

PAINTED DECORATION IN THE APARTMENTS OF ROMAN OSTIA:  
STANDARDIZATION, SOCIAL STATUS, AND VISUAL EXPERIENCE

by

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For Mom and Dad  
and Steve

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## CHAPTER 1

### Introduction

From the first to the early third centuries AD, the city of Ostia was renowned throughout the ancient world as the major port of Rome. Located approximately fifteen miles southwest of Rome at the ancient mouth of the Tiber River,<sup>1</sup> Imperial Ostia was known especially for its role in trade, its cosmopolitan outlook, and its diverse population. The construction of the imperial harbor under Claudius in AD 64 had rapidly transformed Ostia from a minor harbor town into a major Mediterranean commercial center, and the building of a second harbor under Trajan in AD 113 ensured its continued importance.<sup>2</sup> Ostia's close physical proximity to and economic ties with Rome encouraged its growth and prosperity. The city's ever increasing prominence attracted thousands of foreigners from regions across the Empire, including Egypt, Spain, Syria, Greece, Asia Minor, and North Africa.<sup>3</sup> Non-elites, consisting largely of freeborn Romans, freedmen, slaves, and immigrants, comprised the majority of Ostia's population.<sup>4</sup> Through their work in the city's trades and commercial activities, many of

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<sup>1</sup> Wilson 1935, 41-68.

<sup>2</sup> Meiggs 1973, 54-78.

<sup>3</sup> Meiggs 1973, 214-34; Salomies 2002. Social diversity was also a characteristic of other major Italian port cities, especially Puteoli (modern Pozzuoli). On the economic, social, and institutional parallels between Ostia and Puteoli, see D'Arms 1981, 121-48. On the social and economic background of second-century Puteoli, see also D'Arms 1974.

<sup>4</sup> I broadly use the term "Roman" throughout this study to refer to the territory, society, and culture of ancient Rome and also to refer to the people living under Roman rule, regardless of ethnicity or citizenship. When distinctions of ethnicity and/or citizenship are pertinent to my argument, I clarify these in the text.



these individuals gained considerable wealth, power, and prestige, the primary instruments for social advancement in the Roman world.<sup>5</sup>

During the first half of the second century, Ostia experienced a building boom that radically altered its landscape.<sup>6</sup> Modern principles of Roman design and techniques of construction were employed in the rebuilding of the city, with the result that Ostia emerged as a densely packed, brick-faced urban environment formed of regularly planned buildings. Among the most outstanding additions to the city's landscape were its multi-story apartment blocks, which were built to accommodate the growing population.<sup>7</sup> The structures and decorations of many of these apartments are remarkably well preserved and provide us with evidence of the surroundings in which the affluent residents of Ostia lived. Portable objects, such as sculptures and furnishings, no longer remain in situ. However, some of the trappings of wealth, such as traces of floor mosaics, and more frequently, painted decorations, are still preserved in many of the city's apartments.

In the Roman world, the house was unlike the private home in contemporary Western society in that it was "semi-public",<sup>8</sup> functioning both as a residence and as the site where the dominus (head of household) carried out his social, political, business, and patronal affairs (negotium).<sup>9</sup> Consequently, it required spaces that were appropriately

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<sup>5</sup> Garnsey 1970, 280.

<sup>6</sup> Heinzelmann 2002. In the late first century, Domitian laid the groundwork for this transformation of the city by uniformly raising the building level throughout the city by at least a meter above the earlier level, in part by razing earlier structures and employing the rubble for the fill. The building level of Ostia was elevated to this increased height for two reasons: first, to protect against the threat of flooding from the Tiber; and second, to create a solid foundation for the construction of tall apartment blocks, or insulae, designed to house the growing population. On Domitian's impact on the appearance of second-century Ostia, see Meiggs 1973, 64-65; Pavolini 2006, 34.

<sup>7</sup> Packer 1967a; 1971.

<sup>8</sup> Stewart 2008, 40.

<sup>9</sup> In this study, I do not italicize Latin terms that should be relatively familiar to art historians and archaeologists who study the domestic context (e.g., domus, insulae, cubiculum, salutatio, and dominus, among other terms). I italicize Latin terms that pertain to official posts and organizations as well as legal terminology (e.g., *seviri Augustales*, *collegia*, and *libertinus*).

adorned for the practice of activities associated with one's public responsibilities. Recent studies of Ostian domestic painting have highlighted the ways in which particular decorative systems were employed on wall surfaces of specific rooms to visually differentiate the spaces of a residence according to their relative importance.<sup>10</sup> A primary space was one of great social importance, such as a reception room where the occupant received visitors during the *salutatio* (daily visit of a client to his patron),<sup>11</sup> or the *convivium* (banquet), during which the occupant hosted and entertained friends and business partners.<sup>12</sup> Primary spaces are typically characterized by more extravagant decorations than secondary spaces, which served functions of lesser social significance. Secondary spaces commonly include service areas, corridors, and bedrooms.<sup>13</sup> The use of painted decorations to distinguish spaces according to their hierarchical importance has also been noted at other major Roman sites, such as Pompeii and Herculaneum. There is general scholarly consensus that the presence of visually distinct spaces in a residence indicates that the occupants were of elevated social standing because they required such spaces for playing different social roles and for hosting various formal activities. Spatial hierarchies have been discerned not only in the apartments of Ostia but also in houses at other Roman sites, especially Pompeii and Herculaneum.

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<sup>10</sup> When I use the phrase "decorative system", I am referring in general terms to the formal or compositional scheme that fills the wall surface. Below I outline several different types of decorative systems that feature prominently in this dissertation.

<sup>11</sup> On the social system of *clientela*, see Saller 1982. On the *salutatio* in the Pompeian atrium house, see Dwyer 1991.

<sup>12</sup> On the *convivium*, see D'Arms 1984; 1990; Dunbabin 1996; 2003.

<sup>13</sup> The terminology employed by previous scholars to distinguish between rooms of greater or lesser social importance varies slightly. The rooms that appear to have housed the most socially important activities are often described as "principal" or "primary" spaces or more generally as representation rooms, while rooms thought to have served less socially significant functions are commonly described as "secondary" spaces. See Watts 1987, 132-36; Clarke 1991a; Falzone 2001; 2004; Liedtke 2001; 2003; Oome 2007. While this dichotomy is useful for considering basic distinctions in the social importance of the different spaces of the Roman house, it does not entirely convey the multifunctional nature of such spaces. See Chapter 3 for a discussion of rooms that I identify as "alternative primary spaces", which display features of both primary and secondary spaces.

In this dissertation, I investigate the ways in which the structure of Ostian apartments and, more particularly, their decorations might have served in the construction and expression of their occupants' social status. Painted decoration is especially indicative of the hierarchical importance of spaces. To a lesser extent, I consider the role that floor mosaics and the architecture of a residence (that is, its layout and its features) played in the social configuration of space. In short, I analyze how the complete domestic setting of the Ostian residence created and reinforced an image of the occupant's active participation in Roman social life.

### **Definition of the Issues**

From the 1970s onward, there has been considerable scholarly interest in the ways in which domestic decorations were employed to articulate the social functions of space in Roman houses. These studies have considered how decorations such as paintings, mosaics, and sculptures were used in the structuring of space and social relations and in the display of the occupant's social status. Many of these studies have focused on houses and villas at Pompeii, Herculaneum, and elsewhere in the Bay of Naples because of the sheer quantity of domestic architecture and decorations preserved at these sites, while Ostia has received notable but less frequent attention. These socially oriented studies of domestic decor came partly as a reaction to earlier efforts to classify decorations, especially wall paintings, according to style and typology.<sup>14</sup> My research draws broadly

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<sup>14</sup> In particular, August Mau's 1882 study of Pompeian wall paintings, in which he categorized the available examples into the now-canonical Four Styles, has continued to figure into the analysis of Roman wall painting from the Republican and early Imperial periods in the Bay of Naples area and beyond. Even at Ostia, there have been recent efforts to identify the "Pompeian styles" in the scant remains of paintings from the first centuries BC and AD (cf. Falzone 2007, 27-47).

on much of the scholarship on the social functions of domestic space that has been published over the last several decades.

Daniela Scagliarini Corlàita's pioneering study of 1974-76 addresses the relationship between wall, ceiling, and floor decoration in houses at Pompeii and Herculaneum, from which she determined that there was a relationship between the complete decorative ensemble and the room's capacity to facilitate different types of activities.<sup>15</sup> In her 1985 study of Pompeian wall painting, Alix Barbet analyzes the compositional schemes used in each of the Four Styles of painting, through which she concludes that wall and ceiling paintings were chosen to conform to the function of the room and were used to create a decorative hierarchy. Although Barbet suggests that the paintings reflected the personal tastes, social status, and financial means of the residents, she pays little attention to the backgrounds of potential occupants.<sup>16</sup>

John R. Clarke has devoted considerable scholarly attention to the correlation between the domestic decorative assemblage and the structuring of social relations. In his 1979 study of black and white mosaics in the Roman world,<sup>17</sup> Clarke argues that the composition of a floor mosaic was designed to affect the viewer's behavior. Static spaces, such as those used for entertainment and reception purposes, typically contained the most complex designs in order to attract the attention of the stationary viewer, while dynamic spaces, such as corridors, often had simpler, all-over patterns serving to facilitate movement.<sup>18</sup> In 1991, Clarke built upon his earlier work on mosaics in *The Houses of*

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<sup>15</sup> Scagliarini Corlàita 1974-76.

<sup>16</sup> Barbet 1985.

<sup>17</sup> For the official publication of mosaics and opus sectile pavements from Ostia, see Becatti 1961.

<sup>18</sup> Clarke 1979, 20-21, does not explicitly describe any spaces as either "static" or "dynamic", although this distinction is implied by his discussion of rooms used for stationary activities and those designed to facilitate movement. In his 1991 study, Clarke uses the terms "static" and "dynamic" to describe different types of spaces (cf. Clarke 1991a, 16-17).

*Roman Italy, 100 B.C.-A.D. 250*. In this study, Clarke considers the full domestic context in houses at Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Ostia by investigating how domestic architecture and programmatic displays of paintings, mosaics, and sculptures were used in tandem to guide the ancient viewers' experience of a given space.<sup>19</sup> He analyzes how decorations were used to direct behaviors and facilitate participation in the social rituals of the house, such as the *salutatio* and the *convivium*. Such rituals helped to construct and reflect the occupant's social status because they publicly demonstrated his power and ability to provide what others wanted and needed.<sup>20</sup> While Clarke's approach is notable for its emphasis on the complete domestic setting, his application of this approach is limited by the scope of his study, which focuses on a small number of well-preserved, frequently published houses in the Bay of Naples and at Ostia.

In 1991 the significant volume *Roman Art in the Private Sphere*, edited by Elaine Gazda, was also published.<sup>21</sup> The authors of the essays consider issues related to domestic architecture and sculpture, paintings, and mosaics in diverse contexts ranging from the Republican period to late antiquity and incorporating material from Italy (including Pompeii) and the provinces. These essays are united by their attention to the diverse contexts in which objects were created, displayed, and used and their emphasis on the owners' (or occupants') concern with the creation and display of an appropriate public image in the domestic setting.

Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, focusing on houses at Pompeii and Herculaneum, argues that the architecture and decorations of the Roman house created visual codes that helped visitors and occupants distinguish between grand and humble as well as public

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<sup>19</sup> Clarke 1991a. For a preliminary consideration of the issues presented in this work, see Clarke 1985.

<sup>20</sup> Saller 1982, 126-28.

<sup>21</sup> Gazda 1991.

and private spaces in a residence. In his 1994 study, he sees a correlation between the size of a residence, the richness of its decoration, and its occupant's social status and the spectrum of housing outlined in the writings of the Augustan architect, Vitruvius.<sup>22</sup>

Although there is a clear disconnect between the Roman texts and the material remains of Campanian domestic settings,<sup>23</sup> he contends that the houses under consideration generally reflect what the ancient literary sources tell us about the uses of space in Roman houses.

In 1997, Wallace-Hadrill and Ray Laurence edited the volume *Domestic Space in the Roman World: Pompeii and Beyond*, a collection of essays that considered diverse issues related to the social functions of domestic space at Pompeii and elsewhere in the Empire.<sup>24</sup> Topics addressed in the essays included the archaeological evidence for rental accommodations at Pompeii, the study of material culture objects in order to consider the possible functions of a room, and the ways in which architecture, furnishings, and decorations in late Roman houses were used to reflect the owner's power and status.

In her 2003 study *The Roman House and Social Identity*, Shelley Hales similarly emphasizes that the Roman house served simultaneously as public and private space where the occupant cultivated his personal identity as well as his social and political persona. She argues that the architecture and decoration of Roman houses in Italy and in the provinces alike provided visual confirmation of the occupant's Roman identity because they reflected the need for spaces designed to accommodate traditional social rituals. While Hales considers a range of houses from Britain to Syria, she (like her

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<sup>22</sup> Wallace-Hadrill 1994. This volume was based on the following series of articles: Wallace-Hadrill 1988; 1990; 1991a; 1991b. *Vitr. De arch.* 6.5.1-2.

<sup>23</sup> Hales 2003.

<sup>24</sup> Wallace-Hadrill and Laurence 1997.

predecessors) focuses primarily on examples of domus. Moreover, she refrains from considering any residences at Ostia.<sup>25</sup>

With regard specifically to Ostia, studies published within the last fifty years have paid significant attention to the relationship between painted decorations and the architectural context in which they were seen.<sup>26</sup> An interest in the social functions of Ostian domestic art and architecture appeared early in this period but was slower to develop than in studies of Campanian houses. In 1960, Russell Meiggs published the first edition of his seminal study on Roman Ostia, which included a short survey of the paintings, mosaics, and sculptural decorations.<sup>27</sup> In his discussion of domestic painting, he notes that the decorations of the more important reception spaces were treated differently than those in the secondary spaces. More specifically, the paintings in the former type of space exhibited a greater number of horizontal divisions and greater variety in the colors of pigment employed than those in the latter. However, he did not offer any interpretations that built upon this initial observation.

In the 1960s, Bianca Maria Felletti Maj made the first major effort to contextualize Ostian painted decorations.<sup>28</sup> Her volumes on the House of the Painted Vaults, the House of the Yellow Walls, and the House of the Muses (co-authored with Paolo Moreno),<sup>29</sup> as well as one on the Inn of the Peacock by Carlo Gasparri are significant for their attention to the rapport between individual walls and the entire room

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<sup>25</sup> Hales 2003.

<sup>26</sup> Prior studies were especially concerned with developing a chronology for the paintings based primarily on stylistic criteria. See especially Fornari 1913; Calza 1917; 1920; Wirth 1934; Van Essen 1956-58; Borda 1958. For more critiques of stylistic dating, see Mols 2002; Falzone 2004.

<sup>27</sup> Meiggs 1960, 440-46. The second edition of Meiggs's study, which was published in 1973, is cited henceforth in this text. Although revisions were made to specific sections of the first edition, Chapter 17, "The Arts", remained, to my knowledge, untouched (cf. Meiggs 1973, 431-54).

<sup>28</sup> Felletti Maj 1960; 1961; 1968.

<sup>29</sup> Felletti Maj and Moreno 1967.

and for their consideration of stylistic similarities between these paintings and those found elsewhere in the Empire.<sup>30</sup>

By the mid-1990s, the scholarly concern over the social uses of Roman domestic space had become a topic of significant interest to scholars of Ostia domestic architecture and decor. In her recent studies of Ostian wall painting from 1995, 2001, and 2003, Claudia Liedtke observes that decorations with a polychrome background were favored in principal rooms, while a monochrome background was commonly employed in secondary rooms.<sup>31</sup> In her 2001 article and in her studies on Ostian painting from 2004 and 2007, Stella Falzone likewise emphasizes the enduring use of painted decorations to differentiate rooms of varying levels of importance, even after redecoration phases were carried out in select rooms of a single residence.<sup>32</sup> Similarly, Neeltje Oome indicates in her 2007 article on the House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander that different decorative systems of wall painting were employed in specific rooms of this residence in order to articulate their relative importance.<sup>33</sup> More will be said below on the hierarchical significance of different types of decorative systems.

Along with the interest in the social functions of space came a greater concern for the determination of more accurate dates for the painted decorations. In his 1999 studies of apartment block III, X and his 2002 essay on the status quaestionis of Ostian painting, Stefan T.A.M. Mols highlights the importance of studying paintings in relation to phases of structural transformations.<sup>34</sup> Mols argues that the examination of structural phases could assist in determining more accurate dates for the paintings and could also allow for

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<sup>30</sup> Gasparri 1970.

<sup>31</sup> Liedtke 2001.

<sup>32</sup> Falzone 2001; 2004; 2007.

<sup>33</sup> Oome 2007.

<sup>34</sup> Mols 1999a; 1999b; 2002.



a more nuanced consideration of the changes in function of the uses of spaces. Falzone and Oome echo Mols on this point in their recent studies.<sup>35</sup>

While significant scholarly attention has been paid to the use of Ostian painted decorations to designate spatial hierarchies, there has been less pointed consideration of how the occupants of the city's apartments employed the decorations and architecture of their residences to facilitate particular social practices and how such activities assisted in the display of social status. With the exception of John R. Clarke, who in his 1991 study, considered the use of decorations to structure social rituals in six of the largest, best adorned Ostian apartments,<sup>36</sup> no scholar to date has examined a broader range of apartments by focusing on the problem of the role that painted decorations, in concert with floor mosaics, played in the organizing domestic space and constructing and reinforcing the occupant's social status.

I base my study of the relationship between Ostian painted decorations, domestic space, and social status on the close examination of twenty-four apartments of varying size and plan. All of these residences were constructed in the first half of the second century and were inhabited through at least the first quarter of the third century.<sup>37</sup> These apartments are suited to the purposes of the current study for three reasons.

The first is that these apartments generally retain substantial remains of their painted decorations.<sup>38</sup> In some cases, floor mosaics are also preserved in one or more of

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<sup>35</sup> Falzone 2001; 2004; Oome 2007.

<sup>36</sup> Clarke 1991a, 267-361, on the House of the Muses (III, IX, 22), the House of the Painted Vaults (III, V, 1), the House of the Yellow Walls (III, IX, 12), the House of the Painted Ceiling (II, VI, 6), the House of Jupiter and Ganymede (I, IV, 2), and the Inn of the Peacock (IV, II, 6).

<sup>37</sup> On the topography of the site, see Calza et al. 1953. See Chapter 5 for a discussion of the apartments in the Garden Houses complex (III, IX), many of which appear to have been inhabited beyond the first quarter of the third century.

<sup>38</sup> Apartments 14, 16, 18, 19, and 20 in the interior blocks of the Garden Houses complex (III, IX) do not preserve substantial traces of their painted decorations. However, I still include them in my study because

the rooms that contain paintings. Much of the groundwork for the study of the decorations has been laid in a useful way by previous scholars. As I have already noted, the painted decorations of a number of the largest residences were treated extensively in studies by Felletti Maj, Moreno, Gasparri, and Clarke.<sup>39</sup> Recently, studies by Mols, Falzone, and Oome have paid attention to the wall paintings of smaller or more modest apartments, though these are simpler and generally less well-preserved.<sup>40</sup> Although the paintings and mosaics of each residence cannot typically be assigned to a single, unified phase of decoration, nearly all of the examples under consideration have been dated to the period from the early second through the early third centuries. These dates have primarily been assigned through stylistic analyses, a less precise but frequently used method of dating.<sup>41</sup> However, scholars have also used architectural analysis to study the structural transformations associated with different phases of decoration in order to arrive at more accurate, archaeologically supported dates.<sup>42</sup>

These studies are supplemented by the nine months of field research that I carried out at Ostia during 2008-2009. During that time, I closely examined the wall and ceiling paintings, floor mosaics, and architecture of the twenty-four apartments currently under consideration. I also studied the painted and mosaic decorations in additional residential and public structures, which are not discussed in the present study for at least one of several reasons: 1) its function as a residential building was not clearly supported by the

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of the strong similarities that they share with the other units in the interior blocks and with the other medianum apartments in terms of plan.

<sup>39</sup> Felletti Maj 1960; 1961; 1968; Felletti Maj and Moreno 1967; Gasparri 1970; Clarke 1991a.

<sup>40</sup> Mols 1999a; 1999b; Falzone 2001; 2004; Oome 2007. Falzone 2004, also considers the painted decorations and structural transformations in many the apartments with paintings that are arguably of higher quality.

<sup>41</sup> On the pitfalls of stylistic analyses, see especially Mols 2002.

<sup>42</sup> For a recent discussion of structural transformations in numerous apartments, see Falzone 2004.

archaeological evidence;<sup>43</sup> 2) renovation and redecoration phases that occurred from the mid-third century onward had substantially altered the layout and appearance of the residence from that of its second to early third century state;<sup>44</sup> and 3) it does not preserve any traces of its painted and/or mosaic decorations.<sup>45</sup> Collectively, the previously published studies and the information gathered during my field research provide the basic documentation about the paintings and mosaics in apartments of varying size and plan.

My second reason for choosing this sample of apartments is the general consistency in the decorative systems of the wall paintings and in their distribution among certain types of spaces. These similarities from one apartment to another allow me to ask broad questions about spatial hierarchies in apartments of different size and plan and thus to study patterns across economic levels. I have already noted that Liedtke has identified a relationship between the background color of painted decorations and the social significance of the room: primary spaces commonly have painted decorations with a polychrome background, while secondary spaces typically have painted decorations with a monochrome background.<sup>46</sup> Proceeding from this observation it is possible to go the next step and consider more closely the social significance of the decorative system employed.

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<sup>43</sup> More specifically, I do not examine the House of Diana (I, III, 3-4), which has been interpreted variously as a hotel (cf. Hermansen 1981, 127; Pavolini 2006, 84), a guild seat (Bakker 1994, 203), a domus or other large residence (cf. Falzone 1999; 2004, 33-34), or an apartment building composed of multiple small apartments or rooms for rent (Calza 1917; Pavolini 2006, 84).

<sup>44</sup> There are several residences considered to be domus that I have omitted from the present study because they do not preserve any remains of their painted decorations: the House of the Thunderbolt (III, VII, 4), dated to the reign of Vespasian (cf. Packer 1971, 71 n. 41; Lorenzatti 1998; Pavolini 2006, 174-76), the House of Apuleius (II, VIII, 5), which originally dates to the Republican period and was renovated in the Antonine period (cf. D'Asdia 2002; Pavolini 2006, 73-74).

<sup>45</sup> The House of Fortuna Annonaria (V, II, 8) was constructed around AD 150 and underwent several phases of renovation prior to the early fifth century (cf. Boersma 1985, 47-58). There is a mosaic floor in room 9 dated to the first half of the third century and an opus sectile floor in room 10 dated to the second half of the third century (cf. Becatti 1961, 213), but there are no remaining traces of painted decorations.

<sup>46</sup> Liedtke 2001.

My discussion of decorative systems draws on the work of Hetty Joyce and Liedtke, who have both proposed typological systems to establish broad categories of painted decoration found at Ostia and elsewhere in Italy during the second and early third centuries AD. In 1981, Joyce proposed three decorative systems: the modular system, in which a single motif, such as a panel enclosed in a wide frame or an aedicula, is repeated across the wall surface (Figs. 1-2); the architectural system, in which architectural motifs or vistas frame a central element (Fig. 3); and the figural system, in which unconfined large-scale human figures are painted in settings such as gardens and nymphaea. Joyce argues that the architectural system was frequently employed in the most important spaces of the house on the grounds that this system required more preparation and demanded the skilled work of specialist figure-painters. In contrast, modular panel and aedicular systems were more useful in decorating secondary spaces, such as long halls and corridors. Liedtke presented a slightly different typological system in her 2003 study of the painted decorations of secondary spaces.<sup>47</sup> Like Joyce, she identified modular aedicular and panel systems, although she separates these into two separate types, but she also described two additional systems: a field system, in which narrow frames enclose broad fields of the wall surface, and a linear system, in which simple lines in red and green create abstractions of architecture on a white background.<sup>48</sup> In this study I pay special attention to the architectural, panel, and aedicular systems, which were used regularly in the apartments under consideration.

The repeated use of particular decorative systems in rooms of primary or secondary importance also relates to the Roman principle of decorum (decor), or

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<sup>47</sup> Liedtke 2003, argues that the panel system is ranked highest among all of the systems used in secondary spaces because of its greater complexity.

<sup>48</sup> Liedtke 2003, 8-12.

appropriateness, as presented by ancient authors, particularly Cicero, Pliny the Elder, and Vitruvius.<sup>49</sup> A number of recent studies highlight the importance of decorum as a moral and aesthetic principle that was applicable to nearly all aspects of public and domestic life.<sup>50</sup> Perry sees a reciprocal relationship between a work of art and its architectural context in both public and private settings: while a specific setting could give meaning to a work, the type, style, or subject of the work could enhance and alter the meaning of its display context. In the domestic setting, this practice helped in the creation of the occupant's public image.<sup>51</sup> Perry also stresses the relationship between decorum, repetition, and tradition, noting how adherence to general standards of appropriateness encouraged repeated, formulaic expressions just as it reinforced traditional values.<sup>52</sup> The investigation of painted decorations in the Ostian apartments complements and extends these earlier studies.

A third and final reason for my choice of these apartments is the degree of preservation of the architectural complexes in which the decorated rooms survive. The architectural features and layout of an apartment, of course, did much to determine the social configuration of space. It has been rightly noted that Roman domestic architecture was designed to communicate specific messages about the occupant's role in society, messages which were then reinforced by the art displayed in the residence.<sup>53</sup>

There are two problems inherent in the study of Ostian architecture, the first of which is that the upper stories of the majority of the apartment blocks are no longer

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<sup>49</sup> On discussions of the appropriateness of decorum as it relates to the visual arts, see esp. Cic. *Att.* 1.6.2; Cic. *De Off.* 1.138-139; Plin. *HN.* 35.73; 36.43; Vitr. *De arch.* 6.5.1-3; 7.5.4.

<sup>50</sup> Bartman 1988; 1991; Marvin 1989; Isager 1991; Gazda 2002; Bounia 2004; Perry 2005.

<sup>51</sup> Perry 2005, 76.

<sup>52</sup> Perry 2005, 48-49.

<sup>53</sup> Stewart 2008, 53.

preserved, which restricts my study to ground floor units. Second, the excavation records on more than half of the area of the ancient city that is currently visible are largely incomplete.<sup>54</sup> The absence of precise information about the archaeological contexts in which the apartments were found does not allow for a consideration of whether objects found in specific rooms could inform us about the possible function of the spaces. Fortunately, the plans of the ground floor units are well documented and the architecture is fairly well preserved. By studying the architecture of an apartment I am able to assess the significance of an individual room's location within the residence as well as the spatial relationships among different rooms.

More than half of the twenty-four apartments at Ostia are configured according to the same ground plan: the so-called medianum plan (Fig. 4). This apartment type derives its name from the medianum, a rectangular room that gave access to the other rooms of the apartments, which opened onto it on three sides; the fourth side of the medianum faced the street or courtyard. The advantage of this plan, an important development in second-century urban housing, was that it maximized space without restricting the flow of light and air.<sup>55</sup> It has been suggested that the medianum plan originated at Rome, yet Ostia is the only site where it is archaeologically attested on a large scale.<sup>56</sup> Many of the

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<sup>54</sup> From the start of the first official campaign in 1907 through 1937, excavation work occurred at a slow but steady pace. The situation changed in 1938, when Mussolini initiated the campaign to clear out the majority of the site in order to showcase it during the world's fair, or *Esposizione Universale di Roma* (EUR), which was to be held in 1942. From 1938 to 1942 the area of the site that had been excavated more than doubled, but the world's fair never occurred due to the outbreak of the Second World War. Little information was recorded in the excavation journals as a result of the intense pressure to complete the campaign. See Meiggs 1973, 110; Hermansen 1981, xiii-xiv; Pavolini 2006, 40.

<sup>55</sup> Hermansen 1970; 1981, is the first scholar to refer to this type of apartment as a "medianum apartment". This phrase is now generally accepted when referring to apartments that exhibit this plan.

<sup>56</sup> Packer 1967a; 1971. Recently, an apartment that was excavated at Ariminum (modern Rimini) has been identified as exhibiting a layout that is similar to the "Casette Tipo" apartments (III, XII, 1-2; III, XIII, 1-2), which are the earliest medianum apartments and date to the reign of Trajan, c. AD 100-110 (cf. Packer 1971, 185). This medianum-like phase of the building (designated Ar6) has been dated to the second half

apartments so disposed offered amenities, including paintings and mosaics, indoor plumbing, access to garden spaces, and spacious layouts (typically with a ground floor area of at least 200 m<sup>2</sup>). Regarded by scholars as relatively upscale units, the medianum apartments have received significant attention in the scholarship on Ostian domestic space.<sup>57</sup> They feature prominently in this study because they allow for the discussion of larger patterns in the decoration and configuration of space in this type of residence.

Over the last several decades, scholars whose work focuses on Ostian domestic architecture have paid greater attention to the ways in which the layout of a residence contributed to the structuring of social interactions. These studies reflect a clear departure from those carried out through the 1970s, which were occupied with categorizing the apartments according to type and with tracing their origins in earlier Roman housing types, such as the Pompeian atrium house.<sup>58</sup> In her 1987 dissertation, Carol Martin Watts proposes that a pattern language, or a set of rules generating the built environment, were repeatedly employed in the construction of Roman houses and apartments.<sup>59</sup> She detects numerous patterns of spatial configuration in the earlier Campanian houses that persist in the Ostian apartments, the most pertinent of which to my study involves the use of architecture to distinguish spaces according to a hierarchy of importance. Watts also calls attention to numerous other patterns, including the arrangement of spaces along a main axis, the structuring of views into and out of rooms, and the use of notable architectural features to differentiate a space. While Watts acknowledges the presence of

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of the second century (cf. Graziani 2010, 58-59). This apartment is the only example of a medianum apartment to date that has been identified outside of Ostia.

<sup>57</sup> Packer 1967a; 1971; Hermansen 1970; 1981, 17-53; Cervi 1999; Gering 1999; 2001; 2002; Heinzelmann 2002; DeLaine 2002; 2004.

<sup>58</sup> Harsh 1935; Calza et al. 1953; Packer 1967a; 1971; Meiggs 1973; Hermansen 1981.

<sup>59</sup> Watts 1987.

painted and mosaic decorations, she focuses on quantifying their occurrences and variations and showing how these variations relate to the social organization of space. I build on Watts's work by identifying several of these architectural patterns in numerous apartments that were not examined in her study, and I also pay greater attention to the patterns associated with the distribution of different types of paintings and floor mosaics in certain spaces.

More recently, Janet DeLaine has taken a statistical approach to the study of the configuration of space in Ostian apartments.<sup>60</sup> Using Hillier and Hanson's methodology of spatial analysis, also known as access analysis,<sup>61</sup> she quantitatively assesses potential patterns of interaction and access to the different spaces of a residence. Mark Grahame also adopted this approach in his studies of patterns of interaction and circulation in Pompeian houses, as did Hannah Stöger in her study of the headquarters of Ostian *collegia* (occupational or religious organizations), and D.J. Newsome in his study of the spatial arrangement of Ostia's street network.<sup>62</sup> Despite the clear differences in layout between the Ostian apartment and the Pompeian atrium house, DeLaine suggests that the Ostian patron, like his Pompeian predecessor, was particularly concerned with controlling visitors' access to him within his home. DeLaine's approach is relevant to my own research because it suggests a more objective method for studying the ways in which the plan of an apartment helped to structure social relations, yet she does not consider the role that decorations and architectural features also played. In my study, I base my assessments of the potential patterns of interactions in Ostian apartments largely on the

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<sup>60</sup> DeLaine 1999; 2004.

<sup>61</sup> Hillier and Hanson 1984. This approach suggests the potential, rather than actual, use of the apartments. It does not take into account temporary barriers such as doors, curtains or screens, and people. See also DeLaine 2004, 158.

<sup>62</sup> Grahame 1997; 2000; Newsome 2005; Stöger 2009.



results of DeLaine's studies and on my own on-site inspection of the spaces, and I also build upon her approach by taking decorations and other features into account alongside the statistical results of her spatial analysis.

In studies of Ostian apartments in particular and of Roman housing in general, scholars typically apply Greek and Latin terms found in ancient literary sources to the rooms of the house. This practice imparts limited and specific functions on particular types of rooms. Primary spaces tend to receive designations such as triclinium (dining room), tablinum (office or business room), or oecus (main room or reception room) because of their high quality decorations, prominent locations, and larger dimensions. In contrast, smaller, more simply adorned spaces are often identified as cubicula (bedrooms).<sup>63</sup> However, a number of scholars have called for a reconsideration of the usefulness of using ancient terminology for determining the functions of domestic spaces. Penelope Allison criticizes the overreliance upon Vitruvian terminology, pointing out that ancient authors were not themselves consistent.<sup>64</sup> Eleanor Leach highlights the variety of Greek and Latin terms that could refer to a single room type and questions what indirect evidence of nomenclature can in fact tell us about the actual functions and uses of domestic space in the Roman world.<sup>65</sup> Lisa Nevett stresses the usefulness of literary sources to give a broad impression, rather than a specific picture, of the organization and uses of domestic space.<sup>66</sup> The multifunctional nature of rooms has also received greater attention in recent years. Andrew Riggsby, Nevett, and Wallace-Hadrill all note the

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<sup>63</sup> These terms are frequently used in earlier studies, including Meiggs 1973; Packer 1971; Frier 1980. However, even in recent works they are employed without question. See Falzone 2007; Oome 2007.

<sup>64</sup> Allison 2001. On the importance of studying a space's assemblage of objects in order to consider its possible functions, see Allison 1993; 2004; Berry 1997.

<sup>65</sup> Leach 1997.

<sup>66</sup> Nevett 1997.

multiple uses of the term “cubiculum” in ancient literature and stress that rooms described as such were not only used as sleeping accommodations but were also suitable for secluded receptions of respected guests and other private activities.<sup>67</sup>

While the use of ancient terminology has its limitations, so does the reliance on decorative and architectural evidence to identify a room’s function. When I discuss specific rooms in this study, I generally refrain from using Latin terms. Only in rare cases in which the archaeological evidence agrees with a textual interpretation do I also use a Latin term to describe a room.<sup>68</sup> In the case of the medianum, I use this term because the space in question can be clearly identified from its defining architectural features. In my discussion of various rooms I use numbers to refer to specific spaces. I use either the numbers that are provided in *Scavi di Ostia XIV*, the official publication of the painted decorations, or those used in later studies, if these have become standard.<sup>69</sup>

In previous studies of Ostian domestic art and architecture, the occupants are often overlooked. The Ostian epigraphic record, which includes epitaphs, honorific and dedicatory inscriptions, the records of public acts of local officials, and the records of *collegia*, contains substantial evidence of the social, legal, and ethnic backgrounds of the Ostian population as well as information about individuals’ occupations and membership in political, religious, and trade organizations.<sup>70</sup> Some of the epigraphic evidence attests to a notable degree of upward social mobility among an affluent and powerful group of non-elites. Despite this wealth of socio-historical documentation, scholars examining the

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<sup>67</sup> Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 17; Nevett 1997, 290-92; Riggsby 1997.

<sup>68</sup> For example, Clarke 1991a, 308, notes that room 7 in the House of the Yellow Walls (III, IX, 12) was likely a triclinium because the floor mosaic was designed in order to allow dining couches to be placed along three sides of the room without hiding the elaborate central motif.

<sup>69</sup> Falzone 2004. The sources of the room numbers that I use are discussed in the Table below.

<sup>70</sup> Bargagli and Grosso 1997.

Ostian domestic setting have rarely made use of the inscriptions, preferring instead to offer generalizations about the diversity of the population and their commercially oriented occupations.<sup>71</sup> This is primarily due to the fact that there are no known inscriptions that indicate precisely who inhabited any particular residence. However, at Ostia there are two residences that can potentially be linked with individuals who are known to have lived in the city.<sup>72</sup>

Consequently, questions of social status have been more frequently approached through the study of the material remains. The occupants of the adorned apartments have generally been identified as members of a well-off, Ostian “middle class”.<sup>73</sup> To my knowledge, DeLaine is the first to look to the inscriptions to find evidence of the types of individuals who might have inhabited one of the residential complexes, the Garden Houses complex. In her 2004 study, she briefly considers how particular apartments might have facilitated the social and business needs of a known group of persons living at Ostia during this time (e.g., a wealthy group of shippers from North Africa or the Eastern Mediterranean). At the same time, DeLaine leaves open the possibility of other types of prosperous occupants.<sup>74</sup>

Lauren Hackworth Petersen has pointed to the importance of considering inscriptions alongside the material remains even while stressing how difficulties in

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<sup>71</sup> Meiggs 1973, 189-234, closely considers the composition of the population and of the “governing class”, but he does not address what types of people might have inhabited the city’s apartments. See also Frier 1980; Clarke 1991a, 268.

<sup>72</sup> Falzone 2007, 80, discusses a graffito found in room 4 of the House of the Priestesses (House of Luceia Primitiva) (III, IX, 6) that refers to a woman named Luceia Primitiva, who might have lived in the residence. Bakker proposes that the owner of the House of Annus (III, XIV, 4) might have been Annus Serapiodorus, a prosperous producer of oil lamps at Ostia in the Severan period (<http://www.ostia-antica.org/regio3/14/14-4.htm>, accessed 22 March 2011). See Chapter 2 for additional discussion of these individuals and their possible residences.

<sup>73</sup> Meiggs 1973, 70, 73, 77, 437; Falzone 2001, 337; Falzone and Pellegrino 2001b, 267; Liedtke 2001, 345.

<sup>74</sup> DeLaine 2004.

interpretation can arise when one allows both ancient and modern prejudices against non-elites to inform one's reading of written evidence.<sup>75</sup> In her discussion of the decorations of the House of the Vettii at Pompeii, Petersen argues that previous interpretations of the house's Fourth-Style paintings as being "overburdened" and evocative of nouveaux riches tastes have resulted from an effort to read the decorations according to the owners' presumed identities as freedmen. In my own study of Ostian apartments I take the position that a synthetic approach that considers the inscriptions along with the architectural and decorative remains of the apartments allows for a more informed understanding of the social status (or identities) of the occupants and the nature of the social functions they performed in the artistic and architectural settings of their Ostian residences.

It is important, I will argue, also to keep in mind that the occupants of a Roman house comprised the entire familia of the dominus. The familia included immediate family members and other blood relatives, as well as slaves and freedpersons.<sup>76</sup> The members of the latter group often continued to work for their former masters after manumission.<sup>77</sup> Temporary residents also inhabited the spaces, including friends and extended family members, who might have brought with them their own servants,<sup>78</sup> or even lodgers who paid to rent a room for a short period of time.<sup>79</sup> Likewise, invited and uninvited guests would also have made their presence felt in the spaces of a residence to varying degrees. As I noted above, the Roman house was the site where the occupant

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<sup>75</sup> Petersen 2006, especially 5-10 on the House of the Vettii.

<sup>76</sup> Saller 1984; Dixon 1992.

<sup>77</sup> On freedpersons working for their former masters, see Treggiari 1969; Garnsey 1981; Joshel 1992. These types of servants fulfilled a variety of needs around the house, working as cooks, nurses, entertainers, tutors, and philosophers. On slaves in the Roman house, see George 1997.

<sup>78</sup> Powers 2006, 17.

<sup>79</sup> Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 105. Grahame 1997, 142, on the distinctions between visitors, who were temporary inhabitants, and strangers, who were not permitted the same access to the house.

conducted many of his social, political, business, and patronal affairs. Such guests included one's clients, who visited the residence during the daily salutatio, as well as business partners and friends of equivalent and lower standing, who were entertained at more prestigious gatherings, such as the convivium.<sup>80</sup> These types of social activities likely also took place in Ostian apartments, especially those that were luxury residences.

It has been widely assumed that the apartments under consideration, particularly those of the medianum type, functioned as rental units - that is, places occupied not by owners but by tenants.<sup>81</sup> In his 1980 study of Roman property law, Bruce Frier argues that the Ostian medianum apartments were of the type described in Roman legal texts on urban tenancy.<sup>82</sup> Other scholars simply mention the possibility that the medianum were rental units, without further explanation.<sup>83</sup> This idea is in many ways compelling, for strong similarities in plan and decorations, coupled with the fact that the apartments typically belong to larger complexes, are consistent with modern notions of apartments intended for temporary residence. In addition, since many of the city's inhabitants practiced occupations related to trade and commerce, it is widely assumed that they resided at Ostia only seasonally.<sup>84</sup> However, because there is no textual evidence that specifically supports the identification of any of these buildings as either permanent residences or rental accommodations, the question is best left open.

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<sup>80</sup> Garnsey and Saller 1987, 126-47, on different types of reciprocal relationships. See also Garnsey 1981, on the relationship between a freedman and his patron after the former's manumission.

<sup>81</sup> See especially Calza 1914; 1915; 1929; 1941.

<sup>82</sup> Frier 1977; 1980, 5, argues that these apartments were of a type known as the *cenaculum*, the plan of which is described by Ulpian (*Dig.* 9.3.5.2).

<sup>83</sup> Meiggs 1973, 247; Packer 1971, 8-11; Hermansen 1981, 17-49; Clarke 1991a, 270; Falzone 2001, 337; Liedtke 2001, 345; Mols 2001, 332; Mols 2002, 170.

<sup>84</sup> Hermansen 1981, 7, notes that the season of navigation for shipping goods by boat was about 240 days per year. Presumably the individuals engaged in this line of work only required temporary or seasonal housing.

Contributing to the question of use has been the application of ancient terminology to describe the residences. Modern scholars have tended to apply the Latin term *insula* (apartment block or “multiple dwelling”<sup>85</sup>) to distinguish such units from larger residences, which are described as *domus*. The term *domus* generally refers to a single-family house,<sup>86</sup> which could have been either a freestanding dwelling or one that belonged to a larger architectural complex. Scholars treating Ostia or Pompeii rarely identify a *domus* as a rental unit.<sup>87</sup> Just as I refrain from using terms such as *cubiculum* and *triclinium* to describe specific rooms, I avoid using the terms *insula* and *domus* to describe the residences.<sup>88</sup> Normally I refer to them as ‘apartments’ in order to avoid creating a clear dichotomy between the larger and smaller units.

DeLaine is the only scholar to date to argue that any of the city’s apartments were inhabited by their owners.<sup>89</sup> She proposes that a group of wealthy individuals who had a notable presence in the city and who might have been of provincial origin could have collectively commissioned seasonal residences at Ostia to facilitate their social and business activities. Based on her architectural analysis of the archaeological remains of the Garden Houses, she argues that this complex required too great an investment to have been undertaken as a speculative venture.<sup>90</sup> Felix Pirson similarly emphasizes the need to challenge assumptions about occupancy by closely examining the architecture of

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<sup>85</sup> Packer 1967a, 83.

<sup>86</sup> On the meaning of the term “*insula*”, see Storey 2004. Hermansen 1981, 18-19, notes that Vitruvius only uses the term “*insula*” once.

<sup>87</sup> On the possibility that the House of the Muses (III, IX, 22) was a rental unit, see Clarke 1991a, 270. Pirson 1997, 172, suggests that the *domus* for rent in the *Insula Arriana Polliana* at Pompeii was actually a ground-floor apartment that was the size of a small, independent house (c. 90-100 m<sup>2</sup> in ground floor area).

<sup>88</sup> However, I use the term “*insula*” when discussing the *Insula of the Paintings* (a complex that comprises three apartments) as a collective apartment block.

<sup>89</sup> DeLaine 2004, 169-71.

<sup>90</sup> DeLaine 2004, 171, proposes that it would have taken a force of around 300 men at least 3 years to construct the complex. See also DeLaine 2002, 52-57 and 73-74, on the nature of the project.

residential structures. In his 1997 study of two known rental units in Pompeii, he develops a set of architectural criteria that he believes might be used to identify additional rental units in Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Ostia as well. These criteria include habitability (i.e., whether there was a clear living space), ownership (i.e., whether a unit belongs to a larger architectural complex), and independence (i.e., whether the unit can be accessed separately from the exterior).<sup>91</sup>

I believe that questions of occupancy are worth exploring because they can help us arrive at a more nuanced understanding of the range of housing types that were available in Ostia. Moreover, they challenge us to consider whether the similarities that many apartments share in their decorations should be attributed to landlords who outfitted their properties with paintings that were appropriate for a particular audience of potential tenants, or whether they should be attributed to the owners, who selected decorations that reflected both their aesthetic preferences and their adherence to standards of visual decorum. With respect to the question of occupancy, I find it useful to study architectural and decorative changes in relation to Roman lease laws on urban tenancy, which restricted alterations to particular types of occupants. From this it emerges that the material evidence of Ostian apartments does not allow for a clear reading of their function as rental units but instead suggests diverse patterns of occupancy over time.<sup>92</sup>

### **Organization of the Dissertation**

I begin in Chapter 2 with a survey of legal and social status distinctions in the Roman world and review their possible application to the Ostian historical and cultural

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<sup>91</sup> Pirson 1997, 173-78.

<sup>92</sup> Another factor is the extent to which the repertoires of painters and painters' workshops dictated the types of decorative systems in common use, although I will not explore this topic in depth.

context. Previous studies of Ostian domestic space have typically addressed the social standing of occupants in passing and have adopted a vague terminology based on class and/or status distinctions, paying little attention to the social, economic, and legal factors that informed an individual's place in Ostian society. In order to demonstrate the hazards of indiscriminate uses of the terms, I call attention to the differences between class, which is associated with the grouping of individuals according to economic, social, and professional criteria, and status, which involves the social estimation of one's honor and prestige. My study is concerned with the latter. I also distinguish between legal status, which was absolutely defined by Roman law, and social status, which was defined according to the particular context. After surveying the main categories of Roman legal distinctions, I address what the Ostian epigraphic record can tell us about the diverse social, legal, ethnic, and occupational backgrounds of the city's residents in order to highlight the factors that could help or hinder one's advancement along the social continuum. It is my contention that one must develop an understanding of these factors in order to arrive at an informed view of how social status was constructed in the Ostian historical context.

Chapter 3 considers whether the widely held assumption of a correlation between the size and splendor of a Roman house and its residents' social standing can be corroborated by the material evidence of Ostian residences. To this end, I examine the architecture and decorations of a group of case study apartments in an effort to identify primary spaces, which would likely have been used for various social, political, business and patronal activities expected of occupants who had achieved an elevated social standing. I have categorized the apartments into three groups based on their ground floor



area: Group 1 (500-750 m<sup>2</sup>), Group 2 (190-350 m<sup>2</sup>), and Group 3 (65-140 m<sup>2</sup>). I have developed three categories of criteria for identifying primary spaces: 1) decorations [paintings and pavements]; 2) architectural features; and 3) apartment layout and room location. I also employ these criteria to identify rooms that I refer to as “alternative primary spaces”, which display features associated with both primary and secondary spaces.

My analysis shows, surprisingly, that there is no direct correlation between the size of the apartment and the number of primary (and alternative primary) spaces that could have been used for receiving guests. However, there is one apparent distinction. The apartments of Groups 1 and 2 (i.e., those with an area of at least 190 m<sup>2</sup>) generally have at least two primary spaces, nearly all of which have painted decorations that exhibit an architectural system on a polychrome background. The repeated use of this painted decorative system in the primary spaces suggests its appropriateness for rooms used in the practice of affairs of great social significance, in part because the architectural features employed in the wall paintings make clear visual reference to the public sphere. In effect, the apartments in my Groups 1 and 2 can be viewed as one large group of luxury residences because they have much in common despite their difference in size. In contrast, primary spaces are less clearly identifiable among the Group 3 apartments, in part because the painted decorations of each apartment exhibit a fair degree of uniformity. Throughout each apartment one finds the same type of decorative system (either the panel system or the aedicular system on a predominantly monochrome background). I argue that the occupants of Group 3 apartments either did not require

primary spaces or that the spaces were designed to be multifunctional and could have served as reception spaces if the situation required it.

In Chapter 4 I examine upward social mobility among the Ostian population. Based on the epigraphic evidence outlined in Chapter 2, I identify two groups of individuals who experienced significant social advancement in second-century Ostia: freeborn non-elites (a group comprising men of servile descent and freeborn citizens), who entered the order of the decurions (town council) in greater numbers than in the past, and independent freedpersons, particularly those who became *seviri Augustales* (members of the priesthood of the imperial cult).<sup>93</sup> While upward mobility was not limited to new decurions and the *seviri Augustales*, I focus on these two groups because there is substantial documentation of the significant public roles that these organizations played in the civic and economic life of the city.

I then consider which of the apartments I analyzed in Chapter 3 might have been suitable for such individuals. Given that their prominent positions in Ostian society would have been accompanied by various social, political, and patronal responsibilities, I argue that the medianum apartments of Group 2 would have been especially attractive to many of these up-and-coming individuals and to other powerful Ostians because they included two clearly designated reception spaces. Moreover, such an apartment—one of a ‘standardized’ type, complete with all of the requisite reception spaces and decorations—might well have appealed to an occupant who wished to display his acceptance of Roman values and his acculturation into Ostian society, regardless of his social, legal, or ethnic origins. I argue that the desire to fit in among one’s peers and colleagues could have fueled the ambition of such individuals to seek out housing that

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<sup>93</sup> On social mobility after AD 250, see MacMullen 1964; 1974.

would represent them as social equals and that would also reflect their shared need for homes with visually distinct spaces that accommodated various formal activities and practices.

My study culminates in Chapter 5 where I turn my attention to the Garden Houses complex, the largest private building project at Ostia, which was built in the late Hadrianic period (c. AD 128-130). The complex is quadrilateral in plan and has at its perimeter blocks of residential and commercial buildings, which encircle a paved interior area, at the center of which are two freestanding apartment blocks. Each block contains four medianum apartments on the ground floor level. In this chapter, I consider what variations in the painted decorations of the interior-block apartments can tell us about the occupancy of these units. After identifying basic similarities and differences in the painted decorations, I propose dates for the paintings. These dates are based largely on stylistic comparison to better preserved, firmly dated paintings in other Ostian apartments and to a lesser extent on approximate dates associated with structural modifications in certain rooms of the apartments. I arrive at a date range that runs from the late Hadrianic through the late Antonine periods (AD 128-192). The dates vary by room and by apartment but lean toward the latter part of this range. The fact that the paintings do not appear to be attributable to a single datable phase is significant because it challenges the common assumption that the paintings belong to unified decorative project that was commissioned by the landlord or owner and was carried out shortly after the complex was built.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>94</sup> On the possibility that the painted decorations were commissioned by the landlord or owner, see Liedtke 2001, 345; Mols 2002, 170.

I also consider the significance of the decorative and structural variations evident in the interior-block apartments of the Garden Houses complex in light of Roman legal texts on urban tenancy. Although the legal sources are silent on whether tenants were allowed to make cosmetic and structural alterations, they indicate that non rent-paying individuals who were granted the usufruct of a property, or permission to occupy a residence that was owned by another person, were legally allowed to alter the wall paintings and make minor structural modifications, such as the addition of windows.<sup>95</sup> The material evidence of the interior-block apartments allows me to argue for several possible types of occupancy. Although it is not clear who lived in these apartments over time, it is evident that the occupants required residences with spaces whose functions could be clearly distinguished based on their decorations. By considering the material evidence and legal sources in tandem, I highlight the value of paying greater attention to questions of occupancy in Ostian apartments of all sizes and plans.

Throughout my dissertation, I seek to demonstrate that the painted decorations, along with the architectural features and layout of an apartment, were collectively employed in the social configuration of domestic space and in constructing and displaying the occupant's social status. By integrating epigraphic evidence relating to the composition of the city's population along with legal texts on urban tenancy, I offer a more contextualized approach to Ostian domestic spaces than is currently available, one that takes greater account of the occupants and their social practices and that also questions the traditional interpretation of the apartments as rental units. I hope to demonstrate that my approach has implications not only for the study of Ostian domestic art and architecture but also for the study of Roman domestic space in the wider empire.

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<sup>95</sup> *Dig.* 7.1.13.7-8; *Dig.* 7.1.7.2-3; Frier 1980, 27.

## CHAPTER 2

### Defining Social Status at Ostia

As indicated in Chapter 1, this dissertation considers how individuals who resided at Ostia from the second through early third centuries AD employed the decorations and architecture of their residences in the construction and display of their social status. In the Roman world, housing and social standing were inextricably linked. Indeed, “No marker of identity was more profound, in the world inhabited by the Roman elite, than the ‘private’ house”.<sup>96</sup> The connection between the size and splendor of an individual’s house and his station in life is perhaps most vividly described by the architect Vitruvius in his renowned architectural treatise, written at the end of the first century BC. In Book 6, Chapter 5, Vitruvius states the following:

Therefore magnificent vestibules and alcoves and halls are not necessary to persons of common fortune, because they pay their respects by visiting among others, and are not visited by others. Again, the houses of bankers and farmers of the revenue should be more spacious and imposing and safe from burglars. Advocates and professors of rhetoric should be housed with distinction, and in sufficient space to accommodate their audiences. For persons of high rank who hold office and magistracies, and whose duty it is to serve the state, we must provide princely vestibules, lofty halls and very spacious peristyles, plantations and broad avenues finished in a majestic manner; further, libraries and basilicas arranged in a similar fashion with the magnificence of public structures, because, in such palaces, public deliberations and private trials and judgments are often transacted. Therefore if buildings are planned with a

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<sup>96</sup> Elsner 1998, 44.

view to the status of the client, as was set forth in the first book under the head of decor, we shall escape censure.<sup>97</sup>

In short, Vitruvius indicates that there is a direct relation between social status and dwelling place, and he makes it clear that individuals of higher status share a need for residences designed to accommodate the practice of the various social, political, business, and patronal activities associated with prominence in the public sphere. To be sure, we cannot take Vitruvius entirely at face value because he was writing not merely to advise fellow architects on proper building principles but rather to justify the elites' increasingly lavish housing requirements.<sup>98</sup> Moreover, his text was written more than a century before the apartments under consideration were built, so one can ask whether his guidelines were applicable to the Ostian context. Nevertheless, Vitruvius's text sheds important light on the Roman concern with the relation between social standing and suitable housing.<sup>99</sup>

In this chapter I lay the foundation for my discussion of social status and Ostian housing in subsequent chapters. After outlining the basic distinctions between status and class and explaining why I have chosen to focus on the former rather than the latter, I survey two types of ancient textual sources—legal texts and inscriptions. Legal texts can inform us about status distinctions employed throughout the Roman Empire, while epigraphic evidence from Ostia can tell us about the diverse social, legal, ethnic, and occupational backgrounds of the city's residents and indicate the types of barriers they might have faced in the pursuit of social advancement. It is my contention that an informed consideration of social status and its construction in the Ostian domestic context

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<sup>97</sup> Vitr. *De arch.* 6.5.1-3 (transl. Granger 1934, 37-39).

<sup>98</sup> Hales 2003, 26-28.

<sup>99</sup> Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 6.

depends on a nuanced understanding of both empire-wide and site-specific factors. The significance of the correlation between housing and social status will be explored in greater depth in Chapter 3 in my examination of the architecture and decorations of the case study apartments.

### **Defining the Terms: Class, Status, and the Social Continuum**

As Roman social historians Peter Garnsey and Richard Saller rightly note, “the problem of analyzing persisting social inequalities has been presented in terms of the need to characterize or label the divisions in Roman society”.<sup>100</sup> Due to the complex and dynamic nature of Roman social relationships, it would be extremely difficult to categorize the Roman social structure according to a fixed classification system, such as that which Géza Alföldy represented graphically in the form of a pyramid (Fig. 5).<sup>101</sup> His pyramid sets the emperor at the top, below which are the members of the *ordines*, or social orders or ranks (i.e., the senators, equestrians, and decurions), who had to meet specific property and wealth requirements.<sup>102</sup> This group comprises Alföldy’s upper strata. The lower strata, which forms the bottom of the pyramid, includes the much larger group of freeborn citizens, freedpersons, and slaves and is further divided into the *plebs urbana* (city populace) and the *plebs rustica* (country populace). There is also a vaguely defined group of wealthy freedpersons and members of the *familia Caesaris* (imperial slaves and freedmen), who straddle the division between the upper and lower strata. The immutable hierarchy represented by Alföldy’s pyramid does not accurately account for

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<sup>100</sup> Garnsey and Saller 1987, 109.

<sup>101</sup> Alföldy 1985, 146, Fig. 1. On the description of the Roman social hierarchy as a pyramid, see also D’Ambra and Métraux 2006, xii. Clarke 2003, 5, critiques Alföldy’s strict division according to orders.

<sup>102</sup> For an overview of the three orders, see Alföldy 1985, 94-133. See below on the wealth and property requirements.

the constant shifting of social positions in the Roman world during the first two centuries of the Principate. It also does not acknowledge that institutions that existed in one part of the Empire at one time might not have been identical to those in a different area during the same period or at a different time. Indeed, a person could be a well-respected member of the community in a small provincial city but looked down upon in the capital of Rome.<sup>103</sup>

More frequently, scholars of Roman social history describe the divisions within the Roman social structure by using the terms “class” and “status”. While class and status are closely related, they are not identical forms of social categorization. Part of the difficulty in using these terms is determining not only how to define them but also how to apply them accurately to the ancient Roman context.

In very broad terms, “class,” as defined by ancient historian Moses Finley, involves the organization of people into groups according to economic, social, professional, and legal criteria.<sup>104</sup> Although the specific parameters for defining a given class within the larger system are open to debate, economic factors are perhaps the most frequently introduced. This occurs particularly when scholars apply the Marxist mode of analysis to the ancient world. Garnsey and Saller have argued the utility of applying certain aspects of Marxist theory to Roman society. In particular, they have emphasized how the relationship between the occupational, legal, and property systems could give rise to and preserve social inequalities in the Roman world.<sup>105</sup> However, they have noted

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<sup>103</sup> Purcell 1981, 126, notes that status depended largely on the observer and the place. Alföldy 1985, 127-28, cites a similar idea, in that decurions of smaller cities often paid a smaller amount for their *summa honoraria* (entry fee) than those in larger cities. This suggests that those in the less affluent cities were only wealthy by local standards.

<sup>104</sup> Finley 1999, 49.

<sup>105</sup> Garnsey and Saller 1987, 109-10. The ruling groups depend on their control over the means of production for their wealth and power and their authority over the legal system to enforce and safeguard the



that Marxist class categories, which pertain to nineteenth-century industrialist society and include groups such as the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, are not applicable to the context of ancient Rome. Finley has likewise suggested that Marxist class analysis is not entirely applicable to the ancient world because it would incorrectly group individuals of clearly different status levels into the same category.<sup>106</sup> In short, there is significant difficulty in identifying more specific terms to refer to class divisions in Roman society.

“Status” is undoubtedly as difficult to define as “class”, for it has psychological connotations as well.<sup>107</sup> Whereas a Roman’s legal status was defined in absolute terms (e.g., as a freeborn citizen, a freedperson, or a slave), his or her social status was defined relatively, as Garnsey has noted, being based on the context or situation.<sup>108</sup> More specifically, social status involves the estimation of an individual’s honor and prestige by those around him or her.<sup>109</sup> Within a peer group, factors such as birth, wealth, perceived moral standing, education, and power played a role in conferring social status. Additional considerations included economic class, occupation, gender, and legal status.<sup>110</sup> For example, a freeborn male who performed a job that was deemed socially valuable (e.g., doctor, legal adviser, or pedagogue) would have been of higher social status than a freeborn male who performed a less respectable job, such as a farmer. The components that conferred social status did not always match up and anomalies could occur: there were extremely wealthy individuals of humble freeborn or servile origin, just as there were destitute senators from esteemed families.

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distribution of property to their benefit. They also rely on their power over the division of labor, which gives individuals and groups access to control of property. In Roman society, these processes would have worked together in an exploitative way that created social and economic inequality.

<sup>106</sup> Finley 1999, 49.

<sup>107</sup> Finley 1999, 51.

<sup>108</sup> Garnsey 1970, 2 n. 1.

<sup>109</sup> Garnsey and Saller 1987, 118.

<sup>110</sup> Kampen 1981, 16.

In Rome as elsewhere, there was inevitable overlap between the categories of class and status. It can be argued that the division according to financial resources, such as the social orders, acted as a class distinction, while the division according to the power, prestige, and respectable birth of individuals who belonged or did not belong to these groups operated as a type of status distinction. While it is beyond the scope of this study to fully explore the relation between status and class, I maintain the distinction between the two categories, often indiscriminately elided in scholarship, to further my analysis of the social functions of domestic architecture and decoration.

It is with status, rather than class, that I am primarily concerned in this study. I focus on social status because it is defined relatively according to context (rather than according to legal standing) and is based on multiple factors. Admittedly, the dynamic evolution of the relationships between members of different groups makes it impossible to ever arrive at a definition of social status that comprehends all the subtle distinctions in the Roman social hierarchy. However, precise definitions of such distinctions are not necessary in order to examine issues related to social status.

In previous studies of Ostian apartments and domestic decorations, the terms that have been employed to describe the social standing of the residents of these apartments are loosely defined at best. This is understandable in part because no inscriptions discovered to date indicate precisely who occupied particular residences.<sup>111</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> As noted in Chapter 1, there are two instances in which an individual documented at Ostia might have been the owner or occupant of a residence. Falzone 2007, 80, discusses a graffito found in room 4 of the House of the Priestesses (House of Luceia Primitiva) that refers to a woman named Luceia Primitiva, who promises to thank the deity Fortuna Taurianensis once she and those who are dear to her are in good health. Luceia Primitiva was likely a family member of the owner and perhaps also a resident of this apartment. Falzone suggests that the epithet Taurianensis is a derivation of the *cognomen* Taurianus. There was a T. Statilio Tauriano at Ostia in the half of the second century AD, who was mentioned in a monumental inscription at the Serapeum. This individual seems in some way connected to a T. Statilio Tauro, who was one of the Ostian patrons of the *collegium* known as the *corpus lenunculariorum traiectus*

Consequently, the residents of many of the city's apartments have been classified in a variety of ways that are too often based on vague (and occasionally anachronistic) categories of class and/or status, as one finds in other studies of Roman social history. Ostians have been characterized as “middle class”,<sup>112</sup> “comfortably well off”,<sup>113</sup> “people of a fairly high social status”,<sup>114</sup> “lower ranges of the upper class”,<sup>115</sup> and even “middle-to-upper-middle-class”.<sup>116</sup> The variations in definition attest to the difficulty in identifying the inhabitants of these apartments with a particular social group or groups.

Because the social movement of people within Roman (and Ostian) society was fluid and constantly shifting, I argue that it makes more sense to consider an individual's position as moving along a continuum of possibilities, rather than as being set within an immutable hierarchy displaying clear and precise stratification.<sup>117</sup> The social continuum is by no means a new concept. The passage from Vitruvius cited above suggests that he correlated his view of the Roman social continuum with an equivalent continuum of housing.<sup>118</sup> The significance of this correlation between housing and social standing will be explored in greater depth in Chapter 3.

I draw especially on the work of Finley, who broadly explored the concept of the “spectrum” in relation to Greek and Roman society in his study of the ancient

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*Luculli* (a *collegium* associated with boats and transport) between AD 140 and 150 (*CIL* XIV, 246).

Falzone proposes that the Tauriano in question was the owner of the house in the Antonine period and was perhaps also the person who commissioned the paintings, which are dated to the early Antonine age. With regard to the House of Annius, Bakker proposes that the owner might have been Annius Serapiodorus, a prosperous producer of oil lamps at Ostia in the Severan period (<http://www.ostia-antica.org/regio3/14/14-4.htm>, accessed 22 March 2011). To my knowledge, Bakker's interpretation is not published elsewhere. See also Ceci 2001; 2003 on the lamps of Annius Serapiodorus.

<sup>112</sup> Meiggs 1973, 70, 73, 77, 437; Falzone 2001b, 337; Falzone and Pellegrino 2001a, 267; Liedtke 2001, 345.

<sup>113</sup> Crook 1983, 213.

<sup>114</sup> Bakker 1994, 52.

<sup>115</sup> Frier 1980, 17.

<sup>116</sup> Hermansen 1981, 45.

<sup>117</sup> Finley 1999, 68; Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 11.

<sup>118</sup> Vitr. *De arch.* 6.5.2-3.

economy.<sup>119</sup> He has linked the social spectrum to the concept of legal freedom: at one end of Finley's spectrum is the slave, who is treated as property, and at the other is the "perfectly free man, all of whose acts are freely and voluntarily performed".<sup>120</sup> Finley has argued that neither of these individuals actually ever existed, but that there was a whole spectrum of positions between the two extremes. These were based on whether a person possessed or lacked a combination of specific legal, political, and property rights.<sup>121</sup>

Considering status along a continuum has the advantage that one can suggest in general terms the social position of an individual or a group without pigeonholing them in an abstract system and rigidly defined system.<sup>122</sup> I agree with Finley's assessment that an individual's possession or lack of particular legal, political, and property rights affected his or her placement along this continuum, but other economic and social factors, such as wealth, power, and prestige (the last of which is the most difficult to identify) also had their effect. Because my primary concern is with how these factors affected a Roman's social rather than legal status, I refer to this continuum as a social continuum.<sup>123</sup>

The polar extremes of the social continuum that I work with in my study depart slightly from Finley's in that freedom is not the governing issue. Like Finley, I envision

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<sup>119</sup> To my knowledge, Ossowski was the first contemporary scholar to propose a "continuum of social statuses", which was in relation to modern discussions of class and classlessness (cf. Ossowski 1963, 96).

<sup>120</sup> Finley 1999, 67.

<sup>121</sup> Finley 1999, 67-68, on the idea that many individual slaves were undoubtedly treated as nothing more than a possession, but that no society treated the entirety of a slave population in such a way. Finley also argues that his spectrum should be viewed not as a clear mathematical continuum that is consistent throughout but rather as a "metaphorical, discontinuous spectrum, with gaps here, heavier concentrations there."

<sup>122</sup> I use the term "continuum" because it refers to a continuous sequence of components that cannot be clearly distinguished from one another, and it also suggests vertical movement. Thus, "continuum" seems more appropriate for describing social movement. I refrain from using the term "spectrum" because it implies clearer divisions between components and suggests horizontal movement.

<sup>123</sup> Garnsey 1970, 280.

a vast continuum that takes account of all members of Roman society, with slaves at the low end. To be sure, not all slaves were treated solely as the property of another and denied all rights, but such individuals were socially and legally inferior and were typically impoverished.<sup>124</sup> At the opposite end of the continuum was the emperor, who was the “first citizen” (*princeps*) of the empire. All of the remaining members of the Roman population, whose social, legal, and economic conditions varied considerably, fell somewhere along this continuum.

In this study, when I refer to one’s position along the social continuum, I do so in broad terms. In cases in which I compare documented individuals, I highlight the factors that suggest their positions relative to one another. I am aware that characterizations of individuals at the “upper end” or “lower end” of the continuum could be perceived as comparable to the binaries of upper class/lower class or high status/low status. However, I believe that the deliberate avoidance of terms that clearly designate an individual as belonging to a specific class or status helps shed light on the ever-shifting nature of social status, depending on the context and the individual’s personal circumstances.<sup>125</sup>

### **Written Evidence on “Status” in the Roman World**

It is an understatement to say that Roman society was highly stratified in nature. Legal, literary, and epigraphic sources from the late Republican and Imperial periods provide some insight into the sheer complexity of the Roman social hierarchy and

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<sup>124</sup> Bradley 1987; 1994.

<sup>125</sup> At present, I will not attempt to discern clear gradations of social status along this continuum. One could argue that the achievement of specific social and legal milestones would have been associated with a notable increase in one’s status (e.g., manumission, acceptance into an order, etc.).<sup>125</sup> However, any attempt to mark these achievements at specific points along the spectrum is in theory impossible because it would not take into account the numerous other factors that contribute to one’s status. The creation of such social milestones would be akin to creating classifying individuals according to different levels or categories of social status.

political system.<sup>126</sup> Still our picture of Roman social history remains far from complete: there is no evidence that a systematic analysis of Roman society was ever written in antiquity,<sup>127</sup> and the textual witnesses that survive are highly specific to particular contexts and individuals. Here I outline the main sources of written evidence on social and legal status in the Roman world and how they pertain to the Ostian historical context.

Numerous forms of Roman literary sources address issues related to social differentiation. These include prose fiction, satirical poetry, historical and biographical writing, and personal letters. Their sheer diversity prevents scholars from making sweeping statements based on a single genre.<sup>128</sup> And yet these texts have commonalities: most were written by male elites, who often viewed individuals of lower status with considerable contempt.<sup>129</sup> Consequently, we cannot take their views as representative of the whole of Roman society. Still the literary sources can be used to highlight specific issues, provided that one acknowledges the limitations of the material.

Juristic texts are especially useful for shedding light on legal distinctions in the domain of status.<sup>130</sup> Many relevant texts are found in the *Digest*, which was compiled in AD 530 by a commission appointed by the Emperor Justinian. This compendium brought together extracts of key texts in Roman jurisprudence, many of which were written in the

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<sup>126</sup> For an overview of Roman social history, see Gagé 1965; MacMullen 1974; Alföldy 1985; Garnsey and Saller 1987, 107-125. On social and legal privileges in the Principate, see Garnsey 1970. On status and patronage, see Saller 1982. Rostovtzeff 1957, provides an early synthesis of Roman social and economic history, which is today viewed as flawed because of its emphasis upon Marxist approaches to class. See Bowersock 1974, for brief biography of Rostovtzeff and a consideration of the significance of his text in the sphere of Roman social history.

<sup>127</sup> Garnsey and Saller 1987, 108.

<sup>128</sup> Wallace-Hadrill 1994, on literary and epigraphic evidence of Roman social status as it relates to the archaeological evidence of houses at Pompeii and Herculaneum.

<sup>129</sup> Garnsey and Saller 1987, 108.

<sup>130</sup> For an overview of Roman law, see Wolff 1951; Buckland 1963.

Antonine and Severan periods.<sup>131</sup> Thus, the legal information in the *Digest* is especially relevant to the discussion of Ostia in the second and early third centuries.<sup>132</sup> As I have already noted, legal status was absolutely defined, while social status was relatively defined according to the situation. Because these two considerations go hand in hand, it is necessary first to address the main distinctions in legal status in order to frame the larger discussion of social status at Ostia, which is informed in part by studying the inscriptions. Such legal distinctions would have pertained to the inhabitants at Ostia as well as individuals living in far-flung parts of the empire.

In the Roman legal sources, the jurists tended to express distinctions among segments of society according to different polarities.<sup>133</sup> In the Republic and the early Principate, one of the most important divisions in Roman society involved the distinction of citizenship.<sup>134</sup> The category of citizen (*civis Romanus*) was the largest in Roman society and was composed of both the freeborn (*ingenui*) and freedpersons (*libertini*).<sup>135</sup> Among the citizens there was great diversity – this group comprised individuals such as impoverished peasants living in rural areas, wealthy merchants residing in urban centers, and the emperor himself.<sup>136</sup> The category of non-citizen included slaves (*servi*) and foreign persons (*peregrini*).<sup>137</sup> There would have been similar diversity within this group, which could have included the lowly slave who was viewed as little more than a speaking

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<sup>131</sup> Garnsey 1970, 7.

<sup>132</sup> It is especially relevant to the study of urban tenancy, which will be addressed in Chapter 5.

<sup>133</sup> Alföldy 1985, 106, on Aelius Aristides, who discusses social divisions as reflecting polarities such as rich/poor, large/small, prestigious/nameless, and noble/ordinary (cf. Ael. Aristid. *Or.* 26. 39, 26.59).

<sup>134</sup> Garnsey and Saller 1987, 115.

<sup>135</sup> López 1995, 328-29, on further distinctions in the types of citizenship awarded to freedpersons. Not all freedpersons became full citizens - some belonged to the subordinate status group of the *Latini Iuniani*. Alföldy 1985, 140, notes that the *lex Iunia* (c. AD 19) bestowed only Latin rights, rather than full citizenship, upon persons who were freed by informal means or at an early age. On the Iunian (Junian) Latins, see López 1986-87, 125-36.

<sup>136</sup> Petersen 2006, 10.

<sup>137</sup> Alföldy 1985, 111-12.

tool (*instrumentum vocale*),<sup>138</sup> to the imperial slave who wielded great power, to the wealthy, influential foreign notable.

During the reign of Hadrian a further set of legal distinctions emerged: that between *honestiores* and *humiliores*.<sup>139</sup> As the significance of citizenship waned due to the increasing ease with which it was acquired during the Imperial period,<sup>140</sup> this legal distinction was developed to distinguish between the “better-off” and “lesser-off” segments of society. The *honestiores* were people of elite orders and privileged backgrounds, who had served the state or military or were involved in lawmaking and governing. These individuals also had substantial wealth, especially in land holdings.<sup>141</sup> This group included the members of the orders of the senators, equestrians, and decurions (town council members), as well as magistrates, judges, soldiers, and veterans.<sup>142</sup> Exceptional individuals who were typically omitted from the orders were also included in the category of *honestiores*, such as imperial freedmen and foreign non-citizens of notable birth and wealth (especially those from eastern, non-municipal towns).<sup>143</sup>

The *humiliores*, in contrast, formed the remainder of the population. This group comprised humble freeborn citizens, freedpersons, and slaves and was defined in large

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<sup>138</sup> Garnsey and Saller 1987, 116.

<sup>139</sup> Garnsey 1970. Under the dual-penalty system of the second century AD, there were clear distinctions in the types of punishment reserved for each group. While the *honestiores* benefited from privileges such as exemption from corporal punishment and lenient treatment in front of courts, *humiliores* (even those who were citizens) could suffer from cruel and unusual punishment normally reserved for slaves.

<sup>140</sup> Hopkins 1965, 112-13. Citizenship was granted to virtually all provincial non-citizens by Caracalla in AD 212.

<sup>141</sup> Garnsey 1970, 222-32; Kampen 1981, 23.

<sup>142</sup> Purcell 1983. The *apparitores*, who were the assistants of magistrates, formed a distinct group of non-elites. They served as scribes (*scribae*), messengers (*viatores*), lictors (*lictores*), and heralds (*praecones*). Freedmen and freeborn men could serve as *apparitores*, and the body to which they belonged was called a *decuria* (not to be confused with the *ordo decurionum*). Garnsey and Saller 1987, 116, argue that the *apparitores* should be associated with the elite stratum because of their close working relationship with magistrates.

<sup>143</sup> Kampen 1981, 23-24.



part by its need to work.<sup>144</sup> Although they were legally of the same status, there was a social hierarchy among the *humiliores*: slaves were at the greatest disadvantage because they were considered a form of property;<sup>145</sup> freedpersons were placed above slaves but did not experience freedom in a true sense because they were (in nearly all cases) still indebted to their former masters;<sup>146</sup> and humble freeborn individuals were ranked above most other *humiliores* but were still considered lower than the *honestiores* because of their lack of wealth and office.<sup>147</sup> It seems likely that the majority of the Ostian population, which largely comprised humble freeborn citizens, freedpersons, and slaves, would have been classified as *humiliores*. Thus, for *humiliores* at Ostia and elsewhere, upward social mobility would have had the added benefit of improved legal status.

### **Elites and Non-Elites**

The legal distinction between *honestiores* and *humiliores* can loosely be correlated with the polarity of elite and non-elite that is often introduced in contemporary scholarship. There is general scholarly consensus on how to identify members of the elite sphere, but it is far more difficult to clearly define the constituency of the non-elite sphere. The elites, who formed a very small minority of the Roman population throughout the Principate, were expected to meet four prerequisites in order to belong to the upper echelons of society: wealth, public appointments and other offices, social prestige, and membership in an order (*ordo*).<sup>148</sup> Membership in an order required

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<sup>144</sup> Kampen 1981, 25, notes that it was no interest to the jurists who worked and why, yet this was a primary concern to many Romans. On work and identity in the Roman world, see Joshel 1992. On the social significance of images of working women at Ostia, see Kampen 1981.

<sup>145</sup> Buckland 1963, 63

<sup>146</sup> Treggiari 1969, 47-68, 75-78, and 88-90; *Dig.* 38.1.31.

<sup>147</sup> Garnsey 1974, 159-60; Kampen 1981, 24; *Cic. Flac.* 52.

<sup>148</sup> Alföldy 1985, 106-7; Clarke 2003, 4.

wealth,<sup>149</sup> free birth (ideally from a well-established family line), and *dignitas* (social standing).<sup>150</sup> When an individual, from Ostia or elsewhere, is known to have belonged to an *ordo*, it is safe to use the term “elite” to describe him.<sup>151</sup> In order of increasing importance and exclusivity, the three orders were those of the decurions, equestrians, and senators.<sup>152</sup> The distinction of belonging to an order was critical to the social structure because it reinforced a variety of inequalities that prevented upward mobility among the non-elites.<sup>153</sup>

The senatorial order, the most prestigious of all three groups, comprised the Empire’s magistrates and generals.<sup>154</sup> This order was the smallest in terms of membership, numbering around six hundred members after the reforms of Augustus.<sup>155</sup> The equestrian order was much larger than the senatorial, with membership in the thousands. Consequently, it was characterized by greater diversity in the ranks and posts held by its members,<sup>156</sup> who ranged from local notables who governed the towns of the Empire to the few hundred distinguished equestrians who held offices in Rome.<sup>157</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> Alföldy 1985, 94-133. The property requirements were as follows: decurions (100,000 sesterces); equestrians (400,000 sesterces); senators (1,000,000 sesterces). Alföldy 1985, 128, indicates that the property requirement for decurions could be lower in communities of less importance. For example, in small African municipalities the wealth and property requirement was only 20,000 sesterces.

<sup>150</sup> Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 4.

<sup>151</sup> This is not to say that people who were not members of orders could not be viewed as elites. Female members of wealthy and prestigious families would undoubtedly have also been considered elite even if they could not hold office. On Roman women of the upper strata, see Kampen 1981, 29. On Roman women of different classes, see Pomeroy 1975. Likewise, privileged, non-citizen notables in the provinces might have been held in high esteem by their peers in Rome.

<sup>152</sup> For an overview of the three orders, see Alföldy 1985, 94-133.

<sup>153</sup> Meiggs 1973; 205-6; Garnsey and Saller 1987, 115.

<sup>154</sup> Hopkins 1965; D’Ambra and Métraux 2006, xi.

<sup>155</sup> Hopkins 1965. MacMullen 1974, 88-89, estimates that the senatorial order amounted to approximately two-thousandths of one percent of the Roman population.

<sup>156</sup> MacMullen 1974, 89, suggests that the equestrian rank would have formed about one tenth of one percent of the Roman population.

<sup>157</sup> Garnsey and Saller 1987, 114; D’Ambra and Métraux 2006, xii. By the late second century, a hierarchy of epithets was created in order to differentiate the office-holding members (the true elites of the order) from the less distinguished equestrians.

The order of the decurions was the lowest of the three and also the largest. Among this order, the requirements of wealth, distinguished birth, and elevated social standing were less rigidly enforced.

The requirement of high moral standards (*dignitas*) was often overlooked in practice, because of the difficulty in identifying this quality as well as the need to fill the seats with individuals who could afford to make financial contributions to the city. This occurred not just at Ostia but also in other Roman cities.<sup>158</sup> The third-century jurist Callistratus wrote that men of questionable honor were at times admitted into the order if the situation demanded it. His view was that traders, while they should not be prevented from joining the order, should only be allowed into its numbers when a shortage of honorable men necessitated it.<sup>159</sup>

The requirement of respectable birth was also flexible. Sons of freedmen were regularly admitted to the order because they were freeborn Roman citizens, unlike their fathers.<sup>160</sup> Consequently, wealth was often the key factor in the admittance of new members. This was largely because membership brought no pay but rather substantial obligations to contribute to the costs of public infrastructure, festivals, and services,<sup>161</sup> as well as financing the costs of running the town administration.<sup>162</sup> This use of private wealth to provide for public benefit, known as euergetism, developed in the Hellenistic world and flourished throughout the Roman Empire as affluent individuals provided for

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<sup>158</sup> Mouritsen 1997, on the epigraphic evidence for social mobility and changes in the membership of the order of the decurions at Pompeii, Ostia, Puteoli, and Beneventum.

<sup>159</sup> *Dig.* 50.2.12.

<sup>160</sup> Garnsey 1975, 169; López 1995, 328.

<sup>161</sup> Mouritsen 1997, 79.

<sup>162</sup> Duncan-Jones 1982, 147-55.

their communities in part to receive privileges and social recognition.<sup>163</sup> An individual would also be expected to perform civic duties, such as maintaining public order, managing the food supply, and overseeing the administration of finance and justice.<sup>164</sup> Membership in the order of the decurions brought a desirable level of social prestige from the local population.<sup>165</sup> As will be addressed in Chapter 4, new decurions, such as those described by Callistratus, entered the order at Ostia in especially greater numbers in the second century. It is my contention that these individuals would have required housing that reflected their newly attained status and social prominence.

It was stated in the Visellian law of AD 23 that freedmen were forbidden from holding office in an elite order because of the stain of their former servitude.<sup>166</sup> However, this restriction did not extend to the freeborn sons of freedmen.<sup>167</sup> Despite the restrictions of this law, there was one office that conferred something of the prestige of the elite orders and that allowed the freeman to reconcile his past with his social ambitions: the *seviri Augustales*, or the priesthood of the imperial cult.<sup>168</sup> Through their display of loyalty and deference to the emperor, freedmen had the means to obtain official standing within the city as well as a form of *dignitas*.<sup>169</sup> Those who joined the *seviri Augustales* throughout the Roman West were the wealthiest and foremost freedmen of their towns. Although this institution initially served a predominantly religious function, its importance in the social and economic spheres of Roman society grew over time, and its

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<sup>163</sup> On euergetism, benefaction, and public patronage in the cities of Roman Italy, see Lomas and Cornell 2003. For a discussion of euergetism in the Roman provinces and the emperor as *euergetes*, see also Veyne 1990.

<sup>164</sup> Alföldy 1985, 129.

<sup>165</sup> D'Ambra and Métraux 2006, xii n. 21 (cf. Stahl 1978).

<sup>166</sup> *Cod. Iust.* 9, 21. Buckland 1963, 87-90; Crook 1967, 50-55.

<sup>167</sup> Garnsey 1975, 169; López 1996, 328.

<sup>168</sup> Taylor 1914; Nock 1933-34; Duthoy 1970, 1974. Wilson 1935, 59, notes that freedmen could become honorary decurions by obtaining the title of *decurionatus ornamenta*.

<sup>169</sup> Nock 1933-34, 635.

organization came to resemble that of a *collegium*, a group associated with a particular craft, trade, or cult.<sup>170</sup>

Much like the members of the order of the decurions, the *seviri Augustales* had financial duties to their cities. They contributed a substantial portion of the money required for urban development, financed public construction work, erected cult statues, and provided for the welfare of the population by providing cash sums.<sup>171</sup> In return, they enjoyed numerous benefits, including specially designated seats at games and other public events, and they could appear in public with attendants and bearing symbols of authority, including *fasces* (rods) and distinguishing clothing.<sup>172</sup> Moreover, a select number of *seviri Augustales* were able to marry freeborn women (who were their social and legal superiors), rather than freedwomen within the *familia* of their patron's household. This suggests that these former slaves had reached exceptionally prominent positions in their cities.<sup>173</sup> At Ostia, there is substantial epigraphic evidence documenting the significant role played by the *seviri Augustales* in municipal life. Much like the decurions, it seems likely that these individuals would have been concerned with displaying their newly attained social prominence in both the public and private spheres.

In contrast, the “non-elites” of the Roman world are a much more diverse group. For many years, the term “non-elite” has been employed frequently as a sort of catch-all term that refers to “the other 98 percent of Roman society”;<sup>174</sup> that is, the humble freeborn citizens, freedpersons, and slaves, who would have been categorized as

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<sup>170</sup> Meiggs 1973, 217-24.

<sup>171</sup> D'Arms 1981, 127; Alföldy 1985, 131.

<sup>172</sup> Garnsey and Saller 1987, 121.

<sup>173</sup> D'Arms 1981, 134.

<sup>174</sup> Clarke 2003, 1.

*humiliores*.<sup>175</sup> While it is generally understood that the two were not entirely monolithic populations, the term “non-elite” has also received criticism for crudely grouping individuals from significantly different social and legal backgrounds, cultural competences, and finance levels.<sup>176</sup> Indeed, as John R. Clarke has rightly noted in his recent study of the art of “ordinary” Romans, it is not possible to define status and class, nor is it possible to apply terms such as “elite” and “non-elite” with a high degree of precision.<sup>177</sup> Nonetheless the term has some utility if the aim is to draw broad distinctions between the minority of the Roman population, who had attained clear positions of social prominence based on wealth, power, prestige, and respectable birth,<sup>178</sup> and the large majority who had not.

The non-elite population was characterized by the fact that its members typically worked for a living.<sup>179</sup> Slaves, freedpersons, and citizens not only pursued the same occupations, but they also lived in the same neighborhoods, worshipped together, and socialized and banqueted communally.<sup>180</sup> In rural areas, work centered on agricultural production.<sup>181</sup> In urban areas such as Ostia, occupations primarily involved crafts and industries, trade, and commerce.<sup>182</sup>

Among the Roman elites, laborers of various sorts, such as craftsmen, artisans, and technicians, could be viewed as almost less than human, certainly as second-class

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<sup>175</sup> Clarke 2003, 1.

<sup>176</sup> D’Ambra and Métraux 2006, ix.

<sup>177</sup> Clarke 2003, 5.

<sup>178</sup> Garnsey 1970, 280, indicates that “In law, as in other aspects of Roman society, the principal benefits and rewards were available to those groups most advantageously placed in the stratification system by reason of their greater property, power, and prestige.” See also Kampen 1981, 24, on the “wealth/power/prestige system”.

<sup>179</sup> Petersen 2006, 10.

<sup>180</sup> Kampen 1981, 31.

<sup>181</sup> Alföldy 1985, 142; Kolendo 1993. See also Andreau 1993, 186-87, on the fact that agricultural work was not viewed as a trade or urban profession, despite the difficult nature of agricultural work.

<sup>182</sup> Giardina 1993; Morel 1993. For a discussion of occupations at Ostia, see Chevallier 1986, 152-59.

citizens.<sup>183</sup> This is most clearly conveyed in the philosophical writings of Cicero, who distinguishes between economic activities that are viewed as either honorable (*liberalis*) or vulgar (*sordidus*) and the people who practice them.<sup>184</sup> According to Cicero,<sup>185</sup> land ownership and the cultivation of one's land for agricultural production were considered gentlemanly pursuits appropriate to individuals of elite standing. Indeed, to the Roman elites, selling what one produced on one's own was not a form of commerce.<sup>186</sup> In contrast, any activities involving trade, commerce, and manufacturing were generally the concerns of the non-noble masses and were thus viewed with significant contempt, despite the great profits that one might earn from them.<sup>187</sup> An elite individual might therefore employ slaves or freedmen as business representatives to conduct these types of transactions.<sup>188</sup>

Practitioners of more "intellectual" pursuits, such as doctors, pedagogues, philosophers, artists, actors, musicians, scribes, and legal advisers, were also considered laborers of non-elite status.<sup>189</sup> This is significant because such non-elite individuals often interacted with (or to be more specific, worked for) Roman elites, yet their associations

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<sup>183</sup> Morel 1993, 214.

<sup>184</sup> See especially Giardina 1993. See also Robertis 1946, 52-63; D'Arms 1981, 3-7; Kampen 1981, 114-15; Mouritsen 1997, 62.

<sup>185</sup> Cic. *De Off.* 1.150-151.

<sup>186</sup> Giardina 1993, 260.

<sup>187</sup> On elites and the cultivation of one's property, see especially D'Arms 1981, 3-19; Mouritsen 1997. The complete separation of trade and agriculture was likely only an ideal and not a realized behavior. Given the swift growth rate of trade and commerce during the Imperial period, it would be limiting to think that the fortunes of the elites were made and furthered solely through the ownership of land and minor agricultural production. Moreover, agricultural production and commercial wealth went hand in hand, despite the strict division between the two economic activities that is presented in the writings of the Roman elites. In fact, land holdings of elite families were not restricted to agricultural plots: many also possessed commercial and industrial land holdings, such as warehouses and brickyards. On the involvement of equestrians, senators, and the emperor in the brick-making industry, see Garnsey 1981, 370. On bricks used at Ostia produced by imperial factories, see DeLaine 2002. Finley 1973, 58, is quick to note that brick-making and tile-making could be considered an agricultural pursuit if one's land had good clay pits.

<sup>188</sup> D'Arms 1981, 142-44; Garnsey 1981.

<sup>189</sup> Alföldy 1985, 135.

with their superiors did not automatically elevate them to positions of social prominence. One must question whether and how individuals overcame the stigma of their occupations, and if so, what facilitated their upward mobility. The issue of social advancement among non-elites in Ostian society will be addressed in Chapter 4.

At Ostia, it seems likely that many of these occupations, particularly those associated with commerce, trade, and manufacturing, would have been viewed in a more positive light because were the primary means to financial success in the port city. At the nearby necropolis of Isola Sacra, men and women who worked in the commercial, artisanal, and professional spheres at Ostia and nearby Portus memorialized themselves with tomb buildings as well as inscriptions, paintings, and reliefs, many of which document their occupations and the prosperity that they had achieved through their work.<sup>190</sup> It is beyond the purview of this study to fully examine the material and written evidence from Isola Sacra of the occupations practiced at Ostia, but I acknowledge it here to emphasize that many Ostian “non-elites” were in fact proud to commemorate themselves as individuals whose prosperity was achieved through their work.

For those non-elite citizens at Ostia and elsewhere who were unable to gain membership in the orders, there was the option of joining the *collegia*, or guilds, of their cities. These organizations, which have also been referred to as “plebeian formations”,<sup>191</sup> were corporate entities that were controlled by the state or civic administration.<sup>192</sup> Their members shared a common interest such as an occupation, trade, or cult and banded

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<sup>190</sup> For a discussion of reliefs of working women at Isola Sacra, see Kampen 1981. Kampen also catalogues many of the images of working men in the appendix. See also D’Ambra 1988.

<sup>191</sup> López 1995, 344. See also Purcell 1983.

<sup>192</sup> Alföldy 1985, 134.



together to share in mutual benefits.<sup>193</sup> *Collegia* primarily represented the interests of employers, who were the main members, rather than the interests of their workers, as is the case in modern-day unions. Although they focused primarily on the business interests of their members, *collegia* were also social organizations with a religious association.<sup>194</sup> As will be addressed below, the members of the Ostian *collegia*, especially those who belonged to the wealthiest and most powerful organizations, were also able to gain a certain amount of social recognition.

### **Who Were the Ostians? The Epigraphic Evidence**

The most specific evidence of the social and legal backgrounds of the Ostian population is found in the epigraphic record.<sup>195</sup> Literary evidence on the Ostian population is negligible, but considerable information on status can be gleaned from the inscriptions. Currently, more than 4000 partial or complete inscriptions have been found on site. The Ostian inscriptions are diverse in function and include epitaphs, honorific and dedicatory inscriptions, the records of public acts of local officials, and the records of *collegia*.<sup>196</sup>

Inscriptions were important means of self-representation for individuals throughout the empire at varying social levels. The use of the written word suggested agency, while the inscription of the written word in stone conveyed its permanence. As Eve D’Ambra and Guy P. R. Métraux indicate, “Once a name and pronouncement was

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<sup>193</sup> Meiggs 1973, 311-33; Pavolini 1986, 129-37.

<sup>194</sup> Hermansen 1981, 60-61.

<sup>195</sup> *CIL (Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum)*, volume VI, on the inscriptions from the city of Rome, and volume XIV and volume XIV, *Supplementum* (henceforth abbreviated as *S*) on the inscriptions from Latium and the environs of Rome, including Ostia. On the *fasti Ostienses* (the records of religious and official events at Ostia), see Bargagli and Grosso 1997.

<sup>196</sup> Meiggs 1973, 3; Mouritsen 1997, 70.

set in stone, its intent and power would be permanent and its memory a matter of civic and personal presence".<sup>197</sup> The inscriptions from Ostia are important to my study because they not only provide evidence of the diverse demographics of the Ostian population, but they also attest to a certain degree of social mobility among the city's inhabitants.<sup>198</sup>

There are several limitations associated with inscriptions, not just those at Ostia but also those found elsewhere in the Empire. First, the study of the inscriptions is often hindered by the lack of status-explicit identifications,<sup>199</sup> particularly among freedmen, who rarely attest to their servile origins, especially from the late first century onward. Second, the samples that remain tend to be unrepresentative of the population as a whole. Dedications were typically set up for people who were at least of modest means and standing; the impoverished, for obvious reasons, were generally excluded.<sup>200</sup> Third, gaps in the record can make it difficult to identify and examine particular trends in Roman society.<sup>201</sup> For example, there is an absence of evidence about humble freeborn citizens, which is most often read as evidence that there was no need to acknowledge them

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<sup>197</sup> D'Ambra and Métraux 2006, x.

<sup>198</sup> On the ethnic demographics of Ostia, see Pavolini 1986; 33-36; Salomies 2002. On social mobility, see D'Arms 1981; Garnsey 1981; López 1995; Mouritsen 1997. See also Chapter 4 for a discussion of Ostian upward social mobility.

<sup>199</sup> Taylor 1961, 121-22, indicates that there is a notable decline in the use of *l.* or *lib.* to identify an individual as a freedperson in the second century, unless one's patron was the emperor. For example, among the Julii, the freedmen of the emperor's freedmen were often listed as *C. Iulius C. l.* or *Ti. Iulius Ti. l.* According to Taylor, the decline in the use of *libertus* in a freedman's name is a reflection of his desire not to declare his inferior status or his dependence on (and ongoing obligation to) his patron. See also Petersen 2006, 11.

<sup>200</sup> Garnsey and Saller 1987, 108.

<sup>201</sup> MacMullen 1982. Many of the inscriptions that remain, which especially include brief epitaphs and honorific career inscriptions, are not found equally throughout the Empire over space, time, and/or social group. Such inscriptions have been viewed as an artifact of Romanization, which did not affect all parts of the Empire equally. One epitaphs at Ostia, see Mouritsen 1997.

because of their numbers.<sup>202</sup> When such difficulties are not acknowledged, it can create biases in the conclusions drawn from the inscriptions.<sup>203</sup>

At Ostia, the inscriptions do not necessarily help solve particular problems, but they can provide indirect evidence about the potential occupants of the apartments. It is by bringing together epigraphic sources and the remains of the architecture and decor of the apartments that we can make headway in understanding the display of social status in the Ostian domestic sphere. It seems probable that prominent individuals documented in the epigraphic sources might have required apartments that accommodated the activities associated with their public responsibilities. To my knowledge, no scholar to date has considered the inscriptions and the material evidence of the domestic context side by side. In doing so, I hope to open up the question of who or, to be more specific, what types of individuals might have occupied the apartments under consideration.

Before beginning my survey of the relevant epigraphic evidence, I must clarify that I rely largely on secondary sources that address the content of the inscriptions. It is beyond the purview of this study to offer a full examination of the inscriptions that inform us about the Ostian population, but I cite specific inscriptions where relevant. I refer the reader to Meiggs for the most comprehensive consideration of the inscriptions to date.<sup>204</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> Taylor 1961, 131; Petersen 2006, 11.

<sup>203</sup> Meiggs 1973, 196-208, employs non-narrative historical evidence from inscriptions, which he compiles into a historical narrative of Ostia's second-century "social revolution." Although Meiggs is somewhat cautious in his approach, the story that he carefully weaves of the conflict of the old aristocracy and the "*nouveaux riches*" perpetuates currently held assumptions about the social mobility of those who were not traditionally of the upper classes. For a critique of Meiggs' approach and a comparison to the similar approach taken by Castrén (1975) to the epigraphic evidence from Pompeii, see Mouritsen 1997, 70-73.

<sup>204</sup> Meiggs 1973. For additional discussion of the inscriptions, see also Calza 1927; Bloch 1939; 1953b; Cèbeillac-Gervasoni 1971; Marinucci 1988; Lazzarini et al. 2002. For a discussion of the inscriptions documenting Ostian notables and freedmen, see especially D'Arms 1976; 1981, 121-148.

## Servile Origins or Ancestry

There was a population boom in second-century at Ostia that appears to have been largely the result of an influx of freedpersons and slaves.<sup>205</sup> It is generally thought that freedpersons were “at the very center of Ostian society” because of the large number of dedications and epitaphs they left, which dominate the city’s epigraphic record.<sup>206</sup> The fact of their former servitude would have created a barrier to their entry into the elite orders; thus, they needed to find other ways to climb the social ladder and augment their status.

To be sure, not all freed slaves actively sought out the opportunity to advertise their tainted backgrounds. Similar to freedmen located elsewhere in the Empire, few at Ostia made reference to their manumitted status in inscriptions with the designation *lib.* or *l.*<sup>207</sup> Other features in the inscriptions, however, have been identified that reveal an individual’s servile origins or descent from a former slave, notably nomenclature.

There is a special group of *cognomina* among inscriptions at Ostia and elsewhere that suggest servile origins. Upon his manumission, a slave would retain as his *cognomen* (the name of the family line within the larger clan) the name by which he was originally known, but he also took the *praenomen* (given name) and *nomen* (the name of

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<sup>205</sup> Meiggs 1973, 214. See also Garnsey 1975; D’Arms 1976; D’Arms 1981, 121-48; López 1996; Mouritsen 1997. On Ostian freedpersons and their art, see especially Kampen 1981; Laird 2002; Clarke 2003; Clarke 2006; D’Ambra 2006; Petersen 2006, 184-225. On the epitaphs of freedmen in Imperial Rome, see Taylor 1961.

<sup>206</sup> Meiggs 1973, 217. See also D’Arms 1981, 121. However, one should also take into account the possibility that the freedpersons at Ostia might appear to have greatly outnumbered freeborn citizens because the latter group less frequently attested to their *ingenui* status.

<sup>207</sup> Garnsey 1981, 359, n. 3. On the designation *libertinus*, see Keppie 1991, 19-20. A freedperson was denied the inheritance of a *nomen* as well as the use of a filiation, although he could assume the *praenomen* and *nomen* of his former master and could designate himself as a *libertinus*. While he possessed a *nomen*, which was the badge of Roman citizenship, he could not include a filiation, which ultimately marked him as a kinless person. Moreover, the designation *libertinus* marked one as having a “heritage” that was based solely on his relationship with his former master.

the clan) of his patron.<sup>208</sup> Names that implied the slave owner's expectations about the slave's personality, such as Felix (lucky), Fides (trust), and Hilarus (cheerful) were frequently employed.<sup>209</sup> Slave names based on the city or region of the individual's origin were also conferred.<sup>210</sup> Within several generations, however, "free"-sounding *cognomina* would often replace the servile-sounding names, presumably because the father did not wish to have his son and his descendants identifiable as being of servile descent. For example, at Ostia, C. Silius Felix, a freedman, gave his son C. Silius Nerva a more respectable Latin *cognomen*.<sup>211</sup>

Another clue to origins lies in the appearance of Greek or eastern names. Such names were commonly given to slaves, regardless of their origins.<sup>212</sup> Many of the individuals at Ostia with names of Greek or eastern origins might have been slaves who were brought to the port city through the slave trade. However, the frequency of Greek names among former slaves at Ostia could be attributed less to random name assignments than to the large number of immigrants who came to the city from the Greek East.<sup>213</sup> Still a Greek name could have been perceived as reflecting servile origins or descent, which could have been a possible barrier to one's social mobility.

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<sup>208</sup> Since the focus of my chapter is on freedmen (rather than freedwomen) and their upward mobility in Ostian society, I will generally refer to any hypothetical individual under discussion as a "freedman" rather than as a "freedperson".

<sup>209</sup> Kajanto 1965; Joshel 1992, 36.

<sup>210</sup> Joshel 1992, 36-7.

<sup>211</sup> Wilson 1935, 45; *CIL* XIV 415.

<sup>212</sup> Gordon 1924, 93-111; Toynbee 1934, xviii-xix; Joshel 1992, 36.

<sup>213</sup> Meiggs 1973, 215, 225; Pavolini 1986, 39; Lazzarini 1992-93, 140. Garnsey 1975, 173, suggests that a Greek or eastern *cognomen* used by a resident of a western city points either to one's descent from a slave, or to a freeborn immigrant (or a descendant of a freeborn immigrant) coming from the Eastern Mediterranean region. Just as freedmen would at times give their sons Latin names, individuals with eastern names (regardless of their legal status), were known to give their children Latin names, perhaps to assist with their social integration. López 1995, 335, notes that this practice suggests a strong prejudice against eastern names because of their association with slaves and freedpersons. George 2006, 19, suggests that a foreign-sounding name could imply servile descent, which would then have a negative impact on one's social acceptability.

A considerable percentage of the Ostian inscriptions document individuals with imperial *nomina*.<sup>214</sup> This group comprised both freeborn citizens and individuals of servile birth or descent. The second category was substantially larger in number and included not only imperial slaves and their descendants but also the slaves of Imperial slaves and their descendants.<sup>215</sup> It seems reasonable that there would have been imperial slaves at Ostia because of its proximity to and commercial connections with Rome. It is an open question whether an imperial slave (or the slave of an imperial slave) had better prospects for social mobility upon his manumission.

An additional clue to servile origin in the inscriptions of Ostia, which is unrelated to Roman naming conventions, is the designation of an individual as a member of the *seviri Augustales*. Membership in the priesthood of the imperial cult was generally restricted to freedmen.<sup>216</sup> The important role of the *seviri Augustales* in Ostian society and the great social significance of membership in this organization will be addressed in depth in Chapter 4.

While there is extensive epigraphic evidence of freedpersons at Ostia, it is important not to take quantity as an accurate measure of the make-up of society. The freedpersons who are attested in the epigraphic record were unusual for the fact that they had likely achieved wealth and influence beyond that of the average, humble freedperson.<sup>217</sup> Nonetheless the number is conspicuously large at Ostia, a port town with

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<sup>214</sup> López 1995, 336; Salomies 2002, 137.

<sup>215</sup> Garnsey 1975, 175.

<sup>216</sup> Meiggs 1973; 217-24; D'Arms 1981, 121-48; López 1995, 337. Except for certain areas, where men of non-servile origins were allowed to enter the *seviri Augustales*, the office was almost entirely restricted to freedmen.

<sup>217</sup> On commemoration because of municipal euergetism, see Laird 2006, esp. 32-33.

a diverse society in which it might have been socially acceptable to have announced one's social advancement.

### **Freeborn Non-Elites**

There is an absence of epigraphic evidence documenting humble freeborn citizens both at Ostia and throughout the Empire.<sup>218</sup> This is generally attributed to the fact that such individuals were common in society.<sup>219</sup> It seems reasonable that they formed a sizable segment of the Ostian non-elite population, especially as citizenship became increasingly common throughout the Empire.<sup>220</sup> Admittedly, not all freeborn citizens had sufficient wealth or prominence to have been commemorated. For those *ingenui* who were able to commission inscriptions, one can do no more than speculate on the variety of reasons why they might not have indicated their legal status. A few seem plausible.

It is possible that freeborn citizens did not feel that they needed to distinguish themselves as such in part because of their formal nomenclature, which included the use of a filiation or status indication and marked an individual as a legitimate member of society with a clear family of origin.<sup>221</sup> Although being freeborn was a considerable advantage in society, it might not have seemed relevant to call attention to one's freeborn status. Unlike a successful freedman, who might have wanted to highlight his newly attained freedom and prosperity, a well-to-do non-elite citizen, of the same legal status since birth, might not have had the same concern with emphasizing his legal status.

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<sup>218</sup> On citizenship, see Hopkins 1965, 112-13.

<sup>219</sup> Petersen 2006, 11. Taylor 1961, 131, notes that freeborn individuals who lived in Rome were not distinguished in inscriptions in any way. She also argues that they were generally shut out of various crafts and professions, which were largely practiced by freedpersons.

<sup>220</sup> On citizenship, see Hopkins 1965, 112-13.

<sup>221</sup> Joshel 1992, 35. A filiation identified an individual as an inferior in a relationship of authority, such as son, daughter, freedman, or slave, and the name of the authority figure (father, patron, master, etc.).

Kampen advances the intriguing possibility that freeborn citizens at Ostia, who often worked hand in hand with slaves and freedpersons, might have been less critical of their differences in legal standing and perhaps even viewed one another as equals.<sup>222</sup> If this were the case, one must consider whether the potential leveling of social distinctions between freeborn citizens and freedpersons of similar wealth and standing affected the ways in which the spaces of Ostian apartments were organized and decorated to accommodate specific social practices.

### **Ethnic Backgrounds**

It is clear from the inscriptions that there was substantial immigration to Ostia, especially from the late first century AD onward. This was no doubt due partly to the city's flourishing harbors and the opportunities that they offered.<sup>223</sup> Newcomers traveled to Ostia from cities on the Italic peninsula, such as Praeneste, Ravenna, Vercellae, Etruria, Campania, and Umbria, as well as from diverse regions of the Empire, including Egypt, Asia Minor, Syria, Spain, Gaul, and the Greek East.<sup>224</sup> The legal backgrounds of these individuals undoubtedly varied. While many immigrants were slaves, freedpersons, and their descendants,<sup>225</sup> others were freeborn citizens (*cives Romani*) or foreigners (*peregrini*) who lacked citizenship.<sup>226</sup> From the Flavian period onward, citizenship was increasingly extended into the farthest areas of the Empire, and by the reign of Caracalla, citizenship was awarded to all free inhabitants of the Roman Empire through the

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<sup>222</sup> Kampen 1981, 27 n. 25, cites inscriptions that describe groups and organizations of mixed membership, such as the dedicant cattle merchants (*CIL* I, 1450), and a *collegium* of net makers (*CIL* I, 1618).

<sup>223</sup> Wilson 1935, 68; Salomies 2002, 150. However, individuals were likely moving to the city as early as the Republican period, when it was already a major port of Rome.

<sup>224</sup> Meiggs 1973, 214-16; Salomies 2002, 150-52. See also Pavolini 1986, 36-38; Valjus 1999, 38-39. On the Greeks of Ostia, see Lazzarini, 1992-93, 137-41.

<sup>225</sup> Meiggs 1973, 214.

<sup>226</sup> Alföldy 1985, 112.



*constitutio Antoniniana*.<sup>227</sup> It is unclear what percentage of foreigners residing at Ostia were non-citizens during the city's period of prosperity. However, those who had obtained citizenship and who had also achieved substantial wealth and power would likely have had greater opportunities for social advancement, particularly by joining one of the elite orders, such as that of the decurions.

The ethnic backgrounds of individuals can be discerned in the epigraphic evidence in two ways: 1) through direct references to the individual's homeland; and 2) through the study of *nomina* that suggest a probable ethnic or regional origin. First, individuals often attested to their city or region of origin in inscriptions. For example, M. Caesius Maximus indicates that he is from Aeminium in Lusitania,<sup>228</sup> C. Annaeus states that he came from the region of the Pictones in Aquitania,<sup>229</sup> and Aphrodisius, son of Arpocraton, indicates that he hailed from Alexandria.<sup>230</sup> A considerable number of residents appear to have had their roots in the province of Africa, which comes as no surprise given its ongoing trade relationship with Ostia and its close proximity to Italy.<sup>231</sup>

Second, the study of nomenclature has also shed light on the possible origins of many of the city's residents. When individuals do not state their place of origin or that of their ancestors, it is sometimes possible to determine a city or at least region of origin based on their *nomina*. In a recent study of Ostian onomastics, Otto Salomies presents numerous examples of *nomina* documented at Ostia that can be connected with specific

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<sup>227</sup> Alföldy 1985, 104; D'Ambra and Métraux 2006, xiii. Citizenship was granted to all free residents of the empire in AD 212.

<sup>228</sup> Meiggs 1973, 215; *CIL* XIV, S 4822.

<sup>229</sup> Meiggs 1973, 215; *CIL* XIV, 479.

<sup>230</sup> Meiggs 1973, 215; *CIL* XIV, 478.

<sup>231</sup> Meiggs 1973, 214-16. On North African nomenclature at Ostia, see Cèbeillac-Gervasoni 1996; Salomies 2002, 152-53. On the strong presence of North African shippers at Ostia, see DeLaine 2004, 169-71.

cities or regions.<sup>232</sup> There are multiple cases in which a *nomen* found at Ostia is mentioned only in other cities or regions of Italy. For example, the name Crassius appears only in Ostia, Rome, and around Pompeii and Herculaneum, which might point to a Campanian origin.<sup>233</sup>

Likewise, nomenclature reflecting an African origin or background is prevalent at Ostia and can be identified in part because of its originality. For example, the *praenomen/nomen* combination of Q. Aurelius is known to have been associated with individuals of African origin or ancestry.<sup>234</sup> The voting tribe (*tribus*) Quirina,<sup>235</sup> which is also associated with immigrants from Africa,<sup>236</sup> is frequently attested at Ostia and is more commonly cited in the inscriptions than any other non-Ostian tribe.<sup>237</sup> One must also consider the possibility that the strong presence of persons from North Africa at Ostia might have provided individuals from this region (especially those who were new to the city) with greater opportunities for work and social engagement with their fellow North Africans.<sup>238</sup>

Names that suggest an eastern background tend to be more difficult to read as indicators of ethnic origins. Greek names are generally more common than Latin names

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<sup>232</sup> Salomies 2002.

<sup>233</sup> Salomies 2002, 151.

<sup>234</sup> Salomies 2002, 152.

<sup>235</sup> Keppie 19, 1991. In the Roman world, citizens were assigned to one of what eventually totaled thirty-five tribes, which was associated with a voting district. Towns that had been subsumed into the Empire were each placed in one of the tribes. The tribe to which a citizen belonged formed part of his name for legal purposes, not unlike a census. See also Taylor 1960.

<sup>236</sup> López 1995, 341; Cèbeillac-Gervasoni 1996; Salomies 2002, 150.

<sup>237</sup> Meiggs 1973, 215; Pavolini 1986, 38; Cèbeillac-Gervasoni 1996; Salomies 2002, 150.

<sup>238</sup> Although this is purely speculative, it seems reasonable that foreigners living at Ostia were willing to assist fellow expatriates with work opportunities and other chances at social advancement. Indeed, groups such as the North African shippers, whose commercial success was publicly noted in part through the mosaics in the Square of the Corporations (Piazzale delle Corporazioni), would likely have held a certain degree of power in their industry and perhaps assisted individuals from their home region. On the Square of Corporations, see Pohl 1978.

among the freedpersons at Ostia.<sup>239</sup> As previously noted, this preponderance of Greek names could be attributed partly to the fact that slave owners and dealers often assigned Greek names to slaves, regardless of their ethnic origins,<sup>240</sup> although it is more likely due to the large number of immigrants at Ostia from the Greek East.<sup>241</sup> While the epigraphic record of Ostia presents many ambiguous cases of nomenclature, the examples that can be read with some accuracy present a picture of Ostia as a diverse and cosmopolitan city with a considerable immigrant population.<sup>242</sup>

### **Occupations and the *Collegia***

As elsewhere in the Empire, work was an essential component of life at Ostia for slaves, freedpersons, and humble freeborn citizens.<sup>243</sup> A large percentage of Ostia's working population belonged to the city's *collegia*. Inscriptions provide information on about sixty of the city's associations, although there were likely even greater numbers of them during the Imperial period.<sup>244</sup> *Collegia* appear to have represented nearly every facet of Ostian life and were especially focused on activities associated with the

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<sup>239</sup> Lazzarini 1992-93, 140.

<sup>240</sup> Gordon 1924, 93-111; Toynbee 1934, xviii-xix; Meiggs 1973, 225; Joshel 1992, 36. It is possible that Greek names (rather than Latin names) were assigned to slaves in order to convey a sense of exoticism about their origins.

<sup>241</sup> Meiggs 1973, 215, 225; Pavolini 1986, 39; Lazzarini 1992-93, 140. This is also supported by Garnsey 1975, 173. According to Garnsey, a Greek or "oriental" *cognomen* used by a resident of a western city points to either one's descent from a slave, or to a freeborn immigrant (or a descendant of a freeborn immigrant) coming from the Eastern Mediterranean region.

<sup>242</sup> Salomies 2002, 150.

<sup>243</sup> On the work of craftsmen and tradesmen in the Roman world, see Brewster 1917; Maxey 1938; Loane 1938; Robertis 1946; Floriani Squarciapino 1947; Calabi-Limentani 1958; Burford 1972; Morel 1993. On women's work at Ostia, see Kampen 1981. See also D'Ambra 1988, on reliefs from Ostia that depict work, see D'Ambra 1988. While these sources provide considerable information on the topic, a study that focuses pointedly on the work of both men and women at Ostia is long overdue.

<sup>244</sup> Chevallier 1986, 153-57. Hermansen 1981, 56-89, acknowledges about forty of the *collegia*. See also Pavolini 1986, 129-39. For an early consideration of Roman *collegia*, see Waltzing 1895-1900, esp. vol. II (1896).

production of goods within the city for use by locals and transients passing through the harbor as well as the importation of goods from the various provinces to Rome.

Hermansen categorizes the *collegia* of Ostia into six main groups: grain shipping and related services, commerce, transport, trades, civil services, and religious cults.<sup>245</sup> Nearly half of the Ostian *collegia* were associated in some way with either navigation or the grain trade, such as the ship owners, the operators and caretakers of various types of ships, the grain measurers, and the weight controllers. Besides grain, much of the city's commerce centered on the trade of wine and oil.<sup>246</sup> Numerous *collegia* were associated with trades, such as those of the shipbuilders, fullers, bakers, and rope makers.<sup>247</sup> The association of builders or carpenters (*fabri tignuarii*) was the richest and one of the most numerous of all of the Ostian *collegia*, with a total of 352 members at its peak.<sup>248</sup> A painters' *collegium*, the *collegae pingentes*, is documented on a tombstone.<sup>249</sup> This inscription provides the only documentation of painters working at Ostia, other than the paintings themselves.<sup>250</sup> Inscriptions documenting many of the *collegia* that would have been associated with small-scale craftsmen and other workers, such as butchers, barbers, and cobblers, are missing. However, it is thought that the practitioners of such occupations would also have belonged to the *collegia* associated with these trades.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> Hermansen 1981, 56-59. See also pp. 239-41 for English translations of the Latin names of the different *collegia* mentioned in inscriptions. Chevallier 1986, 158-59, lists additional types of work that are documented in the inscriptions and in sculptural reliefs but that are not associated with the *collegia*. These occupations include treasurer (*arcarius*; *CIL* XIV 255); seller of purple fabric (*purpurarius*; *CIL* XIV 473); metalsmith or goldsmith (*uasclarius*; *CIL* XIV 467); rhetoric instructor (*rhetor*; *CIL* XIV 4201); and bursar (*ucilicus*; *CIL* XIV 255).

<sup>246</sup> Hermansen 1981, 57, 59, 239-41. *Olearii*: *CIL* XIV 409; *Negotiantes fori vinarii*: *CIL* XIV 403.

<sup>247</sup> Hermansen 1981, 58-59, 239-41. *Fabri navales*: *CIL* XIV 168, 169, 256; *Fullones*: *CIL* XIV 409, *S* 4573; *Pistores*: *CIL* XIV 101, 374; *Restiones*: *CIL* XIV S4549, 1.

<sup>248</sup> *CIL* XIV 5345; *CIL* XIV, *S* 4569; D'Arms 1981, 128-29 n. 28.

<sup>249</sup> *CIL* XIV, *S* 4699.

<sup>250</sup> Meiggs 1973, 312.

<sup>251</sup> Hermansen 1981, 56-59. However, reliefs found in the tombs at Isola Sacra often document individuals performing these occupations. See esp. Calza 1940; Kampen 1981; D'Ambra 2006.

The *collegia* formed a notable presence within the urban fabric of the city.<sup>252</sup> Some twenty buildings in Ostia have been identified as headquarters of different *collegia* – a fraction of the nearly sixty organizations that have been identified thus far.<sup>253</sup> These buildings would have been the sites of a variety of meetings and events.<sup>254</sup> Stöger has observed that the *collegium* buildings were not clustered in a particular part of the city; rather, their locations appear to have been dictated in part by the available urban space and also the *collegium*'s financial resources.<sup>255</sup> However, the preferred location appears to have been along the main thoroughfares and near the forum at the city center, which suggests that the members of a particular *collegium* were attempting to create important associations between their organization and major public buildings.<sup>256</sup> Many *collegia* also erected and maintained temples that likely served as the setting for religious ceremonies, banquets, and assemblies.<sup>257</sup> The physical presence of a *collegium* in a central location within the urban landscape of Ostia thus called attention to its power and financial standing as well as that of its members.

The *collegia* elected patrons of their organizations, who were not required to be members but who were expected to be considerably affluent and influential in the local society. Indeed, a patron could be the member of one *collegium* and also serve as the patron of one or more associations. Moreover, patronage of one or more *collegia* was not

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<sup>252</sup> Stöger 2009.

<sup>253</sup> Stöger 2009, 2.

<sup>254</sup> Meiggs 1973, 327-30. Hermansen 1981, 61-87, on the seats of identified and unidentified *collegia*. On the *collegia* of Ostia and their associated seats, see Zevi 2008. See also Pavolini 1986, 137-39.

<sup>255</sup> Stöger 2009, 9.

<sup>256</sup> Bollman 1998, 195-99.

<sup>257</sup> Hermansen 1981, 60.

restricted to the residents of Ostia. On occasion, senators and equestrians from Rome served as patrons, although this seems to have been a rare occurrence.<sup>258</sup>

The motivation behind a patron's munificence was not entirely selfless: often such individuals supported a particular organization in an effort to safeguard their own commercial, trade, and manufacturing interests, which were likely varied in a city as prosperous as that of Ostia.<sup>259</sup> For example, P. Aufidius Fortis was the president of the corn merchants, but he also served as the patron of the grain measurers.<sup>260</sup> Likewise, Cn. Sentius Felix was a member of the *collegium* of Adriatic shippers and also served as the patron of the *collegia* of the wine merchants, the fishermen, and the bankers, among others.<sup>261</sup> It is likely that the poor quality of Ostia's hinterland, which was not easily cultivatable,<sup>262</sup> might have encouraged affluent members of the *collegia*, local notables, and elites from Rome to invest some of their wealth in the organizations of profitable trades and industries rather than in the purchase of land. Thus, one's patronage of a *collegium* not only emphasized one's wealth but also highlighted a desire to give back and benefit others through one's financial resources. One could interpret the patronage of a specific *collegium* as an act of euergetism because it also brought the patron a certain level of social recognition. While this was not entirely a selfless practice because it helped protect the patron's economic interests, it likely helped project a positive public image of the patron to the *collegium* and the city.

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<sup>258</sup> Wilson 1935, 63; Meiggs 1973, 316.

<sup>259</sup> López 1995, 342.

<sup>260</sup> Meiggs 1973, 316 n. 3; *CIL* XIV 4144. See also Pavolini 1986, 131.

<sup>261</sup> Meiggs 1973, 316, n. 5; *CIL* XIV 409.

<sup>262</sup> Wilson 1935, 47, indicates that Ostia was known during antiquity for its scallions, mulberries, and melons. Meiggs 1973, 265-66, conjectures that fruits and vegetables would have been produced at Ostia for the local market and for that of Rome, although he is doubtful that the sale of produce would have encouraged the growth of large-scale estates in the vicinity of Ostia.

Much like the elite orders of the senators, equestrians, and decurions, the *collegia* were organized hierarchically.<sup>263</sup> Offices varied in terms of duration and responsibilities, and officers were elected by the non-office-holding members, who were known as *plebs* in the *collegia* records. Individuals could ascend through the posts of their *collegium* to positions of greater authority in a manner not unlike that experienced by members of the elite orders.<sup>264</sup>

Unlike the elite orders, which permitted advancement only to people of freeborn status, the *collegia* permitted both freedmen and freeborn individuals to hold office, provided that they could afford to cover the costs of the various benefactions that were required of them. Even non-office-holding members of free birth or servile descent could achieve a certain degree of recognition by attaining seniority within their organization, which is indicated by the order of members listed in the guild rolls.<sup>265</sup> In fact, wealthy and powerful freedmen who belonged to one or more *collegia* and also to the *seviri Augustales* often held the highest offices within the former.<sup>266</sup> Thus, Ostia's *collegia* provided many of the city's non-elites, regardless of background, with an opportunity to gain a certain degree of power, prestige, and status, not unlike the way that the decurions and *seviri Augustales* could achieve greater social prominence through membership in their respective organizations. I return to this latter topic in Chapter 4.

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<sup>263</sup> Meiggs 1973, 314-16; Chevallyer 1986, 160; Pavolini 1986, 132. The *collegium* of the builders (*fabri tignuarii*), were unusual in that they were a quasi-military organization, which might have been organized similarly to the *collegium* of the builders at Rome. See Meiggs 1973, 319-21.

<sup>264</sup> Alföldy 1985, 134.

<sup>265</sup> Meiggs 1973, 317-18. According to Meiggs, no effort is made to distinguish between freeborn and freedmen in the *collegium* rolls.

<sup>266</sup> D'Arms 1981, 133. See also Pavolini 1986, 132-33 on the difficulties associated with belonging to more than one *collegium*.

## **Applying the Social Continuum to the Ostian Context**

After highlighting the social, legal, and ethnic diversity of the Ostian population, I conclude this chapter by returning to the topic of the social continuum that I outlined at its outset. In order to demonstrate how I describe the placement of individuals along the social continuum, I consider here three examples of hypothetical Ostians who I argue would have been of comparable social status.

We might imagine first the prosperous freedman, who had earned great prestige by joining the *seviri Augustales*. Because of his servile origins, he was prohibited by law from entering the elite orders. However, his social aspirations were not limited, and he could employ his citizenship, freedom, and wealth earned through his work to construct his social identity and elevate his social status. Second, there might be an affluent trader of humble but freeborn origins, who had been received into the local council as a decurion. Because he held a seat in an order, he would be viewed as an elite citizen, albeit one at the lowest end of the elite ranks. However, he might have been viewed with some disdain by local elites from more respectable backgrounds because of his undistinguished origins and also because his wealth was likely the deciding factor in his admittance. On the other hand, the new decurion could employ his wealth as well as the prestige that came with his new office to cultivate an appearance of higher social status. The third hypothetical individual would have been respected for his superior bloodline, upbringing, and affluence, yet he was not a Roman citizen.<sup>267</sup> Thus, he would not have been able to gain admittance to an elite order. However, he could increase his social

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<sup>267</sup> This is provided that this hypothetical citizen lived before AD 212, when citizenship was granted to practically all provincial non-citizens.



prominence through other means, such as by serving as a patron or an office-holder in a *collegium*.

To be sure, the prosperous freedman, the new decurion, and the wealthy foreign notable belonged to different legal categories (the first was a *libertinus*, the second was an *ingenuus*, and the third was a *peregrinus*). However, they all could attain a somewhat elevated position along the social continuum owing to their access to wealth, power, and prestige. This is not to say that these three hypothetical Ostians attained an equivalent position on the social continuum (not that it would even be possible to determine so in the first place, given the fluid boundaries of social status). Rather, what I argue here is that it was possible for people of diverse social, legal, and ethnic backgrounds to aspire to and attain positions closer to the upper end of the social continuum, despite the varied social and legal barriers that potentially stood in their way.

The concept of the continuum is not only pertinent to the study of social status – it is also relevant to the examination of apartments and their accompanying decorations. Just as we see a continuum of status among the Ostian population, we also see a continuum of residences. It is these apartments, which vary in size, plan, and decoration, to which I turn in the next chapter.

## CHAPTER 3

### Primary Spaces and Painted Decorations in Ostian Apartments

In the previous chapter, I cited a passage from Vitruvius 6.5 to highlight the close relationship between social status and one's place of residence in Roman society. This passage is significant not only for its basic description of the Roman social continuum but also for its emphasis on the features of residences that were suitable for individuals of varying social status. For example, "persons of common fortune" have no need for lavish reception spaces because they do not receive clients of their own.<sup>268</sup> In contrast, elite public servants, such as orators and magistrates, require residences with magnificent rooms comparable to the halls of public buildings because their occupants fulfilled many of their public responsibilities in the home.<sup>269</sup> Cicero provides further insight into the relationship between a person's house and his or her position in society. As Cicero states, "a man's dignity may be enhanced by the house he lives in, but not wholly secured by it; the owner should bring honor to his house, not the house to its owner".<sup>270</sup> Thus, an individual should occupy a residence with spaces that are appropriate to his or her station in life and should not (at least in theory) reside in a home that is grander and larger than his or her status necessitates.

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<sup>268</sup> Vitr. *De arch.* 6.5.1.

<sup>269</sup> Vitr. *De arch.* 6.5.2.

<sup>270</sup> Cic. *De Off.* 1.138-139.

This preoccupation with appropriateness is rooted in decorum (*decor*), a moral and aesthetic principle that was applicable to nearly all aspects of public and domestic life, from literature and oratory to the visual arts and architecture.<sup>271</sup> As Perry notes, decorum was characterized by the close relationship between a work and its context.<sup>272</sup> This relationship was often reciprocal: just as a specific setting could give meaning to a work, the type, style, or subject of the work could enhance and alter the message of its display context. An inappropriately selected artwork would not convey the intended meaning and would thus indicate that the patron lacked *auctoritas*, or the knowledge of socially accepted norms.<sup>273</sup> For example, Cicero criticizes his friend Atticus' inappropriate selection of sculptures of maenads to adorn the Academy that formed part of his new villa at Tusculum. To Cicero, the subject matter of the sculptures would not complement the philosophical discussions that he anticipated taking place in this setting.<sup>274</sup>

Decorum played a significant role in notions of the proper arrangement and adornment of domestic space. The decorations and architecture of a residence were not only designed to project and maintain an idealized image of the resident and his personal identity, but they were also expected to provide a suitable backdrop for the activities associated with his public persona.<sup>275</sup> To this end, visually differentiated spaces were designed to articulate for visitors which spaces of the house they were permitted to enter when interacting with the occupant. Decorations, especially permanent artworks such as

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<sup>271</sup> For a recent treatment of decorum that incorporates substantial literary evidence, see Perry 2005.

<sup>272</sup> Perry 2005, 76.

<sup>273</sup> Perry 2005, 32-35.

<sup>274</sup> Cic. *Att.* 1.6.2. On Cicero's letters to Atticus and their reflection of his concern with decorum, see Marvin 1989.

<sup>275</sup> On the reciprocal relationship between domestic decorations and architecture and their role in constructing a contrived image of the occupant, see especially Hales 2003, 1-8. On the practice of social rituals in the Roman house, see especially Clarke 1991a.

wall and ceiling paintings and floor mosaics, provided the clearest visual indicator of a room's significance.<sup>276</sup> Portable objects, such as sculptures (especially small-scale statuettes) and other furnishings, also suggested the importance of a space.<sup>277</sup> Similarly, the location and architectural features of the room as well as the layout of the residence as a whole helped to distinguish the most important public spaces from the more private spaces that were the domain of the resident and his familia.<sup>278</sup>

As I noted in Chapter 1, where archaeological evidence indicates that the decorations and architecture of a Roman house were used in order to configure its spaces to accommodate social functions, it is possible to say that there is a spatial hierarchy. That is, there is an apparent distinction in social function between spaces of primary social importance (primary spaces), which were used mainly for receiving and hosting guests, and spaces of secondary social importance (secondary spaces), such as corridors and service quarters.<sup>279</sup> It follows then that the costliest and most extravagant decorations were typically to be seen in the primary spaces rather than in the secondary spaces.<sup>280</sup> There does not appear to have been a special Latin expression to describe this hierarchical arrangement of space. However, modern scholars generally agree that

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<sup>276</sup> Scagliarini Corlàita 1974-76; Barbet 1985; Clarke 1979; 1991a; Falzone 2001; Liedtke 2001.

<sup>277</sup> For a consideration and critique of previous discussions of the role of decorum in guiding patrons' selection of sculptures for private display, see Bartman 1991. On statuettes in the Roman domestic context, see Bartman 1992; Stirling 2005.

<sup>278</sup> On the public-private and grand-humble axes of differentiation, see Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 17-37.

<sup>279</sup> My use of the terms "primary space" and "secondary space" corresponds to some extent with Clarke's categories of "static" and "dynamic" spaces (cf. Clarke 1991a, 16-17). While primary spaces are typically static spaces because they provided the setting for lengthy receptions and other social encounters, secondary spaces are not always dynamic spaces. For example, a corridor is a secondary space and also a dynamic space, but a small room that might have functioned on occasion as a bedroom is also a secondary space, but typically such spaces would be static as well.

<sup>280</sup> Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 149-74, on the relationship between decorations, wealth, and luxury in Pompeian houses.

decorations and architecture were employed in the structuring of activities of greater or lesser social importance in the Roman house.<sup>281</sup>

In the Ostian context, the presence of one or more primary spaces in a residence can be taken as a sign of elevated social status. If the resident held a prominent position in Ostian society, he would likely have had various public responsibilities, some of which he would have fulfilled in the domestic setting. To this end, he would have required appropriately adorned spaces to carry out these activities. It seems logical that if we wish to discover something about the relationship between housing and social status at Ostia, we should first look to the primary spaces of the apartments.<sup>282</sup> How do we identify primary spaces in Roman houses, or more specifically, in Ostian apartments? Moreover, how do we interpret the presence of one or more such spaces in different apartments?

In this chapter, I examine the primary spaces of numerous Ostian apartments of varying size and plan. I do so in an effort to consider what the size and splendor of a residence might be able to tell us about the residents' social standing.<sup>283</sup> I begin by outlining a set of criteria that I have developed for identifying the primary spaces in Ostian apartments. These criteria fall into three broad categories: 1) decorations, 2) location of the room and layout of the apartment, and 3) architectural features. I then examine the decorations and architecture of the apartments to determine if they exhibit features that fulfill these criteria. Several earlier studies, most notably that of Clarke,<sup>284</sup>

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<sup>281</sup> Spatial hierarchies feature prominently in the following studies of Roman domestic art: Scagliarini Corlàita 1974-76; Barbet 1985; Clarke 1979; 1991a; Watts 1987; Liedtke 1995; 2001; 2003; Falzone 2001; 2004.

<sup>282</sup> Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 5-6.

<sup>283</sup> Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 84-87, finds that the correlation between house size and social standing is generally supported by the material evidence of houses of a range of sizes at Pompeii and Herculaneum.

<sup>284</sup> Clarke 1991a. On the spatial hierarchies and Ostian painted decorations, see also Falzone 2001; 2004; Liedtke 1995; 2001; 2003; Oome 2007. However, Falzone pays more attention to the connection between

address the ways in which Ostian domestic decorations and architecture were employed in the social configuration of space. However, no scholar to date has considered a broad range of apartments of varying size and plan such as that which I examine here in an effort to identify their primary spaces.

I also consider the significance of rooms that appear to have been secondary spaces but that fulfill one or more of my criteria for identifying primary spaces (henceforth referred to as primary space criteria). I refer to this type of space as an alternative primary space. I argue that these rooms were deliberately designed to be multifunctional in order to fulfill both primary and secondary room functions, depending on the occasion. I do not discuss the decorations and architectural features of the secondary spaces of Ostian residences in great detail because they are less relevant to my examination of the relationship between spatial hierarchies, apartment size, and social status. I refer the reader to Liedtke's 2003 monograph on the painted decorations of secondary spaces for the most recent treatment of the topic.<sup>285</sup>

I have chosen to focus my investigation of primary spaces on twenty-four Ostian apartments that were constructed during the second century AD and inhabited as private residences through at least the early third century AD.<sup>286</sup> The ground floor areas of the apartments range from approximately 65-750 m<sup>2</sup>. I have selected this sample of

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the decorations and the phases in which they were installed in each apartment than to the relationship between the decorations and the function of a room as a primary space.

<sup>285</sup> Liedtke 2003.

<sup>286</sup> On the topography of the site, see Calza et al. 1953. On the dates of specific apartments, see the following: Felletti Maj 1961 (House of the Painted Vaults and House of the Yellow Walls); Felletti Maj and Moreno 1967 (House of the Muses); Gasparri 1970 (Inn of the Peacock); DeLaine 1995 (House of Jupiter and Ganymede, House of the Infant Bacchus, and House of the Paintings); Cervi 1999 and Gering 2002 (Garden Houses complex, apartments III, IX, 13-20 (interior-block apartments) as well as House of the Priestesses, House of the Muses, House of the Yellow Walls, and House of the Graffito); Mols 1999b (House of the Charioteers); Falzone 2004 (House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander, House of Annius, and House of Themistocles).

apartments for several reasons: 1) they exhibit a range of apartment sizes and plans; 2) they retain significant traces of painted decorations, and in many cases, mosaic floors; 3) their architectural features and layouts are largely preserved, which allows for a consideration of the relationships between different rooms; and 4) they all functioned primarily as private residences, although non-residential spaces also formed sections of a number of apartments. These apartments thus offer significant archaeological and decorative evidence for me to draw on in my search for primary spaces. Moreover, they allow for a comparison of the types of decorations employed in a range of Ostian apartments. As noted in Chapter 1, the present study does not include structures whose residential functions are not clearly supported by the archaeological evidence or structures that underwent significant architectural and/or decorative transformations after the first quarter of the third century. My interpretations of the social significance of primary spaces will be elaborated upon in Chapter 4, where I combine my study of Ostian domestic settings with a consideration of the epigraphic evidence from Ostia pointing to an upwardly mobile segment of the population.

### **The Case Study Apartments**

The apartments fall into three clear groups based on their ground floor area calculations:<sup>287</sup> Group 1 (500-750 m<sup>2</sup>); Group 2 (190-350 m<sup>2</sup>); and Group 3 (65-140 m<sup>2</sup>). My decision to group the apartments based on area follows the approach taken by Wallace-Hadrill in his survey of 234 houses at Pompeii and Herculaneum, in which he

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<sup>287</sup> See the Table on pages 202-206.

groups the residences into four quartiles based on area.<sup>288</sup> There is no single publication that provides ground floor area calculations for all of the apartments at Ostia, although several scholars, including Bakker,<sup>289</sup> DeLaine,<sup>290</sup> Clarke,<sup>291</sup> and Watts<sup>292</sup> have provided the ground floor areas for select apartments. These figures appear to be derived by measuring published plans rather than from measurements of the apartments themselves, although the method used for calculating area is typically not specified. Consequently, it is often unclear whether non-residential spaces have been included in the area calculations.<sup>293</sup>

Because the entire ground floor must be included in the area calculation of each apartment, I rely on DeLaine's calculations for the medianum apartments and for the House of Jupiter and Ganymede as well as Clarke's measurements of the area of the House of the Muses. In addition, there are several apartments for which there are no published area calculations or which have calculations that do not include non-residential

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<sup>288</sup> Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 80-82, also offers a variety of statistical calculations about each residence (e.g., total area, total open space area, number of rooms, and density of space), from which he draws general conclusions about the functions of the houses in each of the four quartiles.

<sup>289</sup> Bakker 1994, 23 provides ground floor area calculations for numerous apartments in his study of Ostian private religion. He bases these calculations off of measurements taken from the main topographical plan in *Scavi di Ostia I* (Calza et al. 1953). See Bakker 1994, 15, on the ground floor areas of the Ostian "domus"; 47-48, on the ground floor areas of "other habitations". Bakker eliminates non-residential spaces and external staircases from his calculations, which I find somewhat problematic. It can be difficult to determine with accuracy where the residential part of a house ends and where the non-residential part begins, so the elimination of "non-residential" spaces might not accurately reflect the area of a residence.

<sup>290</sup> DeLaine 1999, 176, on the area of the House of Jupiter and Ganymede; and DeLaine 2004, 154, fig. 2, on the areas of numerous Ostian medianum apartments. DeLaine refrains from describing precisely what criteria she uses to obtain these measurements. However, she acknowledges that she is concerned with calculating the total ground floor area of each apartment. I take this to include non-residential spaces.

<sup>291</sup> Clarke 1991a, 270, on the area of the House of the Muses. Based on my calculations from the original plans of *Scavi di Ostia I*, Clarke appears to measure the total area (including non-residential spaces).

<sup>292</sup> Watts 1987, 51-65.

<sup>293</sup> Based on my calculations from the plans of *Scavi di Ostia I*, Watts seems to include non-residential spaces in some of her calculations and appears to exclude them in others.



areas.<sup>294</sup> For these apartments, I have calculated the ground floor area by measuring the plans in *Scavi di Ostia I*.<sup>295</sup> Many of these apartments also included an upper level, rarely surviving.<sup>296</sup> Because nearly all of the apartments no longer preserve traces of their upper stories, I have limited my area calculations and my search for primary spaces to the ground floor of each apartment.<sup>297</sup>

In my Group 1 there are three apartments, sixteen in Group 2, and five in Group 3. The unevenness is in large part due to the chance survival of particular units, especially those on the ground floor, which are thought to have been the highest quality apartments in an apartment block.<sup>298</sup> Remains of the smaller and more numerous upper-story dwellings, where the majority of the city's population resided, are lacking. These upper-floor apartments are generally assumed to have been less comfortable accommodations with more modest decorations, but more recently this interpretation has been called into question: literary and archaeological evidence that suggests that apartment buildings might not have been vertically zoned.<sup>299</sup> Another factor is that

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<sup>294</sup> These include the House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander; the House of the Painted Vaults; the Inn of the Peacock; the House of Annius, Apartment 1 (rooms 3-5A) and Apartment 2 (rooms 6-8); and the House of Themistocles, Apartment 1 (rooms 19-21).

<sup>295</sup> I include external staircases and spaces that appear to be non-residential in order to maintain consistency in presenting the total ground floor area of each of the residences. There will likely be a slight margin of error in my calculations because they are based on measurements taken from a plan at 1:500 scale, although the measurements are adequate for my purpose because I am not extrapolating any additional data from them. Moreover, the differences in size between my three groups are broad enough that minor inaccuracies caused by the reliance upon a scaled plan should not significantly affect the placement of specific residences into different groups.

<sup>296</sup> I refer to this as this first floor in order to maintain consistency with the majority of the scholarship on Ostian apartments, which use the European designations (i.e., ground floor, first floor, etc.) rather than the American designations, which start with the first floor.

<sup>297</sup> DeLaine 2004, 154, fig. 2, provides figures for the ground floor and first floor of numerous medianum apartments. Based on her measurements, I have calculated that the first floor in each apartment to be approximately 40-50% of the size of the ground floor.

<sup>298</sup> Packer 1971; Meiggs 1973, 250-51, on the possibility of "vertical zoning" at Ostia.

<sup>299</sup> Frier 1980, 15 n. 33, on ancient literary references to "upper-class" living on upper levels of buildings. Mols 1999, 165, argues against the interpretation of vertical zoning by pointing to the painted decorations of the second floor of the House of the Charioteers, which he argues are of comparable quality to those on the ground floor. I have viewed these second-floor paintings in situ, and I find it difficult to make a case

excavators of the early twentieth century also played a role in determining what was preserved for future study by prioritizing the survival of the well-adorned apartments of the second century over those units of smaller size and simpler decoration.<sup>300</sup>

The twenty-four structures that I have studied represent a range of apartments with well-preserved architecture and decorations from this period. Thus, they offer a useful sample with which to test whether the correlation between the size and splendor of a Roman house and its residents' social standing can be substantiated by the material remains of Ostian residences.

## **Criteria for Identifying Primary Spaces**

### **Decorations**

The criteria I have developed to identify primary spaces are related to the decorations of the room, its location within the residence and its relationship to the other spaces, and its architectural features. Within each of these three categories I have identified more specific criteria, which I describe below. My application of these criteria is based largely on my field research at Ostia, during which time I examined the architecture and decorations of all twenty-four apartments. A room need not meet all of the criteria in order to be considered a primary space. Often, rooms that meet several of these criteria can fairly easily be identified as the most socially significant spaces of the residence. In other cases, a room that meets one or more of my primary space criteria but

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either for or against vertical zoning based solely on these paintings because they are not well preserved, although they seem to exhibit a panel system that is somewhat comparable to those used in the apartment below. The painted decorations on the first floor of the House of the Painted Vaults, however, seem to provide evidence in favor of vertical zoning. The remains of the painted decorations reflect the use of an aedicular system on a white monochrome background and what appears to be an aedicular system on a yellow background.

<sup>300</sup> Mols 2002, 152; Pavolini 2006, 40; Falzone 2007, 17. On the history of excavations at Ostia, see Olivanti 2001, 56-65.

otherwise appears to be a secondary space will be described as an alternative primary space.

The first criteria are related to the room's decorations. In the absence of moveable objects and other furnishings, including textiles, these criteria are restricted to painted decorations and mosaics. Frequently, primary spaces have painted decorations that exhibit a polychrome background and an architectural system of decoration (Fig. 3). This decorative system is characterized by large, boldly colored panels, which are enclosed by wide frames of contrasting colors. Architectural features such as tall narrow columns and aediculae separate and frame the panels. It seems likely that the architectural features that give this decorative system its name provided a basic reference to the public sphere, thus making it appropriate for rooms of great social significance. Less often, one finds painted decorations in a primary space that are based on the panel system, in which the wall surface is divided into a series of monochrome panels. These panels are then enclosed within frames of a single, bold color (Fig. 1). In contrast, secondary spaces often have painted decorations with a predominantly monochrome yellow or white background and which exhibit the aedicular system of decoration, in which evenly spaced aediculae separate the wall into several panels (Fig. 2).

The hierarchical distinctions between different background colors and decorative systems appear to be based largely on the costs of the materials and the execution of the paintings. The significance of the use of either a polychrome or monochrome background is based on the fact that certain colors of pigment, such as blue, green, black, and violet, were more costly to employ than white, yellow, and red, which were commonly occurring earth pigments (calcium carbonate, yellow ochre, and red ochre,

respectively).<sup>301</sup> Similarly, the primacy of the architectural system over the aedicular system (and to a lesser extent, that of the panel system over the aedicular system) is attributed to the fact that the former is thought to have required a more skilled painter than the latter, which involves the repetition of simple motifs at regular intervals.<sup>302</sup>

Among the painted decorations, figural subject matter is also a marker of primary importance. At Ostia, one rarely finds large-scale mythological compositions comparable to those associated with Fourth Style compositions, although there is at least one remaining example.<sup>303</sup> Instead, there are often isolated representations of human, divine, and mythological figures in the painted decorations. It has been suggested that these individual figures represent a simplified version of the large-scale mythological panels that characterized the paintings of the previous century.<sup>304</sup> The depiction of figural subjects (typically of mythological nature) would have presented viewers with the opportunity to display their erudite knowledge of any literary and cultural themes that were embedded in the painted program, which might also have been reinforced by other artworks exhibited in the room.<sup>305</sup> Thus, figural decorations would have been appropriate for a reception space where one hosted friends and other social equals who they hoped to impress with their cultural knowledge and refinement.

The type of pavement employed could also reflect a room's importance. The floor mosaics in second- and early third-century Ostian apartments are limited to the

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<sup>301</sup> Ling 1991, 207-9.

<sup>302</sup> Joyce 1981, 112; Falzone 2004, 199.

<sup>303</sup> The eponymous mythological panel depicting Jupiter and Ganymede on the east wall of 27 (room 14 following the *Scavi di Ostia I* plan) of the House of Jupiter and Ganymede is a rare exception to this rule. In this same room, a mythological panel with illegible figures, which is similar in size to the Jupiter and Ganymede panel, still remains on the north wall.

<sup>304</sup> Clarke 1991a, 357.

<sup>305</sup> Bartman 1991, 75-77; Ling 1991, 139-40; Ellis 2000, 140-43; Hales 2003, 135-39.

black and white tesserae.<sup>306</sup> Unlike paintings, which could be updated fairly easily and were typically less costly commissions, floor mosaics often remained in place for longer periods of time.<sup>307</sup> This is likely because of the higher cost and greater amount of labor required to produce them. The mosaics that remain in many of these apartments date back to the original construction phases of the buildings.<sup>308</sup>

Clarke has observed on the correlation between a mosaic's pattern and the room's function:<sup>309</sup> the rooms with the most complex floor mosaics were the most prominent spaces of the house (i.e., reception rooms), whereas those with the simplest and plainest mosaics were either dynamic circulation spaces or more private, secondary spaces such as bedrooms. However, there are rooms that contain mosaics with fairly complex patterns but relatively simple wall decorations. More will be said below on the reading of these decorative combinations in the discussion of alternative primary spaces.

The size of the tesserae used in the mosaic can also help indicate a room's importance. That is, rooms with mosaics composed of smaller tesserae were likely of a more elevated function because the mosaic was potentially a more laborious project.<sup>310</sup>

In rare cases, costly *opus sectile* floors, which were constructed by cutting and inlaying

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<sup>306</sup> For a full discussion of mosaics at Ostia, see Becatti 1961. See also Clarke 1979; 1991a; Dunbabin 1999. Swift 2009, considers the significance of threshold mosaics in several Ostian apartments and in other Roman houses. However, threshold mosaics are found in front of primary and secondary spaces alike, which is why I do not consider them as an indicator of primary function.

<sup>307</sup> Ling 1991, 213, on the wage limits stated in the Edict of Diocletian (AD 301). A figure painter (*pictor imaginarius*) could make 150 denarii per day, while a wall painter (*pictor parietarius*) could make only 75 denarii. In contrast, wall and floor mosaicists could make up to 60 and 50 denarii per day, respectively. However, it took substantially longer to complete a mosaic than to paint a room, so the overall cost of the former would be greater.

<sup>308</sup> For example, the House of the Yellow Walls has mosaics that are dated to its construction during the Hadrianic period, but its paintings are dated to later renovations and redecoration phases that took place from the late second century onward. However, in the Inn of the Peacock, new mosaics and paintings were added during the early third century. See Gasparri 1970; Clarke 1991a, 342.

<sup>309</sup> Clarke 1979; Clarke 1991a.

<sup>310</sup> Clarke 1991a, 344-46, indicates the sizes of the tesserae used in different rooms in the Inn of the Peacock. He implicitly suggests that there is a connection between the use of smaller tesserae, higher quality floor mosaics, and reception spaces, but he does not clearly state this.

precious materials and stones in patterns, were also found in Ostian apartments of the second and early third centuries.<sup>311</sup>

### **Location and Layout**

The location of a room can help indicate that it was a significant space within the residence. Frequently, rooms located along major axes of the house were of particular importance.<sup>312</sup> Unlike the basic plan of the Pompeian atrium house, which has a longitudinal axis that divides the house in a relatively symmetrical way, many Ostian apartments (especially those of the medianum type) exhibit a “conceptual” axis (Fig. 6). This is a slightly irregular axis that runs roughly through the house, around which spaces are arranged in a vaguely symmetrical way.<sup>313</sup> Frequently, there is a primary space at the point where the longitudinal axis terminates at the rear of the apartment. Less frequently, one also finds a short axis that runs perpendicular to the main longitudinal axis. At either end of the latter axis are found primary spaces (Fig. 7).<sup>314</sup>

Frequently one also finds what I describe as a calculated view that extends into and out of a primary space. This type of view extends from one space into another through aligned openings.<sup>315</sup> The calculated view is significant because it provided the dominus with a privileged view outward while also allowing him to control how he was presented to visitors gazing inward at him.<sup>316</sup> The calculated view is not found in all

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<sup>311</sup> The Inn of the Peacock has an opus sectile floor in room 9. In the House of the Painted Vaults, room 12 has a floor that is largely composed of mosaic tesserae but also has several pieces of marble in it.

<sup>312</sup> Watts 1987, 132.

<sup>313</sup> Watts 1987, 108.

<sup>314</sup> DeLaine 2004.

<sup>315</sup> Watts 1987, 109, on the “deep view”, which she describes as a view that runs along the major axis of the house and terminates at its end. What I describe “calculated view” is loosely based on Watts’s deep view, although it does not require that the view run along the entire axis of the residence.

<sup>316</sup> On views into and out of Pompeian houses, see especially Powers 2006, 66-103.

Ostian apartments, but when it appears, it is clear that the visitor only encountered it after he or she had progressed beyond the entrance vestibule of the residence.<sup>317</sup>

The direction from which a room received its light and air was also important because it facilitated the functions that they served at different times of year. For example, Vitruvius notes that a winter dining room should face the southwest so that it receives as much heat as possible before the sun sets, while a summer dining room should face the north so that it stays cooler and remains comfortable when hosting guests. In contrast, bedrooms should face the east so that they receive light from the rising sun.<sup>318</sup> While a room's orientation in a specific direction might have encouraged its use for more specialized purposes, it could also have served a variety of additional functions.<sup>319</sup>

An additional criterion associated with the layout involves the degree to which a room provided access to other spaces in the residence. In several apartments, one finds a large room that opens directly onto a smaller space or spaces, such as in the House of the Priestesses (Fig. 8).<sup>320</sup> This type of small room is commonly located at the interior of the apartment and is accessible from either the larger, adjacent room or a nearby side corridor. Typically, the smaller room is not accessible from a major dynamic space, such as a medianum, main corridor, or courtyard. Due to their subsidiary locations, smaller rooms such as these have been interpreted as spaces that facilitated the functions of the

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<sup>317</sup> This differs from the calculated view that runs through the basic Campanian atrium house. In this case, a viewer standing at the entrance would (in theory) have a clear view that ran along the main axis and that terminated in the rear of the residence.

<sup>318</sup> Vitr. *De arch.* 6.4.1.

<sup>319</sup> On the multifunctional use of space in the Roman house, see Riggsby 1997; Hales 2003, 4.

<sup>320</sup> Note the placement of rooms 8 and 11 in relation to room 6. They open directly onto it or are at a single remove by a corridor.

larger rooms. It is thought that they might have been used as service areas,<sup>321</sup> small dining rooms,<sup>322</sup> and secluded reception spaces.<sup>323</sup>

### **Architectural Features**

The final category of primary space criteria involves a room's architectural features. First, the use of a distinctive entrance provided a clear means of distinguishing a room as a primary space. Features such as a tripartite entrance, an enlarged door opening, or two windows or columns flanking the doorway, helped to differentiate a room from the others in the residence while calling attention to its importance. Columns, a notable feature of public architecture, would reinforce the semi-public function of the house while also highlighting the room's importance as a space where the owner could engage in the affairs associated with his occupation and public persona.

The level of the ceiling or floor was also occasionally emphasized. A ceiling of double height is noteworthy because of its consumption of space normally reserved for the floor directly above it.<sup>324</sup> Likewise, a vaulted ceiling (particularly in a residence that did not have vaulted ceilings in all of its rooms) also differentiated a room from the other spaces. A step up or step down also called attention to a room's importance by requiring the person entering the room to encounter it in a different way.<sup>325</sup>

Windows not only served the practical function of providing light and air, but when they featured prominently in a room they helped to indicate its significance.

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<sup>321</sup> On room 6 of the House of the Yellow Walls as a service space, see Clarke 1991a, 307.

<sup>322</sup> On small adjacent rooms as dining rooms, see Richardson 1983.

<sup>323</sup> On cubacula as reception spaces, see Ellis 1991, 123; Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 17; Riggsby 1997; DeLaine 1999, 184.

<sup>324</sup> On ceiling height, Watts 1987, 145-47; on ceiling type, 291-93.

<sup>325</sup> Clarke 1991a.



Rooms with windows that either opened onto the exterior or that were adjacent to sources of natural light, such as courtyards and light wells, were generally privileged over rooms at a further remove.<sup>326</sup> Moreover, rooms with multiple windows (especially when placed on more than one register) seem to have been especially important because of their increased access to light and air. In addition, windows provided more than a view outward: they could also present outsiders with a glimpse of the interior of the apartment.<sup>327</sup>

An additional amenity of note is access to a private or semi-private garden space. Although this is not an architectural feature, it is an amenity that could be experienced from inside the apartment by looking out a window with a view onto the garden space. In a city as populated as Ostia, access to a restricted garden space was undoubtedly a luxury that few could afford.<sup>328</sup>

### **Application of Primary Space Criteria: Group 1 Apartments**

Below I summarize the results of my application of the primary space criteria to the apartments in Groups 1, 2, and 3. For a full discussion of the primary and alternative primary spaces in each apartment, please refer to the Appendix.

The apartments in Group 1 are the largest residences at Ostia that dated to the second to early third centuries AD.<sup>329</sup> Following Vitruvius' guidelines, these are the residences that one would expect to contain numerous primary spaces designed to

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<sup>326</sup> Watts 1987, 137-41.

<sup>327</sup> DeLaine 1999, 180-85.

<sup>328</sup> Falzone 2007, 55 n. 10, indicates that what appears to have been a shared garden space at the center of the Garden Houses complex was in fact a courtyard paved in *cocciopesto*.

<sup>329</sup> Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 81, Table 4.2. These apartments belong to Wallace-Hadrill's fourth quartile of houses (350-3000 m<sup>2</sup>), although they are at the smaller end of the range.

accommodate their owners' social, political, and business activities. There are three apartments in Group 1, each of which exhibits a distinct layout.

Among the three houses of Group 1, the House of the Muses (III, IX, 22) (Fig. 9) and the House of Jupiter and Ganymede (I, IV, 2) (Fig. 10) appear to have much more in common with each other than either does with the House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander (I, III, 5) (Fig. 11). The first two apartments have, in fact, been described by DeLaine as examples of “domus-insulae”,<sup>330</sup> because their layouts suggest that they were organized according to some of the same principles as their Pompeian domus counterparts, even if they lack defining features such as the peristyles, atria, and axial symmetry that characterize many Pompeian houses.<sup>331</sup> Moreover, they both belong to larger apartment blocks or complexes and are the largest residential units within their respective complexes.<sup>332</sup> The third apartment, the House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander, does not fall into DeLaine's “domus-insulae” category, presumably because of its non-domus-like layout. While it is not quite as large as the other two apartments, it is still one of the largest apartments at Ostia from this period.

Based on the application of my primary space criteria, I identify the following rooms in the Group 1 apartments as primary spaces:<sup>333</sup> House of the Muses, rooms 5, 10, 15, and 19; House of Jupiter and Ganymede, rooms 25 and 27; and House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander, rooms 11a and 12a-b. Among these primary spaces,

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<sup>330</sup> DeLaine 1999, 185.

<sup>331</sup> DeLaine 1999, 175-76.

<sup>332</sup> Clarke 1991a, 320-39, on the possibility that the House of Jupiter and Ganymede was a private luxury apartment that was transformed into a “gay hotel” in the period between AD 184 and 192. This interpretation was first put forth by Calza, who based his interpretation on graffiti found in the building referring to sexual acts, the mythological panel depicting Jupiter and Ganymede, and the altered layout of the house (cf. Calza 1902, 362). For a succinct version of Clarke's argument, see also Clarke 1991b.

<sup>333</sup> See the Table below for the sources of the room numbers.

those in the House of the Muses and the House of Jupiter and Ganymede display numerous features associated with the three main categories of primary space criteria.

In both apartments, the primary spaces have painted decorations on a polychrome background that exhibit a variation on the basic architectural system (Figs. 12-13).<sup>334</sup> In addition, there are black and white floor mosaics with geometric patterns of varying complexity in all of these rooms.<sup>335</sup> With regard to location, the rooms are all prominently placed around a major source of light and air (a courtyard in the case of Jupiter and Ganymede and a quadriporticus in the case of the Muses). Moreover, each primary space is axially aligned with one of the other primary spaces,<sup>336</sup> which creates calculated views that extend from one space into the other. Most of these rooms also exhibit significant architectural features. In the House of the Muses, room 10 has an entrance flanked by windows, which creates a faux tripartite entrance, while room 15 has a true tripartite entrance and also once had a vaulted ceiling, which is no longer preserved. In the House of Jupiter and Ganymede, rooms 25 and 27 both have double height ceilings, while the latter room also includes an oversized window that overlooks the courtyard. In short, both apartments have least two primary spaces that were easily distinguishable by their decorations, architectural features, and location within the residence.

Likewise, the House of the Muses and the House of Jupiter and Ganymede both include rooms that could be characterized as alternative primary spaces. In the former

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<sup>334</sup> The painted decorations in room 25 in the House of Jupiter and Ganymede are not very well preserved, so it is not possible to tell whether figural subjects were included, although this seems likely if the paintings were comparable to the well-preserved paintings of room 27 in the same apartment.

<sup>335</sup> The mosaic in the House of the Muses, room 15, is currently covered, but it is documented in Becatti 1961, 131 no. 259, as pavement D.

<sup>336</sup> In the House of the Muses, rooms 5 and 15 are on axis with one another, while rooms 10 and 19 are on a slightly irregular axis that is nearly perpendicular to the first axis. In the House of Jupiter and Ganymede, rooms 25 and 27 are on an axis, which extends behind room 25 into room 24.

they are rooms 8, 9, and 11, and in the latter they are rooms 24 and 33. In the House of the Muses, the painted and mosaic decorations of the alternative primary spaces are of comparable or slightly lesser complexity than those in many of the clear primary spaces. More specifically, the painted decorations exhibit either an architectural system on a polychrome background (rooms 8 and 11) or an elaborate aedicular system on a monochrome background with figural subjects (room 9) (Fig. 14). While room 9 has a mosaic with a simple pattern of white hexagons outlined in black, room 8 contains an elaborate carpet with varying geometric patterns surrounding a central scroll motif. These rooms do not include any significant architectural features and are not directly accessible from the primary spaces, but they are situated in close proximity to them.<sup>337</sup>

In the House of Jupiter and Ganymede, the alternative primary spaces exhibit painted decorations that are more comparable to those associated with secondary spaces (i.e., predominantly yellow walls and an aedicular system of decoration).<sup>338</sup> The mosaic in room 33 has a fairly simple pattern of small white rectangles bordered in black, while the mosaic found in room 24 contains a meander pattern with geometric motifs in the corners and at the center (Fig. 15). The mosaic in room 24 is arguably more complex than that found in room 27, the largest primary space in the residence, which is composed of alternating octagons and checkerboard-like squares (Fig. 16). Moreover, rooms 24 and 33 are situated in less easily accessible parts of the residence, yet they are both located on one of the two axes that provides a view across the courtyard into another privileged

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<sup>337</sup> None of the alternative primary spaces in the House of the Muses can be accessed easily from the quadriporticus: they all must be accessed through another room or passageway.

<sup>338</sup> The painted decorations in room 24 are barely preserved, but they display traces of a yellow background.

space.<sup>339</sup> In short, the alternative primary spaces of Jupiter and Ganymede and the Muses both include one form of decoration that is comparable to that found in the primary spaces, another form of decoration of lesser complexity,<sup>340</sup> as well as a lack of significant architectural features and a less accessible location within the residence.

In the House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander, I have identified two primary spaces: room 11a and room 12a-b.<sup>341</sup> Both rooms fulfill several primary space criteria from the three categories. However, there is a clear difference between the primary spaces of the House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander and those in the other two Group 1 apartments in that the primary spaces of this apartment fulfill a lesser number of the primary space criteria, particularly those associated with location and architectural features. Consequently, the identification of these rooms as primary spaces is largely based on their decorations.

Although rooms 11a and 12a-b have the most complex painted decorations of the residence, they are unlike those of the previous two residences because they are based on the panel system of decoration. In this version of the panel system, wide red frames enclose white panels. At the center of each panel is either a small landscape vignette or a still life. The use of this decorative system in rooms 11a and 12a-b differentiates these spaces from room 11b, which preserves a simple aedicular system on a white background, and a section of the east wall of room 11, which displays an unclassified

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<sup>339</sup> Room 33 provides a view across the courtyard into the semi-private garden space beyond, while room 24 provides a view through room 25, across the courtyard, and into room 27. This is provided that temporary barriers did not block the view through any of the doorways or window openings.

<sup>340</sup> Often one type of decoration (especially floor mosaics) will be of comparable quality to those found in the primary spaces, whereas another type of decoration (especially wall paintings) will feature a simpler decorative system and less variety in the colors employed in the background.

<sup>341</sup> I refer to room 12a-b as a single room because it is discussed in this way in contemporary scholarship (cf. Falzone 2004; Oome 2007). There was a thin partition wall between the two sub-rooms, which contained a door that allowed for passage between the two spaces (cf. Oome 2007, 235).

decorative system composed of little more than a few narrow red bands framing a white field on the wall surface, which is flanked by aediculae.<sup>342</sup> In short, the use of different systems of painting in these rooms suggests a hierarchy among the spaces. This hierarchy is reinforced by the presence of black and white floor mosaics only in rooms 11a and 12a-b. The former is characterized by lozenges forming an eight-pointed star, and the latter is composed of small white squares and larger octagons, at the center of which are small geometric motifs.

The use of the panel system in the painted decorations of the primary spaces of the House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander sets these rooms apart from those in the other two apartments, which feature painted decorations that exhibit an architectural system on a polychrome background. Liedtke has argued that the predominantly white background used in these painted decorations classifies them as having a monochrome background,<sup>343</sup> which in turn suggests a function of secondary importance. Mols and Oome have both criticized this classification, suggesting instead that the red frames around the white panels allow for one to categorize the paintings as having a polychrome background,<sup>344</sup> which rightly suggests that they were appropriate for a primary space. In fact, Oome has convincingly demonstrated through the study of the architecture of the apartment that these rooms were likely reception spaces.<sup>345</sup>

While both the panel and architectural systems of painted decoration might have been appropriate for primary spaces, aesthetically minded occupants and visitors might have been more aware of the qualitative differences between the two systems. It can be

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<sup>342</sup> Liedtke 2003, 311, refers to this as an indeterminable (“unbestimmbare”) system.

<sup>343</sup> Liedtke 2003, 1-12.

<sup>344</sup> Mols 2005, 240-41; Oome 2007, 242-44. Oome

<sup>345</sup> Oome 2007.

argued that the architectural system might have held in higher regard because of its greater complexity (including the use of figural subjects), which likely required a more skilled painter, as well as the investment in a greater variety of colors for the backgrounds. In contrast, the panel system only required wide, boldly colored frames to enclose monochrome backgrounds that included small, sketchy landscape vignettes and still lifes rather than figural subjects. Such differences could reflect upon the financial means of the person who commissioned the paintings (presumably the occupant), his aesthetic preferences, or both.

Room 12a-b also fulfills two architectural criteria: it has a floor level that is 0.4 m below the floor level elsewhere in the residence, as well as a ceiling with a segmented vault.<sup>346</sup> In addition, it is adjacent to a *xystus* (patio or garden area) located immediately to the south of the room. Presumably this space functioned as a private outdoor entertaining area. One could argue that room 12a-b might have been the more privileged reception space in the residence because it fulfilled several primary space criteria and could only be reached by first passing through room 11.

Beyond these features, the rooms of the House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander do not fulfill any other primary space criteria. As a result, there are no rooms that appear to have functioned as alternative primary spaces. Interestingly, neither of the primary spaces are located along any sort of clear visual axes – both are rather located at the interior of the residence. It seems likely that the lack of calculated views could be attributed in part to the structural limitations caused by the previous commercial function

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<sup>346</sup> Oome 2007, 239-40.

of the building.<sup>347</sup> Thus, unlike the House of the Muses and the House of Jupiter and Ganymede, both of which were originally constructed as private residences, the layout of the House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander in its residential state appears to have been restricted in part by the original structure of the building in which it was located.

In sum, each residence in Group 1 had at least two primary spaces. However, the primary spaces in these residences vary in terms of the number and diversity of primary space criteria that they fulfill. It seems likely that the broader distinctions between these apartments could be attributed in part to whether they were initially constructed as residential units. Indeed, the House of the Muses and the House of Jupiter and Ganymede, which belong to residential complexes (and were in fact the largest units within their respective blocks), were clearly designed to include rooms that facilitated different social and formal activities. Decorations and architectural features, as well as calculated views into and out of rooms and restricted access to difference spaces, no doubt encouraged the practice of such activities. With regard to the House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander, it seems that the building's original function as a commercial space might have restricted the extent to which the space could have been reorganized when it became a residence in the mid-second century. Perhaps this is why the primary spaces of the House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander are distinguished largely by their decorations. Above all, it is significant that each of these residences appear to have had at least two clear spaces designed for entertaining and receiving guests. This suggests the occupants of these residences had achieved an

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<sup>347</sup> Oome 2007, on the connection between the House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander and the adjacent House of the Millstones (I, III, 1). The two buildings appear to have functioned collectively as a bakery during the House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander's first phase of occupation.



elevated level of wealth, power, and prestige in Ostian society and were thus at the upper end of the social continuum.

### **Application of Primary Space Criteria: Group 2 Apartments**

Group 2 has 16 apartments and is thus the largest group in my study. Their ground floor areas range from 190-350 m<sup>2</sup>.<sup>348</sup> They are thus notably smaller than the Group 1 apartments, yet they are still by no means diminutive dwellings. Based on the assumed correlation between apartment size, social status, and the need to receive guests, one would expect that these apartments might have primary spaces, albeit in lesser numbers. Moreover, one might also anticipate these apartments to be somewhat more modest in terms of decorations and architectural features than their larger counterparts in Group 1.

Of the 16 apartments in Group 2, 14 are medianum apartments. The majority of the medianum apartments in this group belong to the Garden Houses complex. I refer to this set of 14 medianum apartments as Group 2A in order to clearly distinguish them from the remaining apartments in Group 2, which exhibit less regular layouts. I refer to this second set as Group 2B.

### **Group 2A**

Although the different medianum apartments of Group 2A exhibit variations in their individual layouts, they all follow the same general plan. The basic shared layout

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<sup>348</sup> All of these apartments in Group 2 fall into Wallace-Hadrill's third-quartile, which comprises apartments ranging from 175-350 m<sup>2</sup> in ground floor area and that include fairly well-appointed decorations, atria, and colonnaded gardens (cf. Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 81, Table 4.2). However, when one takes into account the likelihood that many, if not all of these apartments also included a first floor, they would then fit into Wallace-Hadrill's fourth quartile, which comprises the largest houses in his survey.

leads to the question of whether the primary spaces of all of these apartments are situated and adorned in similar ways, or whether it is possible to identify distinctions among the primary spaces of the different apartments.

As noted in Chapter 1, DeLaine has employed the methodology of access analysis to study the potential patterns of interaction in medianum apartments at Ostia. The results of her analysis suggest that two particular rooms in the basic medianum-type apartment might have functioned as reception spaces.<sup>349</sup> These rooms are located at either end of the medianum, one of which is typically larger than the other (Fig. 4). According to DeLaine, the room that is located closer to the entrance (the type-B room) appears to be designed for controlled patterns of encounter, not unlike the tablinum of the Pompeian atrium house, where a patron would receive his clients during their daily visit (*salutatio*).<sup>350</sup> In contrast, the type-A room, which is at the opposite end of the medianum, is designed for more unpredictable patterns of encounter. Thus, it might be compared to the triclinium in the Pompeian atrium house,<sup>351</sup> a room designed for dining and entertaining guests.<sup>352</sup> Based on these conclusions, one would expect to find other indicators of primary function in the decorations and architecture of these two rooms in each apartment.

Following the application of my primary space criteria, I identify the following rooms in the Group 2A apartments as primary spaces: House of the Infant Bacchus, rooms 13 and 20 (Fig. 10); House of the Paintings, rooms 3 and 10 (Fig. 10); House of the Painted Ceiling, room 1 (Fig. 17); House of the Priestesses, rooms 4 and 6 (Fig. 8);

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<sup>349</sup> DeLaine 2004, 155, 158-59.

<sup>350</sup> Dwyer 1991, 27.

<sup>351</sup> DeLaine 2004, 155.

<sup>352</sup> On the functions of the triclinium, see Dunbabin 1991.

House of the Yellow Walls, rooms 7 and 8 (Fig. 18); and the House of the Graffito, rooms 3 and 7 (Fig. 19), as well as the following rooms in the interior blocks of the Garden Houses complex (Fig. 20): apartment III, IX, 13, rooms 4 and 9; apartment III, IX, 14, rooms 4 and 9; apartment III, IX, 15, rooms 5 and 10; apartment III, IX, 16, rooms 5 and 10; apartment III, IX, 17, rooms 5 and 10; apartment III, IX, 18, rooms 5 and 10; apartment III, IX, 19, rooms 4 and 9; and apartment III, IX, 20, rooms 4 and 9. Perhaps not surprisingly, these spaces are the type-B and type-A rooms of each residence. Therefore, nearly every apartment has two primary spaces.<sup>353</sup>

There are several basic trends that can be identified among the primary spaces of the Group 2A apartments. Where paintings are preserved, they consistently involve an architectural system on a polychrome background (Figs. 21-31).<sup>354</sup> With the exception of the House of the Priestesses, which includes two type-B rooms (one of which has an aedicular system of painted decoration), all of the primary spaces that include painted decorations exhibit this decorative system.<sup>355</sup> Only several of the medianum apartments contain traces of their floor mosaics. Those that are largely preserved are comparable to or noticeably more complex than the other mosaics in the residence (Fig. 32-33).<sup>356</sup>

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<sup>353</sup> In its late second century state, the House of the Painted Ceiling did not have a second primary space. At that time, the apartment was reduced in size and the room that presumably functioned as the second primary space was closed off and became part of the adjacent building to the north (cf. Clarke 1991a, 313).

<sup>354</sup> Paintings are not preserved in the following rooms: House of the Graffito, room 3; apartment III, IX, 13, room 9; apartment III, IX, 14, room 9; apartment III, IX, 15, rooms 5 and 10; apartment III, IX, 16, room 10; apartment III, IX, 17, room 10; apartment III, IX, 18, rooms 5 and 10; apartment III, IX, 19, rooms 4 and 9; and apartment III, IX, 20, rooms 4 and 9. However, one should not entirely dismiss these apartments from the discussion because they are lacking painted decorations. It is because of their well-preserved layouts, which are similar to those of other apartments with better-preserved paintings (which in turn exhibit general patterns in the distribution of painting types) that we can take these apartments into account.

<sup>355</sup> In room 9 of the House of the Priestesses, an alternate type-B room, there are painted decorations characterized by an aedicular system on a yellow background.

<sup>356</sup> These apartments include the House of the Yellow Walls, the House of the Priestesses, and the House of the Painted Ceiling. For example, in the House of the Yellow Walls, rooms 7 and 8 have black and white mosaics with complex vegetal and geometric patterns, whereas the remaining rooms have noticeably

In terms of location, all except one of the primary spaces are found at either of the short ends of the medianum.<sup>357</sup> As a result, the two primary spaces in each apartment typically share a calculated view across the medianum into each other. Moreover, because these rooms flank the medianum, they also face the street or courtyard, which provides them with greater access to light and air. This access to natural light is often exploited by means of multiple windows, occasionally on two registers.<sup>358</sup> With the exception of windows, architectural features are less frequently used to distinguish these spaces. Double height ceilings are known in only two apartments,<sup>359</sup> but they might also have been found in other medianum apartments that do not preserve remains of their upper stories.<sup>360</sup> Only one primary space has a distinctive room entrance.<sup>361</sup>

Six of the fourteen medianum apartments also include rooms that could be considered alternative primary spaces. Four apartments have only one alternative primary space, while two have multiple alternative primary spaces.<sup>362</sup> Seven of the nine total alternative primary rooms preserve remains of their painted decorations; all of these display either an aedicular system on a monochrome yellow background or a plain yellow

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simpler patterns. In the House of the Graffito, room 7 had an intricate geometric pattern (cf. Becatti 1961), but the mosaics in the other rooms of the apartment were not preserved.

<sup>357</sup> In the House of the Priestesses, room 6 (the type-A room) is located off of one of the long sides of the medianum, and the two type-B rooms are located at the short ends of the medianum.

<sup>358</sup> For example, in rooms 13 and 20 in the House of the Infant Bacchus and rooms 3 and 10 in the House of the Paintings.

<sup>359</sup> Double-height ceilings are found in rooms 13 and 20 in the House of the Infant Bacchus and rooms 3 and 10 in the House of the Paintings. The architects of these apartments took advantage of the double-height ceilings and added two registers of windows facing the semi-private garden space.

<sup>360</sup> DeLaine 2004, 151, suggests that double-height ceilings were likely in many of the type-A rooms and possibly also in some of the type-B rooms of the medianum apartments.

<sup>361</sup> House of the Priestesses, room 6, has two brick columns covered in red fresco flanking its entrance.

<sup>362</sup> The alternative primary spaces are as follows: House of the Infant Bacchus, room 12; House of the Paintings, room 2; House of the Painted Ceiling, room 4; House of the Priestesses, rooms 8, 9, and 11; House of the Yellow Walls, rooms 5 and 6; House of the Graffito, room 6.

background that lacks features of the former decorative system (Figs. 34-35).<sup>363</sup> Floor mosaics are preserved in only six alternative primary spaces across three of the apartments.<sup>364</sup> One is composed of plain white tesserae,<sup>365</sup> another has a floor of white tesserae with a black border,<sup>366</sup> and the remaining four examples have black and white geometric patterns that are comparable to or slightly simpler than those found in the primary spaces (Fig. 36).<sup>367</sup> With the exception of one room,<sup>368</sup> all of the alternative primary spaces are located in the type-C space;<sup>369</sup> that is, in one of the smaller rooms off of the long side of the medianum. Nearly all of these rooms are connected to one of the primary spaces,<sup>370</sup> either through a direct doorway shared between the two rooms or through a corridor or service space located between the two rooms. Consequently, it seems likely that they could have been used to support the activities taking place in the primary space, just as they could have served as alternate reception spaces where the occupant hosted his most esteemed guests.

Although they are notably smaller in size than the Group 1 apartments, the medianum apartments of Group 2A share a need with the larger apartments of at least two primary spaces. However, less than half of the Group 2A apartments contain alternative primary spaces. Perhaps this could be attributed partly to the space-saving principles behind the design and layout of the basic medianum apartment. For those

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<sup>363</sup> The only two rooms that do not preserve painted decorations are room 3 in the House of the Paintings and room 13 in the House of the Infant Bacchus.

<sup>364</sup> The House of the Yellow Walls, rooms 5 and 6; the House of the Priestesses, rooms 8, 9, and 11; and the House of the Painted Ceiling, room 4.

<sup>365</sup> House of the Painted Ceiling, room 4.

<sup>366</sup> House of the Yellow Walls, room 6.

<sup>367</sup> House of the Yellow Walls, room 5; House of the Priestesses, rooms 8, 9, and 11.

<sup>368</sup> In the House of the Priestesses, room 11, an alternative primary space, is not located off of the medianum but is instead located behind room 9, the alternate type-B room.

<sup>369</sup> See Clarke 1991a, 308, with regard to the type-C rooms in the House of the Yellow Walls (rooms 4 and 5) as cubacula. I refrain from referring to them as such.

<sup>370</sup> In the House of the Painted Ceiling, room 4 is not connected to room 1, the apartment's only primary space.

medianum apartments lacking alternative primary spaces, it is possible that the rooms that appear to be clearly “secondary”, particularly those in the type-C location at the interior of the apartment, could have been used as primary spaces on occasion, even if their decorations, architectural features, and location did not unmistakably identify them as such.

## **Group 2B**

There are only two residences in Group 2B: the House of the Painted Vaults and the Inn of the Peacock.<sup>371</sup> Like the apartments of Group 2A, these apartments have rooms that can be identified as primary spaces based largely on their decorations, although their architectural features and location also contribute to this reading. The small number of apartments in Group 2B and the lack of a common layout make it considerably difficult for one to draw more pointed conclusions about the apartments in this group. It therefore seems reasonable to compare the apartments in this group to those of 2A to determine if there are broader similarities among residences of this size that transcend their plans.

In the House of the Painted Vaults (Fig. 37), there are three primary spaces and two alternative primary spaces.<sup>372</sup> These spaces have painted decorations that are comparable to those in the primary and alternative primary spaces in the Group 2A apartments: the primary spaces have painted decorations with an architectural system on a polychrome background (Fig. 38), and the alternative primary spaces have paintings

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<sup>371</sup> I refer to the Inn of the Peacock as an “Inn” rather than a “House” in order to maintain consistency with previous scholarship. Although the building functioned as a residence through the early third century, it later functioned as a *caupona*, or inn, which is why it is commonly referred to in this way.

<sup>372</sup> In the House of the Painted Vaults, I have identified rooms 2 and 12 as primary spaces and rooms 4, 5, and 11 as alternative primary spaces.

with an aedicular system on a monochrome background. Two of these have yellow backgrounds, while the third has a white background (Fig. 39). Moreover, the floor mosaics in the primary and alternative primary spaces in this residence exhibit geometric patterns of roughly comparable complexity. This is similar to the situation in the House of the Priestesses, where the mosaics in the primary and alternative primary spaces are all characterized by patterns with alternating black and white geometric motifs.

With regard to location, the primary spaces in the House of the Painted Vaults are all placed along one of the two main axes of the residence. This is vaguely comparable to the placement of the primary spaces in the medianum apartments at either end of the medianum. In addition, the alternative primary spaces of this residence are located at its interior, yet they are in close proximity to the primary spaces. Finally, the primary and alternative primary spaces do not exhibit any outstanding architectural features, but they all include at least one window. However, one could attribute this largely to the plan of the apartment and the fact that it is a freestanding unit, which allowed the apartment to receive light on all four of its sides.

In the Inn of the Peacock, there are two primary spaces, but there are no alternative primary spaces (Fig. 40). In rooms 6, 8, 9, and 10, which form the main residential area of the complex,<sup>373</sup> there are painted decorations on a polychrome background. All of the rooms exhibit somewhat similar versions of the panel system of decoration and include figural subjects (Figs. 41-42). There appears to be a qualitative difference among the rooms based on the use of background colors and on the frequency with which figural subjects are used. Rooms 8 and 9, which I identify as primary spaces,

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<sup>373</sup> Gasparri 1970. I do not consider rooms 11-16 in the northern wing of the residence because their function during the phase under consideration is not clear.

have backgrounds with porphyry red, yellow, white, black, and green. In contrast, rooms 6 and 10 include only porphyry red, yellow, and white in their backgrounds. Figural subjects are included in all four rooms, but they are employed with greater frequency in rooms 8 and 9, which I identify as its primary spaces. In addition, the paintings in rooms 8 and 9 include a greater number of figural subjects than those in rooms 6 and 10. Moreover, while rooms 6, 8, and 10 all have black and white mosaics with basic geometric patterns, the floor mosaic in room 8 has smaller tesserae, which implies a more time consuming execution.<sup>374</sup> In addition, room 9 is unique within the Inn of the Peacock and among the Ostian apartments of this period because it has an opus sectile floor (Fig. 43).<sup>375</sup>

Architectural features, such as windows in rooms 8 and 9 and a lowered floor level in room 9, also helped to differentiate these rooms as significance spaces. With regard to layout, room 8 is at the end of the conceptual axis that runs through the apartment, while room 9 is only accessible from room 8. The placement of the first room at the end of the main axis highlights its importance within the apartment, while the difficulty in reaching room 9, which can only be accessed after passing through room 8, suggests that access to this room was highly controlled. This is similar to the restricted access to the type-B rooms in the medianum apartments of Group 2A.

In short, nearly all of the apartments of Groups 2A and 2B include at least two distinct primary spaces. In the majority of cases, there is one larger space, which is frequently more easily accessible by multiple doorways, as well as a second space that is

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<sup>374</sup> Clarke 1991a, 346; Falzone 2007, 138-39.

<sup>375</sup> Becatti 1961, does not discuss the opus sectile floor in room 9, despite the fact that he considers opus sectile floors in this publication.



often smaller and is accessible only from a single doorway.<sup>376</sup> The need for two or more primary spaces suggests that these apartments were occupied by people who had a need for multiple differentiated spaces for entertaining and receiving guests. It thus seems likely that their residents had reached a position at the upper end of the social continuum, not unlike the residents of the Group 1 apartments.

Moreover, nearly half of the Group 2 apartments also include at least one alternative primary space. In Group 2A, there are six apartments with alternative primary spaces, while in Group 2B, only the House of the Painted Vaults includes such spaces (three in total). These rooms are consistently located in close proximity to primary spaces and have mosaics of comparable complexity. However, there do not appear to be alternative primary spaces in all of the Group 2 apartments. It is possible that the residences that included both primary and alternative primary spaces might have been occupied by individuals who were at a more elevated position along the social continuum because they required a variety of options for entertainment and reception spaces.

One must also consider the extent to which visitors' familiarity with apartment types that were repeatedly used at Ostia would have affected their ability to identify primary spaces in other apartments. For example, visitors who were already familiar with the basic medianum plan might have been able to identify primary spaces in other medianum apartments based on their knowledge of the common placement of such rooms. Visitors to houses with less regular layouts, such as those of Group 2B, would have had to rely on visual cues from the decorations, architectural features, and the location of rooms within each residence.

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<sup>376</sup> Although this is not always the case. For example, in the House of the Painted Ceiling, room 2, which is the larger space, has only one doorway. In contrast, in the House of the Painted Vaults of Group 2B, rooms 11 and 12 (the smaller primary spaces) both have two doorways.

### **Application of Primary Space Criteria: Group 3 Apartments**

The Group 3 apartments have ground floor areas ranging from 65 m<sup>2</sup> to 140 m<sup>2</sup> and are the smallest residences examined in this study.<sup>377</sup> There are five apartments in this group, two of which are of the medianum type and three of which exhibit varying plans. Like Group 2, Group 3 is divided into two sub-groups: Group 3A includes the two medianum apartments in the House of Themistocles, and Group 3B includes one apartment in the House of the Charioteers and two apartments in the House of Annus. Since these apartments are smaller than those of the previous two groups, one might expect to find a lesser number of primary spaces in these apartments. Similarly, one might also anticipate that these apartments were adorned with the simplest decorations and to have few (if any) notable architectural features.

#### **Group 3A**

Both of the apartments in Group 3A belong to the same apartment block, the House of Themistocles (Fig. 44), which is adjacent to a temple thought to have belonged to the *collegium* of the *fabri tignuarii* (builders or carpenters).<sup>378</sup> Because these apartments have not previously been described as individual units, I refer to the apartment composed of rooms 19-21 as Apartment 1 and the apartment composed of rooms 22-26 as Apartment 2. Both are medianum apartments, although their plans vary slightly because the area of Apartment 1 was reduced following the construction of the adjacent Insula V, XI, 3 in the Severan period.<sup>379</sup> Because they share a common layout

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<sup>377</sup> These apartments fit into Wallace-Hadrill's second quartile, which includes houses with an area of 50-170 m<sup>2</sup> (cf. Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 81, Table 4.2).

<sup>378</sup> Hermansen 1981, 108-109.

<sup>379</sup> Hermansen 1981, 96-101.

with the medianum apartments of Group 2A, one must consider whether it is possible to identify broad similarities among the primary spaces of both groups or whether the Group 3A apartments exhibit any notable differences.

I have identified the following rooms in the Group 3A apartments as primary spaces: Apartment 1, room 21, and Apartment 2, rooms 22 and 26. The decorations of these apartments are the least helpful features for identifying primary spaces because they display a high degree of uniformity. More specifically, the painted decorations are all characterized by a white monochrome background with a simplified aedicular system composed of red aediculae, with minor architectural details in green and yellow. Decorative motifs include oscilla, masks, birds, crustaceans, but figural subjects are not present (Fig. 45).

The floor mosaics that were once found in several of the rooms are no longer preserved, but they were composed of plain white tesserae, either with or without a black border. Their similarities suggest a continued emphasis on uniformity. However, room 24 once had an *opus spicatum* pavement (bricks laid in a herringbone pattern),<sup>380</sup> which suggests that it had a more utilitarian function than the other spaces. The decorations of the Group 3A apartments are thus unlike those in the medianum apartments of Group 2A, where there are clear differences among the painted and mosaic decorations employed in the primary spaces and in the rooms of secondary or alternative primary importance. Because of the strong similarities among the decorations of Group 3A apartments, it is necessary to turn instead to the room's architectural features as well as its location and

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<sup>380</sup> Hermansen 1981, 41-43. In Apartment 1, room 21, the floor mosaic was composed entirely of plain white tesserae. In Apartment 2, rooms 22, 23, and 26 each had a floor composed of white tesserae with a black border near the outer edge of the room

the layout of the apartment for further clues indicating a function of primary social significance.

In the Themistocles apartments, there are no notable architectural features. The only room that contained a window was room 21 in Apartment 1, which overlooked the adjacent *angiportus* (a narrow passage or alley between houses or from a house to the street), room 18. In Apartment 2, rooms 22 and 26 do not contain windows, but they open onto medianum 24, which is thought to have contained an open light well.<sup>381</sup> Since the Group 3A apartments are also medianum apartments, one might expect the rooms in the type-A and type-B locations to be the most significant spaces of each apartment. In Apartment 2, rooms 22 and 26 are situated at opposite ends of the medianum and share a calculated view across it. In Apartment 1, room 21 is also located at one end of the medianum and has a calculated view into room 19, which appears to be a composite entryway/reception space/medianum due in part to its placement and unusual shape. Based on location, room 21 might have been a primary space, while room 19 might have been an alternative primary space.

The identity of the possible owners of the complex should also be taken into account when considering these apartments. As noted above, it is thought that the entire Themistocles complex (including its temple) might have been owned by the *collegium* of builders or carpenters, which was the richest of Ostia's *collegia* as well as one of the largest, with a total of 352 members at its peak.<sup>382</sup> With an organization this large, it would stand to reason that they owned slaves.<sup>383</sup> This *collegium* is known to have had a

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<sup>381</sup> Hermansen 1981, 41-43.

<sup>382</sup> *CIL* XIV 5345; *CIL* XIV, S 4569; D'Arms 1981, 128-29 n. 28. See also Chapter 2 for further discussion of the Ostian *collegia*.

<sup>383</sup> Meiggs 1973, 10.

headquarters further west down the Decumanus in the House of the Triclinia (Caseggiato dei Triclini). Given the large number of members in the organization, it does not seem out of the question that they would have a secondary headquarters, which might have been in this location.

Perhaps it is possible to read the apartments of the east wing of the House of Themistocles as the residences of the *collegium*'s slaves, who resided there in order to maintain the temple and its facilities. If this were the case, the uniform types of painted and mosaic decorations might not seem entirely inappropriate for the function of the apartments. Although not as lavish as those of the larger medianum apartments of Group 2A, these apartments would still likely have been more pleasing surroundings than the small, cramped upper-floor apartments found elsewhere in the city.

### **Group 3B**

There are three residences in Group 3B: the House of the Charioteers and the two apartments in the House of Annus (henceforth referred to as Apartment 1 and Apartment 2). All three of these apartments seem to have functioned initially as commercial spaces.<sup>384</sup> Just as with the apartments of Group 3A, it is somewhat difficult to identify primary spaces in these apartments because they fill a lesser number of the criteria. I have identified only two potential primary spaces among the Group 3B apartments: rooms 27 and 31 in the House of the Charioteers. Although there do not appear to be any primary spaces in either Apartment 1 or Apartment 2 of the House of Annus, each

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<sup>384</sup> On the House of the Charioteers, see Mols 1999b. On the possible commercial function of the House of Annus, see Falzone 2004, 111. Packer 1971, 187, suggests that rooms 3-8 in the House of Annus initially functioned as a factory, although he does not suggest what type of factory it might have been.

contains two alternative primary spaces.<sup>385</sup> In addition, there are up to three alternative primary spaces in the House of the Charioteers.

In all three apartments, the decorations provide the least evidence supporting an interpretation of a room as a primary space because each apartment has fairly uniform painted decorations and few, if any, traces of pavements. In the House of the Charioteers (Fig. 46), the painted decorations are characterized by the panel system and incorporate yellow and white panels, which are framed in either red or black (Fig. 1 and Fig. 47). At the center of many of the panels are found motifs such as miniature landscapes, sketchy still lifes, isolated animals, and amorini. In Apartments 1 and 2 of the House of Annius (Fig. 48), the painted decorations are comparable to those found in the House of Themistocles apartments and display an aedicular system on a white background (Fig. 49). Motifs such as garlands and birds occupy the white backgrounds. Because a single decorative system is employed throughout each apartment, the painted decorations do not reflect any clear hierarchical distinctions among the rooms.

None of the apartments preserve traces of mosaics. In the House of the Charioteers, rooms 28, 30, and 32 have floor coverings made of *cocciopesto* or *opus signinum* (a mixture of crushed pottery or brick, lime, and *pozzolana*, a volcanic product), but the last two also include marble pieces.<sup>386</sup> Because pavements are not preserved in any of the other rooms of this residence, it is unclear whether they were employed to distinguish the rooms from one another or if they were similarly uniform. In the House of Annius, there are no traces of any pavements.

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<sup>385</sup> The alternative primary spaces are: House of Annius, Apartment 1, rooms 3 and 4-4a; Apartment 2, rooms 6 and 8; House of the Charioteers, rooms 28, 30, and 32.

<sup>386</sup> Mols 1999b, 322. Packer 1971, 181, describes this as a lithostraton pavement.

Architectural features are somewhat more helpful. In the House of the Charioteers, several rooms exhibit architectural features that differentiate them from the other spaces, such as an elevated ceiling height (room 27), a vaulted ceiling (room 28), an enlarged doorway (room 30), and a direct connection between two rooms (rooms 31 and 32). However, none of these architecture features were repeated in any of the other rooms. This creates further difficulty in determining which rooms might have been the most socially significant.

In the House of Annius, there are fewer notable architectural features. In Apartment 1, room 3 contains a window, while room 4 and sub-rooms 4A and 5A included “niche”-like recesses where former doorways were walled up. In addition, the relieving arches that span the openings between room 4 and sub-room 4A and between room 5 and sub-room 5A seem to evoke an arched doorway. In Apartment 2, room 8 includes a window onto the street, while rooms 6 and 7 include “niches” comparable to those in Apartment 1.

Once again, it is necessary to turn to the location of the room and the layout of the apartment in an effort to identify certain rooms as primary spaces. Like the House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander, all of these apartments appear to have functioned originally as commercial spaces prior to their later transformation into residential units. This might have affected the extent to which the spaces could have been reconfigured to create rooms that could appropriately accommodate different formal activities.

In the House of the Charioteers, the two rooms that I identify as primary spaces (rooms 27 and 31) are located at either end of room 29, which is thought to have been an

atrium-type space.<sup>387</sup> This placement seems somewhat comparable to that of the type-A and type-B rooms in the medianum apartments. Moreover, room 31 is directly connected to room 32, the latter of which might have functioned as an alternative primary space due to its location at the interior of the residence and relationship with the other space. Rooms 28 and 30 also appear to have been alternative primary spaces. Room 28 is located at the interior of the residence and is at a noticeable remove from the atrium-type space, yet it is differentiated by its vaulted ceiling. The placement of room 30 directly across from the atrium-type space seems to mark it as a space of some importance because it would have received considerable light and air, given its large doorway. However, its location is roughly comparable to that of the type-C rooms in the medianum apartments, some of which appear to have functioned as alternative primary spaces.

In the House of Annus, the situation is even less clear. The two apartments do not exhibit identical layouts, yet they are vaguely similar in plan. Both include a trapezoidal room at the front of the apartment, which leads to a long narrow corridor that extends to a more secluded room at the back of the residence. It is possible that the rooms at the back of each apartment (room 4-4a in Apartment 1 and room 6 in Apartment 2) could have functioned as reception spaces that were used for more private encounters, just as the rooms at the front of each apartment (room 3 in Apartment 1 and room 8 in Apartment 2) could have been more public reception spaces because of their proximity to the entrance. However, I refrain from categorizing these rooms as primary spaces because of the lack of clear decorative and architectural evidence supporting such an interpretation. Rather, I suggest that they could be considered alternative primary spaces

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<sup>387</sup> Packer 1971, 181.



because their locations imply that they could have served reception functions, if necessary.

In summary, among the Group 3 apartments, the identification of primary spaces is noticeably more difficult than it is in the other apartments. This is partly due to the lack of decorative distinctions between the different rooms of each residence, although the infrequency of distinct architectural features and the irregular layouts also create challenges when attempting to differentiate between spaces of greater or lesser social significance. Moreover, for all of the Group 3B apartments, it seems likely that the original commercial functions of the structures likely imposed some restrictions on the ways in which the spaces could have been reconfigured to accommodate the social practices and political and business affairs that took place in the domestic context. The Group 3 apartments also contain rooms that were more ambiguous in nature. It is unclear whether these rooms truly functioned as “alternative primary spaces”, which would have appropriately accommodated activities associated with primary or secondary spaces, or whether they were simply restricted to secondary functions.

One must also consider the possible reasons why these apartments show less hierarchical differentiation than the apartments in Groups 1 and 2. First, it is possible that the occupants of these apartments had no need for primary spaces because they did not regularly receive and entertain guests. Perhaps the residents were thus clients who visited their patrons in their homes rather than patrons themselves. In short, they might have been the residences of people at the lower end of the social continuum.<sup>388</sup>

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<sup>388</sup> Hermansen 1981, 111. For example, Hermansen describes the Themistocles complex as a “non-luxurious place” that might have been the “environment of humble people”.<sup>388</sup>

Second, it is possible that the occupants of these residences used each of the rooms in a multifunctional way.<sup>389</sup> Rather than relying permanent decorations and architectural features to support the functions of the rooms, the occupants of these apartments might have employed portable artworks and other furnishings to distinguish rooms from one another. One must also keep in mind that these apartments were all ground floor units, which suggests a certain degree of wealth and social status on the part of the resident(s).

Building upon the first and second possibilities, one can also argue that the Group 3 apartments might have been less extravagant rental properties. The decorative similarities would then be attributed to the owner of each property, who adorned each unit in such a way that it would be appropriate for either occupants who had no need of primary spaces or for those who required them and chose to customize the spaces with their own portable art or furnishings.<sup>390</sup>

Given the difficulty in identifying primary spaces in Group 3 through the examination of decorations and architectural features, it seems likely that a re-examination of the layout of each apartment could shed additional light on which rooms were the most important within each residence. More specifically, the statistical methodology of access analysis could be a useful tool for studying the Group 3 apartments as well as other residences that exhibit irregular layouts. By applying access analysis to these Ostian apartments, it might be possible to determine whether particular spaces were characterized by controlled use patterns or variable use patterns. This, in turn, might suggest how they were used and whether they were significant spaces within

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<sup>389</sup> Mols 2002.

<sup>390</sup> See especially Liedtke 2001; Falzone 2007.

a given residence. It is beyond the scope of this chapter and this study in general to apply access analysis to all of the Ostian apartments considered here,<sup>391</sup> but I propose this as a topic of future research because it would no doubt inform our understanding of how space was used in apartments of irregular layout.

### **The Distribution and Decoration of Primary and Alternative Primary Spaces**

After considering the apartments on a group-by-group basis, I now address broad similarities and differences across the three groups in terms of the distribution of primary and alternative primary spaces. Because this study focuses primarily on the relationship between painted decorations, spatial hierarchies, and social status, I address here the similarities and differences among the painted decorations of all three groups. I also consider the similarities among the mosaics of the different groups because they played an equally significant role in the social configuration of space.

### **Primary Spaces**

I have arrived at the following conclusion regarding the frequency with which primary spaces can be identified in the twenty-four Ostian residences under consideration: regardless of size, nearly all of the apartments include rooms that appear to have functioned as primary spaces. However, there is a notable distinction between the apartments of Groups 1 and 2 and those of Group 3 in terms of the number of primary spaces that they contain and in the primary space criteria that the rooms exhibit. Nearly

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<sup>391</sup> On the application of access analysis to Ostian residences, see DeLaine 1999; 2004. DeLaine does not include the House of Themistocles in her study of the medianum apartments, although her results seem applicable to these residences.

all of the apartments in Groups 1 and 2 have at least two primary spaces.<sup>392</sup> In fact, the majority of the apartments in Groups 1 and 2 have only two primary spaces, which I identify based largely on decorations and location and to a lesser extent on the use of notable architectural features. While one could argue that the frequency with which two reception spaces are found in these apartments could be attributed in part to the prevalence of the medianum-type apartment in Group 2, it seems significant nonetheless that nearly all of the Group 1 and Group 2 apartments that were not based on a medianum plan also have two primary spaces.<sup>393</sup> For individuals of elevated social status, it is possible that the minimum number of distinct spaces that could be used for the practice of different social rituals in the setting of the home was two. For those who had a greater need for differentiated spaces, there was also the option of using the alternative primary spaces, although less than half of the total apartments in Groups 1 and 2 included such spaces. Perhaps there was a subtle distinction in the social status of the residents of apartments who occupied apartments with alternative primary spaces and those who did not.

Among the Group 3 apartments, primary spaces are not nearly as easily identifiable, although this is not to say that they did not exist. Three of the five apartments in Group 3 have at least one primary space, and in fact only one apartment has more than one of such spaces.<sup>394</sup> The difficulty in identifying primary spaces in Group 3 residences can be attributed partly to the fact that the decorations of these apartments do not suggest hierarchical distinctions among the different spaces. When I

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<sup>392</sup> Based on my criteria, the House of the Painted Ceiling (Group 2A) has one primary space and one alternative primary space.

<sup>393</sup> The House of the Muses (Group 1) has four primary spaces.

<sup>394</sup> The House of the Charioteers has two primary spaces: rooms 27 and 31.

have identified rooms in the Group 3 apartments as primary spaces, I have based my conclusion on the location of the room within the residence. More specifically, the primary spaces in the Group 3 apartments tend to be situated at either end of a medianum or an atrium-type space. This is similar to the location of nearly all of the primary spaces in the Group 1 and 2 apartments, which frequently open onto a major source of natural light and air, such as a medianum or courtyard.

Given the fact that primary spaces typically facilitated same basic functions of receiving and entertaining guests in apartments of varying size and plan, one must then consider whether they were all adorned similarly. Between the Group 1 and 2 apartments, there are several basic parallels among the decorations. With regard to wall paintings, the primary spaces of nearly all of the residences are characterized by some variation on the architectural system on a polychrome background.<sup>395</sup> As noted above, the architectural system is thought to have required more skilled painters than the other decorative systems,<sup>396</sup> while the diversity of pigments employed in the paintings might have been a costly expense.<sup>397</sup> The use of architectural features such as columns, balustrades, and porticoes to separate the panels can be interpreted as deliberate references to features of public architecture.<sup>398</sup> This would have been appropriate decoration for a space where the resident carried out activities associated with his public responsibilities. Only in one apartment does one find actual columns at the entrance to

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<sup>395</sup> Those in the House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander and in the Inn of the Peacock were characterized by panel systems. In the case of the former, it has been debated whether the backgrounds should be considered monochrome or polychrome, while in the latter they are clearly polychrome.

<sup>396</sup> Joyce 1981.

<sup>397</sup> Ling 1991, 207-9.

<sup>398</sup> On the appropriateness of references to the public sphere in the house, see Perry 2005, 54. See also Bergmann 2002 on painted architecture in Roman houses.

what was likely the most prominent reception space;<sup>399</sup> other residents had to be satisfied with painted likenesses of architecture on their walls.

The panels consistently contain images of isolated mythological figures or deities. Rarely, there are large-scale mythological panels: these are only found in two of the Group 1 residences (the House of the Muses and the House of Jupiter and Ganymede) and in one Group 2 apartment (the House of the Infant Bacchus).<sup>400</sup> Rarely, there are reduced mythological compositions, such as the panel on the north wall of room 8 in the House of the Yellow Walls, which includes a central painting depicting Hercules and Achelaos, who are identifiable by their attributes and poses (Fig. 22).<sup>401</sup> In addition, there are occasionally thematic links among the figures, such as in room 5 of the House of the Muses (the eponymous “Room of the Muses”), where images of the Muses and Apollo stand at the center of each panel (Fig. 12),<sup>402</sup> or in rooms 4 and 6 of the House of the Priestesses, in which the male and female figures seem to evoke a Dionysiac theme (Fig. 25).<sup>403</sup>

In short, the painted decorations in Groups 1 and 2 appear to have been appropriate for the most important rooms of these residences for several reasons: 1) they commonly exhibit a decorative system that is arguably the most complex of the several

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<sup>399</sup> House of the Priestesses, room 6.

<sup>400</sup> In the House of the Muses, there was at least one mythological panel in room 10, which is thought to represent either Andromeda being freed by Perseus or Hesione being released by Hercules (Felletti Maj and Moreno 1968, 49). In room 19 of the same house, there were mythological panels on the central panels of the east and west walls, which might have depicted Perseus and the sea monster. This would have made an iconographic connection back to the aforementioned panel in room 10 (Felletti Maj and Moreno 1967). In the House of Jupiter and Ganymede, there is a large mythological panel on the east wall, which depicts Jupiter, his mortal lover Ganymede, and Leda (Clarke 1991a, 327-35). In the House of the Infant Bacchus, room 20 once included a panel that is thought to have represented Mercury holding the Infant Bacchus in his arm (Falzone 2004, 80).

<sup>401</sup> Clarke 1991a, 356-58.

<sup>402</sup> Felletti Maj and Moreno 1967, 20-30. For a summary of Felletti Maj and Moreno’s interpretation of the Room of the Muses (room 5) and further discussion of the painted decorations, see Clarke 1991a, 278-83.

<sup>403</sup> Falzone 2007, 74-75.

systems that were regularly employed in contemporary Ostian painted decorations; 2) they incorporate pigments of varying colors, some of which were less commonly used because they were more costly; 3) they evoke public architecture, which would have reinforced the public persona of the occupant and the fact that he engaged in political and business affairs in the setting of his residence; and 4) they incorporate images of mythological figures, which might have inspired educated discussion during formal social gatherings about the subjects and themes depicted.

Among the primary spaces of Group 1 and 2 residences, painted decorations characterized by a panel system are found in only two residences: the House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander, a Group 1 apartment, and the Inn of the Peacock, a Group 2 apartment (Figs. 41-42). Comparable decorations are also found in the House of the Charioteers, a Group 3 apartment (Fig. 1 and Fig. 47). The painted decorations of the House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander and the House of the Charioteers exhibit strong formal and stylistic similarities and are thought to have been painted by the same workshop.<sup>404</sup> Because these paintings have monochrome panels that are enclosed in a frame of a single, bold color, the decorations have been read variously as having either a monochrome or polychrome background. This in turn has led to different interpretations of the social significance of these rooms.<sup>405</sup> As I noted above, the uncertain interpretation of the background colors of these painted decorations, as opposed to the clear reading of the architectural decorations as polychrome, seems to suggest a qualitative distinction

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<sup>404</sup> Mols 1999b; Mols 2002, 162; Oome 2007, 242. The paintings in both apartments are dated to the mid-second century on the basis of the relationship between the painted decorations and the phases of architecture, and to a lesser extent on stylistic similarities.

<sup>405</sup> Liedtke 2003, 1-12; Mols 2005, 240-41; Oome 2007, 242-44.

between the panel decorations of the primary spaces of these apartments and the architectural decorations of the primary spaces of other residences.

The painted decorations in the Inn of the Peacock are stylistically different from those in the other two apartments with panel decorations and exhibit greater variety in the shapes, sizes, and placement of the panels.<sup>406</sup> In the Inn of the Peacock, it seems that hierarchical distinctions among the rooms were indicated to the viewer based on the variety of colors employed and the number of figural subjects depicted in the paintings. Thus, the panel system appears to have been used in spaces that clearly served a primary function, albeit less frequently than the architectural system. Whether the infrequency of its use can be attributed to an overall preference for the architectural system among the Ostian population or to the chance survival of only a few examples of the panel system remains to be seen. Nevertheless, it seems significant that simple panel systems are not regularly found in the primary spaces of the Ostian apartments under consideration.

Among the Group 1 and 2 apartments, painted decorations involving an aedicular system on a monochrome background are not found in primary spaces. However, this system of painted decoration is used in the majority of Group 3 apartments: that is, Apartments 1 and 2 of the House of Themistocles, and Apartments 1 and 2 of the House of Annius. The painted decorations in these apartments are especially similar: they all include a monochrome white background, which is populated by simple, red aediculae with architectural features added in yellow and green at regular intervals (Fig. 45 and Fig. 49). The fields between the aediculae feature motifs such as vertical floral and vegetal

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<sup>406</sup> The stylistic differences between the paintings in the Inn of the Peacock and those in the House of the Charioteers and the House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander could be based in part on the differences in date. The paintings in the Inn of the Peacock have been dated to the early third century (cf. Clarke 1991a, 342). See also Gasparri 1970, for a full discussion of the painted decorations of the Inn of the Peacock.



garlands, birds, and oscilla. Because these painted decorations are found in all of the adorned rooms of each apartment, they do not help to indicate the presence of spatial hierarchies in any of the residences.

Mosaics are another key component of the decorations of primary spaces and help to differentiate the most important spaces of the residence from those of lesser social significance. There are clear similarities among the Group 1 and Group 2 apartments in terms of their floor mosaics. Not surprisingly, the floor mosaics in the primary spaces of these apartments typically exhibit the most complex patterns of all of the mosaics in a residence. However, one must keep in mind that the complexity of the designs of the mosaics can vary considerably among different apartments. For example, in the House of the Painted Ceiling (a Group 2 residence), room 1, a primary space, has a black and white floor mosaic that exhibits a moderately complex pattern of interlocking I-shaped motifs.<sup>407</sup> This pattern clearly distinguishes this space from room 4, an alternative primary space, which has a mosaic floor composed of plain white tesserae. In contrast, in the House of the Yellow Walls (also a Group 2 residence), there are elaborately designed black and white mosaic “carpets” in the primary spaces (rooms 7 and 8). These mosaics help differentiate the primary spaces from room 6, an alternative space with floor of white tesserae enclosed in a black outer band.

Even within a single residence there can be a noticeable degree of variation among the mosaics of the primary spaces. For example, in the House of Jupiter and Ganymede, room 27, which is the larger of the two primary spaces, has a floor mosaic with a pattern of interlocking octagons and squares. In contrast, room 25, the smaller of the primary spaces, has a significantly more sophisticated pattern involving knots,

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<sup>407</sup> Dunbabin 1999, 340, refers to this pattern as the “key-pattern”.

lozenges, shields, and other geometric motifs. In one rare case, room 9 of the Inn of the Peacock contains an opus sectile floor, which distinguishes it from all other spaces in the residence, even the other primary space.<sup>408</sup>

Among the Group 3 residences, mosaics are rarely documented. The general absence of mosaics could indicate that they were not included in many of these spaces, although one should not base interpretations solely on a lack of evidence. If this were the case, it might reinforce the conclusion that there were not primary spaces in some of these apartments. However, the two apartments in the House of Themistocles once contained simple white mosaic floors in at least several of their spaces: room 19 of Apartment 1 and rooms 22, 23, and 25 of Apartment 2. Interestingly, room 24 (the medianum) of Apartment 2 previously had an *opus spicatum* floor. Thus, in Apartment 2 of the House of Themistocles there appears to be a distinction between the spaces with mosaic floors and the medianum with its more utilitarian pavement, perhaps because the medianum served a more dynamic function than the other rooms. In sum, mosaics are a less reliable indicator of primary importance in Group 3 apartments, but they regularly reflect spatial hierarchies in the Group 1 and 2 residences.

### **Alternative Primary Spaces**

All three groups of apartments have at least one residence that includes one or more of the multifunctional spaces that I have deemed “alternative primary spaces”. Such spaces display one or more features associated with primary spaces, yet some of their other features imply that they served a less significant function within the residence.

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<sup>408</sup> In the Inn of the Peacock, room 8 (the second primary space) has a floor mosaic with large black and white geometric shapes, such as convex diamonds, squares, and a motif resembling a kantharos.

The presence of one or more of these alternative primary spaces in a residence is significant because it indicates that the owner or resident likely required additional reception spaces, perhaps of a more private nature, for carrying out political and business affairs or for social encounters with his or her most respected friends.

Alternative primary spaces are not found in all of the residences: in Group 1, they are found in two of the three apartments; in Group 2, they are found in six of the sixteen apartments; and in Group 3, they are found in four of the five apartments. Among the Group 1 and 2 residences, the apartments that include alternative primary spaces also belong to well-appointed apartment complexes, such as the Garden Houses complex and the Insula of the Paintings. The presence of alternative primary spaces in such apartments is not surprising because these complexes contain some of the largest apartments in the city and once provided amenities not readily available in other Ostian dwellings.<sup>409</sup>

In Group 3, alternative primary spaces are found in the House of Themistocles, Apartment 1 (room 19), the House of the Charioteers (rooms 28, 30, and 32), and the House of Annius, Apartment 1 (rooms 3 and 4-4a) and Apartment 2 (rooms 6 and 8). The alternative primary spaces in the House of the Charioteers fulfill several of the primary space criteria related to architectural features and location. In the House of Themistocles and the House of Annius, the spaces that I identify as alternative primary spaces do not display architectural or decorative features associated with primary spaces,

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<sup>409</sup> For example, in the Garden Houses complex, residents had access to six private water basins. This afforded them the luxury of not having to travel to the nearest fountain house to have access to water. Moreover, in the interior-block apartments, it is thought that all of the apartments (even those on the fourth floor) had indoor plumbing (cf. Stevens 2005).

yet the location of each of these rooms and the layout of each apartment provide some support for my interpretation.

With regard to the decorations of the alternative primary spaces, the Group 1 and 2 apartments share greater similarities with each other than either does with the Group 3 apartments. In the Group 1 and 2 apartments, all of the alternative primary spaces of these apartments include painted decorations with aedicular systems on either white or yellow backgrounds.<sup>410</sup> This type of wall painting is commonly associated with secondary spaces.

Rarely, alternative primary spaces have painted decorations that are associated with primary spaces. For example, in the House of the Muses, room 11 (an alternative primary space) contains wall paintings that are characterized by an architectural system on a polychrome background also include figural subjects. In the House of the Muses, the choice of a more elevated decorative system for a room of lesser social significance could be attributed to the overall high quality of the paintings throughout the residence rather than to a deliberate attempt to designate this room a primary space.

The mosaics in the alternative primary spaces of the Group 1 and 2 apartments largely inform the reading of these rooms as spaces that could serve functions of primary and secondary social importance. Unlike the painted decorations of the alternative primary spaces, which are typically comparable to the decorations found in clear secondary spaces, the mosaics often display moderately complex patterns. While these

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<sup>410</sup> The following alternative primary spaces in Groups 1 and 2 have yellow walls and an aedicular system: room 33 in the House of Jupiter and Ganymede; room 2 in the House of the Painted Ceiling; rooms 4, 5, and 6 in the House of the Yellow Walls; room 4 in the House of the Painted Vaults; and rooms 8, 9, and 11 in the House of the Priestesses. The following alternative primary spaces in Groups 1 and 2 have white walls and an aedicular system: see the House of the Painted Vaults, room 5; and the House of the Muses, room 9.

patterns are not always as intricate as those found in primary spaces, they tend to be more complex than those in the rooms that appear to be clearly secondary in function. The pattern of a mosaic floor can be a particularly useful indicator of alternative primary function when the painted decorations of the room are nearly identical to those in a space with a much simpler mosaic floor. For example, in the House of the Yellow Walls, rooms 4 and 5 are nearly identical in size and in painted decorations: both display an aedicular system on a yellow background. Room 4 (a secondary space) has a floor mosaic that is composed entirely of white tesserae, with the exception of a black band that runs around the perimeter of the room. In contrast, room 5 (an alternative primary space) has a mosaic with diagonal lines formed by black and white square motifs. It seems likely that the greater complexity of the floor mosaic in room 5 would have suggested to guests and occupants alike its importance as an alternative primary space.<sup>411</sup>

On occasion, one finds a more elaborate mosaic in a room that otherwise appears to be of secondary function. For example, in the House of Jupiter and Ganymede, the floor mosaic in room 24 (an alternative primary space) is arguably more complex than that found in room 27, the largest primary space in the residence. Whereas the mosaic in room 24 displays a complicated pattern composed of a black meander pattern on a white background, with geometric motifs such as convex diamonds, ovoid shapes, square, and circles in the corners and at the center, the mosaic in room 27 exhibits a regular, all-over pattern of interlocking octagons and squares. In short, the greater complexity of the mosaic in room 24 elevates its hierarchical significance within the residence.

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<sup>411</sup> In the House of the Yellow Walls, room 5's role as an alternative primary space would also have been reinforced by its connection to room 6, another alternative primary space, which opens onto room 7, a primary space.

In the case of the Group 3 apartments, the alternative primary spaces do not exhibit any clear differences from the painted decorations in the primary spaces, where the latter are present. Mosaics and other pavements are also unreliable indicators of hierarchical distinctions between primary, alternative primary, and secondary spaces. In Apartment 2 of the House of Themistocles, there appears to have been a hierarchical distinction between the rooms with floors composed of white tesserae and the medianum with the *opus signinum* pavement, but it is not possible to interpret these differences further. Thus, decorations do not play a particularly useful role in the identification of either primary or alternative primary spaces in the Group 3 apartments.

### **Total Number of Possible Reception Spaces**

To return to the main hypothesis of the chapter: if there is a connection between the size and splendor of a residence and its owner's social status, one should expect to find a greater number of primary spaces in the largest apartments because the owner presumably had the greatest need of diverse spaces to receive and entertain visitors, friends, and business partners. The moderately sized apartments should contain primary spaces but in lesser numbers, and the smallest houses should contain few, if any. One would also expect to find a similar correlation between apartment size and the quality and quantity of decorations. Briefly, is it possible to identify a continuum of housing at Ostia that correlates with the presumed continuum of statuses?

The answer to this question is not a simple yes or no. Indeed, the answer to the question lies not so much in the total number of primary spaces, but rather in the number of possible reception spaces and in the quality of their decorations. Here I use the phrase

“possible reception spaces” to refer to the total number of primary and alternative primary spaces in a single residence. In short, all of the residences appear as if they had at least two reception spaces, either of clear primary function, alternative primary function, or a combination of the two. However, the Group 3 apartments present the most uncertain cases.

Interestingly, there does not appear to be a direct correlation between the size of the apartment and the number of possible reception spaces. Rather, my analysis indicates that there is great variation among the twenty-four apartments located along this residential continuum. In other words, the distribution of possible reception spaces does not clearly follow Vitruvius’ guidelines regarding the relationship between the size and decoration of a Roman house.<sup>412</sup> Such spaces are found in all of the Ostian residences examined in this chapter, from the smallest apartment to the very largest “domus-insula”. Here I summarize my finds with regard to the total number of possible reception spaces in each group. I refer the reader to the Table on pages 202-206 for more specific information about the number of possible reception spaces in each residence.

In the Group 1 apartments, each apartment contains at least two but not more than seven possible reception spaces. In Group 2, each apartment includes at least two but no more than five possible reception spaces, although the majority of the apartments have only two possible reception spaces. In Group 3, all of the apartments have at least two *possible* reception spaces. I emphasize possible because of the difficulty in identifying primary spaces among the Group 3 apartments, which in turn leads to further problems when attempting to identify alternative primary spaces in these units. Despite these

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<sup>412</sup> Vitruvius, *De arch.* 6.5.1-2.

problems, I suggest that there were at least two possible reception spaces in each of the five apartments in Group 3.

Although there does not appear to be a direct correlation between apartment size and the number of possible reception spaces, a curious pattern arises regarding the apartments of Groups 1 and 2 (i.e., apartments with a ground floor area of approximately 190 m<sup>2</sup> and larger): nearly all of these apartments exhibit a comparable need of at least two primary spaces. Less frequently, apartments in these two groups appear to have required alternative primary spaces that could have served primary or secondary functions, depending on the occasion and the resident's needs. The identification of numerous possible reception spaces in the Group 1 and Group 2 apartments clearly distinguishes them from the Group 3 apartments, which include rooms that are less convincingly identifiable as either primary or alternative primary spaces.

There is also a similar correlation between the size of the apartment and the types of decorations employed. The residences of Groups 1 and 2 have primary spaces that consistently include painted decorations on polychrome backgrounds, which are characterized by some variation on the architectural system, as well as black and white floor mosaics that display patterns of moderate to high complexity. The alternative primary spaces of these two groups are also similar: they often include painted decorations on a monochrome background that employ the aedicular system of decoration and floor mosaics that are roughly comparable in complexity to those found in the primary spaces.

One can also argue that the decorations of the Group 1 and Group 2 apartments are generally of higher quality than those of the Group 3 apartments. When considering



practical factors such as the higher cost of commissioning a painters' workshop to carry out more complex paintings and the cost of rarer pigments, and the expense of hiring mosaicists to lay floors in multiple rooms, it seems reasonable to suggest that the decorations of the Group 1 and Group 2 apartments were generally of higher quality than those of the Group 3 apartments. Perhaps we should then see these Groups 1 and 2 less as distinct entities and more as one large group of luxury residences, which vary considerably in size but display similar concerns with regard to the use of painted and mosaic decorations and the use of distinct architectural features and a calculated layout to socially configure space in a hierarchical arrangement.

In contrast, the Group 3 apartments generally contain painted decorations and mosaics that are characteristic of the secondary spaces of Group 1 and 2 apartments. Although these decorations differ sharply from those of the primary spaces of the other two groups, the presence of painted decorations and less frequently, floor mosaics, suggest that the residents of these apartments were at least of moderate means but were not the wealthiest or most powerful individuals at Ostia. Based on the decorations, architectural features (or lack thereof), and layouts of the Group 3 apartments, it is apparent that their occupants did not require residences with rooms that were visually differentiated as primary or secondary spaces.

It is possible that the rooms were deliberately adorned in a uniform manner in order to allow for a more multifunctional use of space. The high degree of uniformity among the painted decorations might indicate that they were intended to be suitable for tenants, rather than for the owner of the residence, who would have had a longer-term commitment to residing in the apartment and who might have desired that the spaces

were decorated to suit his or her tastes. What remains unclear is the extent to which the uniformly decorated spaces of these apartments might have been used for activities of great social importance, such as the *salutatio* or the *convivium*. The application of the methodology of access analysis to the plans of the Group 3 apartments could assist in the identification of patterns of interaction among the different rooms, which might in turn might further our understanding of the uses of space in such residences. One must also consider the possibility that one or more of these residences, particularly those in the House of Annius, simply did not include primary spaces. If this were the case, there would be a sharper social distinction between the apartments of Group 3 and those of Groups 1 and 2.

To return to the principle of *decorum* outlined at the beginning of this chapter, my analysis suggests that the apartments of Groups 1, 2, and 3 were appropriate for people at different positions along the social continuum. More specifically, the luxury residences of Groups 1 and 2 were likely occupied by people at the higher end of the social continuum, who had an obvious need for hosting friends, business partners, and clients. The lavishly outfitted reception spaces, adorned with signs of the public sphere, would have been suitable for individuals who needed to fulfill their public responsibilities in the setting of the home. It thus seems reasonable that the elites of Ostian society would have resided in apartments such as these, although it remains to be seen whether these individuals belonged to the truly elite segment of Roman society (i.e., the remaining 2% of the population).<sup>413</sup> In contrast, the architectural and decorative remains of the Group 3

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<sup>413</sup> It seems likely that many of the true Roman elites resided in Rome. Packer 1971, 71, suggests that men of great importance who were connected with Ostia would have lived in Rome and would have had their freedmen reside at Ostia to safeguard their interests. Based on his study of the plans of Ostian apartments and his estimation of the number of occupants in different types of apartments, Packer suggests that the

apartments suggest that their occupants did not have a clear need for receiving and entertaining guests. However, one cannot ignore the possibility that portable objects, which no longer remain in situ, might have been used by their occupants to suggest some hierarchical differentiation, perhaps on a more modest scale. Thus, these residences were likely appropriate for people at a lower position on the social continuum, although undoubtedly not at its lowest end.

This chapter has thus shed light on similarities and differences among Ostian residences of varying sizes, their primary spaces, and their decorations. While it is important to have a nuanced understanding of the complete domestic setting of different types of Ostian residences, is also important to consider more pointedly who the occupants of these apartments might have been. In the next chapter, I examine the inscriptional evidence from Ostia that indicates an upwardly mobile segment of the city's predominantly non-elite population. I argue that these individuals, who played an increasingly prominent role in the local Ostian society, might have occupied one or more of the types of apartments analyzed in the current chapter. I consider this epigraphic evidence in relation to the material evidence of the apartments in an effort to investigate how one's newly attained public responsibilities might have encouraged him to seek out a residence that was outfitted and adorned in ways that supported his active participation in Ostian society life while appropriately reflecting his elevated social status.

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“upper and upper middle classes” of Ostia would have formed an aristocratic minority that could not have exceeded 1,966 persons.

## CHAPTER 4

### Upwardly Mobile Ostians and Domestic Displays of Social Status

Social mobility, as defined by Keith Hopkins, is “a process of gradual acquisition of status on a variety of fronts”.<sup>414</sup> At Ostia, there are two main groups of individuals who were socially mobile at the end of the first century and well into the second century: freeborn non-elite individuals who were able to enter the order of the decurions (this includes men of servile descent and freeborn citizen immigrants), and “independent” freedpersons, particularly those who became *seviri Augustales*.

These organizations have been viewed as the top two tiers of Ostian society, and they were connected in two ways: first, the *seviri Augustales* were often the freedmen or clients of decurions, and second, the freeborn sons and grandsons of the *Augustales* often later rose to populate the ranks of the order of the decurions (*ordo decurionum*).<sup>415</sup> Membership in these organizations required wealth and high moral standards, and it provided an individual with significant public responsibilities and improved his social status and potentially also his legal status. Thus, the individuals who joined these organizations can be considered upwardly mobile. There were also influential individuals at Ostia who did not belong to the order of the decurions or to the *seviri Augustales*, such as the high officials of the *collegia* as well as successful persons with

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<sup>414</sup> Hopkins 1965, 17.

<sup>415</sup> Mouritsen 1997; Laird 2002, 57-61; Laird 2006, 31-32.

significant commercial interests.<sup>416</sup> I focus here on the former two groups because there is substantial documentation of the role that their members played in the civic and economic life of the city. It is this large group of individuals who would have been especially concerned with displaying their newly acquired wealth, influence, and social status in both public and private settings.

In this chapter, I consider the main factors that allowed the freeborn non-elites and “independent” freedmen to negotiate successfully an upward trajectory in Ostian society in greater numbers than in the past. I also address the kinds of public responsibilities that these new positions required of them, which would have been fulfilled in part in the domestic context. Based on my survey of apartments in Chapter 3, I argue that apartments in Groups 1 and 2 would have appropriately accommodated the various social, political, patronal, and business activities in which these upwardly mobile individuals were presumably engaged. By examining written and material evidence in tandem, I hope to shed light on the larger social factors that might have motivated residents to choose decorations for their apartments that would convey distinct messages about their acculturation into Roman society as well as their participation in Ostian social and political life.

### **The New Decurions**

There is considerable epigraphic evidence of Ostia’s elite governing stratum prior to and during the city’s period of great prosperity in the second century. In the pre-Flavian period, inscriptions attest to a small group of families, particularly the Egrilii and

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<sup>416</sup> George 2006, 27, notes that leadership roles in the *collegia* were viewed as “badges of honor”. See also Joshel 1992, 113-22.

the P. Lucilii Gamalae, who held prominent positions in the city's municipal life.<sup>417</sup> In this period, many of the city's *duoviri* (chief magistrates) came from these families.<sup>418</sup> Similarly, the members of the order of the decurions seem to have been drawn primarily from the small number of the city's wealthy, well-established families.<sup>419</sup> Meiggs presumes that it was more difficult for outsiders, such as freeborn non-elites, immigrants, and the descendants of freedmen, to reach high positions within the local government prior to the Flavian period.<sup>420</sup> Until this time, membership in the city council had typically been handed down from father to son, provided that a family maintained its bloodline and economic resources and also that its members did not advance into the higher orders of the equestrians and the senators.<sup>421</sup> Although the decurions were at the bottom rung of the three elite orders,<sup>422</sup> they were, like their superiors, expected to have wealth, reputable birth, and respectable social standing (*dignitas*), the latter of which was the most vaguely defined.<sup>423</sup>

With the beginning of the Flavian period, the aristocratic minority's firm hold on the council seems to have been broken, as the moneyed descendants of freedmen and other prosperous, "self-made" citizens,<sup>424</sup> including wealthy immigrants, entered the Ostian order in greater numbers than they had in the past.<sup>425</sup> In one of the earliest and perhaps most dramatic explanations of these events, Meiggs proposes the occurrence of a

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<sup>417</sup> Meiggs 1973, 191-96; Pavolini 1986, 33-36. On P. Lucilius Gamala's feasts for the Ostians, see D'Arms 2000.

<sup>418</sup> Meiggs 1973, 173.

<sup>419</sup> Meiggs 1973, 173.

<sup>420</sup> Meiggs 1973, 191-93.

<sup>421</sup> Garnsey 1975, 167.

<sup>422</sup> For general discussion of the elite orders, see Alföldy 1985. See also Garnsey and Saller 1987, 112-15, and D'Ambra and Métraux 2006, xi-xiv.

<sup>423</sup> Garnsey and Saller 1987, 114; D'Ambra and Métraux 2006, xii.

<sup>424</sup> Gordon 1931, 76, notes that "self-made" decurions are often found in trading centers.

<sup>425</sup> Mouritsen 1997, 59. López 1995, 340-42, notes that many of the immigrants at Ostia of both free and servile origin who were decurions were also engaged in the grain trade with North Africa.

veritable “social revolution”.<sup>426</sup> According to his account, there was a sharp clash between the city’s ruling aristocracy and the wealthy descendants of freedmen and freeborn immigrants. The latter group, according to Meiggs, was able to join the town council on a massive scale because of their financial resources.<sup>427</sup> This proposed infiltration of these previously non-elite individuals into the order of the decurions allegedly contributed to the “eclipse of the old families”.<sup>428</sup>

In recent years, scholars have offered a more nuanced consideration of these “plebeian decurions”<sup>429</sup> and the reasons why wealthy individuals from non-elite backgrounds were able to become decurions in greater numbers than in the first century AD. Mouritsen and López both point to structural changes within the order as the main cause for turnover within the organization and the introduction of new members.<sup>430</sup> Over time, it became increasingly difficult to restrict membership to men from the handful of well-established families who still remained at Ostia. It is thought that each Roman city had an *ordo decurionum* of 100 members, although larger cities might have had accordingly greater numbers of members.<sup>431</sup> Ostia might have had 110 decurions in the second half of the second century.<sup>432</sup>

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<sup>426</sup> Meiggs 1973, 196.

<sup>427</sup> Meiggs 1973, 196-208. See also Garnsey and Saller 1987, 115, on the fact that wealth often carried more weight than the criteria of social acceptability when choosing new members to fill the empty seats of the *ordo decurionum*.

<sup>428</sup> Meiggs 1973, 208-11.

<sup>429</sup> López 1995, 337.

<sup>430</sup> López 1995; Mouritsen 1997. Both scholars examine epigraphic evidence from Ostia, Pompeii, and Puteoli, although Mouritsen also considers inscriptions from Beneventum and Canusium.

<sup>431</sup> Garnsey 1974, 229-252, suggests that the size of the *ordo* might have varied according to the population of the city. See also Alföldy 1985, 137-38; López 1995, 331-32.

<sup>432</sup> *CIL* XIV, S 4642; Meiggs 1973, 181.

Although Ostia had a fairly large population in the second century, which may have reached as high as 60,000 at its peak,<sup>433</sup> it had become increasingly difficult by that time to fill the approximately 100 or more seats of the order. Several factors led to this problem. First, the well-established families who had previously populated the order no longer provided a ready supply of candidates to fill the seats due to internal changes. Such changes included the extinction of a family line,<sup>434</sup> the elevation of decurions to the equestrian rank,<sup>435</sup> and the splitting up of a family's wealth, which would prevent potential members from being able to afford the financial expenditures that the office required.<sup>436</sup>

The age requirement for holding office was typically 25 or 30,<sup>437</sup> but that did not always prevent younger freeborn males from entering the order. On rare occasions, boys as young as twelve were decurions at Ostia,<sup>438</sup> at least one of which was the grandson of a wealthy freedman.<sup>439</sup> It is possible that these boys were recruited because their wealthy freedman fathers could not join the order, although their sons could join as freeborn citizens. In return, the father would offer substantial sums of money to ensure

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<sup>433</sup> Calza and Lugli 1941, 142-55, propose an estimate of 36,000 people. Girri 1956, 44, suggests that the population of the excavated area was 21,102 people, plus an additional 15,000 who presumably lived in the area of the city that has not yet been excavated; Packer 1971, estimates a total population of approximately 27,000; Meiggs 1973, 532-34, proposes a population of 50,000-60,000.

<sup>434</sup> On low aristocratic fertility rates, see Hopkins 1965, 35. Elite families were required to spend lavish sums of money on practices associated with their children's futures. Subsequently, families would often restrict the number of children that they had because they could not afford all of the expenses. For example, before a son could enter public life, games would be held in his honor that could cost as much as twice his father's annual income. Likewise, a daughter's dowry had to be appropriate to her father's status.

<sup>435</sup> Garnsey 1971, 316; López 1995, 333-34.

<sup>436</sup> Hopkins 1965, 25. It was a common practice for parents in Rome to split up their property equally among their children, regardless of sex. If a family had more than two children, their share of their parents' wealth would be greatly decreased. See also Mouritsen 1997, 77.

<sup>437</sup> Alföldy 1985, 127; López 1995, 332, n. 2. The minimum age was lowered in certain circumstances. Garnsey 1971, 316, cites the case of decurions in Bithynia during the reign of Trajan, who were able to enter the order at the age of 25 if they had previous experience as magistrates.

<sup>438</sup> Gordon 1931, 67; *CIL* XIV, 342, 5379, 306.

<sup>439</sup> Wilson 1935, 59; *CIL* XIV, 8, 250, 251, 341. M. Cornelius Valerianus, the father of the young decurion, was himself a decurion and an equestrian.



his freeborn son's post and his future municipal career.<sup>440</sup> In addition, it has been suggested that very few families who made their fortunes at Ostia remained in the city for more than a few generations.<sup>441</sup> Perhaps many of these new decurions did not stay at Ostia long enough to fully establish a seat in the order that could be held by their male descendants.

While the main requirements to enter the order were a freeborn origin, certain property requirements,<sup>442</sup> and *dignitas*, prosperous individuals of freeborn and servile descent were able to gain membership in the order in greater numbers than in previous periods because wealth (in money and in land ownership) was a primary factor in admittance.<sup>443</sup> This is not to say that this group of formerly non-elite individuals entirely displaced the established families in the town council. Rather, Mouritsen indicates that these new decurions experienced upward mobility on an individual rather than collective basis, and with some clear limitations. Most of the new families, in fact, only reached the order of the decurions and rarely ascended to magistracies or to the equestrian order.<sup>444</sup>

Moreover, it was especially difficult for these individuals to maintain their seats for long periods of time because of the costly financial obligations associated with membership in the order. A decurion, for example, was expected to assist with the public expenditures of the city by participating in municipal euergetism.<sup>445</sup> He could contribute

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<sup>440</sup> Gordon 1931, 66-67.

<sup>441</sup> Wilson 1938, 152. The only established families appear to have been those of the P. Lucilii and the C. Nasennii, and possible also the Egrilii and the M. Acilii.

<sup>442</sup> Duncan-Jones 1982, 4; 147-48; 243; Garnsey and Saller 1987, 114. The census qualification in Italy was typically set at 100,000 sesterces, a quarter of the equestrian census qualification.

<sup>443</sup> López 1995, 333.

<sup>444</sup> Mouritsen 1997, 72. Mouritsen also discusses comparable epigraphic evidence from Puteoli, 74-76.

<sup>445</sup> For recent discussions of benefaction, and public patronage in the cities of Roman Italy, see the essays published in Lomas and Cornell 2003. This volume looks back to Paul Veyne's influential study of euergetism in the ancient world, *Le Pain et le Cirque: Sociologie historique d'un pluralisme politique* (1976; reproduced in an abridged form in English in 1990), which focuses especially the practice of

a large sum for his seat in the form of an entry fee (*summa honoraria*), or he could cover the cost of another sizable expense, such as the construction of a public building.<sup>446</sup> In addition, a decurion might be expected to sponsor public games and private entertainment and also help by alleviating the expenses of running the town administration.<sup>447</sup> As I noted in Chapter 2, beyond meeting financial obligations, he would also be expected to perform a variety of civic duties, such as the administration of the food supply, the maintenance of public order, and the supervision of the financial and judicial spheres.<sup>448</sup>

By the late second century, the period of Ostia's greatest prosperity was quickly ending. The financial difficulties that affected the city also impacted its population, including its prosperous decurions, although a small number of affluent families continued to live at Ostia, such as the P. Aufidii, the M. Cornelli, the C. Nasennii, and the T. Antistii. By this time the emperors and the imperial administration had come to depend upon decurions across the Empire to fulfill financial obligations in their cities, obligations that Garnsey suggests had become less easy to bear or were at least more reluctantly borne by financially strained decurions.<sup>449</sup> The financial difficulties faced by the decurions at Ostia during this period are evidenced in part by an inscription from AD 182, which documents that a well-to-do *sevir Augustalis* named P. Horatius Chryseros presented *sportulae* (cash gifts) of five *denarii* apiece to each of the decurions and *seviri*

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euergesism by the Roman emperor as well as its practice in Hellenistic kingdoms and the Roman provinces. These essays expand upon Veyne's work by examining public patronage and euergesism with regard to the relationship between Italian cities and Rome.

<sup>446</sup> Garnsey 1981, 127; Alföldy 1985, 129-30. Garnsey 1971, 309-25, argues that the *summa honoraria* was not a requirement for decurions in all parts of the Empire at all times. He suggests that it might have been required only in abnormal circumstances, such as if the adlected decurion had not previously been a magistrate or if he were younger than the required age. Additional payments that were made to celebrate an office, known as *ob honorem* payments, were distinguished if they went above and beyond the amount of the *summa honoraria*.

<sup>447</sup> Duncan-Jones 1982, 147-55.

<sup>448</sup> Alföldy 1985, 129.

<sup>449</sup> Garnsey 1971, 322-23.

*Augustales*.<sup>450</sup> In addition to providing the funds for the *sportulae*, Chryseros also donated 50,000 sesterces to the organization, 10,000 sesterces of which were to fulfill his son or nephew's *summa honoraria* for the office of *curator* (treasurer).<sup>451</sup> This gift to the decurions of Ostia was the first of many that occurred at regular intervals in later years.<sup>452</sup> About fifty years later, the *sevir Augustalis* Q. Veturius Socrates also provided a sum of 50,000 sesterces to the organization, as well as cash gifts of five *denarii* to each of the *seviri Augustales* and three *denarii* to each of the decurions. Wilson has argued that the regular occurrence of gifts of *sportulae* to the Ostian decurions indicates that by this time this group was no longer viewed as a wealthy organization.<sup>453</sup>

As decurions at Ostia faced additional financial obligations to the city and decreasing financial resources, it became especially difficult for a new decurion to retain his seat throughout his lifetime. This circumstance, in turn, made it less likely that he could pass the seat on to his sons.<sup>454</sup> Ultimately, it was a small number of the old established families, who had long maintained positions in the city's municipal life, who possessed the financial means to cover the continuous costs of office holding.<sup>455</sup> One can argue that members of these families would have been more likely to ascend to even higher ranks, such as equestrian and senator.<sup>456</sup> The citizens of less prominent families

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<sup>450</sup> Wilson 1938, 153; *CIL* XIV 367. For a full discussion of the foundation monument of P. Horatius Chryseros at Ostia, see Laird 2006.

<sup>451</sup> Laird 2006, 31, indicates that the remaining 40,000 sesterces were to be invested at a set interest rate. In addition, on Chryseros's birthday, 100 sesterces were to be used to decorate his statue in the forum and also to tip the slaves of the *seviri Augustales*.

<sup>452</sup> Wilson 1938, 153; *CIL* XIV 375, 376, 172.

<sup>453</sup> Wilson 1938, 153.

<sup>454</sup> Garnsey 1975, 167.

<sup>455</sup> Mouritsen 1997, 77-80, describes this as a process that occurred at Ostia as well as Pompeii and Puteoli.

<sup>456</sup> For example, A. Egrilius Plarianus, a member of the Egrilii family, pursued a senatorial career and became consul in the late first or early second century. His son, of the same name, also pursued a senatorial career and became consul in 128 (cf. *S* 4445; Meiggs 1973, 197, n. 4 and 5).

who had more recently joined the order of decurions were thus less likely to be promoted beyond their current position.

Despite the difficulties associated with maintaining membership in the *ordo decurionum*, the individuals who gained membership in the order experienced a desirable level of social prestige and visual recognition in Ostian society, at least during their time in office. They publicly displayed their elite status through distinctive clothing and privileged seating at the theater and games, as well as through public banquets at which money or food were given out to the populace in proportion to one's rank.<sup>457</sup> This kind of parading of rank in public helped to differentiate the decurions from the humble populace while also providing clear affirmation of their superiority and of the imperial social structure.<sup>458</sup>

### **The “independent freedman”: A Contradiction in Social and Legal Status**

Freedpersons (*libertini*) at Ostia,<sup>459</sup> and in Roman society in general, faced a life full of great contradiction. The freedperson had gained the right to numerous privileges offered by Roman citizenship, including the rights to acquire wealth and keep savings (*peculium*),<sup>460</sup> marry legally, and produce a Roman family with legitimate freeborn children.<sup>461</sup> Moreover, a freedperson could own and decorate a home, participate in

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<sup>457</sup> Duncan-Jones 1982, 184-88.

<sup>458</sup> Garnsey and Saller 1987, 117.

<sup>459</sup> On freedpersons at Ostia, see esp. Meiggs 1973, 217-26, 335-36, 353-54; D'Arms 1981, 121-48; Laird 2006.

<sup>460</sup> Kirschenbaum 1987, 31-88; Treggiari 1969, 20-31.

<sup>461</sup> Not all freedpersons enjoyed full citizenship. Some belonged to the group known as the *Latini Iuniani* (Junian Latins), who were given Latin rights but not the privileges of citizenship. This legal status was bestowed upon individuals who had been freed at an early age or by other informal means and was passed on to their descendants. Unlike a *libertinus* who became a full citizen, an *Iunianus* could not become an *Augustalis*. On Junian Latins, see Alföldy 1985, 140-41; Weaver 1990; Andraeu 1993, 180; López 1995, 328-29.

public acts of munificence,<sup>462</sup> and even own slaves.<sup>463</sup> Nevertheless, he still faced many legal restrictions that the freeborn citizen did not because of the stigma of prior servitude.<sup>464</sup> Indeed, the very term used to describe a freedperson's legal status (*libertinus or libertina*), was a constant reminder of one's servile origins. Moreover, the fact that a freedperson generally acquired wealth through work rather than from investments in land (the preferred source of income among the elites) was a further sign of non-elite status.<sup>465</sup>

Despite these limitations, a small proportion of freedpersons were able to earn substantial wealth and ascend to positions of great social prominence, especially at Ostia. These individuals have been aptly referred to as "independent freedmen".<sup>466</sup> Independent freedmen appear to have experienced two forms of freedom: 1) they were juridically free due to their emancipation from their former masters; and 2) they were economically free because they could invest their time and money in activities that could produce a profit, such as commerce and manufacturing.<sup>467</sup> Such individuals are often referred to in contemporary scholarship as *parvenus*, or the "newly arrived", although the relevancy of this designation has been called into question.<sup>468</sup> Indeed, the legal restrictions that freedpersons faced, especially that which barred them from becoming members of elite orders, prevented them from every truly arriving.

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<sup>462</sup> Petersen 2006, 1-2.

<sup>463</sup> Rawson 1966, 75.

<sup>464</sup> Kampen 1981, 28-31, on the additional limitations that freedwomen faced.

<sup>465</sup> George 2006, 21, on the stigma associated with involvement in trade and commerce after manumission.

<sup>466</sup> Garnsey 1981, 368. On upwardly mobile freedmen, see especially Garnsey 1975; D'Arms 1976; 1981, 146; Mouritsen 1997.

<sup>467</sup> For a detailed discussion of the economic aspects of relationships between freedmen and their patrons in the Roman world, see Fabre 1981, 267-357.

<sup>468</sup> Veyne 1961, critiques the use of the term "parvenu" to refer to the wealthy freedman character Trimalchio in Petronius' *Satyricon*, noting that the wealthy freedman "never arrived" (228). D'Arms 1981, 98-99, supports this argument. One could argue that freedpersons as a group never truly arrived because they were typically bound to their former masters by their former servitude.

How did one become an independent freedman? During their periods of servitude, the most enterprising slaves took advantage of the opportunities afforded by their masters to gain training in various occupations, especially those associated with commerce and manufacturing.<sup>469</sup> This allowed them to earn profits that would later help them buy their freedom and also win the favor of their masters by eagerly embracing the opportunity for some degree of independence in work.<sup>470</sup> To be sure, there was a certain degree of luck involved in the slave's fate. Not all slaves were provided with training in a particular trade or occupation, nor were they all entrusted with great responsibility by their patrons.<sup>471</sup> In addition, the extent to which a patron required a freedperson to perform various duties, such as *operae* (obligations of work) and *obsequium* (a juridical form of respectful conduct), also affected one's chances at success.<sup>472</sup> Patrons are known to have employed their freedmen as business agents; such freedmen were awarded the power of making contracts with third parties to which they and their patrons were bound.<sup>473</sup> Freedmen might also have held greater responsibility when serving as equal business partners, or *socii*. Alternately, they could have worked independently or with other freedmen, even rising to become their former master's business competitors.<sup>474</sup>

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<sup>469</sup> See Treggiari 1969, 87-161, on the careers of freedmen.

<sup>470</sup> Garnsey and Saller 1987, 124. On a freedman's responsibility to his former master after manumission, see Garnsey 1981, 363-71. A slave who purchased freedom with his own funds earned through his slave work and who served as *emptor* (buyer) in the transaction was, for all intents and purposes, independent from his former master. Therefore, he was no longer required to perform services for him, nor was he required to give his patron one half of his property upon his death. Duff 1928, 91, notes that business relations between freedmen and their former masters were quite common. See also D'Arms 1981, 20-47, for a discussion of the business relations between freedmen and the former masters or other men of high rank (particularly senators) in the Late Republic.

<sup>471</sup> Garnsey 1981, 368, suggests that the key to the independent freedman's success was being entrusted by one's patron with significant work or business responsibility. See also Bradley 1994, 81-112.

<sup>472</sup> A reform from 118 BC (*Dig.* 38.2.1.1) indicates that patrons could legally require former slaves to perform labor in exchange for maintenance. See also Duff 1928, 36-49; Treggiari 1969, 68-81; Garnsey 1981, 363-67; Andraeu 1993, 181. On *operae*, see especially Fabre 1981, 325-30.

<sup>473</sup> D'Arms 1981, 242-43; Garnsey 1981, 365.

<sup>474</sup> Garnsey 1981, 365 n. 27, 367.

Thus, the motivated freedman had a significant advantage over many humble freeborn non-elites: he had a better chance at making a moderate to substantial living and could possibly even gain control over his former master's resources upon the master's death. In contrast, humble freeborns typically received less frequent opportunities to break into trades and other lines of skilled work.<sup>475</sup> Presumably it was these financially independent freedmen who became patrons of humble clients and who took their own slaves.<sup>476</sup>

At Ostia, the social rise of such independent freedmen, like the parallel rise of wealthy "new men" into the *ordo decurionum*, is often associated with the breaking down of traditional barriers of social stratification.<sup>477</sup> There is at least one instance in which an individual, who was likely a freedman, transcended legal and social boundaries by serving as an Ostian decurion and an equestrian.<sup>478</sup> Such exemptions might have occurred when the individual was a member of an influential family.<sup>479</sup> Indeed, wealth and political influence could greatly diminish the stigma of former servitude.<sup>480</sup> Although

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<sup>475</sup> Garnsey and Saller 1987, 124-25. See also Meiggs 1973, 224, on Ostian freedmen whose former masters assisted them in rising within their trades after manumission.

<sup>476</sup> On freedmen and wealthy slaves taking on slaves of their own, see Meiggs 1973, 226; D'Arms 1981, 132-133. What is not clear, however, is whether there was any distinction between patron-client relationships practiced by wealthy, prestigious freedmen and those practiced by the members of the elite stratum.

<sup>477</sup> On freedmen and *seviri Augustales* at Ostia, see Meiggs 1973, 217-26, 335-36, 353-54. According to Meiggs, "A weakening of class barriers is to be expected in a trading city and it is clear that, in the second century at least, trading interests dominated Ostia" (230). See also D'Arms 1981, 121-48; López 1995, 332-43; Mouritsen 1997; Laird 2002; Petersen 2006.

<sup>478</sup> *Cod. Iust.* 9, 21. D'Arms 1976, 386-411, esp. 397-98. This individual appears to have been a true decurion and not merely an individual who held the honorary office of *decurionatus ornamentis* (see below). D'Arms notes that cases such as these could have been exceptions to the Visellian law of AD 23. Garnsey 1975, 169, notes a similar individual at Larinum in Italy, a man named *C. Gabbius Messallae lib(ertus) Aequalis*, who was an Augustalis and an adlected decurion in his city. On the other hand, one could also question whether and the extent to which this law was truly applied. See esp. López 1995, 328.

<sup>479</sup> D'Arms 1976, 398.

<sup>480</sup> George 2006, 27.

prosperous, successful freedmen could not typically hold a seat in an elite order, they could approximate this type of honor by joining the *seviri Augustales*.

***Libertina Nobilitas: the seviri Augustales and the ornamentis decurionatus honoratus***

The evidence for the presence of *seviri Augustales* at Ostia is substantial. In the early days of the organization, there might have been as few as six members, who formed a small elite group among the freedmen. By the late first or early second century, the organization was redeveloped and expanded.<sup>481</sup> The reorganization appears to have followed a change in the order's purpose: whereas it initially centered on the priesthood of the imperial cult, it later began to serve a more public role.<sup>482</sup> Its membership appears to have increased at this time, although the precise numbers during different periods are not known. Epitaphs of 114 *seviri Augustales* have been identified, along with additional evidence of the association's registers from the late second and early third centuries, which document 270 total members for this period.<sup>483</sup>

The significance of the Augustales in Ostian society is reinforced in part by an inscription that refers to this group as the *ordo Augustalium*.<sup>484</sup> The designation of "ordo" suggests that this group might have been recognized as an order or rank in and of itself. This was perhaps reinforced by the fact that the order was also characterized by a hierarchy of offices.<sup>485</sup> It is possible to interpret this designation of "ordo" to suggest that

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<sup>481</sup> Meiggs 1973, 217.

<sup>482</sup> Gordon 1931, 244.

<sup>483</sup> D'Arms 1981, 126-27. On the public and funerary monuments of the *Seviri Augustales* at Ostia, see Laird 2002; 2006.

<sup>484</sup> Alföldy 1985, 131; *ILS*, 6141; 6164. D'Arms 1981, 147 n. 121, notes that there are references to the *ordo Augustalium* in AD 182 (*CIL* XIV, 4621) and in the early third century (*CIL* XIV, 373).

<sup>485</sup> Wilson 1938, 154. These offices are those of the *curatores*, *quinquennales*, *electi*, and an office abbreviated as *q.q.d.d.*, which has been interpreted in a variety of ways, including *q(uin)q(uennales) d(ecreto) d(ecurionum)*, *q(uin)q(uennales) d(omus) d(ivinae)*, and *q(uin)q(uennales) d(ono) d(onato)*. The



its members were socially on par with the city's elites, or at least with those of the *ordo decurionum*, the lowest ranking order. However, it has been noted that the *ordo Augustalium* is often listed after the *ordo decurionum* but that they were still ranked above the plebs in official decrees and other municipal documents.<sup>486</sup> This would then imply that they were socially positioned below the decurions but clearly above the average plebs of Ostia. While the *seviri Augustales* were legally subordinate to the decurions, it is possible that their position was more ambiguous in Ostian society and that they were recognized as a separate but equivalent group in terms of standing and prestige.<sup>487</sup> The *seviri Augustales* are also thought to have had a visible presence in the city through some sort of "seat" or headquarters designated for meetings and other gatherings.<sup>488</sup>

The *seviri Augustales*, much like the members of the order of the decurions, had numerous financial obligations to the city. As noted above, they are thought to have paid entry fees upon their appointment to office,<sup>489</sup> and they also financed urban development and other public embellishment, erected cult statues, and provided cash sums for the welfare of the population.<sup>490</sup> Some even served as benefactors to the town and provided annual gifts to the city's inhabitants by legacy.<sup>491</sup> Some of these gifts, such as the *sportulae* that were provided by individuals to all members of the *seviri Augustales* and

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last reading, which is thought to be the most probable, has been interpreted to mean that these quinquennales paid for the privilege of holding the office (rather than having the honor of being elected to it).

<sup>486</sup> Taylor, 1914, 231-33; D'Arms 1981, 127.

<sup>487</sup> D'Arms 1981, 148.

<sup>488</sup> Laird 2000, for an investigation of whether the building identified by Calza as the "Sede degli Augustali" functioned as such (cf. Calza 1941, 196-215).

<sup>489</sup> Garnsey 1971, 324.

<sup>490</sup> D'Arms 1981, 127; Alföldy 1985, 131. Alföldy also notes that some freedmen (although not necessarily those at Ostia) could provide even greater sums for public purposes than those provided by the decurions. See also Laird 2006, on P. Horatius Chryseros, a *sevir Augustalis* at Ostia who donated considerable money to the *ordo* and who also provided for his son's or nephew's *summa honoraria*.

<sup>491</sup> Gordon 1931, 232.

to all decurions, were designed to reinforce the former organization's connections with the latter organization.<sup>492</sup> They are also known to have commissioned costly private memorials and commemorative inscriptions in honor of themselves and to have provided the funding for their sons' political careers.<sup>493</sup> Moreover, the *ordo Augustalium* did not have any patrons, much like the order of the decurions.<sup>494</sup>

Numerous members of the *seviri Augustales* also held prominent posts within the Ostian *collegia*. Eight of its members held the office of president of the builders' *collegium*, which was the richest of Ostia's guilds. Some held significant posts among the wine importers, shipbuilders, Adriatic shippers, and grain measurers, while others demonstrated interests in commerce, banking, and in the trade of various goods. One member of this select group even served as patron of the shippers.<sup>495</sup>

In the late second century, there was a change in the organization of the order, which appears to have been linked to the decrease in Ostia's prosperity. The four known offices, in order of rank from lowest to highest, were those of the *curatores*, a second office that was enigmatically abbreviated as *q.q.d.d.*,<sup>496</sup> the *quinquennales*, and the *electi*. Of these four offices, the only one which had the same number of appointees after each biennial election was the office of the *quinquennales*. In contrast, the number of individuals appointed to all of the other posts varied at any given time. According to Wilson, all except the office of *quinquennalis* proper appear to have been honorary posts, which were granted when a suitable donation was made to the organization. The

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<sup>492</sup> Laird 2006, 33. This includes the *sportulae* of P. Horatius Chryseros and those of Q. Veturius Socrates (supra).

<sup>493</sup> Meiggs 1973, 222; D'Arms 1981, 121-48; Garnsey 1981, 359-60.

<sup>494</sup> D'Arms 1981, 147.

<sup>495</sup> D'Arms 1981, 128-29.

<sup>496</sup> The office abbreviated as *q.q.d.d.* has been read in a variety of ways, including *q(uin)q(uennales) d(ecreto) d(ecurionum)*, *q(uin)q(uennales d(omus) d(ivinae))*, and *q(uin)q(uennales d(ono) d(onato))*. See Wilson 1938, 154.

variations in numbers could suggest that the number of appointments made depended on the number of men willing to pay the *summa honoraria* for the post. In particular, from AD 180 onward, a large number of individuals appear to have held the office of the *q.q.d.d.* If one reads the abbreviation *q.q.d.d.* as *q(uin)q(uennales d(ono) d(onato)*, it would imply that these *quinquennales* paid for the privilege of holding the office and were not elected to it.<sup>497</sup>

Thus, when considering the position of *seviri Augustales* at Ostia (and their position within Roman society as a whole), one must acknowledge the notable wealth and prestige of its members. Indeed, it was the accumulation of significant financial resources that often led these men to positions of great social prominence. They not only contributed to the financial welfare of the city and its population, but they also maintained important connections with its commercial and industrial sectors, particularly through their ties to the *collegia*. In addition, they played an important role in the Imperial cult by serving as its priests. Although they were forever marked as legally inferior by their former servile status, their various civic and economic responsibilities allowed the *seviri Augustales* to become a powerful group of individuals who were separate from the governing class but arguably of similar social status.

In addition to the privilege of membership in the *ordo Augustalium*, exceptionally wealthy and powerful freedmen could also gain honorary membership in the municipal government. Through the *ornamentis decurionatus honoratus* (or *decurionatus ornamentis*),<sup>498</sup> freedmen could receive the benefits that local decurions enjoyed, but they

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<sup>497</sup> Wilson 1938, 155-56.

<sup>498</sup> Gordon 1931, 66; Wilson 1935, 59; *CIL* XIV, 2045.

were not full members of the order.<sup>499</sup> There are three instances in which this honor was awarded to Ostian freedmen: the first man, P. Aelius Liberalis, was an imperial freedman who had also served as the *procurator annonae* (procurator of the grain supply);<sup>500</sup> the second man, named M. Licinius Privatus, donated 50,000 sesterces to the treasury of Ostia;<sup>501</sup> and the third, whose name has not survived, was the president of the *seviri Augustales* and also served as the president of the *collegium* of the builders (*fabri tignuarii*).<sup>502</sup>

Thus, among all of the freedpersons at Ostia, it was the members of the *seviri Augustales* and the individuals who had been distinguished with the title of *ornamentis decurionatus honoratus* who could be considered the city's *libertina nobilitas*.<sup>503</sup> Although they still belonged to the category of *humiliores* and remained legally inferior,<sup>504</sup> it is possible to argue that the sharp legal distinctions that we perceive today might have been blurred and were perhaps even less significant in Imperial Ostia. Indeed, through their municipal euergetism, the organization of the *seviri Augustales* created a notable presence within the city for its members, who were characterized by their wealth, power, and prestige.<sup>505</sup> Moreover, by engaging in the municipal ritual of providing benefactions, they were able to legitimate their presence as a “recognized civic group”,<sup>506</sup> which was fully integrated into the community. In short, the *seviri Augustales* at Ostia were far more than a priesthood of the imperial cult with civic duties – they were

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<sup>499</sup> Garnsey 1970, 243; Duncan-Jones 1982, 216. The honor could be secured at Ostia through a gift of 50,000 sesterces.

<sup>500</sup> Wilson 1935, 59; *CIL* XIV, 2045.

<sup>501</sup> Wilson 1935, 59; *CIL* XIV, 374.

<sup>502</sup> D'Arms 1976, 411; D'Arms 1981, 133.

<sup>503</sup> D'Arms 1981, 127, indicates that Nock (1933-34, 635) was the first modern scholar to employ this phrase.

<sup>504</sup> Garnsey 1970, 258, on the fact that even imperial freedmen were not considered *honestiores*.

<sup>505</sup> Laird 2006, 32, 43.

<sup>506</sup> Brown 1992, 85.

a “second municipal *ordo*”,<sup>507</sup> which aligned its members with the decurions and thus with the city’s elites.

### **Reception Spaces and Social Rituals in the Medianum Apartments**

Although the prominent Ostian citizen could proclaim his wealth and prestige through public activities such as the offering of municipal benefactions and the erection of cult statues, it was through his house and its decorations that he could assert his social standing in less overtly public but equally important way.<sup>508</sup> Throughout this study, I have emphasized that a residence was expected to be outfitted and adorned in a manner that was appropriate to the occupant’s social standing.<sup>509</sup> Moreover, the occupant should not (in theory) choose a residence that is grander and larger than his or her status could justify.<sup>510</sup> The decorations, architectural features, and layout of the residence collectively provided visitors and residents alike with physical and visual cues that indicated a room’s hierarchical importance according to its social functions. These features also helped differentiate between the more public and the more private spaces of the residence.<sup>511</sup> Depending on the nature of a visitor’s relationship to the occupant, he or she would be granted permission to enter particular parts of the residence.<sup>512</sup>

It seems likely that many of the individuals who belonged to Ostia’s upwardly mobile population would have formally received visitors on a regular basis due to their

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<sup>507</sup> Laird 2006, 33.

<sup>508</sup> Packer 1971, 72, suggests that the city’s “elegant flats” might have belonged to people who did not reach the duovirate, which would imply that the individuals who had reached that office occupied better appointed residences.

<sup>509</sup> See Chapter 3.

<sup>510</sup> Cic. *De Off.* 1.138-139; Perry 2005, 32.

<sup>511</sup> On public/private distinctions, see esp. Clarke 1991a; Wallace-Hadrill 1994. See also DeLaine 1999, 179, on the distinction between public/formal and private/services spaces at Ostia.

<sup>512</sup> Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 4-8.

increased public responsibilities, particularly those who had clients of their own.<sup>513</sup>

Which types of Ostian residences would have suited their standing and their social needs?

It is, of course, not possible to distinguish the legal status of the occupant of a residence simply by considering its decorations, architectural features, and spatial layout.<sup>514</sup> It is, however, possible to examine the architecture and decoration of an apartment in an effort to discern how its occupant might have employed his residence to convey distinct messages about his participation in Ostian social and political life and to promote the self-image that he wished to project to others.

Of all of the apartments discussed in Chapter 3, I propose that the medianum apartments of Group 2A were likely the residences of many of these up-and-coming individuals (Fig. 4). This is not to suggest that the upwardly mobile population of Ostia could not have inhabited other types of apartments, such as those of Group 2B (with non-regular layouts) or the much larger apartments of Group 1, nor that the medianum apartments would have been unattractive to or unsuitable for different groups of well-off Ostians. Rather, I suggest that the medianum apartments would have been appropriate to the social standing of these “new men” who resided at Ostia because they would have accommodated the types of social rituals that they likely practiced. There are several reasons why I argue that these apartments would have been desirable to and suitable for this segment of the population.

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<sup>513</sup> DeLaine 1999, 186 n. 10, suggests that these persons might have included members of the orders, senior officials of the city’s major *collegia*, local magistrates, non-elites who had prospered through commercial interests, and even the *seviri Augustales*.

<sup>514</sup> Petersen 2006, 5-6, highlights the flaws in trying to read freedmen’s tastes into the House of the Vettii, a residence at Pompeii thought to have been inhabited by the affluent Vettii brothers, who were most likely ex-slaves. Kellum 2006, 477, expresses similar sentiments about Clarke’s reading of the House of the Vettii in his 2003 study of the art of “ordinary” Romans (cf. Clarke 2003, 98-105).

First, if these individuals had attained a notable level of wealth, power, and prestige in Ostian society, they would have required apartments that included well-adorned spaces designed for receiving visitors of varying social and economic levels, such as friends (*amici*), business partners (*socii*), and clients (*clientes*).<sup>515</sup> Nearly all of the medianum apartments of Group 2A contain two clear reception spaces,<sup>516</sup> which are located at the opposite ends of the medianum. As discussed in Chapter 3, these two spaces, which I refer to as the type-A and type-B rooms, appear to have been configured for particular types of encounters.<sup>517</sup> The type-B room, which is frequently the smaller of the two rooms, regularly includes a single entrance. Because the room can be accessed in only one way, it seems to have been designed for more controlled encounters. Consequently, the type-B room has been compared to the tablinum in the Pompeian atrium house.<sup>518</sup>

The medianum apartments also typically contain a second reception space, the type-A room, which tends to be larger than the type-B room and often includes two or more entrances. Due to its high degree of accessibility from other parts of the residence, this room exhibits more random patterns of encounter, much as one finds in rooms commonly thought to be triclinia in atrium houses.<sup>519</sup> I do not wish to suggest that the type-A rooms functioned solely as triclinia, although it is possible that this could have

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<sup>515</sup> Garnsey and Saller 1987, 152-53.

<sup>516</sup> The House of the Painted Ceiling only includes one true primary space (room 1), although there is also an alternative primary space (room 4) that likely served reception functions.

<sup>517</sup> DeLaine 2004, employs spatial analysis to the plans of numerous medianum apartments at Ostia to arrive at this interpretation.

<sup>518</sup> DeLaine 2004, 155.

<sup>519</sup> On the type-B room exhibiting patterns of interaction similar to that of the Pompeian tablinum, see DeLaine 2004, 155. I use Latin terminology such as “triclinium” and “tablinum” here to give a sense of the ways in which the use patterns of these rooms are comparable to those of rooms in Pompeian houses that have been designated as such, not to suggest that the rooms in the Ostian apartments definitely functioned in this way. On the problematic nature of employing ancient terminology to describe rooms of unclear function, see also Allison 1993; 2001; Leach 1997; Nevett 1997; Riggsby 1997.

been one of their functions, especially because their dimensions are often greater than those of the type-B rooms.<sup>520</sup> The type-A rooms are often connected to smaller spaces, the latter of which are thought to have functioned as service areas that facilitated the activities taking place in the larger room. In houses and villas at Pompeii, there are similar groupings of reception spaces and adjacent rooms that likely served subsidiary functions.<sup>521</sup>

Both of these room types were adorned with painted decorations, which are consistently characterized by an architectural system on a polychrome background (Fig. 3). As noted in the previous chapter, the use of architectural features such as columns, balustrades, and porticoes in the decorative system employed in the painted decorations could be interpreted as deliberate references to features of public architecture.<sup>522</sup> This would have been suitable for a space where the resident carried out his political, business, and patronal activities. In addition, the rooms were likely fitted with mosaic floors, although remains of such pavements have not been found in all of the medianum apartments. In the instances in which mosaics are preserved in multiple rooms of the residence, the mosaic floors of the type-A and type-B rooms have patterns that are visibly more complex than those found in the other spaces (Figs. 32-33).

If the occupant served as the patron in one or more patron-client relationships, he might have required a reception space that would have accommodated the practice of a fundamental Roman social ritual: the *salutatio*, or the daily visit of the client or lesser friend to his patron, which occurred in the setting of the latter's home. The *salutatio* is

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<sup>520</sup> On identifying triclinia in Roman houses, see Dunbabin 1991.

<sup>521</sup> For a discussion of the relationship between triclinia and smaller, adjacent spaces in Pompeian houses, see Richardson 1983.

<sup>522</sup> On the appropriateness of references to the public sphere in the house, see Perry 2005, 54.



most frequently discussed as occurring in the context of the atrium house in the Republican and early Imperial periods.<sup>523</sup> However, it appears to have been practiced throughout the second century and even into the fourth century throughout the Empire.<sup>524</sup> The salutatio was not only a demonstration of the humble client's political and economic allegiance and dependence,<sup>525</sup> but was also a public manifestation of the patron's honor and social recognition, which he earned in part from his wealth and ability to provide what others wanted and needed.<sup>526</sup> According to Garnsey and Saller, "The "crowded house" was a barometer of and a metaphor for power and prestige".<sup>527</sup> In return for a client's allegiance, his patron would reward him with some sort of *beneficia*, such as legal assistance, political influence, or small sums of money or food.<sup>528</sup>

It seems likely that the salutatio would have been practiced at Ostia, given its proximity to Rome as well as the fact that its practice is documented through at least the fourth century. There are no remains of atrium houses built at Ostia during the second

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<sup>523</sup> Vitruvius (*De arch.* 6.3) discusses the domus and outlines its rooms and their functions. His text describes what is now viewed as the ideal plan of the atrium house, although the examples of domus that have been found throughout the Roman world do not typically exhibit this ideal plan. The atrium house is typically associated with the salutatio, largely because it was designed in order to accommodate the practices of this social ritual. In the "ideal" atrium house, a person standing outside of the house would have a clear view that started at the entrance and extended through the fauces and the atrium to the tablinum, where the patron sat and received his clients in order of their ranking. The ground floor was thus a prime location for the practice of such a ritual. See esp. Bek 1980, 168-70; Clarke 1991a, 2-4; Dwyer 1991.

<sup>524</sup> Saller 1982, 128 n. 56; 129 n. 65. Saller points to passages from Seneca (*Bre. Vitae* 14.3f.), Martial (*Epig.* 2.18, 3.36, 3.38, 3.46), Juvenal (*Sat.* 1.127; 3.124); Cassius Dio (76.5.3f.) as evidence of the ongoing practice of the salutatio. See also Ellis 1991, 118, on the autocratic nature of patronage systems in late antiquity and on the practice of the salutatio through at least the fourth century AD, as evidenced by the texts of Ammianus Marcellinus (cf. *Amm. Marc.* 28.4.12).

<sup>525</sup> Dwyer 1991, 27. Garnsey and Saller note that after AD 14, the patron-client relationship could not revolve around the clients' political leverage, which gave patrons less incentive to treat their clients with respect.

<sup>526</sup> Saller 1982, 126-28.

<sup>527</sup> Garnsey and Saller 1983, 122.

<sup>528</sup> Saller 1982, 128-31; Saller and Garnsey 1987, 151.

century, although this is not to deny their existence.<sup>529</sup> If, as I suggest, the salutatio were practiced by Ostian patrons of high status, it presumably would have taken place in whatever types of residences they occupied.<sup>530</sup> Unlike the basic plan of the atrium house, which often provided the patron with a view of his clients as they entered his domain,<sup>531</sup> the space-saving plan of the medianum-type apartment did not allow for such a controlled view of the entrance. Of the two reception spaces found in most medianum apartments, the type-B room seems to have had more restricted access than the type-A room. It is possible that the patron-occupant could have received his clients in the type-B room,<sup>532</sup> from which he would have had greater control over their access to him.<sup>533</sup>

The upwardly mobile population of Ostia presumably also engaged in social, political, and business relationships with people that were either of equivalent or of slightly lesser but still respectable social standing, such as friends (*amici*) and business partners (*socii*). It seems reasonable that an upwardly mobile individual would have

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<sup>529</sup> The House of the Muses is based around a quadriporticus, although it seems to be the closest approximation to an atrium house in second-century Ostia.

<sup>530</sup> On the evolution of housing at Ostia, see Packer 1971. On medianum apartments in general, see Hermansen 1970 and 1981, 17-53. On the medianum apartments of the Garden Houses complex, see Cervi 1999; Gering 2002.

<sup>531</sup> On the fact that views into and out of Pompeian houses were not always so clearly contrived, see Powers 2006.

<sup>532</sup> Less frequently, one finds a fairly sizable entrance vestibule (*vestibulum*), an alternate location where clients might have been received, such as room 1 in the House of the Yellow Walls. See DeLaine 1999, 177, on entrance vestibule 28 and corridor 29/30 in the House of Jupiter and Ganymede as a possible area for receiving clients. On the vestibulum as a space for receiving visitors, see Wiseman 1987, 393-413; Leach 1997, 54-56.

<sup>533</sup> DeLaine 1999, 185, suggests that Ostian patrons, unlike the individuals who occupied atrium houses in the first century, might have intentionally created a less dynamic public face due to the close supervision of nearby imperial Rome. DeLaine focuses on the House of Jupiter and Ganymede (a “*domus-insula*”), which she argues is deliberately designed to conceal the interior of the residence and the dominus from his clients. She goes on to argue that a less visible patron might imply a greater differentiation in social classes. Although she does not elaborate on this point, she seems to suggest that such a patron desired to reinforce his clients’ lower position by only revealing himself when he saw fit. DeLaine also counters that “others would argue that it [that the organization of space in Ostian apartments] reflects a levelling of social distinctions”, yet she does not indicate who these “others” might be, nor does she elaborate on the reasons for this interpretation. DeLaine also indicates that she does not accept Clarke’s interpretation of the House of Jupiter and Ganymede as a “gay hotel” (cf. Clarke 1991a) because she believes that this is to take the evidence too far (cf. DeLaine 187 n. 42; see also DeLaine 1995, 104-105, n. 42).

required additional reception rooms for receiving his respected guests and for hosting dinners and other gatherings.<sup>534</sup> Indeed, the Roman convivium (banquet) played a significant role in Roman social life because it provided the patron with the opportunity to entertain guests, forge political alliances, and demonstrate his status.<sup>535</sup> Moreover, it also created an obligation on the part of the guests to reciprocate the host's hospitality with some form of future support.<sup>536</sup> It is possible that the type-A room in the medianum apartments might have been used for activities associated with dining and entertaining.

A number of the Group 2A apartments also contain one or more alternative primary spaces, which in most cases were directly accessible from the type-A room. As I indicated in Chapter 3, these alternative primary spaces often included painted decorations that were comparable to those of the secondary spaces, but their floor mosaics, along with their close proximity to a primary space, mark them as spaces of some significance. Many of these rooms have been interpreted as cubicula,<sup>537</sup> which, according to numerous ancient literary sources, was the type of room where a dominus held his most intimate receptions.<sup>538</sup> In the Group 2A apartments, these rooms might have been used for receiving one's highest ranking guests or conducting especially private business after retreating from the adjacent reception space. It is possible there was a subtle social distinction between the Ostians who occupied the medianum apartments that appear to have contained alternative primary spaces and those who did not.<sup>539</sup>

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<sup>534</sup> D'Arms 1984; Dunbabin 1996; Nielsen 1998; Garnsey 1999. On images of convivial banqueting, see Dunbabin 2003.

<sup>535</sup> On aspects of the Roman convivium, see esp. Slater 1991.

<sup>536</sup> D'Arms 1984; Ellis 1991, 119.

<sup>537</sup> See Chapter 3.

<sup>538</sup> Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 17 n. 2. See also Riggsby 1997 for a full discussion of the potential uses of the cubiculum.

<sup>539</sup> Based on the primary space criteria outlined in Chapter 3, none of the apartments in the interior blocks of the Garden Houses complex (III, IX, 13-20) appear to have alternative primary spaces.

In short, the upwardly mobile individuals at Ostia would undoubtedly have required distinct spaces for receiving guests at different social levels and for engaging in the practices associated with such relationships. The medianum apartments of Group 2A would have provided the necessary types of reception rooms for hosting gatherings of varying degrees of formality.

### **Uniformity in the Domestic Setting and Social Acculturation**

As I have already noted, the medianum apartments at Ostia demonstrate a certain degree of uniformity in terms of their layouts and decorations. It is possible that an individual who chose to reside in a standardized apartment, complete with all of the requisite reception spaces and decorations, might have wanted to display his acceptance of Roman values and his acculturation into Ostian society.<sup>540</sup> This might have been a particular concern of the upwardly mobile freedmen and freeborn non-elites of Ostia. Such individuals would likely have been self-conscious about their humble backgrounds as well as the fact that their wealth was typically derived from work. Wallace-Hadrill has suggested that wealthy freedmen at Pompeii, whose claims to Roman identity were shaky following their manumission, must have surrounded themselves with symbols of their newfound *Romanitas* in order to experience “rebirth through imitation” of the local elites.<sup>541</sup> Perhaps the small number of prosperous freedmen and *seviri Augustales* at Ostia were similarly insecure about their place within Ostian society, given their servile origins.<sup>542</sup> In addition, the freeborn new men who became decurions or who held high

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<sup>540</sup> Hales 2003, 3.

<sup>541</sup> Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 173.

<sup>542</sup> D’Arms 1981, 1-9. Perhaps their freeborn sons, whom they assisted in entering the *ordo decurionum* through their wealth, would have been less concerned about displaying their acculturation.

offices in the *collegia* might also have been self-conscious about their unremarkable pasts.

As I have demonstrated throughout this chapter, wealth was allowed to override other criteria of social acceptability. The fact that an individual had amassed sufficient wealth to purchase (or at least rent) a sizable apartment suggests that he had reached a somewhat elevated position in society. Moreover, the acquisition of artworks that facilitated social activities and reinforced personal relationships would have suggested that the owner or occupant of the residence was acculturated into Roman social and political life, regardless of his social, legal, or ethnic origins. As Hales has argued, the Roman house, its decorations, and the social rituals practiced within its walls provided a constant confirmation of the occupants' Roman identity.<sup>543</sup> One can perhaps argue that the aspiration to "fit in" among one's peers and colleagues as a true Roman citizen fueled such individuals' desire to seek out housing that would represent them as social equals and that would also reflect their shared need for distinct spaces of varying hierarchical importance. At Ostia, such standardized housing came in the form of the well-appointed medianum apartments of Group 2A.

There is one final matter of note regarding the residences of Ostia's upwardly mobile population, which concerns the patrons who commissioned the city's apartment blocks. I have already addressed the fact that much of the urban construction and many of the public and semi-public buildings of Ostia were likely built with the support of private benefactors, such as decurions, *seviri Augustales*, wealthy plebeians, and the well-

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<sup>543</sup> Hales 2003, 1-7.

established elites.<sup>544</sup> One must also consider the extent to which benefactors who engaged in municipal euergetism played a role in the construction of private buildings, such as apartment blocks. The investment of time and money in the construction of multi-story brick apartment buildings might have been considered reasonable in light of the possible rent profits that one could expect to obtain from his tenants.<sup>545</sup> While it is not possible to verify this hypothesis based on the available epigraphic and archaeological evidence, it does not seem entirely implausible that an individual or group of considerable means would have invested in private building commissions as another way to make a visible mark on the city. One could take this argument a step further to suggest that they commissioned dwellings for their own use.<sup>546</sup> More will be said on this issue with regard to the possible patrons of the Garden Houses complex in Chapter 5.

Based on this survey of the social and legal backgrounds of Ostia's mid-Imperial population, it is clear that there was a notable population of upwardly mobile citizens, who played an increasingly prominent role in local society. This group comprised individuals such as the wealthy freedman who had ascended greatly beyond his servile origins, the recently inducted decurion from an undistinguished bloodline, and the prosperous non-elite freeborn who had profited from the city's booming commercial activity. These types of individuals trod the line between elite and non-elite status in a

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<sup>544</sup> Based on her study of construction techniques, materials, and brick stamps in Ostian buildings of the second century, DeLaine (2002) argues that patrons of "modest socio-economic status" (75), members of the collegia, and freedmen played a significant role in the construction of public and private buildings at Ostia. In contrast, the emperor and his circle played a less significant role in public construction, with the exception of major structures such as the public baths and the Capitolium. Heinzelmann 2002, indicates that many of the storage structures constructed in the second century, some of which also include adjacent shops, were built by private enterprise.

<sup>545</sup> On the kinds of profits one could expect to obtain from renting properties, see Meiggs 1973, 251; Frier 1980, 21-34.

<sup>546</sup> See esp. DeLaine 2004, 169-71.

way in which the city's small number of well-established families, the "de facto" elite,<sup>547</sup> did not.

Despite the fact that many individuals living at Ostia accumulated their wealth through the less respectable means of work, a small group of them appears to have attained elevated positions on the social continuum: they were perhaps not as far along as the established families, but they ascended beyond the positions of the average, humble freeborn citizen, freedperson, or slave at Ostia. When entering into a patron/client relationship as the superior, the upwardly mobile Ostian surely needed to conduct his business in a domestic setting that was not only befitting of his social status, but also one that reinforced and perhaps even enhanced the appearance of his power, prestige, and influence to his clients, friends, and business partners. It seems likely, therefore, that these Ostians would have required residences that accentuated their increasingly influential roles in society and that accommodated the public responsibilities that accompanied them. Such residences would have indicated the individual's acculturation into Ostian society and the extent to which he had taken on the trappings of a true Roman citizen.

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<sup>547</sup> Mouritsen 1997, 77.

## CHAPTER 5

### Decorative Standardization and Variation in the Interior Blocks of the Garden Houses Complex

The apartment complex known as the Garden Houses (Case a Giardino) (III, IX) built around AD 128-130,<sup>548</sup> was the largest known private building project at Ostia (Fig. 50).<sup>549</sup> Quadrilateral in plan, it comprises a perimeter of buildings that encircle a garden space, at the center of which are located two free-standing apartment blocks, each containing four uniform apartments of the medianum type (Fig. 51). The interior blocks appear to have been purely residential in function until at least the third century AD.<sup>550</sup> In contrast, buildings on the exterior perimeter of the complex contained commercial and service spaces, additional medianum apartments, and one large, “domus-insula” apartment.<sup>551</sup> None of structures of the complex currently preserve stories above the ground level.

The medianum apartments of the Garden Houses complex have long been thought to have functioned as rental units, possibly for residents who were prosperous and of elevated social standing. Although no definitive evidence remains to support this contention, scholars point to the basic similarities in the plans and painted decorations of the apartments and their contemporaneous construction as possible clues to the complex’s

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<sup>548</sup> Cervi 1999; Gering 2002; Falzone 2007, 53-54. These dates have been established based on the identification of brick stamps from this period. On the brick stamps, see Bloch 1953a, 223; DeLaine 2002, 52-57. See Stevens 2005, 113 n. 2, on the gap of several years between the production of bricks and their use in construction.

<sup>549</sup> DeLaine 2004, 170.

<sup>550</sup> Gering 2002, 122-36.

<sup>551</sup> DeLaine 1999, 185.



function.<sup>552</sup> Moreover, there seems to be an implicit assumption that the city's transient population would have required temporary or seasonal housing. Based on the premise that the apartments were rental units, previous scholars have attributed the basic similarities in their painted decorations to the landlord or complex owner's aesthetic choices and also to the selection of a single workshop to execute the paintings in all of the apartments during a unified phase of decoration.<sup>553</sup> I question whether these apartments were in fact so standardized in plan and in decorations as thought, and I also ask whether they functioned exclusively as rental units or if alternate modes of occupation were possible.

In this chapter I examine the painted decorations of the eight medianum apartments in the interior blocks of the Garden Houses complex in an effort to discover what they can tell us about their occupancy. I begin with an overview of the structure of the Garden Houses complex in order to call attention to the outstanding features that have led scholars to view the units as luxury apartments.<sup>554</sup> I then discuss the types of painted decorations that appear in each of these apartments, identifying basic formal patterns among the extant examples and considering the extent to which patterns identified among the painted decorations of the different apartments relate to the hierarchical organization of space within the residence. I ask how the deliberate use of painted decorations to indicate spatial hierarchies might suggest that the residents belonged at the upper end of the social continuum. Given the numerous variations that appear among the painted decorations of the interior-block apartments, I offer new possibilities for understanding

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<sup>552</sup> Meiggs 1973, 139-40; Frier 1980, 3-20; Bakker 1994, 44; Gering 2002; Mols 2002, 170.

<sup>553</sup> Falzone 2001, 337; Liedtke 2001, 345; Mols 2001, 332. Mols 2002, 170, has suggested that the landlords may have tried to provide tenants with decorations that were multifunctional so that residents were free to use them as they pleased.

<sup>554</sup> Gering 2002.

what those variations suggest about the residential uses of the complex during the second and early third centuries AD.

My contribution to the scholarly debate is twofold. The first concerns chronology. I offer the first attempt at dating the paintings of the interior blocks by comparing the painted decorations the paintings of the interior blocks stylistically to more accurately dated domestic paintings found only at Ostia. In addition, I incorporate archaeological evidence of the structural modifications of the apartments to support the dates that I arrive at through stylistic analyses. I intend to suggest that the majority of the paintings that remain in situ should be attributed to later phases of decoration and that few, if any, reveal the decorative systems employed in the original phase of decoration. Although I cannot offer any conclusive evidence that supports specific dates, I hope to open up the issue for future discussion. My second contribution lies in questioning the assumption that the interior-block apartments of the Garden Houses complex were necessarily rental units. I do so by examining the painted decorations and archaeological evidence of the domestic settings of these apartments in light of Roman legal texts pertaining to the rental of residential properties.

### **The State of Scholarship on the Painted Decorations and Architecture of the Garden Houses Complex**

Three residences in the exterior blocks of the Garden Houses complex—those with the most substantial decorative remains—have for understandable reasons received the lion’s share of study to date: apartment 6, known as the House of the Priestesses

(House of Luceia Primitiva),<sup>555</sup> apartment 12, known as the House of the Yellow Walls,<sup>556</sup> and apartment 22, known as the House of the Muses.<sup>557</sup> While the first two apartments are of the medianum type, the third is a large, “domus-insula”-type apartment.<sup>558</sup> Based on its size and the quality of its painted and mosaic decorations, Clarke thinks that this last residence could have been the private residence of the owner or developer of the complex.<sup>559</sup> Certain recent studies of the domestic paintings of the exterior-block apartments of the Garden Houses complex, such as the aforementioned studies by Clarke, Liedtke, and Falzone, offer approaches that are pertinent to my study of the painted decorations of the interior-block apartments.

Studies of the architecture of the Garden Houses complex have focused primarily on identifying the different phases of modification that took place over the life of the complex. Recently, Rina Cervi and Axel Gering have highlighted the ways in which structural transformations can tell us about the changes in the use of the complex over time.<sup>560</sup> Janet DeLaine, however, has paid more attention to the social configuration of space.<sup>561</sup> In her 2004 essay on the uses of space in Ostian medianum apartments, she focuses largely on the Garden Houses complex. In the previous chapters, I have made reference to DeLaine’s use of spatial analysis to assess potential patterns of interaction

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<sup>555</sup> For the original publication of the paintings, see Veloccia Rinaldi 1971. The paintings in the House of the Priestesses were unveiled to the public in 2008 after an extensive conservation project undertaken by the former Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici di Ostia. For recent studies of the painting, see Falzone and Pellegrino 2001a; 2001b; Falzone 2007, 68-81.

<sup>556</sup> For the official publication of the paintings, see Felletti Maj 1961. See also Clarke 1991a, 305-12; Liedtke 2003, 63-65; Falzone 2007, 100-7.

<sup>557</sup> For the official publication of the paintings, see Felletti Maj and Moreno 1967. See also Clarke 1991a, 270-88; Liedtke 2003, 65-68; Falzone 2007, 56-68.

<sup>558</sup> DeLaine 1999, 185.

<sup>559</sup> Frier 1980, 8; Clarke 1991a, 270. However, Clarke also proposes that it could have been an exclusive luxury apartment.

<sup>560</sup> Cervi 1999; Gering 2002.

<sup>561</sup> DeLaine 2004.

and access to the different spaces of a residence.<sup>562</sup> In Chapter 3, I discussed the significance of her findings with regard to the use of space in medianum apartments—that rooms located at either end of the medianum (the type-A and type-B rooms) appear to have served primary functions, while rooms situated along the long side of the medianum (the type-C rooms, labeled C1-C3) likely served secondary functions (Fig. 4). Below I will consider how the painted decorations of the interior-block apartments reinforce these interpretations of the hierarchical importance of the rooms.

Despite the scholarly interest in the domestic paintings of Ostia, particularly with regard to the three apartments in the exterior blocks of the Garden Houses, the less well-preserved paintings of the interior blocks have not received critical attention.<sup>563</sup> No scholar to date has analyzed the painted decorations of all of the apartments of the interior blocks with respect to the types of decorative systems employed. Moreover, despite the recent studies of the structural phases of the Garden Houses complex, there have been no significant scholarly efforts to consider the relationship of the painted decorations to the different phases of construction. Nor has any scholar attempted to date all of the paintings of the interior blocks, either by stylistic comparison to more accurately dated paintings or by considering how structural modifications to the

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<sup>562</sup> This approach was initially proposed in the 1984 work of B. Hillier and J. Hanson. It requires the creation of access diagrams, which map the connections between all of the spaces in a home and produce data indicating the number of spaces passed through to reach a destination. The ‘interaction potential’ of each space is then calculated quantitatively in relation to the degree to which other spaces can be immediately accessed from it (i.e., local interaction potential) versus the extent to which all spaces in the residence can be reached from it (i.e., global interaction potential). This approach suggests the potential, rather than actual, use of the apartments. It does not take into account temporary barriers such as doors, curtains or screens, and people. See also DeLaine 2004, 158.

<sup>563</sup> Falzone 2007, 56 n. 14, indicates that at the time of publication, she and Norbert Zimmermann were working on a project involving the painted decorations of the interior blocks. To my knowledge, this research has not yet been published.

apartments might relate to phases of decoration.<sup>564</sup> Finally, there has been no previous attempt to determine what changes in painted decorations and in the structure of the buildings over time can tell us about the ownership and uses of the apartments.

### **The Garden Houses Complex: Questions of Ownership and Occupancy**

The Garden Houses complex is generally viewed as a block of ancient luxury apartments. Located on the western edge of the city and bordered by the *Cardo degli Aurighi* to the north and the *Via delle Volte Dipinte* to the east, the Garden Houses complex was conveniently situated near the harbors and was distant enough from the city center to provide its residents with a considerable amount of privacy (Fig. 20).<sup>565</sup> The complex might have appeared to passersby as something of a “defended space”, not unlike what is today known as a gated community,<sup>566</sup> in part due to the monumental entrances on the north and east wings, as well as an additional gate on its south side.<sup>567</sup> When it was originally built, the complex had a total of sixteen medianum apartments on the ground floor, eight in the exterior blocks and eight in the interior blocks.<sup>568</sup> These

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<sup>564</sup> Liedtke 2001, 345, suggests that all of the paintings should be dated to the original phase of the building, although she does not elaborate on this interpretation. Cervi 1999, 150-52, suggests that some of the paintings of the interior blocks can be dated to the Antonine period based on evidence of the structural modifications associated with particular decorations. However, she does not discuss specific examples of painted decorations from the interior-block apartments. Gering 2002, 120, offers a general date in the second half of the second century for the paintings on a yellow background in the interior blocks. He compares these paintings in general terms to room 4 of the House of the Painted Ceiling. He does not offer a stylistic comparison to any other yellow rooms at Ostia, nor does he offer dates for any of the other examples of painted decorations in the interior blocks with backgrounds of different colors. See below for further discussion.

<sup>565</sup> Scholars often emphasize the location of the complex on the outskirts of town and its proximity to the harbors. In doing so, they imply that it is a great distance from the city center. See DeLaine 2004, 169-71. However, I have timed the walk from the Garden Houses complex to the Square of the Corporations (*Piazzale delle Corporazioni*), which is located at the heart of the commercial area of the city, to take approximately 10 to 15 minutes when walking at a brisk pace.

<sup>566</sup> Stöger 2007, 355.

<sup>567</sup> There was no gate or entrance on the western side of the complex.

<sup>568</sup> Gering 2002. The medianum apartments in the Garden Houses complex are: III, IX, 1, 3-5, 6, 8, 12-20, and 21. Apartment III, IX, 1 no longer exists in its original medianum form because it was transformed into

were some of the most comfortable and elegant apartments in the city.<sup>569</sup> It is generally assumed that they were rental units for residents of elevated social standing.

There is no surviving parallel for this type of large apartment complex at Rome.<sup>570</sup> Consequently, the Garden Houses complex provides the only extant context in which to consider urban housing and the types of decorations that were incorporated within apartments at Rome and its environs. The medianum apartments of the interior blocks are fairly large, with a ground floor area of at least 278 square meters.<sup>571</sup> Each apartment likely included an upper floor—the first floor—as part of its total area.<sup>572</sup> It is generally agreed that the two central apartment blocks both rose to a height of four stories.<sup>573</sup> Today only the ground floors of these apartments survive. Stevens has recently suggested that the apartments of the central blocks were outfitted with a direct connection to the urban water system, a water drainage system, and in some cases, in-unit running

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part of the much larger House of the Dioscuri (Domus dei Dioscuri) (III, IX, 1) at some point in the late third century.

<sup>569</sup> Pavolini 1986, 181; Liedtke 2001, 345; Gering 2002, 109, describes the Garden Houses complex as “luxuswohnanlage” (luxury housing development).

<sup>570</sup> DeLaine 2004, 147. See also Packer 1967a, for a discussion of the few examples of contemporary and later apartments in Rome. There are known examples of apartment complexes elsewhere in the Roman Empire, such as the Terrace Houses (Hanghäuser) at Ephesus. For a recent treatment of the paintings of the Terrace Houses, see Zimmermann and Ladstätter 2010.

<sup>571</sup> On the ground floor apartments also containing an upper floor, see Meiggs 1973, 246. Bakker 1994, 48, indicates that all eight apartments have a ground floor area of 240 square meters. However, Bakker eliminates non-residential spaces and external staircases from his calculations. DeLaine also provides ground floor area calculations for the interior-block apartments, which appear to include the non-residential spaces. I rely on her measurements in Chapter 3 and in the current chapter.

<sup>572</sup> Stevens 2005, 115-16, notes that the presence of internal staircases in these apartments indicates that each unit included at least one story above the ground floor. DeLaine 2004, 154, fig. 2, provides area calculations for the ground floor as well as estimates of the areas of the first floors of numerous Ostian medianum apartments, including the interior-block apartments. Based on her measurements, I have calculated that the first floor in each of the interior-block apartments is approximately 42-43% of the size of the ground floor. In a number of other Ostian medianum apartments, the first floor is approximately 40-50% of the size of the ground floor.

<sup>573</sup> Stevens 2005, 115-16, examines the external staircases in the interior-block apartments, from which she determines that there were likely four stories. Her calculations of the possible height of each block (c.1776.0 cm) correspond with the Trajanic building limit of 60 Roman feet.

water.<sup>574</sup> Such amenities might provide insight into the social status of the residents of the complex.

It is assumed in scholarship that many if not all of the medianum apartments of the Garden Houses complex were rental properties.<sup>575</sup> Indeed, these apartments and others of the medianum-type at Ostia have been viewed as examples of the types of structures described in Roman lease laws of the early Imperial period, which focus almost entirely on upper-class residences.<sup>576</sup> However, there is no epigraphic evidence to attest to their function as rental apartments. One must therefore examine questions of occupancy by beginning with the material remains of the apartments.

One of the main studies of the architecture of Roman rental properties pertains not to Ostia but rather to Pompeii. Felix Pirson's 1997 study of rental units at Pompeii examines the *Insula Arriana Polliana* and the *Praediae Iuliae Felicis*, two apartment blocks that have been identified as rental accommodations based on epigraphic evidence that documents the leasing of sections of both buildings.<sup>577</sup> Pirson emphasizes the inadequacy of the traditional scholarly distinction between the Ostian multi-story apartment block and the owner-occupied Pompeian *domus*, suggesting that we consider alternate forms of urban housing at Pompeii. To this end, he presents a set of criteria for identifying rental properties at Pompeii and neighboring Herculaneum, which, he argues, can be applied to the housing situation at Ostia. These include 1) habitability (i.e., whether the unit contained livable space), 2) ownership (i.e., whether the resident is not

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<sup>574</sup> Stevens 120, 2005, notes that the northernmost interior block, which contain apartments III, IX, 17-20, had more recesses for water supply and drainage than the southern block, which contains apartments III, IX, 13-16. Perhaps there was a qualitative distinction between the two blocks that was indicated in part by the available amenities.

<sup>575</sup> Falzone 2001, 337; Liedtke 2001; 345; Mols 2001, 332; 2002, 170. Clarke 1991a, 270, suggests that the House of the Muses might also have been a rental unit.

<sup>576</sup> Frier 1980, 39-47.

<sup>577</sup> Pirson 1997.

the same person as the owner and also whether the unit appears to belong to a larger complex), and 3) independence (i.e., whether the apartment can be accessed independently or must be reached by passing through shared interior spaces).<sup>578</sup> Pirson's criteria seem to apply well to the medianum apartments of the Garden Houses complex, although differences in date and context might not allow for his criteria to be entirely applicable to the situation at Ostia, where the apartments in question were built later using modern principles of design that were developed in nearby Rome.<sup>579</sup> To test whether the apartments of the Garden Houses complex were rental units, it is useful to study the provisions of the Roman legal code pertaining to urban tenancy.

Under Roman lease law the landlord would have been required to supply apartments with all the necessary fittings, including water pipes, door bolts, keys, and painted plaster walls.<sup>580</sup> It is unclear from the legal texts whether a tenant was permitted to alter the interior of a rental property. However, there was one type of situation in which a resident was allowed to do so. When individuals were granted the usufruct of a property, they were allowed to reside in it (typically for life) even though it was owned by another party.<sup>581</sup> It appears that such individuals were allowed to occupy the residence without paying rent. In the legal sources, there is ample documentation of this type of living arrangement, although often the jurists are more concerned with determining who specifically could co-habitate with the usufructuary. For example, a widow who was left the use of a house by her husband could continue to occupy the house after remarrying. Her new husband would be allowed to join the other members of

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<sup>578</sup> Pirson 1997, 173-78.

<sup>579</sup> Packer 1967a; Meiggs 1973, 64-78, 238-39.

<sup>580</sup> *Dig.* 33.7.12.16-26; Frier 1980, 38.

<sup>581</sup> *Dig.* 7.8; Frier 1980, 27.



her familia who already resided there, including her children, her parents, and freedpersons.<sup>582</sup> Freedmen were similarly granted permission to occupy their former master's residence and could even let out spaces to tenants if the size of the residence exceeded their personal needs.<sup>583</sup>

According to Roman lease law, a usufructuary had the right to redecorate by adding wall paintings or marble revetments and to add windows.<sup>584</sup> However, he or she was not allowed to modify the rooms, entrances, or the atrium or the layout of the garden.<sup>585</sup> Moreover, while a usufructuary could rent out parts of the house, he or she could not rent out the entire house as a private residence.<sup>586</sup> As Wallace-Hadrill has noted, these distinctions between what a usufructuary could or could not do are telling of what the owner of the property might normally do with his or her property.<sup>587</sup>

The tenants of well-appointed apartments are known to have agreed to multi-year leases.<sup>588</sup> Unlike the modern day leasing system, rent was typically paid on a yearly basis at the end of the payment period, although the landlord would have held a lien on the furnishings that the tenant owned.<sup>589</sup> One can imagine the temptation to redecorate to suit personal tastes or perhaps even to renovate if the tenant planned to reside in the unit for a significant amount of time. Indeed, there are instances in the legal texts that address the difficulties that arose when residents attempted to remove the fittings that they had

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<sup>582</sup> *Dig.* 7.8.4.1.

<sup>583</sup> *Dig.* 18.6.19.

<sup>584</sup> Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 105-6. *Dig.* 7.1.13.7-8.

<sup>585</sup> *Dig.* 7.1.7.2-3.

<sup>586</sup> *Dig.* 7.1.13.7.

<sup>587</sup> Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 105.

<sup>588</sup> *Dig.* 19.2.24.2. Frier 1980, 37, notes that while lease terms varied, multiple-year leases were not uncommon. The legal accounts list leases that lasted up to five years.

<sup>589</sup> Frier 1980, 38.

installed during their tenancy.<sup>590</sup> Although a usufructuary was legally permitted to redecorate or add fixtures such as windows, it is unclear from the legal texts whether the average tenant was also given such leeway.

If the apartments of the Garden Houses complex were rental units, one must consider the role that the hypothetical landlord played in the selection of the painted decorations that one finds partially preserved in the interior and exterior blocks today. To entice prospective tenants of an elevated level of economic and social standing, the landlord might have chosen to include painted decorations (and possibly also floor mosaics) of a similar type in each apartment.<sup>591</sup> These decorations would have had to have suited a variety of tastes while also being appropriate for the activities that took place in the room and corresponding to the status of the prospective resident. In this way the landlord's decorative choices would have created a certain degree of standardization among the paintings of the group of rental properties as a whole.<sup>592</sup> Whether such uniformity actually existed among the paintings will be addressed below.

It is also possible that the apartments of the Garden Houses complex were inhabited by their owners. DeLaine has suggested that the complex might have been commissioned by an organized group as a joint investment, rather than being built on speculation, in the hope that there would be a market of potential tenants ready to move in upon its completion.<sup>593</sup> She has argued that the scale of the complex and the large

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<sup>590</sup> Jul. *D.* 6.1.59; *Dig.* 19.2.19.4.

<sup>591</sup> Unfortunately, floor mosaics are no longer preserved in the interior-block apartments. Traces of black and white floor mosaics are documented in *Scavi di Ostia IV* (Becatti 1961) in the following apartments: Apartment 13, room 4; Apartment 17 (room number not documented); Apartment 20 (room number not documented).

<sup>592</sup> This hypothesis of standardization is commonly offered when the paintings of the interior blocks are mentioned in passing. Liedtke 2001, 344; Mols 2002, 170.

<sup>593</sup> DeLaine 2004, 171, suggests that the project would have taken approximately three years to build with 300 laborers.

investment required to build such a structure might indicate that it was commissioned by investors who would occupy the units seasonally.<sup>594</sup> Given Ostia's prosperous commercial and shipping activities, which were governed in part by the navigation season and which only lasted about 240 days per year,<sup>595</sup> the need for seasonal residences seems plausible. Because the duration of occupancy could vary considerably based on the type of occupant (e.g., lease-holding tenant, temporary boarder, usufructuary, owner, etc.), it can be argued that the possibility of seasonal residences is as reasonable as that of permanent occupancy by the owner and his or her familia.

There is no archaeological or epigraphic evidence that clearly indicates that the apartments of Garden Houses complex functioned as either rental units or as owner-occupied properties. However, the rental unit hypothesis continues to prevail because of basic assumptions that similarities in layouts and decorations suggest single phase building by a speculator. I argue that the situation is more complex than this.

### **The Painted Decorations of the Interior Blocks: Formal Patterns**

To investigate the issues discussed above, I have examined in detail the remains of the painted decorations of the eight medianum apartments of the interior blocks. Although the paintings are not fully preserved in all of the interior-block apartments, there are sufficient painted remains to indicate the basic features of the decorations. The background colors and, in some cases, the elements of the decorative systems are still evident in many of the apartments. According to my analysis, the extant paintings follow three clear patterns. Each pattern indicates a relationship between the background color

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<sup>594</sup> DeLaine 2004, 171.

<sup>595</sup> Hermansen 1981, 7.

or colors employed in the painted decorations and the location of the decorated room within the apartment (Fig. 52).

### **1. Painted Decorations with Yellow Monochrome Backgrounds**

The first pattern involves painted decorations on a monochrome yellow background. The tradition of the “yellow room”, which found favor at Ostia through the end of the second century AD, dates back to the time of Fourth Style houses in Pompeii.<sup>596</sup> It is also attested in a late first century house in Rome, in the so-called “Casa Bellezza” on the Aventine hill.<sup>597</sup> In the interior-block apartments, the painted decorations with yellow backgrounds are typically found in the two small but similarly proportioned rooms located off of the long side of the medianum, which I have referred to as the type-C rooms (Fig. 4).<sup>598</sup> As noted above, these rooms are generally identified as bedrooms or more generally as cubicula based on their smaller dimensions and interior locations, although I argue that they should not be interpreted strictly as such because they could have served a variety of other functions.<sup>599</sup> There are a total of ten type-C rooms among the eight apartments that exhibit paintings on a monochrome yellow background.<sup>600</sup> The remaining type-C rooms do not have any traces of their painted

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<sup>596</sup> Clarke 1991a, 299. At Pompeii, yellow rooms have been identified in the House of Lucretius Fronto, room i; the House of the Marine Venus; the House of Octavius Quartio. At Ostia, yellow rooms are found in the House of the Muses, room 4; the House of Jupiter and Ganymede, room 33; the House of the Painted Ceiling, room 4. Clarke does not consider rooms 4, 5, and 6 of the House of the Yellow Walls as yellow rooms because they each include a red socle, and rooms 4 and 5 also include a red cornice. However, I argue that it should be considered a monochrome yellow room because of the predominantly yellow background.

<sup>597</sup> Boldrighini 2003, esp. 85-104 on the paintings of room B, which has a yellow background.

<sup>598</sup> Room 7 in Apartment 20, a type-C3 room, also includes a yellow monochrome background. See Cervi 1999, 150-51, on the room’s expansion into the space of the adjacent corridor at a later date.

<sup>599</sup> Cervi 1999; Gering 2002; DeLaine 2004.

<sup>600</sup> The following rooms include yellow monochrome backgrounds: Apartment 13, room 5; Apartment 14, rooms 5 and 6; Apartment 15, rooms 6 and 7; Apartment 16, rooms 6 and 7; Apartment 17, rooms 6 and 7; Apartment 20, room 7.

decorations, so there are no known exceptions to this pattern in the interior blocks. Where additional features of the decorative system can be discerned, they are typically the narrow red vertical panels that served as the backgrounds for the painted aediculae of the aedicular system.

## **2. Painted Decorations with Red Monochrome Backgrounds**

The second pattern involves the use of red monochrome backgrounds, which are found less frequently than examples of yellow monochrome backgrounds. Red monochrome backgrounds occur most frequently in dynamic spaces: four of the eight apartments exhibit traces of red monochrome backgrounds in their corridors. Of these same four apartments, two also include painted decorations with red monochrome backgrounds in their mediana.<sup>601</sup> Unfortunately, none of these paintings are well preserved. At present it is not possible to identify any additional colors in the painted backgrounds, nor is it possible to detect the decorative systems that were employed or the remains of any decorative motifs or subjects.

## **3. Painted Decorations with Polychrome Backgrounds**

Only four apartments contain rooms with painted decorations that have polychrome backgrounds.<sup>602</sup> Interestingly, all of the examples are found in the location

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<sup>601</sup> The following rooms include corridors with red monochrome backgrounds: Apartment 13, room 1; Apartment 14, room 1; Apartment 15, room 1; Apartment 20, room 1. Mediana with red backgrounds are found in Apartment 13, room 8 and Apartment 15, room 8. Apartment 13, room 10, also exhibits a red monochrome background.

<sup>602</sup> The following rooms contain painted decorations with polychrome backgrounds: Apartment 13, room 4; Apartment 14, room 4; Apartment 16, room 5; Apartment 17, room 5.

of the type-B room.<sup>603</sup> The four examples of this type exhibit limited variations on the architectural system.<sup>604</sup> All four rooms incorporate broad panels in red and yellow, but the frames that enclose the panels as well as the smaller panels located above, below, and between the large panels exhibit a greater variety of pigment colors, such as blue, green, purple, porphyry red, and white. As noted in Chapter 3, the architectural system of decoration was used widely in the primary spaces of the Group 1 and 2 apartments. In the medianum apartments of Group 2A, the architectural system was restricted to type-A and type-B rooms.

### **The Distribution of Painted Decoration Types and the Application of Spatial Analysis**

As discussed in Chapter 3, Roman houses, or at least the houses of the affluent and socially elevated segment of the population, commonly exhibited spatial hierarchies. There is general scholarly consensus that primary spaces, such as reception areas and dining rooms, frequently exhibited more costly and lavish adornments than secondary spaces,<sup>605</sup> especially those of dynamic function, such as corridors.<sup>606</sup> Likewise, a room's location within the house would also help indicate its importance to residents and visitors. Rooms located along major axes of the house were often of great significance and were

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<sup>603</sup> DeLaine 2004, 151, refers to the smaller reception room that is closer to the apartment entrance as room B, while she refers to the larger room at the opposite end of the medianum as room A.

<sup>604</sup> Joyce 1981, 46; Clarke 1991a, 313.

<sup>605</sup> Barbet 1985; Wallace-Hadrill 1994; 23-37, 149. For a succinct discussion of the use of textual, architectural, and decorative evidence to identify the use of space in Roman houses, see Allison 1993.

<sup>606</sup> Recently, the meaning of the "zebra-stripe" pattern in the wall paintings of houses in the Bay of Naples area has come into question. Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 39-44, argues that the black and white diagonal stripes were appropriate for corridors because they visually encouraged a sense of movement. He also associates black and white stripes with lower status areas, such as service spaces, because such stripes were also found in corridors and lavatories. Cline (forthcoming) argues instead that the zebra-stripe pattern was not designed to encourage movement by slaves through the residence, but rather was designed to imitate imported marbles. See also Laken 2003, for a reading of the zebra-stripe pattern as an indicator that a space served a common or public function. Laken suggests that this pattern could have referenced painted marble incrustations but that it is not always clear whether this was the intention.

the spaces where the resident received his clients and conducted business. In contrast, rooms at the interior of the home were used for more private activities and were restricted to servants, residents, and close friends (*amici*).<sup>607</sup>

It seems safe to assume, then, that hierarchies of space can be distinguished through the study of the background colors of wall paintings. In the apartments of the interior blocks of the Garden Houses complex, the type-B rooms can be identified as reception rooms based on their painted decorations with a polychrome background. Unfortunately no evidence of painted decorations remains in any of the type-A rooms in the interior-block apartments. However, type-A rooms in other contemporary medianum apartments at Ostia typically include painted and mosaic decorations that are of comparable, if not higher quality than those of the type-B room. The prominent locations of the type-A and type-B rooms at either end of the medianum support the interpretation of these rooms as spaces of primary social importance. In contrast, the type-C rooms appear to have been spaces of secondary importance, such as bedrooms and service areas. This interpretation is based on the yellow monochrome backgrounds of their painted decorations and the subsidiary locations of the rooms at the interior of the residence.

Clearly both the painted decorations and the location of each room can greatly assist in the identification of spatial hierarchies within a given residence. One can also approach spatial hierarchies by means of spatial analysis. As I noted in Chapter 4, in the medianum apartments, the type-B room exhibits a low potential for interaction and was

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<sup>607</sup> Watts 1987, 132; Clarke 1991a, 2-4; Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 38-61. Cubicula were spaces that could be used for receiving intimate friends and conducting private business. Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 17 n. 2, offers a list of Roman literary sources that reference the practices of dining, conducting business, and holding imperial trials in the cubiculum. For example, Suetonius *Vesp.* 21, describes Vespasian's morning routine, in which he briefs the representatives of government offices, receives his friends, and dresses himself. Although it is not stated, it is implied that he receives his visitors and friends in the confines of his cubiculum. On the multifunctional nature of the cubiculum, see also Riggsby 1997.

likely designed for particular and controlled encounters, not unlike the tablinum of the Pompeian atrium house. The type-A room, in contrast is more easily accessible from corridors and also from the medianum and thus exhibits more random patterns of encounter, not unlike the triclinium in the atrium houses of Pompeii.<sup>608</sup> My interpretation of the type-A and type-B rooms as primary spaces is thus supported by spatial analysis.

### **Decorative Variations and Proposed Dates for the Painted Decorations**

I have identified numerous variations among the painted decorations on monochrome yellow, monochrome red and polychrome backgrounds. These variations are important to consider because they provide evidence of stylistic parallels with examples of painted decorations found in other Ostian medianum apartments. No scholar to date has attempted to date the paintings of the interior blocks, primarily due to their poor state of preservation. Stylistic comparison to examples of more accurately dated Ostian domestic paintings, in conjunction with the examination of structural modifications associated with phases of decoration are especially revealing.

I am aware of the problems with dating by style – as articulated by Mols and Falzone, who have pointed to its unreliability and the divergence of dates that it has produced.<sup>609</sup> Where possible, I compare the painted decorations of the interior-blocks to the paintings that have been more firmly dated based on the architectural analysis of the apartments in which they were displayed. The dates, of course, remain tentative.

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<sup>608</sup> DeLaine 2004, 155-59.

<sup>609</sup> See esp. Mols 2002. Falzone 2004, considers the relationship between building phases and decorative phases in thirteen apartments and two non-residential buildings. At the conclusion her discussion of each building, she lists the various dates that have been provided in previous publications.



## The Aedicular System in Rooms with Monochrome Backgrounds

Of the ten rooms with yellow monochrome backgrounds, eight preserve traces of narrow red vertical panels that divide the yellow wall surface into three panels.<sup>610</sup> These red vertical panels likely served as a background for painted aediculae, the details of which no longer survive. As discussed above, this decorative system, in which evenly spaced aediculae separate the wall surface into several partitions, is known as the aedicular system.<sup>611</sup> This basic system is employed in most of the type-C rooms. Because the remaining two rooms with monochrome yellow walls display scant traces of red paint, it is not possible to determine whether they also exhibited this compositional system.<sup>612</sup> Beyond the general similarity among the aedicular walls, there are several variations that can be identified within the rooms: these involve the placement of the narrow red panels, the presence or absence of a cornice, and the addition of small landscape paintings and floral borders. The painted decorations in the yellow rooms of other Ostian apartments also exhibit some of these variations.

In the first variation, the decorative system includes narrow, vertical red panels at regular intervals along the wall surface, but they are not found in the corners. In addition, there is no painted cornice (Fig. 53).<sup>613</sup> The closest comparisons that have narrow red aedicular panels are found in the House of the Yellow Walls and the House of the Priestesses, but these painted decorations will be addressed below with regard to the cornice variation. The two main comparisons that incorporate the aedicular system

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<sup>610</sup> The paintings are located in Apartment 13, room 5; Apartment 14, rooms 5 and 6; Apartment 15, rooms 6 and 7; Apartment 16, room 6; and Apartment 17, rooms 5 and 6.

<sup>611</sup> Joyce 1981, 26-33, refers to this as the “modular aedicular system.” She considers it to be one variation on the modular system, in which a basic motif is repeated across the wall surface (p. 21).

<sup>612</sup> The paintings are located in Apartment 16, room 7; Apartment 20, room 7.

<sup>613</sup> This variation is found in Apartment 15, room 6; Apartment 15, room 7; and Apartment 16, room 6.

without a cornice are the late Antonine paintings in room 4 of the House of the Painted Ceiling (Fig. 34),<sup>614</sup> and the late Antonine paintings in room 33 of the House of Jupiter and Ganymede.<sup>615</sup> However, the aediculae in these last two rooms are different in that they are painted directly on the yellow background in red, rather than over a narrow, red vertical panel.<sup>616</sup>

The second variation includes narrow red panels on the wall surface and in the corners of the rooms. These red corner panels wrap from one wall onto the adjacent wall.<sup>617</sup> The main comparisons are found in the medianum (room 16) of the House of the Infant Bacchus, in the medianum (room 6) of the House of the Paintings, and in numerous rooms of the House of the Priestesses, a large medianum apartment in the western sector of the exterior blocks of the Garden Houses complex. In this apartment, rooms 7, 8, 9, and 11 exhibit nearly identical decorative systems involving a red socle, narrow red aediculae, and wide yellow panels (Fig. 54). These decorations have been dated to the late Hadrianic to early Antonine periods based on stylistic criteria and on

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<sup>614</sup> Falzone 2004, 95-101. This residence is a medianum apartment constructed during the Hadrianic period, which was later renovated in the second to last decade of the second century. Clarke 1991a, 313, dates the paintings to this renovation phase.

<sup>615</sup> On the date of the painted decorations of the House of Jupiter and Ganymede, see esp. Calza, 1920, col. 402; Clarke 1991a, 321-22. The House of Jupiter and Ganymede belongs to a larger residential complex, which also includes the House of the Paintings and the House of the Infant Bacchus. The paintings of all three residences have been dated to a period of substantial renovations carried out between AD 184 and 192 within the larger complex. A graffito, VII K L COMMODAS, or “on the seventh day before the Calends of Commodus” was scratched into the wall of corridor 29 of the House of Jupiter and Ganymede. This graffito helps date the paintings to this period because Commodus renamed the month of September after himself in 184 and was murdered in 192. See also Van Buren, 163-64.

<sup>616</sup> The aediculae in the House of the Painted Ceiling, room 4, are rendered in red and white. Those in the House of Jupiter and Ganymede, room 33, have deteriorated badly but the basic elements of the red aediculae are clear.

<sup>617</sup> These painted decorations are in Apartment 17, rooms 6 and 7.

their relationship to the same phase of construction.<sup>618</sup> In all four rooms, the corners preserve clear traces of aedicular panels.

In the third variation, the decorative system includes narrow red panels on the wall surface and a cornice, which is typically red and separates the central register from the upper register. It is unclear based on the remains of these paintings whether they also had narrow red panels in the corners, although this does not seem likely. In the interior-block apartments, there are three rooms across two different units that display traces of a red cornice.<sup>619</sup> These paintings are comparable to those in rooms 4 and 5 of the House of the Yellow Walls (Fig. 35). This last apartment, which is also of the medianum type and belongs to the Garden Houses complex, was built around the same time as the interior blocks (c. 128-130). On the basis of stylistic analysis, the paintings of rooms 4 and 5 of the House of the Yellow Walls have been dated to the late Antonine period, around AD 170.<sup>620</sup> Moreover, two of the yellow rooms in the House of the Priestesses (rooms 7 and 8) also include traces of a red cornice. The other two yellow rooms in this apartment (rooms 9 and 11) do not preserve traces of the upper part of the wall surface, so it is not possible to determine whether they each included a cornice. However, the striking similarities among the painted decorations in the yellow rooms of the House of the Priestesses suggest that cornices might have been included in these rooms as well.

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<sup>618</sup> Veloccia Rinaldi 1970-1971, 169-170. Much like its neighboring residences in the complex, this apartment was built around AD 128-130. All of the paintings in this residence were initially dated by its excavator, M. Veloccia Rinaldi, to a single decorative project carried out around AD 130-140. Falzone 2007, 80-81, suggests a slightly later date of AD 140-150. She notes that many of the features of these paintings seem to be rooted in Hadrianic stylistic tendencies but also anticipate some of the trends of the Antonine age. In this way, she suggests that there was a stylistic evolution in Ostian painting. Clarke 1991a, 301-3, 339, 341-43, similarly addressed a stylistic evolution in second-century Ostian painting that involves a moving away from rational, illusionistic architecture and a new preference for abstraction and the creation of optical effects through the use of panels of contrasting colors to activate the wall surface.

<sup>619</sup> This variation is evident in Apartment 13, room 5 and Apartment 14, rooms 5 and 6.

<sup>620</sup> Felletti Maj 1961, 50-52; Clarke 1991a, 308-12; Falzone 2007, 102. The paintings of room 6, which are lacking a cornice but are otherwise nearly identical to those in rooms 4 and 5, are dated to the same phase.

The fourth and final variation involves the addition of miniature landscape paintings and floral motifs to the decorative system. These features are regularly paired in the monochrome rooms of Ostian apartments, regardless of plan.<sup>621</sup> In apartment 16, room 6, there are faint traces of a horizontal rectangular landscape that is sketchily rendered in blue, white, and red and enclosed by a thin red frame. To the left of the landscape painting are traces of a red vertical floral motif surmounted by a horizontal red oval, which is bordered by small red dots on its upper side. These landscape scenes relate to the tradition of small landscape vignettes, which dates back to the late first century BC.<sup>622</sup> They reflect an ongoing interest in the use of small, framed landscapes, which first appeared around the mid-first century AD in Campania and at Rome,<sup>623</sup> where they featured prominently in room 14 of the Domus Aurea and were also used in the late first century paintings in the yellow room (room B) “Casa Bellezza” on the Aventine Hill, which exhibits what appears to be an aedicular system of decoration.<sup>624</sup> In rooms 4, 5, and 6 of the House of the Yellow Walls (Fig. 35), room 4 of the House of the Painted Ceiling (Fig. 34 and Fig. 55), and room 33 of the House of Jupiter and Ganymede, there

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<sup>621</sup> Small landscape paintings are also found in rooms 5 and 6 of the House of the Painted Vaults, rooms 30 and 32 of the House of the Charioteers, and room 11a of the House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander. None of these apartments are of the medianum type, nor are the painted decorations on yellow backgrounds. In the House of the Painted Vaults, the painted decorations of rooms 5 and 6 have an aedicular system on a white background. Floral motifs comparable to those in the yellow rooms described above are also present. In the House of the Charioteers, the painted decorations are based on the panel system. In room 30, the paintings have white panels framed in red, and in room 32 there are white panels framed in black. The west wall of room 30 includes a landscape painting, as does the north wall of room 32. In the House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander, room 11a includes a landscape at the center of a white panel on the east wall.

<sup>622</sup> An early example of small landscape vignettes is found in the cubiculum nocturnum in the Villa of Agrippa Postumus at Boscotrecase. The paintings are dated to the last decade of the first century BC. See Metropolitan Museum of Art 1987; Blanckenhagen 1990. On landscape in Roman painting, see also Peters 1953; Ling 1991, 142-49; Bergmann 1992.

<sup>623</sup> For a discussion of the framed Campanian landscapes in relation to contemporary literature, see Bergmann 1991. On landscapes at Stabiae, see Pesce 2004, 25-33; Guzzo et al. 2007, 21-33; 39-43.

<sup>624</sup> Iacoppi 1999. See also Boldrighini 2003, 118-19, for a discussion of the similar framed landscapes in room B in the “Casa Bellezza” on the Aventine Hill.

are small landscapes that are loosely painted in similar shades of blue, red, and white and framed in red.

Because the small landscape in Apartment 16 and the examples in other Ostian apartments are typically found in rooms located at the interior of the residence, one could also argue that the landscapes might have been read as small “windows” onto the outside world.<sup>625</sup> The painted decorations of these rooms also incorporate floral or vegetal borders that run around the interior of the large yellow panel that contains the landscape. In other cases, there are vertical or horizontal floral motifs that do not function as a border but instead are placed in a cross pattern below the landscape. As previously noted, all of the aforementioned comparisons have been dated to the late Antonine period.

Based on stylistic similarities to more firmly dated examples found in other Ostian domestic contexts, it is possible to suggest a range beginning in the late Hadrianic phase (c. 128) through the late Antonine phase (c. 192) for the monochrome yellow painted decorations of the interior-block apartments. I lean more toward a date range encompassing the mid to late Antonine period (c. 161-192) because the majority of the comparisons have been dated securely to this period.<sup>626</sup> However, the fact that the comparisons in the House of the Priestesses which have been dated to just before the

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<sup>625</sup> I thank Christopher Lightfoot for this interpretation and for the suggestion that the “impressionistic” rendering might be read as an effort to convey the view out of a glass window, given that glass was starting to be used more frequently in windows in the Roman world during this period.

<sup>626</sup> On the House of the Painted Ceiling, Clarke 1991a, 313; Falzone 2004, 95-101. On the House of the Yellow Walls, Felletti Maj 1961, 50-52; Clarke 1991a, 308; Falzone 2007, 102-3. On the House of Jupiter and Ganymede (along with the House of the Infant Bacchus and the House of the Paintings), Calza 1920, 348-49, 373-75; Clarke 1991a, 320-22; Falzone 2004, 72-74; 82; Falzone 2007, 107-10. The only apartment with painted decorations dated to the first half of the second century is the House of the Priestesses. Falzone 2007, 80-81, dates the paintings to AD 140-150.

middle of the second century leaves open the possibility that the paintings in the interior-block apartments could have been slightly earlier.

There are six rooms in the interior-block apartments with walls with red monochrome backgrounds. Most of the painted decorations are preserved to nearly the top of the wall surface, which would suggest that in most cases the backgrounds of the walls were entirely red.<sup>627</sup> None of these rooms preserve traces of the decorative systems that would have adorned the surfaces of the walls (Fig. 56).<sup>628</sup>

Good comparative examples can be found in other Ostian domestic settings. Interestingly, all of these comparisons have a red main register and a yellow upper register. In the House of Jupiter and Ganymede, room 29, a corridor, has a predominantly red background on its south wall. The paintings display traces of an aedicular system with yellow aediculae and architectural and vegetal details rendered in green and white (Fig. 57). However, there are also remains of an upper register in yellow. Although the background of the room is not entirely red, the main register with the red background allows one to envision how the predominantly red corridors in the interior-block apartments might have appeared. Similarly, rooms 1 and 3 (both of which are corridors) of the House of the Priestesses, room 3 (a corridor) in the House of the Painted Vaults,<sup>629</sup> and room 3 (the medianum) in the House of the Yellow Walls all have painted decorations that include a main register with a red background and an upper

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<sup>627</sup> The remains of the painted decorations in Apartment 13, room 8 are only preserved in the upper part of the central register and are not preserved at the socle level. It is not possible to know for certain if the background of the entire wall surface was red.

<sup>628</sup> There are examples of red monochrome backgrounds in the following rooms: Apartment 13, rooms 1, 8, and 10; Apartment 14, room 1; Apartment 15, room 1; and Apartment 20, room 1.

<sup>629</sup> Felletti Maj 1961, 9-10, notes that the paintings originally comprised a red main register with an upper yellow register, but these were later painted over in a similar way. A layer of whitewash was added to cover the initial decorations, after which a red main register and a yellow upper register were added. A precise date for the painted decorations of room 3 has not been given, although at least one phase has been dated to the Antonine period (cf. Felletti Maj 1961, 32-33).

register with a yellow background.<sup>630</sup> No traces of the decorative system remain in any of these comparative examples.

It seems likely that the red monochrome walls in the interior-block apartments might have included an aedicular system similar to that found in the House of Jupiter and Ganymede. The aedicular system would be appropriate for the long walls of such dynamic spaces because the motif of the aedicula could be employed repeatedly until it filled the length of the wall surface. It seems unlikely that the architectural system or the panel system would have been used in these rooms. The architectural system is not used in rooms with monochrome backgrounds, nor is it typically found in dynamic spaces. Likewise, the panel system is not commonly used in dynamic spaces.<sup>631</sup> Moreover, at Ostia there are no remains of panel system decorations that have red monochrome panels; rather, the panels are commonly white or yellow. Thus, the aedicular system was likely employed in these rooms in the interior-block apartments. Because all of the comparisons include an upper register with a yellow background, one must leave open the possibility that the red rooms in the interior-block apartments also included a yellow upper register. Moreover, the frequency with which predominantly red monochrome walls are found in dynamic spaces such as corridors and *mediana* in a variety of Ostian apartments suggests that there might have been a color code for these types of spaces as well, not unlike the use of polychrome backgrounds in the main reception spaces and

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<sup>630</sup> The painted decorations of the *medianum* (room 3) of the House of the Yellow Walls have not received significant attention, presumably because they are not well preserved. However, the paintings that remain appear to have been preserved in part but a subsequent phase of linear style decorations on a white ground, which were painted directly over the red and yellow paintings. This is similar to the situation in room 4, where linear style painted decorations were later added over the late second century aedicular paintings on a yellow background. Felletti Maj 1961, 43-44, notes that these paintings belong to the second phase of decoration in the room and that the linear style paintings belong to the third phase.

<sup>631</sup> Room 6 (a corridor) in the Inn of the Peacock is an exception to the rule, although in this apartment the panel system was used in all of the rooms that contain painted decorations.

yellow (or white) monochrome backgrounds in static spaces of secondary or alternative primary function.

Based on these comparisons to other rooms with red monochrome backgrounds, it seems reasonable to propose, even in tentatively, a date range for the red rooms in the interior blocks of the late Hadrianic through late Antonine periods. The date range is an estimate that is based on the more firmly dated paintings of the House of the Priestesses (late Hadrianic to early Antonine) and the House of Jupiter and Ganymede (late Antonine). At present, it is not possible to date the paintings to a more precise time frame based solely on the background color.

### **The Architectural System in Rooms with Polychrome Backgrounds**

There are four rooms with painted decorations on a polychrome background in the interior blocks. All of the paintings employ a variation on the architectural system. Since these four examples vary considerably, I consider the paintings of each room individually and offer stylistic comparisons to painted decorations in other Ostian apartments.

The paintings of Apartment 14, room 4 are the best preserved of the four examples (Fig. 29). The painted decorations are composed of a tripartite architectural system with rectangular panels in dark red, yellow, and blue. These panels are each enclosed by wide frames in one of the other two colors, thus creating a clear visual contrast. These painted decorations can be closely compared on a stylistic basis to the late Hadrianic or early Antonine paintings in room 5 of the House of the Muses (Fig. 12),<sup>632</sup> as well as the late Antonine paintings (c.180-190) in room 1 of the House of the Painted

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<sup>632</sup> Felletti Maj and Moreno 1967.



Ceiling (Fig. 21). Both comparisons have a tripartite architectural system comprising a central register with panels and frames in alternating combinations of red, yellow, and blue.<sup>633</sup> Given these similarities, it seems reasonable to date the paintings in Apartment 14, room 4 to some point in the Antonine period. However, there are stronger stylistic similarities to room 1 in the House of the Painted Ceiling, namely with regard to the distribution of colors among the panels. Consequently, I propose a date in the later Antonine period for the paintings in Apartment 14, room 4.

The paintings in Apartment 17, room 5 are notably different from those in the other three polychrome rooms. Here the panels are of varying shapes and sizes, and they are placed on three registers (Fig. 31). Many of the red, yellow, and purple panels employed in this room have concave sides, while the central panel of the west wall has a pediment-like top. These panels are arranged in such a way that the wall surface is relatively symmetrical. However, there are noticeable disparities in terms of the dimensions of the panel, which are designed to mirror one another on either side of the wall surface.<sup>634</sup> Comparanda include the late Hadrianic to early Antonine paintings in reception rooms 4 and 6 of the House of the Priestesses (Fig. 25),<sup>635</sup> and the late Antonine paintings of room 20 in the House of the Infant Bacchus (Fig. 23). While the former comparative example shares similarities in terms of the background colors and in the use of panels of varying shapes and sizes, the latter example seems stylistically closer. Even more similar are the painted decorations in room 20 of the House of the Infant Bacchus display the same lack of rigid symmetry as found in Apartment 17, room 5. This

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<sup>633</sup> Clarke 1991a, 313.

<sup>634</sup> Similar paintings are preserved in Apartment 5, room 1 in the exterior blocks of the Garden Houses complex.

<sup>635</sup> On the paintings, see Falzone and Pellegrino 2001; Falzone 2007, 68-81. On rooms 4 and 6 as reception rooms, see DeLaine 2004, 151-152.

tendency away from rational, symmetrical architecture and toward activating the wall surface with panels of contrasting colors is a feature of later second century painting.<sup>636</sup> I am thus inclined toward a date in the late Antonine age due to the lack of rigid symmetry in the arrangement of the painted panels on the wall surface, which is a feature of later second-century painting that becomes more apparent by the early third century.<sup>637</sup>

The other two examples of polychrome paintings in the interior blocks exhibit less obvious similarities to contemporary Ostian examples (Fig. 28 and Fig. 30). The painted decorations found in Apartment 13, room 4 and Apartment 16, room 5 are both based on an architectural system and employ red, yellow, and either black or blue as their background colors.<sup>638</sup> However, in both rooms, the central panel of the back wall does not appear to be enclosed completely within a wide frame painted in a contrasting color, as is regularly the case. To my knowledge, there are no extant examples of paintings at Ostia in which a frame does not entirely surround the central panel. This presents some difficulty in identifying clear stylistic parallels.

Nevertheless, these two rooms display some basic similarities to other examples based on the architectural system, such as the use of central panels that are noticeably wider than the flanking side panels. This feature is present in the Severan paintings on the south wall of room 7 and on the north wall of room 8 in the House of the Yellow Walls (Fig. 22 and Fig. 26). The paintings of rooms 7 and 8 employ colors that are similar to those used in Apartment 13, room 4 and Apartment 16, room 5; that is, they

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<sup>636</sup> Clarke 1991a, 339. Leach 2004, 270-71, questions whether the departure away from Pompeian styles in second-century Ostian painting should be referred to as a "Fifth Style."

<sup>637</sup> For example, see the paintings in the Inn of the Peacock, room 9, where panels of different colors, sizes, and shapes fill the wall surface at different levels, thus animating the surface. Clarke 1991a, 342 dates the paintings to between 200 and 220.

<sup>638</sup> Black is used in Apartment 16, room 5 and blue is used in Apartment 13, room 4.

include red, yellow, and blue as background colors and also incorporate black, red, yellow, and green as framing colors.<sup>639</sup> Given the lack of clear comparisons, it would be difficult to pinpoint a more specific date range for the painted decorations of Apartment 13, room 4 and Apartment 16, room 5. I am inclined to date the paintings of both rooms to the late Antonine or early Severan period, in part based on the comparison noted above, but also because of the notable width of the central panels found on each wall in both rooms.

Stylistic comparisons to more precisely dated works at Ostia suggest that all four examples of polychrome painted decorations can be reasonably dated to the Antonine period. More specifically, the stylistic similarities suggest a date in the middle to late Antonine period because the majority of the comparative examples are attributed to this period. However, it is not possible to rule out an earlier date because several of the stylistic comparisons discussed above are dated to the late Hadrianic and early Antonine periods.<sup>640</sup>

Thus, the painted decorations of the interior blocks exhibit numerous stylistic similarities to more firmly dated examples found in other Ostian apartments. These similarities allow me to suggest a broad date range for the paintings of the interior-block apartments from the late Hadrianic phase (c. 128) through the late Antonine phase (c. 192). Because the painted decorations exhibit more stylistic parallels to paintings that are associated with the mid to late Antonine period (c. 161-192), I argue that the paintings

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<sup>639</sup> Clarke 1991a, 354-56, dates the paintings in rooms 7 and 8 in the House of the Yellow Walls by stylistic means. Falzone 2007, 144, emphasizes the continuous use of the architectural system with panels throughout the second century and into the third century. See also Felletti Maj 1961, 47, for a much later proposed date for the paintings in rooms 7 and 8 to the reign of Gordian (c. AD 240).

<sup>640</sup> However, the methodology of archaeological dating requires the examination of the latest datable features.

that remain in the apartments were most likely carried out during this narrower time frame. However, this does not rule out the possibility some apartments might have retained paintings from earlier periods in certain space.<sup>641</sup> The fact that many of the paintings of the interior blocks are likely dated to a phase in the second half of the second century is significant because this contradicts Liedtke's proposal that the paintings were carried out as part of a unified decorative project when the apartment complex was built.<sup>642</sup> My proposed dates thus call into question the assumptions that the painted decorations were created at the same time and that they were commissioned by a landlord or owner during a single decorative phase.

### **Archaeological Evidence of Structural Transformations in Support of the Proposed Dates**

In recent years, Cervi and Gering have both shown that structural modifications occurred in the Garden Houses complex in several phases, beginning shortly after its construction and lasting through the fourth century.<sup>643</sup> When I use the phrase "structural modifications", I refer mainly to the filling in or opening up of doorways, which are the two types of modifications that Cervi notes in her discussion of second-century alterations.<sup>644</sup> Both scholars have pointed to a phase of modifications that took place in

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<sup>641</sup> In the House of the Yellow Walls, there are paintings dated to different phases in the same room. In room 8, the north wall includes an architectural system dated to the Severan period (see above), while the south wall displays painted decorations that imitate opus sectile panels of yellow marble with red veins, upon which are placed red peltae and red diamond motifs. These motifs are separated by vertical green bands that seem to evoke aediculae.

<sup>642</sup> Liedtke 2001, 345.

<sup>643</sup> In order to date the different phases, Cervi (1999) examines building techniques as well as the differences in the colors and sizes of the bricks, but she does not explicitly state whether she examines brick stamps. Gering 2002, dates the architectural phases by considering the functional relations between different structural modifications. He also reconsiders the dates proposed by Heres in her earlier study of late antique masonry structures in Rome and at Ostia (cf. Heres 1982). For a consideration of the brick stamps associated with the Garden Houses complex during its initial phase, see DeLaine 2002, 52-57.

<sup>644</sup> Cervi 1999, 143, Fig. 2.

the interior blocks several decades after the initial construction of the building; that is, in the mid-second century, or the Antonine period (Fig. 20).<sup>645</sup> In particular, secondary doors appear to have been added to a number of the type-B and type-C rooms in each of the apartments, including the type-C3 rooms.<sup>646</sup> To a lesser extent, some doorways were blocked off, such as in Apartment 14, where the doorway between room 3 (a corridor) and room 2 (a staircase to the next floor) was filled in. Cervi argues that the majority of the structural changes involving the opening up or closing of doorways and windows likely occurred before the end of the second century. She also contends that these changes would have been carried out according to the tastes and demands of the complex owners.<sup>647</sup>

Following this phase of modifications, there would likely have been a subsequent phase of redecoration, which presumably included new painted decorations. Neither Cervi nor Gering discuss the relationship between paintings in all of the apartments and the various phases of structural transformations. Thus, it is not possible to make specific links between the painted decorations that remain in the eight apartments and the structural changes in each space. However, the date ranges that I have proposed for the paintings, all of which fall partly into the Antonine period, are supported by the dates that Cervi and Gering have suggested for the first main phase of renovation within the complex. Gering has acknowledged the general uniformity among the paintings, especially among the rooms with predominantly yellow backgrounds. Based on the

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<sup>645</sup> Cervi 1999, 149-52; Gering 2002, 119-21.

<sup>646</sup> One door was added to the following type-B rooms: Apartment 13, room 4; Apartment 15, room 5; Apartment 16, room 5; Apartment 17, room 5. One door was added between the type-C rooms in the following apartments: Apartment 19, between rooms 5 and 6; Apartment 20, between rooms 5 and 6. One door was added between a type-C room and the adjacent service space in the following apartments: Apartment 13, between rooms 6 and 7; Apartment 16, between rooms 7 and 8. Also, in Apartment 18, the west wall between room 8 and corridor 11 was almost entirely eliminated.

<sup>647</sup> Cervi 1999, 145-47.

relationship between the walls that he has dated to the mid-second century and their yellow monochrome decorations, he proposes a date for the paintings in the second half of the second century. Gering points to the stylistic similarities between these paintings and those in room 4 (the yellow room) of the House of the Painted Ceiling to support this date range (Fig. 34).<sup>648</sup>

One must also keep in mind that parts of the complex continued to be occupied through at least the fourth century. Gering has indicated that sections of the residential space of the complex, including parts of the interior blocks, were transformed into commercial and industrial spaces by the mid-third century.<sup>649</sup> For example, room 4 in Apartment 14 appears to have been transformed into a shop based on the elimination of a window and the opening up of the north wall into a doorway with a 2.60 m wide threshold.<sup>650</sup> However, an earthquake that occurred around AD 270-275 caused damage to the entire complex.<sup>651</sup> The upper floors of most units collapsed and were never rebuilt. Thus, the subsequent use of the complex for residential purposes occurred only on the ground level.<sup>652</sup>

Despite the numerous changes that occurred to the Garden Houses complex in the third and fourth centuries, it is interesting that the paintings of the interior-blocks, which seem to date roughly to the second half of the second century, were retained in the

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<sup>648</sup> Gering 2002, 120 n. 31, describes the painted decorations in the House of the Painted Ceiling as “nearly identical” (“fast identischen”) to those in the yellow rooms of the interior-block apartments. Although there are basic similarities, it seems a bit of a stretch to refer to describe the similarities in such a way. Cervi 1999, 150, also suggests a general date in the Antonine period for the paintings, particularly for those in Apartment 20, room 7.

<sup>649</sup> Gering 2002, 121-32. This date is based on the discovery of coins dated to the reign of Aurelian in the destruction level. See Veloccia Rinaldi 1971, 168.

<sup>650</sup> Gering 2002, 124-26.

<sup>651</sup> Cervi 1999, 155.

<sup>652</sup> Gering 2002; 132-36. Cervi 1999, 156, describes the residential use of isolated segments of the partially abandoned building as architectural parasitism (“parassitismo architettonico”).

apartments. Alternately, it is possible that the rooms were repainted and that the new decorations were carried out directly over the second-century decorations. If this were the case, the later paintings might have preserved the second-century decorations that remain in the apartments today.<sup>653</sup> One must also consider the extent to which the collapse of the upper floors that occurred during the earthquake prevented future occupation of the interior blocks but preserved the painted decorations.

### **Decorative and Structural Variations and Questions of Occupancy**

Despite the general similarities among the paintings of the interior blocks, there are notable differences among the extant paintings. I offer here four possible reasons for the variations, all of which relate to questions of occupancy. The first two possibilities arise in the case that the apartments of the interior blocks functioned as rental units, the third possibility involves occupancy by the owners, and the fourth involves occupancy by tenants and owners.

The first possibility concerns the mid-second century structural modifications. It is possible that variations in the painted decorations could relate to phases of structural changes. When modifications took place in particular rooms, new paintings might have been added or perhaps the existing paintings were repaired. Alternately, new decorations might have been added to all of the rooms of the residence in order to update the decor according to the current fashions.

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<sup>653</sup> Clarke 1991a, 268, indicates that many of the Ostian wall paintings from the second century remained intact because subsequent phases of redecoration were painted directly over them with thick layers of plaster. For example, in rooms 3 and 4 of the House of the Yellow Walls linear style wall paintings were carried out directly over the earlier Antonine painting, while in room 4 of the House of the Painted Vaults the Antonine ceiling paintings were covered by a Severan scheme, of which traces still remain today. In my examination of the paintings of the interior-block apartments, I did not detect any traces of whitewash or other overpainting, but this is not to deny the possibility that later phases of redecoration might have been carried out directly over the earlier layers but have since deteriorated completely.

Since there is no information regarding the precise years in which the renovations were carried out,<sup>654</sup> it is unclear whether they took place within each of the interior-block apartments at the same time. If this was the case, the owner might have commissioned the same painters' workshop to decorate all of the affected rooms in the complex. This would seem to be the most economical approach to a large-scale renovation project. On the other hand, if the renovations were carried out piecemeal and at different times, perhaps even over a short span of time, the owner might not have hired the same workshop to update the painted decorations in all of the apartments for any number of practical reasons. In short, the paintings of different apartments and even those in different rooms of the same unit could be related to structural changes, but they need not all be of the same date.

Moreover, there were only a few decorative systems in second- and early third-century paintings that achieved a high degree of popularity, particularly the aedicular system and the architectural system. Numerous workshops might have carried out the same basic types of decorations, each in its own distinctive style. Given the fact that the majority of the apartment blocks at Ostia were built in a period of only a few decades, and that the population of the city might have reached as much as 60,000 at its peak,<sup>655</sup> several painters' workshops must have been active at Ostia during this period with commissions to produce the styles that were popular at the time. The activities of multiple painters' workshops could account for the slight differences among the rooms with monochrome yellow walls or the more obvious variations among the paintings on

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<sup>654</sup> To date, no scholar has established a more precise chronology for all of the walls in the complex. Cervi 1999, 141, indicates that no stratigraphic evidence was documented by the 1938-1942 campaign led by Guido Calza, although some stratigraphic evidence was documented for the House of the Yellow Walls in campaigns undertaken in 1965 and 1967.

<sup>655</sup> Meiggs 1973, 532-34, proposes a population of 50,000-60,000.



polychrome backgrounds. Moreover, the number of artists in a workshop could have changed over time, just as the skills of the artists no doubt differed, which would have led to further variations.

The second possible explanation of the decorative variations relates to the tenants' uses of the apartments. In the Roman leasing system, higher-status tenants of well-appointed apartments were known to agree to multi-year leases, and rent was typically paid on a yearly basis at the end of the payment period. A tenant residing in an apartment for multiple years might have decided to change the decorations of the apartment to suit his or her taste. Floor mosaics would have been costly to replace,<sup>656</sup> but altering the paintings would have been a less expensive way to alter the interior.

I have already called attention to the fact that a person granted permission to occupy a residence as a usufructuary was allowed to alter the wall paintings and to make minor structural changes, such as the addition of windows. However, the legal texts are silent on the extent to which non-usufructuary tenants could make minor cosmetic changes. It seems logical that if the residents of the interior-block apartments of the Garden Houses were tenants, they could not all have been usufructuaries. If these tenants altered the painted decorations of their rental units on occasion, as would seem especially likely in cases of multi-year leases, it is interesting that they chose decorative systems that were appropriate to the different spaces of the residence. Once again, the variations could be attributed to the workshops that carried out the different commissions.

A third possible explanation for the deviations from the basic decorative types is that these units were not rental properties but were instead occupied by their owners. The possibility of ownership offers a logical explanation for the variety of differences that I

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<sup>656</sup> Dunbabin 1999, 279-89, on the variety of technical procedures required to produce floor mosaics.

have identified in the paintings, particularly among the painted decorations with polychrome backgrounds. In the interior-block apartments, there is also evidence of different types of structural transformations, including the addition of doors, the closure of window openings, and in one case, the expansion of a room into the space of an adjacent corridor. As noted above, usufructuaries (and presumably also tenants) were not permitted to alter the physical layout the rooms of a residence or its gardens, although they were allowed to add windows.<sup>657</sup> It is unclear whether the legal sources would consider such minor modifications as admissible changes for tenants to make or as projects that were more appropriate for an owner to undertake. It is possible that the addition of doors, in particular, was an inappropriate modification for a tenant to carry out because it could alter the way in which spaces were used and encountered. Thus, the number of minor modifications that took place in the interior-block apartments in the second century could have been the work of their owner-occupants.

A fourth possibility is that these apartments were constructed as rental units and became owner-occupied properties at a later date. This type of situation occurs in late antique Ostia. Many of Ostia's second century insulae were abandoned and the properties were purchased by wealthy elites who, from the late third to early fifth centuries, transformed them into large-scale luxury domus.<sup>658</sup> It is not unreasonable to think that shifting economic conditions might have led to similar changes in the ownership of the Garden Houses properties, especially before the earthquake in the late third century.

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<sup>657</sup> *Dig.* 7.1.13.7-8.

<sup>658</sup> Becatti 1948; Packer 1967b; Meiggs 1973, 259.

It is also possible that different types of occupancy could occur not only within a single apartment block but also within a single residence. As noted above, each ground floor apartment in the interior-blocks also included a first floor unit. Because the entrances to the first floor apartments were very close to the exterior, they could have been let out to individuals outside of the household of the ground floor unit.<sup>659</sup> Alternatively, these spaces could have been used by the household of the ground floor apartment: the owner could have used the first floor as a workspace for conducting business activities, or it could have served as the domain of the household slaves.<sup>660</sup>

In addition, it is important to note as well that the ground floor units were originally connected internally in pairs by passageways.<sup>661</sup> It appears that each pair of apartments could have been used initially as a single, larger apartment. These passageways appear to have been blocked up shortly after the construction of the complex,<sup>662</sup> which might indicate that the apartments were intended to be rented out individually at this point. Alternately, this separation might indicate that the apartments were autonomous, owner-occupied units whose residents did not want or need a direct connection with their neighbors' adjacent residence. In short, the connections that the apartments shared with upper floor units or adjacent ground floor apartments further complicates and nuances our understanding of occupancy at Ostia.

Regardless of whether the inhabitants were tenants, usufructuaries, or owners, one issue is clear: the residents of the interior-block apartments shared a need for spaces that were distinguishable by occupants and guests alike as either primary or secondary spaces

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<sup>659</sup> Gering 2002.

<sup>660</sup> DeLaine 2004, 160-61. The separation of the slaves onto the upper level would have had the added benefit of keeping them out of the visitor's view.

<sup>661</sup> DeLaine 2004, 152.

<sup>662</sup> DeLaine 2004, 152-53. However, DeLaine does not specify when these passageways were blocked.

by their painted decorations and also by the location of the room within the apartment. Residents of these apartments, who needed distinct spaces for reception and entertainment purposes, must have been among the well-off members of Ostian society. Receiving and entertaining guests would have been an obligation of residents who had reached the upper end of the social continuum.<sup>663</sup>

### **The Residents of the Garden Houses Complex**

In previous chapters I have commented on the diversity of Ostia's population, which included large contingencies from North Africa and from the eastern Mediterranean. Many of these foreigners had acquired substantial wealth from the city's shipping and commercial industries. This population likely resided in Ostia seasonally or some even permanently.<sup>664</sup> While an individual's residence at Ostia might not have been identical to that in his home region, it would likely have been suitable for his purposes while in residence in the city.

As noted earlier, DeLaine has suggested that a group of North African shippers, the *naviculari Africani*, or a group of Eastern Mediterranean shippers and merchants might have commissioned the Garden Houses complex for their own use as their seasonal residences.<sup>665</sup> She chose these two groups because their presence at Ostia is well attested in the epigraphic record.<sup>666</sup> DeLaine has argued that such apartments were more

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<sup>663</sup> Garnsey and Saller 1987, 151-52; Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 10-14.

<sup>664</sup> DeLaine 2004, 170, notes that the procurator annonae as well as various imperial officials would likely have needed to spend considerable time at Ostia and might have had their permanent residences elsewhere.

<sup>665</sup> DeLaine 2004, 170-71, suggests that it would have taken a work force of approximately 300 men working for a period of at least 3 years to complete the project. DeLaine cites the close proximity of the complex to the harbor at the river mouth and also to the foreshore where ships would drop anchor as a possible added convenience for merchants or shippers who needed easy access to the ports. See also DeLaine 2002, 52-57 and 73-74, on the nature of the project.

<sup>666</sup> See Chapter 2.

appropriate places for such individuals to conduct and manage their business than were the much smaller chambers of the Square of the Corporations (Piazzale delle Corporazioni), which likely functioned as a site of the commercial offices of many foreign merchants.<sup>667</sup>

Because it is not possible to verify DeLaine's conclusions, one must remain open to the possibility that anyone, whether of foreign, freeborn, or servile origins, could potentially have resided in the complex. DeLaine has opened up an interesting line of inquiry with respect to the role of foreigners residing in, and perhaps even commissioning, spaces that take on the trappings of a distinctly Roman household.<sup>668</sup> If any of the residents of this complex (whether owners of commissioned units or long-term tenants) were foreigners (or to be more specific, provincial citizens), their acceptance of the standardized decorations of the apartment in which they resided might have created for them a stronger sense of membership in Roman society.<sup>669</sup> The painted decorations in the apartments were appropriate for the practice of the social rituals that occurred within the Roman home and would have been a sign that the occupant not only wanted them but also recognized their appropriateness in the local Ostian and wider Roman culture.

It is possible that the occupants of these apartments would already have been familiar with Roman social and cultural practices, particularly if they hailed from one of

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<sup>667</sup> The *naviculari Africani* in particular are known to have a marked presence at the Square of Corporations through the remains of mosaic floors distinguishing their numerous places of business. On the decorations of the Square of Corporations, see Pohl 1978.

<sup>668</sup> However, she does not acknowledge if there are any architectural parallels between the Ostian apartments and the houses found in North Africa or in the Eastern Mediterranean region. The identification of similarities between housing types in the provinces and at Ostia could provide further insight into the identities of the occupants of these apartments. On housing in Roman North Africa, see Thébert 1987. However, Thébert focuses primarily on the domestic architecture of the "ruling class", and many of his examples are on the scale of Roman villas.

<sup>669</sup> On the idea that new citizens (especially freedpersons) surrounded themselves with symbols of *Romanitas* to highlight their Roman identity, see Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 174. I question whether there was a similar urge among wealthy and prestigious foreigners at Ostia to surround themselves with symbols of Romanness in order to validate themselves in the eyes of their business partners and peers.

the numerous provinces of the Empire. Seasonal inhabitants might have had a similarly adorned Roman residence in their home city. Indeed, it was not uncommon for wealthy Romans to have multiple residences.<sup>670</sup>

In sum, I have identified three basic patterns among the paintings of the medianum apartments of the interior blocks of the Garden Houses complex, all of which reflect the relationship between the background colors employed and the hierarchical organization of space within the home. In order to propose date ranges for these paintings, I have compared them stylistically to more securely dated painted decorations located in the exterior blocks of the Garden Houses and in other apartments in the city. In addition, I have pointed to archaeological evidence of structural modifications that supports my proposed date ranges. Phases of structural change were occurring in the apartments starting in the mid-second century, and new painted decorations seem to have followed in many cases.

I have also cast doubt upon the assumption that these “standardized” apartments contained similarly identical painted decorations by identifying the numerous variations that appear among the basic decorative systems. I have interpreted these variations to suggest the possible ownership and use(s) of the complex during the second and early third centuries. In particular, I have proposed that these variations might indicate that new decorations were carried out during different phases and were possibly executed by multiple workshops. I have also suggested that variations among the paintings might indicate that tenants were permitted to alter the decorations of their rental properties, despite the fact that only usufructuaries and owners were legally allowed to do so. In

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<sup>670</sup> For example, Pliny the Younger is known to have had residences near Lake Como, at Laurentinum (Laurentum) near Ostia, and in Tuscany. Pliny *ep.* 1. 3; 2.17; 5.6.

addition, I have considered the possibility that the apartments were inhabited by their owners, who were free to alter the decorations to suit their tastes.

Regardless of whether the apartments were rental units or owned properties, it seems clear that the residents required homes that included rooms that could support different sorts of meetings and receptions. In other words, the residents were likely of an elevated social and economic status, in part because they had a need for a residence with at least one well-appointed reception room as well as multiple secondary spaces.

Ultimately, I hope to have called attention to the fact that standardization in the painted decorations of Garden Houses complex, and to an extent also in the plans of the interior block apartments, is far from absolute. In order to better understand this complex and its painted decorations, we must learn to look more closely at the subtle variations that exist within its seemingly uniform structures.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **Conclusion**

Over the course of this dissertation, I have shown that the painted decorations and architecture of Ostian apartments were collectively employed in the structuring of social relations and in the construction and promotion of the resident's public identity and social status. I have repeatedly emphasized the importance of examining the Ostian epigraphic evidence in order glean information about the social and political activities that the city's occupants engaged in both in the public sphere and in the semi-public setting of their residences. I have argued that a synthetic approach that considers the inscriptions related to people and institutions in Ostia alongside the architectural and decorative remains of the apartments allows for a more informed understanding of the social functions of the art and architecture of Ostian residences. Likewise, I have argued for the importance of reconsidering the assumption that many Ostian apartments functioned as rental units. This assumption has oversimplified our understanding of the Ostian continuum of housing, within which there was likely considerable diversity in terms of housing types and occupancy options. Moreover, the rental unit interpretation has given greater aesthetic agency to the landlords or owners who are thought to have commissioned the painted decorations of many of the apartments, especially those of the Garden Houses complex. Consequently, scholars have rarely acknowledged the possibility that owners or perhaps even tenants could have chosen the decorations that are still preserved today.



Because considerations of social status are central to my research, Chapter 2 considers how one defines and estimates an individual's social status. Previous studies of Ostian domestic space have drawn broad conclusions about the social standing of the occupants based on the material remains, which has led to vague and anachronistic class and/or status distinctions. After highlighting the basic differences between class and status in the Roman Empire, I focused on status because I am concerned primarily with the social estimation of one's honor and prestige rather than with the economic considerations typically associated with class. I then surveyed the distinctions of legal and social status that are outlined in Roman textual sources and addressed their applicability to the historical and cultural context of second-century Ostia. I concluded that the Ostian epigraphic record has much to tell us about the social, legal, ethnic, and occupational backgrounds of the city's residents and the kinds of barriers to social mobility such individuals faced. This survey of epigraphic sources created the foundation for my discussion of the possible occupants of the city's well-appointed apartments that followed in the subsequent chapters.

Chapter 3 considers whether the assumed correlation between the size and splendor of a Roman house and its residents' social standing is supported by the material evidence of Ostian residences. To this end I analyzed the architecture and decorations of twenty-four Ostian apartments of varying size and plan in an effort to discern their primary spaces. I contended that such spaces provide the most conspicuous evidence of the occupant's achievement of elevated social status because he would have conducted many of his social, political, business, and patronal affairs in such spaces. I also developed a set of criteria for identifying primary spaces, which is based on three main

categories: the decorations (paintings and pavements), the layout of the apartment and the location of the room, and architectural features.

My analysis has shown that there is no direct correlation between the size of the apartment, the richness of its decorations, and the number of primary spaces for receiving guests. Rather, there is a clear distinction between the apartments with a ground floor area of at least 190 m<sup>2</sup> (i.e., the apartments of Groups 1 and 2) and those of smaller dimensions (i.e., the Group 3 apartments). The larger apartments typically include at least two primary spaces, nearly all of which have painted decorations characterized by an architectural system on a polychrome background. The fact that this particular decorative system is repeatedly used in the paintings of the primary spaces suggests its appropriateness for the most important spaces of the residence. It seems likely that the architectural features represented in this system would have supported the semi-public function of the residence while also designating the particular room as one where the owner could engage in the practices associated with his public roles in Ostian society. In my judgment the apartments of Groups 1 and 2 should be viewed as one large group of luxury residences designed for individuals of elevated social status rather than two distinct groups of apartments designed for individuals at different positions on the social continuum.

In contrast, primary spaces are less clearly identifiable among the Group 3 apartments. This is partly due to the fact that the same decorative system (i.e., either the aedicular system or the panel system) was employed throughout each residence. This created a certain degree of uniformity among the decorations, which does not support a reading of any spaces as hierarchically more significant than the others. In addition, the

majority of these apartments exhibit few, if any, outstanding architectural features, while their layouts rarely provide clues as to which rooms might have been the most important spaces of the residence.

I arrived at several possible readings of the Group 3 apartments. It is possible that they simply did not include primary spaces, which would imply that they occupants were at a notably lower position along the social continuum than the residents of the Group 1 and Group 2 apartments. It is also possible that the uniformly decorated rooms of these apartments were deliberately designed to be multifunctional. If this were the case, the occupants would have needed to supply their own furnishings if they wished to distinguish the primary space(s) visually from the other parts of the residence. Moreover I suggested that the deliberate decoration of the spaces of an apartment in nearly identical ways could indicate that it functioned as a rental unit. I then proposed that access analysis could shed light on the particular rooms of the Group 3 apartments that might have functioned as socially significant spaces.

Chapter 4 returned to the question of the occupants of the apartments and addressed the relationship between upward social mobility and the need for housing that was appropriate to and that also reinforced one's newly attained social status. I identified two groups of social-climbing individuals who had gained notable wealth, power, and prestige in Ostian society: 1) freeborn non-elites, who joined the order of decurions in greater numbers than in the past, largely because of their financial resources; and 2) independent freedpersons, especially those who belonged to the priesthood of the imperial cult (*seviri Augustales*). I argued that such individuals would have been especially concerned with displaying their newly acquired wealth, influence, and standing

in both public and private settings. In the public sphere, this could have been accomplished through municipal euergetism. This practice of providing public donations allowed individuals who had adequate financial resources to engage in competitive display while also enriching the city and providing for its inhabitants. In the private sphere, an individual was able to employ his residence and its decorations to demonstrate his elevated position in Ostian public life and his adoption of Roman social practices.

Based on my study of the material and written evidence, I concluded that the medianum apartments of Group 2A were the most suitable for the upwardly mobile because they generally contained at least two, clearly differentiated primary spaces where the occupant could have engaged in the social, political, and business affairs associated with his new public role in Ostian society. I also suggested that one's choice of an apartment of this 'standardized' type, complete with all of the requisite reception spaces and decorations, might have appealed to an occupant who wanted to display his acceptance of Roman values (including the importance of the house in one's participation in public life) and his acculturation into Ostian society, regardless of his social, legal, or ethnic origins.

Questions of occupancy were addressed in Chapter 5 in my examination of the Garden Houses complex, the largest private building project at Ostia. The apartments of this complex, particular the medianum apartments of the interior blocks, have long been considered to be rental units, despite the fact that there is no epigraphic evidence to support this reading. I investigated the validity of the rental-unit interpretation by considering what variations in the painted decorations of the interior-block apartments might suggest about the types of occupancy that occurred in the apartments (i.e., whether

they were occupied by tenants, their owners, or others). After identifying the basic similarities among the painted decorations of the apartments, I called attention to a number of minor formal variations on the basic decorative systems employed in order to highlight the problematic reading of the paintings as examples of identical or standardized decorations. I then compared the paintings of the interior blocks on stylistic bases to more securely dated paintings in other Ostian apartments, and I considered the relationship between the painted decorations and later phases of structural modifications that occurred within the complex. Based on the architectural and decorative evidence, I arrived at a broad date range for the interior-block paintings, which runs from the late Hadrianic through the late Antonine period, although I argued that the majority should be dated to the mid to late Antonine period (c. AD 161-192). The dates that I proposed challenge the common belief that the paintings were carried out during a single, unified decorative project when the complex was built and that it was likely commissioned by the owner.

I also highlighted relevant passages in Roman legal texts on urban tenancy that address the duration of the leases and that indicate which types of occupants were allowed to make cosmetic or structural changes to an apartment. Although the legal texts do not indicate whether tenants were permitted to make such alterations, the tenants of well-appointed apartments in Rome were known to have entered into multi-year leases. I argued that tenants, particularly those who planned to reside in an apartment for a considerable period of time, might have wished to outfit their rental accommodations to better suit their tastes. I also called attention to legal sources that pertain to persons granted the usufruct of a property. Such individuals were permitted to occupy a

residence owned by another person and were legally allowed to make minor decorative changes and structural modifications, perhaps not unlike those carried out in many of the interior-block apartments. I stressed the possibility that the occupants could have been the owners of the apartments, who were free to alter their surroundings as they saw fit. My research on the Garden Houses complex ultimately indicates that numerous types of occupancy could have occurred in this complex, perhaps even at the same time, regardless of what their presumed decorative and architectural standardization suggests.

Throughout this study, my discussion of painted decorations has focused largely on the use of specific decorative systems to visually indicate the hierarchical organization of space in Ostian apartments. I have also considered the extent to which the appropriateness of a particular system reinforced its repeated use in the same types of spaces in apartments of varying size and plan. Despite the fact that the Ostian paintings have received significant attention, the painters who created these decorations have not been the subjects of scholarly concern. While there has been considerable interest in the study of painters' workshops at Pompeii,<sup>671</sup> there has been little attention to this topic in the Ostian context. I believe that we can come to a better understanding of their artistic practices and the transmission of specific variations on the decorative systems through a closer examination of the techniques and materials used in the creation of the painted decorations.

The identification of individual artists' hands, when coupled with archaeological evidence of building phases, could assist in determining more accurate dates for the painted decorations of individual apartments and in identifying chronological relationships between the paintings of different apartments that are attributed to the same

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<sup>671</sup> De Vos 1981; Allison 1991; 1995; Richardson 2000; Bragantini 2004; Esposito 2009.

artist. Moreover, the close examination of the painted decorations could also allow for the isolation of features that may be considered distinctly “Ostian”. Such features could, I believe, suggest the ways in which the city’s painters adapted earlier styles and forms to produce decorations that were considered appropriate to their Ostian domestic contexts and that adhered to accepted standards of aesthetic decorum.

Likewise, there has been little attention to the materials used in Ostian paintings. That is, there has not been significant interest in the potential for using scientific analyses to study the materials employed in the painted decorations. With the exception of a recent study by Falzone and Pellegrino on the paintings of the House of the Priestesses,<sup>672</sup> in which X-ray fluorescence (XRF) was used to chemically analyze the pigments employed in the painted decorations, there has been little attention to the pigments and materials employed in Ostian painted decorations. Currently, Hilary Becker, Laura Wilke, and Ruth Beeston are conducting chemical analyses on a hoard of raw pigments from a pigment shop in Rome, which was found within the sacred precinct of the Temples of Fortuna and Mater Matuta (the Area Sacra di S. Omobono).<sup>673</sup> The results of their study could provide an important source of comparative material for future studies of Ostian pigments, especially given that at least some of the painters who worked at Ostia are thought to have been based in the capital. I believe that greater attention to materials could provide us with a better understanding of the artistic practices of painters, which will undoubtedly allow us to advance our interpretations of the painted decorations.

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<sup>672</sup> Falzone and Pellegrino 2001.

<sup>673</sup> Becker (Davidson College) and Wilke (Oberlin College) presented a paper entitled “Colors and Commerce: Pigment Shops in the Ancient World” at the annual meeting of the Archaeological Institute of American in January 2011. Beeston (Davidson College, Department of Chemistry) is currently conducting the chemical analyses. Their research is still in progress.

With this dissertation and these suggestions of future avenues of research, I hope to have laid the groundwork for subsequent studies of Ostian domestic art and architecture. Above all, I hope to have demonstrated that my approach has larger implications not only for the study of the Ostian domestic context but also for the study of Roman domestic space in the wider empire from the mid-Imperial period onward.



**TABLE**  
**Apartments According to Group**

**GROUP 1**

- 1) House of the Muses (III, IX, 22): 749 m<sup>2</sup>  
Source of ground floor area: Clarke 1991, 270.  
Source of room numbers: Clarke 1991, 269, Fig. 163.  
Primary Spaces: 4 (rooms 5, 10, 15, and 19)  
Alternative Primary Spaces: 3 (rooms 8, 9, and 11)  
Total Number of Possible Reception Spaces: 7
  
- 2) House of Jove and Ganymede (I, IV, 2): c. 750 m<sup>2</sup>  
Source of ground floor area: DeLaine 1999, 176.  
Source of room numbers: DeLaine 1995, 88, Fig. 5.4.  
Primary Spaces: 2 (rooms 25 and 27)  
Alternative Primary Spaces: 2 (rooms 24 and 33)  
Total Number of Possible Reception Spaces: 4
  
- 3) House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander (I, III, 5): c. 500 m<sup>2</sup>  
Source of ground floor area: Based on my measurements of the plan in *Scavi di Ostia I*.  
Source of room numbers: Oome 2007, 234, Fig. 2.  
Primary Spaces: 2 (rooms 11a and 12a-b)  
Alternative Primary Spaces: 0  
Total Number of Possible Reception Spaces: 2

**GROUP 2**

**Group 2A**

- 1) House of the Infant Bacchus (I, IV, 3): c. 244.8 m<sup>2</sup>  
Source of ground floor area: DeLaine 2004, 154, Fig. 2.  
Source of room numbers: DeLaine 1995, 88, Fig. 5.4.  
Primary Spaces: 2 (rooms 13 and 20)  
Alternative Primary Spaces: 1 (room 12)  
Total Number of Possible Reception Spaces: 3

- 2) House of the Paintings (I, IV, 4): c. 244.8 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Source of ground floor area: DeLaine 2004, 154, Fig. 2.  
 Source of room numbers: DeLaine 1995, 88, Fig. 5.4.  
 Primary Spaces: 2 (rooms 3 and 10)  
 Alternative Primary Spaces: 1 (room 2)  
 Total Number of Possible Reception Spaces: 3
  
- 3) House of the Painted Ceiling (II, VI, 6): 190 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Source of ground floor area: Based on my measurements of the plan in *Scavi di Ostia I*.  
 Source of room numbers: Falzone 2004, 95, Fig. 43.  
 Primary Spaces: 1 (room 1)  
 Alternative Primary Spaces: 1 (room 4)  
 Total Number of Possible Reception Spaces: 2
  
- 4) House of the Priestesses (III, IX, 6): c. 319.1 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Source of ground floor area: Based on my measurements of the plan in *Scavi di Ostia I*.<sup>674</sup>  
 Source of room numbers: Falzone 2007, 69, Fig. 28.  
 Primary Spaces: 2 (rooms 4 and 6)  
 Alternative Primary Spaces: 3 (rooms 8, 9, and 11)  
 Total Number of Possible Reception Spaces: 5
  
- 5) House of the Yellow Walls (III, IX, 12): 309 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Source of ground floor area: DeLaine 2004, 154, Fig. 2.  
 Source of room numbers: Felletti Maj 1961, 42, Fig. 23.  
 Primary Spaces: 2 (rooms 7 and 8)  
 Alternative Primary Spaces: 2 (rooms 5 and 6)  
 Total Number of Possible Reception Spaces: 4
  
- 6) Garden Houses, Apt. 13 (III, IX, 13): c. 278 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Source of ground floor area: DeLaine 2004, 154, Fig. 2.  
 Source of room numbers: Cervi 1999, Fig. 2.  
 Primary Spaces: 2 (rooms 4 and 9)  
 Alternative Primary Spaces: 0  
 Total Number of Possible Reception Spaces: 2
  
- 7) Garden Houses, Apt. 14 (III, IX, 14): c. 280.4 m<sup>2</sup>  
 Source of ground floor area: DeLaine 2004, 154, Fig. 2.  
 Source of room numbers: Cervi 1999, Fig. 2.  
 Primary Spaces: 2 (rooms 4 and 9)

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<sup>674</sup> DeLaine 2004, 154, Fig. 2. The area that DeLaine provides for the House of the Painted Ceiling appears to include the total ground floor area prior to the renovations that occurred in the late second century, which closed off the two northernmost rooms. Because I consider the apartment in its late second-century phase, I do not rely on her calculations. Instead, I have calculated the approximate ground floor area using the plan in *Scavi di Ostia I*.

Alternative Primary Spaces: 0  
Total Number of Possible Reception Spaces: 2

- 8) Garden Houses, Apt. 15 (III, IX, 15): c. 302.2 m<sup>2</sup>  
Source of ground floor area: DeLaine 2004, 154, Fig. 2.  
Source of room numbers: Cervi 1999, Fig. 2.  
Primary Spaces: 2 (rooms 5 and 10)  
Alternative Primary Spaces: 0  
Total Number of Possible Reception Spaces: 2
- 9) Garden Houses, Apt. 16 (III, IX, 16): c. 302.2 m<sup>2</sup>  
Source of ground floor area: DeLaine 2004, 154, Fig. 2.  
Source of room numbers: Cervi 1999, Fig. 2.  
Primary Spaces: 2 (rooms 5 and 10)  
Alternative Primary Spaces: 0  
Total Number of Possible Reception Spaces: 2
- 10) Garden Houses, Apt. 17 (III, IX, 17): c. 302.2 m<sup>2</sup>  
Source of ground floor area: DeLaine 2004, 154, Fig. 2.  
Source of room numbers: Cervi 1999, Fig. 2.  
Primary Spaces: 2 (rooms 5 and 10)  
Alternative Primary Spaces: 0  
Total Number of Possible Reception Spaces: 2
- 11) Garden Houses, Apt. 18 (III, IX, 18): c. 302.2 m<sup>2</sup>  
Source of ground floor area: DeLaine 2004, 154, Fig. 2.  
Source of room numbers: Cervi 1999, Fig. 2.  
Primary Spaces: 2 (rooms 5 and 10)  
Alternative Primary Spaces: 0  
Total Number of Possible Reception Spaces: 2
- 12) Garden Houses, Apt. 19 (III, IX, 19): 280.4 m<sup>2</sup>  
Source of ground floor area: DeLaine 2004, 154, Fig. 2.  
Source of room numbers: Cervi 1999, Fig. 2.  
Primary Spaces: 2 (rooms 4 and 9)  
Alternative Primary Spaces: 0  
Total Number of Possible Reception Spaces: 2
- 13) Garden Houses, Apt. 20 (III, IX, 20): 280.4 m<sup>2</sup>  
Source of ground floor area: DeLaine 2004, 154, Fig. 2.  
Source of room numbers: Cervi 1999, Fig. 2.  
Primary Spaces: 2 (rooms 4 and 9)  
Alternative Primary Spaces: 0  
Total Number of Possible Reception Spaces: 2

- 14) House of the Graffito (III, IX, 21): c. 205 m<sup>2</sup>  
Source of ground floor area: DeLaine 2004, 154, Fig. 2.  
Source of room numbers: Cervi 1999, Fig. 2.  
Primary Spaces: 2 (rooms 3 and 7)  
Alternative Primary Spaces: 1 (room 6)  
Total Number of Possible Reception Spaces: 3

### **Group 2B**

- 15) Inn of the Peacock (IV, II, 6): c. 350 m<sup>2</sup>  
Source of ground floor area: Based on my measurements of the plan in *Scavi di Ostia I*.  
Source of room numbers: Falzone 2004, 179, Fig. 91.  
Primary Spaces: 2 (rooms 8 and 9)  
Alternative Primary Spaces: 0  
Total Number of Possible Reception Spaces: 2
- 16) House of the Painted Vaults (III, V, 1): c. 220 m<sup>2</sup>  
Source of ground floor area: Based on my measurements of the plan in *Scavi di Ostia I*.  
Source of room numbers: Felletti Maj 1961, 5, Fig. 1.  
Primary Spaces: 2 (rooms 2 and 12)  
Alternative Primary Spaces: 3 (rooms 4, 5, and 11)  
Total Number of Possible Reception Spaces: 5

### **GROUP 3**

#### **Group 3A**

- 1) House of Themistocles (V, XI, 2), Apartment 1 (rooms 19-21): c. 65 m<sup>2</sup>  
Source of ground floor area: Based on my measurements of the plan in *Scavi di Ostia I*.  
Source of room numbers: Falzone 2004, 155, Fig. 84.  
Primary Spaces: 1 (room 21)  
Alternative Primary Spaces: 1 (room 19)  
Total Number of Possible Reception Spaces: 2
- 2) House of Themistocles (V, XI, 2), Apartment 2 (rooms 22-26): c. 90 m<sup>2</sup>  
Source of ground floor area: Based on my measurements of the plan in *Scavi di Ostia I*.  
Source of room numbers: Falzone 2004, 155, Fig. 84.  
Primary Spaces: 2 (rooms 22 and 26)  
Alternative Primary Spaces: 0  
Total Number of Possible Reception Spaces: 2

### Group 3B

- 3) House of the Charioteers (III, X, 1) (rooms 26-33): c. 140 m<sup>2</sup>  
Source of ground floor area: Based on my measurements of the plan in *Scavi di Ostia I*.  
Source of room numbers: Packer 1971, 106, Fig. 25.  
Primary Spaces: 2 (rooms 27 and 31)  
Alternative Primary Spaces: 3 (rooms 28, 30, and 32)  
Total Number of Possible Reception Spaces: 5
  
- 4) House of Annius (III, XIV, 4), Apartment 1 (rooms 3-5A): c. 88 m<sup>2</sup>  
Source of ground floor area: Based on my measurements of the plan in *Scavi di Ostia I*.  
Source of room numbers: Packer 1971, 108, Fig. 30.  
Primary Spaces: 0  
Alternative Primary Spaces: 2 (rooms 3 and 4-4a)  
Total Number of Possible Reception Spaces: 2
  
- 5) House of Annius (III, XIV, 4), Apartment 2 (rooms 6-8): c. 79 m<sup>2</sup>  
Source of ground floor area: Based on my measurements of the plan in *Scavi di Ostia I*.  
Source of room numbers: Packer 1971, 108, Fig. 30.  
Primary Spaces: 0  
Alternative Primary Spaces: 2 (rooms 6 and 8)  
Total Number of Possible Reception Spaces: 2

## APPENDIX

### **The Application of Primary Space Criteria to the Three Groups of Ostian Apartments**

This Appendix presents my analysis of the twenty-four apartments discussed in Chapter 3 according to the primary space criteria outlined above. When referring to specific rooms, I use the numbers that are most commonly cited in reference to each apartment. Please refer to the Table for the sources of the room numbers for each apartment. The apartments in the Appendix are organized according to Group number. The information provided is based largely on my observations of the apartments during my field research at Ostia during 2008-09, during which time I examined the painted decorations and floor mosaics of the apartments as well as their architectural features and layouts. I have also incorporated information gleaned from previous studies. I have compiled this Appendix to serve as a reference for readers of my dissertation and also to provide a resource for scholars researching related topics.

#### **GROUP 1 APARTMENTS**

##### **The House of the Muses (III, IX, 22)** (Fig. 9)

Ground floor area: 749 sq. m

##### **Selected bibliography:**

Calza et al. 1953, 136-37, 236; Becatti 1961, 128-33; Felletti Maj and Moreno 1967; Packer 1971, 173-77; Blake 1973, 188 f.; Joyce 1981, 23, 26, 31, 36, 38, 39, 40, 43, 46-47, 48, 49, 51, 65, 66, 67, 100, 106, 108, 209, 112; Mielsch 1984, 12 ff., 87; Clarke 1991, 270-89; Mols 2001, 327-29; Liedtke 2003, 65-68; Falzone 2007, 54-68.

The House of the Muses vies with the House of Jupiter and Ganymede (see below) for the title of largest mid-Imperial residence at Ostia, with a ground floor measuring approximately 749 m<sup>2</sup> in area.<sup>675</sup> This residence forms part of the Garden Houses complex (*Casa a Giardino*), the largest private building project at Ostia,<sup>676</sup> which was built around AD 128-130.<sup>677</sup> The House of the Muses is the largest residence within the complex. It is located at the northeast corner of the complex and opens onto the Via delle Volte Dipinte, facing the House of the Painted Vaults (*Domus delle Volte Dipinte*). Given its large size and extravagant decorations, the House of the Muses is commonly thought to have been the residence of a person of some means. It is believed to have functioned either as a luxury rental apartment,<sup>678</sup> or perhaps as the residence of the owner of the Garden Houses complex.<sup>679</sup>

As noted above, the House of the Muses has been described as an “insula-domus” because of the fact that it exhibits features of both types of residences.<sup>680</sup> In particular, it has been suggested that this house retains one feature of the atrium house: the placement of special-purpose rooms around a central circulation space.<sup>681</sup> However, the circulation space is not an atrium, but rather a *quadriporticus*, or a four-sided courtyard with colonnaded porticoes on all sides. The center area of the quadriporticus is open to the sky, thus allowing for light and air to reach the spaces located around it.<sup>682</sup> Moreover, the brick-faced concrete *cryptoporticus* (vaulted or covered corridor or arcade) served the practical function of supporting the weight of the building’s upper stories. The painted decorations in the House of the Muse range from the Hadrianic period through late antiquity,<sup>683</sup> while the mosaics date to the original Hadrianic phase of the building.<sup>684</sup>

## **Primary Spaces**

### **House of the Muses, room 5 (The “Room of the Muses”) (Fig. 12)**

#### **Decorations**

##### **Paintings**

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<sup>675</sup> Clarke 1991, 270.

<sup>676</sup> DeLaine 2004, 170.

<sup>677</sup> Cervi 1999; Gering 2002; Falzone 2007, 53-54. These dates have been established based on the identification of brick stamps from this period. On brick stamps, see Bloch 1953, 223; DeLaine 2002, 52-57. See Stevens 2005, 113 n. 2 on the fact that there was typically a gap of several years between the production of bricks and their use in construction.

<sup>678</sup> Clarke 1991, 270.

<sup>679</sup> Packer 1971, 176. See also Clarke 1991, 270.

<sup>680</sup> DeLaine 1999, 176.

<sup>681</sup> Clarke 1991, 270.

<sup>682</sup> Clarke 1991, 270, argues that the quadriporticus of the House of the Muses seems to be something of a hybrid between the imposing yet poorly lit atrium and the airy and bright colonnaded peristyle of the atrium house. DeLaine 1999, 175, however, implies that the quadriporticus could be viewed as a peristyle in a loose sense by referring to this type of house as one of the “contemporary peristyle houses” at Ostia.

<sup>683</sup> Felletti Maj and Moreno 1967, 56-65.

<sup>684</sup> Clarke 1991, 270-288; Falzone 2007, 56-68.

Date: Hadrianic

The painted decorations are characterized by a tripartite architectural system, with background panels and frames in red, yellow, and blue.

Figural subject matter: the Muses. The selection of an iconographic program depicting the Muses might allude to the resident's interest in different aspects of high culture represented by the Muses, including drama, literature, dance, and music. In fact, their arrangement is nearly identical to the order in which they are discussed in Hesiod's *Theogony*. This suggests that their placement was deliberate and calculated,<sup>685</sup> likely to reflect the owner's awareness of their mention in the literary source.

Floor mosaic

Date: Hadrianic

The mosaic is composed of black and white tesserae. The pattern includes alternating swastikas enclosed in thin black bands (6 in total), 7 rosettes, each of which is composed of 8 lozenges arranged symmetrically), and two different geometric motifs at the center. The pattern is laid out symmetrically and aligns with the doorway.

### Location/Layout

The room is located at the center of the north side of the quadriporticus, where it receives ample light from the open roof at the center of the quadriporticus.

### Architectural features

Window: Northeast-facing window provides additional light.

Calculated view: The piers at the north end of the quadriporticus that stand before the entrance to room 5 create the effect of a monumental entrance to the space. This also establishes a relationship between the two rooms as spaces of importance.<sup>686</sup>

## **House of the Muses, Room 10**

Room 10 is commonly interpreted as a triclinium.<sup>687</sup> This is likely because it is one of the largest rooms of the apartment and its prime location directly on the west side of the quadriporticus.

### Decorations

Paintings

Date: Primarily Hadrianic, with traces of later faux *opus sectile* panels in the south and west walls. The painted decorations have an architectural system on a polychrome background.

Figural subject matter: The paintings include a cycle of mythological central panels, although the only one that can be discerned today is located in the center of the west wall. According to Felletti Maj, this panel, which today is barely legible, might represent either Andromeda being freed by Perseus or Hesione being released by Hercules.<sup>688</sup>

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<sup>685</sup> Felletti Maj and Moreno, 1967; 25.

<sup>686</sup> Clarke 1991, 275.

<sup>687</sup> Packer 1971, 174; Clarke 1991, 274; Falzone 2007, 64.

<sup>688</sup> Felletti Maj and Moreno 1967, 49.



### Floor mosaic

Date: Hadrianic

The mosaic is composed of black and white tesserae. The pattern comprises rows of small squares (there are eight short rows with five squares each). Each square contains four smaller geometric shapes (all of the same type) at its center. The pattern symmetrically aligns with the entrance to the room.

### Location/Layout

This room is located at the center of the north side of the quadriporticus. A visitor entering the residence would not be able to see the entrance to room 10 until he or she had passed completely through corridor 1 and had begun to enter the quadriporticus due to the strategic placement of a pier just southeast of the doorway. This suggests a clear effort at controlling visibility of the activities taking place within the room. In addition, room 10 can be accessed by room 11, a long and narrow room adjacent to room 10's west wall that is thought to have functioned as a service space.<sup>689</sup>

Calculated view: From the doorway, one experiences a calculated view across the quadriporticus into room 19, although the view is partially blocked by a pier.<sup>690</sup> However, a viewer standing in the doorway or looking out either window would have a clear view of the back wall of the east side of the quadriporticus.

### Architectural features

Entrance: the doorway in the west wall is flanked by two windows, which align with the openings in the quadriporticus. This creates the sense of a tripartite entrance without requiring two doorways that flank the central doorway.

## **House of the Muses, room 15**

Room 15, the largest room of the house, is thought to have functioned as a tablinum or a triclinium.<sup>691</sup>

### Decorations

#### Paintings

The painted decorations are characterized by an architectural system on a polychrome background, with panels and frames in red, porphyry red, yellow, blue, and black.

#### Floor mosaic

Date: Hadrianic

Pattern is composed of nine large squares, each with angle brackets in the corners, a square at the center, and smaller squares at the center of each of the sides.

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<sup>689</sup> Packer 1971, 174.

<sup>690</sup> This is provided that the viewer looking outward stands to the right of the entrance, as a pier on the northwest side of the quadriporticus slightly blocks the view into room 19.

<sup>691</sup> See Clarke 1991, 271, on its possible dual functions. On its function as a tablinum, see Packer 1971, 175 (numbered as room 12), and Falzone 2007, 62.

## Location/Layout

At the south end of the quadriporticus, directly across from room 5 at the north end of the quadriporticus. Its tripartite entrance faces north, which indicates that it might have functioned on occasion as a summer triclinium, following the prescriptions of Vitruvius.<sup>692</sup> The room also includes two additional doorways (one on the west side and one on the east side), which lead to narrow, corridor-like spaces thought to have functioned as service spaces (rooms 14 and 16, respectively).<sup>693</sup> The presence of two service areas suggests a great need for spaces that were used to facilitate the activities that occurred within room 15.

## Architectural features

Entrance: The room is distinguished from all of the other rooms by its triple-arcaded entrance, which lines up accurately with the arcades of the quadriporticus.<sup>694</sup> In contrast, all of the other rooms only had a single main entrance, although room 10 had a doorway flanked by two windows, which seemed to mimic, albeit on a smaller scale, the triple entrance to room 15.

Ceiling: Groin-vaulted ceiling, which also distinguishes it from the other rooms because it is the only ceiling of its type within the residence.

## **House of the Muses, room 19**

Room 19 has been interpreted as a visitors' waiting area.<sup>695</sup>

## Decorations

### Paintings

Date: Late Hadrianic to early Antonine.<sup>696</sup>

Painted decorations are composed of an architectural system with panels and frames in yellow, red, porphyry red, and black.

Figural subject matter: The paintings might reflect an iconographic connection to the paintings in room 10, although they are about twenty years later in date.<sup>697</sup> According to Felletti Maj, the central mythological panels on the room's east and west walls might have depicted Perseus and the sea monster, which would have made an iconographic connection back to the panel with Andromeda or Hesione on the west wall of room 10.<sup>698</sup> However, the paintings are no longer preserved.

### Floor mosaic

Date: Hadrianic

The pattern is composed of interlocking I-shaped motifs in white, which are bordered in black.

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<sup>692</sup> Vitr. *De arch.* 6.4.1-2.

<sup>693</sup> Room 14 appears to have had the added function of serving as a corridor leading to room 11, the presumed service area of room 10.

<sup>694</sup> Clarke 1991, 271.

<sup>695</sup> Packer 1971, 176.

<sup>696</sup> Clarke 1991, 287.

<sup>697</sup> Clarke 1991, 287.

<sup>698</sup> Felletti Maj and Moreno 1967.

## Location/Layout

This room is located directly on the east side of the quadriporticus.

Calculated view: As noted above in the discussion of room 10, there is a partially blocked calculated view between rooms 19 and 10, which extends cross the quadriporticus but is impeded by piers located in front of the entrances to either room.

## Architectural features

Windows: There is one window in this room, which is located in the northeast wall. It opens onto the adjacent staircase (room 20).

## Alternative Primary Spaces

There are several rooms in the House of the Muses whose hierarchical ranking as either a primary or a secondary space is less easily distinguished. In all of these cases, the painted decorations suggest a primary function, but generally the remaining criteria, including the type of floor decoration, do not completely reinforce this interpretation.

## **House of the Muses, room 8**

Room 8 has been interpreted as an *oecus*, a sitting room for the adjacent room 9,<sup>699</sup> or as a cubiculum.<sup>700</sup> One could argue that the room appears to have served a secondary function because of its placement at the interior of the house, the lack of a calculated view, and the absence of any distinguishing architectural features. However, it is possible that this room functioned as a more private reception room designed for the owner's *amici* (friends) and other elevated guests and associates. After all, its connection to room 10 (possibly a triclinium) by a separate hallway, and its elaborate decorations were likely not wasted on a space of minor importance within the residence.

## Decorations

### Paintings

The decorative system is not evident, but it might have been an architectural system because there are human or divine figures in the panels, which are most commonly found in the architectural system. The panels that remain are yellow and red.

Figural subject matter: the yellow panel on the south wall contains a dancing maenad, while the red panel on the west wall contains a draped female figure. There is also a panel imitating white marble with red striations on its south wall that appears to be of later date.<sup>701</sup> It seems likely that

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<sup>699</sup> Clarke 1991, 274, on the *oecus* and sitting room interpretations.

<sup>700</sup> Packer 1971, 174.

<sup>701</sup> The female figure at the center of the red panel on the north wall is no longer visible.

there would have been additional mythological figures represented in the other panels because this is common feature in second-century Ostian domestic painting.<sup>702</sup>

#### Floor Mosaic

Date: Hadrianic

The pattern comprises angle brackets with a swastika pattern at the corners, rectangles with white and black fan motifs at the center of each side, and a large, square central medallion with s-shaped volutes. A small bird facing the east corner of the room sits at the center of the medallion.<sup>703</sup>

#### Location

Located at the northern corner of the residence. The room is not directly accessible from the quadriporticus, but rather it can only be accessed either through a doorway in its southeast wall that opens onto corridor 7, or through a doorway in its southwest wall that opens onto room 9. Although room 8 does not share a doorway with room 10, one of the primary reception spaces, they are connected through corridor 7.

#### Architectural Features

Windows: There are two windows in this room: one on the southwest wall that looks into room 9, and one on the northeast wall that overlooks the space between the House of the Muses and buildings 23 and 24 in the Garden Houses complex. The northern exposure of this room would have provided it with sufficient light, particularly in the summer. It would also have provided some light to room 9 via the window in the southwest wall of room 8.

### **House of the Muses, Room 9 (Fig. 14)**

Room 9 is commonly thought to be a bedroom (cubiculum).<sup>704</sup>

#### Decorations

Room 9 exhibits decorations that are somewhat more ambiguous than the aforementioned rooms in terms of the clarity of its hierarchical ranking within the home.

#### Paintings

Date: Hadrianic

The painted decorations are composed of an aedicular system on a white background. The white panels are framed by large yellow piers.<sup>705</sup> The paintings could potentially be considered secondary based on the fact that the background is predominantly white, and also because the room only appears to have two horizontal registers rather than three.<sup>706</sup>

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<sup>702</sup> See room 5 in the House of the Muses, room 1 in the House of the Painted Ceiling, rooms 7 and 8 in the House of the Yellow Walls; room 14 in the House of Jupiter and Ganymede; rooms 4 and 6 in the House of the Priestesses (Luceia Primitiva); and room 8 in the House of the Infant Bacchus.

<sup>703</sup> The only somewhat comparable motif is found in the mosaic of room 5 of the House of the Muses, where one finds a “knot-like” feature in the mosaic carpet that does not match the geometric star-like motifs found elsewhere in the room. However, this knot-like motif is not located at the center of the floor. See Becatti 1961, 128-33.

<sup>704</sup> Packer 1971, 174; Clarke 1991, 283-85; Falzone 2007, 64-67.

<sup>705</sup> Joyce 1981, 26.

<sup>706</sup> Meiggs 1973, 441.

Figural subject matter: The subject matter of the decorations, which is Dionysiac in theme,<sup>707</sup> might suggest that the room served as an alternative primary space. Images of Dionysus, Pans, and maenads fill the room, perhaps evoking the indulgence and merriment that could have taken place within the room. Clarke notes a further (although admittedly tenuous) interpretation, in which the room served as the private space or perhaps even the bedroom of the head mistress of the household (*domina*).<sup>708</sup>

#### Floor mosaic

Date: Hadrianic

The black and white floor mosaic is simple in design. It is composed of white hexagons that are individually outlined in black. A thin black frame surrounding the entire floor pavement. This mosaic not exhibit the same sort of complexity as is found in the clear primary spaces of the apartment.

### Location

Room 9, like room 8, is connected to room 10 and to the quadriporticus via corridor 7. While it is not located directly on the quadriporticus, its back (northwest) wall is partially visible from corridor 1. Its placement at a location where it is moderately visible yet also partly concealed might suggest that it served a somewhat elevated function within the house, perhaps functioning like as a more privileged reception room (not unlike room 8), although it could also have functioned as a bedroom or other secondary space.

### Architectural features

Windows: As noted above, room 9 shares a window with room 8, which is located in the southwest wall of the latter. This window would have been the major source of light for room 9, although it likely also would have received additional (but perhaps limited) light from the quadriporticus. The lack of a direct light source seems to suggest that room 9 was a somewhat less significant space within the house.

## **House of the Muses, room 11**

Room 11 is thought to be a service area affiliated with room 10.<sup>709</sup>

### Decorations

#### Paintings

The painted decorations have an architectural system on a polychrome background, with panels and frames in red, porphyry red, yellow, and blue. Traces of a socle zone do not remain, but the decorative system appears to have been composed of three horizontal registers, as evidenced by the gap between the floor and the lowest part of the panel of the presumed middle zone. At the northern end of the east wall there is a section with a porphyry red panel framed in a lighter shade

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<sup>707</sup> Clarke 1991, 283-86.

<sup>708</sup> Clarke 1991, 285. This interpretation is based on the use of mirrors, peacocks (which form the handles of the mirrors), and the overall selection of Dionysiac subject matter. However, Clarke notes that such an interpretation is risky, in part because Dionysiac imagery can also be found in room 16, thought to be a service quarter. The depiction of Dionysiac imagery in room 16 might detract from the interpretation of room 9's similar imagery as reinforcing Dionysiac pursuits.

<sup>709</sup> Packer 1971, 174.

of red, above which is found a vertical panel also framed in red, with a white upper half and a yellow lower half.

Figural subject matter: A draped male figure stands at the center of the panel, with his left arm extended. To the left of the male figure, a red pavilion juts into the panel, upon which stands a goat. Although the identification of the male figure is unclear, the goat recalls the Dionysiac imagery in room 9 as well as the goat depicted in corridor 16.<sup>710</sup> Perhaps one could read the Dionysiac imagery of room 11 as an evocation of the activities taking place in room 10. In addition, at the southern end of the east wall is a red panel, which includes a narrow green frame at its center that is rendered in secco. At the center of the panel is a nude male figure with drapery over his arm, who might be interpreted as Achilles.

#### Floor mosaic

The mosaic is no longer preserved. However, Becatti indicates that it once included a mosaic floor with an all-over pattern composed black squares with white angle brackets in the southwest and northeast corners, and white smaller white squares at the center.<sup>711</sup>

### Location/Layout

Room 11 is located to the west of and adjacent to room 10. The two rooms are connected by a doorway in the northeast wall of room 11. In addition, Room 11 opens onto corridor 14 at its south end. Due to its subsidiary location at the interior of the southwest area of the building, room 11 is largely hidden from view. The fact that room 11 contains polychrome paintings with an architectural system and that it is adjacent to a main reception room seems to suggest that it could have been used for more private gatherings.

### Architectural features

There is a single window in the northwest wall of the room, which would have been the room's main source of light.

## **House of the Muses, Quadriporticus**

Although this area of the apartment is technically not an alternative primary space, I include it in this appendix because its decorations exhibit striking similarities to those of room 11, an alternative primary space.

### Decorations

#### Paintings

The rear walls of the quadriporticus present an unusual case. The rear walls include paintings comprising an architectural system with a polychrome background. Panels in red, yellow, and porphyry red are divided by tall, slender cream columns, and traces of red and yellow panels are also found on the sides of the piers. However, they do not display any evidence of an architectural system having been employed in their decorations, although presumably such a system was employed there as well. The largest surface of painted decorations is preserved at the southeastern end of the quadriporticus between the entrances to rooms 16 and 19. Interestingly, from the southernmost window in the east wall of room 10 one has a clear view of the right side of these

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<sup>710</sup> Since the significance of the Dionysiac imagery in rooms 9 and 16 has already been called into question, its reiteration here leads to further questioning of this room's function.

<sup>711</sup> Becatti 1961, 131, plate CCXXV.

wall decorations. Thus, there appears to have been a concerted effort to create a layered view of painted architectural decorations that play off of one another, depending on where the viewer was standing.

#### Floor mosaic

On the perimeter of the quadriporticus (i.e., on the arcaded sides surrounding the courtyard), there is a floor mosaic with an all-over pattern of white squares, which are framed in black. These white squares have smaller, black squares at their corners. The center of the quadriporticus has a pavement of white tesserae, with four black bands forming a square form at the center.

#### Location/Layout

The location of the quadriporticus at the center of the residence allows it to function as a node that connects the different spaces to one another.<sup>712</sup>

### **Alternative Primary Spaces in the House of the Muses: general conclusions**

The prevalence of the architectural system throughout the House of the Muses leads to one question: how are we to read its repetition in spaces of seemingly secondary use. One could argue that the repeated use of the architectural system might be related to the higher quality of the paintings of the house as a whole. Given the sheer size of the residence and the overall quality of its decorations, the owner or occupant might have relied less on painted decorations and more on other criteria to distinguish the most important rooms from those that were secondary or perhaps multifunctional in use. After all, we are lacking evidence of sculpture and other artworks, which also would have enhanced a room's appearance.

### **The House of Jupiter and Ganymede (I, IV, 2) (Fig. 10)**

Ground floor area: c. 750 sq. m, excluding the adjacent garden space.<sup>713</sup>

#### **Selected bibliography:**

Calza 1920, 354 ff; Wirth 1934, 111 ff., Fig. 51-53; Calza et al. 1953, 131-32, 216, 235; Van Essen 1956-58, 162; Borda 1958, 106; Becatti 1961, 14-16; Packer 1971, 134-39; Blake 1973, 172 f.; Joyce 1981, 30, 31, 32, 51, 52, 53, 102; Mielsch 1984, 93-97; Clarke 1991, 320-39; DeLaine 1995; DeLaine 1996, 165-84; DeLaine 1999, 175-89; Falzone 2007, 107-10.

The House of Jupiter and Ganymede forms part of the complex known as the Insula of the Paintings (*Isolato dei Dipinti*), which also comprises the House of the Paintings (*Insula dei Dipinti*) and the House of the Infant Bacchus (*Insula di Baccho Fanciullo*), two adjacent medianum apartments that are nearly identical in plan and dimensions. The

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<sup>712</sup> On connecting nodes, see Watts 1987, 124-31.

<sup>713</sup> DeLaine 1999, 176.

entire complex, which was built around 130,<sup>714</sup> is located in the heart of the city, just to the northeast of the Forum at the corner of the Via della Casa di Diana and the Via della Casa dei Dipinti. The L-shaped complex also included an expansive garden space that was shared between the three units. As noted above, the House of Jupiter and Ganymede has been described as an “insula-domus”. Like the House of the Muses, this residence also included shop spaces facing onto the street. The painted decorations of the house have been dated narrowly to a period of substantial renovations carried out within the entire complex between AD 184 and 192.<sup>715</sup> The mosaics, however, date to the first (Hadrianic) phase of the building.<sup>716</sup> Despite its large dimensions, the House of Jupiter and Ganymede only appears to have had two rooms that were most likely of primary function: rooms 27 and 25. In addition, it also contains two rooms of more ambiguous function: rooms 33 and 24. These rooms might have been used on occasion for more private encounters and privileged guests.

### **Primary Spaces**

#### **House of Jupiter and Ganymede, Room 27 (Fig. 13 and Fig. 16)**

Room 27 is the largest room in the House of Jupiter and Ganymede. It is commonly interpreted as a tablinum,<sup>717</sup> or as an audience hall or dining room.<sup>718</sup>

### **Decorations**

#### **Paintings**

Date: AD 184-192.<sup>719</sup>

The painted decorations have an architectural system on a polychrome background. Aediculae and projecting porticoes or pavilions are used to separate the large, brightly colored panels.<sup>720</sup> The wall surface is divided into four horizontal registers. This room contains the largest extant painted surface at Ostia.

**Figural subject matter:** A large mythological panel on the east wall, which depicts Jupiter and his mortal lover Ganymede, provides the house with its name.<sup>721</sup> Mythological characters and other common figures of the repertoire, such as bearded and beardless males and draped, flying female figures,<sup>722</sup> are individually represented in various panels across the walls.

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<sup>714</sup> Clarke 1991, 320. For a thorough discussion of the history of the building phases of this complex, see DeLaine 1995.

<sup>715</sup> Calza, 1920, 402; Clarke 1991, 321-22. A graffito, VII K L COMMODAS, or “on the seventh day before the Calends of Commodus” was scratched into the wall of corridor 15. This graffito helps date the paintings to the period between 184 and 192, the period between which Commodus renamed the month of September after himself in 184 and his murder in 192.

<sup>716</sup> Becatti 1961, 14-16.

<sup>717</sup> Falzone 2007, 108.

<sup>718</sup> DeLaine 1999, 179.

<sup>719</sup> Clarke 1991, 321-22.

<sup>720</sup> Falzone 2007, 109, refers to this as a paratactic scheme with aediculae and panels placed on superimposed registers, although Joyce 1981, 52, more generally describes it as an architectural system.

<sup>721</sup> Clarke 1991, 320.

<sup>722</sup> Clarke 1991, 329.



### Floor mosaic

Date: Hadrianic.<sup>723</sup>

The floor mosaic has an all-over pattern of large white hexagons separated by checkerboard patterns. It does not appear to be as intricate as the floor mosaics found in the primary spaces of the House of the Muses, but it is fairly complex compared to the other mosaics of the house.<sup>724</sup>

### Location/Layout

The room is located at the northeast corner of the house, opening onto a courtyard to the west and onto a corridor to the east. Its placement near the courtyard, along with the enormous window in its west wall (see below), would have provided the room with ample light.

Calculated view: There is an irregular calculated view running along the main axis of the house. It begins at corridor (vestibulum) 28, runs through room 26 (the courtyard), continues through the expansive window of room 27, and ends at the back wall of the same room. This calculated view appears to be deliberately calculated to provide the viewer with a glimpse of the painted decorations displayed within room 27.<sup>725</sup> There is also a second calculated view from room 27, which extends across courtyard 26 and through rooms 25 and 24. More will be said on this second view below. Room 27's view of the courtyard, which might have had a fountain at its center, was an added feature of significance.<sup>726</sup>

### Architectural features

Windows: Expansive window in west wall that is 3.85 m above the ground,<sup>727</sup> overlooking the courtyard (room 26).

Ceiling: Double height, with four registers of paintings extending up to the ceiling.

## **House of Jupiter and Ganymede, room 25**

Room 25 is thought to have been either a triclinium or an antechamber to room 24.<sup>728</sup>

### Decorations

#### Paintings

Date: AD 184-192.<sup>729</sup>

This room has received little attention in the scholarly literature, in part due to its lack of substantial painted remains but also because it is no doubt overshadowed by the lavish paintings of room 27.<sup>730</sup> The decorative system employed is not legible, but an architectural system might have been employed given the width of the red and yellow panels that remain.

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<sup>723</sup> Becatti 1961, 16.

<sup>724</sup> The mosaic floor in room 25 is clearly more complex than that of room 27. See below.

<sup>725</sup> DeLaine 1999, 179.

<sup>726</sup> DeLaine 1999, 183.

<sup>727</sup> Packer 1971, 136/

<sup>728</sup> Packer 1971, 136, for the triclinium interpretation; DeLaine 1999, 183.

<sup>729</sup> Clarke 1991, 321-22.

<sup>730</sup> DeLaine 1999, however, addresses the relation between this room and room 14, which are united through an axial view.

### Floor mosaic

Date: Hadrianic.<sup>731</sup>

The floor mosaic exhibits what is arguably the most complex mosaic pattern in the entire residence. Its pattern include nine rosettes, each formed by eight lozenge motifs, which alternate with squares and rectangles that contain varying combinations of motifs such as knots, shields, and peltae.

### Location/Layout

Room 25 is situated at an interesting point within the house. It is found along the axis that runs from room 24 at the west end and room 27 at its east end, with room 26 (the courtyard) immediately to the east. It would have received light from the courtyard, but it also would have afforded a clear view of the lavish decorations of room 27 and also of room 24. DeLaine has suggested that a marble fountain might have been installed in courtyard 26, in part because it would have been visible from room 27 and room 25.<sup>732</sup>

### Architectural features

Windows: There is a wide window with a low sill in the east wall. It is 0.85 m from the floor and 2.27 m high.<sup>733</sup> It seems to mimic, albeit on a smaller scale, the large window in the west wall of room 27, which it overlooks. The low windowsill between rooms 25 and 26 was likely designed to facilitate the view from room 25 toward room 27.<sup>734</sup> There is also a second window that is 0.96 m above the first window, which is 2.10 m high.<sup>735</sup> In addition, there is a similarly sized window in the wall between rooms 25 and 24, which nearly lines up with the window in the east wall of room 25.

Ceiling: Room 25 has a double-height ceiling. Its walls reach 6 m in height.<sup>736</sup> The majority of the painted remains are found on the upper level of its walls.

### Alternative Primary Spaces

#### **House of Jupiter and Ganymede, room 33**

Room 33 is commonly thought to be a secondary room, perhaps a cubiculum.<sup>737</sup> Given the room's small dimensions, simpler decorations, and lack of windows, it is possible that it could have been used as a secondary space. However, it also could have served as a more private reception space for more intimate gatherings because of its grand view onto the courtyard and the garden beyond.

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<sup>731</sup> Becatti 1961, 16.

<sup>732</sup> DeLaine 1999, 183, indicates that there is a precedent for marble fountains in courtyards in second century Ostian residences, such as in the House of Diana. She also notes that there is evidence that the court had access to a water supply. In addition, at a later date, when the doorway leading into the garden area was filled in, a basin was inserted against the wall.

<sup>733</sup> Packer 1971, 136.

<sup>734</sup> DeLaine 1999, 183.

<sup>735</sup> Packer 1971, 136.

<sup>736</sup> Packer 1971, 136.

<sup>737</sup> Clarke 1991, 336.

## Decorations

### Paintings

Characterized by an aedicular system on a monochrome yellow background.<sup>738</sup>

### Floor mosaic

The pattern is composed of white interlocking rectangles outlined in black. The pattern of the floor mosaic of room 33 is simpler than that of room 25, yet it is clearly more complex than the simple white mosaic floors of room 29 (a corridor), room 30, and room 31.

## Location/Layout

The room is situated at the center of the residence, just off of room 29 (a corridor) and south of room 26. A viewer standing in the doorway of room 33 and facing north would have been able to see through the courtyard out to the garden space beyond. Thus, we find a third calculated view, which is basically perpendicular to those running from room 27 toward room 24 and room 28 (an entry corridor) toward the main entrance of the residence. However, this doorway was walled up at a later date, thus leaving us to imagine the original view of the courtyard and the garden space. If the courtyard were adorned and perhaps even outfitted with a marble fountain,<sup>739</sup> the view from room 33 outward would have been a highly privileged and presumably restricted view. Based on DeLaine's access analysis, room 33 appears to have functioned as a controlled space.<sup>740</sup>

## Architectural features:

Entrance: The doorway is fairly tall (2.71 m),<sup>741</sup> perhaps not only to allow additional light and air to enter the room because the room is lacking windows. This also might have allowed for a clearer view of the courtyard and garden space beyond.

## **House of Jupiter and Ganymede, room 24 (Fig. 15)**

Room 24 has been described as a cella (interior chamber),<sup>742</sup> and as the master's private cubiculum.<sup>743</sup>

## Decorations

### Paintings

The painted remains are limited to a few patches of yellow background on the lower part of the north, east, and south walls. It is not clear from the remains what type of decorative system was employed.

### Floor mosaic

The floor mosaic is composed of a narrow, black meander pattern on a white background, with geometric motifs in the corner and in the center. These motifs exhibit a variety of combinations of squares, circles, convex diamonds, and ovoid shapes, and they are arranged in such a way that the overall design is symmetrical in its layout. However the center of the mosaic is not in line with the window overlooking room 25. While perhaps not as outwardly complex as the floor of room 25,

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<sup>738</sup> Joyce 1981, 30.

<sup>739</sup> DeLaine 1999, 183.

<sup>740</sup> DeLaine 1999.

<sup>741</sup> Packer 1971, 137.

<sup>742</sup> Packer 1971, 135.

<sup>743</sup> DeLaine 1999, 179.

the floor of room 24 seems slightly more intricate than the mosaic floor of room 33, which is lacking the use of any distinct geometric motifs.

### Location/Layout

As noted above, there is a clear axis that runs from this room into room 27. Given the placement of room 24 at a further remove from courtyard 26 and room 27, one could argue that room 24 is also a more controlled space because access to it is largely mediated by room 25. According to DeLaine, this room was likely only open to close family members and friends and also to household slaves because of its location and the way in which it was accessed.<sup>744</sup> Thus, it was also presumably some sort of privileged space, perhaps one that consistently served a primary function or at the very least on certain occasions.

Calculated view: The calculated view would potentially allow for a viewer in room 24 to see the mythological panel on the rear wall of room 27 through a series of perspective frames, which were created by the frames of the windows.<sup>745</sup>

### **The House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander (I, III, 5)** (Fig. 11)

Ground floor area: c. 500 sq. m.

#### **Selected bibliography:**

Wirth 1934, 133, Fig. 64-65; Calza et al. 1953, 216; Van Essen 1956-58, 161; Borda 1958, 111; Becatti 1961, 13-14; Blake 1973, 174; Joyce 1981, 35, 37, 65, 108; Mielsch 1984, 102; Liedtke 2003, 26-30; Falzone 2004, 51-60; Oome 2007, 233-46.

The House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander (*Caseggiato del Mitreo di Lucretio Menandro*), located slightly east of the Insula of the Paintings, was constructed in the Hadrianic period and underwent two later phases of renovation. During its first phase, the building appears to have been connected to the adjacent House of the Millstones (*Caseggiato dei Molini*) (I, III, 1), with both functioning together as a bakery.<sup>746</sup> During the mid-second century, the House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander appears to have taken on a partly residential function because the connection between the two structures was blocked. In addition, the oven in room 8 that was likely shared by the two spaces was closed up and abandoned.<sup>747</sup>

During the second phase, the building was divided into two apartments, with one in the northern half and one in the southern half. Under this new arrangement, rooms 4 and 10 acted as a central passage between the two. The apartment under consideration here is

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<sup>744</sup> DeLaine 1999, 179.

<sup>745</sup> DeLaine 1999, 181.

<sup>746</sup> Oome 2007, 239. Oome provides a detailed discussion of the building phases of the House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander. On the structural phases and their relationship to the painted decorations, see Falzone 2004, 51-60.

<sup>747</sup> Oome 2007, 239.

the southern half of the building because this is the only section that still preserves traces of painted decorations and mosaic floors. This unit comprises rooms 4, 5, and 6, where were shops or workrooms, and rooms 10, 11-11a, 12a-b, which were residential spaces. Of the latter group, rooms 11a and 12a-b still exhibit traces of their domestic décor. In its third phase, room 12a-b was transformed into a mithraeum. At this time, rooms 10 and 11 underwent slight architectural alterations, and rooms 10a-b and 11b was added and adorned. Although the floors of the newly constructed rooms 10a and 10b were given new mosaic floors, the painted decorations in rooms 11a and 12a-b appear not to have been altered.<sup>748</sup>

## **Primary Spaces**

### **House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander, room 11a**

Room 11a has been interpreted as a room of importance, perhaps even a triclinium, where the owner could receive guests.<sup>749</sup>

## **Decorations**

### **Paintings**

The room has painted decorations on its west wall that have a panel system and white panels framed in red. Although Liedtke suggests that such paintings should be identified as monochrome because of their predominantly white background,<sup>750</sup> Oome and Mols both suggest that they should instead be considered polychrome because of the red frames that surround the panels.<sup>751</sup> Oome takes her reading of the paintings a step further, arguing that the panel style might have been meant to evoke the costly marble slabs found in elite residences, imperial palaces, and even public buildings, such as the *Schola* (guild seat) of Trajan at Ostia.<sup>752</sup> This last building was constructed in the mid-second century AD, approximately the same time in which the House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander was undergoing its first phase of renovations.

### **Floor Mosaic**

In addition to its paintings, the room also includes a black and white mosaic floor, which exhibits a geometric design of squares and lozenges forming an eight-pointed star.<sup>753</sup> The design appears to be symmetrically oriented toward the wide doorway of the room.

## **Location/Layout**

The room is situated at the interior of the building, south of room 11b and west of rooms 12a-b. The location of the room within the residence, however, does not given any clear indication of its primary function. Perhaps because of the original commercial function of the building and the restrictions of the space itself, it was not possible to easily create any sort of axial view into the room when it was reconfigured to serve a residential purpose.

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<sup>748</sup> Oome 2007, 235-36.

<sup>749</sup> Oome 2007, 239.

<sup>750</sup> Liedtke 2003, 1-12.

<sup>751</sup> Mols 2005, 240-41; Oome 2007, 242.

<sup>752</sup> Oome 2007, 243.

<sup>753</sup> Becatti 1961, 13-14.

## Architectural Features

Window: At the southern end of room 11 there is a window overlooking room 12a-b, perhaps linking them as reception spaces.

### **House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander, room 12a-b**

In its second, residential phase, room 12a-b was converted into what might be another reception area. These two rooms, which were separated by a thin wall with a doorway at the center,<sup>754</sup> are thought to have been used in conjunction with room 11a, another presumed reception space.

## Decorations

### Paintings

Paintings are preserved on the east and west walls. These also exhibit a panel system with white panels enclosed in red frames. At the center of each of the panels is a miniature landscape or a small still life. The inner lines drawn around the red frames slightly vary, with red and yellow employed in sub-room 12a and red and blue in sub-room 12b. The intricate detail of an ovoid stucco cornice is found in some areas over the panels of the main zone.<sup>755</sup>

### Floor Mosaic

The mosaic pavement in room 12a-b displays an all-over pattern of white octagons and squares outlined in black and with vegetal motifs at their centers.<sup>756</sup>

## Location

Room 12a-b is in the southeast end of the building, just east of rooms 11a-b. It is accessed at its south end in a door in its west wall, which leads into room 11a, and also through a doorway in its north wall, which opens into a space immediately to the north of the room. Oome suggests that room 12a-b might have functioned as a *specus aestivus* (summer room) because of its view of the *xystus* (patio or garden area) immediately to the south.<sup>757</sup> After all, its location next to the open-roofed patio provided them with greater light and air than the other rooms of the apartment.

## Architectural Features

When room 12 was constructed during the second phase, the floor level and ceiling were employed to distinguish the space architecturally from the other spaces of the apartment.

Floor level: The floor level was lowered by approximately 0.4 m.

Ceiling: The ceiling created for the space was a segmented vault.<sup>758</sup>

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<sup>754</sup> Oome 2007, 235.

<sup>755</sup> Oome 2007, 238.

<sup>756</sup> Becatti 1961, 13-14.

<sup>757</sup> Oome 2007, 239-40.

<sup>758</sup> Oome 2007, 239.

## GROUP 2 APARTMENTS

### GROUP 2A

#### **House of the Infant Bacchus (I, IV, 3)** (Fig. 10)

Ground floor area: 244.8 m<sup>2</sup>.

#### **Selected bibliography:**

Calza 1920, 343 ff.; Wirth 1934, 116 f. Fig. 54; Calza et al. 1953, 131-32, 216, 235; Becatti 1961, 16-17; Packer 1971, 139-41; Joyce 1981, 30, 31, 52, 66 n. 47 and 49, 100, 112 n. 51-52; DeLaine 1995, 79-106; DeLaine 1996, 165-184; Liedtke 2003, 35-37; Falzone 2004, 75-82; Falzone 2007, 107-8.

The House of the Infant Bacchus (*Insula di Bacco Fanciullo*) forms part of the Insula of the Paintings, a complex that also includes the House of Jupiter and Ganymede, a Group 3 apartment, and the House of the Paintings, another Group 2A medianum apartment (see below). Since the entire complex was renovated during the period between 184 and 192,<sup>759</sup> the paintings of the House of the Infant Bacchus and the House of the Paintings have been dated to this period. The mosaics of all three buildings date to the original phase of the complex, which was in the Hadrianic period. The House of the Infant Bacchus and the House of the Paintings, which are nearly identical in plan, each have a ground floor area of 244.8 m<sup>2</sup>.<sup>760</sup>

#### **Primary Spaces**

##### **House of the Infant Bacchus, room 20** (Fig. 23)

Room 20 is an example of a type-A room. It has been interpreted as a reception room of some type, perhaps a tablinum.<sup>761</sup>

#### **Decorations**

##### **Paintings**

It exhibits painted decorations incorporating a complex architectural system of polychrome panels in red, yellow, porphyry red, and purple, which are placed on multiple registers that extend up the elevated wall surface.

**Figural subject matter:** Figural subjects were represented, which is suggested by the image of a draped female figure in a dark purple panel in the center of the south wall. According to Calza, there was once a panel in the west wall that depicted the abandonment of Ariadne, although this is

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<sup>759</sup> Calza, 1920, 402; Clarke 1991, 321-22.

<sup>760</sup> DeLaine 2004, 154.

<sup>761</sup> Calza 1920, 345; Falzone 2007, 108.

no longer preserved.<sup>762</sup> Likewise, there was a panel in the south wall that appears to have depicted Mercury with the infant Bacchus in his arms. Architectural features painted in secco were also likely included among the panels, which are suggested by the presence of rectangular and trapezoidal panels. Such panels often serve as the backgrounds for receding porches, pavilions, and balustrades in other of examples of Ostian domestic painted decorations, such as in room 14 of the House of Jupiter and Ganymede.

### Location/Layout

Room 20 is located in the southeast corner of the apartment. It has two doorways in its north wall: one opening onto the medianum (room 16) and another opening onto the entry corridor. In addition, it overlooks the shared garden space to the east.

Calculated view: The entire apartment exhibits a horizontal axis running from room 20 to room 13, with a calculated view extending from room 20 across room 16 into room 13 and vice versa.

### Architectural features

Ceiling: During the renovation phase, room 20's ceiling was raised to a height of 6 m, thus elevating it to two stories tall.<sup>763</sup>

Windows: The room is also distinguished by its two registers of triple windows, for a total of six windows opening up onto the garden space to the east of the apartment. Although the garden space was likely reserved for the residents of these complexes only,<sup>764</sup> its windows allowed for anyone in the garden to catch a glimpse of the lavish paintings displayed on its walls.

## **House of the Infant Bacchus, room 13**

Room 13 is a type-B room. It has also been interpreted generally as a reception space or perhaps as a triclinium.<sup>765</sup>

### Decorations

#### Paintings

Its painted decorations, which are not as well preserved as those of room 20, display traces of a panel system with polychrome backgrounds in red, yellow, and porphyry red.<sup>766</sup> These paintings extend up into the second floor because this room also had a double height ceiling.

#### Floor mosaic

The mosaic floor is no longer preserved, but a photo from Becatti's 1961 publication of the mosaics indicates that the floor was characterized by an all-over geometric design of interlocking mosaics and squares in white with black outlines.<sup>767</sup>

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<sup>762</sup> Calza 1920, 379-84; Joyce 1981, 52; Falzone 2004, 81.

<sup>763</sup> Falzone 2007, 108.

<sup>764</sup> Frier 1980.

<sup>765</sup> Packer 1971, 140.

<sup>766</sup> The majority of the painted decorations that still remain *in situ* exhibit traces of yellow panels framed in red or purple/red-brown.

<sup>767</sup> Becatti 1961, 16-17.



## Location/Layout

The room is located at the northeast corner of the building, to the north of the medianum. It also opens onto room 12 to the west.

Calculated view: As noted above, room 13 shares a calculated view with room 20 at the opposite end of the medianum.

## Architectural features

Windows: There are two wide windows in the east wall, which are stacked upon each other in two registers rather than placed side by side. These windows open onto the share garden space beyond, but they also provide a view of the painted decorations contained inside.

## **Alternative Primary Spaces**

### **House of the Infant Bacchus, room 12**

This room has been interpreted as an oecus.<sup>768</sup>

## Decorations

There do not appear to be any remains of the painted decorations or of the floor mosaic in this room. However, it is not possible to enter the room due to the tremendous amount of overgrowth in the room, so my observations have been based primarily upon what I was able to observe from the doorway to the room.

## Location/Layout

The possibility that this room functioned on occasion as a primary space is suggested in part by its private location just off of room 13, a clear primary space. It was clearly a more secluded space, perhaps a bedroom, which also could have been used for private meetings and gatherings.

## Architectural features

Windows: The room has two windows: a large window at the ground floor level, which aligns with the window in the east wall of room 13, and a smaller, clerestory-like window on the upper level. The first window would have provided the viewer with a clear view of the garden space beyond. This arrangement seems somewhat similar to that in the House of Jupiter and Ganymede, in which a clear axial view is calculated between room 24, room 25, room 26, and room 27.

## **House of the Paintings (I, IV, 4)** (Fig. 10)

Ground floor area: 244.8 m<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>768</sup> Packer 1971, 140.

### **Selected bibliography:**

Fornari 1913, 306 ff.; Calza 1920, 343 ff.; Calza et al. 1953, 131-32, 216, 235; Blake 1973, 173 f.; DeLaine 1995, 79-106; DeLaine 1996, 165-184; Liedtke 2003, 37-39.

See above on the House of the Infant Bacchus for information about the date of the apartment and its decorations.

## **Primary Spaces**

### **House of the Paintings, room 10 (Fig. 24)**

Room 10 is the type-A room of the apartment and thus likely functioned as one of the main reception rooms.

#### **Decorations**

##### **Paintings**

The painted decorations are poorly preserved, but the traces of yellow, red, and porphyry red panels on multiple registers of the wall surface suggests that an architectural system was employed.

#### **Location**

Room 10 is located in the same position as room 20 in the House of the Infant Bacchus. In other words, it is situated at the southeast corner of the building, immediately south of the medianum.

Calculated view: The entire apartment exhibits a horizontal axis running from room 10 to room 3, with a calculated view extending from room 10, across medianum 6, into room 3, and vice versa.

#### **Architectural Features**

Ceiling: This room has a ceiling of double height.

Windows: Two registers of triple windows in the east wall, all of which open up onto the shared garden space to the east.

### **House of the Paintings, room 3**

Room 3 is a type-B room, and thus likely functioned as a reception space. Room 3 is comparable in size, decorations, architectural features, and layout to room 13 of the House of the Infant Bacchus.

#### **Decorations**

##### **Paintings**

The painted decorations are composed of polychrome panels in red, yellow, and porphyry red. Once again, the paintings are not legible enough to determine with a high degree of accuracy

which decorative system was employed in the decorations, although the architectural system seems likely based on the fact that the colors of the panels and frames vary.

#### Floor mosaic

Unfortunately, there are not substantial traces of the floor mosaic, but there are minimal remains of a pattern with black scalloped diagonal lines enclosing a white center area.

#### Location/Layout

The room is located at the northeast corner of the building, to the north of the medianum. It also opens onto room 2 (the alternative primary space), which is immediately west of it.

Calculated view: As noted above, room 3 shares a calculated view with room 10 at the opposite end of the medianum.

#### Architectural Features

Ceiling: This room has a ceiling of double height.

Windows: Similar to room 13 in the House of the Infant Bacchus, here there are two wide windows in the east wall, which are stacked upon each other in two registers rather than placed side by side. These windows open onto the share garden space beyond, but they also provide a view of the painted decorations contained inside.

#### Alternative Primary Spaces

##### **House of the Paintings, room 2**

#### Decorations

There are no traces of decorations remaining.

#### Location/Layout

This room is located to the west of room 3, at the northwest end of the building.

#### Architectural features

Windows: The room has two windows: a large window at the ground floor level, which aligns with the window in the east wall of room 3, and a smaller, clerestory-like window on the upper level. The first window would have provided the viewer with a clear view of the garden space to the east of the apartment.

#### **House of the Painted Ceiling (II, VI, 5-6)** (Fig. 17)

Ground floor area: approx. 190 m<sup>2</sup>

#### **Selected bibliography:**

Fornari 1913, 308; Wirth 1934, 104, 117 f., Fig. 56; Calza et al. 1953, 220; Van Essen 1956-58, 56, 173 f.; Borda 1958, 109; Becatti 1961, 63-64; Blake 1973, 194; Joyce 1981,

31; Mielsch 1984, 87 f., 94 f.; Clarke 1991, 313-20; Liedtke 2003, 45-46; Falzone 2004, 95-101; Falzone 2007, 121-24.

The House of the Painted Ceiling (*Insula del Soffitto Dipinto*), located on the Via della Fontana, is one of the smallest medianum apartments of Group 2. Constructed during the Hadrianic period, the apartment was renovated, reduced in size, and redecorated in the second to last decade of the second century.<sup>769</sup> New paintings and mosaics were installed in this period;<sup>770</sup> thus, one should expect that the updated decorations should reflect the functions of the rooms following the renovation of the apartment. There are only two rooms that preserve substantial remains of painted decorations and of mosaic floors: rooms 1 and 4.

## **Primary Spaces**

### **House of the Painted Ceiling, room 1 (Fig. 21 and Fig. 32)**

Room 1, a type-B room, was likely the main primary space of the residence and is thought to have been a small reception space.<sup>771</sup>

## **Decorations**

### Paintings

The painted decorations have an architectural system on a polychrome background of red, yellow, and blue. In addition, the room also preserves some traces of paintings on its ceiling, which are polychrome in color but are illegible in terms of shape and motif.

Figural subject matter: There are female figures in the panels of the central register and also in the pavilions in the upper register.

### Floor mosaic

The mosaic floor, which is the most complex pavement of the residence, displays a design of interlocking I-shaped motifs in white, which are outlined in black.

## **Location/Layout**

Room 1 is located at the southeastern end of the building. It is on axis with room 4, the second room exhibiting significant remains of painted decorations. A contemporary viewer looking out of room 1 would have had a view of the blocked-up doorway in the north wall of room 4, but they would not have been able to see into the western part of the room, where the remaining decorations are preserved.

## **Architectural features**

Windows: Room 1 has only one window facing east onto the Via della Fontana, but additional light enters the room from the windows at the south end of the east wall of the medianum.

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<sup>769</sup> Clarke 1991, 313; Falzone 2004, 95-101.

<sup>770</sup> Falzone 2004, 96. Becatti, 1961, 63-64, however, suggests that they date to around AD 140.

<sup>771</sup> Clarke 1991, 313.

## Alternative Primary Spaces

### **House of the Painted Ceiling, room 4** (Fig. 34 and Fig. 55)

Room 4 is a type-A room. Based largely upon its decorations, room 4 appears to have been a secondary space. However, the location and architectural features suggest that it might have been used on occasion as a primary space.<sup>772</sup> Thus, I categorize it as an alternative primary space.

#### Decorations

##### Paintings

The painted decorations have an aedicular system on a monochrome yellow background.

##### Floor mosaic

The floor is composed of plain white tesserae. At the entrance to room 4, a doorsill marked with two inlaid stones and two narrow areas that are not paved with mosaics indicates that there was some sort of wall and door separating off room 4 from medianum 2. Perhaps this was used for creating a more private setting for hosting guests.

#### Location/Layout

The room is located at the northeast end of the building, at the opposite end of medianum in the type-A room location. When comparing the late second century plan of the House of the Painted Ceiling to the original Hadrianic plan, it is interesting to consider how room 4 was originally in a secondary position, with the unnumbered room to the north of room 5 placed in the room type-A position. It seems significant, then, that when the apartment's ground floor area was reduced, the architect seems to have made an effort to include a second room that could function as a primary space.

#### Architectural features

Window: There are two large windows in the east wall, which overlook the Via della Fontana.

### **House of the Priestesses (III, IX, 6)** (Fig. 8)

Ground floor area: 319.1 m<sup>2</sup>

The House of the Priestesses (*Insula delle Ierodule*), more recently known as the House of Luceia Primitiva because of a graffito found in the residence, is the largest medianum apartment known at Ostia, with a ground floor area of 319.1 m<sup>2</sup>.<sup>773</sup> It is located in the western sector of the exterior blocks of the Garden Houses complex and was built around AD 128-130, when all of the neighboring residences were constructed.<sup>774</sup> All of the paintings in this residence were initially dated by its excavator, M. Veloccia Rinaldi, to a

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<sup>772</sup> Clarke 1991, 319, interprets the room as a reception space.

<sup>773</sup> DeLaine 2004, 154.

<sup>774</sup> Veloccia Rinaldi 1970-1971, 168; DeLaine 2002, 52-57.

single decorative project carried out around AD 130-140.<sup>775</sup> More recently, Falzone has suggested a slightly more general date of late Hadrianic to early Antonine based on both archaeological and stylistic analyses.<sup>776</sup> The mosaics are thought to be contemporary with this presumably original phase of decoration.<sup>777</sup>

### **Selected bibliography:**

Veloccia Rinaldi 1971, 165-85; Joyce 1981, 47, 50, 51, 64 n. 241, 66 n. 250, 85, 86, 88, 91, 93, 94 n. 138, 95 n. 140, 110, 112 n. 49, 113 n. 55; Falzone and Pellegrino 2001a; Falzone and Pellegrino 2001b; Falzone 2007, 68-81.

### **Primary Spaces**

There are two clear primary spaces in the House of the Priestesses: Rooms 4 and 6. The two rooms exhibit nearly identical painted decorations.

### **House of the Priestesses, room 4**

Room 4 is a type-B room.

### **Decorations**

#### Paintings

The painted decorations are composed of an architectural system with polychrome backgrounds in yellow, red, and porphyry red.

Figural subject matter: Figures of vaguely Dionysiac subject matter fill the large panels between the narrow columns, while motifs of the basic repertoire, such as dolphins, marine monsters, vegetal motifs, and *oscilla* are found in many of the smaller panels of the main and upper registers and in the socle zone.

#### Floor mosaic

Black and white mosaic with a pattern of circles and convex diamonds in white, which alternate with shield motifs in black.

### **Location/Layout**

Room 4 is located at the southeast end of the building, south of the medianum and east of the main entrance.

Calculated view: As a type-B room, room 4 exhibits a calculated view that runs from its entrance and across medianum 5 through the westernmost entrance to room 9, which is located at the opposite end of the medianum. However, this view is slightly impeded by the east wall of room 7 and the columns framing the entrance to room 6. This axial view shared between entrances is paralleled in the view from the window in the north wall of room 4, which lines up directly with the easternmost entrance to room 9. Moreover, this north-facing window is perpendicular to the southernmost window in the east wall of the medianum.

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<sup>775</sup> Veloccia Rinaldi 1970-1971, 169-170.

<sup>776</sup> Falzone 2007, 80-81. In particular, Falzone notes that many of the features of these paintings seem to be rooted in Hadrianic stylistic tendencies but also anticipate some of the trends of the Antonine age.

<sup>777</sup> Falzone 2007, 69.

## Architectural features

Windows: As noted above, there is a window in the north wall, which overlooks medianum 5. In addition, this north-facing window is perpendicular to the southernmost window in the east wall of the medianum. Based on the proximity of the two windows, it seems likely that the window in the medianum would have provided further light for room 4, perhaps in the morning hours when the sun was shining in the east. In addition, there is a window in the east wall of room 4, which not only allows for further light and air to enter the room, but it also offers a view of the shared garden space at the center of the Garden House complex.

## **House of the Priestesses, room 6 (Fig. 25)**

Room 6, the larger of the two rooms, is situated in an atypical location to the west of the medianum, where one would typically find the smaller, secondary spaces of the house, such as cubacula. Because of the patterns of access associated with room 6, DeLaine describes it as a type-A room.<sup>778</sup>

## Decorations

### Paintings

The paintings in room 6 are nearly identical to those of room 4. They also comprise an architectural system with polychrome backgrounds in yellow, red, and porphyry red. There are motifs that evoke vaguely Dionysiac subject matter at the interior of the large panels between the narrow columns. Motifs of the repertoire, such as dolphins, marine monsters, vegetal motifs, and *oscilla* are also found in many of the smaller panels of the main and upper registers and in the socle zone.

### Floor mosaic

Room 6 has a mosaic floor composed of white diamond shapes with various geometric motifs, such as smaller black diamonds and swastikas, at their centers. Each of these larger white diamond shapes is framed in a scalloped black border.

## Location/Layout

As noted above, room 6 is located immediately to the west of the medianum and adjacent to the northern part of the room.

Access to adjacent rooms: At the western end of the north and south walls of room 6, there are entrances to corridor 10 and room 8, respectively. Room 10 leads to room 11, a more secluded space in the northwest corner of the residence. Given the fact that room 6 could be accessed from a variety of other rooms, it seems likely that these rooms could have facilitated the variety of activities that occurred within its walls.

## Architectural features

Entrance: The room features a distinctive entrance that comprises two columns in the center of its expansive doorway, which creates a tripartite entrance. The columns, which are covered in plaster

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<sup>778</sup> DeLaine 2004.

that is painted in red, would likely have evoked a sense of the public sphere in the private realm for the resident's guests.

Windows: The room has three windows in its west wall, which align with the openings of the entrance. Moreover, the west windows and the entrance openings also line up with three windows on the east wall of the medianum. Thus, room 6 appears to have received more natural light than any other room in the house. In addition, the west windows provided views onto the open space behind the west wall of room 6, while the windows of the medianum and the tripartite entrance openings might have offered views of the shared garden space at the interior of the complex.

## **Alternative Primary Spaces**

### **House of the Priestesses, room 9**

Room 9 occupies the space where one would expect to find the type-A room of the residence, but DeLaine identifies it as a type-B room.<sup>779</sup>

## **Decorations**

### Paintings

Room 9's paintings are distinct from those in rooms 4 and 6. They are characterized by an aedicular system, with yellow panels framed in red that are connected by a low red socle zone. In the vertical portions of the red frames there are traces of green architectural features depicting aediculae, which are rendered in secco. These architectural details are comparable to those in room 5 (the medianum) and rooms 7, 8, and 11, all of which are thought to be secondary rooms.<sup>780</sup> There are no traces of images of figural subjects remaining, but given the stylistic similarities between room 9 and the aforementioned rooms, it seems likely that there might have been figures rendered in green, as in room 11, or perhaps other motifs of the repertoire such as birds, oscilla, and vessels, as are found in rooms 7 and 8.

### Floor mosaic

Room 9 shares a single decorative similarity with room 6, which is found in the pattern of its mosaic floor. The mosaic floor of room 9 is composed of white octagons with convex sides, which are outlined by a black border of almond-shaped motifs. In addition, small black squares are placed in the spaces between each octagon. The black almond motifs, which frame and soften the sharp edges of the white octagons, evoke the scalloped border around the white diamonds in the mosaic floor of room 6. However, in room 9 there are no motifs at the center of each of the squares. Perhaps the architect was making a deliberate attempt to link rooms 9 and 6 as significant spaces within the residence.

## **Location/Layout**

Room 9 is located at the northeast corner of the building. It is flanked by medianum 5 and corridor 10 to the south and room 11 to the west. The room can be accessed both from the medianum and from corridor 10, but it is not possible to directly access room 9 from room 11: a visitor would instead need to traverse corridor 10 to travel between the two rooms. The placement of room 9 in the location of the usual type-A room suggests that it might have served a primary function.

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<sup>779</sup> DeLaine 2004, 154.

<sup>780</sup> Falzone 2007, 68-81.



Calculated views: As noted above, rooms 9 and 4 share two parallel axes that extend across the medianum. Room 9 also appears closely connected to room 6 through corridor 10. In fact, the westernmost doorway in the south wall of room 9 provides an oblique view across corridor 10 into room 6. One must question whether the connection between these two rooms was designed to facilitate the activities in room 6, perhaps even by providing slaves and servants with a doorway from which they could watch over the events and guests as necessary.<sup>781</sup>

## **House of the Priestesses, room 8**

### Decorations

#### Paintings

The paintings have an aedicular system with red aediculae and a red socle over a yellow background. The motifs, which are primarily in green and white and rendered in secco, include garlands, oscilla, and vases.

#### Floor mosaic

The mosaic has a pattern that can be read differently, depending on whether the viewer looks first to the black motifs or the white motifs. The black motifs include bell-shaped forms, convex squares, and tear-drop shapes, while the white motifs also include inverted bell-shaped forms, convex squares, and shield-like forms.

### Location/Layout

Room 8 is located on the west side of the building, immediately south of room 6 and west of room 7. It can be reached through two doorways: one in the south wall of room 6, and another in the west wall of room 7. The room seems to be a less controlled space because it can be reached from two different doorways.

Calculated view: Room 8 and 11 are found at opposite ends of a longitudinal axis that runs along the western side of the house. This axis also parallels the main longitudinal axis from room 4, across the medianum, and into room 9.

### Architectural features

Window: Room 8 has a single window in its west wall, which faces the western exterior of the building.

## **House of the Priestesses, room 11 (Fig. 54)**

### Decorations

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<sup>781</sup> DeLaine 1999, 183-84. With regard to the House of Jupiter and Ganymede, DeLaine suggests that a small window in between courtyard 26 and room 30 provided slaves and servants with a view of the courtyard and the entrance vestibule. It seems possible that the entrance to room 9 in the House of the Priestesses might have provided slaves and servants with a similar view of room 6, although they would not have been able to view the entrance from that location.

### Paintings

The paintings have an aedicular system with red aediculae and a red socle over a yellow background. The motifs, which are primarily in green and white and rendered in secco, include garlands, oscilla, and vases.

### Floor mosaic

Although the floor mosaic is not well preserved, the remains indicate that the pattern was composed of black and white squares, rectangles, and L-shaped motifs. Thus, the pattern includes shapes that are much more angular than the curved motifs found in the mosaic in room 8.

## Location/Layout

Room 11 is located in the northwest corner of the house. It is directly accessible only from corridor 10, which is adjacent to room 6. Thus, it was likely one of the most secluded rooms of the house.

Calculated view: As noted above, rooms 8 and 11 are found at opposite ends of a longitudinal axis that runs along the western side of the residence. This placement along a clear axis might indicate that the rooms served a function of some significance but that they were presumably of lesser importance than rooms 4 and 6.

## Architectural features

Window: Room 11 has a single window in its west wall, which faces the western exterior of the Building.

## **House of the Yellow Walls (III, IX, 12)** (Fig. 18)

Ground floor area: approx. 309 m<sup>2</sup>.<sup>782</sup>

### Selected bibliography:

Calza et al., 37, 236; Becatti 1961, 123-25; Felletti Maj 1961; Van Essen 1956, 163, 178; Mielsch 1981, 216; Joyce 1981, 25, 30, 40, 44, 56, 65, 100; Mielsch 1984, 89 f., 91 f.; Clarke 1991, 305-12; Liedtke 2003, 61-65; Falzone 2007, 100-7.

The House of the Yellow Walls is another medianum apartment located in the exterior blocks of the Garden Houses complex. Like the House of the Priestesses, the House of the Yellow Walls was built around the same time as the interior blocks (c. 128-130).<sup>783</sup> In this residence, there are two rooms that clearly served primary functions: rooms 7 and 8. The dates of the painted decorations in the residence vary from the Antonine period through the late third to early fourth century,<sup>784</sup> while the mosaics appear to date to the original, Hadrianic phase of the building.<sup>785</sup>

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<sup>782</sup> DeLaine 2004, 154.

<sup>783</sup> Felletti Maj 1961; Clarke 1991, 305.

<sup>784</sup> Felletti Maj 1961, 49-54; Clarke 1991, 307-312, 354-358; Falzone 2007, 157-150.

<sup>785</sup> Becatti 1961, 123-25; Clarke 1991, 308.

## Primary Spaces

### **House of the Yellow Walls, room 7 (Fig. 26)**

Room 7, the type-A room, is the largest room in the House of the Yellow Walls (ground floor area of 49.8 m<sup>2</sup>), with the exception of the expansive medianum (60.9 m<sup>2</sup>).<sup>786</sup> Clarke has interpreted the room as a triclinium based on the layout of the floor mosaic design (see below).<sup>787</sup>

### Decorations

#### Paintings

The painted decorations which have been dated to the early third century (the Severan period),<sup>788</sup> display an architectural system with individual figures placed on a background of polychrome panels and frames in red, yellow, and black, which are flanked by fluted columns. At the center of the south wall is a red panel framed in yellow, which is noticeably wider than the panels on either side of it. At the center of the large red panel is the bottom portion of a small frame in green, which still preserves traces of the bottom part of the drapery worn by the figure on the left.

#### Floor mosaic

The black and white mosaic floor present a pattern of squares filled with knot and diamond motifs around its perimeter. At the center of the floor is an even more complex design involving circles and half-circles, which contain birds and vegetal motifs. According to Clarke, the room can be interpreted as a triclinium because the design of the perimeter of the mosaic floor is deliberately wider on the north and east sides in order to accommodate the *klinai* (couches used for sleeping, resting, and dining) that presumably would have been placed along those walls.<sup>789</sup>

### Location/Layout

Room 7 is located at the northwestern corner of the building and is flanked by the garden space to the west, room 6 to the east, and the medianum to the south.

Calculated view: There is a conceptual axis that runs from room 1 (the main entrance vestibule), across medianum 3, and ending in room 7. However, a visitor standing in the vestibule can only catch a slight glimpse of the room. Room 7 also shares a calculated view along the western side of the house with room 8, the type-B room located in the southwest corner.

Access to adjacent rooms: The relationship between room 7 and the nearby rooms 5 and 6 appears to be significant. Room 6 is directly connected to room 7 through a doorway in the east wall of room 7, and it is also linked through the large, arched window in the center of this same wall. Because of its proximity to room 7 and the physical connection between the two spaces, it is possible that room 6 functioned as a service area. This interpretation is reinforced by its painted decorations on a monochrome background and simple floor mosaic (see below). Room 5, which is thought to have been a bedroom or other secondary space in part because of its small dimensions and painted decorations with a monochrome yellow background, is connected directly to room 6 and is thus only one remove from room 7. The close connection between rooms 5, 6,

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<sup>786</sup> DeLaine 2004, 154.

<sup>787</sup> Clarke 1991, 308.

<sup>788</sup> Clarke 1991, 354; Falzone 2007, 142.

<sup>789</sup> Clarke 1991, 308.

and 7 seems to suggest an even more significant function for room 7 because it might have necessitated these extra rooms to facilitate the activities occurring within it.

### Architectural features

Windows: Room 7 has an abundance of windows. There are three large windows in its west wall, which overlooks the shared garden space, and one grand arched window on the east wall between rooms 6 and 7. Room 7 is on a clear axis with room 8, another presumed reception space in the location of the type-B room. The western orientation of the windows would accommodate the use of this room as a dining room in the winter months, when light and heat were needed from the setting sun.<sup>790</sup>

### **House of the Yellow Walls, room 8 (Fig. 22 and Fig. 33)**

Room 8 is the type-B room of the house. It is noticeably smaller than room 7, with an area of 30.7 sq. m.<sup>791</sup>

### Decorations

#### Paintings

This room also exhibits painted decorations dated to the early third century, which are composed of an architectural system on a polychrome background of yellow, red, and blue on its north and east walls. On the south wall are paintings imitating opus sectile, which are of a later date, perhaps in the late third to early fourth century AD.<sup>792</sup> The decorations incorporate peltae and diamonds in dark red on a yellow background filled with red striations, with blue aediculae dividing the wall surface.

Figural subject matter: On the north wall, one finds a mythological “panel” of Hercules and Achelao that has been reduced to the main figures and their attributes as well as an image of a dancing maenad with a tambourine.<sup>793</sup> On the east wall is a porphyry red panel framed in yellow and blue, with an image of a Silenus holding a wineskin at its center.

#### Floor mosaic

The black and white mosaic floor is as equally complex as that of room 7 and comprises nine smaller panels in alternating square and rectangle shapes, each of which contains delicate geometric and vegetal motifs.

### Location/Layout

Room 8 is located at the southwest corner of the residence. It is flanked by the medianum to the north and room 1 to the east. The room is only accessible from a single doorway in the north wall, which supports the interpretation that it would have been used primarily for controlled encounters.

Calculated view: As noted above, there is a calculated view that is shared between rooms 7 and 8 and that extends across the medianum.

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<sup>790</sup> Vitruvius, *De Arch.* 6.4.1.

<sup>791</sup> DeLaine 2004, 154.

<sup>792</sup> Falzone 2007, 159.

<sup>793</sup> Clarke 1991, 354-356; Falzone 2007, 142.

## Architectural features

Windows: Like room 7, room 8 also has three windows in its west wall, which face out onto the garden space beyond. It is possible that the room could have served as a dining room in the winter months because it was oriented to receive light and heat from the setting sun in the west.

## Alternative Primary Spaces

### **House of the Yellow Walls, room 5 (Figs. 35-36)**

Room 5 stands out from rooms 4 and 6, largely because it exhibits a more complex mosaic pavement than the other two rooms. Its location is also of some significance, as room 5 is linked to room 7 via room 6. If room 6 were a service space used to facilitate the activities taking place in room 7 (see below), it is possible that room 5 could have been used for more intimate gatherings that were held following the conclusion of the social events taking place in room 7.

## Decorations

### Paintings

The painted decorations are composed of the same aedicular system with a yellow monochrome background as that which is employed in rooms 4. In addition, the upper register preserves traces of a red cornice, with a lower horizontal band in white. Traces of narrow, red panels that also likely served as the backgrounds for aediculae are also found in the upper register.

### Floor mosaic

The floor mosaic is composed of black and white squares arranged in a diagonal-line pattern.

## Location/Layout

The room is located east of the medianum, near the interior of the house. It is bordered by the medianum to the west, room 6 to the north, and room 4 to the south.

Access to adjacent rooms: There is an entrance in the room's west wall, which allows access to the medianum, and a second entrance in the north wall, which allows access to room 6. In addition, room 5 is oriented so that the northernmost window in the west wall of medianum 3 lines up directly with its entrance, thus providing it with light.<sup>794</sup> Moreover, room 5 might also have received further light at an oblique angle via the large arched window in the west wall of room 6.

## Architectural features

Entrance: Like the entrance to room 4, it is likely that the entrance was constructed to be of sufficient width to allow for greater light and air to enter the room through the medianum because it was lacking any private windows of its own.

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<sup>794</sup> Room 4 appears to receive light from the two southernmost windows in the west wall of medianum 3, which one could read as access to the amenity of light and air. However, in room 4 the simpler floor and the lack of a connection to a more important reception space seem to suggest a less significant function for this space.

## House of the Yellow Walls, room 6

### Decorations

#### Paintings

The painted decorations are composed of nearly the aedicular system with a yellow monochrome background as that which is employed in rooms 4 and 5. However, this system does not include a cornice.

#### Floor mosaic

The floor is a simple white mosaic pavement with a narrow black band that runs the perimeter of the room.

### Location/Layout

Room 6 is located in the northeast corner of the residence, with room 7 immediately to the west and room 5 to the south.

Access to adjacent rooms: The room has two doorways, one opening onto each of the rooms to which it is adjacent.

### Architectural features

Window: As noted above, there is a grand arched window between rooms 6 and 7, located in the west wall of room 6 (the east wall of room 7). Light and air passing through the exterior windows on the west wall of room 7 would have entered room 6 through this large window.

## **Garden Houses Complex, interior-block apartments (III, IX, 13-20)** (Fig. 20, Figs. 28-31, Figs. 50-53, and Fig. 56)

Ground floor area:

Apartment 13: 278.0 m<sup>2</sup>.

Apartment 14: 280.4 m<sup>2</sup>.

Apartments 15-18: 302.2 m<sup>2</sup>.

Apartments 19-20: 280.4 m<sup>2</sup>.

### **Selected bibliography:**

Calza et al. 1953, 136, 223; Becatti 1961, 125-27; Packer 1971, 172-73; Blake 1973, 189 ff.; D.J. Watts and C.M. Watts 1987; Cervi 1999; Liedtke 2001, 343-45; Gering 2002; Liedtke 2003, 68-69; DeLaine 2004; Falzone 2007, 54-56.

The eight ground-floor medianum apartments of the interior blocks of the Garden Houses complex share a nearly identical layout, with half of them (apartments 15-18) exhibiting a plan that is the near-mirror image of the others (apartments 13, 14, 19, and 20). The ground floor areas of the apartments on the east side of the interior blocks (apartments 15-18) measure 302.2 m<sup>2</sup>, whereas those on the west side of the interior blocks measure

278-280.4 m<sup>2</sup>. This slight difference in ground floor area can be attributed to the fact that apartments 15-18 all include a second staircase (staircase 3 in each apartment on the plan), which was omitted from apartments 13, 14, 19, and 20.<sup>795</sup> The apartments appear to have been purely residential in function,<sup>796</sup> at least until the third century AD.<sup>797</sup> Based on their basic shared layout, these apartments provide an ideal case study for considering the decorative and architectural criteria associated with primary spaces. However, not all apartments preserve significant traces of decorations.

The lack of painted decorations in the remaining apartments does not affect my ability to consider their layouts or their architectural features, so I will consider all eight apartments in light of both criteria. Clearly, the type-A and type-B rooms served a significant purpose within each of these apartments.

## **Primary Spaces**

### **Decorations**

#### **Paintings**

I limit my discussion of painted decorations to the apartments in the interior blocks that preserve substantial traces of paintings that help reinforce an interpretation as a primary space, which are apartments 13, 14, 16, and 17. None of these apartments preserve decorations in their type-A rooms,<sup>798</sup> but they all preserve decorations in their type-B rooms, which are numbered as follows: apartment 13, room 4; apartment 14, room 4; apartment 16, room 5; and apartment 17, room 5.

Each of these rooms preserves traces of paintings with some variation on the architectural system on a polychrome background. However, the paintings vary greatly in terms of the artists' different rendering of the architectural system in each apartment and in the background colors employed.<sup>799</sup> Further distinctions between the paintings will be discussed in Chapter 4, but for the present purpose it is important to acknowledge the presence of paintings that reinforced the primary functions of these rooms. Interestingly, in these four apartments, one does not find painted decorations with primary characteristics in any of the other rooms that still include paintings. More specifically, in the rooms commonly interpreted as secondary spaces,<sup>800</sup> one generally finds paintings on a monochrome yellow background, most often with red aediculae dividing the wall surface into large yellow panels.

#### **Floor mosaics**

No mosaics are currently preserved in any of these apartments, and given the overall lack of evidence of mosaics in the interior block apartments, it is not possible to use mosaics as a criterion with regard to these residences. However, traces of mosaics are documented in Scavi di Ostia IV.<sup>801</sup> In apartment 13, room 4 there was once a mosaic floor with a geometric pattern of white

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<sup>795</sup> DeLaine 2004, 154.

<sup>796</sup> Watts 1987, 55.

<sup>797</sup> Gering 2002, 122-136.

<sup>798</sup> That is, room 9 in apartment 13, room 9 in apartment 14, room 10 in apartment 16, and room 10 in apartment 17.

<sup>799</sup> In addition, there are traces of images of draped female figures in the south and west walls of room 4 in apartment 14 and on the north wall of room 5 in apartment 17.

<sup>800</sup> That is, in apartment 13, room 5; apartment 14, rooms 5 and 6; apartment 16, rooms 6 and 7, and apartment 17, rooms 6 and 7.

<sup>801</sup> Becatti 1961, 125-127.

octagons with meander motifs in black at their centers.<sup>802</sup> In apartment 17, there was once a mosaic composed of white circles, each of which was surrounded by black crescents. The entire composition was framed in a black band.<sup>803</sup> In apartment 20, there was formerly a mosaic comprising four-pointed star motifs rendered in black and composed of acute triangles, along with black squares and white hexagons.<sup>804</sup> Perhaps mosaics of similar complexity were once found in the type-A and type-B rooms of the other interior block apartments.

## Location/Layout

All eight apartments exhibit the same basic layout, with the type-B room at the end of the medianum that is closest to the entrance and the type-A room at the opposite end of the medianum. In all eight apartments, the type-B room is smaller than the type-A room: all of the type-B rooms have an area of 29.4 m<sup>2</sup>, while all of the type-A rooms have a ground floor area of 47.2 m<sup>2</sup>.<sup>805</sup>

During the original Hadrianic phase of the complex, all of the type-B rooms exhibited a single entrance opening onto the medianum. In contrast, nearly all of the type-A rooms, which were located at the corners of the buildings, exhibit two entrances, with one opening onto the medianum and one opening onto the corridor space that was shared with the adjacent apartment in its initial phase.<sup>806</sup> The exception to this is room 10 in apartment 17, in which there appears to have been a window where there is a door in all of the other apartments of the interior blocks.

Calculated view: The type-A and type-B rooms are on opposite ends of a horizontal axis, with each room providing a direct view into the other.

## Architectural features

Windows: During the Hadrianic phase, all of the type-B rooms are thought to have included one to four windows. In addition, all of the type-A rooms appear to have contained at least six windows, with three along the east or west side and three more along its north or south side, depending on where the apartment was located within the complex. Although these apartments still exhibit basic similarities in terms of their layouts, by the late second century each unit underwent some minor renovations. In particular, doorways and windows were added or closed up in different rooms.<sup>807</sup>

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<sup>802</sup> Becatti 1961, 126.

<sup>803</sup> It is not clear precisely which room included this mosaic because Becatti describes it as “il pavimento della stanzetta del lato Nord”, yet there are two small rooms on the north side of the house – rooms 6 and 7.

<sup>804</sup> Once again, it is not clear which room included this mosaic because Becatti refers to the room as “una stanza d’angolo Sud-Est” (127). However, there is no room that one could clearly interpret as being in the southeast corner of the building because it does not have a room in what would be its southeast corner due to its location at the north end of the apartment block.

<sup>805</sup> DeLaine 2004, 154.

<sup>806</sup> Several decades after the complex was constructed, the corridors that initially connected the adjacent apartments were blocked off by partition walls. See Chapter 4 for a more complete discussion of the building history of the interior apartment blocks of the Garden Houses complex.

<sup>807</sup> See especially Cervi 1999 and Gering 2002 for a more complete discussion of the different phases of the construction within the complex.



## **Garden Houses complex, interior-block apartments: A Lack of Alternative Primary Spaces**

In the eight interior-block apartments, one does not find any clear examples of ambiguous rooms that can be attributed a possible function as an alternate primary space. There are three rooms in each apartment that are commonly attributed a secondary function, which are the rooms that are located at the interior of the apartment along the long side of the medianum. In particular, these are the rooms numbered 5, 6, and 7 in each of the apartments 13, 14, 19, and 20, and the rooms numbered 6, 7, and 8 in each of the apartments 15, 16, 17, and 18.

### Decorations

The secondary function is reinforced in part by the presence of painted decorations on a monochrome yellow background.<sup>808</sup>

### Location/Layout

These rooms, which are located along the long side of the medianum between rooms A and B, are not situated directly on the main conceptual axis, although they open up onto it. In addition, none of these rooms are directly connected by a doorway to any of the type-A or type-B rooms. Thus, they do not appear to have functioned as service spaces or other secluded spaces that supported the functions of either of the main reception rooms.

### Architectural features

None of these rooms have their own private windows, instead receiving indirect light from the windows of the medianum.

## **House of the Graffito (III, IX, 21) (Fig. 19)**

Ground floor area: c. 205 m<sup>2</sup>.<sup>809</sup>

### **Selected bibliography:**

Calza et al. 1953, 136-37, 236; Becatti 1961, 127-28; Hermansen 1981, 35-36; Watts 1987, 57-58; Clarke 1991, 307-8.

The House of the Graffito, which is also a medianum apartment in the Garden Houses complex, shares a party wall with the House of the Yellow Walls. Unlike the apartments of the interior blocks, the House of the Graffito does not mirror the plan of the apartment adjacent to it. Rather, the House of the Graffito exhibits a narrower medianum and a smaller entrance vestibule than the House of the Yellow Walls, and it also lacks a service

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<sup>808</sup> Liedtke 2003.

<sup>809</sup> DeLaine 2004, 154.

area opening onto its largest primary space. Its ground floor area is substantially smaller than that of the other medianum apartments in the Garden Houses complex.

## **Primary Spaces**

### **House of the Graffito, room 7 (Fig. 27)**

#### **Decorations**

##### Paintings

Only room 7 preserves traces of its painted decorations. The decorative system of room 7 is not entirely legible, but it seems to have been either a panel system or an architectural system. Given the frequency with which the latter is found in the other medianum apartments of the Garden Houses complex,<sup>810</sup> it seems more likely that the architectural system was employed. The paintings do not preserve any traces of figural subjects or motifs, but it is apparent that the background was yellow and shade of purple or red-brown.

##### Floor mosaic

The floor mosaic no longer remains, but it originally exhibited a complex pattern involves squares with vegetal motifs at their centers, which were encircled by narrow rectangles and trapezoid shapes, the latter of which formed diagonal lines that filled the entire composition.<sup>811</sup>

#### **Location/Layout**

Room 7 is located at the north end of the apartment. It opens onto both the medianum (room 4) and room 6 to the south. The connection between room 7 and room 6 might suggest that the latter space was used to support the activities taking place in the former.

Calculated view: Room 7 exhibits a calculated view into room 3, the type-B room and the other presumed primary space. In addition, room 7 is situated at the end of the conceptual longitudinal axis that begins in vestibule 1. Not unlike the conceptual axis exhibited in the House of the Yellow Walls, it would be difficult for a viewer standing in the entrance vestibule of the House of the Graffito to have a clear view of room 7.

#### **Architectural features**

Windows: Room 7 also includes three tall windows in its east wall that overlook the Via delle Volte Dipinte. This is the greatest number of windows in any static space in the apartment. There do not appear to have been two registers of windows because the height of the ceiling measures at approximate 3.95 m.<sup>812</sup>

### **House of the Graffito, room 3**

Room 3 no longer preserves any traces of either painted or mosaic decorations, but its location and architectural features imply that it served a primary function.

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<sup>810</sup> For example, the architectural system is found in the House of the Painted Vaults, room 1; the House of the Priestesses, rooms 4 and 6; the House of the Yellow Walls, rooms 7 and 8; and in the interior blocks of the Garden Houses complex in apartment 13, room 4; apartment 14, room 4; apartment 16, room 5; and apartment 17, room 5.

<sup>811</sup> Becatti 1961, 127-128.

<sup>812</sup> Hermansen 1981, 35.

### Location/Layout

The room is located at the south end of the apartment (immediately south of the medianum), directly opposite from room 7.

### Architectural features

Window: The room has one window in its east wall, which overlooks the Via delle Volte Dipinte.

Doorway: The room has only a single entrance, which surely helped restrict access to the room, imply that it served a primary function.

### **Alternative Primary Spaces**

#### **House of the Graffito, room 6**

##### Decorations

###### Paintings:

Its painted decorations are also poorly preserved, but the background displays clear traces of a monochrome yellow background. In addition, there are still traces of a red horizontal line in the upper part of the wall in the southwest corner that suggests the presence of a cornice.

##### Location/Layout

Room 6 is located on the west side of the building, immediately south of room 7 and west of the medianum. As noted above, the room was connected to room 7 through a doorway in the wall shared between the two rooms. This could imply that the room was used for functions of primary social importance on occasion.

### **GROUP 2B**

#### **House of the Painted Vaults (III, V, 1)** (Fig. 37)

Ground floor area: c. 220 m<sup>2</sup>

##### **Selected bibliography:**

Calza et al. 1953, 137, 222, 235; Van Essen 1956-58, 157, 173; Felletti Maj 1960; Becatti 1961, 101-2; Felletti Maj 1961; Packer 1971, 166-71; Blake 1973, 183 f.; Mielsch 1981, 215 f.; Joyce 1981, 23, 26, 39, 40, 43 f.; Mielsch 1984, 92 f., 96 ff., 140 f.; Clarke 1991, 289-303; Liedtke 2003, 54-61; Falzone 2007, 81-90.

The House of the Painted Vaults (*Insula delle Volte Dipinte*), which was built around AD 120,<sup>813</sup> is located in close proximity to the Garden Houses complex, situated southeast of the House of the Muses. It exhibits an atypical yet rational layout, in which its rooms are placed on either side of a central corridor that divides the structure in half. Each room in the house, regardless of function, was covered with a groin vault. The rooms on the north side of the building are commonly thought to have been its primary reception spaces, while those on its south side are thought to have been bedrooms or service spaces.<sup>814</sup> It has also been suggested that the south half functioned as a hotel, while the north side was the residence of the owner.<sup>815</sup> Since the structure is generally thought to have functioned as a residence, I will interpret it in this way, although I do not entirely dismiss the possibility that its south half could have functioned as a hotel during later phases.

### **Primary Spaces**

The two rooms that appear to have been the primary spaces of the house are rooms 2 and 12. All of the paintings preserved appear to date to a phase in the early Antonine period (the mid-second century AD), while the mosaic floors (with the exception of later repairs) date to the original Hadrianic phase of construction.<sup>816</sup> Both rooms are on a clear axis that extends through the doorways of each room and runs parallel to the main corridor of the residence, corridor 3.

### **House of the Painted Vaults, room 2 (Fig. 38)**

Room 2, which has been interpreted as a tablinum,<sup>817</sup> is the largest primary space of the residence.

### **Decorations**

#### **Paintings**

The painted decorations are composed of an architectural system on a polychrome background of red, yellow, and black. In the lunettes of each wall, slender figures are depicted standing or seated within delicate pavilions. In addition, stucco moldings define the corners where the walls and the vaulted ceiling meet. Below the lunettes is a cornice level with meandering lines on a red background, which evokes the pattern of the original Hadrianic mosaic floor. Imitation opus sectile panels (possibly mimicking giallo antico) are depicted in the main registers of each wall.

#### **Floor mosaic**

The pattern of the original Hadrianic floor mosaic was composed of small black squares aligned so that they formed swastika motifs in each corner. The lines of squares forming the swastikas extended outward from the motifs themselves, filling the majority of the composition.

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<sup>813</sup> Clarke 1991, 289.

<sup>814</sup> Felletti Maj, 1961, 45-46; Clarke 1991, 293; Falzone 2007, 81-86. According to Clarke, this corridor is similar to the atrium or the peristyle in the Pompeian domus because rooms of different functions are placed around it.

<sup>815</sup> Bakker 1994 78-79, n. 19.

<sup>816</sup> Clarke 1991, 289.

<sup>817</sup> Packer 1971, 166; Clarke 1991, 293.

## Location/Layout

Situated in the southwest corner of the residence, room 2 is located at one end of the axis running along the north side of the building that terminates in room 10. Room 2 can be reached both from vestibule 1, the main entrance to the House of the Painted Vaults, and corridor 3, which is the main corridor running the length of the south side of the building. Thus, it is easily accessible from the main entrance to the house, but it is also connected to the south part of the building, which is generally thought to be the more private part of the residence.

Calculated view: Because of its location at one end of the axis running through the north side of the building, room 2 provides an axial view through rooms 1, 12, 11, and 10, respectively.

## Architectural features

Windows: Room 2 has a total of five windows (the most in any room on the ground floor), three of which are found in its north wall and the remaining two of which are found in its west wall. Thus, it was likely the brightest room of the house, particularly in the later hours of the day, when the heat and light of the setting sun would pour in through its windows. However, they are at an elevated height of 2.08 m,<sup>818</sup> which might have prevented passersby from catching a glimpse of the decorations displayed within.

## **House of the Painted Vaults, room 12**

Room 12 is thought to have served as either triclinium or an oecus.<sup>819</sup>

## Decorations

### Paintings

In the central register, the painted decorations are composed of yellow panels that are separated by red aediculae, and in the upper register there are predominantly red panels.

Figural subject matter: The lunettes display alternating red and yellow panels with architectural settings that enclose lithe figural subjects, which are thought to represent statues. In addition, the painted decorations that remain in the vault exhibit a red background that is enclosed in a wide yellow frame.

### Floor mosaic

The mosaic of room 12 exhibits a complex pattern of black rectangles framing white squares that contain inset concave diamonds in black.

## Location/Layout

Room 12 is located along the axis that runs through the entire north side of the building, to the southwest of room 11 and to the northeast of room 1. It has two doorways, one opening onto room 12 and the other onto room 1.

Calculated view: Room 12 provides a view into all of the rooms that are found along the axis on the north side of the building, terminating in room 2 on the west end and room 10 on the east end.

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<sup>818</sup> Packer 1971, 166.

<sup>819</sup> On the triclinium interpretation, see Clarke 1991, 293; on the oeci interpretation, see Felletti Maj 1961, 45-46; Packer 1971, 167-168.

## Architectural features

Windows: Room 12 has two windows in its north wall, which overlook the Via delle Volte Dipinte. It appears that room 12 was able to accommodate two windows because of its greater width. The windows are at an elevated height of 2.08 m,<sup>820</sup> which would have prevented viewers inside the room from looking out onto the street or vice versa. In addition, room 12 contains a window that opens onto corridor 3, which is at a height of 1.61 m.<sup>821</sup> The height of this window would not have accommodated a view between room 12 and corridor 3.

## **Alternative Primary Spaces**

The alternative primary spaces include rooms 4, 5, and 11.

Because of their subsidiary location, rooms 4, 5, and 6 are commonly interpreted as bedrooms.<sup>822</sup> Recently, it has also been suggested that these rooms functioned more generally as private spaces of secondary function, although the function as bedrooms is still implied.<sup>823</sup> It is my opinion that this more general reading of the rooms as those of a more “private” function should be pursued rather than interpreting all of the rooms specifically as bedrooms. These interpretations are based largely on the decorations and the location of the rooms at the more secluded south side of the building.

Based on my criteria for identifying primary spaces, rooms 4 and 5 appear to have been more ambiguous in function, with a greater potential for functioning on occasion as primary spaces than the noticeably smaller room 6. Likewise, room 11 also appears to have been an alternative primary space because its location implies its importance, although its decorations seem to be characteristic of secondary spaces.

## **House of the Painted Vaults, room 4**

### Decorations

Paintings: This room is best known for the well preserved painted decorations on its vaulted ceiling. The paintings that are seen today date to the Severan period and were painted directly over the monochrome yellow decoration from the mid-second century.<sup>824</sup> Thus, the Severan scheme has deteriorated greatly because the artist failed to roughen the surface in order to allow the plaster to adhere correctly.<sup>825</sup> The complex ceiling painting has a yellow background and is divided into four trapezoidal segments, with one corresponding to the lunette on each of the adjacent walls of the room. On each segment there are two smaller trapezoidal panels painted in red and framed in green, creating a total of eight panels on the ceiling. The paintings of the eight smaller panels include small, lunette shaped panels painted in white at their edges, which evoke the actual lunettes on the walls below. A central roundel of Pegasus mounted by a male figure sits at its center of the ceiling.

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<sup>820</sup> Packer 1971, 167.

<sup>821</sup> Packer 1971, 167.

<sup>822</sup> Felletti Maj 1961, 46; Packer 1971, 168; Clarke 1991, 298-301.

<sup>823</sup> Falzone 2007, 86.

<sup>824</sup> Clarke 1991, 298-300; Falzone 2007, 141-142.

<sup>825</sup> Clarke 1991, 298-299.

Moving from the ceiling down to the wall itself, one finds the best-preserved paintings in the lunette area of the northwest wall. Like the paintings of rooms 2, 11, and 12, these painted decorations also appear to date to the Antonine period. The lunette, which has a yellow background, displays an architectural system that involves delicate pavilions and tall, slender draped figures. Although the paintings of the other three lunettes are not preserved, it seems plausible that the same system was also used to decorate them as well. This architectural system is comparable to that found in the lunettes of rooms 2 and 12, which allows room 4 to make a visual connection between all three rooms.

#### Floor mosaic

Room 4 exhibits a mosaic pavement with an all-over pattern comprising a geometric motif of a somewhat unusual form. The white shape that is repeated throughout the design could best be described as a circle with a shield attached to its side. This atypical motif is outlined in black and alternates with black hearts and convex diamonds.

It appears that the mosaicists were not particularly concerned with creating a pattern that accurately accommodated the room's dimensions or that aligned with its windows or door. First, the mosaic pattern is not symmetrically laid out within the black border of the pavement. Second, the motifs that are adjacent to the border are not represented as complete shapes. For example, along the northwest side of the floor, the white circle-shield motifs are cut in half laterally, while along the northeast side they are each missing the remaining third of the circle part of the motif. This lack of concern over creating a symmetrical and properly formatted design differs from the case in room 12, where there appears to have been a greater emphasis on designing a balanced pattern that neatly fit the dimensions of the room.

### Location/Layout

Room 4 is located in the southeast corner of the building. The location of this room, particularly in relation to room 2, appears to mark it as a space of some importance. The doorway in the south wall of room 2, which opens onto corridor 3, is directly lined up with the entrance to room 4. Although room 4 does not open directly into room 2, its close proximity to it might suggest that it served as a secondary reception space for more private gatherings.

### Architectural features

Windows: Room 4 is distinguished by the fact that it receives light from windows facing two directions, one facing south and another facing east. This suggests that the room was a place of some significance because it was likely brighter and better ventilated than the smaller spaces of the residence.

## **House of the Painted Vaults, room 5 (Fig. 39)**

### Decorations

#### Paintings

Rooms 5 and 6 are strikingly similar in terms of their painted decorations, although they differ noticeably from room 4. Given the strong similarities evidenced by the rendering of the different motifs, it seems likely that the same artist or workshop carried out the decorations in both rooms.<sup>826</sup> Room 5 exhibits an aedicular system with delicate aediculae, garlands, and other motifs

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<sup>826</sup> Clarke 1991, 300.

of the repertoire on a monochrome white background that reflects the continued use of the Fourth Style (or at least a variation on it) in the second century, likely in the Antonine period.

#### Floor mosaic

Room 5 contains a black and white floor mosaic with a pattern involving black and white squares, which are aligned into diagonal bands that extend across the room. The pattern is somewhat similar to that of the mosaic in room 11.

### Architectural features

Room 5 has two windows in its east wall, which overlook the Via delle Trifore. Given its eastern exposure, it is possible that the room could have been used on occasion as a spring or fall dining room.<sup>827</sup> Like the windows on the north side of the building that overlook the Via delle Volte Dipinte, these windows are also found at an elevated height, with the bottom level of each window opening at 1.95 m about the floor.<sup>828</sup>

## **House of the Painted Vaults, room 11**

### Decorations

#### Paintings

The painted decorations are composed of yellow panels that are separated by red aediculae, which are topped by a red cornice. These are similar to those found in the secondary and alternative primary spaces in numerous Group 2A apartments.

#### Floor mosaic

The mosaic pattern is composed of small and large white squares and black L-shaped motifs. The squares and L-motifs are arranged diagonally so that they create a nearly checkerboard-like pattern. Although the design follows a regular pattern, it is not symmetrical.

### Location/Layout

Room 11 is located along the axis that runs through the entire north side of the building, to the southwest of room 10 and to the northeast of room 12. It has two doorways, one opening onto room 12 and the other onto room 10.

Calculated view: Room 11 also provides a view into all of the rooms that are found along the axis on the north side of the building, terminating in room 2 on the west end and room 10 on the east end.

### Architectural features

Windows: Room 11 includes a single window facing the street to the north. In addition, room 11 contains a window that opens onto corridor 3, which is at a height of 1.45 m.<sup>829</sup> Not unlike the window facing the exterior, this window is too high to have accommodated views between room 11 and corridor 3.

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<sup>827</sup> Vitruvius, *De arch.* 6.4.2.

<sup>828</sup> Packer 1971, 168.

<sup>829</sup> Packer 1971, 167.



## **Inn of the Peacock (IV, II, 6) (Fig. 40)**

Ground floor area: c. 350 m<sup>2</sup>

### **Selected bibliography:**

Gasparri 1970, Mielsch, RM 82, 1975, 127 ff.; Mielsch 1981, 217; Joyce 1981, 44 f.; Clarke 1991, 341-354; Liedtke 2003, 103-5; Falzone 2007, 134-41.

The Inn of the Peacock is a structure that functioned as a private residence from the time of its construction in the Hadrianic period until around AD 250, when it was transformed into an inn and a tavern.<sup>830</sup> Since it functioned as a residence during the time in which it was last decorated, that is, around AD 200 to 220, I will consider the parts of the structure that appear to correlate to its domestic usage, namely rooms 1 through 10. Unlike the majority of the residences discussed in this chapter, the Inn of the Peacock has both painted decorations and mosaic floors that date to the same phase;<sup>831</sup> thus, the mosaics are also attributed to the Severan decorative phase and not to an earlier phase of the building.

## **Primary Spaces**

### **Inn of the Peacock, room 8**

Room 8 is commonly interpreted as a tablinum.<sup>832</sup>

#### **Decorations**

##### **Paintings**

The painted decorations are composed of an architectural system on a polychrome background of porphyry, yellow, white, and black.

**Figural subject matter:** There are togate males on the west, south, and east walls, and a nude male and a draped female figure are found on the short walls that flank the entrance to the room in the north wall. Although the painted decorations have greatly deteriorated and have been painted over in some areas (namely the socle zone, which exhibits an imitation *opus sectile* panel from the mid-third century), they draw upon elements of the Pompeian Second Style.

##### **Floor mosaic**

The mosaic pavement exhibits a geometric pattern incorporating shapes that appear to be bells or drinking glasses. The latter interpretation requires one to consider the black concave triangular form attached to the bell shape as a “stem”. These shapes alternate with concave diamonds and butterfly-like trapezoids with scalloped edges in white. The unique design of the mosaic floor tricks the viewer’s eye into recognizing different patterns within the floor decorations, depending on whether the black or white motifs first catch the viewer’s eye. Interestingly, the tesserae of room 8, which measure from 1.2 – 1.8 cm each, are slightly smaller than those used in rooms 6

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<sup>830</sup> See especially Gasparri 1970 on the Inn of the Peacock and its painted decorations.

<sup>831</sup> Clarke 1991, 344-345.

<sup>832</sup> Clarke 1991, 346; Falzone 2007, 134.

and 10, which measure 1.9 – 2.2 cm each.<sup>833</sup> The smaller size of the tesserae in room 8 implies that a greater amount of labor and presumably also skill was required in order to install the mosaic floor.

### Location/Layout

Room 8 is located at the south end of the building and opens onto room 6 to the north and room 9 to the east. It is situated in such a way that it cannot be seen from entrance vestibule 1. Rather, a visitor must travel through vestibule 1, courtyard 4, and corridor 6 before reaching room 8. Thus, it is clearly removed from the main entrance. However, one could argue that it is located at the end of the conceptual axis that begins at entrance vestibule 1, which might suggest that it is in fact situated in a significant location.

### Architectural features

Entrance: Room 8 exhibits a fairly wide entrance, which seems to reinforce the possibility that it could have been used as a reception space.

Window: In addition, there is a window that overlooks courtyard 7 in its east wall. However, the small size of the window, as well as the fact that it is the only window in the room, suggest that the room was not very well lit except during the early hours of the day, when it received light from the morning sun. This seems a logical placement of the window because the morning is also the time at which the *salutatio* would typically take place.<sup>834</sup> Moreover, since the south wall of room 9 projects into the courtyard, it limits the extent to which light could reach room 8.

## **Inn of the Peacock, room 9 (Fig. 41 and Fig. 43)**

Room 9, the smallest but arguably also the best decorated room of the house, appears to have been another space of primary function.

### Decorations

#### Paintings

The polychrome panel system used in these painted decorations reflects a change in taste that favored asymmetrically placed panels and that shunned the balanced architectural systems of the previous two centuries.<sup>835</sup>

Figural subject matter: Individual male and female draped figures occupy single panels with background colors in red, white, black, and yellow at varying heights, while numerous decorative motifs, such as tragic masks, birds, and a gorgon's head (*gorgoneion*) are found in other panels.

#### Floor mosaic

The floor decoration in room 9 is not composed of mosaic tesserae but rather of *opus sectile* panels of various shapes and sizes (mainly squares and rectangles as well as a single circle). The almost haphazard arrangement of *opus sectile* panels seems to evoke the asymmetry of the painted decorations on the walls and to unify the decorative ensemble of the room as a whole. Moreover, an *opus sectile* floor, which was no doubt a more costly investment than a mosaic floor, would have been a clear sign of the owner's conspicuous consumption.

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<sup>833</sup> Clarke 1991, 345. These tesserae, however, are still larger than those of Hadrianic mosaics, which are typically 1.2-1.5 cm.

<sup>834</sup> Laurence 1994, 122-27.

<sup>835</sup> Gasparri 1970; Clarke 1991, 349-353; Falzone 2007, 134-41.

## Location/Layout

Room 9 is located at the south end of the building, between room 8 and courtyard 7. One could reach room 9 only by first entering through its doorway that opens onto room 8, which, as noted above, is thought to have served as the other primary space of the house. Thus, room 8 appears to have acted as a space that screened visitors to room 9. Although I wish to avoid employing terms that suggest the functions of rooms, one could argue that room 8 appears as if it might have been an atrium-type space where visitors were received before they were able to meet with the resident of the house, presumably in room 9, which might have functioned on some occasions as a tablinum-type space. This interpretation of room 9 as a more significant space finds further favor in the room's architectural features.

## Architectural features

Floor level: Room 9 has a floor in which the level has deliberately been lowered. The two stairs that a visitor would descend when entering the room would have called attention to the importance of the room.

Elevated ceiling: The ceiling of the roof was also raised slightly,<sup>836</sup> likely to give the impression that the room was slightly larger than it was in actuality. This might have been an important consideration, given Moreover, the small dimensions of room 9 suggest that a limited number of guests could have been accommodated within this space.

Window: Room 9 has one window, which faces east and overlooks courtyard 7. The room is noticeably brighter than the adjacent room 8, although both rooms have a single window facing the same direction.

## **Inn of the Peacock: a lack of alternative primary spaces (rooms 6 and 10) (Fig. 42)**

The two remaining rooms in this section of the Inn of the Peacock that preserve decorations, room 6 (a corridor) and room 10, do not appear to have functioned as alternate primary spaces. However, this does not preclude their uses as such, particularly in the case of room 10, which is often interpreted as a cubiculum.<sup>837</sup>

### Paintings

Both rooms exhibit painted decorations in a panel style with polychrome backgrounds in red, yellow and white and with various motifs of the repertoire at the center of each panel, such as dolphins, nude male figures, and vegetal motifs. The basic panel style employed in these rooms is similar to that found in room 9; however, the execution of the paintings in rooms 6 and 10 is of noticeably lower quality. Although the paintings are polychrome, the systems seem to be the less complex and are filled with more generic subject matter than the other rooms that preserve painted decorations.

### Floor mosaic

Rooms 6 and 10 both exhibit floor mosaics with allover patterns composed of basic motifs. In Room 6, one finds a pattern of alternating black and white fan motifs. In Room 10, there is a checkerboard-like pattern of alternating squares and L-shaped motifs in black and white.

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<sup>836</sup> Clarke 1991, 349.

<sup>837</sup> Clarke 1991, 343; Falzone 2007, 134.

Thus, much like the recurring use of the architectural system on a polychrome background in the House of the Muses, the recurring use of the panel system on a polychrome background here seems to lose some of its significance. After all, the lack of rooms with monochrome backgrounds in rooms 1–10 does not indicate that there were no rooms of secondary function. Likewise, black and white mosaic pavements are found in multiple rooms and not merely the most important rooms of the house. Thus, it seems likely that these rooms were designated as secondary spaces in some other way, perhaps with lesser quality paintings and mosaics or equivalent or perhaps even less complexity.<sup>838</sup>

## **GROUP 3 APARTMENTS**

### **Group 3A**

#### **House of Themistocles, Apartments 1 and 2 (V, XI, 2)** (Fig. 44)

Ground floor area:

Apartment 1 (rooms 19-21): c. 65 m<sup>2</sup>.

Apartment 2 (rooms 22-26): c. 90 m<sup>2</sup>.

#### **Selected bibliography:**

Van Essen 1956-58, 178; Packer 1971, 194-95; Blake 1973, 203; Hermansen 1981, 41-43, 96-11; Joyce 1981, 29; Mielsch 1984, 97; Falzone and Pellegrino 1997, 203-205; Liedtke 2003, 115-19; Falzone 2004, 155-65; Falzone 2007, 124-29.

The House of Themistocles forms part of a wedge-shaped complex that was built in the Hadrianic period and is located at the southeastern end of the city at the corner of the Via degli Augustali and the Decumanus. The original structure, which opened onto the Decumanus, was composed of an east wing of apartments, a west wing of tabernae, and a central row of rooms that were either used for storage or as residences. However, the shape and composition of the entire complex changed over the course of its history. During the age of Commodus (the late second century), the temple of a *collegium* was

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<sup>838</sup> Moreover, rooms 6 and 10 exhibit all-over geometric patterns in each of their mosaic floors, with alternating black and white fans in corridor 6 and a checkerboard-like pattern in room 10. Admittedly, one could argue that room 8, a primary space, also exhibits an all-over pattern. However, the main difference between room 8 and the other two secondary rooms is that the mosaic floor in the former appears to present the viewer with two different ways of observing the pattern depending on which aspect the viewer focuses on, while the patterns in rooms 6 and 10 lack the same illusionism. In addition, rooms 6 and 10 were not particularly well-lit rooms: room 6 received light only on its east side from the entrances that open onto courtyards 4 and 7, while room 10 does not appear to have had any windows during this phase. Thus, the secondary functions of rooms 6 and 10 seem to be reinforced by each room's decorations, layout, and lack of distinguishing architectural features.

constructed, which encroached upon the land occupied by the west wing. In the Severan period, Insula V, XI, 3 was constructed in the space between the north end of the east wing and the Decumanus, thus reducing the size of the northernmost apartment.<sup>839</sup> Moreover, at some point in the late second century, the apartments of the east wing were renovated and reorganized into four apartments, three of which were medianum apartments.<sup>840</sup>

According to Hermansen, the most probable explanation for the large-scale encroachment onto the original (and initially much larger) property of the House of Themistocles by the guild temple and Insula V, XI, 3 is that the guild who used and constructed the temple also owned the entire plot of land. He argues that the intrusion of the guild temple onto this property would have been a clear violation of Roman property laws; thus, the most logical explanation is that the owner(s) who commissioned the temple did so because they already owned the land. Moreover, following the construction of guild temple and Insula V, XI, 3, the apartments of the east wing could only be inconveniently accessed from the south end of corridor 18 or through the tabernae in the west wing and not from the Decumanus, as was originally the case.<sup>841</sup> Thus, it would have been substantially more difficult for the residents of the apartments to reach their dwellings than it had been in the past.

The collegium in question might have been that of the *fabri tignuarii* (builders or carpenters), a particularly large collegium that already had a guild site in the Caseggiato dei Triclini to the east of the southern half of the Forum.<sup>842</sup> Hermansen notes that this particular collegium had large number of members, and thus it might have needed a second building such as this, which provided practical facilities such as storage and accommodations that were not provided in the other building.<sup>843</sup> I will return to the possible significance of ownership by a guild below.

Two of the medianum apartments in the east wing preserve clear traces of painted decorations: Apartment 1, which is composed of rooms 19-21, and Apartment 2, which is composed of rooms 22-26. These paintings are relatively uniform in terms of decorative system (aedicular system with red aediculae and some architectural details in green and yellow), background color (white), and motifs (oscilla, masks, birds, crustaceans). The dates attributed to the paintings typically range from somewhere in the Antonine period through the age of Gallienus, but a date in the Severan age seems plausible given the likelihood that the apartments were redecorated following the structural transformations to the north of the east wing during the Severan period.<sup>844</sup>

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<sup>839</sup> Hermansen 1982, 96-101.

<sup>840</sup> Falzone 2007, 125, suggests a date in the late second century, in part based on the decorations. Hermansen 1982, 41 suggests a date before the reign of Gallienus (253-260), but I would disagree with a date as late as the mid-third century because the painted decorations are stylistically comparable to other paintings of the late second century.

<sup>841</sup> Hermansen 1982, 108-111.

<sup>842</sup> See Zevi 1971, 472-478, on the fact that the temple was dedicated by the *collegium fabrum tignuariorum Ostiensium* to Divus Pius Pertinax by AD 194. See also Hermansen 1982, 43.

<sup>843</sup> Hermansen 1981, 108.

<sup>844</sup> Falzone 2004, 165. See also Falzone and Pellegrino 1997; Falzone 2007, 125-129.

## House of Themistocles, Apartment 1 (rooms 19-21)

### Room 21

This room has been interpreted as an oecus.<sup>845</sup> Of the three rooms in Apartment 1, the only one that preserves substantial traces of painted decorations and a mosaic floor is room 21. Given its large dimensions, its placement in the type-A room location, and its access to light, it seems plausible that room 21 functioned as a reception space.

### Decorations

#### Paintings

On the south wall, there is a white background with three, double-stacked aediculae rendered schematically in red. Cruciform garlands fill the white open fields between the aediculae, while in the lower register there is an oscillum in the left panel, a crustacean in the center panel, and a dove in the right panel.

Floor mosaic: The room exhibits a rough mosaic floor composed of white tesserae.<sup>846</sup>

### Location/Layout

Room 21 is located at the south end of Apartment 1.

#### Calculated view:

There is a calculated view that is shared between room 21 at the south end of the apartment and room 19, in the north end of the building. Given the placement of room 21 at the end of the conceptual axis, it can be considered the type-A room of this medianum apartment.

### Architectural Features

Window: Room 21 also has the only window of the house, which opens onto the open-roofed corridor (corridor 18) that borders the east wing on its west side. However, room 21 might have received additional light from room 19, provided that the latter had an opening in its roof, which is thought to be the case with room 24 in Apartment 2, the room that is in the same location as room 19.<sup>847</sup>

## Alternative Primary Spaces

### Room 19

Room 19, which appears to have originally functioned as a medianum, seems more ambiguous in function in its Severan state. When the northernmost part of the apartment was eliminated in its later phase, room 19 seems to have taken on a slightly different function. The central, trapezoid-shaped part of the room at the northernmost end seems distinct from the narrow corridor that runs parallel to room 20. This corridor-like segment of room 19 seems to take on the function of the medianum. Thus, room 19 appears as if it could have been used simultaneously as a reception space as well as the medianum. Moreover, room 19 takes on the additional function of an entranceway or

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<sup>845</sup> Packer 1971, 194.

<sup>846</sup> Packer 1971, 194; Hermansen 1981.

<sup>847</sup> Hermansen 1982, 41.

perhaps even a large initial reception space because a visitor would enter the apartment through the doorway in its west wall.

### Decorations

#### Paintings

Only minor traces of plaster with illegible decorations are preserved on the east wall of room 19, so it is not possible to consider the role of its paintings in designating the room's importance within the apartment as a whole.

### Location/Layout

Room 19 is located at the north end of the apartment. As noted above, it is north of room 20, but a narrow segment of room 19 extends southward and flanks the east side of 20.

## **House of Themistocles, Apartment 2 (rooms 22-26) (Fig. 45)**

Apartment 2, which preserves a more complete medianum plan, is noticeably larger than Apartment 1, with a ground floor area of approximately 90 m<sup>2</sup>. This residence preserves traces of its painted decorations in four out of five of its rooms (22, 23, 24, and 25). In addition, it once preserved traces of mosaics in three of its rooms (22, 23, and 26) and an *opus spicatum* floor in the medianum (room 24). Thus, these painted and mosaic decorations provide us with greater evidence of possible distinctions in decorative choices based on the functions of rooms and their importance within the residence as a whole.

As noted above, in all of the rooms that preserve painted decorations we find a schematic aedicular system in red on a white background, with garlands and motifs occupying the spaces of the white fields in between the architectural features. However, the paintings are not identical because they exhibit minor variations in terms of the widths of the panels, as well as slightly differences in the rendering of the aediculae and the different motifs. In addition, the colors green and yellow are employed in the architectural details of the aediculae of only some of the rooms. Regardless, there do not appear to be any painted decorations that designate specific rooms as hierarchically more important than any of the other rooms. Likewise, in rooms 22, 23, and 26, the pavements are documented as having been white mosaic floors with black borders, although no traces of these mosaics are observable today. However, in medianum 24, there was once an *opus spicatum* floor, which suggests that this room was perhaps less important than the other spaces.<sup>848</sup>

### **Primary Spaces**

Since the painted and mosaic decorations provide us with little evidence of hierarchical distinctions among the different rooms of Apartment 2, we must turn instead to the location of each room and the presence of significant architectural features. The entrance

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<sup>848</sup> Hermansen 1981, 41-43.

to Apartment 2, which is located in the west side of medianum 24, appears to divide the residence into two symmetrical halves. Each half includes a large room with a single entrance at its far end (rooms 22 and 26) and a substantially smaller room, also with a single entrance, closer to the interior (rooms 23 and 25). Because the apartment is more or less symmetrical, it is not possible to designate the two larger rooms (22 and 26) as either a type-A or type-B rooms, particularly because they can each be reached from the main entrance by passing through the same number of removes and through a single doorway in the same location. However, given the frequency with which rooms that are located at either end of the medianum functioned as reception spaces, it seems likely that these two rooms were used in a similar way. In fact, it is possible that they were designed to be used interchangeably, depending on the situation.

## **Room 22**

### Decorations

Paintings: See description above.

Floor mosaic: No traces are currently preserved, but there was once a white mosaic floor with a black border.

### Location/Layout

At the north end of the apartment, opening onto the medianum (room 24) to the south.

Calculated view: Room 22 shares a calculated view across medianum 24 with room 26.

### Architectural features

Windows: Room 22 does not contain a window, so it presumably obtained its light and air indirectly from the open light well in medianum 24. One might also imagine that the window in the east wall of medianum 24, which is located considerably closer to the entrance to room 22, would have provided this room with more light than its counterpart at the south end of the building.

Dimensions: Moreover, room 22 is the largest room of the apartment, measuring 4.95 x 6.43 m. It seems likely that this room's large dimensions led Packer and Hermansen to interpret it as an oecus or an exedra, respectively.<sup>849</sup> Based solely on the size of the room, one could possibly consider room 22 to be the type-A room and room 26 to be the type-B room, as the type-A room is typically the larger of the two. However, the type-A room normally takes on a pattern of greater variability in the ways in which it could be accessed, but both rooms appear to be accessible in identical (or more specifically, mirror-image) ways.

## **Room 26**

### Decorations

Paintings: See description above.

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<sup>849</sup> Packer 1971, 194; Hermansen 1982, 42.



Floor mosaic: No traces are currently preserved, but there was once a white mosaic floor with a black border.

### Location/Layout

At the south end of the apartment, opening onto the medianum (room 24) to the north.

Calculated view:

Room 26 shares a calculated view across medianum 24 with room 22.

### Architectural features

Windows: Like room 22, room 26 does not contain a window. Thus, it likely obtained its light and air indirectly from the open light well in medianum 24.

Dimensions: Room 26 measures approximately 4.95 m x 4.75 m. It is therefore the same width as room 22, but it is almost two meters shorter. Based only on its dimensions, it is possible that room 26 was the type-B room of the residence.

## **GROUP 3B**

### **House of the Charioteers, Apt. 26-33 (III, X, 1)** (Fig. 46)

Ground floor area: 140 m<sup>2</sup>.

#### **Selected bibliography:**

Calza et al. 1953, 138, 224, 237; Van Essen 1956-58, 16 ff., Fig. 8-10, 175 f., Fig. 12; Borda 1958, 304; Becatti 1961, 133; Packer 1971, 177-82; Blake 1973, 181 f. 214.; Mielsch 1981, 218; Joyce 1981, 36, 37, 65, 108; Mielsch 1984, 102 ff.; Mols 1999a; Mols 1999b; Falzone 2007, 90-95.

The House of the Charioteers (*Casggiato degli Aurighi*) forms part of a complex located in Insula III, X that also includes the Baths of the Seven Sages (*Terme dei Sette Sapienti*) and the House of Serapis (*Casggiato del Serapide*). Construction on the complex began in the Hadrianic period, at which time a large part of the ground floor of the House of the Charioteers appears to have been used for commercial purposes. Around AD 150, the House of the Charioteers underwent significant transformations,<sup>850</sup> with apartments added in the areas that are to the south, east, and west of the main courtyard (room 11). At this time, the House of the Charioteers appears to have become more private in nature, although there still appear to have been spaces of commercial function within the building.<sup>851</sup>

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<sup>850</sup> Mols 1999a, 168, dates these structural changes to the year AD 150 based on a graffito found in the area under staircase 17 that gives the names of the consuls from that year. See also Mols 1999, 247-86, for a full discussion of decorations and the use of space in Insula III, X.

<sup>851</sup> Mols 1999a, 172.

There are two main apartments that can be identified in this apartment block: one located to the west of the courtyard that is composed of rooms 26-33, and the other located to the south of the courtyard that is composed of rooms 6-10A. I will focus my discussion on the apartment comprising rooms 26-33, which includes painted decorations that appear to date to the same phase.<sup>852</sup> I will not discuss the apartment composed of rooms 6-10A at this time, in part because several of its rooms each contain traces of multiple phases of painted decorations. It is especially difficult to relate the decorative phases to specific phases of structural transformations within the building beyond the phase of renovations that took place around AD 150. Because of the somewhat ambiguous chronology of the structural and decorative changes, I find it problematic to try to draw conclusions about possible primary spaces within this apartment. I refer the reader to Mols' discussion of structural and functional transformations in *Insula III, X* and the associated decorations for a more complete treatment of the features of rooms 6-10A.<sup>853</sup> Thus, I will limit my discussion to the apartment on the west side of the courtyard, which is composed of rooms 26-33.

This apartment exhibits an irregular layout in which the six main rooms are loosely grouped around a corridor (room 26). This atypical layout could be attributed to the possibility that the space in which the apartment is located initially functioned as a commercial property.<sup>854</sup> In other words, the previous layout of the commercial space might have imposed some constraints on the extent to which it was later modified to serve a residential purpose. Unlike the majority of the apartments discussed above, it is difficult to identify the primary spaces of this apartment with a high degree of certainty. This is in large part based on the lack of distinction among the decorations employed in each of the rooms, although the irregular layout also makes it somewhat more difficult to recognize the primary spaces of the residence.

### **Ambiguous decorations in the House of the Charioteers**

The painted decorations, and to a lesser extent the pavements in this apartment, do not provide obvious cues as to which rooms were primary spaces and which were of ambiguous or secondary function. Of the six main rooms, three rooms (28, 30, and 32) still display substantial traces of painted decorations as well as evidence of their pavements. These three rooms contain painted decorations characterized by a comparable decorative system involving white and yellow panels, which are framed in black or red. In addition, motifs such as miniature landscapes, still lifes, and representations of animals and amorini are found at the interior of the central panels of each wall. There are only scant remains of paintings in rooms 27 and 29, although Packer indicates that there were observable traces of white panels with red and yellow borders in both rooms at the time of his 1972 study.<sup>855</sup> In addition, no painted

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<sup>852</sup> Mols 1999b, 344.

<sup>853</sup> Mols 1999b, esp. 321-44.

<sup>854</sup> Watts 1987, 65.

<sup>855</sup> Packer 1971, 180-181.

decorations are currently found in room 31, although Mols notes that this room also included a panel system similar to that found in rooms 27-30 and 32.<sup>856</sup>

Although we can no longer examine the painted decorations that once adorned all of the rooms, the observations made by Packer and Mols allow us to infer that they were not identical, yet they were strongly similar in terms of the decorative system (the panel system), background colors employed (white and yellow), and perhaps also in terms of the motifs chosen to occupy the central panels.<sup>857</sup> Thus, it seems likely that there was not a clearly articulated hierarchical differentiation between the rooms based on the decorative system and background colors employed in the wall paintings. However, if rooms were to be distinguished from one another in terms of their relative significance within the residence, it is probable that the location of the room and the architectural features played a greater role here than they did in the apartments of the previous two groups.

### **Primary Spaces**

The two rooms that exhibit the clearest signs of serving as primary spaces are rooms 27 and 31. Although these rooms preserve little to no traces of painted decorations and pavements, their respective locations within the apartment and their architectural features suggest that they each might have played significant roles within the residence.

### **House of the Charioteers, room 27**

Room 27 is thought to have been a cubiculum.<sup>858</sup>

#### **Decorations**

##### **Paintings**

According to Packer, there were traces of frescoes involving white panels with red and yellow borders.<sup>859</sup> Currently, there are only faint traces of red and yellow painted plaster.

##### **Floor mosaic**

There is no documented evidence of a floor mosaic or any other pavement.

#### **Location/Layout**

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<sup>856</sup> Mols 1999b, 344.

<sup>857</sup> As noted above in the discussion of the paintings in the House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander, Mols (2005) considers panels with white and yellow backgrounds that are framed in bolder colors to be polychrome decorations. However, since all of the rooms appear to have contained similar decorations (regardless of how one interprets the background colors), there is no distinction among them between rooms with monochrome and polychrome backgrounds.

<sup>858</sup> Packer 1971, 180.

<sup>859</sup> Packer 1971, 180.

The room is located at the southeast corner of the apartment and opens onto room 29 to the north. If room 29 were an atrium-type space, as Packer suggests, it might have functioned similarly to a medianum, with rooms 27 and 31 located in the type-B and type-A placements, respectively.

Calculated view: The doorway in the north wall of room 27 aligns with the south entrance to room 31, which creates a calculated view across room 29 that is shared between the two rooms.

### Architectural features

Windows: Room 27 has a window in its east wall, which overlooks the internal corridor of the complex that runs between the apartment and the grand courtyard of the House of the Charioteers (corridor 21). However, the window is at a height of 1.82 m, which would have prevented most viewers from seeing into or out of the room.

Ceiling: Room 27 has an elevated ceiling that is 5 m in height, which is the tallest ceiling of all of the rooms in the apartment.

## **House of the Charioteers, room 31**

Like room 27, room 31 is thought to have been a cubiculum.<sup>860</sup>

### Decorations

There are no paintings or mosaics preserved or recorded for this room.

### Location/Layout

Room 31 is located in the northeast corner of the apartment. It is unique in that it is the only room in the apartment that can be reached from more than one room: it has a south-facing entrance opening onto room 29, as well as a west entrance that connects to room 32. In addition, it opens onto corridor 26 precisely at the point where the corridor connects with room 32. Given the placement of room 32 behind room 31, it seems likely that the functions of rooms 31 and 32 were linked in some way, with room 32 possibly serving a subordinate function because of its more secluded location.<sup>861</sup>

### Architectural features

Window: Similar to room 27, room 31 also has a single window, which is located in its east wall at a height of 1.68 m above the floor.<sup>862</sup>

## **Alternative Primary Spaces**

Rooms 28, 30, and 32, which have the best-preserved painted decorations in the apartment, seem more ambiguous in terms of their hierarchical importance within the

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<sup>860</sup> Packer 1971, 181.

<sup>861</sup> Mols 1999a, 1999b; Falzone 2007, 90-95.

<sup>862</sup> Packer 1971, 181.

residence. Packer attempts to identify these three rooms as having particular functions,<sup>863</sup> but other scholars examining this complex, particularly Mols and Falzone, refrain from interpreting the rooms in any specific way.

### **House of the Charioteers, room 28 (Fig. 2)**

This room has been interpreted as a cubiculum.<sup>864</sup>

#### Decorations

##### Paintings

The painted decorations are composed of white panels framed in black in its central register, with a motif of a deer hunt in the center of the west wall and a panther in the center of its east wall. In addition, delicate garlands hang from the tops of the panels, while vegetal candelabra are found on the outsides of the central panels. Traces of the upper register indicate that the panels at this level were also white with black frames, although it is not clear what types of motifs (if any) occupied the panels. According to Falzone, the paintings of room 28 exhibit the highest quality craftsmanship and design of all of the painted decorations of this apartment because of the delicacy with which they were rendered. As a result, she proposes that this room served a role of particular importance within the house.<sup>865</sup> However, the floor of room 28 is only made of the more humble material of *opus signinum*, a building material formed of broken tile pieces that are mixed with lime and beaten down.<sup>866</sup>

##### Floor mosaic

There is no documented evidence of a floor mosaic or any other pavement.

#### Location/Layout

Room 28 is located in the southwest corner of the apartment. When one enters through the main entrance at the south end of corridor 26, it is the first room on the west side of the apartment. Because it is the first space that one encounters when entering the apartment, it is possible to read as a reception space of some sort. On the other hand, it seems less prominently located than the remaining rooms, particularly rooms 27 and 31, which flank the atrium-type space (room 29). Moreover, it does not offer any sort of significant or privileged view because its only entrance faces the wall to the east between corridor 26 and room 27.

#### Architectural features

Window: This room also has a window in its west wall, but like those of rooms 27 and 31 (and those of the remaining rooms of the house), its window is above eye-level, at a height of 1.90 m about the floor.<sup>867</sup>

Ceiling: Room 28 has a barrel-vaulted ceiling, which could have marked it as a significant space within the house.

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<sup>863</sup> Packer 1971, 180-81.

<sup>864</sup> Packer 1971, 180.

<sup>865</sup> Falzone 2007, 94.

<sup>866</sup> Mols 1999b, 330.

<sup>867</sup> Packer 1971, 180.

## House of the Charioteers, room 30 (Fig. 47)

Room 30, another ambiguous space, is interpreted by Packer as a possible triclinium.<sup>868</sup>

### Decorations

#### Paintings

Its painted decorations are composed of a panel system that is similar on each wall, with white panels in the central register, white panels at the center of the upper register, and yellow panels in the outside panels of the upper register. All of these panels are framed in dark red. On the central register of the south, west, and north walls are found miniature landscapes. The west wall also features a miniature still life of cherries on a green horizontal base in the left panel of the central register, as well as another still life depicting a round yellow fruit on a similar green base in the right panel. In addition, concentric circles in red and blue are found at the upper corners of the panels, while semi-elliptical geometric motifs in red and narrow rectangles in blue are found along thin vertical lines at the edges of the white panels. On the upper register of the south wall, there is an image of two *amorini*. The amorino on the left is seated next to a shield and helmet, attributes of Mars, while the amorino on the right stands next to what appears to be a sword or perhaps even a caduceus, an attribute of Mercury.<sup>869</sup> The central panel of the north wall that is directly opposite the amorini image has not been preserved, but one can imagine that another figural subject or decorative motif might have adorned its center.

#### Pavement

The pavement is made of *opus signinum*, although marble pieces were also added to it.<sup>870</sup>

### Location/Layout

Room 30 is located at the center of the west side of the apartment. This appears to be a fairly prominent position within the house because it is situated directly across from room 29, the “atrium-hall”.<sup>871</sup> If the latter were an atrium-type space, it would likely have provided room 30 with some access to light.

### Architectural features

Windows: There is a window in the west wall, which is 1.87 m above the floor level.<sup>872</sup>

Entrance: The entrance to room 30 has a doorway that is 3.13 m high. This clearly marks it as a room of prominence because the doorway is nearly as tall as the 4 m walls of the room. In fact, it dwarfs the south and north doors of the nearby room 29, which each measure 1.87 m.<sup>873</sup> Depending on the height of the window in the east wall of room 29 (which was transformed into a doorway at a later date), it might have been possible for a viewer standing in the corridor to the east of the apartment (corridor 21) to see the doorway to room 30 and perhaps even beyond to the paintings on the west wall.

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<sup>868</sup> Packer 1971, 181.

<sup>869</sup> Mols 1999b, 350; Falzone 2007, 93.

<sup>870</sup> Mols 1999b, 322. Packer 1971, 181, describes this as a lithostraton pavement.

<sup>871</sup> Packer 1971, 181.

<sup>872</sup> Packer 1971, 181, indicates that the window in room 30 is at the same height as the window in room 28.

<sup>873</sup> Packer 1971, 181.

## House of the Charioteers, room 32

Room 32 has been interpreted as a cubiculum.<sup>874</sup>

### Decorations

#### Paintings

Room 32 has painted decorations that are very similar to those found in the previous two rooms, yet it still exhibits its own distinct motifs. On each wall, the panels of the central register are white with black frames, while those of the upper register are yellow with similar black frames. However, on the south wall, the central panel of the upper register also includes a smaller, square-shaped panel in white that is framed in red. Although not all of the panels are preserved, it is clear from the remaining parts that miniature landscapes and perhaps another still life were found on the north wall. In addition, an outline of a narrow rectangle, perhaps demarcating the placement of another miniature landscape or still life, can be identified in the south wall in the middle panel of the central register.

#### Pavement

Room 32 also has a floor that is paved with *opus signinum* and pieces of marble.<sup>875</sup>

### Location/Layout

Room 32 is located in the northwest corner of the house. It is situated so that a visitor standing at the entrance to the residence in corridor 26 would be able to see the easternmost panel the north wall. In fact, the entrance to the room frames the view of the miniature landscape in the easternmost panel of the north wall.

Access to adjacent rooms: Room 32 is connected directly to room 31 through a shared doorway in the east wall of the former. As noted above, this might suggest a connection between the two rooms, perhaps with room 32 serving a subordinate function that supported the activities taking place in room 31.

### Architectural features

Window: Room 32 has a single window in its west wall, which is also at a height of 1.87 m.<sup>876</sup> The room is fairly dim even during the daytime, perhaps because it is located at one of the back corners of the apartment, where it could not benefit from the light and air from the atrium-type room (room 29).

### House of the Charioteers: General Conclusions

Above all, it is difficult to determine precisely which rooms in this apartment, if any, served clear primary functions. In the majority of the houses discussed above, the decorations (particularly the paintings) appear to have played an important role in helping viewers to recognize the spaces of clear primary function and perhaps even those of more ambiguous function. However, in this apartment, the strong similarities in the wall paintings make it much more difficult to distinguish between spaces of greater or lesser

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<sup>874</sup> Packer 1971, 181.

<sup>875</sup> Mols 1999, 322.

<sup>876</sup> Packer 1971, 181.

importance based on decorative criteria alone. Moreover, the irregular layout of the apartment also creates some difficulty in terms of identifying primary spaces. Based solely on the layout, five out of six rooms (all except room 29) appear as if they could have served as reception or entertaining spaces on at least some occasions. In addition, several rooms (especially rooms 27, 28, 30, and 31) exhibit architectural features that differentiate them from the other rooms in some way, such as an elevated ceiling, a vaulted ceiling, an enlarged doorway, and a connection to a possible subordinate space. However, none of these features were repeated in any of the other rooms. This causes further difficulties when trying to determine which rooms might have been hierarchically more important than the others because none are distinguished from the others in multiple ways.

**House of Annius (III, XIV, 4), Apartment 1 (rooms 3-5) and Apartment 2 (rooms 6-8)** (Fig. 48)

Ground floor area:

Apartment 1 (rooms 3-5): approx. 88 m<sup>2</sup>.

Apartment 2 (rooms 6-8): approx. 79 m<sup>2</sup>.

**Selected bibliography:**

Calza et al. 1953, 137, 232, 236; Packer 1971, 186-87; Blake 1973, 182 f.; Meiggs 1973, 275; Falzone 2004, 111-17; Falzone 2007, 124-29.

The House of Annius, which is composed of two apartments, is the final residential structure to be considered. Located at the corner of the *Cardo degli Aurighi* and the *Via di Annio*, this structure was just situated east of the House of the Charioteers, slightly north of the Garden Houses complex, and adjacent to the *tabernae* on the *Via Tecta degli Aurighi*. Thus, it was located in a main residential and commercial area. The building was built in the Hadrianic period and is thought to have originally functioned as space of commercial character or a factory, perhaps in connection with the nearby warehouses.<sup>877</sup> At a later date, most likely in the late second century AD, it was transformed into two separate apartments, one comprising rooms 3-5, and another comprising rooms 6-8.<sup>878</sup> The apartments exhibit layouts that are not of a regular type, although they roughly mirror each other. For the sake of clarity, I refer to the former as Apartment 1 and the latter as Apartment 2.

Apartments 1 and 2 are united by the fact that they exhibit strikingly similar painted decorations. The paintings are comparable in terms of the choice of decorative system (an aedicular system with two registers of red aediculae, with architectural details in

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<sup>877</sup> Falzone 2004, 111. Packer 1971, 187, on the idea that the group of rooms 3-8 was initially used as a factory, although he does not suggest what kind of factory it might have been.

<sup>878</sup> Rooms 9 and 10 appear to have functioned as a commercial space, perhaps associated with the owner. However, since they are not directly connected to either apartment, I do not consider them in my ground floor area calculations because they appear to have been independent of the residential spaces.



yellow and green), background color (white in all rooms), and decorative motifs (e.g., garlands, birds, oscilla). This seems to suggest that both apartments were painted during the same phase, likely after the building was transformed into apartments. Presumably, the same workshop or artist carried out the commission.<sup>879</sup> The fact that both apartments exhibit uniform painted decorations is significant for one additional reason: it suggests that the decorations were not deliberately employed in order to indicate to visitors (provided that there were any) which rooms that they were permitted to enter. Likewise, there are no traces of any pavements in either apartment that would allow us to consider the possible importance of mosaic floors or other types of pavements in determining a room's importance. Thus, if we wish to determine whether any spaces served primary functions, we must look to the location of each room and its architectural features.

### **Apartment 1 (rooms 3-5)**

Apartment 1 comprises three main rooms, two of which each exhibit a sub-room.

#### **House of Annius, Apartment 1, room 3**

Packer interprets this room as a triclinium,<sup>880</sup> presumably because it is the largest single room in the apartment.

#### **Decorations**

Paintings: See above description.

Pavement: There are no traces of the pavement remaining, nor is there any documentation of its appearance.

#### **Location/Layout**

Room 3 is located on the western side of the apartment, along the Via di Annio. There is no designated entrance vestibule, but room 3 likely served this purpose because it is the first room that a visitor would encounter upon entering the apartment.

Access to adjacent rooms: On the east side of room 3, there is a doorway that opens onto room 5. In this same wall there is a window that provides a view into room 4.

Calculated view: There are two different calculated views in this apartment. The first begins in the entrance to the apartment in the west wall of room 3, and it extends through room 5 and terminates in sub-room 5A. This is, however, a slightly oblique view. The second calculated

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<sup>879</sup> Falzone 2007, 94-95.

<sup>880</sup> Packer 1971, 185-187. In his brief treatment of the different rooms in the House of Annius, Packer offers interpretations of the functions of rooms in both apartments. However, he does not explain the reasoning behind his interpretations, although they seem to be based primarily on the varying sizes of the rooms. Room location does not appear to have been taken into account. Moreover, given the somewhat similar layouts of Apartments 1 and 2, one must question why Packer offers such radically different interpretations of rooms of similar placement in each apartment. While it is clear that the two apartments were each configured slightly differently, it seems questionable to offer specific interpretations of the different rooms when no material finds remain to support these interpretations.

view begins in room 3 and extends through room 4, terminating in sub-room 4A. However, the viewer would not be able to experience this view when standing in the entrance to room 3. Rather, one would need to move further south and in front of the window looking into room 4.

### Architectural features

Windows: There is a window in the north wall that is approximately 1.6 m above the top of the walled-up doorway.<sup>881</sup> Room 3 would likely have had additional access to light and air through the entrance to the apartment, which is located in its west wall.

### **House of Annius, Apartment 1, room 4-4A**

According to Packer, room 4 functioned as an “atrium-hall”,<sup>882</sup> which implies that at least part of its ceiling was open to the sky and therefore provided light and air to rooms 3 and 5. Regardless of whether room 4 functioned as an “atrium-hall”, it also included sub-room 4A, which is separated off from the rest of room 4 by a very wide and shallow arch that connects with a pier that is located between rooms 4 and 5. Perhaps this suite of rooms was employed jointly, with room 4A either facilitating the activities that took place in room 4.

### Decorations

Paintings: See above description.

Pavement: There are no traces of the pavement remaining, nor is there any documentation of its appearance.

### Location/Layout

Room 4 is located roughly in the center of the apartment, closer to the south end, while sub-room 4A is located in the southeast corner of the building. The secluded location of room 4A at the southeast corner of the apartment (i.e., the back of the residence) and its smaller size might suggest that it was a cubiculum, which could have been used for private meetings or activities.

Access to adjacent rooms: Via room 4, one can directly access room 5 through a door in the north wall. Sub-room 4A is only accessible by first passing through room 4. It is possible to view room 3 through the window in the west wall of room 4, but one would need to pass through room 5 in order to return to room 3.

Calculated view: As noted above, there is a calculated view that begins in room 3 and runs through room 4, terminating in sub-room 4A. However, this is not a clear longitudinal axis, but rather it is a conceptual axis. This view was not legible from the entrance to the apartment; instead, a viewer would have to enter room 3 and walk slightly to the south before have the doorway of room 4 in view. Thus, room 4 and sub-room 4A seem somewhat hidden from view.

### Architectural features

Window: There is a window in the northwest wall of room 4, which overlooks room 3. This window might have provided an oblique view into room 4 from the apartment entrance.

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<sup>881</sup> Packer 1971, 186.

<sup>882</sup> Packer 1971, 186.

Relieving arch: Rooms 4 and 4A are distinguished by the relieving arch that spans between the south wall of the apartment and the pier at the center of the apartment.

Wall “niche”: In room 4A, there is a walled-up doorway in the southwest wall. Because the doorway was not fully filled in, it gives the sense of a large recessed niche. In fact, this niche-like area is adorned in a similar manner to the walls, as it contains traces of a white background with an aedicula rendered in red.

### **House of Annius, Apartment 1, room 5**

Room 5, which Packer puzzlingly identifies as a cubiculum, appears to have functioned instead as a corridor (see below).

#### Decorations

##### Paintings

There are no traces of the painted decorations remaining, nor is there any documentation of their appearance.

##### Pavement

There are no traces of the pavement remaining, nor is there any documentation of its appearance.

#### Location/Layout

Room 5 is located at the center of the north end of the apartment, opening onto room 3 to the west, room 4 to the south, and sub-room 5A to the east. Given room 5's placement along the main longitudinal axis and its long and narrow shape, which would facilitate a dynamic function, it seems more appropriate to describe it as a corridor. After all, its placement in apartment 1 mirrors that of room 7 in Apartment 2, which Packer does in fact identify as a corridor.<sup>883</sup> One can almost imagine this space functioning as a medianum, with room 3 serving as the main reception space, or at least the most public area for receiving visitors. However, since room 5 does not appear to have had windows opening onto an exterior source of light, as a medianum would, it cannot be classified in such a way.

Sub-room 5A is located behind room 5, in the northwest corner of the apartment.

Calculated view: The viewer standing in the entrance to the apartment would have a view down corridor 5, which terminated in the niche in the southeast wall of sub-room 5A. However, the viewer would have to be standing at the northernmost part of the entrance to experience this view, otherwise their view would be blocked by the section of wall between the doorway to room 5 and the window of room 4.

#### Architectural features

Windows: Rooms 5 and 5A do not appear to have had any windows.

Relieving arch: Similar to the arch that spans between rooms 4 and 4A, there is a relieving arch that extends from the pier between rooms 4 and 5 toward the north wall of the residence, which separates room 5 from sub-room 5A.

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<sup>883</sup> Packer 1971, 186.

Wall “niche”: Sub-room 5A also includes a niche-like recess in its east wall, but it is smaller in width than the recess in the south wall of sub-room 4A. If the niche in room 5A were covered with painted decorations involving schematic aediculae, as were found in the other rooms of the residence, it might have taken on the appearance of a shrine of sorts. One might interpret sub-room 5A as a cubiculum based on its smaller dimensions, its placement at an interior location of the house, and its lack of light. However, room 5A’s location at the end of the longitudinal axis might imply some sort of significance, much as one would associate with the type-A rooms in the medianum apartments. In fact, if the view through corridor 5 and into sub-room 5A was not blocked by any doors, curtains, or other impediments, a visitor standing in the doorway would have a view of the niche-like recess on the back wall.

### **House of Annius, Apartment 2 (rooms 6-8)**

Apartment 2, which is located immediately to the south of Apartment 1, has a ground floor area of 79 m<sup>2</sup>. As noted above, it has a layout that seems to very loosely mirror that of Apartment 1, although it is slightly smaller in terms of its ground floor area. In Apartment 2, corridor 7 is substantially longer than the analogous corridor 5 of Apartment 1. Room 8, which corresponds roughly in placement to room 3 of Apartment 1, is noticeably smaller than its counterpart in the other apartment. This is in part because the wall that separates corridor 7 from room 8 runs parallel to the corridor, rather than cutting across it perpendicularly, as is the case with the short wall separating room 3 and corridor 5 in Apartment 1.

### **House of Annius, Apartment 2, room 8**

Packer interprets room 8 as a cubiculum.<sup>884</sup> This interpretation appears to be based largely on its smaller dimensions.

#### Decorations

Paintings: See above description.

Pavement: There are no traces of the pavement remaining, nor is there any documentation of its appearance.

#### Location/Layout

Room 8 is located in the northwest corner of the apartment. It is accessed indirectly from the entrance to the apartment, which is located in the southwest corner of the room and opens onto the adjacent corridor 7. However, a visitor to the apartment would enter room 8 simply by turning slightly left; thus, the room does not appear to have been particularly secluded.

Access to adjacent rooms: With the exception of corridor 7, room 8 does not appear to open onto any other spaces of the apartment. Thus, the room was a relatively public space. Moreover, it was not directly accessible from room 6, which is located at a further remove from the entrance.

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<sup>884</sup> Packer 1971, 186.

## Architectural features

Window: There is a window in the north wall of room 7, which is at roughly the same height as the similarly located window in room 3 in Apartment 1.

Built-in shelf: Room 8 contains traces of a built-in shelf in the area of the walled-up doorway in the north wall. Whether or not this feature distinguished the room as important is unclear, but it is interesting that the painted decorations do not cease in the shelf area. In other words, the aediculae continue to ascend upward even as they pass through the shelf level.

## **House of Annius, Apartment 2, room 7**

Room 7 appears to have been the main corridor of the residence.

### Decorations

#### Paintings

There are no traces of the painted decorations remaining, nor is there any documentation of their appearance.

#### Pavement

There are no traces of the pavement remaining, nor is there any documentation of its appearance.

### Location/Layout

Corridor 7 runs along the entire south side of the building.

Calculated view: If a visitor were standing at the southernmost part of the entrance, they would not have a clear axial view running through the apartment, but they would have a somewhat oblique view down the corridor. This is similar to the view that a visitor in Apartment 1 would have when standing in the entrance and attempting to see down room (corridor) 5.

Access to adjacent rooms: Corridor 7 opens onto rooms 6 and 8 and in fact provides the only way in which a person in one room could reach the other.

Wall “niche”: However, there do not appear to have been any significant features or rooms at the end of the corridor, such as the niche-like features in sub-room 5A in Apartment 1.

## **House of Annius, Apartment 2, room 6 (Fig. 49)**

According to Packer, room 6 might have functioned as an oecus,<sup>885</sup> presumably because of its larger dimensions.

### Decorations

#### Paintings

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<sup>885</sup> Packer 1971, 186.

See general description above. In addition, in the southwest wall of the room, one finds a walled-up doorway adorned with a painted aedicula on a white background, which is not unlike those found in sub-rooms 4A and 5A.

#### Pavement

There are no traces of the pavement remaining, nor is there any documentation of its appearance.

#### Location

Room 6, the largest room of the apartment, is located in the northeast corner of the apartment. It is completely blocked from the visitor's view until he or she has traveled approximately two-thirds of the way down corridor 7.

Window: There is a window in the east wall that is 3.12 m above the floor. This window was clearly too high to have provided a view into the adjacent room and thus served the purpose of providing light and air to the room.

Regardless of the specific function(s) of room 6, one must imagine that it served some sort of significant purpose within the apartment because of its large size and more secluded placement. It is possible as the primary reception space of the residence, if such a space was needed by the owner or tenant.

#### **House of Annius: general conclusions**

In both Apartments 1 and 2 we find alternative primary spaces, but not a single clear primary space. The painted decorations, which normally provide the most visible sign of hierarchical distinctions between different rooms, leave us with a more confusing picture because of their high degree of uniformity. As Falzone rightly points out, there does not appear to be any sort of qualitative difference in the decorations, but rather there is a quantitative difference that can be identified in the number of times in which a feature (e.g. a modular aedicula) is repeated along a wall surface or within a room.<sup>886</sup> One could argue that such quantitative distinctions could prove useful when attempting to identify rooms of primary function; after all, the largest and perhaps also the most important rooms would likely have had the greatest number of the specific feature that was employed to divide the wall surface, whether it was aediculae or panels. On the other hand, a long corridor might have a greater number of the repeated motif. However, I have indicated above that small spaces could also function as primary spaces, but perhaps of a more private nature. Thus, quantitative distinctions do not seem to be the most important considerations when searching for primary spaces in uniformly adorned residences.

In addition, the irregular layout and the general lack of outstanding architectural features provide us with few clues as to which rooms might have been used for reception and entertainment purposes. It seems likely that the building's original function as a commercial space no doubt imposed some restrictions on the ways in which the spaces could have been reconfigured in order to accommodate domestic functions. However,

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<sup>886</sup> Falzone 2007, 125.

this should not necessarily have deterred the owner from employing different types of decorations in each room, or at least variations on the same system, as is the case in the House of the Charioteers.

Despite the lack of outward signs of primary function in any of the rooms of either apartment, we can still interpret these two apartments in several ways: 1) the owner had no need of primary spaces, presumably because of lower social standing, which is why none can be clearly identified; 2) the owner embraced the idea of the multifunctional use of space: he used different rooms for diverse purposes, but rather than requiring permanent decorations and architectural features to support the functions of the rooms, he employed portable artworks and other furnishings to distinguish rooms from one another; 3) the owner leased the apartment to tenants, but he decorated it in such a way that it would be appropriate for inhabitants who either had no need for primary spaces or who could customize the spaces with their own portable art or furnishings, if they so desired.

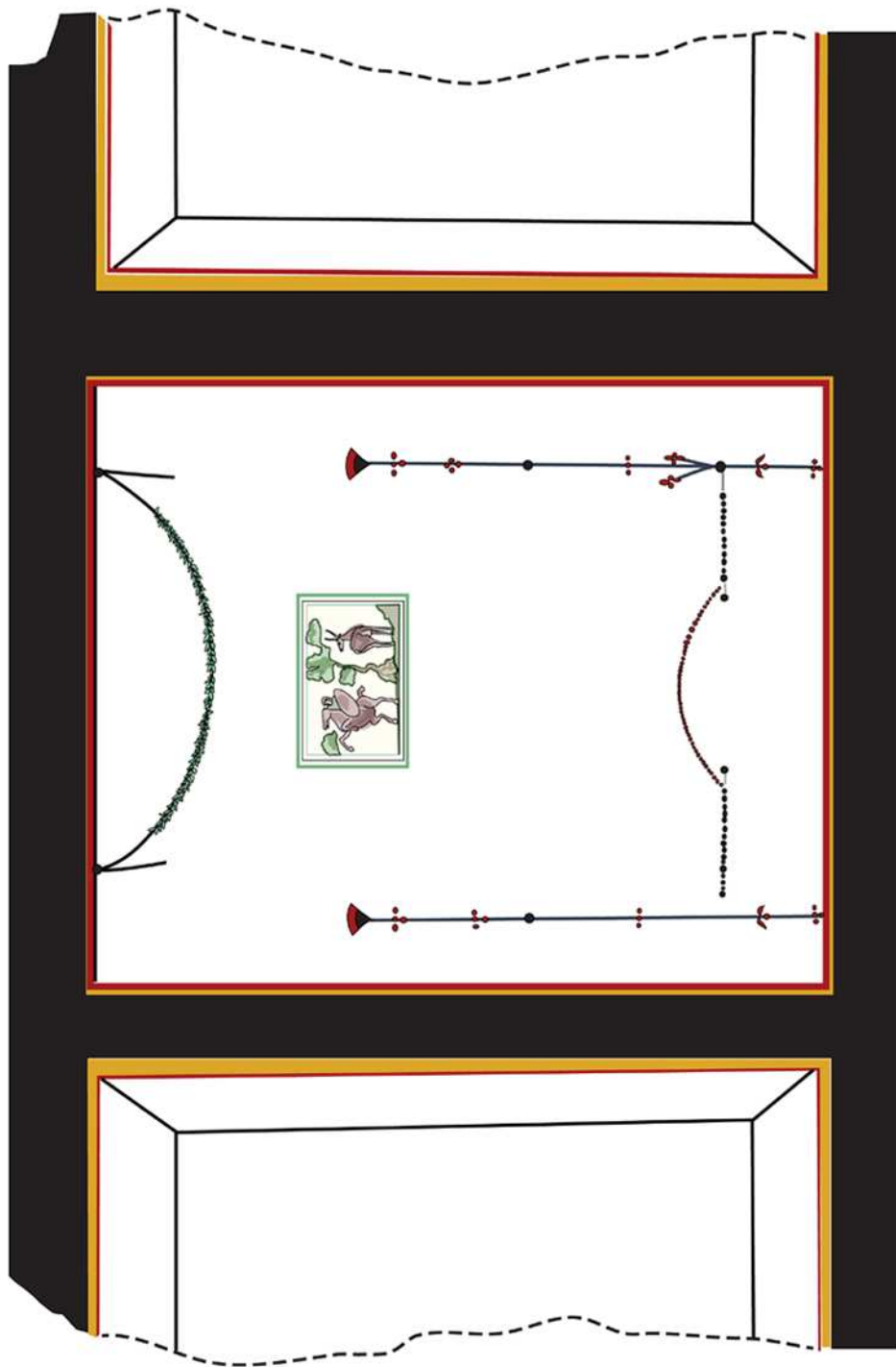


Fig. 1. Line drawing representing the panel system of painted decoration, based on the wall paintings on the southwest wall of the House of the Charioteers, room 28. (Drawn by L. Sterner after photo by Katharine A. Raff)



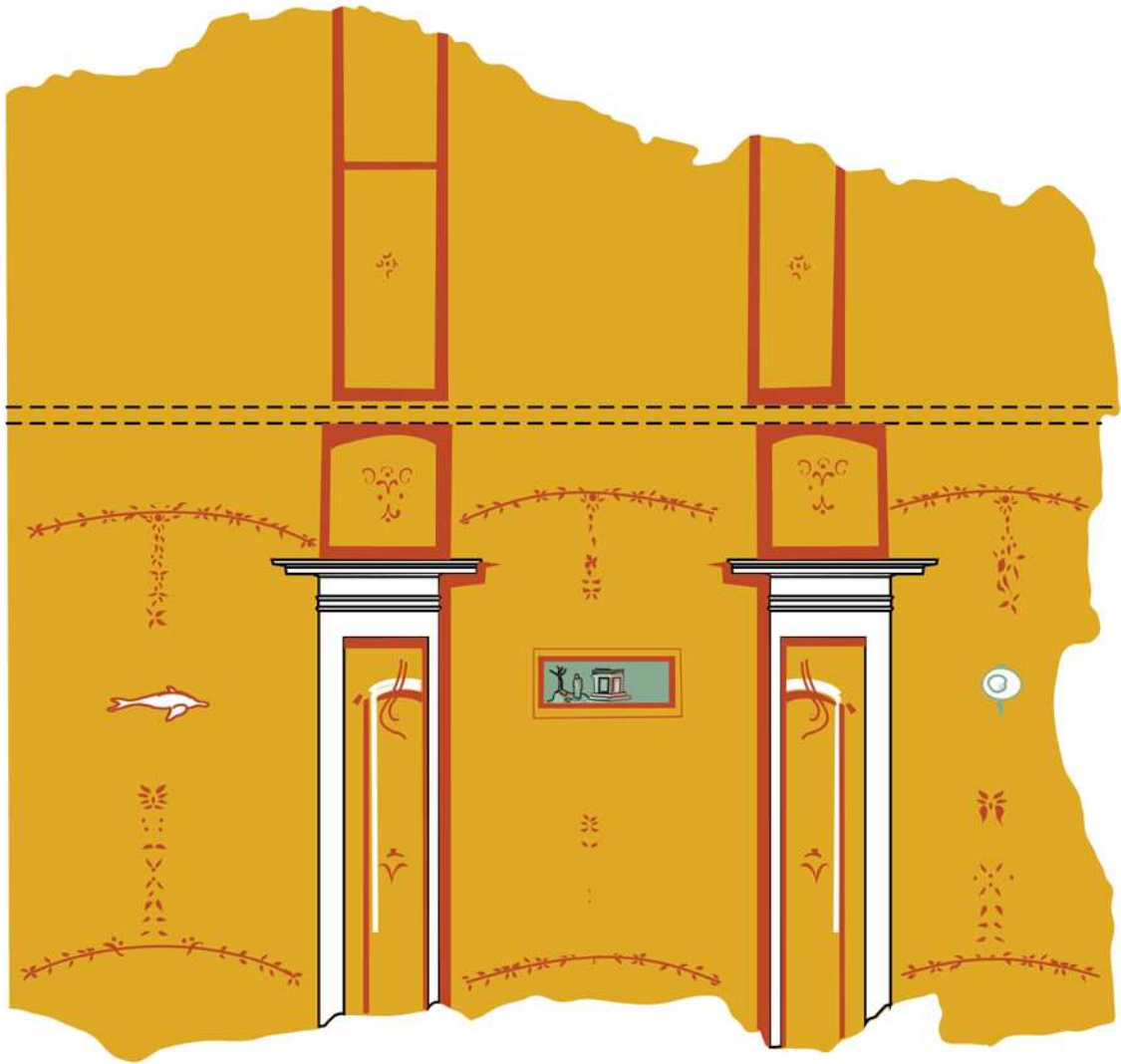


Fig. 2. Line drawing representing the aedicular system of painted decoration, based on the wall paintings on the north wall of the House of the Painted Ceiling, room 1. (Drawn by L. Sterner after photo by Katharine A. Raff)

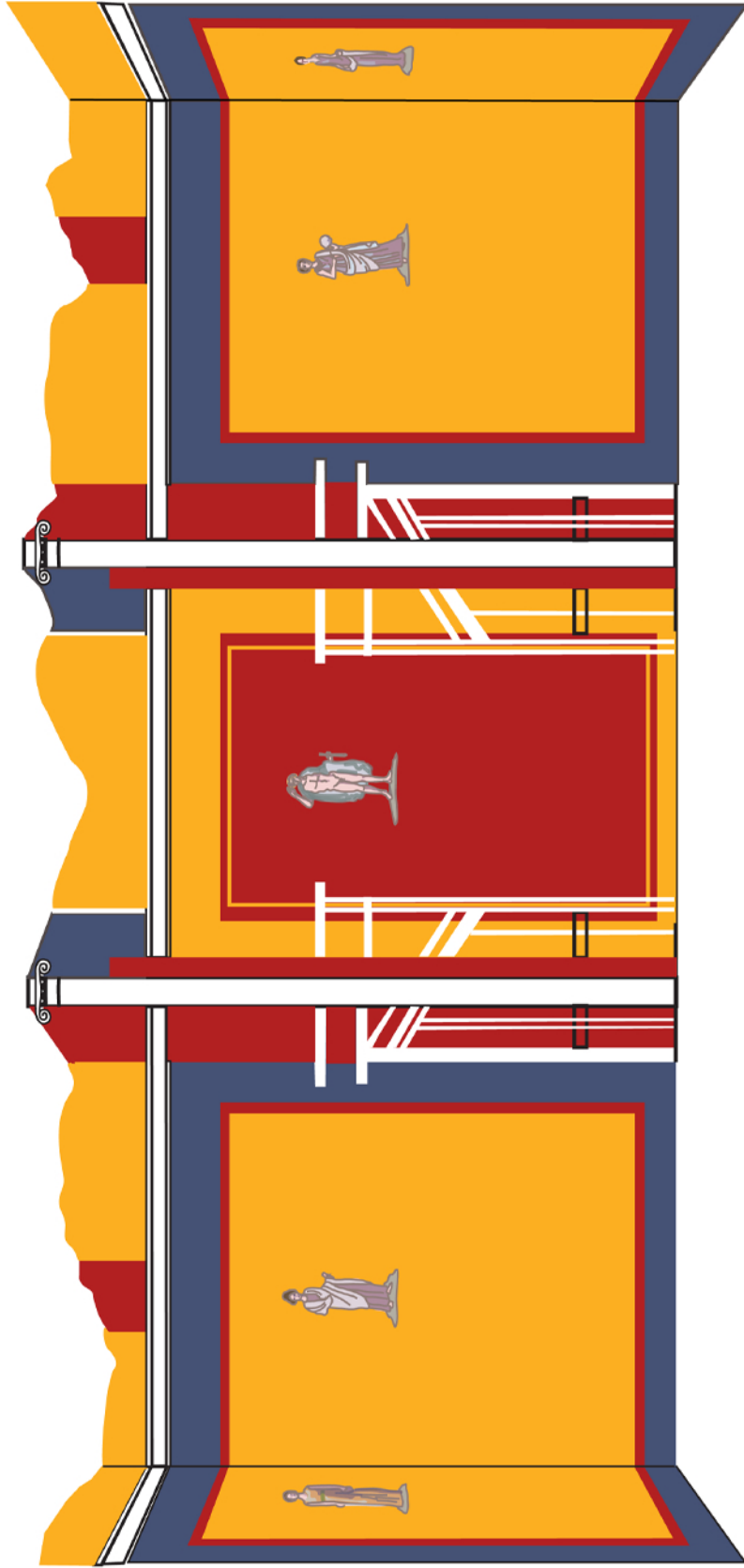


Fig. 3. Line drawing representing the architectural system of painted decoration, based on the wall paintings on the south wall of III, IX, 14, room 4. (Drawn by L. Sterner after photo by Katharine A. Raff)

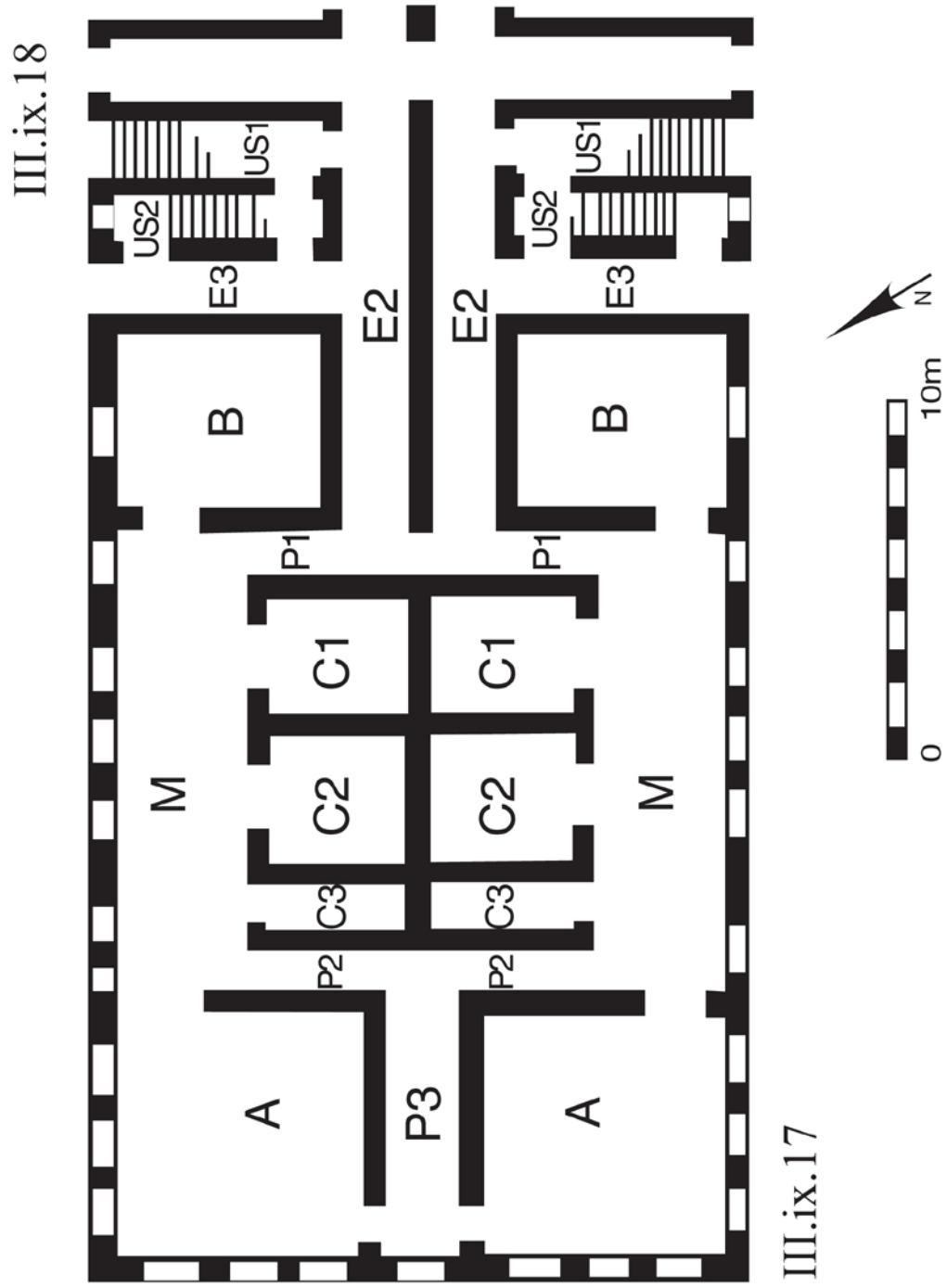


Fig. 4. Plan of III, IX, 17-18. (Adapted from DeLaine 2004, 150, Fig. 1)

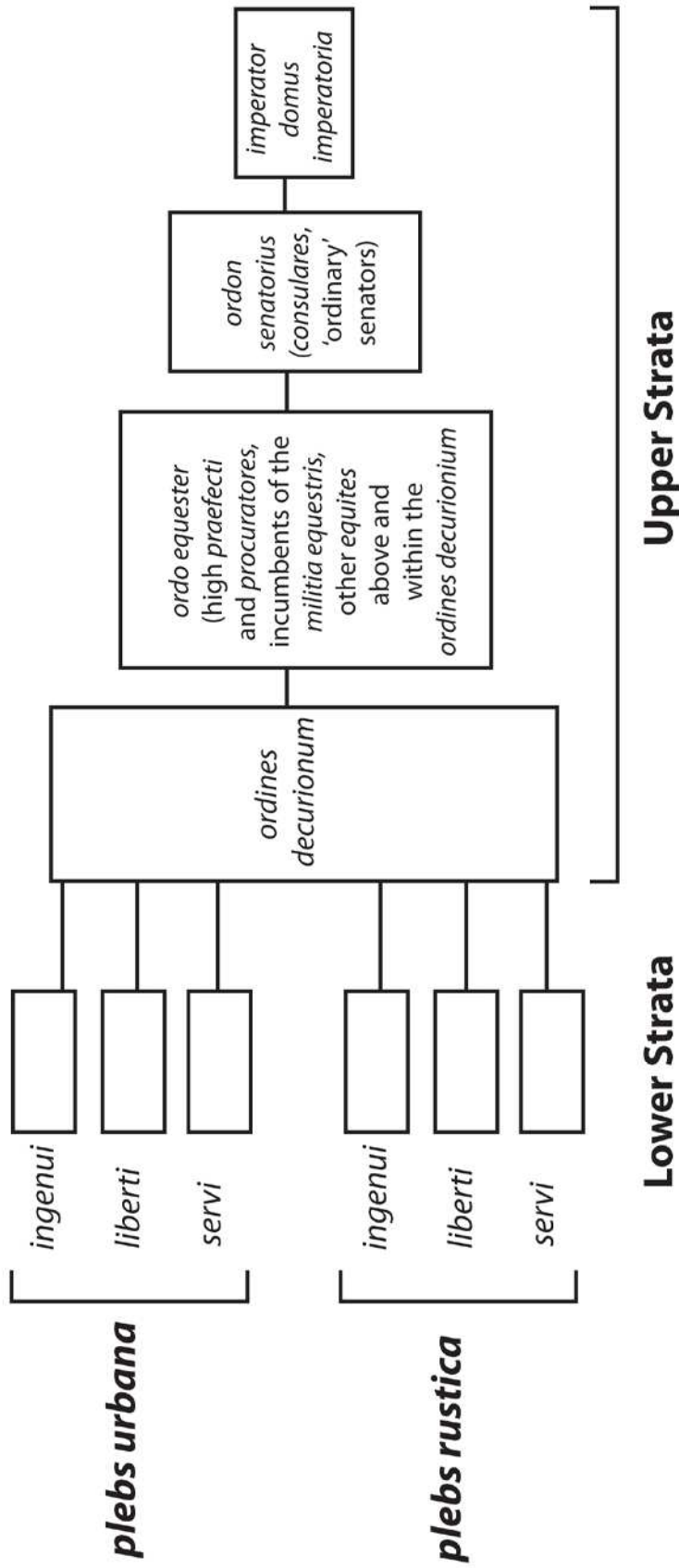


Fig. 5. Diagram of the Orders-Strata Structure and Its Effects.  
(Adapted from Alföldy 1985, 146, Fig. 1)

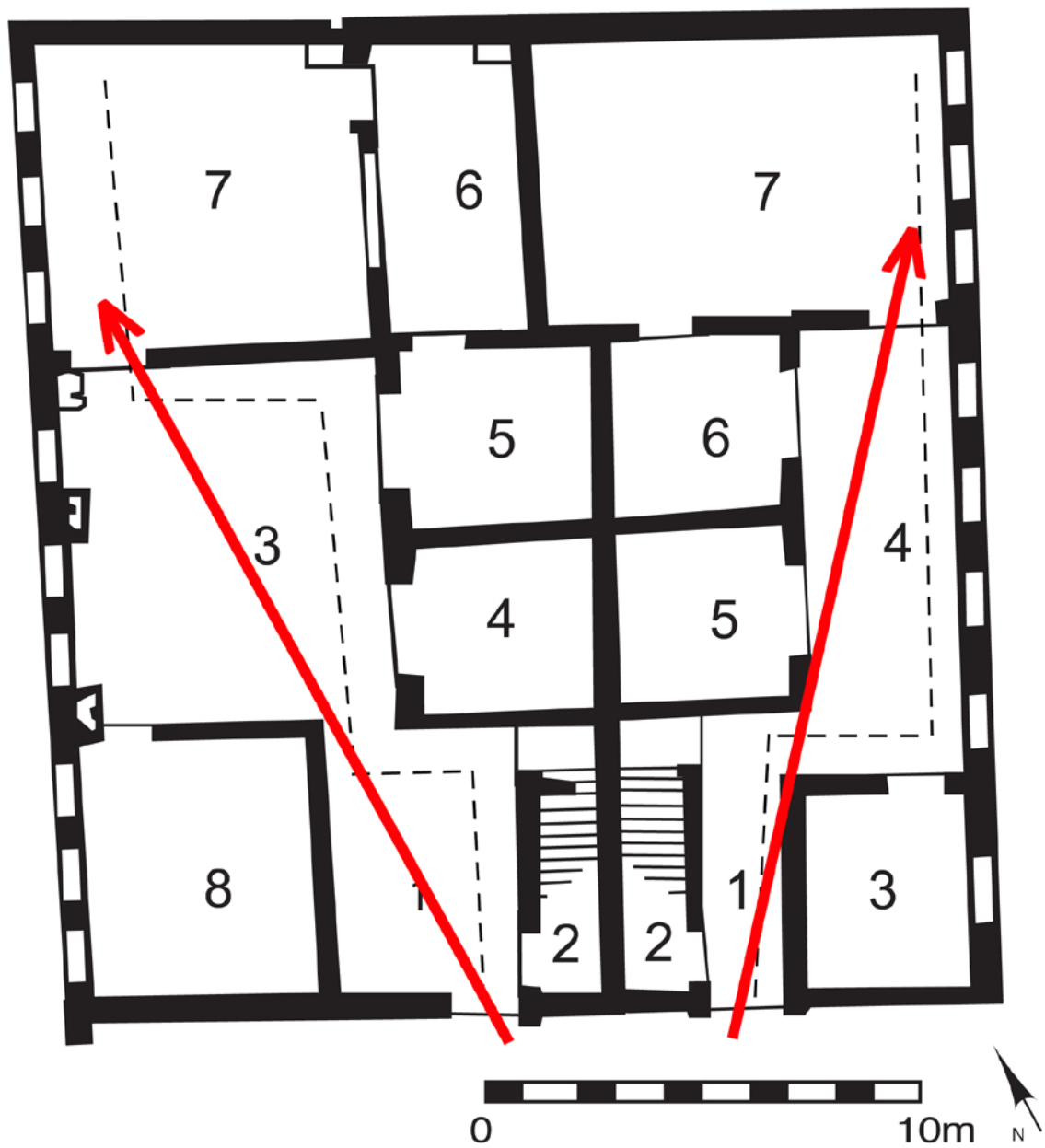


Fig. 6. Plan of the House of the Yellow Walls and the House of the Graffito with conceptual axes added in red. (Adapted from Clarke 1991, 307, Fig. 189)

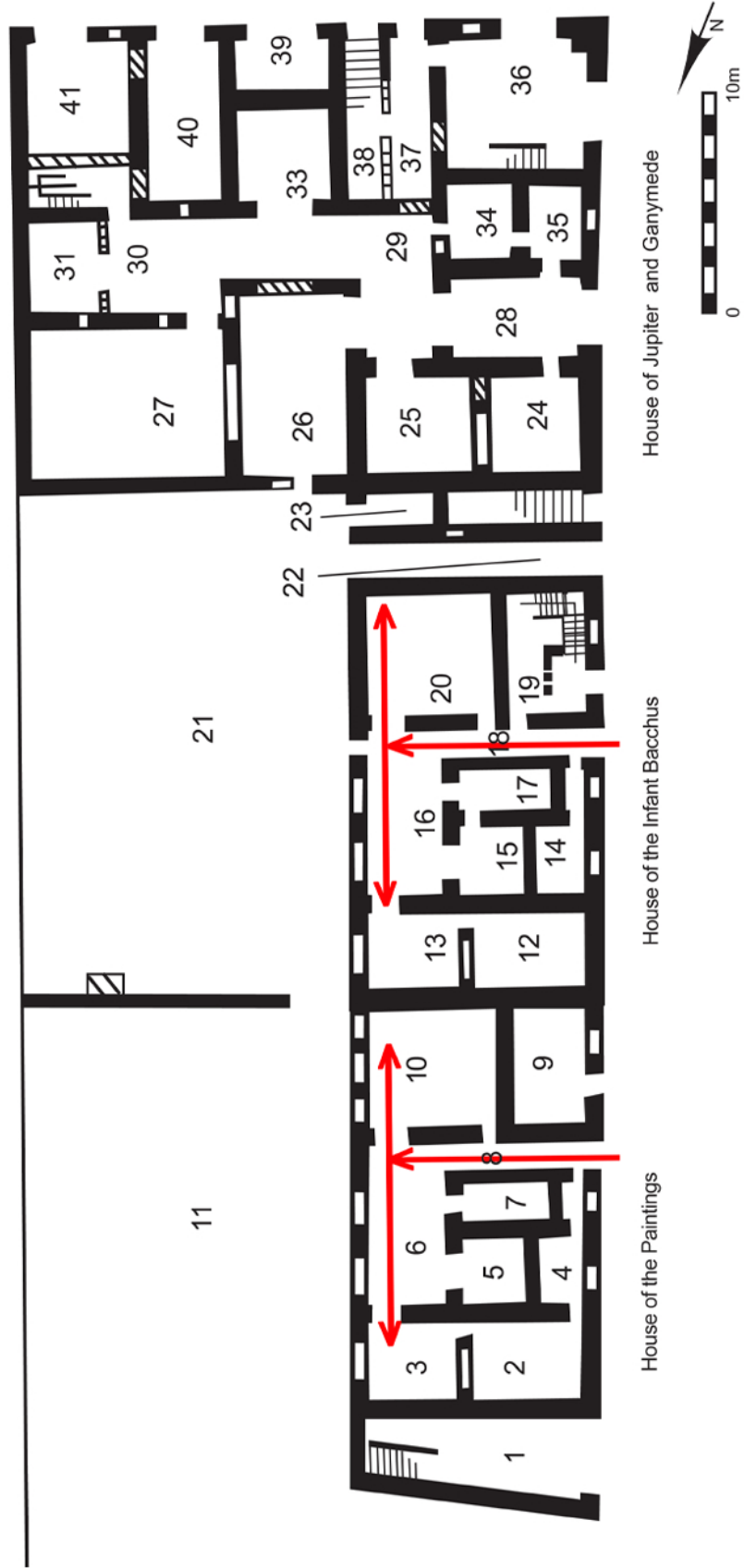


Fig. 7. Plan of the Insula of the Paintings. The perpendicular axes in the House of the Infant Bacchus and in the House of the Paintings are added in red. (Adapted from DeLaine 1995, 88, Fig. 5.4)

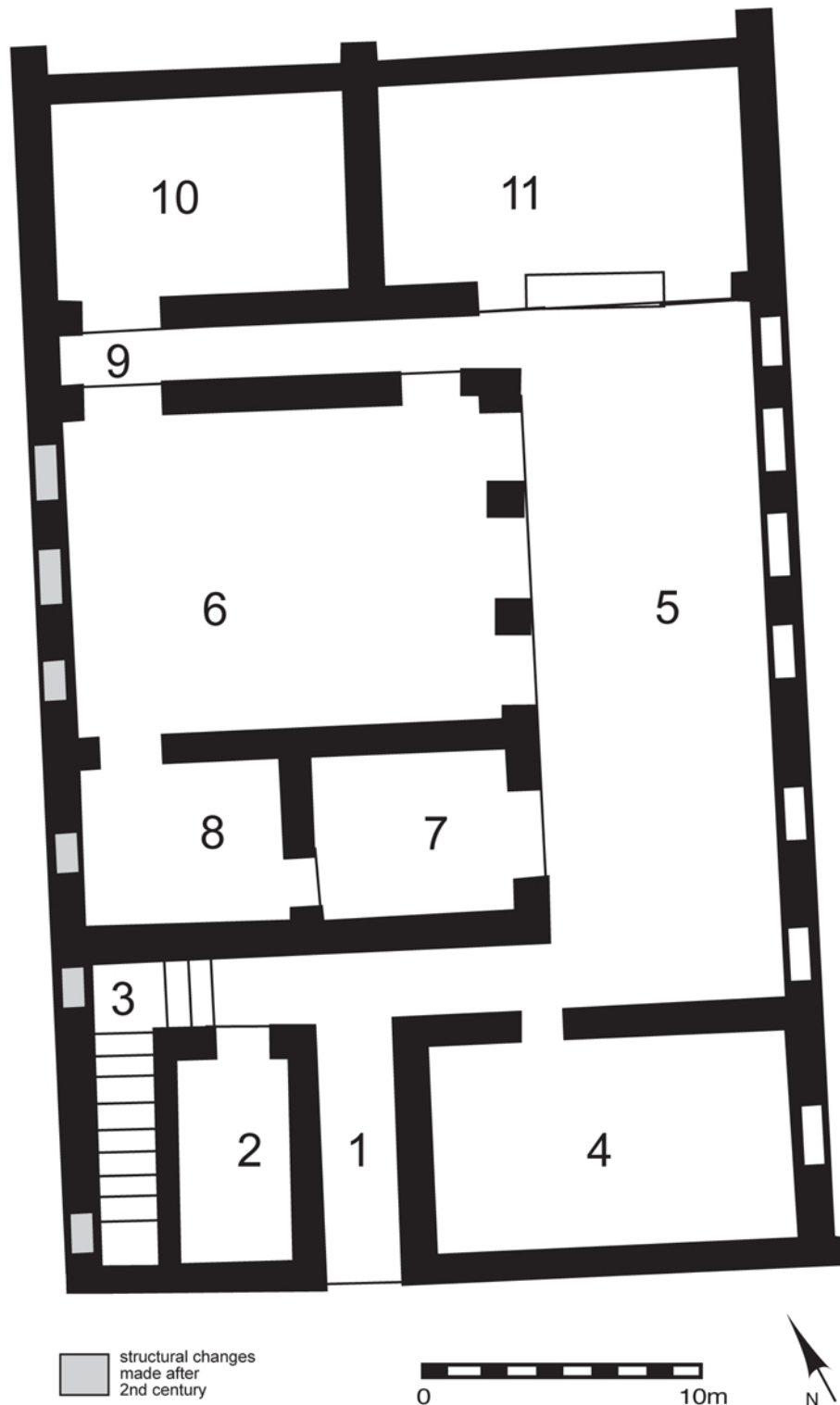


Fig. 8. Plan of the House of the Priestesses (House of Luceia Primitiva).  
 (Adapted from Falzone 2007, 69, Fig. 28)

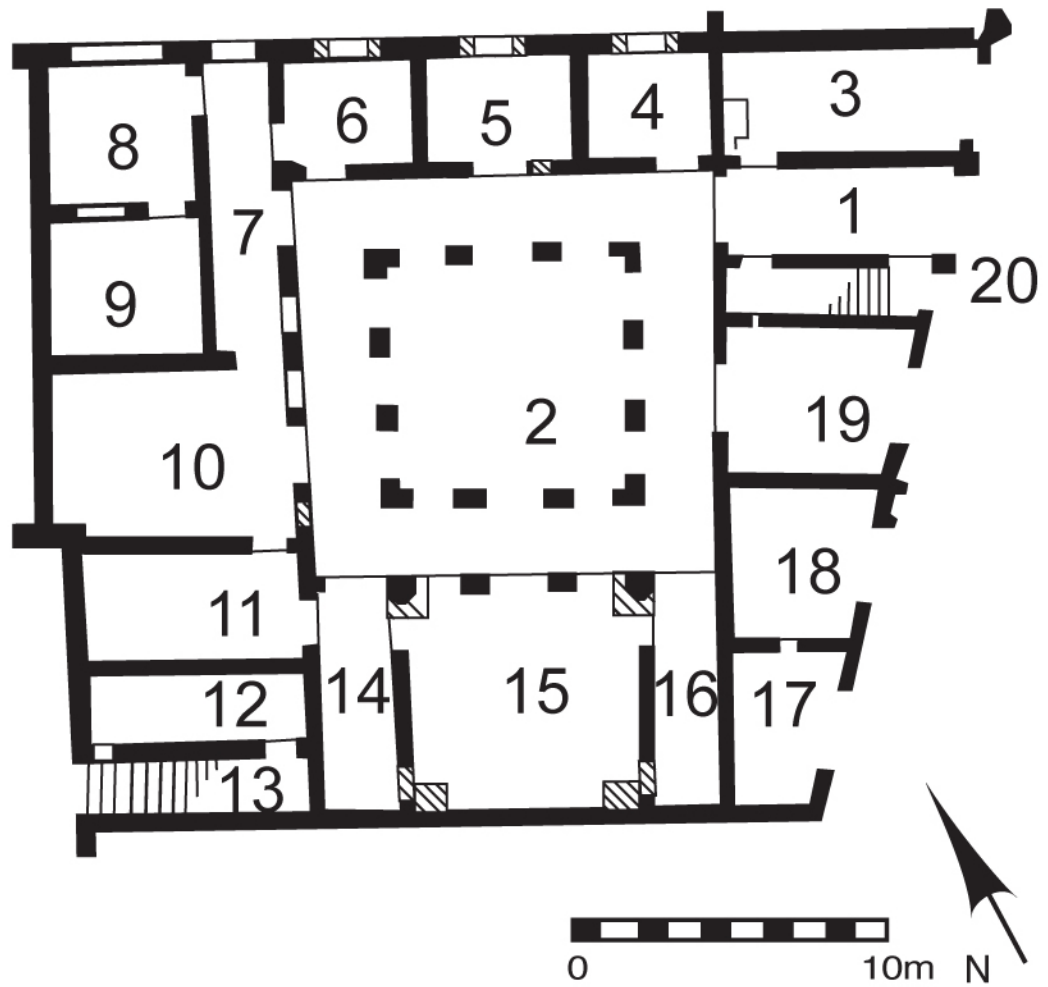


Fig. 9. Plan of the House of the Muses. (Adapted from Clarke 1991, 269, Fig. 163)



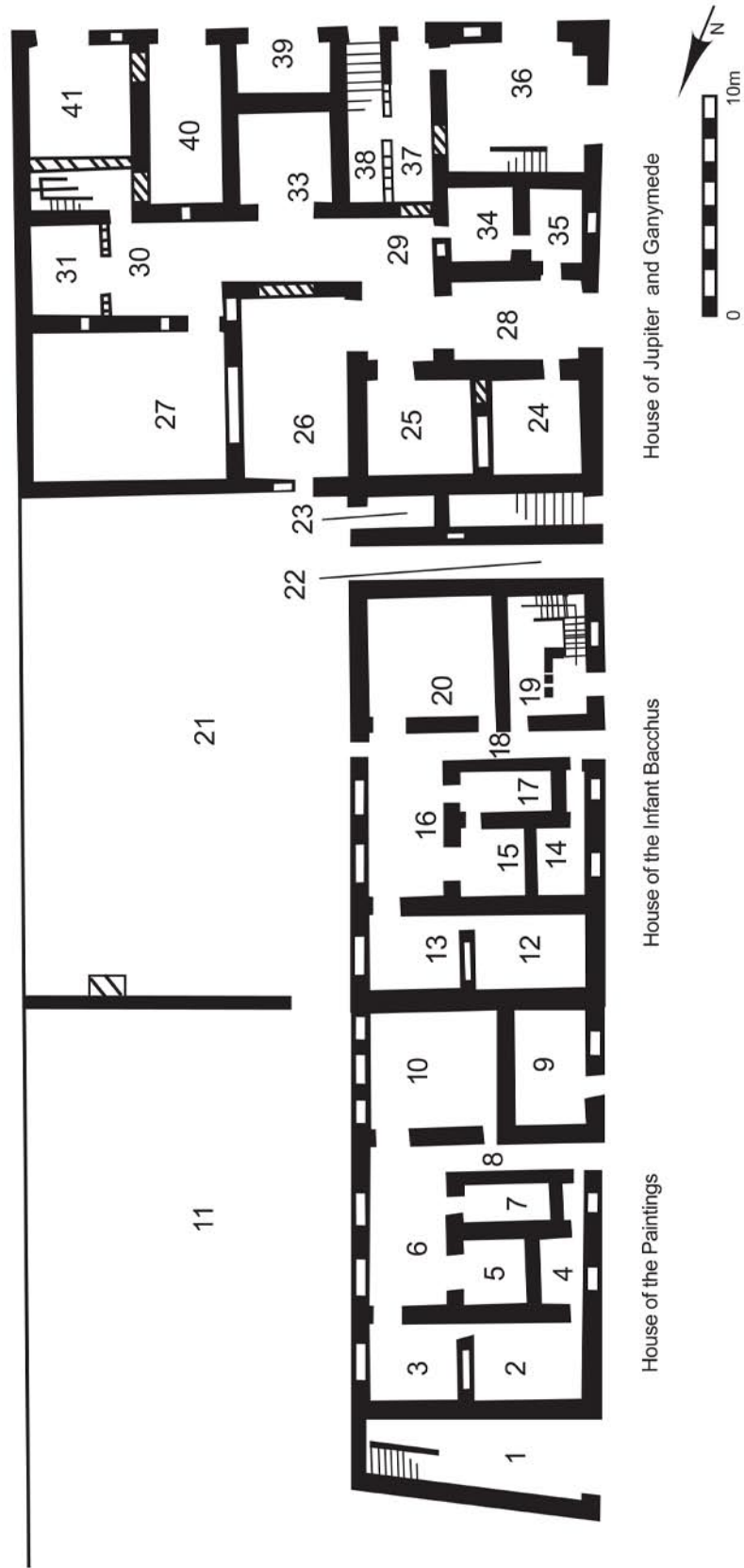


Fig. 10. Plan of the Insula of the Paintings, which comprises the House of Jupiter and Ganymede, the House of the Infant Bacchus, and the House of the Paintings. (Adapted from DeLaine 1995, 88, Fig. 5.4)

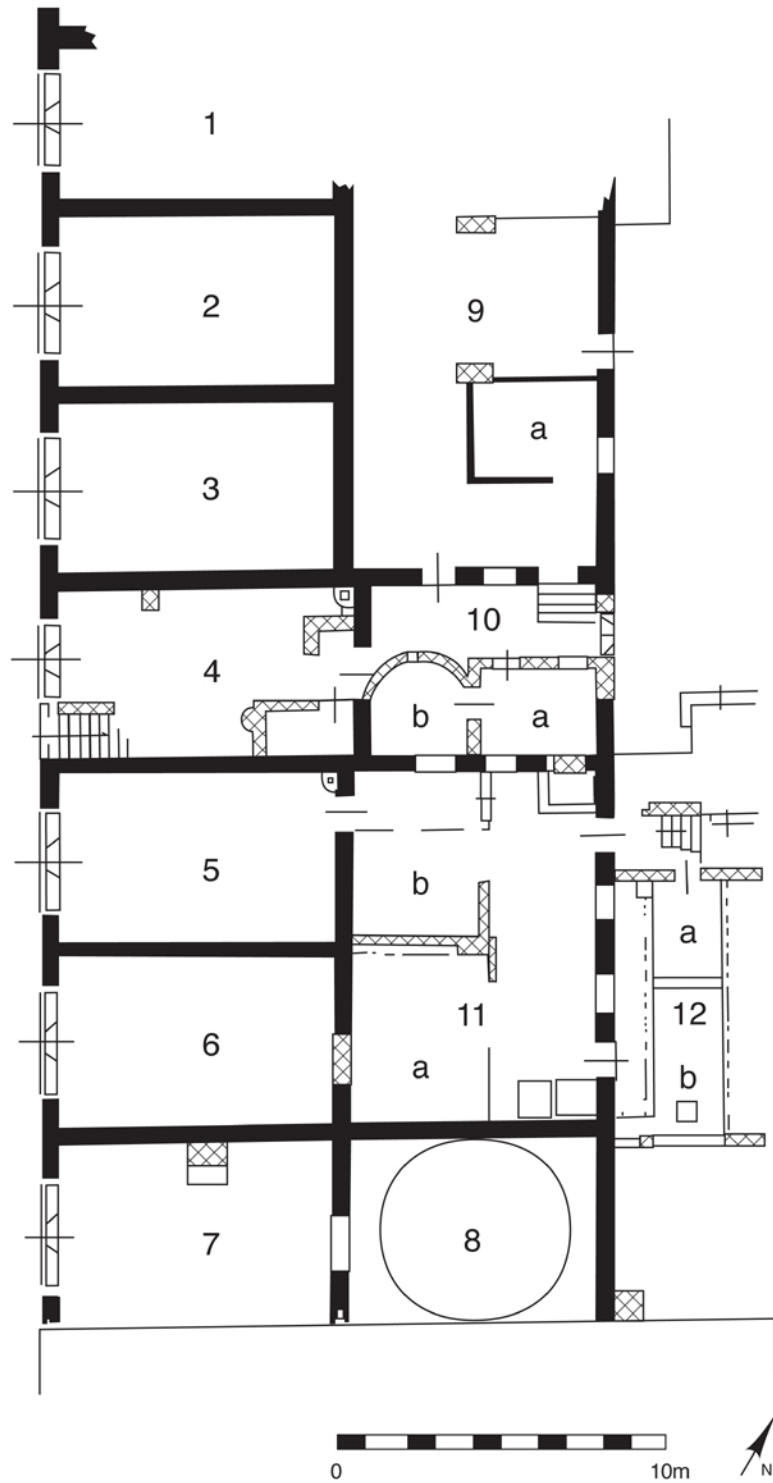


Fig. 11. Plan of the House of the Mithraeum of Lucretius Menander.  
 (Adapted from Falzone 2004, 51, Fig. 13)



Fig. 12. House of the Muses, room 5. View of northeast wall with architectural system of painted decoration on a polychrome background. (KAR 2009)

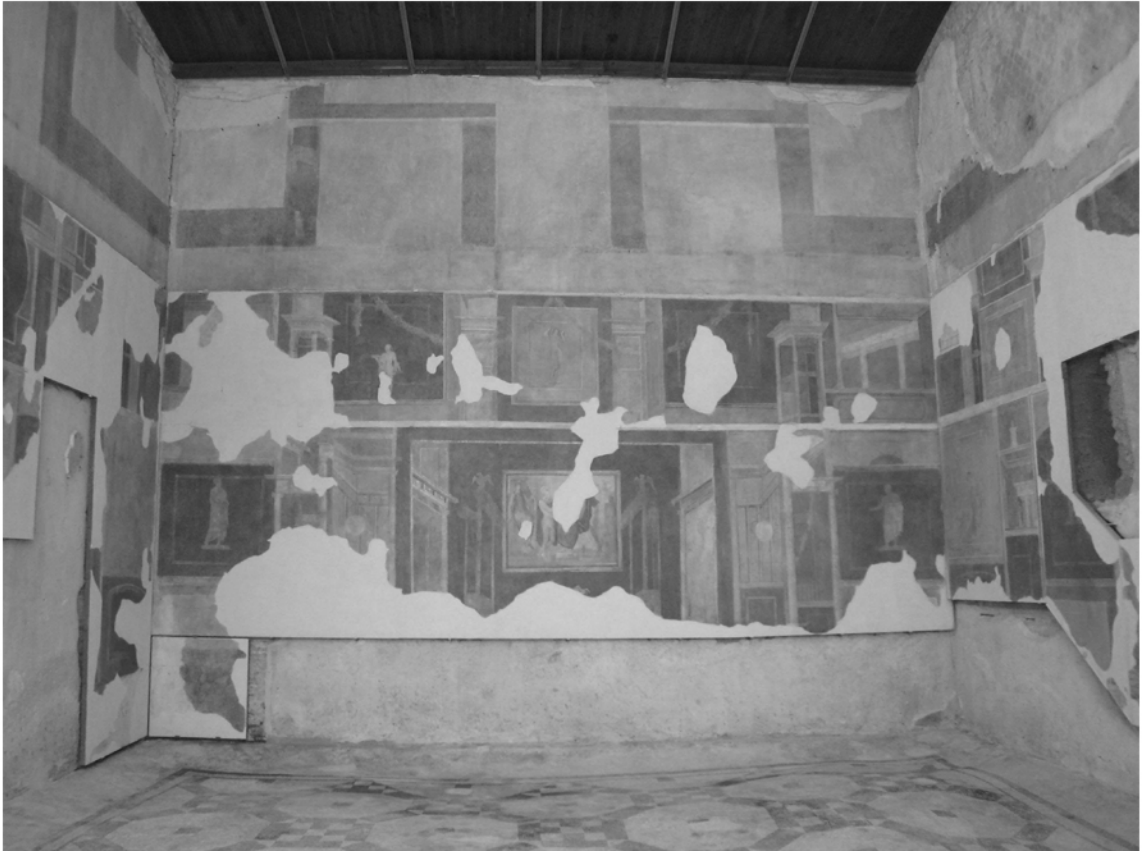


Fig. 13. House of Jupiter and Ganymede, room 27. View of north wall with architectural system of painted decoration on a polychrome background. (KAR 2009)



Fig. 14. House of the Muses, room 9. View of southeast corner with aedicular system of painted decoration on a white monochrome background. (KAR 2009)



Fig. 15. House of Jupiter and Ganymede, room 24. Detail of black and white floor mosaic. (KAR 2009)



Fig. 16. House of Jupiter and Ganymede, room 27. Detail of black and white floor mosaic. (KAR 2009)

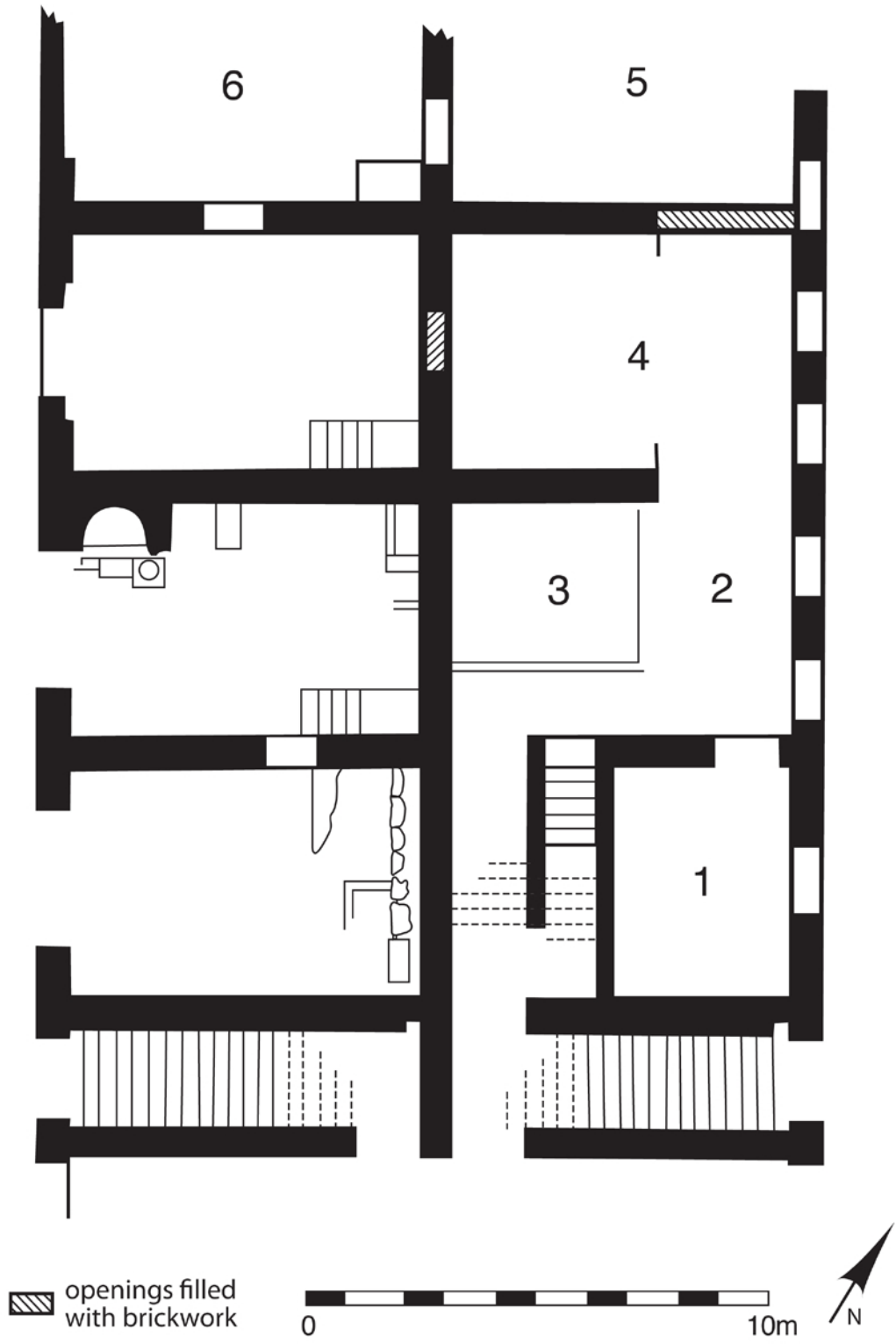


Fig. 17. Plan of the House of the Painted Ceiling. (Adapted from Clarke 1991, 314, Fig. 194)



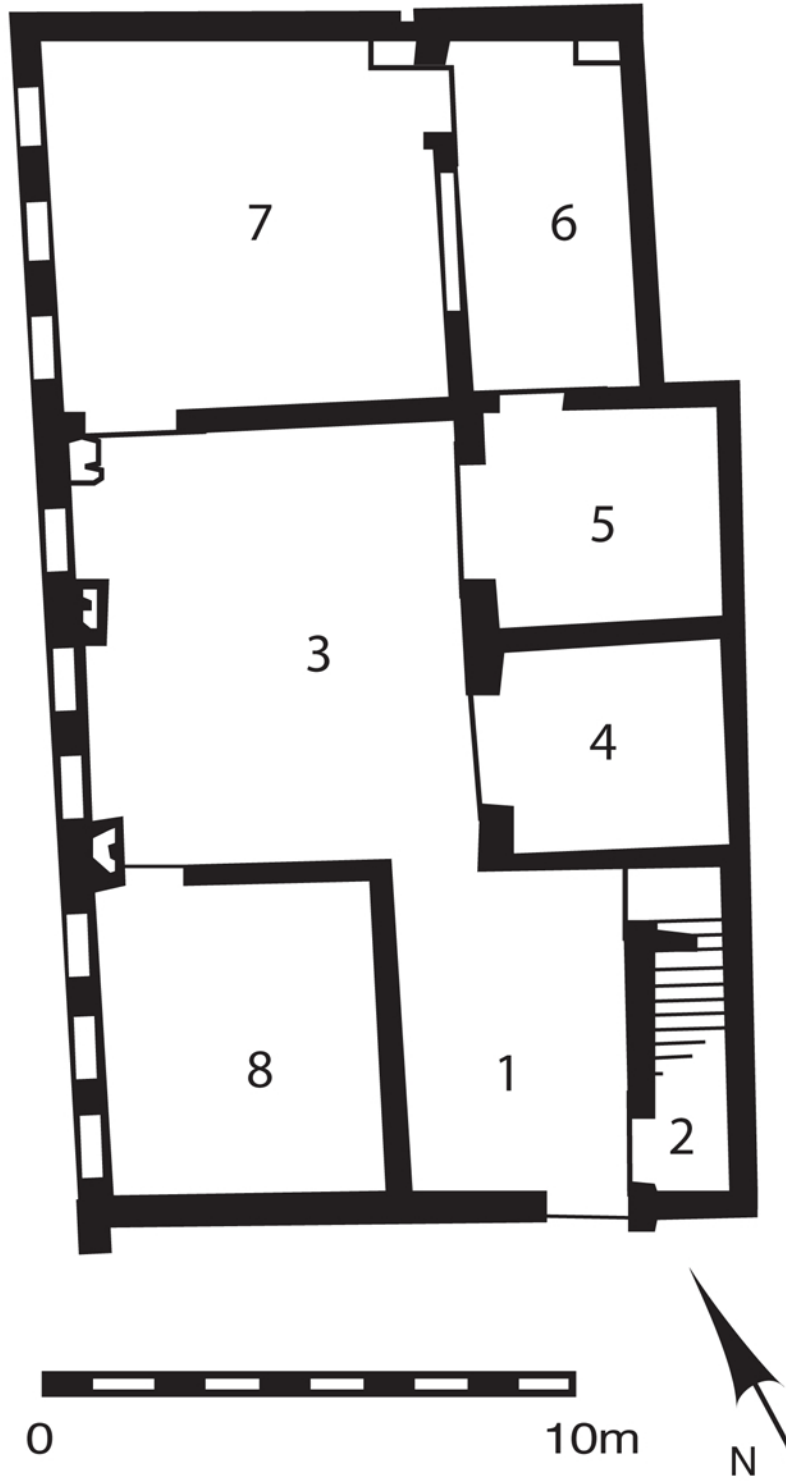


Fig. 18. Plan of the House of the Yellow Walls. (Adapted from Clarke 1991, 306, Fig. 188)

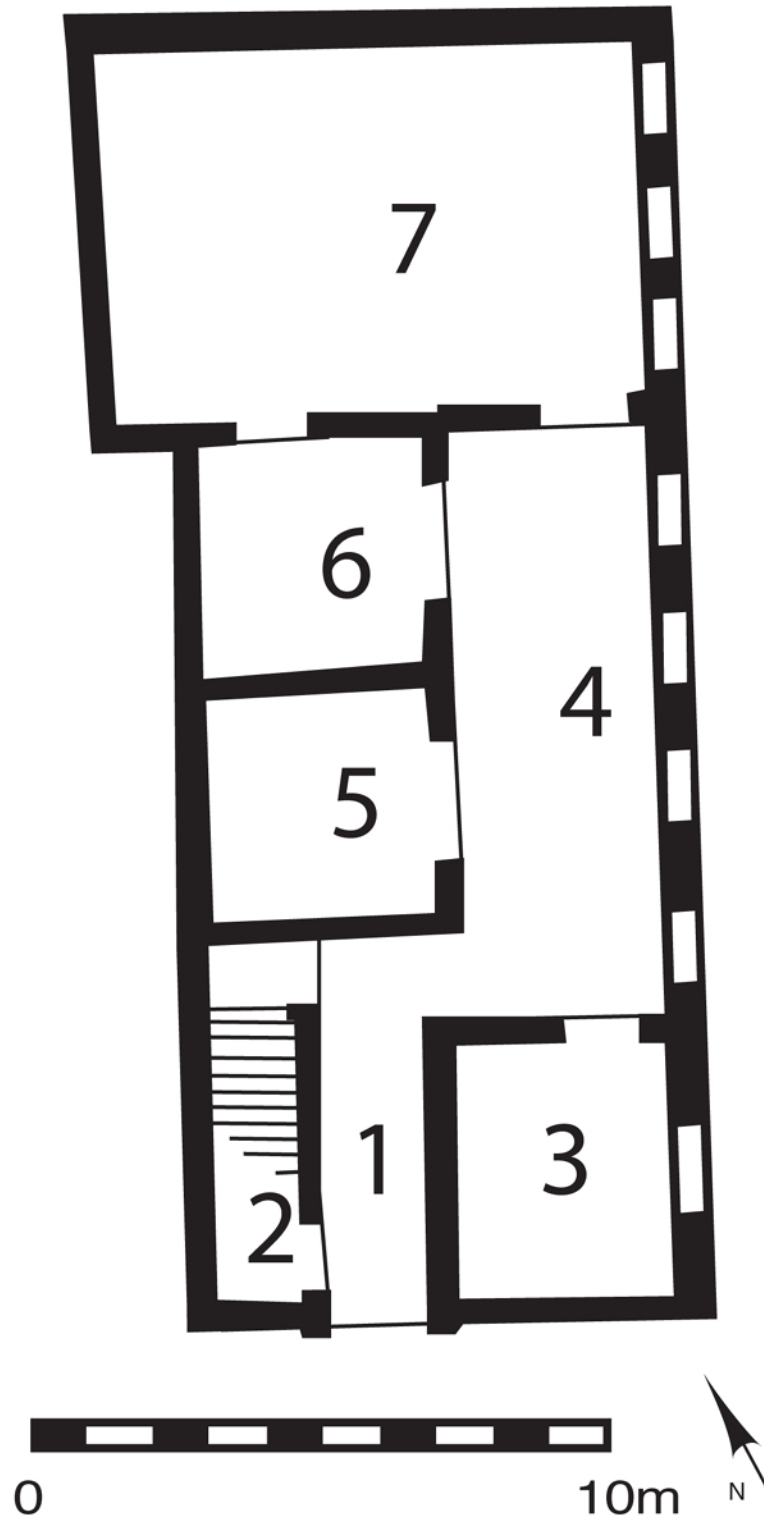


Fig. 19. Plan of the House of the Graffito. (Adapted from Hermansen 1981, 35, Fig. 8)



Fig. 20. Plan of the Garden Houses complex in its current state. (Adapted from Cervi 1999, 143. Fig. 2)



Fig. 21. House of the Painted Ceiling, room 1. View of south wall with architectural system of painted decoration on a polychrome background. (KAR 2009)



Fig. 22. House of the Yellow Walls, room 8. View of north wall with architectural system of painted decoration on a polychrome background. (KAR 2009)



Fig. 23. House of the Infant Bacchus, room 20. View of south wall with architectural system of painted decoration on a polychrome background. (KAR 2009)



Fig. 24. House of the Paintings, room 10. View of south wall with what appears to be an architectural system of painted decoration on a polychrome background. (KAR 2009)

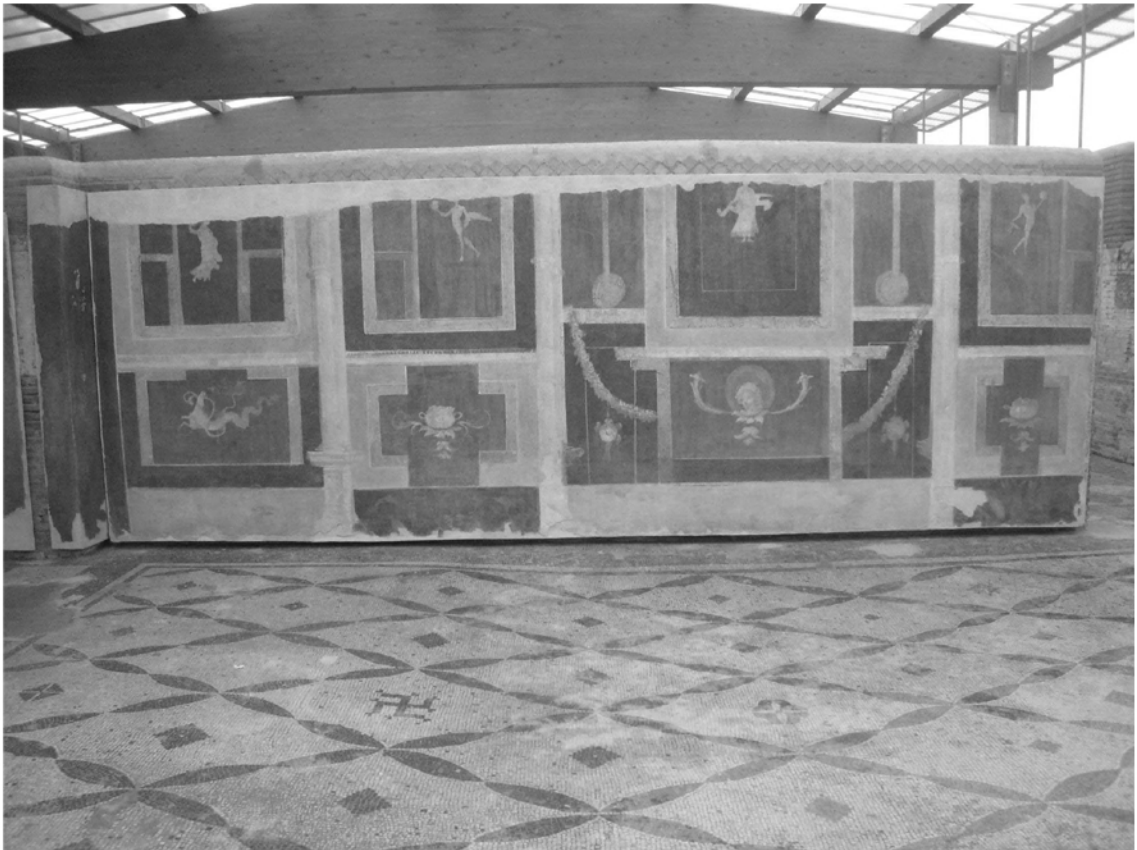


Fig. 25. House of the Priestesses (House of Luceia Primitiva), room 6. View of south wall with architectural system of painted decoration on a polychrome background. (KAR 2009)





Fig. 26. House of the Yellow Walls, room 7. View of south wall with architectural system of painted decoration on a polychrome background. (KAR 2009)



Fig. 27. House of the Graffito, room 7. View of south wall with what appears to be an architectural system of painted decoration on a polychrome background, with view of room 6 (with painted decorations with a yellow monochrome background) on the left. (KAR 2009)



Fig. 28. Apartment III, IX, 13, room 4. View of north wall with architectural system of painted decoration on a polychrome background. (KAR 2009)



Fig. 29. Apartment III, IX, 14, room 4. View of south wall with architectural system on a polychrome background. (KAR 2009)



Fig. 30. Apartment III, IX, 16, room 5. View of south wall with architectural system of painted decoration on a polychrome background. (KAR 2009)



Fig. 31. Apartment III, IX, 17, room 5. View of north wall with architectural system of painted decoration on a polychrome background. (KAR 2009)



Fig. 32. House of the Painted Ceiling, room 1. Detail of black and white floor mosaic. (KAR 2009)



Fig. 33. House of the Yellow Walls, room 8. Detail of black and white floor mosaic. (KAR 2009)





Fig. 34. House of the Painted Ceiling, room 4. View of north wall with aedicular system of painted decoration on a yellow monochrome background. (KAR 2009)



Fig. 35. House of the Yellow Walls, room 5. View of east wall with aedicular system of painted decoration on a yellow monochrome background. (KAR 2009)



Fig. 36. House of the Yellow Walls, room 5. Detail of black and white floor mosaic. (KAR 2009)

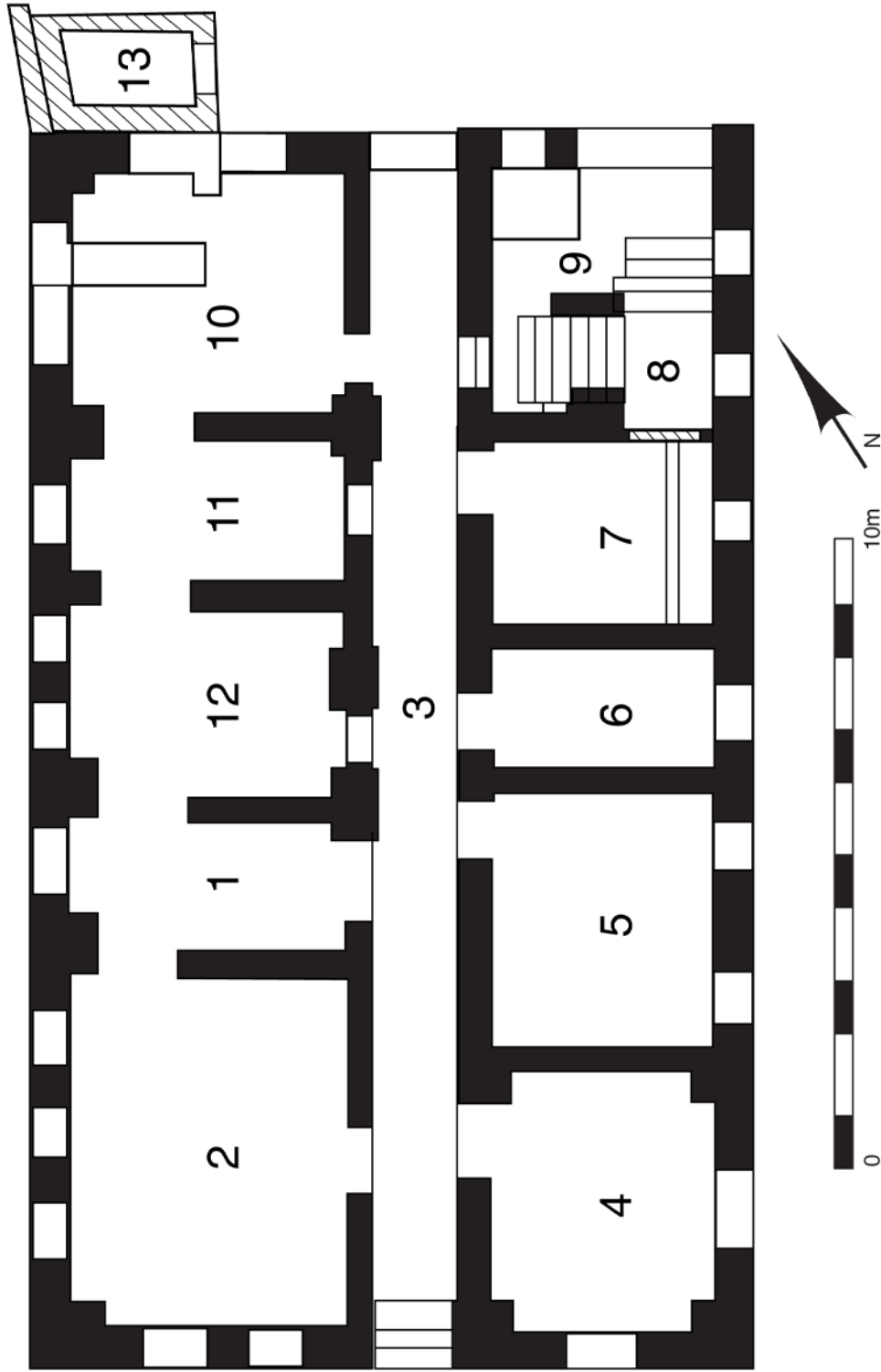


Fig. 37. Plan of the House of the Painted Vaults. (Adapted from Liedtke 2003, 55, Abb. 6)



Fig. 38. House of the Painted Vaults, room 2. View of northeast corner with architectural system of painted decoration on a polychrome background. (KAR 2009)



Fig. 39. House of the Painted Vaults, room 5. View of southwest wall with aedicular system of painted decoration on a white monochrome background. (KAR 2009)

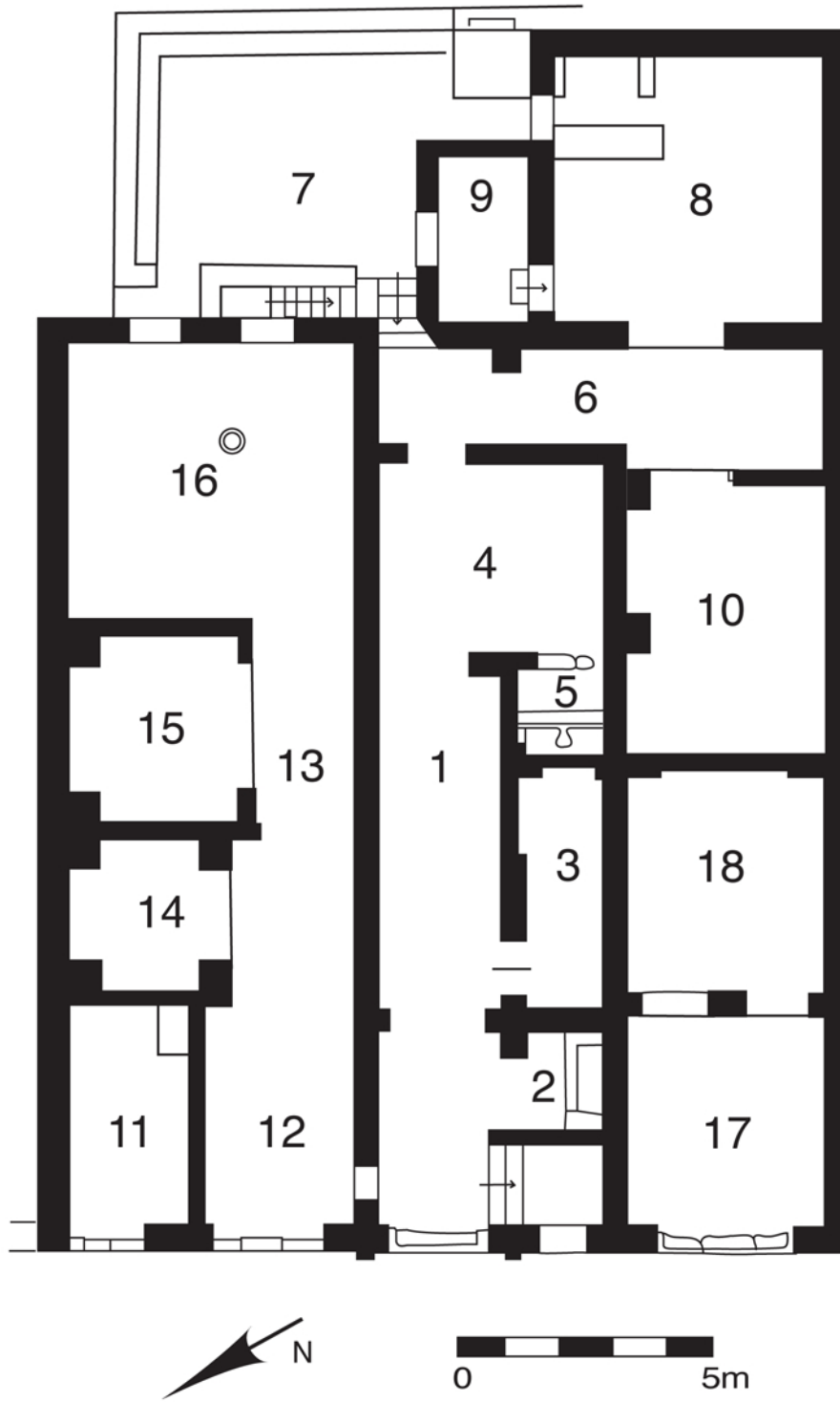


Fig. 40. Plan of the Inn of the Peacock. (Adapted from Clarke 1991, 343, Fig. 212)



Fig. 41. Inn of the Peacock, room 9. View of north wall with panel system of painted decoration on a polychrome background. (KAR 2009)





Fig. 42. Inn of the Peacock, room 6. View of north wall with panel system of painted decoration on a polychrome background. (KAR 2009)



Fig. 43. Inn of the Peacock, room 9. Detail of opus sectile floor.  
(KAR 2009)

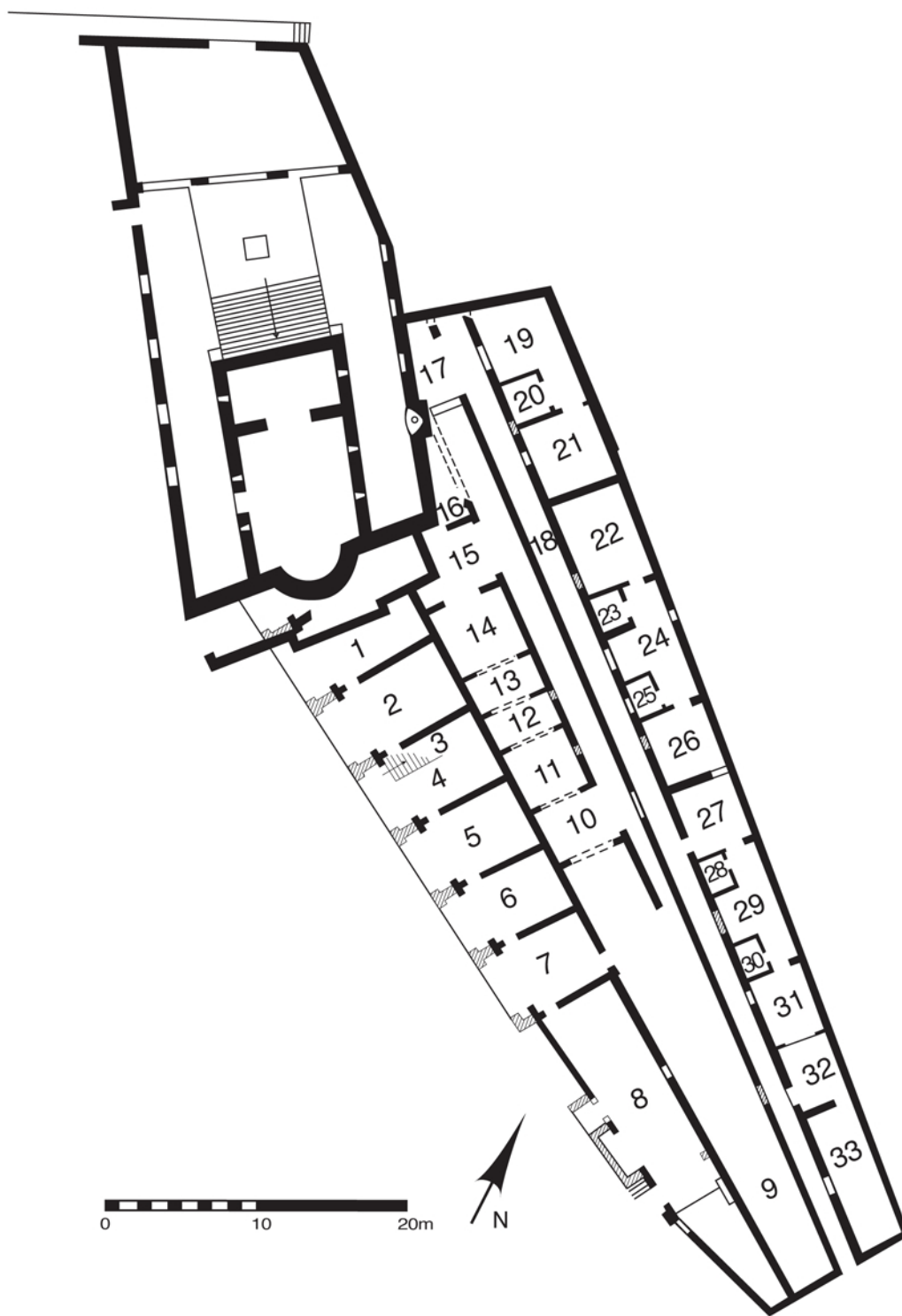


Fig. 44. Plan of the House of Themistocles. (Adapted from Falzone 2004, 155, Fig. 84)



Fig. 45. House of Themistocles, Apartment 2, room 23. View of south wall with aedicular system of painted decoration on a white monochrome background. (KAR 2009)

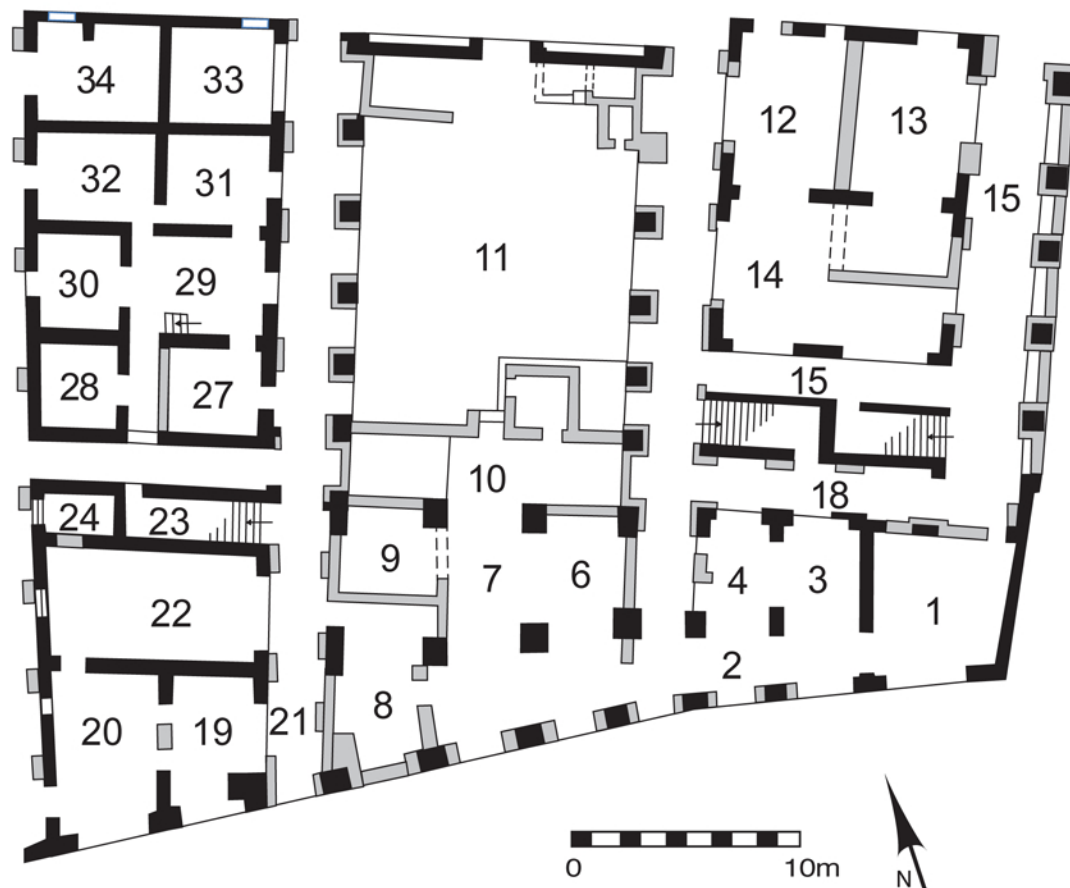


Fig. 46. Plan of the House of the Charioteers. (Adapted from Packer 1971, 106, Fig. 25)



Fig. 47. House of the Charioteers, room 30. View of west wall with panel system of painted decoration with white and yellow panels framed in red. (KAR 2009)

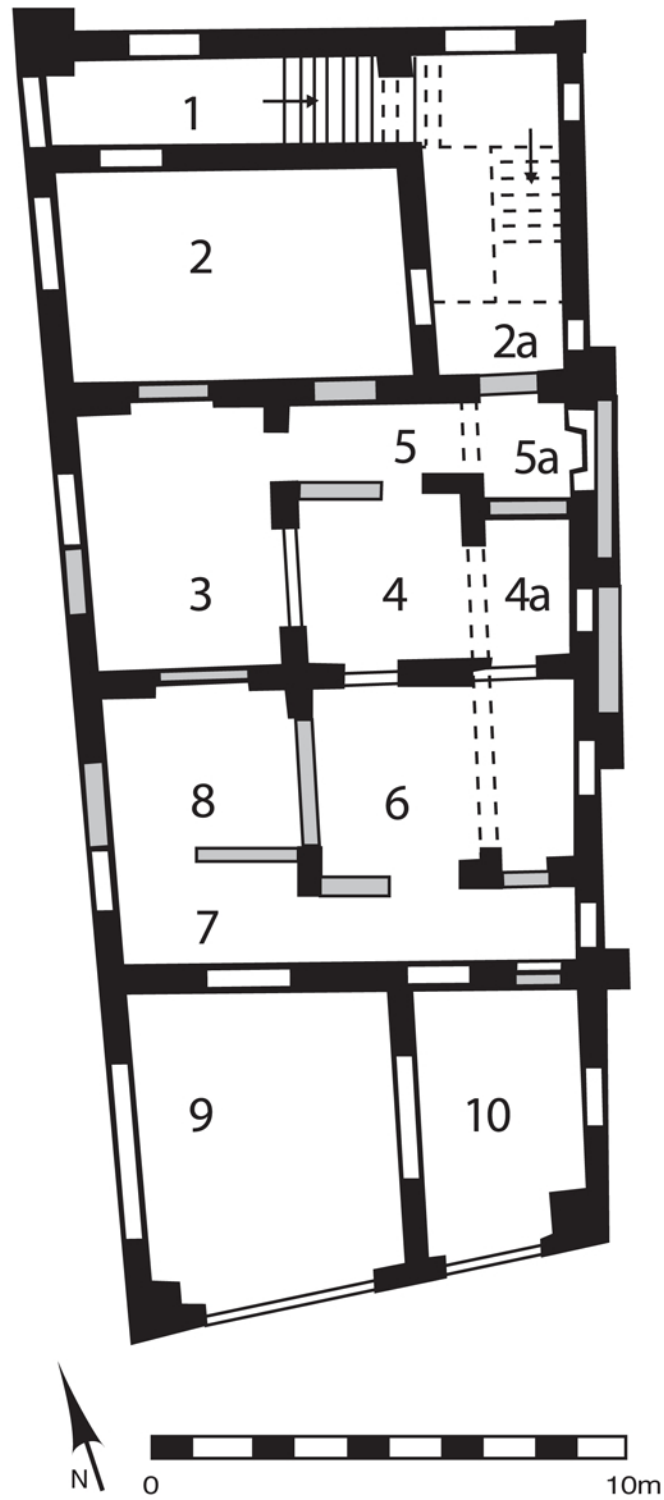


Fig. 48. Plan of the House of Annius. (Adapted from Packer 1971, 108, Fig. 30)



Fig. 49. House of Annius, Apartment 2, room 6. View of north wall with aedicular system of painted decoration on a white monochrome background. (KAR 2009)



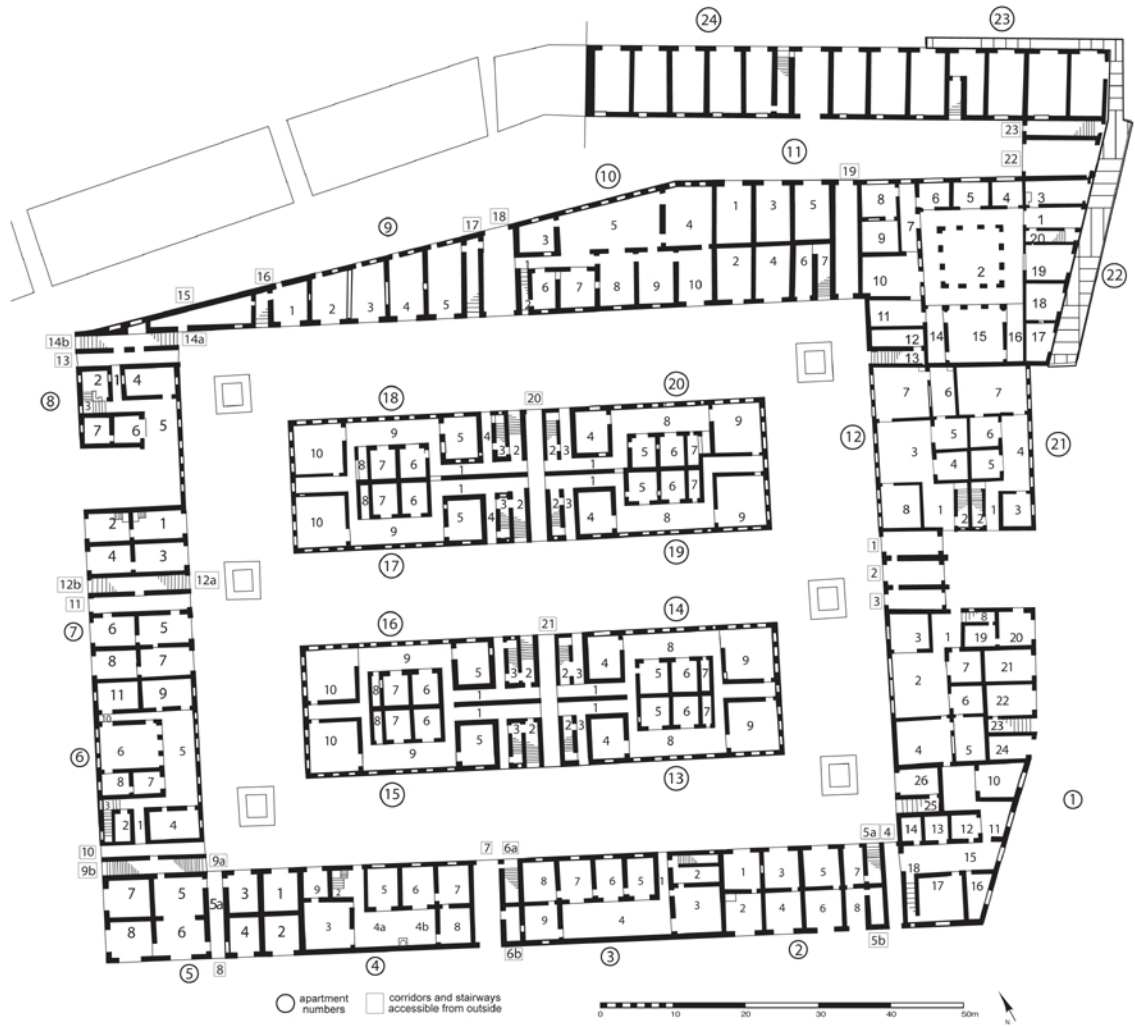


Fig. 50. Plan of the Garden Houses complex in its hypothetical initial phase. (Adapted from Cervi 1999, 142, Fig. 1)

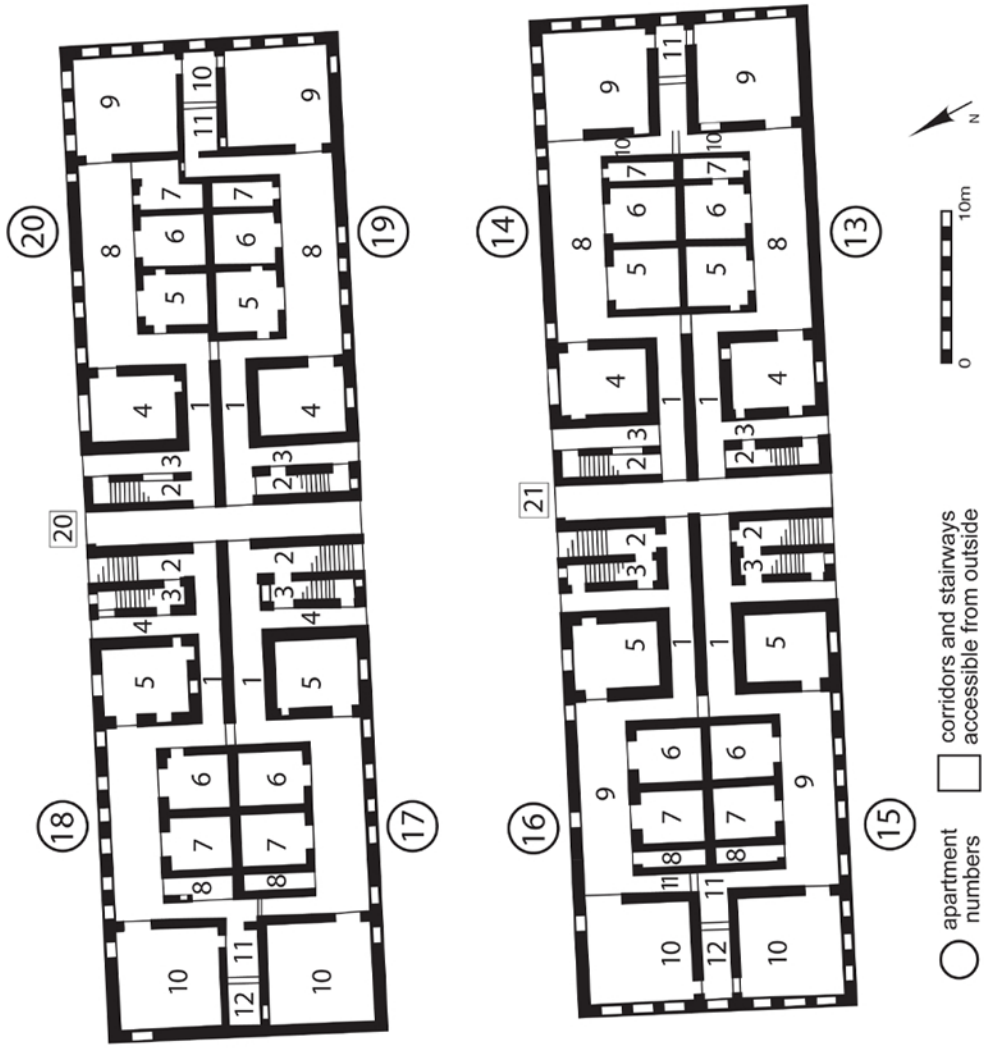


Fig. 51. Plan of the interior-block apartments of the Garden Houses complex in their present state. (Adapted from Cervi 1999, 143, Fig. 2)



Fig. 52. Plan of the Garden Houses complex in its present state, with additions in color to indicate the distribution of decorative systems. (Adapted from Cervi 1999, 143, Fig. 2)



Fig. 53. Apartment III, IX, 16, room 6. View of east wall. (KAR 2009)



Fig. 54. House of the Priestesses (House of Luceia Primitiva), room 11. View of east wall with aedicular system of painted decoration on a yellow monochrome background. (KAR 2009)



Fig. 55. House of the Painted Ceiling, room 4. View of north wall, with detail of floral motifs and small landscape painting in the central panel. (KAR 2009)



Fig. 56. Apartment III, IX, 15, room 1. View of north wall with red monochrome background (KAR 2009)



Fig. 57. House of Jupiter and Ganymede, room 29. View of south wall with aedicular system of painted decoration on a red background. (KAR 2009)



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