

temple was built. It is reasonable to infer that the new temple combined the cults of the two older temples which it replaced. We have suggested above that one may have been the original Capitolium, the other a temple of Jupiter.¹

Until recently it was possible to believe that the new temple might have been dedicated to Vulcan, whose cult was historically the most important in Ostia, but it is now known from a fragment of the *Fasti* that the temple of Vulcan was restored on a handsome scale under Trajan and rededicated in 112 on 22 August, the eve of the *Volcanalia*.² It is barely conceivable that it should have been completely rebuilt within twenty years, and the evidence of brickstamps shows conclusively that the great temple in the Forum was built in the early years of Hadrian's reign.³

Vulcan's was not the only republican temple to receive attention in the prosperity period. The temple of Hercules was substantially restored under Trajan,⁴ and its immediate neighbours at about the same time. Traces of second-century restoration can also be seen in the four republican temples on a common foundation near the theatre.⁵ When a small corner of the area reserved for Bona Dea outside Porta Marina was taken to provide room for a nymphaeum, the goddess was compensated by a small addition to her area and a more imposing entrance.⁶ Later, in the second century, P. Lucilius Gamala restored the temple of Venus that his ancestor had built, the temple of Castor and Pollux, and the cella of pater Tiberinus, whose cult is not otherwise attested but may date back to the Republic.⁷

The natural inference from all these restorations that the old cults were far from moribund is confirmed by other evidence. The games of Castor and Pollux were still being celebrated by Roman praetors at the beginning of the third century. The *pontifex Volcani* maintained his primacy in the religious organization of the town. Records from the second or early third century survive of dedications made to Jupiter Optimus Maximus,⁸ Hercules,⁹ Mars,¹⁰ Apollo,¹¹ Spes Augusta,¹² Fortuna.¹³ An association of *cultores Iovis Tutoris* is found outside the town.¹⁴

¹ p. 352.

² *Fasti*, 112: 'xi K(alendas) Sept. aedis Volkani vetustate corrupta, [restituta or] nato opere, dedicata est.'

³ Bloch, *Bolli laterizi*, 346 f.

⁴ Bloch, *Topografia*, 219 (i. 15. 5).

⁵ *MA* 23 (1914) 475.

⁶ Calza, *NS* 1942, 164.

⁷ 2¹⁶.

⁸ *S* 4293.

⁹ *S* 4287-9.

¹⁰ 31, *S* 4300, Bloch, 6.

¹¹ *S* 4279.

¹² *S* 4330.

¹³ 2040, 4281-2; Fortuna Praestita, Bloch, 1 (cf. *ILS* 4030).

¹⁴ 25.

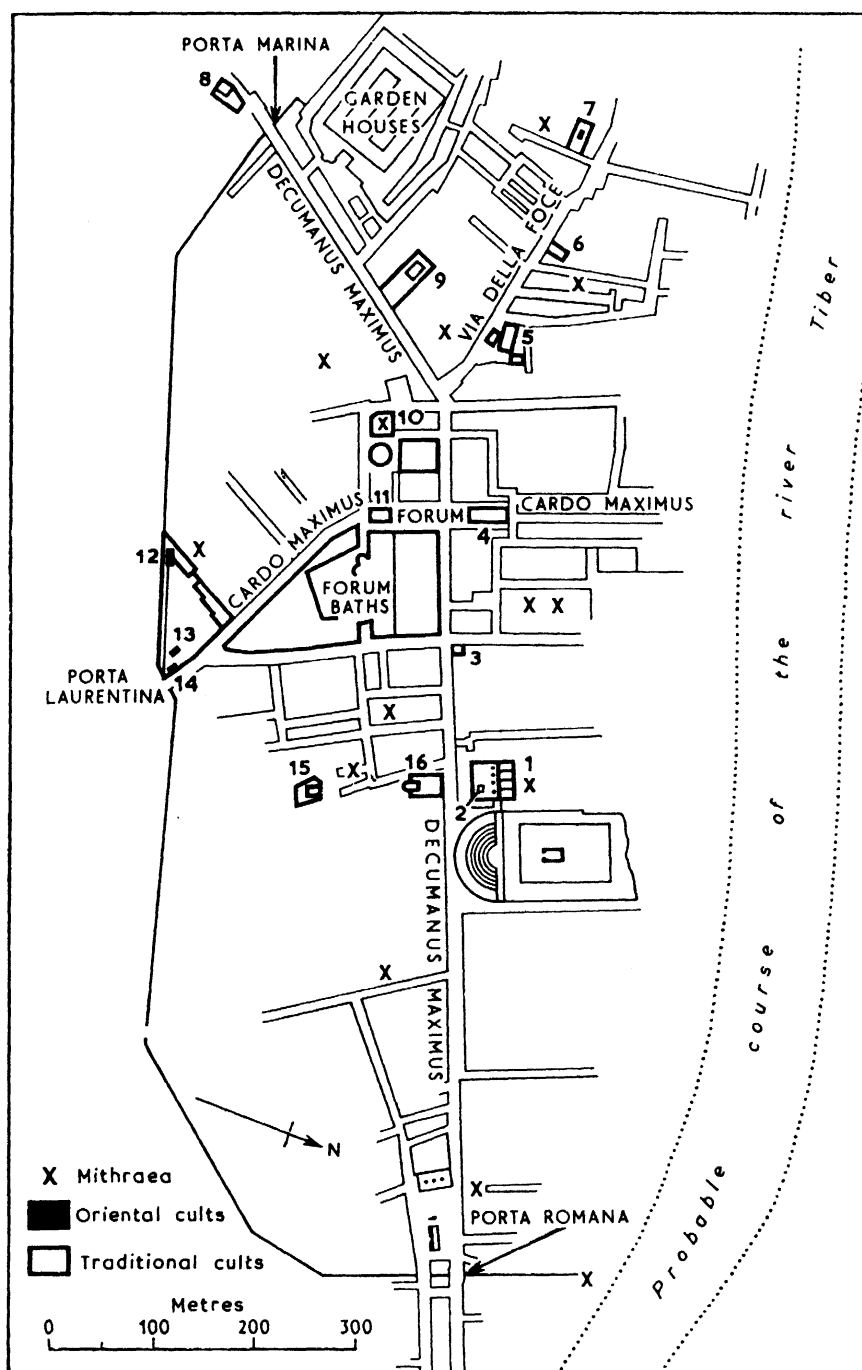


FIG. 27. Ostian cults. 1. ? Venus, Fortuna, Ceres, and another (p. 351). 2. Jupiter Optimus Maximus. 3. ? Spes (p. 351). 4. Capitolium. 5. Hercules. 6. Temple associated with the measurers (p. 329). 7. Serapis. 8. Bona Dea (Julio-Claudian). 9. Guild temple of the ship-builders. 10. Guild temple converted to Mithraeum (p. 328). 11. Rome and Augustus. 12. Cybele. 13. Attis. 14. Bellona. 15. Bona Dea (Augustan). 16. Guild temple. Temples not numbered are not yet identified.

The cult of the Nymphs remained popular into the Empire. D. Hostius Heraclida made a dedication to 'the divine Nymphs'.¹ Titus Amerimnus 'made a gift' to the Nymphs.² Ammonius, an imperial slave, built them an altar, for he had been 'freed by their divine power from a critical malady'; below the inscription is a roughly sculptured scene, depicting a man lying on the ground with his hands raised in terror and a dog running away. It seems that Ammonius owed to the Nymphs his recovery from hydrophobia.³ A well-head was set up in A.D. 197 by the presidents of the corn measurers, 'at the prompting of Ceres and the Nymphs'.⁴ The cult of the Nymphs is perhaps a tribute to the excellence of the natural water supply which, in spite of the close proximity of the sea, was pure and sweet.⁵ Old religious beliefs are also reflected in an altar to the goddesses of the cross-roads, 'deaes Tribiaes sanctaes et loco divino'.⁶

The peculiarly Roman cult of the *genius* is also still widespread in the Empire. Dedications are made to the *genius* of trade guilds,⁷ of the *severi Augustales*,⁸ of the decurions,⁹ of the colony itself,¹⁰ of the Roman people,¹¹ of 'the place'.¹² But the most widely attested cult among the common folk is the deep-rooted cult of Silvanus. On the right bank of the river was found an inscription recording the restoration of a shrine of Silvanus: 'Anteros Aeliorum et Theodora Silvano sancto aedem dirutam a solo restituerunt.'¹³ Temple would probably be a misnomer, for it was not the custom to build temples to Silvanus: probably the *aedes* was a small shrine, perhaps at a cross-roads. More commonly Silvanus is honoured by small altars and statuettes of the god holding billhook and cornucopia, the symbols of his agricultural origin.

Silvanus is invoked to protect the emperor¹⁴ and the *numen* of the imperial house.¹⁵ He is associated with cults old and new. One dedication he shares with Hercules;¹⁶ another with Isis and Serapis.¹⁷ His image is presented to the *dendrophori* of Cybele,¹⁸ and is represented in coloured mosaic in a room that is probably associated with a Mithraeum.¹⁹ Silvanus also finds his way into the trade guilds. He is especially associated

¹ 46a.

² S 4321.

³ NS 1920, 163 n. 1 = S 4322.

⁴ 2.

⁵ Pliny, *Ep.* ii. 17. 25.

⁶ Bloch, 12; cf. *ILS* 3271. For the form of the dative, Sommer, *Handbuch der Laut- und Formenlehre*, 326.

⁷ 10, S 4285, Bloch, 2.

⁸ 12.

⁹ *AE* 1948, 30; Bloch, 3.

¹⁰ 8, 9. In the late second century a *sacerdos geni coloniae* was appointed, p. 185.

¹¹ S 4284.

¹² 11.

¹³ S 4327. For Silvanus at Ostia, Taylor, 37.

¹⁴ S 4327.

¹⁵ S 4326.

¹⁶ 17.

¹⁷ 20.

¹⁸ 53.

¹⁹ Visconti, *Ann. Inst.* 36 (1864) 174; Becatti, *Mithei*, 56.

with the weighers, *sacomarii*, whose guild takes his name;¹ he takes pride of place in the paintings of the small chapel in a large bakery.² The wide distribution of such a rustic cult in a commercial city is a reminder that the products of the farm land and of the woods were not unimportant in the life of the town. The dedications known to us are made by slaves, imperial freedmen, and humble folk: they are found in public places and in private houses. Silvanus triumphantly survived the concentrated urbanization of the second century and the invasion of the oriental cults.

In considering the position in the town's life of traditional religion it may also be significant that there is very little surviving evidence that during the second century the ruling classes were closely associated with the oriental cults. The position of Cybele, as we have seen, was exceptional. She had from the outset enjoyed the patronage of the nobility at Rome; it is consistent that some of the patrons of the Ostian *dendrophori* should have been among the most prominent men of the town. But, so far as our evidence goes, the devotees and officials of the other cults did not include men of great standing. L. Plinius Nigrinus, who made a dedication to Jupiter Dolichenus, is the only chief magistrate of Ostia known to have been associated with any of these cults.³ The sterility of the traditional cults has often been exaggerated by an undue emphasis on the contractual nature of Roman religion. The Capitoline cult had all the emotional associations of a national anthem. The cult of Hercules was capable of new significance against a changing moral background: the idea of superhuman physical force merged into the higher conception of self-sacrifice, Hercules devoting his own life to make the world a better place for others to live in. Many of the older gods and goddesses still had the emotional appeal of patron saints.

THE CULTS BY THE HARBOURS

A further warning against underrating the strength of the traditional cults is given by the development of the area round the imperial harbours. When the Claudian harbour was built, there seems to have been no intention to provide for the growth of a substantial living settlement, but the addition of Trajan's inner basin led to a change. In the reign of Constantine Portus had become a small town and was made indepen-

¹ 309; cf. 51.

² NS 1915, 246.

³ p. 376. The oriental cults are conspicuously absent in the long list of benefactions of the Antonine Gamala, 2.

dent of Ostia; it was already growing fast through the second century. Excavation in this area has not been systematic or extensive. The argument from silence, therefore, which has some validity, if discreetly used, at Ostia, has none at Portus; but sufficient inscriptions and buildings have been at various times recovered to give a partial glimpse of the cults established, and the harbour settlement has special importance for our purpose because it had no roots. Traditional cults might be continued at Ostia because they had become an integral part of the fabric of the town's life; if they were introduced by the harbours and received temples, the natural inference is that they still had an attractive power. And while Ostia town had a long-established local aristocracy and a significant element of men who earned their living from the land and from the woods, and might therefore be more conservative in religious observances, the new population by the harbours was essentially a population of traders and harbour workers. The establishment of traditional cults in such a centre is significant.

The first of these cults for which evidence survives is that of Bona Dea. An early second-century statuette in the Villa Albani portrays a seated matron with a serpent twined round her right forearm and cornucopia held in her left hand.¹ This is the standard representation of Bona Dea and is probably a dedication offered to her temple, for the back of the figure is left rough, suggesting that it stood against a wall. That a temple to Bona Dea existed is confirmed by a later inscription mentioning Bonadienses, a district named presumably after the temple.² This later inscription is a dedication to Silvanus made by a priest of Liber pater Bonadiensium and the cult of Liber pater centred near Bona Dea is also attested by further dedications, including an image of the god set up by Cn. Maelius Epictetus 'in aria sua', on his own private property.³ Another dedication commemorates the association of Commodus with this god, showing that the cult was established by the late second century: 'pro salute imp. M. Aureli Commodi Antonini Aug. pii felicitis Libero patri Commodiano sacrum.'⁴ The temple itself has been identified in a small round Corinthian peristyle structure just north of the Torlonia villa, near the north-east corner of Trajan's harbour.⁵

Hercules, whose cult became so important in Ostia town, is also

¹ A. Greifenhagen, *RM* 52 (1937) 235.

² S 4328.

³ 28. Other dedications, 27, 29; cf. *IG* xiv. 925: 'ἑρεῖς ἑρεῖά τε θεοῦ μεγάλου Διωνύσου'.

⁴ 30.

⁵ Lanciani, *Ann. Inst.* 40 (1868) 181.

commemorated in three inscriptions from Portus. The earliest is from the base of a statue dedicated to Hercules Invictus in the early second century, and set up near the south bank of Trajan's canal.¹ The other two inscriptions probably commemorate statues in the Barracks of the Vigiles. One was set up towards the end of the second century by Cassius Ligus, commander of the detachment of *vigiles* at Ostia;² the other was in honour of Septimius Severus.³ Remains of the temple of Hercules were thought to have been found in the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth centuries between the harbours of Claudius and Trajan, but the evidence recorded is not decisive.⁴

It is Minerva, not an eastern god, who was the patron of the guild of *stuppatores*: 'numini evidentissimo Minervae Aug(ustae) sacrum conservatrici et antistiti splendidissimi corporis stuppatorum.'⁵ Diana is mentioned in an inscription of uncertain meaning.⁶ An altar is set up to Fortuna Domestica for the preservation and safe return of Septimius Severus and Clodius Albinus by a centurion of the *vigiles*.⁷ Silvanus is honoured with a small altar by an imperial freedman who was a *tabularius*,⁸ and by a priest of Liber Pater who makes a dedication in thanksgiving for his success in hunting: 'Silvano sancto cui magnas gratias ago conductor aucupiorum.'⁹

Even in the scanty evidence that has survived the traditional cults hold a significant place, and with them we may include the cult of Cybele, which, as has been seen, held a special position in the Roman state. There is no doubt that the cult of Cybele became well established at the harbours in the second century. The earliest record is a funerary altar from the Isola Sacra cemetery, dated by its style to the early second century. It commemorates Culcia Metropolis, cymbalist in the cult, *tympanistria m(agnae) d(eum) m(atris) utriusq(ue) portus*.¹⁰ A second cymbalist is recorded in a slightly later inscription from the same cemetery, and she is the wife of a priest, *sacerdos m(agnae) d(eum) m(atris) et Aesculapis*.¹¹ Another priest is recorded later, and in the same tomb was buried a ceremonial flute-player, *tibico m(agnae) d(eum) m(atris) portus Aug(usti) et Traiani felicitis*.¹² From the third century dates the tomb of a high priest, who reclines full length in his ceremonial dress on the lid of his sarcophagus and is represented in two separate reliefs, sacrificing to

¹ S 4288.² 13.³ 16.⁴ Fea, *Viaggio*, 39.⁵ 44.⁶ 4 = Thylander, B 287: 'Diana iobens iub. Traianensium.'⁷ 6.⁸ 49, set up by a Flavian freedman.⁹ S 4328.¹⁰ Thylander, A 92: for the altar, G. Ricci, NS 1939, 63.¹¹ Thylander, A 142.¹² 408.

Cybele and Attis.¹ Special importance was attached to the cult by the harbour: 'is qui in portu pro salute imperatoris sacrum facit ex vaticinatione archigalli a tutelis excusatur.' The rite in question is perhaps the *taurobolium*.²

But though the traditional cults were not unimportant by the harbours, the new settlement probably felt the impact of the east more strongly than Ostia town. For it was not until Trajan's harbour was built that eastern trade moved sharply away from Puteoli and, when Ostia itself began to decline, easterners will have done their business and normally stayed at the harbour rather than in the old town.

Of all the oriental cults at Portus those of Egypt have left the most prominent mark. The cult and temple of Serapis were probably inspired by the close association of the Alexandrian corn fleet with the imperial harbours in the second century. In the Severan period we find an official of this fleet as temple-warden,³ and it may be significant that all the inscriptions that can be certainly attributed to the Portus cult are in Greek,⁴ in contrast with the Latin inscriptions from the Ostian Serapeum. In the Torlonia Museum is a large capital with volutes in Egyptian style, carved in a dark granite which probably came from Egypt.⁵ It may have originally crowned one of the columns of the Serapeum of Portus.

The little that we know of the elaboration of the cult has to be inferred from a single inscription. From this we learn that the retainers of the temple included an ἀρχιεπίσκοπος, who may be the head of the religious hierarchy under the temple-warden; ἱερόφωνοι, ritual singers; and καμεινευταί, whose function is uncertain but presumably concerned with ritual fire. There were also slaves attached to the temple, ἱεροδουλεία.⁶

Most of the dedications that have survived are in the name of the temple-warden. Two, both of the Severan period, are in honour of the imperial house,⁷ and in one of them with the prayer for the preservation and safe return of Septimius Severus and Caracalla is coupled a prayer for the safe voyage of the whole (Alexandrian) fleet.⁸ Another inscription records the dedication by a temple-warden of three altars,

¹ Calza, *Necropoli*, 205, figs. 108–11; *Museo*, 158–60; Pl. xxxi a, b. ² Graillot, 153 n. 1.

³ IG xiv. 917: 'Γ. Ουαλέριος Σεργήνος νεωκόρος τοῦ μεγάλου Σαράπιδος, ὁ ἐπιμελήτης παντὸς τοῦ Ἀλεξανδρείνου στόλου.' For the title, cf. S 4626: 'curator navium Karthag(iniensium).'

⁴ IG xiv. 914–21. A possible exception in Latin, 123 = Thylander, B 308. Portus Serapis inscriptions discussed, Dessau, *Bull. Inst.* 54 (1882) 152; Taylor, 72.

⁵ Visconti, *Catalogo Museo Torlonia*, n. 13.

⁶ IG xiv. 914.

⁷ Ibid. 914, 917.

⁸ Ibid. 917.

a large lamp, a censer, and other furnishings, presumably for the temple, and the authority of the *pontifex Volcani* is added.¹ One private memorial, a small marble column, commemorates an athletic victory at Sardis and is set up in honour of his grandfather by a wrestler and his father, who was 'a senator of the renowned city of Alexandria'.²

Two inscriptions refer to the cult of Isis and both are concerned with her *megaron*. One records a restoration by a priest of Isis and the *Isiaci*;³ the other, an enlargement by two women.⁴ In a third inscription of uncertain restoration Isis may be associated, as at Ostia, with Cybele.⁵

Mithraism, which has left such a prominent mark in the ruins of Ostia, is attested by only two inscriptions from the harbour area,⁶ but no inference can be drawn as to the comparative popularity of the cult in the two centres, for Mithraea are not conspicuous monuments, and excavation by the harbours has not yet touched the main living quarters. Jupiter Dolichenus is commemorated in two inscriptions, one dedication set up on behalf of Commodus by the commander of a cavalry squadron,⁷ another, also from the reign of Commodus, by a group of sailors of the Ostia detachment from the Misenum fleet, perhaps celebrating their discharge.⁸ From farther east comes Jupiter of Heliopolis; he was invoked by a Syrian to protect Marcus Aurelius and Commodus.⁹

CHRISTIANITY AND ITS RIVALS¹⁰

In the Severan period, both in Ostia town and by the harbours, while the oriental cults and the cult of the imperial house grew in popularity, many at least of the traditional cults held their own. The religious pattern of the later third and early fourth century is much more elusive. The small number of inscriptions surviving from Ostia is a reflection of the sharp decline that set in during the third century. Some thirty inscriptions are associated with the Ostian cult of Cybele between the accession of Antoninus Pius and the end of the Severan dynasty: from that point until the middle of the fourth century only one dated inscription survives, the record of an imperial *taurobolium* celebrated between

¹ IG xiv. 915.

² Ibid. 916.

³ 18 = Thylander, B 293.

⁴ 19.

⁵ 123 = Thylander, B 308, as restored by Lanciani: '[numini Isid]is et | [magnae deum] matris | [Idaeae sac]rum | [cultores Ser]apis scholam | [constituta]m sua pecunia | [dedicave]runt . . . '.

⁶ 55; 286 = Thylander, B 295, is an 'album sacrat(orum)'. Thylander suggests Isis worshippers. Cumont, noting the titles *pater* and *leo*, rightly associates with Mithras, *Textes et monuments . . . de Mithra*, ii. 117 n. 140.

⁷ 22 = Merlat, *Répertoire des inscriptions . . . du culte de Jupiter Dolichenus*, 265.

⁸ 110 = Merlat, 264.

⁹ 24 = Thylander, B 297.

¹⁰ See also Addenda.

251 and 253.¹ In the cult of Isis a devotee of senatorial status honours 'the priest of the revered queen' in the middle of the third,² but most of the Isiac inscriptions belong to the second century. Similarly most at any rate of the evidence for the cult of Serapis comes from the second half of the second century or the early years of the third. So far as our limited evidence goes, only one of the original cults shows signs of strength in the third century. Mithraism, which had expanded vigorously under Commodus, continued for some time to exercise a strong attraction. Few Mithraic records are dated, but to judge from the lettering of the inscriptions, the physical remains of the buildings, and the style of paintings, mosaics, and sculptures, the cult was still flourishing through the third century. It was against Mithraism that the Christian apologists of the third century launched their keenest attacks and it is possible that at Ostia the rivalry between the two creeds was sharp.

One of the most surprising features of Ostian excavations has been the comparative insignificance of explicit Christian evidence. Though a substantial proportion of Ostia's tombs have been fully or partly explored, less than a hundred Christian epitaphs have been found and most of them seem to belong to the fourth century or later. If M. Curtius Victorinus, whose funerary inscription is clearly Christian—'M. Curtius Victorinus et Plotia Marcella viventes fecerunt si deus permiserit sibi'—is to be identified with the *lenuncularius* of the same name who is listed in the guild's roll of A.D. 192,³ he is the earliest of whom we know.

On general grounds it would not be surprising if Christianity was slow to gain a firm hold in Ostia. It was at Puteoli that St. Paul landed when he brought his appeal as a Roman citizen to Rome, and Christianity grew roots most easily in towns such as Puteoli, Naples, and Pompeii which had had a long and close association with the Greek-speaking world. It was only when the building of Trajan's harbour drew the eastern trade more and more from Puteoli and the southern ports that Christian influence was likely to be strongly felt at Ostia.

Christianity also spread most easily where large Jewish communities were already established, and there is no good evidence to suggest that the number of Jews in Ostia or by the harbours was ever large. The evidence for a Jewish organization at Ostia is confined to a restoration in a single inscription, which was found some miles outside Ostia.^{4*}

¹ 42.

² 352.

³ 1900; 251, col. 1. 25.

⁴ NS 1906, 410 (found at Castel Porziano): '[universitas] Iudaeorum | [in col(onia) Ost(iensium) commor]antium.'

Unless and until more evidence of Jewish names or Jewish monuments is found within the town, no conclusions should be drawn from the restoration.* A large number of Jewish inscriptions including reference to a synagogue and an organized community have been attributed to the harbours, but convincing arguments have recently been put forward to show that the most important inscriptions in the series were almost certainly taken to the bishop's palace at Portus from Rome.¹

But it is too early to speak confidently of the early growth of Christianity in Ostia. Most of the Christian epitaphs so far found come from tombs near the church of S. Ercolano; earlier Christian cemeteries may yet be discovered. If they existed they are likely to have been some distance from the town, and in such areas there has been no systematic exploration. Brief consideration of the third-century evidence confirms the warning. Within the walls there are few certain traces of Christianity, and the number of Christian epitaphs remains small. But the literary tradition suggests that, by the middle of the third century, Christianity was firmly rooted, for in the later records of a third-century persecution Ostia already has her bishop, presbyters, and deacon.

The story concerns the Christian activities of Aurea, an imperial princess who was banished to Ostia for her refusal to abandon the faith; Censorinus, a high Roman official, who was committed to prison in Ostia; and the bishop Cyriacus, with other leaders of the Ostian church.² When Censorinus is visited in prison by a presbyter, his chains are miraculously loosed, and the soldiers on guard, overwhelmed by the miracle, are converted and baptized. The climax comes when news reaches Rome that a cobbler's son has been brought back from the dead. An official is sent down to investigate. The soldiers, refusing to recant, are executed 'by an arch in front of the theatre'; Aurea, Cyriacus the bishop, a presbyter, and a deacon are put to death. Alexander Severus, Claudius Gothicus, and Trebonianus Gallus are named as the emperors concerned in variant versions. We can probably eliminate Alexander Severus who, in Church tradition, was sympathetic to the Christians.

Much of the detail in the story is unacceptable. Different martyrdoms have probably been conflated, but that the tradition of this persecution

¹ H. J. Leon, 'The Jewish community of ancient Porto', *Harvard Theol. Rev.* 45 (1952) 165.

² Further discussed, p. 518.

was firmly rooted in actual events is confirmed by its commemoration in Ostia. In the early Middle Ages a small oratory was built near the south-east corner of the theatre area. The walls were poorly constructed of miscellaneous material from other buildings and collapsed when the town was deserted; but near the ruins were discovered a number of sarcophagi.¹ One has a figure of Orpheus, commonly adopted in early Christian monuments to represent the good shepherd, and on its lid is the simple inscription 'hic Quiriacus dormit in pace'.² Perhaps, when the oratory was built, the remains of the martyrs were collected and laid to rest near the scene of their martyrdom. As late as the twelfth century a priest from Ostia still celebrated mass in this oratory of the martyrs, known as the church of St. Cyriacus, though the Via Ostiensis by which he came from medieval Ostia to the theatre was overgrown, and grass and brambles covered mounds of ruins on either side of the road.³

Aurea's memory is preserved in the church dedicated to her in Ostia. The present building dates from the fifteenth century, but it was not the first church on the site. A basilica of S. Aurea was in ruin, 'distecta vel disrupta', at the end of the seventh century.⁴ Her name has recently been found on a half-column in the church;⁵ the lettering is not later than the fifth century.

Other Christian martyrs are recorded in similar traditions and in the lists of martyrs,⁶ and some of them may have died in the third century. There is independent evidence that a basilica had been built by the tomb of one of these martyrs, Asterius, before the time of Pope Damasius (366-84), and this may provide an important clue.⁷ It is probable that, before Christianity prevailed in the fourth century, the Christians met and worshipped in the cemeteries outside the walls. This will help to explain why there is so little evidence within the town itself.

That the Christian community of Ostia was firmly established before the reign of Constantine is clear also from the presence of Maximus, bishop of Ostia, at the council summoned by Constantine to Rome in October 313 to heal the divisions in the African Church.⁸ Inscriptions add a little substance to the picture; most of them come from tombs near to the modern cemetery by the church of S. Ercolano. Very few of

¹ Vaglieri, *NS* 1910, 126; *Nuovo bull. arch. crist.* (1910), 57.

² Phot. *NS* 1910, 137.

³ p. 520 n. 3.

⁴ *Lib. Pont.* i. 376.

⁵ M. F. Squarciapino, *Museo della via Ostiense* (1955) 35.

⁶ See Appendix VII, p. 518.

⁷ p. 524.

⁸ Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'église*, ii⁴ (1910) 110 f.

the epitaphs give any indication of status or occupation, but one commemorates an official of the mint established in 309 by Maxentius;¹ another a presbyter,² but his date is uncertain. Recurrent formulas are found, and some of them are distinctively Ostian. The comparison of death to sleep, so common later, is in Roman times rare outside Ostia.³ Similarly the phrases 'si deus permiserit', 'cum deus voluerit', 'quando deus voluerit' are not commonly found elsewhere.⁴ To the evidence of inscriptions may be added a large number of Christian lamps found at scattered points in the town and a Christian glass with the words 'bibe, zeses' in gold lettering at the bottom, and the Christian symbol of a fish in relief on one side.⁵ But of Christian meeting-places in this period there is no secure evidence.

The list of Ostian martyrs is not long. In the present state of our evidence it seems probable that Christianity made little headway at Ostia during the second century, but spread widely during the economic distress of the third century. By the time of Augustine it was a well-established tradition that the Pope should be consecrated by the bishop of Ostia.⁶

While Christianity and Mithraism were struggling for supremacy in the third century, how fared the traditional cults? The evidence is extremely slender and does not afford a clear answer. Only one temple is demonstrably later than the end of the second century, but it is one of the most imposing in the town. This 'Round Temple', as it must be called until it is identified, adjoins the Basilica to the west and is built on a monumental scale with a handsome forecourt. Though it has been attributed to the fourth century it is almost certainly to be placed, by the character of its brickwork, towards the middle of the third century.⁷ It would be of particular interest to know to what cult it was dedicated.

The dedication, towards the end of the third century or a little later, of a large new altar in front of the temple of Hercules by the prefect of the corn supply, who was by then responsible for supervising the government of Ostia, shows that the cult of Hercules was still main-

¹ 1878.

² 1879.

³ De Rossi, *Bull. arch. crist.* (1875) 104; M. B. Ogle, 'The Sleep of Death', *MAAR* 11 (1933) 109 f.

⁴ De Rossi, *Bull. arch. crist.* (1873) 143.

⁵ Paschetto, 183.

⁶ Augustine, *Breviculus collationis cum Donatistis*, coll. 3. 16 (Migne, *PL* xliii. 641): 'sicut nec Romanae Ecclesiae ordinat aliquis episcopus metropolitanus, sed de proximo Ostiensis episcopus.' *Lib. Pont.* i. 202: 'hic (Marcus, A.D. 336) constituit ut episcopus Hostiae qui consecrat episcopum palleum uteretur et ab eodem episcopus urbis Romae consecraretur.'

⁷ p. 550.

tained.¹ But one traditional cult at least was declining. At some point the temple area of Bona Dea outside Porta Marina was drastically reduced. The colonnade that surrounded an open court in front of and to the south of her temple was suppressed, and the southern half of the area was converted to other purposes. A new wall cut the area in two and the southern end was divided into a series of rooms, perhaps used as shops.² The new construction, in block and brick, probably belongs to the third century. The festival of Castor and Pollux, attested for the early third century and for the fourth, was still no doubt maintained through the third, and the *pontifex Volcani* preserved his authority in religious matters. Some of the unpretentious dedications to Silvanus are probably also from this period, but of the other traditional cults we learn nothing.

It is possible that, in this period of difficult transition from a commercial to a residential town, philosophical speculation played a bigger part than it had done hitherto among the more leisured class of Ostians. Even when the town was expanding vigorously from the profits of trade, philosophers could find Ostia congenial. Aulus Gellius reports a visit by the learned Favorinus in the early second century. He was joined by two leading representatives of the Peripatetic and Stoic schools from Rome, and a lively discussion developed as they strolled along the shore towards dusk.³ Minucius Felix' dialogue between pagan and Christian has a similar setting. But, when prosperity had passed, the climate was more favourable. In an attractive building on the east side of the *Semita dei Cippi*, equipped with a small set of baths, two heads were found representing the same man. He was almost certainly a philosopher, and the style is not far from the middle of the third century. Perhaps the building was used as a meeting-place for philosophical discussions; it has been persuasively argued that the man they honoured in this striking way was Plotinus, the great leader of the neo-Platonists.⁴

The evidence for the harbour district is less fruitful for the third century than for the second. The cult of Serapis was certainly flourishing in the Severan period, and the close contact with the Alexandrian corn fleet probably ensured its continuity; it is likely to have declined when Constantine transferred the corn of Egypt from Rome to his new eastern

¹ *AE* 1948, 126.

² Calza, *NS* 1942, 164.

³ Aul. Gell. xviii. 1.

⁴ The suggestion, first made by H. P. L'Orange, *Les Cahiers archéologiques*, 5 (1951) 15, is supported, with further argument, by R. Calza, *Boll. d'Arte*, 38 (1953) 203. A third head of the same man probably also comes from Ostia.

capital. To the oriental cults attested in the second century can be added the cult of Syrian Marnas, for the city of Gaza honoured the emperor Gordian as benefactor 'at the prompting of their ancestral god and through Tiberius Claudius Papirius, keeper of the temple'.¹ The dedication was made at the harbours, and the temple of which Papirius was keeper was presumably a temple of Marnas in the harbour area. One of the dedications of Silvanus is probably to be dated to this period;² of other pagan cults no evidence has yet been found.

The evidence of the growth of Christianity by the harbours before Constantine is scarcely more satisfactory than for Ostia. According to a late tradition Hippolytus was bishop of Portus in the middle of the third century; but much that is recorded of him applies with little doubt to the Roman Hippolytus, a dangerous thinker whose place in the Papal succession it was convenient to obscure.³ However, though the confused threads cannot now be disentangled, it is probable that a Hippolytus was among the martyrs of Portus. The site of his church on Isola Sacra is still marked by a medieval campanile, and an earlier church was largely destroyed by the Vandals in the fifth century.⁴ He was, however, probably not a bishop. When Christianity was first developing, the harbour settlement was controlled from Ostia, and the bishop of Ostia probably presided over both Christian communities. The first bishop of Portus who is firmly attested was present at the Council of Arles in 314.⁵ It may be significant that the Christian formula 'hic dormit in pace', characteristic of Ostia but not found in this period at Rome, is shared by Portus, though each centre also has individual expressions which are not found in the other. Such phrases as 'cum deus voluerit', 'cum deus permiserit', are not found at Portus; 'in deo (or in domino) vivas', common at Portus, is not found at Ostia.

In the cemetery of Isola Sacra there are no Christian records in the main phase of development in the first half of the second century. When earlier tombs were reused in the late third and early fourth centuries, three Christian inscriptions and a Christian sarcophagus are found.⁶ Most of the Christian inscriptions come from a cemetery on the north side of Trajan's canal, near its junction with the Tiber;⁷ it probably did not develop before the third century.

¹ IG xiv. 926; Taylor, 79.

² S 4328.

³ p. 526.

⁴ p. 98.

⁵ Duchesne, *Histoire ancienne de l'église*, ii⁴ (1910) 113.

⁶ Thylander, A 283-5; Calza, *Necropoli*, 215.

⁷ De Rossi, *Bull. arch. crist.* (1866) 45-49.

Early Christian tradition records a long list of martyrdoms at the harbours in the periods of persecution, in contrast with the comparatively lean record from Ostia.¹ They include Bonosa, who was put to death with fifty soldiers whom she had converted. In 1837 a large fragment was found near the junction of Tiber and canal of an inscription commemorating 'the holy and most blessed martyrs Eutropius, Bonosa, and Zosima'. It records the enhancement of a tomb and the building beside it by Bishop Donatus of a basilica 'for the holy people of God'.² Twenty years later a random search for marble revealed at the same site a large fragment of an inscription recording in hexameters the triumphant reception of Zosima in heaven.³

The list of Portus martyrs also includes Taurinus and Herculaneus. Their memory was still revered on a fifth-century sarcophagus: 'Deo patri . . . sanctis martyribus Taurino et Herculano omni ora gratias agimus.' This inscription may have been found at Ostia rather than Portus, but it seems to refer to the Portus martyrs.⁴ That Christianity was stronger by the harbour than in the old town during this period is probable but cannot yet be proved.

By the end of the third century Christianity had permeated all ranks in Roman society. When Constantine accepted the sign of the cross and professed himself Christian he gave a powerful incentive for further conversions. When later he declared Christianity to be the state religion it might have been thought that pagan cults, old and new, would quickly disintegrate. But at Rome the magnificent churches of Constantine and his successors are balanced by *taurobolia*, celebrated by the Roman nobility, and a continuous pagan polemic. Neither toleration nor persecution at first succeeded, and for a brief period in the middle of the fourth century the empire once again fell under a pagan ruler. It was not until the closing years of the century that the final victory of Christianity was won.

Of this struggle between faiths old and new there are tantalizing glimpses at Ostia. Anastasius in his life of Pope Silvester records that Constantine built at Ostia a basilica to the blessed apostles Peter, Paul,

¹ p. 526.

² 1937 = Thylander, B 234; De Rossi, *Bull. arch. crist.* (1866) 46.

³ 1938 = Thylander, B 235; De Rossi, art. cit. 47. See also p. 529.

⁴ 1942, reported by Marini to have been brought to Rome 'ex agro Ostiensi'. These martyrs were said to have been buried at Portus (p. 528), but the little church of S. Ercolano at Ostia may have commemorated them. The earliest work in this much restored church may date from the fifth century.

and John.¹ No trace of this basilica has been found, and it has been suggested that the basilica was in fact built at Portus, for a church, of unknown date, of the blessed apostles Peter and Paul is there attested.² But the text of Anastasius is precise: 'in civitate Hostia, iuxta Portum urbis Romae', an interesting reflection on the comparative importance of the two centres in the late Empire. Moreover, the endowment of Constantine's basilica is specified: it includes two properties 'in the territory of Ostia', one of which, 'Balneolum', is recalled by the modern Bagnolo, a farm on the northern side of the Ostian plain, west from Acilia. The endowment is generous, and the basilica should have been built on a substantial scale. Until the remaining third of the town has been excavated the evidence of the Pope's biographer should be accepted.

In the excavated area, which includes the central and most important part of the town, there are no Christian buildings of impressive stature. On the north of the eastern Decumanus two small basilicas have been associated with Christian worship, but neither was built originally for a Christian community and, if they were converted to Christian use, the conversion was probably late. For one, the so-called Aula del Buon Pastore, the evidence is limited to a figure of the Good Shepherd, holding a lamb on his shoulder, with two sheep at his feet: the figures are sculptured on a cut-down column of Cipollino and probably date from the late third or early fourth century.³ Though the representation is clearly Christian it is possible that it was not found in its original setting. The so-called Aula di Marte e Venere⁴ has no better claim. Its final form, reached after many modifications, with two balancing apses and a raised eastern end, is suited to Christian worship, and in it was found a richly ornamented pagan funerary altar from which the decoration had been erased and the top removed; Moretti suggests that it may have been used as a stoup for holy water.⁵ It is, however, an embarrassment that in this building was also found a life-size group of Mars and Venus.⁶ Traces can also be seen of a water-pipe running round the northern apse, which would have been out of place in the church.

Two Christian buildings of the late Empire are, however, beyond controversy. At some point the western wing of the Baths of Mithras

¹ *Lib. Pont.* i. 183 f.

² Paschetto, 86 f.

³ R. Paribeni, *NS* 1916, 143 and 410 f.


⁴ G. Moretti, *NS* 1920, 41-66.

⁵ *Ibid.* 48 f., 58.

⁶ *Ibid.* 59; B. M. Felletti Maj, *Museo Nazionale Romano, Ritratti* (1953), n. 236.

was converted to Christian use. A large apse was added at the northern end and a choir or presbytery was marked off by a wooden or metal railing flanked by two marble posts with the Christian monogram.¹ The pavement of this Christian church had already been restored with a miscellaneous collection of pagan epitaphs while it still belonged to the baths: from this restoration and from the style of the apse and the Christian monogram the conversion can be dated with some probability near the middle of the fourth century.² It is significant that underneath the wing of these baths taken over by the Christians was a large Mithraeum. The sculptured group of Mithras slaying the bull was found in scattered fragments; it had been deliberately broken.³

The only building known to us which was from the outset designed for Christian use has attracted sharp controversy. It has been fully described by Calza and a brief summary will here suffice.⁴ The building lies on the west side of the western Decumanus. It is built over an earlier street, whose entry to the Decumanus it closes. This street was flanked by shops on the south side and on the north by public baths. The shop entrances were closed to form the south wall; on the north side three rooms were incorporated from the baths. The shape of the new building, governed by the earlier walls it used, is long and narrow, divided by a row of columns; and it has three rooms, possibly chapels, on its northern side. At the west end the southern half of the building is separated from the main building. Its entrance is marked by two columns supporting an architrave on which is inscribed:

in  Geon Fison Tigris Eufрата
 <Ti> Cri[st]ianorum sumite fontes.⁵ ★

There has been much dispute about the nature, date, and identification of this building. On its nature Calza's judgement still seems to be right, that it was a Christian basilica and that the inscription marks the entrance to a baptistery.⁶ Calza is less convincing when he identifies the building with Constantine's basilica. The evidence available for assessing the date is not substantial; it consists of the inscription over the 'baptistery', the style of construction, and a name on one of the columns.

¹ Calza, 'Nuove testimonianze del cristianesimo a Ostia', *Rend. Pont.* 25-26 (1949-51) 129; Becatti, *Topografia*, 160.

² See also p. 552.

³ Becatti, *Mitrei*, 32, 139.

⁴ Calza, *Rend. Pont.* 16 (1940) 63.

⁵ I assume, with Calza, that 'Ti', at the beginning of the second line, is a cutter's error, a mental echo from the first line. The surface for two letter spaces following 'ri' is lost. If it had been damaged before the inscription was cut, the cutter may have written TIGRIANORUM.

⁶ See Note H, p. 474. See also Addenda.

None of these clues is decisive; together they point to a date not earlier than the middle of the fourth century.

On one of the columns used in the basilica is the name Volusianus, which recurs on other similar columns in a dump in the area of the near-by temple of the shipbuilders. Presumably the pagan temple had been abandoned and its area was being used by a dealer in marble. Calza identified this Volusianus with Rufus Volusianus, city prefect in 310; the identification confirmed his view that this was Constantine's basilica. But the style of construction and the plan of the building make this view untenable. Constantine's building was richly endowed; this small basilica is squeezed in between secular buildings. It uses existing walls wherever possible, and its new walls are constructed from miscellaneous material, without pattern or form.

In closing the shop entrances on the southern side no attempt was made to provide a continuously straight line for the new wall; and the backs of these closures and of the baptistery apse were left unfaced. This suggests either that they backed on to ruins or that no attempt was being made to keep up appearances in the area. Such miserable conditions do not fit the early fourth century. Similarly the inscription on the architrave above the entrance to the baptistery is poorly cut and poorly centred; and the stone had already been used for two different purposes, originally in a building carrying an inscription, later as a threshold.¹

Fuhrmann's identification of Volusianus with C. Caeionius Rufus Volusianus Lampadius, praetorian prefect in 355 and city prefect in 365, carries greater conviction.² The association of this Volusianus with Ostia is attested by the record which he has left of a *taurobolium* celebrated in honour of the Great Mother;³ his name on columns used for a Christian basilica need not necessarily imply that he had himself become a Christian. Fuhrmann sees confirmation in the character of this Volusianus. Ammianus Marcellinus describes the man as a creature of vanity who blazed his name on buildings throughout Rome, obliterating all traces of the original builders.⁴ In having his name inscribed on columns Fuhrmann thinks that he was acting in character. But the comparison has little force. When Volusianus advertised himself he did it in monumental inscriptions on public buildings; the rough

¹ Pl. xxxvii b. This was first observed in 1957. The original inscription has not yet been published.

² H. Fuhrmann, *Epigraphica*, 3 (1941) 103, accepted by Bloch, *NS* 1953, 273.

³ Bloch, 34.

⁴ *Amm. Marc.* xxvii. 3. 5-7.

inscriptions on these columns are merely marks of ownership. The identification should therefore be left open. The shoddiness of the building makes a later date, in the late fourth or in the fifth century, more probable, and the inscription cannot be dated within narrow limits. A Roman aristocrat who proclaimed his pagan sympathies by a *taurobolium* is not likely to have allowed his columns to be used by the religion he was fighting. The Volusianus of the basilica's columns was probably a Christian, perhaps the grandson of Lampadius.¹

A lead pipe stamped with the word 'aeclesiae' was found during the 1938 excavations.² The building served by this pipe was either a church or church property. The lettering is very poor, not earlier than the late fourth century and probably from the fifth; but, since it is not known where the pipe was found, it would be dangerous to associate it with the basilica on the western Decumanus.

One other document might possibly have a Christian context. On one of the columns at the west end of the Macellum an inscription was cut, probably in the fourth century: *lege et intellige mutu loqui* (or *mutu-loqui*) *ad macellu*. Calza, in noting the text, assumes that the cutter made a slip and intended to write 'multu loqui', warning the passer-by that there was much gossip in the market.³ This interpretation is most improbable. The inscription is carefully cut in large letters;⁴ the cutter evidently attached importance to what he was saying, and must have taken considerable time in the cutting. Could this refer to a Christian miracle, the recovery of speech by a dumb man in the market? The formula 'lege et intellige' is used in Christian writing,⁵ but we should expect also the Christian monogram, or some other explicit Christian reference. The cryptic utterance at least deserves reinterpretation.

Of all the Christian associations of Ostia the most moving is the death of Monica, mother of Augustine. She had come in 388 from Milan with her son and was resting a few days at Ostia, away from the crowded area of the harbours, to recover from the long journey before returning to her native Africa. Augustine describes in his *Confessions* how they stood alone together, leaning out of a window which looked onto an inner garden, and speculated on the nature of the life eternal of the saints. But within five days Monica was overtaken by a fever

¹ p. 474 n. 1.

² Barbieri, 'Fistole inedite', NS 1953, 162 n. 15. The place of finding is not recorded.

³ *Ostia* (1954) 43.

⁴ The inscription is 1.27 m. long; the letters decrease in height from 8 to 5 cm.

⁵ Matt. xxiv. 15; Marci xiii. 14; Act. Ap. viii. 30.

and, after a short illness, died in perfect peace. Though she had always set her heart on being buried by her husband in her African home, she asked, as death approached, to be buried where she died: 'nothing is far from God; there is no fear that at the end of time He will not know where to raise me from the dead'.¹ A manuscript copy survived of a verse epitaph that was said to have been added to Monica's tomb by the consular Anicius Bassus.² In the summer of 1945 two boys, playing in a small courtyard beside the church of S. Aurea in Ostia, began to dig a hole to plant a post for their game. They disturbed a fragment of marble; it contained part of the original inscription.³ Perhaps Anicius Bassus may be identified with the only senatorial Christian securely attested in Ostia on a late dedication: 'Anicius Auchenius Bassus v(ir) c(larissimus) et Turrenia Honorata c(larissima) f(emina) eius cum filiis Deo sanctisque devoti.'⁴

But when all the Christian evidence of the fourth century is assembled it is far less impressive than we should at first expect. The Christian buildings in particular are improvised, poorly built, and lacking any signs of wealth. Yet there was wealth in Ostia, as the large number of houses richly decorated with marble and mosaics in the fourth century demonstrates beyond a doubt. It is significant that only one of these houses shows traces of Christian decoration. The so-called House of the Fishes takes its name from a mosaic in which the association of fish and chalice has a very probable Christian reference;⁵ in none of the other houses does the surviving decoration have a specifically Christian character. We cannot from this infer that none of the other late houses excavated were occupied by Christians but, had they been predominantly Christian homes, some further traces of Christianity would surely have been apparent. A fine Christian bowl was found in the House of the Porch, on the east side of the *Semita dei Cippi*.⁶ But the bowl dates from the late fourth or early fifth century: when the

¹ Augustine, *Confess.* ix. 10-13.

² De Rossi, *Inscriptiones Christianae*, ii. 252; Paschetto, 184.

³ A. Casamassa, 'Ritrovamento di parte dell' elogio di S. Monica', *Rend. Pont.* 27 (1952-4) 271.

⁴ 1875; Paschetto, 181; Symmachus (Seeck) xciii.

⁵ Becatti, *Case Ostiensi del tardo impero*, 18, 51; Calza, *Rend. Pont.* 25-26 (1949-51) 126. In addition to the mosaic a fish in relief on marble (now lost) was incorporated in a semi-circular basin in the court, which Becatti (p. 51) identifies as a baptismal basin. Though the fish is commonly used as a Christian symbol, both mosaic and relief could be pagan decoration. H. Schaal (*Ostia, der Welthafen Roms*, 153) rejects any Christian reference, but he has not, I think, fully met Becatti's argument.

⁶ M. F. Squarciapino, *Boll. d'Arte*, 37 (1952) 204.

house was built, not earlier than the late third century, it had an underground pagan chapel.

It is at least a tenable hypothesis that a large section of the upper classes remained pagan for much of the fourth century and that Christianity flourished mainly among the poor. Symmachus, one of the leaders of the pagan opposition in the second half of the century, had a villa outside Ostia; we could gladly sacrifice much of his dreary epistolary exercises for a realistic report on the attitude of his Ostian neighbours in the long-drawn-out struggle.

A few indications of this pagan opposition survive. At Rome the cult of Cybele formed a rallying-point for the nobility; at Ostia an inscription on a statuette, now headless, of Dionysius, records a *taurobolium* celebrated by the mid-century Volusianus, who had held the two great prefectures at Rome.¹ A small altar, of the late third or early fourth century, records another *taurobolium* by a Roman senator: 'Marcarianus v(ir) c(larissimus) taur(oboliatu)s m(atr)i d(eum) d(edit) d(edicavit).'²

The finding of the cult statue of Attis in perfect condition far away from its original setting suggests that it was deliberately hidden. Similarly dedications belonging to the *cannophori* were walled in behind the temple of Cybele.³ Mithraism had been the main challenge to Christianity among the middle and lower classes. The building of a Christian church above a Mithraeum in the Baths of Mithras was probably deliberate policy; the cult group was violently destroyed. It is probably also significant that another Mithraeum seems to have been sacked and destroyed by fire.⁴ Christian tradition records a persecution in the brief reign of the pagan Julian; no official persecution is attested in any reliable source, but there may well have been a strong local reaction at Ostia. It was at this time, according to the story of Gallicanus, that Hilarinus, who used his home as a rest-house for Christian travellers from overseas, was put to death.⁵

The final glimpse of paganism at Ostia has a fitting context.⁶ Julian's attempt to revive paganism was followed by a strong reaction. The

¹ Bloch, 34; *Museo*, 165: 'Volusianus v(ir) c(larissimus) ex prae(fe)c(tis) taurobolium d(ono) d(edit).'

² *AE* 1948, 25; cf. *ILS* 4094 (from Rome): 'VIRIUS | MARCARIANUS V.C. DEAM CYBEBEN P.S.'

³ Visconti, *Ann. Inst.* 40 (1868) 390.

⁴ Becatti, *Mithei*, 28.

⁵ p. 523.

⁶ Bloch, 'A New Document of the Last Pagan Revival in the West', *Harvard Theol. Rev.* 38 (1945) 199. For a further reflection of this pagan reaction see p. 588.

emperor Gratian in 382 withdrew a grant of public funds for the old public cults and ordered the removal of the altar of Victory from the Roman senate house. In spite of vigorous protests this policy was maintained, largely under the influence of Ambrose, bishop of Milan, but not for long. By 389 Ambrose had temporarily lost his influence and pagan leaders were again given positions of high responsibility; but in February 391 Ambrose was again in the ascendant. A decree was issued outlawing pagan cults and the great Serapeum of Alexandria was destroyed. This, however, was not the end. Eugenius, declared emperor in August 392, was nominally a Christian but had pagan sympathies. When his attempt to remain on terms with his colleague in the purple, Theodosius, failed, he appealed to the pagan nobility for support and paid subsidies for pagan cults as a personal gift. Theodosius named his son Honorius Augustus and Eugenius was forced to fight. Flavianus, leader of the pagan opposition, was in command of his army, Jupiter and Hercules accompanied him on the battlefield. The decisive battle at the Frigidus, in August 394, was lost.

In this brief interlude of Eugenius' reign, the prefect of the corn supply restored the cella of Hercules at Ostia:¹ it is likely that the gesture had local support. But the defeat at the Frigidus meant the end of open opposition, at Ostia as at Rome. Pagan undercurrents doubtless survived into the fifth century,² but the growing insecurity of property further weakened the class which had kept paganism alive. The Ostia which survived the fifth-century invasions was probably a dominantly Christian community.

Christianity met strong pagan opposition at Ostia during the late Empire; the atmosphere at Portus was probably different. The pagans at Ostia, it has been suggested, came primarily from the wealthy residents in the well-appointed private houses of the fourth century; they reflected the temper and behaviour of the senatorial aristocracy at Rome. Portus was more directly influenced by the emperors; and, unlike Ostia, it never became a residential town. Portus was also more open than Ostia to influences from the provinces, and of all the provinces Africa was most closely linked with Rome. African Christianity was particularly vigorous in the fourth century; traders were accom-

¹ Bloch, *ibid.* 201.

² At the end of the fifth century the cult of Castor and Pollux was attacked by Gelasius. It survived in Rome, and probably therefore at Ostia. *Gelasii Papae epistulae et decreta: Adversus Andromachum*, PL 59, col. 114: 'Castores vestri certe, a quorum cultu desistere noluistis.'

panied by pilgrims on their way to Rome. Already in the third century Cyprian writes of the many confessors of the faith who came from Africa, and of their reception at Portus.¹ It was for such pilgrims that the Roman senator, Pammachius, friend of Jerome and Augustine, at the end of the fourth century, built a large rest-house, *xenodochium*, at Portus.² The rooms were built round an open court surrounded by a colonnade.

Attached to the *xenodochium* was a basilica with three naves. Finely worked glass bowls and plates decorated with Christian scenes were found in the building;³ they suggest wealthy patronage.

Portus was probably won for Christianity more quickly and completely than Ostia.

¹ Cyprian, *Ep.* 21. 4.

² Jerome, *Epp.* 66. 11; 77. 10: 'xenodochium in portu Romano situm totus pariter mundus audivit. sub una aestate didicit Britannia, quod Aegyptus et Parthus agnoverant vere.' For the archaeological evidence, De Rossi, *Bull. arch. crist.* (1866) 50; Lugli, *Porto*, 44. But see Addenda.

³ De Rossi, *Bull. arch. crist.* (1868) 37; M. F. Squarciapino, 'Vetri incisi Portuensi del Museo Sacro del Vaticano', *Rend. Pont.* 27 (1952-4) 255.

16

RECREATION

BATHS

BALNEA, vina, Venus, mecum senuere per annos. . . .¹ The order of pleasures in this Ostian epitaph is not significant.¹ The hexameter had to begin with dactyl or spondee and *balnea* fitted the purpose admirably. The emphasis, however, is not ridiculous: in the Empire a visit to the baths was the favourite recreation of almost all classes of society.

The building of baths for public use was introduced into Italy in the second century B.C. from the Greek world. At first they were small in scale, modest in decoration, and primarily utilitarian in purpose. By Cicero's day they were becoming more popular and more elaborate, but it was the imperial purse that developed their full magnificence. Agrippa set the precedent in the great new baths he built in the Campus Martius: Nero, Titus, Trajan, and a long succession of emperors down to Constantine followed him. They competed in the size and costliness of their buildings. Seneca had deplored the growing extravagance; Martial rejoiced in it. The public were with Martial.

Baths were popular because they met a variety of needs. Very little washing was done in the home; it was in the public baths that the Romans kept clean. Proper use of the baths was also considered to be good for health, as statues of Aesculapius and Hygia from two sets of Ostian baths suggest.² But it was the social pleasures rather than the utilitarian services of the baths that accounted for their impressive development in the Empire. At the baths the gossip and scandal of the town could be exchanged. They combined the amenities of swimming bath, gymnasium, and community centre; and there was no need to hurry away, for food and drink could be bought on the premises. Since we are apt to associate sculpture, mosaics, and marble-lined walls such as are found in the ruins of Ostian baths with solemn or at least expensive occasions, we need to be reminded by the writers of the realities

¹ 914. The beginning of the verse had a wide currency, cf. *ILS* 8157, *CIL* iii. 12274.

² Porta Marina Baths (p. 104). ? Forum Baths, Paschetto, 152.

of the crowded scene. Seneca, who once took lodgings over a set of public baths, describes his experience vividly:

Picture to yourself the assortment of sounds, which are strange enough to make me hate my very powers of hearing! When your strenuous gentleman, for example, is exercising himself by flourishing leaden weights; when he is working hard, or else pretends to be working hard, I can hear him grunt; and whenever he releases his imprisoned breath, I can hear him panting in wheezy and high-pitched tones. Or perhaps I notice some lazy fellow, content with a cheap rub-down, and hear the crack of the pummeling hand on his shoulder, varying in sound according as the hand is laid on flat or hollow. Then, perhaps, a professional comes along, shouting out the score; that is the finishing touch. Add to this the arresting of an occasional roysterer or pick-pocket, the racket of the man who always likes to hear his own voice in the bath, or the enthusiast who plunges into the swimming-tank with unconscionable noise and splashing. Besides all those whose voices, if nothing else, are good, imagine the hair-plucker with his penetrating shrill voice,—for purposes of advertisement—continually giving it vent and never holding his tongue except when he is plucking the armpits and making his victim yell instead. Then the cake-seller with his varied cries, the sausageman, the confectioner, and all the vendors of food hawking their wares, each with his own distinctive intonation.¹

The baths were not designed for swimming. The cold baths were no larger than small plunge baths and were substantially less than 2 metres in depth; there was no deep end. The sea, however, was near at hand and in the summer months attracted bathers. Minucius Felix, in his description of the sea-shore, speaks of a breakwater to protect them from the waves.²

The normal time for the bath was the afternoon. By then most men had probably completed their work, for the Roman day began much earlier than ours. It is certain at any rate that public baths were not the prerogative of a leisured class. The large number of establishments at Rome and Ostia suggest that they catered for a widespread popular demand; Roman writers confirm it. A charge was made for entry, but the normal fee at Rome seems to have been a quarter of an *as* only;³ very few can have been excluded by poverty. The provision of free bathing in perpetuity or for a limited period, which was a common form of endowment in the Roman world, is not specifically attested yet

¹ Seneca, *Ep.* 56. 1–2 (trans. R. M. Gummere: Loeb, 1925).

² Minucius Felix, *Octavius*, 4.

³ Horace, *Sat.* i. 3. 137; Seneca, *Ep.* 86. 9; Martial iii. 30. 4; Juv. vi. 447.

in Ostia, but it would be surprising if Ostia's poor did not occasionally benefit from such windfalls.

When public baths were first introduced, separate baths were built for men and women. So at Pompeii the two earliest, the Stabian and the Forum Baths, have each two series of rooms and separate entrances for the two sexes. In the central baths, however, at Pompeii, which were still unfinished when the town was destroyed, no such distinction is made; and in Martial's day at Rome, though certain baths were particularly frequented by women, mixed bathing seems to have been the general rule.¹ At Ostia there is no evidence in any of the ruins of special provision for women. The bathing together of the sexes, however, was not always tolerated. Hadrian forbade it, and Marcus Aurelius repeated the ban.² During periods when the ban was strictly enforced it is probable that special hours were reserved for women.³

The earliest Ostian bathing establishment attested by an inscription dates from the late Republic or early Principate,⁴ but no physical remains earlier than the Julio-Claudian period have yet been found. Such baths as existed earlier were probably small and their water had to be drawn from wells. It was only when an aqueduct was built, in or shortly before the principate of Gaius, that the full amenities could be developed. Probably the first establishment to exploit the new supply of water was the set of baths that can be partly seen under the Via dei Vigiles. The area covered by these baths is not yet known, but a mosaic pavement, illustrating the trade of empire, and a large marble basin show that they were handsomely appointed.⁵ Two other establishments probably date from the Julio-Claudian period, but in neither can we see the full plan. One, in the south-east district, has only been partly uncovered;⁶ the other, the Baths of Invidiosus, on the *Semita dei Cippi*, was largely rebuilt in the first half of the second century.

The number and scale of the baths of the early Empire will only be known when excavation has been in due time extended to the lower levels throughout the town. What we see now are the baths that were built in the great rebuilding of Ostia from the late Flavian period onwards or which survived through that rebuilding. The most extensive baths date, as we should expect, from the great period of prosperity in the second century; but in contrast to commercial and industrial

¹ Martial iii. 51. 72. 87; vii. 35; xi. 75.

² SHA, *Had.* 18. 10; *Marc. Aur.* 23. 8.

³ Carcopino, *La Vie quotidienne*, 298 f.

⁴ S 4711.

⁵ NS 1912, 204-8.

⁶ Reg. v. 10. 3; Becatti, *Topografia*, 117.

premises, the number of baths continued to swell into the late Empire.

The fourth-century regional catalogues of Rome draw a distinction between the great imperial *thermae* which are individually named, and the considerably larger number of *balnea* for which only a total number is given. Martial reflects the same distinction:

Titine thermis an lavatur Agrippae
an inpudici balneo Tigillini.¹

This distinction between *thermae* and *balnea* is not consistently maintained by writers or in inscriptions, but it serves a convenient purpose and will be used here. For the same contrast is seen at Ostia as at Rome. Three public baths eclipse all others in scale. All three probably derive from imperial subsidy, and all three can be associated with monumental inscriptions. In addition, there are at least eleven other establishments of varying size, plan, and elegance. They can be approximately dated by the style of their construction, but we do not know to whose initiative they are due; there are no inscriptions to shed light on their history.

The earliest of the three *thermae* are probably the baths south-east of the Porta Marina, which are still largely buried. The Scottish painter, Gavin Hamilton, in a letter of 1775 already quoted writes:

I got as near the sea as possible, judging it the most probable place to find objects of taste. We opened ground on a spot now called Porta Marina. From the figure of the ruins they proved to be the remains of publick Thermae Maritimae, and from the inscriptions which were found of an unusual size, it seems those Baths had been restored by different emperors down to Constantine. I gave a very elegant one of the time of Trajan to Carlo Albagine. . . .²

An inscription which can now be seen in the Capitoline Museum records the restoration and enlargement of *thermae maritimae* in the late fourth century;³ it may be the inscription which gave to Hamilton his name for the building. The name might imply no more than that they were built by the sea-shore; it is more probable that they were called 'maritimae' because their water was drawn from the sea.⁴

These inscriptions and Hamilton's excavations have been commonly associated with a set of baths partly excavated in the middle of the nineteenth century by Visconti, which have been duly marked on plans as *thermae maritimae*. This identification should be abandoned. Visconti's

¹ Martial iii. 20. 15.

² JHS 21 (1901) 314.

³ 137: 'thermas maritimas intresecus refectione cellarum, foris soli adiectione'.

⁴ Cf. ILS 5724 (Pompeii): 'thermas M. Crassi Frugi aqua marina, et baln. aqua dulci'.

baths are built on the line of the Sullan walls, some 100 metres from the sea. The rooms excavated, which form the main functional part at least of the establishment, are Severan in date, and there is no trace of large-scale fourth-century reconstruction. Moreover, Hamilton's indications are specific. While most of Ostia was buried, two tall brick piers stood out in isolation on the south side of the town; a very little distance beyond them the swollen contour of ruins ended, where the ancient shore-line ran. Porta Marina was the name naturally given to these isolated piers,¹ and it was here that Hamilton tried his luck. He found, as we can now see, that the brick piers were in fact part of a large apsidal room belonging to a set of baths. Of the 'Trajanic inscription' which Hamilton gave to a Roman dealer no trace has survived, but there is no good reason to doubt its existence. It is possible that Hamilton was misled by the inclusion of Trajan's name in the titulature of a later emperor, but the natural explanation is that Trajan's name was in the nominative. It is possible that these baths were included in the building programme at Ostia that followed the completion of Trajan's harbour towards the end of the reign, and that they were financed by the emperor.

It was in these baths that the head of Marciana, sister of Trajan, which is now in the Ostia Museum, was found;² and the head of another imperial princess may also have been found here. This general area was included in the excavations of Campana (1831-5). In the ruins of a large room in a set of baths he found a head which is now in Copenhagen.³ It was first identified as Plotina, wife of Trajan, later as his sister Marciana, but Signora Calza may be right in preferring the younger Sabina, wife of Hadrian.⁴ If these baths were begun at the end of Trajan's reign, their construction is likely to have extended into the

¹ A. Nibby, *Viaggio antiquario ad Ostia* (1829) 76.

² Wegner, *Arch. Anz.* 53 (1938) 290; *Museo*, 20.

³ *Bull. Inst.* 6 (1834) 133. The excavation took place 'near the sea coast, where there were traces of magnificent ancient buildings'. No ruins were more conspicuous and tempting than the Baths of Porta Marina. It is not strange, after Hamilton's earlier exploration, that, apart from this imperial head, only fragments of statues were found.

⁴ Plotina in the report of the discovery. F. Poulsen, *Catalogue of ancient sculptures in the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek* (1951), n. 675 (*Billedtavler* (1907) 1v), identifies with Marciana, but does not exclude her daughter Matidia. The identification will remain doubtful, but the hair style shows the portrait to be not later than the first half of Hadrian's reign. For the imperial ladies of this period, not easily distinguished, M. Wegner, 'Datierung römischer Haartrachten', *Arch. Anz.* 53 (1938) 276. A cast of the head is now in the *Horrea Epagathiana* at Ostia.

reign of Hadrian. For such a building history the statues of Marciana and the young Sabina would be very appropriate.

No brickstamps have yet been found in the construction; two dating from Trajan and one from Hadrian, found among the ruins, are an inadequate basis for argument. Becatti dates the construction to Antoninus Pius,¹ but the brickwork of the earliest walls seems to be earlier, and could be Trajanic. A detailed study, following the complete excavation of the building, should resolve the problem. The original plan of the building cannot be recovered from what is now visible. What is clear is that the area covered was large, that the walls were freely lined with marble, and that some of the sculpture in the building was of distinguished quality. The plan was, so far as can be seen, rectangular throughout. The apsidal Frigidarium to the north and two apsidal Tepidaria in the south wing are later refinements.

These Maritime Baths were followed within a generation by the Baths of Neptune on the north side of the eastern Decumanus. These baths were an integral part of a comprehensive plan under which a large district was rebuilt. The brickwork of the district is homogeneous, and brickstamps indicate the last years of Hadrian's principate for the execution of the plan.² The Barracks of the Vigiles, separated from the baths by a street, were in use before Hadrian died. The completion of the baths was delayed, if, as seems virtually certain, an inscription whose precise origin is unrecorded is to be associated with these baths. This records that Antoninus Pius, in the first year of his reign, completed what his predecessor had begun. Hadrian had promised two million sesterces for the building of the baths; Antoninus Pius added the extra money that was required and the marble to complete the decoration.³ It is probably these baths also that are referred to in the career of a second-century P. Lucilius Gamala: 'idem thermas quas divus Pius aedificaverat vi ignis consumptas refecit porticum reparavit.'⁴ In the Baths of Neptune brickstamps dated to the reign of Marcus Aurelius have been found in two of the heated rooms,⁵ and evidence remains of the restoration of the portico on the Decumanus. Most of the brick piers of this portico date from a later reconstruction in the fourth century, but two of the series are much earlier than the rest and probably represent Gamala's restoration. In the record of Gamala's career the

¹ Becatti, *Topografia*, 146. Brickstamps, Bloch, *Topografia*, 227 (iv. 10. 1).

² Bloch, *Bolli laterizi*, 222.

³ 98.

⁴ 218-26.

⁵ Bloch, *Bolli laterizi*, 243.

credit due to Hadrian, which was confirmed by the finding in the baths of a portrait statue of his wife Sabina in the dress of Ceres, is obscured, and the building is ascribed to Pius alone. Bloch is therefore probably right in identifying the Baths of Neptune with the *lavacrum* said by his biographer to have been presented to Ostia by Antoninus Pius.¹

The Baths of Neptune are built to a square plan, each side measuring approximately 67 metres. The baths proper develop from south to north on the east side of the building. An entrance from the Via dei Vigiles leads into a large hall, off which open several rooms which may have been used as dressing-rooms. Adjacent to the north is the Frigidarium, with two baths at its eastern and western ends. The larger of these baths, at the eastern end, received decorative emphasis from two grey granite columns, with Corinthian capitals in Greek marble, which, with two pilasters attached to the side walls, once carried architrave and cornice. Both baths have niches in their walls for statues. From the Frigidarium the bather proceeded through rooms heated with hot air by hypocausts under the floor and hollow pipes lining the walls to the Caldarium, which, in its present form due to a later restoration, has three small baths for hot water. A service passage ran along the west side of this wing, from which the bath attendants fed the furnaces under the floors through stoke-holes. The water for the baths was stored in the north-east corner in upper cisterns to increase the pressure.²

In the centre of the building is an open Palaestra in which exercise could be taken before or after the bath, with a foot-bath in the south-east corner. Blocks of travertine bedded in the ground, with holes in them, were probably used to fix apparatus. The Palaestra is surrounded on three sides by a colonnade of Porta Santa columns. On the south and east sides is a series of rooms which, with one exception, have preserved no distinguishing character. The exception is the central room on the west side; this is larger than the rest, has a marble pavement, and a statue base against its back wall: it was probably here that the portrait statue of Sabina with the attributes of Ceres, found in this room, originally stood.³ These rooms were presumably used for less energetic recreation; the latrine was tucked away in the north-west corner. The building was served by an entrance on each of its four sides.

¹ SHA, *Ant. Pius*, 8. 3; identification, Bloch, *Bolli laterizi*, 245, 267-9.

² Description, with reference to excavation reports, Paschetto, 265.

³ Paschetto, 274, fig. 59; *Museo*, 25.

The entrance to the baths proper was from the Via dei Vigiles on the east; the other three entrances led into the Palaestra.

These baths, though dwarfed by the imperial establishments at Rome, were spacious for Ostia, and they were decorated handsomely. The sculpture found in the ruins included, besides the statue of Sabina, a charming head of a girl, a male bearded head of competent workmanship, and the figure of a youth with fruit and cornucopia.¹ The mosaics from the rooms in the south-east corner, and particularly the vigorous composition which centres on Neptune driving through his watery kingdom, are the product of a highly skilled and inventive craftsman or workshop.² Marble was freely used, not merely in columns, but on floors and to line baths. Of the original paintings which covered the walls of the main hall and other rooms virtually nothing survives. The fragments still visible in the latrine come from a redecoration in the late second or third century: it is, however, interesting to note that this severely utilitarian room was painted with no less care than the living-rooms of the period.

The generous outlay on the baths was accompanied by sound economies. The building has no façade on the Decumanus; it is there fronted by a line of shops opening on a portico supported by brick piers. Probably more money was spent in the shops of the eastern Decumanus than in any other quarter of the town: shops on this frontage could therefore command high rents. The urgent need for accommodation, which is reflected in the contemporary building of so many *insulae*, was also capitalized. On south and west sides solid stairways led from the streets to upper stories. Rent from these apartments and from the shops might help to bridge the gap between bath receipts and the cost of maintenance.

The third of the series of imperial *thermae* was built immediately to the east of the south end of the Forum. The general character of the brickwork seems to be Antonine; brickstamps suggest a date near the death of Antoninus Pius.³ These Forum Baths cover a larger area than the Baths of Neptune; their scale and decoration were more imposing; their plan is more adventurous. But their setting and their disposition have been radically changed since their construction. In the late Empire, and as we see the ruins now, a large open square, with colonnades along east and west sides and a statue in the centre, covered the area between the Decumanus and the eastern half of the north wall of the baths. On

¹ Paschetto, 268, 272, 275.

² p. 449.

³ Bloch, *Bolli laterizi*, 268-76.

this side the baths had two entrances, one of them, towards the west, monumental. These features are the result of fourth-century changes. When the baths were built, what became later an open square was still a block of buildings, separated from the baths by a street.¹

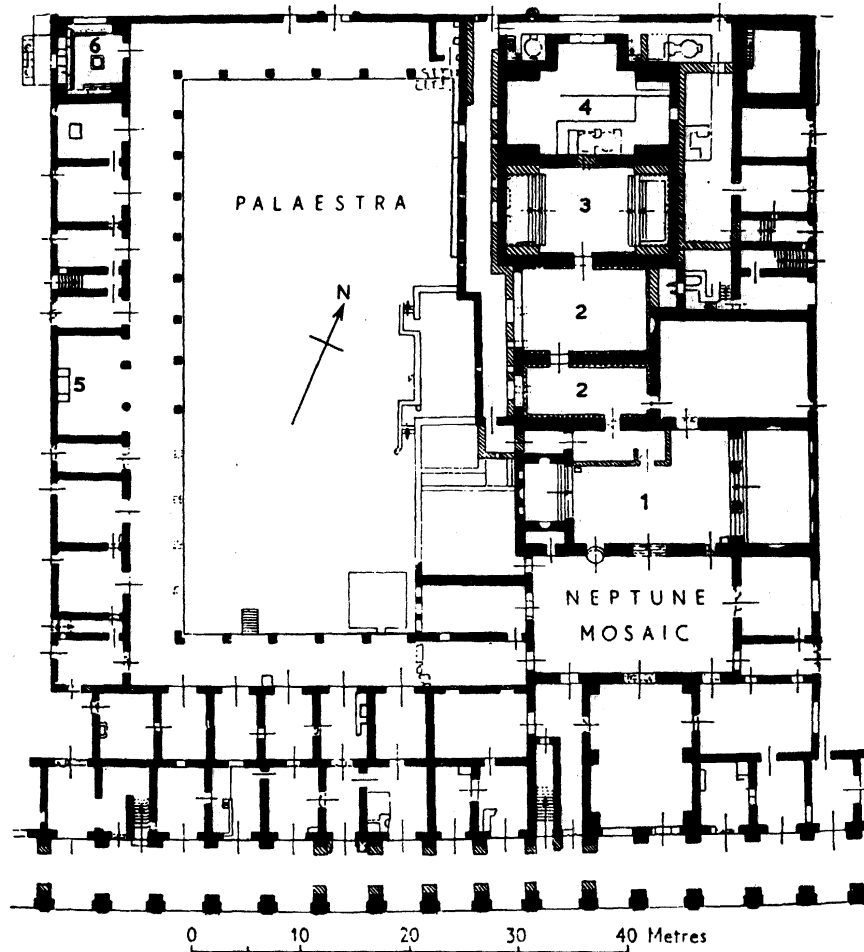


FIG. 28. Baths of Neptune. 1. Frigidarium. 2. Tepidaria. 3. Caldarium. 4. Original Caldarium, later abandoned. 5. Statue of Hadrian's wife Sabina as Ceres. 6. Latrine.

The baths were originally entered by a main entrance from the west, or a subsidiary entrance from the south-east. The northern block was orthodox in plan, rectangular and symmetrical. At either end was a large entrance hall, through which one passed to a further hall, off which opened what may have been dressing-rooms. In the centre of the

¹ Becatti, *Topografia*, 159.

block was the Frigidarium with two baths, on the north and south sides, flanked by small rooms that had sufficient heating in their floor

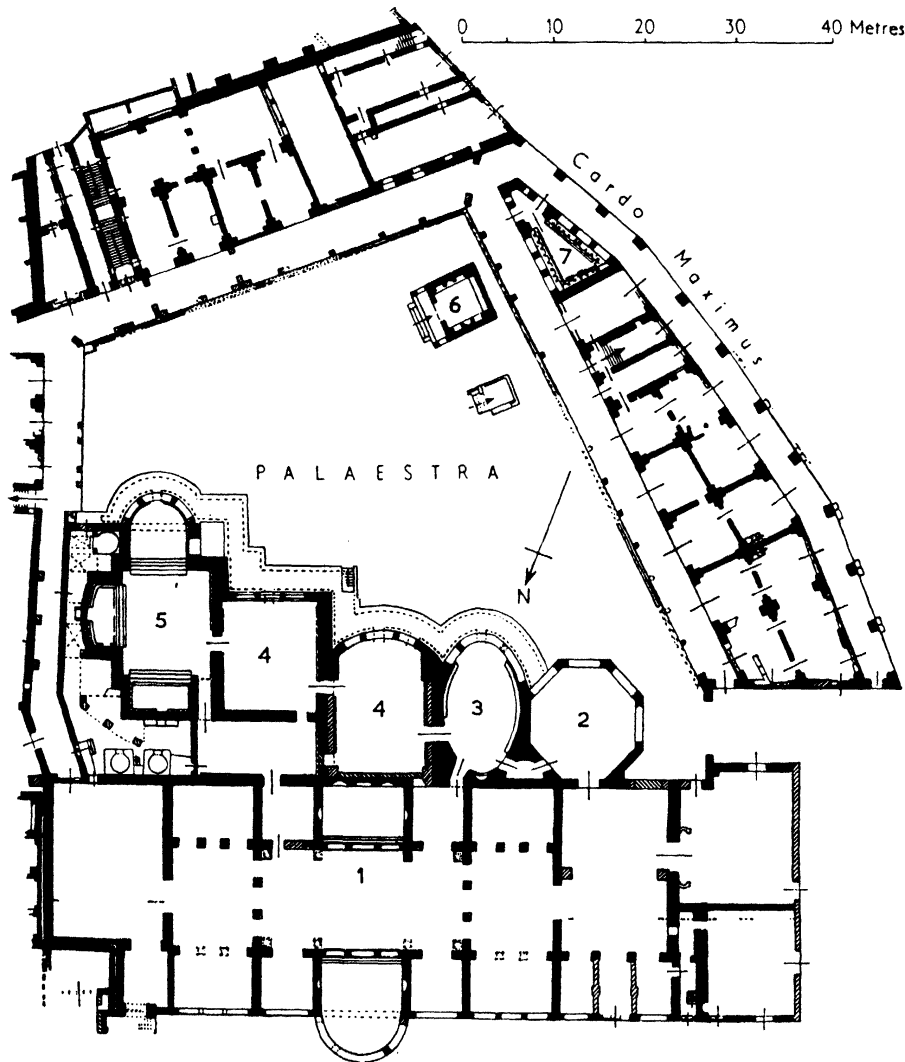


FIG. 29. Forum Baths. 1. Frigidarium. 2. ? Heliocaminos. 3. ? Sudatorium. 4. Tepidaria. 5. Caldarium. 6. Unidentified temple in Palaestra. 7. Latrine.

and walls to take the chill from the air. The northern bath in its present form has an apse at its northern end, but this is a fourth-century refinement.

In sharp contrast to the rectangular symmetry of the northern block is the series of heated rooms on the south side of the building, stepping out from west to east. These rooms present an interesting variety in

design and an ingenious adaptation to function. They were substantially restored more than once, and important changes were made in the fourth century, but, apart from the insertion of an apse in the southern wall of the eastern room, the shape of the rooms remained unchanged. The southern elevation was bold and original.

The most distinctive feature of these rooms as now seen is the series of very large windows in their southern walls, dating from the fourth century. Their purpose is to make the maximum use of sunlight, for these rooms face south,¹ and some of the windows may have been unglazed.

The room at the west end is a regular octagon. The floor is heated by a hypocaust, but there are no pipes in the walls. This room receives more sun than any other in the building and may have been designed for sun-bathing; its wide and tall windows were probably open. A heated passage leads to an elliptical room which is the hottest in the baths, heated by hypocaust, by pipes lining the walls, and probably by pipes in its vault; artificial heat was supplemented by the sun. This was probably a sweating room, *Sudatorium*, and a stone seat ran round the wall for those who preferred to sit while they sweated. The next two rooms are more orthodox. Their floors and walls were heated, but they received much less sun and their temperature was considerably lower; they were *Tepidaria*. The western of the two has a slightly curving south wall; its neighbour is rectangular.²

From the *Tepidaria* one passes to the last room of the series, the *Caldarium*. This has three hot baths on its north, east, and south sides, whose water was heated in boilers in a service room on the east side. Floors, walls, and probably the vault were heated. The southern bath, originally rectangular, was changed to an apsidal form in the fourth century and enjoyed the benefit of the large windows immediately above it.

The Forum Baths had a roughly triangular *Palaestra* behind them,

¹ Cf. Vitruvius v. 10. 1: 'ipsa autem caldaria tepidariaque lumen habeant ab occidente hiberno; si autem natura loci impedierit, utique a meridie, quod maxime tempus lavandi a meridiano ad vesperum est constitutum.'

² E. D. Thatcher, in a valuable detailed analysis of the heating system of these baths (*MAAR* 24 (1956) 170-261), has concluded that all the southern windows were originally unglazed, though glass was later added in one of the rooms. Vivid memories of long spells of cold winds and low temperatures in Ostian winters undermine my confidence, but the argument needs more expert judgement than mine. The absence of archaeological evidence for the fixing of glass might be accounted for by the use of timber frames. I would tentatively suggest that only the eastern, octagonal, room had open windows.

surrounded by a colonnade in which the architect seems to have deliberately selected a contrasting variety of marbles and granites for his columns. Off the colonnade opened shops and other premises, perhaps including a guild headquarters in the centre of the south side. At the west end was a small temple.

These baths had already been explored at the beginning of the nineteenth century and probably on other occasions also; for their ruins stood high, and were a natural temptation to the treasure hunter. Very little therefore was found of their sculptures, paintings, and mosaics when they were excavated. But the tall Cipollino columns of the great hall and architectural fragments of Proconnesian marble show that the decoration matched the boldness of the building. Strong, emphasizing the mixture of styles and the unorthodox carving of the motifs, suggests that this is the work of foreign craftsmen, whose influence he also finds in work of the period at Rome.¹

The Forum Baths were almost certainly not built with Ostian money. Like the Maritime Baths and the Baths of Neptune they are imperial *thermae*, but probably not the gift of an emperor. Among the fragments of inscriptions recording a late fourth-century restoration undertaken by Ragonius Vincentius Celsus, *praefectus annonae*, the name of the baths may be recorded: '—mis Gavi Ma—'. Bloch suggests the attractive restoration 'thermis Gavi Maximi', implying that these baths were built for Ostia by M. Gavius Maximus, who served Antoninus Pius as his praetorian prefect for twenty years.² This hypothesis may receive confirmation from an unexpected source. A fragment of entablature formerly in the Vatican, now removed to the Lateran, has the same decoration as surviving fragments in the Forum Baths at Ostia. The block is inscribed and the inscription begins 'Maximus has olim therm[as]', referring to the original builder.³ An honorary inscription to M. Gavius Maximus is also preserved at Ostia; it was probably found in or near the baths.⁴ *

Whether Commodus, Septimius Severus, or any other of the later emperors added to the imperial *thermae* of Ostia we cannot know for certain until the whole area of the town has been uncovered. No traces have been recorded from earlier exploration. No conspicuous ruins

¹ D. Strong, 'Late Hadrianic Ornament', *BSR* 21 (1953) 138.

² Bloch, 'The name of the Baths near the Forum of Ostia', in *Studies presented to D. M. Robinson*, ii (1953) 412.

³ See Note J, p. 475; Pl. xxxviii b.

⁴ Bloch, art. cit. 416.

remain which seem likely to be *thermae*; but the long history of surprises in Ostia's excavation is a warning against premature assumptions. It is certain at any rate that the provision of smaller baths did not end with the decline in public prosperity.

The main distinction between *thermae* and *balnea* is one of scale. The architect of the *thermae* has a comparatively free hand. His plan is not restricted by competing demands; he has a generous purse behind him and can afford magnificence. The smaller establishments, *balnea*, are probably the result of private enterprise and represent investments. Such is the natural inference concerning practice at Rome from the poems of Martial. The *balnea* he mentions carry the names of private individuals—*balnea* Phoebi, Stephani, Tigillini. These are presumably the men who built the baths or who owned them. For Ostia there is no explicit evidence, but two possible hints. In the Baths of Mithras (so called from a striking sculpture of Mithras) two portrait heads within *clipea* were found. Their style shows them to be at least roughly contemporary with the baths, which are Hadrianic.¹ They may record the original builders. Under the Pharos Baths water-pipes were found stamped with distinguished names, a second-century consul and Cornificia, daughter of the emperor Marcus Aurelius.² The natural inference is that these baths were private property, and did not belong to the local authority.

While *thermae* stand free and dominate the block in which they stand, the plan of *balnea* is largely dictated by the size and shape of the building plot available. They are often built in the middle of blocks and usually enclosed on at least two sides by other buildings. The Baths of Buticosus have shops and commercial premises to north and south. The block in which they stand is comparatively narrow; their main development follows the block plan and runs from south to north, though their entrances are from east and west. The long narrow shape of the Baths of the Six Columns is dictated by the earlier plan of the houses on this stretch of the Decumanus, which had a narrow frontage on the street but developed through atrium and peristyle to a considerable depth. Such restrictions were common also at Rome; Martial speaks of the Baths of Stephanus 'joined to' his living quarters.³ A case is also quoted

¹ Becatti, *Le Arti* (1941) 172; *Museo*, 56, 57.

² Barbieri, 'Fistole inedite', *NS* 1953, 154 n. 5; Cornificiae (sister of M. Aurelius); 167 n. 28: Scipionis Orfiti, probably a late-second-century consul. Presumably the property had changed hands.

³ Martial xi. 52. 4: 'scis quam sint Stephani balnea iuncta mihi.'

in the Digest which is typical of Ostian conditions: 'a certain Hiberus, who owns the insula behind my *horrea*, built a bathing establishment using a party-wall: he may not put hot pipes against the party-wall'. This was an essential regulation, 'for through the pipes the wall is scorched by the heat'.¹ Traces of burning and reconstruction can be seen in almost all the heated rooms of Ostian baths: perhaps the use of pine with its high resin content increased the risk.

It may at first seem odd that if the entry fee was low the building of baths should have been considered a satisfactory investment. The answer probably lies in the additional profit that the baths brought from miscellaneous sales, including food and drink. Nor was space used uneconomically: the street frontages were normally reserved for shop rents, and provision was made for apartments in upper stories. Perhaps some baths were able to charge a considerably higher fee which guaranteed greater exclusiveness. The baths excavated by Visconti on the line of the Sullan walls west of Porta Marina may have been of this type.² The figured mosaics and the lavish use of marble would have been attractive to a select clientele such as might be expected from this district, which was primarily residential. So in Rome it is difficult to believe that the same fee was charged for the Baths of Claudius Etruscus with their rich display of Phrygian and Numidian marble³ as for the dark gloom of Gryllus' establishment.⁴

During the period of prosperity the building of *balnea* developed briskly. The baths by the Christian Basilica are probably late Flavian, possibly Trajanic;⁵ the Baths of Buticosus and the Baths of the Six Columns are Trajanic.⁶ Three sets at least were added under Hadrian, the Baths of Mithras,⁷ of Trinacria,⁸ and a third set on the south side of the eastern Decumanus near the Forum, which were destroyed in the fourth century to make way for an open square.⁹ The Baths of Invidiosus, which incorporate a Julio-Claudian core, may be a little later.¹⁰

The Baths of the Seven Sages, built between two large apartment blocks, the Insula of Serapis and the Insula of the Charioteers, were designed primarily for the tenants of these apartments, but they may

¹ Dig. viii. 2. 13.

³ Martial vi. 42; Statius, *Silvae*, i. 5.

⁴ Martial i. 59. 3: 'tenebrosaue balnea Grylli'.

⁵ Becatti, *Topografia*, 127, dates to Trajan.

⁶ Bloch, *Topografia*, 218 (i. 14. 8); 226 (iv. 5. 11).

⁷ Ibid. 219 (i. 17. 2).

⁹ Becatti, *Topografia*, 159.

² Paschetto, 304; cf. *ILS* 5723.

⁸ Ibid. 225 (iii. 16. 7).

¹⁰ Ibid. 144.

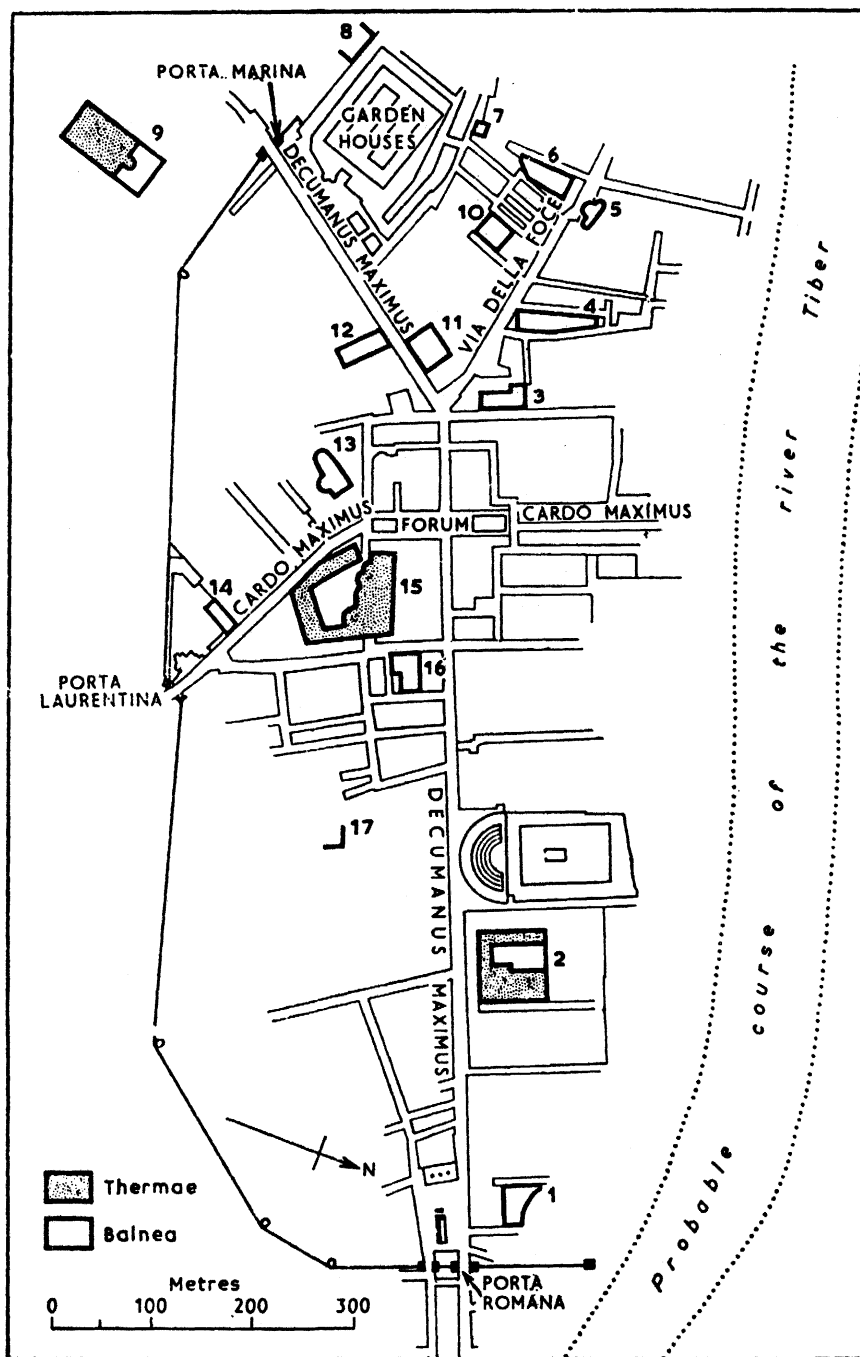


FIG. 30. Distribution of *thermae* and *balnea* (p. 407) in the late Empire. 1. Drivers (Third century). 2. Neptune (Hadrian). 3. Buticosus (Trajan). 4. Mithras (Hadrian). 5. Fourth century. 6. Trinacria (Hadrian). 7. Fourth century. 8. Sullan walls, partly excavated (Severan). 9. Porta Marina (? Trajan-Hadrian). 10. Seven Sages (Hadrian). 11. Basilica (Domitian or Trajan). 12. Six Columns (Trajan). 13. Fourth century. 14. Pharos (? Trajan). 15. Forum (Antoninus Pius). 16. Invidiosus (Julio-Claudian, largely rebuilt). 17. Julio-Claudian, partly excavated.*

also have been open to the public.¹ In their present form they are Severan,² but their original plan goes back to Hadrian. The handsome suite of baths in the 'Imperial Palace' was more probably private.³

The original walls of the Pharos baths near the Porta Laurentina are Trajanic or Hadrianic, but the building may only have been converted to baths later, towards the end of the second century.⁴ Similarly several walls in the Baths of the Drivers on the north side of the Decumanus near the Porta Romana date back to the late Republic or very early Empire. They once belonged to industrial premises; the baths probably represent a third-century adaptation.⁵ A further set of baths was added in the early third century west of the Porta Marina on the line of the Sullan walls, richly furnished with marble and mosaics.⁶ *

The plan of these small sets of baths is dictated by their site and, as we should expect, there is considerable variety in their disposition. None of them had exercise grounds, as the large *thermae* had, but all provided the essential sequence of cold bath, heated rooms, and hot bath. By the Severan period they were distributed through all the districts of the town.

The imperial *thermae* may have been neglected in the difficult period that followed the end of the Severan dynasty. Certainly large-scale restorations were carried out in the early fourth century, and building activity is attested still in the baths when there is little sign of it elsewhere, down to the end of the century. These restorations are often shoddy work. Old material is reused, mosaics are patched with marble without any respect for the design, floors are paved with funerary

¹ I assume, in the absence of inscriptions, that the Insulae of Serapis and of the Chario-teers were private and not public buildings. Two Greek graffiti (unpublished) and the nearness of the Serapeum suggest that this may have been something of an oriental quarter. The baths were richly furnished with sculpture as well as paintings and mosaics. The ruins do not suggest that these blocks catered for the wealthy, for the individual apartments are not particularly large or handsome. If the use of the baths was confined to the tenants they would surely have been uneconomic. Some at least of the rooms on the ground floor were used as shops, entered from the inner courts and not from the street; this makes it reasonable to believe that the baths also were open to the public.

² Bloch, *Bolli laterizi*, 203.

³ Paschetto, 414.

⁴ Mosaics, paintings, and stucco decoration are not earlier than late-second century, but there has been much reconstruction. A more detailed study, with some digging, is needed to establish the original function.

⁵ The decoration of the baths, including mosaics, and the hypocausts (Bloch, *Bolli laterizi*, 279) date from the third century. Wilson, in a detailed study of the block (*BSR* 13 (1935) 82-84) argues that the baths in their original form were Flavian. The evidence is, I think, insufficient. *

⁶ Paschetto, 304; Bloch, *Bolli laterizi*, 278.

inscriptions. But it is clear that the population clung tenaciously to their baths. We even find two new sets added; one, west of the Trajanic *horrea* on the north side of the Via della Foce, is very modest in scale.¹ The other, only partially excavated, south of the Round Temple, is as large as the average *balnea* of the second century and exploits the late Empire fashion of the curving line in its rooms more fully than any other Ostian building known to us.² * Both are almost certainly from the fourth century.

It was not only in the interests of the poor that bathing facilities were maintained with such determination. In spite of the wealth of their decoration and the heating of many of their living-rooms, the House of the Dioscuri is the only late house known in Ostia which has its private suite of bath rooms. When there was such ample provision of public facilities for a declining population there was no need for the rich to provide their own.

THEATRE

At Rome it was a recognized part of the duties of the lesser magistrates to provide shows and games for the people, and the same policy was followed in colonies and municipalities. The expense was borne partly by the town treasury, but the magistrate was compelled by statute to contribute and expected by custom to contribute generously. The charter of the Caesarian colony at Urso in Spain prescribes a maximum that the duovir may draw from the treasury for the public shows that he presents in his year of office and a minimum which he must add from his own pocket.³ The Antonine Gamala's generosity in his interpretation of such a clause is commemorated among his many services to the town: 'hic ludos omnes quos fecit amplificavit impensa sua.'⁴ Social ambition or public spirit might also encourage wealthy individuals to provide entertainment in the theatre. Fabius Hermogenes, once a municipal clerk, boasts that he was the first who in his priesthood (he was *flamen divi Hadriani*) gave at his own expense *ludi scaenici*;⁵ and a wealthy woman in the second century left money to provide annual shows in memory of one of her family.⁶ The common phrase *ludi scaenici* gives little idea of the nature of these theatre shows, but con-

¹ Becatti, *Topografia*, 155.

³ *Lex Ursonensis*, 70.

⁴ 2²⁰.

⁶ S 4450. The nature of these *ludi* is not specified.

² Loc. cit.

⁵ 353, 14.

temporary literature shows that stage fashions had changed considerably since the days of the Republic.

In Cicero's lifetime there was still a popular demand for tragedy and comedy, but the Roman theatre was already living on the past. There were no contemporary dramatists of note; most of the productions were adaptations of Greek plays or revivals of Roman favourites. The audiences, according to Cicero, were enthusiastic; every allusion that could be given a topical twist was seized on. One suspects that they enjoyed their political demonstrations more than the play; that may be one of the reasons why no important new writers of tragedy or comedy appeared in the Augustan revival.

The wall paintings and the scribblings on Pompeian walls show that through the first century of the Empire the standard Greek and Roman classics were still well known and probably performed,¹ but we hear little of them in literature after the first century; in popularity they were eclipsed by other forms. The refinements of comedy could not compete with the vulgarities of Atellan farces.² These plays, which had grown in popularity in the late Republic, maintained a strong hold into the late Empire. A loosely constructed plot was built round a series of stock figures—Maccus, the fool; Pappus, the dotard; Manducus, the glutton; Dossenus, the cunning hunchback; Bucco, the braggart. Such titles as *Maccus miles*, *Bucco adoptatus* suggest the pattern. For their appeal they relied not so much on the intricacy of the plot as on their broad humour and grotesque situations. Mistaken identities, disguises, riddles, were, as in the modern pantomime, an essential part of their stock-in-trade.³

Towards the close of the Republic the Atellan farce was rivalled by the mime, which catered for broadly the same tastes. The mime had been introduced to Rome from the Greek cities of the south and had become considerably vulgarized in its new home. It had several advantages over its rival: the number of its characters was not limited by tradition, it could use actresses for female roles, and the actors, dispensing with masks, had freer play for facial expression. The mimes of Laberius and Publilius Syrus, Cicero's contemporaries, could be quoted as literature, but they were exceptional. The mime that appealed most to popular taste was as ephemeral as a sketch in a modern revue. The

¹ M. Bieber, *The History of the Greek and Roman Theatre*, 391–400; M. Gigante, 'La cultura letteraria a Pompeii', in *Pompeiana* (Bibl. della Parola del Passato, 4; Napoli, 1951) 125.

² W. Beare, *The Roman Stage*² (1955) 127–38.

³ Ibid. 139–48.

actors were more important than the script, and improvisation was tolerated, even expected. Their stock characters were the cuckold, the pander, the procuress, the parasite. Ovid in exile feels very self-righteous when he thinks of the mimes that were drawing the crowds in Rome:

quid si scripsissem mimos obscena iocantes,
 qui semper vetiti crimen amoris habent:
 in quibus assidue cultus procedit adulter:
 verbaque dat stulto callida nupta viro?¹

There seems every reason to believe that they became less rather than more refined. Even Martial can claim that his verses at their frankest are no franker than the mimes.² The authorities of Massilia banned them from the local stage,³ but Massilia still retained something of the Hellenic taste which it owed to its original colonists from Phocaea.⁴ There are not likely to have been such scruples at Ostia.

Farce and mime appealed primarily to the lower and middle classes. The art of pantomime satisfied all tastes. The dramatic dance first became a recognized art form under the patronage of Maecenas and Augustus. Pylades and Bathyllus were the pioneers of the period, and left the new form firmly established. The art of the *pantomimus* was to accompany a song or recitation and interpret it by dance and gesture.⁵ He wore a mask and adapted his dress to the character he was presenting, often changing mask and dress several times during a single performance. With no play of features to help him he had to rely entirely on the movements of his body and cover an immensely wide range of expression with his gestures. His subjects were usually drawn from tragedy and retold the old stories of gods and heroes, among them the madness of Hercules, the sorrows of Niobe, the judgement of Paris.

These *pantomimi* roused even fiercer passions among the audience than the mimes, and measures had to be taken against popular disturbances in the theatre. Upholders of Roman tradition regarded their popularity as a social danger, and Tiberius issued an edict forbidding senators to enter their houses and knights to accompany them in public.⁶ But official decrees and the attacks of the satirists made little impression. Few actors during the Empire attained the social standing of a Roscius, but the successful *pantomimus* often found his way to court. Augustus had patronized Pylades and Bathyllus: Mnester, freedman of

¹ Ovid, *Tristia*, ii. 497.

³ Val. Max. ii. 6. 7.

⁵ *RE*, s.v. *pantomimus* (E. Wüst).

² Martial iii. 86. 4.

⁴ Tac. *Agricola*, 4. 3.

⁶ Tac. *Ann.* i. 77. 5.

Tiberius, was intimate with Gaius and Messalina; Paris turned the head of Domitian's wife. It was common also for wealthy people to have *pantomimi* in their households for the entertainment of guests: even when she was nearly eighty Pliny's friend Ummidia Quadratilla found their performances a pleasant diversion.¹ But their main place was the public stage, and the successful *pantomimus* was the film star of his day. So, if a poet wished to make money, his quickest means lay in a libretto for a dancer. Statius may fill a hall to hear a reading of his *Thebaid*, but if he is to keep the wolf from the door, he must cater for more popular tastes:

sed cum fregit subsellia versu,
esurit, intactam Paridi nisi vendit Agaven.²

There was fierce competition among the towns to attract the great dancers of the day to their stage, and numerous inscriptions record the public and official recognition that was offered to them. A base from Ostia records the council's decision, backed by popular demand, to set up a statue to a dancer 'in recognition of his outstanding skill'.³ Another dancer, in the third century, was commemorated by the *seviri Augustales*; he came from the East and is described as 'the leading *pantomimus* of his day, honoured by Valerianus and Gallienus'.⁴ Both dancers had probably performed on the Ostian stage. Performances at Ostia are probably also reflected in the simple marble tablet set up to L. Aurelius Apolaustus Memphius, freedman of the emperors Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus.⁵ Only his name is recorded, but he was famed as a dancer. The first two of these inscriptions emphasize the skill of the dancer, his *peritia*. The libretto counted for little; it was the subtlety and range of the dancer that caught the imagination. The dancing could also satisfy less exalted appetites. The stories of gods and goddesses gave ample opportunity for suggestive and erotic contortions; the opportunities were liberally taken.

Recitations, singing, and various forms of spectacle also had their place on the Ostian stage, and an odd story in the historian Dio may here be relevant. Dio records that when Septimius Severus found the senate less than lukewarm at his decision to deify Commodus, he pointed out their inconsistency by a very pertinent illustration.⁶ One of their number, a former consul, he reminds them, had recently in a

¹ Pliny, *Ep.* vii. 24. 4.

² Juvenal vii. 86.

³ 474.

⁴ S 4624, fragments of twin marble tablets. The dancer was a member of the council at Ascalon and Damascus.

⁵ S 5375.

⁶ Dio lxxvi. 8. 2.

public exhibition at Ostia sported with a prostitute dressed as a leopard-ess. There is no good reason to doubt this story, for Dio at this stage in his history is writing from personal experience in the senate. Behind the story may lie a spectacle under Commodus in honour of the wine god, who at Portus is described in an inscription as 'Liber pater Commodianus'.¹ The natural setting for the performance would be the theatre.

There seems little doubt that theatre standards had been considerably debased by the Severan period. There was still in the third century no doubt an element of the broad humour which has always justified the music hall. The general temper of the day, however, was not the robustness of the Shakespearians, but the immorality of Restoration Drama without its style, descending often to a mere parade of sex. The rebuilding of Ostia's theatre is almost contemporary with Tertullian's treatise on Public Spectacles, and this strong appeal to Christians to give up the theatre, the arena, and the circus contains a vivid denunciation of the stage. It is 'immodesty's own particular abode, where nothing is in repute but what elsewhere is disreputable'.² Another Christian writer of the third century can speak of the theatre as 'the brothel of public shame and the school of indecency'.³ We do not look to Christian polemics for an unbiased picture of pagan customs, and we can safely allow for considerable exaggeration; but we should not ignore their evidence.

Whatever we may think of the developments of the Roman stage, the Ostian theatre remained popular. When it was rebuilt under Commodus its seating capacity was increased roughly from three to four thousand. It survived the severe economic depression of the third century and was kept in repair throughout the fourth. At the end of the fourth century indeed the Ostian theatre took on a new lease of life; aquatic displays were added to the attractions.

The evidence for this late adaptation of the theatre at Ostia has in part been lost by modern restoration, but Gismondi has ingeniously collected the clues from Lanciani's report on the original excavation.⁴ The decisive indication, however, has always been visible; its significance had been overlooked. At some period the two rooms on either

¹ 30.

² Tertullian, *De spectaculis*, 17. 1.

³ Pseudo-Cyprian (ed. Boulanger; Paris, 1933) 6. 2.

⁴ Gismondi, 'La Colimbeta del teatro di Ostia', in *Anthemon* (Scritti . . . in onore di Carlo Anti; Firenze, 1955) 293-308.

side of the central entrance from the Decumanus, originally shops, were converted to cisterns. Doorways were blocked, walls and floor were lined with cement. These cisterns had been regarded as medieval improvisations to collect water when the aqueduct had failed. But, as Gismondi has pointed out, medieval Ostians lacked either the heart or the competence for such large-scale reconstruction; for their water supply they relied on old wells, or new wells clumsily constructed. Gismondi has also drawn attention to the original apertures, still visible in the walls, where the water from the cisterns was fed into the central passage to flood the orchestra. The southern end of the passage was also converted into a cistern, but the original traces of this conversion are more difficult to distinguish. Cisterns were needed for storage, because the demands on the aqueduct exceeded supply; they could be filled at night when the needs for houses, baths, and public fountains had died down. To flood the orchestra from these cisterns was a simple task; it was no less simple to drain off the water when the theatre reverted to its normal function.

The people of Ostia had grown accustomed to Nereids in the mosaics of their baths. They could now see them in the flesh.¹ Choreographic displays of nymphs and goddesses provided splendid opportunities for enterprising producers, but one wonders whether the bishop of Ostia approved the innovation.

AMPHITHEATRE AND CIRCUS

At Rome the spectacles of the theatre were eclipsed, as forms of popular entertainment, by the wild-beast shows of the amphitheatre and the chariot races of the circus. Both appealed strongly to popular passions, and most of the emperors met the demand with extravagant displays. That the amphitheatre was not regarded as a luxury which only a capital city could afford is shown by the number that survive in the towns of Italy and the provinces: the evidence for circuses is less widespread.

If such a comparatively unimportant town as Pompeii had its own amphitheatre before the end of the Republic, Ostia should have felt and satisfied the need in the prosperity of the second century if not before. Gladiatorial shows were certainly presented at Ostia. The record of the career of the Antonine Gamala includes an instance: 'idem munus

¹ For aquatic displays, G. Traversari, 'Tetimimo e Colimbetra', *Dioniso* 13 (1950) 18.

gladiatorium ded(it).'¹ An entry in the *Fasti* probably recorded a hunting display to commemorate the dedication of a basilica in 152.² The three days' games which P. Aufidius Fortis, patron of the town, celebrated in 146 on the occasion of the dedication of silver statues of Honour and Virtue were also probably gladiatorial displays.³ That the common people were familiar with the gladiator's technique is suggested by rough scratchings of gladiators on a wall in the House of Jupiter and Ganymede⁴ and on an Ostian slab of marble on which some of the principal Roman diversions are roughly incised.⁵

Wild beasts and gladiators are also widely represented in a large hoard of terra-cotta moulds found in a series of sunken dolia near the centre of the town.⁶ These moulds were made in pairs, fitting together; they are elaborately figured and represent scenes associated with the circus, the theatre, and the amphitheatre. The subjects include a giraffe being attacked by a lion and a leopard, and a hunter coming to grips with a lion which has attacked a bull. The excavator's attractive conclusion that these moulds were used for the baking of cakes or bread to be distributed at public spectacles should probably be abandoned. None of the moulds show signs of having been used in this way, not all the scenes are appropriate, and in some the detail is extremely elaborate. Dr. Squarciapino is probably right in removing the moulds from the kitchen to the studio. She suggests that they were used for reproduction in some perishable material, which would explain why no positives have been found.⁷ The hunting scenes at least confirm the popularity of such shows at Ostia.

For displays such as are recorded in the inscriptions there is no suitable open area in imperial Ostia. The Forum was too restricted and too crowded with statues, the theatre orchestra was too small. The field of the Great Mother could have been adapted to the purpose, but it was too closely associated with the ceremonial of Cybele. No amphitheatre, however, has been found, and none is recorded in any surviving inscription. To explain the absence of an amphitheatre by the nearness of Ostia

¹ 2¹².

² *Fasti*, 152: 'famili[a | glad(iatoria) munus venatio]ne legitima edidit, in qua [— | — fu]erunt duo.' See Degrassi's note, p. 238.

³ *Fasti*, 146: 'ludos per triduum sua pec(unia) edidit.' Theatre performances fit Virtus and Honos, military qualities, considerably less well.

⁴ Calza, *MA* 26 (1920) 370.

⁵ *NS* 1914, 290.

⁶ A. Pasqui, *NS* 1906, 182, 357-73.

⁷ M. F. Squarciapino, *Arch. Class.* 6 (1954) 83, who adds further Ostian examples, and cites parallels from other towns.

to Rome is not convincing. Fifteen miles is a long distance for men who have to walk, and if her own theatre was given to Ostia under Augustus there seems no reason why an amphitheatre should not have been demanded later.

In this dilemma the single positive reference to an Ostian amphitheatre should not be neglected, though it comes from a source which many historians would condemn on principle. The reference is contained in the story of the martyrdom at Ostia of Asterius.¹ The Acts of the Christian martyrs, with a few remarkable exceptions, are notoriously unreliable and this is not one of the exceptions. The story is late and melodramatic and as a record of judicial procedure it has no more value than most of its kind. But even the most sensational of these acts of the martyrs usually derive from local tradition, and though their chronology may be inconsistent and their narrative romanticized, they often preserve valuable details of local topography. The trial of Asterius at Ostia ends in his condemnation to the amphitheatre. He was led out 'ad locum qui appellatur Ursariae . . . quia ibi ferae nutriebantur'. With his followers he was taken into the arena, presumably near by, and the wild beasts were sent in. There is a genuine ring about 'the place of bears, so called because it was there that the wild beasts were kept'.

It is then possible that there was an amphitheatre outside the walls, but we should like to have firmer evidence. An amphitheatre should have become a conspicuous ruin, and at least we should expect some record from the eighteenth or nineteenth century. The dilemma could be formally resolved by assuming that the building was completely stripped before the Renaissance, or that it was constructed in timber;² but neither solution is satisfactory. The main reason for retaining an open mind is the difficulty of believing that a town as crowded, rich, and important as Ostia lacked suitable provision for the most popular form of entertainment in the Roman world.

No trace of a circus has been found or reported, and no clear mention is made in inscriptions or wall scribblings of chariot races. Reliefs in terra-cotta and marble illustrate circus scenes, but such themes were part of the sculptor's stock repertoire. Local races are suggested, but not proved, by the inclusion of a horse crowned with victory palm among the diversions crudely illustrated on the marble slab referred to

¹ p. 524.

² Timber amphitheatres: Tac. *Ann.* iv. 62 (Fidenae); *AE* 1926, 78 (Pisidian Antioch); Suet. *Nero*, 12. 1 (Campus Martius).

above.¹ There was no permanent construction for the purpose, but races may have occasionally been held near the sea coast on the southern plain. A Roman praetor commemorating his celebration of the games of Castor and Pollux describes them as 'certamina';² they may have included races for chariots or horses.

INNS AND BARS

In modern societies the inn, the bar, and the café are the main rivals of organized entertainment in the pattern of social recreation. The *caupona* and the *popina* took their place in Roman life.³ A gossip over a drink of wine was doubtless part of the daily routine of the middle class, and many establishments on the street fronts catered for a quick drink or more leisurely refreshment. Most of the shops had been stripped bare before excavation and can no longer be identified, but we get a glimpse of the variety of setting available to men who liked to take their wine or food in public.

One of the most vivid buildings in the town is the largely restored 'Thermopolium' on the Via di Diana.⁴ It dates from the economic decline of the third century, when second-hand marble was easily acquired, and could be used even for shelving and cupboards. At the entrance is a wide counter with shelves attached to the wall behind, on which glasses, dishes, and food for sale were set. Beneath the counter are two basins for washing glasses and dishes. Even these are lined with marble, and the panels include a tablet commemorating C. Fulvius Plautianus, consul, praetorian prefect, father-in-law of the emperor Caracalla.⁵ When he was purged his name was erased: one wonders whether the man who washed the glasses in this basin ever gave a thought to the history of the stone.

Within the shop against the east wall is a marble cupboard and, above it, further shelving. Over the shelving is a large painting, a still life illustrating some of the goods that were for sale; they include ? olives swimming in brine, a bunch of grapes, two pomegranates (?).

¹ NS 1914, 290.

² i; p. 344 f.

³ The *caupona* provided lodging as well as food and drink; the *popina* covered a wide range from drinking den to respectable restaurant, J. Kleberg, *Hôtels, restaurants et cabarets dans l'antiquité romaine* (Uppsala, 1957). Ostian evidence, 45-48, 53-56.

⁴ NS 1915, 29; 1916, 415; Pl. xxix a. *Popina* would be a better title; *thermopolium*, borrowed from the Greek, is rarely used, Kleberg, op. cit. 14, 16.

⁵ S 4392. See Addenda.

The shop is connected with a room to the west, which may have been used as a kitchen; in it is a large *dolium* sunk in the ground, which may have contained wine.

Food and wine could be consumed on the premises. Behind the shop is a small open court, with a plain mosaic pavement and a small fountain in the middle. Along the eastern wall is a stone bench where the customer could bring his food and wine; or he could sit on one of the two stone benches that flanked the entrance on the street and watch the passers-by.

There is a less leisurely atmosphere in the *popina* which is strategically placed at the junction of the eastern Decumanus with the Via della Fontana.¹ This is no larger than a single small shop and was probably somewhat like an espresso bar in function. The shopkeeper has made his business clear, by the invitation to drink inscribed on his mosaic pavement.²

Another *popina*, of less orthodox character, can be seen in the Via della Calcara. As we see it now, it is a dressing-room incorporated in the set of baths between the Insula of Serapis and the Insula of the Charioteers; but originally this room was wide open to the street. It formed part of the small Trajanic nucleus of this large Hadrianic block,³ and the paintings are original. There are two zones of figures on the walls. The lower was largely destroyed when the shop was taken over and transformed, but the upper zone was unaffected and three of the figures are still well preserved. They represent the seven sages of Greek tradition, seated and half life-size, with their names inscribed in Greek lettering below; the names of Solon, Thales, and Chilon are clearly legible.⁴ These sages were noted for their pithy maxims, but not for those recorded here: 'Solon rubbed his stomach to ease his motions'; 'Thales advised determined effort as a cure for constipation.' All the inscriptions that survive are similarly concerned with what a French scholar has discreetly called 'les dernières péripéties de la digestion'.⁵ But in typically Roman spirit the coarseness of the humour is accompanied by great care in the painting and lettering. There are few more skilfully painted figures on Ostian walls than these philosophers, and it is not surprising that they were allowed to remain. On the ceiling are

¹ NS 1909, 92.

² S 4756: '[hospes, inquit] Fortunatus, [vinum e cr]atera, quod sitis, bibe.'

³ p. 134.

⁴ Calza, 'Die Taverne der sieben Weisen in Ostia', *Die Antike*, 15 (1939) 99-115; Pl. xxix b.

⁵ Ch. Picard, *Rev. Arch.* 12 (1938) 252.

painted wine flagons and against one of them *Falernum* can still be read, the connoisseur's Falernian wine. This was clearly a wine shop.

The humour of these walls is essentially masculine. We are in a different atmosphere when we visit the Inn of Helix by the Porta Marina, if the mosaics are a fair guide. A nude Venus with a cupid might be purely decorative, but there is nothing pure about another mosaic that certainly would not pass the modern censor. One suspects that this inn did a very mixed business.¹ The elegance of the paintings in the Peacock Inn, on the other hand, suggests a more refined clientele.²

In their widely distributed baths, in the theatre and at other public spectacles, in their inns and bars Ostian men and women had ample opportunity to relax and enjoy themselves.

¹ Cf. *Dig.* 23. 2. 43: 'palam quaestum facere dicemus non tantum eam, quae in lupanario se prostituit, verum etiam si qua (ut adsolet) in taberna cauponia vel qua alia pudori suo non paret.' Juvenal (8. 171 ff.) has been understood (Kleberg, *op. cit.* 55) to refer to low company in an Ostian *popina*: 'mitte Ostia, Caesar, | mitte sed in magna legatum quaere popina. . . .' Lateranus is to be sent to Ostia to take ship for a provincial command. The *popina* from which he must first be extracted is in Rome.

² *Reg.* iv. 2. 6. The paintings illustrated, *Ostia* (1954), fig. 57.

I 7

THE ARTS

FEW features point the contrast between the ancient and the modern world more sharply than the wealth of sculpture, painting, and mosaics from Roman sites. The contrast is in part misleading. Much of the painting should be compared with the work of the internal decorator rather than the original artist; changing tastes have replaced mosaics by carpets. But the sculptor is governed by the same conditions and to a large extent uses the same tools now as then.

SCULPTURE

The quality and quantity of Ostian sculpture that can still be seen in the museum on the site is impressive; it represents, however, but a small proportion of what once existed. Much was destroyed in medieval lime kilns; more has been taken from the site. The earliest excavators dug for treasure, and the statues, reliefs, and busts which they found were dispersed throughout Europe. The rich harvests of nineteenth-century excavations were reaped primarily by the Papal Collections in Rome. Two rooms of the Lateran Museum, devoted exclusively to Ostian discoveries of the mid-century, suggest something of the richness of the site. To wander through the Vatican galleries with a list of Ostian origins is even more revealing.

If today a local authority in Britain commissions a group of sculpture for a fountain or a public building, the gesture is news, and the seeds of a nice controversy are sown. In Ostia, as in other Roman towns, the sculptor was regarded naturally as the architect's colleague. To compare Ostia with a British town perhaps exaggerates the contrast. Sculpture has rarely been at home in Britain; temperament and climate are uncongenial. But even in modern Mediterranean ports we should find considerably less sculpture, and a considerably lower average of achievement.

Sculpture at Ostia was widely displayed in public places, public buildings, and private houses. The two main fields for commemorative statues were the central Forum and the public gardens within the

Piazzale delle Corporazioni behind the theatre. In the Forum two bases only survive, and one of these was transferred to the Forum in the fourth century when the district in which it was originally set up had lapsed into slum conditions.¹ The other carried an equestrian statue of Manilius Rusticus, a *praefectus annonae* of the late Empire.² No bases survive from the early and middle Empire, but inscriptions record two Ostians honoured with statues in the Forum³ and there were doubtless many more. Commemoration in the Forum was the reward of outstanding public service to the town; the Piazzale delle Corporazioni was primarily reserved, as was appropriate, for those who had benefited the traders and business men of Ostia. More bases survive here, for they were used in a late reconstruction of the theatre; their inscriptions show that they once carried statues of imperial officials concerned with Rome's supplies and their passage through Ostia, presidents of Ostian guilds, and other men of local distinction.⁴

Though commemorative statues seem to have been mainly concentrated in these two centres, it is probable that no public square was completely free of sculpture. An inscription records a chariot group in the Forum Vinarium;⁵ statue bases were found in the field of the Great Mother.⁶ Individual monuments could also be seen at the street side. Immediately before he entered the Porta Romana the visitor to Ostia in the Empire saw a statue of Hygia dedicated by a patron of the town to *salus Caesaris Augusti*.⁷ When he had passed along the Decumanus beyond the theatre he could see a more than life-size statue which had stood beside the street since the late Republic or early Principate.⁸

Public buildings were rich in sculpture, perhaps overcrowded. The temples had cult statues and subsidiary dedications. In the Capitolium each side wall has three large niches reserved for statues: statues stood also in the seven large niches of the Round Temple. From the Basilica probably came the series of imperial heads now in the Sala a Croce Greca in the Vatican, which were found by Petrini in the early nineteenth century.⁹ The court of the Barracks of the Vigiles contained a veritable portrait gallery. Sculpture also played an important part in the decoration of public baths. Chancing his luck at a promising ruin

¹ S 4721.

² S 4455.

³ I³⁸, 353.

⁴ Texts collected, Paschetto, 335.

⁵ 5.

⁶ 324, 325.

⁷ NS 1910, 60; S 4324. For the date, p. 508.

⁸ The core of the base remains; the approximate date is inferred from the level. There is a fragment of an arm from a statue c. 10 ft. high lying near the temple in the Piazzale delle Corporazioni. It may come from this base.

⁹ p. 106.

near the Roman line of the sea shore, the Scottish painter Gavin Hamilton found in a set of baths 'a fine Antinous, an indifferent Aesculapius, a large statue of Hygea and a most excellent torso', and he would have found more if others had not been there before him.¹

The guilds also were good customers for the sculptor. Since they depended increasingly on imperial favour they concentrated primarily on imperial statues and busts, but their guild houses were also decorated with statues of their own distinguished officers and patron deities. Particularly striking is the wealth of sculpture from the social headquarters of the *severi Augustales*.² Though probably much had already been taken away, there remained, when the building was excavated, nine substantial figures. They included a full-length statue of a *sevir Augustalis* dedicated by one of his freedmen, a late third-century emperor dressed in the robes of the *pontifex maximus*, a Venus Genetrix with a portrait head of Sabina, wife of Hadrian, part of a figure of Diana, and a fountain figure of a reclining nymph³

In private houses sculpture needs space for display. In the large apartment blocks *terra-cottas* and small bronzes have been found, but little sculpture. This little, however, includes an impressive Roman copy of an early Greek head of Themistocles.⁴ It was found in an unpretentious block with comparatively small rooms and, if it once belonged to a tenant of the house, it is interesting to speculate why and how he acquired it. It would have caused less surprise if it had been found in one of the well-appointed houses of the late Empire. For the owners of these houses were clearly wealthy, and their walls and floors show their passion for marble. Unfortunately most of the furnishings have long since been robbed, but the sculptures found in the House of Fortuna Annonaria are probably typical.⁵

In the central niche of the main room of this house was a statue of Artemis, copied from a Hellenistic figure, which combined features of fifth- and fourth-century work. A statuette of Hera (or Demeter), copied from a late classical work, was found in the niche in the southern wall of the garden court. A statuette of Venus is a small-scale copy of the third-century original by the Greek sculptor Doidalsas. A headless

¹ *JHS* 21 (1901) 314. For the identification of these baths, p. 407.

² R. Calza, *NS* 1941, 216.

³ It is not certain that all this sculpture came from the building: some of it may have been collected for conversion to lime.

⁴ *Museo*, 385 (with references); G. M. A. Richter, *Three Critical Periods in Greek Sculpture* (Oxford, 1951) 6.

⁵ Becatti, *Casa tarda*, 24.

Athena derives from a fifth-century original. Such copies of Greek works, competently but somewhat lifelessly reproduced, were the hallmark of respectability throughout the imperial period. More interesting is the figure which gives its name to the house. On a base against the south wall of the garden court, at its west end, was a large seated female figure on a throne. She wears a girdled chiton and himation and holds in her left hand a cornucopia and an oar; her head is turreted.¹ Though horn of plenty and oar are appropriate to Fortuna, the turreted head would seem to be out of place. It is normally the mark of a city. Rather than Fortuna we probably see here a personification of Ostia; but, even if this identification is right, the figure derives ultimately from a Greek original. The only specifically Roman sculptures found in the house were two portrait busts of the third century A.D.

In other late houses niches and nymphaea show where sculpture was once displayed, but very little remained for the excavators. The few pieces that were found, such as the copy of a Hellenistic group from which the House of Amor and Psyche takes its name² and the Perseus from a suburban villa outside the Porta Laurentina,³ confirm the Roman lack of originality in decorative sculptures.

There was also a steady demand for sculpture for the tomb. Trimalchio was a true representative of his age and class when he designed his tomb to represent the trade he had followed.⁴ At Ostia modest reliefs in terra-cotta or marble depict the toolmaker, the boatman, the water-seller, the marble-cutter, the innkeeper, and many others, all plying their trades.⁵ When cremation was the rule, the container of the ashes was often elaborately carved in marble; when burial succeeded cremation, the sarcophagus, with its mythological reliefs and symbolic scenes, gave wider scope to the sculptor. Marble doors decorated in relief sometimes gave emphasis to the tomb entrance; portrait heads or statues were often placed inside.⁶

How much of this widespread demand for sculpture, public and private, was satisfied by local craftsmen? The only three signatures preserved are of Greeks. A small base in black marble preserves the name of a Rhodian sculptor of the late Republic.⁷ The free-standing

¹ The head was stolen from the site soon after discovery.

² Becatti, *Arti figurative*, I (1945), tav. x; *Museo*, 180.

³ *Arch. Anz.* 49 (1934) 436; *Museo*, 99.

⁵ Calza, *Necropoli*, 249-57.

⁴ Petronius, *Sat.* 71.

⁶ *Ibid.* 221-47.

⁷ NS1880. 478 n. 16: '[Ἀθαν]όδωρος Ἀγησάνδρου [Ῥ]όδιος ἐποίησεν'. The restoration of the name is based on other examples of the signature in Italy, identified by some scholars

group of Mithras and the bull, from the Baths of Mithras, was the work of Κριτων Ἀθηναίος;¹ a figure of Ganymede, now in the Vatican, has the name Φαίδιμος.² These works could have been bought outside Ostia; or they could have been produced in Ostia by travelling sculptors temporarily resident; they were not the work of sculptors locally trained. One sarcophagus came from an Attic workshop;³ two others, of a well-known columned type, are made from Phrygian marble and came from Asia Minor.⁴ Copies of Greek and Hellenistic works could have been imported, but copy books were freely circulating and local workshops are likely to have competed for the demand. The prototypes of imperial portraits originated normally in Rome, but many of the cruder copies found in Ostia are almost certainly local work; and perhaps not only the cruder copies.

But although there is a wide range of sculpture from Ostia, the origin of which will probably remain uncertain, there remains a large output which can be attributed to local workshops. The portraits of local men and women from tombs and public places, or at least the great majority of them, were carved at Ostia. They form an impressive series from the late Republic to the fourth century A.D., and the best of them can compare with the best from Rome. Some of the best can be seen in the museum on the site: the late Republican head of an old lady, severe, economic, expressive, resembling a death mask;⁵ the sensitive mid-second-century portrait bust of C. Volcacius Myron;⁶ a striking full-length fourth-century figure, redeeming with its very individual head the careless cutting of the toga.⁷ The heads of two members of the Calpurnian family cut in low relief on a funerary monument, now preserved in the Lateran Museum,⁸ are among the most impressive Trajanic portraits that have survived. *

In narrative reliefs Ostian sculptors were perhaps slower in catching up with the best work of the day. The actiological scenes from the

with one of the sculptors of the Laocoon; but see G. M. A. Richter, *Three Critical Periods*, 67.

¹ Becatti, *Mithei*, 32; *Museo*, 149; Pl. xxxi c.

² Ganymede or Narcissus, Amelung, *Die Skulpturen des vatican. Museums*, i (i) n. 388, p. 56.

³ Calza, *Necropoli*, 210, fig. 112; *Museo*, 34; Pl. xxxvi a.

⁴ Marion Lawrence, 'Additional Asiatic Sarcophagi', *MAAR* 20 (1951) 141, 158.

⁵ Wessberg, *Studien zur Kunstgeschichte der röm. Republik* (1941) 251; *Museo*, 63; Pl. xvii a.

⁶ Calza, *Necropoli*, 225, figs. 123-4; *Museo*, 38; Pl. xvii c.

⁷ R. Calza, *BC* 69 (1941) 113; *Museo*, 55. ? Symmachus (R. Calza), ? Ragonius Vincentius Celsus (Becatti, *Case tarde*, 46).

⁸ Bendorff und Schöne, *Die antiken Bildwerke des lateranischen Museums* (1867) 376 f., nn. 535, 567.

temple of Hercules are interesting for their story, but less impressive as compositions. The frieze on the public monument of Cartilius Poplicola outside the Porta Marina is crude and provincial by comparison with contemporary work at Rome. Nor can high artistic claims be made for the series of reliefs which illustrate Ostian trades, whether coming from tombs or business premises. These were mainly commissioned by humble folk and were not the work of the leading sculptors of the day. Their purpose was to tell a story; their merit lies in the realism and vigour with which they told it. An exception may be seen in the relief, attributed to the late Flavian period, which depicts two marble-cutters at work. In this relief the sculptor has arranged and executed his figures with considerable care, and not without success.¹

Local workshops have also been traced in Ostian sarcophagi. The finest were probably imported, but two types at least seem to be specifically Ostian. Reference has already been made to the sarcophagus of Quiriacus found in the Christian chapel by the theatre. In the centre of the strigilated face is the figure of Orpheus playing the lyre; at each end is another figure. Two other examples have been found at Ostia showing the figure of Orpheus treated in precisely the same style. It is a reasonable inference that a further example, from Porto Torres in Sardinia, comes from the same Ostian workshop; it was probably in the return cargo of a corn ship.² Some of the strigilated sarcophagi with central medallions containing portrait busts of the dead are also probably Ostian products. The general type is common elsewhere, but some of the Ostian examples have distinctive decoration round the medallion.³ We may also attribute to a local sculptor the elaborate sarcophagus of a priestess of Cybele, which represents the restoration of Alcestis from the dead by Hercules; for some of the heads are clearly portraits.⁴

PAINTING

Painting has naturally suffered considerably more than sculpture from weather and neglect, and it is only recently that paintings have been found in sufficient quantity at Ostia to justify even the most

¹ Calza, *Necropoli*, 257; *Museo*, 138.

² G. Pesce, *Sarcophagi romani di Sardegna* (Roma, 1957) p. 102 n. 57. The Ostian examples, collected by Signora Calza, are quoted, p. 103 n. 4. Other sarcophagi found in Sardinia are tentatively attributed to Ostian workshops by Pesce (p. 13) on grounds of varying strength.

³ Signora Calza has drawn my attention in particular to inv. 856, 919.

⁴ p. 469.

guarded generalization.¹ When, in the late nineteenth century, a block of apartments north-east of the Capitolium was excavated, the paintings that survived on the walls at once gave the name 'House of the Paintings' to the building. For, though considerable areas between the Decumanus and the Tiber had already been uncovered, and though paintings from tombs outside the Porta Laurentina could be seen in the Vatican and Lateran Galleries, this was the only building at Ostia where the visitor could form some idea of the decoration of house walls. The name is now an embarrassment; it could apply with equal force to more than twenty buildings.

Ostian painting should not be approached too solemnly. Very little of the best has survived, and only the very best Roman painters can stand comparison with the sculptors and mosaicists. For refinement of taste and craftsmanship we turn naturally to public buildings and the private houses of the aristocracy. But from basilicas, temples, the largest of the imperial baths, and other major public buildings almost nothing survives; in the independent houses too little remains to judge the quality of the work. When the spreading houses of the late Republic and early Empire were pulled down, their paintings were lost for ever; in the late houses the lower part of the wall was normally reserved for marble panelling, and only small fragments of painting survived. We are left, therefore, in the main to judge Ostian painting by the survivals in the large insulae, designed for the middle class. In these great apartment blocks the ground floors have often been protected by the ruin of upper floors above them: when exposed by excavation they steadily deteriorate, and only an unlimited purse could give complete protection for all. Sufficient, however, remains to judge the standard wall decoration of the middle class in the second and third centuries.

In most of the insulae the work is not of high quality. Rarely are the outlines of the design incised before painting; often the painter does not even use a guide for his straight lines; the surface which is to receive the paint is generally much coarser than at Pompeii. On very

¹ Very little has been published on Ostian paintings. F. Fornari, *Studi Romani*, i (1913) 305-18, reviewed the examples then known. F. Wirth, *Römische Wandmalerei* (1934), made ample use of Ostian material, but his dating of Ostian walls, based exclusively on brick measurements, is very unreliable. The 1938-42 excavations added considerably to the quantity and range, but very little of the new material has been published. A chronological classification with brief analysis, C. C. Van Essen, *Mededelingen van het Nederlands hist. inst. te Rome*, 8 (1954) 33-55. See Addenda.

few walls is the true technique of fresco employed; more often the craftsman, though painting his background colour while his surface is wet, imposes his figures on a dried wall, a less exacting but less effective and less durable technique. For his more wealthy patrons he works with care, as in the House of the Muses, but in more modest apartments such as the House of the Sun he works with a quick brush carelessly. If his lines are not straight, if he carries his stroke too far, the explanation is usually economic and not aesthetic; he is doing a cheap job.

How much should be attributed to careless workmanship is perhaps a matter of dispute. Fornari, the first of the few who have made a special study of Ostian paintings, considered that the minor irregularities in the paintings he saw (in 1913) were so widespread that they must be deliberate.¹ But the features he noted—arches not truly centred, lines slightly oblique, garlands unequally divided, irregular frames to minor scenes—have no clear aesthetic intention or effect and are more easily ascribed to the speed with which the painter worked. He was more concerned with the total effect of the wall than in the painstaking execution of detail; such irregularities do not at once catch the eye. Not all irregularities, however, are due to carelessness. It has often been remarked that many of the figures in the main living-room of the House of Jupiter and Ganymede ignore the frames that surround them. The head of a philosopher breaks the line of the top of the frame;² the feet of other individual figures come below their frame. This is very different from a failure to draw lines strictly parallel or to centre an arch. The irregularity must be deliberate; perhaps the intention is to make the figures more lifelike. It is also possible that in some rooms where all the vertical lines are noticeably oblique the painter has deliberately avoided the perpendicular.

Ostian painting has not the wealth of mythological interest that compensates for the immediate unattractiveness of much of the painting at Pompeii; but for the study of Roman art it has its own special importance. The changing styles of Pompeian painting, which should not be too rigorously schematized, are reflected in Rome and elsewhere; in the abundant material from Pompeii and Herculaneum we have a point of reference for the fashions in wall decoration of Roman Italy. But Pompeian painting ends abruptly in the middle of the Flavian period. Though discoveries of later paintings in Rome are steadily in-

¹ Fornari, *art. cit.* 306 f.

² *Ibid.* 310 f.; Wirth, *op. cit.* 109, Taf. 25 and 26.

creasing, there is barely yet from Rome itself sufficient material for an historical survey of Roman painting in the imperial period. Ostia helps to fill this gap.

In painting as in sculpture and architecture Ostia reflected Rome. On Ostia's walls we can see the changing currents of Roman taste, and within broad limits we can date some of the changes; for a considerable proportion of Ostian walls are securely dated by brickstamps and where this evidence is not available a comparative study of construction suggests an approximate context. A painting will not necessarily be contemporary with the wall on which it is painted, but the wall gives at least the earliest possible date, and it is usually clear when the painting is not original. In many cases, even when a new surface has been added and a new painting imposed, it is the original painting that has survived.

The clearest signs of changes in taste are the shifting dominance of different colours, and the painter's changing methods of organizing his wall space. It would, however, be unwise to expect rigid uniformity. Within any period we should expect differences not only of quality but of style among Ostian painters. In an apartment where red and yellow are the dominant colours, a white room will not necessarily have been painted later than the rest. A rich man's house is likely to use cobalt blue when it is absent from middle-class flats, because it is an expensive pigment. When styles are changing, an older painter may not change at once with his younger contemporaries. But such differences should not be exaggerated. The painters of Ostia formed a guild, *collegae pingentes*,¹ and in what survives of their work there is little trace of individualism.

Though small fragments of painting from the early Empire survive, it is only from the reign of Hadrian that the study of Ostian painting can usefully begin. One of the most striking features of his reign in Ostia, as has been seen, is the intensive development of large apartment blocks to house a rapidly increasing population. In many of these Hadrianic blocks the original paintings survive. It is clear at once that they cannot be compressed within any of the four recognized Pompeian styles. There are echoes of Pompeian treatment and of Pompeian motifs. Some of the figured scenes recall the second and third Pompeian styles: architectural elements, such as colonnades in perspective, framing columns, and ornamental doors can be paralleled at Pompeii, and the flowering candelabra and garlands on Ostian second-century walls are common in the Flavian period at Rome and elsewhere. But to discuss

¹ S 4699.

Ostian painting in terms of distinctive Pompeian styles is irrelevant and confusing. The total effect of an Ostian wall in the Hadrianic or early Antonine period is at once recognizable and different from any of the standard styles of Pompeii. The wall is still divided into horizontal zones, but the divisions are less emphatic; vertical divisions in the main living-rooms are only rarely indicated, by columns cutting across the horizontal divisions. Architectural forms fill out the design, especially in the upper zone, but they never dominate the wall and become increasingly subordinate until they eventually disappear.

There is a difference of treatment, as one might expect, between the more important living-rooms and secondary rooms and corridors. In the former the dominant colours until the latter part of the century are red and yellow, supplemented by white, green, dark red, violet. The wall is divided into three horizontal zones, of which the central is the largest and most emphatic. The lowest zone is reserved for panels of colour; the central zone is divided into a series of framed panels, each containing one or more figures. The colouring of the figures, in which white, green, and violet predominate, contrasts with the dominant yellow and red of the background. In the smaller rooms each panel normally contains a single figure; scenes with two and three figures are sometimes found on larger walls; there are no large-scale compositions. The scenes are taken from mythology: Jupiter caressing Ganymede, with a somewhat solemn seated female figure in the background,¹ the young Bacchus being presented to one of the nymphs,² the desertion of Ariadne.³ Single figures represent gods, muses, dancers, philosophers, often floating insubstantially in mid-air. The upper zone, very subordinate in the design, is completed with panels of colour accompanied sometimes by architectural forms, fanciful but not so completely unrealistic as in the flights of imagination of the Flavian period.

In looking at these walls the eye focuses first on the contrast of colour masses, and particularly the contrast of red and yellow panels. This effect is a little misleading, because the figures, which were an important element in the original decoration, have suffered much more than the background colours. Being painted on a dry surface they flake away when exposed and on many walls they have entirely disappeared. But even when the paint was fresh, the large panels of colour must have been the dominant feature of the design, and the figures secondary.

¹ *MA* 26 (1920) 397; Wirth, 109, Taf. 25, 36.

² *MA* 26 (1920) 381.

³ *Ibid.* 376.

Sometimes there is a contrast of shape as well as of colour, the regular rectangles being offset by panels with curving lines.

When the rooms are comparatively small and the client has an adequate purse, this style of decoration can be attractive; but it was not well suited to large surfaces. In the small main living-room of the House of the Painted Ceiling in the Via della Fontana the painter can claim a modest success.¹ The emphasis is concentrated on the central zone, which is distinguished by three large vertical panels of colour, red in the centre, flanked on each side by panels of yellow. In each panel is a single floating figure in white, green, and violet. The lowest zone, occupied by small panels of red and yellow, remains inconspicuous; the upper zone has at each angle a columned portico in perspective with architrave and cornice, and, in the centre, a further single figure. More coherence is given to the wall by two white columns which extend from the ground through the horizontal zones. Much less successful is the main room of the House of Jupiter and Ganymede. Here there is no point of rest for the eye, and no coherence in the design. Although individual scenes and figures are carefully painted, the panels of colour remain unorganized.² The painter, possibly accustomed to much smaller surfaces, was unable to adapt his style to the scale of the wall.

The less pretentious decoration of corridors, bedrooms, and other secondary rooms is often more attractive to modern taste. On these walls the low dado found in the main living-room is omitted, and the surface is divided at roughly two-thirds of its height into two horizontal zones. It is, however, the vertical zones that carry the main emphasis. A series of light architectural features, resembling elongated stands to carry vases, divide the surface into vertical fields.³ These features are linked together by light garlands, while in the field minor decorative forms are added, such as a Medusa's head, flying bird, or fish. In the Hadrianic period the background colour is usually white or yellow, the decoration in red and yellow; sometimes the foliage of garlands is painted green, but there is no strict adherence to naturalistic colours. The general pattern is maintained over a long period, but the fashion in colour changes. Sometimes the painting is rough and rapid, as in the

¹ Vaglieri, *NS* 1908, 24; Wirth, 104 (his date, *c.* 160–70, should be rejected. This house is included in a large area built at the end of Hadrian's reign (p. 136); the paintings are almost certainly contemporary.

² Wirth, *taf.* 25. The original construction is Hadrianic. Calza (*MA* 26 (1920) 363) dates the paintings in this room to a later phase, possibly Severan; Wirth (109) dates them *c.* 180. I am not convinced that a Hadrianic date is excluded.

³ Pl. xvi b.

House of the Sun and in the original painting of the corridor of the House of Jupiter and Ganymede; sometimes the design is painted with considerable care and precision, as in the House of the Muses.

In some secondary rooms a variant on this standard pattern is found. In the field between the architectural dividers, small scenes are painted, sometimes free, sometimes within dark frames. The painting is done with a quick brush, and the scene is composed of blocks of contrasting colour, white, brown, and green. No attempt is made to represent detail, but from a distance the little landscapes add distinction to the wall.¹

The Hadrianic style of wall decoration in main rooms, characterized by the contrast of large masses of colour, particularly red and yellow, had gone out of fashion by the end of the second century. In the House of Lucretius Menander we meet a very different style.² In the rooms later converted into a Mithraeum the background is white. The central zone is divided into a series of large panels framed by a thin band of red, within which are three bands of different colours. In the white field of each panel is painted a scene in green and brown, only one of which remains clearly recognizable, a landscape with shrine. The dado below this zone is now concealed by the benches of the Mithraeum but probably was filled by horizontal panels of colour. The upper zone, now lost, is separated from the central zone by a delicately painted stucco cornice in red, black, and blue. Architectural motifs, which had already become very subordinate in the Hadrianic style, have here been completely omitted. Another room in the same house is similar in style and may be from the same workshop. The house was built under Hadrian, but the paintings follow the reconstruction of some of the walls: they also precede the Mithraeum, which was inserted in the house not later than the early third century. The paintings probably are to be dated shortly after the middle of the second century.

Perhaps we should date to roughly the same period a group of paintings in the west wing of the *Insula* of the Charioteers. Here the background is white; the decorative effect is achieved by simple means. Thin lines of garlands break the monotony of the surface, but the main emphasis is on a series of small unframed scenes, of which the best are a hunter and stag in brown and green,³ and a panther. The painters of Ostia, never completely happy with the human figure, are at their best in such quick renderings of animal life.

¹ Wirth, Taf. 30b.

² Wirth, 134.

³ Pl. xvi a.

Towards the end of the second century there is a clear change in fashion in the decoration of secondary rooms both in colour and in subject. Red becomes the dominant background colour, and the change is too widespread to be coincidence; the explanation is not that red was a more practical colour and showed the dirt less, but that the colour had become fashionable. In one case we can see and approximately date the change. The ground-floor corridor of the House of Jupiter and Ganymede had originally, when the block was built under Hadrian, a white background with its decoration in red and yellow; later, though the east end of the corridor, used as a separate room, remained unchanged, the rest of the corridor was given a red background with yellow and green decoration. The new coat covers an original entrance to the street which was later closed, and the chance scratching of a date shows that the new painting was completed before the death of Commodus. The man who wrote 'vii Kal(endas) Commodas'¹ did not realize that the month would retain the emperor's name for less than two years.

As a variant on what we may call the standard corridor pattern, new motifs appear under the Severi. It becomes a common practice to paint stalks with foliage,² or cups on a red background. The foliage is painted in green with a broad brush and in a free style; the cups are large, painted in yellow to represent bronze or gold. This form of decoration can be seen on brick piers, as in the *Insula* of Serapis, in corridors, as in the Baths of Invidiosus, and in larger rooms, as in the Baths of Buticosus. It shows a reaction from the earlier practice of dividing the wall up into panels and treats the surface more as a unity. The same conception lies behind the large unframed figured scenes that date from approximately the same period. Two ambitious examples can be seen decorating the walls of *Frigidaria*. In the Baths of the Seven Sages Venus is depicted rising from the sea, at her toilet. On one side of her a Cupid holds up a mirror, a second Cupid at her other side holds a toilet box. Realistic fishes swim around, but the large lobster in the foreground strikes an incongruous note.³ In the *Pharos Baths* Europa rides her bull accompanied by a miscellaneous assortment of fishes. The two pictures are very similar in style; they may be by the same painter, or at least from the same workshop. The colouring is not unattractive, but the drawing of the figures is weak and the compositions lack design.

While adequate evidence is available for classifying Ostian paintings

¹ *MA* 26 (1920) 369.

² *Pl.* xvi c.

³ *Ostia* (1954), fig. 41.

of the second and early third centuries, it is more difficult to select what properly belongs to the period that follows the Severi. There was little new housebuilding in these years of anarchy, and much of the repainting in the insulae has disintegrated as a result of the method employed. To secure an enduring surface in redecoration the wall must be stripped and a fresh start made, or the old painting must be picked over so that a new bed of plaster can be bound into the old; a fresh surface is then built up. But it was much cheaper merely to cover the old surface with a very thin layer of stucco. The immediate effect of painting on such a surface was satisfactory, but, since it was not securely bound to the old, it was extremely fragile and liable to flake away. Such shoddy redecoration was found in the House of the Paintings and its two neighbours¹ and in the House of the Painted Ceiling.² At the time of excavation a little of the later decoration could be distinguished, but no traces now remain; the original paintings are comparatively well preserved. The proper use of this technique was for notices on brick walls, where the writing or decoration was not required to endure, and the quickest and cheapest method was the best for the purpose. Its application to interior walls is a typical mark of the third-century decline in living standards of the middle classes.

The linear style which pervaded the catacombs through the middle of the third century is represented at Ostia in the little that survives from this period; it was probably the fashion of the day.³ The surface of the wall and ceiling is covered by a pattern, rarely symmetrical, of thin lines, straight and curved, painted in red and green with a subsidiary use of yellow on a white background. Small figures, human and animal, are often included but they are never conspicuous. There is little rest for the eye in such decoration, and if the painter is trying to carry experiments in spatial illusion to their logical conclusion he has failed in his purpose. This is not a triumph of abstract art; it seems to reflect the disintegration and insecurity that followed the end of the Severan dynasty.

Towards the end of the third century and through the fourth a new fashion sweeps the field. On the lower zones of walls the imitation of marble becomes the dominant theme. The taste derives no doubt from the increasing use of marble dadoes and *opus sectile* pavements in the

¹ MA 26 (1920) 347 f.

² NS 1908, 23.

³ For the style, Wirth, 165. At Ostia, NS 1908, 23 (no longer visible); a good example on a wall near the Caupona del Pavone (Reg. iv. 2. 6).

houses of the wealthy. Where marble itself cannot be afforded or where, as in corridors or unimportant rooms, it would seem unduly extravagant, the painter does his best to give the appearance of marble. Not content with whites and greys, he paints panels of Giallo Antico, Pavonazzetto, and Cipollino with the same perverted ingenuity and relish with which a modern craftsman imposes an aristocratic oak grain on a door of Canadian pine. Sometimes the framed marble panels of the dado are his model, as in the *Insula of the Eagle*; sometimes, as in the north-east room of the *Schola del Traiano*, he reproduces the geometric pattern of a marble floor. That the fashion is late in development is shown by its absence from the original paintings on Hadrianic and Antonine walls and its appearance in various rooms where it replaces earlier paintings, as in the *House of the Muses*. In the main room facing the entrance of the guild house of the builders it is later than the podium, which in turn is later than the original Hadrianic construction.

The widespread imitation of marble dominates the painting of the period that has survived, but it was accompanied by large-scale figured scenes. The almost total disappearance of such late paintings is one of our most serious losses. Isolated figures that have survived in Rome suggest that perhaps the painters were not far behind when the sculptors were producing their striking series of late portraits. Fragments of a large composition from the *House of the Nymphaeum* suggest a higher standard than Ostian painters reached in the period of prosperity.¹

Not all the paintings that have survived in Ostia submit to easy classification. Two in particular deserve attention, for they have few parallels in Italy, and anticipate modern principles of wall decoration. Both use a recurring pattern. The first was found in the north-east room off the garden court of a house near the sea coast outside *Porta Marina*. On a background of cobalt blue the painter has imposed a maze in white. At the crossings of the maze are sheafs from which stream swags of foliage, or graceful little figures in white within a red circle. While the main pattern is repeated, the figures are varied. Colour and design combine to make this one of the most attractive paintings to be seen in Ostia.² The wall on which it is painted dates from the construction of the house in the Flavian period; the painting itself may be contemporary, for there is no sign of an earlier coat underneath. The second

¹ Becatti, *Casa tarde*, 38, figs. 37-39.

² Reg. iv. 8. 6 (*Domus Fulminata*). The painting has been transferred to the *Horrea Epagathiana*.

painting based on a recurring pattern is not earlier than the third century. It forms the upper zone of a room in the Insula of the Eagle. The lower zone imitates marble, and is divided from the upper zone by a band of red. Above, on a brown background, the painter has drawn with compass a series of concentric and intersecting circles with colouring of red, green, and blue-grey. The design has the restfulness of a Victorian wallpaper in moderately good taste. A similar but more attractive pattern, based on compass-drawn circles, was later found in an apse near the temple of Serapis and has been moved to the Horrea Epagathiana; it may have come from the same workshop.

MOSAICS

The decorators of pavements have fared much better than the painters in the chances of survival.¹ When walls are pulled down their paintings are lost. Pavements are not torn up; they are simply replaced at a higher level. Ultimately, by careful excavation at lower levels, it should be possible to trace in some detail the history of Ostia's pavements. For even what can now be seen gives a much more representative impression of the pavement worker's quality than of the painter's. Most of the insulae still retain on the ground floor their mosaics; a large series of ambitious decorations survive from the floors of baths and other public buildings, and we can still judge the quality and style of the pavements in the late houses of the rich. What is most needed to complete a general survey is a series of representative samples from independent houses of the early Empire.

The black-and-white mosaic pavement is already well established by the early Empire. It is, however, only from the second century that a sufficient number of pavements can be seen to form a general impression of the mosaicist's work. One of the most striking characteristics of the insulae is the free use of black-and-white mosaics to pave the floors. Normally the kitchen and lavatory are differently treated, with floors of cement or *opus spicatum*, but all other ground-floor rooms and corridors are paved with black-and-white mosaic, even in such humble blocks as the Casette-tipo. In corridors and courts the mosaic is often, but not always, in plain white with a black border; in rooms the pave-

¹ The widest illustration and discussion of Ostian mosaics is by M. E. Blake, 'The Pavements of the Roman Buildings of the Republic and early Empire', *MAAR* 8 (1930) 1-159; 'Roman Mosaics of the Second Century in Italy', *ibid.* 13 (1936) 67-214. A chronological classification of mosaics, including many from Ostia, C. C. Van Essen, *Mededingen van het Nederlands hist. inst. te Rome*, 8 (1954) 64-94.

ment is patterned, and the design is almost invariably geometric. The basic shapes are simple and often repeated, the square, the star, the lozenge, the circle, the pelta, and the hexagon. What makes the pavements interesting is the combination of shapes and the building up of the design. One might have expected that in large blocks, in which the plans of individual apartments often corresponded precisely, the craftsman would have worked to a limited number of selected designs and repeated the pavements of one apartment in the next. It is clear that he approached his job in a very different spirit. In the block which contains the House of Jupiter and Ganymede, the House of the Paintings, and the House of the Infant Bacchus, twelve mosaic floors have in part survived on the ground floor; though many are composed from the same elements, they are all different.¹

The simple designs, such as the key or meander pattern, though unexciting, are always effective. In some of the more complicated arrangements of shapes the design is lost in over-elaboration. But, as a class, these pavements compare very favourably in taste with the floor decoration of a modern middle-class home, and they were practical as well as decorative. Most of them seem to have remained in good condition with comparatively minor repairs for more than a hundred years.

In the *insulae* there are no figured mosaics, coloured mosaics, or marble pavements. In these respects they are very different from the houses of Pompeii. The contrast might be less striking if we could see the pavements of the Julio-Claudian independent homes at Ostia; for it is perhaps significant that in the only *domus* preserving pavements that are roughly contemporary with the Hadrianic *insulae* the pavements are not limited to geometric designs. This house, the so-called House of Apuleius, was probably built under Trajan, but it had a long life and underwent several modifications.² At least two periods can be seen in its pavements, and in two rooms both original and later pavements survive. The original pavements include a simple design of squares, triangles, and hexagons in a small range of coloured marbles; and a black-and-white mosaic design with a figured scene in the centre. This design is composed of rectangles, peltae, and curvilinear squares surrounding a central hexagon: in the centre was once a charioteer raising the palm of victory over his successful chariot.³ Two other figured mosaics can be seen in the west wing of the house. One shows two sea-monsters ridden

¹ Blake, *MAAR* 13 (1936) 90; *MA* 26 (1920) 366.

² *NS* 1886, 163; Paschetto, 421.

³ Blake (1936) 88–90.

by Nereids, the other a maenad and satyr; both are later than the original construction. This house is built in a very restricted area; the pavements of the more spacious houses on the western Decumanus were probably more ambitious.

By the early second century Ostian craftsmen were familiar with laying pavements of marble and reproducing elaborate figured compositions in black-and-white mosaic. Of the marble pavements only small fragments survive. The Basilica was paved with alternating rectangular panels of Giallo Antico and Luna; the design of the Capitolium pavement, as reported in the early nineteenth century, was a simple pattern in more varied marbles of squares enclosing rhombs.¹ In the more modest examples that survive from private buildings there is the same simplicity. Only the simplest geometric forms are used, and the range of marbles is limited.

Figured compositions in mosaic are much more widely represented, and especially from the baths. The earliest large-scale composition known to us was found in a set of baths which was constructed in the middle of the first century A.D. and pulled down before the district was rebuilt at the end of Hadrian's reign.² The field is divided into a series of squares, with a central panel occupying the space of six squares. In this central panel are four dolphins, representing the sea. At each end of this centre-piece four squares contain representations of provinces and winds. At one end is Spain, a female head bound with a wreath of olive, for oil was the province's main export; diagonally from Spain is Sicily, represented by the triskeles. Balancing the two provinces are male winged heads. One is bearded, the other beardless; they represent winds. At the other end two similar winds are balanced by female heads representing Egypt and Africa. A crocodile's head and tail denote Egypt; the elephant's head and tusks which form her head-dress is the badge of Africa. Around these central features of the design run two rows of squares, in which a simple geometric pattern alternates with crossed shields, or shield and spear, symbolizing the fighting that won the provinces. The whole composition is framed by a meander border. There is little subtlety in the technique of this mosaic; the heads are roughly drawn, the representation of beard, hair, and other details is still crude, but the craftsman has organized a large area (13 × 9 metres) into a simple but effective composition. The pavement illustrated the

¹ Paschetto, 360.

² Calza, *BC* 40 (1912) 103; Blake (1930) 123 f.

trade of empire and may have been inspired by the building of the Claudian harbour.

At approximately the same time the colonnade of the Piazzale delle Corporazioni was providing ample scope for figured compositions on a smaller scale. Most of those that can now be seen date from the second century or later; but four mosaics from the lower Claudian level have been preserved. They include a Nereid on a sea-horse accompanied by two dolphins, a man crowning himself for victory over a fallen bull, and Diana with a stag.¹ But it was the great increase in the number and scale of public baths in the second century that gave the Ostian mosaicists their richest opportunity. Here were large surfaces to be decorated, and at least during the first half of the century handsome fees could be afforded. Scenes from marine life were the fashion of the day, and they provided good opportunity for invention.

The finest of Ostia's mosaics paves the floor of the Frigidarium in the Baths of Neptune.² In the centre Neptune is swept along by four galloping sea-horses; in his left hand is his trident, his right holds the reins loosely. His mantle is blown by the wind to form an arc over his head. Around this central group are two bands of swimming figures. The inner band is comparatively restrained and realistic, composed of human figures, cupids riding dolphins, and very plausible fish. In the outer band, fantastic sea-monsters and Nereids in undulating coils prance gaily through the sea.

This is an extremely effective composition, and however much he may have owed to a model in a copybook, the craftsman has imposed his own individuality on the work. His most striking success is to have filled in such a large composition with so many figures without a sense of crowding or monotony, and to have infused the whole with such a sense of movement and high spirits. The interest extends to detail. Rarely do mosaicists show such concern for the anatomy of their sea-monsters, and in his particular formula for expressing the transition from front to hind part of his hybrid creatures he seems to have left his individual mark.³ It recurs in the mosaic in the next room of these baths, a quieter composition, and less fully preserved. Amphitrite rides a sea-horse through the waves, preceded by Hymen and accompanied by sea-monsters, some of whom make music for the approaching

¹ NS 1914, 72, 98; Blake (1930) 101.

² Calza, *Boll. D'arte*, 6 (1912) 199; Blake (1936) 145; Wirth, 144 (with Taf. 35).

³ I am grateful to Professor A. D. Trendall, to whom this observation is due.

marriage. The coiling monsters are unmistakably from the same workshop as the Neptune mosaic.

These mosaics have been dated to the mature Antonine period, and their style has been thought to reflect particularly well the spirit of that age.¹ But the baths in which they were laid were virtually completed by the end of Hadrian's principate,² and it is reasonable to regard the mosaics as contemporary with the building. Some slight support for this earlier date may be found perhaps in a mosaic from the Baths of Buticosus. This mosaic is now half hidden by a hot bath built when the function of the room was changed in a reconstruction; but the marine monsters that figure in the design strongly resemble those of Neptune's Baths and repeat the individualistic formula for expressing the joining of two different forms. The Baths of Buticosus were built under Trajan³ and their decoration may be an earlier work of the Neptune mosaicist.

Scenes taken from marine life are also found in the Severan Baths on the line of the Sullan walls south-west of Porta Marina.⁴ The best preserved shows in the centre a head of Oceanus; at each of the four angles is a triton blowing a horn and holding an oar in the other hand. The design is neat and balanced, but lifeless. There is a similar dullness in the heated rooms of the Baths of the Seven Sages. More interesting is the mosaic that paves the circular room in the latter baths, the so-called hunter's mosaic.⁵ It depicts a series of hunters and wild animals, and the field is divided up by acanthus scrolls. The scale of the figures is small, producing an effect of crowding, and the scrolls, following an undeviating pattern, become monotonous. On grounds of style the mosaic has been attributed to the Severan period, but the present structure of the room is Hadrianic: unless another pavement is found underneath, this mosaic should logically be attributed to the period of Hadrian.

The figured mosaics so far considered were designed primarily as decoration. The main purpose of others is to tell a story. The scene on the pavement of the vestibule of the chapel in the Barracks of the Vigiles depicts the sacrifice of the bull, the central element in the imperial cult.⁶ The mosaic is divided into three scenes. In the centre, the bull has been brought in. He awaits the executioner's blow but struggles

¹ Wirth, 144, followed by Doro Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, 530.

² p. 409.

³ Bloch, *Topografia*, 218 (Reg. i. 14. 8).

⁴ Paschetto, 304; Blake (1936) 146 (but her Antonine dating should be changed to Severan, p. 419).

⁵ Phot. *Ostia*, 86, fig. 35.

⁶ Carcopino, *Mélanges*, 27 (1907) 227; Blake (1936) 166. For the more common representation of this scene, O. Brendel, *RM* 45 (1930) 196.

to escape. Behind him, with stick upraised, is the man who has led him in, and the executioner, with long-handled axe ready to strike. To the right is a lighted altar, and to the right of the altar a flute-player in the background; in the foreground is the officiating priest. The two scenes on left and right balance one another; they show the bull stretched out dead, and a man with axe raised preparing to cut up the sacrificial meat. The drawing of the figures is rough, but the total effect is impressive. There is a nice balance in the design and a fine contrast between the struggling bull of the centre and the dead bull of the side scenes. The date of the barracks is late Hadrianic, but the mosaic is part of a later modification.¹ Somewhat later, probably from the Severan period, is the mosaic of the hall of the corn measurers. In a central panel their measuring trade is depicted; but the figures are crowded and the scene somewhat lifeless. The series of mosaics from the *Piazzale delle Corporazioni* are less concerned with the composition of the design than in setting out the business of the traders they represent; but the ships which are the dominant theme in most of the scenes are drawn with considerable care and skill. There is no doubt that even if we consider only such work as this or the average product on the floors of insulae, shops, and smaller baths, the mosaicist made much better use of his medium than the painter.

How soon and how widely coloured mosaics were used in Ostian pavements is still uncertain, owing to the absence of adequate material from the first century. Some coloured tesserae were used in one of the mosaics from the Claudian level in the *Piazzale delle Corporazioni*,² but the first mature example that survives probably dates from the reign of Antoninus Pius. It was laid in a small shrine on the north side of the *Decumanus* near the *Porta Romana*. The shrine is divided into a vestibule and main room. In the first a simple geometric pattern is used; the main room is covered with interlacing ribbon-like scrolls. The colours used are soft tones of red, yellow, green, black, white.³ Roughly contemporary is the finest of the series known to us. It was discovered by Visconti in the middle of the last century in the baths of the so-called 'Imperial Palace' and preserved for the Pope. The mosaic was carefully lifted, brought to Rome in thirty journeys, restored, and relaid in the

¹ The vestibule itself is not original. It was carved out of the portico by two side framing walls, probably *Commodan*.

² *NS* 1914, 99.

³ Blake (1936) 126.

Hall of the Immaculate Conception in the Vatican galleries, where it can still be seen.¹ The border is modern, the size of the mosaic has been considerably reduced to fit the room (from 18 × 13.37 metres to 14.50 × 8.40 metres), and the surface has been in places heavily worn by visitors. But even now one can understand Visconti's enthusiasm. The basis of the design is provided by rows of large squares and rectangles framed by borders of two-strand guilloche. The scale and the interlace patterns of the squares contrast with naturalistic patterns in the rectangles. Colour and design blend well, and Visconti's comparison with an oriental carpet is apt.

In another room in the Vatican an Ostian mosaic combines coloured panels with a black-and-white field. In the centre is a charming scene showing two birds pecking at a basket of flowers. This central square is flanked on each side by a small square containing a simple rosette. These coloured squares are set against a black-and-white background in which a grape-vine curls gracefully over the field.² Coloured mosaics were also occasionally used to decorate walls. The simple acanthus scrolls on the piers and vaulting of a small room in the Baths of the Seven Sages probably date from Hadrian's reign;³ rather later in the century is the brightly coloured Silvanus which was found lining a niche near the Mithraeum in the 'Imperial Palace' and removed to the Lateran Museum.⁴

For the second and early third centuries we have a wide range of pavements from private and public buildings. In the late Empire no bath or temple pavements survive, and in private buildings our evidence is confined to the domus. In such insulae as were still occupied it seems that the old pavements were crudely restored; only where a domus was carved out of an insula, as in the House of the Dioscuri, were the pavements renewed. From the late houses we can get a clear impression of the fashions of the wealthy in the fourth century. What we cannot yet fully know is how far the fashions reflected in their pavements differed from those of the wealthy classes of the two preceding centuries.

The dominance of marble pavements is probably a new development. They were certainly used earlier, as in the House of Apuleius,

¹ B. Nogara, *I mosaici antichi conservati nei palazzi pont. del Vaticano e del Laterano* (Milano, 1910) 33; Blake (1936) 125.

² Nogara, *op. cit.* 33 (who suggests that two mosaics may be combined); Blake (1936) 130.

³ Doro Levi, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*, 498.

⁴ Nogara, 32; Becatti, *Mithei*, 56 f.

but the fact that in that house an *opus sectile* pavement was succeeded, probably in the second century, in the same room by a black-and-white mosaic suggests that they were less widespread than later. In the fourth century *opus sectile* is normally applied in the main living-room of the house. This emphasis on marble pavements thus corresponds to the popularity of marble dadoes on walls and painted panels imitating marble, which seem to be a late development. The designs of these *opus sectile* pavements are more elaborate than those of the early Empire; rectangular shapes, particularly squares, triangles, and hexagons, have been largely replaced by circles, curving lines, and rosettes; also the range of marbles used is wider.

Black-and-white mosaic geometric designs are still used, particularly in rooms of secondary importance, but their design is normally more complex than in the Hadrianic insulae. Such motifs as Solomon's knot and the Greek Cross are not uncommon, and, consistent with the fashion in architecture, curvilinear patterns tend to replace the square, hexagon, and triangle of the earlier period. Coloured mosaics also appear in the fourth-century houses, both unfigured and figured. It is perhaps socially significant that the only parallel in the fourth century to the impressive black-and-white figured compositions from the public baths of the second century are found in two large mosaics in colour from private houses. One, in the largest room of the House of the Dioscuri, represents Nereids on sea-monsters and shows in the centre Venus at her toilet in a setting of sea-shells.¹ There is a calm resignation about the sea-monsters that contrasts strongly with the liveliness of second-century work, and there is little unity in the design, but the total effect is not unpleasing. The other has been only in part preserved: it was found in the bath wing of a suburban villa and has now been set up on the garden wall of the House of the Paintings. It depicts in a series of panels the months of the year, of which only March and April survive.²

Ostia's mosaics do not rival, in quality and range, those of Antioch or of the wealthiest towns of Africa and Gaul; but there is at least one masterpiece among them, and the general standard of taste and execution is higher than we might expect in a town concerned primarily with trade and commerce.

Neither literature nor inscriptions tell us anything of the social status

¹ Becatti, *Casa tarde*, 36, figs. 42-45.

² *Arch. Anz.* 51 (1936) 460.

or national origin of Ostia's sculptors, painters, and mosaicists. We should think of them as craftsmen rather than artists, normally working in small premises on street fronts, similar to those of the shoemakers and jewellers, mixing freely with traders and shopkeepers. Theirs was not a luxury trade. Even the meanest household had its walls painted, and the demand for mosaics reached at least to the lower middle classes. Only wealthy homes could afford sculpture, but the people expected to see statues in their public places and their public buildings; it was the tradition of public life that the governing class should meet the need.

During the great rebuilding of Ostia in the second century painters and mosaicists must have been hard pressed to find enough assistants to meet the rush of work in the new apartment blocks. At the same time new public buildings and the headquarters of the more prosperous guilds provided opportunities for the decorators and sculptors such as they had never known before. But the depression of the third century fell no less heavily on them than on those whose living depended more directly on the flow of trade. Through the fourth century there was a brisker demand for work of good quality in the houses of the rich; the unpretentious decorator, who had once done a thriving business in the *insulae*, must have had a much leaner time.

THE CEMETERIES

WHEN Juvenal announces his intention to attack the dead he describes his victims as men 'whose ashes lie buried by the Flaminian and Latin roads'. A law of the twelve tables forbade burial or cremation within the city, but the strong desire to be remembered after death required a place for the tomb where it could be easily seen and easily visited. Roman custom was followed in Roman colonies and municipalities; most of their cemeteries are on or near roads.

At Ostia tombs were built along more than seven miles of road. Along the Via Ostiensis they reached eastward as far as Acilia and a little beyond; south of the town they lined long stretches of the five roads that crossed the Piana Bella. At Portus the two main cemeteries were associated with the roads that led to Rome and to Ostia. Inscriptions, sarcophagi, and sculptures have been taken over a long period from tombs in widely dispersed areas, but the early excavators left no record of the tombs themselves. Only two small compact areas have been systematically excavated at Ostia, on the Via Ostiensis immediately outside the Porta Romana,¹ and along a short stretch of the continuation of the *Cardo Maximus* towards Laurentine territory, some 200 metres outside the walls;² at Portus a larger section of a cemetery has been excavated on Isola Sacra by the road that links the imperial harbours with Ostia.³

These three areas between them cover a long period from the end of the Republic to the fourth century A.D., and reflect the changing customs of the middle class; but among the tombs that have been excavated none belonged to the most distinguished layer of society. The Laurentine and Isola Sacra cemeteries were primarily used by small traders and craftsmen; in neither are the tombs of any magistrates or even councillors found. The tombs outside the Porta Romana represent

¹ Paschetto, 441-61. The evidence re-examined, M. F. Squarciapino, *Scavi di Ostia*, iii (1) 11-60.

² Paschetto, 461-77; Calza, *NS* 1938, 26-74; *Scavi di Ostia*, iii (1) 62-127.

³ Calza, *La Necropoli del Porto di Roma nell' Isola Sacra* (1940).

a rather higher social level. The inscriptions include records of knights and a few magistrates, but no men of distinction are among them. It was probably more fashionable to build the tomb farther from the town. The finest sarcophagus from Ostian territory was found at Acilia, some three miles to the east.¹ It was also at Acilia that a relief showing six consular *fascēs* was found; it probably came from an Ostian consul's tomb of the early Empire.² The area to the south near La Toretta also proved a happy hunting-ground for elaborate sarcophagi in the early nineteenth century.³

One of the most striking features of the cemeteries that we can now see is the apparent absence of public control in their development. On Isola Sacra we should expect the earliest tombs to be concentrated near to the canal, and then a systematic extension of the cemetery towards Ostia; but it is clear that some of the earlier tombs were built at least a quarter of a mile from the canal.⁴ Small groups of tombs follow a common alignment, but there are too many variant alignments to be reduced to a rational plan.⁵ Tombs 88 and 90 follow a building line already established, but, unlike the others in their row, which have their entrance from the front, these two tombs are entered at the side, and between them was left an open space. This space the owners had presumably bought, for later a new tomb was built here by permission of their heirs.⁶ The Laurentine cemetery is a little more orderly but it does not suggest a development plan.

The earliest burials so far discovered were found outside the Porta Romana at the level of the sand, but all had been disturbed when later tombs were built over them, and it is impossible to form a clear picture from the evidence that has been recorded.⁷ It seems that normally the ashes were placed in an urn which was laid in the ground, together with a few personal belongings of the dead. In one case certainly, and possibly in others, ashes and belongings were contained in a wooden

¹ *Boll. d'arte*, 39 (1954) 200.

² Fea, *Viaggio*, 10. Now in the cloisters of St. Paul's basilica. Dated to the first half of the first century A.D. by A. M. Colini, *Il Fascio littorio di Roma* (1933) 84 f. Perhaps from the tomb of T. Sextius Africanus, Ostian consul of A.D. 59.

³ Paschetto, 477-81.

⁴ The Vatican cemetery provides an interesting parallel, J. Toynbee and J. Ward Perkins, *The Shrine of St. Peter*, 30.

⁵ Thylander (*Étude sur l'épigraphie latine*, 27-37) explains the difference in alignments by changes in the road system, but some lines (particularly tombs 10 and 11) would still be unexplained.

⁶ Thylander, A 180; Calza, *Necropoli*, 350.

⁷ NS 1911, 83, 448; 1912, 95, 202, 239, 274; *Scavi di Ostia*, iii (1), 11-20.

coffin decorated with applied reliefs in bone.¹ No inscriptions were found to mark those early burials, nor even tufa markers, but the names of the dead might have been recorded on wood. There is no evidence for inhumation as distinct from cremation, but the sample is too small to exclude the possibility. The evidence for dating is inadequate, but a Boeotian coin gives a *terminus post quem* of the early second century B.C. for one burial,² and the general description of the pottery and other associated objects is consistent with a second-century dating of the series. These tombs precede the Sullan walls, but are considerably later than the establishment of the Castrum in the fourth century.

We come to firmer ground towards the end of the Republic. The tombs of the Laurentine cemetery are well enough preserved to allow general conclusions, and the style of construction, together with the lettering of inscriptions, provides a reliable basis for dating the earliest of the tombs to the principate of Augustus or perhaps a little earlier. When the Laurentine tombs had been examined it became clear that the contemporary tombs outside the Porta Romana, which were much less well preserved owing to the more intensive building history of the area, were being built in the same style.

In the early Augustan period two main types of tomb are found and both are already well established. The simpler takes the form of a plain rectangular enclosure with plain reticulate walls some 2 metres high. In this enclosure the body was normally burnt, recalling Festus' definition: 'bustum proprie dicitur locus, in quo mortuus est combustus et sepultus . . . ubi vero combustus quis tantummodo, alibi vero est sepultus, is locus ab urendo ustrina vocatur'.³ The ashes were then collected in an urn and the urn was sunk in the ground, usually in the corner or against a wall of the enclosure. There was no entrance to the enclosure and one assumes that ladders were used.

The second type differs from the first in having a massive monument, normally rectangular, in the face of the enclosure.⁴ Those who could afford it used travertine, at least for the façade; the cheaper alternative was tufa. Of these monuments only the lowest courses, in plain *opus quadratum*, survive. How they were finished we do not know, but Pompeian examples offer possible parallels. The public tomb of C. Cartilius Poplicola outside the Porta Marina conforms to this type; one contemporary tomb has a different character. Instead of a solid

¹ NS 1911, 83; 1912, 95.

² NS 1911, 448.

³ Festus (Lindsay), 29.

⁴ Fig. 31, p. 458; Pl. xxxii a.

rectangular monument in the face of the enclosure there was in the centre some form of light structure supported on columns; within it were found a number of urns containing ashes.¹

The ownership of a tomb is indicated by an inscribed travertine panel or cippus inserted in the wall. The inscriptions are extremely simple. They specify, as tombstones continue to do later, the precise area covered in frontage and depth, and they give the names of those by whom and for whom the tomb is built. In marked contrast with later practice, the

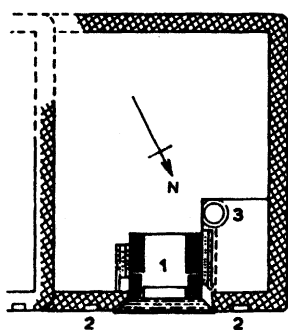


Fig. 31

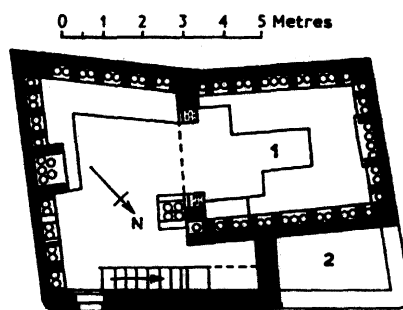


Fig. 32

FIG. 31. Augustan tomb. 1. Tufa monument in reticulate façade (Pl. XXXII a).
2. Inscribed cippi, embedded in wall. 3. Well.

FIG. 32. Early Julio-Claudian columbarium (Pl. XXXII b). 1. Triclinium. 2. Ustrina.

owners seem to be concerned only with the immediately foreseeable future. The individuals for whom the tomb is intended are listed and there is no indication in the text that the tomb will receive other burials after their death. But in two cases it is laid down that the tomb shall not pass to the heir;² we assume that normally it remained the burial place of the family or passed with the rest of the dead man's property to his heir. In only one Augustan inscription is provision explicitly made for a man's freedmen and freedwomen.³ Later *libertis libertabusque suis posterisque eorum* became a standard formula ensuring a long continuity of occupation. It is not surprising that several Augustan tombs were built over at a higher level before the end of the Julio-Claudian period.

Before Augustus died a new type of tomb, found considerably earlier at Rome, was emerging at Ostia, the so-called columbarium.⁴ The

¹ Tomb 23, NS 1938, 39.

² NS 1938, 63 (n. 23), 64 (n. 24).

³ NS 1938, 62 (n. 22).

⁴ Pl. XXXII b. Tomb 18 in the Laurentine cemetery, one of the earliest columbaria, may be dated to the Augustan period by the specially fine quality of its stuccoes and the style of its reticulate facing, NS 1938, 56.

central feature is a rectangular barrel-vaulted tomb chamber. The urns containing the ashes of the dead are no longer placed in the ground but in niches built in the wall. Some tombs have open enclosures added to them, whose walls are also lined with niches, and occasionally narrow stairs lead to an upper room. In the early stages of development of the type a small area is sometimes walled off in the corner of the outer enclosure for the burning of the body as in the previous period;¹ but this custom soon died out. By the Flavian period, and probably earlier, the bodies of the dead were always cremated in public *ustrinae*, a more economic and probably more efficient system.

The columbarium remained the dominant type of family tomb for more than a century. Early examples, such as the tomb of the Claudii,² can be seen in the Laurentine cemetery and outside the Porta Romana, but a more comprehensive impression of the type can be derived from the Trajanic and Hadrianic tombs of the Isola Sacra cemetery. The columbaria reflect the rising standards of the middle class; and the clearest signs of the growing prosperity are the general replacement of travertine by marble for funerary inscriptions and the refinement of the construction and decoration of the tomb.

In contrast with the plain severity of earlier tombs, the columbaria were rich in decoration within and without. The inner wall faces were usually finished crudely, for they were to be plastered; the side and back walls received no emphasis, for they were inconspicuous; but the tomb face was intended to impress the passer-by. In the reticulate period the work was carefully finished; when fired bricks came into general use specially thin bricks were usually selected, deep pink or sometimes yellow, and the layer of mortar between rows and between joints was reduced to a minimum, providing a much more elegant surface than in contemporary insulae. Sometimes pilasters were added to the face in a contrasting colour, red pilasters against a yellow brick wall, or yellow against red.³ While most tombs followed the current building style of reticulate or brick, or a combination of both, others were more original. In one tomb outside the Porta Romana variety was given to the reticulate surface by alternating rows of tufa and *selce* blocks. A stranger experiment was made in one of the Isola Sacra tombs, in which *opus spicatum*, a herring-bone pattern of bricks, normally reserved for floors, was used for the walls.⁴

¹ NS 1938, 42, fig. 15.

³ Calza, *Necropoli*, 76, fig. 26.

² Fig. 32, Pl. xxxii b.

⁴ Ibid. 83, fig. 31.

The door of the tomb chamber, much lower than a house door, was framed by massive travertine imposts surmounted by a simply moulded lintel. Above was inset the inscription providing the title-deed for the tomb. This inscription was made an effective element in the general design by its decorative framing cornice, in which pumice, tufa, and brick were often used to provide contrasts of texture and colour in a rich variety of patterns.¹ Many tombs also had terra-cotta tablets inserted in their walls, illustrating the owner's trade. Above was a plain entablature surmounted by a pediment usually triangular but sometimes curved.²

The tomb chamber was dimly lit by slit-windows, but the interior was elaborately decorated. Rows of niches, each normally containing two urns, were built into the wall and formed the basis of the general design. Special emphasis was given to the central niches, which were larger and more ambitiously decorated; semicircular and rectangular niches were co-ordinated in a comprehensive pattern. The surface of walls, niches, and ceiling offered wide scope for the painters. The larger niches were filled with individual figures or mythological scenes; in the smaller niches floral, animal, or geometric decoration predominates. In many of the tombs stucco was combined with paint. The central niches, sometimes others also, were framed by fluted pilasters, more rarely columns, and stucco shells were widely used to line the semi-domes. Stucco mouldings divided the ceiling into panels of varied shape, which were filled with further paintings. Most tomb floors were paved with mosaic and in a small minority sculpture was added.

The ashes of the dead were normally placed in a plain urn already embedded in a niche, but those who could afford it preferred a more individual memorial. For them decorated marble coffers, or funerary altars, inscribed with their names and epitaph, were used. A similar distinction is seen later, when cremation gives place to burial, between the marble sarcophagus and the simple recess in the wall or grave in the floor.

Columbaria differed considerably in size and capacity, but many of them contained more than a hundred urns, anticipating long-continued use. When all the niches were filled, an enclosure could be added to the front of the tomb, providing new walls for niches, or, in rarer cases, another row of niches could be made in the tomb chamber itself at the expense of the general design. It was the responsibility of the family

¹ Calza, *Necropoli* 89, fig. 37.

² Pl. xxxiii a.

to maintain the tomb and pay due rites to the dead. The funeral was followed by a banquet at the tomb and birthday anniversaries were similarly celebrated. Regular libations also had to be made. In some tomb chambers permanent *triclinia* are found;¹ others have *biclinia* on either side of the entrance. A few ovens survive, in which meals were prepared. Wells are much more widespread; the water was needed not merely for meals but for keeping the tomb clean.

The inscriptions of the earliest columbaria in the Laurentine cemetery preserve the same simple form as those of the enclosures that preceded them. By the second century many of them have become more elaborate. The addition of the standard formula *libertis libertabusque suis posterisque eorum* on most tombs is an indication that most of the middle class, even among the small traders and craftsmen of the imperial harbours, have slaves in their household who will probably receive their freedom early. There is also a widespread anxiety that the integrity of the tomb should be preserved and that it should not pass out of the family. This is expressed in its simplest form by the letters *h(oc) m(onu-mentum) h(eredem) e(xternum) n(on) s(equetur)*, 'This tomb shall not pass to an heir who is not of the family.' But many preferred to be more explicit.

Marcus Antonius Vitalis and Marcus Antonius Verus his son built this tomb for themselves, their freedmen, freedwomen, and their descendants. But if, after the death of M. Antonius Vitalis, anyone should sell or give or in any other way alienate this tomb, or if anyone introduces the body or bones of anyone with a name other than is contained in this inscription, then as penalty he shall pay for each body 3,000 sesterces to the worshippers of the Lares of Portus Augusti.²

The penalty prescribed was usually stiffer.

L. Cocceius Adiutor made this provision for himself and declares that no one should burn or bury any body on the left side as you enter this tomb. If he does so he shall pay 50,000 sesterces to the Ostian government; the informer shall receive the fourth part.³

At Ostia the fine was normally to be paid to the Ostian treasury, at Portus to the public treasury of Rome.⁴

¹ Fig. 32.

² Thylander, A 19.

³ 850.

⁴ Ostia, e.g. 166, 307, 850; Portus, Thylander, A 245, 328, B 210. The distinction between the two centres is embarrassing. One would have expected Portus fines also to go to the Ostian treasury, since the harbour settlement seems to have been controlled by the Ostian government (p. 62). 166 is unique in prescribing fines to be paid both to the Ostian and to the Roman treasury.

Not all were so exclusive. In the Isola Sacra cemetery Valeria Trophime had a large tomb with an attached enclosure.¹ Within the enclosure four separate little tomb chambers were later built. 'C. Galgestius Helius, having bought the ground, not yet used, from Valeria Trophime, built for himself and his descendants a tomb chamber joined to the wall on the right side as you enter, in which are fourteen urns.'² The urn-filled niches can still be seen. The other three small tombs were similarly built on ground bought from Valeria Trophime in the enclosure.

Tombs were also sometimes divided after they had been built, to secure family independence. Tomb 75 in the Isola Sacra cemetery is a large tomb, combining chamber and enclosure, with a frontage and depth of 40 Roman feet. The inscription over the entrance records that it was built by M. Cocceius Daphnus for himself, his dependants, his freedmen, freedwomen, and their descendants, and also for M. Antonius Agathias and M. Ulpus Donatus with their dependants and freedmen.³ A second inscription set in the face of the enclosure shows that one of the beneficiaries preferred to be independent. 'M. Antonius Agathias built for himself, his freedmen, freedwomen, and their descendants a tomb from the monument of M. Cocceius Daphnus whose heir he is, having made a division between himself and his coheirs, adding himself a dividing wall and an independent entry.'⁴ There were originally two tomb chambers, of which Agathias took one. He divided the enclosure by a new wall and added a new doorway in the face of the enclosure to allow independent access. His inscription was set in the wall above his new entrance.

The expenses of a tomb could also be shared. M'. Acilius Marianus and Cognita Optata both made provision for their dependants in the same tomb. Their inscriptions are set out side by side on the same tablet and underneath each is the reciprocal record: 'this tomb is shared with Cognita Optata', 'this tomb is shared with M'. Acilius Marianus'.⁵ An Isola Sacra inscription records a similar partnership. L. Domitius Callistion and Domitia Eutychia shared their tomb with M. Ulpus Artemidorus, *p(ro) p(arte) dimidia recepti in societate ab Ulpio Artemidoro*.⁶

It was also possible to secure niches or graves within the tombs of others. 'Primitivianus and Volusia his parents made this provision for

¹ Calza, *Necropoli*, 359-61.

² Ibid. 83.

³ S 4761, cf. S 5176.

⁴ Thylander, A 124.

⁵ Ibid 16.

⁶ Thylander, A 253.

L. Kacius Volusianus, who lived 19 years, 1 month, 26 days; the place was granted to them by A. Gabinius Adiectus, best of friends.'¹ 'M. Cascellius Diadumenus provided 3 niches and 6 urns for himself, for Cacia Euhodia, his wife, and their descendants.'² Presumably Diadumenus acquired the right to use a limited number of urns in a friend's tomb. Another inscription from the same tomb records that Cacia Euhodia, his wife, gave one of the niches with its two urns to Herennuleia Primilla.³ Graves for burial could later be acquired in the same way: 'Flavia Marcellina provided this grave for Flavia Hilaritas, her well-deserving sister, on the right side as you enter the tomb. It was granted to her by A. Plotius Hermes and Valeria Saturnina.'⁴

The inscriptions set up over tomb entrances are almost always a plain statement concerning the dispositions of the tomb. Within the tomb individuals were commemorated in more varied style. The majority of the epitaphs record only names, relationships, and, in many cases, the age at death; but there is a tendency in the second century for the language to become less restrained, particularly in what we may loosely call the lower middle class. The records of the aristocracy are almost invariably confined to a list of offices held. Sentimental superlatives, 'dulcissimus', 'pientissimus', 'dignissimus', 'sanctissimus', are not uncommon lower down the social scale, and most of the verse epitaphs that survive come from the same class. One of them laments a recruit to the army from Carthage who died young;⁵ another tells the sad story of a small child run over by a cart;⁶ two commemorate flamboyantly men who, without holding office, have enjoyed the good things of life.⁷ Metre and grammar have proved too much for most of these amateur poets; two of them are virtually illiterate.⁸

The columbarium was the dominant form of family tomb, but in both the Laurentine and Isola Sacra cemeteries more modest tombs can be seen, built for individuals or small groups. The commonest type is the *tomba a cassone*, shaped like a chest;⁹ others take the form of an *aedicula* or a pedimented pillar.¹⁰ The monument of C. Annaeus Atticus from Gallic Aquitania was a small brick pyramid.¹¹ Some imperial slaves were sufficiently important to have their own tombs, but no provision was made for slaves in the family tomb. Their burials are

¹ 705.² 777.³ 1106.⁴ 1051⁵ Thylander, A 125.⁶ 1808.⁷ 480, 914.⁸ 510 = Thylander, A 3, S 5186.⁹ Calza, *Necropoli*, 78, fig. 29.¹⁰ Ibid. 79, fig. 30.¹¹ Thylander, A 13 (tomb I); Calza, *op. cit.* 285 f.

marked in the Isola Sacra cemetery by amphora necks projecting from the ground.¹ The ashes were buried and over them was placed the neck of an amphora through which libations could be poured to the dead. Such burials were not confined to slaves, but it is doubtful whether in Ostia and Portus there were many free men who could not afford some modest memorial.

Cremation remained the general practice at Ostia until the reign of Hadrian, when burial is introduced. The two rites continue side by side through the remainder of the second century with the emphasis gradually moving to burial. By the early third century no provision seems to be made in new tombs for cremation. It is difficult to find an adequate explanation for this change in custom.² It comes too early to reflect the influence of Christianity. It does not seem to derive from the oriental cults, for their devotees had for a long period been accustomed to cremation. The view that it represents a spiritual respect for the human body³ finds no echo in contemporary literature nor in the language of funerary inscriptions. It has been suggested that it was the appeal to the rich of the sarcophagus, with its scope for elaborate decoration, that was responsible,⁴ but rich men could find ample scope for ostentatious display before cremation was abandoned. Logically we are driven to the conclusion that it was a change in fashion and feeling.

One of the first persons known to have adopted the new fashion at Rome was Domitian's secretary Abascantus, and we owe our knowledge to the facile hexameters of Statius. When his wife Priscilla died, Abascantus embalmed her body with costly unguents. Had the motive been religious or deeply spiritual Statius would have developed the theme at length. His words suggest that Abascantus rejected cremation because it was too crude, and the accompanying scene too emotional.

nec enim fumantia busta
clamoremque rogi potuit perferre.⁵

¹ Calza, *Necropoli*, 80, 46 (fig. 10).

² The main explanations that have been offered are convincingly refuted, in a detailed review of the evidence, by A. D. Nock, 'Cremation and Burial in the Roman Empire', *Harv. Theol. Rev.* 25 (1932) 321-61.

³ Toynbee and Ward Perkins, *op. cit.* 113: 'The change of rite may well have expressed a vague, perhaps, but deepening intuition of the human body's meaning and purpose *sub specie aeternitatis*, which the Christian doctrines of the Incarnation and Resurrection of the Body were to clinch and clarify.' I should like to believe this, but can find no support for it in the Ostian evidence.

⁴ Nock, *op. cit.* 358. See also Addenda.

⁵ Statius, *Silvae*, v. 1. 226.

The wish to preserve rather than destroy the body is also implied,¹ but it is not associated with Priscilla's destiny in an after life.

The change in custom affects tomb design. At first there is little modification in the form of the columbarium. Decorated niches are still the dominant element, but recesses in the walls are added at floor level for burials. As the century advances niches are replaced by recesses in some of the older columbaria, and in new tombs the proportion of recesses to niches increases; by the early third century the transition seems to be complete. The latest of the Isola Sacra tombs, on the west side of the Roman road, and the tombs on the south side of the Via dei Sepolcri outside the Porta Romana at Ostia are designed exclusively for burials. Recesses take the place of niches in tomb chambers. At first they had been confined to floor level; now they occupy the whole height of the wall. But they are uneconomic in space, and to provide accommodation on the scale of the columbaria full use has to be made of the floor area. In a tomb on the Via dei Sepolcri the whole area of the floor is divided by brick walls into a series of graves. When these were filled another row could be built on top. An inscription from Isola Sacra records the practice: 'A. Plautius Primitibus and Iunia Hieronis, having bought the ground from the two Tiberii Iulii, Zoticus and Aetetus, heirs of Julius Prosdocimus, have made two burial places, one above the other, for themselves and for Plautius Mascellio their sweetest son, who lived 3 years 4 months, 20 days.'²

The change in the form of the tomb led naturally to a change in the style of decoration. The figures and scenes that were well adapted to the niches of the columbarium did not suit the long recesses which were the dominant element in the new tombs. Their place was taken by scenes of hunting, water fowl with cupids,³ and other frieze-like compositions.

The form of burial was dictated primarily by cost. Those who could afford it were laid in marble sarcophagi ranging in elaboration from a simple strigilated pattern to finely detailed mythological scenes. Much more widespread was the use of a plain terra-cotta sarcophagus. In both it is interesting to note that a head-rest was provided so that the dead could lie comfortably, and in one sarcophagus found at Ostia a glass panel was found in the lid over the position where the head would

¹ Ibid. 228: 'nil longior aetas | carpere, nil aevi poterunt vitare labores: | sic cautum membris, tantas venerabile marmor | spirat opes'.

² Thylander, A 198.

³ Pl. xxxv b.

rest,¹ perhaps for the benefit of the dead rather than the living. But the majority were laid in recesses in the wall or in graves in the floor. Recesses were sealed after burial either by a rough wall, sometimes plastered to imitate a sarcophagus, or by a marble slab, plain or decorated. Graves were sometimes covered with a mosaic or marble slab, but most of them merely with earth.

In the limited areas that have been excavated there seem to be no new tombs after the middle of the third century, and it is significant of the leaner economy of the times that many of the older Isola Sacra tombs should be reused for late burials. By this time it is probable that the families for whom the tombs had been originally built had died out; it was cheaper to readapt than to build anew. Even more significant is the wholesale pillaging of tombs which is characteristic of the fourth century and may begin earlier. A large proportion of the funerary inscriptions found at Ostia have been recovered from the floors of public baths and private houses; nor had the new users always the modesty to hide the inscribed face.

No Christian cemetery has been systematically excavated, but the majority of Christian inscriptions from Ostia were found in the region of the little church of S. Ercolano,² and at Portus there were Christian burials near Capo Due Rami.³ From the little evidence that is available it seems that the form of their tombs followed contemporary pagan fashion, but the language of their epitaphs is very different. There is a striking contrast between the fulsome language of many of the second-century pagans and the simple formulas of these Christian inscriptions, showing a calm confidence in death and a submission to God's will. 'Caelius sleeps here. Decria will join him when God wills.'⁴

While the attitude of Christians to death is clear from their inscriptions as well as their literature, it is much more difficult to understand the feelings of Ostian pagans, even in the imperial period. How many of them felt that death would lead to a better existence or even to an intelligible existence at all? We might expect to find the answer in their epitaphs and in the decoration of their tombs.

In this inquiry the inscriptions are extremely disappointing. One, recording an easterner, points clearly to a Pythagorean conception of

¹ Information kindly supplied by Signora Calza.

² Paschetto, 482.

³ De Rossi, *Bull. arch. crist.* (1866) 47.

⁴ 1893. Christian formulas, p. 394.

the after-life.¹ The dead youth 'has left men and the wickedness of men and has found in exchange a place in heaven', where he will appear in the starry firmament. But this is an isolated example. The idea that death is a release, however, lies behind a mosaic in front of an Isola Sacra tomb. The design shows two ships and between them the Claudian lighthouse. Below is inscribed in Greek ὦδε παυσιλυπος, 'So end all cares'.² Death means leaving the storms of life for a safe refuge. The same basic idea is expressed in an Ostian epitaph, which has many parallels elsewhere: 'securitati aeternae A. Egrili Thalli.'³ There is no evidence that this attitude is widely shared.

One verse epitaph, which is barely intelligible, suggests that a virtuous life removes the fear of such punishment as afflicted Tantalus, Sisyphus, and Ixion,⁴ but the idea is conventional and negative. Nor can we attach any profound feeling to the Greek epitaph of a doctor: 'Master of all wisdom here I lie. Say not that good men die.'⁵ Very few inscriptions indeed throw any light on the questions that interest us here. The great majority record nothing but names, ages, and relationships. The rest, with very few exceptions, record the affection of husbands and wives, of parents and children; they catalogue the virtues of the dead, and they lament the sadness of early death; but they give no hint of what follows death. The traditional formula 'D(is) M(anibus)' continues to preface every epitaph; it had become a mere convention.

Our other main source of evidence is the decoration of the tombs, and here the main difficulty lies not in finding evidence but in interpreting it. The sample, however, is a very small one. The Isola Sacra tombs are the only ones in which we can study the decoration as a whole. Individual paintings have been found in the Laurentine cemetery, but the interpretation of a painting may depend on the other paintings with which it is associated. By the time that the Isola Sacra tombs were built tomb painting had developed a traditional symbolic repertoire. The peacock was a symbol of immortality; birds, and particularly doves, represented the souls of the dead; and roses evoked the gardens of the blessed. These motifs were all fully exploited, but their treatment is

¹ M. Guarducci, 'Tracce di pitagorismo nelle iscrizioni Ostiensi', *Rend. Pont.* 23-24 (1947-9) 214. Two other inscriptions which Prof. Guarducci interprets in a Pythagorean sense can be explained more naturally otherwise, A. Barigazzi, *Cretica Chronika*, 7 (1953) 97-109.

² Calza, *Necropoli*, 169.

³ 949.

⁴ 510.

⁵ *IG* xiv. 942. Ε—ς ελητήρ ὁ [π]άνσοφος | [ἐ]νθ[ά]δε [κ]εῖμαι
οὐχὶ θανών. | θυή[σ]κειν μὴ [λ]έγε τοὺς ἀγαθοὺς.

Cf. Callimachus, *Epigr.* 9 (Pfeiffer).

conventional. Unless they are associated with more individual subjects with a more clear-cut meaning we can infer very little concerning the hopes and fears of those who commissioned the painter.

In one tomb the paintings do seem to be consistently centred on the Dionysiac cult and may represent religious beliefs held by a worshipper of Liber Pater,¹ but in most of the tombs the subjects seem to have little deep spiritual content.² We see figures of the gods, particularly Hercules and Venus, but also Mars, Apollo, and Hermes the conductor of souls. The popularity of Hercules may derive partly from the local importance of his cult, but his triumphal restoration of Alcestis from the underworld after overcoming Thanatos made him a natural patron of the dead. In one tomb his twelve labours are represented in stucco;³ more commonly his figure is painted in a niche. The heads of the Seasons and the figures of the Fates recur more than once, but they, too, are part of a common repertoire. Such scenes as the Rape of Persephone or the Visit of Orpheus to the underworld to bring back Eurydice have a natural association with death, without necessarily implying any profound meaning.

It is strange that the oriental cults have left so very little mark on the Isola Sacra tombs. We should have expected the worship of Isis, Cybele, Serapis, and Mithras to be widely reflected, but a single painted head of Serapis is the only clear reference to an oriental cult in the tomb paintings. The high priest of Cybele whose sarcophagus was found in the cemetery was anxious that his religious office should be commemorated. He reclines on his sarcophagus in his priestly robes and two reliefs show him sacrificing to Cybele and to Attis. In his hand he holds an evergreen branch suggesting that like Attis he will live again after death.⁴ It would be interesting to see whether his beliefs affected the subjects painted in his tomb, but his tomb cannot be identified.

The sculpture found in tombs seems, like the paintings, to have no deep significance. The commonest subjects are portrait statues and busts of the dead. In a doctor's tomb were found a head of Hippocrates from a herm, and a life-size portrait of his stepdaughter, represented as Hygia, both recalling his profession.⁵ Figures of the gods and conventional representations of the seasons repeat in marble the painter's subjects.

¹ NS 1928, 151-64; Wilamowitz, *Stud. It. Fil. Class.* 7 (1929) 89-100.

² The tomb paintings from Isola Sacra are discussed by Calza, *Necropoli*, 97-156.

³ *Ibid.* 108.

⁴ *Ibid.* 205-9.

⁵ *Ibid.* 222, 245. For this tomb see also Addenda.

But some of the sculpture of the Isola Sacra cemetery seems to be purely decorative, notably a light-hearted group of a young child on horseback with a rustic servant in attendance, and a Pan and satyr. Calza thought that such sculpture, having no symbolic significance, had been brought from the town of Portus to be hidden for safety in a tomb.¹ The distance is too great and the motive unconvincing.² It is easier to believe that the owner thought that such subjects were attractive and could add distinction to his tomb chamber.

Sarcophagi also present problems of interpretation. The sculptors, like the painters, developed their own repertoire, and certain mythological scenes became particularly popular. These scenes could mean a great deal or very little. They could be deliberately chosen by the purchaser because of the symbolic meaning he attached to them, or they could be bought because they were fashionable and looked expensive.³ The most popular theme on Ostian sarcophagi is the story of Endymion, the shepherd who sleeps for ever and is visited by the Moon Goddess.⁴ This could to some symbolize the reunion in an after-life of husband and wife,⁵ or it could be chosen because it was popular and the comparison of death to sleep was generally appropriate. We must at least be careful not to press its symbolism too narrowly when we find the subject used for a young boy⁶ and also for a mother.⁷ One sarcophagus at least, however, was chosen with great care. It was provided by a president of the builders' guild for himself and his wife, who was a priestess of Cybele, and represents the death of Alcestis and her restoration from the dead by Hercules.⁸ The sarcophagus has the emblems of the cult of Cybele above the relief, and several of the faces are portraits. Almost certainly it was specially ordered and made by an Ostian sculptor. It is reasonable to interpret the scene as a belief in the triumph over death inspired by religion.

More conspicuous in the tombs than any clearly held views about an after life is the strong desire to be remembered by the living. This is

¹ Ibid. 233. Pl. xxxvi b.

² Bloch, *AJA* 48 (1944) 215

³ F. Cumont, *Recherches sur le symbolisme funéraire des Romains* (1942); A. D. Nock, 'Sarcophagi and Symbolism', *AJA* 50 (1946) 140-70.

⁴ Ostian examples, C. Robert, *Die antiken Sarkophag-Reliefs*, iii (1), p. 68 n. 49; 73 n. 56; 79 n. 64; 103 n. 83; iii (3), add. p. 568 n. 41 = NS 1909, 202 n. 2; F. Matz, *Metropolitan Mus. of Art. Bull.* (Jan. 1957) 123. There may be a link between the popularity of sarcophagi illustrating the sleep of Endymion and the adoption by Ostian Christians of the sleep formula in their epitaphs.

⁵ Cumont, op. cit. 247.

⁶ 662.

⁷ 565.

⁸ 371. Robert, op. cit. iii (1), p. 31.

reflected in portraits of the dead, in paint or sculpture, and especially in the many representations in terra-cotta reliefs or painting of the dead man's occupation. Tomb 29 in the Isola Sacra cemetery is of particular interest in this context.¹ When the tomb was first built a terra-cotta tablet was inserted in the face showing a man grinding a knife. Later an enclosure was added in which a small tomb was built with an upper tomb chamber. In the face of the enclosure two terra-cotta tablets were inserted. One shows a man making and selling tools; in the other we see a tool-grinder. The grinding machine is also depicted in mosaic on the floor of the upper tomb chamber. It seems that the same trade was carried on by the same family over more than one generation. Other terra-cotta reliefs depict doctor, miller, water-seller, and boatman.² In the Laurentine cemetery two similar scenes are depicted in paint. One shows a river boat being loaded with corn;³ in the other a man taps a large *dolium* with a stick to see how much liquid it contains.⁴ It has been suggested that these realistic scenes from daily life convey the belief that useful toil merits personal immortality.⁵ It is surely better to regard them as an extension of the portrait. This is what the dead man did in life; this is how he wished to be remembered. Trimalchio was not thinking of a new life beyond death when he designed his tomb. There were to be ships in full sail on his monument, to recall his prosperous trading ventures, and lavish illustration of his public generosity.⁶ His main concern was that he should not be forgotten.

¹ Calza, *Necropoli*, 303.

³ p. 298. Fig. 25 e.

⁵ Toynbee and Ward Perkins, *op. cit.* III.

² *Ibid.* 247-57.

⁴ *NS* 1938, 68, fig. 26.

⁶ Petronius, *Sat.* 71.

NOTES

NOTE A, p. 21. I am greatly indebted to Sir John Beazley, who has generously examined the Attic fragments in detail. The references in his notes which follow are to fragments illustrated in *Topografia*, tav. 23.

'Lower group, right.

'Left. Fragment of an Attic lekanis. On the right, part of a woman seated to left on a small table. On the left, the arms of another figure, with a fan in the left hand: probably Eros flying towards the seated woman. Egg-pattern in the border below. Between the two figures an ornamented ball. Belongs to a large class of lekanides; complete examples of which are: two in Leningrad (*Oichèt*, 1913-15, 86, fig. 135; *ibid.*, p. 95 fig. 154), one in Stuttgart (Scheffold, *Untersuchungen zu den kertscher Vasen*, pl. 15. 1), and (without Eros) one in Salonica, from Olynthos (Robinson, *Olynthus*, 13, pl. 87), and one in Toronto (Robinson and Harcum, pl. 83, no. 451); see also Talcott and Philippaki, *Small Objects from the Pnyx*, ii, pp. 40-42. For the woman, table-seat, ball, compare the Salonica lekanis (*Olynthus*, 13, pl. 87); for the fan, the Toronto vase; for the woman, a lekanis-fragment in Salonica (*Olynthus*, 5, pls. 110, 213).

'The fragment in the top left-hand corner of pl. 23 is also from a fourth-century lekanis.

'Middle. Fragment of an Attic bell-krater symposion. Part of a man or youth reclining on a couch to left, with his left elbow resting on a cushion, and of a woman seated on the couch, to right. The man's himation is let down to his waist. The finger-tips of his left hand are preserved. Compare the bell-kraters by the Black-Thyrsus Painter in Barcelona (Garcia y Bellido, *Hispania Graeca*, pl. 110, left: Beazley *ARV*, p. 879, no. 11) and in the Louvre (*CV*, III I e, pl. 5, 9-10: Beazley, *ARV*, p. 879, no. 10); also the fragments of bell-kraters, with symposion scenes, from Olynthos, in Salonica (Robinson, *Olynthus*, 5, pls. 81-82).

'Right. Fragment of an Attic (? bell-)krater. Lower part of a satyr wearing a panther-skin; on the left, part of a thyrsus. By the Black-Thyrsus Painter: compare his bell-krater in Madrid (Garcia y Bellido, *Hispania Graeca*, pl. 136, right: Beazley, *ARV*, p. 879, no. 8). Several vases or fragments by him were found at Olynthos (Robinson, *Olynthus*, 13, pls. 48-50; 121 b; 137, 361; *Olynthus*, 5, pls. 104, 163).

'Upper group, left.

'Lower left. Fragment from the reverse of an Attic krater. Head of a youth.

'Lower right. Fragment from the inside of a kylix, most probably Attic. Part of a maenad seated to right; behind her a tympanon.

'Vases at the same stage of development as all these were found at Olynthos. The destruction of Olynthos in 348 B.C. indicates a date *ante quem*. 375 to 348 or a very few years later would be safe.'

NOTE B, p. 32. S 4703. I have followed the generally accepted interpretation. F. Maroi (*Studi in onore di Pietro Bonfanti*, ii. 621) rejects it on two grounds: (1) In addition to the inscribed cippi on the Decumanus, a further cippus was found a little to the west,

on the east side of the Via dei Molini. It had been deliberately cut down so that the inscription, if it was inscribed, is lost. It strongly resembles the other stones, and Paribeni (NS 1921, 258) was right in suggesting that it belongs to the series; but it lies west of the *privatum-cippus*. (2) The accepted interpretation is wrong on legal grounds. While strictly the banks of rivers can be private, the use of them is public. Land in such a vital area would not have been allowed to pass into private hands. M. interprets the inscription to signify a right of access to the river by a path through public land, and he compares '*privatum iter*' on various inscriptions. In his view, the *privatum-cippus* precedes the *Caninius-cippi*.

I do not think that the legal argument is decisive, though I am not competent to judge. I believe that the lettering of the *privatum-cippus* is unmistakably later than that of the *Caninius-cippi*. It is a simpler hypothesis to believe that, after the original demarcation, a small area at the west end was made private. The westernmost cippus was then cut down to remove the inscription; the *privatum-cippus* was set up to confirm the new status of what had hitherto been public land.

NOTE C, p. 50. L. Casson, in an interesting article on the grain trade in the Hellenistic world (*TAPA* 85 (1954) 182-7), concludes that Egypt was already one of Rome's main suppliers in the late Republic. If Egypt, he argues, was not supplying Rome, how were the cities she was supplying kept alive when Augustus directed the Egyptian harvest to Rome? And if Rome's supply still remained precarious after Augustus, how could she have survived earlier without substantial imports from Egypt? Casson also emphasizes the close association of Pompey with Ptolemy Auletes in 57 B.C., when Pompey was *curator annonae* and Ptolemy was pressing nervously for his restoration to the Egyptian throne.

The main objection to this thesis is the silence of Cicero. Had Rome depended on Egyptian corn we should expect some clear reference in the public speeches or correspondence. In praising Pompey's energetic clearance of the seas under the Lex Gabinia of 67 B.C. Cicero emphasizes the liberation of Africa, Sicily, Sardinia. These are the '*frumentaria subsidia reipublicae*'; Egypt is not mentioned (*De imperio Cn. Pompeii*, 34). In his letters describing senatorial debates concerning the restoration of Ptolemy Auletes there is no word of Egyptian corn. When he defends Rabirius Postumus for his alleged irregularities in Egypt (*Pro Rabirio Postumo*) we should expect some reference to corn ships if Egyptian corn was vital to Rome.

Appian (*BC* v. 67) attributes the acute shortage of corn at Rome when Sextus Pompeius controlled the seas to the cutting off of supplies from the east as well as from the west. Shipments from Egypt might also be inferred from a passage in Cicero's attack on Verres: '*cum civitatum Siciliae vulgo omne frumentum improbas, num ex Aegypto aut Syria frumentum Romam missurus es?*' (*Verr.* ii. 3. 172). But if supplies from Egypt were large and regular we should find more direct evidence. It is doubtful whether it would have paid private merchants to carry the corn such a long distance except in times of shortage when prices were high; when Egypt became a Roman province the Egyptians had no option. I assume that large-scale annual import from Egypt was an innovation by Augustus.

The absorption of this large increase in supply at Rome may be explained by an increase in purchasing power deriving from Augustan prosperity, and perhaps also by

an increase in the city population. It is more difficult to assess the effect of the Roman monopoly on other consumers. The exportable Egyptian surplus will have been substantially smaller before the Roman army was set to work on the canals. If most of this surplus was sold in the Aegean, Egypt may have been replaced by the kingdom of Bosphorus, for which Rome showed a continuing concern.

NOTE D, p. 161. Both the name and the history of the road raise difficult problems. It is certain from the heavy traffic marks that the road now seen through the cemetery was in the late Empire the main road from Portus to Ostia. It is certain also, from an inscription, that its official name was then Via Flavia (Thylander, A 90). It is most uncertain when this name was given, when this road was built, and whether it represents the original road across the island or a change in route. It has by some been identified with the Via Severiana, but on the Peutinger map that road starts at Ostia and not Portus. This we should expect since there must already have been a road between Ostia and Portus by the Severan period, whereas a coastal road south of Ostia was needed. The name 'Via Flavia' might commemorate one of the late first-century Flavian emperors, but we should expect the road to have been built earlier; more probably the name is a tribute to Constantine who gave independence to Portus. It is possible that the road now seen marks a change in course and that it was not built before the third century, but, though the level is high, the large reticulate blocks of the retaining wall fit the first century better. The line of the road seems to me consistent with its being built before Trajan's harbour (Pl. v). Admittedly the earlier tombs are not aligned on this road, but I am doubtful whether secure inferences can be made from the disposition of tombs to changing road plans, as is argued by Thylander (*Étude*, 27-36). Not all the tomb alignments fit the reconstruction (p. 456). See also Calza, *Necropoli*, 21-27; Bloch, *AJA* 48 (1944) 213.

NOTE E, p. 217. S 4560-3, three series, the first two confined to officers. The third (4563) merely gives lists of names. Wickert (p. 673) refers these lists to the earlier *Augustales*, since one fragment includes L. Rennius Philodoxus (4563, 1; ii. 10), recorded in another inscription (407) as Augustalis. If he is right, the *Augustales* will not have been a small priesthood, as suggested above, and they will have had presidents, since the letters Q Q are added to some of the names. There are serious objections: (1) No president of the *Augustales* is otherwise recorded. (2) The lettering of the lists is not earlier than the middle of the second century and it is unlikely that a list of first-century *Augustales* would be drawn up so late. (3) The name M. Aurelius Priscus (S 4563, s. 42) probably derives from a second-century imperial freedman. It is more probable that the lists comprise the full membership of the *seviri Augustales*. The name L. Rennius Philodoxus may have recurred many times. (See also Addenda.)

NOTE F, p. 266. Roads across the southern plain ('Piana Bella') are indicated, though not accurately mapped, by Canina (reproduced in *Topografia*, 50 (fig. 12)). I am grateful to John Bradford, who studied them with me from air photographs and on the ground. Swollen contours, probably covering tombs, indicate five parallel north-south roads. The westernmost is a continuation of the *Cardo Maximus* emerging from the Porta Laurentina; it is not yet possible to establish the relation of the others to the town plan. The roads are not evenly spaced, the distances between them varying from 500 to

750 ft. One transverse road, running east-west, can also be followed on the ground. Though these roads do not preserve the formal framework of standard centuriation they may be connected with a division of the land. Their date and purpose could be discovered by digging. For a more detailed description, J. Bradford, *Ancient Landscapes*, 242.

NOTE G, p. 17. I have accepted above (p. 343) the identification of Ficana with Dragoncello. Geographically this identification is convincing, but it does violence to our only evidence, which places Ficana by the eleventh milestone on the road from Rome (Festus (Lindsay) 298): 'Pulilia saxa esse ad portum, qui sit secundum Tiberim, ait Fabius Pictor: quem locum putat Labeo dici, ubi fuerit Ficana via Ostiensi ad lapidem undecimum.' The eleventh milestone was at least a mile east of Dragoncello, at Malafede. Since an altar to Mars Ficanus was said to have been found in this area it is possible that Ficana should be located near the Tiber at this point.

NOTE H, p. 397. Different interpretations are given to the inscription and to the building by A. von Gerkan, 'Die christliche Anlage in Ostia', *Römische Quartalschrift*, 47 (1939, published 1942) 15-23; T. Klauser, 'Die Inschrift der neugefundenen altchristlichen Bauanlage in Ostia', *ibid.* 25-30. The former sees the building as a 'Katechumenschule', the latter as a library. The plan does not seem to me suited to either use, but my knowledge of comparative material is negligible. The history of the building deserves more detailed study. It is, I think, more complex than Calza's account suggests.

NOTE I, p. 399. If this conjecture is right the Ostian history of the Caeionii becomes more interesting. Lampadius, *praefectus urbi* in 365, was a stubborn pagan and left a record of a *taurobolium* at Ostia in honour of Magna Mater. It has been suggested above (p. 212) that he owned the House of the Dioscuri near the Porta Marina. His son, if we follow Seeck (*Symmachus*, clxxviii), was Publilius Caeionius Caecina Albinus. Like his father he was a pagan by conviction, but he married a Christian wife (Hieron. *Ep.* 107. 1). Of the two children of this marriage the son, Volusianus, followed his father; the daughter Albina was, like her mother, a Christian; and her daughter in turn, Melania, became particularly famous for her faith and works.

Volusianus is recorded in the Theodosian Code (v. 16. 31) as *comes rerum privatarum* in 408. At about this time his mother asked Augustine, by now bishop of Hippo, to use his influence with Volusianus to persuade him to become a Christian. Augustine writes, somewhat coldly, to Volusianus urging him to study the Scriptures and refer any difficulties to him (*Ep.* 132). Volusianus sets out various difficulties (*Ep.* 135; cf. 136). Augustine replies at great length, but one has the impression that he felt considerably less at ease with this side of the family than with the female side. He writes warmly to Albina, sister of Volusianus (*Ep.* 126), and had every reason to be pleased with Melania's rigorous interpretation of the faith.

At the time of his correspondence with Augustine, Volusianus was still pagan, but prepared to listen to Christian argument. In 429 he is *praefectus praetorio* (*Cod. Theod.* xi. 6. 32). We hear later of his conversion by his niece Melania in 434, while he was on official business at Constantinople (*Analecta Bollandiana*, 8 (1889) 51; 22 (1903) 35). He was critically ill, and died very soon afterwards.

The name Volusianus on the column of a Christian building, very near the House of the Dioscuri (which we have attributed to the family), might reflect his conversion.

NOTE J, p. 415. Amelung, *Die Sculpturen des vatican. Museums*, i (2) n. 160b, Taf. 29. This block (Pl. xxxviii b) was found near the church of S. Pudentiana in Rome and was thought to have come from the *Thermae Novatianae* (*Bull. crist.* 1867, 55). I am grateful to Donald Strong, who drew my attention to its marked similarity to the fragments in the Forum Baths, and to G. V. S. Corbett, who confirmed that the measurements allowed the identification. The naming of the original builder recalls the Ostian inscription discussed by Bloch.

The beginning of another hexameter is preserved below the first: 'divinae mentis ductu cum o (possibly c or g)—'. It may not have immediately followed the first, the length of the inscription being unknown. The language of the line recalls the inscription on Constantine's arch, set up 'instinctu divinitatis' (*ILS* 694). Constantinian restorations in the Forum Baths are reflected in brickstamps. This inscription may commemorate them. *

A further link between Roman and Ostian fragments may be found in a Greek inscription, now lost, which Marini associated with this Latin inscription; it presumably came from a similar fragment: '—ειξεν Βικτωρ ἀρχος ἐω[ας]'. This text, difficult to interpret, and perhaps incorrectly recorded, is to be associated with an unpublished Greek text which can still be seen in the Forum Baths on two large fragments of this distinctive entablature. The first (Pl. xxxviii c) reads 'λουτρον ἀλεξιπνον'; the second 'ν κυδιμος Αὐσονιης'. A further fragment from a different architectural member found in the Forum Baths has '—nte Fl. Octavio V—'. This should indicate a restoration supervised ([cura]nte) by a *praefectus annonae*. He may be identified with a Flavius Octavius Victor recorded in another, unpublished, Ostian inscription. Tentatively I identify him with the Βικτωρ of the lost Greek inscription. Together, Greek and Latin texts record a restoration of the baths, which must be different from that of Ragonius Vincentius Celsus. The lettering of both Greek and Latin texts is carefully done and not later than the fourth century. Whether they refer to a Constantinian or later restoration is uncertain.

The Greek inscription has a further interesting association. The term 'λουτρον ἀλεξιπνον' is, I think, unparalleled in bath inscriptions. It recalls, however, a passage in Augustine's *Confessions* (ix. 12. 32). After his mother's death at Ostia, he tells us, he went to the baths 'because I had heard that baths were called *balnea* from the Greek βαλανειον, which means driving away care from the mind'. This is, I think, our earliest record of this most unconvincing etymology, though it could have been invented much earlier. It is at least interesting to find the same idea reflected on stone in Ostia. It is not unlikely that Augustine went to the Forum Baths. (The texts of Latin and Greek inscriptions from Rome, *CIL* vi. 29769; Diehl, *ILCV* 1901 A.)

NOTE K, p. 40. In the third volume of *Scavi di Ostia* (Le Necropoli, Parte 1), which reached me too late to be used in my text, Poplicola's monument and the inscription on its face are published in detail (169 ff.). From converging lines of evidence a date in or shortly after the twenties B.C. is inferred. The inscription, as restored by Bloch (214 ff.), runs:

Po[bli]c[e].
[C. Carti]li[o C.f. Pop]licolae [—8 or 9]
[— c. 24 — et] libereis pos[tereisque eius]
[decurionum decreto co]lonorumque con[sensu]

- 5 preimario viro pro eius meritis
 hoc m[on]umentum constitutum est
 eique merenti gratia rellata est,
 isque octiens duumvir, ter cens(or) colonorum iudicio
 apsens praesensque factus est,
 10 ob eius amorem in universos ab
 universieis ----- (erasure)
 Humaniae M.F. (added later).

There remains a gap of *c.* 32 letters at the end of the second and at the beginning of the third line. In view of the military subject chosen for the frieze some reference to military service is needed. I assume that in this space was recorded either a normal military post or special service in a special campaign. A military tribunate would be appropriate, but the normal epigraphic formula 'trib. mil. leg. [—]' would be too short; 'trib. militum legionis [—]' is not impossible.

The erasure of 15 or 16 letters at the end of the original text presents a more difficult problem. Bloch considers that lines 10 and 11 might be part of the clause which begins in l. 8, and that the erasure might reflect an error by the cutter or the executive official responsible. This is possible but unattractive. After *colonorum iudicio*, *ab universieis* would be redundant, though stylistically the addition would be intelligible with *in universos*. We should, however, from the rhythm of the preceding clauses, expect the main verb *factus est* to be placed at the end. The balance of the text is better preserved if *ob eius amorem* begins a new and final clause.

After analysing this inscription Bloch reviews the career of C. Cartilius Poplicola in the light of all the inscriptions in which the name is recorded (315, 4134, S 4710, 4711, 4712, and two unpublished texts). He gives good reasons for believing that the public career of Poplicola, covering some twenty years, fell between 44 B.C. and A.D. 5, and adds colour to his career by the interpretation of the inscription on the statue which he dedicated in the temple of Hercules (above, p. 349). This inscription, now fully published for the first time, requires special explanation. In its final form it runs: 'C. Cartilius C.f. | duovir V tertio | Poplicolae'; but it can be seen that the original text of l. 2 was *duovir iterum*.^{*} At a second stage *iterum* was changed to *tertio*, though traces of the original letters remain; subsequently *V* was added after *duovir*, but *tertio* was not erased. The third line is also unorthodox; the cognomen appears in the wrong place and in the wrong case. Bloch is also convinced (though this is perhaps a little less certain from the script itself) that it is an addition to the original text in a different hand.

The changes in the second line are easy to explain: they were made to celebrate further appointments to the duovirate. The reason for the addition of *Poplicolae* is less evident. Bloch infers that C. Cartilius had no cognomen when he was duovir for the second time. The name Poplicola, 'friend of the people', was, he thinks, conferred later by the people in recognition of his outstanding services to the town, and the honour was commemorated on the statue.

This attractive hypothesis is very tempting and it might even be suggested that the words erased on Poplicola's tomb were *cognomen datum est*. We should expect such an outstanding honour to be recorded on his tomb; the words would fit the space. But certain objections must be considered.

1. The cognomen Poplicola (or Publicola) is extremely rare. According to Roman tradition it was conferred on C. Valerius at the beginning of the Republic for his services to the people (Livy ii. 8. 1); it remained hereditary in the family, who seem to have exercised a monopoly. I have been able to find only three examples in Italy of the name attached to other families, and in all three cases a link with the Valerii can be proved or reasonably inferred. For L. Gellius Poplicola, cos. 72 B.C., there is no evidence, but his son, cos. 36 B.C., is stepbrother of M. Valerius Messalla (Dio xlvii. 24, 5; Syme, *Roman Revolution*, 198 n. 8). Q. Pedius Poplicola, mentioned by Horace (*Sat.* i. 10. 28) is almost certainly the son of the consul of 43 B.C.; his mother was a Valeria (Pliny, *NH* xxxv. 21). L. Vipstanus Publicola Messalla, cos. A.D. 48, shows by his second cognomen that he is connected with the Valerii, for Messalla is also hereditary in the family. If Bloch's hypothesis is correct C. Cartilius Poplicola becomes a very striking exception.

2. I can find no parallel for the conferment of a cognomen by a colony or municipality. If this were done at Ostia it should have been done elsewhere. Such an honour would be commemorated on statue bases and tombstones. The argument from silence is not conclusive, but it reinforces doubt.

3. The inscription S 4712 (op. cit., pl. xxxvi. 1) records a C. Cartilius Poplicola in large letters (height, m. 0.125-0.13) on an epistyle. It was found by the Via Ostiensis near Acilia. Other inscriptions from this area (S 2, p. 823) come from tombs which lined the road; we should expect this inscription also, from its form and site, to come from a tomb. But it cannot come from the tomb of our Poplicola, for his ashes were placed in his public monument outside Porta Marina. The lettering seems to be earlier than the other inscriptions of our Poplicola. The tail of R starts from the vertical stroke and the stop is within the circle of the C; in the other inscriptions the tail of R starts from the curved line, and the stop comes between the two ends of the C. I had believed that the Acilia inscription referred to our Poplicola's father. There are, however, two inscriptions from this area, which probably do not come from tombs. One is on an altar to Jupiter Tutor (25); the other refers to an altar, probably to Ceres (74). Our inscription might come from a temple or smaller shrine, and the argument from letter forms cannot be pressed.

If we hesitate to accept Bloch's hypothesis, an alternative explanation is required for the name and its anomalous appearance on the statue. Tentatively I suggest that a C. Cartilius, probably in the late Republic, married into the Valerii and named his son Poplicola. Valerius is, in the Empire, one of the commonest family names in Ostia. Almost all known Ostian Valerii are of freedman stock, but the wide distribution of the name suggests that there were once Valerii of some importance at Ostia. Pliny the elder mentions a C. Valerius Ostiensis who roofed a theatre at Rome, probably in the late Republic. From the *Fasti* we know that a M. Valerius (—) was *duovir* in A.D. 20, and it is a nice coincidence that M. Valerius Messalla was *consul ordinarius* in the same year. An association between the Cartilii and a junior branch of the Valerii settled in Ostia would not be surprising.

It is much more difficult to explain the addition of *Poplicola* to the statue from the temple of Hercules, but not impossible. In the Republic the cognomen was not an essential element in the official name; more often than not it is omitted in formal documents (Thylander, *Étude*, 68 ff.). Under Augustus, a transitional stage, it gains

ground. After Augustus it is very rarely omitted. Poplicola might have omitted it when he was near the outset of his public career, and duovir for only the second time. Later, when his public services had emphasized the relevance of his cognomen, it may have been added. The use of the dative, implying that his statue is a dedication to rather than by Poplicola, is odd, but the cutter may have been misled by *tertio*.

This explanation would be more plausible if parallels could be quoted from Ostia. In the mosaic pavement of the westernmost of the four republican temples west of the theatre there is an inscription recording at the top the duovirs of the year and, below, the names of four freedmen and one free citizen, who may have paid for the pavement (Bloch, *op. cit.* 210, revising 4134). The duovirs are recorded as C. Cartilius Poplicola and C. Fabius (the line is partly restored, but there is no space for a cognomen after Fabius). In a Julio-Claudian inscription (8) a C. Fabius C.f. Agrippa records his free descent for four generations; all his recorded ancestors, clearly stretching back into the Republic, have cognomens. It is at least possible that C. Fabius of the mosaic pavement had a cognomen, though it is not included in the inscription. Similarly M. Acilius, recorded without cognomen in the *Fasti* as duovir in 48 B.C., may possibly be identified with M. Acilius Caninus, who was quaestor at Rome before 28 B.C. (153) and honoured with a statue at Ostia (but see p. 507).

Bloch's hypothesis offers a much easier solution of the inscription on the statue, but the objections outlined above convince me that another explanation should be sought.

Dr. Squarciapino adds a further interesting hypothesis (*op. cit.* 205). The relief found near the temple of Hercules (above, p. 347) probably commemorates the interpretation of an oracle which was successfully fulfilled. The figure of the person to whom the oracle was given is missing. She suggests that it may be C. Cartilius and that the statue which he dedicated in the temple may be a thank-offering for the fulfilment of the oracle. I should like to believe this, but must remain sceptical. Becatti gave good reasons for dating the relief between 80 and 65 B.C. (*BC* 67 (1939) 55), and Dr. Squarciapino accepts these limits. It would be very difficult to date Poplicola's second duovirate, when the statue was dedicated, earlier than 40 B.C. The interval between relief and statue would be too long.

Appendix I

THE EARLIEST OSTIA

THE view adopted in the text that there was a Roman settlement at Ostia before the fourth century rests primarily on the early Roman tradition of a foundation by Ancus Marcius. Other arguments require further consideration.

1. The statement that there is no archaeological evidence of settlement before the fourth-century Castrum might be questioned. Carcopino drew attention to a fragment of Attic pottery of the mature classical style of the second half of the fifth century, which is reported to have been found at Ostia.¹ No record, however, survives of the context in which it was found and Carcopino rightly dismisses it as evidence. Somewhat earlier is an archaic bronze lamp in the form of a boat which was found at Portus. It was briefly reported soon after its finding in 1869 and the accompanying illustration shows that it belongs to a well-known Sardinian series.² This early bronze might support early contact with Sardinia but, since the exact context of the find was not reported, any historical inference would be dangerous.

A pre-Castrum date has been given to some terra-cotta architectural fragments which were found at the lowest level within the Castrum. Andren regarded these fragments, which once probably decorated Ostian temples, as archaistic and dated them to the third century.³ Mingazzini has argued that some at least go back to the sixth and fifth centuries.⁴ This is a problem for specialists. Professor Trendall, who kindly examined the fragments with me, was satisfied that none need be earlier than the fourth century. The head of a Maenad,⁵ in particular, which looks genuinely archaic in a photograph, is much less convincing in the original, and is almost certainly not earlier than the third century.

It remains a reasonable inference from excavation within the Castrum that this site was not occupied before the fourth century. But if, as tradition implies, the earliest settlement was near the salt-beds, this evidence does not

¹ Carcopino, 10.

² *Archaeologia*, 42 (1869) 487, pl. xxviii. 2. Cited by F. W. von Bissing, 'Die sardinischen Bronzen', *RM* 43 (1928) 32, who attributes it to Ostia and refers to a similar lamp, possibly two, from Portus. This reduplication probably derives ultimately from the original publication, which was headed 'Lamp from Ostia', but describes the find-spot as 'on the Torlonia estate'.

³ A. Andren, 'Architectural terra-cottas from Etrusco-Italic temples', *Acta inst. rom. regn. Sueciae*, 6 (1940) 369, pl. 113.

⁴ P. Mingazzini, 'Esisteva un abitato Ostiense anteriore a la colonia romana?', *Rend. Pont.* 23-24 (1947-9) 75-83.

⁵ *Topografia*, tav. xxii.

affect the present issue. It has been held that, if an earlier Ostia existed to the east, some trace would have been found during building operations in the modern village or in farming operations on the plain. Such argument from silence has no force. Between the salt-beds and the river there is ample evidence of Roman buildings in tiles, bricks, and pottery thrown up by the plough, which have not been investigated. On one of the larger sites suggested by such evidence I have seen fragments of black-glazed pottery probably dating from the second century B.C.¹

2. Festus records that the Via Salaria was so called because by it the Sabines carried their salt from the sea.² He implies a continuous route from the sea-coast. In later times the road that led from Rome to Sabine country was still called the Via Salaria, but of the roads that led from Rome towards the coast, the road on the right bank was called the Via Campana, the left-bank road was the Via Ostiensis. If the Via Salaria had run along the right bank the name should have persisted; it is much easier to see how it lapsed if the road was on the left bank. For by the middle of the fourth century at the latest Rome and the Sabines drew their salt from the beds on the right bank.³ The main function of the road on the left bank was no longer to carry salt; it was logical that when Ostia became more important Via Ostiensis should supersede Via Salaria. It is a reasonable inference that originally the Via Salaria ran from Sabine country through Rome to the river mouth on the left bank. This does not necessarily presuppose a Roman settlement, but it makes the tradition of Ancus Marcius' settlement more plausible.

3. Another passage of Festus has been used to support the tradition: 'Quiritium fossae dicuntur quibus Ancus Marcius circumdedit urbem quam secundum ostium Tiberis posuit, ex quo etiam Ostiam.'⁴ If this was the consistent interpretation of 'fossae (or fossa) Quiritium' it would carry weight, but different versions are found in other sources. Livy introduces the name (in the singular), without further explanation, in his account of Ancus Marcius, but he seems to associate it with the Janiculum: 'Quiritium quoque fossa, haud parvum munimentum a planioribus aditu locis, Anci regis opus.'⁵ Dionysius of Halicarnassus, whose account of Ancus Marcius' operations resembles Livy's, does not translate the name, but he says that the king surrounded the newly incorporated Aventine hill with wall and ditch, and this ditch may correspond to Livy's 'fossa Quiritium'.⁶ The much later author of

¹ On the east side of the Via delle Saline, immediately before it meets the Via del Collettorio Secondario.

² Festus (Lindsay), 437: 'Salaria via Romae est appellata, quia per eam Sabini sal a mari deferebant'; cf. Pliny, *NH* xxxi. 89.

³ For the view that the Via Salaria was on the right bank, T. Ashby, *The Roman Campagna in Classical Times*, 219; L. A. Holland, 'The Primitive Roman Bridge', *TAPA* 80 (1949) 281-319 (esp. 313).

⁴ Festus (Lindsay), 304.

⁵ Livy i. 33. 5-7.

⁶ Dion. Hal. iii. 43.