

Chapter 6

Unclassifiable evidence

§ 1 Introduction

The large majority of the Ostian buildings has not yet been studied in depth, and many are dealt with only summarily in modern texts. As a result the function, in one or more building periods, of many rooms or even entire buildings remains unknown, even if proposals have been made. This chapter deals with the evidence:

- from (part of) a building which formed part of the selected material environment (buildings with one or more of the functions dealt with in chapters 2 to 5), but of which the function cannot be specified.
- from (part of) a building which may have formed part of the selected material environment, but of which the function remains uncertain.

To the first category belong some graffiti, which are dealt with separately however, because it cannot be established whether they were written by workers in or inhabitants of the buildings in which they are found, or even by visitors.

§ 2 Presentation of the evidence

2A The evidence

Of the 95 items in catalogue A, 38 remain. The material evidence which did form part of the selected material environment (19 items plus 4 graffiti) is dealt with first.

The evidence which formed part of the selected material environment: the material evidence

The first two items, from the Caseggiato dei Molini, are dealt with in detail in a forthcoming study on the Ostian bakers.¹

In the east facade of the **Caseggiato dei Molini** is a relief of a Genius with *cornucopiae*, *patera* and snake (pl. 59). It is in and contemporary with Hadrianic masonry. The function of the rooms on either side of the relief

¹ Bakker 1994.

in the Hadrianic period is not known: they must have been shops, or entrances to a workshop.

The **Caseggiato dei Molini** was destroyed by fire in the last quarter of the third century AD and was never reoccupied. At the time of the fire the ground floor contained shops and a workshop. On the upper floors were some fairly wealthy apartments. In the destruction-layer resulting from fire numerous religious objects were found. Some of these may have been for sale in the southeast part of the building, others are from a habitation on the first floor, two bars, or the workshop.

In 1870 fifteen statuettes were found somewhere in the building. Identified are Aesculapius, Apollo, a Dioscure, Jupiter-Serapis, Mars, and Minerva. These may have been for sale. During the First World War eight statuettes were found in the destruction-layer in the workshop, one unidentified, a herm, a scorpion, a Dioscure, Hercules, Jupiter-Serapis, a Lar Augusti (pl. 60),² and Minerva. In the same years a small snake (Genius Loci?) and an approximately 0.60 high marble statue of the armed Venus were found in a bar. A statuette of Mercurius was perhaps found in another bar.

In a hall in the **Caseggiato del Bar** is a wall-niche, hacked out at an unknown point in time in the Trajanic masonry of the first building period (catalogue A, nr. 4). In the west part of the Caseggiato is a wide corridor without a roof, running through the building from north to south. On either side of the corridor rooms and halls were built. The halls to the east were later subdivided into smaller rooms, and some entrances were blocked (this later masonry has now largely disappeared). The hall to the west has a row of three wide entrances, characteristic of shops, but there are no partition walls. Some of the rooms on either side of the corridor have thresholds for regular doors and may have been used as store rooms, a workshop, or habitation. Others were at some point in time used as shops, witness shop-thresholds, but it is not clear whether this was their original function.³ In the western hall, opposite its central entrance (but not opposite the centre), high up in the wall, is the wall-niche, which has remains of marble revetment.

At one end of the wide corridor in the **Caseggiato del Bar** a small corridor branches off, where a low, narrow floor-niche is found (A 5; pl. 61). The niche is built of late-Trajanic or early-Hadrianic masonry. It is not clear whether it was a niche from the start. The niche is near a blocked doorway which led to a shop.

² Identified as such because of inlay of silver laurel-branches in the base.

³ Cf. Packer 1971, 123-127.

In the outer wall of the **Horrea Epagathiana et Epaphroditiana** and also in a corridor without a roof behind shops in **Caseggiato I,VIII,4** is a stone slab, which must originally have been painted (A 15). It belongs to the first building period of the Horrea, dated to c. 145-150 AD. Caseggiato I,VIII,4 is Hadrianic. The corridor links a few rooms behind the shops (habitations, workshops, or store rooms) and a second corridor, which comes from the first vestibule of the Horrea. The religious use of the slab is indicated by its position: it could not be seen from outside the Caseggiato and was therefore not a shop-sign.

Three *gorgoneia*, from the first half of the fourth century, are to be found in three rooms in the **Domus delle Gorgoni**, named after the mosaics (A 23-25; pl. 62). All three are large (on average 1.90 x 1.90), and directly behind the main entrances. Two are in rooms accessible from corridors along the courtyard, and at least one of these rooms was a bedroom, as can be deduced from a rectangle in the mosaic, behind the *gorgoneion*, on which a bed was placed.⁴ The *gorgoneion* in the room with the bed is accompanied by the text *Gorgoni bita*, that is *Gorgoni vita*, "Avoid Gorgo!".⁵ The third one is in a room behind the courtyard, a dining-room, witness three joining rectangles in the mosaic, around the *gorgoneion*, on top of which dining-couches were placed.

The building has always been regarded as a *domus*.⁶ The lay-out, including a vestibule with bench, courtyard with basin, and *triclinium*,⁷ fully allows this interpretation, but two problematic elements remain: the position of the building, and the *gorgoneia*.

The building is opposite the Porta Laurentina (some 60 metres away), on a square, and flanked by two main streets (the *Cardo* and *Semita dei Cippi*). No other large ground floor dwelling in Ostia is at such a busy spot. As to the *gorgoneia*, they stand out because of their number (three), position (behind the threshold) and dominating presence (size; not blended in the mosaic). Several examples of *gorgoneia* can be found in Ostian paintings, and four in mosaics, the latter in *domus* and seats of guilds.⁸

⁴ This is the only room in the building with (three) heating-ducts.

⁵ Cf. Paoletti 1988, 347 nr. 12, 360-361. According to Becatti (1961, 25 nr. 42) the text is to be corrected in *Gorgonem vita*. After Plautus the accusative is normally used with *vitare*. Dr. R.T. van der Paardt however drew my attention to Apuleius, *Apologia* 29, where the dative is found again.

⁶ See e.g. Becatti 1949, 5-6; Meiggs 1973, 256; Heres 1982, 402; Boersma 1985, 193.

⁷ The building has an internal and an external staircase, and therefore had at least one floor, possibly at a level of a little over 3.00 (witness the angle of the staircases).

⁸ Mosaics: Becatti 1961, 89-90 nr. 153, Tav. LXX (Domus di Apuleio (II,VIII,5)); Becatti 1961, 154-155 nr. 292, Tavv. LXXXV-LXXXVIII (Caseggiato di Bacco e Arianna (III,XVII,5)); Becatti 1961, 194 nr. 371, Tav. LXXIX (Domus dell'Aquila (IV,V,8)); Becatti 1961, 200-201 nr. 379, Tavv. LXXXVIII, LXXXIX, XCVI (Schola del Traiano ((IV,V,15)).

The painted ones are small and unobtrusive, the four others can be large and in the centre of the mosaic, but they are always blended in the motifs of the mosaic, and not behind a threshold. So many and such dominating apotropaic depictions as are found in the Domus delle Gorgoni cannot, in my view, have been installed in a *domus*, where receptions of respected visitors took place. Perhaps the presence of a conspicuous *gorgoneion* in the dining-room of a dwelling, where the wine could cause problems, must be allowed for. Thus in the Casa del Moralista (III 4, 2-3) in Pompeii the following texts were painted on the walls of a *triclinium*:⁹

"Ab luat unda pedes, puer et detergeat udos, mappa torum velet, lintea nostra cave."

"Lascivos voltus et blandos aufer ocellos coniuge ab alterius, sit tibi in ore pudor."

"[Utere blandit/Abstine discid]iis odiosaque iurgia differ, si potes, aut gressus ad tua tecta refer."

But how to explain the *gorgoneia* in the two lateral rooms, one or two *cubicula*? The one in the bedroom is accompanied by the warning "Avoid Gorgo!", obviously meant to be read by visitors. The bedroom of a *domus* was sometimes used for the reception of intimate friends and business associates,¹⁰ but this use would hardly be planned and the guests would hardly be received in such an unfriendly manner.

I suggest that the building was a luxurious brothel, with good quality paintings and mosaics, offering food and drink to its customers, the *gorgoneia* indicating the problems the prostitutes expected with their customers.¹¹ Many Pompeian brothels are at an intersection of secondary streets.¹² In one of Catullus' poems a prostitute is mentioned working at an intersection.¹³ An advertisement by a Pompeian prostitute was found

⁹ CIL IV S III, 7698; De Vos - De Vos 1982, 134. H. of letters 0.03. Cf. Dunbabin 1978, 161-164 on apotropaic signs in North African *domus*.

¹⁰ Wallace-Hadrill 1988, 59.

¹¹ Reclining couches for guests in Pompeian restaurants and hotels: De Vos - De Vos 1982, 145 (Caupona II 4, 7), 147 (Triclinio Estivo (II 9, 7)), 226 (Casa di Sallustius (VI 2, 4)); in general: Jashemski 1979, chapter VIII. On a mythological link between Gorgo and prostitutes: Ziegler 1912, 1643.

¹² De Vos - De Vos 1982, 202-203. The well-known Lupanar di Africanus e Victor (VII 12, 18-20) is wedge-shaped, like the Domus delle Gorgoni (Kraus - Von Matt 1973, figs. 217, 218, 246; Grant - Mulas 1975, 32, 33, 86; fig. "Gegenüber der Titelseite"; Eschebach 1978, fig. 246; De Vos - De Vos 1982, 202-205).

¹³ Catullus, Carmina 58.

above a bench outside the Porta Marina in Pompeii.¹⁴ Expensive brothels offering food and drink are mentioned in antique literature,¹⁵ and one such brothel, in use from c. 100 AD onwards, was found in the Scholastikia-baths in Ephesus.¹⁶

In the centre of the inside of a jamb of the central passage from the **Domus sul Decumano to Caseggiato III,II,4** is a wall-niche (A 36; pl. 63). Apart from masonry found in soundings, the earliest walls in the Domus and building 4 are Trajanic. Shops may have been in use along the front of the Domus in this period. In the adjoining part of building 4 was a wide corridor with a large hall on either side, a situation reminiscent of that in the west part of the Caseggiato del Bar. The wide entrances (one with a shop-threshold) indicate commercial use. In the back part of building 4 is another large hall.¹⁷ In the years c. 210-235 AD the site of the Domus was rebuilt and occupied by shops behind a portico, backrooms and two corridors.¹⁸ The *domus* was installed in late antiquity. The niche is older than the *domus*. The passage in which the niche is found was blocked at an unknown point in time. The bricks of the niche have a different colour than those of the wall, and very thin joints, indicating that the niche was not meant to be plastered.

A wall-niche can be found in one of the rooms of **Caseggiato III,VII,6** (A 45; pl. 64). The relation of the niche to its masonry (c. 230-240 AD?) is not clear. The function of the building is unknown. Large open areas in this building and the adjacent one (nr. 7) suggest commercial use (depot, workshop). The niche is next to a door. It was plastered.

A room in the back part of the **Caseggiato di Annio** has a floor-niche, hacked out at an unknown point in time in the masonry of the first, Hadrianic building period (A 57; pl. 65). The ground floor of the building was originally a workshop related to the adjacent Magazzino dei Doli. The workshop was later divided in two sections, which are generally held to have been apartments, with good quality paintings.¹⁹ They may in my opinion also have been used for light industrial activity. The niche is almost in the centre of the back wall of the room. It is opposite the

¹⁴ CIL IV, 1751. Cf. perhaps CIL IV S III, 8356.

¹⁵ Seneca Rhetor, *Controversiae* 1, 2, 10; Plautus, *Bacchides* 373, *Poenulus* 174-180, 600-603, 695-703; in general: Herter 1960, 83-84.

¹⁶ Herter 1960, 74, with further literature.

¹⁷ SO I, 235; Blake 1973, 156.

¹⁸ SO I, 237; Becatti 1949, 9-10.

¹⁹ Van Essen 1954(1), 49; Girri 1956, 28; Floriani Squarciapino 1959, 196-198 nrs. 16, 17; Packer 1971, 186-187; Blake 1973, 184-185; Meiggs 1973, 275.

entrance to the room, albeit not opposite the centre of the door. It was plastered. In the upper part of the niche is a hole, the back of which consists of a mass of shells. This tiny niche may have held a lamp and indicates that the floor-niche had a religious function.

From **Caseggiato IV,II,5** come two fragments of paintings, the precise place of discovery of which is not known (A 65, 66). The building is from the period of Marcus Aurelius or a little earlier. It has rooms on either side of a corridor, and must have been a dwelling or used for commercial purposes.²⁰

The first painting, dated to the third century, has a depiction of Fortuna with *cornucopiae* and rudder (pl. 66). The sloping top suggests it comes from an *aedicula*-facade.²¹ On the other fragment, dated to the early Severan period, the lower part of three figures has been preserved, Jupiter, Minerva, and Mars it has been suggested. The figures bear a great resemblance to figures on layers 3 and 4 in the Sacello del Silvano,²² as to their shape, posture, clothes and colours. The preserved parts of the first and third figure are almost identical to the lower parts of the presumed Genius and the lysippian Alexander the Great in the Sacello. The lower part of the central, female figure may be compared to the lower parts of Isis, Fortuna and Annona in the Sacello, but the preserved part of the attribute in her left hand is not found there. The size of the figures suggests, that this fragment comes from a cult-room.

A cult-room (area c. 6.5 m²) was erected in a corner of a small courtyard in the **Caseggiato del Sacello** (A 75; pls. 67, 68, 69). The building in its present shape is probably from the period of Commodus or Severan. The masonry of the cult-room has not been dated. The function of the ground floor, consisting of rooms on either side of a corridor, is not known. The cult-room and the courtyard (c. 35 m²) are rather large in comparison to the remaining rooms on the ground floor (c. 90 m²), and there is no internal staircase. This suggests that this was a commercial building, rather than a dwelling. The building is not reminiscent of any of Ostia's guild-seats.

The cult-room is opposite the entrance to the courtyard from the vestibule. That the courtyard did not have a roof can be deduced from windows lighting the rooms to the southwest. The doorway of the cult-room is flanked by engaged columns and has a *tympanum*. Around the

²⁰ Cf. Blake 1973, 226-227.

²¹ M.L. Veloccia Rinaldi in Floriani Squarciapino 1971, p. 33.

²² See chapter 4, § 5A and chapter 9, § 4C.

entrance the bricks were originally painted red, the mortar white.²³ The room is divided into two parts, the result of differing ceilings. In the rear corners are two low, masonry bases. In the barrel vault of the rear part, a little above the lateral walls and on either side, are three small plastered depressions. Busts may have been painted here. In the back wall of the rear part is a small wall-niche, perhaps for a lamp. The resemblance of this cult-room to Sacello III,II,11 (from the period of Antoninus Pius or somewhat later²⁴) may be noted.

Underneath the remains of the collapsed ceiling were found: a terracotta statue of an enthroned female deity, perhaps Fortuna, partly gilded (Trajanic or Hadrianic); two bacchic herms; a female head; a pineapple; a male head (from the early fourth or the first half of the fifth century AD). The statue was probably placed between the two bases.²⁵

In the vestibule of the **Caseggiato del Sacello** a wall-niche was hacked out low in the wall (A 76). It is in between the entrance to the building from the street and a door to an understairs, and opposite the passage to the courtyard, which has a smooth threshold.

In a corner of a small annex of the southwestern shop of **Caseggiato IV,VII,3** a wall-niche was hacked out in masonry which is perhaps Severan (A 79). The annex has two doors, one leading to an alley and later blocked, the other to the shop, blocked at some point in time and later reopened. The function of the annex is not known (habitation, workshop, or store-room), nor can it be established whether the niche was hacked out when the annex was connected with the shop.

A wall-niche is found in a room in the central part of **Caseggiato V,II,10** (A 84; pl. 70). It forms an entity with masonry dated to c. 200-235 AD. In this period the ground floor may well have been a dwelling behind shops,²⁶ but the back rooms may also have had a commercial function. The niche is more or less in the centre of a lateral wall. It was plastered.

In a rear corner of the **Mitreo dei Serpenti**, originally a backroom of complex V,VI,5-7, is a painting of two huge snakes (*Genii Loci*) and a Genius with *cornucopiae* (presumably the Genius of the *paterfamilias*) (A 89; pl. 71). The Caseggiato has masonry from the periods of Hadrian and

²³ Cf. chapter 2, § 5A, on catalogue A, nr. 90.

²⁴ Blake 1973, 214-215.

²⁵ The height of the ceiling does not allow that it was on top of one of the bases. The depth of the base of the statue is the same as the depth of the bases. It may be noted, that if there was a lamp in the niche in the back wall, this was approximately behind the head of the deity.

²⁶ Suggested by Boersma (Boersma 1985, 171).

Marcus Aurelius.²⁷ Large rooms and halls suggest commercial use. An oven may have been installed in one of the rooms. The backroom must have served as habitation, workshop, or store-room. The painting can perhaps be dated to the early-Antonine period or to the period of Gallienus, and was respected in the *mithraeum*, which was installed in the second half of the third century.²⁸ The painting is next to a blocked doorway.

A *cippus*, found somewhere **to the north of the Terme del Faro**, is related to the redemption of a vow and carries a dedicatory inscription to Isis and the Genius Cenaculi by Claudius Pompeius Rusticus Diocles, *miles frumentarius* from the third Gallic legion (A 95). A date in the third century has been suggested on the basis of the writing. The fairly monumental nature of this piece of evidence suggests, that it does not come from an individual apartment, but from a fairly large shrine, probably in a central room or central area of an apartment building.

The *frumentarii* were messengers and police-officers, even secret agents. They were attached to legions, but could be transferred temporarily to other legions, or to Rome or another place if necessary. From the period of Septimius Severus those in Rome were stationed in the Castra Peregrina. In an inscription from 224 AD from Portus a *statio* of the *frumentarii* is mentioned (Iulia Mamaea is called *mater castrorum*).²⁹ A column on the south end of the Piazzale delle Corporazioni carries a relief of and a dedicatory inscription to the Genius of the Castra Peregrina, probably the camp in Rome, financed by two *frumentarii*.³⁰

The evidence which formed part of the selected material environment: the graffiti

A graffito of a figure with a *cornucopiae* was found on the ground floor of the **Domus di Giove e Ganimede** (A 9). The building is Hadrianic, the graffito cannot be dated. The edifice was built as a house, and turned into a hotel at an unknown point in time.³¹

In the **Caseggiato degli Aurighi** one Latin graffito mentions Mercurius, one Greek graffito Hermes (A 51, 52). The former has the abbreviation *vls*, i.e. *v(otum) l(ibens) s(olvit/olverunt)*, and the word *sol{v}vimus*, in the latter Hermes is asked to bring profit to one Hektikos.³² I could not locate

²⁷ SO I, 236; Becatti 1954, 101-104; Blake 1973, 227-228.

²⁸ Becatti 1954, 103-104. Snakes, it may be remembered, appear regularly in *mithraea*.

²⁹ Fiebigler 1912; Meiggs 1973, 302-303. The inscription: CIL XIV, 125.

³⁰ CIL XIV, 7; Floriani Squarciapino 1972; Meiggs 1973, 302-303.

³¹ Calza 1920, 368-369.

³² A little above the latter is the graffito *Hic ego Mena emi*, referring to the purchase of a slave (Della Corte - Ciprotti 1961, nr. 11; Solin 1972, 195).

the graffiti. The Caseggiato is late-Hadrianic or early-Antonine. The ground floor has a courtyard with portico and around that some shops, a loggia, two halls (presumably used for commercial purposes), a large latrine, and possibly an apartment.³³

The graffito *Dominus Sol hic avitat* (i.e. *Dominus Sol hic habitat*, "Lord Sun lives here") was carefully written with large letters in a back room of the Antonine **Caseggiato del Sole** (A 88). Along the facade of this building are shops. Behind these are two courtyards and three rooms, connected by a row of doors, and by two windows in each of the dividing walls. It is not clear whether the back rooms were used as habitation or had a commercial function. A groove in the plaster on the back wall of the room with the graffito suggests the former presence of a wooden partition.³⁴ The graffito is on one end of the back wall.

The evidence which may have formed part of the selected material environment

In the courtyard of the **Caseggiato di Diana** is a relief with a depiction of Diana as huntress, which gave the building its name (A 6; pls. 72, 73). In the back wall of the courtyard, on the first floor but facing the courtyard, are three floor-niches (A 7; pl. 72). Both the niches and the relief belong to the first, Antonine building period. The function of both the ground floor and the first floor is disputed. The ground floor may have been a dwelling, hotel, or the seat of a guild, the first floor a dwelling or hotel.³⁵

Two niches were found in a corridor or alley in the **Caseggiato dei Doli** (to the north of I,XIX) (A 28). On one side of the corridor is a room with *dolia defossa*, on the other possibly shops. The surroundings of the building have not been excavated. Not much has been published about the building itself, and it was filled with earth a long time ago.

In the southernmost shop of **Caseggiato II,V,1** is a low floor-niche (A 31; pl. 74). It was hacked out at an unknown point in time in the Hadrianic masonry of the first building period. Around 207 AD the room was incorporated in the Caserma dei Vigili (II,V,2). The niche is opposite one end of the shop-entrance. It was plastered. Next to the niche is a rectangular depression.

³³ Packer 1971, 177-182; Blake 1973, 181-182. See also R. Calza 1965, 144-147 and Hermansen 1982(1), 82-83.

³⁴ Becatti 1954, 125-128; Blake 1973, 221-222; Pavolini 1983, 122.

³⁵ Calza 1914(2), 251; Calza 1917, 313; Calza 1929, 126; Becatti 1954, 9-15; Calza-Nash 1959, 28, 79; Packer 1971, 133; Hermansen 1982(1), 127.

In the northernmost room of the **Hospitium delle Volte Dipinte** is an interesting painting, on Hadrianic masonry, but apparently Antonine (A 40; pl. 75). Although the painting remains partly unexplained, Felletti Maj has been able to establish the central theme: it is related to ancestor worship. In the centre of the upper part is an *imago clipeata*, with the bust of a deceased *pater familias*. Below are three scenes. To the left is a pseudo-*aedicula* near which four people are gathered - one of these possibly the son and heir -, performing certain rites. A vessel in the niche of the pseudo-*aedicula* may be an urn. Among the accompanying texts is written *agatetucu*, that must be Ἀγαθὴ Τυχή. The letters *viol* might refer to the *violae dies*, a day on which the graves were garlanded with violets.³⁶ The remaining part of the painting is badly damaged.

The room has four entrances, two wide ones from the street, one leading to a corridor, one leading to what was probably the hotel-keeper's apartment. The wide entrances suggest, that the room was a shop.³⁷ At some point in time after 235 AD a bar-counter was installed.³⁸ The theme of the painting however is out of place in a shop or any other room so open to the outside world. The *imagines clipeatae* had their place inside the houses, especially in the *atrium*.³⁹ Perhaps this was a *compitum*. As will be demonstrated elsewhere,⁴⁰ these could be characterized by entrances. In the Imperial period one conception of the Lares was, that they were the spirits of dead ancestors.⁴¹

In the centre of the rear part of the courtyard with colonnade of the **Domus Fulminata** is the base of an *aedicula* or pseudo-*aedicula*, behind two dining-couches and a basin (A 42; pls. 76, 77). The base was plastered and has a deep floor-niche. In front is an altar on a pedestal. The shrine has not been dated, the building is Flavian.

This building is usually regarded as a *domus*, an hypothesis with which shops on either side of the main entrance, the axial lay-out, the courtyard with colonnade, the basin, the dining-couches, the shrine, and an accentuated room go well.⁴² R. Calza on the other hand has suggested that it was

³⁶ For the *violae dies* see Wissowa 1912, 434 n. 3.

³⁷ The room may originally have been a veranda, according to Felletti Maj (1960, 52).

³⁸ Hermansen 1982(1), 151-157 nr. 19.

³⁹ Bömer 1943, 104-139.

⁴⁰ Chapter 8, § 2B and chapter 12, § 4.

⁴¹ Chapter 8, § 2B. See esp. Wissowa 1897, 1888-1891 and 1904, 42-43, but in the Wissowa-Samter controversy (chapter 8, § 2B) *passim*.

⁴² See on the building especially Becatti 1961, 104-105 and Meiggs 1973, 253. The accentuated room is the most southeastern one, on which see Tamm 1963, 145-146. In the first half of the third century AD mosaics with depictions of Venus and perhaps Leda were installed in the colonnade

the seat of a guild, perhaps related to the Santuario della Bona Dea (IV, VIII, 3) across the street,⁴³ a more attractive hypothesis.

What did the Ostian guild-seats look like, and how can they be distinguished from *domus*?⁴⁴ A number of guild-seats has an axial lay-out, consisting of a vestibule flanked by shops, and a courtyard behind which is an accentuated room.⁴⁵ Accentuated rooms could also be next to the courtyard.⁴⁶ Other seats are arranged around a temple.⁴⁷ During the meetings of the members meals or distributions of food and money took place, and religious activities, focusing on the protective deity of the guild or the Imperial cult. As a result spacious areas, a water-supply, dining-couches, inscriptions recording donations, and shrines were present. Dining-couches are known to have been located in rooms on either side of the central courtyard, and in the accentuated room behind it.⁴⁸ Large and small shrines could be installed.⁴⁹ Apart from the inscriptions two features exclude a residential function: a large number of dining-couches, and the arrangement of the rooms around a relatively large temple. To these a negative criterium can be added: because private rooms were not necessary, some seats have only a few small rooms.⁵⁰

Returning now to the Domus Fulminata it must first of all be noted that the shops, courtyard, basin, dining-couches, shrine, and accentuated room are features of both the *domus* and the guild-seats. However, the rooms of the building - a row of four along the courtyard - make a residential function unlikely.⁵¹ These were not private rooms, such as *cubicula*: they are interconnected through tree pairs of doors, they have wide entrances from the colonnade, and one of the rooms is accentuated.

To the southwest of the building is a Flavian *medianum*-apartment, the

(Becatti 1961, 108 nrs. 203, 204, Tavv. CXII, CXIII).

⁴³ Calza-Nash 1959, 23.

⁴⁴ See also chapter 2, § 1. On the Ostian guilds and guild-seats: Meiggs 1973, chapter 14; Hermansen 1982(1), 55-123. On the activities in the seats see also Stuijber 1960 and Herz 1981.

⁴⁵ The Caseggiato dei Triclini (I, XII, 1), Schola del Traiano (IV, V, 15), Caseggiato dei Lottatori (V, III, 1), and Sede degli Augustali (V, VII, 1-2).

⁴⁶ Caseggiato di Bacco e Arianna (III, XVII, 5).

⁴⁷ Tempio Collegiale (I, X, 4), Tempio and Aula dei Mensori (I, XIX, 2-3), Tempio dei Fabri Navales (III, II, 2), Tempio Collegiale V, XI, 1.

⁴⁸ In the Caseggiato dei Triclini and Schola del Traiano respectively.

⁴⁹ The temples mentioned above and, in the Caseggiato dei Triclini, the accentuated room behind the courtyard.

⁵⁰ For example the Schola del Traiano and Caseggiato dei Lottatori.

⁵¹ There is no internal staircase.

Casa della Domus Fulminata (III,VII,5).⁵² It is now connected with the Domus through a secondary doorway, but there is also a primary, blocked doorway. This house may have been inhabited by the caretaker of the Domus or a guild-official. The apartment has a latrine with three seats, which may have been used during the guild-meals.

In the western corner of the courtyard in the **Domus Fulminata** a thunderbolt which had struck by day has been buried ritually (hence the name of the building), witness the inscription *f(ulgur) d(ium) c(onditum)* (A 43; pl. 77). At this spot fragments were found of vessels, terracotta statuettes, and lamps, most likely from the shrine dealt with above. The structure has not been dated.

In a lateral wall of the northernmost room of the **Domus Fulminata** are two wall-niches, forming an entity with the Flavian masonry (A 44). They are opposite two primary doors in the opposite wall, albeit not opposite the centre of these doors. They were plastered.

A head of Isis or of a woman-follower of Isis was found in "the 'sacello' in the **Casa degli Aurighi**" (A 50). I have no idea which shrine is meant.⁵³ The indication of the place of discovery may be an error.

In the back part of the **Hospitium del Pavone** is a wall-niche (A 68). It forms an entity with the mixtum of the first building period, possibly early-Hadrianic. Gasparri has suggested that the building was already in this period a hotel, but not enough masonry of the first building period has been preserved to allow that or any other interpretation.⁵⁴ The room with the niche later became a corridor. The niche is next to a door.

Set against the back wall of the **Domus della Nicchia a Mosaico** is the pseudo-*aedicula* after which the building is named (A 70; pl. 78). It was perhaps built in the second half of the third century AD. The Domus was built in c. 50-40 BC. Some of its masonry belongs to late antiquity.⁵⁵ It is generally regarded as a *domus*.⁵⁶ In its present shape the building has some elements of a *domus* (axial lay-out, vestibule flanked by shops, courtyard with basin, second courtyard). On the other hand there are only two rooms on the ground floor: a small one and a disproportionately large

⁵² Chapter 3, conspectus nr. 7. SO I, 234; Packer 1971, 171-172; Hermansen 1982(1), 48-49.

⁵³ The head is not mentioned by Becatti in his description of the Sacello delle Tre Navate (III,II,12), next to the building. Becatti mentions a small, male head, possibly related to the cult of Dionysus, as the only object found in this shrine. (Becatti 1954, 69-75, Tav. XIV). Opposite the Sacello delle Tre Navate is the small Sacello III,II,11.

⁵⁴ Gasparri 1970, 12-14. See also chapter 5.

⁵⁵ SO I, 233, 238.

⁵⁶ SO I, 107-108; Pavolini 1983, 190-191.

"*tablinum*". The characteristics rather suggest that the building was a guild-seat. The pseudo-*aedicula* is in the centre of the back wall of a small courtyard, and opposite the centre of the main entrance of the building. The back and arch of the niche are decorated with shells, and pieces of limestone and glass-paste. On the outside a vegetative motif was painted.

In a room in the rear of the **Domus di Giove Fulminatore** are three wall-niches (A 72; pl. 79). In front of the middle one is a podium. Partly in the middle niche and partly on top of the podium is the marble base of a statue. In the room are furthermore an altar dedicated to Zeus "descending in thunder and lightning" (ΖΕΥΣ ΚΑΤΑΒΑΤΗΣ), and a base or altar with a mutilated Greek inscription (the only words preserved in full are

Ἑλλάδιος and στρατία, στρατιος being an *epitheton* of Jupiter, Mars, Minerva and Isis).⁵⁷ The Domus is the front part of an older, much larger house. It was separated in the fourth or fifth century, and is generally held to have remained a *domus*.⁵⁸ The building of course kept characteristics of a *domus*, but again the small number of rooms on the ground floor may be noted. The niches are in a wall blocking the former *tablinum*, the back wall of a new accentuated room. They are opposite the main entrance to the building. In one of the niches are the remains of marble revetment, which is found on the walls of the room as well.

A wall-niche was hacked out in a room next to the changing-room of the **Terme dell'Invidioso** (A 87; pl. 80). It is in masonry which may be Hadrianic. At some date it was filled in. The room has a bar-counter. However, the entrance to the room from the street is narrow and the bar-counter was set against plaster, opening up the possibility that the intended function of the room was not that of shop or bar, and that originally it was part of the bath. The niche is next to the entrance from the street. It was plastered.

In a room in the **Domus su Via degli Augustali** is a wall-niche (A 91). It is in the masonry of the Hadrianic first building period, but the relation of the niche to the masonry can no longer be established. The room was originally a shop. The Domus was installed at the end of the third century AD and the shop was then changed into an accentuated room, slightly elevated, with an opus sectile floor and with two marble columns in its main entrance.⁵⁹ Apart from the accentuated room there is nothing in the building to suggest that it had become a *domus*. It is connected with the adjacent Tempio della Bona Dea (V,X,2) (Augustan in its present shape),⁶⁰ leading Becatti to the

⁵⁷ M.L. Lazzarini will publish a study of the Greek inscriptions in Ostia.

⁵⁸ See chapter 2, conspectus nrs. 21, 23 and § 5A. SO I, 107, fig. 35; Becatti 1961, 185-186.

⁵⁹ Becatti 1949, 26; Becatti 1961, 230-231; Heres 1982, 559-561.

⁶⁰ Brouwer 1989, 425-427.

AREA	TOTAL	CULT- ROOMS	PAIN- TINGS	MOSAICS	RELIEFS, SLABS	NICHES
FACADE	1				1	
VESTIBULE	1					1
COURTYARD	1	1				
CORRIDOR	2				1	1
PASSAGE	1					1
ACCENT.	1			1		
OTHER	8		1	2		5

Figure 15. Unclassifiable evidence from Ostia: the position and appearance of the evidence.

supposition that it was the house of a priest or a meeting place for the faithful.⁶¹ The niche is in a corner of the room, near a door leading to an understairs. It was plastered.

In the museum in Ostia is an undated terracotta relief of Epona and two horses (A 94).⁶² Its place of discovery is not known. It might come from the **Caseggiato dietro la Curia** - containing on the ground floor shops and a workshop or habitations -, because the measurements coincide with those of a depression for a relief in the facade of that building.

2B Dates, position, appearance, deities

Most of the evidence in the first part of § 2A cannot be dated accurately. The position and appearance of the evidence are summarized in figure 15.⁶³ Most of it consists of niches (8 instances). The documented deities are mainly traditional: Dionysus, a Dioscure, Fortuna, an unidentified Genius, the Genius of the *paterfamilias*, Genii Loci, Hercules, Mercurius, Minerva, and Venus. The Imperial cult is represented through a Lar Augusti. The Egyptian gods Isis and Jupiter-Serapis are found. A scorpion might be related to the cult of Mithras.⁶⁴ Three apotropaic gorgoneia were encountered.⁶⁵

⁶¹ Becatti 1961, 230-231. An inscription from the temple, dated to the first century, mentions a portico, benches and a kitchen, suggesting the presence of a guild (Brouwer 1989, 68-69 nr. 63, 426).

⁶² On Epona see chapter 5, n. 112.

⁶³ Evidence of which the exact place of discovery is unknown is not found in the figure.

⁶⁴ Floriani Squarciapino 1962(1), 57.

⁶⁵ For the buried thunderbolt in the Domus Fulminata and the dedication to "Zeus descending in thunder and lightning" in the Domus di Giove Fulminatore, discussed in the third part of § 2A, cf. Pietrangeli 1951 and CIL XIV S, 4294, 4536, 4540. According to Pietrangeli the altar in the Domus di Giove Fulminatore was found "non lungi da un edificio in opera reticolata che ha murate su una parete esterna prospiciente su un piazzale, due targhe (larghe rispettivamente m. 0.25 e 0.26, alte 0.115, distanti una dall'altra mezzo metro e altrettanto dal livello del suolo). Le tabelle recano la formula F D C ..." (Pietrangeli 1951, 41). I have not located these and do not know which building is referred to (northwest wall of Domus del Viridario (IV,IV,9)?).

Three of the four graffiti can hypothetically be related to shrines. The two graffiti in the Caseggiato degli Aurighi, one Latin, one Greek, mention Mercurius/Hermes, the god of trade. The Latin one is apparently related to the redemption of a vow. The building may have held a shrine of the god. The wall in the Caseggiato del Sole on which the graffito *Dominus Sol hic avitat* was written is also an outer lateral wall of the Mitreo dei Serpenti. As Becatti has pointed out, the use of capital letters and the accurate way in which the text was written show, that the graffito was meant quite seriously. Becatti furthermore suggests that Sol is Sol-Mithras, and that *hic* refers to the *mithraeum*.⁶⁶ The graffito is reminiscent of the Greek text ο του ΔΙΟΣ ΠΑΙΣ ΚΑΛΛΙΝΙΚΟΣ Ἡρακλῆς εὐθαδε κατοικεῖ. μηδεν εἰσιτω κακου, not infrequently written above the entrances to houses, from the fourth century BC to the fourth century AD, both in the western and eastern half of the Empire.⁶⁷

2C Participants, beneficiaries, organization

One name can be offered here: Claudius Pompeius Rusticus Diocles, *miles frumentarius* from the third Gallic legion and responsible for a dedication to Isis and the Genius Cenaculi. Ordinary *frumentarii* had the rank of *principalis*, a junior officer.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Becatti 1954, 125-128. Sol is called Dominus in a few mithraic inscriptions. According to Meiggs however the Ostian graffito is related to the cult of Sol as such, because Sol is usually called Invictus Sol or Invictus Deus Sol in the cult of Mithras (Meiggs 1973, 375).

⁶⁷ Von Domaszewski 1902, 14; Wissowa 1912, 282; Weinreich 1938; Weinreich 1946; Van Straten 1974, 181. In Latin we have: *Hercules Invicte, sancte Silvani nepos, huc advenisti: ne quid hic fiat mali!* (CIL VI, 30738).

⁶⁸ Fiebiger 1912, 124.