

THE TERME DEL FARO AND
THE NEIGHBOURHOOD BATHS OF OSTIA

THE TERME DEL FARO AND THE NEIGHBOURHOOD BATHS OF OSTIA:
THEIR ARCHITECTURE, DECORATION, URBAN CONTEXT AND ECONOMICS

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Abstract

Baths and bathing were a very important institution for the inhabitants of Ostia and the Roman Empire in general. They served the general populace not only as a place to wash, but also fulfilled important social functions and often offered a number of other services besides those directly connected to bathing. There are several different types of Roman Bath buildings that have been identified and they are usually classified according to size and layout. Most research to date has concentrated on the larger bath types.

This thesis is concerned with a group of baths in a medium size-range that are intricately interconnected with their immediate neighbourhood, often in both a social and physical way. For this reason they are given the name Neighbourhood Baths. On the basis of both literary and archaeological evidence it can be concluded that these baths were privately owned businesses open to the public.

The Terme del Faro, a building that has received little scholarly attention, serves as the representative example of a Neighbourhood Bath. Although unique in layout, it shares a number of the features that tie Neighbourhood Baths together as a group.

These common features include similarities in decoration. Many of the baths have painted decorations, stucco and mosaic floors. Although never identical, this decoration is often very similar from one bath to another. This suggests that in order to attract business Neighbourhood Baths had to cater to the tastes of their customers.

Neighbourhood Baths were usually fully integrated into their surroundings, often fused together with apartment buildings and located on busy streets. Their very placement, often in locations with large population density, suggests not only how important they were for those who lived around them, but also that they had the potential for being lucrative businesses and good investment opportunities.

A number of literary and epigraphic sources provide scattered information on names, costs, building regulations, possible owners and leaseholders, employees and customers.

The thesis on the Terme del Faro and the Neighbourhood Baths of Ostia is divided into six chapters. The first is an introduction to Ostia, Neighbourhood Baths and the general technical terminology of Roman baths. This is followed by a detailed discussion of the Terme del Faro. The third and fourth chapters offer a detailed discussion of the architecture and decoration of Neighbourhood Baths. The fifth chapter considers their social and urban context, and the last chapter deals with the economics of such a bath.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 . Introduction

Baths and bathing were an integral part of Roman society, and few places are as suited as Ostia to studying the interrelationship between baths and the people who used them. Not only is most of the city preserved and excavated, but there is also a large number of baths of various shapes and sizes throughout the city, making it possible to study the buildings and their typology within their original urban context. In addition, the long life of the city makes it possible to follow changing trends and technology in bathing from the mid 1st century CE to the late 3rd and early 4th centuries.¹

There are at least two dozen baths known from in and around Ostia, 18 of which are within the city walls and are at least partially excavated. Very few, however, have been subject to any detailed studies. The sizes of the various establishments vary greatly in size from tiny, late-antique baths to large, luxurious baths constructed with Imperial funds. About half of the baths, although their plans vary, are of medium size. It is these baths as a group, their placement within the fabric of the ancient city and their status as a functioning business, that are the subject of this thesis. The baths will first be discussed in terms of chronology and research to date. The various definitions and different categories of Ostian baths are also presented in the first chapter, which concludes with a brief outline of building techniques and the terms used to describe them.

The following chapters then proceed to a detailed discussion of the archaeological remains of a little studied medium-sized bath, the Terme del Faro, in chapter two. Appendix One contains an even more complete survey, done room for room.

The Terme del Faro are the starting point of a comparative architectural analysis of the various Neighbourhood Baths that follows in chapter three. This analysis also considers how layout and planning of these baths are influenced by their surroundings. It also offers a brief summary of the various angles from which they have been studied to date.

Chapter four is dedicated to the decoration of the Neighbourhood baths and discusses the common elements as well as the unique features of some the individual baths. The discussion includes painted decoration, stucco, marble, statuary and mosaics. A special emphasis is placed on the decoration of the Terme del Faro, which preserve at least fragments of almost all of these elements.

The fifth chapter considers the urban context of the Ostian Baths, and how their location and layout reflect economic considerations. The placing of the bath in its immediate neighbourhood is considered, and how the various establishments may have vied for business. The manner in which economic factors may have influenced changes in architecture and layout is also studied.

Chapter six is dedicated to the economics of Roman bath buildings, including such questions as ownership, operation costs and fuel consumption, income, additional

¹ R. Mar "Las termas de tipo medio de Ostia y su insercion en el espacio urbano. Estudio preliminar", *Italia* 18 (1990) : 31-63, 31-32.

functions and any businesses connected to ancient baths as an enterprise. A combination of archaeological material, ancient sources and modern experiments forms the basis of this chapter.

Ostia and its baths: a brief introduction to history and geography

Because of its location so close to Rome, Ostia mirrors many developments from the capital. The city dates as far back as the 4th century BCE when a military colony was founded on the site.² It not only protected access to the river and by extension Rome, but also played a role in trade early on.³ For this reason Ostia generally prospered over the next few centuries, but was still subordinate in importance to the harbour town of Puteoli. *Opus incertum* and *opus quasi-reticulatum* were the most widespread construction methods during this period.⁴

There were likely already baths in the city at this point, but no physical remains are known. Rome's general prosperity under Augustus touched nearby Ostia as well. It was probably late in the reign of Augustus that the city was finally supplied with an aqueduct, which would of course have a notable impact on bath buildings.⁵ The emperor Claudius' decision to build a large new harbour at the site greatly enhanced Ostia's prosperity and importance.⁶

Trajan then launched into an even grander harbour project, after the completion of which Ostia finally eclipsed her old rival Puteoli and began to transform itself into the densely packed, brick and concrete city, the remains of which we are familiar with today.⁷ Large areas of the city were rebuilt and the boom that started under Trajan continued into the reign of his successor Hadrian, and extensive building projects were carried out. Entire city sections were re-modelled or rebuilt in brick and concrete.⁸ Most of Ostia's baths were constructed during this period. Antoninus Pius finished a number of projects begun under Hadrian, and a fair number of baths date to this period. Generally speaking fewer apartment blocks and new structures were built. By the time of Marcus Aurelius new building activity had slowed down considerably; rather, pre-existing buildings began to be modified.⁹ A number of baths, including the Terme del Faro, and the Terme dell'

² R. Meiggs. *Roman Ostia*. (Oxford: 1973), 16ff.; F. Zevi. "Les Débuts d' Ostie" and "Ostie sous la République" in Descoedres, J. -P. *Ostia: Port et Porte de la Rome Antique*. (Geneva: 2001), 3-9 and 10-19.

³ Meiggs, 1973, 23-25.

⁴ Meiggs, 1973, 27-32.

⁵ V. Scrinari and M.A. Ricciardi. *La Civiltà dell'Acqua in Ostia Antica*, (Roma: 1996) Vol. 1 89ff.; Meiggs, 1973, 44. See NSc, 1911, p. 452 for a section of lead pipe bearing what was for the longest time the oldest datable inscription for the aqueduct and A. Schmölder. "Le ravitaillement en eau" in J. -P. Descoedres. *Ostia: Port et Porte de la Rome Antique*. (Geneva: 2001) 100-107, esp., note 12, for a recently discovered lead pipe supplying an Augustan date.

⁶ Meiggs, 1973, 44-45, 51-56. Dio 60.11.3 and 24.3, Suet. *Claud.* 85.

⁷ Meiggs, 1973, 55ff.

⁸ M. Blake and D. Bishop *Roman construction in Italy from Nerva through the Antonines*. (Philadelphia: 1973) 158ff.

⁹ Ibid. 204ff. and 217ff. and Meiggs, 1973, 78f.

Invidioso, had already been modified or renovated at least once by the end of the 2nd century.¹⁰ The Severan era is marked by renovations rather than new constructions and the third century shows a sharp drop in prosperity. A feature of this period is the reuse of older brick and the combined use of brick and stone.¹¹ Ostia's commercial significance diminished as the city of Portus, nearer the harbour, grew in importance, and instead, by the 4th century, the town had become a fashionable summer retreat for the wealthy.¹² A combination of invasions and increase in malaria then made the city decline gradually and fade away.¹³

1.2. Roman Baths: Vocabulary and Technical Terms

This section introduces the main parts of a Roman bath and offers a brief description and definition, which also includes a summary of the various traits that aid in identifying these features in the archaeological record. Naturally, bath buildings changed over time and show a great amount of variation. The terms and technology discussed here are based on the fully developed Roman bath of the late 1st century AD and onwards, such as would be encountered in Ostia. Earlier baths often had different features or lacked some of those discussed here. There is also some controversy as to how some of these terms were actually used in antiquity. For the sake of clarity, the terms employed here for the various parts of the baths are those most commonly found in modern archaeological literature, and are used correspondingly. Therefore, the terms, although Latin, were not necessarily used in the same way in antiquity, but are modern labels that have become common through frequent usage in archaeological literature.¹⁴

Roman baths typically included a number of rooms, both heated and cold. Almost all bath buildings share some features, while others were optional. For example, the *palaestra*, or exercise area, was not found in all baths, and is not a necessary feature, while *frigidarium* and *caldarium* are found in all examples (at least at Ostia). We shall come back to the *palaestra* when discussing the definition of Medium Sized Baths.¹⁵ There is always the danger of trying to force a name on to a room found in a bath, and as will be seen below, the Terme del Faro, the main case study, raise a few questions.¹⁶

Heated rooms can usually be identified because they have raised *hypocaust* floors that are connected to a furnace. The space beneath the floor allows for hot air to circulate

¹⁰ Blake, 1973, 157, 209, 222ff, 225ff.

¹¹ Meiggs, 1973, 78-82, 83 ff.

¹² Meiggs, 1973, 87-90.

¹³ Meiggs, 1973, 99-101.

¹⁴ This section is meant to be a brief overview. I. Nielsen. *Thermae et Balnea*. (Aarhus: 1990) has an in-depth discussion of the development of Roman baths in Volume I, Chapter 1 of her work. For additional discussion of the various parts of the bath, an analysis of ancient sources and a discussion of the ancient terms used for the various parts of a bath, see the appropriate sections of Nielsen (vol. I, Chapter 1 and Appendix) and R. Rebuffat. "Vocabulaire Thermal, Documents sur le Bain Romain" in M. Lenoir ed. *Les Thermes Romains*. (Rome: 1991) 1-34, esp. pages 1-23.

¹⁵ Nielsen, 1990, Vol. I, 3-6, 163; G. Poccardi. "Thermes et Bains de l'Ostie antique" in Descoeudres, 161-171.

¹⁶ Rebuffat, 1991, 1-34. This will be discussed in more detail in chapter 2.

and heat the floor from beneath. The hot air then rises through hollow brick tubes, known as *tubuli*, which are embedded in the walls; this effect further heats the rooms. The furnace that heats the floor is called a *praefurnium*.¹⁷

Progressing through the rooms in roughly the same order as an ancient bather, the *apodyterium*, or change room, would be one of the first to be entered, and is usually located near the entrance of the baths for practical reasons. This of course means that a room may be identified as an *apodyterium* simply for its location. A surer sign for identification is the presence of niches or shelves, where the bathers could leave their clothes. Benches are also a fairly common feature.¹⁸

The *frigidarium* is often the largest room in the baths and usually contains at least one pool of unheated water, most often a larger plunge pool called a *piscina*, that occupies a niche or an apse. Architectural features often associated with *frigidaria* are a vaulted ceiling and windows for lighting. The room is not heated and contains no *tubuli* nor does it have a raised floor. It is usually the showpiece of the bath and has the best decoration. The *frigidarium* was most often used after the bather had visited the hot-rooms and was an important meeting place used for social interaction.¹⁹

The *tepidarium* can also be referred to as the *cella media* and basically acted as the transition between heated areas and cold rooms. For this reason it is usually situated between these two rooms and often contained benches for the bather to rest and get acclimatized. The size and shape can vary greatly, but usually it is not as large as the *frigidarium*. Pools of water are sometimes associated with the *tepidarium*, but are not a necessary feature. More importantly, and more controversially, they are usually not heated directly through a *praefurnium* of their own, but by heat drawn from the *caldarium* and other heated rooms.²⁰

The *caldarium* was the hot room and for that reason was supplied with heat by at least one *praefurnium*. It also usually contained heated plunge-baths, known as *alvei*, that were heated by their own *praefurnia* placed below them. These *praefurnia* are larger than those used only for heating the floor because a metal boiler was situated above the furnace fire. This boiler was supported by a curved, metal plate, the *testudo*, which further spread the heat. The *alvei* very frequently are built into niches or apses along the sides of the *caldarium*. They have no drains, which suggests that water constantly splashed over the edge of the pools and created steam throughout the baths. For maximum heat efficiency the *caldarium* (or *calidarium* as it is occasionally spelled) usually occupied the southwest corner of the bath building to take full advantage of solar heat. Large windows aided this process.²¹

¹⁷ Nielsen, 1990, Vol. I, 14-18.

¹⁸ Nielsen, 1990, Vol. I, 153.

¹⁹ Nielsen, 1990, Vol. I, 153-152.

²⁰ Rebuffat, 1991, 2-7, and E. Brödner. *Die Römischen Thermen und das Antike Badewesen*. (Darmstadt: 1983) 99-101 claim that the presence of a *praefurnium*, and even of *tubuli*, casts doubt on the identification as a *tepidarium*. Nielsen, 1990, Vol. I, 155-156, points out that in later buildings it can have a direct heat source.

²¹ Nielsen, 1990, Vol. I: 156-157; Brödner, 1983, 102ff.

Roman baths frequently included sweat-rooms. The exact terminology is disputed, but the two most commonly used terms are *sudatorium* and *laconicum*. The most distinguishing features for a sweat room are: a southern or western exposure, a hypocaust floor, *tubuli* in the walls and direct heat by a *prae-furnium*; the rooms are marked by an absence of water pools or basins.²²

Other rooms could be found in baths, but these can usually not be identified with certainty for lack of any specific traits. Among these is the *unctorium*, where bathers could apply oils, scrape themselves or receive massages. Other rooms in the bath complex could fulfil this function, and there are few known examples that can be identified beyond doubt. Some baths also included sunrooms, large swimming pools or, quite frequently, latrines. *Cauponae* and *popinae* that served snacks are also often part of bath complexes.²³

The *palaestra* is another feature often associated with baths. It was an open space, usually a courtyard surrounded by a colonnade that could be used for running or other physical exercises before bathing. Larger bath complexes sometimes included an open-air swimming pool in this area.²⁴

1.3. The Baths at Ostia²⁵

Chronology

Although they must have existed beforehand, the earliest evidence for an Ostian bath comes from an inscription dating to the reign of Augustus.²⁶ The oldest physical remains of baths at Ostia belong to the so-called Terme delle Provincie, which were most likely built under Claudius and were then torn down and replaced by the Terme di Nettuno. Parts of them survive because they were buried when the level of the Via dei Vigili was raised during the reign of Domitian.²⁷ The Terme dell' Invidioso also seem to date to the Claudian era, but extensive remodelling during the second century greatly altered their original character.²⁸ The Terme del Nuotatore, Ostia's most thoroughly excavated and best-studied bath building, also date to the 1st century CE, but a little later

²² Nielsen, 1990, Vol. I: 3, 158-160; Nielsen here discusses the theory that the *laconicum* was a dry sweat room, whereas the *sudatorium* used steam. It could also be a difference in temperature that distinguishes the two. She prefers the latter interpretation, pointing out that the *caldarium* could be used for steam baths. Brödner, 99-102, uses the terms interchangeably. I here follow Nielsen and use the term *sudatorium*, meaning a room heated by a hypocaust, rather than an open fire. A hypocaust would allow for higher temperatures. For a more detailed analysis of this type of room see Nielsen, 1990, Vol I: 3, 158-160.

²³ Nielsen, 1990, Vol. I: 144ff., 163 ff.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ The names used for the baths of Ostia are all modern nicknames given by the excavators. To avoid confusion, the most frequently used Italian name is used throughout this thesis. Many baths have several alternate names. Appendix 2, The Baths of Ostia lists the baths in alphabetical order by their Italian name, alternate names, "address", size and the most frequently used English names.

²⁶ Meiggs, 1973, 406.

²⁷ Meiggs, 1973, 406f.; Pavolini, 1983, 57-58.

²⁸ Meiggs, 1973, 406 and Pavolini, 1983, 210-211

than the Terme delle Provincie. There are at least two more that date this far back, but they are not yet excavated.²⁹ Speaking from a technological point of view, the oldest baths of Ostia are at the same stage of development as the Terme Centrali at Pompeii, the last to be constructed there.³⁰

The vast majority of baths in the city date to the 2nd century, Ostia's most prosperous period, which is also marked by the most construction activity. Very few new baths are built after this period; instead those already in existence, including the three largest in the city, are maintained, renovated and re-modelled, in the case of many as late as the 3rd and 4th centuries. The only bath buildings that were actually newly built after the Severan era are the Terme Byzantine and the tiny Terme Piccole. The two buildings date to the mid to late 3rd century.³¹ There is evidence that some baths, including the Terme del Faro, continued to function until the 5th century CE.³²

Research to date

The earliest at least partially documented excavations in an Ostian Bath took place in the 18th century in the area of the Terme di Porta Marina, but these early explorations were hardly scientific, and they caused a long lasting name confusion with the Terme Marittime (Baths by the Sullan Walls).³³ Generally speaking it was the larger bath establishments that were excavated first, notably the Terme di Nettuno and the Terme del Foro at the beginning of the 20th century. Notes and remarks on the architecture and decoration of the baths of Ostia were then published in the *Notizie degli Scavi* from that date on. Guido Calza's 1926 article "Le Terme Ostiensi" is the first in a long series of general overviews of the baths of Ostia, and discusses some Ostian baths within the general context of Roman Baths and bathing.³⁴

At least six of Ostia's baths were excavated in and around 1938 during the extensive excavations carried out in preparation for the 1942 World Fair. The main goal of these excavations was to uncover the city, and frequently detailed documentation is lacking.³⁵

The excavations continued at a slightly less fevered pace, and several more baths were uncovered in the post-war years, especially between 1948 and 1951. Most of the excavation results were either published in the form of brief notes in the *Notizie degli Scavi* or finally from 1953 onwards in the *Scavi di Ostia*. Some baths have not been

²⁹ Poccardi, 2001, 170f.

³⁰ Poccardi, 2001, 168.

³¹ Poccardi, 2001, 70ff and Mar, 1990, 53ff, esp. note 57.

³² R. Geremia-Nucci. "Le Terme del Faro di Ostia. Nuovi dati provenienti dallo studio delle fistulae" *Archeologia Classica* 51 (2000): 383-409, esp. 402-404. This is discussed in more detail in chapters 2 and 6.

³³ See Meiggs, 1973, 407-409 for a good discussion and summary. Nielsen (1990) provides excavation dates in her catalogue wherever possible (Vol. II, Cat. No. 15-31).

³⁴ G. Calza. "Le Terme Ostiensi" *Architettura e Arti Decorative* (1926): 337-344. He uses plans and photos of the Terme di Nettuno, Terme Marittime, and Terme dei Cisarii and Terme del Foro, but only touches on them.

³⁵ P. Olivanti. "Les Fouilles d'Ostie de Vaglieri à nos jours" in Descoedres, 2001, 56-65.

published in any detail until this day, and because of the lack of precise records it can in some cases only be approximated when exactly a bath was uncovered.³⁶

The very thorough excavations of the Terme del Nuotatore, lasting from 1966-75, seem to have set a new standard at Ostia, and after the 70's, rather than turning to excavating new buildings, a number of baths first explored early in the century were re-excavated or more fully uncovered and studied. In addition, the already excavated buildings were studied from a variety of aspects, frequently from an art historical or chronological point of view. Some technical studies were also undertaken.³⁷ More recently the urban context and general typology of the Ostian baths have been a point of interest to researchers.³⁸

While the three largest baths of Ostia have been studied and published in great detail, very few of the smaller Ostian baths have been subject to any detailed study and many remain essentially unpublished. If they do appear in any literature, it is usually in the context of a general overview. The Terme dei Sette Sapienti and Terme del Nuotatore are the exceptions and have enjoyed a great deal of attention.³⁹

The new website of Ostia, which is set up and run by a number of European scholars and is constantly being updated and expanded, will in future be an invaluable resource on the city. It compiles information for individual buildings and brings together information that is usually scattered and published in many separate works. The project is constantly progressing and aims to supply each building that has received any scholarly attention with a labelled plan, brief summary of notable information and photographs of points of interest. It unfortunately does not give references for the information in the summaries, but it does provide them for the photographs.⁴⁰

Definitions: Large and medium, public and private

So far the terms large, medium and small baths have been used in a relative sense. How then can the various sizes be distinguished, and should the frequently used terms *thermae* and *balnea* be applied to them?

Even in ancient sources, both literary and epigraphic, the distinction between *thermae* and *balnea* is not always entirely clear or constant, but it can generally be said that dimensions are the main distinction. Yet there is still some overlap, and it is not

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Some examples are T. Heres. "Una ricerca sulla storia edilizia delle Terme di Nettuno ad Ostia Antica (II, 4,2) nel periodo post-adrianeo" *Meded* 40 (1978): 93-112 and "La storia edilizia delle Terme di Nettuno (II, 4,2) ad Ostia: lo sviluppo nei secoli IV-V" *Meded* 41 (1979): 35-42; I. Nielsen and T. Schioler "The Water System in the Baths of Mithras in Ostia" *AnalRom* 9 (1980): 149-159.

³⁸ R. Mar and G. Poccardi would fall in this category.

³⁹ See Bibliography for detailed literature on the individual Baths. It is again Mar and Poccardi, Meiggs and Pavolini who provide brief overviews of some of the other baths.

⁴⁰ URL: <http://www.ostia-antica.org/>. The information provided is generally accurate and reliable and matches what I have found during my own research. The information provided is comparable to an updated Guida Laterza.

always possible to categorize a structure neatly as one or the other; usage also depends to an extent on the preferences of the author.⁴¹

There is the added problem that how a bath is perceived depends on the size or importance of the city it is located in. For example, the Terme di Nettuno, which are a large bath in the town of Ostia, are only medium sized when compared to the baths of Rome or those of many other cities, for example Lepcis Magna, that house imperial bath complexes. At Pompeii the largest bath building, the Terme Centrali, excluding the *palaestra*, corresponds to a medium sized bath in Ostia or a small bath in Rome.⁴²

At Ostia, the three largest bath complexes occupy 2000 m² or more. Small baths essentially fall below 660-500 m². Most of Ostia's baths have a floor space of 1000 to 1500 m² and therefore fall in between these ranges and form a category of medium baths, many of which share a number of similar features.⁴³

The general definition for *thermae* is that of a large, public bath. In Ostia at least three baths, the three largest in the city, the Terme del Foro, Terme di Nettuno and Terme di Porta Marina, fit this category. They are freestanding, occupying an entire *insula* by themselves and usually include a spacious *palaestra*, although absence or presence of this feature is not always sufficient for a bath to fit the definition. Frequently, and in Ostia this is the case, these large baths, unlike the Neighbourhood Baths (to be discussed shortly), were built either through imperial sponsorship (the Terme di Nettuno and di Porta Marina) or by donations from notables (the Terme del Foro, also known as the Terme di Gavius Maximus, a high official under Antoninus Pius). Baths of this type were forms of munificence and were open to the general public. They were not necessarily meant to bring a profit. It is the three *thermae* of Ostia that are the best known and studied.⁴⁴

The medium baths are less homogeneous, but they usually take up only part of an *insula*, and because often the space is already developed, their shape and layout show a lot of variety due to the constraints caused by pre-existing buildings. They also share walls with other buildings unassociated with them. Usually they lack a *palaestra*, a feature that is often used to distinguish between *Thermae* and *Balnea*.⁴⁵ Yet some of these medium-sized baths, like the Terme del Nuotatore, did have fairly spacious exercise grounds, and R. Mar has suggested that sometimes roof terraces would be used instead.⁴⁶ The medium baths also all share the trait that they are easily accessible from the street; sometimes they even have doors opening onto several main thoroughfares. *Balnea*, although the term is used in reference to bath buildings in a range of sizes, largely overlap in their characteristics with these medium sized baths.⁴⁷

⁴¹ Meiggs, 1973, 407-417; Nielsen, 1990, Vol. I: 3, 105-118; Poccardi, 2001, 161-164. See for example O. Robinson. "Baths, an Aspect of Roman Local Government Law" in *Sodalitas: Scritti in onore di Antonio Guarino*. (Naples: 1984) Vol. 3: 1065-1082 esp. 1065-1067 for a discussion of how some authors used the ancient terms.

⁴² Nielsen, 1990, Vol. II., cat. 47.

⁴³ Poccardi, 2001, 164.

⁴⁴ Meiggs, 1973, 407-417; Nielsen, 1990, Vol. I: 3, 105-118; Poccardi, 2001, 161-164.

⁴⁵ Meiggs, 1973, 407-417; Nielsen, 1990, Vol. I: 3, 105-118; Poccardi, 2001, 161-164.

⁴⁶ Meiggs, 1973, 407-420; Nielsen, 1990, Vol. I: 3, 114-118; Poccardi, 2001, 164; Pavolini, 1983, 219-221; Mar, 1990, 43-44.

⁴⁷ Meiggs, 1973, 407-420 and Poccardi, 2001, 164.

In a literary context, for example the works of Martial, *balnea* seem usually to be associated with the names of private individuals, indicating that they were private enterprises built for profit.⁴⁸ Inscriptions and the *fistulae* from the Terme del Faro support this literary evidence. It cannot be proven for certain from the archaeological record alone if a bath was public or had restricted access limited to only certain members of society.⁴⁹

G. Poccardi chooses the term “*bains de quartier*”, or Neighbourhood Baths to describe Medium Baths (the term employed by R. Mar) and the name is fitting as they are scattered evenly through most of the city and almost half of Ostia's baths discovered to date fit this category. The term Neighbourhood Baths has the additional advantage of not excluding baths of a smaller size, like the Terme di Buticoso that otherwise fit all the other criteria.⁵⁰ The term Neighbourhood Bath can also be more universally applied, for as seen above, size definitions can vary significantly depending on the city the baths are located in. The terms Minor Baths or Pompeian Type have also been used to describe this type of bath building.⁵¹

Some of the bathing establishments in Ostia may have been of a more exclusive nature. They possibly operated only for a small segment of the population, for example a guild or club. It can be difficult to tell how inclusive some of the bath establishments were. Some of the smaller ones may have been restricted to only certain members of the public.⁵²

1.4. A brief introduction to the Neighbourhood Baths of Ostia and the case studies

Based on the above definition, the following baths at Ostia can be classified as medium-sized: the Terme Byzantine, Terme dell'Invidioso, Terme del Mitra, Terme del Nuotatore, Terme delle Sei Colonne, Terme dei Sette Sapienti, Terme della Trinacria, and most importantly for chapter 2, the Terme del Faro. They are evenly distributed throughout the city, with the exception of the northeastern section of the city that housed most of the large granaries and warehouses and was not a residential area.

A number of other baths can be categorized less neatly: The Terme di Buticoso, although only half the size of the average Medium Bath, still fulfill all the other requirements. The Terme della Basilica Cristiana may have been public, but later modifications which destroyed the hot-rooms make this difficult to judge. The Terme dei Cisarii are another more complicated case. Their size places them between medium and

⁴⁸ E.g. *Mart.* 1.59.3, 2.14.11-13, 2.48, 3.20.15-16, 7.34.10, 9.75, 12.82.1-2, 14.60.

⁴⁹ See also chapters 5 and 6. Poccardi, 2001, 164; Meiggs, 1973, 407-420; Nielsen, 1990, Vol. I: 3, 114-118.

⁵⁰ Poccardi, 2001, 164 and R. Mar. “Las termas de tipo medio de Ostia y su insercion en el espacio urbano. Estudio preliminar”, *Italica* 18 (1990): 31-63.

⁵¹ See for example Staccioli, R. A. “Sugli edifici Termali minori” *ArchCl* 10 (1958): 273-278 and “Terme Minori e balnea nella documentazione della ‘Forma Urbis’” *ArchCl* 13 (1961): 92-102 and F. Yegül “The Small City Bath in Classical Antiquity and a Reconstruction Study of Lucian's ‘Baths of Hippias’”. *ArchCl* 31 (1979): 108-131. Both articles deal with what are essentially neighbourhood baths in the city of Rome, yet include the Baths of Neptune as an example.

⁵² Poccardi, 2001, 165. See also chapters 4 and 5.

small and they are less readily accessible from the street than the other examples. They may in fact have been owned and operated for the exclusive use of a guild.⁵³

The best studied medium-sized baths of Ostia are the Terme del Nuotatore, which were, as mentioned above, subject to a meticulous nine-season excavation that extended below the imperial levels.⁵⁴ The Terme dei Sette Sapienti have also enjoyed a fair amount of research, which focuses mainly on building phases and the decoration.⁵⁵ The Terme del Mitra were the subject of a detailed study on water use and supply.⁵⁶ Both of the above as well as the Terme delle Sei Colonne, dell' Invidioso and the Terme Byzantine are used by R. Mar as examples for medium-sized baths in their urban context.⁵⁷ Although the archaeological remains were given little attention, the *fistulae* from the Terme del Faro were the basis of a detailed study.⁵⁸ The other baths, all still largely unpublished, only occasionally appear in general surveys of the city and its baths, but have not been documented or researched in any detail. The only notable exception are the mosaic floors, which have all been photographed and documented in volume IV of the *Scavi Di Ostia*.⁵⁹

Typologies

Due to their variation, Ostia's Baths cannot easily be classified other than by size. Their layout and planning differ greatly from each other, not just because they span several centuries, but also because they were often inserted into a narrow space and had to accommodate awkwardly shaped lots and pre-existing building. Three basic types, based on how visitors could move through the baths, can be differentiated: these are the retrograde circuit, the circular circuit and a combination of the two, the mixed circuit.⁶⁰ In the retrograde type the bathers entered the various rooms of the bath and then retraced their steps again to leave. There are a number of sub-divisions in this category depending on whether the rooms were laid out on a straight line or included right-angle turns. In the circular type it was not necessary for the bathers to return the way they had come, instead they could proceed from one room to another and then return by a different route. In the

⁵³ Poccardi, 2001, 168-169.

⁵⁴ G. Becatti. "Scavi in un edificio termale in Ostia Antica (Terme del Nuotatore)", *ArchCl* 19 (1967): 170ff.; "Seconda Campagna di scavo nell'edificio termale di Ostia Antica", *ArchCl* 20 (1968): 157-160; A. Carandini. *Ostia I: Le Terme del Nuotatore: Scavo dell' Ambiente IV*. (Roma: 1968); *Ostia II: Le Terme del Nuotatore: Scavo dell' Ambiente I*. (Roma: 1970); *Ostia II: Le Terme del Nuotatore: Scavo dell' Ambiente II, VI, VIII, scavo dell'ambiente V e di un saggio nell'area SO*. (Roma: 1973)

⁵⁵ T. Heres. "La storia edilizia delle Terme dei Sette Sapienti (III X 2) ad Ostia Antica: uno studio preliminare" *Meded* 51/52 (1993): 76-113; S.Mols. "Decorazione e uso dello spazio a Ostia. Il caso dell'Insula III x (Caseggiato del Serapide, Terme dei Sette Sapienti e Caseggiato degli Aurighi)" *Meded* 59 (1999): 247-386.

⁵⁶ I. Nielsen and T. Schioler. "The Water System in the Baths of Mithras in Ostia" *AnalRom* 9 (1980): 149-159.

⁵⁷ Mar, 1990, 31-63.

⁵⁸ R. Geremia-Nucci. "Le Terme del Faro di Ostia. Nuovi dati provenienti dallo studio delle fistulae" *Archeologia Classica* 51 (2000): 383-409.

⁵⁹ For example Becatti, 1953a and b; Meiggs, 1973, 446-454; Pavolini, 1983, *passim*; Poccardi, 2001, 161-171.

⁶⁰ Poccardi, 2001, 166-168. See Nielsen (1990) Vol. I: 4-5, 67-73 and Vol.II, Cat. No. 15-31.

mixed type a combination of both these factors applies. By far the most baths at Ostia belong to the retrograde type, as the circular type required more space and rooms. Both the Forum Baths and the Terme di Porta Marina, classified as *thermae* and among Ostia's largest baths, belong to the circular type. The only medium-sized baths to fit the category are the Terme delle Sei Colonne. Mixed circuit baths basically are a compromise between the previous two types and usually require at least four heated rooms. Two good examples are the Terme del Faro and the small Terme di Buticoso.⁶¹

1.5. Construction Techniques and Terms

The baths under consideration here span several centuries, during which basic building techniques evolved and changed. The terms used here are those most frequently used in modern literature, and are not infrequently of modern origins rather than ancient. In some cases the terms used for a particular building technique vary from author to author. I have tried to use the most common terms, but also the clearest to avoid confusion.

The earliest, republican, walls in Ostia are built of tufa masonry or employ *opus incertum*, a technique using a concrete core with rough, unshaped pieces of tufa employed as a facing. Since none of the case studies date back far enough, this technique is of comparatively little importance here, but the following technique, *opus reticulatum*, which evolved from it, does pertain to some of our examples. *Opus reticulatum* also consists of a concrete core, but the facing is made up of small, pyramidal blocks of tufa with their squared bases set on an angle so as to form a diamond pattern. This technique appeared during the 1st century BCE and remained in use until the mid 2nd century. When *opus reticulatum* is combined with courses of brick framing the edges and running horizontally through the wall in regular bands, it is often referred to as *opus mixtum*. Since this term is used for a variety of different techniques, for the sake of clarity it is here called *opus reticulatum mixtum* to rule out any confusion.⁶²

The regular, brick-faced concrete that is such a familiar feature at Ostia is referred to as *opus testaceum*, or simply brick and concrete. *Opus latericium*, so similar to the Italian term used for brick and concrete, actually refers to unbaked brick. *Opus testaceum* became prevalent during the 1st century, co-existing with *opus reticulatum* and then gaining prevalence in the later 2nd century.⁶³

Opus vittatum (confusingly often called *opus mixtum* as well) is a late technique that combines layers of small, squared tufa blocks and brick.⁶⁴

The vast majority of baths studied here were built during the course of the 2nd century in either *opus reticulatum mixtum* or *opus testaceum*. Sometimes, as is the case with the Terme del Faro, baths are located within the walls of an older building in *opus reticulatum mixtum* with the walls built as part of the baths in *opus testaceum*. The situation is similar in many other baths and can make dating difficult. *Opus vittatum* is

⁶¹ Poccardi, 2001, 166-168. See Nielsen (1990) Vol. I: 4-5, 67-73 and Vol. II, Cat. No. 15-31.

⁶² J.-P. Adam. *La Construction Romaine*. (Paris: 1989) 142-157.

⁶³ Adam, 1989, 151-162.

⁶⁴ Adam, 1989, 155ff.

usually a sign of late modifications, although a few baths, like the Terme Byzantine, were constructed entirely in this technique.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ See chapters 2 and 3 for details.

Chapter 2.: Terme del Faro

The Terme del Faro fit the definition of a medium-sized bath perfectly. They are located in regio IV at ii 1 and occupy part of an *insula*, sharing walls with an apartment block, a private house and a large city sanctuary (see Fig. 27). They are named Terme del Faro, Baths of the Lighthouse, after a large and prominent mosaic representation of a lighthouse located in the *frigidarium*.

They are accessible through a prominent doorway off the *Cardo Maximus*, one of Ostia's main thoroughfares, and, exceptionally, we have evidence from lead pipes that suggest who the owners were. As well as fitting the standard of most of Ostia's Neighbourhood baths, the Terme del Faro have some interesting and unusual features. They demonstrate excellently some of the difficulties one can encounter when trying to define the function of a room and the dangers of attempting to label it with a standard term. Therefore, the Terme del Faro serve as a case study not only because of the standard features one comes to expect from a Roman bath, but also because they demonstrate well how much variation can be found among Roman baths. There are also some modifications that took place over time and give insights into changing bathing habits.

2.1. Research to date

The Terme del Faro have not been published in any great detail and have generally received very little scholarly attention. The main point of interest in the majority of these brief discussions is the contested age of the building. The Terme del Faro are briefly mentioned in such general works on Ostia as Becatti's *Scavi di Ostia* (1953), Russell Meiggs' *Roman Ostia* (1973) and the *Guida Laterza*, an archaeological guide book written by C. Pavolini (1983). These entries all consist of a brief mention during a general discussion of bath buildings or of a particular city block.¹ The Terme also feature in the catalogue of Roman bath buildings compiled by Inge Nielsen (1990). She provides an estimate of the total square footage of the complex and a summary of the research up to 1990.² G. Poccardi (2001) treats them in slightly more detail as an example of how the proximity between bath buildings and sanctuaries can be potentially misleading. The context is, however, still that of a general overview of Ostia's bath buildings.³ They are also discussed, again briefly, within a catalogue entry by Scrinari and Ricciardi (1996) in the chapter on baths in their recent work on the Ostian water supply.⁴ A small excavation was undertaken in one of the heated rooms during renovation work

¹ G. Becatti. *Scavi Di Ostia I*. (Roma: 1953a), p.127 and 155f; *Scavi Di Ostia IV* (Roma: 1953b), p.172ff. The brick stamps are discussed in H. Bloch, *Scavi Di Ostia I. Appendice. I bolli laterizi nella storia edilizia di Ostia*. (Roma: 1953), 226; R. Meiggs. *Roman Ostia*. (Oxford: 1973), 416, 419 and 443; C. Pavolini. *Ostia*. (Bari: 1983), 197ff.

² I. Nielsen. *Thermae et Balnea*. (Aarhus: 1990), Vol.2, Cat. 26, 5-6.

³ G. Poccardi "Thermae et Bains de L'Ostie Antique" in J.-P. Descoeudres. *Ostia: Port et Porte de la Rome Antique*. (Geneve: 2001), 161-171.

⁴ V. Scrinari and M.A. Ricciardi. *La Civiltà dell'Acqua in Ostia Antica* (Roma: 1996) Vol. I, 171-172.

carried out in the 1960's and the result published in a brief report in 1970.⁵ One notable exception to the usually very brief treatment of the Terme del Faro is an article written in 2000 by Roberta Geremia-Nucci, which studies the *fistulae* recovered from these baths and attempts to establish a pattern of ownership for the Terme del Faro and medium sized baths in Ostia in general.⁶ The mosaics have also received some attention, most recently in J. Clarke's discussion of Black-and-White Figural Mosaics.⁷ The new, scholarly website of Ostia, which is constantly being reworked and updated, also includes a brief discussion of the layout along with a plan and photographs of the attached *caupona*, paintings, stucco and other points of interest.⁸

2.2. Preservation

The preservation of the Terme del Faro is generally good, with walls still standing to the height of one story, in some places more. The site is fairly overgrown, especially in the rear where the service areas were situated. The floor mosaics were not visible in 2005, except for some parts of the plain white floor in a few locations such as the main entrance. Part of the mosaics in the hot rooms were lifted in 1964, but the sections were simply left stacked against the *caldarium* wall, where time and weather have taken their toll.⁹

2.3. Description

General introduction

For the sake of comprehension, the direction given as north in the description, is in fact northwest in a true compass reading (Fig. 2).¹⁰ A more detailed description of the individual phases and state of preservation of each room can be found in the appendix. For the sake of clarity all rooms have been assigned a number. The Terme Del Faro have been classified by Poccardi as a mixed circuit bath, meaning that the layout is a

⁵ F.Zevi. "Ostia-Terme del Faro" *NSc Supplement* 1 (1970): 40-41.

⁶ R. Geremia-Nucci. "Le Terme del Faro di Ostia. Nuovi dati Provenienti dallo studio delle fistulae" *Archeologia Classica* 51 (2000): 383-409.

⁷ G. Becatti, *Scavi Di Ostia IV* (Roma: 1953b), p.172ff., cat. 320-323 and J. R. Clarke. *Roman Black-and-White Figural Mosaics*. (New York: 1979) 51f. and 87-98.

⁸ URL: <http://www.ostia-antica.org/regio4/2/2-1.htm>, last visited on June 6th, 2006. The plan and discussion were posted AFTER work on this thesis was begun.

⁹ The mosaics were photographed and catalogued in volume IV of the *Scavi di Ostia* as inventory numbers 320-323, pages 172-176. Although the floors are supplied with detailed descriptions, it is generally very difficult to follow them and determine which mosaic was placed in which room, and in what position, as no north arrows or maps are provided with the photographs.

¹⁰ I do not follow the example of Stella Falzoni in "Caseggiato IV, II, 5", *Scavi di Ostia XIV: Le Pitture delle Insulae*. 2004, 119-126, but choose to use the directions used by Blake, Nielsen and most other authors.

combination of linear progression from one room to the next and of a circular route that requires no doubling back.¹¹ The entire complex covers 1300 m².¹²

The baths are situated at IV, ii, 1 and occupy a long, narrow, rectangular plot, fronted by shops, that extends back from the street front, occupying about two thirds of the width of the city block. There is an open space at the rear of the building. This courtyard may also have been part of the baths.

The *frigidarium* is essentially the heart of the complex, with most other rooms leading into or branching off from it. This description of the Terme del Faro starts at the main entranceway (1) and proceeds through the change rooms (the east end of room 3 and room 5), around the *frigidarium* (3) and the rooms adjoining it, and then into the hot room area (13-15). The service areas (16-20) and reservoir (21) conclude the description. Decoration is touched on briefly where it survives and will be discussed in more detail in the fourth chapter.

Entrance Area, *Frigidarium* and surrounding rooms

The Terme del Faro are situated on the Cardo Maximus, very close to the Porta Laurentina. The main entrance (1) is located right at the end of the portico known as the Portico Dell'Ercole that runs along the Cardo Maximus. It is also flanked by a *caupona* (room 2, see fig.3) on the north, which is accessible from both the street and the hallway (1). The counter in fact faces the latter entrance and not the street. The entrance corridor leads straight into the spacious *frigidarium* (3). The space of the *frigidarium* is divided and defined by the two large, freestanding support piers that run down the middle of the room, and by the different mosaic patterns that are used. The two freestanding piers are part of the roof support of this room, which would have been covered by cross vaults.¹³ Additional supports were built against the walls, to a total of 10, not counting the two free standing central ones. There were masonry benches for the bathers along the west and north walls. Rooms 7 and 8 are essentially extensions of the *frigidarium*, and both the heated rooms and the service areas are accessible from this large central hall.

Two areas in the Terme del Faro have been identified as change rooms, or *apodyteria*.¹⁴ A positive identification for the two spaces is not possible, but their location and features generally fit those of an *apodyterium*. The larger of the two is situated at the east end of the *frigidarium* and is essentially part of it, located around the corner from the entrance hall. It is defined as a separate space through the position of two engaged piers and the lighthouse mosaic. The mosaics will be discussed in greater detail below, in chapter four.¹⁵ A masonry bench ran along the south and east walls. A room identified as a fairly large latrine (6) was situated to the south and was reached through a door from the

¹¹ Poccardi, 2001, 167-168.

¹² Nielsen, 1990, Vol. II, 5-6.

¹³ As Nielsen (1990) points out in Vol I, 153 this is a commonly employed way to roof a frigidarium.

¹⁴ Nielsen, 1990, Vol. II, fig. 68 and Pavolini, 1983, 197ff.

¹⁵ Nielsen, 1990, Vol. II, fig. 68 and Clarke, 1979, 51-53.

apodyterium (Fig. 5).¹⁶ On the other side of the *frigidarium*, on the north side, opposite the door to the latrine, lay a narrow corridor, room 4 on the plan (fig. 4), that led to a doorway into the neighbouring apartment complex, the Caseggiato dell' Ercole. Next to this corridor and accessible from it, lay the smaller *apodyterium*, room 5. Rooms 4 and 5 were originally one larger space and were later subdivided by a wall, thus producing the two long narrow spaces still visible today. Room 5 was probably an *apodyterium* because it features square holes in the wall that possibly were the anchorings for cupboards.¹⁷

Another dominant feature of the *frigidarium* is the cold-water pool, or *piscina*, number 7 on the plan (Fig. 6). It occupies a wing on the south side of the large *frigidarium* hall and is situated on a short axis at a right angle to that of the *frigidarium*. The entrance is flanked by the two central engaged piers of this wall, which line up neatly with the freestanding ones in the center, emphasizing this different axis and helping to define the space better. The pool is roughly D shaped and was reached by several steps. Originally it would have been lined with marble with a plain white mosaic floor.

Next to the *piscina*, in the southwest corner of the *frigidarium*, is another room (8) of unknown function. It has three doors, one leading to the cold room, one to the service areas immediately to the west (17), and one that leads to the Campus of the Magna Mater, situated on a lower level to the south. There is also a direct access to the service areas (17) from the *frigidarium*, which bypasses room 8.

Additional cold rooms

Directly across from the *piscina* (7), on the north side of the *frigidarium*, is a group of three small rooms, 9, 10 and 11, that were originally one larger space, which was of the same size and shape as that occupied by the *piscina*, meaning that the layout of the *frigidarium* was originally symmetrical and cruciform. A series of walls then divided one half of the space into a set of two small anterooms (9 and 11) and the other half (room 10) into a miniature *frigidarium* complete with benches and a secluded cold plunge. In room 10 are situated wall paintings featuring the so-called Europa riding a bull, Venus and a flurry of sea creatures (Fig. 18 and 19). The marble revetment is also in a remarkable state of preservation. The decoration of this room and the paintings in particular will be discussed in more detail in chapter 4.

Heated Areas

There are some notable features to the heated rooms of the Terme del Faro, mainly the fact that there are four heated rooms. Only one of these, the *caldarium* (14), can be clearly identified and labelled. Nielsen assigns names to rooms 12, 13 and 15 as well, designating them as a heat trap (12), *tepidarium* (13) and *sudatorium* (15). The

¹⁶ Nielsen, 1990, Vol. II, fig. 68 and Pavolini, 1983, 197ff; Clarke, 1979, 53, note 20, points out that the details visible in Becatti's plan from 1953 are no longer visible and is somewhat more cautious in identifying the room as a latrine.

¹⁷ H. Schaal, *Ostia, der Welthafen Roms*, (Bremen: 1957) 106. The holes are too low and numerous to be for beams of an upper floor.

rooms in the Terme del Faro have some unusual features that make these identifications less clear than one might assume. Explanations for the unusual features include the restraints of space and possible multiple uses for the various rooms.

Room 12, reached by a door from room 11, was identified by Nielsen as a heat trap. This small room is important for a number of reasons. First, it is an unusual feature; there are few comparable examples in other Ostian Baths. If it was indeed a heat trap, its purpose was essentially to preserve heat and act as a buffer zone between the hot and cold rooms; such rooms tend to be found more often in colder climates. The little anterooms 11 and 9 (added later) probably served to make this even more effective.¹⁸ The floor was raised on *suspensurae*, just like the other hot rooms, but the room was heated indirectly via number 13, the room next to it. In addition two of its walls were lined with *tubuli* that also drew their heat from the adjacent room. The presence of the *tubuli* is unusual if this feature was merely a heat trap. The room in fact shares several features with a *tepidarium*, yet the presence of the heating flues is again an unusual feature.¹⁹

Since there is a bench present it is possible that this room served as a heated change room in winter as well as aiding in heat conservation and allowing the bather to acclimatize.²⁰

In addition, a section of the original moulded plaster decoration survives in the northwest corner of room 12 (Fig 7). It is remarkably well preserved and shows that the wall surface was divided into panels flanked with pilasters and decorated with small floating figures and swags of decoration. We will return to this decoration in the fourth chapter.

Another feature of room 12 is the door connecting it to the neighbouring room 13, designated the *tepidarium* by Nielsen. At some point this door was completely walled up, thus sealing the only entryway to the hot rooms (Fig. 8). This probably happened at a very late date, because the work is of very poor quality and debris from throughout the baths, including whole sections of *tubuli*, was employed.

The general state of preservation of room 13, usually referred to as the *tepidarium*, is not the best. The raised floor was severely damaged and collapsed when the ceiling vault above gave way; some large sections still lie where they fell in antiquity. This naturally damaged the black and white marine themed mosaics that once decorated the floor.

The room has a slightly irregular outline because the access to the *caldarium* is situated in a corner, forming an unusual triangular space that leads into a corridor with a sharp change of direction. This piece of planning is what makes the Terme Del Faro a mixed circuit bath. So far the various rooms could only be accessed via a linear route and required doubling back. The hot rooms of the Terme Del Faro are however interconnected making it possible to reach both the '*sudatorium*' and the *caldarium* from the '*tepidarium*'. Benches lined all four walls and some remnants of the marble that once faced these and parts of the walls are still extant in a few places. The short diagonal hall

¹⁸ Nielsen, 1990, Vol.I, 79-80 and Vol. II, Fig. 68, 94.

¹⁹ Rebuffat, 1991, 2-7, and E. Brödner. *Die Römischen Thermen und das Antike Badewesen*. (Darmstadt: 1983), 99-101, Nielsen, 1990, Vol.I, 155-156.

²⁰ See Nielsen, 1990, Vol. I, 153 on heated *apodyteria*.

to the *caldarium* also still contains some of the original marble veneer, including the stump of a molded doorframe.

Room 13 does not fit the usual definition of a *tepidarium* because it has a small *praefurnium*, accessible from room 16 (Fig. 9). *Tepidaria*, according to modern definitions, very rarely have *praefurnia* of their own and usually draw their warmth from the neighbouring hot rooms.²¹ Moreover, four walls of this room are lined with *tubuli* for even heat distribution, again an unusual feature for *tepidaria*. As will be seen in chapter three, it is not all that unusual for Ostian baths to have *praefurnia* in all heated rooms.

One possibility is that the small *praefurnium* was only used in the winter to counteract heat loss and supply room 12 with some warmth. In that case, Room 13 would have been a normal *tepidarium* in summer, drawing heat indirectly, but with the option of a direct heat source if the weather turned unusually cold, thus cutting down on heat loss and heating costs.

The *caldarium*, room 14, occupies the southwest corner of the building and its main focus was two heated plunge pools, each situated in a niche at the short ends of the room (Fig.10). These pools are very well preserved and both decoration and technical details can be gained from them. They were originally lined with fine, gray marble and the floors of the basins consisted of white mosaic. The pools are raised on *suspensurae*, just like the floors, and were each heated by their own *praefurnium*, located in rooms 16 and 19 respectively. The room itself was heated by a separate, smaller *praefurnium* located in room 18. A statue niche is still visible in the south wall. Other decoration for this room included a floor covering of black and white mosaic matching the sea creature theme.

Room 15, identified by Nielsen as a '*sudatorium*', is accessible from both the *caldarium* and the '*tepidarium*' (13). It is longer and narrower than room 13 and has its own *praefurnium*, accessible from hallway 19. Like Room 13, there are benches along the walls, but there are *tubuli* only along the two longer ones. There was possibly a west-facing window (southwest in true compass reading) in this room as well. The combination of *tubuli*, *praefurnium*, location within the bath building and absence of water basins all support the identification of this room as a *sudatorium*. It too was decorated with a black and white mosaic. It is this room that was partially excavated in 1964 and the trench is still extant.

Service Areas

All service areas of the Terme del Faro were accessible from the long hallway (17) that occupied about half of the southern side of the baths. It ran between the far end of the *frigidarium* and the open yard at the rear of the bath complex.

Room 16 was located between the *frigidarium* and the *caldarium* and was originally accessible through a doorway from Hall 17. The floor level was slightly lower than that of the *frigidarium*. At some point during the long life of the Terme del Faro the entrance to this service area was bricked in and it must have fallen out of use. This means

²¹ Brödner, 1983, 99f.

that the east *alveus* in the *caldarium*, the *praefurnium* of which was situated in this room, must have ceased to be heated. The same is true for the *praefurnium* of room 13, which was also situated in this area. The arch of the *alveus* furnace is higher and wider than that of a *praefurnium* used simply to heat the rooms because it needed to accommodate both the *testudo* and the metal boiler for the water. The masonry ledges that would have held the *testudo* and supported the weight of the boiler are well preserved.²²

Another feature of this room are its unusually thick walls and what appears to be a channel, perhaps a drain, along its east side. There are a number of features in this area that are difficult to interpret, including the small *praefurnium* for room 13, the ‘*tepidarium*’.²³

Room 18 housed the *praefurnium* for the *caldarium* hypocaust. It was a narrow space that could be reached by a small set of stairs from area 17. This *praefurnium* is a lot smaller than the one just described since it did not have to support the *testudo* or the large boiler. Instead it is a simple arched opening in the wall of the *caldarium* connected to the area beneath the floor by a vaulted channel. There are niches to either side that may have served as storage and to dry wood.

The last service area, number 19, a long narrow corridor, had three entrances. One was accessible by turning north at the end of corridor 17 and passing through a small room, the other two opened onto the courtyard. The area is heavily overgrown and there is an accumulation of sediment, so the steps that led down here are no longer visible.. Room 19 consists of two areas; the first takes up the width of the *caldarium* and houses the furnace for the second hot pool. The corridor then makes a sharp 90 degree turn followed by a second, since it has to wrap around the niche of the hot pool and then rejoin the external wall of the ‘*sudatorium*’, where there is another small *praefurnium* of the same type as that in room 16.

There is also a small cluster of three rooms (20) that back onto the bath complex. They are poorly preserved and show a variety of building phases and alterations and are somewhat irregular in shape. They may have been used for storage.

The Reservoir

The Terme del Faro had a spacious reservoir (21) situated behind the north wall, outside the baths proper. It could be accessed by exiting the baths through number 4, the hallway leading into the Caseggiato dell'Ercole. It is roughly rectangular in shape with massive walls, and a narrow staircase leads up the side. It has been calculated that it could hold up to 98 000 litres of water.²⁴

Since there is no evidence for a well or water wheel, the Terme del Faro must have been supplied with water through the aqueduct. The various *fistulae* confirm that the baths’ owners paid to be connected to the municipal water network (the *fistulae* will be discussed in more detail in chapter 6). It is possible that the reservoir also caught

²² Nielsen, 1990, Vol. I, 16 and Adam, 1989, 287-299.

²³ Brödner, 1983, 99ff.

²⁴ Scrinari and Ricciardi, 1996, 171-173.

rainwater that ran off the neighbouring roofs, although there is no surviving evidence for this.²⁵

The cistern's placement is rather remarkable because it completely occupies and blocks what used to be the main entrance to the small, but elegant, house (IV, II, 5) that occupies most of the space beyond the Terme del Faro's north wall.²⁶ They do not have a common wall, but both have their own walls, separated by a narrow space. This house and the possible implications of the reservoir's location will be discussed in more detail in chapter 5.

2.4. Problems:

Chronology

The exact age of the Terme del Faro is still under contention, as is the earlier history of its particular plot. The baths consist of a combination of re-utilized pre-existing walls and purposely built, specialized walls. To these must then be added various later modifications and renovations. A more extensive excavation below the presently preserved floors would be necessary to identify what type of structure previously occupied this site.²⁷ The small sondage carried out in 1964 revealed the remains of a wall and parts of a plain white mosaic floor beneath the raised floor of the *sudatorium*. The area excavated was, however, too limited in scope to resolve what kind of structure these may have belonged to.²⁸ Modern restoration work is an added difficulty when trying to decipher the various phases of the building.

Parts of the walls, along the northeast and in the hallway leading to the apartment building next door, are in regular *opus reticulatum*, with brick lines running through it in horizontal bands and framing it at the corners; this technique is referred to here as *opus reticulatum mixtum*. By far the largest part of the building is regular, high-quality brickwork. A Trajanic date is assigned to the original structure, especially the perimeter walls of the Terme del Faro.²⁹ The question remains whether the Terme del Faro were inserted into a Trajanic shell at a later date or whether the baths themselves can be assigned to this period.³⁰ Changes to the building were undertaken at least twice during the second century and there are visible, although very subtle, differences in the bricks. There is a thicker variety with a deeper, redder colour and a slightly thinner type of a paler hue.³¹ Nielsen concludes, and the excavation results possibly confirm this, that the site was probably not converted into a bath building until a later date; she suggests the

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Falzoni, 2004, 119-126.

²⁷ Pavolini, 1983, 196-197 and M. Blake and D. Bishop. *Roman construction in Italy from Nerva through the Antonines*. (Philadelphia: 1973), 157, 209.

²⁸ Zevi, 1970, 41-42.

²⁹ Becatti, 1953a, 127.

³⁰ Becatti, 1953a, *Scavi Di Ostia I*, 127 favors a Trajanic date.

³¹ Becatti, 1953a, 127. Bloch, 1953, Appendix. 226-227. Blake, 1973, 157, 209; Meiggs, 1973, 419, 443.

late second century.³² The entire *insula* underwent drastic changes during the reign of Marcus Aurelius when the Caseggiato Dell' Ercole was built, and the baths may very well have been built into an older building around this time.³³ There are strong similarities between the masonry of the baths and the Caseggiato. The *caupona* and room 4/5 are in taken by J. Packer to have been built as part of the apartment complex, further suggesting the baths and the Caseggiato are close in date.³⁴

Bloch also supports the notion that the baths themselves were not Trajanic but were built into the older building around the mid second century CE.³⁵ Brick stamps were recovered from the site, but they do not help determine a more precise date of construction. One recovered from a window arch can be dated to the mid second century CE and beyond, but the other two recovered are unhelpful: one cannot be assigned a date and the other comes from material that was probably reused.³⁶

The *fistulae*, while confirming that the baths were in use by the mid to late second century CE, cannot date the building more precisely either. Several were probably laid during renovations in the Severan age, and another is possibly as late as the fourth century CE. A more detailed discussion of the *fistulae* follows in chapter 6.

Some major renovations were undertaken during the Severan period. In many parts of the baths alterations are visible that were carried out in a brick that is paler and thinner than that of the older walls. The brick of that period does tend to be thinner than under the preceding emperors.³⁷

The surviving decoration of the Terme del Faro is, based on the style, also largely Severan. This date is further confirmed by the excavation which provided a *terminus post quem* for the mosaics from the heated rooms. Brick stamps on the *bipedales* used to build the *hypocaust* and floor of the '*sudatorium*', which the mosaics then covered, date to the reign of Caracalla.³⁸ In addition, at least one of the individuals on the *fistulae* was active during same period. Most sources provide a date of around the reign of Caracalla for the mosaics, J. Clarke suggests a slightly later date of the mid 3rd century on stylistic grounds, based largely on the *frigidarium* mosaic.³⁹

The presence in various parts of the building of *opus listatum*, a building style using brick and small, squared stone blocks in alternate rows, suggests further remodelling and renovations in the third and fourth centuries; T. Heres suggests a more

³² Nielsen, 1990, Vol. II Cat. 26, 5-6. Meiggs, 1973, 419, 443; Blake, 1973, 157, 209, 225ff

³³ Blake, 1973, 225-226.

³⁴ J. Packer. "The insulae of Imperial Ostia". *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* (Rome: 1971) Vol. XXXI, Fig. 31 and 187-190.

³⁵ Bloch, 1953, 226.

³⁶ Bloch identifies the stamps to be of the same type as CIL XV 422 (mid 2nd century and later, with examples known from Rome and around Ostia), CIL XV 910a (with similar examples from Rome) or 2083 (a fragmentary piece recovered from the Via Portuense) and CIL XV 1283 (Rome and environs).

³⁷ Nielsen, 1990, Cat. 26, 5-6. Meiggs, 1973, 419, 443; Blake, 1973, 157, 209, 225ff.

³⁸ Nielsen, 1990, Vol. II, Cat. 26, 5-6. and Zevi, 1970, 42.

³⁹ Becatti, *Scavi Di Ostia IV*, 172ff. (Mosaics), Nielsen, 1990, Cat.26, 5-6, Pavolini, 1983, 198. Clarke, 1979, 51, esp. note 21.

precise date of 275-300 CE for these sections.⁴⁰ One of the *fistulae* bears the name of an individual of the 4th century.⁴¹

The Terme del Faro must therefore been seen as a dynamic structure that was constantly being changed and re-adapted. Its phases reflect the fact that it was a utilitarian structure and was altered not infrequently to better or more efficiently fulfil its purpose, namely that of a Neighbourhood Bath. It was meant to be used and was built both to accommodate the available plot and simultaneously be as practical as possible for both the visitor and the staff.

⁴⁰ T. Heres. *Paries*. (Amsterdam: 1982) 91, 94.

⁴¹ Nielsen, 1990, Vol. II, 5-6. Geremia-Nucci, 2000, 387 and 400-404 and Becatti, 1953a, 155.

Chapter 3. Comparisons

Introduction

After this detailed introduction to the Terme del Faro, the question remains how representative they are for Ostian medium-sized baths. In this chapter, the Terme del Faro are compared to a number of other baths of this category. The comparative examples were chosen either on the basis of the previous research done on them or because they resembled the Terme del Faro in size and layout.

So for example the Terme dei Sette Sapienti have been studied in a lot of detail with regards to decoration, building phases and integration into the surrounding apartment buildings.¹ They were situated in Regio III, x. 2., between two apartment complexes, the Caseggiato del Serapide and the Caseggiato degli Aurighi, and are probably Hadrianic, although they underwent substantial remodelling in the Severan era.² The decoration that remains is fragmentary, but more extensive and varied than that found in most Ostian baths.

The Terme del Mitra were subject to a study on water supply that also included consideration of the various building phases.³ They are very close to the Terme dei Sette Sapienti, in Regio I at xviii. 2, on the other side of the Via della Foce. They are named after a well-preserved mithraeum situated in the substructures, which are unusually well preserved on several underground levels. They are probably Trajanic and were renovated in Hadrianic times. At some point in the mid 4th century CE the baths were converted into a Christian cult site.⁴

The Terme delle Sei Colonne are an excellent example of how the original plot of land influenced the layout and shape of a medium-sized bath, and generally offer a good comparison to the Terme del Faro.⁵ They are situated in the same Regio, IV, at *insula.v.11* and are right on the Decumanus Maximums.

Other baths that appear in less detail in this chapter are the Terme della Trinacria, the Terme dell' Invidioso, the Terme del Nuotatore, Terme Marittime and the Terme di Buticoso.

The questions of accessibility and urban context will be discussed in greater detail in the fifth chapter, as will the possible connections between bathing and sanctuaries.

Layout and planning

¹ T. Heres. "La storia edilizia delle Terme dei Sette Sapienti (III X 2) ad Ostia Antica: uno studio preliminare" *Meded* 51/52 (1993): 76-113, S. Mols. "Decorazione e uso dello spazio a Ostia. Il caso dell'Insula III x (Caseggiato del Serapide, Terme dei Sette Sapienti e Caseggiato degli Aurighi)" *Meded* 59 (1999): 247-386 and "Ricerche sulla pittura di Ostia. Status quaestionis e prospettive", *BABesch* 77 (2002), 151-174 and R. Mar. "Las termas de tipo medio de Ostia y su insercion en el espacio urbano. Estudio preliminar", *Italica* 18 (1990): 31-63.

² I. Nielsen. *Thermae et Balnea*. (Aarhus: 1990) 5, Heres (1993), *passim*.

³ I. Nielsen and T. Schioler. "The Water System in the Baths of Mithras in Ostia" *AnalRom* 9 (1980): 149-159. See also Mar, 1990, 33-41.

⁴ Nielsen and Schioler, 1980, *passim*; C. Pavolini. *Ostia*. (Bari: 1983) 120-122.

⁵ Mar, 1990, 46-50.

There is an enormous variety in the layout and planning of the Neighbourhood Baths of Ostia. No two baths in Ostia are alike, and attempting to compare them on the basis of layout and plan is difficult, simply because the shape the baths took was dictated largely by the available space and pre-existing buildings. In addition, most bathing establishments at Ostia were modified and rebuilt many times over the centuries, altering the original layout, yet still having to deal with the constraints of space. The larger *thermae* are the exception because they gave their planners the space they required.⁶ Typologies of the medium-sized baths are therefore of limited use, since a unique solution had to be found for each bath. The circulation types discussed in chapter one are more useful because they allow conclusions on how visitors were meant to move through the baths and how the baths were intended to be used by the ancient bather; in addition, a mixed or circular circuit bath usually requires more rooms than a simple retrograde type one.⁷ This section compares and contrasts the plans of several Ostian baths of similar size and date, and investigates how the various baths are planned, and what features they share and which are unique.

A group of Ostian baths from the 2nd century CE share a number of characteristics, including similar size. These consist of the Terme del Faro (Fig.2), Terme delle Sei Colonne (Fig. 11), the Terme del Mitra (Fig. 12), Terme della Trinacria (Fig. 13) and Terme dell' Invidioso (Fig. 14). The Terme dei Sette Sapienti (Fig. 17), which will feature prominently in the decoration section, are at first glance unique in their layout and plan, which includes a round *frigidarium*, yet the round room was inserted into an area that was originally rectangular, and the remainder of the rooms are comparable to other examples.⁸ The Terme del Nuotatore (Fig. 15), possibly due to constant renovations, are rather different in several features addressed below.

The Terme delle Sei Colonne, although generally very little attention has been paid to them, are an excellent comparative example to the Terme del Faro.⁹ They are better dated than the Terme del Faro, being initially constructed in the Trajanic era (as were possibly the Terme del Faro) and also underwent various modifications, including significant alterations towards 160 CE. The plot they are situated on is less regular than that of the Terme del Faro, which was built into a nearly perfectly rectangular space. Rather, the Terme delle Sei Colonne occupy a plot that seems to have originally housed a private atrium-style house, fronted with shops. The plot is trapezoidal in shape and becomes narrower towards the back, which naturally influenced the layout of the baths.¹⁰

The baths are entered, like the Terme del Faro, from one of Ostia's main roads, in this case the Decumanus. There are two entrances that are parallel to each other (marked by arrows on the plan). The one on the left, as seen on the plan, leads straight into the *frigidarium*, the other leads around the corner, past a latrine, to what was, judging by its

⁶ R. Meiggs, *Roman Ostia*. (Oxford: 1973) 416.

⁷ G. Poccardi. "Thermes et Bains de l'Ostie Antique" in Descoedres 166-168. See Nielsen, 1990, Vol. I: 4-5, 67-73 and Vol.II, Cat. No. 15-31 for more details.

⁸ T. Heres (1993), 85ff. There is some debate, however, if the cupola was initially actually part of a *macellum*, as Heres suggests, or always intended as part of a bath, as Mar, 1990, 41-46 suggests.

⁹ Mar, 1990, 46-50 gives them a brief overview and Poccardi, 2001, supplies a detailed plan (fig 3, p. 163).

¹⁰ Mar, 1990, 46-50.

location, an *apodyterium*.¹¹ The *frigidarium* is similar to that of the Terme del Faro in that it too is a long, narrow room. R. Mar suggests that the six columns in this area were part of a narrow peristyle, and that the *frigidarium* in fact was connected to the open air.¹² The *piscina*, situated at the end of the *frigidarium*, is rectangular and larger and deeper than its counterpart in the Terme del Faro. There are no additional cold rooms nor a small plunge bath; rather the visitor entered straight into the heated rooms from the *frigidarium* or the open court.

The circulation system in the Terme delle Sei Colonne is circular, as in the Terme del Faro, but more sophisticated. Two of the heated rooms are situated one next to the other along the wall shared with the *frigidarium*, and in the initial phase of the baths there were in fact three separate doors connecting them to the *frigidarium* and a fourth connecting them to each other. Both have a door leading into the *caldarium* at their opposite side. As in the Terme del Faro, it is difficult to assign a label to these two heated rooms. Both have a hypocaust floor, *tubuli* in all four walls and a small *praeefurnium*. There are no water basins. The more northern room, which has two doors to the *frigidarium* (a and b on the plan), fits the description of a *tepidarium* best, especially since the *frigidarium* door in the more Southern room was sealed in a second phase, probably to preserve heat. In the last phase of the baths a heat trap (1) was constructed, consisting of a wall built up between the columns of the *frigidarium*, and a hypocaust that was added underneath this section. In this case the function of the space is clearer than that of the Terme del Faro. The *caldarium* had two long, narrow *alvei*, much like those of the Terme del Faro, and the service areas are arranged in similar fashion, consisting of long corridors following the outlines of the rooms on a slightly lower level reached by steps. The *praeefurnium* of one of the two *alvei* is situated at the short side, rather than more efficiently in the middle of the pool, due to constraints of space.¹³ At the rear of the plot is an open courtyard, which was later filled with small rooms of indeterminate functions and also housed a small shrine. R. Mar suggests that the open area was originally used as a small palaestra.¹⁴ The Terme delle Sei Colonne have a reservoir, similar to that of the Terme del Faro, that had a capacity of 28 000 litres, as well as a second, smaller reservoir and also a *noria* (2), a water wheel used to raise groundwater, and a cistern. The larger reservoir, fed by the aqueduct, probably replaced the water wheel.¹⁵

The Terme del Mitra, della Trinacria, dell' Invidioso, dei Sette Sapienti and the little Terme Marittime all use the simpler retrograde circulation system, and their three hot rooms are placed one behind the other, although how they connect to the *frigidarium* varies. In the Terme del Mitra they are simply placed one behind the other, in the other examples the bather had to follow a 90-degree turn in direction. Like the Terme del Faro

¹¹ Nielsen, 1990, identifies the entire columned area as an *apodyterium* (indicated by A on the plan, Fig.11) rather than the smaller room to the right, below the *tepidarium* (T).

¹² Mar, 1990, 46-50.

¹³ Poccardi, 2001, fig. 3, 163.

¹⁴ Mar, 1990, 49.

¹⁵ V. Scrinari and M.A. Ricciardi, *La Civiltà dell'Acqua in Ostia Antica*, (Roma: 1996) 174.

and delle Sei Colonne, each of these examples had a larger cold pool, usually in the *frigidarium*. In the Terme Marittime most of the *frigidarium* is occupied by an unusually large cold pool. The Terme dell' Invidioso and dei Sette Sapienti, like the Terme del Faro, also have an additional, smaller cold pool. That in the Terme dell' Invidioso is situated in the main *frigidarium*, while the one in the Terme dei Sette Sapienti is situated in a slightly more secluded location, much like the small *frigidarium* in the Terme del Faro.

The usual number of *alvei* in the *caldarium* is two, although the Terme della Trinacria have three, but only two seem to have been heated directly through their own *praefurnium*.

All of these baths also went through modifications over time. These included various phases of redecorating, and the adding of apses, but there is also a general trend for doorways to be sealed and the access to the hot rooms to become more restricted, possibly as a measure to preserve heat. There are also various indications that the baths were slightly reduced in size.¹⁶

There is another general trend among Ostia's Neighbourhood Baths that is worth noting. They are often closely associated with a larger apartment complex, and in some cases, most notably the Terme dei Sette Sapienti and the Terme del Invidioso, they are completely integrated into the complex and have, besides the usual street entrances, separate internal accesses that lead up to the apartments. The Terme del Faro are less closely connected to the Caseggiato dell' Ercole, but still have a direct passageway. The Terme delle Sei Colonne, della Trinacria and del Mitra are less closely associated with a larger apartment building, but more than likely did include rooms or apartments on upper floors.¹⁷ This will be discussed in more detail in chapters five and six.

The Terme del Nuotatore, possibly because they were in use for such a long period of time and were modified numerous times, may serve as a unique example of an Ostian medium sized bath. They fit the definition in all aspects, but their layout, compared to the other examples and to *balnea* in general, is extraordinary. As noted in chapter 1, they have a *palaestra*, in itself an unusual feature for a medium-sized bath. There is a conventional *frigidarium* with *piscina*, comparable in shape to that of the Terme dell' Invidioso, but it gives access to two separate *tepidaria*, both with *praefurnia*. Only the western *tepidarium* gives access to the remainder of the heated rooms.¹⁸ These consist of a *sudatorium* and two apsed *caldaria*. The one situated to the north (*caldaria* usually face south) contains one *alveus*, the one to the east two. There is also a large apsed room of unknown function in front of the *frigidarium*.

There is therefore no real typology that can be applied to these baths because their shape and plan is influenced by the size and shape of the plot they are integrated into. The neighbourhood dictates the shape of the baths as much as the baths influence their immediate surroundings. Changing fashions and styles in architecture take second place to practicality in the case of these baths, except where they have an economic advantage. When it came to decoration, however, the Neighbourhood Baths seems always to have

¹⁶ Terme del Mitra: Nielsen and Schioler, 1980, 149-159, Terme del Mitra, dei Sette Sapienti, delle Sei Colonne and del Invidioso: Mar, 1990.

¹⁷ Mar, 1990, *passim*.

¹⁸ I use here the identifications assigned by Nielsen, 1990, in figure 61, Vol. II, 90.

been as up to date as financially possible. The following chapter discusses their decoration and how they compare to each other and the other baths of Ostia.

Chapter 4. Decoration

General points

The decoration in the Terme del Faro is, like that of all the other baths at Ostia, fragmentary. Yet they contain some unusually well preserved elements, including the mosaics, wall paintings, marble remnants and stucco touched upon in the third chapter. By comparing (and compiling) the decorational elements preserved in several Ostian baths, it is possible to see that there are a number of general trends and similarities, which make it possible to reconstruct at least partially how a medium-sized bath was decorated.

The unique nature of bath buildings provides the necessity for certain specialized types of decoration that are better suited to this particular environment. The high humidity levels and frequency of use require more durable, better wearing materials than a domestic setting would, therefore there is some difference in the techniques used. So, for example, wall paintings tend to be limited to the cold rooms and entrance areas, away from the high humidity of the heated rooms that would prevent the plaster from setting properly and cause rapid decay.¹ The builders of a full-sized replica of a Roman *Balneum* in Xanten, Germany, noted how delicate the *calidarium* wall decorations (executed with ancient techniques) were.² For this reason, in their cold rooms and entrance areas, a lot of baths in Ostia used a thick layer of more durable, waterproof *cocciopesto*, rather than more delicate wall-plaster, as a foundation for paintings on the lower sections of the wall.³

White stucco is the material of choice for the vaulted ceilings because it shows up well in the lesser light and does not require pigments that could fade or run. To ensure its proper adherence to ceiling vaults in a humid setting, workers often used extra layers of plaster and even wooden nails or reed mats to ensure better hold. Stucco ceilings can in fact be found in some of Italy's earliest baths and are widespread. Some of the best examples come from Pompeii, for example the Stabian baths.⁴

Marble is another material of choice as it is hard wearing, water resistant and stands up well to being used as a facing for walls that have hot *tubuli* running through them. In addition, the heat distribution properties of marble prevent the walls from getting too hot.⁵

The decoration of the walls and ceiling was completed by decorated floors; at Ostia these usually consist of black and white mosaic depictions of sea creatures, nymphs

¹ Nielsen, 1990, Vol.1, 42-43

² H. Schalles. "Die Herbergsthermen in der *Colonia Ulpia Trajana* bei Xanten: ein Versuchsmodell römischer Bädertechnik" in J.DeLaine and D. Johnston eds. *Roman Baths and Bathing*. (Portsmouth: 1999) 199-206.

³ P. Baccini Leotardi. "Le pitture con decorazioni vegetali delle Terme" *Monumenti della pittura antica scoperti in Italia* Sect. 3 Ostia, pt.5 (Roma: 1978) 40.

⁴ J. -P. Adam. *La Construction Romaine*. (Paris: 1989) 245.

⁵ Nielsen, 1990, Vol.1, 42-43.

and Tritons, though other subjects can be found. In more heavily used areas plainer mosaic or herringbone brick floors were used.

Paintings

Few paintings survive in the baths of Ostia; even fewer of these are well preserved. Yet certain patterns and tastes can be discerned. These include, depending on the area of the baths and the time period, garden scenes, figural scenes (including sea creatures and deities), monochrome panels with floating figures and geometric designs. Most baths in Ostia have indications of several phases of decoration. This can serve both as an indication that regular wear and tear required repairs and replacement of the decoration, and also that current tastes were adhered to. The latter point is further supported by the fact that many baths seem to have decided to re-decorate at roughly the same time period, although it is sometimes very difficult to date the decoration precisely.⁶

Garden Themes

One commonly found subject, chosen mainly for the entrance areas and *apodyteria*, was garden paintings on a red ground. The best-preserved examples can be found in the long entrance corridor (1) of the Terme di Buticoso (Fig. 16) and were long considered unique for a bath building, especially at Ostia. Yet a study carried out by P. Baccini Leotardi revealed that fragments of this motive could be found in numerous baths throughout town, in establishments of all sizes.⁷

These paintings are executed on a ground of reddish-brown *cocciopesto* and feature yellowish, handled vessels flanked by tufts of greenery. So for example in the Terme di Buticoso the walls on both sides of the hallway (1) were decorated with several of these vessels, which although executed in quick brushstrokes and partially asymmetrical, still appear as three dimensional, metal vessels with handles. On one side of the hallway the wall is broken up by three niches with scalloped stucco ceilings painted white and picked out with yellow and red bands.⁸ The backs of the niches were again decorated with depictions of large urns. In other examples, including those in the hallways of the Terme dei Sette Sapienti (e.g. 27), jets of water were painted, turning the vessels, some crater-shaped others more like jugs, into decorative fountains.⁹ The *apodyterium* of the Terme Marittime were decorated with dark green fronds of vegetation, but no urns, a fragment including a small bird was also discovered. These garden scenes may decorate only the lower parts of the walls, but often they are the main

⁶ J. DeLaine. "Bathing and Society" in J. DeLaine and D. Johnston eds. *Roman Baths and Bathing*. (Portsmouth: 1999) 7-16, 7.

⁷ P. Baccini Leotardi. "Le pitture con decorazioni vegetali delle Terme". *Monumenti della pittura antica scoperti in Italia*. Sect. 3 Ostia, pt.5 (Roma: 1978)

⁸ Baccini Leotardi, 1978, 11-17.

⁹ Baccini Leotardi, 1978, 11-17.

decorative composition and the wall is not as rigidly subdivided as in paintings of the earlier second century.¹⁰

In the Terme dei Sette Sapienti several variations of the plant and urn motive exist and the red cocciopesto dado is consistently used throughout most of the unheated rooms along the western side of the building. In some places little swags of greenery, picked out with red, white or blue flowers hang down between the urns. Such little garlands are found in other Ostian baths as well.¹¹ More remnants of such floral motives have also been found in the Terme delle Sei Colonne, di Nettuno, della Basilica Cristiana, della Trinacria, del Filosofo and dell' Invidioso. All have in common the reddish-brown background. Such garden scenes were also found outside Ostia, with some notable examples coming from Herculaneum and a site in France, Vaison-la-Romaine.¹²

Dating these garden scenes is very difficult, due to the fragmentary nature of the paintings and the fact that most baths show various phases of redecoration and rebuilding. Stylistic traits are also of little help in assigning a date. Baccini Leotardi concluded that garden scenes are very rare in private Ostian homes, except where they were used as backdrops for figural scenes, but were popular in Ostian baths and in use for a very long time, namely from the mid 2nd century CE to the early 4th.¹³ S. Mols on the other hand disagrees with these findings and believes that the garden scenes were fashionable for a comparatively short time in the Severan period, and that the two sections of the Terme dei Sette Sapienti decorated with different styles of vegetation are in fact contemporary. He also points out that similar motives can be found in the Caseggiato degli Aurighi and other domestic settings in Ostia and are not the exclusive domain of bath buildings.¹⁴ Russell Meiggs also suggested a Severan date for the paintings in the Terme dei Sette Sapienti.¹⁵

Why then garden scenes in a bath building? Baccini Leotardi suggests that the paintings were meant to remind the bather of the ornamental gardens of the great imperial baths and give the impression of being outside, possibly functioning as an illusionary replacement for the *palaestra*.¹⁶ S. Mols interprets the garden scenes as picking up on the more general theme of luxury and sumptuousness generally associated with elegant gardens and the great imperial Baths.¹⁷

No fragments of wall paintings with garden scenes survive in the Terme del Faro, but it is possible that similar motives once decorated the entrance *fauces*. The north *apodyterium*, room 5, still preserves a large surface of thick, red cocciopesto. It is possible that this wall too originally had garden scenes on it, long since fallen prey to weathering.

¹⁰ Baccini Leotardi, 1978, 21; Mols, 2001, 325 and Meiggs, 1973, 443.

¹¹ Baccini Leotardi, 1978, 23-28.

¹² Baccini Leotardi, 1978, 29-36 and 42-43, especially note 43.

¹³ Baccini Leotardi, 1978, 39-43.

¹⁴ S. Mols. "Decorazione e uso dello spazio a Ostia. Il caso dell'Insula III x (Caseggiato del Serapide, Terme dei Sette Sapienti e Caseggiato degli Aurighi)" *Meded* 59 (1999): 247-386; 281-285.

¹⁵ Meiggs, 1973, 443.

¹⁶ Baccini-Leotardi, 1978, 43.

¹⁷ Mols, 1999, 285.

Geometric designs

The little Terme di Buticoso also contain poorly preserved remnants of an earlier decoration scheme, which featured geometric designs in red on a white background and was possibly meant to imitate marble. These are situated at the end of the main corridor (2) and the entrance hall facing the Horrea Epagathiana. There is also evidence for another phase of decoration featuring large red panels with leafy garlands in green with little red and yellow flowers.¹⁸

In the Terme dei Sette Sapienti a geometric vegetal design consisting of intersecting circles (drawn with a compass) with stylized, symmetrical flowers in the centre decorates the inside of an archway by the rotunda.¹⁹

Figural Paintings

Few paintings survive in Ostia's baths, and figural paintings are extremely rare. The two best examples are located in the small *frigidaria* of the Terme del Faro (Figs. 18 and 19) and the Terme dei Sette Sapienti (Fig. 20). Most assign a Severan date and Meiggs lists them as two of the most important paintings of this period in all of Ostia. As will be discussed below, the paintings probably derive from a theme usually used for baths.²⁰

The two decorated rooms are so similar in style, theme and colour scheme, that it has been suggested that the same group of workers executed them.²¹ Other figural paintings include small floating figures on monochrome panels that survive in some sections of the unheated rooms in the Terme dei Sette Sapienti.²² The famous images of the Sages (in room 5) that gave the Terme dei Sette Sapienti their name more than likely predate the actual baths, and are therefore of little relevance.²³

The figural paintings depicting the so-called Europa from the Terme del Faro are situated above and around the small cold pool in room 10 in the north section of the building (Figs. 18 and 19). The Terme del Faro paintings have been given far less attention than the examples in the Terme dei Sette Sapienti, and are usually only touched upon in comparison to the former.²⁴ The pool itself and part of the wall were clad in a fine grey marble. The surface of the wall is here treated as a unit, it is not subdivided into

¹⁸ Baccini Leotardi, 1978, 15-17, 29.

¹⁹ Mols, 1999, 285.

²⁰ Mols, 1999, 311 states that there is a general consensus on a Severan date. Van Essen is the main exception.

²¹ H. Joyce. *The Decoration of walls, ceilings, and floors in Italy in the second and third centuries A.D.* (Rome: 1981), 58; Meiggs, 443 and Mols, 1999, 311 c.f. especially notes 100 and 101; Pavolini, 1983, 135-136 and 198.

²² Mols, 1999, 281-283, 288-292.

²³ J. Clarke. *Art in the lives of Ordinary Romans*. (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: 2003)170-180.

²⁴ Images of "Europa" have been published in Joyce, 1981, fig. 61. C.f. Mols, 1999, notes 100 and 101 for a detailed bibliography and discussion and Mols (2002) "Ricerche sulla pittura di Ostia. Status quaestionis e prospettive", *BABesch* 77 (2002), 151-174, fig. 23.

three horizontal bands as it was in earlier periods. The paintings are executed on a background of a bright pale blue of a very similar colour to that in the Terme dei Sette Sapienti. The colours are bold, yet in the case of the fish still naturalistic and “Europa” is executed in a healthy pink flesh tone. Her reddish garment has slipped down to reveal her upper body and she is holding her translucent veil, stretching the fabric, perhaps trying to cover her face. Yet her pose is relaxed and she is reclining lightly and elegantly on her left arm, which she has placed on the neck of the bull, which she rides in sidesaddle. The brown bull, with a massive head, neck and rump, but surprisingly small fish tail, swims along energetically. His bulging muscles are outlined in a darker shade of brown. Because the bull has a fish tail, making him a sea monster, the figure riding him is more than likely to be identified as a generic sea nymph, not Europa, but the name is still frequently applied.²⁵ In front of the bull a giant eel swims vertically towards the ceiling, its body curved in several symmetrical arcs. A variety of other sea creatures, including various fish, are distributed around the main figures.

The adjacent wall shows yet more sea creatures as well as two Tritons holding Venus in a shell. Unfortunately there appear to be no published photos of this painting and it is not visible on site due to the gates and roof erected to protect the paintings. One of the Tritons is visible on a photograph published on the Ostia Web page (Fig. 19).²⁶

The style generally employs thick outlines and comparatively little shading, preferring large, solid blocks of colour to gradations. This is very nicely visible in the giant eel, which is basically composed of three thick bands of colour in russet, white and greyish blue. The subject matter and composition in many ways resembles that of the black and white mosaics that covered the floors of so many bath buildings.²⁷ It also employs the same flat perspective: the sea creatures and blue background completely surround “Europa”, there is no indication of recession into space, just a selection of animals scattered across the background and all around the figures, creating a lively, but surreal effect.²⁸

The figures generally speaking give a slightly clumsy impression and are somewhat out of proportion and disorganized, yet the scheme as a unit has a lively effect that was probably enhanced by the reflection of light by the water in the pool, giving the bather the impression of being underwater.²⁹

The scenes in the Terme dei Sette Sapienti occupy a slightly greater area and the pool is also larger (Fig. 20). The room is that designated as number 26 by Thea Heres.³⁰ A large fragment in the middle section of the main wall survives, along with a few additional fragments from the side walls and even the ceiling. The main subject here is a

²⁵ Mols, 1999 note 101, referring back to P. Meyboom. “I mosaici pompeiani con figure die pesci”. *MededRom* 39 (1977): 49-93, esp. note 352. Meiggs, 1973, 443, Joyce, 1981, 58 and Pavolini, 1983, 198 all call her Europa.

²⁶ Pavolini, 1983, 98 and Joyce, 1981, 58. The photograph is a shot of the corner of the room and shows mostly “Europa”, but some of the other image is visible in the margin. Visible at <http://www.ostia-antica.org/regio4/2/2-1.htm>, photo by Eric Taylor.

²⁷ Meiggs, 1973, 443.

²⁸ Joyce, 1981, 58.

²⁹ H. Mielsch. *Römische Wandmalerei*. (Darmstadt: 2001), 161-162.

³⁰ Heres, 1993, 77 fig. 1.

standing Venus, who stands right in the centre of the wall. On either side of her stand two small cupids; one is holding up a large round mirror for her, the other holds a cosmetics chest and both gaze at her admiringly. Venus stands in a contraposto pose and turns her head to look into the mirror held by the cupid. Her head above the chin is lost, but she is holding her reddish hair to either side of her head with an upheld arm. She wears a bangle on her right arm.³¹

Venus has the same slightly fleshy and somewhat undefined effect as “Europa”, as she consists of a coloured surface with emphasised outlines, although she does show a little more shading than her counterpart at the Terme del Faro.

This figural scene is then surrounded on all sides by sea creatures, including to Venus’ left a giant eel almost identical in colour and pose to that in the Terme del Faro. The composition on this main wall of the Terme dei Sette Sapienti is generally even more incongruous than that at the Terme del Faro, because the marine animals here absolutely dwarf Venus and her attendants. They also appear somewhat squashed together, taking up more background space and leaving less of the blue background visible, which on the other hand frames Venus and her cupids and sets them apart from the milling marine life. The enormous eel seems to be acting as a barrier that keeps a number of large, colourful fish contained in the left half of the painting. The right half is dominated by an enormous red lobster, which is almost as large as Venus herself. The sea creatures at the Terme del Faro are much smaller and more evenly distributed across the background, giving a freer, livelier effect than can be found here. The shorter sides of the pools were decorated with various sea creatures, including octopuses, battling each other.

Only a few fragments survive, but it seems that the blue background and sea creatures even covered the vaulted ceiling of this room. The same may have been true for the Terme del Faro, especially considering all the other similarities between the two sites.

There are parallels to the themes of these paintings and their blue background. For example, from Pietra Papa in Rome comes a painting of a sea nymph riding a white Hippocampus in much the same pose and composition as “Europa” and her bull (Fig. 21). The background is a similar pale blue. The painting comes from the anteroom of a small bath complex, possibly part of a large villa. The room also contained scenes of battling sea creatures, including two panels in which an octopus, an eel and a lobster are locked in a deadly battle. These paintings date to the Antonine period, and they show less flatness and are more three-dimensional with more shading than the paintings in the Terme del Faro and dei Sette Sapienti, which are later. In addition, the walls are still divided into registers. Similar arrangements to the floating sea creatures can also be found, but they are here still restricted to the dado, beneath a scene depicting boats.³²

Other figural representations preserved in the Terme dei Sette Sapienti include a small floating figure on a deep maroon background in the hallway near room 26 that contained the Venus paintings. This wall was probably decorated with garden scenes in the lower areas, and the lunettes formed by the vaults contained monochrome panels, with a figure and a garland in the centre, framed with thick bands of contrasting colours. Still

³¹ Mols, 1999, 311f.

³² A. Donati, ed. *Romana Pictura*. (Rome: 1998) Pls. 52-55, 160ff., 283-286.

visible on either side of the surviving central panel are the remnants of yellow colour blocks with architectural elements above them, possibly little *aediculae*. The figure is a small, nude male, standing in a sideways stance. He originally held some object in his hand.³³ Another lunette, situated in room 30, preserves another similar figure, this time flanked by scrolling garlands. The central panel is framed in a similar style with contrasting bands and trompe l'oeil moulded frames and architectural elements. Below, on a horizontal band divided into a darker and lighter stripe, are depicted a number of objects, which appear to be, from left to right, a bucket, a strigil, an object that resembles a spade, two small balls and a larger one. These objects are painted in white and yellow and have certain three-dimensional qualities achieved through shading and highlights. The objects represented are all popular bathing accessories, and it is possible the room was used for exercising, or the depicted equipment could perhaps be rented there.³⁴

There are some other fragments of nude human figures, standing on a red ground line, that possibly depicted athletes. One of the fragments consists of the ground line and some feet, which seem to be running.³⁵

There are other paintings in the Terme dei Sette Sapienti as well, but it is unclear whether they belong to the baths or are remnants of an earlier phase, before the baths were built. These include the famous seven sages, and also, preserved in a niche and partially covered over by later walls, scenes of a boater, and below him a man leading two gigantic oxen.³⁶

Stucco

Stucco, the term meaning here a fine, lime based plaster that has been moulded for decorative purposes, is by nature ideally suited for bath buildings. It consists of calcium oxide (quick lime) that has been mixed with water and left submerged until it forms malleable putty. When this material is exposed to the air again, it gradually bonds with CO₂ and becomes calcium carbonate, which is essentially an artificial limestone. Stucco is therefore very hard wearing and can endure high levels of moisture. In addition, if powdered marble is added as a bonding agent, the resulting surface is bright white and shiny, reflecting light and brightening up a room.³⁷

Reliefs in stucco could be stamped, rolled or moulded by hand. In the latter case outlines of the figures were often sketched into the bottom layer of plaster and then covered over with the three dimensional figures. Often it is the outlines which survive, rather than the actual figures, which have become detached. To ensure optimal durability, Roman craftsmen usually built up stucco-decoration in much the same way as smooth wall plaster: by using several layers with successively finer aggregate. Therefore the first

³³ Baccini Leotardi, 1978, 27 and Mols, 1999, 281-283, 288-292.

³⁴ Mols, 1999, 292-293.

³⁵ Mols, 1999, 293-296.

³⁶ Mols, 1999, 295, 299-301.

³⁷ C. Gapper. "What is Stucco?" *Architectural History* 42 (1999): 333-343, 333-334; Adam, 1989, 245ff. and R. Ling. *Roman Painting*. (Cambridge: 1991) 97.

layers would be coarser, usually containing sand, and the last layer would contain marble dust for a smooth and shiny finish.³⁸

Stucco and painting frequently borrowed motives from each other, and generally followed similar developments, although R. Ling states that there was a lot less experimentation in stucco, and the same general style is maintained during the 2nd century CE. Over the course of the 3rd century the medium becomes increasingly rare.³⁹ The advent of *tubuli* also had an effect on the types of patterns that could be used for the vault decorations of baths. Previously, up to the mid 1st century CE, high humidity in the air meant that strigilated vaults were needed to allow the collection and runoff of moisture. *Tubuli* kept the air drier and allowed for a greater freedom of decorative themes on the vaults.⁴⁰

Stucco rarely survives in Ostia because it usually decorated the upper reaches of walls and the ceiling vaults, but these superstructures do not usually survive. In Ostia the Terme del Faro, Terme dei Sette Sapienti and Terme dei Cisarii are the only bath buildings to have preserved substantial amounts.⁴¹

The stucco remains in the Terme del Faro are in fact quite substantial, and some elements of the general scheme can still be discerned. The stucco has been dated to the early 3rd century CE (Fig. 22).⁴² The remnants cover the northwest corner of room 12, the “heat trap”. It decorated the upper half of the wall and the remaining section continues around the convex corner of the room onto part of the north wall. Judging by the remains preserved in the lower southwest corner of the same room, there was a marble dado below the stucco. The design likely also extended onto the vault of the ceiling, which does not survive. The composition and motives used here are standard, and stem from a repertoire in use since the mid 1st century.⁴³

As visible on the west wall, the original composition consisted of large panels separated by three-dimensional, fluted pilasters with capitals. One whole and two partial panels survive. The complete one occupies the corner of the room, half of it is on the west wall, half on the north wall. The two partial panels occupy either side of it. Each of the panels seems to have contained a long, thin garland, which was suspended from two bands of moulded decoration that crowned the panels. The bands were possibly decorated with floral scrolls, but the preservation is very poor. They are in turn topped by a moulded entablature with three-dimensional *guttae*. Above the frieze of *guttae* there can still be seen the remains of what appear to be folds of cloth and a quarter of a circular object, probably curtains and shields, which are frequent enough in stucco designs.⁴⁴ The pilasters likely had moulded capitals; at the top of a pilaster, where one would expect the capital, several layers of plaster have pulled away and revealed coarser layers underneath,

³⁸ Gapper, 1999, 333-334, 339 and Adam, 1989, 245ff.

³⁹ Ling, 1991, 184.

⁴⁰ Nielsen, Vol. I. 1990, 42, esp. note 33.

⁴¹ Adam, 1989, 245.

⁴² H. Mielsch. *Römische Stuckreliefs*. (Heidelberg: 1975) p. 99 note 411. He also mentions that 3rd century stucco is rare and largely unpublished.

⁴³ See Ling, 1991, 97f. for more detail on popular subjects.

⁴⁴ Ling, 1991, 97.

as if something heavy had become detached from the wall. The outline is roughly comparable to a capital, and as these were probably more three-dimensional than the surrounding ornaments, their greater weight was more likely to pull them off the wall.

The garlands that are the main decorative feature of each panel fall in a long graceful loop, taking up most of the height. They consist of narrow, three-dimensional bands of foliage, with little rosettes on long stems extending from it symmetrically on either side. Long, flat ribbons, twirling and curling in elegant and animated curves, complete the picture.

Due to weathering, it is often only the sketchy outlines scratched into the plaster rather than the actual moulded pieces that remain (Fig. 23). On the northern of the two short surfaces produced by the jutting corner of the room, the scratched outlines of a winged figure, probably a Cupid, are still visible. The head seems to be shown in side view, the eye nose and mouth still discernible, looking slightly over the shoulder, as the figure seems to be twisting towards the viewer with one wing shown in profile and the other just visible beyond the head. Some very impressionistic outlines of the legs survive as well, but it is not possible to say what kind of garment the figure wore, if any. The general composition of these stucco remains is reminiscent of the wall paintings at the Terme dei Sette Sapienti, that also show floating figures surrounded by architectural elements and garlands.⁴⁵

The stucco from the Terme dei Sette Sapienti comes mainly from the doorways connecting the baths to the apartment buildings flanking it. Above the doors is a relief decorated with garlands and *bucrania*, surmounted by a pediment composed of various registers, decorated alternately with simple bands and egg and dart motives.⁴⁶

Some unusual stucco fragments come from the Terme dei Cisarii. They include parts of large, moulded figures. Fragments of the ceiling decoration show that it was decorated with *tondi* depicting gorgons and rosettes. Other fragments, most likely from the walls, show parts of Nereids riding fantastic sea creatures. There are also numerous pieces of cupids in various poses, and parts of standing, clothed female figures and nude youths. Generally speaking the impression given by the fragments is that of a rather complex scheme.⁴⁷

Marble

Marble was popularly used for decorative purposes in baths. Not only was it an ornate and prestigious material, but it was also hard wearing and was not affected by the high levels of moisture and wear it was exposed to in a bath building; in fact, being wet probably made it all the more attractive.⁴⁸ Unfortunately, marble was widely plundered from ancient sites to be used in the production of lime, meaning that comparatively little

⁴⁵ Mols, 1999, 284-285, fig. 46.

⁴⁶ Mols, 1999, 261-262. There is also a stucco shrine in very high relief in the Caseggiato del Serapide, but this is strictly speaking part of this apartment building, not the baths proper, see Mols, 1999, 251, 260-266.

⁴⁷ Mielsch, 1975, 97ff and 180ff. catalogue entry 128.

⁴⁸ Nielsen, 1990, Vol. I., 42.

marble remains *in situ*, usually in the lower sections of the walls. Ostia preserves some rare examples of more intact marble décor.⁴⁹ Marble was, however, very expensive compared to mosaic and paintings, which is why it was most frequently used as veneer in the lower third of the wall (weight is also a factor) and to line water basins. It was also used for moulded doorframes and thresholds as well as decorative drain covers. Usually more economical mosaic floors were chosen over marble floor tiles.⁵⁰ As a rule, the larger the baths the more marble was employed, so the large Terme del Foro also had marble columns and capitals, as well as friezes. Generally these baths have some of the best-preserved marble remains of Ostia, including veneer, basins and doorframes. Some of the Neighbourhood baths, including the Terme del Mitra and Terme delle Sei Colonne, had marble columns as well.

Marble wall coverings usually consisted of large, square slabs that were anchored in a thick layer of mortar. In the Terme dei Sette Sapienti, although the marble is gone, some areas still preserve the mortar and within it the imprint of the original shape of the marble slabs. Therefore, although the basins in the small *frigidaria* of the Terme dei Sette Sapienti and the Terme del Faro in their present day reconstruction appear to be covered with small, irregular pieces of marble, the imprints in the mortar backing reveal these to be the fragments of large, smooth slabs.⁵¹ Several remain intact and *in situ* in the Terme del Faro: one large, grey slab can still be found bound to its original backing on the east wall of the *piscina*, above the basin. The two *alvei* in the *caldarium* also preserve original marble slabs. Most thresholds and drain covers in the Terme del Faro are also made of marble.

Room 12, discussed above in connection with stucco, seems to have had a marble dado, and more marble fragments remain in place in room 13, at floor level on the benches. This means that the benches in this room were probably covered in marble, as were parts of the wall; the marble plates were mortared in place in front of the *tubuli*. The benches in the heated rooms of the Terme dei Sette Sapienti and Terme di Buticoso are also marble clad.

In the Terme del Faro the heated rooms were probably at least partially covered in marble veneer, as small fragments are preserved near the floor in a number of places.

The diagonal hallway to the *caldarium* also contains some of the original marble near the floor, as well as parts of a moulded doorframe in the same material. An almost intact doorframe of this type is preserved in the Terme di Buticoso (room 4).

In the open courtyard behind the Terme del Faro, near the Mitreo degli Animali, is what can only be described as a marble dump. There is a possible connection to the excavations in the bath building, as the removed earth is piled up near by. The colour of the marble is the same as that from the baths, and there are some moulded pieces that are very similar, if not identical, to the doorframe in the diagonal hallway, but it is possible that the fragments come from throughout the insula or even the neighbouring field.

⁴⁹ Adam, 1989, 247f.

⁵⁰ Adam, 1989, 247 and H. Manderscheid. *Die Wasserversorgung Antiker Städte*. (Mainz: 1988a) 118.

⁵¹ Mols, 1999, 278.

The Terme del Faro also show evidence for the re-use of marble. From the western area of the baths, from the hot rooms, come a number of inscribed marble pieces, that seem to have been originally part of funerary monuments. The marble must have been reused for decorative purposes. This has been taken as possible evidence that the Terme del Faro were still in use and being maintained in the 4th or even 5th century CE, since previously the defiling of a tomb or monument, at least theoretically, carried a fine. Unfortunately no suggested date is provided for the original inscriptions. Similar re-use of inscribed slabs can be found in the *forica* of the Terme del Foro.⁵²

Statuary

Like the marble, the sculptures of bath buildings were frequently re-used for making lime and are lost, but there are often still clues that they once existed. These include actual bases, holes or dowels for their attachment, and wall niches. The choice sculptures were often set up in the *frigidarium*, generally the best decorated room in the baths.⁵³

A variety of sculptures were popular in baths; among them Aesculapius and his daughter Hygia, various forms of Venus and cupids, and Bacchus and his entourage were among the most popular. Sea and water related deities occur as well (although less frequently), as do Apollo and the Muses and popular deities such as Hercules and Fortuna.⁵⁴

The sculpture themes are fitting for baths: Aesculapius and his daughter represent health, but also enjoyment and leisure. Venus can be connected to the sea and pleasure in general, but may also have connections to the imperial household. Bacchic figures can also be placed in the general context of enjoyment. The baths were of course intended to fulfill the purpose not just of hygiene, but also to be a place of recreation and relaxation.⁵⁵

Portraits of the imperial family and honorific statues of notable individuals are also frequently found in baths. Often the individuals portrayed may actually have had a direct connection to the establishment and were benefactors, but it is also possible that baths were chosen because they too attracted many people who would see the statues. With the absence of inscriptions it is difficult to say for certain.⁵⁶

Most Neighbourhood baths in Ostia preserve some indications that they contained statues. There are, for example, niches that look like they may have contained sculptures in the *frigidaria* of the Terme dell' Invidioso and delle Sei Colonne, and the Terme del Faro contain a similar niche in the *caldarium*. Some caution is however necessary, for in

⁵² R. Geremia-Nucci. "Le Terme del Faro di Ostia. Nuovi dati Provenienti dallo studio delle fistulae". *Archeologia Classica* 51 (2000): 383-409. 403-404, see especially note 106 and *GdS* 28.6.1940, pp.130-132. The inventory numbers are 6650, 11248 and 11255. For violation of tombs see also Meiggs, 1973, 94.

⁵³ Manderscheid, 1988a, 119.

⁵⁴ Manderscheid, 1988a, 120.

⁵⁵ Ibid.

⁵⁶ Manderscheid, 1988a, 120 and Nielsen, 1990, Vol I., 5.

the Terme di Buticoso there are similar niches in the main corridor, but these were painted with urns, suggesting that they never did contain statuary.⁵⁷

Studying the sculptures of Ostia poses many problems since only the portraits have been systematically catalogued. In addition, the exact provenience of many pieces is uncertain.⁵⁸

At Ostia, most statuary from a bathing context comes from the three *Thermae*. As the biggest establishments, it can be expected that they had the richest decoration. Due to early exploration and treasure hunting, the exact context of many of the statues is unclear.⁵⁹ Generally speaking, the choice of sculpture is what one would expect to find in a Roman bath. It is important to remember that by far the largest part of the original sculpture is lost.

The sculpture recovered from the Terme di Nettuno covers the entire spectrum of subject matter discussed above. The baths were imperially funded (as attested by an inscription and an account in the *Historia Augusta*) and were therefore correspondingly well decorated.⁶⁰ Most of the statues seem to have been set up in the *frigidarium* area and the *palaestra*. They include a variety of portraits, both imperial and private individuals, as well as athletes, nymphs and a Silenus. The scale ranges from small terracotta statuettes to colossal portraits. The impression is given that the statuary in baths was generally fairly eclectic, and probably grew over time.⁶¹

This is confirmed by a similar collection from the Terme del Foro, which yielded no less than two sets of Aesculapius and Hygia; a Satyr and an Athlete, along with more portraits and statuettes in a range of subjects.⁶²

The Neighbourhood Baths yielded far less statuary, yet some good examples come from the Terme del Mitra. Two *imagines clipeatae* were found in the substructures of the baths. They show an older and a younger man, more than likely elite individuals. The connections between portraits of individuals and bath buildings is rarely obvious, but it is possible that the two men had a hand in founding the baths. Nielsen suggests that sometimes honorary portraits were erected in baths simply because these establishments were also public places with many visitors.⁶³ The dates are contested, and both a Trajanic or Flavian date have been suggested. Pensabene proposes that the image of the older individual is about a decade older than the other portrait.⁶⁴ The portraits probably predate the baths, the first phase of which is dated to around 125 CE on the basis of brick stamps.⁶⁵ In addition an under-lifesized statue of Vulcan was recovered from near one of the *praeurnia*.⁶⁶ Another find from the Terme del Mitra is an archaizing female statue.⁶⁷

⁵⁷ Baccini Leotardi, 1978, 11-17. See also above under garden paintings.

⁵⁸ P. Pensabene. "Ostie: La decoration sculpturale" in Descoedres 291-302.

⁵⁹ Meiggs, 1973, 104, 404, 431.

⁶⁰ CIL XIV 98 and *HA, Ant.* 8.3

⁶¹ H. Manderscheid. *Die Skulpturenausstattung der Kaiserzeitlichen Thermenanlagen*. (Berlin:1981)77-79, catalogue entries 83-98.

⁶² Manderscheid, 1981, 76-77, cat. 71-82.

⁶³ Nielsen, 1990, Vol.I., 145.

⁶⁴ Manderscheid, 1981 79-80, cat. 104-105 and Pensabene,2001, 294.

⁶⁵ Bloch, *Scavi di Ostia I.* 219.

⁶⁶ Manderscheid, 1981 79-80, cat. 103.

The Terme della Basilica Cristiana also contained two male portraits and a half-lifesized statue of Fortuna.⁶⁸ She is headless, but otherwise intact, and was originally situated in the *frigidarium*.

No statuary has been found within the Terme Del Faro, although there is a statue niche in the *caldarium*. A number of sculpture fragments were discovered in the general vicinity of the baths, notably in the rear courtyard, during excavations in 1940. While it is possible that these remains came from all over the insula, the vicinity to the baths is suggestive. The sculptural remains include a headless statuette of Venus of a standing, semi-draped type. Not far away a small female bust was uncovered. The unidentified portrait is of a girl with an elaborate early 1st century hairstyle, with a braid, fringe and ringlets at the forehead. Excavators also found a headless statuette of Hercules and another female statuette, it too missing its head and semi-nude. The last sculpture fragment found in the rear courtyard was the lower half of a cupid or child strangling a goose.⁶⁹ Any of these, especially the Venus, would have been perfectly fitting decoration for a bath building, and there is significant correspondence between these finds and those from other baths.

Mosaics

Mosaics were used in almost all parts of Roman baths, including floors, basins and sometimes even ceilings. Mosaic is hard wearing and waterproof, making it a good choice for bath buildings. Frequently all public rooms will have mosaic floors, including entrance areas and change rooms. As a rule the bathing areas proper, the *frigidarium* and heated rooms, will be more elaborately decorated. It is probably not only economic considerations, but also a deliberate wish to draw the visitor's attention onto certain rooms, that lies behind this pattern. It is also more sensible to pave high traffic areas that suffer a lot of wear and tear with simpler floors that are more easily replaced. Pools also usually have plain white mosaic floors.⁷⁰ Geometric patterns can also be found, but unadorned white with a black border is the most common type.⁷¹ Mosaic floors with figural decoration are frequently oriented and composed in such a way that they are at their best when viewed from a basin or doorway.

Like sculpture, the themes found on the figural mosaics of bath buildings are varied, but sea-related motives were especially popular. These include various arrangements involving sea deities, nymphs, tritons or cupids riding various imaginary sea monsters, or wild collections of various fish. Athletic scenes, portraits of actual athletes, or hunting scenes are also common and all occur in Ostia.⁷²

⁶⁷ Pensabene, 2001, 295, Manderscheid does not list the female statue.

⁶⁸ Manderscheid, 1981, 80, cat. 106-107. The Fortuna is oddly not included in his catalogue. A replica has been set up *in situ*.

⁶⁹ R. Geremia-Nucci, 403-404, note 103 quoting *GdS* III, 26.6.1940, p.130, 5.7.1940, pp. 132-134.

⁷⁰ Manderscheid, 1988a, 120-124.

⁷¹ Meiggs, 1973, 446.

⁷² Manderscheid, 1988a, 120-124.

As in other decorative aspects, the mosaics of Roman baths reflected contemporary taste. It is important to remember that Roman mosaics are often specifically chosen to complement the function of the room they are situated in, therefore bath mosaics do not necessarily reflect domestic tastes and vice-versa, although there is certainly a degree of overlap. The sheer size and shape of the floor of a bath is already in marked contrast with a domestic room, which is why baths have some of their own motives and conventions.⁷³ Sea beasts and marine themes do, however, also appear in private houses, outside a bathing context. So for example at Ostia Nymphs riding sea creatures appear in the Casa di Apuleio and the Casa dei Disocuri.⁷⁴ Meiggs suggests that it was in fact the many Baths that enabled mosaicists at Ostia to earn their main income.⁷⁵

The mosaics of the Terme del Faro consist of three figural mosaics, each of them a variant on the marine theme. Becatti concluded that they were executed contemporaneously by the same workshop. They are dated to the Severan era by style and, as noted in chapter two, brickstamps from the *sudatorium* (room 15) provide a *terminus post quem* of the reign of Caracalla. Clarke suggests a date closer to the mid 3rd century on the basis of stylistic grounds.⁷⁶ The *caldarium* mosaic is lost due to floor collapse, but substantial remains were uncovered in room 15 and the *frigidarium*, with some fragmentary pieces coming from room 13.⁷⁷

The mosaic from room 15 (Fig. 24), like that from room 13 judging by the few surviving fragments, is one of many examples from Ostia depicting nereids and other anthropomorphic ocean dwellers mounted on a variety of fantastical, fish-tailed sea beasts, riding around the room in a circular procession. The mosaic is surrounded by a black border, and figures are arranged in such a way that the heads of the figures face inwards towards the centre of the room. In this particular case the procession is split in two, with some of the protagonists moving clockwise, others counter clockwise. One of the long sides of the room is taking up by a nereid perched high on a huge sea dragon which is turning its head back towards her. His tail is largely lost. The figure on one of the shorter sides of the room is almost completely lost, but the figure opposite consists of a nereid swimming alongside a sea bull, now almost headless. Following these, positioned across the room from the nymph on the dragon, are a cupid riding a dolphin and another nereid, though only her arm and legs survive, swimming with a sea stag. The fifth figure on the last short side is completely lost.

Fine black lines along the outer margins at the feet of the figures represent the water, and a few fish are distributed alongside the larger figures. The centre of the room is occupied by a rather stout octopus or cuttlefish. The outlines of the nereids are given in white *tesserae*, as are anatomical details such as musculature. These are rendered in a stylized, patterned manner, rather than naturalistically.⁷⁸

⁷³ M. David, "La Mosaïque à Ostie et Portus" in Descoeurdes, J. -P. *Ostia: Port et Porte de la Rome Antique*. (Geneva: 2001) 317-324, 318, 319.

⁷⁴ Becatti, 1953b, 86-90, esp. cat.146 and p.119-122, cat.217; Meiggs, 1973, 447-448, 452.

⁷⁵ Meiggs, 1973, 449.

⁷⁶ Clarke, 1979, 51, esp. note 21.

⁷⁷ Nielsen, 1990, Vol. II, Cat. 26, 5-6 and Zevi, 1970, 42

⁷⁸ Becatti, 1953b, 172-175, Cat.322-323, tav. CXXXXVIII and Clarke (1979), 51 and 87-91 and 97-99.

There is a complete absence of drapery in this example, which is unusual compared to other examples. In similar mosaics, like those, for example, from the heated rooms of the Terme dei Sette Sapienti, the Terme dei Cisarii, della Basilica Cristiana, Marittime, della Trinacria or the hallway of the Terme del Invidioso, the nymphs are not entirely nude, but lightly draped, and often have a shawl billowing out behind them in an arc.⁷⁹

The sea *thiasos* is an ideal choice for baths not only because it is a fitting subject, but also because it is both elegant and flexible. It can be adapted to almost any room size. In a long, narrow corridor it can be reduced to just one row of figures, in a vast room such as the *frigidarium* of the Terme di Nettuno, discussed below, the figures can be arranged in several concentric rings. In addition, the individual figures themselves can be altered depending on the available space. The sea beasts can be lengthened or shortened easily simply by straightening or curling their tails, or contracting their coils.

This is nicely visible in Room 15 of the Terme del Faro, which is comparatively long and narrow, even more so when one considers that the walls were also flanked by benches. Therefore the sea dragon, since he occupies most of one of the long sides of the room, has a tail that sweeps out behind him in fluid loops. The sea bull on the other hand occupies a short side; his tail is closely coiled to save space. In a square room like the middle hot room of the little Terme Marittime the creatures can be of more regular size and pose. The corner and centre areas here were filled with dolphins and a mask of Oceanus respectively.⁸⁰ In the Terme della Trinacria a single nereid on a sea bull occupies one half of a room along the shorter side, the other half of the space is simply occupied by registers of fish.⁸¹

The main mosaic in the Terme del Faro *frigidarium* also uses fish as an important decorative element and is unusual. It is located at the eastern end of the room and extends into the area often referred to as the *apodyterium* (Fig. 25).⁸² Along the north side of the room the plain, white floor of the hallway continues to the end, but the area between the south wall and the central piers was covered with a lively collection of fish and mythical sea beasts (Fig. 26). There are no nereids or tritons, and there is no clear up or down, the creatures are freely distributed across the floor, turning here and there in all directions. The only rigid point in the composition is the light house that gives the baths their modern name.⁸³ While lighthouses are a popular motive throughout Ostia, they are usually employed in commercial areas such as shops or offices. The use of a lighthouse motive in the context of a bath is unique.⁸⁴ The effect of the floor is lively and animated. The creatures include a large sea dragon, fish-tailed griffins, bulls and rams, a sea bird

⁷⁹ Becatti, 1953b, Sette Sapienti: cat. 271, tav. CXXXVIII Cisarii: cat. 63, tav. CXLI Basilica Cristiana: cat. 157, tav. CXLI Trinacria: cat. 276, tav. CXLIII Marittime: cat. 211, tav. CLXII, CXLV Invidioso: cat. 414, tav. CLXII.

⁸⁰ Becatti, 1953b, cat. 211, tav. CXLV.

⁸¹ Becatti, 1953b, cat. 276, tav. CCXLIV.

⁸² Becatti, 1953b, cat. 320, 172-174 and Clarke, 1979, 51f. and 87-91 and 97-99.

⁸³ The lighthouse is a popular motive in Ostia, compare, for example, Becatti (1953b), cat. 120, tav. CLXXIX.

⁸⁴ I thank Dr. K. M. D. Dunbabin for bringing this to my attention.

perched on a rock as well as a milling assortment of fish and other marine life. These individual species are still identifiable, although they are somewhat stylized. The figures are solid black with details picked out in strong white bands, which are largely stylizations of muscles and other anatomical details. The treatment of the “water surface” is also interesting in this mosaic. While in the other examples at Ostia, including that in room 15 of the same baths, a few lines are given in the form of more or less parallel black lines, in the *frigidarium* mosaic of the Terme del Faro the entire background is filled with such stripes. Most run north-south, but every once in a while they change direction and run perpendicular. This enhances the effect of rippling water and the overall lively atmosphere of the baths.⁸⁵ Small groups of sea creatures are involved in fights, similar to the Pietra Papa paintings discussed above.

The baths did not need to replace their mosaic floors as often as they needed to repaint their walls, but changing tastes in mosaics in baths can be traced from the early first century. The earliest surviving mosaic from an Ostian bath comes from the Terme delle Provincie. It is a black and white mosaic, dating probably to the reign of Claudius, and combines geometric and figural scenes.⁸⁶

The Mosaics from the Terme di Nettuno are frequently cited as the pinnacle of Ostian Mosaic. The baths were dedicated in 139 CE under Antoninus Pius.⁸⁷ The *frigidarium* is dominated by a depiction of Neptune in a chariot drawn by four hippocamps. A procession of nereids, cupids and tritons riding various sea creatures surround him in two concentric circles. The general effect is vivid and harmonious at the same time.⁸⁸ Other rooms in the *Thermae* are decorated with a similar procession for Amphitrite and a depiction of Scylla.⁸⁹

As for Ostia’s Medium-sized baths, the Terme di Buticoso were probably decorated at a slightly earlier date by the same outfit that later executed the Neptune scenes, because the joints between the human/animal and fish parts of the sea creatures are executed in the same unique manner.⁹⁰

According to both Becatti and Meiggs, during and after the reign of Commodus the now well established sea *thiasos* becomes less graceful and more rigid. Yet as Clarke points out, and the above description of the Terme del Faro stresses, this does not necessarily mean a decrease in quality, but simply a sign of changing tastes. As noted above, wall paintings of the same period also make a move towards treating a surface as a uniform surface rather than a series of divided areas. There is generally more interest in stylization, and on floors flatter, more carpet-like designs become popular.⁹¹ There is also the fact to consider that these smaller baths had smaller budgets than did the large,

⁸⁵ Becatti, 1953b, 172ff. cat.320-323. and Clarke (1979), 51f. and 87-91 and 97-99.

⁸⁶ Becatti, 1953b, 45-47, cat. 68, tav. CXXII-CXXIII; David, 2001, 318 and Meiggs, 1973, 448.

⁸⁷ Pavolini, 1983, 55-56 and *HA, Pius*, 8.3.

⁸⁸ Becatti (1953b), 48-51, cat. 70, tav. CXXIV-CXXXVI; C. Pavolini, 55-6; Meiggs, 1973, 449f. and David, 319.

⁸⁹ Becatti, 1953b, 50-51, cat.71; Pavolini, 1983, 55-6, Meiggs, 449f.

⁹⁰ Pavolini, 1983, 55-6 and Meiggs, 1973, 450 and Becatti, 1953b, cat.52. See tav. CXXIX, CXXX and CXXXIII for comparisons between the two.

⁹¹ Becatti, 1953b, 339; J. Clarke, 51f. and 87-91 and 97-99; and Meiggs, 1973, 450.

imperialy sponsored Terme di Nettuno. Most Ostian Neighbourhood baths underwent re-decoration around the beginning of the 3rd century CE and chose a similar type of figural decoration.

Little or no mosaic survives in the Terme delle Sei Colonne. Some scarce fragments were recovered from the Terme del Mitra, which were part of a mythological scene involving Odysseus and the sirens.⁹²

The Terme dei Cisarii are often considered a semi-private establishment for the exclusive use of a guild. This interpretation is partially based on the mosaics of the frigidarium, which combine standard sea creatures, and figures of swimmers with some unique land scenes. The centre of the room is occupied by a walled city with four Telamons extending towards each corner of the room, and between them are four mule drawn wagons. Each of these is of a different type, and there is a lot of detail in the rendering of harnesses and details of the wagons. In addition, each mule has a little label with its name. This has led to the interpretation that the *Cisarii*, the *collegium* responsible for overland transportation to Rome, in fact owned these baths.⁹³

The little Terme Marittime cover a variety of different subjects. Besides containing a lovely example of the sea *thiasos*, they also contained some athletics scenes. Those located in the apsidal room, probably a *tepidarium*, are mostly lost, but are preserved in a drawing. They depicted two pairs of boxing cupids flanking a central figure apparently holding a long tuba. The bottom section, which still survives, shows two athletes flanking a table with prizes. Judging by their proportions, the athletes are in fact midgets.⁹⁴

As variable as the Neighbourhood Baths may be in layout, they do share a number of important decorative elements. This is not only due to economic considerations and the special environment created by the humidity of a bath building. Many baths seem to have chosen to replace old styles when they went out of fashion, often chronologically at roughly the same time. This is true especially for paintings. The mosaics of the Neighbourhood baths are as variable as the buildings themselves. The sea *thiasos* is very popular, probably not only for aesthetic reasons, but also because it is a very flexible motive. No two bath buildings, though often at first glance very similar, have exactly the same floor, or two identical figures. Many Neighbourhood baths, notably the Terme del Faro, dei Cisarii and Marittime, have very individual floors, which in the case of the Terme dei Cisarii quite possibly tell us more about ownership and operation of the baths, as discussed in chapters 5 and 6.

⁹²Becatti, 1953b, 32, cat. 56; David, 319.

⁹³Becatti, 1953b, 39-44, cat. 62-65; Pavolini, 1983, 50-51, David, 2001, 318-319 and Clarke, J. R.

“Kinaesthetic Address and the Influence of architecture on Mosaic Composition in three Hadrianic Bath Complexes at Ostia” *Architectura* 5 (1975): 1-7 and (1979) 24-25, 53 and 73.

⁹⁴Becatti, 1953b, 110-113, fig. 45.

Chapter 5. Baths in their social and urban context

Baths and society

Roman Baths were more than just facilities for personal hygiene, although as such they played a very important role. The visitor also had access to a wide range of additional services. These could range from the sales of food and drink, to massages, beauty experts, sports, and prostitutes. The baths were also a place for the ancient visitor to socialize or make new contacts.

One of Seneca's letters offers a description of the noise coming from a bathhouse, and although he is exaggerating, it offers a glimpse of some of the activities, besides bathing, which took place on the busy premises. People are exercising or playing games, petty thieves are caught, there is splashing, loud speaking and shouting, depilators advertise their skills (their customers quite possibly cry out in pain), and a variety of food vendors advertise their products. The snacks here include pastries, sausages and sweets.¹

Lucian, in a description of a hypothetical bath building, praises the fact that it includes large rooms where visitors can simply pass the time and socialize, and also some more sheltered niches.² Clients would sometimes visit the baths with their patrons, or meet up with them there.³ In Ammianus Marcellinus' time, if not before, small talk would often involve an individual's favourite baths.⁴

G. Fagan determined from close reading of Martial that many individuals had their own personal favourite baths, and some establishments were deemed more fashionable than others.⁵ Martial informs us that the Baths of Agrippa were preferred by the wealthy, while his favourite were those of Titus.⁶ He also visited the Baths of Stephanus, which were close to home.⁷ The Thermulae Etrusci were unusually opulent and used mainly by the wealthy, as were those of Tigellinus.⁸ Martial disliked the Baths of Nero for their water temperature.⁹ On the other end of the spectrum, he lists the baths of Fortunatus and Faustus as examples where a parasite is unlikely to meet a wealthy patron (because this establishment was so unpleasant one assumes), and the *balnea* of Gryllus and Lupus are described as dark and come across as being at the lowest end of the scale.¹⁰

¹ Seneca, *Ep.* 56. 1-2. Meiggs, 1973, 404-405, G. Fagan. *Bathing in Public in the Roman World*. (Ann Arbor:1999) 12ff.

² Lucian, *Hip.* Cited in F. Yegül. "The Small City Bath in Classical Antiquity and a Reconstruction Study of Lucian's 'Baths of Hippias' ". *ArchCl* 31 (1979): 108-131. 120 and 123.

³ Mart. 3.36.5-6 and Fagan, 1999, 20.

⁴ Amm. Marc. 28.4.10 and Fagan, 1999, 20.

⁵ Fagan, 1999, 19-21.

⁶ Ibid. and Mart.3.36.5-6.

⁷ Mart. 11.52.4, 14.60.

⁸ Mart.6.42.

⁹ Mart.10.48.3-4.

¹⁰ Mart. 2.14.11-13, 1.59.

Baths within their neighbourhood

Baths played an important part in society, and correspondingly within their neighbourhood. One look at a map of Ostia (Fig. 1) reveals the large number of baths in the city, 17 within or in the immediate area of the city walls. Most were in use during the same period (although the Terme Byzantine, Terme del Filosofo and Terme Piccole are of a later date and the Terme del Nuotatore ceased to work comparatively early) and are of the type called Neighbourhood Baths in this Thesis. Who bathed there, and how did so many establishments manage to co-exist, especially if they were run for profit? The Terme del Faro, for example, are situated right down the road from the large Terme del Foro and the Terme dell'Invidioso are even closer. The Terme delle Sei Colonne and the Terme della Basilica Cristiana are virtually across the road from each other. The largest number of baths is situated in the area with the greatest population density.¹¹ The lines of Martial discussed above, although uttered by a satirist in the imperial capital, do give an idea of how different these baths could be from each other and how the Terme del Faro managed to operate successfully just a block from the largest baths in town, and also how a cluster of other Neighbourhood baths in regions I and III managed to compete with one another.

Although available plots of land are one factor that might account for a bath's location, the fact that many are superimposed over older structures suggests that this was a secondary consideration. The Terme del Faro are situated on one of Ostia's main roads, the *Cardo Maximus*, and the main entrance opens onto it, as do the attached *caupona* and shops flanking it (fig.27). The bath building is very close to the Porta Laurentina and bordered on one side (south) by the Sanctuary of the *Magna Mater* and on the other by a private house and a large apartment block, the *Caseggiato dell' Ercole*. As mentioned in chapter two, a hallway connects the baths directly to the apartment building. At the rear is an open courtyard that contains the *Mitreo degli Animali* at the far end. The yard is only reachable by a roundabout route through the *Caseggiato* or by traversing the baths' service areas. A blank wall without any obvious doors delineates the rear of the yard and apartment block, and the area beyond has not been excavated. There is also a door that opens onto the sanctuary next door.

The little *domus* at IV ii 5 that shares the north wall of the Terme del Faro is nicely decorated and fairly spacious, suggesting a rather well off owner. It has been suggested because the original main entrance of the house was put out of use when the baths' reservoir was built, that it was owned by the same owner and was possibly the leaseholder's residence.¹² It is possible that the bath owners purchased the house when the

¹¹ A detailed analysis of Ostia's population was beyond the scope of this thesis. The most recent estimate of the total population has been made by G. Storey in "The population of Ancient Rome" *Antiquity* 71 (1997): 966-978, esp. 975. He estimates a population of 22 000 with a density of 31, 700 inhabitants per km². See also G. Storey, "Regionaries-type Insulae 1: Architecture/ Residential Units at Ostia" *AJA* 105 (2001): 389-401, esp. 397.

¹² S. Falzoni in "Caseggiato IV, II, 5", *Scavi di Ostia XIV: Le Pitture delle Insulae*. 2004, 119-126

reservoir had to be built and rented it to individuals not connected to the baths. A mixture of workshops and apartment buildings occupies the rest of insula IV ii.¹³

The city block right across from the Terme del Faro, I xii, is a triangle defined by the Cardo and the Sèmita dei Cippi. It consists of another apartment complex fronted by shops; the luxurious Domus delle Gorgoni was later inserted into this area. North of this building at I xii 4 is a large mill occupying the entire width of the *insula*. Beyond this is another section of *tabernae* and housing.¹⁴ The Terme del Foro occupy the next city block. Located on the Sèmita dei Cippi, where it meets the Cardo, is a large *horreum* (only partially excavated).¹⁵

The Terme del Faro are, therefore, inserted into a densely inhabited area of town that included some industrial areas such as a mill and *horrea*. The main entrance faces the Cardo, as well as the mill and the warehouses, suggesting that it drew bathers from this direction. In addition, the location is well chosen because the Terme del Faro *caupona* is the first as the traveller enters by the Porta Laurentina. The counter faces the baths rather than the street, suggesting that most customers were bathers, but it could also have the advantage of drawing the customer off the street towards the baths. The direct hallway connecting the baths to the Caseggiato dell' Ercole further suggests that the inhabitants of this building bathed in the Terme del Faro and that the two buildings had a close relationship ensuring a steady stream of visitors to the baths.

This is how the immediate environment of the Terme del Faro appears today, but it is important to note that not all of these structures were constructed at the same time. As pointed out in chapter two, the actual age of the Terme del Faro is uncertain. They may be Trajanic, but they are usually dated to the later 2nd century CE. Some of the surrounding buildings existed before the Terme del Faro, others were added later. For example the Caseggiato dell' Ercole, which occupies about two thirds of insula IV ii and is fronted on the Cardo by the Portico dell' Ercole (fig. 27), was, on the basis of the masonry, probably built around 160-170 CE. There was a building there before it, but it is not clear what it was.¹⁶ It is possible that the Terme del Faro were converted into baths around the same time as the Caseggiato dell' Ercole; the masonry in the two buildings is very similar. The Cardo side of the ground floor of the Caseggiato consists of a double row of 7 *tabernae*, and the baths' *caupona* is virtually identical to these in size, layout and building style. On the inside of the complex was a long, narrow courtyard with a fountain and there are several staircases leading to upper floors. The west side of the building is occupied by a large hall as well as a more elaborate apartment with five rooms. The Caseggiato dell' Ercole was a substantial building and was probably four to five stories high.¹⁷ It alone could have supplied most of the Terme del Faro's customers.

¹³ Pavolini, 1983, 195-203.

¹⁴ Pavolini, 1983, 203-205.

¹⁵ Pavolini, 1983, 204.

¹⁶ Blake and Bishop, 1973, 225; Becatti, 1953a, Fig.33; Pavolini, 1983, 197.

¹⁷ J. Packer "The insulae of Imperial Ostia". *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* (Rome: 1971) Vol. XXXI, Fig. 31 and pages 187-190.

The rest of *insula* IV ii is occupied by the *caupona* del Pavone as well as another apartment building of a similar design. Both, according to Becatti, are Hadrianic.¹⁸ To the south of this lies another series of rooms that have received very little attention to date. The *tabernae* and mill across the street also already existed by this time.¹⁹ The Terme del Foro were built around the time of Antoninus Pius, but the Terme del Faro, if already built, were surrounded by plenty of potential customers.

In the later 2nd and 3rd centuries more luxurious houses like the Domus delle Gorgoni could be found in the area. As discussed in previous chapters, the Terme del Faro continued in use, probably drawing their clientele from the inhabitants of these houses.²⁰

The tiny Terme del Filosofo were inserted at V ii 7 in the later 3rd to 4th centuries. The site seems originally to have been a small sanctuary, but the little temple was then replaced with a meeting hall and the baths. It has been suggested on the basis of some portraits recovered there, among them one of Plotinus, that this was the seat of a philosophical club or school. The entranceway from the street is narrow and not particularly noticeable: the bather has to virtually enter the meeting hall to reach the small suite of rooms. This all suggests that these baths were probably limited to the members of the association.²¹

The location of the Terme del Faro was therefore well chosen to attract a diverse selection of customers. The vicinity to the Caseggiato dell' Ercole probably ensured a regular clientele, and the presence of the other apartment blocks, the mill and warehouse increased the number of possible customers. This number could possibly be increased by travelers entering the city at the Porta Laurentina, and by the baths' strategically placed *caupona*.²² Although baths and sanctuaries will be discussed in more detail below, it can be said at this point that worshipers often purified themselves before visiting a sanctuary, therefore visitors to the sanctuary of the Magna Mater and the Mithreum probably also took advantage of the baths' convenient location.²³

Yet the Terme del Faro are located only one city block away from the large and luxurious Terme del Foro, which as a large municipal bath possibly had free entrance. How they competed cannot be determined with certainty, but there are many possibilities. As discussed above, many baths seem to have catered to a specific clientele. As a smaller establishment they may have been cleaner and less crowded; it is possible that they catered to an upper class clientele while the labourers visited the Terme del Foro. It might be as small a detail as that they served better food or had a more able masseur, or more or fewer prostitutes. There is always the possibility, although there is no evidence, that the baths were for women or men only. Smaller baths may have had better control over the water and room temperature.

¹⁸ Becatti, 1953a, Fig.32.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Geremia-Nucci, 2000, 387 and 400-404.

²¹ Poccardi, 2001, 165, Nielsen, 1990, Vol. II. 6 and Pavolini, 1983, 206-208.

²² Hermansen, G. *Ostia: Aspects of Roman City Life*. (Edmonton: 1981), 162.

²³ Poccardi, 2001, 165.

The situation of the Terme delle Sei Colonne is fairly similar to that of the Terme del Faro. They also open directly onto one of Ostia's main streets, in this case the Decumanus Maximus. They are surrounded by several apartment blocks but not directly connected to any. There may have been some rooms for rent above the shops along the frontage. Rather than being located near a gate, these baths are near a number of guildhalls and markets. Customers came from the Schola del Trajano right next door and the Tempio dei *fabri navales*. In addition, the *macellum* is right up the road. The next larger baths are the Terme di Porta Marina, which is fairly far removed. At first glance it appears that the Terme delle Sei Colonne have competition right on their doorstep with the Terme della Basilica Cristiana right across the road. Although still very close, these baths actually have their main entrance around the corner, over on the Via Della Foce.²⁴

The Terme dell' Invidioso and the Terme Byzantine are also situated close to the Terme del Foro, but differ from the Terme del Faro in several ways. The Terme Byzantine, built in the late 3rd century, are only accessible by a long, narrow passage from the Via del Tempio Rotondo, and are sometimes also known by this name.²⁵ The baths are comparatively isolated from the street, and it appears that they occupy what was once the peristyle of the Domus di Iuppiter Fulminatore. The remote location and the relative inaccessibility of the building have led to the proposal they were in fact private, or at least semi-private, rather than normal public baths. They are indeed still attached to the Domus di Iuppiter Fulminatore.²⁶ More research on these virtually unpublished baths is necessary to determine more. The Terme dei Cisarii also do not have direct access to any of the major thoroughfares, but take up part of a former warehouse near the city wall and are reached by a detour following the road that leads between the *tabernae*.²⁷ Their location is also unusual in that they are not situated in a densely inhabited area, but in *regio* II which has comparatively few inhabitants. This, in combination with the mosaics, has led to the suggestion that these baths were private or semi-private and belonged to the guild of the Cisarii.²⁸ Conversely these baths would be well located for travelers arriving from Rome, being the first baths near that gate, or to serve the large number of workers employed in that area as a place to get cleaned up before returning home.

The Terme dell' Invidioso and dei Sette Sapienti are at first glance similar to the above examples. They are also somewhat removed from direct street access, but both are an integral part of an apartment complex and accessible directly from the apartment buildings that surround them. The Terme dei Sette Sapienti have less obvious street entrances; they can be reached from two thoroughfares, the Via degli Aurighi and the Via della Foce, by traversing the two apartment buildings, and more directly from a small side street, the Via delle Casette Tipo. The entrances to the baths are apparently the same as those used for the apartment buildings, and lead across a small courtyard. The less

²⁴ Pavolini, 1983, 179-185.

²⁵ e.g. Nielsen calls them Terme di via del Tempio Rotondo, R. Mar calls them simply by their street address IV iv 8, yet others use the term Terme Byzantine. Mar, 1990, 53.

²⁶ Mar, 1990, 54.

²⁷ Poccardi, 2001, 165. On the other hand, the area on the north of the Terme dei Cisarii is covered by the embankment bearing the modern road. Possibly there was a more direct access route from this side.

²⁸ Poccardi, 2001, 165 and Pavolini, 1983, 50-51.

prominent street entrances suggest that it was mostly residents of the two apartment blocks that bathed here. In contrast, the Terme dell' Invidioso, perhaps because they are surrounded by a much smaller apartment complex, have three, possibly originally four, corridors that connect them to the surrounding streets, as well as having direct access routes to the apartments above them. These baths have the advantage of being able to attract customers from at least three sides. Like the Terme del Faro, they must have competed with the Terme del Foro, virtually across the street, by some form of specialization.

The plots of the Terme del Mitra and della Trinacria run parallel, rather than perpendicular to the street. They are located less than half a block away from each other and the Terme dei Sette Sapienti. The entrances are much shorter and less defined than in baths that face the street with their short side, and the transition into the baths is somewhat more awkward. They are also located on secondary streets rather than main thoroughfares. The Terme della Trinacria are near the Serapeum and otherwise surrounded by apartment blocks. Nearby were two more large *horrea*. The Terme del Mitra are located in a narrow plot between a row of apartment buildings and the *horrea* dei *Mensores*. Their vicinity to the headquarters of the *Mensores* and the presence of the two *imagines clipeatae* discussed in chapter four has led to the suggestion that the men depicted had constructed the baths as a gift to the *Mensores*. The main entrance of the baths, however, faces not the *horrea* and *aula*, but the apartment buildings. It is situated on a direct route to the Tiber and many of the dockworkers probably passed this way.²⁹ There is no reason why the workers in the *horrea* of the *Mensores* did not use the baths as well, but the location of the main entrance argues against the benefaction theory and suggests that these baths too are a privately owned business.

While the number of Neighbourhood Baths in Ostia may seem large at first glance, if one takes into account the population density and surroundings of each one, it becomes clear that most, if not all, had more than enough customers to keep them profitable. Many were inextricably tied into the fabric of their neighbourhood, sometimes to the extent that they grew together with an apartment complex. Many also included apartments above the baths themselves, and shops and *cauponiae* in the frontage. The very buildings reflect their multiple uses.

Baths and Sanctuaries

Like the baths, sanctuaries and temples were dotted throughout Ostia and fulfilled important roles in society. Remarkably, there often appears to be a correlation between the location of a bath building and a sanctuary and temple. The Terme del Faro are flanked by the Sanctuary of the *Magna Mater* and back onto a mithraeum. The Terme del Mitra and Terme del Nuotatore are also located very close to a mithraeum (the Terme del Mitra in fact incorporate one in their substructures). The Terme del Nuotatore are also very close to one of the sanctuaries of the *Bona Dea*. The Terme di Buticoso are adjacent to the temple of Hercules (as well as a large granary), the Terme della Trinacria are across

²⁹ Pensabene, 2001, 294-295.

the road from the Serapeum, and the Terme delle Sei Colonne face the Tempio dei *fabri navales*. Also situated almost next to this temple are the Terme della Basilica Cristiana which also share a wall with the basilica they are named after.³⁰

One obvious reason for this correlation is that often both baths and sanctuaries are located at central and accessible spots where as many inhabitants as possible can reach them. Building one near the other does have the added advantage of a handy bath for the worshipper to perform purification rituals while providing customers for the baths. R. Mar suggests that several of Ostia's baths, among them the Terme del Faro, della Trinacria and di Buticoso, may have belonged to the nearby sanctuaries and were actually constructed by the sanctuaries on their land as a form of investment. His case is strongest for the Terme di Buticoso, where the service corridors and waterwheels are only accessible from the sanctuary side, and the original entrance was located there as well. In a slightly later phase the main entrance was relocated to the Via Epagathiana.³¹

The connection between baths and sanctuaries is not always as close as it initially seems. The Terme del Faro rather intriguingly have a connecting door to the sanctuary, but it is possibly a remnant from an earlier building phase. The mithraeum is in the baths' back yard, but is only accessible from the baths via the service corridor. Similarly, the main entrance to the Terme della Trinacria is located on the opposite side of the Serapeum, although there is a secondary entrance on that side.³² The Terme della Basilica Cristiana actually pre-date the basilica. Evidence shows the bath building lost most of its heated rooms when the basilica was constructed, meaning the baths are the older structure. The exact date of the basilica's construction is debatable, it is also unclear if the baths continued to be used afterwards, or if they were closed down before.³³ The mithraeum in the Terme del Mitra is likely situated there because the baths offer a suitable vault rather than because there was a religious connection. Rent or lease of the space probably provided the baths with added income, the same is perhaps true for the Mithraeum in the yard of the Terme del Faro.³⁴ Alternatively, it is possible that sanctuaries simply sold off surplus land to be developed by the new owner, and did not actually own the buildings themselves. Even if the sanctuary owned the baths, there was not necessarily any religious significance attached to the baths.

Neighbourhood Baths, as smaller, independently operated businesses, were an integral part of the Ostian cityscape and an important part of the inhabitants' daily lives and routine. While at first glance there seems to be an unusually high number of these smaller bath buildings, it quickly becomes clear that most are located in parts of the city where the population was most densely packed and they were most needed. Without inscriptions it is not possible to say with any certainty if any of these baths were reserved for a specific clientele, but a thorough survey of the area they are located in can give an idea from where they may have drawn their customers.

³⁰ Poccardi, 2001, 165.

³¹ R. Mar, "Santuarios e inversion inmobiliaria en la urbanistica ostiense del siglo II" in A. Gallina-Zevi and A. Claridge (1996): 115-164 esp. 127-136.

³² Poccardi, 2001, 165.

³³ Meiggs, 1973, 397f. and Pavolini, 1983, 142-4.

³⁴ Poccardi, 2001, 165.

Chapter 6: Baths as a business

This chapter looks at Neighbourhood Baths as private businesses, and compares and contrasts them with state and municipally owned baths. The sources on this subject are fragmentary and drawn from many different areas, and many of the numbers given must remain estimates.

The chapter begins with a discussion of who the owners of Neighbourhood Baths may have been. For this reason some written sources are examined, but the main emphasis is on *fistulae*, or lead water pipes, some of which are stamped with a name. The first section will discuss the meaning of these stamps and how *fistulae* can give insight in to the possible owners of a particular bath. The *fistulae* from the Terme del Faro serve as an example of how the owners of the bath may be traced through archaeological evidence.

The next section discusses the differences between privately and publicly owned baths. This is followed by a discussion of a unique inscription from Vipasca that includes a detailed lease agreement for a bath building, listing expenses, employees and most notably the duties of both lease holder and owner. Following this discussion comes a look at who may have leased a bath and what employees are typically associated with bath buildings. Running a bath and the expenditures and income associated with baths as a business are then discussed in some detail.

Owners and Ownership

There is a fair amount of evidence confirming that bath buildings were owned as businesses and invested in for profit. A variety of written works contain references to the individuals owning or investing in a bath building for profit rather than euergetism. Unfortunately these tend to be rather vague and fleeting, and it is sometimes not possible to tell if the reference being made is to a private bath for personal use or for a bath as a form of investment that will be open to the public.

Enterprises, Owners and investors: Written sources

That many baths were open to the public and intended as enterprises is suggested by the number of laws and regulations concerning baths.¹ A section in the *Digest* deals with the scenario of someone tearing down a house, without the owner's consent, and replacing it with a bath building. The existence of legislation dealing with such a case suggests that baths were, in fact, lucrative enterprises. In Rome and Ostia, where good building land was rare, a tenant might very well stoop to this level. In any case the law decrees that the baths go to the owner of the land, not the person who built them.² Other laws deal with building regulations, including the presence of *tubuli* in shared walls and

¹ O. Robinson. "Baths, an Aspect of Roman Local Government Law" in *Sodalitas: Scritti in onore di Antonio Guarino*. (Naples: 1984) Vol.3: 1065-1082.

² *Dig.* 9.2.50 (*Ulp.* 6 *op.*) and Robinson, 1984, 1067.

the maintenance and presence of vents and chimneys for baths, which are often part of *insulae*.³ These sound very much like the Neighbourhood Baths at Ostia that are frequently attached, or at least semi-attached, to apartment complexes.

There is also a decree of Constantinian date stating that the income of a ward may be invested in land, grain and baths. This suggests both that baths were invested in, and that they must have been fairly lucrative.⁴

Written sources further inform us that in Republican times at least, the Aediles were responsible for ensuring cleanliness and appropriate temperature of the bath water, which again suggests that these were privately owned businesses since they required quality control and attempts at standardization.⁵

Juvenal concludes that leasing a bath is a safer source of income than attempting to make a living as a poet, and that in his meagre times it may be the better option.⁶

Who then might the owners and investors be? Around 40 small baths from Rome are known by name only, some from brief passages in the Satirists, others from other authors, the Regionary Catalogues and a variety of inscriptions, but most of these cannot be linked to any specific individual. In addition, it is not clear how these names came to be attached to the various baths. The establishments could have been named after an owner, a landmark or even in honour of an outside individual. Although a person with a similar or identical name is often known, frequently the name is a common one; as C. Bruun further points out, there is not necessarily any connection between the baths and the most famous individual who happens to bear that name.⁷

Martial, in passing, mentions a number of privately owned Neighbourhood Baths by name.⁸ Most of them are apparently named after a person, although it is usually impossible to link these to an actual individual by name alone. Only baths named after members of the imperial family can be securely linked to a specific person.⁹ Senators and elite individuals do frequently appear to have connections with ownership, yet many of the bath names transmitted to us are ambiguous. For example the *balnea Stephani*, *Fortunati* or *Fausti*, to name but a few examples from Martial, all are more likely to be the names of freedmen or even slaves.¹⁰

Written sources sometimes associate a prominent individual of the upper classes more closely with baths. In a passage from the *Noctes Atticae* Aulus Gellius relates how Fronto, an elite individual, is shown various plans and is given estimates for building a *Balneum*. At 300 000 sesterces minimum, the costs are substantial, and as will be shown

³ Dig. 8.2.1.3. pr., 8.5.8.7(*Ulp. 17 ad ed.*), 43.21.3.6. (*Ulp. 70 ad ed.* and Robinson, 1984, 1067-1068, 1074-1076, 1078-1080.

⁴ CI. 5.37.22 pr. and 1 (326), Robinson, 1984, 1067.

⁵ Sen. Ep. 86 and Robinson, 1984, 1078-1079.

⁶ Juv. Sat. 7.4-5.

⁷ Bruun, 1999, 75-76 and Nielsen, 1990, Vol I. 120-121, esp. note 11, which provides a more extensive list.

⁸ E.g. Mart. 1.59.3, 2.14.11-13, 2.48, 3.20.15-16, 7.34.10, 9.75, 12.82.1-2, 14.60.

⁹ Nielsen, 1990, Vol. I, 120-121, see esp., notes 9-12; C. Bruun "Ownership of Baths in Rome and the evidence from lead pipe installations" in J. Delaine and D. Johnston, eds. *Roman Baths and Bathing*. (Portsmouth: 1999) 75-85. esp. 75-76, 79.

¹⁰ Mart. 11.52.4, 14.60 and 2.14.11-13; Bruun, 1999, 77 and Nielsen, 1990, Vol I. 120-121, esp. note 11.

below, most probably pertain to a neighbourhood type bath, run as a business, open to the public, and not a private bath.¹¹

Claudius Etruscus, a man of Equestrian rank, is linked to baths in two different sources. He was an acquaintance of Statius, who describes a dinner party given by this individual to celebrate the construction of a new bath building.¹² Etruscus was also acquainted with Martial and it therefore seems plausible that the *Thermulae Etrusci* he mentions were the same baths.¹³

Another example where a bath's connection with a famous individual is possible comes from an inscription from Pompeii advertising the *balnea Crassi Frugi* which have both a freshwater and a salt-water option and seem to have belonged to a member of this Consular family.¹⁴

There are, however, other indicators that the upper classes invested in and built smaller bath buildings for profit. Among these are the *fistulae* stamps, on the basis of which a series of owners have tentatively been identified for the Terme del Faro.

Fistulae

Fistulae are lead water pipes that were manufactured in a series of sizes and often stamped with a variety of information. C. Bruun concludes that the information was stamped into the pipes during the manufacturing process, and placed in such a way that the stamps were near the joints and at the top, so they could be easily spotted and read. The individual letters also tend to be fairly large to facilitate this.¹⁵

There are various different types of inscription to be found on *fistulae*, but those that are considered to indicate ownership of a particular pipeline are the ones that are simply a name in the genitive. Additional information, e.g. *ex of(f)i(cina)*, indicates that the name is that of the manufacturer rather than that of the owner, whose name stands alone. Groups or institutions also sometimes appear as a genitive alongside individual names.¹⁶

These names in the genitive probably indicate the owner of a particular private waterline that was either purchased or granted to the individual by the emperor. This

¹¹ Aul. Gel. *N.A.* 19.10.1-4. I. Memini me quondam et Celsinum Iulium Numidam ad Frontonem Cornelium pedes tunc graviter aegrum ire et visere. Atque ubi introducti sumus, offendimus eum cubantem in scimpodio Graeciensi circumundique sedentibus multis doctrina aut genere aut fortuna nobilibus viris. II. Adstebant fabri aedium complures balneis novis moliendis adhibiti ostendebantque depictas in membranulis varias species balnearum.

III. Ex quibus cum elegisset unam formam speciemque veris, interrogavit, quantus esset pecuniae sumptus ad id totum opus absolvendum IV. cumque architectus dixisset necessaria videri esse sestertia ferme trecenta, unus ex amicis Frontonis "et praeterpropter" inquit "alia quinquaginta".

¹² Bruun, 1999, 75 and Stat. *Silv.* 1.5.

¹³ Bruun, 1999, 75 and Mart. *Epig.* 6.42 with P. White, "The Friends of Martial, Statius and Pliny, and the dispersal of Patronage" *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 79 (1975): 265-300esp. 275-280.

¹⁴ Bruun, 1999, 77 and CIL X 1063.

¹⁵ C. Bruun. *The water supply of Ancient Rome: A study of Roman imperial administration.* (Helsinki: 1991) 20-21.

¹⁶ Bruun, 1991, 22-24.

access can be for domestic use or for a business such as a bath. Sextus Julius Frontinus, our best source on these matters, states that baths and fulleries had special rights and regulations when it came to their water.¹⁷ He states that although previously a water grant once given was for all eternity (he here cites an old senatorial decree), in his own time the new owner or heir has 30 days to get a renewal of the licence or face losing access to the private water supply. Baths seem to have been considered an exception in that public baths kept their water licence in perpetuity. His wording “*balneis quae publice lavarent*” leaves open whether this also includes privately owned baths that are open to the public.¹⁸

Most *fistulae* come from Rome itself and the names they bear often can be attributed to the senatorial and equestrian classes, yet none of these *fistulae* can be securely linked to a bath building, and most may have come from private houses.¹⁹ C. Bruun states that getting a water permit probably required some influence and would have been easier to obtain for someone of the two upper orders, which again suggests that they provided the capital behind Neighbourhood Baths.²⁰ As will be seen below, the start-up costs for such a venture were fairly high.

The Terme del Faro are unique because a series of *fistulae*, stamped with the names of identifiable elite individuals, were recovered from them. Their exact location within the baths is unfortunately not very clear, but the excavation notes do indicate that they were retrieved from within the baths. On the basis of these, at least three, possibly four possible owners can be identified.²¹

It is unlikely that each new owner of a bath building would have gone to the effort and expense of excavating otherwise fully functional water pipes for the sole reason of replacing the former owner's name with their own. Yet R. Geremia-Nucci has managed to tentatively identify and trace a series of possible owners of the Terme del Faro over at least two centuries.²² Some of the individuals she has identified from the pipe stamps fit chronologically with the known remodelling phases of the Terme del Faro, which explains why new water pipes would have been laid. A startling connection between all the names is that they appear to be those of high-ranking individuals from Rome, including a female member of the imperial family.²³

¹⁷ Frontin, *Aq.* 94.3-4, 107.2, 108.1. Bruun, 1991, 59,73ff and 1999,78.

¹⁸ Bruun, 1991, 59,73ff and 1999,78. Frontin, *Aq.* 107. *Ius impetratae aquae neque heredem neque emptorem neque ullum novum dominum praediorum sequitur. Balneis quae publice lavarent privilegium antiquitus concedebatur, ut semel data aqua perpetuo maneret. Sic ex veteribus senatus consultis cognoscimus, ex quibus unum subieci; nunc omnis aquae cum possessore instauratur beneficium.*

108. “*Quod Q. Aelius Tubero Paulus Fabius Maximus cos. V. F. constitui oportere, quo iure extra intraque urbem ducerent aquas, quibus adtributae essent, Q. D. E. R. F. P. D. E. R. U. I. C. uti usque eo maneret adtributio aquarum, exceptis quae in usum balinearum essent datae aut Augusti nomine, quoad eidem domini possiderent id solum, in quod accepissent aquam.*”

¹⁹ Bruun, 1999, 77, 79ff.

²⁰ Bruun, 1999, 78.

²¹ G. Barbieri. “Ostia- Fistole acquarie inedite o completate” in *NSc* (1953): 151-189, 154-155 and 168-169.

²² Bruun, 1991, 59-62 and R. Geremia-Nucci, “Le Terme del Faro di Ostia. Nuovi dati Provenienti dallo studio delle fistulae”. *Archeologia Classica* 51 (2000): 383-409, esp.386-387 and 389-405.

²³ Geremia-Nucci, 2000, 386ff.

Although it has been suggested that rather than being the owners of the baths these individuals paid for the water-supply as a form of largesse, it seems unlikely that the sister of an emperor or a high ranking senator would choose to bestow their favours on such an obscure bath complex, in Ostia, and in a manner that would have had little visibility. It seems more likely, therefore, that these are in fact owners who had a new water conduit installed in an enterprise, in which they had invested.²⁴

The first of the *fistulae* in question is simply marked CORNIFICIAE IIX.²⁵ This individual has been identified as Annia Cornificia Faustina, either the sister or daughter of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius.²⁶ Chronologically either woman would be possible. But the emperor's sister died in 152 CE and the initial conversion of the site into a bath probably did not take place until slightly later in the second century, possibly during Marcus Aurelius' reign, when the entire *insula* was modified and the Caseggiato dell'Ercole was built.²⁷ The daughter is also a better fit with the individuals that appear on later *fistulae*. She was born between 150 and 160 CE and died in 213, when she was forced to commit suicide by Caracalla. The next phase of the Terme del Faro, involving various modifications, including new mosaics, paintings and stucco, is Severan and can be dated to around this emperor's reign.²⁸

The next two possible owners, either of whom may have carried out these changes, also fit this time bracket.²⁹ The chronologically earlier individual is L. Didius Marinus, but his connection to the Terme del Faro is indirect. He was a prominent equestrian of the late 2nd and early 3rd centuries who held a series of prominent positions and was eventually adlected to the Senate.³⁰ A pipe with his name is soldered to another bearing Cornificia's. The dimensions and appearance of the pipe are very similar to that from the Terme del Faro, but it has no provenance. If the pipe is from the Terme del Faro, this equestrian from Rome could have inherited or purchased the baths from her.³¹

The next individual, who again has a direct connection to the Terme del Faro, is Ser. Scipio Orfitus. A senatorial of this name was active during the Severan Period and is a descendant of the Consul of 178 of that name. Since the connection between the Terme del Faro and Didius Marinus cannot be proven, Scipio Orfitus may have been the next owner of the baths.³²

²⁴ C. Bruun, "Private Munificence in Italy and the Evidence from lead Pipe Stamps", p. 49-50, in H. Solin, ed. *Acta Colloquii Epigraphici Latini*. (Helsinki: 1995) (Commentationes Humanarum Litterarum 104); Bruun, 1999, 79 and Geremia-Nucci, 2000, 388.

²⁵ Barbieri, 1953, 154f. n.5

²⁶ Ibid. and Geremia-Nucci, 2000, 386 argue for the daughter, Meiggs, 1973, 416 note 2 and Pavolini, 1983, 198 the sister.

²⁷ Geremia-Nucci, 2000, 386, 389ff. and for Cornificia: M. Raepsaet-Charlier. *Prosopographie des femmes de l'ordre senatorial (I-II s)*, (Louvain: 1987), 73-74. Building Phases: Nielsen, 1990, Cat. 26, 5-6. Meiggs, 1973, 419, 443; Blake, 157, 209, 225ff.

²⁸ Nielsen, 1990, Cat. 26, 5-6. Meiggs, 1973, 419, 443 and Zevi, 1970, 42.

²⁹ Geremia-Nucci, 2000, 396-397.

³⁰ *PIR*² D 71 "L. Didius Marinus".

³¹ Barbieri, 1953, 154ff, Geremia-Nucci, 2000, 386-387, 396.

³² Barbieri, 1953, 28a and 29, 167-169, Geremia-Nucci, 2000, 387-388 and 396-400.

Finally two pipes soldered together bearing the names VALERI FALTONI ADELFI VC ET IN and ET ANICIAE ITALICAE indicate the last known possible owners of the Terme del Faro.³³ Barbieri identifies the male as being a descendant of the *praefectus urbi* of 351 CE, Clodius Celsinus Adelphius. If this is indeed the case, it is also proof that the Terme Del Faro were still functioning as a bath in the late 4th, possibly the 5th century.³⁴

In summary, the *fistulae* suggest not only a long life for the Terme del Faro, but also that they were owned as an investment by very high ranking individuals that were not native to Ostia and probably did not reside there either. In fact, a comparison between the names found on Ostian *fistulae* and those of individuals known to have been prominent members of Ostian society, showed very little overlap, suggesting absentee landlords investing in the city.³⁵

The Terme del Faro are unique in the number of *fistulae* retrieved, but the Terme del Nuotatore also yielded a stamped *fistula* indicating that they were owned at some point by two women, Larcia Priscilla and Arria (Plaria Vera) Priscilla, again more than likely high ranking individuals.³⁶

The start-up costs for a bath building would have been fairly high; it is therefore not surprising that wealthy individuals of the upper classes would be the investors. As discussed above, the enterprises seem to have been profitable. How and by whom then were such baths run? Before progressing to these important questions, the differences between these privately owned businesses and state or municipally owned baths will be addressed.

Privately owned and State/Municipally owned baths

The differences between these two types of baths can be considerable, and are not just a factor of size. On the one hand we have a bath that is run for profit, constructed with invested funds, on the other a building that is often either financed by the emperor or by generous local dignitaries, or special taxes.³⁷

As discussed above, wealthy individuals often built Neighbourhood Baths as a form of investment. They were created to make a profit and had to be run accordingly. Size in their case is dictated by such factors as land prices and availability, building costs and overall efficiency.

Municipal baths on the other hand, were built by the emperor or local notables and were not necessarily expected to bring revenues. Rather, they were intended as a public

³³ Barbieri, 1953, 32a and b, 170-171, Geremia-Nucci, 2000, 387 and 400-402.

³⁴ Barbieri, 1953, 32a and b, 170-171. Geremia-Nucci, 2000, 387 and 400-404.

³⁵ Bruun, 1991, 285-292.

³⁶ Geremia-Nucci, 2000, 387-388 and G. Pucci "Fistula Plumbea" in A. Carandini. *Ostia III: Le Terme del Nuotatore: Scavo dell' Ambiente III, VI, VII, scavo dell'ambiente V e di un saggio nell'area SO*. (Roma: 1973) 645-646 and Bruun, 1999, 79.

³⁷ Nielsen, 1990, Vol. I, 119-120, 124ff.

gift and as a legacy of those who sponsored them. Individuals would often donate a sum of money to be invested, or donate a piece of land to ensure that the public baths could be maintained and kept running. The privately owned neighbourhood baths could not usually fall back on such safety nets.³⁸ In later antiquity the upper classes that had traditionally covered the expenses associated with the public baths were increasingly unable or unwilling to cover them, in which case various taxes had to be levied to make ends meet.³⁹

Leases

The most important source on bath leases is a paragraph on one of a series of bronze tablets unearthed in 1876 in the ancient Roman mining settlement of Vipasca.⁴⁰ The town was located in the province of Lusitania (Portugal) and was probably founded in the Augustan era. It housed the workers employed in the extensive mining operations nearby that produced copper, silver, gold and probably iron to the mid 3rd century. The section on baths is located on Vipasca tablet I., which dates to the reign of Hadrian.⁴¹ The document is known as the *Lex Metalli Vipascensis* and covers a number of important issues, including the administration and lease of the settlement baths, which although owned by the state are leased out to one or more individuals to be run for the term of one year. There are a few minor *lacunae* in this passage, but the meaning is generally clear.⁴² The interests of both leaseholder and landlord are addressed in the document. The leaseholder, or *conductor*, has to fulfill certain obligations, as does the owner, represented by the procurator of the mines. Any profit earned during that time goes to the leaseholder, he is not simply an employee of the state responsible for running the baths. The *Lex Metalli Vipascensis* is remarkable in that it not only details the obligations and duties of the two parties, but also determines such points as opening hours, entrance fees and who is to be admitted at what time. The bath lease, although a contract between a private individual and the state, probably differs little from a private lease agreement.

The lease opens on line 19 of the tablet and states that the lessee or his partner are responsible for heating the baths at their own expense for the duration of one year. The contract states in line 28 that the leaseholder is not allowed to sell the firewood, suggesting that the owner supplies it. If he does so anyway, he is faced with a fine of 100 sesterces.⁴³

The leaseholder is instructed to supply fresh, heated water twice a day, once in the morning for the women, once in the afternoon for the men. The contract specifies that the

³⁸ Nielsen, 1990, Vol. I, 124ff.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ D. Flach, "Die Bergerksordnungen von Vipasca" *Chiron* 9 (1979): 399-448 esp. 399-400. CIL II 5181; and Nielsen, 1990, Vol. I, 127

⁴¹ C. Domergue. *La Mine Antique D'Ajustrel (Portugal) et les Tablets de Bronze de Vipasca*. (Paris: 1983) 31-32.

⁴² CIL II 5181 19-32 and Flach, 1979, 407-410.

⁴³ M. Weber. *Antike Badekultur*. (Munich: 1996), 132-134.

baths are to be open from the early morning until noon for the women (there is a small lacuna here, but this sense is generally accepted) and from noon until evening for the men.⁴⁴ Entrance fees are also specified in the lease: 1 *as* for women, and ½ *as* for men. There follows a list of people who bathe free, including children, soldiers, imperial slaves and freedmen. It is possible that because this is a state-owned facility in a state-owned town, the entrance fees are fixed at a specific rate. Elsewhere, privately-owned facilities may have left the fee to the discretion of the leaseholder. The Vipasca baths are apparently a little more expensive than a comparable facility in Rome.⁴⁵

There follow very specific instructions on the maintenance of various items required for heating the baths. The leaseholder must return the baths in good order, except for any damage caused by age or use. The owner is responsible for the building, and the leaseholder will receive compensation for income lost due to circumstances beyond his control or due to the landlord not meeting his end of the contract. The leaseholder can be fined if he is careless and the baths have to be closed due to lack of proper maintenance or failure to have enough wood prepared.⁴⁶ Again, a private owner probably could not fine an ineffective tenant, but likely had similar punitive measures to ensure the tenant maintained the building.

Such a lease more than likely left the leaseholder at liberty to further contract out parts of the business, and as will be seen below, secondary services offered at the baths were probably a vital part of making a bath lease profitable. The length of lease could vary greatly as well. At Vipasca the duration of the contract was one year; an advertisement for the baths in the insula of Julia Felix in Pompeii specify a six-year term.⁴⁷

Personnel Associated with the Baths

The Vipasca tablet discusses the duties of the owner in some detail, but says little about employees. The general workers are possibly included in the *instrumenta* the leaseholder is to return undamaged when his lease runs out.⁴⁸

While obligations and rights of the *conductor* become somewhat clear from the Vipasca tablet, less is known about the social status or income of these individuals. As is clear from lines 19 and 24, more than one individual could share the lease.⁴⁹

The owner of a bath building did not necessarily have to lease it and could instead employ a freedman or trusted slave, but leasing seems to have been a preferred practise.

Nielsen concludes that the leaseholders of baths were freeborn individuals, but it is not clear why she excludes freedmen. Juvenal's remark on unemployed poets suggests that even a person with moderate income could make a decent living from the lease of a bath

⁴⁴ CIL II 5181 lines 20-22. Flach, 1979, 434-435.

⁴⁵ CIL II 5181 lines 22-24. Nielsen, 1990, Vol.I, 133.

⁴⁶ CIL II 5181, lines 24ff.

⁴⁷ CIL IV 1136, Nielsen, 1990, Vol.I, 127.

⁴⁸ CIL II 5181 line 24.

⁴⁹ CIL II 5181 lines 19 and 24.

building.⁵⁰ This is especially true if, as seen in Vipasca, two or more individuals pooled their resources.

From the Vipasca agreement it seems that the landlord more or less expected the leaseholder to employ an *actor* for the detailed supervision of the baths and staff.⁵¹ The types of employees in a bath could range from the more administrative positions, such as the *conductor* or *actor*, to technical jobs concerning the heating of the establishment to more general attendants who could fulfil duties ranging from cashier to change room attendant.⁵²

The most famous and discussed bath employee is the versatile *balneator*. His functions varied greatly depending on the size of the baths he worked in, but he is generally understood to have functioned as a sort of superintendent. In small baths his tasks probably also included collecting the entrance fees, guarding the change rooms and carrying out a number of other tasks as the need arose.⁵³ An epigraphical study suggests that *balneatores* were generally slaves, although some freedmen are also known to have done the job.⁵⁴

Another very important employee of the baths, although socially low ranking and performing an undesirable job, was the *fornacator*, the slave responsible for stoking the furnaces and maintaining the temperature of the water and air. He was included in the inventory of a bath, and his job was not only hot and physically demanding, it also required a certain amount of skill to obtain the correct temperature. While experiments show that once the correct temperature is reached the furnaces need to be fed only a few times a day, the *fornacator* had to check on them at night, too.⁵⁵

Other workers we occasionally hear of are the *captuarius*, or cashier, and the *capsarii* who guarded the customer's clothes in the change room. In a small bath the same person or even the *balneator* could fulfill these functions. Sometimes the positions were even leased out to third parties.⁵⁶

There are also a number of other more obscure occupations to be found in baths, including the *mediastrinus* who possibly poured water over people, but his exact function is unclear.⁵⁷

There are also a number of specialized health professionals, including *aliptae*, masseurs, and the *iaturalitpa*, possibly a form of doctor specializing in massage and muscle care.⁵⁸

Beauty professionals such as *unctores*, specializing in the mixing of perfumes, and *depilatores*, experts in depilation, are also described as being active in the baths.

⁵⁰ Nielsen, 1990, Vol.I. 126 and Juv. *Sat.* 7.4-5.

⁵¹ CIL II 5181 and Nielsen, 1990, Vol.I. 126.

⁵² M. Wissemann "Das Personal des antiken Römischen Bades" *Glotta* 67 (1984): 80-89, esp. 81 and Nielsen, 1990, Vol. I., 126.

⁵³ Nielsen, 1990, Vol.I. 128-129, Wisseman, 1984, 82-84.

⁵⁴ Wisseman, 1984, 83-84.

⁵⁵ Wisseman, 1984, 84; F. Kretzschmer "Der Betriebsversuch an einem Hypokaustum der Saalburg" *Germania* 31 (1953): 64-67.

⁵⁶ Wisseman, 1984, 84-85 and Nielsen, 1990, Vol I. 128-129.

⁵⁷ Merten, 1983, 123-129 and Wisseman, 86-88.

⁵⁸ Wisseman, 1984, 87-88 and Nielsen, 1990, Vol I. 128-130.

Depending on the size of the baths not all of these individuals would be present, or one general worker would fulfill as many of these roles as possible. Since most of the individuals listed above were either slaves or even paid the owner a fee to operate on the premises, the payroll was a small expenditure.⁵⁹

Running a Bath: Expenses and income

Labour costs were not a particular burden on the bath owner, but what other expenses did he have to meet, and what sources of income did he have to meet them and make a profit?

Building and maintenance costs, especially for the decoration, were a significant expenditure. Exact numbers are not available, although a number of known inscriptions provide sums spent on baths. Unfortunately, the size and elaborateness of these are scarcely ever known, and they also vary greatly in date. Ostia's Terme di Nettuno are one of the few baths for which we have both a rough budget and the actual structure still extant. An inscription states that building these large baths, inaugurated in 139 CE, cost 2 million sesterces. The decoration cost even more because Antoninus Pius had to contribute an additional, unknown amount for it. Costs for the site were more than likely higher in Rome and Ostia than elsewhere, another point that must be considered.⁶⁰ At a cost of 300 000 HS Fronto's bath project may therefore indicate the price bracket of a Neighbourhood Bath. Depending on opulence and location, the price could be as high as double that amount.⁶¹ Other sources listing construction costs are inscriptions that commemorate wealthy individuals who had baths built for the people of their hometowns. For example, we know that Pliny donated a baths to his hometown on which he spent 300 000 HS on decoration alone. The actual costs were probably double. The baths built by Pliny and other wealthy donors are however municipally, rather than privately owned, and the donors wished to make a statement with their lavishness. As mentioned above, these baths are not required to make a profit.⁶²

Two inscriptions from around 230 AD from Cirta in Northern Africa list the construction costs for a *Balneum* at 100 000HS.⁶³ Prices could therefore vary greatly; it is clear, however, that the decoration was a major expense, often equalling the construction costs. Yet it must also have been an important factor for attracting clients. As seen in chapter four, the Neighbourhood Baths in Ostia combined aesthetics with durability and practicality, finding an economic approach to such an important but expensive part of the baths.

⁵⁹ Wisseman, 1984, 87-89 and Nielsen, 1990, Vol I. 130-132.

⁶⁰ Nielsen, 1990, Vol I. 121-122, CIL XIV 98.

⁶¹ Aul. Gel. *N.A.* 19.10.1-5. I and Nielsen, 1990, Vol I. 121-122

⁶² CIL V 5262, Nielsen, 1990, Vol I. 121-122.

⁶³ AE 1908 no.244-245, Nielsen, 1990, Vol I. 121-122. Nielsen mistakenly gives the sum as 10 000 sesterces.

Water and Fuel

Water was not necessarily a great expense for a Neighbourhood Bath. At Ostia about a third of the Baths had wells, water wheels or cisterns to draw their own water supply.⁶⁴ The Aqueduct water in Ostia cannot have been too expensive, since numerous other baths, including the Terme del Faro, were linked to the municipal water system and the Terme delle Sei Colonne even seem to have switched from a water wheel to a cistern filled by the aqueduct.⁶⁵

Fuel was a different matter and an important part of the baths' monthly budget. At Vipasca the leaseholder has to ensure he has about a month's supply of fuel ready for heating the baths. Municipal baths had the advantage that they were often given funds to invest, the interest of which could be used to pay for the fuel. Costs accumulated would be not only for the wood proper, but also for transport, which became increasingly high. Nielsen has calculated that the municipal baths in smaller Italian towns could cost up to 12 000 HS a year; this includes fuel and water, but also takes into account repairs and other sundries. A bath of the size of the Terme del Faro must have had smaller annual expenditures.⁶⁶

Income

The owner of baths earned income through the money or rent paid to him by the leaseholder, but how did he in turn earn a profit?

Admission fees would certainly play a part in the profitability of a bath. Generally speaking entrance fees in Rome were low, but a cleaner or more pleasant establishment could probably charge a higher entrance fee and still attract customers. As seen in Vipasca, the entrance fees were one *as* for women and half an *as* for men; at Rome fees were about half that much. Many of the imperial and municipal baths had free admission, something privately owned baths had to compete with. Sometimes an aspiring young official would rent a private bath for a certain term, and paid the leaseholder a fixed sum to allow free admission to the establishment. Lead *tesserae* may also have been purchased for that reason, to give individuals free admission to private baths.⁶⁷

Private baths had other ways, to make an income, and that was by providing extra services to their customers. Many baths had on-site *cauponae* that sold refreshments to both bathers and passers-by. The rental of towels, bath sandals or exercise equipment and the sale of bath oils would also bring additional income. As mentioned above, some baths had specialists in massage or beauty care on the premises, which probably brought the baths extra income. Many of Ostia's Neighbourhood Baths have shops along their front, which could be rented for extra profit, and some, including the Terme del Mitra probably had apartments above them. Prostitution is also sometimes linked to baths.

⁶⁴ Nielsen, 1990, Vol I. 124-125 and Bruun, 1991, 73.

⁶⁵ V. Scrinari and M.A. Ricciardi. *La Civiltà dell'Acqua in Ostia Antica*. (Roma: 1996) 174.

⁶⁶ Nielsen, 1990, Vol I. 123-124.

⁶⁷ Nielsen, 1990, Vol I. 123-126, 132ff.; Robinson, 1984, 1074-1075.

Since acoustics were usually good in baths, an enterprising leaseholder could rent the facility out at night for private poetry readings. Less reputable establishments may even have offered specialists in magic and curses.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ Nielsen, 1990, Vol I. 123-124, 145-148.

Conclusion

Most Romans visited a bath to get clean, to socialize, eat or indulge in some beauty care. The baths can be viewed not only as individual structures, but also within the context of their entire neighbourhood. The largest baths, imperially sponsored and usually referred to as *thermae*, were certainly important, but the sheer number of smaller baths suggests that they too were an integral part of daily life. These smaller baths, often simply referred to as minor baths, have only recently begun to receive much attention. Many of them are closely connected to, or even form part of apartment complexes. They also include shops in their frontage and some had apartments above them. For this reason the term Neighbourhood Baths is a fitting label for this type of structure. They were clearly intended to be used by the public, although some may have belonged to guilds or associations and have had more restricted access. The shops, *caupona* and other additional features suggest that the baths were intended to earn a profit. A number of sources, both literary and epigraphical, confirm that they were privately owned and seen as an investment with a steady return.

At Ostia these baths show a great variety in layout and planning, making attempts at classification unhelpful. It is the available plots of land and surrounding structures, along with economic considerations that tend to dictate the ground plans.

The Terme del Faro, a hereto rarely studied building, makes an excellent case study as it demonstrates at the same time the differences and similarities between the Neighbourhood baths that tie them together as a group. The layout with the large main *frigidarium*, smaller secondary *frigidarium*, mixed circuit hot rooms and long service corridor along one side is unique and unusual, yet in floor space and the types of room that occur, it is very similar to the other Neighbourhood Baths. As unusual as the miniature *frigidarium* is, a similar room can be found in the Terme dei Sette Sapienti. All Neighbourhood Baths have at least a *frigidarium* and three heated rooms. How these are arranged is what differs in general. The Terme del Faro have both a prominent street entrance, flanked by a *caupona*, and a secondary connecting hallway to the neighbouring apartment building. This is again a feature shared with many other Neighbourhood Baths.

In terms of decoration this group of baths shows considerably more homogeneity. This is partially dictated by the difficult environment of a bath building. High humidity levels and traffic require a durable decor. For this reason stucco and marble were used in the humid hot rooms and painting in the vestibule and *frigidarium* areas. Mosaic floors were usually chosen since they are decorative, cost efficient and hard wearing. All of Ostia's baths underwent numerous phases of decoration; this was not only due to wear, but also to update the décor to contemporary tastes.

Paintings were frequently used to decorate the dry areas of the baths. Garden themes seem to have been particularly popular since they occur in a large number of baths and usually have a very similar palette and composition. Large figural paintings can be found in the Terme del Faro and the Terme dei Sette Sapienti. Both show mythological figures on a vivid blue background surrounded by a lively assemblage of sea life.

Most of the sculptural decoration of the Neighbourhood Baths is lost, but the smaller baths clearly could also contain statuary in a variety of subjects. The

Neighbourhood Baths also showed a similar taste for mosaics. A variety of themes were popular, for example athletic scenes, but by far the most commonly used theme was some variant of the Sea *Thiasos*. This subject was not only appropriate for a bathing environment, but also very flexible and could be adapted to any room shape or size. Most baths at Ostia include at least one room showing nereids riding a variety of sea creatures. The *frigidarium* mosaic in the Terme del Faro, dating to the Severan era, is unusual in that it consists almost entirely of fish and sea beasts and includes no human figures. In addition, the figures are very densely spaced with thick black lines running in a variety of direction. The general effect is more stylized and patterned than in any other examples from Ostia, including the mosaics in the heated rooms of the same building.

The Neighbourhood Baths fulfilled a number of functions to the people that lived around them. Almost all have at least one prominent entrance that opens off a main street, suggesting that they were not only open to the public but also built in locations suitable for drawing in customers. The Terme Dell' Invidioso, for example, have entrances on three different streets. Notable exceptions are the Terme Byzantine, that are only accessible by a long narrow hall from one of Ostia's less busy streets, and the Terme del Filosofo, a tiny establishment up the street from the Terme del Faro. The latter were more than likely the private baths of a philosophical school, the former may have been at least semi-private. Another bath that was possibly not open to the general public was the Terme dei Cisarii, which is located along a side street in the heart of a former warehouse. This, coupled with some highly individualized mosaics depicting mules and transport carts in great detail, has led to the suggestion that this building was owned and operated for the guild of the *Cisarii*.

Many of the Neighbourhoods Baths, besides having visible entrances onto main thoroughfares, also had hallways and doors connecting them to adjacent apartment buildings. The Terme del Faro possibly even had an *apodyterium* situated in a convenient location for bathers coming from this side entrance. The Terme del Invidioso and dei Sette Sapienti are basically incorporated into an apartment complex and are structurally (although not necessarily chronologically) a unit. Others, like the Terme della Trinacria and del Mitra, are less obviously linked to any particular building, but are located in densely populated areas. Many are also located near the large warehouses and mills where many of Ostia's inhabitants worked, or near city gates.

Many of Ostia's baths are located very close to a religious structure. The Terme del Faro are adjacent to the sanctuary of the *Magna Mater* as well as a mithraeum, the Terme delle Sei Colonne are situated across the street from the Temple of the *fabri navales*. The Terme della Basilica Cristiana are also located near this temple as well as the so-called Basilica Cristiana. The Terme della Trinacria are located across the street from the Serapeum, the Terme del Mitra have a mithraeum in their substructure and the Terme del Buticoso occupy part of the grounds of the temple of Hercules.

In many cases the location is coincidental and can be explained by the fact that both baths and temples are usually located in central places where they can be visited by the general public. In addition, the main entrance of the baths often faces away from the sanctuary in question. This is the case with the Terme della Trinacria and della Basilica Cristiana. The latter baths lost at least part of their heated rooms when the basilica

structure was erected and may have ceased to function at that point. Not all baths and nearby religious structures are contemporary. The vaulted substructures of baths made fitting sites for *mithraea* and their presence does not necessarily suggest any religious significance for the bath building in question. Another possibility is that sanctuaries may have had more land available to sell off gradually to finance upkeep and festivals. Erecting a bath near a sanctuary may also have been a wise business decision as many worshippers required purification before or after certain rituals.

Many of Ostia's Neighbourhood Baths seem to be erected right across the road from each other, or very close to the larger baths. In some cases the baths actually open onto different streets and are not in as close a competition as a first glance might suggest. This is the case with the Terme delle Sei Colonne and della Basilica Cristiana. We also learn from Martial that many bathers had a favourite bath they preferred over others. Reasons include water temperature, cleanliness and decoration, among others. The various baths therefore probably managed to compete with each other through carefully selected locations and by offering specialized services.

There is more evidence that suggests that these baths were indeed privately owned and meant to earn a profit. There are many references in the law books pertaining to the proper running and maintenance of baths and the obligations of owners to ensure public safety from such hazards as fire and noxious fumes. There are also some literary passages in Martial and Statius that mention elite individuals who invested in bath buildings.

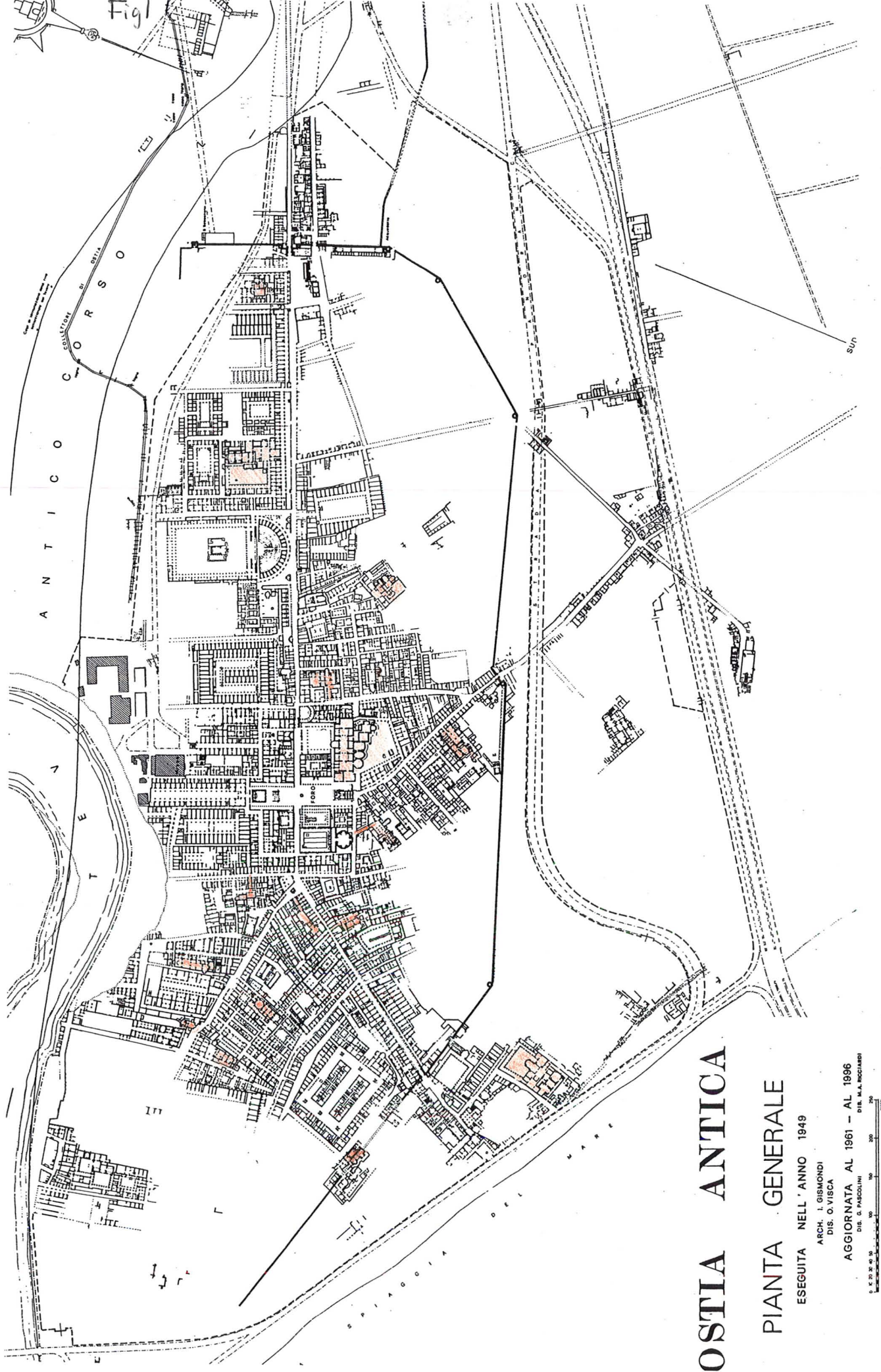
Further evidence for the elite's interest in Neighbourhood Baths comes from lead pipes, or *fistulae*, which often bear the names of individuals that probably belonged to the upper classes. From the Terme del Faro come several such pipes that allow the identification of several of the building's owners. They include an imperial princess and several very high-ranking individuals from Rome. The most likely explanation for the presence of their name is that they owned the building in question. It seems unlikely that such illustrious individuals would indulge in such an obscure and publicly invisible form of *euergetism*. The building costs for a bath of the size of the average Neighbourhood Baths were also fairly high and therefore outside the capabilities of most non-elite individuals.

Baths employed a number of individuals, most probably slaves. These ranged from the *actor*, or general manager, to a series of more specialized employees such as change room attendant, cashiers, cleaning staff, stokers, masseurs and a variety of beauty specialists. In smaller establishments only one individual probably fulfilled at least some of these tasks, or as an additional source of income the leaseholder could rent space in the baths to vendors and people specializing in such trade as hair removal, fortune telling or prostitution.

These additional services helped the leaseholder or owner earn additional income besides entrance fees, that could offset the operation costs of a bath building such as fuel for the heating system, water, and general maintenance of the building. The income for the leaseholder was probably not enormous, but it seems that it was steady and secure enough.

In conclusion, the Neighbourhood Baths of Ostia not only contribute to the understanding of the physical layouts and planning of bath buildings in general, but also

provide insight into the dynamics of an ancient city neighbourhood and the habits of its inhabitants. As a group these baths have a number of common features, including similar decoration and rationale behind their placement, suggesting that as enterprises they were intended to earn a profit, and thus they also offer information on the Roman business world and the investment habits of the elite. They also offer a rare glimpse as to how individuals of lesser wealth could lease and run such an establishment for their own profit. The Neighbourhood Baths changed with the times and adapted to the needs of the community and economy and reflect in a very vivid way the changing tastes and economic situation of the Roman Empire.



OSTIA ANTICA

PIANTA GENERALE

ESEGUITA NELL' ANNO 1949

ARCH. I. GISMONDI
DIS. O. VISCA

AGGIORNATA AL 1961 - AL 1986

DIS. G. PASCOLINI
DIE. M.A. BOCCHARDI



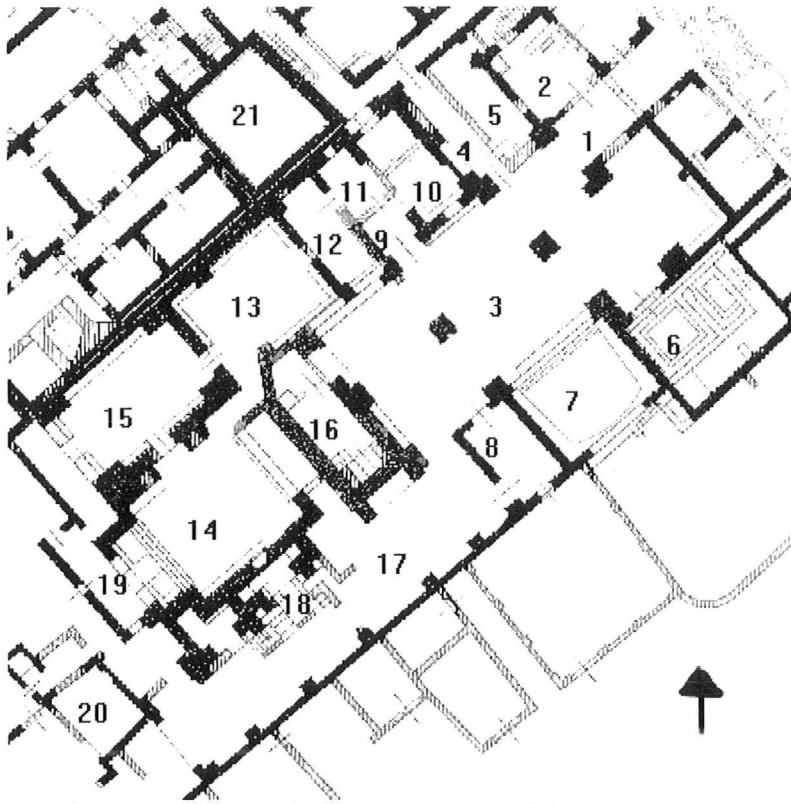


Fig. 2. Plan of Terme del Faro, Ostia (IV ii 1) Terms in quotation marks are those used in Nielsen.

1. Entrance
2. *caupona*
3. *frigidarium*
4. Hallway to Caseggiato dell' Ercole
5. *apodyterium*
6. latrine
7. *piscina*
8. room of unknown function
9. ante room
10. small *frigidarium*
11. ante room
12. "heat trap"
13. "*tepidarium*"
14. *caldarium*
15. "*sudatorium*"
16. service area with *prae furnia*
17. service corridor
18. *prae furnium*
19. service corridor
20. additional rooms



Fig. 3 *Caupona*, as seen from entrance to Terme del Faro, Ostia. Number 2 on fig. 2.



Fig. 4. View of rooms 4 (left) and 5 (right), looking north.



Fig. 5 Terme del Faro, looking south through *frigidarium* into room 6 (background).

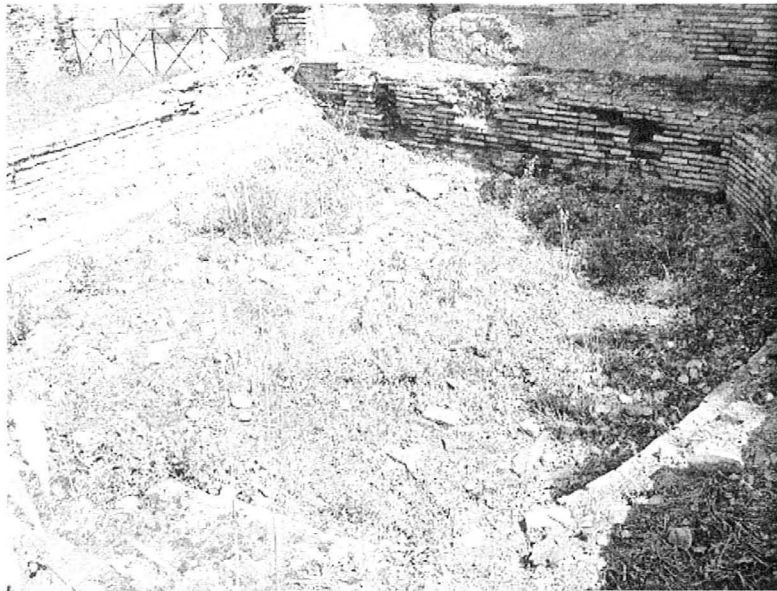


Fig. 6. Terme del Faro, *piscina* (7), looking north east.

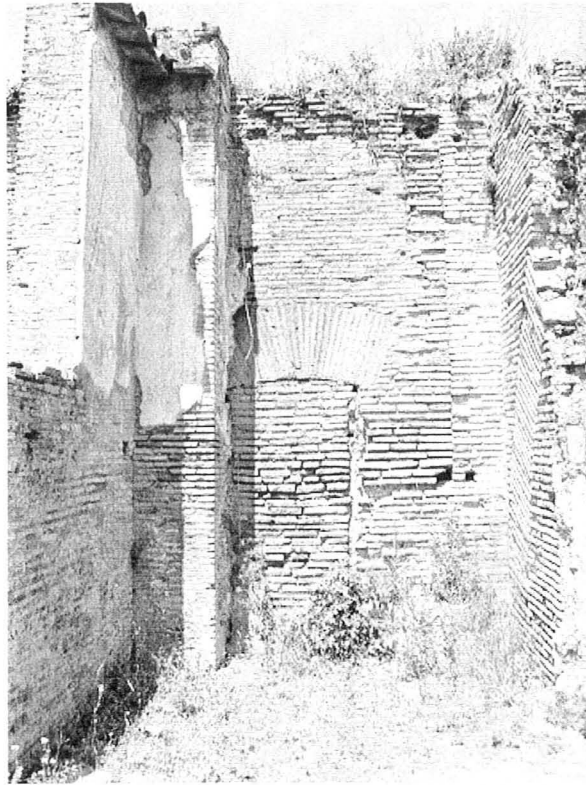


Fig. 7. Terme del Faro, North wall of room 12 with plaster remnants.



Fig. 8. Terme del Faro, room 12, sealed door in room 12.



Fig. 9. *Praefurnium* for room 13 (located in room 16).



Fig. 10. Terme del Faro, eastern *alveus* as seen from *caldarium*.

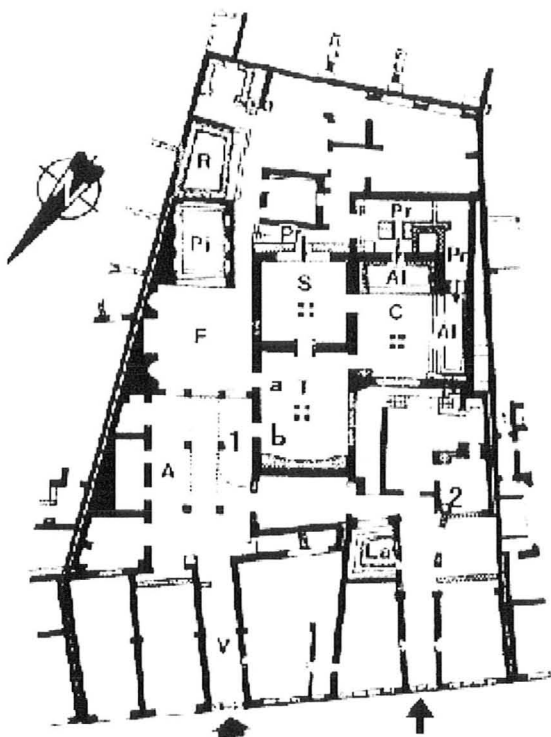


Fig. 11. Terme delle Sei Colonne (1:500).

Letters a and b designate entrances into T.

Labels according to Nielsen:

A= *apodyterium*
 Al= *alveus*
 C= *caldarium*
 F= *frigidarium*
 La= *latrine*
 Pr= *prae-furnium*
 R= *reservoir*
 S= *sudatorium*
 T= *tepidarium*

After G. Poccardi:

1: *heat trap*
 2: *noria*

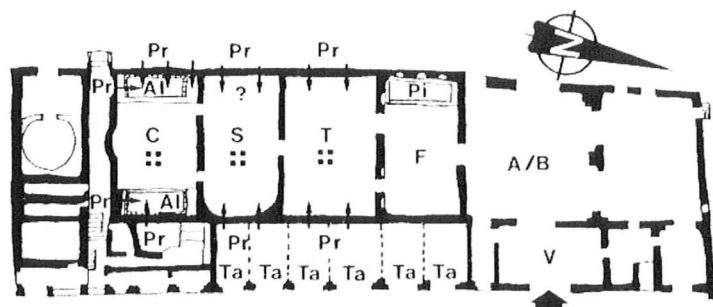


Fig. 12. Terme del Mitra, Ostia (I. xviii. 2) phase I. (1:500).

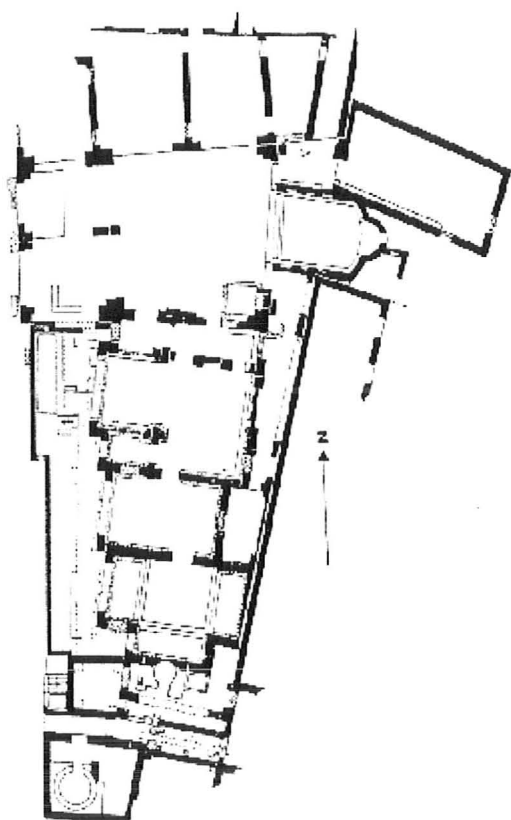


Fig. 13. Terme della Trinacria, Ostia (III. xvi. 5).

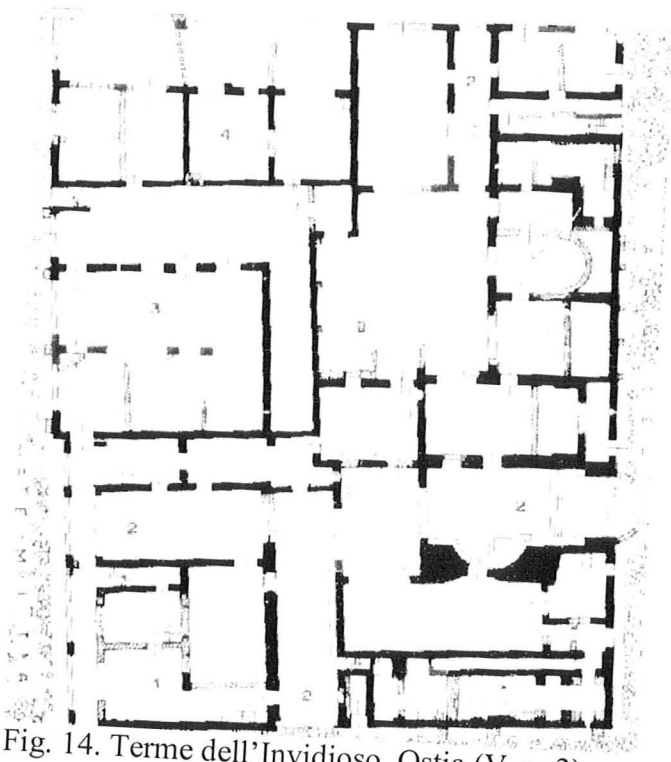


Fig. 14. Terme dell'Invidioso, Ostia (V. v. 2).

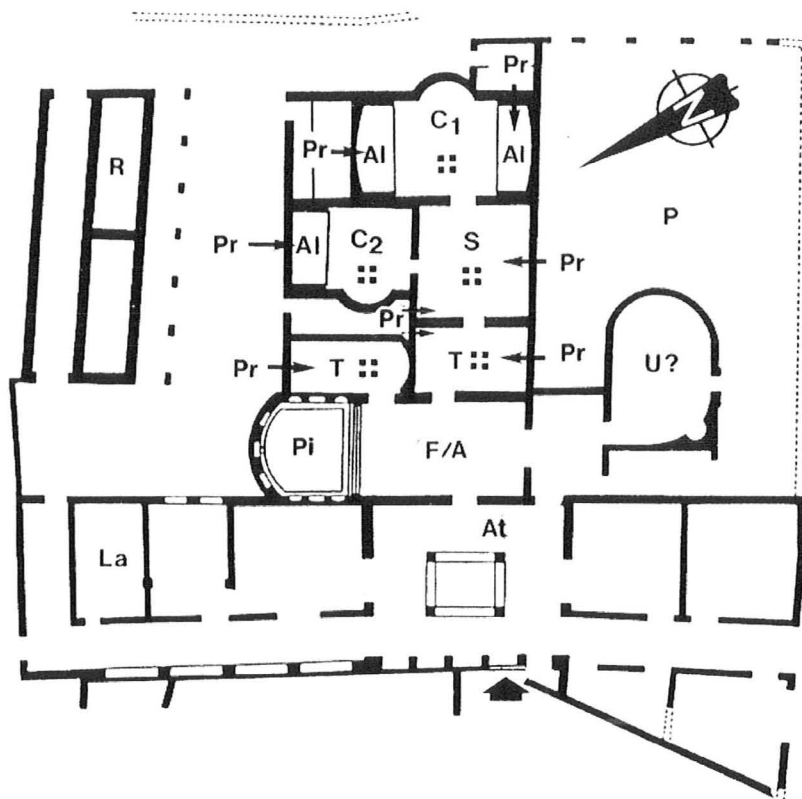


Fig. 15. Terme del Nuotatore (1:500), Ostia (V. x. 3)

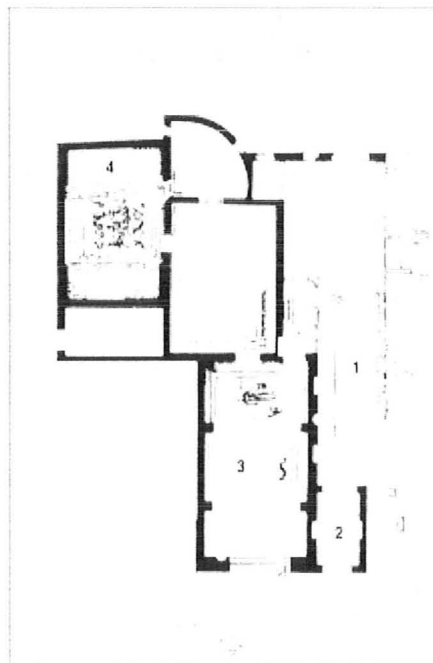


Fig. 16. Terme di Buticoso, Ostia (I. xiv. 8) (Mar, 1996, fig. 9 in Gallina Zevi, 1996)

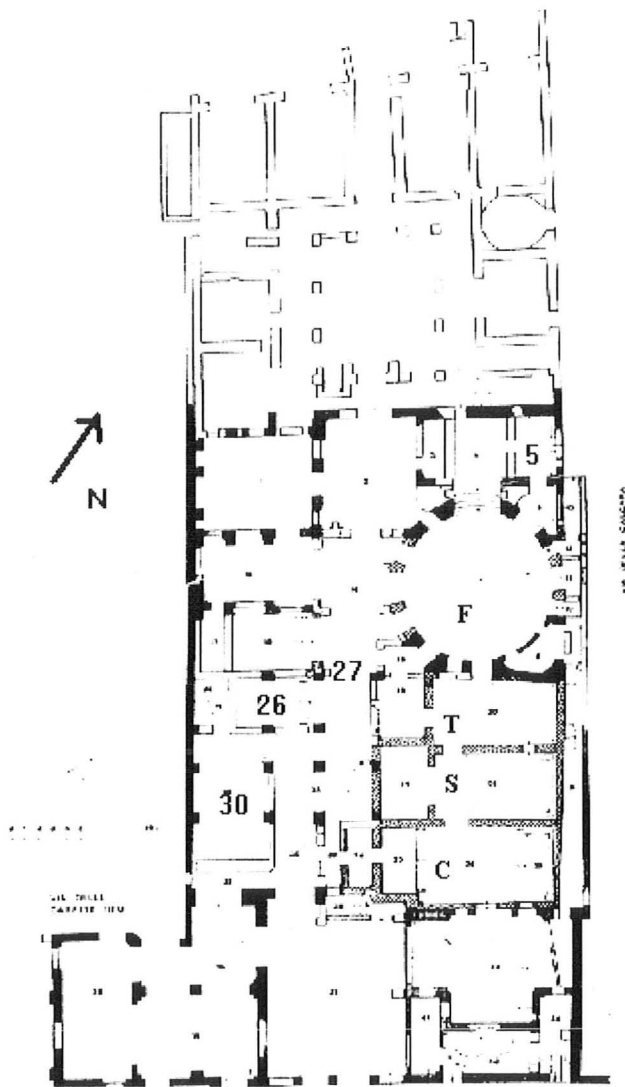


Fig. 17. Terme Dei Sette Sapienti, Ostia (III. x. 2).

As identified by Heres:

F= *frigidarium*

T,S,C= heated rooms

26. Small *piscina*, site of Venus paintings.

27. Floating Figures and architectural elements

30. Paintings of exercise equipment



Fig. 18. Terme del Faro, detail of the painting of Europa, east wall of room 7.



Fig. 19. Terme del Faro, The basin and the painting of Europa in room 7.



Fig. 20. Terme dei Sette Sapienti, painting of Venus in room 26.

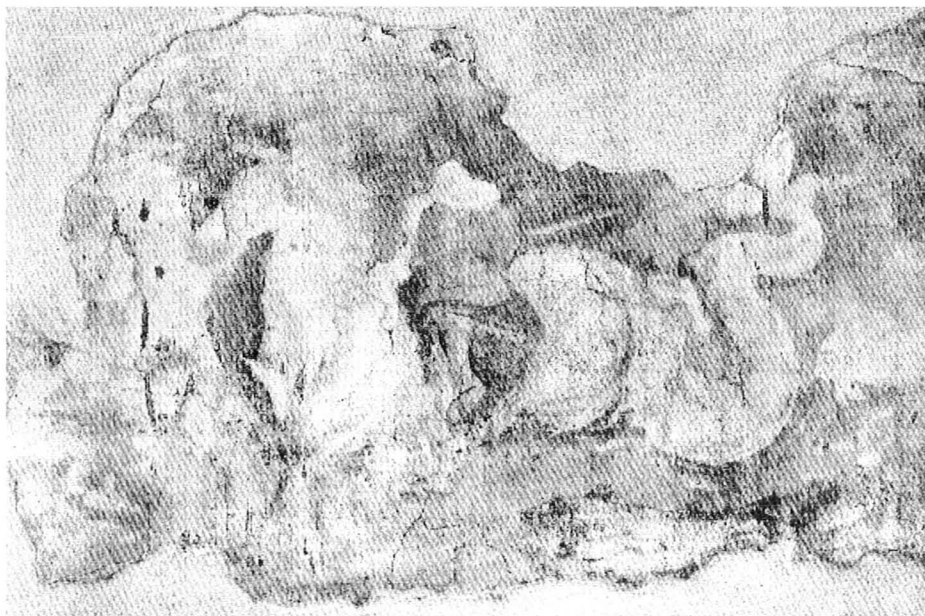


Fig. 21. Museo Nazionale Romano, Sea Nymph riding a Hippocamp, originally from Pietra Papa.



Fig. 22. Terme del Faro, Stucco remains in northwest corner of room 12.



Fig. 23. Detail of above, outlines of a cupid.



Fig. 24. Terme del Faro, mosaic in room 15 (“*sudatorium*”).

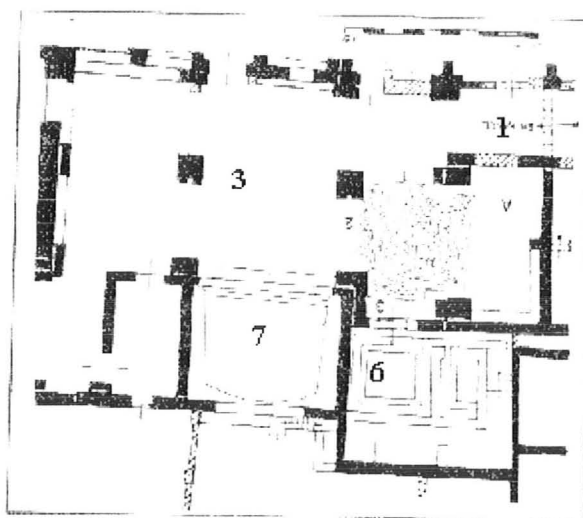


Fig. 25. Plan of Terme del Faro *frigidarium* with location of lighthouse mosaic. Numbers are identical to those on Fig. 2.



Fig. 26. Terme del Faro, *frigidarium*, mosaic 320.

Fig 27

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Appendix 1. The Terme del Faro

The purpose of this appendix is to offer a more detailed overview of the physical remains of the Terme del Faro. It includes observations made on site concerning discernible construction phases, building material and other notable details that were beyond the scope of Chapter 2.

1. Entrance area and *caupona*

The principal entryway itself consists of a corridor (1) and there is a second entrance to the *caupona* (2) from this point. Several phases are visible in the hallway; the walls consist mainly of the original Trajanic masonry, but in the south wall there are two bricked up doorways, similar to the wide entrances with relieving brickwork found in the average *taberna*. The first doorway is sealed with late *opus listatum*, suggesting that the shop flanking the other side of the entrance was originally accessible from the bath and immediately connected to it. The second doorway was probably filled in when the site was converted since the brick used has a different colour and slightly different dimensions. Sealing it narrowed and defined the entry into the *frigidarium* (3). The corridor was paved in plain white *tesserae* with a black border along the walls.¹

2. Frigidarium

The entrance corridor leads straight into the *frigidarium* (3), the largest room in the building. The most distinguishing feature of this room, besides its dimensions, are the two free standing, square brick piers that divide it roughly in half along its long axis. These piers are supplemented by similar supports abutted to the earlier masonry at both ends of the room and at strategic points along the walls. They probably date to the time when the site was converted into the baths. The piers must have supported the vaulted roof structure of the *frigidarium*.² They are built in *opus testaceum* and in some places they contrast with the original, probably Trajanic, walls that they are abutted to, which were built in *opus reticulatum mixtum*. The contrasting technique and the fact that they are abutted rather than forming an integral whole with the original walls further suggests they were added later.³ The far wall (west) of the *frigidarium* shows evidence for another sealed doorway. Remnants of grey sub plaster cover some parts of the wall. This area, as well as parts of the north wall, is lined with masonry benches for the bathers to sit on.

The white mosaic floor of the entrance corridor continued along the north side of the *frigidarium* for its entire length. The black and white mosaics with marine scenes and the lighthouse image occupied the space between the east wall and the central piers, with a black border separating them from the white hall area.⁴

¹ Becatti, 1953b, 172ff.

² The scale model in the Museo della Via Ostiense provides a hypothetical reconstruction of the roof area.

³ This is clearly visible by eye and is also indicated on Becatti's plan.

⁴ Becatti, 1953b, 172-176.

Two areas in the Terme del Faro would have made convenient *apodyteria*. The larger space is basically part of the *frigidarium* and occupies its southeastern corner. The south wall of the entrance corridor and the closer of the two central piers serve to define it and separate it from the rest of the *frigidarium*. The position of the lighthouse mosaic further enforces this separation.⁵ The remains of an L-shaped masonry bench are still barely visible along the east and south walls. The south wall, which was built in the original *opus reticulatum*, also gave access to a latrine (6), which may also have been reachable by a narrow doorway from the street, which was later sealed. Becatti's plan seems to indicate this, but the preservation of the remains on site allows no confirmation of this.⁶ The south wall of the latrine shows signs of late renovations in *opus listatum*.

There is a second, slightly smaller area that makes a suitable *apodyterium* (5) situated across the hall to the north. It occupies part of a corridor that lies exactly across from the entrance to the latrine (6) and is of approximately the same width. This corridor, at a right angle to the entrance axis, was subdivided, leaving a narrower hallway (room 4), that continues through a small door into the Caseggiato dell'Ercole, and room 5. A door in the east wall that once connected it to the *caupona* was sealed. Some wall plaster was preserved in this room, in both red and white, and there are also square holes in the walls, possibly used for shelving or cupboards for the bathers to leave their belongings. Where the plaster has disappeared on the east wall, the original *opus reticulatum* is clearly visible. The holes were probably carved into the wall and were not part of its original form as the diamond shaped stones seem to have been chipped away, their orientation does not suggest they were planned openings. The west wall of the hallway (4) is in *opus reticulatum mixtum*, but it was faced, probably when the small *apodyterium* was built, with another wall consisting of two great relieving arches. The more southern of the two was open, revealing the *reticulatum mixtum* behind it, the other was bricked up. Since the brick used for this differs from that of the surrounding wall, it must have been done at a later date. Generally the two types of brick differ in colouring. One, which from its use must be the older, is redder and shows more calcification.

The *frigidarium* (3) originally probably had two symmetrical wings of nearly identical size opening from its central short axis, giving it a cruciform layout. The wings consisted of Room 7, which housed the *piscina*, to the south, and the area later subdivided into rooms 9, 10 and 11 on the north. To make room for the south wing (7) part of the wall of the original building was possibly removed to make room for the area that contained the cold-water plunge, or *piscina*. Most of the facing of the back wall is now missing, revealing the concrete core.

The pool is approximately D shaped with a rounded end wall and has a ledge running around it. A large piece of the original marble revetment is still *in situ* in one corner; parts of the walls are still covered with the various layers of mortar that held the remainder of the marble in place. One step led from the *frigidarium* floor up to the rim of the basin, and three more then led down into the pool. The outer step is still partially

⁵ Nielsen, 1990, Vol. II, fig. 68 and Clarke, 1979, 51-53.

⁶ Clarke, 1979, 53, note 20, expresses his doubts if this area truly was a latrine. The details do, however, appear on the site plan of *Scavi di Ostia I*.

covered in its original white mosaic. The basin floor and the other steps were probably decorated in the same material but none is extant today. As the surviving piece of marble suggests, the rest of the pool, the ledge, and part of the walls were lined with marble, although only the bare brick remains now. The pool is filled with debris, a lot of which seems to be tile.

Beside the *piscina*, to the west, there is another room (8) of unknown function. It has three doors, one to the *frigidarium*, one to the southwest corridor (17), and one to the south that opened onto the Campus of the Magna Mater. More remnants of *opus reticulatum mixtum* wall are visible around this door. There is no evidence that would suggest the original function of this room. The level of the baths is about two meters above that of the Campus. There were originally a series of storage rooms built along this shared perimeter wall, but it seems they may have been removed by the time this door was placed here. The southwest corridor (17), probably a service area, can also be entered directly from the *frigidarium* without passing through room 8. This entry is wider than that in the side room and there is a marble drain cover located in the middle.

3. Additional cold rooms

The area straight across from the *piscina* served as the entrance area to the hot rooms. It is made up of rooms 9, 10 and 11. Originally the three rooms made up a single space roughly the same size as that occupied by the *piscina*, and was then divided in half at a later date. The western half consists of a series of two small, interconnected rooms, 9 and 11 on the plan. Room 9 contains a drain with a marble cover, and room 11 was supplied with a bench along its North wall.

Room 10, the east half of this space, houses a small, secluded cold pool with an anteroom. When this section was converted, the original, wide doorway, clearly distinguishable by the large tufa blocks that framed it, was partially bricked up creating a narrower access to room 10 and providing the small pool with more privacy. At the same time, the hallway space next to it was divided into rooms 9 and 11. These alterations may have been carried out when the baths were first built, yet the brick seems different from that of the surrounding areas. It is paler and thinner, a trait of Severan masonry. The decoration of the small pool area is Severan in date, and the work and redecorating may all have been carried out simultaneously.⁷ The original, large doorway flanked by the tufa blocks formed part of another section of *opus reticulatum mixtum*. Most of the original arch that covered the large doorway still stands today. The back wall of the small *frigidarium* is part of the same phase and also executed in *opus reticulatum mixtum*. The wall facing the main *frigidarium* was restored in the 1960's in the same technique and provided with a window. It was also roofed and provided with a door and window to protect the remarkably well-preserved decoration from the elements. The preserved decoration includes the almost perfectly intact marble veneer of the small plunge bath as well as some paintings. They are dated to the Severan era.⁸ In the Terme del Faro there

⁷ Becatti, 1953a, 155ff., Pavolini, 1983, 197ff. and Meiggs, 1973, 443.

⁸ Meiggs, 443, Pavolini, 198.

are two well-preserved scenes, both located above the cold pool. The better-preserved one on the north wall shows “Europa” riding a bull surrounded by various marine creatures, including a large eel, various fish species and molluscs.

The back wall (north) of room 11 is still largely covered with a thick layer of coarse, grey sub plaster, which was probably waterproof to withstand the steam from the neighbouring hot room, which would explain its good state of preservation. The plaster may also have been the support for marble veneer, although no prints of marble slabs were visible. There is a small masonry bench, also partially still covered in plaster, at the foot of this wall. The floor has been covered with a modern protective layer for the remaining mosaic, but where it is worn away plain white *tesserae* are visible. A door in the middle of the west wall of this room leads into the heated part of the bath complex.

Beyond the north wall of rooms 11 and 12 and accessible only from around the corner through the hallway (4) to the *Caseggiato*, is the cistern of the baths, which will be discussed in more detail below.

4. Heat trap

The door in the west wall of room 11 leads into another room, number 12, which is approximately the same width as the previous room and twice as long. The northwest corner is convex due to a thicker support pier for the ceiling jutting into the room. There is also a small, bricked-up doorway clearly visible on the north wall, right next to the above feature. There is another bench at the eastern end of the room. Nielsen identifies this room as a heat trap and it is the first room of the complex that is raised on *suspensurae* and includes *tubuli*. These are clearly visible along two thirds of the north wall and behind the bench.⁹ The west wall preserves a reddish grey marble dado still *in situ*. Somewhat over-zealous use of cement and mortar during modern restoration work makes it impossible to tell if there were any *tubuli* behind the veneer, but considering the thickness of the mortar layers used elsewhere in the baths for anchoring marble and the thickness of *tubuli*, it would be a tight fit. Since there are *tubuli* on the other side of this wall, there were probably none here. Becatti’s plan shows no *tubuli* here, however those behind the bench are not indicated either.¹⁰ There is little evidence what specific purpose this room could have served. It had no *praefurnium* of its own and would have drawn its heat indirectly from the next door (13). It may have been used as a room where bathers could apply and scrape away oil and unguents before and after bathing or as a heated change room in winter.¹¹

By far the most remarkable feature of this room is the remnants of moulded plaster that cover the northwest corner. They cover the upper half of the wall and extend around the convex corner of the room. As visible on the west wall the original motive consisted of panels with garlands, ribbons and three-dimensional rosettes, separated by three dimensional, fluted pilasters. These were crowned by two bands of decoration too

⁹ Nielsen, 1990, Vol.I, 79-80 and Vol. II, Fig. 68, 94.

¹⁰ Becatti, 1953a, general site plan.

¹¹ See Nielsen, 1990, Vol. I: 153 on heated *apodyteria*.

poorly preserved to identify clearly, but possibly including floral scrolls. The pilasters likely had moulded capitols. The bands were then finally topped by a moulded entablature with three-dimensional *guttae*. Due to weathering it is often only the sketchy outlines scratched into the plaster rather than the actual moulded pieces that remain. Above the frieze of *guttae* there can still be seen the remains of what appears to be more cloth and a quarter of a circular object. On the short surface produced by the awkwardly jutting corner the scratched outlines of a winged figure, possibly a Cupid, is still visible. The head seems to be shown in profile and the figure seems to be twisting towards the viewer. Some very impressionistic outlines of the legs survive as well, but it not possible to say what kind of garment (if any) the figure wore.

5. Doorway to Heated rooms

A door in the west wall of the heat trap leads into room 13. This doorway is rather intriguing, as it seems to have been walled up in antiquity. Only about a third of the fill is still in place at present, but Becatti's plan suggests the door was indeed completely sealed. This is startling as it is the only access to the hot rooms. The work was carried out very sloppily and the material used is unusual as well. It basically consists of a rough and ready mixture of building debris, including bricks and pieces of bricks, all tumbled together in messy rows with large amounts of coarse, sandy mortar. The technique has a vague similarity to *opus vittatum* in that it employs rows of brick and other material in the rows in between, but it certainly does not have the same neat rows or stone blocks.¹² Even more striking is the fact that whole *tubuli* were incorporated and used instead of bricks. There also appear to be some floor tiles. The presence of these materials suggests that the hot rooms must have already been in serious disrepair and probably were in complete disuse when this work was carried out.

6. The hot rooms

The heated area of the Terme del Faro consists of three rooms, 13, 14 and 15. Only 14 can be securely identified as the *caldarium*. The other two have been identified by Nielsen as the *tepidarium* in room 13 and the *sudatorium* in room 15. Both can be reached directly from room 13 and are also connected to each other. All three of the rooms were originally decorated with black and white floor mosaics depicting various sea monsters and ocean life.¹³

Room 13 is an unusual example of a *tepidarium* and does not fit the definition as easily as Nielsen's plan suggests. The room has a small *praefurnium* stoked from the service area to the south (16). Nielsen does not indicate this *praefurnium* in her plan, but there is another mislabelled *praefurnium* on it. The feature in question is a small, irregularly shaped arch running below the floor of the *tepidarium* with the *tubuli* opening right into it.

¹² J. DeLaine. "Techniques et industrie de la construction à Ostie" in Descoeudres, 91-99. See also Fig. 8.

¹³ Becatti, 1953b, 172ff.

All four walls of the room are lined with *tubuli* and the floor was a raised hypocaust, which collapsed when part of the vault gave way. Two large sections of the ceiling still lie in the room today. They consist of concrete with a rubble core and are of a rounded shape; more conclusions cannot be drawn from them, as they are half buried. The masonry of the *tepidarium* is uniform; another brick pier was added to the southwest area of the room. An unusual feature is visible beside it. It consists of two terracotta vessels built into the wall, a feature that can also be seen in the northeast wall of the Terme del Nettuno. Masonry benches provide seating along most of the wall area. Some fragments of the original marble still remain in place in some locations.

The *caldarium* (14) is connected to the *tepidarium* by a diagonal passageway. Part of the marble decoration is still visible at the base of the wall, as is some wall plaster. Two heated pools, or *alvei*, of approximately average size, occupy niches on the east and west sides of the wall and help positively identify the room. Although the *suspensurae* beneath them have collapsed in the centre, they are intact at the sides and supply an excellent view of how they were constructed and how many layers of brick, mortar, water-proof mortar, grout and mosaic were used for the pools. They were lined with large, grey-veined marble slabs, and the floors were covered in fine white mosaic. Modern reconstruction work, provided with a date of 1961, roofed the two plunge pools to protect them. Some work to the basin edges, however, obscures how high the edge of the basin originally was or how deep the pools were. Each was heated by a *praefurnium* situated at a lower level, underneath the middle of the pool. The *praefurnium* for the east *alveus* is in area 16 (not 17 as indicated by Nielsen), that of the western one is located in area 19. A statue niche is still visible in the south wall of the *caldarium*, but no remains of statuary were recovered here. Drains are visible as small, low arches in the east and west corners, and the *praefurnium* for the floor heating was located at a lower level in area 18, approximately beneath the statue niche. The north wall contains the door to room 15, the “*sudatorium*”.

Room 15 was the site of the 1964 excavation, and the trench was never backfilled. It is still situated more or less in the middle of the room, which is slightly longer than the *tepidarium* and like it is lined with benches. *Tubuli* are located in the two walls shared by the rooms. The west wall is preserved to the height of about one story at the sides, but the middle section is much lower. It is possible that there was a window here to take advantage of solar radiation as a source of additional heat. There is also a *praefurnium* situated below this wall. No decoration survives in this room.

7. Service areas

The service areas of the Terme del Faro consisted of the long southern hallway (17); area 16 situated between the *frigidarium* and the *caldarium* and an additional long hallway (19) that lay on a lower level. Area 18 is located to the south of the *caldarium* and is reached from hallway 17 by a staircase, which is still in place. The second service corridor (19) is a long, narrow space that runs along the west of the *caldarium* and *sudatorium* and follows the line of their walls. At the back of the baths is an open courtyard that may have been used for storage. Situated here is another set of rooms (20)

built in a more irregular fashion, that probably were also part of the service areas. How exactly they connected to the baths and whether the corridor between them was roofed, is not entirely clear.

The central service area (16), which is situated between *caldarium* and *tepidarium*, is of interest not only because it possibly contains two different types of *prae-furnia*, but also because it too seems to have been completely sealed off and made inaccessible at some point in antiquity. Becatti's plan shows no entrance whatsoever, and it is only from inside of the space that it becomes clear that the door was originally situated at the southern end. A narrow hallway and the outlines of a door are still clearly visible. The vault and ceiling in this section are still standing as well. When looking at this wall from the outside, there is simply a uniform layer of brick with no hint of a door. The brick in this new wall looks different from surrounding areas in both colour and texture, and there is less mortar, as it seems to have been of a sandier consistency and crumbled away. When viewed from room 16 through the vanished doorway the visible bricks are coarse and irregular and some look weathered, which is a possible indication that they were reused. It is possible that this was done simply because it was the rear of the wall, which was never meant to be seen, or it may be a sign of restructuring at a fairly late date.¹⁴ In any case, when the door was blocked, the large *prae-furnium* of the east *alveus* and the smaller *prae-furnium* of room 13 must have fallen out of use, as they were now inaccessible. The *prae-furnium* of the east hot pool was situated in this sealed area, not, as the plan in Nielsen suggests, to the south of the pool.¹⁵

The exact use of the long corridor 17 running along the south side of the Terme del Faro is unclear. It provided access to all of the other service areas and could have been used for storage, as it is relatively wide. The reconstruction in the model in the Museo della Via Ostiense shows a row of windows looking out over the Campus of the Magna Mater.

The *prae-furnium* of the *caldarium* is situated in area 18, which is located on a lower level and can be reached from corridor 17 by means of a few steps that lead down to it. On the main corridor level two small, irregular spaces, perhaps for storage, flank the *prae-furnium*. As mentioned above, the small southeastern space, contrary to Nielsen's plan, did not contain the *prae-furnium* for the east *alveus*.

The western service area consists of a long hallway (19) that follows the outlines of the *caldarium* and *sudatorium*. It was accessible by three doors, two lead to the courtyard, and the third to the south corridor. The level is the same as for the south *prae-furnium* (18), but the stairs are buried or have collapsed. Both the large *prae-furnium* for the west *alveus* and a much smaller one for the *sudatorium* are reached by this corridor.

Between the southern doorway and the *prae-furnium* of the *alveus* there lies a large, semicircular stone object. It is half buried, but is decorated along its rounded, bevelled edge with an egg and dart motive. It may have been part of a column, or perhaps it is hollowed out and is some sort of basin. Its position did not allow for it to be inspected

¹⁴Delaine, 2001, 91-99 esp. 93-94, and Fig.11.

¹⁵Nielsen, Vol. II, cat. 26, Fig. 68.

from that angle, nor was it possible to determine if it had been halved by force, or was always semi-circular. It has a reddish brown colour and the texture seems different from marble, although moss growth obscures the surface.

Three irregular little rooms (20) were located at the back of the baths in the courtyard. They are too heavily overgrown to yield much information on function. Some brickwork floor in a herringbone pattern is still visible in a corner and the plan of the rooms is fairly irregular and comprises several phases. The space was re-divided a number of times as the various sealed doors and added walls attest. The largest room is approximately the same size as room 8. The doorway closest to the baths was sealed and instead the opening now faces away from the baths towards the Mithreum.

8. Water supply

No deep wells or water wheels have been found near the Terme del Faro. Instead the local aqueduct supplied the large reservoir (21) located beyond the north wall of the baths. The various *fistulae* bearing the names of various owners attest that the baths indeed paid to tap into the municipal water supply. The cistern could hold approximately 98 000 litres of water.¹⁶

¹⁶ Scrinari and Ricciardi, 1996, 171-173.

Appendix 2. The Baths of Ostia

Dimensions in m² are taken from Nielsen when available. Domestic Baths and those outside the walls could not be included in this list.

Italian Name(s)	Address	Size	English Name(s)
Terme della Basilica Cristiana	III.i.,3	Small, 600 m ²	Baths of the Christian Basilica
Terme di Buticoso	I. xiv. 8	Small, 500m	Baths of Buticosus
Terme Byzantine, Terme di Via del Tempio Rotondo	IV. iv. 8	Medium 1000 m ²	Byzantine Baths
Terme dei Cisarii	II. ii. 3	Medium-Small, 800 m ²	Baths of the Cisarii, Baths of the Drivers
Terme del Faro	IV. ii.1	Medium, 1300 m ²	Baths of the Light House, Pharos Baths
Terme del Filosofo	V. ii. 9	Small, 660 m ²	Baths of the Philosopher
Terme del Foro, Terme di Gavius Maximus	I. xii. 6	Large 3900 m ² (7160 m ² including Palaestra)	Forum Baths
Terme dell' Invidioso	V. v. 2	Medium, 1250 m ²	Baths of Invidiosus
Terme Marittime	III. viii. 2	Small 540 m ²	Maritime Baths, Baths at the Sullan Walls
Terme del Mitra	I. xviii. 2	Medium, 1100 m ²	Baths of Mithras
Terme del Nettuno	II. iv. 2	Large, 2300 m ² (4500 m ² including Palaestra)	Neptune Baths
Terme del Nuotatore	V. x. 3	Medium, 1440 m ² (2295	Baths of the Swimmer

		m ² including Palaestra)	
Terme di Porta Marina, Terme della Marciana, <i>Thermae Maritimae</i>	IV. x. 1	Large, 2080 m ² (3260 m ² including Palaestra)	Baths of Marciana <i>Thermae Maritimae</i>
Terme delle Provincie, Terme sotto/della Via dei Vigili	II ¹	unknown	Baths of the Provinces
Terme delle Sei Colonne	IV. v. 11	Medium, 1160 m ²	Baths of the Six Columns
Terme dei Sette Sapienti	III. x. 2	Medium, 1450 m ²	Baths of the Seven Sages
Terme della Trinacria	III. xvi. 5	Medium, 945 m ²	Baths of the Trinacria
Terme della Via della Foce, Terme in Laterizio Terme Piccole	I. xix. 5	Small 200 m ²	
Number of Baths by city quarter	Medium	Large	Small
Regio I	2	1	2
Regio II	1 (+1 unknown)	1	
Regio III	2		2
Regio IV	3	1	
Regio V	2		1

In the breakdown of the types of bath per city quarter a general correlation between residential density and number of baths can be appreciated.

¹ Since they were demolished in antiquity, no insula or door number can be assigned.

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