

ROOM FUNCTION IN THE ROMAN *DOMUS*

ROOM FUNCTION IN THE ROMAN *DOMUS*:
A STUDY OF FIVE POMPELIAN HOUSES

By

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ABSTRACT

Modern researchers struggle to ascertain spatial use in order to understand more fully the behavior of the inhabitants of the Roman house. As an artifact, the house has the potential to offer the most intimate glimpses of the interactions of the Roman family and Roman society. The artifactual, architectural, and decorative evidence which is preserved in Pompeian houses can provide insight into how the rooms and spaces of the Roman household functioned; room function itself can in turn tell more about the everyday lives of the people who inhabited the *domus*. But what is the value of the evidence found within the house? How much can the extant archaeological remains communicate to the modern researcher about the Roman family and how they used the spaces of their homes? This thesis explores the potential of each type of evidence for evaluating room function and shows that only when all kinds of evidence are taken into account can the most informative picture of the Roman house emerge.

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INTRODUCTION

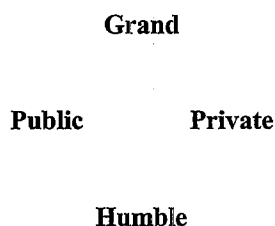
The impact of Pompeii and Herculaneum on the study of the Roman house has been significant. Extensive material has been recovered documenting the architectural design, the decoration, and the materials used in day-to-day life in the typical Roman household. More recently, aspects of how the Roman family functioned within the confined space of the home have been brought to the forefront of scholarly attention. Too often, though, the focus has been on only one type of evidence. The focus of this investigation discusses the premises of analysing Roman houses and explores the methodologies used to ascertain room function and the nature of their contribution.

Modern connotations of the home inevitably, and perhaps unavoidably, colour our perceptions of the workings of the Roman household. While today's concept of house and home evokes thoughts of a sanctuary from public life, the Roman citizen used his home to present his social standing to the best possible advantage.¹ Hence, the status of the homeowner and the house he built are irrevocably linked. The Roman house, therefore, is an invaluable instrument for documenting the social activities carried out within the domestic context.

Andrew Wallace-Hadrill's reading of the Roman house has facilitated a study of

¹Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum* (Princeton 1994) 5.

the extant archaeological remains within a social framework, and his approach will act as an interpretational tool throughout this thesis. The axes of differentiation drawn by Wallace-Hadrill between the public and private and the grand and humble areas of the house are helpful when attempting to define the use of space.² Spatial differentiation along these axes provides a guideline for examining the remains of the *domus*. The degree of separation between the concepts of ‘public’ and ‘private’ as well as ‘grand’ and ‘humble’ are both logical and practical. The author’s graphical representation of these concepts, reproduced here, is perhaps the best way to illustrate the opposing axes.



A space might be both public and grand, such as the *atrium*, or both private and humble, such as a slave’s *cubiculum*.³ The concepts are not mutually exclusive and it is possible for a combination of elements to exist, delineating the context via architecture and decoration, which facilitated the use of space. For example, a humble client might see only the grand and public area such as the *atrium*, and never have reason to visit the kitchen. Conversely, a peer of the homeowner would enter the public and grand area of the *atrium*, but might also have occasion to enter into the private and grand space of the *cubiculum*. The design of, and access to, the public/private and grand/humble spaces of

²*Ibid.*, 8ff.

³*Ibid.*, 11.

the Roman *domus* are dictated by the social hierarchies which existed in Roman society. Absent as differential axes are those distinctions of gender and age; if rooms were set aside for exclusive use by women, the young, or the old, they do not show up in the archaeological record. The single definitive factor in shaping household space is social standing and the needs of the homeowner which stemmed from it.⁴

The physical evidence for spatial differentiation lies in the artifacts and features, architecture, and decoration of the Roman house. The simple, archaeological realities of the evidence and the difficulties they create have also been explored. Considerations such as temporal distinctions regarding the use of space as well as the problems in the employed nomenclature of room types have been taken into account and discussed.

When dealing with features (permanent, non-movable fixtures) and artifacts (small, movable objects), it is important to differentiate between activities which occurred in rooms and primary room function. Just as an archaeological site is composed of strata, room function can be conceptualised in a somewhat similar, stratigraphic manner. The hierarchy of room use can be defined as “primary”, “secondary” and “occasional”. Donald Sanders defines a building as a cultural unit which has two elemental and diverse components -- primary (pure denoted function) and secondary (connoted, conceptual function).⁵ Occasional room use is perhaps the most difficult to determine and to define. Any activity which is not habitually carried out in a given space, but which leaves a trace

⁴*Ibid.*, 6-8.

⁵Donald Sanders, “Behavioral conventions and archaeology: methods for the analysis of ancient architecture,” in *Domestic Architecture and the Use of Space: An Interdisciplinary Cross-Cultural Study*. Susan Kent, ed. (Oxford 1990) 43-72, 45.

in the archaeological record, can be misleading when interpreting the extant evidence. A child's toy discarded after play, for example, may not be an indication of a room specifically designed for that function. Determining and understanding these levels of spatial function in Roman houses requires a careful examination of their contents.⁶

Because of the highly varied activities which were carried out within the interior spaces of the *domus*, it has been suggested that ascribing permanently fixed room function is perhaps too confining.⁷ Assigning a primary room function to a space where a multiplicity of activities occurred can certainly be dangerous; the secondary and occasional spatial functions must never be ignored. Another danger arises in assigning permanent room function when all the inhabitants of a house are taken into account. It cannot be assumed that a set plan or house arrangement which fulfilled the needs of one family adequately met the needs of new occupants if a change in ownership occurred.

A basic assumption in the analysis of architecture, domestic or otherwise, is that "form follows function".⁸ If this assumption is correct, it follows that a built environment such as a house is created to support and facilitate certain behavior.⁹ This is certainly true to some extent. The organisation of domestic dwellings, and the features and artifacts

⁶Penelope Allison, "Artefact Distribution and Spatial Function in Pompeian Houses," in *The Roman Family in Italy: Status, Sentiment, Space*. Beryl Rawson and Paul Weaver, eds. (Oxford 1997). 321-354, 324.

⁷Michele George, "Repopulating the Roman House," in *The Roman Family in Italy: Status, Sentiment, Space*. Beryl Rawson and Paul Weaver, eds. (Oxford 1997) 299-319, 302.

⁸Sanders (1990) 45.

⁹Amos Rapoport, "Systems of Activities and Systems of Settings," in *Domestic Architecture and the Use of Space: An Interdisciplinary Cross-Cultural Study*. Susan Kent, ed. (Cambridge 1990). 9-20, 11.

which can theoretically identify room function, can be tied directly to practical purposes. Simply put, architecture arose to accommodate specific activities. Conversely, activities could also be adapted depending upon the restrictions of the environment itself.¹⁰

The houses employed for this exercise are found in Pompeii, since no other site provides more complete data from a single locale. Because of the eruption in A.D. 79, the evidence which comes from Pompeii is unique and furnishes archaeologists with evidence that is comparatively undisturbed. Since the catastrophe was relatively sudden, many residents did not have the time to eradicate evidence of their activities. Five Pompeian houses act as the basis for this study: the *Casa del Menandro*, the *Casa degli Amorini Dorati*, the *Casa dei Ceii*, the *Casa del Principe di Napoli*, and the *Casa della Ara Massima*. These houses have been selected with the intention of providing a sample which is representative of all Pompeian dwellings. The restrictions on the sample are based on a variety of factors. First, in an attempt to create a sample of houses which will accurately reflect spatial function, the houses vary in size. The second, and possibly the most confining factor, lies in the availability of information. While it would be helpful to have access to all of the original reports, this is simply not possible. Therefore, the sample is restricted to those houses which have sufficient data available to allow this study to be carried out.

This thesis is an exercise intended to evaluate the different aspects of the evidence available for identifying room function. Each chapter undertakes a look at the general

¹⁰Frank E. Brown, "Continuity and Change in the Urban House: Developments in Domestic Space Organisation in Seventeenth-Century London," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. 28 (1986) 558-590, 567.

nature of the evidence, exploring the limitations and potential of each as a tool for determining the use of space. The methodologies are then applied to the individual houses utilised in this study. Chapter 1 explores the value of artifacts and features. Chapter 2 examines room arrangement with an in-depth look at the difficulties presented by the terminology presently employed by scholars. Chapter 3 evaluates room decoration and its ability to aid in identifying room function.

CHAPTER 1

Artifacts and Features as Tools for Determining Room Function

When attempting to isolate and identify room function in Pompeian houses, artifacts and features provide invaluable evidence for the activities which were carried out in the spaces of the Roman household. Both permanent fixtures and smaller, portable items work with the architecture of the built domestic environment to define an area's use and function for inhabitants and visitors alike.¹ Features within the domestic context can provide evidence for the intended primary function of a given space. The very nature of a feature such as a hearth, a bath, a fixed stone bench or a latrine, for example, suggests a permanent use of space, since they are non-movable, built objects which are part of the physical character of the space. Artifacts provide evidence for activities carried out by Romans in their daily behaviour; as such, they provide evidence for a wider, less concrete range of activities.

While the features found in Roman houses may be a clear indication of intended primary room function, they are certainly not to be viewed as indisputable evidence that the same primary function was still valid when Vesuvius erupted in AD 79. Concrete

¹Joanne Berry, "Household artefacts: Toward a Re-interpretation of Roman domestic Space," in *Domestic Space in The Roman World: Pompeii and Beyond*. Ray Laurence and Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, eds. (Portsmouth 1997). 183-195, 183.

evidence for the re-use of space and the re-modeling of Pompeian houses has been explored more fully in recent scholarly works, the most complete of which is the *Häuser in Pompeji* series.² It is clear that at least some houses had undergone, or were in the process of undergoing, extensive construction and refurbishment at the time of the eruption. For example, some areas which had been designed as ‘kitchens’ and had hearths were no longer serving their intended primary function of cooking.³ Rather, by redesigning the room, the fixture had become obsolete, yet was left in place. Cisterns represent another good example. These features are often discovered on sites where they have gone out of use and have been filled in; the fill of such features generally provides a solid *terminus ante quem* for their use. Evidence for changes in room function can be found in many houses, such as the *Casa del Menandro* (cat. #1; fig. 1) and the *Casa dei Ceii* (cat. #4; fig.4), which are discussed more fully in the latter half of this chapter and in subsequent chapters. There is no doubt, however, that a fixed feature is a solid indicator of an activity which was carried out with great regularity in its assigned space.

While an examination of artifacts found within the domestic context can certainly be related to primary room function, artifacts tend to provide evidence of more discrete activity areas within a given space and are good indicators of secondary and occasional

²For further documentation of decoration see Baldassarre, I. *et al.*, *Pompei – Pitture e mosaici* (Milan).

³Penelope Allison, *The Distribution of Pompeian House Contents and its Significance. Volume II*. University of Sydney, Ph.D Thesis: 1992. Allison discusses the re-use of space of the various *atrium* houses in her sample group where they occur.

room use.⁴ It must be remembered that culture, behavior, and the resulting material culture are not entities which are independent of one another.⁵ Quite the opposite is the case; the artifacts which define activity areas are a direct reflection of the human behavior which created and deposited them. As this is the basic premise for all archaeological investigations, it should be possible to reconstruct certain human behavior by artifact analysis, and consequently to make some inferences regarding the behavioral patterns of those who deposited them.

The Nature of Artifact Analysis

Artifact distribution patterns have been widely employed by prehistoric archaeologists to determine human behavioural patterns. Rather than relying on discrete artifacts which have been removed from their depositional context, prehistoric archaeologists have tended to subject 'activity areas' to scrutiny; that is, any place where one or more specific ancient activities were located. Activity areas usually correspond to one or more features and associated artifacts.⁶ In her comprehensive study of artifact distribution and activity areas Susan Kent undertook an in-depth look at the limitations and possibilities of artifact investigations. Combining both ethnographic and

⁴Although sculptural decorations are indeed artifacts, for the purposes of this study they shall be dealt with as decoration in Chapter Three.

⁵Susan Kent, *Analyzing Activity Areas: An Ethnoarchaeological Study of the Use of Space*. (Albuquerque 1984). 12; Irving Rouse, "Settlement Patterns in Archaeology," in *Man, Settlement and Urbanism*. (Gloucester 1972). 95-109, 99; Amos Rapoport, "Systems of Activities and Systems of Settings," in *Domestic Architecture and the Use of Space: An Interdisciplinary Cross-Cultural Study*. Susan Kent, ed. (Cambridge 1990) 9-20, 11.

⁶Robert J. Sharer and Wendy Ashmore, *Archaeology: Discovering Our Past* (Toronto 1993) 607.

archaeological research, Kent explored the use of space by three different cultural groups: Navajos, Euroamericans, and Spanish-Americans. During the course of her ethnographic research, Kent lived among modern families of all groups. In an attempt to contrast the ethnographic data, she excavated historic Navajo sites in order to compile archaeologically derived information.⁷

Kent describes an activity area as the “locus at which a particular human event occurred,” and outlines three assumptions generally made by prehistoric archaeologists when dealing with artifacts. They are as follows:

- i) Activity areas can be discerned from the content and spatial patterning of artifact assemblages;
- ii) most activity areas are gender specific;
- iii) most activity areas are mono-functional.

To these general hypotheses she adds the following corollaries:

- a) that artifacts are abandoned at the locus where they were used;
- b) that abandoned refuse at an activity area allows for interpretation of its function(s);
- c) that activity loci are usually gender specific; that activities relating to different functions are generally performed in different areas.⁸

In Kent’s ethnographic and archaeological test she reached several conclusions regarding the usefulness of artifacts in ascertaining the use of space in households. She found that they are not as reliable as the modern scholar would wish, and that the assumptions which researchers use concerning activity areas are often based on their own

⁷Kent (1884). Chapter 1 outlines the authors method and theory in detail, see especially 15ff.

⁸*Ibid.*, 1 and 2 for definition of “activity area” and for assumptions regarding activity areas.

culture's spatial patterning.⁹ Indeed, Kent found that the hypothesis that activity areas can be detected from the content and spatial patterning of artifact assemblages was not supported by her particular test groups, either archaeological or ethnographical, and she determined that they are simply one tool among many for archaeologists to use in interpreting sites.¹⁰ Essentially, Kent's study provides a solid body of data which underlines the care which must be taken in interpreting any archaeological evidence; that is, any interpretation is subject to bias and the researcher should constantly be aware of his or her own biases. Extant artifacts and features cannot give an entirely accurate picture of human behavior in and of themselves -- artifacts are simply one component of data that can be used in order to interpret human activity.

Until recently classical archaeology has not made extensive use of the hypotheses which are outlined above. Modern scholars of the Roman era are only too aware of the problems of early classical archaeology, in which the excavation of many sites was plagued with casual disregard for potentially useful, minute pieces of evidence.¹¹ While modern, scientific archaeology places a great deal of importance on systematic excavation techniques, it is a relatively recent development, and was certainly not employed in the

⁹*Ibid.*, 132. Kent hastens to point out, however, that one culture's spatial patterning need not be limited or restricted to that particular culture. *Ibid.*, 225.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 184.

¹¹Berry (1997) 187 cautions against judging the early nineteenth century excavations by modern archaeological standards.

nineteenth century.¹² Unfortunately, because of the ‘looting’ mentality of early excavators, the provenance and context of many artifacts, as well many artifacts themselves, have been lost, making activity area analysis more difficult. Re-examining the artifactual evidence of classical sites is becoming more common in studies of sites which were excavated primarily during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, and modern classical archaeologists now work under assumptions similar to those outlined by Kent, since they employ more scientific means of excavation.

While those hypotheses identified seem relatively simple and straightforward, difficulties arise when applying them to the site of Pompeii. The use of artifacts for activity area analysis was developed primarily by prehistoric archaeologists who were left with minimal architectural evidence, and a large number of single-room dwellings. The same methods can also be employed at a site such as Pompeii, where quite the opposite is the case, and where the abundance and size of architectural remains often overwhelm small, movable objects. Indeed, the difficulties in recovering information regarding artifact distribution and location from early excavation reports, such as the *Giornali degli Scavi*, have been the topic of recent scholarly discussion.¹³ The artifacts which have been recovered from the Vesuvian cities have long been the subject of specialised study;

¹²Eugene J. Dwyer, *Pompeian Domestic Sculpture: A Study of Five Pompeian Houses and Their Contents*. (Rome 1982). 13-14. For a similar observation in the paucity of interest in systematic investigation of Greek domestic architecture see Barbara Tsakirgis, “Houses and Households,” *AJA* (1996) 727-781.

¹³Penelope Allison, “Artefact Distribution and Spatial Function in Pompeian Houses,” in *The Roman Family in Italy: Status, Sentiment, Space*. Beryl Rawson and Paul Weaver, eds. (Oxford 1997) 321-354, 328. Also, Berry (1997) 186-187. Allison’s discussion of the the lack of detailed information available for artifact distribution analysis is the most critical of the recent works.

however, these generally take the form of typologies and catalogues and do not constitute a detailed study of the artifacts as they were discovered *in situ*.¹⁴ This is due in large part to the nature of the early excavations.

There are also difficulties in the nature of the site itself. The preservation of the Vesuvian town provides archaeologists with a unique sample of Roman life within the domestic context; however, it must be remembered that the eruption which preserved the town does not provide a static view of a people halted mid-stride in their day-to-day activities.¹⁵ There was a process of abandonment, possibly beginning after the AD 62 earthquake, which allowed residents to pack up their valuable belongings and to relocate.¹⁶ If a family bundled up their possessions with the intention of relocating, thereby removing them from the spaces where they would have provided evidence of room function, these would not be reflected in the archaeological remains; consequently, the dependent interpretations may not be an accurate reflection of spatial function. The relocation of Pompeian residents is in fact indicated in the archaeological record; there are a relatively small number of valuable artifacts such as jewellery and gold and silver table wares from Pompeii, which can probably be attributed to the process of abandonment.¹⁷

¹⁴Berry (1997) 186.

¹⁵For articles discussing the so-called 'Pompeii premise' see: Michael B. Schiffer, "Is there a 'Pompeii Premise' in Archaeology?" *Journal of Anthropological Research* 41 (1985)18-41; Lewis R. Binford, "Behavioral Archaeology and the 'Pompeii Premise'," *Journal of Anthropological Research* 37 (1981) 195-208.

¹⁶Allison (1992) 11-12.

¹⁷Berry (1997) 186.

Another difficulty lies in the preservation of material culture. Every site is subject to formation processes and disturbances which affect the preservation at the time of excavation.¹⁸ Pompeii is no exception and organic material comprises a large body of missing evidence. Unlike Herculaneum, where complete pieces of wooden artifacts and fixtures have been found, at Pompeii there are usually only traces of these objects. These traces generally occur in the form of metal fittings and particles of carbonized wood; seldom is there any evidence of such artifacts as clothing or food which would have made up a significant part of any Roman household.¹⁹ Hence, many of the items employed by the individuals who made up the Roman *domus* are not accurately represented in the archaeological record.

Artifactual Evidence and the Use of Space

From the textual evidence, it is clear that the Romans did not have the same definition of space which we possess today. The distinctions between places of work and places of leisure around which much of the modern, western world is patterned do not apply to the Roman *domus*; rather, the daily activities which occurred within the confines of the house correspond to a distinction of time, primarily morning and afternoon.²⁰ Again, many of the activities which were affected by this distinction of time are not

¹⁸See: M. B. Schiffer, *Formation Process of the Archaeological Record* (New Mexico 1987) for a detailed look at site creation processes.

¹⁹Berry (1997)186.

²⁰Pliny the Younger, *Ep.* 9. 36; Wallace-Hadrill (1994) 47. This time distinction manifests itself in the arrangement of room as well, an aspect which is discussed in Chapter Two.

represented in the archaeological evidence.

Artifactual evidence can only be taken so far when attempting to determine room function. Kent's third assumption regarding activity areas is that they are mono-functional. While this may prove true regarding a small area of a space where an activity occurred, it cannot be applied to all rooms in a Roman houses.²¹ Michele George has examined the complexities involved in the social structure of the extended family of the *paterfamilias* and the placement in the *domus*.²² She points out that the present definition of the so-called 'nuclear' family is not applicable to the Roman household, which might consist of four main groups: the owner's family, clients, extended family, and servile *familia*.²³ It would therefore be shortsighted indeed to assume that rooms in Roman houses were mono-functional.

The task of placing these groups within the walls of the house is not an easy one, since the articulation of social space is not always reflected in the artifacts and the features. For example, the many tasks performed by the slave are not always evident in domestic buildings. The Roman house was designed to reflect the social system of the élite, more specifically the social position of the master himself, and the activities and status of slaves can become lost in the preservation and interpretation of household

²¹Berry (1997) 185.

²²Michele George, "Repopulating the Roman House," in *The Roman Family in Italy: Status, Sentiment, Space*. Beryl Rawson and Paul Weaver, eds. (Oxford 1997) 299-319, 299. See also Wallace-Hadrill, 1994, especially Ch. 3: "The Articulation of the House," 38-64.

²³Wallace-Hadrill (1994) 38.

contents.²⁴ Generally, scholars bookmark service areas, such as kitchens and stables, where the more menial tasks of the household were carried out, as slave quarters. Likewise, worship, as indicated by fixed *lararia*, is yet another activity which occurred in the kitchens at Pompeii, further demonstrating the varied functions of a room.²⁵ Furthermore, a lack of evidence in the extant archaeological data does not preclude speculation about other activities which logically may have occurred in these spaces, such as a popular game perhaps played by slave children in an unoccupied corner of the kitchen.

The aforementioned danger of defining a space as mono-functional if relying on the archaeological remains alone must be reiterated. The writings of Vitruvius and Pliny make it clear that the multiplicity of functions carried out in rooms could vary not only throughout the day, but also seasonally, in order to facilitate the private and public activities of the *dominus*.²⁶ Amos Rapoport asserts that it is not sufficient, nor particularly helpful, to look at and identify single activity areas, but that it is necessary to consider activity systems, since systems of activities occur within systems of settings. As defined by Rapoport, a setting is an environment which reminds its occupants of appropriate behaviour patterns which may take place within that environment.²⁷

²⁴Michele George, "Servus and domus: the slave in the Roman house," in *Domestic Space in the Roman World: Pompeii and Beyond*. Ray Laurence and Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, eds. (Portsmouth 1997) 15-24, 16.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 18-19. Also, George (1997) 316-317.

²⁶Pliny the Younger, *Ep.* 2.17; 5.6; Vitruvius, *De Arch.* 6.4.

²⁷Rapoport (1990) 12.

Similarly, the all-encompassing setting of the *domus* can subsequently be viewed as having smaller settings which are defined by rooms. A system of activities pertaining to meal preparation is primarily confined within the setting of the kitchen, but a larger system of related activities, such as serving the meal in the *triclinium*, expands from the setting of the kitchen to encompass other settings within the *domus*. When viewed in these terms, the entire Roman *domus* is a setting which has certain, appropriate behaviour patterns which were allowed to occur inside its walls. Certain behaviour which is appropriate to the *cubiculum* would be unacceptable in the *tablinum*. The actions which are appropriate to the various settings found within the Roman house are communicated to the occupants and visitors through a pre-ordained set of clues in the setting; some of these have already been discussed. For example, permanent fixtures such as beds, hearths, cisterns, or *lararia* direct the occupants of the house as to what behaviour is appropriate to which space; smaller, movable artifacts are the remains of specified activities carried out within appropriate settings. Not all behaviour patterns and activity areas are necessarily governed by environmental determinism. While a space may have been set aside for a primary function, it is more than likely that other activities were also carried out within its confines. Evidence for occasional activities carried out in rooms can be seen in artifacts which were perhaps discarded or forgotten, but it is often difficult, if not impossible, to identify them as such. For example, does a woman's cosmetic instrument found in a *triclinium* indicate that the space was occasionally used by females of the house to apply their make-up, or was the article merely set down in a distracted moment and forgotten there?

It becomes clear that to view artifacts and features as a completely reliable tool in determining room function would be somewhat short-sighted. Just as it is dangerous to rely only on wall painting or textual evidence, we cannot rely solely on artifacts to give a complete picture of room function in Pompeian houses. Allison outlines the pitfalls of relying exclusively on 'traditional' sources of evidence -- textual, structural and decorative -- while almost summarily ignoring the wealth of data which can in fact be harvested from artifacts.²⁸ Despite her rather stern accusations against earlier generations of scholars who ignored or overlooked a large body of evidence, she herself fails to amalgamate all of the data in her interpretation of Pompeian houses.²⁹

Artifactual Evidence for Room Function from Five Pompeian Houses

For the purposes of this thesis, analysis of the artifacts and features found in five Pompeian houses has been conducted on two levels. First, the reader is directed to view the detailed catalogue at the back. An attempt was made to document the finds which were encountered in each room of each house. As explained in the introduction to the catalogue, documentation is as complete as possible given the nature of early excavation reports found in the *Giornali degli Scavi* and the *Notizie degli Scavi*. A great deal of information on the finds was found in Allison's Ph.D dissertation. Second, only those features, artifacts, and artifact assemblages which aid in identifying room function, or those which appear as anomalies, are discussed below, since the scope of this thesis does

²⁸Allison (1997) 321-322.

²⁹*Ibid.* See especially *Volume II* for an interpretation of the study group.

not allow for a detailed discussion of every artifact discovered in each room.

Certain factors affect the documented finds in the catalogue as well as in the following discussion. Many houses have evidence of looting which took place prior to initial excavations. Since some artifacts were moved by excavators, or removed altogether, the evidence which we have today is clearly incomplete. Moreover, the nature of the early excavations themselves present something of a problem, specifically in the case of activity area analysis. Precise recording of artifact provenance was not a priority, and researchers often have to be content with vague references to findspots.³⁰ These factors must be recognised as limiting the potential for artifact analysis as a tool for interpreting room function at Pompeii. On the other hand, features create less of a problem since they are non-movable; they did not attract the attention of looters and they remain fixed today, so that their precise location is not left open to interpretation.

A survey of artifact types is perhaps the best place to begin a study such as this. All archaeological sites yield artifacts, ranging from the expected to the unexpected. To be certain, every excavator's joy (or nightmare) is to uncover a large quantity of ceramic vessels and vessel fragments. Not only is pottery easily datable through stylistic or scientific means, it is also virtually indestructible and is therefore found in all houses, making it eminently useful on any archaeological site. The five houses studied here yielded the expected range of utilitarian ceramics, from *amphorae* to *mortaria* to

³⁰ Parslow provides a detailed look at the early excavations of Pompeii (as well as Herculaneum and Stabiae) and the first attempts to recover information regarding the urban fabric through a more systematic approach to archaeological research. He also makes clear the enormous information which was lost by those who sought to recover only precious antiquities. [Christopher Charles Parslow, *Rediscovering Antiquity: Karl Weber and the Excavation of Herculaneum, Pompeii, and Stabiae* (Cambridge 1998)].

examples of *terra sigillata*. The general distribution of ceramics is also as surprisingly, they appear in all areas of the house; ceramics and ceramic fragments are highly movable and serve a variety of functions in all areas of the household. Indeed, it would be more surprising if the opposite were the case and a large number of ceramic artifacts were not found. Ceramic vessels were so widely employed that a distinct absence of utilitarian ceramic vessels should be viewed as something of an exception, and should certainly raise questions for the researcher.

In the five houses studied here ceramic vessels and vessel fragments seem fewer in number than would be expected, and provide little evidence of room function except in a few instances. More often than not pottery remains are fragmentary and their form unidentifiable. While pottery is eminently useful as a method of dating sites and assemblages, if the vessel shape is indiscernible and therefore its function, it reveals virtually nothing about room function. Furthermore, the datability of ceramics is not particularly pressing at Pompeii where a solid *terminus ante quem* can be assigned because of the A.D. 79 eruption. In cases where vessels remain intact, smaller vessels such as juglets and dishes are easily moved and are not good indicators of activity areas. In contrast, larger utilitarian and commercial vessels, such as *amphorae*, are more reliable indicators of room function; not only are they rather unwieldy objects, but they are heavy when filled and hence not as portable as their smaller ceramic counterparts.

The amount of bronze cookware found in the houses was also somewhat surprising. With the exception of the *Casa dei Ceii* (cat. #4; fig.4), bronze seems to have been a popular medium for cooking wares. It is not surprising that Pompeian residents

preferred bronze for their cooking needs; not only is it a good conductor of heat, but it is also a relatively cheap metal. The distribution of bronze cooking implements is not as widespread as that of ceramic utilitarian vessels. As with the nature and distribution of ceramic vessels, the findspots of these artifacts give very little information regarding room function. Once again, the same factors apply: they are extremely portable and were subject to the same excavation techniques as their ceramic counterparts. They were, however, slightly more valuable, and therefore might have been more likely to draw the attention of looters, and were probably among the first objects to have been removed from the houses by residents who were moving out of the city.

Glass objects were found in all of the houses in this study. Because of the nature of the material they tended to be small and often luxury items. Glass artifacts range from storage flasks, cups, ointment jars, bottles, small *amphorae*, and decorative items such as beads. Again, glass is easily broken and many of the remains are fragmentary and unidentifiable, making it difficult to deduce the type of vessel and its use, which consequently, limits its use in identifying room function. The distribution of glass objects is haphazard, and no clearly discernible pattern emerges in any of the houses. In a few instances there is a concentration of glass objects; however, in each of these instances it is probably the case that the objects were being stored in these spaces, indicating either a primary or secondary room function. Perhaps a little more poignant with regard to human activity are the lamps found with the skeletons in rooms L and 43 in the *Casa del Menandro* (cat. #1; fig. 1); they likely provided the last rays of light as the refugees sought shelter while the volcano erupted around them.

A similar survey could be conducted of the less common artifact types such as furniture fixtures, coins, and personal ornaments, but would yield little information regarding room function. Attempting to identify primary, secondary, and occasional room function in houses cannot be accomplished by surveying artifact types; a single artifact provides more information about the artifact itself and does not necessarily shed any light on the human activity which placed it there, nor does it provide a great deal of information regarding room function.

Lamps are a good example of the portability of artifacts. Not only are they small, but presumably they were used with great regularity throughout the entire *domus*. Similarly, they are an excellent example of an artifact type which can tell virtually nothing about the function of a room. A lamp left behind in a room can only tell scholars that someone once used it to light their way. Loomweights provide an excellent example of artifact movability. Not surprisingly, loomweights are found scattered throughout the five houses studied here. This cannot be viewed as a positive indication that weaving was an activity carried out in every room (although there is also no evidence that this was not the case), but rather that their spherical shape caused them to be spread throughout the house by both the occupants of the house and also by anyone who came after the burial of the city.

The creation of artifact typologies has been the focus of almost all artifact analysis carried out in past Pompeian scholarship.³¹ While this is certainly a useful exercise, it is limited in the amount of information it provides regarding human activity. Typologies

³¹Berry (1997) 186.

tend to divorce the artifact from its findspot, thereby essentially removing the human behavior which placed it there in the first place. Using artifact typologies to ascertain the date of the artifact, and by context the surrounding material, is the best a researcher can hope for. The identification of room function cannot rely on artifact types. The usefulness of artifacts for identifying room function lies not in individual artifacts, but in artifact assemblages. By using the data compiled in the catalogue, features and artifact assemblages do come together to give an indication of room function.

***Casa del Menandro* (cat. #1; fig. 1)**

By far the largest house in this study group is the *Casa del Menandro*. With sixty rooms/areas in this domestic complex, the range of activity represented by the finds extends from the purely domestic to the commercial. Problems arise, however, in attempting to analyse the finds from this house. Maiuri published only those finds which he considered extraordinary, and discrepancies arise between provenances of recorded finds in the *Giornali* and those published by Maiuri.³² The extant artifacts and features from the *Casa del Menandro* provide a great deal of information pertaining to virtually all aspects of the domestic activities of those who lived there; however, the development of the house from the date of its construction to its final phase is one which is not easily understood. There is a chronological dichotomy found within the house and a clear shift

³²A. Maiuri, *La Casa del Menandro e il suo Tesoro di Argentia* (Rome 1933). Although the *Giornali degli Scavi* were unavailable for this study, Allison mentions the discrepancies which arise between Maiuri's work and initial publications of finds; she also notes that some objects may have been moved for display purposes. Allison (1992) 158.

in the focus of activity from the original *atrium* to the peristyle complex.³³ This in itself poses a more complicated base from which to determine room function.

The artifacts and features found in this house represent a variety of human behaviour; this is partly because the *domus* was large enough to accommodate activities for which other, smaller houses simply did not have the space. The *Casa del Menandro* underwent a series of construction phases from the late third B.C. to the third quarter of the first century A.D. in various areas of the house.³⁴ In the changing format of the house it is clear that the function of rooms changed according to the needs of the homeowner and many of these are represented by the artifacts and especially by the features. Ling identifies at least three major stages in the expansion. The first consisted of the acquisition of the peristyle and the absorption of the *Casa del Fabbro* in the second half of the second century B.C., which created a double-*atrium* complex; the second witnessed the expansion of the peristyle complex to its present extent, with its various baths, *exedrae*, and residential and reception rooms in the third quarter of the first century B.C.; the third and final stage saw the addition of the stableyard complex.³⁵ There is no doubt that the owners of the *Casa del Menandro* were affluent Pompeian residents; however, their identity is a subject of much speculation.³⁶ Whether the house remained in the

³³Roger Ling, *The Insula of the Menander at Pompeii. Volume I: The Structures*. (Oxford 1997) 47.

³⁴Ling (1997). Ling divides his discussion of the *Casa del Menandro* into four sections. For a breakdown of construction phases of the *atrium* complex see 58; for the peristyle complex see 91-92; for the kitchen quarter see 103-105; for the stableyard and staff quarters see 131-132.

³⁵*Ibid.*, 135.

³⁶Ling (1997) 142-144; also Wallace-Hadrill (1994) 19.

ownership of the same family throughout its history is also uncertain; however, it is clear that either the house in its original conception did not meet the needs of the family during their continued ownership, or that new owners found that the *domus* did not meet their needs and proceeded to remodel the dwelling.

Identifying activity areas by using the features and artifacts uncovered in the *Casa del Menandro* is perhaps easier because of the clear division of space. Due to the development of the house and clear changes in the use of space, assessing the functional structure of the house is more easily done in the final phase of the house.³⁷ For example, it is clear that the western area of the house served a utilitarian function which was contained within one cohesive unit. Rooms 51, 52 and 54 were accessed only by a long corridor, 53. Together, the features and artifacts indicate that the nature of this area of the house was a service area. The latrine in room 51 probably served those who worked in the kitchen area of room 52, which is identified by the hearth along the north and east walls and by the sink in the south-western corner; pottery fragments also underline the use of this room as a food preparation area. The stove found in room 54 provided heat for those using this area, further evidenced by the fuel discovered in the north-eastern corner of this room. The garden area (50) may have served as a kitchen garden.³⁸

The same cohesion of evidence is found in the stable area in the south-eastern quadrant of the *Casa del Menandro*. Here, the identification of the stable area is managed

³⁷The plan of the *Casa del Menandro* and its implications regarding room function will be discussed more fully in Chapter Two.

³⁸Ling (1997) 138.

with little difficulty. The masonry platform along the western wall of room 29 was no doubt a manger, and the wagons, attachments, and harness from vehicles, and bronze bells are all artifacts which one would expect to find in a stable because of their association with mules and horses. The courtyard (34) seemed to have served as a space for vehicles to manoeuvre through and load or unload goods. The forty-three stacked *amphorae* found in the courtyard attest to the area's use as a storage space. It would not be presumptuous to identify the small room, 31, in the corner of the stable as a living area for a stable attendant since a latrine and bench (perhaps a bed?) were located along the south wall were discovered. The pile of lime in room 32 also underlines the secondary function of this quadrant as a storage space; the lime was likely used in the various remodeling and construction projects which the *domus* was undergoing at the time of the eruption.

The nature of the artifacts which were discovered in the so-called *atriolum* (41) of the *Casa del Menandro* provide an interesting example of the levels of room function which can be deduced through features and artifacts. It was suggested that this self-contained area of the house was perhaps the home of a favoured freedman who once belonged to the owner of the *domus*.³⁹ Indeed, the area comprising 41, 42, 43, 44, and 45 has its own entrance separate from the rest of the house, thereby affording it a degree of privacy. As such, it may have functioned as a unit entirely separate from the rest of the home. Room 41 is composed of the usual architectural accoutrements expected in an *atrium*, such as the *impluvium* in the centre of the courtyard for the collection of

³⁹*Ibid.*, 138-139.

rainwater, and it is located in such a way to provide access to the rest of the home. What is surprising in the artifacts uncovered in this room are the many and varied activities which they seem to represent. The chest for storing vessels and containers is not uncommon, since it has already been established that *atria* functioned as storage areas to some extent. If this area of the house was occupied by someone employed by the homeowner, there would be no need to maintain the *atrium* as a reception area, which could account for the farming implements, the eight iron hoes and an iron rake which were being kept there at the time of the eruption. Perhaps somewhat more uncommon is the presence of a bed in the south-western corner of the room, which would indicate that either it too was being stored in the area, or that someone was using the space as a sleeping chamber as well. Whatever the case, it is clear that the function of this space changed over time. Where once it would have served as a traditional *atrium* fulfilling the traditional functions, room 41 now housed very diverse activities. So too the function of room 45; what may once have served as a kitchen in this small home was functioning as a provisional latrine instead. This is also seen in room 49 in the area east of the peristyle. The six truncated *amphorae* filled with lime found in this room of the bath suite provide evidence for a change in room function over time. If this area was still operating as a bathing facility at the time of the eruption, it would not have been used to store materials for building.

***Casa degli Amorini Dorati* (cat. #2; fig. 2)**

Constructed on a larger scale is the *atrium*-peristyle house, the *Casa degli*

Amorini Dorati. It consists of twenty six rooms/areas and there are many which are surprisingly devoid of artifacts. Once again, it is uncertain whether this is a case of poor excavation or if it is the consequence of looting; the excavator of this house reportedly considered the house heavily disturbed.⁴⁰ Since two skeletons were found above the south side of the *atrium*, it would suggest that the house was occupied at the time of eruption; however, because of the lack of finds related to domestic activity, this may be a hasty assumption. The skeletons could have been refugees of the eruption and not necessarily occupants of the house.

The area of the house which yielded the vast majority of the finds was the peristyle (f); it is also the largest area of the house, so this is perhaps not surprising. The majority of the finds from the peristyle are decorative in nature, and primarily comprised statuary fragments.⁴¹ The *amphorae*, glass storage flask, two bronze bosses from a chest or a cupboard, and the two small glass *amphorae* suggest that the peristyle was a handy place to store objects for later use.

The features located in the peristyle of the *Casa degli Amorini Dorati* represent secondary functions of the space. The *lararium* aedicula against the north wall and the shrine in the south-eastern corner indicate that worship was carried out in this space. The rectangular pool located in the centre of the garden would be a convenient source of water for the plants which grew in the gardens as well as an aesthetic addition to provide diners with a pleasant view while they ate. Any evidence for dining in the garden was

⁴⁰Allison (1992) 347.

⁴¹See Chapter Three for a more detailed discussion on the sculptural decoration of this peristyle.

restricted to a single bronze *patera* which was found in the peristyle.

The relatively low number of ceramic finds throughout the house is somewhat perplexing. Other than two inscribed *amphorae* in room z, a pottery jug in room g, an amphora base and an unspecified number of *amphorae* in the peristyle (f), no other utilitarian ceramics were recorded. Two explanations could account for the noted lack of ceramics: it could be an oversight in recording more mundane finds, or the house was largely unoccupied at the time of the eruption.⁴² The latter seems the more likely explanation.

Room v can be unequivocally identified as a kitchen due to the fixtures found there. The hearth along the north wall and the circular oven located in the room indicate that it was used for cooking. There is no artifactual evidence, however, to support that the kitchen was in use in A.D. 79; indeed, there were no recorded artifacts in the room at all. Similarly, room x can firmly be identified as a latrine by the masonry seat in the north-western corner of the space.

***Casa del Principe de Napoli* (cat. #3; fig. 3)**

The *Casa del Principe di Napoli* comprises fifteen rooms/areas which were considerably more cluttered with artifacts than the *Casa degli Amorini Dorati*. Unlike the latter, which was probably unoccupied at the time of the eruption, the discovery of a skeleton in room c and especially the food remains in room h seem to indicate that this house was occupied in A.D. 79. The nature of the finds throughout the whole of the

⁴²Allison (1992) 357.

house is related almost entirely to domestic activities. While the presence of *amphorae* in the *atrium* may suggest to some that commercial activity was also taking place, I would hesitate to ascribe activities of an industrial nature to this house based merely on the presence of *amphorae*.⁴³ The twelve glass storage flasks which were found in the same room indicate that the *atrium* was indeed used as a place of storage. It is clear from both textual and artifactual evidence that the *atrium* was host to many activities, including storage, and there is no other evidence to support the idea of commercial activity elsewhere in the structure.

Room h of this small house had a large number of artifacts related to food preparation and utilitarian activities such as washing. The amphora, bronze casserole dish, pottery jugs and plates and chicken and sheep bones suggest that either this room was where the actual cooking for the household took place, or that food stuffs and preparation items were being stored here. The two bronze basins were likely used for washing, or, as in the case of the pottery basin which contained a fatty substance, for the storage of food stuffs. There is no hearth to support the possibility that food was being cooked in this room. Conversely, the artifacts from room e located just off the *atrium* do suggest that this space functioned as a cooking area. Although there was no fixture which resembled a hearth, the large bronze brazier, bronze cooking pot, and the two bronze jugs seem to support this assumption.

Evidence for other utilitarian activities can be found in the portico. A significant number of loomweights were found in the portico (l) of the *Casa del Principe di Napoli*,

⁴³*Ibid.*, 374.

and are evidence that a loom was either housed here or that weaving took place in this space. The latter possibility may seem unlikely since it was a likely a high traffic area at certain times of the day, and thus not conducive to such a utilitarian task.

***Casa dei Ceii* (cat. #4; fig. 4)**

The *Casa dei Ceii* is a modest *atrium* house composed of fourteen rooms/areas, many of which were reportedly subjected to extensive looting before excavation took place.⁴⁴ Based on finds analysis, however, Allison suggests that the house was in a downgraded state before the eruption of Vesuvius. Another possibility is that the inhabitants had sufficient time to systematically remove much of its contents during the period of tremors before the actual volcanic eruption.⁴⁵ Indeed, the paucity of finds, especially in the *atrium*, would seem to support one of the above scenarios. Since the house is relatively small, emptying it of its contents would not have posed an enormous task.

In the *Casa dei Ceii atrium* (b) the diversity of the artifacts found in the built-in cupboard under the stairway as well as those from a wooden chest underline the notion that *atria* of Roman houses provided convenient locations in which to store goods. The diversity of finds found within the cupboards and chest attest to them being stored there; however, they also seem to be items which would have been used daily. For example, the razor and conch shell and the variety of lamps are simple, every-day items which could

⁴⁴M. Della Corte, *Notizie degli Scavi* (Rome 1913) 250.

⁴⁵Allison (1992) 316.

have been placed in the *atrium* as a result of daily tidying.⁴⁶

The artifacts and features found in room g also provide evidence for a room which functioned as a storage area. The shelves which lined the walls along with the remains of cupboards or chests in the south-eastern and south-western corners of the room attest to the storage function of the room. The nature of the artifacts, although not significant in number, also suggest that they were not being used and were stored there. The silver and bronze water heater was probably not used on a daily basis nor were the two tools found in the room; the unused wooden box could have been placed in the room for safe keeping.

Room i of the *Casa dei Ceii* poses an interesting example in which features and artifacts do not complement one another. While the fixtures clearly indicate an intended, primary room function of a kitchen, the artifacts could suggest a change in room function in its final phase; the vessels found in this room are not related to cooking.⁴⁷ Also noteworthy are the remains of statuary which were discovered in this room. This is indicative of either a pre-eruption change in room function, or a removal of the statuary to this space. The former possibility seems the most probable since the remains are not intact; they were perhaps moved here because they had been broken elsewhere in the house.

***Casa della Ara Massima* (cat. #5; fig. 5)**

Also an *atrium* house, the *Casa della Ara Massima* has thirteen room/areas, many

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 310.

⁴⁷Allison (1992) 312.

of which had no recorded finds. Whether or not this house was occupied at the time of the eruption is unclear from the artifactual evidence. Unlike the *Casa del Principe di Napoli* (cat. #3; fig. 3), the artifacts were not of an overwhelmingly domestic nature. Indeed, the finds range from an extensive number of glass objects found in various areas to more delicate objects like the bone hairpin and gold earring found in room f. This diversity of artifacts could indicate a hasty departure from the premises, or that the occupants simply did pack up all their belongings when they vacated the premises.

In room e of the *Casa della Ara Massima* two rows of shelving were discovered along the west wall. A fixture of this nature suggests that the room was being used to keep objects in an orderly manner. Indeed, the nature of the finds from this room would suggest that they were being stored in this area. A handful of glass and ceramic vessels, a ceramic lid devoid of its bottom half, basins not needed elsewhere in the home, and three bronze needles tucked into a wooden box (evidenced by the bronze lock, boss, and handle ring) for safe keeping were among the artifacts discovered in this room.

In the *Casa della Ara Massima* a high concentration of glass objects was unearthed in room f, which contained fifteen glass flasks, three glass cups, and a small glass *aryballos*. These objects, along with the remains of a chest, twenty terracotta lamps, a set of bronze scales, and bronze plates indicate that this particular room was being used for storage purposes at the time of the eruption. Similarly, the two rows of shelving along the western wall of room e would also seem to suggest a storage function. The possibility is substantiated by the odd, largely un-related assortment of artifacts from this room as well as the remains of a wooden container presumably used to store objects

as well. The quantity of terracotta lamps may seem high for a domestic dwelling; however, if the nature of the artifact is taken into account it is perhaps not so unusual. Lamps, especially pottery ones, are easily broken and would have been widely employed in all areas of the home. To purchase and keep handy a quantity of lamps may have simply been practical.

The contents of room n are entirely related to cooking activities. At first glance, the artifact assemblage from this room would seem suitable to a kitchen; however, there is no hearth or other feature which would substantiate this as its primary function. Rather, because the room is adjacent to the kitchen identified as room k by the hearth in the south-western corner, this room probably functioned as a storage area for kitchen-related goods. Moreover, since room m has been identified as a *taberna* it could also have been a handy location to store items needed in this place of business. Indeed the pottery and bronze jugs, bronze basin, bronze cooking pot, bronze casserole dish, and especially the large bronze krater all seem to be items suited to activities related to running a *taberna*.

Conclusions

Specific settings were created within the Pompeian house in order to support a system of activities. Various spaces of the home were set aside to fulfill certain functions, and these functions are sometimes defined by the features and the artifacts which were found in the spaces. It is no difficult task to identify the primary, intended function of certain areas of the *Casa del Menandro* (cat. #1; fig. 1) such as the stable area

in the south-eastern quadrant, the bath area, and the service area in the south-western side through the features and the artifacts which were discovered in these spaces.

Unfortunately it is not always so easy to identify room function when the artifacts or artifact assemblages yield little information concerning human activity.

In room 52 of the *Casa del Menandro* (cat. #1; fig. 1) the hearth along the north and east walls and the sink in the south-west corner indicate that the room functioned primarily as a kitchen; however, in a house of this size one would expect to find more debris relating to cooking activities than the unspecified number of pottery fragments which were recorded in this area.⁴⁸ Similarly, in the smaller *Casa del Principe di Napoli* (cat. #3; fig. 3) there are a plethora of domestic materials scattered throughout the house. Our biases anticipate a distribution pattern which is consistent with our own ideas of spatial function; that is, cooking pots are in the kitchen, personal adornments in the bedroom, and *amphorae* in a storage room. In some respects the distribution of domestic artifacts in the *Casa del Principe di Napoli* (cat. #3; fig. 3) seems inconsistent with the expected pattern.⁴⁹ Modern conceptions of the use of space unfortunately filter through to interpretations of ancient spatial function.

As stated above, identifying occasional room use is the most difficult challenge. This is largely because it is based upon supposition and speculation. For example, in

⁴⁸It is also not specified if these pottery sherd are those of utilitarian cooking wares, or if they are *amphorae* fragments, sherds of *terra sigillata*, *mortaria*, etc.

⁴⁹Allison (1992) 374 comments on the discovery of cooking utensils everywhere except in the kitchen of this dwelling and suggests that the occupancy was unusual and in a period of disruption after the A.D. 62 earthquake. The evidence from wall-painting would suggest that the house was indeed in a downgraded status after it had been painted in the 4th style (see Chapter 3), but I would hesitate to say that the domestic items scattered throughout the house are unexpected.

room 36 of the *Casa del Menandro* (cat. #1; fig. 1) a bronze needle was discovered. This could indicate that the room may have been used on occasion for sewing. Alternatively, its presence there could indicate absolutely nothing about its owner; it may simply have fallen from an upper storey of the house; it may have been dropped by someone passing through the room; because of its small size, it may have simply been moved accidentally by excavators. Hence, the needle in this room alone is not enough evidence to make any certain conclusions.

As a result of the multiplicity of activities that could plausibly be carried out in any one space of the Roman domestic environment, two things become clear when examining the fixtures and artifacts of these spaces. First, fixtures are the best possible indicators for intended primary room function. A hearth indicates cooking; a latrine indicates defecation; a masonry bed indicates sleeping. Since these fixtures were non-movable they suggest that the activity they represent was taking place with some frequency in the area in which they are found; however, this assumption can only be applied with any certainty to the date of their construction. Second, artifacts can be representative of all levels of room function. When an artifact assemblage correlates to a fixture in an area, it helps in identifying primary room function; when an artifact assemblage appears displaced, but represents an identifiable activity area, such as in room e of the *Casa del Principe di Napoli* (cat. #3; fig. 3), it is indicative of either a secondary use of space, or a possible change in room function. Artifacts provide the most conclusive evidence for how a room functioned at the time the house went out of use. Finally, it is plausible that the most difficult level of room use, occasional, can be

identified by seemingly random artifacts.

CHAPTER 2

Room Arrangement for Determining Room Function

An examination of the arrangement of space in the typical Pompeian house can lead to a better understanding of how these spaces were used by the occupants. The arrangement of space within a domestic environment can be held up for scrutiny on several levels. First, activities and occurrences within specifically allocated spaces may be illuminated by the architectural settings since they were created to facilitate certain functions. Second, in the larger spectrum of Roman society, and specifically the Roman family, how the family used the spaces in their house may be a reflection of societal underpinnings and frameworks. The primary, secondary, and occasional uses of a room can be at least partially reconstructed by examining the architectural setting in which the Roman family functioned as a unit. The potential of architectural arrangement in determining room function will be the focus of the first part of this chapter and the specific arrangement of rooms in the houses studied in this thesis will be the focus of the second part.

As L. Nevett points out, the organisation of household space is generally created in order to provide a setting for certain behavioral patterns; conversely, the structural

setting of any environment can also influence the activities carried out within it.¹ As a result, spatial organisation can be examined in regard to both the arrangement of rooms in relation to each other, as well as the architectural or structural characteristics of a room. It must be remembered that the family which functioned within the confines of the domestic space did not remain static over time; indeed, the opposite is true. As patterns of family life and social relations evolved, so too did the internal structure of the home, but this may not always be reflected in the archaeological evidence.² In examining the extent to which architecture can be used in determining room function, researchers have two sources of evidence at their disposal: the literary evidence and the archaeological evidence. While literary and archaeological sources are useful in examining architectural arrangements of the Roman house, both have problems inherent in them; the former will be discussed first.

Literary Evidence

Although literary evidence has come under some attack in recent scholarly works, it has been wisely pointed out that it would be foolish to set aside a vast body of evidence which is available to researchers.³ The textual evidence, more specifically, the works of Vitruvius, Varro, and Pliny the Younger, is helpful in that it provides the names of the

¹Lisa Nevett, "Perceptions of Domestic Space in Roman Italy," in *The Roman Family in Italy: Status, Sentiment, Space*. Beryl Rawson and Paul Weaver, eds. (Oxford 1997) 281-298, 282.

²Brown (1986) 567.

³For the folly of relying on literary evidence see Allison (1992) 12-13; arguing against its exclusion as a valid source see Nevett (1997)285.

various rooms and, in a few instances, describes what activities occurred there; however, as is always the caution when dealing with textual evidence, the biases of the writer must be taken into account.⁴ Other Latin writers also refer to the rooms of the Roman house in various extant passages, but none provide as much evidence as the three authors discussed in more detail below and will only be mentioned in passing here. Works by authors such as Cicero, Petronius, Seneca, and Martial mention some of the names we commonly attach to spaces of the Pompeian house; however, they often cloud what we perceive as the primary function of the space. Even the poet Virgil mentions the *fauces* as the entrance point to the Underworld in three different times, but since the use is metaphorical there is no architectural definition of the space.⁵

Pompeian scholars are most familiar with the vocabulary of domestic spaces assigned by August Mau in his assessment of the ‘typical’ Pompeian house (fig.6).⁶ Mau clearly and succinctly labels his schematised plan of a house employing familiar terminology: *vestibulum*, *fauces*, *atrium*, *impluvium*, *alae*, *tablinum*, *andron*, *peristylum*, and *exedra*. Some terminology, such as *cubiculum* or *triclinium*, both well-known and entrenched in the terminology of the Roman domestic dwelling, are not present on this plan. When exposed to a critical examination both the sources and the physical evidence

⁴Vitruvius, *De Architectura*, 6 and 7; Varro, *De Lingua Latina*, 5, 161-162; Pliny the Younger, *Ep* 2, 17.

⁵Virgil, *Georgics*, 4.467 and *Aeneid*, 6.201; 6.273. Eleanor Winsor Leach undertakes a detailed look at the vocabulary of the domestic buildings and the architectural evidence for them in “Oecus on Ibycus: Investigating the Vocabulary of the Roman House,” in *Sequence and Space in Pompeii*. S. Bon and R. Jones, eds. (Oxford 1997) 50-72, 51.

⁶August Mau, *In Leben und Kunst* (1908) 252.

reveal that these terms have been used far too casually by past scholars.

The vocabulary commonly used to describe the architecture of the Roman house and its relation to room function has recently been the focus of re-examination. Eleanor Leach surveyed the extant literary works in an attempt “to refine and qualify what we think we already know,” and to illuminate discrepancies between the terminology and the archaeological material. In her lexical investigations she finds many contradictions between the archeological evidence and the proposed use of space as recorded by ancient authors; the prescribed uses of space as dictated by extant sources does not always seem to be reflected in the architectural arrangement. She also found that for Mau’s series of rooms which label the Pompeian house there was little to reinforce the authority with which the present terminology is still employed.⁷ Hence, underlying reasons for room arrangement in terms of access and features are not always clear. This is illustrated nicely by a similar investigation.

Andrew Riggsby has undertaken a discussion of *cubicula* in Roman houses.⁸ He ultimately identifies six primary, secondary, and occasional associations with the *cubiculum* and human activity. They are: rest, sex, adultery, controlled display of art, murder and suicide, and reception.⁹ Riggsby’s examination, while primarily restricted to literary accounts, does take in the other available evidence found in decoration, architecture, and artifacts. While Romans themselves wrote on what activities occurred

⁷Leach (1997) 51-53.

⁸Andrew M. Riggsby, “‘Public’ and ‘private’ in Roman culture: the case of the *cubiculum*,” *JRA* 10 (1997) 36-56.

⁹*Ibid.*, 37-41.

within the confines of the *cubiculum*, the room arrangement yields little evidence which attests to their occurrence. Physical evidence for room function can be found primarily in the remains of beds such as niches or furniture fittings and wall paintings can attest to a controlled display of art; however, the other activities identified by Riggsby are not structurally represented.¹⁰

The Latin authors mentioned above who provide the main sources for room terminology and even room function are Vitruvius, Varro, Pliny the Younger. The Roman architect Vitruvius in books six and seven of *De Architectura* describes not only the locations, but also the recommended dimension of the typical Roman house. He also describes how rooms should be related to one another spatially. Vitruvius even proceeds, to some extent, to delineate which areas of the house are assigned to public and private use; that is, which areas of the domestic environment were open to all and which areas required a personal invitation in order to gain admittance. Varro describes how the Latin name for some rooms stemmed from the original function they were intended to serve; Pliny the Younger guides the reader through his villa in an extant letter, and mentions many of the rooms by name.

Unfortunately, there are biases which limit the potential of these authors to identify and define the spaces of a Pompeian domestic dwelling. Vitruvius was describing what was ideal, not necessarily that which was always practical or frequently employed. Varro's main interest was the origin of Latin words and not how rooms

¹⁰See Chapter One for evidence for beds in *cubicula*; see Chapter Three for evidence of wall painting and displays of art.

interacted spatially with one another, nor what activities were commonly carried out in these spaces during his own time. The younger Pliny was attempting to entice a friend to come and see his home, and would naturally point out only the most pleasing aspects of his villa; Pliny's discussion is about a villa and not a house as is found in Pompeii. That is not to say that familiarity with the names of the most commonly referred to rooms of the Roman *domus* cannot aid in identifying room function. Frequently, however, the labels attached to spaces often indicate only a primary function and did not always take into account the other, probable activities which may have occurred in these spaces.

Similarly, the traditional nomenclature (e.g. *atrium*, *fauces*, peristyle, etc.) which is attached to spaces of the Roman house, and is so casually employed by scholars in their writing is generally based not on room function but rather on architectural or structural features which differentiate them from other spaces within the house. Some terms, such as 'peristyle', describe the physical characteristics of the space they define, but reveal nothing about the function of the space. Others, such as '*cubiculum*', refer to function, but tell little or nothing about the structural setting in which the function occurred. There are explicit as well as implicit functions imbedded within the terminology. The term '*cubiculum*' explicitly expresses the activity of lying down or sleeping; however, other activities associated with the bedroom, such as sex, can be implied but not expressed. Hence, by identifying an area or room using the terminology which has for so long been adhered to, the function of the space has already been limited. Despite these problems, the fact remains that this terminology is familiar and thus it shall be used here for ease of space identification.

Room Arrangement and Space Identification

While it is clear that architecture cannot represent every activity which was carried out in its space, it is often the arrangement and architectural and structural features of a room which have led to their identification. Bedrooms, or *cubicula*, in terms of architecture, are generally identified by their size, their location off the *atrium*, or by the presence of niches for beds. The fact that these rooms are closed would suggest functions of a private nature.¹¹ Dining rooms are often characterized by their long and narrow dimensions, since Vitruvius writes that they should be twice as long as they are wide.¹² In some cases, there is evidence for couches as well as fixtures such as hearths or small ovens which indicated that cooking was being carried out in these spaces.¹³ Pompeian *tablina* are often identified by their placement between the garden and the *atrium*; the identified rooms themselves are generally open.

Perhaps one of the largest pitfalls in employing room arrangement as a tool in identifying room function is the certainty which scholars attach to their identification. Since we have become comfortable with the placement of rooms in Pompeian houses, and the terminology used for them, most scholars have a mental plan of the locations and arrangement of the rooms in the average Pompeian dwelling. As a result of this familiarity, the expected position of the *tablinum* is the open room with a view towards the gardens; small, closed rooms off the *atrium* are generally identified as bedrooms.

¹¹Allison (1997) 336; Riggsby (1997) takes a more detailed look at the function of *cubicula*.

¹²Vitruvius, *De Arch.* 6.3.8.

¹³Allison (1997) 341.

With some rooms there is no question because of the architectural evidence; a large garden with a columned walk-way, for example, is most certainly a peristyle. But such familiarity can also be a hindrance. If we become too comfortable with the expected location and arrangement of certain room-types we may not look beyond the already established, somewhat limiting boundaries of the terminology.

Some functions, especially primary, are more than obvious. For example, the main entranceway served as an access point into the home for both occupants and visitors; stairways provided access to upper storeys; a room with a cooking hearth functioned as an area for meal preparations; a bath area served as bathing facilities. The primary function of rooms such as these are not difficult to determine; the difficulty lies in ascertaining the secondary or occasional room functions of these same spaces and others. The covered forecourt, or *atrium*, fulfilled the needs of the Roman family in a variety of ways. The *impluvium* collected rainwater for household use; the *compluvium* provided light and air for the surrounding rooms; *lararia* provided a space for religious activities. The area also functioned as an access point to other spaces of the house. The arrangement of rooms in a systematic manner around the *atrium* frequently follows the same format. Although the format for room arrangement around *atria* can vary from house to house, generally the *tablinum* is found at the back, and it is flanked by both open rooms (*alae*) and closed rooms (*cubicula* and *tablina*).¹⁴ Wooden cupboards and chests attest to the storage of utilitarian goods, and spindle whorls can attest to weaving taking

¹⁴Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "Rethinking the Roman atrium house," in *Domestic Space in The Roman World: Pompeii and Beyond*. Ray Laurence and Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, eds. (Portsmouth 1997) 219-240, 238.

place in the covered forecourt.¹⁵ The *atrium* also fulfilled other functions, however, which are not obvious in terms of room arrangement or artifactual evidence.

If the general plan of the Pompeian house was designed to facilitate the activities of its occupants, the same can be said for the layout of the rooms themselves. In the previous chapter the usefulness of features in identifying room function was explored; these are part of the arrangement of rooms and must be associated with the architecture, but will not be discussed in further detail in this chapter. It is important to first set out a succinct identification of rooms and areas most commonly found in Pompeian houses. P. Allison in her study of thirty Pompeian houses identified twenty-one room types based on a) location, relative to the *atrium*/peristyle complex, b) size, relative to house size, c) through-routes, and d) functions defined by fixtures such as hearths.¹⁶ Allison's attempt to divorce the commonly adhered to terminology from the spaces they refer to is an important one for spatial analysis; she identified a problem area and attempted to remain critical of her evidence. Allison's room definitions will be employed here, especially in the latter part of this chapter, for ease of identification. They are as follows:

1. Main entranceway (*vestibules/fauces*)
2. Room leading directly off main entranceway
3. Covered forecourt (*atrium*)
4. Small closed room off covered forecourt (*cubiculum*)
5. Open room off covered forecourt (*ala*)
6. Medium/large room off covered forecourt (*triclinium*)
7. Open room leading to garden (*tablinum*)
8. Long, narrow internal corridor
9. Main garden or peristyle (also terraces)
10. Medium/large closed room (off garden without view) (*triclinium*)

¹⁵Allison (1997) 334; Berry (1997) 193.

¹⁶Allison (1997) 328. For a detailed discussion of the room types see *Ibid.*, 333-349; also see Allison (1992).

11. Medium/large open room (off garden with view) (*oecus/exedra*)
12. Small closed room off garden
13. Small open room off garden
14. Room with cooking hearth (or associated room)
15. Latrine (entire room)
16. Service areas outside the *atrium*/peristyle complex
17. Stairway
18. Back entrance/service court or secondary gardens
19. Room at front of house open to street (shop)
20. Bath area
21. Upper storey

It is possible that each of the above room types identified by Allison originated to serve a specific, primary function. The original function of certain rooms and areas could very well be imbedded in the nomenclature scholars assign to them today, and which are partially discussed by both Vitruvius and Varro; however, it must not be assumed that this is the case.

If the articulation of the Roman house is an articulation of human activities, human behavior should be reflected in the architectural design of the home. It was suggested at the outset of this chapter that room arrangement can be viewed on two levels: their arrangement in regard to one another, and the architectural characteristics of the rooms themselves. Wallace-Hadrill suggests two axes of differentiation found in the Roman house, public/private and grand/humble, both ranging in degrees relative to the social standing of the home-owner.¹⁷ The general plan of the house is designed to facilitate a proper flow of movement throughout the home between the owner's family,

¹⁷Wallace-Hadrill (1994) 38. Vitruvius underlines the importance of constructing a dwelling according to one's station, stressing that more humble men do not need entrance courts, *tablina*, or *atria* of grand style since their social obligations would be fulfilled in the homes of others. *De Arch.* 6.5.1.

slaves, and visitors.¹⁸ A visitor to a Pompeian house was confronted with certain markers which alerted him/her to the spaces which were accessible; one of these is room arrangement. An open space such as the *atrium* could imply access to all visitors to the home; conversely, a closed area such as a *cubiculum* implies that an invitation was needed to gain access. More subtle divisions of space could be accomplished using doors, curtains, or even slaves to act as spatial divider.¹⁹ Differentiation between grand and humble is dependent not solely upon the wealth of the home-owner, but also upon the use of space. If an area is open to visitors, it is expected that the space be decorated and arranged more grandly, as befitting the social standing of the *paterfamilias*. In a like manner, if a space is set aside for menial tasks and primarily used by slaves, it is expected that the arrangement and the decoration of the space remain on a more humble scale.

Much attention has been paid to the central axis which can be seen to run through many Pompeian houses; interestingly, Vitruvius never mentions that this as a necessary or even a desired element of domestic architecture.²⁰ If looking at a plan of the 'typical' Pompeian house (see fig. 6) as illustrated by A. Mau, this visual axis becomes apparent. Upon entering the home, a visitor first entered through the vestibule/*fauces*, moved inward to the *atrium*, flanked by rooms on either side, while being able to see the peristyle by means of the *tablinum*. This *fauces-atrium-tablinum* axis, while visually pleasant, can perhaps also be the natural result of an economic use of space. While

¹⁸Wallace-Hadrill (1994) 39.

¹⁹Nevett (1997) 305.

²⁰John R. Clarke, *The Houses of Roman Italy, 100 B.C. -- A.D. 250: Ritual, Space, and Decoration*. (Oxford 1991) 2-6; George (1997) 305-306; Wallace-Hadrill (1994) 44-45.

stressing the importance of symmetry in architecture, Vitruvius also writes about the impact the environment should have on the design of a house.²¹ The majority of the houses at Pompeii are located in close proximity to one another, making them naturally extend in length, not in width, the result of which is the visual axis. E. Leach also comments on the familiar *atrium/tablinum* as a successive, visual framing of spaces. She suggests that while the view is prominent in the remains of the Pompeian house denuded of its contents and inhabitants, there would be little chance of appreciating this succession of framing elements if the *atrium* was filled with visitors and inhabitants of the house.²² Whether or not the axes were as important to the average Pompeian moving through their house daily as it seems to be to those who study the plans is perhaps debatable.

It is impossible to examine room arrangement of the Roman *domus* without considering those who inhabited the spaces. The architecture of the domestic environment had to accommodate the duties of those who made daily use of its spaces. The *paterfamilias* who presided over the Roman household had social obligations to carry out involving *clientes*; the morning ritual of the *salutatio* is often linked with the physical evidence of the *vestibulum-atrium-ala-tablinum* complex as an ideal setting for fulfilling this obligation.²³ Similarly, the daily activities of slaves, a group of occupants who are more difficult to locate, must also be taken into consideration. Not only did slaves live in the *domus*, but they also served as integral elements in the running and management of

²¹Vitruvius, *De Arch.*, 5.2.

²²Leach (1997) 56.

²³Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "The Social Structure of the Roman House," *PBSR* 56 (1988) 43-97, 55.

the house; however, the extant archaeological evidence for their placement within the home is not extensive.²⁴ M. George succinctly outlines two dominant methodologies in

within the interior of the house. First, by linking the servile
 the menial tasks which they must have performed, such as in
 activity can be discerned. Second, it is also theoretically
 within a domestic context by contrasting the areas of the house
 employed by the homeowner. In short, the larger, well decorated
 assumed to serve the functions of the house-owner in his daily
 us are assumed to be those spaces of more rustic and humble
 and duties of slaves were probably taken into account when
 constructed since their activities were supposed to be as
 the areas of the house which were frequented by the slaves of
 saps best represented by the architectural characteristics and

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ive, the activities conducted by the home-owner with regard to
 his *clientes*, such as the morning *salutatio* and the afternoon *cena*, are not represented in
 the architectural record. Indeed, there are a great number of activities which are not
 represented in the arrangement of the rooms or architectural features of a given space.
 For example, Wallace-Hadrill discusses at length the use of architectural elements in the
 Roman *domus*, such as columns and peristyles, which were intended to evoke the

²⁴George (1997) 16.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 19-20.

grandeur associated with Greek outdoor spaces.²⁶ While these architectural arrangements may represent social trends, they often say little about room function and more about the wealth of the owner and decorative trend at the time. Moreover, it is important to remember that the functions which may be defined by architectural and structural arrangements do not necessarily preclude other functions which the same space fulfilled, but for which there is no extant evidence. Columns, for example, cannot attest to the activities carried out by the *matrona* when in the covered forecourt. The elegant arrangement of Pompeian peristyles cannot always provide evidence for the numerous dinners they witnessed, or a simple pleasure stroll through their gardens.

Evidence for Room Arrangement and Room Function from Five Pompeian Houses

Although nothing can substitute for a first-hand look at the ruins themselves, a good deal of information about room arrangement can be determined through an examination of existing plans. Because of their size the *Casa del Menandro* (cat. #1; fig. 1) and the *Casa degli Amorini Dorati* (cat. #2; fig. 2) provide the most evidence for architectural characteristics and room arrangement with regard to room function. The smaller houses simply do not have as many rooms/areas on which to offer comment or analysis. In light of this, a house-by-house analysis is undertaken in order to examine the usefulness of room arrangement in identifying room function.

***Casa del Menandro* (cat. #1; fig. 1)**

²⁶Wallace-Hadrill (1994) 25-26.

Within the generous confines of the *Casa del Menandro* all of the twenty-one room types identified by Allison appear. The earliest part of the house conforms rather nicely to the *fauces-atrium-tablinum* plan and the axes which run through the house have been discussed at length by various authors.²⁷ It has been noted that this arrangement of houses conveniently facilitates many of the activities the *paterfamilias* was expected to carry out throughout the course of his day.²⁸ At first glance, the highly organised nature of the dwelling may not be apparent. Because the house was expanded over time -- so much so that it absorbed the *Casa del Fabbro* in the north-east -- the conglomeration of living and working areas may appear confusing. In terms of access, however, there seems to be a very clear division between those spaces are open to family and those areas which are dedicated to utility and commercial functions. The *Casa del Menandro* is an excellent example of how the arrangement of room and areas can be of help in identifying the function of rooms.

The *Casa del Menandro* is an exemplary case of the assumption that easily accessible rooms and areas facilitate activities of a more public nature and those with minimal, even difficult access, facilitate activities which are servile in nature. Areas which have been identified as service areas are reached only through long, narrow corridors which are located discreetly off the peristyle. Corridor 53 leads to the food-preparation area in the north-west and corridor L leads to the stable area in the south-

²⁷Clarke (1991) 14-17, discusses at length the axes which appear in the *Casa del Menandro* and the attention which has been paid to them by other authors; Ling (1997) 140, notes that the impressiveness of the axes were enhanced by this perspectival device; Wallace-Hadrill (1994) 40, also emphasises the sightlines which criss-cross the house.

²⁸Wallace-Hadrill (1988) 55.

eastern quadrant of the house. In this way, slaves could come and go between the nucleus of the house and their work areas without drawing undue attention to their movements and activities.

One of the activities which took place in the gardens of Pompeian houses was dining and food preparation. Evidence for this is found in the type of plants occupying the gardens, bone and charcoal refuse from consumed foods, and evidence for outdoor *triclinia*.²⁹ Two gardens were found in the *Casa del Menandro*; one was the uncommonly large peristyle garden (c) at the centre of the house and the other was off the kitchen area (50). In terms of both access and room arrangement the layout of this area seems ideal. Area 50 had evidence of cultivation and probably served as a vegetable garden for the kitchen.³⁰ There is evidence for a wooden *triclinium* situated in front of the *impluvium*; the corridor where slaves could have emerged laden with food would have provided an unobtrusive passage way to serve the homeowner and his guests.³¹ Similarly, corridor L provided the same discreet access to the stableyard and commercial area (30-34). There is little doubt that with the loading and unloading of goods, housing animals, and the various activities associated with the stable area this would have been a noisy and unpleasantly aromatic area of the home. It therefore seems highly practical to attempt to isolate this area from the main areas of the residence.

The largest reception area of the *Casa del Menandro* is room 18, located directly

²⁹Wihelmina F. Jashemski, *The Gardens of Pompeii, Herculaneum and the Villas Destroyed by Vesuvius* (New York 1979) 92.

³⁰Allison (1994) 177.

³¹Jashemski (1979) 92.

off the large peristyle. The architectural evidence for this room serving as a main reception room is three-fold: it is impressive in both its location and its structural elements, and it is very large which also added to its grandeur. Wallace-Hadrill suggests that the use of the *fastigium* in a domestic context is a deliberate evocation of public buildings such as a temple, a palace, or a basilica.³² Anyone looking into room 18 from the peristyle would have been suitably impressed by the wealth of the host, and the rooms structural design was intended to transport the visitor to larger, more open spaces which it was intended to evoke.

The wealth of the owner of the *Casa del Menandro* is conveyed through the luxury of having a bathing complex in their home. Accessed from the large peristyle garden (c), the rooms (46, 47, 48, 49) which comprise the bath area are neatly contained within one section of the house. Presumably this is partly out of practicality and partly out of the desire for privacy. Having the bath suite located in a neatly confined area makes simple, practical sense and since both men and women would presumably be utilising the same facilities, the need for privacy is met by its somewhat limited access. Similarly, since the bathing area was tucked away towards the rear of the house, the likelihood of visitors to the home intruding upon that privacy is reduced.

In his extensive study of the *Casa del Menandro*, Ling notes that although it is clear the house progressed through a number of construction phases, it is only in the final phase where observations can be made with any degree of success; however, because of the flexibility of room function, he stresses that any observations should also be made

³²Wallace-Hadrill (1994) 19.

with a great deal of reservation.³³ In the *atrium* complex the public rooms/areas are at once discernible. Areas a, b, 04, and 08 are all easily accessible to anyone entering the house; area 09 functioned primarily as a passage between the peristyle and the *atrium*, especially if room 08 was closed. The primary function of area 02 was to provide access to the upper storey of the dwelling. Room 12 is identified as a *triclinium* because of its location as well as its dimensions.³⁴ Its position in the arrangement of the house would also have afforded it a pleasant view into the peristyle garden. Ling suggest that 12 was employed during the winter, when the doors opening to the peristyle would have been kept closed.³⁵ Rooms 01, 06, and 07 are identified as traditional *cubicula* because of their location around the *atrium* as well as by the supporting features (recesses in the walls) found within the rooms for beds.³⁶ Without the evidence for beds in the above rooms, however, there is no reason to identify them as *cubicula*.

Identification of room function using room arrangement and architectural characteristics can sometimes be difficult. For example, the four rooms found along the north-eastern side of the *Casa del Menandro*, because of their location in proximity to the stable area would lead one to suppose that they had a utilitarian function, perhaps, as Maiuri suggests, as storerooms.³⁷ They are only accessible via the L-shaped corridor (L)

³³Ling (1997) 136.

³⁴Vitruvius, in *De Arch.* 6.3.8 writes that a Roman dining room should be twice as long as it is wide.

³⁵Ling (1997) 137.

³⁶See Chapter One for features evidence for beds and associated room function.

³⁷Maiuri (1933) 197.

which traverses the length of them, are all relatively uniform in size, and all have generous windows facing the east. It is unlikely that any room which would have been designed as a storeroom would have been given the luxury of a window. Ling suggests that a more reasonable function would be that of bedrooms.³⁸

Casa degli Amorini Dorati (cat. #2; fig. 2)

The *Casa degli Amorini Dorati* provides another example of an *atrium*-peristyle house but on a slightly less grand scale. The peristyle is the dominating space of the house. The *atrium* is off-set from the peristyle and has an incongruous arrangement of rooms around it. Room C has been identified as a *cubiculum*, but room D, which is of the same size and location has been identified as a storeroom.³⁹ If looking at room arrangement alone, two such similar rooms as C and D would likely be assigned a similar function.

Room E is in the traditional location of the *tablinum*, but it is backed by room I and does not flow through to the peristyle. Also, aside from the large doorway from the *atrium* and the small doorway leading to the peristyle, it is not as accessible and open as other rooms which have been identified as *tablina*. Rooms G and O have been identified as dining rooms for the house; however, with respect to architectural characteristics, neither space fits the dimensions specified by Vitruvius. Room G is rather square and is accessible from both the *atrium* and the peristyle. Room O is more promising as a dining

³⁸Ling (1997) 139.

³⁹Allison (1994) 347-348.

room in both its position off the peristyle and its limited access from only the north-east wall. Both rooms are, however, located on the perimeter of the peristyle which would accommodate a view of the lavishly decorated peristyle garden.

Room O is also a more likely candidate for a diningroom because of its rather grand structural elements. Since it is raised above the peristyle garden it commanded an impressive view of the garden and its various sculptural decorations. It also presented a rather monumental facade which undoubtedly underlined the important function of this space, most likely a quasi-public one.

The small garden, P, seems to be in an odd location; not only is it far from the kitchen area (V), but it is tucked into the corner of the house and can be viewed only from rooms O and Q. On the other hand, since room O is probably a dining room, its location is perhaps not so unusual since dining rooms and gardens are commonly seen adjacent to one another in Pompeian houses. There is another explanation. Florian Seiler identifies this room as a 'Lichthof', or an airwell, for rooms O and Q.⁴⁰ It is possible that the room functioned as a combination of the above identifications. Structurally, the space did provide light and air into the rooms flanking it, but instead of allowing the space to go unused, a garden was planted in order to wisely make use of an empty area.

Out of practicality, area U provided a rear entrance to the *Casa degli Amorini Dorati* and an easy access to the kitchen area of the house, room V. By using this entrance, the slaves would not have disturbed the home-owner with their day-to-day comings and goings. In terms of arrangement, the group of rooms in this area (S, T, U,

⁴⁰Florian Seiler, *Häuser in Pompeji: Casa degli Amorini Dorati* (München 1992) 63.

V, X, Y, Z) suggest that it was occupied and used primarily by servants. Not only is it somewhat isolated from the main area of the house as utility areas generally are, but it also has the kitchen (V) and the latrine (X) as identified by their features.

Casa del Principe di Napoli (cat. #3; fig. 3)

Significantly more modest in size is the *Casa del Principe di Napoli*. Naturally, smaller houses needed to facilitate a large number of the same daily activities as larger dwellings and it is likely that room function was even more flexible in such houses. The *atrium* (d), for example, not only acted as an access point for rooms a, c, g, and e, but it also housed a stairway in order to provide access to the upper storey of the dwelling. As with the *Casa degli Amorini Dorati* (cat. #2; fig. 2), the two rooms (a and c) flanking the entranceway (b) are of similar size. Both rooms have been identified as bedrooms.⁴¹ Room f, however, has also been identified as a bedroom and possesses none of the architectural characteristics of rooms a or c. Moreover, access to this room could be gained through the garden (n) or room e which is atypical of Pompeian *cubicula* in terms of the traditional location off the *atrium*.

Room e of the *Casa del Principe di Napoli* is a bit of an anomaly in both its design and its placement. Mau suggested that the room was a small dining room (perhaps because of its proximity to the kitchen and the large garden) and Volker Strocka agrees

⁴¹Allison (1994) 368. There was also a bed recess in the room c which is further evidence that this room was a bedroom.

with this identification.⁴² Its arrangement, however, does not seem to be able to easily accommodate dining couches; it is open along one side to the *atrium*, has an entrance to the large garden (n), and has a large doorway leading to room f. Its ready access to the *atrium* is probably more indicative of a *tablinum*.

The service area of this house, as indicated by features, is located in the western corner. Room g functioned as a kitchen, since a hearth was located here, and room h probably functioned as a storeroom for the kitchen since its only access was through room g. If room k is correctly identified as a dining room, then the location of the utility area of this house places it at a discrete distance from where the home-owner would have dined and entertained. Once again, however, in terms of room arrangement there is only one factor that supports the identification of room k as a *triclinium*; it opened onto portico l which may have fulfilled the same function as a peristyle.

Another anomaly in this small house is the small room (m) located along the south-eastern side of portico l. Mau identified this room as a summer *cubiculum*.⁴³ It seems doubtful that an open room such as m would have been a comfortable sleeping place especially since its location off the portico was no doubt a busy place. Since it is open along the whole of one side, and is located in the portico, Strocka suggests that it may have functioned much like an *exedra* which are commonly found along the side of peristyle gardens.⁴⁴ The small area (o) located between room m and room k perhaps

⁴²*Ibid.*, 369; Volker Michael Strocka, *Häuser in Pompeji: Casa del Principe di Napoli*. (Tübingen 1984) 22.

⁴³Allison (1994) 372.

⁴⁴Strocka (1984) 29.

functioned as a storage area.⁴⁵

***Casa dei Ceii* (cat. #4; fig. 4)**

Similar in size to the *Casa del Principe di Napoli* (cat. #3; fig. 3), the *Casa dei Ceii* had a relatively large *atrium* (b) in which visitors to the home would have been received. Once again, since the house is small, the *atrium* also had to function as an access area to the upper storey of the dwelling. The two rooms flanking the *fauces* (a) are both similar in size; however, room I was equipped with both a latrine and a hearth, thus identifying it as a kitchen area. Room c has been identified as a bedroom but there are no architectural characteristics which would substantiate this identification, except perhaps its placement as a small closed room off the covered forecourt.⁴⁶ Room f has also been identified as a *cubiculum*, and although it would be the correct size, there are no architectural features which would support this identification.⁴⁷ Room d is in the correct location to function as a *triclinium* with a view to the garden (h) and two doors opening up to the *atrium*; however, D. Michel identifies this room as the *tablinum* which alternately functioned as a *Sommertriclinium*.⁴⁸ When room d was closed during the winter, corridor k would have provided the only access to the rooms located toward the back of the house.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 29.

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 312.

⁴⁷D. Michel, *Häuser in Pompeji: Casa dei Ceii*. (München 1990) 46.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, 34.

Since small areas which may have functioned as storage space (g, m, and n) are located toward the rear of the dwelling, it seems odd that the kitchen was placed at such a distance from these areas. Not only would have this created more work for the slaves employed here (possibly not a consideration), but it would have been highly inconvenient to have slaves traipsing through the covered forecourt in order to collect supplies from storerooms at the opposite end of the house. To combat this, a good deal of foodstuffs and cooking supplies may have been stored in the kitchen itself for easy accessibility. Alternatively, Michel identifies room g as a *cubiculum* or an apotheca, but there is no physical evidence to support this.⁴⁹

***Casa della Ara Massima* (cat. #5; fig. 5)**

The last house, the *Casa della Ara Massima*, is the smallest and has a number of anomalies. Many of the rooms are not symmetrical and their function is unclear, especially if relying only on room arrangement for identification. The easiest to identify is the kitchen area composed of rooms K and L. These are both identified by their architectural features. An oven was found in room K and a latrine and a drain were discovered in room L, all typical features of Pompeian kitchens. Area M is of a good size and in the correct location to have functioned as a kitchen garden; however, in the final phase of the home its function has been identified as a shop attached to the home because of the access from the street.⁵⁰

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, 50.

⁵⁰Allison (1994) 344. Allison notes that this space may indeed have originally functioned as a kitchen garden but that the area was roofed in its final phase.

Again, the rooms flanking the *fauces* (A) are both likely candidates for bedrooms because of their position off the *atrium* and their small doorways. Room H, however, seems to be quite large for a *cubiculum* even though it has been identified as one.⁵¹ A stairway was located outside of room N which led from the street to the upper storey of the house, thereby eliminating the need to set aside a space within the home to provide access. This arrangement seems rather inconvenient if the rooms above the first floor were used by the homeowners. This would have been especially true in the winter when they would have had to go outside in order to have access to the upper storey. If, however, the rooms above the house were perhaps rented out, or used only for storage the outside access is quite logical.

Room I of the *Casa della Ara Massima* presents a case where room arrangement or architectural characteristics can tell little about room function. Its size is similar to that of rooms H and G, and Stemmer identifies the space only as a 'Nebenzimmer' and suggests that it perhaps functioned as a storeroom.⁵² There is no architectural evidence to substantiate this function.

Conclusions

When looked at in isolation, the potential for room arrangement of the Roman house to provide evidence of room function is limited. In terms of access to spaces, room

⁵¹Klaus Stemmer, *Häuser in Pompeji: Casa dell'Ara Massima*. (München 1992) 21.

⁵²Stemmer (1992) 34. Stemmer's observations are based primarily on the painted decoration of the room which consists of a high red socle with white plaster above it. Allison (1992) 343 suggests that the plain decorative scheme is indicative of a storeroom.

arrangement can be particularly useful in determining which areas of the house were open to all who moved within its confines, or those which were open to only a select number of individuals. These spaces could also have been altered using less permanent measures such as screens, doors, and slaves to act as barriers to specified areas. With regard to the architectural characteristics of the particular rooms themselves, extant features are possibly the best indicators of primary room function since they are a part of the permanent architecture of the space, such as *impluvia*, hearths, or even *lararia*. With regard to secondary and occasional use of space, room arrangement offers little insight since these activities were not carried out in a habitual manner in the same setting, and, therefore, perhaps did not warrant a specified arrangement of space. It must be remembered that architectural features and room arrangement date primarily to the construction of the house and not necessarily to the eruption of Vesuvius in A.D. 79. As was mentioned above, the social structure of the family did not remain static over time and it would seem shortsighted to assume that the environment which they inhabited remained equally static. Thus, it is necessary to combine the evidence of architecture with other indicators of room function in order to create as complete a picture as possible.

Chapter Three

Decoration and Room Function

The wall-paintings, mosaics, and sculpture which ornamented the various spaces of the Roman domestic environment can give some insight into room function. Since life in Pompeii came to an abrupt end with the eruption of Vesuvius, chronological questions are not so large a consideration and they can shed little light on room function. With regard to how spaces and rooms were utilised, it is the nature of the decoration which must be evaluated and both the presence and absence of decoration can help determine a room's function. The following discussion will explore how three types of decoration contribute to the problem of identifying room function; an analysis of the decorations found within the five Pompeian houses explored in this thesis will follow.

Decoration in Roman Houses

Wallace-Hadrill suggests that the function of decoration in private dwellings was to “discriminate and to render the house fit for the pattern of social activity within it” and especially to identify to the visitor those areas which were private and those which were

public.¹ Paintings, mosaics, and sculptural ornamentation were meant to be seen; who was meant to view them defined the way in which a Roman decorated his *domus*.

Wallace-Hadrill's observations on the public and private nature of the domestic dwelling are useful when attempting to define the principles by which the *dominus* ornamented his home.² Just as the nature of the activities which were carried out within a space had an impact on its architectural confines, it is reasonable to assume that these same activities had an influence on any decorative elements of a space. Spatial differentiation along these axes provides a guideline by which to examine extant decoration in Roman houses and, ultimately, what they can tell about room function. A public area such as an *atrium* will be decorated on a scale more grand than that of a *cubiculum*. Likewise, a *cubiculum*, though it may well be grand in decoration, is generally decorated in a style vastly different than a pantry off the kitchen.³ In short, these rooms were decorated in a scheme appropriate to their function.

The task of decorating any house brings with it certain considerations. Fashion, taste, and cost were concerns in the Roman period just as they are today. What is of the uppermost consideration, however, is what is appropriate to each area of the house; that is, what sort of colour, style, and figural depictions would not only enhance the aesthetics of a space, but also subtly direct people throughout the home as well as reinforce the

¹Wallace-Hadrill (1994) 149; also, Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "The Social Spread of Roman Luxury: Sampling Pompeii and Herculaneum," *PBSR* 58 (1990) 145-192, 170. For 'private' and 'public' areas in the Roman household see Wallace-Hadrill (1994) Chapter 2 and Chapter 2 of this thesis.

²Wallace-Hadrill (1994) 11.

³*Ibid.*, 155.

status quo between the homeowner and his guests. The concept of appropriateness is central to the general relationships between decoration and room function and will surface repeatedly in the following chapter. To date, analogies drawn between decoration and room function have been based upon the room types which have been identified by the traditional textual nomenclature; however, this assumes that the traditional terminology is accurate.⁴

If decoration was an element meant as an indicator to direct the flow of movement within the household, it stands to reason that visitors and inhabitants would be aware of its role at some level. Within the functional hierarchy of rooms, Clarke asserts that those rooms which were meant to impress guests, such as reception and dining rooms, received the most elaborate decorations.⁵ Conversely, those rooms and spaces which were frequented primarily by slaves, or which were not open to visitors, had no need for extensive or elaborate decoration. With this underlying concept of room decoration in mind, it is possible to ascertain at least the nature of the activities which occurred within the confines of a given space.

It must be remembered that appropriateness of room decoration is not based on room function alone; the wealth of the homeowner also needs to be considered. The hierarchies which governed virtually every aspect of Roman social life can also be seen in

⁴Penelope Allison, "The relationship between wall-decoration and room-type in Pompeian houses: a case study of the Casa della Caccia Antica," *JRA* 5 (1992) 235-249, 235. See Chapter Two of this thesis for the problems related to text-based nomenclature for room types.

⁵Clarke (1991) 367; Ling (1991) 219; see also: Christine Kondoleon, "Signs of Privilege and Pleasure: Roman Domestic Mosaics," in: *Roman Art in the Private Sphere: New Perspectives on the Architecture and Decor of the Domus, Villa, and Insula*. Elaine K. Gazda, ed. (Ann Arbor 1991) 105-115, 105.

how the Romans decorated their homes. Vitruvius mentions that a man of more humble means had no need for an impressive *atrium* since his social obligations would have been fulfilled in the homes of others.⁶ Thus, another axis of differentiation can be drawn between the wealthy and the poor. Indeed, Vitruvius also comments on the cost of decorating one's home, and it has been suggested that the predominance of plain decoration in private and in smaller rooms may mean that it was simply cheaper to decorate in this manner as opposed to elaborate figural artwork.⁷

Wall-painting

Although the Pompeian *atrium* house seems to be the epitome of the social structure associated with Roman culture, there are some considerations which must be taken into account when viewing the artwork of this unique site.⁸ It is clear that much of the architecture and decoration in Pompeian dwellings long pre-dated the eruption in A.D. 79, since many of the houses were undergoing redecoration and remodeling. If the structure of a room pre-dates its final decoration, it is likely that any close correlation between room function and decoration may have ceased to exist at the time of the

⁶Vitruvius, *De Architectura* 6.5.1.

⁷*Ibid.*, 7.5.8; Allison (1992) 248.

⁸Eugene Dwyer, "The Pompeian Atrium House in Theory and in Practice," in: *Roman Art in the Private Sphere: New Perspectives on the Architecture and Decor of the Domus, Villa, and Insula*. Elaine K. Gazda, ed. (Ann Arbor 1991) 25-48, 26.

eruption.⁹ This possibility limits the potential for wall-paintings to evaluating room function. The four Pompeian Styles, outlined briefly below, have been the subject of numerous debates over their classification and dating.¹⁰ As stated above, while the question of chronology is an important one, the content and quality of the artwork is a more significant consideration for the evaluation of room function.

The First Style

The First Pompeian Style of wall-painting emerged from an attempt to imitate construction techniques and is often referred to as the ‘Masonry Style’.¹¹ This Style imitates ashlar masonry using stucco as a medium and consists of five primary elements: a plain socle, large panels called ‘orthostates’, one or two narrow string friezes, a series of regular courses of blockwork, and a dentil cornice topping the decorative elements.¹² The purpose of such a style was twofold. First, all of the elements were painted to imitate the bright colors of marbles used in wealthy domestic dwellings and public buildings. Second, the style imitated palaces and public buildings which were decorated with expensive marbles and was a deliberate allusion to the public world. It is unclear whether or not the viewer was intended to think he was looking at actual marble instead of a

⁹Penelope Allison, “How do we identify the use of space in Roman housing?” in: *Functional and Spatial Analysis of Wall-painting: Proceedings of the Fifth International Congress on Ancient Wall-painting*. Eric M. Moormann, ed. (Leiden 1993) 1-8, 3.

¹⁰Clarke (1991) 31.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 32.

¹²Roger Ling, *Roman Painting* (Cambridge 1991) 15. Ling provides a far more detailed discussion of the Pompeian painting styles than is warranted in this thesis.

painted reproduction.¹³ The examples of the Masonry Style found in Pompeii and Herculaneum are dated primarily to the second and early first century B.C.¹⁴

The Second Style

The emergence of the Second Style in Pompeii can be dated to the early first century B.C. and can be divided into two distinct phases. The Second Style, just as the First Style, attempts to imitate architectural forms; however, this phase of wall-painting accomplishes this through pictorial means.¹⁵ The *trompe l'oeil* or illusionistic renderings primarily depict building façades and urban landscapes. The origins of the Style are unclear; however, two principle candidates garner support. The paintings are complex and elaborate renderings which were designed to either emulate stage decoration, or, as some scholars assert, were representations of real buildings such as the Hellenistic palaces. What is more clear is the impact these paintings must have had on the viewer; by means of illusion, the wall decoration alludes to a grandeur and luxury beyond the walls of the more humble domestic dwelling.¹⁶ The wall-paintings at the beginning of the Second Style are grandiose while those which fall at the end of the Style are less complex.¹⁷ Here, architectural elements provide a framework for figural elements and, as

¹³Wallace-Hadrill (1994) 25.

¹⁴Ling (1991) 13.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, 23.

¹⁶Wallace-Hadrill (1994) 27.

¹⁷Clarke (1991) 47-49.

a result, the architectural forms become less important and more fantastic.¹⁸

The Third Style

Unlike the previous two Styles, the chronology of the Third Style is not easily defined. It is possible that the Third Style reached Pompeii as early as 11B.C. and went out of vogue when the Fourth Style became fashionable by the end of the A.D. 40s.¹⁹ The main characteristic of the Third Style is ornamentation. Early Third Style examples 'closed' the wall and reserved any illusionism for the central decorative panels, while the later Third Style examples reopened the wall through the use of fantastic and spindly decorative elements.²⁰ The architectural structures of the Second Style were replaced by bands of delicate and fastidious polychrome motifs, and any attempt at realism in the supporting architectural elements was abandoned in favour of characteristic tall and spindly columns. Typical for the Third Style are the figural scenes placed within panels, imitations of public picture galleries, or *pinoacothecae*.²¹ Again, the intent was to transport the viewer from the private world into the public.

The Fourth Style

The final stage of wall-painting, the Fourth Style, came into fashion just before

¹⁸Ling (1991) 33-34.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 52.

²⁰Clarke (1991) 65.

²¹Wallace-Hadrill (1994) 30.

the eruption of Vesuvius, and it is thus the best represented in the archaeological record.²² Despite its abundant representations, however, the Fourth Style has received the least analysis and questions concerning its development have not been adequately addressed.²³ It is thought that the Fourth Style came into fashion as early as the 40s or early 50s and the eruption in A.D. 79 provides a solid *terminus ante quem*; however, the Fourth Style did not stop in 79 and there is evidence for its popularity into the 80s at other sites.²⁴ The Fourth Style was an eclectic conglomeration of various elements of the Styles which preceded it. It employed the architectural themes of the Second Style, while imbuing it with the fanciful and delicate underpinnings which were the hallmark of the Third Style.²⁵ What developed was something unique and intriguing. The eclecticism of the Style gives it greater range of subtle differentiation between the public/private and grand/humble spaces of the house.²⁶

Wall-painting and Room Function

It seems clear that the forethought which went into the decorative scheme of the Roman house was extensive; not only did the wall-painting have to suit the room-type in its colour scheme, but also in the scenes which it included. In addition to matching the

²²Clarke (1991) 71.

²³William C. Archer, "The Paintings in the Alae of the Casa dei Vettii and the Definition of the Fourth Pompeian Style," *AJA* 94 (1990) 95-123, 117.

²⁴Ling (1991) 72.

²⁵*Ibid.*, 71.

²⁶Wallace-Hadrill (1994) 31.

colour and scene to a room where it was appropriate, it seems that the artwork also had to be suitable to the social station of the homeowner. In his treatise on architecture, Vitruvius comments on which colours were appropriate for use in winter *triclinia* and stresses that black, red, and yellow were preferable for these rooms; Vitruvius also mentions that areas such as *exedrae* and *ambulationes* should have ornaments and landscapes which were characteristic to them.²⁷

Allison, in her analysis of the relationship between wall-decoration and room-type in the *Casa della Caccia Antica*, reached conclusions similar to those guidelines set out by ancient authors such as Vitruvius²⁸:

- small, closed rooms off the *atrium* had light decoration with small panels, little architecture and no opening of the wall
- more open, accessible, public rooms have elaborate architectural decoration
- *ambulationes* and peristyles generally had dark (usually black), flat fields
- garden walls had landscape scenes
- corridors and entranceways had simple, generally flat decoration
- long, narrow rooms (*triclinia*) made use of vibrant colours like reds and yellows and was usually in alternating fields

If this is the case, then it would seem that wall-paintings are perhaps limited in the information they can provide about room function. Certainly, they can tell something about the wealth of the homeowner; however, since the Roman family did not remain static over time, there is no reason to assume their activities did so. As a result, room function may very well have changed without an immediate change in the wall decorations. Also, wall-paintings seem to be more useful for identifying the general type

²⁷Vitruvius, *De Architectura* 1.2.5; 7.4.4; 7.5.2.

²⁸Allison (1992) 247.

or nature of room function rather than identifying the precise activities. For example, very expensive and elaborate paintings can identify the primarily public function of a room, but they cannot give any indication of secondary or occasional functions of that same space. These limitations hold true for sculptural and mosaic decorations as well.

Sculpture

Cicero's numerous letters to his friend Atticus provide us with some evidence as to how the wealthy Roman chose to decorate his home.²⁹ He clearly preferred Megarian statues, pentelic herms 'with the bronze heads', and bas-reliefs to ornament his lecture hall and colonnade. Furthermore, Cicero trusted Atticus to exercise 'good taste' when procuring his statues and entreated him to collect as many as he could. Since Cicero specified in which areas of his home at Tusculum he wished to place these decorations, it is clear that certain areas of the house had decorations which were appropriate to them. Appropriateness with regard to fashion and room function dictated the placement of sculpture such as images of athletes in the gymnasium.³⁰

In his study of five Pompeian houses, Dwyer found that the public nature of rooms did play a large part in which areas were adorned with sculpture. He states that it is not coincidence that those parts of the *atrium* house which were readily viewed by guests -- the *atrium*, *alae*, *tablinum*, *triclinia*, and peristyle -- were virtually the only

²⁹Cicero, *Ad Atticus*, 1.4.3; 1.6.2; 1.8.2; 1.9.2; 1.10.3.

³⁰Elizabeth Bartman, "Sculptural Collecting and Display in the Private Realm," in: *Roman Art in the Private Sphere: New Perspectives on the Architecture and Decor of the Domus, Villa, and Insula*. Elaine K. Gazda, ed. (Ann Arbor 1991) 71-88, 73.

locations where sculpture was actually found.³¹ The peristyle or garden area of houses seems to be the area most heavily laden with sculpture; many had niches, shrines, and fountains which were often decorated with large statuettes of marble and bronze.³²

Cicero's wish for Atticus to procure as many ornaments as possible can provide us with a backdrop for the diversity seen in many sculptural groups. The diversity of many sculptural decorations which survive today may be the result of a combination of reasons. It may be that the process of acquiring a collection of sculpture saw a change in fashion, but new tastes were simply added to old ones. Nevertheless, it cannot be ruled out that Romans preferred to have an eclectic mix of sculpture gracing the spaces in their homes.³³

Sheer ostentation may have also played a part; what better method of displaying wealth than to have it overtly visible in the home?

Mosaics

The same appropriateness or suitability that can be attributed to wall-painting and sculpture can be seen in the mosaics which were used to ornament a Roman house. Again, the placement of a mosaic in a room or area can be seen as an encoded marker to the visitor; not only did it alert the guest to the relative importance of a space, but it also acted as cue as to how to view the scenes expressed through decoration.³⁴ Wallace-

³¹Dwyer (1982) 120.

³²*Ibid.*, 118; see also Jashemski (1979) 34-40.

³³Bartman (1991) 73.

³⁴Clarke (1991) 273.

Hadrill noted that mosaics are a special feature which correlate strongly to the larger houses which presumably could afford them.³⁵

Clarke asserts that the “first job of pavements is to establish functional hierarchies among the space, divided most generally between those of dynamic and static function.”³⁶

Generally, the simplest mosaics occurred in courtyards and service areas, all over mosaics which had no special features marked axial divisions such as *cubicula*, and the more complex pavements were found in public rooms such as the *triclinium* and the *tablinum*. In the latter, Clarke notes that the mosaicists must have paid particular attention to the proportions of the room and the patterns of both doors and windows.³⁷ It is logical to assume that pavements, just as wall-painting and sculpture, were chosen or specifically designed to complement their surrounding architecture.

Pavements found in the private dwellings of Pompeii are plain when compared to later, Imperial pavements such as the House of the Muses in Ostia or those of lavish villas such as the Piazza Armerina. These later homeowners chose themes which signaled their public status, but also which made the viewer aware of the owner’s private pursuits.³⁸ Pompeian pavements, however, are usually simple, geometric, bi-chrome mosaics which are subordinated to wall decoration, making them less useful for determining room function.

³⁵Wallace-Harill (1994) 154.

³⁶Clarke (1991) 273.

³⁷*Ibid.*, 273-274.

³⁸Kondoleon (1991) 111.

Decoration and Room Function in Five Pompeian Houses

For the following analysis the reader is once again directed to the detailed catalogue at the back of this thesis. The wall-painting has been assigned a gradation of 'low', 'medium', or 'high' quality. This is not a gradation of the plaster, but of the painting itself. Sculptural decoration is found under 'Artifacts' and is also discussed in the following canvass of decorative elements. While it would no doubt be a useful exercise to look at and discuss every room of each house, only those spaces which provide adequate material for analysis are included, as well as any anomalies which occur.

Casa del Menandro (cat. #1; fig. 1)

The decorations of the *Casa del Menandro* represent all Styles of wall-painting. First Style paintings are visible only in underlying plaster in some areas, such as room 18; most of the house was decorated in the Fourth Style. Since it is not feasible within the scope of this analysis to discuss all of the rooms, only those which are well-preserved and which provide good examples of decoration correlating to room function will be discussed.

The *atrium* (b) was decorated with Fourth Style paintings consisting of well-preserved vertical panels with minimal figural decoration. It had a black socle zone and the panels were painted red.³⁹ The room (01) directly off the *atrium* has been identified

³⁹Ida Baldassarre, et. al. *Pompei: Pitture e Mosaici. Volume II, Regio I Parte Seconda* (Rome 1990) 246; plates 9-28.

as a *cella ostiaria*. If this was the primary function of this room, it would explain the unpainted walls since it certainly would not have served as a room for the master's family.⁴⁰

Room 04 was decorated in Fourth Style paintings and a Second Style pavement. The walls consisted of a black socle zone with white ground figural panels, the most elaborate of which depicts Priam with Helen and Cassandra.⁴¹ The nature of the wall decoration and especially the presence of a mosaic would indicate that this room had a primarily public function. Indeed, its arrangement would also substantiate this; it is located directly off the *atrium* and there is no fixed door in place, leaving the entire room visible to anyone standing in the *atrium*.

Room 08 has been identified as the *tablinum* and its high quality Fourth Style decoration would support this.⁴² It is decorated with a black socle zone and white panels with red borders. A marble herm was also found in this area which would seem out of place in a *tablinum*; it has been suggested that the herm originated in the *atrium*.⁴³ The most elaborately decorated room in the northern end of the house is the so-called *oecus*, 11. Its wall-paintings were rendered in a high quality Fourth Style with a red socle zone and green panels; it had a frieze of Lapiths and Centaurs mid-way up the walls. Its floors had an elaborate Second Style mosaic constructed in *opus vermiculatum* with a central

⁴⁰Allison (1992) 160 suggests that the finds do not support such a function since they indicate that the area was acting as a storage space.

⁴¹Baldassarre, et. al. (1990) 276-277.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 289; plates 74-79.

⁴³Allison (1992) 163.

figural emblem.⁴⁴ The decoration and the location of this room suggest that it had a public function.

The peristyle, c, is the largest area of the *Casa del Menandro* and was a hub for social activity in the house. Surprisingly, unlike the smaller peristyle of the *Casa degli Amorini Dorati* (cat. #2; fig. 2) discussed below, the sculptural remains consisted of only one statue of Apollo, a bronze animal foot, and a number of marble slabs (two with fragmentary inscriptions) which possibly fulfilled a decorative function. It had a central pool with several steps leading up to it. The Fourth Style paintings of the peristyle represent the transitional phase between the Third and Fourth Styles and consist of a black socle zone, and a red middle zone with figural panels.⁴⁵ The lack of sculpture could be the result of deliberate relocation due to the redecoration the house was undergoing at the time of the eruption. If this is the case, however, the sculpture was not moved to another area of the house, since no significant concentration of movable ornamentation was found elsewhere. Finds from the peristyle suggest the function of at least some of the areas had changed to storage; perhaps the homeowners during the final stage had no need to employ all of the peristyle for entertaining, which could account for the paucity of sculpture.

The small, open areas (21, 22, 23, 24, and, 25) located at the south end of peristyle c, were all well-decorated. The apsidal spaces of 22 and 24 were both rendered in the Fourth Style with Second Style pavements. Area 24 also had a Second Style ceiling

⁴⁴Baldassarre, et. al. (1990) 295. Lapith and Centaur frieze plates 95-99; mosaic plate 87.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 241; plates 39-52.

decoration.⁴⁶ *Exedra* 25 was painted in the Second Style and was perhaps scheduled for redecoration to bring it up to fashion. Room 21 has been identified as a *cubiculum* and two beds can be seen in place today; however, there are no fixture or artifacts which would suggest that beds were located here, nor does the decoration necessarily support this identification. The floor was paved with a mosaic constructed in *opus vermiculatum* and had a central emblem depicting a Maenad and Satyr.⁴⁷

The bath suite is a good example of changing styles and on-going redecoration after the A.D. 62 earthquake. Examples of Second Style paintings, dating to c. 45-30 B.C., can be found in the *atriolum*, the *tepidarium* east wall, the *caldarium* apse wall, as well as in *exedrae* 24 and 25 located outside of the bath suite and discussed above.⁴⁸ The bath suite of this house was probably undergoing repairs in A.D. 79 and Allison suggests that the repairs to the bath suite were interrupted, resulting in alterations which made it a storage area for valuables.⁴⁹

The utilitarian areas of the *Casa del Menandro* were left largely undecorated. In the south-western area, the latrine (51) and the kitchen (52) were both unpainted, except for the low quality *lararium* painting on the west wall of the kitchen. Rooms 54 and 50 of this same area were also undecorated, suggesting that they were not frequented by the owner's family or his guests. Similarly, the servile area in the south-eastern quadrant of

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 370.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 362. plate 196 shows the beds now in place in this room; plate 197 shows a detail of the central emblem of the floor.

⁴⁸Ling (1997) 18-19.

⁴⁹Allison (1992) 175.

the house was also entirely undecorated. The only anomaly to this is the ornamentation found in a wooden basket in room 35. Here, a bronze statuette of Eros, a base of another small statue, a bronze disc, a semi-lunate bronze ornament, and two bronze pendants were found. Since these decorations were all small and contained within a basket, it is possible that they were either being stored in this room and unused at the time, or that they were being transported somewhere. They were not, however, serving as decoration at the time of the eruption.

The small, semi-private quarters in the north-eastern corner of the house had only one decorated room, 43, and only traces of white plaster remaining on the walls of the *atriolum* (41). Room 43 has been identified as a *cubiculum* because of the imprint of a bed found along the south wall.⁵⁰ The low quality Fourth Style wall-painting consisted of a simple linear and geometric decoration on white ground. Although no decoration remains in the *atriolum*, it is clear from the finds that it was not serving as a reception area, since a bed was found in the south-west corner.

***Casa degli Amorini Dorati* (cat. #2; fig. 2)**

This relatively large house was decorated primarily in the Third and Fourth styles and provides evidence for damage and subsequent reparations to certain areas. By far the most elaborately decorated area was the peristyle (F) which will be discussed in detail. The *fauces* was painted in the Third Style with black fields and a white upper zone. Surprisingly, the *atrium*, one of the main reception areas of a house, was relatively poorly

⁵⁰Baldassarre, et. al. (1990) 377; also Allison (1992) 192.

decorated when compared to the elaborate ornamentation of the peristyle.⁵¹ This could perhaps be explained if the owners used the peristyle and the well-appointed rooms surrounding the space as the main reception area. Visitors could have been ushered through the *atrium* and their business with the *dominus* conducted in the peristyle complex. There is evidence in this area for two phases of repair, probably after the A.D. 62 earthquake, and Seiler dates the extant decoration to the late Third Style.⁵² The *atrium* also had a mosaic threshold.⁵³ The room identified as a *cubiculum* (C) immediately off the *atrium* is painted in the Fourth Style with a black socle zone with alternating ochre and red fields in the central zone; it also had a First Style cornice. Although room D was decorated in a manner much the same as room C, which was identified as a bedroom, the artifacts found in this room do not indicate that it was functioning as such.⁵⁴

The sculpture which served as decoration in the peristyle (F) is too numerous to list here in its entirety; however, it is an impressive collection. The rectangular pool with an apsidal end located in the centre of the garden can certainly be counted amongst the decoration of this space. The aedicular *lararium* which was located against the north wall of the peristyle was host to no less than six statuettes (Jupiter, Juno, Minerva, Mercury, and two Lares), a marble base on which a statue once rested, and a marble mask. The

⁵¹Allison (1992) 347.

⁵²Seiler (1992) 24.

⁵³*Ibid.*, 30.

⁵⁴Allison (1992) 348. Further discussion of the artifacts found in this room can be found in Chapter One, and in the catalogue at the back of this thesis.

shrine in the south-eastern corner of the peristyle also yielded a large amount of decorative statuary: a marble Egyptian statuette, a headless statue of Fortuna, a fragment of a statue of a human foot (possibly not in its original location), two decorated disks, and a slab of marble. The various statuary found elsewhere in the peristyle attests to the vast collection which the homeowners had accumulated. Several pieces of the statuary are related to fountain works, attesting to the fact that the fountain, though practical, also played an aesthetic role in the garden.

The amount of sculptural decoration in this garden suggests that it was an area of the house which was meant to be seen. Much of the sculpture was extremely elaborate (such as the marble relief decorated with theatrical masks and the double marble head of Dionysus and Ariadne) and was complemented by the high quality Fourth Style wall-paintings of the colonnade. Both the *lararium* and the shrine were also decorated in the Fourth Style.⁵⁵

Room O, which is identified as a dining room, faced elaborate decorations of the garden, and may have been equally well-decorated at some time during the house's history; however, at the time of the eruption, the room sported only coarse, undecorated plaster and the marble pavement which once adorned the floor had been removed.⁵⁶ The neat manner in which the paving was removed suggests that it was not taken away by post eruption looters, but was removed sometime before A.D. 79. There is no doubt that the peristyle and room O were meant to balance each other during their hey-day and to

⁵⁵Seiler (1992) 40.

⁵⁶*Ibid.*, 63.

provide an impressive setting for the homeowner to entertain and meet with his guests.

Perhaps this is why the *atrium* remained decorated with the outdated Third Style.

Room i has been identified as a bedroom. Decorated in high quality Fourth Style paintings, the walls were covered with an imitation marble socle with yellow wallpaper pattern paintings. Two glass discs decorated with gilded cupids were set into this pattern. A mosaic decorated the floor of this room. At the time when room i was being decorated it quite probably served a primary function probably related to the master of the house, most likely a bedroom.

The other rooms of the *Casa degli Amorini Dorati* were largely undecorated, or no traces of decoration remain. Rooms which were entirely unpainted such as 01, z, 03, o, p, x, y, and u presumably served primarily utilitarian functions. In the cases where the plaster was painted, as in the kitchen (v), it was monochrome red or pink plaster. As far as function is concerned, it would have been a waste to decorate lavishly a room like the kitchen. The master of the house and guests did not frequent this area and any painted decoration would likely have been easily damaged due to the constant smoke from the hearth. In the same manner, it would also have been impractical to decorate such areas as storerooms and latrines.

***Casa del Principe di Napoli* (cat. #3; fig. 3)**

The unassuming size of the *Casa del Principe di Napoli* is reflected in the decorations which were found in it. The house is decorated entirely in the Fourth Style,

all of which is of relatively low quality. The *fauces* (b) and the *atrium* (d) were ornamented in much the same manner. The wall decoration of d consisted of a black socle zone, a red central zone, and a white upper zone which was meant to imitate ashlar masonry reminiscent of the First Style.⁵⁷ Although the floor did have a decorated pavement consisting of simple, white tesserae, its uncomplicated design blended well with the wall decorations. Room a has been identified as a bedroom, but only coarse, undecorated plaster adorned its walls, as it has been suggested that the room served as sleeping quarters for a slave.⁵⁸ Conversely, room c which was also identified as a bedroom, was decorated in the Fourth Style on a white ground. A recess in the wall supports the identification and it was, therefore, probably the *cubiculum* of a family member rather than of the slave *familia*, since it is unlikely that a bedroom for a slave would have been so elaborately decorated.⁵⁹

Room g, identified as the kitchen and latrine for this house, was predictably adorned in coarse, undecorated plaster along the south wall with only red, unpainted plaster above the hearth.⁶⁰ The room adjacent to it, h, has been identified as a pantry and the coarse, undecorated plaster on its walls do not suggest a more glamorous function.⁶¹

The portico (l) was decorated in a manner similar to room k, consisting of Fourth

⁵⁷Strocka (1984) 19; plates 58-66.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 21.

⁵⁹Allison (1992) 368.

⁶⁰Strocka (1984) 21.

⁶¹*Ibid.*, 22.

Style paintings on a white ground above a black socle, of a rather poor quality.

Surprisingly, the garden (n) was left undecorated and had only a coarse plaster on all of the walls; however, the south and east walls had a high socle in fine, pink plaster.

Fragments of a decorative marble table with feline legs were found in the h. The reason for the unassuming decorations were probably reflective of the more simple needs of the homeowner. Since the *Casa del Principe di Napoli* was quite small, it would not have had the need to entertain on a grand scale; thus any of the visitors to the home could have been received and entertained in the well-decorated room identified as the *triclinium* (k).⁶²

Room k was elaborately decorated and most likely served as the main reception room for the house. The figural decoration consisted of a depiction of Perseus and Andromeda in a panel in the centre of the wall; the middle panel of the eastern wall had a depiction of Adonis and Aphrodite. The floor was enriched with an emblem rendered in *opus sectile* and further decorated with coloured marbles.⁶³

***Casa dei Ceii* (cat. #4; fig. 4)**

The *Casa dei Ceii* was almost entirely painted in the Third Style, with the exception of the garden (h) and room g which were decorated in the Fourth Style. For a house this size, which likely had very little need for impressive decoration for the purpose of entertaining important guests, the decoration was still fairly elaborate. The *atrium* is generally well preserved. Allison notes that the plaster just beneath the window to room

⁶²*Ibid.*, 26; plates 102-155.

⁶³*Ibid.*, 26; plate 155.

d is coarse and suggests that it may post-date the main paintings of the *atrium*, but Michel suggest that it is in fact contemporary with it.⁶⁴

Michel identifies room c off the *atrium* as a *cubiculum*; however there are no fixtures or artifacts which would substantiate this identification.⁶⁵ As far as the Third Style decoration of this room is concerned, it is composed of rather plain, flat panels of alternating light and dark colours with minimal figural decoration.⁶⁶ The wall-paintings do seem suitable for a bedroom in that they are not overly ornate and would have been appropriate for a private room not meant to be viewed by others. The pavement of this room is a simple design composed of white tesserae and nicely rounds out the decorative scheme of the wall-paintings.⁶⁷

Room i is identified as a kitchen by its fixtures and the simple decorations of this room would seem to substantiate this; the east wall and half of the south wall have a simple, white Third Style decoration, and the south-west corner behind the latrine is adorned with only coarse, undecorated plaster. We have already seen the simple decorative scheme in the previous two houses discussed. The statuary found in this room, however, represents an anomaly. The remains of life-size statuary was discovered in this room: a marble dove with iron feet (minus its head) and a thumb. If, as we have supposed throughout this discussion on decoration, that it was generally meant to be seen,

⁶⁴Michel (1990) 24.

⁶⁵*Ibid.*, 30.

⁶⁶*Ibid.*, plates 157-162.

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, plate 171.

its presence in the kitchen could be indicative of two things. It could mean that the kitchen was not functioning as such at the time of the eruption or that the statue had been broken elsewhere in the home and was simply moved here to get it out of the way.

Allison suggests that the house was in a 'downgraded' status.⁶⁸

Room d has been identified as a *tablinum*, but it was adorned with only coarse, undecorated plaster. Michel suggests that this room was functioning as a summer dining room and was undergoing renovation.⁶⁹ If the identification of room function relied solely on the type of decoration, room d would be an unlikely candidate for either a seasonal dining room or an office for the master of the house. The pavement is composed of *opus signinum* with inset white tesserae.⁷⁰ The presence of a decorated floor could support Michel's identification of the room. It is unlikely that a room which had a decorative pavement would have had undecorated walls.

The room identified as a *triclinium*, e, has an appropriate Third Style decoration. It is well-rendered in panels of black separated by ochre zones. The west wall has an elaborate, extremely delicate architectural and vine depiction on white ground. This scene sets off the figure of Dionysus set on a white ground in the middle of the wall.⁷¹

⁶⁸Allison (1992) 316. As an aside, Allison does not define what is implied by a 'downgraded' state. Presumably, she means that either the fortunes of the homeowner had taken a turn for the worse and could not afford the general upkeep of the house, or that a new owner with less money occupied the home at the time of the eruption.

⁶⁹Michel (1990) 35. Allison (1992) 312 notes other undecorated *tablina* in the *Casa del Fabbro*, *Casa di P. Casca Longus*, and the *Casa dell'Efebo*.

⁷⁰Michel (1990) 35; plate 124.

⁷¹*Ibid.*, Plates 187-214.

The colour composition is carried out on the other four walls as well. The floor of room e was composed of *opus sectile* and had an emblem rendered in colored marble in its centre.⁷²

The garden (h) had high quality Fourth Style decoration as well as a decorated floor. If this area functioned as the main meeting place, albeit on a more humble scale than that of the *Casa del Menandro* (cat. #1; fig. 1) or the *Casa degli Amorini Dorati* (cat. #2; fig. 2), it was certainly appointed in a style befitting its function. There were, however, no sculptural decorations discovered in area h, which seems somewhat surprising given the high quality of the artwork. This could support Allison's theory that the house was in a downgraded state at the time of the eruption – the original residents may have simply packed up and removed their art collection.

The unadorned rooms are l, m, and n and are located in the rear of the house. The coarse, undecorated plaster of these rooms suggest that they did not serve any function which required ornamentation. Their unassuming location would also suggest this; they may have functioned as storerooms and the diversity of finds located in this area may substantiate this. Overall, the *Casa dei Ceii*, although small, was an extremely well-decorated house. In addition to the well-decorated walls, the abundance of decorated pavements in the majority of the rooms suggests that at least at one time, probably during the end of the Third and beginning of the Fourth Styles of painting, the homeowner was a reasonably well-off citizen.

⁷²*Ibid.*, 37; plate 198.

***Casa della Ara Massima* (cat. #5; fig. 5)**

The rooms of the *Casa della Ara Massima*, the smallest house in this study group, were decorated entirely in Fourth Style paintings of relatively high quality; only rooms a, b, d, f, g, and h were painted. The *atrium* (b) consisted of an odd mixture of painting and ornamentation. The east and south wall had a high red socle with simple, coarse white plaster above. The *lararium* was painted in the Fourth Style.⁷³

Room f has been identified as both the *tablinum* and the *triclinium*.⁷⁴ The Fourth Style decoration which adorned the room seems suitable for either room-type since both play host to functions of a public nature which required more elaborated decoration. Unfortunately, the artifacts shed little light on the problem since they seem to suggest that the room f was functioning as a storage area at the time of the eruption.⁷⁵ Stemmer identifies room d as a '*pseudo-tablinum*'.⁷⁶ Its Fourth Style painting is composed on a white ground; the western wall had the most elaborate figural decoration with a reclining figure positioned in the middle of the wall.

The lack of decoration in rooms c, e, i, k, l, m, and n suggest that they functioned primarily as utilitarian areas. The finds seem to substantiate this. Room k and l were the kitchen and the latrine. Perhaps a bit misplaced was the statuary find in room i. The marble head of Dionysus seems out of place in this plain room; however, since the piece

⁷³Stemmer (1992) 19.

⁷⁴Allison (1992) 342; Stemmer (1992) 23.

⁷⁵Allison 1992) 341-342.

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, 32; plates 188-204.

is fragmentary it could be the result of storing broken statuary (similar to the *Casa dei Ceii*). Room m was the *taberna*.⁷⁷

Conclusions

In exploring the diffusion of decoration in houses at Pompeii and Herculaneum, Wallace-Hadrill found that a correlation existed between the size of the house and the lavishness of the decoration.⁷⁸ This is not altogether surprising in light of the considerations discussed in the first half of this chapter. A similar correlation can be noted among the five Pompeian houses explored here. The rooms of the *Casa del Menandro* (cat. #1; fig. 1) and the *Casa degli Amorini Dorati* (cat. #2; fig. 2) are certainly more elaborately decorated than the smaller houses. The one glaring exception in this study is the extensive mosaic flooring found in the *Casa dei Ceii* (cat. #4; fig.4) . This could be a case where the homeowner had enough wealth to fashionably decorate his home, but not enough to expand it or to purchase a larger house. Certainly, the *Casa del Principe di Napoli* (cat. #3; fig. 3) and the *Casa della Ara Massima* (cat. #5; fig. 5), which are both relatively small houses, conform to the aforementioned observation.

The usefulness of decoration with regard to room function seems to be limited to generalisations like the one made above. That is not to say, however, that generalisations are not helpful. For example, the more elaborate the painting, the more certain we can be that the room was meant for activities associated with visitors and *clientes*. For example,

⁷⁷Stemmer (1992) 36.

⁷⁸Wallace-Hadrill (1994) 154.

elaborate Second Style architectural vistas and a plethora of sculptural ornamentation in a peristyle were meant to evoke the illusion of grandeur. The viewer was encouraged to associate the lavish surroundings with the explicitly public spaces of the theatre or the forum. Conversely, the more plain or undecorated a room is the more certain we can be that it fulfilled a utilitarian function, or at the very least, that it was probably not frequented by the master of the house or his guests. Problems arise in the medium quality artwork displayed in Pompeian houses, such as those often identified with *cubicula*. Here, identifications, even generalisations, of function are less certain. We know that the Roman bedroom was generally considered a private space, but guests could be admitted with an invitation from the homeowner, rendering it quasi-public for a time. Those decorations which fall into the middle of the spectrum are rather silent, which limits their usefulness in identifying room function.

CONCLUSION

Is it possible to determine all levels of room function when all the available evidence is taken into account? As with most scholarly questions, the answer is not a simple black or white, but is laden with varying shades of gray. A Roman's house was an expression of his social standing, and the spaces within were designed, decorated, and utilised in an appropriate manner. In an attempt to link social standing and how it is manifested in a domestic dwelling, scholars have been quick to draw attention to specific instances where the archaeological evidence and known social rituals coincide. The most notable of these is the *clientela* system and the convenient arrangement of the *vestibulum-atrium-tablinum* complex of many Pompeian houses.¹ But how did the homeowner direct the flow of movement through the house? How were visitors made aware of which areas of the house were appropriate for public functions such as the *salutatio* and which were private and therefore inaccessible?

Those entering the Roman house were bombarded by indicators designed to alert them to appropriate and expected behaviour. Some were obvious, such as the *ostiarius*, but are no longer in place today. Others were far more subtle, such as a curtain barring the way into a *cubiculum*. A pre-ordained set of clues to room function was created by

¹Wallace-Hadrill (1994) 12.

the architecture, decoration, and the artifacts. The settings, the physical cues, and the appropriate behaviours were known by those who moved within the established system, and were probably not acknowledged on a conscious level, but were so socially ingrained as to be intuitive.² If this is indeed the case, then the importance the modern observer places on the individual aspects of setting may not be as crucial as we may think. They are, however, all that are left to us in the surviving archaeological record.

In some instances, the convergence of all pieces of evidence can lead to a reasonably sound identification of room function. For example, room 05 in the *Casa del Menandro* (cat. #1; fig. 1) clearly functioned primarily as a storage space. It is a small room, with shelves lining the north and south walls, and the artifacts found in it substantiate that it was still in use as a storage space in A.D. 79. On a larger scale, the utilitarian area in the south-eastern quadrant of the house also presents a case where primary room functions can be identified. The various fixtures (latrines, drinking trough, manger, etc.) combined with artifacts designed for menial activities, and the undecorated, coarsely plastered rooms all point to an area for utilitarian tasks.

The identification of room function in larger houses is easier than in small dwellings. Except in areas such as kitchens and latrines conclusions about room function must be tentative. This may be indicative of differences in social standing and the needs of the homeowner. Specificity of room function may have been a prerogative mainly of the wealthy, who simply had more space, and smaller houses may not have had the same functions. Yet some elements such as room arrangement and decoration were probably

²Rapoport (1990) 16.

attempts at imitating the wealthy. This could be indicative of the social aspirations of a homeowner such as the one who decorated the *Casa dei Ceii* (cat. #4; fig. 4) with an abundance of mosaic paving.

Larger houses such as the *Casa del Menandro* (cat. #1; fig. 1) and the *Casa degli Amorini Dorati* (cat. #2; fig. 2) lend themselves to more specialised activity areas simply because their size can facilitate them.³ Indeed, the occupants of the *Casa del Menandro* could afford the luxury of entire areas of the *domus* being set aside for commercial and utilitarian purposes. The spaces of smaller houses had to accommodate many of the same domestic activities performed in larger houses within smaller confines. The artifacts in room k of the *Casa dei Ceii* (cat. #4; fig. 4) could be indicative of a change in primary function (from cooking to storage), or they could possibly be an example of secondary room function. Use of the kitchen would probably have been restricted largely to slaves and would certainly not have been accessible to visitors to the home, so it is perhaps a likely location in which to store a broken statue. It is clear from the ancient sources and the extant fixtures and artifacts that many rooms in the Roman *domus* were host to numerous and varied activities. The *atrium* for example functioned not only as a source of light and air for the home, but was also a place of worship attested to by *lararia*, an area in which social obligations of the *paterfamilias* were carried out, and even a place for storage, as indicated by the number of *amphorae*, cupboards, and shelving frequently

³See for example rooms 03 and k in the *Casa degli Amorini Dorati* and rooms a, 14 and 49 in the *Casa del Menandro*. The primary function of these rooms as indicated by their artifacts and fixtures also seems consistent with the quality of decoration (see Chapter 3).

found in this area of the house.⁴ It is possible that what researchers see as inconsistencies in the data may be a reflection of a normal, Roman use of space.

The residents of the Roman house must also be considered when assigning room function. While it is relatively easy to associate the *dominus* or slaves with spaces in the house, difficulties arise when attempting to locate women, the young, or the old. Again, modern attitudes toward domestic space often permeate our ideas of space and function often permeate our ideas of how the ancient world operated. It would be incorrect, for example, to assume that Romans had nurseries and play-rooms for children simply because these associated activities and spaces are familiar to us. Indeed, Wallace-Hadrill points out the virtual impossibility of attempting to draw any age or gender distinctions within the house, since they appear to have no influence on shaping the layout of the home.⁵

Primary room function is the easiest to determine. A *triclinium* was for dining; a *cubiculum* was for sleeping; a kitchen was for food preparation. Secondary room functions are slightly more difficult to determine, since they are marked with more subtle indicators, such as a *lararium* painting found in a kitchen. Occasional room function is the grayest area of all, largely because it is based on assumptions and suppositions; the best evidence we have for occasional room use are artifacts, although not all activities leave a trace in the archaeological record. Furthermore, it seems that the permanent

⁴Clarke (1991) 4-9 for the *salutatio* and the various *sacra privata*. See Allison (1992) Vol. II for evidence for storage in Pompeian *atria*.

⁵Wallace-Hadrill (1998) 52. For a concise view of gender distinctions and social space see: L. C. Nevett, "Gender Relations in the Classical Greek Household: the Archaeological Evidence," *BSA* 90 (1995) 364-381.

physical remains such as room arrangement and features, offer more evidence regarding room function at the time of construction. The decoration, especially wall painting, can offer evidence for changes in room function throughout the course of the home's occupation. Finally, artifacts and artifact assemblages offer the best indications of room function at the time of the eruption in A.D. 79.

Although Pompeii offers the most complete data for an exercise such as this, it is clear that our knowledge of the site would be greater if scientific excavation techniques had been employed. As a result, further systematic excavations of Roman domestic buildings will certainly sharpen at least some of the gray areas regarding room function.

Introduction to Catalogue

The following catalogue of five houses has been arranged according to areas within the house and the contents (fixture, artifacts, and wall paintings) discovered within them. For each house there is a labeled plan, to which the contents correspond. For ease of reference, any space identified by its fixtures or structural characteristics was (e.g. kitchens, *atria*, and peristyles) the room was labeled as such. For the most part, however, terms which denote room function were purposely set aside in an attempt to avoid an assumed room function. Since the size of the house corresponds to wealth, the five houses used here vary in size in an attempt to choose a diverse sample.

The majority of the information regarding finds are from Allison's Ph.D thesis and the *Notizie degli Scavi*; the *Häuser in Pompeji* series dealt with finds in only a cursory manner. Since it would have been difficult to cite the source for each artifact, feature, or decorated wall within the chosen format, I elected simply to list the bibliography prior to the catalogued contents.

Wall decoration in rooms are categorized by 'low', 'medium', and 'high', which refers only to the quality of the painting, and not the quality of the plaster; if a room was decorated with unpainted plaster, it is specified as such.

Catalogue #1

Casa del Menandro

Bibliography

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Volumes I and II. Ph.D Dissertation. University of Sydney (Sydney 1992).

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A. Maiuri, *La Casa del Menandro e il suo tesoro di Argenteria.* (Rome 1933)

<i>Room/Area</i>	<i>Fixtures</i>	<i>Artifacts</i>	<i>Decoration</i>
a	fixed masonry seats on either side of entranceway	none recorded	traces of plaster
b (<i>atrium</i>)	aedicula in N-W corner	45 bronze bosses which decorated wooden lattice work; small pottery amphora; 2 terracotta lamps; bronze fittings (from either door or furniture); bone fragments (probably from furniture decoration); large bronze basin; bronze casserole dish	4th Style -- high quality
01	none recorded	broken bronze pot; iron lock; iron key (possibly from upper storey); bone needle; bone die; bone awl; boar's tooth; 2 terracotta lamps; glass beads and counters; bronze handle	undecorated
02	stairway along E and N walls; series of niches under stairway	none recorded	undecorated

03	masonry structure against wall	obsidian fragments; small lock fragments; glass bead; terracotta lamp; bronze ring (possibly from upper storey)	3rd Style -- low quality
04	none recorded	iron hinge; bronze coin	4th Style -- high quality
05	shelves lining N and S walls	bronze lamina and chain; bronze bosses; small terracotta vessels; glass vessels; black stone for polishing	coarse plaster -- undecorated
06	rectangular recesses in W end of S wall	none recorded	coarse plaster -- undecorated
07	none recorded	none recorded	4th Style -- med. quality
08	none recorded	3 bronze hinges; bronze ring handle; bronze couch (near w wall); 2 loom weights; marble herm; bracket from the <i>impluvium</i> in the <i>atrium</i>	4th Style -- high quality
09 (corridor)	none recorded	ring handle (possibly from wooden container)	4th Style -- med. quality
12	none recorded	small pottery cup	4th Style -- med. quality
13	none recorded	iron fittings possibly from a chest; waterspout in shape of fish-head possibly from the <i>compluvium</i> in the <i>atrium</i>	1st Style -- med. quality
14	none recorded	unspecified number of amphorae	undecorated
15	none recorded	legs from 2 pieces of furniture; chair; number of door fittings; door fittings from a cupboard	4th Style -- med. quality
11	none recorded	4 glass storage bottles in a box; fittings from architectural fixtures	4th Style -- high quality
10	none recorded	<u>from doors of large cupboard</u> : 5 bronze locks; 4 iron handles; fragments of lamina; hinges; nails; <u>from inside cupboard</u> : 16 pottery vessels; 2 loom weights	coarse plaster -- undecorated

c (peristyle)	cistern	<p><u>a wooden chest containing</u>: 9 flasks and jars -- 2 of which contained tiny sea-shells;</p> <p><u>E ambulatory</u>: iron lock; bronze lock fragment; bronze handle guard; 5 tapering winged hinges (probably all door fittings);</p> <p><u>S ambulatory</u>: bronze corner guard; bone hinge; iron lock; terracotta lamp; terracotta bowl; bronze ring; fragments of iron chain; 6 coins; 4 iron keys;</p> <p><u>elsewhere</u>: marble and bronze table; 4 ring handles; 2 bronze lock bolts; fragment of bronze lamina; 5 small bronze tapering winged hinges; 14 small bronze hinges; 5 large tapering winged hinges; rectangular hinge (probably both from door fittings); bronze animal foot; number of marble slabs -- 2 with fragmentary inscriptions; terracotta puteal over cistern head; statue of Apollo; bronze brazier; bronze cooking pot; fragments of lock plates; bronze bracelet; bronze buckle; 2 bronze corner guards; large iron knife; 2 bronze coins; terracotta amphora; grinding stone; 2 bronze coins</p>	4th Style -- high quality
16 (corridor)	none recorded	door fittings; bronze ring-handle; amphora handle; dress <i>fibula</i>	4th Style -- med. quality
17	none recorded	bronze boss; bronze ring; bronze rod (possibly all from same object); amphora	4th Style -- low quality
18	none recorded	bronze table; marble table; bronze jar for cooking; 11 hinges; unspecified architectural fittings from doors/doorways	4th Style -- high quality
19	none recorded	3 skeletons; pick; hoe; 6 glass beads	4th Style -- high quality
21	2 shelves on each of the W, S and E walls	3 terracotta lamps; bronze lampstand; small glass vessels; bronze pan; 2 terracotta lids; 3 <i>ritieni ad occhio</i> (probably from chest or a box); lead weight; glass; blue organic powder (?)	undecorated

22	none recorded	6 lamps; pottery lid; small pottery plate	2nd Style -- med. quality
23	none recorded	pile of lime (used for building)	4th Style -- med. quality
24	none recorded	iron brazier	4th Style -- high quality
25	niche in W wall; bench along W wall below niche	<u>from the niche</u> : 3 wooden busts; wooden head; conical object of organic material (possibly wicker basket)	2nd Style -- high quality
46 (atriolum)	none recorded	none recorded	2nd Style -- med. quality
47	none recorded	iron nails from roof	2nd Style -- med. quality
48 <i>caldarium</i>	recess along N wall	none recorded	4th Style -- high quality
49	none recorded	6 truncated amphorae filled with lime	coarse pink and white plaster
53 (corridor)	niche in W wall	bronze coin	undecorated
51	latrine in N-E corner	pottery vase; 2 marble fragments (possibly from latrine seat)	undecorated
52 (kitchen)	hearth along N and E walls; sink in S-W corner; niche above hearth on N wall	pottery fragments	<i>lararium</i> painting on W wall -- low quality
54	stove	2 terracotta lamps; 2 terracotta weights; iron axehead; small glass bottle; large pile of organic material from N-E corner to stove (fuel)	undecorated
50 (courtyard)	masonry stairway in N-E corner; 2 <i>cocciopesto</i> tubs along S wall	none recorded	undecorated
A	recess in S wall	iron brazier; bronze casserole dish; bronze jug; plate and calyx of lampstand; bronze lamp; terracotta lamp; elliptical bronze tub; bronze lock from door; amphora fragments	undecorated

B	none recorded	5 lock plates; 10 bronze rings; 14 bronze bosses; 5 lock devices; bone ornaments; pieces of bronze and iron lamina; 30 fragments of bone ornaments; wooden fragments; 4 bronze jugs; 2 bronze amphorae; bronze plate; large bronze vessel; glass flask; glass bowl; pottery vessels; suspension chains; mirror ; bronze <i>paterna</i> ; bronze fruit dishes; small bronze amphora; bronze <i>oinochoe</i> ; 2 glass jars; 3 glass ointment jars; terracotta lamp; fragments of bronze lampstand. tufa sundial fragments; 3 new tiles (for <i>compluvium</i> in <i>atrium</i> b); <u>chest along N wall containing:</u> jewelry; gold and silver coins; 118 pieces of silver including group of silver vessels wrapped in heavy cloth.	undecorated
C	latrine in N-W corner; a semicircular masonry platform in S-W corner (hearth?)	Room filled with debris prior to eruption -- <u>from fill:</u> 2 bronze coins	undecorated
D	large domed oven occupied almost entire room	Room filled with debris prior to eruption -- <u>from fill:</u> fragments of inscribed pottery; slab of inscribed marble; bronze lamina; 2 terracotta lamps; bone disc; 2 bronze coins	undecorated
L (corridor)	wooden stairway in S-W corner of west branch; trap door under stairway leading to <i>cisternola</i> ; wooden stairway in S-E corner of S branch	<u>from <i>cisternola</i>:</u> complete and fragmentary pottery vessels; 2 terracotta lamps; bronze rings; bronze coin; fragments of bronze nails and tubes; fragments of <i>terra sigillata</i> plates and bowls; 10 skeletons in S-W corner; <u>elsewhere:</u> amphorae and glass vessels fragments; remains of columns (from Room 46)	undecorated
20	stove in S-E corner	amphorae; iron lock	undecorated
20a	none recorded	none recorded	undecorated
20b	none recorded	none recorded	undecorated
34 (courtyard)	drinking trough in N-W corner; stove towards S-E corner	43 stacked amphorae; fragmentary grinding stone; bronze coins; skeleton of a dog	undecorated

29	wooden staircase in S-E corner; masonry platform (manger?) along W wall	2 wagons/carts; pottery amphora; bronze lock and boss; attachments and harness from vehicles; 3 bronze bells	undecorated
30	none recorded	none recorded	undecorated
31	bench along S wall; latrine S of bench	fragments of pottery; iron handle	undecorated
32	none recorded	pile of lime	coarse plaster -- undecorated
33	none recorded	none recorded	coarse plaster -- undecorated
35	none recorded	<u>wooden basket containing</u> : small set of scales; bronze statuette of Eros; base of another small statuette; bronze disc; semi-lunate bronze ornament; 2 bronze pendants; elaborate glazed terracotta lamp <u>elsewhere</u> : pottery, bronze and glass storage vessels; iron knives; terracotta lamps; lead weight; remains of iron lock	coarse plaster -- undecorated
36	none recorded	bronze needle; glass flask; 2 furniture legs found in the base of an amphora	coarse plaster -- undecorated
37	none recorded	lamp; 2 bronze rings; buckle; fragments of 2 mirrors; 2 bone spoons; bone handle; cooking pot; tripod; amphora; worked marble fragments	undecorated
38	none recorded	bronze and pottery vessels; architectural fittings; bronze lock plate and pommel	undecorated
40	latrine in S-E corner; ledge along W wall; masonry block in front of ledge	tools; 3 small vessels; large bucket; lampstand; coin	undecorated

41 (atriolum)	<i>impluvium</i> in centre of courtyard; low platform against W wall; semi-circular niche above platform	bed decorated with bone pieces in S-W corner; marble table; 3 bronze vessels; 2 jugs; casserole dish; ivory handle from knife; bone boss (possibly from chest fitting); iron tripod; bronze cooking pot; 3 jugs; smoke-blackened ceramic pot; 3 pottery lids; 3 casserole dishes; 3 shells; iron strigil; bronze strigil; 8 iron hoes; iron rake; large knife blade; marble arm; 2 wooden 'collars'; glass beads; glass-paste mortar; heap of straw; marble pieces; jewelry; crushing bowl; bronze buckles; bronze rings; bronze nails; bronze lamp; cooking vessel; liquid container; eating vessels. <u>from niche:</u> 3 terracotta lamps, <u>chest containing:</u> 3 ointment containers; 3 larger glass vessels; egg-shell ware cup; bronze bucket; bronze ladle; 3 pottery jars; 2 pottery jugs; pottery bowl; pottery pan;	traces of white plaster
43	none recorded	2 skeletons; imprint of a bed along S wall; leather purse; silver bracelet; small silver rings; silver spoon; 90 silver and gold coins; decorated bronze bucket; 3 bronze jugs; chest; 4 pieces of marble; terracotta lamp; pottery <i>abbeveratoio</i> ; 2 <i>paterae</i> ; 2 strainers; elliptical bronze fruit dishes; 2 bronze basins; bronze furniture foot; 7 large bronze bosses; 2 bronze locks; set of scales; 115 bronze coins; 3 iron picks; 6 axes; pair of iron shears; 7 knives; 2 chisels; 2 locks; 7 knives for pruning; lampstand; bronze seal [inscription: QUINTO POPPEO EROTE]; iron key; silver ring; iron knife; bronze lamp; bronze spoon; bronze terminal and lead ring	4th Style -- low quality. Simple linear and geometric decoration on white ground
44 (courtyard)	none recorded	bronze <i>situla</i> ; part of a grinding stone; piles of building material in N-E corner; terracotta <i>puteal</i> ; amphorae	undecorated

45	western half taken up by masonry platform, possibly with a provisional latrine; niche in E corner of S wall	3 pottery vases; a weight; marble puteal; a mortar	coarse white plaster; <i>lararium</i> painting on W wall
42	none recorded	3 pottery vessels; 2 amphorae; jug	<i>lararium</i> painting on W wall --

Catalogue #2

Casa degli Amorini Dorati

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<i>Room/Area</i>	<i>Fixtures</i>	<i>Artifacts</i>	<i>Decoration</i>
a	stone seats on each side of area	none recorded	3rd Style -- low quality
b (<i>atrium</i>)	none recorded	none recorded	3rd Style -- low quality
c	none recorded	none recorded	4th Style in central zone-- high quality; 1st style cornice above -- high quality
d	none recorded	marble table support; bronze and silver decorated amphora; 2 bronze jugs; spherical bronze basin; bronze boss and chain (possible from a chest)	3rd Style -- high quality
e	none recorded	none recorded	3rd Style -- high quality

f (peristyle)	<i>lararium</i> aedicula against N wall; shrine (?) in S-E corner of peristyle; set of stairs on W side of garden; rectangular pool with apsidal end is located in centre of garden	<u>in aedicula</u> : cylindrical lead vase; bronze jug; cylindrical bronze container; 6 bronze statuettes (Jupiter, Juno, Minerva, Mercury and 2 Lares). travertine altar; amphorae (unspecified number); marble puteal; marble base; marble mask; <u>in shrine area</u> : marble Egyptian statuette; headless statuette of Fortuna; fragment of statue of human foot crushing a toad; 2 small glass amphorae; glass storage flask; set of scales; 2 decorated disks; fragments of a disk (probably from locks); slab of marble; terracotta lamp decorated with Isis; Neronian coin <u>elsewhere in garden</u> : 5 marble masks; marble head of Dionysus; 2 bronze bosses (possibly from a chest or cupboard); bone tessera incised with "IP"; bone bead; marble Corinthian capital; amphora base; granite basin; stone disc; cylindrical marble base; bronze <i>patera</i> ; 2 plaques (possibly from a belt); 14 glass-paste beads; lead vase decorated with serpents; travertine sundial; marble base with feline feet; marble trunk; 3 marble pilasters; marble relief decorated with theatrical masks; marble fragment of a club; 2 marble herms; marble herm used as a fountain; marble support (possibly for a fountain); head of Dionysus; cylindrical base; marble statue of a boar; marble statue of a rabbit; marble statue of a dog; herm of a male portrait; marble fountain base; double marble head of Dionysus and Ariadne	4th Style -- high quality
g	none recorded	pottery jug; bronze jug; circular lock plate and tongue; bronze signet ring	predominately 3rd Style -- high quality; 4th Style on north wall -- low quality (repaired after AD 62 earthquake)
01	wooden stairway	none recorded	traces of plaster on south wall

z	masonry podium in N-E corner	2 inscribed amphorae	none recorded; it is thought that this room may not have been attached to the house, but was included in Allison's survey of finds because of its proximity to the structure
03	wooden cupboard filled the area	none recorded	undecorated
i	2 glass discs decorated with gilded cupids were set into the walls	10 bone hinges; fragments of a set of scales; bronze lampstand and a bronze lamp; 5 coins	4th Style -- high quality (imitation marble socle with yellow wallpaper pattern and the glass discs inset above)
j	wooded shelves along E and N walls; drainage hole in N-E corner of room	2 small lock plates with tongues; large marble mortar; bronze jug; bronze strigil	coarse plaster in scheme of white and pink
k	latrine	iron cone with wood remains; 4 bronze coins	no traces of decoration remain
l	2 rows of wooden shelving along N wall	bronze <i>patera</i> ; small glass bottle; 4 iron strigils; small bone spoon	traces of undecorated white plaster on N wall
m	none recorded	4 [guardispigoli]; ring handle	4th Style --high quality
n	none recorded	none recorded	4th Style -- high quality
o	none recorded	none recorded	coarse plaster -- undecorated
p (garden)	none recorded	none recorded	coarse plaster -- undecorated
q	none recorded	none recorded	4th Style -- high quality
r	none recorded	none recorded	4th Style -- high quality

s (corridor)	wooded stairway along N wall	ring-handle; 2 rectangular lock plates; 4 rings (probably all from a cupboard or chest)	traces of undecorated plaster
t	<i>fusorium</i> in N-E corner	none recorded	traces of undecorated red plaster
u	none recorded	none recorded	traces of undecorated plaster
v (kitchen)	bench or hearth along N wall; circular <i>fusorium</i> ; wooden stairway along S wall	none recorded	traces of undecorated red plaster
x (latrine)	masonry seat in N-W corner; <i>impluvium</i> and cistern mouth in N-E corner	none recorded	traces of undecorated plaster
y	none recorded	bronze foot; 2 bronze furniture ornaments inlaid with silver; full-sized marble bust of a woman	coarse plaster -- undecorated

Catalogue #3

Casa del Principe di Napoli

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<i>Room/Area</i>	<i>Fixtures</i>	<i>Artifacts</i>	<i>Decoration</i>
b	none recorded	none recorded	4th Style -- low quality
d (<i>atrium</i>)	none recorded	marble table; 9 inscribed amphorae; 2 bronze basins; 2 bronze buckets; bronze <i>forma di pasticceria</i> ; bronze casserole dish; 2 small pottery vases; base of <i>terra sigillata</i> vase; 12 glass storage flasks (varying sizes); small cylindrical bronze container; bronze buckle; small lead weight with iron handle	4th Style -- low quality
a	wooden stairway along N wall	pottery jug; pottery vase; small pottery plate; 2 glass storage flasks; bronze lampstand; part of a lampstand; lead weight (probably a loomweight); terracotta lamp; 5 bronze coins	coarse plaster -- undecorated
c	recess in N wall	bronze surgical implement; bronze herm; small bronze bell with an iron hammer; 2 cylindrical bone pieces; bone spindle; 2 pyramidal lead weights (probably from a loom); skeleton	4th Style -- low quality
e	none recorded	large bronze brazier; bronze cooking pot; 2 bronze jugs; bronze finger ring (?)	4th Style -- low quality
f	none recorded	none recorded	4th Style --

g	bench or hearth along N wall; semicircular niche in N wall; latrine in N-E corner; terracotta downpipe connected to latrine from floor above; wooden stairway along S wall	amphora; 4 small glass bottles; glass cup; 2 pottery vases; bronze surgical instrument; bronze lock; bronze ring-handle; bronze lock plate	coarse plaster -- undecorated along S wall; red unpainted plaster above hearth.
h	none recorded	2 bronze basins; amphora; bronze casserole dish; bronze handled vase; 2 pottery jugs; pottery vase; pottery basin containing fatty substance; iron axe; 2 small pottery plates, one <i>terra sigillata</i> ; small glass bottle; terracotta lamp; shell; chicken and sheep bones; bronze boss; bronze hook; bronze coin	coarse plaster -- undecorated
i	none recorded	amphora; bronze bucket; 2 bronze frying pans; 2 bronze handle from a cooking pot; marble pestal and mortar; small bronze lid	4th Style -- low quality
n (garden)	painting <i>lararium</i> aedicula against W wall; cistern in N-E corner	terracotta puteal; bronze <i>patera</i> ; bronze vase; fragments of marble table with feline legs; inscribed amphora	coarse plaster -- undecorated on all walls; high socle in fine pink plaster on S and E walls
l (portico)	stairway in N-W corner	54 pyramidal lead weights (probably from loom)	4th Style -- low quality
p	area housed stairway	none recorded	coarse plaster -- undecorated
k	none recorded	two-handled bronze basin, decorated with silver; bronze <i>fruttiera</i> ; 3 bronze vases with handles; bronze shell-shaped <i>forma di pasticceria</i> ; 2 bronze lamps; bronze chains; 6 ring-handles; bronze spindle; lead weight	4th Style -- high quality
m	none recorded	small bronze bottle; elliptical <i>forma di pasticceria</i> ; small glass amphora; 2 fluted terracotta pots; pottery beaker; 2 bone probes; 2 bone spindles	4th Style -- high quality
o	none recorded	none recorded	4th Style -- low quality

Catalogue #4

Casa dei Ceii

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<i>Room/ Area</i>	<i>Fixtures</i>	<i>Artifacts</i>	<i>Decoration</i>
a	2 masonry seats (outside entrance way)	fittings of house door; two bronze coins	3rd Style -- med. quality
b (<i>atrium</i>)	stairway (from S-E corner) with a built-in cupboard underneath.	from cupboard under stairs: scales, several vessels including a marble basin, knife, lantern, variety of lamps, and a conch shell; wooden cupboard containing: one glass bottle, a razor and a conch shell; wooden chest containing: small pottery vessel and four fish-spine chains attached to wood; marble table; puteal; lead tub; <i>labrum</i> ; remains of scales; pair of shears; counterweight; small lump of wax	3rd Style -- med. quality
c	none recorded	none recorded	3rd Style -- med. quality
i (kitchen)	latrine (under stair); seat along N wall; bench or hearth	remains of life-size statuary: a marble dove with iron feet (lacking its head) and a thumb; bronze and terracotta vessels; handmill	3rd Style -- low quality; coarse plaster -- undecorated behind latrine
d	none recorded	four bronze discs (possibly furniture decoration) <i>patera</i>	coarse plaster -- undecorated,
e (<i>triclinium</i>)	none recorded	none recorded	3rd Style -- high quality

k (corridor)	none recorded	hoe; coin; fittings (possibly from furniture)	3rd Style -- low quality
h (garden)	none recorded	bronze needle; skeleton of a tortoise	4th Style -- high quality
f	none recorded	bone hinges (possibly from a cupboard); vessel for washing; <i>forma di pasticceria</i> ; silver shell; spinning implement; coin	3rd Style -- med. quality
g	shelves lined the walls; evidence for cupboards or chests in S-E and S-W corners	broken glass chalice; silver and bronze water-heater; two tools; empty wooden money-box(?)	4th Style -- med. quality
l	none recorded	remains of wooden furniture; bronze brazier	coarse plaster -- undecorated
m	none recorded	four numbered lead weights; pair of tweezers	coarse plaster -- undecorated
n	none recorded	storage vessel fragments; table vessel fragments; utilitarian vessel fragments; small glass vessels; locks; lamps; terracotta weight; unidentified animal bones	coarse plaster -- undecorated
r	none recorded	none recorded	3rd Style -- med. quality

Catalogue #5

Casa della Ara Massima

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<i>Room/Area</i>	<i>Fixtures</i>	<i>Artifacts</i>	<i>Decoration</i>
a	none recorded	none recorded	high red socle; white plaster above
b (<i>atrium</i>)	square niche on N wall; statue base fixed to W wall	bronze krater; iron hoe	4th Style -- high quality on <i>lararium</i> (N wall) and W wall; undecorated plaster--E and S walls.
c	wooden shelving along N and S walls	amphora; utilitarian jug; fine-ware cup	coarse plaster -- undecorated
d	none recorded	none recorded	4th Style -- high quality
h	none recorded	none recorded	4th Style -- med. quality
i	none recorded	marble head of Dionysus; table	plain dark red and white zones (poorly preserved)
k	circular masonry structure in S-W corner	none recorded	coarse plaster -- undecorated
l (<i>latrine</i>)	latrine in S-E corner; drain in N-E corner	bronze basin	coarse plaster -- undecorated (only S wall is preserved)
e	two rows of shelves along W wall	amphora base; pottery jar; pottery lid; painted (?) marble vase; pottery bowl; glass flask; lead container; 2 glass basins; a pottery basin; 2 terracotta lamps; 3 bronze needles; bronze lock, boss, and handle ring (probably from wooden container)	white plaster -- undecorated

f	none recorded	3 small bronze discs, attached to wooden disc with bone lamina; 2 iron feet with ivory decoration (possibly from furniture); 5 corner guards (possibly from a chest); 15 glass flasks; 3 glass cups; small glass vase; a glass <i>aryballos</i> ; pottery cup; bronze jar; set of bronze scales; bronze plates; bronze lantern; 20 terracotta lamps; small amber figure; bronze tweezers; bone hairpin; 103 beads; part of a gold earring	4th Style -- high quality
g	masonry structure in S-E corner (possibly a bench)	marble table; bronze lock and key; 2 fragmentary bronze locks; complete bronze lock; bronze casserole dish; pottery pan; pottery jug; bronze ladle; 2 glass bottles; small glass amphora; 2 glass flasks; 2 amphora bases; terracotta lamp; bronze netting needle; set of bronze scales; large lead weight; 120 fish-hooks; glass fragments; 2 terracotta lamps; silver coin; 2 bronze coins	4th Style -- high quality
m (<i>taberna</i>)	none recorded	none recorded	undecorated
n	wooden stairway	pottery jug; circular two-handled bronze basin; bronze cooking pot; bronze jug; bronze casserole dish; large bronze krater (?)	white plaster -- undecorated

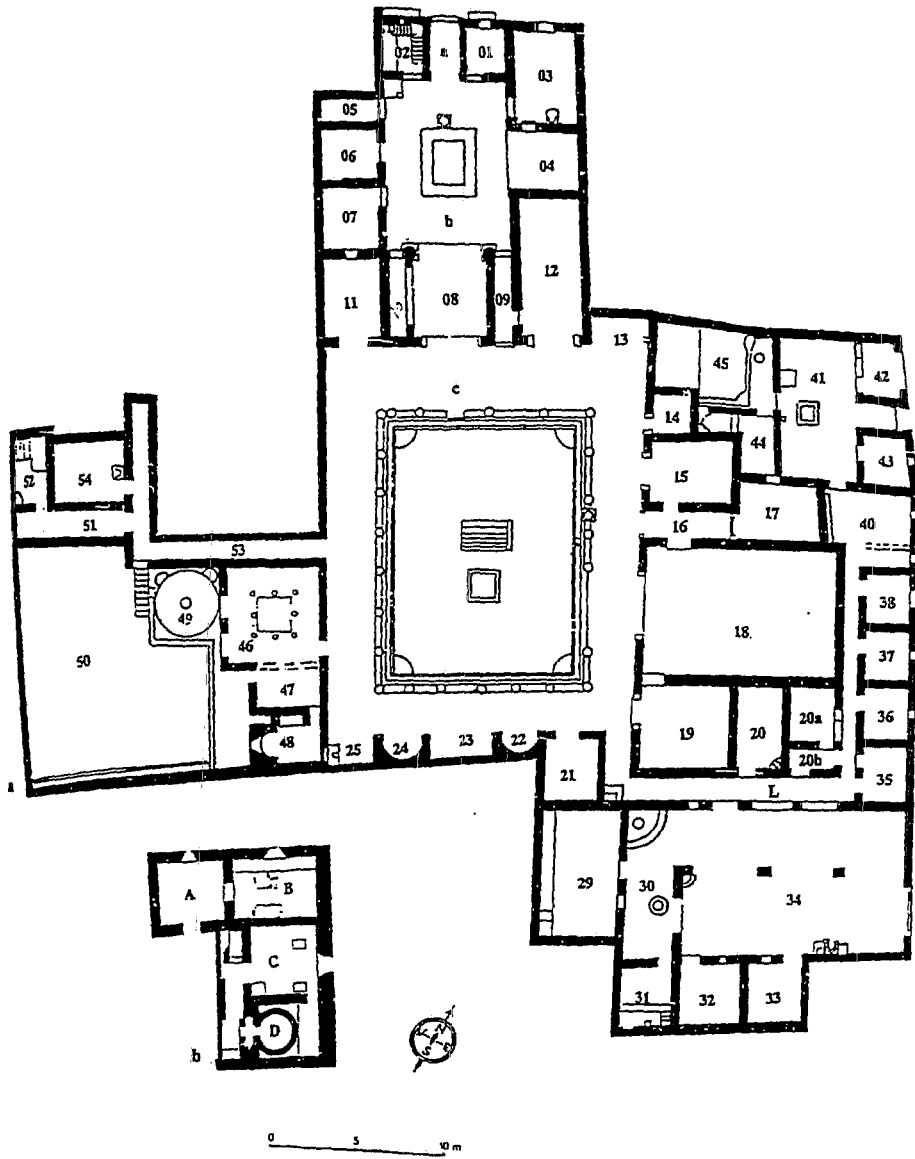


FIGURE 1: Plan of the *Casa del Menandro*

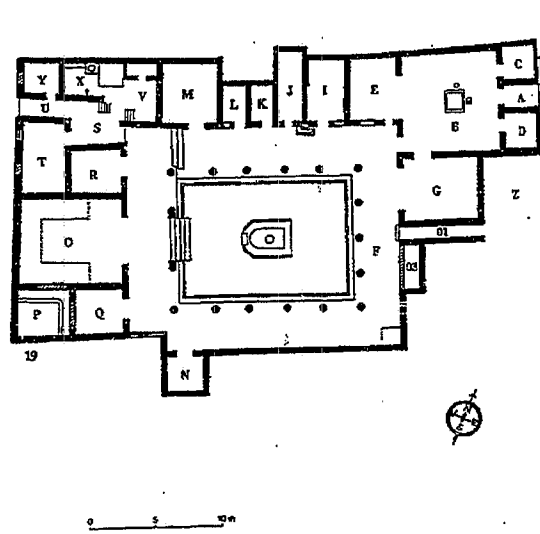


FIGURE 2: Plan of the *Casa degli Amorini Dorati*

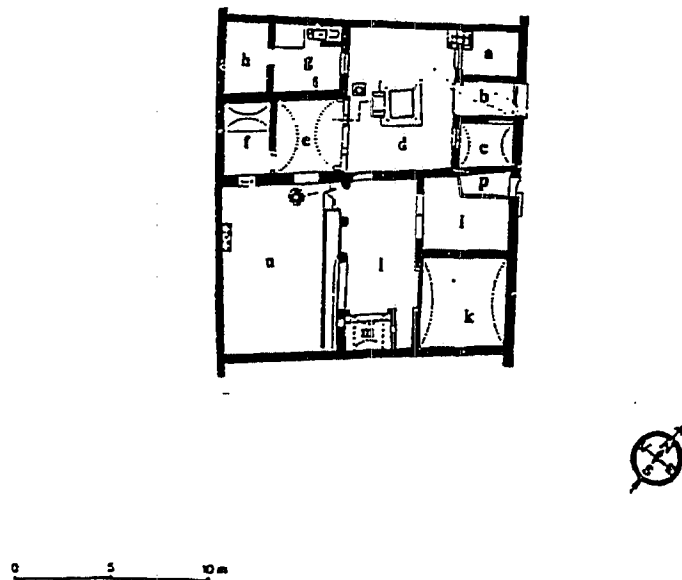


FIGURE 3: Plan of the *Casa del Principe di Napoli*

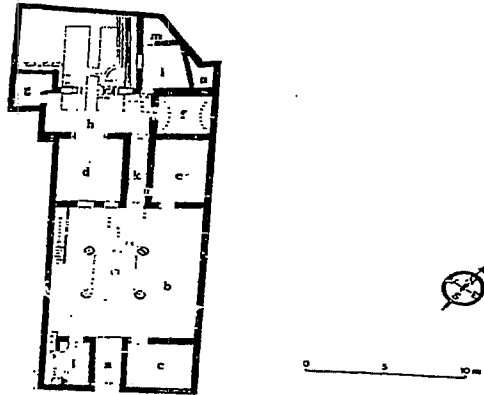


FIGURE 4: Plan of the *Casa dei Ceii*

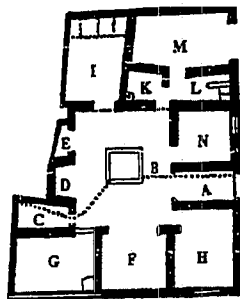


FIGURE 5: Plan of the *Casa della Ara Massima*

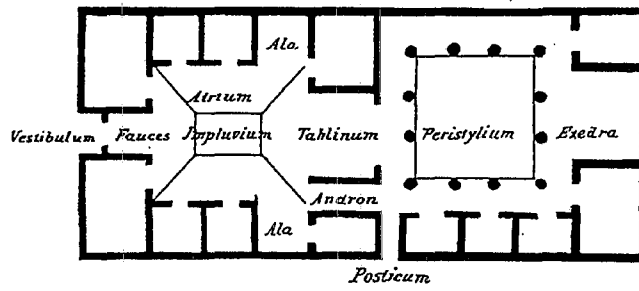


FIGURE 6: Schematic plan of typical Pompeian house

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