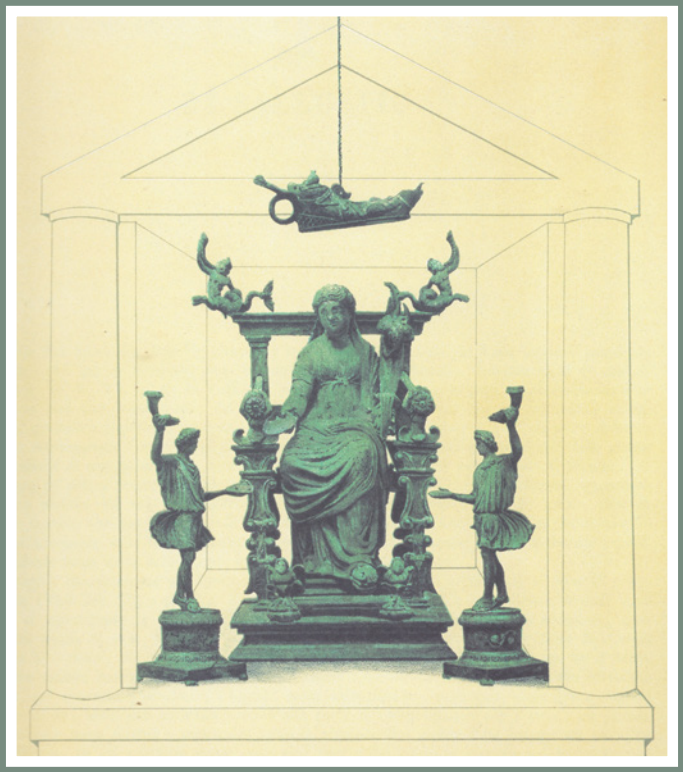
ACTA INSTITUTI ROMANI FINLANDIAE VOL. 49

TANGIBLE RELIGION

MATERIALITY OF DOMESTIC CULT PRACTICES FROM ANTIQUITY TO EARLY MODERN ERA

editors

RIA BERG, ANTONELLA CORALINI, ANU KAISA KOPONEN & REIMA VÄLIMÄKI



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Acta Instituti Romani Finlandiae,
rivista internazionale open-access sottoposta a peer review
Acta Instituti Romani Finlandiae,
an international peer-reviewed open-access series

In copertina / *Cover illustration*

Bronze statuette of the goddess Fortuna and the Lares in the *lararium* of the House of Fortuna (IX 7, 20), Pompeii. After F. Niccolini – F. Niccolini, *Le case ed i monumenti di Pompei disegnati e descritti*, Napoli 1890, vol. III, Casa r. IX is. VII, tav. III.

I titoli delle riviste sono abbreviati secondo le norme dell'American Journal of Archaeology /
The abbreviations for journal titles follow the system of the American Journal of Archaeology.

ISBN 978-88-5491-164-2
ISSN 0538-2270

Roma 2021
www.irfrome.org

Finito di stampare nel mese di luglio 2021

Contents

Acknowledgements

This book has its roots in an international workshop of the same name, *Tangible Religion*, which focused on the material presence, use and meaning of objects relative to cult practices in premodern domestic spaces, in a time frame ranging from Antiquity to Early Modern Europe. The workshop was organized at the *Institutum Romanum Finlandiae*, Villa Lante in Rome, 27th–28th November 2014 by Dr. Ria Berg, Dr. Anu Kaisa Koponen and Dr. Marika Räsänen; the editors of the volume thank Dr. Räsänen warmly for her assiduous work and enthusiasm in the organization of the event, essential for the creation of this volume. Further papers (Bassani, Coralini, Ferrer, Perna) have been added from those read in another, complementary workshop, the session *Objects and Images. Materiality of Lived Religion in the Classical World*, organized by Dr. Ria Berg, Prof. Antonella Coralini and Dr. Ilkka Kuivalainen at the European Association of Archaeologists yearly conference *Building Bridges*, 30th August – 3rd September 2017 at Maastricht. We also warmly thank Dr. Maddalena Bassani, who was present at both conferences, for sharing her expertise and for fruitful collaboration through the editorial process.

This project is a fruit of the interdisciplinary and *longue-durée* approach at the heart of the work of the institute, and aims to stimulate exchange and confrontation of methods, research questions and new influences in different fields of study.

We thank first and foremost the Finnish Cultural foundation and the University of Turku for financial support that made it possible to organise the original workshop in Rome; we of course owe a great debt of gratitude to the Institutum Romanum Finlandiae for support and assistance in all phases of the process, in particular the then director Prof. Tuomas Heikkilä, Intendent Simo Örmä, and Amanuensis Linda Jokela. We also express our sincere gratitude to the current Director, Prof. Arja Karivieri, Prof. Marjo Kaartinen and Prof. Mika Kajava for accepting the manuscript for publication. We also thank the Parco archeologico di Pompei, especially Prof. Massimo Osanna and the present Director, Prof. Gabriel Zuchtriegel, for the kind permission to study the Pompeian materials and wall-paintings relevant to the theme and Dr. Grete Stefani and members of the Pompeii staff for long-standing and multiple assistance. We also thank Dr. Brian McNeil for the English revision of a number of articles. Over the years, we have had the pleasure of benefiting from discussions with and support from numerous scholars, whom we want to thank cordially, in *primis* Prof. Katariina Mustakallio, but importantly also Emese Balint, Jonas Bjørnebye, Kimberly Bowes, Rasmus Brandt, Véronique Dasen, †Turid Seim, Line C. Engh, Kristine Iara, Siri Sande, Teemu Immonen, Ilkka Kuivalainen, Liisa Lagerstam, Ville Hakanen, Katja Varakas and numerous others.

Rome, June 2021

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Introduction:
Tangible Religion from Antiquity to the Early Modern Period

Ria Berg – Reima Välimäki – Anu Kaisa Koponen – Antonella Coralini

In ancient and premodern societies – from archaic Greece and imperial Rome, through the Middle Ages up to Reformed Northern Europe – most homes contained at least some select objects with a religious or ritual significance. Such objects, with a variable degree of sacrality, would range from altars, household shrines, and statuettes of divinities to incense burners, relics, pendants, rosaries and religious imagery of gods and saints represented on wall paintings, decorative tiles, textiles, furniture or everyday utensils, and even substances contained in the 'consecrated' vases, such as incense, salt, honey, water and wine. Such objects differed from the most venerated sacred cult items safeguarded in temples and churches, and seen only during certain ceremonies: domestic cult objects may have been seen, touched and used on an every-day basis. Inhabitants, visitors, servants, and slaves of the households therefore had a close, physical – and arguably more direct, personal and emotive – relationship with these objects with which they shared the living space and with which they were in daily interaction, than with the objects of the official cult. In domestic space, holy and everyday activities and objects mingled and were closely interwoven, to such an extent that it is impossible to distinguish the borders between the 'sacred' and the 'profane'.

Material culture, with its non-language-like qualities, has always offered very specific ways to express abstract religious ideas and emotions.[1] Tangible objects – cult images, ritual paraphernalia, offerings, relics and sacred mementoes – have made it possible to vest ethereal religious beliefs in a material form, to render abstract ideas concrete and tactile, and made them ownable and capable of being contained in one's home.[2] Thus, religious performances – prayers, votive promises, and sacrifices – can have, to a certain degree, material proxies reflecting these ephemeral acts of speech and gesture.[3]

In the Roman world, cult and sacrifice were prescribed in minute detail, and their material equipment too had to meet certain formal standards.[4] Such objects and images had also, in turn, the capability to render certain domestic spaces (more) sacred and give to the entire Roman *domus* a sacral aura.[5] The Roman house, as a homestead, was therefore, in a certain sense, regarded as a holy place and therefore was well protected by Roman law. The violation of someone's house was regarded as an attack not only against property and person, but also against the Roman state and its religion. In theory, the same 'sacred aura' attached to the Roman elite house also protected the humble homes of the poor.[6]

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1 Boivin 2008.

2 Rowan 2012.

3 Swetnam-Burland 2018, 591.

4 Siebert 1999; Marchetti 2016b, 172–73.

5 Scagliarini 2011; Albrecht et al. 2018, 572.

6 Treggiari 2002, 108

On the other hand, it must be borne in mind that all domestic objects could, potentially, be 'religious' – for example, a water basin could, on occasion, contain water for nuptial ablutions, or, in other moments, just be a sink for daily washing.[7] Money-boxes were simple utensils, but, when decorated with images of Mercury and Fortune, and entrusted to the custody of the domestic deities, the Lares, they also became symbols and protectors of the whole family fortune. Similarly, all domestic spaces and activities may, at times, have been considered sacred, making it more difficult to identify them within the domestic setting. In Antiquity, divinities were, in fact, present in every aspect of domestic life in a capillary way, since every action had to be sanctified and approved by their good omens.[8]

In a different way, the inner religious devotion and personal spiritual commitment typical of Christianity made it, potentially, equally omnipresent in daily life. The great places of formal and public worship, monasteries and cathedrals, are still visible in the European landscape, but we know that many medieval Christians heeded Jesus's words "But thou when thou shalt pray, enter into thy chamber, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father in secret".[9]

The meaning of the domestic setting for family cult practices can hardly be underestimated: the home was the setting of the most important events in the family life through the generations, conception, birth, child-care, illnesses, coming of age, weddings, business enterprises, departures and returns, deaths. The closest objects at hand in such moments were private and domestic cult items, through which protection was sought in the critical periods in a human life-cycle. Sometimes, different, quite particular divinities, or saints, were thought to supervise these domestic aspects of the human existence, such as, in Antiquity, the uterine amulets in red hematite with images of Hercules and Omphale that helped in childbirth, and, in later periods, specific icons or images of the Madonna with child.[10]

The relation of domestic or private vs. official or public religion is a delicate and much discussed question, and varies considerably at different historical periods. Domestic and public religious realms were interpermeable and each affected the other. However, the domestic cult practices have often been seen as reflections of the public and official ones, on a smaller scale: For example the *lararium* shrine, *aedicula*, often reproduced the Roman temple, in its most essential features, the frontal pediment sustained by columns, and later on, similar chapel-like shrines framed images of saints (**Fig. 1**). Cult images of the temples were reproduced in miniature in the collections of statuette figurines inside the *lararia*, and Madonna figures or crucifixes were copied from altar pieces, or icons and rosaries.

There were both private and public elements in the rituals associated with medieval sacramentals, that is, blessed objects and matter such as blessed salt, candles, or herbs. A priest or bishop blessed them on certain feast days, but their use, often for healing, was located in the home.[11]

In ancient Greek and Roman homes, the religious map may be more 'individualistic' and multifaceted, and more varied and heterogenous behaviour is to be expected, than in the official cults.[12] In private, traditions based on the ethnic origin or on personal beliefs of the inhabitant may be more visible and religious expressions even be in disaccord with official religious tendencies and power struggles. Sometimes such individual practices were deemed negatively as 'magic', such as the use of amulets and various natural

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7 Insoll 2004.

8 Kaufmann-Heinimann 2007a, 188; Santoro 2013.

9 Matth. 6:6; Deane 2013, 67–68.

10 Dasen 2008.

11 On sacramentals, see Franz 1909, vol. 1; Scribner 1984.

12 Belayche 2007, 276.

Fig. 1: A domestic cult place, *lararium*, containing the statuettes of the household divinities (Lares, Bacchus, Mercurius), and a lamp (After F. Niccolini – F. Niccolini, *Le case e i monumenti di Pompei disegnati e descritti*, 1896, vol. IV, tav. V).

substances like snake skins and herbs in domestic healing; the fine line between religion and superstition was ever a matter of definition and redefinition. The same applies to medieval Christianity: the laity was encouraged to engage in personal devotion, but private worship always risked being suspected of heretical opinions or superstitious and magical practices.

One specific question is the relation between domestic and funerary practices. In Antiquity, the tomb was conceived as an eternal domicile, and (for example) the Etruscan tombs were designed and furnished to look like contemporary homes. In the Roman period too, assemblages of grave goods could imitate domestic contexts, and some tombs had architectural features typical of the Roman house such as *cubicula* or alcoves with beds or a U-shaped arrangement of three couches in the dining room (*triclinium*).

Yet another question to keep in mind is the relation between collections of religious art and art in general. Roman elite homes abounded in Greek sculpture and paintings, many representing divinities and sacral settings, and Egyptian religious images too were often present. They may have been chosen for a variety of motives: to exhibit the owners' knowledge of the Greek culture, mythology and history, or exotic tastes, cosmopolitan lifestyles and the ability to acquire rare and imported items; however, genuine religious feelings may also have been felt for *objets d'art*.[13]

13 Kaufmann-Heiniman 2007a, 192–93.

In recent years, premodern cult practices from Antiquity to the early modern period have been intensively researched from the perspectives of materiality, sensorial and emotional experience, and lived religion. This volume expands the focus, not only taking into consideration sacred objects used in domestic ritual and cult, but also exploring the sacrality inherent in everyday utensils or domestic decorations; the questions include the relationship between the inhabitants, domestic cult objects and other objects in the household, the interrelations of religious objects with space and movement, as well as temporal changes in attitudes towards such objects, the criticism and the defence of such material cult practices; the role of objects in expressing religious change or resistance to change. The papers in this volume discuss these topics through interdisciplinary approaches ranging from cultural history, archaeology, history of religion, and art history.

Studies on Premodern Domestic Cult

The evidence for domestic religion in the Greek world is relatively scarce. Literary sources mention some domestically worshipped deities of the domestic hearth (Hestia), family and family line, like Apollo Patroos, and of the house itself and its propriety, like Zeus Herkeios (protector of house limits) and, in particular, Zeus Ktesios (of the acquisitions).[14] The last of these may have been represented and worshipped in the aniconic form of an *amphora* jar, placed in the domestic storeroom, or as a snake. Literary sources also mention sacred images and objects (*hiera*) among the heirlooms at home, venerated through sacrifices, offerings of incense and cakes, ritually cleaned and crowned with garlands.[15] Private small processions of the family, carrying such sacred objects, also took place at funerals, weddings and feasts like the rural Dionysia.[16]

The scholarly interest in the Greek home as a religious locus first surfaced in the 1950s in works of an anthropological tone,[17] and in the writings of A.-J. Festugière, who famously saw in Greek religious thought an evolution from communal towards ever more individual belief, ultimately leading to Christian inner devotion.[18] Subsequent research has likewise, in general, followed the trail of contrasting spheres of 'state' vs. 'individual', 'public' vs. 'private' cult, discussing them together as two aspects of one conceptual whole, only on a different scale.[19] The domestic cult, headed by the father of the family, has often been seen as a miniature reproduction of the civic cults. Since both textual and archaeological evidence remains very scarce, even the very existence of a specific 'domestic cult' in the Greek world has been questioned.[20] However, K. Bowes has noted how this may be due, in part, to the fact that much of the evidence, like cult niches and painting on the walls, is simply missing from the archaeological record together with the high-standing walls; the hearth, another locus of cult, was mostly portable and has not left permanent traces.[21] In particular, the better-conserved sites like Olynthus and Delos have, however, yielded material evidence, such as masonry altars and cult niches, that mark the central courtyard as the focus of domestic cult practices; also

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14 Soph. *Ant*. 487; Pl. *Euthyd*. 302c; Ath. 473b–c; Philostr. *Imag*. 2.23; Schol. Pl. Euthyd. 302d; Dion. Hal. *Ant. Rom.* 8.41; *Suda* s.v. Ἑρκεῖος Ζεύς. See Sjövall 1931; Faraone 2008, 10–17; Bowes 2015, 211–12.

15 Porph. *Abst*. 2.16.

16 Isae. 8.15–16.

17 Nilsson 1954; Rose 1957.

18 Festugière 1954; Faraone 2008, 210; Kindt 2015.

19 Morgan 2007; Faraone 2008; Scheid 2011; Portale 2014.

20 Sourvinou-Inwood 2000.

21 Bowes 2015, 209–10; 214.

the entrance, as a potentially dangerous liminal space, was often protected with cult niches.[22] The study by C.E. Barrett concentrates on Egyptianizing terracotta figurines connected with domestic cult practices of the multicultural port city Delos.[23] Her study reveals how Egyptian religious traditions were both understood and followed, as well as interpreted in a new way. Numerous façades of Delian houses were decorated with a unique kind of religious paintings which scholars (erroneously) have called *lararium* paintings. They testify to innovative domestic cult practices.

C. Faraone has examined the *topos* linking women with Greek domestic ritual practices bordering on magic, in literary sources that mention, in domestic contexts, women and the infirm members of households vowing altars and resorting to amulets. Plato, taking a radical position, would have forbidden such a household cult in his ideal state, because it encouraged deleterious magical practices. He recommended that sacrifice be left to the professional figures of temple priests and priestesses.[24] Plutarch too associates women with domestic healing magic, exemplified by his famous account of how women hung amulets around the neck of the unwilling Pericles, as he lay dying of the plague.[25] However, Faraone has underlined that the study of Greek domestic religion should increasingly widen its focus to include not only the male 'head' of the family, but also the activities of the whole family unit (*oikos*): women, children and slaves.

In the ancient Roman world, the textual and material evidence is much more abundant. The private cults, *sacra privata*, included principally those of the Lares, protectors of the family, the Penates, protectors of the domestic stocks and storerooms (*penus*), Vesta of the fireplace, *Genius* of the *paterfamilias*, Juno of the *materfamilias* and other divinities preferred by the household members.[26] Also many inanimate elements of the domestic space, such as the fireplace, doors and passages, could be honoured as divinities or have their specific divine protectors.[27] Domestic deities were venerated on the occasions of family celebrations, but also many public festivals, such as the *Lemuria*, *Parentalia*, *Caristia* and *Liberalia* included rituals in the domestic environment.[28] In the study of Roman religion, scholars have traditionally regarded the cults practiced in public sanctuaries and the private and domestic religious practices as quite distinct realities. Among the studies of the more general picture of Roman domestic religion, besides the works of G. Wissowa, must be mentioned the early publication of De Marchi in 1896, claiming the importance and the independence of the domestic cults from the public ones. This started a long debate about the *sacra privata* as opposed to *sacra publica*.[29] The differences between private and public religiosity have recently been re-analysed, for example, by J.R. Brandt and by J. Bodel and S.M. Olyan in their introduction to the collective volume *Household and Family Religion in Antiquity*.[30] The domestic ritual, as earlier in the Greek world, has often been seen as reproducing on a smaller scale the forms of the public cult, since the *pater familias*, the most central agent in the domestic religiosity, performed sacrifices at the domestic altar, just like the official cult priest in the temples. Less attention, again, has

22 Cahill 2002.

23 Barrett 2011.

24 Pl. *Leg*. 909d–e–910b.

25 Plut. *Vit. Per.* 38.

26 For the Roman domestic pantheon, see Dubourdieu 1989; Bodel 2008; Dubourdieu 2012, 43; Gury 2016, 60–62.

27 See Bassani p. 108 in this volume.

28 Gury 2016, 62.

29 De Marchi 1896; Wissowa 1912.

30 Bodel – Olyan 2008a and b; Brandt 2010.

been given to the cultural functions of the other members of the domestic *familia*, in the everyday cult praxis. However, it is well known that the slaves too had an important, almost central role in Roman domestic cult of the Lares.

The centerpieces of Roman family cults were undoubtedly the specific domestic gods called *Lares familiares*, at whose altars offerings of wine, grapes, food, honey and honey-cakes, spelt, garlands, perfume and incense were made.[31] Literary sources have numerous mentions of their domestic cult, both at daily domestic mealtimes and monthly celebrations and at specific crucial moments of family life: on their altar were offered the childhood dress and *bulla* of the son and his first beard at his coming-of-age ceremony, a coin by the bride at the wedding, and weapons by the veteran soldier.[32] The image of these archaic divinities, depicted as two youthful, dancing gods with wine goblets in their hands, and dressed in short tunics, were borrowed from the late Hellenistic Dionysiac iconographic repertoire.[33] Their cult was materially located at the so-called *lararia*, household shrines composed of a niche or masonry *aedicula*, sometimes with a separate altar in front, where the worship of the other domestic deities also took place. The word *lararium* is rare and first appears only in the *Scriptores historiae Augustae*; before that period, the domestic shrine was simply called *sacrarium* or *sacellum*. But *lararium* will be used in this book by several writers as a conventional term to describe such household shrines.[34]

The *lararia* of the Vesuvian towns buried by Vesuvius in 79 CE constitute the most comprehensive and massive source material for Roman domestic religion. Their first catalogues appeared already in the second half of the 19th century,[35] and the monumental *corpus* of G.K. Boyce, in 1937, comprised 505 such domestic shrines.[36] The Lares and *lararia* have continued to be a prolific field of studies that has interested scholars of successive generations, in particular with the studies of D.G. Orr, T. Fröhlich and F. Giacobello.[37] The spatial aspects of their positioning in the atrium, peristyle, or the kitchen were examined by P. Foss, who pointed out the importance of the visual view lines connecting *lararia* with the other spaces.[38] W. van Andringa has elaborated this discourse, studying how the collocation of *lararia* both in the atrium, the old locus of the hearth, and its later collocation in the kitchen, depended on the centrality of food, with meals in common as the defining basis of the family unit, shared by family members of all statuses, ages and genders.[39] He has also underlined, in this context, the centrality of the sacrifice of a pig, and its preparation and consumption, a conspicuous element in the iconography of the *lararia*.[40]

The *lararia* of Ostia have received relatively little attention, in comparison to Pompeii, but they are discussed in the monograph of J.Th. Bakker as part of the religious landscape of this multicultural harbour town; R. Brand has also catalogued and discussed the Ostian *lararia*.[41]

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31 Plaut. *Aul*. 23; Iuv. 9.138; Tib. 1.10.21–25; Petron. 29.8.

32 Plaut. *Aul*. 1–5; Cato *agr*. 43.3. On the figure and the cult of the Lares, De Marchi 1896 (2003), 155–62; Wissowa 1897, col. 1868–1898; Laforge 2009, 153–55; Torelli 2011, and most recently Flower 2017. For sacrifice in a domestic context, see Bassani 2017b.

33 Santoro 2013, 52–53.

34 *Hist. Aug. Aurelian*. 3.5; *Hist. Aug. Alex*. 29.2; 31.4; *Hist. Aug. Tac*. 17.4. Laforge 2009, 20, n. 11; Gury 2016, 63; for a critique of the term, see Bassani in this volume, p. 209.

35 Jordan 1862; Helbig 1868, 11–29, cat. 31–95; Sogliano 1879, 10–19, cat. 9–71.

36 Boyce 1937.

37 Nilsson 1954; Orr 1978; 1994; Fröhlich 1991; Giacobello 2008. See also Bettini 2012.

38 Foss 1997.

39 Van Andringa 2009, 217–44.

40 Van Andringa 2011.

41 Bakker 1994; Brandt 2010.

Numerous publications have continued to draw attention to the wealth of evidence of the domestic cult in Pompeii, such as the specific studies by A. Krzyszowska, V. Catalano, M.-O. Laforge, A. Maiuri, and, more generically on Pompeian religion, but also considering the domestic sphere, the works of W. van Andringa and M.T. d'Alessio.[42] In the Cisalpine region, another important centre of studies of Roman domestic religion has emerged, culminating in the important volume of the University of Padua, edited by F. Ghedini and M. Bassani, *Religionem significare*, in 2011. Similarly, the prolific series of seminars organized by the University of Trieste, *Sacrum facere*, have touched in several works on questions related to the private cult.[43] M. Bassani has also expanded the spatial and contextual research of Roman domestic cults to comprise all the sacred rooms and spaces denoted by the presence of *podia*, niches and *aediculae*, which she defines as the *sacraria* (cult rooms) and the *sacella* (cult buildings), in houses and villas of Pompeii and Central Italy.[44] L. Anniboletti has examined the niches on the outside of the Pompeian houses that guard the passage between indoor and outdoor space, with a strategic placing of apotropaic deities.[45]

The relation of Roman domestic wall-paintings to the sacred has also been a particularly fruitful field of study. K. Schefold famously saw the wall-painting systems as integrated wholes, transforming Roman homes into veritable domestic sanctuaries.[46] More recently, the question has been examined in more segmented ways, especially through single divinities and their iconographies. A. Coralini has made a seminal iconographic study of one important deity, Hercules, in the *corpus* of Pompeian imagery, and more recently, studies by C. Brain on Venus, and S. Hales, M. Scapini and I. Kuivalainen on Liber-Bacchus have appeared.[47] We should also mention the studies by F. Gury on the question of the 'sacralising' effect of wall-painting, in general, and images of aniconic divinities, *baetyli*, in particular, in Vesuvian domestic paintings.[48]

There is at present a considerable scholarly debate about the meaning of images and objects alluding to Egypt in Roman Italy. For example, I. Bragantini and M.J. Versluys have divided specific domestic images into different genres, such as religious Egyptianizing images and objects presumably related to performing of a domestic cult and images showing Egyptian subjects or settings that are unconnected to cult and have a decorative function or communicate political messages.[49] In contrast, C.E. Barrett underlines that "the meaning of many Roman images of Egypt resists reduction to any single fixed interpretation, remaining open to contestation, renegotiation, and reinterpretation according to changing circumstances".[50] The meaning of a specific figure depends, indeed, on numerous factors such as its architectural and social context as well as its assemblage among other items and images. Besides this, different viewers interpreted specific images according to their earlier experiences. But is it possible to be more precise in specific cases? L. Hackworth Petersen argues that it is time to problematize our dependence on the political meaning of Isis, and to regard Isis as a truly Roman deity, as one of many gods that individuals could invoke, just as with

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42 Krzyszowska 2002; Catalano 2002; Laforge 2009; Van Andringa 2009; 2011; d'Alessio 2009; Maiuri 2013. For a bibliographical overview, see Santoro 2013.

43 Ghedini – Bassani 2011; Fuchs 2016; Gury 2016; 2018; Marchetti 2916 a.

44 Bassani 2008; 2012; 2017a.

45 Anniboletti 2008.

46 Schefold 1972.

47 Coralini 2001; Hales 2007; Scapini 2016; Brain 2017; Kuivalainen 2020.

48 Gury 2016; 2018.

49 Bragantini 2012; Versluys 2002.

50 Barrett 2017.

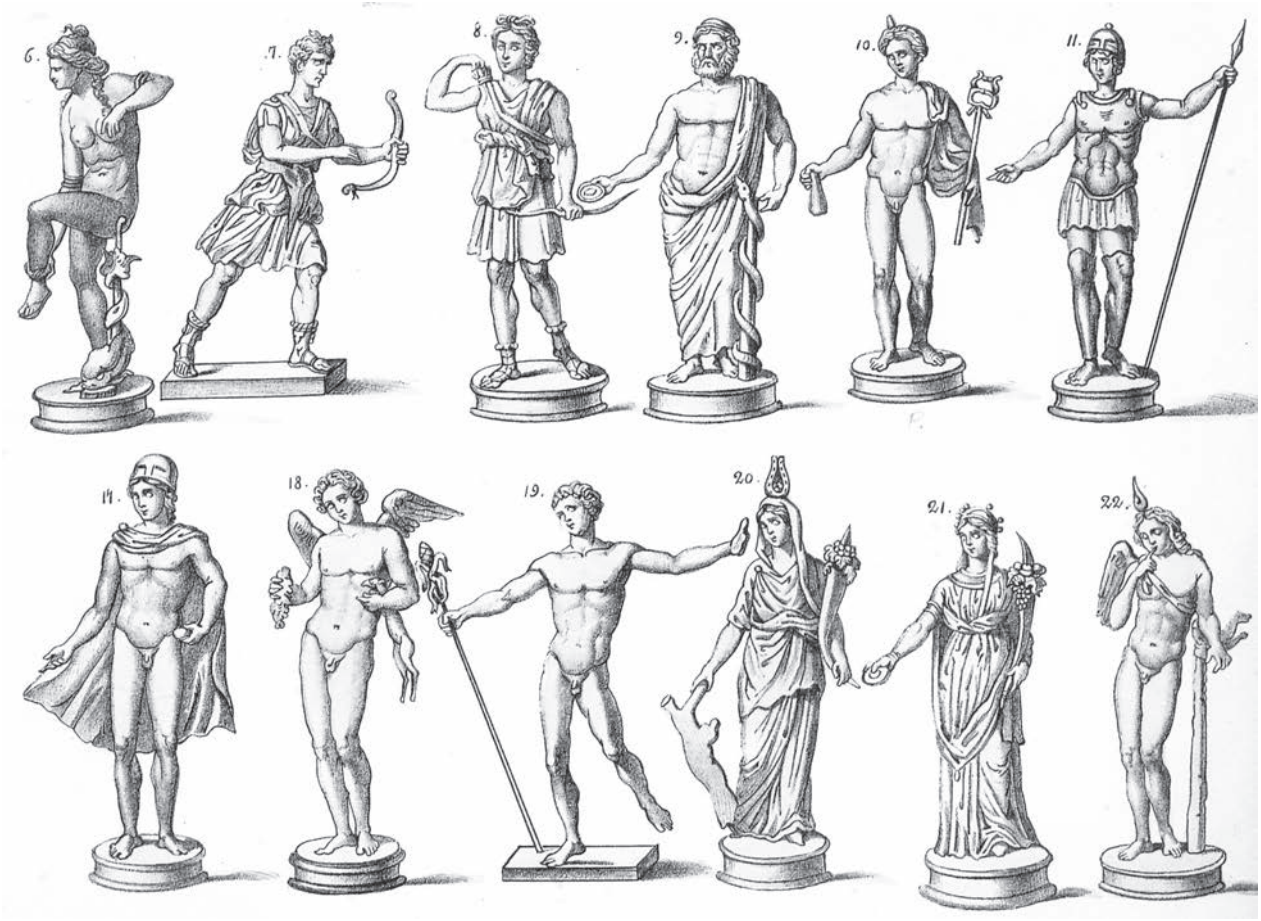

Fig. 2: Domestic cult statuettes in the Archaeological Museum of Naples (After C. Ceci, *Piccoli bronzi del Museo Nazionale di Napoli*, Napoli 1858, pl. V).

any Roman deity.[51] On this point, a firm foundation for further studies on Roman imagery alluding to Egypt in general could be the unquestionable material evidence of Egyptian cults in a Roman context, recently discussed in the works of M. Swetnam-Burland, L. Beaurin and I. Bragantini (to name only a few).[52]

Decidedly less attention has been paid to the material cult objects placed on the altars (**Fig. 2**). An important study by S. Adamo-Muscettola examined collections of divinities on the altars in Pompeii, and A. Kaufmann-Heinimann studied these in Augusta Raurica.[53] Among other sacred paraphernalia, the Pompeian incense burners and small altars (*arulae*) have been examined first by O. Elia and then by A. d'Ambrosio and M. Borriello.[54] C.M. Marchetti has discussed these and other material instruments of Pompeian religious ritual both in domestic contexts and in sanctuaries.[55] A. Sofroniew has attempted to bridge the gap between the material objects of religious practice, examining statuettes in the collection of the Getty Museum, and their location in domestic spaces.[56]

Since late Antiquity, and the rise of Christianity, royalty and nobility had founded their own private chapels in their palaces; in the later Middle Ages, domestic altars could be found in ordinary homes. Medieval

51 Hackworth Petersen 2016.

52 Swetnam-Burland 2007; 2018; Beaurin 2013; Bragantini 2012.

53 Adamo-Muscettola 1984; Kaufmann-Heinimann 1998; Kaufmann-heinimann 2007b.

54 Elia 1962; d'Ambrosio – Borriello 2001.

55 Marchetti 2016b.

56 Sofroniew 2015.

domestic devotional objects included, *inter alia,* rosary beads, images of the saints, prayer books, and relics. Sacramentals, that is, blessed objects and matter such as salt, candles, wax or herbs, entered from public to domestic worship. A priest or bishop blessed them on certain feast days, but their use, often for healing, took place at home.[57] Amulets, carried usually for general protective purposes, combined specific matter such as herbs with related prayers and invocations. Their use was widespread, but was often regarded with suspicion by clerical authorities. Amulets thus occupied a place between the holy and the superstitious.[58] In addition to actual devotional objects, religious decorative motifs were omnipresent, ranging from rich frescoes and tapestries to simple *Ave Maria* engravings on plates and buckles. The sixteenth-century Reformation brought a change to Christian material culture, but especially in Scandinavia, this change was gradual, taking place over decades or even centuries (**Fig. 3**). Yet, even the most rigorous Protestants were not satisfied with God's word alone. The new confession created its own religious imagery. It was expressed in everyday objects such as stoneware and stove tiles, and it spread through the Hanseatic trade network.[59]

Fig. 3: A fifteenth-century tin flagon, German origin. The flagon has two religious text excerpts: *In Maria Muter reine* and *Mane surgemus cum Kristi* (Photo: Museum Centre of Turku).

The study of domestic cults has not remained unaffected by new theoretical currents. After the 'spatial turn', the 'material turn' of the early twenty-first century, in archaeology, has kindled a new type of interest, shifting the interest from production to the use and context of the object, not only seeing things as passive recipients of human agency, but emphasizing how material things have an active role in the relationships with human beings, shaping people's behaviour and identities. The 'sensorial turn' of the last decade, then, has added to the parameters to be considered the senses, touch, smell and sound of objects, considering also the aspect of 'embodiment'. All these approaches offer important viewpoints for the study of religious objects and images located in domestic space, to be considered their 'materiality', and 'sensoriality', as items to keep in the hand and touch, the smell of the incense, associated with chants by voices, giving direct emotional responses through such multisensorial experiences. A fuller overview of the surge of the 'material' turn in religious studies, and its relations with the 'lived religion' approaches can be found in the article by Simona Perna in this volume.

Recently, the Max Weber Centre of Erfurt University has hosted a project on 'Lived Ancient Religion: Questioning "Cults" and "*Polis* Religion" ' (2012–2017), directed by J. Rüpke.[60] The members of the project

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57 On sacramentals, see Franz 1909, vol. 1; Scribner 1984.

58 Bailey 2007, 84–86.

59 See the articles by David Gaimster and Kirsi Majantie articles in this volume.

60 See the article by Simona Perna in this volume in part. p. 54-55.

have utilized the concept of 'lived religion' to study Roman religion from a new perspective, focusing on concrete daily cult activities, embodied devotional performances, material evidence of such practices and actions, and interactions in religious social networks.[61] This approach too has offered very fruitful new viewpoints for the present study.

The material and sensorial turns mentioned above have not left medieval and early modern studies untouched. In the course of the past decade, disciplines traditionally focusing on textual sources, such as history, literary studies and historical anthropology, have broadened their field of enquiry into objects, matter and sensorial experience. The perspective of material culture (that is, "'stuff' and what it means to people," in J.K. Deane's wonderfully concise definition),[62] has also brought together previously separated scholarly traditions, such as the study of objects and of consumption in the premodern world.[63] C.W. Bynum's *Christian Materiality: an Essay on Religion in Late Medieval Europe* (2011) has been a ground-breaking study, exploring both theological discussion and practical issues of holy matter in the Middle Ages. Bynum's ideas have resonated in subsequent scholarship, including essays in this volume. However, one should not exaggerate theoretical turns. Material aspects and sensory experiences have long been a part of the cultural historical study of premodern religion, for example, in M. Rubin's classic study of the Eucharist in medieval culture.[64] Cultural and social historians' interest in material culture, such as consumption and everyday objects, can be traced back much further, to the programme of the *Annales* school and K. Lambrecht's *Kulturgeschichte.*[65] Some scholars have even proposed that the material turn has done little to advance the actual study of objects and material culture. The material turn has generated intense theoretical discussion in keeping with the broader phenomenon of post-humanism. J. Keupp, himself a historian engaged in the study of matter and objects, has claimed that this deluge of theoretical meta-texts has contributed mainly to the theoretical debate itself, rather than to the empirical study of concrete objects.[66] There is no denying, however, that scholarship on material and domestic premodern religion has greatly flourished in recent years. The study of material culture has also become established to such an extent that it features in companions and textbooks on topics such as medieval Christianity or early modern emotions.[67] It has earned thematic issues in general historical journals, for example the centennial issue of *The Catholic Historical Review* in 2015.[68] While it is impossible to cover every publication in this lively field, some should be pointed out.

The written word and literary expressions of devotion in premodern Europe were dominated – although not monopolized – by men. Consequently, focusing on material culture and domestic piety can make expressions of female piety visible.[69] An illustrative example are the crowns with which the Wienhausen nuns used to adorn statues of saints, studied by C.W. Bynum. Removed in a 1469 reform of the monastery by male reformers as superfluous luxury, the crowns nevertheless had profound spiritual meaning for the monastic identity of the nuns, who experienced anguish upon their loss and sought new ways to adorn statues of the Virgin.[70] Women also had a crucial role as arbiters of new cults of relics, such as the veneration

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61 Rüpke 2015; Raja – Rüpke 2015b; Albrecht et al. 2018; Gasparini et al. 2020.

62 Deane 2013, 67.

63 Schmidt-Funke 2019.

64 Rubin 1991, esp. 35–82.

65 Miller 2015, 6–8.

66 Keupp 2017.

67 Williamson 2014; Hamling 2017; Laven 2017.

68 Miller 2015

69 Deane 2013, 67–68.

70 Bynum 2015.

of Byzantine relics sent home by crusaders in the aftermath of the fall of Constantinople to the Latins in 1204.[71]

Material devotion is entangled with two other aspects of human experience that cultural historians have intensely studied in recent years: emotions and senses. M. Rubin has explored how Virgin Mary was made more familiar, tender and motherly in the late twelfth and early thirteenth century. In this process, depictions of Mary entered domestic spaces and fostered a new 'exploration of emotion and empathy.'[72] Sensory experience and materiality are the themes of a recent edited collection focusing on devotion in late medieval Northern Europe,[73] and in 2016, the *Scandinavian Journal of History* published a special issue on 'Gender, Material Culture and Emotions in Scandinavian History'. The issue contained articles by A-C. Eriksson on materiality and emotion of fifteenth-century Swedish Pietà images,[74] and by R.M. Toivo on emotions associated with rosaries in the seventeenth-century Finland.[75] In an edited collection, *Feeling Things* (2018), H.M. Hickey surveyed the changing practices of emotions around the Holy Tear relic in medieval and early modern France,[76] and S. Randlers studied pilgrimage tokens from the Cathedral of Notre Dame in Chartres.[77]

For the present volume and its chapters on late medieval and early modern tangible religion, the most relevant scholarly tradition is the study of domestic devotion. In addition to the study of material culture, this scholarship draws on the long tradition of what previously was the study of 'popular' and nowadays 'lived religion', as well as from the spatial turn of the early 2000s. J.K. Deane, summing up the scholarship on medieval domestic devotion up to 2013 and setting the course for future studies, defined three core elements: 'prayer, rituals, and the use of material objects to enhance spiritual activities at home'.[78] While our emphasis is on the last of these, all three elements are present in the essays of this volume, and indeed they cannot be separated. In her essay, Deane urged future scholars to conduct comparative studies between domestic devotional practices of Christianity, Islam and Judaism, and to look into how domestic influenced the formal religious practices (not only vice versa). Furthermore, she pointed out the need to look beyond the binary division of heresy and orthodoxy in medieval Christianity, and to explore the supposed great divide of the sixteenth-century Reformation in domestic devotion.[79] In the years that have followed, scholarship has indeed advanced roughly according to the lines Deane proposed. Several studies have emphasised the continuity of medieval material devotion in Reformed Northern Europe, especially in domestic settings.[80] The Reformation was not, however, only about continuity, but was in many ways a real break and a transition to new forms of devotion. In this book, David Gaimster and Kirsi Majantie participate in the discussion with their essays demonstrating that household ceramics and stove tiles were updated to match the new religious convictions and tastes of their owners.

Although late medieval and early modern Italy with its rich and varied source materials remains one of the favourite areas in the study of domestic devotion,[81] the geographical focus has expanded significantly.

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71 Lester 2014.

72 Rubin 2009, 79–104, at 98.

73 Laugerud – Ryan – Skinnebach 2016.

74 Eriksson 2016.

75 Toivo 2016.

76 Hickey 2018.

77 Randlers 2018.

78 Deane 2013, 67.

79 Deane 2013, 71.

80 Toivo 2016; Bø 2018; Zachrisson 2018; Zachrisson 2019; Ellens 2019; see also several chapters in Martin – Ryrie 2012.

81 Musacchio 1999; Musacchio 2000; Musacchio 2005; Morse 2007; Corry – Faini – Meneghin 2018; Brundin – Howard – Laven 2018; Lawless 2020.

The ERC project 'Domestic Devotions' (2013–2017) focused on Italy in 1400–1600, but the project also published an edited volume with a global perspective. The chapters in the volume treat domestic rituals in sixteenth-century Korea,[82] early modern Damascus,[83] and among Ottoman Jews,[84] to give some examples. This trend continues in the recent thematic issue of the journal *Religions*. Entitled 'Domestic Devotions in Medieval and Early Modern Europe', the issue (or rather, several issues) has also essays on rituals in the early modern Ottoman world,[85] as well as on beds in high medieval Jewish devotion.[86] A few essays look beyond Western Europe, to the Balkans[87] and Russia.[88]

Writing in 2013, Deane could justifiably claim that 'only a bare beginning has been made in scholarship on medieval domestic devotion'.[89] Now in 2020, much more has been accomplished, and a lively community of scholars continues to explore the elusive nature of domestic and material religious practices. This volume contributes to the ongoing discussion and urges readers to contemplate long-term continuities and changes in religion and the domestic sphere.

The Structure of the Book

The volume is opened by the article of Meritxell Ferrer, who examines Sicilian domestic religion of the Greek, Phoenician and local communities in the eight – fifth centuries BCE, with the lens of gender studies. The main aim of this paper is to recover the role of women in ritual practices carried out in the household, both in Greek (Himera), Phoenician (Mozia) and local Sicilian (Monte Polizzo) contexts. The study of these practices in a cross-cultural perspective highlights the importance of the female agency in the domestic cult, their centrality in the ritual and practical maintenance of their homes, and their role as feeders, careers and keepers of the house and the household and, by extension, of their communities.

Simona Perna's paper discusses a specific type of Roman vessel, the funerary urn named 'tureen', which is essentially connected with both domestic and sacred spheres. The tureens are ash containers of a complex form carved mostly from alabaster, which came into use in the Augustan age and peaked in the Julio-Claudian period; sixty-five examples are known. Their basic form is derived from mundane Greek vessel forms with archaic ancestry, the crater and *lebes/stamnos*. These large containers were originally used for mixing wine and for cooking, but gradually took on a more sacral connotation through their use in feasting and sacrifice. The association of food, banquets and symposia with death is, in Antiquity, quite a normal occurrence, and thus the use of a cooking pot as a funerary urn can be explained by this connection; the preparation and consumption of food, and their ritual version, the sacrifice on the altar, could be symbolically connected with the cremating procedure and the container of the ashes. The Augustan renovation brought similar forms again into auge, possibly bearing a cultural or ritual memory of these earlier traditions. The use of similar forms as religious signifiers in domestic and funerary wall-painting points to a deeper eschatological meaning also in the choice of funerary urn.

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82 Soyeon 2018.

83 Katz 2018.

84 Arad 2018.

85 Allen 2020.

86 Kohn 2019.

87 Ulčar 2019; Marušić 2020.

88 Sulikowska-Bełczowska 2019.

89 Deane 2013, 71.

The following group of four papers examines domestic religion in Imperial-age Pompeii. A study of Pompeian *lararia* is mandatory for an interpretation of Roman domestic worship. In their paper, Aude Durand and William Van Andringa re-examine from a fresh viewpoint the central cult of the Lares and *Genius* of the *paterfamilias*, according to the literary evidence and archaeological material, which was the basis of domestic religion in Pompeii. The Lares were the sovereign rulers and protectors of the territory of the house, and guardians of the family. The Lares also define the *domicilium* legally and moved together with the family. This leads Durand and Van Andringa to enquire into the relationship between the presence of the gods in the domestic space and the occupation of houses, especially in the last phase of Pompeian history before the eruption of 79 CE. Their questions are: Is the presence or absence of gods in the house significant? Does it reflect transfers of populations or properties in the urban space? The challenges of investigating the urban organization of Pompeii before the eruption are expounded through representative examples. Similarly, the observation of *lararia* closed by walling raises the problem of changing ownership within the same house.

The contribution of Maddalena Bassani proposes some methodological observations for the study of domestic cult objects from the mid-late Republican age to late Antiquity, juxtaposing material finds and ancient literary evidence. Firstly, the subjects taking part in sacred ceremonies are taken into consideration (the *dominus* and his family, the *clientes* in the case of aristocratic homes, the servant *familia*), along with their role in the rituals and the artefacts that could suggest their participation, both in daily house rituals and in special occasions. Secondly, some reflections will be offered on the possible difference between types of cult objects found in the sacred spaces of urban dwellings or mansions, and those from countryside residences, in the light of literary evidence too. The central hypothesis discussed in the paper is the consideration that all the objects found in the spaces recognized as family *sacraria* in Pompeian houses might be connected with cult purposes. Thus, for example, one has to consider whether common tools and everyday utensils might in fact be 'cult objects' or even, at a certain level, aniconic 'personifications' of the archaic and less-known minor domestic deities that did not have figural images of their own.

Ria Berg's paper observes Roman domestic cult practice through the lens of one type of object between utensil and amulet, exclusively in female use, the hairpin. In general, the decorations on these pins – Venus figurines, female busts, hands, hoofs, pine-cones – have been seen mostly as decorative, and also as allegories of beauty and lucky charms. In this paper, the decorated hairpins of Pompeii are catalogued and their imagery and their iconography are analysed in greater detail in relation with the gestures and contexts of their use. The study argues that the iconography of the amulet-like finials points quite precisely to amorous and nuptial imagery; in the Roman wedding ceremony, hairpins also played an important role in the construction of the coiffure of the bride. Pointed objects, like wands and nails, also had an inherent 'magical' quality in Roman cult practice. Thus, such pins may have been specific utensil-amulets used in this family ritual, and afterwards in daily use as mementoes and talismans protecting the family unit, promoting amorous success and fertility. The case study demonstrates how the categories of cult image, amulet and utensil can be overlapping in the Roman domestic context.

Antonella Coralini's paper concentrates on the presence of one divine figure, Hercules, in the pictorial world of Pompeian homes. Like other divinities of the Greco-Roman *pantheon*, Hercules enters the domestic space, with particular frequency and intensity, through two routes, that of the myth and that of the cult. The dividing line between these two spheres is quite subtle and fluid: neither the collocation nor the subject of a divine figure suffices on its own to define the exact nature of the images connected with religious thought. Consequently, even in the rich and varied material offered by the Vesuvian cities, the interpretation of cult figures must be integrated with the reading of the whole contextual data, which differ from case to case. In

this approach, the concept of materiality can offer new methodological support. This also confirms how, in the sphere of the *sacra privata*, approaches looking only for general lines of single phenomena can be inadequate to understand the complex ancient realities.

Anu Kaisa Koponen's paper presents all the surviving or visually documented cult images of Egyptian deities or their attributes painted on walls of Pompeian houses. This study is based on Koponen's earlier statistical study on images alluding to Egypt in wall paintings of Pompeii. Although the Egyptian cult images are only eight in total, they are important evidence of religious attitudes of Pompeians towards Egyptian deities in their homes. In contrast to object finds whose exact original context is often obscure, these cult images can be studied in their original architectural and decorative contexts. In addition, the relationship between Egyptian cult images and other Egyptian motifs of frescoes is discussed. According to this study, visual allusions to Egypt were spread sparsely and homogenously in Pompeian domestic architecture. Most houses with Egyptian cult images did not present other Egyptian motifs in their wall decoration, and these houses were often also embellished with traditional domestic shrines or *lararium* paintings. As a result, the study suggests that in the Pompeian domestic sphere Egyptian deities were well adapted to the religious Pantheon of Roman gods and goddesses. This contrasts with the modern idea of the Roman followers of Isis as separate groups of initiates.

The second paper by Maddalena Bassani is based on her preceding mapping of the religious items and spaces in forty-seven dwellings in central Italy, ranging from urban *domus* extra-urban villas with the *floruit* between the second century BCE to the fourth century CE. The indicators of private worship include interior rooms and exterior buildings identifiable as *sacraria* and *sacella*, furnished with altars, niches, *aediculae*, paintings, artefacts and inscriptions; worship furniture found inside the house (altars, niches, pedestals), associated with cult-related artefacts like sculptures and reliefs, *arulae*, *thymiateria* and also other domestic utensils. The article concludes by looking at sculptures that bear evidence of imperial worship in private habitations, offering a novel outlook on *sacra privata*.

The second section of the book collects four papers, discussing the late medieval and early modern period in Northern Europe.

Claire Renkin's paper examines some of the paradigms that surround analysis of late medieval devotional objects (Books of Hours, rosary beads, domestic reliquaries etc.). They were seen, both at the time and by subsequent scholars, as expressions of a self-indulgent hyper-sensual spirituality that clashed with an increasingly urgent reform agenda of movements like the *Devotio Moderna* and Savonarola that voiced a hostility to the materiality of late medieval spirituality. In contrast, the material exuberance of many objects evokes visually a passionate delight in the tangibility of the sacred. This emotional response finds support in the writings of various authorities from Gregory the Great to Catherine of Siena. Central examples of this 'exuberantly incarnational spirituality' discussed by Renkin range from late-fifteenth-century illuminations from Books of Hours to early-sixteenth-century Flemish prayer-nuts with scenes from the Life of Mary Magdalen.

Reima Välimäki's essay is an attempt to look beyond the binary division of 'heresy' and 'orthodoxy' in medieval Christianity.[90] He explores the ways in which the laypeople with Waldensian affinities in late fourteenth-century Germany negotiated between conflicting theological and pastoral instructions from their dissident lay confessors, the Waldensian Brethren, and the surrounding mainstream Catholicism. The article's focus is on the Waldensians' relationship to material practices of medieval Catholicism. Waldensian Brethren taught their followers that practically all material aspects of worship were invalid and superfluous.

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90 See Deane 2013, 71.

Thus, holy water or blessed salt was considered to be nothing more than ordinary water and salt. When interrogated by an inquisitor, Waldensian followers demonstrated knowledge of this condemnation of material cult, but many of them had nevertheless continued for example the aspersion of holy water. Sometimes this was done in order to assimilate into the surrounding community, but some of those interrogated explicitly stated that they believed in the beneficial effects of blessed material objects, despite the teachings of the Brethren. Medieval Catholicism's relationship to holy matter was problematic and contested, and Välimäki demonstrates that laypeople's opinions did not necessarily follow the lines of heresy and orthodoxy as imagined by inquisitors and polemicists.

Kirsi Majantie discusses ceramic tile stoves as a source to study the private devotion in the 15th–16th century in Northern Europe. The finest of these were decorated with moulded images which were copied directly from ecclesiastical art and architecture, and from the mid-fifteenth century onwards, models were taken also from printed media. The most typical motifs on the fifteenth-century stove tiles were the devotional themes of the Catholic Church, especially the Passion of Christ and images of the saints. Religion and piety were however entangled with aspirations for demonstrating one's power and status, and in the houses of nobility, religious motifs were often mixed with portraits and coats of arms of their owners and depictions of their elite pursuits, such as hunting. Although there is no written evidence suggesting that tile stoves were used as instruments of private devotion, their biblical stories and depictions of saints must have aroused veneration both in their owners and in other household members, and they could have acted as private altar shrines and allowed prayers to the saints. The Reformation with its abolition of the doctrine of purgatory brought visible changes to the decoration of stove tiles. The themes which had related to the veneration of saints or had emphasised suffering were replaced by portraits of the secular supporters of the Reformation and by themes linked to forgiveness and salvation. This article discusses the devotional nature of tile stoves and how their transformation from verifications of their owners' Catholic piety to showcases for the support of the Reformation is manifested in archaeological material.

The book closes with the final reflections by David Gaimster. It takes further the discussion begun in Gaimster's 2003 article 'Pots, prints and propaganda' in the volume *The Archaeology of Reformation 1480–1580,* which established an archaeological connection between the long-distance Hanseatic trade in 'iconographic' domestic ceramics (relief-decorated stoneware and stove-tiles together with moulded figurines) and the spread of the Protestant faith and changed political loyalties around the Baltic and North Seas. Since then, the increased archaeological distributions of these products have transformed the historical picture of sixteenth-century religious and social change from the Gulf of Finland to the English Channel. Stonewares, stoves and figurines contributed to a visual and sensorial sacralisation of the domestic interior in post-Reformation Europe, with the urban merchant class leading the trend. Gaimster's paper considers the extent to which Hanseatic trade communities employed the moulded ceramic medium to cement and communicate changed confessional, cultural and political identities within the urban domestic sphere.

Conclusion

The prolific recent literature on the theme of private cult practice show that the theme of domestic religion is still relevant, and offers new approaches and questions. One of the main goals of this diachronic book is, in fact, to confront such unasked questions, which can be presented in different time periods.

Several writers in this volume have noted the need to reinforce the viewpoints and experiences of the other household members, slaves, servants, children, ethnic and religious minorities, women – their

presence and agency is more likely to be documented in material culture, minor objects and imagery, than in written sources and the architecture of official sanctuaries.

Questions anchored within the spatial approach have inspired enquiries about the mobility of the domestic cult objects inside the house, and from one domicile to another. Among the domestic spaces, in what ways do sacred objects sanctify living space, or *vice versa*, consecrated spaces or chapels give sanctity to ordinary utensils kept within? To what degree are the domestic divinities identified with the family unit and help to form their collective identity, and what is their relationship with the material homestead – what happens when the family unit moves?

Questions related to the long-standing debate about private vs. public religiosity surface in several contributions. In Antiquity, religious plurality was relatively unproblematic, and the arrival of new cults, divinities and ritual practices was relatively well-tolerated. The differences between official *religio* and private cult, sometimes mingled with *superstitio* and often negatively judged, were questions pondered upon by ancient authors and often connected with political power struggles. Multiple cults, both traditional Roman gods and newer arrivals, for example the Hellenized Egyptian divinities, could flourish simultaneously in one and the same household. Christianity brought a different official monopoly of creed and cult, although this was continuously challenged by inner movements of reform and change, some of whom were regarded as heretical by the orthodox mainstream. Domestic religiosity, in particular, permitted uniquely multifaceted expressions of religious devotion that found their material form in domestic furnishings. These material features can also bear evidence of opportunism, syncretism, creativity, neglect and indifference to accepted public religious modes. Significant new religious currents can also originate in such private initiatives; at times, if the public domain sees them as a threat, there may be efforts to control more strictly domestic behaviour too. In the home, there can be earlier symptoms of a shift between religious tides can give earlier symptoms, although the home can also retain conservative and old-fashioned habits.

An important question to consider in the framework of domestic, material religion, in all epochs, is the complex relation between ‘pattern’ and ‘agency’. Whereas religious ritual is inherently something repetitive, traditionally given, and therefore forming consistent patterns also in material culture, the home is also the sphere of action par excellence of individual agency – in this case, the possibility for the individual inhabitant to pick and mix cults, divinities and ritual practices he/she preferred. In this volume, examples show, for example, how painted cult images and statuettes of Egyptian deities were combined with more traditional Roman gods in Pompeian domestic shrines, and the changing imagery on the domestic decorative relief tiles continued to insist on certain Catholic figurative motifs even after the Reformation, while also adopting a new pictorial repertoire. A person who was deemed a heretic by Church officials could nevertheless hold perfectly Catholic opinions about blessed objects, even against the instructions of his or her dissident masters.

The tangible realities of religious objects offer a large prism of approaches through the concept of materiality, in particular from the point of view of their identity building effects. For example, the Roman hairpin performs ritual grooming gestures, and its pointed nail-like form may be seen to reinforce its magical effect. The gesture of manipulating the prayer nuts in one’s hands, reiterating or reproducing by touch the sacred image carved onto it, is also a fascinating example of combining object with ritual gesture. What is the meaning and origin of specific sacral vessel forms that can be found, in painted or material form, in ancient homes as well as in tombs and sanctuaries?

In premodern times, material objects were fewer and more precious, and this too may have influenced their religious significance. For example, at least in poorer households, it was not possible to have distinct

sets of plates for sacred offerings and for common mealtimes, or for sacral ablutions and hygienic washing. On the other hand, the object that did not exactly correspond to one's religious *credo* might have continued to be used, since it was not financially possible to acquire new ones. Also, in some cases the decorative or memory value of domestic items may have been more important than their religious meaning. Thus, traditional gods of the ancient period continued to be represented in late antique and medieval times as allegories, and Catholic images too may have remained in use in some Reformed homes. A similar (or same) image, object or gesture could also have been given different meanings and interpretations at different historical periods. Some powerful images, like the mother-goddess holding a baby, can even form a strong continuum from Antiquity to modern religious imagery; households, at all historical periods, needed to tackle similar problems related to the critical moments of birth, maternity and early infancy.

In sum, religion is a dynamic and ever-variable complex of parallel beliefs and a spectrum of material practises. Comparing the physical presence of cult objects in domestic space, in different epochs, offers possibilities for reflection on *longue-durée* continuities, gradual changes and points of complete breakage of tradition. Domestic viewpoints are an important addition to the research that questions traditional ideas of clear-cut watersheds in religious history, such as the change in Antiquity from traditional Roman 'formal' religion to more personal so-called 'Oriental' and Christian beliefs, the medieval distinction between heresy and orthodoxy, and the early modern transfer from Catholic to Reformed Christianity. According to the material and pictorial evidence from domestic contexts, such transpositions may not have been so radical and abrupt. The multiformity of cult was, arguably, more tolerated in private contexts, but the interpenetrating levels of public/private religious practice still offer numerous stimulating challenges to interpretation.

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Ancient World

More than Dwellings. Women, Rituals and Homes in Western Sicily (8th–5th Centuries BCE)

Meritxell Ferrer*

Introduction

Western Sicily is the only ancient Mediterranean territory where, from mid-eight century BCE, people of Levantine and Aegean origins settled permanently, living together with local populations (**Fig. 1**).[1] This colonial duality turns western Sicily into a perfect setting to study colonial phenomena and cultural contact processes. Besides, just as other buffer zones, western Sicily was a highly dynamic and changing space that turns it into a perfect place to analyze the construction, negotiation and representation of these three communities' social and cultural – as well as gender – identities.

This peculiarity, however, has been largely overlooked as these peoples have usually been studied independently and in isolation. Furthermore, in those cases where scholars have analyzed cultural contact in the area, they have almost always done so from a colonialist perspective. That is, keeping a dual gaze based on the classical relationship among colonists and colonized in which the former – both Greek or Phoenicians – are represented as the only possible agents who have some ability of action, while the latter – the natives – are imagined as mere passive audiences always subjected to colonial agency and dynamics.[2]

In spite of this academic isolation, it is worth noting that these three fields of study have some elements in common. All have had a strong interest in everything that is considered as being closely associated with power. An example of this preference are the considerable amount of studies – in the Greek, Phoenician or local fields – focused on monumentality, trade, religious technocracies or the public sphere, at the expense of other areas of interest that have been usually considered to be unconnected or secondary to power and politics, such as everything related to the domesticity and, especially, to the feminine sphere. This shared perspective of inquiry has enabled to maintain a highly classist and androcentric image of western Sicily: an image where only those men that have been interpreted as being full members of an idealized male elite have voice, whereas the rest of the community – elders, children, commoners and, especially, women – have been completely silenced.

Notwithstanding this traditional perspective of study, the detailed analysis of some contexts shows us a different scene where some of these long-standing silenced agents –such as women– have agency for their own and their capacity of action is not limited to their assumed male elites. In this regard, the analysis of some ritual and religious practices carried out by certain women during their

* This paper was written during a postdoctoral contract Juan de la Cierva-Incorporacion, awarded by the Ministery of Economy, Industry and Competiteveness of the Government of Spain.

1 The first levels of the Phoenician colony of Mozia are dated to the mid-eighth century BCE (Nigro 2014, 492–93), while the foundation of the first Aegean colonies in Sicily – for example Naxos (Pelagatti 1977; Lentini 1987) or Megara Hyblaea (Bérard 1983) – is dated to the end of the eighth century BCE.

2 Ferrer 2012; 2016.

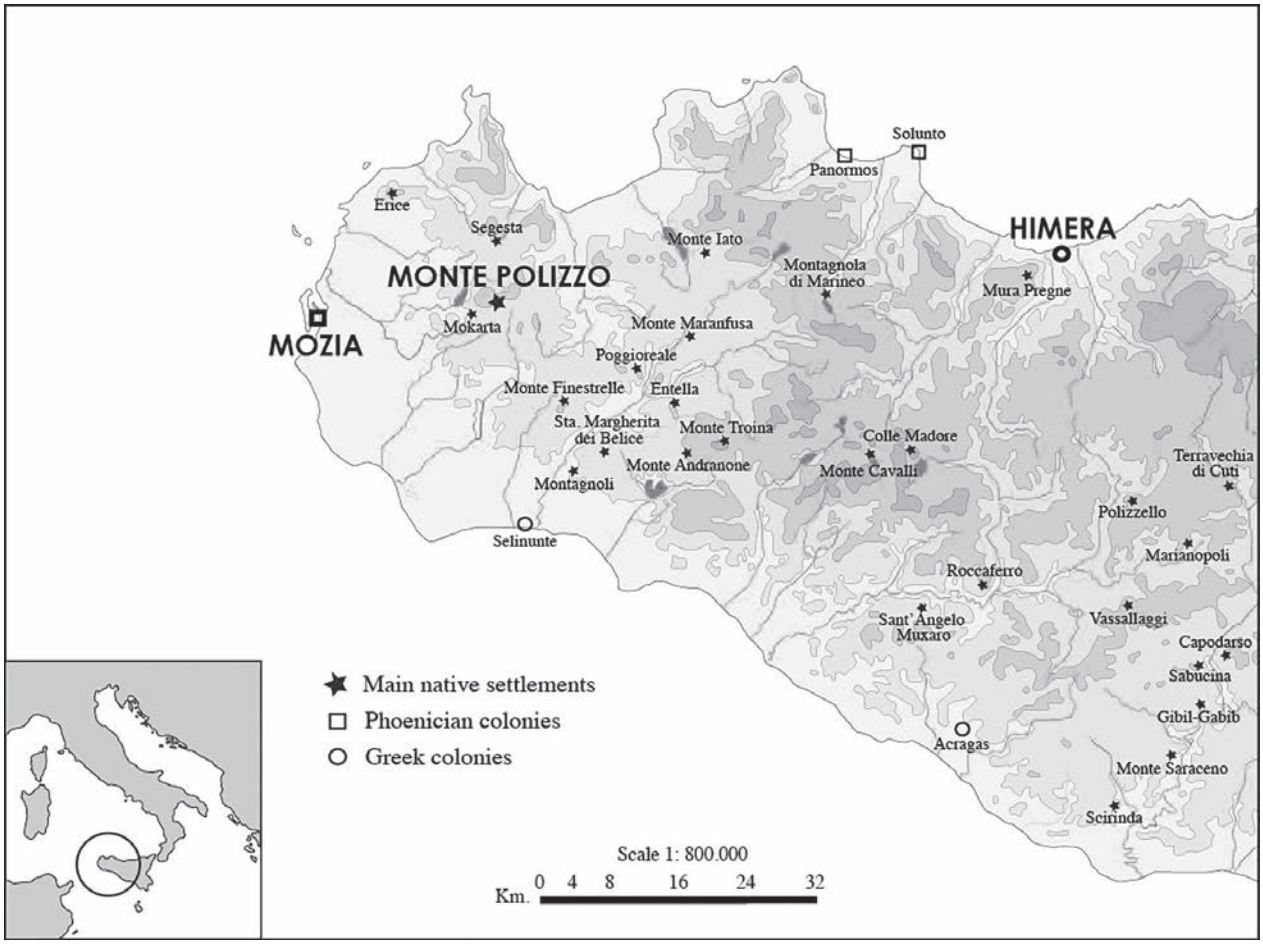

Fig. 1: Map of western Sicily showing the main native, Phoenician and Greek settlements from the sixth–fifth centuries BCE.

everyday practices opens a window that allow to recover the feminine agency as well as the centrality and importance of some women in the maintenance of their own homes as well as the communities they belong to.

The aim of this paper is twofold. Firstly, I want to break this traditional academic isolation by presenting together some study cases belonging to these three communities that settled in this western Sicilian setting contemporaneously. Secondly, through a contextual analysis of some ritual practices associated with the house and, especially, with everyday domestic activities, I want to visualize and recuperate the voice of some women who, with their domestic ritual actions, sought to facilitate, improve and protect the welfare and success of their households as well as their own communities.

To achieve this double aim, first, I will stress the importance of the house as well as domestic ritual practices for these three communities settled in western Sicily contemporaneously. Secondly, I will analyze in detail three study cases, each one of them related to one of these communities. In particular, I will focus on three settlements: Monte Polizzo for Sicilian native people, Mozia for Phoenicians and Himera for Greeks. Finally, I will explore the centrality and importance of certain women in the development of their households, the communities they belong to and, by extension, the historical development of western Sicily during the first millennium BCE.

The Centrality of the House and Domestic Rituals for Sicilian Communities

Like in many other ancient Mediterranean cultures,[3] the house seems to be the basic unit at the economic, social and religious levels for all the people who settled in western Sicily. This is for all these three communities, whether Greek, Phoenician or local. In this sense, I understand the house in its wider and social sense: considering its physical space – its built environment as well as its associated external areas –, the persons who dwell in it – living, dead or even, in some cases, unborn, as well as possible workmen or servants – its material culture and the set of productive and reproductive activities carried out by all those who were part of the household.[4]

The centrality of the house for these three communities – to their economic, social and biological development – turns it into a vital space where the activities carried out by all its members had as their main aim the production and reproduction of the basic needs required for the perpetuation of the house, the household and, in consequence, the community they belonged to. But, at the same time, it makes the house into a field of action where some women acquired great preeminence, especially through their everyday activities and their role as feeders, carers and keepers of the house and the household.[5]

The importance of these Greek, Phoenician and native women is well illustrated by their active participation in the daily performance of some necessary and relevant activities for the domestic economy of their household – such as, among others, the preparation and cooking of everyday meals or the production of textiles – as well as in the processes of socialization and identification of all of the household's members. Besides, this preeminence of some women could also be observed in their centrality to the execution of some domestic ritualities. These women, by means of the management and performance of some ritual actions, sought to benefit the reproduction and survival of their households, to promote the lifecycle of the house and its members, as well as to care for the house and, mainly in the Greek and Phoenician world, to protect it from supernatural and evil forces that surrounded it and threatened it constantly. To sum up, through these domestic ritual practices these women enlarged their field of action from the ordinary to the extraordinary, merging with these practices their present with the past as well as the future of their households.

Despite the importance of these domestic ritual actions to securing the welfare and success of the house – as well as the community –, until recent times these domestic ritual practices have been strongly overlooked.[6] This forgetting is mainly due to two causes. On one hand, we must highlight once again the traditional scarce academic interest in everything related to domesticity and, especially, to the feminine sphere, since it has been usually considered to be alien to power dynamics and of lower historical importance.[7] On the other hand, we must point to the scarcity of textual references to ritual domestic practices.[8] Besides, when they are mentioned, they mostly appear with some negative commentaries. This is well illustrated

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3 See, for example: Meyers 1988; 2002; 2012; Morgan 2010; Sørensen 2010; Delgado – Ferrer 2012; Ferrer – Lafrenz 2016; Nakhai 2014.

4 Meyers 2002, 284–85.

5 Ferrer – Lafrenz 2016, 535.

6 However, it should be noted that in recent years have been published a few studies focused on domestic rituals and religiosity in Greek, Phoenician and Punic and native Sicilian world. For Greek see: Morgan 2007; Faraone 2008; Portale 2014; for Phoenician and Punic: Delgado – Ferrer 2011; Ferrer – Lafrenz 2016; Ferrer – Lopez-Bertran 2020 and for native Sicilian: Ferrer 2011; Mühlenbock 2016.

7 Ferrer 2012; 2016a.

8 In this regard I am only referring to Phoenician and, especially, Greek world as we have not any textual reference for Sicilian native people.

in the words that Jeremiah used in reference to those women who cooked cakes in honor to the Queen of Heaven[9] or the reasons that Plato[10] gave to remove all domestic cults in the imaginary city of 'Magnetes'.

To these reasons, it could be added the archaeological difficulties that accompany the analysis of domestic ritual practices. The close relationship between domestic practices and this kind of ritual actions entails that in the performance of the latter objects of daily use could be employed.[11] For example, the jug used to serve drinks during a daily meal could be used to do libations; the lamps used to illuminate rooms could be used to communicate with supernatural beings or the vessels used to cook the everyday meal could be used to bake cakes to honor and feed a divinity or an ancestor. This indistinct use of the same items in the performance of both practices make it difficult to locate ritual actions carried out in the domestic sphere in the archaeological record. However, a contextual analysis of the archaeological record and, in particular, the possible use of some objects with clear ritual functionality – such as, among others, terracotta figurines, small altars or miniature vessels – open a small window into the material identification of these actions.

In this regard, a close examination of some textual, iconographic and, especially, archaeological evidence allows us to detect some of these ritual actions whose performance was completely interwoven with domestic everyday practices usually performed by some women of the household. Some of these actions were quite explicit, such are the protection of some members of the household through the wearing and bearing of amulets and talismans; the care of deceased family members at home and in the grave; or the worship of house and family divinities. Other ritual actions, which also sought the welfare, protection and success of the household, were archaeologically less obvious as they were carried out simultaneously with everyday tasks, such are the management, preparation and cooking of foods or the elaboration of textiles. These last ritual practices completely entangled with the domestic life of the household are the focus of the following sections, both in a local, Phoenician and Greek settlement from Western Sicily.

Domestic Ritual Practices in Native Sicily: The Study Case of Monte Polizzo

The considerable amount of studies done in the last century have shown that from the end of the second millennium BCE and throughout the first millennium BCE native Sicilian populations mostly settled on hilltops (see **Fig. 1**).

These settlements were placed in strategic points close to river networks, which favored a good communication between them as well as the colonies scattered along the coast, but also with agricultural valleys and pastoral areas. In fact, agriculture and livestock were their two main economic practices, which were complemented by other activities carried out in the settlements –such are pottery manufacture, metallurgy or textile production– or based in the resources offered by the forestry, like hunting.[12]

However, it has to be noted that, although in the last decades our knowledge about them has increased, we still have poor archaeological information related to their domestic sphere. In fact, until this moment only two sites from western Sicily – Monte Polizzo[13] and Monte Maranfusa [14]– have been the subject of

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9 Jer. 7.17–18.

10 Pl. *Leg*. 909e–f.

11 This archaeological difficulty has been also highlighted in other historical contexts. See, for example, Plunket 2002; Bradley 2005.

12 Leighton 1999; Albanese Procelli 2003; Ferrer 2012.

13 Mühlenbock 2008; Prescott – Müchlenbock 2013.

14 Spatafora 2003.

publications about domestic contexts. Although there are some evidences of domestic ritual practices in both settlements[15], in this paper I am going to focus only on one house from Monte Polizzo, in particular House 1.

Monte Polizzo is located on a hilltop in the internal area of the current province of Trapani (**Fig. 1**). While there are some evidences of activity before the Archaic period, its main phase of occupation seems to begin in mid-seventh century until the last quarter of the sixth century BCE, when the site was probably abandoned.[16] It is in this moment when Monte Polizzo presents its maximum extension that follows a traditional Sicilian occupation pattern: residential quarters are located in the upper levels of the hill, on the top there is a ritual communal space or 'acropolis' and in the lower areas there are cemeteries. From this moment have been published five domestic contexts: three of them located in Area A – House 1, House 2 and House 3 –; House 4 in Area B[17]; and the so-called Tusa's House[18] at the southern foot of the acropolis.

House 1 is located in a small natural plain enlarged by an artificial terrace located in the northern area of the settlement. Archaeological evidences of this house suggest the existence of three constructive phases dated from c. 625 to 550 BCE. In its last phase, this house presents 6 spaces that are perfectly differentiated in its architecture as well as functionally. According to the interpretation offered by its archaeologists, the bigger room of the house (space 1) was mainly used to manufacture textiles and for the consumption of food. To the north there are two smaller rooms (space 3 and 4), probably used for some ancillary activities to those carried out in space 1. To the east there are two other rooms (space 2 and 5), with materials that suggest that they were used for small domestic storage as well as for the everyday preparation, cooking and consumption of food. Finally, in the eastern boundary there is space 6. This is an open area covered by a wooden ceiling that – because of its localization, its architecture and the huge amount of *pithoi* and *amphorae* recorded in it – seems to act as the granary of the house. In fact, paleobotanical analysis carried out in this space indicates that cereal – mainly wheat and barley – was stored here before it was transformed (**Fig. 2**).[19]

Along with the numerous storage containers, a 'capeduncola' was also recorded in this granary. The 'capeduncola' is a medium size carinated vessel that stands out for its completely decorated elevated handle. In this case, the handle represents a feminine figure with a triangular head with two incised circular eyes, a molded round nose and two horizontal triangles close to its neck. The same pattern is also placed in the middle of its rectangular body, probably representing its breasts, from which emerge two upraised arms.[20] In Sicily this kind of vessel is highly unusual, not only for its peculiar anthropomorphic or zoomorphic decoration, but also for its scarce documentation as well as its usual record in ritual contexts, mostly in communal ritual areas such are the acropolis or cemeteries (**Fig. 2**).[21]

The presence of one 'capeduncola' in this granary suggests the performance of some kind of ritual practice associated with the domestic storage of food and, specifically, of cereals. It must be noted that cereal was the base of the daily diet of the Sicilian native people.[22] Regarding this, we must point out that the survival and the welfare of this household – both in the present and in the future – strongly depended on the good management of cereal reserves. Indeed, the handling of cereal rations that a household required for

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15 Domestic ritual practices have been recorded in House 1 and 3 from Monte Polizzo (Mühlenbock 2008; 2016; Ferrer 2011; Prescott – Mühlenbok 2013) as well as in Campo A's house from Monte Maranfusa, Spatafora 2003, 60–63; 2015, 292.

16 Morris – Tusa 2004; Mühlenbock 2008.

17 Mühlenbock 2008.

18 Tusa 1973.

19 Mühlenbock 2008; Prescott – Müchlenbock 2013.

20 Mühlenbock 2008, 111; 2016, 262–63.

21 Bernabò Brea 1958; La Rosa 1989; Trombi 2003.

22 Spigo 1980-81; Stika et al. 2008.

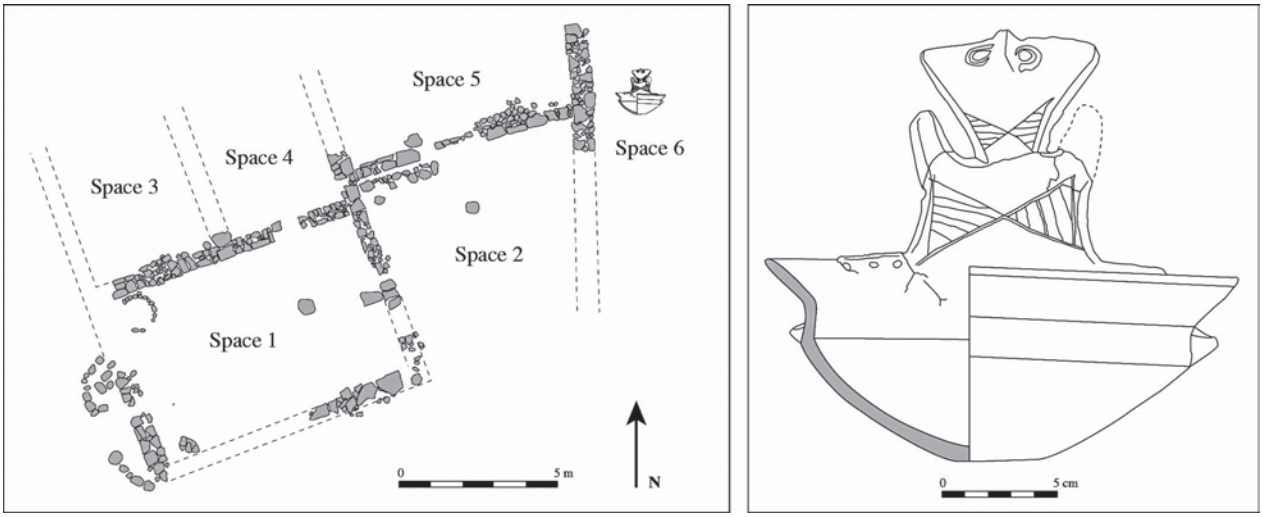

Fig. 2: Planimetry of Monte Polizzo's House 1 and its 'capeduncola' (After Mühlenbock 2008, fig. 51).

its daily subsistence was one of its main domestic – but also economic – activities. In this sense, it should be noted that both the shape of the 'capeduncola' and its close association with the storage of cereals suggest that this vessel could be used to manage the rations of unprocessed grain that the household required for its everyday meals. In other words, it could be used to measure, remove – and even carry – the grain that was to be processed and cooked everyday in the contiguous space of the house. This act of great importance for the biological survival of the household, but also for the control and management of the household's domestic economy, was probably carried out by those members of the household who processed and cooked these foods on a daily basis and, among them probably were some of the women of the house.[23]

The use of this vessel with ritual connotations to perform this daily act highlights that in this world some domestic practices were completely interwoven with others of ritual nature, which surely had as their main aim to protect, promote and extend the survival and, especially, the success of the household. In fact, both practices seek – although on different levels – to ensure the survival, the welfare and the future success of the household. Through their performance, those women who carried out these ordinary but also ritual acts emerged as the carers and keepers of the house, the household as well as the community they belonged to.

Domestic Ritual in Sicilian Phoenician Communities: The Study Case of Mozia

This intersection between everyday domestic activities carried out by some of the women of the house and ritual practices can also been witnessed in Phoenician domestic contexts from Sicily, especially in Mozia. This site is located on a small island in the middle of Marsala's lagoon (see **Fig. 1**). In it have been recorded different residential and artisanal quarters as well as ritual and funerary spaces that establish the presence of a permanent occupation by Levantine people from mid-eight to fourth century BCE, when its residents seem to have moved to a new center located in the Sicilian mainland.[24]

Among the excavated residential areas, the so-called 'House of the Domestic Shrine' stands out. This house is located in Zone D, in the western slope of the small hilltop of the islet, along the street that would

23 Ferrer 2011.

24 Ciasca 1989; Nigro 2014.

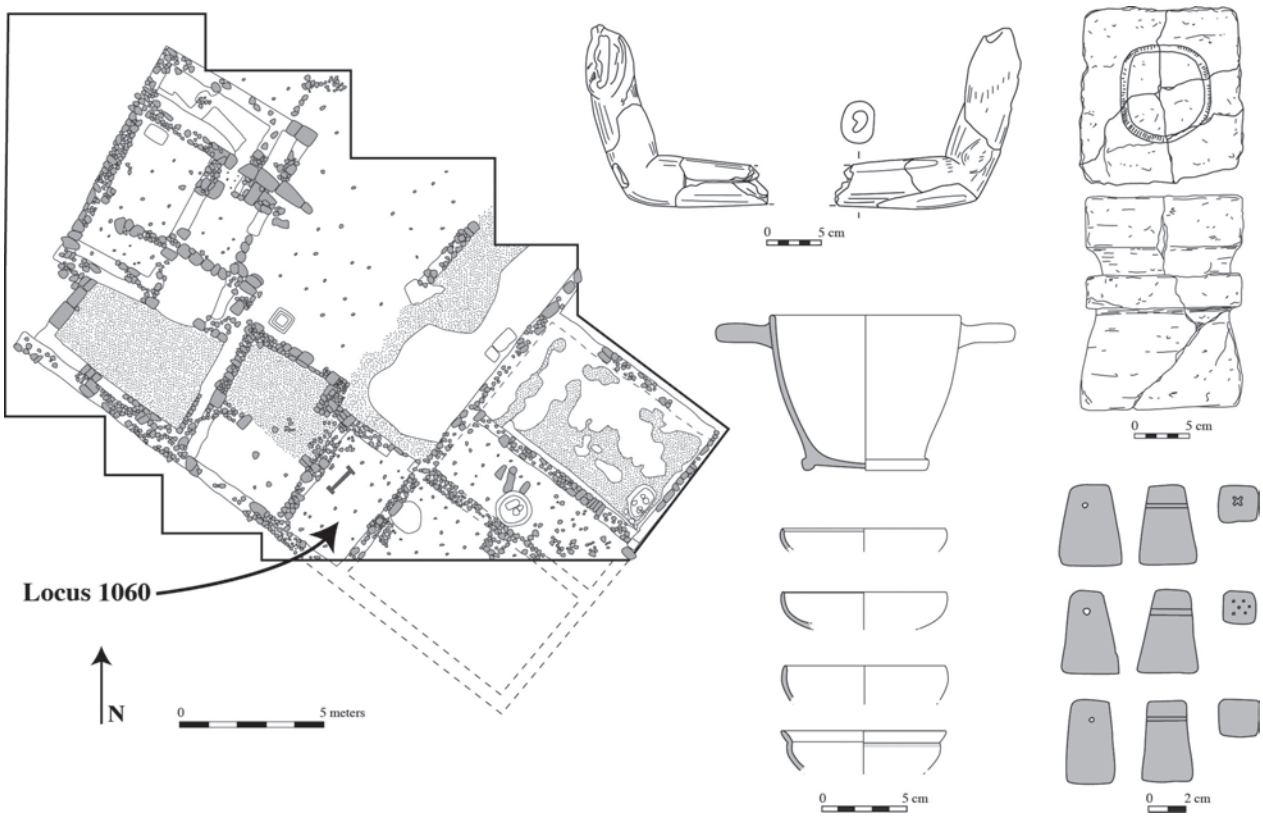

Fig. 3: Planimetry of 'House of the Domestic Shrine' and selected materials recorded in 'Locus 1060' (After Nigro 2007, tav. XVI, XV, XII).

connect its 'acropolis' with the Kothon' area. Architectonical and material evidences suggest that this house was in use during the entire fifth century BCE until its destruction by fire at the beginning of the fourth century BCE.[25] Its architecture follows a typical Phoenician pattern, organizing its space around a central open courtyard with access to the four sectors that conform the ground floor as well as to the staircase room that give access to its second floor (**Fig. 3**).[26]

Along with the main courtyard, in its ground floor have been documented at least 9 rooms. Materials as well as some installations recorded in these rooms have allowed its archaeologists suggest some of the functions of these rooms, such are the entrance hall, the kitchen or the bathroom. Among them stands out Locus 1060, a small room located in its southern corner (**Fig. 3**). This room is connected to two adjoining spaces, as well as to the central courtyard of the house. Although in its southwest angle has been recorded a considerable set of tableware, both local and imported,[27] the probably functionality of this space has been proposed for the discovering in the middle of the room of the remains of a wooden vertical loom with 36 associated loomweights. This finding evidences that one of the main activities carried out in it was the domestic production of textiles.[28]

Together with these objects, in the southwestern corner of this room two arms from a terracotta statue were recorded. The gesture of the arms seems to allude to a blessing action.[29] In this sense, the presence of

25 Nigro 2004; 2007.

26 Nigro 2004, 167–211; 2007, 31–75.

27 Nigro 2007, 49.

28 Nigro 2007, 45.

29 Nigro 2007, 48.

this statue in a room mainly intended for textile activities suggests that certain ritual practices were carried out in this space. These practices were probably undertaken to protect the space and, especially, the members of the household who spent the most time in it: the women responsible for domestic textile production, as well as the children in their charge while they were performing this everyday task.[30]

The possibility that ritual actions were carried out in this room is stressed by the discovery, just below the room, of a stone incense burner[31] characterized by a tapered body, and Egyptian cyma and a circular depression on its upper surface.[32] Its type, as with the 'capeduncola', is usually documented in ritual areas, mainly sanctuaries[33] and funerary spaces[34]. The juxtaposition of all these materials – tableware, terracotta statue, incense burner – suggests that, in this space, the same people who produce textiles – probably some of the women of the house – also carried out different ritual practices that surely involved the burning of aromatic substances and the libation or offering of some liquids (**Fig. 3**).[35]

Like in Monte Polizzo, these evidences from Mozia suggest that some women of the house performed simultaneously productive and ritual activities during their everyday life. In fact, with both daily actions these women are actively involved in the quest for success of their house. They are performing an economic activity but, at the same time, they are also seeking the protection of their homes and promoting the welfare of their households as well as the community they belong to.

Domestic Ritual in Sicilian Greek Communities: The Study Case of Himera

Finally, I focus on Himera, the western Greek colony on the northern coast of Sicily, next to the mouth of Salso river (see **Fig. 1**). According to Thucydides,[36] this colony was founded at the end of the seventh century by people coming from Zancle and Syracuse, and destroyed by Carthage at the end of the fifth century BCE.

Unlike other Greek colonies, the systematic archaeological activities carried out in Himera from 1960s until now offer us a good knowledge of this city.[37] Besides, most of these activities have been focused on it residential quarters, located in both the upper and the lower city. This sound documentation opens a window into the everyday life of those who inhabited this settlement, mainly in its last period of life (fifth century BCE). The same record gives us a glimpse into some of the domestic practices that its inhabitants carried out daily. Among them – just as in Monte Polizzo or Mozia – there were ritual actions probably performed by some women along with their other everyday tasks, such as the preparation and cooking of food or the elaboration of textiles.

It must be note that most of the objects clearly related to ritual practices – such as terracotta figurines and small altars – documented in Himera's houses have been recorded in their central courtyards.[38] In fact,

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30 Ferrer – Lafrenz 2016, 537–38.

31 In this regard, it is interesting to highlight that for Phoenician people the burning of aromatic substances, through its associated smells, was meant to communicate and gain favor with divinities and ancestors, as well as to dispel evil spirits and demonic forces. See Nielsen 1996.

32 Nigro 2007, 47; Spagnoli 2012.

33 Moscati – Uberti 1981, 32–33; Fantar 1986, 184.

34 Tamburello 1967, 362; Bartoloni 1976.

35 Ferrer – Lafrenz 2016, 538.

36 *Thuc.* 6.5.1.

37 Among others: Adriani 1970; Allegro 1976; Vassallo 2005; Allegro 2008; Belvedere 2013.

38 See Harms 2010; Portale 2014.

this pattern of documentation seems to coincide with other contemporary Greek houses[39] and it has been traditionally related to the domestic cult to Zeus Herkeios and Zeus Ktesios.[40] In spite of this considerable amount of documentation, in this paper I am going to focus on one room (room 49) from Block 4.[41]

This house is situated in the so-called Piano di Himera – the upper city – in the northern area of Isolato II. Although this bloc was excavated from 1967 to 1968, it was not completely published until few years ago.[42] While the eastern area of the house has been damaged by modern agricultural works, its general architecture suggests that its space was organized around a central courtyard, following the pattern recorded in other contemporary houses in Himera.[43] Likewise, the access to the main street is located in its north front, while the rest of the house is delimited by small alleys, separating this house from the adjacent Block 3 and 5.[44]

According to the architectural features of this house as well as the materials found inside its rooms and courtyard, it has been interpreted that the northern area of the house had a more public character, being used room 56d mainly for artisanal practices (such as warehouse and workshop). On the contrary, its southern area would be a more private space where residential and domestic activities – mainly those related with the feminine sphere – would be allocated.[45] It is in this last area of the house, in the southern area of its central courtyards, where it's located room 49: a quite big space, which leads to two adjoining rooms (room 59 and 48) and to the central courtyard (**Fig. 4**).

Inside this room, several elements were recorded: some tableware, used both for the consumption and the serving of liquids, a small amount of transport *amphorae* and some cooking ware. Besides, 20 loom-weights were also documented in this room, which were probably associated with one loom.[46] Like in Locus 1060 from the 'House of the Domestic Shrine' of Mozia, the presence of this set of textile implements seems to suggest that one of the main activities performed in this room could be the domestic production of textiles, and probably also some cooking activities. These were two practices that were highly related to the feminine sphere in the Greek world.[47]

Along with these objects, the other findings in this room include two terracotta female figurines[48] and a couple of *louteria*'s columns[49], as well as five *paterae* and two lamps.[50] Although these latter objects – *paterae* and lamps – could have a domestic use, they are frequently used in ritual actions too. In this case, as in Monte Polizzo and Mozia, the presence of these ritual objects in this room suggests that certain women of the house, during the performance of one of their everyday domestic practices required for the subsistence of their household – such as the elaboration of textiles or the preparation and cooking of the

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39 Small altars have been found in some of the domestic courtyards of Olynthus, Priene, Delos and Halos. See Haagsma 2010, 219.

40 Together with this archaeological information, there are also some written evidence about the performance of Zeus Kerkeios and Zeus Ktesios cult on the domestic courtyards (Isae. 8.15–16; Paus. 5.143.7). Nilsson 1967; Jameson 1990; Faraone 2008.

41 Allegro 2008, 162–83.

42 Allegro 2008.

43 Allegro 1976; 2008.

44 Allegro 2008, 173.

45 Allegro 2008, 193.

46 Allegro 2008, 186–88.

47 Brock 1994; Bundrick 2008.

48 One of these terracotta figurines wears a large *polos* (H68.634), the other is not described in the volume, Allegro 2008.

49 One of them is the upper part of a marble *louteria*'s column (H68.681.1), the other is not described in the volume, Allegro 2008.

50 Allegro 2008, 186–88.

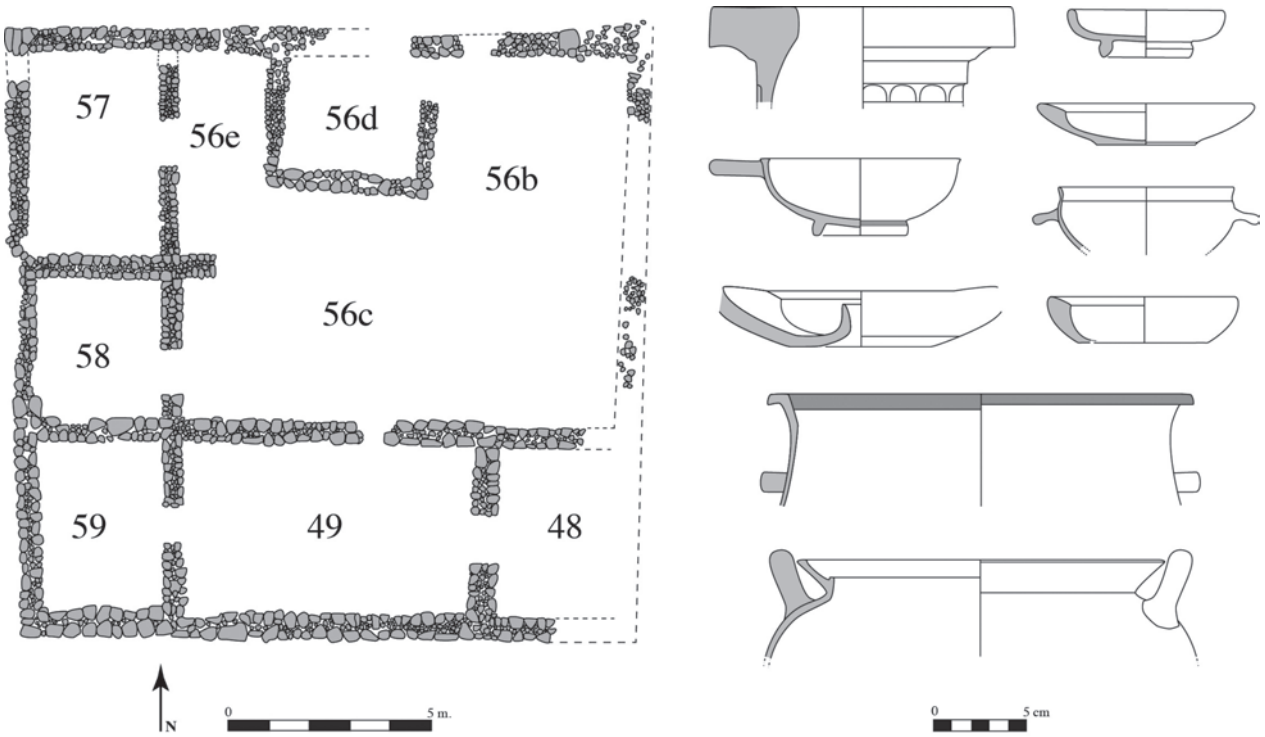

Fig. 4: Planimetry of Block 4 and selected materials recorded in room 49 (After Allegro 2008, fig. 43, tav. LXXXVI, LXXXVII).

household's daily meals – simultaneously carried out some ritual actions, such as the burning of substances, the offering of food and the caring for the figurines. Through these ritual practices these women protected the household and, especially those members in the room – mainly themselves and the children under their care – sought the success of their domestic activities and, by extension, to benefit the domestic economy of their household.

Conclusions

To conclude, I want to stress three points that I have tried to highlight through this paper. First, I want to note the possibility to break the traditional academic plots that characterize the study of Western Sicily. In fact, to focus on one specific topic – as in this case domestic ritual practices – allow overcoming this academic mosaic as well as to get a new image of Sicily in which all its actors can be considered simultaneously and a more complex reality is presented.

Secondly, I want to point out that the analysis of domestic contexts and, particularly, those actions related to the domesticity, provide another image of the past in which those who has been interpreted as the privileged members of the elite – this is, only some adult men – are not the only active actors of the communities they belong to. On the contrary, to focus on domestic practices give the chance to return the voice to some of those members of the community that has been largely silenced; such are some native, Phoenician and Greek women who lived in western Sicily between sixth and fifth century BCE. Besides, the study of these ritual actions interwoven with daily practices allow also to highlight the importance and centrality of these women in the social, economic, biological and ritual development of their homes and households. In fact, through their daily acts these women sought to ensure the survival of their houses, to encourage the welfare of their homes and to promote the success of their households, both in the present and

the future. Furthermore, to consider the daily acts carried out for these women – both in economic, social and ritual domains – not only present them as active actors for themselves, but also highlight their centrality in the well development of their households. In other words, these women are not longer considered as passive subjects whose acts are completely subjected to the male elites' interests and turn them into active members of their home and their community both at social, economic and ritual level.

Finally, I want to conclude pointing out that, if we assume that the house was the basic unit for all these Sicilian people, the role of these local, Phoenician and Greek women as feeders, keepers and carers of their homes will be extended to the community that they belong to. Consequently, their everyday acts can not still being read as secondary or aliens to the politic dynamics of their communities, but as other important part of it.

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What is in a Vase?
Materiality and Semiotics of Cinerary Vases in Egyptian Stone and Vase Shapes in Roman Domestic and Funerary Contexts

Simona Perna[1]

Introduction

This chapter focuses on vases and vase shapes to explore their materiality and semiotics in Roman domestic and ritual contexts. To this end, I focus on a group of Julio-Claudian cinerary vases in coloured stone that present a double-handled hemispherical body resting on a short foot and with a lid with a pear-shaped finial. Due to the striking resemblance to a (modern) soup bowl, I called this shape 'tureen'. Previous scholars had noticed these urns' 'atypical' design, which appears random if compared to that of other known types of Roman cinerary containers, and with no obvious funerary connection. Instead, I suggest that the tureen's 'unconventional' shape was symbolically charged, and thus meaningful. I further argue that it resulted from the synthesis of a series of more ancient ritual vases connected to both the domestic and ritual spheres. I start from the observation that the choice of a given shape for a cinerary container could not be made randomly, but on the account of its perceived familiar, sacred character or semiotic reference to the cultic sphere. To illustrate this point, I discuss the tureen shape's hybrid ancestry by recalling the use and function of its architypes considering recent debates on material culture, memory and skeuomorphism.

Although no tureens have been found in 'physical' form in Roman domestic contexts, there is evidence from visual representations that the iconography of the shape itself could have played an important role in domestic religion and in everyday life. I shall thus set the discussion further against the images of vases, that feature in Roman domestic frescoes and of which the tureen seems to be the materialisation to speculate upon its potential connection with Roman domestic cults. By discussing the ritual meaning of these painted objects within their scenes, I aim to demonstrate that they are not simple *parerga* or accessories but meaningful visual symbols that acting upon the senses made the sacred a tangible reality in everyday life.

Furthermore, the evidence emerging from the creation and use of the stone tureens compels us to frame this phenomenon further in the early Imperial cultural and ideological climate. The tureens do not in fact come into use as urns until the Augustan period. I argue that this is more than a chronological coincidence, but possibly the material actualisation of the Augustan visual and religious syntax. Within the framework of lived religion and sensory studies, my aim is to extrapolate the ritual role of the tureen and other vase shapes in Roman religious and domestic contexts to shed further light on the relationship between the sacred and materiality in Antiquity.

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Materiality, Material Culture Studies and Lived Religion. A Brief Overview

Leading on from the authors' introduction to this volume, I shall hereby review the recent trends in religious studies. This review is by no means exhaustive or even extensive, but, in eschewing a more critical perspective, it is aimed at offering a concise overview particularly of materiality and material culture studies and of the definition of 'lived religion', all which constitute the theoretical framework of this volume. The recent interest in material culture in the humanities and social sciences, including archaeology, has been labelled the 'material turn' for the importance given to the analysis of concrete, real things, bodies and corporeal experiences as opposed to immateriality and abstraction. The material turn, which builds upon the concept of materiality, and from whence material culture studies stem, seeks to challenge the mind-body, subject-object, human-non human divides that have historically characterised Western thought. Initiated in the early 1990s by Anglo-American anthropologists and archaeologists, the discourse on material culture, as defined by its initiator Daniel Miller, advocates the study of the 'human/thing interaction' and of the consequences of relationship between people and objects.[2] Since its early days, the approach has proven to be so fruitful and transdisciplinary that it has been extended to debates outside the field of archaeology and anthropology themselves. Notwithstanding its recognised value, theoretical and methodological unity as well as agreement on what 'materiality' really means are still lacking.[3] In very recent years, the material culture approach has been criticised particularly by the New Materialists for its 'anthropocentric' approach in the study of materiality and for the persistence of the subject-object divide. New Materialism builds upon the ideas of the philosophers Latour and his Actor Network Theory (ANT) and Deleuze and Guattari's assemblage theory as recently codified by Delanda, Braidoth and Bennett.[4] The movement advocates to decentre the material world from the attention given to human subjects and human perception, and to overcome the subject-object dichotomy, for instance, through approaches like assemblage theory, which sees human and non-human as co-constitutive without distinction. Material religion, which in many ways stemmed from and was influenced by the material turn in material culture studies, advocates to think religion through things.[5] Initiating work of such material approach to religion is usually considered McDonnell's *Material Christianity* (1995), a study of Christian religious manifestations and practices from the point of view of sensorial, lived religion. The (re)discovery of the ritual, visual and material habits of religion, particularly from the perspective of Western culture and history, become the pivots of material religion studies as encompassed by the *Material Religion Journal* (2005–) whose editors' manifesto calls for the study of "how religions happen in material form and the practices that put them to work".[6] Such an approach builds upon the assumption that things are intrinsic to, and thus inseparable from, religion, in other words on the recognition of the materiality of religion and its manifestations. Nevertheless, one issue within material religion studies remains the critical assessment of the concepts of belief and faith that underlie the concept of religion itself. Moreover, as in the case of materiality and material culture studies, also material religion approaches have been criticised for their dualism and for being anthropocentric.[7] Three of the criticised methodological approaches are: things

2 Miller 2005.

3 See for example Ingold 2007.

4 For a summary of these approaches see Bräunlein 2015.

5 A critical entry into this area of research is offered by Brent Plate 2015.

6 Meyer et al. 2010, 209.

7 As summarized by Hazard 2013.

as symbols,[8] material disciplines and phenomenology, which, although concerned mainly with the bodily aspects of religion, emphasizes the power and work of sacred things in constructing 'shared identity' and making physically present what is 'otherwise unseen'.[9] These approaches have been deemed inadequate to fully account for the material turn, while shifts in the direction of either an ontological turn or new materialism have been put forward in the attempt to promote a non-anthropocentric, non-binary approach to material religion.[10] However, this criticism has been recently challenged by Bräunlein, who highlights the problems of an irreparably flowed anthropocentric perspective in this area of research.[11] As Bräunlein rightly puts it "it is always the human being who reflects upon her or his relation to things and the complexity of the material world which she or he is entangled in".[12] He thus proposes a three-pronged approach to the study of material/lived religion based on the combination of 'semiotic ideology', which informs us on what things can stand for and on the 'relational knowledge' based on the insider-outsider approach; 'methodological ludism', which, through the assumption of an experimental attitude towards the studied subject, allows the temporal dissolution of the common subject-object relation of the researcher to understand the qualities of the religious objects; 'aesthetics of religion' to overcome methodological and ontological issues and to grasp the ambivalent nature of artefact/religious object/god.[13] As he remarks, the aesthetics of religion approach builds upon Aristoteles' definition of *aesthesis*, the quality according to which we perceive the things around us through our five different senses. Aesthetic perception, through imagination, becomes a "formative process" that filters meaningful information. As Bräunlein explains it "the aesthetics of religion approach is premised on the rationale that ontological and aesthetic operations that process distinctions are basic to sense production of any specific culture and … of religion. Behind the debate on the agency of things … there are always ontological and aesthetic perceptions that process distinctions".[14] According to Bräunlein, these proposed approaches might help reconcile the methodological divergences highlighted by dissident scholars, in particular those invoking the non-anthropocentric approach and the dichotomy belief/thing.[15] Bräunlein applies this new methodology to his case study, the statue of the Hawaiian god Ku on display in the Gottingen Museum, and convincingly concludes that such an object can be both "god and artefact" at the same time. The "biology of the sensory apparatus" in combination with material reality and cultural constructions constitute the basis of the aesthetics of religion as a connective approach to the study of religion. Within this framework, we should analyse and understand the relationship between materiality, sensoriality and the sacred, on the one hand; on the other, the role of images, whether pictorial or material, of religious things particularly in everyday ancient religion.

The fields of material religion and sensory studies overlap with that of lived religion. The concept of 'lived religion' originates among North American scholars of religious studies and sociology of religion from the perspective of ordinary people as religious subjects.[16] One of its 'founders' is usually considered David Hall with his *Lived Religion in America: Toward a History of Practice* (1997). Lived religion

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8 Stemming from Hodder's seminal *Symbols in Action* (1982).

9 Morgan 2010, 19.

10 Hazard 2013.

11 Bräunlein 2015, 21–28.

12 Bräunlein 2015, 28.

13 Bräunlein 2015, 21–28.

14 Bräunlein 2015, 26.

15 Bräunlein 2015, 21–28.

16 For a very recent critical overview of lived religion, see Knibbe – Kupari 2020.

emerged in response to and in contrast with religion studies based on texts as the main source, however, one of the characteristics of this approach is the fact that it leaves out macro-level issues, such as providing a definition of 'religion', by focusing on 'action and experience', in other words, on religion as it is practised in a variety of environments. Because of this, the concept has become more and more synonymous with 'everyday religion', with a focus on subjective experience and meaning.[17] The complexity of this approach consists in the fact that it is not based on a specific theory or method but, as a broad research trend, it draws from several theoretical foundations followed by its most prominent scholars. These can summed up as: theories of practice (Hall),[18] theories of everyday (Ammerman),[19] phenomenology and anthropology (Orsi)[20] and embodiment theory (McGuire).[21] Nevertheless, while the lived religion approach has seen a number of interesting applications in recent years, it still remains vaguely generic, partly because the key question of what religion is still lies unanswered and secondly because there is no common agreement on what lived religion actually means.[22]

Since its emergence, lived religion has been applied to a vast array of religious case studies from diverse cultural and chronological horizons spanning from modern America to the Mediterranean Antiquity.[23] Jörg Rüpke is one of the first scholars to apply the concept to ancient Mediterranean societies, in particular to the Roman period.[24] The key aims of scholars like Rüpke is to analyse how people experienced religion in the past particularly from the perspective of 'individualisation' and of the relationship between social structures and individual agents enriched by four notions: appropriation, agency, situational meaning and mediality.[25] Recent research, culminating in a very recent ERC-funded research project, Lived Ancient Religion (LAR), has brought forward a novel way of studying religious behaviour in ancient daily life. As the researchers themselves explain, although being aware of the impossibility of understanding the specific cultural meanings of past religious behaviour, the study of lived religion from the perspective of the past allows to analyse it from its making.[26] In other words, it provides an analytical framework and tool not only to investigate past lived religion but also to understand modern lived religion.

A fruitful application of the lived religion approach is by David Morgan.[27] Morgan's idea of lived religion stems from the entanglement of several approaches, such as material culture, visuality and embodiment, which in the scholar's view represent the essence of lived religion. As he puts it "I propose to define the material culture of lived religion in terms of several categories of practice that put images and objects to work as ways of engaging the human body in the configuration of the sacred".[28] Central to Morgan's approach are the role of practice and the human body as the "triangulation of individual, group and sacred other",[29] while as he himself states, "by lived religion I mean religion at work, what it does in everyday life, among people, in the

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17 Ammerman 2016. Other synonymous concepts: popular religion, folk religion, vernacular, Primiano 1995.

18 Hall 1997, vii–xiii.

19 Ammerman 2007.

20 Orsi 1997, 2012.

21 McGuire 1990; 2008.

22 Knibbe – Kupari 2020. Religion cannot be defined reliably across cultures and historical periods.

23 Raja – Rüpke 2015a–b.

24 Rüpke 2011, 2016.

25 Gasparini et al. 2020.

26 Gasparini et al. 2020, 1–8.

27 Morgan 2010.

28 Morgan 2010, 15.

29 Ibid.

street or home… Lived religion comes in the form of practices… Therefore, fundamental to the study of lived religion is the role of practice".[30] Another interesting aspect of Morgan's idea of lived religion is the primary role he attributes to aesthetics: "because embodiment and materiality comprise lived religion and therefore make sensation and feeling the medium of belief, we may regard aesthetics as a primary framework for the study of religion… By aesthetics … I intend the study of ways of feelings, forms of sensation, modes of perception. These are not hopelessly subjective and therefore inaccessible phenomena, but … shared patterns or routines that endure and therefore characterize groups of people as forms of sociality, as the sensuous means of social association and shared imagination".[31] Morgan's approach thus represents an eloquent example of the overlap between material culture and religious studies as well as of their analytical potential when combined. Despite the human body and its bodily aspect being the pivots of his idea and analysis of lived religion, Morgan's approach is enlightening and 'user friendly', fertilised as it is by the co-occurrence of several theoretical strands, from materiality to sensory studies. The cross-fertilisation of these non-exclusive approaches shows how varied, but also how similar in the questions they seek to answer, lived religion and material religion studies are. It is within such a framework that I shall set up the discussion of my case study.

More than a Vase: Ancestry and Semiotics of the 'Tureen' Shape

The tureens are ash containers carved from coloured stone: calcite alabaster[32] but also purple porphyry, granite and basalt, all quarried in the Egyptian Eastern Desert and imported into Italy from the end of the first century BCE (**Fig. 1**). They began to appear in Roman cremation burials in the Augustan period, but the peak of their use is recorded between the Julio-Claudian period and the late first century CE. The sixty-five extant examples point to a small production for few élite individuals across the Western empire.[33] The tureen's standard shape is that of a double-handled hemispherical vase provided with a lid with a pear- or teardrop-shaped finial resting on a high, convex foot. The lower attachment of the loop handles on most examples is an elongated lanceolate leaf.[34] Admittedly the shape of this cinerary vase is quite 'unusual' and 'new' meaning that, as it is, it only occurs in coloured stone and in funerary contexts. So, we may ask, what is behind the design and funerary use of the tureen? What are the origins of its shape? I argue that such a shape is a hybrid resulting from

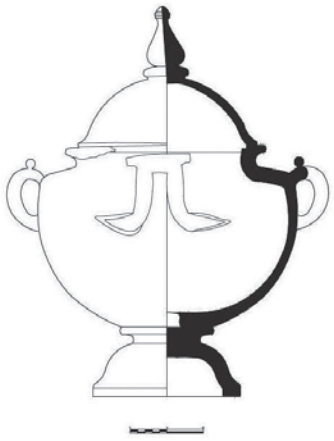

Fig. 1: Drawing of Tureen B from Rome, Museo Nazionale Romano, Terme di Diocleziano, Storage rooms; Inv. No. 531595 (Drawing: Mariarosaria Perna).

30 Morgan 2010, 18.

31 Ibid.

32 Calcite alabaster almost certainly from Egypt is the predominant lithotype used for the making of the tureens with sixty out of sixty-five examples.

33 Perna 2019. The production of tureens took place in Rome, whence the trend stemmed. Tureen urns are found in the burials of urban, Italic and provincial affluent individuals. The majority of these urns are found in Rome and its surroundings and in other Italian regions, followed by France, England, Libya, Croatia, Spain.

34 Despite the apparent homogeny of the tureen shape, several variations of the body, lid, foot or finial profile and of the handle attachments may be noticed. I distinguished these variations, which are true exclusively for genuine surviving elements, into subtypes: body: A (height is more than the maximum diameter), B (height and width almost correspond to a perfect cube) and C (height being less than their diameter); handle types: attaching on rim (a–a1–a2), shoulder (b–b1–b2–b3) or other (c); lid types: convex (a1–a2), domed (a3), concave/conical (b) or other (c); finial types: piriform (a1–a2), round (b) or other (c); foot types: detached-high (a1–a2) or un-detached (b1–b2).

the mix of formal elements borrowed from a repertoire of metal, ceramic and glass containers, particularly a series of Archaic, Classical and Hellenistic vases, whose iconography must have been perceived as meaningful and familiar by viewers, users and makers.

According to the shape or 'variants' of the body profile, the tureen can be likened to a volute amphoroid crater (variant A); a *stamnos* or *dinos* (variant B); a shallow *lebes* (variant C), all containers that in the Archaic period were deeply entangled with both domestic practices and religious rituals. The *lebes* and *dinos*, for instance, were both practical, mundane containers that also happened to have a series of ritual functions. The *dinos* is a closed round vessel, with shoulder and a short neck.[35] Ceramic *dinoi* appeared around the early seventh century BCE[36] and were used for mixing wine. While footless *dinoi* were set on stands,[37] variants with a foot began to appear, giving the vessel the overall appearance of a crater/*stamnos*, which is also a wine vessel.[38] *Dinoi*, craters and *stamnoi*, are best known for their black and red figure painted representations, however, hammered and then cast metal versions of *dinoi* spread in Archaic Greece and Italy, such as those produced at Capua in the sixth century BCE and used locally as funerary urns (see *infra*).[39]

The *lebes,* instead, is an open cauldron or kettle with a wide mouth, deep or shallow footless body and without shoulder.[40] *Lebetes* were cast from bronze to be set on fire by means of a tripod[41] and thus mainly used for cooking. Though its origins are Mycenaean, this vessel came into wider use in the Orientalising period (eight–seventh centuries BCE).[42] Moreover, *dinoi* and *lebetes* also had a ceremonial use. It must be pointed out that in modern literature the names *lebes* and *dinos*[43] have been used interchangeably to indicate the same container.[44] This has mainly resulted from their formal similarities and ignores the individual functions they possessed.[45] Although now assimilated to each other, the two vessels originally held dis-

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35 Daremberg – Saglio s.v. *dinos* [Robert]; Benton 1935, 75, n. 2.

36 The word *dinos* is absent in Homer showing that the container had not yet appeared in the eight century BCE or was called by another name. Kanowsky (1984, 87–88) denied the existence of the ancient word *dinos*. In his study of Etruscan vase names, Colonna (1973, 145–50) argued that the Etruscan word *θina* (indicating a type of clay vessel with handles, set on a conical stand, or *holmos*) is found in Archaic Latin as *tina*, which, according to Varro, was a bowl for mixing or storing wine used in the early seventh-sixth centuries BCE. The word is attested as early as the seventh century BCE century thus showing the existence of the Greek word *dinos* and the container around that time.

37 These could be of various shapes: three legs, column and conical. On the latter, see Sirano 1995, 13.

38 In this way, the *dinos* is assimilated in function to a wine-mixing crater, See Daremberg – Saglio s.v. *crater*: "the Greek crater had various shapes; nothing should prevent us from calling crater the round vessel without handles, set on a stand, to which nowadays is given name of dinos" [Humbert].

39 Benassai 1995, 157–206.

40 Daremberg – Saglio s.v. *lebes* [De Ridder].

41 Benton 1935, 4–75.

42 The word *lebes* appears in Homer, but it is also alternatively called *phiale*, Valenza Mele 1982, 111–20.

43 Hawkes – Smith (1957, 166–67) define the *lebes* with shallow basin as a native Greek form and the *dinos* with deep and round bowl as imported from Asia Minor. They also concede that the *dinos* could be a variant of the *lebes*. Benassai (1995) classifies the bronze ash containers from Capua as *dinoi*. The catalogue also includes the 'lebete del Barone' from Capua, now at the British Museum, GR 1855.8–16, Benassai 1995, 161 no. B2, showing that the same *dinoi* may be referred to as *lebetes* elsewhere, for example by D'Agostino 1974, 199; the latter elsewhere (1988, 111) assimilates the *lebes* to the crater and then differentiates them in an article from 2003 titled 'Il cratere, il dinos e il lebete'.

44 Daremberg – Saglio s.v. with references. Modern scholars, such as Amyx 1958, 199–200 and Walters 1905, 173–74, pointed out the discrepancies among the ancient sources and painted representations regarding the definition of these vessels and their uses. Cf. Caskey 1922, 116.

45 Richter (1935, 10) defined the *dinos* a mixing bowl and a drinking cup. For Colonna (1973, 145–50) the Etruscan θina and the Greek *dinos* may have shared the same function as wine vessels back in the seventh century BCE, thus showing that the *dinos* was primarily a wine vessel. Valenza Mele (1982, 99) concluded that the two vessels should be kept distinguished since the creation of a specific form is not arbitrary but tied to a specific function assigned to that object, thus not interchangeable. Whilst this may well be the case, the two vessels still go undistinguished and the question remains open.

tinct functions in Antiquity, and both became entangled with rituals connected with eschatological views of death and rebirth. For instance, the *lebes* was at the centre of a funerary ritual, broadly inspired by Homer's account of Patroclos' funeral,[46] essentially consisting of a metal vessel, primarily a cauldron, used as a funerary urn in adult (male) burials in Greece, particularly in Attica and Euboea (Eretria), Cyprus (Salamis) and in Italy (Cumae, Pontecagnano) from the eight to the seventh century BCE (**Fig. 2**).[47] The analysis of this funerary ritual and its wider socio-political, ideological and historical implications falls outside the purposes of this paper and thus we refer the reader to the main literature on the subject.[48] Its brief mention, however, might help to explain the association of the cauldron with the funerary sphere, its 'sacred' connotation and, ultimately, the potential semiotics of its shape. As obsolete as this may appear, the use of a cooking pot as a funerary urn is not totally un-explicable,[49] and being the association of food, banquets and symposia with death quite a normal occurrence in Antiquity, scholars have tried to explain the possible motivations behind this practice in light of this.[50]

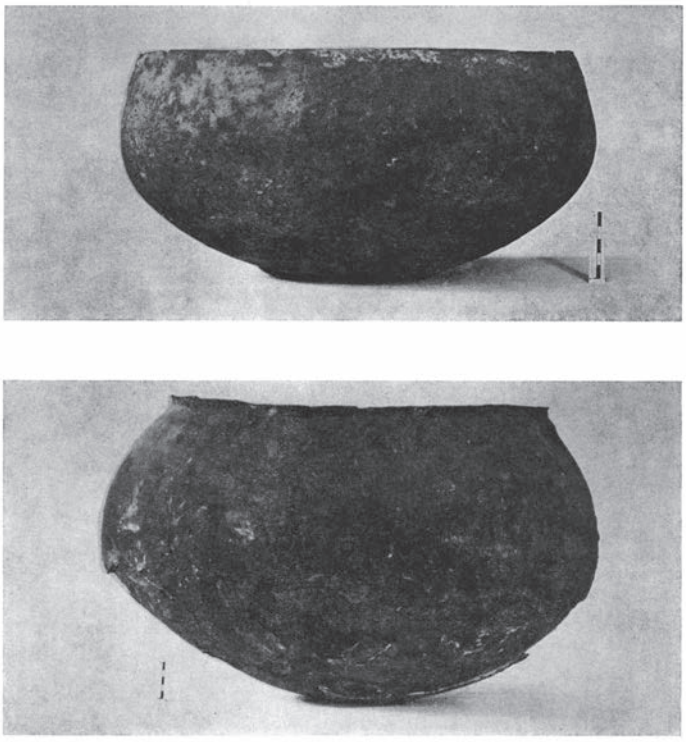

Fig. 2: Bronze *lebetes* used as funerary urns from T.104 (Fondo Artiaco) at Cuma (Campania), 725 BC (After Albore Livadie 1975, pl. VI, fig. 18–19).

The *lebes* features in a series of myths and rituals connected with banqueting, sacrifice and cremation, which, originating in the Aeolian and Ionic societies, were 'codified' by the works of Homer and Hesiod.[51] In those societies, up to the Archaic period, banqueting and sacrifice were seen as the moment when gods and humans met, and by extension, cremation, being associated to cooking, seemed to make

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46 Hom. *Iliad,* 23, 110–83. See Mylonas 1948, 53–70. A bronze cauldron used as cinerary urn, wrapped in a cloth, buried in a shaft with weapons and offerings, and surmounted by a mound. In Homer we find an account or 'codification' of an existing ritual as the burial of Toumba at Lefkandi, dating to the tenth century BCE, represents the earliest known example of this 'ritual package' (Morris 1986, 93; id. 2000, 219). The most direct parallel to this 'heroising' burial is the later *Heroon* at Eretria dating to between 720–680 BCE with seven cremations in bronze cauldrons, see Berard 1970.

47 The phenomenon of the so-called 'heroising burials' in Greece (Attica: Kurtz – Boardman 1971, 73, 98–100; although exhaustive, Kurtz – Boardman's account does not explain the funerary ritual in relation with the vessel nor its complex typological variety and occurrence in other areas, see also Rendeli 1992, 11; Coldstream 1976, 8–17; Euboea: Berard 1970; Crielaard – Driessen 1994; Whitley 1994; Wright 2004) or 'princely tombs' (*tombe principesche* named after a group of rich burials discovered at Pontecagnano (Campania)) in Etruria, Latium and Campania (D'Agostino 1977; Cerchiai 1984; Bartoloni et al. 1982; Morris 1999, 57–80).

48 Modern scholarship has variously interpreted the emergence of this funerary ritual across the various Mediterranean regions and put it in connection with the appearance of new forms of political power and urbanisation also on the wake of the 'Orientalising' *koinè* (Riva 2006; Morris 2016 and 2020 with most recent bibliography on the subject); the formation of aristocratic elites (Crielaard 1998) or the emergence of the *polis* and new social structures, see Morris 1987, 1992.

49 See for example Murray 1988, 239–55; Vernant – Detienne 1989.

50 See Riva 2010, 155–59, for an updated summary.

51 Valenza Mele 1982, 127–30; Burquert 1983, 48–58.

this union possible.[52] Being connected with the preparation and consumption of food, the *lebes* was thus seen as the means for this cooking-cremation procedure. Moreover, through cremation the warrior/hero was believed to reach an immortal status, being almost assimilated to a god.[53] Cremation stops the body from decomposing, but it does not destroy the image of the dead as only the perishable part is consumed by the fire.[54] By consuming the flesh, the fire leaves exposed the 'white bones' (*leukà ostea)*, which, according to ancient Greek sacrificial practices, are given to the gods as the most precious part of the 'victim'. Moreover, fire dries up the water constituting humans and elevates the dead to the same igneous nature as the gods.[55] Concurrently, according to the Greek view, both water and heat are natural elements essential to fecundity and to the ability to conceive: thus human existence itself depends upon boiling both elements in equal measure.[56] Therefore, by being the pot for boiling meat, the *lebes* transfers this cooking procedure to the funerary level and becomes the means through which re-birth is enacted. Interestingly, the *lebes* is also defined *gaster*,[57] meaning 'stomach, belly', but also 'womb', almost to underline its 'symbolic' role in facilitating regeneration/rebirth after death. The symbolic homology between cremation and cooking is thus established by means of a cauldron-urn. In this way, cremation allowed the deceased the same status as the gods in the afterlife, while the *leuka ostea,* spared and gathered in the *lebes,* would undergo a process of regeneration through boiling.[58]

This function of the *lebes* is confirmed by ancient Greek mythology and literary anecdotes, some of which originated in the Mycenean period.[59] A series of myths, such as the tale of Prometheus or that of Zeus and Pelops, further hint at the regenerative power of the *lebes*. Pelops, for instance, was regenerated by Zeus after his limbs were boiled in a *lebes*.[60] Similarly, a passage by Herodotus describes the episode of Hippocrates, Pisistratus' father, who, whilst visiting the temple of Zeus at Olympia, witnessed the prodigious boiling of water and meats contained in the votive *lebetes*, an event interpreted as announcing the birth of his son.[61] The *lebes* is one of Medea's magic tools and she is also aware of the regenerating power of boiling.[62] Such 'mortality-food-sex-work chain', as Morris calls it,[63] which underlay Prometheus' and other tales, characterised ancient Mediterranean societies and tied together sacrifice, cooking and funerals. In this light, we may better understand the multipurpose function of the *lebes* and its symbolism as a funerary urn. The use of cauldrons as ash containers became common to many areas of the Mediterranean between the Orientalising and Archaic periods. While the use of *lebetes* in Campanian burials, particularly those at Cumae and Pontecagnano, has been interpreted as part of the 'heroic' ritual through which the gender, age and social prominence of the deceased were asserted,[64] that of *dinoi* in Capuan burials

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52 Cerchiai 1984, 39–69.

53 Cerchiai 1984, 52–53.

54 On the 'Greek fire' see also Morris 2000, 292–93.

55 See Mylonas 1948, 59.

56 Mylonas 1948, 56–57.

57 For example, in Homer *Od.* 20, vv. 26–27; ibid. 28, vv. 44–45; and Hesiod, *Theog.* vv. 521–64 in the tale of Prometheus.

58 Cerchiai 1984, 58.

59 Valenza Mele 1982, 126, 129–30; Morris 2000, 291.

60 This episode would explain the presence of the ceremonial *lebetes* on tripods at Olympia where the cult of Pelops was connected to the establishment of the Olympic Games, for example. According to Valenza Mele (1982, 122) also at Delphi, the *lebes* was considered the tool of the art of divination and had a double culinary-sacrificial function.

61 Her. *Hist.* 1.59.1. D'Agostino (2003, 212) pointed out that the homology *lebes*/womb lies behind Herodotus' passage.

62 Valenza Mele 1982, 123.

63 Morris 2000, 292.

64 D'Agostino 1977, 1988; Cerchiai 1995; Cuozzo 1998.

has been attributed to a different cultural and ritual milieu.[65]

Bronze *dinoi* came into use as funerary urns at Capua around the mid-sixth century BCE. These *dinoi* present a stamnoid or hemispherical body with round shoulder, foot and lid, and are characterised by the presence of a plastic decoration on the lid and of a frieze engraved on the body (**Fig. 3**). The complex eschatological and ritual meaning of such decorative features has been summarised by scholars as expressing a new heroic-athletic ideology.[66] In fact, while sharing the function of ash container with the 'old' *lebes,* such *dinoi* were awarded as prizes at agonistic contests, as inscriptions on their surfaces testify.[67] The *dinos*, being a mixing wine bowl, evoked the symposium on the one hand; on the other, it embodied a different ideology, that no longer rested on managing the sword, but on the values of athletics. Therefore, it seems that not reference to the Homeric heroic death, but the celebration of the physical strength in the athletic world lay behind the choice of the *dinoi*.[68] The plastic decoration and the frieze characterising these objects, such as the Barone *Lebes*, would ultimately symbolise the *ephebia,* the athletic training received during youth in preparation to the military career.[69] As for their production, according to Benassai, the *dinoi* from Capua seem to have been produced exclusively for funerary use and they never had a practical use contrary to many of the *lebetes*-urns, which, according to Valenza Mele, were most probably re-used.[70] Moreover, the *dinoi,* which remained a localised phenomenon, vary little in their shape and decoration forming a homogeneous class that was quite likely produced by specialised workshops at Capua.[71] The tureen, especially in its variant B, shows the closest formal similarities with these Archaic bronze *dinoi*.

Fig. 3: Bronze *dinos* used as funerary urn from Capua (Campania), sixth century BC (After Benassai 1995, pl. LV, no. 8, © Ministero della Cultura).

If the tureen's profile can be said to have been inspired by such meaningful containers, the remainder of the elements that compose it can also be paralleled to other semiotic objects. The elongated piriform and/or teardrop shaped finial, which is the most iconic feature of the tureens, is altogether very much alike the lid ornaments of ritual vessels, such as those on late-fifth to fourth century BCE Greek

65 Benassai 1995; Cerchai 1995; Minoja 2006.

66 D'Agostino – Cerchiai 1999, 164–65; Benassai 1995, 55–68.

67 D'Agostino – Cerchiai, loc. cit., recall the so-called *dinos* of Onomastos from Attica with an inscription referring to games held at Argos and in Eubea. See also the *dinos* of Aspasia, Smith 1926, 253–57.

68 For example, Frederiksen (1984, 74–78) linked this new ideology to the emergence a Capuan cavalry comparable to the Cumaean *hyppobotai.* See also Minoja 2006, 120–28.

69 Cerchiai 1995, 117–22.

70 Valenza Mele 1984, 100, *contra* Berard 1970, 25 and Zancani Montuoro 1976, 75.

71 Benassai 1995, 198–200.

Fig. 4: A *lebes-gamikos* (After Trendall 1989, 178, fig. 28).

and Southern Italian red figures *lebetes-gamikoi* (**Fig. 4**),[72] on Hellenistic ceramic and glass vessels[73] and on late Republican archaising metal vessels, on the one hand; on the other, it closely resembles the tear-bottles and ointment jars that accompanied the cinerary urns in the tomb. Such a shape must have been deemed deeply semiotic for its connection with funerary rites and may justify its presence on the tureens. Another idiosyncratic feature of the tureen is the horizontal leaf/ivy shaped handle attachment. This decorative motif is known from both objects, such as silver or bronze cups, jugs and basins, and the visual arts, in Second Pompeian style frescoes for instance, from the Late Republican period, when rich vegetal decoration and ornaments became very popular.[74] Nevertheless, it appears that this decorative motif reached its popularity as a handle complement in the Augustan period since it is found not only on silver[75] and bronze vessels,[76] but also on luxury vases in other materials, such as the Augustan cameo glass Portland Vase[77] and the Blue Amphora[78], whose body is decorated with Dionysiac scenes, as I discuss later on.[79] Indeed, apart from their aesthetic value as ornaments, ivy leaves are popular in Dionysiac iconography[80] and by extension are found on drinking and pouring vessels, such as *skyphoi*, craters and *cantharoi*, linked to wine consumption, almost to underline further the 'ritual' connotation of these objects.

This overview makes apparent that the tureen consisted of elements selected from objects provided with a cultic agency and a meaningful identity within ritual contexts. The shape of the tureen needed not carry necessarily a specific meaning but simply represent a formal choice motivated by the aesthetic perceptions evoked by it; however, the analysis of its complex ancestry suggests a more profound meaning to its shape than that. As mentioned above, the tureen shows striking physical similarities with the Archaic bronze *dinoi* and *lebetes*, thus presenting a certain retrospective style that may conceal an explicit reference to the ritual associations of the shape's iconographic prototypes. Indeed, whether the Romans made

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72 Trendall 1989, 10, 159 and 178 fig. 280, 173 and 195 fig. 336. These are mainly from Campania.

73 Two lidded *amphorae* dated to the second century BCE in the Staatlische Museen of Berlin, Gehrig 1968, 153, no. 30219, 54 and 202 V.I.4950, images pl. 103, nos. 153 and 202.

74 Such as the two silver *skyphoi* decorated with olive twigs from the house of Menander at Pompeii (I 10, 4) dating to the mid-first century BCE, De Caro 1996, 231; Ciardiello 2012, 521–23. According to her recent analysis, this decoration mirrors that of the Second Style vegetal frieze in the house of Caesius Blandus (VII 1, 40), Ciardiello 2012, 522, fig. 9 and 10.

75 A silver *kantharos* of unknown provenance, Künzl 1979, 223 no. 131; the silver *skyphoi* dating to the mid-first century BCE, Late Republican, in the so-called Tivoli Hoard now at the Metropolitan Museum, Inv. 20.49, 2–12, cf. Oliver 1965; the series of *skyphoi* from the Boscoreale and Murecine hoards, Ciardiello 2012, 513–14, fig. 2.

76 The bronze crater from Herculaneum MANN Inv. no. 73105, De Caro 1996, 226.

77 BM GR 1945.0927.1 (Gems 4036), Painter – Whitehouse 1990, 24–84.

78 MANN Inv. 13521, De Caro 1996, 267 from a tomb at the Herculaneum Gate necropolis at Pompeii reused as a cinerary urn.

79 The decoration of the Blue Amphora consists of scenes from grape harvesting and wine making framed by a luxurious vegetal motif of ivy and vine scrolls, all connected to the Dionysiac theme and imagery, on this see La Rocca et al. 2013, 260 [Tortorella].

80 Gasparri 1986, 420–566.

such an explicit connection between the containers and their earlier ritual meaning remains difficult to demonstrate. However, it can be argued that somehow these survived in what Assmann recently defined 'cultural memory' as opposed to 'collective memory' or 'communicative memory'.[81] According to Assmann, memory not only has a social dimension, but also a cultural dimension.[82] As a form of remembrance, cultural memory is particularly important in the transmission of the cultural baggage of a given society, amongst which rituals. The primary force of cultural memory, contrary to communicative memory, resides in its ability to crosscut distant generations, in other words, because it stretches further back into the past as a sort of 'diachronic axis' it "extends a society's ability to remember far beyond the biological and expressive limitations of communicative memory, opening up the depths of time".[83] Therefore, cultural memory is more far-reaching than other forms of memory and it embraces both well-organised systems of memory and more discarded or forgotten pieces of stored cultural forms which are then rediscovered by a given society. For this reason, as Assmann puts it, "cultural memory accounts for a society's ability to reproduce its way of life diachronically over many generations".[84] Therefore, as arbitrary as it may seem to imply a direct relationship with certain practices, particularly those behind the funerary uses of the Archaic metal vessels, and their ritual continuity into the Roman period, given the obvious different historical, cultural, social and religious milieu, it cannot be excluded that the ancestral cultic connotations and ritual functions of these ancient containers were not completely lost, but were rediscovered as part of a common cultural past to share in the present. As Annette Haug, also quoting Assman, remarks, "material culture is the objective side of cultural memory. Cultural goods are important because they can exist within many different chronological horizons forming the basis of the culture of the present allowing the reconstruction of the past and constituting contents and values for the future.The *Vergangenheitsgehalt* – past content – can be either implicit or subconscious or it can be consciously organised. The reception of material culture (remembrance/memory) oscillates between unintentional continuation of cultural meaning (tradition) and purpose reference to the past (remembrance)".[85] Given also that the tureen shape, as I believe, was in all probability developed in Italy and that the *dinoi* are mainly found at Capua, where they were produced locally, this may be symptomatic of the possible persistence in the local ritual memory and material *koinè* of these religious objects that might have stylistically inspired the shape of the tureen in the early Augustan age. The concept of ritual memory of a given society is akin to that of cultural memory. According to Assmann, the most ancient cultic societies were characterised by cult religions based upon ritual forms of remembering or ritual continuity for the transfer and continuation of the ritual knowledge, without which, he argues, "the universe would suffer or even collapse".[86] As Assmann argues, in ancient cultic societies, the ritual time is a present time and such aspect ensures the continual recreation of the world allowing the myths and the images of the sacred knowledge of the past to be both preserved and transmitted.[87] Therefore, as distant in time as the archaic ritual objects that could have inspired the tureen may have been, it is not completely unlikely that the image of these powerful ritual symbols, and possibly their meaning, were transmitted to the Romans who were, in turn, familiar with them.

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81 For a definition of these concepts and their uses see the collection of papers in Olick et al. 2011.

82 Assmann 2006, 2011.

83 Assmann 2006, 24.

84 Assmann 2006, 8.

85 Haug 2001, 111.

86 Assmann 2006, 126.

87 Ibid.

Indeed, Roman cultural and cultic heritage had its roots in both the local customs of Italic origins and the Greek ones, with which it also shared the pantheon and the complex mythological sagas. It is also possible that both written accounts of these past rituals codified by the timeless repertoire of myths and literary sources together with the actual material remnants in the form of objects allowed their survival and transmission into later times. Moreover, as we shall see further on, it is certainly striking to see that the migration of the image of these ritual objects, resulting in what could be defined their 'actualisation' through the creation of the tureen, started in the Augustan age, when the cult of the past and its renewal were strongly felt. As Haug underlines, the concept itself of *renovatio*, which was central to Augustus' political propaganda, relies upon an intentional perception of the difference between past and present.[88] In other words, the renewal of past culture must have implied an awareness of it in order for it to be looked back upon and relived. The recurrent image of lidded tureen-like vessels in Augustan domestic frescoes and mosaics depicting sanctuaries and cultic scenes may represent the tangible proof that not only was this shape familiar to the Roman eye, but that it was also perceived as sacred and deeply evocative. Moreover, as I hope to demonstrate, it is possible that these objects played an important role in creating and expressing a more intimate form of religious rituals in the domestic context.

Symbols Matter. The Tureen in Roman Domestic Contexts

A lidded vase, made of metal either bronze, silver or gold, features in Roman mural frescoes and mosaics. This painted vase has been generically described as urn[89] or *pyxis*,[90] but I argue that it so strongly resembles the stone tureen that it could be its painted double. The overall features of this painted vessel are a hemispherical body with foot, two handles and a lid with finial. Despite the apparent similarity between all painted examples, like with real tureens, some variants in the profile or attributes of the vase can be noticed. According to this, the body can be either spherical or hemispherical, deep or shallow; the foot, where present, is high and convex, while many examples have lids that in some cases present an elongated finial. The profile of the handles also ranges from round – horizontal to vertical – elongated. In the latter case, it is possible to recognise griffin protomes that replace altogether or coexist with the handles, something which the real coloured stone tureens do not present.[91]

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88 Haug 2001, 111.

89 Franca Taglietti (1979, 231–32, 235, 249–50, nos 145, 149, 156) was the first to point out the close visual similarities between the shape of the lidded double-handed type of urn, which I later labelled 'tureen', and the series of cultic metal vases depicted in Roman sacro-idyllic landscape paintings.

90 For example, by Mulliez 2014, 25–28.

91 This seems to suggest that the type was inspired by or meant to imitate the Archaic ritual vessels ultimately deriving from the ceremonial griffin *lebes*. These vessels were essentially ceremonial and ritual objects, and as such they were awarded as prizes to athletes at gymnastic contests in Greece, or offered as votives to pan-Hellenic sanctuaries, such as at Olympia and Delphi, alongside being used for ablutions and libations at ceremonies. Griffin vessels were also traded and exchanged as gifts well into the Archaic period and examples have been found in Cyprus, Etruria, Southern Italy and as far North as Vix in France. The shape as a whole continued into much later periods in many variants, particularly stone and terracotta. Globular stone griffin vases were used as funerary *sema* on graves in fourth century BCE Attica and as acroteria in the Hellenistic necropolises at Taranto in Apulia and Siracusa in Sicily. A group of limestone and miniaturistic terracotta griffin bowls on high foot with lid dating to the third century BCE featured among the grave goods at a necropolis near Siracusa. A cinerary urn with griffin heads was found at Reggio Calabria, dating to the fourth century, but possibly later, consisting of a hemispherical body with conical lid and a pear-shaped finial and thus presenting strong formal similarities with the tureen. Archaizing stone acroteria, in the shape of globular fluted vessels on high foot, are found again in the first century BCE decorating the pyramidal roof of base and canopy tombs in North-Eastern Italy, such as the monument of Aesfonius Rufus at the Pian di Bezzo necropolis at Sarsina. While disappearing in Northern Italy, the type appears again as white marble acroteria meant to represent the cinerary urn (fake cineraria) on Early Augustan funerary monuments as well as on real urns. In the Augustan period, the griffin became an extremely popular iconographic motif in visual arts, often imbued with complex symbolic associations especially in connection with the Augustan cult of Apollo. As a creature sacred to both Apollo and

Fig. 5: 'Tureen-like vases' on top of architraves framing a scene with a tripod, House of the Cryptoporticus, *frigidarium*, north wall. Detail of upper centre (Photo: Author, © Ministero della Cultura/Parco archeologico di Pompei).

Fig. 6: 'Tureen-like' vessel on top on an architrave in a Second Style fresco, Room 2, Villa A Oplontis (Torre Annunziata) (Photo: Author, © Ministero della Cultura/Parco archeologico di Pompei).

It is possible that these vases could be either votives, cultic paraphernalia, funerary acroteria or actual urns. In Second Style 'architectural' frescoes, the 'tureen' vase is normally set on the edge of architraves of temples and porticoes, often accompanied by several symbols or images of objects, such as theatrical tragic masks, tripods, shields and cultic paraphernalia, like in the frescoes of the House of Cryptoporticus at Pompeii (**Fig. 5**), Villa of the Mysteries and Villa A at Oplontis (**Fig. 6**). In the Third and Fourth Style sacro-idyllic landscape scenes, the vase usually features on top of pillars and columns as well as buildings, such as sacred gateways and temple-shrines (**Fig. 7**), for instance in the frescoes of House of the Four Styles (**Fig. 8**), the House of Polybius and from the House of Livia on the Palatine. Outdoor sanctuaries and sacred groves, scenes of *pietas*, *simulacra* or herms of deities further underline the sacred nature of the setting in which the vase appears, like in the Venus and Eros fresco decorating the *exedra* 24 of House of the Menander where four 'tureens' stand on the four upper corners of the *aedicula* where the two deities are standing (**Fig. 9**). The importance of the tureen is underlined by its position in what are quite visible or meaningful spots. The fact itself that it often appears on top of grandiose architectural features, pillars and columns further suggests the intention by the artist or patron to make the vase more or less visible, and perhaps this was related to the type of composition, whether solemn architectures, like in the case of Second Style, or idyllic settings, like in Third Style frescoes, or in respect to the point of view.[92] Sometimes, the tureen is the sole element in the scene that characterises the ambience as sacred being often placed at the very centre of the composition on top of a pillar, like the one in the fresco decorating room 5 'of the masks' in the house of Augustus on the Palatine. The sacred function of the vases is further endorsed by fabric bands hanging from their handles, like in the above-mentioned tureens from the

Nemesis, it came to symbolise the guardian of the new 'Golden Age' and became metaphoric of Octavian's victory over Egypt. It has also been noted that in Augustan representations the griffin is also often depicted next to a *cantharos* or *crater*, thus symbolising a double connection with Dionysus. This image is also found quite commonly in first century CE Roman funerary art, such as tomb reliefs and paintings. As also Hermann (1979) pointed out, the griffins were first and foremost the caretakers of the gods, and their role on the *lebetes* dedicated at Olympia or Delphi, should be seen as that of guardians and protectors of the gifts to the gods and of their sacredness. By the same token, the protomes had the apotropaic function to keep the evil spirits away from the objects they were attached to.

92 On multiple views within the fresco, Mulliez 2014, 74.

Fig. 7: 'Tureen-like' vessel on top of a sacred gate in the Third Style fresco 'Paris as a shepherd', unknown context (Pompeii) at the Archaeological Museum of Naples (Photo: Author, © Ministero della Cultura/MANN).

Fig. 8: 'Tureen-like' vessel with hanging bands on top of a pillar in a sacral Third Style fresco, *triclinium*, Casa dei Quattro Stili, Pompeii (Photo: Author © Ministero della Cultura/Parco archeologico di Pompei).

House of the Menander and of Augustus, and by garlands, like in the fresco from the *triclinium* G at the Villa of Fannius Synistor. The presence of holy animals, such as birds, such as peacocks and ibises (**Fig. 10**), framing the vase from both its sides is a further testimony of the relevance of the object (**Fig. 11**). Tureen-like vases also appear in the series of Nilotic sacred landscapes from the Isis Temple at Pompeii. Here, the vase features by the entrance or on the top of temple enclosures along with other cultic vessels and simulacra of Egyptian deities. Many Third Style frescoes are characterised by Egyptian themes and 'sacred' symbols, such as obelisks, zoomorphic deities, hieroglyphs and sphinxes, that are mixed with classical style features and projected into idealised Nilotic landscapes in the attempt to recall Pharaonic Egypt.[93] Egyptian icons and symbols feature next to each other according to the Roman perception of Egypt, mediated through the experience of Ptolemaic Alexandria, and filtered by the Roman eye.[94] An aura of sacredness is also projected onto objects, which although non-Egyptian looking, like the tureen-like vase, become iconic paraphernalia of Egyptian cults, as can be observed in the Palestrina mosaic. In other mosaics the tureen features on top of a 'sacred gateway', like in the case of the Plato's academy mosaic, from the House of Siminius Stephanus at Pompeii (**Fig. 12**), or in a 'ritual' freeze, such as the mosaic Preparation of a satyr play from the House of the Tragic Poet (**Fig. 13**).

93 Ling 1977, 11.

94 On the topic, see Anu Koponen's paper in this volume.

Fig. 9: 'Tureen-like' vessel on top of an *aedicula* in the Third Style fresco in the garden exedra of the House of the Menander, Pompeii (Photo: Author © Ministero della Cultura/ Parco archeologico di Pompei).

Fig. 10: 'Tureen-like' vessel flanked by sacred birds unknown context (Rome) at Museo Nazionale Romano Palazzo Massimo alle Terme (Photo: Author © Ministero della Cultura).

Fig. 11: 'Tureen-like' vessel on top of a pillar flanked by cockerels in a Third Style fresco, unknown context (Pompeii) at the Archaeological Museum of Naples (Photo: Author © Ministero della Cultura/MANN).

Here the tureen-like vase is represented together with other vases standing between a series of red coloured herms, possibly representing Dionysus. The ritual connotation of the frieze is suggested by these objects, which were probably connected to and thus symbolised a sort of propitiatory rite to Dionysus before the play. I believe that this makes further evident that the painted versions of the tureen were not just attributes, but alive, significant instruments that embodied shared sacred symbols in the context of domestic religion. As we shall see, images of vases and other containers are very common in a variety of Roman iconographic contexts from frescoes, mosaics and stucco reliefs to sarcophagi and pottery. In Roman mural painting, their presence and function have been variously interpreted by most scholars: 'accessories' in still-life scenes, *xenia*[95], trophies, prizes at games[96] and/or luxury objects[97] to display in painting. In other words, the dominating idea is that these objects are mere *parerga,* that is accessories or ornaments.[98] Whilst these interpretations may all be equally valid and non-exclusive, however, they seem to fail to grasp the potential, deeper semiotics of these objects within the wider economy of the painted scenes or in respect to the subjects represented. The tureen-like vases may well have been the result of artistic conventions and had a mere decorative function; yet, based on what we have discussed above, we may argue it was more than a *parergon*. I believe it was a symbolic, allegoric attribute and a fitting emblem of lived religion in the domestic sphere.

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95 On which see recently Squire 2017.

96 Peters 1963; Ling 1991; Baldassarre et al. 2006; Croisille 2005, 2010.

97 Mulliez (2014) does dedicate some attention to these vases, but exclusively within the wider perspective of the display luxury and its imitations in late Republican Roman painting, particularly Second Style architectural frescoes. Despite recording the frequency of metal vases, amongst which the tureen, he does not explain their semiotics.

98 Plural of the ancient Greek word *parergon.* The concept has been conceptualized by modern philosophers, such as Immanuel Kant in his The Critique of Judgement (1892), who defined it as what goes beyond the ergon 'work' likening it to an ornament, and more recently by Jacques Derrida (1979, 1987), who was influenced by Kant's use of the word and used it in his wider theory of deconstruction in combination with the term 'supplement'. The critical review of this term and uses falls outside the scope of this paper. For a very recent summary, see Duro 2019. For its use in Roman art critique, see Anguissola 2018.

Fig. 12: Representations of 'tureen-like' vases in the mosaic Plato's academy, House of Siminius Stephanus (Pompeii) (After De Caro 1996, 187 © Ministero della Cultura/MANN).

Fig. 13: 'Tureen-like' vessel in the mosaic 'Preparation of a satyr play, House of the Tragic Poet' (Pompeii) (After De Caro 1996, 18 © Ministero della Cultura/MANN).

Painted Objects, Living Symbols: Sacred Vases in Roman Domestic Frescoes

The relationship between Roman visual arts and religion and the question of the meaning of iconography – religious versus decorative – have been studied relentlessly from a variety of perspectives generating a vast bibliography, of which the review falls outside the scope of this paper.[99] Similarly, the allegoric character of Roman domestic wall painting, although renown, is dominated by overarching iconographic and iconological narratives deriving from a diversity of scholarly positions.[100] In this direction, Jaś Elsner's interpretation of the relationship between art and religion is particularly emblematic.[101] He argues that Roman traditional religion was based on pictures, in other words, that art itself was religion. Furthermore, he goes on and distinguishes between 'mimetic' religious art – representing real ritual practices – and symbolic 'mysteric' art – namely art linked to mysteries that expressed meanings through symbols. According to this interpretation, symbols could only represent mysteries; however, although Elsner's hypothesis is persuasive, it seems rather exclusive to conclude that this was (always) the case. It is undeniable that Roman frescoes are packed with a variety of visual devices that are markedly religious in nature. These 'sacral' elements and religious iconography often coexist or, as Platt put it, "are provocatively intertwined",[102] with non-religious naturalistic images – something which Little defined 'sacral pictorial' – [103] so much so that it is not possible to distinguish what is mimetic, symbolic or allegoric from what is not, since the whole scene becomes permeated with a sense of diffused sacredness that "challenges the viewer's response".[104] Therefore, because there is not such a clear-cut distinction, [105] we should not be so exclusive and deny *tout court* that these pictures were symbols and/or allegories. Rather, we could argue that they may have been both mimetic and symbolic images that, building upon a shared imagination, the Roman viewers would recognise as mimetic, symbolic or both. That said, as also Vittorio Macchioro pointed out, we should not rule out completely the aesthetic or even fashion element to them or see a symbol behind every detail. In this respect, I consider Macchioro's observation particularly stimulating: coming from the premise that decorative art does not necessarily exclude symbolism, he discusses the meaning, occurrence and repetition of 'symbols' in the visual arts – with special reference to funerary art though – and speculates upon whether there is a difference between purely ornamental and entirely symbolic by distinguishing between a 'conscious symbolism', in the case of symbolic images, and an 'unconscious symbolism', in the case of ornamental images. Either ways, the responsibility for the reproduction of images, he argues, lies in the hands of the artist producing and reproducing art according to its demand:

> "However, between this art, which is called decorative and which I will call such in the absence of a better term but maintaining what I have said so far, and symbolic art there is a difference not with respect to art but to the artist. While recognising that all art is psychologically symbolic and that a truly ornamental figurative art does not exist, it would nevertheless be an exaggeration to want to see in any motive, even industrial, a deliberately symbolic content. Let us consider for example the image of the hare that it is said to have been an aphrodisiac [type of food] amongst the Romans. We do not believe that the artist using that motif on a sarcophagus or cip-

99 Dominated by Schefold 1972. Recently summed up and reviewed in Estienne et al. 2008. See also Jones 2019.

100 Sauron 2007; Lorenz 2016.

101 Elsner 1995, 1996.

102 Platt 2002, 87.

103 Little 1945, 140.

104 Platt 2002, 87.

105 On this also Macchioro 1909, 22 [14].

> pus, and any other motif in association with it, was deliberately expressing an aphrodisiac message. No: the reasons of the common expressions of the figurative language are in the conscience of the people, they exist in a thousand ways and a thousand forms and the artist draws on them: but they nevertheless have a reason for being moral or religious in grace of which they are so common, they are so fashionable. And the artist uses them, because the current taste imposes it on him: but since this taste has more or less evident ethical or religious bases, more or less remote, he does a work of unconscious symbolism: that is, the work is not the wanted symbol of an individual idea of the artist, but the unwanted symbol of a collective idea. We therefore distinguish the conscious symbolic work and the unconscious symbolic work, the first corresponding to the symbolic (symbolist) art, the second to the figurative ornamental art" (Macchioro 1909, 25–26 [17–18]).

At the same time, Macchioro quite cogently observes that the Romans were so profoundly concerned with death, and I should add religion, that they would have never accepted random and obscure images of which they ignored the meaning.[106] Indeed, in Roman society, religion, superstition, sacrifices, ritual acts as well as the material objects to perform them were omnipresent in the daily practice. We may well presume that the Romans wished to surround themselves and the spaces they inhabited not just with the material means of religiousness, but also with divine signs and images that would allow the sacred and religious world to enter the private sphere. Images that would speak to the viewers, patron visitor or alike, and inspire in them a sense of piety. A role that is played by the buildings, statues and objects within the painting. This is a phenomenon that Mulliez defined "la sacralisation de l'espace privé" behind the representation of sacred architecture in Second Style frescoes starting from the late Republican period. In particular, he notices:

> "L'aspect sacré réside tant dans le sujet que dans l'objet matériel… il ne s'agit pas d'objet de temple volés mais d'objets, de matériaux qui, dans la conscience collective, étaient destinés à des temples – ou plutôt à dis dieux – tant leur valeur était immense, et qui peu à peu faut leur entrée dans l'apparait privé…les objets sacrès – torches, offrandes – placés au plan du decor le plus proche du spectateur semblent l'inviter dans cet univers" (Mulliez 2014, 25).

These observations become even more relevant if we accept the ambivalent nature – public and private – or polyvalent – the incorporation of the sacred into private contexts[107] – of the Roman house and the fact that decorative, architectural and pictorial features adorning it were selected also according to space, size and function – whether private or open to visitors – of the individual domestic areas. As also John Clarke underlined:

> "Roman life was filled with rituals, no less so in the private sphere of the home than in the public arena…the word 'ritual' itself has extended meanings in the private sphere, because the Romans tended to think of each space in a house in terms of the ritual or the activity that the space housed. For this reason, the meaning of ritual…is two pronged. In its usual sense, it denotes formal, prescribed activity, often with religious purposes or rigidly ceremonial overtones. Its second sense is that of the habitual – yet not religiously presented – activity that took place in these spaces." (Clarke 1991, 1).

Therefore, if domestic wall and floor decoration were meant to show the owner's taste, social standing, economic and political power to the house guests and visitors, the figural themes and iconographic

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106 Macchioro 1909, 25 [17].

107 Coarelli 1983; Bergmann 1992, 40.

Fig. 14: Painted vases with garlands hanging from the handles in a fresco at Villa San Marco, Stabia (Photo: Author © Ministero della Cultura/Parco archeologico di Pompei).

programmes within the represented scenes were conceived as visual means to convey social, cultural and religious messages about the house owner and the other people living within the premises. While it is true that some themes are peculiar for their use in specific rooms, it is also true that the many decorative schemes of religious nature, especially those involving vases, occur indistinctively throughout the house, from the most public areas, like *atria*, to the most intimate rooms, like *cubicula* (**Fig. 14**). This suggests that these images were both meant for internal and external viewers and, while relying on different visual strategies, probably affected each viewer in a different way. However, whether these images reflected actual rituals or were just 'pious reminders' for the house owner or "sophisticated games with religious iconography", as Platt calls them,[108] for the external viewer, they must have played an important role as attributes of meaning that would speak further for religious experience within the house. The iconographic or iconic images may be indeed obscure and challenging for the modern viewer, not least because of the variability in modes of viewing, thus we can only tentatively try to reconstruct their cultural meaning – fluid though also this can be; however, on the premise that the painted images with a potential character of sacredness should tell us something about religion, they can still offer insights into the diverse range of lived, multi-sensory forms of Roman religious behaviour. Thereby, we can assume that tureen-like vases acted as key visual referents and active symbols that contributed to the construction of religious practice not just within their scenes but especially in everyday contexts. This claim can be confirmed by the undeniably religious nature of the represented scenes, the accompanying symbolic apparatus and, ultimately, by the actual position of the tureen within the composition.

A similar conclusion may well be applied to the other vase shapes occurring in Roman frescoes and mosaics depicting sanctuaries and cultic scenes. *Amphorae*, craters, *paterae*, *cantharoi* and jugs occur on the top of columns and along the edge of architraves or shrines in Roman sacro-idyllic paintings and mosaics representing processions, symposia of gods and mortals as well as sacrifices and other rituals, but are found also in isolation, in *pinakes*, set up on *mensae* or offering tables, often flanked by other sacred

108 Platt 2002, 104.

Fig. 15: *Cantharos* on top on an architrave in a Second Style fresco, unknown context (Portici) at the Archaeological Museum of Naples (Photo: Author © Ministero della Cultura/MANN).

objects and animals, like birds. I believe that the iconography of the scenes makes it obvious that these vases were not mere accessories. These scenes allow us to make a strong case that these vase shapes had eventually entered the ritual sphere and therefore had a semiotic value by association with a specific deity, such as the crater, which is iconic for Dionysus and Dionysiac rites (**Fig. 15**), or because of their use as cultic paraphernalia, such as the jug associated with the *patera* for pouring libations during sacrifices, celebrations and funerals. This seems to be confirmed also by other instances. In her discussion of the marble relief of Argenidas dedicated to the Dioscuri where two *amphorae* are represented standing on an offering table, Estienne recalls that these have been interpreted either as paraphernalia or as symbolic representations of the two gods.[109] In her view, these vases represented the divine presence on multiple levels during a certain ritual, in this case possibly associated with navigation. Another piece of evidence that provides yet another hint of this semiotic function of painted vases is their occurrence in funerary contexts, like in the Columbaria of Vigna Codini in Rome. An eloquent example is to be found in the crater depicted on one of the walls of the tomb E at the Vatican Necropolis in Rome.[110] The crater, a vase connected to wine drinking, seems to instantiate the reference to the Dionysiac rituals and/or initiation by the devotee. As such, we are dealing with quite a common phenomenon since the connection between the Dionysiac imagery and the funerary sphere, as an expression of a blessed afterlife, is renown and evident from the abundance of Greco-Roman visual and plastic media.[111] Nevertheless, I should point out that I am not going to discuss the complex question of Dionysiac iconography, its implications for Classical art and the varied scholarly interpretations to which I refer the reader.[112] I only wish to recall the role of vase shapes, both in plastic and painted form, with a markedly Dionysiac character in materialising and embodying the link with the Dionysiac sphere in Roman private contexts and funerary ideology. In reference to the latter, this link seems to be further instantiated by other vessels used, or more likely reused, as cinerary urns in Roman and non-Roman burials, such as the metal Derveni crater from the Hellenistic tomb at Vergina,[113] the series of red figure *stamnoi* used in fifth century BCE burials at Capua[114] as well as the Blue Amphora

109 Estienne 2015, 380–81.

110 Mielsch – von Hesberg 1995, 80–87; 91–92.

111 On these see the volume edited by Mac Gòràin 2019.

112 On Dionysiac iconography see Scapini 2016.

113 Barr Sharrar 2008.

114 Rendeli 1992.

from Pompeii discussed above, all examples whose iconography alluded more or less explicitly to the Dionysiac sphere. It is certainly striking to see that one of the two ash urns found in the above-mentioned Vatican tomb E is a calcite alabaster crater that mirrors exactly the one in the fresco (**Fig. 16**).

Fig. 16: Calcite Alabaster Crater from the Vatican necropolis, Mausoleum E, Julio-Claudian (After Mielsch – Von Hesberg 1995, 90, fig. 86).

A deeper eschatological meaning is thus foreseeable behind the painted vase shape and the choice of urns whose shapes are a materialisation of the vessels that appear in visual form in the same context. There are other examples of stone vases re-adapted as cinerary urns in early Imperial Roman burials and these are mostly stone skeuomorphs of feasting, banqueting and drinking vessels which, I argue, had been selected for their Dionysiac iconography, as in the case of another crater from an early Augustan tomb at Santa Maria Capua Vetere (ancient Capua).[115] Along with human remains, the urn contained another drinking cup, a rock-crystal skyphos of superb craftsmanship, decorated with knotted vine leaves. The allusion to the Dionysian world, and possibly to the deceased's belief (a devotee? an initiated?) is instantiated by the pair of vessels. These considerations strengthen my interpretation that behind the use as urns of the tureens and other vases lies their symbolic value: these objects represented the material evidence of people's *pietas*, spirituality and beliefs in everyday life and, by extension, in the funerary sphere.

This overview makes apparent that vases, whether in plastic or painted form, constituted a network of pictorial and material *koinè* that had a significance beyond their surface meaning and alluded allegorically to gods, customary rites and beliefs. One way to understand this is to recognise that vases had an ambivalent nature of both mundane domestic tools and sacred paraphernalia, and this lies behind their visual representation and objectification whether in stone or other media. Paraphrasing Morgan,[116] these "commonly experienced artefacts" were instruments that instructed the senses and operated as forms of the sacred in everyday lived religion. In the previous section, I illustrated how the tureen was a new container whose shape had 'migrated' from past religious metal and pottery containers and was translated into a new material: exotic stone. Imported coloured lithotypes were themselves imbued with symbolism connected to their colour/country of origin and, as I argued elsewhere in the case of alabaster,[117] may have been thought to possess 'magical' and religious powers. This suggests that the choice of the materials went hand in hand with that of the vase shapes, their understood meaning and intended function. At this point, it is worth asking how did its form travel from one media to the other? What cultural and ideological frame was this new container meant to fit in?

115 Perna 2012; Perna (forthcoming).

116 Morgan 2010, 17.

117 Perna – Barker 2018, 405–12.

Materialising the Past, Objectifying the Sacred: The Augustan Syntax

The complex ancestry of the tureen reveals that the shape was not a mere reinterpretation and adaptation, but the materialisation or actualisation of specific past symbolic visual sets. As also Haug remarks that "past artefacts become part of contemporary culture through actualisation".[118] The analysis of the tureen's features reveals the careful and selective transposition and combination into a single object of multiple skeuomorphic details, motifs and shapes that were not themselves new but already occurred on objects in other media. Based on this, the tureen vase can be described as a skeuomorphic polymorph. A skeuomorph can be broadly defined as a copy of a protype object replicated in different physical materials.[119] There can be skeuomorphs of whole objects or of parts of them – design attributes – which originally had a practical, utilitarian function in the prototype object that may be lost in the derivative object but whose iconicity remains unaltered. Carl Knappett's seminal article on skeuomorphs (2002) is one of a series of scholarly contributions which using a wider variety of multidisciplinary approaches – from archaeology, anthropology, architectural history and design, sociology to cognitive psychology – have offered a multidimensional perspective on the subject. The fulcrum of Knappett's interpretation of skeuomorphism – within the wider discourse on objects' agency[120] – builds upon the concepts of signs and related words – icon, symbol and index – which he draws from the field of semiotics and Charles Pierce (1955) and which he applies to his case study, Minoan pottery skeuomorphs of silver cups from Crete.[121] Essential to his view is amongst other things 'sympathetic magic' – a concept borrowed from Alfred Gell – which building on the principle of imitation operates through the shared visual properties of the derivative object to affect its referent. This idea is, however, closely linked to the view of objects as social agents and their ability – 'agency' – to influence social dynamics.[122] Objects that are *secondary* social agents are the medium through which the primary social agents/humans perform their social actions. According to this, skeuomorphs have the power to influence their referent objects through the manipulation of people. Skeuomorphs also exist as traits sought in other objects, either for their psychological comforts or social desirability. This view is akin to that of skeuomorphs as 'boundary objects', namely concrete objects that inhabit intersecting social worlds where they represent and help translate abstract concepts. This term that was first used in the field of museum collection management has been recently applied by Milena Gošić (2015) to explain the role plaid by metal axes as skeuomorphs of stone ritual objects in the introduction of metallurgy – socialisation of technology – in Copper Age Gassulian society (the Levant). Boundary objects act as translators between worlds by means of a recognisable structure, in a similar manner, skeuomorphs using similar designs, albeit in different materials, help connecting people to new ideas and practices. By means of a familiar iconography rooted in social and ritual practices, skeuomorphs as boundary objects facilitate the acceptance of new technology and the objects produced through it. This means that by mediating between the new and the old, skeuomorphs ease the socialisation of technology especially when technology is used to produce ritual artefacts or social symbols. It may thus

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118 Haug 2001, 111

119 The concept of 'skeuomorph' was first introduced in 1889 by Henry Colley March, who coined the term skeuomorphism – from *skeuos* (container, vessel, equipment or tool) and *morphê* (shape). In the field of Classical studies, the concept has again been applied to all the classes of containers whose shapes or details result from reciprocal influence of productions in diverse media. For a review of all the approaches to skeuomoprhs in Classical archaeology see Perna (forthcoming).

120 The topic is too vast, and its discussion falls outside the scope of this paper. I therefore refer the reader to the main bibliography on the subject. Gell 1988, 99–104; 1992.

121 Knappett 2002, 108–13.

122 Knappett – Malafouris 2008.

be argued that, by making objects in new materials feel comfortably old and familiar, skeuomorphs are a medium through which the new known is fitted in known, pre-existing cultural structures.[123] Skeuomorphs therefore must elicit a social memory to allow the acceptance of the new through the reference to the shape of the familiar prototype. This 'familiarity' is usually a characteristic of the past and of the formal language of 'past' objects which in the process of copying may result in a deliberate 'archaising' appearance of newly created objects to facilitate their acceptance.[124] Polymorphism, conversely, is a form of skeuomorphism, but instead of reproducing attributes from one category of artefacts, more elements, often from exogenous productions, may be borrowed, combined and brought together in a single artefact.[125] Polymorphism usually implies a local syntax resulting in the creation of a new object which conforms to local taste and fits in with the local values. Based on this, it can be drawn that the creation of the tureen shape, which combined skeuomorphism and polymorphism, allowed the actualisation of a formal language that, building upon cultural memory, expressed the deceased's sense of religious community and adherence to tradition.

Therefore, the actualisation of the formal language resulting in the tureen compels us to frame this phenomenon further within the cultural and ideological climate of the Augustan period. As seen above, Capua was one of the Italic centres responsible for the production and reproduction of metal works in the late first century BCE,[126] when the renewed appreciation for antique Greek works set off by the antiquarian trend known as 'Necrocorinthia' boosted the demand and the production of archaizing bronze and silver vessels that were sought after by rich Roman patrons (**Fig. 17**).[127] Especially in the Augustan period, antiques were not only deemed fashionable collectibles by their owners because they expressed the erudite and pious reception of the past, particularly Greek, by their owners; they were also deemed to be 'magical' objects *per se,* particularly because of their *patina,* the typical dark colour that old bronze takes.[128] As Zanker cogently put it in the Augustan age "archaic forms were still thought to possess a special religious aura" and "the connotation of the Archaic style, whether Greek or Etruscan-Italic, was unmistakably that of the sacred".[129] Moreover, as also Haug remarks, "the Augustan age was marked through the presence not only of indigenous Roman cultural heritage embodied through local artefacts: Greek materials from various time periods and exotic artefacts, which came to Rome as a result of Augustus' conquest

Fig. 17: Bronze Argive hydria dating to 460–450 BC found in the House of Julius Polybius, Pompeii (After Lazzarini – Zevi 1989, 35, figs. 3–4).

123 Dietler 1999.

124 Blitz 2015.

125 Manzo 2012, 339–72. Term first introduced by Baud 2010.

126 Tassinari 1979, 236–39 for bronzes; Ciardiello 2012, 519–22 for silver.

127 Strab. 8.6.23; Suet. *Caes.* 81.

128 Lazzarini – Zevi 1989.

129 Zanker 1988, 243–44.

of Egypt were equally visible and tangible. The varied geographical and chronological contexts of these artefacts resulted in the simultaneous representation of several different levels of cultural symbol sets".[130] In confirmation of such statement there is the instance of the tripod *lebes,* a variant of the vessels discussed above, that was among the symbols chosen by Augustus to represent his religious ideology as it came to signify Apollo, one of the key deities of his pantheon (**Fig. 18**).[131] Augustan retrospective and eclectic Classicism heavily drew upon, often by mixing them, Archaic and Classical Greek as well as Hellenistic style and motifs and turned them into symbols which conveyed a sense of piety, solemnity and sanctity. As Haug underlined, Archaic and Classical forms were deemed suitable and appropriate for "dignified official scenes", thus particularly apt in religious contexts.[132] Similarly, by drawing on recognisable ritual symbols and objects, the classical-archaizing 'tureen' shape, transposed into four different types of Egyptian stone, had to be appropriate for the funerary sphere.

The choice of the tureen shape may be further framed within the use of the exotic stones. In fact, I argue that the tureen was chiefly created with the intention to transpose a familiar formal language into an imported stone to appear apt to a Roman ritual context. From the Augustan age, marble became a powerful status marker and the taste for coloured stone items increased over time. As part of his *renovatio* program, which oscillated between tradition and innovation as well as *pietas* and *auctoritas*, Augustus clad the city of Rome with the new, sought after imported material, which steadily become a symbol of power and prestige. Incidentally, the language chosen to be transposed into the new media was that of the past so to fit Roman taste and tradition. By the same token, a cinerary container that responded to specific aesthetic – use of exotic coloured stone – ideological – status expression and self-promotion in the realm of death – and, above all, ritual criteria – conservation of mortal remains – would eventually be suitable and appropriate for a dignified Roman burial. In this light, it can be better understood why the Augustan age represents the moment of the creation of the tureen shape and how such a cinerary vase epitomises the materialisation of the Augustan formal and religious syntax.

From Culinary to Funerary. The Multiple Lives of Objects as Religious Symbols

This chapter started with the premise that ancient vases were not just mere containers. Rather, by looking at their biography it becomes apparent how they had a dialectical nature, practical and ceremonial, which seems to be reconciled in their perceived 'sacred' meaning. From domestic paraphernalia to ritual tools, I suggest that vases fully embodied the materiality of religion and of cult practices in everyday religiosity. This ambivalence or capacity to migrate in form, material and meaning is a frequent feature of material culture that, being very mobile and deeply semiotic, allows objects to turn into symbols and, in return, symbols to be objectified through materialisation. According to this, mundane objects could become cultic or religious paraphernalia through a process of actualisation which made them eventually apt for ritual contexts. This seems to have been particularly the case with certain vases and other containers that were imbued with 'magical' ritual powers likely grounded in their shapes, materials or other folkloristic constructs. The ancient use or reuse of certain vases, such as cauldrons, connected with domestic practices, like food preparation and eating, as containers for mortal remains makes the inter-permeability between the domestic and funerary ritual spheres in ancient societies further apparent. Both through visual resemblance and habitual and conventional associations, vases seem to have played an integral part of ritual performance in everyday practice, thus substantiating the importance of

130 Haug 2001, 112.

131 Zanker 1988, 49–51 in part. fig. 39; Strazzulla 1990, 17–22.

132 Haug 2001, 116.

Fig. 18: Lastra Campana from the Augustan Temple of Apollo on the Palatine representing the tripod symbol of Apollo, Rome (Photo: Wikimedia Commons/ Sailko).

material culture in ancient religion. As Meyer *et alii* underline, "things are the objects of the body's apprehension, but they are also agencies within themselves either as other bodies or as the extension or completion of a body or as the presence or symbol of a social body. There is a material economy at work in sacred things… the study of religion without the materiality of this network is to miss the embodiment of belief."[133] Similarly, I hope to have more convincingly demonstrated that the vases represented in paintings were more than meaningless accessories, but visual prompts and pious reminders of domestic religiousness.

The hybrid ancestry of the funerary tureen, a skeuomorphic polymorph consisting in an iconographic synthesis of various, more ancient containers, whose cultic uses and meanings were still strongly felt in both visual and material form in the Roman cultural memory, represents a tangible proof of the symbolism of certain objects and their shapes in ancient religious rituals. The constant presence of tureen-like vases in 'sacred' Roman domestic frescoes shows the important role played by their iconicity within the painted scene and, therefore, confirms that these objects had a strong connection with domestic cults by making the sacred a perceptible reality in people's everyday life. These vases were meaningful and familiar objects to viewers, just like the tureen was to its users and makers. As part of a syntactical journey from material to visual and then material again, the stone tureens may well be the representations of those painted vases made concrete and tangible in the attempt to transpose the memory of a domestic familiar symbol to the tomb where it would endure for the eternity. The deceased would be both comforted and dignified while displaying a 'novel' funerary container that adhered to tradition and ancestral religion. The material and visual combined evidence on the tureen speaks powerfully: the link between the domestic dimension and the funerary sphere, thus between the house and the tomb, is created and substantiated by means of an object, in this case a funerary vase, which, in a manner similar to what Knappett calls "the objectification of the thing",[134] is both sacred and the idea of it.

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133 Meyer et al. 2010, 209.

134 Knappett 2008, 145.

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To Live or not to Live.
The Lares and the Transfer of the *Domicilium* in a Roman Town

Aude Durand[1] & William Van Andringa[2]

In Plautus' *Aulularia*, the *Lar familiaris* presents himself as follows: "I am the household god of this family, from whose house you have seen me coming forth. It is now many years that I have been occupying this house (*domus*) and I inhabited it for the father and the grandfather of this person who now dwells here. But beseeching me, his grandfather entrusted to me a treasure of gold, unknown to all. He deposited it in the middle of the hearth, praying to me to watch it for him."[3]

The protagonist of the Prologue, the Lar of the family, presents himself as a family member, installed in the house a long time ago and still a resident. He also defines himself as a major representative of the house in the sense of the *domicilium* of the *paterfamilias* and the central place of the family heritage. Obviously, the grandfather moved into the house in question, with his Lar who is still there in the third generation. That is why the Lar can show himself as an expression of the family memory.[4] In Roman times, one can inherit the Lares from one's father (while the *genius* is born and dies with the person he protects). Thus, when the son succeeds the miser in the role of *paterfamilias* ("A son succeeded him: he currently lives in the house"[5]), the Lar continues his office of divine guardian of the *familia*.

The Lares, a Legal Marker of the *Domicilium*?

We deduce from this fundamental passage that the transmission of the domicile implied the maintenance of the patron god of the *domus*: the Lar then remained in the kitchen hearth, his place of residence assigned within the house; he continued to live there when the house stayed in the family. One may even think, in the light of the Pompeian examples, that this type of direct passing on of the family house resulted in repainting the *lararium* in every generation. To maintain a house in the family fold meant to continue to worship the Lares of the family, who stayed at their previous location, sometimes even in their original form. This is obviously the meaning of the figurines made in perishable material that adorned the chapel of the so-called

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3 Plaut. *Aul.* prol. 2–8 : *Ego Lar sum familiaris ex hac familia / unde exeuntem me aspexistis. Hanc domum / iam multos annos est cum possideo et colo / patri auoque iam huius qui nunc hic habet. / Sed mihi auus huius obsecrans concredidit / thesaurum auri clam omnis: in medio foco / defodit, uenerans me ut id seruarem sibi.*

4 It is not surprising, therefore, that the Lares were among the gods of the lineage – *dis generis* – who received special honors during the *Caristia*, an annual family feast intended to celebrate the memory of the ancestors and to strengthen the cohesion of its members (Ov. *fast.* 2.5.617–38). Generally speaking, the domestic *sacra privata*, during which the Lares received the greatest attention, were specific to each family and normally excluded anyone from outside the *familia*. On the characteristics of the *sacra privata*: Maiuri 2013, 34–36 and Bassani 2017, 27–31.

5 Plaut. *Aul.* prol. 21: *Is ex se hunc reliquit qui hic nunc habitat filium*.

Fig. 1: The chapel of the so-called *imagines maiorum* installed in the peristyle of the house of the Menander (I 10, 4) (Photo: William Van Andringa © Ministero della Cultura/Parco archeologico di Pompei).

imagines maiorum installed in the peristyle of the house of the Menander[6] (I 10, 4; **Fig. 1**). This private *sacrarium* has been interpreted as a place for a cult of ancestors, but Flower showed rightly that there is no such a cult in the Roman period.[7] Instead of ancestors, the Lares and the Penates of ancestors could be worshipped in the form of wooden statuettes, as is indicated precisely in one Tibullus' passage: "Protect me, Lares of my fathers, it is you who have fed me when I was a child, and do not be ashamed to be cut in an old wood; this is how you lived in the ancient house of my grandfather".[8] This passage explains our wooden effigies placed in the chapel of the House of the Menander at Pompeii. Among these gods, we recognize Mercury; other figurines, in geometric shape such as the wooden Mercurius of Apuleius,[9] are difficult to identify. The ensemble may be seen as the Penates, the household pantheon with the Lares of the founder of the house of the Menander.

The same remark could be made regarding the *lararium* installed in the kitchen of house I 8, 18. On the wall, we find two painted Lares in their traditional posture while two crude effigies, originally made of wood, are placed in the niche: they obviously represent the Penates or the Lares of the father of the owner, who lived in the house in 79 CE (**Fig. 2**). The testamentary provisions were intended to ensure the continuity of the *nomen* and the family line of the deceased. The fact that the *heredes* undertook, by accepting all or part of the family property (*pecunia*) of the testator, to adopt (or preserve) the *sacra privata* of the deceased, is particularly revealing: domestic sanctuaries were constitutive of the family identity and were understood as an integral part of the patrimony of each Roman *familia*. To sacrifice, over the generations, to the same deities, in the same sacred space and with the same religious equipment, was this not symbolically the most effective way of maintaining family identity?

At any rate, the Lar of Plautus clearly raises the question of the relationship established in Roman times between the home (*domicilium*), the establishment of people and household gods. The whole house was under the tutelage of the Lares[10] assisted by the Penates (which are themselves the gods of the owner, usually composing a diversified pantheon, expressing the patronage of familial, economic and

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6 Bassani 2008, 172–73.

7 Flower 1996.

8 Tib. 1.10.15–18: *Sed patrii servate* Lares*: aluistis et idem, / cursarem vestros cum tener ante pedes. / Neu pudeat prisco vos esse e stipite factos: / sic veteris sedes incoluistis avi*.

9 Apul. *apol.* 61.

10 This formula of Ennius sums it up perfectly (Enn. *ann.* fragment 619): *vosque* Lares*, tectum nostrum qui funditus curant* ("and you, Lares, who take care of everything under our roof"). The Lares become collective gods in Imperial times (Dubourdieu 1989).

domestic activities).[11] This cohabitation between the *paterfamilias*, the members of the *familia* and domestic gods was so real that the house of a citizen was considered sacred by Cicero, in the sense that the house was the residence of the household gods celebrated in various places by regular rituals:[12] "There is nothing more sacred than the home of every citizen. It is the place of his altars, his hearths, his household gods, his sacrifices, his devotions, his ceremonies".[13] In this sense, the Lares of the family embodied the family order, which explains why some people threw their Lares into the street when they heard about the death of Germanicus:[14] the order of the family and the *domus*, institutionalized by the presence of the Lares, was broken by the premature death of Germanicus.

Fig. 2: The *lararium* installed in the kitchen of house I 8, 18 (Photo: Archivio of the Parco archeologico di Pompei © Ministero della Cultura).

We understand then how the Lares (like the Penates) by metonymy came to refer to the house in a very wide range of literary passages.[15] This use must not have been a simple poetic license, since some legal texts seem to show that the Lares could have served as a legal indicator of *domicilium*. On January 10, 383 CE, a constitution of the Emperor Gratian required the declaration (*professio*) of the entire patrimony, i.e. of all the landed estates including the *domicilium*, for the calculation of senators' taxes, using the formula *lar habitatioque uel sedes certae*.[16] Within the hierarchy of landed estates, the Lar would therefore be distinguished from *habitatio* or *sedes certae*, terms designating residence in the broad sense, and would symbolize *domicilium*. In an article of the *Code of Justinian* (10.40.7.1), temporary residence is distinguished from the *domicilium* made with the establishment of the Lares and the essentials of the master's business: *Et in eodem loco singulos habere domicilium non ambigitur, ubi quis larem rerumque ac fortunarum suarum summam constituit*.[17] In this

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11 Dumézil 1974, 347.

12 Ceremonies in honour of the Lares could be celebrated on a regular basis (Cato, *agr.* 143.2; Tib. 1.3.33–34; Mart. *epigr.* 3.58.22–23; Ov. *fast.* 2.617–38) or on the occasion of important events in the life of family members, for example at a birth (Plaut. *Rud.* 1207), a marriage (Plaut. *Aul.* 23–27; 384–87; Nonn. Lindsay p. 852), an anniversary (Ov. *trist.* 5.5.10–12), from mourning (Cic. *leg.* 2.22.55), to the passage to adulthood, both for boys (Fest. Lindsay p. 273; Petron. 60.8; Porph. *Comm. in Q. Hor. Flac. in sermonum* 1.5.65–66) and for girls (Pseudo-Acron, *Comm. in Q. Hor. Flac. in sermonum* 1.5.65–66), on the occasion of a manumission for a new freedman (Hor. *sat.* 1.5.65–66), before a departure for war (Tib. 1.10.13–29) or at the end of military service (Ov. *trist.* 4.8.21–22).

13 Cic. *dom*. 41.109: *Quid est sanctius, quid omni religione munitius quam domus unius cuiusque ciuium? Hic arae sunt, hic foci, hic di penates, hic sacra, religiones, caerimoniae continentur*.

14 Suet. *Cal.* 5.

15 Catull. 31.7–10; Cic. *Att.* 16.4.2; Cic. *Verr.* 3.27 and 3.125; Hor. *sat.* 1.2.56; Hor. *epist.* 1.7.58–59 and 2.2.51; Mart. *epigr.* 10.61.5–6; Ov. *fast.* 3.242; Plaut. *Merc.* 834–37; Sall. *Catil.* 20.11; Tert. *nat.* 1.10.20–21; Val. Fl. 4.45.

16 Cod. *Theod.* 4.2.13: *Quiq(ue) consularitatis insignia fu[erit adsecutus, digni]tatis obeundae atq(ue) exercendae a[dministrationis] huius copiam non habeat, nisi prop[ria adnotatione] digesserit [se] senatorium nomen ag[noscere et larem] habitationemq(ue) vel sedes certas in [provincia atque oppido] conlocasse nihilque amplius quam [certum professio]nis modum varias intra provi[ncias possidere.*

17 "Undoubtedly each one has his *domicilium* where he has established his Lar, as well as the bulk of his property and wealth."

definition of home, the hearth of the kitchen is obviously full of meaning: it is both the main altar of the Lares and the centre of the Roman house.[18]

The *domicilium* is defined by the main house of the *paterfamilias*.[19] Chosen by the *dominus* who resides there permanently, the *domicilium* is the administrative seat of his patrimony: this is where he exhibits his books of accounting, and the place where he officially established his business, but it is also from there that he manages his civic affairs (political, legal, social, religious). Since it is in essence closely linked to the *negotiatio* and the activities of the cities, the *domicilium* is most often urban.[20] This is exactly what the tomb of C. Vestorius Priscus at Pompeii shows.[21] One of the paintings of the *podium* of the funerary altar shows the deceased at the entrance of his *domus*, probably in front of his accounts displayed in the *tablinum* (**Fig. 3**). This depiction is anything but an evocation of the domicile of the deceased, considered as essential in the construction of the social memory of Vestorius Priscus, a very promising member of the elite who died very young, aged twenty-two. He was already the head of the house, and that is what his mother wanted to depict when ordering the paintings of the tomb. Another painting of the same monument shows the home silverware (*argentum*), which belonged to the movable property often passed down from generation to generation with the servile *familia*.[22] Linked to this was also the *arca*, the safety box, placed in

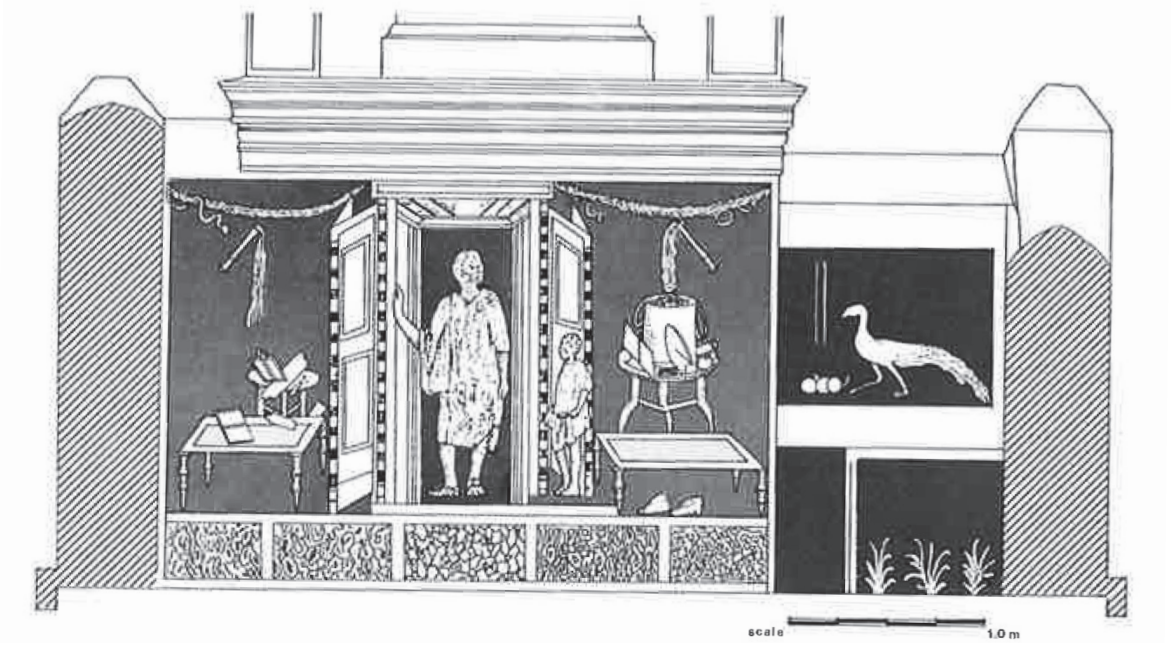

Fig. 3: Tomb of C. Vestorius Priscus at Pompeii. Painting of the podium of the funerary altar showing the deceased at the entrance of his domus (After Clarke 2003, fig. 104).

18 Serv. *Aen.* 3.134: *quidam focos* Lares *hoc and per domiciliary tradunt* (see also Serv. *Aen.* 1.730, who distinguishes the kitchen hearth from the atrium which, he says, is the temple of the Lares).

19 Thomas 1996, 34–53; Dubouloz 2011, 133–39.

20 Ulp. *dig.* 50.1, *Ad municipalem et de incolis* 27: *Si quis negotia sua non in colonia, sed in municipio semper agit, in illo uendit, emit, contrahit, in eo foro, balineo, spectaculis utitur, ibi festos dies celebrat, omnibus denique municipii commodis, nullis coloniarum fruitur, ibi magis habere domicilium uidetur, quam ubi colendi causa deuersatur* ("if a private individual conducts his business not in the territory, but always in the *municipium*, if it is there that he carries out sales, purchases, concludes contracts, if he makes use of the forum, baths, places of entertainment, if it is there that he celebrates feast days, finally if he enjoys all the advantages of the *municipium* and none of those of the territories, it is considered that it is there that his domicile is located, rather than in the place where he resides to take care of his lands").

21 Clarke 2003, 187–92.

22 Dubouloz 2011, 63.

Fig. 4: Domus of Obellius Firmus. The safe was located in the west wing of the atrium, under the gaze of the Lares and the Penates (Photo: William Van Andringa © Ministero della Cultura/Parco archeologico di Pompei).

the atrium of a few aristocratic houses of the Vesuvian area. At Pompeii, in the *domus* of Obellius Firmus, the safe was located in the west wing of the atrium, under the gaze of the Lares and the Penates whose shrine was located in the northwest corner (**Fig. 4**). The atrium of the House of Siricus (VII 1, 25, 46.47) contained the family's safe, not far from a cupboard that was probably used to store the statuettes of gods found in the house. In Herculaneum, the *aedicula* of house V 7 is installed in the north-west corner of the atrium, a few metres from the *arca*, which was located against the south wall of the room. In the vast villa of San Marco in Stabiae, the safe was displayed in the atrium, near the chapel of the household gods.[23] The Lares are in fact generally responsible for the protection of the family patrimony.[24]

Apart from the traditional client system (for example in the case of *sodalitates* without a family nucleus, such as certain housing communities), the ability to settle Lares permanently in a place of residence seems to have been synonymous with access to property ownership and therefore with a certain financial and social autonomy. This, at any rate, is what emerges from an anecdote reported by Horace,[25] in which L. Marcius

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23 These examples echo the excerpt from Plautus' prologue quoted above (Plaut. *Aul.* prol. 7–8: *thesaurum (...) in medio foco / defodit, venerans me ut id servarem sibi*; see also Plaut. *Aul.* 823: *ubi id est aurum? In arca apud me*) as well as the comedy *Querolus*, where the *aurum* is also hidden in a *sacrarium*, in the atrium of the house (Rut. Nam., *Querol.* 3.46; see Bassani 2008, 55–56).

24 Dubouloz 2011, 103. The close relationship between the Lares and the *pecunia* of the family is also found in the law of succession: an heir, by accepting the property (*pecunia*) of the testator, undertook to make his own, if this was not already the case, the *sacra privata* of the deceased.

25 Hor. *epist.* 1.7.58–59: *(...) abi, quaere et refer, unde domo, quis, / cuius fortunae, quo sit patre quove patrono. / It, redit et narrat Volteium nomine Menam, / praeconem, tenui censu, sine crimine, notum / et properare loco et cessare, et quaerere et uti, /*

Philippus, consul at the beginning of the first century BCE, asks his slave, Demetrius, to investigate the identity of an individual seen in a barber's shop. The fact that the individual (a town crier by the name of Volteius Mena) had a *lar certus*, i.e. a fixed Lar, answers the question about his potential dependency (*quo sit patre quove patrono*). Philippus understands the answer given by Demetrius as an indication of the town crier's autonomy, since the consul decides to make him his client. Volteius Mena belongs to the independent plebeians, plebeians with a humble income, but whose degree of social, legal and financial autonomy allows them, possibly in association with individuals of similar status, to have access to home ownership.[26]

As a consequence of the close relationship established between the official home and the household gods, the Lares and the Penates were associated with the fate of the house. Thus, the Lares travelled with the *paterfamilias* whenever he moved to found a new *domicilium*. This idea came from Aeneas, who "transferred his Lares under a new roof".[27] It was customary to give a wreath of flowers to the Lares when they moved into their new home.[28] Statues of deities were sometimes found in the bags of Pompeians trying to escape from the disaster of 79 CE.[29] The Penates kept a guardian role even outside the house and could accompany certain members of the family on their travels. It is probably in this sense that we must understand the religious furnishings found in some wrecks, in particular the small portable lead *aediculae*, associated with divinities (Eros, Venus, Priapus, Mercury), which were on board a ship that sank off the coast of Comacchio.[30] Tibullus speaks of a hospitable land called the Lares;[31] the African shepherd carries everything with him, house, Lar, weapons and dog (*tectum, larem, arma, canem*) says Virgil.[32] Domestic gods also define hospitality:[33] Verres violates the sacred right of hospitality by pilfering an ornate dish devoted to household gods that embodies the hospitality of the householder. One moved in with his Penates and Lares and moved back into the new home. In this sense, the passage mentioning Plautus' Charin seems rather to illustrate exceptional behaviour, that of an individual who wishes to draw a line under his past: having abhorred Attica, Charin recommends his family and his fortune to the family gods and says that, for his part, he will go elsewhere and recreate a new life; it is somewhat as if a new identity was passing through new Penates: his destiny was then to seek "other household gods, another Lar, another city, another city-state".[34] Such a view has a strong impact on our perception of the domestic religious landscape at Pompeii and Herculaneum.

Presence of the Lares and Occupation of a House

The presence of the Lares is first of all supposed to give an accurate indication of the occupation of a house by a *paterfamilias* or a member of his family. The texts, as we have seen, tell us that the Lares were estab-

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gaudentem parvisque sodalibus et lare certo / et ludis et post decisa negotia Campo ("Go, find out and come back and tell me what this man's homeland is, his name, his situation, his father or boss. The slave goes, comes back and says his name is Volteius Mena, a town crier, of meager but blameless fame, known for working and resting on purpose, for knowing how to win and enjoy, living contentedly with the society of little people, a fixed abode, games and the Field of Mars when his business is done").

26 Dubouloz 2011, 328–29, in particular n. 86.

27 Ov. *fast.* 4.802: *transferri iussos in nova tecta* Lares (see also Verg. *Aen.* 1.371ff; 2.717ff).

28 Plaut. *Trin.* 39–41 : *Larem corona nostrum decorari volo. / Uxor, venerare ut nobis haec habitatio / bona fausta felix fortunataque eveniat*.

29 Boyce 1937, 12; Van Andringa 2009, 219.

30 Berti 1990, 70–72 ; 205–10.

31 Tib. 2.5.42.

32 Verg. *georg.* 3.343–45.

33 Cic. *Verr.* 2.4.48.

34 Plaut. *Merc.* 836–37.

lished in the domicile of the father of the family, but a passage from Cato explains that the *paterfamilias* also found a familiar Lar in each of the *villae* he owned.[35] These rural estates were cultivated (and inhabited) by his dependents, mainly slaves, and administered by a intendant (*vilicus*), also a member of the *familia* of the *dominus*; it was the *vilicus* who, with his wife (*vilica*), was in charge, in the absence of the *paterfamilias*, of the domestic religious ceremonies involving, in particular, offerings to the family Lar.[36] It therefore seems quite probable that, in a similar way, the *lararia* found in a good number of places of trade in Vesuvian cities indicate not only that they were inhabited, but also that, very often, they belonged to the estates, this time urban, of a head of family and had to be cultivated by servants (slaves or freedmen) belonging to the *familia urbana* of the *paterfamilias*.[37] According to a graffito found in the *viridarium*, a Pompeian bakery with a shop (IX 3, 19-20) was inhabited in the last years of the colony by a certain Papirius Sabinius.[38] In addition to rooms for baking and selling bread, the *pistrina* had living areas on the ground floor and first floor. Here too, the Lares are present: accompanied by the *Genius paterfamiliaris* and the snakes, they appear next to a niche facing the millstones, a representative equipment of the economic activity of the place. A second *sacrarium* was set up in a more residential area of the building: in the *viridarium* with benches, a small portable marble altar was found and its western wall was decorated with a representation of a snake and a probable personification of the Sarno. This sacred space was probably more suitable for religious celebrations to be attended by the entire household who lived and worked in the bakery. Also in Pompeii, a food shop established not far from Porta Stabia (I 1, 8–9) included residential areas. The *sacrarium* of the kitchen, although it is based on the traditional motif of the *lararia* paintings, seems to indicate that it belonged to the urban domains of a *dominus*. Indeed, under the traditional sacrifice scene by the *Genius paterfamiliaris* assisted by a *tibicen* and a *camillus*, framed by two Lares, under which two snakes stand, there is a depiction of an individual, a slave named Hermes, preparing to empty the contents of an *amphora* into a semi-buried *dolium*. This is most likely the owner of the restaurant, a slave employed by the owner of the place of business to manage the trade. In this case, Hermes enjoyed a certain autonomy, lived in his house and ran his own business, but he remained closely dependent on the master's authority, as is evidenced by the daily presence of the Lares *familiaris* and the *Genius paterfamiliaris*.

Counting the Lares would make it possible to estimate the number of official families living in Pompeii in 79, while the city went through a significant crisis.[39] However, a specific study done in the *insula* I 8 seems to confirm that the low number of the Lares could indicate a partial abandonment of the area, in the period preceding the eruption: the domestic gods are present only in four houses of the *insula*.[40] A painting showing the Lares associated with the *genius* of the *paterfamilias* is located in house I 8, 14, at the kitchen entrance (**Fig. 5**). The state of the painting seems to indicate that it was made shortly before the eruption of Vesuvius; in any case, it gives us a tangible proof of the occupation of the house by a family represented by the *paterfamilias*. The sacred topography of the house might be completed by a niche located in the

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35 Cato, *agr.* 2. The presence of Lares *familiares* in the *villae* is a well attested practice, thanks to a series of archaeological discoveries (see for example Bassani 2011 and 2012).

36 Cato, *agr.* 143.

37 The belonging to the *praedia urbana* of a *dominus* seems probable when the Lares accompany the central figure of the *Genius paterfamiliaris*, which is after all the most frequent representation of Pompeian *lararia*. Excluding, of course, the questions of transmission and conservation of material data, the Lares present without the *Genius paterfamiliaris* could, on the other hand, indicate a form of autonomy from a traditional family nucleus, in the manner of the figure of Volteius Mena evoked by Horace (see above).

38 *CIL* IV 5065: *Hic domus Papiriu Sabinium (sic)*.

39 Van Andringa 2013, 244–61.

40 The program I 8 is supervised by Philippe Borgard, CNRS.

Fig. 5: Painting showing the Lares associated with the *genius* of the *paterfamilias* located in house I 8, 14, at the kitchen entrance (Photo: Archivio del Parco archeologico di Pompei © Ministero della Cultura).

triclinium: it was indeed common to make a toast to the gods who were invited to the banquet.[41]

The well-known house I 8, 8 was also occupied, as is shown by the presence of the Lares. However there is a difference regarding the location of the *lararium*. It is located not in the house, but in the open front shop on the street of the Abundance (**Fig. 6**). Another difference concerns the gods associated with the two Lares and the *genius* of the *paterfamilias*. We find Bacchus and Mercury, two gods with a specific relationship with the family business. The gods gathered in the same painting indicate that the merchant lived also in the house; its living quarters were displayed at the back of the shop. The presence in the shop of the protecting gods of the household, the *genius* of the *paterfamilias* accompanied by the Lares, reminds us that commercial spaces are also domestic spaces, but above all, it indicates that the manager was also the *paterfamilias*. This situation could explain why we do not find a *lararium* inside the house, in the atrium or the peristyle (the niche located in the room E is not a shrine). Clearly, the *lararium* of the house was deliberately installed in the shop. This interpretation may be confirmed by the personality of the gods associated with the protectors of the *domus*. The first is Mercury, who ensures earnings and profits, since he is the patron of lucrative activities.[42] The second is Bacchus, the god of ecstasy, who was active throughout the chain of the wine production, from wine growing to marketing and consumption in banquets.[43] The two deities accompanying the Lares acted as the patrons of the activities of the store, clearly focused on selling wine, as is evidenced by the many *amphorae* found in the back room and throughout the house (especially in the peristyle and the summer *triclinium*). One final note is the presence of a second panel covered over by the first one (we can recognize the pediment of the façade). This re-plastering of the shrine reflects either the continuity of a family home, or the change of ownership. In the little street sloping gently to the south, there is an entrance marked by a painted panel, which allows us to identify the house of a ceramic entrepreneur (I, 8, 10; **Fig. 7**). The pots were not produced there (there are no kilns) but the presence of the Lares indicates the home of an entrepreneur. The Lares are at their traditional location, on the wall at the entrance to the kitchen, confirming that the house was inhabited in the generation before the eruption. The presence of another painting, very

41 As can be seen in Petron. 60.

42 The 1600 coins found in one of the *dolia* are a clear testimony to the intervention of the god who multiplies profits!

43 Van Andringa 2009, 306–14.

Fig. 6: Household gods of house I 8, 8 (Photo: William Van Andringa © Ministero della Cultura/Parco archeologico di Pompei).

faded, in a different place, to the left of the same entrance, certainly shows a prior *lararium* and may refer to a different owner, who had left the house. The same location, the kitchen, is dedicated to the Lares in *domus* I 8, 18 (see fig. 2). The gods frame a niche opposite to the entrance, which contained two wooden figurines[44] associated with a portable altar. Again, the state of the painting suggests that the house hosted a family in 79 CE.

That is all in the case of the *insula* I 8. One may ask why the Lares do not appear in other houses and shops of the neighbourhood. It is possible, of course, that some figurines of the gods were taken away before or after the eruption, but this does not fit in with the general evidence of abandonment of houses: there are no clear traces of occupation in houses I 8, 17 (Four Styles); I 8, 2 and I 8, 5. In house I 8, 5, facing the street of Abundance, the very faded painting of the Lares, mentioned in the excavation notebook, seems to indicate that the house was not inhabited before the eruption, and this seems to be confirmed by the furniture registered during the excavations. It seems that this situation was fairly general throughout the *insula*, and this ultimately explains the absence of the Lares, the protectors of the domestic territory. This specific example indicates that the presence of the Lares may give some indication about the occupation of an area of Pompeii, shortly before the destruction of the city.[45]

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44 Identified with the old ancestral Penates (see above).

45 Unless one holds that the housing units without a *lararium* were rented: in this case, it makes sense not to find a permanently installed domestic sanctuary.

Fig. 7: Entrance of I 8, 10 marked by a painted panel presenting the production of ceramic vases under the patronage of Minerva (Photo: Archivio of the Parco archeologico di Pompei © Ministero della Cultura).

Sacraria and Changes of Ownership

When we consider that when the owner of a house, like Aeneas, moved, he left with his Lares to settle in the new home, we may wonder whether we have traces of this phenomenon in the houses of the Vesuvian cities. At Pompeii, in house V 2, d, Boyce registered two *lararia* in the east wall of the atrium (a single serpent with altar and offerings) and in the first floor of the rear room.[46] The erosion of the south wall of the atrium revealed a third *lararium*, a niche decorated with coloured flowers, which had been walled up (**Fig. 8**). The existence of the disused niche certainly implies a change of owner when the house was redecorated (the new plaster covered the niche of the *lararium*). This kind of operation was perfectly admissible: since the domestic shrines were private, they were not consecrated by a magistrate and were therefore not 'sacred' from the legal point of view.[47] On the contrary, they were part of the patrimony (*pecunia*) of the *paterfamiliaris*, who could therefore *a priori* arrange them as he wished. In practice, what happened to a sacred space when the owner of the building in which the *sacrarium* was established changed? Was it kept, altered or condemned when it was moved, sold, donated, bequeathed or inherited? Textual sources provide very little information about the fate of private *sacraria* during the history of a building.[48] The Pompeian house V 2, d shows that the owner of the house[49] could decide to wall up the niche of a *sacrarium*.[50] This example is far from being a *unicum,* and several archaeological testimonies, in Pompeii and Herculaneum, prove that it was relatively frequent to condemn a religious arrangement. Even if such a procedure is often difficult to specify, and

46 Boyce 1937, n° 101 and 102.

47 Fest. Lindsay p. 321; *dig*. 1.8.6.3. At most, they could be 'regarded as sacred' (Fest., Lindsay, p. 424). This shows that the categories of public law and sacred law were not always in practice always perceptible individuals.

48 Among the imposing corpus of legal sources relating to real estate ownership gathered by Dubouloz (2011), no mention is ever made of religious arrangements.

49 It is difficult to specify in this case whether it is the former owner or the new owner who is acting.

50 Sabinus' clause, relating to contracts of sale, that "Nothing that is sacred or religious may be sold!" (*dig.* 18.1.22: *si quid sacri, uel religiosi est, eius uenit nihil*), therefore did not apply to domestic *sacraria*. On the inalienable character of the *res sacrae*, see Thomas 2002.

Fig. 8: Atrium of house V 2, d: the walled *lararium* (Photo: William Van Andringa © Ministero della Cultura/Parco archeologico di Pompei).

although the reasons for such a transformation generally remain an enigma, the study of the construction sometimes permits us to propose some hypotheses.

In a few cases, the condemnation of a religious arrangement seems to be linked to a change in the activity of the place, possibly associated with a change of ownership of the establishment. In this respect, the example of the *garum* production workshop of the Umbricii (I 12, 8) seems quite significant. Indeed, while maintaining residential spaces, the laboratory was installed in an old dwelling in the last decade of Pompeii's life. At that time it had several sacred spaces: a *lararium* was painted over the kitchen hearth, and the *viridarium*, where the *amphorae* and the semi-buried *dolia* containing the *garum* were stored, had an altar at the northern end of the *pluteus*. Although the *lararium* and altar may have been built before the workshop was installed, it should be noted that these facilities were maintained when the precious fish sauce was produced and stored there. However, a niche in the west wall of the atrium – probably a *sacrarium* as well – was condemned: this niche, although walled up, still shows a thin plaster edging that adorned its side walls. The possibly associated decoration is, of course, not visible; likewise, the absence of plaster preserved all around the niche makes it impossible to ensure that it was used for religious purposes. Nevertheless, its location, at the centre of the west wall of the atrium of the pre-existing dwelling, usual for domestic chapels, leaves little doubt about the original function of this construction. It seems conceivable to date the condemnation of this niche to the time when the atrium and the vestibule of the former house underwent major alterations to allow the installation of the three spaces in the façade, at the time when the building

was converted into a *garum* workshop.[51] It was probably the change of ownership of the building (more than a simple change of activity) that caused the disuse of this probable original *sacrarium*. Unfortunately, while the *tituli picti* found on different containers of the workshop allow us to assume that the owner of the establishment was A. Umbricius Scaurus, for whom many *liberti* worked, the identity of the family occupying the pre-existing dwelling remains unknown.

Alongside these first examples, there is a whole series of walled niches whose condemnation seems to be linked, once again, to a change of ownership. However, this change of *dominus* seems to be reflected, not through a change in the activities carried out within the building in question, but through an evolution of the building (an opening to new 'annexed' spaces or, conversely, the closing of a door, the addition of a dividing wall, etc.). Not far from the Porta Marina, building VII 15, 4.5 was the result of the fusion of two buildings (one at n. 4, the other at n. 5), forming, at the time of the eruption, a unitary whole, judging by the uniform paintwork on the façade and the various internal openings. It included a food store, customer reception areas and residential spaces, especially on the upper floor. In addition to a painting of Mercury on the pillar against which the sales counter leant, a sacred space had been set up in the *viridarium* at the back of the establishment. This consisted of a rectangular niche, preceded by a masonry altar, dug into the north wall of the courtyard and framed by two large uprights of red plaster on which snakes were painted. At the bottom of the niche, a female figure (?), identified by G. Fiorelli as Libera because of the ivy crown above her, was lying on a bed, sheltered by a tent and with a table before her, on which three glasses were placed, an echo, once again unusual, of the activity of the place. The gradual fall of the plastering revealed two niches of similar dimensions and located at the same height from the ground; these 'twin niches' most probably correspond to an earlier *sacrarium*, judging by similar arrangements, in principle intended for the Lares on the one hand and the *Genius paterfamiliaris* on the other.[52] Furthermore, the location of this previous *sacrarium* (in a *viridarium*) would not be surprising. This example is interesting in the sense that it seems to be one of the few cases where it could be said that the change of domestic chapel was accompanied by a change of honoured deities. If our hypotheses are correct, then we would have the manifestation of the departure of a first *familia* with its domestic deities. At that time, the new owner, instead of reusing the old *sacrarium*, would create a new sacred space for his own family deities, not unrelated to his spheres of activity. However, it is impossible to say whether it was the departing *familia* who, possibly during a specific ceremony, condemned the niches of their chapel, or whether it was the new family who, on settling in, walled up the previous niches to build over their *sacrarium*. In any case, the symbol is strong and meaningful: it would be a matter of erasing the hold of the previous domestic deities, topographical markers of the belonging of a building to the heritage (*pecunia*) of a *familia*, in order to install other family gods, which now testify to the attachment of the building to the urban estates of the new owners. Similarly, in house IX 1, 29, we find two niches walled up in the atrium (**Fig. 9**). The reason seems quite clear when observing the construction of the large *lararium* in the atrium of house IX 1, 22. In the generation before the eruption, house IX 1, 22 was enlarged with *domus* IX 1, 29. At this time, the Lares of IX 1, 29 moved away with the previous owner.

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51 The destination of these rooms remains uncertain. (Were they used for selling the product? For storage before shipment?) In any case, it should be noted that the easternmost one, with a grooved threshold and open, not to the street, but to the entrance room of the building, had a niche in its north wall, which was functional at the time of the eruption. Is it a new *sacrarium*, built within a commercial space to replace the old niche in the atrium that was associated with the previous dwelling? There is nothing preserved to confirm this hypothesis.

52 The twin niches that have revealed paintings of deities systematically know this distribution. One of the most beautiful examples is probably the underground *lararium* in VII 2, 20, but such a layout is found elsewhere in Pompeii.

Fig. 9: *Lararia* of house IX 1, 29 (Photo: William Van Andringa © Ministero della Cultura/Parco archeologico di Pompei).

Fig. 10: *Lararium* walled during the construction of the temple of Fortuna Augusta built in the Augustan era (Photo: William Van Andringa © Ministero della Cultura).

While these examples are still hypotheses, the change of ownership is proven in one particular case. In Augustan times, M. Tullius gave to the city part of his *praedia urbana* (*solo*) and financed (*pequnia sua*) the erection of a public temple dedicated to Fortuna Augusta.[53] The consecration of such a temple requires first the passage of private land into public property.[54] Instead, the excavation revealed the existence of a walled niche (**Fig. 10**), probably an ancient *sacrarium*, in the small room located to the east, behind the temple. The message was clear: Tullius' family deities could not remain in this chapel, since the land had passed into the hands of the municipality, before being ceded, this time forever, to the Augustan Fortune. These changes of ownership had to be accompanied, at least in some cases, by ritual ceremonies, but these are rarely highlighted. At the temple of Fortuna Augusta, the analysis of carpological remains forming the upper filling of one of the post holes related to the construction of the temple revealed that a specific ritual, involving the burning of a set of fruits on a hearth, marked the end of the construction site.[55] Only this kind of observation, coupled with a fine analysis of the stratigraphy and the construction, will make it possible to highlight the religious practices, or at least rituals, that were associated with a change of ownership and to know the fate of sacred spaces in a domestic context.

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53 *CIL* X 820: *M(arcus) Tullius M(arci) f(ilius) d(uum)v(ir) i(ure) d(icundo) ter(tium) quinq(uennalis) augur tr(ibunus) mil(itum) / a pop(ulo) aedem Fortunae August(ae)* ***solo et peq(unia) sua***. The excavations carried out on the temple and its annexes by the archaeological team of W. Van Andringa from 2008 to 2013 revealed that the sanctuary was built on a group of houses and shops dating from the Republican period and that they had been levelled. (Van Andringa 2011, 364–65; Van Andringa 2015).

54 Thomas 2002, 1437.

55 Van Andringa 2011, 365.

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Gods and Cult Objects in Roman Houses. Notes for a Methodological Research*

Maddalena Bassani

Introduction

How important ceremonials, rituals and their 'material' elements were in Roman society is widely known, and attested by a rich bibliography.[1] However, in the case of private ceremonies the complexity of data is such that it is sometimes hard to fully grasp the significance of some objects found in domestic worship spaces. In fact, whereas it is easy to understand the cult function of mobile artefacts such as *arulae*, incense burners, tripods or figurines and portraits, it is more difficult to trace the framework for that multiplicity of seemingly common use objects that can be found in private contexts, with a clearly ceremonial function.

Ancient man lived in a constant dialogue with the deities, with an approach that, for the Romans at least, could border on superstition: this aspect is well described by Polybius in a famous passage of his *Historiae*, where he explicitly speaks of *deisidaimonía*:[2] "To such an extraordinary height is [superstition] carried among them (*scilic*. the Romans), both in private and public business, that nothing could exceed it. [...] in my opinion their object is to use it as a check upon the common people. [...] seeing that every multitude is fickle, and full of lawless desires, unreasoning anger, and violent passion, the only resource is to keep them in check by mysterious terrors".

Actually, this idea of superstition must be interpreted in a wider sense, as a need to arrange, pace and regulate through rituals, words and objects, too, every moment of the life of Roman men and women who, from birth to death, could resort to a plurality of divine figures to protect themselves from failures and calamities.

The number of these divinities must have been enormous, and the loss of Varro's books on Roman cults and rituals created a great gap in our knowledge of this aspect.[3] However, thanks to specific studies,[4] it has been possible to retrace identities and spheres of action for many members of the Roman *pantheon*, and even to understand that each deity had been created to establish a cosmic order so as to regulate all aspects of life. Furthermore, to codify so many deities and as many powers, specific texts were written, which could also be consulted when needed: besides pontifical books, we have to remember *indigitamenta*, i.e. books

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* I would like to dedicate this article to prof. Mario Torelli, recently deceased, with whom I discussed the paper and who gave me priceless advice: to him go my affectionate thoughts. I would also like to thank the staff of Institutum Romanum Finlandiae for the scientific management.

1 Scheid 1983; 2007a; about the ritual in the Roman world see in partic. Scheid 2007b, 40–63, with previous bibliography; about the concept of polymorphism and orthopraxis see King 2003.

2 Polyb. 6.56.7–11, ed. by D. Musti, BUR 2002.

3 Varro, *Antiquitatum rerum divinarum libri*.

4 Schilling 1979; Scheid 1983. For the cult of Lares in the Roman house see Giacobello 2008; for local deities in the Roman *Pantheon* see Van Andringa 2011; see also the article of W. Van Andringa in this volume.

containing the names and explanations of the gods, along with the *formulae* to pray to them.[5] There were of course the so-called major deities, coinciding with the Roman *pantheon*, but there were also many other so-called minor gods, each one with a name denoting their sphere of action. It is precisely these less 'famous' deities that are interesting to observe: not just because they were part of the Roman divine framework, but also because they could be invoked in the daily rituals of every family, to obtain protection from dangers, diseases, and failures.

The purpose of this contribution is thus firstly to examine some examples of mobile artefacts, dating from between the Augustan age and the early Empire, which at first glance appear as commonplace objects but, having been found inside private shrines, could represent the result of a ritual ceremony. We will attempt to interpret them thanks to literary evidence, not only in reference to the 'main' divinities, but mostly considering those 'secondary' deities who might have been relevant protagonists of Roman families' daily routine. This is all the more true during the Augustan age, when the *princeps* began a great revival of archaic and sometimes forgotten rituals and festivities, useful in codifying and legitimizing his power.[6]

In the second and final part, we will examine some items of the better-known and much quoted class of private worship materials, the so-called *lararium* statuettes: despite being a set of artefacts which have been widely studied,[7] I believe some hints derived from literary sources can offer further areas of future investigation.

Of course, this contribution only presents a suggestion for a method of analysis, that may be later re-thought, but it could perhaps be useful in highlighting the need to consider as many elements as possible in the attempt to retrace the ritual sphere of *sacra privata* in the Roman age.

The Houses, their *Sacraria* and the Objects Found Inside

I believe it is useful to start from carefully-excavated archaeological contexts, in order to discuss private worship spaces, where there was a precise record of the set of finds; I have chosen four examples from the Vesuvian area, because it is a well-documented context, but it is not the only area with interesting points, as we will see.

The dwellings are the House of Ceii (I 16, 15), the House of the Wine-maker (IX 9, 6–7.10) in Pompei, and, in Boscoreale, the villas in Fondo Zurlo and Fondo D'Acunzo.

The first house (I 16, 15) belonged to the ancient Samnite family of Ceii (second cent. BCE), as the epigraphs on the outside wall of the house testify (**Fig. 1**).[8] One of the last members of the *gens*, a L. Ceius Secundus, running up for the post of aedile around 76 CE, had his house decorated with paintings connected to Isis, as can be seen in the winter *triclinium* and in garden *h*. Precisely this wide, partly uncovered space was overlooked by the small family *sacrarium*, room *g* (ca. 2.42 x 2.27 m), by means of a window flanked by two ionic semi-columns. Its interior also contains paintings of fourth style connected to Isis: on the walls we can in fact perceive cupids bearing Isis-related objects, such as a *situla*, a rose crown, a tambourine, and a drinking horn. A lot of everyday objects were collected inside, as can be seen in **Table 1**, like a small hatchet (14 cm) and a small pickaxe (23 cm), but also some valuable artefacts, such as fragments of a bell-shaped crystal goblet (12 cm in diameter, 13 cm tall), and wooden money boxes. These objects, as will be seen, may

5 Perfigli 2004.

6 Scheid 2007b, 45.

7 Adamo Muscettola 1984; Kaufmann-Heinimann 1998. See in this volume the article by Ria Berg about hairpins.

8 See Bassani 2008, 216–17, with previous bibliography.

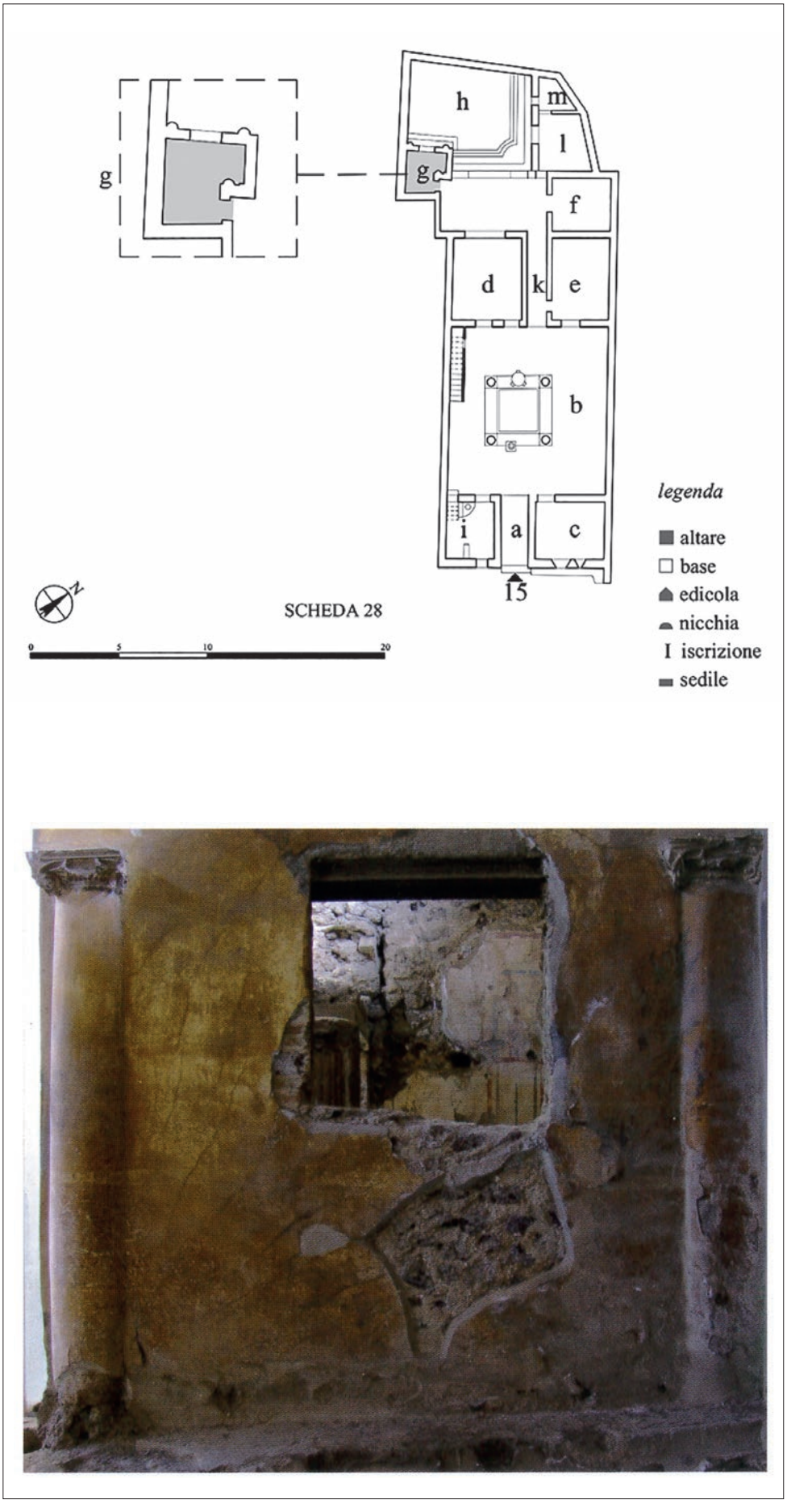

Fig. 1: Pompei, map of the Casa dei Ceii (I 6, 15) and photo of the external wall of *sacrarium g* (After Bassani 2008, 216–17 © Ministero della Cultura).

be indicators of a ritual connected to those above-mentioned minor deities, although a short time after the decoration the *sacrarium* was turned into storage space.

The second dwelling and its worship space feature some interesting elements: in the Wine-maker's house (IX 9, 6–7.10), so-called for the owner's probable business of producing and selling wine (first cent. CE),[9] there was an outbuilding, *q* (3.11 x 3.45 m), at the back end of the large garden, *p*, which had initially served as a kitchen (**Fig. 2**). At some point, however, this building was transformed into a family shrine: a bench on two sides was added, as well as three arched *aediculae*, and an altar in front of the back-wall niche, painted with vegetal motifs. Numerous objects were found, possibly connected to worshipping activities (see **Table 1**): plates, glasses, vases, bottles, etc., but also a female statuette and some lanterns. In the dwelling, though, there were other cult spaces, such as an altar in front of the niche in passage *m*.

The other two contexts are two suburban *villae*, excavated in the 1800s and well-documented in *Notizie degli Scavi*, but later interred. The first is a rustic villa near Boscoreale, in Contrada Giuliana–Fondo Zurlo (**Fig. 3**), dated from the first cent. BCE on the basis of some coin finds, and only partly excavated.[10] In fact, it must have developed southwards too, where a porticoed courtyard *D* existed, perhaps devoted to the residence's *pars urbana*, while the investigated northern part was mainly devoted to production activities. Right in front of one of the two surviving columns from the peristyle, at a slightly lower level, one could access shrine *A* (3 x 3.5 mt), with a window on the outside: inside, there were various structural elements for ritual performances, besides numerous objects. Upon entering, on the right, there was a rectangular niche with a shelf, and on the opposite side there was a stonework parallelepiped pedestal (*e*); then, contiguous, a circular altar (*d*) and a long base (*c*), with traces of wood on the left side. The room, as reported at the time of discovery, was painted with squares divided by dark-red strips, and a golden candle-holder topped with a ball could be seen in the middle area, flanked by stylised swans; other paintings were also present on the altar and the pedestals: the former was decorated with festoons, the latter with reddish plaster. Like in the wine-maker's house, some saucers, a lock, balm glass bottles, and some lanterns were found here as well (see **Table 1**); moreover, an earthenware basin was recovered from the altar (52 cm in diameter), with traces of ash. In the villa there was a second worship space: in portico *E* a niche was found, fitted with a bronze lantern and painted with the Lares, the *Genius* and a piper at an altar.

The last dwelling was excavated still at Boscoreale, in Fondo D'Acunzo (**Fig. 4**) and it was generically dated from the first century CE.[11] Like in the previous house, here as well the worship space 12 (4.5 x 3.5 m) was located corresponding to the service area, being accessible from the kitchen 8, with a window on the outside; it too was fitted with two pedestals: one, (*z*), made up of a shelf supported by small wooden beams; the other, (*y*) made of stonework, situated on the back wall, was possibly an altar. The importance in the discovery of this room dedicated to the family worship lies in the quantity of objects found inside (see **Table 1**): seven bronze statuettes portraying Jupiter, Isis, the *Genius*, Neptune, Faun and Helios (but according to other interpretations the last three could represent another Jupiter and Castor and Pollux);[12] and most of all a myriad of other artefacts, mostly made of glass and clay (little bottles, saucers, oil bottles, etc.) but also precious materials: for example, a bronze *simpulum* and a *situla*, a carnelian gem and a golden ribbon, a porphyry ointment bottle and some objects in ivory (a spoon, a phallus, a pooch and two dice),

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9 See Bassani 2008, 230–31, with previous bibliography.

10 See Bassani 2008, 211, with previous bibliography.

11 See Bassani 2008, 212–13, with previous bibliography.

12 Kaufmann-Heiniman 1998, 210.

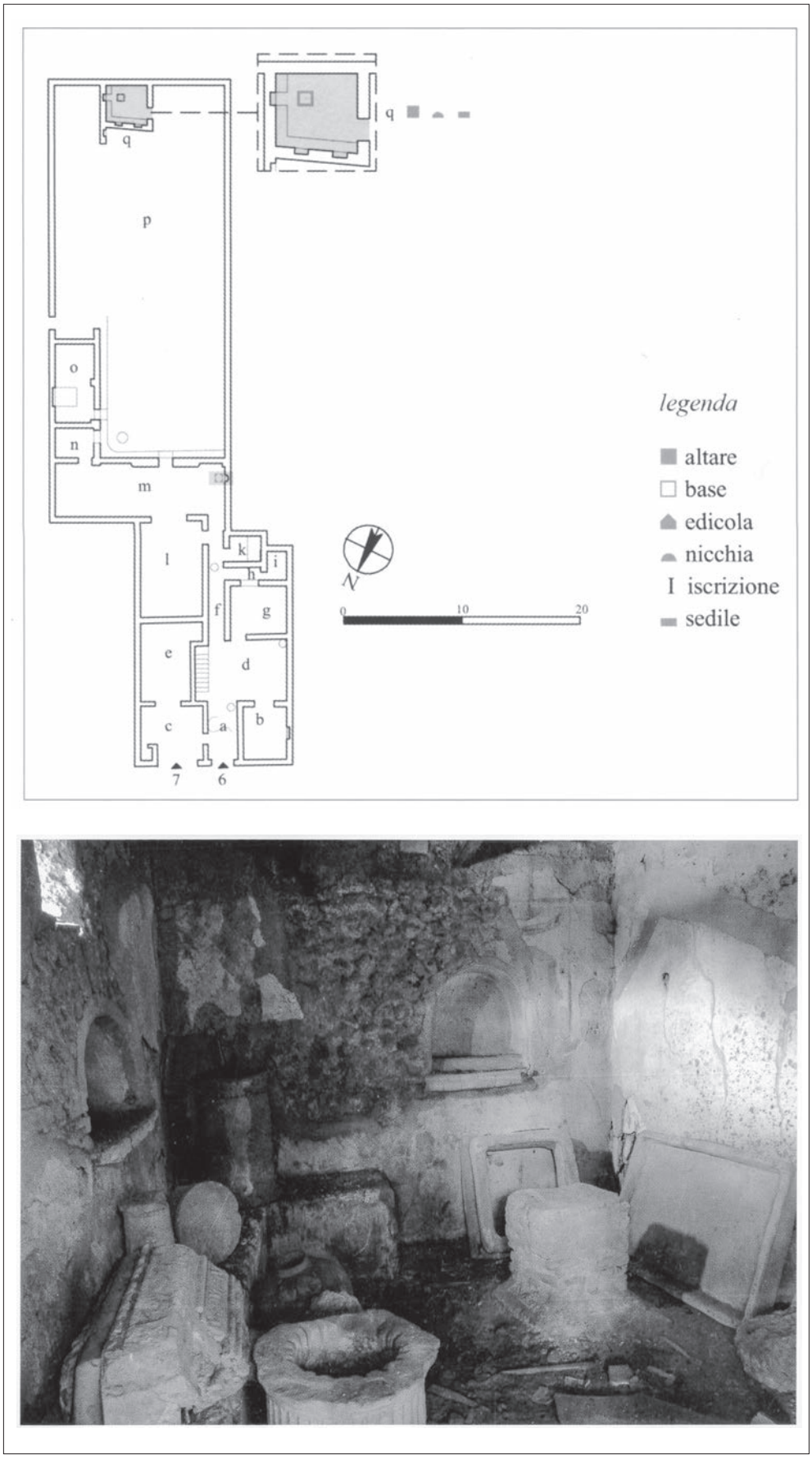

Fig. 2: Pompei, map of the Casa del Vinaio (IX 9, 6–7.10) and photo of interior of *sacrarium q* (After Bassani 2008, 230–31 © Ministero della Cultura).

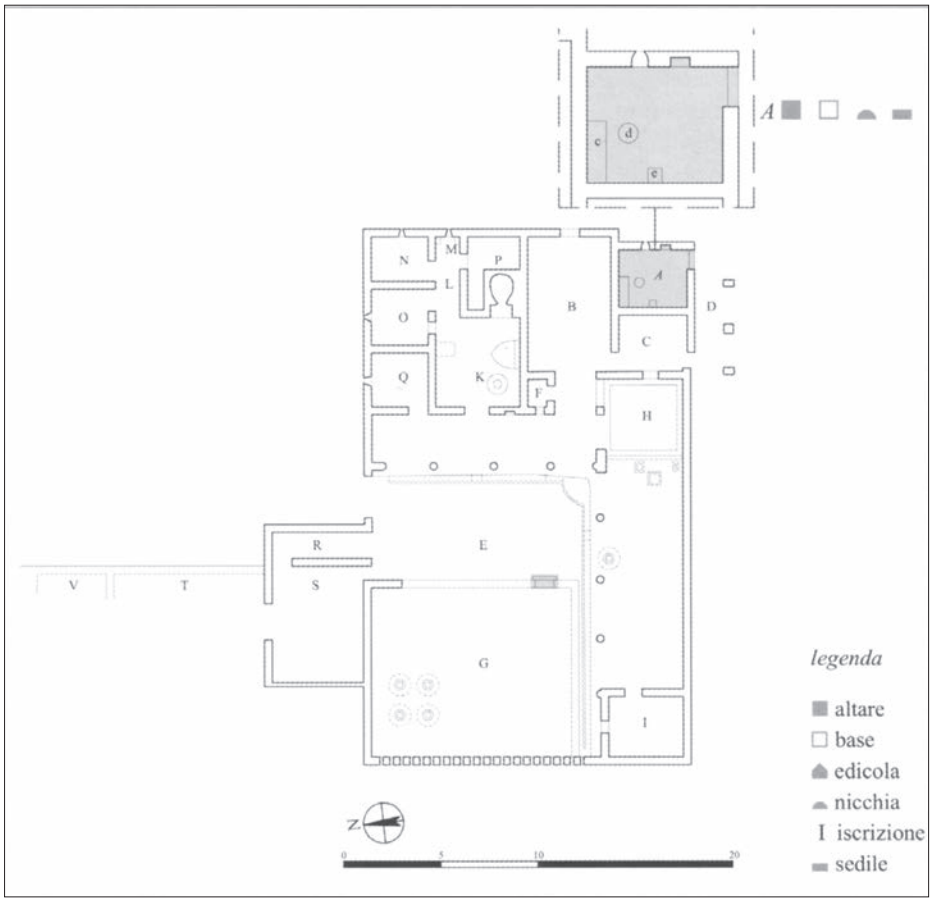

Fig. 3: Boscoreale, map of the Villa in Fondo Zurlo and of worship room *A* (After Bassani 2008, 211 © Ministero della Cultura).

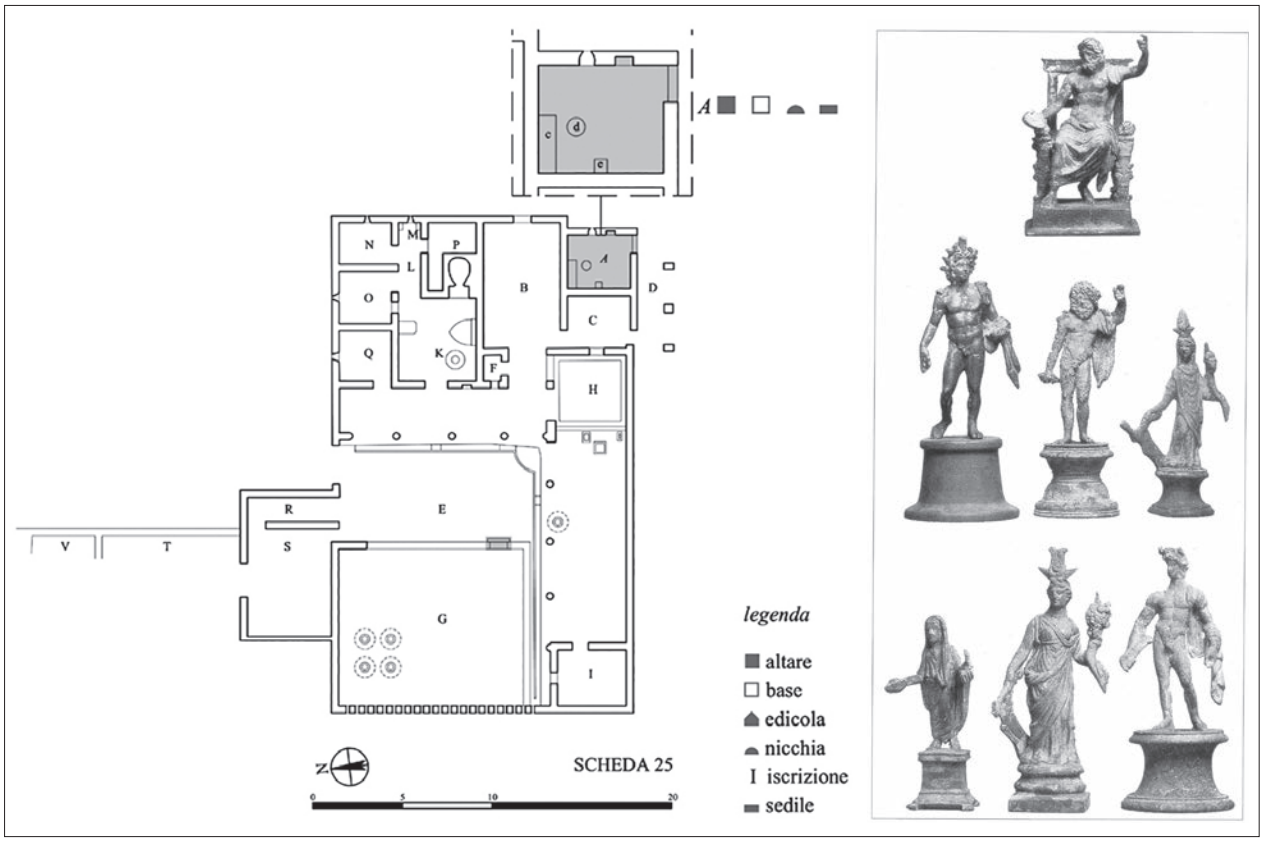

Fig. 4: Boscoreale, map of the Villa in Fondo D'Acunzo and photo of bronze statuettes found in *sacrarium* 12 (After Bassani 2008, 212–13 © Ministero della Cultura).

besides six silver coins. Eight pruning hooks and two hoes were also found, items clearly connected to the sphere of domestic and agricultural work, which, as we will see, may perhaps indicate specific rituals linked to certain moments of daily life.

Everyday Objects in Domestic *Sacraria*

Let us now consider the types of artefacts preserved in the above-mentioned worship places: altars, platforms, benches, niches, ritual tables, statuettes, paintings have been found, clearly denoting a sacred function; but many artefacts were also there, connected to the *instrumentum domesticum*. Relying on the excavation data, and without documenting pictures, three groups of materials are listed, pertaining to three fields of usage (see **Table 1**):[13]

1. objects connected to the preparation and consumption of food and drinks, made of bronze, glass or clay: pots and lids, an *authepsa* with its tray, bread-baskets, pans and pastry moulds, plates, cups, bowls, bottles, basins, little *amphorae*, goblets, an ivory teaspoon, a wine urn, a funnel and a *simpulum*;
2. items pertaining to working and farming activities, mostly made of iron: pruning hooks, hoes, axes, small pickaxes, rings, tweezers, scales, a candle holder, small round and pyramid-shaped lead weights, lanterns;
3. objects from the personal and household sphere, in various materials: a carnelian gem, some buckles, some mirrors, a small porphyry ointment bottle, clay oil bottles, safe boxes and locks, a gold band, several coins.

From such a list, we can infer that, excluding the 'canonical' ritual objects (*arulae*, statuettes, etc.), artefacts pertaining to daily life could also be left in Vesuvian shrines. Why? And how do we interpret these objects?

The first and simplest explanation is to deny the main function of those spaces as private shrines, and to suppose a multifunctional purpose: being storage and working spaces, objects used in the most diverse household activities could be left there. But it is also possible to give another explanation, that acknowledges the space as a private shrine and interprets such artefacts as a generic offering to the deities, connected to daily life. If this second hypothesis is highly preferable, the problem remains of explaining why and to which deities these objects were dedicated, and in which occasions they were left there.

These questions lead to a wider reference frame and to attempt other interpretations than the usual ones, also including literary evidence, and reading these objects, belonging to non-religious spheres of life, as possible indicators of ceremonies to invoke particular deities who protected specific moments or situations in human life.

Gods in the Town House

To start this dialogue between mobile artefacts and literary sources, I think it is important to begin from two late but eminent authors, Servius and Augustine. The latter, in particular, to prove the falsity of the pagan creed in favour of Christianity, lists in his *The City of God* some of those above-mentioned 'minor' deities,

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13 A recently published volume underlines the necessity to re-examine the vast number of domestic crockery and utensils found in over 250 years of excavations in Pompeii, not just for a coherent and organic classification, but also to reconstruct food preparation, preservation and storing activities, as well as to hypothesize working activities according to the inhabitants' social status: see Kastenmeier 2007, 72–73 and note 40, with specific bibliography.

who helped protect the Romans' life.[14] He thus introduces us to an imaginary ancient house which, as far as its peripheral walls, as Servius says,[15] was under the *aegis* of Zeus *Herkeios*, protector of fenced spaces.

Starting from the hallway, Augustine reminds us that there were three deities in charge of this first part of the house: *Forculus* watched over doors (the name clearly comes from *fores*), *Limentinus* over thresholds (from *limes*) and *Cardea* on door hinges (from *cardines*);[16] furthermore, as Servius clarifies, all the vestibule area was consecrated to Vesta, with a clear correspondence between the goddess's name and the entrance space.[17] Precisely for the presence in this part of the house of a deity devoted to chastity, new brides could not touch the threshold, in view of their role of mothers. Servius also notes[18] that, before entering their new home, *nubendae* used to adorn the doorposts with white woollen cloths as a good omen, and dress them with oils, under the eye of the goddess *Unxia*. In particular, the young wife about to step into a *domus religiosa* bringing some wool, would solemnly promise to be able to perform one of her main tasks, the *lanificium*.[19]

From these first pieces of information, some useful data already emerge, to attempt to explain the presence, inside private shrines, of apparently meaningless objects. We have seen how doors and thresholds were under particular deities, who presided over them by means of clear symbols: locks, hinges and latches, but keys too. In fact, among the artefacts in the above-mentioned Pompei shrines, there are some keys and locks, perhaps in some cases belonging to caskets, but in some other instances connected to house doors, like the exemplars found in Switzerland: here we can observe similar objects among the so-called *lararia* materials, sometimes quite large, such as in a villa in Courtaman or other private contexts.[20]

Thresholds and door posts were also protected by little known but not negligible divine beings: Servius tells us that door posts were sprinkled with oils dear to *Unxia*, contained in oil bottles, so it seems reasonable to surmise that at least some of the oil bottles found in the above-mentioned shrines might have been dedicated in some particular family ceremonies: among these, we point out the small porphyry ointment bottle, from the votive offerings in the shrine at Villa di Fondo D'Acunzo.

Moreover, it is possible that the small vases and baskets could be used to preserve those woollen *vittae* connected to the young wives' activities of spinning and weaving, which could be well represented by loom weights, distaffs, etc., sometimes found in private worship sites, similarly to public ones.[21]

If we go back to Augustine's description of the gods peopling the Roman household and consider the young wife, a further piece of information emerges. We learn that on the wedding day, the young woman would beg various deities for help, such as *Domiduca* and *Iterduca* who presided over the nuptial procession,[22] but also *Cinxia*, who watched over the untying of the bride's woollen belt in the bridal chamber: this was probably tied with clasps and rings, very similar to those found in some above-mentioned Pompei shrines. On the other hand, the groom could also count on a multitude of gods assisting him during the sex act: among these, *Subigus* (from *sub agere*), male deity who helped the *dominus* subjugate the woman,

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14 Aug. *civ*. 6.1–6 (ed. by da L. Alici, Milano 1990); this author extensively draws on Varro's book (*Antiquitates*), that is for the most part lost; about Agostine see Dumézil 2001.

15 Serv. *Aen*. 2.469.

16 Aug. *civ*. 6.7.1 and before 4.8.

17 Serv. *Aen*. 2.469.

18 Serv. *Aen*. 4.458.

19 Anniboletti 2011, in partic. 72–73.

20 Kaufmann-Heinimann 1998, 280–21, GF75.

21 For example, in the curative shrine at Santa Veneranda near Pesaro (Di Luca 2004); or in various votive deposits in central Italy (Comella 1981).

22 Aug. *civ.* 7.3.

along with *Prema* who favoured the couple's union thus ensuring their prosperity. Last but not least, the auspicious Priapus, whose symbolic phallus could feature as a propitiatory object among the offerings in worship rooms: an ivory one was found in the shrine of Villa in Fondo D'Acunzo, a concrete example of a prayer aimed at ensuring the family's well-being.

Gods in the Country House

Besides the town house there was a country house. Recent studies have pointed out that the divine beings called on to watch over the countryside, the valleys, the mountains or the hills, similarly represented, with their 'eloquent' names, a sort of classification of every type of land or activity performed there.[23] For instance, *Collatina* for the hilly grounds, *Vallonia* for those in the valley, *Rusina* for workable grounds, *Iugatinus* for the mountain chains. Moreover, as Servius remarks, "since names are given to the gods according to the jobs they do",[24] *Occator* was the god of harrowing (from *occatio*), *Promitor* for germination, *Sterculinus* for manuring (from *stercus*). The latter, according to Macrobius,[25] coincided with Saturn, because he was believed to be the inventor of the scythe, as well as of honey, fruit and fertilization.

Among the gods who helped man in his country residence was *Flora*, patron of blossoming and therefore of the following harvesting of fruits; the goddess *Robigo* was also venerated as a protector from rust. Her existence is precious for the hypothesis on the possible meaning of some objects found in private worship places. Ovid in his *Fasti* appeals to her in these terms: "Grip not the tender crops, but rather grip the hard iron. Forestall the destroyer. Better that thou shouldst gnaw at swords and baneful weapons. [...] But do not thou profane the corn, and ever may the husbandman be able to pay his vows to thee in thine absence".[26] So, the country man had to perform ceremonies in honour of the goddess who sheltered the harvest from rust, offering rusty tools over which she could feast sparing the crops: working tools like the pruning hooks and hoes found in the shrines of the two rural villas at Boscoreale, and which, though generally connected to farm work, could also be interpreted, within specific worship spaces, as offerings for precise ceremonies such as that in honour of *Robigo*.

If Ovid's passage offers new elements for interpretation and makes clear that 'negative' deities were also venerated, so as not to offend their sensibility, Augustine also gives new interesting clues to understand the possible significance of some offerings in private shrines. In particular, speaking of Liber, the bishop of Hippo explains that he had been entrusted with controlling both liquid seeds, i.e. fruit juices, wine first of all, and animal seed, i.e. seminal fluid.[27] If this aspect revealed the licentious nature of the festivals in his honour, it also stressed the Romans' attention to avert bad luck from cultivated fields, so that Liber could guarantee the utmost yield. But what were the ceremonies to perform? Many, surely, as we can infer from Cato's pages dedicated to the agricultural world and the rituals performed in the various working areas,[28] but the most interesting and relevant is, I believe, the one described, although briefly, by Columella.[29] Speaking about the preparations for

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23 See Perfigli 2004, 138–53.

24 Serv. *geo*. 1.21.

25 Macr. *Sat*. 1.7.25.

26 Ov. *fast*. 4.910–32: *Nec teneras segetes, sed durum amplectere ferrum, / quodque potest alios perdere perde prior. [...] / sarcula nunc durusque bidens et vomer aduncus, / ruris opes, niteant; inquinet arma situs [...] / at tu ne viola Cererem, semperque colonus / absenti possit solvere vota sibi*.

27 Aug. *civ*. 7.21.

28 Cato *agr*., *passim*.

29 Colum. 12.18.4: *Cella quoque vinaria omni stercore liberanda et bonis odoribus suf[f]icienda, ne quem redoleat foetorem acoremve. Tum sacrificia Libero Liberaeque et vasis presso<r>is quam sanctissime castitissimeque facienda, nec per vindemiam*

grape-harvesting, and explaining how cellars had to be cleaned, the writer clarifies that sacrifices must be made to Liber and Libera but also "to the wine-press vases with the highest reverence and purity". Therefore, not only the deities who protected the grape harvest had to be revered, but also the containers, because destined to hold the precious liquid; thus perhaps, by analogy, some of those *ollae* and *amphorae* that could be destined to the first fruit of pressing.

Is there a trace of these vases in the shrines under examination? The answer is yes, and indeed it deserves a digression. In the shrine of the Villa di Fondo D'Acunzo, among the various objects, a 'wine urn' is mentioned which, without a picture, will have to be recovered from the stores of the Local Authority for Archaeological Heritage, to verify its shape and material.[30] From the point of view of lexical and typological classification,[31] I believe it can be interpreted as a vase with decorated sides, perhaps similar to some fine ceramic items, widely present in the Mediterranean as far back as the early Imperial age. Based on Augustine's and especially Columella's testimony, its presence in the shrine of a rustic villa, which probably also profited from the sale of wine, must not be a surprise, nor can it be dismissed as a generic reference to Liber-Dionysus. That vase/urn can indeed be tangible proof of a specific ceremony in honour of both the god and the containers of the precious liquid.

It is, of course, a working hypothesis, which may or may not be confirmed in following studies, but if correct, it could also be extended to another above-mentioned shrine, in the wine-maker's house in the *Regio* IX in Pompei. Here room *q* was provided with all those cult indicators (an altar, a niche, paintings, a statuette and a ritual table) which allow for a certain classification. Inside it, various glass bottles, numerous small vases, basins, bowls and other containers for liquids were found:[32] obvious signs of an economic and cult centrality of Liber. In fact, as W.F. Jashemsky remarked in an article from the 1960s dedicated to this very house, the whole dwelling seems to refer to this god: in the *domus* there were a lot of *amphorae*, mainly for wine, both in the garden and in the various rooms, so that it was supposed to be a *vinarius*'s house. It is not surprising, therefore, that in his own worship space, the owner had dedicated such a large number of liquid containers: Liber probably presided over his main source of income, wine trading, also attested by a *taberna* in the entrance hall.

No Entry for Some Deities

From the data so far presented, the written sources let us perceive the presence of some 'minor' deities in the house, to whom we can try to ascribe some common use objects found in the shrines. But there are also some ancient literary texts informing us that there were some gods in the Roman cult sphere who absolutely must not enter the house: and to prevent their access, particular rituals were necessary.

Augustine explains that the uncouth Silvanus, precisely as the god of *silvae*, had to remain far from inhabited areas, as civilized spaces hostile to him. In particular, if there was a woman who had just given birth, three deities had to be invoked, to protect the woman and the baby from the god's violence. Augustine minutely describes the ritual:[33] "three men go round the house during the night, and first strike the threshold

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ab torculari aut vinaria cella recedendum est, ut et omnia, qui mostum conficiunt, pure mundeque faciant ne<c> furi locus detur partem fructuum intercipiendi.

30 According to *Notizie degli Scavi*, it measured 0.30 m in height, with handle terminating with a human finger upwards, and with a leaf downwards (*NSc* 1921, 440–41). See *EAA*, *Atlante delle forme ceramiche* II, 261, type I/84 and respective picture in fig. LXXXIII.

31 See, for example, the records offered by Annecchino 1977; or the cases in Bats 1996, *passim*.

32 Jashemski 1966-67.

33 Aug. *civ*. 6, 9: *Tres homines noctu circuire limina domus et primo limen securi ferire, postea pilo, tertio deverrere scopis, ut his datis culturae signis deus Silvanus prohibeatur intrare [...] ab his autem tribus rebus tres nuncupatos deos, Intercidonam a securis intercisione, Pilumnus a pilo, Deverram ab scopis*.

with a hatchet, next with a pestle, and the third time sweep it with a brush, in order that these symbols of agriculture having been exhibited, the god Silvanus might be hindered from entering [...]. Now from these three things three gods have been named: *Intercidona*, from the cut made by the hatchet; *Pilumnus*, from the pestle; *Diverra*, from the besom".

Augustine's passage, though tinged with derisory tones in order to ridicule the Romans' pagan beliefs, is however significant in highlighting the various private ceremonies around the god Silvanus, and the tools connected to them. In this case, too, specific objects are quoted as evoking some deities' powers (*Intercidona*, *Pilumnus*, *Deverra*), called on to limit Silvanus's sphere of action: the hatchet, the pestle and the besom in fact referred to the world of agriculture and therefore to an orderly world, separate from the unruly one of the *silvae*, belonging to Silvanus. That these rituals might be the reason for the axe and pick-axe found among the materials in the small *g* shrine in the house of Ceii, is a working hypothesis that must be duly verified; we can also point out that in Augusta Raurica some examples of small axes were discovered among the cult materials in a dwelling,[34] and other small hatchets come from a probably private context still in Switzerland, found together with other so-called *lararium* statuettes.[35]

Therefore, it will be worth verifying if there is material proof in the Roman dwellings of this 'external' – so to speak – dimension of the god. In this respect, I think it is important to emphasize that the 'domestic' artefacts I know of, attributable to Silvanus, all come from external courtyards or gardens outside the house itself,[36] not from interior spaces. Maybe it is a coincidence, or maybe not.

This is a new research lead too, just like the need for a constant dialogue between literary and archaeological evidence emerges from the data presented: all the more so when the artefacts pertain to several life spheres, as is the case with the objects mentioned so far.

That these may actually refer to 'minor' deities is a plausible hypothesis, at least in some cases. But why, if this is the right track, were the symbols of these 'secondary' gods enough to evoke their presence? Why did not these deities have a face? Actually, I do not know of reliefs, *lararium* statuettes, nor paintings that may refer to these entities, only known for their *indigitamenta*. The explanation for this iconographic void is, in my opinion, very simple, almost banal: the deity became inherent in the object which represented his/her power. It was not necessary to have an image, which may not even have been codified: it was enough to leave a trace of the ritual, by offering the artefact which conveyed the presence of the god.

Some Examples of 'Sacred Pictures' for Private Cult and the Problem of the Imperial Cult

In this second and final part of my contribution, there is space to reflect on another category of cult artefacts, the so-called *lararium* statuettes. Not just on the best-known types made of bronze, but also on the less valuable ones made of clay or wood, which could evoke particular ritual occasions, and which could be bought at specific festive periods: in other words, I would like to enlarge on the precursors of the modern 'sacred pictures' (a term inclusive of various objects), which still nowadays can be bought on the stalls around churches and sacred places, or in specialist shops for religious items.[37]

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34 Kaufmann-Heinimann 1998, 106, S106; dating: 10–70 d.C.; ibidem, 117, dating: 80–120/180–300 d.C.

35 Kaufmann Heinimann 1998, 285–86, GF85.

36 For example, a relief from the garden of the Casa degli Affreschi at Luni (Bassani 2012b, 129); a statue from the courtyard of a villa in the *suburbium* of Rome (Bassani 2012a, 16); a statue probably from the courtyard of another villa in the *suburbium* of Concordia Sagittaria (Portogruaro) (Di Filippo Balestrazzi 2011, 167). On Silvanus see Nagy 1994.

37 In the long catholic tradition, as commonly known, there were a lot of patron saints for daily life activities: see for example in this volume the article by Claire Renkin.

I will begin this time from the written sources, precisely from Apuleius.[38] The learned African writer, in a passage of his book written to defend himself from accusations of magic, explains that he had asked a craftsman from Oea to make an ebony statuette, which did not at all portray a skeleton, as his accusers claimed, but a small Mercury. Besides describing it in detail, the author says he was wont to carry it when travelling, along with those of other deities, to honour them, if need be.

Besides interest in the documentary datum itself, the text offers on the one hand a testimony of the habit of having cult objects made *ad hoc* for domestic ceremonies; on the other hand, it draws attention to a particular Roman festival, the *Saturnalia*. From 17th to 23rd December, there was a celebration in honour of Saturn, when it was customary to make *sigilla* or *sigillaria*, i. e. small wax or clay artefacts given as presents to ones' own relatives. But what did these objects depict and where were they sold?

Sigilla (or *sigillaria*) represented the most diverse objects, such as mythological figures or deities, but also defied ancestors.[39] A passage from Cicero's *in Verrem* is interesting in this respect; the orator tells a real story which took place in Sicily: during a banquet offered by Gnaeus Pompeius to Verres, the guest, attracted to the beauty of the *sigilla* chiselled on a serving dish, took the dish and removed its figurines, despite its being a "symbol of the cult of Penates and of the host's hospitality".[40] Therefore, even a simple dish decorated with particular images could take on a precise cult value, which apparently Verres did not take into consideration, being too attracted by the beauty of the work. This aspect is clarified by Cicero himself shortly before, when he remembers how Verres had taken away dishes, *paterae* and incense burners from all the houses in Sicily, reducing the matrons to tears, because they were used for sacrifices, had been inherited from their fathers and had always been in the house.[41]

The production of mobile objects offers similar exemplars, found both in Pompei,[42] and, for instance, in Hildesheim:[43] some of them reproduce, perhaps not by chance, small busts of figures that may very likely have been ancestors and that could be an object of devotion in particular family anniversaries.

But *sigilla*, in plain or precious material, could also portray specific subjects, for example deified emperors. A passage in a *scholium* (commentary) to Juvenal proves it, observing that during the *Saturnalia* in Rome, numerous *sigillaria* stalls could be found inside the *porticus* in the Baths of Trajan,[44] as well as in Agrippa's porticus, where the paintings of the Argonauts' feats were displayed: in the text the reference

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38 Apul. *mag*. 56.

39 For a definition of the term see Romizzi 2005, 331–32.

40 Cic. *Verr*. 2.4.22.48: *Qui (scil. Verres) cum in convivium venisset, si quicquam caelati aspexerat, manus abstinere, iudices, non poterat. Cn. Pompeius est, Philo qui fuit, Tyndaritanus. Is cenam isti dabat apud villam in Tyndaritano. Fecit quod Siculi non audebant; ille, civis Romanus quod erat, impunius id se facturum putavit; adposuit patellam in qua sigilla erant egregia. Iste continuo ut vidit, non dubitavit illud insigne penatium hospitaliumque deorum ex hospitali mensa tollere, sed tamen, quod ante de istius abstinentia dixeram, sigillis avulsis reliquum argentum sine ulla varitia reddidit*. See G. Baldo ed., Firenze 2004.

41 Cic. *Verr*. 2.4.21.47: *Qui (scil. Verres) simul atque in oppidum quoppiam venerat, immitterabantur illi continuo Cibyratici canes, qui investigabant et perscrutabantur omnia. Si quod erat grande vas et maius opus inventum, laeti adferebant; si minus eius modi quidpiam venari potuerant, illa quidem certe pro lepusculis capiebantur, patellae, paterae, turibula. Hic quos putatis fletus mulierum, quas lamentationes fieri solitas esse in hisce rebus? quae forsitan vobis parvae esse videantur, sed magnum et acerbum dolorem commovent, mulierculis praesertim, cum eripiuntur e manibus ea quibus ad res divinas uti consuerunt, quae a suis acceperunt, quae in familia semper fuerunt*.

42 Baratte 1986.

43 Pirzio Biroli Stefanelli 1990, in partic. 62–77, with previous bibliography.

44 Schol. *Iuv*. 6.153–54. (*Et armatis opstat) casa candida nautis: 'casam candidam' illud significat, quod Romae in porticu Traianarum t<h>ermarum tempore Saturnaliorum sigillaria sunt. tunc mercatores casas de linteis faciunt [quibus picturam obstruunt]. ideo autem dicit 'mercator Iason', quoniam antea in porticu Agrippi<a>narum sigillaria proponebantur: in qua porticu historia Argonautarum depicta est, et casae, cum fierent, picturae obstabant*, P. Wessner (ed.), Lipsiae 1941. See now Gradel 2002; Bassani 2017, in partic. 236–39; Bettini 2018, 141–45.

to the *sigillaria* of the 'Agrippinae' is ambiguous, but it is an interpretation that can be take into account, considering figurines of the illustrious descendants of Augustus's right arm, Agrippa, dedicator of the same porticus.

In fact, reading the Juvenal's commentator and other literary sources it leads us to assume that there were precise places in the city where figurines could be bought, representing also emperors to venerate in domestic spaces, and, although cheap, bearing a strong connotation on the iconographic level: besides the precious and expensive objects like bronze statuettes of deities, there was a considerable mass of cult objects affordable for everyone, representing the Augusti. Such objects made of humble materials were clearly inspired to the Emperors' iconographic prototypes elaborated at court, to be reproduced in portraits, or medium and large but also small statues, as attested by the bronze statuettes found in the Forum of Augusta Emerita, which seem to represent precisely Augustus, Livia and Tiberius.[45]

Thus, the issue of imperial cult also appears in the private religious sphere: a topic that has been widely debated and studied, and generally found to be a phenomenon connected to a sort of loyalty/political opportunity mostly practised in the public and official sphere from the Augustan age.[46] Indeed, if from 7 BCE the cult of *Genius Augusti* was decreed even among the Lares Compitales, evidence of imperial cult in households is very rare.[47] However, some scholars have observed characteristic traits in exemplars of statuettes found in Pompei houses: the case of the statue of so-called Mercury-Aesculapius from the House of Red Walls (VIII 5, 27) is emblematic; his face could represent Augustus, with an oval tending to a triangular shape and a small chin.[48] Suetonius in fact states that he himself had found a bronze effigy of Augustus in a street market, portrayed in his youthful looks and with the nickname Turinus,[49] which he had then given to Hadrian so that he could venerate it among his Lares.

But beyond Augustus, some scholars proposed to identify an imperial iconography in a statuette of a female deity from the House of the Mirror, still in Pompei (IX 7, 20): it was found in a niche in the atrium, flanked by two Lares effigies, and though it has been mostly interpreted as an image of Fortune, according to some studies it might be Livia,[50] or a personification of Concordia Augusta.[51] However, as stressed before, the face of this figurine is very different from that of Augustus's wife, who usually had a straighter and smaller nose; nor are there other known examples in Pompei of an effigy of Concordia among the *lararium* statuettes. It could not represent one of the two Agrippinas from the Julio-Claudian dynasty: although they could even be two important personalities for the imperial cult.[52]

The problem, however, can be proposed. Surely, it is worth noticing that the owner of the House of the Mirror was an Augustal, a D. Caprasius Felix, who must have been interested in having in his house a statuette of exquisite workmanship, referring probably to an *Augusta*. With such an assumption, it seems acceptable to propose that in some cases the features of emperors and *Augustae* may be traced in the faces of statuettes: it is a new field of study which deserves some attention, I believe, as much as the cases of rulers' statues with divine features are studied.

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45 Nogales Basarrate 2007, 510–11.

46 See Fishwich 1987–1992; Small 1996.

47 Krzyszowska 2002, in partic. 175–82; on Lares Compitales see Van Andringa 2009.

48 Adamo Muscettola 1984, 18–20.

49 Suet. *Aug*. 2.6.

50 Adamo Muscettola 1984, 20–23.

51 Krzyszowska 2002, 178–80.

52 For an analysis of imperial hairstyles see Buccino 2013, with previous bibliography.

In this respect we can recall some sculptures attested in dwellings of Roman Italy, for example: in Luni, in the House of Frescoes, a bust of Tiberius Gemellus was recovered, who was venerated together with other deities in the sacred space of that house's garden.[53] In Abruzzo, in the villa in Fonte del Sedime (AQ), a fragment of a basalt head was found, which for the type of headdress – based on the model statue of Augustus of Prima Porta – has been interpreted as a *princeps* bust and therefore as a subject of *sacra privata*.[54] Whereas the fragments of a statue of Augustus found in a small space in the Coiedii's house in Suasa remain of uncertain interpretation;[55] the portrait head of Marcellus recovered in a Roman villa near Taranto proves a clear worshipping function.[56]

Surely, compared to the clay *sigilla* mentioned at the beginning of this section, the statues here presented are medium-high level products, made to venerate members of the imperial house: anyway, through them it will be possible to also examine the issue of imperial cult at a domestic level,[57] so far only dealt with from a public point of view.[58]

However, both this aspect and the one discussed above relating to daily-use artefacts dedicated in domestic shrines are, hopefully, entirely new study fields which will perhaps enable us to better understand the various issues connected to *sacra privata*. It is valuable to have here proposed different methodological fields for this study, which can lead to original research areas.

House, Cultual Room or Cultual Building	*Sculptural Objetcs*	*Various Objects*
Casa dei *Ceii*, Room *g*		*Bronzo: authepsa* su vassoio, scudetto e anello di una cassa di legno, basetta a piede umano. *Cristallo*: calice. *Ferro*: serratura, scure, piccone. *Osso*: targhetta, *Legno*: 2 casse, cassettino-portamonete (*NSc* 1913, 223–24).
Casa del Vinaio, Building *q*	Little Female Clay Statuette on *kline*	*Bronzo*: sesterzio, candelabro, specchio. *Vetro*: 8 vasetti, 3 bacili, 2 piatti, 2 bicchieri, tazzina, 3 boccette. *Terracotta*: 2 vasetti, lucerna con altre 3 lucernette sovrapposte, 2 lucerne, vasetto, 7 piattini, 4 ciotole, 3 tazze, 3 pignattini, coppa, anforetta (*NSc* 1888, 574).
Villa Fondo Zurlo, Room *A*		*Bronzo*: serratura. *Vetro*: 5 balsamari. *Terracotta*: 5 piattini, coperchio, 2 lucerne (*NSc* 1897, 393–94).
Villa Fondo d'Acunzo, Room 12	7 Bronze Statuettes: Giove, Iside-Fortuna, *Genius*, Dioscuri (?)	*Bronzo*: bilancia, casseruola, 4 fibbie, 4 anelli, oleare, simpulum e situla, forma di pasticceria, pignattino e pignatta, vasettino, imbuto, specchio, urna vinaria, torta, specillo, pinzetta, serratura, 35 monete imperiali. *Argento*: 6 denarii. *Oro*: nastrino di filigrana; *Corniola*: gemma con quadriga. *Avorio*: cucchiaino, fallo, cagnolino, 2 dadi. *Porfido*: unguentario. *Piombo*: 5 pesi da telaio. *Ferro*: 8 roncole e 2 zappe. *Vetro*: 3 anforette, 7 bottiglie, 3 tazze, parereta, cratere. *Terracotta*: 8 oleari, 5 pignattini, 2 urcei, 3 piatti, 3 scodelle aretine, tazza, 2 lucerne (*NSc* 1921, 440–41).

Table 1. Mobile objects found inside the cult spaces of the four houses examined (see the Italian words reported in *Notizie degli Scavi*).

53 Bassani 2012b, 128–29, with previous bibliography.

54 Campanelli 1993, 66–67.

55 Campagnoli 2010, 319–34.

56 Mastrocinque 2010, 166, with previous bibliography.

57 I have been examining this topic within a research project about *sacra privata* in central Italy: Bassani 2017; the topic was partially studied some years ago by J.M Santero (Santero 1983).

58 See the articles edited by Nogales – González 2007.

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Instruments & Amulets.
Pompeian Hairpins and Women's Domestic Ritual

Ria Berg

Roman hairpins were common domestic utensils, which were sometimes decorated with images relative to cults or magical beliefs, and therefore bordering on domestic religious and ritual practices. Hairpins with figural motifs have mostly been studied from a typological point of view,[1] but in this essay, a more holistic and interpretative reading of their imagery will be proposed. The hairpin will also be contextualized, not only in the daily female grooming routines, but also in family ritual.

In Roman homes, images of cult and myth were omnipresent: divinities and their attributes not only appeared around the domestic altars, but they also adorned walls, furniture, and common objects of use, and were worn as amulets and accessories. Sara Santoro has defined such domesticated divine images in 'interior decoration' as hybrids between the realms of religion, on one hand, and, luxury and pleasures of life, on the other.[2] But to what degree should we consider these images purely decorative features that delighted the domestic gestures, pictorial clues of their purpose and use, or as true signifiers of cult? The latter view may be supported by the observation that in the early imperial age, simple allegorical references – such as images of Bacchus forged on vessels for wine, or painted on dining-room walls, marine divinities decorating vessels for ablutions and bathrooms – are the exception rather than the rule.[3] This lack of easy correlations forces us to take a closer look at the motives for combining objects with images. For example, Venus appears very rarely on Roman mirrors, whereas the attributes of ultra-masculine Hercules, the club and the lion skin, belong to the most typical mirror decorations. This may partly be due to the allegory of Hercules' enslavement by the beauty of Queen Omphale, but also, and perhaps more importantly, to Hercules' magical role in curing female ailments and facilitating childbirth.[4] Many figurative appliqués of vases and furniture are clearly apotropaic in function, representing Gorgon heads and other monstrous visages, and thus offer magical protection to their users. In later Antiquity, from the third century CE onwards, Venus can be seen much more often among the decorations of toiletry implements, as the Greco-Roman gods gradually become more and more decorative and allegorical.[5]

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1 The material discussed in this paper consists of the hairpins found in Pompeii and conserved in its archaeological storerooms (Casa Bacco). Bibliography on Roman hairpins is consistent. Hairpins ('spilloni') in Roman Italy have been studied by Bianchi 1995, while many typological studies of Roman hairpins have been made in Roman provinces: Béal (1983; 1984) in the Gaulish areas; Riha (1990, 95–114) in Augusta Rauricorum. Other fundamental studies include Deonna 1938, 277–78; Davidson 1952, 276–87; Alföldi 1957, 481–82; Ruprechtsberger 1978; Crummy 1979; Cool 1990. Most recently, Bartus (2003, 2012) has studied pins with figurative hand decoration from Brigetio, and Eckhardt 2014, the hand-shaped pins from Roman Britain.

2 Santoro 2007, 113–15.

3 Kaufmann-Heinimann 2007, 189–90. Similarly, the placing of divinities in wall-paintings does not offer simple keys for reading (we do not consistently find Dionysus in *triclinia*, Venus in *cubicula*, Apollo in the library, etc.). See Swift 2009, passim. For the meaning of snakes on the handles of washing basins and their use in family ritual, see Berg 2015.

4 Dasen 2015, 185–89; Dasen 2021.

5 From Pompeii, the only instance of a toiletry box decorated with a Venus figure is a small bronze lock of a beauty case, found in the so-called Casa Imperiale/L. Caelius Ianuarius in the form of Aphrodite *Anadyomene*, Berg 2017a. For Venus on the toiletries of the late third century Esquiline treasure, see Elsner 2003.

Hairpins could, on occasion, be attached to the hairdo as adornment, and their decoration should, therefore, also be compared with that on jewellery. Roman jewellery was – differently from earlier Hellenistic traditions – mostly aniconic; figurative decorations were quite exceptional, and limited to the snake-shaped bracelets, some relief-images on armlets (Venus-figures and other divinities) and occasional pendants shaped like *lunulae* or wheels of Fortune. The rarity of images on Roman jewellery seems, again, to underline and strengthen their amuletic functions.

This case-study will pose the question: Why do hairpins often have images, while such decoration is rare or absent on other toiletry implements (such as cosmetic spoons, tweezers, and *spatulae*) and jewels, and what is the meaning of such decorations? Some of the images on hairpins are easy to explain as allegories (Venus, female bust), but others (hand, hoof) require more complex explanations. The questions of the meaning of these images in the context of the family cult will be at the core of this essay.

Roman Hairpins and their Functions

The Latin names *acus crinalis* or *acus comatoria* are traditionally used to label a category of pointed pins of average length of 10 cm, topped by a simple sphere, disc, composite moulding or figurative image.[6] Such pins are among the most common finds all over the Empire throughout the Roman era. Iconographic and literary sources reveal that the pins had several uses, but they mainly served in hairdressing and to extract perfumes from narrow necked unguent-bottles.[7] The alternative Latin name for the instrument, *acus discriminalis* (dividing pin), suggests that such pins were used, as combs, to divide tresses of hair in constructing hairdos.[8] Some also have a brownish colouring at tip, suggesting that they were used to apply cosmetic substances.[9] Furthermore, other flexible uses for such pins can be suggested. For example, the fact that some rare pins are decorated with the motif of a writing-tablet suggests that the same pins could even be used to write on wax tablets.

Hairpins are hardly ever shown in the depictions of Roman female hairdos, whether in sculpture or in paintings.[10] Exceptions to the rule are some rare sculpted female portrait-heads from the second century CE in which the coiffure is fixed by a pin, ending either in a small spoon or in a needle-hole, perforating the

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6 For general references to hairpins, see Daremberg – Saglio 1877, s.v. *acus* e *TLL* s.v. *acus discriminalis*; *discerniculum*. For the term, see Bianchi 1995, 15; Iorio 2004; Allison 2006, 32–33.

7 For the functions of bone pins, see Bèal1983, 183; Bianchi 1995, 15–23.

8 Varro (*ling*. 5.29.129) mentions such a 'divider' for the hair: *discerniculum, quo discernitus capillus*. Ovid speaks of the hair of Theseus, not "combed by a pin": *Theseus … a nulla tempora comptus acu* (*ars* 1.509–10). Claudius Claudianus mentions an 'Idalian pin' (belonging to the Idaean Venus) that divides the hair, in *Raptus Proserpinae*, 2.15–16: *illi multifidos crinis sinuatur in orbes Idalia divisus acu.* Tertullian uses the expression 'lewd pin' that divides the hair in *De virginibus velandis* (12): *vertunt capillum et acu lasciviore comam sibi inserunt, crinibus a fronte divisis apertam professae mulieritatem*. Similarly, Isidore of Seville (*orig*. 19.31.8) speaks of dividing the hair: *discriminalia capitis mulierum sunt vocata ex eo, quod caput auro discernant, nam discriminare dividere dicitur*.

9 St. Clair 2003, 206, n. 54; Luciano 2010, 194, fig. 3. For the passages of classical authors describing their cosmetic uses, see Bianchi 1995, 16–17. For example, Juvenal describes an effeminate male drawing an eyeliner with *acus* dipped in black colour made of soot, *sat*. 2.93–94: *ille supercilium madida fuligine tinctum / obliqua producit acu pingitque trementis / attollens oculos.* In a passage of Silius Italicus, the goddess Voluptas uses an *acus* to adorn her brow; *Punica*, 15.23: *fronte decor quaesitus acu*; this is ambivalent and could refer either to hairdo or to cosmetics.

10 For some isolated examples in Fayyum portraits, see Iorio 2004, 67, nn. 21–25; for other potraits, see Bianchi 1995, 17–22. Martial mentions a golden hairpin that fixed the hairdo and remained visible among the gifts listed in the *Apophoreta* (24): *Splendida ne madidi violent bombycina crines / figat acus tortas, sustineatque comas.* Martial also discusses the use of the pin in fixing ringlets of curls in an epigram, 2.66.1: *unus de toto peccaverat orbe comarum / anulus, incerta non bene fixus acu.* Isidore of Seville also mentions the pins used to fix the hairdos (*orig*. 19.31.9): *Acus sunt quibus in feminis ornandorum crinium conpago retinetur, ne laxius fluant et sparsos dissipentur capillos*. See further bibliography in Iorio 2004, 66–67, nn. 12–14; Bianchi 1995, 16. Janet Ste-

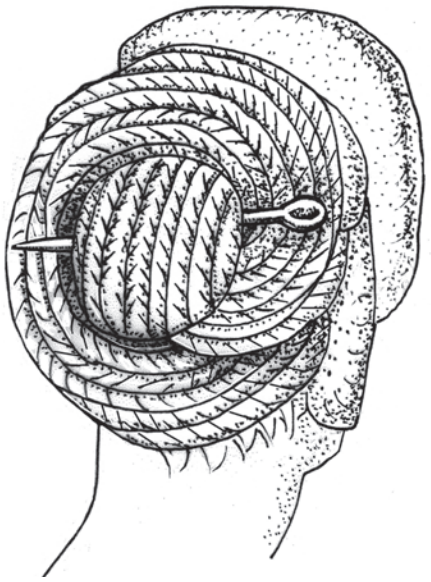

Fig. 1: Portrait head from Apt (Vaucluse, France), showing a hairpin used to fix the hairdo (Drawing after Daremberg – Saglio 1877, fig. 103).

bun horizontally (**Fig. 1**).[11] Thus, their use as ornamental hair accessories was probably not the primary one, at least not in the more elaborate elite coiffures. In archaeological contexts, hairpins in precious metals are rare even among jewellery parures in gold.[12] The main corpus of the material is made of bone, which was a relatively cheap material. Bone pins may have been worn, in particular, by sub-elite women, and this might also be one reason why they are not shown on (elitarian) portrait images. For sub-elite women, the pin may have been, ambivalently, both a personal ornament/accessory and a utilitarian domestic instrument, carried along attached in the hair and extracted for other uses when needed.

It is striking that in Roman literary sources the hairpin is mostly mentioned as a weapon of female aggression. Two well-known passages in Ovid and one in Juvenal depict the *domina*, displeased with her coiffure, puncturing the arms of her *ornatrices* with a makeshift weapon of this kind.[13] Petronius, in the *Satyricon*, uses the same motif in a satirical context, describing Encolpius and Ascyltus under attack by two woman, who prick their cheeks with hairpins dipped in *satyrion* potion.[14] Later, Apuleius in his *Metamorphoses* reuses the motif of abrupt female violence aided by a hairpin, by the widow Charite who, seeking out her husband's murderer, grabbed a hairpin from her hair and stabbed out his eyes, stating that "your bridesmaids will be the avenging Furies; blindness will be your groomsmen".[15] Strabo, Plutarch and later Dio Cassius give a version of Cleopatra's suicide, assisted by her hairpin dipped in poison.[16] Dio Cassius also presents the tradition that Cicero's enemy Fulvia pierced the tongue of his cut-off head with her hairpin.[17] These passages strongly suggest that hairpins represented a readily-at-hand, multi-use, pointed instrument, always carried on the person, and even a protective arm for the woman in case of need.

It is significant, as I have shown above, that hairpins could also, on occasion, be dipped in unguents, potions or poisons, like *satyrion* in the above-mentioned passage of Petronius. Extending the parallelism, the hairpin could thus even have been likened to the wands that appear in ancient magical practices since Homer. In comparison, in the Egyptian domestic cult, specific magic wands engraved with propitious images were used, for example, to draw protective circles around the newborn.[18] Ovid uses the words *baculum* and *virga* in describing the magical arts of Circe, who employs it to touch Odysseus' men three times in

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phens (2008) has suggested that the most elaborate coiffures were constructed by sewing them with wool strings, using a perforated bone or metal bodkin, rather than a number of small fixed pins.

11 For this and other similar portraits, like a female head in Palazzo Corsini (inv. 642), see Bianchi 1995, 17–19, figs. 1–3; Luciano 2010, 196, figs. 6–7; Bartman 2001, 12, fig. 10.

12 d'Ambrosio – De Carolis 1997, 16, 24, 27–28.

13 The mistress seizes the pin and hurts the arms of the maid in an attack of rage, Ov. *am*. 1.14.15–18; *ars* 3.235; Iuv. 6.487–507.

14 Petr. 21.1: *Psyche acu comatoria ... malas pungebat, illinc puella penicillo, quod et ipsum satyrio tinxerat, Ascylton opprimebat.*

15 Apul. *met*. 8.13: *mulier acu crinali capite deprompta Thrasylli convulnerat tota lumina.*

16 Strab. 17.1.10; Plut. *Vit. Ant.* 86.2; Cass. Dio 51.14.

17 Cass. Dio 47.8.4.

18 Ritner 2008, 177.

order to transform them into swine.[19] In the myth of Arachne, Minerva spells her by shaking a wand, *radius*, three times, here generally understood as a weaving shuttle, in improvised use.[20] Pins also are close in form to nails, which were magical objects *par excellence*, tying and fixing spells. Decorated with an amulet-like finials, hairpins may, hypothetically, have been used in domestic healing and grooming as a semi-magical device, recalling that domestic magical practices were firmly associated with female gender by Roman authors.[21]

However, the primary use of the pin was the grooming of hair. Hypothetically, its particular decorations may have been connected with the great symbolical importance given in the Roman culture to the female hair – in all ancient Mediterranean cultures, hair was a metonymic symbol for the body, and also a *locus* of vital and magical forces. In consequence, controlling, regulating and ordering the hair metonymically symbolized controlling the whole body and its impulses.[22] Whereas the use of cosmetics was mostly condemned by (male) writers, the coiffing of the hair was not similarly criticised; on the contrary, it was the necessary core of female beauty, as is eloquently testified by Apuleius' long *encomium* of the a woman's hair.[23] The assimilation of hair to the whole person was visible also in magical rituals, where locks of hair could be used for erotically enchanting a person.[24]

The ritual and symbolic importance of the gesture of parting a woman's hair was particularly conspicuous in wedding ritual, in which the bride's hair was divided with a specific pointed instrument, the so-called *hasta caelibaris*, 'the nuptial spear'.[25] Although a real combat weapon may (or may not) have been originally used, such a custom was certainly no more in use in the Imperial era.[26] However, the strong magical and symbolic role of the instrument may have been taken up by a special hairpin called by this name, hypothetically one specifically acquired for the occasion. Also, the frequent adoption of the hairpin as an improvised weapon seems to confirm this possible symbolic connection between a pin and a spear. Considering the above evidence, the grooming of the hair at the beginning of the the marriage ceremony, as a *rite du passage*, was clearly a moment that needed specific protection by divine powers. Hypothetically, such gestures might have also have given protection through the particular amulet-like decoration of the instrument used in the ritual.

Figural Motifs on Pompeian Hairpins

In order to understand the ritual, magical and practical meanings of the hairpins, the next step is to sound the significance of their decorations themselves. Notably, their images have many similarities with Roman

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19 *Ter iuvenum baculo tetigit*, Ov. *met*. 14.278, 14.295, 14.300.

20 Ov. *met*. 6.27.

21 For example, Tib. 1.5.41–44, 1.8.17–24, 2.4.55; Prop. 1.1.19–22. See also Luc. *Dial. meret*. 54.1–4.

22 Myerowitz Levine 1995, 80–82, 85–89; Bartman 2001, 1–6.

23 Apul. *met*. 2.8–9.

24 Faraone 1999, 8, 51, 150.

25 Fest. s.v. *caelibaris hasta*, 55.3 (Lindsay p. 55): *caelibari hasta caput nubendis comebatur*. Cf. Ov. *fast*. 2.558–60; Arnob. *nat*. 2.67; Plut. *Quaest. Rom*. 87; Plin. *nat*. 28.34. Sensi 1980/81, 59, sees the *hasta caelibaris* as a symbol, on the one hand, of good fortune and, on the other, of the submission of the bride to the husband. On its use in the marriage ceremony, see Hersch 2010, 80–83. For the different interpretations of the symbolism inherent in this ritual, see La Follette 2001, 60; Fayer 2005, 490–95.

26 Claudius Claudianus in *Epithalamium* (10.284), towards the end of the fourth century CE, describes the nuptial toilet of Venus, who parts her hair, not with a spear but with a pin: *ipsa caput distinguit acu*. Distant echoes of the usage might be seen in the Lombardian bridal hairdo 'sperada', in use up to the twentieth century, decorated with numerous silver hairpins called 'spadine' and pointed earspoons ('spazzaorecchie', 'cugialit').

amuletic pendents.[27] The most complex figurative representations appear on the rare hairpins in fabricated in precious metals, gold or silver, and they mostly refer to the amorous sphere.[28] The rare metallic examples from the Vesuvian area feature miniature figures of Venus and Cupid, and birds (doves), but in some cases also Dionysian wine-craters.[29] The Cupid, holding a (nuptial) torch or wreath in some examples found outside of the Vesuvian area, could suggest a symbolic connection with the marriage ceremony.[30] Even two-figured compositions are known, like the bronze pin with the embracing couple, Cupid and Psyche, from Rome.[31]

Bone hairpins show less complex figural motifs than the metal ones (**Fig. 2**). The most common motif on Pompeian hairpin finials is the hand, with ten examples in this corpus (Cats. 3.1-10).[32] The hand-figure is followed by Venus-statuettes, the most recurrent of which is the standing Venus *Anadyomene* (Cats. 1.1-6). Elsewhere in the Roman world, bone pins with images of Venus *pudica* and Isis-Fortuna also appear.[33] The pin decorated with a female portrait is present in the present *corpus* with two examples (Cats. 2.1-3); further bust-shaped pins belong to the collection of the Naples Museum.[34] Another small group of three examples is constituted by pins ending in a highly stylized hoof of an animal (Cat. 4.1-3).[35] In some cases, the top is decorated with simple mouldings, sometimes as a pine cone, characterized as such by oblique carved lines (Type 5).[36]

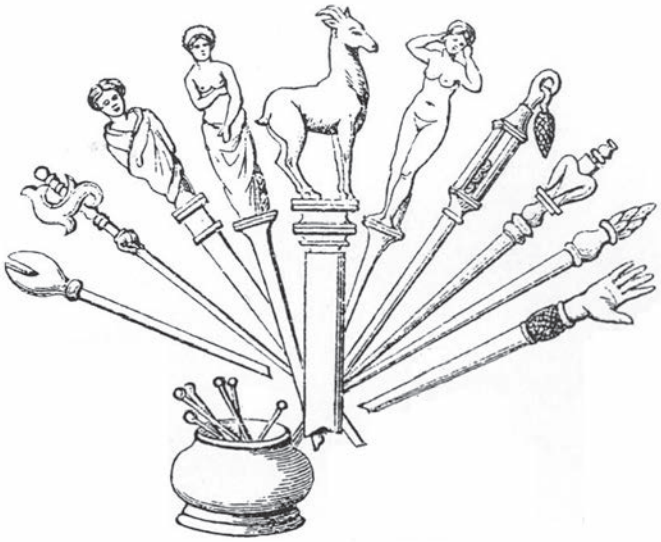

Fig. 2: Select types of Pompeian bone hairpins in the Museum of Naples (After Overbeck – Mau 1884, 453, fig. 252).

27 For the functions of Roman amulets in general, see Bonner 1950; Corti 2001, 71; Maioli 2007, 103; Laforge 2009, 182–83.

28 In the *Digest*, the pins decorated with pearls, *acus cum margarita*, are exceptionally included in jewelry, not in toiletry items (*dig*. 34.2.25.10).

29 Gold and silver pins are extremely rare, making up about 2.4% of hairpins found in the Vesuvian area. One gold example has the form of a bejewelled Cupid holding a wreath, Dyer 1868, 572, fig. 3. d'Ambrosio – De Carolis 1997, 16, 24, 27–28, pl. I, 1–3, catalogue several examples from Pompeii. In silver, three examples present figurative motifs: Cupid on a Corinthian capital, leaning on a downward turned torch (cat. 1, inv. 6031, from I, 8, 14, d'Ambrosio 2001, 50, cat. 3, fig. 4); a dove (cat. 2, inv. 7028, from I 8, 5); a hand (cat. 4, inv. 12997). Two in gold have the finial in the shape of a *crater* or *cantharus*, with an amber inlay inside the vessel (cat. 3, inv. 6028, I 8, 14, d'Ambrosio 2001, 50, cat. 2, fig. 2); the example from the House of Menander, Painter 2001, 74, cat. M125, fig. pl. 29. From Oplontis, villa of Crassius Tertius, room 10, a silver example has the form of female figure enveloped in a mantle, probably Venus, inv. Op. 4625/MANN 74625, d'Ambrosio 2001, 51, cat. 4; Roberts 2013, 294–95, fig. 385.

30 Kleiner – Matheson 1996, 162, cat. 113, from Dura-Europos.

31 Rome, Antiquario Comunale, inv. 1566.

32 Johns 1996, 117; Hall – Wardle 2005, 174; Bartus 2012.

33 For Venus Capitolina or *pudica*, see Virgili 1989, 44, fig. 30. For Isis-Fortuna, from Casa di Sirico, see Niccolini – Niccolini 1854, pl. 1. In Roman Londinum, the hand and the bust are the most frequent images; also images of Venus tying her sandal, Isis-Fortuna and Minerva have been found, Brailsford 1964, cats. 8–9, fig. 4; cats. 10–11, fig. 14; Hall – Wardle 2005, 173 et passim.

34 MANN inv. 77441, from Pompeii. For the hairpins in the collection of the Naples Archaeological Museum, Borriello 1986; Virgili 1989, 44, fig. 30; Ward-Perkins – Claridge 1976, 71; Bartus 2012, 215.

35 Types rarely or never appearing in the Vesuvian area include Riha 1990, 95–114, types 12.4 axe; 12.5 palmette; 12.6 volute; 12.7 with pendants; 12.12 rosette; 12.13 with glass bead; 12.14 with the head covered by gold leaf; 12.15 spiralled shaft and globe head; 12.16 rounded or oval head; 12.17 head in the form of a half globe; 12.21 polyhedric.

36 Most bone pins have non-figurative, geometric decoration at top (rounded, onion-shaped, conical, dodecahedral).

Venus Anadyomene (Pompeii Type 1)

All the six Pompeian pins with Venus finials show the statuary type of the goddess emerging from the sea, wringing water from her hair, originating in the famous painting of Aphrodite *Anadyomene* by Apelles, which is one of the most widely diffused image type of Venus in all minor formats in the Roman world.[37]

The Venus-hairpin seems to be more frequent in Pompeii than elsewhere in the Roman Empire, possibly showing a particular attachment to Venus as the protectress of the city.[38] In Pompeii, Venus was a common figure in wall paintings and larger statuary, but also as small bronze figurines, down to portable amulets.[39] This kind of diminishing series of several Venus figures, all in one house, can be observed, for example, in the Casa del Flamen (V 3, 4).[40] Here, the *lararium* niche in the *atrium*, presiding over the more public area and domestic cult, was painted with a procession of gods, including Venus Pompeiana. In *triclinium d*, together with an altar and the figures of the domestic divinities, the Lares, a marble statuette of Venus *Anadyomene* was conserved.[41] In the principal storage room, *cubiculum c*, among other toiletry instruments, a hair pin with a Venus *Anadyomene* finial was found (Cat. 1.4).[42] This illustrates well the close integration of the divine figures in the pictorial worlds of the house, potentially imbued with cultic significance at all levels.

Another interesting case of Venus figures in a domestic context, as a utensil, a hairpin, and as a portable amulet, can be observed in the house of L. Helvius Severus (I 13, 2). In a rich context of cosmetic and medical instruments found in a cupboard of the atrium, a group of more than forty different amulets also came to light, together with a miniature statuette of baby Hercules (**Fig. 3 a**). Two perforated bone amulets reproduce the Venus *Anadyomene* figure (**Fig. 3 b**).[43] The figure was present also on two bone hairpin finials found in the house (Cat. 1.1 and Cat. 1.2, **Fig. 3 c**). The similarity in material, workmanship, form and size between the Venus figurines on both amulets and hairpins underlines their conceptual unity. In this case, this close and 'tangible' connection between the two categories of objects strongly suggests that the hairpin too could have been conceived of as an amulet attached to the hair, or protecting the very act of grooming. Gaëlle Ficheux has proposed that the Aphrodite *Anadyomene* figure on magical gems, shown lifting and tying her hair, a gesture visualizing the sexual allure of the goddess, may have been a image functional in love magic, symbolizing the amorous 'tying' of the beloved.[44] Such an interpretation should be kept in mind also when interpreting the imagery on the hairpins.

Two further Pompeian houses can be cited as examples of collections of female toiletry items, where the hairpin stands out as the only implement with a figural design. In the Casa di Aurunculeius Secundio,

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37 For such Venus *anadyomene* hairpins, see Bianchi 2013, 107–8, cat. 6.40, with bibliography. For *anadyomene*, see Delivourrias 1984, 150, esp. n. 423–55.

38 Type Béal 1993, A XXI, 10. For other numerous parallels, see Scarpignato 2002, 24.1.

39 On the role of Venus in Pompeian domestic wall-painting, see Brain 2017.

40 *PPM* III, 1047; Kaufmann-Heinimann 1998, 218, fig. 163; Berg 2010.

41 Hand-written *Libretto d'Inventario*, old inv. no. 1864: "Statuetta di Venere Anadiomene di bellissima forma, con la mano destra rotta e che attacca. È corrosa nel lato sinistro, conserva tracce di doratura sulla chioma, nelle braccia, nel petto, in due tenie incrociate e nelle parti genitali, altre tracce molto evanescenti fanno capire che essa era interamente dorata. Poggia su di un piedistallo di forma circolare e la coscia sinistra appoggia ad un vaso piramidale. Altezza senza piedistallo mm. 330, altezza della basetta mm. 35. [Spedizione a Napoli n. 243]". Cf. *NSc* 1899, 267. See also Kaufmann-Heinimann 1998, 218; Bassani 2008, 134.

42 *NSc* 1899, 103, 144–46, 203–15, 340–43; *NSc* 1901, 147, 258–59; Mau 1901, 317–25.

43 Invv. 11599, 11600. Gallo 1994, 144–45, cats. 150–51, pl. 33 E–F; Gallo 1994, 138, cat. 122, pl. 33 A, inv. 11647; Berg 2003, 148–49, fig. 5.

44 Ficheux 2006.

Fig. 3 a: Statuette/amulet in the form of baby Hercules, from the House of Helvius Severus (I 13, 2), inv. 11596 (Photo: Alfredo Foglia © Parco Archeologico di Pompei/Ministero della Cultura).

Fig. 3 b: Amulets from the House of Helvius Severus (I 13, 2), including two Venus *Anadyomene* figures and two hand-shaped talismans (Photo: Luigi Spina © Parco Archeologico di Pompei/Ministero della Cultura).

Fig. 3 c: Finial of a hairpin in the form of Venus anadyomene, from the House of Helvius Severus (I 13, 2), inv. 11514 (Photo: Alfredo Foglia © Parco Archeologico di Pompei/Ministero della Cultura).

a hairpin with a Venus finial (Cat. 1.6) was placed among female toiletry items stored in room (*d*), accompanied by two bronze amulets, an Isis and a female bust.[45] In the Casa degli Origini di Roma, the Venus hairpin was not in storage with the rest of the *mundus muliebris*, but was possibly in use context in *oecus S* (Cat. 1.5).[46]

In sum, the Venus figurines on hairpins undoubtedly allude to beauty as the normative ideal of Roman women, but their tangible closeness, formally and contextually, to similar portable amulets, and the rarity

45 Hand-written *Libretto d'Inventario* (3320 A–B). "Due amuleti; alti cent. 3, rappresentanti l'uno un bustino muliebre la cui chioma è rannodata sulla testa in alto tutulo; (B=55816) l'altro una statuina di Iside, riconoscibile al fiore di loto che ha sul capo e al sistro che ha nella destra. Sono muniti di anelletto per infilarli alla collana." *NSc* 1908, 272, fig. 1; 287–98; Berg 2010; 2017, 20, fig. 4.3; 2018.

46 *NSc* 1902, 275; 1905, 85–97, in part. 92–93; Berg 2010.

of similar decorations on other toiletry items makes them also magical tokens that evoke beneficial forces of growth, fertility and sexuality.

The Female Bust (Pompeii Type 2)

The type of hairpin topped with a female bust, coiffed with elaborate and fashionable hairdo, gained popularity from the end of the first century CE, becoming the dominant type from the second century onwards.[47] In a minority of examples from the Roman world, the bust can be recognized as that of a goddess, in particular when the bust is held by a hand, and characterized by her headdress as Isis or Minerva.[48] The collection of the Archaeological Museum of Naples includes a pin with a hand holding the bust of Serapis, crowned by a *modius*.[49] Although the ideally beautiful female bust might sometimes be interpreted as Venus herself, as a rule, the emphasis on the contemporary style of her hair fashion – never the classical Hellenistic hairdo typical of the representations of the goddess – show that it was rather the woman herself, the owner of the pin, that was portrayed. Among the types of finials, this seems therefore to be the one that is most devoid of cultic significance, and less amuletic in nature, alluring purely to the ideal female beauty as the final result of grooming. Ellen Swift has observed that such pins were self-referential allusions to the construction of the proper image of an elite woman, reserving them for gendered, female use, and they also emphasise the proper role of Roman women "to be appropriately adorned and on show".[50]

Martin Henig has interestingly suggested an interrelation between the portrait bust and ancestral *imagines* that might, however, give this type a more profound reference to death, afterlife and family continuity.[51] A later bone pin double bust with female and male portraits, and, below, the inscribed names *Petronia* and *Florian(u)s*, in the Museo Nazionale Romano (Palazzo Massimo) probably depicts a married couple, and could, again, also indicate that such pins had a particular and symbolical role in the marriage ceremony, perhaps as a nuptial gift.[52] In later Imperial age Ostia, one hairpin has a finial in the form of a young boy, but male representations always remain exceptional rarities.[53] This points, also, to the meaning of the object as an eulogy to the family continuity through a young son, rather than as a mere allegory of youthful beauty.

The Hand (Pompeii Type 3)

In the Pompeian corpus of pins discussed here, the most recurring image is the hand (ten examples).[54] Its meaning as a symbol in the sphere of beauty and grooming is not immediately evident. Mostly, the hand is depicted with index and middle finger raised up, joining with the thumb, in the beneaugural gesture known as the *benedictio latina*. In some cases, the hands are empty, with straight fingers, but mostly they hold a

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47 Von Gonzenbach 1950–51; Béal type A XXI 8; Riha 1990, 99, type 12.1 (12.1.1 bust, 12.1.2 head); Bianchi 1995, 79–80, type v; See also d'Ambrosio 2001, 28. On the evolutions of the type, see, in particular, Stutzinger 1995.

48 For examples in Roman London, see Hall – Wardle 2005, 176, cat. 13, fig. 3.

49 MANN inv. 119433.

50 Swift 2009, 37.

51 Henig 1977, 359–61. For female busts as portraits of empresses, see also Bíró 1999, and Hall – Wardle 2005, 175, cat. 1, a hairpin with a female bust imitating the hairdo of Empress Sabina.

52 Museo Nazionale Romano, Palazzo Massimo. Dated to the second half of the fourth century CE.

53 Ostia, Nuovi depositi, inv. 4301. Berg 2020c, 285, fig. 14, 490, cat. 96, tav. 1. See also Riha 1990, 99, type 12.1.3, with parallels.

54 For further examples have been found in the new excavations of the *Insula* VI.1, Cool 2016, 36–37, fig. 2.8, cat. 47-48.

rounded object.[55] Three of the ten Pompeian hand-pins hold a rounded object, while the remaining seven are broken at the finger tips, and it is impossibl to say whether they originally held anything. In some cases, outside of the Vesuvian area, the sphere is clearly characterized as a pine-cone, apple or a pomegranate, but mostly it is just an undefined, rounded object. Such objects have been interpreted as generic allusions to the gesture of giving a votive gift.[56]

The most recent, and comprehensive classification of such hand-shaped hairpins in the Roman Empire has been made by David Bartus.[57] Recently, Hella Eckardt has also examined the meaning and empire-wide diffusion of such pins, comparing them with other groups of objects decorated with hands, like keys and knife handles.[58] Both Bartus and Eckardt give to the hand symbol a generic apotropaic function, but also compare it with the talismanic hand *par excellence*, the hand-shaped statuette called *mano pantea*, of which seven examples are known from the Vesuvian cities, and some dozens thoughout the Empire.[59] These bronze statuettes in the form of a hand in the *benedictio latina* combine in one object a multitude of magical and beneaugural symbols, *cornucopiae*, snakes, lizards, ram heads, and fruit, and are connected with the oriental cult of Zeus Sabazius, originally a Thracian divinity protector of fertility, assimilated to Dionysus (**Fig. 4**). Sometimes, a woman and a baby are depicted in the lower register of the objects, and therefore such hands have also been interpreted as charms for parturients and mothers; however, the image may plausibly depict the birth of the god himself. Also the snake, always coiling around the hand, may allude to a wish for the geneaological continuity of the family, or to the chthonic double nature of the god. We should note that all the known specimens have the pine cone on the top of the thumb, or they hold it with three fingers; sometimes the snake moves up to reach it.

Could the Pompeian hairpins depict Sabazian hands, and profess trust in this deity? Some similar bone pins with hands from Sardinia and Cyprus have, very hypothetically, been considered by E.N. Lane as distinctive signs worn by Sabazius' priests.[60] The link between pins and Sabazian hands is enforced by the fact that the the latter may originally have been attached on top of poles and carried on processions – making the hairpins visually true miniature versions of such ritual equipment. Bartus notes that in some Roman hairpins the coiled snake is, in fact, carved as a real reptile, not as a bracelet, reaching upwards to eat the ob-

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55 The hand is type 12.2 in the classification of Riha 1990, 99, cat. 1367–71, pl. 40. J.-C. Béal has divided the hand-pins in six groups, se Béal 1983, 224–27: A XXI 2: outstretched fingers, A XXI 3: *benedictio latina*, A XXI 4: twisted shaft, A XXI 5: elongated object in the hand, A XXI 6: snake on the wrist, A XXI 7: holding a small writing-tablet. Hilary Cool has classified the hand pins from Roman Britain as her type 7, subdividing between those of a flattish appearance, in which an object is held by two fingers (A) from the other, mone three-dimensional ones (B). See Cool 1990, 157, fig. 5. For the significance and types of the hand symbol in hairpins from Roman London, see also Hall – Wardle 2005, 174, 177–78. Besides the bone pins, one exceptional example in bronze, in the shape of a hand holding a rounded object, has been reported by Della Corte, *NSc* 1913, 31, fig. 3, found on 13.1.1913, in the *tablinum* of House I VI, 4, together with the remains of a decorated box and gold jewellery.

56 Arthur 1977; Riha 1990, 99; Bartus 2012; Bianchi 2013, 108, cat. 6.42; Eckardt 2014, 171. Von Gonzenbach also proposed the possibility that the hand had have no specific meaning, but was simply a receptacle for decorative beads, since some examples with inserted beads in different material have been found in Vindonissa, see Von Gonzenbach 1950–51, 14; Bartus 2012, 211.

57 Bartus 2012, 206–8, gives them a two-level classification, firstly for the form and position of the hand, and the object held (types 1–8) and secondly according to the decoration of the wrists (types A–H), which in his material give 30 different combinations. For the chronology of the hand-pins, pp. 209–10: 1: empty hand with outstretched fingers, 2: index and thumb hold an object, the other fingers straight, 3: thumb, index and middle hold a globular object, other two fingers closed to the palm, 4: holding a pomegranate, 5: holding a pinecone, 6: holding a rectangular object (writing tablet), 7: holding a female bust, 8: holding other objects (shelll, comb, mirror, pot, wreath, bird); A: undecorated wrist, B: simple bracelet consisting of incised lines, C: net patterns, D: bead-and-reel, E: flower-cup, F: collar with grooved decoration, G: snake-bracelet, H: realistic snake, reaching the object held in the hand.

58 Eckardt 2014, 158–59. See also Riha 1990, 99.

59 For an example found in the so-called Casa del Chirurgo at Rimini, together with the medical *instrumentarium*, see Maioli 2007, 103 and Ortalli – Neri 2007, 202, cat. 89, with further bibliography. For the symbolic connections of the *mano pantea* with hairpins, see Eckardt 2014, 166.

60 Lane 1989, 36; Vermaseren 1983.

Fig. 4: A Sabazian hand from the Vesuvian area (After: G. Carafa, *Alcuni monumenti del Museo Carrafa*, Napoli 1778).

ject (pine-cone, egg) held in the hand (his type H), creating a direct parallel to the iconography of the *mano pantea*.[61] However, the absence of other, exclusively Sabazian symbols, like frogs and lizards, and the rarity of pinecones on hairpins makes it more probable that although they partly refer to a common iconographical *koinè* of fertility symbols, the pins are not to be read as distinctive signs of this cult.

Only two examples from Pompeii depict a snake bracelet around the wrist. Snake bracelets can obviously also be more generically connected with the cult of Isis and Dionysus, which remains a more plausible reference also for the Pompeian hand-formed hairpins. However, the close similarity of the hairpins to the *mano pantea* seems to strengthen their connotation of magical talismans and charms.

The hand-pins must also be compared with portable amulets in the shape of a hand, which are stock figures of magical charms in the Mediterranean context.[62] The hand-shaped amulets are not, however, shown in the gesture of *benedictio latina*. In most cases, the gesture is the so-called *manus impudica*, depicted as a fist with the thumb between index and middle fingers, a strong apotropaic gesture of sexual reference, used to avert the evil eye (**Fig. 5 a**).[63] It is notable that hairpins almost never show such indecent gestures.[64] Amulets can also take the shape of an empty hand with straight fingers, in an averting gesture, as in one example in bone, pierced for suspension at the wrist, that comes from Herculaneum; in Egypt, such amulets are relatively common, and this form also appears on hairpins (**Fig. 5 b**).[65]

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61 For the Sabazian interpretation of the hand pins, see Bartus 2012.

62 For the symbolism of the hand motif, and its use in various categories of utensils, see Eckhardt 2014, 153–72.

63 For the evil eye, see Maioli 2007, 104–5.

64 One exceptional Pompeian object must be mentioned here: a *manus impudica* in silver, without exact provenience, that, according to d'Ambrosio and De Carolis, may have been either an amulet, or the finial of a hairpin, d'Ambrosio – De Carolis 1007, 28, cat. 4, tav. 1, inv. 12997. Cf. a *manus impudica* amulet in gold, Marshall 1911, 353, cat. 2964, pl. LXVIII; Greifenhagen 1975, 30, pl. 24,1; Atasoy 1974, 262, cat. 22, pl. 52, fig. 7.

65 Scatozza Höricht 1989, 82–83, cat. E 3101 G; 72–73, cat. E 177, from the Casa a graticcio III 13–15. In Egypt, the meaning of this figure seems to be to offer protections from humans, whereas the image of the crocodile protected from animals, Lesko 2008, 199.

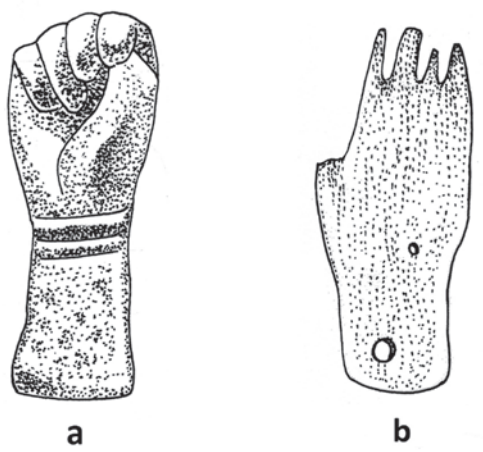

Fig. 5: Hand-shaped bone amulets from Herculaneum: a) *manus impudica*, b) open hand (Drawings: Author after Scatozza Höricht 1989, 73, cat. 139 and 82, cat. 181).

Numerous hand-shaped amulets have been found in Pompeii. Four hand amulets of different types, for example, come from the above-mentioned collection of over 40 amulets in the Casa di L. Helvius Severus (I 13, 2), where two Venus amulets were also present: a *manus impudica* in amber, and one in bone, in combination with a phallus,[66] an amulet in the shape of a hand with straight fingers and one representing two hands united (*dextratum iunctio*).[67] Another example of a collection of 44 amulets, together with a rich context of female toiletry items, is the group of pendants found in House V 3, 11, which included three *manus impudicae*.[68] It also included a bone hairpin, topped by a hand holding an object recognized as a script roll.[69]

The contextual closeness and material similarities between the portable tokens and the hairpins suggests that we should read both as amuletic objects. In the case of the hand, the parallelism is, however, not as direct as in the case of Venus figures: the *manus impudica* hardly ever appears on hairpins, and amulets in the form of a hand in the *benedictio latina* gesture are extremely rare. The meaning and 'sphere of action' of the two types of amuletic objects therefore seem to be neatly differentiated.

Neither the Sabazian cult, nor the generic apotropaic meaning, then, offer quite satisfactory explanations for the iconography of the hand-shaped hairpins. Turning, again, to the objects held by the hand, completing the Pompeian corpus with examples from different parts of the Roman Empire, the hand can hold a series of different toiletry items: combs, mirrors, shells, unguent bottles, or doves.[70] In these cases, as several scholars have noted, objects clearly belonging to the *mundus muliebris* easily connect the hairpin to its use in grooming and to the the Aphrodisian sphere. Ellen Swift has observed how the woman, holding such a pin in the form of a hand holding a further toiletry instrument, performs an act of mimesis.[71] The roundish object held by the hand could represent a sponge, and it could actually have been used as a spatula to apply cosmetic substances, thus making reality and representation intertwine.

The rectangular object sometimes appearing on the finial, with or without a hand, defined as a writing tablet, seems to refer to a different sphere.[72] This is no sacred or votive item, nor a toiletry instrument, and, as I have said, it is possible that in some cases the object was also used as a *stylus* for writing, and its flat side used to erase the text from the tablet.[73] However, interpreting such a wax-tablet as a love-letter or marriage contract would, again, connect this symbol too to the Aphrodisian sphere.

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66 Berg 2003, 148. Inv. 11605 in amber, Gallo 1994, 172, cat. 227; inv. 11529 in bone, 146, cat. 156, pl. 34B.

67 Berg 2003, 148. Invv. 11604, Gallo 1994, 145–46, cat. 155; inv. 11605, Gallo 1994, 145, cat. 154.

68 Inv. 29488/512. Venditto 2006, 215, cat. III.137.

69 *NSc* 1902, 370. *Libretto d'Inventario*, Pompeii, old inv. 2665. "Ago crinale con manina umana che presenta graziosamente un oggetto irriconoscibile forse un libercolo [spedizione a Napoli no. 253]."

70 Bartus 2012.

71 Swift 2009, 37.

72 Hand holding a tablet is Béal type A XXI 7. An example from the Vesuvian area is a pin with a hand holding a small rectangular object with all fingers straight, in the MANN, inv. 119429.

73 Bertrand 2008, 115, fig. 19.

Fig. 6: The *dextrarum iunctio* between Vinicius Corinthus and Vinicia Tyche; the latter is holding an apple or a pomegranate. Funerary altar at the Museo archeologico di Firenze, Augustan age (From: Wikimedia Commons, Sailko, CC BY-SA 3.0).

In the three Pompeian pins that hold a rounded object, it is a rectangle with rounded corners, rather than a perfect circle; it is wider horizontally, and therefore not similar to an egg or a pine-cone. An apple is a plausible interpretation.

An apple, as an attribute, is also held by several statues of Venus, as a trophy of the victorious Venus in the beauty contest of the goddesses.[74] As the fruit preferred by Venus, it was sometimes given as a symbolic engagement and marriage gift in Greece, and the tradition was known also in Rome.[75] In some Roman marriage scenes, the woman is shown holding an apple in her left hand. For example, in a relief in the Museo archeologico di Firenze, datable to the early Imperial age, a couple is shown holding hands; the man also holds a roll, and the woman an apple or a pomegranate (**Fig. 6**).[76] Similarly, in a funerary relief of a couple in *dextrarum iunctio*, found in the area of the Case a Giardino in Ostia, the woman holds an apple.[77] This might refer to an actual offering of the fruit during the marriage ceremony, and more generically to love, beauty and fertility as ingredients of the marital concord.[78] Notably, in three Pompeian hand-pins with the rounded object, the left hand is depicted, as in the case of the apple in the marriage scenes.

It must also be remembered that the hands also had a central symbol role in the Roman marriage ceremony. They were literary symbols of the marriage bond, beginning with the expressions *cum manu* or *sine manu*, and in particular, the gesture of *dextrarum iunctio*, or the symbolical joining of the hands, is often represented on rings and gemstones. In wedding scenes, the spouses are mostly shown holding their right hands, while the groom may hold in his left a roll or tablet, referring to the marriage contract.

In conclusion, the iconography of the hand on hairpins is clearly distict from the hand amulets that are more strongly apotropaic in character. In Pompeii, the rounded object held in the hand could plausibly be an apple, connecting these pins too to the Aphrodisian sphere, representing the hand of the bride or of Venus herself, who will assist in the marriage preparations, or commemorate and protect the bond afterwards.

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74 For example, a bronze statuette in the Metropolitan Museum inv. 97.22.4, showing nude Aphrodite with an apple in her left hand, held with three fingers, datable to first–second century CE. For the round object interpreted as an apple, see Bartus 2012, 212.

75 Catull. 65.19: *missum sponsi furtive munere malum*; Propertius putting an apple in the hands of sleeping Cynthia, 1.3.24–26. For apples as engagement or wedding gifts and aphrodisiacs in the Greek world, see Faraone 1990, 219; 1999, 69–73.

76 Inv. 13831. Kleiner 1987, 130–2, pl. 14, 1–4.

77 Ostia Antiquarium, inv. 5, 140–150 CE.

78 It has been proposed that rather than the actual ceremony, these images may represent marital harmony in general, Hersch 2010, 205–6, 209–11.

The Hoof and the Pine-cone (Pompeii Types 4 and 5)

Two further figurative motifs are present on Pompeian bone pins: the hoof and the pine-cone, both probably allusive to the Dionysian sphere. The hoof shape is present in Pompeian pins with three examples, but is quite rare outside of the Vesuvian area (Cats. 4.1-3).[79] In Riha's material from Kaiseraugst, only one is present and she proposes to it a clear apotropaic function.[80] From Pompeii, some examples of spoons with the handle ending in a hoof are known.[81]

If interpreted as a pig's hoof, the image would accord with the motifs of pine-cone and snake, which are reminiscent of elements present on painted domestic *lararium* altars to celebrate the generative forces of the family unit and the wish for abundant food reserves.[82] These images also show snakes, interpreted alternatively as *genius* spirits of the patron of the house, or as the *genius loci* of the house itself, coiling around an altar to reach a pine cone on its top. Interestingly, in the *lararium* pictures, a whole leg of pork with other types of meat is often depicted, a figure with a close parallel among bone amulets.[83] Although the connection between hoof and pine-cone pins and *lararium* painting is not direct, this may have added another interpretative layer, referring to the images of domestic well-being.

Given its delicate shape, the small small cloven hoof is, however, more probably that of a goat or a deer, rather than a pig's trotter. Both goat and deer would add to the number of Dionysiac attributes present on these items, as animals accompanying the god in the *thiasus*, and as skins worn by maenads (*nebris*), or referring to the feet of Pan/Faunus. In myth, goat and Faun symbolize unbound sexual forces of nature, or else (less probably) it might refer to the goat Amalthea nursing baby Zeus.

As I have mentioned above, in some cases the handpin may also have had a Bacchic meaning, since the snake bracelet is more commonly worn by Bacchic maenads than by Venus, and the hand holding a pine-cone also leads us to this sphere.[84] The rare golden hairpins with wine craters also must refer to Bacchus. Furthermore, the *benedictio latina* is similar to the gesture of *aposkopein*, often performed by members of the Dionysian *thiasus*, to express surprise, awe, and apotropaic self-protection in front of frightful sights. The maenads with dishevelled hair would hardly seem good examples of the use of hairpins and grooming; but the happy union between Bacchus and Ariadne, and the Dionysian natural abundance, growth and plenty are more likely to be the references sought-for here.

Finally, a number of pins are topped simply by an onion-shaped finial, resembling a pine-cone, decorated by criss-crossed incisions.[85] Besides the above-mentioned Sabazian references, a clear parallelism, once again, exists between the form of these pins and the primary Dionysian symbol, the *thyrsus* wand, a phallic symbol topped by a vegetal cone.[86] We should note that one of the most ubiquitous among the lucky charms of the Roman world, the phallus, is found extremely rarely on hair pins; it might be only hinted at in

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79 Two additional examples from the new excavations of the *Insula* VI.1 have been published by Cool 2016, 36–37, fig. 2.8, cat. 49.

80 Riha 1990, 100, type 12.3.3 (hoof), with only one example.

81 Two from the house of Helvius Severus, inv. 11634, 11644; Gallo 1994, 132, pl. 30, B, C; 140.

82 Adamo Muscettola 1996, 175–76.

83 According to Lane, this amulet type has a Sabazian connection, Lane 1989, 36.

84 Reportedly, from Casa del Sacello Iliaco (I 6, 4), from a cupboard in the atrium, a bone pin with a hand holding a pine-cone was found, *NSc* 1913, 34, fig. 7. Cf. Bartus 2012, 216.

85 For the type, see Béal 1983a, 221–23, type A XXI.1 (pine-cone a) on a convex or concave element b) on disc); Riha 1990, 101–2; Bianchi 1995, 76–78, type t; Bianchi 2013, 109, cat. 6.44.

86 Pine cone for example in Scarpignato 2002, 24.2.

the veiled form of the pine-cone, in contrast with the more straightforward images on portable amulets.[87] In any case, the pine-cone can be read as a further syncretic fertility symbol, which, as well as other nuts and fruits, often appears on portable amulets too.

Conclusion: Instrument, Amulet, or Both?

In conclusion, the hairpin is an object very intriguingly situated on the borderline between amulets and utensils. Catherine Johns proposed a threefold significance of decorated hairpins for their wearer: as practical devices for maintaining a fashionable hairstyle, as decorative embellishments to the hair, and as symbols of good fortune.[88] On the basis of this short cross-section of the imagery on Roman hairpins, more emphasis can be put on their cultic meaning in the family context, and the discourse elaborated somewhat further.

Hairpins with images are more than simple symbols of fortune. They can be interpreted as veritable amulets incorporated into toilet implements. The amulet (*ligamentum*) is by definition a mobile object, tied to the human body, or to animals, vehicles or doors, etc.; the talismanic decoration on a hairpin shares this connection with movement. It could be attached to the hairdo as a protection, but it could also protect the performance of a daily female gesture, the grooming of the hair. Many amulet types are, indeed, identical with the hairpin finials, but there are also significant differences: whereas amulets often act as an aggressive defence against the evil eye and similar undesirable malign forces, often through obscene elements, the pins concentrate on calling forth good fortune and protective forces (**Fig. 7**). In this pantheon of divinities, Venus has the most prominent presence, flanked by Dionysus, with a link also to his parallel god, Sabazios. Since the combination of different cultic elements is never consistent or completely univocal, the pins are more probably syncretistic compilations of symbols of fertility, plenty and fortune, cross-referring and converging in the cult of the family *genius* and of all procreative forces.

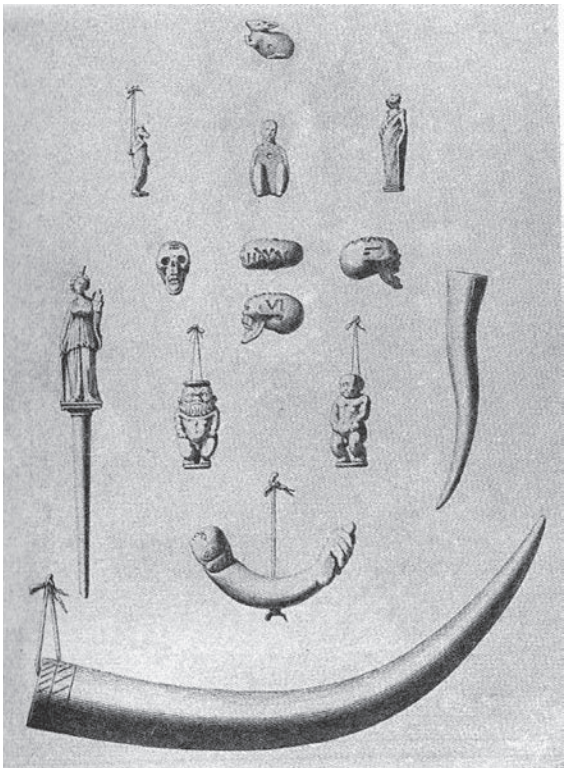


Fig. 7: A hairpin with Isis-Fortuna finial and amulets from Pompeii in the collections of the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, engraving (After Pagano – Prisciandaro 2006, 346, fig. 138).

As I have noted above, the hairpin with an amulet finial could even be likened to wands or nails as magical devices; besides this a function in love magic has been proposed for the *Anadyomene* figure. This further underlines the magical qualities attributed to pointed objects, if only in helping the matron's daily transformation through grooming, or also in performing actual love magic.

87 For a phallus-shaped hairpin from Roman London, see Hall – Wardle 2005, 178, cat. 22, fig. 6.

88 Johns 1996, 115.

Many symbols on the more complex pins point to nuptial imagery – the Cupid with a torch, the paired bust of the couple, even the hand holding an apple. This may be connected with a role in arranging the hairdo of the married matron, creating and maintaining her proper role and image, but especially with the wedding as a *rite du passage* that needed the evocation of generative family fortune.

The category of decorated hairpins could even be putatively identified as the *hasta caelibaris*, the proverbial 'spear' with which the bride's hair was symbolically parted. This event would have been the first time that a girl's hair was combed up and coiffed in a complex hairdo. Such a pin might, hypothetically, also have been given as a nuptial gift.

In sum, the hairpin as a domestic utensil performed several everyday practical gestures of body care, but also other improvised daily operations, where a pointed instrument was needed, like writing, applying substances, or even in personal defence. As an amulet, it offered specific symbolic protection to the act of grooming the female hair, a locus of multiple magical beliefs, and by extension, of the body, the family unit and its continuity, and, in particular, the marriage. Ancient authors suggest, as a *topos*, that women, in family ritual, tended to use methods verging on magic. Such objects may therefore be tangible evidence of women's less-known and otherwise undocumented roles in domestic cultic practice.

Catalogue of Figured Bone Hairpins in the Archaeological Storerooms of Pompeii

1 Hairpins with Venus Anadyomene

1.1 Fig. 8. Inv. 11514. Dimensions: L 6.7+. Condition: Broken ca. one cm below the decorated top, shaft and the pointed end missing. Description: At finial, a stylized Venus *Anadyomene*, draped at waist. Discovery: House of L. Helvius Severus I 13, 2, in a cupboard in the atrium, in 21.10.1955.

1.2 Fig. 8. Inv. 11647. Dimensions: L 12.7+. Condition: Slightly flaked at tip. Description: Highly stylized Venus *Anadyomene*, of an overall rectangular form, showing a radiate diadem at head, navel, horizontal lines to indicate mantle at waist. Two horizontal incisions separate the figure from the shaft.
Discovery: House of L. Helvius Severus, I 13, 2, *cubiculum* at the south side of the atrium. Together with a thumb-shaped spatula, 11648 A. Bibliography: D'Ambrosio 2001, 28, cat. 17, fig. 17; Stefani 2004, 48.

1.3 Fig. 9–10. Inv. 18384. Dimensions: L 9.0+. Condition: Broken at tip; the head and the upper arms of the Venus figure are missing. Description: Two horizontal lines at waist indicate a mantle, three vertical lines mark the folds of the drapery in front. At the right side, a flanking object might be a stylized vase (*hydria*). Discovery: ? Bibliography: Berg 2017a, 214, fig. 2.

1.4 Fig. 9–10. Inv. 54142 (=old 1815). Dimensions: L 10.2. Condition: Intact. Description: Strongly stylized Venus anadyomene, with rounded head, two short horizontal lines at the waist, and one vertical line at the front, either division of legs of simple drapery line. At the right side, a flanking object might be a stylized vase (hydria). Discovery: In the so-called house of the Flamen, V 4, 3, room c (at the right side of the entrance) on 30.4.1899. Berg 2017a, 214, fig. 2.

1.5 Fig. 9–10. Inv. 55546 (= old 3048). Dimensions: L 9.6+. Condition: The shaft broken and lower part missing; the head and upper arms of Venus figure are missing. Description: The workmanship of the Venus figure is more accurate: the belly and the breasts are anatomically shaped, with the navel, two neat horizontal drapery lines at the waist, the mantle is carefully draped in several folds. At the right side, a flanking object might be stylized vase (*hydria*). Between the figure and the shaft, there are two rings. Discovery: In the so-

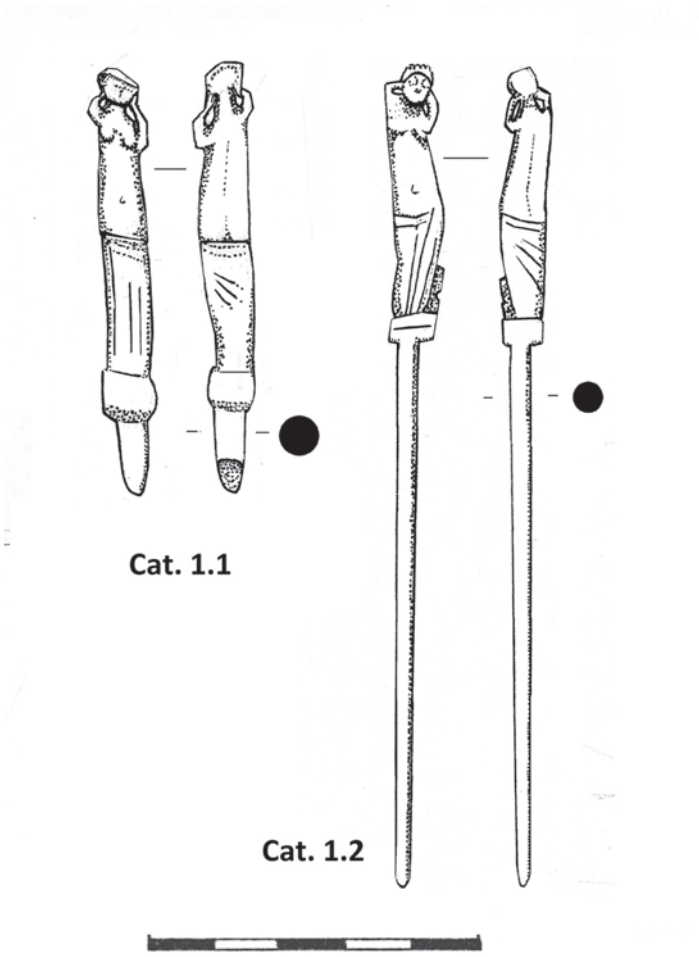


Fig. 8: Two hairpins with Venus-shaped finials, House of L. Helvius Severus. Archaeological storerooms of Pompei (Drawing: Author).

Fig. 9: Hairpins with Venus finials, Pompeii (Photo: Author © Parco archeologico di Pompei/Ministero della Cultura).

so-called Casa degli Origini di Roma, V 4, 13, in 23.5.1903. Bibliography: Berg 2017a, 214, fig. 2; Berg 2020b, 213, fig. 8.17.

1.6 **Fig. 9–10.** Inv. 55879 (=3354B). Dimensions: L 14.4. Condition: Heavily worn and pitted on all surfaces; otherwise intact. Description: Very stylized, angularly carved figure. Two horizontal lines mark the waist, and one vertical line at the front, either division of legs of simple drapery line. At right side, a flanking object might be stylized vase (hydria). Between the figure and the shaft, there are two rings. Discovery: In the casa di L. Aurunculeius Secundio (VI 16, 32), room D, 27 June 1904. Together with Cat. 5.3. Bibliography: G. Stefani in Cappelli 1992, 132, cat. 13; Berg 2017a, 214, fig. 2; Berg 2017 b, 19-20, fig. 4.6.

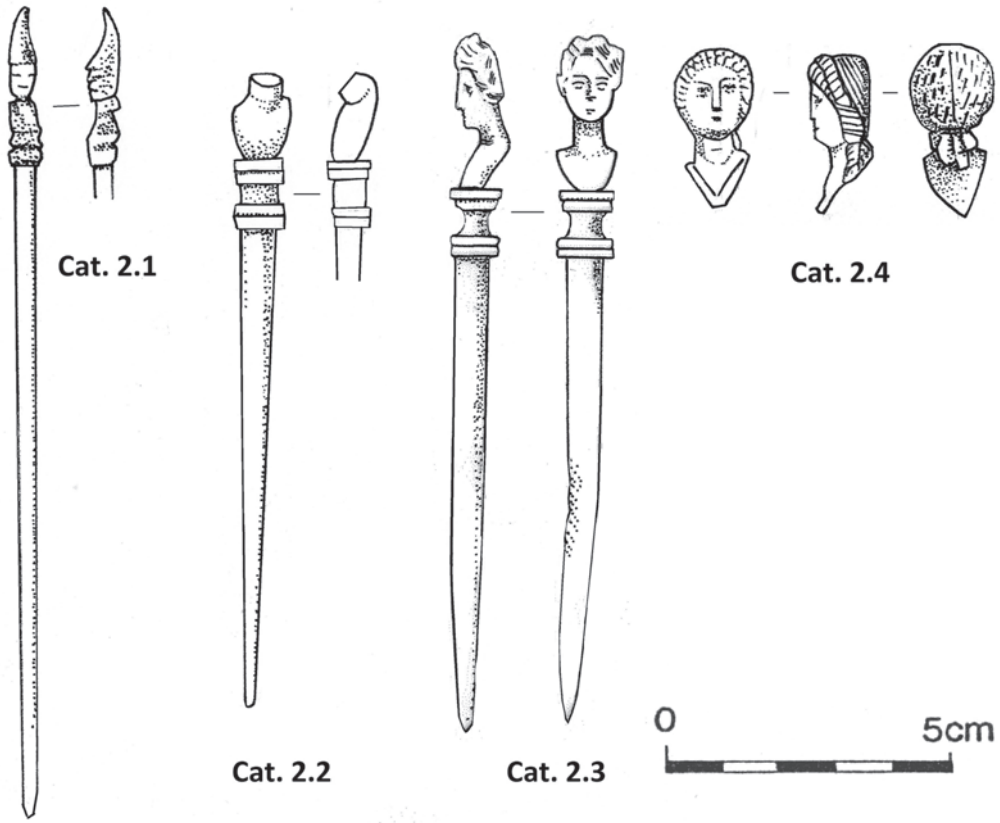
2 Hairpins with Busts

2.1 Inv. 501. **Fig. 11.** Dimensions: L 13.0. Condition: The tip of the hat is broken, otherwise intact. Description: Very stylized head and bust, wearing a tall, pointed, slightly curved headgear. The shaft is slightly curving. Discovery: Tomb of Aesquilia Polla (necropolis of the Nola Gate), 1909. Cf. a similar hairpin in Bianchi 2013, 109, cat. 6.45.

2.2 Inv. 573. **Fig. 11.** Dimensions: L 10.0. Condition: Portrait bust with head missing, broken at the neck, just below the chin. The pointed end is integrally preserved. Description: The cubic portrait base, with

Fig. 10: Hairpins with Venus finials (back), Pompeii (Photo: Author © Parco archeologico di Pompei/Ministero della Cultura).

Fig. 11: Hairpins with bust shaped finials. Archaeological storerooms of Pompeii (Drawing: Author).



two rectangular cordons at the top of the shaft, is decorated by two horizontal mouldings at base and at top. Discovery: Found outside the Vesuvian Gate, in 1909. Parallels: Hall – Wardle 2005, cat. 2, fig. 2.

2.3. Inv. 12244. **Fig. 11.** Dimensions: L 11.0. Condition: Intact, the surface worn and colored greenish. Description: At top, female bust with a Flavian hairdo. Discovery: I 14, 13. Bibliography: d'Ambrosio 2001, 28, cat. 18; Stefani 2004, 48; Roberts 2013, 135-36, fig. 148.

2.4 Inv. Op 74984. **Fig. 11.** Dimensions: H 2.9+. Condition: Only the decorative finial is conserved. Description: Female bust with a hairdo showing a line of curls along the forehead and over the ears, at the back the hair is tied in a low, hanging bun. Claudian-Neronian hairstyle. Discovery: Oplontis, Villa B, room 10, 15.6.1984. Cf. Stutzinger 1995, 160, fig. 12, cat. 13 (Hamburg, Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe, Inv.1921.326).

Fig. 12: Hairpins with hand-shaped finials (Photo: Author © Parco archeologico di Pompei/Ministero della Cultura).

3 Hairpins with Hand

3.1 Inv. 370. **Fig. 12–13.** Dimensions: L 9.9. Condition: Index and middle finger of the hand broken at the tip. The pin is also broken at the tip. Description: Probably the right hand, with three upraised, straight fingers. Discovery: Found in the Tomb of Arellia Tertulla (necropolis of the Vesuvian Gate), in 1909. Comments: Bartus 2012, type 3 A.

3.2 Inv. 397 B. **Fig. 12–13.** Dimensions: L 10.4+. Condition: The tip is broken. Description: At the top, the right hand, with all the fingers straight and upraised, holding an oval object with two diagonal stripes at each side. Discovery: Found outside the Vesuvian Gate, in 1909. Comments: Bartus 2012, type 2 A.

3.3 Inv. 1992. **Fig. 12–13.** Dimensions: L 10.1+. Description: Point broken and missing. Pitting at the wrist and at the upper end of the shaft. Description: The top in the form of a right hand, with thumb, index and middle fingers raised to hold a circular object, the other two fingers bent down. Discovery: Found in house II 2, 5 in 1914. Bibliography: d'Ambrosio 2001, 27, cat. 14, fig. 14. Comments: Bartus 2012, type 2 A.

3.4 Inv. 10716 A. **Fig. 13.** Dimensions: L 12.5. Condition: The finger tips broken and missing. Description: Probably a right hand, with three upraised and two bent fingers. Brown colouring at the middle and at the tip of the shaft. Discovery: Casa del Larario di Ercole (II 1, 9), room 1, near the *lararium*, on 1.4.1954. 'Un ago crinale desinente in un estremo a punta ed all'altra a mano umana reggendo forse una piccola sfera deteriorata. Lungh. rispettive m. 0,135 a m. 0,09.' Comments: Bartus 2012, type 2 A.

3.5 Inv. 13288. **Fig. 13–14.** Dimensions: L 10.5+. Condition: All the fingers are broken at the tip. Broken at the pointed end. Description: Finely carved right hand with upright straight fingers, the thumb straight

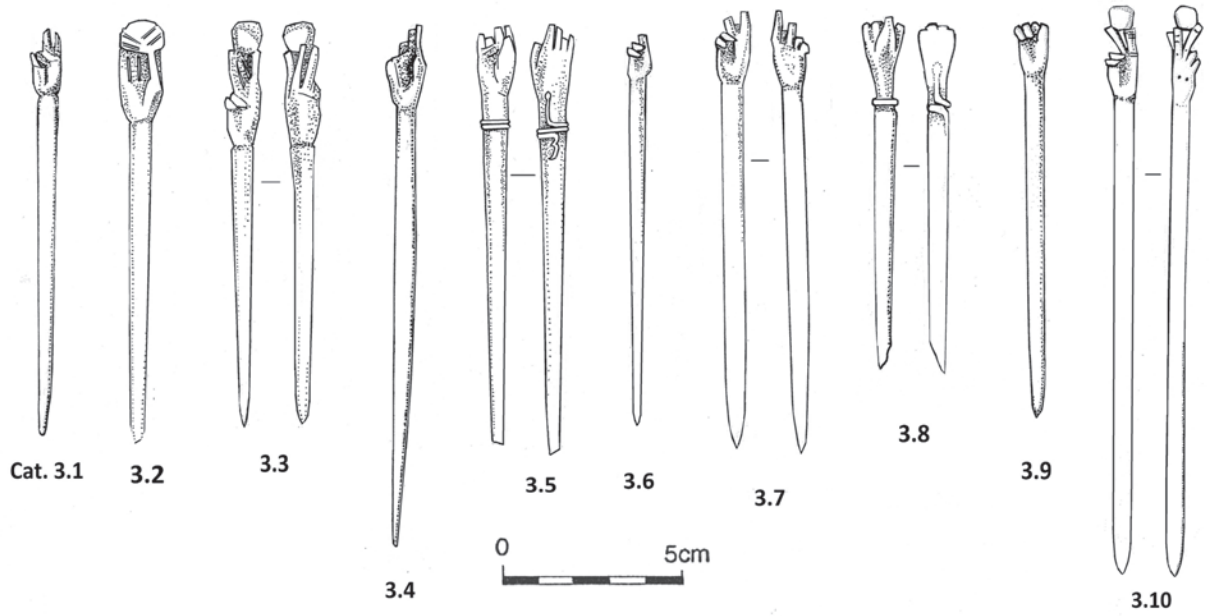


Fig. 13: Hairpins with hand-shaped finials (Drawing: Author).

Fig. 14: Hairpin with elaborately shaped hand-finial wearing a snake-bracelet, Cat. 3.5. (Photo: Author © Parco archeologico di Pompei/Ministero della Cultura).

up and four fingers slightly bent backwards. A snake bracelet is coiled twice around the wrist, the head of the snake is raised vertically towards the back of the hand. An example in Museum of Gloucester, of very similar style and workmanship, holds a pine-cone. Discovery: House I 12, 6, room at the left side of the fauces, in 10.4.1961. Bibliography: D'Ambrosio 2001, 27, cat. 15, fig. 15; Stefani 2004, 48. Comments: Bartus 2012, type 2 G.

3.6 Inv. 18378. **Fig. 13.** Dimensions: L 9.1. Condition: The shaft is broken in two pieces. The tips of the uplifted fingers are broken and missing. The shaft is coloured dark toward the tip. Description: Right hand with three fingers raised (thumb, index and middle finger) and two lowered. Discovery: ? Comments: Probably Bartus 2012, type 3 A.

3.7 Inv. 53714 (=1317). **Fig. 12–13.** Dimensions: L 11.1. Condition: Slightly broken at the finger tips. Description: Right hand with three fingers raised (thumb, index, middle), and two lowered. A strong groove separated the thumb at the palm of the hand. Discovery: Found in house VI 15, 2, on 17.10.1897. Comments: Bartus 2012, type 3 A.

3.8 Inv. 53884 (=1545). **Fig. 12–13.** Dimensions: L 8.7+. Condition: Broken at the pointed end. The fingers are mostly broken. Description: Right hand with two upraised fingers, kept apart; slightly protruding thumb. A snake bracelet is coiled around the wrist, with the head of the snake raised at the back of the hand. Discovery: Found in house VI 15, 12, on 14.10.1898. Comments: Bartus 2012, type 3 G.

3.9 Inv. 55348 (=2908). **Fig. 12–13.** Dimensions: L 9.5+. Condition: Fragmented at tip; the fingers are broken. Strongly pitted at the decorated end. Description: Right hand with three fingers raised (thumb,

Fig. 15: Hairpins with hoof-shaped finials (Photo: Author © Parco archeologico di Pompei/Ministero della Cultura).

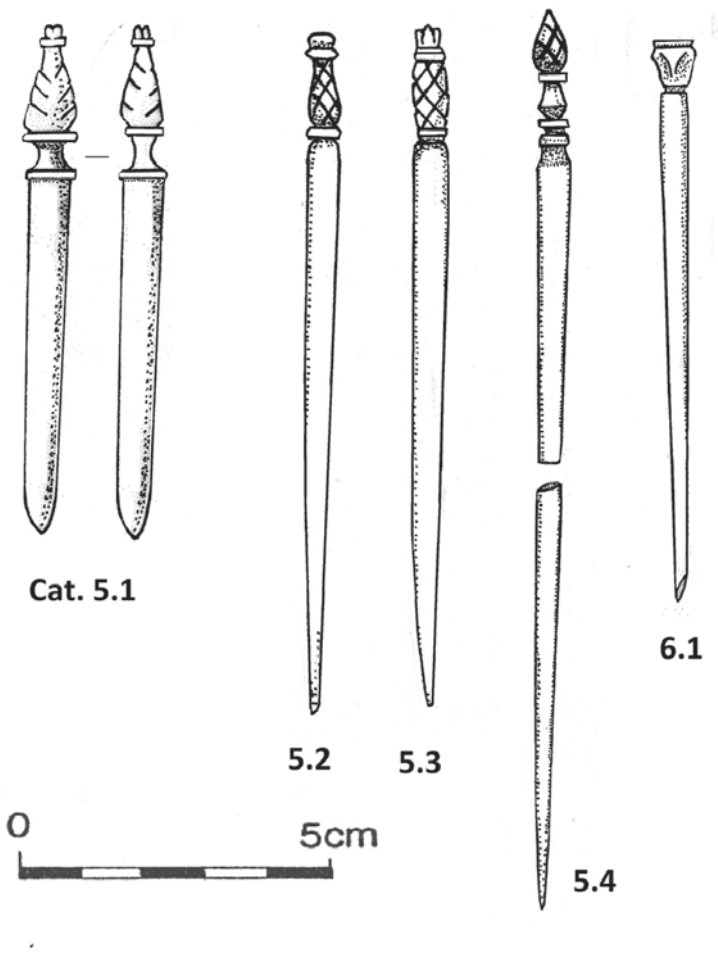


Fig. 16: Hairpins with pine-cone shaped finials (Drawing: Author).

index, middle), and two lowered. Discovery: Found in house V 4, 13, on 3.4.1903. Comments: Bartus 2012, type 3 A.

3.10 Inv. 55494 (=2998 A). **Fig. 13.** Dimensions: L 14.1. Condition: Intact. Description: Thin, sharply pointed pin with a hand finial. The right hand holds a rounded object with three outstretched fingers, two fingers are bent. On the back of the hand, the wrinkles and dimples are marked with incision; on the top of the rounded object an incision gives it an apple-like shape. Discovery: V 1, 32. Bibliography: Stefani 2004, 48. Comments: Bartus 2012, type 3 A.

4 Hairpins with Hoofs

4.1 Inv. 305. **Fig. 15.** Dimensions: L 9.7. Condition: Integrally preserved. Description: Straight, rather thick shaft, with a finial in the form of a caprine hoof. Discovery: Outside of the Vesuvian Gate, in 1908.

4.2 Inv. 388. **Fig. 15.** Dimensions: L 12.8. Condition: Integrally preserved. Description: Finial in the form of a caprine hoof, on the top of a convex element distinguished by two deep grooves. Discovery: Outside of the Vesuvian Gate, in 1909.

4.3 Inv. 1087. **Fig. 15.** Dimensions: L 9.3. Condition: Integrally preserved. Description: Finial in the form of a caprine hoof, on the top of a convex element distinguished by two deep grooves. Discovery: *Insula* I 7, upper strata, in 1911.

5 Hairpins with Pine-Cones

5.1 Inv. 13290 A. **Fig. 16.** Dimensions: L 7.6. Condition: Complete. Description: Short, thick pin, with the finial decorated with mouldings, at top a pine-cone decorated with diagonal incisions. Discovery: House I 12, 6, room at the left side of the fauces, in 10.4.1961. Bibliography: D'Ambrosio 2001, 28, cat. 16, fig. 16.

5.2 Inv. 54148 (=1825). **Fig. 16.** Dimensions: L 10.2+. Condition: Broken at tip. Description: At the finial, a cone-shaped narrowing element decorated with crossed, incised lines. Below, two grooved lines, above, two protruding ledges. Discovery: In the House V 4, 5, in 1899.

5.3 55878 (=3354 A). **Fig. 16.** Dimensions: L 10.1+. Conditions: Broken at tip. Description: At the finial, a cylindrical thickening decorated with criss-crossed incisions, at the top a flower-like ending, below and above a projecting ledge. Discovery: In Casa di L. Aurunculeius Secundio (VI 16, 32), on 27 giugno 1904. Together with Cat. 1.6. Bibliography: Berg 2017 b, 19–20, fig. 4.5. Cf. Bianchi 1995, 75, type r.

5.4 Inv. 55998 (=3481). **Fig. 16.** Dimensions: L 13.1. Condition: Broken in two halves. Description: Long and thin shaft, the finial distinguished by two grooves and a convex moulding; at the top a pine-cone decorated with crossed incised lines. Discovery: House VI 16, 15, in 12.10.1904. Giornale: "Nella casa n. 15, e precisamente nell'ambiente a sin. dell'atrio, recante il quadro di Selene e Endimione". Comments: A parallel at MANN, inv. 77438.

Other

6.1 Inv. 53840 (=1465). **Fig. 16.** Dimensions: L 8.4+. Condition: Shaft broken at the tip, lower part missing. On the top of the finial capital, there may have been a figural image. Description: A finial, stylized Corinthian capital, distinguished from the shaft by two grooves. Discovery: ? Cf. Overbeck – Mau 1884, 453, fig. 252g.

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Materialising Divine Presences. Hercules *domesticus* Revisited

Antonella Coralini[1]

Introduction

This article will focus on the contribution of images and their materiality (in all its aspects) to our understanding of the domestic sphere and household life in religious and cultural terms. In doing so, this paper adopts an integrated approach, blending studies of images and household archaeology. The following pages are the most recent product of a long-term ongoing research project concerning domestic imagery, with particular interest in its functions and meanings in ancient use-contexts, material as well as immaterial.[2]

In this research, attention to the physical aspect of each image, taking account of the material and medium, as well as the space and context, has been a constant feature since the beginning. The sphere of the sacred was, and continues to be, an important aspect of this investigation process. The Vesuvian region has often been its main case study, because of its complexity and the quantitative abundance of its archaeological record, despite its intrinsic difficulties. Concerning the specific problems of the Vesuvian sample and its limits I have already commented elsewhere, but I will say something on this occasion too, as a premise, in order not only to clarify the coordinates of my work, but also as a memorandum. In my opinion, the need for better (in the sense of more informed and therefore more aware) knowledge (and consequently better use) of the Vesuvian sample cannot be stressed enough.[3]

Rediscovering the Vesuvian Sites: The Potential and Limits of an Exceptional Sample

The topic of household religion in the Roman world has been addressed from multiple perspectives and by a conspicuous number of studies, with no aspect and no component of household religious life and religion in the domestic sphere still obscure or yet to be investigated. There exists an extensive bibliography reflecting several approaches, in which the Vesuvian sample plays a leading role, although other sites have made important contributions, in terms of both the quantity of documentation and the quality of data. Among these, an excellent example of a city-wide study is the investigation of plastic *lararium* furnishings from the excavations of Augusta Raurica.[4]

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2 For the main case study, Hercules, see Coralini 2001 (esp. 25–27, 59–66); 2002; 2005. A similar approach was experienced for Tyche/Fortuna: Coralini 1997.

3 About the Vesuvian sample, its value and limits were already highlighted by many scholars, such as M. Torelli, in its premise to the M. Bassani's monograph on *sacra privata* in Central Italy (2017, 9–10).

4 Kaufmann-Heinimann 1998.

According to many scholars, the progress of studies, particularly intense in the last half century, has enabled "une géographie du sacré bien identifiable à l'intérieur des maisons".[5] In this context, for instance, W. Van Andringa wrote of Pompeii that "meme si beaucoup de laraires ont été retrouvés vides, on possède pour Pompéi de dossiers essentiels pour la connaissance de la religion domestique, permettant d'identifier avec une relative précision les commanditaires et les destinataires des cultes de la maison".[6] If reconsidered in the light of the real Pompeii premises,[7] this appears to be highly optimistic assessment that does not take sufficient account of the actual quality of the body of evidence in Pompeii and in other Vesuvian sites: a quality not equal to its quantity. If only for this reason, prudence rather than enthusiasm should be exercised: the documentary reliability of the Vesuvian sample cannot be merely assumed, but must be scrupulously verified.[8]

The first step is to determine the indicators of the sacred in the domestic sphere and its components (spaces, structures, furniture, instruments).

In recent decades, many studies have sought to answer this question, with results inevitably affected by the documentary quality of the record in question, which is directly proportional not so much to the richness of the material evidence as it is to the accuracy and completeness of the documentation and therefore of the available data.

Many studies, especially in recent years, have focused on individual elements of the sacred in the domestic sphere, from spaces to fittings, from furniture to instruments, in search of their forms and their possible meanings.[9] There have also been more general studies, which have proposed an overall reading of the religious life of this region, with special interest in Pompeii.[10]

Concerning the relationship between the reliability of the data and the validity of interpretative hypotheses (when studies have benefited from publications based on excavations that were not only extensive, but also well conducted and well documented), the Vesuvian sites represent a negative example. The corpus, although unique and bequeathed to us in conditions that have no parallel elsewhere, has lost a substantial part of its exceptional documentary quality in the passage from potence to act, due to a long sequence of summary excavations, inadequate documentation and unpublished data. In the almost three centuries of the second life of these sites, stratigraphic excavations are a very recent conquest, and a practice restricted to a small number of episodes, almost all limited to investigations in levels below 79 CE.[11]

The same fate has befallen many other sites, but for the Vesuvian sites, and especially Pompeii, the weakening of the informative potential of the archaeological contexts is substantial and yet rarely acknowledged by the scientific community. Most scholars continue to consider the Vesuvian sites to be well documented, instead of realising that they represent a largely imperfect sample, albeit well known. Indeed,

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5 Van Andringa 2009, 218.

6 Van Andringa 2009, 220.

7 Coralini 2020a, 121; 2020b, 56. In recognition of the complexity of the issue, the 'Pompeii premise' of the period 1960–1980s (Ascher 1961; Binford 1981; Schiffer 1985) has given way to the 'Pompeii premises' of more recent research (Allison 1992; Murray 1999; Lohmann 2016).

8 Coralini 2001, esp. 34; ead. forthcoming b, with focus on the *insula* studies in the Vesuvian sample.

9 As introduction, Bodel – Olyan 2008b (esp. Bodel 2008); Bassani – Ghedini 2011; Insoll 2011; Santoro 2013; Maiuri 2013 (on juridical aspects). For an outline, Kaufmann-Heinimann 2007a; Bowes 2015.

10 Krzyszowska 1999; 2002; Barnabei 2007; D'Alessio 2009; Van Andringa 2009; Laforge 2009. For specific components or aspects: Boyce 1937; Orr 1978 and 1988; Fröhlich 1991; Kaufmann-Heinimann 2007; Giacobello 2008; Brandt 2010; Huet – Wyler 2014 (*lararia*); Adamo Muscettola 1984; Kaufmann-Heinimann 1998; 2002; 2007b (small-sized statues); Bassani 2008; 2017 (*sacraria*). For other sites, see, for example, Bakker 1994.

11 Coralini forthcoming b.

with few exceptions, the small number of scientific publications does not even reflect the meagre quantity of studies conducted.[12]

By its very nature, rereading this sample is a complex task, which requires, as the essential basis for further research, the revision of the consolidated literature, parcel by parcel, in both urban and rural landscapes. Only by increasing the number of properly documented and published sites, and therefore the quantity of validated data, based on the careful verification of individual contexts and above all the systematic recovery of all information, will it be possible to re-read the Vesuvian sites on a solid basis.

As J. Bodel and S.M. Olyan reminded us in 2008, in their introduction to a collection of studies on household and family religion in Antiquity, the contextual approach, understood as a detailed analysis of the phenomenon in each individual situation, is indispensable for any wide-ranging comparison:[13] in turn, the latter is the necessary basis for moving from micro-histories to macro-history.

For the Vesuvian sites, this approach is still in its infancy, a point that should encourage caution. On a Roman-world scale, the progress of research and studies and the consequent extent of the documentary basis makes it necessary to question the relationship between the Vesuvian sample (traditionally seen as a model) and others: Pompeii and the other sites buried by the eruption of 79 CE need to be looked at afresh, with new eyes and new questions, in the light of the data provided by samples that have been better investigated and are therefore more reliable in quality.

Firstly, we must give up the 'Pompeii premise', which developed in the period from the 1960s to the 1980s, i.e. the idea that Vesuvian sites are an ensemble of closed contexts providing a faithful mirror of life in 79 CE.[14] In reality, that reflection is distorted by a number of factors, especially the traumatic way in which those sites came to an end, as well as by the nature of their rediscovery and subsequent second life, not only material but also immaterial, in both scientific literature and common imagery.

As a consequence, some corrections are required, and these can only come from a fresh comparison with other sites, contemporary and otherwise, especially if the latter are of higher documentary quality:[15] a comparison in which Pompeii and other sites buried by Vesuvius are not the main point of reference, but sites like any other, as indeed they were in ancient times.

At the same time, the Vesuvian sample continues to be an inevitable feature of the scholarly landscape, if only within its chronological limits. There can be no doubt that it is still a cornerstone of classical archaeology, especially given its quantitative significance and variety, but also its informative quality, despite the flaws in its rediscovery, documentation and conservation.[16] It should thus be regarded not as a model but rather as an exceptional case study.

To recontextualise this sample, it is necessary to understand its true nature, reconsidering the so-called Pompeii premise, both in general terms and for our specific topic. Today, the 'Pompeii premise' of

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12 For Pompeii, the British Project on *insula* I 10 (so-called *insula* del Menandro), exemplar *insula*-based research project (Coralini 2018, 480): Ling 1997; Allison 2004; Ling – Ling 2005. For the rural landscape, the SALVE Project, focused on the Sarno Valley (Vogel – Esposito – Seiler 2012; Seiler – Vogel – Esposito 2019), and some research projects concerning individual villas: Somma Vesuviana (Aoyagi – Angelelli – Matsuyama, forthcoming); Oplontis, villa A (Clarke – Muntasser 2014, 2019, forthcoming); Pompeii, Villa di Diomede (Dessales 2020); Torre del Greco, Villa Sora (Bosco et al. 2019; Coralini 2020c; Osanna et al. 2020).

13 Bodel – Olyan 2008c, 3.

14 For a synthesis on this concept, Lohmann 2016.

15 So, for the small bronze plastic, and despite the chronological décalage, Augusta Raurica (Kaufmann-Heinimann 1998). For this rereading address of the Vesuvian sample, also Santoro 2009. With a focus on religious dimension and on traces of sacred, Santoro – Mastrobattista – Petit 2011.

16 For eruptive deposits, only two stratigraphic excavations have been carried out at Pompeii, in the *insula* IX 12 (Varone 2002) and in the *regio* V, in the so-called 'Cuneo' (Osanna – Fabbri 2019).

which P. Ascher first wrote in 1961 can be considered valid by only a part of the scientific community, i.e. those scholars who continue to believe that the rapidity of the end of those settlements bequeathed to posterity a faithful snapshot of the life of a Roman city in CE 79. This approach however does not stand up to scrutiny of the true nature of the Vesuvian sites.

The Pompeii premise, in the terms in which it was discussed in 1960s and 1970s might continue to be believed, perhaps due to inertia, by those who look only superficially at the way in which the life of those towns and those buildings came to an end and does not consider the role played in the construction of the archaeological object by the ways in which it was recovered and conserved.

That end was indeed rapid but not instantaneous.[17] Above all, it was so traumatic as to heavily disturb the daily routine of its inhabitants, particularly in the private sphere, which by its nature can be assumed to have been less regimented, even in the Roman world. What remains of that life should therefore be regarded as distorted evidence, even potentially misleading: only if that evidence is properly viewed in a broader documentary framework can it be deemed a reliable indicator.

Even when it is thereby reduced to its real nature, the Vesuvian sample is no less important. Indeed, it acquires a new relevance, freed of its paralysing exceptionalism but conserving its specific physiognomy. Pompeii, Herculaneum and their surrounding region remain a unique case study that offers, albeit with the highlighted caveats, an extensive, variegated and rich body of evidence of everyday life, including religious life, in an urban community in the early imperial period. W. Van Andringa is right to say that "à Pompéi mieux qu'ailleurs" it is possible to conduct a global study of the organisation of the sacred in a Roman city, because it enables "l'observations des cultes dans leur contexte archéologique".[18] However, when moving from the regional to the domestic context, i.e. from large-scale to small-scale studies, the issues arising from the origins of that sample are felt more keenly and greater caution in the use of the data must be applied. This has been convincingly demonstrated by those who have focused on dwelling contexts and their artefact assemblages, of whom P.M. Allison is the pioneer and the most important protagonist.[19]

Broadly speaking, we are dealing here with a sample that is extremely well known but has not been studied in detail: a sample that requires a new reading with fresh eyes, with a view to recognising its limits, identifying its distinctive characteristics and deriving analytical protocols to be used on other less extensive bodies of evidence. Among the new approaches arising from the progress of the discipline, the focus on materials and materiality has rarely been applied to Vesuvian sites.

Living with the Gods: The Power of Context, from the Tangible to the Invisible. Domestic Religion and Material Evidence

What is required if we are to speak of the materiality of the sacred in the domestic sphere, and in the Vesuvian sample in particular? How can materiality contribute to our knowledge and understanding of the domestic religious experience in the Vesuvian region? What is the relationship between the divine and the composite material or physical form in which it is represented or mentally visualised? How do sacral or divine 'things' acted, and what was the source and nature of their agency? Can we define a hierarchy of sources? What was the role of circumstantial value?

17 Allison 2004, 182–96.

18 Van Andringa 2009, IX, XIV.

19 Allison 1992; 2004; 2006.

Many of these questions remain unanswered. Proceeding by means of examples, I shall seek to highlight what may be the contribution of Hercules' imagery, when considered on the basis of a contextual and holistic approach, i.e. by analysing each item in terms of its interactions with other components of the same environment.

With this aim, the Vesuvian corpus was reconsidered, in order to identify the interactions between visual and material evidence, in all its manifestations, without forgetting that what these images represent for us does not sufficiently convey what they meant for the ancients, above all for their beholders.

This integrated reading is naturally affected by the quality of the contextual evidence: a quality that only in a few cases in Vesuvian sites is sufficient to provide clear answers. Indeed, in terms of the completeness and reliability of the excavation data, these do not represent the best sample: with the exception of a few felicitous episodes, most of the areas, structures and artefacts were brought to light using methods that are very far from the stratigraphic excavation and detailed documentation which have characterised Italian archaeology since the 1970s.[20]

Images as Windows on Religious Life in the Domestic Sphere

What was the role of the images in the domestic sphere? Is the tangible presence of divine images enough to characterise a space as sacred?[21] Isolated data, in this case as in others, is usually unreliable. In the absence of other data, identifying a space as sacred only because the image of a deity was found inside it is a facile simplification.[22]

The weakness of the distinction between religious and decorative in the modern evaluation of ancient images has been highlighted by many authors with increasing urgency.[23] For instance, with respect to small statuettes and figurines, in bronze or other material, the most common interpretation ascribes them to the plastic *lararium* furnishings, even when data from the context of discovery are not reliable.[24] Typology and size are not in themselves sufficient indicators, and neither is the iconography.

Over recent decades, in their investigations of religious life in the domestic sphere, the disciplines of anthropology, archaeology, art history and religious studies have focused on materiality, re-centring the relations between humans and objects. This interest in materials (and materiality) is the result of a new approach to religion and belief in general.[25] In this new line of thinking, belief is also considered an activity that is grounded in practice and has material expression. As a consequence, visual representations are considered primary evidence of religious experience.[26] Divine and sacred images provide us with traces of rite and myth: they are testimonies to thanksgiving, expectation and devotion, as well as markers of social status and visual expression of divinatory exchange with the unseen.

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20 Van Andringa 2009.

21 For the Greek house, Jaillard 2004.

22 Otherwhise, F. Pesando (2011, 19), for which the recovery of an exemplar of the 'Piccola Ercolanese' is an enough clue.

23 Wyler 2004; 2006; 2008, for Bacchus.

24 On the problems of functional identification of small bronzes from Pompeii and Herculaneum, a category of artefacts, which still awaits systematic contextual studies, Adamo Muscettola 1984 and Kaufmann-Heinimann 1998, 184–86, 209–26, and 2007b.

25 Pongratz-Leisten – Sonik 2015; Raja – Rüpke 2015; Iara 2020. For the discussion of the applicability of the word 'belief' to the Roman religion, King 2003.

26 McGuire 2008; Rüpke 2010; 2012; 2013.

A prerequisite for understanding the agency of things is the idea that the human mind operates using representations or mental concepts which experience automatically organises into broader schemata.[27] Since it is in the mental framework that meaning is assigned to matter, certain institutional and cultural contexts become crucial to understanding this process.

Before discussing the material proper, it is useful to start with a brief elucidation of what is meant in this paper by sacred and divine representations. Not all images with religious subjects are in themselves religious in character or in form. For this reason, some scholars prefer to speak of sacred and divine representations rather than religious images, as did L. Dirven recently for the case study of Palmyra.[28] In doing so, they assume that the religious character of material objects is determined by their use and contexts, and not only by their form, in other words, it is the result of a specific 'entanglement'[29] between medium and iconography. From this point of view, for some scholars, sacred and divine representations are especially (and sometimes exclusively) those formally (and tangibly) associated with religious practices, such as cult statues or reliefs, votive reliefs, representations of deities on other artifacts and figurative graffiti in religious contexts. In this regard, due partly to the pervading nature of the sacred in the Roman world, I argue that the evidence taken into consideration must be extended to all images, each of which must be evaluated in its specificity, as the result of the entanglement of context, medium and iconography, with a view to revealing its situational meaning.[30]

This is the framework of this article, which focuses on a single theme within a single context (Hercules in houses in the Vesuvian region) in the light of recent theoretical approaches. From this new perspective, figurative monuments and artefacts can be (re)read as instantiated religious agents, which played an important role, connecting humans and gods beyond the limits of time and space.[31] As a consequence, images of Hercules can also be reconsidered as religious agents, on the basis of their form and content, as well as their position in space. The focus is on their role in material agency, i.e. in the sacralisation of contexts and other forms of religious communication within the domestic sphere, both in themselves and as an expression of human agency in all its aspects, such as commission, selection, creation, use.[32]

In accordance with this approach (focused on the materiality of the gods' presence *in effigie*, as agents of religious communication and the sacralisation of space), Hercules in the home becomes a case study of individual religious appropriation as the adaptation of existing beliefs and practices (primarily concerning institutionalised religion) to contingent individual aims and needs.[33] Moreover, it should be borne in mind that, as in the modern world, in ancient societies not all human agents were religious in the same way: to ignore that exposes modern viewers to the risk of misinterpreting ancient evidence.[34]

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27 Gell 1998.

28 Dirven 2019.

29 Hodder 2012.

30 On the pervading *sacrum* in the Roman house, Bassani 2017, esp, 243–45 ('Abitare con gli dei'). For the situational meaning, Raja – Weiss 2015. For a similar approach to the rereading of the material evidence: Kaufmann-Heinimann 2017 (focused on Roman medium-sized statuettes) and Szabo 2018, for the Roman Dacia.

31 About agents in ancient religion, Rüpke 2015. On the role of objects, also Raja – Weiss 2015. On the notion of instantation, Albrecht et al. 2018, esp. 572–74.

32 For the notions of agency and materiality as applied to lived religion, Rüpke 2015; Pongratz-Leisten – Sonik 2015; Veymiers 2018; Iara 2020.

33 On the role of the individual in religious life in the Roman world, Rüpke 2013; 2014; 2015; 2016; Szabo 2018, on the case study of Roman Dacia

34 For the plural reading of lived ancient religion, Rüpke 2018b.

Revisiting (and Rethinking) Hercules *domesticus* (or Why it is Still Important to Focus on the Imagery of Domestic Religious Life within the Context of a Single Site)

Two decades ago, when analysing the presence of Hercules' imagery in Roman houses with the Vesuvian sample as a case study, I proposed to distinguish two thematic areas, i.e. religion and myth. To the sphere of religion I attributed all the images probably connected to private worship in terms of both cults (those associated with the lararia, in various media, whether painted or plastic) and apotropaic magic, the latter often positioned on the façade or near the entrance of dwellings or shops.[35]

In the wall paintings I recognised a pronounced uniformity in iconography, which was dominated by the schema of the Hercules Invictus: i.e., a standing Hercules, represented and at rest, with his distinctive attributes (especially the club and the lionskin) and often with a drinking cup (usually a *skyphos*), probably alluding to both cult practices and the close relationship between Hercules and the world of the *convivium*.[36] With its many variants, this is the most widespread schema in the Herculean repertoire, seen on various supports and various contexts, public and private, domestic, funerary and religious, as confirmed by both the Vesuvian sample and the other sites that have been subject to systematic re-evaluation, from the Iberian Peninsula to Dacia, from Gaul to Syria.[37]

In contrast, I saw the bronzes as displaying a wide variety of iconographic solutions, perhaps the result, as already observed by S. Adamo Muscettola for the same sample and confirmed by A.M. Kaufmann-Heinimann for the corpus from Augusta Raurica, of the ways in which those furnishings were formed and composed. Indeed, it appears plausible that those statuettes were expected above all to ensure the presence of the divinity, with little attention paid to how that presence was to be guaranteed.[38]

Twenty years later, the quantitative data are basically the same. However, as well as in the study of the traces of the sacred, in the study of the popularity of Hercules in the Roman world, much progress has been made, enabling us to reconsider and reinterpret the data from the Vesuvian sample. *Lararia* and *sacraria*, for instance,have been re-examined by various authors from various points of view. The daily routine of gods and human beings has been the subject of a wide-ranging analysis.[39] For other divine figures, further large-scale analyses have been initiated and extended to the Vesuvian region,[40] while the Hercules of other cultural contexts in the Roman world has been the subject of analytical re-evaluation.[41]

The method adopted from the beginning for research into Hercules *domesticus* in the Vesuvian region in the Roman period remains valid.[42] Founded on an integrated approach to the study of images, it pays careful attention to both visual and material evidence, ranging from wall paintings to small finds and statuary. The approach adopted twenty years ago, then considered pioneering, has thus been validated. Today it is in line with the most innovative research: conducting site-scale analysis of the use of images of the divine, in all its manifestations, in macro- and micro-contexts.

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35 Coralini 2001, 59–63.

36 Coralini 2001, 67–106 (91–95: Hercules *conviva*).

37 Downey 1969 (Dura-Europos, with focus on sculptures); Oria Segura 1996; 2002 (Hispaniae); Moitrieux 2012 (Galliae).

38 Adamo Muscettola 1984; Kaufmann-Heinimann 1998.

39 Haeperen 2011.

40 On Bacchus, Wyler 2004; 2006; 2008 and Kuivalainen 2020.

41 See Haeperen 2011.

42 On the relevance of small finds to reconstruct social lives and practices in the Roman world, and then also the Roman lived religion, Whitmore – Hoss 2016.

In the first place, in today's rereading, the definition of the sphere of the cult needs to be reconsidered. Indeed, even in ancient times its boundaries were plausibly very fluid. What is it that allows us to classify an image as religious? What was the role of iconography, the support and the context? Did images of myths contribute to the dimension of the sacred?

It is also necessary, as I seek to do specifically in this paper, to assess the respective roles of the individual images' intrinsic components (iconography and support) and extrinsic characteristics (the physical space in which the image was inserted). With even greater conviction today than at the beginning of my research, more than twenty years ago, I can now affirm that the presence of the sacred was pervasive, including in Roman houses, and that among these gods, the ubiquitous representations of the *domesticus* demi-god par excellence played a key role, superior, at least in quantitative terms, to that of other popular divinities such as Venus and Bacchus.[43]

As I have already pointed out, the material evidence reveals a significant difference in its presence between the two urban sites, Pompeii and Herculaneum: Hercules appears frequently in the domestic sphere but is almost absent from public monuments in Pompeii, while the situation is the other way round in Herculaneum, where the mythical founder is seen in many public buildings and is almost absent in the houses.[44]

Recognition of the pervasiveness of the sacred is one of the more recent achievements in both archaeology and studies of religion, in the Vesuvian sample and the Roman world in general. On a global scale, the 'Lived Ancient Religion' project has made a contribution of fundamental importance, while for Pompeii it is the work of W. Van Andringa on the daily routines of gods and humans that has formed the main point of reference for over a decade.[45]

The most common dichotomies (public and private, urban and rural, small and monumental) can be usually replaced by a spatial taxonomy focusing on primary, secondary and shared spaces in religious communication. A primary space can be a household shrine or a micro-space using miniature objects (gems, amulets).[46] Secondary and shared spaces, however, are the most frequent in the domestic sphere.

Refraining from labelling Roman domestic religion as private, and thus from giving rise to a public/private dichotomy, enables us to recognise its true nature, as the result of a network of interactions (or entanglements) between individuals and communities.

Material remains are the most useful source with which to investigate domestic religion, outlining the kinds of spaces, agents (humans and things) and practices that comprised religiosity in the home.[47] From this perspective, evidence that I had previously not considered as clearly pertaining to the religious sphere can now be reassessed as pertaining to the agency of things that helped to construct the dimension of the sacred. This includes all the small statuettes, which only rarely have been discovered in clear association with a *lararium*,[48] the small and medium-sized sculptures that are most readily interpreted as decorative images and the paintings inspired by mythological themes. Regarding the latter, what A. Maiuri wrote concerning the popularity of the imagery of Venus – highlighting the importance of the evidence

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43 For the "omniprésence des dieux" à Pompéi, van Andringa 2009, 1–21. On space sacralisation and the Lived Ancient Religion (LAR) approach, Szabo 2018, esp. 2–4.

44 Coralini 2001, esp. 27–32; 2006.

45 Van Andringa 2009. For the LAR (Lived Ancient Religion) Project, Raja – Rüpke 2015b; Albrecht et al. 2018; Gasparini et al. 2020.

46 For the notion of micro-space, Raja – Rüpke 2015c, 5.

47 For a survey, Bowes 2015. On the role of agency in the archaeology of ancient religions, Rüpke 2015.

48 Adamo Muscettola 1984; Kaufmann-Heinimann 1998; 2002; 2007b.

provided by wall paintings, both images of myth and those of a more obviously religious inspiration – is also valid for Hercules.[49] To claim however that "le grand succés des tableaux herculéens s'explique de toute évidence par la tradition locale",[50] which associated the foundation of Pompeii with Hercules, seems to me to suffer from an oversimplification of a situation that was in reality much more complex. More convincing is the idea that policies adopted in the public arena were also reflected in the domestic sphere. It should be noted however that the material evidence points to the near absence of Hercules in the urban religious landscape, the only exception being some compital shrines and paintings next to the entrances of dwellings and shops.

To me it appears more plausible that the success of Hercules, in various formulations, is the result of the multi-functional nature of the subject and the thematic and iconographic richness of its associated imagery.[51] Recognising the pervasiveness of the sacred enables a more flexible reading of the material evidence, regardless of our taxonomic requirements. In the light of the most recent theoretical orientations, it is possible to include even those contexts which – given the importance of the themes and iconographies adopted in them – demonstrate a close relationship with the hero-god, whether possessing the physical characteristics of the *sacrarium* (as defined by M. Bassani) or not.[52] At the very least, such contexts may be considered sacralised spaces, serving as 'Hercules rooms'. Examples include the *oeci* in the House of D. Octavius Quartio (Pompeii, II 2, 2) and the House of the Wedding of Hercules (Pompeii, VII 9, 47): in both cases the main factor we can recognise as marking the sacralised space is the figured themes of their wall-paintings.[53]

In this entangled setting, in which the sacred is manifested in various forms on a variety of media, there is believed to have been a hierarchy of images determined above all by the role they played in the cult. That hierarchy was affected by a number of factors, including the nature and function of the support, the iconography of the subject and the context in which the image was embedded.

The analytical examination of the individual cases, in themselves and in relation to the other images and the spaces of which they were part, constitutes the indispensable basis for the recognition of tendencies and common features among the material manifestations of the dimension of the sacred, in the daily routines of both the public and the domestic sphere.

The role of the physical context is believed to have been of primary importance, above all for the fixed artefacts, attached to a specific position. First and foremost, this included the images painted on the walls.

For these items however, there is the issue of their semantic evolution in the diachronic development of domestic spaces. The meaning of an image, the value assigned to it and the agency exerted by it should not be seen as static entities. While the physical context might remain the same, this was unlikely to be the case with the functional context. In other words, the value of an image in relation to its physical 'container' can perhaps be reconstructed for its initial creation, while it is far more difficult to assess the development of the actual functions of that space over time. Regarding this aspect, even in the most fortunate cases, in excavation contexts in which artefact assemblages have been carefully brought to light, documented and studied, shedding light on the contexts of use in ancient times, elements that might make it possible to go beyond conjecture are almost never present.

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49 Maiuri 1953, 77ss.

50 Van Andringa 2009, 13.

51 Coralini 2001, 137–40.

52 Bassani 2005; 2007; 2008; 2011; 2017.

53 Coralini 2001, 63–64, 78–81; 2003.

A wide-ranging approach also allows us to reassess the above-mentioned distinction between religious images (in the *lararia*) and apotropaic images (on the façades, but also on *instrumentum* and personal ornamental objects). Can we truly rule out the possibility that a Hercules in the *lararium* also had an apotropaic function? The answer today is no: perhaps that function, so strongly associated with the demi-god, was expressed to varying degrees in all Herculean imagery. The value of each component of the image, understood as a complex organism, can be partly clarified by means of large-scale seriation, but the key role was very probably played by the entanglement of iconography, support (in turn an entanglement of material, form and function) and container.

For this reason, the most balanced solution, considering the (deontological) need to avoid traducing the objective evidence of the ancient context as it has come to us, together with the need for research, understanding and knowledge, lies in combining a complete census of all the identifiable evidence with a detailed analysis of the cases that are best: these, indeed, can be deployed as reference points with which to conduct a more effective reading of those cases that are not as rich or as fortunate.

Analysing the evidence in its totality makes it possible not only to identify recurring features, but also to properly recognise the role of the images' materiality, with regard to both their individual elements (material, form, contest) and their entanglement.

For this case study too, the Vesuvian sample provides the coordinates for interpreting other situations, which in turn provide not just confirmation but also new perspectives. In the last two decades, a number of studies, on different scales and with varying levels of commitment, have enriched the scientific literature on the popularity of Hercules in the Roman world and religious life in the Vesuvian region. The most important contribution to the collective body of evidence has been the large-scale and broad-spectrum research focusing on the Iberian Peninsula and Gaul: contextual analysis was not the objective in either case, in keeping with the nature of their sample (more highly dispersed than the Pompeii corpus and not as well conserved), but both have yielded a large quantity of data useful for the purposes of comparison.

The data provided by these works confirms, at least for the domestic sphere, the picture emerging from the Vesuvian sample. The material evidence from this latter is similar in nature to that of other regions of the Roman world which have been examined in detail, although in quantitative terms, the Vesuvian sample is much richer. This is especially the case with the Iberian Peninsula, where M. Oria Segura collected a corpus of eighty items, ranging from inscriptions to figured artefacts, such as sculptures and reliefs (22), bronze statuettes and appliques (14), wall paintings (3), mosaics (9), furnishings (26) and incised gems (14).[54]

Concerning Gaul, greater abundance is seen, with a hundred inscriptions and a large corpus of sculptures (350 items), but again, the situation is proportionately not as rich or varied as that of the Vesuvian sites.[55]

Reviewing the Archaeological Record as an Entangled Entity: Images, Media, Spaces

1. Images: The Interplay between Themes and Iconographic Schemata

In terms of their content, some mythological themes seem to be closer to the sacred dimension than others. A good example is that of Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides, in both its more complex, in which

54 Oria Segura 1996; 2002, 219.

55 Moitrieux 2002.

Fig. 1: Oplontis, villa A. *Tepidarium*, back wall. Hercules in the Hesperides garden (After Coralini 2001, 41 © Ministero della Cultura/Parco archeologico di Pompei).

Fig. 2: Pompeii, I 13, 11. Garden 7, *lararium*: Hercules with the apples of the Hesperides (After Kaufmann-Heinimann 1998, fig. 156 © Ministero della Cultura/MANN).

the hero-god is flanked by the Hesperides (as in the *triclinium* of the House of Sacerdos Amandus, I 7, 7, in Pompeii) and its simpler schema, with Hercules and the tree (as in the *tepidarium* of Villa A in Oplontis[56]), or Hercules by himself, with schemas seen also in many images associated with lararia, in wall paintings or statuettes, or painted on façades, near the entrance (**Figs. 1–4**).[57] In contrast, the themes of Hercules *bibax* and *mingens* usually are not attributed to the dimension of the sacred, at least to modern eyes, but it is clear that this can be merely the result of a perspective that differs from that of the ancients (**Figs. 5–6**). It is above all the plastic furnishings of the *lararia* that show us how the subject was more important than the specific theme and its iconography. This is especially true for a subject characterised by a pronounced polymorphism such as Hercules, whose presence may have included images that belonged, at least in appearance, more to the *ornatus* than to the religious dimension.[58]

56 Coralini 2001, 60, 242–43 (t.007).

57 Coralini 2001, 59–60.

58 As highlighted in Adamo Muscettola 1988 and Kaufmann-Heinimann 2007b.

Fig. 3: Pompeii, II 8, 9. Court 1, *lararium* (After Fröhlich 1991, 100, pl. 29.4).

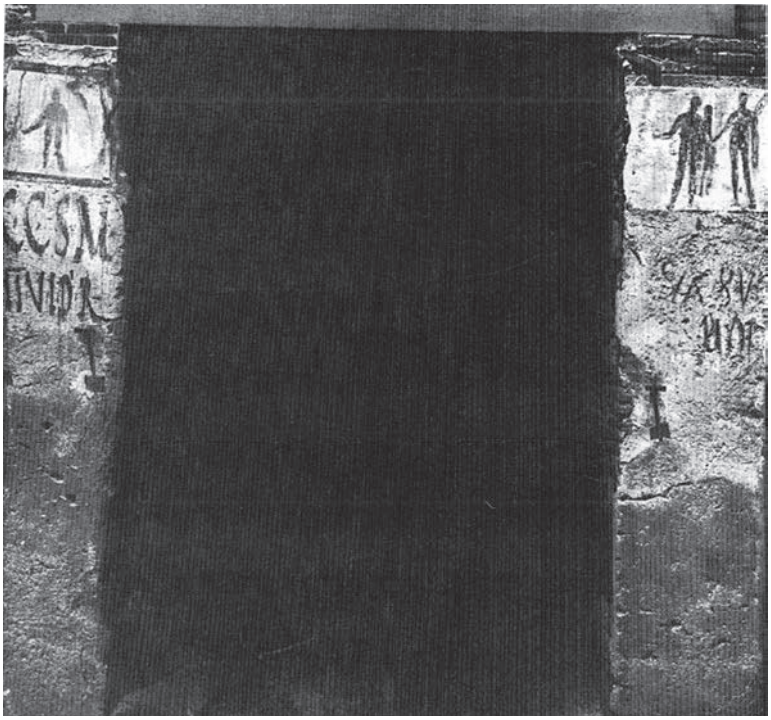

Fig. 4: Pompeii, IX 11, 6.7. Facade, at the sides of the entrance: *in postibus*, Hercules (After Spinazzola 1953, figs. 201–2).

Fig. 5: Pompeii, I 18, 3. Hercules mingens, bronze, small-sized statuette (After Coralini 2001, 164, P.034 © Ministero della Cultura/MANN).

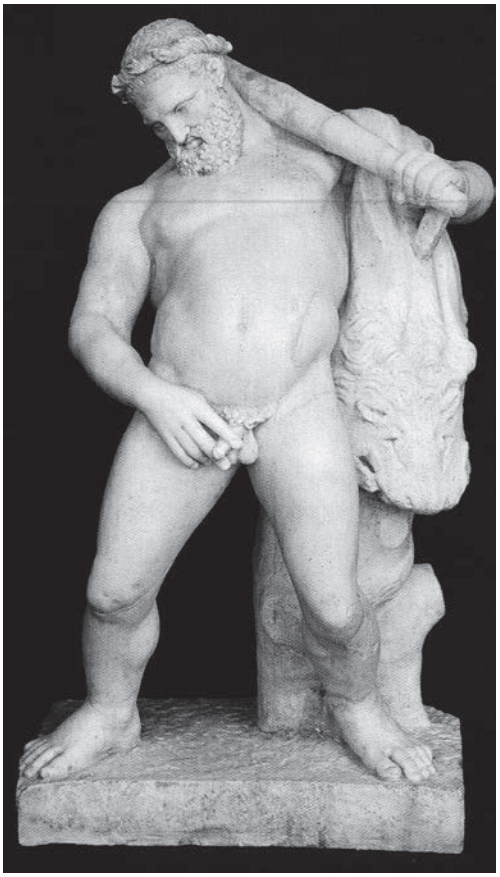

Fig. 6: Herculaneum, IV 2: Garden, Hercules mingens (After Coralini 2001, 236, E.003.A © Ministero della Cultura/Parco archeologico di Ercolano).

2. Media and Iconographies: Interactions between Functional and Semantic Values

Among the iconographies of Hercules as the sole subject, one in particular makes it possible to best understand the entanglement between figurative schema and medium: Hercules clothed, usually, wrapped in the lionskin (**Figs. 7-8**).[59]

In the material culture of the Roman world, this iconography is rare in wall-paintings, but is frequently attested in sculptures in a range of sizes and materials, from bronze to marble. It is also seen on *instrumentum*, decorating for example the handle of a tool or utensil, and personal ornaments, especially amulets worn as pendants and incised gemstones.[60] It is particularly the latter association that supports the thesis that this iconography was used in the Roman world with a specifically apotropaic and safeguard function. It is a clue however, not proof. Indeed, it is clear that the shape, compact and narrow, of this iconographic schema may also have influenced its selection, since it could easily be adapted to a handle or a support such as a *trapezophoros*.[61] Also this circumstance may partly explain the popularity of the type in this form (**Fig. 8**).

Fig. 7: Pompeii, I 10, 7. Garden 12, Hercules clothed, marble, small-sized statuette (After Jashemski 1979b, 160, P.021 © Ministero della Cultura/Parco archeologico di Pompei).

Fig. 8: Herculaneum, VI 28. *Cubiculum* 2, Hercules clothed, marble, trapezophoros (h. 76 cm) (After Coralini 2001, 238 © Ministero della Cultura/Parco archeologico di Ercolano).

3. Locations: Spatial Aspects, from Ancient Intentions to Modern Readings

Examination of the contexts does not offer data useful for identifying any special relationships between a given type of physical space (entrances, convivial spaces, gardens) and specific iconographies: Hercules as victor is a common theme, and only for images painted on walls (and then only in some cases) is it possible to identify a thematic consonance with the functional context, as suggested by the position and form, as well as its decorations and furnishings (if conserved).

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59 Coralini 2001, 107–9.

60 Oria Segura 1998; Coralini 2001, 107–9; Moitrieux 2002.

61 As well as in Herculaneum, VI 28 (Coralini 2001, 238–39, E. 008), Pompeii, VII 2, 23 (atrium, Carrella et al. 2008, 119, C 07: C. Serpe), Pompeii, IX 7 12, garden (Coralini 2001, 228, P.128: Carrella et al. 2008, 183–84, D 32: A. D'Acunto).

Representations as Material Evidence: Rethinking Hercules' Presence in the Home

That the gods of the Greco-Roman pantheon inhabited Roman houses, in many forms ranging between myth and worship, is hardly a novelty. On this subject there is an extensive literature, much of which focuses on the record of the Vesuvian sites, due to the quantity of their material evidence, but it is also enriched with careful analyses of other samples.[62]

What we know of houses in the Roman world suggests that in the domestic sphere the divine presence was actualised in several forms and a variety of media, referencing myth and cult. The leading role was played by images, with a wide range of possible manifestations in terms of both media and iconographies. These range from two-dimensional wall and floor decorations to three-dimensional plastic artefacts including furnishings and objects for personal ornament. These were either modelled on practices seen in the public sphere or adopted forms that were suited to their specific contexts and the personal interests and needs of their authors and viewers. Recognising which of these images were instruments and objects of devotion in the domestic sphere is frequently a difficult task.

However, it is possible, through an integrated reading of all the available data, to hypothesise a semantic hierarchy of evidential items that we may consider agents of the domestic *sacrum*, linking beliefs and their materialisations. In this respect Hercules is also a good case study, due his various iconographies and the frequency of his presence in Roman homescapes. Like other gods of the Greek-Roman pantheon, but with particular popularity and intensity, probably partly due to his pronounced polysemy and polymorphism, Hercules inhabited the Roman home on two levels, i.e. myth and worship.[63] The boundaries between these two spheres are thin and fluid, and very hard to define. The location of an image and its subject do not by themselves constitute sufficient data with which to recognise with certainty its cultic nature in ancient times, whether at the moment of its creation, or as the result of some subsequent adoption.

As a consequence, recognising images that were directly related to religion and cults is often difficult, especially when (as in the Vesuvian sites) high-quality data are the exception in the archaeological (i.e. material) record, and not the rule. Indeed, even in a rich and varied sample such as the Vesuvian, it is only the integrated examination of contexts, media and iconographies that can provide precious further information, case by case.[64] To enrich the corpus, and to facilitate the all-round reading of the evidence, a very important role is often played by the re-evaluation and enhancement of the materiality of the archaeological record. This entails identification of the synergy between a number of factors, each of which contributes to conveying the divine presence in physical and tangible forms.

Such an approach, painstaking and integrated, reveals how looking for general lines of behaviour, especially in the domestic dimension of the sacred, can expose the researcher to the risk of not fully grasping the ancient reality (and hence ultimately betraying it).

Even today, Hercules remains (at least in the literature) the only subject to which a systematic, city-wide investigation, extending to all classes of materials, combining large-scale and small-scale studies, has been applied.[65]

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62 Exemplar, for the category of small bronzes, the work of A.M. Kaufmann-Heinimann 1998.

63 *CIL* IV, 8417–18: *Bonus deus / hic habitat in do/mo / Act(ii)*.

64 As already pointed out in Coralini 2001, esp. 21–24.

65 Studies focused on Bacchus in Vesuvian region have been carried out, after 2001, by S. Wyler (2004; 2006; 2008), but with a different approach, more interested in ancient literary sources than in material evidence, and by I. Kuivalainen in his doctoral dissertation, 2020 and forthcoming as a volume.

1. Materiality *in effigie et in re*: Visiting Gods at Home

The echo of the public sphere in private spaces is evident in the wall-paintings of a *domus* in the immediate vicinity of the Forum.[66] Here, in a large *oecus* facing the peristyle, the upper zone of the back wall was occupied by a painted frieze. This was the only figurative element of its decoration, with the scene of a procession in which Venus in her temple and Hercules are recognisable (**Fig. 9**). From the podium of the temple a female figure with a crown and sceptre turns towards the hero-god in what seems to be a *dextrarum iunctio*. This scene is interpretable also as a nuptial gesture, from which comes the modern name of the house, although she might also be waving goodbye.[67] Today illegible, and visible only thanks to reproductions (**Figs. 10a–b**),[68] this image is still without parallel. Its subject is probably a sacred ceremony, perhaps inspired by the religious life of the community of Pompeii, as reflection of the public sphere into the private one:[69] either (as proposed by M. Della Corte) a reference to the theatrical reproduction of the wedding of Hercules and Hebe/Juventas, performed by the *juventus* of Pompeii on the occasion of the feasts of Venus,[70] or the representation of an encounter between different divinities of the city's pantheon, in the course of a ceremony during which the gods called on each other.[71] The sacred nature of the subject is beyond doubt: represented on each side of a temple of Venus (in a central position) is a theory of figures bearing offerings (priestesses, servants carrying *fercula*, sacrificial victims) who seem to reproduce the forms and characteristics of a procession whose starting point and destination is the temple, inside which is the Venus of Pompeii in her distinctive iconography.[72]

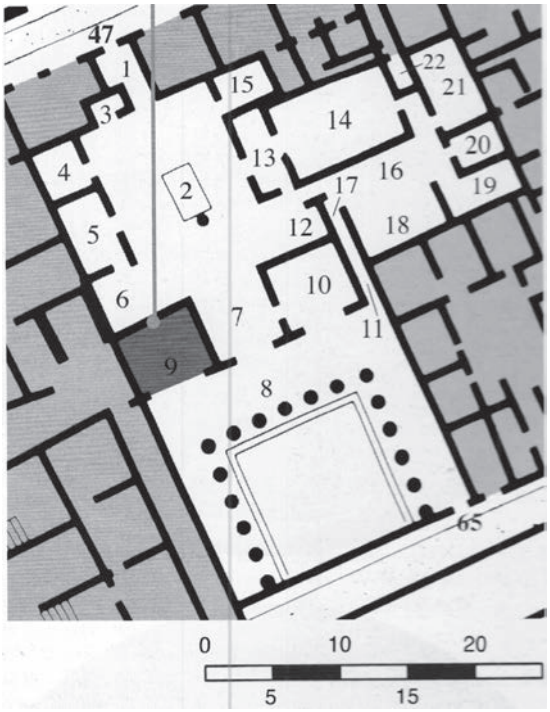

Fig. 9: Pompeii, VII 9, 47. *Oecus* 9 (After Coralini 2001, 204).

However, while the identity of the divinity at the centre of the frieze is not in doubt, that of the temple has been questioned. For decades, the assumption that this was the temple of Venus in the south-western sector of the plain of Pompeii, on the terrace behind the Basilica, went unchallenged. However, in 2002, F. Marcattili advanced a new hypothesis, considering it to be the representation of a different building in Pompeii, the so-called temple of Jupiter Meilichios, the smallest of the city's public places of worship, located near the theatre area, along the southern stretch of the *cardo* known as Via Stabia.[73] Marcattili's proposal is supported by the re-examination of the small temple, attributed to Asclepius, to which Venus is believed to have

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66 Coralini 2001, 63–64, 203–5 (P.088).

67 Della Corte 1924; Marcattili 2002, 320.

68 Francesco Morelli, 1820: *PPM* VII, 373, fig. 2.

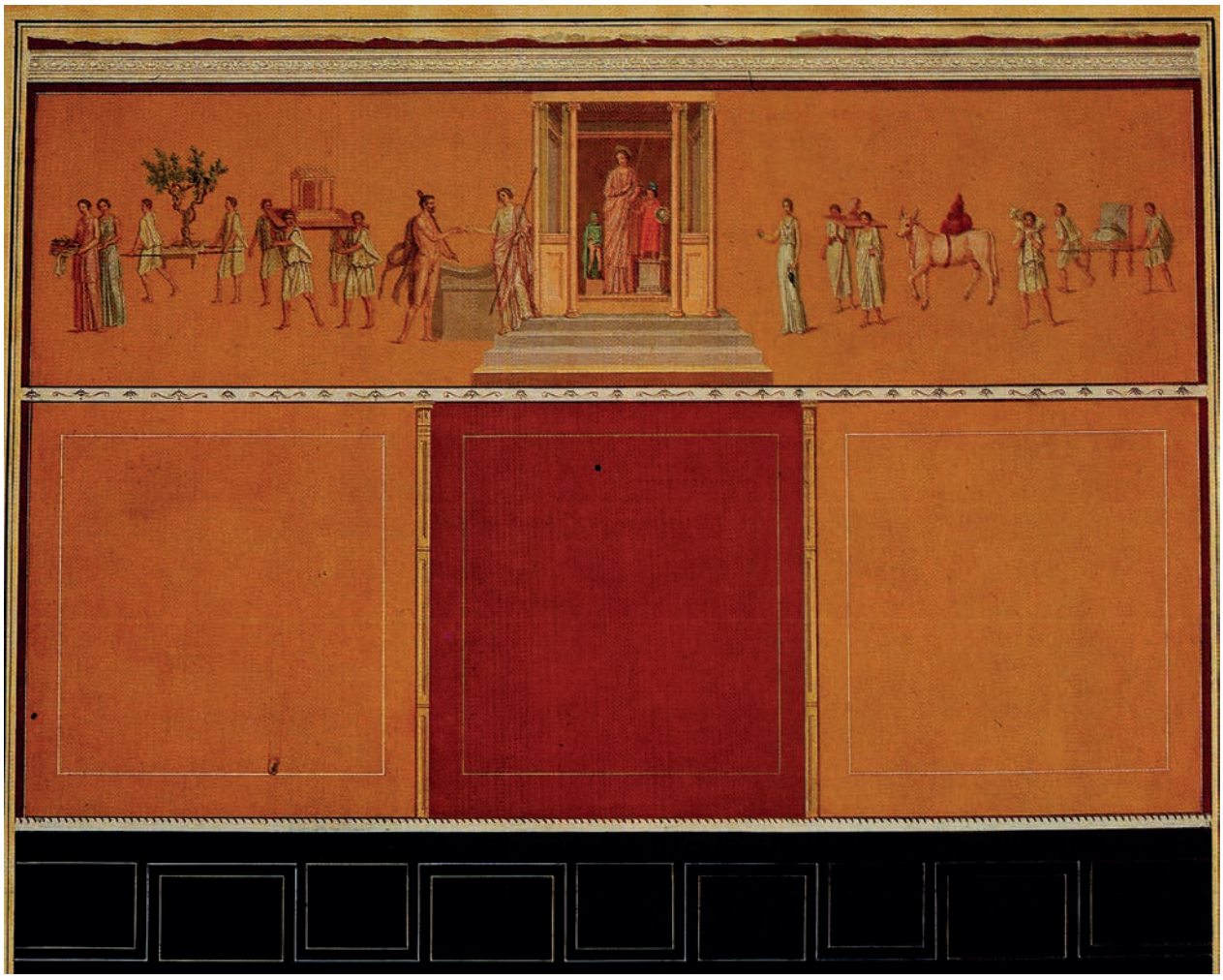
69 I. Scott Ryberg (1955, 169–70, pl. LXI, fig. 99) inserted the frieze among the private monuments reflecting state cult.

70 Della Corte 1924.

71 Van Andringa 2009, 189–91.

72 On Venus Pompeiana and her iconography, van Andringa 2009, 272–84. On practices, presences and representations, Rüpke 2010; 2012; with focus on the Campanian villas, Wyler 2014.

73 Marcattili 2002, reproposed in Marcattili 2006 and 2020, 138–39.



Figs. 10.a–b: Pompeii, VII 9, 47. *Oecus* 9, rear wall, upper zone, frieze (5,40 x 1,40 m): sacred procession, with Hercules and Venus (a: after Scott Ryberg 1955, fig. 99; b: F. Morelli, 1820, after *PPM, Disegnatori*, fig. 59).

been added at the moment of the foundation of the colony of Sulla.[74] Support for the hypothesis also comes from the re-examination of the statuary discovered in this context during the excavations: a small group of sculptures which includes two statues – Asclepius and a female figure, once interpreted as Hygieia but ac-

74 Marcattili, 2002, 321–24.

cording to Marcattili to be identified rather with Venus – a bust of Minerva, and, on the basis of legacy data, an effigy of Priapus and a small bust with a *bulla* in a cradle.[75]

Moreover, the iconography of the cult statue used in the sanctuary of Venus is unknown, and thus it may or may not have been the one represented in the painted frieze of the House of the Wedding of Hercules. In this situation, Marcattili's proposed identification of the temple at the centre of the scene is convincing, but not conclusive. The absence in that image of the statue of Asclepius still requires clarification. If Marcattili's reconstruction is correct, then it must be concluded that in the selection of the identifying elements with which to render the place of worship recognisable, the god to whom the temple was consecrated (Asclepius) was sacrificed in favour of the guest divinity (Venus). It is necessary however to study the reasons behind the decision to make Venus the only protagonist: understandable in a temple dedicated to her alone, less so in a temple consecrated to another divinity. Is invoking the artist's desire for brevity sufficient to justify the absence of Asclepius? In support of this claim, Marcattili adds a topographical argument to the iconographic one, which hinges however precisely on the proposed recognition of Venus (and not Hygieia) in the female statue without attributes found in association with the statue of Asclepius,[76] thereby relying on circular reasoning. Recognisable in the frieze are references to another two locations in the sacred topography of Pompeii, lying north and south of the Temple of Asclepius: in the procession that is arriving, the sanctuary of Isis; in the one that is leaving, the Doric Temple. This hypothesis, appealing at first sight, is based on the assumption that the frieze depicts the stages of a real ceremonial route, from the sanctuary of Isis to the Temple of Asclepius (and Venus), and from there to the terrace of the Triangular Forum, where in the Archaic period there stood a Doric temple that may have been dedicated to Athena or Hercules. While recognising the persistence and longevity of the memory of Archaic cults, we do not currently possess reliable data regarding the tangible existence of the public cult of Hercules for the later phases of the history of Pompeii.[77] As with Minerva and Apollo, the presence of Hercules in Pompeii is a long-term phenomenon, which is believed to have played an important role in the identity of the community. However, a place of worship consecrated to the hero-god, active in Roman Pompeii, has not yet been identified. Nor are there in the public sphere any other traces of a material presence of Hercules, with the exception of paintings on façades and a few *lararia*.[78]

Regardless of the identity of the religious buildings represented or evoked in it, the frieze's importance to the research into the tangible aspects of the presence of Hercules in the domestic sphere remains unchanged. The materiality of the cult is present here both *in effigie*, in the painting that shows a procession with sacred places and objects (a temple of Venus, a model of a temple on a *ferculum*, the sacrificial victims), and in a tangible form in the furniture of the room: on the same level as the painted frieze, the lateral walls had two series of holes (twelve, in total) at regular intervals, perhaps to hold in place furnishings that were used in the performance of ceremonial activities (**Fig. 11**).[79] The *oecus* of the House of the Wedding of Hercules offers an interesting example of the entanglement of the religious dimension of the community with that of the individual.[80] The hypothesis that this was a space designed to host cult activities, reserved for the

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75 Marcattili 2002, 324–26.

76 Marcattili 2002, 324–26. The latter artefact (a bust with bulla in a cradle) is a 'bruciaprofumi' (MANN inv 20680: d'Ambrosio – Borriello 2001, 62).

77 Krzyszowska 1999; 2002; Barnabei 2007; D'Alessio 2009; Van Andringa 2009 (focused on the period from the beginnings of first century BCE and 79 CE).

78 Coralini 2001, 27–28.

79 Della Corte 1924, 91.

80 About the role of the individual in lived ancient religion, Rüpke 2016.

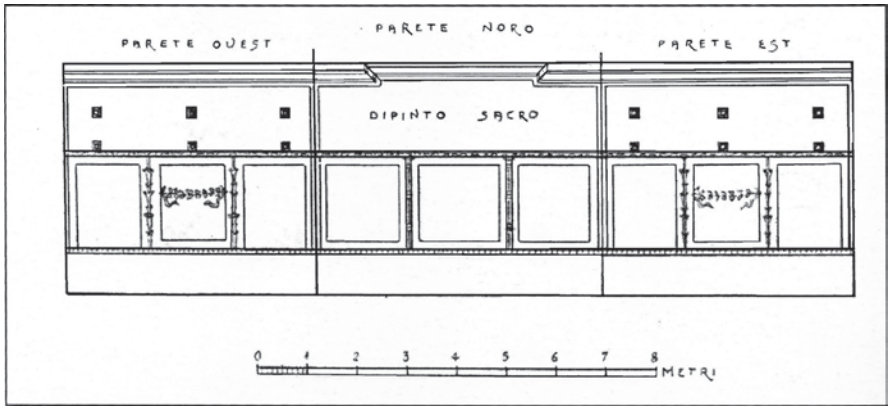

Fig. 11: Pompeii, VII 9, 47. *Oecus* 9, wall decoration, graphic scheme (After Coralini 2001, 204, P.088.2).

owner's family, or perhaps for a *collegium*, appears worthy of consideration: whether the depicted ceremony can be identified, as Marcattili proposes, with a Pompeii version, *mutatis mutandis*, of the celebration that the calendars assign to 12 August (*Hercules Invictus ad Circum Maximum*), or whether we are dealing here with some other festivity, it cannot be denied that this painting, so original in the repertoire as we know it today, must be considered proof of its patron's strong involvement, direct or indirect, in the religious life of the city.[81]

The fact that little else is known of the decorations, furniture and artefacts of the House of the Wedding of Hercules in the city's last few years of life prevents us from recognising the role of the images of the *oecus* in the house as a whole. It is clear, however, that we are dealing with a *monumentum* that was extremely important to its ancient users, as well as its modern interpreters. Re-reading the reports of the initial excavations (May 1820 – July 1821) was useful in this regard.[82]

The frieze was already in a poor state of conservation at the moment of its discovery, to the point that it was considered necessary to rapidly record its characteristics ("before it falls apart, given that the plaster seems to be disintegrating, and it will be very difficult to detach it"), while the picture with Mars and Venus brought to light in the *tablinum* was in contrast in excellent condition. This suggests that the two paintings belonged to two distinct decorative phases, of which that of the *oecus* was older, as also suggested by the 'style' of the paintings.[83]

In the Pompeii corpus of Hercules-themed imagery, the work in question constitutes one of the best examples of a presence that goes beyond the role of *tutor* of the domestic sphere, which seems to have been strongly associated with the hero-god.[84] Indeed, this specific case mainly reflects public religious practices, which in this house are intertwined with the history of an individual, i.e. the patron who commissioned the work.[85] Concerning the origins of this 'domestication', we can only formulate conjectures, but its tangible effects are evident. Hercules is 'only' a co-protagonist, but in a role that recalls his importance in the religious life of the city attested by the presence of two altars, at short distance from the room with the painted frieze, one outside the *oecus*, next to the entrance, and the other inside a small space, perhaps a *sacrarium*, in accordance with the taxonomy proposed by M. Bassani (**Fig. 9**).[86]

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81 Coralini 2001, 63–64; Marcattili 2002, 327–28.

82 *PAH* II, 21–28.

83 Ibid.; *PPM* VII, 373–77, figg. 31–36.

84 Coralini 2001, 137–40; Van Andringa 2009, 259, 265.

85 Probably a *sacerdos*, according to M. Bassani (2008, 156, 186–87), or a sponsor of the performance. On the visibility of religion and religious specialists in the Roman world, Rüpke 2018a.

86 Coralini 2001, 204; Bassani 2008, 186–87.

2. Resilient Images: Materialising Gods at All Costs

In an area in the south-east sector of Pompeii, more recent excavations have brought to light an extremely interesting situation. Hercules' special relationship with gardens, also well attested by the material evidence, is manifested here in a singular instance. The context is that of a large green space linked to a small building (II 8, 6) (**Fig. 12**).[87] Used for floriculture, as demonstrated by the palaeobotanical investigations,[88] the garden also had an area set aside for religious and convivial activities, as suggested by the joint presence of an open-air stone *triclinium* and an *aedicula-lararium* with an *arula*. A statuette of Hercules, 57 cm high (**Figs. 13a-b**), discovered a short distance from the *aedicula-lararium*, is also believed to have belonged to the decorative set of the garden.[89] The hero-god is seen here standing and at rest, in the schema of Hercules Invictus adopted in paintings in *lararia* and on façades.[90] More interesting than the iconography however is its materiality: the small sculpture had been clumsily restored in ancient times,[91] but apparently continued to be kept *in situ*. The resilience of this statuette indicates that regardless of its aesthetic quality, after the restoration, the presence of the image of Hercules was still seen as highly important, to the point of using a poor-quality medium to guarantee it. Considering the reduced decorative value of the artefact, of much lower quality than another garden Hercules, the so-called 'Matrone Hercules' (**Figs. 14–15**),[92] and given the physical context, clearly associated with worship (as suggested by the *aedicula-lararium* and the *arula*), it seems legitimate to suggest that the role attributed in this garden to the statuette was above all that of a cult image. As we have already noted, the entanglement between *ornatus* and *sacrum* is also believed to

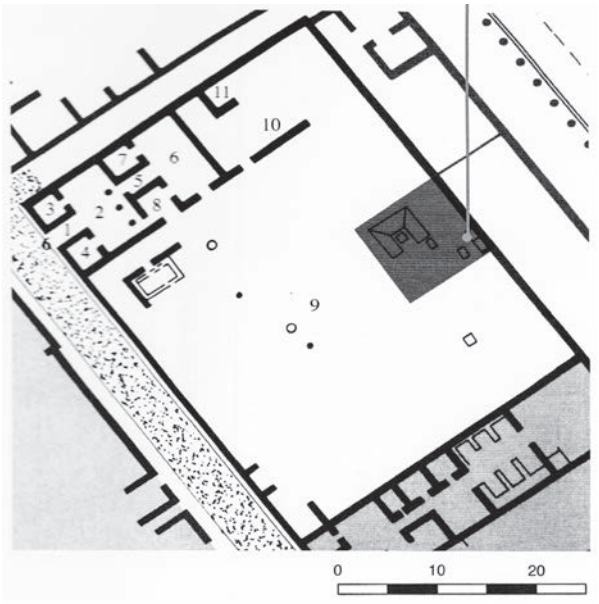
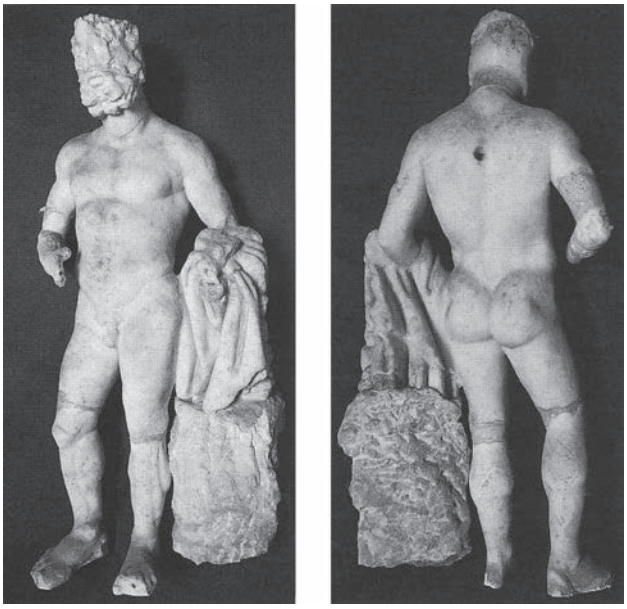


Fig. 12: Pompeii, II 8, 6. Garden 9 (After Coralini 2001, 174).



Figs. 13a–b: Pompeii, II 8, 6. Garden 9, Hercules: marble, medium-sized statuette, h. 57 cm (After Coralini 2001, 175 © Ministero della Cultura/Parco archeologico di Pompei).

87 Jashemski 1979a, 1979b (121–22, fig. 192); Coralini 2001, 119–20 ('I giardini di Ercole'), 175 (P.043).

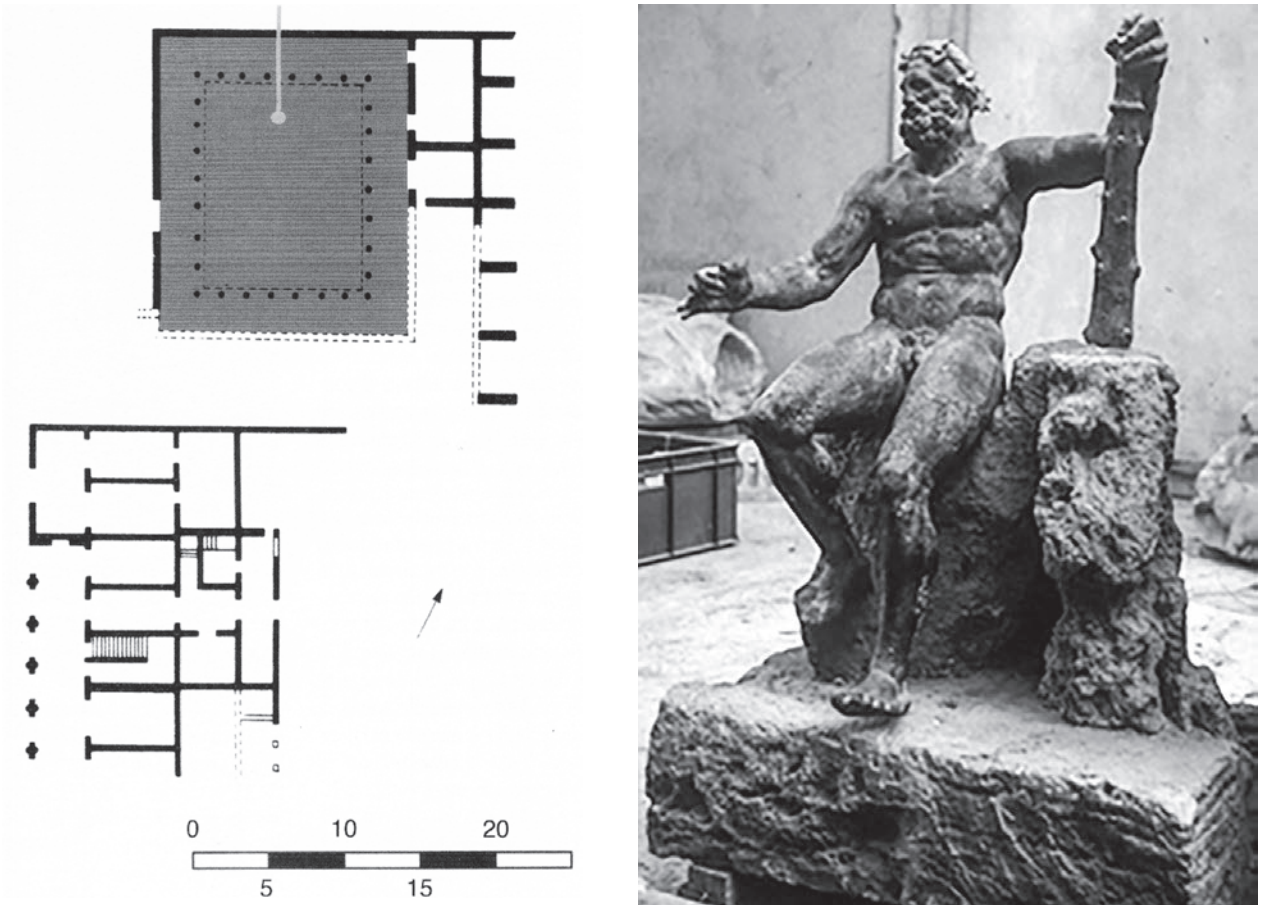
88 Jashemski 1979a.

89 Van Andringa 2009, 266.

90 Coralini 2001, 59–60.

91 Coralini 2001, 175.

92 Coralini 2001, 240–41 (t.001).



Figs. 14–15: Pompeii, Villa Matrone. Peristyle, Hercules Epitrapezios: bronze, medium-sized statuette, h. 88 (After Coralini 2001, 241, t.001 © Ministero della Cultura/MANN).

have been a constant feature of the domestic sphere: here, as in other situations, the presence of Hercules lent itself – even in ancient times – to a number of readings, affirming the multifunctionality of the context (i.e. a garden that was also used for economic activities). In addition, it gave tangible form not only to the demi-god's role as *tutor*, through his participation in convivial activities (here materialised by the open-air *triclinium*) and his function, together with Minerva and Mercury, as the protector of craftsmen and traders.[93] The association of images of Hercules with convivial spaces and structures is clearly attested in the archaeological record in Vesuvian sites and elsewhere. In Pompeii it is confirmed by the case of another garden, in House I 13, 16, probably a *caupona*.[94] Here, a marble head of Hercules, inserted in a niche in the upper zone of the northern wall, protected the banquets from above. It was accompanied in this function, which in this specific context seems to be a safeguard rather than decoration, by a head of Dionysus, also inside a niche, and the painted image of Venus on a small pillar, probably the reproduction of a statue (**Figs. 16–17**).[95]

The case of the 'Garden of Hercules' (Pompeii, II 8, 6) opens a window on the reworking and reuse of artefacts, an aspect of the use of images of divinities that has not still been systematically explored with regard to the domestic sphere.[96]

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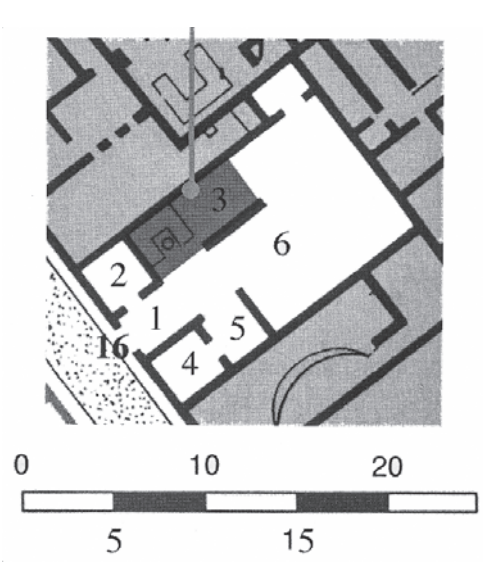
93 Coralini 2001, 163, P.030.

94 For a review of bars, and similia, at Pompeii, Ellis 2015.

95 Coralini 2001, 162–63, P.030.

96 Coralini 2001, 175, with other examples.



Figs. 16–17: Pompeii, I 13, 16. Garden 6, northern wall: marble, head (After Coralini 2001, 162, P.030 © Ministero della Cultura/ Parco archeologico di Pompei).

A similar situation, regarding the materiality of the artefact, is also documented in another small dwelling (Pompeii, I 2, 17), where Hercules *in effigie* was present twice, in different spaces and media: first, in the entrance area, in the atrium, with the form of a medium size statue; then, in the rear quarter, depicted on the back wall of an *oecus* overlooking the small garden (**Fig. 18**).[97] In this case too, the sculptural artefact is the result of an attempt at reworking and restoration: the figure of Hercules, in an unusual variation on the theme of Hercules clothed, is cut in half, at the level of the waist, and the form is thus that of a high-relief rather than a sculpture in the round (**Figs. 19a–c**).[98]

Conclusion: Readings in Progress. Remarks on an Open (and Necessary) Process

The re-examination of the Hercules *domesticus* corpus in the light of data from other regions and in the perspective of the recent reflections on the discipline – concerning especially agency, entanglement, Human-Things networks and the new 'material turn' – has confirmed the importance of painstaking contextual analysis of the archaeological evidence.[99] Only a two-pronged approach to research can bridge the gap between ancient meanings and modern readings: on the one hand, direct verification of the data, on a broad scale, with reference to case studies; on the other, an open process involving the review of the material evidence in accordance with the heuristic progress of the discipline. This is the surest way to anchor the interpretations of today to the materiality of the past.[100]

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97 Coralini 2001, 145–46, P.001 and P.002.

98 Coralini 2001, 145–46; Carrella et al. 2008, 22–24 (N. Inserra).

99 For other studies on Hercules in Roman world, see supra note 37. For the more recent trends in archaeological theory: Robb 2005 (agency); Hodder 2012 (entanglement); Hicks 2010; Witmore 2014; Cooper 2020 (material turn). For their reception in studies on ancient religion, Raja – Rüpke 2015a; Veymiers – Gasparini 2018.

100 Strategy already adopted by Coralini 2001.

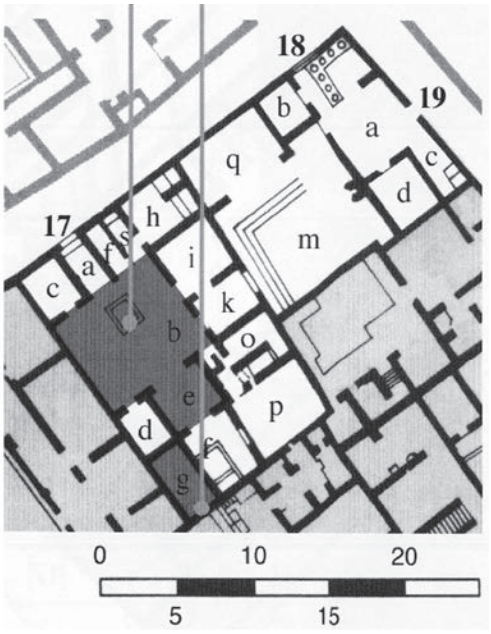

Fig. 18: Pompeii, I 2, 17. Atrium b and *oecus* g (After Coralini 2001, 145).

Figs. 19.a–c: Pompeii, I 2, 17. Atrium b: marble, medium-sized statuette, h. 72 cm (After Coralini 2001, 145 © Ministero della Cultura).

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Egyptian Cults in Pompeian Domestic Wall Paintings

Anu Kaisa Koponen

Introduction

This article focuses on cult images of Egyptian deities painted in a Pompeian domestic context.[1] I will present systematically and contextually the Pompeian evidence of painted Egyptianizing imagery whose principal (but not exclusive) meaning for Pompeians was religious. Studies based on catalogues by A. Coralini and M.J. Versluys testify to the usefulness of systematic and contextual listing of specific Pompeian pictorial themes.[2] The aims of this study are 1) to define specific patterns of how Pompeians decorated their homes with religious images of Egyptian deities and 2) to understand better than earlier the specific role of Egyptian deities in the Pompeian domestic sphere. I hope that my analyses of eight Egyptian cult paintings with their architectural and decorative frameworks can help further studies aiming to understand better the multifaceted roles not only of Egyptian cults but of diverse pictorial allusions to Egypt in the Pompeian domestic sphere.

Material allusions to Egypt were created in Pompeian houses through diverse media varying from figures in paintings and mosaics to Egyptian and Egyptianizing object finds. An Egyptian atmosphere was also created by using elements of Ptolemaic architecture such as a high *podium* in the Temple of Isis, a broken pediment in wall paintings, and decorative water canals alluding to the river Nile in Pompeian gardens.[3] Egypt was present through material choices as well as techniques of craftsmanship originating from Egypt, such as the preparation of the cerulean blue (lat. *caeruleum*) by heating copper. Although Vitruvius in his *de architectura* explains that preparation of Egyptian blue was first invented in Alexandria, this colour was most likely appreciated by Pompeians for its beautiful tone that lent a heavenly or watery atmosphere to the space, they did not necessarily pay attention to its Alexandrian origins.[4]

M. de Vos, M.J. Versluys and I. Bragantini have divided specific domestic images into different genres, such as religious Egyptianizing images and objects presumably related to the performance of a domestic cult, and images showing Egyptian subjects or settings that are unconnected to cult and have a decorative function or communicate political messages.[5] In contrast, C.E. Barrett underlines that "the meaning of many Roman images

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1 I am most grateful to Dr. Eeva-Maria Viitanen for her careful and thought-provoking comments on an earlier version of this paper and especially for sharing her profound knowledge of the Pompeian *insula* (IX 3). I am also very grateful to Dr. Nikola D. Bellucci for kindly showing me his detailed catalogue 'A2 – Appendice dei reperti egizi ed egittizzanti provenienti da Pompei' in his forthcoming publication. All errors are mine.

2 Coralini 2001; Versluys 2002.

3 For the high *podium* in Alexandrian tomb architecture see Venit 2002, 37–67; for the broken pediment in Alexandrian architecture and Roman wall painting see McKenzie 2007, 89–105.

4 Vitr. 7, 10. In reality Egyptian blue (calcium copper silicate) was used much earlier than the Ptolemaic kingdom in ancient Egypt and Near East, and it was the dominant blue pigment of ancient Greek painting from the third millennium BCE (Kakoulli 2009).

5 de Vos 1980; Versluys 2002; Bragantini 2012.

of Egypt resists reduction to any single fixed interpretation, remaining open to contestation, renegotiation, and reinterpretation according to changing circumstances".[6] The meaning of Egyptian imagery in cosmopolitan Alexandria and around the multicultural Mediterranean was certainly multifaceted and varied between decorative, political and religious, as well as according to context, assemblage and the background of the viewer. P. Zanker speaks about a "fan of interpretations" in Roman domestic art.[7] T. Hölscher has defined "Roman art as a semantic language" in which the Romans arranged earlier Greek pieces of art and styles in new assemblages and contexts. Hölscher points out how Roman art's evocation of different visual types from a variety of previous cultures elides the pastness of the past in a contemporaneity of display.[8] The Romans managed to communicate their own messages by elaborating earlier styles and Greek pieces of art. Hölscher's semantic theory helps to understand the role of Egyptian objects and Egyptianizing figures in Roman art as a part of Roman visual communication. Not only artworks and imported luxury but also religious practices were arranged in a new way to communicate Roman messages. E. Orlin explains how new messages were created, for example, when Augustan law ordered that Egyptian cults could be practised only outside the *pomerium* (a religious boundary around the city of Rome). Orlin argues that Augustus' aim was to make Greek culture to look truly Roman when it was compared to Egyptian culture; and his strategy was to define clear boundaries of Romanness while incorporating foreign elements into the Roman culture.[9] Pompeian evidence, however, does not reveal imperial interests but visual and religious strategies of diverse Pompeian families to arrange decorative motifs as well as their deities in assemblages and contexts to communicate their messages taking into account local social norms.[10]

In order to understand what meanings Pompeian viewers attached to their Egyptianizing material culture, it is essential to study these motifs in their architectural, decorative and social context. Unfortunately, the exact original location of Egyptian and Egyptianizing object finds is often obscure, since many objects were excavated without a proper documentation. In addition, the Pompeians stored their objects in storage rooms, cupboards or boxes.[11] Thus their find context gives no idea of the spaces where they were used. Objects were also transferred in various places, according to occasions and needs. In contrast, painted cult images are fixed in their character and thus can be studied in their original architectural and decorative contexts. As a result, they are a good starting point when we try to understand both the role of Egyptian cults and the material culture alluding to Egypt in Pompeian homes.

Research Methods

Egyptian motifs catch the eye to such a degree that they are well recorded in the catalogues of Pompeian wall paintings and mosaics (*PPP* and *PPM*), which I have used as a backbone of my earlier statistical study.[12] These catalogues make it possible to study not only photographs and other visual documentation of a specific image, but also its location in the ground plan of the house. I have grouped diverse Egyptian mo-

6 Barrett 2017.

7 Zanker 2002

8 Hölscher 2004.

9 Orlin 2008.

10 For unwritten social norms and Egyptian motifs in Pompeii see Koponen 2020.

11 Berg 2014.

12 Koponen 2017, 2020. See also the table 'Egyptian Motifs in Pompeian Houses' published by A.K. Koponen in the Poster 20 in the conference 'Picta fragmenta' (MANN, Napoli, 13–15 settembre 2018): 'Social Expectations and Egyptian Motives in Pompeian Wall Painting'. Download the poster 20 in the website of the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli (https://www.museoarcheologiconapoli.it/it/2018/09/13-15-settembre-2018-picta-fragmenta-rileggendo-la-pittura-vesuviana/).

tifs of wall paintings in seven groups, one of which is 'Egyptian cult images'.[13] According to my statistical research on Egyptian motifs in Pompeian houses, there were Egyptian motifs in 79 rooms in 52 houses in Pompeii. Rooms with cult paintings of Egyptian deities are 10% of all those with painted Egyptian motifs (8 rooms out of 79 rooms). It must be noted that these images, whose visual form and location is known, are like the tip of the iceberg. Numerous Egyptian cult paintings have faded and perished without an accurate visual documentation, some of which are mentioned in excavation reports.[14]

Earlier Research on Egyptian Cult Images in Pompeii

The role of Egyptian motifs in Roman domestic context still is a highly debated issue. The term 'Egyptomania' was connected by M. de Vos with decorative fashion of Nilotic scenes and pharaonic images in her influential study *L'egittomania in pitture e mosaici romano-campani della prima età imperiale* (1980). According to her these images alluding to Egypt were non-religious and purely ornamental during the specific political climate of the Early Empire after Augustan victory over Egypt.[15] Her study was a critical response to earlier scholars who had interpreted all kinds of Egyptian motifs as a testimony of Isiac faith in Pompeian houses. In his influential opera *Pompeji in Leben und Kunst* (1900) A. Mau explained that the owners of the small Casa di Acceptus e Euhodia (VIII 5, 39) were followers of Isis based on its five small Egyptianizing statuettes, a Greek inscription 'of Sarapion' and a cult painting of Isis-Fortuna.[16] Later K. Schefold and V. Tran Tam Tinh, for example, continued to trace the followers of Isis (*Isiaci*) as a separate religious group based on Egyptianizing decoration of Pompeian houses.

Currently most scholars agree that the meaning of Egyptian decoration was multifaceted for the Romans varying from political and decorative to religious. Artists, patrons, family members, servants and visitors all might have interpreted these images based on their own backgrounds and interests. However, there is a specific group of undoubtedly religious images of Egyptian deities that could be studied further. For example, there has been no attempt to define the special character of these Egyptian cult paintings in a relation to Pompeian *lararium* paintings. T. Fröhlich included Egyptian cult images in his catalogue of *lararium* and facade paintings in Pompeii but F. Giacobello excluded them from her catalogue of Pompeian *lararia*.[17]

The most important article concentrating on Egyptian cult images in Pompeian houses is by I. Bragantini 'The Cult of Isis and Ancient Egyptomania in Campania' (2012) in which she discusses among other things five Egyptian cult images included also in my catalogue of this article. She analyses these paintings according to such parameters as chronology, clientele and context. Bragantini assumes that cult paintings in the service area were exclusively aimed for slaves.[18] In contrast Giacobello regards the *lararia* in the vicinity of hearth and kitchen as the primary *lararia* worshipped by the whole family.[19]

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13 The seven groups in the catalogue are: 1) Nilotic scenes with pygmies and exotic animals, 2) Egyptian decorative details such as caryatides, human and divine figures, objects of the Isis cult, as well as Egyptian flora and fauna, 3) Egyptian cult images 4) Egyptian landscape vignettes with Egyptian architecture, 5) Mythological pictures of the myth of Io as pendants: 'Io guarded by many-eyed Argos' and 'Io in the Canopus received by Isis', 6) Painted garden rooms with Egyptian details, 7) The personification of Egypt (or Africa) as a female figure with an elephant headdress. See Koponen 2017, 2020.

14 Numerous excavation reports mention now lost Egyptian cult images. See Bellucci (forthcoming).

15 de Vos 1980, 78–79.

16 Mau 1908, 361-62; Schefold 1952; Tran Tam Tinh 1964.

17 Giacobello 2008, 80; Fröhlich 1991, 262, L32 fig.; 265; L40, fig. 30,1; 281, L74, figs. 38.1–2; 292, L97 fig. 46,2; L Tafel 47, I.

18 Bragantini 2012.

19 Giacobello 2008.

Bragantini supposes that Egyptian motifs of the Third style might have been connected to Augustan political propaganda, an idea which I have questioned in my earlier articles and dissertation.[20] Augustan architects used Egyptian elements, such as an obelisk, in public architecture in order to celebrate Augustus' rule over Egypt and visualise his power. However, according to my studies these political manoeuvres in the public sphere had surprisingly little impact on the material culture of the private sphere.[21] Indeed, P. Zanker underlines that images celebrating the Imperial family were almost totally excluded from the Roman domestic sphere.[22]

M. Malaise assumes that Augustus was hostile to Egyptian cults based on two Augustan laws (28 BCE and 21 BCE) prohibiting Egyptian shrines inside the *pomerium*.[23] But E. Orlin assures us that Egyptian gods continued to be worshipped in both public and private spheres during the Imperial era, although they were excluded from the *pomerium* in Augustan legislation.[24] According to F. Coarelli these laws by Augustus and Agrippa concerned the private shrines of Isis and not the public temple *Iseum Campense*.[25]

The first phase of the Temple of Isis in Pompeii was built at the end of the second century BCE.[26] Consequently, the cult of Isis was firmly integrated into Pompeian religious life during the first century BCE, although its exotic character remained an essential part of it even at a later date. I agree with L. Hackworth Petersen who argues that it is time to problematise our dependence on the political meaning of Isis and consider Isis as a truly Roman deity, as one of many gods that individuals could invoke, just as with any Roman deity.[27]

The dissertations by L. Beaurin and E. Mol include in their appendices also cult images of Egyptian deities in Pompeian houses. They both analyse, however, a much larger body of evidence in their dissertations and include in their appendices also now lost paintings documented only in textual descriptions.[28] In the catalogue of this article I have included only Egyptian cult paintings whose visual form is preserved as original, in a drawing or photograph. Mol's study is based on an assumption that 'Isiacs' and 'non-Isiacs' engaged in fundamentally different ways with objects and motifs alluding to Egypt in Pompeian domestic sphere. In her recent publication of Egyptian landscapes in Pompeian gardens C.E. Barrett questions this widespread binary assumption of religious identities; and she includes in her study a catalogue of Pompeian garden shrines with images of Isis and related deities.[29] A complete catalogue of Pompeian *Aegyptiaca* as well as Egyptianizing objects and painted motifs is about to be published by N.D. Bellucci.[30]

In addition to eight certainly religious cult paintings of Egyptian deities of my catalogue there are numerous images in Pompeian houses, which can possibly be connected with the cult of Isis. For example, Beaurin's appendix includes room (g) of the Casa dei Ceii (I 6, 15) together with other uncertain Egyptian

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20 Bragantini (2012, 28–31) and de Vos (1980, 78–79) assume that pharaonic and Nilotic images were without cultic implications and may have had a political character, and that these Egyptian motifs spread rapidly in Roman art in order to celebrate Augustus' victory over Egypt. Contra Koponen 2009 and 2017, 291.

21 Koponen 2009, 2017, 2020.

22 Zanker 2002, 214.

23 Malaise 1972, 380; Dio Cass. 53, 2, 4; 54, 6.

24 Orlin 2008.

25 Coarelli 2019, 69–74. In this study Coarelli collects together textual and archaeological evidence testifying to the arrival of the cult of Isis in the Italian Peninsula during the third or at latest in the second century BCE.

26 Coarelli 2019, 53; Guidobaldi – Pesando 2006, 68.

27 Petersen 2016.

28 Beaurin 2013, 451–54, Appendix 5; Mol 2015, 178, table 4.12.

29 Barrett 2019, 294–95, Appendix D.

30 Bellucci (forthcoming). See n. 1. in this article.

cult paintings which she has marked with a question-mark.[31] In this volume M. Bassani proposes in her article that room (g) in the Casa dei Ceii (I 6, 15) was a small family *sacrarium* since it was decorated with Isis-related subjects on its walls, such as a breast-like *situla* as well as rose crown, and it overlooked *viridarium* (h) decorated with Nilotic scenes.[32]

The meaning of a specific figure depends on numerous factors such as its architectural and social context as well as its assemblage among other items and images. Also, different viewers interpreted specific images according to their earlier experiences. All this is true, but such a large fan of interpretations may reflect more contemporary art theories than ancient Roman perception. F. Coarelli reminds us of the well-known fact that during Antiquity, religion pervaded every aspect of private and public life.[33] Similarly, M. Bettini wonders why we still continue to see Roman art as images of mythology, while for the Romans, these images of ancient myths were depictions of their gods.[34]

Terminology

In current studies, the terminology of Pompeian cult images representing Egyptian deities varies: T. Fröhlich (1991), L. Beaurin (2013), and E. Mol (2015) call them *lararium* paintings. F. Giacobello (2008) rejects this and excludes Egyptian deities from her corpus of Pompeian *lararia.* Giacobello demands a separate treatment of cult paintings representing Egyptian deities since there are no figures of Lares depicted in them.[35] In this article I call them 'Cult paintings of Egyptian deities' and 'Egyptian cult paintings'.

Pompeian wall paintings are local products, including their 'Egyptian motifs'. In this study, 'Egyptianizing decoration' refers to decoration composed of Egyptian-style objects and painted Egyptian motifs produced outside Egypt, whereas the term *Aegyptiaca* refers only to objects that are originally imported from Egypt.[36] The term 'cult image' is used in this article to mean that this specific image was an object of veneration and sacrifices. There were numerous other kinds of images of Egyptian gods and goddesses on Pompeian wall paintings, and religious feelings were possibly attached to other images too; but 'cult images' were the only certain object of worship and sacrifices in a manner similar to the statuettes and images of Pompeian *lararia*.

In Pompeian frescoes figures alluding to Egypt are Hellenised and/or Romanised versions of Egyptian deities. Their syncretic forms included both familiar and exotic elements allowing multiple readings simultaneously. We do not know if the Pompeians regarded their Egyptian cult figures as local or foreign deities. Interpretations may have varied depending on context and the background of the viewer. My earlier studies suggests that Pompeians were eager to visualise a small amount of Egyptian flavour in

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31 Beaurin (2013, 451–54) marks as uncertain some cult paintings in her list with a question mark, as in the case of a supposed 'cult room' in the Casa dei Ceii (I 6, 15), or with a comment, when she doubts that an obscure, small fragment of a female figure with a *cornucopia* and possibly *modius* in an old photograph of the house (V 4, 3.5) could be Isis-Fortuna by explaining that it is more likely Fortuna.

32 See 'Gods and Cult Objects in Roman Houses' by M. Bassani in this volume.

33 Coarelli 2019, 41: "...del mondo romano, dove, come è universalmente noto, l'aspetto religioso si caratterizza proprio per la sua presenza non specializzata, ma pervasiva, universalmente diffusa in tutte le manifestazioni della vita pubblica e privata."

34 Bettini 2014, 9–10.

35 Giacobello (2008, 80) leaves Isiac shrines and cult paintings out of her catalogue of Pompeian *lararia*: "Tali apprestamenti non sono stati inclusi nell'appendice in quanto espressione di un culto specifico con caratteristiche autonome."

36 Bellucci (forthcoming) argues that for historical and etymological reasons the term *Aegyptiaca* should be used to describe products imported originally from Egypt (and made by or for Egyptians), whereas artworks evoking Egyptian style or form but produced outside Egypt are 'Egyptianizing'. It must be noted, however, that the origin of numerous objects alluding to Egypt remains unknown and the Romans did not necessarily pay attention to their origin.

their homes. But they also took care that the 'things Egyptian' remained in a minor role in their domestic decoration.[37]

Household Worship of Egyptian Deities

In Pompeian houses, there are eight domestic cult paintings clearly connected with the cult of Isis: In addition to six Egyptian cult images included in the *PPM*, I have integrated in my list of Egyptian cult images a *sacrarium* (a sacred room) of Egyptian gods in the *praedia Iuliae Felicis* (II 4, 2–12) and a figure of Isis-Fortuna in the modest Casa con l'affresco di Isis-Fortuna (V 4, 9).[38] I present in the following a photo, drawing or an engraving of each of these eight Egyptian cult images, and I also mark their location in the ground plan of the house. The plan of Pompeii with houses indicated makes it possible to compare their locations and sizes (**Fig. 1**).

T. Fröhlich regards the standardised style of *lararium* paintings as poorer quality of 'Plebeian art', but Giacobello is convinced that their stylistic choice is due to different use of visual language in a specific context.[39] D. Esposito and F. Giacobello assure us that same painters' workshops, composed of fixed painters and organised as big business, executed both *lararium* images and other wall decoration, even though in some cases a decorator specialised in *lararium* paintings might have been used.[40] According to them, few local workshops of considerable size were responsible for decoration of Pompeian buildings during the last decades of the city. Thus, it seems likely that the visual difference between cult images and other wall paintings is an intentional choice underlining the cultic character of a specific image.

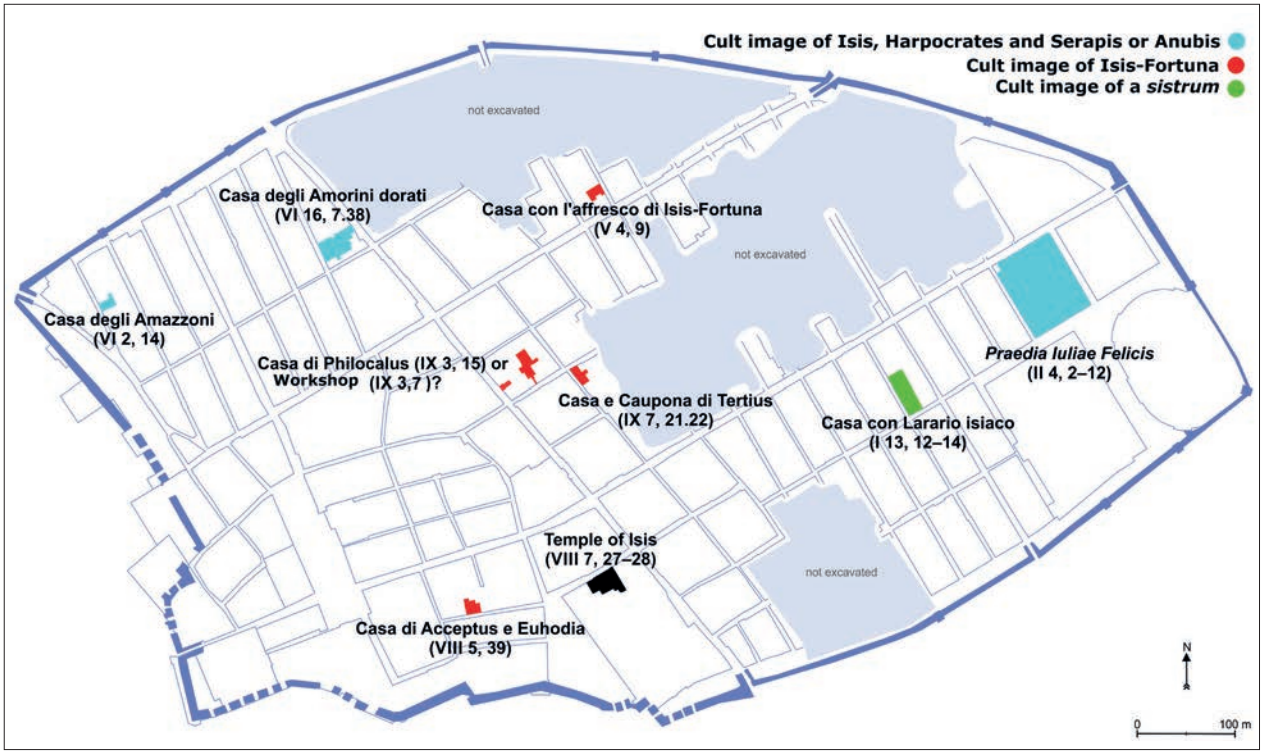

Fig. 1: Pompeii. A plan of the ancient city, with eight houses, discussed in this article, indicated (Drawing: Eeva-Maria Viitanen).

37 Koponen 2017, 2020.

38 *PPM* (III,1059) includes a textual reference to the photograph of Isis-Fortuna in Sogliano 1899, p. 346, fig. 7.

39 Giacobello 2008, 98–104.

40 Esposito 2009, 136; 2017, 281–86; Giacobello 2014.

Egyptian cult paintings indicate the location of domestic rituals. Pompeian lived religious practises can be deduced by observing details of *lararium* paintings and holes in their plaster as well as traces of altars, niches and shelves. Nails and nail holes in both ends of painted garlands in several Pompeian *lararia* indicate that real garlands were attached to the surfaces overlaying their painted counterparts. Also in Egyptian cult paintings are often depicted garlands. D. Rogers explains how real garlands were hung on the top of Egyptian cult paintings as votive offerings during religious rituals.[41] There are traces of permanent altars in front of several Egyptian cult paintings, and also portable altars were common. Vine, food, flower, incense and votive lamp offerings were placed on these altars. In the Temple of Isis Pompeians burnt chicken, fish, figs, dates, chestnuts, pine nuts, walnuts and hazelnuts to venerate Isis and her divine consorts.[42] Perhaps Egyptian deities got similar food offerings also in Pompeian houses.

Various combinations of statuettes of Roman deities were placed on the domestic *lararia,* often also including statuettes of Egyptian deities, such as Isis, Isis-Fortuna and Harpocrates. Each family choose these deities according to their religious needs and preferences. It seems likely that ancient authors referred to these personal assemblages of Roman household gods and goddesses with the term 'Penates'.[43] More than fifty statuettes of Egyptian deities have been found in Pompeii and its suburban villas, and at least twenty-three of these are from the domestic context.[44] Unfortunately the original location of many objects is unknown or unsure. Although I have traced only eight certain Egyptian cult images in total, they are important evidence of religious attitudes in the Pompeian domestic sphere especially due to their fixed context.[45]

Pompeian houses were often embellished with two or more *lararia,* and Giacobello divides *lararium* paintings into two groups, one more traditional and modest group near the kitchen and service areas, and the other more elaborate in the representative areas of the house.[46] Quite similarly Egyptian cult paintings can be divided into two groups according to their location as will be discussed in the following.

Catalogue of Egyptian Cult Paintings in Pompeian Houses

1. The sacrarium *of the* praedia Iuliae Felicis *(II 4, 2–12)*

Recently, two painted walls of the Egyptianizing *sacrarium* of the *praedia Iuliae Felicis* (II 4, 2–12) have been identified in storage rooms of the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli (MANN). The *praedia* complex, owned by the Pompeian businesswoman Iulia Felix, was composed of living quarters around an atrium and spaces with elegant baths and dining rooms aimed at the rental business as is confirmed by an

41 Rogers (2020) lists seven Pompeian *lararium* paintings with nail holes in sides of painted garlands.

42 Beaurin 2013, 443–44, Appendix 3.

43 Giacobello 2008, 54.

44 According to 'A2 – Appendice dei reperti egizi ed egittizzanti provenienti da Pompei' in Bellucci (forthcoming) the most common Egyptian figure on Pompeian domestic shrines was a bronze statuette of Harpocrates found in 9 Pompeian houses. In total 19 statuettes of Harpocrates have been found in Pompeii and its suburban villas. Four bronze statuettes of Isis-Fortuna and one of silver are from Pompeian houses and workshops with the residential quarter in the rear; there have been found 19 statuettes of Isis-Fortuna in total in Pompeii and its suburbs. Two marble statues and two bronze statuettes of Isis have been found in domestic context; and in total 10 statues of Isis have been found in Pompeii and its suburbs. In addition three terracotta busts of Isis and one Isis-Hydreia are from Pompeian bars. One bronze and two alabaster statuettes of Horus as well as two bronze statuettes of Anubis are from lavish Pompeian houses. The original location of one bronze statuette of Serapis is unknown.

45 The exact location of the winged Isis-Fortuna (MANN inv. 8836) inside the *Insula* (IX 3) is unsure.

46 Giacobello (2008) divides Pompeian *lararia* into two groups: the principal *lararia* are connected with food production and are located near the hearth and kitchen. The secondary *lararia* are located in other spaces.

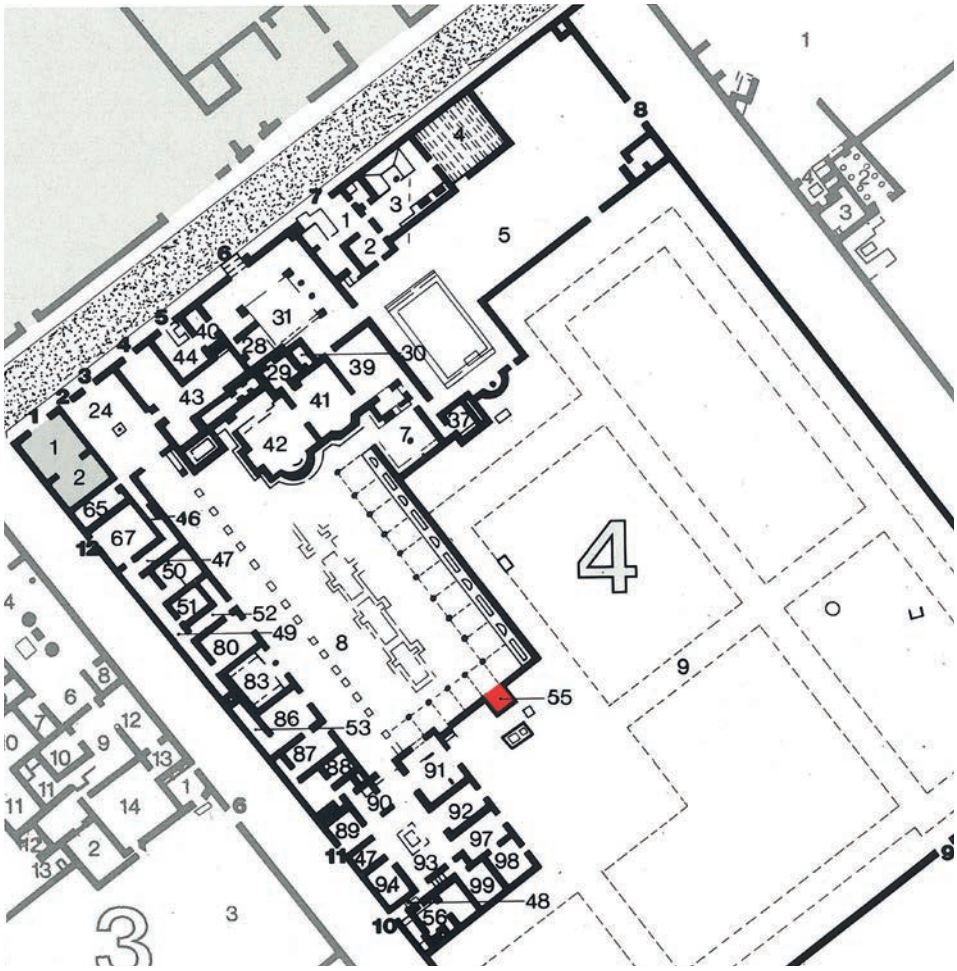

Fig. 2: The ground plan of the *praedia Iuliae Felicis* (II 4, 2-12) with the *sacrarium* indicated (Modified from the ground plan in *PPM* III, 184).

advertisement painted in the facade.[47] In between the living quarters and the baths was a large and elegant *viridarium* with a decorative canal surrounded by numerous statues. In the west side of the *viridarium* was a long colonnade of thin marble columns and a *triclinium-nymphaeum* and a *sacrarium* dedicated to Egyptian gods. This *sacrarium* is a small chamber decorated with figures of Egyptian deities and the goddess Fortuna on its walls. It was the first private shrine to be discovered and documented already in 1755, during the Bourbon excavations (**Fig. 2**).

Immediately after documentation the site was buried as was typical of the Bourbon excavations. The *sacrarium* walls and barrel-vaulted roof were dismantled and transferred to the royal collections of Portici together with object finds and numerous fresco fragments. Later they were transported to the Museo Nazionale di Napoli in 1828. The *praedia* was excavated for a second time in the 1950's by Amedeo Maiuri. Other examples of ancient fresco painting were central images, vignettes and decorative details cut out from wall paintings of the *praedia* to create a royal picture gallery of ancient paintings. Among these were fragments of Nilotic scenes (MANN inv. 8573, 8608, 8732, 9102; MANN NR 794, 797, 799, 800) of the *triclinium-nymphaeum* (83).[48] Such a collection was reminiscent of the easel paintings in picture galleries typical of the 18th century. Exceptionally, the frescoes of the *sacrarium* were exhibited in Portici, so that the entire interior was reconstructed in the museum.[49]

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47 *CIL* VI 1136.

48 Sampaolo 2020, 24-25; Figs. 2.1–8.

49 Sampaolo 2019; Parslow 2013.

The *praedia* was excavated and documented by the Swiss military engineer Karl Weber. His detailed excavation reports, ground plans and axonometric drawings combined with the careful inventory of finds make it possible to reconstruct the original location and appearance of this *sacrarium*. These documents also mention object finds and their original location. In this chamber was found a bronze tripod decorated with ithyphallic satyrs (MANN inv. 27874) and in the marble shelf a dancing Priapus statue (MANN inv. 27733), a silver crescent moon (MANN inv. 25629) and a silver statuette of Harpocrates (MANN inv. 25460).[50]

The frescoes of the *sacrarium* became part of the permanent exhibition of the MANN in 2016. Unfortunately, the rear wall is missing. The wall decoration of the *sacrarium,* including the rear wall, is depicted in an engraving by Francesco Piranesi published in 1807 and based on a drawing made by his father Giambattista circa fifty years earlier (**Fig. 3**). In this engraving, the *sacrarium* is erroneously attributed to the Temple of Isis. In addition to excavation reports, we have museum inventories and eye-witness accounts by visitors. There are contradictions between these accounts and Piranesi's engraving. Early descriptions of the rear wall say that Isis is on the throne and Harpocrates wears sandals. In F. Piranesi's engraving, however,

Fig. 3: The *sacrarium* of the *praedia Iuliae Felicis*, engraving by Francesco Piranesi (Piranesi 1807, Planche 1: https://digi.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/diglit/piranesi1807bd1/0006).

50 Parslow 2013.

Isis is standing in between Anubis and a female figure. On the survived west wall Harpocrates is depicted barefoot.

The *sacrarium* was located in the south-east corner of the *praedia*'s garden. The garden was embellished with a long decorative pool (*euripus* or *nilus*) surrounded by an eclectic collection of garden statuary. The shrine's narrow entrance was cut into a high screen wall on the south side of the *viridarium*. Wooden beams of this pergola, were placed on brick pillars. The pergola decorated both the long east and rear south walls of the large garden. On the west side of the garden was a colonnade row of elegant thin marble columns, sixteen in total. The front of the long eastern arbour gave shade to the entrance of the *sacrarium*. The terracotta pipes were placed in the springing of the barrel vault. Most likely, they functioned as chimneys for burnt offerings, since a tripod decorated with ithyphallic figures was found here. A narrow shelf of white marble was placed on all three walls. In this were placed smaller artefacts.[51]

In the exhibition of the MANN the survived west and east walls of the *sacrarium* are rather faded. The entire fresco painting covering all the walls was elegantly depicted including the shadows following the direction of the real natural light arriving from the entrance. Egyptian deities were painted on the white background above a marble shelf placed at a height of 1,10 m. A painted dado was decorated with vegetal ornaments. Above a dado were depicted two *agathodaimon*-serpents flanking a pine cone. In the tunnel vaulted ceiling are traces of three lines, which suggest that there was a painted pergola connecting this cult chamber to the real pergola of the *viridarium*.

Looking from the entrance on the left wall (east wall) is depicted a goddess, Fortuna in a green dress composed of a long *chiton* and a *himation*. She holds a rudder in her right hand and a horn of abundance in her left hand. As often in the images of the Fortuna and Isis-Fortuna, there is a globe under the rudder. According to W. Helbig, there was a crown in her head, but now this figure is faded. At her right side is depicted Harpocrates standing on an L-shaped base. He is nude, wearing only a dark red mantle over his left shoulder, and his hair is tied in a typical lock called the 'Isis lock'. He has an index finger of his left hand

Fig. 4: Fortuna and Harpocrates on the east wall of the *sacrarium* of the *praedia Iuliae Felicis* (II 4,2-12). MANN Inv. Romano 839 (Photo: A.K. Koponen © Ministero della Cultura/ MANN).

51 Parslow 2013.

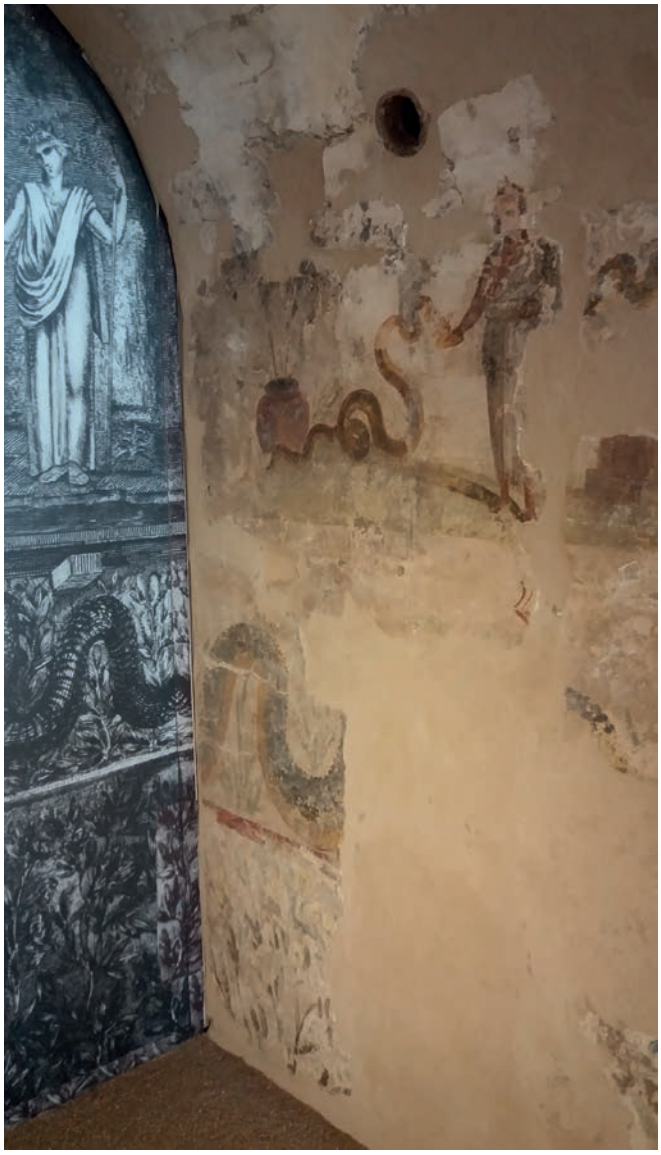

Fig. 5: An Isiac priestess on the west wall of the *sacrarium* of the *praedia Iuliae Felicis* (II 4, 2-12). MANN Inv. Romano 839 (Photo: A.K. Koponen © Ministero della Cultura/MANN).

in the front of his mouth, interpreted usually as a sign of silence and mystery, and a golden horn of abundance in his right hand (**Fig. 4**). Looking from the entrance on the right wall (west) of the *sacrarium,* there is a depiction of a female figure flanked by two serpents (**Fig. 5**). She may be the priestess of Isis wearing a lotus-blossom on her head. At her right side is depicted a palm tree growing from a large terracotta *dolium*. Similar palm trees in a terracotta pot appear in several Nilotic scenes, for example, in the Casa dei Pigmei (IX 5, 9, room l, north wall).

2. Casa degli Amorini dorati (VI 16, 7.38)

The peristyle portico of the Casa degli Amorini dorati (VI 16, 7.38) has two shrines – one dedicated to the cult of Isis and the other a *lararium*. From the left corner of the atrium, there is an unexceptional non-axial entry to the theatrical Rhodian peristyle. The unique combination of the shrine of Isis with the paintings of Harpocrates, Isis, Serapis and Anubis, together with the traditional *lararium* around the same peristyle, testifies to the interest of the owner in combining Roman and Hellenised Egyptian cults around the same luxurious garden setting. The bronze statues of the Lares (MANN 133327, 133328), together with the statues of Mercury and the Capitoline triad Jupiter, Juno and Minerva (MANN inv. 133323, 133324, 133325), have been found in the temple-like *lararium* composed of two colums supporting a pediment above a *podium*. In the atrium side of the *podium* the visitor may have notice a human profile painted playfully with red veins in marble imitation.

The Casa degli Amorini dorati is one of those Pompeian houses where the eclectic lavishness of the peristyle takes the attention totally away from the atrium (**Fig. 6**). The oldest part of the Casa degli Amorini dorati is the atrium, which was later transformed to be a modest vestibule to the elegant and beautifully decorated complex around the Rhodian peristyle. The images of the Trojan cycle in the small *tablinum* (E) and room (G), which open both on to the atrium and the peristyle, were carefully restored when the peristyle was redecorated after 62 CE.

From the street, this house seems to be the traditional small house with an atrium and *tablinum*. The peristyle complex is, exceptionally, on the side of the atrium and not, as in the traditional Roman house, after the *tablinum* in the main visual axis. It is only in the front of the *tablinum* that the visitor will realise that on the left-hand side is an elegant peristyle. When the visitor arrives at the peristyle, he/she will see a traditional

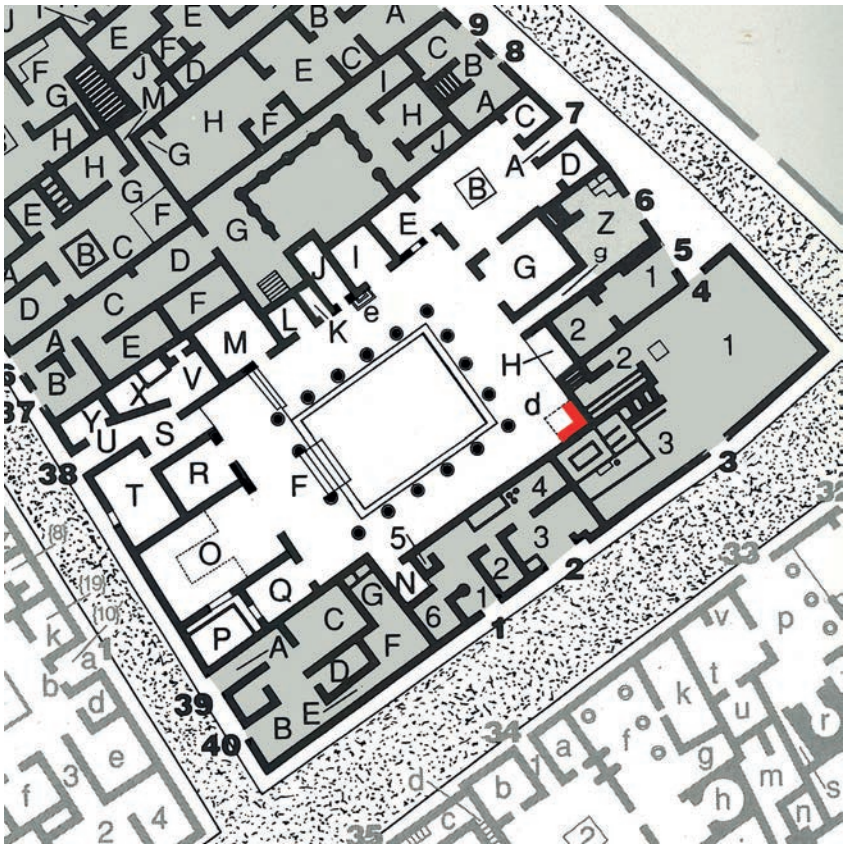

Fig. 6: The ground plan of the Casa degli Amorini dorati (VI 16, 7.38) with the Egyptian shrine indicated. Note that corridor (g) leads to the peristyle from the street through the workshop (VI 16, 6) (Modified from the ground plan in *PPM* V, 712).

lararium in the centre of the northern peristyle. The traditional visual axis in the atrium ends quite modestly with the *tablinum,* but when the visitor steps in the *tablinum* and looks to the peristyle through an opening on the south wall, he/she will see the shrine of Isis.

The unexceptional ground plan can be explained by the shortage of space, which forced the invention of solutions when the owners wanted to enlarge their houses with peristyles. Not all Pompeian patrons emphasised the importance of *salutatio*; they preferred different designs better fitted to their needs. The lavishness of the peristyle clearly suggests that most important meetings were arranged there during the last decades of the city.

The Egyptian shrine is created in the peristyle corner by decorating both east and south walls with ochre coloured rectangular panels framed with red borders (**Fig. 7**). In the south panel are depicted a jackal-headed Anubis in a red cloak, as well as Harpocrates, Isis and Serapis in a white dress. It looks as if these Egyptian deities were participating in a ceremony. Isis and Serapis are playing a rattle (*sistrum*), and Isis is also holding a sacred, breast-shaped vessel (a *situla*). Both Serapis and Harpocrates hold a *cornucopia*. In the east panel are depicted ritual objects: a *sistrum, patera* and *situla.* Below are depicted two *cistae mysticae* (mysterious baskets), one with a symbol of a crescent moon, and an *uraeus* (the sacred cobra). The panels with Egyptian deities and cult objects are painted above a white dado in which are depicted yellow *agathodaimon*-snakes approaching an altar in both sides of the corner. An alabaster statue of Horus (MANN inv. 133230), a now-lost marble statue of Fortuna (or Isis-Fortuna) enthroned, and an oil lamp adorned with figures of Isis, Harpocrates and Anubis (MANN inv. 19286) were found in this shrine. There are signs of a shelf in the east panel.[52]

52 Petersen 2012, 338 and Table 5.1.

Fig. 7: The Egyptian shrine of the Casa degli Amorini dorati (VI 16, 7.38) with a *sistrum*, two Isiac baskets, a *patera* and cobra depicted on the east wall. On the south wall are figures of Anubis, Harpocrates, Isis and Serapis (Photo: A.K. Koponen © Ministero della Cultura/Parco archeologico di Pompei).

The western portico is taller than the other sides of the peristyle. As a result, the central gabled *aedicula* stands on the *podium* on the rear side of the garden. According to Vitruvius, this kind of Rhodian peristyle belongs to the Greek house.[53] The elevated rear side of the peristyle could have served as a stage, because the rear floor of the peristyle is built up under this gabled *aedicula*. Behind the stage-like *podium* there is a monumental main *triclinium* (O) that was redecorated in 79 CE. The theatrical effect is reinforced by the fact that the floor level of the rear side is elevated two steps higher than the other side of the peristyle. Additionally, under the *aedicula* there are four steps leading dramatically to the garden. The gabled *aedicula* on the *podium* is reminiscent of the architectural structures of a public temple. Similarly, the Temple of Isis – an example of Hellenistic baroque architecture and Alexandrian influence in Pompeii – has the staircases in the centre of the colonnaded podium. The straight narrow corridor leads from the street through the small *caupona* (VI 16,6) to this peristyle, so that the visitor or servant can avoid the normal route through the atrium to the peristyle. It has been suggested that in this peristyle were arranged semi-public performances and the guests arrived directly from the street to the peristyle through this corridor.[54] The corridor entrance to the peristyle is exactly in the main visual axis opposite to the gabled *aedicula*. However, one column of the peristyle blocks this view.

The luxurious peristyle area had a garden pool, which was surrounded by numerous animal sculptures and Dionysiac herms, and also one herm of Jupiter Ammon. Decorative shields and masks hang between the

53 Vitr. 6, 7, 3.

54 Leach 2004, 105.

columns, while the peristyle corridors are decorated with wall paintings, reliefs representing theatre masks, and mirrors.[55]

The theatre and the Isis cult are also connected in the Pompeian public sphere: the architectural structures of the Pompeian public theatre and the Temple of Isis are attached. It seems possible that not only the Isis shrine, but also the theatrical arrangement of the peristyle in the Casa degli Amorini dorati was influenced by Alexandrian models. Alexandrian tombs show a tendency to theatricality in their architectural settings, which were designed for Ptolemaic funerary rituals. Tomb 3 in the necropolis at Moustapha Pasha in the vicinity of Alexandria is an example of theatricality attached to funerals, since the tomb is dominated by a high platform at the north end of the court.[56] The high *podium* of the tomb supports the *scaenae frons* of three real and two flanking fake doors.

In the Hellenistic period, life was sometimes seen as a reflection of the theatre; the fondness for dramatic settings and surprising, mysterious inner spaces was a distinctive feature of Hellenistic architecture.[57] The architecture and decoration of the Casa degli Amorini dorati displays such typically Hellenistic features as the interest in theatricality, surprises and mysteries, as well as a cosmopolitan outlook mixing different cultures and cults. Various elements testify to the cultural connections to Alexandria: the Isis shrine, the herm statue of Jupiter Ammon, the glass plates with golden cupids, as well as the theatrical *podium* on the west side of the peristyle.

3. Casa delle Amazzoni (VI 2, 14)

This large Egyptian cult painting with a real shrine in the Casa delle Amazzoni is a rare example of an Egyptian imagery placed at the end of the main visual axis starting from the entrance, going through the *fauces*, atrium and a tiny *tablinum* to the garden (**Fig. 8**). The Casa delle Amazzoni was excavated circa 1810, when its garden painting including figures of Isis, Harpocrates and Serapis was documented in a colourful drawing by Francesco Morelli (MANN inv. ADS 130) (**Fig. 9**). This large garden painting covers the whole wall in the rear of a small *viridarium*. Egyptian deities are depicted standing in an *aedicula* placed on the top of the pillar-like *podium*. The *aedicula* and its deities rise above the date-palm trees in the foreground, while the watery landscape of the Nile Delta shines in the background. Although this wall painting combines figures of Egyptian gods with a large landscape and exotic garden painting, its primary role as a religious painting is confirmed by a tiny altar made of bricks placed exactly in the front of the Egyptian deities.

Fig. 8: The ground Plan of the Casa delle Amazzoni (VI 2, 14), with the garden painting indicated (Modified from the ground plan in *PPM* IV, 168).

55 For the objects from the peristyle see Petersen 2012; Mol 2015, 345–46, Fig. 5.7 and Table 5.5.

56 Venit 2002, 61–67.

57 Pollitt 1986, 4–7.

Fig. 9: In the garden painting of the Casa delle Amazzoni (VI 2, 14) were depicted Isis, Harpocrates and Serapis inside an *aedicula*. The landscape panorama in the background represented the Nile Delta. In the front of the painted *aedicula* was a real altar documented by Francesco Morelli in a tempera-painting in 1812. MANN inv. ADS 130 (Photo © ICCD http://www.catalogo.beniculturali.it).

My statistical and contextual study testifies that Pompeians, in general, avoided placing Egyptian motifs of frescoes in the vicinity of the main visual axis (*fauces*-atrium-*tablinum*-peristyle), but in this house, Egyptian deities and an altar are located in the end of the main visual axis.[58] Thus, it seems that the owners of this small house exceptionally underlined their interest in the cult of Isis, since Egyptian deities and the shrine were visible from the entrance, when the view was not blocked with a door or curtains. Atrium and *tablinum* are small, while the main emphasis is on this small but lavishly decorated garden with its shrine and its elaborately decorated *triclinium* in the south and room (11) in the north. A window placed in the upper part of the north wall of room (11) took light from the peristyle of the attached larger house (VI 2,15).[59] Perhaps these two properties belonged to the same owner.

4. Casa con Larario isiaco (I 13, 12–14)

An Isiac niche is located in the most central and visible area of the house in an atrium of the Casa con Larario isiaco (I 13, 12–14). In an early construction phase of the house an entrance was framed with pilasters

58 Koponen 2017, 2020.

59 The upper window of room (11) looks like a modern construction probably somewhat imitating the original ancient design.

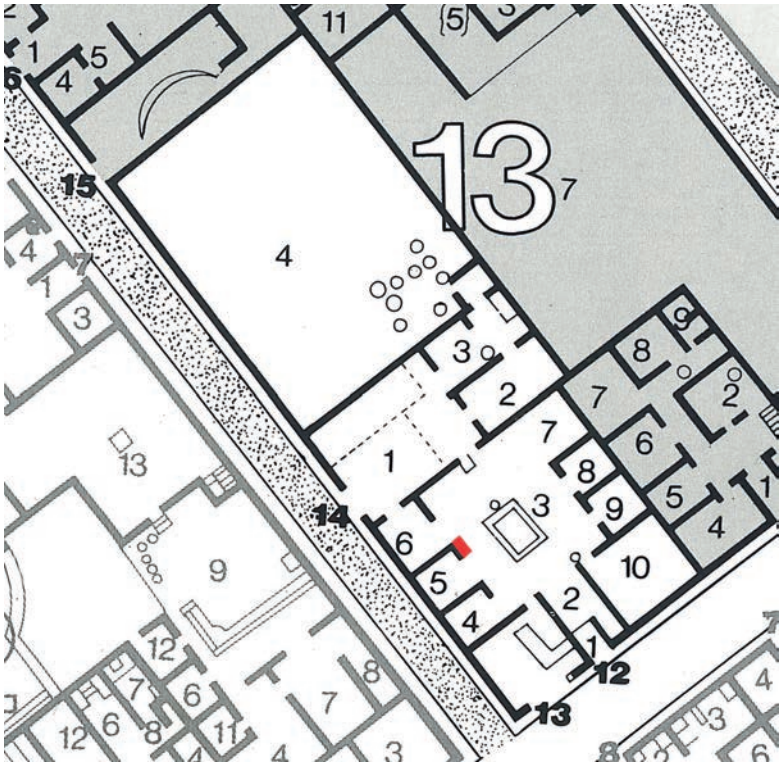

Fig. 10: The ground plan of the Casa con Larario isiaco (I 13, 12.14), with the Isiac niche indicated (Modified from the ground plan in *PPM* II, 920).

supporting cubic capitals as a sign of prestige. Later this traditional atrium house was modified for more utilitarian needs. As a result, there is no *tablinum* after the atrium (3), but a courtyard (1) leads directly from the street through a room (3) to a large agricultural plot (4) (**Fig. 10**).

The Isiac shrine, made of bricks, was integrated in an *opus vittatum mixtum*-pillar during the last decades of the city. This pillar was built in between the openings of room (6) and *ala* (5) in the west wall of the atrium. The architectural form of the niche is typical for a *lararium,* but its decoration alludes to the cult of Isis. Its *tympanon* was decorated with coloured mosaics, glass paste and seashells representing a *sistrum*, *situla*, and *cista*. On the white background of the interior of the niche were painted red roses with green leaves. Among the roses were depicted objects of the Isis cult: a *sistrum* and breast-like *situla,* but also a *caduceus,* an attribute of Mercury, all painted to shine like gold (**Figs. 11a, b**).

Fig. 11 a-b: An Isiac niche with an image of a *sistrum* in the atrium of the Casa con Larario isiaco (I 13, 12.14) (Photos: A.K. Koponen © Ministero della Cultura/Parco archeologico di Pompei).

5. Casa con l'affresco di Isis-Fortuna (V 4, 9)

Immediately after the visitor stepped inside this modest house, there was a small room (b) to the right (south) with a figure of Isis-Fortuna painted on its rear wall (**Fig. 12**). In the vicinity of this cult image, there was a *latrina* in the south-east corner of the same room. In the atrium of this small house, there were two *lararium* niches, which testify to an intense religious activity in this modest house. In the *lararium* niche of the north wall, there was a bronze bust of Minerva and a roughly worked Venus made of alabaster.

The whole wall was destroyed and only a photograph reveals that this Isis-Fortuna was depicted wearing a *modius* (a cylindrical headdress representing a grain-measure) and holding a cornucopia (as a symbol of abundance), while a rudder (as a symbol of destiny) in her hand was placed above a globe (as a symbol of the uncertainties of human life).[60] This painting had a painted band as a frame and the statue-like figure was painted inside an *aedicula* (**Fig. 13**).

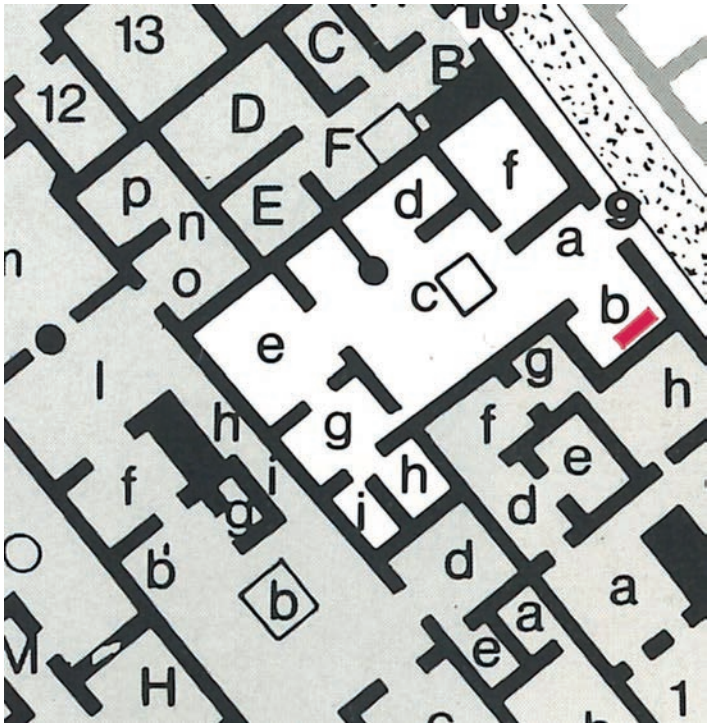

Fig. 12: The ground plan of the Casa con l'affresco di Isis-Fortuna (V 4, 9), with the cult painting of Isis-Fortuna indicated (Modified from the ground plan in *PPM* III, 1059).

Fig. 13: In the Casa con l'affresco di Isis-Fortuna (V 4, 9) the cult painting of Isis-Fortuna was in the south wall of the room (b) attached to the *latrina* in the south-east corner. Now this wall is destroyed and the image of the goddess is preserved only as an obscure photograph in an article by A. Sogliano in 1899 (Photo: Sogliano 1899, 346, fig. 7).

6. Casa di Acceptus e Euhodia (VIII 5, 39)

The Casa di Acceptus e Euhodia (VIII 5, 39) was a modest house without an atrium in the vicinity of the Temple of Isis. As was discussed in the beginning of this article, A. Mau was convinced that the owners of

60 Sogliano 1899, p. 345–46, fig. 7; Boyce 1937, 41, n. 122; *PPM* vol. III, 1059.

this house were followers of Isis based on its Egyptianizing garden decoration and cult painting of Isis-Fortuna.[61] In reality, Egyptianizing themes in this house are nothing exceptional in Pompeian domestic context.

From the street the visitor arrived immediately under a two-storied portico supported by two columns (**Fig. 14**). Four rooms (d, f, h, i) opened onto the portico. In the rear of the house there was another small garden (g) giving natural light to room (f) and anteroom (h). In the entrance the portico was separated from the garden with a masonry *triclinium* by a low wall. Even though the garden was small (c. 30 m^2), there was a luxurious summer *triclinium* with a fountain jet in the table. The garden was decorated with small garden sculptures, including glazed terracotta statuettes imitating Egyptian faiance: Ptah Pateco (MANN inv. 116666), Bes (MANN inv. 116665), another Bes without a head (MANN inv. 117178) as well as one Egyptian female and one male figure. Among several other marble objects there was a fluted *monopodium* with a Greek inscription *ΣΑΡΑΠΙΩΝΟΣ* 'of Sarapion'.[62]

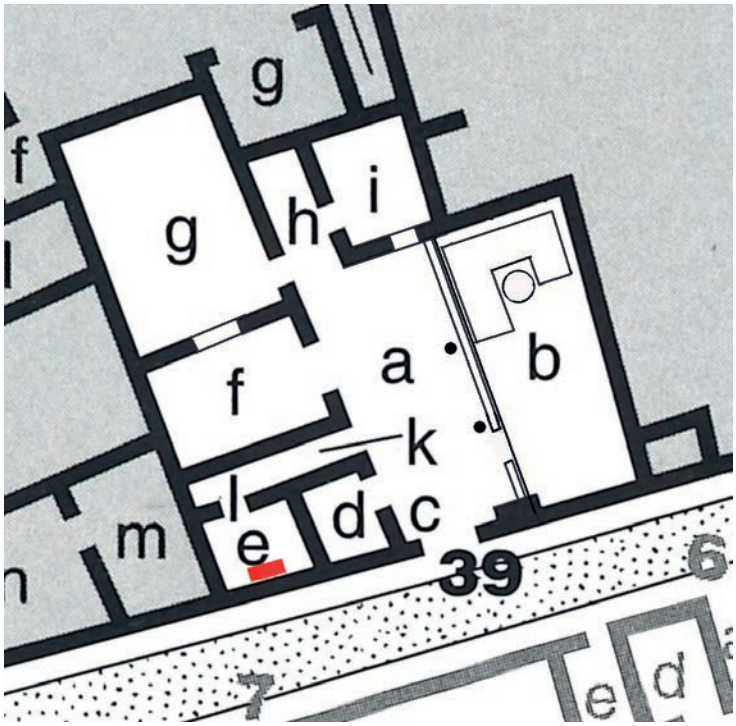

Fig. 14: The ground plan of the Casa di Acceptus e Euhodia (VIII 5, 39), with the cult painting of Isis-Fortuna indicated (Modified from the ground plan in *PPM* VIII, 648).

In this house too, the cult image of Isis-Fortuna was located in the vicinity of the *latrina* on the south wall of a small kitchen (e). It was painted in between the *latrina* in the south-east corner and the hearth in the south-west corner. The access from the garden to the kitchen was through a narrow corridor. The figure of Isis-Fortuna is now totally faded, but red bands that framed the goddess are still visible. A. Mau and G. Boyce agree that the goddess is Isis-Fortuna, and according to Boyce: "the goddess stands, a wreath of leaves upon her head, the lotus flower on her forehead, her dark hair falling over her shoulders; she wears a long yellow *chiton* and blue mantle".[63] We know this picture in the drawing by G. Discanno: Isis-Fortuna has in one hand a rudder resting on a globe and in the other a *cornucopia,* on her head is a tiny lotus blossom or leaves as a headdress. Garlands hang above the goddess, and she is flanked by big bushes with red flowers (**Fig. 15**).[64] In her detailed discussion on this image of Isis Fortuna and its context C. E. Barrett has pointed out that the goddess's corkscrew curls have particular associations with Isis both in the Hellenistic and Roman world.[65] Indeed, in the central image 'Io at Canopus' in the Temple of Isis (MANN inv. 9558) and the Casa del Duca di Aumale (VI 9, 1) (MANN inv. 9555) the goddess Isis has dark corkscrew curls.

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61 Mau 1908, 362.

62 Mau 1908, 362; Jashemski 1993, 218. Fröhlich 1991, 293: L97; Taf. 46,2.

63 Mau 1908, 361-62; Boyce 1937, 78, no. 372.

64 DAI Rom, Archiv, 83, c. 201 (DAI_0203_3201).

65 Barrett 2019, 297.

Fig. 15: Isis-Fortuna on the south wall was painted between the *latrina* in the south-east corner and the hearth in the south-west corner of kitchen (k) in the Casa di Acceptus e Euhodia (Drawing: G. Discanno, *PPM* VIII, 653, Fig. 11).

7. Casa e Caupona di Tertius (IX 7, 21.22)

A modest house (IX 7, 21) was connected with a Caupona di Tertius (IX 7, 22) through an atrium in which the hearth was located in the north-west corner (**Fig. 16**). Above the hearth was a niche under which were depicted a garland as well as yellow *agathodaimon*-serpents with red crests and beards. They surrounded a burning altar with a pine cone. In the east side of the *caupona* was a room decorated with a red dado and ochre panels with small images of a bird pecking at fruit. On the south wall of the corridor (g) leading to the *latrine* was painted a figure of Isis-Fortuna and a bending man under a yellow garland (MANN inv. 112285) (**Fig. 17**). In the front of this cult picture was a small terracotta *monopodium*, perhaps an altar. Isis-Fortuna is depicted here with all her attributes: a rudder, a globe, a *cornucopia*, and she has a small *modius* on her head. At her right side is a young man bending his knees. He is surrounded by a pair of *agathodaimon*-serpents as if they were to protect him. Above this man was a charcoal graffito written later rather rudely on the fresco surface: *cacator cave malu(m)* (‘shitter, beware of misfortune!’ or ‘shitter

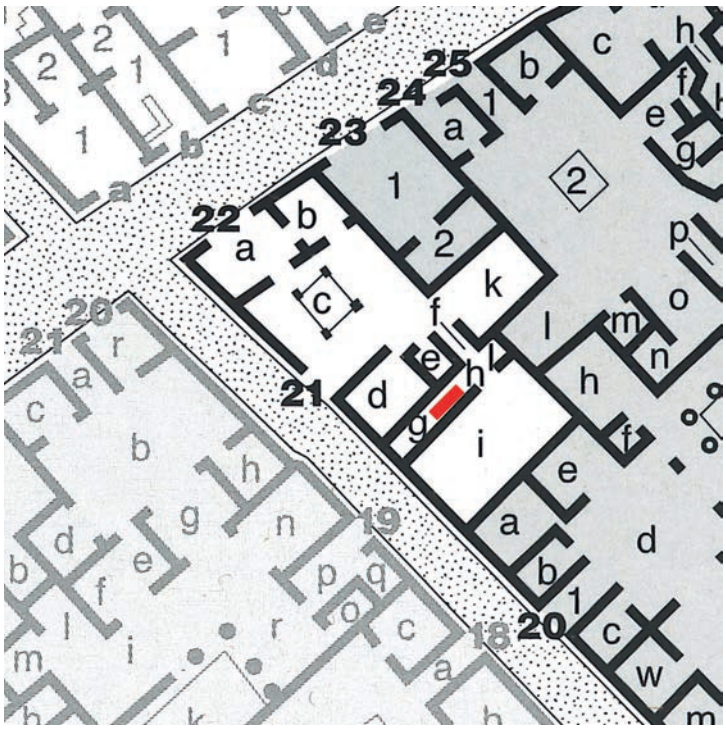

Fig. 16: The ground plan of the Casa e Caupona di Tertius (IX 7, 21.22), with the cult image of Isis-Fortuna indicated. (Modified from the ground plan in *PPM* IX, 865).

Fig. 17: Isis-Fortuna and a pair of *agatho-daimon*-snakes flanking a man bending his knees decorated the south wall of corridor (g) leading to the *latrina* in the Casa e Caupona di Tertius. MANN inv. 112285 (Photo: A.K. Koponen © Ministero della Cultura/MANN).

beware of the evil eye!').[66] In ancient Rome, obscenity and humour helped to ward off evil, in connection with apotropaism, and it is likely that the aim of this painting was to protect the digestive apparatus and take care of hygiene.

8. The Winged Isis-Fortuna of the Insula *(IX 3)*

The exact original location of an enigmatic painting of the winged Isis-Fortuna (MANN inv. 8836) in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli remains unknown. It was found in the *insula* (IX 3) during the excavation in the Casa di Marcus Lucretius (IX 3, 5.24) while reinforcing a wall structure of this house between March 29th and June 30th in 1847.[67] According to T. Panofka the painting was found on a wall of some neighbouring property, and this wall was a common wall between it and the Casa di M. Lucretius.[68] Two locations have been suggested for this painting based on this information: the north wall near a niche (a *lararium* niche?) of the workshop (IX 3, 7) or on the north wall in *cubiculum* (h) in the Casa di Philocalus (IX 3, 15) (**Fig. 18**).

Panofka published a short report of this image in the *Bullettino dell'Instituto di corrispondenza archeologica* already on the 1st of July, 1847. He identified the depicted figures as Isis-Fortuna-Dea Panthea, a riding man as Horus, and a small, winged boy as Hesperos. According to him the style of this

66 *CIL* IV 3832.

67 *PAH* II, 457–74; Panofka 1847a, 127; 1847b, 144. These sources help to define the excavation period but only Panofka mentions this cult painting.

68 Panofka 1847a, 127.

Fig. 18: The ground plan of the *Insula* (IX 3) with two most likely original locations of the winged Isis-Fortuna with a votive inscription of Philocalus indicated: the Casa di Philocalus (IX 3, 15) and the workshop (IX 3, 7) (Modified from the ground plan in *PPM* IX, 328).

painting was reminiscent of images in Pompeian workshops. The painting was most likely detached and transported to the *Real Museo Borbonico* in the early 1850's together with paintings of the Casa di M. Lucretius, which D. Raul-Rochette described in their new museum context in his articles in 1852.[69] As a result of the unification of Italy the collection of the *Museo Borbonico* was transported to the Museo Nazionale in Naples in the early 1860's, when G. Minervini wrote about this winged Isis-Fortuna. He did not reveal more than Panofka of the original location of the image, even though he included in this article a drawing by G. Abbate made in its original site in 1847. Minervini concentrated, instead, on

69 Raoul-Rochette 1852, 67–68.

arguing that figures of the painting were a god Luno on a horseback, a goddess Isis-Fortuna-Luna and Phosphoros.[70]

C. Zangemeister seems to be the first interested in an original location of the winged Isis-Fortuna painting. His attention was not in the image but in an *ex voto* inscription written on it. He marked this inscription on the map of Pompeii in *CIL IV* (1871) in a small *cubiculum* (g) in the Casa di Philocalus (IX 3, 15). Zangemeister visited the site following instructions of the director of the excavations G. Fiorelli.[71] Four years later Fiorelli, however, locates the painting in the vicinity of a niche on the north wall of a workshop (IX 3, 7).[72] The shop was excavated partially already in September 1846 and the painting of Isis-Fortuna is not mentioned in any of the excavation reports.[73]

The medium-sized Casa di Philocalus occupied the centre of the *insula* (IX 3). Its long *fauces* led to a small atrium with two rooms on its western side. Deeper inside the house, seven rooms were arranged around a peristyle garden and its three-sided portico – its northern arm had been turned into three rooms. The north wall of room (g), on which Zangemeister located the cult painting, is neither a common wall with the Casa di M. Lucretius nor is there enough unplastered area for a painting of this size (MANN inv. 8836: c. 70 cm x c. 80 cm). But the north wall of the next room (h) has a shared wall with room (23) of the Casa di M. Lucretius and there is little plaster on it.[74] Indeed, this wall is mainly a modern construction indicating that this could have been the place where the wall structure had been reinforced and while doing this the cult painting of Isis Fortuna was found.[75] The map of Pompeii drawn in 1858–60 reveals that these two rooms (g, h) were already unearthed during the excavation of the Casa di M. Lucretius in 1847 whereas other rooms of the Casa di Philocalus were excavated much later between 1861–72.[76] All in all, room (h) of the Casa di Philocalus seems to be the most likely location for the painting although the workshop (IX 3, 7) cannot be excluded definitively.

In this cult image Isis-Fortuna has a crescent moon on her head, and she is holding a *sistrum* and *cornucopia* in her hands. Near her foot is a globe with a small rudder. A red garland (made of roses?) decorates her dress composed of a pink colour *chiton* and ochre colour *himation*, and her wings are greenblue. A bigger red garland is painted to hang on the top of the painting. On the left side of Isis-Fortuna is depicted a man on horseback with a radiant crown (Sol?) and a double axe in his hand. A winged boy with a torch (Hesperus or Phosphorus?) stands on her right side. Figures are depicted standing in the green ground above which rises a white background decorated with a greenblue star-pattern (**Fig. 19**). Above the painted garland

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70 Minervini 1862, 89–92, Tav. IV.

71 *CIL* IV 882: "Extabat in cubiculo tab nostrae A 125 (=*Mus. Borb*. XIV tab. AB n. 60) pone aedes Lucretii sito, in pariete septentrionali, quem locum indiciis quibusdam a Fiorellio mihi subministratis ductus tandem repperi...".

72 Fiorelli 1875, 394: "7. Taberna Pilocali. Questa è assai profonda, ed ha nello interno la scaletta dell' ammezzato con la nicchia de' Penati, presso della quale trovavasi quel dipinto, che ritrae Iside-Fortuna sul globo, il dio Luno a cavallo, ed Espero alato portando una face: nella cornice si legge *PILOcaLVS·VOTVM·SOL·LIBES·MERITO*".

73 *PAH* II, 457–74, 482-85, 497–504. Fiorelli 1873, 51–52, tav. XI; 1875, 394–95. According to Ynnilä (2012, 2, 107, n. 550) the weekly reports mention that the shop walls featured no plaster. It may be that Fiorelli was inspired by another winged Isis-Fortuna painting surrounding a cult niche in a bakery (IX 3, 10-12; excavated in 1847–72; see Ynnilä 2012, 2, 121–39) in his choice to locate the winged Isis-Fortuna with an *ex voto* inscription in the workshop (IX 3, 7). The similarity of the locations was pointed out by Dr. Eeva-Maria Viitanen, responsible for buildings archaeology in the *Expeditio Pompeiana Universitatis Helsingiensis* (EPUH) in the *Insula* IX 3 during the field-work years 2002–2012.

74 Ynnilä 2012, 2, 170.

75 According to a discussion with Dr. Eeva-Maria Viitanen.

76 The map of Pompeii in *CIL* IV showing rooms (g, h) of the Casa di Philocalus was based on the map *Tabula Coloniae Veneriae Corneliae Pompeis* drawn by C. Sorgente for G. Fiorelli in 1858–60. Fiorelli 1873, tav. XI: The map of the *insula* IX 3 made in the year 1872 showing the whole *insula* (IX 3) excavated. For the history of excavations and documentation of the insula (IX 3) see Ynnilä 2012, 1, 23–36. For the documentation history of the Casa di M. Lucretius see Berg 2019a, 45–53.

Fig. 19: The winged Isis-Fortuna is flanked by a riding man (Helios?) with a double axe and radiant crown as well as a winged small figure (Hesperos or Phosporos) holding a torch. MANN inv. 8836 (Photo: A.K. Koponen © Ministero della Cultura/MANN).

at the top of this image was an inscription *Pilo[ca]lus votum sol(vit) libe(n)s merito,* according to which G. Boyce assumed that the painting was dedicated *ex voto.*[77] In reality, the nature of the votive offering of Philocalus was not defined in the inscription; it could have been this painting or something else.

This painting alludes to Roman planetary deities in many ways: In addition to the riding Sol, Isis-Fortuna has a crescent moon on her head. She might have been assimilated with Luna and Diana as the goddesses of the Moon. In the right the figure of Hesperus with a torch may allude to the Evening Star or, if he is Phosphorus, to the Morning Star.

This Isis-Fortuna differs greatly from her other Pompeian representations especially because she has wings. A winged statuette of Isis Panthea was found in Herculaneum.[78] This syncretised Isis Panthea is filled with attributes of numerous deities such as Fortuna (a rudder, cornucopia and globe), Victory (wings), Nemesis (wings) and Hygeia (a snake around a hand), which underline her universal qualities. In Delos, for example, Isis was assimilated with Tyche in the Serapeion C in two inscriptions in 115–114 BCE dedicated to *Tyche Protogeneia* identified with Fortuna Primigenia of Praeneste in Italy.[79] The Delians assimilated Isis also with Nike (Victoria in Roman religion) by calling Isis as *nikèphoros*, and they dedicated to Isis-Nemesis (a Greek justice-bringing goddess) a *sacrarium* and statue in their Isieion in c. 110 BCE.[80] Two centuries

77 *CIL* IV 882. Boyce 1937, 84.

78 De Caro 2006, 176.

79 *ID* 2072-2073; Coarelli 2019, 22.

80 Dunand 1973, 94, 112.

later painted Isis-Fortuna of the Pompeian *insula* (IX 3) could be Isis-Fortuna-Nemesis or Isis-Fortuna-Victoria, even though her ancient name remains obscure.

The *insula* IX 3 contained also two other features related to Isis-Fortuna. The south-west corner of the *insula* (IX 3) was occupied by a *pistrinum* (a bakery) with a mill (IX 3, 10-12).[81] The milling area was abundantly decorated with several cult paintings documented in drawings by G. Discanno. On the south wall of the courtyard there was a cult painting with a niche. Around the niche were painted winged Isis-Fortuna, Luna (or Semele) riding a horse, Eros, and, below them, two snakes (**Fig. 20**). On the pillar close to the western wall there was a *lararium* painting of two figures with a cornucopia; one of them was on a boat approaching a shore, while another was a *genius* offering a sacrifice on the altar guarded by an *agathodaimon*-snake in the vicinity of two trees. The niche is still visible but the Egyptian cult painting and the *lararium* painting are both faded. Additionally, in the northern part of the *insula* in a *lararium* niche of the Officina (*offectoria)* di Ubonius (IX 3, 1–2) were found a statuette of Isis-Fortuna (MANN inv. 5347) together with statuettes of a veiled woman (MANN inv. 5383) and bearded male as well as Hercules, and Jupiter.[82] This complex was composed of a residential part with this *lararium* niche and a

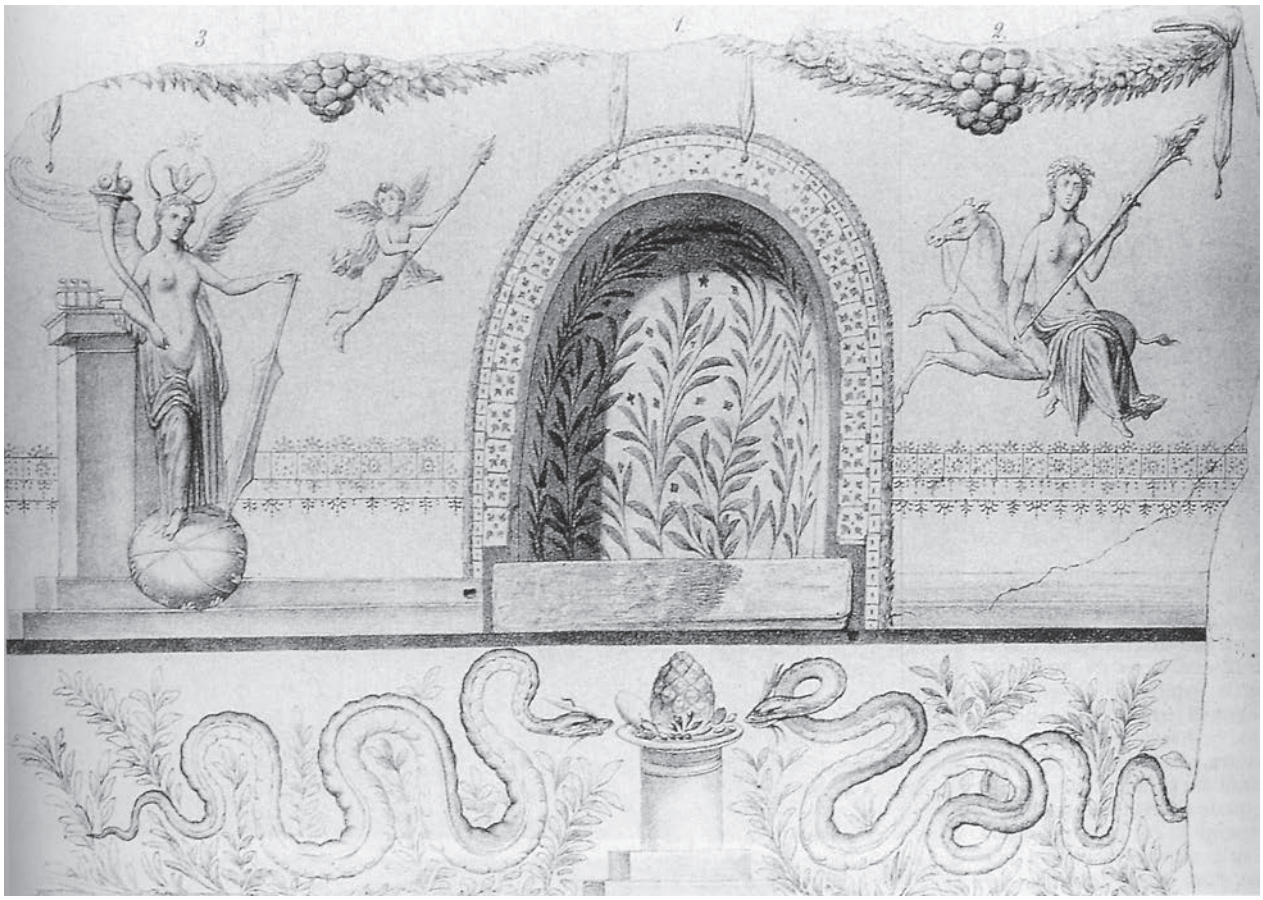

Fig. 20: Around an Isiac niche on the south wall of the *pistrinum* (IX 3, 10-12) were depicted the winged goddess Isis-Fortuna as well as the goddess Luna (or Semele) riding a horse. In the lower part of the painting *agathodaimon*-snakes were approaching an altar with food offerings: a pine-cone, an egg, and small fruits possibly dates, figs and nuts. Now the painting is faded, but it was documented in a drawing by G. Abbate in 1872 (Drawing: *PPM* IX, 321).

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81 Ynnilä (2012, 1, 134–35) suggests that the Isis-Fortuna painting could have been found from the garden of this bakery based on a description of the area from 1851. It is clear, however, that the garden was not excavated by the summer of 1847 when the painting was found and this suggestion has to be rejected.

82 *PAH* II, 468; Berg 2019b, 65, n. 69; Ynnilä 2012, 2, 15, n. 67; 39–40, n. 175,176.

commercial part possibly engaged in re-dyeing clothes.[83] It must be noted that in numerous studies five bronze statuettes of this property are erroneously placed in the most lavish house of the *insula*, the Casa di M. Lucretius.[84]

Two paintings of the winged Isis-Fortuna in the *insula* (IX 3) differ greatly, both visually and contextually, from other Pompeian depictions of the deity. This suggests that some of its inhabitants had cultural and religious networks outside Pompeii. Together with the statuette of Isis-Fortuna these cult paintings are important evidence for the active veneration of the goddess in this Pompeian *insula* during the last years of the city.

Conclusions

My study demonstrates that Pompeians dedicated separate cult paintings exclusively to their Egyptian gods. On the other hand, statuettes of Isis, Isis-Fortuna and Harpocrates were common in Pompeian *lararia* together with Roman deities, as discussed in studies by G. Boyce, F. Giacobello, L. Beaurin, E. Mol and N.D. Bellucci.[85] The religious role of Egyptian cult paintings was much more specialised compared to the Egyptianizing statuettes. As a matter of fact, two different types of Egyptian cult paintings were located in diverse room and house types: Depictions of several Egyptian deities (Isis, Harpocrates, Serapis and/or Anubis) belonged to the peristyle zone of lavish houses attached to the garden and elegant dining rooms whereas modest cult images of Isis-Fortuna were located in small houses near the *latrina*.

According to my earlier statistical research on motifs alluding to Egypt, visual allusions to Egypt were spread sparsely and homogeneously in Pompeian domestic walls, hence, most houses with Egyptian cult images did not present other Egyptian motifs in their frescoes. My study also reveals that the Pompeians were rather moderate in their Egyptian decoration suggesting that the quantity of Egyptian details in Pompeian wall paintings was controlled by unwritten social codes.[86]

In this article I have pointed out that houses with Egyptian cult images also included Roman *lararium* shrines, niches or paintings. Under the depiction of Egyptian gods, in lavish houses, there was a typical scene of *lararium* paintings: a pair of *agathodaimon*-snakes approaching an altar and its pine cone. In modest houses the figure of Isis-Fortuna was more similar to the Roman goddess Fortuna than Egyptian deities. Pompeians actually worshipped numerous deities and guardian spirits in their homes, and it seems that they had multifaceted and multipurposed religious feelings towards their Egyptian, Greek and Roman deities and guardian spirits. In contrast to the modern idea of the Roman followers of Isis as separate groups of initiates – influenced by ancient authors such as Apuleius, Plutarch and Juvenal[87] – my study indicates that Egyptian deities were in fact part of religious pantheon of Roman gods and goddesses in Pompeii. It seems likely that the use of Egyptian cult images was regulated by unwritten social and religious norms in accordance with the use of motifs alluding to Egypt in general. Such norms might have derived from the polytheistic tradition as well as social and political tensions between different groups.

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83 Ynnilä 2012, 2, 22, n. 106.

84 For example, Mau (1908, 278) erroneously places these bronze statuettes in the *lararium* of the Casa di M. Lucretius and also Boyce (1937, 83, n.1) inside this house adding, though, that the exact original location is unknown. Due to their influential publications this mixing of two contexts is repeated in numerous studies till today.

85 Boyce 1937; Giacobello 2008; Beaurin 2013; Mol 2015; Bellucci (forthcoming).

86 Koponen 2017, 2020.

87 Apul. *Met.* 11; Plut. *De Is. et Os.*; Juv. 6.486–91.

Inspired by ancient texts A. Mau assumed that the owners of the Casa di Acceptus e Euhodia (VIII 5,39) were followers of Isis. However, my study asserts that allusions to Egypt in this modest house were nothing exceptional since its Isis-Fortuna had closer affinity with the goddess Fortuna than Egyptian deities. Both the figure of Fortuna and Isis-Fortuna were apparently regarded as the protectors of health, sanitation and hygiene when painted near Pompeian toilets. In this context their role was largely comparable to the Greek goddess Hygeia. The connection between Isis, Fortuna and Hygeia was multifaceted and thus became visualised in numerous ways: In the *praedia Iuliae Felicis* (II 4, 2–12) the goddess Fortuna was depicted both near the *latrina* and in the *sacrarium* among Egyptian deities. A marble statuette the goddess Fortuna Enthroned belonged to the Egyptian shrine of the Casa degli Amorini dorati. In the Pompeian central image 'Io's arrival at Canopus' a seated Isis was depicted with a cobra twisted around her arm. Similarly, a snake twists around an arm of a Roman marble statue of the seated goddess Hygeia.[88]

On the walls of opulent houses, a group of Egyptian deities is painted vividly as if they were participating together in a ritual. By way of comparison, in three modest houses the goddess Isis-Fortuna has a standardised statue-like pose: she has a cornucopia in one hand and a rudder in another, the rudder is placed above a globe, and her headdress is a lotus-blossom or a *modius*. Comparable figures of Isis-Fortuna were common in Pompeian *lararium* shrines among statuettes of other Roman deities. The statue-like pose of Isis-Fortuna in cult paintings underlines her role as an object of veneration. In the garden painting of the Casa delle Amazzoni (VI 2, 14) Isis, Serapis and Harpocrates are representations of statues painted on a high *podium* inside a temple-like niche to look like proper temple statues.

For the Pompeians images of date palms, palm leaves and dates (**Fig. 20**) evoked the Nile Delta and so they were appropriate for their Egyptian deities, though, dates were depicted on an altar in some *lararium* paintings as well.[89] A monumental row of date palms was depicted in the front of the panorama of the Nile Delta in the large cult painting of the Casa degli Amazzoni (VI 2, 14). Both the figures of Anubis – one in the *praedia Iuliae Felicis* and another in the Casa degli Amorini dorati – are holding palm leaves in their hands. Although date palms grew on the Bay of Naples they could not fruit, therefore dates had to be imported from areas such as Syria, Judea, or Egypt.[90] Traces of carbonised dates, together with other food offerings have been found in the Temple of Isis while carbonised remains of food offerings, such as pine cones, dates, figs and hazel nuts, have been found in small pits of gardens in Pompeian houses.[91] However, archaeobotanical studies in the houses with Egyptian cult images still need to be done.

The painting of Isis-Fortuna with a man bending his knees in the Casa e Caupona di Tertius (IX 7, 21.22) is a unique example of a defecating figure painted near a toilet. Similar warnings as *cacator cave malu(m)* ('shitter, beware of misfortune!') scratched into this painting were most often painted along streets, near city-gates together with *agathodaimon*-serpents.[92]

It is remarkable that all three depictions of Isis-Fortuna, whose original location is known, were painted attached to the *latrina.* Many *lararium* paintings were located in the kitchen including a *latrina,* and this was also the case for the painting of Isis-Fortuna in the Casa di Acceptus e Euhodia (VIII 5, 39). However, two other cult

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88 Two Pompeian central pictures 'Io at Canopus' are from the Temple of Isis (MANN inv. 9558) and the Casa del Duca di Aumale (VI 9, 1) (MANN inv. 9555). For example, a marble statue of seated goddess Hygeia from the 1st century CE is in the State Hermitage Museum.

89 See *lararium* paintings of *caupona* (I 11, 10-12), house (IX 2, 24) and *pistrinum* (IX 3, 10–12) in Fröhlich 1991, Tafel 27, L 22; Tafel 42, L99; Tafel 45, L102.

90 Ciarallo 2001, 11–12.

91 For carbonised plant remains in the gardens of houses (VI 16,27; V 1, 18; I 9,11–12) see Robinson 2005.

92 *CIL* IV 7714-15; *CIL* IV 7716; *CIL* IV 29828b; *CIL* IV 5438; *CIL* IV 6641. See Levin-Richardson 2015, 228–33.

images of Isis-Fortuna were painted by the toilets away from the kitchen area: one was in the corridor leading to the *latrina* in the Casa e Caupona di Tertius (IX 7, 21.22) while the other was in the small room (b) with the *latrina* attached to the entrance in the Casa con l'affresco di Isis-Fortuna (V 4, 9). This would actually confirm that these cult images of Isis-Fortuna were especially aimed at protecting toilet visitors together with the hygiene of the house. Three depictions of Fortuna were painted in the area close to the *latrina* in Pompeii as well as some toilets in Ostia and Rome, obviously in order to protect these spaces from the illness-causing demons.[93]

The similar role of Fortuna and Isis-Fortuna near the toilets indicates that the Pompeians regarded Isis-Fortuna more as a Roman rather than Egyptian. However, among her many roles, Isis was a magical healer. Isis-Fortuna was reasonably believed to be even more efficient in maintaining a regular digestion and healthy bowel function than Fortuna who could literally bring good luck to toilet users, inevitably exposed to high risks of contamination. In front of Isis-Fortuna the toilet visitor could actually ask for healthy digestion and the whole household could pray for the toilet and nearby kitchen to remain clean without intestinal parasites, fly pupae and bad odours.

While the Lares were responsible for protection of food storage and meal preparation,[94] the cult image of Isis-Fortuna was especially aimed at protecting both the digestion and hygiene, perhaps in collaboration with *agathodaimon*-serpents. Even more, hanging fresh votive garlands above cult paintings, burning incense and votive lamps on altars nearby the *latrina* could eliminate bad odours in a practical sense.

The most impressive Egyptian shrines belonged to two large and lavishly decorated houses, the Casa degli Amorini dorati (VI 16, 7.38) and *praedia Iuliae Felicis* (II 4, 2–12); they were located attached to the luxurious peristyle-gardens and *triclinia*. These shrines were dedicated not only to Isis but also to her consorts Harpocrates and Anubis. In both paintings jackal-headed Anubis wears a Greek-styled mantle and holds a *caduceus,* an attribute of Mercury. Both Anubis and Mercury were responsible for guiding souls to the afterlife and when Anubis was assimilated with Mercury its strange outlook became more easily acceptable for the Romans' hypercritical attitude towards Egyptian animal worship. In both houses, the pantheon of Egyptian deities is painted in one row, as if these gods and goddesses were participating in a celebration by playing their rattles and giving offerings. They were some kind of perceivable allies, or a mirror image, for the Pompeian worshippers gathering around the shrine.

In the Room of the Mysteries in the Villa dei Misteri, figures are depicted gazing at each other and the viewer, who becomes more like a participant than a spectator of this mysterious ritual painted on the walls.[95] In these Egyptian cult images the viewer is invited to participate in depicted rituals with mimetic acts: the paintings invite to do offerings, pour the sacred water or milk, hang garlands, wave palm leaves, and play a *sistrum*. We can therefore imagine the smell of roses, burnt incense and food offerings together with the sound of a *sistrum* and other musical instruments. Twenty *sistra* have been found in Pompeii, and at least eight of them are found in the domestic context,[96] suggesting that the Pompeias venerated their Egyptian cult paintings and statuettes with mimetic acts and, by doing so, they created multisensorial religious experiences in their homes.

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93 The goddess Fortuna was depicted in the vicinity of a toilet in room (37) of the *praedia Iuliae Felicis* (II 4, 2–12), in room (z', upstairs) of the Casa degli Epigrammi Greci (V 1, 18) and in a *latrina* of the Suburban Baths (VII 16 a). See Moormann 2011b.

94 For the role of Lares as protectors of preparation and storage of food see Van Andringa 2011; Giacobello 2012; Petersen 2012.

95 Clarke 1991, 98–105.

96 In Pompeii has been found 20 *sistra* in total. Bronze *sistra* have been documented in excavation reports of eight Pompeian houses: I, 2, 6 (two bronze *sistra*); V 3,1; VII 2, 18 (one silver and one bronze *sistrum*); VIII 4, 5; VIII 4, 12 and IX 8, 3.6.a. See De Caro 2006, 168–72; Coralini 2018, 262-63; Bellucci (forthcoming): 'A2 – Appendice dei reperti egizi ed egittizzanti provenienti da Pompei'.

It seems that worshipping of the goddess Isis and her consorts was part of elegant feasting and dining in the *praedia Iuliae Felicis*, Casa degli Amorini dorati, and Casa delle Amazzoni. Architectural elements and decorative frameworks surrounding cult images of Egyptian deities in these houses indicate that the spaces nearby these cult images were not designed for traditional Roman *salutatio* and dining rituals. The traditional *fauces*-atrium-*tablinum*-complex underlined the importance of the patron and his *clientela*, but these houses with Egyptian cult images were designed another kind of meetings and social relationship in mind. What these spaces were conceived for? A graffito on the facade of the *praedia Iuliae Felicis* reveals that a part of this complex was aimed for a rental business. What if some other Pompeian houses – in which the shrines of Egyptian deities were almost directly accessible from the street – were designed for rental business or arranged for group meetings? I will discuss this in my next article 'Feasting and dining with Egyptian deities in Pompeian houses'.[97]

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Sacra privata in Central Italy. New Data from an Archaeological Research

Maddalena Bassani[1]

The theme of *sacra privata* has only recently been paid due attention by archaeologists, historians and religion scholars,[2] since domestic cult had previously been 'compressed' under the generic category of *lararia*, only identified in the paintings and statuettes in honour of the Lares attested especially in the Vesuvius area, and therefore described as the most tangible evidence of Roman families' religiousness.

Actually, as I have often remarked in previous studies,[3] the word *lararium* is totally improper to define the expressions of domestic cult before the third century CE, as until then this word was not attested in the Latin language, and mostly as there are many other indicators of private worship to be found by carefully studying the ancient house.

It is precisely those 'markers' that I intend to analyse here, in the hope of outlining in greater detail the several sides of *sacra privata*:[4] this category includes the cult indicators of family guardian deities (the traditional pantheon gods and foreign divinities), those of ancestors (*divi parentes*), and finally, as we will see, some forms of worship of the imperial family members.[5]

The results presented here represent an overview of a wider recent research project dedicated to archaeological contexts in central Italy.[6]

The Investigated Area and the Type of Domestic Cult Indicators

The choice to analyse the archaeological documentation of present central Italy regions, in particular Marche, Abruzzo, Molise, Umbria, Tuscany, derives from the fact that this area has never been the subject of in-depth study on private worship: therefore it promised new elements, even if it was immediately clear that here, unlike other previously studied areas, like Campania, Lazio or the provinces, the recovery of data might be more complex, given the inhomogeneous conservation of archaeological traces in urban or extra-urban contexts. Furthermore, since the investigated regions do not exactly coincide with the Augustan *regiones*, we have deemed useful for our research purposes to include in the investigation some residential contexts

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2 Ortalli – Neri 2007; Bassani 2008; Giacobello 2008; Laforge 2009; Bassani – Ghedini 2011; Van Andringa 2009; *Les cultes domestiques* 2013; Sfameni 2014. For an updated outline, see Bassani 2017, with wide bibliography.

3 Bassani 2008, in partic. 49–64; Bassani 2017, in partic. 23–34.

4 For further notes about the need to consider multiple features in the study of the private worship, see in this book my first paper, 'Gods and Cult Objects in Roman Houses'.

5 We cannot omit that alongside expressions of private cult, precise ritual actions have also been recorded, that is votive deposits of various nature: ample discussion in Bassani 2017, chapter 9, in partic. 165–74.

6 The research project, carried out between 2014 and 2016, was funded through a fellowship with an additional research amount for a final publication (Bassani 2017, edited by the Padova University Press, Padova).

between Bolsena and Tivoli, a sort of 'corridor' corresponding to the southern borders of ancient Etruria and the north-western ones of Samnium. This, in order to compare the documentation from the central regions to the more abundant one from the Lazio residences, where indicators of domestic cult could appear more 'eloquent'.[7]

The research has included forty-seven dwellings: urban *domus*, countryside residences and extra-urban villas of medium or large dimensions, with attendance ranging from the second century BCE to the fourth century CE.[8] There, indicators of private worship have emerged, which can be grouped into five categories: interior rooms and exterior buildings (*sacraria* and *sacella* respectively), marked in their functional purpose by the presence of altars, niches, *aediculae*, paintings, mobile artefacts and/or inscriptions; fixed worship furniture generally found inside the house (altars, niches, pedestals), which can sometimes be associated to *putealia* and wells, when worship or ritual actions are evident. Also, an all-but-secondary role is played by mobile artefacts like sculptures and reliefs, which we will come back to further below, but also *arulae*, *thymiateria* and in some cases domestic crockery; finally, we need to mention the inscriptions on altars or slabs, which in some cases have greatly contributed to the interpretation of the religious background of the family living in a given domestic context.

These indicators will now be exemplified within objects and images of domestic religion, to focus then on carved artefacts pertaining to private forms of imperial worship, which represents, as we believe, an unprecedented outlook on *sacra privata*.

Examples of *Sacraria* and *Sacella*

Let us start from some contexts containing interior spaces certainly dedicated to private ceremonies, on account of the presence of objects and images pertaining to the sacred sphere. In a Roman villa located in Madonna della Difesa, near Larino (Molise), which was excavated in the 1800s, a room was discovered which, in my opinion, represents a typical domestic *sacrarium* dating back to the first century BCE (**Fig. 1**): [9] with a rectangular plan, a cross-reticulated mosaic floor and red-striped walls, it featured a pyramid-shaped limestone altar, with a *bucranium* and a *patera* carved on the pedestal. Afterwards, in the Imperial age, the mosaic was refurbished, with the insertion of an unusual vase, positioned on the left: it appears to be inspired to wine containers of Dionysian nature, perhaps indicating the performance of ceremonies linked to Bacchus and wine production.

Whereas the Larino *sacrarium* cannot be enclosed within the villa's layout, because there is no updated plan of the villa, the *sacrarium* of the Volusii Saturnini villa at Lucus Feroniae (Lazio) offers instead a more clarifying comparison (**Fig. 2**):[10] found in the servants' quarters of the villa in the 1960s, it appears as a typical space for domestic worship, for the presence of numerous function markers. In the middle there was an altar with priestly symbols, on one side a circular *trapeza* for the ritual offerings and a seat for the participants to the ceremonies: these three pieces of worship furniture were made of marble and likely

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7 In fact, while these regions were, geographically speaking, marked to the north by the natural Apennine barrier, they were historically inhabited by ethnically different peoples that, from the third century BCE, shared a common Italic identity, which then turned into a solid Romanised community when Rome ruled the whole peninsula.

8 For a detailed analysis of these aspects we refer to the chapters in the book quoted at the beginning (Bassani 2017, chapters 4–11, in partic. 53–198).

9 De Felice 1994, 157–59; Bassani 2017, 54 and passim, 279. The space, as well as the altar, is dated from the mid-first century BCE.

10 Bassani 2017, 55 and passim, in partic. 307–12.

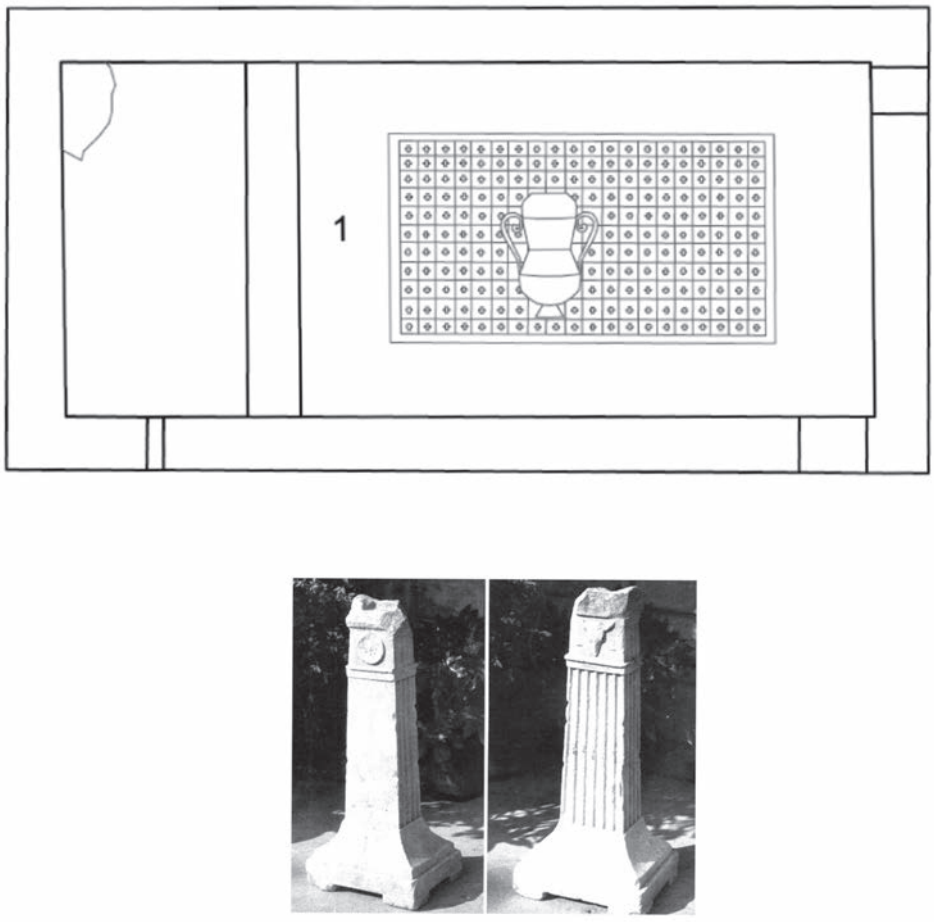

Fig. 1: Larino, villa at Madonna della Difesa (CB). Plan of the *sacrarium* 1 and the altar (After Bassani 2017, 279, figs. 21.1, 21.2).

of urban production, while the two side pedestals were of brickwork, set on the original floral-geometric mosaic in the second half of the first century CE. On them were two inscriptions celebrating the Volusii family, in particular some of its members who held very important public posts, and of whom fragments of sculptures and portraits were found; as we will remark later on, these *imagines maiorum* had also been associated to the sculptures of two *Augustae*, clearly to underline the family's role in the organs of power in the first century CE.

It seems important to stress the type of cult that must have been celebrated here: the lack of reference to the Lares, the emphasis on some family *maiores*, the positioning of the *sacrarium* in the servants' quarters, allow us to suppose that the room was dedicated to the worshipping of ancestors and perhaps to imperial cult, even if we cannot exclude forms of worship towards traditional pantheon figures, which could be represented by statuettes no longer present at the time of discovery.

Regarding this type of interior structures, some interesting data are also offered by buildings situated in the houses' outdoor spaces, identified as *sacella*. At Cosa (Tuscany), Diana's house is attested, so called for the discovery, in the garden at the back of the *domus*, of a *sacellum* in honour of the goddess (**Fig. 3**).[11] Here, in the first half of the first century CE, a small temple was built on a *podium*, with three steps and columns to support the covering, where fragments of a less-than-life-size statue were found, composed of a head of Greek-origin and body of Julio-Claudian age; the goddess was flanked by a dog and must have been 'introduced' by an inscription which, we believe, was originally located on the front of the temple. The

11 Fentress 2003; Bassani 2017, 63 and passim, in partic. 295–97.

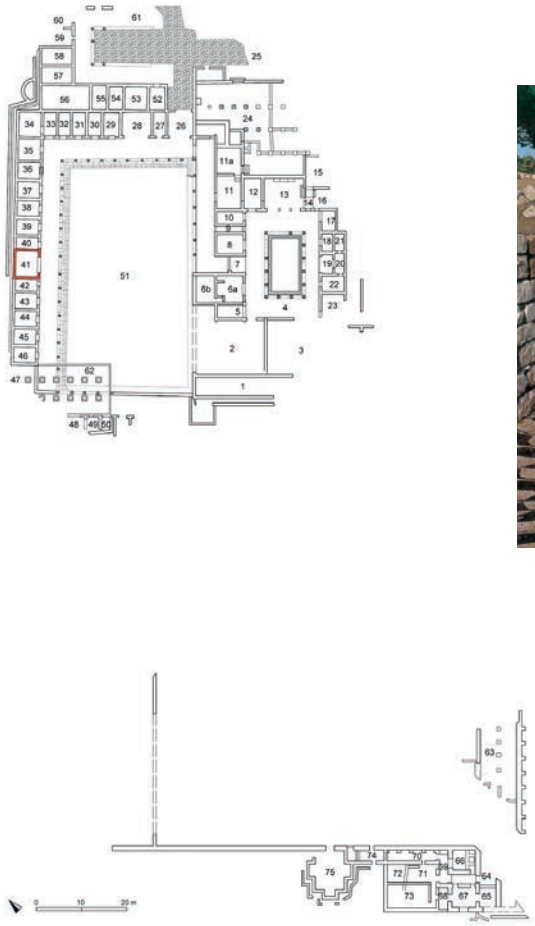

Fig. 2: Lucus Feroniae, villa of the Volusii Saturnini. The plan with the *sacrarium* 41 and the furnishings for worship (After Bassani 2017, 308–9, figs. 40.1, 40.4).

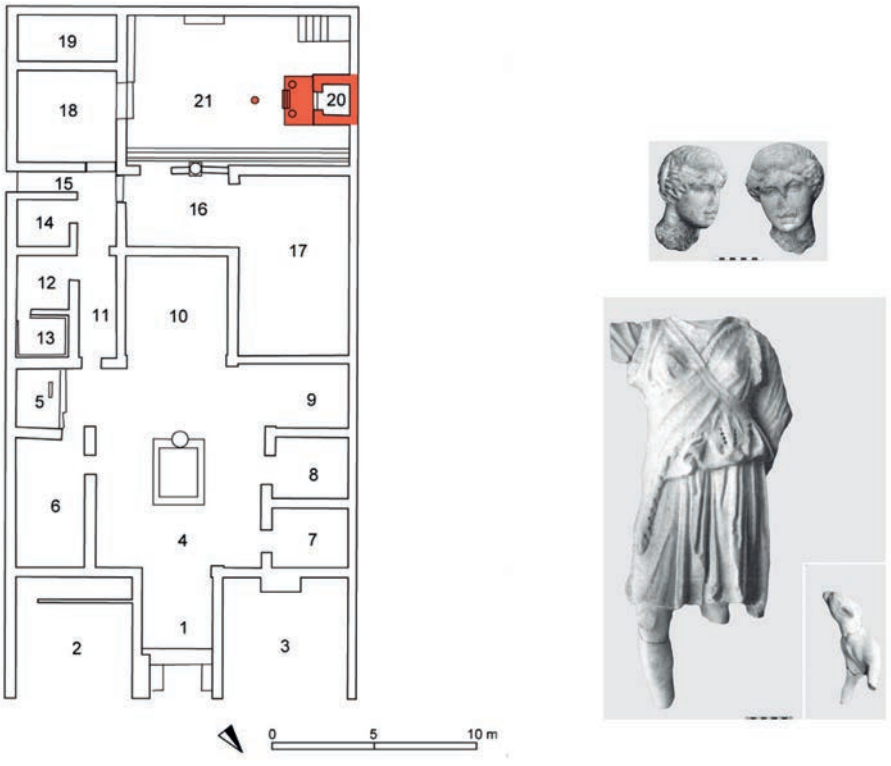

Fig. 3: Cosa, *domus* of Diana (GR). Plan with the *sacellum* 20 and the statue of Diana (After Bassani 2017, 295–96, figs. 33.1, 33.2, 33.3).

latter, of modest dimensions like similar examples from Pompeii, was preceded by an altar carved from the tambour of a column, where two votive deposits were found, testifying to the celebratory and ceremonial function of this part of the *domus*.

A further and very interesting example of a probable *sacellum* comes from a villa in the Tivoli area, at Setteville (Vignacce, Lazio):[12] although there is no overall plan of the residence, portions of rooms and also decorative and worship statues have been repeatedly found, among which the one representing a child Hercules stands out. Found in a precise spot of the villa's original garden, where it was perhaps displayed within a *sacellum* like the Tuscan example, the less-than-life-size statue appears as a work of valuable make, attributable to workshops from the middle-Imperial age. The fact that it could have been a cult statue seems to be confirmed by the discovery of an important inscription fragment, re-used as a threshold piece in one of the late refurbishments of the villa (**Fig. 4**):[13] it states that Hercules was the custodian of the family, defined as *domus* in its sense of domestic unit, and the god was perceived as *sospitalis*, therefore as a real protector of the owners, the Galloni, whose procurator, a Sabinus, had dedicated the epigraph following the release from a vow.

Fig. 4: Setteville, villa at Vignacce. The statue of child Hercules and the inscription attesting the private worship for him as the *custos* of the *domus* Galloniana (After Bassani 2017, 318–19, figs. 43.4, 33.2, 43.6).

Imperial Statues and Portraits from Domestic Contexts

The data so far presented, despite the few examples quoted, clarify the multiplicity of elements to be taken into consideration in the study of *sacra privata* of the ancient house, especially the Roman one: architectural-structural data, fixed worship and decorative setups, epigraphic documents, but also more

12 Adembri et al. 2002. Bassani 2017, 97 and passim, in partic. 317–20.

13 For and interpretative reading of the inscription, see the substantial contribution of M.G. Granino Cecere in Adembri et al. 2002.

strictly cult elements relating to the venerated subjects within the dwellings, mostly expressed through sculpture – traditional deities or ancestors' *imagines*. But alongside these divine entities, we also need to focus on a class of materials found in some surveyed houses in central Italy, that appear particularly interesting from an interpretative point of view: these are statues and portraits of emperors and *Augustae* which could be tangible proof of forms of imperial cult carried out at a 'private' level.[14] In fact, among the forty-seven catalogued houses, five have preserved fragments of statues and portraits of the imperial house: certainly a small number, which could however indicate a wider phenomenon, as we will have occasion to underline thanks to adequate literary comparisons and references.

Let us start from the archaeological data. The houses at issue are scattered among Marche (*domus* under the Law Courts in Ascoli Piceno*, domus* of the Coiedii at Suasa), Abruzzo (villa at Pescina), Tuscany (villa at Massaciuccoli) and northern Lazio (villa of the Volusii Saturnini, Lucus Feroniae) and all appear of a mid-high standard.[15] To these five contexts the case of a *domus* can be added, in Spoleto in Via Visiale, in Umbria, where a base of a probable statue was found, bearing a partly abraded inscription, perhaps dedicated to Caligula.[16]

Let us first consider the attestations relating to images of Augustus. In the villa at Pescina recent excavations have brought up the fragment of a head very probably depicting the founder of the empire: made of basalt (greywacke) and of small dimensions, only the upper part of the head survives, presenting the typical three-pronged claw hairstyle (**Fig. 5**). It must have been made by artists of Egyptian origin, as

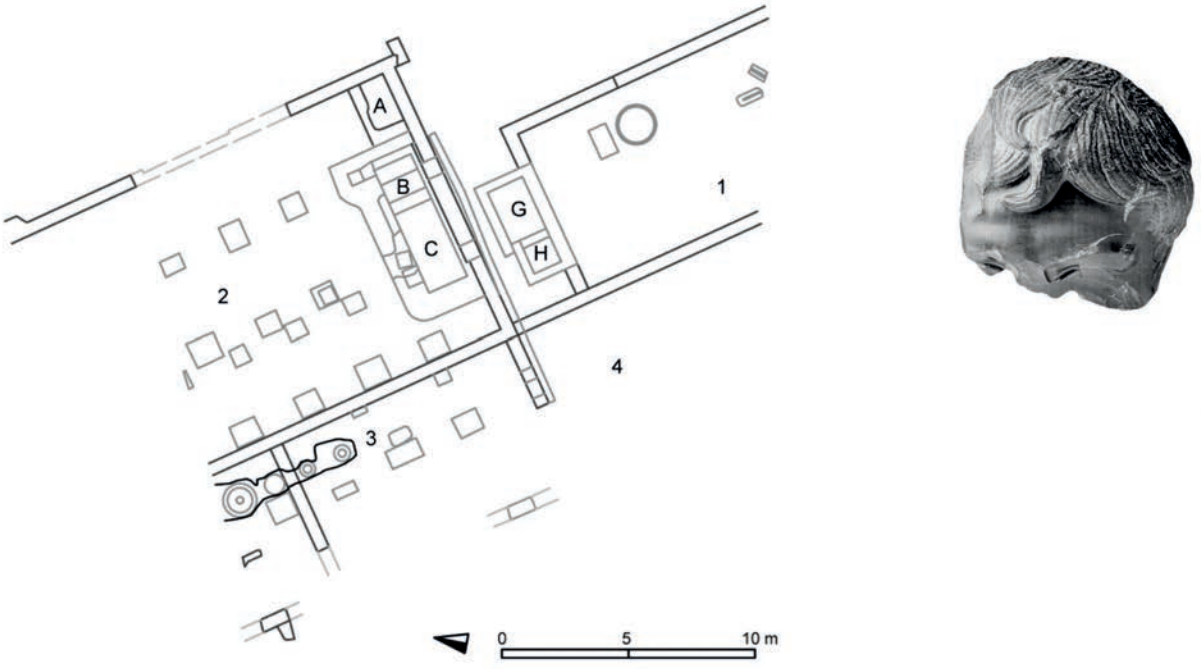

Fig. 5: Pescina, villa at Fonte del Sedime (AQ). The plan and the head of Augustus found here (After Bassani 2017, 270, figs. 13.1, 13.3).

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14 Ample discussion in Bassani 2017, 120–37 and 232–40; see also the recent contributions of I. Gradel and J. Scheid on the topic (Gradel 2002; Scheid 2006–2007).

15 *Domus* under the Law Courts, Ascoli Piceno: Bassani 2017, 251–52, with previous bibliography; *domus* of the Coiedii, Suasa: Bassani 2017, 259–61, with previous bibliography; villa at Pescina, loc. Fonte del Sedime: Bassani 2017, 270–71, with previous bibliography; villa at Massaciuccoli, Lucca: Bassani 2017, 297–99, with previous bibliography; villa of the Volusii Saturnini, Lucus Feroniae: Bassani 2017, 307–12, with previous bibliography.

16 Bassani 2017, 286–88, with previous bibliography.

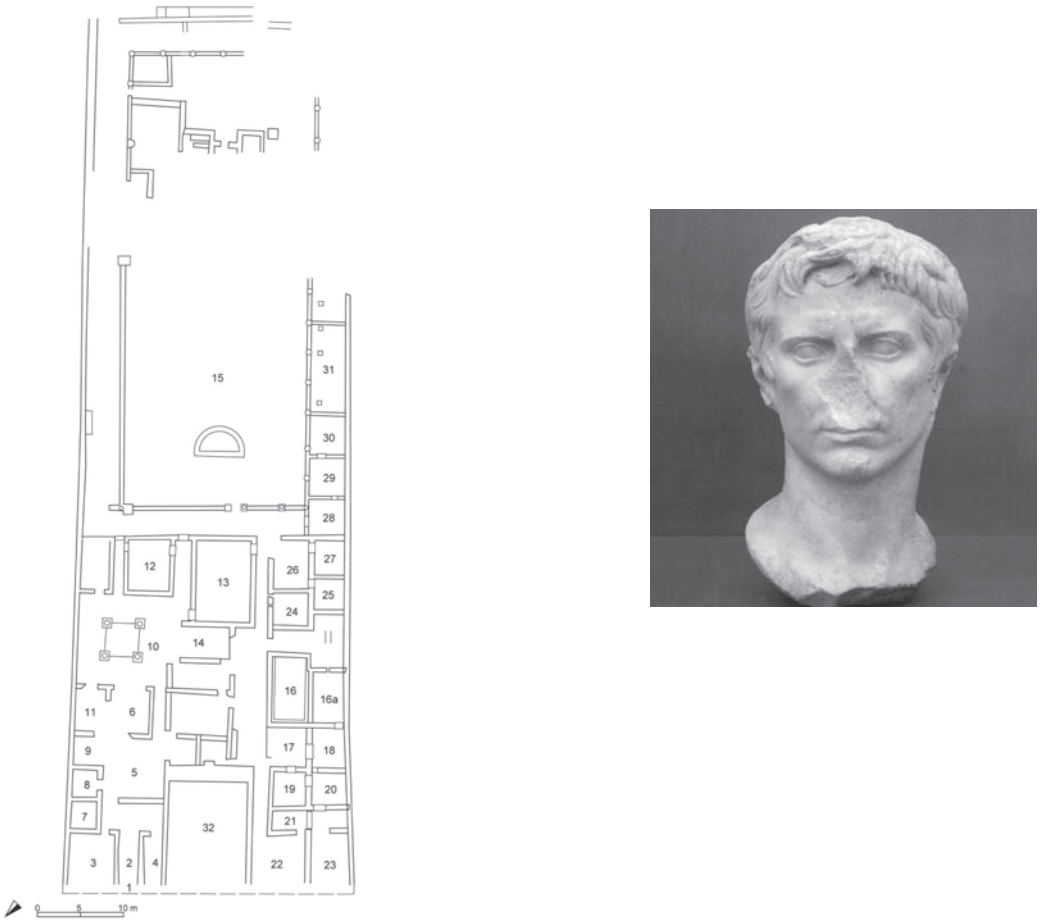

Fig. 6: Suasa, *domus* of the Coiedii (AN). The plan and the head of Augustus found here (After Bassani 2017, 260, figs. 6.2, 6.4).

this material only appeared on the Roman market following the conquest of Egypt by Octavianus, nor does it seem to be used beyond the first century CE, when porphyry prevailed for official portraits of rulers. The discovery of such find in an Abruzzo villa therefore is strong proof not only of the cult value of such images, which are usually found in public buildings and especially in the *Augustea*, but also of the indirect adhesion, on the part of the owners of the villa, to the *principes*' and the imperial house's political propaganda.

The recovery of some fragments of a marble statue of Augustus in a *domus* attributed to the Coiedii family appears more problematic. Among the greatest landowners in Suasa (Marche), one of the main members, L. Coiedius Candidus, had been dedicated a commemorative monument in the house, as the fragment of an inscription shows (**Fig. 6**). The layout of the house dates back to the early second century CE, but it was set on a previous *domus* of the late Republican-Augustan age, also covering other existing residential contexts; in the third century CE, moreover, the house was reduced, which led to the creation of a room 32 with street access. The interesting and problematic fact is that the fragments of Augustus' statue were found inside the small space 21, which surely cannot be interpreted as a private shrine, given the absolute lack of precise cult indicators: according to the explorers, the statue was deposited there at a late stage, when the house was almost abandoned, whereas its original position is unknown. According to some hypotheses, it may have decorated room 32, which is therefore to be interpreted as a publicly-accessed room for imperial cult, but we cannot exclude that the Augustus' statue had already been in the house previously: it may have been displayed next to the honorary monument to L. Coiedius Candidus dated, like the statue, to the Claudian age. If this hypothesis were true, we could be facing a sort of gallery of commemorative

images devised to associate the Coiedii forefather to the founder of the empire, a game of allusions and self-celebrating reference by one of the most important families of the city.

It would be a situation not unlike the one in the Massaciuccoli villa, in Tuscany (**Fig. 7**). Here as well, part of a statue – now lost – was found in the 1700s, of a figure identified as an emperor: this time Claudius has been proposed, on the basis of a drawing made at the time of discovery; in the same context, another statue was also found, of a male person, perhaps a member of the Venuleii, the rich patrons active under Nero and Vespasian, who ruled the north-western part of Tuscany. According to the explorers, the owners of the villa also possessed a *mansio* excavated near the villa, where a portrait was recovered, perhaps of Poppaea, but we cannot exclude that the image of the Augusta was part of a statuary within the villa, among which Claudius' statue may have been one of the most important *eikones*.

To Trajan, instead, was dedicated a marble head found in room 5 of a *domus* in Ascoli Piceno (Marche) (**Fig. 8**): despite the complex interpretation of the data pertaining to this and other *domus* discovered nearby, the room may have been part of the house extending under the Law Courts and may have represented a space dedicated to the ceremonial functions of the resident family, as a recovered Nike's bronze wing, together with the emperor's head, would suggest. These materials should have constituted part of objects dedicated to the private worship carried out in the *domus*.

The cases mentioned so far could be regarded as being of scarce documentary merit and dismissed as a series of common traces of homage paid to the rulers, rather than attestations of imperial cult, were it not for the fact that all the examples can find a precise counterpart in the above-mentioned *sacrarium* in the Volusii Saturnini villa at Lucus Feroniae (Lazio). Here shrine 41 housed both some ancestors' images and a statue of Agrippina the Younger, preserved in fragments (**Fig. 9**); furthermore, in the close surroundings of the shrine a portrait of Sabina, Hadrian's wife, was found, which was very probably preserved inside room 41. The presence of the multiple above-mentioned cult indicators confirms the function of this space as a room devoted to the worship ceremonies of the dwellers and at the same time strengthens the hypothesis

Fig. 7: Massaciuccoli, villa of the Venuleii (LU). The plan of the residential building and the *mansio*, with the male statue (Claudius?) in a drawing of 1756 and the portrait of an Augusta (Poppaea?) (After Bassani 2017, 298, figs. 34.1, 34.3, 34.4).

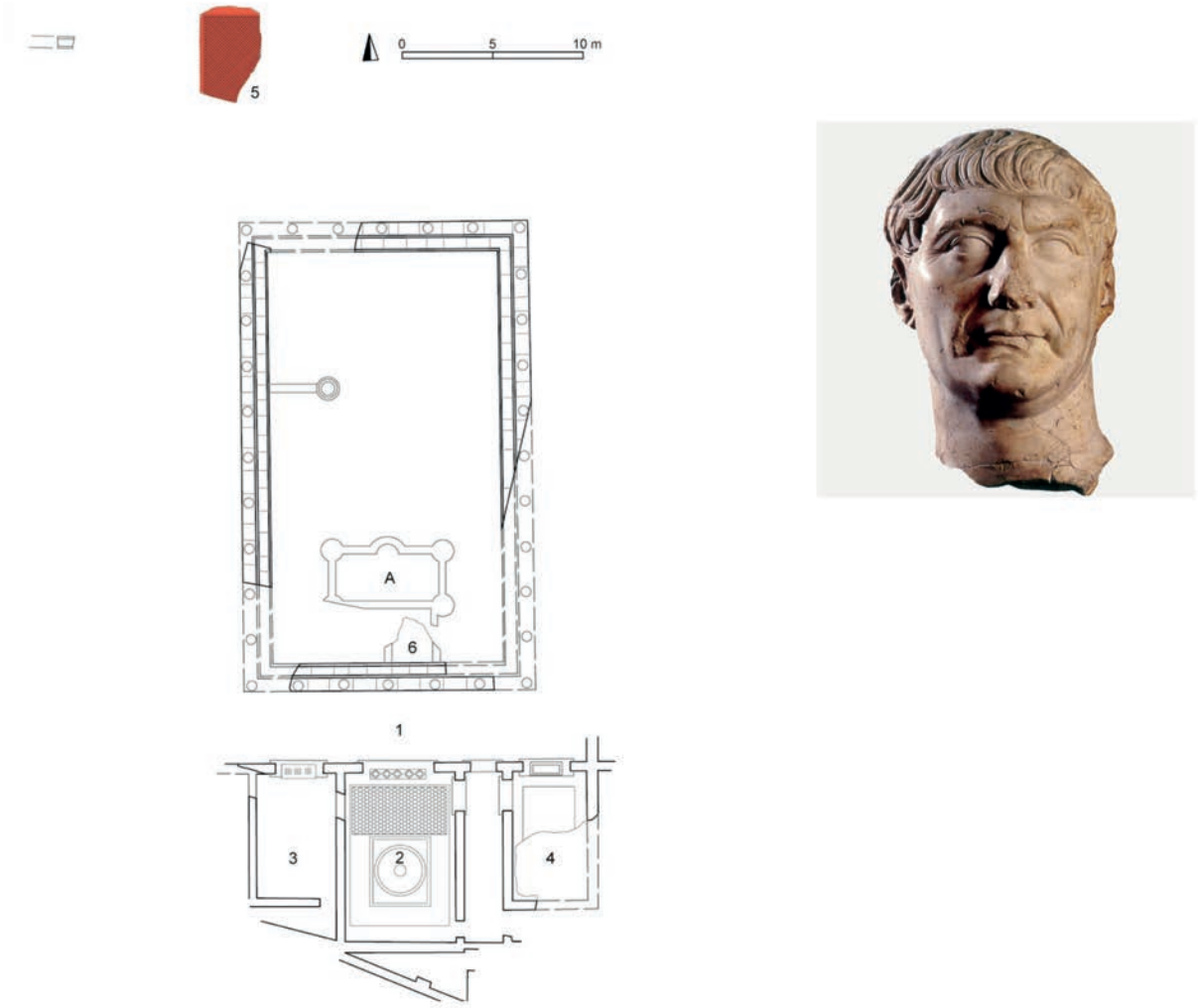

Fig. 8: Ascoli Piceno, *domus* under the Law Courts. The plan with the position of the *sacrarium* 5 and the head of Trajan found here (After Bassani 2017, 2951, figs. 1.1, 1.2).

that in Roman houses, especially those of high rank, not only gods and ancestors, but also images of *Augusti* and *Augustae* could be found among the venerated deities. Outside the specific sphere under investigation, indeed, there are further confirmations:[17] busts and portraits of Marcellus, Agrippa, Drusus Iulius Caesar were found in some dwellings in Pompeii (Casa del Citarista, I 4, 5.25; Casa di Diomede, I 2, 17; Casa di Dedalo e Icaro, IX 6, 3: **Fig. 10**), as well as a precious bust of Marcellus recovered in a house in Taranto; again, an image of Tiberius Gemellus came from the *domus* of Frescoes in Luni, precisely from the *sacellum* area in the house garden. Further examples can be given from some residences in the eastern Mediterranean: the cult statuettes from the House of Bronzes in Kos, among which a Caracalla (or Geta) bust stands out; or the Caligula bust from a residential building still in Kos. These cases are images of sovereigns placed among the cult statuettes of the families owning the residences, because they were considered to be protectors of the family unit on equal terms with the deities presiding over the *domus*.

Therefore, the materials found in the houses in central Italy under survey can be compared to similar artefacts found in other domestic contexts throughout the empire; among them, indeed, some clearly testify

17 For the busts and portraits mentioned in the paragraph, see Bassani 2017, 124–30 with specific bibliography.

Fig. 9: Lucus Feroniae, villa of the Volusii Saturnini. The plan with the *sacrarium* 41 and some of the statues and portraits found inside related to the imperial cult (After Bassani 2017, 311, figs. 40.9, 40.10).

to the potentially 'sacred' value attributed to the images of sovereigns within the dwellings. On the other hand, if we read some literary documents from the Imperial age in this perspective, we can find confirmation of the practice of owning statues and portraits of *Augusti* and *Augustae* in private houses, to enable in them forms of worship similar to the well-known and widely studied ones of the public sphere.

Ovid, for example, from his exile in the Pontus, thanks his friend Cotta for sending him images of Augustus, Tiberius, Livia, Germanicus and Drusus to place in the domestic shrine.[18] The poet does not clarify in which part of his home these were, but we can image an internal place dedicated to the worship activities: a specific *sacrarium*, or an *aedicula* in the atrium, or a private room, a *cubiculum*, used also for religious celebrations. In this sense, some decades later, Suetonius remembers having given Hadrian a statuette of Octavian which was placed in the *cubiculum* appointed to the veneration of the Lares and other deities.[19]

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18 Ov. *Pont*. 2.8.1: *Redditus est nobis Caesar cum Caesare nuper, / quos mihi misisti, Maxime Cotta, deos; / utque tuum munus numerum, quem debet, haberet, / est ibi Caesaribus Livia iucta suis. / Argentum felix omnique beatius auro, / quod, fuerit pretium cum rude, numen habet*. Ov. *Pont*. 4.9.105: *Nec pietas ignota mea est: videt hospita terra / in nostra sacrum Caesaris esse domo. / Stant pariter natusque pius coniunxque sacerdos, / numina iam facto non leviora deo. / Neu desit pars ulla domus, stat uterque nepotum, / hic aviae lateri proximus, ille patris*.

19 Suet. *Aug*. 7: *Thurinum cognominatum satis certa probatione tradiderim nactus puerilem imagunculam eius aeream veterem ferreis et paene iam exolescentibus litteris hoc nomine inscriptam, quae dono a me principi data inter cubiculi Lares colitus*.

Fig. 10: Pompei, *domus* of Diomede, I 2, 17. View of the portrait of Agrippa from the peristyle (After Bassani 2017, 125, fig. 92).

Tacitus, on his part, bears witness to the famous case of Granius Marcellus, accused of lese majesty for substituting the head of Augustus on a statue with that of Tiberius as soon as the *princeps* died:[20] but clearly that action could only have been performed within the walls of Granius Marcellus' residence, as it would have been impossible in a public space without arousing general indignation. Finally, in the *Historia Augusta* it is attested that during the reign of Marcus Aurelius, because of his great government, all the people had an image of the Emperor at home: if not, someone could be accused of *sacrilegium*.[21]

We could continue with further examples, but here it is enough to conclude recalling attention on the need to approach the study of *sacra privata* with a new methodology, capable of stepping outside the well-known sphere of the so-called *lararia* to investigate the phenomenon of domestic cult starting from the study of all indicators traced in a residential space. It is enough, we hope, to have outlined, if only in general terms, the wide scope of a phenomenon like that of imperial cult in the private sphere, which has so far been ignored because considered a practice of exclusive, and almost obvious, public competence: and this because there has not been, until now, a perspective of investigation able to examine *sacra privata* in all their different facets, beyond the images of the Lares. With these premises, the future developments appear wider and more articulated than imagined, and the continuation of research cannot but widen discussion and bring out new significant data to be analysed.

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21 *Hist. Aug. Aur.* 18: *Et parum sane fuit quod illi honores divinos omnis aetas omnis sexus omnis condicio ac dignitas dedit, nisi quod etiam sacrilegus iudicatus est qui eius imaginem in sua domo non habuit, qui per fortunam vel potuit habere vel debuit. Denique hodieque in multis domibus Marci Antonini statuae consistunt inter deos penates.*

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Medieval & Early Modern Europe

Making the Sacred Palpable. How Material Objects Enhanced Lay Devotional Practices in Late Medieval Europe

Claire Renkin

The materiality of devotional objects opens fresh perspectives for scholars of late medieval domestic devotion. Unfortunately, museums frequently display paintings, sculpture and other devotional objects without mentioning the rich material devotional culture which originally framed them. The contemporary display of late medieval devotional works often surrounds these objects within spare, uncrowded space. Ironically such displays deprive the objects of the very quality which once animated them: materiality. This paper will explore why either a literal or in the case of paintings, an imagined act of touch performed such a vital role in late medieval domestic devotion.

My understanding of the late Middle Ages hinges on a proliferation of religious devotions.[1] Moreover much of this devotional culture centres upon things: altarpieces, Books of Hours, rosaries, ivories, or pilgrim badges to mobilise the beliefs and practices of late medieval men and women. My understanding of how materiality functioned in the late Middle Ages has been influenced by the work of Caroline Walker Bynum.[2] Her explorations of the behaviour and ideas that both exalted and denounced the veneration of miraculous matter has been especially helpful. In this regard Bynum seeks to broaden the prevailing conceptual framework. She sums up in one sentence: "Miraculous matter was simultaneously – hence paradoxically – the changeable stuff of not-God and the locus of a God revealed."[3]

Examples of devotional objects drawn from both Italy, the Low Countries, and Germany challenge us to move beyond some of the polarities which scholars have imposed on these works. In what follows I will explore why polarities like sacred versus secular or divine versus amuletic must be historically situated if we are to make sense of the often contradictory evidence we find in contemporary late medieval sources. This article ventures observations about the ways in which prayer was understood and experienced in this period. As many have observed, late medieval spirituality favoured rote repetition of familiar prayers. In this scenario the devout man or women comes across as little more than passive participants in a mechanical performance dependant on purely external prompts.[4] My brief discussion of several domestic devotional objects draws on the evidence of the objects themselves in order to contest this opinion. I shall argue on the contrary that domestic spaces facilitated a kind of devotional experience that empowered more autonomous modes of prayer than official public locations did. The tactility of these intimate objects or 'toys' invites us to re-think assumptions about the experience of prayer and contemplation.[5] In particular the physicality of

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1 Van Engen 2008, 278.

2 Bynum 2011.

3 Bynum 2011, 35.

4 Swanson 1995. More nuanced approaches include Duffy 1992, 109–30 and Reinburg 2012, 139–71.

5 I have borrowed this term from Christiane Klapisch-Zuber who uses it to refer to the use of dolls often depicting the Christ-child and saints in the devotions of late medieval laity and religious. See Klapisch-Zuber 1985, 311.

smaller objects suggest that the process of contemplation may have run not, as often assumed always from outer to inner, but may have run in both directions, causing a back-and-forth dialectic between outer actions and inner vision. This paper will explore some ways in which these portable tools of devotion challenge conventional thinking about domestic devotional practice.

How then do such objects relate to the human life cycle? In recent years several large exhibitions have explored the role of the visual arts in a domestic context in Renaissance Italy.[6] The focus on the household marks a shift away from more traditional art historical scholarly subjects like delineating artist's oeuvre or the development of artistic styles and influences. In turning to the study of material culture and materiality art historians have expanded their purview to include a much broader type of object.[7] Everyday objects now jostle with the conventional fine arts for scholarly attention. These museum exhibitions together with the accompanying catalogues and other scholarly publications represent a growing trend exploring the cultural life of the late Middle Ages and early modern era with a particular emphasis on the materiality of the domestic realm. Many of these exhibitions framed the selection of objects and interpretive essays around the concept of key rituals in the human life cycle.

Thus such pivotal events as betrothal, marriage and birth frame the interpretation of objects acquired by Italian families in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[8] Civic life in many Italian communes depended on the complex interweaving of social and political networks. Such alliances were forged through marriage. As Jacqueline Musacchio and others argue material objects from cassone chests to birth salvers visually highlighted the crucial role of the family and its material existence in ensuring the stability and prosperity of the city.[9] This emphasis on social understandings of the rituals marking the life cycle of individuals and families in Renaissance Italy has opened up new directions in studying material culture in Italian households in the fifteenth through sixteenth century. [10] Still unexplored is the assumption that the household comprised a secular domain in contrast to the supposed sacred realm of the churches, monasteries and other public interactive spaces. Art historians need to attend more carefully to how we use such a contested polarity as that between a supposedly secular domestic interior and a sacred liturgical space.[11]

How then might we expand this excellent research exploring domestic objects as cultural expressions of the life cycles of individual and the family? Let me propose that we adopt from ritual studies the concept of the liturgical cycle. This cycle may be said to shape ideas of time based on a non-linear model which repeats every year. In contrast to the image of the human life cycle the progressions of major seasons and festivities of the Christian liturgical year incorporates the individual's life span into a circular experience of sacred time. In later remarks I will expand on this observation.

Study of devotional objects within the domestic realm in the late Middle Ages and Renaissance is further complicated by other conceptual polarities. These concern on the one hand whether the sacred resides in church or domestic, and on the other hand what kinds of objects constellated the sacred (devotional/

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6 See for instance, Objects of Virtue, British Museum, 2001; At Home in the Renaissance, Victoria and Albert Museum, 2006–2007, Madonnas and Miracles. The Holy Home in Renaissance Italy, Fitzwilliam Museum, 2017.

7 For an introduction to some recent studies see O'malley – Welch, 2007; Ajmar-Wollheim – Dennis – Matchette 2007.

8 Musacchio 2008; Bayer 2008.

9 Musacchio 1999, Musacchio 2008.

10 Sarti 2002; Cavallo – Evangelisti 2009.

11 Musacchio 2008. The 2012 and 2013 meetings of the Ecclesiastical History Society were dedicated to the theme of 'Religion and the Household', It is remarkable that no papers dealing with Christian devotional experience in the late Middle Ages were presented. The papers of these conferences are published in Doran – Methuen – Walsham 2014.

magical).[12] Many studies argue that whereas the church buildings represented officially sanctioned devotions, domestic households harboured practices bordering on the popular.[13] In truth throughout the late Middle Ages ecclesiastical officials and theologians re-drew the lines around many of the devotional practices that flourished in this period.[14] Propositions about what constituted the sacred were debated as churchmen frequently expressed anxiety about the control and regulation of devotional practices. Clerics frequently expressed reservations about miracle-working hosts. In the mid fifteenth-century Popes Eugene IV (reigned 1441–1447) and his successor Nicholas V (reigned 1447–1455) both insisted that hosts consecrated by priests be displayed alongside miraculous objects. By aligning the universally venerated object of the host, whose authenticity had been confirmed by priestly consecration, with a disputed *Dauerwunder* (for example Eucharistic hosts and chalices which were believed to have been miraculously transformed into bleeding hosts), church officials tried to direct pious devotion away from objects that resisted authenticating.[15]

Another instance where church officials displayed ambivalence to newer devotions concerns the Franciscan Bernardino of Siena's cult of the Holy Name in Italy in the early fifteenth-century. As is well known Bernardino promoted devotion to Christ through small wax tablets featuring the letters IHS. The cult attracted devotion throughout Italy. Conversely the little wax tablets likewise brought charges of heresy upon Bernardino. Criticism was levelled on two counts; firstly the erasure of the cross attracted charges of scandal, and secondly doubts about the spiritual efficacy of the tablets were made by many theologians. Though eventually the charges were lifted, the controversy surrounding devotion to the objects evokes the suspicion among many that the wax tablets were indistinguishable from amulets. Again, as we see in the case of the miraculous *Dauernwunder* (and many other examples), church approval was neither coordinated nor predictable.[16]

Many studies examining these objects demonstrate a modern tendency to designate as 'devotional objects' such things as reliquaries, rosaries, and wax tablets known as *Agnus Dei.* In contrast, many scholars dismiss as manifestation of superstitious folk magic a variety of other items variously described as amulets, or supposed apotropaic devices.[17] Such labels highlight the ambivalence that these objects evoke then and now.[18] Zealous devotion to a tiny coral pendant might elicit the derision of a cleric or a Florentine merchant alike. Both types of men were voicing the misgivings which non-participants felt toward such private domestic devotional practice. Many critics feared that the materiality of specific objects threatened to destabilise the safe boundaries which clerics wished to place around the sacred.[19] More broadly, objects like the Eucharistic host or miraculous images performed a privileged role in Catholic belief and practice. In principle, these considerations raise the question of what authority ought to validate the spiritual experiences in question. Who was to legitimate the claims that objects mediated grace? Interestingly the scepticism which modern scholars tend to voice about such claims finds its counterpart in the hey-day of these devotional devices.[20] I

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12 See Musacchio 2005, 139–56.

13 Musacchio 2005, 151; Ajmar-Wollheim – Dennis 2006, 196.

14 Bynum 2011; Van Engen 2008.

15 Bynum 2011, 168.

16 Bynum 2007; Bynum 2011, 270; Van Engen 2008, 280.

17 Thomas 1978; Kieckhefer 2000.

18 Studies by Arnold 2011, Ames 2014 and Reinburg 2012, 139–71 all question the polarities of elite and popular piety especially in regard to the laity. Often these categories assert clear boundaries that the sources do not support. I thank Reima Välimäki for the first two references.

19 Bynum 2011, 154–67.

20 Bynum 2011, 217–65.

raise this question not to argue that many objects like pieces of coral or animal teeth should be understood as sacred rather than dismissed as amulets. Instead my purpose is to ask if we need to re-think the dichotomy between the devotional and what I shall call the amuletic.

The question at issue derives from scholars' observations about the 'blurring' of lines between the sacred and 'popular magic'.[21] Jacqueline Musacchio has brought to our attention many examples of relics, small crosses and *agnus dei* discs (on the latter see below) combined with crystals, animal teeth and coral branches.[22] In order better to interpret devotional culture which prized these objects, we need to re-examine the 'blurry' conceptual area between the poles we have staked out. We need to go further than acknowledging the contradictions such behaviour presents. However improbable, some of the objects may seem, the desired function need not always have been thaumaturgic, but may also have stimulated prayer life even if inarticulate.[23]

Today, many of the objects displayed in museums were originally executed for domestic households. In Italy from the late thirteenth-century a range of objects including images both painted and in relief were often found in domestic interiors. Inventories and similar textual sources reveal that it was not only the wealthy who could afford private devotional objects. By the fifteenth-century workshops like that of the artist Neri di Bicci offered 'off the rack' small panels at prices an artisan could afford. Reliefs featuring the Madonna and Child brought this type of devotional image to an expanding market. The production of these images in multiple numbers in stucco, gesso or terracotta ensured the affordability of such objects. Visual and textual sources help us to imagine how such devotional works functioned for their late medieval owners. Artists often included details of quasi liturgical furnishings like holy water buckets and sprinklers or candle prickets in narrative scenes like the Annunciation.[24] Placed before devotional paintings, these objects recalled contemporary domestic devotional habits. Household inventories at this time describe such items, familiar from paintings.[25] The presence in a home of the holy water bucket and sprinkler virtually identical to objects which were routinely found in churches suggest the ways in which lay people appropriated "liturgical practice of the clergy to frame the sacred within their own homes, without however merely mimicking priestly gestures".[26]

More significantly from our perspective these objects because of the sensorial appeal to memory might well have encouraged the viewer to become a participant in a sacred act in what might be called extra-liturgical. The image-saturated devotional culture of the late Middle Ages encouraged the devout to seek the divine through direct affective meditation on sacred stories. The narrator's exhortation to the reader (or listener) in such familiar devotional texts as *The Meditation on the Life of Christ* to touch, caress, smell and hear mobilised feeling through the senses.[27] The divine encounter these material props might stimulate achieved what Jeffrey Hamburger memorably likens to "biblical day-dreaming".[28] Other accessories like curtains

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21 See especially in this regard Musacchio 2005.

22 Musacchio 2005.

23 Musacchio's excellent explorations of the role of such objects in the domestic world of Renaissance Italians has however, applied too narrow a conceptualization to these objects.

24 See for example Carpaccio's inclusion of the pricket, bucket and sprinkler before an image in his painting of *The Dream of St Ursula,* 1490–94, reproduced in Dennis – Ajmar-Wollheim 2006, 193. Abundant evidence for the use of these objects can be found in household inventories.

25 Household inventories provide a fundamental source for research on domestic devotions in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. See Musacchio 2000 and Morse 2013, 143–53.

26 Ajmar-Wollheim – Dennis, 2006, 192.

27 Ragusa – Green 1961, 38.

28 Hamburger 1991, 232.

Fig. 1: Italian silver container with nielloed plaques: Agnus Dei. British Museum, MME AF 2892. Copyright Trustees of the British Museum.

or veils similarly assisted the householder in creating a space where potentially human and divine might meet in an act of prayer triggered by materiality.[29] Recourse to material objects of devotion enabled lay people to craft an autonomous mode of devotion in domestic and liturgical spaces.

The devotional object known as *Agnus Dei* were familiar in much of Europe from at least the eleventh century. These objects (**Fig. 1**) continued to be manufactured until the last decades of the twentieth century. The image of the lamb impressed into the small wax disc thus explains the name for the containers made to hold the disc. Originally the disc was composed of wax melted from the Paschal candle blessed by the pope at the annual Easter Sunday Mass. By the fourteenth century the blessing had evolved into a more elaborate ritual. In addition to receiving the blessing of the Pope the discs were also dipped into water mixed with chrism, and balsam.[30]Popes including Innocent II (reigned 1130–43) and Paul II (reigned 1464–1471) proclaimed the spiritual benefits of the wax discs. This short poem which accompanied Urban V's gift of three *Agnus Dei* to John Paleologus in 1366 enumerates the benefits of the little discs: "Balsam and pure wax with liquid chrism make this Agnus: which I give thee as a mighty gift. Being sprung from a fount sanctified by mysteries, it repels lightning from above, and all that is malign; it destroys sin, like Christ's own blood, and augments (virtue). It at once preserves the pregnant woman and delivers her of her child; to the worthy it brings gifts; it destroys the power of fire; worn in purity it rescues from watery floods."[31]

Owners of these inherently fragile discs commissioned containers to protect the wax. Typically, the container was made of copper or silver gilt, a small loop was attached to it, so that the disc could be worn. Italian household inventories record the popular custom of giving pendants containing the wax disc to a bride at her wedding and to children at their baptisms. The associations of these modest sacramentals (objects like bread, water or salt which are rendered holy through a clerical blessing) with major events in family life are not surprising. The symbol of the lamb recalled the innocent Christ, and provided an especially intimate reminder of vulnerability which would surely have appealed to young women during pregnancy. When worn close to the body, these tangible reminders of the mutability of matter surely helped shape late medieval peoples devotional experience. Materiality communicates experiences, including that of the sacred, in the encounter between people and things. Contemporary churchmen including the famous

29 On the veiling of private devotional images see Schmidt 2005, 95, and more broadly Schmidt 2007, 191–213.

30 Cherry 2003, 170–83.

31 Cited in Cherry 2003, 171–72.

fifteenth-century preacher Bernardino of Siena recommended that such objects "be kept in your homes, at the threshold and also at the doorway of your rooms."[32]

While the appeal of *Agnus Dei* and other similar sacramentals at the time of marriage and birth is obvious, the emphasis in the secondary literature on these moments in the life cycle ignores an equally significant event in the human life cycle: death. Moreover, in contrast to marriage and birth at an individual's death religious rituals performed at this time reminded communities of the bonds which linked the living and the dead. Through the annual performance of memorial masses for the dead, the activation of memory through liturgy and prayer imagined human relationships (between parents and children or husbands and wives) in circular rather than linear time. Devotional objects like Books of Hours, rosaries, modest silver pendants of saints, and *Agnus Dei* bridged the different worlds of the human and the divine. We frequently find evidence in wills of *Agnus Dei* left to relatives. The form of the testament makes explicit that the legacy is intended to call to mind the deceased. In 1392 Richard Earl of Arundel left his mother the Duchess of Norfolk an *Agnus Dei* "in remembrance of me and of my soul." Rosaries too appear often as legacies to close relatives as we see when in 1400 Lord Scrope of Bolton left his son Roger a set of beads with a gold cross "which belonged to my Lord my father". Similiarly, Avice the wife of William of Pontefract left her husband in 1404 "a pair of gold paternosters [rosaries] with a gold crucifix hanging therefrom as a memorial."[33] Devotional prayer books including Books of Hours retain fascinating traces of their owners' devotional lives. Many contain prayers inscribed by hand, in addition to a note which informs the reader of the birth of a child on a particular saint's day.[34]

How might the symbol of the *Agnus Dei* have provided tangible links with the sacred in routine domestic tasks? Ewer stands were a familiar household item. Many examples of a type of ceramic tableware known as maiolica were produced in large numbers throughout Italy from the late thirteenth century. Many stands were probably manufactured in Deruta, a major production centre for this type of ceramic ware.[35] Our knowledge of how this and other similar ewers and stands were used comes from a variety of contemporary sources. Bridal dowries often list such items; though it seems likely the acquisition of these objects would not have been restricted to events like marriage or childbirth. Washing one's hands or those of guests habitually featured in the domestic life of the late medieval period.[36]

Every-day objects become something other than ordinary when they are invested with special purpose, however fleeting such episodes may have been. In this instance, that heightened moment might have arisen when water poured into the stand prominently decorated with the lamb, an ancient symbol of Chris as redeemer, fused an individual's domestic ritual and sacral imagery. Water together with other sacramentals like candles and even herbs activated the sacred in households. In all parts of Europe people collected water after mass, which had been earlier blessed by clergy. Where and how was this holy water stored and used? Until recently the fact that Christian imagery often featured in the decoration of these and other domestic ceramics has received little comment.[37] Unfortunately museum displays of these objects fall between the binaries of domestic and liturgical use. In other words museums tend to assign these

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32 Cited in Corry –Howard – Laven 2017, 104.

33 For the *Agnus Dei* see Cherry 2003, 176. On the rosaries see Lightbown 1992, 354.

34 Eamon Duffy argues that Books of Hours as objects transcended categories of sacred and secular. As he explains entries which record the death of a parent, reminded a person of the obligation to pray for the deceased. See Duffy 2006, 44.

35 On the manufacture and use of maiolica and other tableware in the fourteenth to sixteenth centuries see Ajmar-Wollheim – Dennis 2006, 254–65.

36 Ajmar-Wollheim – Dennis 2006, 186, 286.

37 Syson 2001, 100.

Fig. 2: German rosary, wood, silver, gilded silver and amber, c. 1475-1500 (Photo © The Victoria and Albert Museum).

objects either to the domestic and therefore secular realm or to the liturgical and thus sacred realm. Might it not be desirable to re-imagine a binary transcending category such as 'domestic liturgy'?

Turning from Renaissance Italy to northern Europe, rosaries (**Fig. 2**), which were also known as paternosters or prayer beads, were of course familiar throughout Europe in the late Middle Ages.[38] My focus on examples drawn from the Low Countries and Germany allows us to briefly consider distinctive features of material and devotional culture in northern Europe. Rosaries typically took the form of small round beads strung together to form a chain. Prayer beads in other religious traditions including Buddhism and Islam pre-date the earliest appearance of these beads in Europe in the eleventh century. The rosary as it is familiar today only took its present shape at the end of the late Middle Ages.[39] For centuries prayer beads existed in a variety of materials and form. As a devotional object these highly material beads offered a flexibility and portability which no doubt accounts for the appeal of the rosary to both lay and religious.

Beads could be arranged into a number of combinations. The most common was in decades; however sets of five or seven beads were also popular.[40] Various forms of prayer were associated with the counting of beads. Two of the earliest examples include the repetition of the *Ave Maria* and the *Paternoster* and the Psalms. Gradually the praying of the *Ave* developed to include meditations on the life of Christ and the life of the Virgin. The meditative devotions expanded to include rosaries dedicated to the wounds of Christ or saints. In fact, the variety of possible rosaries clearly reflects the richness of late medieval devotional culture.[41] The popularity of rosaries devoted to saints is also suggested by the survival of a number of rosaries which include pendants of saints attached to the chains.[42] By the late fifteenth century the rosary became all but synonymous with devotion to the Virgin. Much of this growth is due to the

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38 The word rosary from at least the fourteenth century referred to a garland of roses. The symbolism of roses and the Virgin has its origins in the patristic era. See As-Vijvers 2007, 51 with references to earlier literature.

39 Lightbown 1992, 344.

40 Lightbown 1992, 344.

41 As-Vijers 2007, 47–50. As-Vijers notes references to these wider kinds of rosaries in devotional books, 50.

42 See Lightbown 1992, 353.

institutional drive of Dominicans who from the late fifteenth-century sponsored the confraternities dedicated to the rosary. These 'brotherhoods' rapidly expanded from the first confraternity founded in Cologne in 1475. Soon rosary confraternities were to be found all over Europe.[43]

Prayer beads not only came in different forms, they could also employ a variety of materials to fashion these beads. Both extant examples of beads and records from textual sources witness to the wide social reach of this devotional object. Records describe the manufacture by specialist artisans in a range of modest materials such as wood, bone, glass or even fabric such as wool. For those of greater means popular materials included coral, jet amber, and gold. Pearls and precious stones were used for the marker beads which separated the smaller sequence of beads perhaps in decades.[44] Unsurprisingly rosaries made of more luxurious materials survive in far greater numbers than more modest examples. This does not mean however, that the beads would not have been popular among the poor. Inventories from Monte di Pietà (charitable pawn institutions) and makers of rosaries provide evidence of beads crafted from more modest materials like wood and bone were owned by humble workers.[45]

The versatility of prayer beads must surely have contributed to the popularity of these devotional objects. Until recently scholars have seldom speculated about the connections between late medieval spirituality, materiality and domesticity.[46] Let me venture these observations about how we might identify some of the themes and features shared across these categories. Firstly, the lack of prescriptive regulations concerning what meditations were to be prayed in the rosary (the official form was only issued by the papacy in 1569) meant that this devotion could be practised with a remarkable degree of personal freedom. Like the degree of choice that could be exercised in choosing offices and prayers for inclusion in a Book of Hours, rosaries encouraged and reinforced an individual's personal religious experience.[47]

In contrast to Books of Hours which in the main were affordable only to the wealthy, rosaries (and prints) reached a much wider social audience. Secondly in addition to the greater affordability of rosaries, these modest devotional objects did not require literacy, either in Latin or the vernacular. For women, prayer beads offered an accessible and often consoling mode of devotion.[48] Finally rosaries like other modest devotional objects (pilgrim badges or inexpensive prints) occupied a privileged place in the domestic environment.[49] These objects decorated the walls of rooms, where they were hung to protect families from illness and other threats to well-being.[50] To be sure, the small size of rosaries allowed men and women to carry them beyond the home, whether to work, church or social visits. However, the practice of repeated prayers was surely best performed in an interior setting where the regular action of fingering one's bead was less subject to distraction.

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43 As-Vijers 2007, 48–49.

44 Lightbown 1992, 345.

45 Corry – Howard – Laven 2017, 82–83, 94–97.

46 See Donal Cooper's essay in Ajmar-Wollheim – Dennis 2006, 190–203. For the role of sacramentals see Scribner 1984, 69–71. I thank Reima Välimäki for this reference. See now Brundin – Howard – Laven 2018, for a more nuanced interpretation of the intersections of spiritual practice and the domestic space in Renaissance Italy.

47 John van Engen argues that this emphasis on an individual's opportunity to cultivate personal devotional choices was a feature of the fifteenth century across Europe. See Van Engen 2008, 270.

48 As-Vivjiers comments on the openness of the regulations governing rosary confraternities. Membership was free and open to men and women. Moreover members choose the particular version of the rosary they preferred and could say it wherever they wished. See As-Vijers 2007, 49.

49 On the market for religious prints in households in the Renaissance, see Ajmar-Wollheim – Dennis 2006, 322–27.

50 As-Vijers 2007, 76.

Fig. 3: Netherlandish rosary bead closed, boxwood, early sixteenth century (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York).

Rosaries came in a great variety; a version featuring a single large carved bead became a familiar devotional item in the southern Netherlands. Prayer-nuts, as they were called, begin to appear as a distinctive material feature of devotional life in the Netherlands and Germany c. 1480 to c. 1530s. Around fifty examples of these finely carved little objects survive now in museums and private collections.[51] Most are spherical in shape and consist of two spheres which are hinged so that the two wings can be opened and closed. The vast majority are carved from boxwood, a particularly suitable material as it is a finely grained hard wood. Boxwood's resistance to constant handling no doubt appealed to the owners of the prayer-nut. Contemporary portraits of men and women fingering their prayer-nuts confirm how the devotional objects were used. The bead could be worn attached to a belt or suspended from a pair of rosary beads. As the size of these prayer-nuts is generally around 4 cm it is clear only the finest carvers would have worked in this genre. When opened the interior revealed each wing decorated with carved scenes from the life of Christ, the Virgin, or the saints.

Fig. 4: Netherlandish rosary bead opened Road to Calvary and The Crucifixion, early sixteenth century. Boxwood (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York).

51 See Scholten 2011, 447.

In a notable example from the collection of the Metropolitan Museum (**Figs. 3–4**) Latin inscriptions decorate the exterior and interior rim of both valves and announce the narratives depicted. The Latin text on the exterior taken from Lamentations instructs the user of the prayer nut: "lift up our hearts with hands to the Lord in the heaven. O all ye that pass by the way attend, and see if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow".[52] This exhortation in a sense helps prepare the user and guide him or her in their prayerful meditation. The multisensory appeal to the senses of these prayer-beads may well have inspired contemplative prayer. When the prayer-bead is opened the inscriptions refer directly to the narrative scenes depicted. At the left the scene of the *Road to Calvary* features this verse from John's gospel: "Then therefore he delivered him to them to be crucified. And they took Jesus and led him forth. And bearing his own cross, he went forth to that place which is called Calvary". The scene of the *Crucifixion* carries a verse from the sixth century hymn *Vexilla Regis* attributed to Venantius Fortunatus "Hail, O Cross! Our only hope! During the days of the Passion, increase to the good their grace." The inscription on the exterior reads: *LEVEMS CORDA NOSTRA CCVM MANIBVS AD DNM I CEL ATTENDITE 9ET0 VIDETE SI ESY DOLOR SICUT DOLOR MEUS*; the interior left valve reads: *SUSCEPERUNT AUTEM IESUM ET EDVXERVNT ET BAJVLAANS SIBI CRVCEM*; and the right: *O CRVX AVE SPES VNICA HOC PASSIONIS TEMPORE AV (auge) PIIS IVSTICIAM*.[53]

Prayer-nuts above all appeal especially to the sense of touch. The owner must surely have fondled the often openwork carving of the exterior, before opening the wings to expose the seemingly miraculous carved scenes which demanded close attention. Some users may have run their fingers over the reliefs on the interior, the virtuoso carving invited the holder to differentiate both with eyes and fingers figures, textures and narrative incidents in the often multi-figured scenes.[54] It is known that prayer-nuts sometimes combined to function as pomanders.[55] In this way fragrances created by dough, herbs and dried flowers released sweet-smelling scent. The perfume released enhanced the act of praying which that tactile and visual engagement with these devotional tools had already triggered. Late medieval writers mirrored this type of religious experience in metaphors of smelling and tasting. Here is an example from Mechthild of Hackeborn: "And now, O only comfort of my soul, I offer you my heart as a fresh rose whose sweetness will attract your eyes the whole day long, and whose sweet scent will please your divine heart."[56]

My final example depicts what might be described as a donor enjoying the 'company of Baby Jesus'.[57] The scene depicted in this small devotional panel (**Fig. 5**) attributed to the Master of St Gudule imagines a moment of playful religious behaviour in a domestic setting.[58] The female donor who appears dressed in fashionable, expensive clothes kneels facing the seated Virgin and Child.[59] At a little distance standing behind the donor we recognise the scarlet-clad Magdalen. From her gesture she appears to be presenting the donor to the Virgin and Child. The composition derives from works by earlier Flemish masters – Jan

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52 The following translations are from the *Douay/Rheims* edition of the Vulgate.

53 See *Metropolitan Museum* 2015 for the inscriptions. Although most inscriptions are in Latin, some prayer-nuts use the vernacular. Likewise, the texts of many Books of Hours were written in Latin, though a number of examples featured certain prayers and sometimes offices in the vernacular.

54 Jacqueline Jung writes perceptively about the role of touch together with vision in communicating the divine. See Jung 2010.

55 See Scholten 2011, 451.

56 From the *Liber specialis gratiae,* cited in Falkenburg 1994, 69.

57 The phrase is borrowed from Jung 2010, 235.

58 Clearly the Virgin's stone throne and canopy would be out of place in a domestic setting. However, the architecture of the loggia, formal garden and inclusion of the prie-dieu recalls a wealthy household. In Flanders in the early fifteenth-century a new iconography of the Virgin in a domestic interior replaced the earlier setting of a church. Jeanne Nuechterlein argues that the new domestic setting suggests confidence in the possibility of experiencing the sacred in the domestic realm. See Nuechterlein 2005, 50.

59 Allart 2008, 42.

Fig. 5: Master of the View of St Gudule, Virgin and Child with St Mary Magdalen and a donor, c. 1470-1485 (Musée d'Art Religieux et d'Art Mosan, Liège).

Van Eyck's *Virgin of Chancellor Rolin* (c. 1435) and Rogier van der Weyden's *St Luke Drawing the Virgin* (c. 1435–40).[60] Before we explore the meaning of the playful exchange between the donor and Christ-child, we need to examine the unusual iconography of this scene. Scenes which portray the Virgin and Child in intimate playful relationship are quite common, from the fourteenth century onwards. Such imagery can be found in both monumental and smaller devotional works.[61] In contrast the portrayal of a female donor in prayer before the Virgin and Child finds few parallels in Flemish art at this time.[62]

The woman in prayer and the Christ-child manipulating the expensive coral rosary between them demands further exploration. The following observations help to contextualise the central actions which pivot around the rosary. Firstly, although all four figures appear to share the same space, the placement of the prie-dieu virtually at the centre of the composition effectively separates the space of the donor from the Virgin and Child. Functioning like a barrier the prie-dieu reminds the viewer that the figures on either side of it inhabit different worlds, namely the celestial and the earthly. Secondly the placement of a prayer-book (the page lies open to reveal a miniature of the Crucifixion which suggests this is a Book of Hours) reinforces the meditative intent of the donor. We have already briefly noted the role of the senses in activating the sacred. It seems to me that this is precisely what we see depicted in this small devotional image. Here where the Christ-child and the female donor grasp the rosary-beads, the viewer (perhaps the original donor?) witnesses a potential exchange between the divine and human. If we understand the logic of the painter's visual rhetoric, we find that the tangibility of the rosary and not the book, evoke the sacred.[63] The materiality of this luxurious rosary enables the woman and the Christ-child to manifest an unusual kind of relationality as their hands manipulate a highly valued object. This object in their hands may be said to sum up my argument, because the material object manifests so clearly the inner bond between the praying woman and the Christ-child. It is no accident that the equilateral triangle shaped by the rosary occupies the near centre of the panel. It also bridges the transition between interior and exterior spaces. The coral rosary externalises an inner state of relationality.

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60 Allart 2008, 43.

61 For example *Virgin and Child,* c. 1450 attributed to the workshop of the Master of the Saint Barbara Altarpiece, Museum Narodowe, Wroclaw reproduced in Borchert 2010, fig. 3, 477, Gerard David, *Virgin and Child,* c. 1510-15, Private Collection, Belgium, reproduced in Borchert 2010, 144.

62 Allart 2008, 44-45; Campbell – Van Der Stock 2009, 414.

63 See also on the 'materialisation' of the sacred through the tangibility of the rosary see Van Asperen 2007, 105.

Growing interest in exploring the use of cult objects within the domestic realm opens promising research avenues. Earlier in this paper I referred to the polarities that one sometimes encounters in the diverse ways in which museums display and interpret the types of objects many of us have written about. The question of how best to house those objects which were believed to manifest sacred power likewise troubled medieval people. The late Middle Ages ecclesiastical authorities prohibited the keeping of relics in domestic households. The proscription against the ownership and devotional use of relics in domestic spaces appears to have been widely ignored. The Florentine Francesco Inghirammi kept a number of relics in his palazzo.[64] Evidence in the form of hundreds of reliquary jewels, often in the form of pendants suggests many lay men and women desired the spiritual comfort to be derived from a relic close to them.[65] If, as John Van Engen argues, the Church's central spiritual treasure (the Eucharistic, and devotion to the Passion of Christ) had opened up devotion to the Passion in countless forms and practices (from confraternities, to rival sites of miraculous bleeding hosts) this proliferation of opportunities in his word tended to 'de-center' the sacred.[66] Evidence of such displacement beyond the setting of the mass comes in the story of a sister of the Devout who "exercised [herself] so inwardly and devoutly in the life and suffering of Our Lord that she poured out tears." Significantly the nun's experience of feeling the presence of God took place not during the mass, but while she sewed.[67] The notion of activating sacrality in households and not just in churches would seem to encompass most of the practices discussed in this paper. When we speak of objects of devotion making spirituality palpable, we could as well speak of them enlarging the sites in which the spiritual became manifest. Material objects of devotion extended the spatiality of late medieval spiritual practice.

All the objects that I have inventoried – prayer-nut, rosaries, *Agnus Dei,* devotional images – performed this kind of function in assisting people in their own homes to cultivate a sense of relationship with embodiments of the sacred. The objects that we are studying today served to domesticate modes of devotion that without the agency of materiality would have remained abstract and disembodied.

In summary, embodiments created for purposes of private or public devotion gratify a participant's desire to touch, fondle or caress the object of sacred attention. Frequent cultivation of such intimate, indeed sensual contact with a sacred object contrasts sharply with the action of watching a mass performed at a distance or witnessing a procession of clerical persons. In the case of hand-held objects such as this paper has considered, the contrast is heightened by the participant's control over the site, timing, and duration of the act of devotion. Embodied devotions allow the participant to control the process within one's own space and at one's own preferred time. Such a sense of control, which is missing from formal worship, would have appealed to middle class devotees who wished to exercise a greater degree of control over the disposition of their time and movements. Moreover, such devotions, whether of hand-held objects or of images, awaken a desire not just to savour an intimate experience but to re-enact actions of saints and holy persons. Embodied devotions invite a devotee physically to emulate a sacred behaviour that the object evokes. One feels able, for example, to join the Virgin in caressing her baby or to join St Jerome in his weeping or to imitate St Anne teaching her daughter, the Virgin, to read. Embodied devotions enabled late medieval women and men to engage with the sacred in ways that rendered the sacred abundantly and intimately accessible.

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64 Musacchio 2008, 142.

65 See Lightbown 1992 who uses inventories and wills to demonstrate the appeal of reliquary jewels in the late Middle Ages.

66 Van Engen points to the impact this displacement on a narrow focus on the Eucharist for the devout. See Van Engen 2008, 278.

67 See Van Engen 2008, 278–79.

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More Powerful than Mere Matter? Forbidden but Practiced Material Religion among the Late Medieval German Waldensians

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Introduction

It is no wonder that the complex relationship of matter and the divine, object and the holy, caused tensions, misinterpretations and opposition in medieval Latin Christendom. Everybody agreed that the divine intersected with the material, but to what extent a holy image or object participated in the divinity it represented was theologically such a complicated question that even Thomas Aquinas displayed discomfort when discussing it. Orthodox theologians could very well agree that images or relics were signs pointing to their divine exemplar and thus directing the devotion of the faithful. The actual presence of divine power in material objects was much more difficult to explain in scholastic terms, and yet there was no denying it. In the eyes of the faithful, both clerical and lay – or at least the majority of them – it was the objects that were the bearer of the holy, be it a relic in the pilgrimage site or blessed herbs to ward off evil.[2]

Some misinterpretations, though persistent and common, were not deemed dangerous. For many of the faithful, the distinctions of materiality in sacraments (baptismal water as prerequisite for the sacrament), in sacramentals (herbs, candles and water blessed on certain feast days and used, for example, in healing) and other holy or magical objects not consecrated by a priest were not clear, and all these were used for theurgic purposes. This disturbed some theologians, but the practices went on.[3] Yet sometimes interests conflicted and contesting interpretations were sorted out. This happened, for example, when reformers or visitors from outside disapproved of cults promoted by a local clerical and lay elite. In the late middle ages, a typical example is the *Dauerwunder*, that is, hosts bleeding or resembling human flesh, often suspected of frauds or superstition.[4]

The participants in the above-mentioned malpractices were deemed to be misinformed at worst. There were, however, more dangerous propositions: condemned, dissident and heretical. This article is about these radical alternatives. From the beginning of the conflict between dissident groups and the high and late medieval Catholic Church, the tangible holy objects were a point of disagreement. Bishop Gérard of Cambrai was forced to explicate the presence of divine power in baptismal water and relics to the dissidents in Arras in 1025, although, according to Guy Lobrichon, there were no absolute contradictions in the respective interpretations of the bishop and the heretics.[5] The violent opposition of Peter of Bruis to the crucifix in the

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1 Postdoctoral researcher, University of Turku, Turku Institute for Advanced Studies.

2 Bynum 2011, 153–55.

3 Bynum 2011, 147, 151–53; the fundamental work on sacramentals and other blessings is still Franz 1909, vol. 1; see also Scribner 1984.

4 One of the famous sceptics was the scholar, reformer and bishop Nicolas of Cusa, see Rinser 2013, 203 et passim; On the famous case in Wilsnack, see Bynum 2011, 171–74.

5 Lobrichon 1999, 101–5.

twelfth century as well as the rigorous anti-materialism of Cathars[6] in the thirteenth and early fourteenth century are well known, and their story has been often told.[7] In the later middle ages, it was the destruction of relics and images by the Hussites in Bohemia and Lollards in England that caused terror in conventional Catholic clergy.[8] The Viennese scholar Thomas Ebendorfer wrote in his chronicle of the bishops of Passau, composed in the 1450s, about heretics "who, aroused by the hate of clergy, defile all the ecclesiastical sacraments, pollute holy temples and, fallen to all kinds of crimes, these men who do not live in accordance with nature are not afraid to perform any cruelty, as Bohemian fury in our unhappy times, infected by this Waldensian pestilence, has demonstrated as clearly as day in its deeds."[9]

It is the Waldensians of the late fourteenth century and their opposition, real and imagined, to material cult objects and images that is the subject of the present article. Interestingly but not surprisingly, they were far less radical and violent than in the description by Thomas Ebendorfer more than a half century later. As we shall see, some of them venerated images and consumed blessed matter, although in principle they were supposed to disavow those practices. The views of the late-fourteenth-century Waldensians are revealed in inquisitorial documents, treatises and shorter descriptions that were produced in the course of the persecutions all over German-speaking Europe from ca. 1390 till 1404.[10] The most accurate texts originate from the inquisitorial proceedings as well as from literary works of the Celestine provincial Petrus Zwicker.[11] Especially important are the 195 protocols that have survived from the more than 450 interrogations conducted by Zwicker in the Pomeranian town of Stettin in 1392–1394.[12]

The movement of Waldensians, often known as the 'Poor of Lyons' (*Pauperes de Lugduno*), had its roots in the conversion of a merchant called Valdés or Valdesius in Lyon in the early 1170s. Valdés and his followers wanted to imitate Christ and Apostles as poor, itinerant lay preachers. They, however, crossed the ecclesiastic authorities and were consequently excommunicated and declared heretical in 1184. Nevertheless, the movement spread and survived despite occasional persecution. In the later Middle Ages, the Waldensians had strong support areas in Piedmont, Lombardy and around Germanophone Europe from Fribourg in Switzerland to Stettin in Pomerania and Austria and Hungary in the south.[13] The late medieval German Waldensians differed both in organisation and in doctrine from the rather undefined *imitatio apostolorum* practiced by Valdés and his followers. By the end of the fourteenth century, they consisted of groups of laymen and – women sympathetic to Waldensian beliefs, who confessed their sins to and listened to the preaching of itinerant lay preachers and confessors, called 'brethren' or 'masters'. These had committed themselves to poverty, chastity and pastoral care, moving in pairs and visiting Waldensian communities dispersed in a large geographic area. The late medieval Waldensian doctrine was more sharply anticlerical and at odds with the Catholic teachings than early Waldensianism. The late medieval Waldensians denied

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6 I am fully aware of the problems with the nomenclature of dualist heretics in the medieval Western Europe. Since no alternative, convenient shorthand term has won general acceptance, I have resorted to the common practice of acknowledging the problem and then using 'Cathar'. Cf. most recently Sparks 2014, xi; Sennis 2016.

7 In general, see Lambert 2009, 52–56; 115–57; For recent discussions of Cathar dualism, see Taylor 2013; Arnold 2016, see. also Bynum 2011, 163–64.

8 On Lollard iconoclasm, see Aston 1988, 96–159.

9 Ebendorfer 2008, 227–28.

10 While there is no comprehensive treatment of the prosecutions of German heretics in the last decade of the fourteenth century, the best survey is offered by Modestin 2007a, 1–12; see also Kolpacoff 2000, 247–61; Välimäki 2019, 32–37.

11 On Zwicker's career and life, see Välimäki 2019, 22–37; Modestin 2010; Segl 2006, 165–66.

12 Edited in summarized form in Kurze 1975, 77–261.

13 On Medieval Waldensians in general, see Gonnet & Molnár 1974; Schneider 1981; Audisio 1999; Cameron 2000; Biller 2001a.

the cult of saints and Virgin Mary, as well as relics, claiming that the saints were unable or uninterested to intervene on behalf of the living. They also rebuked the wealth of the Church and the worldly lifestyle of its prelates. They adhered word for word to biblical morals, including the rejection of taking oaths and capital punishment. An integral part of Waldensian teachings was the denial of the existence of Purgatory, and consequently masses and prayers for the dead as well as indulgences. They likewise considered many material aspects of the medieval Christian cult, such as blessed water, images, church buildings, graveyards, or vestments of the priest to be superfluous and pernicious.[14]

It is the last aspect of Waldensianism that is discussed in the present article. In theory, the late medieval Waldensian Brethren, at least in Germany, deemed all material aspects of worship invalid. Thus, holy water or blessed salt was considered to be nothing more than ordinary water and salt. The knowledge of this prohibition was demonstrated by the average Waldensian followers when interrogated by an inquisitor. Nevertheless, many of them had continued, for example, to sprinkle of holy water. Sometimes this was without doubt done in order to assimilate to the surrounding community, but some of those interrogated clearly stated that they believed in the beneficial effects of blessed material objects, despite the teachings of the Brethren. This 'double heresy' enables us to pin down the meanings assigned to the tangible religion, by those interrogated as well as by the interrogators.

Interpreting lay beliefs from inquisitorial and polemical sources is far from simple. Indeed, it involves the most crucial question in heresy studies during the past four decades: should we regard heresies and heretics primarily as polemical constructions of their enemies, Catholic prelates projecting their own fears and models of patristic literature on to the dissidents of their own time? Or can we find, behind the hostile descriptions, a genuine dissident theology and organised groups challenging the Catholic Church?[15] My own approach lies between the extremes.[16] It is certainly true that Waldensianism as a distinct, idealised doctrinal system exists only in the polemical constructions by inquisitors and theologians, and in some reconstructions by modern historians. However, as Peter Biller has forcefully argued, there is no denying that the medieval Waldensians were a real dissident group with their own sense of identity, history and doctrine.[17] In the particular group studied in this article, the late medieval German Waldensians, we can observe migration between different, geographically distant Waldensian communities,[18] as well as Brethren who served the spiritual needs of their flock from the Pomeranian countryside to Austria, Rhineland and Swiss cities.[19] The Waldensians made the distinction themselves: they called themselves 'the known' (*die Künden/notos*), and those outside their group 'the strangers' (*die Fremden/alienos*).[20] Part of this distinct, heretical religious profession was the (theoretical) rejection of material objects of devotion, from images of the saints to sacramentals intended for the personal use of the faithful. As I will argue in the conclusion of this article, careful analysis of dissident approaches to material religion not

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14 On the doctrine and organization of the late-fourteenth-century German Waldensians, see Kurze 1968, 77–91; Cameron 2000, 125–39; Biller 2001b; Segl 2006, 163–75; Modestin 2007a, 124–47.

15 It is not possible to cover this discussion in this essay. Arnold 2016 offers a balanced overview of this historiographical and methodological debate.

16 Välimäki 2019, 18–21.

17 Biller 2006; On the Waldensian sense of identity, see also Audisio 2004.

18 Modestin 2007b, 2.

19 For example, the Brethren Konrad of Saxony and Klaus of Solothurn appear in depositions both in Stettin and in Strasbourg, see Kurze 1968, 79–80; Cf. Modestin 2007a, 121; In Fribourg there are no names of the Brethren mentioned, but there are references to their German and Bohemian origin, Utz Tremp 2000, 53.

20 The distinction is prominent in Stettin protocols, and discussed e.g. in Cameron 2000, 131; cf. Biller 2001b, 282–83.

only provides new insights into the question of holy matter but can also do justice to the messiness and complexity of late medieval dissident lay beliefs.

The Sacramentals that were Denied

In terms of tangible religion, the most intriguing part of the Waldensian criticism of the Church was the condemnation of the sacramentals. These included for example herbs, candles and water blessed on certain feast days, and they were used by faithful for healing purposes and as a protection against demons. Although the sacramentals were blessed by a priest in church, their use often took place in domestic spaces by lay persons, outside the supervision of the clergy. Moreover, the sacramentals required intense involvement with the divine through matter: baptismal water was sprinkled on top of oneself and blessed salts were eaten. However disturbing it was to some medieval theologians, the majority of the faithful held that the words of the blessing added to the matter a physical efficacy which in turn was transferred to the person who consumed it.[21]

The explicit denial of the material sacramentals is a particularity of the late-fourteenth-century Waldensians, while the general criticism of church buildings and their decorations and images, as well as of clerical vestments and ornaments, can be found repeatedly in the descriptions of Waldensians at least from the thirteenth century onwards. These opinions should be understood as conclusions derived either from literal biblicism (the Old Testament prohibition of images) or from the opposition to ecclesiastical property and the worldly lifestyle of the prelates. This was also observed by the contemporary orthodox authors. The Anonymous of Passau, writing in Austria around 1260, comments on Waldensians' condemnation of decorations in churches: "They say the decoration in a church to be a sin, and that it would be better to clothe the poor than the walls."[22] However, the condemnation of blessed water (other than baptismal water), candles, ash, palm-leaves or herbs is only rarely present in the thirteenth-century German treatises exposing the Waldensian doctrine and way of life. Only the Pseudo-Reinerius redaction of the Anonymous of Passau treatise lists various blessings among the ecclesiastical practices that the heretics condemn.[23] Nor does Moneta of Cremona, who composed perhaps the longest medieval treatise against heretics in Lombardy around 1240, discuss sacramentals in his *Adversus Catharos et Valdenses*.[24] And the sacramental are not mentioned in the short treatise against Waldensians known by its incipit as *Attendite a falsis prophetis* that was composed in the German context in the late fourteenth century, at the latest by 1390.[25]

The sacramentals appear on the stage, to my best knowledge, in the 1390s. The earliest appearance is in the list of errors compiled in Mainz, according to Jennifer Kolpacoff, soon after September 1390. The seventeen articles of faith include the affirmation "that the blessed water and the salt of the exorcism have

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21 Bynum 2011, 147 et passim; Scribner 1984, 69–71.

22 *Ornatum ecclesie dicunt peccatum, et quod melius esset vestire pauperes quam parietes*. Patschovsky – Selge 1973, 95.

23 *Item omnes dedicationes, benedictiones et consecrationes candelarum, cinerum, palmarum, crismatis, ignis, cerei, agni paschalis, mulierum post partum, peregrinorum, sacrorum locorum, sacrarum personarum, vestium, salis et aque derident*. Nickson 1967, 301.

24 Moneta, writing primarily against Cathars, treats materiality in several chapters, but from the anti-dualist point of view. Baptismal water received its own chapter, but all the arguments are directed against Cathars, not against Waldensians, see Moneta (Cremonensis) 1743, Lib. 2, Cap. 2, 116–129; Lib. 4, Cap. 1, § iii, 279–283; On Moneta's treatise, see Sackville 2011, 14–15; Sackville 2016.

25 On the dating of the treatise, see Biller 1974, 261, 365; Biller 2001b, 290; Välimäki 2019, 18. Since Biller studied the treatise in 1970s, it has been edited by Romolo Cegna, but mistakenly attributed to a Silesian inquisitor and dated, likewise erroneously, to 1399. See Cegna 1982. I have checked the treatise from the manuscript Sankt Florian XI 152, 48v–50v.

no effect for salvation."[26] A similar question is then asked by the inquisitor Petrus Zwicker in Stettin 1392–1394. Not surprisingly, we find questions concerning blessed water, salt, herbs and other consecrated matter in the two questionnaires that can be connected to Petrus Zwicker's inquisitorial process.[27] It appears also in the list of Waldensian errors, *Articuli Waldensium,* that circulated in Zwicker's inquisitorial material,[28] and in another 1390s list of Waldensian tenets.[29] The Waldensian attack on the consecrated objects features in Zwicker's letter to the Austrian Habsburg dukes, written in 1395 in order to secure their help in the battle against heresy. Zwicker not only lists as separate errors the refusal to venerate the instruments of Christ's passion and death, from the Crown of Thorns to the Holy Sepulchre (articles 41–55) and the denial of the sanctity in baptismal water and sacramentals (articles 59–63), but he also claims that the Waldensians condemn the plant ornaments, clothing and lights that the faithful use in processions.[30] Without doubt, the inquisitor wanted to make sure that the dukes, and everybody else who would read or hear the letter, would be convinced that the Waldensians threatened everything that was deemed holy and dear by the good Christians. A great deal of this was material and tangible.

Moreover, Zwicker gives theoretical and theological treatment to the validity of sacramentals and the consecration of other material objects and buildings in his long, polemical treatise against Waldensians, written in the middle of his inquisitorial career in 1395 and known as *Cum dormirent homines*, "When men were asleep."[31] The foundation of his defence was also one of the cornerstones of Christian materiality and materialism of the later middle ages: Christ's presence in the Eucharist, when wine and bread are transformed through the words of the consecrating priest. This, according to Zwicker, proves that the words of consecration and benediction have the capacity to bring sanctity into the consecrated matter.[32] In contrast, the *Refutatio errorum*, another draft-like treatise by Zwicker that closely resembles the *Cum dormirent homines*, has a chapter discussing the sanctity in material objects, but it is much more conservative and closer to thirteenth-century examples in the objects it mentions. In this earlier treatise, Zwicker lists only churches, their bell-towers, bells, and decorations of altars, cemeteries, organs and especially clerical vestments.[33]

After Mainz and Stettin, the same belief appears in Alsace. Those interrogated in the preliminary investigation in Strasbourg 1400 revealed that Waldensians had no faith in the blessed water and generally in the things blessed by the priests. Nevertheless, they received the water and sprinkled it on bread or cakes

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26 For the edition of the list, see Kolpacoff 2000, 283–84, for the dating 158.

27 The shorter interrogatory, used probably in Stettin, has *Credidisti, ecclesiasticam sepulturam, aquam benedictam, sal consecratum, herbas, palmas, cineres, candelas*, [--] *hec omnia esse sancta et katholica?* See Kurze 1975, 74; The longer interrogatory has: *Aspersisti te aqua benedicta, gustavisti sal benedictum? Habes herbas et palmas benedictas in domo et candelam?* See edition in Werner 1963, 273. On the two interrogatories and Zwicker's use of them, see Välimäki 2019, 109, 116–19.

28 *Item quidquid benedicitur ab episcopis et presbyteris, siue, sit ipsa ecclesia, siue fons baptismali, sal, aqua, herbe, cimiteria, paramenta, palme, candele, dicunt penitus von valere et si quandocumque intersunt, hoc faciunt ne notentur.* Werner 1963, 268.

29 Augsburg, Universitätsbibliothek, Cod. II. 1. 2° 78, 245vb: *Item minime curant de aqua benedicta et de aliis misse huius ceremoniis ecclesie*.

30 Preger 1877, 247, Article 37: *Item damnant et reprobant ornamenta florum et graminum, vestium et luminarium, que Christi fideles in ipsa processione faciunt ad dei laudem*.

31 See esp. Cap. 15: De incredulitate vestium sacertotalium, salis & aquae, cinerum & aliorum in Zwicker 1677, 291F–92C.

32 Ibid., 291G. Cf. Bynum 2011, 156–58, 241–42, 250, 270.

33 Gdańsk, PAN Mar F. 295, f. 215vb: *Item dicunt ecclesiarum dedicaciones esse irrationales et edificaciones turrium, ecclesiarum, campanarum, ornatuum altarium, consecraciones cyminteriorum [sic], cantus organorum et plurima ymmo quasi omnia que pro sollempnitatibus fiunt in ecclesia dampnant, reprobant dicentes esse pompas et superbias deo displicitas*. [--216ra] *Item de ornatu vestimentorum sacerdotalium. Respondetur, quod ad mandatum domini moyses fecit fere aaron et filiis eius vestimenta sacerdotalia* [--].; cf. Moneta (Cremonensis) 1743, 454–55 (on church buildings), 457 (clerical vestments), 458–59 (church music), 459 (incenses); Patschovsky – Selge 1973, 94–97 (church buildings, decorations, church music, incense, imagines). On Zwicker's authorship of the *Refutatio errorum* and the different redactions of the work, see Välimäki 2019, 39–64.

(*die fladen*) "so that, if somebody asked if the thing was blessed, they could then answer 'Yes'".[34] And as in Stettin some years earlier, not all Waldensians in Strasbourg disapproved of these practices, or they were at least uncertain about their position.[35] Also, even before the Strasbourg trials and roughly contemporary to the trials in Stettin, the Waldensian opposition to blessing of objects is to be found in the list of errors from Augsburg, where the persecution was led by the inquisitor Heinrich Angermeyer in 1393.[36]

Was the Waldensian opposition to sacramentals originally an invention of the inquisitors, imposed by them on the interrogated Waldensians, perhaps adopted from the error list in the Pseudo-Reinerius? This would be a probable explanation of the sudden appearance of this 'error', first in Mainz and then elsewhere, if the depositions from Stettin did not indicate that this opinion originated from the teachings of the Waldensian Brethren. Heyne Tramburch, a sixty-year-old Waldensian, even remembered the name of the preacher who had prohibited the consummation of salt and blessed water as well as the singing of *den leyse*, which apparently was a processional song sung when carrying relics.[37] This heresiarch was Nicolaus Gotschalk, also known as Clauss de Brandenburg. What makes his role significant is that he was not only one of the most important Brethren who visited Stettin and its surroundings, but was also one of the Waldensians who had converted to Catholicism around 1391. After his conversion, he became a Catholic priest in Vienna and even witnessed there an abjuration of heretics, supervised by Zwicker in 1404.[38] Petrus Zwicker was involved in the conversion of these Waldensians in 1391, and the accurate knowledge he had about Waldensian doctrine and customs was most likely due to the discussions with these converts.[39] Now, it seems that the denial of blessed material objects was included in the pastoral instructions given by the Waldensian Brethren to their followers at the end of the fourteenth century. It was certainly not the core of their message, but it was taught, and the teachings were remembered. When Nicolaus Gotschalk and other converts revealed their knowledge of Waldensianism to the inquisitors, they in turn updated their apparatus of questions to include this article. Zwicker also updated the *Cum dormirent homines* to refute this teaching, whereas the earlier, more compilatory *Refutatio errorum* had merely presented the oft-repeated criticism of church buildings, decorations and clerical vestments – an example that shows how the authors of anti-heretical polemics could adapt to new situations and did not simply repeat old *topoi*.

Belief, Unbelief and Sacred Matter

How then, was this discussion (sometimes real, but mostly merely rhetorical, taking place in treatises) between the inquisitor and the heresiarchs observable on the level of Waldensian laity? When we investigate the reasons for practiced material religion among Waldensians, we encounter a difficult question of belief. What did

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34 "umbe daz, frogete sie jaman, obe ir dinge gewihet werent, daz sie danne mohtent sprechen 'Jo'". Modestin 2007b, 171 [K145]; See also Modestin 2007a, 127, 131.

35 Modestin 2007a, 147.

36 *Item de consecratione Ecclesiarum, caemeteriorum, palmarum, herbarum, salis, candelarum & aliarum rerum juxta ritum Ecclesiae statutorum nihil omnino credebant*. Oefele 1763, 620; See also Kiessling 1971, 317; on the trials in Augsburg, see Modestin 2011; Smelyansky 2016.

37 *Item quod audiverit predicaciones eorum, respondit, quod sic et maxime a Nicolao Gotschalg, qui inhibuit eis sal et aquam benedictam etc. et cum reliquiis cantare den leyse*. Kurze 1975, 164–65. 'Leyse' or 'Leise' could refer to various songs sung by the congregation. Also, Grete Doerynk remembered that the Brethren had prohibited the acceptance and use of sacramentals, see Kurze 1975, 198.

38 Gotschalk, his conversion and his family connections to Stettin have been discussed by Kurze 1968, 79–81; on his later involvement in inquisition, see Biller 1974, 372.

39 Kurze 1968, 70–71; Biller 2001b, 272.

Waldensian laymen and -women think when they sprinkled holy water or consumed blessed salts? Did they believe in it or doubt it, or did they perhaps outrightly disavow it? This, not coincidentally, was also the question asked by the inquisitor. Petrus Zwicker's interrogatory asks about the sacramentals, blessed objects, relices and many other practices: "Did you believe this all to be holy and Catholic?"[40] Consequently, the historian must take care not to ask the same questions in a thought-policing way, not to stand beside the inquisitor.[41]

Yet, by setting aside or bypassing the question of belief, this treacherous, immaterial and hard-to-define phenomenon, we may also do injustice to our objects of inquiry. This danger has been identified by Steven Justice with regard to the saints' lives and by Christine Caldwell Ames regarding the inquisition of heresy. From different perspectives, these scholars have showed how there is a tendency in the study of miracle stories and of the inquisition to explain religious discourse as a sign of something else, something that is more comfortable and less disturbing to us than belief and faith: the quest for political power, real or cultural capital, or attempts to maintain ideological hegemony.[42]

How then should a scholar address something as personal and inaccessible as belief? Justice proposes that we look at the medieval concept of belief in order to find ways of explaining and understanding it. He has proposed, on the basis of Thomas Aquinas's theology and of examples from hagiography, that doubt was an integral part of medieval belief, even a prerequisite for believing in something miraculous that defied common sense. By definition, *credere* was to knowingly believe in something that could not be grasped. The belief needed to be interrogated and questioned, and then be assented to, and this was done constantly, whether by university theologians or by laity without a formal education. This view has been more recently endorsed and applied to the study of material religion by Caroline W. Bynum. Concerning the things such as Eucharist, holy images or blessed objects, there is tension in religious reactions, and it exists at every social level.[43] John H. Arnold, in his study of belief and unbelief in medieval Europe, has come to similar conclusions, proposing that there existed large, messy discussions at all levels of society concerning the faith, and that this is observable to us only in rare cases, such as when heresy was suspected.[44]

This doubt, inquiry and negotiation is what I see happening among the Waldensian laity. This tension by no means was exclusively with Catholic practices. There is more than enough evidence to show that the heretical laity who were interrogated also took much what was said by their heresiarchs with a grain of salt. Sometimes, they even entirely refused to comply. Katherina, the wife of Hans Mews from the village of Selchow, was called to the inquisitor towards the end of the trials in Stettin, in March 1394. She confessed that she had once, at the invitation and urging of a certain woman called Mette, attended a meeting where a heresiarch had preached. When it was Katherina's turn to confess privately to this heresiarch, she decided to challenge him: "And she had previously heard from a certain priest, that one must not act according to their [heretics'] word, and that they taught that one is not allowed to have blessed candles. Therefore she [Katherina] asked, if it were good to have this kind of candle. And he [the heresiarch] [said] No."[45]

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40 Kurze 1975, 74: *Credidisti [--] hec omnia esse sancta et katholica*.

41 Regarding the danger of standing with the inquisitor despite the historian's wish to stand with the deponent, see Arnold 2001, 14–15.

42 Justice 2008; Ames first expressed this concern in her essay, see Ames 2005. Following this program, she later demonstrated how persecuting heretics was an integral part of devotional life in the Dominican Order, see Ames 2009.

43 Justice 2008; Bynum 2011, 130 et passim.

44 Arnold 2011, 27–28.

45 Kurze 1975, 250: *et ipsa audivisset prius a quodam sacerdote, quod secundum verbum eorum non deberet facere, et quod candelas benedictas non liceret habere, docerent; quare ipsa interrogaverit, an eciam bonum esset habere huiusmodi candelas, et ipse: non*.

The rest or the exchange between the heresiarch (whose name is never mentioned) and Katherina is difficult to piece together from the cryptic protocol, but apparently the heresiarch asked her to keep her mouth shut about what she had witnessed. In any case, the result was that Katherina never confessed to the heresiarch. She also sad that she may have done so, if it had been daytime, but that she was very afraid at night because of the lack of light.[46] Nor, according to her oath, did she confess on any later occasion to a Waldensian Brother. She was rewarded for this by the inquisitor, as one of the two persons released from the Stettin trials with their reputation cleared from accusations of heresy. We have here a laywoman who seems to have balanced between and then chosen from two conflicting theological authorities: Catholic priest and Waldensian Brother. Katherina chose the former, and in her case it was the material, tangible religion that weighed more heavily in the scale: she was afraid that by committing herself to a Waldensian way of life, she would not be allowed to take home the blessed candles.

Many, however, decided to uphold the Waldensian position, and denied that blessed material objects could possess any power beneficial to souls. A man called Cuene Hutvilther had not believed that blessed water, salt and ashes (and so on), possessed any worth or power beyond their matter.[47] Another Katherina, the wife of Heyne Fricze, had heard from the Brethren that the blessed objects were contrary to the faith and inventions of the clergy.[48] A woman called Sophya did not think that the blessed water, salt, palm-leaves, herbs, candles or the sound of the church bells possessed any more sanctity than they would have had without consecration.[49] A similar position was held by Sybert Curaw, who incidentally had led the opposition against the inquisitor and was the last person interrogated and absolved in Stettin.[50] What seems to be at stake here is precisely the transformation of the material objects through the words of the priest. The protocols are frustrating in their concise, laconic formulation, and we are unable to access the underlying belief behind Sophya's deposition. It could have been a simple suspicion of rituals practiced by the clergy, or a more fundamental conviction that words are unable to convey sanctity into matter. The inquisitor clearly interpreted this and other similar statements as the latter, to his great dismay. Regarding the blessings of various sacramentals, ecclesiastical buildings and even the consecration of the priests, the Celestine inquisitor laments that the Waldensians claim that "these consecrated things do not acquire any sanctity at all from these words, even if the words as such were holy and good."[51] Zwicker then continues his exposition at a very general doctrinal level: are rational or irrational things able to attain sanctity at all? According to Zwicker this was doubtless the case, but the position of the Church was not as clear as the inquisitor presented it to be. While it was in practice granted that the sacramentals and other blessings had physical effects, theologians as influential as Bonaventure had held that the blessing adds nothing to the matter: "in the consecration no new quality is given to a church."[52]

Many Waldensians did not believe in sacramentals, but accepted them from churches and sprinkled the holy water in order not to draw attention to themselves.[53] Others did not believe in them, but continued

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46 Ibid. *et sibi confessa fuisset, si dies fuisset, sed in nocte maxime perterrebatur propter ablacionem luminis in commodo, ubi sedebat*.

47 Ibid., 147–48.

48 Ibid., 129–31.

49 Ibid., 219–20: *Item de aqua benedicta, sale, palmis, herbis, candelis, de pulsu campanarum nichil credidit, quod plus sanctitatis in se haberent, quam si non essent consecrate*.

50 Ibid., 260: *Item quod sal, cineres, palmas etc. non crediderit meliora benedicta quam alia a natura*.

51 Zwicker 1677, 291F–G: *Dicentes illas taliter consecratas nil omnino singularis sanctitatis ex illis verbis percipere, licet verba in se sancta sint et bona*.

52 *in qua consecratione ecclesiae non datur nova qualitas*, cit. in Franz 1909, 29. See also Scribner 1984, 68.

53 Kurze 1975, 86, 157, 173, 205, 210, 258.

the practice out of habit.[54] Heyne Vilter the Younger, apparently a prominent member of the local Waldensians who had drawn the attention of the diocesan officials already in the previous decade, took a defiant position in his hearing and declared to the inquisitor that he had not used the holy water to get rid of the sins, but had instead sprinkled it to his face in summer in order to cool himself.[55] A similar derision of the blessed water was expressed by an elderly man named Heyncze Wegener.[56] While some of these answers are probably reactions to explicit inquiries made by the inquisitor,[57] it is nevertheless clear that Waldensians around Stettin had widespread suspicion about the efficacy of blessed objects.

This opposition, however, was not universal and monolithic. Several deponents who subscribed to the Waldensian teachings and life-style, some of whom even had relatively accurate knowledge of Waldensian doctrine, also continued to accept, consume and use sacramentals, and not only in order to hide their true beliefs. Grete Doerynk remembered that Waldensian Brethren had prohibited the use of blessed water and salt, because "they did not help". Grete believed this of the salt, but not of the blessed water.[58] Yet another Katherina, the wife of a weaver, had sprinkled holy water on herself. She was ambivalent (or opportunistic) about its powers, believing, on the one hand, that it did not remove sin. On the other hand, she thought that if it helped other people in this, perhaps it would also help her. And if it did not help, neither did it do any harm (apparently because it was acceptable to use it for concealment).[59] A forty-years-old wife, Tylls Ermgart, was firmly Waldensian, having yearly confessed to the Brethren. She adhered to Waldensian tenets and, for example, completely denied the intercession of the saints on behalf of the living. Nevertheless, the notary wrote down that, of the blessed water and similar objects as well as of the church music "she understood in the Catholic way".[60] Moreover, two deponents did not believe in any spiritual effects of the holy water, but somehow considered it to be unlike normal water, and stated that it did not go stale so quickly.[61]

However, the most intriguing of all the statements concerning blessed or holy objects was made by Mette Döryngische, a widow more than ninety years old, who believed that holy water and salt could take away sins, and yet she knew from the "doctrine of the heresiarchs", that these were not valid for this purpose. When the inquisitor Petrus Zwicker accused her of having "two faiths" (*duas fides*), she explained, to the dismay of the inquisitor and the notary, that "they [the faiths] are obscure and therefore illuminated by heavy expenses and work".[62] Apparently, after reaching the age of nearly one hundred years, one can afford to school the inquisitor in the subtleties of theology.

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54 Ibid., 169.

55 Ibid., 91–93: *Interrogatus, quod crediderit de aqua benedicta, sale, cineribus etc., respondit, quod panem bene crediderit benedici et quod plus asperserit se aqua benedicta in estate quam in yeme, ut infrigidaret sibi faciem, non quod aliqua peccata sibi deleret*.

56 Ibid., 160–61.

57 The longer of the two interrogatories that can be traced to Zwicker takes into account the possibility of attempted concealment in the use of sacramentals: *Aspersisti te aqua benedicta, gustavisti sal benedictum? Habes herbas et palmas benedictas in domo et candelam? Fecisti talia puro corde sicud alii homines christiani, quos tu alienos, id est di ffremden nominas uel fecisti solummodo talia ad ostentacionem, ne notareris?* See Werner 1963, 273.

58 Kurze 1975, 197–98: *Item quod prohibuerint eam aquam benedictam, sal etc. recipere, quia non iuvarent, et hoc non crediderit de aqua, sed de sale sic*.

59 Ibid., 209–10: *Item quod se asperserit aqua benedicta, non credens, ad delecionem peccati aliquid facere, sed si alios iuvaret eciam ipsam, et si non, eam non inpediret propter homines*.

60 Ibid., 161–62: *Item de aqua benedicta etc. et cantu ecclesiastico katholice sapuit*.

61 Ibid., 119–20, 222–23; see also Cameron 2000, 135.

62 Kurze, 1975, 154–55: *Item aquam benedictam, sal etc. receperit et crediderit ad delecionem peccati valere, et ex doctrinis heresiarcarum, quod non, et addidit racionem, cum fuisset redarguta, qualiter duas fides habuisset, dicens, quia – proch dolor! – essent exce(ca)ti et iam quare illuminari gravibus expensis et laboribus*.

Mette's position in relation to orthodox and heretical doctrines was perhaps unusually explicated and independent, but nevertheless a part of the general spectrum of interpretations revealed in the Stettin protocols. Waldensian laypersons attended heretical meetings as well as official services. They listened to both Waldensian Brethren and parish priests. Some denied the Catholic cult and customs completely, and even derided them. Others were closer to their Catholic neighbours than to heretical preachers, and many more occupied the grey area in between. Even when committing themselves to one or another doctrine, they did not do so without questioning, doubting and choosing. Dietrich Kurze remarked already in the 1960s that a whole scale of interpretations was possible for the Waldensians in Stettin, from the borders of Catholicism to aggressive polemic against the Church.[63] Euan Cameron has since further elaborated this, and rightly pointed out that the persons making statements contradictory to the teachings of the Brethren were not misinformed or marginal individuals, but important members of the community.[64] This was by no means exclusively a Waldensian phenomenon. The renewed interest in the lived religion of the non-elite members of the Cathar movement has shown that there too, some ardent supporters of the heretics also challenged them in important items of faith, such as baptism and marriage, and navigated their own way between the church and the "good men".[65]

The Catholic practices among Waldensians have been explained either as a survival strategy of a persecuted minority in a hostile society, or as deriving from the constant, irresistible influence of the surrounding Catholicism, or simply as a result of a poor level of theological understanding on the part of some Waldensian followers.[66] All this is true in the case of some Waldensian laypersons, but by no means of all. There were many who evidently disapproved, and even felt contempt towards Catholic rituals and kept their participation to a minimum required in order to avoid persecution. However, the examples above bear witness to several deponents who actively chose some Catholic, some Waldensian practices and perhaps somewhat doubted both. Moreover, what is (consciously or not) presupposed in the studies quoted above is that there existed some kind of ideal Waldensianism that was preferred by those who attended the sermons of Waldensian brethren and confessed to them, and that the syncretism displayed by the Waldensian followers was a diluted form of this. There seems to be at work here a phenomenon recently explored by Christine Caldwell Ames: the almost inescapable propensity of historians to sort and categorise religion into authentic and non-authentic, a tendency partly inherited from the inquisitors we study.[67] Indeed, the picture drawn by modern historians comes surprisingly close to the view of the inquisitor Petrus Zwicker. When he wrote to the Austrian Habsburg dukes in 1395, asking for their support, he listed approximately 90 errors of Waldensians. At the end of the list he added, that "All and every heresiarch of the Waldensian sect believes in these heretical, damned and condemned articles, holds them and asserts them, but their believers do so to a greater or lesser degree, according to their capacities."[68] I do not pretend to be free of this propensity, but I have tried to shed some of it by making visible, as best as I can, the different forces, opinions, interpretations and practices at play in the sources, both Catholic and dissident – and by not assuming that either of them was uniform.

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63 Kurze 1968, 84.

64 Cameron 2000, 134–37.

65 Sparks 2014, 5–6, 41, 109–11; Taylor 2013, 337.

66 Kurze 1968, 84; Biller 2001b, 203; Schneider 1981, 129; Cameron 2000, 136; Modestin 2007a, 129.

67 Ames 2014, 109–10 et passim.

68 Preger 1877, 249: *Hos articulos hereticos dampnatos et reprobatos tenent et credunt et asserunt omnes et singuli heresiarche secte Waldensium, sed credentes ipsorum pro suis capacitatibus plus et minus.*

Conclusions

Defining lived religion is a messy and frustrating business, to the inquisitor as well as to the historian. A lay-person could have decided from the preaching of the Waldensians that eating the blessed salt was superstitious and that the salt was in no way different from the ordinary salt. And yet he or she, like Grete Doerynk, could nevertheless simultaneously believe in the powers of the holy water to confer grace.

The Waldensian laity challenged the dominant practices of the Catholic culture with teachings they had learned from the Brethern, but they also, albeit to a lesser degree, challenged some parts of the Waldensian doctrine on the basis of what they have learned in their parish churches. We are able to catch a glimpse of this negotiation because these people were summoned before the inquisitor because of their Waldensian sympathies. In many ways, these contradictions emerged in the inquisition on heresy only when the deponents were confronted by the inquiry and were forced to discern their beliefs and juxtapose the sermons of the Waldensians to instructions of the clergy.

Along with the practiced material cult there was also widespread suspicion of the efficacy of blessed material. We cannot be sure if the Waldensian laity saw the relationship between blessings and blessed objects as the inquisitors thought they did: namely, that matter cannot be transformed into a vessel of sanctity. However, their disapproval of the practice should not be doubted. In a way, the tables are turned on our expectations of learned and lived religion. What we have here is the university-educated inquisitor belonging to an ascetic monastic order defending and promoting quasi-magical practices, and heretical laymen and -women doubting the link between words and matter, the very same doubt that was expressed by such figures as Bonaventure.

The link between matter and the divine was crucial to late medieval Christianity. It was also under criticism, negotiation and reaffirmation. Both the intellectual elite of the church and its outer margins took part in this messy discussion, and their positions were not always what we expect them to be. Waldensianism – and Catholicism, for that matter – had clear borders only in the polemical treatises.

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Venerated and Didactic Walls. Devotional Images on Fifteenth- to Sixteenth-Century Tile Stoves in Northern Europe

Kirsi Majantie

Introduction

Ceramic tile stoves are useful sources for the study of private devotion in fifteenth- to sixteenth-century northern Europe. The finest of them were decorated with moulded images, inspired at first by ecclesiastical art and architecture and later by contemporary woodcuts and engravings. The most typical motifs on fifteenth-century stove tiles were the devotional themes of the Catholic Church, especially the Passion of Christ and images of the saints. Religion and piety were, however, entangled with aspirations to demonstrate power and status, and in the houses of the nobility, religious motifs were often mixed with portraits and the coats of arms of their owners and depictions of their elite pursuits, such as hunting. The Reformation, with its abolition of the doctrine of purgatory, brought about visible changes to the decoration of stove tiles. Themes which were related to the veneration of saints or which emphasised suffering were replaced by portraits of the secular supporters of the Reformation and by themes linked to forgiveness and salvation. This article discusses the devotional use of tile stoves and how the changes in religious doctrines are reflected in the stove-tile material discovered in various sites in northern Europe.[1]

Smokeless Heat and Decorative Images

Late medieval and early modern tile stoves were tall, tower-like heating appliances, which consisted of vessel-, niche- or panel-shaped ceramic tiles. Their popularity was based on their smokeless use, their effective ability to retain heat and their decorative appearances. The lower part of one side was attached to the wall of the room, and they were heated through an opening in this wall from another room.[2] The tall walls of the tile stoves provided large surfaces for decoration, and thus provided a canvass for the nobility and later also the middle class to demonstrate their wealth, power, status and convictions.

The early stove tiles resembled ordinary ceramic vessels and it is difficult to distinguish them from each other. Although the early history of tile stoves is said to have started already in the first millennium CE in the Alpine regions of present-day Germany, Austria and Switzerland, the oldest indisputable stove-tile

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1 Although northern Europe is nowadays considered as consisting of the Nordic and the Baltic countries and the British Isles, I have also included examples of stove-tile finds from present-day Germany and Poland in this article. The presented material rely mostly on published data, but some of the identifications of the motifs are based on my own observations when visiting the respective museums and gathering material for an exhibition. See Majantie 2007a. In these cases the catalogue numbers of the objects are given here.

2 For more details, see for example Franz 1969, 14, 38–40, 44–45, 70–74. Some tile stoves had, however, a firebox opening in the front and were not completely smokeless. See for example Stephan 1991, 30.

finds have been dated to the twelfth century.[3] Tile stoves spread from the thirteenth century onwards to wide areas in northern, western and eastern Europe, aided by the travels and movements of Hanseatic merchants and German craftsmen as well as the nobility and the clergy. Although their main raw material was clay, which itself was common and inexpensive, the early tile stoves were mainly built in castles, manors and monasteries. As the urban burghers became wealthier and started to emulate the material culture of the nobility, tile stoves also spread to their dwellings in the towns.[4]

Emulation and demand for luxury were also behind the development of stove tiles from simple vessels to relief-decorated panels; instead of being made on the potter's wheel, stove tiles started to be manufactured with moulds, which enabled detailed decorations that were copied from the mid-fifteenth century onwards from contemporary woodcuts and engravings. The wide distribution of stove tiles with identical decorative images was facilitated by printing technology, the trade in moulds and the migration of potters.[5] When the simple vessel tile stoves were replaced by relief-decorated stoves in the wealthier circles, the former spread in some areas into more modest households where they continued to be used until the nineteenth century.[6] This did not, however, happen for example in Finland, where the use of vessel tile stoves ended completely in the seventeenth century and only the development of panel tiles continued.[7]

Tile stoves were often situated in communal rooms, where all members of the household as well as visitors could see them. In German-speaking areas the final development of tile stoves has been associated with the introduction of a heated room called the *Stube*.[8] At least from the fifteenth century onwards, the residences of the nobility commonly contained one heatable *Stube* for public use. At the beginning of the sixteenth century stove tiles were also introduced into the dining rooms of the nobility, which were situated next to their private apartments.[9] Only a few tile stoves from late medieval or early modern period have survived in their original locations. Stove tiles discovered in archaeological excavations are, moreover, rarely found *in situ*. It is therefore often difficult to reconstruct which type of rooms the stoves were once situated in. Stove tiles are usually discovered among the demolition debris of houses and most of their find contexts are secondary.[10] The fragments of stove tiles are, nevertheless, rare proofs of fifteenth- to sixteenth-century interior decoration, since many other materials, such as wood and textiles, have often not survived at all.

Medieval Tile Stoves as Instruments of Private Devotion

The images on stove tiles started to mirror the devotional themes of the Catholic Church in the fifteenth century, their style being inspired by Gothic ecclesiastical art and architecture. Since the early tile stoves were commissioned mainly by the nobility, the images on them also reflected the nobility's lifestyle and values and, accordingly, popular images on stove tiles consisted of knights, coats of arms and scenes of courtly love, hunting and couples playing cards and board games.

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3 Roth Heege 2012, 30–37.

4 On the spread of tile stoves, see Gaimster 2001, 52–54, 61–62; 2007, 30–34, 48–55; Roth Heege 2012, 36–37.

5 See for example Franz 1969, 9–18, 24–45, 57, 72–73, 87, 110.

6 See for example Kristiansen 2007, 117; Stephan 1991, 30.

7 See Majantie 2010, 77–79, 103.

8 Franz 1969, 14; Stephan 1991, 8.

9 Hoppe 2013, 304–8, 322.

10 See for example Majantie 2010, 99–102, 184; Århem 2007, 103 regarding finds from Turku and Stockholm.

The most decorative Gothic stove tiles were rectangular niche tiles, which were coated with monochrome or polychrome glaze. Their central decorative figures were surrounded by pointed arches and other features typical of Gothic art and the crests of the stoves were often crowned with tapering pinnacles. In addition to images depicting knightly values, other popular motifs on medieval stove tiles were religious images such as the Virgin Mary, saints, the Evangelists, the Apostles and scenes from the Passion of Christ.[11] Because medieval knights were considered to fight for faith and justice, some seemingly chivalric themes also had religious overtones: warrior-saints such as St George and St Michael were glorified as soldiers of Christ.[12] The secular motifs on tile stoves reflected the nobility's desire to display their status and power and the religious ones their need to be seen as pious believers and benefactors. Religious images most likely also acted as assistance in private devotional practices.

Because of the Church's dominant role in medieval society, it is not surprising to find religious motifs on stove tiles too; images were after all supposed to act as reminders of biblical stories and the lives of saints, to serve as moral and educational instructions and to assist in devotional practices.[13] The key themes in late-medieval art were scenes from the Passion of Christ, the narratives of saints and the Virgin Mary.[14] As a result of common religious practices and rituals, as well as common customs and values among the nobility, Gothic art was very similar across western Europe.[15] The similarities in style and decoration also crossed different art forms; the same images that appeared on the period's ecclesiastical architecture were copied on a smaller scale in book illustrations, altarpieces and decorative furnishings and objects,[16] including tile stoves.

Although medieval domestic interiors have rarely been preserved, the surviving evidence suggests that the fifteenth century saw a notable increase in the production of private devotional art.[17] This development coincided with the increase in privacy and the separation of bedrooms and private living quarters from communal rooms in the homes of the nobility.[18] It has been considered that the bedchambers were the most likely locations for informal religious practices and private prayers in late medieval Europe, although the upper classes also had private chapels in their homes.[19] In more modest households part of a normal room could have been used for private devotion.[20] Tile stoves were, however, often situated in communal rooms, and the reason for the appearance of religious images in this location was probably a combination of their owners' desire to present themselves as pious believers, and their aspiration to provide visual assistance and guidance to devotional practices for the household.

It is interesting that artistic images of saints themselves started to be depicted in domestic interiors instead of in ecclesiastical settings in the fifteenth century. For example, in the Netherlands images in which the Annunciation takes place in a domestic interior, instead of a church, start appearing in the 1420s. Furthermore, the Virgin and Child and the Holy Family became popular images that were depicted in domestic scenes, showing that the sacred could enter into secular domestic interiors. This coincides with the

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11 See for example Franz 1969, 31–40, 45; Liebgott 1972, 9–16 and examples given in this article.

12 Sekules 2001, 152, 159–62.

13 Christensen 1979, 15–20; Sekules 2001, 2–3, 90–111; Sureda 1997, 20–24, 108, 325–32.

14 See for example Swanson 1995, 142–45.

15 See for example Sekules, 2001, 88; Vale 2001, 258–59.

16 Sekules 2001, 2, 88.

17 Christensen 1979, 15; Harbison 1995, 11–13, 94.

18 Vale 2001, 59–63.

19 Webb 2005, 29–31, 38–39.

20 Nuechterlein 2005, 50.

increase in private devotional literature, and it is likely that devotional texts and prayer books were used in conjunction with praying before the images.[21]

Late medieval tile stoves spread in the fifteenth and early sixteenth century to most parts of northern Europe. Their ubiquity, however, varied greatly by area. In Scandinavia, for example, they only spread to areas which had close contacts with the German lands.[22] In Finland, which during this period was the eastern province of the kingdom of Sweden, Gothic tile stoves only spread to Turku, which was the ecclesiastical, administrative and commercial centre of Finland. Only a few fragments of Gothic niche tiles have been found in Turku. The finest of them depicts a pelican in her piety, comforted by a human figure, covered in feathers and reaching out his hand towards the pelican's neck.[23] A pelican feeding her young with blood plucked from her breast was a common pictorial motif in medieval art, symbolising Christ's sacrifice on the Cross,[24] and also the human figure on the tile most probably symbolises the believer's identification with Christ's passion. It is also possible that the covering on the human figure represents hair, and in this case the figure could depict a wild man, which in the decorative art of the time pointed to the contrast between wild nature and civilised society, and sometimes also personified mankind's sin.[25]

In Denmark and Sweden niche tiles were more common, most probably as a result of closer contacts with the German lands, and numerous late medieval stove tiles and their fragments have been found in excavations. In Denmark the religious motifs depicted on the late-fifteenth- or early-sixteenth-century stove tiles include the Annunciation, the Crucifixion, the Virgin Mary and Child, the Apostles and various saints. Other motifs consist of couples playing board games, hunting scenes and portraits of the nobility (**Fig. 1**).[26]

In Sweden the earliest Gothic stove tiles have been found in the Royal Castle and in the old town in Stockholm. They date from the second half of the fifteenth century and were most probably imported from Germany. They were decorated with religious motifs such as St Olaf and St George and secular motifs such as stags, unicorns and courtly lovers.[27] There is evidence that Gothic stove tiles were also manufactured locally with the help of imported moulds at the end of the fifteenth century or the early sixteenth century. The images on these moulds include biblical motifs such as St Michael and Samson's fight with the lion, and secular motifs such as a portrait of a knight in armour and a courtly lady wearing a Gothic headdress.[28]

Gothic tile stoves also spread to present-day Poland and the Baltic countries, and have been found for example in Vilnius and Klaipeda in Lithuania, Haapsalu and Kaarma in Estonia and various sites in Poland. In Lithuania stove tiles with images of Adam and Eve, St Sebastian, the Crucifixion and the Virgin and Child with St Anne have been found, while secular images include coats of arms, knights and scenes of courtly love.[29] An identical stove tile with the Virgin and Child with St Anne has been found in Kaarma parsonage in Estonia, as well as stove tiles with the Crucifixion and St George.[30] A similar stove tile with the Virgin

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21 Nuechterlein 2005, 50–62.

22 Blomqvist 1936, 180; Gaimster 2007, 48–55; Liebgott 1972, 5; Majantie 2010, 271–75.

23 Majantie 2010, 192–95.

24 See for example Ferguson 1961, 23.

25 See Husband 1980, 1–5, 12, 15, 99.

26 Kristiansen 2003, 264–68; Liebgott 1972, 10–16. These identifications are also based on my own observations when visiting the collections of the National Museum and the City Museum in Copenhagen.

27 Gaimster 2002, 202–04; Århem 2007, 104; Wahlöö 1976, figs. 650–53.

28 Gaimster 2002, 203.

29 Kuncevičius 1993, figs. 21–25, 52–56, 64–67; Žulkus 2002, 122.

30 Pärn – Russow 2005, 56, 62.

Fig. 1: Fragment of a Gothic stove tile with the Annunciation from Denmark (National Museum of Denmark, D.6157) (Photo: Aboa Vetus & Ars Nova museum / Klaus Koszubatis. Published by the kind permission of the © National Museum of Denmark).

Fig. 2: Gothic stove tile with the Crucifixion from Estonia (Saaremaa Museum, SM10108-1) (Photo: Erki Russow. Published by the kind permission of the © Saaremaa Museum).

and Child with St Anne has also been discovered in the episcopal castle of Haapsalu.[31] In Poland a large number of Gothic stove tiles have been found in excavations at various castle sites. Their images include religious motifs such as Adam and Eve, various saints, the Annunciation, the Adoration of the Magi, the Virgin and Child, the pelican in her piety, Samson's fight with the lion, and secular images such as coats of arms, knights and scenes of courtly love and hunting (**Fig. 2**).[32]

In the German-speaking lands Gothic tile stoves, depicting the same images as mentioned above, were naturally more common.[33] Also, ceramic moulds of niche tiles have been found for example in Lübeck, where they depict scenes from the life and Passion of Christ, including the Nativity of Jesus, the Adoration of the Magi, the Circumcision and the Virgin and the Child.[34]

Most of these stove tiles have been found in castle sites, but some of them also come from towns, where they could have been situated in private houses of wealthy burghers. At the time when religion played an important role in everyday life and images and statues were venerated and prayed before, the religious images on tile stoves were also most likely used as reminders of biblical stories and as assistance to prayer. They were certainly also manifestations of their owners' piety and played their part in the public

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31 Russow – Pärn 2013, 114, 122, 129–30; Gaimster – Russow 2015, 102–5 See also later in this article and Gaimster in this publication.

32 Janiak 2003, 49–99.

33 See for example Franz 1969, 31–68, figs. 40–160.

34 These finds belong to the collections of the Museum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte in Lübeck. See Majantie 2007a, figs. 115, 153, 155, 157, 159 regarding one of them and other finds from Lübeck.

demonstration of their power and status. Some of the images were clearly copied from the same woodcuts and engravings, and some identical stove tiles found in different countries prove that the moulds used in their manufacture were either traded or moved to new places with migrating potters.

Early Modern Tile Stoves as Expressions of Religious Convictions

From the 1520–30s onwards, stove tiles began to be influenced by Renaissance art and architecture, and the Reformation also had a strong impact on their pictorial motifs.[35] The abolition of the doctrine of purgatory and the new understanding of sin led to the abandonment of themes related to the veneration of saints or with an emphasis on suffering, which were replaced by portraits of contemporary rulers and by themes linked to forgiveness and salvation. The leading secular supporters of the Reformation were particularly active in using their portraits as a form of religious and political propaganda, and their images became popular motifs on the sixteenth-century stove tiles too. They replaced the saints as paragons of faith and virtue. The most widespread portraits of the Protestant princes that appear on stove tiles are those of Elector Johann Friedrich of Saxony (1503–54) and Landgrave Philip of Hesse (1504–67), both leaders of the Schmalkaldic League, which was a military alliance founded to protect the spread of the Reformation.[36]

The Reformation was not, however, the only reason for the changes in pictorial motifs; the interest aroused by the Renaissance and humanism towards Classical Antiquity and individuality also acted as a stimulus for the adoption of new subject matters, such as portraits. Also rulers started to increasingly use their images as a means of political propaganda.[37] On Renaissance stove tiles the pointed arches and tapering towers were replaced by semi-circular arches and flat mouldings. Other decorative features were also taken from classical art and architecture, and depictions of the history and mythology of Antiquity became popular. Furthermore, personifications of planets and virtues started to appear on stove tiles, the latter acting as a replacement for the images of saints.

The use of religious motifs continued, but was limited to themes that suited the new Lutheran doctrine, such as the Crucifixion, the Evangelists, Adam and Eve, the parable of the prodigal son, the twelve heroes of the Old Testament and scenes from Christ's life. The Evangelists were popular, since they were the narrators of Christ's life, the prodigal son reflected the Reformation message on forgiveness, the story of Adam and Eve served as a warning, but was also a reminder of eventual redemption, and the heroes of the Old Testament acted as paragons of rightful rulers and defenders of the faith. The Crucifixion was naturally the most important reminder of salvation.[38]

Images of Luther himself were often used in Protestant art and they appear on stove tiles too. The same princes who had previously shown themselves with the Virgin Mary and saints now presented themselves with Luther, who thus spiritually sanctioned their political and religious authority.[39] For

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35 Franz 1969, 70–90; Stephan 1991, 60. Although the term Renaissance describes northern European art already at the beginning of the fifteenth century, it was only from the 1530s onwards that Renaissance started to have a wider impact on material culture in the north. See for example Burke 1998, 14–15, 102–7.

36 See for example Franz 1969, 71–90, 116; Gaimster 2000, 145–48; Kristiansen 2003, 275–78; Majantie 2010, 204–11, 239–57; Ose 1996, 142–45; Ring 2013, 172–73. See also Gaimster in this publication. On the Schmalkaldic League, see Cameron 1991, 270, 343–47; Christensen 1992, 57–58.

37 Christensen 1979, 160–61, 172–73; 1992, 126; Johannesson 1998, 15–28. See Franz 1969, 87.

38 See for example Gaimster 2000, 145–48; Majantie 2010, 74–76; Ose 1996, 142–45. See also Hallenkamp-Lumpe 2007; Ring 2013; Žeglitz 2012.

39 Christensen 1992, 26–27, 125–28.

example, the electors of Saxony used images which showed them kneeling together with Luther in front of the crucified Christ, emphasising the princely protection of the Reformation.[40] Renaissance art also continued pursuing pedagogic and moral objectives; biblical and classical stories were supposed to act as instructions and guidance for a good and virtuous life.[41] However, as a result of the Lutheran doctrine on salvation by grace alone, the meaning and popularity of some images changed; for example, in the case of the virtues, *Prudentia* (Prudence) was replaced with *Patientia* (Patience) and *Caritas* (Charity) with *Fides* (Faith).[42]

Despite the fact that the main message of the Reformation was that believers were saved by faith, Scripture and grace alone, without the assistance of indulgences and saints,[43] it has been stressed that Protestantism could not immediately remove the underlying fear of the devil and the horrors of purgatory, and people continued to treat religious images as sources of help and comfort.[44] The destruction of images as a result of iconoclasm was also not as comprehensive as has sometimes been claimed; many artworks were simply removed to less visible places or transferred into domestic surroundings.[45] The surviving material evidence also suggests that images continued to be used as aids to prayer and meditation in the domestic setting. For example, in England, the interiors of the houses of the nobility and wealthy urban citizens were decorated with wall paintings, plasterwork, stone and wood carvings and furnishings carrying biblical images.[46]

It has also been suggested that some materials were considered more appropriate than others for depicting religious images. For example, relief-decorated white plasterwork, which was used for decorating ceilings, friezes and fireplaces, was relatively inexpensive and often unpainted, and thus less likely to arouse idolatry.[47] It is interesting that from the mid-sixteenth century onwards, tile stoves had predominantly monochrome glaze. Also their raw material, clay, was inexpensive.

In addition to decorative furnishings and objects, the surviving private devotional handbooks, catechisms, prayer books and spiritual diaries indicate that some time must have been spent each day on private devotion.[48] It has been noted that communal prayers were important too, because not all household members were able to read the Bible themselves; in both cases, objects and furnishings decorated with religious images were probably used as aids to prayer.[49]

Renaissance tile stoves spread to wider areas in northern Europe than Gothic tile stoves. They were built in castles, manor houses and towns, and they were often manufactured locally, although mainly with imported moulds and by German craftsmen.[50] In Lutheran areas their images changed from veneration of saints to support of the Reformation. It has, however, been noted that not all stove tiles which were decorated

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40 Scribner 1994, 221, 227.

41 Johannesson 1998, 16–17, 21–22.

42 Morall 2007, 106–11, 114–17.

43 See for example Cameron 1991, 97–103, 136–37; Karant-Nunn 2010, 67–72, 195–99.

44 Scribner 2001, 58–60, 332. See also Hamling 2010, 334.

45 Christensen 1979, 108; Hamling 2012, 135–39, 334.

46 Hamling 2010, 321; 2012, 135–41. In many areas Catholic altars and images remained in the churches too. See for example Hiekkanen 2007, 99–107 for more details regarding the altar monuments in Finland.

47 Hamling 2007, 149–55.

48 Green 2012, 9–10, 18–19.

49 See Hamling 2012, 142, 159–62.

50 See Gaimster 2007, 49–55 and also for example Blomqvist 1936, 210–18; Kristiansen 2007, 117–18; Majantie 2010, 275–79; Århem 2007, 103–4 regarding the local production.

with images that suited the Lutheran doctrine were intended as support for the Reformation.[51] According to archaeological evidence Renaissance tile stoves became more common only in the mid-sixteenth century. Since tile stoves were permanent fixtures, which were often abandoned only when the house where they belonged was demolished or renovated, their dating is not always easy and their archaeological find contexts often only give the latest possible date for the demolition of the stoves, but reveal little about the date of their manufacture. To make the dating even more complicated, old stove tiles were often re-used in new stoves, and old moulds and printed images were used for several decades.[52]

The earliest stove tiles in Sweden and Denmark that have some Renaissance features, including round arches and pillars, have been dated to the early to mid-sixteenth century. Their pictorial motifs include mainly portraits of rulers and the nobility. Many of the portraits cannot be identified because they do not have identifying attributes or inscriptions on them, but some can be identified on the basis of inscriptions.[53] In Stockholm imported moulds of these types of tiles were found in the same context as moulds of Gothic niche tiles. They bear portraits of contemporary rulers, one depicting the king of Bohemia and the other possibly Emperor Maximilian I (1459–1519).[54]

After the mid-sixteenth century, the most typical motifs on stove tiles were without question portraits of rulers and nobility. Some portraits from Stockholm can be identified on the basis of texts accompanying them as Sibylle of Cleves (1512–54) and Duke Albert of Prussia (1490–1568), both supporters of the Reformation. Others can be named on the basis of identical woodcuts or engravings as Duke Johann Friedrich II of Saxony (1529–95) and the Catholic Emperor Charles V (1500–58). Stove-tile fragments with the sacrifice of Isaac, Christ's head and the Crucifixion have also been found and an interesting fragment depicting the Crucifixion scene with Luther kneeling in front of the cross. By the beginning of the seventeenth century botanical and geometric ornaments and the Evangelists became popular.[55]

In Denmark, including Skåne, which in the sixteenth century was part the Danish kingdom, the number of stove tiles is considerably greater than in Sweden. The most typical motifs on them are portraits. Although many of them cannot be identified, some can be named on the basis of woodcuts or engravings and some have identifying inscriptions. From the Lutheran side portraits of Landgrave Philip of Hesse, Elector Johann Friedrich of Saxony and his consort Sibylle of Cleves appear on the stove tiles and from the Catholic side portraits of Emperor Charles V and Duke George of Saxony (1471–1539). Also coats of arms, personifications of planets and virtues, twelve heroes of the Old Testament, and biblical motifs such as the Crucifixion, Judith with the head of Holofernes and the sacrifice of Isaac appear on Danish stove tiles. From the late sixteenth century onwards narratives of the prodigal son, the four Evangelists and botanical and geometric ornaments became popular. Portraits also retained their popularity, including King Sigismund of Vasa (1566–1632) and his consort Anna, King Christian IV of Denmark (1577–1648) and the Catholic emperors Rudolf II (1552–1612) and Matthias (1557–1619).[56]

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51 Hallenkamp-Lumpe 2007, 323–31.

52 For more details, see Franz 1969, 8, 31, 38, 56, 75–77; Majantie 2010, 99–106. See also Żeglitz 2012, 25–32 regarding the local manufacture of moulds and the long use of printed images.

53 See Gaimster 2001, 59–62; 2002, 205–6; Jensen 1988, 111–16; Wahlöö 1976, figs. 631–34.

54 Gaimster 2002, 205–6.

55 See Århem 2006, 118–24; 2007, 105–6. See also Majantie 2007a, figs. 5, 6, 10, 58, 126, 179, 209; 2010, fig. 195. The identifications of Johann Friedrich II of Saxony (cat. nr SSM45924) and Albert of Prussia (cat. nr SSM3165) are based on my notes when visiting the collections of the Stockholm City Museum.

56 See Blomqvist 1936, 184–216; Kristiansen 2003, 270–80; 2007, 117–21; Liebgott 1972, 18–39. Additionally the identifications of the sacrifice of Isaac (cat. nr D.4624), Duke George of Saxony (cat. nr D.10992) and Rudolf II (no cat. nr) are based on my

Fig. 3: Renaissance stove tile with portrait of Elector Johann Friedrich of Saxony from Finland (Museum Centre of Turku, TMM18434:1) (Photo: Kirsi Majantie. Published by the kind permission of the © Museum Centre of Turku).

The earliest archaeological evidence of Renaissance stove tiles in Finland dates to the 1560s. In this case too the dating is challenging; although the stove tiles bear portraits of Elector Johann Friedrich of Saxony, who only bore his electoral title during the years 1532–47, their find contexts and written documents suggest that they were made in Turku Castle in 1560–63. Identical stove tiles have also been found in the town of Turku, where they date most likely from the same period, and there is also evidence that their manufacture continued until the early seventeenth century. In Turku Castle they most probably demonstrated support for the Reformation, but their continued use in the town could also have been a result of the wealthy burghers' desire to furnish their homes with Renaissance fashion. Other motifs on Finnish sixteenth-century and early-seventeenth-century stove tiles are unidentified portraits, the Evangelists, and botanical and geometric ornaments (**Fig. 3**).[57]

The same development towards Reformation-related themes can also be seen on stove tiles found in Poland and the Baltic countries. In Poland the best example of a Renaissance tile stove is a still-standing grand stove in Gdańsk. It was built in 1545–46 in a gathering place of the city's burghers called the Artus Court. It consists of over 500 tiles, many of which are decorated with portraits of the Protestant princes, including Elector Johann Friedrich of Saxony and his consort Sibylle, Friedrich III (1463–1525) and Landgrave Philip of Hesse. From the Catholic side, in addition to Emperor Charles V and his consort Isabella, portraits of King Ferdinand of Bohemia and Hungary (1503–64) and his consort Anna, and King Ludwig II of Bohemia and Hungary (1500–26) also appear on the stove. It is, however, interesting that even this stove seems to emphasise support for the Lutheran faith; it contains more portraits of Johann Friedrich than of Charles V and the stove's plinth was placed on top of a monk and a nun, as if in criticism of the Catholic faith. Other pictorial motifs on the stove include local coats of arms and personifications of virtues and planets.[58]

In Estonia some of the finest sixteenth-century stove tiles have been found in Haapsalu, Pärnu and Tartu. The tiles from Haapsalu come from a castle originally constructed as an episcopal stronghold. The Gothic stove tiles decorated with the Virgin and Child with St Anne, mentioned earlier in this article, come from the same site and probably the same stove. The Renaissance stove tiles include portraits of Landgrave Philip of Hesse and his consort Christina, personifications of planets and virtues and botanical ornaments.[59]

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notes when visiting the collections of the National Museum in Copenhagen. See also Majantie 2007a, figs. 3, 7, 13, 51, 61, 122, 124, 136, 143, 144, 150, 167–69, 172–74, 177, 181, 183, 210.

57 Majantie 2007b; 410–13; 2010, 199–267. Johann Friedrich died in 1554, but his images continued to be used as religious and political propaganda long after this. They were especially popular during the Thirty Years' War (1618–48). See for example Christensen 1992, 88, 92–101, 129.

58 See Kilarska – Kilarski 1993, 31–57; Kilarska 2007, 137–41. The stove was partly destroyed and dismantled in the 1940s and rebuilt again in the 1990s.

59 Russow 2002, 126–30; Russow – Pärn 2013, 105–23; Gaimster – Russow 2015, 101–10. See also Gaimster in this publication and Majantie 2007a, figs. 49, 50, 74, 182, 214, 216.

The tiles from Pärnu come from various sites, many of them from the town area. Portraits of Luther, Elector Johann Friedrich of Saxony and Landgrave Philip of Hesse were clearly Lutheran motifs, but portraits of Emperor Charles V and coats of arms of Catholic Bavaria also appear on them. Furthermore, tiles with images of the heroes of the Old Testament, Christ as a good shepherd and the sacrifice of Isaac have been found.[60] Also in Tartu several portrait tiles have been found, and one stove tile bears the letters VDMIE, an abbreviation of one of the most widespread slogans of the Protestants: *Verbvm Domini Manet In Aeternvm* (The Word of God Endures Forever).[61]

In Latvia sixteenth-century stove tiles have been found in towns as well as on castle sites. Most of them bear portraits of German rulers or biblical, historical and allegorical figures, once again including portraits of Elector Johann Friedrich of Saxony and Landgrave Philip of Hesse. Stove tiles decorated with portraits of Luther have been found in Cēsis castle, which interestingly was the residence of the Catholic master of the Livonian Order. The Order remained Catholic until 1562, but it has been suggested that the last masters of the Order could have sympathised with Lutheranism. Furthermore, stove tiles with images of the heroes of the Old Testament, appear on Latvian stove tiles, and biblical motifs include Adam and Eve, the Evangelists and Judith with the head of Holofernes. Also in Latvia, botanical and geometric ornaments mostly replaced portraits in the seventeenth century.[62]

Renaissance stove tiles are naturally plentiful in the German-speaking lands; even the moulds which were used in manufacturing most of the stove tiles discussed earlier originated from there. Various versions of Elector Johann Friedrich's portraits, based on different woodcuts and engravings and some of them depicting him as a duke, have been found for example in Lüneburg and Stralsund, both early Lutheran cities, but also portraits of Catholic rulers appear on them.

A series of stove tiles and their moulds with portraits of Johann Friedrich of Saxony and his two sons Johann Friedrich II (1529–95) and Johann Wilhelm (1530–73) have been found in a potter's workshop in Lüneburg. They have identical frame ornamentation and according to the dating of the engravings of Johann Friedrich's sons, they date earliest to the 1560s. Other Protestant images on the stove tiles from Lüneburg include scenes from the parable of the prodigal son, depictions of the heroes of the Old Testament and portraits of Luther, King Christian IV of Denmark and Duke Friedrich Wilhelm I of Saxony (1562–1602). However, portraits of Catholic rulers also appear on them, including Emperor Charles V, Duke George of Saxony, emperors Rudolf II and Matthias, and King Sigismund of Vasa and his consort Anna.[63] In Stralsund too both Protestant and Catholic figures appear on stove tiles, including Luther, Elector Johann Friedrich of Saxony, Duke Friedrich Wilhelm I of Saxony, Emperor Charles V and King Sigismund of Vasa and his consort Anna. Biblical motifs include Adam and Eve, the baptism of Jesus and the brazen serpent. Towards the end of the sixteenth century botanical and geometric ornaments became common.[64]

Many of these stove tiles not only bear the same pictorial motifs, but some of the images are exact copies of each other and must have been produced with moulds manufactured by the same workshops, which could then have been traded or moved to new places with migrating potters. Some of the tiles were, however, clearly produced locally, and they only roughly copy the original images. Although the majority of portraits on these

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60 Vunk 2000, 158–70.

61 See Majantie 2007a, figs. 1, 52, 53, 63, 77. The tile with letters VDMIE is on display at the Tartu City Museum.

62 Ose 1996, 31–39; 2007, 128–30; 2013, 37–97.

63 See Ring 1996, 77–87; 2013, 172–75; 2014, 540–46. See also Majantie 2007a, figs. 12, 54, 73, 75, 127, 171, 178, 180, 205, 215.

64 See Hoffmann 2007a, 153–55; 2007b, 350–57, 364–67. Additionally, the identification of Sigismund (no cat. nr) is based on my own notes when visiting the collections of the Kulturhistorisches Museum der Hansestadt Stralsund.

stove tiles were supporters of the Lutheran faith, portraits of Catholic rulers also appear on them. However, the predominance of Lutheran motifs, both portraits and biblical themes, indicate that many of their owners must have been Protestants, although it is also possible that some of them could have been acquired as purely fashionable furnishings. It is also interesting that in many places the portraits do not represent local rulers or nobility before the seventeenth century, or at least they have not been identified so far. This could reflect the foreign origin of the owners of the tile stoves, but the local nobility and burghers could also have wanted to present themselves as learned and cultured figures by displaying portraits of well-known European rulers in their homes.[65]

Conclusions

Ceramic tile stoves give an interesting glimpse of the private devotion in fifteenth- to sixteenth-century northern Europe. They were decorated with moulded images which were copied from contemporary art, architecture and printed media, and the trade in moulds and the migration of potters facilitated the spread of identical stove tiles to wide geographical areas north of the Alps. Although only a few tile stoves have survived intact in their original locations, a great number of stove-tile fragments have been discovered in archaeological excavations.

Based on these findings, tile stoves were at first built in castles, manors and monasteries, but when the urban burghers became wealthier and started to emulate the material culture of the nobility, tile stoves also spread to their dwellings in the towns. As tile stoves were often situated in communal rooms, where all members of the household as well as visitors could see them, their tall walls provided a perfect canvass for their owners to demonstrate their wealth, power, status, piety and convictions.

The most popular decorative motifs on the fifteenth century stove tiles were the devotional themes of the Catholic Church, especially the Passion of Christ and images of the saints. Religion and piety were, however, tangled with aspirations for demonstrating one's power and status, and in the houses of nobility, religious motifs were often mixed with portraits and coats of arms of their owners, as well as depictions of their elite lifestyle. Even though there is no written evidence suggesting that tile stoves were used as instruments of private devotion, biblical stories and depictions of saints on their walls must have aroused veneration, and they could have acted as private altar shrines, allowing prayers to the saints.

The Reformation with its abolition of the doctrine of purgatory and the new understanding of sin changed the decorative motifs on stove tiles. The themes which had related to the veneration of saints or had emphasised suffering were replaced by portraits of the secular supporters of the Reformation and by themes linked to forgiveness and salvation. The Reformation was not, however, the only reason for the changes in pictorial motifs on stove tiles; the interest triggered by the Renaissance and humanism towards Classical Antiquity and individuality also acted as a stimulus for the adoption of new subject matters, such as portraits. However, even they often carried religious messages. Portraits of the leading supporters of the Reformation and personifications of virtues replaced saints as models of faith and integrity. It is likely that also after the Reformation the religious images on tile stoves were used as reminders of biblical stories, moral instructions and as assistance to prayer. They were certainly also manifestations of their owners' piety and played their part in the public demonstration of their status and power.

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65 In England painted portraits of the Tudor and Stuart monarchs were popular among the nobility and wealthy burghers in the sixteenth–seventeenth centuries. Although in this case the rulers were local, it has been suggested that in addition to symbolising allegiance to the ruling dynasties, they could also have emphasised their owners' cultured status and historical knowledge. See Cooper 2010, 160–72. See also Trusted 1990, 122 regarding the use of portraits of European rulers and princes and their consorts in game-piece series, popular among the nobility.

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New Faith, New Home, New Stove. The Role of the Hanseatic Ceramic Trade in the Transmission of New Confessional and Political Identities in the Northern European Home, c. 1500–1600

David Gaimster

Hanseatic Ceramic Trade in Northern Europe

Recently a new interpretive narrative of the Hanseatic League has begun to emerge, which aims to shift the traditional emphasis on economic transactions to the study of cultural, technological and ideological interactions, transfer and resistance. Where they were once almost exclusively regarded as material evidence for long-distance commercial activity, domestic artefacts, such as table and heating ceramics, are now subject to scrutiny as signifiers of cultural, ethnic, genealogical and social relationships contributing to the creation of Hanseatic cultural identities both between and amongst trading communities separated by hundreds of miles of sea and land. The archaeology of the Hansa now intersects with the broader historical archaeological debate about European colonialism and globalisation.[1] During the Middle Ages, the overwhelming bulk of the trade was in perishable goods or in raw materials that is generally below the archaeological radar. In a survey of 500 years of trade through the port of Hull from ninety-eight to ninety-nine per cent of its exports and perhaps as much as ninety-five per cent of its imports fall into this category.[2] While the excavated sample may be unrepresentative and inadequate for use in the reconstruction of the long-distance bulk commodity trade, its study as an index of changing private consumption and of taste at the micro-scale level is considerably more valuable. Excavated household goods such as table, kitchen or heating ceramics, in view of their ubiquitous survival rate, form an effective comparative measure of the extent to which the Hanseatic cultural signature was conserved in the homes of trading communities around the region and penetrated the wider cultural landscape. Because of their short lifespan and survival in the ground, imported ceramics can be cross-examined as *Kulturträger* in their own right alongside gabled brick architecture and ecclesiastical objects. Pottery and tile assemblages show both commercial and social links between trading communities and may also reflect the process of cultural transfer to the region over time and space. The domestic ceramic evidence forms a comparative measure of the spread and adoption of domestic practice and socially influenced expressions or *habitus*, particularly in the spheres of cooking and dining traditions, heating technology and interior design.[3]

The last thirty years of urban archaeology and maritime exploration have helped cement a picture of developing shared cultural identities amongst urban mercantile communities on the North Sea and Baltic rim over the late medieval to the early modern period. The archaeology of the Hanseatic trading town in the Baltic, with its prodigious and well-preserved artefact sequences, now offers the prospect of investigating some key social and economic attributes of "transitional" and pre-industrial European society, including

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1 Gaimster 2014.

2 Evans 1999.

3 Stephan 1996; Gaimster, 2005a; 2007a.

the development of merchant capitalism, shifts in religious confession and identity, increasing social stratification, the rise of nation-states and the expansion of European trade and colonisation. This chapter surveys the Hanseatic ceramic trade from the perspective of religious confession and domestic piety. It considers the ways in which the moulded ceramic medium was used to communicate changed political and religious identities in the domestic sphere of the urban merchant class.

Reformation Archaeology: Pots, Prints and Propaganda

In 2003 I published a paper entitled 'Pots, prints and propaganda' in a (then) ground-breaking edited volume of the Society for Post-Medieval Archaeology on the archaeology of Reformation identifying a link between the extent of long-distance Hanseatic trade and the spread of Reformation, or at least Reformed culture, as expressed through the material culture record.[4] This phenomenon was identified as a key component in the transition between late medieval (pre-Reformation) to early modern society (post-Reformation) in Northwest Europe. Geographical overlap was identified between Hanseatic mercantile communities' location and distribution of a new range of domestic 'iconographic' ceramics displaying Reformed visual culture. These new products – stonewares, stove-tiles, figurines, maiolica etc. – which employed new technologies of applied relief, moulding, and polychrome painting and glazing, were developed as media for social competition and the transmission of new ideologies, confessions and loyalties into the domestic sphere.

The fusion of graphical reproduction and moulded technology enabled producers of stoneware vessels to respond immediately to rapidly changing political and religious loyalties by introducing a completely new iconographic repertoire. Stoneware rapidly became a vehicle for promoting new political affiliations and propaganda, drawing on printed armorials or portrait engravings. A Cologne stoneware tankard excavated in Bishopsgate, the City of London, and now in the Museum of London, is applied with the moulded reliefs of two crowned monarchs.[5] The portraits are close in style and execution to contemporary printed images of the Habsburg Emperors Maximilian I (1459–1519), Charles V (1500–1558) and Ferdinand I (1503–1564). The identification of the portraits also hinges on the vessel's production date, which is secured to around 1535–1540 on archaeological comparative grounds. This date would suggest a dual portraiture of the bearded Charles V as Holy Roman Emperor and his younger brother Ferdinand I (who subsequently succeeded Charles as Emperor in 1558). Ferdinand's portrait would appear to be based on the engraving by Barthel Beham, published in 1531 on Ferdinand's election as King of the Romans. The portraits are devised as satirical images of the two rulers, accentuating the pronounced malformation of the jaw in Habsburg family members. Cologne was a free city of the Empire and in constant tension with the archdiocese of Cologne, which was a separate state within the Empire. It is arguable that potters working in the city of Cologne were gently satirising their Imperial overlords through the graphical manipulation of popular printed sources. In the diasporic Hanseatic trading community of the City of London, a Cologne merchant may have owned the tankard. Political and religious satire was not unknown amongst the ornamental repertoire of traded Rhenish stoneware during the sixteenth century; the most well known in production waste excavated at Siegburg are the medallions moulded with the double-headed portraits of the Pope wearing the papal tiara and, on the opposing portrait, the Devil with horns and satyr's ears, and of the Cardinal and the fool.[6] In each double portrait, both heads share the same mouth, and each nose serves as the chin of the mirror profile. Thus, on

4 Gaimster 2003.

5 Gaimster 1997, cat. 39.

6 Gaimster 1997, fig. 5.15 and 5.17 respectively.

tipping these vessels to drink, the Pope becomes the Devil and Cardinal becomes the fool. These Lutheran satires applied to stoneware vessels derive from contemporary propaganda medals of the 1540s, which also appeared on propaganda broadsheets of the period.[7]

Imported moulded pipeclay figurines are another medium, but in this case a portable one, for investigating how changing design and iconography reflects the communication and reception of new religious, cultural and politically sectarian messages over the course of the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries. Archaeological mapping enables us also to observe their social topography, function and symbolic role. Among the archaeological finds of imported devotional miniature pipeclay figurines on English sites, the most common personifications are those of the Virgin and Child, the virgin martyr saints, the crucified Christ and the Christ Child. The numerical dominance of the Virgin among surviving miniature devotional statuary reflects the high position of the Marian cult in the popular religion of late medieval England. Given the subjects and contexts of many of the finds, it is legitimate to speculate that they were produced primarily for a female audience. As in the case of imported pre-Reformation stove-tiles, the figures closely resemble ecclesiastical figural sculpture in stone, wood and terracotta. The domestic context associated with virtually all of these finds illustrates the transfer of the cult of the saints from the church altar into the secular sphere.

The replacement of the cult of the saints by temporal authority and humanist imagery in moulded stove-tile design is mirrored to an extent in the appearance of secular and profane forms in the range of pipeclay figurines circulating in England from the middle of the sixteenth century.[8] The spectrum of post-medieval pipeclay figurines found in London and southern England is dominated by the figures of rulers and their consorts and by symbolic miniatures of humanist or secular armorial devices. Full-length-figurines of Stuart monarchs and female consorts in the British Museum collections may be moulded after commemorative seventeenth-century engravings. London finds include a small equestrian figure of a female monarch holding the Sword of State, possibly Elizabeth or Anne of Denmark and a full-length figure of a late Stuart monarch in full armour. Heraldic lions may commemorate the Glorious Revolution during which the new King William III placed the lion of Nassau in the centre of the royal arms of England.

Almost twenty years on from the 2003 survey, we have more data, but an increasingly complex picture is emerging in terms of the diverse social locus and heterogeneity amongst the archaeological site assemblages of the transitional sixteenth century, most notably in the conflicting design repertoires represented. Of all the domestic ceramic categories, the stove-tiles illustrate best the complex visual record and competing confessions.

The Smokeless Ceramic Tile-stove: Type-fossil of Hanseatic Technological and Cultural Transfer

The archaeological evidence for the introduction of the smokeless ceramic tile-stove into the Baltic Sea region from central and western Europe forms a key comparative measure of long-distance trade together with the cultural and technological transfer. Stove-tile finds make up almost twenty per cent of all domestic ceramics found on fifteenth and sixteenth-century urban mercantile and residential feudal sites across the region and, as such, represent a key element in the Hanseatic domestic inventory and in trading activity.[9] Moulded tiles of various designs were used in the construction of large stoves of architectonic form, which were mainly erected in living spaces to form a key element of the domestic interior design. Earthenware

7 Gaimster 1997, fig. 5.14 and 5.16 respectively.

8 Gaimster 2007b.

9 Gaimster 1999a; 1999b; 2001b.

stoves contributed not only to a technological transformation of the domestic environment but also, with the development from the mid-fifteenth century onwards of coloured lead and tin glazes and moulded relief, they introduced a new visual and iconographic element into the home. Scenes from the lives of the Holy Family and the saints based directly on the individual narrative compartments of carved wooden altar shrines of churches were replaced during the early stages of the Lutheran Reformation by the secular iconography of coats-of-arms and portrait busts of the region's temporal rulers and religious leaders. As with relief-decorated stoneware, the ceramic stove provided a medium for the circulation of new attitudes, loyalties and beliefs on the domestic scene.

Earthenware stove-tiles, in contrast to stoneware vessels, were a fragile product and risky to transport over long distances. Although it is possible to identify rare instances of northern or central German tiles imported into southern Scandinavia, it is clear from the number and distribution of production sites and from analysis of the fabrics that most stoves made in the Baltic region were manufactured locally, often with the use of moulds imported from northern and central Germany. Following the model for the spread of redware manufacture in the thirteenth century, production on this scale can only be explained by the movement of specialist craftsmen or even workshops around the Baltic rim. The documentary references to German tile-makers (*pottomakare*) settling in Lund, Malmö, Kalmar in Sweden and Turku in Finland from the mid-sixteenth century confirms the archaeological trace for Continental craftsmen migrating into the region to exploit the developing urban demand for smokeless central heating.[10] The migration of production is evident in the distributions of pre-Reformation tiles moulded in relief with biblical figures and scenes, surrounded by architectural and botanical ornament, derived from church altarpiece carving. A workshop deposit of moulds and wasters, with designs including scenes from the life of Christ, was found in the centre of Lübeck in 1939. More recent excavations in the cellar of a late fifteenth-century house on the Pläterstrasse in Rostock produced moulds and wasters contemporary with the Lübeck manufacture.[11] Both the Rostock and Lübeck workshops generated matrix-identical moulds of the *Charity of St Martin,* suggesting that they were linked. The format of the North German moulds, their border ornament and their design repertoire drawn from the life of Christ and the lives of the saints compare closely to the moulds found alongside production waste in the Norrmalm district on the outskirts of medieval Stockholm.[12]

Devotional moulded relief design repertoire of imported German stove-tiles was popular amongst pre-Reformation monastic consumers in Britain from c. 1450–1475, such as at Fountains Abbey, Yorkshire, and St Mary Graces Abbey, City of London.[13] But increasingly urban archaeology has revealed a high degree of competition in the import trade of ceramic stoves. Of the fifteen find spots for imported pre-Reformation stove-tiles in Britain, eight (60%) are represented by civic mercantile residential contexts four (27%) from monastic sites; and three (13%) from feudal residences. Urban sites include Norwich Pottergate, 1507 ('Stranger' community);[14] London; Southwark; Canterbury; Oxford; Salisbury; Cardiff; and Edinburgh. The feudal distribution is represented by York Place, Westminster; Broad Arrow Tower, Tower of London; and Sheffield Manor (Earl of Shrewsbury's hunting lodge).

The development of cheap woodblock printing formed a significant factor in the symbolic transformation of domestic ceramics in Germany during the Lutheran Reformation. The smokeless ceramic stove made a

10 Gaimster 1999b and 2005a.

11 Burrows – Gaimster 2001.

12 Gaimster 2002.

13 Gaimster – Goffin – Blackmore 1990.

14 Gaimster 1993.

dramatic intervention, both technologically and visually, into the English urban domestic interior between the mid-fifteenth and early seventeenth centuries, initially as a premium imported product and from the early sixteenth century manufactured in southern England close to the main marketplace of London. The iconographic repertoire of the pre-Reformation period, characterised by the moulded representations of the saints and the carved devotional scenes of contemporary wooden altarpieces, was superseded from the second quarter of the sixteenth century by woodcut-based representations of the leading protagonists of the Lutheran Reformation, the secular personality cults suiting the new confessional and political affiliations of the North Sea and Baltic mercantile communities. Out on the Hanseatic League's western orbit, the City of London has produced a series of portrait tiles of Schmalkaldic League of Protestant Princes (1531–1547), humanists and Old Testament warlords so beloved by Protestant sympathisers of the time.[15] These finds place the English metropolis squarely within the cultural network of the Hanseatic League, which was instrumental in spreading Protestantism beyond northern Germany.

The Baltic distribution of moulds and matrix-identical tiles with portraits of Schmalkaldic League leaders such as Johann Friedrich of Saxony and consort Sybille of Cleves stretches from Lübeck and Rostock in the south to Stockholm, Turku and Riga in the North. In contrast to the immediate pre-Reformation phase in the Baltic zone, in which elite residential sites, such as castles and monasteries, dominate the archaeological distribution of the highly representational stoves, the new secularised products (particularly those displaying Lutheran affiliations) appear with greater frequency in urban contexts. This revised pattern in the archaeological distribution of apostolic stoves suggests a radical shift in consumption by which urban mercantile communities were taking the lead in the spread of new confessional loyalties in the region.[16]

Although statistically in England and Scotland urban finds and mercantile contexts dominate the archaeological distributions (sixty-five per cent of sites), recent discoveries on feudal residencies and military installations reflect the growing influence of the Reformed faith amongst members of the court and wider aristocracy. A major find of imported Reformer tiles was made during excavations at Camber Castle in East Sussex, a Henrician coastal artillery fort built between 1539 and 1542.[17] The distribution of tiles on the site suggests that the stove may have been located in the entrance bastion where there is evidence for a suite of rooms complete with garderobe on the first floor. All the Camber tiles are characterised by an explicitly Lutheran visual polemic (**Fig. 1**). The design repertoire includes portrait busts of Schmalkaldic leader Philip I the Magnanimous of Hesse and his consort Christine of Saxony, together with full-length portraits of Landsknecht soldiers and representations of the Temptation, both popular humanist and homiletic themes widely represented among contemporary earthenware stove-tiles of northern Germany during this period and taken directly from the Lutheran catechism. Landsknechts, while a symbol of Imperial might, were part of the Lutheran polemic, which utilised the godless mercenary as an allegory of divine retribution for the failure to repent of a sinful life.[18] The crest of the Camber stove was ornamented by facing doves or phoenixes, symbols of concord and the resurrection respectively. The iconographic programme of the stove strongly suggests that whoever commissioned the stove at Camber had strong Lutheran or at least Protestant sympathies. The fact that the tile fragments are associated with the 1539–1543 construction phases of the castle may link the stove to the clerk of works, Stephen von Haschenperg, a Moravian German architect, who worked simultaneously at Sandgate and at other Henrician artillery forts from 1539 to 1544. He is

15 Gaimster 2000.

16 Gaimster 2007a.

17 Gaimster 2001c.

18 Moxey 1989.

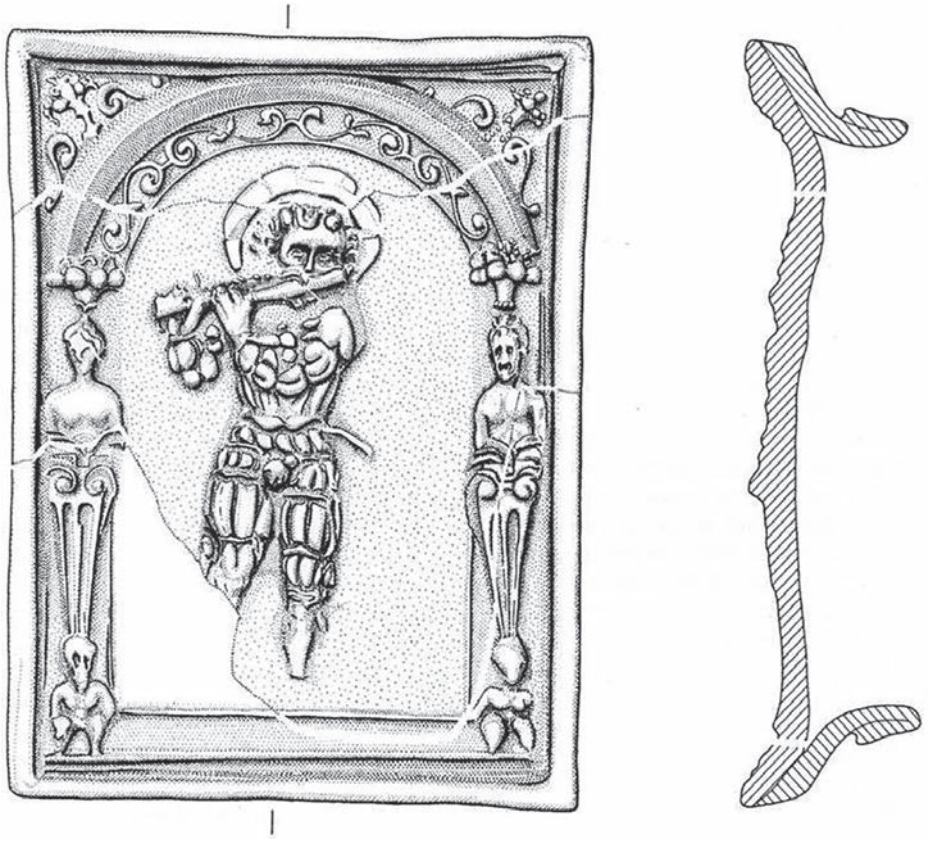

Fig. 1: Drawing of green-glazed earthenware stove-tile from the site of Camber Castle, East Sussex, England, moulded with the figure of a Landsknecht fifer. Made in northern Germany, c.1540 (Image by permission of © English Heritage).

recorded as having an office *cum* residence at Camber, the 'devisours chamber', with accommodation for his servants and horses. It is tempting to speculate that von Haschenperg commissioned a German smokeless ceramic stove in an explicitly Lutheran design for use in his personal quarters.

Despite these individual spectacular finds, overall the distribution of imported stove-tiles in England for the second half of the sixteenth century is dominated by wares belonging to the humanist and homiletic design repertoire. At this period Cologne supplied London with a series of dated 1561 architecturally framed panel tiles moulded with allegorical personifications of the seven liberal arts and the seven virtues.[19] The largest single group of mid-sixteenth-century Cologne allegorical stove-tiles has been recovered from Fleet Street, close to the Inns of Court. Tiles sharing the same mould designs have been recovered from the aristocratic apartments built by the Duke of Norfolk within the dissolved Holy Trinity Priory, in the City of London, after 1554 and occupied to 1564.[20] Another imported series, not recorded amongst Cologne production, but the frame and central relief repertoire are common to North Germany and the southern Baltic, is moulded with scenes from the parable of the prodigal son and various representations in the ages of man.[21] A pan-Hanseatic trade zone distribution for these series has been noted (and moulds have been excavated in Lübeck).[22]

The emblematic humanist theme in the traded ceramic stove medium has been identified recently in a medieval suburb of Tallinn, Estonia, where excavators have uncovered a tile moulded in high relief with the

19 Gaimster 1988a.

20 Gaimster 2005b.

21 Gaimster 1989.

22 Gaimster 2001b.

motif of an ape trying on a shoe.[23] The design is based on a woodcut published in a mid-sixteenth-century Antwerp emblem book and intended as a critique on 'busybodiness'. It reinforces the evidence for the circulation of contemporary humanist debates in the local mercantile community. The redware fabric may be local or belong to the wares imported from the core Hanseatic trade zone of northern Germany. Much of what survives archaeologically of stove-tile relief design of the mid to late sixteenth century remains unattributed and unrecognised, but the research conducted on the Tallinn finds signals the importance of further iconographic detective work.

The success of the imported ceramic stove-tile trade into Britain during the sixteenth century stimulated earthenware potters situated in Surrey-Hampshire border area of southern England to enter into competition. Here local potters (there is documentary evidence for immigrant Rhenish potters working in Surrey-Hants border area during last quarter of sixteenth century) produced green-glazed whiteware rectangular panel tiles moulded with the royal Tudor and (later) Stuart arms with identifying monograms of Tudor and Stuart monarchs from Henry VII (r. 1485–1509) and Henry VIII (r. 1509–1547) through to Elizabeth I (r. 1558–1603) and James I (r. 1603–1625).[24] We have a distribution of these products from thirty-six sites in the south-east of England, including royal palaces (e.g. Whitehall, mid-1530s to mid-1540s) and aristocratic sites (nine sites; 25%); but the circulation is dominated by urban finds (27 find spots; 72%).

Fig. 2: Green-glazed earthenware stove-tile moulded with royal arms of King Edward VI (r. 1547–1553) or Queen Elizabeth I (r. 1558–1603). Made in the Surrey-Hampshire border district, England (Photo by permission of © The Trustees of the British Museum).

The growing secularisation of the stove-tile design repertoire in England during the mid and late sixteenth century is also influenced by royal dynastic propaganda. The widespread representation of royal arms in public buildings and domestic interiors is also visible in domestic mural art employed to reinforce dynastic legitimacy and allegiance. In Bagshot, Surrey, we note the survival of an extensive armorial and allegorical scheme in a local inn *cum* courthouse with the arms of Henry VIII's son and heir Prince Edward (later Edward VI) as Prince of Wales (between 1537 and 1547) at its centrepiece surrounded by fabulous heraldic beats and cornucopia (**Fig. 2**).[25] The Prince of Wales badge enjoyed a wide currency and is frequently repeated in other domestic interior media of the Tudor era, such as window glass roundels. Secular imagery, tied to political affiliation, emerges quickly during the early Tudor period, and in fact during the immediate pre-Reformation period. The chapel of early Tudor house at Ightham Mote in Kent, remodelled and decorated by the minor courtier Sir Richard Clement, is also typical of the practice of adopting Tudor dynastic insignia as an

23 Gaimster – Russow 2011.

24 Gaimster 1988b.

25 Cole 1997.

expression of dynastic loyalty.[26] The ribs of the barrel vault are painted in Tudor livery colour of green and white or silver. The panels are painted in an intervening pattern of royal badges (Tudor rose, portcullis and pomegranate of Queen Catherine of Aragon dimidiated with a rose, together with a further two Spanish emblems: the castle of Castille and the arrows). Alternating with the badges are lozenges of white and green with roses and fleurs-de-lis at the intersections. The chapel is an early instance of the secularisation of the religious space, a trend which would grow in regularity in the mid to late sixteenth century.

In the urban Hanseatic core trading zone of northern Germany, we can glimpse something of the transition during the course of the sixteenth century in the domestic tile-stove design repertoire reflecting the shift from standard pre-Reformation devotional observance to an increasingly secularised visual culture, incorporating aspects of the popular Reformer ideology. On the Stralsund Mühlenstrasse successive elements of the interior design of a patrician mercantile household's main living rooms were deposited in the latrine over the course of one hundred years so spanning pre- and post-Reformation eras.[27] The sealed layered deposits contained tiles from two stoves built in sequence: the first phase contained a late Gothic tower stove c. 1450–1525, with tiles moulded with openwork tracery supported by devotional figures of the Virgin Mary and St Olaf (probably from the Rostock Pläterstrasse workshop). A second stove of c. 1525–1575 probably replaced the first. It comprised tiles moulded with portraits of Landsknecht mercenaries, portraits of the defenders of Lutheran Protestant cause, including Schmalkaldic co-leader Johann Friedrich of Saxony and brother Duke Johann Ernst of Saxony, who together with Hieronymus Linke, the popular songwriter and reforming preacher. The same layers also produced (possibly antique) painted window glass roundels of the Virgin, St Anne and Christ Child, suggesting that some elements of the pre-Reformation devotional culture had survived intact.

At Haapsalu's prince-bishop's castle in western Estonia half of the ground floor of a late medieval dwelling house has recently been unearthed against the interior northern wall of the western bailey. It was buried beneath a reinforced earthen rampart built in the late 1560s. The building was extremely well preserved with painted plaster surviving in the hall, together with a baking oven and a fireplace. In addition, an extensive assemblage of relief-moulded stove-tiles was recovered, all scattered around the foundation of a tiled stove preserved in situ. The stove-tile relief designs are extremely heterogeneous, and therefore probably not representative of one stove or one period. It is possible that the final stove in the sequence was erected in final phase partly from the remains of previous constructions. The iconographic inventory is diverse. In addition to ornamental botanical and abstract northern Renaissance designs, the figurative spectrum ranges from a stereotypical pre-Reformation group comprising the Virgin, St Anne and Christ Child of the 1520s to mid-sixteenth-century portrait medallion tiles of Duke Ludwig X of Bavaria (an early Protestant sympathiser) and of the leaders of the Schmalkaldic League and their consorts, portrait medallion tiles of Christ the Good Shepherd and Samson and the lion, together with full-length allegorical personifications of temperance, one of four cardinal virtues, and of the planets sun and mercury. Overall the design repertoire is consistent with a hybridised Reformation period stove belonging to the final phase of occupation of the house shortly before its destruction to accommodate strengthened defences of the castle during the Livonian-Russian War of 1558–1583. The repertoire combined relic devotional tiles, propaganda portraits of the Lutheran Reformation, evangelical iconography and humanist allegories. The Haapsalu stove was built in a hurry from various tile series available to local house builders, possibly even also from

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26 Starkey 1982.

27 Gaimster – Schindler – Schäfer 2001.

previous stoves erected in the house concerned. Its importance lies in its short single phase of construction and its insight into the increasingly heterogeneous product design of the ceramic stove medium in the eastern Baltic region during a period of dramatic, and at times vacillating, transition between political and religious authorities. In its multi-confessional iconographic programme, the Haapsalu tile stove reflects ideological and cultural tensions in Livonian society at a time when allegiance to the new Protestant faith was gaining and when popular consciousness of Mediterranean Renaissance visual culture was emerging.[28]

Conclusions: Patterns in the Archaeological Record

Hanseatic trade was instrumental in the distribution and adoption of key symbolic products in the northern European ceramic market, including stoneware and stove-tiles, and specialist products, such as pipeclay devotional figurines.

There are multiple instances of correlation between the location of urban Hanseatic diaspora merchant communities and the archaeological distribution of devotional and also 'Reformed' domestic ceramic wares, such as in the stove-tile record of the period c. 1500–1600.

From the mid-sixteenth century, the representation of confessional affiliation in the tile-stove medium is increasingly synchronous with regional and local political loyalties and cultural impulses, which are reflected in 'hybrid' archaeological assemblages of tiles containing combinations of relic popular pre-Reformation motifs, humanist symbolic allegories of the northern Renaissance and propaganda portraits of secular Reformation leaders. In England, whilst humanist allegories dominate the design of imported tiles from western and northern Germany, the output of immigrant potters in the Surrey-Hampshire region is centred exclusively on the making of tiles bearing Tudor dynastic armorial propaganda for the London market and its hinterland.

From the mid-century onwards a clear development is visible in the archaeological record for the manufacture and circulation of symbolic ceramics in the Hanseatic trade zone of northern and western Europe. In this phase, new religious affiliations, temporal authorities and humanist emblemata competed visually and materially in the home. Over the course of the following century, as northern Europe was plunged into widespread territorial and dynastic disputes, propaganda portraits and heraldry of temporal leaders increasingly dominated the symbolic repertoire of moulded table and heating ceramics.

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