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This chapter examines Insula IV ii (Fig. 5.1), concentrating on its urban development during the 2nd and early 3rd centuries AD. To reconstruct the Insula as completely as possible a combination of approaches has been applied. These include a thorough assessment of the standing structures, a critical evaluation of published and unpublished (archival) material, as well as a Space Syntax analysis of the Insula’s spatial organisation. The Insula comprises 14 buildings, more than half of which have never been studied, while the others, mainly the better preserved ones, have attracted limited attention in the past. Earlier studies have treated these buildings as isolated units, and as such they have been approached from specific thematic perspectives, e.g. wall-paintings, mosaics, or the architectural constructions typical of a certain period, while none of the buildings has received attention in its own right. There is therefore a considerable amount of material evidence available that has previously been neglected, which allows us to take a fresh look at the Insula and its buildings.

For the first time this chapter brings together the complete Insula, including all its buildings, presenting their research history as well as a new assessment of the material evidence. Already established information and new findings resulting from this research have been combined to present a synthesis of the Insula’s built space. The focus is on the Insula as a spatial entity, acknowledging that the Insula is more than the sum of its buildings. The issue addressed is how the group of buildings functioned as a neighbourhood, looking at its internal spatial structure as well as its relationship with public space through the street network in which it was embedded.

Space Syntax theory and methods have been applied to examine the Insula’s spatial properties, and to address questions related to its integrative capacity as an urban neighbourhood.

The term *insula* is here used as a modern label, denoting a city street block. The term provides a mere technical convention, and neither implies that this particular group of buildings was ever called an *insula* in the Roman period, nor refers to the activities that took place therein. The term *insula* is highly ambiguous as it incorporates both legal and architectural definitions. It covers a wide range of meanings from street blocks to small one-room apartment units, and even funerary enclosures. To make it even more complicated, a visibly distinct architectural unit within a city block could also be called *insula* in both ancient literary sources and in today’s literature; hence one would find an *insula* within an *insula*. In the following the term *insula* has been used only in the sense of the ‘city street block’, while complex buildings found within Insula IV ii are always referred to as ‘building or *caseggiato*’ and never as *insula*.

5.1 INSULA IV ii - TOPOGRAPHICAL LOCATION

Located on the southern *cardo maximus*, near the Porta Laurentina, but still inside the Late Republican city walls, the Insula enjoyed a location that

3. See Allison (2001: 184) for a critical stance on the use of ancient terminology from textual data to interpret material remains.
5. In contrast, Calza (1953) refers to complex buildings as ‘*insula*’; Calza also uses “*caseggiato*” to describe a more complex building. A *caseggiato* often comprises various functions, e.g. an apartment building with commercial space at ground levels.
benefitted from the relative proximity to the city centre, as well as from the closeness to the city gate (Fig. 5.1). The latter provided a connection to the south-eastern extra-mural areas of Ostia and the area of Laurentum.\(^6\) Placed at the intersection between the cardo and the Via della Caupona, a side road south off the cardo, the Insula appears well positioned within the urban street network. Towards the east, the triangular area of the Campo della Magna Mater, the sanctuary dedicated to Cybele, the great mother goddess, and one of Ostia’s main sanctuaries, delimits the Insula. The northern and western sides are confined by streets, whereas its eastern and southern extent are bounded by retaining walls to a height of about 1.50 - 2.00 m, keeping in place a fill layer presumably placed when the terrain was levelled prior to building development during the Trajanic period (AD 98-117).

The southern boundary of the Insula coincides with the limits of the city’s excavated area. In the conventional reading of Ostia, which has been largely conditioned by the ‘visible’ (excavated) city, the extent of the excavation has at times been associated with the expanse of the city. As far as the Insula is concerned, its ‘edge position’ has contributed to a perception of it being located at the fringe of the built-up area and thus lacking a ‘visible’ neighbourhood on the southern side, as in the Gismondi model (Fig. 5.2). However, as has been revealed through geophysical prospection, Ostia’s excavated area constitutes only about one third of the city, comprising merely the central areas, while the larger part, including the outlying zones, still remained unexcavated.\(^7\)

From the published preliminary results of this survey it becomes already clear that the Insula was fully embedded within a densely developed area. However, it will only be possible to reach a better understanding of its southern neighbourhood once the results of the geophysical survey are available. The same applies to the street which runs south of the Insula, traversing the partly unexcavated area from the city centre to the zone south of the Campo della Magna Mater; the course of the street and its intersections with other streets cannot yet be securely established.

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\(^6\) See Chapter Six on streets.

\(^7\) The final results of the geophysical survey have not yet been published; for preliminary reports see Bauer et al. (1999).
5.2 INSULA IV II – BUILT SPACE

Before attempting to understand how the Insula functioned collectively, the buildings comprising the group will be discussed individually. This will be done in the form of a descriptive analysis of the built space and the building’s structural history. Whenever possible a detailed treatment of the individual buildings will be presented. The degree of detail seems fully justified since the Insula and its buildings have not received sufficient attention until now, therefore, by ‘placing Insula IV ii on the map’ this study fills a lacuna in Ostian research. At times, as far as the evidence permits, an identification and function of the buildings have also been suggested together with a description of the material remains. The mixed land-use which seems so overtly apparent might point to various groups of interest present within the locality. This notion will be weighed against the Insula’s built environment and spatial organisation, proposing new ideas of how the Insula functioned as an urban neighbourhood. But first of all, a comprehensive survey of the individual buildings (IV ii 1 – 14) will be presented, following the established numbering system introduced in the topographical index of the Scavi di Ostia I (Fig. 5.3).8

5.2.1 Terme del Faro (IV ii 1)

The Terme del Faro (baths) are located on the eastern border of the Insula, adjacent to the Campo della Magna Mater (Fig. 5.4). The baths received their name from the image of a lighthouse (faro) depicted on the mosaic pavement found in room (13) to the east of the main entrance (Fig. 5.5).9 The bath complex covers a total area of about 1542 m², reaching deep into the Insula. On the northern side the complex is bounded by the cardo maximus; to the west by the Caseggiato dell’Ercole (IV ii 2-3), and to the southwest by building IV ii 5. At the southern end the baths border onto a larger area of open space forming part of the Insula’s southern inner courtyard enclosing a small unidentified structure (Fig. 5.6).10 Their main entrance is located along the cardo, while some additional points of access were provided from within the Insula, and at a late period of occupation a direct connection between the baths and the Campo della Magna Mater was established.

Different levels of heights can be observed between the baths and the surrounding terrain. At the northern side, along the cardo maximus the baths open at street level, while the terrain slopes down towards the south. The most significant change of levels is found between the baths and the Campo, with a difference in height of about 1.50 - 1.80 m. Since baths require substantial substructures to accommodate service facilities for heating, water and maintenance,11 the foundation walls of the bathing block would be expected to be at least as low as the floor levels of the Campo. It therefore looks as if the sloping terrain was utilised sensibly: the heated sections of the baths which necessitated substructures seem to have been concentrated in the lower parts towards the south, while the cold rooms and cold water basins are located in the northern part, where added terracing

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8. For consistency’s sake the established numbering has been followed even though some buildings form a structural unit with another building (e.g. IV ii 7 and 8 as well as IV ii 9 and 13).

10. This small building has as yet not been examined; no reference exists in the topographic index in Calza (1953). The structures are completely overgrown, thus inaccessible. An impression of the remains of the building, when cleared after it had been excavated can only be gained from a photograph at the Archivio Fotografico (ref. 3714) (Fig. 5.6).
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Fig. 5.3 - Insula IV ii Buildings 1 - 14

Scavi di Ostia, IV ii

- 01 Terme del faro (IV ii 1)
- 02 Caseggiato dell’Ercole (Portico (IV ii 2)
- 03 Caseggiato dell’Ercole (IV ii 3)
- 04 Caseggiato dell’Ercole (Industrial building) (IV ii 4)
- 05 Caseggiato (IV ii 5)
- 06 Caupona del faro (IV ii 6)
- 07 Caseggiato (IV ii 7)
- 08 Caseggiato (IV ii 8)
- 09 Caseggiato (IV ii 9)
- 10 Building 10 (IV ii 10)
- 11 Mitreo degli animali (IV ii 11)
- 12 Building (IV ii 12)
- 13 Loggia (IV ii 13)
- 14 Tabernae (IV ii 14)
Fig. 5.4 - Terme del Faro (IV ii 1) walled structures and architectural details
appears to account for the difference in height between the floor levels of the Campo and the northern sections of the baths.

These levelling activities might explain the presence of the eastern *opus reticulatum* (brick) wall, which seems to have acted as a retaining wall to keep in place the fill layer used for terracing. This wall confines the Insula towards the Campo, extending along the full length of the baths (Fig. 5.7). Hence, the wall not only marks the boundary between the two areas, but also reflects the peculiar relationship between the Campo della Magna Mater and the Insula. Interestingly enough, the Insula, or to be more precise the baths or their preceding building, expanded their area by encroaching onto the ‘territory’ of the Campo. This can be inferred from the original eastern confines of the Insula, marked by the *interstitium* (space in between *insulae*) on the *cardo* (Fig. 5.8). If a line is drawn from the western side of the *interstitium* due south, it meets the *opus reticulatum*/brick wall which bounds the Insula at its south-eastern end (Fig. 5.9). Therefore, the area east of this line refers to space which was originally part of the area of the Campo, and became incorporated into the Insula at some later point. From this, one might be able to infer a degree of interdependence between the Insula and the Campo.

**Excavations and history of research**

The Terme del Faro have been largely neglected; this applies not only to the baths’ state of preservation but also to their study. Their structural development has never been established, and hence the chronology is not at all clear. Moreover, the similarity in name between the Terme del Faro and the Terme del Foro has at times led to confusion in the literature, as well as in the archiving system applied by the Soprintendenza of Ostia. Previous to this study, the most detailed description of the baths was found in Ostia’s archaeological guide, while specific aspects,

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12. This interesting observation was already made by Rieger (2004: 125).

13. As Pavolini (2006: 206) puts it: ‘... le cui fasi cronologiche non sono del tutto chiare.’

14. As an enjoyable and rewarding by-product of this study, a number of statues which had been wrongly recorded as coming from excavations of the Terme del Foro, can now be ‘repatriated’ to their original provenience: the Terme del Faro (Stöger in prep.).

15. See Pavolini (2006: 206-207); the baths are also listed...
such as the mosaic pavements, or the chronology of lead waterpipes and the related change of ownership, have been approached in specific studies.\textsuperscript{16} In addition, the relationship between the Campo and the baths has been explored from the perspective of the Campo,\textsuperscript{17} whereas the link between the baths and the Insula is still to be examined and will be dealt with in the following sections.

The baths were excavated during Calza’s campaign in July 1940; however, the map produced by T. Zappati reveals that the northern part of the baths had already been exposed in 1805 (Fig. 5.10).\textsuperscript{18} Nothing is known about the earliest excavations,\textsuperscript{19} and not much has been reported about Calza’s campaign either. The \textit{Giornale degli Scavi} (Vol. 28, 1938-1943) lists a number of entries, recording and describing statues and fragments of sculptures found during Calza’s campaign, while references to the remains of the building itself are lacking.\textsuperscript{20} Restoration works

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[16.] On the mosaics see Becatti (1961: 172-176, mosaics nos. 320-323); on lead waterpipes and their proprietors see Geremia-Nucci (2000: 383-409); on unpublished lead waterpipes see Barbieri (1953).
\item[17.] See Rieger (2004: 124-126); R. Mar conducted excavations within the Campo dalla Magna Mater in the area of the Temple of Cybele (or Magna Mater, the great mother goddess), but the results have as yet not been published. A preliminary report has been submitted to the Soprintendenza, which is however still embargoed, and was therefore not available to the author for consultation.
\item[18.] The earliest site-plans of Ostia were produced by Pietro Holl; an adapted version of Holl’s plan was published by Guattani in 1805 in his \textit{Monumenti inediti}; the plan was drawn by the architect T. Zappati. The plan included the excavations by G. Petrini carried out between 1802 and 1804; see Lauro (1995: 42, note 42) on the history of excavations in Ostia.
\item[19.] The excavations of the 18th and early 19th century had no scientific agenda, but were carried out to retrieve marble statues and inscriptions.
\item[20.] See \textit{Giornale degli Scavi} (henceforth G.d.Sc.), Volume 28, 1938-1943, entry dates 4th and 5th July 1940.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
seem to have followed soon after, in the manner typical of Calza’s operation. Later, between 1956 and 1961, major restorations were conducted within the Insula. As far as the baths were concerned these concentrated on the mosaic pavements and the water drains. During clearing a number of small objects were retrieved, most of which reflect what one would expect to find in baths: several metal screws to close water taps, a spoon made of bone, small clay vases, oil lamps and coins, but also a cache of 23 bronze coins cemented into the compressed floor of one of the service corridors. Some of the finds, notably two bronze coins from the 5th century AD, could point to the longevity the baths have enjoyed.

In July 1964, F. Zevi and I. Pohl excavated a few trenches within selected areas to gain a better understanding of the baths’ building sequence. One trench was opened in room (1), where the hypocaust had partly caved in, and the mosaic layers had been detached from their support. The excavations ascertained that the mosaic floors rested on a hypocaust which had been constructed during the period of Caracalla (211-217 AD); the dating is firmly based on brickstamps found on the pavement of the baths, indicated by the use of funerary inscriptions in secondary contexts (2000: 404, note 106).
upon which the *suspenurae* (pillars of stacked brick) had been placed (Fig. 5.11). Therefore, secure dates for the reconstruction of the heated rooms during the Severan period have been established; these activities included the renewal of mosaic floors and the rendering of stucco decorations (Fig. 5.12).

A further trench was opened in the centre of room (01), with the intention of investigating the layers below the Severan pavement. A wall (c. 0.75 m wide) belonging to the preceding building came to light under the compressed fill which supported the pavements of the Severan hypocaust.

The walls’ alignment was found to comply with the directions of the later walls of the baths. On the western side of the earlier wall, remains of earlier floor levels with white mosaic tesserae were revealed. Unfortunately the excavation report does not supply any further information, and hence, while secure dates for the Severan reconstruction have been provided, the baths’ earlier phases remain uncertain. Notwithstanding this, some observations based on the author’s survey of the standing structures can be offered, and these, together with a synthesis of the published studies, shed new light on the development of the baths and the changes that occurred over time.

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25. Bipedales conform to about 2 Roman feet square (c. 58-59 cm²).
26. The *Notizie degli Scavi* (1970: 42) provide a list of the 17 brickstamps with their respective reference to CIL and their inventory numbers.
27. Drawings to scale (plan and section, 1:25) of the Severan wall-decorations have been made by M. Bedello; these have not been published, but are kept at the Archivio Disegni of the Soprintendenza of Ostia.
28. The plans of the Terme del Faro, presented here, form a hybrid between Calza’s 1953 plan and the results of a re-mapping project carried out by the author with the help of H. Kamermans, E. Mol, D. v. d. Zande and G. Offenberg; the ArchGIS work is by J. Lee of GeoStar, Leiden.
Building phases

The initial development of the area, prior to the baths, appears to have coincided with the construction of the Campo della Magna Mater, dated to the Early Imperial period. Calza’s phase plan for the Augustan and Flavian periods shows traces of early buildings existing within the Insula; these were mainly concentrated along the cardo maximus (Fig. 5.13). Furthermore, Calza refers to the existence of other early structures, some of which have been integrated into the later buildings. In fact, early opus reticulatum wall (tufo quoining) are still extant in the northern part of the baths, incorporated into the later structures (Fig. 5.14). In addition, an intriguing feature, also preceding the baths, is presented by a travertine door frame of ‘monumental dimensions’ (Fig. 5.15). It provided access to a room constructed in opus reticulatum (brick) (room 08). This room had been incorporated into the baths, and, in its new role it accommodates a cold water basin of modest dimensions. In fact, when put to its new use, the wide door opening was constricted, thus adapted to its new function, reflecting a much humbler scale.

Only a few traces of the preceding structures can be identified, and while the scarcity of the evidence would not permit a reconstruction of the original development, still these can help us to understand change and adaptation. The first major reconstructions of the area seem to have occurred towards the end of the 1st century AD and the beginning of the 2nd century; the opus reticulatum/brick walls of the tabernae (13) along the cardo, and the eastern opus reticulatum/brick wall along the Campo, can be attributed to this phase. However, there is no evidence that the building had been transformed into a bath complex already during this period; above all there is no secure proof for water pipes supplying the building. The first reliable evidence for lead water pipes comes from stamped fistulae providing the names of their proprietors.
Fig. 5.13 - Early Imperial development in Insula IV ii: only few structural remains were identified and marked on Calza’s phase plan for the Augustan/Flavian Period (Calza 1953: fig. 30)

Fig. 5.14 - An opus reticulatum (tufo) wall, part of the preceding structures, divides the northern taberna from the rooms belonging to the Terme del Faro

Fig. 5.15 - Travertine blocks forming the arched door opening of the preceding building, integrated into room 08 which served as a small frigidarium of the later baths
The earliest identifiable lead pipes have been connected with the name *Cornificia*, and have been dated to the middle of the 2\textsuperscript{nd} century AD. The female person whose name was stamped on the fistula, was first thought to be the sister of the emperor Marcus Aurelius, but was later identified as being the daughter of the emperor, who was also called *Cornificia*.\(^{35}\)

Most scholars tend to agree that the baths were installed during the mid-2\textsuperscript{nd} century AD; the construction in brick (latericum) typical for the period seems to lend support, and, more importantly, the established brickstamp chronology has supposedly provided reliable dates.\(^{36}\) The argument hinges heavily on Bloch’s assessment of brickstamps, which has been followed by all later scholars. Bloch lists several brickstamps for the Terme del Faro, most of which come from a secondary context, however one stamp (*CIL* XIV 422), dated to around 150-160 AD, was claimed to have been found in situ in the arch of a window of the ‘forica’ near the *cardo maximus*.\(^{37}\) Therefore, a reliable date for the *latericum* construction of the Terme del Faro seemed available. However, no such *forica* near the *cardo* forms part of the Terme del Faro. Instead it seems more likely that this particular find spot points to the Terme del Foro, with its latrine along the *cardo*. In this case the similarity between the names of the two bath complexes seems responsible for the wrong attribution of this particular brickstamp. As such, the absence of brickstamps does not necessarily invalidate the mid-second century AD dates which have been proposed for the building’s transformation into a bath complex. The actual bathing block, constructed in *opus latericium*, seems to fit well into this period, while later activities, concerning the reconstructions of the hypocausts, have been firmly dated to the Severan period. A third and last rebuilding, identified by earlier studies,\(^{38}\) seems to concern activities involving the *tabernae* along the *cardo*; these interventions have been dated to the last quarter of the 3\textsuperscript{rd} century AD. All in all, this would account for three major rebuilding phases during the long life of the Terme del Faro.

Still, we should keep in mind that baths, by their very nature, require a considerable degree of maintenance. Temperature fluctuations and high levels of humidity put constant stress on building materials, as well as on the structural strength of the walls. Therefore, next to larger reconstructions, which can be roughly grouped into building stages, a series of smaller interventions took place during the baths’ long period of occupation; however, these cannot be treated with much attention, since the aim here is to present an overall picture. Instead, this study is more interested in those alterations and reconstructions which also impacted on the baths’ neighbouring buildings. Such ‘bilateral’ activities not only capture the baths’ internal dynamics, but can also shed light on the relationship between the Terme del Faro and the rest of the Insula. The links with neighbouring buildings will be examined in the following sections, but before that, the baths’ general layout will be explained.

**Layout and decoration**

The Terme del Faro have been classified as of the angular row type, and, owing to their relatively moderate size, the baths fall into the category of *balneum*.\(^{39}\) The baths, as they have been preserved in their final stage, comprise 17 spaces functionally linked to each other (Fig. 5.16). The complex does not include an area of open-air space which could have functioned as a *palaestra*. The main entrance was located on the *cardo*, from there the fauces (14) in the form of a passage flanked by *tabernae*, led directly into the baths’ amply proportioned *frigidarium* (09).

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39. This classification has been suggested by Nielsen (1991 II: 5); contra DeLaine (1993: 348-358); Nielsen’s catalogue reference to the Terme del Faro is C.26.
Fig. 5.16 – Terme del Faro (IV ii 1) functional zones of the baths
Just before the frigidarium was reached, a sizeable room (13) (apodyterium) opened to the east, which featured the mosaic floor with the lighthouse (faro), surrounded by sea creatures and sea monsters (see Fig. 5.5). During a late phase of occupation, a connection was opened to the easternmost room, where a latrina (10) was installed. By then the baths had also established a ‘physical’ link to the Campo della Magna Mater, with walled stairs bridging the difference in height.

The frigidarium consisted of a vaulted structure supported by two central brick pillars; these had their eastern and western counterparts built against the walls of the surrounding rooms. The southern pillars were placed against the earlier walls, which confined the northern service tract (04) of the bathing block (03). Solid walled benches lined the outer walls of the frigidarium. The large cold-water basin was located on the eastern side of the frigidarium, placed against the wall which separates the Insula from the Campo. A wide window opening is found in the eastern wall. The window faces east, overlooking the Campo, being the direction suitable to allow the morning sun to enter and warm up water and air.

Opposite the large basin across the frigidarium is room 08, which contains a small cold water-tub; the walls behind the water-tub still preserve a series of wall paintings, depicting mythological scenes fitting the context of aquatic display (Venus in a shell, a Nereid and Triton, and the Rape of Europa by Zeus as a white bull).

The bathing block proper (03 and 04), with the surrounding service-rooms appears to have been a self-contained unit, which could have initially functioned as a small balneum, with just one or two adjacent rooms to form the core structure of baths: caldarium, tepidarium and frigidarium. It seems very possible that the baths were gradually enlarged, including first the western section, and extending later to the northern cold-rooms. In their complete version the Terme del Faro represent a fairly handsome bathing establishment. The fragmented mosaics, which are still found, scattered in single tesserae, or in larger sections attached to concrete supports and carelessly piled up in room (01) (Fig. 5.17 and 5.18), are a sad testimony to their former appeal.

40. An interesting parallel for a similar mosaic is reported from the so-called Palazzo Imperiale at Ostia, where a mosaic with a pharos (lighthouse) surrounded by sea-creatures was found in one of the northern rooms, the mosaic also included the text ‘FELIX FAMILIA’; its discovery was reported by Visconti on the 20th May 1862 in the Giornale di Roma.

41. Vitruvius De Arch 5 on public buildings offers advice on the directional aspects of baths in order to benefit from sun and natural daylight; ideally daylight and solar heat should enter the heated rooms in the afternoon, which was the most common time for bathing (1999: 72).

42. Pavolini (2006: 207) suggests Severan dates, based on the composition of the paintings; similar work is found in the Terme dei Sette Sapienti (III x 2).

43. An interesting detail is offered by the walls which formed the rectangular recesses to accommodate the heated plunge pools. Interestingly enough, all corners on the inner room side have rounded edges to facilitate movement in and out of the recesses constructed for the pools. These rounded edges are also found at the corners of the eastern walls, and therefore seem to indicate that the space, which was later walled-up and filled by the niche, was probably open and either served as a plunge pool or as a passage.

44. Ideally such a suggestion needs to be confirmed by information which can only be gained through a small excavation.
Not much can be said about the surface decoration and the statues and ornaments employed to embellish the baths. From the surviving fragments of stucco plaster, marble revetments and mosaics, we can assume that the baths’ walls and floors were treated according to their function. At the same time, the materials were not only chosen for their functional qualities, but were as much a symbol of wealth and luxury as they were attractive elements appealing to the senses.  

This also applies to the display of water, which was not only articulated through the embellishment of individual pools and tubs, but also through the strategic placing of pools and basins:

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45. See Yegül on general ideas about the decoration of baths (1992).
the largest pool was placed on the eastern side of the frigidarium, and was therefore not directly visible upon entering the baths.

However, the pool became a visual focal point when leaving the heated rooms (Figs 5.19 and 5.20). A rectangular field of black and white mosaics, depicting sea creatures, was placed in front of the basin to further emphasise its position and promote a frontal approach. The mosaic probably reached from the pool’s western edge to the central pillars, while the remaining floor of the *frigidarium* was covered in white tesserae. The contrast created between the larger white area and the dark mosaic in front of the pool not only expressed a division of functional space, it must have also added a degree of visual excitement. The surviving mosaic floors conform to the same aquatic genre, representing sea creatures and sea monsters, all figures were twisted and turned, creating a busy, dynamic sphere full of movement. Such themes seem to have been popular and mosaics rendered in the similar style are found in several baths, e.g. the Baths of Caracalla in Rome (Fig. 5.21). The figurative mosaics were executed in black and white tesserae, framed within black borders, while the remaining floor surfaces were covered in white tesserae, with some black tesserae thrown in randomly. The changing pattern between light and dark floor sections, as well as the alternations between ornate and plain surfaces, must have reinforced the spatial structure of the rooms, and helped guide the flow of movement through the different sections of the baths.

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46. See mosaic No. 321 in Becatti (1961: 174-175); Becatti reports that only two fragments of 1.0 x 2.5 and 1.5 x 3.0 m survived from the mosaic placed in front of the pool.

47. The uniformity of the artistic rendering suggests that they were produced by the same workshop (Becatti 1961:173). Becatti’s survey identifies four floor mosaics (No. 320-323): while mosaics 320 and 321 can be clearly attributed to their rooms (320 in the eastern apodyterium [13], 321 in the frigidarium in front of the pool), 322 seems to have been located in the heated room (05), judging from Becatti’s mentioning of the damage caused by the collapse of vaults, while mosaic 323 seems to have been located in the heated room (01), based on the mosaic’s dimensions (10.0 x 5.0 m) which could only fit there, see Becatti 1961: Tav. CXLVIII.

The mosaic of the caldarium (03) was completely destroyed according to Becatti (1961: 173).
Several patches of painted wall plaster remain preserved in protected locations within the northern cold rooms (Fig. 5.22); these help us to develop an idea about the decorative treatment of the inner walls. It seems that the lower parts of the walls which composed the frigidarium, and the adjacent eastern and western apodyteria, were covered in plaster with a layer of dark-red paint. From the remains it can be inferred that the painted plaster formed a high dado of about 1.7 m, finishing with a bevelled edge. The plaster continued above the dado’s edge as a much thinner layer; from the dado upwards the walls were covered in white paint with faint traces of red lines still visible; the latter seems to have delineated rectangular fields. The available evidence of surface materials creates the impression that the baths’ decoration was based on a restricted yet dramatic colour scheme of black and white floors and dark-red walls for the cold rooms, while the heated rooms had partly monochrome (white and grey) marble cladding, and partly stucco decoration (see Fig 5.12).

In addition to the surface decorations, a number of statues and ornaments were employed to embellish the rooms; these statues formed part of an iconographic programme which not only conveyed aesthetic values but also symbolic meaning. The sculptures which came to light during Calza’s excavation have never been examined within their proper setting, instead a number of them have been wrongly attributed to the Terme del Foro.

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48. Patches of plaster can be found in the north-western apodyterium, on the pillar placed against the northern wall; and in the frigidarium on the south-western pillar.
49. This style of surface decoration seems typical of the 3rd century AD and has also been identified in the Caseggiato dell’Ercole, Building IV ii 5, and IV ii 14, see Liedke 2003.
50. See also Valeri’s (2002) examination of sculptural programmes displayed in Ostian baths (other than the Terme del Faro).
51. Geremia Nucci (2000: 403-404, note 103), by way of footnote refers to the entries in the G.d.Sc. which are concerned with the sculptures found during excavation, but she does not relate them to the decoration of the baths.
52. As stated above, the similarity in name between the Terme del Faro and Terme del Foro led in some instances to wrong entries in the records of the Soprintendenza; many thanks to E. Angeloni and M. Seno from the Archivio Fotografico who helped in retrieving the images. The complete group of statues that came to light in the excavation of the Terme del Faro will be the subject of a separate publication (Stöger in prep.).
Fig. 5.23 – (left) Female statue of Type of the Venus Capitolina (Sc.St.292, h 0.61 m), found in the Terme del Faro during Calza’s excavation in July 1940
Fig. 5.24 – (right) Female statue, semi-draped; part of a group, possibly Amphitrite with a dolphin (Sc.St. 290, 0.70 m); found during Calza’s excavation of the Terme del Faro in July 1940

Fig. 5.25 – ‘Weary’ Hercules, Farnese Type, excavated in 1940 from the Terme del Faro, (ref. 318, Sc. St. 288, h 0.30 m, white marble), probably part of the decoration of a fountain
Even more interesting is the statue of Hercules (Fig. 5.25), retrieved during the 1940s excavations. It is a small-scale version of the ‘weary Hercules’, reminiscent of the Farnese type which had its original place in the Baths of Caracalla. Hercules was considered a figure with varied symbolic potential in the environment of baths, and plays a frequent role in their statuary equipment. In imitating the design and the decoration of the grand imperial baths in Rome and Ostia, the small private baths in Ostia and elsewhere could demonstrate that they were able to keep abreast with tastes and trends promoted in Rome. Furthermore, in the specific context of the Terme del Faro, where it seems very likely that high high-ranking personalities from the Imperial families were involved as investors or proprietors of the baths, one cannot be sure at all but it could be possible that a statue of Hercules was placed there not only to adorn the backdrop of a fountain, but also to allude to the Severan imperial house, which had Hercules as one of its patron deities.

All in all the baths appear to have been well-equipped and decorated to appeal to the taste of their visitors. Since they did not cover a large area, the use of space had to be well thought-out to maximize the baths’ spatial and ‘thermal’ efficacy. The long history of the Terme del Faro points to a successful management, apparently securing enough (paying) visitors to make the baths a sustainable enterprise worth of investment over a long period of time. The baths kept functioning for almost 400 years, from the mid 2nd century AD to the early 5th century AD, (when the last change of ownership was documented), and probably longer, as the late 5th century coins suggest. During these centuries of use several reconstructions occurred; the ones which also affected the neighbouring buildings will be examined in more detail since they allow us to gain an insight into the relationship between the baths and the Insula.

**Links to the neighbouring buildings**

On their western side the baths interlock with building IV ii 05. There are no direct party walls shared between these buildings, and yet several activities occurred which reflect an ongoing ‘dialogue’ between them. Two walled up doors are telling (Fig. 5.26): one is found at the southern end of the eastern wall (opus reticulatum/brick) of building IV ii 5. It betrays a former connection between building IV ii 5 and the space to the east, later to be occupied by the baths’ heated room (01). The door’s usefulness ended when the western wall of the baths was constructed against the earlier (opus reticulatum/brick) wall of building IV ii 5.

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59. See Manderscheid’s list of the frequency of occurrence of specific statues in imperial baths (1981:34).
60. The similarity of style observed in the floor mosaics is also suggestive of the influence of the large imperial baths on smaller establishments.
61. Geremia Nucci’s (2000) study reveals that the baths remained attractive property as well as an interesting sector for investment for Roman imperial and senatorial personalities from the 2nd until the 5th century. The last documented proprietors were Valerius Faltonius Adelfius and Anicia Italica; see also a brief summary in Geremia Nucci (1999:36-37).
62. See DeLaine (1997: 80) on the Severan dynasty’s association with Hercules, and specifically Caracalla with the Farnese-type Hercules.
Likewise, a door opening in the western wall of the baths (room 06) (Fig. 5.27), once provided access to the open space to the west, and became redundant when the space was occupied by the baths’ large water cistern. Any interventions which cancel existing connections between buildings should require at least an agreement between the property owners, or they might even point to a joint ownership between the baths and the adjacent building (IV ii 5). Moreover, since the water cistern clearly curtailed the open space behind the eastern part of the Caseggiato dell’Ercole (IV ii 2-3), we have to presume that such a measure would require an agreement between all property owners concerned, including the dell’Ercole complex.

At the north-western side, along the cardo, there are several points of intersection between the baths and the Caseggiato dell’Ercole (IV ii 2-3). These betray a close, albeit changing relationship between the buildings (Fig. 5.28). The transformations that took place over time are best reflected in the alterations that occurred in taberna (03) of the Caseggiato dell’Ercole (see Fig. 5.35 for a site plan of the Caseggiato dell’Ercole). The taberna is located to the northwest of the baths’ main entrance and the adjacent western apodyterium (baths [07]) (changing rooms). First of all, a structural link existed between the buildings, which can be established from the shared party wall: the Caseggiato’s easternmost wall constitutes the apodyterium’s western wall. The shared wall extends from the portico to the water fountain east of the caseggiato’s inner courtyard. The evidently close link between the Caseggiato and the baths is further emphasised by a door opening, directly connecting the Caseggiato’s easternmost corridor to the space which served as changing room. This connection remained intact throughout the building’s history; even though the apodyterium was subdivided into two narrow rectangular rooms, and was further separated from the baths during a late phase of use.

The changing relationship between the buildings is also indicated by the successive interventions that occurred within the Caseggiato’s taberna (03), whose southern wall is shared with the baths’ north-western apodyterium (changing room [07]). The wall in question (opus reticulatum wall 03_03_01, see Fig. 5.14) belongs to the building’s earliest construction phase (opus reticulatum with tufo quoining), predating the baths. The early wall remained preserved within the later structures, while the western wall, which is shared between the taberna and the staircase (Caseggiato 02) was built against it,63 pointing to a somewhat later activity. Again at a later point, when the Caseggiato and its portico were constructed, the portico’s façade was structurally joined to the pre-existing western wall (Fig. 5.29).

63. See the site plan of the Caseggiato dell’Ercole (IV ii 2-3) (Fig. 5.35) for the location of the stairs (03) and the taberna (02).
In order to create a coherent public façade, the Caseggiato’s portico was extended until it reached the entrance to the baths, thereby bringing *taberna* (Caseggiato 03) fully into the realm of the Caseggiato, while the Caseggiato’s first structural wall is only found west of the *taberna*. It can be noted that the depth of the Caseggiato’s portico followed the alignment of the baths’ eastern *tabernae*, creating the impression of a unified street frontage along the *cardo*.

The early *opus reticulatum* (*tufo* quoining) wall (03_03_01), which was shared between the *taberna* and the *apodyterium*, was adapted to its new use in several stages. Being part of the earliest construction phase, the wall’s foundation levels are probably found about 1.50 m below the later occupation levels of the *taberna* (Fig. 5.30). The walled-up door provides a telling detail about the changing levels, since the original lintel was lower and was cut back...
At a later point the door was walled up, blocking the direct connection between the taberna and the baths’ apodyterium, while an informal link was still maintained through a passage crossing from under the stairs. These changes can be attributed to a late period, when a series of reconstructions occurred in the baths’ northern part. These included the door opening between the taberna and the baths’ entrance corridor becoming restricted. Collectively these interventions led to an almost complete separation between taberna (Caseggiato 03) and the baths.

It seems therefore very plausible that these transformations were related to changes in ownership, which consequently redefined the connection between the baths and the Caseggiato dell’Ercole and its taberna (03).

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64. Heres dates the latest reconstructions to the last quarter of the 3rd century AD (1983: 91 and 94) without specifically explaining the dating framework; Heres’ dates support Becatti’s chronology (Calza 1953: 226).

65. The almost complete separation of the taberna from the baths could be related to the last change of ownership, which if Geremia-Nucci (2000:387) is right, is associated with the stamped fistula of Valerius Falconius Adelfius and Anicia Italica (Barberi 32); and could therefore suggest that the Terme del Faro had then become property of Anicia Italica and her husband Valerius Falconius, dating to the early 5th century AD; see Meiggs (1973: 213).
crudely placed against the outer walls and the central pillar (IVii01_13_09) (Fig. 5.31). Plaster patches with layers of dark-red paint are still visible on the outer eastern wall, preserved behind the attached partition wall (Fig. 5.32). This indicates that no effort was made to anchor the new partition walls to the side walls, and therefore not much structural ‘responsibility’ was conferred to the inserted partitions. Walled benches were placed against them on the baths’ side, some remains of which are still visible. As part of the same phase of reconstruction the southern door opening, connecting to the entrance corridor, was walled up (IVii01_13_07).66 These changes signify a clear division between the tabernae and the southern room. The latter was completely redirected towards the baths, serving as the baths’ eastern apodyterium.67

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66. The material used seems similar in brick size and quality of walling.
67. The partition walls created the space necessary for the apodyterium, therefore, if the Severan dates for the mosaics are correct for all mosaics, then these interventions occurred in connection with the Severan reconstructions. Becatti suggests later dates for the mosaics, he places them into the mid-3rd century AD, on purely stylistic criteria.
In contrast, the tabernae saw their attention redirected fully onto the streets, suggesting that the tabernae were rented out independently of the activities of the baths. Faint traces of stairs which had been built against the north-eastern side of the partition wall can still be identified. These indicate that the tabernae had access to a mezzanine floor or a pergola, and were therefore a self-contained rental unit, including its own up-stairs living space.

Finally, we should draw our attention to the links between the baths and the Campo della Magna Mater. The baths’ initial intrusion into the Campo’s territory has already been identified in the course of the eastern opus reticulatum/brick wall which delimits the Insula against the Campo (see above). While the original opus reticulatum/brick wall did not make provision for door apertures, two door openings were added during later periods of occupation: room (11), which presumably served as an apodyterium, became connected to the Campo through a door opening (Fig. 5.33), broken into the opus reticulatum/brick wall. On the side of the Campo we find a rectangular space built against the opus reticulatum/brick. In this way an enclosed space was created within the Campo which seems functionally linked to the baths, serving as an entrance hall to provide access to the eastern changing room (11). At the same time the enclosed opening was probably overcome by wooden stairs; the beam holes could be connected to a ramp or some other temporary construction.

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68. Calza’s 1953 plan of the Insula (section 13) indicates stairs which were built against the partition wall; these can no longer be identified.
69. See Pirson on rented tabernae inclusive of living space at the mezzanine level (1999: 19-20).
70. The difference in height was presumably overcome by wooden stairs since no traces of stairs can be identified on the facing of the opus reticulatum/brick wall.
71. Rieger (2003: 120-121, fig. 90 a-d) illustrates the transformation of the Campo della Magna Mater from the early imperial to the Severan period, including the changes which occurred in response to the baths. However some incorrect details seem to compromise her interpretations, the most striking one being the window opening behind the cold water pool which Rieger understood as a wide door opening.
72. The enclosed space consisted originally of a square outlined by pillars; the inter-pillar spaces were walled up in connection with the enclosure for the latrine.
space functioned as a transitional area placed between the Campo and the baths. At a later period, probably linked to the last changes in the northern part of the baths, a sizeable latrine was installed in room 10. This required the creation of an extension stretching out into the Campo (Fig. 5.34), and the construction of stairs to overcome the difference in height. Therefore once again the Insula encroached upon the territory of the Campo. On the side of the Campo, the area surrounding the stairs was generously closed-off, delineating a large space which seemed functionally connected to the latrine. It is worth mentioning that the latrine could be accessed from the Campo without entering the baths, and from the baths without setting foot onto the Campo, and could therefore be shared by both. All in all these reconstructions and mutual infringements bear witness to a dynamic long-term dialogue between the baths and the Campo, where both sides lost and gained at the same time.

**Conclusion**

The close examination of the Terme del Faro’s structural remains has allowed us to reconstruct the baths’ development over a period of about 400 years. Their long period of use proves them successful not only in securing investment but also in attracting sufficient numbers of clients to sustain their long-term occupation. This seems even more of an achievement when considering the high density of Ostia’s baths, with several of them located within a radius of 400 m. The proximity to the Campo della Magna Mater and to the city gate must have offered a location which benefited from high levels of traffic of people.

73. Terme del Foro (Antoninus Pius), Baths IV iv 8 (4th century), Terme dell’Invidioso, V v 1 (dated to the Julio-Claudian period, reconstructed in the time of Antoninus Pius and again in the first half of the 3rd century AD, see Pavolini 2006: 222); Terme delle Sei Colonne, IV v 11, (dated to the period of Trajan); the so-called Perseus baths outside the city walls, reduced and altered in the 4th century AD (Ricciardi and Scrinari 1996 I: 183).
moving in and out of the city. The Terme del Faro experienced the most striking changes during the Severan period, when the hypocausts were renewed and the cold rooms in the northern part installed. In fact, the Severan mosaic pavements and decoration programme remained in use throughout the rest of the baths’ life. Since the premises were on the smaller side, efficient use of space and well-functioning movement flows seem critical for the successful running of the baths. It appears that the baths’ decorative treatment was employed to good effect; it underlined the hierarchies of functional spaces and helped in creating a stimulating environment, despite limited movement patterns. Clearly, the baths must have appealed to their visitors. Since the baths could not target the broad public, but still needed a certain number of well-paying guests to keep the business going, they might come close to a ‘niche product’, maybe comparable to a ‘boutique spa’ to modern eyes.

The installation of the water cistern, which probably occurred in connection with the Severan reconstruction, must have been indispensable for the procurement of the baths’ water supply, while the cistern’s negative effect on the baths’ neighbouring buildings cannot be ignored. We can therefore identify a priority which the baths assumed over neighbouring buildings, subordinating them to the prospering of the baths. Surely the enlargement of the baths increased water consumption, but this was not the only reason why the cistern was installed. From the Severan period onwards the city’s water supplies had come under serious pressure: private and public water consumption had increased significantly; along Ostia’s streets an orchestrated public water display took place including a substantial number of fountains and nymphaea. Since Ostia’s public water supply could barely cope with the high demand, many baths were compelled to install their own water cisterns to avoid a water shortage during their opening hours, by filling up their water tanks overnight. The Terme del Faro fit well into the general ‘water culture’ prevailing in Ostia during the Severan period; the implications for the Insula will be clearer once we have established how all its buildings functioned as a group.

5.2.2 Portico and Caseggiato dell’Ercole (IV ii 2-3)

The large building complex consists of several units, including the Portico (IV ii 2) and the Caseggiato dell’Ercole (IV ii 3) (Fig. 5.35), as well as the industrial building (030) (Fig. 5.48). The buildings cover a total area of 1170 m², grouped around a long trapezoid courtyard with a fountain house (Fig. 5.36). The Caseggiato and its portico extended along the cardo maximus, and represent the Insula’s commercial frontage. To the southwest the complex borders on the Caupona del Pavone (IV ii 6), and is confined by the Via della Caupona to the west, while its eastern side is bounded by the Terme del Faro. The main doorway opens on the Via della Caupona, leading through an entrance passage into the inner courtyard. Three additional entrances are found along the cardo, providing a link between the street space and the internal courtyard. All points of access, located along the cardo and the Via della Caupona, open at street level.

Excavations and history of research

The Caseggiato was excavated during Calza’s large-scale campaign of the late 1930s and early 1940s, when most buildings within the Insula were brought to light. Interestingly enough, earlier excavations seem indicated on Zappati’s plan, which reveals that some rooms had already been excavated in 1805 (see Fig. 5.10 above). The Giornale degli scavi remain silent about Calza’s excavations; however,

76. The Caseggiato dell’Ercole received its name from a small tufo figurine of Hercules, probably originating from a keystone (Calza 1953: 145), presumably found during the excavations.
77. The areas: caseggiato and portico (IV ii 3) 1110.75 m²; industrial wing (IV ii 3) 228.90 m²; and the adjacent industrial building (IV ii 04) 258.10 m².
Scavi di Ostia
Portico & Caseggiato dell’Ercole (IV ii 2-3)

Wall
Threshold
Window
Door, walled up
Staircase, landing
Counter, shelf

Portico
Portico supporting blocks
Pier
Well, waterbasin, waterdrain
Floor, Opus Spicatum

Fig. 5.35 – Caseggiato and Portico dell’Ercole (IV ii 2-3)
Fig. 5.36 – The Caseggiato’s courtyard seen from within the Insula (Scavi di Ostia, Archivo Fotografico, ref. B 3037)

Fig. 5.37 – Excavation in process: the courtyard is still under excavation, dated March 7th 1940 (Scavi di Ostia, Archivo Fotografico, ref. B 2901)
the photographic documentation allows us to establish an approximate period of excavation between December 1939 and July 1940.\textsuperscript{79} The work seems to have progressed swiftly along the \textit{cardo}, and from there further into the Insula (Fig. 5.37). As stated before, Calza’s excavations were accompanied by the immediate restoration and consolidation of the built structures. In the case of the Caseggiato dell’Ercole, the photographic records offer an interesting glimpse into this practice, which at times got out of hand and allowed walls to be removed during restoration (see Fig 5.38), without keeping any record of their existence.\textsuperscript{80}

In the 1960s a thorough examination of the Caseggiato was conducted by Packer.\textsuperscript{81} He surveyed the complex as part of an extensive study of Ostia’s multiple dwellings, which aimed at establishing urban living conditions and estimates of population densities for Ostia and Rome. Packer’s room by room description long remained the most detailed assessment of the Caseggiato’s architecture, while the building also received attention in Blake’s assessment of Roman construction.\textsuperscript{82} Girri’s survey of Ostia’s \textit{tabernae}, written 10 years earlier, includes a brief description of the Caseggiato, classifying its \textit{tabernae} according to typologies,\textsuperscript{83} while Hermansen’s survey covers the Caseggiato’s three bars or inns.\textsuperscript{84} The buildings’ water facilities have been explored within the wider study of Ostia’s water culture.\textsuperscript{85} In addition, a recent study of Roman wall-paintings included a few examples originating from the Caseggiato,\textsuperscript{86} providing mid 3\textsuperscript{rd} century AD dates for these paintings (Fig. 5.39).\textsuperscript{87}

\begin{flushright}
Fig. 5.38 – All traces of the walled-up door were removed by the excavators (former connection between rooms 05 and 06) (Scavi di Ostia, Archivo Fotografico, ref. B 2913)
\end{flushright}

\textsuperscript{79} Archivio Fotografico at Ostia: beginning of excavation c. 21.12.1939 photo reference B2888-2892.
\textsuperscript{80} The room as it is preserved today shows a regular door opening; the 1953 site-plan (Calza 1953) indicates a door opening..
\textsuperscript{81} Packer (1971: 109, plan 31, 187-190).
\textsuperscript{82} See Blake (1973: 226-227) for a brief description of the Caseggiato dell’Ercole (IV ii 2-3).
\textsuperscript{83} See Girri (1956: 29).
\textsuperscript{84} Hermansen (1982: 162-165), taverns 26-28, figs. 99-105.
\textsuperscript{86} Liedke (2003) offers a contextualised approach, studying wall decorations within their architectural setting; the focus is on ‘Nebenraumdekorationen’ (wall decorations found in side rooms), thus dealing with the ‘more modest’ end of Roman wall decorations.
\textsuperscript{87} According to Liedke (2003: 96-97) the wall paintings
In the literature the Caseggiato and its portico have been considered to be one of the commercial/residential buildings typically found in Ostia; moreover, the building's architectural structure has been described as homogenous and ‘organic’. However, the Caseggiato might not be as organic as hitherto believed; on the contrary, as revealed by this study, the building has undergone quite a few modifications and interventions. The description presented here moves beyond Packer's earlier observations and presents the author's on-site study. The plans have been produced by the author; for the sake of keeping consistency with already published work, Packer's numeric reference system has been followed.

Fig. 5.39 – Wall painting dating to the mid-3rd century from the Caseggiato dell’Ercole (IV ii 2-3), dispute over a broken amphora, scene from a court case (photograph, courtesy of Ostia website)

Building phases and layout

There seems to be a general agreement on the construction dates for the Caseggiato and the portico: most scholars suggest c. 160-170 AD. Once again, the dates rest on brickstamps. As far as preceding buildings are concerned, Calza refers to the structures of a Republican domus, found underneath the Caseggiato (see Fig. 5.13 above). Two wells, originally part of the Republican domus, remained in use and were integrated into the later Caseggiato. Moreover, the easternmost pillar structures seem to belong to an earlier structure, dating to the end of the first century AD/beginning of the 2nd century, and became incorporated into the later portico built during the second half of the 2nd century AD.

The Caseggiato can best be described as a commercial-residential building. Tabernae (commercial outlets of various functions) occupy the greater part of the ground floor, while an industrial complex takes up the west wing. The thickness of the walls (c. 0.60 m) suggests that the building had several storeys. The Caseggiato’s street front along the cardo was shaded by a long portico (65 m) (Fig. 5.40), supported by 12 pillars and paved with bipedales; for ease of communication the portico was probably repeated as a corridor on the upper floors. On the Via della Caupona, a sidewalk of two rows of bipedales follows the full length of the Caseggiato, and comes to an abrupt end at the point where the Caupona del Pavone begins (Fig. 5.41). Being restricted to the Caseggiato only, the sidewalk seems to denote private property, tied to the Caseggiato through ownership and liability.

The Caseggiato proper consists of a double row of rooms, subdivided into three sections by passageways and stairwells. Nine rooms open onto the portico (03, 05, 08, 10, 12, 14, 21, 22, 23), whereas two (23, 26)

95. See Packer (1971: 190).
96. Several of the bipedales which compose the sidewalk still preserve brickstamps; see Bloch (1953: 226).
Fig. 5.40 – The portico of the Caseggiato dell’Ercole (IV ii 2), facing east towards the Porta Laurentina

Fig. 5.41 – Via della Caupona, the Caseggiato’s pavement stops where the Caupona del Pavone begins
connect directly to the Via della Caupona. Five rooms are interconnected (05-06, 08-09, 10-11, 12-13 and 14-15), and therefore have both an opening to the portico and to the courtyard, while the others are either directed towards the outside, or the internal courtyard. The ground floor plan seems to have been replicated on the mezzanine upper floors: the remains of door openings of the upper floors are still preserved, and are visible on top of the lintels of the ground floor doors (Fig. 5.42). From the position of the stairways, the possible arrangement of the upper storeys can be reconstructed.

The Caseggiato’s initial layout was defined by openness, affording access between tabernae and their backrooms, as well as tabernae and the adjacent corridors. During successive interventions various doors have either been blocked or restricted (see plan Fig. 5.35). These changes occurred mainly in the easternmost group of tabernae (05, 06, 08 and 09) closest to the Terme del Faro. The doors between rooms (05-08) and (05-06) were walled-up (see Fig. 5.38 above), and consequently room (05) was cut-off from the internal communication, while its focus was redirected towards the portico. Likewise, room (06) was affected, its communication restricted, and its direction turned towards the inner courtyard. Room (09) was originally not only connected to room (08), but also to passage (01) by means of a wide door opening. This door was walled up in the course of interventions which concerned the reconstruction of the south-western corner of room (09), adding a reinforcing buttress at the corner, as well as restricting and strengthening the southern door towards the courtyard. These latter interventions could have been a response to structural damage. It is also possible that these changes occurred in connection with a restructuring of the northern part of Building IV ii 5, just south of the Caseggiato dell’Ercole. Whatever the cause may be, the Caseggiato seems to have experienced a number of structural problems: to counteract these, walled pillars were placed into the corners of several rooms, functioning as reinforcing buttresses. The rooms concerned are (05) and (08) on the northern side (along the portico), as well as (11, 13 and 15) on the southern side (on the courtyard); while a single pillar of larger dimensions is found in room (14). Furthermore, structural damage seems to have prompted the reconstruction of a larger section of the eastern wall of room (10) (see Fig. 5.43). In addition, the eastern part of the portico has been reinforced, doubling the outer pillars and adding a row of corresponding buttresses along the Caseggiato’s northern wall.

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97. Rooms (5-6, 8-9, 10-11 and 12-13) are interconnected by means of wide door openings without (travertine) thresholds; hence no closing of these doors was intended. Conversely rooms 14-15, as well as 15 and 13 are interconnected, however, the door is narrow and has a travertine threshold still preserved. The passage spaces 16 and 17 have not been listed since they seem functionally dedicated to passage only. 98. See Packer 1971:190; the present study cannot verify all of Packer’s suggestions; some structures which seem to have been still present at the time of Packer’s survey have disappeared in the meantime (e.g. stairs within room 10), cf. Packer (1971:109, plan 31).


100. Similar brick work (brick size and mortar beds) as well as bonding courses can be observed in the corresponding northern wall of building IV ii 5; therefore this seems a reasonable suggestion since changes in building IV ii 5 could have affected the caseggiato’s section on the courtyard side.
It has been suggested that these interventions might testify to structural damage caused by earthquakes.\textsuperscript{101} Seismic activities are not unusual in the region, moreover, destruction deposits, which clearly point to the impact of earthquakes, have been identified in various other buildings in Ostia.\textsuperscript{102} However, while an earthquake scenario might be very likely, still we have no secure evidence, and thus it remains impossible to draw a direct link between cause and effect. Alternatively, one could think of structural problems caused by the overload of the upper floors and a possible weakness of the terracing fill upon which the foundation walls rested.

Notwithstanding these unresolved questions, there are some other ‘oddities’ within the building which need to be addressed. These concern the westernmost section, comprising rooms (21) to (26). The walls of this part remain preserved to a much greater standing height than the central part of the Caseggiato (Fig. 5.44).\textsuperscript{103} No reinforcing pillars are present in this section; no structural interventions can be identified; instead, the group of rooms appears to be structurally homogeneous, with its walls solidly keyed to each other at the corners, and with regular bonding courses adding consistency. However, a distinct break in the structural unit can be noted, not

\textsuperscript{101} See the description of IV ii 2-3 in the topographic directory of the Ostia website: http://www.ostia-antica.org/regio4/2/2-3.htm

\textsuperscript{102} See DeLaine and Wilkinson (1999: 19) on evidence from Ostia’s Insula I iv, revealing severe damage possibly caused by an earthquake, suggested dating 150-175 AD. Gering (2002: 120) encountered structural damage and subsequent reinforcement in the Case a Giardino (III ix) dating to around the same period.

\textsuperscript{103} The westernmost section preserved walls to a standing height of c. 6.50 m which marks the top of the vaults, while the spring of the vaulting is at 4.20 m height; in contrast, the central section preserves walls to a height of c. 4.0 m.
occurring at the intersection of rooms (25/26) and the wide entrance passage (27). Here, the break line clearly divides two different walls: discontinuity is evident from the quality and size of the bricks, as well as the mortar beds (Fig. 5.45). The same break is visible at the opposite corner along the Via della Caupona. This strongly suggests that the unit comprising rooms (21) to (26) was built against already existing structures, and was therefore not part of an initial ‘organic’ programme, but a later insertion, presumably replacing the original section. The existing earlier walls formed part of the entrance corridor, and continued further in the entrance to the Caseggiato’s western industrial wing. Interestingly enough, the earlier walls bear a close similarity to the walls constituting the easternmost section near the Terme del Faro. In view of the reconstruction of the westernmost section, an earthquake scenario should not be excluded as a possible cause for the destruction of the westernmost part and its subsequent reconstruction.

Next to the structural differences noted in the westernmost section (rooms 21 – 26), we can also observe a difference in the spatial organisation of these rooms. Here, no interconnections exist between the individual tabernae: they either open to the courtyard or to the public street space, while a connection between both, responding to the inside as well as to the outside, seemed not desired for this part of the Caseggiato. Instead, we find the corner room (23) with a pronounced outward focus, opening to the cardo (through the portico) and to the Via della Caupona. This suggests that external dynamics should be taken into consideration, and we should think of the Terme del Foro (Forum baths) located just across the cardo, as a possible outside influence. The ‘mega bath complex’, which takes up the entire eastern quadrant of Ostia’s city centre,
was constructed c. 160 AD,\textsuperscript{106} while the same construction dates have been suggested for the Caseggiato, or to be more precise, the western section of the Caseggiato.\textsuperscript{107} Considering their proximity in time and space, it is not at all surprising that we find the western section of the Caseggiato directed towards the Terme del Foro, possibly aiming to benefit from the vicinity of the new focal point of social activity.\textsuperscript{108}

\textbf{Functional space}

The premises of three ‘bars’ were located along the Caseggiato’s façade, occupying tabernae 03, 08 and 21, and underlining the Caseggiato’s image as the Insula’s commercial front.\textsuperscript{109} All three bars were situated on the portico side and therefore open towards the \textit{cardo}. Their equipment identifies them as bars: all have counters placed in different positions to attract clients coming from different directions. The easternmost bar is closely linked to the Terme del Faro; the position of the counter is directed towards visitors coming from the Porta Laurentina (Fig. 5.46).

In contrast, the counter in \textit{taberna} (08) was placed at the rear part of the room (Fig. 5.47), further removed from the portico, possibly responding to visitors both from outside and from inside the Insula. \textit{Tabernae} (08) and (09) were interconnected through a door opening, however, without threshold and visible locking device between these rooms. \textit{Taberna} 21 followed a different direction: a walled stepped shelf was placed in its north-eastern corner, next to the door, and was therefore best visible for customers coming from the city centre; \textit{taberna} 21 also incorporated the water well, which had been part of the preceding building of the Late Republican period.\textsuperscript{110}

\textsuperscript{107} The brickstamps which have been dating the construction of the Caseggiato to the period of Antoninus Pius, have been mainly found in the western section; while several brickstamps found on the bipesales of the sidewalk date to the 3rd century AD, see Bloch (1953:226); a small number of brickstamps have been spotted by the author on the bipesales of the staircase (18) and the landing on the 2nd floor (above the spaces 19 and 18).
\textsuperscript{108} The corner shop did not only use the inside space, but also utilised parts of the portico to display merchandise. Slots for shelves, chiselled into the outer walls, can be found between rooms 23 and 22.
\textsuperscript{109} Ostia’s ‘taverns’ have been studied by Anna Kieburg (publication forthcoming).
\textsuperscript{110} See Ricciardi and Scrinari (1996 I: 45, figs. 52).
The Caseggiato’s portico (IV ii 2) played an important role in creating not only a unified, but also a protected street front along the cardo. In this sense, the Caseggiato responded to the city’s infrastructural demands: the Terme del Foro and the Caseggiato dell’Ercole jointly offered an almost continuous sheltered passage under their porticos, reaching from the city centre to the Campo della Magna Mater. The Caseggiato’s portico started where the one of the Forum baths ended. In terms of its architectural effect, the Caseggiato’s portico acted like a screen composed of a row of pillars, creating physical and visual links between the public space outside and the inner Insula space. It enjoyed a dual nature, both static and dynamic: static in that it defined the line of a wall, and dynamic, in that it allowed passage through it. Interestingly enough, a closer inspection of the portico reveals that the distances between the pillars were not regular.\footnote{111. The most obvious difference is found in the eastern part, where the pillars confirm to a smaller dimension and have been reinforced at a later point. This indicates that the eastern part of the portico is earlier than the centre and western part.} The placing of the pillars on the eastern side and in the centre betrays a direct ‘one-to one’ relationship between the pillars and the corresponding walls of the Caseggiato, creating a structural and visual connection between the open spaces between the pillars and the door openings of the tabernae.\footnote{112. One would expect that the pillars are placed to address structural requirements, i.e. strengthening the walls which divide the tabernae.} In contrast, the westernmost pillars, which relate to tabernae (21 to 23), are all placed off-centre, slightly shifted to the west. This has led to a break in the visual line between inter-pillar space and the door openings of the western taberna, partially obscuring the western side of the taberna opening. The inconsistency seemed to have occurred in response to a reconstruction of the westernmost part, and the construction of the narrow passage corridor (20), which was almost completely obscured behind the portico’s pillar.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{fig546}
\caption{Taberna 03, best visible for visitors approaching from the Porta Laurentina}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{fig547}
\caption{Taberna 08, the counter is withdrawn from the street front}
\end{figure}
The links between the Caseggiato and the Insula

The Caseggiato’s relationship with its immediate neighbourhood is defined by contact with the Caupona del Pavone to the southwest, and the Terme del Faro (baths) to the east. As far as the boundary with the Caupona is concerned, it can be established that the Caseggiato’s southern latericium wall (industrial wing) was built against the pre-existing wall (opus reticulatum/brick) of the Caupona. This allows us to establish a chronology, if relative, between these buildings, as the Caseggiato was built later than the Caupona’s initial opus reticulatum/brick phase. In contrast, the link between the Caseggiato and the baths appears more complex and reflects several points of intersection. It indicates a changing relationship in the course of the baths’ long period of use, which seems to point to a change of ownership of the baths, which consequently redefined the connection between the baths and the Caseggiato.

5.2.3 Caseggiato dell’Ercole: western ‘industrial’ wing (IV ii 3)

The western section (030) of the complex forms a separate, yet structurally linked spatial unit (Fig. 5.48). It offered premises suitable for industrial use at ground floor level and habitation space on the upper floors, and therefore contributed to the multifunctionality of the dell’Ercole complex. The section covers an area of 228.9 m², forming a rectangular, slightly trapezoid shape. It is separated from the Caseggiato’s row of tabernae by the internal courtyard to the north. The building was physically connected to and divided from the Caseggiato through the entrance passage (27) on the Via della Caupona. On its southern side the industrial space is bounded by the Caupona del Pavone, whereas on its eastern side it abuts Building IV ii 4. Its narrow end is located on the Via della Caupona, while the longer side extends deeper into the Insula. The unit can be accessed from the Via della Caupona, where we find a wide door opening which preserves a travertine threshold still in situ. Two further points of access are located on the Via della Caupona: one leads directly to the staircase (28) connecting to the building’s upper floors, while the other leads to the ‘under stair’ space connecting between entrance (27) and the industrial space. Two additional entrances existed from within the Insula.

Calza’s 1953 site-plan indicates subdivisions within the ground-floor spaces (Fig. 5.48), the traces of which are no longer visible, and could only partially be verified by this survey. According to the 1953 site-plan the unit was subdivided into four distinct spaces, one of which is the stairs mentioned before (28). The remaining space was divided into a large taberna-like room, opening to the Via della Caupona (29), and two long rectangular rooms dividing the eastern part of the building. The size of the taberna is significant since it conforms to the depth of the Caseggiato’s western tabernae (23 and 26), and therefore structural continuity was maintained along the entire façade on the Via dell Caupona.

Once we have identified the spaces along the Via della Caupona (26, 27, 28 and 29) as a structural entity, the development of the western wing can be

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113. The pavements are overgrown; the subdivisions can only be reconstructed from the scarce remains, still visible where the partition walls intersected with the outer walls.
114. See above on tabernae (21 to 26); the block of tabernae seems to have been built against already existing structures, i.e. the porch (27) and the south-western rooms (28 and 29) along the Via della Caupona.
understood more clearly, since the entrance passage and the tabernae along the Via della Caupona were built earlier than the eastern ‘industrial’ part. The long wall on the courtyard side had been placed against the already existing north-eastern corner of the entrance passage (Fig. 5.49).115 The ‘courtyard wall’ continues into building IV ii 04, where it terminates against a pre-existing opus reticulatum/brick wall.116 In addition, the wall which confines the building on the southern side had also been built against an earlier opus reticulatum/brick wall of the Caupona del Pavone.117 All in all this suggests that the space available for the construction of the industrial unit was largely determined by pre-existing structures.

The ‘courtyard wall’ features a row of windows overlooking the open space of the courtyard, as well as a door opening, connecting the courtyard to the westernmost room of building IV ii 04. At a late period of occupation the door leading to the courtyard (Fig. 5.50) and the door between space 030 and building IV ii 04, were been walled-up.118 Nevertheless, from a structural point of view, space 030 and the western room of building IV ii 04 remained a continuum, while no party walls were shared between the Caupona and the western industrial space.119

115. A relative sequence between the courtyard wall and the porch’s eastern wall can be inferred from the fact that the porch’s eastern wall has a number of putlog holes which reach through, suggesting that the wall was standing free when it was constructed. The courtyard wall was built perpendicular to it, covering the first putlog hole.

116. See Building IV ii 14 and its structural relationship with building IV ii 4.

117. A small stretch of opus reticulatum can be identified near the north-eastern corner of building IV ii 04, pointing to an earlier opus reticulatum/brick wall which was integrated into the building’s northern wall.

118. The technique applied was opus vittatum, typical of later periods (c. mid 2nd to end mid 3rd century AD).

119. Points of contact exist between the Caupona and the building’s central room: the central room’s southern wall confined the Caupona’s courtyard.
Fig. 5.50 – The entrance leading to the industrial spaces IV ii 3 (030) and IV ii 4 was blocked during a late period of occupation

Fig. 5.51 – Niche inside the entrance passage (27)
its plaster layer (Fig. 5.51). Presumably it housed the Caseggiato’s protective deity; the niche’s location seems to lend support to such a function. Every person, coming and going, had to pass under the watchful eyes of the deities who protected the Caseggiato. A scatter of black tesserae was found near the southern wall of the passage, however not enough to confirm mosaic floors for this part of the Caseggiato. The passage still preserves a travertine threshold, suggesting that access to the Via della Caupona could be closed.

5.2.4 Building IV ii 4

Building IV ii 4 is located in the centre of the Insula (Fig. 5.52). On its western side it borders the industrial wing of the Caseggiato dell’Ercole, while it meets a range of tabernae (IV ii 14) on the southern side. On its eastern extent it is bounded by a passage which connects the Caseggiato’s courtyard with the inner open space in the south of the Insula. The building covers a rectangular area of 258.1 m², offering rooms which appear suitable for industrial use. While the building’s southern and western sides are bounded by neighbouring buildings, it boasts façades on its eastern and northern sides, facing the Insula’s internal open spaces (passage and courtyard). The main point of access is found on the building’s northern side, where a door opening was reached from the centre of the Caseggiato’s courtyard. A secondary entrance connected it to the eastern passage, where we also find a staircase leading to the upper floors; an additional access point was provided by an internal connection linking Building IV ii 04 to the Caseggiato dell’Ercole’s industrial wing (IV ii 03).

Although no specific mention of the building was made in the excavation reports, it can be assumed that building IV ii 4 was excavated during Calza’s campaign (c. 1940). We come across a reference to the building as late as 1960, when it was restored as part of the extensive conservation and restoration activities which took place within the Insula. In the course of these works a number of finds came to light, retrieved when the walls were cleaned before being consolidated. The finds consist of a scatter of coins, and a brickstamp, as well as marble and amphora fragments; however they do not allow us to draw any conclusions in terms of the building’s function. On the other hand the brickstamp might help us to develop a dating framework, suggesting the late Hadrianic/early Antonine periods into which we can place the construction of Building IV ii 4.

121. The travertine threshold preserves grooves.
122. G.d.Sc. Vol. 32; entry date 06.05.1960, Building IV ii 04; during the restoration of a wall the head of a figurine in red marble came to light, (described as ‘ermetta’, a herm, by the excavators); its preserved dimensions are c. 12.5 cm; very damaged, Hellenistic type (no inventory number provided);
123. In addition to the small finds, the cleaning activities also revealed a brick stamp in situ: on a fragmented brick of the dimensions 29 cm long and 2 cm thick, which was found on a projecting ledge (aletta sporgente), with circular stamp: EX PRAEDIS STERTINIAE BASSULAE/OFICINA LICINI DONATI (CIL XIV 2205).
124. Steinby (1977: 15, note 1) provides late Hadrianic/early Antonine dates for the production of this brick, which comes from the estate of Stertinia Bassula, the wife of Ti. Iulius Iulianus. One brickstamp might allow us to suggest only a terminus post quem, assuming that it was found in a primary context. During the author’s survey another brickstamp was discovered (room 031, in the southwestern wall, where it intersects with the southern wall which confines the space against the Caupona); the brickstamp has as yet not been studied, but will be examined by E. Rinaldi in the near future.
Fig. 5.52 – Industrial Building (IV ii 4)
The unit has hitherto not received much attention; it features in Packer’s survey of Ostia’s multiple dwellings destined for industrial use.\(^{125}\) It is included in Calza’s topological and chronological indices.\(^ {126}\)

**Fig. 5.53 – The walls of the industrial building (IV ii 4) were reinforced with buttresses**

**Layout and construction phases**

Building IV ii 04, as many of these ‘industrial’ establishments or ‘factories’, was solidly built. The walls are buttressed by heavy piers which increase the thickness of the walls in several places to 1.50 m. The building was constructed against two pre-existing opus reticulatum/brick walls, which constitute an integral part of tabernae IV ii 14. In this way the factory and the tabernae shared party walls: the tabernae’s northern confining wall formed the factory’s southern wall, while the tabernae’s westernmost wall continued due north to delimit the factory toward the western industrial wing (030) of the Caseggiato dell’Ercole. By making use of already existing walls, the building was completed by adding the eastern and the northern buttressed walls, and a row of central piers which corresponded to their southern and northern counterparts. These carried a series of intersecting arches which supported the cross vaults (Fig.5.53). The piers also helped in subdividing the space into smaller areas. Subsequent reconstructions can be identified in the south-western space which received an additional brick-face, cladding the piers and the western opus reticulatum/brick wall. During a later intervention, the northern buttresses were reinforced, and some of the rooms were further subdivided as well. In the north-western corner a water basin of rectangular shape was installed (Fig.5.54), emphasising the industrial use of the premises.\(^ {127}\) This is further underlined by the remains of single basalt blocks scattered within the factory, pointing to floor pavements which allowed heavy use. The south-eastern corner was taken up by the stairs, a door opening provided access to the room under the stairs from inside the industrial premises, while the stairs were reached from the outside passage; hence entry to the upper floors remained independent of the activities of the factory’s ground floor space.

**Fig. 5.54 – A water basin was built against the north-western corner of Building IV ii 4 (Scavi di Ostia, Archivio Fotografico, ref. 3703)**

From the assessment of Building IV ii 04 and the Caseggiato’s western wing (030) it can be established that these two ‘factories’ were functionally connected spaces. Although the two premises did not share party walls, they still shared a common main entrance, reached from the Caseggiato’s courtyard leading to the central room (01). The central room (01) proves critical since it was structurally linked to the Caseggiato’s industrial wing, and, equally

\(^{125}\) See Packer (1971: 14).

\(^{126}\) Calza (1953: 232, 238); Calza suggests that the building was reconstructed during the 2nd half of the 3rd century, this could possibly refer to the added brickface in the southwestern room, as well as some additional pillars (1953: 238).

\(^{127}\) See Ricciardi and Scrinari II (1996: 135-136, fig. 240) who date the water basins to the 3rd century AD.
Scavi di Ostia
Caseggiato (IV ii 5)

Wall
Threshold
Window
Door, walled up
Pillar
Arches
Waterdrain, well, fountain
Trial trenches 1994-1995
Staircase, landing

Fig. 5.55 – Caseggiato IV ii 5
important, its southern latericium wall delimited the Caupona’s courtyard, and apparently even encroached upon the Caupona’s courtyard to increase its own space. It seems very likely that the construction of the factories was connected to a larger reconstruction project, concerning *tabernae* IV ii 14, IV ii 04, and Building IV ii 5, and to a limited extent also the Caupona del Pavone (IV ii 6).

5.2.5 Caseggiato IV ii 5

Caseggiato IV ii 5 belongs to the lesser known structures located in the centre of the Insula (Fig. 5.55). It is rectangular in shape and seems of residential character; it covers an area of 309.3 m². Its eastern neighbour is the Terme del Faro, while to the south it is bounded by building IV ii 12. On the western side it is separated by a passage from the range of *tabernae* (IV ii 14), while to the north it is confined by a water cistern serving the baths, which came to occupy a former open space behind the Caseggiato dell’Ercole. Originally the main entrance of the Caseggiato IV ii 5 was located at its northern side, leading to the open space of the courtyard behind the Caseggiato dell’Ercole. The building’s layout points to several phases of reconstruction. These reconstructions even involved the relocation of the main entrance (Fig. 5.56); all in all the many interventions make it difficult to judge the building’s original plan. Different ground levels can be observed within the building’s plan: whilst the northern part largely complied with the street levels dictated by the *cardo* and the Caseggiato dell’Ercole, the southern part is located about 1.0 m lower, responding to the Insula’s sloping terrain. A row of seven relieving arches, placed at regular intervals are a conspicuous feature visible at the bottom of the building’s western wall (Fig. 5.57). The arches were presumably employed to counteract the sloping ground and to strengthen the structure.

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128. This issue will be further discussed in connection with the development of Caseggiato IV ii 5.
129. Already here a slight difference in levels can be noted: the northern door opening integrates a door step of c. 0.30 m height; presumably needed to level out the difference in height between the open space to the north and the level of the inner corridor (5).
130. See Blake (1973: 226).
Excavations and history of research

A brief entry in the giornale degli scavi informs us that a building with painted walls ‘pareti dipinte a fondo bianco’, had been brought to light to the ‘north’ of the Terme del Faro. Once again we can locate the period of excavation within Calza’s large-scale campaign in the year 1940. The next time we hear about the building is when a series of restorations were carried out as part of a larger project that swept through the Insula in the late 1950s and early 1960s. During these activities several walls within the building were restored; modern bricks bearing the year 1960, inserted into the restored brickwork, mark these interventions.

In addition, the Giornale degli Scavi reports that a number of small objects had been found during cleaning, when the structures were prepared for conservation. After a long break the building once again attracted the attention of the Soprintendenza: in 1994 five trial trenches were excavated to study

131. See Liedke (1995: 15, note 37) for the complete text of the entry in the G.d.Sc.
132. The direction ‘north’ was used by the excavators to provide a rough indication and does not reflect the actual location, which would be northwest of the baths.

Fig. 5.58 – Structures of unknown function (12 and 13) were built into the internal courtyard (04). The corner visible in the foreground froms part of room (06)(Scavi di Ostia, Archivio Fotografico, ref. 3711)
the relationship between the existing structures and the building’s preceding phases, the results have not yet been published.

As far as published research is concerned, the building received limited attention in Blake’s survey of Roman construction, whereas a more detailed description of the built structures followed almost three decades later, when it was studied for its wall-paintings by Liedke. The building’s wall-decorations remained the major focus for subsequent studies: Falzone’s volume on wall-paintings from Ostia (Scavi di Ostia XIV) dedicates a section to the Caseggiato IV ii 5, including a brief description of the architectural structures. Falzone draws on Liedke’s earlier survey, but also adds insights gained from the excavations she had conducted herself. The description of Caseggiato IV ii 5 presented here utilises Liedke’s and Falzone’s earlier work, but contributes new information gained by the author’s on-site study.

Building phases and layout

The building is preserved in its later stage, constructed in opus latericium. It has been ascribed to the period of Marcus Aurelius (161-180 AD). However, a brickstamp found in situ on a bipedalis suggests earlier dates between 123 and 155 AD. Furthermore, the building incorporates sections of opus reticulatum/brick walls belonging to the preceding building phase, attributed to the Hadrianic period. Therefore earlier dates seem more likely, and the possible date for the building’s reconstruction should be pushed back to the period of Antoninus Pius (138-161 AD). The earlier opus reticulatum/brick walls are only found in the building’s outer walls (southern confining wall and on the eastern side along the Terme del Faro), while none remained preserved within the building. Liedke therefore suggested that the reconstruction involved a total removal of the core of the earlier building, which led to a complete redesign of the internal division of the later building. Liedke offers an interesting observation, which is however difficult to prove: she suggests that the preceding building had formed a continuous unit with buildings IV ii 14 and IV ii 4. She noted that the passageway between buildings IV ii 14, 4 and IV ii 5 confirms to the same dimensions as the width of the tabernae of building IV ii 14, which led her to assume that the preceding building consisted of a continuous row of tabernae, probably extending from the Caupona del Pavone to the Terme del Faro. We shall however see in the next chapter that there are spatial and visual considerations which would speak against such a continuous building.

Building IV ii 5, as it has been preserved, has an attractive layout with only a few similar floor-plans found in Ostia. The floor plan bears a slight resemblance to the Caupona del Pavone (IV ii 6): a conspicuous feature found in both buildings is a fenestrated courtyard at the rear part of the building. The building’s rectangular ground plan is divided by a central wall into an eastern and western section. The western section is subdivided into a range of interconnected rooms (1, 2, 3, 8, 9, and 10), of which rooms (9) and (10) form part of the stair well leading to upper floors. The building’s eastern part comprises

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134. G.d.Sc. Vol. 74 (1994-95) contains the preliminary excavation reports from the trial trenches opened within IV ii 5 (1994); the excavations were directed by A. Pellegrino and conducted by P. Olivanti and S. Falzone; plans produced in connection with the excavations are available for viewing at the Archivio Disegni at the Scavi di Ostia.


139. The floor plan of building IV ii 5 has been re-mapped by the author and produced in ArcGIS (GeoStar, J. Lee and the author).


141. Blake (1973: 226) mentions a brickstamp bearing the name of Lucilla, found in situ; Blake (1973: 226, note 152) makes a vague reference to the brickstamp listed in CIL, col. 15 (1), p. 273; she further states that CIL suggests 123-155 AD as the period of use for Lucilla’s stamp; Steinby (1977: 52) also states between 123 to 155 AD as the period of use for Lucilla’s stamp.

142. Falzone (2003: 120) refers to a longitudinal wall within room 01 which had been razed to the ground presumable to prepare for the reconstruction of the early Antonine period.


145. The Insula delle Volte dipinte (III v 1) comes to mind, but also other buildings with a central corridor and ranges of rooms on both sides, e.g. III xvi 4.
an internal courtyard (4) and a corridor (05), as well as rooms (06) and (07). Corridor (05) leads from the northern entrance (later walled up) to the internal courtyard (04) on the southern end of the building, connecting to all rooms but room (01). Rooms (06) and (07) are located on the north-eastern side, along the wall bordering onto the Terme del Faro. Rooms (06) and (07) received light and air only from the corridor and the courtyard.

146. Rooms 6 and 7 have been identified as cubicula by Liedke (1995) and Falzone (2003), the reason being that these rooms did not have any direct sources of light, and were of moderate dimensions.

147. Rooms 6 and 7 preserved several wall-paintings, and have therefore been studied in detail by Liedke (1995) and later Falzone (2003). Liedke dates the decorations in room 6 into a Pre-Severan phase, hence they must have been applied before the northern entrance had been walled-up (Liedke 1995: 15).

Construction considerations: light, air, access and building sequence

‘Light and air’ seemed to have been a major concern, and have influenced various construction decisions in observable ways. There are no windows in the building’s eastern wall, since it abuts a pre-existing wall, confining the Caseggiato IV ii 5 against the baths. However a number of window apertures are found in the western wall along the passage; they remained open in room (05), whereas the windows had been walled up in rooms (01) and (02). These windows, although included in the original design, had already been blocked during the original building phase. As a result of the these changes, room (01), which was one of the largest rooms within the building, was left with only two windows in the eastern wall, opening to the courtyard. Hence the courtyard remained the only source of light and air for room (01), while room (02) only received light from the corridor and the other rooms. Throughout the building’s lifetime the open courtyard (04) kept functioning as the most important light and air well for the majority of the rooms. During a later phase of occupation, two small rooms (11) were built into the courtyard (04) (Fig. 5.58). Their function is not at all clear. Liedke suggests that they could have been the substructure of an internal staircase which had been built into the courtyard at a late point of occupation. In any case, by inserting these rooms, half the size of the courtyard was taken away, reducing it to a corridor. However, despite these overall constrictions, the added structures still respected the window which brought light into room (06). This is evident from the skewed angle of the buttress-like structure, which had been placed against the eastern wall of the courtyard (04). Moreover, since the later reconstruction seems responsive to the needs of air and light in room (06), this illustrates that room 06 was still in use at a late period of occupation.

Turning our attention once more to the courtyard (04), it seems to reveal a number of clues about the building’s different stages of reconstruction: almost all major changes that occurred within Caseggiato IV ii 5 are reflected in the courtyard’s walls. The eastern wall which confines the courtyard against the Terme del Faro still preserves the opus reticulatum/
brick of the Hadrianic building phase. In contrast, the courtyard’s western wall (shared with room 01) and the northern wall (shared with room 06 and the corridor) belong to the major reconstruction in the Antonine period (opus latericium), which gave the building its existing layout. The southern wall is of specific interest since it not only includes in its lower parts stretches of opus reticulatum/brick from the preceding building phase, it also offers some indications about the link between building IV ii 5 and its neighbouring building IV ii 12: an interesting feature is a projecting arch (constructed in opus latericium). It was placed into the southeastern corner to reinforce the southern wall at a critical point of intersection with the eastern wall (Fig. 5.59). The corner represents a crucial spot where three buildings meet, and it is easy to imagine that constructions which took place in one building would affect or even compromise the structural stability of the neighbouring buildings. Hence the supporting arch might have been a device to counteract structural stress caused through works carried out in the Terme del Faro, which affected the Caseggiato IV ii 5, and also building IV ii 12.

The courtyard’s southern wall runs back to back with an opus reticulatum/brick wall of building IV ii 12, hence no party walls were shared between the Caseggiato IV ii 5 and its southern neighbour. Today the structural remains show a large aperture broken into the opus reticulatum/brick wall of building IV ii 12, connecting through to the southern wall of building IV ii 5 (Fig. 5.60). It is difficult to determine whether a proper doorway, linking them physically and functionally, ever existed between these buildings. However, there are a number of indications which would support such a view. The issues under concern are the points of access to building IV ii 5. As stated before the main entrance was originally located at the northern side, but was blocked when the baths’ water cistern was installed, which occurred most probably in the Severan period. Two additional entrances, placed in rooms (09) and (10 stairwell), were connected through room (09) to the western range of rooms, and through room (08) to the corridor (05). Rooms (09) and (08) were successively blocked off, and as a result the ground floor became disconnected from the upper floors, and from the northernmost part of the building. Most of all, these interventions seem to have left the building’s ground floor without direct access to the outside space. Liedke concluded that the building in its later phase did not have a separate entrance at ground floor level any longer, and therefore suggested that the ground floor was only accessible from upstairs via the presumed stairs (rooms 11) inside the courtyard (04). This seems rather unlikely, and we should think of alternatives and hence consider a possible connection between the courtyard (04) and building IV ii 12. This however implies that we have to reconsider the relationship between these neighbouring buildings.

Caseggiato IV ii 5 and its neighbours

At the core of the discussion is the connection between the Terme del Faro and its neighbouring buildings; again and again we see how changes in one building affect the others. As discussed earlier, the changes that occurred in the northern part of the Caseggiato IV ii 5 were related to the construction of the baths’ water cistern; therefore we should assume a close link, and probably a shared ownership.

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148. Here we find the blocked door opening (mentioned above) which earlier provided a connection to the space which later became occupied by the heated rooms of the Terme del Faro (see Fig. 5.26 above).
149. The Terme del Faro, building IV ii 12 and building IV ii 5.
150. The opus reticulatum/brick walls have been attributed to the Hadrianic period, hence they belong to the preceding building phase.
151. It would not be too far off the mark to attribute such a radical intervention to the 1940s excavators.
152. The 1953 site plan does not identify a door opening but indicates missing walls; see plan section 13.
153. The southern wall ends with a straight edge slightly short of the eastern side of the large aperture; rooms 11, which were added at a later stage still confirm to a size which assures that a passage of about 2.5 m wide remains clear, hence transforming the courtyard into a passageway.
154. Gering’s suggestion that the building had been completely abandoned during the late 3rd century (2004; with colour-coded site plan attached) is both difficult to maintain and to refute; his suggestion seems to rest on the fact that the building did not have an entrance at ground floor level.
between the baths and the Caseggiato IV ii 5; a common ownership was probably also extended to building IV ii 12. The latter consists of a relatively simple ground floor layout, however, on its eastern side it features a substantial flight of stairs, which, if it had to serve only the upper floors above building IV ii 12, would have seemed rather out of scale, and one would have to put its usefulness into question. However, if seen in connection with building IV ii 5, it would make a valuable addition, as it would allow access to the upstairs spaces independently of the building’s northern staircase. Two independent staircases would provide a structured access to the upstairs spaces, which could have been split up into several units and be rented out independently, serving different rental requirements.

Fig. 5.60 – Opus reticulatum structures of the adjacent Building IV ii 12
Fig. 5.61 – Caupona del Pavone, IV ii 6
5.2.6 Caupona del Pavone (IV ii 6)

The Caupona del Pavone (Fig. 5.61) is located in the western part of the Insula, positioned on the Via della Caupona which was also named after the same building. It occupies an almost rectangular area of about 385 m² (c. 16 x 24 m). On its northern side the Caupona is flanked by the industrial wing of the Caseggiato dell’Ercole (IV ii 3), to the east by building IV ii 14, and to the south by Caseggiato IV ii 7. The Caupona’s only façade is along the Via della Caupona; here we find the only points of access: four door openings in a row, all directly connected to the street.

The building was excavated in the first days of July 1940, forming part of Calza’s large-scale excavation campaign. A series of photographs is available which were taken during the excavations to document the building’s condition. These photographs reveal that the walls were only preserved to a relatively small height (c. 1.50 m); however they still retained substantial remains of painted plaster and wall paintings still intact. Conservation works commenced immediately after the excavations, as the stability of the walls seemed compromised in several locations. Since the protection of the wall-paintings took priority, specific attention was paid to the walls of the internal rooms. It was decided to restore the walls to a height of three metres to stabilize them, and to mount supports using reinforced concrete.

Fig. 5.62 – The main entrance to the Caupona, closed for visitors; the arch is a later intervention to provide structural support; the corridor is paved with opus spicatum (small tiles laid in herringbone pattern)

In addition, several other walls in the entrance area were restored, re-using original building material which had been retrieved during the excavation. Hence, the state of the Caupona, as we observe it today, is to a large extent the result of Gismondi’s interventions, as well as other subsequent restoration activities. The Caupona is inaccessible to Ostia’s visitors, a precaution taken to protect the wall-paintings; a special permit is required to get past the modern iron-gate which bars the main entrance (Fig. 5.62) while the front rooms, directly linked to the street, have remained open to visitors. Different levels of height can be observed between the front and the rear of the building: the entrances on the Via della Caupona open at street level, whereas the courtyard in the rear is located about 0.90 m lower, and was reached by descending four steps (Fig. 5.63).

156. The Caupona del Pavone, ‘The Hostel of the Peacock”, received its name from a painting of a peacock found in the niche of the aedicula placed in the outer courtyard (07). In this study the term caupona refers to a ‘hostel’; although the use of the terms is debatable, a discussion of terminology is not within the remit of this study. See Hermansen (1982: 192) for a discussion of the various terms caupona, deversorium, hospitium and stabulum which all denote what modern language would call hotels.

157. The Caupona del Pavone will be referred to as ‘Caupona’. However we have to keep in mind that the building remained a private domus until the Severan period and served as a caupona (hostel) only in its late stage of occupation.

158. See Gasparri (1970: 6, fig. 2); the photographs are kept in the Archivio Fotografico of the Soprintendenza di Roma sede Ostia.

159. The Caupona’s restoration was directed by I. Gismondi; see Gasparri (1970: 5).


161. Restoration activities were carried out between 1965 and 1968, and in July 1969, see Gasparri (1970: 5).
Owing to its well-preserved wall-paintings, the Caupona has received considerable attention, and has been referred to in several publications on Ostia; the most complete treatment is Gasparri’s monograph.\textsuperscript{162} Although primarily focused on wall-paintings, it dedicates one chapter to the building’s structural development.\textsuperscript{163} The brief description presented in the next section combines Gasparri’s observations with the author’s own on-site study. For this purpose Pascolini’s site plan has been redrawn (see Fig. 5.61 above), and his reference systems adapted to the numeric reference system used by this study.\textsuperscript{164}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.8\textwidth]{Fig. 5.63 – Difference in height between the Caupona’s floor levels (corridor 06) and the rear courtyard (07)}
\caption{Fig. 5.63 – Difference in height between the Caupona’s floor levels (corridor 06) and the rear courtyard (07)}
\end{figure}

\textit{Building phases and spatial layout}

The building has undergone various phases of transformation. Initially it was a private domus and was only transformed into a caupona (hostel) during the late period of its occupation. The original core of the building, dated to the early Hadrianic period,\textsuperscript{165} is still preserved in the \textit{opus reticulatum}/brick walls.\textsuperscript{166} Major changes took place in the Severan period, when the building still served as a comfortable private dwelling. The existing wall-paintings and mosaic pavements have been attributed to this phase.\textsuperscript{167} The building developed its identity as a caupona at a later stage, when the counter (bar) and the walled shelves were installed in room (08). Since these had been placed not only against the existing wall-paintings,

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{162}Gasparri (1970); see also Pavolini (2006: 203-206) for a general description; see Hermansen’s survey of the Caupona (1982: 167-168); see Calza and Becatti (1971: 49); see Becatti (1961: 176-177, fig. 64, mosaics 324-326); see Calza (1953: 145, 226,237) on the building’s dating sequences; see Ricciardi and Scrinari (1996 Vol. I: 46-47, 136-137) on the building’s water facilities; see also Falzone on wall-paintings (2007: 134-141).
\item \textsuperscript{163}Gasparri (1970: 7-14).
\item \textsuperscript{164}For the study of the Caupona it was not necessary to draw a new site plan. The available plan, drawn by A. Pascolini, published in Gasparri (1970: 5, fig. 1) includes detailed information on different structural phases based on building techniques; Pascolini’s plan (inv. 443) is kept in the Archivio Disegni (Soprintendenza Roma, sede Ostia).
\item \textsuperscript{165}A pre-existing building, dated to the Augustan period might be suggested by the earliest and deepest phase of the well, whose well head is visible above in room XVI, see Ricciardi and Scrinari I (1996: 46-47).
\item \textsuperscript{166}See Gasparri (1970: 12-13); \textit{opus reticulatum}/brick walls are found in room 8, courtyard 7, as well as in sections of the northern and eastern walls confining the spaces 16, 15, 14 and 11.
\item \textsuperscript{167}Gasparri (1970: 13).
\end{itemize}
but also against the somewhat later renewed plaster socle, a *terminus post quem* could be established for the building’s last transformation, dating these activities to the first half of the 3rd century AD. Most of all, by preserving the exquisite decorations, which were evidently still in good state, the elegant style of the previous building was transferred onto the Caupona. In contrast, the interventions which were introduced during the period of the Caupona proper were of a rather modest kind, e.g. the solidly walled benches added to the walls in the courtyard (07), and possibly the cocciopesto socle in the inner courtyard (04), as well as the new counter and the shelves in room (08). Ultimately, the Caupona, as all other buildings in Ostia, was abandoned. It was reported that during the excavations a huge heap of mosaic tesserae was found in room (03), stripped from the pavements and apparently collected with the intention to be taken away and possibly used elsewhere. This clearly documents the phase when the Caupona became ‘spolia’ like the rest of Ostia.

The Caupona’s internal layout is organised along a central corridor (1), leading from the main entrance into the inner part of the building (see plan Fig. 5.61). The corridor forms a central axis, dividing the building into a distinct northern and southern part. The internal division is also reflected in the access points found along the street front. Accordingly, the building’s main entrance is flanked by two additional door openings to the north, and one to the south. The first entrance gives access to a separate, rectangular room of modest proportions (11), directly accessible from the street; the second door leads to a series of rooms (12, 13, 14, 15 and 16) annexed to the building. Both entrances have travertine thresholds preserved in situ, but do not present any traces of locking systems. In contrast, the fourth and last entrance, leading to a *taberna* (17), has a travertine threshold still in situ, with the locking devices typical of *tabernae*. The central entrance (the third opening) was clearly emphasised as the most important one: pilasters are found on both sides of the door, which probably supported a triangular pediment. The main entrance preserved its travertine threshold, with locking devices still visible. Between the main entrance and the fourth entrance (*taberna*), there is a window opening at the height of 2 m, bringing light into a stairwell (02). From the height of the façade, preserved to a maximum of c. 2.50 m, not much can be inferred. However, the presence of stairs proves the existence of an upper floor, which, given the modest plan of the stairs, was probably also the only upper floor present.

The central corridor (01) leads into the inner part of the building; interestingly enough, all doors (except for one), which once connected the corridor to the northern part have been blocked, whereas on the southern side a number of utility rooms have been installed. Upon entering the building, immediately to the right are the stairs leading to the upper floor; in the small space under the stairs (02), a drain was discovered, embedded in *cocciopesto*, probably used as a *latrina*. Directly after the division by an arch, a room of rectangular form (03), paved in *bipedales*, is found. Judging by the modest dimensions and the lack of a window, it could have been used as a storage or service room. Further into the building, the corridor opens into a small courtyard (04) of squarish shape; the presence of two drain holes indicates that the area was unroofed and served to collect rain water; in addition, the open space also brought light and air into the inner rooms of the building. The courtyard is covered in mosaic, rendered in large *tesserae*, with a central white area, surrounded by a black border. From the south-western corner of the courtyard, a small room (05) opens, assigned as a *latrina*, with a drainage channel and pavement in *cocciopesto*.

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172. Some of these doors seem to have been walled-up already during the initial building phase since there are no lintels present, and instead the regular wall just continues once the apertures had been filled; a similar ‘change of plan’ can be observed in various other buildings, e.g. VI ii 5, where several windows had been walled up already during the original building phase.
173. The arch is a late intervention judging by the *opus vittatum*, probably Severan period; incidentally it is also the place where the modern iron-gate has been placed.
The door at the back of the courtyard leads to a traversing corridor (06) paved with mosaics in alternating black and white semi-circular patterns.\textsuperscript{174} From this corridor a number of rooms can be reached, most notably room (08), where the Caupona’s counter had been placed (Fig. 5.64). In the building’s earlier phase, room (08) probably assumed the function of a reception room. Corridor (06) also connects to room (10) and to the outside courtyard (07), located at the rear part of the building. The door leading to courtyard (07) is of special interest: it opens in a skewed angle so as to facilitate movement between corridor and courtyard. This odd situation developed when the small room (09) had been added to room (08). Prior to this intervention, the opening to the outside corridor was presumably as wide as corridor (01), thus corresponding to the main entrance on the street front. This correspondence gives us an indication about the building’s initial layout: a central corridor, with a door opening on each end, flanked by large spaces on either side, which had been subdivided into smaller rooms by partition walls.\textsuperscript{175} While the central corridor seems to have remained functioning throughout the building’s history, the internal rooms have been re-organised in the course of its occupation, responding to different needs at different times: the northern and southern parts have been rearranged by either blocking existing door openings or by subdividing rooms into smaller units.

The outside courtyard (07) was reached from the traversing corridor (06) by descending four steps (see Fig. 5.63 above). The courtyard’s original form was rectangular until the south-western corner was sacrificed for the construction of room (09). A \textit{lararium} in aedicula-shape, constructed in \textit{opus vittatum} (Fig. 5.65) with a triangular pediment in \textit{opus latericium},\textsuperscript{176} was built against the eastern confining wall. The shrine seems to predated room (09), when room (09) was added the shrine’s surrounding space was considerably restricted. The Caupona’s rear courtyard is bounded in the east by building IV ii 14; and in the north by buildings IV ii 3 and 4. In fact, the Caupona’s courtyard shares party-walls with these buildings; a latericum wall

\textsuperscript{174} See Becatti (1961: 176, mosaic no. 324).
\textsuperscript{175} Casparri (1970: 12-13) alerts us to this particular building type, not uncommon in Ostia; an example can be found in Reg III xvi 4.
\textsuperscript{176} The shrine features a niche with a painting of a blue peacock spreading its tail-feathers (the peacock gave the building its name); see Bakker for a detailed description (1994: 230, catalogue entry no. 67).
Fig. 5.65 – The aedicula-type niche located in the south-eastern corner of the Caupona’s courtyard; walled benches were placed against a crude wall; the latter was built against the *opus reticulatum* (brick) wall of building IV ii 14.

Fig. 5.66 – The backdrop to the northern bench was built against the courtyard’s northern wall shared with buildings IV ii 3 and 4.
belonging to buildings IV ii 3 and 4, confines the courtyard to the north, while a well-constructed *opus reticulatum* brick wall, which constitutes a structural part of building IV ii 14, confines the eastern side of the courtyard. Furthermore, a range of windows in the eastern wall (*opus reticulatum* brick), placed at a height of c. 2.50 m, allows light to enter building IV ii 14; hence the Caupona’s courtyard serves as a light well not only for room 16, but also for the westernmost *taberna* of Building IV ii 14. All this suggests that there must have been some tacit agreement between the owners of Building IV ii 14 and the Caupona. Even more so since at the time when the building functioned as a hostel or inn, a very crude wall was placed against the *opus reticulatum* brick (decorated plaster is still visible behind the crude wall), and against the northern *latericium* wall (Fig. 5.66). The ‘crude’ wall served as a backrest for solidly walled benches placed against the wall to offer seating for the Caupona’s patrons and lodgers. Upon entering the courtyard, immediately to the left (north) of the entrance, there is a flight of narrow stairs, leading to an underground ‘inspection chamber’, also constructed during the phase when the building functioned as a caupona, when it was apparently necessary to have better access to the walled shaft of a well, which communicates with the well-head placed in space (16) above (Fig. 5.67). 

Last but not least we should turn our attention to the Caupona’s northern section, comprising rooms (11, 12, 13, 14, 15 and 16), and to the southern tract where we find a *taberna* (17) with an adjacent retrobottega (18) (backroom). These parts seemed to have experienced an independent development from the rest of the building. Both sections are directly linked to the street space, while completely or partially disconnected from the internal part of the building. Various dating sequences have been proposed for the development of these rooms, however there seems little agreement.\textsuperscript{178} In terms of their function rooms 14 and 15 have been interpreted as cubicula,\textsuperscript{179} while spaces 11 and 17/18 probably served as *tabernae*, dedicated to commercial activities. It can be established however that during the phase of the Caupona proper, both sections had already been cut off from the core of the building. Therefore, these relatively independent parts might have allowed the Caupona’s owner to respond to the different requirements of his customers, ranging from lodgers for a single night to long-term tenants. The *tabernae* (17/18) allowed direct access and might have been rented out to long-term tenants independently of the Caupona.

The Caupona’s most striking characteristic is its outwards focus: all points of access are concentrated along its 16 metres of street front. Within the Insula the Caupona forms an exception: it is the only building within the group which does not interact with the inner part of the Insula. Furthermore, it does not share party walls with its northern and southern neighbours. The Caupona’s fairly isolated position vis-à-vis the Insula and its pronounced outward focus could have various reasons. One of these seems to be rooted in the plot-size typical of the *domus* with its narrow end on the street front, providing individual access to the street space. The building remained a private dwelling until the Severan period, when it was eventually turned into the Caupona. During its entire period of use the building held on to its conservative layout, while its immediate neighbourhood had already been transformed into multi-storey commercial/residential buildings starting from the Late Hadrianic/Early Antonine periods. During these transformations the Caupona’s field of negotiation seems restricted to its inner courtyard which shared party walls with *tabernae* IV ii 14 and the central

\textsuperscript{178} Ricciardi and Scrinari I (1996: 44-46) propose that rooms 11, 14 and 15 re-use reticulate walls dated to the Augustan period, while Van Dalen (1991: 263) proposes Severan dates for parts of the walls in the north-eastern section of the Caupona, suggesting a ‘late use of *opus reticulatum* in Ostia’; Ricciardi and Scrinari’s suggestion can be ruled out since these rooms have been built against the existing *opus reticulatum* (brick) wall of Hadrianic date, which provides a *terminus post quem* for the partition walls in *opus reticulatum*.

\textsuperscript{179} Gasparri (1970: 11).
room of the factories related to the Caseggiato dell’Ercole (IV ii 3 and 4). Within the small world of the Caupona’s rear courtyard we are allowed a glimpse into the gains as well as the concessions made by the Caupona’s owners, striving to adapt to an ever changing neighbourhood. The Caupona’s outward focus seems to have suited both the earlier domus and the later caupona function. During the late phase of occupation when the building functioned as a caupona, the outward focus seemed appropriate and reflects a response to external dynamics, related to the Caupona’s commercial focus, attracting visitors and customers from outside the Insula.
Fig. 5.68 – Caseggiato IV ii 7
5.2.7 Caseggiato IV ii 7

Positioned at the western side of the Insula, the Caseggiato IV ii 7 (Fig. 5.68) is located on the Via della Caupona, with its western façade facing the street, while the other three sides are bounded by neighbouring buildings: the Caupona del Pavone to the north, buildings IV ii 13 and IV ii 9 to the east, and building IV ii 08 to the south. The latter forms a structural continuation of building IV ii 07; notwithstanding this, Ostia’s topographical index lists the buildings as independent entities.\(^{180}\) The Caseggiato IV ii 7 has a commercial-residential character, and covers an area of 535 m\(^2\). All access points along the Via della Caupona open at street level; they link the building to the city’s public space, while a secondary entrance connects the building also to the internal courtyard inside the Insula.

Excavations and history of research

The caseggiato is one of the lesser known buildings within the Insula, and has hardly attracted any scholarly attention. It received limited consideration in Van Dalen’s survey of constructions in opus reticulatum.\(^{182}\) The building’s history of excavation cannot be reconstructed; however we have reason to assume that it was excavated during Calza’s campaign, although no reports are available. As mentioned before, there was no concern for any standard documentation to record the excavation process, unless any special finds were made. Nevertheless, a series of photographs is available from the archives; these offer information on the state of preservation of some of the building’s walls prior to their restoration (Fig. 5.69). In 1960 when the large restoration campaign was carried out within the Insula, several walls of the caseggiato were consolidated and partly reconstructed. A number of small finds were retrieved during cleaning in preparation for these interventions.\(^{183}\) Although the following finds have been retrieved in the layer between surface and mosaic tesserae:

a) decorated base of a vase made of marble: decoration in bas relief; motif: bacchiale; preserved dimensions: h 0.10 m diameter at the base 0.14 m, diameter of the body 0.18 m. From the decoration only the legs and feet of female figures are preserved.

b) 5 bronze coins:
   - 1 MB (dupondius/as) of Nerva (Coh. II n. 110);
   - 1 MB (dupondius/as) hardly legible of Alexander Severus (imp. SEV. ALEXANDER AUG);
   - 1 PB (as) of Maximinus Thrax (Hercules-type) (Coh VI, 56);
   - 1 PB (antoninianus) of Gallienus (Coh V, 24);
   - 1 PB (a small bronze coin) from the 4th century, illegible (obv: bust of imperator with diadem; rev.: standing figure not identifiable);

in addition, another object was found: a small lump of vitreous paste, hemispheric, with a diameter of 1.5 cm of light blue colour (inv. 5836).

During cleaning in preparation for the restoration of IV ii 7, the following finds have been retrieved:

180. The total area of both buildings amounts to 942 m\(^2\).
182. See Van Dalen (1991) proposing a new chronology for the late use of opus reticulatum in Ostia. Van Dalen’s study set out to challenge the conventional dates for opus reticulatum/brick constructions as established in Calza’s chronological index (1953: 234-237).
183. G.d.Sc. Vol. 32 (1956-1961) entry date 22.02.1960; 184. Ricciardi and Scrinar II (1996: 137, fig. 244), suggest 3\(^{rd}\) to 4\(^{th}\) century dates for the construction of the water basin, presumably based on construction material and technique (i.e. tufa blocks).
185. See Van Dalen’s plan of Building IV ii 07 suggests a tentative chronology for its building phases (1991: 239, fig. 3).
Fig. 5.69 – Caseggiato IV ii 7, hall 06-07, north-western corner prior to restoration (Scavi di Ostia, Archivio Fotografico, ref. 1768)

Fig. 5.70 – Caseggiato IV ii 7, fountain placed in the northern section of the courtyard (01) (Scavi di Ostia, Archivio Fotografico, ref. 1168)
uses a combined technique of *opus reticulatum* (brick/blocks) and *opus vittatum* (alternating courses of tufa-blocks and brick). This combination seems noteworthy since internal and external wall-facings are treated differently: the inner wall-facings are constructed in *opus reticulatum* (brick/block), with a distinct variation as the corners were reinforced employing quoining in *opus vittatum* (Fig. 5.71). In contrast, the eastern outer wall-facings (confining the building against IV ii 13 and 9) were constructed in *opus vittatum*. Such combinations are not uncommon at Ostia and are found in different variations whereby the techniques for the outer wall facing and the wall facing on the inside are different from each other.

The *caseggiato* has undergone a few stages of reconstruction and a number of minor interventions occurring during a late occupation phase: these concern the closing off of former door openings (19 and 20, as well as 17 and 13), as well as the reinforcement of the eastern and western walls in room (07), and the partition between rooms (06) and (07). In addition, the building’s original layout included an additional room placed along its northern wall (against the Caupona), where traces of a perpendicular wall are still visible, which was connected to the southern wall of room (20) (Fig. 5.71).

Although the *tabernae* along the Via della Caupona open to the street space, their door openings (ranging from 1.20 to 2.00 m) are not quite as wide as often found in *tabernae*; most of the rooms along the street preserve their travertine thresholds still *in situ*. In contrast, the rooms which open to the inner courtyard have narrow door apertures and would therefore not really suggest a commercial use. While the rooms in the south-western section of the courtyard still preserve their travertine thresholds, the north-eastern rooms (02 and 03) lack thresholds altogether and instead preserve a course of bipedales. The latter would suggest that these rooms were not locked, or the thresholds have been removed. It is difficult to put forward an idea about the function of the interconnected rooms (02 and 03). The archival photograph shows a large quantity of marble fragments piled up in room (03) (Fig. 5.72),

186. Archivio Fotografico (Soprintendenza Roma sede Ostia) Inv. No. 1770.
presumably the remains of marble revetments used in wall decoration, while a concentration of black and white tesserae is still found in the northeastern corner of room 02. To the south of room (03) there is a narrow space (04) which served as a latrina (Fig. 5.73). This makes the Caseggiato IV ii 07 the only dwelling within the Insula which integrated toilet facilities within the building.

Across the corridor, on the south-eastern side we find a sizeable rectangular space (Fig. 5.74), originally constructed as a single hall, which was later subdivided into rooms (06 and 07). This space allows insights into the development of the caseggiato, since all stages of reconstruction which occurred over time seem reflected in hall (07/06). Its southern wall is shared with building IV ii 8 and preserves the *opus reticulatum*/brick which constitutes the early phase of the building, dated to the Hadrianic period. In contrast, the eastern wall, shared with building IV ii 9, comes from the slightly later phase and is constructed in a combination of *opus reticulatum*(brick)/*opus vittatum*. The eastern wall’s counterpart on the courtyard side is a stretch of wall constructed in *opus vittatum*. Built against the north-eastern corner of room (23), presumably to close a former door opening similar to the one still present in room (08), the piece of wall integrated a pier, serving as a buttress to stabilise the walls. Its corresponding pier is found in the eastern wall. To further strengthen the structure, two larger pillars were placed against the eastern and western buttresses, and at a later point, the walls were reinforced once more by placing stretches of *opus vittatum* against the eastern and western walls.

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187. The presence of mosaic floors is also indirectly confirmed by the G.d.Sc., which document that several finds were made when the surfaces of the mosaics were cleared; see G.d.Sc. Vol. 32 (1956-1961) entry date 22.02.1960.

188. The identification of room 04 as latrina rests on the assessment of the excavators; today the space is completely overgrown and cannot be examined.

189. In contrast, the latrina of the Terme del Faro seems to be an addition that occurred during a late phase, turning a back-room of a taberna into a latrine.

190. Remains of the partition wall have only been preserved where it joins the eastern confining wall, while hardly any traces are visible of its continuation. The photograph in Fig.

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5.74 (Scavi di Ostia, Archivio Fotografico, ref. 3764) clearly shows the former course of the partition wall.
Finally, at a late period of use a partition wall was inserted, running across the space to divide the hall into a larger southern (07) and a smaller northern room (06). Both spaces could be accessed separately, while only the door opening to room (06) retained fragments of a travertine threshold.

Across the inner courtyard, almost diagonally opposite room (06/07), we find room (17), which seems conspicuously dedicated to water. In the centre of the northern half of room (17), a walled block (opus vittatum) was placed, containing clay water pipes on its western side, and a vertical water drain on its southern side. The feature might be associated with running water; however, this needs to be further investigated. Along the entire length of the southern wall we find a low walled ledge, forming a bench-like structure. The door opening to the courtyard was walled up at some point, while an entrance was crudely broken into the southern wall, connecting to the passage. The function of this room is not at all clear, but it seems related to water. Room 17 is completely overgrown; a detailed survey would require the removal of layers of vegetation.

Relative chronology

The caseggiato’s most striking feature is the specific construction technique which combines opus reticulatum (brick/tufo) and opus vittatum. It is represented in the building’s eastern and northern confining walls, while the southern and south-western sections preserve the earlier opus reticulatum (brick) walls. It therefore appears that the reconstruction activities cut diagonally across the building, preserving all earlier opus reticulatum/brick walls which were directly or indirectly linked to Building IV ii 08, while the rest was built (or rebuilt) slightly later in a different technique. These activities allow us to suggest tentatively a relative chronology for these construction phases: all sections in the south and southwest retaining the opus reticulatum/brick suggest Hadrianic dates; while the northern and northeastern parts, which feature opus reticulatum (brick)/opus vittatum, imply somewhat later dates, possibly Late Hadrianic to Early Antoninus Pius. From a practical point of view it seems that the later building phase started from the eastern part of the building and moved towards the Via della Caupona, terminating at the northern wall of passage (15), which still formed part of the earlier opus reticulatum/brick construction.

A relative chronology between the Caupona and the abutting section of Caseggiato IV ii 7 can be suggested from the northern wall (code IVii07_01_02) of Caseggiato IV ii 7. The latter was built against the pre-existing Caupona wall,192

191. Dimensions of the walled block structure: 1.20 x 0.95, h = 1.40 m.

192. This can be established since the putlog holes of wall
and hence the northern section of Building IV ii 7 was built later than the Caupona. The relationship between Caseggiato IV ii 7 and its eastern neighbour is again different; here we find the western structures of Building IV ii 13 placed against the earlier opus reticulatum/opus vittatum wall of Caseggiato IV ii 7. The same relative chronology can be established between Building IV ii 7 and its eastern neighbour IV ii 9: the western walls of Building IV ii 9 were built against the already existing eastern confining wall of Building IV ii 7 (Fig. 5.75), hence Building IV ii 7 predates its eastern neighbours IV ii 9 (western section only) and 13. While we can establish a relative chronology between these neighbouring buildings, it is still interesting to note that the eastern walls (opus reticulatum (brick/tufa)/opus vittatum) were built without any door apertures (except for the passage). This could suggest that they were built against existing structures, which were then later replaced by Buildings IV ii 9 and 13.

5.2.8 Building VI ii 8

Being structurally linked to the Caseggiato IV ii 07, Building VI ii 8 (Fig. 5.76) constitutes the southern wing of the joint building. Calza considered the building as independent and hence it received its own distinct reference. It is bounded by the Via della Caupona on its western side, while on its eastern and southern sides it is delimited by open (unexcavated) space. Building VI ii 8 is L-shaped and covers an area of c. 406 m². It features façades on two sides: on the Via della Caupona; and towards the east, overlooking the ‘open’ (unexcavated) space. On its northern side it shares a common wall with the Caseggiato IV ii 7, and was also internally connected to it by means of a corridor. Building IV ii 8 has access points to the city’s street system on the Via della Caupona, while on its southern side it seems connected to a courtyard-like space which was only partially excavated.

In terms of its excavation and subsequent restoration Building IV ii 8 shared the fate of most other buildings within the Insula, and hence no reference is found in the 1940s excavation reports. In 1960 when the building was restored, the discovery of a small fragmented head, sculpted in marble (giallo antico) was reported.193 The photographic records available at the Soprintendenza allow an impression of the built structures at the time when they were cleared and presumably prepared for restoration (Fig. 5.77). At present, Building IV ii 8 is largely overgrown and covered in layers of vegetation obscuring the walls, which make most of the rooms inaccessible.

Layout and construction phases

Building IV ii 8 is composed of an eastern and a western section divided by a corridor; the latter connects IV ii 8 to IV ii 7; the corridor ends at room 23, which seems to have played an intermediary role, allowing movement from one part of the building to

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193. G.d.Sc. entry date 29.04.1960, reports for IV, Is. II 8: amidst the conglomerate of a wall, a small head in coloured marble was found (giallo antico). The right part of the face is completely missing; it probably represents a woman with a slightly elongated face (preserved dimension ca. 12 cm); no inventory number is provided.
the other. The building’s eastern section comprises a row of rooms, all lined up along the hallway, with only a single door opening, linked to the corridor; the doors still preserve the travertine thresholds. On their eastern side the rooms have window-openings (Fig. 5.78), overlooking the open space to the east. The western section is organised completely differently; all rooms are linked to the outside space, while no internal links, connecting the rooms with each other, existed. On the side of the Via della Caupona, a staircase, directly reached from the street space, leads to the building’s upper floors. The spacious room west of the corridor was originally connected to the corridor and the door was walled-up during a later phase of use, while the room’s only remaining door was connected to the open space in the south.

The building’s original structures are built of opus reticulatum/brick of the Hadrianic period. This includes the common wall shared between IV ii 07 and IV ii 08, which runs in an east-west direction through the entire width of the building. This wall is crucial since it acted as the building’s spine from which all perpendicular walls of the northern part (IV ii 7), as well as the southern part (IV ii 8) emanated, forging a structural unit. Along the southern façade some alterations occurred; these concern the outer walls, where opus latericium seems to have replaced the earlier opus reticulatum/brick façade.  

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194 The walls along the street front and the south-western corner are largely restored, making an assessment difficult if not impossible.
Among the later interventions we can also include the placement of reinforcing pillars in the room west of the corridor (Fig. 5.79). The doors along the Via della Caupona preserve their travertine threshold; judging from the width of the door openings (1.95 – 2.70 m) the rooms seem suitable for commercial use. In contrast, the door openings on the southern side, measuring only 1.40 m, would therefore not really promote a commercial function for these rooms. Moreover, the undefined rectangular walled structure located in front of the southern rooms, 195 adds further uncertainty concerning the possible function of this part of the building. Furthermore, at the building’s southern frontage three independent stretches of wall were placed perpendicular to the southern confining wall; these seem to function as buttresses, presumably positioned to provide structural support. 196

195. The structure might represent a water cistern or basin.  
196. A similarity in technique and material used can be observed between the buttresses placed against the southern frontage of Building IV ii 8 and the southern confining wall of Building IV ii 9 can be observed.
5.2.9 Caseggiato IV ii 9

The Caseggiato IV ii 9 (Fig. 5.80) is situated on the Insula’s southern limits. Covering a rectangular area of 378.9 m\(^2\), it is sandwiched between buildings IV ii 7 in the west, and IV ii 10 in the east. Its northern side is bounded by the Insula’s inner courtyard, while it is confined by the Insula’s southern boundary wall towards the open (unexcavated) space to the south. The southern wall is of specific interest since it served as the building’s as well as the Insula’s confining wall; furthermore it functioned as a retaining wall (Fig. 5.81). Analogous to the Insula’s eastern border with the Campo della Magna Mater, its southern boundary too is characterised by a difference in height: the Insula’s occupation levels are about 1.0 – 1.2 m higher than the floor levels of the open area to the south. The differences in height seem to be a result of terracing, placed prior to the development of the Insula’s southern area during the Trajanic period (98-117 AD). The southern confining/retaining wall runs in an east-west direction, extending from the border with the Campo della Magna Mater to the western corner, where the Insula takes a 90 degree turn, and building development (Building IV ii 8) continued towards the south. The southern wall consists of several sections all constructed in opus reticulatum/brick, except for the westernmost part which was built in opus latericium. This is significant since it not only gives us a relative chronology for the ‘piecemeal’ development of the boundary wall, but it also demonstrates that the western section of the Caseggiato IV ii 9 was not only a modification of existing structures, but involved profound reconstruction of the area including the retaining wall. The latter was structurally reinforced by an arch to counteract the thrust from Buildings IV ii 7 and 8 (Fig. 5.82).

Building phases and layout

The Caseggiato IV ii 9 consists of distinct western and eastern parts. The eastern part still preserves the original opus reticulatum (tufo quoining) structures dating to the period of Trajan,\(^{197}\) while the western part was completely rebuilt during the end of the 2\(^{nd}\) or the beginning of the 3\(^{rd}\) century AD.\(^{198}\) The building’s only façade opens on the Insula’s inner courtyard, where the points of access are found: one door opening leading to the western part, and a further door linking to the eastern part. It remains unclear whether there was an internal connection to its southern neighbour Building IV ii 10.

The western section of the Caseggiato IV ii 9 forms a unit with Building (‘loggia’) IV ii 13;\(^{199}\) this is not only reflected in building material and technique but also in the architectural traits. Both structures are based on a system of pillars framed by walls on the northern and southern sides. The pillars conform to the same distance; therefore a common outline can be followed across both buildings. A chronological sequence (relative) can be established from the relationship with the neighbouring buildings: the two western pillars have been placed against the existing eastern wall of Building IV ii 7; whereas the section is delimited by an opus reticulatum wall (with tufo quoining) of the Trajanic period towards the building’s eastern part. The opus reticulatum wall belongs to the original core of Caseggiato IV ii 9 and most likely confined the western side of the original building, extending from the northern courtyard to the southern confining wall. The western section of Building IV ii 9 is characterised by openness, while the later subdivisions make use of the central pillars with subsequent partition walls placed perpendicular to the eastern opus reticulatum (tufo) wall. During the building’s late phase the rectangular room, framed by the central pillars and delimited by the eastern wall, was further subdivided into a central room (6) and the northern corridor (7), from where a door opening connected to the building’s eastern part (Fig. 5.83). The division appears to have more clearly defined the central room (6), and this might have prompted the owner to dedicate more attention to the

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198. A relative chronology can be established for this section since structures belonging to buildings IV ii 13 and 9 have been placed against the existing eastern walls of the Caseggiato IV ii 7.

199. To follow the reference system laid down in the Scavi di Ostia, Vol. I (Calza 1953) Building IV ii 13 has been described separately, although buildings IV ii 09 and IV ii 13 form an entity.
Fig. 5.80 – Caseggiato IV ii 9 and ‘Loggia’ IV ii 13
room’s surface decorations: patches of mosaic floor and single tesserae are generously distributed within the space, suggesting mosaic pavements within the central room. Today the room’s eastern wall has a large aperture, opening to the building’s eastern part, most likely broken in at a late stage of use and not part of the original design. Another possible connection between the western and eastern parts existed along the southern confining wall, where a range of interconnected rooms (8, 9, 10) was lined up, forming a relatively independent subsection, similar in layout to a *medianum* apartment.\(^{200}\)

The eastern section of Building IV ii 09 is difficult to assess. It has undergone considerable reconstructions and is in a sad state of preservation. The original *opus reticulatum* (*tufo* quoining) walls can be identified.

\(^{200}\) Ostia’s so-called *medianum* apartments are often luxuriously appointed apartments following a common plan. The key feature is a hall or corridor (the *medianum*) around which the remaining rooms are grouped; see DeLaine (2004: 147).
on the courtyard side and on the southern side, where *opus reticulatum* (*tufo*) walls subdivide the ‘medianum’ space (rooms 8-10). The central part of the building consists of *latericium* walls, forming a central corridor connected to rooms on either side; however most of the former door openings were restricted and walled-up. While no secure building phases can be established, still the many reconstructions point to a dynamic history of the building and to a long period of use, most probably into the 4th century (Fig. 5.84). In terms of the building’s function, the state of preservation makes it difficult to draw inferences. However, the clear division between the eastern and western parts suggests a functional division along the same lines. A more residential character can be identified in the eastern part, possibly including *medianum* apartments at ground floor level. The western part instead is characterised by an open layout, suitably for multiple purposes, while commercial use does not seem to be the best option since the space lacks a public interface. A staircase (16) reached upon entering the western part suggests that upstairs levels were available, possibly offering residential space at the upper floors.
5.2.10 Building IV ii 10

Building IV ii 10 is found to the west of the mithraeum (Mitreo degli Animali, IV ii 11) (Fig. 5.85); its southern border is delimited by the retaining wall which divides the Insula from the open area to the south, and serves as the building’s southern wall at the same time. The building’s western side is shared with IV ii 09, without defining a clear boundary, while its northern side fronts the Insula’s inner courtyard. Building IV ii 10 covers an area of 239.9 m² and conforms to an almost quadrangular shape. It is largely overgrown and a structural assessment is unattainable. A first-hand impression of the structural remains can be gained from a photograph taken after the excavations (Fig. 5.86). A few additional observations can be offered, however not enough to understand the building’s history or its layout.201

The building has not attracted any research interest in the past.202 Even Calza’s 1953 site plan suggests that not much attention was paid when the building was mapped: the partition wall which subdivides the eastern room is missing on the plan. The building’s core structures consist of opus reticulatum/brick attributed to the Trajanic period (98-117 AD).203 When examining the southern wall from inside the eastern room which borders the mithraeum, the wall gives the impression as if an earlier opus reticulatum/brick wall had been shaved to a unified height, and then a latericium wall was placed on top, indicating a new phase of construction which integrated the pre-existing walls. This impression is even strengthened by the presence of a continuous bonding course of bipedales across the entire extent of the southern wall, upon which the latericium courses were resting. Continued use of earlier walls in later construction phases is not unusual. Of specific interest are the remains of the room’s floor levels which are found about 0.60 m above the excavation levels (Figs. 5.87 and 5.88). This is quite significant since the excavation levels seem to have followed the floor heights of the mithraeum, which had already been excavated when the

201. During a brief period in 2007, when the Soprintendenza cleared parts of the vegetation, the easternmost rooms were accessible to allow for a preliminary study of the structural remains.

202. It is however included in Calza’s topographic and chronological indices, Calza (1953: 232, 235).

203. Calza (1953: 235). It is however difficult to determine whether the southern wall was constructed entirely in reticulate, or whether it is opus reticulatum (brick) of which the latericium fields are missing. The wall’s southern face is largely eroded.
neighbouring building IV ii 10 was brought to light. In fact, the actual floor levels of the eastern rooms of building IV ii 10 were located 0.60 – 0.70 m higher than the *mithraeum*, and therefore seem to have been ‘undercut’ by the excavators. In contrast, higher floor levels were retained only in the western part of Building IV ii 10 (Fig. 5.89). The floor levels might have some implication for a possible connection between the *mithraeum* and building IV ii 10. In any case it would exclude a straightforward link between the buildings, and if there was ever a door between them, this would have required a few steps inside building IV ii 10 to overcome the difference of c. 0.70 metres. Considering all the evidence, this seems to speak against a connection between Building IV ii 10 and the *mithraeum*. As far as the building’s external points of access are concerned, Calza’s plan indicates two apertures on the building’s northern side connecting to the Insula’s courtyard.

Fig. 5.87 – Southern wall (room 6) which confines Building IV ii 10 against the open space to the south; remains of floor levels are indicated by a course of *bipedales* and traces of mosaics preserved in the corners

Fig. 5.88 – Building IV ii 10, detail: remains of floor mosaics preserved in the south-eastern corner of room 5

Fig. 5.89 – Building IV ii 10, higher floor levels are only preserved in the western rooms 1 and 4
5.2.11 Mitreo degli Animali, IV ii 11

The mithraeum (Fig. 5.90), a cult room dedicated to Mithras, is located at the south-eastern corner of the Insula, close to the Temple of Magna Mater (Cybele). It is nestled into the corner of intersecting opus reticulatum (brick) walls which preceded the mithraeum. It covers an area of 173.4 m², including its associated rooms. The mithraeum’s floor levels are about 0.70 m lower than the levels of its neighbouring building (IV ii 10) to the west, but c. 1.0 m higher than the open space to the south. The entrance to the mithraeum remains a bit of a mystery; different access points have been suggested during its long history of research. It is however clear that the mithraeum had no direct access to public street space and was only reachable through the inner courtyards within the Insula. It received its name from the mosaic pavements with a series of animal depictions rendered in black and white tesserae.

Excavations and history of research

Unlike the other buildings within the Insula, which share the same history of excavation in being part of Calza’s campaign in 1940, the mithraeum was excavated already 75 years earlier by P.E. Visconti, who was the papal commissario delle antichità. From 1864 to 1869 the pontifical excavations in Ostia directed their attention to the south-eastern areas, unearthing the Porta Laurentina, sections of the Via Laurentina, the Temple of Magna Mater (Cybele), and the adjacent mithraeum. Due to its proximity to the temple, the mithraeum was then identified as a ‘sacrario metroaco’, functionally related to the cult of Magna Mater. At the time of Visconti’s excavation the understanding of the cult area was still based on an incomplete picture. The 19th century excavations had only revealed a fraction of the monuments which comprise the Campo della Magna Mater (Fig. 5.91), while the Insula remained unexcavated, except for its south-eastern corner where the mithraeum was discovered. Judging from the limited view available at that time, a functional as well as spatial nexus between the temple of Magna Mater and the mithraeum seemed very likely. Today, both the Campo della Magna Mater and Insula IV ii have been fully excavated and, based on the existing architecture, a structural connection between the mithraeum and the temple of Magna Mater can be securely excluded.

The first accounts of Visconti’s work in the area of the Campo della Magna Mater appeared in the Giornale di Roma soon after the excavations had taken place. On the 26th of May 1867 it was reported, together with other results, that a new ‘mitreo’ had been found. One year later C.L. Visconti published a substantial description of the buildings and monuments comprising the Temple of Magna Mater, considering them as a functional group dedicated to the cult of the Phrygian deity, and hence the buildings were collectively called

204. The eastern opus reticulatum (brick) wall confines the Insula against the Campo della Magna Mater, while the southern opus reticulatum (brick) wall served as a retaining wall, marking the Insula’s southern boundary. P.E. Visconti and his nephew C.L. Visconti conducted the papal excavations in Ostia. Ostia was the property of the Holy See until 1870; afterwards it became part of the newly formed Italian state. Consequently the position of the papal ‘Commissario delle Antichità’ was substituted by the ‘Soprintendente per gli Scavi e i Monumenti di Roma’. See Marini Recchia et al. (2002: 263) on excavations in Ostia during the 19th century; see Paschetto (1912: 537-538) on the Viscontis’ excavations in the southeast of Ostia; see also Rieger (2004: 93, notes 472, 473) on the history of excavations of the Campo della Magna Mater.

205. The Giornale di Roma printed monthly updates from the meetings of the Pontificia Accademia Romana d’Archeologia reporting the progress of the papal excavations, including brief announcements of specific finds (statues and inscriptions) or the discovery of important buildings.

206. Although Visconti recognised similarities in layout to other mithraea, he still decided to link the building to the Cult of Magna Mater; see Visconti 1868: 402; see also Ross Taylor (1912: 84-85) on a reassessment of Visconti’s interpretation in the light of Cumont’s Mithraic studies (Cumont 1902).

207. Due to the political upheavals connected to the Italian Unification, excavations which had been initiated by the Viscontis were not continued; excavations in the area only resumed later in the 20th century under a new political agenda, resulting in Calza large-scale excavation campaign. See Becatti (1961: 177); see also Rieger (2004: 126-127).

208. The Giornale di Roma reported once again on the discovery of the mithraeum was reported once again on the 8th June 1867 (Giornale di Roma).
Nevertheless Visconti’s article dedicated specific attention to the ‘mitreo’, providing a detailed description together with a plan to scale (Fig. 5.92), as well as a discussion of its possible function. However, as stated above, the *mithraeum* was then understood to be a cult-room linked to the cult of Magna Mater and not an independently operating *mithraeum*.

Almost 30 years after its discovery the functional nature of the building was re-assessed by Paschetto, who still left the question open whether it was a *mithraeum* or a *sacrario metroaco*. However later, in 1954, Becatti published the volume on Ostia’s ‘mitrei’ including the ‘Mitreo degli Animali’; Becatti understood the sanctuary in the light of the 1940s excavations and clearly identified the space as a *mithraeum*.

Fig. 5.90 – Mitreo degli Animali (IV ii 11)

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211. Visconti (1868).
212. Paradoxically it was already called a ‘mitreo’ in the earliest reports, while it was identified as a ‘sacrario metroaco’, see above.
From the very beginning the ‘Mitreo degli Animali’ attracted significant scholarly interest, which continued over the years. In contrast, there has been little sustained attention paid to its material remains since their discovery. As early as 1908, R. Finelli, the assistant curator in charge, commented on the sad state of repair of its walls and mosaics. The mosaics had suffered from root action and exposure to the elements ever since they came to light, therefore interventions became necessary at a very early date.

In 1958, in the course of the large restoration campaign, the mithraeum and its mosaics were restored a second time. Despite these attempts, the mosaics have remained unprotected, while the interventions carried out to consolidate the walls created their own set of problems: in many instances the 1958/60s restorations obscure the original walled structures and make their assessment difficult and at times impossible.

During the long history of its study, the mithraeum has been re-mapped several times. Every new site-plan seems to reflect the research interests of the time. Visconti’s 1887 plan focussed on the mosaics, while it neglected the walls (see Fig. 5.92 above). Pascolini’s plan provided details on the walled structures (Fig. 5.93); however, it disregarded the mithraeum’s associated rooms. In addition to the published plans a further set of plans has been produced; these concentrate on identifying the different building techniques represented in the walls of the mithraeum (Fig. 5.94). Unfortunately, these plans, although expertly rendered, fail to distinguish between original and restored walls; moreover they seem to have been generated by architects with little attention paid to archaeology. Hence, this study produced a new sit plan, drawn in 2007, which not only includes the neighbouring structures, but also

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216. See for example Groh et al. (1967) on Mithraism in Ostia.
218. Published in Becatti (1954: 89, fig. 19).
219. Courtesy of Ostia’s Archivio disegni: inv. 4721 (plan), inv. 4722 (southern section) and inv. 4723 northern section; the plans have been produced by the architects M. Lilli, P. Pasquali, P. Pinna and F. Caccianiga; no date.
identifies different construction phases (Fig. 5.91).\textsuperscript{220} From the re-assessment of the material evidence, some new observations can be offered.

**Building phases and layout**

The *mithraeum* was built against pre-existing *opus reticulatum* (brick) walls,\textsuperscript{221} utilising them as its eastern and southern confining walls (Fig. 5.95). The eastern *opus reticulatum* wall delimits the Insula against the Campo della Magna Mater.\textsuperscript{222} The southern wall defines the insula’s boundary towards the open space to the south. To the west, the *mithraeum* is bounded by another *opus reticulatum* (brick) wall, shared with building IV ii 10.

A walled-up door can be identified in the southern wall, indicating a former connection to the southern ‘open’ space.\textsuperscript{223} When the area was occupied by the *mithraeum*, or even before, the floor levels were raised at least by 1.0 m. The former door opening is a good indicator for the change in levels: only the top part of the door (c. 0.75 m) remained visible above the occupation levels of the *mithraeum* (Fig. 5.96).

By utilising already existing walls, the construction of the *mithraeum* required only a simple pillar formation and one wall to close the building against the open space to the north, the only side not bounded by earlier walls.

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\textsuperscript{220} The new plan (1:20) of the Mitreo degli Animali was produced by the author with the help of MA students from the University of Leiden (M. Berkhout, R. Bonnie, M. Boonstra, A. Koenis, E. Mol, and C. Ochsman), reproduced here in ArcGIS (courtesy of J. Lee, GeoStar).

\textsuperscript{221} Dated to the period of Trajan (98-117 AD), see Calza (1953: 235).

\textsuperscript{222} See above on the relationship between the Terme del Faro and the Campo della Magna Mater.

\textsuperscript{223} The open space has as yet not been excavated; the long-awaited results from the DAI survey (geophysical prospection) should shed new light on the state of development in this area.
Fig. 5.93 – Pascolini’s plan published in Becatti 1954 (Scavi di Ostia, Archivio Disegni, ref. 99)

Fig. 5.94 – Schematic plan of the Mitro degli Animali (Scavi di Ostia, Archivio Disegni, ref. 4721)
The *mithraeum* (c. 4 x 16 m) consists of two parallel narrow halls divided by rows of pillars. The southern room constitutes the *mithraeum* proper, while the northern room seems to have functioned as an entrance corridor. Four pillars have been placed against the pre-existing southern wall: these are matched by four pillars in the centre; while the central pillars also correspond to the northern space where they have their counterparts, these are four pilasters integrated into the northern wall. The *mithraeum* proper (southern space) is subdivided into two separate parts: the eastern side served as a passage leading to the cult room, while the western side was occupied by the cult room proper which had an altar-like structure at its western end and very possibly a podium on each side of the passage. A marble threshold marked the division between these functionally distinct spaces. The pillars associated with the *mithraeum* have been built in *opus latericium*, dated to c. 160 AD, while the altar seems to be a later construction, added during the mid-3rd century AD.\(^{224}\)

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The floor pavements feature five fields of black and white mosaics, 225 four depict faunal motifs associated with the cult of Mithras, 226 while one represents a human figure (Fig. 5.97). 227 The latter is placed at the eastern end of the passageway. The motifs and their sequence symbolize the fundamental elements of the sacrifice of the bull, 228 and hence allude to grades of initiation as well as to rituals performed within the cult. The fifth mosaic field is located in the western cult room, placed midway between the marble threshold and the altar. It depicts the head of a bull, facing the altar, and an axe on the northern side of the bull’s head (Fig. 5.98). The ‘cult-room’ seemed to have functioned as a communal place, where the sacrifice of the bull was symbolically celebrated. It is very likely that the lateral walls were lined with podia. 229 The podia could have served as couches where the members of the cult could recline, celebrate their communal meals and perform activities related to the cult. To the north of the cult room, separated by a partition wall, a rectangular water basin can be found, sunken into the floor level. The room in which the water basin was located suggests that it served as an antechamber, where cult members would gather before they entered the inner space of the mithraeum. This brings us to the next questions concerning access to the mithraeum, and movement within its spaces.

Points of access and movement

The location of the entrance to the mithraeum is not at all clear. The earliest site-plan of Visconti, published in 1867, suggests two openings: one on the north-eastern and one on the north-western side.

227. The identification of the human figure has been very much debated (suggestions are Leo, Saturn, Silvanus); Becatti’s interpretation seems very plausible, he suggests that the figure was a Mystes, an initiate being instructed in the cult of Mithras (1961: 178).
228. See Becatti (1961: 179).
229. Remains of substructures, walled in coarse tufa blocks, are still present. They have been built against the pillars, and therefore seem a later addition. The lateral walls still show remains of thick plaster layers and some nails, indicating that the walls had been covered with marble revetments.

Fig. 5.97 – A human figure identified as ‘Mytes’ (according to Becatti 1954) (photo courtesy of Ostia website)

Fig. 5.98 – The head of a bull and an axe symbolising the sacrifice of the bull (photograph courtesy of Ostia website)

While no connection to Building IV ii 10 seems to have existed. Then again, Becatti’s reconstruction of the mithraeum included a connection to Building IV ii 10, providing a secondary entrance reserved for the priest. 230 Consequently Pascolini’s plan, published in 1954, 231 indicates that the mithraeum was connected to Building IV ii 10 through a passage between the altar and the partition wall (opus reticulatum/brick). In contrast, Ostia’s site plan of 1953 clearly closes off the mithraeum against the neighbouring building IV ii 10. 232 Today it is impossible to judge whether

231. Published in Becatti (1954)
Fig. 5.99 – The 1958 restoration obscures whether the wall behind the altar continued and closed off the cult area towards Building IV ii 12

a door opening to Building IV ii 10 ever existed, or whether the clearly pronounced aperture is a result of the 1958 restoration activities (Fig. 5.99). Despite these uncertainties it seems most plausible that the mithraeum was accessed from the north-western side, connecting the antechamber to the open space between the mithraeum and the baths.

Movement within the mithraeum would have been structured according to the specific activities performed: different functional spaces seem indicated through partitions. The mithraeum proper was reached through the opening between the westernmost pillars, leading to the passage with the first mosaic field showing the human figure (mystes); from there the cult members would have proceeded towards the cult room. The cult room proper was not closed off physically, although a clear architectural change can be noted: while the eastern part was defined by four pairs of columns forming a passage, the cult room started west of the last pair of pillars and widened into a rectangular room. In addition, the division between these rooms was visibly marked by a marble threshold.

As stated before, no physical connection existed between the mithraeum and the Campo della Magna Mater, nonetheless a link between these two cult places has been suggested, based on the proximity between the Temple of Magna Mater and the mithraeum, and also on the affinity between both cults. However there is no binding evidence which would allow us to conclude that these cults were linked in this particular location. We should therefore appreciate the mithraeum within its own spatial setting, which is clearly defined by the Insula of which it forms a structural and functional part.

233. Rieger argues against a connection between building IV ii 10 and the mithraeum, since the passage between altar and partition wall would lead directly onto the presumed reclining podia (2004: 126, note 631).

234. See Becatti (1954: 92); see also Rieger (2004: 127) for a discussion of the links between the cults.

235. There is one reference which might point to the involvement of a person in both cults; the inscription comes from the context of the Schola dei Dendrofori, which was located on the southern side of the Temple of Cybele and southeast of the Mitreo degli animali. The reference concerns a certain M. Cerellius Hieronymus who is referred to as 'pater et sacerdos'. His name is found on an inscription listing the members of the Schola dei Dendrofori. The combination of ‘pater et sacerdos’ could suggest that M. Cerellius Hieronymus was involved in both cults; ‘pater’ was typically used by followers of the cult of Mithras; see Rieger for a detailed discussion (2004: 127, 171 fig. 140).
### 5.2.12 Building IV ii 12

Located in the centre of the Insula, Building IV ii 12 (Fig. 5.100) measures 141.8 m² and is of rectangular shape. It stands wall on wall against the southern side of Caseggiato IV ii 05, while it faces open space on all other frontages. Points of access are found on all three façades: the building opens to the Insula’s central passage to the west, and to the inner courtyard on its southern front. Towards the east it communicates with the open space south of the Terme del Faro, betraying a link to the baths. The building has as yet not received much research interest; brief references to it are found in Blake, and Liedke when discussing the adjacent Building IV ii 05.

#### Building phases and layout

Building IV ii 12, as it has been preserved, displays a straightforward layout: it was subdivided into two rectangular rooms (01 and 02) of large dimensions, whereas a staircase of substantial size was added to the building’s eastern side (Fig. 5.101). The building’s northern wall was placed back-to-back with the southern wall of Caseggiato IV ii 05. These walls are *opus reticulatum* (brick) structures of the preceding buildings, which were integrated into the later building (Fig. 5.102). All later walls (*latericium* or crudely walled with tufa blocks) have been built against the *opus reticulatum* (brick) (Fig. 5.103); hence a relative chronology for the building’s reconstruction phases can be suggested. The *opus reticulatum* (brick) has been dated to the Hadrianic period, whereas the later reconstructions seem connected to the rebuilding of IV ii 05.

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236. Reference to the building was made in Calza’s topographic and chronological indices (1953: 232, 236).
239. See Calza (1953: 236).
This concerned the transformation of the larger area, as we have seen earlier. In this context it is also interesting to note that the eastern wall of the staircase forms a structural unit with the baths’ south-western wall (Fig. 5.104). The latter encloses the baths’ service corridor to the south of the western caldarium. From the shared wall a connection between IV ii 12 and the baths can be inferred.
Building IV ii 12 underwent several minor alterations during a late period of occupation, when the existing door openings were walled-up or restricted (Fig. 5.105). However, during their entire period both rooms (01 and 02) retained their wide door openings towards the southern outside space, suggesting that the building could have served as commercial premises. As suggested already in the context of Caseggiato IV ii 5, during a late period of use, buildings IV ii 12 and 5 might have been connected at ground level, allowing access to Building IV ii 5 by passing through Building IV ii 12. Furthermore, the staircase on the building’s eastern side might have served not only Building IV ii 12 but also Building IV ii 5. Therefore Building IV ii 12 receives significance in connection with its immediate neighbourhood, and the transformations which occurred within Caseggiato IV ii 5 and the southern section of the baths. It seems very likely that buildings IV ii 5, 12 and the baths belonged to the same owner.
5.2.13 Building (‘loggia’) IV ii 13

The ‘loggia’ IV ii 13 is located east of the Caseggiato IV ii 7. It is of rectangular shape and measures an area of 85.7 m². Built ‘back-to-back’ with Building IV ii 7, or rather against the pre-existing eastern wall of Building IV ii 7, it forms a functional unit with the western section of the Caseggiato IV ii 9 (see Fig. 5.80 above), from which it is divided by a corridor. The corridor forms part of the same passage which connects Building IV ii 7 to the Insula’s internal courtyard. The loggia’s southern wall confines the passage, while the eastern and northern sides face the open space of the Insula’s courtyard. The original construction included door openings on three sides, whereas the building, as it has been preserved, features only a single point of access, facing east, linking the ‘loggia’ to the Insula’s open courtyard.

No reference is found to the building’s excavation; however, it can be assumed that it came to light during Calza’s campaign. Later restorations are indicated by modern brick stating the year 1960. The building has not been studied as yet. In Calza’s topographic index it is listed as an independent entity, implying that its connection to the western section of Building IV ii 09 had not been identified by the excavators. Forty years later, Van Dalen’s survey recognised the similarity in building material and construction technique, and concluded that the loggia (IV ii 13) and the western part of Building IV ii 9 were part of the same rebuilding phase.

Fig. 5.106 – A travertine threshold marks the entrance to Building IV ii 13 (‘Loggia’); the northern corner of the water basin is visible

240. The descriptive term ‘loggia’ has no official status, it is simply a term used by the author to refer to the building’s pillar-based open structure of the initial design.


Building phases and layout

The building’s architecture seems noteworthy since it was transformed from a pillar-based open structure into one with closed walls. The original ‘loggia-like’ premises had three door openings on the southern façade. Only the central entrance remained in use and preserved a raised travertine threshold, while the other openings were walled up. The former doors on the southern and northern sides were walled up too. After the building had been turned into a closed space, presumably linked to a functional change, a large water basin (4.40 x 2.15 m, h 0.50 – 0.60 m) was installed in the south-eastern corner (Fig. 5.106); it was later subdivided into two basins. The northern wall accommodates a water channel (Fig. 5.107); it is difficult to determine whether a concern for water was already part of the initial design, or the water channel was a later alteration in connection with the water basins.

A functional link between Building IV ii 13 and the westernmost section of Building IV ii 09 can be inferred from the shared corridor and the way the passage space had been designed to facilitate movement: the edge of the south-eastern corner of Building IV ii 13 was cut so as to increase the space available for moving in and out of Building IV ii 09. In addition, the width of the passage takes account of the northern confining wall of Building IV ii 09. The actual passage appears to lie at the core of the connection between buildings IV ii 07, 09 and 13. All buildings concerned evidently agreed to some ‘right of innocent passage’ which allowed inhabitants and visitors to enter and pass through various buildings on the route from the Insula’s inner courtyard to the outside space on the Via della Caupona. The passage was maintained throughout successive building phases and demanded concessions on the part of the property owners.

243. The threshold rests on a foundation of coarse walling (restored in 1960), raising the threshold to about 0.35 m above floor levels. This seems to comply with a general rise in floor levels within the central part of the Insula.

244. The basin was constructed using a mix of re-used materials (reticulate, brick and tufa blocks). Thick layers of remnant plaster are still visible in the corners of the basin.
RETHINKING OSTIA: A SPATIAL ENQUIRY INTO THE URBAN SOCIETY OF ROME’S IMPERIAL PORT-TOWN

Fig. 5.108 – Building (Tabernae) IV ii 14
5.2.14 Building (Tabernae) IV ii 14

The Tabernae IV ii 14 (Fig. 5.108) are found in the centre of the Insula, located at the rear side of the Caupona del Pavone. The Tabernae’s westernmost wall confines the Caupona’s courtyard; while the northern wall is shared with Building IV ii 4. The building comprises three tabernae in a row, all facing south. The Tabernae are individually connected to the Insula’s courtyard, while the eastern taberna was also linked to the Insula’s central passage which leads from the Caseggiato dell’Ercole to the Insula’s innermost courtyard. The building covers an area of 153.6 m² including a small enclosure in front of the eastern taberna (Fig. 5.109). In its original design the building comprised a larger unit. It has been suggested that it possibly formed a continuous row of tabernae from the Caupona del Pavone to the Terme del Faro. Today’s structures are the result of many changes. The Tabernae seem to represent the three remaining rooms of a larger complex, sections of which have been separated and subsequently reconstructed, involving not only structural change but also a change of function.247

Building phases

The group of tabernae preserve to a large extent the original opus reticulatum (brick) walls, which have been attributed to the Hadrianic period.248 The three rooms conform to nearly equal size (c. 7.40 x 4.20 m), with standing walls up to a height of c. 2.5 m. The opus reticulatum appears to be of very good quality: rectangular fields of reticulatum (c. 90 cm h) alternate with horizontal bands of five courses of brick (latericium), while the corners are anchored with latericium quoining (Fig. 5.110). The building’s southern façade is constructed in latericium, and is characterised by wide door openings (ranging from 3.5 to 3.9 m) suitable for commercial interaction.

The building underwent a number of reconstructions: these include the replacement of the easternmost opus reticulatum with a latericium wall,249 and the constriction of the western taberna’s door to about half of its original width with opus vittatum.

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245. Calza’s 1953 site plan includes also the western part of the enclosure, traces of which are no longer visible, and could not be ascertained by this study.
247. See Building IV ii 4 above, which seems to have been dedicated to industrial use.
249. The eastern latericium wall sits on a high foundation upon which one course of bipedales has been placed, jutting out, flush with the foundation wall, while the wall itself continues recessed by 10 cm (the bipedales are visible inside the room).
The eastern latericium wall includes a window aperture and a door connecting to the central passage which runs through the Insula. This intervention seems to be linked to the reconstruction of Building IV ii 05 in the early Antonine period, which brought about the formation of the passage which divides Buildings IV ii 05 and IV ii 14.

In the northern wall of the central room a walled-up door opening betrays a former connection to Building IV ii 04. The aperture is about 0.80 m wide and reveals only the top part of the door, reduced to a ‘visible’ height of merely 0.70 m above today’s floor levels. The Tabernae’s floor levels were raised by about one metre in the course of their period of occupation. Still, a difference in height of about 0.50 m can be observed between the floor levels of the Tabernae and the higher occupation levels of the eastern passage. During a late stage in the Tabernae’s life, additional door openings were broken into the opus reticulatum (brick) walls to interconnect all rooms to each other (Fig. 5.111), thereby directing the focus of the Tabernae more towards the eastern corridor. In the easternmost room patches of floor mosaics (black tesserae) are still present, while smaller scatters of mosaic are also found in the enclosure in front of the eastern taberna. Wall paintings of two phases of decoration have been identified in the Tabernae, of which several patches are still preserved, although detached from the walls and mounted on plaster boards (see Fig. 5.111). The wall decorations have been dated to the Severan period.

Fig. 5.110 – Opus reticulatum with regular fields of reticulatum; corners are reinforced with quoining in opus latericium; a former door opening betrays a link to the neighbouring building to the north

250. The door still partially preserves the original tufa door posts. Within building IV ii 4 no traces of the former door opening are visible; the brickface of the wall was probably restored.

251. The presumed height of the door reached the first courses of the latericium band at a height of ca. 0.70 m above today’s floor levels. The door’s height corresponds to the height of the first putlogs, which suggests that the original floor levels were about one metre below present day floor levels.

252. The height of the original floor levels can be estimated from the height of the first row of putlog holes. These are placed about 0.75 m above the present floor levels. The latter conform to the last occupation levels since they comply with the height of the threshold fragments.

The presence of wall-paintings and mosaic floors offer us a glimpse, if fragmentary, into the decorative treatment of the Tabernae’s interior surfaces. This allows us to develop an idea about the efforts that were made to keep up with contemporary tastes, while assuring sustained development at least as late as the Severan period. In this respect the three ‘surviving’ tabernae are a testimony to a changing urban landscape; one which still however allowed some pockets to continue on a smaller scale and maybe slower pace.

5.3 CONCLUSION

The close examination of the buildings has allowed us to gain insights into the Insula’s development over the first three centuries AD. The structural remains bear witness to a dynamic environment which afforded continuous change involving all buildings to various degrees, reflecting not only the larger building booms which shaped Ostia’s built environment, but also periods of less pronounced activity. Through our detailed assessment structural changes could be identified and a chronological sequence, although relative, could be established for the development of the buildings (see Table 1). For the majority of the buildings it could be demonstrated how closely they were linked to their neighbouring buildings and how changes in one building affected the others. Not a single building existed within the Insula which did not in one way or other interfere with its next-door neighbour.

Evidence for early building phases, attributed to the Late Republican/Early Imperial periods (ca. 50 BC – 50 AD) has been identified in a few isolated structures integrated in later buildings, e.g. the northern part of the Terme del Faro and taberna 03 of the Caseggiato dell’Ercole. Traces of the Trajanic/Hadrianic phase are still preserved in single walls within the preceding buildings. However, a number of buildings also remained preserved in various section of the Insula, notably in locations embedded inside the Insula or on its southern extent, not directly linked to public street space (Fig. 5.112). The most substantial structural changes occurred however during the mid 2nd century AD. In the early Antonine period the Insula’s public face developed when the large Caseggiato dell’Ercole was built with its portico. The portico was a direct response to the city’s infrastructural demands enhancing the Insula’s commercial as well as its public appearance. The last period during which we can identify building activities was the Severan period (Buildings IV ii 9 and 13). All later activities seem restricted to undemanding interventions or maintenance carried out to upkeep the existing built environment,
although evidence for continuous occupation is found until the $4^{th}/5^{th}$ centuries.\footnote{254}

On the whole the Insula’s structural remains confirm the general picture which has been established for Ostia’s built environment. However, one important phase typical of Ostia is absent within the Insula: none of the buildings was ever converted into a Late Antique private luxury \textit{domus}, as can be observed in other \textit{insulae} of the surrounding area. Several reasons could account for this. The most plausible one seems to be that since the buildings remained operational into the $4^{th}$ and some even into the $5^{th}$ century, they were not vacant and therefore not susceptible to functional change, i.e. being converted into luxury dwellings. Another reason could be that the individual buildings were too interdependent and interwoven and therefore not attractive for new owners, who would have had to single out individual plots for luxury development while the remainder of the Insula would stay unchanged.

Although construction decreased after the Antonine period, the Severan period emerges as the most significant for the Insula. Only one building, which was also the last one to be constructed within the Insula, was actually built during the Severan period. What seems more important however is the fact that the existing buildings appear to be at the height of their productivity: the baths were renewed and enlarged during the Severan period, the Caupona was converted into a hostel; and a number of earlier buildings received new surface decorations. The Insula’s commercial front and the buildings within the Insula seem fully functional, and several of them were refurbished during the Severan period. In this way the Insula almost becomes a textbook example of Ostia’s new role in the Severan period which saw a shift from the boomtown to a ‘consumer city’.\footnote{255} The economic implications would deserve a study on its own; within the remit of this research it is sufficient enough to establish that the ‘Severan Insula’ is the only possible ‘time slice’ which can be selected for the Space Syntax analysis, since all existing buildings maintained a spatial and functional relationship during that period. Spatial continuity throughout a certain period of use is a pre-condition for Space Syntax’s spatial analysis, which will presented in the following chapter.

\footnote{254} See Gering’s (2004, fig. 49) interpretation of Ostia in the later 3rd and 4th centuries; according to Gering building IV ii 05, and a section of building IV ii 09 had been abandoned. Unfortunately Gering is not very specific about the archaeological evidence supporting his interpretations.

\footnote{255} See Pavolini’s (2002: 325-352) assessment of Ostia’s shifting commercial landscape from an outward oriented to an inward focussed ‘consumer city’ in the early 3rd century AD.
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Table 5.1 – Insula IV ii – development 1st to 3rd centuries AD
Fig. 5.112 – Insula IV ii, early construction phases indicated by *opus reticulatum* walls