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Rethinking Ostia : a spatial enquiry into the urban society of Rome's imperial port-town

Stöger, J.J.

Citation

Stöger, J. J. (2011, December 7). *Rethinking Ostia : a spatial enquiry into the urban society of Rome's imperial port-town*. *Archaeological Studies Leiden University*. Leiden University Press, Leiden. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/18192>

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Author: Stöger, Johanna

Title: Rethinking Ostia : a spatial enquiry into the urban society of Rome's imperial port-town

Issue Date: 2011-12-07

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Glossary

The following glossary is intended to provide brief definitions for architectural or culture specific terms used in the text. The keywords are denoted in capital letters, the use of *italics* within an entry indicates a cross-reference.

ALA(-AE) – room (wing) opening from the atrium of a Roman *domus*; *alae* usually occur in pairs flanking the *tablinum*.

ALBUM (-A) – membership list.

ALBUM COLLEGII - membership list of a Roman *collegium*.

ANNONA – grain supply to the city of Rome.

APODYTERIUM – the changing room of a Roman bath.

BIPEDALIS – two-foot-square brick (c. 58 cm).

CALDARIUM – the main heated room or rooms of Roman baths.

CAPITOLIUM – the main temple of a Roman city dedicated to the three supreme deities (Jupiter, Juno and Minerva).

CARDO MAXIMUS – the central north-south axis in a Roman urban street system.

CASEGGIATO (-I) – Italian term for a Roman building, divided into separate units, often including commercial space (*tabernae*).

CASTRUM (-A) – denotes a military camp or fortifications.

CAUPONA – a Latin term to describe a Roman hotel, hostel or restaurant.

CISIARII – *cisium* refers to a type of ancient Roman chariot, the conductors of these hired gigs were called *cisiarii*.

COCCIOPESTO – Italian term for a hydraulic mortar made with crushed terracotta, also used as floor pavement and roofing.

COLLEGIUM (-A) – Roman voluntary association of professionals and/or religious followers.

COLLEGIUM FABRUM TIGNARIORUM (FABRI TIGNUARI) – builders' association (literally 'woodworker's guild'). The association required an entry fee and consisted of freeborn and freedmen builders (not limited to wood workers in spite of the name).

COMPLUVIUM – an opening in the roof of the atrium that allowed light and rain water to enter; the latter being gathered (*impluvium*) and stored in a cistern below.

CUBICULUM (-A) – a room in a Roman house, serving various functions; when used as bedrooms the night-time bedrooms were called *cubicula nocturna* or *dormitoria*, while those rooms used for rest in the daytime were *cubicula diurna*.

DOMUS – refers to a Roman town house, the term is used for domestic buildings.

DECUMANUS – the term denotes the main east-west axis in the street system of a Roman town.

EUERGETISM – the practice of the élite in Greek and Roman cities of distributing a part of their wealth to the community. It might take the form of the construction of public buildings, the provision of public pleasures, the entertainment of the populace in circus or arena, or the provision of food in times of famine.

EXEDRA – in architecture, a semicircular niche forming part of a building, but also an outside seating area.

FAUCES – a term used for the hallway leading from the street into the building.

FISTULA – a water-pipe; Vitruvius (VIII, 7) distinguishes three modes of conveying water: by channels of masonry (*per canales structiles*), by leaden pipes (*fistulis plumbeis*), and by earthen pipes (*tubulis fictilibus*); lead pipes were the more commonly used.

FIGLINA – on brickstamps, signifies the name of the place of the production of the brick, or a production unit.

FORUM – a public space in the centre of the Roman town that serves as political, economic, and social centre of the city.

FRIGIDARIUM – the main cold-water bathing hall, often containing one or several large unheated pools.

HORREA – warehouses and storage buildings.

HYPOCAUST – the major heating system of Roman baths. In the fully developed *hypocaust* the floor of the room is suspended, resting on short pillars (often a stack of tiles); the hollow space is heated by the circulation of hot air produced by the furnace (*praefurnium*) stoked from outside.

IMPLUVIUM – the sunken part of the atrium in a Roman house (*domus*), designed to collect the rainwater which comes into the house through the *compluvium*.

INSULA (-AE) – a city block; or a large multi-apartment building.

LATRINA – usually a communal space with multiple toilets, but also single units with one seat.

LIMES (-ITES) – the boundary marking the land parcels allocated to individuals or towns.

MEDIANUM – *medianum* apartments are a type of dwelling unit typically found in Ostia, characteristic of a *medianum* apartment is the arrangement of rooms on three sides of a centrally positioned rectangular space, the *medianum*.

MODIUS – a Roman dry measuring unit used primarily to measure out grain.

NATATIO (-IONES) – a large unheated swimming pool, open or roofed, the term is also used to refer to the hall of the swimming pool itself.

NAVALIA – dock-yard.

NYMPHAEUM (-A) – In general use, an elaborate or monumental fountain structure, often adorning public space; originally the term denoted a cave or grotto with a running water source sacred to the nymphs.

OPUS LATERICIUM – Roman form of construction using brickwork to face the cement core of the wall.

OPUS RETICULATUM (brick) – construction method consisting of a combination of techniques: *opus reticulatum* for the walls and *opus latericium* to strengthen the corners and apertures (in the literature often referred to as *opus mixtum*). This technique was used in particular during the Trajanic and Hadrianic periods.

OPUS RETICULATUM – term referring to a type of facing on concrete walls in which small cone shaped stones (*tufa*) are set in such a way that the joints between them form a diagonal grid on the face of the wall.

OPUS SPICATUM – type of floor paving employing small bricks set in herringbone fashion.

OPUS VITTATUM – Roman construction technique consisting of bands of *tufa* blocks intersected by one or more brick bands at regular or irregular distances.

PALAESTRA – the exercise court of the baths, often a colonnaded enclosure.

POMERIUM – the ritual boundary defining the city, usually corresponding to the course of the city walls.

PORTA MARINA – Ostia’s south-western gate leading to the ancient shoreline.

PORTA ROMANA – Ostia’s eastern gate; it is part of the city walls of the 1st century BC. The Via Ostiensis leading from Rome to Ostia ends at the Porta Romana and continues as Ostia’s eastern *decumanus maximus*.

PORTA LAURENTINA – Ostia’s southeastern gate belongs to the city walls of the first century BC. It received its name from the village Laurentum located to the south of Ostia. The gate marks the beginning of the Via Laurentina leading to Ostia’s suburban areas and the rural areas of Laurentum.

PORTICUS – a colonnade or covered walkway.

PRAEFURNIUM (-A) – furnace of a Roman bath. The term may denote only the stoke hole (*fornix*) of the furnace, or the larger area of the furnace or furnaces.

PUTLOG HOLE – the holes in a wall in which the ends of scaffolding beams were lodged during construction. In Roman buildings they were usually covered by the final wall facing.

RELIEVING ARCH – an arch built into a wall usually to relieve the pressure from an opening below.

RUTELLUM – a stick used to straighten out the surface of the grain to obtain the correct quantity when the *modius* was filled.

SCHOLA (-AE) – Guild building, headquarters or clubhouse of a professional or religious guild.

STAGNUM – any enclosed stretch of water, also a pool or pond.

SUSPENSURA (-AE) – In the Vitruvian description of the *hypocaust*, the term means ‘hanging floor’ or ‘suspended floor’ (5.10.2-3); more correctly it denotes a floor supported by the small pillars of the *hypocaust*.

TABERNA (-AE) – a one or two room space primarily used as a shop; but also used as a workshop and residence by the shopkeeper, as well as for storage.

TABLINUM – refers to a reception room generally situated on one side of the atrium and opposite to the entrance.

TEPIDARIUM (-A) – the ‘lukewarm’ warm room or rooms in Roman baths; in the context of the imperial baths it has been interpreted to be the relatively small heated room (or the ‘heat lock’) between the *caldarium* and the *frigidarium*.

TESSERAE – small cut stones arranged in patterns to decorate mosaic pavements.

TRICLINIUM – a dining room in the Roman house.

TUBULI – inter-capillary wall-heating elements in Roman baths made up of continuous hollow terra-cotta tiles, normally box-shaped (‘box tiles’), and connected at one end to the *hypocaust*.

TUFO (TUFF) – volcanic rock formed of consolidated pyroclastic materials ejected during a volcanic eruption.

Chronology of the Imperial Periods

Octavian/Augustus		31 BC to AD 14
Julio-Claudian dynasty	Tiberius	AD 14 – 37
	Caligula	AD 37 – 41
	Claudius	AD 41 – 54
	Nero	AD 54 – 68
Year of the four emperors:		
Galba		AD 68 – 69
Otho		AD 69
Vitellius		AD 69
Flavian dynasty	Vespasian	AD 69 – 79
	Titus	AD 79 – 81
	Domitian	AD 81 – 96
Nerva		AD 96 – 98
Trajan		AD 98 – 117
Hadrian		AD 117 – 138
Antonine dynasty	Antoninus Pius	AD 138 – 161
	Marcus Aurelius	AD 161 – 180
	Commodus	AD 180 – 193
Pertinax		AD 193
Severan dynasty	Septimius Severus	AD 193 – 211
	Caracalla	AD 211 – 217
	Elagabalus	AD 218 – 222
	Severus Alexander	AD 222 – 235
Maximinus Thrax		AD 235 – 238
Gordian III		AD 238 – 244
Philip the Arab		AD 244 – 249
Decius		AD 249 – 251
Trebonianus Gallus		AD 251 – 253
Valerian		AD 253 – 260
Gallienus		AD 260 – 268
Claudius II Gothicus		AD 268 – 270
Aurelian		AD 270 – 275
Probus		AD 276 – 282
Carus, Carinus and Numerian		AD 282 – 284
Diocletian		AD 284 – 305
Tetrarchy		AD 293 – 305
Maxentius		AD 306 – 312
Constantine I		AD 312 – 337

