7 From the Forum to the Gate
Commercial Investment and Ostia's Cardo

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This article analyses the relation between commerce and urban development in Ostia. It explores the question of how commercial interests played a role in decisions about building projects, and how this, in turn, impacted on the way in which the urban landscape functioned as a social space: to which extent did commercial interests shape the urban experience? This agenda necessitates a close reading of building practice on the micro scale, analysing changes and shifts over time, and assessing the impact of individual building projects. For this reason, the argument will develop from a close analysis of one specific subsection of the city, and it will focus on an area that has long remained relatively marginal in scholarly thinking about Ostia's urban landscape: the so-called "Cardo", which has traditionally played a secondary role in conceptualisations of Ostia's urban landscape, as these very much focused on the eastern decumanus and its continuation west of the forum towards the sea. Still, the excavated section of the cardo, which connected the forum of Ostia with the so-called Laurentine Gate and the necropolis beyond it, must be seen as a key road within Ostia's urban street network, and it certainly was one of the oldest: it has been argued that it went back to before the foundation of the Roman colony in the fourth century BC (Mar 1990; Stöger 2011). Understanding the way in which the role of commerce alongside this road developed over time, and comparing this to the other main arteries of Ostia, which tend to be better known, can add to discourse on the commercial history of Ostia at large.

7.1 COMMERCIAL INVESTMENT IN OSTIA

Commerce in Ostia has not escaped scholarly notice. Indeed, there is, compared to elsewhere in the Roman world, a relative wealth of literature on commerce in Ostia. Already in the late 1950s, Girri published a small booklet on the shops of Ostia (Girri 1956). Meiggs subsequently discussed commerce extensively in his trend-setting work on Roman Ostia, as did Hermansen in his book on daily life in the city (Meiggs 1960; Hermansen 1981). More recently, DeLaine has offered an architecture-based approach to the "commercial landscape" of Ostia in the second century AD, while several scholars have been studying bakeries, fulleries, and *horrea* in the city (DeLaine 2005).[1] A recent analysis by Schoevaert has analysed the *tabernae* of Ostia from a variety of angles (Schoevaert 2018). Recent work on the *tabernae* by Holleran and Ellis has also discussed the *tabernae* of Ostia (Holleran 2017; Ellis 2018). All this scholarship has left no doubt that commerce was a defining feature of everyday urban practice in Ostia, and it has made clear that the archaeological remains of the city cannot be properly understood without acknowledging the fundamental centrality of commerce to both the formation and use of the urban landscape.

Yet it may be argued that most of these approaches have focused on the second century AD city, and remain implicit about – or even insensitive to – chronological change: second century AD Ostia has been characterised as a "boomtown" that suddenly exploded in size under Trajan and Hadrian, and this is likely to have had an enormous impact on the way its commercial landscape took shape in this period, but this has barely been part of the discussion.[2] At the same time, while several people have been looking at the spatial dynamics of Ostia's urban landscape, particularly Hanna Stöger,

1 On bakeries, see Bakker 1999; on the fulleries, see De Ruyt 2001; Flohr 2013. On the *horrea* of Ostia, see, besides Rickman 1971, Boetto *et al*. 2016.

2 On the second century AD building boom, see, still, Heinzelmann 2002.

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Fig. 7.1 *Taberna* in the north-east corner of building I XII 10, belonging to the Terme del Foro. (Photo: M. Flohr)

most approaches to commerce have been typological rather than topographical in nature: the idea that commercial development as a phenomenon spreads unequally over time and place within cities has not yet been a central part of the discussion (Stöger 2011). Yet chronological change and an emerging differentiation within the urban area are crucial for our understanding of the social and economic history of Ostia, and the same is true for the changing contexts within which commercial facilities were constructed. The present author has explored some of these issues in an earlier article discussing the chronological development of commercial investment along the western *decumanus* (Flohr 2018). The following pages subject Ostia's cardo to a comparable analysis. As will become clear in what follows, engaging with the cardo adds quite a bit of nuance to the picture suggested by analysing the *decumanus*.

A few basic, methodological issues briefly need to be discussed explicitly at the start of the argument. First, the relation between archaeology and commerce is complex and takes several forms. Traditionally, scholars have emphasised the quantity and size of the *horrea* of Ostia (Meiggs 1960, 270–278; Hermansen 1981, 125–205). It is undeniable that the *horrea* constitute a dominant and remarkable feature of the city, and their history is of direct relevance for both the economic and urban history of Ostia: it is hard to build up a credible narrative of Ostia's commercial landscape without acknowledging the impact of the horrea on urban space, particularly in the eastern half of the city. However, the more dominant commercial phenomenon at Ostia was the *taberna* – a large space with a wide opening from, usually, the street, which could be used for a variety of commercial purposes (Fig. 7.1).[3] Within the Roman architectural

3 On the *taberna* see Flohr 2020; in press; Holleran 2012, 00–00;

vocabulary the *taberna* was a room type, not a building type, and as such it is always found as part of a larger whole. However, it also was a very flexible concept: it could be used in a large variety of building types, in a variety of places, and in smaller and larger numbers; size and shape could differ according to the circumstances – essentially, only the wide entrance is a standard element. In practice, *tabernae* have been found as part of houses, and of all kinds of public buildings, and they could also be constructed as groups, in rows, as a commercial building. There was no clear end to the flexibility with which *tabernae* could be deployed.

The *taberna* was an old phenomenon by the time that Ostia began to grow spectacularly in the later first century BC and early first century AD. Probably, its origins lie in the Italian peninsula. The *taberna* seems to have emerged in the third century BC, roughly in the same period in which there is increasing evidence for the monetization of everyday urban commerce, and to have become increasingly common, throughout Italy, from the second century BC onwards—particularly in larger cities, but increasingly also in smaller urban centres. By the Early Imperial period the *taberna* was a widespread phenomenon in Roman Italy, and one that was, culturally, profoundly associated with concepts of urbanity—Roman authors talk about it as if a city normally had shops, and if it did not have shops, or if shops were closed, it did not look like a city, or at least not like a daytime urban environment.[4] The wide opening of the *taberna* not only fostered commercial interaction—prospective buyers could quickly and easily evaluate what was on offer—but they also integrated shop holders—craftsmen and retailers—into the urban environment, thus intensifying the urban social landscape (Flohr 2020). In other words, the commercialisation of urban space, which was mostly fostered by economic priorities, had profound social consequences in many cities in Roman Italy, and transformed the practical dynamics of everyday urban life.

At Ostia the oldest remains of *tabernae* are found against the outer walls of the *castrum* and probably date to the third century, though no good dating evidence is available (Calza & Becatti 1953; Flohr 2018). There is scattered evidence for the Later Republican and Early Imperial periods, mostly underneath later buildings, but it suggests that, as elsewhere in Italy, the *taberna* became a common element in the urban landscape even if, at Ostia, compared to Pompeii, large elite houses with more than four *tabernae* in the façade appear to have been exceptional. *Tabernae* at Ostia, before the second century AD, appear mostly in relation to small- and medium-sized private houses, and in the form of long rows as commercial buildings along the main streets, and in the *castrum*. The building boom of the second century AD completely transformed the entire city, and resulted in a much denser commercial landscape which, throughout the city, became dominated by long, continuous sequences of *tabernae*. Some of these were constructed during huge building projects which involved the construction of entire neighbourhoods – such as the quarter around the Baths of Neptune along the eastern *decumanus*, or the Case a Giardino in the western part of the city.[5] By the third century AD, however, it seems that investment levels had dropped, and the number of *tabernae* had stopped increasing – though there is no evidence suggesting that many *tabernae* went out of use immediately: only when the population of Ostia began to decrease, in Late Antiquity, did *tabernae* begin to be closed off, or to be converted into other uses – indeed, many of Ostia's late antique houses include the remains of second century AD *tabernae*.[6]

7.2 INTRODUCING THE CARDO

This, very roughly, is the background against which the history of commercial investment alongside Ostia's Cardo should be evaluated. There is a bit more to say about the Cardo itself. In its final state, the Cardo started – or ended – at the south end of the *forum*, against the back wall of the temple of Roma and Augustus (Fig. 7.2). In the second century traffic could, at this point, continue towards, or come from, three different directions: the *forum*, the palaestra of

2017; Ellis 2018.

4 E.g. Liv. 23.24. Cf. Flohr in press.

5 On these quarters, see DeLaine 2002; Stevens 2005.

6 On late antique Ostia in general, see Boin 2013. Converted *tabernae* were included in e.g. the House of Amor and Psyche (I XIV 3), house II VI 2, and the Aula of Mars and Venus (II IX 3). On these complexes, see Pavolini 2006, 38.

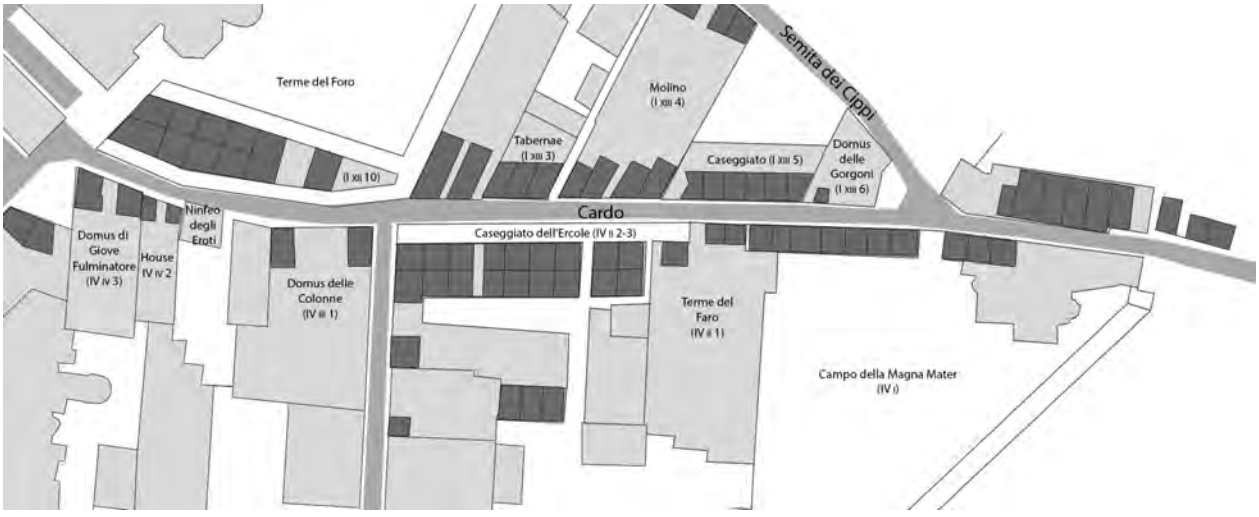

Fig. 7.2 Overview of the *Cardo* and its adjacent buildings. (Map: M. Flohr)

the *forum* baths, and the Via del Tempio Rotondo and the Via del Pomerio, which ran around the outer *castrum* wall and connected the end of the *cardo* to the piazza in front of the sea-side gate of the *castrum*, from where the two main roads towards the sea and the river mouth departed. Only this last connection was viable for wheeled traffic. From this crossroads on the edge of the *forum* the Cardo slightly bent in an easterly direction before continuing in a straight line to the Porta Laurentina – a distance totaling some 250 meters. On its way, it encountered two other roads. On the south side, some 75 meters from the *forum* it crossed at right angles the Via della Caupona, of which some 100 meters have been excavated; we do not know how it continued beyond that point, though it probably at some point encountered the continuation of the Via di Iside, which ran parallel to the Cardo further to the south. Some 125 meters further down the road was the point where the Semita dei Cippi split off from the Cardo, to continue in a north westerly direction towards the east end of the original *castrum* and the *decumanus*. Beyond the city gate the *cardo* has been excavated for no more than a few meters, but its continuation has been found some 200 meters further to the east, where it is surrounded by tombs and thus appears to have lost its urban character. Beyond the necropolis, the road was connected to the rigidly centuriated agricultural zone of the Pianabella area.[7]

To understand how this road functioned in its larger urban environment, the most logical starting point is Stöger's analysis of Ostia's reconstructed street grid, which does not only include the actually excavated streets, but the unexcavated streets of which we know the existence through geophysical survey (Stöger 2011, 197–227). Her analysis in general strongly privileges the *decumanus* over perpendicular routes like the cardo: these were less central to the urban road system, and therefore mostly of secondary importance. Additionally, Stöger's Space Syntax analysis suggested that among the roads leading to and from the *decumani*, it was not the Cardo and the Semita dei Cippi that were the most relevant, but a road further to the east that branched off the eastern *decumanus* in the vicinity of the theatre – the Via del Sabazeo (Fig. 7.3). This road is known to have led to an unexcavated city gate and continued south of the city, connecting with the prolongation of the cardo in the necropolis.[8] It offered a shortcut to those who traveled from the area south of Ostia to the city and preferred to avoid the city center. Yet it should be pointed out that this relative marginality of the Cardo should not be overstated. First, of course, Stöger's analysis of relative integration analyzed *potential* traffic routes, not actual road use, and because it is based only on the road network, it is insensitive to

7 On this centuriation, see Heinzelmann 1998.

8 On the city gate belonging to this road, see Martin & Heinzelmann 2000, who date it to the first century AD.

Fig. 7.3 Position of the *Cardo* in Ostia's street network. (Map adapted from Stöger 2011, Fig. 7.12)

differences in population density within the city. It may be argued that the *Cardo*, while theoretically more marginal than the Via del Sabazeo if you look at the road network, was in practice much more prominent and much more intensively used, simply because it ran through and gave access to several areas with a high population density and, especially, to the *forum*. Also, and partly for the same reason, the Cardo was a privileged position compared to the Semita dei Cippi, and this is also clear in the latter road's historical development over time, which suggests increasing marginalisation.[9] We should, therefore, analyse the Cardo with the idea in mind that it was a very central urban road, and potentially also one that had considerable symbolic significance within the community.

As the argument proceeds to discussing the commercial development of the Cardo, it makes sense to divide the road into a number of sections. In what follows three will be distinguished. The first runs from the *forum* to the Via della Caupona; the second from the Via della Caupona to the Bivio with the Semita dei Cippi, and the third from the Bivio to the Porta Laurentina and beyond.

7.3 SECTION I: FROM THE *FORUM* TO THE VIA DELLA CAUPONA

In its present, excavated state, the first part of the Cardo has two faces: on the east side the road is flanked by the remains of a *porticus* with *tabernae* belonging to the Forum Baths; on the west side are the remains of a sequence of private buildings of mostly modest size.

This latter sequence starts with Ostia's two remaining "*atrium* houses", which date back to at least the late first century BC, and it is clear that both were initially built with the classic, Pompeian-Vitruvian arrangement of a central entrance corridor flanked by a *taberna* on each side.[10] Further to the south follow two more private buildings, but their

9 A section of the Semita dei Cippi close to the eastern *decumanus* was partially overbuilt by a monumental exedra in later antiquity, rendering it unusable. Cf. Pavolini 2006, 79

10 Calza & Becatti 1953; Pavolini 2006, 198–199. On the *Domus di Giove Fulminatore*, see Lorenzatti 1998.

Fig. 7.4 Ostia, Cardo. Porticus with *tabernae* I XII 10. (Photo: M. Flohr)

visible remains are of a much later date. The first of these was dramatically altered in the early fifth century by the construction of the so-called Ninfeo degli Eroti; it was originally Hadrianic in date, and it may have had two *tabernae*.[11] The second is the third century AD *Domus delle Colonne*, which was constructed with two *tabernae* around its monumental entrance.[12] In both cases it is impossible to reconstruct how the area was used beforehand, but it may be argued that it would have been occupied by buildings that were similar in size to the later structures—or smaller.

On the opposite side of the road, the *tabernae* of the Forum Baths belong to the later second century AD – probably, to the final years of the reign of Antoninus Pius (Fig. 7.4) (Cicerchia & Marinucci 1992; Pavolini 2006, 107–110). It is hard to understand land use prior to the construction of the baths, but a magnetometer survey done by the University of Kent suggests the presence of at least one building with dimensions and an orientation suggesting it was a house opening off the cardo (Lavan 2018, 415–417). It is possible, thus, that before the construction of the baths, land use on both sides of the road was rather similar, and that the baths were constructed at the expense of a residential quarter. Parallels like the Central Baths in Pompeii, constructed at the expense of a city block in the 60s and 70s AD, and the baths of Caracalla in Rome, which replaced a sizable urban quarter in the early third century AD, also suggest that this is a credible scenario.[13]

11 On the Ninfeo degli Eroti, see Pavolini 2006, 200.

12 On this house, see Tione 2004, 227; Pavolini 2006, 200–201.

13 On the Central Baths in Pompeii, see De Haan & Wallat 2008. On the Baths of Caracalla in Rome, see Coarelli 2008, 428–432; Claridge 2010, 357

Fig. 7.5 Ostia, ashlar façade of building I XIII 3. (Photo: M. Flohr)

7.4 SECTION II: FROM THE VIA DELLA CAUPONA TO THE BIVIO

The second section of the Cardo essentially mirrors the layout of the first. Now, the east side of the road was flanked by a sequence of small to medium-sized buildings – though in this case commercial buildings rather than houses. All were much deeper than they were wide, and all had a façade with two or more *tabernae*. Immediately south of the Terme del Foro, the two buildings closest to the *forum* had archaising façades of ashlar (Fig. 7.5). Apparently, these façades belonged to earlier buildings: even though the present structures belonged to the second or third century AD, the façades, and therefore the *tabernae*, were significantly older, perhaps dating back to the late Republic or the Augustan period.[14] Further to the south, the last two buildings before the Bivio were much later in date. The first is a row of six *tabernae* from the late Severan Period (Calza & Becatti 1953, 237). The second is the fourth century *Domus delle Gorgoni* on the south end of the city block, which included only one, very small *taberna*. Both buildings are likely to have had predecessors, but it is not clear whether these were of similar size. Compared to most other buildings at Ostia that do not belong to the boom period of the early second century, the Severan *tabernae* have a relatively long façade length; perhaps, they were the result of a merged plot.

On the other side of the road, in insula IV, II, the situation was different.[15] Most of the street front of this *insula* is taken up by the Porticus and Caseggiato dell'Ercole, which has been brick-stamp dated to the 160s AD (Fig. 7.6).[16] Chronologically, it therefore connects

14 See, on these two buildings (I XIII 3 and I XIII 4), Pietrogrande 1976, 9–13; Meijlink 1999, 64–77.

15 On this *insula*, see, of course, Stöger 2011, 67–196.

16 See Stöger 2011, 96 with reference to Calza & Becatti 1953, 226; Packer 1971, 190.

Fig. 7.6 Ostia, Cardo with Portico di Ercole (IV II 2-3). (Photo: M. Flohr)

rather directly with the *porticus* with *tabernae* belonging to the Forum Baths. Physically, too, the two *porticus* were closely linked: one could directly cross the road from the east end of the porticus of the Forum Baths to the west end of the Portico dell'Ercole. While it is hard to prove (and perhaps unlikely) that they were actually planned as one coherent covered walkway, they surely will have ended up functioning as one. Within the *porticus* there was a sequence of ten *tabernae* interrupted by three corridors connecting the *porticus* to the inner part of the building. The portico is unlikely to have been the first building in the area and, indeed, excavations by Calza have found traces of houses dating back to, possibly, the Republican period (Calza & Becatti 1953, Fig. 30; Stöger 2011, 96). Their number and layout are unclear, as is the extent to which they had *tabernae*. Probably, they were bought up and razed in order to make space for the Caseggiato dell'Ercole. The only building that may have partially preserved the shape of the original allotments is the one hosting the Terme del Faro, which in its present state roughly belongs to the same period as the Caseggiato dell'Ercole, and which has two *tabernae* directly on the street.[17]

East of these baths was the large sanctuary that occupied the entire space between insula IV, ii and the city walls, and is commonly referred to as the Campo della Magna Mater.[18] This sanctuary emerged in the Imperial period on an area that appears to have remained unoccupied after the erection of the city walls. Initially, it was separated from the street simply by a closed wall, but in the Hadrianic period a row of ten *tabernae* was built on both sides of the central entrance to the sacred area, and only the last section before the gate was kept free (Fig. 7.7).[19]

17 On this building, see Stöger 2011, 69–92.

18 The most detailed study of this sanctuary is Berlioz 1997. See also Pavolini 2006, 207–210.

19 The dating of the *tabernae* is derived from Calza & Becatti 1953, 236, but can be confirmed on the basis of the use of Hadrianic-style

Fig. 7.7 Ostia, Final stretch of the Cardo with *tabernae* (IV I 9) in front of the Campo della Magna Mater. (Photo: M. Flohr)

7.5 SECTION III: FROM THE BIVIO TO THE PORTA LAURENTINA AND BEYOND

The final stretch of the road, between the Semita dei Cippi and the end of the modern excavations, was partially bordered by the *tabernae* belonging to the sanctuary. Outside the gate there is a partially excavated structure that includes at least one *taberna*, and possibly more. It may have been a *caseggiato*, or a row of *tabernae*, and its date remains unclear. On the other side of the road the remains of two buildings are visible. One is a row of seven *tabernae* dating to the Severan period that have been built around and over the city wall (Fig. 7.8).[20] A second building, further to the east, is an only partially excavated *caseggiato* with at least three *tabernae* along the street, but, again, the details remain unclear.[21] On the opposite side of the road the plans of Calza and Becatti show one *taberna* outside the Porta Laurentina, but while it evidently was part of a larger whole, its context cannot be reconstructed on the basis of the building's known remains. However, even if the interpretation of these fragmentary remains at the edge of the excavated area remains complicated, they do make clear that, like at the other city gates, the urban area continued a bit beyond the wall-circuit, albeit not endlessly: the excavated section situated some 200 meters further to the south shows the road being flanked by a necropolis, with little trace of urban architecture around it.[22]

opus reticulatum with *latericium*. There are no known brick-stamps associated with the complex.

20 On this building, see Calza & Becatti 1953, 237.

21 This building seems to be completely undocumented; it lacks a number on the plan of Calza & Becatti 1953.

22 On the Porta Laurentina Necropolis, see Heinzelmann 1998; 2001.

Fig. 7.8 Ostia, *Caseggiato* V I 1, with *tabernae* built on top of the late republican city wall. (Photo: M. Flohr)

7.6 DISCUSSION

The 14 buildings within the city walls that have been discussed in the previous sections together had, in their excavated state, 59 *tabernae* – or on average just over four *tabernae* per building (Fig. 7.9). Five buildings had more than this average – with six to ten *tabernae*; seven buildings had only one or two *tabernae*, and there is one building with three, and one building with four *tabernae*. Thus, while the *porticus* with *tabernae* of the Caseggiato dell'Ercole and of the Forum baths are eye-catchers, in terms of commerce, small- and medium-sized complexes made up the majority, and it seems from the archeological evidence that these complexes mostly had a history of independent ownership. At the same time, in the excavated state, commercialisation along the street is rather close to the theoretical maximum: there were only four buildings with alternative uses of space: the Forum Baths included a latrine south of the *tabernae*; the Late Antique Nympheum of the Cupids occupied the space of, possibly, one earlier *taberna*; the Late Antique Domus delle Gorgoni was partially constructed with a closed façade, and the same is true for a section of the Campo della Magna Mater.

Yet, this is only the static, descriptive picture. More important is how this situation developed over time, and how it compared to other roads. As to the first issue, there seem to be three main developments in the area. First, in the Late Republican and Early Imperial periods the land alongside the Cardo was parceled out and sold to private people who used it to build their houses; the finds underneath the Forum Baths and the Caseggiato dell'Ercole suggests that this was true along both sides of the road, up to the Campo della Magna Mater and, perhaps, the south end of the city block east of the road. Second, while these buildings were continuously being adapted and developed, a major development took place in the 160s AD, when, possibly in a related development, the *porticus* with

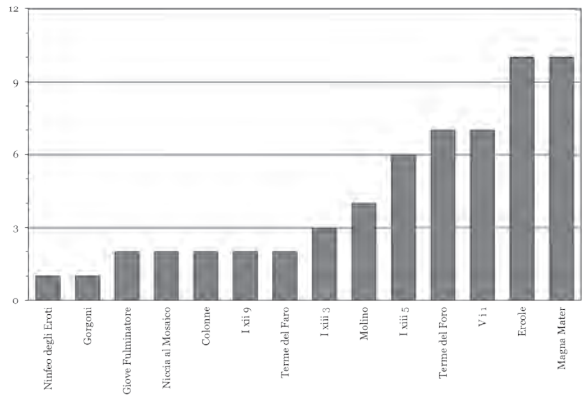

Fig. 7.9 Ostia, number of *tabernae* for each of the buildings discussed in this chapter. (Chart: M. Flohr)

tabernae of the Forum Baths and the Caseggiato dell'Ercole were constructed, both at the expense of pre-existing buildings. These two building projects fundamentally changed the character of the street and gave the Cardo a considerably more monumental appearance than it had had before. Thirdly, in later antiquity, the need to invest in commerce or to maintain commercial facilities diminished, and this is reflected in the construction of the Domus delle Gorgoni, the Ninfeo degli Eroti, and the large public latrine, that were probably constructed at the expense of *tabernae* once situated alongside the road.

It is relevant to put this in a slightly broader context: how do the developments along the *Cardo* relate to developments elsewhere in Ostia? Three points can be made. First, it may be observed that the history of the Cardo to some extent resembles that of the first section of the western *decumanus*, which had a comparable sequence of small- to medium-sized buildings.[23] Some of these subsequently merged to form larger complexes, but in general plot boundaries along both roads appear to have remained stable. Second, it may be argued that, compared to the traditional narrative of Ostia as a Trajanic and Hadrianic boomtown, developments along the Cardo in the second century AD were not only limited, but also relatively late: while both along the western and along the eastern *decumanus* key developments clustered in the 120s and 130s, the Cardo began to be transformed decisively only in the 160s, and its development continued well into the Severan period, with two rows of *tabernae* being added only in this period.[24] Finally, it may be pointed out that compared to the two "competitor roads" between the Pianabella Necropolis and the *decumanus* – the Semita dei Cippi and the Via del Sabazeo – the Cardo had traditionally been the main connection, and the developments of the second century AD confirm this: the Cardo ended up much more strongly monumentalised than the other two roads, even if, in terms of connectivity as measured through space syntax, it was less central than the Via del Sabazeo. Arguably, for *civic* purposes the Cardo was and remained the main road; this may have been different for trade and transport, but it does show that space syntax should not be used too rigidly when assessing urban topographies.

7.7 CONCLUSION

More in general, this article confirms how, even in Ostia, where architecture developed on a scale not seen in most other urban excavations in the Roman world – or indeed in many Roman cities – a lot of commercial development was spatially constrained, and proceeded little by little, bit by bit – because of the way in which the landscape had developed, it generally was hard to construct buildings that exceeded the size of one traditional plot *unless* the local authorities got involved and helped to evict the people living on the spot – then you get developments like the Forum Baths or the Portico dell'Ercole. Yet it should be pointed out that, in spite of what may be expected, such complexes were exceptional even at Ostia – whatever happened on the really large scale, excepting the Porticus of Pius IX, happened on land that previously had not or scarcely been built up. In this way, the developments along the Cardo may be more extreme than they appear to us at first sight.

At the same time, the discussion in this article has highlighted that the development of the Cardo sits uneasily with the Trajanic and Hadrianic

23 As has been argued in Flohr 2018. See there for an assessment of the historical development of the Western *decumanus*.

24 For the eastern *decumanus*, key projects like the Terme di Nettuno quarter belong to the boom period of the first half of the second century AD. See *e.g.* DeLaine 2002.

building boom narrative that dominates the historical development of the *decumani* and the city as such. As it seems, the Cardo followed its own rhythm, and came under development only at a later moment—essentially just when the second century AD building boom had come to an end. In fact, this opens up an array of new questions about Ostia's commercial history in the second century AD and beyond.

Finally, it should be emphasised that methodologically, to understand all of this, the larger framework of the urban landscape as a whole is indispensable, and this chapter has also shown that in understanding such issues at Ostia, Hannah Stöger's *Rethinking Ostia* remains a groundbreaking work: even if some of the arguments will be modified or further developed in the future – indeed, this chapter implicitly challenges her argument about the prominence of the Via del Sabazeo – the merit of *Rethinking Ostia* lies in opening up an entirely new way of thinking about Ostia as a spatial system. Without this work, it would be impossible to contextualise the commercial development of both individual streets and the urban landscape as a whole.

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