ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation:	ON THE THRESHOLD: VISUALIZING AMBIGUITY IN THE ART AND EXPERIENCE OF ANCIENT ROMAN DOORWAYS
	Amanda Kane Chen, Doctor of Philosophy, 2022
Dissertation directed by:	Professor Maryl B. Gensheimer, Department of Art History and Archaeology

Neither interior nor exterior, doors, thresholds, and passageways were regarded as powerful, yet ambiguous areas by the ancient Romans. Ancient myths and texts characterize thresholds as sites of magic and ritual and record that improper movements or interactions could enact misfortune or physical peril for those who transgressed the space. These concerns about the liminal nature of doorways are reflected in the art historical and archaeological records, where corridors are often decorated with charged images or inscriptions. This dissertation examines the wide variety of efficacious images that accompany domestic doorways in the cities of ancient south Italy (Campania) from the second century BCE through the first century CE. The project investigates the painting, mosaic, architectural features, and surrounding urban landscape of domestic doorways to understand how images were used to mark and mediate transitional spaces, and to reconstruct the ancient experience of moving through spatially ambiguous areas.

In doing so, it offers new insights into the active nature of Roman images and the mechanism of this "superstitious" practice.

The phenomenon of decorating spaces of passage with powerful imagery existed throughout the ancient Mediterranean and reveals not only Roman concerns with the uncertainties of liminal space, but also that images were considered an effective tool for mitigating the perceived vulnerabilities of thresholds. This dissertation demonstrates that homeowners in ancient Campania safeguarded their thresholds by embellishing their entrance corridors with images that themselves possessed ambiguous or transitional qualities and associations. By addressing spatial ambiguity with its visual and ideological counterparts, the Romans developed a visual language that they used to mediate transitional areas. The efficacious images also physically engaged viewers in these protective mechanisms through pointed visual details that encouraged reciprocal interactions and activated the images.

This project draws on data collected from a survey of all domestic doorways in Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Stabiae. It combines wide-ranging philosophical, anthropological, art historical, and archaeological theories to assess the material, and offers a new methodology for understanding and evaluating spatial ambiguity. The conclusions, methodology, and data presented in this dissertation exhibit the importance of a comprehensive contextual approach to the art and archaeology of ancient Campania, while they also demonstrate the interconnected nature of art, space, and spiritual practice in ancient south Italy. The project thus carries important implications for studies of Roman art, archaeology, and space, but also for perceptions of and responses to ambiguity and uncertainty more broadly.

ON THE THRESHOLD: VISUALIZING AMBIGUITY IN THE ART AND EXPERIENCE OF ANCIENT ROMAN DOORWAYS

by

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Dedication

To WHR.

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Table of Contents

Dedication ii
Acknowledgements iii
Table of Contents v
List of Figures vii
List of Abbreviations xi
Introduction 1
State of the Field 3
Contributions of this Project 11
Project Scope 12
Terminology and Conventions 15
Organization 16
Key Theory and Methodological Framework 20
Perception and Embodied Viewing 20
Object Agency 25
Phenomenology 26
Space and Urban Display 28
Liminality 30
Project Methodology 33
Chapter 1: The Roman *Ostium* in Text, Belief, and Practice 35
Roman Doorways: Form, Function, and Ornamentation 35
Apotropaia and the Belief in Invisible Dangers 48
Deities of the Doorway 51
Roman Doors in Latin Texts 58
Conclusion 69
Chapter 2: Divine Intervention: Liminal Deities and the Threshold 71
Deities and the Casa dei Dioscuri 73
Dioscuri at the Doorway: Divine Images and Transitional Space in the Casa dei Dioscuri 78
On the Façade: Fortuna and Mercury 79
In the *Fauces:* The Dioscuri 83
Experiencing and Activating the Dioscuri Paintings 90
Priapus on the Threshold: Ithyphallic Representation and the Doorway 94
Priapus: An Overview 94

Priapus and the Casa dei Vettii 97
Charged Images within the Interior of the Casa dei Vettii 105
Beyond the Casa dei Vettii: Other Examples of Priapus on the Threshold 107
From Atrium to Peristyle: Divine Interior Imagery in the Casa dei Dioscuri 116
Conclusions 121
Chapter 3: Animals, Transformation, and the Defense of Domestic Doorways 123
Animal Imagery and Pompeian Doorways 124
The Casa dell'Orso Ferito 127
Roman Bears: A Brief Overview 131
Women, Bears, and Transformation in Ancient Myth 133
The *Ursus* in Ancient Literature 135
Unravelling the Wounded Bear Mosaic 137
The Orso Ferito in Context 142
Dolphins at the Door: Animal Imagery and the Domus M. Caesi Blandi 149
The Dolphin in the Ancient Mediterranean 150
Situating the Mosaic within the Domus M. Caesi Blandi 154
The Domus M. Caesi Blandi in Context 159
Conclusions 161
Chapter 4: Snares and Signs: Captivating Patterns and Powerful Symbols in Domestic Passageways 163
Dynamism, Captivation, and Defense: Theories and Examples of Efficacious Symbols 165
The Casa dell'Atrio a mosaico 173
Tactics of Defense and Address in the Entryway of the Casa dell'Ancora 177
Anchors and Scales: Symbols of Protection, Good Fortune, and Captivation 179
Experiencing the *Fauces* Mosaics in the Casa dell'Ancora 183
Conclusions 187
Chapter 5: HAVE, CAVE, SALVE: Charged Inscriptions within Campanian Doorways 189
The Nexus of Art and Text in (Recent) Scholarship 192
Word and Picture: Inscription, Image, and Engagement 197
Questions of Viewing and Literacy 200
Hail! Mosaic Greetings of Welcome and Protection 203
Mosaic Inscriptions at the Casa del Fauno and House V.3.10 203
Wishes of Health and Safety at the Casa del Salve 209
Greetings from Stabiae: The SALVE Inscription at the Villa Arianna 219

Welcoming Fortune: An Auspicious Inscription at the Domus Vedi Sirici 224
Messages of Warning and Intimidation: 233
"Beware of the Dog" at the Casa del Poeta Tragico 234
Warning and Welcome at the Casa del Giardino d'Ercole 238
Conclusions 246
Conclusion 248
Spatial Trends and Themes 249
Chapters and Maps: Summary and Discussion 252
Future Work and Project Limitations 260
Contributions and Conclusions 262
Appendix 265
Bibliography 276

List of Figures

Fig. I.1 Plan of a ("Typical") Pompeian House……..……36
Fig. I.2 Plaster Cast of Door……...39
Fig. I.3 Tomba della Finta Porta……40
Fig. I.4 Tomba dei Caronti…… 40
Fig. I.5 Diagram, Roman door……41
Fig. I.6 Door Cuttings in Threshold. Casa dei Quattro Stili [I.8.17]……..41
Fig. I.7 Door Cast. Casa di Ocatvius Quartio [II.2.2]…….... 42
Fig. I.8 Door Cast, Casa di Popidius Montanus [IX.7.9]……... 42
Fig. I.9 Detail, Second-Style Fresco, Room G. Villa of Publius Fannius Synistor…44
Fig. I.10 Detail, Second Style Fresco, Room M. Villa of Publius Fannius Synistor…44
Fig. I.11 Lion's Head Door Handle/Knocker……... 44
Fig. I.12 Detail, Arms on Door, Second-Style Atrium Fresco. Villa of Poppaea…… 45
Fig. I.13 Dog Mosaic. Casa di Orfeo [VI.14.20]……..47
Fig. I.14 Plaster Cast of Dog Remains. Casa di Orfeo [VI.14.20]……47
Fig. I.15 Evil Eye Amulet…….49
Fig. I.16 *Tintinnabulum*…… 50
Fig. I.17 Phallus Relief……50
Fig. I.18 *Sestertius* of Nero. Reverse: Temple of Janus Quirinus…… 53
Fig. I.19 Boundary Stone. Regio IX, Insula 1…….. 55
Fig. I.20 Herm, used as a table leg……... 57
Fig. II.1 Plan of Casa dei Dioscuri [VI.9.6-7] (brown)……...…….73
Fig. II.2 Plan of are surrounding the Casa dei Dioscuri (brown)……... 73
Fig. II.3 Façade, Casa dei Dioscuri [VI.9.6-7]…….74
Fig. II.4 Mercury and Fortuna, from the Casa dei Dioscuri [VI.9.6-7]……... 74
Fig. II.5A Dioscouros. Casa dei Dioscuri [VI.9.6-7]…….……...…..75
Fig. II.5B Reproduction, Dioscuros. Casa dei Dioscuri [VI.9.6-7]……75
Fig. II.6A Dioscouros. Casa dei Dioscuri [VI.9.6-7]……..75
Fig. II.6B Reproduction, Dioscuros. Casa dei Dioscuri [VI.9.6-7].……75
Fig. II.7 Fresco Locations within the Atrium of the Casa dei Dioscuri [VI.9.6-7]…..76
Fig. II.8 Jupiter Enthroned with Victory. Casa dei Dioscuri [VI.9.6-7]…… 76
Fig. II.9 Bacchus with Panther and Satyr. Casa dei Dioscuri [VI.9.6-7]……76
Fig. II.10 Saturn with Sickle. Casa dei Dioscuri [VI.9.6-7]…….. 76
Fig. II.11 Apollo with Cithara. Casa dei Dioscuri [VI.9.6-7]……76
Fig. II.12 Ceres with Torch and Basket. Casa dei Dioscuri [VI.9.6-7]……. 76
Fig. II.13 Hermaphrodite and Satyr. Casa dei Dioscuri [VI.9.6-7]……... 77
Fig. II.14 Fresco locations within the peristyle of the Casa dei Dioscuri [VI.9.6-7]….78
Fig. II.15A Fortuna. From the Casa di Tullius [VI.7.9]……... 80
Fig. II.15B Mercury. From the Casa di Tullius [VI.7.9]…….. 80
Fig. II.16 Structures in Pompeii with façade images of Mercury and/or Fortuna……. 80
Fig. II.17 Ithyphallic Mercury. Casa dei Dioscuri [VI.9.6-7]……81
Fig. II.18 Temple of Castor and Pollux…… 87
Fig. II.19 View of the *fauces* of the Casa dei Dioscuri [VI.9.6-7]…….88
Fig. II.20 Detail, Dioscuros. Casa dei Dioscuri [VI.9.6-7]……91

Fig. II.21 Detail, Horse. Casa dei Dioscuri [VI.9.6-7]……...92
Fig. II.22 Plan, Casa dei Vettii [VI.15.1]……...97
Fig. II.23 Priapus. From the Casa dei Vettii [VI.15.1]…….. 97
Fig. II.24 Vestibule Painting, Casa dei Vettii [VI.15.1]…… 97
Fig. II.25 Facade, Casa dei Vettii [VI.15.1]……...98
Fig. II.26 Vestibule floor, Casa dei Vettii [VI.15.1]……..98
Fig. II.27 Map, Area surrounding the Casa dei Vettii [VI.15.1]……103
Fig. II.28 Sidewalk, Casa dei Vettii [VI.15.1]……...104
Fig. II.29 Crossing Stones. Casa dei Vettii [VI.15.1]…… 104
Fig. II.30 Priapus Garden Fountain Sculpture……... 105
Fig. II.31 Hermaphrodite and Pan. From the Casa dei Vettii [VI.15.1]…… 105
Fig. II.32 Plan, Complesso dei Riti Magici [II.1.12]…… 107
Fig. II.33 Facade, Complesso dei Riti Magici [II.1.12]…… 107
Fig. II.34 Detail of Venus, Complesso dei Riti Magici [II.1.12]……...107
Fig. II.35 Detail of Bacchus and Mercury, Complesso dei Riti Magici [II.1.12]…….. 107
Fig. II.36 Priapus, Complesso dei Riti Magici [II.1.12]…… 107
Fig. II.37 Cult Vase. From the Complesso dei Riti Magici [II.1.12]……108
Fig. II.38 Map, Area surrounding the Complesso dei Riti Magici [II.1.12]……..110
Fig. II.39 Priapus. From Structure V.6.12……. 111
Fig. II.40 Mercury, from V.6.12…… 113
Fig. II.41 Map, Area Surrounding Structure V.6.12 (grey) and Porta Vesuvio (aqua). 113
Fig. II.42 Structure II.9.1……... 114
Fig. II.43 Priapus. From Structure II.9.1……114
Fig. II.44 Pillar decorated on four sides. From Structure II.9.1……114
Fig. II.45 View of Priapus Painting from front door of II.9.1……... 115
Fig. II.46 Map, Area surrounding II.9.1 (maroon) and Porta Nocera (red)……... 115
Fig. II.47 Wall between atrium and peristyle, Casa dei Dioscuri [VI.9.6-7]……120
Fig. III.1 Exterior, Casa dell'Orso Ferito [VII.2.45]……127
Fig. III.2 Wounded Bear Mosaic, Casa dell'Orso Ferito [VII.2.45]…… 128
Fig. III.3 *Fauces* floor, Casa dell'Orso Ferito [VII.2.45]……..128
Fig. III.4 *Fauces* Fresco, Casa dell'Orso Ferito [VII.2.45]……...128
Fig. III.5 Atrium and *impluvium*, Casa dell'Orso Ferito [VII.2.45]……..129
Fig. III.6 *Nymphaeum*, Casa dell'Orso Ferito [VII.2.45]……..129
Fig. III.7 Garden Painting, Casa dell'Orso Ferito [VII.2.45]……130
Fig. III.8 Hadrianic tondo with bear hunt, now on the Arch of Constantine…… 132
Fig. III.9 Detail, Wounded Bear Mosaic, Casa dell'Orso Ferito [VII.2.45]…… 137
Fig. III.10 Evil Eye Mosaic, House of the Evil Eye……139
Fig. III.11 Detail, Wounded Bear Mosaic, Casa dell'Orso Ferito [VII.2.45]……. 140
Fig. III.12 View of the Casa dell'Orso Ferito from across the street……..142
Fig. III.13 Stucco Fragments on Façade, Casa dell'Orso Ferito [VII.2.45]……142
Fig. III.14 Stucco Fragments on Façade, Casa dell'Orso Ferito [VII.2.45]……142
Fig. III.15 View through the *fauces*, Casa dell'Orso Ferito [VII.2.45]……...142
Fig. III.16 Garden Painting, Villa of Poppaea at Oplontis……..143
Fig. III.17 Detail, Wounded Bear Mosaic, Casa dell'Orso Ferito [VII.2.45]……. 144
Fig. III.18 Plan, Casa dell'Orso Ferito [VII.2.45] (green)…….. 147
Fig. III.19 Insula 2, Regio VII Plan……148

Fig. III.20 Crossing Stones in front of the Casa dell'Orso Ferito [VII.2.45]……..148
Fig. III.21 Exterior, Domus M. Caesi Blandi [VII.1.40]…….149
Fig. III.22 *Fauces* mosaic, Domus M. Caesi Blandi [VII.1.40]……..149
Fig. III.23 *Metamorphosis of the Tyrrhenian Pirates into Dolphins*…….. 150
Fig. III.24 Plan, Domus M. Caesi Blandi [VII.1.40] (navy)……... 154
Fig. III.25 View from the Threshold, Domus M. Caesi Blandi [VII.1.40]…… 154
Fig. III.26 City Gate Threshold Mosaic, Domus M. Caesi Blandi [VII.1.40]…… 157
Fig. III.27 Map of Streets Surrounding the Domus M. Caesi Blandi [VII.1.40]…… 159
Fig. III.28 Map of Proximity of Casa dell'Orso Ferito [VII.2.45] (green) to Domuus M. Caesi Blandi [VII.1.40] (navy)…….160
Fig. IV.1 Mosaic with guilloche border Caseggiato del Lottatore [V.3.1]……... 166
Fig. IV.2 Solomonic knot mosaic, Room 61, Villa San Marco…… 167
Fig. IV.3 Plan, Villa San Marco…… 169
Fig. IV.4 Exterior, Villa San Marco……..169
Fig. IV.5 Atrium, Villa San Marco……169
Fig. IV.6 Mosaic Threshold, Room 57, Villa San Marco……. 170
Fig. IV.7 Mosaic Threshold, Room 59A, Villa San Marco…….. 170
Fig. IV.8 Mosaic Threshold, *Tablinum*, Villa San Marco……170
Fig. IV.9 Mosaic Threshold, Room 36, Villa San Marco……. 171
Fig. IV.10 Mosaic Threshold, Room 32, Villa San Marco……. 171
Fig. IV.11 Mosaic Threshold, Room 39, Villa San Marco……. 171
Fig. IV.12 Plan, Casa dell'Atrio a Mosaico [IV.2]……. 172
Fig. IV.13 *Fauces* Mosaic Casa dell'Atrio a Mosaico [IV.2]……. 173
Fig. IV.14 Rosette detail, *Fauces* Mosaic Casa dell'Atrio a Mosaico [IV.2]……. 174
Fig. IV.15 Plan, Casa dell'Ancora [VI.10.7] (aqua)……... 176
Fig. IV.16 Facade, Casa dell'Ancora [VI.10.7]…….. 176
Fig. IV.17 Anchor Mosaic, Casa dell'Ancora [VI.10.7]……176
Fig. IV.18 Scale Pattern Mosaic, Casa dell'Ancora [VI.10.7]…… 177
Fig. IV.19 Door Cuttings, Casa dell'Ancora [VI.10.7]……... 177
Fig. IV.20 Strong Box Platform, Casa dell'Ancora [VI.10.7]…… 177
Fig. IV.21 Two leveled-Garden, Casa dell'Ancora [VI.10.7]……177
Fig. IV.22 Garden *nymphaeum*, Casa dell'Ancora [VI.10.7]……. 178
Fig. IV.23 Facade with anchor, VIII.2.30……... 180
Fig. IV.24 Terracotta mask, facade, VIII.2.30…… 180
Fig. IV.25 Detail of balustrade, Portico 20, Villa San Marco……181
Fig. IV.26 Historic photograph, façade, Casa dell'Ancora [VI.10.7]…… 182
Fig. IV.27 Fountain, Casa della Fontana Grande [VI.8.22]……..... 185
Fig. V.1 Snake game graffiti, [V.3.1]…….. 198
Fig. V.2 Exterior, Casa del Fauno [VI.12.2]……203
Fig. V.3 Sidewalk "HAVE" mosaic, Casa del Fauno [VI.12.2]…….. 203
Fig. V.4 *Fauces*, Casa del Fauno [VI.12.2]……. 204
Fig. V.5 Plan, Casa del Fauno [VI.12.2] (blue)……... 204
Fig. V.6 Exterior, House V.3.10…….. 205
Fig. V.7 Historical photograph of House V.3.10 sidewalk mosaic……. 206
Fig. V.8 Plan, House V.3.10 (orange)……..207
Fig. V.9 Historic photograph of House V.3.10 garden…… 207

Fig. V.10 View of kitchen and latrine, House V.3.10……207
Fig. V.11 Rear entrance of the Casa del Salve [VI.1.25]……...209
Fig. V.12 Drawing of “SALVE” mosaic from the Casa del Salve [VI.1.25]…… 209
Fig. V.13 Plan, Casa del Salve [VI.1.25] (yellow, entrance 25 marked with star)…… 210
Fig. V.14 Front entrance of the Casa del Salve [VI.1.7/VI.1.25]…….. 210
Fig. V.15 Tablet cursing enslaved individuals……...213
Fig. V.16 View from the rear Entrance corridor of the Casa del Salve [VI.1.25]……. 215
Fig. V.17 Map of Area Surrounding the Casa del Salve [VI.1.25] (yellow)……. 216
Fig. V.18 Niche within the façade of the Casa del Narciso [VI.2.16]……... 218
Fig. V.19 Bust of Bacchus, façade of the Taberna delle Quattro Divinità [IX.7.1]….. 218
Fig. V.20 Plan, Villa Arianna A…….219
Fig. V.21 Location of former “SALVE” mosaic, *vestibulum* of Villa Arianna A…….220
Fig. V.22 Engraving of the “SALVE” mosaic…….. 221
Fig. V.23 Atrium, Villa Arianna A…… 223
Fig. V.24 Entrance, Domus Vedi Sirici [VII.1.47]…… 225
Fig. V.25 *Fauces*, Domus Vedi Sirici [VII.1.47]……...225
Fig. V.26 “SALVE LUCRU” mosaic, Domus Vedi Sirici [VII.1.47]……..226
Fig. V.27 Drawing the “SALVE LUCRU” mosaic. Domus Vedi Sirici [VII.1.47]….. 226
Fig. V.28 Plan, Domus Vedi Sirici [VII.1.47]. (dark purple)……..... 227
Fig. V.29 “SALVE LUCRU” mosaic. Domus Vedi Sirici [VII.1.47]……..230
Fig. V.30 Map of Area Surrounding the Domus Vedi Sirici [VII.1.47] (purple)…….. 231
Fig. V.31 *Lararium* Painting on the exterior of VII.11.13…….231
Fig. V.32 Façade, Casa del Poeta Tragico [VI.8.5]……... 234
Fig. V.33 “CAVE CANEM” mosaic, Casa del Poeta Tragico [VI.8.5]…… 235
Fig. V.34 Plan, Casa del Poeta Tragico [VI.8.5] (red)……...235
Fig. V.35 *Fauces*, Casa del Poeta Tragico [VI.8.5]……... 237
Fig. V.36 Façade, Casa del Giardino d’Ercole [II.8.6]…….. 238
Fig. V.37 Plan, Casa del Giardino d’Ercole [II.8.6] (pink)……238
Fig. V.38 Garden, Casa del Giardino d’Ercole [II.8.6]……..239
Fig. V.39 Historic photograph of the “CRAS CREDO” mosaic. Casa del Giardino d’Ercole [II.8.6]…….. 243
Fig. V.40 Map of area surrounding the Casa del Giardino d’Ercole [II.8.6] (pink)….. 244

List of Abbreviations

Ael. *NA*	Aelianus, *De natura animalium*
Alc. Frag.	Alcaeus, Fragments
Amm. Mars. *History*	Ammianus Marcellinus, *Historiae*
Ant. Lib. *Met.*	Antoninus Liberalis, *Metamorphoses*
Apollod. *Bild.*	Apollodorus mythographus, *Bibliotheca*
Arist. *Hist. An.*	Aristotle, *Historia animalium*
Aristoph. *Lys.*	Aristophanes, *Lysistrata*
Aug. *De civ.*	Augustine, *De civitate Dei*
Apul. *Met.*	Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*
Callim. Lyric. Frag.	Callimachus, Lyric Fragment
Cic. *Div.*	Cicero, *De divinatione*
Cic. *Dom.*	Cicero, *De domo sua*
Cic. *Nat.*	Cicero, *De natura deorum*
Cic. *Verr.*	Cicero, *In Verrem*
Claud. *Nupt.*	Claudian, *Epithalamium de Nuptiis Honorii Augusti*
CMPDD	*Le case ed i monumenti di Pompei disegnati e descritti*
Collum. *Rust.*	Columella, *De re rustica*
Diod. Sic. *Bib Hist.*	Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca historica*
Etur.	Eutropius, *Breviarium Historiae Romanae*
Eur. *Bacch.*	Euripides, *Bacchae*
Gell. *NA*	Aulus Gellius, *Noctes Atticae*
Her. *Hdt.*	Herodotus, *Historiae*
Hes. *Astronomia*	Hesiod, *Astronomia*
Hist. Aug. Elagabalus	Scriptores Historiae Augustae, *Heliogabalus*
Hist. Aug. Gordianus.	Scriptores Historiae Augustae, *Gordiani Tres*
Hom. *Il.*	Homer, *Iliad*
Hom. *Od.*	Homer, *Odyssey*
Hor. *Ars. P.*	Horace, *Ars poetica*
Hor. *Sat.*	Horace, *Satirae* or *Sermones*
Hyg. *Fab.*	Hyginus, *Fabulae*
Hyg. *Poet. Astr.*	Hyginus, *Poetica astronomica*
Hymn. Hom.	*Hymnus Homericus ad Apollinem*
Hymn. Hom. Ap.	*Hymnus Homericus ad Apollinem*
Hymn. Hom. Bacch.	*Hymnus Homericus ad Apollinem Bacchum*
Iambl. *Protr.*	Iamblichus, *Protrepticus*
Juv. *Sat.*	Juvenal, *Satires*
Liv.	Livy
Livy Ab *Urbe Cond.*	Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita Libri*
Luc. *Phar*.	Lucan, *Pharsalia* or *De Bello Civili*
Lucian. *Dial. Marini.*	Lucian, *Dialogi Marini*
Lucr.	Lucretius, *De rerum natura*
Macrob. *Sat.*	Macrobius, *Saturnalia*
Mart. *Ep*.	Martial, *Epigrams*

Mart. *Spect.*	Martial, *Spectacula*
Opp. *Cyn.*	Oppian, *Cynegetica*
Opp. *Hal.*	Oppian, *Halieutica*
Ov. *Am.*	Ovid, *Amores*
Ov. *Fast.*	Ovid, *Fasti*
Ov. *Met.*	Ovid, *Metamorphoses*
PAH	*Pompeianarum antiquitatum historia quam ex cod. mss. et schedis diurnisque R. Alcubierre, C. Weber, M. Cixia, I. Corcoles, I Perez-Conde, F. et P. La Vega, R. Amicone, A Ribav, M. Arditi, N.d'Apuzzo ceteror*.
Paus.	Pausanias, *Graecae descriptio*
Petron. *Sat.*	Petronius, *Satyrica*
Philostr. *Imag.*	Philostratus, *Imagines*
Pin. *Nem.*	Pindar, *Nemean*
Pind. *Pyth.*	Pindar, *Pythian*
Plaut. *Cas.*	Plautus, *Casina*
Plin. *Ep.*	Pliny the Younger, *Epistulae*
Plin. *HN*	Pliny the Elder, *Naturalis Historia*
Plut. Publ.	Plutarch, *Life of Publicola*
PPM	*Pompei: pitture e mosaici*.
PPP	*Pitture e pavimenti di Pompei*
Procop. *Goth.*	Procopius, *De bello Gothico*
Sen. *Ira.*	Seneca the Younger, *De Ira*
Sen. *Q. Nat.*	Seneca the Younger, *Quaestiones naturales*
Sic. Fl. *Cond. Agr*.	Siculus Flaccus, *De Condicionibus Agrorum*
Stat. *Silv.*	Statius, *Sivae*
Suet. *Aug.*	Suetonius, *Divus Augustus*
Suet. *Cal.*	Suetonius, *Gaius Caligula*
Suet. *Gram. et Rhet.*	Suetonius, *De grammaticis et rhetoribus*
Suet. *Ner.*	Suetonius, *Nero*
Tac. *Ann.*	Tacitus, *Annales*
Tert. *De Idolatria.*	Tertullian, *De Idololatria*
Thuc. Elegide.	Tibullus, *Elegies*
Varro, *Ling.*	Varro, *De lingua Latina*
Varro, *Sat. Men.*	Varro, *Saturae menippae*
Verg. *Aen.*	Virgil, *Aeneid*
Verg. *Ecl.*	Virgil, *Eclogues*
Verg. *G.*	Virgil, *Georgics*
Vitr. *De Arch.*	Vitruvius, *De architectura*

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Introduction

It is easy to feel vulnerable standing on the threshold of the Casa dell'Orso Ferito [VII.2.45] in Pompeii. The entrance corridor is narrow, long, and windowless, and the darkness of the passage is disorienting. The front entrance of the house stands near an obtuse bend in the street, which makes the diagonal orientation of the entrance corridor confounding and intimidating. Glimpses of light from within the home's small garden are visible beyond the protracted passageway, but the long journey from the threshold to the interior of the home appears perilous. This feeling is compounded by the decoration of the hallway. Just past the threshold, a mosaic image of a wounded, bleeding bear decorates the floor and greets visitors as they enter.

Certainly, this was not an image a viewer might expect to encounter when entering the home. And yet, the mosaic is emblematic of ancient Roman attitudes toward transitional spaces and visual responses to ambiguity. The wounded bear mosaic represents one of the many visual strategies used by the ancient Romans to combat the perils they believed lurked in doorways. As spaces associated with transition, doorways were considered vulnerable places that required protection. The bear mosaic is thus part of a wider phenomenon that existed throughout the ancient Roman world in which homeowners decorated their entryways with powerful images. In this dissertation, I examine the location, content, and visual details of the images that decorate the doorways of Roman homes in ancient south Italy (second century BCE-first century CE) to study how the belief in the vulnerabilities of passageways manifests in the art historical and archaeological records.

With this project I am interested in experiences, images, and confrontations of transition and ambiguity. The domestic doorway represents an ideal meeting point of these interests because it is a space that exists as an intermediary between two distinct areas: interior and exterior.[1] Doorways are liminal in their very nature, function, and location. This characterization of passageways extends to ancient Rome, where the doorway was considered a charged, yet ambiguous locale. As will be discussed in more depth in Chapter One, doorways, thresholds, and passageways were characterized as powerful areas in ancient myth and text, which often identify thresholds as the site of magical rituals or spells. This conception of doorways is reflected in the archaeological record, wherein doors and passageways are decorated with powerful images like a wounded, bleeding bear, images that work to mark and navigate domestic thresholds.

This project investigates the images that surround the thresholds and passageways of domestic structures in ancient Campania. It combines art historical and archaeological material with brief analyses of Roman history, myth, and literature to examine the significance and experience of doorway imagery. The dissertation is particularly concerned with presenting a comprehensive, contextual analysis of the case studies discussed therein. To do so, it draws on theories from across disciplines, including philosophy and anthropology, to interpret the material as active agents within space, reconstruct to the extent possible the experience of approaching and interacting with the images, and disentangle the intricacies of liminality.

The foremost premise of this project is that the images that embellish domestic doorways in ancient south Italy directly respond to the ambiguous nature of the threshold through their content, visual details, and engagement with observers. I propose that homeowners in Roman

[1] Bernhard Siegert and John Durham Peters characterize the binary of the Roman house door as separating the hostile space of the outside from the friendly space of the interior. Bernhard Siegert and John Durham Peters, "Doors: On the Materiality of the Symbolic," *Grey Room* 47 (2012): 11.

Campania were keenly aware of the uncertainties associated with domestic doorways and made special efforts to confront and mitigate these ambiguities using an array of efficacious visual tools. Not only did these tools acknowledge the liminal nature of the threshold, but they actively addressed the spatial uncertainty with images, concepts, and architectural features that were likewise ambiguous or liminal. As part of this approach, I focus on the apotropaic aspects of the case studies discussed within this dissertation— as this angle has not often been given the scholarly attention it deserves— but I do acknowledge that other meanings existed alongside the apotropaic significance within these multivalent images. In this way, this project demonstrates that Campanian homeowners carefully crafted the décor and visual experience of their homes' thresholds to safeguard the passageway. It offers a new approach to studying Roman responses to uncertainty that incorporates visual, archaeological, literary, historical, and mythological material with a robust and wide-ranging theoretical apparatus.

State of the Field

Despite the ubiquity of doors, passageways, and thresholds within Roman houses, the field of ancient Roman doorway studies is relatively narrow. Nevertheless, a handful of excellent studies on the architectural components of thresholds, their symbolic significance, and their role in shaping urban environments have been published in the last twenty years,[2] and the field is beginning to gather momentum. This dissertation has benefitted from each of these publications. It investigates the decorative elements and cultural significance of Roman doorways as an

[2] The domestic threshold is the subject of H. Clay Turnbull's late 19th century *The Threshold Covenant or the Beginning of Religious Rites*, which argues that the domestic threshold was originally conceived of as the altar of "primitive" families. H. Clay Trumbull, *The Threshold Covenant; or, the Beginning of Religious Rites.* 2d ed. (New York: C. Scribner, 1906), 3. Turnbull uses this premise to examine the sacred resonance of the threshold throughout the world and is in this way essentially an extended ethnographic study. Given the religious focus, colonialist lens and wide geographic and chronological span of the material Turnbull examines (only small sections of the book deal with ancient Roman or Greek material), I have chosen not to include the book in this state of the field summary.

expansion of, and complement to, the work of previous scholars, while it also addresses a lacuna in the current scholarship.

One of the first major studies of Roman thresholds was published by Yoshiki Hori in 1992.[3] Hori's article focuses on creating a typology of thresholds in Pompeii through careful analysis of the individual material components of thresholds and doors. He uses this morphology to understand middle-class housing in Pompeii,[4] and his study demonstrates how the structural elements of thresholds can help scholars reconstruct the forms of now-lost doors. Although Hori is concerned with the architectural characteristics of Pompeian thresholds rather than the decorative elements, his typology has guided my reading of the archaeological evidence and contributes to my holistic approach to the Pompeian material.

More recently, Barbara Rizzo has contributed to scholarship on decorated mosaic thresholds in Pompeii. Rizzo's 2007 article, "Limina: la decorazione figurata delle soglie musive a Pompei," tracks various statistics of decorated thresholds, including their content, locations, and materials.[5] Following a brief discussion of embellished thresholds, Rizzo includes a catalogue of all mosaic thresholds from Pompeii, including short descriptions, dimensions, and relevant bibliography. Given the wealth of information provided within the text and catalogue, Rizzo's article, while different in scope and overall aim, is therefore an essential starting point for this project.

M. Taylor Lauritsen has also worked to assess doors and partitions as physical objects within his various publications and in his role as director of the Doors of Pompeii and Herculaneum Project (established 2009). Lauritsen's project surveys thresholds and door jambs

[3] Yoshiki Hori, "Thresholds in Pompeii," *Opuscula Pompeiana* II (1992): 73-91.
[4] Hori, "Thresholds in Pompeii," 73-4.
[5] Barbara Rizzo, "Limina: la decorazione figurata delle soglie musive a Pompei," *Orizzonti: rassegna di archeologia* VIII (2007): 89-94

in Campanian atrium houses,[6] and demonstrates that Roman doors existed somewhere between artifact and architecture.[7] This work has yielded a preliminary typology of internal doorways, which attests to the existence of more doors within individual houses than previously imagined.[8] Similar to Hori, Lauritsen is interested in the architectural, rather than visual, evidence. My project bridges this divide by drawing on Hori and Lauritsen's typologies to examine the architectural material alongside the surrounding decorative elements.

Hana Stöger continues this work at Ostia Antica, where she examines the changing urban landscape of the city.[9] Her study highlights the congruence between urban development and the rise of monumental doorways in Ostia through a survey of monumental entrances in the city. She is interested in the architectural remains at Ostia, however, her characterization of doorways as an interface between interior and exterior, provides a useful framework.[10] Stöger identifies doorways as "symbolic thresholds" that signal the transition between different types of space, and which are often aligned with ritual areas.[11] This characterization of doorways as charged, transitional areas demonstrates that doorways were conceptualized as places of change and power throughout Roman Italy. Thus, while I am overall less interested in urbanism than Stöger, her focus on the cultural significance of doorways is critical to my own approach to the visual material in ancient south Italy.

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[6] M. Taylor Lauritsen. "Doors in Domestic Space at Pompeii and Herculaneum: A Preliminary Study," *Theoretical Roman Archaeology Journal 2010* (2011): 61.
[7] Lauritsen, "Doors in Domestic Space at Pompeii and Herculaneum: A Preliminary Study," 60.
[8] Lauritsen, "Doors in Domestic Space at Pompeii and Herculaneum: A Preliminary Study," 62, 73. See also Evan Proudfoot on secondary doors in Pompeii. Evan Proudfoot, "Secondary Doors in Entranceways at Pompeii: Reconsidering Access and the 'View from the Street'." *Theoretical Roman Archaeology Journal* (2012): 91–115.
[9] Hanna Stöger, "Monumental Entrances of Roman Ostia," *Babesch - Bulletin Antieke Beschaving* 82, no. 2 (2007): 347.
[10] Stöger, "Monumental Entrances of Roman Ostia," 347.
[11] Stöger, "Monumental Entrances of Roman Ostia," 354-5

Analyses of the role of doorways within the urban landscape also feature prominently in Steven Ellis's "*Pes Dexter*: Superstition and the State in the Shaping of Shopfronts and Street Activity in the Roman World" (2011). The article examines Roman urbanism through shopfront thresholds in Pompeii, Ostia, and Rome and demonstrates that the built environment of a city reflects its social realities.[12] Ellis argues that the orientation of commercial thresholds echoes Roman social practices and ideologies, and is a key factor in understanding street traffic and urbanization in Roman cities.[13] As part of this work, Ellis explains that doorways and thresholds were considered "highly charged" areas that were regarded with "superstitious anxiety".[14] I believe that Ellis's premises can be expanded beyond commercial architectural forms and urban movement to analyze the visual evidence. Ellis's article has been highly influential on my interest in portals and approach to doorways in this dissertation. Accordingly, this project follows Ellis's characterization of thresholds and considers a doorway's surrounding urban context to understand the imagery of domestic passageways more fully.

Doorways also appear as an important metric for measuring urban space in Ray Laurence's *Roman Pompeii: Space and Society* (2007). Laurence tracks the number of doorways along a street and their placement to evaluate levels of street activity in Pompeii and ascertain patterns within the urban environment.[15] This work has determined that the density of doorways along streets in Pompeii is tied to the location of the street within the city.[16] More specifically,

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[12] See also Steven J.R. Ellis, *The Roman Retail Revolution: The Socio-Economic World of the Taberna* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 4.
[13]Steven J.R. Ellis, "*Pes Dexter*: Superstition and the State in the Shaping of Shopfronts and Street Activity in the Roman World," in *Rome, Ostia, Pompeii: Movement and Space*, 160-173. Eds. Ray Laurence and David Newsome (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 162; Ellis, *The Roman Retail Revolution: The Socio-Economic World of the Taberna*, 4.
[14] Ellis, "*Pes Dexter*: Superstition and the State in the Shaping of Shopfronts and Street Activity in the Roman World," 161-2.
[15] Ray Laurence, *Roman Pompeii: Space and Society*. 2nd ed (London: Routledge, 2007), 103.
[16] Laurence, *Roman Pompeii: Space and Society*, 103.

Laurence observes that streets with higher concentrations of doors, and thus higher levels of social interaction, tend to cluster around major traffic routes.[17]

Andrew-Wallace Hadrill takes a similar approach in his work on Roman urbanism, spatial relationships, and social display in Pompeii and Herculaneum. In addition to suggesting that different grades or axes of access and decorative elaboration existed within Roman homes,[18] he proposes that the number of doors found within a single house indicates the number of family units that occupied the structure.[19] Both Laurence and Wallace-Hadrill utilize doorways as a tool to reconstruct social activity in Pompeii and their work helps scholars better understand the lived experience of the ancient city. This dissertation diverges from Wallace-Hadrill and Laurence's studies in its focus on the imagery and experience of domestic spaces, as opposed to using doors as a tool of urban analysis, however, it does build upon their important work on the social and urban implications of Roman doors to understand the meaning, function, and experience of portals more holistically.

Beyond the door's architectural features and role in shaping Roman urbanism, the door carried important religious significance and valence as a visual motif. Ardle MacMahon examines doorways as transitional spaces in a 2003 paper on the symbolism and religious significance of the threshold.[20] MacMahon is interested in the ways in which doorways related to the enigmatic Roman deity Janus and domestic ritual,[21] and he emphasizes the highly ritual nature of Roman thresholds. His paper lays important groundwork for this project, as it

[17] Laurence, *Roman Pompeii: Space and Society*, 103-9, 116.
[18] Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 11.
[19] Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum*, 107-8.
[20] Ardle MacMahon. "The Realms of Janus: Doorways in the Roman World," *Theoretical Roman Archaeology Journal 2002* (2003): 58–73. 58
[21] MacMahon, "The Realms of Janus: Doorways in the Roman World," 58.

establishes the ritual and transitional nature of domestic thresholds, its use as a marker of status, and the importance of Janus in Roman life and religion.[22] In this way, it serves as a critical foundation for the ideological and socio-cultural features of doorways examined within this dissertation.

In addition to doorway studies, examinations of protective images are also essential to this project. Scholars of Roman art and archaeology have long acknowledged the existence of apotropaic images, or those used to protect against the dangers of unseen forces, yet before the 1980s, few studied such images in their own right. The field is somewhat broader today, but more work must be done to understand the function and omnipresence of *apotropaia* across the Roman world. My project continues this work through its analysis of the apotropaic nature of the images found within Roman doorways, and has been profoundly influenced by the work of two scholars in particular, Katherine M.D. Dunbabin and John R. Clarke.

Katherine Dunbabin has demonstrated the significance and ubiquity of protective imagery throughout the Roman world in her work on the mosaics of Roman *thermae* (baths). Notably, she was among the first scholars of Roman art to devote a dedicated study to apotropaic images when she published an article on *apotropaia* and Roman baths in 1983.[23] Dunbabin combines visual, spatial, and textual analysis to understand the mosaics found within Roman

[22] For a discussion of the door as a motif within Roman painting, see Maurice Owen, "The False-Door: dissolution and becoming in Roman wall-painting," Owen-ArtResearch, 2010, http://www.owen-artresearch.uk/custom/rwpainting/cover/index.html; Gilbert Charles-Picard, *Roman Painting*. The Pallas Library of Art, V. 4 (Greenwich, Conn.: New York Graphic Society, 1970), 97. See also Maurice Owen, "False-Doors in Domestic Roman Architecture," in *Papers in Italian Archaeology VII: The Archaeology of Death: Proceedings of the Seventh Conference of Italian Archaeology Held at the National University of Ireland, Galway, April 16-18, 2016*, 457-64. Eds. Edward Herring and Eóin O'Donoghue (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2018). Other art historical examinations of the door motif include Britt Haarløv, "The Half-Open Door: A Common Symbolic Motif Within Roman Sepulchral Sculpture," Dissertation, Odense University Press, 1977

[23] Katherine M. D. Dunbabin, "*Baiarum Grata Voluptas:* Pleasures and Dangers of the Baths," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 57(1989): 6-46. See also Katherine M. D. Dunbabin and M.W. Dickie, "*Invidia Rumpantur Pectora:* The Iconography of Phthonos-Invidia in Graeco-Roman Art." *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 26 (1983): 7-37.

baths. She demonstrates that protective inscriptions and images were often placed above doorways or on thresholds,[24] and emphasizes that bath mosaics should be assessed within their context for fuller interpretation.[25] These two points are particularly useful to this dissertation in that they establish that thresholds were also powerful in public spaces like baths, and provides a model for my own holistic approach to the material from the homes of Roman Campania. Keeping in mind Dunbabin's vibrant investigations of the apotropaic qualities of bath mosaics, this dissertation expands the scope of study to domestic painting, architecture, and mosaic, and emphasizes the dynamic, protective nature of Roman images within vulnerable contexts.

Art historian John Clarke addresses similar topics in his work on diverse themes within the field of Roman art that range from erotic imagery to the art of "ordinary" Romans. Clarke emphasizes both the importance of assessing works of art within their original contexts, and the dynamic, active nature of Roman images across his many publications.[26] Clarke is interested in a specific genre of apotropaic imagery— humorous, erotic, and shocking images. He argues that these images were intended to address viewers and respond to their environments by facilitating certain human behaviors such as laughter. He further notes that certain areas, like doorways, were considered more vulnerable than others.[27] Laughter, loud noises, and explicit images were believed to distract or avert the so-called Evil Eye and other malevolent forces, thereby keeping the inhabitants of a house from harm.[28] Clarke's work on apotropaic images has guided my

[24] Dunbabin, "*Baiarum Grata Voluptas:* Pleasures and Dangers of the Baths," 35.
[25] Dunbabin, "*Baiarum Grata Voluptas:* Pleasures and Dangers of the Baths," 31, 40.
[26] John R. Clarke, *Looking at Laughter: Humor, Power, and Transgression in Roman Visual Culture, 100 B.c.-A.d. 250.* Ahmanson Murphy Fine Arts Imprint. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007; John R. Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking: Constructions of Sexuality in Roman Art, 100 B.c.-A.d. 250*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1998; John R. Clarke, *The Houses of Roman Italy, 100 B.c.-A.d. 250: Ritual, Space, and Decoration*. Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1991.
[27] Clarke, *Looking at Laughter: Humor, Power, and Transgression in Roman Visual Culture, 100 B.c.-A.d. 250,* 63.
[28] Clarke, *Looking at Laughter: Humor, Power, and Transgression in Roman Visual Culture, 100 B.c.-A.d. 250,* 63-7.

approach to and interpretation of the images found within domestic passageways. I am less focused on the humorous or erotic elements of the images found therein, and more interested in the variety of reactions elicited by the décor. However, Clarke's work, including his treatment of the images as active agents of defense and discussion of the prevalence of apotropaic art throughout the Roman world, provides a model for evaluating images that engage with both visible and invisible dangers, a framework I use to investigate the décor and experience of domestic doorways.

The works discussed in the preceding paragraphs represent the most important contributions to the study of Roman doors and thresholds to date. This dissertation builds upon those works, but also diverges from them in critical ways. First and foremost, this project differs from previous scholarship on Roman doors in its focus on the art and experience of domestic doorways in Roman Campania. As summarized above, each of the previous studies of Roman doors and doorways is focused on the door's architectural elements, morphology, or role within the surrounding cityscape. Unlike these scholars, I am not interested in creating a typology or method for assessing Roman urbanism, as much of this important work has been pioneered by others. Instead, I am interested in investigating the visual and experiential aspects of domestic passageways. I examine the visual and phenomenological relationships created within doorways between the architectural, spatial, and decorative elements, as well as the relationships between viewer, space, and image. I explore why specific images were chosen to accompany thresholds and draw on the important work of scholars like Dunbabin and Clarke to situate doorway images within the compendium of Roman *apotropaia* broadly. Thus, while this project has been undoubtedly influenced by the work of previous scholars, it focuses on an unexplored facet of Roman art and culture. It considers all elements of doorway space and decoration together as a

program to understand the intent and experience of doorway spaces holistically. In doing so it offers a fresh perspective on the art of domestic doors in Roman south Italy and contributes to the growing corpus of work on Roman doors and apotropaic images.

Contributions of this Project

By investigating the imagery of passageways, this dissertation offers three key contributions: a clearer understanding of the relationship between Roman attitudes about transitional space and the extant archaeological record; an identification and assessment of the strategies used within domestic spaces of passage to address and mediate spatial, ideological, and visual ambiguity; and finally, a corpus of domestic doorway imagery from Pompeii, in the form of maps. This project contributes to our understanding of the role of domestic décor, active nature of images, and the physical and spiritual complexities of spatial ambiguity in Roman Campania. It also foregrounds the importance of evaluating visual and archaeological material within an array of contexts, such as those as small as a single room and as broad as an entire city *regio,* or region. This dissertation also contributes to a growing body of scholarship that asks readers to conceptualize domestic décor as a carefully considered ensemble, one that was unified but also tailored to specific areas within a house. This project underscores the importance and fruitful possibilities of studying the many uncertainties, ambiguities, and other grey areas that existed within Roman daily life, art, and archaeology.

Although the scope of the overall project is necessarily limited, the relevance of its analyses extends beyond domestic doorways in Campania, and perhaps even the Roman world. Certainly, much of the information presented in this project is specific to the décor of domestic passageways, but I am also hopeful that it will provide a framework for future studies of the art and archaeology of ambiguous spaces across the Roman world. The overarching themes,

conclusions, and specific case studies found within this dissertation work to form a fuller picture of Roman conceptions of space, responses to a wide variety of uncertainties, and the relationship between image, ideology, architecture, and the viewer. This information could be relevant to studies of tombs or *necropoli*, as intermediary locales between life and death, for example, or even secular versus religious space. It could also be relevant to scholars interested in examining the art and experience of ambiguous areas in other parts of the world and within different time periods. Indeed, the methodology of this project is not specific to a single time or place, but rather utilizes a wide-ranging theoretical apparatus to synthesize a new methodological approach to the study of transitional space that could be useful to scholars in other, related disciplines.

Project Scope

The material examined in this dissertation spans the second century BCE through the first century CE and focuses on archaeological evidence from the ancient cities of Roman Campania preserved by the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 79 CE (Pompeii, Herculaneum, Stabiae, Oplontis). The temporal span of the second century BCE through first CE was chosen simply because the best-preserved and most abundant material in ancient Campania date to these periods. The geographic span was chosen for the high levels of archaeological preservation in ancient south Italy and the research opportunities offered by that corpus of material. Although neither the geographic nor temporal scope of the dissertation are representative of the entire Roman world, Pompeii, Herculaneum, Stabiae, and the other Campania cities offer an unparalleled corpus of extant visual and archaeological evidence. Indeed, nowhere else can scholars find so many examples of preserved (or documented) frescoes, mosaics, structures, and everyday objects. These cities also offer a more comprehensive archaeological record than do most other surviving

Roman sites, making them ideal for the contextual and phenomenological analyses I undertake within this project.

Additionally, there is a large corpus of information available that documents the excavation of cities like Pompeii and Herculaneum, which can supply information that has since been lost. The records from the early excavations of these cities are not perfect, but the fuller, more systematic nature of excavation documentation since the 20th century can supply critical information. Therefore, while I do not believe that the information presented in this dissertation about individual case studies should be used as the sole means for understanding other houses from the Roman world, I contend that the conclusions of this dissertation can still provide valuable information about the ideas and practices that were circulating throughout the broader Roman Mediterranean in the late Republican and early Imperial periods.

In addition to chronology and geography, I have also chosen to limit the type of structures investigated in this project. The transitional nature of thresholds was not confined to Roman houses. In fact, excellent work has been done on protective doorway imagery within Roman baths,[29] and similar images have been found in conjunction with Roman shops and religious spaces.[30] I focus on domestic doorways within this dissertation because they provide a more individualized, less formulaic body of evidence. It can be difficult to disentangle the strictly religious and "superstitious" elements of the décor in a religious context, and indeed, these two ideas were closely linked in the Roman world. While a worthwhile endeavor, the passageway imagery of Roman temples requires a project in and of itself.[31] Additionally, the

[29] Dunbabin, "*Baiarum Grata Voluptas*: Pleasures and Dangers of the Baths," 6-46.
[30] For example, the fresco of deities on the Taberna delle quattro divinità [IX.7.1-2] in Pompeii or the gorgon heads depicted within the terracotta reliefs that once decorated the Temple of Apollo Palatinus in Rome (now in the Museo Palatino, 27 BCE-14 CE).
[31] On this subject see Madeleine Mumcuoglu and Yosef Garfinkel, *Crossing the Threshold: Architecture, Iconography and the Sacred Entrance* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2018) and Emilie Marlène van Opstall, *Sacred*

doorway décor of Roman shops is more formulaic than that of domestic structures. Images of the deities of commerce, Mercury, Fortuna, and even Venus Pompeiana, embellish shops across the city of Pompeii, and while not identical, are often similar in form, details, and composition.

Roman houses, on the other hand, represent the choices of individual homeowners. These homeowners would have made carefully considered social, political, and aesthetic calculations in their choice of décor, but this also means that individual values and concerns could be expressed in the embellishment of domestic doorways. The home was also the domain of the individual or family unit. Where certain rules applied to public and religious spaces, there was more latitude for personal taste and values within one's private domain. This is reflected in the wide array of doorway imagery found throughout ancient Campania, which range from twinned images of the Dioscuri, to menacing inscriptions. In limiting the scope of material to the Roman house, I also focus on images found within entrance passageways. The journey through the front doorway from exterior to interior seems to have been considered more perilous than other liminal areas. This belief is reflected in the archaeological record, where charged images are almost always located within an entranceway, rather than interior passageway. Entranceway decoration also provided homeowners a chance to broadcast the image to passersby on the street and even would-be intruders. Thus, the decoration of domestic entranceways offers a singular corpus through which to evaluate the meaning, function, and experience of images within transitional spaces.

Finally, I have also chosen to limit the type of archaeological material examined within this dissertation. In the following pages, I investigate a wide variety of visual, architectural, and

Thresholds: The Door to the Sanctuary in Late Antiquity. Religions in the Graeco-Roman World, Volume 185 (Leiden: Brill, 2018).

archaeological evidence, but will not include sculpture, furniture, or ceiling decoration in this study. In general, information about sculpture, furnishings, and ceiling decoration is sparser than information about fresco and mosaic in the archaeological record, in large part because fresco and mosaic are more difficult to move, and ceiling decorations have not survived in large numbers. This information does exist for a handful of examples discussed within the proceeding chapters, but I have chosen to omit it for the sake of consistency across the dissertation. This decision was made because this information does not exist for each case study, and because, in the cases where this information is available, it did not significantly impact my broader conclusions. Therefore, while the visual material is discussed in great detail, these discussions are confined to fresco, mosaic, and architectural elements. Rather than hindering the project, these limitations strengthen the overall dissertation by allowing me to work within well-defined boundaries to produce a feasible, focused, and substantive product.

Terminology and Conventions

A few words about the terminology and conventions used throughout this dissertation are necessary. In general, I use the most commonly-invoked name for a house when discussing specific structures, although I do acknowledge that multiple names exist for many structures. Often, the names are in Italian or Latin, and describe either a feature of the structure or an individual believed to have inhabited the house. These names are accompanied by a series of three numbers, following a numbering system established in the mid-19th century by then-Soprintendente (superintendent of the archaeological park) Giuseppe Fiorelli. This system is used throughout the dissertation to refer to individual houses in Pompeii and Herculaneum, as is standard practice. In the case of Pompeii, the first number (in Roman numerals) refers to the *regio* or region of the city, of which there are nine, where the structure is located. The second

number indicates the *insula*, or city block within the *regio* in which the structure is positioned, and the third and final number identifies the number of the structure within the *insula*. Therefore, the Casa dei Vettii [VI.15.1] is located at structure number one within the fifteenth *insula* of *Regio* Six. At Herculaneum there are no *regiones*, so the two numbers refer to the city block and structure number. *Regio* and *insula* are capitalized when referring to a specific numbered region or blocks and given in lowercase if discussed in general terms.

Organization

Five chapters, a methodological review, and conclusion are included within this dissertation. Four of the five chapters investigate a different theme of the art and experience of domestic doorways in ancient Campania. I selected a thematic organization as the most effective way to both sort the wide array of doorway images that exist in Campania, and to address content-specific concerns, visual details, and defensive mechanisms. The proceeding chapters demonstrate that both the individual motifs and broader thematic categories reveal critical information about Roman attitudes toward transitional areas, and the role of art in shaping and responding to these ideas. A thematic approach thus provides the most efficient means to study the meaning and function of passageway imagery.

Four key "themes" emerged from a comprehensive survey of all domestic passageway images in Roman south Italy: deities, animals, symbols and/or patterns, and inscriptions. With a few exceptions all documented examples of efficacious images from domestic doorways fall into one of these four categories, each of which provides the focus for a different chapter. Each theme presents its own challenges and concerns, but ultimately, as this dissertation argues, all images that decorate domestic doorways in ancient Campania work to acknowledge and mediate the ambiguous nature of the threshold.

The methodological overview presents a survey of the wide-ranging theories used to form my methodological apparatus. This section reviews each of these theories in turn and describes how I apply them to the material explored within this dissertation. A detailed breakdown of my personal methodology for this project is then presented at the end of the chapter.

The first chapter provides an overview of the doorway and other transitional areas through an examination of ancient texts and a review of relevant modern scholarship. The chapter surveys the literary record to understand textual portrayals of doorways, a metric to which I compare the physical evidence in later sections. It also offers a review of protective imagery in the Roman world alongside an overview of the physical characteristics of Roman doors and the spiritual valence of the threshold. The information presented in this chapter establishes a critical foundation for the visual and archaeological material investigated in the proceeding four chapters.

Chapter Two represents the first of the four thematic chapters. This section examines key examples of divine representations that surround domestic thresholds in Pompeii. The chapter investigates why certain deities were chosen to safeguard domestic thresholds, while examining reciprocal interactions between image and viewer. As with all the thematic chapters, Chapter Two analyzes the images within their original contexts to assess how ancient viewers might have experienced the divine representations within the passageway. Accordingly, it considers similarities between the divine images, while also acknowledging and teasing out the specific ways individual divine representations respond to their surroundings.

The following chapter investigates images of animals from the entrance corridors of two homes in Pompeii. It studies the efficacy of images of fauna, both violent and benign, in guarding spaces of transition. As with Chapter Two, the third chapter evaluates why

representations of certain animals were considered appropriate and active decorative elements within domestic passageways, with a special emphasis on the nexus between the faunal images, their architectural surroundings, and larger urban contexts. This chapter pays special attention to the characterizations of particular animals in ancient myth and text to understand Roman attitudes towards animals such as bears and dolphins. By combining the visual, archaeological, urban, mythical, and literary evidence, I seek to offer a picture of animal images within their liminal contexts.

The efficacious patterns and symbols that appear in conjunction with passageways of homes in Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Stabiae form the focus of Chapter Four. Numerous individual motifs held great symbolic, spiritual, and ideological significance in the Roman world. Likewise, patterns were not only decorative, but also at times captivating in their complexity. Examples of both patterns and symbols abound throughout ancient Campania, however, the examples located within the passageways of homes carry special resonance as markers and mediators of ambiguous areas. Chapter Four explores the visual characteristics and protective mechanisms of patterns and symbols to understand how non-figural images functioned near thresholds and study how these strategies differ from the figural images investigated in the preceding sections.

The final chapter examines the mosaic inscriptions discovered in association with domestic thresholds. Chapter Five begins with a discussion of the visual nature of texts and inscriptions in the Roman world, before examining specific case studies from Pompeii and Stabiae. Like Chapter Four, this section analyzes the characteristics of non-figural motifs and surveys the range of messages presented by the mosaic inscriptions that embellish domestic thresholds. These mosaic inscriptions may not be as visually arresting as their divine, faunal, or

patterned counterparts, but their formal and textual qualities offer opportunities for visual and literary analysis. More so than any other thematic category, the mosaic inscriptions clearly and directly address the presence and nature of the thresholds they accompany, and in this way, provide an invaluable corpus of material.

Together, these five chapters present broad conclusions about the meaning and function of the images that embellish domestic passageways, alongside detailed analysis of individual case studies from across Roman Campania. While the material forms and visual details of each image differ widely from one another, the corpus of domestic doorway images from Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Stabiae share an underlying concern with the transitional nature of thresholds and demonstrate that the Romans developed a wide-ranging yet codified visual language with which to address ambiguous spaces. As such, I suggest that the transitional nature of passageways not only actively concerned the ancient Romans, but also impacted decorative choices within individual homes.

Key Theory and Methodological Framework

In this short methodological overview, I review the critical theories that have shaped my approach to the material examined within this dissertation and then briefly describe the methodology I use throughout. Theories of human perception, object agency, embodied viewing, phenomenology, and liminality are central to the methodology employed within this dissertation, each of which I review in turn to ground and contextualize my methodology. I examine both strictly theoretical texts, as well as those that apply the theory to material evidence, which I adapt to the visual and archaeological material from late Republican and early Imperial south Italy.

Perception and Embodied Viewing

The question of a viewer's interactions with an image plays a pivotal role in examining the meaning and function of doorway imagery in the ensuing study of the art and experience of Roman doors and passageways. Philosophies of perception and modes of viewing are key to the analysis of viewer interaction, experience, and movement, and these theories guide my reading of the images. To this end, I consult the work of a wide variety of scholars, including philosophers, anthropologists, classicists, and art historians, to undertake an interdisciplinary approach to discussions of dynamic interactions and embodied viewing.

Chief among these is the work of philosopher Maurice Merleau-Ponty. In his seminal 1945 *Phénoménologie de la perception* Merleau-Ponty wrote, "the mythical phenomenon is not a representation, but a genuine presence."[32] Throughout the book, Merleau-Ponty is concerned with establishing the ways and means through which we perceive and experience the world.

[32] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*. Translated by Donald A. Landes (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012), 303.

Discussing space and the perceived world, he argues that to see or perceive is to experience a moment of embodied material interaction, one that, although it may be irrational, exists as a valid experience because it is perceived as real by the individual.[3334] In other words, to see is to experience. One's body, he proposes, is a key factor in establishing perception, as movement is the result of the "harmonization of visual and tactile."[35] Merleau-Ponty defends the importance of perception as an embodied experience by identifying the sensible (body) and intellectual (mind) consciousnesses as two inextricably linked components of every human,[36] which are equally as important factors in creating perception. Only through a combination of the sensible and intellectual selves, that is the sensing and the thinking, he contends, can perception be created.

Merleau-Ponty's study has important implication for both the work of later scholars and the material examined in this dissertation. Most importantly, it provides a critical framework that I use to approach the visual and archaeological material. I utilize the idea that human perceptions of an image, object, or space can create an embodied experience to inform my analysis of the images that embellish domestic doorways in ancient south Italy, and to reconstruct ancient viewing experiences.

Turning to Pompeii, Duncan E. MacRae has suggested that divine images, such as those of Mercury that grace the facades of many shops in Pompeii,[37] engaged their Roman viewers as a real, physical presence.[38] MacRae proposes that Roman religion could be experienced both

[33] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 303.
[34] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 303.
[35] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 257.
[36] Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 248-50.
[37] Including I.3.24; I.8.10; I.12.4; II.1.1; III.8.1; IV.1.E; V.6.1; VI.1.2; VI.7.8-9; VI.14.28; VI.14.37; VII.4.22; VII.6.34; VII.9.28; VII.9.30; VII.11.13; VII.12.9-10; IX.3.14-15; IX.7.1; IX.7.7; IX.8.4; and IX.12.6.
[38] Duncan E. MacRae, "Mercury and Materialism: Images of Mercury and the *Tabernae* of Pompeii," in *Tracking Hermes, Pursuing Mercury*, 193-208. Eds. John F. Miller and Jenny Strauss Clay (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 204.

intellectually and physically,[39] and that the abovementioned images of Mercury could act as a means of connection between human and divine.[40] In doing so, he reasons, viewers could hope to receive good luck or guidance through their personal interactions with depictions of gods.

Verity Platt takes a similar approach in her study of the perception of divine images in the Pompeian Casa di Octavius Quartio [II.2.2]. Platt warns that Roman viewers could become complicit in the events they observed within paintings of deities and myth,[41] and suggests that, "we are actively implicated in the events we behold" through the dangers and powers of the gaze.[42] For Platt, divine images function as a representation of an epiphany, both literal and symbolic, invocation and representation.[43] She further suggests that an image could take material form in the mind of the viewer,[44] thus foregrounding Merleau-Ponty's ideas about embodied interactions between viewer and object within a Roman context.

In addition to her work on divine and mythological images, Platt also addresses object embodiment in a 2018 special issue of *Art History* entitled *The Embodied Object in Classical Antiquity,* co-edited with Milette Gaifman. In the introductory essay, Platt and Gaifman observe that objects act upon humans, and suggest that human bodies can be understood as nodes among

[39] MacRae, "Mercury and Materialism: Images of Mercury and the *Tabernae* of Pompeii," 195.
[40] MacRae, "Mercury and Materialism: Images of Mercury and the *Tabernae* of Pompeii," 206.
[41] Verity Platt, "Viewing, Desiring, Believing: Confronting the Divine in a Pompeian House," *Art History* 25, 1 (2002): 87-96.
[42] Platt, "Viewing, Desiring, believing: Confronting the Divine in a Pompeian House," 87.
[43] Verity Platt, *Facing the Gods: Epiphany and Representation in Graeco-Roman Art, Literature and Religion. Greek culture in the Roman world* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011) 37-8. Clifford Ando disagrees that visions of deities should be considered epiphanies. Instead, he suggests, Roman gods were understood as material, pushing back on the idea that the natural state of Roman deities was invisibility. What is more, Ando suggests that images of deities in ritual contexts were not intended as icons. Clifford Ando, "*Praesentia numinis*. Part 1: The Invisibility of Gods in Roman Thought and Language," *Asdiwal* 5 (2010): 47-8; Clifford Ando, "*Praesentia numinis.* Part 2: Objects in Roman Cult," *Asdiwal* 6 (2011): 57-60; Clifford Ando, "*Praesentia numinis*. Part 3: Idols in Context (Of Use)," *Asdiwal* 10 (2015): 69.
[44] Verity Platt, "Double Vision: Epiphanies of the Dioscuri in Classical Antiquity," *Archiv für Religionsgeschichte* 20, no. 1 (2018): 248.

objects.[45] They further remind us that objects are made with human interactions in mind, and that objects can even become extensions of the body.[46] Seven essays follow the introduction, each of which examines a different type of ancient artifact through the lens of embodiment,[47] and together demonstrate the utility of an embodied approach to the art and material culture of ancient Greece and Rome.

I believe these approaches can be adapted to studies of the experience of images within transitional areas. These ideas can help scholars consider how a wide variety of ancient Roman images were understood to interact with spectators. Indeed, the trope of Roman illusionistic wall painting, which asks viewers to immerse themselves within the fictive environment, suggests such exchanges between image and viewer were common throughout Roman visual production. Maryl B. Gensheimer notes that visual illusion intentionally blurs the lines between real and fictive, an exercise that requires the suspension of disbelief, even if for only a moment.[48] Likewise, Nathaniel Jones proposes that an image, "induces action through the persuasiveness of illusion,"[49] and identifies the tension between real and fake as one means of activating a work of art.[50]

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[45] Milette Gaifman and Verity Platt, "Introduction: From Grecian Urn to Embodied Object," *Art History* 41 (2018): 407.
[46] Gaifman and Platt, "Introduction: From Grecian Urn to Embodied Object," 404.
[47] Among the essays, the contributions of Ruth Bielfeldt, Gaifman, Platt, and Jaś Elsner are especially successful in their applications of theories of embodiment, phenomenology, and hermeneutics to better and more fully studying ancient objects that were just as important for their functional qualities as they were for their aesthetic value. Ruth Bielfeldt, "*Candelabrus* and Trimalchio: Embodied Histories of Roman Lampstands and their Slaves," *Art History* 41 (2018): 422-3; Milette Gaifman, "The Greek Libation Bowl as Embodied Object," *Art History* 41(2018): 445; Verity Platt, "Orphaned Objects: The Phenomenology of the Incomplete in Pliny's *Natural History*," *Art History* 41 (2018): 496-8; and Jaś Elsner, "The Embodied Object: Recensions of the Dead on Roman Sarcophagi," *Art History* 41 (2018): 547.
[48] Maryl B. Gensheimer, "Greek and Roman Images of Art and Architecture," in *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Art and Architecture*, 84-104. Ed. Clemente Marconi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 92. Nathaniel Jones also remarks on the trend toward the blurring of reality and illusion in Roman painting. Nathaniel Jones, "Starting from Places: Continuous Narration and Discontinuous Perspectives in Roman Art," *The Art Bulletin* 100 (2018): 19.
[49] Jones, "Starting from Places: Continuous Narration and Discontinuous Perspectives in Roman Art," 29.
[50] Jones, "Starting from Places: Continuous Narration and Discontinuous Perspectives in Roman Art," 29.

Jaś Elsner also discusses vision, illusion, and imagination in his work on ancient modes of viewing art. Elsner examines ancient conceptions of optics and suggests that ancient viewers were willing participants in the deception of illusionistic images.[51] He further argues that something imagined in the mind's eye becomes concrete through a viewer's imagining of the object.[52] The tension between reality and illusion studied by Elsner, Gensheimer, and Jones has important implications not only for the study of illusionistic images, but also embody the binary nature of the threshold itself and reflect the active experience of moving through domestic spaces of passage.

John Clarke takes a similar approach to the active and interactive nature of black and white mosaics at Ostia and Pompeii. Clarke argues that the mosaicists took the experience of a mosaic into careful account when creating tessellated designs.[53] He observes that figured and patterned images can influence the movements of observers and calls this relationship between image and viewer "kinesthetic address".[54] Although I will not refer to this phenomenon as kinesthetic address in the proceeding dissertation, Clarke's identification of this dynamic relationship is an important building block within my overall methodology.

Together, these scholars build on the work of Merleau-Ponty to help establish a framework through which to understand the reciprocal exchange between image and viewer. Considering the dangers of transitional environments, points characterized by Sarah I. Johnston as sites of "permanent chaos" in her work on crossroads,[55] it appears that similar ideas also apply

[51] Jaś Elsner, *Art and the Roman Viewer: The Transformation of Art from the Pagan World to Christianity*. Cambridge Studies in New Art History and Criticism (Cambridge England: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 33-5.
[52] Elsner, *Art and the Roman Viewer: The Transformation of Art from the Pagan World to Christianity*, 27.
[53] John R. Clarke and College Art Association of America, *Roman Black-And-White Figural Mosaics*. Monographs on Archaeology and the Fine Arts, 35 (New York: Published by New York University Press for the College Art Association of America, 1979), xxii.
[54] Clarke, *Roman Black-And-White Figural Mosaics*, 21.
[55] S. I. Johnston, "Crossroads," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 88 (1991): 218.

to the perception of prophylactic imagery in the ancient Campanian city, and provide a useful methodological structure through which to approach charged images within transitional locales.

Object Agency

If, as the previous section suggested, images could create embodied viewing experiences, then what of the agency of the image or object itself? To accept the premise of embodied viewing experiences, it is also necessary to understand the images themselves as active agents. The work of anthropologist Alfred Gell provides a particularly useful approach to this complex concept. In his 1998 *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*, Gell argues that art objects should be understood to possess a certain degree of agency, as they can function as instruments of change.[56] By triggering an event or series of events, art objects can help mediate social situations, wherein art itself exists as a system of action.[57] Art objects can also help humans form attachments to the object itself or the decorative elements that adorn the item.[58] As Gell describes, one of the many forms of artistic agency is captivation, wherein a design that is either mesmerizingly patterned or virtuoso can captivate viewers.[59] Through captivation, images can disarm and distract viewers, effectively nullifying any harmful intentions. Therefore, even though they are not alive, art objects can be understood as active or animate through both the events they cause and their interactions with humans. In fact, Gell even specifies that apotropaic art amounts to a type of artistic agency.[60]

The material examined in *Art and Agency* ranges from Maori architecture to Duchamp, and notably, Gell believes his ideas apply universally to art notwithstanding its place of origin. In

[56] Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 7-18.
[57] Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory,* 6-7.
[58] Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory,* 74.
[59] Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory,* 66-72.
[60] Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory,* 83.

this way, it is possible to apply Gell's theories of object agency to the ancient Roman world to understand how the images found within Roman doorways act as agents of protection in and of themselves. The framework outlined in *Art and Agency* therefore works alongside those of Merleau-Ponty, Platt, and others to provide a critical framework for approaching and understanding the efficacy and agency of art objects and the dynamic experience of domestic portals and their décor in ancient Campania.

Phenomenology

The analysis of the experience of viewing and interacting with an image is another important methodological tenent of this project. I utilize philosophical, anthropological, and archaeological theories of phenomenology to understand the relationships between viewer and image in context.

Phenomenological analysis came to prominence in the early 20th century in the work of philosopher Edmund Husserl. Husserl was interested in the structures of consciousness, perception, and experience, and his work focuses on exploring the science of "essential being."[61] He argued that we can understand human consciousness and experience through what he calls *epoché*, or the bracketing of intentional actions that are free from pre-conceived judgements.[62] These experiences, Husserl suggests, exist as legitimate reflections of individual cognition and create perceptions of an intentional object regardless of the veracity of the object or experience.[63] Husserl's work was continued by later scholars outside of philosophy, who adapted his theories to their own fields. It is these adaptations of Husserl's phenomenology to archaeology and

[61] Edmund Husserl and William Ralph Boyce Gibson, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology* (Muirhead Library of Philosophy. London: Routledge, 2002), 44.
[62] Husserl and Gibson, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology,* 110-11, 112-14.
[63] Husserl and Gibson, *Ideas: General Introduction to Pure Phenomenology,* 101-2.

Roman studies, rather than the pure philosophical analysis, that have shaped the phenomenological lens of this dissertation.

Christopher Tilley was among the first scholars to apply theories of phenomenology to the study of archaeology in his work on Neolithic British landscapes. Specifically, Tilley is concerned with a person's creation of the self through a separation from their surroundings and others, while also trying to understand and relate to the "other" through bodily perception.[64] Tilley argues that modes of approach and signs of access or inclusion mirror social systems.[65] Just as objects carry meaning, so do places, and it is through the control of such places, structures, and experiences, that ideologies are communicated.[66] While this project is concerned with Roman Italy rather than Neolithic Britain, Tilley's study lays important groundwork for a phenomenological approach to archaeological material.

In addition to Tilley's studies of Neolithic archaeology, phenomenological analysis has also been adopted within the field of ancient Roman studies. Both Diane Favro and Penelope Davies have worked to apply phenomenological analysis to ancient Roman architecture, monuments, and environments. Favro employs digital models and urban reconstructions to study the urban landscape of ancient Rome, and even the experience of large public funerals in the *Forum Romanum*.[67] She seeks to understand how to navigate the ancient city, considering the sights, sounds, and smells of the urban environment, [68] and suggests that although the experience of space is choreographed by the built environment, individuals read spaces differently.[69] Davies

[64] Christopher Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths, and Monuments. Explorations in Anthropology* (Oxford, UK: Berg, 1994), 34.
[65] Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths, and Monuments. Explorations in Anthropology*, 7-8.
[66] Tilley, *A Phenomenology of Landscape: Places, Paths, and Monuments. Explorations in Anthropology*, 27, 204.
[67] Diane Favro and Christopher Johanson, "Death in Motion: Funeral Processions in the Roman Forum," *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 69, no.1 (2010), 12-37.
[68] Eric Poehler takes a similar approach in *The Traffic Systems of Pompeii* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) by guiding readers through the streets of Pompeii, the practicalities of walking down them, and their history.
[69] Diane G. Favro. *The Urban Image of Augustan Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 50.

likewise applies an experiential approach in her study of Imperial funerary monuments in Rome. She suggests that Imperial tombs were specifically engineered to engage viewers and encourage them to reenact funerary rituals.[70]

I believe the same applies to the processes of visual protection and self-assertion within Roman doorways, the strategies and messages of which change based on one's location in relation to the space. That is, the experience of a Roman doorway changes as one approaches, moves through, and exits the space, signaled by the imagery visible at each step of the journey. Therefore, like Tilley, Favro, and Davies, I consider the lived experience of structures, monuments, and images to investigate the combined effects of the architecture and decoration of the spaces. These methodologies complement the theories of perception and agency examined above and have helped me formulate a methodology that considers multiple facets of the experience of passageway art and architecture in Roman south Italy.

Space and Urban Display

Along with considerations of perception, agency, and phenomenology, theories of space and urban display also form an important component of my methodological approach. This dissertation focuses on socially-coded spaces within dense urban environments, and the use of spatial theory allows me to investigate and nuance the status of transitional spaces within ancient Campanian homes.

One of the most important contributions to theories of space in the last half-century has been philosopher Henri Lefebvre's *The Production of Space* (1974). Lefebvre explores the production of social space and argues that physical space is directly shaped by the social systems

[70] Penelope J. E. Davies, *Death and the Emperor: Roman Imperial Funerary Monuments, from Augustus to Marcus Aurelius* (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 27.

and practices of the societies that create it.[71] Lefebvre proposes that because the basis of social relations is spatial,[72] the same space can be experienced in very different ways by diverse inhabitants or audiences. Not only does Lefebvre's work find parallels among that of Merleau-Ponty, who also emphasizes the individualizing nature of perception, but it also provides an important tool to this dissertation for understanding doorways as spaces, experienced both within the urban fabric of the city, and as an isolated phenomenon.

Critical theories of space and urban display also exist within Roman studies, including William MacDonald's theory of armatures, and Andrew Wallace-Hadrill's axes of space and social display. MacDonald is interested in studying the architecture of Imperial Rome to understand Roman urban space and proposes the idea of armatures, or urban structures connected by streets, as a means of classifying different types of space.[73] As part of this classification, MacDonald identifies connective and passage architecture, which together form the urban armature, organize urban space, and function as a symbol of Roman rule and identity.[74] I scale down MacDonald's idea of urban armature for this project to apply it to domestic structures in south Italy. Using this system, I approach passageways within Roman homes as smaller-scale versions of an armature to understand their function within urban environments as spaces of connection and passage, and their role in shaping Roman urbanism.

Like MacDonald, Andrew Wallace-Hadrill is also interested in spatial relationships in the Roman world. Wallace-Hadrill's *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum* (1994) has been one of the most impactful contributions to the study of Campanian domestic space in the

[71] Henri Lefebvre and David Harvey, *The Production of Space*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 1991), 78.
[72] Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 404.
[73] William L. MacDonald, *The Architecture of the Roman Empire Vol. II*. Rev. Yale Publications in the History of Art, 17, 35 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), 5.
[74] MacDonald, *The Architecture of the Roman Empire Vol. II*, 30.

past three decades. *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum* explores the intersection between social systems and domestic display in Roman south Italy. Wallace-Hadrill approaches the house as a social document,[75] and asserts that Roman social systems dictated the ways in which houses were built and decorated,[76] such as the presence of the most lavish decoration in the rooms of greatest importance.[77] As part of this approach, he proposes that axes of public/private and grand/humble existed within Roman homes, structuring movement and helping visitors read the space.[78] While I am not as interested as Wallace-Hadrill in keying the size of houses to the sophistication of their décor, I will utilize his idea of grades of space and exclusivity to guide my interpretation of doorway spaces as multivalent and transitional, as opposed to strictly public or private.

Liminality

Finally, no study of doorways, or the imagery therein, would be complete without a consideration of the concepts of transition and liminality. Although originally developed to describe the intermediary phase of ritual, the term liminality has become aligned more broadly with transition and in-between states, both spatially and temporally.

Arnold van Gennep pioneered studies of liminality in his *Les rites de passage*, published in 1909. *Les rites de passage* aims to identify a universal pattern for all rites of passage, which van Gennep distills down to a three-step process. The first phase, called rites of separation or preliminal rites, signals the start of the rites and separates the individual from the world in which

[75]Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 3.
[76] Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum*, 5, 60.
[77] Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum*, 28.
[78] Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum*, 11.

they previously existed.[79] Van Gennep identifies the next phase as the transition or liminal rites, wherein the individual exists outside of the group and status they occupied at the start of the ritual.[80] Following this intermediary phase is the rites of incorporation or postliminal rites. In this phase the individual rejoins society with a new status or identity.[81] As a broadly applicable three-step process, van Gennep believed the pattern he identified could be applied universally to any ritual process or rite of passage.[82]

As part of his investigation of rites of passage, van Gennep also discusses the spiritual, social, religious, and magical valence of the door and threshold across cultures. Van Gennep argues that thresholds are highly charged areas that play a pivotal role in rites of passage, specifically rites of transition where the threshold functions as a sacred, yet indeterminate point between two different and well-defined geographic or spiritual realms.[83] Indeed, it is no coincidence that the word liminal is derived the from the Latin word *limen*, or threshold. As van Gennep makes clear in *Les rites de passage,* physical and metaphorical thresholds are an essential component within rites of passage, processes of change, and mechanisms of transformation.

Anthropologist Victor Turner reinvigorated van Gennep's ideas in the mid-20th century by focusing on the liminal period and considering the ambiguous nature of this stage.[84] He believes that initiates were "invisible" during the intermediary phase of rites of passage,[85] lacking a clearly defined status or role. Turner studies Ndembu ritual in his work to demonstrate

[79] Arnold van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press: 1960), 21.
[80] Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, 21.
[81] Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, 21.
[82] Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, 191.
[83] van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage*, 20.
[84] Victor Turner "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage," in *Betwixt & Between: Patterns of Masculine and Feminine Initiation*, 3-19. Eds. Louise Carus Mahdi, Steven Foster, and Meredith Little (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1987).
[85] Turner, "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage," 6.

how liminal periods are both ambiguous and fruitful.[86] Recent scholarship, however has argued against the limited applications of liminality that characterize Turner's publications.[87] The editors of *Breaking Boundaries: Varieties of Liminality* (2018), for instance, contend that liminality is a "fundamental human experience," and should be applied to scenarios beyond ritual.[88] Bjørn Thomassen also argues that liminality should be used as a tool to understand the experience of change more broadly.[89] Weighing the work of van Gennep, Turner, and recent scholars, I believe that liminality is a useful, critical, means of understanding the processes and human experiences of change and transition. With these ideas in mind, the ensuing study of the imagery of Roman doorways in ancient south Italy utilizes van Gennep and Turner's theories of liminality to understand ambiguity and transition as active, if fleeting, states of human experience worthy of study.

This is not to suggest, however, that the act of crossing a threshold was not considered a ritual of sorts amongst the Romans. In fact, the moment of transition while crossing a threshold, where one passes from the realm of the deities of the street to that of the divinities of the home, carries with it inherent religious or ritual undertones. Whether or not the Romans were actively cognizant of the ritual nature of this crossing, the many rites associated with crossings, and the frequent presence of *lararia* in domestic entryways draws attention to a clear connection between spaces of passage and Roman spirituality. Thus, at least within the context of this study,

[86] Turner, "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage," 18.
[87] Victor Turner, "Liminal to Liminoid, in Play, Flow, and Ritual: An Essay in Comparative Symbology," *Rice Institute Pamphlet - Rice University Studies* 60 (1974): 62
[88] Agnes Horvath, Bjørn Thomassen, and Harald Wydra. "Introduction: Liminality and the Search for Boundaries," on *Breaking Boundaries: Varieties of Liminality*, 1-8. Eds. Agnes Horvath, Bjørn Thomassen, and Harald Wydra (Berghahn Books, 2018), 3.
[89] Bjørn Thomassen, "Thinking with Liminality: To the Boundaries of an Anthropological Concept," in *Breaking Boundaries: Varieties of Liminality*, 39-58. Eds. Bjørn Thomassen, Agnes Horvath, and Harald Wydra (Berghahn Books, 2018), 39.

the term liminal is used to describe the states and locales of an active agent as they traverse a boundary.

Project Methodology

This project combines art historical, archaeological, historical, and literary material with the aforementioned theories of space, perception, agency, phenomenology, and liminality to examine the art, experience, and environments of domestic passageways in Roman south Italy. Given the many types of material considered and the diverse, yet interrelated, elements of the dissertation's theoretical apparatus, I have developed a methodology for this project that is both uniquely suited to this study, but can also be easily adapted to other projects. I have developed these clear analytical procedures to contend with a large data set of images and structures quickly and consistently, but also to align the theory with the visual and archaeological data. The following methodology thus combines the theories outlined in the previous section with an overview of the archaeological corpus from Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Stabiae, noting patterns, available information, and preservation.

The resulting methodology involves the following key elements:

Recognizing-

- that images are dynamic agents of change and human action
- that human experiences of images can enact an embodied material presence or experience of the image
- that the act of crossing a threshold was a charged experience
- that passageways were considered vulnerable locales

Creating-

- reconstructions of the experience of approaching and viewing an image in context
- maps of the location of the structure on micro and macro scales
- a dataset of all surrounding decorative elements and architectural features

Assessing-

- individual visual details and the impact of the overall composition
- an image in conjunction with its surrounding visual and architectural elements
- how the experience of interacting with an image within its original context impacts its meaning or function
- the ways in which an image works to engage viewers
- characterizations of, or attitudes toward, a visual theme or motif within the Latin corpus
- how a structure's urban surroundings might influence the need for, or specific features of, doorway embellishment
- how an image compares to other similar images

I utilize this methodology when analyzing every case study within this dissertation but have also formulated the methodology broadly enough that it can easily be adapted to other projects. I have tried to be as transparent as possible in outlining my methodology to make the results of this study as clear and well-supported as possible, but also to make clear any biases or blind spots I may have. I hope that scholars both within the field of Roman studies, and those in other disciplines entirely will find it a useful tool.

Chapter 1: The Roman *Ostium* in Text, Belief, and Practice

Today, as in the ancient Roman world, doorways, thresholds, and boundaries mark change and signal transition. Boundaries act as a marker of diverse spaces to emphasize these differences. Indeed, as Roman archaeologist Joanne Berry observes, there is "no such thing as a neutral boundary,"[90] and that the Roman house was "a sacred and protected space."[91] Roman doorways delineated difference through their presence, their forms, and their decoration as essential markers of two distinct spaces and were therefore highly charged sites.[92]

This chapter explores the physical components of Roman doorways through the archaeological and literary evidence, before turning to a brief discussion of invisible dangers and *apotropaia*. It offers an overview of the deities connected to doorways, thresholds, and transitional space, as well as the characterization of doorways in Latin literature and the rituals performed therein. These discussions provide a grounding for the practices and ideas behind the art and experience of the specific examples discussed in later chapters.

Roman Doorways: Form, Function, and Ornamentation

The Roman house, or *domus*, was a lively, dynamic space composed of a series of public rooms, private areas, and functional spaces. In his seminal 1899 book on Pompeii, August Mau described the various components of the so-called Roman atrium house as a paradigm of elite Roman domestic construction, following the guidelines given in first century BCE Roman

[90] Joanne Berry, "Boundaries and Control in the Roman House," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 29 (2016): 129.
[91] Berry, "Boundaries and Control in the Roman House," 128.
[92] Jeremy Hartnett, *The Roman Street: Urban Life and Society in Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Rome* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 256.

architect Vitruvius's *De architetura*.[93] In essence, Mau believed the atrium house was a model followed, cookie-cutter style, by elite homeowners in the construction of their domiciles [Fig.I.1]. According to this theory, any respectable Roman house would contain a specific set of features, starting with the *vestibulum*, or chamber before the front door of a house. Next, a visitor entered the home through the front door to reach the *fauces*, a hallway leading to the atrium.[94] Once through the *fauces*, a visitor approached the atrium, which contained an opening in the ceiling to let in light and air (*compluvium*), and a shallow pool below (*impluvium*). *Cubicula*, or small private rooms used for sleeping and other activities, surrounded the open space of the atrium.[95] Across the atrium from the *fauces* was the workspace of the homeowner, called the *tablinum*, which could be closed off for privacy with moveable partitions. Past the *tablinum*, further into the interior space of the house, visitors were greeted by an open peristyle garden surrounded by a colonnade. Various small rooms, such as kitchens and service corridors surrounded the peristyle garden, as well as more private spaces for entertaining. The *triclinium*, or dining room, was one such entertainment space, which often featured a prime view of the garden or nearby water feature.

Since Mau, scholars have demonstrated that the structure and use of extant Roman houses are not as formulaic as the atrium house model suggests, but rather conform to the individual needs and tastes of the homeowner, as well as geographic, environmental, and geomorphic

[93] August Mau and Francis W. Kelsey, *Pompeii, Its Life and Art* (New York: Macmillan, 1907), 245-8. On Vitruvius's discussion of private homes, Vitr. *De arch.* 6.3-5. Vitruvius also makes clear that although he does not hold large and luxurious houses in high regard, they are necessary for wealthy men with "social obligations". In a sub-elite house, Vitruvius says, entrance courts, *talbina*, and lavish atria are not appropriate. Vitr. *De arch.* 6.5.
[94] See Mau's description of the *fauces*, Mau, *Pompeii, Its Life and Art*, 248-50.
[95] Vitr. *De arch.* 6.5. The terms Vitruvius applies to various rooms within the "typical" Roman house, however, have been debated in recent scholarship, where scholars argue that the terms cannot be applied unilaterally. See note 9 below for sources on the debate surrounding the terminology of the rooms within Roman houses.

constraints.[96] Others have argued against an uncritical application of architectural terms from Latin texts to the archaeological record.[97] Among these terms is *fauces*, one that is of critical importance to this study. The *fauces*, "jaws" in Latin,[98] stood at the juncture between interior and exterior, and the term jaws rightfully denotes the perilous and ambiguous qualities of the passage. The nature and location of the *fauces*, mentioned just once by Vitruvius, has been called into question by some scholars,[99] but nevertheless remains a useful term for the passageway into the interior of a house.

The *vestibulum* was similar to the *fauces* in its position in front of the interior of the house and could also function as a space of transition between interior and exterior. Second century CE grammarian Gellius describes the vestibule as, "not in the house itself, nor is it a part of the house, but is an open place before the door of the house, through which there is approach and access to the house from the street… the door itself is at a distance from the street, separated from it by this vacant space."[100] It is telling that Gellius does not identify the *vestibulum* as a part of the house itself, but rather as a separate passageway between spaces, despite its physical

[96] See, for example, Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "Rethinking the Roman Atrium House," *Journal of Roman Archaeology, Supplementary Series* 22 (1997): 219-220.
[97] See Eleanor W. Leach, "*Oecus* on Ibycus: Investigating the Vocabulary of the Roman House," *Oxbow Monograph* 77 (1997): 50–72; Eugene Dwyer, "The Pompeian Atrium House in Theory and Practice," in *Roman Art in the Private Sphere: New Perspectives on the Architecture and Decor of the Domus, Villa, and Insula*, 25-48. Ed. Elaine Gazda (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1991), 25-48; Penelope M. Allison, "The Relationship between Wall-Decoration and Room-Type in Pompeian Houses: A Case Study of the Casa della Caccia Antica," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* no. 5 (1992): 235–49; Joanne Berry, "Household artefacts: towards a reinterpretation of Roman domestic space," in *Domestic Space in the Roman world: Pompeii and Beyond*, 183-195. Eds. Ray Laurence and Andrew Wallace Hadrill. Journal of Roman Archaeology Supplementary Series 22, 1997; Penelope M. Allison, "Using the Material and Written Sources: Turn of the Millennium Approaches to Roman Domestic Space," *American Journal of Archaeology* 105, no. 2 (2001): 181-208; Penelope M. Allison, "Presenting and Negotiating the Evidence: Continuing Debates of Relationships between Text and Archaeology in Roman Social History," in *Archaeology and History in Roman, Medieval and Post-Medieval Greece,* 37–51. Eds. W. R. Caraher, L. J. Hall and R. S. Moore (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008).
[98] John R. Clarke, *Looking at Laughter: Humor, Power, and Transgression in Roman Visual Culture, 100 B.c.-A.d. 250* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 53.
[99] J.B. Greenough, J. B., "The *Fauces* of the Roman House," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 1 (1890): 1-12.
[100] Gell. *NA* 16.5. Translation J.C. Rolfe. Loeb Classical Library, 1927.

connection to the structure. This reveals the transitional nature of the space; as neither a segment of the house nor the street, it marks the boundary between two distinct spaces, but also existed as its own, liminal space.[101] Consequently, walking through a *vestibulum*, *fauces*, or threshold was perceived as a charged act, one often signaled through visual cues.[102]

The houses discussed in the proceeding chapters incorporate, in almost every case, some of the aforementioned elements of the "typical" Roman *domus*, while also exhibiting distinctive characteristics. In this way, the atrium house model is useful for the ease of description it allows but should only be used when assessed in concert with the archaeological evidence. Henceforth, I use terms such as *fauces* or *vestibulum* when the architectural elements of the space correspond to or confirm their functions. More specifically, I use the term *fauces* to refer to the covered passageway within a house in between the front door and the interior of a structure. *Vestibulum* is used to signify the uncovered area or passageway before the front door of a house. I thus employ the vocabulary typically associated with various spaces within the house for efficiency and clarity, but only when the identification of the space is supported by the archaeological evidence.

Both physical and spiritual boundaries existed within the Roman home.[103] Working together, visible and invisible boundaries protected the home, but also controlled access to various spaces. Levels of public and private in the home could be marked by spatial and decorative cues,[104] and views through open doors provided visitors and passersby a preview of

[101] It has even been suggested that the word *vestibulum* derives from the word *vesta*, referring to the sacred space between the house and the street. Berry, "Boundaries and Control in the Roman House," 134.
[102] Berry, "Boundaries and Control in the Roman House," 134.
[103] Berry, "Boundaries and Control in the Roman House," 125.
[104] Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 28. At the Villa di Poppaea, for instance, splendid Second Style paintings decorate the atrium, while "zebra stripe" paintings (schematic and thought to encourage movement) appear around the peristyle and other spaces of passage. For more on the zebra stripe motif, see Crispin Corrado Goulet, "The 'Zebra Stripe' Design: An Investigation of Roman Wall Painting in the Periphery." *Rivista di studi pompeiani* 12-13 (2001): 53-94;

what they could expect once inside.[105] Indeed, the divisions of public/private and interior/exterior could be even more pronounced from the street than from within the home.

In their basic forms and functions, the doors and doorways of an ancient Roman homes served as physical, visual, and ideological focal points of the structure.[106] Not only did doors permit or restrict access to certain areas of the house, they also held symbolic significance.[107] Few ancient Roman doors have been preserved, [108] however, plaster casts of door cavities made in the cities along the Bay of Naples, such as that in the so-called Villa di Poppaea (Villa A) at Oplontis [Fig. I.2], help scholars reconstruct the appearance of ancient doors and their functional mechanisms.

Doors in Roman homes could be opened or closed at will or as needed, and their morphology, in general, supports this function. The form and construction of doors were more or less consistent across the ancient Mediterranean.[109] Archaic Greek (650-480 BCE) doors were, for the most part, constructed of wood, with metal attachments added in later years.[110] The Classical (480-323 BCE) doorway saw the addition of door-stops and drop-bolts, with minor

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Lara Laken, "Zebrapatterns in Campanian Wall Painting: A Matter of Function," *Bulletin Antieke Beschaving: Babesch* 78 (2003): 167-89; Jacobus Evert Rauws, "Zebra Stripes: Minimal Art as 'Fifth Style' Wall Painting in Roman Campania." *Rivista di studi pompeiani* 26-27 (2015): 53-60. In her study of the Casa della Poeta Tragico [VI.8.5], Bettina Bergmann shows how the shared themes of the atrium frescoes, which focus on change and transition, encouraged movement through the space. Bettina Bergmann, "The Roman House as Memory Theater: The House of the Tragic Poet in Pompeii," *The Art Bulletin* 76, no. 2 (1994): 225-56.

[105] Ray Laurence, *Roman Pompeii: Space and Society*, (London: Routledge, 2007), 102.

[106] For an overview of the entryways of Pompeian houses see Pierre Gusman, *Pompei, the City, Its Life & Art*. Translated by Florence Simmonds and Margaret Jourdain (London: W. Heinemann, 1900), 253-7.

[107] M. B. Ogle, "The House-Door in Greek and Roman Religion and Folk-Lore," *The American Journal of Philology* 32, no. 3 (1911): 251-52.

[108] Third-fourth century CE examples of door or window panels from the Fayum may be illuminating (Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, Inv. H4578). See also David Walsh, "Doors of the Greek and Roman World," *Archaeology* (1983): 44.

[109] M.T. Lauritsen, "Ter Limen Tetigi. Exploring the Role of Thresholds in the Houses of Pompeii and Beyond," in *Housing and Habitat in the Ancient Mediterranean: Cultural and Environmental Responses.* Babesch: Annual Papers on Mediterranean Archaeology. Supplement, 26., 299–312. Eds B. E. Parr, A. A. di Castro and C. Hope. Leuven: Peerters, 2015), 300.

[110] Lauritsen, "*Ter Limen Tetigi*. Exploring the Role of Thresholds in the Houses of Pompeii and Beyond," 300.

regional variation in threshold type.[111] Greek doors favored two pivoting leaves, and could be ornately decorated, but were often simple.[112] Most Greek doors were constructed of wood, and therefore have not been preserved.[113]

As with Greek doors, few physical Etruscan doors survive due to the perishable materials from which they were constructed.[114] Nevertheless, depictions of doors in relief and fresco from Etruscan tombs reveal that Etruscan doors, at the very least those associated with the funerary realm, were likely constructed in a post-and-lintel fashion with two leaves.[115] A rock cut tomb from the Castelluzza Necropolis in Tuscania, appropriately known as the Tomba della Finta Porta, is outfitted with a false door at its rear. The false door is carved in relief and is simple, consisting of two leaves, each divided by a horizontal band at its middle [Fig.I.3]. It is likely this depiction reflects the construction of actual, physical Etruscan doors.

Examples of Etruscan portals in fresco are typically more ornate. The Tomba dei Caronti from Tarquinia, for instance, is home to two paintings of false doors within the tomb chamber [Fig.I.4]. An image of Charon (known as Charun to the Etruscans), a blue-skinned and ferocious demon of death decorates either side of each door. The doors themselves are decorated with two

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[111] Lauritsen, "*Ter Limen Tetigi*. Exploring the Role of Thresholds in the Houses of Pompeii and Beyond," 300-302.
[112] Walsh, "Doors of the Greek and Roman World," 45-46.
[113] George E. Mylonas, "The Olynthian House of the Classical Period," *The Classical Journal* 35, no. 7 (1940): 394 fn. 15. Mylonas also notes that apotropaic inscriptions above doorways were common in ancient Greece.
[114] At the Etruscan town of Marzabotto, for instance, most houses feature a street-facing door, not unlike those often associated with Etruscan tombs and urns, but the doors themselves do not survive. See Axel Boëthius, Roger Ling, and Tom Rasmussen, *Etruscan and Early Roman Architecture* (Harmondsworth, Eng.: Penguin Books, 1978), 75. However, Boethius's use of tomb architecture and funerary objects to understand domestic architecture should be approached with caution, as it is unlikely that funerary architecture and representations mirrored domestic architecture as closely as Boethius imagines.
[115] There is some evidence the Etruscans also had arched doorways. Depictions of doors, domestic and otherwise, on Etruscan urns, sarcophagi, and tombs suggest that the Etruscans were also interested in arched doorways. See, for example, a cinerary urn from Chiusi now in the Museo Archeologico in Arezzo (Inv. 14276) with an arched doorway. Boëthius, Ling, and Rasmussen, *Etruscan and Early Roman Architecture*, 85. Despite the funerary evidence, these images do not necessarily accurately reflect domestic practices, but it is probable that the basic form of these doors were based in real examples. Charlotte Scheffer, "The Arched Door in Late Etruscan Funerary Art," in *Murlo and the Etruscans: Art and Society in Ancient Etruria*. (Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994), 197.

horizontal bands of metal medallions and a series of three vertical stripes on each leaf, motifs that are similar to the details that later decorate Roman representations of doors.[116]

Roman doorways were similar to their Greek and Etruscan counterparts in form, function, and decoration, but could be moved or replaced more easily.[117] A typical Roman doorway was composed of four parts: the threshold, lintel, jambs, and door [Fig.I.5].[118] Thresholds varied in width and featured either round cuts called *cardines* for pivoting doors,[119] or long and narrow grooves for sliding doors. Stone thresholds were common, particularly in Pompeii, starting with lava in the earliest extant Pompeian houses, then transition to limestone in the mid-second century BCE, and marble in the following century.[120] When looking for evidence of former doors, archaeologists search for cuttings in thresholds or door jambs [Fig.I.6], in addition to bolt holes and any remaining hardware. Roman doors rotated on pivots, which were attached to the doorframe on the top and bottom of the leaf, and then connected to the *cardines* in the threshold.[121] To fasten a door, a bolt or beam of wood or metal could be used to secure the structure at night, and extant archaeological remains, including bolt holes and metal attachments, are evidence of this practice.

The general form of Roman doors appears not to have changed significantly during the late Republican and early Imperial periods (ca. second century BCE- first century CE). In general, the domestic door was roughly twice as tall as it was wide and moved on pivots or grooves in the floor. Notably, doors or partitions did not always fill the full height of the

[116] See, for example, the Tomba dei Auguri, ca. 520 BCE, Tarquinia, Italy.
[117] Lauritsen, "*Ter Limen Tetigi*. Exploring the Role of Thresholds in the Houses of Pompeii and Beyond," 302.
[118] William Smith, *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities* (London: J. Murray, 1901), 524.
[119] M.T. Lauritsen, "Doors in Domestic Space at Pompeii and Herculaneum: A Preliminary Study," in *TRAC 2010: Proceedings of the Twentieth Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference* (Oxford: Oxbow, 2011), 62.
[120] Roger Ling and Paul Arthur, *The Insula of the Menander at Pompeii* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997), 336; Lauritsen, "*Ter Limen Tetigi*. Exploring the Role of Thresholds in the Houses of Pompeii and Beyond," 303.
[121] Lauritsen, "Doors in Domestic Space at Pompeii and Herculaneum: A Preliminary Study," 62.

doorway,[122] as door casts from the Casa dei Ceii [I.6.15], where there is a gap between the top of the leaf and top of the doorframe, confirm.

Three predominant door forms exist in the archaeological record: those with two leaves (double doors), known as *bifores*; folding doors, called *valvae*; and doors with a single leaf.[123] As M. Taylor Lauritsen observes, the type of door chosen for a space appears to correspond to the size of the doorway; *bifores* were utilized in narrow spaces, while *valvae* were commonly selected for wider openings.[124] There were also different names for the various kinds of doors. Front doors were referred to as *ianua*, a direct reference to the god Janus, while a general doorway was called an *ostium*. *Foris* could also refer to a general doorway,[125] opening, or entrance. A rear door was called a *posticum*, and thresholds were referred to as *limen*.

Domestic front doors were often quite tall and *bifores* in form. The plaster cast of doors from the Casa di T. Octavius Quartio [II.2.2] in Pompeii is similar to many of the other ancient Roman doors found in Campania. This door includes two tall doors, *bifores*, that fill the doorway opening of the entryway [Fig.I.7]. The leaves are each divided into two recessed panels, upper and lower, by two horizontal bands. Two rows of five protruding attachments with a rounded knob at the end embellish the bands. Other, more modest doors, such as the partially cast leaves from the front of the Casa di Popidius Monatus [IX.7.9] reveal a similar composition, with two vertical panels and a row of metal attachments along the top [Fig.I.8].

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[122] M.T. Lauritsen, "The Form and Function of Boundaries in the Campanian House," in *Privata Luxuria: Towards an Archaeology of Intimacy* (München: Utz, 2013), 99. A screen or partial partition may have filled the space between the top of the door and the height of the doorway.
[123] Lauritsen, "The Form and Function of Boundaries in the Campanian House," 98-99.
[124] Lauritsen, "The Form and Function of Boundaries in the Campanian House," 98.
[125] The word may have referred to doors that open outward. Thoman Leverton Donaldson, *A Collection of the Most Approved Examples of Doorways: From Ancient Buildings in Greece and Italy, Expressly Measured and Delineated for This Work, Preceded by an Essay on the Usages of the Ancients Respecting Door-Ways; a New Translation of the Chapter of Vitruvius on the Subject, with the Original Text Taken from an Ancient and Valuable M.s. in the British Museum; and Copious Descriptions of the Plates* (London: Bossange, Barthès and Lowell, 1833), 8.

While the doors themselves would have been impressive to behold, Latin literary sources record that domestic doors were often kept open during the day.[126] The majority of Roman pivoting doors opened inward. This protected pedestrians from a sudden opening of doors, but it also allowed inhabitants to control views of the interior.[127] The ubiquity of inward-opening doors is made apparent by Plutarch, a first century CE Greek philosopher and later Roman citizen, who makes a point to note that the *consul* Marcus Valerius was granted the special privilege of outward opening doors,[128] a rare sight in Rome or other Roman cities.

In addition to primary doorways, recent studies of Campanian thresholds have revealed that secondary doors were much more prevalent than previously assumed.[129] Evan Proudfoot has demonstrated that secondary doors or temporary boundaries often existed in conjunction with the main door,[130] and were likely kept closed when the outer doors were open.[131] Although more numerous than primary doorways, secondary doorways were not as elaborate as their street-facing counterparts. Other partitions, such as screens or curtains, could also be used to divide a space, but appear only rarely in the archaeological record. It appears that permanent barriers were utilized more frequently toward the front of a house, while temporary or moveable partitions were favored at the more private and controlled rear.[132] Bearing in mind that open doors meant easier access to the interior, the practice may have rendered doorways even more in

[126] Hartnett, *The Roman Street: Urban Life and Society in Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Rome,* 188; Laurence, *Roman Pompeii: Space and Society*, 102; W. G. Martley, "Remarks and Suggestions on Plautus. 'Fores,' 'Janua,' 'Ostium,' in Plautus," *Hermathena* 4, no. 8 (1882): 304; Livy, *Ab urbe cond.* 5.41.7. Given the importance of the daily ritual of *salutatio*, this is likely true.
[127] Berry, "Boundaries and Control in the Roman House," 131.
[128] Plut. *Publ.* 20.
[129] Evan Proudfoot, "Secondary Doors in Entranceways at Pompeii: Reconsidering Access and the 'View from the Street,'" *Theoretical Roman Archaeology Journal* 2012 (2013): 199-200.
[130] Proudfoot, "Secondary Doors in Entranceways at Pompeii: Reconsidering Access and the 'View from the Street,'" 231-23.
[131] Berry, "Boundaries and Control in the Roman House," 131.
[132] Lauritsen, "The Form and Function of Boundaries in the Campanian House," 105.

need of protection[133] as interior was considered safe, while exterior was understood as dangerous.[134]

The materiality of primary doors is significant, given the temporary nature of moveable barriers. Permanent doors were most often constructed of wood, but there is both textual and archaeological evidence that doors could be constructed from or decorated with materials such as precious metals, shell, or ivory.[135] In the Augustan era, for instance, tortoise shell was apparently a popular inlay material for door posts or doors.[136] A Second Style fresco from the *triclinium* of the Villa of Publius Fannius Synistor in Boscoreale, now in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale in Naples [Fig.I.9], and another from a *cubiculum* of the same villa [Fig.I.10], affirm this. Doors may also have been painted, as is often depicted in fresco,[137] but there is no way to confirm this.[138] Lion's head *protomes*, too, seem to have been popular, such as those from the Spurlock Museum at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign[139] or a pair at the J. Paul Getty Museum [Fig.I.11].[140] Along with figural decoration, these attachments functioned to protect the threshold, and, by extension, the home and its inhabitants.[141]

[133] Hartnett, *The Roman Street: Urban Life and Society in Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Rome,* 188; Suet. *Vit.* 16.
[134] Frederick Jones, *The Boundaries of Art and Social Space in Rome: The Caged Bird and Other Art Forms* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 48.
[135] Walsh, "Doors of the Greek and Roman World," 46.
[136] Verg. *G*. 2.463. Walsh, "Doors of the Greek and Roman World," 44.
[137] See again the *triclinium* painting from Boscoreale, the Second Style frescoes from the *cubiculum* of the Villa of Publius Fannius Synistor, now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, Inv. 03.14.12a-g; the false doors from the Casa di Giulio Polibio in Pompeii; or the polychrome stucco panels from the Casa di Meleagro in Pompeii, now in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Inv. 9625.
[138] Hartnett, *The Roman Street: Urban Life and Society in Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Rome,* 182.
[139] Bronze. First century BCE-CE. Spurlock Museum, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Champaign, Inv. 1940.01.0002.
[140] Bronze. First to second century CE. J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, Inv. 72.AC.91.2.
[141] Walsh, "Doors of the Greek and Roman World," 46.

The doors of grand structures could even be outfitted with gold, carved adornment,[142] or mythical creatures.[143] This is true of grand buildings such as temples and palaces, but many homeowners also chose to embellish the primary doors of their residences on a smaller scale. Arms and spoils also occasionally decorated house doors,[144] and this too is depicted in extant images of doors [Fig.I.12].[145] Inscriptions could even be written upon doors for various purposes. First century CE naturalist and author Pliny the Elder (who perished during the 79 CE eruption of Mt. Vesuvius) remarks that certain phrases written on a door were thought to protect a structure from fire.[146] Certainly, the great efforts taken to embellishing doors signals their importance as an element of domestic architecture.

In addition to the doors and doorways themselves, visitors to an ancient Roman home could expect to encounter a variety of objects and individuals in the doorway, *fauces,* or *vestibulum*. Special porters (nearly always enslaved individuals) called *ianitores* or *ostiarii* were charged with monitoring the front door of a house and controlling access to the interior. Accordingly, these enslaved porters could at times wield a certain amount of power,[147] and might even receive bribes to let individuals into the house for access to the *dominus,* or homeowner.

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[142] Verg. *G*. 3.26.
[143] Cicero, first century BCE-CE Roman statesman and staunch defender of Republican values, describes the doors of the Temple of Minerva at Syracuse as featuring Gorgon heads and carved scenes in ivory and gold on its doors. Cic. *Verr*. 2.4.122. This is in reference to a Greek city and a monumental religious structure, but the description can provide a sense of the elaborate potential of Mediterranean door decoration, even if domestic Campanian doors did not enjoy the same degree of lavish embellishment.
[144] Verg. *Aen*. 2.504; 7.183; Liv. 38.43.9-10; Suet. *Ner*. 38.2; Petron. *Sat*. 30.
[145] Both the *fauces* mosaic from the Casa di Paquius Proculus [I.7.1] in Pompeii, and an atrium fresco from Villa A at Oplontis (Villa of Poppaea) include depictions of spoils hung on or around doorways.
[146] Plin. *NH*. 28.4. The practice of using inscriptions as a means of protecting a structure survives into the Christian period, where protective inscriptions can be found above lintels. William K. Prentice, "Magical Formulae on Lintels of the Christian Period in Syria," *American Journal of Archaeology* 10, no. 2 (1906): 138.
[147] Hartnett, *The Roman Street: Urban Life and Society in Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Rome,* 188.

Despite this power, *ostiarii* were still enslaved individuals with little to no social agency and they may even have been chained to their posts.[148]

An *ostiarius* is briefly described in the *Satyricon* (ca. first century CE), a satirical manuscript attributed to Neronian-era novelist Petronius. Book 29 opens with the central character Enclopius and his companions entering the house of the wealthy freedman Trimalchio to attend a dinner party. The group encounters an enslaved porter on their way into the house, whom Petronius describes in colorful detail:

"In aditu autem ipso stabat ostiarius prasinatus, cerasino succinctus cingulo, atque in lance argentea pisum purgabat. Super limen autem cavea pendebat aurea, in qua pica varia intrantes salutabat."

"Just at the entrance stood a porter in green clothes, with a cherry-colored belt, shelling peas in a silver dish. A golden cage hung in the doorway, and a black and white magpie in it greeted visitors."[149]

Here, Petronius describes a brightly dressed porter standing at the door, who appears more concerned with shelling peas into a silver dish than watching the front door.[150] Clearly, the silver dish and bird in a golden cage are meant to display the wealth of the homeowner, but it is likely the presence of the *ostiarius* was also used to signal that Trimalchio's household was one of great wealth.

The existence of enslaved porters is also borne out in the material record,[151] where archaeologists have discovered numerous examples of special rooms located directly off the

[148] Ov. *Am.* 1. 6; Suet. *Gram. et Rhet.* 3.
[149] Petron. *Sat.* 28.8. Translation Michael Heseltine. Loeb Classical Library, 1969.
[150] Barry Baldwin suggests that like many of the other enslaved individuals within Trimalchio's house, the fact that the *ostiarius* appears to be performing two jobs suggests that Trimalchio is not as wealthy as he would have his guests believe. Barry Baldwin, "Trimalchio's Domestic Staff," *Acta Classica* 21 (1978), 80.
[151] Two *ianitores* are even attested by name in the epigraphic record, CIL IV 1894; CIL IV 1921. See Berry, "Boundaries and Control in the Roman House," 138, fn. 59 for an exhaustive list of *ostiarii* and *ianitores* in literature and epigraphy.

fauces that were designated for *ostiarii,*[152] also known as a *cella ostiaria*.[153] Here, porters could easily stand watch over the doorway. The presence of special rooms dedicated for use by porters signals both their importance as a status symbol for the inhabitants of the house, and the perceived importance of monitoring the passageway.

In addition to porters, chained dogs— real or represented—could also appear within domestic entryways.[154] Three mosaics from Pompeii depict dogs in the entryway of a home,[155] as well as a dog mosaic from a room to the right of the atrium in the Casa di Orfeo [VI.14.20] [Fig.I.13]. A cavity[156] left by a dog (of a similar breed as those depicted in the mosaics)[157] was discovered in the *fauces* of this same house in 1874 and was used to create the well-known plaster cast of a dog from Pompeii [Fig.I.14]. Various Latin authors, including first century BCE Roman poet Tibullus,[158] mention the presence of dogs in doorways, and canine skeletons have been uncovered in other houses in Pompeii,[159] signaling their ubiquity throughout the city.

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[152] IX.9.12, Casa del Poeta Tragico [VI.8.5], Casa del Granduca di Toscana [VII.4.56], Casa dei Capitelli Figurati [VII.4.57] and Casa del Cenetario [IX.8.6] in Pompeii, for example, each feature a *cella ostiaria* off the entryway of the house. Unsurprisingly, such rooms often appear in wealthier households that could have afforded an *ostiarius*.
[153] The presence of a porter's "office" is even mentioned by Petronius. Petron. *Sat*. 29. Gilbert Bagnani, "The House of Trimalchio," *The American Journal of Philology* 75, 1 (1954): 22.
[154] Tib. *Elegiae*, 2.4.32-36; Suet. *Vit.* 16.
[155] These mosaics were discovered in the House of Paquius Proculus [I.7.1], Casa di Caecilius Iucundus [V.1.26], and the House of the Tragic Poet [VI.8.8]. Paintings of dogs were discovered in the Casa di Marcus Casellius Marcellus [IX.2.26] and I.12.3. See Berry, "Boundaries and Control in the Roman House," 137.
[156] The famous casts of human and animal victims of the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius were created when archaeologists realized the many empty pockets they encountered while excavating the volcanic material were in fact the cavities of the bodies of those who died during the eruption. These cavities formed when individuals were killed during the eruption, and their bodies buried by volcanic material (ash, pumice, pyroclastic flow, mud). After the bodies decayed, a hole was left in the volcanic material in the shape of the individual. In many cases the positions, outlines of clothing, and even expressions of the deceased were preserved in these cavities. In a technique popularized by archaeologist Giuseppe Fiorelli, who excavated Pompeii in the mid-19th century, the pockets were filled with plaster to take the form of the cavity. This practice produced the many plaster casts of victims that can be viewed throughout Pompeii.
[157] M. Zedda, P. Manca, V. Chisu, S. Gadau, G. Lepore, A. Genovese, and V. Farina, "Ancient Pompeian Dogs-Morphological and Morphometric Evidence for Different Canine Populations," *Anatomia, Histologia, Embryologia* 35, no. 5 (2006): 319, 323.
[158] Tib. *Elegiae*, 2.4.31-32. First century CE Roman poet Virgil even described the mythical dog Cerberus as a porter in this description of the underworld. Verg. *Aen*. 8.96.
[159] Zedda, Manca, Chisu, Gadau, Lepore, Genovese, and Farina, "Ancient Pompeian Dogs-Morphological and Morphometric Evidence for Different Canine Populations," 321-323. Gaetano Pelagalli and Carlo Giordano suggest

Like dogs, inanimate objects could also appear within or in front of portals. Sculpture was placed beside doorways,[160] or even, as the late first/early second century CE Roman poet Juvenal recounts, in the *vestibulum*.[161] Fewer objects appear within *fauces* or passageways than in front of doors due to the narrowness of the space, but the vivid fresco and mosaic that decorate the entryway of houses may have been meant to help embellish the passageways in lieu of three-dimensional decorative objects. The ancient experience of the doorway or *fauces* was thus one of many sights, sounds, and encounters, and the door itself was both a functional object and the site of decorative elaboration.

Apotropaia and the Belief in Invisible Dangers

In addition to their visual qualities, doors and doorways carried charged spiritual and ideological valence in the Roman world. The ancient Romans regarded transitional spaces as places of both vulnerability and power, and which required protection. As the following chapters demonstrate, images within doorways were employed to engage with, and protect against, visible and invisible dangers.

Foremost among these dangers were invisible threats, forces one could not see, but which could certainly cause suffering. In particular, the Romans believed in the so-called Evil Eye, a malign force created by the jealousy or ill-will of others.[162] The Evil Eye was called *Phthonos* by the Greeks and *Invidia* by the Romans, and thought to fill the entire body of an unlucky individual and cause them to waste away.[163] Jealous individuals afflicted with the Eye could

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that large dogs were used to guard the entryway of houses. Gaetano Pelagalli and Carlo Giordano, "Cani e canili nell'antica Pompei," *Atti dell'academia pontaniana* 8 (1957): 175.

[160] Smith, *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities,* 526.

[161] Juv. *Sat.* 7.126.

[162] Katherine M. Dunbabin and M.W. Dickie, "*Invidia Rupantur Pectora*: The Iconography of Phtonos/Invidia in Graeco-Roman Art," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 26 (1983): 7-9.

[163] Dunbabin and Dickie, "*Invidia Rupantur Pectora*: The Iconography of Phtonos/Invidia in Graeco-Roman Art," 8.

cause physical harm, sickness, or bad luck to people or even animals with a single glance.[164] Many Roman amulets intended to counteract the ill effects of the Evil Eye have been discovered by archaeologists [Fig.I.15][165] and attest to the widespread nature of the belief in malicious, unseen forces.[166]

Belief in the Evil Eye is also represented within the visual record. Depictions of the Evil Eye in various media show an eye being attacked by one or several animals or symbols as a means of counteracting the danger posed by the Eye.[167] In addition to these images, a wide variety of objects and symbols were used to protect against unseen dangers, among them elephants, horns, Gorgon heads, eyes, and even hands.[168] Other powerful symbols include the phallus, maze patterns, swastikas, and palms, several of which appear within doorways.[169] Often, many of these symbols appear within the same composition, no doubt an attempt to create as potent an image as possible to ward off evil forces.

Tintinnabula, or a grouping of bells, number among the amulets used to defend against invisible dangers. These objects offered apotropaic protection not only through the noise created

[164] Frederick Thomas Elworthy, *The Evil Eye* (Secaucus, N.J.: University Books/Citadel Press, 1982), 10, 19. These individuals are called jettatura in modern Italian.
[165] For example, a second century CE amulet in the Johns Hopkins Archaeological Museum depicts a central eye being attacked by various animals and symbols, including an elephant and scorpion. See Vèronique Dansen, 'Probaskania: Amulets and Magic in Antiquity," in *The Materiality of Magic* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2015), 177-204.
[166] Even today, superstitions about the Evil Eye linger in Greece and Italy, where protective symbols such as the eye or coral horn are still common, as well as certain apotropaic hand gestures.
[167] J.R. C. Cousland suggests the animals chosen to attack the eye (in this type of imagery generally) are meant to represent deities, thereby calling upon their protection. J.R.C. Cousland, "The Much Suffering Eye in Antioch's House of the Evil Eye. Is it Mithraic?" *Religious Studies and Theology* 24, no.1 (2005): 66.
[168] Door knockers in the shape of hands from Pompeii are especially significant to this study of the protective nature of doorway imagery. Elworthy, *The Evil Eye*, 254. Hand gestures, including the *mano cornuta* were (and in some places still are) used also to divert the Evil Eye.
[169] Katherine M. D. Dunbabin, "*Baiarum Grata Voluptas*: Pleasures and Dangers of the Baths," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 57 (1989): 336-37.

by the bells, [170] but also through the addition of protective symbols such as phalluses (often outrageously large or unnaturally placed) [Fig.I.16], animals, or humorous imagery.[171] *Tintinnabula* were hung at vulnerable locations like doors,[172] or even on the necks of children, to draw attention away from potential targets.[173]

Stand-alone phalluses, called *fascinia*,[174] were also used as prophylactic devices against malign forces, and often featured outrageous characteristics like wings or legs [Fig.I.17].[175] A *fascinium* could be simple, such as the schematic phallus that decorates a small gold ring now in the Thorvaldsen Museum,[176] or as complex and comical as a bronze figurine of Mercury with multiple phalluses.[177] Like *tintinnabula*, their purpose was to distract the Evil Eye or other evil forces from causing harm to a human target, a practice affirmed by first century CE author and magistrate Pliny the Younger's description of *fascinia* as a remedy for the Evil Eye.[178] Combined with the nature of doorways, where clear protection by deities lapsed as visitors moved from the protection of the gods of the street to those of the house, the threat of the Evil Eye rendered doorways and thresholds particularly perilous.

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[170] Catherine Johns, *Sex or Symbol: Erotic Images of Greece and Rome*. 1st ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), 67-70. Clarke, *Looking at Laughter: Humor, Power, and Transgression in Roman Visual Culture, 100 B.c.-A.d. 250*, 69-70.

[171] See Adam Parker, "The Bells! The Bells! Approaching *Tintinnabula* in Roman Britain and Beyond," in *Material Approaches to Roman Magic: Occult Objects and Supernatural Substances* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2018), 98.

[172] Parker, "The Bells! The Bells! Approaching *Tintinnabula* in Roman Britain and Beyond," 109.

[173] Clarke, *Looking at Laughter: Humor, Power, and Transgression in Roman Visual Culture, 100 B.c.-A.d. 250*, 69. This is similar to the practice of Roman boys wearing protective *bullas* (often filled with magical objects or incantations) to protect them until they reached adulthood.

[174] *Fascinia* were named after the phallic god Fascinus, protector of children. Varro notes that phalluses were hung around the necks of babies Varro, *Ling.* 7.97; Plin. *HN*. 28.8.

[175] Johns, *Sex or Symbol: Erotic Images of Greece and Rome*, 62-75, esp. 62-72; Wilhelmina F. Jashemski, "The Excavation of a Shop-House Garden at Pompeii (I. XX. 5)," *American Journal of Archaeology* 81, no. 2 (1977): 219-221.

[176] Roman. Gold. Thorvaldsen Museum, Copenhagen, Inv. H1816.

[177] From Pompeii, now in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Inv. 27854.

[178] Pliny uses the word *invidia*, meaning envy, to refer to the Evil Eye.

Deities of the Doorway

Symbols and amulets were not the only means used to protect against invisible dangers. Deities were also thought to shield different spaces against evil spirits or unwanted visitors. In the Roman world, every space was associated with a particular deity. From the fountains and springs of Juturna, to the orchards of Pomona, Romans constantly moved from the space of one deity to another.[179] It is no wonder, then, that a number of deities were associated with doors, crossroads, boundaries, and beginnings in the Roman pantheon. Chief among these deities was Janus, keeper of gates, passageways, and travelers.[180]

Janus was a native Italic deity of ancient origins,[181] an amalgamation of many different ideas and stories.[182] He had no Greek counterpart, and may have been among the most important deities in Roman religion during the period of the Roman kings (753-509 BCE).[183] By dint of his early origins, he existed as a shadowy and enigmatic figures to writers in the first centuries BCE and CE. Ovid, the first century BCE/early first century CE Roman poet, characterizes Janus as a figure with enigmatic origins.[184] Elsewhere in the literary record Janus is characterized as the god of transitions and beginnings, as well as the embodiment of transitional space.[185] In Ovid's *Fasti,* for instance, Janus is described as a doorkeeper who watches over both the interior and

[179] Florence Dupont, *Daily Life in Ancient Rome* (Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1993), 75.
[180] Phyllis Ackerman, "The Oriental Origins of Janus and Hermes," *Bulletin of the American Institute for Iranian Art and Archaeology* 5, 3 (1938): 217.
[181] Some scholars have, alternately, proposed Eastern, specifically Sumerian, origins for the god, as he has no Greek counterpart and was purported to have been the first king in Italy. Such scholars suggest that Hermes, also a guardian of the door, served as Janus's Greek counterpart, noting the iconographic similarities between the two. Ackerman, "The Oriental Origins of Janus and Hermes," 216, 218-220.
[182] Rabun Taylor, "Watching the Skies: Janus, Auspication, and the Shrine in the Roman Forum," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 45 (2000): 1.
[183] Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, 550-552.
[184] Lily Ross Taylor and Louise Adams Holland, "Janus and the Fasti," *Classical Philology* 47 (1952): 139. Ov. *Fast.* 1.89.
[185] Taylor, "Watching the Skies: Janus, Auspication, and the Shrine in the Roman Forum," 1.

exterior of a house,[186] and the boundary between order and chaos as a heavenly porter.[187] Virgil also supports the deity's role as doorkeeper when he states that Janus guards thresholds in "sleepless watch."[188] As such, the deity was understood to guard the transition between the safety of the interior and perils of the exterior as the god of doors and gates.[189] Indeed, it seems no coincidence that the Latin word for front door, *ianua*, is so similar to the name of the deity (Ianus), who presided over those entering and exiting a doorway.[190]

This connection is emphasized in the few images of Janus that survive. These images are rare, and it seems that Janus was not often portrayed in anthropomorphic form. Depictions of Janus appear most frequently on coins, and few sculptures of the god have been identified with absolute certainty.[191] Nevertheless, the deity was described as carrying a key and staff in visual representations,[192] attributes appropriate for the god of doors and transitions. Another key identifying characteristic of images of Janus was his depiction as *bifrons*, or with two faces back-to-back so that he could watch front and back doors simultaneously.[193]

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[186] Ov. *Fast.* 1.135-140.
[187] Ov. *Fast.* 1.103.
[188] Verg. *Aen*. 7.601. Macrobius even connects Janus to the sun, Macrob. *Sat.* 1.9.9.
[189] Louise Adams Holland, *Janus and the Bridge* (Rome: American Academy in Rome, 1961), 305. Janus seems also to have been closely linked to time. Taylor and Holland, "Janus and the Fasti," 140. The first day of each month was sacred to Janus, and his named was invoked first when reciting prayers, W. Warde Fowler, *The Roman Festivals of the Period of the Republic: An Introduction to the Study of the Religion of the Romans* (London: Macmillan and Co., 1925), 287; Gary Forsythe, *Time in Roman Religion: One Thousand Years of Religious History*. Routledge Studies in Ancient History, 4. New York: Routledge, 2012), 14. Janus was closely related to divination, and also, by some accounts, the first Latin king (Macrob. *Sat.* 1.7.20; 1.9.2-3). He also protected ephemeral boundaries as well, including the passage into a new year (Dupont, *Daily Life in Ancient Rome*, 84-85).
[190] C. Bailey, *Phases in the Religion of Ancient Rome* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1932), 47.
[191] Taylor, "Watching the Skies: Janus, Auspication, and the Shrine in the Roman Forum," 2.
[192] Macrob. *Sat*. 1.9.7, "But the name we give Janus shows that he has power over all doorways, and in that it is similar to *Thyraios*. He is also shown holding a key and a rod, to signify that he is guardian of all gates and the regent of all roads." Translation Robert A. Kaster. Loeb Classical Library, 2011. Ov. *Fast.* 1.254-5.
[193] Ov. *Fast.* 1.90; 1.130-140. It may also be that his anthropomorphic form was inspired by the Etruscan god Culśanś, who was also represented as bifrontal and with door bolts, and was linked with passageways. Taylor, "Watching the Skies: Janus, Auspication, and the Shrine in the Roman Forum," 36. See also Erika Simon, "Gods in Harmony: The Etruscan Pantheon," in *Etruscan Religion* (Austin: Univ. of Texas Press, 2006), 58; Erika Simon, *Culsu, Culsans und Janus: zum Kult Etruskischer und Römischer Torgottheiten*. Roma, 1989; Ingrid Krauskopf, "Culsans und Culsu," in *Beiträge zur altitalischen Geistesgeschichte*. *Festschrift für Gerhard Radke*, 156-163. Eds. Gerhard Radke, Ruth Atheim-Stiehl, and Manfred Rosenbach (Munich: Aschendorf, 1986); R. Staccioli, "II

Like many other Roman deities, Janus enjoyed an annual feast day, January 9th.[194] While there is little doubt that prayers were made to Janus, there is no evidence that he enjoyed a dedicated priesthood.[195] The most important structure dedicated to the worship of Janus was supposedly built under Numa (said to have reigned 715-673 BCE).[196] This *Ianus Geminus* was not a temple, but rather an open passageway with gates at either end. Procopius, a Byzantine scholar writing in the sixth century CE, describes the construction as having two gates connected by walls with a cult statue inside,[197] and most scholars believe the structure had no roof and may have survived into the fifth century CE.[198] The earliest representations of the structure appear on Neronian coins (54-68 CE), where it is depicted as a square construction with two arched passageways, and an attic [Fig.I.18].

Famously, the doors of the *Ianus Geminus* were only closed in times of peace throughout the Roman world. According to Varro, first century BCE author and scholar, the doors of the shrine were first closed by Numa after its construction during his peaceful reign,[199] and again

bronzetto cortonese di Culsans come il Giano dell'Argileto," *Archeologia classica* 46 (1994) 347-353. An Etruscan sarcophagus from Tuscania may represents either a *bifrons* Janus or Culśanś. Adriano Maggiani. "Argos, Janus, Culśanś: A proposito di un sarcophago di Tuscania," *Prospettiva* 52 (1988): 7.

[194] Varro, *Ling*. 6.12; Ov. *Fast.* 1.317-322; Fowler, *The Roman Festivals of the Period of the Republic: An Introduction to the Study of the Religion of the Romans,* 282.

[195] However, there is some evidence that the *rex sacrorum,* King of the Sacred Rites, was in charge of the worship of Janus. Marcel Renard, "Aspects anciens de Janus et de Junon," *Revue belge de philologie et d' histoire* 31, 1 (1953): 8.

[196] Valentine Müller, "The Shrine of Janus Geminus in Rome," *American Journal of Archaeology* 47, 4 (1943): 437. Taylor believes the shrine was oriented on an east-west axis and located close to the southeast corner of the archaic *comitium*, Taylor, "Watching the Skies: Janus, Auspication, and the Shrine in the Roman Forum," 35. For other sources on the location of the shrine see H. Bauer, "II Foro Transitorio e il tempio di Giano," *Rendiconti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia* 49 (1976-1977): 139-40; Laurence Richardson Jr., "Curia Julia and Janus Geminus," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archdologischen Instituts, Romische Abteilung* 85 (1978): 359-369; Pierre Grimal, "Le Janus de l'argilète," *Comptes-rendus des séances de l'année-Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* 93, 1 (1949): 6.

[197] Procop. *Goth*. 5.25; Mart. *Ep*. 10.28.3; Ov. *Fast.* 1.257.

[198] Taylor, "Watching the Skies: Janus, Auspication, and the Shrine in the Roman Forum," 25-26. Müller, "The Shrine of Janus Geminus in Rome," 439.

[199] Varro, *Ling*. 5.165; Liv. 1.19. Other traditions attribute the shrine to Romulus. Müller, "The Shrine of Janus Geminus in Rome," 437.

after the First Punic War in 235 BCE.[200] The doors were not closed again until 29 BCE, when Augustus shut the doors after the Battle of Actium (31 BCE).[201] Both Vespasian and Gordian III are also supposed to have closed the doors,[202] the former in 71 CE and the latter in 241 CE. It is no surprise that the shrine to the god of doorways and boundaries was so closely associated with a ritual involving the opening and closing of doors. Indeed, this connection with doors and boundaries pervades nearly every aspect of the deity and his lore and his association with doorways, portals, and spaces of transition remains unequivocal.[203]

Whereas Janus was associated with physical boundaries, the Roman god Terminus was the deity of intermediary zones.[204] Terminus was connected to boundary stones (*termini),*[205] in addition to Jupiter and fertility.[206] Like Janus, Terminus had ancient Italian roots. Ancient authors propose that Terminus was Sabine in origin and introduced into the Roman pantheon during the reign of either Romulus (753-715 BCE) or Numa.[207] The Festival of Terminus, called the *Terminalia,* was celebrated on February 23rd each year,[208] during which time devotees placed wreaths and cakes on boundary stones and performed sacrifices,[209] and special sacrifices were required to consecrate a new boundary stone.[210] Examples of boundary stones appear in Pompeii

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[200] Varro, *Ling*. 5.165.
[201] Suet. *Aug*. 22. Augustus closed the doors twice more during his reign. Some sources suggest the doors were also closed by Nero. G.B. Townend, "Tacitus, Suetonius, and the Temple of Janus," *Hermes* 108, 2 (1980): 241.
[202] Stat. *Silv*. 4.1. *Hist. Aug*. *Gordianus,* 26. 3; Etur. 9.2.2.
[203] The shrine in the *argiletum*, while the most prominent, was not the only structure constructed in honor of the deity. Among these, a temple or shrine to Janus in the Forum Holitorium is said to have been dedicated by Gaius Duilius in 260 BCE (Tacitus, *Annals*, 2.49), with a statue of the god inside. Two further shrines are reported to have been erected on the Janiculum and Oppian Hills. Additionally, a first century CE *quadrifrons* Arch of Janus is said to have been located in the Forum Transitorium, reportedly constructed by Domitian.
[204] Dupont, *Daily Life in Ancient Rome*, 83.
[205] Ov. *Fast*. 2.639-684.
[206] Roger Woodard, *Indo-European Sacred Space: Vedic and Roman Cult* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 64, 81.
[207] Varro, *Ling.* 5.74.
[208] Varro, *Ling* 6.13.
[209] Dupont, *Daily Life in Ancient Rome*, 83.
[210] Sic. Fl. *Cond. Agr.*, 11. Although, it should be noted that Flaccus was writing in the sixth century CE, centuries after our period of focus.

and other Roman cities, often at critical junctures [Fig.I.19].[211] While not as prominent a deity as Janus in Roman spiritual rituals, Terminus, nevertheless, was a god whose dominion the ancient Romans encountered on a daily basis.

Portunus, the god of ports, locks, gates, harbors, and at times doors, was often associated with Janus.[212] Both Portunus and Janus held keys as their attributes, and both deities could be depicted as *bifrons*. Portunus, too, was a god with old Italic roots,[213] and his Republican-era temple still stands in Rome in the ancient *Forum Boarium*.[214] Unlike Janus, however, Portunus had his own *flamen,* or priests, who helped celebrate the annual festival of Portunus on August 17th each year.[215] Therefore, despite the fact that Portunus was not as closely aligned with house doors as other deities, his shared traits with Janus and connection to transitional space demonstrates his importance as a deity of thresholds.

The Roman goddess of the hinge was called Cardea after the word for hinges, *cardo.* She kept watch over the door hinges of the home, and appears under a different name, in the *Fasti,* where Ovid conflates Cardea with Carna, by describing Carna as the goddess of the hinge.[216] Ovid also recounts the story of Cranaë in the *Fasti*, a nymph who was raped by Janus and given guardianship over hinges as "the price of thy lost maidenhood,"[217] once again appearing to conflate two goddesses. To make good on this promise, Janus gives Cranaë whitethorn, a plant

[211] Boundary stones found at III.7.7; VII.4.2 (CIL X 821) in Pompeii.
[212] Fowler, *The Roman Festivals of the Period of the Republic: An Introduction to the Study of the Religion of the Romans*, 203.
[213] See Giulio Bonfante "Tracce di terminologia palafitticola nel vocabolario latino?" *Atti dell'Istituto Veneto di scienze, lettere e arti* 97 (1937): 53-70.
[214] Ca. 75 BCE.
[215] Keys may have been thrown into the fire during these rituals. Fowler, *The Roman Festivals of the Period of the Republic: An Introduction to the Study of the Religion of the Romans*, 203.
[216] Ov. *Fast*. 6.101–103; Fowler, *The Roman Festivals of the Period of the Republic: An Introduction to the Study of the Religion of the Romans*, 131.
[217] Ov. *Fast*. 6.125. Translation James G. Frazer. Loeb Classical Library, 1931.

with the power to deter evil from entering a house.[218] Considering Janus's role as guardian of doors and passageways, this association is significant, and Cardea's ties to the doorway, coupled with her protective nature, highlight the perceived need for such protection.

In *De civitate Dei*, written by the fourth/fifth century CE theologian St. Augustine, Cardea is associated with the gods Forculus and Limentius, who are said to preside over doors and thresholds, respectively.[219] Even less is known about these deities than Cardea, as they appear only a handful of times in the literary record, but they were likely minor deities. Whether or not St. Augustine's discussion of Limentius and Forculus is applicable to the late Republican and early Imperial periods, the association of the two with a part of a door and doorway would be both in keeping with Roman religious belief and yet another indication of the importance of the doorway.

The goddesses Trivia and Aboena also held clear associations with doorways and transitional space. Trivia was the goddess of journeys, and another old Italic deity who was known as Hekate to the Greeks.[220] Specifically, she was thought to watch over children when they left the house, and like Hekate, was associated with witchcraft and served as a guide to the underworld.[221] Trivia's counterpart, Aboena, on the other hand, guarded children as they returned home.[222] Unlike Aboena, Trivia kept watch over the journeys that took place outside the home as the goddess of crossroads and protector of travelers.

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[218] Ov. *Fast*. 6.129-130; This then explains the passage in the *Fasti* where Ovid describes Cranaë marking the door with arbutus branches to block the entrance of the blood-sucking striges who prey on infants. First curing the young Proca, she also hangs whitethorn over the window in which the infant sleeps. Ov. *Fas.* 6.140-169; Christopher Michael McDonough, "Carna, Proca and the Strix on the Kalends of June," *Transactions of the American Philological* Association 127 (1997): 330.
[219] Aug. *De civ. D.* 4.8; Tert. *De Idolatria*, 15. Robert Turcan, *The Gods of Ancient Rome: Religion in Everyday Life from Archaic to Imperial Times* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 14.
[220] S.I. Johnston, "Crossroads," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 88 (1991): 217-218.
[221] Trivia is at times also used as an epithet of Diana. Virgil, *Aeneid* 6.20.
[222] Aug. *De civ. D.* 4.21.

Two major Olympian deities, Mercury and Bacchus, were also aligned with transitions. Mercury, as the god of commerce, travelers, transport, boundaries, and even thieves, was an important deity in the Roman pantheon. In addition to these duties, Mercury served as a guide to the underworld for the souls of the deceased.[223] Mercury also helped protect transitional spaces like doors. In fact, herms, a type of sculpture associated with journeys and boundaries, were named after Mercury's Greek counterpart Hermes [Fig.I.20]. These phallic pillars began as markers of crossroads and reinforce Mercury's role as protector of boundaries, thresholds, and travelers, as well as his associations with both physical and ephemeral transitions. Indeed, in the city of Pompeii, Mercury is often depicted besides entryways.[224]

Bacchus, too, was associated with transition. In addition to his role as the god of wine, fertility, and religious frenzy, Bacchus was also aligned with various transitions. First, Bacchus was the only of the twelve Olympian gods to be born of a mortal mother,[225] thereby straddling the realms of divine and human. He was also thought to move between earth and Hades as a conduit between the living and dead.[226] Furthermore, in one version of his origin myth, he was reanimated by his father Zeus,[227] again walking the line between life and death, and also appears in transitional spaces in Roman cities.

Roman boundaries were a matter of religious significance. The sacred boundary of any Roman city was known as the *pomerium*. With a few special exceptions, the dead could not be buried within the *pomerium* and generals were required to surrender their *imperium* (military

[223] Mercury was also father to the *Lares*, a noteworthy detail when considering the importance of these household gods to the protection of the home.
[224] Some examples include II.1.12; V.6.1; VI.9.6; IX.7.7; IX.12.6.
[225] Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.26-9.
[226] Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.37.
[227] Eur. *Bacch.* 88-104.

command) before crossing the boundary.[228] According to Varro, the enclosure of a new city was cut by a plow and then intermittently broken by gates, called *portae.*[229] Like the many deities associated with transitional spaces generally, and doors specifically, Roman spiritual beliefs concerning boundaries reflect an understanding of the ambiguities and potential dangers of transitional space. It seems no coincidence that these diverse, yet interrelated spaces share similar underlying beliefs and principals, ideas that also appear in literary characterizations of doorways.

Roman Doors in Latin Texts

The Latin corpus contains valuable information regarding Roman conceptions of doorways and other transitional spaces, however, I do not aim to present a comprehensive overview of the treatment of doorways and thresholds in all Latin sources in the following review of pertinent literary sources. Rather, I discuss a number of key examples to establish a more generalized understanding and characterization of doorways in Roman thought and practice. Voices such as those of Pliny the Elder (first century CE), Ovid (first century BCE-first century CE), and Petronius (first century CE) are critical to this discussion, which focuses on late Republican and early Imperial sources,[230] but I also highlight a small selection of later sources, such as St. Augustine (fourth/fifth century CE)[231] and Claudian (fourth/fifth century CE Latin

[228] Fred K. Drogula, "Imperium, Potestas, and the Pomerium in the Roman Republic," *Historia: Zeitschrift Für Alte Geschichte* 56, 4 (2007): 420.
[229] Varro, *Ling.* 5.143. Samuel Ball Platner and Thomas Ashley, *A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome* (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1965), 392-393. Bernhard Siegert and John Durham Peters, "Doors: On the Materiality of the Symbolic," *Grey Room* 47 (2012): 9.
[230] These sources, while instructive, have also been chosen for their contemporaneity with the structures I will study in the chapters that follow.
[231] It is important to note that St. Augustine's works, while they may be indicative of Roman ideas circulating in the fourth and fifth centuries CE, is writing through an early Christian lens, and thus may not be representative of Roman cultural ideas more broadly.

poet) where relevant, to illuminate other Roman cultural beliefs not recorded in earlier periods, with a special focus on sources that discuss daily life, ritual, and belief.

Doors, doorposts, and thresholds appear frequently in the Latin corpus, where they are often characterized as spaces of power and transition.[232] Ovid, for example, mentions the presence of an altar near a threshold in his description of the birth of Hercules.[233] In addition to altars, lamps or torches were also placed before doorways to give thanks to the spirits that resided on the threshold.[234] Further east, it is hypothesized that the dead were buried under the threshold of houses or other structures in early Greek history, where offerings were later made to appease their spirits.[235] Perhaps the Romans borrowed this belief from the Greeks, who were extremely influential on the Italian peninsula starting in the eight century BCE, and especially during the second century BCE.[236] Charles Godfrey Leland adds that Etruscan and Roman magic was often performed on the threshold because it was the limit between the domestic and spiritual

[232] Clay Trumbull suggests that early or "primitive" domestic altars were located on the threshold of the front door. However, this idea is presented in a very generalized manner in a text concerned with "primitive" ritual and should not be taken as definitive proof of this practice. Clay H. Trumbull, *The Threshold Covenant; or, the Beginning of Religious Rites* (New York: C. Scribner, 1906), 3.

[233] "*Ante fores ara, dextroque a poplite laevum pressa genu et digitis inter se pectine iunctis sustinuit partus. tacita quoque carmina voce dixit, et inceptos tenuerunt carmina partus*."
"There she sat upon the altar before the door, listening to my groans, with her right knee crossed over her left, and with her fingers interlocked; and so she stayed the birth. Charms also, in low muttered words, she chanted, and the charms prevented my deliverance." Ov. *Met.* 9.297-301. Translated Frank Justus Miller. Loeb Classical Library, 1916.

[234] Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology*, 527.

[235] Ogle, "The House-Door in Greek and Roman Religion and Folk-Lore," 265.

[236] Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "To Be Roman, Go Greek. Thoughts on Hellenization at Rome," *Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies*. Supplement, No. 71 (1998): 79-91; Kathryn Lomas, "The Greeks in the West and the Hellenization of Italy," in *The Greek World,* 361–381. Ed. Anton Powell (London: Routledge, 1995), 361-381; Tonio Hölscher, "Römische nobiles und hellenistische Herrscher," in *Akten des XIII Internationalen Kongresses fiir klassische Archäologie Berlin 1988*, 73-84. Ed. Deutsches archeaologisches institut (Mainz: P. von Zabern, 1990), 73-84; Paul Veyne, "The Hellenization of Rome and the Question of Acculturations," *Diogenes* 27, no. 106 (June 1979): 1–27; Ann L. Kuttner, "Culture and History at Pompey's Museum," *Transactions of the American Philological Association* 129 (1999): 359-64; Brunilde Sismondo Ridgway, *Roman Copies of Greek Sculpture: The Problem of the Originals* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1984); Cornelius C. Vermeule, "Greek Sculpture and Roman Taste," *Boston Museum Bulletin 65*, no. 342 (1967): 175-92; Richard Brilliant, "Roman Copies: Degrees Of Authenticity." *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 24, no. 2 (2005): 19-27; Elaine K. Gazda, *The Ancient Art of Emulation: Studies in Artistic Originality and Tradition from the Present to Classical Antiquity*. Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome. Supplementary volume; 1. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002).

realms.[237] This characterization of the doorway or threshold as a powerful space where one could perform magic spells or rituals is borne out in the literary record.

The magic spells and rituals performed in doorways could be protective, as in the case of remedies, or an attempt to exploit the forces thought to populate the space.[238] Pliny the Elder, for instance, records numerous magical spells associated with the house door or threshold. In one example, he suggests fixing a starfish smeared with fox blood to a lintel with a copper nail to keep out disease.

"mala medicamenta inferri negant posse aut certe nocere stella marina volpino sanguine inlita et adfixa limini superiori aut clavo aereo ianuae."

"They say that noxious charms cannot enter, or at least cannot harm, homes where a star-fish, smeared with the blood of a fox, has been fastened to the upper lintel or to the door with a bronze nail." [239]

In another he prescribes that iron nails taken from a grave and attached to lintels will prevent night frenzy (nightmares).

"…*et praefixisse in limine evulsos sepulchris clavos adversus nocturnas lymphationes*…"

"…and to have a fence of nails that have been extracted from tombs driven in in front of the threshold is a protection against attacks of nightmare."[240]

Pliny adds that vinegar poured over a door hinge will relieve a headache,

"cardinibus ostiorum aceto adfusis lutum fronti inlitum capitis dolorem sedare…"

"…and that applying to the forehead the mud obtained by pouring vinegar over a front door's hinges relieves headaches …"[241]

[237] Charles Godfrey Leland, *Etruscan and Roman Remains in Popular Tradition* (London: T.F. Unwin, 1892), 282.
[238] This is true also of crossroads in Greece and Rome. Johnston, "Crossroads," 224.
[239] Plin. *NH*. 32.16. Translation W.H.S Jones. Loeb Classical Library, 1963.
[240] Plin. *NH*. 34.44. Translation H. Rackham. Loeb Classical Library, 1952.
[241] Plin. *NH*. 28.12. Translation W.H.S Jones. Loeb Classical Library, 1963.

and that blood smeared on a doorpost will neutralize any magic.

"…*sanguinem cum polenta sumptum torminibus; eodem tactis postibus ubicumque Magorum infestari artes*…"

"…the blood taken with pearl barley is good for colic, and if the door-posts are everywhere touched with this blood, the tricks of the Magi are made ineffective…"[242]

These examples represent just a handful of those discussed by Pliny in his *Naturalis Historia*. In fact, Pliny records more than fifteen examples of spells or remedies associated with doorways, many of which aim to cure disease or keep out magic spells, but he also includes others that promise good fortune.[243] Considering the diverse rituals, spells, objects, and threats Pliny discusses in association with the doorway or threshold, it is clear that he, and likely others, conceptualized the doorway as a place of great power and potential danger. It is perhaps no coincidence that many of the ailments or spells he mentions are related to transition or uncertainty.

Like Pliny, Ovid discusses rituals involving the doorway in both the *Metamorphoses* and the *Fasti*. In one passage, Ovid describes the story of the infant Proca, where the nymph Cranaë strikes the door, thresholds, and doorposts of the home with an arbutus branch to prevent *striges* (female demons of the night) from entering the home and preying on the baby.

"*protinus arbutea postes ter in ordine tangit*
fronde, ter arbutea limina fronde notat;
spargit aquis aditus (et aquae medicamen habebant)
extaque de porca cruda bimenstre tenet …"

[242] Plin. *NH*. 28.27. Translation W.H.S Jones. Loeb Classical Library, 1963.
[243] Plin. *NH*. 29.20.

"Straightway she thrice touched the doorposts, one after the other, with arbutus leaves; thrice with arbutus leaves she marked the threshold. She sprinkled the entrance with water (and the water was drugged), and she held the raw innards of a sow just two months old." [244]

The threshold is once again characterized as a powerful space by Ovid in the *Metamorphoses*, where altars are placed before thresholds that are believed to be haunted by spirits. Ovid describes Medea setting up altars before her threshold, where she performs a sacrifice in a passage recounting Medea's revitalization of Jason's elderly and infirm father, Aeson.

"*constitit adveniens citra limenque foresque*
et tantum caelo tegitur refugitque viriles
contactus, statuitque aras de caespite binas,
dexteriore Hecates, ast laeva parte Iuventae.
has ubi verbenis silvaque incinxit agresti,
haud procul egesta scrobibus tellure duabus
sacra facit cultrosque in guttura velleris atri
conicit et patulas perfundit sanguine fossas."

"As she came Medea stopped this side of the threshold and the door; covered by the sky alone, she avoided her husband's embrace, and built two turf altars, one on the right to Hecate and one on the left to Youth. She wreathed these with boughs from the wild wood, then hard by she dug two ditches in the earth and performed her rites; plunging her knife into the throat of a black sheep, she drenched the open ditches with his blood." [245]

Ovid once again alludes to the importance of the doorway when recounting the vengeance of Tisiphone and he vividly describes how the doorposts shrink from the Fury and the doors become ashen at her presence.[246] Virgil also notes an association between doors and the Furies in the *Aeneid*, where he describes the Furies guarding a door.[247]

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[244] Ov. *Fast*. 6.155. Translation James G. Frazer. Loeb Classical Library, 1931.
[245] Ov. *Met.* 7.238-245. Translation Frank Justus Miller. Loeb Classical Library, 1916.
[246] "*limine constiterat: postes tremuisse feruntur Aeolii pallorque fores infecit acernas solque locum fugit*." "She stood upon the doomed threshold. They say the very door-posts of the house of Aeolus shrank away from her; the polished oaken doors grew dim and the sun hid his face." Ov. *Met.* 4.486-489. Translation Frank Justus Miller. Loeb Classical Library, 1916.
[247] For instance, Verg. *Aen*. 4.473-474.

As Ovid's description of Tisiphone reveals, door posts, too, could be imbued with power. When a new temple was dedicated, as Cicero reports, the *pontifex* (priest) grasped the door posts.[248] Livy, a mid-first century BCE/early first century CE historian, details a similar practice when discussing a feud between Valerius and Horatius over the dedication of the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus on the Capitoline Hill in 507 BCE.[249] In the tale, Valerius attempts to stir up trouble during the consecration of the temple after he becomes angry that Horatius was chosen to consecrate the new temple instead of himself. Livy tells us that in spite of Valerius's efforts, Horatius continued to grip the doorposts to pray and complete the dedication of the temple.[250]

Another passage in Livy (himself following Polybius, the second century BCE Greek historian, whose work Livy references and paraphrases in his *Ab Urbe Condita*),[251] describes the visit of Prusias II of Bithynia to the Senate. There, Livy references practices and ideas related to the domestic door.

"*Romae quoque, cum veniret in curiam, summisisse se et osculo limen curiae contigisse et deos servatores suos senatum appellasse aliamque orationem non tam honorificam audientibus quam sibi deformem habuisse.*"

"…when Prusias entered the senate-house at Rome, he fell down and kissed the threshold of the senate-house, hailed the senate as his savior-gods and indulged in further speech which conveyed more disgrace to himself than honor to his hearers."[252]

Although an apparent affront to contemporary Roman rules of decorum, the supposed actions of this foreign king reveal a knowledge of the reverence of the Roman threshold and importance of

[248] Cic. *Dom.* 46.
[249] Liv. 2.8.
[250] Liv. 2.8.
[251] Robert J. Sklenář, "Sources and Individuality in Two Passages of Livy," *Historia: Zeitschrift für alte Geschichte* 53, no. 3 (2004): 302-3.
[252] Liv. 45.44. Translation Alfred C. Schlesinger. Loeb Classical Library, 1951.

its associated deities. Together, this passage and the preceding examples demonstrate the importance and perceived power of the Roman doorway.

Yet, the significance of the Roman doorway was not confined to the realm of magic, medicine, and religion. In addition to the various doorway rites associated with magic, the door played a role in nearly all stages of Roman life, from birth to death. By St. Augustine's account of Varro (first century BCE scholar), the threshold of a home was ritually struck with an iron ax and pestle when a child was born. The area was then swept to prevent the wood spirit Silvanus from entering the home and harming the newborn.[253]

Announcements were also made via household doors. Roman households hung a wreath on the front door of a house to announce a birth,[254] and new husbands placed a wreath or garland of laurel or myrtle on his front door to celebrate the marriage.[255] In a similar practice, new brides adorned the door of her new home with various objects and substances. Virgil recounts that a bride was supposed to smear wolf's fat or oil on the doorposts of the house when entering her new home, [256] as well as hang woolen fillets from the door.[257]

Doors also played a pivotal role in more somber life events, such as death. When a family member passed away, cypress was hung on the front door and placed on the body to mark the death.[258] This functioned as both an announcement of the passing and notification to passersby of

[253] Aug. *De civ. D.*, 6.9. Eli Edward Burniss, *Taboo, Magic, Spirits: A Study of Primitive Elements in Roman Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1931), 57-58. In this case, Augustine is likely to be commenting on pagan ritual as a non-Christian practice and curiosity.
[254] Juv. *Sat*. 9. 85.
[255] Juv. *Sat*. 6.79; Claud. *Nupt.*10.204.
[256] Plin. *HN*. 28.142.
[257] Plin. *HN*. 29.9. The use of wool here is significant, as wool was at times considered an efficacious material. A woolen band was also tied in a knot around the waist of the bride.
[258] Plin. *HN*.16.60; Verg. *Aen.* 3.64.

the impurity of death that lay within.[259] Doorways were also the site of drama or forlorn lovers. As Elizabeth Haight observes, doors appear frequently as a symbol in Classical Greek poetry (480-323 BCE), often as the setting for the height of drama.[260] The same seems also to have been true in Rome. The first century BCE Roman philosopher and poet Lucretius, for one, narrates an encounter between a spurned lover at the threshold of his beloved's front door, one of many such interactions in the literary record.

"*at lacrimans exclusus amator limina saepe*
floribus et sertis operit postisque superbos
unguit amaracino et foribus miser oscula figit…"

"But the lover shut out, weeping, often covers the threshold with flowers and wreaths, anoints the proud doorposts with oil of marjoram, presses his love-sick kisses upon the door…"[261]

Both the objects placed upon doors and the activities undertaken in and around thresholds demonstrate the critical role of doorways in everyday Roman life. In addition to the charged nature of the doorway, its accompanying activities, and the rites performed therein, one's physical interactions with doorways and thresholds were often regulated. As one example of such regulations, various authors warn caution when stepping over a threshold. Plautus (third/second century BCE Roman playwright) and Lucan (first century CE Roman poet), for instance, caution husbands to carry their new brides into the home to prevent the ill omen of her tripping over the threshold.[262]

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[259] Death was thought to bring pollution. As part of Roman funerary ritual, the family members of the deceased were ritually cleansed with water and fire after the body had been removed from the household. Only then could they resume contact with other individuals.

[260] Elizabeth Hazelton Haight, *The Symbolism of the House Door in Classical Poetry* (New York: Longmans Green, 1950), 1-3, 16, 32.

[261] Lucr. 4.1177-1179. Translation W.H.D. Rouse. Loeb Classical Library, 1924.

[262] This has also been explained as connected to the tradition of the Sabine women, who were carried off by the early Romans. Alternately, it has been suggested that brides were carried over the threshold because the threshold was a symbol of Vesta, and therefore connected to chastity and virginity. Hartnett, *The Roman Street: Urban Life and Society in Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Rome,* 154; Valerie M. Warrior, *Roman Religion* (Cambridge: Cambridge

"*Translata vitat contingere limina planta...*"

"…and careful not to touch the threshold when her foot crosses it…"[263]

"*sensim super attolle limen pedes, mea noua nupta;*
sospes iter incipe hoc…"

"Raise your feet above the threshold gently, my new bride. Begin this journey safely…"[264]

A similar superstition existed for leaving one's home, and tripping on a threshold was characterized as a portent of ill fortune.[265] The foot one used to cross the threshold was also aligned with superstition and could be regulated. Petronius's *Satyricon* includes a scene where Enclopius and his companions are stopped at the door of Trimalchio's house by an enslaved individual who instructs them to step right foot first.[266]

"*His repleti voluptatibus cum conaremur [in triclinium] intrare, exclamavit unus ex pueris, qui super hoc officium erat positus, "Dextro pede." Sine dubio paulisper trepidavimus, ne contra praeceptum aliquis nostrum limen transiret*."

"Fed full of these delights, we tried to get in[to the dining-room], when one of the slaves, who was entrusted with this duty, cried, "Right foot first!" For a moment we were naturally nervous, for fear any of us had broken the rule in crossing the threshold."[267]

University Press, 2006), 32; Norman W. DeWitt, "The Primitive Roman Household," *The Classical Journal* 15, no.4 (1920): 219.
[263] Luc. *Phar*. 2, 359. Translation J.D. Duff, 2015.
[264] Plaut. *Cas*. 4.4. Translation Wolfgang de Melo. Loeb Classical Library, 2011.
[265] It was also considered bad luck to trip over one's threshold when leaving the house. Cic. *Div*. 2.40.84; Ov. *Met*. 10.452. Ugo Enrico Paoli, *Rome: Its People, Life, and Customs* (Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 1975), 281; Dupont, *Daily Life in Ancient Rome*, 90.
[266] Petron. *Sat*. 30. Translation Michael Heseltine, W. H. D Rouse, and E. H Warmington. Loeb Classical Library, 1969.
[267] Petron. *Sat*. 30. Translation Michael Heseltine, W. H. D Rouse, and E. H Warmington. Loeb Classical Library, 1969.

While likely an exaggeration that wealthy Roman households included a doorkeeper who regulated which foot one used to cross the threshold,[268] the inclusion of this scene does imply that such a superstition existed in Roman thought. Outside of Petronius's satire, Apuleius (second century CE Roman philosopher and prose writer) emphasized the importance of starting a journey with the right foot, and there even existed the idea that the right shoe should be put on before the left.[269]

"*Sed ut fieri assolet, sinistro pede profectum me spes compendii frustrata est. Omne enim pridie Lupus negotiator magnarius coemerat.*"

"But, as usually happens, I started out with my left foot and my hope of profit was frustrated, because a wholesale merchant named Lupus had purchased it all the day before."[270]

Indeed, the controlled nature of the physical choreography of moving across a threshold is supported by what Steven Ellis has called the Roman "cult of the right,"[271] or the overwhelming Roman preference for, and superstition surrounding, the right side. [272] He adds that examples of

[268] While past scholars often took Petronius at his word, in both characterizations of freedmen and their habits (i.e. Nicholas Purcell, "Tomb and Suburb," in *Römishe Gräberstraßen: Selbstdarstellung- Status-Standards*, 25-41. Ed. Henner von Hesberg and Paul Zanker (Munich: Verlag der Bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaft, 1987), 25), recent scholars such as Lauren Hackworth Petersen have argued that the *Satyricon* does not reflect the wide range of attitudes toward freedmen in antiquity, and that a fictional character should not be used as the only basis through which to understand the lives and experiences of real freedmen and women. Lauren Hackworth Petersen, *The Freedman in Roman Art and Art History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 6-10. See also John H. D'Arms, *Commerce and Social Standing in Ancient Rome* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), 97-120 ("The 'Typicality' of Trimalchio"); Paul Veyne, "Vie de Trimalcion," *Annales. Histoire, Sciences Sociales* 16, no. 2 (1961): 213–47; and Bagnani, "The House of Trimalchio," 16-39.

[269] Suet. *Aug*. 92; Iambl. *Protr*. Symbol 12.

[270] Apul. *Met.* 1.5. Translation J. Arthur Hansen. Loeb Classical Library, 1996.

[271] Steven J. R. Ellis, "*Pes Dexter*: Superstition and the State in the Shaping of Shopfronts and Street Activity in the Roman World," in, *Rome, Ostia, Pompeii: Movement and Space* (Corby: Oxford University Press, 2011), 166-167, 173. This preference for the right side was also shared by the ancient Greeks, Herbert Dukinfield Darbishire, Relliquiæ Philologicæ: *Or, Essays in Comparative Philology*. Ed, Robert Seymour Conway (Cambridge: University Press, 1895), 66-8.

[272] M. Taylor Lauritsen disagrees with Ellis and has suggested that the Roman preference for the right was culturally normative as opposed to superstitious. Lauritsen, "*Ter Limen Tetigi*. Exploring the Role of Thresholds in the Houses of Pompeii and Beyond," 311. I believe the two can exist at once, and that the idea may have become culturally normative as a result of its continued practice and superstitious origins. For a continuation of this ideology into the Middle Ages and Early Modern periods, specifically in the placement of men (right) and women (left) in double

Roman partiality toward the right are, "as multifarious as they are countless,"[273] including the idea that thieves stole with their left hand.[274] Eric Poehler also discusses Roman directional superstitions and the Roman preference for the right, demonstrating through archaeological evidence that Romans drove on the right-hand side of the street.[275] As Poehler observes, the right-hand path is linked to virtue in Greek and Roman myth,[276] and Anthony Wagener shows that the right was understood as favorable, associated with men, and the hand used in many rituals in Latin literature.[277]

Doors and superstitious directionality appear in other sources as well. Vitruvius discusses temple doors in the sixth chapter of Book Four of his architectural treatise.[278] In addition to laying out the proportions of doors for each of the three Classical orders, he briefly discusses appropriate placement and decoration.[279] Perhaps more significantly, Vitruvius records that the number of steps in front of a temple should be odd to ensure that the right foot is always the first to reach the landing in chapter four of Book Three.

"gradus in fronte constituendi ita sunt uti sint semper inpares. namque cum dextro pede primus erit pondendus."

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portraits, see Corine Schlief, "Men on the Right, Women on the Left: (A) Symmetrical Spaces and Gendered Places," in *Women's Space: Patronage, Place, and Gender in the Medieval Church* (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 2005), especially 207, 212, 220, 241-242.

[273] Ellis, "*Pes Dexter*: Superstition and the State in the Shaping of Shopfronts and Street Activity in the Roman World," 166.

[274] Ellis, "*Pes Dexter:* Superstition and the State in the Shaping of Shopfronts and Street Activity in the Roman World," 166. Ov, *Met.* 13.110.

[275] Eric E. Poehler, "Romans on the Right: The Art and Archaeology of Traffic," *Athanor* 21 (2003): 7. To determine the Roman preference for the right, archaeologically, Poehler analyzes wheel ruts in Pompeii to reconstruct traffic patterns.

[276] Poehler, "Romans on the Right: The Art and Archaeology of Traffic," 8. Verg. *Aen.* 6.540-543.

[277] Anthony Pelzer Wagener, "Popular Associations of Right and Left in Roman Literature," (Dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 1912), 5, 31, 38, 56. Wagener argues that the word for right (*dexter*) was at times used to mean favorable in contexts with no relation to directionality, 56. Among the examples of *dexter* used to mean favorable Wagener cites Verg. *Aen.* 2. 388; Sen. *Med*. 68, and *sinister/sinistra* as unfavorable Catull. 29.15; Verg. *G*. 1.444; Tac., *Ann.* 1.74.10; Luc. *Phar*. 8.52.

[278] Vitr. *De arch.* 4.6.1-6.

[279] Vitr. *De arch.* 4.6.1-5.

"The steps in front must be arranged so that there shall always be an odd number of them; for thus the right foot, with which one mounts the first step, will also be the first to reach the level of the temple itself."[280]

While this may seem like an insignificant aside, a survey of domestic structures in Pompeii suggests that homes at particularly vulnerable junctures, or with charged decoration, tend to feature an odd number of steps up to the main doorway.[281]

Together with the archaeological evidence and the observations of Ellis, Poehler, and others on the Roman preference for the right, the literary sources support the existence of directional superstition among the Romans. This is acutely significant to this study of Roman doorways in that this directionality is often connected to the main doorway or threshold of a structure. Many of the doorways considered in the ensuing chapters engage directly and indirectly with ideas of directional preference and superstition, and further establish the doorway as a place of uncertainty, ambiguity, and transition. These chapters further compare the literary and archaeological evidence by examining the material evidence to demonstrate that many of the ideas discussed in this chapter are borne out in the visual record.

Conclusion

This chapter has sought to provide background to the beliefs, concepts, and practices that influenced the decoration of Roman doorways. The physical form and components of Roman doors and doorways, along with the ideology surrounding the threshold as a space of superstition, ritual, ambiguity, and potential danger help establish a baseline with which to

[280] Vitr. *De arch.* 3.4.4. Translated Ingrid D. Rowland, Thomas Noble Howe, and Michael Dewar, 1999.
[281] See, for instance, the House of the Vettii [VI.15.1] and the House of Paquius Proculus, [I.7.1] both with charged decoration (Priapus fresco and dog mosaic, respectively), and which are location near either cross stones or a public fountain. More on this in Chapter Two, 104.

understand the art and experience of the Roman doorways examined in the proceeding chapters. Discussions of the history and structure of Roman doors in this chapter have revealed a more or less standard "type" and construction, determined in large part through archaeological remains. Various literary sources and images of doors have helped reconstruct the appearance and decoration of doors and doorways, in addition to the objects and individuals one might encounter within the space.

The Roman belief in invisible dangers and use of a wide variety of *apotropaia*, have also foregrounded an understanding of protective imagery in belief and practice. Roman spiritual beliefs can also aid in understanding the ideology driving the decoration and formulation of doorways and other ambiguous spaces. As the existence of numerous deities connected to doors, thresholds, and crossings have demonstrated, transitional spaces were vulnerable and necessitated the protection of various gods for each phase of one's journey.

The literary characterization of doorways is likewise key to understanding the ideology and practice of doorway decoration. While not always thoroughly reliable sources on Roman thought and life, the Latin texts attest to a wide variety of ideas concerning the power, danger, and efficacy of doorways in diverse contexts. In addition to notions of superstitious directionality, doorways played a role in many of life's most important events, as well as offered an ideal place to perform magic or create medical remedies. This repeated acknowledgement of the doorway as a critical juncture and powerful locale thus contextualizes and enlivens the spaces examined in the proceeding pages.

Chapter 2: Divine Intervention: Liminal Deities and the Threshold

Divine imagery played a fundamental role in the daily lives of the ancient Romans. From shops to temples, inhabitants of Roman cities could expect to encounter representations of gods and goddesses in a variety of media everywhere they went. The domestic doorways of ancient Pompeii are no exception, many of which featured depictions of deities within or surrounding spaces of passage. This chapter examines images of deities that appear within domestic doorways in Pompeii as one of the many visual tactics employed to combat the dangers of moving through a space of passage. Liminal locations could be harnessed for good or evil,[282] and it is this ambiguity that required the presence of deities whose traits were often similarly vague. Taking the Casa dei Dioscuri [VI.9.6-7] as the predominant case study, this chapter focuses on the depiction of divinities as one method of mitigating the vulnerabilities of the doorway space, by considering in turn the images themselves, the spaces in which they appear, and how a viewer might have interacted with them.

In studying the images and their original contexts, I argue that divine imagery was carefully chosen for ambiguous locales based on the characteristics of the god or goddess in question and was then activated through a viewer's movements. In addition to their roles as guardians, this chapter suggests that paintings of deities such as the Dioscuri, Mercury, Priapus, and Fortuna were situated to draw on their many dualities to protect the space.

In addition to the archaeological and art historical material, the works of Merleau-Ponty, Platt, Morgan, and MacRae on the perception and embodiment are useful methodological and theoretical touchpoints to investigate the experience of divine images in domestic doorways. If,

[282] S. I. Johnston, "Crossroads," *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 88 (1991): 224.

as Merleau-Ponty, Platt, Morgan, and MacRae contend,[283] the experience of an image is both embodied and material, it would also stand to reason that not only were certain images chosen to inhabit intermediary spaces due to the supposed qualities of the individual or object depicted, but that these perceived qualities could be expected to affect the viewer through embodied or material means. With these ideas in mind, I propose that the presence of divine imagery at ambiguous locales could allow viewers to imagine, and thus experience, material interactions with a deity. Although the nature of this embodied viewing and reciprocal interaction could vary, it could help to ensure the efficacy of the divine image as protector or aggressor of thresholds, passageways, and other spaces of transition. [284] The chapter thus investigates depictions of deities in domestic doorways with the understanding that perception of and engagement with such images produced an embodied experience for the ancient viewer.[285]

[283] For more about the work of Merleau-Ponty, Platt, Morgan, and McRae, see pages 20-24 above.
[284] In fact, Barbara Kellum calls crossing a threshold a, "highly charged act." Barbara Kellum, "The Spectacle of the Street," *Studies in the History of Art* 56 (1999): 284.
[285] See Maryl B. Gensheimer, "Greek and Roman Images of Art and Architecture," in *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Art and Architecture*, 84-104. Ed. Clemente Marconi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), 88, wherein she observes that representations of deities function as both representation and deity themselves.

Deities and the Casa dei Dioscuri

The large and richly decorated Casa dei Dioscuri[286] [VI.9.6-7] (first excavated in 1828 by Carlo Bonucci)[287] is located on the east side of the Via di Mercurio in Pompeii [Fig.II.1].[288] It is surrounded by many other elite homes, as well as major roads and public buildings [Fig.II.2],[289] and is connected to another structure, the so-called Domus Caetroni, through an opening in the south wall of the home's large peristyle.[290] The initial building phase dates to the Republican

[286] The house was also called the Casa del Questore in the 19th century, Irene Bragantini, "VI 9, 6-7 Casa dei Dioscuri," in *PPM*, Vol. IV, 860-1004. Eds. G. P. Carratelli and I. Baldassarre (Roma: Istituto della enciclopedia italiana, 1991) 861; Fausto Niccolini and Felice Niccolini, "Casa detta di Castore e Polluce," in *CMPDD* Vol.1, 1-16. Eds. Fausto Niccolini and Felice Niccolini (Napoli: Fausto Niccolini, 1854), 1. The second level has been lost.

[287] For early excavation reports on the Casa dei Disocuri, see Gugliemo Bechi, "Relazione degli scavi di Pompei da Aprile 1828 a Maggio 1829," in *Real museo borbonico* Vol. V,1-26. Eds. Museo nazionale di Napoli and Antonio Niccolini, (Napoli: Stamperia reale, 1829), 1-26; Giuseppe Fiorelli, *PAH* Vol. II. (Neapoli, 1860), 86-94, 204-218 (hereafter *PAH*); Giuseppe Fiorelli, *Descrizione di Pompei* (Napoli: Tipografia Italiana, 1875), 135-139; Niccolini and Niccolini, "Casa detta di Castore e Polluce," 1-16; Wilhelm Zahn, *Die schönsten Ornamente und merkwürdigsten Gemälde aus Pompeji, Herculanum und Stabiae nebst einigen Grundrissen und Ansichten nach den an Ort und Stelle gemachten Originalzeichnungen* Vol. II (G. Reimer, 1828), esp. pl.90; Sir William Gell, John P. Gandy, and Charles Heath, *Pompeiana: The Topography, Edifices, and Ornaments of Pompeii* II London: Chatto and Windus, 1875), 14-47, 139-154; Ernest Breton, *Pompeia décrite et dessinée*. 3d ed. (Paris: L. Guerin & Cie, 1869), 348-355; Amedeo Maiuri, *L'ultima fase edilizia di Pompei*. Italia Romana. Campania Romana, 2 (Spoleto: Istituto di studi romani, 1942), 101-2. Laurence Richardson Jr.'s 1955 monograph augments these early reports (L. Richardson, *Pompeii: The Casa dei Dioscuri and Its Painters*. Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome, V. 23. Rome: American Academy in Rome, 1955), and Lucia Romizzi provides an updated overview of the house in her 2006, "La Casa dei Dioscuri di Pompei (VI.9.6.7): una nuova lettura," in *Contributi di archeologia vesuviana. Studi della Soprintendenza Archeologica di Pompei, 17-18, 2*, 78-109. Ed. Soprintendenza Archeologica di Pompei (Roma: l'Erma di Bretschneider, 2006). See also Irene Bragantini, "VI 9, 6 Casa dei Dioscuri," in *PPP*, Vol. II, 207-27. Eds. Irene Bragantini, Mariette De Vos, Franca Parise Badoni, and Valeria Sampaolo (Roma: Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali, Istituto centrale per il catalogo e la documentazione, 1983), 207-27; E. De Carolis and M.P. Corsale, "La Casa dei Dioscuri (VI, 9, 6.7) in Pompei. La tecnica di esecuzione delle decorazioni parietali," in *DHER. Domus Herculanensis rationes. Sito, archivio, museo*, 479–511. Ed. A. Coralini. Ante Quem Editoria: Bologna, 2011.

[288] A replica of the Casa dei Dioscuri was constructed in 1840 by King Ludwig I of Bavaria after he visited the newly-excavated structure in 1830. Called the Pompejanum, the building is not an exact replica of its Pompeian counterpart but was the first full-scale model of a specific ancient house. For an extensive discussion of the Pompejanum, see Bettina Bergmann, "A Tale of Two Sites: Ludwig I's Pompejanum and the House of the Dioscuri in Pompeii," in *Returns to Pompeii. Interior Space and Decoration Documented and Revived. 18th-20th Century*, 183-301. Eds. Shelley Hales and Anne-Marie Leander Touati. Skrifter Utgivna Av Svenska Institutet I Rom, 4°, 62 (Stockholm: Svenska Institutet, 2016), 183–301.

[289] Richardson, *Pompeii: The Casa dei Dioscuri and Its Painters*, 1.

[290] It is believed that the Domus Caetroni was annexed to the Casa dei Dioscuri in the late Republican period, however it remained linked to the main house only through rear connecting corridors until the mid-first century CE. Richardson, *Pompeii: The Casa dei Dioscuri and Its Painters*, 105, 68-69. Large parts of the Domus Caetroni remained undecorated when Vesuvius erupted. Bechi, "Relazione degli Scavi di Pompei da Aprile 1828 a Maggio 1829," 22-3.

period,[291] and the house enjoyed an occupation history of nearly two hundred years. First Style frescoes imitating large ashlar blocks of stone, molded in stucco above a red socle decorate the façade of the Casa dei Dioscuri. Originally, the spaces in between the faux blocks were highlighted in blue paint,[292] and the modeled blocks which now appear white were once yellow [Fig.II.3].[293] Additionally, small sections of the block moldings reveal traces of stamped trefoil and lily patterns,[294] suggesting that much care went into decorating the façade. Many graffiti inscriptions formerly decorated the street-facing walls of the home, now lost, but recorded by early archaeologists who encountered the home.[295]

The primary, Republican-era[296] entryway is tall, wide, and flanked by faux pillars capped with large tufa blocks.[297] The pillar to the right of the entrance was formerly ornamented with a painting of Fortuna and Mercury. [Fig.II.4] when the house was first excavated in 1828.[298] Despite the fact that no accompanying painting was found on the other side of the entryway, the presence of this fresco next to the doorway of the home demonstrates a concern with protective

[291] Maria Emma Pirozzi, "La Casa dei Dioscuri in Pompei scavi," *Rivista di studi pompeiani* 21 (2010): 144.
[292] Bragantini, "VI 9, 6-7 Casa dei Dioscuri," 862; Bechi, "Relazione degli Scavi di Pompei da Aprile 1828 a Maggio 1829," 3.
[293] Richardson, *Pompeii: The Casa Dei Dioscuri and Its Painters*, 3, fn. 28.
[294] Richardson, *Pompeii: The Casa Dei Dioscuri and Its Painters*, 3.
[295] The exterior graffiti discussed the famous fight between the Pompeians and Nucerians, and graffiti within the main doorway are associated with the theater. Richardson, *Pompeii: The Casa dei Dioscuri and Its Painters*, 88, 93. For more on the graffiti associated with the house, see Alison Cooley and M. G. L Cooley, *Pompeii: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 2004), 63 [CIL IV 1293]; Mario Pagano and Raffaele Prisciandaro, *Studio sulle provenienze degli oggetti rinvenuti negli scavi borbonici del regno di Napoli* (Naples: Nicola Longobardi, 2006), 139; Fiorelli, *PAH* Vol. II, 214-6; Bechi, "Relazione degli Scavi di Pompei da Aprile 1828 a Maggio 1829," 26.
[296] Bragantini, "VI 9, 6-7 Casa dei Dioscuri," 861.
[297] A now-lost tufa lintel, decorated with stucco dentils, once spanned the tall entrance to the home. Richardson, *Pompeii: The Casa dei Dioscuri and Its Painters*, 4; Bechi, "Relazione degli Scavi di Pompei da Aprile 1828 a Maggio 1829," 3.
[298] Thomas Fröhlich, *Lararien und Fassadenbilder in den Vesuvstädten: Untersuchungen zur 'volkstümlichen' Pompejanischen Malerei*. Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archaeologischen Instituts, Roemische Abteilung. Ergänzungsheft, Bullettino dell'istituto archeologico Germanico, sezione Romana. Supplemento, 32. (Mainz: P. Von Zabern, 1991), F39, 321, Abb.9; Gugliemo Bechi, "Mercurio e Fortuna. Antico dipinto di Pompei," in *Real museo borbonico* Vol. V,1-3. Eds. Museo nazionale di Napoli and Antonio Niccolini (Napoli: Stamperia reale, 1830), 2-3.

deities and entryways, even before crossing the threshold.[299] When approaching the house from the wide sidewalk, the painted walls of the *fauces* are today immediately visible, aided by the slope of the floor.[300] As one approaches the entryway and steps over the low marble threshold,[301] two figural images come into view, one on each of the two *fauces* walls. On the left is a painting of one of the Dioscuri twins, Castor and Pollux, with his horse. Today, a reproduction stands in for the original, which now resides in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli [Fig. II.5 A, B].[302] A similar painting of the other Dioscuri brother decorates the right wall of the *fauces*, with another reproduction in embedded within the wall today [Fig. II.6 A, B].[303] Alternating yellow panels also populate the central zones of the passageway walls,[304] and the dado zone was formerly embellished with depictions of plants, birds, and insects on a dark red background.

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[299] The pavement of the *fauces* is composed of a cement matrix with pieces of terracotta and various types of colored stone and is slightly sloped upward toward the interior. The home was connected to an aqueduct, and water from the aqueduct and the home's cistern were used to wash down the *fauces*, which contains a cistern mouth. Richardson, *Pompeii: The Casa dei Dioscuri and Its Painters*, 10-11. In this case the area under discussion is called the *fauces* as an enclosed entry hallway into the home. See J. B. Greenough, "The *Fauces* of the Roman House," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 1 (1890): 1-12. According to Richardson, the *fauces* measures 2.06 x 3.06 m. Richardson, *Pompeii: The Casa dei Dioscuri and Its Painters*, 5.

[300] This view is likely to have been partially obstructed by the house doors in antiquity. Recent restoration projects that focus on the Casa dei Dioscuri emphasize the importance of preserving the original experience of the house, as well as using correct materials for restoration Pirozzi, "La Casa dei Dioscuri in Pompei scavi," 145; Stefania Argenti and Fabio Galeandro, "GPP 12 restauro architettonico e strutturale della Casa dei Dioscuri (VI 9, 6-7)," *Rivista di studi pompeiani* 26-27 (2015): 124-25. Argenti and Galeandro note that restoration work undertaken at the Casa dei Dioscuri allowed excavators to go beyond the 79 CE layers, where they discovered older layers of flooring along with two Punic *amphorae*. They also discovered evidence that the garden may have bene used for production activities. Argenti and Galeandro, "GPP 12 Restauro architettonico e strutturale della Casa dei Dioscuri (VI 9, 6-7)," 124-5.

[301] Bragantini, "VI 9, 6-7 Casa dei Dioscuri," 868. Richardson, however, identifies the threshold as travertine. Richardson, *Pompeii: The Casa dei Dioscuri and Its Painters*, 4.

[302] Museo Archeologico Nazionali di Napoli, Inv. 9455. Françoise Gury, "Castores," *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* Vol. 8 (Zürich: Artemis, 1997), 615. Romizzi notes that such mythological panels are uncommon in atria or entryways but do appear in structures that were redecorated after the earthquake. Romizzi, "La Casa dei Dioscuri di Pompei (VI.9.6.7): una nuova lettura," 87, 92. Karl Schefold and Deutsches Archäologisches Institut. *Die Wände Pompejis: Topographisches Verzeichnis der Bildmotive*. (Berlin: DeGruyter, 1957), 115-6; Richardson, *Pompeii: The Casa dei Dioscuri and Its Painters*, 5-7; Bragantini, "VI 9, 6-7 Casa dei Dioscuri," 208.

[303] Museo Archeologico Nazionali di Napoli, Inv. 9452. Both Dioscuri paintings were discovered by Bonucci on June 18, 1828. Karl Schefold, *Die Wände Pompejis: Topographisches Verzeichnis der Bildmotive*. (Berlin: DeGruyter, 1957), 115-6; Richardson, *Pompeii: The Casa dei Dioscuri and Its Painters*, 5-7.

[304] Eroti may formerly have flanked the Dioscuri in the yellow panels. Richardson, *Pompeii: The Casa dei Dioscuri and Its Painters*, 6; Bechi, "Relazione degli scavi di Pompei da Aprile 1828 a Maggio 1829," 5. See also Breton, *Pompeia décrite et dessinée*, 282.

Finally, representations of faux stone blocks in blue, red, and yellow appeared in the upper, or secondary, zone.[305]

A small room with modest decoration is located immediately to the right of the entrance passageway,[306] which likely used to house the family's *ostiarius*.[307] A small *laconium* (dry sweat room) lies to the south, complete with a *hypocaust*.[308] Beyond the *fauces*, an impressive colonnaded *impluvium* with Corinthian capitals occupies the middle of the atrium.[309] *Cubicula* and other rooms of varying size surround the atrium, some of which were formerly decorated with vivid fresco. The walls of the atrium itself were also originally adorned with Fourth Style mythological paintings [Fig.II.7]. In addition to these mythological figures in the primary zone, the dado zone of the atrium walls was painted with bright red panels and yellow stripes.

A painting of Jupiter enthroned formerly decorated the southwest wall of the atrium [Fig. II.8],[310] while the wall to the south was decorated with side-by-side images of a Victory[311] and Bacchus [Fig. II.9].[312] A bay featuring a passageway to a large peristyle is located on the south side of the atrium, which was formerly embellished with an image of Saturn on the east side [Fig. II.10].[313] Frescoes of Apollo [Fig. II.11][314] and Ceres [Fig. II.12] flank the doorway to the

[305] At the end of the *fauces*, faux fluted columns flank the walkway, red on the lowermost third of the column, and white above. The former capitals are lost, but Richardson believes they would have been Fourth Style Corinthian. Richardson, *Pompeii: The Casa dei Dioscuri and Its Painters*, 6.
[306] This room originally contained a staircase and an opening to stoke the fire for the room next door. Richardson, *Pompeii: The Casa dei Dioscuri and Its Painters*, 7.
[307] Richardson, *Pompeii: The Casa dei Dioscuri and Its Painters*,7; Bechi, "Relazione degli scavi di Pompei da Aprile 1828 a Maggio 1829," 4-5.
[308] Richardson, *Pompeii: The Casa dei Dioscuri and Its Painters*, 62-62.
[309] The Corinthian atrium in the Casa dei Dioscuri is one of just four examples of true Corinthian atria in Pompeii. Richardson, *Pompeii: The Casa Dei Dioscuri and Its Painters*, 8. A white marble fountain originally stood within the *impluvium*. Richardson, *Pompeii: The Casa dei Dioscuri and Its Painters*, 9; Bechi, "Relazione degli Scavi di Pompei da Aprile 1828 a Maggio 1829," 6.
[310] Museo Archeologico Nazionali di Napoli, Inv. 9551.
[311] Gell, Gandy, and Heath, *Pompeiana: The Topography, Edifices, and Ornaments of Pompeii* II, 35.
[312] Museo Archeologico Nazionali di Napoli, Inv. 9268.
[313] Museo Archeologico Nazionali di Napoli, Inv. 8873.
[314] British Museum, London, Inv. 1857, 0415.1.

peristyle,[315] while the image of a hermaphrodite exposed by a satyr is situated above the doorway [Fig. II.13].[316] Today, all paintings except that of Apollo[317] are housed in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli.[318]

A richly decorated *tablinum* lies directly across from the atrium,[319] which was formerly embellished with Fourth Style paintings of various mythological stories.[320] Just north of the *tablinum* is the corridor to a pseudoperistyle and suite of rooms in the eastern wing of the house, including a kitchen, *triclinium*, service rooms, and an exedra. Additional Fourth Styles paintings were discovered within the *cubicula* and the other small rooms that surround the atrium.[321]

Further mythological frescoes decorated the large peristyle south of the atrium, which include Fourth Style paintings of still lives, Venus Pompeiana, the Niobids, Medea, and Perseus

[315] Museo Archeologico Nazionali di Napoli, Inv. 9454. In addition to these images, a now-lost painting of Mercury is thought to have appeared near the *ala.* Richardson, *Pompeii: The Casa dei Dioscuri and Its Painters*, 14.
[316] Museo Archeologico Nazionali di Napoli, Inv. 27700. Five lost mythological panels would have accompanied the scene of the hermaphrodite and satyr, such as an image of Perseus fighting the suitors of Andromeda to the left of the central hermaphrodite panel, and a depiction of the rape of Europa to the right, as well as landscape scenes. Bechi, "Relazione degli Scavi di Pompei da Aprile 1828 a Maggio 1829," 9; Richardson, *Pompeii: The Casa dei Dioscuri and Its Painters*, 15. Bragantini, "VI 9, 6-7 Casa dei Dioscuri," 886; Fiorelli, *PAH* Vol. II, 214.
[317] A painting of a female figure with a palm leaf, sometimes called an athlete, from the peristyle of the Casa dei Dioscuri, is also housed in the British Museum, Inv. 1857,0415.2. Richardson, *Pompeii: The Casa dei Dioscuri and Its Painters*, pl. LVIII.
[318] These paintings were removed from the house in the 19th century. Pirozzi, "La Casa dei Dioscuri in Pompei scavi," 144.
[319] Two ornamented wooden chests used to hold valuables were discovered in the atrium in 1828. Bechi, "Relazione degli scavi di Pompei da Aprile 1828 a Maggio 1829," 2, 7. Fiorelli, *PAH* Vol. II, 214-15. They disintegrated almost immediately upon being uncovered, but reports note that the chests contained sculpture and other objects. Richardson, *Pompeii: The Casa dei Dioscuri and Its Painters*, 17; Fiorelli, *PAH* Vol. II, 214-15; Bragantini, "VI 9, 6-7 Casa dei Dioscuri," 883. The house apparently originally also contained marble revetment, rare in Pompeii, which was robbed out well before the house was excavated in 1828. Bergmann, "A Tale of Two Sites: Ludwig I's Pompejanum and the House of the Dioscuri in Pompeii," 198; Carolis and Corsale, "La Casa dei Dioscuri (VI, 9, 6.7) in Pompei. La tecnica di esecuzione delle decorazioni parietali," 492.
[320] Bergmann notes that a former mirror in the *tablinum* reflected the entrance. Bergmann, "A Tale of Two Sites: Ludwig I's Pompejanum and the House of the Dioscuri in Pompeii," 194. Among these paintings were mythological panels, including an image of Achilles preparing to fight Agamemnon (Museo Archeologico Nazionali di Napoli, Inv. 9104); Achilles on Skyros (Museo Archeologico Nazionali di Napoli, Inv. 9110); an enigmatic image of a woman and traveler (Museo Archeologico Nazionali di Napoli, Inv. 9106); and floating figures (Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Inv. 9134; 9135).
[321] For instance, a painting of Endymion and Selene in the winter *triclinium* (Museo Archeologico Nazionali di Napoli, Inv. 9240). This image survives in a painting by Giuseppe Marsigli, created on July 21, 1828, shortly after its discovery (Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Inv. ADS 337).

with Andromeda, among others [Fig.II.14].[322] Notably, a third depiction of a Dioscuros may decorate the south wall of the peristyle. Traces of a painting of a young man with a horse, spear, and cloak are still discernable on this wall today, although the fresco has suffered considerable weathering.[323] Other, smaller, rooms throughout the house were decorated in more muted patterns. The frescoes of one room, for example, are designated as "povera" in one description of the house.[324] Such subdued designs no doubt served to further aggrandize the lavish decorations within the more public areas of the house.[325]

While the Casa dei Dioscuri is no doubt large, richly embellished, and well-appointed, the features most significant for this study are the paintings that appear in the *fauces,* on the façade of the home, and around the doorway between the atrium and large peristyle. These frescoes of deities protect the areas in which they appear from the various ambiguities associated with spaces of passage.

Dioscuri at the Doorway: Divine Images and Transitional Space in the Casa dei Dioscuri

Images of deities appear throughout the Casa dei Dioscuri, ranging from depictions of Jupiter to portrayals of Venus Pompeiana. Six of these paintings once ornamented spaces associated with doorways within the house—those from the *fauces,* on the façade of the house, and surrounding the doorway between the atrium and large peristyle. These images indicate an

[322] Museo Archeologico Nazionali di Napoli, Inv. 9304; 9302; 8977; 8998. Other images included paintings of Bacchus and a satyr and a priestess with a snake. Fiorelli, *PAH* Vol. II, 210. Six garden paintings would also have appeared in between the columns of the peristyle. Wilhelmina F. Jashemski, *The Gardens of Pompeii: Herculaneum and the Villas Destroyed by Vesuvius* (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Caratzas Bros, 1979), 57

[323] Depictions of the Dioscuri are rare in Pompeii. Aside from the Casa dei Dioscuri, depictions of one or both of the twins appear in the so-called Portico dei Triclini in the Pagus Maritimus of Pompeii (see Olga Elia, *Il portico dei triclini del Pagus Maritimus di Pompei* (Roma, 1961), 207-8), and on the south wall of the first floor atrium within the Sarno Baths [VIII.2.17-21].

[324] Bragantini, "VI 9, 6-7 Casa dei Dioscuri," 869; Gell, *Pompeiana*, Vol. 2, 147, Pl. 68.

[325] Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 28.

awareness of the dangers associated with transitional space and represent one method of navigating and protecting ambiguous space by using divine images that invite viewer engagement. In particular, the images of Mercury and Fortuna on the house's façade and the twinned paintings of the Dioscuri within its *fauces* are demonstrative of these concerns.

On the Façade: Fortuna and Mercury

The painting of Mercury and Fortuna, recorded in early excavation reports,[326] no longer appears on the façade of the home; indeed, it had already vanished by Laurence Richardson Jr.'s 1955 publication on the house. Fortunately, the overall character of the image was preserved in a drawing published by Fausto and Felice Niccolini in *Le case ed i monumenti di Pompei disegnati e descritti* [Fig.II.3].[327] This drawing features Fortuna on the left, wearing a wreathed crown and draped garments. She carries a cornucopia in her left hand and her right hand rests on a rudder atop a globe. Fortuna is depicted looking to her left, toward Mercury, who occupies the right half of the scene. Mercury appears mid-flight and floating above the ground. He wears a short tunic and cloak, with a winged *petasos* perched on his head. Mercury holds a *caduceus* in his left hand and a full purse in the right. Finally, a small structure arises out of a simple, hilly landscape.

An analogous painting of Mercury and Fortuna, now lost, once decorated the façade of the nearby Casa degli Scienziati [VI.14.43].[328] Frescoes of Mercury and Fortuna, which appear strikingly similar to that on the façade of the Casa dei Dioscuri, also adorned the exterior

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[326] Bechi, "Relazione degli scavi di Pompei da Aprile 1828 a Maggio 1829," 4. Wolfgang Helbig, *Wandegemalde dervom Vesuv Verschutteten Stadte Campaniens* (Leipiz: 1868), 8, no.18. Bechi reports a second painting of Mercury with a rooster also once appeared within the atrium, Bechi, "Relazione degli scavi di Pompei da Aprile 1828 a Maggio 1829," 8.

[327] Fausto Niccolini and Felice Niccolini, *CMPDD* Vol.1, Tav. II.

[328] George K. Boyce, "Corpus of the Lararia of Pompeii," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 14 (1937): 111. Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, "Bullettino dell'Instituto di corrispondenza archeologica: Bulletin de l'Institut de correspondance archéologique," (Roma, 1841), 113; Fröhlich, *Lararien und Fassadenbilder in den Vesuvstädten: Untersuchungen zur 'volkstümlichen' Pompejanischen Malerei*, 324, F43; Helbig, *Wandegemalde dervom Vesuv Verschutteten Stadte Campaniens,* 8, no. 19.

pilasters of structure VI.7.9, located across the Via del Mercurio from the Casa dei Dioscuri [Fig.II.15 A,B].[329] In each case it is clear that the deities act as guardians of the buildings they embellish. Significantly, all houses that feature paintings of Mercury and/or Fortuna on their facades are located on, or one structure away from, the corner of an *insula* [Fig.II.16], a fact that supports the defensive function of the images.

Mercury was linked to boundaries and travelers in Roman belief, and his presence in painted representations at or very near crossroads accords with his known associations. The deity could fulfill his role as a guardian and safely guide travelers across intersections and over thresholds from his post on corners and building facades. Mercury's presence could also be made material through a pedestrian's perception of the image of the deity, rendering the protection he offered more efficacious through a viewer's activation of Mercury's effigy. Indeed, Barbara Kellum notes that the Roman street was an important venue for everyday public spectacle, in which spectators took an active role as participants.[330] It is very likely viewers interacted with the images of Mercury they encountered on the street in a similar manner.

While Mercury is, on the whole, a deity associated with positive characteristics, his many roles in Roman belief, religion, and mythology render him a vigorous guardian of the threshold. In the Greek world he was considered a protector of the boundary between interior and

[329] Recorded in two watercolor paintings by Giuseppe Marsigli on November 14, 1827. Now in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Inv. ADS 176; ADS 177. These two paintings appeared on the exterior of the pilasters and were accompanied by paintings of Minerva on the interior of the entrance pilaster, the famous so-called Parade of the Carpenters (Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Inv. 8991) and one of Daedalus and Pasiphae (Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Inv. ADS 578). Boyce, "Corpus of the Lararia of Pompeii," 110, no. 10; Helbig, *Wandegemalde dervom Vesuv Verschutteten Stadte Campaniens,* 9, 17. Mercury also appears on the facades of I.3.24; I.9.1; V.4.13; VI.14.37, all of which Boyce designates as houses. Boyce, "Corpus of the Lararia of Pompeii," 110-111.

[330] Kellum, "The Spectacle of the Street," 283, 292.

exterior,[331] and likely functioned in much a similar role in Roman cities.[332] As the keeper of boundaries[333] and travelers, fortune and thieves, Mercury was associated with various dualities and therefore a fitting counterpart for the transitional space of the doorway.[334]

An image of Mercury that once decorated the façade of the Casa dei Casti Amanti [IX.12.6] in Pompeii [Fig.II.17] demonstrates one of the many ways in which the deity could monitor a threshold. The fresco fragment, now in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale, depicts Mercury in mid-stride, carrying his *caduceus* in one hand, and a bag of money in the other. His head is wreathed, and his are ankles winged, but most remarkable is the figure's immense and erect phallus. At once comical, due to the outrageous size and positioning of the deity's phallus, and threatening,[335] as the phallus is aimed at the viewer, this image is simultaneously propitious and menacing. Much like the painting of Mercury on the façade of the Casa dei Dioscuri, the depiction of Mercury from the Casa dei Casti Amanti is multifaceted in its location, just before the vulnerable space of the doorway, and activated through a viewer's acknowledgement of the painting. This intentional alignment of transitional space and a deity associated with the

[331] Michael H. Jameson, "Domestic Space in The Greek City State," in *Domestic Architecture and the Use of Space: An Interdisciplinary Cross-Cultural Study*. New Directions in Archaeology, 92-113. Ed. Susan Kent (Cambridge England: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 105.
[332] Even his *caduceus* was thought to function to ward off the Evil Eye. Thomas Frederick Elworthy, *The Evil Eye* (Secaucus, N.J.: University Books/Citadel Press, 1982) 15.
[333] This is especially true of early aniconic representations of Hermes, rocks stacked upon one another at crossroads or boundary markers and herms, which were associated with travel, boundaries, and intersections. For a discussion of herms within vase painting as intercessors between human and divine, see Hélène Collard, "Communicating with the Divine: Herms in Attic Vase Painting," in *Tracking Hermes, Pursuing Mercury*, 227-244. Eds. John F. Miller and Jenny Strauss Clay, First. Ed (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 227-44. Catherine Johns, *Sex or Symbol: Erotic Images of Greece and Rome*. 1st ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982), 52-4. On herms within Roman homes see Rocío Manuela Cuadra Rubio, "Herms: From Custodians of Boundaries to Custodians of Gardens," in *The Many Faces of Mimesis: Selected Essays from the 2017 Symposium on the Hellenic Heritage of Western Greece*, 313-24. Eds. L. Reid Heather and Jeremy C. DeLong (Sioux City, Iowa: Parnassos Press-Fonte Aretusa, 2018), 317-22.
[334] A recent study of Mercury and his Greek counterpart Hermes even calls the deity "enigmatic" and "ambiguous". Jenny Strauss Clay and John F. Miller. "Introduction," in *Tracking Hermes, Pursuing Mercury*, 3-10. Eds. John F. Miller and Jenny Strauss Clay, First. Ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019), 3.
[335] Johns, *Sex or Symbol: Erotic Images of Greece and Rome*, 70.

permeation of boundaries reveals an effort to protect a transitional area with the multivalent image of a divine being.

The same is true of Fortuna, who, as her name suggests, was associated with good luck. In the case of the Casa dei Dioscuri, Fortuna's association with good luck and abundance was made clear by the nearly overflowing cornucopia she held. At the same time, Fortuna could also symbolize ill or fickle fortune. The unpredictable nature of Fortuna's powers designates her, like Mercury, as a deity who could bring both bad and good. Her position besides the front door of the Casa dei Dioscuri, therefore, similarly draws on Fortuna's dual qualities, as guardian of the threshold. With both deities, then, the meaning and function of the image outside the Casa dei Dioscuri changes based on who is viewing the images. The divine pair would be a welcomed and positive sight to the inhabitants of the house and those who visited without malicious intentions, whereas to those with ill intent, Mercury and Fortuna would serve as a reminder of the consequences of harming the space.[336]

Representations of the deities also appear frequently outside domestic contexts[337] throughout Pompeii, [338] where they are portrayed with similar attributes. [339] Different from the Casa dei Dioscuri example, however, many of these images embellish the fronts of shops or taverns, rather than private residences, no doubt an effort to bring prosperity to the structures

[336] Another example of this type of image can be found at the Casa del Meleagro [VI.9.2], where a painted vignette of Mercury and Demeter decorates the south wall of the entrance passageway. Here too, Mercury appears at a key moment during one's journey into the interior of the home.
[337] MacRae, "Mercury and Materialism: Images of Mercury and the *Tabernae* of Pompeii," 197-205.
[338] Mercury similarly decorates the facades of shops, *tabernae*, offices, and workshops throughout Pompeii. These include I.6.7; II.2.3; II.4.1; VII.4.15-16; VII.4.17; VII.4.23-24; VII.6.34-35; VII.9.2-3; VII.9.13-14; VII.9.28; IX.3.14; IX.7.1; IX.7.7; IX.12.2; IX.12.6. For a full list see Boyce, "Corpus of the Lararia of Pompeii," 110-112.
[339] These include VI.2.9 and VI.14.43.

they guarded. While not a shop,[340] the Casa dei Dioscuri very likely draws on the same characteristics associated with Mercury and Fortuna to keep watch over the home.[341]

In the case of the Casa dei Dioscuri painting, the location of the deities in or around the doorway of the structure is noteworthy. Just as John Clarke argues that architecture was adapted to ritual, the locations of images could be dictated by ritual or belief.[342] The fresco of Mercury and Fortuna would have been impossible to miss when entering the building from their position near the front door. It would have been one of the last things a visitor saw before moving through the doorway, as well as a tool of protection. These rewards or consequences would have become concrete through a visitor's perceptions of, and interactions with, the painting as they approached the home. Consequently, it is Fortuna and Mercury's many dualities that make them effective guardians of the threshold, and the material perception of these dualities that sustained the safety of the passageway. Threatening and welcoming, protective and liminal, the deities parallel the transitional nature of the space, a potent and efficient tool.

In the *Fauces:* The Dioscuri

The paintings of the Dioscuri in the *fauces* of the Casa dei Dioscuri function in much a similar way as the fresco of Mercury and Fortuna on the façade of the house.[343] On the left (north) side of the *fauces*, the painting of one of the Dioscuri appears within a red panel in the

[340] Richardson has suggested that the sale of expensive bronze items may have taken place out of a back room in the house based on a large number of fine bronze vessels found in one room, Richardson, *Pompeii: The Casa dei Dioscuri and Its Painters*, 74. These objects are also mentioned by Bechi, "Relazione degli scavi di Pompei da Aprile 1828 a Maggio 1829," 11.
[341] Bragantini, "VI 9, 6-7 Casa dei Dioscuri," 866.
[342] John R. Clarke, *The Houses of Roman Italy, 100 B.c.-A.d. 250: Ritual, Space, and Decoration* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1991), 1.
[343] It is worth noting that although no temple to the Dioscuri has been discovered in Pompeii, a temple to the brothers did exist in nearby Naples, which was restored by two of Tiberius's freedmen. Birte Poulsen, "The Dioscuri and Ruler Ideology," *Symbolae Osloenses* LXVI (1991): 133. Two pendant images of the Dioscuri are also believed to have decorated the temple in Naples. Romizzi, "La Casa dei Dioscuri di Pompei (VI.9.6.7): una nuova lettura," 89.

primary zone of the wall [Fig.II.5A]. He wears a *chlamys* but is nude from the shoulders down. The figure holds a spear in his left hand and wears a conical hat,[344] or *pileus,* decorated with a star, likely a reference to his divine parentage.[345] He is accompanied by his horse, the bridle for which he grasps in his right hand. Directly across from this figure is an image of his twin, who is depicted in an analogous manner [Fig.II.6A]. This twin also wears a *chlamys* and *pileus* while holding a spear in his left hand. The left side of this fresco is damaged, but it is still possible to discern the bridle and head of the figure's horse. These visual details, along with their mythological characteristics, style the brothers as ideal guardians of the threshold. Furthermore, it is noteworthy that in the case of the Casa dei Dioscuri, the images of the Dioscuri twins in the *fauces* are unprecedented in the extant archaeological record, and appear to have been commissioned especially for the entryway of the home. This, in turn, reflects an overarching concern at the Casa dei Dioscuri with the visual protection of the home.

The Dioscuri enjoyed a long and celebrated history within Greek and Roman mythological traditions.[346] According to mythological accounts, the twins Castor and Pollux were born to Leda, queen of Sparta and wife of Tyndareus. In some versions, Zeus is the father of the twins, famously raping Leda in the form of a swan,[347] while others suggest that Zeus was the father of only one twin, and Tyndareus the father of the other.[348] Still others record

[344] Some believe the conical shape of the hat refers to the twins' birth from eggs. Henry J. Walker, *The Twin Horse Gods: The Dioskouroi in Mythologies of the Ancient World*. Library of Classical Studies, 11 (London: I. B. Tauris, 2015), 153. Antione Hermary, "Dioskouri," *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* Vol. 8 (Zürich: Artemis, 1997), 589; Romizzi, "La Casa dei Dioscuri di Pompei (VI.9.6.7): una nuova lettura," 87.
[345] Bragantini, "VI 9, 6-7 Casa dei Dioscuri," 869. Stars have long been associated with the Dioscuri, appearing in visual representations as early as the fifth century BCE. Poulsen, "The Dioscuri and Ruler Ideology," 131.
[346] For example, Paus. 3.26.3; 4;16;5; Hom. *Od.* 11.298-304; Pind. *P.* 11.61; Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.2.2; Pind. *Nem.* 10.55-90; Ov. *Met.* 8.298-317; Ov. *Fast.* 5.699-720; Liv. 2.20; Cic. *Nat*. 2.2.6; Hyg. *Fab.* 80; *Hymn. Hom.* 33; Sen. *Nat*. 1.1.13. See also Hermary, "Dioskouri," 567-8;589-93 and Gury, "Castores," 608-11;628-35.
[347] Hyg. *Fab*. 14, 77, and 155; *Hymn. Hom.* 17 and 33; Alc. Frag. 34.
[348] In this version, Leda conceives children with both Zeus and Tyndareus on the same night. Pind. *Nem*. 10.56 and 79; Hyg. *Fab*. 77 and 80; Apollod. *Bibl*. 3.10.5-7.

Tyndareus as the sole father of the Dioscuri.[349] Similarly unclear is the status of the twins' mortality. In most cases Pollux is immortal, while his brother, Castor, is mortal.[350] However, in other versions of the story the brothers are described as both mortal[351] or both immortal.[352]

After their births, as princes of Sparta, the Dioscuri take part in the expedition of the Argonauts, participate in the Caledonian Boar Hunt, rescue their sister Helen after she is kidnapped by Theseus, and themselves kidnap the Leucippides, Phoebe and Hilaeira, whom they marry.[353] In another story, the Dioscuri find themselves in an armed conflict with their cousins Lynceus and Idas,[354] resulting in the deaths of Idas, Lynceus, and Castor.[355] A distraught Pollux asks Zeus to allow him to join Castor in death. Zeus agrees to allow Pollux to share his immortality with Castor, under the condition that they alternate between Mt. Olympus and the underworld.[356] As a result, the Dioscuri habitually cross and re-cross the boundary between the realms of the living and the dead as demigods in Roman and Greek belief.[357]

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[349] Hom. *Od*. 11.298-304. The story is further complicated by stories concerning the sisters of the Dioscuri, Helen and Clytemnestra, who may or may not have been born at the same time as Castor and Pollux. Hom *Hymn*. 13.5; Hyg. *Fab.* 155; Pin. *Nem*, 10.150. Lowell Edmunds, *Stealing Helen: The Myth of the Abducted Wife in Comparative Perspective*. Book Collections on Project Muse (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016), 73.
[350] Pind. *Nem*. 10.; Hyg. *Fab*. 80.
[351] In the *Iliad*, Homer seems to imply that the twins are both mortal, and already dead at the time of the Trojan War. Hom. *Il.* 3.236-8. Hyginus notes that they are "mortals who were made immortal." Hyg. *Fab.* 224.
[352] *Hymn. Hom.* 33. When their mortality is divided, Pollux is in every case the immortal twin.
[353] Apollod. *Bibl.* 1.8.2, 3.10.5-7, and 3.13.4; Pind. *Pyth*. 4.169-72; Hyg. *Fab.* 80; Diod. Sic. *Bib. Hist.* 4.48.6.
[354] Pind. *Nem.* 10. As Timothy Ganz notes, the timeline of this conflict is not consistent in all accounts. Timothy Gantz, *Early Greek Myth: A Guide to Literary and Artistic Sources* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993), 325.
[355] Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.136-7.
[356] Pind. *Nem*. 10.55-9; Hyg. *Fab*. 251; Ov. *Fast.* 5. 697; Hom. *Od.* 11.301-4
[357] The Dioscuri were also considered patrons of sailors and those travelling by sea (Diod. Sic. *Bib. Hist.* 4.43.1, Ps. Hyg. *Poet. astr*. 2.22; Prop. 2.26A, Sen. *HF*. 552, Paus. 2.1.9); aligned with St. Elmo's fire (*Hymn. Hom.* 33; Alc. Frag. 34) and the constellation Gemini (Ov. *Met*. 8.370, Ov., *Fast*. 5.697; Ps. Hyg. *Poet. astr*. 2.22); averters of evil (Edward Champlin, "Tiberius and the Heavenly Twins," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 101 (2011): 74); and protectors of guests (Callim. *Lyric Frag*. 227). The Dioscuri were also at times represented as a Spartan symbol consisting of a horizontal bar over two vertical beams, known as dókana. Walker, *The Twin Horse Gods: The Dioskouroi in Mythologies of the Ancient World*, 138. Maria Jose Strazzulla even suggests the symbol might appear in Etruscan tombs. Maria Jose Strazzulla, "Attestazioni figurative dei Dioscuri nel mondo etrusco," in *Castores: L'immagine dei Dioscuri a Roma*, 39-52. Eds. Leila Nista and Gabriella Angeli Bufalini Petrocchi. (Roma: De Luca, 1994), 40. The Dioscuri could also be associated with death and were frequently depicted on sarcophagi. Marjorie Mackintosh, *The Divine Rider in the Art of the Western Roman Empire* (Oxford: Tempus Reparatum, 1995), 38, 42,

Worship of the twins originated in Sparta, spread to the rest of Greece, then to Sicily, and finally to mainland Italy.[358] It reached Rome by the early fifth century BCE,[359] likely by way of Lavinium.[360] In Rome, the Dioscuri were said to have appeared at the Battle of Lake Regillus to announce Roman victory,[361] and a temple was built in their honor in the *Forum Romanum*

43; Eugénie Strong, *Apotheosis and after Life: Three Lectures on Certain Phases of Art and Religion in the Roman Empire* (Constable & co., 1915), 201; Franz Cumont, *Recherches sur le symbolisme funéraire des Romains* (New York: Arno Press, 1975), 65-6, 76; Annwies van den Hoek, "Divine Twins or Saintly Twins: The Dioscuri in an Early Christian Context," in *Gods, Objects, and Ritual Practice*. Studies in Ancient Mediterranean Religions, Number 1, 17-51. Ed. Sandra Blakely (Atlanta, GA: Lockwood Press, 2017), 31-2.

[358] According to Pausanias, the twins received divine honors in Sparta (Lacedaemia) 40 years after their fight with Lynceus and Idas, Paus. 3.13.1The cult thus appears to have been of great antiquity in Greece, also confirmed by Pausanias. Paus.1.18.1. Champlin, "Tiberius and the Heavenly Twins," 74.

[359] It is likely worship of the Dioscuri reached Rome earlier. A version of the Dioscuri seem also to have existed among Rome's predecessors in Etruria, where they were called Kastur and Pultuce or *tinas cliniiaras*, and appear frequently on bronze mirrors. Nancy Thomson De Grummond, *Etruscan Myth, Sacred History, and Legend* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2006), 189; Nancy Thomson De Grummond, "The Etruscan Mirror," *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 4, no. 2/3 (1985): 32; Richard Daniel De Puma, "Tinias Cliniar," *Lexicon Iconographicum Mythologiae Classicae* Vol. 8 (Zürich: Artemis, 1997), 598.

[360] A mid-late sixth century BCE bronze tablet with a dedication to "Castor and Pollox, the kouroi," in archaic Latin was discovered in Lavinium in 1959. Now in the Museo Nazionale Romano alle Terme di Diocleziano, Rome, with inscription CIL I (2) 2833, Inv. 135931. Stefan Weinstock, "Two Archaic Inscriptions from Latium," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 50 (1960): 112-4; Champlin, "Tiberius and the Heavenly Twins," 74; van den Hoek, "Divine Twins or Saintly Twins: The Dioscuri in an Early Christian Context," 18; Stefano Rebeggiani, "Reading the Republican Forum: Virgil's Aeneid, the Dioscuri, and the Battle of Lake Regillus," *Classical Philology* 108, no. 1 (2013): 53-69; Walker, *The Twin Horse Gods: The Dioskouroi in Mythologies of the Ancient World*, 181, 187. However, while most scholars agree that worship of the Dioscuri was transmitted to Rome through Lavinium (i.e. Weinstock, "Two Archaic Inscriptions from Latium,"112; Ferdinando Castagnoli, "L'introduzione del culto dei Dioscuri nel Lazio" *Studi Romani* 31, no. 1 (1983): 4; Maria Bertinetti, "Testimonianze del culto dei Dioscuri in area Laziale," in *Castores: L'immagine dei Dioscuri a Roma*, 59-62. Eds. Leila Nista and Gabriella Angeli Bufalini Petrocchi. Roma: De Luca, 1994, 59-61; Eugenio La Rocca, "Memore di Castore: principi come Dioscuri," in *Castores: L'immagine dei Dioscuri a Roma*, 73-90. Eds. Leila Nista and Gabriella Angeli Bufalini Petrocchi. Roma: De Luca, 1994, 77), others suggest it traveled north from Campania (Maria Rita Sanzi di Mino, "Il culto dei gemelli in ambito medio-Italico," in *Castores: L'immagine dei Dioscuri a Roma*, 53-8. Eds. Leila Nista and Gabriella Angeli Bufalini Petrocchi. (Roma: De Luca, 1994), 57), or even Etruria.

[361] The battle took place either in 499 or 496 BCE. Champlin, "Tiberius and the Heavenly Twins," 74. The Dioscuri are also said to have appeared in the Roman Forum after the battle as two young men in battle gear, who watered their horses at the pool of Juturna. Castagnoli, "L'introduzione del culto dei Dioscuri nel Lazio" 4; Champlin, "Tiberius and the Heavenly Twins," 74. See also Geoffrey S. Sumi, "Monuments and Memory: The *Aedes Castoris* in the Formation of Augustan Ideology," *The Classical Quarterly*, New Series, 59, no. 1 (2009): 174.

[Fig.II.18].[362] Over time, the Dioscuri became connected to announcing battle victories in Italy,[363] as well as patrons of the Roman equestrian order.[364]

Back in Pompeii, the paintings of Castor and Pollux in the Casa dei Dioscuri draw on these many mythologies, characteristics, and even imperial associations to keep watch over the space of the entryway. While some have suggested that the Dioscuri were chosen due to the equestrian status of the *dominus*,[365] considering the brothers' qualities and associated mythologies, this does not appear to have been the predominant motivation for their selection. Instead, I contend, it was their associations with transition that inspired their selection as guardians of the *fauces*. This appears to be true even in Imperial Rome, where the Temple of

[362] Vowed by Aulus Postumius Albus Regillensis after the Battle of Lake Regillus, and was dedicated by his son on January 27, 484 BCE. Inge Nielsen, "Castor, Aedes, Templum," in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* Vol.I, 242-5. Ed. Eva Margareta Steinby (Roma: Edizioni Quasar, 1993), 424-5. Inge Nielsen, "Il tempio del Foro Romano: l'età repubblicana," in *Castores: L'immagine dei Dioscuri a Roma,* 107-112. Eds. Leila Nista and Gabriella Angeli Bufalini Petrocchi. (Roma: De Luca, 1994). This temple was reconstructed by Lucius Caecilius Metellus Dalmaticus in 117 BCE, restored by Gaius Verres in 73 BCE, and after it was destroyed in a fire in 14 BCE, rebuilt and rededicated by the future emperor Tiberius on January 27, 6 CE in honor of himself and his deceased brother Drusus. For a discussion of the political implications of the Tiberian Temple to Pollux and Castor, especially Tiberius's alignment of himself with the immortal Pollux, see Kenneth Scott, "The Dioscuri and the Imperial Cult," *Classical Philology* 25, no. 4 (1930): 379-80; George McCracken, "Tiberius and the Cult of the Dioscuri at Tusculum," *The Classical Journal* 35, no. 8 (1940): 486-88; Champlin, "Tiberius and the Heavenly Twins," 73-99.

[363] The Dioscuri are also said to have appeared in the Forum to announce the victories of the Battles of Pydna, Vercellae, and Pharsalus. Champlin, "Tiberius and the Heavenly Twins," 75, Poulsen, "The Dioscuri and Ruler Ideology," 140-2. Walker, *The Twin Horse Gods: The Dioskouroi in Mythologies of the Ancient World*, 139-40.

[364] Champlin, "Tiberius and the Heavenly Twins," 75; Walker, *The Twin Horse Gods: The Dioskouroi in Mythologies of the Ancient World*, 188.

[365] Romizzi, disagrees with the idea that the Dioscuri serve a protective function, and instead suggest they relate to the homeowner's sociopolitical rank as an *eques*. Romizzi, "La Casa dei Dioscuri di Pompei (VI.9.6.7): una nuova lettura," 90. Argenti and Galeandro agree, calling the Dioscuri an explicit reference to the equestrian rank of the *dominus*. Argenti and Galeandro, "GPP 12 restauro architettonico e strutturale della Casa dei Dioscuri (VI 9, 6-7),"125. However, as the owner of the home is yet unknown (although Richardson does suggest it was possibly a member of the *gens* Nigidius, Richardson, *Pompeii: The Casa dei Dioscuri and Its Painters*, 87, and Carolis and Corsale suggest it was Cn Alleius Nigidius Maius, Carolis and Corsale, "La Casa dei Dioscuri (VI, 9, 6.7) in Pompei. La tecnica di esecuzione delle decorazioni parietali," 480), it is impossible to confirm whether or not they was a member of the equestrian order. The owner's equestrian status has been proposed based on the wealth of the home, but there is of yet, no definitive proof. Therefore, while I do not rule this out as a possibility, I do not believe it is enough of a basis upon which to determine the motive of decorative choices. That said, it is also possible the two meanings function in tandem with one another.

Castor and Pollux was described as the vestibule of the emperor Gaius Caligula's house, with the twins as his guardians.[366]

This theory finds support among other scholars as well. Shortly after the discovery of the frescoes, Giuseppe Fiorelli proposed the images of the Dioscuri was defensive, and may even have been meant to celebrate the hospitality and generosity of the *dominus*.[367] It appears Fiorelli was correct in his assessment of the Casa dei Dioscuri paintings of Castor and Pollux as guardians of the *fauces.* Jennifer Trimble agrees, observing that the presence of the Dioscuri in the home is a protective measure,[368] and their position near the front door represents a clear effort to safeguard the home.

The Dioscuri dominate the entryway from their posts on the *fauces* walls, and are impossible to miss from the threshold [Fig.II.19].[369] The two brothers face one another, effectively flanking a visitor entering the home. Paired with the Dioscuri's role as patrons of travelers and sailors, the decision to populate the entryway of the home with images of the Dioscuri was a sensible choice on the part of the homeowners for two reasons. First, the many dual qualities of Castor and Pollux make them an appropriate pair to occupy a space of transition.[370] The twins' close familiarity with transition, and the ambiguity that accompanies it, could allow Castor and Pollux to remain within the intermediary space of the *fauces* in perpetuity

[366] Suet. *Cal*. 22.2.
[367] Fiorelli, *PAH* Vol. II, 217.
[368] Jennifer F. Trimble, "Greek Myth, Gender, and Social Structure in a Roman House: Two Paintings of Achilles at Pompeii," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome.* Supplementary Volumes 1 (2002): 228.
[369] Jaś Elsner notes that images often necessitated particular modes of viewing, as I believe is the case with the Casa dei Dioscuri. Jaś Elsner, "Viewing Ariadne: From Ekphrasis to Wall Painting in the Roman World," *Classical Philology* 102, 1 (2007): 28.
[370] Platt, "Double Vision: Epiphanies of the Dioscuri in Classical Antiquity," 230. The dualities of Castor and Pollux also mirrors the double nature of truth versus deceit. Platt, "Double Vision: Epiphanies of the Dioscuri in Classical Antiquity," 241.

at the Casa dei Dioscuri, and their identification as demigods renders the pair liminal in not only their actions and movements, but also their very status.[371]

Second, the inclusion of the Dioscuri within the decoration of the *fauces* is a motif that could be used to address an ever-changing flow of visitors and possible threats. In selecting the divine twins as watchers of the threshold, the owners of the Casa dei Dioscuri endeavored to address the ambiguity of liminal space with the images of deities who were broadly protective and existed in the spaces between boundaries.

The twinned nature of Castor and Pollux also plays an important role in their imagery and identities. As the story of Castor's death demonstrates, the two cannot be separated, and they are almost always depicted as a pair. In fact, Trimble suggests the idea of dualities plays an important role in the decorative program of the house as a whole, especially in the entryway and *tablinum*.[372] The twinned images of Achilles in *tablinum* and paired depictions of the Dioscuri in the *fauces* provide visitors with visual cues for the appropriate path of movement within the house.[373] By moving from one set of twinned images in the *fauces*, to a second in the *tablinum*, Trimble proposes, visitors could navigate the interior of the home.[374] As a result, the Dioscuri served as both visual and spiritual guides.

Further details of the pendant paintings[375] reinforce the dual qualities of the Dioscuri within the space of the entryway. It is impossible to determine which twin is Castor and which is

[371] Henry Walker, for instance, calls the divinity of the Dioscuri "ambiguous." Walker, *The Twin Horse Gods: The Dioskouroi in Mythologies of the Ancient World*, 12.
[372] Trimble, "Greek Myth, Gender, and Social Structure in a Roman House: Two Paintings of Achilles at Pompeii," 228.
[373] Trimble, "Greek Myth, Gender, and Social Structure in a Roman House: Two Paintings of Achilles at Pompeii," 230.
[374] Trimble, "Greek Myth, Gender, and Social Structure in a Roman House: Two Paintings of Achilles at Pompeii," 244.
[375] For a discussion on Roman pendant images, see Elizabeth Bartman, "Decor et Duplicatio: Pendants in Roman Sculptural Display," *American Journal of Archaeology* 92, no. 2 (1988): 211-25.

Pollux. As a result, the pair are at once both Castor *and* Pollux, and either Castor *or* Pollux. This uncertainty complements the spatial ambiguity of the *fauces* and reinforces the paired nature of the Dioscuri. Drawing on these qualities, the *fauces* paintings in the Casa dei Dioscuri work to help visitors navigate the intermediary space of the passageway.

Experiencing and Activating the Dioscuri Paintings

The dual nature of the Dioscuri has further implications for the experience of the images of Castor and Pollux within the *fauces* of the Casa dei Dioscuri. As with the depictions of Mercury and Fortuna on the façade of the house, the positions of the Dioscuri help engage viewers, thereby activating the images. When crossing the threshold of the home, one almost immediately encounters the images of the deities, one on the left wall, and one on the right. It is significant that the Dioscuri flank a visitor on their way into the interior of the structure. Not only do the paintings affect the visitor, but the visitor also plays a key role in the function of the frescoes. A visitor's visual, mental, and physical acknowledgement of the images could enliven these representations of the Dioscuri just as much as the paintings could trigger a reaction for viewers. Considering the many stories about the spontaneous appearance of the twins during or after battle, or in other contexts as "epiphanies", this seems all the more likely.[376]

The experience of being surrounded by the Dioscuri has two opposing effects. For those who approach the house as welcomed guests with innocent aims, the presence of the deities is comforting, a reminder that the pair are protecting the visitor from all sides as they move through the ambiguity of the intermediary space. The opposite is true for those with ill intentions. The menacing experience of having to pass between two deities who are charged with protecting the

[376] For a discussion of the Dioscuri and epiphany, see Platt, "Double Vision: Epiphanies of the Dioscuri in Classical Antiquity," 229–56, esp. 231 on the corporeal epiphanies of the Dioscuri.

house may have deterred those who would threaten the house or its inhabitants. And, by inhabiting the space of the *fauces* and observing the Dioscuri, the spectator could become complicit in the concretization of their own punishment or protection.

The aggressive aspect of the Dioscuri, one side of their dual nature, is supported by the mythologies surrounding the pair. The brothers were known as great hunters and fighters, and sources identify Castor as a skilled horseman, and Pollux as a great boxer.[377] Such tales of Pollux's skill as a fighter were unlikely to be forgotten by those moving through the *fauces* of the Casa dei Dioscuri. Keeping in mind the twins' many skills, including their known martial abilities, it is entirely plausible that a visitor with malintent could be faced with similar punishments.

The journey over the threshold and through the entryway is made even more striking by a specific detail within the paintings, a detail that both activates the images and increases their efficacy. When in the *fauces*, and standing in between the images of Castor and Pollux, one is drawn to the eyes of the figures. In particular, the eyes of the twin on the left side of the hallway, as the better-preserved example, convey this feeling [Fig.II.20]. Not only are his eyes clearly focused outward, they appear opened wide as a result of the stark contrast between the pupil and sclera.[378] This is important for two reasons. For one, the Dioscuri appear to be looking at one another, affirming the presence of the other brother, and reminding the viewer of the twinned nature of the pair. In acknowledging one another, they also seem to confirm the existence of the other twin, thereby activating each other. The knowing look between the two also serves as a reminder of their bond and shared characteristics.

[377] Hom. *Il.* 3.237-38.
[378] The white area of the eye.

At the same time, when directly in between Castor and Pollux, the deities seem to stare at the human between them. This acknowledgement of, and engagement with, the viewer enlivens the images by allowing the deities to address the visitor through eye contact. Platt, in her discussion of a painting of Narcissus in the Casa di Octavius Quartio, notes that Narcissus makes eye contact with spectators, implicating them in the events portrayed in the painted scene.[379] A similar phenomenon seems to be at work with the Dioscuri through the deities' eye contact with observers. Through this embodied experience, the Dioscuri thus communicate that the viewer both sees and is seen. In fact, the horses even appear to have their eyes trained on the human between them [Fig.II.21]. Through this eye contact, the images are made to feel as if alive and made manifest through the viewer's perception of their presence. It also has the effect of allowing the visitor to feel watched by the Dioscuri while moving toward the interior of the residence. The idea of seeing and being seen was an important component of the architecture and decoration of the Casa dei Dioscuri,[380] and it seems that in the case of the pendant portraits of Castor and Pollux, the figures within the frescoes take part in this exchange.

Notably, the space of the *fauces* and the images within are only active when a visitor is within the entryway, which is, aptly, the only time the space requires such protection. By sensing the Dioscuri within the *fauces*, even in the form of two-dimensional representations, a visitor could thereby activate the protective measures located therein. Akin to the triggering of a home alarm, which can only be caused by dynamic human intervention, acknowledgement of the Dioscuri in the entryway manifests the threats or protective measures aimed at those entering the

[379] Platt, "Viewing, Desiring, Believing: Confronting the Divine in a Pompeian House," 91.
[380] Trimble, "Greek Myth, Gender, and Social Structure in a Roman House: Two Paintings of Achilles at Pompeii," 228, 244.

home. Thus, the protective nature of the *fauces* imagery of the Casa dei Dioscuri is activated through a reciprocal, if momentary, visual exchange between visitor and deities.

It is also important to note that the images of the Dioscuri appear roughly in the middle of the length of the *fauces* and it seems no accident that the frescoes are located at a pivotal point within the journey into the house. Crossing a threshold can itself be dangerous, but movement through the *fauces* is both more prolonged and just as ambiguous. The most vulnerable moment within the journey is in the middle,[381] wherein one is furthest away from either entrance or exit. Here, the Dioscuri appear in their role as patrons of travelers to reassure or intimidate, and even though they can be seen from the threshold, their proximity would be especially efficacious at this moment. Then, once past the vulnerable middle of the *fauces*, one can continue on, no longer requiring a direct view of the twins to resume, but knowing the Dioscuri are there all the while.

Together with their semi-divine status, physical journey between the underworld and the heavens, demi-mortality, and roles in Roman belief and religion, the experience facilitated by the paintings of the Dioscuri in the eponymous house in Pompeii beckons visitors to enter the interior of the home. Simultaneously protective and threatening, the pair stand as a line of defense while also offering to guide guests through the ambiguous space of the *fauces*, where the images are concretized by viewer perception of their existence. In between the street and atrium, the pair are in a distinct position to guide and guard as a result of their own mythological resumes. Rather than existing as either threatening or welcoming, therefore, the images of Castor and Pollux can be easily adapted to a variety of situations. As both guardians and symbols, the semi-divine brothers could offer the owners of the Casa dei Dioscuri viewer-activated divine

[381] Victor Turner, "Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage," in *Betwixt & Between: Patterns of Masculine and Feminine Initiation*, 3-19. Eds. Louise Carus Mahdi, Steven Foster, and Meredith Little (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1987), 17-8.

protection while deterring unwanted visitors. In their functions as (semi) divine guardians of transitional spaces with many associated dualities, however, the Dioscuri were not alone.

Priapus on the Threshold: Ithyphallic Representation and the Doorway

Considering the efficacy of the Dioscuri as guardians of vulnerable spaces, it is no wonder additional divine images are also found in association with the doorways of other Pompeian homes. Priapus is one such deity, and representations of Priapus decorate the doorways of the Casa dei Vettii [VI.15.1], the so-called Complesso dei Riti Magici [II.1.12], House II.9.1, and House V.6.12 to safeguard the threshold. Although jarring to modern viewers, the choice of Priapus to decorate a doorway was not only a suitable selection, but also directly tied to ancient conceptions of, and associations with, the phallic deity.

Priapus: An Overview

Neither an Olympian god nor a mere mortal, Priapus was a minor deity in the Greek and Roman religious canon.[382] Priapus was worshiped as a fertility god who served as protector of gardens,[383] and was said to have an unusually large and permanently erect phallus.[384] Wooden statues of Priapus[385] were set up in private *horti* (gardens) to protect against intruders and

[382] Worship of Priapus originated amongst the Greek colonists who settled Lampsacus on the coast of Hellespont (where Priapus is said to have been born) in the sixth century BCE and is believed to have reached Rome in the second century BCE. Although worship of Priapus appears to have arrived in Rome in the second century BCE, it did not become widespread until the 1st century BCE. Peter Stewart, "Fine Art and Coarse Art: The Image of Roman Priapus," *Art History* 20, no. 4 (1997): 583; Hans Herter, *De Priapo*. Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten, Xxiii. Band (Giessen: Verlat Von Alfred Töpelmann, 1932), 25-26.
[383] Stewart, "Fine Art and Coarse Art: The Image of Roman Priapus," 575.
[384] Worship of Priapus could include offering the deity the first fruits of harvest, milk, honey, cakes, and asses. Ov. *Fast.* I. 391, 416; Verg. *Ecl.* VII, 33.
[385] *Carmina Priapea*, Poem 6; Hor. *Sat.* 1.8.1-7; Mart. *Ep.* 8.40. See also Alisa Hunt, "Priapus as Wooden God: Confronting Manufacture and Destruction," *Cambridge Classical Journal* 57, no. 57 (2011): 29-54. Peter Stewart suggests the rustic wooden materiality of Priapic statues served as a foil for "high" art, an appropriately unpolished artform for a minor god. Stewart, "Fine Art and Coarse Art: The Image of Roman Priapus," 576-578.

would-be thieves,[386] and wall paintings from around the Bay of Naples illustrate garden scenes complete with ithyphallic statues of Priapus displayed on pedestals. This includes an example from the south wall of the *triclinium* in the Casa del Sacerdos Amandus [I.7.7] that depicts an ithyphallic statue on a high pedestal. In addition to gardens,[387] Priapus also kept watch over sailors and harbors, and representations of the deity may even have been carried aboard ships for good luck and safe passage. [388]

Written descriptions of Priapus portray the deity as crude and crass, often threatening those who transgress the boundary of the garden he protects with sexual violence.[389] A late first or early second century CE[390] collection of eighty poems called the *Carmina Priapea* preserves many examples of these threats.[391] The majority of the short poems are written from the perspective of Priapus and are notable for the obscene language used throughout.[392] Threats against thieves are the most common theme and appear in nearly half of the poems.[393] Poem six is a prime example of the content and tone of the *Carmina Priapea*:

"Quod sum ligneus ut vides, Priapus

[386] Ov. *Fast.* 1.415; 6.319.
[387] On Priapus and gardens, see James Uden, "The Vanishing Gardens of Priapus," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 105 (2010): 189-219.
[388] Harry R. Neilson, "A Terracotta Phallus from Pisa Ship E: More Evidence of the Priapus Deity as Protector of Greek and Roman Navigators," *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 31, no. 2 (2002): 248-252; Herter, *De Priapo,* 215.
[389] This is similar to the function of disembodied phalli, which could also threaten sexual violence. Vèronique Dansen, 'Probaskania: Amulets and Magic in Antiquity," in *The Materiality of Magic*, 177-204. Eds. Jan Bremmer and Dietrich Boschung (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 2015), 187.
[390] Hunt, "Priapus as Wooden God: Confronting Manufacture and Destruction," 34. For a debate on the date of the collection see Vinzenz Buchheit, *Studien zum Corpus Priapeorum* (Zetemata, 28. München: Beck, 1962) and Gerrit Kloss, "Uberlegungen zur Verfasserschaft und Datierung der Carmina Priapea." *Hermes* 131, no. 4 (2003).
[391] The authorship of the poems is a question still debated by scholars. Some believe the collection is an anthology of poems by several different authors, and others support single authorship. See Vinzenz Buchheit (1962), Gerrit Kloss (2003), and Niklas Holzberg (2005) argue for single authorship, while W.H. Parker (1988), Eugene O'Connor (1989), and Amy Richlin (1983) believe it is an anthology. Early versions of the *Carmina Priapea* attributed the epigrams to Virgil, and later to Martial or Ovid. W.H. Parker, *Priapea: Poems for a Phallic God*. Croom Helm Classical Studies (London: Croom Helm, 1988), 32-35.
[392] Amy Richlin calls the poems religious artifacts. Amy Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus: Sexuality and Aggression in Roman Humor*. Rev. ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 9.
[393] Richlin calculates that threats against thieves appear in 46.3% of the *Carmina Priapea* poems. Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus: Sexuality and Aggression in Roman Humor,* 120.

et falx lignea ligneusque penis,
prendam te tamen et tenebo prensum
totamque hanc sine fraude, quantacunque est,
tormento citaeraque tensiorem
ad costam tibi septimam recondam."

"Though I'm just a wood Priapus
with a wooden cock and sickle,
I'll still get you in my clutches
and (no kidding) I'll insert this—
every single fiber tauter
than a catapult or lyre—
right up to your seventh rib bone."[394]

Also notable are the aggressive sexual threats made by the god. As Poem 13 explains:

"Percidere puer, moneo, futuere puella.
Barbatum furem tertia poena manet."

"Girl, watch your cunt; boy, keep your ass from grief.
Another threat awaits the bearded thief."[395]

Here Priapus threatens girls or women with vaginal rape, young boys with anal rape, and mature men with irrumation, or oral rape, considered the most degrading sexual act for a mature male to perform or endure.[396] Priapus makes clear not only the punishments that await those who steal from the garden, a reference to his robust virility, but also the violence associated with these acts.[397]

At the same time, in some of the poems, Priapus declares his disgust and avoidance of certain victims and even reveals that he is at times impotent.[398] Priapus's forceful boasts of his

[394] Translation Richard W. Hooper, *The Priapus Poems: Erotic Epigrams from Ancient Rome* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 54-55.
[395] Translation Hooper, *The Priapus Poems: Erotic Epigrams from Ancient Rome*, 56-57.
[396] Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus: Sexuality and Aggression in Roman Humor*, 27.
[397] Heather Elomaa describes how such threats could be both off-putting and tempting, and how the boundaries of the garden are aligned with those of the body. Heather Elomaa, "The Poetics of the Carmina Priapea," (Dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 2015), 144, 176.
[398] Poems 26, 73, and 77 discuss Priapus's impotence. Poem 26, for example: "*Porro (nam quis erit modus?) Quirites, aut praecidite seminale membrum, quod totis mihi noctibus fatigant vincinae sine fine prurientes venis passeribus salaciores, aut rumpar, nec habebitis Priapum. Ipsi cernitis, effututus ut sim confectusque macerque*

virility are clearly at odds with his admitted occasional impotence,[399] no doubt intended as an amusing irony for readers of the *Carmina Priapea.*[400] While humorous, the poems also highlight clear liminalities in Roman representations of the deity, which are appropriate qualities for a guardian of the threshold.

Priapus and the Casa dei Vettii

With such characterizations of Priapus in mind, the Priapus fresco from the Casa dei Vettii [VI.15.1] serves as a key example to understand the function of Priapic images within the space of a doorway [Fig.II.22]. The painting of Priapus in the Casa dei Vettii, decorates the west wall of the entryway of the home [Fig.II.23]. It is surrounded by Third Style panels illustrating various creatures and small vignettes [Fig.II.24],[401] and depicts Priapus dressed in a long-sleeved

pallidusque qui quondam ruber et valens solebam fures caedere quamlibet valentes. Defiecit latus et periculosam cum tussi miser expuo salivam." "Friends, there has to be a limit: Either slice away my member, which local sex-starved females, hornier than springtime sparrows, spend the whole night devastating, or I'll burst—goodbye Priapus! You can see yourself how ruptured, thin, fucked out, and pale they've made me. I who once, bright red and brawny, cut down robbers by the dozen. Now my side hurts and a morbid spittle is expectorated." Translation Hooper, *The Priapus Poems: Erotic Epigrams from Ancient Rome,* 62-65. On Priapus's disgust of certain women, Poem 46: "*O non candidior Mauro, sed morbosior omnibus cinaedis, Pygmaeo brevior gruem timenti, ursis asperior pilosirque, Medis laxior indicisve bracis—manes hinc, licet ut liberet, ires. Name quamvis videar satis paratus, erucarum opus est decem maniplis, fossas inguinis ut teram dolemque cunni vermiculos scaturrientis*." "Girl no whiter than the Moors are, more contageious than the faggots, shorter than some Pygmy crane bait, harrier than shaggy bears are, looser still than Persian breeches—Go to hell (you seem to want to). Even I would have to buy my aphrodisiacs at wholesale just to get it up for drubbing such a worm-infested crotch hole." Translation Hooper, *The Priapus Poems: Erotic Epigrams from Ancient Rome,* 76-77.

[399] This contradiction is indicative of much of Priapus's character beyond his ability to perform sexual acts. Niklas Holzberg, "Impotence? It Happened to the Best of Them! A Linear Reading of the 'Corpus Priapeorum,'" *Hermes* 133, no. 3 (2005): 374. See Hor. *Sat.* 1.8 in which Priapus describes an encounter with witches relating to his impotence.

[400] The poems assume an elite male, and likely heterosexual, audience. Parker, *Priapea: Poems for a Phallic God,* 49. Like Priapus, Enclopius, of Petronius's *Satyricon,* can be viewed as a satire of Roman manhood. Kirk Ormand, *Controlling Desires: Sexuality in Ancient Greece and Rome*. Revised ed. (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2018), 248.

[401] One vignette, on the north wall of the *vestibulum,* depicts a table with a ram, vessel, and symbols aligned with Mercury (*caduceus* and purse). As with the Casa dei Dioscuri façade painting, the subtle references to Mercury may itself be a protective measure.

yellow and aqua garment,[402] Phrygian cap, gold jewelry, and high laced sandals.[403] He leans against a pillar with a staff nestled in the crook of his arm, and he lifts his tunic with his left hand to reveal his outrageously large phallus. With his other hand, Priapus holds a scale with which he weighs his phallus against a large bag of money, and a sizable bowl overflowing with fruit rests at his feet.

This painting is located in the entryway of the Casa dei Vettii and situated in such a way that it would have been visible to observers from the street as they approached the house from the northeast, provided the doors were open [Fig.II.25].[404] From this position, Priapus functions as a guardian of the home, standing watch at the door in between the front entrance and the body of the house.[405] The painting is located in the *vestibulum* between the front door and entryway to the central atrium of the house, and thus addresses viewers within a space that is neither fully exterior nor interior. The strange configuration of the vestibule threshold,[406] an L-shaped step up and multiple *cardines* for instance, further emphasizes the indistinct character of the entryway [Fig.II.26].

Even today, when first confronted by the image of Priapus weighing his comically large phallus against a bag of money, most viewers cannot help but laugh. This laughter, as Clarke has

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[402] Diod. Sic. *Bib. Hist* 4.4.

[403] It is worth noting that the Priapus fresco does not seem to fit organically amongst the surrounding painted panels. Rather, it appears specifically rendered and intentionally placed to catch the eye of visitors or passersby, highlighting the intentionality of the image and intended efficacy.

[404] Jeremy Hartnett, *The Roman Street: Urban Life and Society in Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Rome* (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 188; Ray Laurence, *Roman Pompeii: Space and Society* (London: Routledge, 2007), 102; W. G. Martley, "Remarks and Suggestions on Plautus. 'Fores,' 'Janua,' 'Ostium,' in Plautus" *Hermathena* 4, no. 8 (1882): 304; Liv. *Ab urbe cond.* 5.41.7. Like most Roman homes, the doors of the Casa dei Vettii would have opened inward. Pia Kastenmeier, "Priap zum Gruße: der Hauseingang der Casa dei Vettii in Pompeji," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archaologischen Instituts (Rom)* 108 (2001): 304. Kastenmeier further shows that the doors of the entranceway could be used to either highlight or obscure the image of Priapus. Kastenmeier, "Priap zum Gruße: der Hauseingang der Casa dei Vettii in Pompeji," 310-311.

[405] It is worth noting that images of Priapus were at times associated with Roman graves, no doubt yet another indication of his association with liminal spaces and states. Herter, *De Priapo*, 231.

[406] See Kastenmeier, "Priap zum Gruße: der Hauseingang der Casa dei Vettii in Pompeji," 301-7.

aptly demonstrated, was intentional on the part of the homeowner. Clarke argues that the image was meant to evoke laughter to ward off the ill forces of the Evil Eye.[407] Not only was the Eye deterred by laughter, it was also easily distracted by humorous, sexual, or violent imagery.[408] A comical image in an entryway, therefore, would be doubly efficacious by encouraging laughter and captivating the attention of the Evil Eye. In the case of the Vettii Priapus, a well-intentioned guest could animate the apotropaic effects of the painting through reciprocal interactions to deter any harmful forces that might follow them into the home.

The act of weighing the phallus to prove its great size and weight is both comical and threatening,[409] as the demonstrated heft of Priapus's phallus could cause great anxiety to visitors with malintent who might recall the crude threats of rape made by the deity. In this way, the image seems to imply that those who transgress the boundary of the home will not only suffer the punishment of rape, but will be punished with an instrument of alarming size. At the same time, the appearance of the basket of fruit and bag of money balance these threats through their promise of abundance and prosperity.[410] In fact, it seems as if Priapus is physically and metaphorically weighing the two options an observer has when entering the home. For those who are made to choose between peaceful abundance or bodily harm, the fact that Priapus's phallus

[407] John R. Clarke, *Looking at Laughter: Humor, Power, and Transgression in Roman Visual Culture, 100 B.c.-A.d. 250* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 184-187. On the relationship between the Evil Eye and phalluses, see Johns, *Sex or Symbol: Erotic Images of Greece and* Rome, 66-7; Wilhelmina F. Jashemski, "The Excavation of a Shop-House Garden at Pompeii (I. XX. 5)," *American Journal of Archaeology* 81, no. 2 (1977): 217-27.

[408] John R. Clarke, "Look Who's Laughing at Sex: Men and Women Viewers in the *Apodyterium* of the Suburban Baths at Pompeii," in *The Roman Gaze: Vision, Power, and the Body* (Arethusa Books. Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2002), 156; and Adam Parker, "The Bells! The Bells! Approaching Tintinnabula in Roman Britain and Beyond," in *Material Approaches to Roman Magic: Occult Objects and Supernatural Substances* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2018), 101.

[409] Ardle MacMahon, "The Realms of Janus: Doorways in the Roman World," *Theoretical Roman Archaeology Journal 2002* (2003): 67.

[410] Johns notes that abundance and protection were closely interrelated concepts in ancient Rome. Johns, *Sex or Symbol: Erotic Images of Greece and Rome,* 52.

weighs more than the bag of money suggests any potential gain through nefarious deeds is not worth the punishment. The immense wealth of the home, which included two large chests of money in the atrium, no doubt rendered these messages even more expedient.[411]

In addition to the messages communicated by the painting, an embodied experience of the fresco could concretize both Priapus's violent threats, as well as manifest the prosperity he promised, rendering it a particularly efficacious inclusion within the *vestibulum*. Like the other divine images examined in this chapter, the Vettii Priapus appears almost as if to address spectators. Although the paint delineating his eyes is damaged, his head is tilted downward. Although the deity may have had his eye trained on his task at hand, the location of the painting just above the eyeline of the viewer might have made it appear as though Priapus was also looking down to acknowledge the presence of the viewer. The Vettii Priapus thus stands guard over the interior threshold of the home, enlivened and made more potent by the reciprocal moment of viewing between a visitor and the representation of the deity.

Priapus's own status also renders him an appropriate choice to guard a doorway. Conversely associated with abundance, fertility, and sexual violence, Priapus was one who could both help and harm. As his graphic threats from the *Carmina Priapea* make clear, Priapus is not shy about enforcing, or at the very least threatening to enforce, the boundaries of the gardens he protects.[412] Much like his post guarding the boundaries of gardens, here Priapus guards the interior of the structure, and likely portended similar punishments of rape to those who would

[411] It is also possible Priapus fresco in the doorway was connected to Priapus's associations with seafarers. The occupations of the inhabitants are unknown, but many in the city participated in maritime commerce due to the proximity of the city to the sea. If the "Vettii" were indeed merchants who participated in maritime trade, it is possible that the image of Priapus was also chosen to pay homage to their patron deity, the protector of both home and livelihood.

[412] It is very likely contemporary Roman viewers were familiar with more rustic Priapus statues in gardens and the violent punishments with which he threatened intruders.

transgress the threshold. In fact, in Poem Nine of the *Carmina Priapea*, the deity directly compares his phallus to a weapon.[413] Similar characterizations of phalli as weapons appear elsewhere in Latin literature,[414] and outrageously large phalluses were themselves considered apotropaic devices.[415] Priapus's presence within the doorway of the Casa dei Vettii, then, was aligned with his role as keeper of gardens and their boundaries, substituting the boundary of the garden for that of a front entryway.

In addition to his role as the guardian of boundaries, sailors, and fertility, Priapus's own characteristics distinguish him a fitting choice to guard the threshold.[416] Priapus is himself a figure on various thresholds, both virile and impotent, divine but a minor deity. These incongruent characteristics align Priapus with the perceived qualities of spaces such as entryways, as intermediary and potentially threatening, with an ambiguous outcome. Just as the end of a journey through a transitional space could be pleasant or harmful, Priapus could bring pain or protection to those crossing the threshold of the Casa dei Vettii.

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[413] Poems 9 and 36 describe Priapus's phallus as a weapon. An excerpt from Poem 9, for instance, ends, "To fault me for a naked cock is senseless. Without my weapon I'd be left defenseless." Hooper, *The Priapus Poems: Erotic Epigrams from Ancient Rome,* 52. In Poem 43 Priapus specifically states that his threats are not a joke. Note also, the violence associated with Poem 11.

[414] For example, Cat. 56.7. Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus: Sexuality and Aggression in Roman Humor,* 59.

[415] Johns, *Sex or Symbol: Erotic Images of Greece and Rome*, 62; Dasen, "Probaskania: Amulets and Magic in Antiquity," 187; John R. Clarke, "Hypersexual Black Men in Augustan Baths: Ideal Somatotypes and Apotropaic Magic," in *Sexuality in Ancient Art: Near East, Egypt, Greece, and Italy*. Eds. Natalie Kampen and Bettina Ann Bergmann, 184-198. Cambridge Studies in New Art History and Criticism (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 193.

[416] Even today modern science reminds us of Priapus's unfortunate predicament. The modern medical term "Priapism" refers to a protracted erection, a condition that is often not caused by sexual stimulation, and which can be quite painful. It is ironic, and perhaps telling, that the deity is today known for his impotence rather than his virility. A recent medical study claims that the Priapus painting from the Casa dei Vettii demonstrates clear signs of phimosis, a condition where the foreskin becomes tight or unable to retract. While I am hesitant to use such studies as a means of diagnosing medical conditions or as proof of ancient intentionality, the article may reveal an ancient connection between a medical condition that can cause impotence or pain and the mythologies surrounding Priapus. Francesco M. Galassi and Stefano Galassi, "Shut Phimosis in the Priapus Fresco from Pompeii." *Urology* 85, no. 6 (2015): 1521-2; Whitney Davis, "Wax Tokens of Libido: William Hamilton, Richard Payne Knight, and the Phalli of Isernia," in "*Ephemeral Bodies: Wax Sculpture and the Human Figure* (Los Angeles, Calif.: Getty Research Institute, 2008), 124.

As ithyphallic yet impotent, Priapus's gendered associations are also at odds with one another. Images of erect phalluses were meant to evoke laughter or function as an apotropaic symbol,[417] and it was typically only disembodied phalluses, outrageous imagery, or representations of transgressive creatures such as satyrs that were depicted as ithyphallic.[418] Priapus, it would seem, as permanently ithyphallic, was aligned with outrageous imagery, despite his status as a god and his "hypermasculine" nature. While some have called Priapus a "mascot of Roman masculinity,"[419] I would argue that, in fact, Priapus was not only aligned with atypical male characteristics, but in spite of his oversized manhood, might even have been considered outside the confines of acceptable masculinity by taking masculinity one step too far— as a normative male is neither constantly erect nor impotent.

Further complicating the picture are Roman conceptions of masculinity. Key to proper Roman male identity was a sense of control and rationality,[420] and despite his proclaimed virility and clear anatomical maleness, Priapus is characterized as lacking self-restraint, immodest, and unvirtuous. Priapus's eastern origins throw yet another wrench into the mix.[421] Foreign deities

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[417] Alissa M. Whitmore, "Fascinating *Fascina*: Apotropaic Magic and How to Wear a Penis." In *What Shall I Say of Clothes?: Theoretical and Methodological Approaches to the Study of Dress in Antiquity*. Eds. Megan Cifarelli and Laura Gawlinski, 47-66. Selected Papers on Ancient Art and Architecture, Number 3 (Boston, MA: Archaeological Institute of America, 2017), 49; Kelly Olson, "Masculinity, Appearance, and Sexuality: Dandies in Roman Antiquity," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 23, no. 2 (2014): 184.

[418] Similarly, Adam Parker observes that there are no known flaccid *tintinnabula*. Parker, "The Bells! The Bells! Approaching Tintinnabula in Roman Britain and Beyond," 100. Herms and some images of Mercury are notable exceptions to this.

[419] Craig A. Williams, *Roman Homosexuality* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 151-156.

[420] Natalie Kampen, "What is a Man?" in *What Is a Man?: Changing Images of Masculinity in Late Antique Art*. Eds. Natalie Elizabeth Kampen, Elizabeth M. Marlowe, Rebecca M Molholt, and Douglas F. Cooley Memorial Art Gallery, 3-16 (Portland, Or.: Douglas F. Colley Memorial Art Gallery, Reed College, 2002), 6. Mathew Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch: Masculinity, Gender Ambiguity, and Christian Ideology in Late Antiquity* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), 19, 26-28. Even an excess of masculinity could be considered dangerous, as was the case with gladiators. Kampen, "What is a Man?" 13. Jaqueline Pearson describes a similar characterization of early modern male Turkish converts to Christianity, where their masculinity is considered excessive and transgressive. Jaqueline Pearson, "One Lot in Sodom: Masculinity and the Gendered Body in Early Modern Narratives of Converted Turks," *Literature and Theology* 21, no. 1 (2007): 38.

[421] Indeed, Amy Richlin, discussing the place of sexually obscene and aggressive humor in Roman culture, observes that Priapus has non-Roman characteristics. Richlin, *The Garden of Priapus: Sexuality and Aggression in Roman Humor,* XVII.

and mortals were at times portrayed with effeminate characteristics, such as Bacchus's long hair and androgynous body,[422] demarcating them as non-Roman and lacking control.[423] Priapus originated from northwest Turkey and some of the characteristics associated with effeminate figures are reflected in his brightly colored flowing garment and floppy Phrygian cap.[424] Priapus's seeming inability to control his own body and his identification as non-Roman render his masculinity both less-than-ideal and non-conforming to Roman standards.[425] As both ithyphallic and impotent, Priapus himself can be characterized as in a state of transition, a clear and close parallel to the transitional nature of the doorway.

The protection provided by the Vettii Priapus may have been necessitated by the position of the house [Fig.II.27]. The Casa dei Vettii is located on an unassuming narrow street in the northwestern section of the city one block west of the Via del Vesuvio and the nearby Porta Vesuvio. Major roads such as the Via del Vesuvio and gates of entry such as the Porta Vesuvio would likely have experienced a steady flow of traffic, which would have provided more opportunities for harm to befall nearby homes. In addition to possible traffic from the Via del Vesuvio, the house is large, and located on a corner. Crossroads were understood as spaces that

[422] Kampen, "What is a Man?" 46.
[423] Individuals from the east were viewed as soft and effeminate by the Romans. Kuefler, *The Manly Eunuch: Masculinity, Gender Ambiguity, and Christian Ideology in Late Antiquity,* 59, 63; Natalie Kampen, "Omphale and the Instability of Gender," in *Sexuality in Ancient Art: Near East, Egypt, Greece, and Italy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 235.
[424] Phrygian caps were typically associated with foreigners from the East. Valeria Sampaolo, "VI 15, 1 Casa dei Vettii," in *PPM*, Vol. V, 468-572. Eds. G. P. Carratelli and I. Baldassarre (Roma: Istituto della enciclopedia italiana, 1991), 471.
[425] Steve Garlick calls violence "an important technology of masculine embodiment." Steve Garlick, *The Nature of Masculinity: Critical Theory, New Materialisms, and Technologies of Embodiment* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 194.

required protection,[426] and the presence of the Priapus image in the entryway of the Casa dei Vettii may have been intended to address the vulnerable position of the home.

Similarly noteworthy, the sidewalk in front of the house is extremely narrow and difficult to traverse [Fig.II.28].[427] This may have forced some pedestrians to walk in the street, thus further removed from the house. Three crossing stones also lie directly across the front door of the house [Fig.II.29]. These crossing stones could be associated with various dangers, especially those which accompany crossing a street.[428] While such stepping stones could also be indicative of the wealth of a homeowner, who was able to arrange a direct pathway to their doorstep, they could also encourage a higher amount of foot traffic near the house. Thus, the presence of protective imagery in many Pompeian homes which are located near crossing stones may be linked to the perception of danger associated with such features. In either case, the position, details, and location of the Vettii Priapus communicate a message that is at once protective, threatening, and humorous, while addressing the nature of the space of the entryway and the location of the home.[429]

[426] Johnston observes that crossroads were locales associated with Hekate, magic, pollution, and ritual, and even notes that "atypical" corpses were buried at crossroads. Johnston, "Crossroads," 217, 219, 220, 223-4; Kellum, "The Spectacle of the Street," 285.
[427] Hartnett, *The Roman Street: Urban Life and Society in Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Rome*, 39; Juliana van Roggen, "Guard Stones: Street Infrastructure in Pompeii," *AISTHESIS* IV (2015): 71.
[428] Hartnett, *The Roman Street: Urban Life and Society in Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Rome*, 72. Similarly, van Roggen notes that curb stones were used to protect pedestrians. Van Roggen, "Guard Stones: Street Infrastructure in Pompeii," 73.
[429] The Priapus fresco may also have been related to the deity's connection to seafarers. Many scholars believe that two freedmen Aulus Vettius Conviva and Aulus Vettius Restitutus owned the house based on graffiti [CIL IV 3522, 3509] (Clarke, *The Houses of Roman Italy, 100 B.c.-A.d. 250: Ritual, Space, and Decoration*, 208; Matteo Della Corte, *Case ed abitanti di Pompei* (Napoli: Fausto Fiorentino, 1965), 9-23; Reale Accademia dei Lincei, Reale Accademia d'Italia, and Accademia nazionale dei Lincei. *Notizie degli scavi di antichità* (Roma: Tip. della R. Accademia dei Lincei, 1876), 32. For a useful summary of the evidence, see Beth Severy-Hoven, "Master Narratives and the Wall Painting of the House of the Vettii, Pompeii," *Gender and History* 24, no. 3 (2012): 545-6).

Charged Images within the Interior of the Casa dei Vettii

In addition to the Priapus fresco that decorates the entryway of the home, a second representation of Priapus and additional image of a mythological figure associated with a space of transition appear within the house. A marble statue of Priapus that functioned as a fountain was also included within the decorative scheme of the home and located near the boundary between the interior space of the house and the exterior space of the garden [Fig.II.30].[430] The statue depicts a nude male figure with a large, erect phallus that protrudes into the space of the viewer. This phallus would have warned spectators not to get too close, but it also would have sprayed water into a basin.[431] Clarke suggests that the statue was originally placed within the line of vision from the entryway of the garden for maximum effect,[432] at once humorous and protective, thereby functioning in much a similar way as its painted counterpart in the entryway. The resonances between the vestibule painting and garden sculpture could also have increased a visitor's sense of the vitality of Priapus within the home. The reappearance of the deity in the garden may have suggested he had moved from his post at the entryway toward the interior of the home as a result of the activation of the image.

A fresco of a hermaphrodite over the doorway of the so-called Ixion Room (Room P) in the Casa dei Vettii functions in much a similar way.[433] The painting depicts a reclining

[430] Clarke, *Looking at Laughter: Humor, Power, and Transgression in Roman Visual Culture, 100 B.c.-A.d. 250*, 188-9.
[431] Clarke, *The Houses of Roman Italy, 100 B.c.-A.d. 250: Ritual, Space, and Decoration,* 211.
[432] Clarke, *Looking at Laughter: Humor, Power, and Transgression in Roman Visual Culture, 100 B.c.-A.d. 250*, 189.
[433] For more on the hermaphrodite painting, see Francesca Tronchin, "The Sculpture of the Casa di Octavius Quartio in Pompeii," in *Pompeii: Art, Industry and Infrastructure*, 24-40. Eds. Eric Poehler, Miko Flohr, and Kevin Cole (Oxbow Books, 2011), Katharine Von Stackelberg, "Garden Hybrids: Hermaphrodite Images in the Roman House," Garden Hybrids: Hermaphrodite Images in the Roman House," *Classical Antiquity* 33, no. 2 (2014): 406-7; Clarke, *Looking at Laughter: Humor, Power, and Transgression in Roman Visual Culture, 100 B.c.-A.d. 250*, 182. On the defensive qualities of hermaphroditic images, Aileen Ajootian, "The Only Happy Couple: Hermaphrodites and Gender*,"* in *Naked Truths: Women Sexuality and Gender in Classical Art and Archaeology*, 220–42. Eds. A. Koloski-Ostrow and C. L. Lyons (London: Routledge, 1997), 230-3. See also Jennifer Trimble, "Beyond Surprise:

hermaphrodite, half-man half-woman, directly above the doorway of the room [Fig.II.31]. A startled Pan, who has just exposed the phallus of the hermaphrodite, stands behind Hermaphroditus and raises his hand in surprise. The painting is at once disorienting and amusing. Similar to other Roman representations of hermaphrodites, which incorporate an element of surprise when one discovers the phallus of the figure who otherwise appears female, both Pan and the viewer are surprised to discover the true nature of the Vettii hermaphrodite.

Such shocking, comical, and sexual imagery, as we have seen, could be used as a powerful defense against the Evil Eye and other malignant forces. The location of the painting above the doorway secures the protective qualities of the image against these forces when moving through the opening. Here too, the gendered ambiguity of the hermaphrodite parallels the nature of the doorway. It is also worth noting that another image of a hermaphrodite appears beside the doorway of *oecus* Q within the house.[434] Combined with the two images of Priapus discovered within the Casa dei Vettii, it appears that the homeowners were especially attuned to, or concerned with, the vulnerabilities that accompanied spaces of transition within their home. Drawing on the ambiguous, transitional, or inconsistent qualities of Priapus and the hermaphrodite, the owners utilized these images to ensure the safety of the home, its inhabitants, and potential visitors.

Looking Again at the Sleeping Hermaphrodite in the Palazzo Massimo," in *Roman Artists, Patrons, and Public Consumption: Familiar Works Reconsidered*, 13-37. Eds. Brenda Longfellow and Ellen Perry. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018.

[434] Severy-Hoven, "Master Narratives and the Wall Painting of the House of the Vettii, Pompeii," 568; Clarke, *Looking at Laughter: Humor, Power, and Transgression in Roman Visual Culture, 100 B.c.-A.d. 250*, 182.

Beyond the Casa dei Vettii: Other Examples of Priapus on the Threshold

Frescoes from the famous Complesso dei Riti Magici [II.1.12], a house on the Via di Nocera [II.9.1], and a recently discovered house in *Regio* V [V.6.12],[435] all appear in association with ambiguous space, and share many characteristics with the Priapus painting from the Casa dei Vettii. The Complesso dei Riti Magici was first constructed in the early second century BCE,[436] and experienced many phases of remodel and repair in its three-hundred-year history [Fig.II.32]. What began as a small private home was expanded, remodeled, and finally converted into a religious structure in or around 62 CE.[437] Although not a domestic space in its final phase, the Complesso dei Riti Magici is nevertheless an instructive example of charged imagery in transitional space.

Like the Casa dei Vettii, the Complesso dei Riti Magici once featured Priapic imagery within its entryway. Unfortunately, the paintings have not survived, but 20th century photographs have preserved the composition and placement of the images [Fig.II.33].[438] Frescoes of three deities flanking the front doorway formerly adorned the façade of the complex.[439] A painting of Venus emerging from her bath originally decorated the left side of the façade [Fig.II.34].[440] On the right side of the doorway was a panel depicting Mercury with his *caduceus* and bag of money, and Bacchus with a *thyrsus* [Fig.II.35]. Paired images of Priapus occupied either side of the front doorway, and were identical in pose, clothing, and facial expression [Fig.II.36]. The

[435] Uncovered in August 2018. Massimo Osanna, *Pompei, il tempo ritrovato: le nuove scoperte*. Prima edizione (Milan: Rizzoli, 2019), 270.
[436]Rosella Pace, "Il 'Complesso dei Riti Magici' a Pompeii II, 1, 11-12," *Rivista di studi pompeiani,* Vol. 8 (1997): 78.
[437] Pace, "Il 'Complesso dei Riti Magici' a Pompeii II, 1, 11-12," 83-87.
[438] The paintings were removed from the walls and placed within the *Schola Armaturarum Iuventutis Pompeianae* [III.2.6]. As a result of the 2010 collapse of the building, however, the status of the paintings is unknown, and they are presumably lost or destroyed.
[439] Pace, "Il 'Complesso dei Riti Magici' a Pompeii II, 1, 11-12," 80-81.
[440] The goddess was accompanied by a small Cupid and dolphin near her feet, while she studied her reflection in a mirror.

deity was depicted facing forward wearing a billowing aqua-colored garment, which was lifted in the *anasyrma* pose to reveal Priapus's large erect phallus below. Due to the quality of the photographs, additional details are difficult to discern, but the overall character of the decorative scheme is clear.

First and foremost, the combination of deities at the front of the structure suggests a concern with offering divine guidance or protection when approaching and entering the complex. The use of divine imagery to decorate a religious structure is hardly a surprise, but the combination of Mercury, Bacchus, Venus, and Priapus is unusual. While Priapus is at times depicted with Venus[441] or Bacchus,[442] and occasionally aligned with Mercury,[443] this is of the few occasions on which all four are depicted together.[444] What is more, the Complesso dei Riti Magici is thought to have been a location for the worship of Sabazius, not any of the four gods from the frescoes. A large altar at the rear of the structure, as well as various cult objects found within, including two bronze hands embellished with representations Sabazius and two terracotta vessels decorated with ritual symbols [Fig.II.37], suggest that Sabazius was venerated within the complex.[445] As a place of worship, then, the Complesso dei Riti Magici may have required extra protection on the façade and threshold, provided by the depictions of Mercury, Bacchus, Venus, and especially Priapus.

[441] See, for instance, the painting from the *triclinium* of structure I.13.16 in which Venus gazes at herself in a mirror next to a Priapic statue on a pedestal. The painting is now very faded.
[442] Priapus and Bacchus appear in tandem also at house II.9.1, as I discuss below.
[443] Such as the abovementioned fresco of ithyphallic Mercury from the Casa dei Casti Amanti [IX.12.6].
[444] This grouping of deities may refer to Priapus's divine parentage, said sometimes to be Mercury (Hyg. *Fab.* 160.), and others Venus and Bacchus (Paus. 9.31.2; Diod. Sic. *Bib.Hist.* 4.6).
[444] Paus. 9.31.2; Diod. Sic. *Bib.Hist.* 4.6.
[445] Robert Turcan, "Sabazios à Pompéi." In *Ercolano 1738-1988: 250 anni di ricerca archeologica. Atti del Convegno internazionale (Ravello-Ercolano-Napoli-Pompei, 30 ottobre-5 novembre 1988),* 499-512. Ed. Luisa Franchi Dell'Orto, Italy. Soprintendenza archeologica di Pompei, Centro Universitario Europeo per i Beni Culturali di Ravello (L'erma di Bretschneider: Roma, 1993), 499-512. Originally a Phrygian deity, Sabazius was often conflated with Roman or Greek gods, such as Zeus, Dionysus, or Mercury.

The dual nature of the Priapus paintings is unusual, unprecedented, and likely speaks to the concerns of those who frequented or owned the structure. The twinned Priapic images within a space of transition is reminiscent of the frescoes of the Dioscuri in the Casa dei Dioscuri *fauces* in location and function. In both cases, the images of deities flank visitors at vulnerable junctures of transition. Like the Dioscuri, the dual Priapus paintings were no doubt intended to address the viewer and protect the interior space of the structure. However, unlike the Dioscuri, Priapus was a deity who dispensed well-known threats of bodily harm. Considering the embodied characterization of the wooden Priapi in the *Carmina Priapea*, spectators might have believed that the twinned Priapi were fully capable of making good on the deity's threats of sexual violence. The paired frescoes of Priapus from the Complesso dei Riti Magici and the literary characterization of the deity thus demonstrate that Priapus's efficacy as a protective image is directly linked to his nature as a phallic god, associations with sexual violence, and mythological characteristics.

Priapus's many liminal qualities, communicated in both the written record and the Complesso dei Riti Magici frescoes, would have been emphasized by one's experience of approaching the structure. For one, the location of the paintings within the interior of the front door seems to address those entering the complex. In its final phase, a visitor would approach the structure from the Via di Nocera, first encountering the images of Venus, Mercury, and Bacchus that flanked the front doorway. Likely a providential sight, the images of three divinities on the façade of the complex would have harnessed their collective traits, while reminding viewers of the consequences of their wrath.[446] Then, once within the front door, the visitor would have seen

[446] These deities may also have been chosen due to their associations with Sabazius or the rituals performed within the structure.

the Priapus frescoes, just above eye-level, and peering at the viewer in stereo. Unlike the images of Mercury, Bacchus, and Venus on the façade, the twinned depictions of Priapus in the doorway are more clearly aggressive in their pose and demeanor as they appear on either side of the viewer.

It is no accident that these more aggressive images appear in conjunction with the primary threshold of the structure, a location more vulnerable than the façade of the complex. Here, as with the Casa dei Dioscuri entryway, the images of the deity flank visitors on their way inside the structure, a clear message that the movements of the spectator are being monitored. Although they would have been placed slightly above eye level, the two Priapus paintings appear to stare down at viewers, another clear sign that one is being watched while crossing the threshold. As with the Dioscuri, eye contact with Priapus could signal one's acknowledgement of this fact. Through this reciprocal exchange between divine image and viewer, the paintings would be activated by the onlooker, who would thus become complicit in their own potential punishment.

The pose of the Priapic images conveys a similar message, as the deity's outrageously large and erect phallus would have been aimed very near the eye-level of viewers.[447] While more overtly threatening than the images of the Dioscuri, those of Priapus in the Complesso dei Riti Magici could also symbolize the abundance associated with the deity, signaled by his exposed phallus and the repetition of the image. Once again, it seems, the representation of a divine figure in association with a space of transition works on many levels simultaneously. Both threatening and aligned with the abundance of fertility, the paintings of Priapus that decorate the inner front

[447] Conversely, the location of the phallus could be interpreted as at mouth level, if one remembers Priapus's forceful threats of irrumation.

doorway of the Complesso dei Riti Magici offer a dual form of protection that is mirrored by the pendant images of the deity that flank the entryway.

Moreover, the location of the Complesso dei Riti Magici within the city of Pompeii may have necessitated the protective imagery on its façade and entryway [Fig.II.38]. The main entrance of the complex is located on the Via di Nocera, the street that leads to the Porta Nocera, one of the main points of entry into the city. Such a gate could bring both increased levels of foot traffic and more opportunities for dangerous encounters. In addition to the dangers associated with a major thoroughfare, a large necropolis is also located directly beyond the Porta Nocera. Roman necropoli were aligned with the pollution of death, located outside the city walls, and often associated with witchcraft, prostitution, and other unsavory activities.[448] The Complesso dei Riti Magici, then, could have been understood as particularly vulnerable due to its proximity to the city gate and nearby necropolis, thereby requiring more potent forms of protection around the entryway.

Efficient and effective, the images of Priapus on the threshold of the Complesso dei Riti Magici respond to the particularities of the structure, its location,[449] and the activities that took place therein, while aligning with the methods, aims, and function of similar divine doorway imagery throughout the city. In fact, the multifaceted nature of Priapus appears in two final examples of Priapic doorway imagery also from Pompeii.

[448] Valerie M. Hope, *Death in Ancient Rome: A Source Book* (London: Routledge, 2007), 169; Valerie M Hope and Eireann Marshall, *Death and Disease in the Ancient City*. Routledge Classical Monographs (London: Routledge, 2000), 121. However, Allison Emmerson has recently challenged the idea that Roman necropolis were associated with pollution, Allison L. C. Emmerson, *Life and Death in the Roman Suburb* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

[449] The Complesso dei Riti Magici is situated along the street that leads to the Porta di Nocera, one of the main points of entry into the city. Such a gate could bring both increased levels of foot traffic, and more opportunities for dangerous encounters.

Many vivid new paintings have come to light in the course of recent excavations of Pompeii's *Regio* V undertaken by the Soprintendenza Pompei. Germane to this examination of Priapic imagery is a painting of Priapus that was uncovered in August 2018,[450] which further demonstrates the efficacy of Priapic imagery near doorways or openings [Fig. II.39]. Appearing in the entryway of structure V.6.12, the Priapus painting is remarkably similar to that from the Casa dei Vettii. Like the Vettii Priapus, the image from V.6.12 depicts the deity in nearly identical clothing, with a staff in the crook of his arm, exposing his phallus, and weighing said phallus on a scale. Here too, his phallus is heavier than a bag of money, and a familiar bowl of fruit is depicted near Priapus's feet. The deity appears within a Fourth Style decorative scheme on a white background, and is accompanied by garlands, candelabra, and faux architecture.

The V.6.12 Priapus is, unfortunately damaged, as the face of the figure appears to have been previously removed. However, the similarities between the V.6.12 painting and its Vettii counterpart are striking. Both the details of the new Priapus painting and its location near the entrance of the structure indicate that this image also functioned as both humorous, through the amusing image of weighing his phallus against a bag of money, and threatening, via the well-known punishments of rape to those who cross Priapus or the garden he protects. The many echoes between the Vettii and newly discovered versions of the Priapus painting strongly suggest either a pre-existing model from which both images were derived, or the existence of a particular "type" of Priapic imagery.[451] Both are likely to be true. This, in turn, indicates that decorating the entryway of one's home with an image of Priapus was more common than previously imagined.

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[450] Massimo Osanna, *Pompei, il tempo ritrovato: le nuove scoperte*, 270. For the press release on the new discovery, see http://pompeiisites.org/comunicati/laffresco-di-un-priapo-come-quello-della-nota-casa-dei-vettii-emerge-dagli-scavi-della-regio-v/.

[451] Due to the many similarities between the V.6.12 Priapus and the Vettii fresco, it is possible the composition existed as part of a pattern book. On Roman pattern (or model) books for painting, see Gerhart Rodenwaldt, *Die Komposition der Pompejanischen Wandgemälde*. Edizione anastaticaed (Roma: L'erma di Bretschneider, 1968),

In the case of structure V.6.12, much like the Casa dei Vettii and Complesso dei Riti Magici, the location of the house and viewing experience of the decoration play an important role in understanding the meaning and function of the frescoes associated with the entryway. When approaching the house and entering the *fauces*, the fresco of Priapus quickly and clearly comes into view on the left wall of the entryway. If looking beyond the *fauces* toward the rear of the house, however, a second newly-discovered divine image appears on the east wall of the atrium [Fig.II.40]. Within the fresco, a representation of Mercury standing on a pedestal sits atop a series of stairs and within a pair of open doors.

This image is visible from the front threshold of the home, and beckons visitors into the house, while offering protection for both the home and guest. Once again, such an exchange between viewer and divine representation could both animate and fortify the function of the image as a defensive measure. The presence of Priapus and Mercury, two diverse strategies for engaging with the dangers of liminal space, may be further explained by the location of the house, on the Via del Vesuvio and near the Porta Vesuvio. V.6.12 is thus located on a major road that runs north-south through the city and terminates at the Vesuvian gate [Fig.II.41]. As with the Casa dei Vettii, just two blocks west, proximity to a busy road and gate would have brought increased foot traffic past the house, and numerous opportunities for dangerous interactions.

242-5; W. Kraiker, "Aus dem Musterbuch eines pompejanischen Wandmalers," in *Studies Presented to David Moore Robinson on His Seventieth Birthday*, 801-7. Ed. G.E. Mylonas. Saint Louis: Washington University, 1951), 801-7; Roger Ling, *Roman Painting* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 217-8; and John R. Clarke, "Model-book, Outline-book, Figure-book: New Observations on the Creation of Near-Exact Copies in Romano-Campanian Painting." In *Atti del X Congresso internazionale dell'AIPMA (Associazione internazionale per la pittura murale antica, Naples, 17-21 September 2007, annali di archeologia e storia antica, 18, 1*, 203-214. Ed. Irene Bragantini (Naples: Università degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale," 2010), 203-214. Clarke, specifically, discusses the different possible means by which images could have been reproduced in so similar a fashion to one another. While no definitive proof of pattern books has been uncovered, the close repetition of many designs in Roman painting, and the many instances where the paintings are cut off by the architectural features of the space (i.e. in the peristyle of the Villa dei Misteri), strongly suggest they were commonly used.

What is more, the front entryway of the home is located across from a public fountain,[452] yet another opportunity for friends and foe to gather near the house.

Together with the fresco of Priapus from the Casa dei Vettii, the Priapic fresco from structure V.6.12 suggests that charged images such as those of Priapus weighing his phallus were expressly selected to defend and decorate the entryways of certain domiciles. More specifically, the motif may be tied to structures located at vulnerable junctures within the city. Taking the Vettii Priapus alone, it has been easy to categorize the image as a singular phenomenon, in some cases even derided as the "gauche" taste of freedmen and nouveau riche.[453] While the ownership of V.6.12 remains a question, both the V.6.12 and Vettii Priapus paintings nevertheless underscore the anxiety that accompanied transitional space, and the efficacy of Priapus, as a transgressive, outrageous, comical, and threatening figure in the face of ambiguity.

A final example of Priapic imagery comes from House II.9.1 [Fig. II.42], also known as the Casa di Quietus, which features a painting of Priapus toward the rear of the home [Fig.II.43]. Despite not being positioned near the front entryway of the structure, where depictions of Mercury and Hercules once decorated the entrance corridor, [454] the location of the painting is nevertheless significant. This image of Priapus embellishes one side of a square pillar between a hallway and outdoor *triclinium.*[455] Priapus is dressed in the now-familiar yellow, purple, and

[452] Jeremy Hartnett calls public fountains a "nuisance" for homeowners, who often moved their house facades back from the street when near a fountain. Jeremy Hartnett, "The Power of Nuisances on the Roman Street," in *Rome, Ostia, and Pompeii: Movement and Space*, 135-59. Ed. Ray Laurence and David Newsome (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 150.
[453] Lauren Hackworth Petersen, *The Freedman in Roman Art and Art History* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 50, 88.
[454]Anna Maria Sodo, "Regio II, Insula 9," *Rivista di studi pompeiani* 2 (1988): 198; Antonio Varone, Grete Stefani, and Soprintendenza archeologica di Pompei, *Titulorum Pictorum Pompeianorum qui in cil Vol. Iv collecti sunt: imagines*. Studi della Soprintendenza Archeologica di Pompei, 29 (Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2009), 226. Graffiti CIL IV 9903; 9904.
[455] Sodo, "Regio II, Insula 9," 199.

aqua garments and Phrygian cap, as he lifts his tunic, which is laden with produce.[456] The other three sides of the pillar are decorated with images of Bacchus to the south; a cornucopia on the north side;[457] and a bird with a lyre on the eastern face [Fig.II.44].[458]

As with the other images of Priapus, the location of this painting is significant. For one, it is appropriately situated at the point of transition between two spaces, one of which is an outdoor area that could easily have been conflated with the gardens Priapus was charged with guarding. What is more, the image is visible from the front door of the house, despite being located near the rear of the home. In fact, if peering into the house from the front door, the image is highlighted by the stark contrast between the darkness of the interior space and the natural light of the external *triclinium* [Fig.II.45]. Such a vantage point may even have enhanced the embodied experience of observing the representation of Priapus, as the image appears almost to move as one approaches. In the case of House II.9.1, the painting of Priapus works double duty, guarding two spaces at once through a reciprocal exchange with viewers, a savvy choice by the owners of this modest house.[459]

Once again, the location of the structure relative to the surrounding city of Pompeii may play a role in the nature of its decorative program. House II.9.1 is located one *insula* south of the

[456] The pose of Priapus lifting his tunic to reveal his phallus while supporting a bounty within the folds is one of the most common poses in which the deity is depicted, also known as the *anasyromeons* or *anasyrma* pose. Oldřich Pelikán "Überraschung im Depositar (Ein priapeisches Relief im Donaugebietsmuseum zu Komárno)," *Folia philologica*, Roč. 94, Čís. 2 (1971): 114, and H. Blanck, "Il Maripara. eine Priapstatue in Formello," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts* 86 (1979): 340. See also Ajootian, "The Only Happy Couple: Hermaphrodites and Gender*,"* 221-6.

[457] Priapus, as a deity associated with fertility and abundance, is often depicted with a cornucopia or bowl of fruit. Jacques-Antoine Dulaure, *The Gods of Generation: A History of Phallic Cults among Ancients & Moderns* (New York: Priv. Print., the Panurge Press, 1934), 118.

[458] Similar imagery and symbols have been found in other transitional spaces. See, for instance, the birds above the front doorway of the Casa dei Ceii in Pompeii [I.6.15].

[459] The owners may also be making an interesting parallel between the house's small outdoor *triclinium* and the rustic gardens typically associated with Priapus. In doing so they may be visually and ideologically extending the space of the triclinium to make the house as a whole appear larger. A similar technique can be detected at the Casa di Nettuno e Anfitrite [V.6-7] in Herculaneum, where the owners strategically decorated and utilized the space of the first floor to pack as much splendor into a small space using carefully constructed sightlines.

Complesso dei Riti Magici, and thus also positioned along the Via di Nocera [Fig.II.46]. The structure II.9.1 stands near a major route from the amphitheater (known for its rowdy spectators),[460] and just one *insula* away from the Porta Nocera necropolis. Such a vulnerable location within the urban fabric of the city likely necessitated the use of imagery as potent as a depiction of Priapus, visible from the front door, to deter a wide variety of possible hazards.

As with the other examples considered, the Priapic painting within structure II.9.1 functions simultaneously as threatening, especially from a distance, and representative of the transgressive nature of Priapus's many traits. As a result, Priapus is here an ideal guardian of the ambiguous spaces of the house, where his threatening display warns intruders to stay away, while his own incongruent nature perfectly aligns with the liminality of transitional space. Keeping in mind the protective features and functions of Priapic imagery, I return briefly to the Casa dei Dioscuri to examine one final group of divine images.

From Atrium to Peristyle: Divine Interior Imagery in the Casa dei Dioscuri

Returning to the Casa dei Dioscuri, a series of paintings located around the doorway between the atrium and large peristyle have further resonances for this study. Much like the images of Mercury, Fortuna, and the Dioscuri, these depictions of divine figures and mythological characters function to safeguard the passage between atrium and peristyle and speak broadly to the nature of divine imagery in domestic doorways. A painting of a hermaphrodite that recalls the image of a hermaphrodite over the doorway of Room P from the Casa dei Vettii was formerly situated directly above the doorway opening. The fresco depicts a

[460] Tacitus records the infamous riots in the amphitheater between the Pompeians and Nucerians that broke out in 59 CE. He notes that such brawls were common in such "disorderly country towns." Tac. *Ann.* XIV.17.

hermaphrodite reclining on a leopard skin in a rocky landscape,[461] surrounded by vegetation and an ithyphallic statue [Fig.II.13].[462] The hermaphrodite has just been exposed by a satyr, who raises his hand and looks away in shock and horror as the hermaphrodite calmly touches his arm. On the east (left) side of the doorway was formerly a painting of Apollo with a cithara and a small archaizing statue [Fig.II.11].[463] To the west (right) of the doorway was a depiction of Ceres holding a basket of grain and a long torch [Fig.II.12].[464] All three paintings supplement the program of divine imagery that ornaments the interior of the house.

As the point of transition between atrium and peristyle,[465] the atrium-facing side of the doorway signals a change in space, and therefore, status of the visitor. While perhaps not as overtly vulnerable as the primary entryway of the home, the movement from the contained and familiar space of the atrium to the unfamiliar and more unpredictable space of the peristyle nevertheless could create anxiety for both the visitor and inhabitants of the house. A new guest, entering the peristyle for the first time, would not only be unfamiliar with the space, but also unsure of the activities that might take place within. At the same time, the homeowner, in welcoming guests into a more private part of the house,[466] might have hoped the images that

[461] Helbig, *Wandegemalde dervom Vesuv Verschutteten Stadte Campaniens,* 304-305.
[462] Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Inv. 27700.
[463] Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Inv. 1857, 0415.1.
[464] Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Inv. 9454.
[465] Richard Beacham calls the transition between atrium and peristyle a "symbolic threshold" between public and private. Richard Beacham, *"Otium, Opulentia* and *Opsis:* Setting, Performance and Perception Within the *Mise-En-Scene* of the Roman House," in *Performance in Greek and Roman Theater* Mnemosyne Supplements. Monographs on Greek and Latin Language and Literature, 353, 361-408. Eds. George William Mallory Harrison and Liapēs Vaios (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 361-408, 361.
[466] For an in-depth analysis of the axes between public and private within Roman homes, see Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum,* 28. See also Annapaola Zaccaria Ruggiu, *Spazio privato e spazio pubblico nella città romana*. Collection del''ecole Française de Rome, 210 (Rome: Ecole française de Rome, Palais Farnèse, 1995), esp. 120-228; Kate Cooper, "Closely Watched Households: Visibility, Exposure and Private Power in the Roman 'Domus'," *Past & Present,* no. 197 (2007): 3-33; Leonard Burckhardt, "'Zu Hause Geht alles, wie wir wünschen...'-Privates und Politisches in den Briefen Ciceros." *Klio* 85, no. 1 (2003): 94-113; Mark Grahame, Public and private in the Roman house: the spatial order of the Casa del Fauno" in *Domestic Space in the Roman World: Pompeii and Beyond*, 137-164. Eds. R. Laurence and A. Wallace-Hadrill (Portsmouth: Journal of Roman Archaeology suppl. 22, 1997); Mark Grahame, "Reading the Roman House: The Social Interpretation of Spatial

surrounded the doorway would offer a second line of protection for the more intimate parts of the structure. Both of these concerns were addressed by the images decorating the doorway between the atrium and peristyle.

Of the three frescoes, that of the hermaphrodite speaks most directly to the anxieties associated with transitional space. The image of the hermaphrodite and satyr is simultaneously surprising, humorous, and ambiguous, and may even speak to the fictive rusticity of the peristyle garden.[467] In fact, by perceiving, and thus manifesting, the image above the doorway of the hermaphrodite and satyr, the viewer may have initiated the activation of a scene that could play out within the peristyle garden.

As with the similar painting in the Casa dei Vettii, this image was intended to surprise viewers, and its location is no accident. Just like the unlucky satyr, we are surprised to discover the phallus of the figure, who otherwise, appears like any other nude female. From the panel's original location above the doorway, the hermaphrodite's phallus would have been difficult to detect. However, once one noticed the reaction of the satyr and searched for its cause, the phallus would become conspicuous.[468] No doubt a human viewer would have stopped to study such an image before moving through the doorway into the peristyle. In doing so, the painting may have reminded guests of the ideologies associated with gardens and wilderness, while also encouraging (apotropaic) laughter.

Order," *Theoretical Roman Archaeology Journal*, no. 1993 (1999): 48–74; Elaine K. Gazda and Anne E Haeckl, *Roman Art in the Private Sphere: New Perspectives on the Architecture and Decor of the Domus, Villa, and Insula*. 2nd ed. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2010); Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "The Social Structure of the Roman House;" *Papers of the British School at Rome* 56 (1988): 43–97; Kaius Tuori and Laura Nissin, *Public and Private in the Roman House and Society*. Journal of Roman Archaeology. Supplementary series, 102 (Portsmouth, RI: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 2015).

[467] Katharine T. von Stackelberg, *The Roman Garden: Space, Sense, and Society* (Routledge Monographs in Classical Studies. London: Routledge, 2009), 87-8; von Stackelberg, "Garden Hybrids: Hermaphrodite Images in the Roman House," 406.

[468] John Clarke notes that artists intentional created images of hermaphrodites that would encourage a double take. Clarke, *Looking at Laughter: Humor, Power, and Transgression in Roman Visual Culture, 100 B.c.-A.d. 250*, 179.

Like the Dioscuri in the *fauces*, the owners of the Casa dei Dioscuri selected a mythological figure who possessed dual or indistinct qualities to guard the space between the atrium and peristyle. As neither fully male nor female, simultaneously desirable and off-putting,[469] and with divine associations,[470] the hermaphrodite fresco in the Casa dei Dioscuri reflects the liminality of the doorway over which it once appeared. Hermaphrodites were a popular feature of garden decoration,[471] and many such sculptures were situated within gardens to surprise onlookers.[472] The image of the hermaphrodite and satyr over the threshold between the atrium and peristyle,[473] is therefore even more appropriate in context.

The efficacy of the hermaphrodite fresco above the door of the Casa dei Dioscuri would have been augmented by the images of Apollo and Ceres that accompanied the fresco on the south atrium wall.[474] Both Apollo and Ceres were associated with protection and abundance. Apollo was long associated with medicine and healing, but some of his many epithets explicitly associate the deity with protective qualities. The Greek epithet ἀλεξίκακος (*alexikakos*), for example, means to keep away ill or evil, and Apollo was even at times called Apollo Apotropaios, [475] a title with direct connections to the modern usage of the word "apotropaic". Epithets aside, an integral part of Apollo's character as a Greek god was as an "Averter of

[469] This is assuming a male, heterosexual viewpoint, the intended audience of this work.
[470] See Clarke, *Looking at Laughter: Humor, Power, and Transgression in Roman Visual Culture, 100 B.c.-A.d. 250*, 180.
[471] Von Stackelberg, "Garden Hybrids: Hermaphrodite Images in the Roman House," 396, 407-9, 411.
[472] Clarke specifically calls Hermaphroditus a, "protector of passageway spaces…". Clarke, *Looking at Laughter: Humor, Power, and Transgression in Roman Visual Culture, 100 B.c.-A.d. 250*, 181.
[473] Romizzi, "La Casa dei Dioscuri di Pompei (VI.9.6.7): una nuova lettura," 93.
[474] Two now-lost mythological paintings originally flanked the hermaphrodite fresco. To the left of the hermaphrodite and satyr panel was a scene of Perseus fighting the suitors of Andromeda, and to the right a depiction of the Rape of Europa. Richardson, *Pompeii: The Casa dei Dioscuri and Its Painters*, 15; Helbig, *Wandegemalde dervom Vesuv Verschutteten Stadte Campaniens* 25, 38.
[475] Robert Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens*. Ebsco Academic Collection (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 413-4.

Evil"[476] who was charged with protecting houses from evils.[477] Given the many parallels between Greek and Roman religion and cultural practices, it is highly likely that Apollo served a similar function within the Roman house. His appearance on one side of the peristyle doorway, therefore, draws on his role as protector, ensuring safe passage for visitors, and protection of the home for its inhabitants. In fact, the small archaizing statue near Apollo's feet, may have functioned to remind viewers of his ancient roots and old associations with averting evil.

Ceres, on the right side of the doorway, promised a different kind of security. As a goddess of agriculture and fertility, she assured good fortune and symbolized abundance. The torch and basket of grain with which she is depicted emphasize Ceres's role as bringer of abundance and fertility, but also as a guide. If standing before the doorway, one can see through the middle of the large peristyle thereby previewing some, but not all, of the unknown space beyond [Fig.II.47]. By decorating the doorway between the atrium and peristyle with images of Apollo on one side of the doorway, Ceres on the other, and the hermaphroditic scene above, the owners of the Casa dei Dioscuri employed a wide range of apotropaic imagery. The frescoes on the wall not only physically surrounded the area of the doorway, but also guarded the space using various protective strategies, which became more effective with the complicit animation of the images by viewers.

Much like the frescoes of the Dioscuri in the *fauces* and Mercury and Fortuna on the façade, the paintings that surround the doorway between the atrium and peristyle in the Casa dei Dioscuri employ divine imagery to protect the passageway and draw on a visitor's embodied experience of the images to uphold the safety of transitional areas. As a clear overarching

[476] Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens*, 413-4.
[477] Parker, *Polytheism and Society at Athens*, 20.

concern of the homeowners throughout the domicile, the images associated with spaces of transition within the Casa dei Dioscuri utilize a variety of tactics to avert various threats. Whereas the ambiguous nature of Hermaphroditus encourages laughter and confusion while mirroring the perceived qualities of vulnerable spaces, Apollo and Ceres offer protection through their roles as defensive deities. In confronting spatial ambiguity with visual and ideological ambiguity, the divine images within the Casa dei Dioscuri thus functioned as potent, yet diverse guardians, and underscore the anxieties associated with passage and the Roman house.

Conclusions

In this chapter I have investigated the phenomenon of populating domestic doorways with divine images to investigate the ways in which such imagery functioned within transitional space. In undertaking both an in-depth examination of the Casa dei Dioscuri, and a study of other structures in Pompeii, I have argued that divine doorway imagery engaged with the uncertainty of transitional space through the varied, and at times incongruous, qualities associated with each deity. The chapter has proposed that a viewer's perception and activation of divine representations helped manifest the threats or rewards offered by the presence of such imagery. These images encapsulate some of the many visual approaches taken to defending spatial ambiguity by invoking the associated characteristics of each deity, while also activating the specific locales through a viewer's movements.

The Casa dei Dioscuri offered a range of protective strategies through the divine images that populated its façade, *fauces*, and inner doorways. As a first line of defense, the painting of Mercury and Fortuna on the façade both beckoned guests to enter, but also warned against any actions that might harm the home. Next, the pendant paintings of the Dioscuri in the *fauces* engaged with the ambiguous nature of the space through their own ambiguous and transitional

qualities and visual features. Then, the frescoes between the doorway of the atrium and peristyle further guided a visitor through more private and unfamiliar areas of the home. Together, the divine images in and around doorways within the Casa dei Dioscuri demonstrate a clear concern with guarding the transitional spaces within the home.

The doorway images of Priapus from the Complesso dei Riti Magici, Casa dei Vettii, and structures V.6.12 and II.9.1 functioned much like those from the Casa dei Dioscuri. Not only do they appear in key positions within spaces of transition, the many contradictions inherent within Priapus's characterization in myth, texts, and images rendered him an effective guardian of boundaries. Priapic doorway images safeguarded thresholds through their humorous and obscene qualities, which could become animated through a viewer's embodied experience of the frescoes. The many parallels between the representations of Priapus suggest the existence of an established mode of Priapic doorway imagery, highlighting the efficacy of Priapus as a protective symbol, and the extent of Roman anxieties concerning the threshold.

As this chapter has endeavored to demonstrate, the divine images situated in and around the doorways of Roman homes offered potent protection for spaces of transition beyond their status as goddesses and gods. Both the examples from the Casa dei Dioscuri and those of Priapic paintingd reveal an intentionality inherent in divine doorway imagery that is inextricably linked to the nature of each deity and predicated on a viewer's interaction with the images. Homeowners who decorated their entryways with divine images endeavored to protect a particularly vulnerable junction of their home with imagery activated by the space itself and the movements of viewers. In doing so, these divine images provided protection that was multivalent, flexible, and reflexive, while simultaneously engaging the vulnerabilities of spatial ambiguity on a variety of levels.

Chapter 3: Animals, Transformation, and the Defense of Domestic Doorways

Similar to the divine portrayals discussed in the previous chapter, images of animals were used throughout ancient Campania to defend spaces of passage. This chapter examines two examples of animal images within Pompeian entryways, the Casa dell'Orso Ferito [VII.2.45] and the Domus M. Caesi Blandi [VII.1.40], to examine the efficacy of faunal images, both violent and benign, in guarding spaces of transition.[478] Specifically, I investigate how the qualities associated with each animal rendered them effective guardians of the threshold and determine the ways in which animal images were suited to their architectural and urban contexts.

The images of animals that appear within ancient Roman doorways have often been characterized as broadly protective, owing to their ferocious qualities or familiar role as guards. Yet, deeper contextualization of the images and their surroundings demonstrates that the animals respond to contextual stimuli as a result of their associations with transformation. I consult ancient literature and myth to understand the animals' associations with transformation, alongside analyses of the images and their contexts.[479] By combining studies of images, text, and myth, the chapter takes an interdisciplinary approach to the phenomenon of defensive doorway imagery within ancient Pompeian homes. I argue that by anticipating a viewer's movements and physically engaging onlookers, faunal images could function as active defenders of the home, while also conveying messages about the status of its owners. By closely examining the Casa

[478] It is important to note that the relatively brief discussion of the famous mosaic depictions of guard dogs in this chapter is intentional, as the canine material has been more comprehensively studied than the other examples. Nevertheless, canine images do draw on many of the defensive tools utilized by the animal images in this chapter and help demonstrate the efficacy of protective faunal motifs.

[479] Indeed, Renee M. Gondek and Carrie L. Sulosky Weaver emphasize the importance of images in "facilitating and broadcasting…. transitions." Renee M. Gondek and Carrie L. Sulosky Weaver, "Approaching Transformation," in *The Ancient Art of Transformation: Case Studies from Mediterranean Contexts*, 1-6. Eds. Renee M. Gondek and Carrie L. Sulosky Weaver (Oxford: Oxbow, 2018), 5.

dell'Orso Ferito and Domus M. Caesi Blandi, I demonstrate not only the context-specific nature of each image, but also the ways in which defensive animal representations could be adapted to engage with the ambiguous nature of doorways and protect the household.

Animal Imagery and Pompeian Doorways

While this chapter focuses on the mosaics in the *fauces* of the Casa dell'Orso Ferito and Domus M. Caesi Blandi, the use of faunal images to decorate domestic entrance corridors appears to have been a popular practice in ancient Pompeii. Nearly twenty examples of animal images still decorate the entryways of Pompeian homes, and given the relative rarity of fully intact entrance corridor pavements or wall frescoes in the city, it is likely additional examples once existed. Dogs, birds, wild boar, dolphins, and a bear number among the extant examples and can be found in six of the city's nine *regiones*.[480] Nearly all the images are mosaic, and the overwhelming majority decorate the floor of a domestic *fauces* or *vestibulum*. Certainly, many of the abovementioned animals could have served protective functions through their associations with ferocity or fidelity, but the characteristics aligned with each suggest the animals may have been chosen for reasons other than, or in addition to, their ferocity.

This is supported by the fact that many of the animals that frequently appear within the decorations of the *atria, cubicula, triclinia*, peristyles, and *tablina* of Pompeian homes are not found in entryways. For example, despite their popularity as part of Third and Fourth Style ensembles and interior mosaic pavements, significant images of fish have not been discovered in any of Pompeii's many domestic entryways. Even images of ferocious wild animals such as large cats, which would seem appropriate as heraldic symbols or intimidating motifs, are

[480] See Map 4 in Appendix 1.

extremely rare, as only one example is documented within a Pompeian entrance corridor.[481] It seems, therefore, that the animals chosen for *fauces* and *vestibula* were distinct from those selected to decorate other rooms of a house.

As I argue in more depth below, close analysis of animal images, their surroundings, and Roman attitudes toward certain animals suggests that the species portrayed in Pompeian doorways and corridors were purposefully chosen for their associations with change, transformation, and boundaries. Dogs, for example, have long been associated with guarding doorways, as detailed in Columella's first century CE treatise on farming,[482] but they were also associated with the underworld via the mythical three-headed beast Cerberus who stood before the gates of Hades. Modern scholars have suggested that dogs were associated with death and healing,[483] both transitional states, and Pliny the Elder describes various medicinal and magical uses for canines in his *Naturalis Historia*. Among the treatments Pliny notes that the ashes of a dog's head could cure a variety of ailments[484] and that magicians believed the genitals of a black male dog could be powerful if buried under a threshold.[485] Whether or not Pliny believed in the efficacy of such magic, the connection between dogs and the threshold is noteworthy. Not only does this demonstrate a link between dogs and entryways in superstitious belief and magical

[481] This mosaic is mentioned by Ludwig Goro von Agyagfalva and Fiorelli and apparently decorated the threshold of the front door of the Casa del Leone [VI.17.25]. Ludwig Goro von Agyagfalva, *Wanderungen durch Pompeii* (Wien: Mörschner und Jasper, 1825), 101-2; Giuseppe Fiorelli, *PAH* Vol. I (Neapoli, 1860), 311, addenda 164. In this case the lion was likely selected for its ferocious or heraldic qualities and is thus different from the faunal images found in the entryways of other Pompeian houses. No photographic documentation of this mosaic exists, so little analysis can be done.
[482] Columella, *Rust.* VII.12.1-14.
[483] This claim is based on dogs' association with Asclepius. J. M. C. Toynbee, *Animals in Roman Life and Art. Aspects of Greek and Roman Life* (Ithaca, N.Y: Cornell University Press, 1973), 122-123. The connection between dogs, death, and rebirth is repeated by Christine Morris, "Animals into Art in the Ancient World," in *A Cultural History of Animals in Antiquity*, 175-98. Ed. Linda Kalof (Oxford: Berg, 2011), 196.
[484] Plin. *HN* 29.32; 30.8; 30.18; 30.22; 30.28; 30.35; 30.37; 30.39, to name a few. Pliny also lists a variety of treatments for bites from a mad dog (rabies), i.e., 20.36; 20.46; 29.32, that dog brains could treat broken bones, Plin. *HN* 30.40, and that dog blood could be used to counteract certain poisons, Plin. *HN* 29.14.
[485] Plin. *HN* 30.24. See also Plin. *HN* 30.24, where he states that magicians believed dog blood and bile could work as a "counter-charm" for homes. Pliny does, however, make his low opinion of magicians known. Plin. *HN* 30.1.

practices, but it also characterizes canines, or parts thereof, as physical and spiritual protectors of the doorway.

Similar connections to transition exist with birds and wild boar. Birds were able to quickly transition between air and land, nimbly moving between realms and suddenly changing their physical forms.[486] Some birds could even speak, thus toeing the line between animal and human. Wild boar, meanwhile, could be a fearsome animal to hunt in the wild or face in the arena. In particular, the wild boar kept in Roman *vivaria* (animal enclosures) would have existed simultaneously as wild and tame; wild as they had not been domesticated, but tame in that they had been captured and confined.

Thus, far from being the only two examples of protective animal images within domestic entryways, the *fauces* mosaics in the Casa dell'Orso Ferito and Domus M. Caesi Blandi represent just two of many extant examples from ancient Campania and belong to a wider phenomenon of doorway images that provided dynamic protection. The Casa dell'Orso Ferito and Domus M. Caesi Blandi present two particularly well-preserved examples that demonstrate the range and adaptability of the defensive animal motif. While different in tone and foci, both mosaics draw on the perceived transformational characteristics of each animal to defend a passageway and engage anxieties surrounding spatial ambiguity.

[486] Birds often appear as frescoes above major doorways, such as at the Casa dei Ceii [I.6.15], rather than as mosaic pavements in an entrance corridor. This may have something to do with their ability to fly, or perhaps their cages were even hung in ancient Roman doorways, as Petronius seems to suggest in the *Satyricon*, Petron. *Sat.* 28.

The Casa dell'Orso Ferito

The Casa dell'Orso Ferito[487] [VII.2.45] (first excavated 1865)[488] is located in *Regio* VII on the west side of Pompeii [Fig. III.1].[489] The house is situated between the Forum and the Via Stabiana, and near a bend in the irregularly-shaped *insula*. It was constructed and decorated in

[487] For a list of other names given to VII.2.45 see Liselotte Eschebach and Jürgen Müller-Trollius, *Gebäudeverzeichnis und Stadtplan der antiken Stadt Pompeji* (Köln: Böhlau, 1993), 262. Graffiti was found in the atrium of the house near the doorway of VII.2.44, CIL IV 1679. See Karl Zangemeister and Istituto di corrispondenza archeologica, *Bullettino dell'Istituto di corrispondenza archeologica: 1865-1866* (Italy, 1866), 184-5; Matteo Della Corte, *Case ed abitanti di Pompei* (Napoli: Fausto Fiorentino, 1965), 180; Alison Cooley and M. G. L Cooley, *Pompeii: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 2004), 162.

[488] Breton, *Pompeia décrite et dessinée*, 414; Thomas Henry Dyer, *Pompeii: Its History, Buildings, and Antiquities. An Account of the Destruction of the City, with a Full Description of the Remains, and of the Recent Excavations, and Also an Itinerary for Visitors* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1875), 472. Excavated again in 1868, Eschebach and Müller-Trollius, *Gebäudeverzeichnis und Stadtplan der antiken Stadt Pompeji*, 263.

[489] See Giuseppe Fiorelli, "Descrizione dei nuovi scavi," in *Giornale degli scavi di Pompei,* 1-14. Eds. Giuseppe Fiorelli and Scuola archeologica di Pompei. Napoli: Tip. italiana nel Liceo V. Emanuele, 1865), 2-14; Giuseppe Fiorelli, *Gli scavi di Pompei dal 1861 al 1872* (Napoli: Tipografia italiana nel liceo V. Emanuele, 1873), 153; Wolfgang Helbig, "Scavi di Pompei," *Bullettino dell'Istituto di corrispondenza archeologica: 1865,* 228-35. Ed. Wolfgang Helbig and Istituto di corrispondenza Archeologica (Italy, 1865), 230-4; Wolfgang Helbig, *Die Wandgemälde der vom Vesuv Verschütteten Städte Campaniens* (Leipzig, 1868), 119 (no. 520), 120 (no. 524), 121 (no. 530), 125 (no. 558), 213 (no. 1060), 299 (no. 1349), 399 (nos. 1590, 1596), 400 (no. 1602), 418-9 (no. 1759), 421 (no. 1778); Breton, *Pompeia décrite et dessinée*, 414-8; Giuseppe Fiorelli, *Descrizione di Pompei* (Napoli: Tipografia Italiana, 1875), 197-8; Marion Elizabeth Blake, "The Pavements of the Roman Buildings of the Republic and Early Empire," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 8 (1930): 44, 95, 105, 108, 111, 117, 122; Erich Pernice, *Pavimente und Figürliche Mosaiken. Die Hellenistische Kunst in Pompeji*, Bd. 6 (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1938), 98-9, 135, 139, 141, 143-4, 148; Amedeo Maiuri, *L'ultima fase edilizia di Pompei* (Campania Romana, 2. Roma: Ist. di Studi Romani, 1942), 126, 186; Karl Schefold, *Die Wände Pompejis: Topographisches Verzeichnis der Bildmotive* (Berlin: DeGruyter, 1957), 175; Della Corte, *Case ed abitanti di Pompei*, 179-80, 188; Hans Eschebach, Liselotte Eschebach, and Josef Adamiak. *Pompeji: erlebte antike welt* (Leipzig: Seemann, VEB, 1978), 306; John R. Clarke, *Roman Black-and-White Figural Mosaics* (New York: College Art Association of America, 1979), 32, 37; Irene Bragantini, "Tra il III e il IV stile: ipotesi per l'identificazione di una fase della pittura pompeiana," in *Pompei, 1748-1980: t tempi della documentazioni: [mostra presentata nel] Foro Romano, Curia Senatus, Luglio-Settembre 1981 [e nel] Pompei, Antiquarium, Ottobre 1981*, 106-118. Eds. Curia Senatus (Rome, Italy), Antiquarium (Pompei, Italy), Istituto centrale per il catalogo e la documentazione (Italy), Soprintendenza archeologica delle provincie di Napoli e di Caserta, and Italy. Soprintendenza archeologica di Roma. Roma: Multigrafica, 1981), 175. See also Wolfgang Ehrhardt, Peter Grunwald, and Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, *Casa dell'Orso: (VII 2, 44-46)*. Häuser in Pompeij, Bd. 2 (München: Hirmer Verlag, 1988); Irene Bragantini, "VII 2, 45 Casa dell'Orso," in *PPP*, Vol. III, 85-94. Eds. Irene Bragantini, Mariette De Vos, Franca Parise Badoni, and Valeria Sampaolo (Roma: Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali, Istituto centrale per il catalogo e la documentazione, 1986); Wolfgang Ehrhardt, "VII 2, 44-46 Casa dell'Orso," in *PPM*, Vol. VI, 742-85. Eds. G. P. Carratelli and I. Baldassarre (Roma: Istituto della enciclopedia italiana, 1994); Katherine D.M. Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 307-9.

the mid-first century CE (ca. 40-60 CE)[490] and the plan of the house is small and atypical.[491] The entrance of the Casa dell'Orso Ferito is flanked by two shops, and the façade was once decorated with recessed concentric rectangular panels in molded stucco, only fragments of which remain in situ today.

The façade of the Casa dell'Orso Ferito forms an obtuse angle to follow the irregular V-shaped tip of the *insula* where the house is located. The west half of the façade is therefore situated further north than the eastern half and necessitates a diagonally-oriented front threshold to join the two walls. Just past the threshold, the *fauces* of the Casa dell'Orso Ferito is angled to the west and decorated with mosaic and fresco.[492] A vivid mid-first century CE polychrome mosaic appears enclosed in a black box just past the threshold [Fig. II.2].[493] The mosaic depicts a bear wounded by a spear with an inscribed greeting.[494] Beyond the so-called "orso ferito" (wounded bear) from which the house derives its name, the remainder of the *fauces* floor is decorated in a geometric pattern of white rectangles defined by lines of black *tesserae,* reminiscent of courses of brick or stone [Fig. III.3].[495] The walls of the passageway are

[490] Ehrhardt, "VII 2, 44-46 Casa dell'Orso," 742. For more on the phasing of the house see Eschebach and Müller-Trollius, *Gebäudeverzeichnis und Stadtplan der antiken Stadt Pompeji,* 263; Ehrhardt, *Casa dell'Orso: (VII 2, 44-46),* 57-71.
[491] The irregular plan of the house includes two *triclinia* within a relatively small space, rooms with diagonally-oriented walls, and corners that form acute angles. These features suggest the house may have been constructed within the space between two pre-existing structures. For an in-depth description of the house shortly after it was excavated. See Helbig, "Scavi di Pompei," 230-234.
[492] For a detailed description of the *fauces* see Ehrhardt, *Casa dell'Orso: (VII 2, 44-46),* 20-5. The *fauces* is approximately six meters long. Ehrhardt, "VII 2, 44-46 Casa dell'Orso," 743.
[493] Dunbabin dates the pavements to 40-62 CE. Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World,* 307.
[494] Barbara Rizzo, "Limina: la decorazione figurata delle soglie musive a Pompei," *Orizzonti: rassegna di archeologia* VIII (2007): 106.
[495] Ehrhardt proposes this design was meant to mimic *opus sectile*. Ehrhardt, "VII 2, 44-46 Casa dell'Orso," 746.

embellished with fresco in yellow and red panels,[496] much of which has been preserved [Fig. III.4].[497]

Little of the atrium fresco has been preserved and the sections of plaster that have survived are almost entirely faded.[498] The geometric-patterned mosaic pavement, however, remains vivid. A black and white checkerboard-patterned mosaic with intermittent squares is situated between the entrance corridor and *impluvium*, and a guilloche pattern surrounds the *impluvium* in black and white *tesserae* [Fig. III.5].[499] The remainder of the atrium floor is decorated in a variety of black and white geometric patterns, some of which appear in irregularly-shaped bands. There are three rooms along the west side of the atrium,[500] and a fourth occupies the far north corner.[501]

[496] Parts of the *fauces* decoration were repaired after the 62 CE earthquake. Ehrhardt, "VII 2, 44-46 Casa dell'Orso," 742.
[497] The dado zone features patterned lines and garlands in between small vignettes delineated by carpet borders and containing figures and fantastic animals, all on a bright cinnabar background. In the primary zone, yellow panels with central *Erotes* flank narrow panels featuring faux architecture and elaborate candelabra. Breton describes these paintings as stretched yellow curtains with painted panels featuring nude figures. Breton, *Pompeia décrite et dessinée*, 415. Unfortunately, the secondary zone does not survive, but it is likely to have continued many of the motifs from and dado and primary zones. See Ehrhardt, "VII 2, 44-46 Casa dell'Orso," 746-52 on the *fauces* frescoes.
[498] Ehrhardt, *Casa dell'Orso: (VII 2, 44-46)*, 16-20. Originally, the walls were painted with fauns and Bacchantes (Breton, *Pompeia décrite et dessinée*, 415), as well as a medallion with a nymph and satyr (Dyer, *Pompeii: Its History, Buildings, and Antiquities. An Account of the Destruction of the City, with a Full Description of the Remains, and of the Recent Excavations, and Also an Itinerary for Visitors*, 472). See also Helbig, "Scavi di Pompei," 231-232.
[499] Ehrhardt, *Casa dell'Orso: (VII 2, 44-46)*, 18.
[500] One room leads to a larger street-facing room. Breton notes this room originally contained a wooden chest. Breton, *Pompeia décrite et dessinée*, 416. Ehrhardt, *Casa dell'Orso: (VII 2, 44-46)*, 35. The other three rooms are a small *cubiculum* with extant fresco fragments and elaborate polychrome pavement (Ehrhardt, *Casa dell'Orso: (VII 2, 44-46)*, 37-40), and a room that once contained a staircase (Ehrhardt, *Casa dell'Orso: (VII 2, 44-46)*, 40-4).
[501] Decorated with fragments of a black dado and white primary zone on the walls. Ehrhardt calls this room a cabinet. Ehrhardt, *Casa dell'Orso: (VII 2, 44-46)*, 47.

Two *triclinia*[502] and one small *cubiculum* occupy the opposite (east) side of the atrium.[503] Just north of the atrium is a narrow *tablinum* featuring a mosaic with a meander border enclosing a band of interlocking knots, which in turn surrounds a yellow and grey rectangle of bright *opus sectile*. Finally, beyond the *tablinum* there is a small courtyard with a modest garden and a large, impressive *nymphaeum* embellished with vivid polychrome mosaic *tesserae* and shells that form water-themed figural designs [Fig. III.6].[504] Behind the *nymphaeum*, on the far north wall of the Casa dell'Orso Ferito, there is a large fresco depicting garden scenes, garlands, and a tree between a wild boar[505] and dog[506] [Fig. III.7].[507] Given the elaborate interior décor that ornaments the Casa dell'Orso Ferito, it is clear the inhabitants of the house took great pains to embellish their home, and the mosaic of the wounded bear in the entryway would have been the first image a viewer glimpsed when preparing to enter.

The wounded bear mosaic from the Casa dell'Orso Ferito is vivid, gory, and complex. Confined within a black mosaic border and situated against a white tessellated background, the

[502] Ehrhardt, *Casa dell'Orso: (VII 2, 44-46)*, 25-34. This room features floor decoration consisting of black and white mosaic squares of various geometric designs, with a central polychrome *opus sectile emblematum*. The walls of the *triclinium* are painted in red and white panels with mythological vignettes, including one of Narcissus (Helbig, *Die Wandgemälde dervom Vesuv Verschütteten Städte Campaniens*, 299, no. 1349), and a second depicting Danae and Perseus. For a full description of the paintings originally within this room see Breton, *Pompeia décrite et dessinée*, 415.

[503] Ehrhardt, *Casa dell'Orso: (VII 2, 44-46)*, 31-2.

[504] The *nymphaeum* is embellished with shells and brightly colored *tesserae.* Poseidon is portrayed within the niche among various fish, and above, Venus reclines in a shell. Eroti and gorgon heads appear on either side of the niche, and a snaky-legged Triton decorates the pediment. Ehrhardt, *Casa dell'Orso: (VII 2, 44-46)*, 48-53; Breton, *Pompeia décrite et dessinée*, 418. Norman Neuerburg, *L'architettura delle fontane e dei ninfei nell'Italia antica*. Memorie dell'accademia di archeologia lettere e belle arti di Napoli, 5 (Napoli: Macchiaroli, 1965), 128. Frank B. Sear, *Roman Wall and Vault Mosaics* (Heidelberg: F.H. Kerle, 1977), 77.

[505] A similar scene with a wild boar and large feline has recently been discovered near a vivid *lararium* in the so-called Casa con Sontuoso Larario [V.3.12] in Pompeii, excavated 2018.

[506]The dog has alternatively been identified as a wolf by the Soprintendenza di Pompei (http://pompeiisites.org/sito_archeologico/casa-dellorso-ferito/). Whether the animal is a dog or wolf has no bearing on the overall meaning of the fresco.

[507] Dyer identifies these as two wild boar, but it appears he is mistaken. Dyer, *Pompeii: Its History, Buildings, and Antiquities. An Account of the Destruction of the City, with a Full Description of the Remains, and of the Recent Excavations, and Also an Itinerary for Visitors*, 472. See Maria Theresia Andreae, "Tiermegalographien in Pompejanischen gärten. Die sogenannten paradeisos darstellungen," *Rivista di studi pompeiani* 4 (1990): 78.

eponymous bear crouches on an indiscriminate patch of earth. The bear's head is bowed toward its lifted front right paw, which grasps the broken-off shaft of a spear. The rest of the yellow spear has been sunken into the side of the bear, from which spills blood, defined by bright red and orange *tesserae*.[508] The bear's bodily position appears pained, and it seems clear it has lost the fight.[509] Above the bear, the Latin greeting "HAVE" (welcome) is inscribed in black *tesserae*.

The appearance of a wounded bear near the threshold of the home is a surprising choice, at least to the modern eye. In fact, although bears and transition might not seem an obvious pairing, ancient myth, literary sources, and ritual do align bears with in-between-ness. In this way, the selection of a wounded bear to decorate the front threshold of the Casa dell'Orso Ferito was neither random nor inconsequential. Rather, the mosaic was purposefully selected for the space in which it appears as a result of ursine links to transformation, ambiguity, and status.

Roman Bears: A Brief Overview

From jet bear figurines in Roman Britain[510] to late-imperial bear-shaped vessels,[511] ursine representations have been discovered throughout the Roman Empire. Images of bears were especially popular in third and fourth century CE North African arena mosaics,[512] but they also

[508] Significantly, Helbig notes that he had seen a similar motif on a lamp from Capua, in the collection of a "signor Simmaco Doria" at Santa Maria. Helbig, "Scavi di Pompei," 231.
[509] Shelby Brown remarks that Romans were not often empathetic toward animals or even humans in the arena. Thus, despite the painted expression of the bear, it is unlikely viewers of the mosaic felt empathy toward the bear. Shelby Brown, "Death as Decoration: Scenes from the Arena on Roman Domestic Mosaics," in *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome*, 180-211. Ed. Amy Richlin (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992) 185, 208.
[510] Nina Crummy, "Bears and Coins: The Iconography of Protection in Late Roman Infant Burials," *Britannia* 41 (2010): 38-50, 56-60.
[511] Fourth to third century BCE, bronze. Now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, MA, Inv. 62.1203.
[512] Such as the so-called Magerius Mosaic, which commemorates games given by a man called Magerius. Smirat, 3rd century CE, now in the Sousse Museum. Katherine M. D. Dunbabin, *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa: Studies in Iconography and Patronage*. Oxford Monographs on Classical Archaeology (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 65-

decorate Pompeian homes. [513] Such representations often take the form of domestic wall frescoes portraying a hunt, and although images of bears do not appear within Campanian domestic structures as frequently as other animals such as birds,[514] ursine representations could enhance the splendor of a home and thrill of a hunting scene.

Beyond the visual material, bears occupied a special place within the lives and imaginations of the ancient Romans. Brown bears, which were native to Italy,[515] were well-known in Rome and frequently featured in popular forms of entertainment. A Roman citizen might expect to encounter bears in the arena, where they were hunted or trained for spectacle.[516] Ancient texts describe how to catch live bears,[517] and after they were captured the bears could be used both in arena shows and the hunting expeditions of the elite. Several emperors were known to have hunted bears for sport,[518] as demonstrated by a Hadrianic tondo now on the Arch of

9; Azedine Beschaouch, "La mosaïque de chasse à l'amphithéâtre découverte à Smirat en Tunisie," *Comptes-rendus des séances de l'année – Académie des inscriptions et belles-lettres* 110, no. 1 (1966): 134–57.

[513] Bears appear in the Casa della Caccia Antica [VII.4.48], Casa dei Gladiatori [V.5.3], Casa di Marcus Lucretius Fronto [V.4.A], Casa Lucrum Gaudium [VI.14.29], and the Casa dell'Efebo [I.7.12]. A bear may also exist as part of the decoration of the peristyle of the Casa di Romulo e Remo [VII.7.10]. Helbig writes that a painting with a bear and boar once decorated the garden of the Casa della Caccia Nuova [VII.10.3]. Helbig, *Wandgemälde dervom Vesuv Verschütteten Städte Campaniens*, 398, no. 1583, 1584. For more on megalographic animal frescoes in Pompeian houses, see Andreae, "Tiermegalographien in Pompejanischen gärten. Die sogenannten paradeisos darstellungen," 45-124.

[514] Mette Moltesen, "Three Little Bears," in *Ancient History Matters. Studies Presented to Jens Erik Skydsgaard on His Seventieth Birthday* (Analecta Romana Instituti Danici. Supplementum, 30), 277-87. Eds. Karen Ascani, Vincent Gabrielsen, Kirsten Kvist, and Anders Holm Rasmussen (Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2002) 283. Bears are occasionally depicted on Roman funerary monuments and sarcophagi. Moltesen, "Three Little Bears," 285.

[515] Sian Lewis and Llyod Llewellyn-Jones, *The Culture of Animals in Antiquity: A Sourcebook with Commentaries* (Milton Park, Abingdon: Routledge/Taylor & Francis Group, 2018), 316; Moltesen, "Three Little Bears," 280. Bears are said to have been especially populous in Lucania. Kenneth F. Kitchell Jr., *Animals in the Ancient World: From A to Z* (Abingdon, Oxon; New York, NY: Routledge, 2017), 12; Toynbee, *Animals in Roman Life and Art*, 93.

[516] Mart. *Spect.* 104, Toynbee, *Animals in Roman Life and Art*, 16, 93. The use of bears in spectacle is further confirmed by the discovery of bronze figurines depicting harnessed bears, Moltesen, "Three Little Bears," 280. See, for example, the bronze vessel in the shape of a bear, depicted with a harness. Now in the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Roman, fourth-third century BCE, Inv. 62.1203. Bears could also, on occasion, be hunted for consumption. Michael Mackinnon, "Hunting," in *The Oxford Handbook of Animals in Classical Thought and Life.* Oxford Handbooks in Classics and Ancient History, 203-15. Ed. Gordon Lindsay (Corby: Oxford University Press, 2014), 207. Bears could also be used to perform executions. Mart. *Spect*. 7.

[517] Opp. *Cyn.* 4.354-424. There was even a specific title given to those who trapped bears, *ursarii*, as recorded by military inscriptions. Christopher Epplett, "The Capture of Animals by the Roman Military," *Greece & Rome* 48, no. 2 (2001): 214.

[518] Moltesen, "Three Little Bears," 282.

Constantine [Fig. III.8].[519] On the tondo, the emperor is carved in relief on horseback with his right arm raised, ready to strike. A tree branch appears behind Hadrian (now re-carved as Constantine), who is accompanied by two additional men on horseback. Below his rearing horse is a now-headless bear with shaggy fur, perched on its own groundline. The tondo illustrates a clear message of Hadrian's hunting prowess, in addition to his elite status,[520] a feature often associated with ursine representations.[521]

In addition to hunting, a handful of emperors are also believed to have kept bears as pets.[522] The *Historia Augusta*, for instance, reports that Elagabalus kept a tame pet bear.[523] Valerian is similarly said to have owned two bears,[524] Mica Aurea and Innocentia, which may have been kept in cages near the emperor's bedroom.[525] Of course, the possession of pet bears by two emperors, one known for his eccentric lifestyle, is not indicative of general attitudes towards the animal in the first century CE. It does, however, demonstrate an alignment of bears with elite and imperial activities.

Women, Bears, and Transformation in Ancient Myth

In addition to the biographies of Roman emperors and other elite figures, bears carried a host of associations, as illuminated by ancient myth and literary sources. While not indicative of

[519] Hadrian was known to have killed bears while hunting in both Boeotia and Mysia (Toynbee, *Animals in Roman Life and Art*, 93). A Hadrianic coin minted in Hadrianotherae, Mysia (117-138 CE), even depicts the profile of a she-bear on the reverse to commemorate the Mysian hunt. Perhaps the tondo conveys a message the emperor's hunting abilities and abilities as a ruler, while also alluding to real events.
[520] Toynbee, *Animals in Roman Life and Art*, 93.
[521] Outside of Rome, such shows were held by the local elite. Toynbee, *Animals in Roman Life and Art*, 19.
[522] Sen. *Ira*. 2.31.6. Aelian notes that bears were difficult to domesticate. Ael. *NA*. 4.45.
[523] *Hist. Aug. Elagabalus*, 25.1-2.
[524] Amm. Marc. *History*, 29.3.9. Toynbee lists other known names of Roman bears, some of which come from mosaics. J. M. C. Toynbee, "Beasts and Their Names in the Roman Empire," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 16 (1948): 35-36.
[525] Innocentia is said to have been released back into the forest as a reward for her service. Amm. Marc., *History*, 29.3.9.

actual lived practice or experience, the mythical associations of bears in the ancient Mediterranean provide insight into Roman beliefs about the animal. Bears appear in a handful of Greek myths, which would no doubt have inflected Roman understanding of the *ursus*, especially among the educated elite. The most famous mythical bear was Callisto, a former nymph of Artemis, who was raped and impregnated by Zeus. In Ovid's version of the tale, when Diana (Artemis) discovers Callisto is pregnant, the goddess expels her from the group. Callisto gives birth to a son, Arcas, and is then turned into a bear by the jealous Juno (Hera).[526] Later in life, still a bear, Callisto is nearly killed by her son Arcas, but Jupiter (Zeus) intercedes at the last moment. To prevent the matricide, he places Callisto and Arcas among the stars as the constellations Ursa Major and Minor.[527]

The theme of transition plays a key role through all phases of Callisto's story. Zeus transforms himself into Artemis, Callisto is turned into a bear, and finally Callisto and Arcas are transformed into constellations at the end of the tale. In addition to Callisto, connections with transition recur in other myths concerning bears. In nearly every case, a woman is associated with a bear and transition, or a female bear offers help at a pivotal moment.[528] These myths include the story of Polyphonte, who is cursed with lust for a bear, and who is eventually transformed into a *strix.*[529] Here too, the story aligns a female character with transformation, bears, and deities.[530] The connection between Artemis, who appears in both myths, and bears

[526] While Ovid and Pausanias claim it was Juno who turned Callisto into a bear (Ov. *Me*t. 2.409-531; Paus. 8.3.6) in other versions of the myth her transformation was a result of Artemis/Diana's rage (Hes. *Astronomia*, Frag. 3), or even Zeus/Jupiter himself (Apollod. *Bibl*. 3.100).
[527] Ov. *Met*. 2.409-531.
[528] In addition to Artemis/Diana, Callisto, and Polyphonte, bears appear elsewhere in mythology. Bears also feature in myth as the savior of Atalanta who was suckled by a she-bear after she was abandoned as a child. Apollod. *Bibl*. 3.9.2.
[529] Ant. Lib. *Met.* 21.
[530] Laura Cherubini, "The Virgin, the Bear, the Upside-Down Strix: An Interpretation of Antoninus Liberalis 21," *Arethusa* 42, no. 1 (2009): 79. Cherubini notes that he would have been following a fourth century BCE version by

may even have had resonances in actual Greek religious practice. At the shrine of Artemis at Brauron, young girls called *arktoi* (little bears) were said to act as she-bears in honor of the goddess in part of a coming-of-age ceremony associated with transformation.[531] Whether or not the first century CE inhabitants of Campania were familiar with the Brauron *arkteia*, the myths aligning bears with transition are nevertheless significant.[532]

The *Ursus* in Ancient Literature

Beyond myth, ancient literary sources provide further context for Roman attitudes towards bears and their connections to transition. While much of what ancient authors wrote about bears has been proven false, the texts help establish what elite Romans believed about bears in the first century CE.

Writing more or less contemporaneously with the decoration of the Casa dell'Orso Ferito, Pliny the Elder includes many insights about bears in the *Naturalis Historia*. Within the text, Pliny provides a lengthy discussion of the mating, child-rearing, and hibernation habits of bears.[533] His account is heavily influenced by his predecessor Aristotle, the latter of whom

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Boios (*Ornithogonia*). Cherubini, "The Virgin, the Bear, the Upside-Down Strix: An Interpretation of Antoninus Liberalis 21," 78.

[531] The girls are thought to have been from ages 10-15. Paula Perlman, "Acting the She-Bear for Artemis," *Arethusa* 22, no. 2 (1989): 111, 118. Michel Pastoureau suggests that this tradition took place from the 6th century BCE through the Hellenistic period. Michel Pastoureau and George Holoch, *The Bear: History of a Fallen King* (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011), 29. The transformation of the girls from maidenhood to eligible for marriage is thought to have mirrored the transformation experienced by bears while hibernating. Perlman, "Acting the She-Bear for Artemis," 123, 126. Archaeological work at the shrine at Brauron uncovered pottery fragments decorated with images of running and dancing girls and bears, which Lily Kahil argues prove the rituals with *arktoi* discussed in the Lysistrata (Aristoph. *Lys*. 641-7) really did happen at Brauron. Lily Kahil, *Quelques vases du sanctuaire d'Artémis à Brauron*. Antike Kunst (Olten: Urs Graf-Verlag, 1963), 13-14; Lilly Kahil, "Autour de l'Artémis Attique," *Antike Kunst* 8, No. 1 (1965): 20-33; John Papadimitriou. "The Sanctuary of Artemis at Brauron," *Scientific American* 208, no. 6 (1963): 118.

[532] In most cases, the transformation of a human into an animal is framed as a punishment. Chiara Thumiger, "Metamorphosis: Human into Animals," in *The Oxford Handbook of Animals in Classical Thought and Life.* Oxford Handbooks in Classics and Ancient History, 294-309. Ed. Gordon Lindsay (Corby: Oxford University Press, 2014), 294.

[533] Pliny claims that after mating, female bears enter a cave alone, where they give birth to cubs, which are born shapeless and licked into shape by their mother. Plin. *HN*. 8.54.

attributed many human characteristics to bears, including drinking by gulping,[534] possessing five toes,[535] and walking on two legs.[536] Although Pliny focuses on the transformative qualities of hibernation and motherhood,[537] he does repeat some of the connections between men and bears made by Aristotle.[538] Pliny also lists medicinal uses for bears, including the use of bear fat to help prevent balding[539] and to cure leg ulcers.[540] Thus, it appears that ancient attitudes towards bears were linked to the notion of transition and motherhood, as evidenced by Pliny's interest in hibernation, birth, and medicinal applications. Of course, Pliny the Elder was not the only ancient writer to discuss bears, however, his account provides a useful overview of the status and characteristics of the *ursus* in elite Roman thought.

The various human characteristics ascribed to bears by ancient writers indicate that bears were considered similar to humans as an intermediary between wildness and civilization.[541] It is no wonder, then, that the myths discussed above concern humans transforming into bears, or vice versa. Along with the notion of transformation aligned with ursine hibernation and motherhood,[542] the place of the animal within the wild and tame dichotomy demonstrates that bears were aligned with various types of transition in the Roman imagination. Although these ideas represent elite characterizations of bears, it is likely that many of these ideas filtered down

[534] Arist. *Hist. An.* VIII.VI.595a 10.
[535] Arist. *Hist. An.* II.I.498a 35.
[536] Arist. *Hist. An.* VIII.VI 594b 18-19.
[537] Oppian, supposed author of the *Cynegetica,* similarly writes about how mother and cubs survive hibernation, a liminal period in which they do not eat. Opp. *Cyn*. III.170-81. Oppian was also interested in ursine habits, and notes that bears were cunning and fierce, with hands and feet like those of men. Opp. *Cyn*. III.141-2. He believed that female bears are particularly lustful, and as a result, her cubs are born only half-formed, and licked into shape. Opp. *Cyn*. III.144-6; 149-51; 159-60; 168-9. As he was writing well after the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius, Oppian's work should not be used as a window into first century CE Roman thought. Nevertheless, it is possible that some of his ideas were circulating in the early Imperial period.
[538] Plin. *HN*, 8.54.
[539] Plin. *HN*, 8.54.
[540] Plin. *HN*, 28.74. He also notes that the consumption of a bear's testes can help cure epilepsy, Plin. *HN* NH 28.63. On other ailments cured with bear parts, see Plin. *HN*, 28.52; 28.56; 28.71.
[541] Perlman, "Acting the She-Bear for Artemis," 121.
[542] Moltesen, "Three Little Bears," 281; Perlman, "Acting the She-Bear for Artemis," 122.

in some form to the lower echelons of Roman and Pompeian society. Thus, whether the decision to decorate the *fauces* of the Casa dell'Orso Ferito was directly influenced by elite Roman characterizations of bears, the ideas that bears hibernate in the winter, emerge transformed, and possess human-like qualities may have existed as a facet of popular knowledge.

Unravelling the Wounded Bear Mosaic

Together, the qualities ascribed to bears in ancient texts and myth help modern viewers understand why the mosaic of a wounded bear was chosen to decorate the entryway of the Casa dell'Orso Ferito in Pompeii. As creatures associated with transformation by means of hibernation and mythological tradition, and that toe the threshold between civilization and the wild, the bear seems an appropriate motif to appear in conjunction with the front threshold of the home. Like the painted representations of deities examined in Chapter Two, the Casa dell'Orso Ferito mosaic appears to confront the liminal space of a passageway with a figure that itself possesses transitional or transformational qualities. In other words, the mosaic represents another example of engaging one type of ambiguity with another.

Although we know nothing about the status or erudition of the owner of the Casa dell'Orso Ferito, bears are likely to have appeared in the Pompeian amphitheater.[543] Given the ubiquity of bears in the Roman arena and the frequent juxtaposition of the life and death of animals as part of the spectacle, the homeowner is likely to have seen a bear at least once in their life and been familiar with the tenuous mortality of captured bears. Furthermore, the mythical resonance of bears and transformation might have been known to the inhabitants of the Casa

[543] Anthony King, "Mammals: Evidence from Wall Paintings, Sculpture, Mosaics, Faunal remains, and Ancient Literary Sources," in *The Natural History of Pompeii,* 401-450. Wilhelmina F. Jashemski and Frederick G. Meyer (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 446.

dell'Orso Ferito, where familiarity with mythological traditions is reflected in depictions of Narcissus, Danaë, and Perseus that decorate the southeastern *triclinium* of the house.

It is also worth considering the injury the bear has suffered [Fig. III.9].[544] While a healthy bear might be an appropriate image in the *fauces*, what do the wounds indicate about the function of the image? A few details from within the mosaic can provide some context to address this question. The spear depicted in yellow *tesserae* indicates that the bear was hunted and wounded by a human, likely within the arena. The fact that nearly all known Roman mosaics of bears are located within arena contexts[545] makes the setting of this image within an arena more likely. The arena setting also has important implications for the meaning of this mosaic within the entry corridor of the Casa dell'Orso Ferito.

Given the associations of bears in Roman thought and culture, the image of the wounded bear functions as a symbol of the wild, chaos, and the control of nature.[546] However, it is significant that while wounded, the bear is not yet dead. Bears were known as ferocious fighters and perhaps the latent threat of a still-live bear, subdued but still with the potential to cause

[544] The emphasis on the bloody wound of arena victims is common amongst other arena mosaics. Brown, "Death as Decoration: Scenes from the Arena on Roman Domestic Mosaics," 207.

[545] It is important to note that many of these mosaics date well after the Casa dell'Orso Ferito and come from Roman North Africa. On arena mosaics from North Africa, see Dunbabin, *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa: Studies in Iconography and Patronage*, 65-87.

[546] The message that the bear has been subdued is complemented by the presence of its blood, a substance that Pliny the Elder claimed could be used to cure inflamed tumors and even act as a sort of pesticide. Plin. *HN*, 28.61; 17.47. Taking into account the conspicuous portrayal of the blood and Pliny's claims, the depiction of the blood may have further addressed the charged nature of the entryway in its function as both a curative and preventative agent. Additionally, a bear tooth discovered in the Casa di Julius Polybius [IX.13.1-3] may have possesed apotropaic powers. Inv. SAP 22459. Annamaria Ciarallo, Ernesto De Carolis, Maria Rosaria Borriello, Suzanne Kotz, Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, and Los Angeles County Museum of Art, *Pompeii: Life in a Roman Tow*n (Milan: Electa, 1999), 117 Wilhelmina F. Jashemski and Frederick G. Meyer, *The Natural History of Pompeii* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 446. Alex Butterworth and Ray Laurence, *Pompeii: The Living City* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2006), 185. Outside of Roman Italy, images of bears, such as jet figurines, were used as amulets and even deposited in graves as a protective measure. Crummy, "Bears and Coins: The Iconography of Protection in Late Roman Infant Burials," 38, 44, 52-53. On teeth and sympathetic magic see Veronique Dasen, "Amulets, the Body and Persona Agency." In *Material Approaches to Roman Magic: Occult Objects and Supernatural Substances*. Trac Themes in Roman Archaeology, Volume 2, 127-135. Eds. Adam Parker and Stuart McKie (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2018), 129-130. Otto Jahn notes that teeth could be used as amulets to dispel the Evil Eye. Otto Jahn, *Über den Aberglauben des Bösen Blicks Bei den Alten* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1855), 43.

harm, could also have deterred menaces to the home and household. Much in the same way a chained dog can still inspire fear, the wounded bear may have warned guests to be wary of the controlled, yet unpredictable, presence at the door.

Meanwhile, the mosaic also conveys a message about the status of the homeowner. For one, the prominent location of the image at the front entrance of the house, and the juxtaposition of the mosaic with a clear view of the small *tablinum*, gives the impression that it was the homeowner who subdued the bear, as the proprietor of the space.[547] By prominently displaying the defeated bear, the inhabitants also exhibited their dominance over the chaos of the wild.

On a more ephemeral level, the pain, violence, and bodily harm depicted within the mosaic themselves function as potent apotropaic devices. Just as laughter and outrageous imagery could serve protective functions,[548] violence and gore may also have effectively distracted the Evil Eye and other malign forces. While apotropaic violence is not often directly examined, it would stand to reason that eye-catching, violent images could deter unwanted forces as successfully as humorous representations or sounds.

In fact, the idea of apotropaic violence may have been a long-standing tradition in ancient Italy, with possible roots in Etruscan practice and belief.[549] Violent motifs appear in a variety of Roman mosaics with apotropaic functions. Among these images is the Evil Eye mosaic from the

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[547] Images of animals were often used to declare or convey one's strength. Alastair Harden, "Animals in Classical Art," in *The Oxford Handbook of Animals in Classical Thought and Life.* Oxford Handbooks in Classics and Ancient History, 24-60. Ed. Gordon Lindsay (Corby: Oxford University Press, 2014), 47, 51.

[548] See Introduction page 9-10 and Chapter Two pages 98-9.

[549] Recent scholarship on violent representation in Etruscan art has worked to dispel the idea that the Etruscans were an inherently more violent culture than their Greek contemporaries. Instead, scholars argue that violence was consciously employed in specific contexts to convey a wide variety of messages, including a display of power. Luca Cerchiai, Natacha Lubtchansky, and Claude Pouzadoux, "Du bon usage de la violence dans l'iconographie italiote et étrusque," in *Contacts et acculturations en méditerranée occidentale: Hommages à Michel Bats: Actes du Colloque de Hyères, 15-18 Septembre 2011.* Bibliothèque d'archéologie Méditerranéenne et Africaine, 15, 309-319. Ed. Roure Réjane (Paris: Éditions Errance, 2015), 310-11; Alexandra A. Carpino, "The 'Taste' for Violence in Etruscan Art: Debunking the Myth," in *A Companion to the Etruscans*, 410–30. Eds. Sinclair Bell and Alexandra A. Carpino. John Wiley & Sons, Inc.: Hoboken, NJ, 2015), 410.

House of the Evil Eye in Antioch, Syria [Fig. III.10].[550] An ithyphallic dwarf is accompanied by the inscription "KAICY", meaning "and you",[551] and is surrounded by a wave-patterned border. To the right of the dwarf, a variety of wild animals and weapons attack an eye. Although it is clear that the Evil Eye mosaic is much more overtly apotropaic than that of the wounded bear, both share a display of violence meant to distract harmful forces. In the case of the wounded bear mosaic, the show of violence is emphasized by the bright red blood of the bear. The image is thus literally and figuratively captivating— not only does the mosaic draw our attention, it also has the ability to hold captive or disarm evil forces.

Yet, despite the many and multifaceted functions of the bear, the "orso ferito" is not the only feature within the panel. The "HAVE" inscription, meaning welcome,[552] accompanies the bear in the upper left corner of the composition [Fig. III.11]. Mosaic inscriptions of greeting or warning are not uncommon in Campanian houses, yet they are rarely paired with an image such as the wounded bear. In most cases, such inscriptions are separate from other decorative elements, or communicate an important message about the image with which it appears.[553] In the case of the Casa dell'Orso Ferito, however, the greeting seems incongruent with the depiction of a mortally wounded bear near the front threshold of the home. In fact, the two elements appear

[550] Despite the fact that the Evil Eye mosaic dates to roughly one hundred years after the Casa dell'Orso Ferito and hails from a different area of the empire, I believe it is representative of wider Roman customs and beliefs, if inflected with local tastes and emphases. Second century CE. Hatay Archaeological Museum, Atakya, Inv. 1024.
[551] In Greek KAI ΣΥ. The implication with the inscription is that any evil wishes brought by someone with malintent would be flipped back on the individual wishing to cause harm. Katherine M.D. Dunbabin, and Dickie, M.W. "Invidia Rupantur Pectora: The Iconography of Phthonos/Invidia in Graeco-Roman art," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 26 (1983): 35-6. J.R.C. Cousland, "The Much Suffering Eye in Antioch's House of the Evil Eye: Is It Mithraic?" *Religious Studies and Theology 24*, no. 1 (2005): 61, 66.
[552] "HAVE" has also been translated as "Hail to you" or "Hello", John R. Clarke, *Art in the Lives of Ordinary Romans: Visual Representation and Non-Elite Viewers in Italy, 100 B.c.-A.d. 315*. The Joan Palevsky Imprint in Classical Literature (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 248.
[553] See, for example, the famous dog mosaic from the Casa del Poeta Tragico [VI.8.3-5], which is paired with the warning "Cave Canem" or "Beware of the Dog". In fact, Marion Elizabeth Blake has suggested that the same mosaicist created both the wounded bear and "Cave Canem" mosaics. Blake, "The Pavements of the Roman Buildings of the Republic and Early Empire," 122.

almost at odds with one another— while the inscription beckons guests inside, the image of a bleeding animal might deter visitors. How then can the juxtaposition of image and inscription be understood within the context of the Casa dell'Orso Ferito entryway?

The answer lies in a brief return to apotropaism. As John Clarke has demonstrated, inscriptions could be used as effective deterrents for the Evil Eye and other malignant forces. Comparable to the famous "HAVE" in colored stone[554] that adorns the sidewalk in front of the Casa del Fauno [VI.12.2], [555] the Casa dell'Orso Ferito "HAVE" inscription was likewise an apotropaic device. I will not examine the inscription in great depth here, as inscriptions are explored in Chapter Five. Nevertheless, the gesture of welcome conveyed by the mosaic message can be understood as providing a greeting that is both propitious and prophylactic. By wishing visitors well before their journey inside the home, the inscription could bring guests good fortune as they transitioned from the street to the domestic interior.[556] Clarke explains that such inscriptions could reassure visitors by functioning as a visual reminder of the protection a *dominus* promised for his guests.[557] In this light, and juxtaposed with the wounded bear, the "HAVE" inscription offers one further measure of protection for the inhabitants of, and visitors to, the Casa dell'Orso Ferito.[558]

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[554] Mau identifies the stone as marble. August Mau and Francis W. Kelsey. *Pompeii: Its Life and Art* (New York; London: Macmillan, 1902), 289.
[555] Clarke, *Art in the Lives of Ordinary Romans: Visual Representation and Non-Elite Viewers in Italy, 100 B.c.-A.d. 315,* 250. Alternately, Shelley Hales believes the inscription to be a symbol of the owner's *romanitas*. Shelley Hales, *The Roman House and Social Identity* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 105. While both interpretations can certainly exist simultaneously, I am inclined to follow Clarke in this instance. See also Chapter Five pages 204-7.
[556] Clarke, *Art in the Lives of Ordinary Romans: Visual Representation and Non-Elite Viewers in Italy, 100 B.c.-A.d. 315,* 250.
[557] Clarke, *Art in the Lives of Ordinary Romans: Visual Representation and Non-Elite Viewers in Italy, 100 B.c.-A.d. 315,* 250.
[558] In Roman Britain and Germany, bears were considered protectors of boundaries, aligned with Silvanus, and thought to be guides of the dead. Crummy, "Bears and Coins: The Iconography of Protection in Late Roman Infant Burials," 56, 74.

Taken together, the many features of the wounded bear mosaic would have communicated a powerful message of transformation, status, and potential danger to visitors entering the home. Rather than relying on a single meaning or message, the image addresses the many and diverse concerns associated with the front threshold and entrance passage by drawing on the numerous associations of bears with the idea of transformation.

The Orso Ferito in Context

The powerful image of the wounded bear, located just beyond the front threshold of the Casa dell'Orso Ferito, is one of the first decorative elements a visitor would see when entering the home. It appears at an angle to the threshold to accommodate the diagonal bend of the street and irregular orientation of the house. In fact, the mosaic is visible even from across the street, drawing one's attention to the entryway of the home with its bright colors and unusual positioning [Fig. III.12]. Even the vivid wall fresco panels within the passageway, which themselves appear to have no protective utility,[559] frame the corridor and further highlight the wounded bear mosaic.

The view of the interior of the home from the sidewalk was formerly flanked by panels of molded and painted stucco decoration [Fig. III.13]. Large parts of these panels are lost, but they are documented in 19th century drawings and photographs [Fig. III.14]. The panels are characterized by a red lower zone with two concentric rectangles and a yellow upper zone featuring a pattern of recessed and projecting rectangles. The motif was likely meant to create the

[559] The motifs of the *fauces* walls are typical of Campanian houses, including faux architecture, candelabra, small figures, Eroti, and fantastic animals. These elements appear to have no overt prophylactic qualities.

appearance of either stylized *antae*[560] or fictive leaves of an open door, and could help orient visitors to the entryway of the home.

Approaching the house and standing on the threshold, an ancient visitor could observe the wounded bear up close, and peer at the mosaic pattern beyond.[561] From this location, one could enjoy an uninterrupted view of the *nymphaeum* and wilderness fresco at the rear of the house [Fig. III.15]. Despite the curious layout of the Casa dell'Orso Ferito, this visual dialogue between the wounded bear mosaic at the front of the house and sylvan fresco on the rear wall is no accident. By physically and visually aligning the bear, boar, and dog, the owners of the house convey a clear message about the fictive environment they wished to create for their home. Attempts at creating faux wooded and wild environments were common among Campanian homes in the early Imperial period. These faux sylvan environments were often associated with ambiguity and transgression.[562] Zahra Newby observes that domestic landscape frescoes could represent man's control over nature, while reminding viewers of the dangers and unpredictability of the wilderness.[563] In the case of the Casa dell'Orso Ferito a very specific type of rusticity is invoked, one intended to elevate the status of the homeowner.

Unlike the scenes of fictive wilderness that decorate many of ancient Campania's largest and most elaborately embellished homes,[564] which invite guests to step into a realm of imagined pastoralism, the Casa dell'Orso Ferito is small in comparison and uses its frescoes to make the house appear larger and more impressive. Where the garden paintings in the so-called Villa di

[560] Ehrhardt calls them faux half pilasters. Ehrhardt, "VII 2, 44-46 Casa dell'Orso," 745.
[561] This mosaic motif appears similar to frescoes of faux masonry blocks that appear decorating houses in ancient Pompeii and Herculaneum. See, for instance, the interior of the Casa del Bel Cortile [V.8] in Herculaneum.
[562] Hales, *The Roman House and Social Identity*, 155. This is similar to the paintings within the Casa dei Dioscuri discussed in Chapter Two pages 116-20.
[563] Zahra Newby, "The Aesthetics of Violence: Myth and Danger in Roman Domestic Landscapes," *Classical Antiquity* 31, no. 2 (2012): 357.
[564] Some examples include the Casa di Octavius Quartio [II.2.2], Casa della Caccia Antica [VII.4.48], and the Casa della Caccia Nuova [VII.2.25].

Poppaea at Oplontis and Casa del Bracciale d'oro [VI.17.42] in Pompeii, for instance, appear in conjunction with large green spaces at the rear of the homes [Fig. III.16], the Casa dell'Orso Ferito has room for only a small garden beyond the *tablinum*. In both cases the pastoral paintings are intended to illusionistically extend the space of the house. However, while the frescoes at the Villa di Poppaea and Casa del Bracciale d'Oro help create an immersive experience, the fresco at the Casa dell'Orso Ferito works in conjunction with the brightly colored and centrally located *nymphaeum* to make the house as a whole appear larger, and suggest the existence of a large green space where there was none.[565] By creating the illusion of a larger house with wild animals, the owner of the Casa dell'Orso Ferito sought to enhance the prestige of the space, a strategy repeated throughout the rest of the structure in the use of *opus sectile emblemata* and other fine pavements in rooms of modest proportions.[566]

Considering the attempts to enhance the apparent size of the home and status of its owner, it is no wonder both the wounded bear mosaic and fresco are visible from the front entrance of the house and framed by the narrow entry corridor. Together, the mosaic and fresco provided the house an air of rusticity, while also conveying a message about the inhabitants' control over, and possession of, nature. As a result, the reciprocal nature of the two images, along with the experience of viewing them from the front entranceway, encouraged viewers to interact with the images in a prescribed manner.

[565] A similar strategy is employed in the Casa del Nettuno e Anfitrite [V.6-7] in Herculaneum, where both a vivid mosaic of Neptune and Amphitrite and bright garden frescoes are clearly and conspicuously visible from the front entrance of the modestly-sized home.

[566] For example, in the small *tablinum*. Indeed, Dunbabin describes the house as communicating "pretensions of grandeur." Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World*, 308. Pernice also notes that many of the mosaics were constructed using large tesserae that were not joined very neatly. Pernice, *Pavimente und Figürliche Mosaiken. Die Hellenistische Kunst in Pompeji*, 98.

Returning to the mosaic, close examination of the wounded bear reveals that the animal does not make direct eye contact with the viewer [Fig. III.17]. Instead, it appears concentrated on the spear fragment it grasps. This means that while the viewer may be aware of the mosaic, the bear does not seem to acknowledge spectators. This is different from the images of deities discussed in the previous chapter, where in each case, the deity is aware of the viewer's presence, and where visitors are implicated in their own protection or punishment. Herein lies an important difference between the image of the bear and those of deities that decorate spaces of transition. Where the deities are the active forces in policing the passages, the wounded bear is incapacitated, and thus less dynamic. This is not to suggest that the mosaic is a less effective tool for monitoring the threshold, but rather that it represents a different approach suited to the form, location, and individual tastes of the inhabitants of the Casa dell'Orso Ferito. Despite the lack of acknowledgement between the wounded bear and viewers of the mosaic, the image nevertheless encourages an embodied viewing experience. This embodied experience is facilitated through both a visitor's physical interactions with the mosaic, as well as a reciprocity between the experience of the bear and that of the viewer.

The wounded bear is itself depicted in a state of transition, captured in perpetuity by the mosaic. Most significantly, it is clear the bear is fatally wounded, as evidenced by its slouched position and the severity of its injury. The mosaicist has portrayed a true liminal moment within the life of the animal. Neither fully alive, nor yet dead, the bear exists between two states. This ambiguous space between two distinct realms would have mirrored a visitor's experience of entering the Casa dell'Orso Ferito. Once on the threshold of the house, in full view of the mosaic, a visitor would also be positioned at an impasse between interior and exterior. In this

way, a guest might engage with the image on a physical and metaphorical level as they embarked on their own experience of ambiguity.

In addition to the bear's impending transition from life to death, the arena setting of the mosaic signals the bear's transformation from an autonomous wild animal, to a creature captured, controlled, and exploited for the entertainment of humans. This, too, mirrors a guest's experience of entering the home. When approaching the house, a viewer would move from the exterior space of the street where one was free to move around, to the interior of the house where one's movements were controlled, and in some cases choreographed. No doubt this message was a clear warning about the consequences of transgressing the boundaries of the home.

As the resonances between the experience of the bear and human visitors demonstrate, a guest's relationship with the mosaic was one of embodiment, notwithstanding a sense of reciprocity. To enter the house, a visitor would need to step on or over the bear, thereby physically engaging with the image.[567] Indeed, Rebecca Molholt remarks that mosaics "call for immersion and immediacy on the part of the viewer,"[568] and the wounded bear mosaic is no exception. The notion of stepping on or trampling an enemy to vanquish them, as discussed by Katherine Dunbabin,[569] may also have provided visitors additional opportunities to shield themselves while moving through an ambiguous space. In either case, it would be impossible to ignore the bear underfoot. At the same time, the vivid portrayal of the bear's injuries may have elicited a visceral response from viewers. Of course, it is anachronistic to apply modern attitudes

[567] Andrew Wilburn rightly observes that tactile experience could activate mosaics, as is the case with the wounded bear. Andrew Wilburn, "The Archaeology of Ritual in the Domestic Sphere: Case Studies from Karanis and Pompeii," in *Material Approaches to Roman Magic: Occult Objects and Supernatural Substances*. Trac Themes in Roman Archaeology, Volume 2, 103-14. Eds. Adam Parker and Stuart McKie (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2018), 110.
[568] Rebecca Molholt, "Roman Labyrinth Mosaics and the Experience of Motion," *The Art Bulletin* 93, no. 3 (2011): 288.
[569] Katherine Dunbabin, "*Inbide calco te*. Trampling upon the Envious," in *Tesserae: Festschrift für Joseph Engemann, Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum*. Ergänzungsband 18, 25-36. Eds. Ernst Dassman and Klaus Thraede (Münster: Aschendorff, 1991), 27-34.

toward animals to an ancient visitor's experience of a Roman mosaic, but the visual emphasis on the wound is striking nevertheless and bound to have provoked a reaction. The physical connection between the wounded bear and visitor, even if only momentary, still required the viewer to interact with and acknowledge the image.

The works of Merleau-Ponty, Platt, and others, also play important roles in the interpretation of the experience of the wounded bear mosaic. As these scholars propose, to see an image is to physically, materially, and spiritually experience that which is depicted.[570] Although the wounded bear is not a divine portrayal, the perception of the image might nevertheless generate a concrete experience of the bear. An embodied experience of the mosaic could amplify the many messages conveyed by the image. By momentarily locating a viewer within the arena, the threat of the bear might feel more immediate, while the prestige of the Casa dell'Orso Ferito could be made more impressive by the momentary realism of the scene. Even the liminal state of the bear and its many links to transformation could be manifest as a materially potent tool against the ambiguity of the passage. Combined with the location of the mosaic within the Casa dell'Orso Ferito, an embodied experience of the image may have helped safeguard the home and its inhabitants by employing an efficacious image to police the entryway as an essential first line of defense.

Considering the mechanics of an embodied interaction with the mosaic, an image such as the wounded bear may have been considered necessary for the Casa dell'Orso Ferito beyond the spatial ambiguity associated with Roman doorways. Both the unusual plan of the house, as well as its location within the cityscape of Pompeii, may have necessitated the presence of the "orso

[570] Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*. Translated by Donald A. Landes. (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012), 358; Verity Platt, "Viewing, Desiring, Believing: Confronting the Divine in a Pompeian House," *Art History* 25, 1 (2002): 87.

ferito". The layout of the Casa dell'Orso Ferito is atypical of domestic spaces in Pompeii,[571] with rooms appearing at angles, unbalanced mosaic decoration, and the diagonal orientation of the entrance corridor. Indeed, if studying the plan [Fig. III.18], few walls of the house are straight, and many features appear askance. Without going so far as to suggest that the unusual plan of the house necessitated extra protective measures, the wounded bear mosaic does help orient visitors by drawing attention to the front door and entrance corridor. The "HAVE" greeting that accompanies the bear further signals the orientation of the structure and highlights the change of space. Armed with these cues, a visitor could then effectively navigate the interior of the house.

In addition to the unusual plan of the Casa dell'Orso Ferito, the *insula* in which the house is located is itself unusually shaped [Fig III.19]. Different from the many other rectangular *insulae* in the city, *Insula* Two in *Regio* Seven has five sides, two of which meet at a V-shaped angle. This V-shape accommodates not only a bend in the Via degli Augustali, which fronts the Casa dell'Orso Ferito, but also another perpendicular road, the Vicolo del Lupanare, which intersects the Via degli Augustali in front of the Casa dell'Orso Ferito.[572] As a result, the Casa dell'Orso Ferito is located near both an intersection and a corner-like bend in the street. Furthermore, one large crossing stone lies in front of the house [Fig. III.20]. The culmination of the plan and location of the Casa dell'Orso Ferito, then, suggests that varying degrees of spatial, ideological, and physical vulnerabilities were associated with the structure and that the ursine mosaic worked to visually engage and dispel the spatial, spiritual, and material uncertainties tied to the home. Thus, what appears as a straightforward image is in actuality a complicated and

[571] While there is no one standard house plan that exists throughout the city, despite early attempts to fit Pompeian domestic spaces into the atrium house model, the Casa dell'Orso Ferito is unusual for several reasons, and likely a result of building a house between two extant structures.
[572] Not only does the Via degli Augustali intersect the Vicolo del Lupanare, but it also leads directly to the Forum and intersects with the Via Stabiana, a major route.

multifaceted symbol of transformation, status, and protection, as well as the tensions between wilderness and civilization; freedom and control; animal and human; life and death.

Dolphins at the Door: Animal Imagery and the Domus M. Caesi Blandi

The second case study of this chapter examines an animal mosaic that demonstrates many of the same concerns as the wounded bear but draws on different visual tools and ideological associations. The Domus M. Caesi Blandi [VII.1.40][573] features mosaic representations of an animal that is neither aggressive toward humans nor was hunted by the Romans [Fig. III.21]. Two dolphins are depicted in a late Second Style[574] mosaic panel in the *fauces* of the Domus M. Caesi Blandi.[575] The dolphins flank the helm of a ship and a trident, with a small polychrome bird perched atop the helm, and a *hippocampus* (marine monster) located in the upper right corner [Fig. III.22].[576] The mosaic appears just past the entrance threshold,[577] and is oriented toward visitors approaching the house. As we will see, despite several overt differences between

[573] Also known as the Casa di Marte e Venere. The Domus M. Caesi Blandi was excavated in 1848 and 1862. For more information about the house, see Giuseppe Fiorelli, "Descrizione dei nuovi scavi," in *Giornale degli scavi di Pompei*, 81-96. Eds. Giuseppe Fiorelli and Scuola archeologica di Pompei (Napoli: Tip. italiana nel Liceo V. Emanuele, 1862), 88-96; August Mau, *Geschichte der Decorativen Wandmalerei in Pompeji* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1882), 91, 166-7, 209-14, 269-72; Pernice, *Pavimente und Figürliche Mosaiken. Die Hellenistische Kunst in Pompeji*, Bd. 6, 53-4; Schefold, *Die Wände Pompejis: Topographisches Verzeichnis der Bildmotive*, 167-8; Blake, "The Pavements of the Roman Buildings of the Republic and Early Empire," 75, 80, 83, 106-8, 121; Hendrik Gerard Beyen, *Die Pompejanische Wanddekoration vom Zweiten bis zum Vierten Stil*, II (Haag: M. Nijhoff, 1938), 234-59; Della Corte, *Case ed abitanti di Pompei*, 165-8; Irene Bragantini, "VII 1, 40 Casa di M. Caesius Blandus," in *PPP*, Vol. III, 42-53. Eds. Irene Bragantini, Mariette De Vos, Franca Parise Badoni, and Valeria Sampaolo (Roma: Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali, Istituto centrale per il catalogo e la documentazione, 1986); John R. Clarke, "Mosaic Workshops at Pompeii and Ostia Antica," in *Fifth International Colloquium on Ancient Mosaics: Held at Bath, England, on September 5-12, 1987*. Journal of Roman Archaeology. Supplementary Series, No. 9, 89-102. Eds. Peter Johnson Roger Ling, D. J Smith, Association internationale pour l'étude de la mosaïque antique, Association for the Study and Preservation of Roman Mosaics, and Betty Morgan May Memorial Fund (Ann Arbor, Mich.: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1994), 95-6. See also Eschebach and Müller-Trollius, *Gebäudeverzeichnis und Stadtplan der antiken Stadt Pompeji*, 250-1; Irene Bragantini, "VII 1, 40 Casa di M. Caesius Blandus," in *PPM*, Vol. VI, 380-458. Eds. G. P. Carratelli and I. Baldassarre. Roma: Istituto della enciclopedia italiana, 1994).

[574] Bragantini, "VII 1, 40 Casa di M. Caesius Blandus," 381-2.

[575] Now-lost Fourth Style frescoes once decorated the walls of the entrance corridor. Bragantini, "VII 1, 40 Casa di M. Caesius Blandus," 384; Fiorelli, "Descrizione dei nuovi scavi," 88-9.

[576] Rizzo, "Limina: la decorazione figurata delle soglie musive a Pompei," 105-6. See Clarke's description, Clarke, *Roman Black-and-White Figural Mosaics*, 10.

[577] The threshold step into the house retains cuttings for the original door frame.

the dolphin mosaic and the wounded bear example, the images function in similar ways to safeguard the thresholds of their respective homes. While the dolphin was not considered an aggressive animal and represents a different approach to faunal imagery, dolphins were aligned with metamorphosis and considered akin to men in a variety of aspects. Drawing on these qualities, the dolphins in the *fauces* of the Domus M. Caesi Blandi work to protect the home through their ties to change and their perceived friendly, yet intermediary, nature.[578]

The Dolphin in the Ancient Mediterranean

Dolphins feature in a wide array of ancient Mediterranean myths and texts, nearly all of which celebrate the animal as friendly and intelligent.[579] In many of these tales, dolphins are celebrated for their similarity to humans and associations with transformation. One of the best-known myths featuring dolphins involves the deity Dionysus. According to the circa sixth century BCE *Homeric Hymn to Dionysus*, the deity is kidnapped by a boat of Tyrrehenian pirates. In retaliation, the deity conjures visions of fearsome creatures and fills the boat with vines. The pirates jump overboard and are transformed into dolphins.[580] Ovid's version of the tale, which may have been familiar to first century CE Campanians, follows its earlier Greek predecessor closely, but rather than kidnapping Bacchus (Dionysus), the pirates trick the deity and plot to sell him into slavery.[581] In both versions of the myth the associations between

[578] On a later example of a dolphin mosaic from Ostia, see Dunbabin, "*Inbide calco te*. Trampling upon the Envious," 25-36. Dunbabin demonstrates how the inscription "*Inbide calco te*" that appears alongside the dolphin could help protect the shop it decorated. She further demonstrates that dolphins were used as an auspicious and apotropaic symbol. Dunbabin, "*Inbide calco te*. Trampling upon the Envious," 34-5.
[579] Lewis and Llewellyn-Jones, *The Culture of Animals in Antiquity: A Sourcebook with Commentaries*, 410.
[580] *Hymn. Hom. Bacch.*7
[581] Ov. *Met*. 3.580-689. Various versions of the tale exist, including Apollod. *Bibl*. 3. 36; Philostr. *Imag.*1.19; Hyg. *Fab.* 134.

dolphins and bodily change are clear, and ancient visual representations of the story emphasize this aspect even further.

A sixth century BCE Etruscan black-figure *kalpis*, roughly contemporary with the *Homeric Hymn*, is one of many depictions of the myth of Dionysus (the Etruscan Fufluns) and the Tyrrehenian pirates. The vessel portrays the pirates' moment of transition from men into dolphins, both a pivotal point in the plot, and an indication of the importance of transformation relative to ideas surrounding dolphins [Fig. III.23].[582] Five figures are portrayed diving into the sea with the legs of men and the heads and torsos of dolphins. A sixth pirate experiences the transformation in the reverse order, with the tail and fins of a dolphin and the head and chest of a man. Dionysus reclines in the upper register, and two men decorate the neck of the vessel.[583] In both mythic and visual representations of the tale there is a clear emphasis on transformation, including the transformation from pirate to dolphin, and the transformation of Dionysus from captive to vengeful deity. It is also notable that the myth has Greek origins, later Roman iterations, and is represented on an Etruscan vessel— all demonstrative of the popularity of the story and its wide distribution. This is true of many ancient myths, but it does confirm that stories concerning dolphins and metamorphosis pervaded the ancient Mediterranean and persisted over centuries.[584]

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[582] On the depiction of human-animal transformation on sixth and fifth century BCE Greek vases, see Annetta Alexandridis, "Shifting Species: Animal and Human Bodies in Attic Vase Painting of the 6th and 5th Centuries B.C," in *Bodies and Boundaries in Graeco-Roman Antiquity*, 261-281. Eds. Thorsten Fögen and Mireille M. Lee (Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter, 2009), 261-279.

[583] Other examples of depictions of the myth include the famous black figure kylix by Exekias from Vulci, which depicts Bacchus on a ship in the water surrounded by dolphins. The *Dionysus Cup*, Attic, ca. 540 BCE. Found in Vulci, Italy in 1841, now in the Staatliche Antikensammlungen, Munich, Inv. 8729. Similar motifs adorn the Choragic Monument of Lysicrates (334 BCE, Athens, Greece) and an Imperial-era mosaic from Utica (Third century CE, mosaic. From Dougga, now in the Bardo National Museum, Tunis, Inv. 2884B), both of which portray the moment of transformation, as opposed to other segments of the story.

[584] Other mythological traditions and ancient stories similarly reinforce the dolphin's links to transformation. One of Apollo's many epithets was *Delphinios* and in one tale Apollo transforms himself into a dolphin while in search of priests for his new temple at Delphi. *Hymn. Hom. Ap*. Once again, dolphins are aligned with shape shifting, and the

In other works of art, dolphins are frequently depicted with a handful of other deities, including Neptune, Venus, and Eros.[585] Such images often take the form of mosaics, but also commonly decorate sculpture, coins, personal items, and pottery. Given the aquatic associations of all three gods, the alignment of dolphins with these deities is no surprise, and the presence of the animal can often help to identify figures or orient the viewer.[586] Already, then, it is evident that dolphins could be used as a decorative element in a variety of contexts and on an array of objects.

Outside the realm of ancient myth, written observations of the natural world are similarly instructive. Pliny the Elder is again an especially useful resource, despite several factual inaccuracies among his claims. As with his discussions of bears, much of Pliny's information about the characteristics of dolphins can be traced back to Aristotle,[587] but Pliny supplies additional stories and information about the medicinal uses of the aquatic mammal. In particular, he claims that dolphin teeth can be used to soothe teething babies,[588] dolphin fat can cure dropsy,[589] and that recurrent fevers can be treated with dolphin liver.[590] What is more, Pliny writes that a dolphin tooth worn as an amulet could protect again sudden terrors.[591] The

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story of Apollo as a dolphin demonstrates that the association between the metamorphosis and dolphins existed beyond the myth of Bacchus.

[585] Idit Sagiv, "Victory of Good Over Evil? Amuletic Animal Images on Roman Engraved Gems," in *Material Approaches to Roman Magic: Occult Objects and Supernatural Substances*. Trac Themes in Roman Archaeology, Volume 2, 45-56. Eds. Adam Parker and Stuart McKie (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2018), 52.

[586] Jahn observes that dolphins could function as symbols of protective deities. Jahn, *Über den Aberglauben des Bösen Blicks bei den alten*, 97.

[587] H.C. Montgomery, "The Fabulous Dolphin," *The Classical Journal* 61, no. 7 (1966): 311.

[588] Plin. *HN*. 32.48.

[589] Plin. *HN*. 32.39.

[590] Plin. *HN*. 32.38. Dolphin grease from a baked liver or the ashes of a dolphin were also said to help treat leprosy spots. Plin. *HN*. 32.27. To this Pliny adds that the smoke from lighting lint with dolphin fat on fire can aid hysterical women, Plin. *HN*. 32.46.

[591] Specifically, dolphin teeth could ease sudden terrors in children. Plin. *HN*, 32.48. Considering the powers ascribed to the previously considered bear tooth, it is interesting that dolphin teeth seem to have been believed to possess similar powers. Brunilde Sismondo Ridgway even suggests that dolphins may have served as an apotropaic image on early Greek armor. Brunilde Sismondo Ridgway, "Dolphins and Dolphin-Riders," *Archaeology* 23, no. 2 (1970): 91. Laura Ambrosini proposes a possible otherworldly or underworld associations with dolphins. Laura

perceived amuletic powers of dolphin parts can help to further contextualize and justify the appearance of the dolphin mosaic in the entryway of the Domus M. Caesi Blandi as a protective symbol. If dolphin parts were considered effective against sudden terrors when worn, perhaps a depiction of the animal could offer similar protections to those entering a home.

Beyond discussions of the uses of dolphins in medicine or magic, Pliny identifies several dolphin characteristics similar to those of humans,[592] and even categorizes dolphins as neither wild nor domestic, calling them of an "intermediate nature."[593] The ancient Greeks and Romans appear to have been keenly aware of dolphins' many human-like qualities,[594] and believed the animal was a symbol of good fortune.[595] Killing or hunting dolphins was discouraged,[596] perhaps due to stories that identify the animal as former men. In fact, in second century CE Greek satirist Lucian's *Dialogues of the Sea Gods*, a group of dolphins reasons that they are friendly to men because they were once themselves human,[597] an unmistakable reference to the tale discussed above.

Ambrosini, "Ceramica falisca a figure rosse: 'the Satyr and Dolphin Group' (Pittore di Würzburg 820) e lo schema iconografico del 'Dolphin-Rider,'" *Archeologia Classica* 51 (1999): 271.

[592] Pliny observes that the sounds emitted by the animal are akin to some of those made by humans, Plin. *HN*. 97.

[593] Plin. *HN*. 8.82.

[594] Dolphins were also believed to be the fastest creature on land or in the sea, Plin. *HN*. 9.7. This may be why sculptures of dolphins were used *spina* in the Roman circus. Toynbee, *Animals in Roman Life and Art*, 208; Kitchell, *Animals in the Ancient World: From A to Z*, 57. Pliny writes that dolphins could even nurse while moving. Plin. *HN*, 11.95. Dolphins are also said to help fishermen with their catch. Plin. *HN*. 9.9; Opp. *Hal*. 5.425-447; Ael. *NA* 2.8. Kitchell notes that this is behavior has been confirmed by modern observation of the animal. Kitchell, *Animals in the Ancient World: From A to Z*, 55.

[595] Ridgway even suggests the decoration of Greek arms with images of dolphins may have been as *apotropaia.* Brunilde Sismondo Ridgway, "Dolphins and Dolphin-Riders," *Archaeology* 23, no. 2 (1970): 90.

[596] Opp. *Hal*. 5.416-147; 5.519-72. Michael Mackinnon observes that dolphins were considered sacred. Michael Mackinnon, "Fauna of the Ancient Mediterranean World," in *The Oxford Handbook of Animals in Classical Thought and Life.* Oxford Handbooks in Classics and Ancient History, 156-79. Ed. Gordon Lindsay (Corby: Oxford University Press, 2014). 175.

[597] Lucian, *Dial. marini* 8.308. Although this would have been written well after the eruption of Vesuvius, this line reveals that ideas linking dolphins and their human origins remained within the popular imagination.

The human-like qualities and friendliness of dolphins secured them special affection among the Romans, and many stories about dolphins reflect this sentiment.[598] In nearly every case, the stories center around a friendly relationship between a dolphin and a human, most often a youth. Pliny the Elder alone records six different stories about friendships between dolphins and boys.[599] Among these stories are the tale of Arion, who was saved by a dolphin,[600] and the town of Hippo Diarrytus in Africa, where a dolphin befriended a young boy. [601] The fabled close relationships of dolphins[602] and humans may also have situated the animal as an intermediary between men and beasts, yet another indication of dolphins' ties to transition, transformation, and good fortune. Together with the work of fellow naturalists and mythological traditions, the relevant passages in Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis Historia* demonstrate that ideas linking dolphins to transformation, ambiguity, and human-like qualities were likely in circulation in Campania in the first century CE and may have influenced the owners of the Domus M. Caesi Blandi.

Situating the Mosaic within the Domus M. Caesi Blandi

The Domus M. Caesi Blandi (excavated 1848) was first constructed in the Republican period, subsequently remodeled and enlarged, and finally refitted with Fourth Style decoration in

[598] Even the Roman nickname given to dolphins, "smino" or "snubnose", reflects a degree of affection. Kitchell, *Animals in the Ancient World: From A to Z,* 55.
[599] On relationships between humans and dolphins, see Craig A. Williams, "When a Dolphin Loves a Boy: Some Greco-Roman and Native American Love Stories," *Classical Antiquity* 32, no. 1 (2013): 200-12, esp. 204-211.
[600] Plin. *HN*. 9.8. The original version of this tale comes from Herodotus, *Hdt.* 1.23-24. C.M. Bowra, "Arion and the Dolphin," *Museum Helveticum* 20, no. 3 (1963): 121. Among the many versions of the story are Ael. *NA* 12.45; Opp. *Hal*. 5.448-51; Hyg. *Fab.*194; Lucian, *Dial. marini* 8.308-9; Paus 3.25.5.
[601] Plin. *HN* 9.8; Plin. *Ep.* 9.33. On the dialogue between the two versions of the story, see Benjamin Stevens, "Pliny and the Dolphin-Or a Story About Storytelling," *Arethusa* 42, no. 2 (2009): 161–79. See also C. Lee Miller, "The Younger Pliny's Dolphin Story ('Epistulae' IX 33): An Analysis," *The Classical World* 60, no. 1 (1966): 6-8.
[602] While many of these stories are unlikely to have been based in fact (consider, for instance, the formulaic nature of each of the tales), close bonds between children and dolphins have been documented more recently. For instance, the dolphin named Opo, who is documented playing with humans in New Zealand. Alan Rauch, *Dolphin* (London: Reaktion Books, 2013), 130.

the first century CE [Fig. III.24].[603] It is located on the corner of the Via degli Augustali and is fairly large and well-appointed. The late Second Style (late first century BCE)[604] dolphin mosaic decorates the floor of the entryway and is bordered by a thick band of black *tesserae*. The two dolphins appear almost as if mirror images of one another. Faded red and black fresco panels accompany the marine mosaic on the walls of the passageway. A threshold mosaic between the *fauces* and atrium depicts the walls and gate of an unknown city. Once within the atrium, it is possible to peer through the *tablinum* to the large peristyle garden at the rear of the house [Fig. III.25].[605] The *tablinum* is decorated with a mosaic threshold band and fragments of red and white fresco. A corridor to a kitchen and private bath with late Second Style decoration occupy the east side of the atrium.[606] An *ala*, with a scrolling vegetal threshold mosaic, and an *oecus* lie opposite the corridor at the west end of the atrium.[607] Beyond the *oecus* and *ala*, the colonnaded peristyle is surrounded by various small courtyard rooms.

Returning to the entryway mosaic, the marine theme of the composition is unmistakable, and supported by the trident, helm, and *hippocampus* that accompany the dolphins just beyond the threshold.[608] Each of the objects depicted has a clear connection to water, and yet this seems a somewhat incongruous pairing with the space of the *fauces*. Considering the location of this

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[603] Bragantini, "VII 1, 40 Casa di M. Caesius Blandus," 380-1; Eschebach and Müller-Trollius, *Gebäudeverzeichnis und Stadtplan der antiken Stadt Pompeji*, 251.

[604] Blake suggests this mosaic may have been a part of the original decoration of the house (Blake, "The Pavements of the Roman Buildings of the Republic and Early Empire," 121), however Pernice and Clarke believe it was relaid in the late first century BCE (Pernice, *Pavimente und Figürliche Mosaiken. Die Hellenistische Kunst in Pompeji*, 54; Clarke, *Roman Black-And-White Figural Mosaics*, 61).

[605] The rear entrance to the house is located at VII.1.43, which could be accessed via ramp. The rear entrance would also have provided access to storerooms under the peristyle.

[606] Bragantini, "VII 1, 40 Casa di M. Caesius Blandus," 430.

[607] The *caldarium* of the bath suite was once decorated with black and white mosaic, the *tepidarium* with painted garlands and a checkerboard threshold mosaic, and the *oecus* with paintings of garlands, herms, caryatids, and a portrait medallion of a mythological couple.

[608] *Hippocampi* are a common feature of marine imagery, and both *hippocampi* and the trident are symbolic of Neptune. William Smith, *Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography and Mythology* Vol. II (Boston: C.C. Little and J. Brown, 1849), 480. See also Katharine Shepard, *The Fish-Tailed Monster in Greek and Etruscan Art* (New York: Priv. Print, 1940).

image and the objects represented, it seems that the mosaic functioned as both a means of policing the passageway, through the dolphin's associations with transformation, and as a metaphor for a visitor's journey inside the structure.

The many associations of dolphins with transformation and goodwill towards humans communicate the mosaic's protective qualities. The aforementioned visual and textual sources demonstrate the conceptual linkage between dolphins and various states of change. It has even been suggested that dolphins functioned as a symbol of the journey across the sea to the Blessed Isles after death, aligning the animal with yet another type of transformation.[609] In addition, other Roman representations of dolphins demonstrate clear associations with protection. A second century CE mosaic, now in the Museo Nacional de Arte Romano in Mérida, Spain,[610] depicts two pairs of dolphins flanking kraters. Swastikas, another protective symbol, appear on the kraters, and the inscription "FELIX" (lucky) is positioned in between the pair of kraters on the left.

Thus, the dolphin mosaic in the entryway of the Domus M. Caesi Blandi aptly draws on a visual motif associated with change and protection as a means of addressing the ambiguity of the passage. The mosaic guards the transitional space of the entryway with the image of a creature that was itself intimately familiar with the processes of transformation.[611] As with the Casa dell'Orso Ferito mosaic, a visitor's experience of their own transition is mirrored by the

[609] Toynbee, *Animals in Roman Life and Art*, 207; Eunice Burr Stebbins, *The Dolphin in the Literature and Art of Greece and Rome* (Menasha, Wis.: The George Banta Publishing Company, 1929), 81.
[610] Museo Nacional de Arte Romano, Mérida, Spain. Antonio Blanco Freijeiro, *Mosaicos Romanos de Mérida. Corpus de Mosaicos de España, Fasc*. 1 (Madrid: Instituto Español de Arqueología "Rodrigo Caro" del Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1978), 28-9.
[611] Elworthy suggests that images of dolphins were used to ward off the Evil Eye. Frederick Thomas Elworthy, *The Evil Eye* (Secaucus, N.J.: University Books/Citadel Press, 1982), 167.

transformational qualities associated with the animal imagery featured in the entryway of the Domus M. Caesi Blandi.

The image of two dolphins, as friends of man and symbolic of good fortune, would no doubt have also been a welcome sight to visitors to the Domus M. Caesi Blandi, and very different from reactions elicited by the wounded bear mosaic. Where the image of the wounded bear is likely to have conjured ideas of the ferocity of wild animals in the arena, the Domus M. Caesi Blandi employs a more welcoming tactic. Nevertheless, in both cases the transformational qualities associated with each animal render them efficacious symbols with which to mediate a space of passage. Furthermore, the fact that the two mosaics were laid roughly a century apart demonstrates that the use of images of animals associated with transformation to guard domestic thresholds persisted throughout the history of Pompeii. This, in turn, suggests that a multiplicity of approaches could be taken to prophylactic animal images within the transitional space of the doorway, each suited to its surroundings.

What is more, a review of the myths and tales associated with dolphins reveal that the theme of travel exists alongside that of metamorphosis in nearly every example. Not only is Dionysus on a journey when he creates dolphins, but in the tales of Pliny the Elder and others, the boys who befriend the animals are always shown favor by being transported by the dolphins. Much like the fact that transformation into dolphins is aligned with the transitional experience of the passageway, the connections to travel would also have paralleled a visitor's experience of the *fauces* as they ventured inside the structure.

It is also significant that an element of danger or tragedy appears within many of the stories concerning dolphins. Whether facing the wrath of Dionysus or mourning the passing of a boy and his dolphin companion, each myth reminds us that although dolphins could be friendly

to humans, the friendship could result in death, sadness, or even unsolicited metamorphosis.[612] In this way, the suggestion of danger may also function as a warning to guests approaching the threshold of the Domus M. Caesi Blandi not to harm the household, lest one should face the misfortune that can result from contact with a dolphin. At most, however, such a warning was subsidiary to the more positive associations with dolphins.

The mosaic panel between the *fauces* and atrium of the Domus M. Caesi Blandi continues the protective efforts of the entryway pavement decoration with its dolphins. This panel depicts the walls of a city with an arched gate. Shields are positioned atop the walls and two crenulated towers appear on either side of the wall [Fig. III.26]. Perhaps even more so than the aquatic panel and dolphins, the connections between this image and the entryway are evident. The panel gives visual form to the barrier between the *fauces* and atrium, and likely reminded viewers of the charged nature of the threshold. Significantly, the gates are closed, denying both physical and visual access to the interior. The image also functions as a space of transition depicted within a space of transition, yet another example of addressing like with like in locales associated with change and ambiguity. It may even be that a visitor to the Domus M. Caesi Blandi waited at this juncture to receive permission to enter the home. Whatever the case, it is clear the image draws a direct comparison between the gated city walls of the mosaic and the interior of the home, both closely monitored and with controlled access.

The combination of the marine motifs and city gate panel may also represent various stages during the journey through the entrance corridor. When first approaching the mosaic, the tiller of the helm is nearest viewers, signifying one's participation in marine travel. The dolphins

[612] In fact, in one story describing a friendship between a dolphin and a boy, the dolphin is to blame for the boy's death, as the animal accidentally pierces the boy's stomach with its sharp dorsal fin. We now know that dolphin fins are neither retractable nor razor sharp, but these features appear in a number of dolphin stories. Ael. *NA* 6.15.

then appear on either side of the viewer, a sign that the voyage is underway. Next, a guest would encounter the trident, a reference to Neptune's domain, and then the top of the helm, bird, and *hippocampus*. The positioning of the helm suggests that it is out of the water, a sign that the journey is coming to an end. This message is reinforced by the presence of the bird, as birds were used by sailors in mythological stories to measure the distance to land.[613] The hippocampus might then symbolize that one is leaving the realm of Neptune, before finally approaching the city gates.

The Domus M. Caesi Blandi in Context

As with the wounded bear mosaic, it is necessary to physically interact with the marine image in the *fauces* of the Domus M. Caesi Blandi. The mosaic fills the entire length and width of the *fauces* floor, and one must step on the mosaic to enter the house, thereby physically engaging with the image. In addition to concerns with symmetry and compositional balance, the presence of two dolphins in the marine panel may have been intended to flank a visitor during the journey through the *fauces*, serving as guides through the ambiguous and unknown space.[614] The eyes of the two dolphins are clearly defined by white *tesserae*, and seem to look toward the visitor. What is more, as one moves across the floor of the *fauces*, the dolphins appear almost to be moving themselves, as if swimming up to a guest, as dolphins were known to do in the

[613] These myths include that of Jason and the Argonauts, who used a dove to navigate the Symplegades. Ap. Rhod. *Argon* 2.317-44. Gildas Hamel, "Taking the Argo to Nineveh: Jonah and Jason in a Mediterranean Context," *Judaism* 44, no. 3 (1995): 344. Although Antero Tammisto identifies the mosaic bird as a kingfisher rather than a dove (Antero Tammisto, *Birds in Mosaics: A Study on the Representation of Birds in Hellenistic and Romano-Campanian Tessellated Mosaics to the Early Augustan Age*. Acta Instituti Romani Finlandiae, Vol. 18 (Rome: Institutum Romanum Finlandiae, 1997), 394-5), the bird may still have signaled the ship was approaching land. The kingfisher may also have symbolized a reference to the myth of Alcyone and Ceyx, two lovers transformed into kingfishers by Zeus. Ov. *Met.* XI.410-749.

[614] It is possible this flanking of a guest could also be interpreted as a gesture of intimidation, to outnumber the visitor and keep them contained within the prescribed path of access.

wild.[615] The dynamism created by this interaction also complements the many ancient stories about dolphins swimming up to humans or guiding them in the water. A similar active approach is taken with the city wall panel, which appears closer and closer as one draws nearer, analogous to the experience of approaching a real city gate. The Domus M. Caesi Blandi entryway mosaic thus anticipates the movements of viewers to activate the protective imagery and guard the *fauces*.

The location of the house also provides information about the meaning and function of the marine mosaic. The Domus M. Caesi Blandi lies at the intersection of the Via degli Augustali and the Vicolo del Lupanare [Fig. III.27].[616] In fact, the Domus M. Caesi Blandi is located very near the Casa dell'Orso Ferito and likely responded to many of the same topographical features. More specifically, the Domus M. Caesi Blandi is situated at a diagonal from the Casa dell'Orso Ferito, across the Via degli Augustali to the southeast [Fig. III.28]. This means that like the Casa dell'Orso Ferito, the Domus M. Caesi Blandi is positioned very near the intersection of two roads, on a corner, and near the unusual bend in the Via degli Augustali that appears in front of the Casa dell'Orso Ferito.

Despite responding to similar geographic concerns and constraints, the owners of the Domus M. Caesi Blandi and Casa dell'Orso Ferito chose very different emphases for the animal images in their entryways. Broadly speaking, then, these two houses demonstrate that efficacious animal imagery within spaces of passage could be a flexible and widely adaptable motif, while remaining a potent tool to monitor ambiguous spaces. With the Domus M. Caesi Blandi and the dolphin mosaic, the many characteristics attributed to dolphins within Roman ideology allow the

[615] Even the diagonal position of the trident may have been intended to encourage movement toward the atrium, as Clarke observes. Clarke *Roman Black-And-White Figural Mosaics*, 10.
[616] To be precise, shop VII.1.41 is located on the corner of the two streets, but this shop occupies a small portion of the northwest corner of the Domus M. Caesi Blandi and is connected via a doorway to the interior of the house.

image to function as a multivalent motif that draws on a variety of ideas and actions simultaneously to convey messages of protection, status, and various types of change.

Conclusions

In examining the mosaic representations of bears and dolphins that appear within the entryways of the Casa dell'Orso Ferito and Domus M. Caesi Blandi, this chapter has investigated two diverse approaches to protective and dynamic representations of animals. I have argued that the use of protective animal imagery was both multifaceted and highly adaptable to its surroundings, a practice that was used in Pompeii for at least two centuries. Bears and dolphins were not simply heraldic animals, but specifically chosen for their posts at the doorways of domestic structures as efficacious symbols of defense, transformation, and status. Where the mosaic of the wounded bear within the Casa dell'Orso Ferito works to both protect and aggrandize the home, the dolphin entryway mosaic in the Domus M. Caesi Blandi draws on the details of its marine motifs to repel intruders, welcome guests, and address the ambiguity of the passage. In both cases the images act in defense of the passageways in which they appear through various visual details, which anticipate a guest's experience of the mosaics.

Much like the divine images studied in Chapter Two, the protective qualities attributed to the animals were activated through an observer's interaction with the images. By again drawing on theories of perception and phenomenology, I have examined how such exchanges were activated and sustained by the images themselves through embodied interactions; the experience of viewing and approaching the mosaics; and the presence of images within a space of passage.

This chapter has also studied the connections between characterizations of certain animals in ancient myth and texts— which associate the animals with transformation, work in service of men, and healing—and the roles of such images to defend domestic thresholds. In this

examination of animal imagery in spaces of passage, the chapter investigated how features such as apotropaic violence, visual illusion, and the distinct characteristics aligned with certain animals rendered them appropriate guardians of Roman doors and doorways, and the ways in which the mosaics responded to their surroundings. Through these analyses, the unexpected complexity of these images has emerged as a fitting and effective foil for the perceived perils of Roman doorways.

Chapter 4: Snares and Signs: Captivating Patterns and Powerful Symbols in Domestic Passageways

Urban life in the cities of ancient Campania brimmed with visual stimuli. Monumental statues decorated major gathering spaces, sidewalks were paved in brilliant polychrome marble chips, and buildings of all kinds displayed brightly painted advertisements on their facades. Among the many colors and textures encountered throughout the city were a wide variety of symbols and patterns that formed ornamental ensembles. In addition to their decorative qualities, such symbols and patterns could also serve as agents of defense at the doorways of ancient Roman homes. These non-figural images represent the focus of this chapter, which examines examples of symbolic or patterned images that appear in conjunction with the portals of three Campanian homes.

While the symbols and patterns with which this chapter is concerned draw on similar ideas of spatial vulnerability and visual efficacy as their figural counterparts discussed in Chapters Two and Three, they employ different strategies of protection within domestic spaces of passage due to their repeating geometric elements and more abbreviated forms. Instead of the visual ambiguity that characterizes the images of deities and animals that appear in Campanian doorways, charged symbols and patterns present a message that is straightforward yet captivating. The mosaic and sculpted symbols and patterns investigated in this chapter endeavored to fascinate, distract, and confound human and spirit viewers through visual puzzles and potent signs. As the work of Alfred Gell, John Manley, and Ellen Swift demonstrate,[617]

[617] Alfred Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), John Manley, "Decoration and Demon Traps: The Meanings of Geometric Borders in Roman Mosaics," in *Communities and Connections: Essays in Honour of Barry Cunliffe*, 426-448. Eds. Chris Gosden and Barry W. Cunliffe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), Ellen Swift, *Style and Function in Roman Decoration: Living with Objects and Interiors* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009).

patterns and symbols could create a sense of movement,[618] in some cases "trapping" evil spirits within their complex visual components. These ideas guide this chapter as it examines the non-figural images that guard Campanian doorways.

The practice of decorating one's entryway with mosaic signs and patterns has roots in Hellenistic Greek cities such as Olynthus and Delos,[619] where symbols like the double axe frequently embellish domestic pavements and could also function as tools of protection.[620] Many of the motifs that decorate Greek structures appear in the mosaics of Roman homes,[621] the decoration of which was profoundly influenced by Greek traditions. Exploring the resonances and reformulations of this Greek tradition in ancient Roman homes, this chapter examines a variety of patterns and symbols to determine how contemporary viewers would have interacted with the images, as well as how they functioned within their specific domestic, and wider urban, environments.

Previous scholarship has characterized these motifs as merely decorative.[622] My research, however, and this chapter more specifically, propose a new understanding of these motifs, and I push back against previous assumptions to highlight the dynamic nature of non-figural images. In addition, I demonstrate how patterned images could be used to repel unwanted visitors and regulate movement within transitional spaces through signs of visual directionality. As active

[618] The same is true of the labyrinth mosaics often found in Roman baths and private homes, which as Rebecca Molholt argues, were experienced both visually and corporeally within their architectural settings. She further suggests that this sensorial connection helped draw viewers into the scene depicted within the mosaic and that the complex pattern of the mosaic could cause viewers to become "optically lost". Rebecca Molholt, "Roman Labyrinth Mosaics and the Experience of Motion," *The Art Bulletin* 93, no. 3 (2011): 287-8, 290.
[619] Swift, *Style and Function in Roman Decoration: Living with Objects and Interiors*, 33.
[620] Katherine M. D. Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 8.
[621] Marion Elizabeth Blake, "Roman Mosaics of the Second Century in Italy." *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 13 (1936): 72.
[622] Robert Curtis believes that black and white patterned mosaics are subordinate to the spaces they decorate. Robert I. Curtis, "A Personalized Floor Mosaic from Pompeii," *American Journal of Archaeology* 88, no. 4 (1984): 565.

and powerful agents in and of themselves, symbols could offer a potent form of defense within vulnerable spaces by invoking fundamentally different strategies than figural representations.

This chapter first presents a theoretical grounding for the study of dynamic patterns and symbols, before briefly examining charged non-figural floor mosaics in the Villa San Marco at Stabiae and the Casa dell'Atrio a Mosaico at Herculaneum. Then, I examine the entryway mosaic of the Casa dell'Ancora [VI.10.7] and its two mosaic symbols within the *fauces* and *vestibulum*. This chapter seeks to demonstrate the dynamic and efficacious nature of patterns and symbols within Roman doorways through these examples, as images that both respond to, and were specifically selected to function within, the ambiguous space of domestic passageways.

Dynamism, Captivation, and Defense: Theories and Examples of Efficacious Symbols

Far more than simply functioning as representations of an object or idea, symbols could act as dynamic agents of change and markers of transitional space within Roman doorways. As a form of visual shorthand, symbols functioned as efficacious images with which to defend passageways. Various scholars and theorists have examined images and symbols as a system of communication or language,[623] and yet semiotics (the study of signs) does not appear to explicate how protective symbols functioned as a prophylactic device. Semiotics *can* explain the messages

[623] On semiotics in art history, see Mieke Bal and Norman Bryson, "Semiotics and Art History," *The Art Bulletin* 73, no. 2 (1991): 174-208; Mieke Bal, "Seeing Signs: The Use of Semiotics for the Understanding of Visual Art," in *The Subjects of Art History: Historical Objects in Contemporary Perspective*, 74-93. Eds. Mark A. Cheetham, Michael Ann Holly, and Keith P. F. Moxey. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 74-93; Göran Sonesson, "Methods and Models in Pictorial Semiotics." 1998. See also the responses to Bal and Bryson, Reva Wolf, Francis H. Dowley, Mieke Bal, and Norman Bryson, "Some Thoughts on 'Semiotics and Art History,'" *The Art Bulletin* 74, no. 3 (1992): 522-31, and Marie Czach, "Further on 'Semiotics and Art History,'" *The Art Bulletin* 75, no. 2 (1993): 338-40; Tonio Hölscher, "Semiotics to Agency," in *The Oxford Handbook of Greek and Roman Art and Architecture*, 662-86. Ed. Clemente Marconi (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015). See also Tonio Hölscher, *The Language of Images in Roman Art* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). On semiotics generally, Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*. Translated by Roy Harris. Bloomsbury Revelations Series. (London: Bloomsbury Academic, An imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2013); Umberto Eco, *A Theory of Semiotics*. *Advances in Semiotics* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976).

behind the symbol, but not the active processes of defense that are engaged through a viewer's interaction with images. In this regard, the work of Alfred Gell is particularly useful for the study of charged symbols and patterns.[624] Beyond his discussion of art objects as active agents,[625] Gell devotes an entire chapter to the analysis of patterns and repetitious designs in *Art and Agency*. He argues that patterned images can be used to captivate, demoralize, paralyze, and even trap onlookers or evil spirits.[626] The complicated, and often confusing, nature of patterns can result in what Gell calls a "pleasurable frustration" or "mind trap".[627] This "cognitive stickiness" reflects the active nature of the pattern or symbol, which Gell argues is animated through one's perception of the image.[628] Drawing on their captivating nature, patterns thus represent one type of artistic agency through their protective qualities.[629]

John Manley has applied Gell's ideas to the study of geometric floor mosaics in Roman Britain. Manley argues that the geometric patterns and symbols used in mosaic borders could function as active agents of protection.[630] Evil forces could be captivated through the use of complicated, overlapping patterns, and therefore become distracted from their human targets.[631] Guilloche, meander, and other repeating patterns could be "teasing and tempting" for demon viewers,[632] mesmerizing as one attempts to follow or "solve" the visual puzzle. Manley also

[624] Gell takes a strong stance against semiotics and does not conceptualize art as a "visual code," but rather a "system of action". Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*, 6, 14.
[625] See Key Theory and Methodological Framework, pages 25-6.
[626] Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*, 71.
[627] Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*, 80. On the survival of these ideas in 20th century Italy and Spain, see W. L. Hildburgh, "Indeterminability and Confusion as Apotropaic Elements in Italy and in Spain," *Folklore* 55, no. 4 (1944): 133-49, esp. 143-5.
[628] Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*, 78.
[629] Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*, 83.
[630]Manley, "Decoration and Demon Traps: The Meanings of Geometric Borders in Roman Mosaics," 438-9.
[631] See also Katherine M. D. Dunbabin, "*Baiarum Grata Voluptas*: Pleasures and Dangers of the Baths," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 57 (1989): 40.
[632] Manley, "Decoration and Demon Traps: The Meanings of Geometric Borders in Roman Mosaics," 440.

suggests that patterns could create a sense of movement or animation.[633] The guilloche pattern,[634] for instance, is composed of repeated overlapping "ribbons" [Fig. IV.1]. This interlaced pattern captivates the viewer as one attempts to discern where one segment of a "ribbon" begins, and visually disentangle the relationship between the individual components. Moreover, tracing the motif with one's eyes imbues the pattern with a sense of movement and spiraling motion. Ellen Swift proposes that such patterns could be used to create intentional disorientation,[635] and Manley even suggests that guilloche and other mosaic borders were used to keep central mosaic *emblemata* safe from harm.[636] Whether or not mosaic borders did indeed protect the interior elements from harm, the defensive characteristics of the symbols and patterns that populate mosaic borders appear to have been efficacious and dynamic.

I believe the ideas of Gell and Manley can be extended beyond geometric mosaic borders and patterns to the individual symbols found within or surrounding domestic doorways in ancient Campania. Despite Robert Curtis's insistence that patterned black and white mosaics were in general "basically functional"[637] or "conventional and frivolous,"[638] this chapter argues that the symbols that decorate ancient Campanian domestic doorways in mosaic and sculpture had utility beyond their function as floor paving or decoration. Like efficacious patterns, individual elements such as swastikas or labyrinths could work to fascinate spectators through their complicated, and at times illusionistic, elements. Onlookers could be easily distracted and disarmed in their attempts to understand such symbols. Indeed, Katherine Dunbabin identifies

[633] Manley, "Decoration and Demon Traps: The Meanings of Geometric Borders in Roman Mosaics," 440.
[634] The guilloche pattern as observed in Roman mosaics, was introduced in the Hellenistic period. S.E. Waywell, "Roman Mosaics in Greece," *American Journal of Archaeology* 83, no. 3 (1979): 310.
[635] Swift, *Style and Function in Roman Decoration: Living with Objects and Interiors*, 100.
[636] Manley explains that this was done in an attempt to ensure the efficacy of the auspicious central *emblemata*. Manley, "Decoration and Demon Traps: The Meanings of Geometric Borders in Roman Mosaics," 444.
[637] Curtis, "A Personalized Floor Mosaic from Pompeii," 565.
[638] Curtis, "A Personalized Floor Mosaic from Pompeii," 565

swastikas,[639] phalluses, *kantharoi,* Gorgon heads, laurel, labyrinths, and even feet[640] as apotropaic symbols that often appear in conjunction with thresholds.[641] For Dunbabin these symbols could offer protection and safe passage within doorways and spaces of passage.[642] Dunbabin does not address the mechanisms of protection offered by the symbols— and this is not her aim— but the use of apotropaic symbols in vulnerable locations seems to have been consistent across the wide geographic and temporal spans of the material she investigates. Although Dunbabin is specifically concerned with the defensive images and inscriptions that populated baths, the appearance of the same symbols in domestic doorways demonstrates that such a practice extended beyond *thermae*.

The motif known as the Solomonic knot is a key example of the captivating qualities of symbols [Fig. IV.2]. Composed of two interlocking ovals, the Solomonic knot[643] is a symbol that is endless, as the ovals have neither a clear beginning nor end, and it leaves viewers in an infinite visual loop. The Solomonic knot was used as an apotropaic symbol in ancient and early Christian contexts, where it was invoked to safeguard vulnerable areas,[644] perhaps through its demon-trapping abilities, as suggested by Gell.[645] The presence of the symbol within Roman doorways

[639] Manley, "Decoration and Demon Traps: The Meanings of Geometric Borders in Roman Mosaics," 437; Frederick Thomas Elworthy, *The Evil Eye* (Secaucus, N.J.: University Books/Citadel Press, 1982), 291.
[640] Katherine M.D. Dunbabin, "*Ipsa deae vestigia*...Footprints divine and human on Graeco-Roman monuments," *Journal of Roman Archaeology* 3 (1990): 85-109.
[641] Dunbabin, "*Baiarum Grata Voluptas*: Pleasures and Dangers of the Baths," 39-40.
[642] Dunbabin, "*Baiarum Grata Voluptas*: Pleasures and Dangers of the Baths," 38-46. Elsewhere, Dunbabin suggests that only single symbols (as opposed to a repeating pattern) are protective. Katherine M. D. Dunbabin, *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa: Studies in Iconography and Patronage.* Oxford Monographs on Classical Archaeology (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1978), 163.
[643] Marion Elizabeth Blake estimates that the Solomonic knot motif was introduced in Rome in the first century CE. Blake, "Roman Mosaics of the Second Century in Italy," 196.
[644] Eunice Dauterman Maguire, Henry Maguire, Maggie J. Duncan-Flowers, Krannert Art Museum, and Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, *Art and Holy Powers in the Early Christian House*. Illinois Byzantine Studies, 2 (Urbana: Krannert Art Museum, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1989), 4. Knots in general were believed to offer protection, and in addition to the Solomonic knot, the knot of Hercules (square knot) was also symbolic of protection and good fortune. Dauterman Maguire, Maguire, Duncan-Flowers, Krannert Art Museum, and Kelsey Museum of Archaeology, *Art and Holy Powers in the Early Christian House*, 3-4.
[645] Gell, *Art and Agency: An Anthropological Theory*, 84-6.

seems to draw on these qualities, as it demonstrates the embodied experience of viewing the image. With both the Solomonic knot and other symbols, the complex interrelationships between the many parts of a motif work to animate the image. Through these features, observers of the motif are made to feel as if they are activating the symbols, which in turn creates a sense of reciprocity between viewer and image.

Consequently, the following analyses draw on the ideas of Gell, Manley, Swift, and Dunbabin, as well as the embodied experiences made possible by symbols, to undertake an investigation of symbols and patterns as tools of fascination and protection. These qualities, combined with the perceived vulnerabilities of Roman doorways, suggest that specific and powerful symbols were chosen to decorate thresholds as a tool of defense against various perils. While not all threshold mosaics are overtly efficacious or protective in nature, the impulse to mark thresholds and draw attention to their liminal nature reveals a clear concern for differentiating transitional spaces in Roman homes. Both decorative and functional, the embellishment of thresholds with mosaic symbols and patterns served to signal changes in space and could even delineate public zones from private areas.[646]

Mosaic Symbols and Patterns at the Villa San Marco and Casa dell'Atrio a Mosaico

The Villa San Marco

[646] For more on the differentiation of public and private spaces within a Roman house see Chapter Two page 59, note 236.

The Villa San Marco[647] at Stabiae (modern Castellammare di Stabia) is a sprawling maritime villa[648] that includes a monumental entryway, large green spaces, and a private bath suite [Fig. IV.3].[649] The front entrance of the house features a pedimented porch and two benches [Fig. IV.4], and a simple black and white mosaic band marks the threshold of the wide front doorway. Inside the villa, the atrium is large and features a columned *impluvium* [Fig. IV.5]. Fresco fragments decorate the atrium walls, and a large and brightly painted *lararium* occupies a niche within the east wall of the atrium. Small rooms with extant fresco and mosaic-patterned thresholds surround the central space. East of the atrium are service areas and a kitchen, and to the south, a large *tablinum*. South of the *tablinum* is the home's sizable bath suite, and the east side of the villa is occupied by two large green spaces. The first is demarcated by a long pool and *nymphaeum*, and is surrounded by a portico, various rooms, and a *cryptoporticus*, while the second green space is defined by a large peristyle.[650]

[647] Excavated 1749-1754, and again in the 1950s. Damaged in 1980 earthquake, excavated and restored 2008, 2011-2012. Giovanna Bonifacio and Anna Maria Sodo, *Stabiae: guida archeologica alle ville* (Castellammare di Stabia. Napoli: N. Longobardi, 2001), 21-31. On the recent excavations, Fabrizio Ruffo, "Stabiae: Villa San Marco e l'impianto urbano alla luce delle recenti indagini archeologiche (2008). Osservazioni preliminari," *Rivista di studi pompeiani* 20 (2009): 87-102; Taco Terpstra, Luana Toniolo, and Paolo Gardelli. "Campagna di scavo APAHA 2011 a Villa San Marco, 'Stabiae': relazione preliminare sull'indagine archeologica," *Rivista di studi pompeiani* 22 (2011): 199-205; Taco T. Terpstra, "Preliminary Field Report on the 2012 Excavations at the Villa San Marco, Stabiae," *Rivista di Studi Pompeiani 24* (2013): 139-43; Mantha Zarmakoupi, *Designing for Luxury on the Bay of Naples: Villas and Landscapes (c. 100 Bce-79 Ce)* (Oxford Studies in Ancient Culture and Representation. Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2014), 68-74.

[648] See also Alix Barbet and Paola Miniero. *La Villa San Marco a Stabia*. Collection du Centre Jean Bérard, 18. Napoli: Centre Jean Bérard, 1999; Bonifacio and Sodo, *Stabiae: guida archeologica alle ville*, 31-88; Fabrizio Ruffo, "Alcune riflessioni su Stabiae: Stabiae, San Marco: la villa, le terme, Narcisso," *Rivista di studi pompeiani* 25 (2014): 174-78; Hélène Eristov and Nicole Blanc, "Peintures et stucs des villas de Stabies: bilan des recherches et nouveaux projets," *Rivista di studi pompeiani* 20 (2009): 158-60; Alix Barbet, "Peintures de Stabies perdues et retrouvées," *Rivista di studi pompeiani* 21 (2010): 15-19; Antonio Ferrara, "La Villa San Marco a Stabiae," in *Stabiae, dai borbone alle ultime scoperte*, 99-104. Eds. Domenico Camardo and Antonio Ferrara (Castellammare di Stabia (Na). Napoli: N. Longobardi, 2001), 99-104; Michele Ruggiero, *Degli scavi di Stabia dal MDCCXLIX al MDCCLXXXII: notizie* (Napoli: Tipografia dell'Academia reale delle scienze, 1881.

[649] On the thermal suite, see Luciana Jacobelli, "Nuove ipotesi sul settore termale della Villa San Marco," *Rivista di studi pompeiani* 25 (2014): 179-83.

[650] Other areas of the villa have not yet been excavated.

Although the front threshold of the Villa San Marco does not feature any symbols or patterns, every room that surrounds the atrium is decorated with a different non-figural motif in black and white mosaic.[651] No two threshold patterns are the same, and this demarcation may have helped residents and guests of the villa differentiate one room from the next.[652] For example, while Room 57 is decorated with a simple lozenge [Fig. IV.6], the threshold of corridor 59A is embellished with a pattern of hexagons and lozenges [Fig. IV.7]. A pattern of triangles surrounded by a guilloche border marks the threshold of the *tablinum* [Fig. IV.8], and the threshold of Room 61 is marked by a Solomonic knot enclosed within two black borders [Fig IV.2]. Room 61 is a small *cubiculum* located to the north of the front entrance, the interior of which is decorated with simple, monochromatic frescoes that feature small depictions of drinking vessels, animals, and garlands. As discussed above, the Solomonic knot was a symbol that could be used to ensnare evil forces through its fascinating components. Given that Room 61 is located directly beside the front entrance corridor and guards a private room of the house, the symbol may have been used as a necessary tool of defense by trapping spirits on the threshold of the *cubiculum*.

The same can be said of the threshold band that separates the atrium from the *tablinum*. The triangles and guilloche of the mosaic band offer two methods of captivation. The triangle pattern begins in the middle at a central lozenge and runs to either side of the panel, pointing in opposite directions from point to base. This pattern encourages both the mind and body to follow

[651] For a scientific analysis of the floors of the villa see Francesco Izzo, Anna Arizzi, Piergiulio Cappelletti, Giuseppe Cultrone, Alberto De Bonis, Chiara Germinario, Sossio Fabio Graziano, Celestino Grifa, Vincenza Guarino, Mariano Mercurio, Vincenzo Morra, Alessio Langella, "The Art of Building in the Roman Period (89 B.C. – 79 A.D.): Mortars, Plasters and Mosaic Floors from Ancient Stabiae (Naples, Italy)", *Construction and Building Materials* 117 (2016): 129-143. See also Simon J. Barker, J. Clayton Fant, and Courtney A. Ward. "Relazione preliminare sulla decorazione marmorea alle Ville Arianna e San Marco, Stabiae." *Rivista di studi pompeiani* 24 (2013): 128-130.

[652] For example, a guest unfamiliar with the home might remember which *cubiculum* was theirs by looking for a diamond motif.

the points of the triangles to either side of the doorway,[653] rather than into the interior of the room. Meanwhile, the guilloche border that surrounds the triangles presents a complicated and repeating pattern of twisted and overlapping elements, in which it is possible to lose oneself. While no protective elements have been preserved within the front doorway of the home, the threshold bands in rooms such as the *tablinum* and *cubiculum* 61 may have supplemented or supplied protection within the interior of the large villa, which features many open-air spaces.

Patterned thresholds exist elsewhere in the home, including within the bath suite and in between individual columns of the northwestern peristyle.[654] These patterns range from simple checkerboards [Fig. IV.9], to complicated patterns of faceted grids [Fig IV.10].[655] In both cases, the checkerboard and faceted grid present patterns that are dynamic and could require a great deal of concentration to unpack; perfectly suited to disarming unwanted guests within the house. Patterned thresholds even appear in the service areas of the Villa San Marco, including service corridor 39 [Fig. IV.11], which speaks to the multivalent nature of the mosaics.

Certainly, not all threshold motifs that appear within the Villa San Marco are intrinsically protective, but the high percentage of transitional spaces that are marked with threshold patterns within the villa suggests the delineation and differentiation of these spaces was important to the inhabitants. The threshold symbols are made further conspicuous by the mosaic floor decoration on the interior of the villa's many rooms. On the whole, the non-threshold mosaic floors are monochrome, with a single thin border demarcating the limits of the room. This means that the patterns and symbols that decorate the thresholds stand in stark contrast to the relatively plain

[653] On directionality in non-figural mosaics see Swift, *Style and Function in Roman Decoration: Living with Objects and Interior*, 46-52.
[654] Those thresholds in the Villa San Marco that do not feature mosaic symbols or patterns have either been damaged or are marked with a marble slab.
[655] These patterns decorate rooms 36 and 32, respectively.

interior mosaic floor design. Once again, this demonstrates that mosaic threshold patterns were used to draw attention to the transitional nature of the space, and in some cases provided visual tools that could be used to defend the threshold.

The mosaic symbols that decorate the villa's interior thresholds would have helped guide and protect guests as they traveled through the various rooms of the house. Diverse in form and complexity, the threshold mosaics worked to clearly and dynamically call attention to the many ambiguous spaces within the villa. These symbols engaged viewers in fundamentally different ways than figural decorations. Where the images of deities and animals examined in previous chapters sought to engage with viewers through interactions with another living being, such as eye contact or bodily proximity, the thresholds within the Villa San Marco draw in viewers through the confounding nature of their patterns and symbols. In some cases, the patterns appear as if moving toward or around them. Viewers are thus drawn into the patterns and distracted from any plans of harm, as opposed to engaging with figural images that offer warning or welcome. The strategy employed by symbols and patterns aims to distract and trap, rather than communicating directly with observers. However, while the mechanisms of activation may differ from those of figural images, the functionality is the same. In both cases the dynamic elements of the images work to actively defend ambiguous spaces, and the presence of a viewer is essential for the images to function. In this way, the threshold mosaics of the Villa San Marco are dynamic and efficacious images that are critical to navigating the interior space of the villa.

The Casa dell'Atrio a mosaico

The thresholds at the Villa San Marco belong within a larger pattern of domestic decoration on the Bay of Naples, including a repeating pattern of mosaic symbols found within the entrance corridor of the Casa dell'Atrio a mosaico [IV.2] in Herculaneum [Fig. IV.12]

(excavated 1929).[656] A single bench lies to the left of the entranceway, and the *fauces* is long with some surviving wall fresco fragments. Square panels of black and white mosaic, each embellished with a rosette or geometric motif decorate the f*auces* floor,[657] which is followed by a large atrium. A colonnaded *tablinum* or *oecus* is located beyond the atrium, and the house continues to the south with a large porticoed garden that features a series of small *cubicula* and an exedra along the eastern side. A large *triclinium* and four small rooms occupy the southern end of the garden. Finally, a narrow terrace lies at the southern end of the structure, and this terrace would have overlooked the ancient beachfront before 79 CE.

Much like the patterned thresholds within the Villa San Marco, the *fauces* mosaic of the Casa dell'Atrio a mosaico utilizes repeating patterns and specific symbols to defend the corridor.[658] The floor mosaic consists of eighteen squares, each containing a black and white symbol and surrounded by a guilloche pattern [Fig. IV.13]. The symbols are arranged into six rows of three squares (or three columns of six squares), and a threshold panel of five eight-pointed stars separates the *fauces* floor from that of the atrium.[659] Some of the *fauces* symbols are explicitly protective, such as the swastika, while others, like a white square within a black lozenge, appear more decorative. Previous scholars have described the effect of the pavement as

[656] See Amedeo Maiuri, *Ercolano: i nuovi scavi (1927-1958)* (Roma: Istituto poligrafico dello Stato, Libreria della Stato, 1958), 280-302, esp. 282-3; Amedeo Maiuri, *Ercolano*. 6. Ed. riv. e aggiornata. Itinerari dei musei, gallerie e monumenti d'Italia, N. 53 (Roma: Istituto poligrafico dello Stato, Libreria dello Stato, 1967), 26-8; on the paintings, Maria Paola Guidobaldi, Domenico Camardo, and Elena Tommasino, "Indagini archeologiche nella Casa dell'Atrio a Mosaico di Ercolano (IV, 2; 1)," *Rivista di studi pompeiani* 17 (2006): 112-20; Maria Paola Guidobaldi, "Ufficio scavi di Ercolano," *Rivista di studi pompeiani* 16 (2005): 260; Maria Paola Guidobaldi, *Ercolano: guida agli scavi* (Naples: Electa Napoli, 2006), 70-4; Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994), 18-9, 199.

[657] Giuseppina Cerulli Irelli, *Le pitture della Casa dell'Atrio a Mosaico.* Monumenti della pittura antica scoperti in Italia. Sezione 3. Ercolano, Fasc. 1 (Roma: Istituto poligrafico dello Stato, 1971), 14.

[658] Maiuri dates the mosaic to the Flavian period. Maiuri, *Ercolano: i nuovi scavi (1927-1958),* 283.

[659] The atrium floor is decorated in a checkerboard pattern surrounded by a border of scrolling vines. Stars could be used as apotropaic symbols in late antiquity. It is likely this was also true in earlier periods. John Mitchell, "Keeping the Demons Out of the House: The Archaeology of Apotropaic Strategy and Practice in Late Antique Butrint and Antigoneia," in *Objects in Context, Objects in Use: Material Spatiality in Late Antiquity*. Late Antique Archaeology, V. 5, 273-310. Eds. Luke Lavan, Ellen Swift, and Toon Putzeys. Leiden: Brill, 2007), 281.

a carpet pattern,[660] however, I have observed a more regular pattern within the composition of the mosaic. Specifically, the overall organization of the symbols forms a pattern of repeating motifs, where each column contains two different symbols (A and B) arranged in a pattern of A-B-A-A-B-A. Symbol "A" in the row nearest the front door is a lozenge with a central square cutout on the left side, a rosette with six overlapping petals in the middle, and four ovals surrounding a central square on the right. On the left, symbol "B" consists of two crescent shields (*peltae*),[661] a swastika in the middle, and on the right four black triangles that form a hexagon. Together, the motifs create a patterned effect, that is both regular and dynamic.

The decoration of the *fauces* floor with a "carpet" of different symbols works in similar ways as the mosaic thresholds of the Villa San Marco. Also located within a space of transition, the Casa dell'Atrio a mosaico *fauces* mosaic symbols demonstrate an effort to deter unwanted visitors within the intermediary space of the entrance corridor through the use of symbols. The central column employs two different approaches. Where the swastika is broadly protective, the rosette endeavors to ensnare unwanted guests, the latter of which is formed by overlapping components in a complex and illusionistic pattern [Fig. IV.14]. At first glance, one might see a large floral motif with areas of black *tesserae* between each segment and on the tip of each panel. The visual game continues as one attempts to trace the overlapping pattern of the petals, which merge with one another. Then, a second glance reveals a smaller flower in the black ovals that occupy the center of the symbol, which are joined together by pointed crescent shapes. The play of back and forth offered by this symbol is not only dynamic, but captivating, and not unlike a

[660] Amedeo Maiuri, *Ercolano*. 6. Ed. riv. e aggiornata. Itinerari dei musei, gallerie e monumenti d'Italia, N. 53 (Roma: Istituto poligrafico dello Stato, Libreria dello Stato, 1967), 26.
[661] According to Mariette De Vos, *peltae* frequently appear at thresholds. Mariette De Vos, "Pavimenti e mosaici," in *Pompei 79: raccolta di studi per il decimonono centenario dell'eruzione Vesuviana,* 161-176. Ed. Fausto Zevi (Napoli: G. Macchiaroli, 1984), 172.

modern “Magic Eye” poster. Moreover, the alternation between the rosette and swastika offered layers of prophylactic symbols within the space of the corridor to ensure the ensnarement or repulsion of malign forces. The other two columns employed similar devices, where both protective symbols and geometric motifs confront those standing in the *fauces*.

Separately, the individual symbols of the *fauces* mosaic pattern are an effective means of protection, but together, the motifs offer another visual puzzle to decipher. Due to their arrangement in the A-B-A-A-B-A pattern, it takes a moment to unravel the repeating pattern of the symbols when viewing the mosaic from the threshold. Rather than a simple alternation of symbols A and B, motif A repeats in the middle, and this confounds easy untangling of the pattern. This, too, could function as a means of distracting and disarming unwelcome visitors. Then, the guilloche border could work to further captivate or ensnare with its repeating and overlapping elements. In this way, the mosaic symbols and patterned border in the entryway of the Casa dell’Atrio a mosaico work on two levels to defend the interior of the home within the vulnerable space of the *fauces*.

Despite the complexities of the protective symbols employed in defense of the Villa San Marco and Casa dell’Atrio a mosaico, the use of intricate patterns to ensnare evil forces is but one function of charged symbols in domestic doorways. As the following example will reveal, symbols could also offer protection through the perceived characteristics of the objects depicted. In some cases, these symbols combine with efficacious patterns for additional defensive measures, and in others the symbols stand alone. Yet, like the motifs in the Villa San Marco and Casa dell’Atrio a mosaico, each offers dynamic protection within the ambiguous space of the doorway.

Tactics of Defense and Address in the Entryway of the Casa dell'Ancora

The Casa dell'Ancora[662] [VI.10.7][663] is a large house located on the Via di Mercurio [Fig. IV.15][664] within Pompeii's *Regio* VI on the northwest side of the city [Fig. IV.16].[665] No façade decoration survives,[666] but the *fauces* of the house is wide and can be reached by two steps between the sidewalk and front door. A black and white mosaic depicting an anchor[667] appears in the *fauces* immediately past the front threshold of the house [Fig. IV.17].[668] The *fauces* then

[662] Also called the Casa di Melissaeus, Casa dell'Ancora Nera, and the Casa di Nettuno. Liselotte Eschebach and Jürgen Müller-Trollius, *Gebäudeverzeichnis und Stadtplan der antiken Stadt Pompeji* (Köln: Böhlau, 1993), 194.
[663] For early descriptions of the house see Giuseppe Fiorelli, *PAH* Vol. II, Pt. 5 (Neapoli, 1860) 162, 183, 221, 237-8; Giuseppe Fiorelli, *PAH* Vol. III (Neapoli, 1860), 69, 121; Ernest Breton, *Pompeia décrite et dessinée*. 3rd ed. (Paris: L. Guerin & Cie, 1870), 361-2; Wolfgang Helbig, *Wandgemälde der vom Vesuv Verschütteten Städte Campaniens* (Leipzig, 1868), 50 (no. 174), 87 (no. 334), 114 (no. 495), 126 (no. 564), 255 (no. 1220); Giuseppe Fiorelli, *Descrizione di Pompei* (Napoli: Tipografia Italiana, 1875), 142-3; August Mau, *Geschichte der Dekorativen Wandmalerei in Pompeji* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1882) 79-80, 258-9, 396-7, 422; August Mau and Francis W. Kelsey, *Pompeii: Its Life and Art*. New ed., rev. and cored. (New York; London: Macmillan, 1902), 351-2. See also Erich Pernice, *Pavimente und Figürliche Mosaiken. Die Hellenistische Kunst in Pompeji*, Bd. 6 (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1938), 78; Karl Schefold *Die Wände Pompejis: Topographisches Verzeichnis der Bildmotive* (Berlin: DeGruyter, 1957), 123-4; Matteo Della Corte, *Case ed abitanti di Pompei* (Napoli: Fausto Fiorentino, 1965), 57-8; Valeria Sampaolo, "VI 10, 7 Casa dell'Ancora," in *PPP*, Vol. II. 231-4. Eds. Irene Bragantini, Mariette De Vos, Franca Parise Badoni, and Valeria Sampaolo (Roma: Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali, Istituto centrale per il catalogo e la documentazione, 1983), 231; Anne Laidlaw, *The First Style in Pompeii: Painting and Architecture*. Archaeologica, 57. (Rome: G. Bretschneider, 1985), 164; Eschebach and Müller-Trollius, *Gebäudeverzeichnis und Stadtplan der antiken Stadt Pompeji*, 194; 4; Valeria Sampaolo, "VI 10, 7 Casa dell'àncora," in *PPM*, Vol. IV, 1050-71. Eds. G. P. Carratelli and I. Baldassarre (Roma: Istituto della enciclopedia italiana, 1991).
[664] The rear entrance of the Casa dell'Ancora is located at VI.10.16.
[665] The Casa dell'Ancora was excavated in 1826-1827, and 1828-1829 under the direction of Carlo Bonucci. Restored in 2014. Emanuela Santaniello, Fabio Galeandro, Sara Matilde Masseroli, and Raffaele Martinelli, "GPP 12 restauro architettonico della Casa dell'Ancora (VI, 10, 7)," *Rivista di studi pompeiani* 26-27 (2015): 119. A Greco-Italic amphora was found beneath the floor at late Samnite level. Filippo Coarelli, Annapaola Zaccaria Ruggiu, Fabrizio Pesando, and Paolo Braconi, "Pompei: 'Progetto Regio VI'. Relazione preliminare degli scavi nelle insulae 10 e 14," *Rivista di studi pompeiani* 12-13 (2001): 225. For objects found within the house, see Fabrizio Pesando, Davide Cannavina, Fausta Freda, Adriana Grassi, Ruben Tilotta, Elena Tommasino, "La Casa dell'Ancora (V1 10,7)," in *Rileggere Pompei. 1. L'insula 10 della Regio VI: 1*. Studi della Soprintendenza Archeologica di Pompei (Vedi Studi e Ricerche del Parco Archeologico di Pompei) Ser, V. 12, 161-241. Eds. Filippo Coarelli, Fabrizio Pesando, and Monika Verzár-Bass (Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2006),165.
[666] Graffiti was found on the exterior walls of the home when excavated. CIL IV 26 was discovered to the right of the door in August 1826, and CIL IV 154-7 were found to the left of the door in January 1827. See Mario Pagano and Raffaele Prisciandaro, *Studio sulle provenienze degli oggetti rinvenuti negli scavi borbonici del regno di Napoli: una lettura integrata, coordinata e commentata della documentazione.* Castellammare di Stabia (Na): N. Longobardi, 2006), 136.
[667] Structure III.1.3 in Pompeii is also reported to have been decorated with a red anchor painted on the right pilaster of the entrance. This anchor was painted on an old layer of plaster, which was revealed when newer layers fell from the wall. The anchor is no longer extant. Della Corte, *Case ed abitanti di Pompei*, 342.
[668] Barbara Rizzo, "Limina: la decorazione figurata delle soglie musive a Pompei," *Orizzonti: rassegna di archeologia* VIII (2007): 100; Blake, "The Pavements of the Roman Buildings of the Republic and Early Empire," 85.

continues with a short step up that is decorated with a black and white scale-patterned mosaic panel [Fig. IV.18]. Little fresco remains on the *fauces* walls, and the extant fragments are faded, but First Style decorations originally embellished the walls.[669] Two stone blocks with cuttings flank the opening to the atrium at the end of the *fauces* and reveal that a door once existed between the entry corridor and the atrium [Fig. IV.19].

Once inside the Casa dell'Ancora, various small rooms with extant marble thresholds surround the atrium,[670] which is complete with an *impluvium* and accompanying puteal. A large lava stone stands on the north side of the atrium. This block would have supported a strongbox, and currently sits atop fragments of the mosaic that formerly paved the entire atrium [Fig. IV.20].[671] A large *tablinum* occupies the east side of the atrium, in which excavators discovered a painting of Adonis.[672] Continuing east, three rooms occupy the north wall of the house and have no extant decoration.[673] South of these rooms, and east of the *tablinum*, it is possible to view the lower level of the house, which incorporates a large garden space [Fig. IV.21] and can be reached by a staircase in the atrium.[674] A two-tiered faux portico occupies the east side of the green space, while an arched masonry *cryptoporticus* inhabits the west, and a series of six rooms

[669] Pesando, Cannavina, Freda, Grassi, Tilotta, Tommasino, "La Casa dell'Ancora (V1 10,7)," 168-9.
[670] A painting of Amymone and Neptune formerly decorated the room in the southwest corner of the atrium. See Helbig, *Wandgemälde der vom Vesuv Verschütteten Städte Campaniens*, 174; H. Roux, *Herculanum et Pompéi recueil général des peintures, bronzes, mosaïques: Tome 2* (Paris: Didot, 1839), pl. 62. Helbig mentions that the room north of the *fauces* once was decorated with a painting of Ariadne abandoned by Theseus. Helbig, *Wandgemälde der vom Vesuv Verschütteten Städte Campaniens*, 114 (no. 495), 255 (no. 1220). For more on the interior decoration of the Casa dell'Ancora, see Sampaolo, "VI 10, 7 Casa dell'Ancora," 232-3; Wolfgang Zahn, *Die schönsten Ornamente und merkwürdigsten Gemälde aus Pompeji, Herculanum und Stabiae: III* (Berlin: Reimer, 1852), Tav. 49.
[671] Blake, "The Pavements of the Roman Buildings of the Republic and Early Empire," 62.
[672] Now lost, found on the north wall. Helbig, *Wandgemälde der vom Vesuv Verschütteten Städte Campaniens*, 334; Sampaolo, "VI 10, 7 Casa dell'Ancora," 232.
[673] The middle room, thought have been a *triclinium*, was formerly decorated with a black and white geometric floor mosaic. Santaniello, Galeandro, Masseroli, and Martinelli, "GPP 12 restauro architettonico della Casa dell'Ancora (VI, 10, 7)," *Rivista di studi pompeiani* 26-27 (2015): 120-1. The room in the northeast corner featured diamond-patterned black and white floor paving.
[674] Two portrait busts were found in the niches. Wilhelmina F. Jashemski, *The Gardens of Pompeii: Herculaneum and the Villas Destroyed by Vesuvius*. Volume II, Appendices (New Rochelle, N.Y.: A.D. Caratzas Pub, 1993), 141.

lie along the southwest wall of the house. Finally, a *nymphaeum* with three large niches inhabits the far south end of the garden [Fig. IV.22].[675]

Anchors and Scales: Symbols of Protection, Good Fortune, and Captivation

Six construction phases have been identified at the Casa dell'Ancora. The earliest phase dates to the Samnite period (third century BCE), while the latest was begun after the earthquake of 62 CE. Both the late first century BCE Second Style floor mosaics[676] and First Style paintings in the entrance corridor would have communicated the long and well-established history of the house to visitors during the first century CE.[677] Moreover, beyond celebrating the great age of the home, the mosaics would have offered protection for the inhabitants and guests of the Casa dell'Ancora.

[675] On the nymphaeum see Frank Sear, "The Earliest Wall Mosaics in Italy," *Papers of the British School at Rome* 43 (1975), 93.

[676] The mosaics have been identified as a part of the third phase of construction. Pesando, Cannavina, Freda, Grassi, Tilotta, Tommasino, "La Casa dell'Ancora (V1 10,7)," 169. On the phasing of the house, see Pesando, Cannavina, Freda, Grassi, Tilotta, Tommasino, "La Casa dell'Ancora (V1 10,7)," 227-232; Santaniello, Galeandro, Masseroli, and Martinelli, "GPP 12 restauro architettonico della Casa dell'Ancora (VI, 10, 7)," 119-20; Coarelli, Ruggiu, Pesando, and Braconi, "Pompei: 'Progetto Regio VI'. relazione preliminare degli scavi nelle insulae 10 e 14," 225. At the time of the eruption, a second story was being constructed for the house, Paul Zanker, *Pompeii: Public and Private Life*. Revealing Antiquity, 11 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1998), 160.

[677] The sense of the age of the house may further have been communicated by the shape of the anchor itself. Anchors like that found in the entryway of the house, with arms that meet at roughly 45-degree angles, were used during the Republican period. Indeed, Pliny the Elder claims that double-fluked anchors were pioneered by Anacharsis (Plin. *HN* 7.209). Viewers familiar with seafaring or maritime history may have (correctly) inferred that the house had Republican-era roots based on the form of the anchor. Gerhard Kapitän, "Ancient Anchors-Technology and Classification," *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 13 (1984): 42. On anchor morphology and for studies on the discovery of Roman anchors, see Micaela Perrone Mercanti, *Ancorae antiquae: per una cronologia preliminare delle ancore del Mediterraneo*. Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider: 1979, esp. 13-9; Carlotta Bigagli and Barbara Ferrini, "Ancore," in *Le navi antiche di Pisa*, 92-7. Ed. Elisabetta Setari and Andrea Camilli (Milano: Electa, 2005), 92-7; Piero Nicola Gargallo and Evelyn Prebensen, "Anchors of Antiquity," *Archaeology* 14, no. 1 (1961): 31-35; Douglas Haldane, "Anchors of Antiquity," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 53, no. 1 (1990): 19-24; Guido Ucelli, *Le navi di Nemi.* Roma: La Libreria dello Stato, 1950; Francesco Tiboni, "A Roman Iron Anchor from the Port of Genoa, Italy*," International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 45, no. 1 (2016): 204–5; G. Hadas, I. Segal, O. Yoffe, and M. Stein, "Study of Roman Anchor from the Dead Sea Shore*," *Archaeometry* 51, no. 6 (2009): 1008–14; Gideon Hadas, Nili Liphschitz, and Georges Bonani, "Two Ancient Wooden Anchors from Ein Gedi, on the Dead Sea, Israel," *International Journal of Nautical Archaeology* 34, no. 2 (2005): 299–307. Parts of a Roman anchor found on the shore of Herculaneum are now displayed in the boat exhibit in Herculaneum.

The anchor mosaic would have provided a first line of defense when entering the Casa dell'Ancora from its position just beyond the front threshold. Anchors were long associated with solidity and stability due to their practical function of keeping a boat from drifting in moving waters.[678] The anchor motif is likely to have promised the same sense of stability in mosaic form within the entrance corridor of the Casa dell'Ancora, while functioning as an apotropaic symbol[679] within a space of transition. In addition to feelings of security, anchors were considered symbolic of good fortune, hope, and tranquility.[680] Anchors could work to both allay the fears of human viewers and bring them good fortune as an auspicious symbol.[681] Anchors could also attract spirit viewers and lure them away from their human targets.[682] Considering the various possible interactions between the anchor mosaic and unseen malign forces, it is even possible that the anchor represented an attempt to "anchor" unwanted guests within the passageway and prevent them from reaching the interior of the home. Whether or not the symbol could function to bind malignant forces to the *fauces* floor, the auspicious characteristics of the mosaic indicate that such an image would have been a well-regarded symbol at the front door of an unfamiliar, or even well-known, home.

The positioning of the anchor may also provide an important clue to its function as a symbol of defense. Significantly, the tip of the anchor points to the right when viewing the mosaic from the front threshold. This may seem a small detail, but the directionality of the motif is likely to have contributed to the overall propitious message conveyed by the anchor, as

[678] The entrance mosaics were inspired by Hellenistic models. Pesando, Cannavina, Freda, Grassi, Tilotta, Tommasino, "La Casa dell'Ancora (V1 10,7)," 221.
[679] Pesando, Cannavina, Freda, Grassi, Tilotta, Tommasino, "La Casa dell'Ancora (V1 10,7)," 221.
[680] Mitchell, "Keeping the Demons Out of the House: The Archaeology of Apotropaic Strategy and Practice in Late Antique Butrint and Antigoneia," 294.
[681] In later Christian iconography anchors came to represent hope, very likely a continuation of the Roman tradition. Charles A. Kennedy, "Early Christians and the Anchor," *The Biblical Archaeologist* 38, no. 3/4 (1975): 115-24.
[682] Manley, "Decoration and Demon Traps: The Meanings of Geometric Borders in Roman Mosaics," 428.

discussed previously.[683] In the case of the anchor mosaic, this emphasis on the right side may have offered another *stratum* of well-wishes in the entryway. It is even possible the right-facing point of the anchor reminded viewers to enter with their right foot first to ensure an auspicious visit.[684] Indeed, structure VIII.2.30 in Pompeii also features a right-pointing anchor embedded in the reticulate work on the façade of the house.[685] This anchor is formed by dark grey blocks of tufa with a rust-colored piece on the far-left end [Fig. IV.23], and is accompanied by a small terracotta mask embedded within the wall [Fig. IV.24].[686] Both of these decorative features would have communicated messages of good luck and apotropaic protection to passersby,[687] to safeguard the structure itself, its inhabitants, and welcomed guests.[688]

At both the Casa dell'Ancora and House VIII.2.30, then, the anchor symbol is associated with the front entrance or façade of their respective homes and demonstrates a link between right-pointing anchor representations and domestic security. As symbols of good fortune, the anchors helped guide observers and offered protection for entering the home and traversing the sidewalk. The Casa dell'Ancora anchor mosaic thus utilized the auspicious elements associated with the motif and its orientation within the *fauces* of the home to welcome invited guests and repel unwanted visitors.

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[683] See Chapter One, pages 66-9.
[684] See Chapter One, pages 66-7.
[685] *Opus reticulatum* was one method of construction used by Roman builders in the second century BCE through the late first century CE and characterized by diamond-shaped pieces of stone set in concrete to form a net pattern. Jean Pierre Adam, *Roman Building: Materials and Techniques* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994), 248-381, 254-67. The front walls of VIII.2.30 are actually in *opus mixtum*, which combines reticulate work with brick reinforcement, but the section of the wall with which we are concerned is the reticulate portion.
[686] It is unclear whether the wall would have been covered with stucco, but the presence of the anchor and other designs as deliberate parts of the construction suggests they may have been visible, even if only temporarily.
[687] Otto Jahn, *Über den Aberglauben des Bösen Blicks bei den Alten* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1855), 58; Maurice Owen, "House as Theater," in *The False-Door: dissolution and becoming in Roman wall-painting*, 1-20. E-publication (2010), 4.
[688] The clear intentionality of incorporating the anchor and mask into the construction of the wall is striking and signals the utility and potency of the anchor symbol even if invisible to most.

In addition to the propitious qualities of the anchor motif, the scale pattern that embellishes the step mid-way through the *fauces* of the Casa dell'Ancora was also tied to the perceived vulnerabilities of the passageway. The scale pattern had long associations with boundaries, could guide visitors through the space, and may even have been able to disarm evil spirits. These qualities not only render the pattern appropriate for the entryway, but also complemented the defensive qualities of the anchor to safeguard the home from threats.

The scale motif was a popular mosaic pattern that remained in use over wide temporal and geographic expanses. Examples of the pattern can be found in first century BCE Pompeian homes,[689] a fourth century CE villa in Spain,[690] and even monumental bath complexes, such as the sprawling early third century CE Baths of Caracalla in Rome,[691] and were used to decorate and demark entryways and other peripheral spaces.[692] Swift proposes that the scale motif developed from a pattern used to decorate doors, gates, and other boundary markers, into a motif used to denote the limits of space within domestic entryways,[693] as depicted within a fresco panel of a balustrade from the peristyle of the Villa San Marco at Stabiae (portico 20) [Fig. IV.25].[694] As part of this process, the visual shorthand of the scale pattern became a sign of transitional areas and boundaries, and a tool used to alert viewers to the marginal nature of the space.[695]

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[689] In Pompeii, the scale pattern appears at VI.8.20; VI.11.10; VIII.2.39; IX.3.2. At Herculaneum it can be found in the Casa Sannitica [V.1]. See Swift, *Style and Function in Roman Decoration: Living with Objects and Interior,* Table 2.1 page 35.

[690] A threshold with the scale pattern can be found in the Villa Romana de Puente de la Olmilla, Albaladejo, Spain. Carmen García Bueno, "Aspectos Constructivos y Decorativos de la Villa Romana de Puente de la Olmilla (Albaladejo, Ciudad Real)," *Lvcentvm* 34, no. 34 (2015): 207-30.

[691] From the west *palaestra* of the baths. Maria Piranomonte, "Thermae Antoninianae," in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* Vol.I, 42-8. Ed. Eva Margareta Steinby (Roma: Edizioni Quasar, 1993), 42-8.

[692] Swift, *Style and Function in Roman Decoration: Living with Objects and Interiors,* 57.

[693] Swift, *Style and Function in Roman Decoration: Living with Objects and Interiors,* 34, 38, 57.

[694] Mid-first century CE, Villa San Marco, Castellammare di Stabia, Italy.

[695] Swift observes that the first century BCE and CE examples most often appear near exterior thresholds and within *vestibula* and *fauces* to designate the change between interior and exterior, although this does change in the second through fourth centuries CE. Swift, *Style and Function in Roman Decoration: Living with Objects and Interiors,* 57, 65.

The appearance of the scale motif within the *fauces* of the Casa dell'Ancora is thus both appropriate and informative, as it reminds viewers of the intermediary nature of the corridor and the vulnerabilities associated with spaces of passage. By drawing attention to the intermediary nature of the *fauces*, the mosaic could also help orient visitors and guide guests to appropriate locations within the home. The repeating nature of the scale pattern is similarly noteworthy. At once straightforward and bewildering, the motif is clear and regular, while also obscuring where one scale ends and another begins. These repeating and overlapping components may even have been used to distract and trap malign forces attempting to enter the home.[696] Taken together, the auspicious qualities of the anchor and the scale motifs' associations with movement, boundaries, and fascination work in tandem to monitor the threshold of the Casa dell'Ancora.

Experiencing the *Fauces* Mosaics in the Casa dell'Ancora

The façade of the house would have been tall and imposing if standing on the sidewalk in front of the Casa dell'Ancora in antiquity. No traces of exterior decoration survive, but 20th century photographs reveal it was formerly faced with plaster [Fig. IV.26]. Two steps lead up to the front threshold of the house from the sidewalk, and the top step features cuttings for a door. Having ascended the stairs, a visitor would then encounter the anchor. The mosaic is large and fills the first step of the *fauces*. It would have been partially visible from the street, but not until one reached the threshold would the full image come into view. The size and bold lines of the anchor would have encouraged guests to stop and consider the symbol before continuing through the passage. Because the anchor is displayed horizontally, the motif is less legible than if

[696] It is possible the owners of the house were sailors or merchants, as suggested by Della Corte (Della Corte, *Case ed abitanti di Pompei*, 45-46) but refuted by Pesando et. al (Pesando, Cannavina, Freda, Grassi, Tilotta, Tommasino, "La Casa dell'Ancora (V1 10,7)," 221). However, the protective and marginal qualities aligned with both the anchor and scale pattern indicate that the *fauces* mosaic decoration served a purpose beyond simply announcing the professions of the inhabitants.

positioned vertically. It therefore requires a moment or two of study before one recognizes the symbol. This moment of pause would not only have allowed visitors a chance to contemplate and "read" the image, but also have given the inhabitants of the house time to assess the individual before they entered the home. The characteristics of the anchor as a symbol would have further encouraged guests to stop on the threshold due to the anchor's associations with stability and security. After the anchor was considered and the message of well-wishes communicated, a visitor could then begin moving through the *fauces* corridor.

Once past the anchor, a visitor would then encounter the scale motif. Standing on the step between the anchor panel and the atrium, one's access to and view of the interior of the house may have been obscured by a closed door. The door cuttings appear at the end of the *fauces* and signal the presence of former doors that could have been used to restrict access to the atrium.[697] If the doors were closed, a visitor would have felt truly in limbo when standing on the scale-patterned step, neither inside nor outside the home. One would feel beckoned forward by the scale motif, but unable to advance due to the barrier. If the doors were open, the scale pattern would have allowed forward motion by alerting viewers to the intermediary nature of the corridor.

As a marker of marginal space, the scale motif would also have encouraged movement. As with other patterns, the scale motif prompts forward motion through the *fauces* corridor and into the atrium due to the sense of directionality communicated by the pattern. Swift has remarked on the directional quality of the scale motif,[698] and by encouraging forward movement,

[697] Pesando, Cannavina, Freda, Grassi, Tilotta, Tommasino, "La Casa dell'Ancora (V1 10,7)," 169. Cuttings also appear on the edge of the step between the anchor and scale panel and suggest a third door may have existed halfway through the *fauces.*

[698] Swift, *Style and Function in Roman Decoration: Living with Objects and Interiors,* 57. Pesando et. al observe the same phenomenon. Pesando, Cannavina, Freda, Grassi, Tilotta, Tommasino, "La Casa dell'Ancora (V1 10,7)," 222.

the panel in the *fauces* of the Casa dell'Ancora was itself a dynamic image while also functioning as an animating device.[699] Therefore, when approaching and walking over the scale pattern, visitors to the Casa dell'Ancora could be reminded to keep moving, their motions mandated and monitored by the visual devices within the passageway.

Thus, where the anchor encouraged guests to stop and look, the scale pattern would have reminded visitors to keep moving. These opposing tactics would have helped further police the *fauces* and control the movements of the individuals within. By inviting guests to first stop and contemplate the anchor, the inhabitants of the house could easily evaluate the visitor.[700] The step between the two parts of the corridor would have further encouraged viewers to pause between the two areas by creating a physical obstacle that discouraged hasty movement. Then, sanctioned visitors would be prompted to move swiftly through the rest of the *fauces* into the interior of the home by the scale patterned panel. Accordingly, the progression of the *fauces* decoration was essential to the function of the protective devices housed therein. Whereas the anchor could be used as the first line of defense by offering an auspicious symbol of security for human viewers and a deterrent for spirits, the scale pattern could safely and quickly usher guests through the remainder of the ambiguous space, while laying a trap for any forces that might try to follow them inside. Considering Manley's suggestion that geometric patterned mosaic borders protected central *emblemata* from evil forces,[701] the scale pattern at the Casa dell'Ancora may even have served to guarantee the efficacy of the anchor symbol. The anchor and scale pattern mosaics in the *fauces* of the Casa dell'Ancora thus ensured any unwanted visitors would be contained within

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In other examples, the scale pattern changes direction in some areas to indicate the direction in which viewers should move.

[699] Swift, *Style and Function in Roman Decoration: Living with Objects and Interiors,* 62.

[700] This sequence of events assumes all doors were open. A similar effect could be accomplished is a door existed between the two steps of the *fauces* and was closed.

[701] Manley, "Decoration and Demon Traps: The Meanings of Geometric Borders in Roman Mosaics," 444.

the intermediary space between the interior of the home and exterior street, and trap any lingering spirits in the space before the interior threshold.

The Casa dell'Ancora is located on the wide Via di Mercurio, where it is surrounded by various other large homes, workshops, and even a fullery [VI.8.20]. Although no other houses on the block exhibit extant entryway decoration, some do feature impressive sightlines from their front doors. The Casa della Fontana Grande [VI.8.22] is one such example, and viewers are presented with an uninterrupted view of a large and colorful water feature at the far west side of the home from the wide threshold of the front door [Fig. IV.27]. Such a tactic of display was not possible at the Casa dell'Ancora, where the green space and accompanying niche are sunken and not visible from the front door. Instead, the *fauces* mosaics were used to impress, protect, and guide visitors.

While no single, overwhelmingly, dangerous feature exists in the area around the Casa dell'Ancora, the proximity of the house to major roads and public gathering points may have influenced the *fauces* decoration. As we have seen with other examples located nearby, the Via di Mercurio leads directly to the heart of the Forum, and the facade of the Casa dell'Ancora would have experienced a fair amount of foot traffic as a result.[702] A public fountain was located at the northeastern corner of the *insula* during the final phase of the house, and the nearby shops and workshops would have enjoyed a steady stream of traffic.

What is more, the presence of the strongbox within the atrium of the house may have necessitated the use of powerful defensive images in the *fauces*.[703] The display of a strongbox in the atrium would have brought prestige to the Casa dell'Ancora, as a physical demonstration of

[702] It is important to note, however, that it is impossible to know precisely what urban or geographic features the entryway mosaics addressed when first laid in the first century BCE.
[703] A strongbox also appears within the atrium of the Casa dei Vettii [VI.15.1], where the entryway of the house is decorated with a protective image (Priapus). See Chapter Two, page 100.

the family's wealth, but would also have invited additional dangers, including the envy of others, possible thieves, and the threat of the Evil Eye. Based on the size and positioning of the extant strongbox base, the chest would have been visible from the entrance corridor. The strongbox, in addition to the urban location of the house, likely necessitated the inclusion of the symbols and patterns that decorate the floor of the Casa dell'Ancora entrance corridor. Furthermore, while the *fauces* mosaics appear to have been less influenced by the urban and geographic features surrounding the house than the images of deities and animals examined in previous chapters, the location of the structure, presence of the strongbox, and unusual plan of the house serve to contextualize the protective devices used within the entryway of the Casa dell'Ancora.

The anchor motif and scale pattern that decorate the *fauces* of the Casa dell'Ancora represent two different, yet related methods of address and security within a space of passage. At once auspicious, distracting, and captivating, the mosaics draw attention to the transitional nature of the corridor, while also helping control access to the interior of the structure. These motifs worked in many ways at once and aimed to address diverse audiences simultaneously to provide protection for the home, its inhabitants, and welcomed guests.

Conclusions

As this chapter has demonstrated, symbols and patterns could serve as an effective and active means of safeguarding one's doorways. By employing complex patterns of overlapping elements and charged symbols, the images examined in this chapter worked to captivate viewers and convey messages of good fortune or warning. Beyond their functionality as pavements, mosaics embellished with patterns and symbols were dynamic and efficacious, and positioned to engage viewers entering a home. Through their constituent elements and locations relative to spaces of passage, the images regulate movement within vulnerable areas, and were activated by

the presence of viewers. Symbols and patterns utilized different visual means of protection and dynamism than the figural images previously considered, while responding to the same ideas of spatial vulnerability and ambiguity. Rather than one approach being more effective than the other, figural and non-figural images represent two different, yet equally powerful visual strategies of defense, both of which emphasized engagement through visual contemplation.

In general, the non-figural images examined in this chapter appear to have been aimed at spirit, rather than human, viewers, owing to the strategies of fascination and entrapment present within patterns and symbols. The images are also less often driven by the structures that surround them, likely a result of their spirit-oriented foci. It is perhaps telling that the images used to address and repel malign forces are patterned and symbolic, and this may provide insight into Roman conceptions of ephemeral forces, invisible dangers, and the most effective means to catch and trap the attention of spirits. Despite this direct engagement with unseen forces, charged non-figural images could work to repel unwanted human guests through efficacious symbols and visual puzzles, while signposting appropriate movement and comportment within the space. In this way, the symbols and patterns examined in this chapter help demonstrate that the visual protection of intermediary spaces was tied to the individual elements of an image's surroundings, and that different audiences required diverse defensive strategies.

Chapter 5: HAVE, CAVE, SALVE: Charged Inscriptions within Campanian Doorways

"*HAVE*", "*CAVE*", "*SALVE*"![704] These and other mosaic inscriptions greeted visitors in the entryways of Roman homes in ancient Campania. At once welcoming and cautionary, mosaic inscriptions functioned like modern welcome mats, as practical markers of space, while also conveying a particular message or idea. Unlike modern welcome mats, however, the inscriptions could also be used to protect domestic doorways through their visual and textual components, and existed on the precipice between word and picture.[705] This chapter investigates the active and defensive features of entryway inscriptions in ancient Campanian homes to examine how the mosaics could be used to keep domestic guests and inhabitants safe from harm.[706] Despite previous characterizations of mosaic inscriptions as requiring, "no great subtlety of imagination",[707] I suggest that mosaic inscriptions functioned as active agents of defense within spaces of transition.

While some of the mosaic inscriptions discussed in this chapter are well-known, mosaic inscriptions overall have rarely received in-depth analysis and are often treated as accompaniments to images, assessed in isolation from their contexts in epigraphic studies, or

[704] These Latin words translate to "hail", beware", and "hello", respectively.
[705] On mosaic inscriptions from Roman provinces, see Janine Lancha, *Mosaïque et culture dans l'Occident romain (Ier-Ive S).* Biblioteca Archeologica, 20 (Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1997), 387-90.
[706] Like so many other features of Roman life and culture, the practice of decorating the entryway of one's home with inscribed mosaics has roots in ancient Greece. Katherine M.D. Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 58; Mariette de Vos, "Pavimenti e mosaici," in *Pompei 79: raccolta di studi per il decimonono centenario dell'eruzione Vesuviana*, 161-176. Ed. Fausto Zevi (Napoli: G. Macchiaroli, 1984), 165; Robert I. Curtis, "A Personalized Floor Mosaic from Pompeii," *American Journal of Archaeology* 88, no. 4 (1984): 565.
[707] Marion Elizabeth Blake, "The Pavements of the Roman Buildings of the Republic and Early Empire," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 8 (1930): 95. Roger Ling is among the few scholars who believe that mosaic inscriptions warrant further study. Roger Ling, "Inscriptions on Romano-British Mosaics and Wall-Paintings," *Britannia* 38 (2007): 63.

quickly mentioned in archaeological descriptions with little analysis or contextualization.[708] Notable exceptions are Katherine Dunbabin, who demonstrates that the inscriptions that appear in Greek and Roman baths were not only concerned with averting danger, but were also actively used in conjunction with mosaic images to repel unwanted forces,[709] and Roger Ling, who adds that the practice of including apotropaic inscriptions within Roman baths was an "Empire-wide" phenomenon.[710] Besides Dunbabin and Ling, however, few have studied the dynamic nature of the inscriptions or their utility as devices of defense.

I address this lacuna in the scholarship in this chapter to propose that the inscriptions should be understood to function as both text and image,[711] a duality which speaks directly to the ambiguous nature of the threshold. I demonstrate that inscriptions were not merely written displays of a simple idea or message, but rather efficacious tools of domestic protection and spatial orientation activated by the presence of viewers, and which addressed a wide variety of audiences. I seek to explore the ways in which the words, articulated as an art form, could function as complex and efficacious tools of domestic protection within vulnerable spaces.

To accomplish this, I examine seven case studies from ancient Campania where mosaic inscriptions decorated the entryways of homes and villas. The inscriptions vary in location, complexity, and overall message, but nevertheless respond to perceptions of danger and

[708] For example, Matteo Della Corte, *Case ed abitanti di Pompei* (Napoli: Fausto Fiorentino, 1965), 148; Blake, "The Pavements of the Roman Buildings of the Republic and Early Empire," 95; de Vos, "Pavimenti e mosaici," 165; Curtis, "A Personalized Floor Mosaic from Pompeii," 565.
[709] Katherine M. D. Dunbabin and M.W. Dickie, "*Invidia Rumpantur Pectora*: The Iconography of Phthonos-Invidia in Graeco-Roman Art," *Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum* 26 (1983): 35.
[710] Ling, "Inscriptions on Romano-British Mosaics and Wail-Paintings," 85.
[711] On mosaics that combine image and text, or "speaking mosaics", see Angelique Notermans, "Speaking Mosaics," in *La mosaïque gréco-romaine VIII: actes du VIIIème Colloque international pour l'étude de la mosaïque antique et médiévale, Lausanne (Suisse), 6-11 octobre 1997*. Vol. 1, 459-64. Ed. Daniel Paunier (Lausanne: Cahiers d'Archéologie Romande, 2001), 459. Notermans also notes that "speaking mosaics" most often appear in reception spaces and were used to impress visitors. Notermans "Speaking Mosaics," 462. See also Angelique Notermans "Sprekende Mozaïeken: Functie en Betekenis van teksten op Romeinse vloermozaïeken." Dissertation, 2007.

uncertainty through visual and textual means. The chapter investigates the Casa del Fauno [VI.12.2], House V.3.10, Casa del Salve [VI.1.25], Domus Vedi Sirici [VII.1.47], Casa del Poeta Tragico [VI.8.3], and Casa del Giardino d'Ercole [II.8.6] at Pompeii, and the Villa Arianna at Stabiae to study the diverse ways inscriptions could function within domestic passageways. Ranging from outwardly friendly to aggressively cautionary, the inscriptions draw on their written messages and visual forms to repel danger and offer protection for viewers at ambiguous locales.

I should say at the outset that this chapter is not intended as a philological examination of the inscriptions investigated therein.[712] While I occasionally discuss the various meanings of a word or phrase to study the meaning and function of an inscription more fully, my primary goal is to study the inscriptions as a *visual*, rather than textual, phenomenon, as well as their resonances as protective tools.[713]

As an additional note, the body of evidence referenced in this chapter deviates somewhat from those of previous chapters. Unlike the images of divinities, animals, and symbols for which photographic documentation exists, some of the inscriptions examined in this chapter survive only as records in excavation reports, which I assume have reported the ancient material accurately.[714] The loss of these inscriptions and the lack of photographic documentation presents a particular challenge to this dissertation, which otherwise relies heavily on extant visual

[712] For an overview of inscriptions, see L. J. F. Keppie, *Understanding Roman Inscriptions* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991).
[713] See Sean Villareal Leatherbury, *Inscribing Faith in Late Antiquity: Between Reading and Seeing. Image, Text, and Culture in Classical Antiquity* (London; New York: Routledge, 2020).
[714] Indeed, Carratelli and Baldassarre note that only a handful of pavement inscriptions have been discovered at Pompeii, and even fewer preserved. G. P. Carratelli and I. Baldassarre, *PPM* Vol. 6 (Roma: Istituto della enciclopedia italiana, 1994), 230.

material. And yet, as the chapter demonstrates, much productive work can still be accomplished using the surviving material and documentary records.

The Nexus of Art and Text in (Recent) Scholarship

The first century BCE poet Horace's famous line, "*ut pictura poesis*"[715] has long captivated writers and artists. Meaning, "as is painting so is poetry," the phrase has informed approaches to ancient art and literature.[716] The topic of text and image in the ancient world has received much scholarly attention in recent years and is an issue of great importance to the material examined in this chapter. Studies on the interplay of word and visual representation range from exclusively visual, to wholly literary, and encompass a wide variety of approaches.[717] Most notable are studies on the literary tradition of describing an image,[718] or *ekphrasis*, [719] and the resonances between inscription and image within Roman painting and material culture.[720] The literature on ancient *ekphrasis* is vast, and I do not intend to survey the corpus in its entirety. Rather, I briefly discuss a few of the works on *ekphrasis* most relevant to studies of ancient

[715] Hor. *Ars P*. 361.
[716] See, for example, Elizabeth Hazelton Haight, "Horace on Art: Ut Pictura Poesis," *The Classical Journal* 47, no. 5 (1952): 157-202; Wesley Trimpi, "The Meaning of Horace's Ut Pictura Poesis," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 36 (1973): 1-34; Andrew Laird, "Ut figura poesis: Writing Art and the Art of Writing in Augustan Poetry," in *Art and Text in Roman Culture*. Cambridge Studies in New Art History and Criticism, 75-102. Ed. Jaś Elsner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996).
[717] For example, L. Fougher, "L'art de la mosaïque et les poètes latins," *Latomus* 23, no. 2 (1964): 247-57; Elfriede R. Knauer, "Roman Wall Paintings from Boscotrecase: Three Studies in the Relationship between Writing and Painting," *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 28 (1993): 13-46.
[718] Also defined as the use of language to create an image in the mind's eye of the reader.
[719] For foundational works on ekphrasis, see Ruth Webb, "Ekphrasis Ancient and Modern: The Invention of a Genre," *Word & Image* 15, no. 1 (1999): 7–18; John Hollander, "The Poetics of Ekphrasis," *Word & Image* 4 (1988): 209-219; D. P. Fowler, "Narrate and Describe: The Problem of Ekphrasis," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 81 (1991): 25-35; Gottfried Boehm and Helmut Pfotenhauer, *Beschreibungskunst, Kunstbeschreibung: Ekphrasis von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart* (München: W. Fink, 1995); James A. W. Heffernan, "Ekphrasis and Representation," *New Literary History* 22, no. 2 (1991): 297-316.
[720] Zahra Newby and Ruth E. Leader-Newby, *Art and Inscriptions in the Ancient World* (Cambridge University Press, 2007); Jocelyn Penny Small, *The Parallel Worlds of Classical Art and Text* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Mireille Corbier, *Donner à voir, donner à lire: mémoire et communication dans la Rome ancienne* (Paris: CNRS Editions, 2006).

Roman art and inscription to foreground the proceeding case studies. Chief among these discussions are the contributions of Jaś Elsner, Michael Squire, and Bettina Bergmann.

Jaś Elsner explores the close ties between written and visual expression that existed in ancient Rome,[721] and posits that ancient modes of viewing were directly informed by Classical theories of vision and literary devices.[722] Investigating modes of visuality, the gaze, and *ekphrasis*, Elsner demonstrates that ancient literature and images often worked in dialogue with one another,[723] and he further emphasizes the importance of reflexive looking (that is, seeing and being seen).[724] Elsner's work also highlights the importance of inscriptions in providing essential context for monuments,[725] such as Augustus's *Res Gestae* (ca. 14 CE), which helped contextualize and direct viewers' experiences of the mausoleum it decorated.[726]

Michael Squire is interested in similar topics in his work on the visual and verbal meanings of inscriptions.[727] He argues that texts could inform one's viewing experience of images[728] and that ancient *ekphrasis* was not a purely literary phenomenon.[729] Squire describes how images and words worked in dialogue to create meaning using the example of the sculpture

[721] Jaś Elsner, "Introduction. The Genres of Ekphrasis," in *The Verbal and the Visual: Cultures of Ekphrasis in Antiquity*, 1-18. Ed. Jaś Elsner (Bendigo North, Victoria: Aureal Publications, 2002), 1-18.
[722] Elsner examines the *Imagines* of Philostratus and *Tabula* of Cebes to reconstruct ancient Roman viewing practices. Jaś Elsner, *Art and the Roman Viewer: The Transformation of Art from the Pagan World to Christianity*. Cambridge Studies in New Art History and Criticism. Cambridge England: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 21-48. Not all agree with Elsner's approach, see Elizabeth Bartman, review of *Art and the Roman Viewer: The Transformation of Art from the Pagan World to Christianity*, by Jaś Elsner, *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*, 1996.
[723] Jaś Elsner, *Roman Eyes: Visuality & Subjectivity in Art & Text* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 2007), 67-109.
[724] Elsner, *Roman Eyes: Visuality & Subjectivity in Art & Text*, 21.
[725] Jaś Elsner, "Inventing imperium: Text and the propaganda of monuments in Augustan Rome," in *Art and Text in Roman Culture*. Cambridge Studies in New Art History and Criticism, 32-53. Ed. Jaś Elsner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 39.
[726] Elsner, "Inventing imperium: Text and the propaganda of monuments in Augustan Rome," 35-40.
[727] Michael Squire, *The Iliad in a Nutshell: Visualizing Epic on the Tabulae Iliacae* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 127-196; Squire, *Image and Text in Graeco-Roman Antiquity*, 148.
[728] Michael Squire, *Image and Text in Graeco-Roman Antiquity* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 208.
[729] Squire, *Image and Text in Graeco-Roman Antiquity*, 149.

and epigram in the famous grotto at Sperlonga, Italy.[730] The grotto at Sperlonga was an entertainment and dining space for an imperial villa that housed famous first century CE sculptures depicting scenes from the Odyssey,[731] to which a descriptive epigram was added in the fourth century CE.[732] Squire demonstrates that the interplay between image and text could influence and elevate a learned observer's experience of the sculptural groups,[733] and that Roman viewers were "highly attuned"[734] to the many resonances between image and text.[735]

Bettina Bergmann moves the discussion to Pompeii in her study of the Casa degli Epigrammi Greci [V.1.18].[736] Bergmann investigates the interplay between art and inscription in a private domestic *exedra* where mythological wall frescoes accompany Greek epigrams,[737] and demonstrates how the combination of image and text could create a dynamic viewing experience.[738] Bergmann proposes that the inscribed paintings within the *exedra* asked viewers

[730] Michael Squire, "The Motto in the Grotto: Inscribing Illustration and Illustrating Inscription at Sperlonga," in *Art and Inscriptions in the Ancient World*, 102-27. Eds. Zahra Newby and Ruth E. Leader-Newby (Cambridge University Press, 2007), 105; Squire, *Image and Text in Graeco-Roman Antiquity*, 208.
[731] Refer to the relevant essays in Nancy Thomson De Grummond, Brunilde Sismondo Ridgway, and Langford Conference of the Department of Classics (4th: 1997: Florida State University), *From Pergamon to Sperlonga: Sculpture and Context*. Hellenistic Culture and Society, 34 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).
[732] The epigram was inscribed on a white marble tablet. Squire, *Image and Text in Graeco-Roman Antiquity*, 203.
[733] Here Squire notes that the boundary between the sculptures and inscription was more permeable than expected. Squire, "The Motto in the Grotto: Inscribing Illustration and Illustrating Inscription at Sperlonga," 123-5.
[734] Squire, *Image and Text in Graeco-Roman Antiquity*, 176.
[735] These include the so-called House of Propertius under Santa Maria Maggiore in Assisi (Squire, *Image and Text in Graeco-Roman Antiquity*, 249-93) and the *Tabulae Iliacae* (Squire, *The Iliad in a Nutshell: Visualizing Epic on the Tabulae Iliacae*). See also Michael Squire, "Picturing Words and Wording Pictures: False Closure in the Pompeian Casa degli Epigrammi," in *The Door Ajar. False Closure in Greek and Roman Literature and Art.* Bibliothek der Klassischen Altertumswissenschaften, Neue Folge, 2. Reihe, Bd. 132, 169-201. Eds. F. Grewing, B. Acosta Hughes and A. Kirichenko (Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag 2013); Michael Squire, "Ekphrasis at the Forge and the Forging of Ekphrasis: The 'Shield of Achilles' in Graeco-Roman Word and Image," *Word & Image* 29, 2 (2013): 157-191, among many others.
[736] For more on the dipinti of the Casa degli Epigrammi Greci, see Volker Michael Strocka, "Das Bildprogram des Epigrammzimmers in Pompeji," *Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Römische Abteilung*. 102 (1995): 269-290. See also Squire's discussion of the house. Squire, *Image and Text in Graeco-Roman Antiquity*, 176-89.
[737] The paintings and epigrams were discovered in 1876 and identified as Greek epigrams by Karl Dilthey. The epigrams date to ca. 40 BCE. Bettina Bergmann, "A Painted Garland: Weaving Words and Images the House of the Epigrams in Pompeii," in *Art and Inscriptions in the Ancient World*, 60-101. Eds. Zahra Newby and Ruth Leader Newby (New York: Cambridge University Press UK, 2007), 60.
[738] Bergmann, "A Painted Garland: Weaving Words and Images the House of the Epigrams in Pompeii," 75, 100.

to "see pictures and think in words,"[739] creating a visual "riddle" or game.[740] Bergmann's analysis of the paintings and epigrams in the Casa degli Epigrammi Greci illuminates yet another dimension of the relationship between words and images.

Considering the many connections between word and art, the mosaic inscriptions investigated in this chapter are approached as visual objects that existed in between word and illustration. And yet, while recent work on *ekphrasis*, image, and text has done much to illuminate the resonances between the two, the studies are overwhelmingly concerned with inscriptions that accompany images, and which contain literary references,[741] labels,[742] or descriptions of the scenes depicted.[743] The inscriptions examined in this chapter do not appear in conjunction with images,[744] and are neither literary nor didactic. Instead, they acted as warnings or greetings meant to convey a message to viewers and guests. With one possible exception, they do not make literary references,[745] and therefore the relationship between image and inscription is not one that can be understood solely through studies of *ekphrastic* practice.[746] As a result, *ekphrasis* is not used as a guiding principle for this chapter but invoked as evidence of the complex interplay between text and image.

[739] Bergmann, "A Painted Garland: Weaving Words and Images the House of the Epigrams in Pompeii," 73.
[740] Bergmann, "A Painted Garland: Weaving Words and Images the House of the Epigrams in Pompeii," 100.
[741] Including an inscription quoting the *Aeneid*, CIL IV 5020, found within the Casa di M. Casellius Marcellus [IX2.26], or the short Homeric quote CIL IV 4078.
[742] Such as the inscribed mosaic from the Casa di Umbricius Scaurus [VII.16.15] in Pompeii which functioned as an advertisement of sorts for Scaurus's fish sauce business.
[743] For example, the so-called Magerius Mosaic from Smirat. Third century CE, now in the Sousse Museum.
[744] Aside from the so-called Cave Canem mosaic from the Casa del Poeta Tragico [VI.8.5], pages 236-9.
[745] See pages 240-8 below.
[746] See also Eleanor Windsor Leach, *The Rhetoric of Space: Literary and Artistic Representations of Landscape in Republican and Augustan Rome* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1988); Eleanor Winsor Leach, *The Social Life of Painting in Ancient Rome and on the Bay of Naples* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004); Jocelyn Penny Small, *Wax Tablets of the Mind: Cognitive Studies of Memory and Literacy in Classical Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 1997), 237; W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

Instead, I approach the inscriptions as *images*, an approach that has seen growing support in recent years. Mireille Corbier observes that the written word is itself a sign in her discussion of inscriptions within Roman art,[747] while James K. Franklin Jr. writes that, "…for all the major varieties of inscriptions, the most important reading was visual, not literate."[748] Even if a viewer could not understand an inscription— a topic discussed below—the placement of words near a permeable barrier would have drawn attention to the threshold. For literate Romans, the message was clear immediately. For those who could not read, the inscription functioned as a symbol that could be recognized as a sign even if it could not be read. This means that even illiterate Romans who had seen the word before might be able to recognize the meaning of the word much in the same way the Solomonic knot could be recognized as a charged symbol.[749] While the exercise of viewing the mosaic inscriptions could be enhanced by one's ability to read, textual literacy was not necessarily required to understand the broad nature and function of the inscriptions.

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[747] Corbier, *Donner à voir, donner à lire: mémoire et communication dans la Rome ancienne,* 128; Paolo Pocetti, "Manipolazione della realtà e manipolazione della lingua: alcuni aspetti dei testi magici dell'antichità," in *Linguaggio, linguaggi, invenzione, scoperta: atti del Convegno, Macerata-Fermo, 22-23 Ottobre 1999*. Lingue, linguaggi, metalinguaggio, 7, 11-59. Ed. Ruggero Morresi. Roma: Il calamo, 2002), 51. William Harris also writes that inscriptions carried symbolic meaning (William V. Harris, *Ancient Literacy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1991), 28, 232), and Bente Kiilerich adds that writing functioned as both a visual and non-visual tool for which visibility may have been more important than legibility (Bente Kiilerich, "Visual and Functional Aspects of Inscriptions in Early Church Floors," *Acta ad archaeologiam,* 24, 10 (2011): 46, 61). Although Kiilerich is concerned with inscriptions within the floors of early Christian churches, she acknowledges the Classical precedents for the practice.

[748] James L. Franklin, "Literacy and the Parietal Inscriptions of Pompeii," in *Literacy in the Roman World.* Journal of Roman Archaeology. Supplementary Series, No. 3, 77-98. Ed. J.H. Humphrey and Mary Beard (Ann Arbor, MI: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1991), 86. Franklin cautions that modern, hyperliterate mindsets can obscure ancient experiences of literacy, Franklin, "Literacy and the Parietal Inscriptions of Pompeii," 87. However, Franklin also believes most graffiti were written by the lower classes, a proposition with which I do not wholly agree. Franklin, "Literacy and the Parietal Inscriptions of Pompeii," 80, 87. See also Greg Woolf, "Monumental Writing and the Expansion of Roman Society in the Early Empire," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 86 (1996): 29. Kristina Milnor adds that viewers would have been forced to "confront the materiality of the written word. Kristina Milnor, *Graffiti and the Literary Landscape in Roman Pompeii.* First ed. (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2014), 26, 77-96. Additionally, Pocetti stresses the importance of the visual qualities of writing in Roman magic, arguing that "la scrittura a scopo magico si avvale fortemente della componente visuva." Pocetti, "Manipolazione della realtà e manipolazione della lingua: alcuni aspetti dei testi magici dell'antichità," 50.

[749] Chapter Four, pages 169-70.

The materiality of mosaics further underscored the visual nature of the inscriptions and emphasized connection between inscription and image. Unlike dedicatory plaques or graffiti, the mosaic inscriptions examined in the proceeding pages were laid rather than inscribed. Mosaic is an overwhelmingly visual medium that is most often associated with pictorial or geometric designs. This means that observers likely approached mosaic inscriptions prepared to view a tessellated *image*.[750] I therefore refer to onlookers as *viewing*, rather than *reading* the mosaic inscriptions in this chapter, and approach the mosaic words as a form of visual communication.

Word and Picture: Inscription, Image, and Engagement

Text and image appeared together frequently in Roman daily life, where inscriptions decorated statues, notices were posted on walls, and *amphorae* were marked with the names of makers or recipients.[751] The close ties between the textual and the visual are also attested by the numerous examples of graffiti that appear throughout Pompeii.[752] Many ancient graffiti (etched

[750] While the inclusion of mosaic inscriptions in the form of signatures or labels became commonplace beginning in the third century CE, mosaic inscriptions in the first century CE were uncommon and brief. Ruth Leader-Newby, "Inscribed Mosaics in the Late Roman Empire: Perspectives from East and West," in *Art and Inscriptions in the Ancient World*, 179-99. Eds. Zahra Newby and Ruth Leader-Newby (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 180; Small, *The Parallel Worlds of Classical Art and Text*, 110; Katherine Dunbabin, "Mosaics and Their Public," in *La mosaïque gréco-romaine VII: VIIe colloque international pour l'étude de la mosaïque antique Tunis 3-7 octobre 1994*, 739-45. Ed. Mongi Ennaïfer (Tunis: Institut national du patrimoine, 1999), 743; Philippe Bruneau, "Philologie mosaïstique," *Journal des Savants* 1-2 (1988): 12.

[751] Such as a late first century BCE stamped amphora handle from Pompeii found at Naukratis. Now in the British Museum, Inv. 1925,0119.701. On literacy and portable objects, see William V. Harris, *The Inscribed Economy: Production and Distribution in the Roman Empire in the Light of* Instrumentum Domesticum: *The Proceedings of a Conference Held at the American Academy in Rome on 10-11 January 1992* (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan, 1993).

[752] On Pompeian graffiti, see Milnor, *Graffiti and the Literary Landscape in Roman Pompeii*; Martin Langner, "Antike Graffitizeichnungen: Motive, Gestaltung und Bedeutung." Dissertation, Ludwig Reichert, 2001; Antonio Varone, *Erotica Pompeiana: Love Inscriptions on the Walls of Pompeii*. Studia Archaeologica, 116 (Roma: L'erma di Bretschneider, 2002); Helen H. Tanzer, *The Common People of Pompeii: A Study of the Graffiti*. Johns Hopkins University Studies in Archaeology, No. 29 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1939); Polly Lohmann, *Graffiti als Interaktionsform: Geritzte Inschriften in den Wohnhäusern Pompejis*. Materiale Textkulturen, 16 (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2017); Rebecca Benefiel, and Peter Keegan, *Inscriptions in the Private Sphere in the Greco-Roman World*. Brill Studies in Greek and Roman Epigraphy, Volume 7 (Leiden: Brill, 2016); Rebecca Benefiel, "Dialogues of Graffiti in the House of the Four Styles at Pompeii (Casa dei Quattro Stili, I.8.17, 11)," in *Ancient Graffiti in Context*, 20-41. Eds. Jennifer A. Baird and Claire Taylor. Routledge Studies in Ancient History, V. 2 (New York: Routledge, 2011), among many others.

inscriptions) and dipinti (painted ones) still decorate the public and private walls of Pompeii and are often accompanied by small drawings.[753] The words themselves even occasionally take pictorial form. An inscription discovered near the Porta di Nola [CIL IV 1595], for instance, takes the winding form of a snake and describes the skill of one Sepumius in a so-called snake game [Fig. V.1].[754] The reflexive and self-referential nature of this inscription-image highlights the interconnectivity of the two forms of expression, and demonstrates that art and text were closely aligned in everyday life in both the public and private realms.

Words had a long and rich history as active devices in Roman oratory, magical spells, and prayers.[755] The same is true of mosaic inscriptions, which engaged viewers visually and physically. As with most Roman floor mosaics, it would have been necessary to physically interact with each of the inscriptions studied in this chapter. Guests would step on the inscriptions that occupied the entryways of domestic structures to move past the entrance corridors and into the interiors of the homes. The inscriptions would have been positioned to address those entering the structures and engage those who attempted to cross the front threshold.

Even the grammar of the inscriptions indicates the direct address of onlookers. In all but three cases,[756] the words are conjugated in the second person singular imperative form of the

[753] For example, the drawing of an ancient battle that accompanies an Oscan inscription at the Casa del Sacerdos Amandus [I.7.7]. See Luciana Jacobelli's description. Luciana Jacobelli, *Gladiators at Pompeii* (Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2003), 75.

[754] Milnor, *Graffiti and the Literary Landscape in Roman Pompeii*, 26; Peter Kruschwitz, "Patterns of Text Layout in Pompeian Verse Inscriptions," *Studia Philogica Valentina* (2008): 257. Other examples include a graffito found within the peristyle of IX.1.22 [CIL IV 2396] which discusses the power of a dagger and is itself inscribed within a roughly etched dagger. Peter Kruschwitz and Virginia L Campbell, "What the Pompeians Saw: Representations of Document Types in Graffiti Drawings and Their Value for Linguistic Research," *Arctos* 43 (2009): 72.

[755] On the efficacy of magical language and writing see Poccetti, "Manipolazione della realtà e manipolazione della lingua: alcuni aspetti dei testi magici dell'antichità," 11-57; Gabriella Bevilacqua, *Scrittura e magia: un repertorio di oggetti iscritti della magia Greco-Romana*. Opuscula Epigraphica, 12 (Roma: Edizioni Quasar, 2010).

[756] One exception is the Domus Vedi Sirici [VII.1.47], which directly address the idea or embodiment of prosperity. A second is V.3.10, which uses the second person plural, and the third is the Casa del Giardino d'Ercole [II.8.6],

verb. Accordingly, those who read the texts would have felt as though they were being directly addressed by the inscriptions, creating a further sense of connection with the mosaics. A similar phenomenon appears within various graffiti and epitaphs discovered at Pompeii. Where some graffiti anticipate a particular audience,[757] many Pompeian tombs speak directly to passersby, asking them to stop and say the name of the deceased aloud.[758] In this way, the embodied experience of the mosaic inscriptions created through physical contact and direct address would have amplified the efficacy of the words, while also physically, personally, and mentally engaging viewers in the protection of both their own bodies and the home.

where the inscription contains a message relayed in the first person, presumably from the perspective of the homeowner. See pages 226-35, 207-10, and 240- 8 below.

[757] For example, CIL IV 7716.

[758] An epitaph from Cadiz, Spain, for example, addresses viewers and asks them to speak a sentence aloud [CIL II 1821], or another example from Ostia [CIL XIV 356]. See Mario Erasmo, *Reading Death in Ancient Rome* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2008), 154-204; Penelope J.E. Davies, "The Politics of Perpetuation: Trajan's Column and the Art of Commemoration," *Journal of American Archaeology* 101, No.1 (1997): 50. Speaking the name of a deceased invidious aloud was believed to momentarily reanimate their spirit. Davies, "The Politics of Perpetuation: Trajan's Column and the Art of Commemoration," 41-65. Michael Koortbojian characterizes tombs as "speaking images". Michael Koortbojian, "In Commemorationem Mortuorum: Text and Image Along the 'Street of Tombs,'" in *Art and Text in Roman Culture*, 210-234. Ed. Jaś Elsner. Cambridge University Press, New York, 1996) 233.

Questions of Viewing and Literacy

I now turn to the complicated question of literacy in the ancient Roman world. I do not intend to exhaustively examine the issue of Roman literacy,[759] and address it simply to determine the efficacy of powerful mosaic inscriptions for audiences of varying literacies.[760]

In 1989 William Harris estimated that less than fifteen percent of people living in Italy during the Imperial period were literate,[761] including two to three thousand in Pompeii in 79 CE.[762] Other scholars have proposed varying rates of Roman literacy,[763] but ultimately, it is impossible to account for the many different types of literacies that existed, especially as more Romans could read than write.[764] Greg Woolf discusses this difficulty when he observes that while only a small number of Romans would have been fully literate, a higher number of

[759] For studies of Roman literacy Harris, *Ancient Literacy*; Alan K. Bowman and Greg Woolf, *Literacy and Power in the Ancient World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994); Thomas Habinek, "Situating Literacy at Rome," in *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome*, 114-40. Eds. William A. Johnson and Holt N. Parker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); William A. Johnson and N. Holt Parker, *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009); J.H. Humphrey and Mary Beard, *Literacy in the Roman World*. Journal of Roman Archaeology. Supplementary Series, No. 3 (Ann Arbor, MI: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1991). For a blending of epigraphic and material culture studies, Hella Eckardt, *Writing and Power in the Roman World: Literacies and Material Culture* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2018); Hella Eckhart, "Writing Power: The Material Culture of Literacy as Representation and Practice," in *Materialising Roman Histories*. University of Cambridge Museum of Classical Archaeology Monograph (3), 23-30. Eds. A. Van Oyen and M. Pitts (Oxbow Books, Oxford, 2017). See also Shirley Werner's bibliographic essay for extensive bibliography on ancient literacy. Shirley Werner, "Literacy Studies in Classics. The Last Twenty Years," in *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome*, 333-82. Eds. William A. Johnson and Holt N. Parker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[760] Eckardt, *Writing and Power in the Roman World: Literacies and Material Culture*, 3.

[761] Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 267.

[762] Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 264. James L. Franklin, by contrast, proposes widespread literacy existed at Pompeii. Franklin, "Literacy and the Parietal Inscriptions of Pompeii," 97.

[763] Responses to Harris include the essays in Humphrey and Beard, *Literacy in the Roman World*. Nicholas Horsfall, "Statistics or State of Mind?" in *Literacy in the Roman World*. Journal of Roman Archaeology. Supplementary Series, No. 3, 59-76. Eds. J.H. Humphrey and Mary Beard (Ann Arbor, MI: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1991; and Mary Beard, "Writing and Religion: Ancient Literacy and the Function of the Written Word in Roman Religion. Question: What Was the Role of Writing in Greco-Roman Paganism?" in *Literacy in the Roman World*. Journal of Roman Archaeology. Supplementary Series, No. 3, 35-58. Eds. J.H. Humphrey and Mary Beard (Ann Arbor, MI: Journal of Roman Archaeology, 1991). Additionally, Helen Tanzer believed a high degree of literacy existed within the sub-elite. Tanzer, *The Common People of Pompeii: A Study of the Graffiti*, 6.

[764] Eckardt, *Writing and Power in the Roman World: Literacies and Material Culture*, 17.

Romans could "use" texts than in many other ancient cultures.[765] Woolf's employment of the word *use*, as opposed to *read*, is significant, and indicates that Roman texts could be used in ways other than reading, something I believe to be true of mosaic inscriptions.

It is also true, as Ling reminds us, that the presence of inscriptions does not imply viewers were literate.[766] Only a single literate individual was needed to produce or read an inscription, and the literate person could have helped others engage with the text.[767] Consequently, for the purposes of this study, it is enough to acknowledge that different levels of literacy existed at different periods of Roman history,[768] and that Romans who were not fully literate might still be able to recognize certain words and phrases,[769] or even sign their own names.[770] Whether fully literate, semi-literate, or unable to read or write in any capacity, ancient viewers of mosaic inscriptions in Campania would have, at the very least, recognized the word(s) as a means of communicating a particular message or idea.

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[765] Greg Woolf, "Literacy or Literacies in Rome?" in *Ancient Literacies: The Culture of Reading in Greece and Rome*, 46-68. Eds. William A. Johnson and Holt N. Parker (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), 46.
[766] Ling, "Inscriptions on Romano-British Mosaics and Wall Paintings," 84.
[767] Kristina Milnor adds that literacy was not necessary to live in Roman cities. Milnor, *Graffiti and the Literary Landscape in Roman Pompeii*, 50. See also Bowman "Literacy in the Roman Empire: Mass and Mode," 122.
[768] On the so-called Roman "epigraphic habit" see Ramsay MacMullen, "The Epigraphic Habit in the Roman Empire," *The American Journal of Philology* 103, no. 3 (1982): 233–46; Elizabeth Meyer, "Explaining the Epigraphic Habit in the Roman Empire: The Evidence of Epitaphs," *The Journal of Roman Studies* 80 (1990): 74-96; Woolf, "Monumental Writing and the Expansion of Roman Society in the Early Empire," 22-39. Meyer argues that the rise in the number of Roman inscriptions in the first and second centuries CE was in part the result of provincial adoption of Roman epigraphic practices. Francisco Beltrán Llorris, however, cautions that difficulty of dating inscriptions means that parts of MacMullen, Meyer, and Woolf's conclusions (and assumptions) should be challenged. Francisco Beltrán Llorris, "The 'Epigraphic Habit' in the Roman World," in *The Oxford Handbook of Roman Epigraphy*, 131-48. Ed. Christer Bruun and Jonathan Edmondson (Oxford - New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 141-3.
[769] Maureen Carroll believes that many Romans would have been able to read simple inscriptions. Maureen Carroll, "'Vox tua nempe mea est' Dialogues with the Dead in Roman Funerary Commemoration," *Accordia Research Papers* 11 (2007/2008): 41-3.
[770] Woolf, for instance, posits that short texts might be deciphered by those who were not fully literate, but who were familiar with the conventions of epigraphic abbreviation. Woolf, "Literacy or Literacies in Rome?" 57. Kristina Milnor introduces the binary of pragmatic versus literary writing at Pompeii. Milnor "Literary Literacy in Roman Pompeii," 297.

The topic of silent reading also has important resonances for this study, as the idea of reading aloud can illuminate some of the ways viewers interacted with mosaic inscriptions. The question of silent reading has been vigorously debated in the last century,[771] with scholarly opinion vacillating slowly. While the practice of reading silently may not actually have been as rare as some scholars have proposed,[772] texts were certainly read aloud often, and in a variety of contexts.[773] The debates have largely focused on the reading of literary texts and letters,[774] but it is probable the practice of reading aloud would also have been used for the inscriptions encountered in daily life, including the mosaic inscriptions that decorate Campanian thresholds.[775] Not only would this have provided increased opportunities for those with limited literacy to engage with inscriptions,[776] it may also have facilitated an embodied experience of the mosaic. Through the doubly efficacious paired actions of seeing and speaking, reading and viewing, the words of mosaic inscriptions could thus be activated and utilized to ensure the safety of the household and visitors alike. It is this intermediary nature that guides analyses of the following case studies and help demonstrate the efficacy of mosaic inscriptions as an active visual form of protection.

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[771] Refer to Werner, "Literacy Studies in Classics. The Last Twenty Years," 333-382, esp. 347-9 for sources on the debate over silent reading.

[772] Josef Balogh first proposed that silent reading was extremely rare in 1927. Josef Balogh, ''Voces paginarum: Beiträge zur Geschichte des lauten Lesens und Schreibens," *Philologus* 82 (1927): 84–109; 202–40. Bernard Knox compellingly refuted Balogh's claims in 1968. Bernard M. W. Knox, "Silent Reading in Antiquity," *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 9 (1968): 421-35. Knox insightfully observes that most of Balogh's data come from late antique/early Christian sources. Knox, "Silent Reading in Antiquity," 422.

[773] Knox, "Silent Reading in Antiquity," 427-8; A. K. Gavrilov, "Techniques of Reading in Classical Antiquity," *The Classical Quarterly* 47, no. 1 (1997): 56; William A. Johnson, "Toward a Sociology of Reading in Classical Antiquity," *The American Journal of Philology* 121, no. 4 (2000): 593-627, 600, among many others.

[774] On the silent reading of letters, see Knox "Silent Reading in Antiquity," 428-35.

[775] Amina Kropp, "How Does Magical Language Work? The Spells and Formulae of the Latin *Defixionum Tabellae*." In *Magical Practice in the Latin West: Papers from the International Conference Held at the University of Zaragoza, 30 Sept.-1 Oct. 2005*, 357-80. Eds. Francisco Marco Simón and R. L. Gordon (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 131.

[776] For instance, Harris suggests literate and illiterate Romans may have discussed inscriptions together. Harris, *Ancient Literacy*, 35.

Hail! Mosaic Greetings of Welcome and Protection

Mosaic Inscriptions at the Casa del Fauno and House V.3.10

The inscription on the sidewalk in front of the second century BCE Casa del Fauno [VI.12.2] in Pompeii is a fitting first case study [Fig. V.2]. Directly in front of the *vestibulum* of the Casa del Fauno,[777] the word "HAVE" is spelled out in red, yellow, and white *tesserae* [Fig. V.3].[778] The inscription, which means "welcome" or "hail" in Latin, greeted ancient guests of the Casa del Fauno. Not only would the inscription have functioned as a friendly gesture of welcome, but the decoration of the sidewalk in front of the house with the word "HAVE" would also have provided assurances of protection as one entered the sprawling home.

As mentioned in Chapter Three,[779] mosaic inscriptions could offer a sense of safety for visitors via the well-wishes communicated by the greeting, and the "HAVE" inscription of the

[777] Scholarly references to the Casa del Fauno are too numerous to list in toto, however important early references include Giuseppe Fiorelli, *PAH* Vol. II (Neapoli, 1862), 240-55; Giuseppe Fiorelli, *PAH*, Vol. III (Neapoli, 1864), 103, 113-8; Carlo Bonucci, "Giornale de'reali scavi di Pompei ed Ercolano dal mese di Agosto a tutto Dicembre 1830 (Ritardato)," *Bullettino archeologico napoletano* 2 (Feburary 1831): 24-7; Wolfgang Zahn, "Ultime scoperte di Pompei ed Ercolano. Lettera del prof. Gugliemo Zahn a prof. Gerhad." *Bullettino archeologico napoletano* 2 (Feburary 1831): 17-22; Carlo Bonucci, "Regno di Napoli. Giornale de'reali scavi di Pompei ed Ercolano per tutto l'anno scorso 1831," *Bullettino archeologico napoletano* 1 (January 1832): 7-11; Carlo Bonucci, "Giornale de'reali scavi di Pompei dal 20 novembre 1831 a tutto li 7 marzo 1832," *Bullettino archeologico napoletano* 3B (March 1832): 49-52; Gugliemo Bechi, "Relazione degli scavi di Pompei. Da Maggio 1831 a Maggio 1832," in *Real museo borbonico* Vol. VIII,1-15. Eds. Museo nazionale di Napoli and Antonio Niccolini (Napoli: Stamperia reale, 1832), 1-15; Fausto Niccolini and Felice Niccolini, "Casa detta del Fauno," in *CMPDD* Vol.1, 1-12, Tav. I-IX. Eds. Fausto Niccolini and Felice Niccolini (Napoli: Fausto Niccolini, 1854), 1-12; Ernest Breton, *Pompeia décrite et dessinée*. 3rd ed. (Paris: L. Guérin & Cie, 1870) 366-74; Giuseppe Fiorelli, *Descrizione di Pompei* (Napoli: Tipografia Italiana, 1875), 152-9; Heinrich Nissen, *Pompeianische Studien zur Städtekunde des Altertums* (Leipzig: Druck, 1877), 655-8; August Mau, *Geschichte der Dekorativen Wandmalerei in Pompeji* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1882), 33-57, 110-1, 122-3, 162-3, 263-4; August Mau, and Francis W. Kelsey, *Pompeii: Its Life and Art*. New ed., rev. and cored. (New York; London: Macmillan, 1902), 288-98. See also Liselotte Eschenbach and Jürgen Müller-Trollius, *Gebäudeverzeichnis und Stadtplan der antiken Stadt Pompeji* (Köln: Böhlau, 1993), 201-3; Mariette De Vos, "VI 12, 2 Casa del Fauno," in *PPP*, Vol. II, 253-62. Eds. Irene Bragantini, Mariette De Vos, Franca Parise Badoni, and Valeria Sampaolo (Roma: Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali, Istituto centrale per il catalogo e la documentazione, 1983); Adolf Hoffmann and Mariette De Vos, "VI 12, 2 Casa del Fauno," in *PPM*, Vol. V, 80-141. Eds. G. P. Carratelli and I. Baldassarre (Roma: Istituto della enciclopedia italiana, 1991); Fausto Zevi and Luciano Pedicini, *I mosaici della Casa del Fauno a Pompei* (Napoli: Luciano Pedicini, fotografo/Archivio dell'arte, 1998).

[778] Barbara Rizzo, "Limina: La decorazione figurata delle soglie musive a Pompei," *Orizzonti: rassegna di archeologia* VIII (2007): 100; William Munro Mackenzie and Alberto Pisa, *Pompeii* (London: A. & C. Black, 1910), 53.

[779] See Chapter Three, pages 141-2.

Casa del Fauno would also have acted as a charged symbol of defense. John Clarke suggests that the Casa del Fauno inscription was an important marker of the transition from exterior to interior, and a reminder of the homeowner's responsibility to keep guests safe.[780] As a sign of safety, the inscription takes on dimension as a tool that provides peace of mind and protection when moving through a space of passage.

In the case of the Casa del Fauno "HAVE", the message is fortuitous, but the presence of the inscription also invokes the dominion of the homeowner and calls attention to the passageway that lies just beyond the embellished sidewalk. The "HAVE" inscription is thus at once passive and active in its defensive measures— passive as it indicates the safety promised by the homeowner, and active as a feature that can invite or repel guests through the direct address of onlookers.

Furthermore, the position of the inscription leaves no doubt as to the function of the mosaic. Oriented toward those approaching the house from the street, the inscription is conspicuous and visible both across the street and down the block. The attention-catching nature of the inscription is mirrored by the grand entryway of the Casa del Fauno, which features a tall doorway, a façade with faux Corinthian columns, and a stucco cornice. A *vestibulum* with two low marble steps leads to an elaborate *fauces* decorated with a geometric *opus sectile* floor, figural mosaic threshold band, First Style frescoes, and faux architecture in modeled stucco on the upper registers of the walls [Fig. V.4]. Given the complex architectural and decorative features that visitors would have encountered once passing over the "HAVE" mosaic and moving toward the interior of the house, it is no wonder the inscription was deemed necessary to

[780] John R. Clarke, *Art in the Lives of Ordinary Romans: Visual Representation and Non-Elite Viewers in Italy, 100 B.c.-A.d. 315*. The Joan Palevsky Imprint in Classical Literature (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2003), 250.

embed within the sidewalk [Fig. V.5]. Together with the many features of the *vestibulum* and *fauces*, the mosaic inscription visually prepares guests to enter the home, assuring visitors of their own safety, while monitoring and controlling movement within the transitional spaces through ideological and physical barriers.

The grand size and rich decoration of the Casa del Fauno likely also necessitated the installation of the mosaic inscription within the sidewalk. A house of such expanse and wealth would no doubt have been the target of potential thieves or envious passersby, and the shops that front the home would have ensured a steady flow of traffic past the front entrance. Considering the plan of the house, the "HAVE" inscription helped delineate the front entrance of the home from the surrounding shops, while also acting as one of many security features. Therefore, although it appears straightforward, the Casa del Fauno "HAVE" inscription works to protect the home from many angles, while enriching the splendor of the structure and prestige of its inhabitants. The inscription also draws attention to the vulnerabilities of the threshold and acts as a reminder of the responsibilities, capabilities, and generosity of the homeowner. As a greeting of welcome and good fortune, the inscription would have conveyed an auspicious message, one that could be used to defend oneself when entering the structure.

The word *have* also appears within an inscription that once decorated the sidewalk of House V.3.10 in Pompeii [Fig. V.6].[781] The mosaic was discovered in April 1902 while

[781] For descriptions of V.3.10, see R. Paribeni, "Campania," in *Notizie degli scavi di antichità*, 201-4. Eds. Fiorelli, Giuseppe, Reale Accademia dei Lincei, Reale Accademia d'Italia, and Accademia nazionale dei Lincei (Roma: Tip. della R. Accademia dei Lincei, 1902), 201, 203-4; R. Paribeni, "Regione I: Latium et Campania," in *Notizie degli scavi di antichità*, 274-6. Eds. Fiorelli, Giuseppe, Reale Accademia dei Lincei, Reale Accademia d'Italia, and Accademia nazionale dei Lincei (Roma: Tip. della R. Accademia dei Lincei, 1902), 274; Antonio Sogliano, "Regione I: Latium et Campania," in *Notizie degli scavi di antichità*, 400-6. Eds. Fiorelli, Giuseppe, Reale Accademia dei Lincei, Reale Accademia d'Italia, and Accademia nazionale dei Lincei (Roma: Tip. della R. Accademia dei Lincei, 1902), 400-3; Karl Schefold, *Die Wände Pompejis: Topographisches Verzeichnis der Bildmotive* (Berlin: DeGruyter, 1957), 82. See also Irene Bragantini, "V 3, 10," in *PPP*, Vol. II, 76-8. Eds. Irene Bragantini, Mariette De Vos, Franca Parise Badoni, and Valeria Sampaolo (Roma: Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali, Istituto centrale per il catalogo e la documentazione, 1983); Erich Pernice, *Pavimente und Figürliche*

excavators were cleaning the sidewalk in front of the house, [782] and read "HAVETIS INTRO",[783] or "welcome inside".[784] The inscription has unfortunately been lost,[785] but, a 20th century photograph partially records the appearance of the inscription [Fig. V.7]. Upon rediscovering the epigraph in 1902, R. Paribeni described the inscription as accompanied by vegetal motifs surrounding a rectangular slab of African marble.[786] Irene Bragantini describes the inscription in a similar manner but adds that three square *tesserae* appeared under the letters of the epigraph.[787] Bragantini dates the inscription to the Republican era,[788] and the fact that it remained a part of the sidewalk paving until 79 CE demonstrates the inscription's continued importance and utility to the homeowners through the early Imperial period.

Past the sidewalk inscription, House V.3.10[789] is a structure of modest proportions and includes a Tuscan atrium that formerly displayed a strongbox,[790] *impluvium*, *tablinum,* kitchen

Mosaiken. die Hellenistische Kunst in Pompeji, Bd. 6 (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1938), 109, 131; Irene Bragantini, "V 3, 10," in *PPM* Vol. III, 929-43. Eds. G. P. Carratelli and I. Baldassarre (Roma: Istituto della enciclopedia italiana, 1990); Eschenbach and Müller-Trollius, *Gebäudeverzeichnis und Stadtplan der antiken Stadt Pompeji,* 139; de Vos, "Pavimenti e mosaici," 165. A human skeleton was found within the house. Paribeni, "Campania," 204.

[782] Paribeni, "Regione I: Latium et Campania," 274.

[783] Rizzo, "Limina: la decorazione figurata delle soglie musive a Pompei," 99; De Vos, "Pavimenti e mosaici," 165; Della Corte, *Case ed abitanti di Pompei*, 148.

[784] Paribeni directly compares the "HAVETIS INTRO" inscription to the "HAVE" of the Casa del Fauno. Paribeni, "Regione I: Latium et Campania," 274. de Vos, "Pavimenti e mosaici," 165.

[785] Evidently, the mosaic was still in situ in 1964, when Marisa de Spagnolis described seeing the inscription. Marisa De Spagnolis, *Reliving Pompeii: The Adventures of an Archaeologist* (Gaeta (Latina): Ali ribelli, 2018), 2.

[786] The specific type of African marble is not specified, and no color photos of the slab or inscription exist. Paribeni, "Regione I: Latium et Campania," 274.

[787] Bragantini, "V 3, 10," 930.

[788] Bragantini, "V 3, 10," 930.

[789] Graffiti associated with the house include CIL IV 6714; CIL IV 6721. Eschebach and Müller-Trollius, *Gebäudeverzeichnis und Stadtplan der antiken Stadt Pompeji,* 139; Giuseppe Fiorelli, *Notizie degli scavi di antichità* (Roma: Tip. della R. Accademia dei Lincei, 1902), 205-6.

[790] Antonio Sogliano, "Relazione degli scavi eseguiti durante il mese di Giugno 1901," in *Notizie degli scavi di antichità*, 299-304. Eds. Fiorelli, Giuseppe, Reale Accademia dei Lincei, Reale Accademia d'Italia, and Accademia nazionale dei Lincei (Roma: Tip. della R. Accademia dei Lincei, 1901), 302-3.

and accompanying latrine,[791] peristyle garden,[792] and *triclinium*[793] [Fig. V.8].[794] Third Style frescoes formerly decorated the walls of the interior,[795] now lost, and the walls of the narrow garden were once painted in a polychrome checkerboard pattern that resembled faux blocks of stone [Fig. V.9].[796] Therefore, while smaller than the other houses examined in this chapter, House V.3.10 incorporates many of the basic elements of a Roman home into its plan.[797] Absent among these elements, however, is a *fauces* or *vestibulum*. This means that visitors would have entered into the interior of the home directly from the sidewalk, with no buffer zone between interior and exterior. In addition, the kitchen would have been the first room visitors encountered when crossing the threshold, as it is located immediately to the left of the entrance doorway. It may even have been possible to view the latrine while standing on the front threshold, which is clearly visible through the open doorway of the kitchen today [Fig. V.10]. This is unusual, and although Roman notions of privacy were very different from our own,[798] the location of the latrine indicates that the owners of House V.3.10 had to creatively work to shape a small, pre-existing space to their needs.

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[791] George Boyce notes that a snake was formerly painted on the south wall of the kitchen. George K. Boyce, "Corpus of the Lararia of Pompeii," *Memoirs of the American Academy in Rome* 14 (1937): 39, no.115; Paribeni, "Campania," 203.

[792] Old photographs reveal that the walls of the garden were formerly decorated with fresco in a pattern that imitates blocks of stone. A marble relief with a goddess, supplicants, and a sacrificial ram was also discovered in the garden. Now in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Inv. 126174. Sogliano, "Regione I: Latium et Campania," 400-2; Theodor Kraus and Leonard von Matt, *Pompeii and Herculaneum: The Living Cities of the Dead* (New York: H.N. Abrams, 1975), 193. For a recent reevaluation of the relief, see Jessica Powers, "The Votive Relief from House V.3.10 in Pompeii: A Sculpture and Its Context Reexamined," *in Roman Artists, Patrons, and Public Consumption: Familiar Works Reconsidered*, 213-239. Eds. Brenda Longfellow and Ellen Perry (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2018), 213-239.

[793] The *triclinium* was painted with frescoes of garlands, fruit, and birds. Paribeni, "Campania," 204; Tatiana Warscher, *Pompeji: Ein führer durch die ruinen* (Berlin und Leipzig: de Gruyter, 1925), 125.

[794] For a list of the finds discovered within the house see Eschebach and Müller-Trollius, *Gebäudeverzeichnis und Stadtplan der antiken Stadt Pompeji,* 139; Sogliano, "Regione I: Latium et Campania," 403.

[795] Eschebach and Müller-Trollius, *Gebäudeverzeichnis und Stadtplan der antiken Stadt Pompeji,* 13; Paribeni, "Campania," 204; Warscher, *Pompeji: Ein Führer durch die Ruinen,* 125.

[796] Wilhelmina F. Jashemski, *The Gardens of Pompeii.* Volume II: Appendices (New York: Caratzas, 1993), 114.

[797] On the issue of the typical Roman house plan (or lack thereof), see Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "Rethinking the Roman Atrium House," *Journal of Roman Archaeology, Supplementary Series* 22 (1997): 219-20.

[798] For example, the communal latrines found throughout the Roman world.

Combined with the lack of an entrance corridor, the position of the latrine may help explain the presence of the "HAVETIS INTRO" inscription in front of the house. By inviting visitors inside, the inscription would have encouraged guests to enter the home, which lacks the typical architectural and decorative cues of entry. The absence of an entrance corridor of any size, while not unprecedented,[799] is atypical of ancient Campanian homes. Without the visual markers of an entryway, visitors may have mistaken the doorway of V.3.10 as a secondary entrance or non-domestic space. The proximity and visibility of the latrine to the front door of the house may have caused further disorientation when approaching the interior of V.3.10. These unusual features may therefore have necessitated the addition of the "HAVETIS INTRO" inscription to the sidewalk in front of the house, where the epigraph signaled the proper entrance to the home, reassured viewers they were in the correct location, and oriented visitors to the layout of the space.

On a more ephemeral level, the "HAVETIS INTRO" inscription also functioned as an auspicious message of welcome. Like the Casa del Fauno "HAVE" inscription, the "HAVETIS INTRO" inscription would have simultaneously bestowed well-wishes upon guests and signaled the presence of the threshold. Here, too, the epigraph provided protection for the home and visitors through the well-wishes communicated and functioned as a symbol of defense. Yet, it was not just the word "HAVE" or its many forms that worked as an efficacious tool of visual protection.

[799] Such as the Domus of Lesbianus and Numicia Primigenia [I.13.9] in Pompeii.

Wishes of Health and Safety at the Casa del Salve

Unlike the Casa del Fauno and House V.3.10, where mosaic inscriptions decorated the front entryways of the homes, the Casa del Salve [VI.1.25][800] formerly featured a mosaic greeting near its back door [Fig. V.11].[801] The corridor leading to door VI.1.25 was formerly decorated with a black and white mosaic of the greeting "SALVE" [CIL X 873b][802] within a *tabula ansata* frame[803] and surrounded by a border of black and white triangles [Fig. V.12]. [804] The mosaic has since disappeared, but its position near the rear entrance of the Casa del Salve was noted by Giuseppe Fiorelli when it was discovered in November 1875.[805] Immediately past

[800] The front entrance of the house can be found at VI.1.7. Doors VI.1.6; VI.1.8; VI.1.24; and VI.1.26 are connected to the structure. The house has also been called the House of Ione, Casa delle Vestali, Casa di Vesta, Casa di Claudio, and the Domus des Varennius Zethus Libertus. Eschebach and Müller-Trollius, *Gebäudeverzeichnis und Stadtplan der antiken Stadt Pompeji,* 151.

[801] First excavated 1770. For early descriptions of the house see François Mazois, *Les ruines de Pompei*: Seconde Partie (Paris: Firmin Didot, 1824), 49, Pl. XI, Fig III-V; Giuseppe Fiorelli, *PAH* Vol. I (Neapoli, 1860), 242, 246-6; Giuseppe Fiorelli, *PAH*, Vol. I, 2, 22-4, 28-31, 40, 246-7, 255; Breton, *Pompeia décrite et dessinée,* 305-7. August Mau, "Osservazioni. Parete dipinta della Casa delle Vestali," in *Giornale degli scavi di Pompei* 24, 107-30. Eds. Giuseppe Fiorelli and Scuola archeologica di Pompei (Napoli: Tip. italiana nel Liceo V. Emanuele, 1875), 107-30; August Mau, *Geschichte der Dekorativen Wandmalerei in Pompeji* (Berlin: G. Reimer, 1882), 66, 415. See also Karl Schefold, *Die Wände Pompejis: Topographisches Verzeichnis der Bildmotive*, 91-2; Bragantini, De Vos, and Parise Badoni *PPP* Vol. II, 105-11; Anne Laidlaw, *The First Style in Pompeii: Painting and Architecture*. Archaeologica, 57 (Rome: G. Bretschneider, 1985), 117-8; Pernice, *Pavimente und Figürliche Mosaiken. Die Hellenistische Kunst in Pompeji,* Bd. 6, 109-10, 113, 132, 138, 143. See also Irene Bragantini, "VI 1, 7 Casa delle Vestali," in *PPM*, Vol. IV, 5-49. Eds. G. P. Carratelli and I. Baldassarre (Roma: Istituto della enciclopedia italiana, 1991); Eschebach and Müller-Trollius, *Gebäudeverzeichnis und Stadtplan der antiken Stadt Pompeji,* 151.

[802] Rizzo, "Limina: la decorazione figurata delle soglie musive a Pompei," 99*;* Breton, *Pompeia décrite et dessinée,* 1; de Vos, "Pavimenti e mosaici," 165.

[803] The *tabula ansata* frame was modeled after Roman rectangular tablets with triangular "handles" used originally to display hanging inscriptions. However, similar to the phrase *damnatio memoriae, tabula ansata* is not the term the ancient Romans would have used to refer to the form. Sean Leatherbury, "Framing Late Antique Texts as Monuments: The Tabula Ansata Between Sculpture and Mosaic," in *The Materiality of Text: Placement, Perception, and Presence of Inscribed Texts in Classical Antiquity*. Brill Studies in Greek and Roman Epigraphy, Volume 11, 380-404. Eds. Andrej Petrovic, Ivana Petrovic, and Edmund Thomas (Leiden: Brill, 2019), 383.

[804] An 1875 lithograph illustrates the mosaic inscription beneath another mosaic panel that was discovered within the house. This mosaic may now appear in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, although I have not personally confirmed this. Also uncertain is whether the two mosaics would have been laid near one another within the rear corridor. Considering the fact that other similar 19th century images conflate decorative elements from different rooms of a house onto a single page, it is unlikely the meander-bordered mosaic appeared in conjunction with the "SALVE" inscription. See Mario Pagano and Raffaele Prisciandaro, *Studio sulle provenienze degli oggetti rinvenuti negli scavi borbonici del regno di Napoli: una lettura integrata, coordinata e commentata della documentazio*ne. Studi e ricerche della Soprintendenza per i Beni Archeologici del Molise, 1-2 (Castellammare di Stabia (Na) i.e. Naples, Italy: N. Longobardi, 2006), 83; Giuseppe Fiorelli, *PAH* Vol. I, 2, 28.

[805] Pagano and Prisciandaro, *Studio sulle provenienze degli oggetti rinvenuti negli scavi borbonici del regno di Napoli: una lettura integrata, coordinata e commentata della documentazio*ne, 83; *PAH* I, 2, 28.

the rear or secondary entry corridor of the house is an atrium, and various corridors lead to the front of the Casa del Salve [VI.1.7] [Fig. V.13]. If approaching the home from the front, the primary entryway of the Casa del Salve is flanked by two side entrances elevated above the street,[806] and the entrance corridor is long and paved with pieces of polychrome marble [Fig. V.14]. The plan of the large house is roughly L-shaped and includes two atria, a large peristyle, and a bath suite. Little interior decoration remains in situ, but elaborate wall paintings and floor mosaics were discovered and recorded by the excavators of the Casa del Salve.[807] The organization of the house reveals that it was originally constructed as two separate houses that were later joined together to form one large, irregularly shaped structure.[808] In fact, entrance VI.1.25 is but one of three rear entrances to the Casa del Salve, the other two located at VI.1.24 and VI.1.26. Each of these doorways is situated on the east side of the house along a street that is narrow, and which ends in the fortification walls at the northern limit of the city.

According to Fiorelli's description of the house (dated November 24, 1875), the walls of the corridor were painted in black and yellow, and decorated with images of birds and garlands.[809] Fiorelli mentions that the black and white "SALVE" inscription occupied the threshold of the entrance,[810] but recorded nothing further concerning the meaning or precise detail about its surroundings. It is unclear whether or not the "SALVE" mosaic was laid before

[806] These are numbers VI.1.6 and VI.1.8, both of which were decorated with black and white mosaic pavements with central geometric designs and wall frescoes. The threshold between VI.1.8 and the interior of the Casa del Salve features a mosaic threshold with a diamond in the center and may further indicate a concern with protecting the boundaries of the house. See Bragantini, "VI 1, 7 Casa delle Vestali," 5-49.
[807] For instance, a mosaic of two dolphins and an anchor formerly decorated the threshold of the *triclinium*. Fiorelli, *PAH* I, 2, 21-2. A second mosaic of a labyrinth with a helmet at the center was also discovered within one of the rooms surrounding the atrium. Bragantini, "VI 1, 7 Casa delle Vestali," 48-9; *PAH* I, 2, 29; Pagano and Prisciandaro, *Studio sulle provenienze degli oggetti rinvenuti negli scavi borbonici del regno di Napoli: una lettura integrata, coordinata e commentata della documentazion*e, 82.
[808] Bragantini, "VI 1, 7 Casa delle Vestali," 5.
[809] Fiorelli, *PAH* I, 2, 28. On the objects found within the room, including an iron lock, see Fiorelli, *PAH* I, 2, 28.
[810] Fiorelli, *PAH* I, 2, 28.

or after the houses were joined,[811] but in either case the location of the inscription in association with a major point of entry (and exit) is significant.[812] Of the three rear entrances to the Casa del Salve, door VI.1.25 is the largest and most ornate, and was likely used as the primary eastern entrance to the home.[813]

Further complicating the picture is the fact that the house was hit during the 1943 bombing of Pompeii, and the rear entrance at VI.1.25 suffered considerable damage.[814] Because the mosaic has been lost, its orientation remains a question. However, based on the positioning of other similar inscriptions, I believe the mosaic would have faced those entering the home from the rear door, as opposed to those exiting the house.[815] Therefore, from its location near the threshold of the rear entryway, the "SALVE" mosaic would have endeavored to engage those approaching the house from the east, and set the tone for visitors as they crossed the threshold.

Like the "HAVE" inscription that decorates the sidewalk in front of the Casa del Fauno, the "SALVE" mosaic at the Casa del Salve communicated messages of safety and well-wishes, while also drawing attention to the perilous nature of the passageway and the transition from interior to exterior space. Appearing at the threshold of an entryway, the mosaic inscription clearly and conspicuously signaled the transitional nature of the space it embellished. Generally, in ancient Campania, mosaic inscriptions of greeting or warning indicate a change of space, and the presence of a mosaic inscription is likely to have signaled to viewers that they were approaching a private area. In addition, the presence of the "SALVE" inscription could signpost

[811] The style of the mosaic dates it to the late Republican period (Second Style) and suggests it predates the joining of the houses. I also suspect that the mosaic would have functioned to protect the original primary entrance of the structure.
[812] If the "SALVE" mosaic was laid after the two pre-existing structures were joined, the inscription may have been intended to orient guests to the home and encourage them to enter the secondary entryway.
[813] It is also likely to have been the primary entrance to the original structure before it was joined to VI.1.7.
[814] Laurentino Garcia y Garcia, *Danni di guerra a Pompei* (Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2006), 66.
[815] As the previous chapters have demonstrated, doorway imagery is in nearly every case positioned to face visitors upon entering a structure.

the types of movement required when entering a private space. These diverse, yet interrelated, messages further support the idea that the inscription functioned as a type of sign or symbol, messages that were enhanced by the meaning and connotations of the word *salve*.

The inscription "SALVE", which translates to "hello!" or more literally, "be in good health," is an unambiguously auspicious and welcoming greeting. As an adverb, the word *salvē* means "well" or "in good health", and visitors are likely to have approached the house with a sense of reassurance. Where the greeting of "hail" ("HAVE") is more formal, "SALVE" communicates a message not only of welcome, but also wishes for the physical and spiritual well-being of the viewer. In this way, the "SALVE" inscription was far more than a friendly message and could activate mechanisms of physical protection for guests. This, in turn, could create a feeling of safety as one crossed the threshold and moved through the corridor.

This is different from modern, western welcome signs, which are meant as a gesture of goodwill, but are straightforward and innocuous. Rather, the single word *salvē,* when incorporated into the entryway of an ancient Campanian home, functioned as a visual tool of corporeal protection. The textual, visual, and magical qualities of Roman curse tablets, or *defixiones*, support this approach to the "SALVE" mosaic. *Defixiones* typically took the form of inscribed sheets of lead and were used throughout the Roman Empire[816] to punish, bind, or

[816] Such as the many curse tablets found at Bath. Roger Tomlin, *Tabellae Sulis: Roman Inscribed Tablets of Tin and Lead from the Sacred Spring at Bath* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Committee for Archaeology, 1988); J. N. Adams, "British Latin: The Text, Interpretation and Language of the Bath Curse Tablets," *Britannia* 23 (1992): 1-26. See also John G. Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), 3-4, 193. Curse tablets from Italy include those found within the Fountain of Anna Perenna in Rome. See Marina Piranomonte, "Religion and Magic at Rome: The Fountain of Anna Perenna," in *Magical Practice in the Latin West: Papers from the International Conference Held at the University of Zaragoza, 30 Sept.-1 Oct. 2005*, 191-213. Eds. Francisco Marco Simón and R. L. Gordon (Leiden: Brill, 2010), among others. A possible *defixio* was even discovered at Pompeii. Maria Elephante, "Un caso di defixio nella necropoli Pompeiana di Porta Nocera?" *La parola del passato* 40 (1985): 431-43.

control a particular individual [Fig. V.15].[817] For the Romans, the power of the tablets emanated from the words inscribed upon them[818] as powerful words made visually and materially manifest.[819] I believe the same is true of the "SALVE" mosaic from the Casa del Salve, where the inscription takes on a sense of power and agency to enact change and manifest the wishes of well-being communicated by the greeting. The mosaic thus functioned not only as a wish for good health and general greeting, but it could also actively ensure one's well-being within the vulnerable space of the entryway.

Beyond the word "SALVE", the frame that surrounds the inscription is noteworthy. In fact, the "SALVE" mosaic is among only a handful of Pompeian inscriptions that were surrounded by a dedicated frame. This is significant not only because the frame draws attention to the inscription, but also due to the associations *tabulae ansatae* carried. Dunbabin observes that many efficacious inscriptions in Roman baths were framed with a *tabula ansata*, and the

[817] For more on *defixiones* see Gager, *Curse Tablets and Binding Spells from the Ancient World,* esp. 3-41; Fritz Graf, *Magic in the Ancient World*. Revealing Antiquity, 10 (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1997), 118-176; Geoff W. Adams, "The Social and Cultural Implications of Curse Tablets (*Defixiones*) in Britain and on the Continent," *Studia Humaniora Tartuensia* 7 (2006): 1-15; Kropp, "How Does Magical Language Work? The Spells and Formulae of the Latin *Defixionum Tabellae*," 357-80; Celia Sanchez Natalias, "The Medium Matters: Materiality and Metaphor in Some Latin Curse Tablets." In *Material Approaches to Roman Magic: Occult Objects and Supernatural Substances*. Trac Themes in Roman Archaeology, Volume 2, 9-16. Eds. Adam Parker and Stuart McKie (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2018), 9-16.

[818] Indeed, Amina Kropp proposes that writing down a magical formula was akin to performing magical acts (Kropp "How Does Magical Language Work? The Spells and Formulae of the Latin *Defixionum Tabellae*," 360), and Richard Gordon characterizes curse tablets as "activated texts" (Richard L. Gordon, "From Substances to Texts: Three Materialities of 'Magic' in the Roman Imperial Period," in *The Materiality of Magic: An Artifactual Investigation into Ritual Practices and Popular Beliefs*, 133-76. Eds. Ceri Houlbrook and Natalie Armitage (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2015), 166).

[819] Giulio Vallarino, "Parole invisibili," in *Scrittura e magia: un repertorio di oggetti iscritti della nagia Greco-Romana*. Opuscula Epigraphica, 12, 87-93. Ed. Gabriella Bevilacqua, (Roma: Edizioni Quasar, 2010), 91-2. Some scholars have even suggested that Roman curse tablets did, in fact, work, and could create psychosomatic illness through the target's knowledge of the curse, Philip Kiernan, "Did Curse Tablets Work?" in *TRAC 2003: Proceedings of the Thirteenth Annual Theoretical Roman Archaeology Conference, Leicester 2003*, 123-134. Eds. Ben Croxford, Hella Eckardt, Judy Meade and Jake Weekes (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 2004), 123, 131.

powerful resonances of the tablet forms seems also to have applied to domestic mosaic inscriptions.[820]

The *tabula ansata* form was first used in archaic Greece for votive, funerary, and political inscriptions,[821] spread to Rome,[822] and became popular throughout the ancient Mediterranean as a framing device for a wide variety of inscriptions, such as funerary epitaphs and public dedications.[823] With few exceptions, the *tabula ansata* was used to frame and highlight text,[824] and it is likely Roman viewers subconsciously prepared themselves to encounter writing when they saw a *tabula ansata*.[825] As decorative elements within Roman houses, *tabulae* were often used to mark the boundaries of a room and functioned as an *apotropaion*.[826] The *tabula ansata*

[820] Dunbabin, "*Baiarum Grata Voluptas*: Pleasures and Dangers of the Baths," 16. Indeed, Henry Maguire notes that geometric frames could increase the powers of a mosaic. Henry Maguire, "Magic and Geometry in Early Christian Floor Mosaics and Textiles," *Jahrbuch der österreichischen Byzantinistik* 45 (1995): 274. The prevalence of *tabulae ansatae* in these bath mosaic and not in Pompeii is likely a result of the fact that the *tabula ansata* did not become a popular mosaic motif until well after the 79 CE eruption.

[821] Leatherbury, *Inscribing Faith in Late Antiquity: Between Reading and Seeing. Image, Text, and Culture in Classical Antiquity*, 94, 93-110; Stefan Schepp, "Gehenkette Schrift: Die Tabulae Ansata," in *Marcus Caelius: Tod in der Varusschlacht*, 114-7. Eds. Hans-Joachim Schalles and Susanne Willer (Darmstadt: Primus Verlag, 2009), 114. Peter Kruschwitz and Virginia L. Campbell disagree, call *tabulae ansatae* "distinctly Roman," and claim the tablets derived from Republican-era wooden tablets for public notices. Kruschwitz and Campbell, "What the Pompeians Saw: Representations of Document Types in Pompeian Drawings and Paintings (and Their Value for Linguistic Research)," 59-60.

[822] Mosaic versions of the *tabula ansata* appeared in the Roman world in the late first-early second century CE and remained popular for centuries afterward. These early mosaic *tabulae ansatae* were used to highlight the signatures of the mosaicists, Leatherbury, "Framing Late Antique Texts as Monuments: The Tabula Ansata Between Sculpture and Mosaic," 387. Kruschwitz and Campbell note that several examples where graffiti messages or wishes are enclosed within *tabulae*. Kruschwitz and Campbell "What the Pompeians Saw: Representations of Document Types in Graffiti Drawings and Their Value for Linguistic Research," 66-7.

[823] "Leatherbury, "Framing Late Antique Texts as Monuments: The Tabula Ansata Between Sculpture and Mosaic," 385; Leatherbury, *Inscribing Faith in Late Antiquity: Between Reading and Seeing. Image, Text, and Culture in Classical Antiquity*, 95.

[824] For late exceptions to this rule, see Leatherbury, "Framing Late Antique Texts as Monuments: The Tabula Ansata Between Sculpture and Mosaic," 382, FN 9. Schepp, "Gehenkette Schrift: Die Tabulae Ansata," 114.

[825] As Leatherbury demonstrates, the ubiquity of the form continued into the early Christian period. Leatherbury, *Inscribing Faith in Late Antiquity: Between Reading and Seeing. Image, Text, and Culture in Classical Antiquity*, 97. In support of the idea that the *tabula ansata* frame could prepare viewers for text, Franklin observes the form of a text could signal to audiences (literate or illiterate) the meaning or type of the inscription. Franklin, "Literacy and the Parietal Inscriptions of Pompeii," 86-7.

[826] Leatherbury suggests that *tabula ansata* mosaics that delineate public and private spaces in ancient Roman houses, such as those in the Roman villas at Merida and Faro were apotropaic. Sean Villareal Leatherbury, "Inscribed Within the Image: The Visual Character of Early Christian Mosaic Inscriptions," Dissertation, Oxford University, 2012, 201; Giovanni Giacomo Panni, "Forma, linguaggio e contenuti delle dediche epigrafiche nei tituli ansati (iv-ix sec. d.C)," in *La terza età dell'epigrafia: Colloquio Aiegl-Borghesi 86, Bologna, Ottobre 1986*.

thus concurrently worked as a marker of transitional space, indication of text, and symbol of protection within Roman domestic spaces. Given the defensive and aspirational nuances of the *tabula ansata*, the *tabula ansata*-framed "SALVE" inscription within the Casa del Salve offered a powerful tool of protection through the combination of symbol and text. Thus, the "SALVE" inscription was multivalent and suited to address a variety of audiences as a visual element that is at once welcoming, defensive, and aspirational.

Due to the unfortunate loss of the mosaic and dearth of information about its exact positioning, the ancient experience of the inscription is nearly impossible to fully reconstruct. This discussion of the experience of the mosaic is therefore necessarily broad and focuses on the presence of the mosaic in the secondary entrance of the house, rather than the specifics of experience or interactions.

The "SALVE" mosaic is mentioned just once in Fiorelli's description of the house, and little detail is provided. Fiorelli writes that the mosaic was laid near the threshold of the entrance corridor of VI.1.25 in black and white *tesserae* spelling out the word "SALVE". He then goes on to describe the surrounding wall frescoes.[827] It is not specified whether this was the threshold closest to the front door or the one between the entrance corridor and atrium.

A few observations are possible. The secondary entrance [VI.1.25] of the Casa del Salve can be approached from a narrow street and would have been fronted by two steps. When standing on the threshold of the doorway it would have been possible to view the mosaic inscription [Fig. V.16]. In both cases, visitors could have viewed the inscription before entering

Epigrafia e Antichità, 9, 169-94. Ed. Angela Donati (Faenza: Fratelli Lega, 1988), 193. In early Christian contexts, a *tabula ansata* was also often used in conjunction with other efficacious elements to protect boundaries within religious spaces. Leatherbury, "Framing Late Antique Texts as Monuments: The Tabula Ansata Between Sculpture and Mosaic," 394.

[827] Fiorelli, *PAH* I, 2, 28.

the house and comprehended its message before beginning the short journey inside the structure. This means that the protective qualities of the mosaic would have been activated even before a guest entered the home through the recognition of the inscription and its frame as a sign of protection.

A guest's physical interactions with the mosaic would have further imbued the inscription with a sense of dynamism. As with other mosaic examples considered, it would have been necessary to step on or over the inscription when entering the house, thus ensuring physical contact with, or maneuvering around the mosaic. In the case of the Casa del Salve, an embodied experience of the inscription, facilitated by physical and visual interactions with the mosaic, may even have complemented or activated the epigraph's wishes of good health. That is, by interacting with the visual manifestation of the word *salvē*, one's health and well-being could be transferred via reciprocal tactility from inscription to human participant. It is even possible the mosaic was activated by literate viewers if read aloud. Whether or not it was read aloud, a viewer's embodied experience of the inscription would have been facilitated by the location of the mosaic in the entrance corridor and activated through physical contact. With this consideration of the experience of the mosaic in mind, the location of the structure within the Pompeian cityscape is also necessary to understand the inscription in context.

The front entrance of the Casa del Salve is located along the Via Consolare, roughly in the middle of the V-shaped *insula* [Fig. V.17]. Stretching across the northwestern-most section of the city, the Via Consolare terminates at the Porta Ercolano and is the route used to exit the city in the direction of Herculaneum. The Via dei Sepolcri, also known as the Porta Ercolano Necropolis, lies just past the Porta Ercolano, and begins less than sixty meters from the primary entrance of the Casa del Salve. The rear entrance of the house [VI.1.25] is positioned along the

Vicolo di Narciso, which terminates to the north in one of the city walls and branches off from the Via Consolare at the southernmost corner of the *insula*.[828] Due to the atypical shape of both the *insula* and the Casa del Salve, the rear side of the house occupies the uppermost third of the block and is located very near the city limits.[829] Alone, each of these features is likely to have necessitated special, visual protective measures, and together they situate the Casa del Salve at a particularly vulnerable location.

First and foremost, the proximity of the house to the necropolis—the largest and most prestigious necropolis at Pompeii—may have amplified the sense of danger one experienced when approaching the home.[830] Proximity to the gate would have increased the possibility of unwanted visitors and intensified the need for protective measures. In a sense, the proximity of the Casa del Salve to the Porta Ercolano and city walls can be understood much like the function of a domestic door. The closer one was to the point of access (doorway) within a home, the more vulnerable. The same is true of the city walls, which mirrored the juxtaposition of interior and exterior on a macro scale.

Each of the above-mentioned features would have impacted the primary entrance on the Via Consolare, which does not exhibit any extant defensive images.[831] While the secondary entrance is not positioned on the street that leads to the Porta Ercolano, the connection of the doorway to the Via Consolare-facing areas of the house was likely enough.[832] What is more, the secondary entrance of the Casa del Salve is itself positioned along a long and narrow street. As

[828] A public fountain, water tower, and public well [VI.1.19] are also located at the southern corner of the *insula.*
[829] In fact, entrance VI.1.25 is located within twenty meters of the city walls.
[830] See Chapter Two, page 111.
[831] One exception to this may be the geometric mosaic threshold that separates VI.1.8 from the interior of the house.
[832] While it may seem curious no protective images decorate the arguable more vulnerable front entrance of the Casa del Salve, defensive imagery may either have been lost or the mosaic at VI.1.25 considered adequate. It is also true that not all doorways in dangerous locations were decorative with efficacious images.

discussed elsewhere,[833] narrow streets and sidewalks could be cause for concern and put pedestrians in vulnerable positions. The fact that the Vicolo di Narciso terminates in the northern wall of the city, as a dead end, means that pedestrians who reached the end of the Vicolo di Narciso may have felt trapped, with little room to turn around. The narrowness of the Vicolo di Narciso and termination of the small street in the city wall would therefore have compelled the need for the presence of the "SALVE" mosaic inscription within the secondary entryway of the house, to both orient and reassure visitors.

This concern also presents itself on the façade of the nearby Casa del Narciso [VI.2.16], which is positioned at a diagonal from the Casa del Salve on the east side of the Vicolo di Narciso. A rounded niche (possible *lararium*) was built into the face of the Casa del Narciso to the left (north) of the doorway [Fig. V.18]. The niche is located very low to the ground, and although it retains no decoration, it is faced with plaster and was probably painted. Similar niches, such as that on the façade of the so-called Taberna delle Quattro Divinità [IX.7.1], which contains a bust of Bacchus [Fig. V.19], were often decorated with divine images or held statuettes of deities and were protective in function. Even if not a true *lararium*, the presence of the niche outside the Casa del Narciso further indicates that this stretch of the Vicolo del Narciso was considered a vulnerable locale.

Among the other case studies considered in this chapter, the Casa del Salve appears to have been located in a particularly vulnerable position within the city of Pompeii, as it was situated near a major city gate and necropolis and along a narrow dead-end road. These various geographic features thus help elucidate the presence of the "SALVE" mosaic inscription at the rear entrance of the Casa del Salve, as a visual feature deemed necessary to protect the home, its

[833] See Chapter Two, pages 103-4.

inhabitants, and visitors. Through the efficacious visualization of an propitious word and surrounding *tabula ansata* frame, the "SALVE" inscription responds to its surroundings by offering dynamic well-wishes of corporeal health and safety to viewers.[834]

Greetings from Stabiae: The SALVE Inscription at the Villa Arianna

While nearly all known examples of mosaic inscriptions from Campania were discovered at Pompeii, another, little-known, "SALVE" mosaic once decorated the Villa Arianna (A) at Stabiae (modern Castellamare di Stabia).[835] Located on the Varano hill overlooking the ancient coastline,[836] the Villa Arianna is a spacious first century BCE maritime villa that was buried by the eruption of Mt. Vesuvius in 79 CE. The house includes many interior rooms of varied function,[837] two porticoed courtyards, a large garden,[838] a bath suite, and a tunnel to the sea [Fig. V.20]. Many vivid frescoes and decorative pavements were discovered within the villa, some of

[834] Pierre Gusman records that another "SALVE" mosaic accompanied by phalli was discovered at entrance of a home across the street from the Domus L. Caecili Iucundi [V.1.26]. He does not specify a house but is likely referring to the Fullonica di Marcus Vesonius Primus [VI.14.21-2], which is in fact, not a house. If true, this presents another fascinating example of protective doorway inscriptions, made even more potent with the addition of phalli. However, no trace of the mosaic remains. Pierre Gusman, Margaret Jourdain, and Florence Simmonds, *Pompei: The City, its Life & Art* (London: W. Heinemann, 1900), 256-7.

[835] Mariette De Vos, "Paving Techniques at Pompeii," *Archaeological News* 16 (1991): 42.

[836] The ancient coastline was pushed back due to the volcanic materials that flowed from Vesuvius, as also happened at Herculaneum.

[837] These include leisure, sleeping, dining, working, storage, and entertainment spaces. For more on the villa, see Giovanna Bonifacio and Anna Maria Sodo, *Stabiae: guida archeologica alle ville* (Castellammare di Stabia (Napoli): N. Longobardi, 2001), 89-166; Michele Ruggiero, *Degli scavi di Stabia dal MDCCXLIX al MDCCLXXXII: Notizie* (Napoli: Tipografia dell'Academia reale delle scienze, 1881); Mantha Zarmakoupi, *Designing for Luxury on the Bay of Naples: Villas and Landscapes (c. 100 Bce-79 Ce).* Oxford Studies in Ancient Culture and Representation (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 2014), 54-66; Domenico Camardo and Antonio Ferrara, *Stabiae, dai borbone alle ultime scoperte* (Castellammare di Stabia (Na). Napoli: N. Longobardi, 2001), 75-87; Libero D'Orsi, Antonio Carosella, and Vincenzo Cuccurullo, *Gli scavi di Stabiae: giornale di Ssavo.* Monografie. Ministero per i Beni Culturali ed Ambientali, Soprintendenza Archeologica di Pompei, 11 (Roma: Quasar, 1996).

[838] The garden is estimated to have been added ca. 30 CE. Thomas N. Howe, "A Most Fragile Art Object: Interpreting and Presenting the Strolling Garden of the Villa Arianna, Stabiae," *The Actual Problems of History and Theory of Art* 8 (2018): 695.

which remain in situ,[839] and which together with the grand size of the structure and its desirable location on the waterfront, bespeak wealth and the leisurely pursuits of *otium*.

The "SALVE" mosaic inscription was uncovered at the threshold[840] between the *vestibulum* and atrium of the villa on September 15, 1761 by Karl Weber[841] [Fig. V.21].[842] Shortly after its discovery, the mosaic was removed from the entryway of the Villa Arianna[843] and transported to the Herculanese Museum[844] in Portici, Italy. It was later moved to the Real Museo Borbonico.[845]

[839] The rest either have been lost or are housed within the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli.
[840] Other threshold mosaics with symbols such as the Solomonic knot appear throughout the house, such as those before rooms 12, N, M, and O.
[841] This villa was first excavated by Karl Weber from 1757 to 1762 and then reburied. Excavated again in 1950 by Libero d'Orsi. Bonifacio and Sodo, *Stabiae: Guida Archeologica alle Ville,* 89. Excavations restarted in the 1980s and through the 2000s. Zarmakoupi, *Designing for Luxury on the Bay of Naples: Villas and Landscapes (c. 100 Bce-79 Ce),* 59; Domenico Camardo, "La Villa di Arianna a Stabiae," in *Stabiae, dai borbone alle ultime scoperte,* 75-83. Eds. Domenico Camardo and Antonio Ferrara (Castellammare di Stabia (Na). Napoli: N. Longobardi, 2001), 75; Anna Maria Sodo, "I rinvenimenti recenti: nuovi ambienti in luce a Villa Arianna," in *Stabiae, dai borbone alle ultime scoperte,* 85-8. Eds. Domenico Camardo and Antonio Ferrara (Castellammare di Stabia (Na). Napoli: N. Longobardi, 2001), 85-8.
[842] The mosaic measured six palms two ounces wide, and two palms long. Ruggiero, *Degli scavi di Stabia dal MDCCXLIX al MDCCLXXXII: Notizie,* 157-8. A Neapolitan palm equals roughly 0.26455 meters. Paolo Gardelli and Carmela Ariano, "Two Lesser-Known Mosaic Floors from the 18th-Century Excavations of Villa Arianna at Stabia," *Actual Problems of Theory and History of Art* 9 (2019): 136, FN. 3.
[843] Originally located just beyond a black basalt threshold. Bonifacio and Sodo, *Stabiae: guida archeologica alle ville,* 92.
[844] In room 14 of the Palazzo Caramanico. The mosaic was reportedly detached and moved by cart to the palazzo on September 18, 1761. Ruggiero, *Degli scavi di Stabia dal MDCCXLIX al MDCCLXXXII: Notizie,* 160.
[845] Renamed the Museo archeologico nazionale di Napoli. Today the mosaic is embedded into the floor of room 46 in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli. Mariette De Vos, "Camillo Paderni, la tradizione antiquaria romana e i collezionisti inglesi," in *Ercolano 1738–1988: 250 anni di ricerca archeologica,* 99-116. Ed. Luisa Franchi dell'Orto (Roma, L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1993), 109; Floriana Miele, "Notazioni per una storia della documentazione dei mosaici pompeiani del Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli. Dalle 'antichità di Ercolano' e dal fondo storico dei disegni pompeiani alla tecnologia informatiche e digitali," in *Atti del XVI Colloquio dell'Associazione Italiana per lo Studio e la Conservazione del Mosaico, Palermo-Piazza Armerina, 17–20 marzo 2010,* 109-21. Ed. C. Angelelli (Tivoli, Edizioni Scripta Manent Publ., 2011), 93; Gardelli and Ariano, "Two Lesser-Known Mosaic Floors from the 18th-Century Excavations of Villa Arianna at Stabia," 141. The mosaic is currently in an inaccessible non-exhibition room in the museum. Maria Stella Pisapia, "II complesso musivo pavimentale dell'ala occidentale del Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli: un mosaico di mosaico," in *Convegno internazionale di studi. La materia e i segni della storia. 2004. Apparati musivi antichi nell'area del Mediterraneo: conservazione programmata e recupero, contributi analitici alla Carta del rischio: Piazza Armerina, 9-13 aprile 2003,* 60-70. Eds. Sicilia. Dipartimento Beni Culturali ed Ambientali ed Educazione Permanente.; Centro regionale per la progettazione e il restauro (Palermo: Centro regionale per la progettazione e il restauro, 2004), 68-9.

In the sole extant image of the inscription, the mosaic appears as a panel with black letters on a white background surrounded by a trapezoidal black band. However, this was not the original appearance of the mosaic. When the "SALVE" mosaic was moved to the Herculanese Museum it was combined with a marine scene from the Praedia of Julia Felix, a central geometric *emblema*, and a turreted border [Fig. V.22].[846] The surviving image of the mosaic was published in 1808, decades after the inscription was removed and therefore does not reflect the original appearance of the inscription.[847] While the eighteenth century alterations to the mosaic do not significantly impact our interpretation of the inscription, it is important to note that the mosaic would have been laid within the villa to correspond to the dimensions of the *vestibulum* floor as an integral part of the decorative scheme.

Much like the Casa del Salve mosaic, the inscription from the front threshold of the Villa Arianna displayed a propitious[848] message of welcome and good health to visitors. Here too, the

[846] The mosaic was reshaped to fit within a window niche. De Vos, "Camillo Paderni, la tradizione antiquaria romana e i collezionisti inglesi," 109; Miele, "Notazioni per una storia della documentazione dei mosaici pompeiani del Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli. Dalle 'antichità di Ercolano' e dal fondo storico dei disegni pompeiani alla tecnologia informatiche e digitali," 93. The combined mosaic is illustrated in both the 1808 and 1828 versions of *Gli ornati delle pareti ed i pavimenti delle stanze dell'antica Pompei incisi in rame*. François Morel, Guglielmo Morghen, Camillo Paderni, Raffaele Aloja, Giovanni Battista Casanova, and Domenico Casanova, *Gli ornati delle pareti ed i pavimenti delle stanze dell'antica Pompei incisi in rame*. (Pompei, Girolamo. 1808), Tav. 38; François Morel, Guglielmo Morghen, Camillo Paderni, Raffaele Aloja, Giovanni Battista Casanova, and Domenico Casanova, *Gli ornati delle pareti ed i Pavimenti delle stanze dell'antica Pompei, incisi in rame* (Napoli: Nella Stamperia reale, 1828), Tav. 80. In the 1828 edition the mosaic is described as, "Bello è il pavimento riportato sotto questo numero. Nel mezzo sembra espresso un seno di mare con pesci guizzanti e mostri marini, chiuso dalle mura di una Città turrita ai quattro angoli, e con quattro porte dischiuse in mezzo de' quattro lati. Alla parte esterna di uno di questi leggesi in caratteri cubitali il cordiale motto SALVE, motto che ha dato nome all'abitazione del Salve tanto rinomata in Pompei, per essersi in quella il pavimento rinvenuto. Incisione del Cesarano." Morel, Morghen, Paderni, Aloja, Casanova, and Casanova, *Gli ornati delle pareti ed i pavimenti delle stanze dell'antica Pompei incisi in rame*, 1828, 7. The plate was also published in Fausto Niccolini and Felice Niccolini, "Descrizione Generale," in *CMPDD* Vol.2, 1-80, I-VI, Tav. I-XCVI. Eds. Fausto Niccolini and Felice Niccolini (Napoli: Fausto Niccolini, 1862), Tav. V. Note that the "SALVE" inscription is erroneously attributed to the Casa del Salve, apparently famous in the early 19th century. However, the two mosaics are different, and the location of the Casa del Salve mosaic is unknown. Gardelli and Ariano, "Two Lesser-Known Mosaic Floors from the 18th-Century Excavations of Villa Arianna at Stabia," 141.

[847] Instead of being trapezoidal in shape, the original mosaic would have been rectangular to fit within the recessed rectangular area between the front threshold and atrium of the Villa Arianna.

[848] Gardelli and Ariano, "Two Lesser-Known Mosaic Floors from the 18th-Century Excavations of Villa Arianna at Stabia," 141.

"SALVE" inscription would have engaged viewers at the critical juncture between the exterior space of the portico and interior of the villa. The greetings and wishes conveyed by the inscription are likely to have reassured visitors entering the villa, communicating the duties of the homeowner as host and protector, and invoking a sense of well-being for invited guests. Through the direct address of viewers, the mosaic inscription could additionally implicate viewers in their own protection or repulsion. Physical contact with the inscription would have been necessary to enter the house, and like the Casa del Salve inscription, corporeal connection with the mosaic may have activated wishes of good health for visitors. On a more basic level, the presence of the mosaic would also have signaled a change of space, and alerted viewers to both the transitional nature of the passageway, and the oncoming shift from exterior to interior. Therefore, as a gesture of welcome, the "SALVE" mosaic inscription at the Villa Arianna functioned as both a means of communicating information, and a protective device that could be activated by onlookers. While this is not different from the examples previously considered, it is noteworthy that similar strategies as those employed in Pompeian homes were also utilized at the seaside villa escapes of the elite.

Despite the great size and splendor of the accessible areas of the villa, the structure has not been fully excavated. A second complex exists northeast of the Villa Arianna A but has not been explored. In addition, some areas of the garden (including a pool)[849] that were located near the cliffside have been lost to landslides,[850] and a series of rooms southeast of the atrium were

[849] Recent landslides in 2008 and 2009 carried the pool and other areas over the cliff. Thomas Noble Howe, Kathryn Gleason, Ian Sutherland, and J. Sutherland, "'Stabiae', Villa Arianna: scavi e studi nel giardino del grande peristilio, 2007-2011," *Rivista di studi pompeiani* 22 (2011): 207.

[850] See also Luciana Orlando, "Instability Analysis of the Villa Arianna Site at Castellammare di Stabia (Naples)," *Near Surface Geophysics* 10, no. 1 (2012): 89–100; Giuseppe Delmonaco, Claudio Margottini, Luciana Orlando, Daniele Spizzichino, and Claudio Margottini, "Integration of Geophysical Investigation to Landslide Analysis in the Archaeological Site of Stabiae (Italy)," in *Landslide Science and Practice. Volume 6, Risk Assessment, Management and Mitigation.* 561–68. Eds. Paolo Canuto and Kyoji Sassa (Berlin: Springer, 2013).

excavated and then reburied by the Bourbons. The latter have never been re-excavated, but are thought to include stables and agricultural space, among other rooms. As a result, a full contextual analysis of the villa is not possible. However, thanks to the accessibility and preservation of the villa's entryway and atrium, a few remarks about the experience of entering the villa are possible.

When visiting the Villa Arianna today it is still possible to approach the atrium from the *vestibulum*. The *vestibulum* is rather short and leads directly into the large atrium of the villa. Simple frescoes with a black dado, red primary zone, white secondary zone, and small ornamental motifs decorate the walls of the *vestibulum* and carry no defensive associations. Ancient viewers would have been able to look through the atrium, past the spacious *tablinum*, and over the edge of the cliff to the panorama of the Bay of Naples from the front threshold [Fig. V.23]. Standing on the threshold, then, would certainly have been an impressive experience. A visitor was first greeted by the "SALVE" mosaic inscription and simple wall frescoes in the *vestibulum*. Starkly different in color from the mosaic, the wall frescoes would have framed and drawn attention to the inscription and its message. Having seen the mosaic, a visitor might then look through the atrium and *tablinum* to the glorious view beyond. From its position in the *vestibulum*, the "SALVE" inscription would thus have moderated a viewer's experience of standing on the threshold by welcoming visitors while enriching the splendor of the entryway.

Yet, considering this impressive experience, the *vestibulum* and its accompanying mosaic were likely not the first elements a visitor would have encountered when approaching the villa. If approaching from the northwest cliffside, visitors would first have reached the terraces and the rooms of the house along the edge of the cliff. Those coming from the southeast would have encountered the stables, various rooms, and a porticoed courtyard before reaching the

vestibulum. This is likely to have been a somewhat disorienting experience for first time visitors unfamiliar with the layout of the villa. Considering this sense of disorientation, the mosaic inscription would have oriented guests to the front entrance of the villa, simultaneously offering information about the plan of the structure, signaling the primary public areas, and indicating appropriate behavior, while offering a protective message of welcome. Therefore, like the Casa del Salve, the Villa Arianna "SALVE" inscription was dynamic, informative, efficacious, and suited to its surroundings.

The positive and powerful mosaic greetings that decorated the entryways of the Casa del Salve, Villa Arianna, Casa del Fauno, and House V.3.10 present but one of many approaches to the use of mosaic inscriptions in Pompeian entryways. By communicating well-wishes of greeting and good health the inscriptions draw on visual tools of address and strategies of corporeal interaction to offer protection at vulnerable locations. These mosaics exist at once as visual and textual forms, and their presence within the entryways of Campanian homes demonstrates their efficacy as both word and image, a characteristic true of all the mosaic inscriptions investigated in this chapter.

Welcoming Fortune: An Auspicious Inscription at the Domus Vedi Sirici

Beyond greetings of welcome or good health, mosaic inscriptions within private homes could also communicate wishes for economic prosperity. One example from *Regio* VII in Pompeii displays an inscription which invoked good fortune and material wealth. This epigraph draws on similar ideas and methods of address as those discussed in the previous section, but is overall concerned with the well-being that can result from monetary gain rather than more general greetings.

The Domus Vedi Sirici [VII.1.47][851] is located on the east side of the Vicolo del Lupanare in Pompeii. Two cube-shaped limestone capitals demarcate the entrance on either side of the front doorway[852] and give way to a long, narrow *fauces*[853] [Fig. V.24].[854] A short ramp leads to the threshold of the front door, and although it is only partially intact today, it would have occupied the entire width of the sidewalk in front of the house. Once inside the structure, the long *fauces* slopes slightly upward toward the interior of the home [Fig. V.25].[855] The walls

[851] So-called because a seal reading "SIRICI", accompanied by an *amphora*, was discovered in the *tablinum* of the house, in addition to a gold ring with a portrait of a man. A graffito found outside the house also mentions the name "SIRICUM" [CIL IV 805] and would seem to confirm that someone named Siricus owned the house. Fausto Niccolini and Felice Niccolini, "Casa di Sirico," *CMPDD* Vol.1, 1-6, Tav. I-II. Eds. Fausto Niccolini and Felice Niccolini (Napoli: Fausto Niccolini, 1854), 1, Tav. I; Giuseppe Fiorelli, "Descrizione dei nuovi scavi," in *Giornale degli scavi di Pompei,* 2-24. Eds. Giuseppe Fiorelli and Scuola archeologica di Pompei (Napoli: Tip. italiana nel Liceo V. Emanuele, 1862) 3, 4, 10. For a list of objects found within the house see Niccolini and Niccolini, "Casa di Sirico," 5-6.

[852] Niccolini and Niccolini describe the door as wooden with two *valvae*, an iron lock, and bronze studs. They record that a plaster cast was made of the door, however, the location of this cast is currently unknown. Niccolini and Niccolini, "Casa di Sirico," 1; Fiorelli, "Descrizione dei nuovi scavi," 4.

[853] The house was first excavated in 1851 by Giuseppe Fiorelli. For early descriptions of the house see Fiorelli, "Descrizione dei nuovi scavi," 2-24; Giulio Minervini, "Ottobre 1852," *Bullettino archeologico napoletano.* Nuova Serie 1, 8 (1852): 60-2; Giulio Minervini, "Novembre 1852," *Bullettino archeologico napoletano.* Nuova Serie 1, 9 (1852): 71-2; Giulio Minervini, "Novembre 1852," *Bullettino archeologico napoletano* Nuova Serie 1, 10 (1852): 73-5; Giulio Minervini, "Dicembre 1852," *Bullettino archeologico napoletano.* Nuova Serie 1, 12 (1852): 89; Giulio Minervini, "Marzo 1853," *Bullettino archeologico napoletano.* Nuova Serie 1, 18 (1853): 140-2; Niccolini and Niccolini, "Casa di Sirico," 1-6; Fausto Niccolini and Felice Niccolini, "Strada Stabiana Casa Numero 57," in *CMPDD* Vol.1, 1-6, Tav. I-III. Eds. Fausto Niccolini and Felice Niccolini (Napoli: Fausto Niccolini, 1854), 1-6, Tav. I-III; Fiorelli, *PAH* II, 521-33; Thomas Henry Dyer, *The Ruins of Pompeii: A Series of Eighteen Photographic Views: With an Account of the Destruction of the City, and a Description of the Most Interesting Remains.* Nineteenth Century Collections Online (Ncco): Photography: The World through the Lens (London: Bell and Daldy, 1867), 81; Breton, *Pompeia décrite et dessinée*, 445-50; Johannes Overbeck, *Pompeji: in seinem gebäuden, atherümern und kunstwerken für kunst-und alterthumsfreunde*. 3, Abermals durchgearb. u. verm. Aufled. Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann, 1875), 320-5; Boyce, "Corpus of the Lararia of Pompeii," 60, Nos. 235-239; Pernice, *Pavimente und Figürliche Mosaiken. Die Hellenistische Kunst in Pompeji,* Bd. 6, 113, 146; Amedeo Maiuri, *L'ultima fase edilizia di Pompei*. Italia Romana. Campania Romana, 2 (Spoleto: Istituto di studi romani, 1942), 187; Schefold, *Die Wände Pompejis: Topographisches Verzeichnis der Bildmotive,*103-6; Della Corte, *Case ed Abitanti di Pompei*, 9-11, 207-8; Irene Bragantini, Mariette De Vos, and Franca Parise Badoni, *PPP* Vol. III (Roma: Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali, Istituto centrale per il catalogo e la documentazione, 1986), 28-40; Thomas Fröhlich, *Lararien und Fassadenbilder in den Vesuvstädten: Untersuchungen zur 'volkstümlichen' Pompejanischen Malerei*. Mitteilungen des Deutschen Archäologischen Instituts, Roemische Abteilung. Ergänzungsheft, Bullettino dell'istituto Archeologico Germanico, Sezione Romana. Supplemento, 32. Mainz: P. Von Zabern, 1991), 43-4, 282-3, No. L79; Eschebach and Müller-Trollius, *Gebäudeverzeichnis und Stadtplan der antiken Stadt Pompeji*, 246-7; Irene Bragantini, "VII 1, 25.47 Casa di Sirico," in *PPM,* Vol. VI, 228-353. Eds. G. P. Carratelli and I. Baldassarre (Roma: Istituto della enciclopedia italiana, 1994).

[854] Graffiti associated with the house include CIL IV 805; CIL IV 2302; CIL IV 2303.

[855] This slope Niccolini and Niccolini attribute to the existence of a drain channel under the floor, which is confirmed by the existence of two drains in the floor covered with marble caps. Niccolini and Niccolini, "Casa di Sirico," 1.

of the passageway are plastered, but unadorned, and early excavators recorded that the walls were plain white when discovered.[856] The end of the *fauces* is decorated with rows of white diamond-shaped *tesserae*, and the mosaic epigraph "SALVE LUCRU(M)" [857] [CIL X 874][858] appears at the end of the *fauces* [Fig. V.26].[859] A short band of swastika meander formerly appeared above the mosaic inscription, separated by a thin horizontal line [Fig. V.27]. This marked the threshold between the atrium and *fauces*. As a result of damage, the meander band today appears as five fragmentary horizontal lines.

Blocks for door posts occupy either side of the threshold between the atrium and entrance hallway, and door cuttings appear at various points within the *fauces*. Cuttings on the threshold, two bronze *cardines* on either side of the doorway, and a large doorpost cutting on the left side of the entranceway indicate a complex, perhaps multi-phase, system of doors and partitions. A room is located on the right side of the *fauces*, but because it is too large to have been a *cella ostiaria* its function is unclear.[860] A second large room that housed a staircase to the former

[856] Niccolini and Niccolini, "Casa di Sirico," 1; Fiorelli, "Descrizione dei nuovi scavi," 5.
[857] The "M" is missing in the inscription, but the full word would have been *lucrum.* Roman viewers would have known to supply the m. Alison Cooley and M. G. L Cooley, *Pompeii: A Sourcebook* (London: Routledge, 2004) 168; de Vos, "Pavimenti e mosaici," 165; Curtis, "A Personalized Floor Mosaic from Pompeii," 565.
[858] Rizzo, "Limina: la decorazione figurata delle soglie musive a Pompei," 105; Robert I. Curtis, "Product Identification and Advertising on Roman Commercial Amphorae," *Ancient Society* 15/17 (1984): 213; Della Corte, *Case ed abitanti di Pompei,* 148; Allan Chester Johnson, *An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome. Volume V: Rome and Italy of the Empire*. Edited by Tenney Frank (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1940), 255; Mackenzie and Pisa, *Pompeii*, 53.
[859] A similar inscription decorates the western edge of the *impluvium* of the so-called Casa Lucrum Gaudium [VI.14.39], also in Pompeii. The inscription translates to "profit, joy," and would have faced viewers entering through the *fauces* of the house. Cooley and Cooley, *Pompeii: A Sourcebook,* 196. The epigraph would have functioned in a similar manner as that from the Domus Vedi Sirici, to welcome both visitors and economic gain. See Della Corte, *Case ed abitanti di Pompei,* 84, 148; August Mau and Istituto di Corrispondenza Archeologica, *Bullettino dell'Istituto di corrispondenza archeologica: 1878* (Italy, 1878), 93-4; de Vos, "Pavimenti e mosaici," 165. In addition, Fiorelli mentions that another inscription of "LUCRU ACIPE" [CIL X 876] was found within House VII.3.6 in Pompeii. No sign of this mosaic inscription is visible today. Fiorelli, "Descrizione dei nuovi scavi," 6.
[860] Niccolini and Niccolini describe the decoration of this room as white frescoes with red lines populated with birds, vases, garlands, horns, and faux architecture. Niccolini and Niccolini, "Casa di Sirico," 1. They also note that some bronze nails were discovered on the floor of this room, which they believe fell from the entablature boards when the second floor collapsed. Niccolini and Niccolini, "Casa di Sirico," 1.

upper level lies to the left of the *fauces*. This room was closed with double doors and was decorated with frescoes depicting the attributes of various deities.[861] The presence of a large lava block in the southwest corner of the atrium[862] reveals that it formerly housed a strongbox. The atrium is also home to a fine marble *impluvium* and table. Various other rooms, including a *tablinum*,[863] *cubiculum*,[864] *triclinium*, and large exedra[865] surround the atrium.

The Domus Vedi Sirici is connected to a second house, the Casa dei Principi di Russia [VII.1.25],[866] which together form one large and irregularly shaped structure [Fig. V.28].[867] Entrance VII.1.47 would have seen frequent use, owing to its grand façade and visual similarity

[861] Fiorelli, "Descrizione dei nuovi scavi," 11.
[862] The walls of the atrium were also covered with rough white plaster. Niccolini and Niccolini, "Casa di Sirico," 1; Fiorelli, "Descrizione dei nuovi scavi," 7. Various objects were discovered within a cupboard in the atrium, including lamps and a large plate. Niccolini and Niccolini, "Casa di Sirico," 5-6; Fiorelli, "Descrizione dei nuovi scavi," 6-8, 10-11, 17, 20-21, 23.
[863] A dog skeleton was found inside the *tablinum*, along with items Niccolini and Niccolini proposed were dropped by a maid in haste during the eruption. Niccolini and Niccolini, "Casa di Sirico," 2. See also Fiorelli, "Descrizione dei nuovi scavi," 10.
[864] Niccolini and Niccolini believed servants slept in the *cubiculum*, as the decoration of the room was very simple. Niccolini and Niccolini, "Casa di Sirico," 2.
[865] The exedra was originally closed by large wooden doors, and its walls were decorated with paintings of Eroti; faux architecture; muses; Neptune and Apollo watching the construction of the walls of Troy; Vulcan and Thetis; Drunken Hercules, three women (one possibly Omphale), and Bacchus with fauns. For a full description see Fiorelli, "Descrizione dei nuovi scavi,"12-7; Dyer, *The Ruins of Pompeii: A Series of Eighteen Photographic Views: With an Account of the Destruction of the City, and a Description of the Most Interesting Remains,* 81; Wolfgang Helbig, *Wandgemälde der vom Vesuv Verschütteten Städte Campaniens* (Leipzig, 1868), 860.
[866] Excavated starting in 1852. Breton, *Pompeia décrite et dessinée*, 450. For a description of the Casa dei Principi di Russia, see Niccolini and Niccolini, "Strada Stabiana Casa Numero 57," in *CMPDD* 1-6, Tav. I-III; Breton, *Pompeia décrite et dessinée*, 450-2. The house included a small *lararium* painted with two snakes and a small niche. Five skeletons were also discovered inside the house, and the various frescoes found within included one from the exedra depicting Alcmaeon killing Eriphyle, now in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Inv. 8994. Wolfgang Zahn, *Die schönsten Ornamente und merkwürdigsten Gemälde aus Pompeji, Herkulanum und Stabiae: III* (Berlin: Reimer, 1852), Taf. 77; Umberto Pappalardo and Mario Grimaldi, *La descrizione di Pompei per Giuseppe Fiorelli, 1875* (Napoli: Massa Ed, 2001), 76.
[867] The original structure was constructed in the late Republican period, the houses were joined in the Augustan era. Bragantini, "VII 1, 25.47 Casa di Sirico," 229. In fact, a third entrance to the house is located at VII.1.46 and contains a latrine and various small rooms. This would have been a secondary point of access to the house. It is worth noting that the oven in the kitchen was decorated with a large stone phallus, which, according to Fiorelli, was a "segno di propizia e desiderata abbondanza." Fiorelli, "Descrizione dei nuovi scavi," 23. The presence of the phallus may demonstrate an overarching concern for protecting vulnerable spaces throughout the house. The *triclinium* was formerly decorated with painting of Aeneas (now in the Museo Archeologico Nazionale di Napoli, Inv. 9009), along with a two of other mythological paintings depicting a nude hero with women and a hermaphrodite surrounded by nymphs. Niccolini and Niccolini, "Casa di Sirico," 3-4; Fiorelli, "Descrizione dei nuovi scavi," 17-20.

to other primary entryways. It is likely a visitor's direction of approach and relationship with the inhabitants dictated which entrance was used.

Returning to the mosaic inscription, the "SALVE LUCRU(M)" message that decorates the threshold between the *fauces* and atrium of the Domus Vedi Sirici is at once bold, fortuitous, and welcoming. The epigraph, which means "hail, profit,"[868] concurrently greets guests and the possibility of profit and wealth. While the text appears straightforward at first glance, it is unclear exactly who was meant to benefit from the message. For one, the inscription may have been intended to bestow wishes of monetary prosperity on the Domus Vedi Sirici. At the same time, it may have been utilized to communicate hopes for the wealth of viewers, visitors, and passersby.

In fact, if the owner of the Domus Vedi Sirici conducted their business from the *tablinum* of VII.1.47, the inscription may also have functioned to welcome prosperous business partners, and to assure clients and partners of the wealth that would result from working with the inhabitants of the house. In all likelihood, the epigraph functioned in all three ways, greeting guests with a message of future profit and indicating the profitability of the household's business ventures, while also welcoming profit into the house at all times.[869] There is no doubt the inscription also worked in dialogue with the strongbox in the atrium, where the chest represented a visual and physical demonstration of financial success. As such, the epigraph made an unambiguous statement about the prosperity of the household while inviting others to similarly benefit.

[868] Cooley and Cooley, *Pompeii: A Sourcebook*, 168; Dunbabin, *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World*, 58. Bragantini writes that the phrase is in the formula of a wish. Bragantini, "VII 1, 25.47 Casa di Sirico," 230.
[869] Marcel Brion has even suggested the inscription was meant also as a direct greeting to profit or money itself. Marcel Brion, *Pompeii and Herculaneum, the Glory and the Grief* (London: Elek Books Ltd., 1960), 122.

The turn from messages of welcome and good health at the Casa del Salve to those of financial prosperity at the Domus Vedi Sirici reveals another dimension of mosaic texts. Not only could mosaic epigraphs within a doorway bring about good wishes, but they might also manifest financial success. The message of financial gain in the *fauces* would have set the tone for those entering the house, making the focus on business and prosperity immediately clear. Such a positive message is likely to have encouraged otherwise hesitant guests to enter the Domus Vedi Sirici, or even drum up business from hopeful collaborators.

The inscription could also have generated good fortune in a literal sense— doubling as a message of monetary success and of one's well-being more generally. Indeed, the ideas of well-being and financial gain may even have been linked in the Roman mindset, as those with more wealth often lived longer and healthier lives than those without. The inclusion of the word "SALVE" may similarly have enacted the manifestation of personal and corporeal well-being. Finally, if addressing spirit viewers, the "SALVE LUCRU(M)" inscription would have made clear which unseen forces were welcomed within the house, and which were not, perhaps deterring malign spirits from entering. These functions of the "SALVE LUCRU(M)" inscription would have rendered the epigraph efficacious, by enacting wishes for gain, while addressing a variety of audiences and scenarios. Whereas the Domus Vedi Sirici inscription is not accompanied by any charged symbols, such as the *tabula ansata* of the Casa del Salve mosaic, the "SALVE LUCRU(M)" message would nevertheless have offered a form of visual protection and guidance through a vulnerable area within the home.

Considering the notions of well-being and prosperity communicated by the "SALVE LUCRU(M)" inscription, an ancient Roman visitor's experience of viewing the epigraph would have emphasized the messages conveyed by the mosaic. It is possible to see the inscription if

standing on the sidewalk before the threshold of the Domus Vedi Sirici even today. Although the letters are small and light-colored, the gentle upward slope of the *fauces* floor allows an unobstructed view of the epigraph [Fig. V.29]. And, even if the exact words of the inscription were not immediately visible to a guest, the knowledge that an inscription was present on the threshold may have been enough to temporarily assuage the anxieties of visitors.

The *fauces* of the Domus Vedi Sirici is roughly nine meters long and may have presented a daunting journey for guests. As a result of this length, the inscription would have become clearer and larger to guests as they traversed the passageway. By the time a visitor reached the threshold between the *fauces* and atrium, the message of prosperity would have been long known to literate viewers.[870] Even viewers with more limited literacies may have recognized the word "SALVE". Then, having reached the threshold, a viewer could easily have seen the strongbox in the corner of the atrium, which reinforced the inscription's message of prosperity. A clear view of the *tablinum* would have been possible when looking across the atrium. Although this is true of many ancient Campanian houses, the visual and spatial interplay between the atrium threshold, inscription, and *tablinum* would have aligned the message of financial gain with the "office" of the homeowner. This dynamic interaction of approach and inevitable contact between viewer and mosaic epigraph would have helped animate the inscription. What is more, as with the "SALVE" inscription, if the epigraph was read aloud, the sentiment communicated by the inscription may have been activated through a visual and verbal exchange between viewer and inscription, which in turn complemented the experience of entering the home.

[870] Indeed, Brion describes the arresting experience of viewing the mosaic, writing that the message would "stop a visitor short and fix his attention." Brion, *Pompeii and Herculaneum, the Glory and the Grief*, 121.

Outside the Domus Vedi Sirici, the various urban and architectural features that surround the house likely contributed to the perceived need for the "SALVE LUCRU(M)" inscription [Fig. V.30]. For one, the house shares a wall with the large Terme Stabiane, which is located immediately to the southeast of the structure. The shared wall is connected to one of the bath's many points of entry, in this case a corridor leading to the women's baths [VII.1.48]. Such proximity to a major public building would have ensured that many pedestrians passed in front of the Domus Vedi Sirici on their way to or from the baths. As we have seen, higher concentrations of traffic were accompanied by increased opportunities for danger,[871] and this would also have been true of the Domus Vedi Sirici. On a more ephemeral front, baths themselves were considered dangerous locales.[872] In addition to the many vulnerabilities faced while at the baths, proximity to a potentially dangerous space would have increased the perceived vulnerability of the Domus Vedi Sirici.

In addition to the nearby public baths, two other features are located close to the Domus Vedi Sirici.[873] The first is a large *lararium* painting that lies directly across from the doorway of the Domus Vedi Sirici. Located on the west side of the Vicolo del Lupanare, the fresco decorates the exterior wall of a small *caupona* (inn or tavern) at VII.11.13. The painting is very long and occupies the entire length of the exterior wall. Despite having suffered some damage and weathering, two large yellow serpents and a central altar are still visible against a red background [Fig. V.31]. According to Fiorelli's description of the painting, one female and one male snake

[871] In addition to the baths themselves, many shops are located on the exterior of the bath structure. This would no doubt have encouraged additional traffic.
[872] Dunbabin, "*Baiarum Grata Voluptas*: Pleasures and Dangers of the Baths," 35-6.
[873] A *cella meretricia*, or single room used by sex workers, is also located across the street from the Domus Vedi Sirici at VII.11.12.

flanked a central altar, on which two pinecones and two eggs were laid.[874] *Lararia* and public shrines were considered sacred areas within Roman cities, and the presence of a public painted shrine along the Vicolo del Lupanare means that either the location was considered particularly sacred, or that it required additional protection from the gods and local spirits.

Furthermore, the great size of the painting indicates that extraordinary measures were considered necessary at this particular locale. It is impossible to know the exact motivation for the installation of the painting, but the presence of the fresco indicates the particularly charged nature of this stretch of the Vicolo del Lupanare. This sense of vulnerability or sanctity likely extended to the entrance of the Domus Vedi Sirici. Even if it did not, the fact that the painted shrine is located just steps away from the house and visible from the front door suggests that additional protective measures, like the "SALVE LUCRU(M)" inscription, may have been deemed necessary for the house.

The third and final feature is the so-called *lupanar* [VII.12.18], the only known purpose-built brothel in Pompeii.[875] The *lupanar* is located at the intersection of the Vicolo del Lupanare and the Vicolo del Balcone Pensile, just northwest of the Domus Vedi Sirici. Although it was considered acceptable for men to visit sex workers,[876] sex workers themselves were identified as *infame*, or those lacking legal or social status.[877] The presence of a large group of *infame* may have brought danger to this area. Furthermore, perceived disagreeable activities and individuals

[874] Two inscriptions also formerly accompanied the painting. Pappalardo and Fiorelli, *La descrizione di Pompei per Giuseppe Fiorelli*, 110.
[875] Sarah Levin-Richardson, *The Brothel of Pompeii: Sex, Class, and Gender at the Margins of Roman Society* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 1.
[876] Indeed, visiting a sex worker was considered a better alternative to marital infidelity. Hor. *Sat.* 1.2.31-5.
[877] Thomas A. J. McGinn, *Prostitution, Sexuality, and the Law in Ancient Rome* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 65-9; Catherine H. Edwards, "Unspeakable professions: public performance and prostitution in ancient Rome," in *Roman Sexualities*, 66-95. Eds. Judith P. Hallett and Marilyn B. Skinner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 67; Sarah Bond, "Altering Infamy: Status, Violence, and Civic Exclusion in Late Antiquity," *Classical Antiquity* 33, no. 1 (2014): 6; William Smith, *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities.* 2nd Edition (Boston: Little, Brown, 1870) 634-6.

were often associated with sex workers and brothels. Due to close proximity to the brothel, which is likely to have been a busy place with frequent turnaround, the owners of the Domus Vedi Sirici may have felt their home required the protective measure of the mosaic inscription. Thus, the interior features of the Domus Vedi Sirici, the nearby baths, proximity of the large *lararium* painting, and existence of the nearby *lupanar* may have driven the presence of the "SALVE LUCRU(M)" inscription within the entrance corridor of the home.

By welcoming profit, the "SALVE LUCRU(M)" inscription within the Domus Vedi Sirici worked to imbue the entryway of the home with a sense of protection and prosperity. The messages of financial gain communicated by the inscription are auspicious and represent a function of efficacious inscriptions beyond the model of direct viewer address and greeting. At the same time, the epigraph demonstrates the diversity of approaches to the idea of greeting or well-being. Enlivened through physical, visual, and verbal interactions with viewers, the inscription was tied to both its position at the end of a long passageway, and the surroundings of the Domus Vedi Sirici. "SALVE LUCRU(M)" was thus more than just a reflection of its patron's interest in monetary success. Rather, it was a powerful and complex response to architectural, spatial, and geographic concerns and constraints.

Messages of Warning and Intimidation:

The final category of mosaic inscription diverges from the more positive messages previously examined. Inscriptions of warning appear at the entryways of the Casa del Poeta Tragico and Casa del Giardino d'Ercole in Pompeii, where they caution viewers to be mindful of the dangers of the passageway and discourage risky behavior. Both the Casa del Poeta Tragico and Casa del Giardino d'Ercole inscriptions utilize similar visual, spatial, and ideological tools to ensure the efficacy of the epigraphs and guard the passageways.

"Beware of the Dog" at the Casa del Poeta Tragico

Among the most famous images from all of Pompeii is the so-called "Cave Canem" mosaic from the Casa del Poeta Tragico [VI.8.5] [Fig. V.32].[878] Bold, startling, and even humorous, the mosaic depicts a large dog with the inscription "CAVE CANEM" below.[879] The mosaic appears just beyond the front entrance threshold of the Casa del Poeta Tragico, and

[878] Dated to the Imperial era, restored and redecorated after the earthquake in 62 CE. Francesca Parise Badoni and Federica Narciso, "VI 8, 3.5 Casa del Poeta Tragico," in *PPM,* Vol. IV, 527-603. Eds. G. P. Carratelli and I. Baldassarre (Roma: Istituto della enciclopedia italiana, 1991) 527. The house was excavated between October 1824 and June 1825. Minervini identified the threshold stone as peperino, and he noted a bronze *cardini* at the front door of the house. Giulio Minervini, "Descrizione nella casa detta del poeta tragico in Pompei," *Bullettino archeologico napoletano* 141 (1858): 132-3. See also Gugliemo Bechi, "Casa Omerica," in *Real museo borbonico* Vol. II,1-12, Tav. LV. Eds. Museo nazionale di Napoli and Antonio Niccolini (Napoli: Stamperia reale, 1825), 1-12, Tav. LV; Gugliemo Bechi, "Mosaici. Cane, corago. *Direttore di palco scenico*," in *Real museo borbonico* Vol. II, 1-3, Tav. LVI. Eds. Museo nazionale di Napoli and Antonio Niccolini (Napoli: Stamperia reale, 1825), 1-3, Tav. LVI; Gugliemo Bechi, "Agamennone Conduce sulla Nave Criseide per Rimandarla a Suo Padre Crise. *Antico dipinto di Pompei alto palmi 5, largo 3*," in *Real museo borbonico* Vol. II, 1-3, Tav. LVII. Eds. Museo nazionale di Napoli and Antonio Niccolini (Napoli: Stamperia reale, 1825), 1-3, Tav. LVII; Gugliemo Bechi, "Achille dà Briseide agli Araldi di Agamennone. *Antico dipinto di Pompei alto palmi 5, largo palmi 4, once 8*," in *Real museo borbonico* Vol. II, 1-3, Tav. LVIII. Eds. Museo nazionale di Napoli and Antonio Niccolini (Napoli: Stamperia reale, 1825), 1-3, Tav. LVIII; Gugliemo Bechi, "Giunone che va a Giove sul Monte Ida. *Antico dipinto di Pompei alto palmi 5 once 2, largo palmi 4, once 11*," in *Real museo borbonico* Vol. II, 1-8, Tav. LIX. Eds. Museo nazionale di Napoli and Antonio Niccolini (Napoli: Stamperia reale, 1825), 1-8, Tav. LIX; Carlo Bonucci, *Pompei descritta* (Napoli: Raffaele Miranda, 1827), 112-124; D. Raoul-Rochette, *Choix de monuments inédits. 1ère partie: Maison du Poète Tragique à Pompéi* (Paris, 1828); William Gell and John P. Gandy, *Pompeiana: The Topography, Edifices and Ornaments of Pompeii*. Vol. I. 3d ed. (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1852) 142-78; Gell and Gandy, P*ompeiana: The Topography, Edifices and Ornaments of Pompeii*. Vol. II, 95-120, 167-8, 174; Fausto Niccolini and Felice Niccolini, "Casa detta del Poeta Tragico," in *LCPDD* Vol.1, 1-10, Tav. I-VI. Eds. Fausto Niccolini and Felice Niccolini (Napoli: Fausto Niccolini, 1854), 1-10, Tav. I-VI; Giulio Minervini, "Descrizione nella casa detta del poeta tragico in Pompei," *Bullettino archeologico napoletano* 144 (1858): 153-8; Giulio Minervini, "Descrizione nella casa detta del poeta tragico in Pompei," *Bullettino archeologico napoletano* 146 (1858): 169-72; Fiorelli, *PAH* II, 57-61, 69, 71, 75; Fiorelli, *PAH* III, 116-41; Breton, *Pompeia décrite et dessinée*, 316-321; Giuseppe Fiorelli, *Descrizione di Pompei*, 119-20; Overbeck, *Pompeji: in seinem gebäuden, atherümern und kunstwerken für kunst- und alterthumsfreunde*, 285-9; Mau and Kelsey, *Pompeii: Its Life and Art*, 313-21; Ludwig Curtius, *Die Wandmalerei Pompejis: Eine Einführung in ihr Verständnis* (Leipzig: E.A. Seemann, 1929), 36-8; Maiuri, *L'ultima fase edilizia di Pompei*, 100-1; Schefold, *Die Wände Pompejis: Topographisches Verzeichnis der Bildmotive*,103-6 Valeria Sampaolo, "VI 8, 3 Casa del Poeta Tragico," in *PPP*, Vol. II. 164-74. Eds. Irene Bragantini, Mariette De Vos, Franca Parise Badoni, and Valeria Sampaolo (Roma: Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali, Istituto centrale per il catalogo e la documentazione, 1983); Eschebach and Müller-Trollius, *Gebäudeverzeichnis und Stadtplan der antiken Stadt Pompeji,* 183-4; Parise Badoni and Narciso, "VI 8, 3.5 Casa del Poeta Tragico," 527-603. For objects found within the house, see Minervini, "Descrizione nella casa detta del poeta tragico in Pompei," 171-172. Some have concluded a jeweler lived in the house, but it is impossible to say for certain. Gell and Gandy, P*ompeiana: The Topography, Edifices and Ornaments of Pompeii*. Vol. I, 150. Gell also notes that the house door was hung on bronze pivots. Gell and Gandy, *Pompeiana: The Topography, Edifices and Ornaments of Pompeii*. Vol. I, 144. The house was made famous as the setting of E. Bulwer Lytton's *The Last Days of Pompeii* (1834).

[879] Rizzo, "Limina: La decorazione figurata delle soglie musive a Pompei," 100; Della Corte, *Case ed abitanti di Pompei*, 148; Mackenzie and Pisa, *Pompeii*, 53.

depicts a ferocious black dog with white spots in black, white, and red mosaic *tesserae* [Fig. V.33]. [880] The dog wears a collar connected to a chain and is portrayed as though it might attack viewers. It even seems as if to bark through its open mouth. Just below the paws of the dog, the message "CAVE CANEM," or "beware of the dog" greets those who approach the house.[881]

The entrance corridor in which the mosaic is located is remarkably long,[882] and continues well past the canine mosaic. Fourth Style frescoes decorate the walls of the corridor, the floor of which is paved in black and white mosaic.[883] Two shops flank the front entrance of the Casa del Poeta Tragico, both connected to the house through a shared door. Inside the house, the large atrium is surrounded by a *tablinum*, *cubicula*, and an *ala*, and a kitchen and *triclinium* occupy the northeast wing of the structure [Fig. V.34]. A peristyle garden with an *aedicula* niche lies at the far back of the house. Vivid mythological paintings and mosaics decorated the interior of the home, most of which have been moved to museums.[884]

Overall, the house is large and sumptuously decorated, and the entryway mosaic was just one component of the decorative program. And yet, the Cave Canem mosaic would have been the first (and last) thing a guest encountered when entering or exiting the home. Not only would the mosaic have set the tone, but it would also have reminded visitors of the dangers inherent

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[880] Mau notes that the mosaic was removed and housed in the Museo Nazionale Archeologico di Napoli for many years before it was returned to Pompeii in the late 19th century. Mau, *Pompeii: Its Life and Art*, 315. See also Blake, "The Pavements of the Roman Buildings of the Republic and Early Empire," 122. More recently, the mosaic was restored in 2014. Fabio Galeandro, "Pompei scavi Casa del Poeta Tragico (Vi 8, 5)," *Rivista di studi pompeiani* 26-27 (2015): 127. For more on the restoration of the house and mosaic, Emidio De Albentiis, "Archeologia e restauri di epoca moderna: un'indagine - campione nell'Insula' VI, 8 di Pompei," *Rivista di studi sompeiani* 9 (1998): 128-31.

[881] Although the Casa del Poeta Tragico mosaic is the only extant example of a dog mosaic paired with the warning "CAVE CANEM", such an image may have been a trope within Roman visual culture.

[882] The passageway is roughly 6 meters long.

[883] An 1825 painting by Giuseppe Marsigli preserves some of the original elements of the fresco, which includes a red dado with ferns, candelabra, and garlands; yellow panels with central medallions, putti, and faux architecture in the primary zone; fragments of small vignettes in the secondary zone; and intermittent columns that span all zones.

[884] These include Inv. 9986; 9112; 9559; 9105; 9108; 9026; 9027. See Bettina Bergmann, "The Roman House as Memory Theater: The House of the Tragic Poet in Pompeii," *The Art Bulletin* 76, no. 2 (1994): 225-7 on the atrium paintings.

within an unfamiliar structure. Unsuspecting guests might even have been startled by the dog mosaic. Such a reaction is described by Petronius in the *Satyricon*, where the character Enclopius is met with a similar image.

> *"Ceterum ego dum omnia stupeo, paene resupinatus crura mea fregi. Ad sinistram enim intrantibus non longe ab ostiarii cella canis ingens, catena vinctus, in pariete erat pictus superque quadrata littera scriptum 'Cave canem.'"* [885]

> "I was gazing at all this, when I nearly fell backwards and broke my leg. For on the left hand as you went in, not far from the porter's office, a great dog on a chain was painted on the wall, and over him was written in large letters 'Beware of the Dog.'"

Certainly, Enclopius's over the top reaction is a satirical exaggeration like so many other aspects of the *Satyricon*, but when observing the Cave Canem mosaic, it is easy to see how viewers might momentarily mistake the mosaic dog for a real guard dog. Fierce and ready to attack, the protective qualities of the image are not difficult to imagine, setting viewers on their guard as they moved through a transitional space and disarming any unwanted guests. Leaving aside the apotropaic qualities of the dog,[886] "CAVE CANEM" is among the most straightforward of the mosaic inscriptions examined in this chapter. Paired with the mosaic dog, the inscription makes evident the potential dangers of entering the house and consequences of attacks on the home. As a result, the inscription might be understood as simply explanatory, warning viewers of the presence of a guard dog. This ostensibly straightforward nature of the epigraph may exist because the inscription accompanies, and thus explicates, a figural mosaic. However, even alone, the inscription could have easily communicated the presence of a guard dog.

[885] Petron. *Sat.* 29. On this incident, Petronius, and the painted dog, see Paul Veyne, "Cave Canem," *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire* 75, no. 1 (1963): 59–66.
[886] Although this is an important consideration, I will not examine the dog in any depth due to the epigraphic focus in this chapter. On the efficacy of animal images, see Chapter Three.

Overall, the mosaic does indeed appear to have been informative and worked to scare off any unwanted guests. The inscribed warning and depiction of a ferocious dog—especially in a structure with such a long *fauces*—would have no doubt encouraged those with malintent to reconsider any actions against the house [Fig. V.35]. But what about those invited into the Casa del Poeta Tragico? Could the inscription have provided a protective device for individuals during their journey through the passageway? Whether or not the inscription refers to an actual dog within the house or the mosaic itself is unclear,[887] but this uncertainty may have increased a viewer's sense of trepidation when entering the home. This uncertainty would have, in turn, required defensive measures for welcomed visitors.

It may even be that the word "CAVE", which can also mean "to guard against", offered a form of protection for visitors. Similar to the "SALVE" inscription at the Casa del Salve, physical contact with the "CAVE CANEM" epigraph may have activated an unseen mechanism that could guard or shield the individual. It would have been necessary to step on both the inscription and the dog when crossing the threshold, and this sense of reciprocity between text, image, and human viewer would have helped to enact the defensive and offensive protective qualities of the mosaic, notwithstanding the potentially charged nature of the word "CAVE". In this way, the Cave Canem mosaic from the Casa del Poeta Tragico warns as it protects and intimidates as it welcomes, through the tension of image, text, interior, and exterior at the threshold of the home.

[887] Roger Ling, specifically, believes the image warns viewers of the presence of a guard dog within the home. Roger Ling, *Ancient Mosaics* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), 38-9.

Warning and Welcome at the Casa del Giardino d'Ercole

The final example of this chapter is also the most unusual. It appears within the entryway of the Casa del Giardino d'Ercole [II.8.6],[888] where the words "CRAS CREDO" were once embedded within the floor in white *tesserae*.[889] The inscription was recorded by Matteo Della Corte in 1958,[890] but it disappeared in the roughly twenty years between the initial excavation of the house in 1953 and Wilhelmina Jashemski's 1971 excavations of the garden.[891] The entrance of the house is marked by a low step and medium-length entrance corridor, with no extant façade decoration [Fig. V.36].[892] Past the entrance corridor there is a small rectangular front room and two *cubicula* on the southwestern side of the structure [Fig. V.37]. Moving further into the house, there is a long, narrow hallway. Along the left side of the hallway are three rooms of

[888] Excavated 1953-4, 1971-3 and 1984, restored 1988, Arnold De Vos, "II 8, 6," in *PPM*, Vol. III, 325-8. Eds. G. P. Carratelli and I. Baldassarre (Roma: Istituto della enciclopedia italiana, 1990), 325. Originally numbered Regio II Insula 11. Excavated by Wilhelmina Jashemski from 1971-3. On her findings see Wilhelmina F. Jashemski, *The Gardens of Pompeii: Herculaneum and the Villas Destroyed by Vesuvius* (New Rochelle, N.Y.: Caratzas Bros, 1979), 121-2, 279-88; Wilhelmina F. Jashemski, "'The Garden of Hercules at Pompeii' (II.viii.6): The Discovery of a Commercial Flower Garden," *American Journal of Archaeology* 83, no. 4 (1979): 403-11. Jashemski discovered many root cavities within the garden and even some ancient pollen. Based on pollen analysis and the discovery of an olive tree root cavity, she believed olive tree were grown in this garden. Jashemski, *The Gardens of Pompeii: Herculaneum and the Villas Destroyed by Vesuvius*, 279, 282-4. See also Matteo Della Corte, "Regione I (Latium et Campania)," in *Notizie degli scavi di antichità*, 77-180. Eds. Fiorelli, Giuseppe, Reale Accademia dei Lincei, Reale Accademia d'Italia, and Accademia nazionale dei Lincei (Roma: Tip. della R. Accademia dei Lincei, 1958), 94, 133; Mariette De Vos, "II 8, 6," in *PPP*, Vol. I, 243. Eds. Irene Bragantini, Mariette De Vos, and Franca Parise Badoni (Roma: Ministero per i beni culturali e ambientali, Istituto centrale per il catalogo e la documentazione, 1981); Halsted B. VanderPoel, García y García Laurentino, Joan McConnell, and University of Texas at Austin. *Corpus Topographicum Pompeianum*. *The Insulae of Regions I-V* (Rome: University of Texas at Austin, 1986), 56-7; Antonio De Simone, "Regio II, Insula VIII," *Rivista di studi pompeiani* 1 (1987): 156; Antonio De Simone, "Le insulae su via di Nocera. L'insula 8 della Regio II," *Rivista di studi pompeiani* 2 (1988): 185-6; Eschebach and Müller-Trollius, *Gebäudeverzeichnis und Stadtplan der antiken Stadt Pompeji*, 97; De Vos, "II 8, 6," 325-8. It appears that the house was in the process of being redecorated in 79 CE.

[889] Jashemski, *The Gardens of Pompeii: Herculaneum and the Villas Destroyed by Vesuvius*, 288; Jashemski, "'The Garden of Hercules at Pompeii' (II.viii.6): The Discovery of a Commercial Flower Garden," 410; Grete Stefani, Soprintendenza archeologica di Pompei, and Antiquarium di Boscoreale, *Cibi e sapori a Pompei e dintorni: Antiquarium di Boscoreale, 3 Febbraio-26 Giugno 2005* (Pompei [Napoli]: Flavius, 2005), 48; Della Corte, *Case ed abitanti di Pompei*, 148, FN 2; Barbara Rizzo, "Limina: la decorazione figurata delle soglie musive a Pompei," 97.

[890] Matteo Della Corte, "Regione I (Latium et Campania)," 94, 133. As Jashemski observes, no excavation reports exist for this insula. Jashemski, "'The Garden of Hercules at Pompeii' (II.viii.6): The Discovery of a Commercial Flower Garden," 403, FN 1.

[891] No record exists of the mosaic's removal. Jashemski, *The Gardens of Pompeii: Herculaneum and the Villas Destroyed by Vesuvius*, 288.

[892] A square doorstop stands in the middle of the *vestibulum*.

uncertain function, and to the right is a room connected to the rear garden and a *viridarium* (pleasure garden).[893] Some fresco has been preserved in the hallway and within two of the rooms, but these fragments have no outward prophylactic qualities.[894] A large garden lies to the southeast, with an outdoor *triclinium*, a dog house constructed with half a *dolium*,[895] and a *lararium* [Fig. V.38].[896]

Scholars disagree on whether the structure served a commercial or domestic function, but the structure appears to have had semi-public utility.[897] Jashemski believes the garden area was used to grow flowers, and that the large *lararium* and outdoor *triclinium* were enjoyed by more than just the residents of the Casa del Giardino d'Ercole.[898] She also suggests the structure was connected to the garden was a private home.[899] If Jashemski is correct, as I believe she is, the Casa del Giardino d'Ercole presents an interesting example of a space that served both public

[893] The unusual plan of the structure may in part be a result of the 62 CE earthquake. Jashemski reports finding evidence of additional rooms in the garden area, which she suggests were destroyed in the earthquake, and the garden extended into these areas. Jashemski, *The Gardens of Pompeii: Herculaneum and the Villas Destroyed by Vesuvius*, 284.

[894] The hallway paintings are divided into two registers on a white background. In the lower register are various columns, and in the upper register are rectangles imitating blocks of stone. The two rooms are painted in panels of red, yellow, and white.

[895] Gaetano Pelagalli and Carlo Giordano, "Cani e canili nell'antica Pompei," *Atti dell'Academia Pontaniana* 8 (1957): 200; Jashemski, *The Gardens of Pompeii: Herculaneum and the Villas Destroyed by Vesuvius,* 279; Jashemski, "'The Garden of Hercules at Pompeii' (II.viii.6): The Discovery of a Commercial Flower Garden," 404.

[896] This shrine is built into the east wall of the garden, and a statuette of Hercules was found near the shrine along with two votive offerings. Jashemski, *The Gardens of Pompeii: Herculaneum and the Villas Destroyed by Vesuvius,* 121, 279. Two ancient tools were also found in the garden. Jashemski, *The Gardens of Pompeii: Herculaneum and the Villas Destroyed by Vesuvius*, 282.

[897] Jashemski proposed that the garden served as a commercial flower garden, a fact supported by the discovery of many perfume bottles in the associated house. Jashemski, *The Gardens of Pompeii: Herculaneum and the Villas Destroyed by Vesuvius*, 287; Jashemski, "'The Garden of Hercules at Pompeii' (II.viii.6): The Discovery of a Commercial Flower Garden," 411. Eschebach lists II.8.6 as a domestic structure, calling it a terrace house (Reihenhaus) where flowers, perfumes, and ointments were produced. Eschebach and Müller-Trollius, *Gebäudeverzeichnis und Stadtplan der antiken Stadt Pompeji*, 97.

[898] Jashemski posits that the garden and *triclinium* were used as commercial spaces based on the objects (coins, medical instruments, rings, a strigil, and one human skeleton) found nearby, and the fact that Hercules was a patron deity of commerce. Jashemski, *The Gardens of Pompeii: Herculaneum and the Villas Destroyed by Vesuvius,* 122.

[899] Jashemski, *The Gardens of Pompeii: Herculaneum and the Villas Destroyed by Vesuvius,* 287.

and private functions. This, in turn, carries important implications for the meaning of the "CRAS CREDO" inscription in the entryway.

As a private residence connected to a commercial garden and gathering space, the house existed at the nexus between residential and commercial, public and private. Although the commercial and domestic areas of the house were separate, it would have been necessary to move through the more private areas of the house before reaching the garden. It is impossible to know whether the inhabitants of the small house were a single family or those who tended the garden, but the frequent interactions between public and private spaces would have created a domestic experience very different from stand-alone houses, and even from houses fronted by shops. This means that inhabitants, domestic visitors, business partners, and even customers encountered the inscription in the entryway of the Casa del Giardino d'Ercole when entering the structure. With such diverse audiences, the "CRAS CREDO" inscription was used to address many types of individuals, and therefore carried a polyvalent message suitable for a variety of viewers and encounters.

The "CRAS CREDO" inscription found within the entrance corridor of the Casa del Giardino d'Ercole translates roughly to "tomorrow I trust," or "I will give credit tomorrow."[900] This phrase seems a curious choice to decorate an entry corridor, but also appears to address both commercial and domestic viewers. The exact meaning behind the message is not immediately clear, but the phrase appears cautionary, communicating to viewers that the homeowner is

[900] Della Corte translates the phrase as "farò credito domani." Matteo Della Corte, "Regione I (Latium et Campania)," 94. Della Corte also recorded graffiti associated with the house, including CIL IV 10176A, B from the interior. Jashemski, *The Gardens of Pompeii: Herculaneum and the Villas Destroyed by Vesuvius,* 288; Jashemski, "'The Garden of Hercules at Pompeii' (II.viii.6): The Discovery of a Commercial Flower Garden," 410. De Vos translates the phrase to "Domani io credito," and believe the phrase reflects the commercial activities of the house. De Vos, "II 8, 6," 327.

watchful. While Mariette De Vos and Robert Curtis suggest the inscription simply refers to business,[901] I believe there is more to the inscription than a passing commercial reference.

To take the inscription on its face, the word *cras* means tomorrow, while *credō* can signify to lend, trust, believe, or think. While the combination of *cras* and *credō* can be translated as tomorrow I trust, believe, etc., the overarching sentiment is that the "speaker" has no faith today. This is a pointed message at the entrance of a structure which served both domestic and commercial functions, and one that seems to warn viewers against any unwise behavior. To domestic visitors, the inscription warned viewers not to harm the home, while for business partners or clients it may have discouraged dishonest business transactions. The inscription would likely also have cautioned commercial visitors not to disrupt or violate the domestic space during their journey into the garden.

Notably, the phrase does appear at least once more within the Latin corpus. "Cras credo" happens to have been part of the title of a book within the lost *Saturae Menippeae* by the late second/early first century BCE author Varro (lines 77-78).[902] The full phrase is "Cras credo, hodie nihil," or "tomorrow I trust, not today," and while the addition of the second part completes the phrase, it does not significantly alter its meaning. Instead, "Cras credo, hodie nihil" communicates that although trust might be given tomorrow, it does not exist today. Consequently, the characterization of "CRAS CREDO" as a message of warning is also applicable to the full expression.[903]

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[901] De Vos, "Pavimenti e mosaici," 165; Curtis, "A Personalized Floor Mosaic from Pompeii," 565.

[902] Varro, *Sat. Men.* 77-8. For a discussion of the meaning of the preserved fragments, see Marcus Terentius Varro and Cèbe Jean-Pierre. *Varron, Satires Ménippées*: èdition, traduction et commentaire. Vol. 3. Collection de L'école Française de Rome, 9 (Rome: École française de Rome, 1972), 326-332. Charlton T. Lewis, William Freund, E. A. Andrews, and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary* (Clarendon Press, 1879), "CRAS".

[903] Ardle MacMahon reads the inscription as a positive message and unlike other scholars, translates the inscription as "I believe in tomorrow." He does not, however, consider the other clause that may have been associated with the phrase, "hodie nihil." While "cras credo" on its own might have a positive spin, "cras credo, hodie nihil" makes it clear that the speaker trusts in tomorrow, not today. As such, I maintain that the inscription at the Casa del Giardino

Beyond the precise meaning of the inscription, the appearance of "cras credo, hodie nihil" within the *Saturae Menippeae* is noteworthy, as it suggests the phrase was known and used outside Pompeii. Varro's lost *Saturae Menippeae* was a collection of satires divided into 150 books. Each individual book of the *Saturae Menippeae* takes an idiom for its title, such as "Est modus matulae" or "Caprinum Proelium,"[904] This suggests that "Cras credo, hodie nihil" was also a well-known idiom. In this light, the "CRAS CREDO" inscription may not have been so strange a phrase as it initially seems.

What is more, the idiomatic nature of the book titles within the *Saturae Menippeae* also carries resonances with the inscription considered in the previous section, "CAVE CANEM". A book entitled "Cave Canem" appeared shortly before "Cras credo, hodie nihil" within the *Saturae Menippeae*.[905] While this may be mere coincidence, the existence of two books within the text with titles that decorate Pompeian thresholds suggests that both were well-known or colloquial phrases. This means that even if the owners of the Casa del Giardino d'Ercole (and Casa del Poeta Tragico) had not read Varro's Menippean satires, some early imperial Pompeians would have been familiar with these idiomatic phrases.

To approach the issue from another angle, although the inscriptions need not make direct reference to Varro, it is also possible the owners or inhabitants of the Casa del Giardino d'Ercole were attempting to style themselves as learned individuals. Varro's works would have been well-known among the learned elite, and the Casa del Giardino d'Ercole inscription may have been intended to demonstrate familiarity with the *Saturae Menippeae*. Literary quotations are found

d'Ercole was a cautionary, if not intimidating message. Ardle MacMahon, *The Taberna Structures of Roman Britain*. Bar British Series, 356 (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 2003), 12.

[904] Varro, *Sat. Men.* 111-16 and 71, respectively.

[905] Number 75. On the preserved fragments of this section, see Varro and Cèbe, *Varron, Satires Ménippées*: èdition, traduction et commentaire Vol. 3, 313-318.

elsewhere in Pompeii as graffiti, dipinti, and inscriptions, all of which communicate knowledge of famous literature.[906] Homeowners often utilized domestic decoration to convey a deep knowledge of various literary works,[907] and it is likely that mosaic inscriptions were used for a similar purpose.

The Casa del Giardino d'Ercole inscription may alternately have referred to the content of Varro's "Cras credo, hodie nihil", which Jean-Pierre Cèbe characterizes as a satire of those who are overcautious.[908] In this light, the inscription takes on a different dimension, and might encourage enjoyment in the garden and at the *triclinium*. Tempting as this theory might be, however, there is no evidence that the Casa del Giardino d'Ercole inscription refers to Varro's text, rather than a well-known idiom of warning. Indeed, few would assume the "CAVE CANEM" inscription makes a direct reference to the book of the same name in the *Saturae Menippeae* simply because it also appears within the text. "Cras credo, hodie nihil", then, is best characterized as an idiomatic phrase warning caution that pre-dated the *Saturae Menippeae,* as it is unlikely that Varro himself popularized the phrase.[909] Understood in this light, the "CRAS CREDO" mosaic inscription at the Casa del Giardino d'Ercole functioned first and foremost as an idiomatic warning to those who entered the structure, with any reference to Varro existing in addition to the functional meaning of the inscription.

Just one closely cropped photograph of the "CRAS CREDO" mosaic exists [Fig. V.39]. As such, it is not easy to determine where exactly the inscription was placed within the entrance corridor, although Arnold De Vos notes that it was placed in front of the threshold.[910] Any

[906] Including CIL IV 5007; 10241.
[907] For examples, the atrium frescoes in the Casa del Poeta Tragico or *oecus* of the Casa degli Epigrammi Greci.
[908] Varro and Cèbe, *Varron, Satires Ménippées*: èdition, traduction et commentaire Vol. 3, 328.
[909] As all book titles within the *Saturae Menippeae* were idioms, each must have preceded Varro's satires.
[910] De Vos, "II 8, 6," 327. Others, however, say it was embedded within the sidewalk in front of the home, Rizzo, "Limina: la decorazione figurata delle soglie musive a Pompei," 97.

experience of the inscription is therefore difficult to reconstruct, but a general overview of the entryway provides a sense of how ancient viewers might have interacted with the inscription. The layout of the Casa del Giardino d'Ercole is unusual, with a few small domestic rooms on the northwest side of the house, and a garden area roughly three times the size of the structure to the south. When standing on the front threshold of the home, which is marked by a single step, it would have been possible to look through the entrance corridor, down the narrow central hallway, and to the open garden area at the back. Regardless of where the mosaic "CRAS CREDO" inscription was located within the entrance corridor, it would have been clearly visible from the front threshold. A visitor may then have peered down the hallway to the back of the house having seen the inscription, keeping the message in mind while moving into the interior space, and inflecting one's experience of the journey.

It is likely viewers were forced to step on or over the inscription when passing through the corridor, thereby making physical contact with both the *tesserae* and the words they spelled. Again, the disappearance of the mosaic means this can never be confirmed, but based on the other examples considered in this chapter, it seems likely. The interaction that resulted from this physical contact would have made it impossible to ignore the message of the inscription. While this embodied experience might not activate any protective mechanisms for the viewer, it would certainly have reminded guests to be wary and respectful of the household while moving through a transitional and vulnerable space. In this way, visitors to the Casa del Giardino d'Ercole could engage with the defensive qualities of the inscription through their presence and movements. It could further warn caution within an atypical, hybrid space, and perhaps even orient visitors to the layout of the structure, compelling them forward through the central hallway, and out to the garden.

On a broader scale, the Casa del Giardino d'Ercole lies within the southeast section of Pompeii. Like the Complesso dei Riti Magici [II.1.12] discussed in Chapter Two,[911] the structure is situated very near the Porta Nocera [Fig. V.40]. In fact, the Casa del Giardino d'Ercole is located one *insula* closer to the gate than the Complesso dei Riti Magici and occupies the final *insula* before the southeastern fortification walls. The large property occupies roughly half of the entire *insula* and its neighbors include several small entertainment spaces and gardens.[912] Various workshops, entertainment spaces, and living areas populate the stretch of the Via di Nocera across from the Casa del Giardino d'Ercole, and the area generally seems to have been devoted to hospitality and commercial activity. This characterization is fitting considering the *insula*'s proximity to the Porta Nocera, a major point of entry into the city from the direction of Nocera. It is likely the surrounding structures were frequented by those entering or exiting the city.

Numerous travelers are likely to have passed in front of the Casa del Giardino d'Ercole, and the mosaic inscription in the entryway is sure to have served as a warning against harming the structure. In addition to high levels of traffic, the Porta Nocera Necropolis is located immediately outside the nearby city walls. Within the city limits, the Casa del Giardino d'Ercole is also situated on a street corner, and immediately southwest of the city's large *palaestra* [II.7.9], which certainly received high volumes of foot traffic.[913]

Given its location, message, and purpose, the Casa del Giardino d'Ercole inscription is unusual among the examples previously considered. Where the inscriptions from the Casa del

[911] Chapter Two, 110-1.
[912] Structures II.8.1-II.8.5.
[913] The Casa del Giardino d'Ercole is in fact located very near what may originally have been the primary entrance of the *palaestra*, later blocked up. Eschebach and Müller-Trollius, *Gebäudeverzeichnis und Stadtplan der antiken Stadt Pompeji,* 97.

Fauno, Casa del Salve, House V.3.10, and the Domus Vedi Sirici conveyed messages of welcome, good health, and prosperity, the Casa del Giardino d'Ercole functioned as a warning to those who might transgress the boundaries of the space. The same is true of the "CAVE CANEM" inscription at the Casa del Poeta Tragico, which warned observers to take heed. While different in tone and overall message than the other case studies considered in this chapter, the "CRAS CREDO" and "CAVE CANEM" inscriptions nevertheless drew on similar forms of visual and textual protection for vulnerable spaces, while reacting to singular architectural and geographic concerns. As two of a small group of documented examples of cautionary entryway mosaics, the Casa del Giardino d'Ercole and Casa del Poeta Tragico epigraphs represent rare, but powerful, defensive responses to the notion of spatial vulnerability.

Conclusions

This chapter has argued that inscriptions worked as both text and image to safeguard domestic doorways through written messages and direct viewer engagement. It has investigated not only the range of approaches to protective inscriptions, but also the ways in which context could affect and encourage the need for charged language, in visual form, within the entryways of Campanian homes. Where the auspicious messages of "HAVE", "HAVETIS INTRO", and "SALVE" at the Casa del Fauno, House V.3.10, Villa Arianna, and Casa del Salve welcomed guests inside with greetings and wishes for good health, the "SALVE LUCRU(M)" inscription of the Domus Vedi Sirici addressed the forces of fortune, and the mosaics at the Casa del Poeta Tragico and Casa del Giardino d'Ercole warned caution to those crossing the threshold.

It must be noted that the seven case studies examined in this chapter are by no means the only examples of mosaic inscriptions found within Campanian entryways, other examples of

which include a "SALVE" inscription reportedly discovered within the Casa di Pansa[914] and an inscription of "HAVE SALVE" [915] at the Villa of Numerius Popidius Florus in Boscoreale. This chapter's case studies are, however, the best and most reliably documented examples, and demonstrate the utility of decorating domestic entryways with charged mosaic inscriptions.

Although different in timbre, each example utilized similar inscriptional strategies to protect their respective entryways. As this chapter has demonstrated, the character of each mosaic inscription was suited to its surroundings and made efficacious by the messages conveyed and the presence of viewers. Neither solely text nor singularly image, the mosaic inscriptions defy easy categorization and existed at the nexus of various dichotomies. Much like the liminal qualities of divine and animal images discussed in previous chapters, the intermediary nature of mosaic inscriptions is entirely appropriate for the transitional space of doorways, once again engaging one type of ambiguity with another form of uncertainty. Thus, while neither figural nor patterned, the mosaic inscriptions that decorated the entryways of Campanian homes functioned as charged, dynamic tools of defense that both responded to and paralleled the ambiguous nature of doorways.

[914] Pier Ambrogio Curti, *Pompei e le sue rovine*. Vol. 3 (Milano: Sanvito, 1874), 65.
[915] Matteo Della Corte, "Scavi eseguiti da privati nel territorio Pompeiano," in *Notizie degli scavi di antichità*, 415-67. Eds. Fiorelli, Giuseppe, Reale Accademia dei Lincei, Reale Accademia d'Italia, and Accademia nazionale dei Lincei (Roma: Tip. della R. Accademia dei Lincei, 1921), 450-1, Fig. 15. The mosaic is now in the Antiquarium di Boscoreale, no inventory number.

Conclusion

This dissertation has examined how transitional spaces in ancient Campanian homes were addressed by, and mediated through, their surrounding decorative elements. I have argued not only that a cohesive, yet flexible, visual language existed among these images, but also that the decorative elements chosen to embellish the thresholds, doorways, and corridors of Campanian houses mirrored the spatial ambiguity of the passageway through their liminal characteristics and visual details. The preceding chapters have demonstrated how "doorway imagery" engaged viewers through direct address and physical contact to enact the protective mechanisms of the paintings and mosaics located within charged locales. Through a close examination of the images, the spaces they occupy, and their viewing experience, the dissertation offers a detailed analysis of the meaning and function of doorway embellishment, while it also provides insight into Roman attitudes toward boundary, ambiguity, and the agency of images.

This interdisciplinary study has drawn on theories of liminality, perception, and spatial analysis from a variety of fields, while employing key art historical and archaeological methodologies. It has addressed questions pertinent not only to the experience of daily life and transitional areas in ancient Campania, but also about the ways in which images were utilized as powerful tools of Roman spiritual belief. By examining Roman conceptions and confrontations of transition, the dissertation has shown that images could be used as active, functional tools to signal and navigate transitional spaces. The project has also, to the extent possible, reconstructed the experience of viewing and interacting with doorway images to understand the paintings and mosaics as dynamic mediators of transition.

This concluding chapter will discuss a series of maps created in ArcGIS that trace the locations and distributions of homes with efficacious images within the archaeological park of

Pompeii, before turning to a discussion of future work and a review of the limitations and contributions of this project. The discussion of geographic patterns will reflect not only the broad conclusions and contributions of this study, but it will also demonstrate the wider implications of the data set and analysis presented in the dissertation.

Spatial Trends and Themes

Map 1 charts the locations of all known images that accompany domestic thresholds in Pompeii. The map reveals that various types of doorway motifs are distributed more or less evenly across the geographic expanse of the ancient city. Charged doorway images do not appear to cluster in any one part of the city, as they populate every *regio* and 38% of *insulae*.[916] This means that the images that decorate domestic passageways were considered appropriate in all regions of Pompeii.[917] The fact that charged doorway images appear within over one third of the city's individual *insulae* further indicates the popularity of the practice, especially given the fact that some *insulae* are only partially excavated or contain few domestic structures. Unsurprisingly, houses with efficacious doorway images tend to cluster around major veins of traffic, such as the Via dell'Abbondanza, a trend that aligns with the geographic distribution of the city's largest and most lavishly decorated homes. However, given the high concentration of large and small domestic structures along major roads, and the presence of entryway decor in smaller houses in less trafficked areas, it is clear that the decoration of domestic doorways was not simply an exercise in aggrandizement.

[916] Of the 110 insulae that populate the city, 42 include at least one domestic structure that features one or more "doorway images". These *insulae* are: *Regio* I- 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 12, 13; *Regio* II- 8, 9; *Regio* III- 1; *Regio* IV- 5; *Regio* V- 1, 3, 4, 6; *Regio* VI- 1, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17; *Regio* VII- 1, 2, 4, 11, 15, 16; *Regio* VIII- 2, 3; *Regio* IX- 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 13..

[917] Those excavated to date.

The overarching distribution of homes with dynamic doorway decor throughout Pompeii indicates that the use of powerful images to embellish and defend the threshold of one's home was a widespread practice in Pompeii that was not limited to a superstitious few. Indeed, the practice is represented in 15% of the extant houses in the city.[918] Even more surprising is the fact that charged mosaics and paintings embellish the entrance corridors of 21% of Pompeian houses with extant entryway decor.[919] However, a more accurate statistic might be that, of the 293 houses in Pompeii that I found either had extant entryway décor or detailed descriptions of now-lost entryway décor, 173 of these houses have decorations that are either too faded or fragmentary to discern and content or details. Given these numbers, over half (52%) of homes in Pompeii with doorway images that are preserved well enough to assess their content feature efficacious motifs. This means that the original percentage of Pompeian houses with efficacious doorway decoration was even higher than the current archaeological evidence suggests.[920]

Map 1 also demonstrates that more ancient Campanians chose to decorate their thresholds with efficacious motifs than previously assumed. Domestic images that respond to the spatial ambiguity of passageways have often been regarded as rare or passing curiosities within the broader corpus of the archaeological record. Although scholars such as John Clarke have worked

[918] This percentage is based on 62 of 413 houses. I followed Eschebach's (Eschebach and Müller-Trollius. *Gebäudeverzeichnis und Stadtplan der antiken Stadt Pompeji*, 453-64) identifications to determine the function of each structure in the city.

[919] This percentage calculated based on 66 houses with efficacious entryway imagery divided by 293 houses in Pompeii that have fragments of extant decoration on their facades or on the floors of walls of their entrance corridors. The vast majority of these elements, however, are fragments of fresco that are now so faded that few details are discernable.

[920] Notably, a similar distribution pattern is not present at Herculaneum, where the majority of domestic entrance corridors are embellished with geometric patterns and non-figural designs with no apparent protective utility. Only a fraction of Herculaneum has been excavation compared to Pompeii, but even if additional examples do not exist within the still-buried portions of the city, the presence of case studies such as the Casa dell'Atrio a mosaico demonstrate that the inhabitants of Herculaneum were familiar with the practice. It is unclear why the practice was less popular in Herculaneum than it was at Pompeii, but it is also unrealistic to expect that even two cities located in such close proximity as Pompeii and Herculaneum would follow the same patterns of domestic embellishment.

to establish the ubiquity of explicit, humorous, and powerful works of art, images like the ithyphallic Priapus in the entryway of the Casa dei Vettii have been, in large part, characterized as singular or unusual. Armed with the information presented in this dissertation, we now know this is not true. While the details and forms of the images examined throughout this study have varied, ultimately, each of the mosaics and frescoes that embellish Pompeian houses responded to the same concerns surrounding transitional spaces within the home.

The prevalence of charged doorway representations further supports the interconnectivity of art, space, and spiritual practice in ancient south Italy. As described in Chapter One, the spiritual and religious realms were closely aligned within thresholds and other transitional spaces in the ancient Roman mindset. The deities of the door, *limen*, and even hinges could be invoked in prayer, and rituals were often performed before thresholds. In this way, the prevalence of powerful imagery in domestic passageways also reflects a widespread acknowledgment of the constant presence of deities within everyday activities and reveals that religion and domestic architecture were closely intertwined in belief and practice. Therefore, images were considered an appropriate means for engaging with deities and the transitional spaces they were believed to occupy.

Finally, the distribution and number of doorway images found throughout Pompeii reveal that passageway motifs were frequently used as active agents of address, tools for reciprocal exchange, and mediators of the built environment. The case studies examined within this dissertation have demonstrated that images could be enlivened or activated by the presence of viewers. Since dynamic images can be found in every region of the city, ancient Pompeians would have interacted with active images on an everyday basis and were well equipped to understand their function as tools for traversing specific spaces. Given the proliferation of

embellishment outside of domestic contexts, it appears the ancient visual landscape would have been a much more active and animated experience than typically imagined.

Chapters and Maps: Summary and Discussion

Where analyses of the full map of doorway decor in Pompeii can help support and elucidate some of the wider implications of this study, investigations of individual thematic maps can provide further context for some of the dissertation's finer points. This includes the significance and mechanisms of different visual approaches to charged motifs within passageways and the impact of an image's geographic surroundings.

Chapter One provided an overview of the characterization of doors, rooms within a Roman house, and visual responses to superstition, and therefore does not necessitate an ArcGIS map. Chapter Two argued that the divine images found in conjunction with the doorways of the Casa dei Dioscuri, Casa dei Vettii, and other houses in Pompeii were carefully and specifically chosen to mark and negotiate the ambiguity of thresholds. It argued that the gods and goddesses that decorate domestic passageways were specifically selected for the transitional space of the doorway based on their own transitional, ambiguous, or dual qualities, itself an acknowledgment of the ambiguous character of passageways. By studying the experience of interacting with the images and their surroundings, the chapter further asserted that viewers could interact with the divine frescoes to enliven the images and manifest the presence of the deities through a reflexive exchange between image and observer.

Map 2 charts the locations of all known divine domestic doorway images in Pompeii. Although at least one example of a doorway deity representation exists in nearly every *regio*,[921]

[921] Except for *Regiones* III and VIII.

the map shows that the frescoes follow the general trend of Map 1, as houses with divine doorway images tend to congregate around major traffic routes. For instance, two houses face the Via del Vesuvio/Via Stabiana, four the Via dell'Abbondanza, two the Via di Nocera, and three the Via di Mercurio. This trend is not surprising given the corresponding distribution of large houses discussed above and confirms the relationship between elaborate decor and urban visibility. As we have seen, major roads were areas associated with various vulnerabilities, and the need for efficacious imagery along these routes was likely higher than in other areas of the city.

In terms of distribution by *regio*, the highest concentration of divine doorway images is in *Regiones* VI and IX, while *Regio* VII contains only a single example, and none are found in *Regiones* III or VIII. The dearth of examples in *Regio* III can be attributed to the fact that only a small area of the *regio* has been excavated, but the relative absence of examples in *Regiones* VII and VIII may indicate that divine images were either not deemed necessary or were simply unpopular in the southwestern sector of the city. Certainly, *Regio* VII is characterized by more commercial and fewer domestic structures than other areas of the city, and the concentration of temples around the Forum may also mean that divine images were not considered necessary in homes near religious spaces. However, neither do representations of divinities in doorways appear to correspond to the locations of street shrines (Map 3), as a survey of the plotted structures reveals no clear congruence. Nevertheless, the examples of divine images that do correspond to a particular geographic determinant demonstrate that a structure's location within the city could indeed influence the decoration of one's front entrance corridor.

The third chapter of this dissertation examined the images of animals that populate domestic doorways in Pompeii. This chapter focused on the animal mosaics that decorate the

fauces of the Casa dell'Orso Ferito and the Domus M. Caesi Blandi. Both the wounded bear from the Casa dell'Orso Ferito and marine animals in the Domus M. Caesi Blandi respond to the transitional status of the thresholds they decorate with their own transformational qualities, while aggrandizing the home. Ancient mythological and literary sources associate bears and dolphins with a wide variety of transformational qualities, and by aligning these characteristics with the transitional status of doorways, the inhabitants of the Casa dell'Orso Ferito and the Domus M. Caesi Blandi could signal the function of the space while helping visitors navigate the passageway. These characteristics were in turn enhanced by the visual details of the mosaic, which worked to engage viewers and anticipate their movements.

Map 4 displays the locations of all animal images that decorate entrance corridors in Pompeian homes, the topic of Chapter Three. Like the frescoes of divinities, these images also frequently lie near major traffic routes. Here, too, the locations of shrines and fountains appear to have no bearing on the locations of faunal depictions. The presence of *necropoli* similarly do not appear to necessitate the use of animal images in nearby homes. No examples of faunal doorway images have been preserved in *Regiones* II, III, or IV, however, one or more examples are present in each of the other six *regiones* and are more or less evenly distributed throughout those areas.

Within the six regions, over half of the documented examples of animal depictions decorate houses located near or at an intersection or crossroad.[922] Among these examples, dogs appear twice, dolphins three times, lions once, bears once, and wild boar once at crossroads. This arrangement suggests that a wide variety of animals were considered appropriate decorations for

[922] Eight of fifteen total examples, or 53%. These structures are I.7.1; VI.8.5; VI.17.25; VII.1.40; VII.2.45; VII.15.2; VIII.3.8; and IX.8.3.

houses close to intersections. It is notable that three of the four extant examples of dolphin images lie near crossroads. The small sample size and incomplete preservation of the city prevent definitive conclusions, but the surviving evidence in Pompeii suggests that some degree of correspondence may have existed between crossroads and dolphins.

Leaving aside the issue of the dolphin mosaics, a few overarching statements are possible. Animal images are, statistically, more closely aligned with proximity to intersections than divine images within the data set utilized by this dissertation. They are also less likely to lie along major roads, although the images still do tend to follow the trend of mirroring traffic patterns. Faunal images are also less numerous than their divine counterparts, and rendered in mosaic in nearly every case.[923] The overarching significance of these observations may not translate directly to the wider field of domestic decoration within the Roman Empire, but they do indicate the images of animals that embellished domestic entryways at Pompeii addressed similar concerns as divine frescoes, but responded using a different form of visual intervention considered more appropriate at crossroads than painted deities.

Chapter Four investigated the charged dynamism of mosaic patterns and symbols in Campanian doorways to examine how non-figural images functioned within transitional spaces. Different from figural images, the mosaic patterns that decorate domestic thresholds worked to engage and repel viewers through the use of visual tricks or illusions and intricate patterns that were difficult or impossible to disentangle. Through these complex patterns, the images responded to the uncertainty of the passageway using motifs that were themselves ambiguous. Each of these features could not only draw the attention of viewers, but also hold their attention

[923] Exceptions include a former fresco of a dog from IX.2.26 and the fresco of birds above the interior lintel of the Casa dei Ceii [I.6.15].

to bind spectators to the threshold, structure movement, repel the forces of *invidia*, and signal the transitional nature of a passageway through their associations with good fortune or corporeal threats. Although directed at spirit viewers more so than human spectators, the non-figural mosaics examined in the chapter represent an efficacious response to the ambiguity of domestic thresholds and demonstrate that the various strategies of visual intervention were tailored to different anticipated audiences.

Map 6 visualizes the data presented in Chapter Four. As the map shows, the overall distribution of domestic threshold patterns and symbols is less evenly dispersed throughout Pompeii than divine or faunal images. The extant examples appear in *Regiones* I, III, VI, VII, VIII, and IX. The highest concentration of non-figural images populate *Regio* VIII, with eight examples, and *Regiones* VI and IX, each with six examples. In all three *regiones*, the images tend to cluster close to one another, and in many cases, they decorate neighboring houses. VIII.2.26, VIII.2.28, VIII.2.30, and VIII.2.34, for instance, each feature charged patterns in their entryways, and are situated in a row next to one another along the Vicolo della Regina. Meander patterns in black and white mosaic decorate the front entryways of three of these four structures,[924] and it is apparent that the houses were in communication with one another and/or redecorated in close succession, possibly by the same local workshop.

Just over one quarter of the houses stand along a street that leads to a city gate, far less than either divine or faunal images. Although the locations of major streets appear to have no direct impact on the locations of the patterned mosaics, the images may find correlation with the locations of street shrines or altars (Map 7). 77%[925] of the houses stand in proximity to one or

[924] VIII.2.26; VIII.2.28; VIII.2.30.
[925] This figure based on 17 of 22 houses. VI.9.2, VI.10.7, VI.13.13, VI.17.42, VII.16.13, VIII.2.4, VIII.2.13, VIII.2.26, VIII.2.28, VIII.2.30, VIII.3.4, VIII.3.8, IX.7.20, IX.13.3, IX.5.11, IX.5.14, and IX.13.3.

more street shrines. This is a much higher percentage than divine or animal doorway imagery and is likely correlated with the higher number of deities, spirits, and non-corporeal entities thought to gather around shrines.[926] This distribution thus supports the chapter's conclusion that non-figural mosaics in domestic passageways were aimed at spirit, rather than human, observers.

Given the distribution of mosaic patterns and symbols in the doorways of Pompeian homes and the intended audience of the images, Map 7 suggests that beyond street altars, non-figural images were not as closely correlated with geographic factors as their figural counterparts. Because the images were aimed at spirit viewers, the presence of efficacious symbols and patterns in domestic passageways are less likely to have been impacted by the increased traffic of busy streets or proximity to "polluted" areas of the city.

However, preservation bias is also at play in the distribution of non-figural images in Pompeian doorways. 27% of the houses plotted in Map 6 are located in *Insula* 2 of *Regio* VIII. Far from coincidental, this *insula* has a higher percentage of preserved mosaic decoration in the entryways of its homes than the *insulae* of *Regiones* I, II, IV, and V, or indeed, nearly any other area of the city. More specifically, 31% of structures in *Regio* VIII *Insula* 2 have preserved pavements in their entryways, while *Regio* I has an average of 3%, *Regio* II 4%, *Regio* IV 0%, and *Regio* V an average of 5% of entryways with extant or recorded pavements. Accordingly, the surrounding topographical features of these areas cannot wholly account for the higher number of non-figural images in *Regio* VIII or *Regio* IX.

[926] Certainly, there are areas of the city with high concentrations of shrines where few or no efficacious patterned doorway mosaics are preserved, but these areas of the city have fewer domestic structures. Furthermore, the preservation of entryway decoration is poorer in the houses that do exist in these areas, such as *Region* I *Insula* 2, where only 3% of structures feature extant mosaic embellishment in their entryway, or Regio I Insula 14, where no structures have preserved entryway pavements.

This means that geometric patterns and charged symbols were likely more prevalent within the doorways of Pompeian houses than the current archaeological evidence suggests, where an average of only 3.8% of houses in the city feature preserved pavements in their entryways. This also indicates that spirit viewers may have been considered more omnipresent than human observers or other corporeal threats associated with transitional and ambiguous spaces. Broadly, then, the mapped locations, statistical data, and findings of Chapter Four demonstrate that the patterns and symbols found within the passageways of Pompeian houses were utilized with less regard for their urban surroundings as other types of efficacious doorway imagery, while functioning as both a defensive and decorative tool.

Mosaic inscriptions were the focus of Chapter Five, which blended studies of text and image to investigate the final major category of dynamic doorway decoration. The chapter argued that the mosaic inscriptions that embellish Pompeian thresholds functioned as images alongside the literary value of their textual messages and were purposely selected to respond to their architectural and geographic surroundings. The mosaic messages range from welcoming words to stark warnings and functioned as active agents of defense. Their presence in domestic passageways worked to alert viewers to the transitional nature of the space, while engaging onlookers through visual, textual, and physical interactions. Through their simultaneous existence as text and image, the mosaic inscriptions embody and engage the duality that characterize transitional spaces, a fitting response to the ambiguous nature of thresholds.

The material discussed in Chapter Five is tracked by Map 8, which plots the location of each mosaic inscription from Pompeii. Only eight mosaic inscriptions associated with entrance corridors survive or are attested in excavation records from the city.[927] It is thus difficult to

[927] II.8.6; V.3.10; VI.1.25; VI.8.3-5; VI.12.2; VI.16.20; VII.1.47; and VII.2.45.

ascertain geographic trends among the extant examples. The survival of so few inscriptions, compared to examples of divine, faunal, or patterned images, may be in part due to the low regard in which mosaic inscriptions were held by archaeologists, relative to other mosaic decor. Indeed, although the "Cras Credo" inscription from the Casa del Giardino d'Ercole was still in situ as late as 1958, it had disappeared by 1971. Combined with the low overall percentage of structures in Pompeii that today feature preserved pavements, the prioritization of figural or patterned mosaics over inscriptions suggests that additional examples may have existed.

The distribution of mosaic inscriptions in Pompeii is sporadic throughout the city. Mosaic inscriptions exist within houses in *Regiones* I, II, V, VI, and VII. Half (four) of the inscriptions populate *Regio* VI, while two appear in *Regio* VII, and one each in *Regiones* I, II, and V. The inscriptions are relatively spread out, even in *regiones* with multiple examples, and decorate houses of all sizes. In fact, no single *insula* in Pompeii contains more than one mosaic inscription. These inscriptions were not as prevalent in the first century CE as they would later become, and it appears that the inclusion of a mosaic inscription within the entryway of one's home was a carefully considered element chosen for areas believed to require visual intervention. The distribution and relative rarity of inscriptions further support the argument that they were charged actors within transitional space— were they merely decorative or informative, the inscriptions might find more regular appearance throughout the city.

Perhaps more so than the other categories of images considered in this dissertation, the mosaic inscriptions mapped in Map 8 demonstrate a clear and direct response to their surroundings. In nearly every case the house in which an inscription appears is located near a vulnerable area of the city, including city gates, crossroads, and major arteries of traffic.[928] Each

[928] For specifics, refer to discussions of the case studies in Chapter Five.

of the inscriptions is also located within an *insula* that is home to a street shrine, which as Chapter Five's discussion of the Domus Vedi Sirici demonstrated, could warrant enhanced precautionary measures. Thus, the mosaic inscriptions that embellish the thresholds of houses in Pompeii were specifically engineered to correspond to their surroundings as a dynamic tool for traversing ambiguous areas, and which, like thresholds, existed between two distinct realms. Together with their corresponding maps, the case studies examined within this dissertation have demonstrated the widespread nature of the practice of decorating doorways with powerful images, and also the great diversity in visual approaches taken to underscoring and mediating spaces of transition.

Future Work and Project Limitations

As discussed in the introduction, the limitations of this study have been both necessary and intentional. By limiting the scope of material to late Republican and early Imperial cities along the Bay of Naples, I have been able to discuss both region-wide trends, and city or neighborhood-specific features and phenomena. The corpus of material from Pompeii alone includes archaeological evidence from over 2,000 individual structures, each of which I have surveyed and analyzed. To this corpus I added evidence from Herculaneum, Stabiae, and Oplontis to better understand visual and spatial trends across ancient Campania. I intend to publish the research presented within this dissertation in book form in the proceeding years.

Now that I have established a general methodology for studying ancient Roman images in spaces of passage and traced patterns among houses in Campania, I hope to expand the project to include images beyond Roman south Italy for areas such as north Africa, Spain, France, and Britain. I am keenly aware that the Roman Empire was not limited to the Italian peninsula, and aim to reflect the diversity of the Empire in future iterations of this project by expanding the

scope of material beyond Italy. Not only will this acknowledge other areas of the Empire, but it will also demonstrate the widespread utilization and regional variation of charged doorway images throughout the Roman world. I also hope to expand the temporal scope of future work to investigate how the use of doorway decorations in houses throughout the Empire changed over time. Although material outside early first century BCE-first century CE south Italy is less plentiful than that from Pompeii, Herculaneum, and Stabiae, temporal and geographic expansions will allow me to track Empire-wide trends and better understand the function of images within transitional areas.

In addition to this work, I intend to broaden, where possible, the size of houses examined. This study is, for the most part, limited to wealthy, elite homes by the extant material evidence. This is not because smaller homes did not decorate their doorways and thresholds with efficacious images, but rather that the evidence for the practice is more difficult to locate outside of the large and richly decorated houses for which Pompeii is famous. This limitation is largely the result of the surviving archaeological record, which has prioritized the preservation of grand homes, as well as the more perishable materials used to embellish smaller dwellings. Nevertheless, future work on this project will aim to locate non-elite examples of the practice by undertaking a more in-depth examination of original excavation reports and records.[929] Future studies may also further extend these efforts to examine non-domestic spaces, such as commercial, religious, or municipal structures. Therefore, while this dissertation has offered an in-depth examination of the phenomenon in early Imperial south Italy, there is more exciting work to be done with this body of material throughout the Roman world.

[929] Unfortunately, I was not able to consult some of the archaeological records housed in Italian archives due to the COVID-19 global pandemic and associated travel restrictions.

Contributions and Conclusions

Through its investigation of the painting and mosaic that embellish thresholds in Roman Campania, this dissertation has sought to examine a particular phenomenon of domestic decor in ancient south Italy. The material examined within the project spans a wide range of topics pertinent to the ancient world, including the role of images and experience of Roman religion. In doing so, it has brought together a body of visual, archaeological, and architectural materials never before considered alongside one another. Through the analysis of the preceding chapters, the dissertation records all known examples of efficacious doorway images found within Pompeian homes. This has led to a fuller understanding of ancient Roman and Campanian perceptions of, and responses to, transitional or otherwise ambiguous locales.

Concurrently, the project also discusses the use of images as visual tools to negotiate spatial uncertainty and the perceived interactions between visible and invisible in spaces of passage. This dissertation has utilized art historical, archaeological, literary, and mythological evidence to demonstrate that, rather than innocuous areas given little passing thought, transitional locales in Roman homes were understood as vulnerable spaces and approached with trepidation, while also demonstrating the critical, active, role of charged images in this exchange.

Broadly, I hope the material and conclusions of this project will be of interest and utility not just for specialists of ancient south Italy, but also scholars of history, anthropology, literature, and many other disciplines within the social sciences. My methodology for examining the intersection of art, transitional space, and belief includes a close analysis of the experience and agency of images and can provide insight into the dynamic complexities of ambiguity, uncertainty, and liminality in the ancient world and beyond. I hope it will also encourage readers

to consider how individuals today navigate unfamiliar spaces and the resonances between ancient and contemporary experiences and practices.

The project has also demonstrated the importance of considering images within their original contexts. In addition to their presence within spaces of passage, the images examined in this dissertation universally engage with the works of art, architecture, and urban features that surround each home. The wounded bear mosaic at the Casa dell'Orso Ferito, for example, both responds to the narrow, diagonal entrance corridor in which it is located, but also to the crossing stones, corners, and intersections that exist nearby. This dissertation has also shown that the images, along with their responses to surrounding features, utilize pointed visual strategies to engage viewers, such as the eye contact sought by images of divinities, or the maze-like patterns found in domestic entryways. Not only were these images dynamic in their own right, but as the project has demonstrated, they could also be animated by the presence of spectators to offer an exchange between image and viewer in vulnerable areas.

Furthermore, the dissertation has provided archaeological evidence that compliments the characterization of thresholds as powerful and perilous locales in ancient literary sources. Authors of the Latin corpus should not always be taken at their word, as is well known. And yet, the material investigated within this dissertation reveals that thresholds were indeed regarded with anxiety, as demonstrated by the many charged, passageway-specific images found in ancient Campanian houses. Therefore, while we should always approach literary sources with a critical eye, the characterization of doorways as vulnerable areas in ancient literature and myth is in this case borne out in the archaeological record.

Finally, the dissertation offers supplementary maps to aid other scholars in accessing and engaging with the material considered in this dissertation. These maps and additional data will be

made available for the scholarly and general public in future publications. I am hopeful that they will be a useful resource for scholars interested in geographic distribution patterns, domestic art in Pompeii, and transitional space, and inspire future research.

Uncertainty and ambiguity lie at the heart of this dissertation and, more broadly, everyday life in ancient Rome. This is a theme embodied not only in the physical spaces of passage, but also in the images themselves, which feature transitional or ambiguous qualities. Ancient Romans would also have grappled with the experience of uncertainty on a daily basis. With high infant mortality rates, periodic disease or famine, and the unpredictability of the gods, it was hard for Romans to know what the future might hold, try as they might by consulting the *augurs*. As such, they were no doubt keenly aware of the presence and powerful nature of uncertainty. By decorating the passageways of their homes using images with transitional resonance, Romans thus demonstrated their understanding of the power of ambiguous areas and their familiarity with experiences of ambiguity.

Appendix

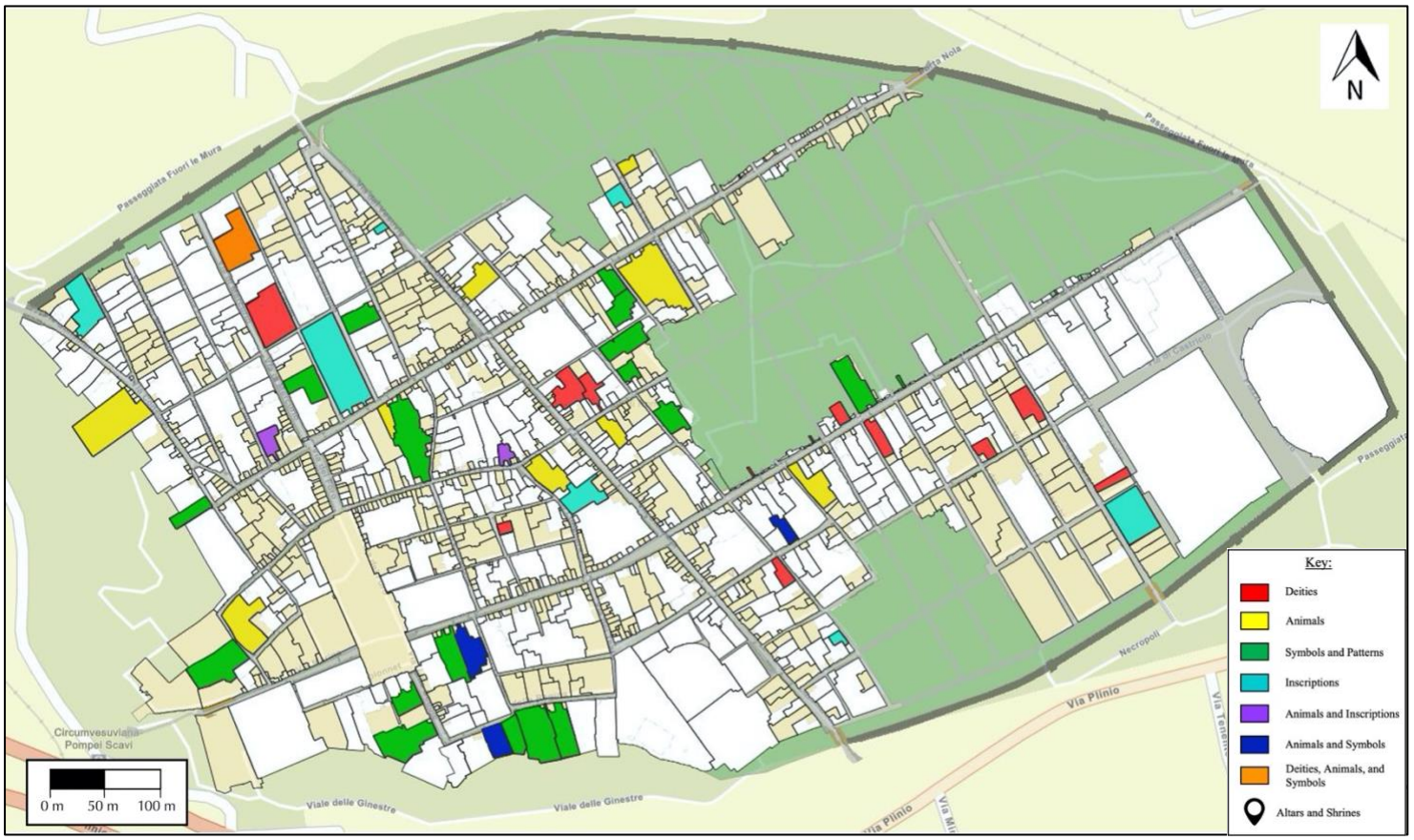
The following appendix is intended to provide information that supplements the material presented within the text of the dissertation. This appendix is a series of nine maps that track the locations of all known efficacious domestic doorway images in the city of Pompeii. These maps demonstrate geographic patterns and trends within the city and are color coded to correspond to thematic categorizations. Each of the maps was created in ArcGIS using base layers formulated by the *Pompeii: Navigation Map 2* by the Pompeii Bibliography and Mapping Project, and the full map is accessible online at: https://www.arcgis.com/apps/mapviewer/index.html?webmap=1cb62dc7446b4948a5761ce1fbbeb16b. Maps One through Nine track the locations of images of deities, animals, symbols, and inscriptions in Pompeian doorways and compare them to the locations of street altars and shrines. They demonstrate not only that the use of efficacious images in domestic passageways was a widespread practice in Pompeii, but also that it was distributed relatively evenly throughout the city. The maps included within the appendices are envisioned as evolving documents, and I will continue to add and update information as it becomes available, especially in light of recent and continuing excavations at Pompeii.

Together, the maps included within this appendix demonstrate the reach of this project beyond the seventeen case studies discussed within the preceding text. Indeed, the maps collectively record information for over 100 different images. This reveals that, counter to previous characterizations of charged fresco and mosaic in Roman homes as a handful of curiosities, the use of efficacious images to respond to the liminal nature of the threshold was a widespread and clearly codified practice in Pompeii, and likely other Roman cities as well. As such, the following appendices confirm the characterizations of transitional spaces given in

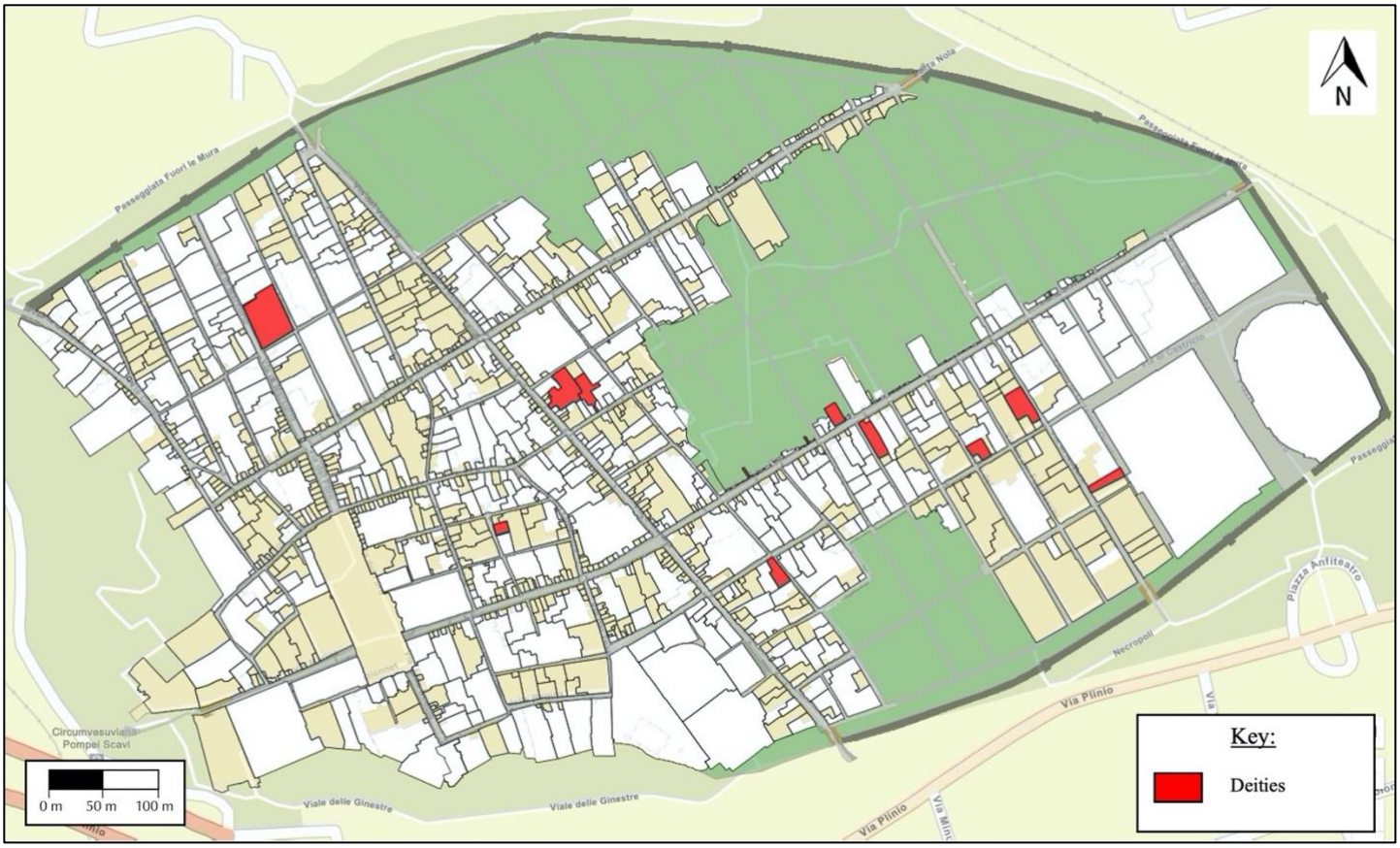
ancient texts in the material record, give visual form to the trends discussed throughout the dissertation, and reflect the wide variety of visual responses to spatial ambiguity utilized in Pompeian homes.

Appendix 1: Maps of Efficacious Entranceway Images in Pompeian Homes

Map 1: Locations of Significant Images Found in the Entrance Corridors of Pompeian Homes



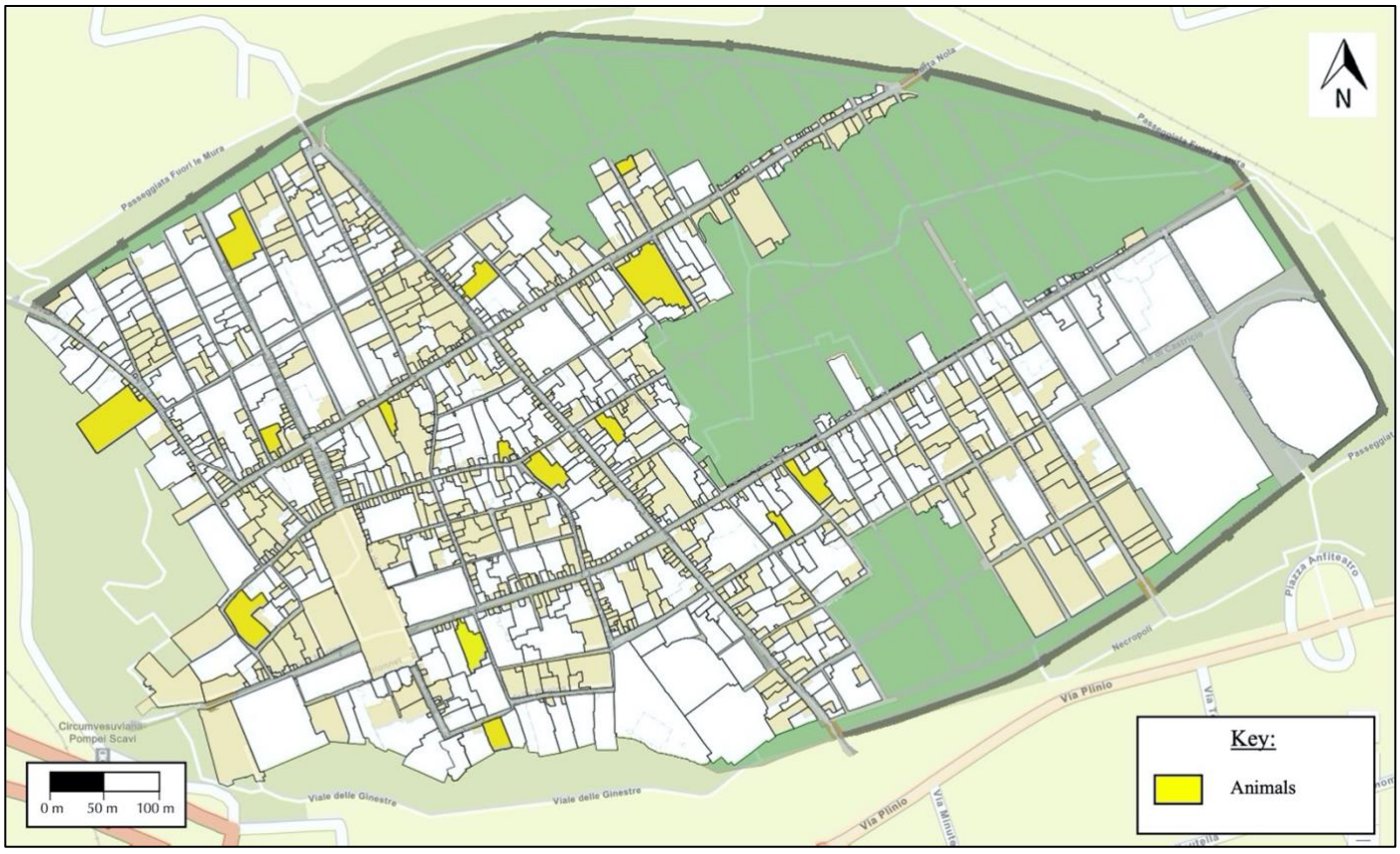
Map 2: Locations of Divine Images Found in the Entrance Corridors of Pompeian Homes



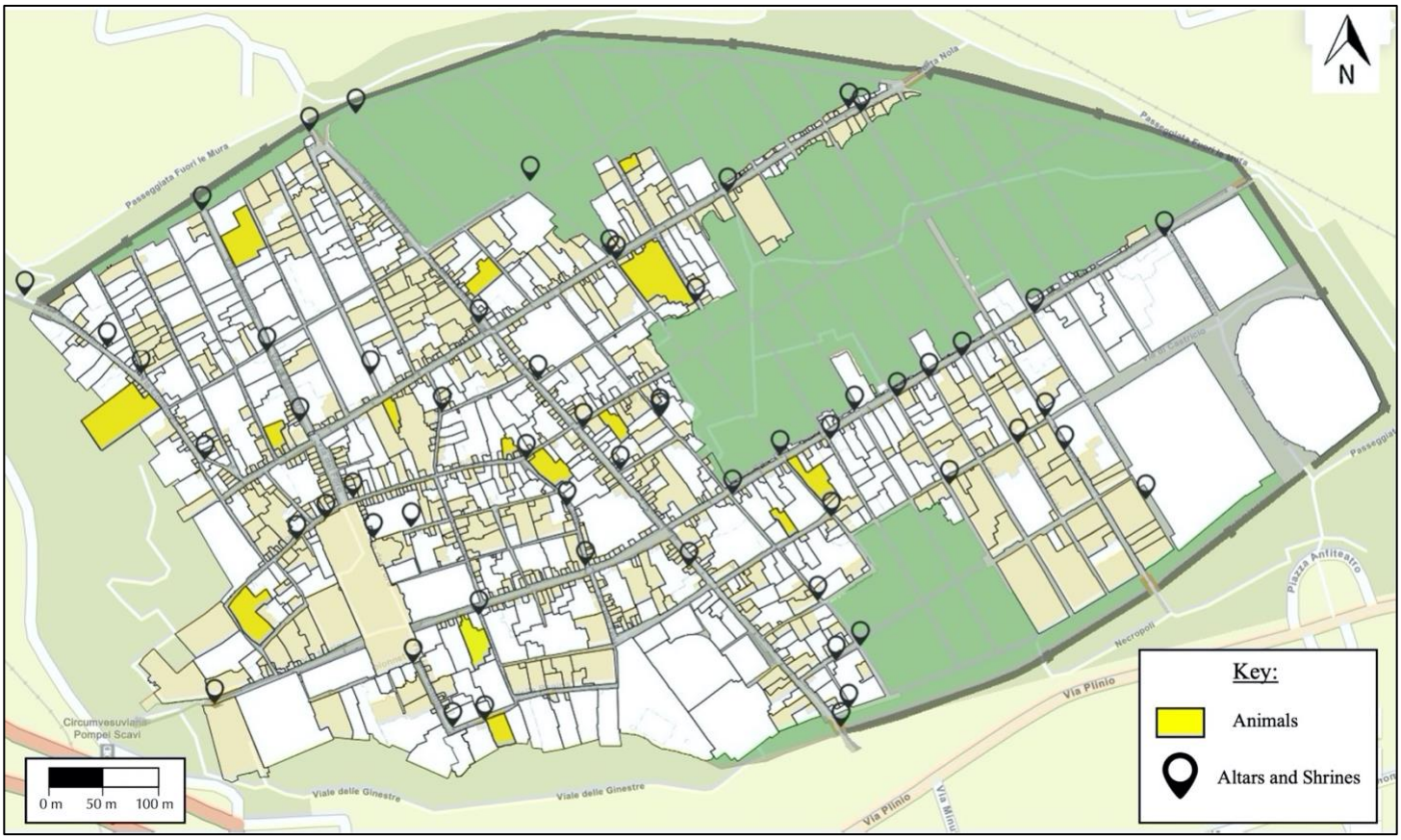
Map 3: Locations of Divine Images Found in the Entrance Corridors of Pompeian Homes with Shrines and Altars



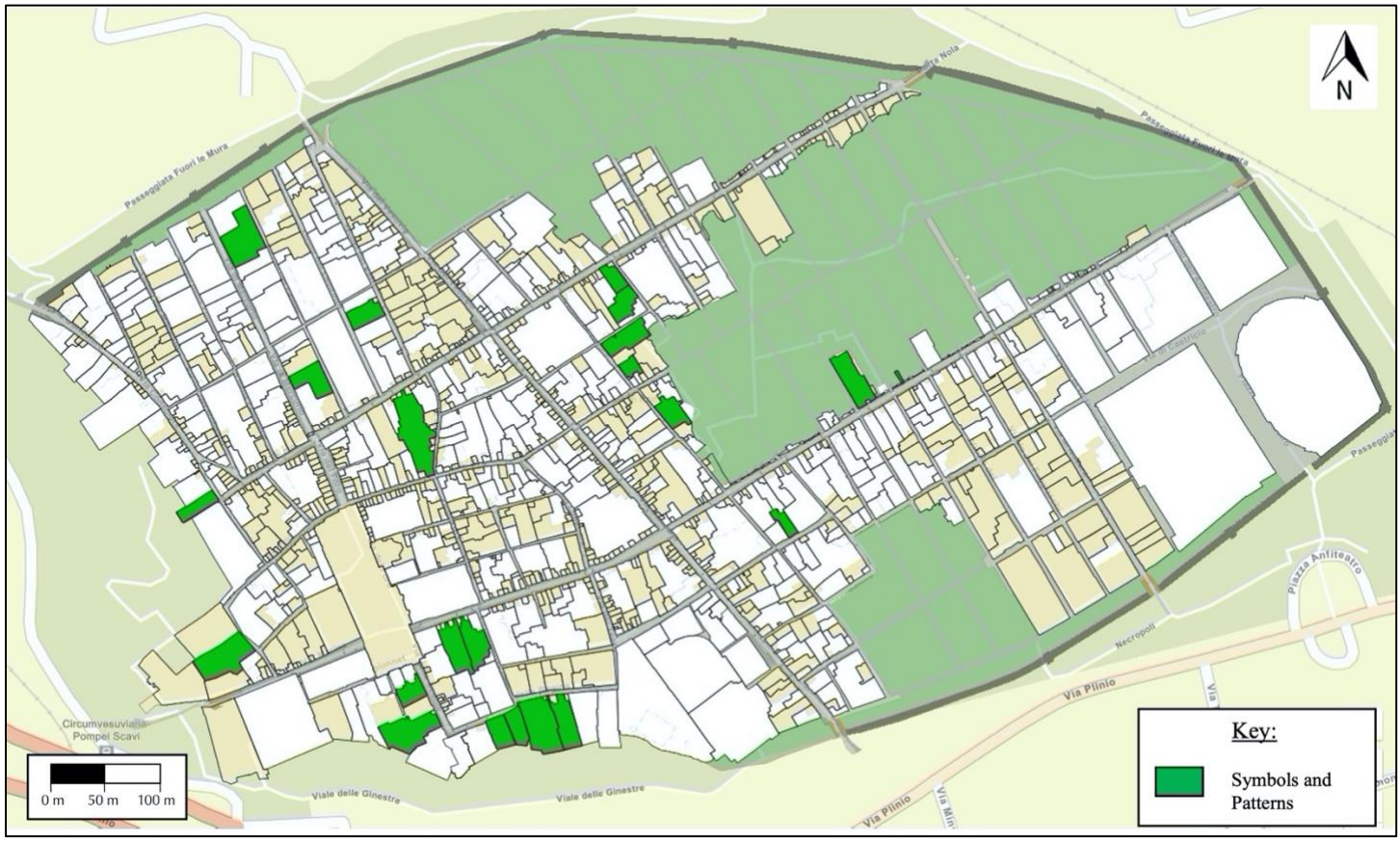
Map 4: Locations of Animals Images Found in the Entrance Corridors of Pompeian Homes



Map 5: Locations of Animal Images Found in the Entrance Corridors of Pompeian Homes with Shrines and Altars



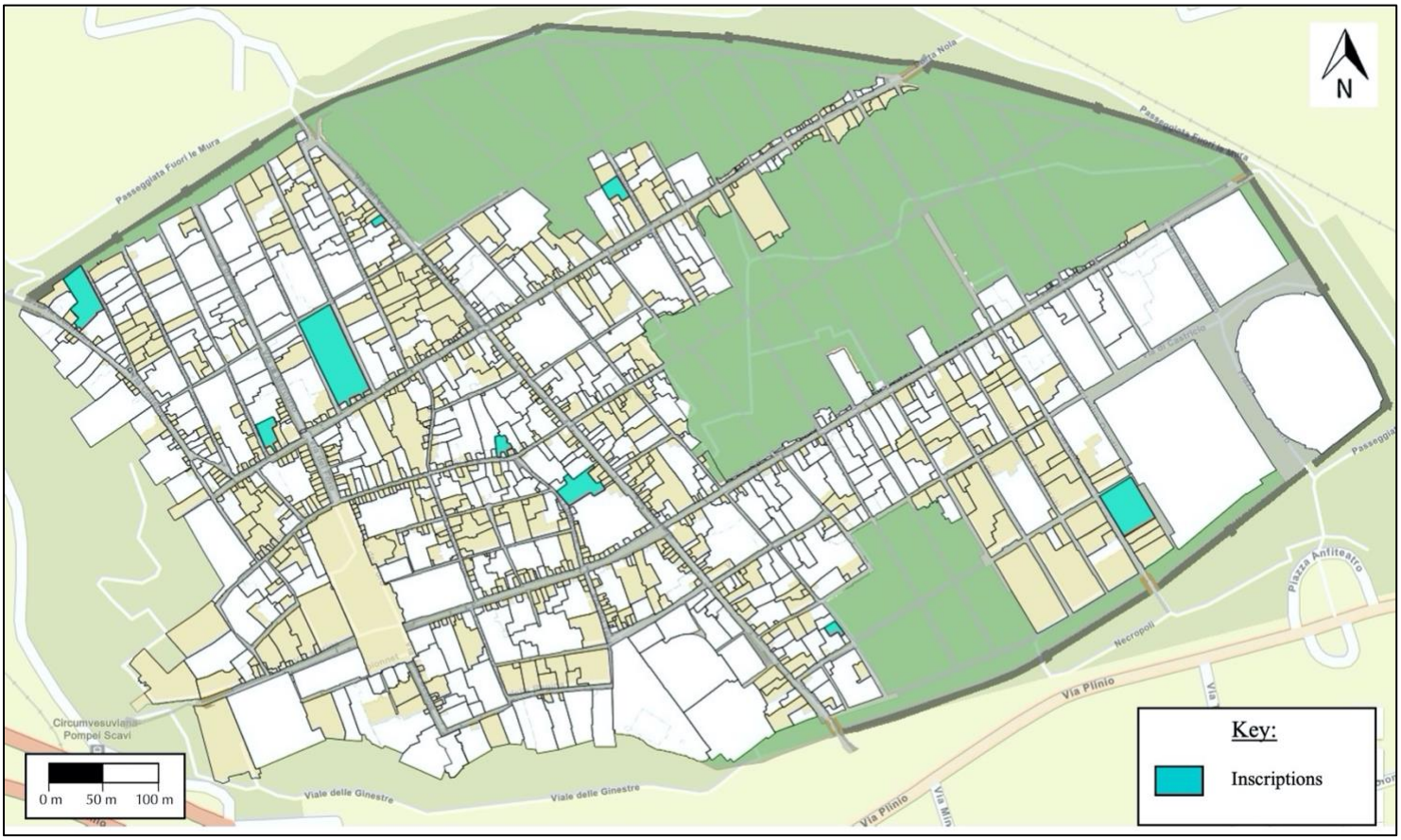
Map 6: Locations of Symbols and Patterns Found in the Entrance Corridors of Pompeian Homes



Map 7: Locations of Symbols and Patterns Found in the Entrance Corridors of Pompeian Homes with Shrines and Altars



Map 8: Locations of Inscriptions Found in the Entrance Corridors of Pompeian Homes



Map 9: Locations of Inscriptions Found in the Entrance Corridors of Pompeian Homes with Shrines and Altars



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