



Making sense(s) of Roman neighborhoods

Conflict, Negotiation, and Collaboration in
Multisensory Communities

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Sensory turn

C. Classen, *Worlds of sense: exploring the senses in history and across cultures*, London 1993

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- C. Classen, D. Howes, R. Newhauser, H. Roodenburg, J. P. Toner, A. Vila, *The Cultural History of the Senses*, vol. 1-6, London 2014
 - J. Day (ed.), *Making Senses of the Past: Toward a Sensory Archaeology*, Carbondale 2013
 - E.M. Betts, (ed.) *Senses of the Empire: Multisensory Approaches to Roman Culture*, London 2017



Sensory studies: theoretical background

- Classen et al. (1994, 3)
 - ”smell is not simply a biological and psychological phenomenon [but] cultural, hence a social and historical phenomenon”
- Day (2014, 3)
 - “the senses are as much culturally constituted as physically given”.



Making sense(s) of Roman neighborhoods

- Investigation on experiences of coexistence in ancient Roman
 - how the inhabitants of Roman towns sensed their immediate neighborhoods.
- The research questions of the study are
 - *what kind of sounds, smells, sights and lights surrounded urban dwellers*
 - how these sensations were perceived and dealt with
 - how they influenced the constructions of spaces

Case studies of three houses

- *House of Marcus Lucretius IX,3,5* in Pompeii
- *Casa del Tramezzo di legno III, 11* in Herculaneum
- *Domus delle Muse III,IX,22* in Ostia.
- Relationships to immediate neighbors
 - other *domus* and apartments
 - *tabernae* and *cauponae*
 - workshops
 - latrines
 - baths, stables or other animal shelters,
 - religious buildings
 - streets etc.



Sounds of the city: disrupting peace

- Snoring neighbor in Cicero, Att. 4,3,5: *Marcellus candidatus ita stertebat ut ego vicinus audirem*
- Traffic in Juvenal 3.232-9: *Raedarum transitus arto / vicorum in flexu et stantis convicia mandrae / eripient somnum Druso vitulisque marinis*
- Bakers, schoolmasters and coppersmiths in Mart. 12,57: *Negant vitam / ludi magistri mane, nocte pistores / aerariorum marculi die toto*
- Baths in Seneca (epist. 56.1) *Ecce undique me varius clamor circumsonat: supra ipsum balneum habito*
- Other noisemakers included e.g. dogs (Iuv. 6,415-23), slaves (Petron. 68)
- Ostian streets: J. Veithch, Soundscape of the street: Architectural acoustics in Ostia, in E.M. Betts 2017

Urban smellscape: sources of smells & scents

- fullonicae (laundries)
- latrines
- stables
- **tanneries**
- waste disposal (streets?)
- bathhouses?
- perfumes
- horti
- bakeries
- thermopolia / tabernae / popinae
- dinners?

sacrifices?
funeral processions?



M. Flohr, Beyond smell: The sensory landscape of the Roman fullonica, in Betts 2017

Campania



Map: Nina Heiska / Expeditio Pompeiana
Universitatis Helsingiensis (EPUH)

Pompeii

Insula IX,3



Map: H. VanderPoel, Rica Maps of Pompeii

Insula IX,3 and House of Marcus Lucretius (IX 3,5/24)

IX, 3,1-2 Fullonica / dye house

IX,3, 10-12 and IX,3, 19-20:
Bakeries

★ latrines (cesspits)

→ other private houses

(work)shops



- IX.2.1 / 29: Three arcades + street altar
IX.2.28 Kitchen, latrine and small storeroom, belonging to adjacent domus
IX.2.25: Caupona
IX.2.24: Stables

—> private houses
● (work)shops

Insula IX,2

Map: H. VanderPoel



VII.2.3 Two private houses linked
+ bakery

VII.2.11 Dye house

VII.2.15 Popina / caupona

●(work)shops

VII.2, along Via Stabiana + IX,4 Terme centrali



Map: H. VanderPoel

Herculaneum

Casa del Tramezzo di legno



Herculaneum: Casa del Tramezzo di legno



Map: Juhana Heikonen, *Public and Private in the Roman House Project*

Bottega del lanarius

Private houses

Textile workshop
+ living quarters

Baths

"Apartment block"

Fullonica + living quarters

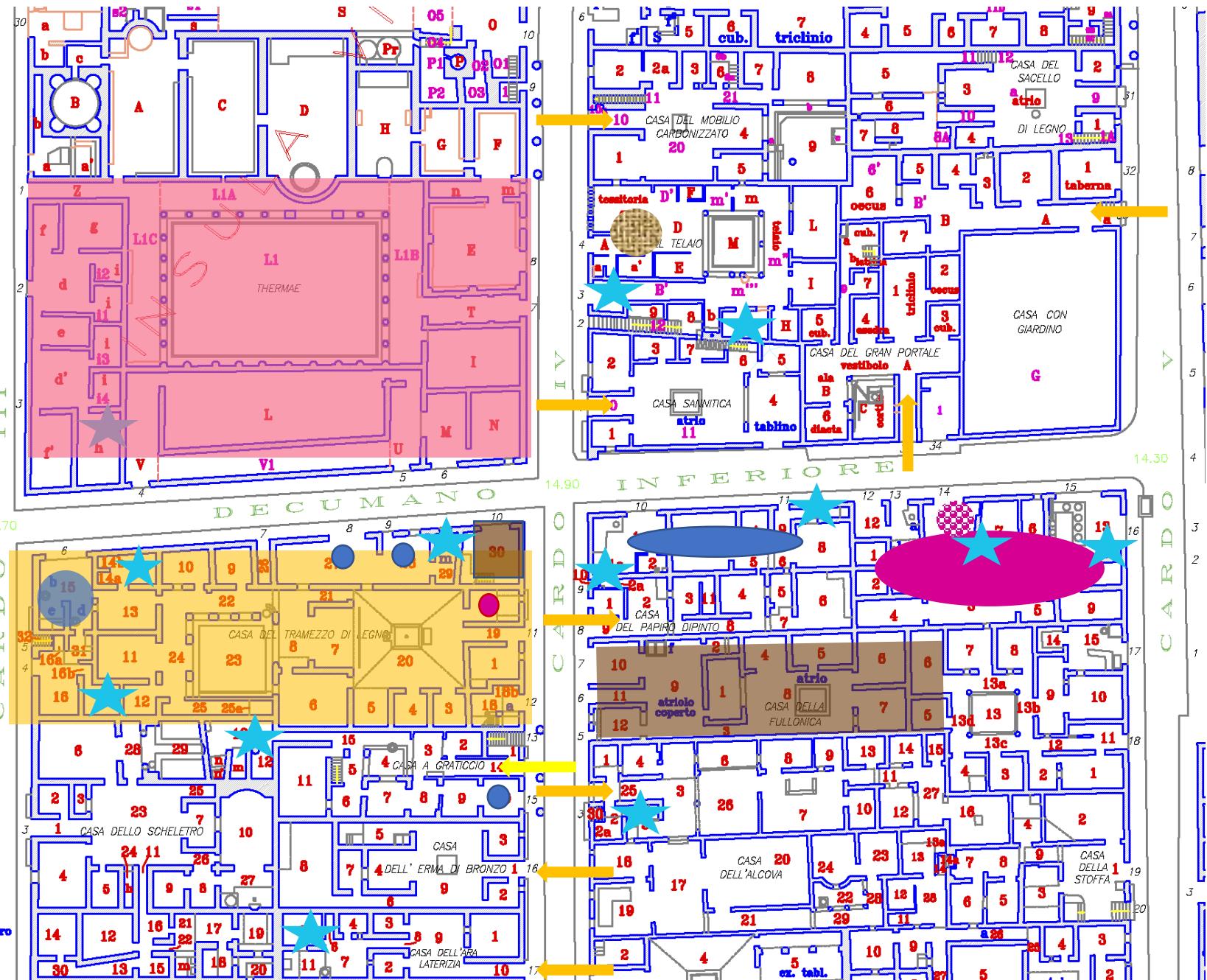
Bottega with living quarters

Thermopolium

Taberna

● (Work)shops

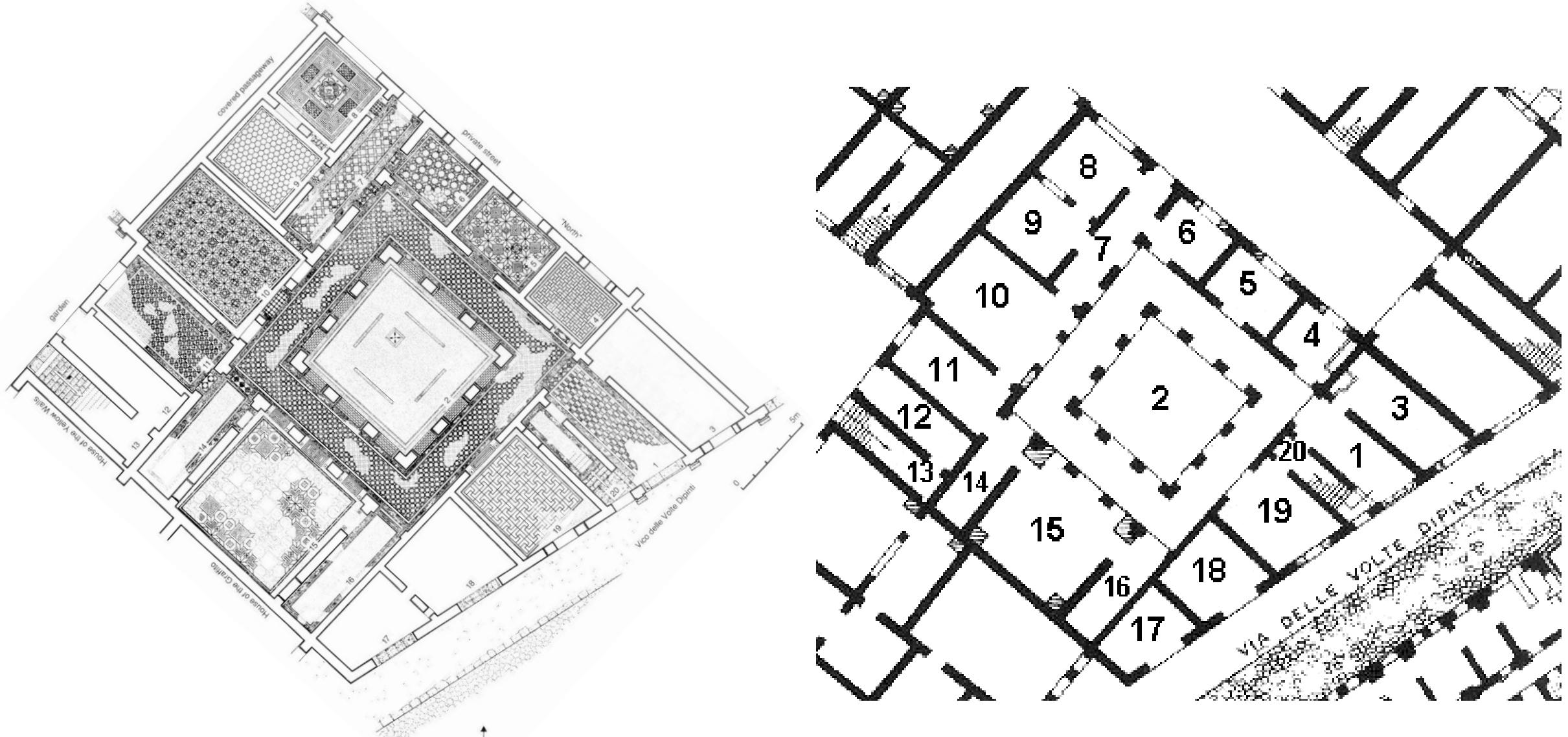
★ Latrines



Source <http://ostia-antica.org/dict.htm>, used with permission

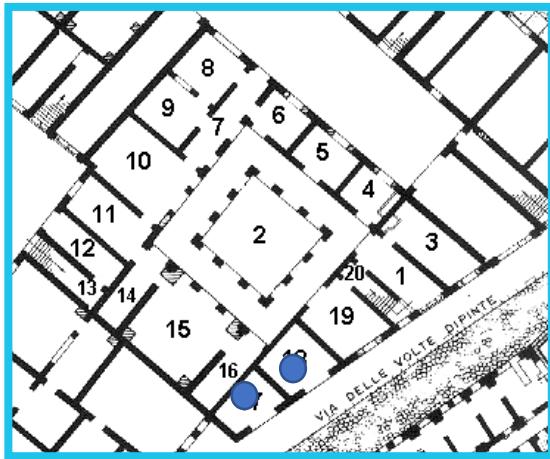


Domus delle Muse (III,IX,22)



- (work)shops
- apartments /
domus
- bars, taverns
- brothels

Domus delle Muse (III,IX,22)



Domus delle Muse (III,IX,22)



- Serapeum (III,XVII,4)
Mitreo III,XVII,2
Sacello delle Tre Navate (III,II,12)
Sacello III,II,11
Tempio dei Fabri Navales (III,II,1-2)
Basilica Cristiana (III,I,4)
Mitreo delle Pareti Dipinte (III,I,6)
Tempio dei Mensores (I,XIX,2)
Tempio dell'Ara Rotonda (I,XV,6)
Tempio di Ercole (I,XV,5)
Tempio tetrastilo (I,XV,2)
Santuario della Bona Dea IV,VIII,3
Mitreo delle Sette Porte (IV,V,13)



Conflict, Negotiation, and/or Collaboration in Multisensory Communities?



**High level of
integration**

**Little
zoning**



**Hierarchy of
society**

Thank you!



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