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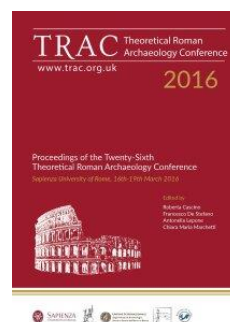
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Venus in Pompeian Domestic Space: Decoration and Context

Carla Brain

Introduction

This paper considers domestic space in Pompeii in terms of ‘predominantly reception areas’ and ‘predominantly non-reception areas’. This approach is then applied to representations of Venus in Pompeian houses to determine whether the location of the artwork influenced the Venus type chosen, and thus whether the context affected the decoration. The latter sections of this paper focus on two Venus types (*Venus Pescatrice* and *Venus Pompeiana*) as these two types are almost exclusively found in Pompeii, and are located in contrasting areas of the house.

Pompeian domestic space has received increasing attention over the past few decades. Many different theories have been proposed for analysing the use of space in Roman houses, with attempts to identify gendered spaces, service areas, and public and private areas. (For identification or discussion of gendered spaces, see de Vos & de Vos 1982: 171; Richardson 1983: 69–71; Richardson 1988: 157; Wallace-Hadrill 1988: 50–52; Hingley 1989: 43–45; Laurence 1994: 127–132; Zaccaria Ruggiu 1995: 289–310; Wallace-Hadrill 1996: esp. 110–111; Allison 2004a: 156–157; for service areas, see Maiuri 1933: 186–237; Wallace-Hadrill 1994; George 1997a; George 1997b: 316–317; Allison 2004a: 107; for public and private areas, see Dunbabin 1994; Wallace-Hadrill 1994; Zaccaria Ruggiu 1995; Grahame 1997; Riggsby 1997; Tuori & Nissin 2015).

Different approaches have also been developed in attempts to identify the function of rooms in the Roman house. Some scholars have used ancient nomenclature to identify room function or activities that would have taken place in these rooms, while others use decoration and/or material culture as an indicator of room function or type of area (for these approaches, discussion or critiques of them, regarding ancient nomenclature, see Overbeck 1884: esp. 248–249; Mau 1899: 239–360; Wallace-Hadrill 1994: 6–7; Dickmann 1997; Leach 1997; Nevett 1997: 283–284; Ellis 2002: esp. 27. For decoration and/or material culture reflecting the function of a room, see Scagliarini Corlàita 1974–6; Clarke 1991: esp. 157, 159, 367–368; Ling 1991: 48–51, 69–70; Jansen 1993; Tybout 1993; van Binnebeke 1993; Foss 1994: esp. 107–108, 115; Berry 1997. For decoration and architecture used to identify service areas, see Wallace-Hadrill 1994: esp. 39–44).

By contrast, Allison (2004a) avoids interpretation of room function as far as possible. She classifies different room types based on the openness of the room and whether it was

located off the front hall or main garden area. This allows room types to be identified without attributing a function to them and without using ancient nomenclature that often describes either the ideal Roman house or a specific one (for a discussion of the issues inherent with using ancient nomenclature to describe Roman houses, see Allison 2001). It is useful to avoid interpretations of room function given that the use of space in Pompeian houses probably had some degree of flexibility, with rooms often serving multiple functions and some used seasonally (as discussed below). If Roman rooms were indeed multifunctional, this would suggest that no single function can be ascertained through their decoration, and any artefacts situated within a room in Pompeii might just indicate the last use of the room before the eruption, rather than the other functions it may have served previously.

I have emulated Allison's (2004a) approach because, as mentioned, this avoids interpreting the function of spaces, as the room types are based on criteria relating to the physical structure rather than interpretations of space. I have then grouped these room types together according to whether they predominantly served as a reception or a non-reception space, in order to investigate whether representations of Venus varied in relation to the location of the artwork.

Vitruvius and Reception Areas

In order to determine Roman attitudes towards domestic space, the texts of ancient authors need to be utilised, whilst bearing in mind their limitations. When describing the ideal house, Vitruvius, a Roman architect and engineer in the first century B.C., distinguishes areas within the house as rooms where guests need an invitation to enter, such as *cubicula*, *triclinia*, and *balneae*; and rooms where visitors can enter uninvited, such as *vestibula*, *cava aedium*, and *peristylia* (Vitruvius 6.5.1). He does not distinguish between public areas and private ones, as we may now, but rather between areas that anyone could access and areas where an invitation was needed. No private areas of the house where guests could not enter are identified. Vitruvius thus considers different rooms in the house to have different degrees of reception for guests. Although he does not identify any non-reception areas, guests were presumably not received in some areas of the house, such as kitchen areas (detectable by a hearth).

Multifunctional and Seasonal Rooms

Rooms within the Roman house were probably multifunctional and varied their use seasonally (Richardson 1983: 62–64; George 1997b: 302–303; Nevett 1997: 291–292; Allison 2001: 192). The same room could serve multiple functions and different activities could take place there. The function of a room could change throughout the day and year, and could be made more public or private, being used to receive guests or reserved for the household's private use, depending on what was needed at the time.

Indeed, Pliny the Younger described how a room in his Laurentine house was multifunctional, as it could be used as either a *cubiculum* or a *cenatio* (Pliny, *Letters*, 2.17.10). That said, in Pompeian houses, fixtures for permanent furniture appear to be common, perhaps suggesting that moveable furniture was less common in Pompeii (Allison 2004a: 123).

Portable or permanent screens, doors, windows with shutters, and curtains could cordon off space at different times. These are referred to in ancient sources (especially by Pliny, see George 1997b: 317–318), and have been discovered at Pompeii (Proudfoot 2013: 93, 100). These could change a space from public to private, open to closed, reception to non-reception, as required.

Rooms may have served a reception function at certain times of day and not at others. This is best seen in the houses of the elite. Patrons would receive clients during the *salutatio* in their houses in the morning, then would likely go to the forum to conduct public business or to the baths, returning to the house for dinner in the evening when again guests would be received (Laurence 1994: 122–132). Although some rooms may have been purpose-built to serve a specific function with permanent fixtures, such as hearths in kitchen areas, it is likely that the rooms used for morning *salutatio*, or for the reception of guests in the evening for dining and other entertainments, were also used throughout the day by other members of the household.

Identifying Room Types

I have adapted the criteria of Allison (2004a) in order to identify room types (table 1), since her study focuses exclusively on *atrium* houses in Pompeii, whereas my research focuses on different types of houses in the town. Rooms are identified as small, medium or large in relation to the size of other rooms within the house. Allison’s room type criteria are particularly useful for considering the Pompeian house as they are based on architectural evidence for room types without attributing a function to them. Allison highlights that applying the nomenclature used to describe rooms by ancient authors to the actual material evidence is problematic (Allison 2004a: 161–163). For instance, terms such as *cubiculum* or *tablinum* are often equated to modern room types such as bedrooms or offices (Allison 2004a: 166–168), which introduce preconceptions about the function of these areas.

Table 1: Allison’s room type criteria (after Allison 2004a, Table 5.a) with slight adaptations in bold, and the reception level of the room stated

| Room Type | Section of House | Room Location and Description | Predominantly Reception or Non-Reception Area |
|-----------|------------------|--|---|
| 1 | Front hall area | Main entranceway | Non-Reception |
| 2 | “ | Room leading directly off front entranceway | Depends on individual room |
| 3 | “ | Front hall, usually with central opening and pool | Reception |
| 4 | “ | Small closed room off side of front hall | Non-Reception |
| 5 | “ | Open-fronted area off side of front hall | Reception |
| 6 | “ | Large/medium room usually off corner of front hall | Reception |
| 7 | “ | Open-sided room usually opposite main entrance or leading to garden | Reception |

| | | | |
|----|------------------|--|----------------------------|
| 8 | “ | Long, narrow internal corridor | Non-Reception |
| 9 | Main garden area | Main garden, colonnaded garden and ambulatories, or terrace | Reception |
| 10 | “ | Large/medium closed room off garden/terrace but with no view | Reception |
| 11 | “ | Large/medium open-fronted room off garden/terrace with window or wide entranceway giving view of garden or lower floor | Reception |
| 12 | “ | Small closed room off garden/terrace or lower floor | Non-Reception |
| 13 | “ | Small open-fronted (at least partially) area off garden/terrace or lower floor | Reception |
| 14 | Other areas | Room with cooking hearth or associated room (kitchen area) | Non-Reception |
| 15 | “ | Latrine as entire room | Non-Reception |
| 16 | “ | Other room outside main front hall/garden complex | Depends on individual room |
| 17 | “ | Stairway | Non-Reception |
| 18 | “ | Secondary internal garden or court, usually not colonnaded | Depends on individual room |
| 19 | “ | Secondary entrance or entrance courtyard | Depends on individual room |
| 20 | “ | Room at front of house open to street (shop) | N/A |
| 21 | “ | Bath area | Reception |
| 22 | “ | Upper floor rooms and material in upper-level deposits | Depends on individual room |

Grouping Room Types

Adams (2006) uses Allison's (2004a) room types to group rooms he considers 'potential entertainment' spaces. He uses these room types and artefacts found within them to identify just six room types as having a potential entertainment function – types 6, 7, 9, 10, 11 and 13. He considers these room types to have a potential entertainment function in light of their fine decoration; accessibility; and/or their possible use as dining or display areas (Adams 2006: 2–3). He excludes other room types based on their architectural type and the findings of Allison, arguing that they only had 'limited evidence that could suggest a potential entertainment role' (Adams 2006: 3).

Although reception and entertainment spaces could overlap, there are additional areas that served a reception function but not an entertainment one (reception areas being for the reception of guests, encompassing business purposes such as the *salutatio* in addition to entertainment functions). The six room types identified by Adams as potential entertainment areas are all considered as 'predominantly reception areas' in the present study, as they satisfy the criteria outlined below. This is in addition to other room types, discussed in detail in the following sections, along with the criteria for classifying rooms as 'predominantly reception areas'.

Reception and Non-Reception Areas

As Table 2 shows, when the 156 artworks featuring Venus in domestic contexts are divided into 22 different room types, the numbers are generally too small for analysis. They need to be grouped together for clarity. Thus, in this study, rooms are separated into two categories based on their room type: ‘predominantly reception areas’ and ‘predominantly non-reception areas’. These categories are used as analytical tools and do not necessarily reflect the use of these rooms in reality as exclusively one or the other. Each room type had a different degree to which they could be used as a reception room, which perhaps varied depending on the time of day or the season, though this is difficult to ascertain. ‘Predominantly reception areas’ are those likely to have performed a reception function the majority of the time, and ‘predominantly non-reception areas’ are those which probably performed a non-reception function most of the time. Predominantly reception and non-reception areas are classified based on their architecture (how open the room is, and its size) and the presence of structural features that suggest a clear function (such as millstones in domestic contexts identifying bakeries, and hearths identifying kitchens, both indicating ‘predominantly non-reception areas’). Shops at the front of houses (room type 20) are not considered as domestic spaces in this study so do not qualify as either category.

‘Predominantly Reception Areas’

‘Predominantly reception areas’ include open rooms (room types 5, 7, and 13); medium/large rooms (room types 6 and 10); or both (room types 3, 9, and 11); and bath areas (room type 21). Activities in open rooms could be viewed from other locations, which probably resulted in the use of these areas for public rather than private activities. Although partitions could make these rooms less open and visible, they probably served a mostly reception function. Medium or large rooms had the potential to be used for the reception of guests given their size, as they could provide the required capacity for large gatherings and associated entertainments, such as singing, dancing, and acrobatic displays (Witts 2000: 293). Bath areas were likely to have been used by both the inhabitants and guests; indeed, Vitruvius states that invited guests could enter *balneae* (Vitruvius 6.5.1).

Many rooms in the house would have been open to guests, as is suggested by many ancient authors. Guests could visit rooms such as the library before having dinner (Macrobius, *Saturnalia*, 1.6.1; Sidonius, *Letters*, 2.9; Ellis 1997: 42). Indeed, the guests of Trimalchio in Petronius’ *Satyricon* visit a good portion of the house before dinner (Wallace-Hadrill 1988: 44). Multiple rooms appear to have been utilised for large gatherings (Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, 13.52.1–2 – Letter 353), suggesting there could be more than one reception room within larger houses at least.

‘Predominantly Non-Reception Areas’

‘Predominantly non-reception areas’ include small, closed rooms (types 4 and 12) given their lack of openness and their small size. The architecture of these rooms would thus have made it difficult for large numbers of guests to be entertained as a group, although guests could be received on a more intimate level (as discussed in the ‘Venus in *Cubicula*’ section below). It is therefore unlikely that these rooms were mainly used as reception areas.

Type 14 rooms (kitchen areas) were noisy and smoky due to cooking, and were thus unlikely reception areas. Foss argues that cooking areas were located ‘with other service areas of the house’ near storerooms, latrines and stables based on the accounts of ancient authors (Foss 1994: 72), which would suggest that they were ‘predominantly non-reception areas’.

Although guests would have passed through entranceways (room type 1) and perhaps some corridors (room type 8), these qualify as ‘predominantly non-reception areas’ as they are transition areas with no space for guests to congregate or for activities to take place. Latrines (room type 15) and stairways (room type 17) are obviously not reception areas where guests would be received, entertained, or would congregate.

Room Types Assessed Individually

Some room types cover such a varied collection of rooms that the reception level for the type cannot be generalised. Thus, rooms of type 2 (those leading directly off the front entranceway); 16 (rooms which do not qualify as other room types, such as domestic bakeries); and 22 (upper floor rooms) need their predominantly reception or non-reception character to be assessed for each room individually rather than for the type as a whole.

Secondary gardens (room type 18) and secondary entrances and courtyards (room type 19) are exceptions to the criteria above that identify predominantly reception and non-reception areas through the architecture of a room and its structural features. Although these areas are often large and sometimes quite open, thus having the potential to receive guests, the material evidence recovered indicates that industrial activities were sometimes amongst their uses, and some were possibly productive gardens (Allison 2004a: 108–110). This is not evident from their architectural remains alone, and thus rooms of these types need to be categorised on a case-by-case basis.

The Usefulness of this Approach

Considering rooms in terms of ‘predominantly reception areas’ and ‘predominantly non-reception areas’ on the basis of the above criteria is useful as it is based on size, capacity and structural features, rather than concepts of room function, decoration and artefacts, which do not take into consideration the multifunctional nature of rooms. The word ‘predominantly’ prefixed to these two categories acknowledges that the reception level of a room existed on a spectrum – the same room could fall into a different category at different times of the day or year, given the multifunctional and seasonal use of space; reception areas could be made into smaller non-reception areas through the use of temporary partitions such as screens or curtains; and small, closed rooms (considered ‘predominantly non-reception areas’ as they would not be able to support a large gathering) could be used for the more intimate reception of a few guests.

Venus in Pompeian Domestic Space

The above theoretical model of considering the Pompeian house in terms of ‘predominantly reception areas’ and ‘predominantly non-reception areas’ can be used to analyse the

location of fixed artworks featuring Venus in Pompeii. Venus appears 161 times in domestic contexts in Pompeii in wall-paintings, reliefs, ceiling paintings and floor decoration (this dataset is subject to small amendments, see Brain forthcoming). Table 2 shows how many Venus representations occur in each room type (for five of these there is no information available on their room of origin, leaving 156 where the room type is identifiable). There are obvious reasons why Venus is not depicted in certain areas. For instance, Venus representations are absent from entranceways, corridors, and stairways (room types 1, 8, 17, and 19), probably because the nature of these rooms as transition areas meant they were only experienced briefly by visitors, or even members of the household. In Allison's (2004b) sample, the least common room type is room type 2 (rooms leading directly off the front entranceway; table 2) with just one of these rooms including wall-paintings, so the lack of Venus artworks in this room type is unsurprising. Her absence in room type 15 (latrines) is also unsurprising (Jansen 1993 attests to the rarity of decorated toilets in Pompeii and Herculaneum). The lack of Venus depictions in room type 18 (secondary internal gardens or courts) is perhaps due to rooms of this type serving an industrial or utilitarian function (Allison 2004a: 108–110). Allison's (2004b) study also reveals that rooms of this type are mostly unpainted, or painted with colours and patterns rather than figures and scenes, which suggests that these secondary gardens received less decorative attention than main garden areas (room type 9). The goddess is not recorded in artworks in upper floor rooms (room type 22), probably due to a paucity of surviving upper floor paintings due to their collapse during the eruption.

Table 2: The frequency of each room type and corresponding percentage within Allison's (2004b) sample of 30 Pompeian households in comparison to the frequency and percentage of Venus representations in each room type

| Room Type | Number of rooms of each type within Allison's sample | Percentage of rooms of each type within Allison's sample | Number of Venus representations in each room type | Percentage of Venus representations in each room type |
|-----------|--|--|---|---|
| 1 | 37 | 4.3% | 0 | 0.0% |
| 2 | 9 | 1.1% | 0 | 0.0% |
| 3 | 35 | 4.1% | 7 | 4.5% |
| 4 | 130 | 15.2% | 25 | 16.0% |
| 5 | 31 | 3.6% | 7 | 4.5% |
| 6 | 34 | 4.0% | 15 | 9.6% |
| 7 | 33 | 3.9% | 18 | 11.5% |
| 8 | 63 | 7.4% | 0 | 0.0% |
| 9 | 45 | 5.3% | 10 | 6.4% |
| 10 | 22 | 2.6% | 16 | 10.3% |
| 11 | 55 | 6.4% | 36 | 23.1% |
| 12 | 70 | 8.2% | 11 | 7.1% |
| 13 | 22 | 2.6% | 5 | 3.2% |
| 14 | 44 | 5.1% | 1 | 0.6% |
| 15 | 11 | 1.3% | 0 | 0.0% |
| 16 | 78 | 9.1% | 2 | 1.3% |

| | | | | |
|--------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|
| 17 | 24 | 2.8% | 0 | 0.0% |
| 18 | 15 | 1.8% | 0 | 0.0% |
| 19 | 10 | 1.2% | 0 | 0.0% |
| 20 | 11 | 1.3% | 0 | 0.0% |
| 21 | 19 | 2.2% | 3 | 1.9% |
| 22 | 58 | 6.8% | 0 | 0.0% |
| Total | 856 | 100% | 156 | 100% |

In Allison's sample of 30 Pompeian houses, there are 856 different rooms. Type 20 rooms (shops at the front of houses) are not considered part of domestic space in this study and instead qualify as public areas. Thus, these 11 rooms are omitted here, leaving 845 rooms. Based on the criteria previously discussed, 296 of these (35%) qualify as 'predominantly reception areas', compared with 379 (45%) 'predominantly non-reception areas'. The remaining 170 (20%) are room types that are so varied that their reception level needs to be assessed individually rather than as a type.

In contrast, it is more common for the 156 Venus depictions in domestic contexts in Pompeii to appear in 'predominantly reception areas', where there are 118 images of Venus (76%), compared with 38 (24%) in 'predominantly non-reception areas'. These numbers include the two Venus representations in type 16 rooms (other rooms) which need to be assessed individually. These consist of one in a 'predominantly non-reception area' (room 16 of VI.11.8–10 is a domestic bakery), and one in a 'predominantly reception area' (room 62 of VII.16.22 is a hall on the lower floor). *Venus Pescatrice* is the only Venus type to appear more often in 'predominantly non-reception areas' of the house.

Table 2 demonstrates that large/medium rooms (types 6, 10, and 11) are particularly rich in representations of Venus, though small, closed rooms (types 4 and 12) also frequently feature the goddess. Aside from these groups of room types, the most popular locations for depictions of Venus are type 7 rooms (*tablina*), followed by type 9 rooms (garden areas).

As the majority of Venus artworks are located in 'predominantly reception areas', discussion here will focus on the 24% from 'predominantly non-reception areas'. All but two of these depictions from 'predominantly non-reception areas' are located in small, closed rooms (types 4 and 12), conventionally referred to as *cubicula* (these are sometimes referred to as *cubicula* below for ease of comparing my data with the arguments of scholars who use these terms).

Venus in cubicula

This study considers small, closed rooms (types 4 and 12 – *cubicula*) to be 'predominantly non-reception areas', however, they could still be used for reception purposes (on a small scale) when needed. For instance, Cicero and Pliny describe how *cubicula* could be used for meeting clients, friends or businessmen (Cicero, *Pro Scauro*, 11.26; Pliny, *Letters*, 5.1.6 and 5.3.11).

Cubicula have previously been considered as bedrooms (see discussion in Allison 2004a: 166–167). Several ancient authors attest to *cubicula* being used for rest, sexual activ-

ity and adultery (see Riggsby 1997: 37–38 for a comprehensive list), but in Allison’s sample of 30 *atrium* houses in Pompeii, she discovered relatively little material evidence for sleeping in these rooms (Allison 2004a: 134–135). As Nevett argues, *cubicula* may therefore have been a more general term for rooms, given their number and the range of activities they seem to have encompassed, and perhaps different *cubicula* had different functions; Pliny describes a *cubiculum dormitorium*, a further categorisation presumably not needed if all *cubicula* were used for sleeping (Pliny, *Natural History*, 30.17.52; Nevett 1997: 291; Allison 2004a: 166–167). Regardless of the function of these rooms, their small size compared to other rooms in the house and their closed nature meant they could not support the reception of a number of guests and thus likely served a mostly non-reception function.

Ling and Ling have argued that scenes associated with Venus, and love scenes more generally, were particularly common in *cubicula* (Ling & Ling 2005: 94). Although my research focuses on scenes depicting Venus, and not love scenes more generally, if the majority of love scenes were located in room types conventionally referred to as *cubicula*, a high proportion of representations of the goddess of love could also be expected to occur in such rooms. However, just 23% of domestic depictions of Venus are located in small, closed rooms (room types 4 and 12 – *cubicula*) where the room type can be ascertained (table 2).

Among the 156 Venus artworks in domestic contexts in Pompeii, 48 constitute love scenes featuring Venus (31% of all domestic Venus depictions). These scenes include: Venus with Adonis; the love of Venus and Mars; various Helena and Paris narratives; Echo and Narcissus; the weddings of various deities; Pasiphae with Venus and Daedalus; and Venus encouraging a hero to approach a woman.

Just 21% of the 48 love scenes featuring Venus in domestic contexts are located in small, closed rooms (types 4 and 12 – *cubicula*). As fig. 1 shows, such scenes occur in other room types too, and are located throughout the house. The larger proportion (46%) are lo-

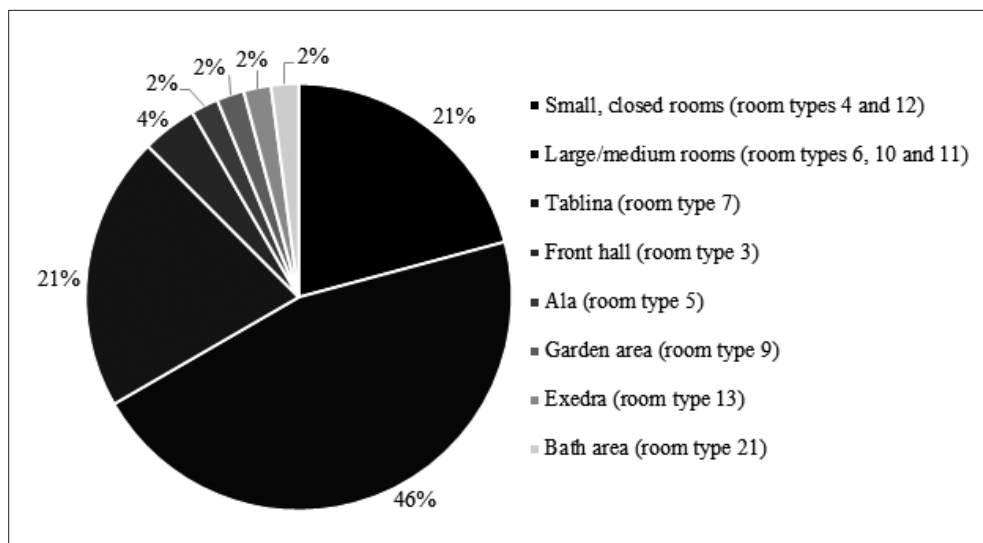


Figure 1: The location of love scenes featuring Venus in domestic contexts in Pompeii

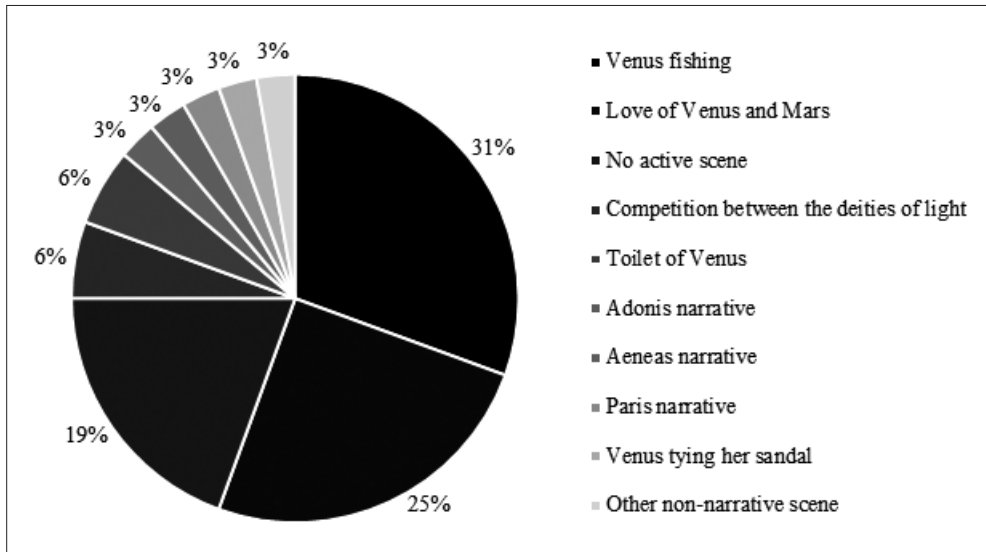


Figure 2: Scene types featuring Venus in small, closed rooms (room types 4 and 12) in domestic contexts in Pompeii – there is a rounding error of 2%

cated in large/medium rooms (types 6, 10 and 11) and another 21% in *tablina* (room type 7). Especially noteworthy is that the 39 artworks of Venus touching or embracing one of her lovers (Mars, Adonis or Anchises) in domestic contexts are rarely located in small, closed rooms (just 9 of 39 – 23% are located in room types 4 and 12; see Brain forthcoming).

There are 36 Venus representations in small, closed rooms (*cubicula*). The most popular scene featuring Venus in these room types is that of ‘Venus fishing’ (often known as *Venus Pescatrice*), accounting for nearly a third of Venus depictions in these room types (11 of 36 – 31%, fig. 2). The ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ scene type is the second most frequent Venus scene in small, closed rooms, accounting for a quarter of depictions in these room types (9 of 36 – 25%). Although the prominence of ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ scenes in *cubicula* might suggest that love scenes are common in these room types, this scene type is mostly located in rooms other than *cubicula* (in 24 of 33 – 73% depictions of this scene type; see Brain forthcoming). The ‘Love of Venus and Mars’ is also the most frequent Venus scene located in large/medium rooms and *tablina*. This demonstrates the importance of considering room types in relation to each other and not in isolation.

Venus Pescatrice

Venus Pescatrice is represented 25 times in Pompeii, exclusively in wall-paintings. Depictions of this type are very similar in both pose and setting. *Venus Pescatrice* depicts Venus fishing semi-naked, seated on a rock, her lower half covered in drapery (see *PPM V*: 345, photo 6). She usually sits on the right-hand side of the painting, using her left hand to support herself and holding a fishing rod in her right hand. There is always landscape scenery in the background, and often at least one cupid.

It has been argued that *Venus Pescatrice* appears exclusively within *cubicula*, the equivalent of small, closed rooms (de Vos in *PPM* II: 1059). My research has shown that this Venus type occurs not only outside *cubicula*, but also outside the house in four examples: one in a shop (VI.14.28); one in the back room of a *caupona* (VI.10.1); one in a *caupona* which later became part of a house (IX.8.3/7); and one where the domestic or public context of the building cannot be established (an unknown house in region IX, to the east of *insulae* 5 and 6). The remaining 21 *Venus Pescatrice* paintings are from domestic contexts (the room type is identifiable for 19 of these 21 depictions).

Table 3: The distribution of *Venus Pescatrice* representations in domestic contexts across room types

| Room Type | Total |
|--|-----------|
| Predominantly Reception Areas | 8 |
| 5 | 2 |
| 6 | 1 |
| 7 | 1 |
| 10 | 1 |
| 11 | 3 |
| Predominantly Non-Reception Areas | 11 |
| 4 | 9 |
| 12 | 2 |
| Unknown Areas | 2 |
| Unknown | 2 |
| Total | 21 |

Although *cubicula* are the more frequent locations for *Venus Pescatrice* representations (11 of 19 – 58%), this Venus type does not exclusively appear within *cubicula*, as 8 of 19 (42%) domestic depictions of this type are located in ‘predominantly reception areas’ of the house, in room types 5, 6, 7, 10, and 11 (table 3). Furthermore, it is interesting to note where this type does not occur. *Venus Pescatrice* representations are absent from major open areas of the house, such as *atria* (room type 3) and garden areas (room type 9). These areas gave access to a number of other rooms, and were often open to the elements. They may have also included water features, such as *impluvia* or fountains, which would have complemented the fishing aspect of the scene. It is thus strange that no representations of this Venus type were located in these room types, especially as gardens were often decorated in relation to their function with outdoor scenes such as gardens, landscapes and hunting scenes (Allison 2001: 193).

Venus Pompeiana

Venus Pompeiana is represented 12 times in Pompeii, exclusively in wall-paintings. By contrast to *Venus Pescatrice*, which is often located in ‘predominantly non-reception areas’ of the house, *Venus Pompeiana* is more often located in ‘predominantly reception areas’.

Venus Pompeiana depicts Venus standing in full regalia, heavily draped in a mantle, with her right arm across her breast (see Spinazzola 1953: tav. XV). She is recognisable by this pose and her attributes of a rudder, cupid, walled crown, and olive or myrtle sprig, though she may

not appear with all these attributes within the same painting. Given the similarities between all paintings of this type – the statue-like, rigid pose of Venus, and the fact that the goddess never appears within any action occurring within the scene – it is likely that this type represents a statue of Venus, possibly the cult statue of Venus in Pompeii, although such a cult statue has not been discovered (Balsdon 1951: 6; Moormann 1988: 51, 74; Fröhlich 1991: 149–150; *PPM* VII: 374; Brain forthcoming). Furthermore, this Venus type is almost exclusively found in Pompeii (except for one example in Boscoreale – Boyce 1937: 99 no. 496). Altogether this evidence suggests that *Venus Pompeiana* represents the role of Venus as patron deity of Pompeii. If so, it would explain why one-third (4 of 12 – 33%) of *Venus Pompeiana* paintings are located in public locations (public buildings/spaces or on façades). Moreover, this Venus type has the joint highest number of occurrences outside the house, with *Venus Pompeiana*; *Venus Anadyomene*; and the ‘Toilet of Venus’ types each comprising 4 of all 23 (17%) depictions of Venus in public locations (Brain forthcoming). *Venus Pompeiana* is also the most common Venus type depicted on façades, with three representations (3 of 11 – 27%).

The remaining two-thirds (8 of 12 – 67%) of *Venus Pompeiana* paintings are located in domestic contexts. All but two domestic depictions of this type are located in ‘predominantly reception areas’ (table 4) – room type 16 in this instance is a ‘predominantly non-reception area’ (the domestic bakery, room 16 in VI.11.8–10). The two paintings located in ‘predominantly non-reception areas’ (room 16 in VI.11.8–10 – room type 16; and room k in IX.1.12 – room type 14) may be explained by their location within *lararium* paintings and by this Venus type having more religious/ritual significance than other types (Brain forthcoming), perhaps representing the patron deity of the town, possibly as a cult statue.

In total, 4 of 12 (33%) *Venus Pompeiana* paintings in both public and domestic contexts are located either in a *lararium* painting or near a *lararium* (Brain forthcoming). One of these is located in the courtyard of a shop (VII.4.20). The other three are located in domestic contexts in an *atrium* (V.4.3); a domestic bakery (VI.11.8–10); and a cooking area (IX.1.12). *Venus Pompeiana* is the most frequent Venus type represented in *lararium* paintings or on *lararia* in Pompeii, comprising 4 of the 6 (67%) depictions of Venus in these contexts (Brain forthcoming).

Table 4: The distribution of *Venus Pompeiana* representations in domestic contexts across room types

| Room Type | Total |
|--|----------|
| Predominantly Reception Areas | 6 |
| 3 | 1 |
| 6 | 1 |
| 9 | 1 |
| 10 | 1 |
| 11 | 1 |
| 13 | 1 |
| Predominantly Non-Reception Areas | 2 |
| 14 | 1 |
| 16 | 1 |
| Total | 8 |

Conclusion

It may never be possible to ascertain Roman attitudes towards the use of space in domestic contexts, especially as it is unlikely that all Romans approached it in the same way. In order to study Pompeian domestic space, the architectural remains need to be considered without applying modern ideas on the use of space to them or adopting ancient nomenclature that describes either the ideal house, or a specific one and was not intended as a guide to all Roman houses.

The potential multifunctional nature of space in Roman houses meant the use of space was fluid. Considering Pompeian houses in terms of Allison's (2004a) room types, rather than attributing a function to rooms, allows for more reliable conclusions to be made on the basis of the architectural room type – ascertained by its size relative to other rooms in the house and its open or closed nature.

Just 21% of love scenes featuring Venus in domestic contexts in Pompeii occur in small, closed rooms (*cubicula*). They are far more common in 'predominantly reception areas' of the house. Thus the assumption that *cubicula* were bedrooms decorated with love scenes, reflecting the function of the room, is not supported by depictions of the goddess of love herself.

Venus Pescatrice is the only Venus type to have a particular bias towards being represented more often in 'predominantly non-reception areas', though this type could appear throughout the house. This is in sharp contrast to paintings of *Venus Pompeiana*, which mostly appear in larger, reception areas of the house, in addition to this Venus type being the most frequent on façades. When *Venus Pompeiana* occurs within domestic contexts, this type is always depicted in 'predominantly reception areas' or within *lararium* paintings.

Thus, in some instances, the predominantly reception or non-reception character of a room affected which type of Venus, or scene featuring Venus, was chosen to decorate it. Although rooms could change between being reception and non-reception areas depending on the time of day or the season, the degree of openness and the size of a room suggests whether it had a predominantly reception or non-reception function. This model is not without its limitations, as room types 18 and 19 (secondary gardens, entrances and courtyards) are exceptions to these criteria for predominantly reception and non-reception areas and may need further analysis going beyond the architecture of these rooms. Thus this model may be limited in its transferability to the wider study of Pompeian houses, though it is important to emphasise its utility for the study of depictions of Venus in Pompeii. This approach is designed for studies focusing on a large amount of houses; scholars using a smaller sample should endeavour to consider each room individually, rather than grouping room types together as predominantly reception or non-reception areas.

An accurate model for studying all houses in Pompeii may be unattainable because of the complexity of the use of space in Pompeian houses. This paper, however, has put forward a new approach to help us reach new understandings of Roman domestic space, beyond arguments based on: applying ancient nomenclature to archaeological remains to interpret the function of spaces; identifying room function through decoration alone; or segregating areas of houses based on modern concepts of public or private space.

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Abbreviations

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