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# *FINDING COMMERCE: THE* TABERNA *AND THE IDENTIFICATION OF ROMAN COMMERCIAL SPACE*

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*Although commercial activity was one of the central features of Roman urban centres, the identification of commercial space in the archaeological record is not always straightforward. Identifications are routinely made through the application of Latin nomenclature to particular architectural typologies, almost inevitably leading to interpretations of space influenced by both textual and modern analogies, a practice which can be most clearly demonstrated by the so-called* taberna. *Using the* taberna *as a case-study, this paper explores the issues of Latin nomenclature and textual analogy; architectural typology and modern analogy; and material evidence and functional space, demonstrating the difficulties of identifying specific functions for so-called* tabernae *in the archaeological record. It argues that a much wider variety of spaces should be viewed as potentially commercial, since commerce — and especially retail — could take place almost anywhere, and suggests ways in which we could use the ancient evidence to look for commerce beyond the* taberna, *demonstrating the commercial potential of streets, porticoes, arcades, open spaces, and even private houses, since the separation of commercial and domestic activities in the ancient world was minimal.*

*Sebbene l'attività commerciale possa essere considerata una delle caratteristiche centrali delle città romane, l'identificazione dello spazio commerciale nel* record *archeologico non è sempre semplice. Essa è frutto generalmente dell'applicazione della terminologia latina a particolari tipologie architettoniche, il che porta inevitabilmente a interpretazioni influenzate da analogie sia testuali sia moderne, come chiaramente dimostrato dal caso della cosiddetta* taberna. *Utilizzando la* taberna *come caso studio, il presente articolo esplora le questioni della terminologia latina e dell'analogia testuale, della tipologia architettonica e dell'analogia moderna, dell'evidenza materiale e dello spazio funzionale, dimostrando le difficoltà di identificare specifiche funzioni nel* record *archeologico per le cosiddette* tabernae. *Si sostiene inoltre che una maggiore gamma di spazi dovrebbe essere considerata come potenzialmente commerciale, dal momento che il commercio — specialmente quello di dettaglio — poteva avere luogo quasi ovunque. Si suggeriscono così modi in cui si potrebbe usare l'evidenza antica per indagare la categoria del commercio al di fuori della* taberna, *dimostrando il potenziale commerciale delle strade, dei portici, degli spazi aperti e persino delle case private, dal momento che nel mondo antico la distinzione tra attività commerciali e domestiche era minima.*

A significant proportion of Roman urban space was given over to commercial activity, but identifying commercial space in the archaeological record is not always straightforward. A commercial function is often assigned to particular

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spaces on the basis of a combination of architectural typologies, the application of Latin nomenclature, and textual and modern analogies.[2] This is a practice most clearly demonstrated by the so-called *taberna*, a Latin term which is frequently assigned to spaces that follow a particular architectural form. These structures typically consist of ground-floor rooms opening directly on to the street (or on to a portico or arcade), with wide entranceways marked by grooved thresholds in which shutters could be placed; some also have back rooms and/or mezzanine floors above, lighted by windows above the entranceways (Figs 1a–c and 2a–c). Such structures are frequently identified in the archaeological record, appearing almost as *the* quintessential Roman commercial space, and are commonly identified as shops and workshops.[3] Theories about the structure and organization of urban economies and societies are then constructed on the basis of this identification. Purcell (1994: 659–73), for example, contends that the *taberna* was almost synonymous with the urban *plebs* in Rome, characterizing Rome as a 'city of shops' and its people as 'a nation of shopkeepers', while Mayer (2012) argues for a particular '*taberna* economy' that generated and supported a Roman urban middle class. Others, such as Flohr (2014), note that the number and visibility of these commercial units increased in the Roman period, reflecting a pattern of increased capital investment in commercial space and the growing commercialization of the economy. The presence of *tabernae* has, therefore, been used as a proxy indicator for the nature of an urban economy.

This paper has two main aims: first, to explore the connections between Latin terminology, architectural typologies and Roman commercial space, using the *taberna* as a case-study; and secondly, to argue that commercial activity does not always require a particular architectural space or structure in which to take place, meaning that relying on the *taberna* alone gives only a partial picture of urban commercial activity. The main focus is on Roman Italy, partly for practical reasons of space and clarity, but also because the terminology and architectural typologies of the Eastern provinces are somewhat different. In the Eastern regions of the Roman world, the term *ergasterion* is used in place of *taberna*, at least in literature, and many structures lack the wide doorways typically associated with *tabernae* in Italy and the West.[4]

[2] For the purposes of this paper, commercial activity is taken to include both retail and production of goods on a commercial scale, since retail and production very often overlapped in the pre-modern world.

[3] References are numerous but see e.g. Pompili 2001: 129–30. For Pompeii, see Gassner 1986; Wallace-Hadrill 1994: 80; for Ostia, see Girri 1956; Pavolini 1991: 110–13; DeLaine 2005: 32–6; for Rome, see Purcell 1994: 659–61; Holleran 2012: 105–12; for Gaul, see Goodman 2007: 113, with further references. For Britain, see MacMahon 2003, although grooved thresholds are rare in Britain. See in addition Boëthius 1960: ch. 4, who also applies the term '*taberna*' to medieval structures of a similar form. For the archaeological identification of commercial space in late antiquity, see various contributions to Lavan *et al.* 2007, particularly the introduction and the chapter on commercial space by Putzeys and Lavan, and the chapters by Baird and Khamis.

[4] For *ergasterion* as synonymous with *taberna*, see e.g. *Corpus Glossariorum Latinorum* III.388.33; Lewis 1991: 278. See Karvonis 2007 for Greek commercial vocabulary (41–2 for

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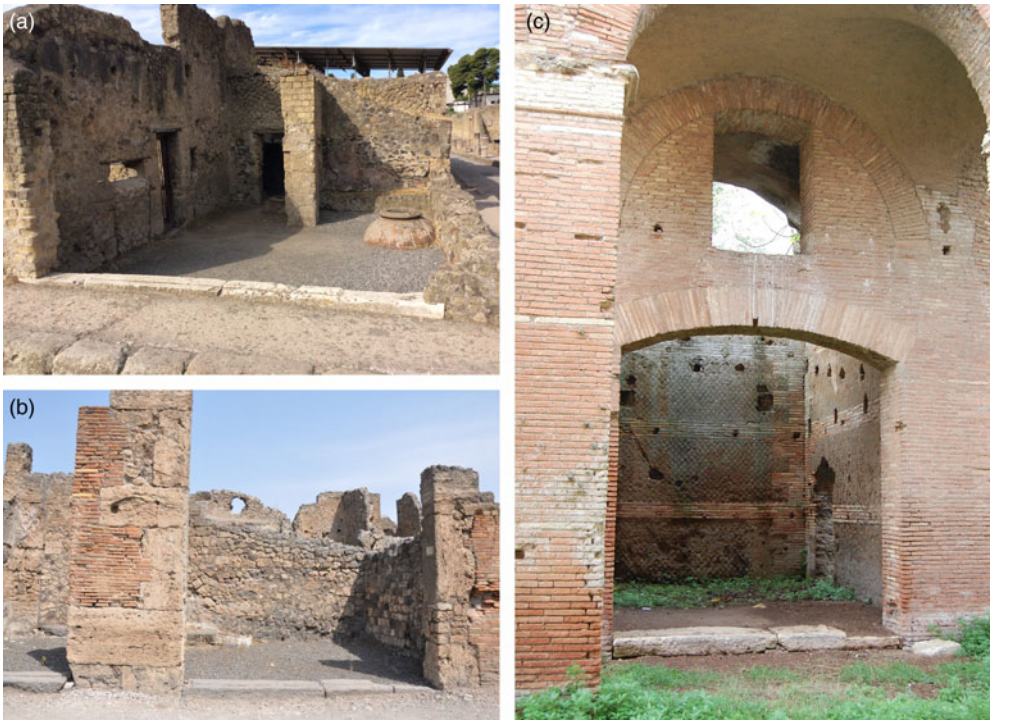


Fig. 1. (a) *Taberna* (Herculaneum, Ins.III.6) *(photo: Amy Coker)*. (b) *Taberna* (Pompeii VI.14.14) *(photo: author)*. (c) *Taberna* (Ostia) *(photo: Elizabeth Munro)*.

The first part of the paper considers the Latin label *taberna*, the architectural structures associated with this terminology, and the process of textual analogy, drawing on recent scholarship highlighting the complexity of the relationship between architecture and text. It then goes on to investigate the use of historical and modern analogy in interpreting archaeological space — a practice that has long been the subject of debate among archaeologists — before exploring the material evidence that could provide an independent check on the use of analogy to understand Roman commercial space.[5] This analysis of material evidence focuses in particular on Pompeii and Herculaneum, since *tabernae* in these urban centres are relatively well documented and well studied.

The second section of the paper then moves beyond the *taberna* to argue that commerce — and particularly retail – could take place almost anywhere, and that

ἐργαστήριον) and Karvonis 2008 for the typology and evolution of commercial structures in the classical and Hellenistic periods. Doorways were more typically of a single or double leaf in Eastern regions, at least in late antiquity (Lavan 2012: 349); see e.g. the 'Byzantine shops' at Sardis (Stephens Crawford 1990; Harris 2004).

[5] For historical and modern analogy, see e.g. Ascher 1961; Binford 1967; Hodder 1982: 11–27; Wylie 1985; Reece 1993: 34–6; Shelley 1999. For a brief introduction to the use of analogy in archaeological interpretation in general, see Carver 2009: 302–9. For the use of independent checks, see e.g. Wylie 1985: 107.

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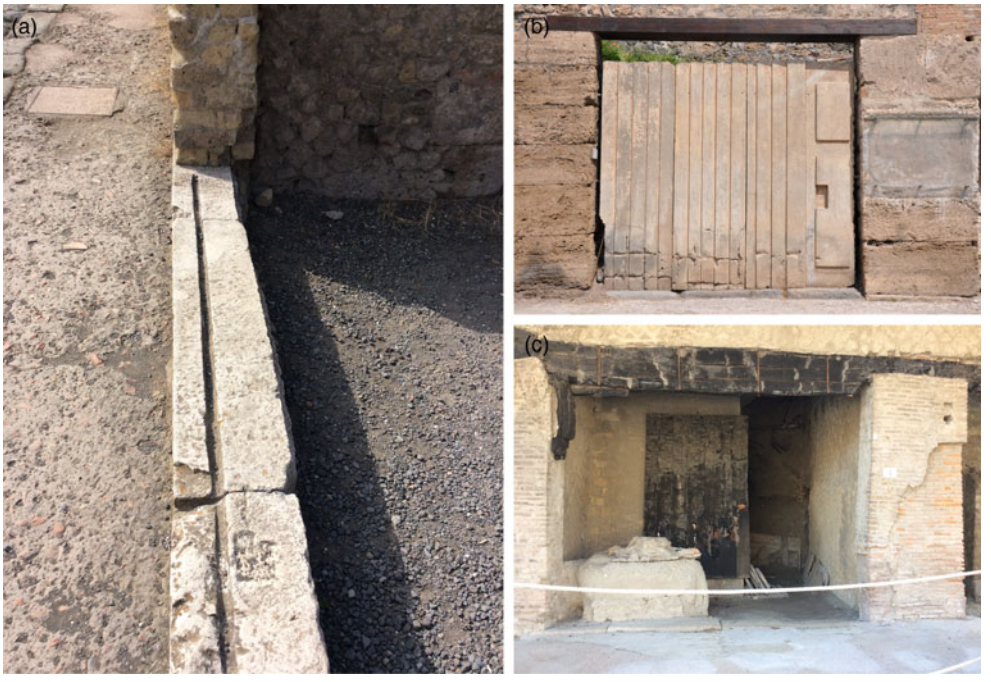


Fig. 2. (a) Grooved threshold (Herculaneum, Ins.III.6) *(photo: Amy Coker)*. (b) Cast of shutters (Pompeii IX.7.10) *(photo: author)*. (c) Remains of shutters (Herculaneum, Decumanus Maximus) *(photo: Amy Coker)*.

consequently a much wider variety of spaces should be viewed as potentially commercial, not all of which can be identified on architectural grounds.[6] Extending the Roman commercial arena beyond the paradigm of the *taberna* is in itself nothing new. DeLaine's (2005) valuable discussion of Ostia, for instance, recognizes the diversity of the commercial landscape of the Roman town, but while open spaces on the outskirts of Ostia are identified as potentially commercial, the overall focus continues to be on architectural structures, including *tabernae*, porticoes, and covered spaces similar in form to later Italian loggias. Furthermore, DeLaine (2005: 30) considers Portus to be reliant on Ostia for supply since it lacks market buildings or *tabernae*, argued to be essential components for commerce. This paper contends that commerce does not require an architecturally definable space in which to take place and argues that we should also consider a variety of open spaces, streets, and even private houses to be part of the commercial landscape, at least potentially. In focusing too much on architecturally defined spaces, we run the risk of overlooking many of the commercial spaces which cannot be so easily labelled or categorized, and thus of underestimating the flexibility and diversity of

[6] See also Baird 2007a: 433, who argues that 'there is no universal criterion for the identification of commercial establishments in the Roman period'.

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Roman commercial activities and practices, in terms of both structure and spatial organization.[7]

## THE *TABERNA*: A CASE STUDY

### LATIN NOMENCLATURE AND TEXTUAL ANALOGY

Several studies focusing on the domestic sphere have demonstrated that the labelling of archaeological remains with Latin terminology is a problematic practice. The Vitruvian or Varronian labels conventionally applied to spaces are not always used correctly, and moreover, their application results in uncritical relationships being drawn between domestic spaces and literary texts.[8] Labels are used as though they constitute primary evidence, when in fact the process of labelling in itself represents a modern interpretation of the ancient remains, and presupposes a function for a space that may not accurately reflect actual household practices. In the commercial sphere also, Latin terminology has at times been erroneously applied to archaeological remains. There are, for example, numerous Latin terms for bars and inns, including *taberna*, *deversorium*, *hospitium*, *stabulum*, *caupona*, *popina* and *thermopolium*, which were applied almost indiscriminately to structures at Pompeii in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. These labels were subsequently used by scholars such as Kleberg (1957) to categorize Pompeian bars; the work of Steven Ellis (e.g. 2004; 2008), focusing on the actual archaeological evidence for bars at Pompeii, has provided an important corrective to this practice.

Likewise, structures that follow a particular architectural typology — essentially, ground-floor rooms with wide entranceways closed by shutters — are routinely labelled as *tabernae* in the archaeological record. Yet no particular criteria for the architectural form of such structures are laid down in the literary record. Ulpian (*Digest* 50.16.183) defines *tabernae* as 'all buildings fit for habitation' (*'tabernae' appellatio declarat omne utile ad habitandum aedificium*).[9] Although this definition is so broad as to be almost meaningless, it does suggest that a wide variety of architectural forms could conceivably be classed as *tabernae*. However, on the outskirts of Rome inscriptions recording *tabernae* as part of tomb complexes seem to be referring to a distinctive building 'type', since they commonly distinguish these structures from *aedificia*

[7] Similarly for the classical and Hellenistic Greek world, see Karvonis 2007 for the imprecision of Greek commercial terminology reflecting the flexibility of Greek commercial space.

[8] See, in particular, the numerous contributions of Allison to this debate: Allison 1993; 1994; 1999: 71; 2001; 2004: 11–14, 161–77, 201–3; 2007: 269–71; 2009: 13–14. Also Wallace-Hadrill 1994: 6; Leach 1997; Dickmann 1999: 23–39.

[9] This passage was amended by Mommsen to read 'all buildings *not* fit for habitation', but this amendment surely reflects Mommsen's own spatial and functional understanding of the *taberna* and need not be followed.

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(buildings) and *habitationes* (places to live).[10] Thus although Storey (2004: 51) argues that in a funerary context *taberna* simply means 'shelter', reflecting the co-option of words for house and abode to mean eternal homes for the dead, the fact that *tabernae* are clearly distinguished from *habitationes* suggests that they were unlikely to be included in tomb complexes for residential purposes, either for the living or the dead. *Tabernae* here must surely be understood to have had a particular function and/or form, although none is specified. It could be argued that these were intended as storerooms for the flowers and fruit grown in associated gardens,[11] or as places offering refreshments to mourners and also to travellers, given the location of tombs along the main arterial roads leading out of Rome, but this must remain speculation. Vitruvius (6.5.2) also appears to be providing a specific functional (and perhaps spatial) definition when he advises those who need to store country produce within their property to have *tabernae* and *stabula* in their forecourt, although he does not elaborate any further on the architectural form that these units should take.

There are, however, some surviving indications of the appearance of *tabernae* in the literary sources. According to ancient etymologists, for example, the term *taberna* originally referred to the simple wooden huts in which the poor lived. It derived either from *tabula* (board or plank) or *trabs* (a length of timber), but continued to be used even when tiled roofs and stone construction became the norm. These authors stress that the term derives from the initial wooden construction, rather than from wooden shutters, which in itself implies a popular association between *tabernae* and wooden shutters;[12] these were then chained in place at night (Juvenal 3.302–4; see Fig. 2a–c).

Furthermore, at least some *tabernae* appear to have opened directly on to the street, or on to an associated portico or arcade, probably by means of a wide doorway, since Martial (7.61) praises Domitian's edict ordering all *tabernae* to keep within their own threshold; previously they had spilled over into the street, arcades or porticoes, causing obstructions. The jurist Paulus' description of a fugitive taking refuge in a *taberna*, only to be attacked by a dog, also suggests easy access from the street (*Digest* 9.1.2.1; Monteix 2010: 45). An open doorway is further implied by Livy's description of Camillus entering Tusculum and seeing all the *tabernae* open, displaying the goods and activities within to passers-by (Livy 6.25.9.1). Livy's scene is set in the fourth century BC but doubtless reflects the cityscape familiar from his own experience.

[10] Holleran 2012: 119. *CIL* VI 1396; 1600; 9404; 9664; 9681; 10245; 13061; 13267; 17228; 17992; 21849; 28375; 29907; 29964; 29967; 30058; 30480. With two *tabernae: CIL* VI 19035; 29970; 36262. With three *tabernae: CIL* VI 31852. Multiple *tabernae: CIL* VI 29726. The abbreviations system used herein follows the *Oxford Classical Dictionary* (fourth edition).

[11] For *horti*, see *CIL* VI 1396; 1600; 9681; 17992; 29964; 31852; 36262.

[12] e.g. Festus, *Gloss. Lat.* p.490L; Diom. 3.489.28; Cassiodorus, *Expositio psalmorum* 14. 31; Isid. *Etym.* 15.2.43; Paulus Diaconus, *Excerpta ex libris Festi de significatione verborum*, p.11L; p.34L.

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Surviving graffiti from Pompeii can also be linked directly to archaeological remains. Rental notices on the *Insula Arriana Polliana* (VI.6: *CIL* IV 138) and *praedia* of Julia Felix (II.4: *CIL* IV 1136), for example, both list *tabernae* to rent, alongside other units, including *cenacula*, *pergulae* and *domus*.[13] At the *Insula Arriana Polliana*, the *tabernae* offered to rent are described as *cum pergulae*, which most likely refers to mezzanine floors, although this is not certain. Within the complex, there are several rooms with grooved thresholds and wide entranceways opening on to the street (VI.6.2–4; 21–3); these rooms also display the remains of staircases and holes in the walls in which supportive beams for mezzanine floors were placed. These units could then potentially be the *tabernae* offered for rent, although it is equally plausible that other rooms or spaces in the complex were offered for rent as *tabernae*, such as the other small units on the west side of the block that lack wide openings but have mezzanine floors (VI.6.14–16).[14] Similarly, at the *praedia* of Julia Felix, the rental notice lists *tabernae, pergulae* and *cenacula* to rent and three rooms on the ground floor fit the architectural typology conventionally assigned to *tabernae* (II.4.1; 5; 7). Elsewhere in Pompeii, a graffito offering a reward for information leading to the return of a vessel (*urna*) stolen from a *taberna* was painted on a pillar between two rooms which would conventionally be identified as *tabernae* (VIII.5.33 and VIII.5.34); the notice can plausibly be linked to a theft from one of these units (*CIL* IV 64; Monteix 2010: 48). There is, of course, a certain circularity to these arguments. A relationship is assumed between the graffiti and rooms that fits preconceived ideas of the form of *tabernae*, when in reality, the term may be referring to an entirely different type of space.[15] The graffiti do, however, suggest that at least in some cases a spatial rather than a functional definition for the term was understood; that is, the rental advertisements were presumably referring to particular rooms or complexes of rooms, rather than to how the spaces were to be used.

Most probably, then, a wide doorway opening on to the street was a common feature of *tabernae*, but there is no need to believe that this was a prerequisite. In fact, the literary evidence suggests that some *tabernae* were little more than wooden booths or even tables, temporary or otherwise (e.g. Suetonius, *Nero* 27.3). Some were known by the diminutive term *tabernula*, although the *tabernula* described by Apuleius (*Met*. 9.40–2) was relatively substantial, consisting of two floors, and with enough space to conceal a donkey and his owner. Some *tabernulae* housed neighbourhood shrines (e.g. Varro, *Ling*. 5.47; 5.50), but others may have had a commercial function. Dealers or agents, as well as those involved in businesses such as moneylending, could easily have operated from relatively small premises or stalls, as of course could small-scale retailers.

[13] Discussed by Pirson 1997; 1999: 15–21, 23–52. See also Allison 2001: 186–8.
[14] Pirson 1997: 170–1; 1999: 26–34, 176–8.
[15] See discussion in Allison 2001: 186–8.

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In the case of the *taberna*, then, the connection between the Latin terminology and the structures to which it is conventionally applied is probably not too far off the mark, although the term was almost certainly less rigidly applied in antiquity than its modern usage implies. Thus while the literary or legal concept of the *taberna* cannot simply be mapped directly on to a physical space, ancient written evidence can be useful for understanding the place of the *taberna* within the Roman commercial environment and for suggesting a function for at least some of these units.

The term *taberna* occurs relatively frequently in the surviving corpus of Latin literature, and the actual meaning is often ambiguous and dependent on context.[16] Indeed, although a glossary in a standard Pompeian textbook, *The World of Pompeii*, edited by Dobbins and Foss (2007: 647), provides what the authors note is the 'traditional' definition of a *taberna* as a 'retail shop; a wine shop or tavern', this 'traditional' definition is far too limited.[17] Furthermore, the meaning was not fixed and will have changed over time, from apparently initially referring to the wooden shelters of the poor to becoming particularly (although not exclusively) associated with bars and inns in late antiquity, a meaning which it has retained in some modern European languages.[18] If we look at the full range of uses of the term, the *taberna* appears as a multi-functional space, but one used primarily for commercial purposes. *Tabernae* are linked to retail, to manufacturing, to administration and to the provision of services, including those of doctors, barbers and moneylenders, as well as the supply of food and drink, housing bars, cookshops and inns, together with bakers, butchers, fishmongers, cheese-sellers and the like.[19] *Tabernae* were also residential, either in combination with commerce or exclusively domestic.[20]

Textual analogy, then, can be useful in suggesting functions for these spaces. We must, however, remember the full range of uses attributed to *tabernae* in Latin literature, and crucially, we must not privilege the literary over the material evidence.[21] Indeed, the action of labelling spaces as *tabernae* remains

[16] As, for example, Allison (2001: 104–5) argues for *cubicula* and Storey (2004: 47) for *insulae*. Storey 2004 in particular demonstrates that *insula* was a polysemic word, which could in practice mean anything from a single apartment unit to a multi-storey apartment building to an entire city block.

[17] The *OLD* provides a more appropriately broad definition of a wooden hut or booth; an inn; and a shop or stall.

[18] For houses of the poor, see n. 20; for bars and inns in late antiquity, see Non. p. 835L; retaining a broader meaning, see e.g. S.H.A. *Pert.* 3.3; Sulpicius Severus, *Dialogi* 2.1.8; Sid. Apoll. *Carm.* 23.39; discussed in Holleran 2012: 145. Also Gassner 1986: 5–7.

[19] For example: retail and manufacture: Liv. 6.25.9; administration: Suet. *Nero* 37.1; barbers: Vitr. 9.8.2; doctors: Plin. *HN.* 29.12–13; moneylenders: Livy 26.11.7; bars: Cic. *Att.* 1.13.1; butchers: Livy 3.48.5; fishmongers: Flavius Caper, *De Verbis Dubiis* p. 108; cheese-sellers: Ulp. *Dig.* 8.5.8.5. The use of the term '*taberna*' in literature is discussed further in Holleran 2012: 99–158. See also Pompili 2001.

[20] See e.g. Hor. *Ars.* 229; *Carm.* 1.4.13; Tac. *Hist.* 1.86.2.

[21] See e.g. Holleran 2012: 99–158, although perhaps with an over-reliance on textual analogy and assuming too much of a one-to-one relationship between text and structure.

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problematic, as it imposes an expectation of function that is not always borne out by the actual physical evidence, and hinders other interpretations of the use of space in these units. To use Latin nomenclature still risks privileging the literary evidence over the actual archaeological evidence.

## ARCHITECTURAL TYPOLOGY AND MODERN ANALOGY

Regardless of whether or not we are justified in labelling them as *tabernae*, spaces that fulfil the architectural typology described above are routinely identified as commercial (see introductory section and n. 3, above). Identification is made on the basis of form, irrespective of whether or not there is any corroborating archaeological evidence.[22] This practice cannot really be separated from the idea of the *taberna*, since notions of Latin nomenclature and the architectural form of the space itself have fed into each other and become mutually reinforcing. The understanding of the use of the architectural space is, however, based as much on modern analogy and 'intuitive' approaches to spatial function as on the literary idea of the *taberna*. These units are architecturally almost identical to commercial units that can still be seen in the historic city centres of Italy, such as those along the Via dei Tribunali in Naples or along the Via dei Sediari in Rome, with their wide entranceways opening directly on to the street or an arcade (see Fig. 3a, b), something which has almost certainly influenced interpretations of Roman space.[23]

In the case of the *taberna*, modern analogy would suggest on the basis of their architectural form that they had a commercial function, most obviously as shops. As in modern urban centres, the Roman units tend to be located along the main streets, suggesting that they were intended to be visible and accessible to as many people as possible, and the wide doorway maximizes light and air, and facilitates interaction between those inside and outside the unit.[24] The wide entranceway would also make these spaces less practical from a domestic point of view, although it is important not to impose on the ancient world modern expectations of privacy and space.[25]

[22] See e.g. Adam 1984: 345–6; Packer 1971; Meiggs 1973: 272–3, who do not use the term '*taberna*', but nevertheless assign a commercial function on the basis of the architectural form of the rooms; Adam calls them 'boutiques', while Meiggs and Packer, focusing on Ostia, refer to them as 'shops'. In Dura-Europos, see Baird 2007a: 415–23 for 164 rooms labelled as shops by the initial excavators; she points out that this appears to be 'based on an architectural typology never made explicit', and is applied to any room that opened directly on to the street, with or without the wide doorways seen as characteristic of *tabernae* in the West.

[23] See e.g. Boëthius 1960: 147–8; 151, fig. 81d, who explicitly draws analogies with later periods. See also Baird 2007b for similar practices among the initial excavators of Dura-Europos, whose labelling and interpretation of ancient spaces — both commercial and domestic — was clearly influenced by the contemporary environment; the later marketplace, for example, was termed the *bazaar*.

[24] For locations, see at Pompeii, van Nes 2011: 105–6; at Ostia, DeLaine 2005: 33–4.

[25] e.g. Grahame 1997; Riggsby 1997.

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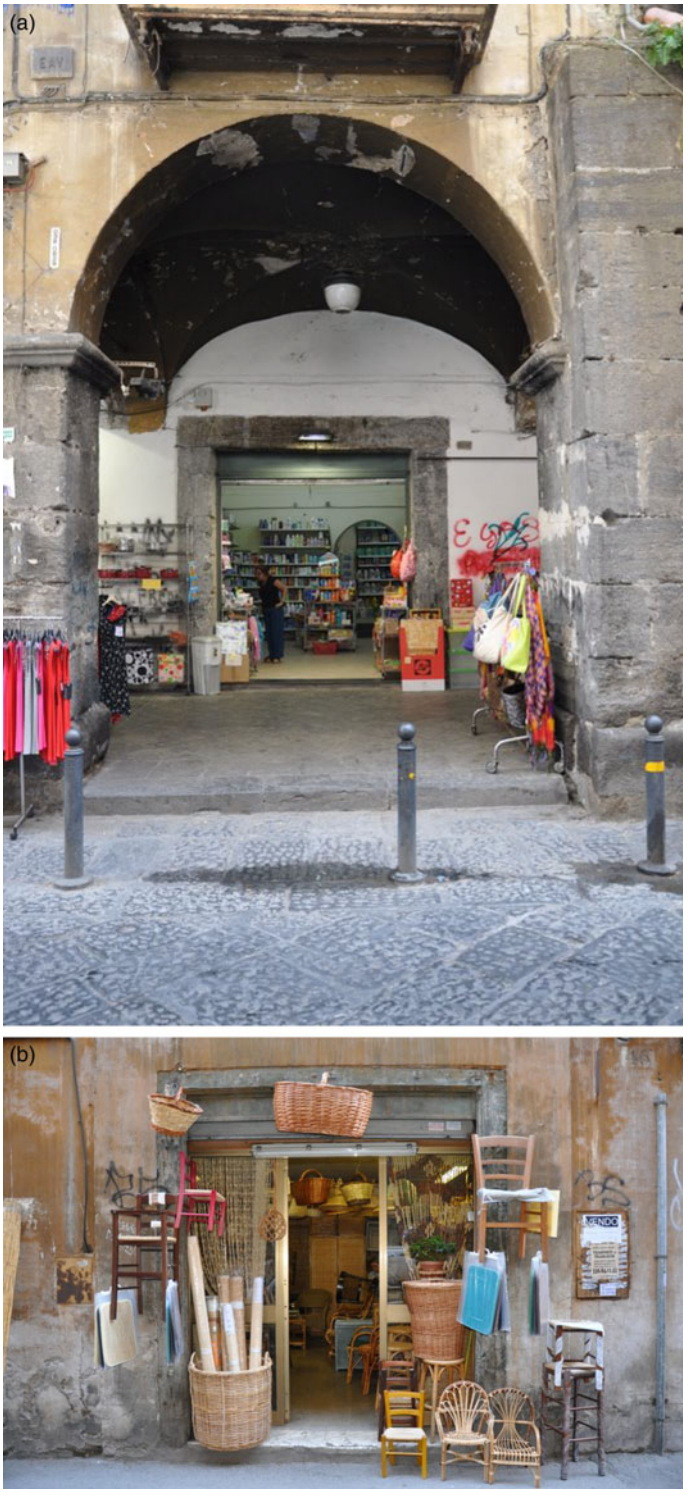


Fig. 3. (a) Shop, Via dei Tribunali, Naples. (b) Workshop, Via dei Sediari, Rome. *(Photos: author)*.

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However, while analogy can at the very least be useful in providing hypotheses about the potential use of space in the archaeological record, caution is needed. Allison (2001: 195) warned that modern analogy can 'normalize the perception that little has changed in the domestic domain over the past millennia', and such concerns also hold for the commercial sphere. Drawing analogies between the commercial landscape of the Roman period and modern Italy can lead to anachronistic assumptions, since the nature of production and the structure of demand that created the modern commercial landscape are fundamentally different from those of the Roman world. Moreover, even if the architectural form of a space suggests that it was designed for a particular purpose, the actual use is not always consistent with the intended use (Allison 2009: 11).

## MATERIAL EVIDENCE AND FUNCTIONAL SPACE

In analysing how a space was actually used, the material evidence should of course play a central role in archaeological interpretation.[26] The clearest evidence to indicate a function for *tabernae* in the archaeological record comes in the form of permanent installations, which often represent a significant fixed-capital investment on the part of the owners or tenants.[27] Stone counters, for example, are sometimes found within these units and are generally taken to indicate the sale of food and drink in bars (see Fig. 4).[28] Similarly, millstones and ovens, or basins, vats and treading bowls, are taken to indicate the presence of bakers and fullers respectively.[29]

[26] It can, however, be difficult to move away from the notion that form is the best indicator of function. On the basis of the excavated contents of an early Byzantine structure at Sardis, for example, destroyed by fire in the early seventh century, Stephens Crawford (1990) identified the structure as a row of shops, but Harris (2004) convincingly reassessed the evidence, arguing that the finds were inconclusive and that the structure was used for a combination of commercial and residential purposes, emphasizing in particular its domestic function. Putzeys and Lavan (2007: 83), however, claimed that while Harris' analysis might be valid for the Sardis 'shops' in their final phase of occupation, the architectural form of these units indicates that they were initially built for retail.

[27] For the importance of such structural features in identifying commercial space in late antiquity, see Putzeys and Lavan 2007: 82. In classical and Hellenistic Greece, see Karvonis 2008: 61–2. At Pompeii, see Flohr 2007.

[28] For a survey of bars at Pompeii, see Ellis 2004; 2008; also Packer 1978. Some stone counters at Pompeii may relate to other types of production or retail — two bakeries, for example, had stone sales counters (IX.1.3/33; IX.3.10–13; perhaps also VII.1.36/37; IX.3.19–20; Mayeske 1972: 168) — but Ellis (2004: 374; also 2008) notes that the majority (128, or 81% of counters) were found in conjunction with cooking facilities. He argues that this is a strong indicator of the sale of food and drink, although it is possible that some cooking facilities had a domestic rather than a commercial function. For a catalogue of bars at Ostia, see Hermansen 1981: 127–83. An unknown number of Ostian bar counters were systematically removed during initial excavations in the first half of the twentieth century (Ellis 2011: 164).

[29] For example, see Mayeske's catalogue of Pompeian bakeries: Mayeske 1972: 82–136; cf. 166–88; appendix A. For the archaeological identification of fulleries, although not explicitly linked here to *tabernae*, see Flohr 2013: 20–30. For late antique examples, see Putzeys and Lavan 2007: 94.

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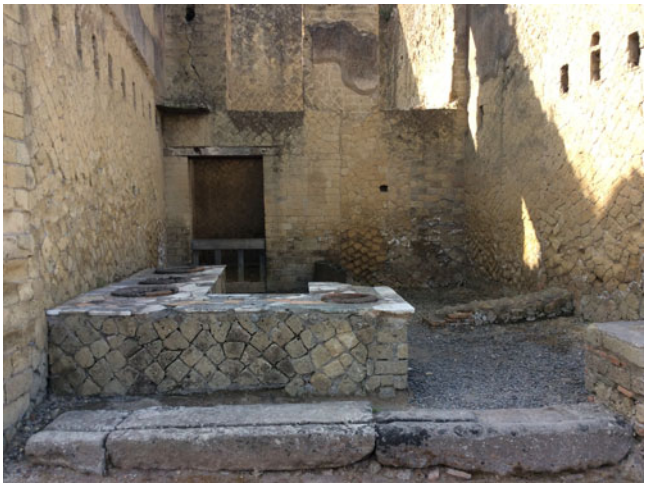

Fig. 4. Stone bar counter (Herculaneum, Ins.IV.6) *(photo: Amy Coker)*.

Artefact assemblages can also sometimes indicate a likely function for a unit.[30] At Pompeii, for example, a probable tannery (I.5.2) has been identified by the discovery of various leather worker's tools and numerous basins, together with a graffito near the entrance, *X/lmi cor(i)ariano*, perhaps identifying this as the tannery of Xulmus, or, as Borgard *et al.* (2003) suggest, referring to a specific order of skins, with the number ten followed by the worker's initials.[31] A cobbler's workshop (VII.1.41–2) has also been identified on the basis of a graffito referring to the repair of a cobbler's tool, and the discovery of various items, such as knives, hooks for stretching leather, a pair of tongs, three bronze needles, and two small jars of what Della Corte describes as *atramentum* (black dye for shoe leather); the room also contained a stone workbench.[32] Further finds suggest the presence of pottery and lamp sellers and/or producers (I.20.2; VII.4.3; VII.2.46),[33] a doctor (VIII.3.11–12)[34] and metalworkers.[35]

[30] For a discussion of artefact assemblages indicating the function of units in late antiquity, and the evidential bias towards restaurants, metal workshops, dye shops, and glassblowing, see Lavan 2012: 346; 355.

[31] *CIL* IV 4014. Borgard *et al.* 2003: 14–15. For more details on the finds, see Adam 1984: 351–2; Eschebach and Müller-Trollius 1993: 31; Borgard *et al.* 2003: 13–18.

[32] Graffito: *CIL* IV 1712. *Atramentum* as black dye for shoe leather: Plin. *HN*. 34.32.123. See also Della Corte 1965: 185; Fiorelli 1875: 175.

[33] For a thorough discussion, see Peña and McCallum 2009a: 64–76; 2009b: 181–4; also see 185 for a rejection of earlier identifications of pottery shops.

[34] Bliquez 1994: 81.

[35] See, in particular, Gralfs (1988: 12–92) who identifies thirteen metalworking sites in Pompeii, including a number of workshops housed in '*tabernae*'. For the so-called '*taberna plumbarius*' in the façade of the *casa del Salone Nero* at Herculaneum (VI.12), see Monteix 2005; 2006: 19–23; 64–6; 2007a. For a similar assemblage of finds indicating a metal workshop at Bet She'an, see Khamis 2007: 456. For the identification of metal workshops in general, see also Putzeys and

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Somewhat less convincingly, functions for some units at Pompeii have been suggested on the basis of paintings, *dipinti* or graffiti on their exterior. One unexcavated unit (IX.7.5–7), for example, is commonly referred to as the *officina coactiliaria di Verecundus*, or felt workshop of Verecundus, on the basis of a painting depicting the production and sale of felt items on the exterior.[36] A supposed pottery shop has been identified on the basis of a sign advertising the sale of containers for *faex* (wine-lees or the sediment at the bottom of *garum*) on the exterior;[37] this is known as the *taberna vasaria* of Zosimus, since *dipinti* on the exterior wall name one Zosimus, although such identifications of ownership are tenuous at best.[38] Similarly, Della Corte suggested uses for some units on the basis of electoral recommendations made by groups of craftsmen or retailers on the façade, a practice rightly called into question by Mouritsen.[39]

The vast majority of *tabernae* excavated across the Roman world, however, provide little archaeological evidence of their function in antiquity. At Ostia, for example, Girri (1956) catalogued over 800 units that she identified as *tabernae*, but the process of slow abandonment, coupled with the manner of excavation, means that it is possible to identify a specific function for only a small minority of these units.[40] At Rome also, *tabernae* were either similarly abandoned and emptied of their contents in the final stage of occupation, or were continuously occupied or incorporated into other structures, leaving few traces of their use in antiquity.[41] A rare exception was the discovery of dozens of glass-paste 'gems' inside a *taberna* of the early imperial period, situated below a staircase at the northwest corner of the Palatine, suggesting the workshop of a jeweller (Haselberger *et al.* 2002: 221).[42]

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Lavan 2007: 89–93. For glass workshops identified on the basis of kilns, debris from glass-working, and the presence of significant quantities of glass vessels, see Price 2005.

[36] See e.g. Coarelli *et al.* 1976: 205–6. For a detailed description of the paintings, see Clarke 2003: 105–112. The name Verecundus is written above an image of a man holding up a piece of finished felt.

[37] *vasa faecaria ven(dit): CIL* IV 7678. For discussion of this unit, see Peña and McCallum 2009b: 184–5; the authors point out that the evidence from the interior is minimal, despite previous claims that the unit contained a large amount of pottery, some of which contained the remnants of brine.

[38] *CIL* IV 8866a–b; Della Corte *Not. Scav.* 1916: 154.

[39] e.g. *Sagarii* (cloak sellers, VII.1.3): *CIL* IV 753; *Tegettarii* (mat makers, I.13.4–5): *CIL* IV 7473; Della Corte 1965: 231–2; 350–1; cf. Mouritsen 1988: 18–19.

[40] See also DeLaine 2005: 33. For a history of the excavations at Ostia, see Bignamini 2001; Marini *et al.* 2001; Olivanti 2001. For a lack of finds, see Girri 1956: 3; Meiggs 1973: 272; Pavolini 1991: 53; 113.

[41] One of the *tabernae* excavated near the modern Piazza dei Cinquecento in front of Termini station contained a long bench in the back corner (D1), another contained a basin (D4), while another (D5) contained limited finds, such as a lamp, a ceramic lid and beaker, and two cups; there is nothing here to indicate the function of these rooms: see Pettinau 1996.

[42] These steps were previously identified as the *scalae Graecae* (*LTUR* IV: 214–42), possibly synonymous with the *scalae Anulariae* (*LTUR* IV: 238–9), but see now Hurst 2006.

Even at Pompeii and Herculaneum, where the rich archaeological record potentially enables a fuller understanding of the commercial landscape of the towns, the vast majority of the excavated units provide little evidence of their actual function. Gassner (1986), for example, undertook a study of what she termed the 'Kaufläden' of Pompeii (also described as *tabernae* in the text). She deliberately excluded those units with readily identifiable functions, such as bakeries, fulleries or dyeworks, and bars, leaving a total of 577 units to survey; a probable function can be suggested for fewer than 20% of these units.[43] As the early excavators of Pompeii were concerned primarily with domestic art and architecture, spaces that were thought to be commercial in nature were excavated with little care.[44] Furthermore, fragmentary glass and pottery were largely overlooked until the 1930s, as were amphorae without inscriptions, until relatively recently.[45] Finds that were not of artistic interest were routinely decontextualized, and moved without the exact context or find spot being precisely documented, meaning that they tend to be analysed separately as evidence for activities such as trade, rather than for the function of a particular space.[46]

For those units that do contain a number of documented finds, these are often of limited help in understanding room function. Allison (2004), for example, analysed the finds excavated in a sample of 30 houses at Pompeii, investigating what the spatial distribution of the finds could tell us about the function of spaces within the houses.[47] The artefact assemblages for the *tabernae* included in the sample were on the whole inconclusive, with no distinctive finds that could suggest a particular function for a unit, commercial or otherwise.[48] Other

[43] See also Prato 2006 for a study of commercial units in *Regio* I at Pompeii; out of a survey of 120 units, 55 (46%) had an uncertain use, while the remaining 65 were dominated by trades that can be relatively easily identified archaeologically, such as catering establishments (39 = 32.5%), and fulleries or dyeworks (11 = 9%).

[44] Gassner 1986: 45; Berry 1997: 187; Cooley 2003: 76–7; Allison 2004: 3–4. For an account of the early excavations, see Cooley 2003: 65–79; Berry 2007a: 31, 36–63.

[45] Allison 2004: 32–3. This was standard archaeological practice at the time; see Baird 2007a: 415 for the same situation at Dura-Europos.

[46] Gassner 1986: 27; Berry 1997: 186–7; Allison 2004: 4; 30. Finds were also sometimes moved around and displayed to site visitors as though they were *in situ*. At Herculaneum, for example, the unit in the front of the *casa di Nettuno e Anfitrite* (V.6–7) is described by Deiss (1966: 105, 109; see also Grimaldi Bernardi 2005: 28) as 'the most complete ancient shop ever discovered', but the contents were actually moved into the room as part of Maiuri's idea of presenting the site as a living museum (James Andrews pers. comm.). The finds are no longer exhibited in the room, reflecting changing approaches to display at Herculaneum.

[47] There is an on-line companion to this book, which includes a searchable database of finds contained within each room or area of a house: http://www.stoa.org/projects/ph/index.html (accessed 10 February 2016).

[48] See e.g. I.10.4; I.10.111; I.11.6; VI.16.15; and the three *tabernae* within VIII.5.9. Details can be obtained through a search of *tabernae* (or room type '20') in the database on the on-line companion. See also Allison 2004: 112–13; note that in the printed work Allison studiously avoids referring to these as *tabernae*, calling them instead 'rooms open to the street', thus avoiding prejudging the function through the application of Latin nomenclature and textual analogy.

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recent studies have also demonstrated that the contents and assemblages of many *tabernae* are not notably distinct from those found in areas of houses which are generally assumed to have a domestic function.[49] Indeed, as Allison (2004: 174) concludes on the basis of her particular sample, 'the evidence is insubstantial to identify them [*tabernae*] as commercial spaces'.[50]

In any case, it can be difficult to distinguish between finds that indicate a commercial or a domestic function, since these are very often the same. The presence of hearths, latrines and stoves, for example, could be connected with a commercial or 'industrial' function for a room, but such finds could equally be taken as evidence of habitation.[51] Similarly traces of cult could represent the protective deities of workers, but could also signify the domestic cult of a household.[52] Yet preconceived ideas of function mean that signs of habitation have often been overlooked and attention has focused almost exclusively on finding evidence of commerce, a practice which to a certain extent reflects an anachronistic modern conception of living and working space as separate. Some units at Pompeii, for example, contain possible bed niches set into the walls (e.g. I.8.15; II.2.3; VII.3.8), and at Herculaneum the remains of beds are occasionally found (e.g. Insula Orientalis II.9 and II.10); both are generally located in back rooms.[53] Yet when Maiuri (1958: 442; 466) came across evidence for beds, or for areas of *tabernae* that were partitioned off with wooden panels at Herculaneum, he took these to be evidence of rest areas for workers, places for a siesta, rather than as an indication that this was a residential unit. Furthermore, although space may have been tight, workers and other occupants could sleep on mats on the floor, which would be unlikely to leave any trace in the archaeological record; boundaries between domestic and commercial space in such units were probably more temporal than spatial, and the use of space in *tabernae* was likely flexible (Flohr 2007: 142).

Identifying the specific function of *tabernae* on the basis of material evidence alone, then, is rarely possible. Finds are very often either non-existent, or are inconclusive. This is particularly true for sites that underwent a process of

[49] For other inconclusive assemblages of finds in *tabernae*, see Amorosa 2007: 34–5 (Pompeii: VII.10.4; VII.10.10); Berry 2007b: 294–7 (I.9.2); also Berry 1997; Cassetta and Costantino 2006: 254–7 (VI.10.12); Gallo 2001: 16–17 (IX.1.4), 59–68 (IX.1.1; IX.1.2; IX.1.4; IX.1.9); Ruggiero 2006: 342–5 (VI.10.13; VI.10.15; IX.1.10–11); Zampetti 2006: 101–3 (VI.10.5). See also the *tabernae* included within the houses published in the *Häuser in Pompeji* series (edited by Strocka 1984–); e.g. the contents of '*taberna* B' in the *casa della parete nera* (VII.4.58–60; Staub Gierow 2000: 20–2.).

[50] See also Gassner 1986: 39. It is also worth noting that the terminology used by nineteenth- and early twentieth-century excavators at Pompeii to classify items was not always clear and was often inconsistent, leading to confusion as to the nature of some finds (see Peña and McCallum (2009b: 82) in relation to pottery assemblages; also Allison 1999).

[51] Girri 1956: 4–5; Wallace-Hadrill 1994: 80.

[52] Pirson 1999: 53–5, 90–1; Monteix 2006: 40.

[53] Maiuri 1958: 462–4; Pirson 1999: 91. For evidence of habitation in general, see Monteix 2006: 39–44. For the difficulties of assuming a low, narrow niche contained a bed, see Allison 2004: 46–8.

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gradual abandonment rather than sudden destruction, since any specialist tools, wooden furnishings, raw materials and stock — especially if these were valuable and could be sold or reused — would generally have been packed up and removed when a space was eventually abandoned. Given the limited archaeological evidence, a greater variety of activities could then potentially have taken place within these spaces than is commonly assumed. Furthermore, in focusing on the architectural form of the *taberna* as a commercial space, we may overlook the commercial activities that were taking place in spaces that would ordinarily be identified on architectural grounds as having a solely domestic function.

In fact, artefact assemblages at Pompeii indicate small-scale metalworking and cloth production taking place within apparently 'domestic' spaces, as well as pointing to two houses being used for gem engraving, and one as a painter's workshop, although with Pompeii it is possible that some of these activities reflect a change in the use of space after disruptive seismic activity in the years leading up to the eruption of Vesuvius.[54] While it is not always easy to distinguish whether such material represents domestic activity or enterprises on a commercial scale, in these cases, finds are significant enough to suggest production on a commercial level.[55] Groups of over 50 loom weights found together in particular houses, for instance, point to multiple looms and cloth production on a scale that could conceivably enable some commercial sales, while the high numbers of precious stones in varying states of manufacture, found alongside tools, suggest activity geared towards the market.[56] There is nothing in terms of decoration or architecture to distinguish these houses from any others, and in a less well-preserved site than Pompeii it is unlikely that the commercial function of these spaces would have been recognized. Here it is the contents of the house which suggest how the space was used functionally by the inhabitants.[57] Graffiti can also sometimes indicate a commercial use for an

[54] Metalworking: House of the Postumii (VIII.4.4.49); Pirson 2007: 467. Cloth production: Dixon 2004: 66–8; Allison 2009: 15–19. Gem engraving: House of Pinarius Cerealis (III.4.b); Della Corte *Not. Scav.* 1927: 104; Eschebach and Müller-Trollius 1993: 106. 'House of the Gem Engraver': Eschebach and Müller-Trollius 1993: 98; Borgard *et al.* 2003: 24–8. Painter's workshop: I.9.9; Eschebach and Müller-Trollius 1993: 50; Tuffreau-Libre 1999: 68–9; Berry 2007a: 219.

[55] For a consideration of the difficulties in distinguishing between spaces intended for domestic work and those that were used to conduct work on a commercial scale, see Kastenmeier 2007: 30–1. For the difficulties of separating domestic and commercial space at Dura-Europos, see Baird 2007a: 414; 431–2. In classical and Hellenistic Greece, see Karvonis 2008: 65–6. See also the so-called 'carpenter's house' in Roman London, tentatively identified on the basis of a quantity of wooden off-cuts located in a room during excavations of No 1 Poultry (Hall 2005: 135); no tools are documented in the house and the wood may have been intended for use as firewood, or for repairs or reconstructions within the house itself.

[56] For loom weights, see I.10.8; VI.15.7–8; VI.16.26; see references in n. 54. See n. 54 also for references for houses of gem engravers.

[57] See discussion in Allison 2009.

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apparently 'domestic' space, as, for example, with the House of Nebuchelos (B8-H; also known as the 'House of the Archive') at Dura-Europus. Alongside horoscopes, *mnēsthē* texts, and drawings of a boat and a winged victory, graffiti include accounts, receipts, records of shipments for items including wool and grain, and inventories, testifying to the organization within the house of the commercial activities of one Aurelios Nebuchelos, who appears to have had business interests in agriculture, trade and moneylending.[58]

These examples demonstrate that a particular architectural space such as that of the *taberna* is not a prerequisite for commerce, something also shown by Flohr's (2007) study of the spatial contexts of urban production at Pompeii. His dataset, based on a survey of workshops containing relatively easily identifiable installations such as ovens and mills, treading stalls, basins, vats and furnaces, is by no means dominated by *tabernae*; of 61 workshops identified, only 18 were located in *tabernae*, with 26 found in *domus* and 17 in other spatial contexts, although 67% of workshops were part of a complex of rooms that were connected to a *taberna* (Flohr 2007: 133–4; appendix 1). Urban production clearly took place in a variety of spaces, many of which would ordinarily be classified on architectural grounds alone as domestic; more often than not, decoration and finds suggest that these spaces were also residential. It is the additional artefactual or textual evidence that points to their commercial function.

Furthermore, ancient literature indicates that external producers and retailers visited private homes directly, particularly those of the wealthy, in order to make sales and collect payments. Some visits were by appointment, with customers inviting traders into their homes, while other visits were more speculative; Horace (*Sat*. 2.3.225–30), for example, satirizes a wealthy young man who invites a number of luxury traders to come to his house the next day, while Ovid (*Ars am*. 1.421–8) warns readers of the danger of a retailer calling when women are in the mood to buy. The sexual threat of the pedlar visiting women who are home alone became a cliché in Latin literature.[59] It is also perfectly possible for traders to base themselves within their own homes. This may reduce the opportunity for spontaneous commercial transactions with passers-by, but for those who worked in small urban centres, or who dealt in highly specialist goods, word of mouth may have been sufficient to enable them to do business; an art dealer such as Damasippus, for example, was unlikely to have a shop (Cic. *Ad Familiares* 7.23; Hor. *Sat*. 2.3.20). Even apparently domestic space can, therefore, be viewed as potentially commercial, while apparently commercial space can be viewed as potentially domestic.

[58] Welles 1933: 79–145; Ruffing 2000; 2007; Baird 2016: 22–6.

[59] Hor. *Carm*. 3.6.30; *Epod*. 17.19–20; Ov. *Rem. am*. 305–6; Jer. *Adv. Iovinian*. 1.47. See also Plaut. *Aulularia* 505–22; Ulp. *Dig*. 19.5.20.2.

## LOOKING BEYOND THE *TABERNA*

To understand commercial space more fully, then, we need to look beyond the *taberna*. Commercial activities do not always require a specialized workshop or shop, but can take place within houses or simply in the open air, particularly in Mediterranean countries; such practices must have been less common in the northern parts of the empire, especially in the winter months. Retail in particular can take place in almost any conceivable setting, including not only fora and other large open spaces, but also streets, porticoes and arcades. Legislation enacted in the first and second centuries indicates that *tabernae* commonly spilled out over their thresholds in Rome, and texts from Roman Palestine indicate the problems that could be caused by such practices, recounting, for example, the story of a blind man who broke a box of glassware displayed outside a glass shop by hitting it with his stick.[60] There is also plenty of literary evidence to suggest that street traders and hawkers were themselves a common feature of Roman urban centres, most notably as sellers of food.[61] Auctions were also a common means of exchange, with transactions ranging from the wholesale and retail trading of commodities at docks, wharves and gates, to the sale of land, cattle, luxury items, the redistribution of the contents of large aristocratic estates, and the informal sale of second-hand items. While some auctions took place in *macella* or auction halls, street corners, porticoes, arcades — in short, almost any public open space — could be utilized for such sales.[62]

Ancient visual representations of retail certainly suggest that much of this took place in the open air. The frieze from the *praedia* of Julia Felix at Pompeii, for example, shows a variety of retailers in the forum; most sell their goods from the floor, although some display items on wooden tables or shelves, while a shoe seller hangs curtains between the columns of a portico to mark out his area of sale.[63] A marble relief from Ostia, most probably dating to the late second century AD, shows a vegetable seller behind a makeshift trestle table, with the basket underneath presumably used to transport the produce.[64] Another Ostian relief of similar date depicts a woman behind a stall made up

[60] For legislation, see Mart. 7.61; Papinian, *Dig*. 43.10.1.4. For Roman Palestine, see Sperber 1998: 12.

[61] As food sellers, see e.g. Lucil. 5.221–2; Cic. *Div*. 2. 84; *Phil*. 2.97; *Pis*. 67; Hor. *Sat*. 1.6.111–14; Ov. *Ars am*. 3.167.8; Calp. *Ecl*. 5.97; Sen. *Ep*. 56.2; Petron. 6–7; Mart. 1.41.3–10; Ulp. *Dig*. 14.3.5.4; 14.3.5.9. See also Holleran 2011; 2012: 199–215; 2016.

[62] See e.g. Hor. *Epist*. 1.7.64–6; *Ars P*. 419; Juv. 8.95. In defined salesrooms: Cic. *Agr*. 1.7; *Quinct*. 12; 25; Juv. 7.7. There is no set architectural typology for the identification of auction halls in the Roman world. Further references and discussion in Holleran 2012: 252–5. Also DeLaine 2005: 43–5.

[63] The majority of the frieze is now on display in the National Archaeological Museum in Naples; Inv. 9057; 9059; 9061–2; 9064; 9066–8; 9070. For details and reproductions of these paintings, see Nappo 1989; Olivito 2013.

[64] Museo Ostiense: Inv. 198; Kampen 1981: 59–64; fig. 40–1.

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of wooden cages which hold her stock of live chickens and rabbits. She also sells fruit from bowls on the stall, along with snails, contained in a large barrel.[65] Reliefs from Gaul show the sale of fruit from a trestle table (Arlon), grain from sacks (Bordeaux), and fruit sold by an ambulant trader, who carried his stock in a basket hung around his neck (Narbonne).[66]

Sellers who hawked goods from trays, baskets or mats would leave little physical trace of their presence. Similarly, many stalls were temporary in nature, and packed up and removed when not in use. Such commercial practices are, therefore, difficult to document archaeologically, although sudden destruction due to a catastrophic event can enable the remains of stalls to be detected. At Wroxeter in England, for example, stacks of pottery vessels were uncovered, which appear to have fallen from stalls located in the portico of the forum during a fire in the mid-second century AD (Atkinson 1942: 127–30).[67] With this in mind, we might expect similar finds at Pompeii, but no such stalls have been noted here. Perhaps they were rare, given the narrowness of most pavements and the scarcity of porticoes and arcades in the town, although there are traces of numerous stone benches that traders could potentially have used to display their wares.[68] Wooden benches could also have been used in similar ways, although such furniture does not commonly survive (Hartnett 2008: 93).

It may, however, also be the case that the remains of stalls were not properly identified when the streets were excavated. A group of metal items found in a street in Regio I in the early twentieth century, for example, could be tentatively identified as the stock of a street stall. These bronze and iron items were rusted together and included grips for horses (two of which were stamped with the name of P. Pilonius Felix), elements of horse harnesses, strigils, keys, scythes and sickles.[69] A *taberna* (I.6.12) located *c.* 1 m behind the metal items was consequently identified as the workshop of a '*faber ferrarius*', conventionally attributed to Junianus on the basis of a name appearing in an electoral notice on the façade, although the name differs from that stamped on the horse grips.[70] The items are commonly thought to have been hanging for sale on the architrave when Vesuvius erupted, having then been moved away from the entrance by the force of the eruption.[71] Yet when the room was excavated in

[65] Museo Ostiense: Inv. 134; Kampen 1981: 52–59; fig. 28.

[66] Arlon: Kampen 1981: fig. 30. Bordeaux: Liversidge 1976: 102. Narbonne: Holleran 2012: 209. For late antiquity, see also the 'Yakto mosaic', Antakya Musuem, inv. 1016, with some reproductions of details in Mango 2000: figs. 2.1–2.4.

[67] Also in England, see the evidence for craftworking in the Walbrook valley in London: Perring 1991: 51–4; Hall 2005: 132–6, 41.

[68] For a discussion of streetside benches at Pompeii, see Hartnett 2008. For their possible use to display merchandise, see Hartnett 2008: 106 n. 48.

[69] Della Corte *Not. Scav.* 1912: 336; Coarelli 1976: 193.

[70] *CIL* IV 7181–2; Della Corte 1965: 283; Gralfs 1988: 84–6.

[71] Della Corte 1965: 283–4; Coarelli *et al.* 1976: 193; Wallace-Hadrill 1994: 189; MacMahon 2003: 116. For disturbance caused by the eruption which could have forced the items to move 1 m away from the *taberna*, see Cooley 2003: 44.

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the 1920s, some years later than the street, the finds were rather inconclusive, consisting of a miscellany of bronze, glass and terracotta items, but nothing to indicate metalworking, such as a furnace, brazier or traces of metal debris.[72] This may be because the *taberna* housed a retailer rather than a manufacturer of metal items, but it could also be that the artefact assemblage is entirely independent of the structure behind. The pavement in front of this *taberna* is relatively wide, and the artefacts could possibly represent the remains of a stall selling metal items to customers moving along the Via dell'Abbondanza. Such suggestions must, of course, remain speculative, but it may be that the significance of other such artefact assemblages has been missed in the past.

Traders were surely more likely to base themselves on such busy, central streets as the Via dell'Abbondanza in Pompeii, or close to the entrances to important public buildings, in temple complexes, within open spaces such as fora, or perhaps alongside a water basin or neighbourhood shrine, anywhere that pedestrian traffic — and thus the potential for customers — was at its greatest.[73] Religious centres, for example, were natural locations for trade. Sacrificial cakes were available for purchase outside the Temple of Venus close to the Pompeian forum, flowers and garlands were sold along the Via Sacra in Rome, and Paul famously angered the sellers of silver shrines outside the Temple of Artemis in Ephesus.[74] Traders also sold food, and at a sanctuary to Venus near modern Cassino in Italy an inscription records a kitchen set up by four freedwomen (*AE* 1975: 197; 1980: 216). The popularity of temples and altars as places to trade can perhaps also be indicated by a clause included on the dedicatory inscriptions of altars erected by Domitian in Rome in response to the great fire under Nero in AD 64 (*CIL* VI 826; 30837); trading was forbidden in the vicinity of the altars, suggesting that this was common practice elsewhere.

Likewise, entertainment venues were popular places to trade, and sellers marked out the location of their stalls on the exterior of the amphitheatre at Pompeii with paint, while price lists or accounts were scratched on the columns in the portico of the palaestra.[75] A wall painting depicting the riot in the amphitheatre at Pompeii in AD 59 also shows stalls in the foreground.[76] Some of these stalls look to be semi-permanent wooden structures, while others are more temporary in nature, consisting of spaces marked off by awnings strung between trees or on posts, a practice that would be impossible to document archaeologically but must have been common in the hot Mediterranean climate.

[72] Della Corte, *Not. Scav.* 1929: 427–30.

[73] For a discussion of stall location in general, see Trifilo 2009: 175–8, 193–4, 207–8.

[74] For Temple of Venus, see *CIL* IV 1768; 1769. For flowers in Rome, see Ov. *Fast.* 6.791–2; *CIL* VI 9227, 9282; 9283 (*coronarii*). For Paul at Artemis, see Acts 19: 23–41.

[75] Amphitheatre: *CIL* IV 1096; see also *CIL* IV 1096a–b, 1097, 1097a–b, 1115. Also see *CIL* IV 2996. Palaestra: *CIL* IV 8561, 8566b; Monteix 2007b: 181–2, 195–6. A similar list of prices was found on the retaining wall of the theatre in the south agora at Aphrodisias: Roueché 2004: 213.

[76] Found in I. 3.23. Now in the National Archaeological Museum in Naples: Inv. 112222.

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There is no recorded archaeological evidence for semi-permanent wooden huts in the vicinity of the amphitheatre at Pompeii, but in some differently preserved towns, such as Cherchel in modern Algeria, the presence of stalls and wooden huts can sometimes be identified by the marks of grooves and post-holes left in pavement surfaces, primarily in the forum or agora (Trifilo 2009: 185–7).[77] The commercial function of these huts can perhaps be indicated by the large numbers of fourth-century bronze coins found in the paving cracks beneath; certainly in other locations the discovery of significant numbers of scattered coins of a reasonable chronological and geographical spread has been taken as a strong indicator of commercial activity, sometimes signifying the site of an otherwise undocumented market, fair, or place of sale.[78]

While the painted markers for stalls that we occasionally find at Pompeii are rare, in some late antique cities of the Eastern empire, for example Aphrodisias, Sagalassos and Gerasa, more durable topos markers survive in the form of names and occupations carved into stone columns or walls.[79] It is unclear if these markings replaced earlier ones, which perhaps were made with paint (as at Pompeii) rather than inscribed, or if this was an entirely new phenomenon in these cities, reflecting a change in the use of space in late antiquity, or at least a formalization of previous practices. The practice of inscribing place markers in stone, particularly when combined with the presence of wooden huts, certainly suggests some permanence to the stalls and stall-holders. Moreover, both the painted and inscribed markers must reflect supervision and regulation of trade by local civic officials, who rented these spaces out to traders.[80]

The presence of temporary and semi-permanent wooden stalls must have had a notable impact upon the character and atmosphere of a city. Where present, stalls must also have affected the visibility and impact of public buildings, especially as they tended to cluster around the edges of porticoes and fora, very often competing for space with public monuments, such as honorific statues (Trifilo 2009: 194–205). As Libanius (*Orations* 11.254) remarked about fourth-century Antioch, 'no space is without some handicraft; but if a man gets possession of a

[77] See also Lavan 2012: 332–4 for stalls and huts at both Cherchel and Sagalassos in modern Turkey.

[78] See MacMullen 1970: 333 for small finds of coins indicating potential sites for rural periodic markets and fairs in the Roman period. For the identification of a potential market area in the Roman fort at Newcastle-upon-Tyne (Pons Aelius), see Bidwell and Snape 2002. Caution is needed on some sites close to religious centres in Britain and northern Gaul, as here coins could be associated with votive offerings rather than buying and selling: see e.g. Haselgrove 2008; King 2008. For Italy, see Facchinetti 2003. For the use of coin deposits for the identification of a new type of archaeological site for the Middle Saxon period (*c.* 650–850) in England, known as 'productive sites', see e.g. Ulmschneider 2000; 2002.

[79] For Aphrodisias, see Roueché 2004: 187–211; not all of these necessarily refer to traders, but all act as place markers. For Sagalassos, see Lavan 2009: 206–7. For Gerasa, see Uscatescu and Martín-Bueno 1997: 70–1. In general, see Lavan 2012: 334–5.

[80] See also pavement markings designating spaces for street stalls, concentrated in central areas, e.g. at Timgad, discussed in Trifilo 2009: 181–3. Also perhaps at Aphrodisias (Roueché 2007: 100), Sagalassos (Putzeys and Lavan 2007: 105–6), and Cherchel (Trifilo 2009: 203–4).

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little strip of space, it at once becomes a tailor's workshop (*ergastērion*) or something of that order'.[81] These practices attracted the attention of the authorities, but ultimately led to the development of the *suq* or market in eastern cities.[82]

## CONCLUSIONS

Identifying commercial space in the archaeological record is not always easy. Whether consciously or not, we are very often relying on different types of analogies, which can be misleading. Assigning Latin terminology to particular spaces and drawing on textual analogy to identify the function of those spaces is, for example, a problematic practice, although in the case of the *taberna* at least, not an entirely unjustified one. Similarly, we cannot rely on architectural typology alone as an indicator of function, since the interpretation of space is influenced by modern analogies which may not necessarily be valid, and in any case, the actual use of a space is not always consistent with the intended use. Also, when it comes to the *taberna*, the material evidence that could provide an indication of function is very often missing. Moreover, commercial activity does not require a particular architectural space or structure in which to take place, a fact underlined by the minimal separation of commercial and domestic space in the pre-modern world. We need to be cautious, then, about using architecture as a proxy for activities; the frequency of *tabernae* cannot straightforwardly be viewed as a proxy indicator for the structure and organization of an urban economy or society, since commercial activity could take place in a wide variety of spaces, from private houses to street corners, from open market spaces to porticoes and arcades. This is indicated by the archaeological, literary, epigraphic and pictorial evidence for commercial activity, and while no single source should necessarily take precedence over another, making use of a broad range of ancient evidence enables a much fuller understanding of the Roman urban commercial landscape. In short, if we rely on architecture as our main indicator for the nature and location of commerce, we will only ever get a limited and partial picture of the diverse commercial landscape of Roman urban centres.

[81] Trans. Downey 1959. See also Downey's commentary 1959: 685. Libanius' *Oration to Antioch* (11.251–60) gives a sense of how commerce pervaded urban centres, admittedly in a highly rhetorical context. For the clearance of such wooden booths from a major street at Edessa in the fifth century, see Joshua the Stylite 29, 32; Lavan 2012: 336.

[82] Kennedy 1985: 18–22. Also Trifilo 2009: 197–9. For legal moves to remove buildings that encroached upon public spaces, see Ulp. *Dig.* 43.8.2.17; *Cod. Theod.* 14.14.1; 15.1.22; 15.1.25; 15.1.39. See also Lavan 2012: 330–7 who focuses on the archaeological material rather than the legal evidence to demonstrate that in major eastern cities at least, such encroachment was largely controlled until at least the late sixth century AD.

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