

Triumphabant Aeternae Domus:

Motifs of Arms in Roman Domestic Decoration

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

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Volume 1 of 2

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Abstract

Despite the wealth of research on Roman interior decoration, little has been said about the use of motifs of arms and armour in domestic contexts. Previous scholarship has generally interpreted such images as representing Roman spoils of war. This study challenges this connection with spoils, looking at a wider range of influences on the development and deployment of motifs of arms. It explores how such motifs could have been interpreted in light of their wider decorative context.

Drawing on an extensive catalogue of images in painting, mosaic and stucco dating from 100 BC to 100 AD, this thesis looks at the ways real captured arms were displayed in public and private contexts to assess how closely the domestic decorations mirror these idealised practices. It also explores the influence of Greek culture on Roman decorative motifs, decorative fashions across Mau's Four Styles, the possible influence of gladiatorial combats on the depiction of arms and begins to assess the extent to which all of these factors may have been involved in interpreting motifs of arms in the Roman home. This allows a more nuanced approach to motifs of arms in decorations, emphasising their flexibility and ambiguity. This study also begins to explore how the location of motifs of arms within the house can impact on how a Roman observer could have interpreted the images, opening up a further avenue of research on motifs of arms and understanding how they were deployed and responded to in Roman domestic contexts.

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Introduction: 'triumphabantque etiam dominis mutatis aeternae domus'

As an important symbol of social status the home played a vital role in Roman life. The interior decoration of a Roman home was an essential part of sustaining an appearance of prestige and importance. Pliny's eternally triumphing home, in the title above, along with many others, describes the dedication of captured weaponry in and on the Roman home.¹ Those displaying captured enemy weaponry were almost guaranteed a level of social advancement over those without.² Whilst some attention has been paid to the practice of displaying booty in various contexts, only in recent years has research begun to explore how the decoration of the Roman home itself responded to the presence of captured enemy goods.³

Although *spolia* included foreign artworks, sculptures and vast quantities of wealth, this thesis will focus on arms and armour captured from the enemy. In particular the depiction of arms and armour in stucco, mosaic and fresco and how they were deployed and understood within Roman domestic space. Modern scholarship has traditionally linked the depiction of arms and armour in Roman domestic decoration with the practice of displaying real spoils of war on the Roman home, without necessarily allowing for the more nuanced

¹ Pliny, *Natural History*, 35.7.

² That the presence of captured enemy weaponry had such impact on improving social status is seen in the replenishment of the senate after the defeat at Cannae. New members of the Senate are promoted '*from the number of those who had not held offices, the men who had spoils of the enemy affixed to their houses.*' Livy, 23. 23, 4-7.

³ For the purposes of this study the terms 'booty,' 'spoils' and the latin term '*spolia*' are all deemed to refer to the wide range of captured items brought back in triumphal processions, including captured arms and armour.

reality of how such images could be interpreted. In contrast, this thesis suggests depictions of arms and armour in domestic decoration were not always immediately understood by the ancient observer as being linked with the display of captured weaponry around the home. Motifs of arms and armour are in fact open to a wide range of interpretations, their identity as captured enemy weaponry being just one possibility.

The first stage of this research is to identify and collate examples of motifs of arms and armour in the decoration of Roman houses. For the purposes of this study a 'motif of arms and/or armour' is identified as being an artistic depiction of an item of weaponry or armour. The motif may be produced in any medium, although stucco, mosaic and fresco are likely to be the most common. The motif can also consist of both singular and multiple items, but does not include depictions of weaponry found in figured scenes.⁴ I have chosen to include depictions of other military items such as rostra and anthropomorphic trophies on occasion. Whilst these items are not specifically weaponry, they are part of the wider iconographic language connected with victory that depictions of weaponry form such a large part of, but the focus of this thesis is motifs of weaponry. The scope is limited to mainland Italy and to the period from 100 BC to 100 AD.⁵ This time frame is due to the nature of the archaeological record itself; the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 AD means that much of the surviving and accessible Roman domestic decoration comes from this period. Limiting the

⁴ Depictions of figures holding weaponry are common in Roman domestic decoration, for example images of Thetis with the shield of Achilles or even the armed personifications in the decoration of the Villa of P. Fannius Synistor at Boscoreale. They form a large corpus of material which, whilst relevant to this study, cannot be explored within the scope of this thesis.

⁵ For the purpose of this research, 'Italy' makes reference to the modern geographical boundaries of Italy rather than the ancient concept of *Italia*. The development of a wider *Italic* and *Roman* identity was one of the key social changes taking place during the scope of this study, particularly during the build up to and aftermath of the Social Wars of 90- 88 BC. The range of cultural influences in this period also make it impossible to define all the art addressed in this study as specifically 'Roman.' However, the term 'Roman' is used to imply its creation in Rome or a location with close political and social interactions with Rome.

geographical scope also allows a more useful discussion of the dissemination of such motifs from this period, whilst accommodating the inherent cultural differences between Rome and towns on the Bay of Naples.

The evidence has been collated from published material and through first-hand research in Rome, Pompeii and Herculaneum. The most important publications used include the ten volumes of Carratelli's *Pompei: Pitture e Mosaici*, the *Häuser in Pompeji* series and Bragantini, De Vos and Badoni's *Pitture e Pavimenti di Pompeii: Repertorio delle fotografie del Gabinetto Fotografico Nazionale*.⁶ Whilst these volumes provided most of the evidence now collected in the accompanying evidence catalogue, some of the items were discovered during my own on-site research in Rome and the Bay of Naples. Wherever access to the various *villae* and *domus* has been possible I have attempted to take up-to-date photographs of the motifs relevant to this study and have also highlighted a number of previously unmentioned motifs as a result of my work.⁷ The results of this undertaking are seen in the accompanying catalogue, which is organised geographically in order to emphasise the stylistic differences between Rome and the Bay of Naples, as well as to draw

⁶ Carratelli, (ed.), 1999 - 2003, Volumes 1-10. Hereafter referred to as *Pitture e Mosaici*. Bragantini, De Vos & Badoni, 1981-1986, Volumes 1-3. Hereafter referred to as *Pitture e Pavimenti*. Volumes from the *Häuser in Pompeji* series are referenced individually with their respective authors.

⁷ For example, the depiction of pelta shields in the Room 19 of the House of the Menander (Item 21), or the presence of a group of different weaponry depicted in the decoration of the famous Ixion room of the House of the Vettii (Item 43A). The decoration of these rooms has been studied previously, but no attention has been given to the presence of these weaponry motifs. Whilst many of the photographs in the evidence catalogue are my own, I have attempted to provide bibliographic information for as many of the items in the catalogue as possible. Where a specific mention of a motif is not made, I have given a reference to the decoration of the room as a whole to provide background information on the decorative context of the motifs from previous research.

attention to the bias in the archaeological record towards Pompeii.⁸ Throughout this thesis I will refer to specific items by their catalogue number in the text or in brackets.

In addition to presenting this corpus of evidence, this thesis will compile depictions of arms and armour into a typology according to the configuration in which they are depicted.⁹ Organising the evidence according to type will allow the repetition of particular versions to be identified. The most common motifs could be the ones that form part of a 'pattern book' repertoire, indicating how such motifs could be appropriate and even fashionable choices for the Roman home.¹⁰ The typology will also help in identifying the origins or sources of various motifs, either from their Hellenistic predecessors, or their development as new 'Roman' models. The creation of a typology will be another way of exploring the extent to which these motifs of arms and armour respond to the choices of fashion throughout the period and the changing value of such decorative motifs to patrons throughout Italy. The popularity of different styles of motif may help reveal how depictions of arms and armour were regarded by ancient observers throughout this period, allowing us a further insight into the ancient interpretations of motifs of arms and their connection to the display of captured weaponry on the Roman home.

⁸ The largest collection of evidence within the catalogue comes from Pompeii. However, this is most likely as a result of my increased ability to access various domus in this town and the greater number of publications that exist detailing the decoration of properties in Pompeii. This is invariably due to greater excavation of Pompeii than the other sites under scrutiny here. In contrast, the study of decorations from Herculaneum and Rome remains focused on specific properties such as the Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum and the Domus Aurea in Rome, as these are all that has been published at this time.

⁹ 'Configuration' here is taken to mean the positioning of the motif on the wall (upper zone, middle zone etc.), the size of the motif and the way in which it appears to be attached to real or perspectival surfaces (flat, suspended etc.). There are also some inevitable divisions between motifs of arms and armour and the depiction of *clipeatae imagines* for these are two very different types of item, in spite of their common connection with military victory.

¹⁰ It is suggested by many scholars that some form of 'pattern book' was in use for the production of Roman domestic decorations, particularly in relation to fresco. See Ling, 1991, 217. However, the idea remains controversial.

As stated above, previous scholarship tends to suggest that many motifs of arms in domestic space allude to the dedication of captured weaponry in, or on, the Roman domus. It is important, therefore, to look at previous research into the interpretation of motifs of arms in Roman domestic decoration to understand how 'allusion' to spoils has become the most popular explanation at the expense of other interpretations. Whilst the role of war booty in the Roman home has been a subject discussed in recent years following a renewed interest in the Roman triumphal procession, the specific analysis of decorative depictions of arms and armour in the Roman home remains limited to a much smaller group of works that will be assessed fully in Chapter 1.

This thesis will also evaluate the connection between motifs of arms and the practice of displaying captured enemy weaponry around the Roman domus to assess how far the depictions of weaponry correspond with the guidelines for displaying captured arms on the Roman home that are outlined in ancient literature. Almost all of our knowledge about the practice of displaying enemy weaponry on the Roman home is gained from the descriptions and instructions set out in Greek and Latin texts. Chapter 2 will study these sources and extrapolate the conventions for the display of captured enemy weaponry in the Roman home. It is not the aim of this thesis, however, to use the literary evidence to legitimise the interpretation of the archaeological material. Whilst similarities between the idealised literary 'rules' and the decorative depictions of arms and armour are likely to be an interesting point for discussion, any correlation cannot be understood as the only interpretation to be made. Whilst I hope to look for similarities, this thesis will also place the

images within the context of a wide range of relevant archaeological evidence, which will hopefully counteract a reliance on the idealised literary descriptions.

Chapter 3 will address the range and importance of the archaeological evidence for the use of motifs of arms in domestic decoration by looking at the decoration of the public buildings. An overview of Roman coin types will give an insight into how ancient observers may have come across depictions of captured enemy weaponry whilst going about their everyday lives. By understanding how the ancient observer was familiar with imagery of captured enemy arms, it becomes easier to assess how they may have interpreted depictions of arms within domestic space.¹¹ An analysis of how motifs of arms are used on public buildings and coin types throughout this period will also help us to understand how and why motifs of arms were deployed in domestic decorations and what they may have meant to the ancient observer. Chapter 3 will also look back to the use of the motifs in Greece and the Hellenistic kingdoms. The visual difference between representations of weaponry captured by Hellenistic kings and depicted in a Hellenistic context and the spoils of Greece re-deployed in a Roman public or domestic context, if any, will be an important factor in how such decorations would have been interpreted by an ancient observer. Finally, this chapter will also address the evidence of public decorations from the Bay of Naples. It is hoped that addressing the use of motifs of arms in these public spaces will give a suitable background to how the ancient observer could have interpreted such decorations in domestic space.

¹¹ Coins were a particularly useful way of disseminating a particular message for Generals would often mint the coins to pay their troops, making the imagery on the coin types accessible to all social classes. See Southern, 2007, 18.

Focusing on the decorative context of the motifs of arms in domestic decorations will allow for a much wider range of interpretations. Arms and armour could simply be a motif that is useful in constructing the overall theme of the decorative scheme, for example the replication of a cityscape or public space, or perhaps the creation of an idealised Hellenistic environment in which captured weaponry plays a role. Their inclusion in domestic decorative schemes could be as a coincidence of creating these decorative themes rather than a conscious choice to respond to the tradition of dedicating captured arms on the domus. Building upon the evidence presented in Chapters 2 and 3, Chapter 4 will bring together these key arguments, looking in particular at how motifs of arms and armour form part of a desire for allusion to Hellenistic and Roman public spaces and analysing the decorative context of the evidence collected to suggest what the range of interpretations may be and how they correspond with the use and interpretation of motifs used in public decorations explored in Chapter 3.

Chapter 5 will assess if there is any connection between the motifs and gladiatorial games. Working from gladiatorial panoply and the depiction of gladiators themselves in Roman domestic art, this chapter will consider if motifs of arms may have a connection with gladiatorial games and display rather than with Hellenistic luxuries or decoration of public buildings. If the arms and armour depicted show any links with gladiatorial games, then they will further emphasise the flexibility of these motifs and their capacity to allude to any number of different contexts.

Chapter 6 acts as a basis for future research into motifs of arms by applying spatial analysis theories to explore the locations in which motifs are found. Using aspects of these spatial theories I will begin to explore how the rooms in which motifs of arms are found could have been accessed by residents and visitors to the Roman home. This will help to highlight if the motifs were located in more private or public areas of the property. Using a range of properties from Pompeii, it is hoped that this analysis will begin to indicate where motifs of arms are most commonly depicted in the home and how this could affect our interpretation of them. In addition, this chapter will begin to highlight the locations of the domus that are decorated with motifs of arms within the town of Pompeii itself. This will help future research to begin to understand if there were any neighbourhoods of Pompeii where motifs of arms were more popular and what this might mean for our interpretation of them.

Combining all of these analyses, I aim to open up discussion on the interpretation of motifs of arms and armour in Roman domestic space, broadening the approach taken by future research and encouraging further investigation of these fascinating motifs.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

The aim of this thesis is to begin to address a gap in modern scholarship by outlining how motifs of arms could be interpreted when used in Roman domestic decoration. This topic is inspired by the convergence of several different areas of research.

1.1: The Roman Home: Architecture, Decoration and Interpretation

The study of the Roman home and the fresco, stucco and mosaic decorations that adorn it are virtually inseparable in research. Both are equally important in informing and defining the socio-political role of the house in Roman life. In spite of this, two separate approaches to Roman domestic decoration appear to have developed in modern scholarship.

The first approach is found in the study of the architecture of the Roman home and its socio-political role in Roman life. Any discussion of domestic decoration within these works tends to focus on its role in creating an appropriate environment for day-to-day activities in the home and in developing the 'Social Identity,' as Hale's suggests, of the Roman home itself.¹² A particularly influential study on the Roman home is Wallace-Hadrill's *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum*, which looks at the identification of space within the Roman home and particularly the definition, or lack of, between public and private areas in the Roman domus and villa. His identification of how 'Roman domestic architecture is obsessively concerned with distinctions of social rank resulted in his development of the

¹² Hales, 2003, *The Roman Home and Social Identity*.

‘axes of differentiation’ that outline how the Roman home is thought to have functioned.¹³ Definitions of the distinction (or lack of) between the public and private spaces of the Roman home, informed by the quality of the decoration and architecture in each area, are still interpreted in light of Wallace-Hadrill’s axes, depicted in Figure 1.

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FIGURE 1: WALLACE-HADRILL'S 'AXES OF DIFFERENTIATION.'

WALLACE-HADRILL, 1994, 11.

Wallace-Hadrill’s study is limited by its focus on just the Roman domus in one area of Italy. Whilst his approach to public and private spaces in the domus is clearly transferrable to ancient properties of different types and locations, the study of these alternative spaces is excluded. In spite of these limitations, his study remains an important guide to understanding the concepts of public and private space within the Roman home. Wallace-Hadrill suggests that one of the key ways in which public and private are differentiated in the home is by the use of decorative ‘allusion.’¹⁴ He believes that ‘it is by borrowing the language of actual public spaces in the domestic context that architect and decorator can evoke in the visitor the feel of something more than a private house.’¹⁵ Exploring how motifs of arms relate to this ‘allusion’ within domestic decoration will offer the opportunity

¹³ Wallace-Hadrill, 1994, 8-11.

¹⁴ Wallace-Hadrill, 1994, 17.

¹⁵ Wallace-Hadrill, 1994, 17.

for a wider interpretation of motifs of arms in the Roman home than as replications of spoils.

Whilst most studies show an appreciation of the importance of domestic decoration in interpreting the Roman house, the choice to focus in specific detail on the architectural form of the home and the way it is designed to contain 'social, sexual and political choreographies' appears to have been a popular theme in the research of the 1990s.¹⁶ Useful publications from this period include Barton's *Roman Domestic Buildings* and Ellis' *Roman Housing*.¹⁷ Barton's focus is upon the archaeological evidence for Roman housing of all types, including not only the Roman domus, but also the villa and even palaces, reflected in McKay's study of domestic space published only a few years later.¹⁸ Following Barton's lead, Ellis' work on Roman domestic space focuses heavily upon the archaeological evidence to explore not only housing in Italy, but also in the Roman provinces. This focus on the architecture of the Roman home and its role in defining space has led, in recent years, to the application of spatial theories to the study of the Roman home as a way of understanding how interaction and movement took place within the domus and villa. Although originally applied to the urban context of the domus in works like Laurence's *Roman Pompeii: Space and Society*, Grahame's *Reading Space: Social Interaction and Identity in the Houses of Roman Pompeii*, applied these theories directly to the Roman domus with interesting results.

¹⁶ Further works that looked at the architectural form of Roman domestic space and its function in both Italy and the Empire are Laurence & Wallace-Hadrill (eds.), *Domestic Space in the Roman World: Pompeii and Beyond* and Pesando's *Domus*, both published in 1997. Quote from Metraux, 2002, 394.

¹⁷ Barton, 1996. Ellis, 2000.

¹⁸ McKay, 1998, *Houses, Villas and Palaces in the Roman World*.

One further work that has had a significant impact on recent studies of Roman domestic space is Hales' *The Roman House and Social Identity*.¹⁹ This monograph is one of the most recent studies to focus on how the architecture and decoration of the home were involved in the creation and maintenance of Roman social identity. Hales' focus on 'art as impression' builds on Wallace-Hadrill's earlier explorations of 'allusion' in Roman domestic decoration, but in this case seeking what was specifically 'Roman' about the home and its decoration, its *Romanitas*, rather than Wallace-Hadrill's discussion of the influence of Hellenism.²⁰ Hales achieves this by looking at housing through the lens of particularly 'Roman' activities and texts. Utilising Vitruvius, Hales builds on existing scholarship to give a convincing argument for the 'need for openness and the public nature of the elite household,' interpreting the entertainment structures of the domus and their decorations, as a specifically Roman phenomenon.²¹ Hales also reignites the idea of an agenda behind the design of Roman domestic decoration: 'Décor is not simply a reflection of personal taste – though Romans were certainly not unaware of the perceptions of taste... - it is a way of asserting yourself and your family's right to be a part of Rome.'²² Her discussion of the use of military imagery and the display of captured enemy weaponry within the Roman home, although brief, builds on this search for a personal agenda in domestic decorations and is one of the more general sources of inspiration for this research.²³

Hales' outline of the use of captured enemy weaponry in the Roman home is martialled to support her argument for the creation of a specifically Roman identity by the domus or villa.

¹⁹ Hales, 2003.

²⁰ Hales, 2003, 5.

²¹ Hales, 2003, 5.

²² Hales, 2003, 3.

²³ Hales 2003, 46; 52; 57.

However, this approach leaves many aspects to explore, including the decorative context of these motifs, the types of arms represented, how they are depicted and most importantly, what all these factors mean for the interpretation of the motifs by ancient observers. The context of motifs of arms in the Roman home is key in understanding how they functioned and were meant to be understood. It seems the standard response to the display of captured arms is they were found in the atrium or on the doorposts, that 'the tradition directly reflects the decoration of spoils that are reported to have graced the rostra or the dedication of other spoils in the temples of Rome,' and the fresco, stucco and mosaic depictions of arms and armour are invariably based upon the practice of dedicating captured enemy weaponry within the home.²⁴

In reality it is exceptionally difficult to identify any motifs of arms as depictions of spoils of war with complete certainty. The depiction of weaponry that is closest to this specific and idealised interpretation is mentioned by Hales: The vestibule mosaic of the House of Paquius Proculus in Pompeii.²⁵ The mosaic (9) is normally discussed by scholars because of its large depiction of a guard dog.²⁶ However, behind the guard dog is a perspectival depiction of a doorway, presumably the doorway to a Roman home, which is decorated with weaponry. An oval shield, a spear and a double-headed axe are attached to the upper half of each door with one door being shown slightly open to suggest that the domus was

²⁴ Hales, 2003, 57.

²⁵ Hales, 2003, 110-112.

²⁶ Hales also emphasises the presence of the dog over the weaponry elements of the mosaic which would in fact be equally useful in demonstrating the 'owner's aspirations or achievements.' Hales, 2003, 110. Balch, 2008, 35. – also chooses to focus on the dog and its importance. Similarly, Dobbins & Foss, 2009, 330 and Berry, 2007, 159 mention the importance of the guard dog, overlooking the weaponry in this mosaic. Dunbabin identifies the mosaic as showing 'the open doors of the house: a projection onto the mosaic of the real doors opening onto the passage where it is set.' However, she also overlooks the weaponry attached to them in her description. Dunbabin, 1999, 58.

open to *clientes* and visitors. This mosaic, located in the vestibule of the home and depicting the items attached to a doorway, is the closest that any surviving domestic motifs of weaponry come to matching the idealised display of captured enemy weaponry on the Roman home outlined in the literary evidence. In spite of a general lack of any other specific evidence to link motifs of arms in the Roman home with spoils of war, where depictions of weaponry are mentioned they are almost immediately categorised as representations of captured enemy weaponry. This oversimplification by much of modern scholarship has inspired this thesis. The Roman house clearly has a socio-political role that can be supported by the display of real captured weaponry in, or on it. A study of how the motifs of arms and armour in domestic decoration connect with real weaponry and the wider socio-political role of the domus remains incomplete. These motifs of arms should not be overlooked, but placed within their decorative context to understand how they could be interpreted and if this interpretation could be of use to the socio-political role of the Roman home overall.

1.2: Roman Domestic Decoration as Roman Art

A vast number of studies have attempted to categorise, collate and interpret Roman domestic decoration since the first discoveries of frescos from Rome and the Bay of Naples. This research can be split into publications that focus on a wider range of different media that seek to make sense of how we should categorise and interpret different domestic decorations: works focusing on the decoration of a particular town or property and those focusing on a particular theme or motif.

The most important of the works in the first category is Mau's *Geschichte der decorativen Wandmalerei in Pompeii*.²⁷ Mau's Four Styles are now applied to the study of almost all Roman wall paintings, regardless of their origin and often without consideration for the chronological and geographical differences that would surely have informed a level of cultural variance with Pompeii. This geographical divide is an important point to consider in my own research. Due to the conservation of the decorations of properties on the Bay of Naples by the eruption of Vesuvius, any study on Roman domestic decoration faces an inevitable amount of bias towards the evidence excavated within this area. This evidence is then limited even further by the extent of excavations in the area and the level of access available to the excavated material, either on site or through publication. As Stewart suggests, almost every study on Roman art, domestic or otherwise, is based upon a 'familiar pool' of previously published material.²⁸ Whilst an awareness of this bias is helpful in constructing this study, it remains problematic. This thesis provides a catalogue, although by no means a complete one, of evidence relating to motifs of arms and armour in fresco, stucco and mosaic decorations. Subject to the access restrictions mentioned above, photographs of the motifs of arms and armour have been taken where none were previously published, representations of weapons are recorded where large corpuses of material had previously been overlooked and relevant published material is collated together into one volume for ease of access and study. Whilst this cannot eradicate the effects of the bias of the archaeological record and the difficulties of access, the focus on

²⁷ Mau, 1882.

²⁸ Stewart, P., 2008, 8.

previously overlooked detail does allow this study to present something new to the ‘familiar pool’ that Stewart describes.

The Four Styles system was updated by Beyen in 1960 and is still widely used in publications on Roman decoration and art.²⁹ Working from Mau, Beyen and Clarke this study attributes the following dates to each Style: First Style – 200 BC to 60 BC, Second Style – 60 BC to 20 BC, Third Style – 20 BC to 20 AD and Fourth Style – 20 AD to 79 AD and beyond. The styles are useful in allowing an easy way of comparing frescos from similar chronological periods and for offering a rough estimation of a date for paintings that have not been examined scientifically for dating purposes. However, in light of more recent studies in the *Häuser in Pompeji* series and Ling’s study of decorations from the House of the Menander in Pompeii, the desire has arisen for a more holistic approach to the study of domestic decoration, factoring in the connections between fresco, stucco and mosaic in the overall design of the decorative scheme of a room or house as a whole. Each medium can no longer be understood on their own, but as part of a wider decorative effect that encompassed every part of the room and the items within it.³⁰ In spite of this, publications on each decorative medium remain an essential part of getting to grips with ancient decorations. Ling’s study on *Roman Painting* brings much of the research of Mau and Beyen into a more modern context and approach, whilst drawing in new ideas about the approach to art in general, such as *Vorhang* and *Dürchblick* in the later Fourth Style paintings.³¹ For mosaics, Dunbabin’s *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World* provides an inclusive survey of Roman

²⁹ Beyen, 1960. More recent publications that address the use of the styles in modern research include Ling, 1991.

³⁰ For the particular effect of furniture and other household objects on decoration see Swift, 2008.

³¹ Ling, 1991, 73-80.

decorations in light of the Greek precedents.³² Building on the extensive catalogue and assessment of Pernice, the focus on the Hellenistic origins of many mosaics and their connection to and use in the Roman world, Dunbabin's work remains highly significant to the understanding of how mosaics were interpreted by ancient observers.³³ Westgate has also outlined how mosaics helped to delineate space and usage in the Greek home and in houses at Pompeii.³⁴ The study of mosaics and their effect on space in the Roman home has also been explored in Clarke's study on Roman housing and decoration in some detail.³⁵ With regard to stucco decorations, Ling remains the current authority. *Stuccowork and Painting in Roman Italy* builds upon his work on *Roman Painting* from 1991 and places stuccowork within its wider decorative context in the Roman home, making it an invaluable resource for scholars of Roman domestic interiors.³⁶

The second category of research focuses on the collected art of different towns or houses: these are the publications that form Stewart's 'familiar pool' of evidence.³⁷ The introduction of this thesis has already mentioned several important texts used in the creation of the accompanying evidence catalogue: the ten volumes of Carratelli's *Pitture e Mosaici*, the Deutschen Archäologischen Institut's *Häuser in Pompeji* series and Bragantini, De Vos and Badoni's *Pitture e Pavimenti*.³⁸ Alongside these key collections are more recent works including Pappalardo's *Affreschi Romani*, Esposito and Guidobaldi's *Herculaneum: Art of a*

³² Dunbabin, 1999.

³³ Pernice, 1938.

³⁴ Westgate, 2007 and Westgate, 2000.

³⁵ Clarke, 1991.

³⁶ Ling, 1999 and Ling, 1991.

³⁷ Stewart, P., 2008, 8.

³⁸ Carratelli, (ed.), 1999-2003, Volumes 1-10; Bragantini, De Vos & Badoni, 1981-1986, Volumes 1-3; *Häuser in Pompeji* series are all authored individually.

Buried City, Berry's *The Complete Pompeii*, Coarelli's *Pompeii* and Wallace-Hadrill's *Herculaneum: Past and Future*.³⁹ Each of these works seeks to publish details about both the architecture and the decoration of specific houses in Pompeii and Herculaneum in light of their preservation, excavation and the other various items found within each house as they were discovered. The majority are exceptionally well illustrated, allowing access to images of frescos, mosaics, and other domestic decorations that are otherwise closed to public access that have formed the basis of the accompanying evidence catalogue. Whilst the photographs included in these publications were often focused on central panel paintings, such images have often inadvertently included depictions of motifs of arms that are relevant to this study, making them an incredibly important resource. Specific works also exist for the decorations of individual houses or villae. Publications on the *Domus Aurea* and *The House of Augustus* by Iacopi, Boldrighini's *Domus Picta* and Zarmakoupi's *The Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum*, among many others, have given me a great deal of insight into the decoration of individual domus and villae from across Roman Italy and not just on the Bay of Naples.

The third category focuses on the study of individual themes. Some publications, such as Leach's *The Social Life of Painting in Ancient Rome and on the Bay of Naples* take a very broad approach to a specific theme. Leach's work is invaluable in discussing the way in which specific imagery within the Roman home can be indicative of social status, as well as helping to improve it.⁴⁰ Leach takes a thematic approach to material from Rome and

³⁹ Pappalardo, 2009; Esposito & Guidobaldi, 2013; Berry, 2007; Coarelli, 2006 and Wallace-Hadrill, 2011.

⁴⁰ Leach, 2004. Leach also gives a very useful discussion on the connection between the *scaenae frons* of the Greco-Roman theatre and Roman domestic decoration. This will become relevant when looking for the locations in which motifs of arms are used in public decorations in Roman Italy. See Leach, 2004, Chapter 3.

Campania.⁴¹ She explores theatrical references in wall painting designs and the extent of mimesis with Roman public buildings. Mimesis will be useful for my own research in understanding how far representations of captured arms are linked to material examples on public display. Another important thematic work, specifically focusing on the impact of Hellenism on Roman art in both the public and domestic sphere, is Zanker's study of Roman art.⁴² 'Hellenisation' is a pertinent topic when discussing the development and interpretation of Roman domestic decoration and many more recent publications have sought to replace the term 'Hellenisation' with one that is more suggestive of a fusion of cultures than the replacement of one with another in reaction to earlier scholarship that sought to identify what was specifically 'Roman' about Roman art.⁴³ The idea of a 'Hellenistic' influence on Roman art is vitally important to this study, for it is something that is generally believed to originate from Roman conquest, triumph and spoils of war.⁴⁴ The Punic Wars are the point generally given for the first real interactions between Roman and Greek art and culture.⁴⁵ Victory over Macedonia and other Hellenistic states resulted in a huge influx of captured Greek weaponry, art and other booty to Rome and Pollitt describes how 'many Romans probably got their first good look at Greek art in the form of plunder.'⁴⁶

⁴¹ See Wallace-Hadrill, 1994, *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press).

⁴² Zanker, 1990, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, trans. A. Shapiro, (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press).

⁴³ Wallace-Hadrill, 2008. Wallace-Hadrill's *Rome's Cultural Revolution* seeks to use the term 'acculturation' although even this is not ideal, as it suggests both cultures worked together to replace elements of the other. I suggest a term such as cultural 'cohabitation' or 'partnership' would be better suited as it suggestive of a more conciliatory and symbiotic relationship between the two cultural influences of 'Hellenistic' Greek art, 'Roman' art and any other interactions with wider Mediterranean cultures.

⁴⁴ See Pollitt, 1986, 150.

⁴⁵ Pollitt, 1986, 150-151.

⁴⁶ Pollitt, 1986, 153.

During the Roman triumphal procession, Greek artworks were on display alongside vast quantities of captured arms and armour.⁴⁷ Not only were the sculptures and artworks quickly adopted into the decoration of the Roman home, but it also became fashionable to imitate or 'allude' to the decoration of Hellenistic public buildings in domestic decoration in order to create a sense of grandeur and wealth.⁴⁸ Mau's First Style is generally believed to have been developed in response to the marble decorations of Hellenistic palaces, sacked during Roman victories and inhabited by Roman allies, for example at Pergamum.⁴⁹ The effects of 'Hellenistic' culture on Roman art could also be seen in the re-telling of Greek myths and histories in various artistic mediums and settings in Roman art. In Pompeii, for instance, many houses include decorations that refer to the events of the *Iliad*, or even the victories of the Hellenistic general, Alexander the Great.⁵⁰ For the purpose of this thesis, the term 'Hellenism' is used as a way of referring to these images that represent Greek myths and culture in Roman art. The especial effects of Hellenism on the use of motifs of arms and armour in the Roman domestic sphere will be discussed in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

1.3: Domi Militiaque – Captured 'Art' and the Roman home

One particular collection of papers has turned scholarly attention towards the way in which victory and spoils of war are depicted in Roman domestic decorations: Dillon and Welch's

⁴⁷ Östenberg, 2010, 91-94.

⁴⁸ Wallace-Hadrill, 1994, 17-25. 'Allusion' as the basis of Hellenistic art.

⁴⁹ Pappalardo, 2009, 8-9.

⁵⁰ For example, the stucco decorations of the small shrine in the House of the Trojan Shrine that depict scenes from the Trojan wars. The Alexander Mosaic found in the House of the Faun at Pompeii is an equally important example of how Greek art and history were adopted into the Roman domestic sphere. The mosaic is believed to be a copy of an original Greek painting that has been copied into the House of the Faun as a symbol of wealth and erudite, 'Hellenistic' sensibilities. See Cohen, 1997.

Representations of War in Ancient Rome.⁵¹ This collection of papers has served as a gateway for discussion of how Roman decoration and art, both public and private, sought to deal with the effects of war and conquest. One paper holds especial value for this thesis in drawing together both the study of domestic decoration and the spoils of war: '*Domi Militiaque: Roman Domestic Aesthetics and War Booty in the Republic*.'⁵² Welch aims to explore 'the aesthetic conventions of Roman domestic spaces and their connection to the display of war booty.'⁵³ Her definition of the aesthetics of Roman domestic decoration is largely limited to the study of Mau's Second Pompeian Style wall paintings in domus and villae from Italy and her focus on 'booty' is also narrow, outlining the display of captured 'ideal sculptures' and other 'art' objects in the domestic sphere with no mention of the captured arms and armour that once accompanied them in the triumphal procession.⁵⁴

Welch suggests sculptures form a 'novel... category of booty and for that reason they were considered by some Roman families to be an appropriate type of house decoration.'⁵⁵ Her discussion of these items is particularly interesting in light of the various ancient polemics against luxury in Republican domestic decoration; a trend that was almost exclusively blamed upon the increasing influence of Hellenistic and Oriental art being introduced to Rome as *spolia* in this period.⁵⁶ On this point, Erich Gruen has presented a convincing and often reproduced argument for the 'lure of Hellenism' in his work on *Culture and National*

⁵¹ Dillon & Welch, 2006.

⁵² Welch, 2006 in Dillon & Welch, 2006, 91-162.

⁵³ Welch, 2006, 92.

⁵⁴ Welch, 2006, 93.

⁵⁵ Welch, 2006, 112.

⁵⁶ Cato's speech 'Plunder Should be Made Public Property,' emphasises this appropriation of captured art works and *spolia* items for the decoration of private spaces. See Gruen, 1996, 136. Also *ORF*, Cato, fr. 98. Translation from Rupke, 2006.

Identity in Republican Rome (1992).⁵⁷ Welch also attempts to place these items within a wider context of Hellenism in Rome. However, her suggestions that Hellenism had a 'practical' purpose are not as clear as they could have been.⁵⁸ It is perhaps the logical choice to discuss statuary and art works as *spolia* in relation to Roman domestic decoration, as both groups fall under the same definition of an obvious form of 'art.' However, it is Welch's choice to focus on these objects and not captured arms and armour that is most important here. In leaving a discussion of these items out of her paper, Welch leaves their relationship to domestic decoration unexplored. It is this gap in our research knowledge that this thesis begins to explore.⁵⁹

Unlike previous scholarship, Welch is careful to differentiate the display of booty within the home from the display of the enemy weaponry on 'the façade and vestibule of Rome's atrium houses.'⁶⁰ She also emphasises that 'there is no evidence as to how exactly these [weapons] were displayed.'⁶¹ This helps to highlight just how important it is for this thesis to explore the different interpretations of arms and armour that could be made, for if we do not know how real items were displayed then how can we be sure of a connection with the motifs? In contrast, Welch's discussion of the location of *spolia* statues is intriguing, as it suggests that *spolia* could be found throughout the house and not just above the door frames. She believes that statuary was found in the hortus, in order to maintain 'a

⁵⁷ Gruen, 1992.

⁵⁸ Welch, 2006, 98.

⁵⁹ It is unclear if Welch aims to discuss the presence of captured enemy weaponry and its relationship with Roman domestic decoration in her forthcoming publication *Roman Aesthetics of War*, from Cambridge University Press. No publication date is yet available.

⁶⁰ Welch, 2006, 110.

⁶¹ Welch, 2006, 110.

traditional Roman image' in the atrium and other more public areas of the property.⁶² What this 'traditional' image is clearly remains open to debate, but this provides an interesting point of contrast and comparison with captured arms or armour, which were placed in these more 'traditional' public areas. Ultimately Welch's discussion of the positioning of statuary within the Roman home is undermined by a lack of evidence for such items being positively identified as *spolia* and also being found in situ. Welch also does not explain how a *spolia* statue and a statue commissioned by the home owner would be differentiated, either in modern analyses or from the perspective of the Roman observer. These problems of identifying *spolia*, of positioning it within the home and of providing the evidence to support this location from a very limited range of domestic examples in Rome itself must all remain relevant for study in this field, including my own research. The analyses within this thesis aim to address multiple interpretations of motifs of arms as a counterpoint to this traditional desire to interpret such motifs of arms as booty. This is done by placing the motifs within their decorative context. It is hoped that this will allow for a clearer view of how ancient observers would have interpreted motifs of arms in domestic decoration, in light of the influence of captured enemy weaponry on the home.

Welch's exploration of a Roman 'booty mentality' is also of particular interest. She defines this mentality as 'obtaining as many objects and as many different categories of objects as possible' and suggests it was 'at the root of decorative patterns in Roman villas and Pompeian houses, where artwork was closely exhibited, diverse in subject matter and

⁶² Welch, 2006, 145.

period style, and rarely organised by overarching theme.’⁶³ This concept is not new, originating in Pape’s doctoral dissertation ‘Griechische kunstwerk aus Kriegsbeute und ihre öffentliche Aufstellung in Rom’ in 1975 and being upheld by Künzl’s ‘Der römische Triumph: Siegesfeiern im antiken Rom’ in 1988.⁶⁴ The combined ideas of Pape, Künzl and Welch and also Shatzman on the ability of the attitudes of Roman generals to booty being able to shape both public and private display are also significant to my own research.⁶⁵ Welch’s approach to the concept of *Domi Militaque* is arguably one of the most important influences on the research presented within this thesis, not only for its combination of two traditionally distant spheres of artistic representation, but also for opening up debate on the impact that spoils of war, whatever their form, had on the domestic decoration of the Roman home. That this is an important topic for current and ongoing research is reflected in her forthcoming publication *Roman Aesthetics of War* from Cambridge University Press in the near future.

Whilst Welch’s article is the only piece of scholarship to look in detail at the connection between *spolia* and the decoration of the Roman home, studies into the relationship between *spolia* and domestic space in general are more common. Two articles that highlight this connection are T.P. Wiseman’s ‘Conspicui Postes Tectaque Digna Deo: The Public Image of Aristocratic and Imperial Houses in the Late Republic and Early Empire,’ and

⁶³ Welch, 2006, 130.

⁶⁴ Pape, 1975 – defended at the University of Hamburg. Künzl, 1988.

⁶⁵ Shatzman, 1972 - ‘The Roman General’s Authority over Booty.’ This general outline of what was supposed to have happened to the booty carried in triumph and then taken by the triumphator has been built upon by Gruen, 1996 and others, but remains a useful reference point.

Elizabeth Rawson's article 'The Antiquarian Tradition: Spoils and Representations of Foreign Armour.'⁶⁶

Wiseman's paper set the scene for the works of Wallace-Hadrill through to Hales in his discussion of the house being key to demonstrating social status in Rome. He suggests that 'by the late Republic, at least, it was well understood that a house might perpetuate the fame of its previous owner and perhaps (by comparison) the shame of its new one.'⁶⁷ The difference between Wiseman's demonstration of this social role and those of Wallace-Hadrill and Hales is that Wiseman's conclusions on the social power of the home are based upon the *spolia* they display. He closely links the triumphal procession with the Roman home and the power of domestic space. However, Wiseman is referring to material spoils and not painted examples of them. My own research is the first to search for the role or importance of painted representations of captured arms in the home in creating a visual impression of the social status of a home or its owner.

Rawson's exploration of an ancient ethnographic approach to ancient arms is intriguing and even she admits 'we can rarely accept the statements of antiquarians unless they give their evidence explicitly, and often not then.'⁶⁸ Rawson quotes from an extensive range of ancient sources to explore Roman attitudes to captured arms. She looks carefully at the range of evidence that Livy provides for captured spoils in order to decide how best to use the evidence he provides as a mixture of truth and anachronism. She also aims to look for origins, a focus that is in keeping with the antiquarian theme of her article. In this case she

⁶⁶ Wiseman, 1987; Rawson, 1990.

⁶⁷ Wiseman, 1987, 99.

⁶⁸ Rawson, 1990, 173.

looks for the origins of the custom of affixing spoils to the Roman home. Rawson's suggestion that captured arms and armour were given to 'representatives of the *Populus Romanus* as a whole' and that 'with increasing secularisation, the display of personal spoils was allowed to private soldiers as well as great generals' is particularly enlightening and suggests that a wide audience would have had access to both real captured arms as well as the motifs of arms.⁶⁹ If large sections of society had the potential to earn and display captured arms and armour, then they were equally exposed to the display of this booty as a symbol of victory and honour that could be copied into the decoration of their own homes.

1.4: Wider Historical Context: The Roman Triumph

Any study of the aesthetics of spoils of war in the Roman home cannot be undertaken without an understanding of how the same items were displayed in public spaces in Rome. This invariably requires some engagement with how the spoils are obtained and put on display in these public places, such as in the Roman Triumph. The recent and prolific trend for research into the Roman triumphal procession reaches a high point with the 2009 publication of Ida Östenberg's *Staging the World: Spoils, Captives and Representations in the Triumphal Procession*. Rather than focusing on the triumphator, Östenberg's work looks in detail at the use and development of three other important features: spoils, captives and representations. Her careful evaluation of the literary sources gives a much clearer picture of the range and quantity of *spolia* on display in Roman triumphal processions and how it could be displayed. Whilst discussing the display of *spolia* on Roman houses, Östenberg does not make any attempt to link them with Roman domestic decorations, nevertheless,

⁶⁹ Rawson, 1990, 173.

her approach to the material on public display is invaluable as a counterpoint for discussing the domestic displays. Her narrow focus on these less explored elements of spoils, captives and representations is a welcome change from the well-trodden ground of the triumphator, the origins of the triumphal procession and the triumphal route that go back at least as far as Payne and Versnel's earliest works on this topic.⁷⁰

Beard's *The Roman Triumph*, has also encouraged a return to research on the topic.⁷¹ Her exploration, however, often serves to challenge conceptions, particularly regarding the triumphal route. An approach to 'triumphal issues' is not new, but Beard's refreshing approach to the source material acts as a useful reminder to treat all our sources for the triumph with a level of interpretive caution. As with most of the works in this field, she presents little new information on booty, highlighting just how important Östenberg's publication is. Other works on the triumph in recent years include La Rocca's Exhibition and accompanying catalogue, *Trionfi Romani*, Bastien's *Le Triomphe Romain et Son Utilisation Politique*, Itgenshorst's *Tota Illa Pompa* and the collection of essays entitled *Triplici invectus triumpho: Der römische Triumph in augusteischer Zeit* that aimed to look at the changes to the triumphal procession that came with Augustus' rule.⁷² An article by Peter Holliday in 1997 introduced the concept of looking at art in relation to the triumph, which ultimately created his monograph on *The Origins of Roman Historical Commemoration in the Visual Arts* in 2002.⁷³ An outline of the use of motifs of arms in domestic decoration and their connection to these traditions and conventions that accompany the commemoration of

⁷⁰ Payne, 1964; Versnel, 1970.

⁷¹ Beard, 2007.

⁷² La Rocca, 2008; Bastien, 2007; Itgenshorst, 2005; Krasser, Pausch and Petrovic, (eds.), 2008.

⁷³ Holliday, 2002.

Roman victory is seemingly overdue. Whilst the research undertaken in this thesis does not explicitly refer to the Roman triumphal procession other than as a way for the masses to visually engage with captured arms and armour, an understanding of its impact on the Roman psyche will clearly influence any conclusions on how the ancient observer was meant to have interpreted motifs of arms and armour in domestic space.

1.5: Motifs of Arms in Public and Private Decoration

This thesis intends to assess how representations of weaponry could be interpreted within Roman domestic art. These depictions of weapons are generally known as motifs of arms and armour and they are not without their own research precedents. One monograph has had a great impact on the study of motifs of arms and it plays a vital role in the development of the research undertaken in this thesis: Eugenio Polito's monograph on friezes of arms and armour - *Fulgentibus Armis: Introduzione allo studio dei fregi d'armi antichi*.⁷⁴

Polito collates and analyses the use of friezes of arms in Greek and Roman decoration with considerable breadth and skill. Seven chapters outline the identification and deployment of motifs of arms in decorations from the 4th Century BC through to the later Roman Empire. Since its publication *Fulgentibus Armis* has become widely accepted as a standard reference for the interpretation of motifs of arms and armour, particularly regarding the typology of

⁷⁴ Polito, 1998. Hereafter referred to as *Fulgentibus Armis* in the text.

weaponry Polito provides.⁷⁵ With regard to this thesis, Polito also acts as the starting point for observations and analysis of the use of weaponry motifs and their effect on domestic decoration, a trend more recently built upon by Dillon and Welch's 2006 work, *Representations of War in Ancient Rome* and by Polito himself.⁷⁶ He is the first to explicitly address the presence of motifs of arms and armour in domestic decoration and it is important to acknowledge the contribution that *Fulgentibus Armis* makes to the evidence that I will present within this thesis.

Chapter 1 outlines common international terminology for friezes of arms and explores historiography in some detail, demonstrating a breadth of research interest from Flavio Biando's *de Roma Triumphalis* to more recent studies on arms and armour and anthropomorphic trophies in Greco-Roman public decorations, including Picard's *Les Trophées Romains* and Jaeckel's investigations of the reliefs from Pergamum.⁷⁷ A study of similar evidence from domestic contexts is conspicuous by its absence in previous research. In more recent years, Polito has attempted to address some of the shortcomings of his monograph, particularly relating to confusion over the interpretation of representations of weaponry in relation to the display of real weaponry in the ancient world.⁷⁸ Representations of weaponry are, he claims, a phenomenon that runs parallel to the exposition of genuine weaponry in public and private spaces and it is outdated to suggest that representations

⁷⁵ For example, the description of a stucco panel of arms and armour recently discovered in the Villa of the Papyri was discussed in terms of Polito's typology, more than a decade after Polito's original work was published. See Zarmakoupi, 2010, 40.

⁷⁶ Dillon & Welch, 2006; Polito, 2011.

⁷⁷ Biondo, 1531. Text accessed online at <http://www.mgh-bibliothek.de/cgi-bin/blondus2.pl?seite=1>, [Accessed April 2014]; Picard, 1957; Jaeckel, 1965.

⁷⁸ In particular see Polito, 2011. See also Polito, 2012; Polito, 2009, Polito, 2003.

could replace the practice of dedicating genuine weaponry in either space.⁷⁹ This thesis hopes to suggest a much broader range of interpretations for these motifs of arms and to encourage any connections with the display of real captured weaponry to be understood as something more than just a 'petrification' of the real items into a decorative motif, following Polito's suggestions.⁸⁰

Regarding the aims of this thesis, Chapter 3 is the most significant section of Polito's research. Firstly, Polito addresses the difficult question of the origins of these motifs in Greek and Roman decoration, looking at the types of arms and armour on display and trying to split them into separate categories depending on their ethnic identification or possible usage. These categories include Hellenistic weaponry, 'barbarian' weaponry (mostly, but not limited to, eastern peoples), gladiatorial arms and armour, 'Roman' arms and armour and weaponry connected with the realms of mythology and fantasy (e.g. Amazonian weaponry).⁸¹ He rejects the antiquarian view of Coussin that most monuments display captured Gallic arms, suggesting this is lacking in both evidence and critical approach to the surviving material.⁸² Polito rightly claims that the identification of weaponry as belonging to such individual categories of ethnicity or usage is, in most cases, very difficult to confirm.⁸³ In some cases an identification is simple, for example the distinctive arms of the retiarius gladiator, but this is rare. However, throughout the monograph, Polito does make his own suggestions as to the identity or use of some arms that are represented in public and private decorations, indicating that although complex, this area of study has much more to offer.

⁷⁹ Polito, 2011, 264.

⁸⁰ Polito, 2011.

⁸¹ Polito, 1998, Chapter 3, section 2.

⁸² Polito, 1998, 33; Coussin, 1926.

⁸³ Polito, 1998, 34.

Perhaps most importantly, Chapter 3 of *Fulgentibus Armis* provides Polito's typology of weaponry. It is a broad and well considered approach to the identification of various types of weaponry (of varying ethnicities and ancient periods) found in public and private decoration throughout the Greco-Roman world, although greater illustration of the distinctive types would have been more helpful. It remains in use as a standard for identifying weaponry in public and private decorations, although it has been revised by Polito and built upon through a series of articles.⁸⁴ The typology is divided into the separate types of weaponry, for instance shields and helmets, and then narrowed into smaller categories based upon the style of each item. These styles often form ethnic identities and whilst Polito has attempted to avoid giving a set interpretation for each motif, some different types of weaponry are more obviously connected with the ethnicity of Roman enemies and much more likely to be representative of spoils of war – for instance the distinctive conical helmets of Rome's eastern enemies and the northern *carnyx* with its animal head decoration.⁸⁵ In other cases, Polito has allowed for the possibility of a gladiatorial interpretation of the motifs, something that will be reflected in Chapter 5 of this thesis.⁸⁶ It is partly Polito's open approach to interpreting these motifs in the public sphere that has encouraged me to look for wider interpretations of motifs of arms in Roman domestic decoration rather than the traditional interpretation of such motifs as captured enemy arms and armour. Polito's production of a typology has also acted as inspiration for the development of a suitable typology of motifs as part of this thesis. Rather than focusing

⁸⁴ Most recently by Polito, 2012 and Polito, 2011. Recent uses of the typology to identify weaponry include Zarmakoupi, 2010, 40.

⁸⁵ Polito, 1998, 51-52; 59.

⁸⁶ For example, a C.2. Type helmet is possibly identifiable as a Hellenistic form of armament, but could also have been used by gladiators. Polito, 1998, 49.

on the type of weapon depicted, the typology I have developed is based upon the manner in which motifs of arms are displayed in domestic decoration, focusing on the interpretation of motifs within their decorative context and actively encouraging the interpretation of the motifs as something other than replications of spoils of war. Most importantly, Polito does explore a limited selection of motifs of arms found within the decoration on the Roman home.⁸⁷ He attributes the presence of these examples to the influence of Greek decoration on Roman public and private buildings and goes no further than this in his exploration of domestic motifs. It may well be that he believed there was little more evidence to be found. However, as the research presented in this thesis shows, there are far more than just five examples of these captured arms in Roman domestic space, and they have more to demonstrate than a simple Greek influence on decoration in this period.

Fulgentibus Armis, combined with Polito's later articles that build on his findings, are an undeniably important corpus of work in relation to my own research. Polito has laid the foundations for the discussion of captured arms and armour as an iconographic theme in their own right and has even provided several examples of arms from domestic decoration to inspire my own search and provide a starting point for further enquiry. The wide range of public examples that he explores act as an important point of comparison for the domestic examples this thesis will discuss and his typology of weapons is a useful point of reference for identifying the types of weapons on display. His method of identifying the examples in set chronological periods is useful, but since my own research will be focused upon a much more narrow historical period this method is not entirely necessary to my own research.

⁸⁷ Polito, 1998, 127-132.

It is within the context of this wide range of methods and approaches to Roman domestic space, spoils of war, the Roman triumph and Roman domestic decoration that my thesis is based. My research aims to address new territory, not only through collecting and presenting examples of Roman domestic decoration that have not been focused upon in detail before, but also through applying relatively recent spatial analysis methods to explore and analyse the importance of these collated examples to Roman decoration and the social expectations connected with them.

Chapter 2: The Literary Evidence for the display of Arms and Armour in Public and Domestic Space.

Scholars often refer to a Roman 'tradition' or 'custom' of decorating public buildings with captured arms.⁸⁸ Prior studies discussing the display of *spolia* on the Roman home have also treated the practice as a 'custom.'⁸⁹ In order to understand what was meant by this, it is important to return to the ancient literary evidence. Assessing how closely the representations of arms and armour in domestic decorations reflect the display of real weaponry requires in-depth exploration of the literary evidence to identify precisely what these traditional values and customs are. Only then can any comparison between the archaeological material and the literary evidence be made. The attitudes of the literary sources to weaponry display can highlight if their observer's response connects them exclusively with spoils of war, or if they appear open to wider interpretations based on alternative reasons for displaying arms and armour in public and private space.

2.1: Literary *Mores*: The public 'custom' of displaying real arms

The best known literary example of the public display of captured enemy weaponry is Livy's description of how '*gilded shields were distributed amongst the owners of the bankers*'

⁸⁸ For example: Östenberg, 2010, 20; Hales, 2003, 57.

⁸⁹ See Rawson, E., 1990.

*shops to adorn the Forum.*⁹⁰ The shields are believed to be those captured during the second Samnite War by L. Papirius Cursor and displayed in his triumphal procession of 309 BC, before being hung in the Forum Romanum, although both Rawson and Beard question the accuracy of this location.⁹¹ In spite of Livy's anachronisms it is likely that this display of shields in the Forum did take place, as they are compared with other shields displayed by Papirius Cursor the Younger after his triumph in 293 BC:

*'...men inspected the spoils that he had taken from the Samnites and compared them for splendour and beauty with those that his father had won, which were familiar to them for often being used in the decoration of public places.'*⁹²

Livy's description confirms that these original captured shields were not only still on display some years later, but also that the general populace were '*familiar*' with them. Rawson highlights that this display is sited in an area frequented by 'representatives of the *Populous Romanus* as a whole' rather than just the arenas of the elite.⁹³ This is a deliberate choice to create a familiarity with captured weaponry among observers of varied social rank and to widen their social impact. This is something that could help explain how the motifs of arms were likely to have gained in importance in the Roman iconographic language of victory and triumph throughout the Republic and into the Principate.

⁹⁰ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 9.40,15.

⁹¹ Rawson, 1990. Rawson's doubts are attached to the suggestion that the shields were displayed above the '*argentarii*,' which she believes had not been established in the Forum at this early stage. Beard supports this: Beard, 2007, 168.

⁹² Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 10.46, 7-8. For the date of Papirius Cursor the Younger's Triumph in 293 BC, see Polo, 2011, 158-9.

⁹³ Rawson, 1990, 173.

Whilst not strictly weaponry, the presence of rostra, or ship's prows, in the Forum Romanum is also a part of this practice of displaying *spolia* in public spaces. The original speaker's platform was decorated with the beaks of ships captured at the Battle of Antium in 338 BC:

*'Maenius dedicated the prows of the ships he captured at Antium under the speaker's platform in the forum, which was subsequently known as the Rostra.'*⁹⁴

This display of captured prows was then reflected in the later construction of a second platform by Augustus:

*'...they decreed that the platform of the shrine to Julius should be decorated with the beaks of the captured ships [from Actium]...'*⁹⁵

As Sear suggests, 'the two rostra faced each other across the Forum and reminded Romans of the glories of the old Republic, and the more recent triumphs of the restored Republic and its new leader, Augustus.'⁹⁶

Captured enemy weaponry was also displayed in temples, a practice stemming from the dedication of the *spolia opima* in the temple of Jupiter Feretrius.⁹⁷ Arms captured by Papirius Cursor the Younger are described below:

'Papirius dedicated the temple of Quirinus... adorning it with spoils of the enemy. Of these there was such a great quantity that not only were the temple and the Forum

⁹⁴ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 8. 14, 1-12.

⁹⁵ Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 51. 19, 2.

⁹⁶ Sear, 1982, 59.

⁹⁷ Flower, 2000, 34.

*bedecked with them, but they were distributed also amongst the allies and the neighbouring colonies for the decoration of their temples and public squares.'*⁹⁸

Religious and civic structures were the regular home of dedications of enemy weaponry. Dio's description places them on an equal footing and infers that these were the first public places decorated with *spolia* items before any excess went to decorate public buildings in other colonies. The forum and the temple are, therefore, idealised places for public display of arms and armour and particularly those items captured from the enemy.

Rawson approaches the literary evidence more critically. Through questioning the veracity of our literary accounts she indicates that the location and type of individual examples of weaponry recorded as displayed in public may well be a 'literary *topoi*' due to apparent regularity of dedications of this type in Latin literature; these descriptions could be fictional rather than factual.⁹⁹ While we may not be able to rely on our ancient sources' connection of *spolia* display to specific triumphs and triumphators, Rawson must concede that creation of a literary '*topoi*' indicated that a widespread practice of dedicating weaponry in public spaces was ongoing during the Republican period and that prominent public structures would have been a suitable place for this type of display.¹⁰⁰

Weapons almost certainly adorned a range of public buildings on the Capitoline hill, particularly in the form of shields. Pliny writes that M. Aufidius, when conducting his public lustrations, '*informed the senate that the shields there... [which] had been listed as copper*

⁹⁸ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 10.46, 7-9.

⁹⁹ Rawson, 1990, 164.

¹⁰⁰ Rawson, 1990, 164-5.

*were in reality made of silver.*¹⁰¹ This short account tells us much about the presence of shields on the Capitoline. Firstly, that there were enough shields for them to require listing in the lustrations. Not only were shields present, but also the care taken to record them indicates they held some value, intrinsic or otherwise, and they needed to be accounted for. This corresponds with Diodorus Siculus' accounts and his attempts to record the numbers of shields in triumphal display.¹⁰² The admission of a mistake in the records – recording them as bronze rather than silver – is quite illuminating. The fact that silver tarnishes to a bronze colour, particularly when exposed to the open air and left untouched, makes this account more believable, as heavily tarnished silver shields could possibly be mistaken for bronze if not viewed particularly closely. The inaccuracy is not spotted for several years which could suggest the shields were hung in such a way as to make close visual inspection difficult, for example high on a public building. Pliny's apparent surprise at this mistake equally indicates that it was something that was unusual and that records kept of these weapons were normally accurate and detailed.

The records may have been used to keep track of which public or private buildings had weaponry on display and to record the intrinsic value of them. Certainly silver shields would have been more valuable than their bronze counterparts, making the find a profitable one and perhaps this is the motive behind Pliny's inclusion of this detail. Precisely which buildings these shields are displayed on is not mentioned. Of greater importance to this study is the fact that the shields are not specifically identified as captured enemy weaponry.

The weapons could be *spolia*, but there is nothing that proves this categorically. Not all

¹⁰¹ Pliny, *Natural History*, 35.4.

¹⁰² Diodorus Siculus, *Library of History*, 31.8, 10. This source lists the numbers and types of weaponry on display in a triumphal procession. It is discussed further on page 69 of this thesis.

weaponry on display was taken as booty during successful campaigns, but it is likely that the form of the shield itself allowed observers to connect the displays with a military tradition on some level. The peculiar focus on shields in Pliny's account, combined with those of Diodorus Siculus and Livy suggests that they were numerous in public decorations. That lists or records of shields were made at all suggests there were a large enough number of them on display to be worthy of attention, regardless of their origins.

By contrast, little mention is made in the sources of other items of weaponry that could have been on display. It is possible that whilst some trophies could be constructed in the anthropomorphic style, using body armour and offensive weaponry, and carried in the triumph, the majority of the swords, helmets and other items may have been burned and disposed of. Livy's description of the preparations for Aemilius Paullus' triumph records:

*'After the festival had been held and the bronze shields loaded into the ships, the rest of the arms of all kinds were piled up into a great heap, and the general, after prayer to Mars, Minerva, Mother Lua and the other gods to whom it is right and lawful to dedicate the spoils of the enemy, with his own hands put the torch to the pile: then each of the military tribunes as they stood round about tossed in fire.'*¹⁰³

Shields are deliberately separated from the rest of the captured arms and armour to be transported to Rome. It appears that only the best items of war booty were used in the

¹⁰³ Livy, 45. 33, 1-5.

triumphal procession. Shields also appear to take precedence in Plutarch's description of Aemilius Paullus' triumph.¹⁰⁴

The so-called 'Marcian Shield,' hung in or on the temple to Jupiter Capitolinus, on the Capitoline Hill was decorated with the image of Hasdrubal.¹⁰⁵ This is almost certainly the same shield captured during the campaigns and described below:

*'The latter included a silver shield, one hundred and thirty seven pounds in weight, with an image of Hasdrubal.'*¹⁰⁶

John Marincola believes the shield may not have been an item of *spolia*, suggesting that it was made from the 137lbs of silver that had been captured.¹⁰⁷ Ultimately the shield, either fabricated or captured was considered 'a war trophy,' although it is important to note the distancing of the object from the idealised 'broken and bloody' weapons that had been displayed in the Triumphal procession.¹⁰⁸ This is a different kind of shield, the inclusion of a portrait of Hasdrubal giving it aesthetic as well as a martial value. It was a religious dedication as well as an honorific one, emphasising how the ancient observer could make multiple interpretations even of the original weaponry, let alone its sculpted or painted equivalents. Shields were clearly an important part of both decoration and public dedication in the architecture of the Capitoline Hill. Their display in public places indicates that citizens and non-Romans alike would have the opportunity to view genuine spoils of war dedicated

¹⁰⁴ Plutarch, *Aemilius*, 32.4-7.

¹⁰⁵ Livy, 25.39, 18.

¹⁰⁶ Livy, 25.39, 13.

¹⁰⁷ Marincola, 2011, 394.

¹⁰⁸ Marincola, 2011, 394; Östenberg, 2010, 27.

in situ, and consequently be able to identify them in the decorative schemes of other public monuments.

One of the most interesting instances of the display of captured *spolia* is in the portico of C. Lutatius Catulus. After his defeat of the Cimbri in 101 BC, Q. Lutatius Catulus went so far as to build his own public building, a portico on the Palatine hill, to house his spoils.¹⁰⁹ It seems likely that some captured arms and armour were among the items on display in the portico, probably in a manner similar to the captured Spartan shields hung in the Painted Stoa in Athens.¹¹⁰ Other types of *spolia* would also have been present including captured statues, artworks and other luxury items. Cerutti suggests that Catulus' portico was 'an L- shaped colonnade one hundred feet wide and somewhat greater in depth, framing an annexe to the precinct of the Magna Mater and Victoria.'¹¹¹ A comparison with the portico constructed by Pompey at the rear of this theatre and temple complex shows some similarities between the two.¹¹² The position of Catulus' portico in an area used by worshippers at the temple means that arms and armour on display were easily visible. Its location close to the temple of Victoria, goddess of victory, also suggests that the spoils hung there were likely to include captured arms as obvious symbols of military conquest to connect with dedications made in and on the temple itself.

Weaponry appears to be commonplace on various types of public buildings. Shields and other weaponry items, along with rostra, are dedicated on civic buildings in the Forum, the

¹⁰⁹ Cicero, *De Domo Sua*, 102 and Valerius Maximus, 6.3, 1.

¹¹⁰ For a discussion of the Spartan shields in the Painted Stoa see Camp, 1986, 71-72.

¹¹¹ Cerutti, 1997, 423.

¹¹² Pompey's portico is said to have displayed some of the *spolia* taken during his campaigns, possibly including tapestries among other objects that could have included weaponry. Propertius, *Elegies*, 2.32.11-16.

porticos and public horti and in religious buildings. When considering the decoration of the Roman home, it seems logical to suggest that depictions of arms and armour would be found in more 'public' areas of the home, namely the entrance area, atrium and possibly the tablinum. However, Wallace-Hadrill's suggestions of 'allusion' being used within Roman domestic decoration mean that we should be equally aware of the presence of depictions of weaponry within paintings or other decorations alluding to the structures and decorations of Roman public space. This context does not allow for the motifs of arms and armour in domestic decorations to be interpreted exclusively as spoils of war, but suggests something more nuanced and perhaps even peripheral in the creation of an appropriate decorative environment for Roman domestic ritual.

2.2. Non- Military dedications of Arms and Armour

Arms and armour used in the decoration of public buildings in Rome and other cities are most often identified by scholars as items of *spolia*. Rutledge's study on the acquisition and display of booty and other collectible items confirms that the 'display of spoils needs to be distinguished from commemorative statues, monuments, and a diverse array of objects and material that did not consist of spoils of the vanquished, but rather of memorials set up specifically to recall deeds of valour or benefactions.'¹¹³ Whilst Rutledge is concerned with the presence of statuary, the same need for differentiation applies to arms and armour on display in public spaces. Weaponry, particularly shields, appears to have been set up on public buildings to commemorate both civic and military actions.

¹¹³ Rutledge, 2012, 135.

Livy mentions two instances of shields being displayed on the Capitoline that were not captured from the enemy:

‘[M. Aemilius Lepidus and L. Aemilius Paullus] inflicted fines on a large number of graziers and out of the proceeds they had gold-plated shields put up on the pediment of the temple of Jupiter.’¹¹⁴

‘Twelve gilt shields were also set up by the curule aediles P. Claudius Pulcher and Servius Sulpicius Galba out of the fines levied on grain dealers who had been holding back their grain.’¹¹⁵

Neither group of shields can be positively identified as items of captured enemy arms and armour. They seem to be bought with, or made using revenue from fining law-breakers. The shields could be items of booty that have been purchased for display, but this seems unlikely when facing objections like Cato’s.¹¹⁶

A brief note on the linguistic choices of ancient Latin authors when referring to real weaponry is of value. The Romans utilised a wealth of different terms for weaponry, something that becomes apparent from just a cursory glance through Polito’s typology.¹¹⁷

Different shield types have their own particular names, including the Iberian *caetra* or its

¹¹⁴ Livy, 35. 10, 12 - *‘multos pecuarios damnatunt; ex ea pecunia clipea inaurata in fastigio lovis aedis posuerunt.’*

¹¹⁵ Livy 38.35 – *‘et duodecim clipea aurata ab aedilibus curulibus P. Claudius Pulchro et Ser. Sulpicio Galba sunt posita ex pecunia qua frumentarios ob annonam compressam damnarunt.’*

¹¹⁶ For a discussion of the presence of a private market for *spolia* items see section 2.3.1 of this chapter. Cato’s Oration, *Ne Spolia Figeretur Nisi De Hoste Capta*, highlights that the appropriation of war booty that was not earned was socially unacceptable, although it did take place. It may well have applied to public buildings as well as private buildings, for if *imperatores* set up war booty that they had purchased on public buildings, rather than items they had won in combat, they would be committing a similar offence. However, the fact that Cato makes a speech on this topic at all suggests that it was taking place. It is unlikely, however, that the shields Livy mentions were purchased from a sale of war booty.

¹¹⁷ Polito, 1998. Chapter 3.

close companion the *parma*, the Amazonian or Thracian *pelta*, the Roman *scutum* and even the rare *ancilia* shield form. These are identified as something completely different to a *clipeus*, the term which most likely applies to the round shields of hoplites and possibly Macedonia.¹¹⁸ As a result, when referring to captured weaponry on public display, it seems reasonable to expect our Latin sources to demonstrate some variation in the terminology used to describe items, especially if a description wishes to emphasise the foreignness of the defeated foe. It would also be strange for displays of shields in public spaces to be limited only to round shields when such a variety of foreign weaponry would have been available. However, the choice of terminology for the majority of Latin authors does not appear to reflect this diversity.

In all the sources explored above, the term *clipeus* is used to describe the shields on display. A brief examination of word frequency statistics also shows a marked difference in the use of these terms. As a basic example, in Virgil's *Aeneid* the word *clipeus* is used on 103 separate occasions to describe weaponry. In contrast *scutum* is utilised 24 times, the term *parma* is encountered on 13 occasions and the *pelta* is mentioned only 3 times in the Latin text.¹¹⁹ Perhaps most telling is that for his description of the public display of weaponry on

¹¹⁸ Polito, 1998, 39-45. See also the definition by Rich in Smith, 1875, 297-299 that emphasises the *clipeus*' identification as a round shield.

¹¹⁹ Word frequency statistics gained by the use of the Perseus 'Latin Word Study Tool' - accessed online. <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/wordfreq?lookup=clipeus&lang=la>, [Accessed April 2014]. This is just for the text of the *Aeneid* and working as an example of the use of these terms at the mid-point of the chronological scope of this thesis. These results are invariably subject to the bias of the chosen version of text published on the website and may vary between different versions of the *Aeneid* available from different sources. This brief assessment is designed to be indicative and not complete. A more detailed study of word frequency regarding these terms seems likely to yield more interesting results, but unfortunately cannot be accommodated here.

the palace of Laurentum, Virgil refers to *clipei* and not to any of the other shield types.¹²⁰ A foreign identity for at least some of the weaponry in the decoration of the palace is implied by the presence of the more barbarian sounding ‘curved axes,’ yet the shields are referred to in a generic fashion.¹²¹ Similarly in Pliny the Elder’s *Natural History* he mentions the *clipeus* on 24 occasions, both for the description of real weaponry used in combat, as well as specifically Roman forms of display such as portrait shields (*clipeatae imagines*).¹²²

It could be that by the Augustan period, the display of the *clipeus virtutis* in Rome had inspired a generalisation of shield description, either real or motifs, and the choice of terminology in Virgil’s text.¹²³ Zanker suggests that this ‘honorific shield’ had Hellenistic precedents.¹²⁴ The association of virtuous qualities with the round shield may have made it a more desirable form of shield to dedicate, but this is not explicit in our ancient sources. Augustus’ *clipeus virtutis* was displayed in the Curia, something that Zanker claims confirmed an interpretation of this shield form as a symbol of victory, as well as other virtues, and that it explains why later representations of the round shield are ‘almost always combined with the goddess of victory.’¹²⁵ It would be stretching the evidence too far to

¹²⁰ ‘multaque praeterea sacris in postibus arma, captive pendent currus curvaeque secures et cristae capitum et portarum ingentia claustra spiclaque clipeique ereptaque rostris carinis.’ Virgil, *Aeneid*, 7. 183-186.

¹²¹ Virgil, *Aeneid*, 7. 183-186.

¹²² Word frequency statistics as in footnote 112, this time working from Pliny’s *Natural History* text available online. Pliny’s description of shields used in combat: *Natural History*, 7.56; for shields used in more decorative display: *Natural History*, 35.2.

¹²³ The *clipeus virtutis* was dedicated to Augustus in 27 or 26 BC, designed to honour his personal virtues. It took the form of a ‘golden shield’ that Augustus set up in the curia. An extant marble copy of the shield, as well as its mention in Augustus’ *Res Gestae*, demonstrates the attempt to make this single shield a powerful and widely recognised piece of self-promotion for the Princeps, even in antiquity. A full discussion of the shield, along with the virtues it supposedly represents is given in Wallace-Hadrill, 1981.

¹²⁴ Zanker, 1990, 96-97.

¹²⁵ Zanker, 1990, 97.

suggest that this association of the *clipeus virtutis* with the goddess Victoria connects all uses of the term *clipeus* with ideas of Roman conquest even in the Augustan period.

The influence of the *clipeus virtutis* of Augustus suggests that the display of weaponry in public was not always directly connected with Roman military victory. Other interpretations were quite clearly possible in antiquity and would have been understood by the ancient observer. Shields appear to have held a level of prestige that went beyond their possible role as items of captured weaponry. They were a suitable item to dedicate to the gods and to display in public for reasons other than military success. Shields developed a strong connection with moral values and justice through their relationship with fines and tithes, suggesting they may have been an honorific dedication for these virtues long before the well-known dedication of the *clipeus virtutis* to Augustus in 27 BC. Rutledge suggests they have a 'symbolic value, reminding the viewer of the "shielding protection" of the *clipeus*' dedicator and the strength of the victor in stripping away the enemy's defences, rendering him vulnerable.'¹²⁶ Whilst this certainly applies to the *clipeus virtutis*, without any specific markings, it is not clear how the ancient observer, or the modern one, can visually differentiate these two forms of dedication for weaponry in public space. The terminology for shields supports this lack of differentiation between types of dedicated weaponry, the term *clipeus* being equally interpretable as an item of enemy weaponry or a form of honorific decoration. It appears that the display of arms and armour in public spaces is not as definitively connected to captured weaponry as previous scholarship would suggest. Regardless of our limitations, the opportunity for these other, equally important

¹²⁶ Rutledge, 2012, 138.

interpretations must remain and could have been thought of just as readily by the ancient observer when viewing such items.

2.3: Domi Militiaque: The evidence for real weaponry in Roman domestic space.

Not only do our literary sources provide evidence of a rich tradition of using weaponry to adorn public places, either *spolia* or otherwise, they also provide evidence for the use of weaponry to decorate Roman domestic spaces. The predominance of sources that describe captured enemy weaponry over other forms of dedication may have led to the modern trend to interpret motifs of arms in the Roman home as representations of, or allusions to, spoils before any other interpretation. In consequence, an interrogation of these sources is particularly important to this thesis. It is important to outline, if possible, the rules or conventions that govern the display of real weaponry in the Roman home in contrast to the display of weaponry in public.

A key source for the display of *spolia* at the Roman home is Polybius. He describes how on returning from war '*in their houses... [The Romans] hang up the spoils they won in the most conspicuous places looking upon them as tokens and evidence of their valour.*'¹²⁷ The emphasis for display of captured weaponry here is that they are in a 'conspicuous' place. This is ambiguous as there is no definition in our sources of 'conspicuous' places in the Roman home. What appears absolutely necessary is that the display of *spolia* in the home is

¹²⁷ Polybius, 6, 39.10.

something that must be earned. Cicero, in his public rebuke of Marc Antony, castigates him for moving into Pompey's home:

*'Did you actually dare to enter that house, to cross that most hallowed threshold, to show your debauched face to the household gods of that dwelling? Are you not ashamed to be lodging for such a long time in a house that for quite some time no man could behold... or when you see those ships' beaks in the vestibulum do you imagine it is your house you are entering? That is impossible!'*¹²⁸

Antony is clearly not a fitting candidate to move into Pompey's home. His 'debauchery' means he is unworthy of the *spolia* displayed at the entrance. Antony must do far more than just possess Pompey's house, he must be worthy of the victories that the entrance commemorates. Feldherr goes as far as to suggest that 'the alternative to equalling the achievements memorialized in the domus is to enter into someone else's triumph, presumably in the role of captive.'¹²⁹ Pliny confirms this, saying '*a powerful stimulus to emulation this, when the walls each day reproached an unwarlike owner for having thus intruded on the triumphs of another.*'¹³⁰ In all cases the owner of a home must be worthy of the spoils that are displayed there through his own military exploits, personal qualities and behaviour.

Whilst there appear to be certain rules for who can display spoils on and around their home, there are also rules against their removal:

¹²⁸ Cicero, *Philippics*, 2.28. 68.

¹²⁹ Feldherr, 1998, 22.

¹³⁰ Pliny 35.2, 7.

'Why is it that of all things dedicated to the gods it is the custom to allow only spoils of war to disintegrate with the passage of time and not to remove them beforehand nor repair them?'¹³¹

Plutarch is ultimately referring to *spolia* dedicated in public, but the practice also seems to apply to the *spolia* dedicated in domestic space. Suetonius describes how in the fire of 64 AD, *'the houses of leaders of old were burned, still adorned with trophies of victory.'*¹³² The weaponry on display had been left in situ and destroyed by the fire, because they could not be removed by choice. Pliny also highlights how spoils were *'memorials which a purchaser even was not allowed to displace so that the very house continued to triumph even after it had changed its master.'*¹³³ This is not to be taken as evidence that all *spolia* remained untouched. Other sources, tell of spoils being taken down from decorating the home to be used in combat, which suggests removal could be considered in extreme circumstances.¹³⁴ Domestic space appears to be equally appropriate to public space as a place to display captured arms and armour, but remains subject to a set of social and moral restraints that would have been understood by those in possession of the spoils and those observing them.

It was not just the elite who could display captured arms or armour on their homes. After the battle of Cannae, the Roman senate is forced to take extreme measures to replenish their numbers. Livy describes how men were chosen from *'those who had been aediles,*

¹³¹ Plutarch, *Moralia, Questions*, 37.

¹³² Suetonius, *Nero*, 38.2.

¹³³ Pliny 35.2.7.

¹³⁴ Livy describes how spoils are removed from display on public buildings to be used in the defence of Rome after the defeat at Cannae – Livy, 22.57, 10-11. The same could occur in the domestic sphere, as the spoils of Flaccus are removed to be used by his supporters in the urban conflicts inspired by Gaius Gracchus in 121 BC – Plutarch, *C. Gracchus*, 15.1.

tribunes of the plebs and quaestors’ and also *‘from the number of those who had not held offices, the men who had spoils of the enemy affixed to their houses.’*¹³⁵ The opportunity to acquire and display *spolia* was clearly not limited to higher echelons of the Roman elite, but open to all Roman soldiers. Even more important is the effect these spoils had on social mobility, albeit in extreme circumstances. Whilst the positions of the *cursus honorum* create their own form of social stratification, for those that do not or cannot hold a political office, the ability to display captured enemy arms and armour allows them to be regarded as a higher social rank. Essentially, captured arms and armour belong to Rapoport’s “Middle-level meanings” in terms of their significance of guiding social behaviour in the built environment.¹³⁶ They can indicate the social status of their owner symbolically and even help to improve it as far as senatorial status.

The presence of *spolia* is also used as evidence for the moral and social superiority of Roman individuals or families. In the case of Marcus Manlius Capitolinus, spoils in the form of captured arms are even produced as physical evidence in his trial:

*‘...the military distinctions which he not only enumerated but produced for all to see, comprised of the spoils of thirty enemies whom he had slain’*¹³⁷.

Whilst the spoils act as evidence of his superior morality and fulfilment of Roman values, the fact that they can be *‘produced for all to see’* indicates that the spoils were not always attached to the house, but could be kept within the home, ready to be produced if required.

¹³⁵ Livy, 23.23. 4-7.

¹³⁶ Rapoport, 1990, 219-225.

¹³⁷ Livy, 6.20.7.

It seems that spoils were a well understood feature of Roman domestic space and held some significance in terms of indicating or creating social status.

As well as outlining social expectations, our literary sources also seem to present a set of *ideals* for the display of captured arms and armour in or on domestic space. Whilst we cannot identify a set 'rule' for the location of *spolia* within the domus, our sources do present a 'conspicuous' place as the ideal. The 'conspicuous' place has commonly been interpreted by scholars to be the entrance to the home, including the vestibule, door posts, doors and areas in very close proximity to the threshold, both inside and outside the domus.¹³⁸ The sources supporting this identification include: Cicero's description of *spolia* in the vestibule of the house of Pompey; Virgil's focus on the spoils attached directly to the doorposts of Priam's palace in Troy and also to the doors of the palace at Laurentum; Ovid's description of weaponry decorating the doorposts of the House of Augustus on the Palatine in Rome; Silius' description of the weaponry at the threshold of the domus of Marcus Atilius Regulus in Rome; Pliny's description of the weaponry of the ancestors being displayed in the atrium.¹³⁹ Of the sources listed, the majority point to captured weaponry being dedicated specifically on the doorposts or doors of the property itself and only two of the sources mention specific spaces that are recognised as part of the Roman domus – the vestibule and the atrium.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁸ Polito, 1998, 26.

¹³⁹ "*In vestibulo*" - Cicero, *Philippics*, 2.28.68; "*barbarico postes auro spoliisque*" - Virgil, *Aeneid*, 2.504 and "*in postibus arma*" - 7.183-6; "*fulgentibus armis conspicuos postes tectaque*" - Ovid, *Tristia*, 3.1, 33-34; "*in limine*" - Silius, *Punica*, 6. 445-6; "*aliter apud maiores in atriis haec errant*" - Pliny, *Natural History*, 35.2,6.

¹⁴⁰ Cicero and Pliny respectively. References and Latin text as above.

Four of the sources provide examples of *spolia* in the decoration of a specifically 'Roman' home. Virgil's two examples refer to foreign palaces, structures quite different from the traditional Roman domus. Modern scholarship suggests the practice of displaying weaponry on the walls or doors of the home was 'typically Roman rather than Greek,' which could indicate that these two descriptions are not only an anachronistic application of the Roman practice to the depiction of Greek domestic spaces, but also likely to be completely fabricated.¹⁴¹ Virgil produced the *Aeneid* at the height of Augustus' supremacy and much of its subject matter is a thinly veiled panegyric to Augustan rule.¹⁴² It may be that Virgil's description is influenced by the decoration of the entrance to Augustus' home on the Palatine. Whilst Virgil does not explicitly describe this entrance, Ovid makes Augustus' home a detail of his own literary dedication to the Princeps. His description is one of the four remaining sources that can be definitively linked to the display of captured weaponry in a clearly Roman context:

*'While I was marvelling at one thing after another, I beheld doorposts marked out from others by gleaming arms and a dwelling worthy of a god.'*¹⁴³

Depictions of the doorway seen on coins of the period often incorporate the two laurel trees and the laurel crown (See Figure 2):

¹⁴¹ Östenberg, 2010, 20.

¹⁴² The close links between the subject matter of the *Aeneid* and Augustan rule are thoroughly explored by Grandsden & Harrison, 2008, particularly chapter 1; Thomas, 2004, Chapter 1 and Ford Wiltshire, 1989, 16 as a starting point.

¹⁴³ Ovid, *Tristia*, 3.1.33-34

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FIGURE 2: AUREUS OF CANINIUS GALLUS, ROME, 12BC.

RIC 1. 419.¹⁴⁴

Contrary to Ovid's description the coin type design does not include any representations of captured arms. This could suggest that it was not appropriate for the captured arms to be included on the coin. This would act as a permanent memorial of the spoils and contravene the idea set forward by both Plutarch and Pliny, that *spolia* should be left to decay and not be commemorated permanently. However, since other coin designs include depictions of *spolia* like rostra, trophies or shields, this seems unlikely.¹⁴⁵ It could be that Ovid, like Virgil, has imagined a display of arms for literary emphasis and effect. This seems less likely in the light of Augustus' triple triumph of 29 BC and the huge amount of *spolia* brought back to Rome and paraded in the procession.¹⁴⁶ I would suggest that it is most likely that Augustus' home on the Palatine displayed captured *spolia* in or on it. This was the highest honour available to most serving soldiers and generals and it would be expected, if not essential, for Augustus to display elements of his captured booty in or on his own domestic space. A more mundane explanation could be that depicting the various types of arms in detail on the

¹⁴⁴ Aureus of Caninius Gallus, Rome, 12 BC. (*RIC* 1. 419). Commonly believed to represent the doorway to Augustus' house on the Palatine; Zanker, 1990, 92; Mattingly, 1960, 171. However Gaius Stern argues that this is not the case and that the doors represented are actually those of the temple of Janus. See Stern, 2006, 142. Image from Zanker, 1990, 92, Fig. 75a.

¹⁴⁵ A more detailed discussion of coin types is given in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

¹⁴⁶ Gurval, 1998, 19.

aureus was too complicated for the coin design, so focus was instead placed on the honours voted to him publicly rather than those he gained as an individual.

Whilst the presence of captured arms and armour in the decoration of the exterior of the House of Augustus remains unproven, the role of such items in the decoration of other Roman citizens' houses is especially well documented. The house of Pompey, a famed Roman general, was decorated with the rostra captured from his campaign against the pirates.¹⁴⁷ Here, at last, is an example of *spolia* being displayed in a clearly defined Roman domestic context, but these are rostra and not arms. Another, in book VI of Silius Italicus' *Punica* relates the life of Marcus Atilius Regulus who was consul for the first year of the Punic war. Silius Italicus' account describes the display of weaponry, specifically shields, at the 'threshold' of the domus supporting Plutarch's description of Pompey's vestibule.¹⁴⁸ So far the location of these arms appears to be limited to the entrance threshold and vestibule. Pliny provides the only literary evidence for the display of weaponry in the atrium of the Roman home. This location seems to have been adopted as a likely place for the Roman *paterfamilias* to display captured *spoils* of war, including weaponry, but this appears to be based upon the atrium's role in Roman public activity such as the *salutatio* and not on a great deal of evidence from the ancient literature. Whilst Pliny's description does specify '*in atriis*' it is often overlooked by scholars that he is referring to the display of *clipeatae*

¹⁴⁷ Cicero, *Philippics*, 2. 28, 68.

¹⁴⁸ The dating of the *Punica* has been subject to some debate by scholars, but is generally believed to have been written in the 1st Century AD, some two centuries after the Punic wars themselves. See Hoyos, 2011, 125. Also Silius, *Punica*, 6.

imagines and not the display of captured enemy weaponry.¹⁴⁹ The two forms of dedication are quite different, in spite of their common military origin.

It appears that the modern practice of associating the display of captured enemy weaponry with the entrance threshold and vestibule of the Roman domus, although apparently based on only a few Latin sources, is a sound one. Whilst it is possible that captured enemy weaponry was also displayed in the atrium, this is a much more tenuous connection in the ancient accounts. If motifs of arms in the decoration of the Roman domus are in any way attempting to replicate or respond to the practice of displaying real weaponry in the home, then they too should be depicted as though close to thresholds or entrances and the motifs may even be found near to the entrance of the home itself.

2.3.1: Private Collecting: A Market for Arms and Armour?

The creation of private collections of artefacts by members of the Roman social elite is a popular subject for current research. Rutledge's study on 'acquisition and collection' of artefacts in Rome suggests that the popularity of collecting statues and other plundered artworks was part of the overall 'lure of Hellenism' endemic in Roman society during the Republic; 'aspiring to own or possess Greek cultural objects could signify one's erudition and cultural sophistication, or the political and military domination of a society believed more advanced.'¹⁵⁰ Rutledge is concerned with the collecting habits of the Roman elite, particularly regarding statuary in marble or bronze. A large number of Rome's senatorial class were actively engaged in purchasing such items when unable to increase their holdings

¹⁴⁹ Pliny, 35.6.

¹⁵⁰ For 'lure of Hellenism' - see Gruen, 1992, 1; Rutledge, 2012, 33.

through success in foreign conquest.¹⁵¹ Rutledge's account of these Roman collectors is purely based upon the literary evidence and while he suggests that a survey of the archaeological evidence for collecting would be valuable, the inherent difficulties in undertaking this work have halted scholars in this field. The most obvious of these concerns also relevant to this thesis is outlining how to differentiate between items of a private collection acquired as personal plunder and purchased items. It is virtually impossible for the modern observer to distinguish any difference in the provenance of the statuary or weaponry on display.

The ancient literature is equally reticent in distinguishing between captured weaponry and other booty when discussing the trade of plundered items. Weaponry, being subject to the strict rules about permanent display outlined by Plutarch, should obviously not be available for sale. However, the lack of differentiation in ancient accounts could be interpreted as ambivalence to the form of booty on sale, captured weaponry being as available to the consumer as statuary. Fragments from a series of speeches by the elder Cato indicate that 'the "proper" disposal and use of booty' was a subject of concern as desire to create and grow private collections increased.¹⁵² One particular speech, '*Ne spolia figeretur nisi de hoste capta*,' could indicate that captured weaponry was being appropriated and displayed by those who had not won it through honourable means. Without any direct reference in our literary sources to a trade in captured weaponry, the presence of any market for these items must remain speculative, but seems to have been likely. The strongest argument for its presence is that the sheer desirability of captured weaponry, for its aesthetic value or

¹⁵¹ Rutledge, 2012, 56.

¹⁵² Rutledge, 2012, 43.

social importance, was sure to have led to some form of trade, legitimate or otherwise. It may well be that the depictions of weaponry found in the Roman home could offer some insight into the collectability of captured arms and armour, perhaps by the display of many items in large groups in the style of a *pinacothecae*. The decorative context of these items will be key. While only hinted at in the ancient literature, the possibility of a desire to collect captured arms and armour should still be kept in mind when interpreting the domestic decorations.

2.3.2: Pliny's *Natural History*, 35.2 and the Case of *Clipeatae Imagines*.

As mentioned above, the misinterpretation of Pliny's *Natural History* 35.2 is likely to be responsible for the modern association of the display of weaponry in the atrium (*in atriis*) of the domus.¹⁵³ Combined with the well-known depictions of both portrait shields and military shields in the atrium of the villa at Oplontis, it is understandable that previous scholarship has attempted to link these items with the atrium location. Pliny specifically notes the presence of enemy *spolia* being hung on the outside of the home and around the threshold, but his description of items being hung in the atrium relates to portraits and not weapons.¹⁵⁴ The presence of captured enemy weaponry and spoils around the threshold seems to be a reasonable expectation based on the same practice being found in the domus of Pompey and Regulus discussed above. Pliny's discussion of portrait shields is something entirely separate and should not be confused with the display of captured arms.

¹⁵³ Pliny, *Natural History*, 35.2, 6.

¹⁵⁴ '*aliae foris et circa limina animorum ingentium imagines errant adfixis hostium spoliis*,' *Natural History*, 35.2, 11.

Winkes, among others, interprets Pliny's separate description of 'silver faces' as evidence for portrait shields or *clipeatae imagines*.¹⁵⁵ Flower and Fejfer also support this identification.¹⁵⁶ Both Winkes and Fejfer suggest that in spite of being manufactured rather than captured, portrait shields retained a very close connection with the commemoration of Roman military victory; Fejfer claims that 'the shield portrait was awarded during the Republic as a special honour in connection with a triumph,' something that Rutledge implies comes from the commissioning of such portraits on shields by the *triumphator* himself.¹⁵⁷ In his interpretation of Pliny 35.2, Winkes finds not only a description of the 'function and meaning' of portrait shields, but also evidence that he believes indicates *clipeatae imagines* were hung up alongside captured enemy weaponry.¹⁵⁸ A preliminary glance at the domestic decoration suggests this may well be true, for the large Macedonian shields depicted in the atrium of the villa at Oplontis are shown alongside depictions of *clipeatae imagines*.¹⁵⁹ Winkes goes so far as to suggest that it was portrait shields that 'brought eternal honour on the house and encouraged the present owner to emulate the deeds of the forefathers', rather than captured weaponry.¹⁶⁰ It is my opinion that Cicero would have explicitly mentioned *clipeatae imagines* as having this ability in his description of Pompey's house, rather than insinuating that such power came from the rostra on display in the vestibule.

Both Winkes and Fejfer agree a connection between the *clipeatae imagines* and the display of captured enemy weaponry is likely, but perhaps the most convincing argument for this is

¹⁵⁵ Winkes, following the work of others such as H. von Heintze, suggests that a portrait shield can be defined as "Anything round with one or more images." Winkes, 199, 91 - citing von Heintze. See also Fejfer, 2008, 233.

¹⁵⁶ Flower, 1996, 75-77; Fejfer, 2008, 233.

¹⁵⁷ Fejfer, 2008, 233; Rutledge, 2012, 127.

¹⁵⁸ Winkes, 1979, 482.

¹⁵⁹ Catalogue numbers 96-96D.

¹⁶⁰ Winkes, 1979, 482.

the choice of the shield form itself. If the identification of Winkes, Flower and Fejfer is correct and the '*ponuntur clipei*' that Pliny describes are indeed portrait shields rather than captured enemy weapons, the only firm evidence this source gives is that shield portraits may have been found in the atrium. Whilst it appears Winkes is correct in saying shield portraits were displayed alongside captured enemy weaponry, they are not captured arms in the same sense and any value they could hold in connection to the commemoration of military victory would require them to be displayed in the same location as captured weaponry in general. This, according to Pliny's description and those of the other sources outlined above, is displayed only around the threshold at the entrance to the domus itself. As a consequence, whilst I have included the evidence for depictions of *clipeatae imagines* in the accompanying catalogue, I find they deserve far greater attention as a separate entity than the scope of this thesis is able to provide. This research will not attempt to re-interpret *clipeatae imagines* as items of *spolia*, nor will it assume that they were understood as such by the ancient observer. Instead, the *clipeatae imagines* are considered to be excellent evidence to support the suggestion that depictions of weaponry were not always attached to an interpretation of spoils of war when used in Roman domestic decoration.

2.3.3: A botched attempt at triumphal display? Trimalchio's rostrum.

In Petronius' *Satyricon*, we are introduced to Trimalchio. Ridiculed for his outrageous gestures and trappings of luxury, it is not without a sense of irony that Petronius includes the item of *spolia* described below:

'We went through to the dining-room. At the entrance the steward sat receiving accounts and, something which I found quite remarkable, affixed to the doorposts were

*fasces and axes, the bottom part of which ended in the form of a bronze ship's prow, on which was inscribed: "PRESENTED BY CINNAMUS THE STEWARD TO CAIUS POMPEIUS TRIMALCHIO, PRIEST OF THE COLLEGE OF AUGUSTUS."*¹⁶¹

The item on display in this case is a representation of a rostrum, or ship's beak, and it is not even Trimalchio's booty, but is a gift from his steward. The rostrum, combined with the display of *fasces* nearby, is supposed to generate an impression of power and prestige, which Prag identifies as being 'primarily triumphal.'¹⁶² However the inscription on the rostrum is included by Petronius to deliberately undermine the power these items would otherwise have held. Trimalchio is so ridiculous that he displays representations of booty, given by his servants as though it were his own captured arms. Prag indicates that the ridicule is not all directed at Trimalchio; He claims 'the fact that the *embolum* has on it an inscription drawing attention to Trimalchio's acquired *nomen*, Pompeius, can hardly be coincidental.'¹⁶³ This is supported by Murray and Petsas, who suggest that the inclusion of the rostrum in the decoration is 'a satirical reflection of Pompey's own ostentatious display' in his vestibule.¹⁶⁴ This source, in spite of its obviously derogatory connotations, also provides a separate indication that *spolia* could be displayed inside the home as well as on the exterior. However, since the majority of Trimalchio's actions appear to be misplaced or misinterpreted, it is possible that he has made yet another mistake in placing his items at the entrance to his dining room rather than his house. The 'Roman' reader would pick up on this and laugh at Trimalchio's expense, just as Petronius intends. Another interpretation is

¹⁶¹ Petronius, *Satyricon*, 30.

¹⁶² Prag, 2006, 544.

¹⁶³ Prag, 2006, 542-3.

¹⁶⁴ Murray & Petsas, 1989, 117.

that since this rostrum is not earned by Trimalchio, but given to him by his steward, it must be displayed in a less conspicuous position than the exterior of the property to avoid the same damnation that Antony receives at the hands of Cicero.¹⁶⁵

2.4: Conclusions

An exploration of the ancient literary evidence for the display of captured enemy weaponry has demonstrated that we can claim with some certainty that real weaponry was dedicated and displayed on public buildings in Rome. The sources indicate that the display of weaponry was a familiar sight in a range of structures including temples, shops, porticos and public administrative buildings like basilica. The description of Catulus' portico on the Palatine hill even suggests the construction of new public spaces specifically for the purpose of displaying war booty. Some scholars, like Rawson, question the accuracy of the Latin authors, indicating that the inclusion of dedications of shields is a form of literary trope. Whilst this means we cannot guarantee all the weaponry described was real, it still indicates that the public display of weaponry in general was particularly common. It appears that the continuing view of scholars to imagine Roman public space as 'full of images and memorials of fighting and conquest' is legitimate based on these ancient descriptions.¹⁶⁶ Regarding the examination of domestic decoration within this thesis, the literary accounts suggest that it will be important to consider the decorative context of motifs of arms for any allusions to these public structures or spaces. It is possible that rather than being depictions of weaponry within the home, the painted, stucco and mosaic decorations of the Roman

¹⁶⁵ Cicero, *Philippics*, 2. 28.68.

¹⁶⁶ Beard, 2013, 194.

domus are instead alluding to or even replicating the decoration of civic buildings, horti, porticos or even temples with captured spoils in order to re-create the feel of these public spaces.

Perhaps one of the most important revelations of this analysis has been the presence of various other ways of interpreting the display of weaponry in public spaces, particularly regarding shields. Rather than always being connected with captured enemy weaponry, shields can be manufactured specifically for public display. The reasons for this are equally varied: Livy indicates that shields could be set up to commemorate the collection of tithes or taxes; the development of a more generic terminology for shields, particularly in Augustan literature, most likely responds to the dedication of the *clipeus virtutis* and indicates that such armaments could be interpreted as symbols of civic and political virtue rather than just as symbols of military valour. These alternative interpretations of shields indicate that it would be wrong to assume that the ancient observer would immediately have connected the display of weaponry, perhaps more specifically the display of shields, with captured arms of the barbarian 'other.' There are inherent difficulties in differentiating between honorific shields and shields displayed as captured enemy weaponry. Again, it appears that the decorative context will be vitally important in interpreting them correctly. The ethnic identity of the weaponry displayed will also be a useful indicator in identifying these non-military dedications. Since the sources refer almost unanimously to *clipei*, it is possible that these non-military dedications could only take the form of round shields and will be displayed without the presence of any other captured weaponry that would confuse their interpretation for both the modern and ancient observer.

In terms of the display of weaponry within domestic space, the literary sources provide evidence for an unwritten collection of social rules. Whilst arms and armour could be displayed on the home, they had to be earned or deserved by the social status and exploits of the domus' inhabitant. Displays of armour are similarly shown to have held such an important apotropaic and antiquarian value that they should not be removed from the houses on which they were displayed, although this was inevitably not always followed. While searching for a rule that guides specifically where weaponry should be displayed inside the home we encounter more difficulty. Previous scholarship has commonly considered the atrium of the Roman domus to be a site used for the display of captured enemy weaponry. The surviving sources I have explored only attribute this practice to the display of portrait shields, a very different form of display to the captured arms and armour of the enemy and a type of dedication not explored by this thesis. Similarly, connections with the display of weaponry in the triclinium are based upon the dubious exempla of Trimalchio's domus, which is notorious for its deliberate misinterpretation of Roman traditional values. The only locations that the literary evidence firmly connects with the display of captured enemy weaponry and *spolia* is the entrance to the Roman domus, consisting of the vestibule, threshold, doors and door posts. In order to ascertain just how the representations of arms and armour in Roman domestic decorations are reflections of, or responses to, this idealised display of real weaponry within the Roman home, careful attention must be paid to the decorative context they are found in and perhaps even their location. Returning to the viability of multiple interpretations for the display of weaponry in public spaces, it will be beneficial to see if the use of motifs of arms in public decorations

allow a similar range of interpretations and this thesis will begin to address this in the subsequent chapter.

Chapter 3: Motifs of Arms in Public Decorations

In the previous chapter I have given a brief outline of how surviving Greek and Roman texts have attempted to explain the tradition of taking arms from the defeated enemy, the practice of displaying them in public and private spaces and the particular guidelines and beliefs that concerned the display of captured enemy arms in and on the Roman home. This has revealed several ways in which the ancient observer could have interpreted depictions of weaponry in the Roman home, other than as an allusion to the dedication of captured arms outside the doorway of the house. This chapter begins with a brief outline of some of the earliest examples of the use of motifs of arms and armour for decorative purposes and the contexts in which they can be found. By studying how the motifs of arms and armour developed, and how they were interpreted as representing weaponry captured from the enemy, a much wider background will be given for how such motifs of arms and armour could have found their way into the decoration of Roman domestic space.

3.1: The Display of Weaponry in the Ancient World: A Brief Outline

The tradition of taking arms and armour as spoils of war was practised throughout the ancient world. Egyptian pharaohs are known to have taken ‘bronze armour, helmets and... bows’ as booty during the Syrian campaigns of the Year 33.¹⁶⁷ Although we cannot be sure if

¹⁶⁷ Morkot, 2003, xxii-xxiii.

the items were then publicly displayed, sources from that period suggest that booty would be stored in the temples, like that of Amun at Karnak.¹⁶⁸ In the Greek tradition, Homeric heroes are regularly recorded taking spoils of war and Agamemnon was said to keep the best for himself.¹⁶⁹ Conversely, Odysseus shares the booty out evenly among his men, opening up the honour to a wider pool of recipients.¹⁷⁰ The extent to which arms and armour formed part of this booty cannot be ascertained, but Polito suggests that a large proportion of enemy armour would be left on the corpses and burned with them in this early Greek period.¹⁷¹ More remarkable armour is captured and even fought over: for example when the armour of Sarpedon is captured by the Greeks it becomes not only an item of war booty, but is also offered as a prize in the funeral games of Patroklos.¹⁷² Even in this very early period of Mediterranean history the appropriation of enemy armour for either personal or national gain was an intrinsic part of ancient warfare. For Greeks in particular, the 'dedication of captured weapons is rooted in myth,' with arms and armour purportedly being dedicated in temples by Hercules.¹⁷³ This practice continued throughout the Archaic and Classical periods with weapons supposedly dating from the Trojan Wars being acquired by Alexander the Great from the sanctuary of Athena at Troy in exchange for items of his own panoply.¹⁷⁴ Whilst the Greek warriors certainly collected captured arms and dedicated them publicly, there is no evidence to suggest that captured weaponry was displayed in the Greek home. Arms and armour were found in domestic space in early Greek

¹⁶⁸ Morkot, 2005, 191. The use of captured weaponry as votive items clearly has a long history which cannot be fully recounted here.

¹⁶⁹ *Iliad*, I.163-167.

¹⁷⁰ *Odyssey*, IX. 41-42.

¹⁷¹ Polito, 1998, 23.

¹⁷² *Iliad*, XXIII, 800-805.

¹⁷³ Polito, 1998, 23; Diodorus Siculus, *Bibliotheca Historica*, 4.10,4 for Hercules' dedication.

¹⁷⁴ See Arrian, *Anabasis*, I. 2, 7.

texts, such as Odysseus' bow being found in his home, but they are stored there for personal use and do not appear to include captured enemy items on display.¹⁷⁵ However, their display in public spaces, like the Painted Stoa in Athens in later periods, would probably have inspired the development of motifs of arms in the iconographic language.

3.1.1: Tombs

Another location for the display of arms and armour, although not necessarily captured enemy weaponry, appears to be in tombs. The Greeks included weaponry in tombs from an early period and Whitley notes the presence of 'spectacular "cuirass tombs," where warriors are interred with a full panoply of armour' in the 8th Century BC.¹⁷⁶ In the 5th and 4th centuries BC the Etruscans converted this practice to incorporate motifs of arms, decorating the tomb itself with representations of arms and armour, although not necessarily those of a defeated enemy.¹⁷⁷ The best known examples are the Tomb of the Shields and Chairs and the Tomb of the Reliefs from Cerveteri and the Giglioli Tomb from Tarquinia (See Figure 3).¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁵ *Odyssey*, XXI, 5-15. For more details of the display of weaponry in the Greek home, see Polito, 1998, 24.

¹⁷⁶ Whitley, 2001, 96.

¹⁷⁷ Steingräber, 2006, 254.

¹⁷⁸ Kleiner, F.S. 2010a, 228-229. For more general information about the sites: Steingräber, 2006; Moretti, 2001.



FIGURE 3: TOMB OF THE RELIEFS, CERVETERI.

PHOTOGRAPH BY N. CRACKNELL, 2009.

We have very little information about how the Etruscans treated war booty, but the decoration of the Giglioli tomb incorporates ‘helmets of the Phrygian type,’ suggesting these reliefs could represent captured arms and armour put on public display as well as the weaponry of the deceased.¹⁷⁹

In Greece, the decoration of tombs with motifs of arms and armour also took place. One well known example is the decoration of the 2nd Century BC tomb of Lyson and Kallikles in Macedonia, where helmets and shields are painted on the walls of the tomb in realistic detail.¹⁸⁰ The arms are Macedonian and Chaniotis confirms that their inclusion is almost certainly designed to allude to ‘military activity.’¹⁸¹ In Classical Athens, real captured enemy weapons were displayed in the Painted Stoa. Bronze shields captured from the Skionians and the Spartans were on display there along with a series of paintings of military subjects,

¹⁷⁹ Steingräber, 2006, 254. The communal nature of the tomb means that repeated visits were likely for further burials, placing the decoration on display repeatedly and adding to its social importance and value.

¹⁸⁰ For a full treatment of the decoration of this tomb see Miller, S.G., 1993.

¹⁸¹ Chaniotis, 2008, 206.

suggesting at a developing connection between real arms and artistic depictions of warfare.¹⁸²

Rome's interaction with Egyptian, Etruscan and particularly Greek culture almost certainly led to a level of 'acculturation,' which could have involved the practice of collecting and displaying weaponry.¹⁸³ However, whilst the display of weaponry, particularly of captured enemy weaponry, was something shared by these cultures, the Roman attitudes to them and their deployment of the captured items differ dramatically. For the Romans, the captured weapons were one of the key features of military victory. They could be given special significance if they were deemed to be *spolia opima* - the arms taken from an enemy leader when killed by a Roman in single combat.¹⁸⁴ This special honour was supposedly only awarded three times in Roman history, to Romulus, A. Cornelius Cossus and M. Claudius Marcellus.¹⁸⁵ The arms and armour that formed the *spolia opima* were exclusively dedicated in the temple of Jupiter Feretrius on the Capitoline hill.¹⁸⁶ Whilst this tradition already indicates that the Romans held captured arms and armour in high regard it is in the triumphal procession that arms take centre stage. The weaponry forms one of the high points of the procession and some notice, if not accuracy, is given by the ancient authors to their numbers and types; Diodorus Siculus notes how '*twelve hundred wagons filled with*

¹⁸² Castriota, 1992, 76.

¹⁸³ Wallace-Hadrill would suggest that 'acculturation' is the wrong term for this combination of cultural influences and I use the term here to suggest an increasing *cohabitation of cultures* rather than the direct replacement of one form of cultural expression with another. See Wallace-Hadrill, 2008, Chapter 1.

¹⁸⁴ Versnel, 1970, 304-313; Östenberg, 2010, 19; Flower, 2000.

¹⁸⁵ For Romulus see: Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 1.10; Plutarch, *Romulus*, 16.5-8 and Ogilvie, 1965, 70-73. For Cossus see: Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 4.19-20; Propertius, 4.10 and Ogilvie, 1965, 557-558. For Marcellus see: Plutarch, *Marcellus*, 8; Propertius, 4.10 and for a discussion on the awarding of the *spolia opima* based upon single combat see Oakley, 1985.

¹⁸⁶ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 10. 5 and Plutarch, *Romulus*, 16. 6-8 both describe the temple as the final site for the dedication of the arms.

embossed white shields, then another twelve hundred filled with bronze shields’ were carried in the triumph of Aemilius Paullus.¹⁸⁷ The accuracy of Diodorus’ numbers is questionable, but his choice to include any numbers at all suggests that the arms and armour were important enough to be counted or estimated. Ovid records the presence of helmets in his imagined grand triumph: *‘Shields and helmets radiant with gems and gold,’* and Propertius also recalls the *‘soldiers’ bows*’ on display in the triumphal procession that he describes.¹⁸⁸ Perhaps the most vivid description of arms and armour on display in a triumphal procession is Plutarch’s description of the triumph of Aemilius Paullus over Macedonia in 167 BC; he describes:

*‘The arms themselves sparkled with freshly polished bronze and iron, and were carefully and artfully arranged to look exactly as though they had been piled together in heaps and at random, helmets lying upon shields and cuirasses upon greaves, while Cretan shields and Thracian wicker shields and quivers were mixed up with horses’ bridles, and through them projected naked swords and pikes planted among them, all the arms being so loosely packed that they smote against each other as they were borne along and gave out a harsh and dreadful sound...’*¹⁸⁹

Mixed types of captured arms and armour were clearly on display in the processions and were designed to attract the attention of the Roman observer, by sight and sound. Whilst Östenberg suggests that ‘the display did not stress the importance of any particular piece or

¹⁸⁷ Diodorus Siculus, 31.8,10.

¹⁸⁸ *‘scuta sed et galeae gemmis radiantur et auro,’* Ovid, *Ex Ponto*, 3.4,103; *‘militibus arcus’* Propertius, *Elegies*, 3.4,17.

¹⁸⁹ Plutarch, *Aemilius Paullus*, 32.5-8.

type of weapon' she also indicates that 'shields form the one exception to this rule.'¹⁹⁰ It was perhaps these glittering displays in the triumph, along with the Greek and Etruscan uses of weaponry motifs that led to the development of motifs of arms in Roman iconography.

3.1.2: Shields

It is possible, as Östenberg suggests, that shields were valued for their intrinsic worth as large, often decorative metal objects, as well as for their status as captured items. This may explain the regularity with which they are displayed in public places or listed by our ancient sources.¹⁹¹ Plutarch describes how a single shield in Lucullus' triumph was '*adorned with precious stones*' and was likely to be very valuable.¹⁹² Shields are also the focus of Diodorus Siculus' account, as he describes the wagons full of these items over any other type of weapon on display. This attention to fiscal value can similarly be supported by the regularity with which sources record the shields' constituent metal. Diodorus Siculus describes that some shields were '*white*,' perhaps indicating a gilded, silvered or painted finish, or *bronze*.'¹⁹³ Livy records the presence of '*gilded shields*.'¹⁹⁴ Pliny also suggests weapons were objects of commercial and particularly intrinsic metal value; he suggests '*we esteem them only for the value of the material, for some heir to break up and melt*.'¹⁹⁵ Whilst Pliny seems to disapprove of melting down captured spoils to '*forestall the noose and slip-knot of the thief*,' he also appears to regard it as common practice amongst families in need of extra money. This suggests that some form of trade in *spolia* items, including weaponry, was

¹⁹⁰ Östenberg, 2010, 28.

¹⁹¹ Östenberg, 2010, 28.

¹⁹² Plutarch, *Lucullus*, 37.3.

¹⁹³ Diodorus Siculus, 31.8,10.

¹⁹⁴ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 9.40, 15-17.

¹⁹⁵ Pliny, *Natural History*, 25.2,6.

taking place.¹⁹⁶ This also seems to be supported by surviving fragments of a speech by Cato the Elder. *Ne spolia figerentur nisi de hoste capta* was a warning to those who would display captured items that they had not personally won in battle and therefore did not deserve.¹⁹⁷ Gruen points out that it is not the *spolia* that is the issue, 'but the legitimacy of its acquisition.'¹⁹⁸ If spoils of war could be acquired illegitimately then this suggests that some market existed for them.¹⁹⁹ This view of shields as valuable objects, before even taking into account any extra value of the decorations on the shield, may explain their additional importance within the Roman triumphal procession and, consequently, the opinions of Roman spectators like Pliny and Cato. This particular focus on the captured enemy shield is something to consider in light of the other cross-cultural examples that have been explored above. Shields were hung in the Painted Stoa at Athens and shields are most prominently painted into the tombs of Macedonians and Etruscans, suggesting that this focus may not be an exclusively Roman attribute and that shields have peculiar value in all these cultures. It is possible that the shields presented a very human aspect of warfare to ancient spectators by visually representing the mortality of great armies when confronted with Roman opposition, in a similar way to the Greek shields dedicated to the dead in the Stoa of Zeus Eleutherios at Olympia.²⁰⁰ Although not attested in any of our literary sources, it would be easily apparent to any observer of the Roman triumphal procession that for every shield displayed, its

¹⁹⁶ Pliny, *Natural History*, 25.2,6. This also supports the idea of an illegal trade in *spolia* weaponry outlined in section 2.3.1 of this thesis.

¹⁹⁷ Cugusi, *OR*, fr. 71.

¹⁹⁸ Gruen, 1992, 112.

¹⁹⁹ See the discussion of a trade in captured items in section 2.3.1 of this thesis.

²⁰⁰ Scholten, 2000, 41.

bearer had been defeated and probably killed.²⁰¹ This illustration and visual calculation of the human cost of war also helps to explain the apparent apotropaic role of trophies and the need for the triumphal procession itself to perform a similar apotropaic function in the city of Rome.²⁰²

Whilst those in Rome would have been familiar with the display of arms and armour in the public context of the triumphal processions and the display of real weaponry on public buildings from literature, Greek uses of motifs of arms and perhaps even Etruscan depictions of weaponry, the ancient Roman observer would also have been familiar with depictions of arms and armour from other sources. These include the development of an iconographic language for weaponry that was found on Roman coin types and the sculptural depictions of arms and armour that decorated monuments and buildings across Italy and beyond. Both would have been accessible to all sections of Roman society, as well as viewable by foreign observers, continuing the creation of a familiarity with the dedication of real weaponry as idealised in the literary evidence.

3.2: Numismatic Evidence

Coins were often struck to commemorate Roman military campaigns and victories, the coin type representing victory over a specific ethnicity of enemy. As Southern suggests, 'the Romans used their coinage to disseminate political and military propaganda... favourite

²⁰¹ This is of course excluding some more elaborate shields like that displayed in Lucullus' triumph, which is more likely to have come from a captured treasury than the battlefield itself.

²⁰² Versnel, 1970, 138. This also could explain why the numbers of shields that Diodorus Siculus gives us seem very high. Exaggeration of the numbers of shields would then fit with exaggerated figures of enemy casualties that would be good for Roman morale and make a more glorious victory. This is likely to exclude the more decorative examples of shields, like that carried in Lucullus triumph.

motifs were the military standards of various legions and units, and displays of armour with shields and weapons.²⁰³ The fact that depictions of arms and armour were so common on coins indicates the value of displaying these motifs to a wide audience to symbolise victory. A brief outline of the coin types depicting motifs of arms and armour and other forms of *spolia* should prove useful in identifying what form we would expect motifs of arms to take in public and private decorations.

3.2.1: Republican Numismatics

One of the earliest forms of Roman currency to use motifs of arms is a bronze ingot from around 280 BC.²⁰⁴ The ingot has the exterior of an oval shield with a central spine and boss on one side and a view of the inside of the shield with its arm grip on the other. The shield form is most likely that of the early Roman Legionary.²⁰⁵ Whilst not a depiction of enemy weaponry, the ability of arms and armour to represent wealth and prosperity seems to have begun quite early in Rome.²⁰⁶ Picard suggests that coins depicting trophies being completed by the goddess Victoria followed soon after, coming into common use after Roman victory in the First Illyrian war in 228 BC.²⁰⁷ After the first Punic war some of these coins were known as ‘victoriatus’ coins, clearly connecting the weaponry depicted as part of the trophy as being captured from a defeated enemy.²⁰⁸ Throughout the Republic and into the Principate, this image remains the most common coin type that depicts arms and armour,

²⁰³ Southern, 2007, 18.

²⁰⁴ RRC 7/1. Found in the British Museum. Coins and Medals Catalogue number: GC1p26.1.

²⁰⁵ Polito, 1998, 42.

²⁰⁶ Polito, 1998, 42.

²⁰⁷ Picard, 1957, 140.

²⁰⁸ ‘Victoriatus’ definition from Oxford Classical Dictionary. The name is used in a number of ancient accounts suggesting it may have been referred to as a victoriatus coin in every day Roman life. It is even suggested by Burns that the victoriatus originated from Campania, making this imagery even more pertinent to depictions from the Bay of Naples. Burns, 2013, 271.

although the constituent arms change over time. Prows of ships also appear relatively early in the numismatic record with the earliest examples dating to around 215 BC , probably relating to early naval clashes of the Second Punic War or Roman success at the battle of the Aegates Islands over the Carthaginians.²⁰⁹ A brief survey of Crawford's *Roman Republican Coinage* and Mattingly's *Roman Imperial Coinage*, give some indication of how the depiction of arms and armour on coin types may have developed.²¹⁰ The first example that Crawford provides of a coin type depicting enemy weaponry is seen in Figure 4.

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FIGURE 4: ANONYMOUS 'VICTORIATUS' COIN

CRAWFORD, *RRC*, 44/1. ²¹¹

This coin, from around 211- 208 BC, depicts a trophy of a round shield, a crested helmet, greaves and spears attached to a tree trunk.²¹² The round shield dominates the depiction, suggesting that this item was the clearest indicator of the identity of the defeated enemy at this early stage in Roman history. The whole trophy is crowned by a Victory.²¹³ The round shield remains the most obvious item of arms and armour in coin types for many years from this point, perhaps highlighting Rome's interaction with enemies utilising hoplite-style

²⁰⁹ For example Crawford, *RRC* 35/1-5 and 36/1-5 etc.

²¹⁰ Hereafter referred to as Crawford, *RRC* and Mattingly, *RIC* respectively.

²¹¹ Image from [http://davy.potdevin.free.fr/1%20Roman%20coins%200%20\(Republican\)/crawford%200-99/cr44-1_325chf.jpg](http://davy.potdevin.free.fr/1%20Roman%20coins%200%20(Republican)/crawford%200-99/cr44-1_325chf.jpg), [Accessed December 2014]. Crawford, *RRC*, 44/1.

²¹² Polito's typology: Shield - A1, Helmet – A with crest. These are the traditional hoplite arms.

²¹³ For a treatment of the representations of the goddess Victoria see Hölscher's detailed work *Victoria Romana*, 1967.

weaponry. Another coin struck around the same time is shown in Figure 5, although with slight variations to the weaponry included.

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FIGURE 5: ANONYMOUS 'VICTORIATUS' COIN

CRAWFORD, *RRC*, 53/1.²¹⁴

The same round shield dominates the depiction, but the trophy construction includes a trident, perhaps for a naval victory, instead of the tree trunk dictated by the anthropomorphic tradition.²¹⁵ The helmet is displayed from the side, rather than from the front, making it easier to see the crest and the large brim. The arms and armour are depicted carefully, with spears and greaves included to create the impression of the full enemy panoply. Shields are still the most important items in victory display, the round shield dominating the trophy. It seems likely they also held a greater iconographic significance in the decoration of coin types, being the largest item and also the one which can be clearly indicative of the 'other' identity of the defeated. Similar coins still show the large round shield as the dominant item of weaponry. A coin minted in Luceria (Apulia)

²¹⁴ Image from [http://davy.potdevin.free.fr/1%20Roman%20coins%200%20\(Republican\)/crawford%20-99/cr53-1_400chf.jpg](http://davy.potdevin.free.fr/1%20Roman%20coins%200%20(Republican)/crawford%20-99/cr53-1_400chf.jpg), [Accessed May 2014]. Crawford, *RRC*, 53/1.

²¹⁵ Picard, 1957.

depicts the trophy in greater detail with a breastplate and *pteryges*, yet is still dominated by the presence of the round hoplite shield. Although slight variations are inevitable, the repeated presence of the round shield with spears and other arms suggests that the same iconographic language for captured enemy weaponry developing in Rome was equally relevant in wider Italy.²¹⁶

The first real change we see from a collection of arms based around a round shield appears in around 119 BC with a coin struck during the Consulship of M. Furius L.f Philus (See Figure 6):

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FIGURE 6: DENARIUS OF M. FURIUS L.F. PHILUS, 119 BC.

CRAWFORD, *RRC*, 281/1.²¹⁷

This coin shows a completely different type of weaponry, responding to the changed identity of Rome's enemies. Crawford suggests this coin is meant to celebrate the Roman defeat of the Allobroges in 121 BC and the subsequent triumphal procession of Q. Fabius Maximus.²¹⁸ Gallic weaponry takes the place of the round hoplite shield, with three rectangular shields (all decorated with Gallic patterns and a central boss), two *carnyx* war trumpets, a sword and a curved helmet. The weaponry is different to that seen in the earlier

²¹⁶ Crawford, *RRC*, 94/1.

²¹⁷ Image from [http://davy.potdevin.free.fr/1%20Roman%20coins%200%20\(Republican\)/crawford%20200-299/cr281-1_475\\$.jpg](http://davy.potdevin.free.fr/1%20Roman%20coins%200%20(Republican)/crawford%20200-299/cr281-1_475$.jpg), [Accessed May 2014]. Crawford, *RRC*, 281/1.

²¹⁸ Crawford, *RRC*, 281/1.

coins, yet their construction into the *tropaion* form means that the Roman observer still connects them with military victory. The defeated enemy is not named. This is particularly interesting, for it suggests that, as with the previous examples, Roman observers did not need written clues as to the identity of the defeated enemy. It is indicated by the ‘foreignness’ of arms and armour on the coin instead. It also highlights how a familiarity with different depictions of arms and armour could have spread throughout Italy, developing in parallel with representations of arms in other contexts in this period. The impact of these coin designs and their dissemination across Italy is also illustrated by a fresco from the House of Sulpicius Rufus at Pompeii (65). The panel painting depicts a trophy, possibly of Hellenistic arms, being completed by the goddess Victoria in a manner that is very similar to that seen on the coin types in Figures 4, 5 and 6. Another version is found in the decoration of the elite Domus Aurea at Rome (90), suggesting this motif was well known and still had impact in even later decorative styles. It is possible that the frescos were inspired by the coin type designs, but it is also possible that use of these elements in a large monumental decoration in Rome could equally have inspired both the frescos and coin types.

Another coin struck much closer to the date at which a Roman colony was founded at Pompeii was a denarius of Sulla. It probably celebrated his victory over Mithridates VI at the battle of Chaeronea in 86 BC (Figure 7).

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FIGURE 7: DENARIUS OF L. CORNELIUS SULLA, 84-83 BC.

CRAWFORD, *RRC*, 359/2.²¹⁹

Veterans of this particular combat may have made up some of the number that formed the Sullan colony at Pompeii in 80 BC.²²⁰ The imagery on this coin would have been familiar to these veterans. The coin depicts two trophies constructed around the hoplite style round shield with lituus and jug, a type that Crawford believes is 'personal to Sulla.'²²¹ The round shield still appears to reflect the style of weaponry used by the enemy, acting as the key to interpreting these images and may influence the types of shields depicted in Pompeian decorations, perhaps chosen by the veterans.²²²

Whilst all the coin types explored above have made use of the *tropaion* as a way of representing captured arms and armour, in around 127 BC Crawford records a coin that depicts an item of weaponry without a trophy (Figure 8).

²¹⁹ Image from [http://davy.potdevin.free.fr/1%20Roman%20coins%200%20\(Republican\)/crawford%20300-399/cr359-2_1200chf.jpg](http://davy.potdevin.free.fr/1%20Roman%20coins%200%20(Republican)/crawford%20300-399/cr359-2_1200chf.jpg), [Accessed May 2014]. Crawford, *RRC*, 359/2.

²²⁰ Zanker estimates that the number of colonists 'must have been at least 2000 veterans' with their families. It seems highly likely that at least some of these men would have been retired from combat within the decade between the social wars and the foundation of the colony. The battle of Chaeronea was one of Sulla's major engagements in this period (86 BC) and it is highly likely that at least some of the veterans who formed the new colony were present at this battle. Zanker, 1998, 61-62.

²²¹ Crawford, *RRC*, 359/1 and 2.

²²² Mithridatic warriors were most likely armed in the style of the Macedonian infantry, the Macedonian Phalanx having been adopted by many Greek *poleis* at this time. The round shields probably refer to the use of the hoplite style shield by more elite units at that time, although the phalangite shields were also round but smaller. For basic unit reconstructions see Connolly, 1981, 79.

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FIGURE 8: DENARIUS OF M. METELLUS Q. F., 127 BC

CRAWFORD, *RRC*, 263/1A.²²³

Figure 8 depicts a single round shield, decorated with multiple decorative bosses, a depiction of an elephant's head in the centre and a five-pointed star shape. Crawford has identified it as a Macedonian shield.²²⁴ It is likely that the consul in power, M. Caecilius Metellus Q. f., wished to refer to the victory of his more illustrious ancestor, Q. Caecilius Metellus Macedonicus.²²⁵ The role of the shield motif in commemorating the triumphs of an ancestor, an honorific shield of sorts, may be the reason for its inclusion as a single motif rather than as part of a trophy or group of arms. The display of individual items of weaponry appears to be relatively rare in the decoration of Republican coin types, but still indicates it could be understood by a wide audience as indicative of triumph.²²⁶

One of the most important coins to survive from the Republican period that refers to the public display of arms and armour is Figure 9.

²²³ Image from [http://davy.potdevin.free.fr/1%20Roman%20coins%200%20\(Republican\)/crawford%20200-299/cr263-1a_240chf.jpg](http://davy.potdevin.free.fr/1%20Roman%20coins%200%20(Republican)/crawford%20200-299/cr263-1a_240chf.jpg), [Accessed December 2014]. Crawford, *RRC*, 263/1.

²²⁴ Crawford, *RRC*, 263/1.

²²⁵ Crawford's identification is probably taken from Caryophilus, 1751, 118. Caryophilus also suggests that the presence of the elephant's head is inspired by another member of the Metellus family (L. Caecilius Metellus) using Elephants to pull his triumphal chariot. Caryophilus, 1751, 118-119.

²²⁶ It is possible that this shield, with its central depiction of an elephant, is more akin to portrait shields than a captured enemy item. This identification would also make it a much more appropriate way of referring to the victories of ancestors, as is seen here, rather than announcing a contemporary victory.

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FIGURE 9: DENARIUS OF M. AEMILIUS LEPIDUS, 61 BC.

CRAWFORD, *RRC*, 419/3B.²²⁷

This coin depicts the dedication of round shields on the exterior of the Basilica Aemilia at Rome in 74/3 BC.²²⁸ The role of these shields as captured arms remains uncertain, since Pliny describes the basilica as a location for portrait shields and makes no mention of any spoils on the exterior.²²⁹ As we have seen with our literary sources, not all the depictions of arms and armour dedicated in public spaces are commemorations of Roman military victory and it may be that these shields are undetailed depictions of the portrait shields Pliny describes. There are few clues in the coin type to indicate if the shields are captured arms or portraits, suggesting that it was the shields and their 'warlike example' that were the most important feature here.²³⁰ It is also the only surviving physical evidence for the use of shields in decorating public spaces, as described in our literary sources.

Another coin believed to show the decoration of the Forum with captured enemy spoils is Figure 10. Crawford suggests that the rostra included in the reverse design are those displayed in the Forum at Rome (Fig. 10):

²²⁷ Image from [http://davy.potdevin.free.fr/1%20Roman%20coins%200%20\(Republican\)/crawford%20400-499/cr419-3b_2500CHF.jpg](http://davy.potdevin.free.fr/1%20Roman%20coins%200%20(Republican)/crawford%20400-499/cr419-3b_2500CHF.jpg), [Accessed May 2014]. Crawford, *RRC*, 419/3b.

²²⁸ Fejfer suggests this date for the dedication of the shields. Fejfer, 2008, 128.

²²⁹ Pliny, XXXV, 3, 13.

²³⁰ Pliny, XXXV, 3, 13.

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FIGURE 10: DENARIUS OF LOLLIANUS PALICANUS, 45 BC.

CRAWFORD, *RRC*, 473/1.²³¹

The prows are displayed within an arcaded structure, possibly the rostrum itself, although it could be a depiction of a port with Triremes moored in individual archways. A fresco found in the decoration of a house at Pompeii and preserved in Naples Museum shows a very similar configuration of ships prows and archways, yet is identified as a harbour (See Figure 11).



FIGURE 11: SECOND STYLE FRESCO DEPICTING SHIPS PROWS IN ARCHES.

PHOTOGRAPH BY N. CRACKNELL, 2011.²³²

²³¹ Image from [http://davy.potdevin.free.fr/1%20Roman%20coins%200%20\(Republican\)/crawford%20400-499/cr473-1_4000\\$.jpg](http://davy.potdevin.free.fr/1%20Roman%20coins%200%20(Republican)/crawford%20400-499/cr473-1_4000$.jpg), [Accessed December 2014], Crawford, *RRC*, 473/1.

²³² Fresco from Naples Archaeological Museum (MANN), Inventory number 8604. Exhibition signage identifies the ships as being seen 'across the arcades of a harbour.' Photograph taken by N. Cracknell, March 2011.

The presence of *spolia*, including the captured enemy ship prows, in the Forum appears to have been well known and worthy of commemoration on a coin, yet it is not entirely clear if the coin or the fresco represent the speaker's podium or a Roman harbour to a modern observer. Several other frescos found in the evidence catalogue incorporate motifs of rostra. One large painting from the House of the Library at Pompeii (48) almost certainly seems to be depicting the speaker's podium with two ships' prows resting on a stone plinth dominating the wall. Others are far more ambiguous, such as the mosaic depiction of a rostrum from the House of Paquius Proculus in Pompeii (10A), which despite the 'arches' appearance of its coffer, is hard to associate with the speaker's podium or a port. A prow painted in the House of the Arches (26), alongside helmets and other motifs of arms seems to be referring more to the symbolism of naval victory than to either of these locations. This ambiguity is perhaps in its favour, meaning the rostrum motif can be interpreted in many different ways and suggests that we should expect a similar range of interpretations for other motifs of arms in Chapter 4.

Among the most famous trophies depicted on Republican coins are those belonging to Julius Caesar after his defeat of the Gauls. Several different coins were minted to celebrate this event, although interestingly they seem to display slightly different types of weaponry. A denarius struck in 48-47BC is one of the first that Crawford provides (Figure 12):

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FIGURE 12: DENARIUS OF JULIUS CAESAR, 48-47 BC.

CRAWFORD, *RRC*, 452/2.²³³

In this case the trophy is constructed from an oval shield with central boss and spine, a horned helmet, a tunic and a *carnyx*. A battle axe is included, decorated with an animal head (possibly a dog or wolf). Caesar's name is stamped quite clearly across the bottom of the design. From exactly the same date comes another coin, a quinarius that supposedly depicts Caesar's trophies (Figure 13).

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FIGURE 13: QUINARIUS OF JULIUS CAESAR, 48-47 BC.

CRAWFORD, *RRC*, 452/3.²³⁴

The weaponry is markedly different from that seen in Figure 12. A round shield is included with what Crawford identifies as an '*ancilia*' shield. There is also an oversized sword of some form, and the helmet is almost unrecognisable. The difference in detail may be due to the

²³³ Image from [http://davy.potdevin.free.fr/1%20Roman%20coins%200%20\(Republican\)/crawford%20400-499/cr452-2_2000\\$.jpg](http://davy.potdevin.free.fr/1%20Roman%20coins%200%20(Republican)/crawford%20400-499/cr452-2_2000$.jpg), [Accessed December 2014], Crawford, *RRC*, 452/2. An Aureus version of this coin was also produced.

²³⁴ Image from [http://davy.potdevin.free.fr/1%20Roman%20coins%200%20\(Republican\)/crawford%20400-499/cr452-3.jpg](http://davy.potdevin.free.fr/1%20Roman%20coins%200%20(Republican)/crawford%20400-499/cr452-3.jpg) [Accessed December 2014], Crawford, *RRC*, 452/3.

difference in the coin denomination, the quinarius being worth less and perhaps incorporating less prestigious decoration. The difference in weaponry could also be explained by the portrayal of a different Gallic tribe, since Caesar faced several during his Gallic campaigns. Another denarius depicting Caesar's trophies shows a captive bound at the foot of a *tropaion* very similar to that in Figure 12 (See Figure 14).

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FIGURE 14: DENARIUS OF JULIUS CAESAR, AUGUST 48 BC – JULY 47 BC.

CRAWFORD, *RRC*, 452/4.²³⁵

The trophy is constructed in the same form as the Figure 12, with oval shield, horned helmet and *carnyx*. Their combination with the wild looking captive indicates this collection of arms was perhaps most commonly identified with Gallic ethnicity and Caesar's trophies. This is confirmed by the final coin attributed to this date and group (*RIC* 452/5), which shows very similar features to the two denarii explored here and almost no similarity to the quinarius.²³⁶ It appears from these coin types that a set of weaponry motifs could be called upon to represent defeated Gauls. However, the presence of the quinarius with its radically different décor also shows how attention to detail in the depiction of arms may not always create a uniform iconographic language for each conquered ethnicity. In spite of this, some motifs are repeated more often than others, indicating that these arms and armour were

²³⁵ Image from [http://davy.potdevin.free.fr/1%20Roman%20coins%200%20\(Republican\)/crawford%20400-499/cr452-4_28000chf.jpg](http://davy.potdevin.free.fr/1%20Roman%20coins%200%20(Republican)/crawford%20400-499/cr452-4_28000chf.jpg), [Accessed December 2014], Crawford, *RRC*, 452/4.

²³⁶ Crawford, *RRC*, 452/5.

likely to be the most widely understood as representing the defeated enemy. Indeed there would be no value in depicting a series of weapons that belonged to a defeated foe if the audience did not understand their meaning or importance.

During the Triumvirates, the coins minted under Antony are decorated with *tropaia* that are far less rigid in the ethnicity of their constituent weaponry. Whilst Caesar's trophies invariably referred to Gallic weaponry, those minted by Antony allude to his political triumphs as well as his military ones. The coin in Figure 15, struck around 37 BC, shows a trophy constructed from two different ethnic types of arms.

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FIGURE 15: DENARIUS OF MARCUS ANTONIUS, 37 BC.

CRAWFORD, *RRC*, 536/3. 237

At the foot of the trophy is a macedonian style shield, most likely referring to the recent victory at Philippi for Antony and Octavian in 42 BC. The shield could also refer to Antony's governorship of the Macedonia, with the majority of Asia, following the division of the Republic between the members of the second triumvirate.²³⁸ This would also explain the unusual figure of eight shield type that Polito attributes to Gaul or Thrace.²³⁹ The coin type is able to allude to Antony's imperium over most of the Roman world through simple motifs

²³⁷ Image from [http://davy.potdevin.free.fr/1%20Roman%20coins%200%20\(Republican\)/crawford%20500-599/cr536-3_1500\\$.jpg](http://davy.potdevin.free.fr/1%20Roman%20coins%200%20(Republican)/crawford%20500-599/cr536-3_1500$.jpg), [Accessed December 2014], Crawford, *RRC*, 536/3.

²³⁸ Antony received Asia and Gaul, while Octavian controlled the west. See Scullard, 1982, 161.

²³⁹ Polito, 1998, 43.

of arms. Even in their most simple iconographic form, it seems motifs of arms and armour can reflect the status of entire provinces in the Roman world.

3.2.2: Numismatics of the Principate and Empire to 79 AD.

Moving into the Principate, we find more surviving examples of coin types depicting motifs of arms and armour that do not form a *tropaion*. Several coins minted at the new Augustan colony of Emerita show a combination of Iberian arms, most likely representing captured arms from the Cantabrian wars.²⁴⁰ These are decorated with a round shield, spear and a curved sword (possibly a *falx*).²⁴¹ Another coin struck around the same date shows a very detailed full faced helmet topped with antlers or horns (Figure 16).

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FIGURE 16: DENARIUS EMERITA OF P CARISIUS, 25-23 BC

MATTINGLY, *RIC*, I, 7A. ²⁴²

The type includes a helmet, a sword or dagger with a slightly curved blade and a double-headed axe. This form of axe is traditionally associated with Amazons, but appears to also be used by European soldiers in this period. It is suggested that the helmet is Celtiberian.²⁴³

²⁴⁰ Mattingly (ed.), *Roman Imperial Coinage*, 2a/b. Hereafter referred to as Mattingly, *RIC*. For a discussion of the likely effect of the Cantabrian Wars on trophies displayed at the beginning of the Principate see Polito 2011, 262 and Polito 2012.

²⁴¹ Mattingly, *RIC*, 2/ a & b; 3.

²⁴² Image from http://davy.potdevin.free.fr/2%20Roman%20coins%20I%20Augustus%20to%20Vitellius/1-augustus/ric7a_7000chf.jpg, [Accessed December 2014], Mattingly, *RIC*, 7a.

²⁴³ Mattingly, *RIC*, 6; 7/a, 7/b; 8.

Polito believes the arms probably relate to victory in the Cantabrian wars.²⁴⁴ It appears, that not only has the practice of displaying captured arms and armour on coins survived into the Principate, but it has also become a key way of spreading motifs of arms and their associated propaganda messages throughout the provinces. In terms of the appearance of rostra, a coin minted in approximately 36-30 BC under Octavian shows the dedication of a rostrated column (Figure 17).

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FIGURE 17: DENARIUS OF AUGUSTUS, 36-30 BC.

MATTINGLY, *RIC*, I, 271.²⁴⁵

This was not a new idea, C. Diulus having constructed the first such column in around 260 BC.²⁴⁶ Octavian's coin, however, appears to be the first to depict this type of monument. The ships prows are clearly connected with military victory, specifically the Roman naval victory at Actium. The coin is useful in providing a visual demonstration of columns used to display captured items.²⁴⁷ The longevity of this practice and its survival into the iconography and topography of the Principate suggests that the display of rostra and other *spolia* items

²⁴⁴ See Polito, 2012.

²⁴⁵ Image from [http://davy.potdevin.free.fr/2%20Roman%20coins%20I%20Augustus%20to%20Vitellius/1-augustus/ric271_5500\\$.jpg](http://davy.potdevin.free.fr/2%20Roman%20coins%20I%20Augustus%20to%20Vitellius/1-augustus/ric271_5500$.jpg) [Accessed May 2014]. Mattingly, *RIC*, 271.

²⁴⁶ Dillon & Welch, 2006, 3.

²⁴⁷ As will become clear in Chapter 4, the decoration of columns with captured arms is one of the ways in which domestic frescos incorporate motifs of arms. See Type 4, Section 4.3.4 of this thesis.

on columns was widely understood by the Roman people to be a reference to military victory as well as the honour and virtue of the man who dedicated them.

In the Augustan period another type of shield came to prominence in public display. This was the *clipeus virtutis* that was awarded to Augustus in 27 BC. Mattingly's catalogue includes an aureus struck in around 19-18 BC that is decorated with this shield (Figure 18).

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FIGURE 18: AUREUS OF AUGUSTUS, 19- 18 BC

MATTINGLY, *RIC*, I, 30A.²⁴⁸

The *clipeus virtutis* takes the form of the round hoplite shield, much like the portrait shields described by Pliny.²⁴⁹ The choice of this shield type could well be for the same reasons it was chosen for portraits - to refer to the archetypal heroes that fought at Troy.²⁵⁰ Augustus' honour is thus given a military dimension connecting him, however obliquely, with Roman foundation myths. Levick also suggests that the choice of this type of dedication copied those given in the Hellenistic age.²⁵¹ McDonnell believes that 'what was new and significant about the *clipeus virtutis* is the presence of an ethical sense of *virtus* on a public

²⁴⁸Image from [http://davy.potdevin.free.fr/2%20Roman%20coins%20I%20Augustus%20to%20Vitellius/1-augustus/ric30a_28000\\$.jpg](http://davy.potdevin.free.fr/2%20Roman%20coins%20I%20Augustus%20to%20Vitellius/1-augustus/ric30a_28000$.jpg), [Accessed December 2014], Mattingly, *RIC*, 30/a.

²⁴⁹ Pliny, XXXV, 3, 13.

²⁵⁰ Pliny, XXXV, 3, 13.

²⁵¹ Levick, 2010, 74.

monument.²⁵² However, the analysis of our literary sources has shown that setting up a shield as an honorific dedication to represent Roman virtue (namely in fulfilling the legal duties of the Republic) is something that was already developing in Rome before the *clipeus virtutis* itself.²⁵³ Whilst there are previous incidences of honorary round shields before 27 BC, it is obvious that the dedication of the *clipeus virtutis* to Augustus was to change the regard with which these arms were held. This is reflected by the number of marble copies of the shield that have been found in Rome and the provinces (See Figure 63). Once again the numismatic evidence, in this case supported by sculptural evidence, suggests that we should be open to multiple interpretations of motifs of arms and armour, even in their simplest forms.

Later depictions of arms and armour appear to favour individual items over the *tropaion* form. After his conquest of Armenia, the coin issued by Augustus depicts a bow case and quiver (*gorytos*) along with a form of helmet (identified by Mattingly as a tiara).²⁵⁴ They are shown individually suggesting that the military victory of the Princeps was inferable from these individual items alone. Under Tiberius, Caligula and Claudius, the *tropaion* remains equally rare.²⁵⁵ Perhaps this could indicate that the dedication of weapons in this way and their commemoration on coins had become unfashionable, something that could be reflected in the domestic decorations. Other ways of celebrating victory, such as the depiction of the goddess Victoria seated on a globe, appear to be used instead of the

²⁵² McDonnell, 2006, 386.

²⁵³ This is specifically seen in the case of commemorating successful fines or tithes as well as in the form of portrait shields. See Section 2.2 of this thesis.

²⁵⁴ Mattingly, *RIC*, 515.

²⁵⁵ Mattingly's catalogue provides very few depictions of arms and armour on coins in this period.

depiction of captured arms.²⁵⁶ This could suggest a level of confidence in Rome's global position, but is also likely to have been inspired by a general lack of territorial expansion in this period. Tiberius made no further territorial gains and Caligula's military accomplishments are often portrayed with a sense of lunacy and frivolity, such as his orders to collect shells as 'spoils of the Ocean' after his failed invasion of Britain.²⁵⁷ The only coins to return to depictions of enemy weaponry are some examples minted during the reign of the Emperor Claudius (Figure 19):

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FIGURE 19: DENARIUS OF CLAUDIUS, 41-45 AD.

MATTINGLY, *RIC*, CLAUDIUS 74.²⁵⁸

This coin is dated to between 41 and 45 AD, around the time of Claudius' invasion of Britain. However, the weaponry depicted on the coin does not belong to his own triumphs, but to those of his father, for his success in defeating the German tribes during the reign of Augustus.²⁵⁹ A pair of oblong shields with a collection of spears and war trumpets dominate the coin type, although their connection with the weaponry won by Claudius' father suggests that the depiction aims to legitimise Claudius' rule based upon his father's success rather than his own. A much more scattered depiction of arms, reflecting the type of display

²⁵⁶ For a discussion of the 'Victory on a Globe' motif see Hölscher, 1967, 41-47.

²⁵⁷ Suetonius, *Caligula*, 46. For Tiberius' peaceful reign see Eckstein, 2010, 584.

²⁵⁸ Image from http://davy.potdevin.free.fr/2%20Roman%20coins%20I%20Augustus%20to%20Vitellius/4-claudius/ric74_5000CHF.jpg, [Accessed December 2014], Mattingly, *RIC*, 74.

²⁵⁹ Suetonius, *Claudius*, 1.

likely to have been viewed during triumphal processions, is seen on another coin commissioned by Claudius in Figure 20.

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FIGURE 20: SESTERTIUS OF CLAUDIUS, 41- 50 AD

MATTINGLY, *RIC*, CLAUDIUS 93.²⁶⁰

This coin dates to the early 50s AD and shows a dramatic turn around in the portrayal of captured enemy weaponry, even in comparison to Figure 19. A much wider assortment of arms and armour are displayed and in a manner which is unlike any other coin reverse seen so far. Arms are scattered around the foot of Claudius' curule chair indicating his imperium and supremacy over a defeated nation. The shields hark back to the Gallic examples displayed by Caesar and suggest a Germanic link, which fits with the victories of Claudius' father's campaigns there, but could link to Claudius' own victories over British tribes. The attention to detail in displaying the arms is similar to that shown during the Republic and a dramatic change from the more generic, honorific *clipeus virtutis* motifs of the early Imperial period. This perhaps indicates that the display of captured enemy weaponry is making a reappearance in wider Roman art at this time, most likely as a result of Claudius' need to consolidate his position as Emperor. Other coins confirm the contemporary construction of

²⁶⁰Image from
<http://www.coinarchives.com/2423488e64096b7b75e49fdf64e371c9/img/peus/412/image00191.jpg>,
[Accessed May 2014]; Mattingly, *RIC*, 93.

new triumphal arches and structures relating to military victory that would be likely to display motifs of arms, making the re-appearance of these motifs in other contexts appear entirely plausible.²⁶¹

The re-appearance of mixed arms and armour on coin types continues into the Neronian period. The round shield, having previously been highlighted as an honorific dedication, regains a military interpretation; coins depicting the goddess Roma appear to show her writing on a shield that she rests on her knee.²⁶² This is perhaps the forerunner of the same action performed by the goddess Victoria, which becomes much more common into the Flavian period and beyond.²⁶³ Under Nero, coins also showed Roma seated on a pile of captured weaponry (Figure 21).

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FIGURE 21: SEMIS OF NERO, 64 AD.

MATTINGLY, *RIC*, NERO, 223.²⁶⁴

A cuirass and helmet are visible along with a parazonium held by Roma, extending the association of weaponry with virtue. The arms are shown in a pile under Roma similar to how we would expect arms to be displayed in a triumph. Some detail has gone into making

²⁶¹ For example, Mattingly, *RIC*, 34 and 35.

²⁶² Mattingly, *RIC*, 27/28.

²⁶³ For a greater discussion of the 'Victoria inscribing a shield' motif see Kousser 'Conquest and Desire' in Dillon & Welch, 2006, 218-243 and the seminal monograph on the goddess: Hölscher, 1967.

²⁶⁴ Mattingly, *RIC*, 223.

the weaponry identifiable showing that whilst motifs of captured arms may have lost some of their relevance in the early years of the Empire, they were regaining importance. The *tropaion* form is once again conspicuous by its absence, remaining extremely uncommon throughout the civil wars that followed Nero's death.²⁶⁵ The trophy returns to use on Vespasian's coins following the conquest of Judaea, but never as the focal point of the decoration. Coins minted under Vespasian generally use a similar pattern to the coin of Nero above; arms are depicted as scattered around personifications of Judaea weeping on the ground.²⁶⁶

The decoration of Roman coin types shows a clear development of an iconographic language for the depiction of arms and armour. Whilst we would expect depictions of arms on coins to be reduced to their simplest form, having little detail as part of trophies or even as individual items, it is clear there was attention to detail in their representation. The arms depicted hold great importance for the propaganda function of the coins; if observers cannot interpret the various arms depicted, then there is often no other indication of which victory they celebrate. This also highlights how it was likely that the majority of observers, Roman or otherwise, would be familiar with the different ethnic weaponry displayed and be able to interpret them accordingly. The numismatic evidence gives an indication of how arms could be displayed on public buildings in the Forum, allowing us to make comparisons between the depictions on these coin types and any other representations of arms and

²⁶⁵ There appears to be only one use of the trophy as a coin type during this civil war period which is on a denarius not recorded by Mattingly. The coin depicts a trophy with two oval shields (with spine and central boss), cuirass with pteryges, helmet and spears. It is documented in a numismatics sale catalogue: *Pegasi II*, 1996, 298. An image of the coin is also available here: <http://davy.potdevin.free.fr/Site/macer.html> [Accessed May 2014], No. 31.

²⁶⁶ Mattingly, *RIC*, Vespasian 159.

armour in a public space that we may find. The coins also give an insight into the multiple interpretations of depictions of arms. Honorific shields are present in the decoration of coin types. Trophies can be used to show political *Imperium* as well as referring to specific victories and much of this relates to depicting the correct arms and armour to symbolise various ethnicities or provinces in the Roman world. Some coin types even appear to be reflected in domestic decorations at Pompeii. Finally, the numismatic evidence presents a narrative of how motifs of arms and armour were likely to have been displayed and received throughout the Republic and into the Imperial period. Particularly interesting is the decline in use of such motifs during the reigns of Tiberius and Caligula. It almost appears that the depictions of weaponry on coins, like those arms dedicated in public and private spaces, must be connected to a military victory and '*de hosta capta*' as Cato demands. The widespread use of these coins was almost certainly one of the key ways in which motifs of captured arms and armour were circulated to Roman allies and subjects. The impact of the motifs on coins, in combination with viewing genuine spolia items and, as I shall now address, sculptural depictions of arms, appears to reflect the repertoire of motifs that could be used in domestic decorations.

3.3: Sculptural Motifs of Arms

Whilst coins provide visual evidence of how real weaponry was dedicated on public buildings in Rome, there also appears to have been a parallel development of sculptural depictions that followed the same display practices. Polito suggests that these sculptural motifs of arms are not a direct 'petrification' of the real arms and armour, but they are

undoubtedly influenced by the display of such items in public.²⁶⁷ When considering the decoration of Roman domestic space, scholarship has generally confirmed that many decorative schemes aimed to replicate or refer to the decoration of public buildings and spaces from either the Hellenistic or Roman world. An overview of how motifs of arms are used in the sculptural decoration of public buildings across Italy will facilitate a discussion of the domestic evidence when considering how far the motifs of arms used there, and particularly their decorative context, reflect the use of motifs of arms on public buildings.

3.3.1: Greco-Roman Sculptural Precedents

Perhaps the most famous example of motifs of arms from a Greco-Hellenistic background are those decorating the sanctuary of Athena at Pergamum (Figure 22).

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FIGURE 22: FRIEZE FROM THE SANCTUARY OF ATHENA AT PERGAMUM.

DEUBNER, 1949, 104, FIG.17.²⁶⁸

They have been dated by Jaeckel to the reign of Eumenes II.²⁶⁹ The style of motifs is said by Deubner to be specific to the architecture of Pergamum in this period, due to the

²⁶⁷ Polito, 2011.

²⁶⁸ Deubner, 1949, 104, figure 17.

²⁶⁹ Eumenes II reigned between 197 and 159 B.C., but Jaeckel suggests the structures that incorporate the frieze can be dated to 183 BC. See Jaeckel, 1965, 94.

overlapping style of the arms and armour.²⁷⁰ It is this presentation of weaponry as a disordered pile of arms that we have most anticipated from the description of Roman triumphal display in our ancient sources. The combination of arms in this way, even in the Hellenistic period, is clearly a defining feature of the representations of captured enemy weaponry or spoils of war. Polito believes the Pergamum arms fit into a wider decorative scheme that also included statues of vanquished Gallic warriors as part of the commemoration of Attalus I's victory over the Gauls.²⁷¹ This would confirm a close link with the captured weaponry and is something we would expect to see repeated in Roman depictions of spoils of war, not only from their similarity to display practices in the triumphal procession, but also from the desire to copy the Hellenistic precedents.

Nielsen's work on the palaces of Hellenistic kingdoms has demonstrated that whilst the 'lavishness of the decoration of the palaces' was likely to have influenced Roman decorative models, they remain very 'poorly preserved.'²⁷² Our understanding of the decoration of the palaces is instead based upon the descriptions in literary sources, the most elaborate being the dining-pavilion of Ptolemy II described as part of the Ptolemaia festival, which was itself decorated with shields:

*'In the intercolumniations were paintings... Above these, oblong shields were hung all round, alternately of silver and of gold.'*²⁷³

²⁷⁰ Deubner, 1949, 104

²⁷¹ Polito, 1999.

²⁷² Nielsen, 1999, 22.

²⁷³ Athenaeus, *The Deipnosophistae*, 197.

In terms of the decoration of other Hellenistic buildings that could have influenced Roman decoration, Webb's study of Hellenistic architecture has identified that 'the simplest Hellenistic motif is the undecorated shield.'²⁷⁴ Her survey of the figural decoration of Hellenistic buildings has revealed the shield was used in the decoration of public buildings like the bouleuteria of Herakleia and Ariassos in this period, as well as in the decoration of the Propylon of the Agora at Magnesia.²⁷⁵ She also notes that other items of weaponry were found decorating civic buildings at Sagalassos and Ephesos, indicating widespread use of these motifs in the Hellenistic world, particularly in the decoration of its public buildings.²⁷⁶ To this we must add the decoration of the Sanctuary of Athena at Pergamum. The evidence for the use of shields and other military items in the decoration of Hellenistic buildings seems a likely source of influence for the inclusion of motifs of arms in Roman domestic decorations. This is particularly true in light of the 'lure of Hellenism' and the connections between original First Style decoration and the Hellenistic world.²⁷⁷ Scholars, such as McKenzie, have even demonstrated the diffusion of Hellenistic (particularly Alexandrian) art into Roman domestic decorations by analysing architecture at Petra.²⁷⁸ In terms of identifying these 'Hellenistic' influences in Roman domestic decorations, the decorative contexts of the motifs of arms may show connections with desirable Greek spaces such as the *pinacotheca* or picture gallery. The influence of Greek spaces could also be suggested by the presence of panel paintings of Greek subjects, for example the Trojan War, or even the presence of Greek inscriptions. However, the significant impact that Hellenistic art and

²⁷⁴ Webb, 1996, 33.

²⁷⁵ Webb, 1996, 33.

²⁷⁶ Webb, 1996, 33.

²⁷⁷ Gruen, 1992.

²⁷⁸ McKenzie, 2007.

architecture had on Roman art will probably make it very difficult to determine if the decorations are alluding to a Hellenistic or Roman context. Where examples appear to have a particularly 'Greek' connection they will be drawn out and examined in more detail.

An early example of weaponry motifs used in the decoration of public buildings in Italy is the Sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia in Palestrina (Figure 23). The decoration of the tholos on the terrace includes shields amongst depictions of bucrania and rosettes, along with the more traditional barred finials for triglyphs. The frieze dates to around the middle of the 2nd Century BC to the 80s BC.²⁷⁹ At this point, Palestrina was an ally of Rome following its defeat in the Latin wars.²⁸⁰

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FIGURE 23: DECORATION OF THE THOLOS AT THE SANCTUARY OF FORTUNA PRIMIGENIA, PALESTRINA.

FASOLO & GULLINI, 1953, 150, FIG.225.

The shields sculpted on this monument are the same round, hoplite-style as those found on later Republican reliefs. They have less decorative detail, suggesting that their presence in the decoration alone that was symbolic. The frieze indicates how the practice of representing weaponry in public decoration was used in the areas of Italy under Greek influence as well as Roman influence. We would expect this based upon the Greek precedents for dedicating arms in public spaces already seen at Pergamum. Polito suggests

²⁷⁹ Polito, 1998, 132-133, f.57; Fasolo & Gullini, 1954, 149. The later dating is disputed by Coarelli, 1987, 35-84.

²⁸⁰ Livy, 6.25, 5-26.

that other Republican monuments with Doric friezes, like the *Fornix Fabianus* may also have demonstrated a similar combination of military motifs, but this is speculative and contradicted by more recent scholarship.²⁸¹ In the House of the Labyrinth at Pompeii one decorative cityscape fresco shows a tholos that has shields hung between the pillars, perhaps indicating the sculpted shields were inspired by real weaponry dedications (Figure 24).

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FIGURE 24: FRESCO FROM THE HOUSE OF THE LABYRINTH, POMPEII

PAPPALARDO, 2009, 85.

The scene belongs to the sacro-idyllic landscape genre and may be based upon the decoration of sanctuary sites like Fortuna Primigenia in this period. The fresco dates to the Second Pompeian style, most likely in the mid 1st Century BC, some years after the speculative date for the decoration at Palestrina, but demonstrating that the decoration of *tholoi* and other religious structures with weaponry was something that was still understood in later periods even if not taking place.

Motifs of arms were used in the decoration of early public monuments in Pergamum and Italy and were likely to have formed part of the Hellenistic iconography that was growing increasingly desirable in Rome throughout the Republican period. This suggests that the

²⁸¹ Polito, 1998, 133. *Contra*, Welch, 2010, 506 – Welch suggests that Republican arches were without relief decoration, in spite of the presence of the Doric frieze on the *Fornix Fabianus*.

development of motifs of arms as a form of public decoration was something that developed contemporaneously but not always as a result of Roman practices for the commemoration of victory.

3.3.2: Sculptural Motifs of Arms: The Republic

The display of captured weapons on Roman public monuments and buildings has been described as a regular occurrence by the literary sources in Chapter 2. One key commemorative structure developed in this period was the triumphal arch.²⁸² However, Katherine Welch suggests that ‘Republican arches were not decorated with relief sculpture and did not support triumphal chariots.’²⁸³ This is an interesting contrast to the decoration of later arches, such as the surviving arches of Titus and Septimius Severus in the Forum, which are festooned with relief decoration often relating to the triumphal procession itself. Welch’s theory is supported by Kleiner’s belief that relief sculpture for arches was developed during the Augustan period.²⁸⁴ If Welch is correct then items of captured weaponry, either genuine or sculptural, may not have been incorporated into these conspicuously triumphal monuments. This is unexpected. However, evidence for the decoration of Republican monuments with sculptural depictions of arms and armour does exist, although limited, and is also described by Polito.²⁸⁵

²⁸² This may be a consequence of their supposedly more ‘votive’ nature, as offerings to the gods rather than as self-aggrandising military commemorations – see Kontokosta, 2013.

²⁸³ Welch, 2010, 506.

²⁸⁴ Welch, 2010, 506, f.40; Kleiner, F.S., 1985, 88. Also supported by a belief that the arch was ‘reinvented’ in this period – see Kontokosta, 2013, 7, f.7.

²⁸⁵ Polito, 1998. Chapter 6.

3.3.2a: Sant Omobono

The best known example of Republican sculptural motifs of arms and armour is found in the reliefs excavated near to Sant Omobono in Rome. The surviving sections are part of a much larger monumental structure of African grey limestone.²⁸⁶ It has been suggested that the reliefs are ‘commemorating Sulla’s victories’ as part of base for ‘a statue group showing the surrender to Sulla of Jugurtha.’²⁸⁷ Federico Santangelo has also suggested that ‘its iconography is not incompatible with a later dating, after victory in the first Mithridatic War.’²⁸⁸ The sculptures of the weapons are simple and clear. There is no extensive overlap between individual figures or objects for the best visual impact; it is what Polito calls a ‘paratactic’ frieze.²⁸⁹ At the centre of the first relief is a shield, flanked on both sides by Victories and candelabra (See Figure 25).²⁹⁰



FIGURE 25: SECTION OF SANT OMOBONO FRIEZE, ROME

PHOTOGRAPH BY N. CRACKNELL, 2012.

²⁸⁶ Museum label for “Triumphal Monument Erected by Boccus, King of Mauritania,” Rome: Musei Capitolini, Centrale Montemartini. March 2012. (Inventory numbers 2749-2752 and 3517).

²⁸⁷ Welch, 2010, 530.

²⁸⁸ Santangelo, 2007, 2.

²⁸⁹ Polito, 2011, 260.

²⁹⁰ Polito, 1998, 122.

Polito has suggested the shield and its victories allude to two triumphs that have been achieved by the general associated with the monument.²⁹¹



FIGURE 26: SECTION OF SANT OMOBONO FREIZE, ROME.

PHOTOGRAPH BY N. CRACKNELL, 2012.

The second panel (Figure 26) depicts a large shield decorated with a female figure with long hair and draped fabric visible around her neck. Polito has speculatively identified her as 'Roma-Virtus.'²⁹² Alongside the shield are two anthropomorphic trophies, which confirm the shield was connected with victory.²⁹³ A section of torso armour is also included, perhaps as a representation of the victorious general, or a representation of an item of armour captured in the campaign and displayed in triumph.

²⁹¹ Polito, 1998, 122.

²⁹² Polito, 1998, 124.

²⁹³ D'Amato believes the panoply that forms the trophy is contemporary Roman equipment for a centurion in the time of Sulla. This is interesting as it raises the question as to why it would be necessary for the armour of Roman soldiers to be displayed in victory. (D'Amato, 2011, 13). If the monument does indeed celebrate the defeat of Jugurtha then the presence of Roman armour as part of the trophies may be due to the close relationship that Jugurtha had with Rome before the eventual civil war that led to his defeat?



FIGURE 27: SECTION OF SANT OMOBONO FRIEZE, ROME

PHOTOGRAPH BY N. CRACKNELL, 2012.

In another section of relief (Figure 27), the round shield is decorated with what appears to be a mounted soldier or general. Alongside the shield are two other separate pieces of armour. A highly decorative greave is included in the decoration, the top of which incorporates a gorgon or a lion's head.²⁹⁴ The rest of the decoration is now badly damaged, making it difficult to identify. However, it appears to consist of vegetal motifs and patterns. They could allude to the arms of the enemy general, the round hoplite shield not often being used by Roman soldiers in this period. As we have already seen from our literary sources describing the shield of Hasdrubal in Chapter 2, shields depicting the image of the enemy general were not unknown in Rome. Far from simply representing captured enemy armour, the items displayed in the relief have been chosen carefully in order to resonate with the Roman observers' understanding and conceptions of the victorious campaign that it represents, as well as decorative precedents evoking connections with heroism and

²⁹⁴ An example of a bronze greave decorated with the embossed image of a gorgon on the knee section was excavated from the temple site at Ardea. It is dated between the 2nd and 1st Century BC, which is similar to the dating of this monument to the late Republican period. See D'Amato, 2011, 12; 46.

valour.²⁹⁵ We must assume that all of these images would have assisted the observer in successfully identifying the intended recipient of the prestige of the monument and also the identity of the subdued enemy in the absence of any surviving inscription.

One final section of relief survives that demonstrates a remarkably different ethnicity to the other arms shown; it is decorated in an oriental fashion (Figure 28).²⁹⁶



FIGURE 28: SECTION OF SANT OMOBONO FRIEZE, ROME.

PHOTOGRAPH BY N. CRACKNELL, 2012.

The shield is sub-rectangular and its decoration is particularly unusual since it includes the image of a winged snake. Winged serpents are commonly associated with Egypt in Herodotus's account, but D'Arms suggests that the symbol 'may be a Numidian device.'²⁹⁷ It is probably included to demonstrate the barbarian, 'otherness' of the defeated enemy in

²⁹⁵ Polito, 2011, 260.

²⁹⁶ See D'Amato, 2011, 46.

²⁹⁷ Winged serpents are known as *ophies pteretoi* in the account of Herodotus. Herodotus, *Histories*, 2.75, 1-4; 3.107- 110. See also D'Amato, 2011, 46.

contrast to the round shields and equestrian attributes of the other arms. Could this be the arms of the foreign general instead?

This monument, gives various examples of how motifs of arms could be used in the decoration of public monuments, emphasising a paratactic style over a display of mixed piles of arms.²⁹⁸ Far from simply copying items in the heaped piles on display in the triumph or elsewhere in the city, items are chosen with care and precision. Each item is designed to evoke a sense of the enemy that was subdued and perhaps the general who is now victorious. It may well be that there were two sides to the monument. The round shields showing the attributes of the victorious general and the opposite sides showing the attributes of the defeated King of Numidia, including the shield with the winged snake. A different interpretation is that the monument was set up by Bocchus of Mauretania, a Roman ally in the fight against Jugurtha, hence the inclusion of a mixture of both foreign and Roman panoply.²⁹⁹ Whatever message the monument intended to send, the display of arms and armour as single items, particularly shields, appears to stem from the practices outlined in our literary sources, whilst also showing a particular awareness of their symbolic value for heroism developed in the Hellenistic period.

²⁹⁸ This could well be due to the constraints of visibility. If the reliefs were high up then keeping the individual weaponry separate would make the decoration easier to read from a distance. The same would apply to the decoration were it from a statue base, although this would be more likely to tie it in with the Hellenistic precedents of heroic armour – see Polito, 2011, 260.

²⁹⁹ Santangelo, 2007, 2.

3.3.2b: The Niche of Todi

Polito suggests that this monument dates to around 40 BC and is decorated with a Doric frieze including triglyphs and metopes.³⁰⁰ The niches are commonly believed to be connected with a temple to Mars that had been dedicated on the site.³⁰¹ Although much of the temple is lost, the Doric frieze includes various motifs of arms and armour. Tascio believed the frieze to include only vegetal reliefs, but a sketch of the frieze made in 1818 shows that shields and arms were indeed a part of the design (Figure 29).³⁰²

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FIGURE 29: DRAWINGS OF THE NICHE OF TODI FRIEZE, ITALY.

TASCIO, 1989, 39, FIG. 29.³⁰³

Pelta shields, cuirasses and some items that look like decorative examples of the round hoplite style shield are found in the metopes. Even in Italian provincial decoration, arms and armour seem to take a relatively important position in the decoration of public monuments. It is not clear if they allude to captured arms or are religious motifs representing the arms of Mars, but it appears that motifs of arms were appropriate on all forms of public building

³⁰⁰ Polito, 1998, 132-133.

³⁰¹ Tascio, 1989, 38.

³⁰² Tascio, 1989, 39-41.

³⁰³ Images from Tascio, 1989, 39. Fig. 29. Sketches originally by G. Battini, 1818.

including victory monuments, or structures surrounding temples like the Niche at Todi and the Pergamum friezes.

3.3.2c: Late Republican/ Early Principate Funerary Monuments

Polito describes several Doric-style metopes that may have once formed part of the decoration of an early Augustan triumphal arch, but until these are firmly attributed to the appropriate historical period, the identification remains speculative.³⁰⁴ The majority of Polito's other evidence for this period comes from funerary monuments.³⁰⁵ The mausoleum of L. Munatius Plancus presents a Doric style frieze at the top of its walls.³⁰⁶ The individual metopes incorporate a range of arms and armour among which Polito identifies round, oval and pelta shields, body armour, helmets, greaves and spears (Figure 30).³⁰⁷



FIGURE 30: METOPES FROM THE MAUSOLEUM OF L. MUNATIUS PLANCUS, 20-15 BC.

PHOTOGRAPH BY N. CRACKNELL, 2012.

Polito also identifies the reliefs in Figures 31 and 32 as belonging to funerary monuments, mainly due to the inclusion of *bucrania*.³⁰⁸ If the monuments were designed for funerary

³⁰⁴ Polito, 1998, 133.

³⁰⁵ Polito, 1998, 134.

³⁰⁶ Polito, 1998, 136-7.

³⁰⁷ Polito, 1998, 135, f.84.

³⁰⁸ Polito, 1998, 138.

display and commemoration then it is highly likely that their decoration was designed to be seen by passers-by.

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FIGURE 31: FUNERARY MONUMENT WITH DORIC FRIEZE

POLITO, 1998, 139.

Figure 31 incorporates a Doric frieze, on which a shield is shown with a crossed sword and possibly a spear behind. Polito also identifies the pattern on the shield as 'labirinti' or labyrinthine.³⁰⁹ This is a far more decorative design than in the previous depictions of shields from the Sant Omobono monuments, which, in later revisions to his original typology, Polito identifies as coming from the Iberian Peninsula and having a possible connection to the Cantabrian wars.³¹⁰ This suggests that the date of the frieze is likely to be in the early years of the Principate rather than the late Republic, but highlights the difficulty of accurately dating decorations of this type without greater knowledge of their context.³¹¹ The shield would be clearly visible to passers-by and may have been inspired by similar decorations on state buildings. The second funerary frieze is now held in a private collection (Figure 32).³¹² Any details of its original context are lost. Two motifs of shields are incorporated into the decoration of this monument in separate metopes.

³⁰⁹ Polito, 1998, 139.

³¹⁰ Polito, 2012, 142.

³¹¹ Polito says that this is from 'the first decades of the power of Augustus.' Polito, 2012, 142.

³¹² Polito, 1998, 141.

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FIGURE 32: FUNERARY MONUMENT WITH DORIC FRIEZE, ROME

POLITO, 1998, 141.

The round shield in the left metope is identified as a parma shield, combined with crossed swords. The shield in the right metope appears more rectangular in shape and is shown from the side and accompanied by a pair of greaves and an object that Polito has identified as an offensive weapon in the shape of a letter 'L,' although this could be connected with gladiatorial rather than martial combat.³¹³ The depiction of the shields and related military paraphernalia appears more random, matching with the display of spoils being *'artfully arranged to look exactly as though they had been piled together in heaps and at random, helmets lying upon shields and cuirasses upon greaves.'*³¹⁴ This disorganised pile design may have been inspired by the presentation of weaponry in a triumph, or by the precedents of the friezes of Pergamum explored earlier in this chapter (Figure 22) and also corresponds with the piled depictions seen on later coin types (e.g. Figure 21).

Polito's findings indicate that 'the iconography of stacked arms and armour, together with those isolated in the metopes of the Doric friezes, characterises a large number of funerary monuments erected by the first generations of Augustan followers in Italy.'³¹⁵ This, he

³¹³ Polito, 1998, 55. 'K' type. It is also possible that this could be a form of rostrum. The diversity of the motifs and the difficulties in identifying them in modern scholarship only serve to emphasise just how nuanced the range and meaning of the motifs may have been in antiquity.

³¹⁴ Plutarch, *Aemilius Paullus*, 32.5-8.

³¹⁵ Polito, 2012, 141; Polito 2011.

suggests, indicates that there may have been at least 'one example of a late Republican Roman public monument decorated with stacked weaponry' that acts as the catalyst for the much increased incidence of these friezes in the late Republic and early Principate.³¹⁶ It is commonly believed that Roman domestic decorative schemes were designed to imitate and allude to the decoration of public buildings and spaces as diverse as Hellenistic palaces to Roman theatres.³¹⁷ As Hales suggests, "'Public" rooms reflected the public sphere.'³¹⁸ As Polito suggests, the 'transition from the display of real weapons to pictorial or sculptural depictions is not a direct or immediate passage.'³¹⁹ Yet in the assessment of domestic decoration, it remains the commonly held view that the painted representations of arms and armour act as a direct 'impression of the martial prowess exhibited by spoils and weapons in the homes of the Roman aristocracy.'³²⁰ If there is no 'petrification' of weaponry into motifs of arms, then it follows that there is no direct transformation of real weaponry into painted motifs either, contrasting with these traditionally held views on representations of arms in domestic decor.³²¹ Wallace-Hadrill's 'allusion,' rather than Leach's 'mimesis' appears key to understanding motifs of arms in all contexts.³²²

3.3.2d: Theatre Decorations

One location in which the display of sculpted arms and armour extends across both the Republic and into the Principate and beyond is in the decoration of the theatre. Our literary sources provide no clear evidence for the use of arms and armour in the decoration of

³¹⁶ Polito, 2012, 260-261.

³¹⁷ Pappalardo, 2009, 9-10.

³¹⁸ Hales, 2003, 127.

³¹⁹ Polito, 2011, 260.

³²⁰ Hales, 2003, 52.

³²¹ Polito, 2011, 260.

³²² Wallace-Hadrill, 1994, 17; Leach, 2004, 17; 54-55.

theatres, although several imply that this was a possibility: Livy describes a great festival in which the spoils of Aemilius Paullus are put on display alongside theatrical performances, the implication being that when watching the performance in the theatre, the ancient spectator also saw 'the collected loot of Macedonia,' most likely including its arms and armour.³²³ Similarly the decoration of Pompey's grand theatre-temple complex and its attached portico was likely to have included displays of arms and armour if only as votive items in the temple of Victoria. Sear's catalogue of the architecture of Roman theatres, along with Fuch's valuable study of Roman theatrical architecture, presents several sites where fragments of decoration that depict arms and armour have been found.³²⁴ The theatre at Interamnia Praetuttiorum (modern Teramo), incorporated 'arms, bucrania and Rosettes' in its decorations dating to the late 1st Century BC.³²⁵ Another theatre at Faesulae (modern Fiesole) incorporates 2nd Century AD weapon friezes, some of which Fuch's believes were actually part of the *scaenae frons*.³²⁶ Whilst this is not overwhelming evidence for either the presence of real or sculptural arms and armour in theatre decorations, it demonstrates that they could have been connected and it is important to bear in mind that much of the decoration from these sites is now lost, leaving only fragmentary remains; their decorations could have been far more extensive and there may well have been sculpted arms and armour found in other theatres that have also since been lost. Connections between theatrical decorations and motifs of arms in domestic decoration may, as a result, have been inspired by sculpted or real arms in Roman theatres.

³²³ See Livy, 45. 33, 1-7.

³²⁴ See Sear, 2006 and Fuchs, 1987.

³²⁵ Sear, 2006, 158; Fuchs, 1987, 67-68.

³²⁶ Fuchs, 1987, 46-51.

3.3.3: Sculptural Motifs of Arms: The Principate to 100 AD

The advent of the Principate and Augustan power evoked considerable changes in Roman culture, not least in its art and architecture. Representations of captured arms and armour in public decoration were not exempt from this. Polito has already indicated that the early years of the Principate saw a dramatic increase in the number of funerary monuments using motifs of arms and armour, perhaps indicating a change in when it was possible to celebrate personal triumphs in light of the new power of the Princeps and his control of triumphal processions.³²⁷

3.3.3a: The Temple of Apollo Sosianus

The temple of Apollo Sosianus was refurbished by Gaius Sosius shortly after 34 BC.³²⁸ This was a period of extensive political upheaval, with the collapse of the triumvirates and the eventual defeat of Antony at the battle of Actium in 31 BC. Having just celebrated his own triumph, Sosius was likely to have used some of the booty he brought back from his campaign to refurbish the temple *ex manubiis*. The pediment, decorated with an Amazonomachy, is believed to have been taken in one piece from a Greek temple and transported to Rome to be used in the design, effectively making the pediment itself *spolia*.³²⁹ The section of particular interest to this chapter, however, is a figural relief depicting a triumphal procession, part of which can be seen in Figure 33.

³²⁷ Polito, 2012.

³²⁸ Sosius triumphed in 34 BC, so as the decoration depicts a triumphal procession it seems sensible to assume that his refurbishment of the temple happened after his victory. See Gurval, 1998, 116.

³²⁹ Newby, 2011, 267.



FIGURE 33: FREIZE FROM THE TEMPLE OF APOLLO SOSIANUS, ROME

PHOTOGRAPH BY N. CRACKNELL, 2012.

The frieze has often been identified as representing the triple triumph of Augustus, included either by the Princeps' own completion of the temple, or as a result of Sosius' gratitude for Augustus' clemency after Actium. It depicts distinctly northern barbarians, which supports this identification with the Augustan triumph rather than the procession of Sosius in 34 BC, which was over Judea.³³⁰ The focal point of the frieze are the trophies. Trophies were used by both the Greeks and the Romans as a form of displaying captured arms and armour on the battlefield.³³¹ The trophy was also adopted by the Romans as a means for displaying captured arms and armour in the triumphal procession, as this relief suggests. Combined with the representations of subjugated barbarian prisoners at the foot of the trophy, the image was resonant with a sense of political power and Roman superiority. Whilst trophies were common on Republican coins, it seems that by the 2nd Century AD, they had taken precedence on monuments, replacing the more paratactic style of the Sant Omobono reliefs.

³³⁰ Bowman, Champlin and Lintott (eds.), 1996, 47.

³³¹ Picard, 1957.

3.3.3b: The Trophies of Marius

This change of focus from individual items of weaponry to grouped representations and the depiction of trophies is supported by the setting up of the so-called ‘Trophies of Marius,’ now found on the Capitoline hill (Figure 34):



FIGURE 34: THE ‘TROPHIES OF MARIUS’

PHOTOGRAPH BY N. CRACKNELL, 2012.

The sculptures are named after a pair of trophies that were erected by Marius to celebrate his victory over Jugurtha and also the Cimbri and the Teutones.³³² However, they are unlikely to be anything to do with Marius at all. They originally formed part of the decoration of a public nymphaeum in Piazza Vittorio Emmanuele.³³³ The sculptures were only moved to the Capitoline in the 1500s, but it is likely that they date to the early 2nd Century AD. A coin struck by Alexander Severus in AD 226 is purported to show the trophies as part of the nymphaeum decoration.³³⁴ It appears that elaborate sculptural constructions

³³² Suetonius, *Julius Caesar*, 11. The sculptures are known by this name but are unlikely to have anything to do with military victories of Marius or the Republic in general.

³³³ Richardson, 1992, 402.

³³⁴ Richardson, 1992, 271.

of trophies were understood quite easily as evidence of military victory and captured arms and armour in this later period. Throughout the Republican and Imperial periods, this symbol was well understood as an icon of military victory and as a form of *spolia*, although due to its original apotropaic function it was likely to have been used more cautiously in earlier periods.³³⁵

3.3.3c: A Trophy from the Gardens of Sallust

Excavation of the gardens of Sallust in the 1880s discovered a large sculpture of a trophy. It is carved from Parian marble and was obviously a part of the decorative design of the gardens (Figure 35).



FIGURE 35: STATUE OF A TROPHY FROM THE GARDENS OF SALLUST

PHOTOGRAPH BY N. CRACKNELL, 2012.³³⁶

The statue would once have had metallic weaponry attached to the arms of the trophy, making it appear even more imposing than it does today.³³⁷ The depiction of the

³³⁵ For a more detailed explanation of this adaptation of the trophy by the Romans see Picard, 1957, specifically Chapter 2.

³³⁶ Photograph by N. Cracknell, Rome, Centrale Montemartini, March 2012. *M.C inv. 42*.

components that survive is very detailed, suggesting that this sculpture was supposed to be taken as a serious reference to military victory. It has been suggested that the sculpture dates to the Augustan period, although this is contested by Hartswick who believes that the trophy could not have been installed in the gardens until they were under the Imperial ownership of Nero.³³⁸ This also seems unlikely, for the dedication of this sculpture in the gardens, along with other sculptural depictions of Gauls and barbarian enemies indicated that military victory was a theme that pervaded the early decoration of the gardens.³³⁹ The inclusion of the trophy in the gardens does not seem unusual when we consider the placement of *spolia* items in the decorative porticoes of the Republican period; *spolia* appear to be placed in spaces where ambulatory movement is common. The sculpture is clear evidence of how even metallic replica weaponry could be on display in public spaces, along with the more traditional apotropaic trophy, in order to refer to military victory in even the most decorative and relaxed spaces in Rome.

3.3.3d: The Forum of Augustus and the House of Augustus?

Another monument that we understand was decorated with motifs of arms was the Forum of Augustus. Although very little remains of its decoration, our ancient sources can give us an indication of the decoration that was once found there:

*'At the entranceways he sees arms of all sorts from all the lands conquered by his soldier.'*³⁴⁰

³³⁷ Picard, 1957, 282.

³³⁸ Hartswick, 2004, 213.

³³⁹ Picard, 1957, 283.

³⁴⁰ Ovid, *Fasti*, 5.533.

Ovid's description of the Forum of Augustus is the best we have to work from and it is not entirely clear if the arms he mentions are genuine items of booty that have been dedicated in the temple and its precinct, or if they are sculptural motifs. Ovid describes the groups of statues found around the Forum and since his focus is on the sculptural decoration, it is possible to suggest that the arms he describes are sculptural depictions of captured arms too. This is supported by Polito, who describes a fragment of marble found in the Forum; 'there was found a fragment of metope in which a shield was probably represented, recognisable by the margins, that was crossed with a sword with a hemispherical pommel...' although the dating of these fragments remains speculative.³⁴¹ If Polito's description of the fragment is correct and it does indeed come from the decoration of the Forum of Augustus then it does not seem unlikely that the complex was decorated with sculptural motifs of arms, as well as the genuine items. This would have had a profound impact on nearby decoration and was likely to inspire allusions to such an important location in domestic decorations. Spinazzola was also convinced that the forum was decorated in this manner. He described the Temple of Mars in the Augustan Forum as likely to have been covered in sculptural decorations and paintings representing the victories of both Caesar and Augustus, which 'spread throughout the Roman world, as more or less equal copies.'³⁴²

Another relief (See Figure 36), possibly dating to the early Principate, has been found on the Palatine hill in the area connected with the temple of Apollo and the speculatively identified House of Augustus.

³⁴¹ Polito, 1998, 133. The fragment is stored in the Antiquarium Forense in Rome and no photograph is available. Antiquarium Forense, Rome: Inventory number 37.1952.

³⁴² Spinazzola, 1916, 429 – 450.

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FIGURE 36: RELIEF FROM THE PALATINE HILL, ROME

CARANDINI & BRUNO, 2008, 77.

It is uncertain if the relief is part of the decoration of the domestic residence or the temple. Carandini has suggested the panel was from the domus, due to the inclusion of two laurel trees in its design.³⁴³ The shield motif is the central focal point of the panel and is undoubtedly connected with Augustus. In his *Res Gestae*, Augustus describes:

*'the doorposts of my house were covered with laurels by public act... and a golden shield was placed in the curia Julia whose inscription testified that the senate and the Roman people gave me this in recognition of my valour, my clemency, my justice and my piety.'*³⁴⁴

Augustus' shield is not mentioned at any point to be an item of spolia from a particular battle or war. Instead it is a gift from the senate and people of Rome, his *clipeus virtutis*, as seen on the coin types earlier in this chapter. It seems that this particular round shield motif had become synonymous with the rewards of victory and was perhaps a typical prize for valour and honour. The hoplite shield, therefore, has become representative of all these moral qualities, as well as military prowess and victory. The wide publication given by Augustus about his receipt of this shield ensured that these values would be understood by

³⁴³ Carandini and Bruno, 2008, 77.

³⁴⁴ *Res Gestae Divi Augusti*, 34.

all Roman society as being encapsulated in the hoplite shield form. The lack of a clear context for this particular relief, however, does not allow for a full understanding of its purpose.

In spite of the rapid increase in popularity for decorative motifs of arms in the early Augustan period (a phenomenon that Polito attributes to Augustan veterans and their settlements), by the end of Augustus' reign the value of motifs of arms appears to be 'losing ground in the face of the growth of other themes.'³⁴⁵ Whilst motifs of weaponry are still found in the decoration of funerary monuments, they are less numerous and tend to repeat the same 'repertoire of weapons' developed in motifs of the late Republic and early Principate.³⁴⁶ If domestic depictions of motifs of arms are influenced in any way by the development of public decoration, then I would expect to see a similar decline in the use of motifs of arms in fresco, stucco and mosaic decorations. Whilst this decline may not be reflected in the profusion of domestic representations (their number already limited by the nature of the archaeological record for domestic decorations), I would expect the repetition of a 'repertoire' of weapons to impact on domestic depictions, perhaps lessening their size and maybe even their realism within the home.

3.3.3e: Later Imperial Triumphal Arches

Although no decoration survives for Republican arches, examples from later periods do survive in Rome and in the Roman provinces. The arch of Tiberius in Orange (See Figure 37), dating to around 25 AD, was in place some fifty years before the destruction of Pompeii, suggesting that its style of decoration would have had time to spread and become popular

³⁴⁵ Polito, 2011, 262.

³⁴⁶ Polito, 2011, 262.

in Italy, as well as in the provinces.³⁴⁷ The arch is decorated in striking relief (partly due to restorations in 1825) and is covered with representations of captured arms and armour.³⁴⁸

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FIGURE 37: TRIUMPHAL ARCH AT ORANGE

KLEINER, F.S., 2010A, 95, FIG.7.8.

Kleiner suggests that the busy and detailed relief was a peculiarity of the architecture of Roman Gaul that had not yet achieved popularity in Rome.³⁴⁹ Whether this style of decoration had made a significant impact in the art of Rome or its other provinces by this time is uncertain, but the decoration of the Arch at Orange indicates just how easy it was to understand the symbolism of captured arms and armour and the power that it had come to hold by this point in Roman history. Motifs of arms and armour had become a decorative trope, representative of Roman power over the generic barbarian 'other,' more than just an indication of the social prestige of individuals and were understood across the Provinces in this form.

It seems likely that arms and armour were a common theme in public sculptural decoration throughout the 1st and 2nd Centuries BC, although they remained relatively simple in the earliest periods. Relief sculpture certainly appears to remain uncomplicated, with the mixed

³⁴⁷ Kleiner, F.S., 2010a, 95.

³⁴⁸ Stanley-Brown, 1929, 87.

³⁴⁹ Kleiner, F.S., 2010a, 95.

piles and heaps of weapons, like those seen at Pergamum, not appearing consistently in the archaeological record until at least the 1st Century AD. Arms and armour appear almost as individual items, or in small groups that are either sculpted into monumental friezes as part of a continuous selection of items, as per the Sant Omobono reliefs, or as individual metopes, like in the Niche at Todi and the Sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia. By the end of the 1st Century BC, however, more complicated reliefs were coming into use, with trophies and prisoners being added to indicate *spolia* in representations of triumphal processions.

Eventually these 'busy' depictions became prominent, resulting in sculptures like the base of Trajan's Column and the 'trophies of Marius.' Representations of lone round shields become synonymous with imperial power and virtue after the *clipeus virtutis* of Augustus, perhaps accounting for the rise in these more hectic yet generic representations of barbarian arms and the decline in the more reserved and clear cut realism of earlier depictions of shields, something that has already been demonstrated in the numismatic record. According to Polito, this generic collection of 'alien' weaponry was to remain the standard motif through to the erection of the triumphal column of Arcadius in Constantinople in the early 5th Century AD.³⁵⁰ What appears clear from both Polito's study and my own analysis is that motifs of arms were split into two types of depiction: first is the almost paratactic display of individual motifs of weaponry, such as the depiction of arms on the Sant Omobono monument (e.g. Figures 25 & 26). The second is a 'mixed pile' display of weaponry with multiple types of weaponry grouped together to form a continuous collection of arms. This appears to be something that is developed mainly in the sculptural decorations. These two

³⁵⁰ Polito, 2011, 264.

types of display, along with trophies which form their own category, probably reflect the ways in which real weapons and sculptural decorations were displayed in public buildings. It is highly likely that I will find both categories reflected in the decoration of Roman domestic spaces.

3.4: Public Representations of Weaponry from the Bay of Naples

No captured enemy weapons have yet been found attached to excavated buildings at Pompeii and Herculaneum.³⁵¹ If captured weaponry had indeed been on display, then the earthquake of 62 AD may have led to the destruction of the large majority of objects nailed onto the exterior of buildings, domestic or otherwise, just as a similar destruction occurred with the fire in Rome just two years later.³⁵² We also know from Pliny's accounts that many residents of Pompeii and Herculaneum attempted to flee the eruption of 79 AD, taking valuable items with them. It could be that the captured arms, valued for both their prestige and intrinsic worth, were among those items grabbed or looted in the escape, or were destroyed in the eruption itself.³⁵³

In terms of public sculptural decorations depicting arms, only fragments have survived from Pompeii and Herculaneum. De Caro describes the discovery of stucco fragments in the form

³⁵¹ It could also be there were simply no captured arms displayed in Pompeii at all, either genuine or sculptural, although this seems unlikely considering the number of elite families with residences on the Bay of Naples. Whilst a connection with an elite family would not guarantee that a property would be decorated with captured arms, it is likely that the competitive nature of Roman society would have led to these families displaying their accolades wherever and whenever possible, even in seaside towns like Pompeii and Herculaneum.

³⁵² Suetonius, *Nero*, 38.2.

³⁵³ This theory implies a certain disregard for the rules outlined by Plutarch that indicate *spolia* items should not be removed when they have been displayed, but should be allowed to decay. One does question if such items would have been a priority in the escape from the cities during the eruption. However, we do know from our ancient sources that captured weapons on display could be seized and used during emergencies, for example after the Battle of Cannae - Livy, 22. 57. 10-11.

of shields from the decoration of the Temple of Apollo at Pompeii.³⁵⁴ Danner also describes decorative terracotta fragments that appear to represent shields found in the Doric temple in the triangular forum of Pompeii.³⁵⁵ These finds indicate that motifs of arms were a valid choice for the decoration of public spaces in Pompeii, especially temples, in a manner similar to that described in our literary sources and seen in the sculptural decorations discussed above.

In Paestum some fragments of a large, limestone frieze have been found, a section of which is shown in Figure 38.

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FIGURE 38: FRAGMENT OF FRIEZE FROM PAESTUM

POLITO, 1998, 114.

Polito has suggested the frieze can be dated to around the 2nd Century BC.³⁵⁶ The shield is similar to that depicted on the Sant Omobono reliefs. It is undecorated, but it is possible that it was painted with decorations that no longer survive. Shields without additional sculpted decoration were perhaps still recognisable as *spolia*, even in Paestum, which became a Latin colony in 272 BC.³⁵⁷ Polito has even suggested that the frieze may have been

³⁵⁴ De Caro, 2007, 78.

³⁵⁵ See Danner, 1996.

³⁵⁶ Polito, 1998, 114.

³⁵⁷ Lomas, 1993, 67.

attached to the town hall in the city to commemorate the involvement of the town in the Punic wars as a Roman ally.³⁵⁸ Whilst this is not certain, it appears very likely that motifs of arms and armour, and particularly shields, were understood throughout Italy as icons of military victory and triumph, among other interpretations, by all members of society and in a wide range of Roman and Hellenic contexts.

The evidence for sculptural motifs of arms in Pompeii and Herculaneum remains limited, but this does not indicate that motifs of arms were an inappropriate or unfashionable form of decoration on the Bay of Naples. The inhabitants of both towns used other methods to create the same types of decorations, possibly in addition to sculptural décor or architectural terracotta that no longer survives. Public wall paintings and stucco incorporate arms and armour as well. Seven surviving sections of fresco and one in stucco appear to represent motifs of arms in public structures in Pompeii along with another two examples from Herculaneum. Whilst this is not a great number of examples, one of them was discovered only recently, which indicates that more examples are likely to be uncovered by future excavations.

3.4.1: The Basilica Noniana, Herculaneum.

This fresco was found in Herculaneum during the 2009 excavations of the Basilica Noniana.³⁵⁹ It consisted of a large section of Fourth Style wall painting including the section enlarged in Figure 39.

³⁵⁸ Polito, 1998, 114.

³⁵⁹ Photograph reproduced with permission of the Herculaneum Conservation Project (Camardo/ Esposito), 2015. Details courtesy of Andrew Wallace-Hadrill. Email, 2009. See also Camardo & Esposito, 2013, 247.



FIGURE 39: FRESCO FROM THE BASILICA NONIANA, HERCULANEUM

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF HERCULANEUM CONSERVATION PROJECT, 2015.

The fresco was located on the west wall of the basilica and whilst only one column in the surviving section is decorated with helmets, it is possible that other columns may also been depicted in the same way. A nearby column is decorated with lions' heads, perhaps indicating a Hellenistic theme within the decoration rather than one of captured enemy arms.³⁶⁰ All three helmets appear to fit with Polito's 'C.1' helmet type, which he describes as a helmet that closely parallels the depictions from Pergamum, supporting this Hellenistic interpretation.³⁶¹ The extent to which these helmets represent captured enemy weaponry remains uncertain. We know from our ancient sources that captured weaponry was displayed in public places like basilicas, but the sources tend to describe just shields.³⁶² This does not mean that helmets could not be displayed and it is likely that the display of armour attached to columns in this fashion would still have been understood as captured enemy

³⁶⁰ Lions' heads are a symbol commonly connected with Alexander the Great and Hellenistic rulers in art. For example, the Lion's Head Helmet he is depicted wearing on the Alexander Sarcophagus in the Istanbul Archaeological Museum.

³⁶¹ Polito, 1998, 49.

³⁶² Pliny, *Natural History*, 35, 13.

weaponry in a public setting due to the Roman precedents for attaching *spolia* to columns.³⁶³ The choice to include these helmets in the decoration of the basilica demonstrates that whilst Herculaneum may or may not have had real arms and armour to display, they could still use frescos to represent or infer triumphal ideas, as well as allusions to Hellenistic themes.

3.4.2: The College of the Augustales, Herculaneum.

The painted decoration of the sacellum in the centre of the College of the Augustales includes various items of weaponry. The side walls of the sacellum repeat the same motifs except for a different central panel painting. In each of the archways a pelta or rectangular shield is present, such as can be seen in Figure 40.



FIGURE 40: FRESCO OF A SHIELD, COLLEGE OF THE AUGUSTALES, HERCULANEUM

PHOTOGRAPH BY N. CRACKNELL, 2011.

³⁶³ For example the rostrated columns set up for naval victories - see Pliny, *Natural History*, 7. 60; 34. 20.

In the central perspectival archway a round shield is present, this time painted as though viewed from behind (Figure 41).



FIGURE 41: FRESCO OF A ROUND SHIELD, COLLEGE OF THE AUGUSTALES, HERCULANEUM.

PHOTOGRAPH BY N. CRACKNELL, 2011.

Many frescos depicting round shields show them decorated with ribbons, but the purpose of these ribbons appears to be suggested at in Figure 41. It seems that the ribbons are the method by which the shield is attached to the architecture on which it is displayed. The ribbons are looped through the grip on the rear of the shield before being tied onto a section of architrave. This detail suggests there is a level of realism to these depictions of shields that has previously been overlooked. The artist is attempting to portray how the items are attached to the perspectival architecture as though they were real. This emphasises the realism of the depiction of these weapons and could have influenced the Roman observers to interpret them as representing *spolia* items, which were displayed in the same way on the public buildings around them.

The rear wall of the sacellum also includes shields as part of its decoration, as can be seen in Figure 42.



FIGURE 42: REAR WALL OF THE SACELLUM, COLLEGE OF THE AUGUSTALES, HERCULANEUM

PHOTOGRAPH BY N. CRACKNELL, 2011.

In the upper zone of the decoration in the centre of the wall are two round, bronze shields. These appear to be used to hold a curtain or awning up above the recessed archway in the wall. There is no sign of central decoration to the shields, suggesting that these are meant to represent a basic, hoplite-type shield.³⁶⁴ A round shield is also depicted in the centre of the recessed archway at the very top of the decoration (Figure 43).

³⁶⁴ Polito, 1998, 39.



FIGURE 43: FRESCO OF ROUND PORTRAIT SHIELD, COLLEGE OF THE AUGUSTALES, HERCULANEUM.

PHOTOGRAPH BY N. CRACKNELL, 2011.

This shield is a portrait shield, the neck and chin of a figure being visible in the centre of the shield. It is unclear if this is a mythological figure or not, so it is very difficult to securely identify the shield as an item of captured enemy armour. However, the ribbons that hang below the shield suspend a laurel wreath, which could indicate a connection with victory of some kind. The presence of so many different shields within the decorative scheme indicates that they were clearly an acceptable item to display in public in Herculaneum and were obviously highly appropriate for display in the sacellum of the College of the Augustales. The armour may not relate to any particular victory, connecting instead with the tradition of the *clipeus virtutis* and the moral integrity of Augustus as a leader and deity. However, as shields are among the items dedicated in temples they cannot be ruled out as items of captured weaponry. Either way, the shields add a military feel to the decoration that could allude to victory and conquest, as well as moral and sacred values.

3.4.3: The Suburban Baths, Pompeii.

The decoration of room 9, a small frigidarium, in the Suburban Baths of Pompeii includes a variety of maritime subjects. Clarke describes how they include ‘fish and mythical sea creatures as well as warships of the Roman navy in combat.’³⁶⁵ Whilst it is impossible to determine what is going on in the naval battles due to damage to the frescos, some sections appear to present Nilotic landscapes. The presence of hippopotami and other Egyptian animals, as well as Egyptian temples, indicates that these frescos are most likely responding to victory at Actium. The room also includes the representation of a round, bronze shield, not unlike those we have already seen decorating the College of the Augustales in Herculaneum (Figure 44). At first, the shield seems unusual, but when placed in the context of the rest of the decoration with its images of naval battles it seems to act as a signifier or symbol of the presence of military imagery in the decorative scheme as a whole.



FIGURE 44: FRESCO OF A SHIELD, THE SUBURBAN BATHS, POMPEII

PHOTOGRAPH BY N. CRACKNELL, 2011.

³⁶⁵ Clarke, 2007, 108.

Even in public baths, a place of leisure away from the sphere of war, the depiction of weaponry appears to have been present in decorative schemes as an allusion to victory and conquest.

3.4.4: The Stabian Baths, Pompeii.

Whilst the depictions of shields in the suburban baths are rendered in fresco, the motifs of arms found in the Stabian baths are rendered in stucco. They decorate a series of hexagonal coffers forming part of the ceiling in the male apodyterium of the baths. Just one coffer of the many that survive is depicted in Figure 45.

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FIGURE 45: STUCCO COFFER CONTAINING ARMS, STABIAN BATHS, POMPEII

PITTURE E MOSAICI, VOL. 6, 196-199, FIG 95.

The decorations are believed to be prior to 80 BC although it is possible that coffers could have been added later after the Sullan veteran colony was founded in Pompeii.³⁶⁶ The arms presented in the coffer above highlight the incredible detail of these motifs; the bosses on the round shield and decorations on the hexagonal shields are incised and moulded and the pelta shield is decorated with a carefully moulded scorpion. There are many other combinations of arms and armour in coffers throughout the ceiling decoration in

³⁶⁶ Yegül in DeRose Evans, 2013, 28.

combination with depictions of maenads, satyrs and cupids.³⁶⁷ The coffers demonstrate that not only were motifs of arms an acceptable or desirable choice for wall paintings in public spaces, they were also worth including in the creation of detailed and expensive stucco decorations. The room in which they are found is traditionally identified as the male apodyterium, suggesting that depictions of arms could also assist in creating a sense of masculinity or *virtus* by their associations with victory in combat. The detail suggests the observer was intended to recognise the ethnicity of the weaponry on display, in the same way that they would interpret similar motifs on coins. Not only are motifs of arms and armour included in the public decoration of Pompeii, they also offer up multi-faceted interpretations, in a way similar to that seen in the literary sources and numismatic evidence.

3.4.5: The Macellum, Pompeii.

The decoration of the Macellum in Pompeii presents a series of perspectival architectural elements interspersed with panel paintings and other figural motifs. It is possible to see three almost entirely different approaches to the decorative scheme based upon the height of the decoration of the wall. Figure 46 is a photograph of the majority of the wall with both the upper and middle zones of the decoration visible:

³⁶⁷ *Pitture e Mosaici*, Vol.6, 196.



FIGURE 46: FRESCO DECORATION FROM THE MACELLUM, POMPEII

PHOTOGRAPH BY N. CRACKNELL, 2007

The upper zone decoration consists of a series of panel paintings depicting food items, such as bread or fruit, and decorative images of either muses or goddesses between them. These images, found in a market, have a practical value by illustrating items available to buy. Their position high on the wall means they would be visible over busy crowds and may have even acted as an early form of advertising. They instruct the observer on what to expect in their immediate, real-life surroundings and work to bring the painted scheme into harmony with their commercial environment. The panel paintings here, as well as being decorative, have a function.

In contrast, the lowest zone of the painting acts as generic 'filler' material. Consisting of a series of small coloured panels with some vegetal motifs, the artist seems aware that with

the presence of crowds, animals, produce and stalls in the space, there will be very little opportunity for observers to view these lower areas of the design.³⁶⁸

The middle zone of the decoration is built around a series of perspectival architectural structures. In the surviving section at least three pairs of columns, topped with decorative pediments or archways are incorporated into the scheme. Each one acts as a *Durchblick* or window-like structure onto a cityscape beyond the painted architecture. In one of these windows, created above the top of a painted archway and holding the image of a Victory in a biga we find an incredibly detailed depiction of weaponry on display (Figures 47 & 48).³⁶⁹

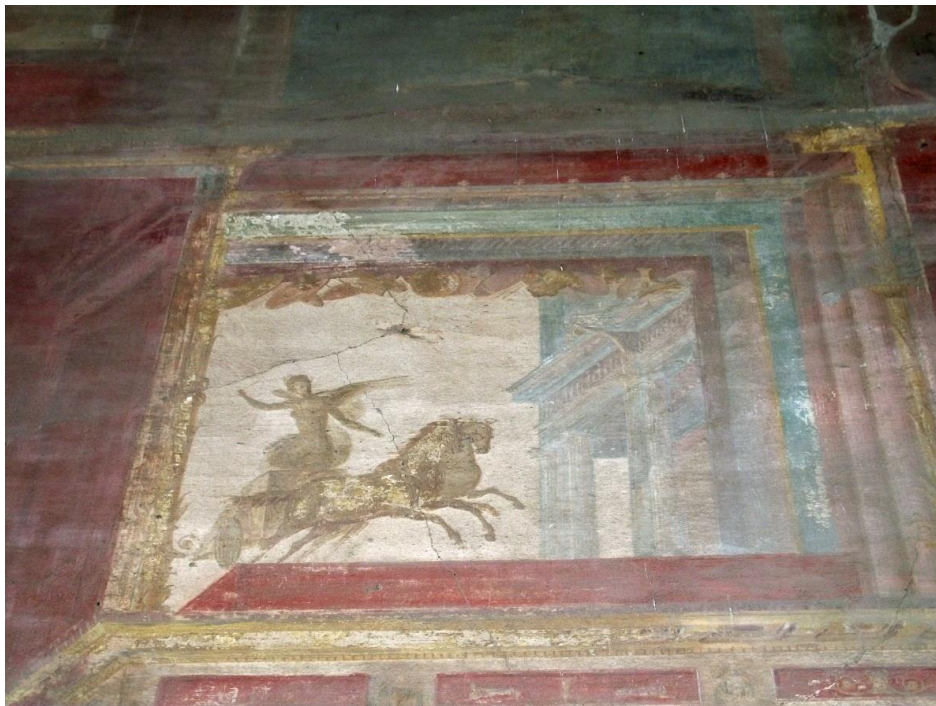


FIGURE 47: FRESCO DEPICTING ARMS AND GODDESS VICTORIA, MACELLUM, POMPEII

PHOTOGRAPH BY N. CRACKNELL, 2011.

³⁶⁸ Even today a clear view of the lower zone decoration is blocked by the presence of casts in display cases and the tour groups that gather around them. The other zones of the decoration, seen in the photograph, begin at around head height, indicating they are designed to be seen above the level of the market day crowds, even if partially blocked by the structures of any temporary stalls.

³⁶⁹ For the concept of *Durchblick* see Drerup, 1959.

For the purposes of identification, an enlargement of these weaponry is seen in Figure 48.



FIGURE 48: DETAIL OF A FRESCO DEPICTING ARMS AND ARMOUR, MACELLUM, POMPEII

PHOTOGRAPH BY N. CRACKNELL, 2011.

The fresco includes at least 8 oval shields, several sets of spears and a large round shield. Two helmets, one of which appears to have the protuberance at the top that is typical of Phrygian helmets, also form part of the collection of arms along with a cuirass without *pteryges* that is similar to examples depicted on the monuments at Pergamum. A rostrum appears to be depicted on the right, indicating the collection of weapons could connect with a naval victory as spoils of war. The items are painted as though attached to a perspectival soffit structure that forms part of the architecture in the fresco. The architecture itself appears to attempt to copy that of public buildings, with large columns and a *dürchblick* to a city-scape. It does not seem unreasonable to suggest, therefore, that the artist has based this depiction on a real display of arms and armour attached to buildings in this fashion, either in Pompeii or in Rome itself. As we have seen in the literary descriptions of displays of captured weaponry, the ‘mixed’ display of arms and armour is something that was familiar from the Triumphal procession and was a likely side-effect of the display of many offerings of weaponry on public buildings over the years. Domestic depictions of arms, it seems could be inspired by the dedication of real weaponry, sculptural decorations and even fresco

depictions of arms from public buildings that are themselves an allusion to the display of real weaponry.

3.4.6: The Schola Armaturarum and the Via dell'Abbondanza, Pompeii.

In Pompeii, the most notable place in which captured arms and armour were displayed in painted public decoration was on the Schola Armaturarum (III, 63 6). Unfortunately this structure collapsed in November 2010, so assessment of its decoration must be made from pre-existing photographs. On its initial excavation Spinazzola referred to the building as having an 'exclusively military character' that infers it is a 'room for weapons.'³⁷⁰ He suggests that we can 'exclude the identification with a gladiatorial armamentarium' due to the 'complete absence of gladiatorial weaponry in the frescos of trophies on the exterior.'³⁷¹ However, he contradicts himself later in his description by saying that the decorations 'might indicate some relationship that this room also had with weapons of the gladiatorial games,' based upon the depiction of victories carrying Thracian arms.³⁷² Jacobelli prefers this gladiatorial interpretation, reasserting that the weapons carried by the painted victories represent a link with gladiatorial weaponry, rather than enemy arms and armour.³⁷³ Both identifications remain viable. The most important decoration, however, was that originally found on the front of the building. Reconstructions illustrate a pair of large trophies painted on either side of the entrance to the building. These frescos are now lost, but some original photographs remain and along with Spinazzola's descriptions it is possible to determine a significant amount of detail (Figure 49).

³⁷⁰ Spinazzola, 1916, 444.

³⁷¹ Spinazzola, 1916, 445.

³⁷² Spinazzola, 1916, 446.

³⁷³ Jacobelli, 2003, 68.

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FIGURE 49: DETAIL OF A TROPHY FROM THE EXTERIOR OF THE SCHOLA ARMATURARUM, POMPEII

PITTURE E MOSAICI, VOL. 3, 394.

Spinazzola describes this trophy as a mixture of 'Germanic trophies' and items belonging to 'Hellenistic civilizations.'³⁷⁴ Spinazzola also describes how the weaponry and items collected at the foot of this *tropaion*, and those which form the surviving section of decoration from the right hand pillar, belong to Gallic and northern barbarian cultures.³⁷⁵ He identifies these based upon the 'hexagonal shield' type, which he indicates is a typical form of Gallic weaponry.³⁷⁶ Whilst the use of this building is still debated by scholars, it is clearly a public building, the wide entrance way allowing easy access into the building from the street. The decoration of the exterior of this building with enemy arms and armour, therefore, must be significant. This importance is supported by the presence of dedicatory slogans below the trophies suggesting a connection with the Popidii family, who had long been established in positions of power in Pompeii.³⁷⁷ The fact that the election slogans and accompanying graffiti do not cover the paintings supports the suggestion of their importance, but they

³⁷⁴ Spinazzola, 1916, 435.

³⁷⁵ Spinazzola, 1916, 434-435.

³⁷⁶ Spinazzola, 1916, 434.

³⁷⁷ CIL IV 7656 and CIL IV 7657 in particular emphasise the Popidii family as 'good men' and that one member of the family should be elected as aedile.

were not sacrosanct. Other graffiti found nearby, indicates that whilst the paintings may have been important, this did not bar the presence of more profane slogans.³⁷⁸

Spinazzola, among others, has identified the paintings as copies of genuine trophies on display in the Forum of Augustus in Rome and they are an obvious example of how imagery of captured arms and armour can be used to make a structure appear imposing and important in public life. They must have been understood by both inhabitants and visitors as symbol of victory and triumph. This is confirmed by the presence of painted depictions of the goddess Victoria inside the building, also carrying weapons.³⁷⁹ Whilst a gladiatorial interpretation has been suggested, it seems strange that the exterior of the building would be decorated in a manner consistent with the celebration of military victory, rather than images of gladiatorial combat. We would also expect, at this later date near 79 AD, to see specific arms and armour depicted that would be immediately apparent as gladiatorial, for instance the enclosed helmet of the *murmillo* or the trident of the *retiarius*. I would venture to suggest that based upon the mixture of weaponry depicted, the obvious attempts to connect the armaments with both land and sea campaigns through the depiction of anchors, rudders and wagons and also the size and presence of the trophies on the exterior of the building, that the *Schola Armaturarum* was connected with military activity or commemoration in Pompeii. It seems that motifs of arms and armour and their connection with military victory was something that was understood in Pompeii as well as in Rome.

The *Schola Armaturarum* is located on the *Via dell'Abbondanza*, one of the largest streets in Pompeii, which holds a number of shops and commercial premises. Whether or not they are

³⁷⁸ 'Martialis fellas Proculum' CIL IV 8841.

³⁷⁹ Garcia y Garcia, 2006, 53-54. See photographs for details. Spinazzola, 1916, 439-444.

inspired by the decorations on the exterior of the Schola Armaturarum, several other buildings along this street are decorated with imagery that appears to connect with a theme of military victory. The first of these is a fresco depicting a shield on the front of a shop counter or bar that faces onto the street at I.8.1 (Figure 50).



FIGURE 50: FRESCO DECORATION OF A BAR ON THE VIA DELL'ABBONDANZA, POMPEII

PHOTOGRAPH BY N. CRACKNELL, 2011.

The shield is hoplite style and decorated with white ribbons. It is surrounded by other items that appear to connect with Bacchic imagery; chalices and vines are painted as though they rest upon the ground. Such items and imagery seems appropriate for the decoration of a main-street bar. The presence of the shield, however, is unusual. There is very little chance that real captured arms would be displayed in a bar, but the fresco could be attempting to allude to motifs of arms or even real arms found on the same street.

The nearby shop and House of Verecundus (IX, 7, 5-7) is decorated with an image of Venus Pompeiana riding in a triumphal quadriga pulled by elephants, something that was seen in

triumphal processions after Pompey first displayed the creatures in his own triumph.³⁸⁰ The goddess is depicted holding a rostrum. This combination of a triumphal Venus Pompeiana, shields and tropaion style trophies along the Via dell'Abbondanza, combined with the evidence from the decoration of nearby House of the Cryptoporticus and House of Paquius Proculus, does indicate that there may have been a fashion for decoration depicting weaponry and triumph in this area at this time, or could suggest that the owners of these properties are responding to a particular triumph or collection of weapons that has inspired the inclusion of these images.³⁸¹ It seems likely that domestic decorations in Pompeii were likely to be inspired by local depictions of arms in public buildings and spaces as well as those found in Rome.

3.4.7: Quadriporticus of the Theatre, Pompeii.

A fresco of arms and armour that definitively links with gladiatorial weaponry was found in the quadriporticus of the theatres at Pompeii. According to Jacobelli, the quadriporticus was being used as a *ludus* by the time of the destruction of Pompeii.³⁸² Various items of gladiatorial weaponry were actually found in the quadriporticus, confirming its use as a residential and training area for the gladiators at this time.³⁸³ The location of the painted frieze of arms in this area would immediately suggest that the weapons depicted within it

³⁸⁰ Clarke, 2003, 105-107. The quadriga was used by generals in the triumphal procession and the use of this particular type of chariot seems to suggest that the goddess is herself depicted at a moment of victory. Manders indicates in his assessment of numismatic material that 'a quadriga symbolizes victory anyway,' indicating that while quadrigae may have been used on other state occasions, their most obvious use is during the triumphal procession. Manders, 2012, 82, f.86.

³⁸¹ For discussion of the decoration of these houses see Chapter 4 of this thesis.

³⁸² Jacobelli, 2003, 67.

³⁸³ Jacobelli, 2003, 66-67.

were gladiatorial or had links to the games. This is confirmed, however, by the types of arms that are depicted in Figure 51.

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FIGURE 51: DRAWING OF A FRESCO FROM THE QUADRIPORTICUS OF THE THEATRE, POMPEII

JACOBELLI, 2003, 67, FIG.55

There is a shoulder guard and trident used by the Retiarius type, the curved, rectangular shields used by the Murmillo, a sharply curved blade used by the Thraex type and several helmets that present the fully closed face guards we would expect for gladiatorial armour.³⁸⁴ One helmet even has perforated 'eye-holes' in the visor, a type associated with gladiatorial helmets rather than items of war booty.³⁸⁵ There can be no doubt that the weaponry is gladiatorial. When looking to identify arms and armour in the examples collected in the evidence catalogue, the presence of these items, particularly the fully closed helmets and the arms of the Retiarius, will be a very good indication that the arms depicted are gladiatorial. However, it will also be important to remember that this depiction of arms from the quadriporticus is a Fourth Style fresco, so earlier representations of arms and armour may depict an earlier type of gladiatorial weaponry that has not developed the fully

³⁸⁴ Junkelmann, 2000b, 124-126 (retiarius); 110-111 (murmillo); 119-120 (thraex).

³⁸⁵ Polito, 1998, 51. 'L' type helmet.

enclosed helmets seen in the quadriporticus fresco.³⁸⁶ This fresco will be discussed further in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

3.4.8: The Amphitheatre, Pompeii

Another example of how public motifs of arms can depict gladiatorial combats and weaponry is found in the amphitheatre itself. These paintings depicted the scenes of individual gladiatorial combats as well as animal hunts. They also included a series of panels where individual items of weaponry, usually shields, are resting against herms (Figure 52).

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FIGURE 52: DRAWING OF FRESCO DECORATION FROM THE AMPHITHEATRE, POMPEII

JACOBELLI, 2003, 61. FIG.51

The semi-cylindrical *scutum* and an oval shield are depicted.³⁸⁷ These weapons are clearly meant to be gladiatorial. This can be extrapolated from both their location, within the amphitheatre in Pompeii, and their decorative context alongside depictions of animal hunts and gladiatorial battles, in spite of the depictions of the goddess Victoria on top of a Globe, which are more often associated with military victory. However, had this frieze not been located within the amphitheatre it would still have been possible to present a link with the games due to the panel paintings depicting scenes from the arena. This demonstrates the vital importance of decorative context in understanding how the ancient observer would be

³⁸⁶ Jacobelli, 2003, 66. For the general development of gladiatorial weaponry, see Junkelmann, 2000.

³⁸⁷ For other sections, see Jacobelli, 2003, 58-61.

led to interpret motifs of arms and armour. Gladiatorial allusions will be dealt with in more detail in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

3.4.9: Moregine

Excavations taking place just outside Pompeii revealed a property that had three luxuriously decorated triclinia and a baths complex. It has been suggested that these rooms belonged to a *tabernae diversoriae*, or staging-post, on the Campanian coast used by travellers.³⁸⁸ It is for this reason that I include the decorations with the discussion of public buildings and not domestic space. Recent discussions of the frescos by Mastroroberto have hinted at a link between the decoration of these rooms and the Emperor Nero himself.³⁸⁹ Studying photographs of the frescos has revealed that triclinia A and C from the site include motifs of arms in their decoration. Triclinium A includes a series of motifs of arms that show shields hung from perspectival architectural structures in pairs. Helmets are also attached to the perspectival soffits as shown in Figure 53.

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FIGURE 53: FRESCO DECORATION FROM TRICLINIUM A, MOREGINE

GUZZO, 2003, 173.

The crossed shields are painted to appear as though they are real, at the boundary between the Roman observer in the triclinium and the perspectival space beyond. The depiction of

³⁸⁸ Guzzo, 2003, 169.

³⁸⁹ See Guzzo & Mastroroberto, 2002.

the helmet is equally beautiful, the feather decorating the top of the helmet, painted in white to stand out against the silver. Groups of arms displayed in the same way, although not necessarily the same types of arms, are found on all three of the surviving walls from triclinium A. If Mastroroberto is right, then it appears that motifs of arms remained popular in decorations right through to the reign of Nero.

A similar display of arms and armour hanging from the perspectival soffits is found in the decoration of triclinium C at Moregine. In this case their impact is amplified by the inclusion of large figures of the goddess Victoria, carrying a tripod on one wall and a helmet, shield and spear on another.³⁹⁰ The decoration of Triclinium B is unfortunately badly damaged, making the identification of motifs of arms more difficult. The presence of beautifully painted motifs of arms in this later period shows that they had remained an appropriate and desirable image in public decorative schemes. The grandeur of this complex indicates its probable use by those of high social status, reiterating the connection of arms with personal *imperium* also seen in coins and the link between social status and the display of real weaponry described in our literary sources, even in public spaces.

The exploration of the painted and stucco decorations from public buildings on the Bay of Naples has revealed some surprising results. Whilst the motifs of arms included in these decorations have the capacity to be interpreted as captured enemy weaponry, they are also open to much wider interpretations. Most of the decorations appear to be striving to allude to public spaces. Motifs of arms and armour are included to add a sense of realism to the public architecture, perhaps attempting to make it more like the architecture in Rome itself,

³⁹⁰ Guzzo, 2003, 176.

which we know from our literary sources was extensively decorated with real weaponry. Perhaps most surprising is the possibility of gladiatorial interpretations for motifs of arms, particularly in Pompeii. The depiction of motifs of arms and armour are almost traditionally associated with captured enemy weaponry in modern scholarship, so the ability to interpret motifs of arms as gladiatorial, while not new, obviously requires re-addressing in light of the evidence I have collected during my research.

3.5: Conclusions

From the examination of the numismatic record, the analysis of the sculptural material and exploration of painted motifs of arms in public decoration in this chapter it is possible to gain some idea of how motifs of arms developed and were used in the Roman public sphere and to predict the possible impact they may have on domestic representations. Taking their impetus from Greek models the sculptural and pictorial motifs of arms do appear to develop in parallel with Roman practices for commemorating victory. Polito claims that the motifs must have had ‘high-level urban models’ to explain their popularity, but it is entirely possible that these precedents were also numismatic or from other smaller arts.³⁹¹ The impact of the ‘lure of Hellenism’ on depictions of arms in the domestic sphere must be considered in light of these Greek precedents for motifs of arms and the display of genuine weaponry.³⁹² Previous research into the decoration of the Roman domestic sphere has already revealed the tremendous impact that Greek art and culture had on Roman domestic decorations and the presence of depictions of weaponry must be considered as a

³⁹¹ Polito, 2012.

³⁹² Gruen, 1992, 1.

component in creating the feel of these desirable Hellenistic spaces as well as in alluding to Roman public spaces.

The style of the motifs in this period, both the depiction of single items like round shields and groups of mixed arms in piles, is particularly interesting and it will be important to see if the domestic decorations use the same styles. The problem of interpreting representations of weaponry when they are included in decorative schemes that aim to replicate public buildings remains conspicuous. As has been suggested by Polito's recent works, there is no direct transition from real weaponry to sculptural and pictorial depictions of weaponry in the public sphere.³⁹³ To suggest as such removes the opportunity to discuss the influence of other factors such as Greek decorative precedents and fashions. It seems likely that even many years after such structures have been destroyed, the decoration of their palaces and the appropriation of Hellenistic motifs and styles remains a popular choice in Roman decorations. The analysis of fresco and stucco decorations from public places in Pompeii and Herculaneum has also revealed that motifs of arms can refer to gladiatorial combats as well as military ones. Combined with my findings from assessing the ancient literary accounts and their attitudes to the public and private display of captured weaponry, it appears that the domestic depictions of arms and armour will be likely to fall into one of the following categories of interpretation:

- An allusion to the display of captured enemy weaponry around the threshold of the Roman home, inferred by the decorative context of the motifs.

³⁹³ Polito, 2011, 260.

- An allusion to non-military forms of dedication for other virtues, for example the *clipeus virtutis* of Augustus, the *clipeatae imagines* and the subject of private collections.
- An allusion to the display of captured enemy weaponry in Roman public space. This can be in the decoration of public buildings with real or sculptural arms and armour and also in the decoration of horti, porticos, theatres and even temples and is inferred by the decorative context of the motifs.
- An allusion to the presence of weaponry in Hellenistic palace decoration or Hellenistic public building decoration inferred by decorative context. Weaponry could also be included as an allusion to Hellenistic culture in general, including the Trojan wars and its heroes.
- A reference to the arms and armour of different gladiatorial types.

As already suggested, the lack of any visual indication of whether or not a weapon is part of a private collection or a non-military dedication will make it highly unlikely that this thesis will be able to specifically identify any motifs that belong in this category. Whilst minimal attention can be given to this category due to these difficulties, it cannot be dismissed entirely. These difficulties extend to defining how to identify any of these themes from visual clues in domestic decoration. As we have seen in the examination of the sculptural decorations, it is very difficult to discern much difference between the depiction of captured weaponry on Greek buildings and the depiction of arms and armour on Roman buildings. The cultural interaction between Rome, Greece and other Hellenistic states like Egypt means that it is often difficult to separate out an allusion to a 'Hellenistic' space from the

allusion to a Roman space in Roman domestic decoration. Far from fitting within one of these categories, each depiction of weaponry has the capacity to fit with some or even all of these possible interpretations. The interpretation of the depictions of arms included in the accompanying catalogue and the difficulties associated with this are the subject of the next chapter of this thesis.

Chapter 4: ‘Ponuntur Clipei’

The evidence for depictions of arms and armour in Roman domestic decoration

In light of the varied interpretations for motifs of arms identified in Chapters 1, 2 and 3 of this thesis, this chapter now addresses the decoration of the Roman domestic sphere. In order to assess them in light of the interpretations extrapolated from the public decorations and literary evidence, it will be useful to outline the development and interpretation of Roman domestic decorations in general.

Mau’s Four Pompeian Styles, originally developed in 1882, have been subject to various revisions, yet remain valuable to current studies on Roman domestic decoration.³⁹⁴ By organising material chronologically it is possible to gain some impression of how and when motifs of arms were developed in Roman domestic decoration. By highlighting the use of motifs of arms and armour within each Style, it could be possible to suggest how far motifs of armour held especial value in decorations, or if they were a ubiquitous part of fashionable decorations. For the purposes of this study, the chronological Style boundaries are given as follows:

First Style: c.200 BC – c.60 BC.

Second Style: c.60 BC – c.20 BC.

³⁹⁴ Mau, 1882; Beyen 1951 & 1960.

Third Style: c.20 BC – c.20 AD.

Fourth Style: c.20 AD – c.79 AD and beyond.

These approximate dates are based upon Beyen's revisions to Mau's original stylistic divides and more recent usage of the Styles by Andrew Wallace-Hadrill and the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York.³⁹⁵

The chronological study of wall painting and the development of Mau's Styles highlights the impact of the culture of the wider Mediterranean, and particularly Hellenistic culture, on Roman art.³⁹⁶ Particularly pertinent to the discussion of Roman art has been the idea of the 'lure of Hellenism.'³⁹⁷ The desirability of Greek art is thought to be a key influence on the design and decoration of the Roman domus. Rutledge confirms that 'aspiring to own or possess Greek cultural objects could signify one's erudition, cultural sophistication, or political and military domination of a society believed more advanced in the areas of art, science and literature.'³⁹⁸ Whilst an influence is undeniable it does not necessarily precipitate a decline in the 'Roman-ness' of the art in Roman houses. Newer terms such as 'acculturation' have attempted to assuage the suggestion of dominance of one culture over another, with mixed results.³⁹⁹ I would venture that both Roman and Greek influence is

³⁹⁵ Wallace-Hadrill, 1994, 160; Anderson, 1987/1988, 3-8. It is important to point out that there is a great deal of variation in the dating for each of these styles and that it is the progression from one style to another throughout this period, often with extensive overlap in the use of styles, that is of most use to this study. Dates are included for ease of reference, but should be considered approximate and as guidance only. Wallace-Hadrill's approach is perhaps the best explanation of this open approach, Wallace-Hadrill, 1994, 160.

³⁹⁶ For a full description of the cultural components and geographical development in this period see Pollitt, 1986, Chapter 1. For the purposes of this study, the term 'Hellenistic' is meant to imply the culture, art, language and people of Greece and the wider empire created by Alexander the Great and divided into constituent kingdoms, including Macedonia and Ptolemaic Egypt, after his death. See: Pollitt, 1986, 150.

³⁹⁷ Gruen, 1992, 1.

³⁹⁸ Rutledge, 2012, 33.

³⁹⁹ Wallace-Hadrill, 2008, 10-11.

inherent in the decoration of the Roman home and that the decorations are not necessarily in competition for supremacy, one over the other, but are both chosen by the patron to reflect different aspects of his character, social role, education or fancy. It seems equally likely that the architectural decorations and schemes can allude to both Hellenistic and Roman public spaces, perhaps both at the same time.

In order to assess how these different types of motifs may have increased or decreased in popularity throughout the chronological scope of this study (100 BC-100 AD), the images must be grouped loosely according to date. This is done by matching the wider decorative context of the motifs of arms and armour to one of Mau's Four Styles, as far as it is possible to achieve this. This approach has limitations. Due to the nature of the archaeological record, the number of surviving frescos from the Fourth Pompeian Style is likely to be far higher than those of the earlier styles, much of Pompeii being in the process of reconstruction after the earthquake of 62 AD and the surviving buildings in Rome often dating to after the fire in 64 AD. At the time of the eruption of Vesuvius in 79 AD, some of the First and Second style decorations were nearly 100 years old and inevitably rarer than more recent Fourth Style decorations. Any choice to preserve these earlier paintings is illuminating, for it reveals that these much earlier images may have been prized or valued, either for their quality or subject matter. It will be important to consider these particular issues in assessing the material collected in the accompanying catalogue.

The First Pompeian Style is generally believed to have developed from Greek decorations.⁴⁰⁰

The Style is believed to allude to the decoration of early monumental Greek buildings with its replication of large masonry blocks.⁴⁰¹ Allusions to Hellenistic contexts, however, also remain a possibility in later Styles. 'Allusion' is the focal point of a key change in approaching Roman painting encapsulated in the work of Wallace-Hadrill. Roman domestic decoration was commonly believed to be a form of 'mimesis,' replicating public spaces exactly. However, Wallace-Hadrill has suggested that 'allusion' more appropriately describes the styles of architecture, motif and layout borrowed from the decoration and architecture of Greek and Roman public spaces. This is what allows Roman domestic decoration to assist in the creation and maintenance of social standing in the Roman home.⁴⁰² The role of weaponry motifs in this 'allusion,' and what they allude to, is the subject of this chapter.

Ling is one scholar providing an explicit approach to interpreting weaponry in domestic decorations, although it is important to point out that they are not the focus of his analysis. Referring mainly to depictions of shields 'suspended' from perspectival architecture, Ling identifies fresco representations of weaponry as 'usual filling motifs' of the Fourth Style in particular and that they were included because they were 'obviously decorative subjects.'⁴⁰³ This would indicate we should understand the majority of the examples in the accompanying catalogue as part of a decorative fashion; a stock motif rather than a conscious choice to allude to, or represent, spoils of war. He does suggest that shields could be interpreted in other ways, for instance 'as votive offerings, household ornaments or the

⁴⁰⁰ Ling, 1991, 12. Ling suggests that it was 'the Italian version of a style current throughout the Hellenistic period and throughout the areas under Greek influence.' Ling, 1991, 12.

⁴⁰¹ Pappalardo, 2009, 8-10.

⁴⁰² Wallace-Hadrill, 1994, 17-28.

⁴⁰³ Ling, 1991, 97 and 48 respectively.

like,' but gives no evidence to support how these interpretations could be drawn, or their likelihood.⁴⁰⁴ Whilst Ling's remarks are useful in drawing attention to arms and armour as a decorative motif in Roman art, his approach is only cursory. His referral to motifs as being 'common coin,' particularly in early Roman decorations, makes no attempt to analyse varying types of depictions and differences between these 'usual' motifs and the Second Style depictions of large Macedonian shields in the decoration of the Villa at Oplontis.⁴⁰⁵ It is clear from Ling's remarks that a more detailed analysis of the motifs of arms and armour is required to fully appreciate an ancient observer's interpretation.

Polito has also addressed the presence of motifs of arms in Roman domestic decoration.⁴⁰⁶ In contrast with Ling's diffuse approach to the depictions of weaponry as stock motifs, Polito takes a narrower approach, examining specific motifs in domestic space. He focuses on describing two examples of decoration from Pompeii: a fresco from the Villa of the Mysteries (67/ 67A) and the House of the Trojan Shrine (5). He indicates these may have been developed from long-lost Hellenistic paintings, but makes no real attempt to interpret them or their role in the wider decorative scheme.⁴⁰⁷ Polito's discussion, unlike Ling's, also focuses upon the stucco and mosaic depictions of arms and armour. He suggests the stucco decorations found in the House of the Cryptoporticus in Pompeii (1-1D), the House of Augustus on the Palatine (83, 84, 85-85D), and the so-called villa of Galba at Frascati (104), could have been inspired by the decoration of lost Republican monuments, although this is questionable in light of Welch's recent discussion of Republican architecture and particularly

⁴⁰⁴ Ling, 1991, 27.

⁴⁰⁵ Ling, 1991, 27.

⁴⁰⁶ Polito, 1998.

⁴⁰⁷ Polito, 1998, 128.

triumphal arches, which she believes were not decorated with relief sculpture or statuary.⁴⁰⁸

Finally Polito outlines a small selection of mosaic decorations from a villa on the Via degli Annibaldi in Rome (86) and the villa of the Volusii Saturnini at Lucus Feroniae (112/112A).

Regarding the role of such motifs of arms and armour Polito, like most other scholars, leans towards interpreting the motifs as an allusion to the captured enemy arms and armour displayed on or inside the Roman home.⁴⁰⁹ He also suggests that the motifs are a reference to the traditional display of such weaponry in the 'atrium or tablinum,' a trope that the examination of the literary evidence earlier in this thesis has already proven to be idealised and exaggerated, if not misguided.⁴¹⁰ Polito's overall assessment of the inclusion of the motifs is that they could only have been inspired by 'Hellenistic' precedents, in spite of his belief of their connection with *spolia*. In light of these two very different and partial approaches to motifs of arms and armour, it seems obvious that a more holistic approach, encompassing types of depiction, chronology and in particular a discussion of how they were understood in antiquity, is much needed.

4.1: Typology

In order to facilitate discussion of the motifs included in the accompanying catalogue they are organised into a typology. Ling has identified that there are depictions of 'suspended' shields as well as larger motifs of shields depicted as though flat on the wall at the Villa of

⁴⁰⁸ Polito, 1998, 128; Welch, 2010, 506.

⁴⁰⁹ Polito, 1998, 132.

⁴¹⁰ Polito, 1998, 132.

the Poppaei at Oplontis.⁴¹¹ Organising the motifs according to the manner or configuration in which they are depicted will be an enlightening exercise in itself. It will highlight the various ways in which motifs of arms and armour could be incorporated into the decoration of the Roman home and how they related to the types of motifs of arms seen in public decorations in Chapter 3 of this thesis. This organisation of the evidence will also allow the application of chronology, in the form of Mau's Four Styles, allowing analysis of the development of particular motifs and if any forms of display were more popular in some Styles and periods than in others. The typology that I have devised, based upon the evidence I have collected and Ling's stylistic approach, is divided into nine different sections that are outlined below.

Type 1: Bands of arms

This type consists of bands of stucco and fresco decoration that include the depiction of multiple items of arms and armour. The arms can be of various types, always in large numbers and depicted in close proximity to one another. Often these depictions create the impression of the weaponry being displayed in piles of arms, such as the real weaponry seen in the Roman triumphal procession and the motifs of arms in the decoration of the sanctuary of Athena at Pergamum explored in the previous chapter. See Figure 54.

⁴¹¹ Ling, 1991, 74-75.



FIGURE 54: BAND OF ARMS FROM THE VILLA OF THE MYSTERIES, POMPEII.

PHOTOGRAPH BY N. CRACKNELL, 2012.

Type 2: Weapons attached flat to a wall

This type collates depictions of weaponry where the items are shown as though attached to a flat wall surface. These arms may be depicted as though attached to the real wall or to perspectival wall surfaces. The weapon or armour can be depicted from any angle. Multiple weapons can be depicted in the same space, but they do not overlap each other in the way that the items collected in Type 1 do. They appear more like the depictions of items on the Sant Omobono monument rather than those from Pergamum.⁴¹² See Figure 55.

⁴¹² See Chapter 3 of this thesis.



FIGURE 55: SHIELD FLAT ON WALL, HOUSE OF THE CENTINEL POMPEII

PHOTOGRAPH BY N. CRACKNELL, 2011.

Type 3: Weaponry suspended from perspectival architecture

This category identifies with Ling's discussion of shields. It is not restricted to the discussion of shields, although they form the majority of motifs within this category. The weaponry is depicted hanging from a section of architecture, either real or perspectival. The items often appear to be suspended over a vista or area of *durchblick* in the decorative scheme.⁴¹³ See Figure 56. This category requires a further sub-division to accommodate the range of sizes of these motifs, the smaller round shield motifs being collected into Type 3a. See Figure 57.

⁴¹³ Ling, 1991, 74-75. The term was originally applied by German art historians but is now in common use as a way of describing the window-like gaps in Roman fresco decorations that show vistas of landscape or architecture.

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FIGURE 56: **TYPE 3**: LARGE SUSPENDED SHIELD FROM BOSCOREALE

IMAGE FROM BERGMANN, 2010, 9.



FIGURE 57: **TYPE 3A**: SMALL SUSPENDED ROUND SHIELD FROM THE HOUSE OF THE GOLDEN CUPIDS, POMPEII

PHOTOGRAPH BY N. CRACKNELL, 2011.

Type 4: Weaponry attached to perspectival columns

In this category the arms and armour are depicted attached to columns forming part of the perspectival architectural decoration in the room. Examples are separated from those in Type 3 by the positioning of the weaponry directly on the column shaft. Arms can be depicted in small groups or alone. See Figure 58.



FIGURE 58: WEAPONRY ATTACHED TO A PERSPECTIVAL COLUMN, HOUSE OF THE SKELETON, HERCULANEUM.

PHOTOGRAPH BY N. CRACKNELL, 2011.

Type 5: Shields depicted in racks.

This type includes representations of a curious piece of furniture possibly found in public and private spaces in Rome: a shield rack. These racks essentially consisted of two lengths of wood or metal between columns. The shields are angled forward for ease of viewing. They are most commonly found at the top of columns in the upper zone of decorations. The depictions of shields racks may provide evidence for their actual use in public or private spaces, although no physical evidence survives. See Figure 59.



FIGURE 59: SHIELDS PAINTED AS THOUGH IN RACKS, VILLA OF POPPAEA, OPLONTIS.

PHOTOGRAPH BY N. CRACKNELL, 2011.

Type 6: Weaponry depicted in coffers

This category consists of depictions of small groups of arms within decorative coffers, although depictions of single weaponry items are not excluded. Arms are generally depicted in close proximity and often overlap. Coffers vary in size and location within the decorative scheme, including ceiling or vault decorations. They can be found in stucco and mosaic decorations. See Figure 60.

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FIGURE 60: COFFERS OF ARMS FROM THE HOUSE OF THE CRYPTOPORTICUS, POMPEII

IMAGE FROM POLITO, 1998, 131, FIG.63.

Type 7: Portrait Shields.

This category collates *clipeatae imagines*, or portrait shields. These are generally found in fresco decorations, although not exclusively. This category is included to allow for the evidence of the depiction of portrait shields to be included in this thesis, but the analysis of them is not something that will be dealt with here. It requires a far greater level of analysis and discussion than can be given within the scope of this study. For a typical illustration of a portrait shield see Figure 61.



FIGURE 61: PORTRAIT SHIELDS FROM THE VILLA OF POPPAEA AT OPLONTIS.

PHOTOGRAPH BY N. CRACKNELL, 2011.

Type 8: Anthropomorphic Trophies

Trophies are a form of commemoration specifically designed for military victory, adopted by the Romans and developed from Hellenistic precedents.⁴¹⁴ Whilst they can be connected with mythological victories, particularly the triumph of Dionysos, in Roman domestic art

⁴¹⁴ For a full discussion of the development of the anthropomorphic trophy, see Picard, 1957.

they are the most obvious iconographic link to the Roman celebration and commemoration of military victory (See Figure 62). In general, the images of these motifs form part of a wider decorative scheme with other images of arms and armour allowing another clue for the ancient observer's interpretation. The role of the trophy in domestic art will not be discussed as part of this thesis, but the images incorporated in the accompanying catalogue will be used to support the discussion of other motifs and their possible connection with spoils of war.

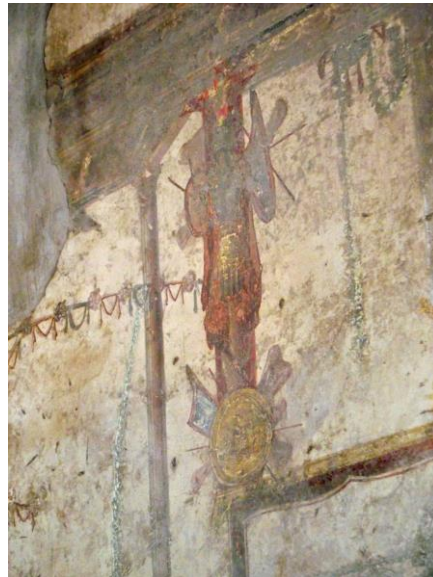


FIGURE 62: ANTHROPOMORPHIC TROPHY FROM THE HOUSE OF THE GOLDEN CUPIDS, POMPEII.

PHOTOGRAPH BY N. CRACKNELL, 2011.

Type 9: Rostra

The use of rostra motifs was discussed in Chapter 3 and there seems little more to say on the incorporation of these motifs other than the possibility they could refer to captured

ship's prows, the speaker's platform in the forum or perhaps even a port or harbour.⁴¹⁵ A deeper analysis of these motifs will not form part of this thesis.

It is now possible to analyse the evidence within each category for the possible ways they could have been interpreted by ancient observers. Comparisons between different types of depiction can be made and by applying Mau's Four Styles, the chronological development and dissolution of some of these categories may be determined. Each item in the evidence catalogue has been attributed to one of these categories. The definition of each type has been kept deliberately broad to encompass as much of the evidence as possible, but there will inevitably be some overlap. This organisation of the material is presented in Table 1: the catalogue number of each item next to the most appropriate category.⁴¹⁶

⁴¹⁵ See Chapter 3 of this thesis for the discussion of rostra and these three interpretations.

⁴¹⁶ The totals in the "Number of Examples" column do not count multiple items from the same room – for example items 52-52G are counted as one item, not as 8.

Table 1:

Type	Catalogue Numbers	Number of Examples.
1: Bands of mixed arms and armour forming a 'frieze of arms.'	5, 52-52G, 67 -67A, 78, 83, 85-85D, 105, 116.	8
2: Weaponry depicted as though attached flat to walls, perspectival or real.	2 -2A, 8 - 8A, 8C-8F, 13, 14, 24, 25, 26, 34, 35, 36, 41A, 49-49A, 59, 60, 86, 96-96A, 99-99A, 100.	19
3: Arms and armour depicted as though suspended from perspectival architecture.	2B, 4A, 8B, 12, 21, 22-22A, 23A, 27, 28, 29-29A, 30, 31, 33, 40, 42, 43A, 56A, 57, 58, 64, 68, 74, 76, 77, 79, 80A, 81-81A, 82, 88, 91A, 93, 95-95A, 98, 101, 106A, 113, 114.	37
3a: Small, round shields shown suspended from perspectival architecture.	4, 6, 7, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23, 28-28A, 32 39, 44, 45, 47, 50, 56, 61, 62, 63, 66, 69, 93A, 94, 97, 102, 103-103A, 109.	28
4: Arms depicted as though attached to perspectival columns.	38, 51, 55, 70, 72, 108.	6
5: Depictions of shields in special display 'racks.'	37, 80, 96D-96E, 111.	4
6: Arms and Armour depicted in coffer.	1-1D, 3, 10-10A, 54, 84, 104, 106, 107, 112-112A, 115, 117.	11
7: Depictions of portrait shields.	11, 15, 35A, 41, 43, 46, 46A, 71, 75, 92, 96B-96C, 98A-98B, 110.	12
8: Depictions of anthropomorphic trophies.	45A, 58A, 65, 76A, 89, 90-90A, 91, 114A.	8
9: Depictions of rostra	10A, 26, 27, 47, 48, 73.	6

Pictorial Representations

Two items in the catalogue are not included in the table above. Both are mosaics from Pompeii, the subjects being pictorial rather than iconographic. These pictorial mosaics are some of the best evidence we have for a connection between Roman domestic decoration and the display of captured enemy weaponry in the home. Whilst it would be ideal to include pictorial representations of arms and armour as an entirely separate type, this would require a level of detail that is beyond the scope of this thesis. A great number of frescos from Pompeii and Herculaneum depict figures holding weaponry or personifications carrying large shields, such as the figures found in the decoration of Room H the Villa of P. Fannius Synistor at Boscoreale.⁴¹⁷ The two examples that have been included here are both very much based upon the depiction of architectural features, making them much more relevant to the discussion of Roman domestic decorations and their suitability for certain spaces and areas within the Roman home.

Item 9, a Third Style mosaic from the vestibule of the House of Paquius Proculus in Pompeii, already mentioned in Chapter 1, is one of the best visual representations of how captured weaponry could be displayed at the entrance to the Roman home. It is the closest that any item in the accompanying evidence catalogue comes to matching the idealised description of the domestic display of captured weaponry given in surviving ancient literature. The mosaic depicts a doorway, guarded by a dog and with two items of weaponry attached to the upper sections of the door. Whilst the possibility remains that the doorway is to a public building, the presence of the guard dog makes this less likely. The interpretation of the

⁴¹⁷ Bergmann, 2010, 25.

mosaic appears to be even more pertinent being found in the vestibule of the home, where our literary sources indicate that captured weaponry was ideally displayed.

Another vestibule mosaic that may also have a connection with the display of *spolia* is found in the House of Caesius Blandus at Pompeii (53) but this time it is the representation of city gates and walls rather than a domestic entrance. Shields are depicted above the gates suggesting it shows a captured city or town. Both these mosaics, therefore, may have a connection with the display of weaponry in the Roman home. This indicates that we cannot exclude the possibility of connecting the images of arms and armour in the home with the display of captured weaponry in Roman domestic space.

4.2: Expected Interpretations and their Limitations.

How to interpret these images, is now the focus of this chapter, beginning with depictions of weaponry in the Roman home. By far the largest number of examples are found in Types 3 and 3a: suspended shields. The regularity with which this type appears in the evidence catalogue, especially within fresco decorations, might explain why Ling singles out this particular configuration in his short description of shield motifs. As the most common way in which shields are included in domestic decorations, the suspended shields are invariably the most likely to be noticed by other scholars, even in passing.⁴¹⁸

Sixty five of the rooms examined from properties across Italy include depictions of weaponry suspended from perspectival architecture. Just under half of these fall into Type 3a, which is focused on small, round shields, often no bigger than 20cm in diameter. These

⁴¹⁸ Ling, 1991, 74-75.

small shields are commonly repeated several times within the same room, hanging from the perspectival architecture that opens onto vistas or aediculae to create the impression of *durchblick*. The presence of such large numbers of examples falling in these two categories should help to indicate why motifs of arms and arms were used and how they could be interpreted. The suspension of shields from architecture, hanging just above openings, seems to be a logical way to display captured weaponry on public buildings. The display location is very similar to the way in which oscilla were hung in the Roman home, perhaps indicating why a marble oscillum was found in the shape of a pelta shield in the House of the Citharist at Pompeii and why pelta shaped oscilla are included in the fresco decoration of the so-called 'garden room' in the House of the Golden Bracelet at Pompeii.⁴¹⁹ Both Taylor and Albert agree that oscilla display in the Roman home was most likely inspired by the display of shields suspended in this inter-columnar space in Greece and in Rome.⁴²⁰ Taylor even suggests that 'it should be obvious that every carved tondo hung in a Roman portico, whatever the subject matter of its relief, evokes the shield.'⁴²¹ An oscillum, therefore, appears to be a parallel way in which the presence of captured weaponry in public and private spaces could have influenced the decoration of the Roman home, although Taylor suggests that the non-military dedications of shields, including the *clipeus virtutis*, could be equally responsible for this development.⁴²²

Each type of motif is now addressed in light of the divisions of Mau's Four Styles. This should reveal any patterns in when motifs of arms are used and which configuration of display was

⁴¹⁹ For the pelta shaped oscillum see Taylor, 2005, 83 and Bowe, 2004, 38. For the peltae in the House of the Golden Bracelet, see the most recent publication from Roberts, 2013, 172, especially fig. 202.

⁴²⁰ Taylor, 2005, 93; Maurice Albert, 1881.

⁴²¹ Taylor, 2005, 93, n. 31.

⁴²² Taylor, 2005, 93.

most popular in each style. At the end of Chapter 3, it was suggested that the literary evidence and visual material from Greco-Roman public decoration had revealed several different ways that the ancient observer could have interpreted depictions of arms and armour in Roman domestic decoration. They were as follows:

- An allusion to the display of captured enemy weaponry around the Roman home.
- An allusion to non-military forms of dedication for other virtues, for example the *clipeus virtutis* of Augustus, the *clipeatae imagines* and the subject of private collections.
- An allusion to the display of weaponry in Roman public space. This can be in the decoration of public buildings with real or sculptural arms and armour and also in the decoration of horti, porticos, theatres and even temples with these items.
- An allusion to the presence of weaponry in Hellenistic palace decoration or Greek public building decoration. Weaponry could also be included as an allusion to Greek culture in general, including the Trojan wars and its heroes.
- A reference to the arms and armour of different gladiatorial types.

The gladiatorial games played such an important role in the lives of residents in Rome and particularly in Pompeii, it will be important to explore their impact on domestic decoration separately, and particularly the interpretation of depictions of weaponry. This analysis will be undertaken in Chapter 5.

A further problem, already stated in Chapter 3, is that differentiation between non-military dedications of shields, like the *clipeus virtutis* and military dedications of arms is very

difficult in the visual material. There are some indications of what the *clipeus virtutis* may have looked like, based upon a surviving marble copy of the shield found at Arles (Figure 63).

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FIGURE 63: *CLYPEUS VIRTUTIS* MARBLE COPY IN THE MUSEE DEPARTEMENTAL ARLES ANTIQUE.⁴²³

The marble shield is clearly inscribed with the virtues that Augustus lists in his *Res Gestae*.⁴²⁴ If any of the shields depicted in domestic decoration are supposed to represent the *clipeus virtutis* then we could expect them to show the same inscriptions that singled out Augustus' shield in the Curia from other dedications. None of the depictions in the evidence catalogue show any evidence of inscriptions, so it seems highly unlikely that any are trying to replicate the display of Augustus' shield. This does not mean that the depictions of shields could not evoke associations with the *clipeus virtutis* for the ancient observer. By the time of Nero it is highly likely that the display of a shield in domestic decoration could be understood as a way of implying the valour, clemency, justice and piety of the Emperor and perhaps even the

⁴²³ Image from the Musée Départemental Arles antique website: http://www.arles-antique.cg13.fr/mdaa_cg13/r09_bonus/090201.htm. [Accessed 12th August 2014].

⁴²⁴ Augustus, *Res Gestae Divi Augustus*, 34.

Paterfamilias that commissioned it.⁴²⁵ Without an inscription or other form of indication it is impossible to determine if a shield in domestic art is meant to represent a military or non-military dedication, but it is likely this distinction would not have mattered to the ancient observer. The power of the shield to evoke all these qualities, as well as connections with military victory, was perhaps a reason for their inclusion in so many decorations. It seems that we should expect the depictions of shields in domestic decorations to be open to a wide range of interpretations rather than being instantly connected with captured arms in the eyes of the ancient observer.

It should be possible to identify the occasions on which the decorations allude to public spaces and buildings. The presence of grand architectural schemes of the Second Style and the more stylised architecture of the Fourth Style are highly likely to allude to the architecture of public buildings, either in Rome or its Hellenistic contemporaries. Religious spaces will most likely be alluded to by the presence of cult statues, tripods or other religious objects, distinguishing them from the more generic architectural schemes. The presence of the three door structure of the *scaenae frons* could suggest an allusion to the decoration of theatres in Greco-Roman contexts, which is another public structure believed to have had significant impact on the development of Roman domestic decoration.⁴²⁶ Garden scenes should be identifiable by the profusion of plants, birds and animals depicted within them.

It is highly likely that the motifs of arms and armour collected together in this chapter will allude to public spaces in one way or another for, as Wallace-Hadrill has suggested, 'it is by

⁴²⁵ Taylor takes this connection with moral virtues even further in his study of the shields of Perseus and Achilles, suggested that even in Greek mythology the shield was capable of demonstrating its owner's virtues as well as having an apotropaic role. See Taylor, 2008, Chapters 4 and 5.

⁴²⁶ Leach, 2004, 93-123.

borrowing the language of actual public spaces in the domestic context that the architect and decorator can evoke in the visitor the feel of something more than a private house.’⁴²⁷

In light of these difficulties and possible interpretations, this chapter now proceeds to analyse the evidence collated in the accompanying catalogue. The evidence will be addressed by type, according to the typology set out above, and by reference to the Four Styles and the various interpretations offered by literary accounts and public decorations, to give some indication of the wide variety of ways in which motifs of arms and armour can be interpreted in Roman domestic decorations.

4.3: Analysis.

4.3.1: Type 1, Bands of Arms and Armour

Depictions of mixed groups or piles of arms are, by their very nature the most likely of the types of motifs to be identified with the display of *spolia*. The depiction of weaponry ‘piled up in heaps’ seems to have been designed in order to evoke captured enemy arms piled up on the battlefield, or loaded onto wagons and displayed in the Roman triumphal procession.⁴²⁸ Based upon this connection, it seems likely that the ancient observer would have understood these motifs to be alluding to the display of captured weapons. What is not clear is if this particular category could be interpreted as alluding to the weaponry dedicated on the Roman home, or if they could have been interpreted in any other way by the Roman observer.

⁴²⁷ Wallace-Hadrill, 1994, 17.

⁴²⁸ ‘Trophée tumuliforme’ - Picard, 1957, 20; ‘piled up in heaps’ in the triumphal procession – Östenberg, 2010, 24.

I have generally found bands of decoration containing motifs of arms and armour in fresco and stucco decorations, the one exception being a decorative band of terracotta reliefs from Fregellae that incorporate trophies and figured scenes rather than mixed piles of arms (116). No mosaics have been found.⁴²⁹ Stucco mouldings, by their very nature, allude to the relief decorations of public buildings.⁴³⁰ As has been demonstrated in Chapter 3, the relief and even stucco decorations of Roman public buildings included depictions of weaponry, as did Hellenistic buildings like the sanctuary of Athena at Pergamum. These may well have inspired the inclusion of stucco mouldings of weaponry in the home as much as the display of the original weaponry. Stucco decorations from the Stabian Baths at Pompeii also prove that local examples of stucco motifs were on hand for artists and patrons to copy in domestic contexts (Figure 45). Whilst the display of weaponry in piles indicates that they could be interpreted as booty, the use of the stucco medium suggests that many, if not all of these items, will have been included as a way of alluding to the decoration of public spaces, be they Hellenistic or Roman. It is likely that fresco depictions of arms and armour in bands will also be alluding to the display of captured enemy weaponry in public spaces, based upon Hellenistic precedents like the reliefs from Pergamum.

The overall date of the items in this category is particularly interesting. This type is the only one to present evidence exclusively from the First and Second Styles with no similar examples being found in the decorations dating to the 1st Century AD. The table below

⁴²⁹ This lack of mosaic material maybe due to the bias of the archaeological record. However it could also be due to the difficulty in depicting detailed bands of arms in mosaic decorations or be inspired by the constantly changing fashions in mosaic decorations at this time.

⁴³⁰ Vitruvius mentions the use of stucco in the decoration of Greek houses and public porticos – Vitruvius, *de Architectura*, 6. 7, 3.

divides these items according to the Pompeian Styles, emphasising precisely which decorations were likely to have been produced around the same time.

Table 2

Date	Style	Items
c.200 BC- c.60 BC	First Style	Stucco: 105, 116 (relief).
		Mosaic:
		Fresco:
c.60 BC- c.20 AD	Second Style	Stucco: 78, 83, 85-85D.
		Mosaic: -
		Fresco: 5, 52-52G, 67-67A.

The table suggests the bands may well have been more appropriate during the Republic than in the Imperial era, as no Third or Fourth Style examples have been discovered to date. If the bands do represent captured enemy weaponry from Hellenistic or Roman victories, as is suspected, then this could indicate that the use of such imagery was seen as fashionable and perhaps to emphasise elite social status. In later periods when the right to hold a triumphal procession became the preserve of the Emperor, the opportunities of the elite to legitimately use such imagery would have been limited. This could indicate, therefore, that

early depictions held a level of potency that meant they needed to be guided by the same social requirements of having real weaponry on display, for example being worthy of them as the ancient sources suggest. It is unlikely, however, that such a large number of items could have been displayed on the exterior of one home; the mosaic from the House of Paquius Proculus depicts only three items of weaponry on the doors of the home at most.⁴³¹ These bands are clearly allusion and not mimesis.

It seems logical to suggest that even in the early Republic, when the quantities of booty arriving from conquered states were vast, these bands of decoration were much more likely to be alluding to displays on public buildings, like temples or civic structures, rather than the exterior of the Roman home. This is not to say that a connection between motifs of arms and the military activities of the *Paterfamilias* is impossible. It is important to remember that Pompeii, the source of the majority of the evidence explored here, was the site of a veteran colony founded by Sulla in 80 BC.⁴³² It is possible that the inclusion of military motifs, including motifs of arms and armour, could be more common in the Second Style decorations after 80 BC due to the new colonists choosing to commemorate their role in the Roman army and their victorious campaigns within the decorations of their homes. However, since it is extremely difficult to connect the depictions of weaponry with specific campaigns or triumphal processions, or to identify who owned specific houses during this earlier period of Pompeian history, this connection must remain speculative.

Connection with an earlier date could also indicate that the weaponry depictions are more closely related to the desire for Hellenism that was endemic in this period. First Style

⁴³¹ Item 9. See discussion earlier in this chapter for its connection with the display of spoils.

⁴³² Santangelo, 2007, 71.

decorations are generally perceived by scholars to allude to the monumental decoration of Hellenistic palaces or public buildings. The discovery of a frieze that decorated domus 2 at Fregellae, although produced in terracotta, has suggested that arms and armour were an appropriate finishing touch for these First Style decorations in Italy from a very early period (116). Depicting trophies and oriental captives, Coarelli has suggested that the frieze 'is portraying an historical event, a battle in which elite troops of Fregellae... had participated.'⁴³³ However, the wider First Style context of the frieze could indicate that the terracotta fragments were a reference to a public decoration, perhaps on a temple or civic building in the town, or maybe developed from the decoration of Hellenistic palaces that were triumphed over as part of the campaign. The use of motifs of trophies and captive prisoners makes it very difficult to interpret this earliest frieze as anything other than a depiction of victory and spoils, however, this specificity is lost in later decoration.

Welch has suggested that Second Style decorations, including these depictions of arms, were developed to provide a fitting 'Hellenistic' backdrop to the artworks acquired and distributed as booty.⁴³⁴ If correct, then these depictions of weaponry refer to a more general victory over Hellenistic states rather than the specific military activities of the owner of the domus and they do this by creating the sense of a 'Hellenistic' space in which it was appropriate to display captured artworks. Wallace-Hadrill believes that the motifs of weaponry were interpreted as something 'reassuringly Roman' in the decoration of the Roman home, although this is somewhat undermined by similarities between these

⁴³³ D'Auria, 2012, 137; Coarelli, 1994, 93-108.

⁴³⁴ Welch, 2008.

depictions collected here and the relief decoration from Pergamum.⁴³⁵ What is most interesting about the depictions from the Villa of the Mysteries (67/67A) is that whilst they may have originally been painted in the 1st Century BC, they were clearly important enough to have been preserved when other parts of the home were redecorated. In spite of their original connection with fashionable decorations in the Republic, the fresco decorations are kept long into the Imperial period. Perhaps the decorations were, as Wallace-Hadrill suggests, a way of underlining the 'Roman' values of valour and victory in the home, meaning that they retained their usefulness even in this later period. It could even be suggested that the decorations were maintained as a way of commemorating victories that had long since passed. As we have already seen, it is unlikely that a collection of weaponry this large could have been dedicated in one property and the depictions are much more likely to refer to the display of weaponry in Roman religious and civic buildings rather than on the home. The best explanation for their preservation, therefore, is that friezes of arms remained a very good way, even in the 1st Century AD, of alluding to public spaces in the decoration of the Roman home, yet also allowed the Paterfamilias to reference wider virtues of honour and military competence.

Of the evidence that does survive, the majority is in the form of stucco mouldings. The earliest stucco is a fragment depicting a shield from an unknown villa in Apulia (105). The decorative context of the fragment no longer survives, but Marin suggests it was likely to have been part of a larger frieze of arms.⁴³⁶ The lack of decorative context means we can learn little more about how the shield could have been interpreted, although its date

⁴³⁵ Wallace-Hadrill, 2010, 204.

⁴³⁶ Marin, 1964, 220-224.

suggests it was likely to have been part of a First Style ensemble with all the Hellenistic connotations that this style brings.

Item 78, a stucco decoration only recently uncovered during excavations at the Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum, is similarly preserved without its original decorative context. In this case, however, this is due to the choices of those responsible for decorating the room. The stucco depictions of weaponry are dated to between 40 and 25 BC, but the fresco decoration that surrounds it comes from the period post the 62 AD earthquake.⁴³⁷ The act of preserving the early decoration indicates that the stucco must have held some value. Working from the ethnic identification of the weaponry represented in the band of arms, Guidobaldi has suggested that it may depict the weaponry 'typical of the peoples of northern Europe.'⁴³⁸ Contrastingly, Zarmakoupi has suggested that 'the representations of weapons made apposite reference to the recently conquered Hellenistic East.'⁴³⁹ It seems that even the ethnic identity of the weaponry depicted appears to be ambiguous. This could be because, as modern observers, we are unfamiliar with the subtle clues that would have been obvious to the ancient observer in how to interpret this relief. Conversely it could be suggested that the ethnic identity of the weaponry is deliberately ambiguous to allow the ancient observer to view such panels and be reminded of Hellenistic spaces, public buildings, the conquests of the Hellenistic kings and the triumphs of Roman generals and not of specific triumphs celebrated by the Paterfamilias of the home. Being able to have so many interpretations of the weapons may well be what made them useful enough to preserve when the rest of the decoration was replaced.

⁴³⁷ Guidobaldi, 2009, 148.

⁴³⁸ Guidobaldi, 2009, 150-151.

⁴³⁹ Zarmakoupi, 2014, 137.

Items 83 and 85-85D were all found in the excavation of a domus that has been speculatively identified as the House of Augustus on the Palatine in Rome.⁴⁴⁰ The stucco fragments of 85-85D are believed to have formed one continuous frieze, like that preserved in item 83. All were found in three inter-connecting rooms opening onto the peristyle of the property. Two of the rooms have been speculatively identified as libraries, perhaps indicating that arms and armour were suitable motifs for this type of space, particularly when considered in light of the much later libraries of Trajan and their proximity to the spiral frieze and motifs of arms that decorated Trajan's Column.⁴⁴¹ It is possible that the items are depictions of *spolia* and Polito indicates that they could refer to the display of weaponry found at the entrance to Augustus's home as described by Ovid.⁴⁴² To suggest that this is the only possible interpretation of the stucco decoration would be misleading.

The location of these stucco depictions within the decorative scheme seems to suggest the motifs were not as important as they are generally believed to have been. As Wallace-Hadrill has suggested, 'the distinction between public and private will lie partly in scale.'⁴⁴³ Whilst he is referring to the size and structure of the architecture of the Roman home in this statement, it seems to apply equally well to representations of weaponry in Roman domestic decoration. If the weaponry is supposed to be particularly important or relevant to

⁴⁴⁰ Carandini & Bruno, 2008; Carrettoni, 1983.

⁴⁴¹ As can be seen from plans of Trajan's Forum complex, two buildings that are identified as the 'West' and 'East' libraries are located on either side of the Column, while the Basilica Ulpia and the slightly later temple to the divine Trajan would have closed off entry to this small courtyard. Scholars remain divided on how the column was meant to be viewed, although the possibility remains that the column could have been best viewed from the upper floors of the library buildings and the basilica. See Packer, 2001 for plans, reconstructions and an excellent summary of the main monumental structures. For some varying approaches to viewing the spiral frieze, see Davies, 1997 and Coarelli, 2000, 11.

⁴⁴² Polito, 1998, 128-129. Indeed Polito is one of the scholars who suggests that the depictions of weaponry in Roman domestic space should generally be understood as 'evoking the display of booty in Italic and Roman homes.' Polito, 1998, 128.

⁴⁴³ Wallace-Hadrill, 1994, 17.

the patron of the domus then we would expect the motifs of arms to be large, if not life-size, taking pride of place in the decorations and being positioned so they could not be missed by the ancient observer. Conversely, if the depictions of weaponry are small and not immediately obvious to the observer then it is likely that the motifs of arms are more decorative, or part of a wider scheme to allude to something other than just the display of captured arms. The stucco decorations in this chapter are all found in the decoration of vaults or ceilings and were not likely to have been immediately visible to the ancient observer on entering the room. Their small size, particularly of the weapons in items 83 and 85-85D, indicates they did not have the same presence in the decorative scheme that we would expect them to have if alluding to the dedication of real items nearby. The combination of Greek decorative elements and the stucco medium also indicates that these motifs of arms were more likely part of a language used to allude to public spaces, either Hellenistic or Roman, in domestic decorations.

The other surviving bands of arms and armour are fresco decorations. A series of decorative bands found in the atrium of the Villa of the Mysteries at Pompeii are the most commonly cited depiction of weaponry in Roman domestic space (67/67A). Zarmakoupi, based upon the original excavations and reports by Maiuri, suggests that the bands of arms acted as an appropriate frame for panel paintings that 'probably celebrated war campaigns' and are now lost, inferring that the weaponry should be interpreted as *spolia*.⁴⁴⁴ Welch believes the missing panel paintings to have been 'of Greek mythological subject matter,' supporting her theory that Second Style decorations were designed to provide an appropriate framework

⁴⁴⁴ Zarmakoupi, 2010, 40.

for the display of captured enemy *spolia*, especially art, although the subject of the panels is impossible to prove.⁴⁴⁵ In contrast with these views, Polito, addressing the fresco in light of its connection with the wider development of friezes of arms, suggests that the weaponry is based upon Hellenistic precedents, possibly large paintings, that are now lost.⁴⁴⁶ Much of Polito's discussion is based upon the identification of the ethnicity of the constituent weaponry, rather than focussing on the decorative context and all of these interpretations focus on the relationship of the frieze to the missing panel paintings. It is important, therefore, to see how the rest of the decorative scheme can influence how the motifs of arms were interpreted in antiquity without speculating as to the subject matter of these lost panels.

In spite of their detail, the small size of these motifs of weapons within the border means that they are not the most obvious feature of the decorative scheme. The arms act as a frame, rather than the focal point. As we cannot know what the subjects of these panels were, it becomes much more difficult to view these friezes of arms as an important part of the decoration of the room as a whole. If the frieze was designed to suggest the military prowess of the Paterfamilias of the *domus* we would perhaps expect the weaponry to be larger and more imposing, especially if these arms were designed to refer to the practice of dedicating real weaponry within the domus. The other sections of fresco that survive from the atrium appear to be alluding to the large monumental blocks of marble that were commonly associated with the architecture of Hellenistic palaces.⁴⁴⁷ Although not dating to the first style, the blocked style of the fresco in the middle zone of the decoration and the

⁴⁴⁵ Welch, 2006, 143.

⁴⁴⁶ Polito, 1998, 127-128.

⁴⁴⁷ Pappalardo, 2009, 9.

presence of a stucco cornice separating the upper zone from the rest of the scheme, suggests a link with this earlier monumental architectural decoration and a desire to create the same effect. It seems that this frieze, if referring to a display of captured arms, is referencing a public, perhaps even Hellenistic display rather than the Roman practice of displaying arms at the threshold of the domus.

Perhaps the most intriguing band of arms was found in the peristyle in the House of Siricus at Pompeii (52-52G). Excavated in the early 1800s, the frieze is now lost, surviving only in a series of watercolour paintings produced at the time. These images reveal a particularly interesting collection of arms and armour. If the artist's depiction of the frieze can be trusted, then it shows several groups of arms separated into small sections.⁴⁴⁸ Like the frieze from the Villa of the Mysteries, the range of arms includes pelta shields, round shields, breastplates, helmets, rectangular shields and swords. Also visible are trumpets, lengths of cloth (perhaps cloaks or tapestries like those mentioned in the decoration of the Ptolemaia pavilion), curved swords (*sica*?) and even what appears to be a Phrygian helmet.⁴⁴⁹ The range of arms and armour suggests the weaponry is connected to a defeated barbarian 'other,' in combination with what could be Roman legionary equipment. Fiorelli and La Regina's approach is to consider these arms in light of a gladiatorial connection or interpretation, which will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.⁴⁵⁰ Lack of any other details of the decorative context of means it is very difficult to gain a deeper understanding of how it would have been understood by the ancient observer other than as a connection

⁴⁴⁸ La Regina, 2001, 368; Niccolini (ed.), *MB*, Vol. XV, 1, 7.

⁴⁴⁹ For the Ptolemaia description see Athenaeus, *The Deipnosophistae*, 197.

⁴⁵⁰ La Regina, 2001, 386; Fiorelli, 1862, 21-22.

with military victory or perhaps a link to the great Hellenistic friezes like that seen at Pergamum, but a gladiatorial interpretation needs to be explored.

Item 5, from the House of the Trojan Shrine, presents a very similar case to the frescos from the Villa of the Mysteries and House of Siricus. The arms appear to act as a decorative accent rather than as a focal point. The decorative context is largely suggestive of Greek cultural connections, with panel paintings depicting Dionysos and Satyrs.⁴⁵¹ The use of Greek key patterns and plant motifs in the bands either side also seems to lessen any impact they may have had and consequently their likelihood of being interpreted as the captured spoils of the Paterfamilias.⁴⁵² There is very little that allows us to identify the weaponry specifically as captured enemy arms other than the inference of their configuration in heaps or piles. Furthermore, the size of the weaponry within the frieze is relatively small, meaning that it is not the focal point of the decorative scheme, but rather acts as an accessory to whatever space or culture the decoration is attempting to evoke, which in this case appears to be Greek or Hellenistic.

It appears that whilst depictions of arms and armour in bands could allude to how captured enemy weaponry was dedicated in public spaces, they also have the capacity to allude to a desire for Hellenistic architectural design and decoration in the Roman home. Dunbabin has confidently demonstrated the impact of the 'full flood of Hellenistic convivial luxury' on Roman dining spaces and interior decoration from the 2nd Century BC and it appears that this desire to replicate or respond to Hellenistic decorative traditions is something that also

⁴⁵¹ *Pitture e Mosaici*, Vol.1, 327.

⁴⁵² *Pitture e Mosaici*, Vol.1, 327.

applies to the depiction of motifs of arms in domestic space.⁴⁵³ The small size of the majority of the motifs means they are less likely to be designed to have the same impact as the dedication of real weaponry on the Roman home. The position of the stucco mouldings in the vault or ceiling decorations of the rooms make them less obvious and consequently less powerful within the decorative scheme. All of the depictions appear to have a role in helping to create the sense of a public space, be it Hellenistic or Roman, within the domus; they are part of the wider language of public space and not necessarily a reference to private dedications. Arms and armour seem to play a far less important role in these decorative schemes than we would expect if the ancient observer was supposed to regard them as representations of, or even allusions to, the military achievements of the *paterfamilias* of each domus. Their use in Roman domestic decoration seems to be much more nuanced, open to a variety of interpretations and far more complex than previous scholarship has suggested.

4.3.2: Type 2, Weapons attached to Flat Walls.

This category addresses the development and use of motifs of arms depicted as though attached flat against perspectival or real walls in the Roman home. This way of displaying weaponry is clearly something copied into the artistic depictions of arms based upon the way real items were attached to public buildings from as early as Classical Athens, for

⁴⁵³ Dunbabin, 2003, 12.

example the shields hung in the Painted Stoa.⁴⁵⁴ The depiction of weaponry in relief sculptures, like the sections found at Sant Omobono, is also likely to have inspired this simple display of weaponry against a flat surface in the Roman home.⁴⁵⁵

This type, like Type 1, contains only stucco and fresco decorations. An inevitable overlap between categories means that the nymphaeum mosaic from the Via degli Annibaldi in Rome could also be included in Type 2, but it appears to fit better with depictions of arms in coffers than these depictions of weapons hung flat on walls. Some of the frescos that belong in this category are particularly well attested in past scholarship on Roman domestic decorations, none more so than the decorations of the Villa of the Poppaei at Oplontis (96-96E). The value of these frescos in allowing us to see the ways in which the interpretation of decorative context can impact upon how motifs of arms are understood means that the depictions from the atrium of the Oplontis villa will be dealt with in some detail here. By contrast, the items of stucco decoration in this category are less well known, but reveal much about the use of motifs of arms in Roman domestic decorations.

An overall assessment of the dating of the evidence in this category suggests a greater sense of the development of this type across the chronological scope of the thesis than seen in Type 1.

⁴⁵⁴ Peter Connolly's reconstruction of the Painted Stoa suggests that the shields were hung on the rear wall of the Stoa rather than suspended in the inter-columnar spaces. This would position them closer to the paintings that were also displayed in the Stoa to commemorate previous Athenian military campaigns. See Camp, 2001, 67, fig.64.

⁴⁵⁵ See Chapter 3 for discussion of Sant Omobono monument and Figures 25-28.

Table 3

Date	Style	Catalogue Number
c.200 BC – c.60 BC	First Style	Stucco: 14, 25.
		Mosaic: -
		Fresco: -
c.60 BC – c.20 BC	Second Style	Stucco: -
		Mosaic: -
		Fresco: 2/2A, 49/49A, 59, 68, 96/96A, 99/99A, 100.
c.20 BC – c.20 AD	Third Style	-
c.20 AD – c.79 AD +	Fourth Style	Stucco: -
		Mosaic: -
		Fresco: 8/8A/8C/8D/8E/8F, 13, 24, 26, 34, 36, 41A, 60.

The earliest examples are two stucco depictions of shields from Pompeii. The stucco shield from I.13, 7 (25) now exists without its original decorative context due to the decay of the surrounding decoration. Item 14, found in the House of the Four Styles at Pompeii, is in a far better state of preservation and can be seen within the context of its surrounding First Style

decorative scheme. The walls depict representations of masonry blocks, false marble veneers and a stucco cornice, typical of the monumental construction of First Style decoration. The decorative context of this shield alludes to public spaces as much as it is creating a more private, domestic one. The stucco shields are closest in style to the sculptural versions of arms and armour found decorating Greek and Roman public buildings. A connection between these depictions of shields and an allusion to public space seems to be highly likely. Scholars have often connected the decorations of the First Style with the appearance of Hellenistic palaces and public structures, perhaps indicating that these shields are designed to allude to Greek origins and contexts as well as Roman public spaces.⁴⁵⁶ This is confirmed by Webb, who suggests that ‘the simplest Hellenistic motif is the undecorated shield.’⁴⁵⁷ She suggests that these stucco shields like any other ‘undecorated shield in relief was apparently intended to imitate in stone the practice of dedicating bronze shields by fastening them to the architrave of a temple,’ or public structure in both Greek and Roman culture.⁴⁵⁸ Whilst these depictions could be connected with palace architecture, generally based upon the descriptions of the elaborate pavilion erected during a Ptolemaia festival, Webb believes the relief decoration to be connected with religious structures and dedications as ‘a form of visual consecration.’⁴⁵⁹ The generally featureless nature of the blocks depicted in First Style decoration make it difficult to differentiate between votive offerings or the dedication of spoils on other public buildings. However, it appears that the

⁴⁵⁶ Pappalardo, 2009, 8-9.

⁴⁵⁷ Webb, 1996, 33.

⁴⁵⁸ Webb, 1996, 33. Although it is possible that they could also be recalling earlier models – for example the decoration of the Stoa Poikile and the Temple of Zeus at Olympia with real dedications of weaponry as well as motifs of arms.

⁴⁵⁹ Athenaeus, *The Deipnosophistae*, 197; Webb, 1996, 43.

shields may have been part of alluding to Hellenistic public spaces, as well as to a Roman display of captured arms.

The level of importance that the stucco decorations held within the home seems to be less than we would expect for the depiction of real captured arms. If the motifs are designed to act as visual symbols of the prowess and importance of the domus owner, as captured arms and armour surely did, then these depictions should be in prominent positions within the domus. However, the shield from the House of the Four Styles (14) is incredibly difficult to view. Located in the highest zone of the decoration of a small, poorly lit room off the atrium, the shield is not immediately visible to visitors and may even have required some form of artificial light to be seen clearly. This cramped and unimpressive position indicates it may well have been included as an appropriate filler motif for the upper zone of the room, based on the simplified pediment decoration of public buildings; it is part of the language of alluding to public space. For this room in particular with its panelled First Style decorative scheme, the shield motif may even be a reference to the dedication of weaponry on Hellenistic architecture within the Roman home.⁴⁶⁰

The combined evidence of Types 1 and 2 suggests that fresco depictions of arms and armour may have developed in the Second Style of Roman decoration; only stucco mouldings of arms and armour survive from the period of First Style decorations across Italy.⁴⁶¹ A

⁴⁶⁰ Webb notes that plain shields are often found in the decoration of 'upper exterior walls' of Greek buildings and the 'pediments' of others. Webb, 1996, 33.

⁴⁶¹ See Tables 2 and 3. This lack of evidence for fresco depictions of arms in the First Style could be as a result of the nature of the archaeological record, many First Style schemes being painted over with more fashionable schemes before the 100 AD limit of the scope of this project. However, the preservation of these early stucco examples highlights that they maintained a level of value and importance throughout chronological scope of this study in order to remain extant today. It is entirely possible that the presence of the stucco decorations is inspired by the nature of First Style decoration, which is itself a form of stucco relief.

particularly important example of the depiction of shields in Second Style schemes is found in the fresco decoration of the atrium of the so-called Villa of the Poppaei at Oplontis, which is discussed in detail below.

4.3.2a: The atrium of Villa A at Oplontis and its contemporaries: The interpretation of Second Style Shields in fantasy architecture.

Two depictions of round shields in this category belong to the elaborate decoration of the atrium in the Villa of the Poppaei (Villa A) at Oplontis: 96 and 96A. These two shields are virtually identical, depicted as though attached to the rear of a perspectival portico. The shields are positioned at eye level, partially hidden by perspectival columns, and in combination with the depiction of large shields in special racks (Type 5) and portrait shields (Type 7). The two shields in this category (96/96A) and those depicted in racks (96D/96E) have been identified as Macedonian shields due to the inclusion of a central star motif on the boss.⁴⁶² Leach has suggested that the portrait shields alongside them included ‘faces of the provinces,’ perhaps indicating that the entire decorative scheme was designed around a triumphal theme.⁴⁶³ The uniform ethnicity of the shield motifs and their limited number could also indicate that these shields reflect the military achievements of a single campaign, or even of the owner of the villa in the 1st Century BC. Several scholars have already put forward the possibility of the shields being connected with the Paterfamilias of the villa; Maxfield suggests that the shields are ‘in commemoration of some military episode,’ whilst Mielsch’s study has concluded that such images are ‘an expression of the war-like prowess

⁴⁶² The identification of the shields as Macedonian is confirmed not only by reference to Polito’s typology, but also by the discussion of these shields in previous scholarship. See Polito, 1998, 39; Pappalardo, 2009, 72; Leach, 2004, 79.

⁴⁶³ Leach, 2004, 79.

of a particular family.⁴⁶⁴ Tybout's work on the villas of the Bay of Naples has suggested that these depictions of shields were a result of the installation of the Sullan veteran colony at Pompeii, the owners of the villa clearly having a connection to the veterans and using their domestic decoration to commemorate their military exploits.⁴⁶⁵ A more oblique approach is taken by Winkes, who believes that the presence of both the Macedonian shields and the portrait shields suggests that the entire decorative scheme is designed to replicate the display of captured arms and *clipeatae imagines* together in the atrium of the Roman domus.⁴⁶⁶

The interpretation of the atrium decoration of the villa as a reference to the decoration of an ideal Roman domus atrium seems peculiarly self-referential. However, as we have already seen from the mosaic in the vestibule of the House of Paquius Proculus at Pompeii, the idealised depiction of the space that motifs are found in is something entirely plausible in Roman decoration. Hales also subscribes to the identification of the decoration as representing a 'traditional first style domus atrium.'⁴⁶⁷ Whilst it is entirely possible that these depictions of shields could be representations of arms on display in a Roman domestic context, the decoration has inspired several other interpretations of equal value.

Another interpretation of this fresco decoration is as an allusion to the decoration of a Hellenistic palace; Pappalardo describes how the fresco 'transforms the spaces into a sumptuous Hellenistic palace' and Clarke appears to combine the ideal of captured arms at the entrance to the Roman home with Hellenistic palace decorations to describe the

⁴⁶⁴ Maxfield, 1981, 144; Mielsch, 1987, 47.

⁴⁶⁵ Tybout, 2001, 56.

⁴⁶⁶ Winkes, 1979, 483.

⁴⁶⁷ Hales, 2003, 52; 152.

decoration as ‘a kind of royal vestibule.’⁴⁶⁸ This interpretation appears to have been developed from Fittschen’s work on Hellenistic palace architecture and even the most recent research on villa decoration suggests that the atrium decoration was a way for the owners to ‘represent themselves as inheritors of Hellenistic culture.’⁴⁶⁹ Working from these interpretations of their decorative context, it would appear that the Macedonian shields are an intrinsic part of referring to Hellenistic public architecture within Roman domestic spaces. This interpretation could suggest that the shields are decorative or non-military commemorations rather than items of *spolia*, as a Macedonian palace was hardly likely to be displaying Macedonian shields as booty. If we view the decoration as alluding to a Roman palace or structure, decorated in a Hellenistic style and adorned with spoils captured from Macedonia, then the value and interpretation of the shields changes once again. The way we interpret the decorative context of these items changes how we interpret the shields themselves.

Several other Second Style depictions of shields within this category have also been located within a Hellenistic context. The elaborate decorative scheme of room 15 in the villa at Oplontis includes depictions of shields apparently hung against the wall in rows, angled downwards towards the observer (99/99A) and the presence of a round shield in the upper zone decoration of the atrium from the Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum suggests that a similar decorative scheme may have been found in this elite property (79). Sadly the surrounding decoration from the Villa of the Papyri has not survived in enough detail for us to extrapolate anything more than the shield being attached to architecture that appears as

⁴⁶⁸ Pappalardo, 2009, 71; Clarke, 1991, 113.

⁴⁶⁹ Fittschen, 1976; Zarmakoupi, 2014, 50.

part of a public decorative context. The shields from room 15 at Oplontis (99/99A) are located in the upper zone of the decoration, attached to the top of a perspectival propylon. Their decorative context has been commonly identified by scholars as religious space. Ling has described the fresco as depicting a 'sacred grove' while Zarmakoupi has pointed out the 'religious overtones of the colonnaded precinct.'⁴⁷⁰ Pappalardo has extended this identification to specifically identify the decorative context of these shields as 'a sanctuary of Apollo.'⁴⁷¹ The religious identification is therefore combined with a Hellenistic one, perhaps indicating that these arms are depicted as though within a public, Greek sanctuary space.⁴⁷²

The villa at Oplontis is not the only home to make use of these religious contexts. Items 49 and 49A are depictions of round, bronze shields that are located in a room, reconstructed by Strocka, to form one completed 'religious landscape.'⁴⁷³ The presence of Greek kalathoi and statues of Aphrodite similarly highlight the possibility of the religious space also being interpreted as a Hellenistic one in this Pompeian domus (VI, 17, 41).⁴⁷⁴ We know from surviving accounts that nearly all the Greek states, except Sparta, dedicated captured enemy weaponry in their temples.⁴⁷⁵ It seems logical therefore, to interpret these shields as images of captured arms, but the Greek identity of their decorative context perhaps indicates that they can be understood as alluding to Greek displays rather than Roman ones.

⁴⁷⁰ Ling, 1991, 28; Zarmakoupi, 2014, 79.

⁴⁷¹ Pappalardo, 2009, 73.

⁴⁷² See also Dufallo, 2013, 51.

⁴⁷³ Strocka, 1993, 330. From the House of the Library, Pompeii.

⁴⁷⁴ For the role of Kalathoi as votive items see Connor & Jackson, 2000, 30. The combined Hellenistic and Religious interpretation is further supported by the presence of a perspectival tholos in the central panel (49A), which Leach has connected with both religious activity and Greek culture. Leach, 2004, 87.

⁴⁷⁵ For discussion see Pritchett, 1974, Vol. 5, 130-133. For the Spartans not taking part, see Thucydides, 5, 74, 2.

In such a case, the Paterfamilias gains no boost to his military status from the inclusion of motifs of arms, but projects an erudite, wealthy and educated persona by his allusion to Hellenistic luxury and culture. The shields described here, may be just a visual signpost to the ancient observer for this Hellenistic luxury and grandeur, especially as they are surrounded by large depictions of fish and birds that do not conform to the scale and sense of the rest of the decorative scheme. It is a fantasy location with a religious link rather than a direct allusion to a specific temple or religious space. Motifs of arms cannot be neatly categorised as located in Hellenistic palaces or Greek temples, something reflected in Leach's approach to the Second Style scheme in the atrium at Oplontis.

Leach highlights that 'the materials of this decoration and certainly some of the forms are appropriate... to a regal residence.'⁴⁷⁶ Her conclusions, however, are far more circumspect: she suggests that the 'Roman' constituents of the scheme mean that a Hellenistic palace cannot be 'the immediate point of reference' and therefore interpretation of the ancient observer.⁴⁷⁷ Cerutti and Richardson Jnr. have identified the decoration with the 'theatrical' décor of the Roman *scaenae frons*, although Leach believes this interpretation to be incorrect.⁴⁷⁸ Wallace-Hadrill is equally cautious in his interpretation, saying that 'stage scenery and painting and actual contemporary architecture, whether of the Hellenistic palace or the Roman luxury villa itself' are all involved in the creation and interpretation of this fresco.⁴⁷⁹

⁴⁷⁶ Leach, 2004, 83.

⁴⁷⁷ Leach, 2004, 83.

⁴⁷⁸ Cerutti & Richardson Jnr., 1989, 176; Leach, 2004, 84.

⁴⁷⁹ Wallace-Hadrill, 1994, 26-27.

The allusion to stage decoration is believed to be a far more secure interpretation of room 23 of the villa at Oplontis, located close to these atrium decorations (100). A significant number of scholars have linked the perspectival architecture in this room to ‘the *scaenae frons* structure that formed the background in ancient theatres.’⁴⁸⁰ The use of the *scaenae frons* in Roman domestic decoration is attested by Vitruvius, taking the form of ‘tragic, comic or satyric’ stage sets.⁴⁸¹ A consensus on what kind of setting is represented in room 23 (100) has not yet been reached, with Beacham indicating the set-up is for a ‘Roman comic stage’ and Wallace-Hadrill suggesting it is a ‘tragic stage.’⁴⁸² I would venture that the stage set follows the tragic repertoire, the inclusion of the bronze shield in the upper corner of the room being part of the overall allusion to the ‘luxury and grandeur and public life that... transports us to the palaces of kings’ on the Roman tragic stage.⁴⁸³ This identification is supported by another fresco in this category; item 59 is a fresco decoration from the House of M. Fabius Rufus at Pompeii that depicts both bronze and silver shields in its upper zone. Leach has identified the scene as being a ‘royal backdrop’ that is typical of the tragic stage set and which ultimately, although admittedly indirectly, links these depictions of arms back to the models of luxurious and imposing Hellenistic palaces and public architecture.

Another Second Style fresco including depictions of shields is found in the House of the Cryptoporticus in Pompeii (2-2B). Whilst it has been linked to theatrical decoration, some scholars have suggested that the context in which these shields are depicted is a Greek

⁴⁸⁰ Dufallo, 2013, 51; McKenzie, 2007 – also suggests that this fresco depicted stage decoration based upon Hellenistic models; Leach, 2004, 94; Beacham, 1996, 73; Wallace-Hadrill, 1994, 27.

⁴⁸¹ Vitruvius, VII, 5, 2.

⁴⁸² Beacham, 1996, 73; Wallace-Hadrill, 1994, 27.

⁴⁸³ Wallace-Hadrill, 1994, 27.

pinacotheca or art gallery.⁴⁸⁴ Leach describes the items depicted as being representations of ‘art objects,’ although it is not clear if she means to include the various representations of shields in this interpretation.⁴⁸⁵ The round shields in items 2 and 2A are also accompanied by depictions of suspended pelta shields (2B), perhaps indicating that weaponry was an appropriate item to display in these spaces. Vitruvius counts the *pinacotheca* among the rooms required by the wealthy elite and since these were the families most likely to have the opportunity to gain impressive *spolia* items, including weapons, then it is possible that these shields could represent captured enemy arms. Such an art gallery, hung with captured arms and possibly even trophy art-works, would be the perfect evidence for Welch’s theory of a ‘booty mentality’ driving the development of Second Style fresco decoration in the Roman home.⁴⁸⁶

Viewing the shields as items of *spolia* is, however, just one viable interpretation of the decoration that could be made by the ancient observer. The presence of sphinxes and Greek drinking vessels suggests a wider Greek influence at play and in light of the Greek mythological subject of the central panel paintings, it is equally possible to interpret the shields as symbols of Greek heroes and their opponents. The round, bronze shield is ubiquitous in depictions of Trojan heroes and Greek hoplites, whilst the pelta shields suspended in the upper zone of the decoration are often connected to Amazons – the archetypal Greek opponent. A more generic reference to Hellenistic ornament or perhaps a conglomeration of various building decorations from the Greek and Hellenistic cities could

⁴⁸⁴ Termed a ‘Scenografia’ in *Pitture e Mosaici*, Vol.1, 241. For *pinacotheca* interpretation see Leach, 2004, 136-137.

⁴⁸⁵ Leach, 2004, 136.

⁴⁸⁶ Welch, 2006.

produce the same combination of motifs. A similar interpretation can be made of the two shields depicted in room 4 in the Villa of the Mysteries (68). These round or oval shields are shown as though attached to the perspectival archway and viewed from the side, like the shields in 2/2A. The surrounding decoration, packed with Hellenistic motifs including Satyrs and Dionysos and Silenus, also includes a series of small panel paintings viewed through little shuttered windows called *pinakes*.⁴⁸⁷ The presence of these framed panels is likely to have created the same impression of an art gallery of sorts within this room, although perhaps overshadowed by the larger Dionysian figures below them. Regardless of this, the influence of Greek decorations on these spaces was likely to have been apparent to the ancient observer. It is possible that the decoration of the rooms is referring to a wider appreciation of Greek culture by its allusion to myth and even Greek history, allowing the Paterfamilias to demonstrate his cultivation and knowledge.

Rather than a simplistic interpretation of the display of shields as spoils in a Roman domestic setting, these Second Style motifs can be interpreted in many ways: as attributes of Hellenistic palaces and sanctuaries, part of the appropriate display in Greek-style art galleries, symbols of Greek myths and heroes, a feature of the stage decorations of Roman theatres and other Roman public buildings, and ultimately as part of a complex visual language that alludes to public spaces and rituals within Roman domestic decoration.

4.3.2b: Fourth Style Motifs: The Ideal Hortus

A discussion of how this type develops between 20 BC and 20 AD is stalled by a sudden lack of evidence. No motifs of arms depicted flat against the walls are found in surviving Third

⁴⁸⁷ Clarke, 1991, 97.

Style paintings and the cause is ambiguous. The examination of the numismatic evidence in Chapter 3 has highlighted the possibility of motifs of arms and armour, excluding the *clipeus virtutis*, being less common in this particular period of transition from Republic to Empire. The likelihood of a focus on the *clipeus virtutis* and Augustan symbols of victory in this period is supported by Touchette; she describes how ‘in this period, triumphal images were permissible in the private sphere so long as they were clearly identifiable as references to Augustan triumph.’⁴⁸⁸ It is possible, therefore, that these depictions of weaponry hung against flat walls were not motifs that could be easily connected with Augustan victories and were consequently excluded. However, as we have seen, the shields and other items depicted in these decorations can be interpreted as far more than just captured arms and armour. To say that they are rarer in this period because they do not depict the right kind of arms implies that the motifs were understood only as captured arms in Roman contexts. This may be possible, but the cause of this apparent lack of evidence could be the bias in the archaeological record. As has already been explained, the destruction of large amounts of decoration on the Bay of Naples by earthquake and in Rome by fire in the early 60s AD probably resulted in the re-decoration of many rooms in the current style of the day – the Fourth Style. This would inevitably have reduced the amount of extant Third Style decoration and consequently the number of motifs of arms that belong to this category. However, since the same destruction would also have caused the replacement of First and

⁴⁸⁸ Touchette, 1998, 323. The extent to which Touchette’s assertion can apply to Pompeii and Herculaneum is uncertain. Whilst it is likely that the influence of Augustan legislation and power would have been felt on the Bay of Naples, it is not entirely clear how any changes could have been policed within domestic decoration other than by peer pressure. The movement away from triumphal imagery in this period could equally be explained by the populace having grown tired of war and conquest.

Second Style decorations, it seems possible that there really was a movement away from depicting arms and armour in Third Style decorations to some extent.

By contrast a number of surviving Fourth Style decorations depict arms and armour that belong in this category. What is most surprising is that the majority appear to be found within a very similar decorative context: the hortus. There are naturally some exceptions and Item 24, a round shield found in domus, I. 13, 1 in Pompeii is found in a small cubiculum adjacent to the entrance of the domus. The shield is decorated with a detailed gorgon head and appears to be segmented. It could be based upon the same model as the portrait shields in the atrium at Oplontis (96B/96C). The decoration of the rest of the room is now lost, making it almost impossible to surmise how this shield was interpreted within the decorative scheme as a whole. The decorative context of item 60, a small round shield found in the House of M. Epidius Rufus at Pompeii, has also suffered substantial damage since its excavation. Enough of the fresco survives to prove that this shield, with its decorative ribbons, was part of a Fourth Style fantasy architectural backdrop and not situated within an imaginary hortus. It is peculiar for being located in the socle decoration, the only extant example of such positioning in the accompanying catalogue. It is not clear why the shield was depicted in this lower zone, but since it is repeated at other points in the room, it could be understood as one of Ling's 'filling motifs.'⁴⁸⁹ Sadly the damage to the fresco as a whole means it is difficult to discern any further interpretation.

Items 8-8F, 13, 26, 34, 36 and 41A are all motifs of arms, principally shields, depicted as though located in lush gardens. The enclosed hortus at the rear of the House of the Ceii in

⁴⁸⁹ Ling, 1991, 79.

Pompeii is elaborately decorated with a collection of vivid motifs and scenes and is perhaps the most striking of the horti examined here. Dominating the rear wall is a large landscape populated with exotic animals and surrounded by depictions of weaponry (8-8F). Clarke has identified the scene as one of 'game preserves, or *paradeisoi*, of Hellenistic rulers.'⁴⁹⁰ The presence of shields in the decoration could support this, since arms and armour were likely to have been used in the decoration of the Hellenistic palaces where the *paradeisoi* could also be found.⁴⁹¹ This suggests a connection between Hellenistic culture and royalty in this decorative scheme before we have even begun to address the presence of the weaponry that is depicted. Jacobelli has suggested that the scene could be understood as a reference to the *venationes* as part of the gladiatorial games, although this interpretation will be dealt with more closely in Chapter 5.⁴⁹²

Another interpretation is that this decorative scheme simply illustrates a fantasy hunt of exotic beasts. Hunting is presented as a traditional masculine pastime for the Romans and an excellent way to train young men for the rigours of military combat.⁴⁹³ It would not be unusual to record a hunt in fresco on the wall of a Roman domus and there are several other similar examples to be found in Pompeii alone, for example the House of the Ancient Hunt is named after a large fresco in its hortus that depicts an animal hunt in progress.⁴⁹⁴ Bearing in mind these various contexts, the arms and armour in this fresco can be

⁴⁹⁰ Clarke, 1991, 163.

⁴⁹¹ This is generally extrapolated from the decoration of the tent or pavilion that is described by Callixenus of Rhodes in the first Ptolemaia festival. Specifically mentioned are "*oblong shields all round, alternatively of silver and gold*" that are placed between the columns in the pavilion. Athenaeus, *Deipnosophists*, 5.196f.

⁴⁹² Jacobelli, 2003, 70-71.

⁴⁹³ Horace refers to hunting as '*militia Romana*' confirming this military connection with Roman hunting practices. Horace, *Satires*, 2.2, 9-10.

⁴⁹⁴ This fresco is now extensively damaged and most of the detail has been lost.

interpreted in a number of ways. The lack of any central decoration on the round shields means that they are less likely to be identifiable as Macedonian shields and should probably be identified as the bronze, hoplite shield type. The helmets are a combination of a very plain, possibly Corinthian type helmet (8E) and a horned helmet that is often connected with Gallic or Germanic trophies (8F). The presence of these two ethnicities is very similar to the combination of ethnic weaponry found in the decoration of the sanctuary of Athena at Pergamum, perhaps indicating that these weapons are based upon the Hellenistic tradition for displaying weaponry rather than a Roman tradition.⁴⁹⁵ The shields and helmets are painted as though displayed in a garden, rather than attached to a portico or public building. This emphasises their role as decorative items and symbols of luxury rather than their military value. As such, it is entirely possible that this collection of weaponry could have been understood by the Roman observer as a way of emphasising the regal, luxurious and Hellenistic attributes and sensitivities of the *Paterfamilias*.

It is possible that Roman public gardens or *horti* could also have inspired these frescos. The decoration of Roman public *horti* were likely to have been inspired by the victories that often paid for their construction; the *hortus* within Pompey's portico 'was adorned with statues representing the nations Pompey had subjugated during his eastern campaigns,' and a the large marble statue of a trophy, noted in Chapter 3, was found at the location of the *Horti Sallustini* (Figure 35).⁴⁹⁶ Hartswick, following Picard, has even suggested that statues of kneeling barbarians were displayed with this marble trophy to create a visual display of

⁴⁹⁵ See discussion of the Sanctuary of Athena friezes from Pergamum in Chapter 3.

⁴⁹⁶ Touchette, 1998, 329.

conquest.⁴⁹⁷ Public gardens packed with statuary that surrounded the *horti* residences in Rome were clearly an appropriate place in which to display spoils of war. Whilst they are not mentioned by our literary sources, it seems likely that arms and armour, as motifs or the real items, would also have been found in these public garden spaces. The presence of fountains with statues of sphinxes for bases and vases resting on architectural plinths hints at the eclecticism of statue collections found in villas and public horti from across Italy: Zarmakoupi suggests that these two forms of hortus, the domestic and the public, almost certainly acted to inspire and develop each other.⁴⁹⁸

It appears that just this one garden from the House of the Ceii can allow a wide range of interpretations for its motifs of arms: from the arms decorating Hellenistic palaces and used in hunting in the *paradeisoi*, to decorations of Roman public horti funded by the spoils of war themselves. Several other frescos that depict or are located within gardens in Pompeii are found in the House of the Ephebe (13), the House of the Arches (26), the House of Apollo (34), the House of the Small Fountain (36) and the House of the Dioscuri (41A). It is worth addressing these frescos together and in light of the decoration of the House of the Ceii (8-8F) for their similarities in construction and configuration.

As with the motifs of arms in 8-8F, these depictions from other Pompeian horti also incorporate images of helmets as well as shields, indicating that there is a greater likelihood of the ancient observer associating the decorations with captured spoils than in the case of depictions of lone, round shields. Notable are the pair of helmets from the peristyle of the House of the Dioscuri (41A) and even the presence of a rostrum in the decoration from the

⁴⁹⁷ Hartswick, 2004, 125.

⁴⁹⁸ Zarmakoupi, 2014, 374.

House of the Arches (26). Depictions of suspended helmets, as well as those depicted as though attached flat to the wall can be found in Fourth Style decorations. Whilst they would generally belong in Type 3, discussed later in this chapter, their inclusion and interpretation is almost identical to these examples discussed in Type 2.⁴⁹⁹

As has already been suggested, the use of victory-themed sculptural decorations in Roman public horti could indicate that these imaginary garden scenes are building upon a connection between public gardens and military victory in the Roman world.⁵⁰⁰ Looking in more detail at the design of these imaginary horti, several common features appear. The House of the Arches and the House of the Ceii both incorporate representations of sculptural fountains, often in the form of sphinxes; these items could be speculatively linked with Hellenistic gardens or palace decorations, or perhaps even the attempt of smaller properties to allude to the more glamorous decorations of larger Roman villae.⁵⁰¹ Nilotic landscapes are a very prominent feature of many of these decorative schemes, taking up large sections of the wall in the House of the Ceii, the House of the Ephebe (13), the House of Apollo (34) and the House of the Small Fountain (36). These vistas of the Nile and Egyptian landscape were perhaps a way of reminding the ancient observer of Roman triumph over Egypt, or of the rich decoration of the Ptolemaic palaces that would have experienced such 'nilotic' views in reality, or were just fashionably exotic. By far the most

⁴⁹⁹ Several examples of suspended helmets exist. The catalogue numbers are 4A, 29A, 31, 56A and 106. All of these depictions make use of small motifs of helmets, usually positioned above a central panel painting or hung from the perspectival architecture, the exception being a particularly large and detailed depiction of a helmet from the House of Venus in the Shell (29A). The helmets can almost universally be understood as having a connection with warfare and perhaps even with *spolia*, but as 29A also demonstrates, the helmets could also be interpreted as part of the panoply of the gods. See Section 4.3.3c for the discussion of 29A.

⁵⁰⁰ See Touchette, 1998.

⁵⁰¹ Sphinxes would be interpreted as 'symbols of foreign "Egyptianity"'. See Swetnum-Burland, 2007, 123. For the possibility of connections between domestic decoration and replicating villa decorations and landscaping see Döhl & Zanker, 1984, 198-201.

ubiquitous feature, however, is the plain red background or border to which almost all of these motifs of arms are shown as attached.⁵⁰² Whilst the red backgrounds here are almost certainly not the expensive cinnabar pigment that the Romans held in such 'high esteem,' even the choice of the red colour may have implications for cultural allusions.⁵⁰³ Pliny suggests that a similar red colour was used 'in the days of the Trojan War' perhaps indicating that the depiction of weaponry items upon these red backgrounds could be referring to the mythological arms and armour of Trojan heroes.⁵⁰⁴ This may, however, be reading too much into the detail; the ancient observer may not have been as aware of this connection as Pliny. Other than cinnabar, red pigments were generally among the least expensive suggesting that this background may have been chosen for economy rather than special significance. The combination of these motifs of arms and armour with red backgrounds may simply be aesthetically pleasing to the ancient observer.

It appears that these depictions of arms and armour in gardens could support Welch's belief that the fresco decoration in the hortus of the home was adapted to provide an appropriate background for the display of captured art works in Fourth Style decorations as well as in Second Style ones. She has already specified that the hortus was 'filled with Greek art' and it may well be that these fresco decorations with their motifs of arms are part of creating the allusion to Hellenistic spaces that would be appropriate for Greek artworks.⁵⁰⁵ However, whilst this may be applicable to the elite domus found in Rome, the smaller domus of Pompeii were less likely to be housing captured artworks than their Roman counterparts.

⁵⁰² The two exceptions being items 8C and 26, which are both on yellow backgrounds.

⁵⁰³ Pliny, *Natural History*, 33, 38.

⁵⁰⁴ Pliny, *Natural History*, 33, 38.

⁵⁰⁵ Welch, 2006, 146.

Regarding the hortus decorative context, Wallace-Hadrill suggests that 'it makes little sense to debate whether these are representations drawn from real Roman gardens or from a dream world of Hellenistic *paradeisoi* precisely because the aim of the real Roman garden was to evoke the *paradeisos*.'⁵⁰⁶ On the basis of this, it seems likely that the ancient observer could interpret these motifs of arms as war booty, as symbols of Hellenistic culture and as trappings of the Roman public horti, the three concepts being interwoven and interdependent even in later Fourth Style decorations.

Images of arms and armour attached to flat walls appear to inspire a wide array of interpretations. The early stucco decorations allude to the decoration of public building in Greece or Rome. The elaborate Second Style schemes offer up links with Hellenistic palaces, Greek sanctuaries and Roman stage decorations and the Fourth Style motifs connect arms and armour with the display of public horti and their Hellenistic precedents. In all these cases, the identity of the arms as captured enemy items is possible, but is not the only meaning likely to have been extracted by the ancient observer. The sheer variety of interpretations of the wider decorative schemes provided in modern research can almost certainly be reflected onto the motifs of arms themselves. The weaponry could be Greek spoils, votive offerings, aesthetic trappings of Hellenism, 'filling motifs' and even depictions of Roman spoils in Roman public spaces.⁵⁰⁷ Alongside all of these approaches the possibility remains for a connection with the display of real weaponry on the exterior of the Roman domus. The greater flexibility of these motifs in positioning and size in comparison to the bands of decoration in Type 1 is probably partially responsible for this greater range of

⁵⁰⁶ Wallace-Hadrill, 1998a, 9.

⁵⁰⁷ Ling, 1991, 79.

interpretations and it will be interesting to see which interpretation, if any, stands out for the depictions of suspended shields discussed in Type 3.

4.3.3: Type 3, Suspended Arms.

The evidence collected in this category consists of images of arms that appear to be suspended from perspectival architecture. Just as in Type 2, the positioning of these arms within the decorative scheme is very likely to have been inspired by the display of real arms and armour in public spaces. Images of arms and armour on coins and those depicted in relief on public architecture give very little evidence for this suspended type. The only evidence from public decorations that depict suspended arms comes from the public fresco decorations of Pompeii and Herculaneum. A surviving fresco from the College of the Augustales in Herculaneum depicts single shields, in both pelta and round form, suspended from the perspectival architecture in the scheme (Figures 40, 41 & 43). The shields are generally hung in places where the decoration of the wall is 'open,' creating the impression of a space visible beyond the wall itself. These depictions of single shields are most similar to the incidence of single shields and other items discussed in Type 2. However, the decoration of the Macellum at Pompeii also demonstrates how large groups of arms and armour, more similar to the bands of arms in Type 1, are also depicted as though attached to the perspectival architecture in public spaces. The two images are similar in that they both appear above the perspectival aediculae or openings to the fictive spaces beyond the perspectival architecture. If both styles of depiction, single items and groups of arms, are found depicted in this way in domestic decorations, it seems that there is a good chance

that they were influenced by, or developed alongside, this form of representation in public decorations.

Of the examples collated in the accompanying catalogue, the number depicting suspended arms is significantly more than in other categories. There are sixty five rooms that depict examples of arms and armour suspended from perspectival architecture. Among these examples, the depictions of small, round shields that are attached to the perspectival architecture are so numerous (twenty eight rooms) that they have been separated out into a separate category – Type 3a, which is discussed separately below (Section 4.3.4). The remaining decorations in Type 3 consist of various types of arms and armour, although largely shields, which have been identified in thirty seven different rooms from the surviving domestic spaces in Italy in the scope of this thesis. The examples from the evidence catalogue have been arranged according to their date and decorative style in Table 4 (excluding Type 3a).

Table 4

Date	Style	Catalogue Number
c.200 B.C. – c.60 B.C.	First Style	-
c.60 B.C. – c.20 B.C.	Second Style	Stucco: -
		Mosaic: -
		Fresco: 2B, 12, 22/22A, 30, 82, 95/95A, 98, 113.

c.20 B.C. – c.20 A.D.	Third Style	Stucco: -
		Mosaic: -
		Fresco: 103/103A, 114.
c.20 A.D. – c.79 A.D. +	Fourth Style	Stucco: -
		Mosaic: -
		Fresco: 4A, 8B, 21, 23A, 27, 28, 29/29A, 31, 33, 40, 42, 43A, 56A, 57, 58, 64, 74, 76, 77, 80A, 81/81A, 91A, 93, 101, 106A.

As can be seen in Table 4, none of the collected depictions of suspended weapons appear in Mau's First Style. There may be several reasons for this, one being the nature of First Style decoration itself; these schemes often employ 'closed' walls consisting of illusionary masonry blocks or marble panels moulded in relief, meaning there is nothing to suspend the weaponry from.

Unlike Types 1 and 2, there is evidence for the incorporation of suspended arms and armour into Third Style decorative schemes. Whilst only two examples of fresco decoration are classified as this style (103/A & 114), the decoration from the villa excavated at Castel di Guido is particularly interesting for a number of reasons (114). As an example of suspended arms and armour this fresco is unusual for depicting a space that has obvious Roman, rather

than Hellenistic, attributes in the form of the togate figures visible in the panel painting over which the collection of arms and armour is suspended. Sanzi di Mino has interpreted the scene as a sacrifice in which the male figures are dressed in Julio-Claudian fashions.⁵⁰⁸ The scene in the panel seems to be depicting activity in a public space, indicated by the columns and formal dress of the figures within the scene. If Sanzi di Mino is correct and the figures are taking part in a sacrifice, then this places the arms and armour in a religious context, perhaps a Roman temple or sanctuary. This suggests that the arms and armour should be interpreted as votive items and as part of alluding to a religious space, similar to the collections of shields we have seen in Second Style religious contexts from Oplontis (99/99A). Sanzi di Mino goes on to suggest that the nearby anthropomorphic trophy is based upon Augustan models due to the inclusion of the round shield, which she believes has connections with victory at Actium, although this not particularly well substantiated (114A).⁵⁰⁹ This is not to say that it is impossible that the owner of the villa took part in the Actium campaigns, but the depiction of the spoils in a public religious context indicates that it is much more likely they are part of setting this scene within the domestic decoration rather than relating to the achievements of the *Paterfamilias*, just like the depictions of shields in the atrium at Oplontis (96-96E). Regardless of their connection with Augustan triumph or any other specific Roman victory, the arms are clearly meant to represent captured enemy weaponry and this is supported by the presence of the anthropomorphic trophy depicted on the pediment above these arms (114A). The arms and armour in this

⁵⁰⁸ Sanzi di Mino, 1998, 225.

⁵⁰⁹ Sanzi di Mino, 1998, 225. Sanzi di Mino gives no indication of where this connection between the round shield and Actium comes from, but it may have been inspired by the depiction of victory at Actium on the centre of Virgil's Shield of Aeneas - see Martindale, 1997, 199; Williams, 1981, 8-11. Furthermore, the use of the round shield by Egyptian troops may have developed from the adoption of the Macedonian *hypaspist* who carried a round shield - See Fischer-Bovet, 2014, 152.

Third Style decoration can be interpreted in the same way as the weaponry in Types 1 and 2: they are a part of creating the illusion or feel of a public space and architecture within Roman domestic space.

A well-known depiction of suspended Macedonian shields in a cubiculum from the villa of P. Fannius Synistor at Boscoreale (now in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) has been identified by Rutledge as ‘the exterior of a house,’ decorated with spoils in the manner described by the literary sources.⁵¹⁰ However, I believe that Bergmann’s identification of the fresco as depicting a ‘sacred edifice’ is a much more realistic interpretation.⁵¹¹ She suggests that ‘everywhere one looks there are signs of worship and sacrifice in progress’ in the scheme, making it seem likely that the ancient observer would interpret the shields as votive items that are part of alluding to a sanctuary context. A comparable religious context can also be suggested for the depiction of two suspended shields found in the decoration of Villa 6 at Terzigno (113). Whilst these shields are painted with less detail and precision than those found at Boscoreale or Oplontis, the inclusion of a Betylos below the shields indicates that these motifs could also be interpreted as votive items and that the use of shield motifs as part of alluding to sacred space was relatively common in Roman domestic decorations. Other sections of decoration from the Boscoreale villa suggest that the shields in room M should be interpreted as *spolia*. In Room H a *megalographia* fresco depicts figures that have been identified as ‘portraits of rulers of the Hellenistic East.’⁵¹² The shields displayed in room M could be designed to represent the spoils captured from these Hellenistic rulers. The shields in the Boscoreale cubiculum could, therefore, represent captured enemy arms,

⁵¹⁰ Rutledge, 2012, 129, Fig. 4.3.

⁵¹¹ Bergmann, 2010, 30.

⁵¹² Bergmann, 2010, 25.

but displayed within a sanctuary or religious space and not depicted as though in the Roman domestic sphere.

It seems that far from being part of the decoration of just one room or space, in some properties, shields and other depictions of arms and armour may have acted as a way of connecting spaces within the domus or villa. At Oplontis, the presence of shields in atrium 5, oecus 15 and in room 23 as large motifs, and in other rooms as the small, round, suspended shield motif (97, 102 & 103/ 103A), indicates the possibility of an overall theme to the decoration of some areas of the villa. To these we must add the Second Style example of a suspended shield in the triclinium of the Villa (98), which is remarkably similar in its design and position to the shields depicted in the Boscoreale cubiculum. The round Macedonian shield is hung above an entrance or gateway to a sanctuary, a cult statue appearing in the centre of the tholos behind the gate – another example of a shield motif facilitating the allusion to public space and religious display. The sacred decorative context of these items makes any interpretation of the motifs of arms more nuanced. The shields depicted could well be spoils of war, dedicated in a sanctuary setting, but they could also allude to non-military votive objects. Motifs of arms, it seems, are far more ambiguous than they would first appear.

4.3.3.1: The Pelta Shield

The remaining Second Style decorations within this category make use of a different shield motif: the pelta shield. Polito's typology indicates that the pelta shield can be interpreted as

a 'fantasy' weapon, connected with Amazon warriors in Greek art.⁵¹³ However, it could also be linked with the much more real threat of the Thracian soldier or other Oriental enemies of Rome.⁵¹⁴ Being able to identify the difference between these two interpretations of the shield is particularly difficult, if not impossible for the modern observer, so we must rely on cues from the decorative context to assist our understanding. Polito indicates that the pelta shield is present in a fresco we have already explored in Type 1, the band of decoration from the atrium of the Villa of the Mysteries (67/67A).⁵¹⁵ Here it clearly forms part of a Hellenistic repertoire, so it could be that single motifs of suspended pelta shields could lead to a similar association with Hellenism and Greek culture in domestic decorations. Picard has also suggested that the pelta could be understood as a symbol of virtue, although this is based upon much later usage of the motif than is addressed in this thesis and may be something that is not apparent in these early decorations.⁵¹⁶

Three rooms use a suspended pelta shield motif within Second Style decorations: The House of the Epigrams (30), an unnamed house at I.11.14 in Pompeii (22) and the House of Augustus on the Palatine (82). In all three the pelta is depicted as though suspended from perspectival architecture at the boundary between the upper and middle zones of decoration on the wall. All are decorated with vegetal garlands and what appears to be a ribbon or strip of red cloth attached behind the shield and that drapes down below it. The shape of the three pelta shields is virtually identical, each taking the 'single concavity' form

⁵¹³ Polito, 1998, 44.

⁵¹⁴ Polito, 1998, 45.

⁵¹⁵ Polito, 1998, 45.

⁵¹⁶ Picard, 1957, 452.

with a clearly discernible boss and rim.⁵¹⁷ The extensive similarities could indicate that, as Ling has already suggested, they are the suspended shield ‘filling motifs’ used to fill out the decorative scheme with appropriate details.⁵¹⁸ However, the prominent position of the pelta in the decoration of the House of Augustus suggests it may have more value to the decorative schemes than those in 22 and 30. The pelta shield here (82) is hung directly above the central aedicule on the west wall and is designed to be clearly visible on entry to the room. It is repeated above the aedicule on the east wall and in both cases the boss of the shield is decorated (although this is much harder to see on the east wall due to damage).⁵¹⁹ The boss decoration is an image of the goddess Victoria completing a trophy, which would indicate that these pelta shields are designed to be associated with military victory. The decoration of the rest of the room is a combination of sacred landscapes linked to the god Apollo by the presence of a quiver and blindfold, and a *scaenae frons* style stage decoration populated with theatrical masks.⁵²⁰ Allusions to theatrical décor indicate that the ancient observer could interpret these pelta shields as symbols of the myths and drama in which Amazon warriors played a part. The likelihood of the arms being connected with mythical figures and stories is supported by the depiction of an acroterial winged figure that also carries a pelta shield in the same scheme.⁵²¹ Yet the decoration of the main pelta shield with a trophy and its depiction above a sacred landscape indicate it could be understood as a votive item, perhaps even as a dedicated item of *spolia*. Neither interpretation appears prominent. Its presence within a landscape attributed to a Greek god, and its connection

⁵¹⁷ Polito, 1998, 45.

⁵¹⁸ Ling, 1991, 97.

⁵¹⁹ See Iacopi, 2008, 23-25.

⁵²⁰ Iacopi, 2008, 16.

⁵²¹ Iacopi, 2008, 28-29.

with nearby depictions of mythical creatures, perhaps a type of Amazon warrior, indicates weaponry could have been understood as a symbol of wider Greek culture, myth and learning by the ancient observer or as the symbol of the defeated barbarian 'other.'

A similar interpretation seems relevant for items 21, 22, 30 and 64. Item 21 includes a depiction of a pelta shield hung from a soffit structure directly below an Amazonomachy frieze, confirming this decorative link between the pelta and the Amazon warriors survives even into Fourth Style decorations, although item 64, found in the House of the Centenary, demonstrates that the use of the pelta could be more generic within the Fourth Style. Item 22, from the unnamed house I, 11, 14 at Pompeii, presents a remarkably similar decorative context for the pelta shield as in the House of Augustus. In this case, the pelta shield hangs in the side aedicule, a small round shield being depicted above the central aedicule instead. Beneath the pelta are depictions of theatre masks, just as in the House of Augustus, although the decoration is more 'closed' in this room, with a vista of an urban cityscape visible in only part of the central aedicule. It is in the House of the Epigrams that the full Greek symbolism of the pelta shield is revealed. In the exedra of the property the pelta shield is surrounded by panel paintings of Greek mythological subjects and even the use of Greek language in the series of epigrams that give the house its name. The pelta is clearly an integral part of this decoration helping to create the sense of a Greek, rather than a Roman, space. As such, it seems likely that we should understand the use of the pelta shield in all three of these properties as a way for the patron to demonstrate their ability to engage with Hellenistic subjects and the sense of 'learnedness' this creates.

4.3.3.2: Mixed Suspended Arms

Tightly packed depictions of weaponry were common in the band decorations of the First and Second styles, as discussed in Type 1. However, in the Fourth Style decorations the arms are now depicted as though suspended from the perspectival architecture above the *durchblick* vistas of painted aediculae. Two examples of this type are found in the House of the Coloured Capitals at Pompeii (57 & 58). Both groups of arms are clearly designed to be interpreted as spoils by the ancient observer. Drawings of the frieze from room 17 (57) indicate the shields had arrows protruding from them, the closest that we come to a visual representation of Plutarch's 'bloodied spoils' which dominated public decoration in Rome.⁵²² These weapons are clearly meant to be spoils of war. The arms grouped into an arch in room 22 (58) can similarly be interpreted as a display of captured enemy weaponry; the ancient observer would have been guided by the inclusion of the anthropomorphic trophies forming acroterial decorations on the pediment above (58A). Other images of suspended groups of arms are more difficult to interpret, although several appear to have a possible connection with naval victories. An archway of suspended weaponry in room 38 of the House of the Dioscuri (40) and a small group of arms attached to a perspectival soffit in room 'p' in the House of the Vettii (43A) are both positioned above small panel paintings depicting naval battles.⁵²³ It is uncertain if the ships are engaged in a *naumachia* battle or real naval warfare. The inclusion of some armed male figures that could be gladiators, on a

⁵²² Plutarch, *Life of Marcellus*, 21.

⁵²³ See Ling, 1991, 78.

column near to the arms in the House of the Vettii (43A) indicates that either interpretation remains viable.⁵²⁴

The final decorative scheme in the catalogue to include these groupings of suspended arms is found in the House of the Grand Portal at Herculaneum (76). Here, as in the House of the Vettii, the clusters of weaponry are repeated around the room at various intervals within a decorative band running around the middle zone of the decoration. As with the House of the Coloured Capitals (58), this room also includes depictions of anthropomorphic trophies, suggesting that the ancient observer would connect the weaponry with *spolia*. The identification of the arms as spoils seems slightly at odds with the backdrop of ‘theatrical curtains’ against which both the trophies and clusters of arms are displayed.⁵²⁵ However, as was noted in Chapter 3, theatrical decoration could include sculptural or even real arms and armour. These motifs may not be as incongruous as they first appear, particularly for the ancient observer familiar with weaponry decorating theatres and other entertainment sites, for example the paintings in the quadriporticus of the theatre at Pompeii depicting gladiatorial weaponry.⁵²⁶ The presence of rostra and depictions of tritons forming part of the architectural structures, suggests that these arms, like those in the House of the Dioscuri or the House of the Vettii, could be linked with either naval victories or naumachia. The presence of the anthropomorphic trophies in this case could be said to indicate military rather than gladiatorial victories.

⁵²⁴ For the identification of the scenes as naumachia see Avilia & Jacobelli, 1989, 131-155. The gladiatorial interpretation of this particular frieze from the House of the Vettii is discussed in greater detail in the next chapter of this thesis.

⁵²⁵ Deiss, 1966, 106.

⁵²⁶ See Chapter 3.4.7 and 3.4.8 of this thesis for both theatrical decorations and the quadriporticus at Pompeii.

Overall it seems highly likely that these suspended groups of arms were inspired by the display of real weaponry on public architecture and, as with the majority of the motifs of arms explored so far, have a role in alluding to public space. The mimesis of real captured weaponry doesn't appear to be the reason for their inclusion. Unlike in other categories these clusters of arms have an extant example of their use in public decorations; they are found in the decoration of the Macellum at Pompeii. As discussed in Chapter 3, a section of the surviving fresco from the marketplace at Pompeii includes a very similar depiction of these tightly packed arms suspended from a perspectival soffit. The similar styles of these domestic decorations and the Macellum fresco highlight how public and private fresco decorations appear to develop in parallel in Pompeii. It emphasises just how closely domestic decorations attempted to reflect the decoration of public spaces in the town, with artists using the same styles of motifs to help allude to public spaces. At the same time, both the domestic and public examples could be working from a display of real weaponry in a public space, indicating that the Macellum frescos and the domestic decorations are both attempting to construct the same idealised public backdrop.

It seems that suspended arms in Type 3 play several different roles in domestic decorations. They can be interpreted as features of religious spaces and as votive items, as we have already seen in the discussion of Type 2. We have also seen how arms and armour can be much more than a reference to Hellenistic luxury, by actually forming part of frescos that interact with Greek language and mythology to highlight the learning and cultural capital of their patron. The variation in the motifs of Type 3 perhaps indicates they are not quite the 'filling motifs' that Ling describes, but could be appreciated purely for their decorative value.

Above all, it seems that motifs of suspended arms, just like bands of arms and those on flat walls, form part of a complex visual language that was understood by the ancient observer as a way of alluding to idealised public spaces within the decoration of the Roman home.

4.3.3.3: Other Fourth Style Mixed, Suspended Arms

The depictions of suspended pelta shields and tightly packed groups of arms are two specific ways in which Fourth Style fresco decorations incorporated motifs of weapons. However, a far more general collection of depictions of suspended arms and armour is also found in this period, suggesting that whilst the size and realism of the images may have changed, they remained an appropriate and even popular motif in domestic decorations of the 1st Century AD.

We can see a number of fresco decorations incorporate images of one or two items in small groups that are shown as though suspended from the perspectival architecture. Items 23A, 27, 33 and 42, all from Pompeii, present groups of two or three items of weaponry. Item 27 from the House of Venus in the Shell at Pompeii includes an unusual small, stylised depiction of a double concavity pelta shield, combined with an oval shield. It is hung above a depiction of an exterior balcony, suggesting they allude to exterior adornments rather than weaponry displayed in a more enclosed domestic space. Items 23A and 33 incorporate other similar groups of arms displayed in this manner, with a greater emphasis on the soffit structure from which the items are hung in item 33. Item 42, from the House of the Vettii has been interpreted by Clarke as being linked to Hellenistic decoration and culture; the arms are suspended above the image of a God that Clarke identifies as Alexander the Great

in the guise of Zeus.⁵²⁷ The range of interpretations for these groups appears to remain relatively open, with the possibility of Hellenistic connections as well as religious inferences. The curtains depicted hanging from the architecture alongside the shields in Item 23A also indicate that connections with theatrical architecture and public architecture in general cannot be ruled out in these later depictions.

The remaining depictions of mixed groups of arms are found in the decoration of domus from Rome itself. Items 80A, 81 and 81A are from the decoration of a domus excavated on the Aventine in Rome. The motifs come from two very different rooms. Room A, where 80A is located, clearly demonstrates a decorative scheme that alludes to public architecture and space. Several large ionic columns have been constructed to create a portico within the room and it is likely that the small depictions of shields added to the allusion of public grandeur in this domestic reception room.⁵²⁸ In room B of the domus, a more religious theme pervades the décor with subtle references to bucrania and Dionysiac motifs, although this could similarly engage with Hellenistic culture and the cult of Dionysos.⁵²⁹ Several groups of arms are included in the fresco, suspended from the perspectival aediculae, including one further depiction of a pelta shield in 81A. This supports the Hellenistic connections within the decoration, perhaps indicating the arms allude to Hellenistic palace architecture.

⁵²⁷ Clarke, 1991, 230.

⁵²⁸ From La Domus di Largo Arrigo VII. See Boldrighini, 2003, 73-84.

⁵²⁹ The worship of Dionysos played a particularly prominent role in the celebrations of the Ptolemies, indicating that it may have been seen as a particularly regal and Hellenistic practice to refer to Dionysiac imagery. For a description of Dionysiac ritual in Alexandria see the description of the Ptolemaia by Athenaeus, *Deipnosophistae*, 197C.

Items 91A and 93, also found in Rome, form part of the decorations of the Domus Aurea of Nero. As a pseudo-public palace designed for an Emperor, the motifs of arms are more than likely to have been included to emphasise Nero's imperial power and his role as the triumphant Roman Emperor. The arms allude not only to his power, but also to the adornment of public spaces with arms: Item 91A depicts a populated *scaenae frons* style structure decorated with arms and item 93 alludes to the display of weaponry in religious contexts, the girl below the arms holding a sacrificial *patera*.⁵³⁰ It appears that whilst they may be smaller in size than earlier Second Style counterparts, the range of interpretations for motifs of arms in domestic decoration generally remains the same in these Fourth Style schemes. Naturally some of the potency of the imagery has been lost due to their reduction in size, but they still retain the capacity to allude to public architecture and space, as well as Hellenistic and religious structures. It is very difficult to view any of these images as depictions of arms and armour in the 'conspicuous' places of the Roman domus and none of them are clearly referencing a domestic display in the way that the mosaic from the vestibule of the House of Paquius Proculus in Pompeii has demonstrated. Motifs of arms are no longer a focal point of domestic decoration, they appear to have been reduced in size to become a short-hand reference to victory and power in general, above all acting as part of an iconographic language for alluding to public spaces.

4.3.3.4: Motifs of Arms as Boundary Markers

Fourth Style depictions of arms are not limited to depictions of mixed groups. A range of images of single shields and other items of armour can also be found in domestic

⁵³⁰ Iacopi, 2001, 115.

decorations. The legacy of the large round shields included most conspicuously in the atrium at Oplontis appears to live on in the Fourth Style. Along with shields depicted as though flat on the wall (Type 2), another shield in the hortus of the House of the Ceii at Pompeii falls into the suspended shield category, item 8b. This large round shield is depicted directly above the centre of the panel painting on the rear wall of the hortus, acting as a link between the activity depicted in the panel painting and the decoration of the rest of the hortus with motifs of arms. As has already been suggested in section 4.3.2b, the shields could be connected with Hellenism or gladiatorial events, suggesting that this suspended shield, although displayed differently, was likely to be subject to the same possible interpretations. The atrium of the Samnite House at Herculaneum (74) and the long corridor of the Villa of the Poppaei at Oplontis (101) both utilise a similar depiction of a suspended round shield, decorated with garlands. The positioning of the shields in the decorative scheme, above decorative vistas or *dürchblick*, is not unusual. However, the regularity with which motifs of arms are found above these perspectival vistas, regardless of their size, could indicate that there is an agenda behind including arms and armour in this location.

It is possible, if not likely, that the depiction of weaponry motifs suspended in the inter-columnar space, above the vista or entrance to another space, is developed from the display of real weaponry in this same location on public buildings. Taylor suggests that ‘the habit of suspending shields in stoas, basilicas, temples and other colonnaded structures is pervasive in Greco-Roman antiquity,’ yet the suspension of the shields in the ‘intercolumniations’ is something demonstrated only in fresco decorations.⁵³¹ As we have already seen in Chapter

⁵³¹ Taylor, 2005, 93; 93, f.31.

3, the numismatic evidence for the shields decorating the Basilica Aemilia indicates they were attached to the columns or architrave of the building and not in the intercolumniations (See Figure 9). Our evidence for real weaponry being hung in this position is the fresco decorations themselves. Whilst retaining the possibility for this inter-columnar location having been inspired by the display of real weaponry, it is also possible that motifs of arms in this particular location have a particular apotropaic role.

The motifs of arms explored in this particular type are almost always located above vistas to an illusion of a landscape or cityscape. Their position places them directly at the boundary between the 'real and imaginary spaces' in the axonometric decorative schemes and in particular, at the boundary between the depiction of an interior or inside space and a depiction of the wider landscape, be it urban or bucolic.⁵³² It is possible that motifs of arms, particularly shields, could be included in these locations as a form of boundary marker, emphasising the place at which the decoration shifts from focusing inside a space or building (usually, though not always, public) into a wider public space beyond. It would act as a useful shorthand for the ancient observer for interpreting where the perspectival extension of the room they are in ends and the suggestion of a wider landscape beyond it begins. When considering the apotropaic role of the shield as the protector of the warrior that carries it, this adds another level to the decorations. Helmets and other groups of arms

⁵³² Pappalardo, 2009, 229 discusses the concept of real and imaginary space in Roman fresco in light of the use of perspective in domestic decoration.

could also be interpreted as having this apotropaic value, particularly in light of the original purpose of the trophy and even the Roman triumph itself.⁵³³

When assessing the ancient literary descriptions of the display of captured arms in the home, the focus on thresholds or other liminal locations near the entrance to the domus appears to be a common theme.⁵³⁴ It is possible, that this positioning of the suspended shields at the boundary between depictions of 'inside' and 'outside' space is inspired by the display of real captured weaponry at these same liminal locations in the Roman home. Reviewing the depictions of the shields in the atrium at Oplontis (96 -96E), it becomes apparent that this liminal location is reflected even in depictions of shields that appear to be flat against the wall. The shields are positioned flanking a number of perspectival doors, creating the impression that the shields are located at the boundary between an indoor space and another space currently hidden from the viewer. The same is true of shields displayed in the House of the Cryptoporticus (2 & 2A). In this case the arms are displayed next to the vistas onto an urban city-scape as the wall is opened up to a vista beyond.

Returning to the Fourth Style examples in Type 3, the shield depicted in the long corridor at Oplontis (101) could be reflecting a very real boundary, for it is depicted directly above the entrance through which visitors to the villa had to pass to enter the more private and luxurious spaces of the home; in this case the shield marks the boundary between the

⁵³³ Longfellow, 2011, 197; Picard, 1957, 27-36. Longfellow (based upon Picard) believes that the apotropaic nature of trophies is developed from their ability to 'embody the spirits of those fallen warriors and so stifle their power for unleashing demonic forces.' 197. Taylor also identifies the gorgon head that is so often seen decorating shields as an 'apotropaic device,' Taylor, 2005, 196. Flower suggests that many aspects of the Roman triumphal procession were themselves apotropaic, including things as simple as the songs the soldiers sang – Flower, 1999, 106.

⁵³⁴ For example those weapons hung around the entrance to the home or in the vestibule.

agricultural, working space of the villa and the luxurious, reception rooms. The round shield also acts as a boundary marker in the House of the Samnite (74), being positioned directly above the main entrance to and from the atrium that leads to the street outside. This positioning of the motifs of arms at boundaries between the real and imaginary space could be even more significant when considering the positioning of real captured weaponry at the thresholds of the Roman home. The motifs, marking the entrances into space beyond the room in which the ancient observer stood could, therefore, be said to be conforming to the idealised positioning of real captured arms at the thresholds of the domus. Whilst not the threshold between the domus and the street, these imaginary entrances open onto wider landscapes and cityscapes that suggest a connection with the world outside the domus itself. It is possible to suggest that motifs of arms depicted in these threshold locations in fresco decorations allude to the display of real spoils of war in domestic space. This is speculative and may be pushing the allusion of the fresco decoration too far. It is also highly dependent upon how the ancient observer would have interpreted the decorative context of these motifs. Those that are depicted in frescos of public buildings or theatres cannot be said to represent arms depicted in the domus. In spite of these limitations it does seem there may have been some connection between the practices for displaying real captured arms in the home and the location of motifs of arms deployed within their decorative context.

There are invariably exceptions to this trend. Item 29 presents the depiction of a large round shield in the context of a garden scene from the House of Venus in the Shell at Pompeii. Whilst hung from the upper zone of the decoration and accompanied with

garlands and even the depiction of a helmet, the closed in wall of the scheme does not allow for the weaponry to be interpreted as a marker of a boundary in any way. It is possible that this is due to the weaponry being connected with the nearby depiction of a statue of the god Mars. This interpretation of arms and armour marking boundaries similarly finds difficulties when applied to the stucco ceiling coffers depicting arms dealt with later in this chapter (i.e. 1-1D), for it is not entirely clear what boundaries such ceiling decorations could actively define when positioned above the observer and not as part of a wider perspectival scheme. Regardless of these issues, the role of motifs of arms as boundary markers, particularly in perspectival decorations and remains a compelling idea and worthy of further research that cannot be undertaken within the scope of this thesis.

It seems highly possible that shields and the other items of arms collected in the evidence catalogue could be understood on a far more conceptual level than their connection with the display of captured enemy weaponry or their links to the design and decoration of public spaces within Roman domestic decoration. The motifs of arms could have been interpreted by the ancient observer as a form of boundary marker, guiding them in their interpretations not only of decorative fresco schemes, but also in their interpretation of the boundaries between real spaces in the Roman home and the world beyond it. The motifs were placed at entrances between the real and the imaginary, perhaps borrowing from the rules for displaying real arms. Even if this connection is an unconscious one, it demonstrates that the simple interpretation of images of weaponry in the home as captured arms is no longer a suitable 'catch-all' explanation and interpretation for these motifs.

4.3.3a: Type 3a, Stock Shield Motifs

Whilst arms and armour have already been shown to be understood in a variety of different ways by the ancient observer, we have yet to see the extent to which decorative fashions had an impact on the inclusion of motifs of arms. In some cases, the possibility has already arisen for the depictions to be nothing more than stock motifs. This idea is voiced by Ling, whose approach to images of weaponry is to interpret them as part of ‘a common fund of patterns.’⁵³⁵ Ling draws particular attention to ‘suspended shields’ as ‘stock motifs’ in domestic decorations, although as we have seen in section 4.3.3, there is a significant amount of variation in types of weaponry, colours and configuration that indicate these are not necessarily the ‘filling motifs’ to which he refers.⁵³⁶ However, analysis of the evidence in the accompanying catalogue has revealed one particular shield motif that is repeated more often than any other specific type and which keeps to a very similar form with each use; the small round shield.

These small round shields are usually no bigger than 20cm in diameter and are found attached to the perspectival architecture within decorative schemes. A typical example of this motif is item 45 from the House of the Golden Cupids at Pompeii. The shield is round and bronze, possibly responding to the hoplite style shield seen in the early stucco decorations. Virtually all of the shield motifs in this category include no central decoration, the one exception being a round shield found in the hortus of the House of the Wounded Bear at Pompeii (56). In this case the central boss depicts a gorgon head. The small size means this shield could just as easily be included in Type 3 along with the helmet suspended

⁵³⁵ Ling, 1972, 39.

⁵³⁶ Ling, 1991, 74-75; 97.

next to it (56A). Other particular exceptions to this overall theme include a silver, shield in an ala of the House of the Menander at Pompeii (19), which is also unusual for its particularly small size. A tiny bronze shield depicted in the lower zone of the decoration of the fauces of IX, 5. 6-17 at Pompeii is similarly unusual for its very small size. Finally the depiction of two very small bronze shields attached to balcony supports in an urban landscape from a room in the House of the Great Altar at Pompeii are of such a small size as to be barely noticeable in the decorative scheme. With these exceptions in mind, the rest of the motifs are markedly similar.

The examples of this shield motif collated in the evidence catalogue are by no means an exhaustive collection. In many cases where an example is included, it is one of several instances of the motif repeated around the room usually in the same position in the decoration, for example the centre of each perspectival aedicule. Furthermore, the examples included in the catalogue are highly unlikely to record all the instances of this motif in Roman domestic decoration from Italy. Other extant examples have been left out of this collection due to time constraints and limited access to sites and publications of decorations, many of which would ignore these small motifs in favour of discussing the larger and more imposing panel paintings. However, an indication of the regularity with which this motif appears and the dates at which they are used are illustrated by Table 5.

Table 5

Date	Style	Catalogue Number
c.200 B.C. – c.60 B.C.	First Style	-
c.60 B.C. – c.20 B.C.	Second Style	-
c.20 B.C. – c.20 A.D.	Third Style	-
c.20 A.D. – c.79 A.D. +	Fourth Style	Fresco: 4, 6, 7, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23, 28/28A, 32, 39, 44, 45, 47, 50, 56, 61, 62, 63, 66, 69, 93A, 94, 93A, 94, 97, 102, 103/103A, 109.

Table 5 highlights that the small, round shield motifs in Type 3a are only used in decorations from the 1st Century AD, supporting Ling's description of shields as 'stock motifs of the Fourth Style.'⁵³⁷ It is possible that this motif may not have been developed in this particular form until the Fourth Style.

This change to smaller motifs could indicate a decline in the potency or value of shield motifs in this period. The reduced visual impact of these smaller shields, and consequently

⁵³⁷ Ling, 1991, 91.

their importance within the wider decorative scheme, may have been influenced by changes to the triumphal procession during the transition from Republic to Principate. Householders in Pompeii could equally be more distanced from military engagement by the end of civil war. Both during and after the reign of Augustus, Beard suggests that the triumphal procession becomes a 'dynastic event' used to 'showcase potential heirs... or to celebrate the beginnings of reigns.'⁵³⁸ The spoils and personal honour that were once open to the majority of the Roman social elite were now restricted to a select few. This reduction in opportunity for the elite to gain personal booty was likely to have impacted on the interpretation of motifs of arms. Where they may once have supported or emphasised a patron's social position and inferred his military prowess, the lack of booty available from triumphal processions meant that the acquisition of arms and armour on a personal basis was less realistic, leading to smaller and less realistic depictions of arms and armour in domestic décor. Add to this the adoption of the *clipeus virtutis* by Augustus, which essentially monopolised the honorific shield motif as a symbol of the Emperor's virtues rather than of any male member of the Roman elite, and it seems that large realistic depictions of shields would have needed to change to reflect the situation. However, since larger and more realistic depictions of shields remain in use during these later decorations, for example those in the House of the Ceii at Pompeii (8-8F), this connection remains speculative at best.

An alternative reason for the development of these smaller shield motifs in later decorations is due to the development of the decorative Styles themselves. In Second Style

⁵³⁸ Beard, 2007, 296-297.

decorations, the perspectival architectural structures often dominated entire walls, for example Oplontis (96/96A) and the House of the Cryptoporticus in Pompeii (2/2A/2B). This allowed the artist the space to create large depictions of shields and other motifs of arms, in keeping with the scale of the rest of the decoration. However, in the later Third and Fourth Style decorations, the perspectival architecture structures depicted become smaller and less realistic. Instead of large architectural facades, schemes incorporate small aediculae and spindly pediment structures which, if decorated with a large shield motif, would appear strange and out of proportion with the decorative scheme as a whole; put simply, the larger motifs simply would not work on the perspectival architecture and aediculae of the Third and Fourth Style, so the shield motif was adapted accordingly.

The smaller shield motif is much more flexible, allowing it to be deployed in many different areas of the decorative scheme, creating the impression of a 'filling motif' although not necessarily being understood in this way by the ancient observer. Indeed many of the other interpretations are preserved: the small shields suspended above depictions of the gods in item 63 could allow them to be interpreted as indicators of religious space or as votive objects; the small shields in the House of the Golden Cupids and their accompanying anthropomorphic trophies can be seen as an allusion to the decoration of public buildings and spaces with spoils (45); the shields hung above small depictions of sphinxes in the House of the Dioscuri could be understood as Hellenistic ornament (39). The multiple interpretations of shields, therefore, are not lost due to their smaller size, but made more flexible. This flexibility may account for the large numbers of this style of depiction that are

included in the catalogue. However, these assessments are limited by the bias in the archaeological record towards Fourth Style decorations.

It appears that decorative context has a far greater impact on motifs of arms than just guiding their interpretation, for it may have guided the development of the motifs themselves. Whilst Ling's beliefs about shields being a 'stock motif' in this period could be correct, it seems limiting to assume that this is due to any decline in their usefulness or value. The shield can still allow the observer to connect the decorative scheme with sanctuaries, Greek myths and Hellenistic luxuries, but its small size is part of how it is adapted to fit with later decorative styles. This indicates that its main role, as with almost all Roman domestic decorations, is to be part of alluding to grand, public spaces within the Roman home.

4.3.4: Type 4, Columns with Arms and Armour

Another type of weaponry motif found in the 1st Century AD is the depiction of arms and armour attached to perspectival columns. The changing decorative style in these later periods, particularly the movement from realistic architectural features to more fantastical structures is probably a significant reason for the small size of the weaponry motifs in this category and Type 3a. The smaller items are more appropriate in scale to the less substantial perspectival columns. I have found six surviving decorative schemes that include examples of columns decorated with weaponry in Roman domestic spaces and they are organised according to date and style in Table 6.

Table 6

Date	Style	Catalogue Number
c.200 B.C. – c.60 B.C.	First Style	-
c.60 B.C. – c.20 B.C.	Second Style	-
c.20 B.C. – c.20 A.D.	Third Style	Fresco: 70.
c.20 A.D. – c.79 A.D. +	Fourth Style	Fresco: 38, 51, 55, 72, 108.

As indicated by Table 6, this way of incorporating weaponry motifs into domestic decoration appears to be in use in the 1st Century AD and no examples are found from earlier decorations. It is possible that this is as a result of bias towards the survival of later styles in the archaeological record and it is difficult to explain why this particular form of display is more prevalent in this later period based on any of our literary sources or archaeological discoveries. It is likely that all these examples were inspired to some extent by commemorative columns that were erected in the Republican period and perhaps even those put up in Greek cities.⁵³⁹ Columns ‘became a standard form of commemoration, especially for military victories’ in this period.⁵⁴⁰ This connection between columns and military success indicates that it is also likely that the ancient observer would interpret weaponry attached to the columns, in depictions or in reality, as spoils of war.

⁵³⁹ Gagarin, 2010, 266.

⁵⁴⁰ Gagarin, 2010, 266.

Item 55, from the House of the Quadriga at Pompeii, appears to depict one of these commemorative columns, topped with a statue and decorated with rostra and captured enemy arms and armour. The presence of the rostra, along with an anchor and rudder at the base of the column, indicates that this column relates to a naval victory, most likely based upon famous commemorative columns in the Forum Romanum that are described by our literary sources. The columns of C. Duilius and Aemilius Paullus are both described as being decorated with the captured rostra from the naval battles and topped with statues in order to celebrate significant naval triumphs.⁵⁴¹ Although part of a panel painting, this image from the House of the Quadriga is interesting in that it demonstrates that columns could be hung with captured enemy arms and armour as well as rostra, something that is overlooked by the literary descriptions and which may indicate that all of the examples discussed in this section relate to these commemorative columns. The depiction with the greatest sense of realism is found decorating a room in the Second Villa complex adjacent to the Villa of Arianna at Stabiae (108). Attached to a wider, more substantial depiction of a column than some of the more flimsy Fourth Style architecture, this pair of shields (one oval, one round) are designed to be seen not only from within the room in which they are located, but also from the corridor that stretches out along the unexcavated peristyle just outside. The rest of the surviving decoration within the room gives little or no clues for how to interpret the shields, but their position in this prominent location in the property suggests that they were designed to be noticed by the ancient observer. It is likely that the depiction is based upon these commemorative columns from the Forum in Rome or the display of weaponry attached to columns rather than the spaces between on public

⁵⁴¹ For C. Duilius see Pliny *Natural History*, 34, 20. For Aemilius Paullus see Livy, 42, 20,1.

buildings or perhaps even on single columns found in sanctuary sites.⁵⁴² The public connection between shields and columns could have been inspired by the display of Augustus' *clipeus virtutis*. A coin from the Principate depicts the honorific shield attached to a column, which Zanker suggests 'recalls the display in the Curia.'⁵⁴³ It is possible, that these later displays of shields on columns could have been inspired by the display of the *clipeus virtutis*, although the differing types of shields on display, other than the round form commonly associated with the honorific shield, indicate that whilst alluding to the honorific shield, these motifs of arms are not direct replicas of them. In fact, the majority of the depictions utilise other, more unusual types of shields in combination with other items of weaponry.

Item 38, from the House of Meleager in Pompeii, includes a sub-rectangular style shield with a spear, whilst item 51 from the House of the Golden Bracelet at Pompeii includes a particularly unusual figure of eight style shield. It is not entirely clear what barbarian ethnicity this shield belongs to, but it is recurrent in domestic decoration from the Bay of Naples, whilst Polito's catalogue of sculptural depictions of arms gives only one extant example of this shield type in a frieze from an unknown monument in Bologna.⁵⁴⁴ The remaining depictions of shields and arms attached to columns in items 70 and 72 appear to form small collections of weaponry that consist of helmets and spears as well as shields.

⁵⁴² Of note here is the depiction of a sanctuary scene in the fish mosaic from Praeneste and a similar example from Palestrina. The single column, part of a shrine or sanctuary, is decorated with a shield suspended from it, perhaps indicating this was a way for captured arms or votive items to be displayed in sanctuary settings. See Meyboom, 1995, 336, n.6.

⁵⁴³ Zanker, 1990, 96, fig.80.

⁵⁴⁴ For example, part of the anthropomorphic trophies in the House of the Grand Portal at Herculaneum (item 76A), in the wider scheme of room e in the House of the Vettii (Item 42, but not pictured) and even in the stucco decorations found at the Villa of the Papyri (78). For the sculptural depiction, see Polito, 1998, 211, fig. 156.

Both also include a depiction of a *carnyx*, which in the case of item 72, is likely to be connected with Gallic or Northern enemies due to its animal-head shape.⁵⁴⁵

In all of these images, the decorative context of the weaponry gives us very few clues as to how to interpret them, other than as a way of alluding to the display of captured arms in public spaces. Considering this in light of the public painted decorations of helmets attached to a column that was recently uncovered in the excavation of the Basilica at Herculaneum, it seems reasonable to suggest that these images of columns decorated with weapons are part of a public visual language rather than a private one, adopted by domestic decorations to help allude to such public spaces.⁵⁴⁶

4.3.5: Type 5, Shield Racks.

This category is unusual for it presents evidence for the possible existence of a structure that is not specifically described in the surviving literary accounts: the shield rack. In these fresco decorations, shields are depicted as though attached to a pair of wooden or metal struts between columns, effectively forming a rack. The racks are included in keeping with the perspectival architecture, assisting in creating depth of field and are clearly based upon real racks used to display shields. It is not entirely clear if the racks were developed for public or domestic displays and the literary accounts make no mention of anything that bears any resemblance to them. Unlike the evidence for Types 3a and 4, the depictions of shields in these racks are found in both the Second and Fourth Styles, outlined in Table 7.

⁵⁴⁵ Polito, 1998, 59.

⁵⁴⁶ For the painting from the Basilica at Herculaneum, see Chapter 3.

Table 7

Date	Style	Catalogue Number
c.200 B.C. – c.60 B.C.	First Style	-
c.60 B.C. – c.20 B.C.	Second Style	Fresco: 96D, 96E.
c.20 B.C. – c.20 A.D.	Third Style	-
c.20 A.D. – c.79 A.D. +	Fourth Style	Fresco: 15, 37, 80, 111.

The presence of the racks in the Second Style decorations at Oplontis (96D & 96E) helps to support the suggestion that these depictions are based upon the real display practices for weaponry. The detail and large size of the shields emphasises their importance and realism in the atrium fresco, indicating that the rack that holds them is also likely to have been developed from realistic display practices. As discussed in section 4.3.2a above, the atrium decoration of the Villa of the Poppaei has been interpreted in several different ways, but the most convincing arguments suggest that the arms are represented as though in a public setting rather than a private one, helping to create a sense of the grandeur of public space within the villa itself.⁵⁴⁷ The racks in the Oplontis decoration have not gone entirely unnoticed by previous scholarship. Fejfer describes the shields as being contained ‘in a kind

⁵⁴⁷ See Zarmakoupi, 2014, 50; Pappalardo, 2009, 71; Hales, 2003, 52:152; Clarke, 1991, 113.

of “plate rack” consisting of two wooden beams.’⁵⁴⁸ In spite of this, little attention has been paid to interpreting or understanding the display of the shields in this way.

Item 15 is another depiction of shields displayed in these racks and is finished with the same attention to detail as the fresco from the villa at Oplontis. However, whilst the shields in items 96D & 96E are clearly designed to depict *spolia*, Item 15 depicts portrait shields. As has already been discussed, portrait shields or *clipeatae imagines* are a very different form of commemoration to captured arms. Pliny has indicated that these portraits were found in both public and private spaces, which means it is more difficult to discern if these frescos are referring to public spaces and public architecture or to the decoration of the elite domus atrium.⁵⁴⁹ It is possible that in the case of Item 15 from the House of the Beautiful Impluvium at Pompeii and in the atrium of the Villa at Oplontis the decoration is deliberately ambiguous allowing references to both public architecture and domestic space. However, the development of Roman fresco decoration based upon the architecture of both Greek and Roman public spaces suggests that these frescos may refer to public decorations and spaces to allude to these structures within the home. This desire for realism in the Second style decorations, may go some way towards the inclusion of these racks in domestic fresco decoration as a way of alluding to the display of shields in this way in public spaces.

As with most of the motifs of arms explored in this chapter, the shields depicted in racks in the Fourth Style decorations appear to be smaller in size than their Second Style counterparts. Item 37, found decorating the fauces in the House of Meleager at Pompeii,

⁵⁴⁸ Fejfer, 2008, 156.

⁵⁴⁹ Pliny, *Natural History*, 35, 13.

incorporates a repeated motif of a bronze shield in wooden racks. As a small part of the wider perspectival architecture, these shields are less obvious than their larger, Second Style predecessors in the villa at Oplontis. However, the fact that the use of this motif continues across the period into the Fourth Style indicates that it must retain some symbolic value, even in these later decorations. Bronze, round shields are found in a similar simplified rack depicted in the villa of San Marco at Stabiae (111). The small cubiculum of the villa repeats the motif of a singular bronze shield on one of the racks either side of the central aedicule and on the opposing wall of the room, suggesting that the motif was supposed to form part of the focal point of the decoration and was considered to be both appropriate and perhaps even important within the scheme as a whole.

The final example of these racks are found in the decoration of a house excavated on the Aventine in Rome (80). The shields depicted in racks are found in room A of this domus, which has already been described in section 4.3.3.3 and which has a clear agenda for alluding to the architecture and trappings of public space. In this case the shields in the rack are silver rather than bronze, although their small size does not indicate that they held any particular importance within the overall scheme other than being another part of the allusive iconographic language of public space that has become a pervasive theme in the interpretation of motifs of arms.

In all these decorations, both Second and Fourth Style, the depictions of shields in racks seems likely to have been based upon a real way of displaying shields in either public or private spaces. Their use for portrait shields as well as military shields highlights the difficulties of interpreting if the racks refer to public or private displays of weaponry, but the

sense of realism they create remains apparent, even in later and smaller depictions. This realism is what ultimately appears to indicate that the artist or patron included them as part of a wider allusive decorative language, most likely inspired by public spaces, as has been seen throughout the interpretation of motifs in all of the categories explored so far.

4.3.6: Type 6, Motifs of Arms in Coffers

Coffered motifs were used in all three of the main media in Roman domestic decoration (stucco, mosaic and fresco), as well as in the construction of decorative wooden ceilings.⁵⁵⁰

The evidence in the catalogue indicates that unlike in the previously explored types, coffers with motifs of arms are only found in stucco decorations. Type 6 encompasses several motifs that have already been explored in the analysis of Type 1: bands of arms and armour. Both the stucco panel from the *basis villae* of the Villa of the Papyri (78) and the ceiling coffers from the House of Augustus in Rome (83 & 85-85D) demonstrate the use of a coffered structure to display large groups of weaponry motifs.⁵⁵¹ The coffers discussed in this type incorporate smaller groups of arms and are generally square rather than rectangular.

The chronological analysis of the other types discussed in this chapter have demonstrated a relatively continual presence of motifs of arms in Roman domestic decoration from the 1st

⁵⁵⁰ For example, a series of painted wooden ceiling coffers belonging to the House of Telephus at Herculaneum were uncovered during excavations in 2008. See Camardo et al, 2010, 318-322. These coffers are decorated with rosettes and other Hellenistic imagery, but the fragments are not, at this time, believed to include motifs of arms and armour.

⁵⁵¹ Items 85-85D form part of a larger frieze. Based upon the general coffered design of the ceiling in rooms 8, 8a and 10 in the House of Augustus it seems extremely likely that fragments 85-85D would have been contained within a coffered structure of some sort, similar to item 83, which no longer survives.

Century BC through to the end of the 1st Century AD. However, whilst Fourth Style decorations have often been the most numerous in the other types of display, the distribution of the coffered decorations indicates that the majority of the examples belong to Second Style decorative schemes rather than Fourth Style ensembles, as shown in Table 8:

Table 8

Date	Style	Catalogue Number
c.200 B.C. – c.60 B.C.	First Style	-
c.60 B.C. – c.20 B.C.	Second Style	Stucco: 1-1D, 84, 115.
		Mosaic: 3, 54, 87, 112/A.
		Fresco: -
c.20 B.C. – c.20 A.D.	Third Style	Mosaic: 10/A.
c.20 A.D. – c.79 A.D. +	Fourth Style	Mosaic: 106, 107.

The prevalence of Second Style decorations could be as a result of fashion or popular style choices in this period, yet the survival of these decorations through to at least 79 AD indicates that such decorations remained desirable in later decorative schemes. The table also highlights that coffered decorations were still created as part of Third and Fourth Style decorations. It is possible that such coffered decorations were appreciated for an ‘antiquarian’ value as well as an aesthetic one. An analysis of the decorative context of the

coffers collected in the catalogue should give an indication of how they could have been interpreted in a variety of domestic decorative schemes.

Previous studies of coffered decorations in public and private contexts have linked them with stucco coffers in domestic decorations. An extensive study of Roman stucco by Ling has demonstrated that 'it was normal' to have stucco coffers decorating the ceiling of elite Roman domus and villae, particularly 'by the middle of the 1st Century BC.'⁵⁵² Ling also notes that it was common for these coffers to 'contain reliefs of armour,' supporting the hypothesis that such motifs were fashionable and suitable for home decoration in this period.⁵⁵³ It seems entirely credible to suggest a Greek precedent for the use of coffers in Roman public buildings and consequently their use in domestic decorations; Webb outlines the use of 'figured coffers' in several extant Hellenistic buildings including the Belevi mausoleum, but suggests that this was 'the rarest form of architectural sculpture' in this period and that figural decoration in coffers declined after the 3rd Century BC.⁵⁵⁴ In spite of this apparent decline, Ulrich highlights how coffered ceilings became 'a vehicle for the ostentatious demonstration of wealth' in the Republican period, indicating that the coffered ceiling had been adapted as a way of bringing the grandeur of Hellenistic and Roman public decoration into the private sphere.⁵⁵⁵

Ling's interpretation of the depictions of armour in stucco coffers is very similar to his views on the fresco depictions of suspended shields that were explored in Type 3a; 'items from... military repertoires are particularly favoured... [But] it is unlikely that these subjects were

⁵⁵² Ling, 1972, 42.

⁵⁵³ Ling, 1972, 42.

⁵⁵⁴ Webb, 1996, 22: 77.

⁵⁵⁵ Ulrich, 2008, 165; Manilius, *Astron*, 5.291-293.

normally chosen for other than their decorative value.’⁵⁵⁶ Whilst the motivation for incorporating coffers into the decoration of Roman homes undoubtedly had some level of aesthetic motivation, with the addition of weaponry motifs it seems limiting to view the motifs in just this way. The earliest examples of coffered decoration in the catalogue belong to the Second Style. Stucco coffers from the House of the Cryptoporticus in Pompeii (1-1D), The House of Augustus in Rome (84) and a concrete vault decoration from Formiae (115) combine with stucco bands of arms, also contained within coffer structures that have been included in the discussion of Type 1 in this chapter (items 78, 83, 85-85D). Mosaics from the House of the Cryptoporticus (3), the House of Caesius Blandus in Pompeii (54), a villa from the Via Ardeatina (87) and the villa of the Volusii Saturnini (112-112A) also belong to this early period.⁵⁵⁷

4.3.6a: Stucco

The stucco decorations from the House of the Cryptoporticus (1-1D) and a surviving square coffer from room 8 in the House of Augustus in Rome (84) are remarkably similar in construction. The square coffers surrounded by an *ionic kyma* suggests a pattern-book approach or a universal mould for this overall design, the difference being in the weaponry depicted in each coffer. Both sets of stucco decorations suggest that they would once have been augmented with precious gems or metals to emphasise their grandeur, particularly in the case of the shield boss from item 84. There is, however, no clear evidence at present to show if these coffers were painted. The range of armour depicted in the coffers is quite

⁵⁵⁶ Ling, 1972, 45.

⁵⁵⁷ Also likely to belong to this category is Item 105, a fragment of stucco surviving from the decoration of a villa at Apulia. However, without any other fragments surviving to give a bigger picture of how the fragment was included in the decoration, this item remains elusive and almost impossible to interpret.

diverse. Item 84 depicts a rectangular shield that Polito has suggested is connected with Germanic enemies or tribes.⁵⁵⁸ The coffers from the House of the Cryptoporticus (1-1D) depict a range of different weaponry including oval shields, rectangular shields and sub-rectangular shields, some of which could also be linked to Germanic 'barbarian' panoplies (1A & 1C). It is possible that the oval shields (1B & 1C) could be identified as Roman Republican equipment appearing similar to shields on the Altar of Domitius Ahenobarbus and described by Polybius and accompanied by what could be a gladius. However, we must of course allow for the breadth of personalisation and variety in early Roman military equipment.⁵⁵⁹ Item 1D adds a more fantastic interpretation to the scheme, the pelta shield often being connected with Thracian enemies and fantasy Amazon warriors. This could be extended to a more general 'oriental' interpretation when considering the curved *sica* blade in item 1C. The combination of arms in these coffers and item 84 with the rest of the arms depicted in the stucco from the House of Augustus (83 & 85-85D) could indicate that this choice of weaponry, whilst based on real items, was not designed to infer specific conflicts or victories. Instead, it was a way of inferring the symbolic power of captured arms in general.

A further coffer was uncovered in the decoration of a concrete nymphaeum from Formiae (115). Whilst this is not a stucco decoration its construction appears remarkably similar so it has been included here, the round shields perhaps linking to Greek ornament or Roman public building decorations. Sadly in the case of both items 115 and 84, the decorative

⁵⁵⁸ Polito, 1998, 43; See also Chapter 3 of this thesis, Figure 6.

⁵⁵⁹ Item 1 in particular appears to show a number of similarities to Republican Roman scuta depicted on the Altar of Domitius Ahenobarbus and as described by Polybius as being typical of legionary equipment in the second half of the 1st Century BC, around the same time that these stucco reliefs were produced. See Travis, 2014, 16 and Polybius, *The Histories*, 1.22, 5: 6.23,3.

context for the coffers is lost making it impossible to continue to assess the role these weaponry motifs played. The detail in their incised decorations and the probably use of metal and gem adornments supports Ulrich's suggestion that the coffers were a way of demonstrating power and wealth.⁵⁶⁰ Whilst we can learn little more from these fragments it is already apparent that motifs of arms in coffers could have helped to portray the wealth and importance of their patron and could relate to Greek or Roman public precedents, adding more than just aesthetic value.

Fortunately, some of the decorative context for the stucco decorations from the House of the Cryptoporticus has survived (1-1D). The stucco decorations were accompanied by a series of twenty five small frescos depicting scenes from the Trojan Wars. These literary allusions were popular because 'the domini could show how well educated they were' by including them in their domestic decorations.⁵⁶¹ Putting the stucco decorations in the context of these allusions indicates a militaristic theme to the décor as well as a desire to present Greek learning and knowledge of Greek culture and mythology. However, the variety of weaponry depicted in the coffers is not of the types we would expect to be linked to Greek and Trojan armies. This would be the round hoplite shield, not the *sica* and *pelta*. A connection with Hellenistic decorations also remains possible. Many of the same motifs are depicted as part of the Pergamum reliefs and Zarmakoupi suggests that the architectural form of the cryptoporticus itself, where the stucco is found, was used as a connection with Hellenistic architecture and ideals.⁵⁶² Whilst inevitably playing upon the Roman practice of displaying captured enemy weaponry in the home, these coffers could even allow the

⁵⁶⁰ Ulrich, 2008, 165.

⁵⁶¹ Moorman, 2012, 79.

⁵⁶² Zarmakoupi, 2010, 50.

observer to recall gladiatorial combats, for example the arms in item 1C could have been inspired by the arms of 'Thracian' gladiator types.⁵⁶³ It may be that the weaponry chosen is deliberately diverse and ambiguous to give a sense of fantasy to the design or perhaps even to encourage multiple readings of the decoration. However, the decorative context of items 1-1D suggest connections with a presentation of Greek learning and the sophistication this could lend to its patron, whilst its stucco construction brings allusions to the decoration of public buildings to the fore.

The closest many of the representations come to a replication of captured weaponry is by the form of the representations themselves – stucco – being used to create the impression of Roman public architectural design. Ling's analysis of Roman decor has shown that ceiling decorations were 'influenced by their treatment in monumental architecture,' with stucco being preferable in these decorations, as they allowed 'a truer approximation, in physical terms, to the stone and wooden coffers of monumental architecture.'⁵⁶⁴ This appears to be true of the examples addressed here and re-emphasises how the weaponry included in the stucco is clearly designed to reflect similar depictions of weaponry in monumental sculpture, such as the reliefs from Sant Omobono or Pergamum. Whilst a Roman desire for Hellenistic decorations may have been a driving force behind the inclusion of stucco in the domus and villae, their connection with the public display of captured arms and armour cannot be denied. The display of mixed piles of weapons in the triumph is something that the Roman observer would have been familiar with as a symbol of triumph and success. This

⁵⁶³ A more detailed discussion of gladiatorial links and interpretations is found in Chapter 5 of this thesis.

⁵⁶⁴ Ling, 1991, 42.

connection alone would explain the inclusion of such motifs in stucco within domestic decoration.

The decoration of the exterior of Roman homes with privately captured arms would probably have made it appear equally acceptable to decorate the interior of the home with replicas of weapons that are on public display. What appears certain is these depictions of weapons, although displayed in a style that the modern and Roman observer would instantly connect with captured arms and armour, are not directly linked to the display of genuine captured items of weaponry in the conspicuous places of the home and they do not attempt to imitate the display practices or the value that such items hold. The closest the stucco weaponry comes to these practices is by the fact that they are included in the domestic decoration at all, something that Wallace-Hadrill suggests is entirely 'Roman.'⁵⁶⁵ The preservation of early stucco decorations in later schemes could have been decided as a financial measure, the design and installation of an entirely new stucco scheme for a ceiling inevitably being a considerable expense for even the wealthiest Romans. The preservation of the same decorations for nearly a century implies that these depictions of enemy weaponry remained important and valued in Roman domestic decoration and they may have held more importance in the commemoration of victory within the home than their locations would indicate.

4.3.6b: Mosaics

Unlike the stucco coffers explored above, coffered mosaics containing motifs of arms are found across the Second to Fourth Pompeian Styles. Four Second Style examples are found

⁵⁶⁵ Wallace-Hadrill, 2008, 204.

in the catalogue that incorporate these motifs of arms and armour. Ling's approach to the coffered mosaics is to suggest that they are developed from the lacunar structures of the ceilings and vaults discussed above; he suggests that the mosaic decorations 'had served their apprenticeships on vaults.'⁵⁶⁶ The key evidence that Ling presents for the similarities between the coffered mosaics and ceilings is the decoration of the House of the Cryptoporticus at Pompeii. This is the same domestic space where stucco coffers 1-1D were found. Ling's connection between the floor and ceiling designs appears to be confirmed by the presence of a coffered threshold mosaic found in an oecus of the domus (3). Item 3, also like the stucco ceiling fragments of 1-1D, incorporates motifs of arms and armour.

This mosaic, completed in polychrome tesserae, depicts a small panoply of arms, including a sub-rectangular shield, a helmet with cheek pieces and feather decorations, a spear and what appears to be a gladius sword. The arms could represent a Republican Roman legionary's equipment, the sub-rectangular shield motif showing some similarities to a real shield discovered during excavations at Kasr el-Harit.⁵⁶⁷ However, a lack of uniformity for Republican legionary equipment makes it seem less likely that these motifs would represent something so variable unless especially idealised.⁵⁶⁸ The mosaic incorporates several coffers, only one of them containing motifs of arms. The rest of the mosaic band consists of a gorgon head and Hellenistic rosette motifs, perhaps indicating that the mosaic, like the stucco coffers in the Cryptoporticus (1-1D) is inspired by Greek precedents, mythology and ideals.

⁵⁶⁶ Ling, 1991, 48.

⁵⁶⁷ Sekunda, 2004, 6.

⁵⁶⁸ Sekunda, 2004, 6.

Three other Second Style mosaics of arms and armour in coffers are found in the catalogue. A coffered threshold band from the villa of the Volusii Saturnini (112/A) is similar in construction to that found in the House of the Cryptoporticus (3), indicating that this way of using motifs of arms could have been popular in mosaic decorations across Italy and not just in the Bay of Naples. Polito dates the polychrome mosaic in Room 18 of the villa of the Volusii Saturnini as from the end of the Republican period, although Dunbabin specifically dates them to between 60 and 50 BC.⁵⁶⁹ Unlike in item 3, the motifs of arms in 112/A are the only figural motifs in the scheme, suggesting that they may have held greater importance in their own right than those in the Cryptoporticus mosaic (3). It could be suggested that the choice of arms in these coffers responded to Germanic panoplies, the 'S' shaped decoration on the shields being a feature known from Caesar's trophies in Rome.⁵⁷⁰ However, such a link cannot be definitively proven. This is compounded by a lack of decorative context for the mosaics. The same is true for a threshold mosaic from the House of Caesius Blandus in Pompeii (54). In spite of being discovered in Pompeii, little of the accompanying fresco decoration has survived. Unlike items 3 and 112/A the weaponry here is more fantasy based, with the Amazonian pelta shield suggesting at Greek precedents and lightning bolt motifs that are associated with gods or Hellenistic ornament.⁵⁷¹

Contrasting with these three threshold mosaics explored above, the last Second Style mosaic in this category is on a much larger scale, encompassing what was likely to have been an entire room. The polychrome mosaic was found during the excavation of a villa on the Via Ardeatina (87). Unfortunately, the decorative context of the mosaic has not survived

⁵⁶⁹ Polito, 1998, 132; Dunbabin, 2003, 57. Fig. 54.

⁵⁷⁰ Polito, 1998, 32; 44.

⁵⁷¹ D'Amato & Summer, 2009, 32.

and the mosaic is now part of the Vatican museum collections. According to Werner, 'most conspicuous in this pavement are the number of motifs that come from a recurring military type. In addition to the ships there are shields, helmets and lightening bundles.'⁵⁷² The military theme is completed by a 'tondo with a gorgoneion' at the centre, similar to the tondo in item 3.⁵⁷³ Werner believes that the mosaic 'must belong to the Republican period, but dates to around the middle of the 1st Century BC.'⁵⁷⁴ The range of weaponry depicted in this mosaic includes oval shields of various types (including those with and without a central boss and spine), round shields with spears, rectangular shields and pelta shields. Alongside the collections of weaponry are theatre masks, also in coffers. The detail of the mosaic indicates it must have been an expensive commission, chosen by the patron to reflect his high social status. The captured arms, therefore, in combination with the theatre masks were probably intended to reinforce the impression of elite social status. The presence of a series of ships at one end of the mosaic could indicate that it is linked to a naval battle or perhaps a naumachia, but without any other contextual details to work from this must remain speculative.

These Second Style Coffered mosaics appear to fit with a desire for Greek culture, mythology and learning above all, although we cannot dismiss the possibility that they could connect with the display of gladiatorial arms or even spoils of war.

⁵⁷² Werner, 1998, 284.

⁵⁷³ Werner, 1998, 280.

⁵⁷⁴ Werner, 1998, 284.

4.3.6c: Third and Fourth Style Examples

The surviving Third and Fourth Style coffered mosaics in this catalogue are all found on the Bay of Naples. An atrium mosaic from the House of Paquius Proculus in Pompeii belongs to the Third Style (10/10A), whilst mosaics from the Villa of Arianna (106) and the Second Complex (107) next to it are attributed to the Fourth Style. No ‘threshold’ mosaics are found in these later styles, the mosaics instead covering the entire floor, as in items 10/10A and 106, or forming a central decorative square as in item 107.

Items 10 and 10A are found in a coffered border surrounding the impluvium in the House of Paquius Proculus. The coffers here are smaller than those that cover the rest of the floor and a wide range of different motifs are depicted. Birds, lions, nautical motifs, tritons, hunters, warriors and even basic renderings of what could be *clipeatae imagines* are found in the scheme along with arms and armour. This is in stark contrast to the monochrome mosaic from the Villa of Arianna (106) which repeats the same motif of a pair of sub-rectangular shields throughout the design. The mixture of motifs in items 10/10A indicates a likely connection with Greek precedents or artworks. The lions are a motif most commonly associated with Alexander the Great and Hellenistic Kings. However, the presence of a rostrum could also indicate a connection with naval victories or naumachia rather than a desire for Greek adornment. The motifs are clearly designed to be visible from the entrance to the domus and the atrium itself, being exposed to the greatest amount of access.⁵⁷⁵ Remembering that access to the coffers of items 10 and 10A can only be gained by first encountering the more ‘realistic’ depiction of spoils of war on display in the vestibule

⁵⁷⁵ Lauritsen, 2012, 107.

mosaic of the home (9) it is likely that this first visual encounter will influence the visitor to the property to view the coffered arms in the atrium as an extension of this reference to spoils of war. A connection with military victory can also be supported by the presence of rostra in item 10A, but their combination with Greek motifs means it is virtually impossible to tell if the mosaic is referring to a victory won by the patron of the home, or if it is a more generic reference to great victories like that displayed in the Alexander Mosaic in the nearby House of the Faun.

The mosaic from the Villa of Arianna is even harder to connect with specific military victories. The shields that are used in this mosaic appear in pairs, overlapping each other at right angles. Polito indicates that these shields are most commonly linked to a Germanic origin, although they could also be connected with Northern barbarian populations, but this does little more to explain their inclusion here.⁵⁷⁶ The depiction of a number of helmets in the fresco decoration of the room suggests that the artist may have wanted the observer to connect the helmets on the walls with the shields on the floor, creating a sense of a panoply. However, there is little other decorative detail to add sense or a greater meaning to the inclusion of the arms here. Their combination with the tessellated coffered pattern serves only to emphasise a more fashionable or decorative reason for their inclusion. The same can be said of the mosaic found in the nearby Second Complex (107). The mosaic is no longer in situ, now forming part of the collection at Naples Archaeological Museum and its original decorative context has since been lost.⁵⁷⁷ The mosaic includes pelta shields, which could suggest a link with mythological 'Amazonian' defeats popular in Hellenistic decorative

⁵⁷⁶ Polito, 1998, 43.

⁵⁷⁷ Bonifacio & Sodo, 2002, 113.

culture or the defeat of an eastern barbarian force. The loss of the decorative context for the mosaic makes it extremely difficult to suggest anything other than a decorative purpose for the mosaic and it could be suggested that by the time of Fourth Style decorations these mosaics of arms have begun to lose their potency and relevance as symbols of war and conquest, being viewed as decorative motifs instead.

The use of motifs of arms in coffered stucco and mosaic decorations shows a similar range of possible interpretations to that seen in other types of motifs explored in this chapter. The coffer itself, providing a border for each small depiction of arms, could be said to add a more 'decorative' element to the motifs of arms, lessening their impact in the scheme as a whole, particularly when the same motifs are repeated multiple times as a pattern rather than depicted as single friezes or items with greater impact on the viewer. The weaponry appears to be regularly connected with 'barbarian' enemies of Germanic origin or Amazons, suggesting that the ancient observer would have been able to associate the motifs with both real and fictitious victories. However, the decorative ensemble from the House of the Cryptoporticus suggests that a Hellenistic theme or interpretation could be equally applicable; the combination of *pinakes* depicting the fall of Troy and stucco coffers with varied arms could suggest that these motifs were based on Hellenistic precedents or themes, in spite of Webb's suggestion that figured motifs were particularly rare in Hellenistic decorations. Unfortunately, a lack of information about the decorative context of the majority of the mosaics means it is difficult to interpret these motifs in the same way the ancient observer would have. It seems equally possible, therefore, that the arms could

be understood as spoils of war, symbols of Hellenistic luxury and power and as purely decorative items based upon trends in ceiling design.

4.4: Conclusions

The analysis of the motifs collected in this chapter has uncovered a great deal of useful information about how and why motifs of arms and armour have been used in Roman domestic decorations. The organisation of the evidence into a typology has highlighted a number of interesting features about the use of motifs of arms throughout the period under study and can give some indication of how the different types of motif developed in domestic decorations. Very few First Style decorations appear to survive with depictions of arms intact; only four rooms in the accompanying catalogue include decorations from this Style and period. Moving into the period of Mau's Second Style there is a rapid increase in the use of motifs of arms and armour. The accompanying catalogue includes thirty two different rooms that utilise motifs of arms and armour in Second Style decorations. This is an eight-fold increase on the number of examples of motifs of arms found in the surviving decorations and 27% of the catalogue. It is likely that more domus and villae would have originally utilised motifs of arms in Second Style decorative schemes that have since been painted over, the decorations from the House of M. Fabius Rufus (59) providing a vivid demonstration of how older schemes including arms and armour could be painted over in later years. Painted bands of arms, probably evolving from the terracotta friezes of the First Style and larger sculptural counterparts, are more common in Second Style decorations, indicating that this particular way of depicting arms and armour was at its most popular in

this period. No new decorative bands are created as part of Third or Fourth Style decorations, suggesting they may have waned in popularity or suitability for domestic decoration in the 1st Century AD, but the preservation of earlier frescos still indicates that the motifs held some importance or prestige that would encourage their preservation.

Third Style decorations containing motifs of arms and armour are relatively uncommon; only six rooms in the accompanying catalogue present obviously identifiable Third Style decorations that incorporate weapons. The spindly architecture of the new style and its movement away from the realism of Second Style compositions may have played some part in reducing the number of motifs of arms depicted in this period, although we cannot be entirely certain of the cause. The number of rooms incorporating arms into Fourth Style decorative schemes is the largest; seventy five rooms, 64% of the evidence provided in the accompanying catalogue, comes from this later decorative style. The destruction of Pompeii and Herculaneum in 79 AD is almost certainly responsible for the preservation of so many decorative schemes belonging to this period, for the Fourth Style was contemporary with the eruption and many houses were being redecorated in this Style following the earthquake of 62 AD. Whilst this does not necessarily mean that there was a sudden resurgence of interest in motifs of arms for the composition of Fourth Style decorations, it does suggest, taking the bias of the archaeological record into account, that motifs of arms developed as a component of fresco decorations that increased in popularity in Second Style decorations and continued to play a role in the construction of domestic decorative schemes in the Third and Fourth Styles until at least 100 AD.

Reviewing the types of motifs used in each of the styles, as demonstrated in the various tables incorporated in this chapter, has shown that some types of motifs are exclusive to particular decorative styles, whilst others are found throughout the period under study. In First Style decorations the bands of arms (Type 1) and shields tend to be sculpted depictions, most likely based upon public monumental precedents. Motifs from Types 1, 2, 3, 5 and 6 are all found in the Second Style with the largest and most impressive examples being found in the Villa at Oplontis (96-96E). The range of motifs demonstrated in the Third Style examples is limited to Types 3a, 4 and 6. Decorations from the Fourth Style, as well as being the most numerous, also demonstrate the widest variety of types of motif with several types appearing only in this period. Motifs from Types 2, 3, 3a, 4, 5 and 6 are all present in Fourth Style decorative schemes, with the evidence for Type 3a belonging only to this Style. It seems likely, therefore, that some of these types of motifs were developed for later decorative styles as a result of the popularity of arms and armour motifs in earlier decorative schemes. Suggesting the cause of these developments and changes overall is more difficult.

At this beginning of this chapter I ventured several hypotheses for how motifs of arms and armour were likely to have been interpreted by the ancient observer when used in domestic decorations for the Roman domus and villa. Whilst previous approaches to images of arms and armour in domestic space have often tried to link the motifs with spoils of war on display in the Roman home, this chapter has demonstrated a far greater complexity in the deployment of these motifs and the difficulties in connecting them directly with the display of spoils of war in domestic settings. This is not to say that images of weaponry found in

domestic decorations are not alluding to the practice of displaying captured arms on and around the home, but applying this interpretation alone can be limiting. Not all of the motifs of arms explored in this chapter can be clearly linked to the display of captured enemy weaponry in the Roman home at all. There is no obvious feature that identifies the majority of the depictions with captured enemy weaponry and it is even more difficult to understand the motifs as allusions to spoils in domestic settings when their decorative context is evocative of a much wider range of contexts. The closest that we can come to a clear identification of motifs that are alluding to spoils of war in a domestic context are the pictorial mosaic from the fauces of the House of Paquius Proculus (9) and perhaps the depictions of shields in the atrium of the Villa of Oplontis (96-96E). Even the identification of the shields from Oplontis as spoils in a domestic setting is speculative, since their decorative context could equally be understood as representing a Roman public building or perhaps even a Hellenistic palace. This is not to say that the ancient observer did not interpret these images of weapons as allusions to the triumphs of the domus' patron, but their ambiguity means this cannot have been the only way in which they were viewed.

Allusions to non-military forms of commemorations are also particularly ambiguous. The round shields found in Third or Fourth Style decorations could also be said to be alluding to the *clipeus virtutis* without referencing its inscription, the round shield form being enough to bring this commemorative shield to the mind of the ancient observer. It is almost impossible for the modern scholar to use the decorative context of these motifs to suggest a singular connection with the *clipeus virtutis* over any other interpretation, once again emphasising the flexibility of the motifs of arms and particularly of the round shield form.

Perhaps one of the most likely interpretations is that the motifs of arms are designed to allude to the display of weaponry in public spaces. Making this connection is reliant on the decorative context in which motifs of arms and armour are found. The analysis of the collected motifs in this chapter has shown that the interpretation of the motifs as arms on display in a public building is by far the most common interpretation and is found in every section of the typology created in this chapter. The difficulty comes in trying to understand how the ancient observer would have interpreted these decorative schemes depicting public architecture and vistas: Would the decorative scheme have been primarily interpreted as a domestic space utilising architectural elements and features that were borrowed from public spaces, meaning that the arms and armour represented are allusions to spoils hung in public space? Or would the ancient observer have been conscious of the allusion to public spaces and have viewed the decorations as depicting a public space to add grandeur and importance to a domestic one, viewing the motifs of arms as allusions to the display of weaponry in the home itself in a manner similar to that seen in public buildings? Both approaches are possible and it is particularly difficult to determine which would have been most commonly taken by the ancient observer. In turn the motifs of arms and armour could be interpreted as symbols of the victories of the patron, displayed against a typical domus background with its allusions to public architecture, but this seems less likely. Or were the motifs understood as decorative features that helped to create the impression of a public space within the domus? Once again the motifs of arms create and reflect a far greater sense of ambiguity than has been hinted at or suggested by previous approaches to them.

The use of motifs as allusions to Hellenistic public buildings appears to be particularly relevant in our understanding of the bands of arms (Type 1) explored in this chapter. The similarities between these fresco decorations and the sculpted friezes from Pergamum cannot be ignored and it seems highly probable that these collections of motifs of arms could have been inspired by the reliefs and other Hellenistic decorations that were known to the ancient observer and artist, but have since been lost. Connections between the Roman use of motifs of arms and Hellenistic culture and imagery are also supported by the regular combination of arms and armour with frescos depicting subjects from Greek mythology, for example Amazonomachy or the Trojan Wars, and even with Greek literature, for example in the House of the Epigrams at Pompeii (30). It could be suggested that many of the motifs of arms explored in this chapter are a type of Hellenistic ornament, used to fulfil the desire for Hellenistic luxury and decoration that was rife in the Republic. Since the arms and armour are not obviously part of a Hellenistic panoply, nor is their decorative context always evocative of Hellenistic or Greek features, the way to interpret these motifs remains ambiguous.

Rather than one of these possible solutions taking precedence over the other, all of the interpretations hypothesised at the beginning of this chapter appear to have equal value when interpreting motifs of arms in Roman domestic decorations. This ambiguity may well have been purposeful on the part of the Roman artists, since it allowed for the arms to be interpreted as symbols of prestige and wealth that would support the patron, as well as allowing the ancient observer to view them as symbols of Hellenistic luxury, public grandeur, Roman conquest and even as commemorations of civic importance. Motifs of

arms are flexible and applicable in such a wide range of decorative contexts that it is almost impossible just to view them as depictions of spoils of war in the Roman home and it seems unlikely that the ancient observer would have been any more limited in their interpretations.

Alongside these initial hypotheses for the interpretation of motifs of arms, several more ways of understanding the arms and armour have come to light throughout this chapter. Motifs of arms could have been understood as having an apotropaic value in Roman decoration, the relative scarcity of offensive weaponry in comparison to the depiction of shields indicating that the motifs had a defensive role rather than the commemoration of aggression. Whilst shields and helmets appear relatively regularly as motifs in domestic decoration, depictions of more aggressive weaponry and particularly swords are far less common. Among the items collected in the evidence catalogue, there are only eight examples of swords included as decorative motifs and in all these cases they are depicted as part of a wider panoply of arms including shields, helmets and other items of armour.⁵⁷⁸ None of the decorative schemes collated here, regardless of their Style or decorative theme, incorporate a depiction of a lone sword. It seems, that far from just being depictions of random items of weaponry, the motifs are carefully chosen and limited, in general, to defensive weaponry rather than offensive items. The presence of double-head axes in a number of decorative schemes could be said to go against this theory, but since this item is generally connected with the Amazon warriors, a mythical barbarian 'other' it was perhaps

⁵⁷⁸ The specific catalogue numbers are 1, 1C, 3, 5, 52, 67/67A, 78 and 83. Most of these small groups of arms are displayed within decorative coffers and are discussed in greater detail in section 4.3.8 of this chapter. The swords are more difficult to identify in items 5, 67/67A and 83 due to the nature of the tightly packed depictions.

less troubling to incorporate this offensive weapon into domestic decorations than the sword. It is possible, therefore, that the choice of these defensive weapons indicates the ancient observer interpreted them as having a defensive or perhaps even apotropaic value in the decoration. An alternative interpretation returns to Livy's description of how booty was treated before its return to Rome, shields being preserved and packed onto the ships whilst the other arms were burned.⁵⁷⁹ If this lack of offensive weaponry motifs is inspired by the practices for preserving and ultimately displaying war booty, then it would serve to confirm a greater link between all these motifs of arms and spoils of war. Both arguments appear just as likely to be true.

The positioning of the depiction of suspended weaponry suggests that the motifs could act as a form of boundary marker; whilst not being found at the physical threshold of the property, the arms are found at the thresholds between real and imaginary space in fresco decoration, perhaps demonstrating a tenuous connection with the idealised display of captured arms at the entrance to the domus. The study of how motifs of arms changed across the chronological period studied is perhaps the most revealing addition to these hypotheses. The motifs of arms found in Second Style decorations tend to be larger and more realistic than their later Third and Fourth Style counterparts. By the Fourth Style we see the development of a new type of motif, Type 3a, where the round shield motif has been shrunk to a small and perhaps cursory flourish in decorative schemes. It is not clear if this change from the large, detailed motifs of the Second Style to the smaller and more clumsy Fourth Style examples is as a result of the decline in their popularity or usefulness in

⁵⁷⁹ Livy, 45. 33, 1-5.

domestic decorations, or is a result of the motifs being adapted to fit the spindly and less detailed structures of Fourth Style decorations in general. The reduction in size does not necessarily mean these motifs lost their ability to be interpreted in multiple ways, but it does indicate that their potency within the decoration was reduced and that arms and armour, whilst desirable and useful, were not as important for domestic or even public decorations in this later period.

The motifs of arms collected here are much more than simple allusions to the display of captured arms and armour in and on the Roman home. They are themselves a symbolic language that allowed the ancient observer to engage not only with Roman concepts of victory, but also with a multiplicity of interpretations that inevitably added to their value in domestic decorations and probably explains their continued usage in domestic decorations over such an extensive chronological period and in a wide geographical area.

Chapter 5: “Spolia or Spectacle: Arms and armour as a memento of Roman entertainments in the domestic sphere”

‘Panem et Circensis’: bread and circuses formed the basis of Roman governmental interaction with its populace.⁵⁸⁰ Not only were games and theatrical performances a means of keeping the people of Rome well entertained, but they also offered increasing opportunities for social differentiation and political advancement.⁵⁸¹ The gladiatorial games were also one of the main spheres in which the Roman populace would come into contact with foreign weaponry and the panoplies of defeated Roman enemies. It is possible that exposure to such a range of arms and armour at the gladiatorial games could itself have influenced the use of motifs of arms in Roman domestic decorations. Whilst the influence of Hellenistic culture and decorative precedents, public building decoration and even honorific dedications of weaponry have been explored in relation to motifs of arms in domestic decoration, a connection with gladiatorial games and panoply deserves attention. The precise impact that these spectacles had on the inclusion of arms and armour in Roman fresco, stucco and mosaic decorations is what this chapter aims to explore. Focusing on the gladiatorial games as a source of inspiration for the inclusion of arms and armour in

⁵⁸⁰ Juvenal, *Satires*, 10.81.

⁵⁸¹ The funding of gladiatorial games by the elite is confirmed by Cassius Dio, who outlines the measures brought in to try and restrict the amount spent on games by individuals hoping to advance themselves politically. See Cassius Dio, *Roman History*, 54, 2. In terms of the opportunities for women to watch the games it is implied by Suetonius that women were free to watch the games, although seating restrictions were imposed by Augustus during his rule. Suetonius, *Augustus*, 44.

domestic décor, I will begin by looking at the arms and armour used in gladiatorial fights. Any similarities between the arms and armour used by gladiators in public fights and those painted into the decoration of Roman houses could suggest a link between the spectacles witnessed, or provided by the owners of these properties.

5.1: Background

For this study, an outline of gladiatorial weaponry is required and Junkelmann's *Das Spiel mit dem Tod* (2000) painstakingly reconstructs and illustrates the different types of panoply that were found in the ancient sources. His work also includes a catalogue of finds for gladiatorial armour from across the Roman Empire, which supports the reconstructions he makes of gladiatorial panoply and fighting style. This research into the arms and armour of gladiators is of great importance to this chapter, since it provides the basis of the comparisons between the types of gladiatorial armour on display in the arena and the types of weaponry depicted in the fresco, mosaic and stucco from the Roman houses.

Another text that is important to this chapter is Jacobelli's *Gladiators in Pompeii* (2003). Jacobelli looks at some depictions of gladiatorial games in the decoration of houses at Pompeii, which is a useful starting point for my own research into motifs of arms. Polito also suggests that it is almost impossible to determine the difference between weapons that are captured war booty and gladiatorial arms.⁵⁸² The only major distinctions, he argues, are in the style of helmet and the inclusion of the corselet of body armour.⁵⁸³ This he suggests is

⁵⁸² Polito, 1998, 36-7.

⁵⁸³ Polito, 1998, 51. Particularly type L that have the closed visors and are linked solely with gladiatorial combat.

not found in depictions of gladiatorial weapons, most likely because it is so rarely seen in the typical iconography of gladiatorial panoply.⁵⁸⁴ However, the development of gladiatorial arms and armour from foreign armour can make distinguishing between them impossible; weapons that would have been recognisable as Thracian from a triumph were ultimately replaced by the stylised 'Thracian' arms carried by the gladiator of this type.⁵⁸⁵

Some gladiatorial types can be obviously linked with Roman conquest. The Samnite, is described by Livy:

*'the Campanians, in consequence of their pride and hatred of the Samnites, equipped after this fashion the gladiators who furnished them entertainments at their feasts and bestowed on them the name Samnites.'*⁵⁸⁶

The differences between gladiatorial games held in celebration of military victory and those held for other festivals may have become less pronounced as time passed and these gladiatorial 'types,' based upon vanquished Roman enemies, became an unremarkable part of combat in the arena. But other types of gladiator cannot be linked with military conquest, like the *venator*. They only fought with animals.⁵⁸⁷ Jacobelli describes them as being armed with 'wooden spits or poles with iron tips,' although they are also seen carrying shields and swords in various depictions of the *venationes*.⁵⁸⁸ Ville suggests that the practice of animal hunts and the use of animals in public executions came from Carthage, and the first of its

⁵⁸⁴ 'In genere sono invece assenti le corazze, che compaiono quasi sempre nei fregi con armi,' Polito, 1998, 36.

⁵⁸⁵ Polito, 1998, 36-37.

⁵⁸⁶ Livy, *Ab Urbe Condita*, 9. 40.

⁵⁸⁷ Jacobelli, 2003, 17.

⁵⁸⁸ Jacobelli, 2003, 17; Köhne et. al. , 2000, 71.

type, recorded by Pliny, used animals captured during the first successful campaign against Carthage:

*'Rome, five years later, saw elephants in a triumph; she saw them again in great numbers in 502 A.U.C. captured from the Carthaginians in Sicily in the victory of L. Metellus... Verrius says they were made to fight in the circus and were killed with javelins.'*⁵⁸⁹

The animals themselves were war booty, suggesting that even when gladiators like the Samnite were not involved, the crowd could still connect the games with military victory. Futrell suggests that the animal hunts were 'an effect of the spread of Roman hegemony, suggesting that during the 3rd Century and after, success in battle against foreign foes opened up areas abundant in exotic animal resources, now exploitable by Romans.'⁵⁹⁰ The beast hunts could also show the influence of military victory on Roman society. Since the *venationes* were equally a form of armed combat, although against animals, it will be important to look at the context of the inclusion of arms or armour in fresco, for if they are accompanied by scenes of hunting or animals, then it is possible the weapons could refer to those used by the *venatores* in the spectacles, and not captured war booty. It is possible that some of the motifs of arms collected in the accompanying catalogue could allude to gladiatorial weaponry.

⁵⁸⁹ Ville, 1981, 52-54, Pliny, *Natural History*, 8.6, 17.

⁵⁹⁰ Futrell, 2001, 26.

5.2: Gladiators in Art

Images of gladiators were popular in Roman art throughout the Republic and into the Principate. Pliny the Elder describes large paintings and representations of gladiators being displayed in public by generous fans:

*‘the public porticoes were covered with paintings, so we are told, containing life-like portraits of all the gladiators and assistants. This portraiture of gladiators has been the highest interest in art for many centuries now.’*⁵⁹¹

Some of these images may well have been produced by fans looking to celebrate their heroes in the arena and this is most obvious in the decorative graffiti found at Pompeii. Many provide rudimentary line drawings of gladiatorial combats like these found in the House of the Labyrinth in Pompeii (Figure 64).

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FIGURE 64: GRAFFITO OF TWO GLADIATORS FROM THE HOUSE OF THE LABYRINTH, POMPEII

JACOBELLI, 2003, 50. FIG. 42.

⁵⁹¹ Pliny, *Natural History*, 35.52, 36.

The graffito above shows that depictions of gladiators were found in Pompeian domestic space as well as public areas. Silius Italicus even describes a gladiatorial battle taking place within the dining room of a domus in Campania:

*'Then too it was their ancient custom to enliven their banquets with bloodshed and to combine with their feasting the horrid sight of men fighting; often the combatants fell dead above the very cups of the revellers, and the tables were stained with streams of blood.'*⁵⁹²

The holding of private games within the Roman home, does appear to be something that was generally disapproved of and the barbarity of the 'ancient custom' is perhaps emphasised beyond truth, but the apparent connections between gladiatorial games and the domestic sphere indicates that the games were likely to influence domestic decorations in some way. The depiction of gladiators in graffiti also suggests that a simple appreciation for a particular gladiator or combat by a fan was something that was not necessarily worthy of an expensively commissioned fresco or mosaic. However, the exception to this appears in one of the most famous frescos depicting gladiatorial combats in Pompeii: that found in the House of Anicetus (Figure 65).

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FIGURE 65: AMPHITHEATRE FRESCO FROM THE HOUSE OF ANICETUS, POMPEII

JACOBELLI, 2003, 72 FIG. 58

⁵⁹² Silius Italicus, *Punica*, 11. 51.4.

The fresco depicts the riot that took place in the Pompeian amphitheatre in 59 AD, which is recorded by Tacitus.⁵⁹³ It was supposedly accompanied by two frescos depicting gladiatorial combats in action.⁵⁹⁴ The historic topic of the fresco suggests it is a form of commemoration by a fan or even a participant in the games for a particularly memorable fight in the amphitheatre. Perhaps this is an example of how the fans of the games could have commemorated them in their domestic space.⁵⁹⁵

A fresco from the House of C. Holconius Rufus in Pompeii also celebrated a favourite gladiator. Although it no longer survives, Jacobelli notes how 'on the left column of the entrance hall, the painting of a gladiator labelled "PRIMIGENIUS" was uncovered. The fighter was armed with a helmet, a sword and a rectangular shield.'⁵⁹⁶ The fact that the gladiator is named could suggest that patron who commissioned the painting was a fan of this particular gladiator, hence his focus on this single figure. However, the size of the house, and the wealth that was likely to have been connected with it, could also indicate that the patron was in fact the sponsor of the games in which this gladiator fought, or he was the owner of this successful fighter.⁵⁹⁷ We cannot tell for certain if this was the case and in the majority of examples of depictions of gladiators in domestic space, the reasons for their inclusion will remain obscure.

⁵⁹³ Tacitus, *Annals*, 14.17.

⁵⁹⁴ See Reinach, 1922, 285. His drawings remain the only evidence for this section of the fresco, the original now being lost.

⁵⁹⁵ Clarke, 2003, 156. Fröhlich interprets the painting as one commissioned by a proud Pompeian citizen who took part in the riot, the fresco being included not to commemorate the games, but rather the victory of the citizens of Pompeii over Nuceria. This could well be true, but the depiction of two detailed gladiatorial fights that accompanied the image of the riot suggests that the action within the arena was of equal interest to the patron of the fresco as the riot that followed it. See Fröhlich, 1991, 247. For other various interpretations of the inspiration for the fresco see Clarke, 2003, 157-158.

⁵⁹⁶ Jacobelli, 2003, 79.

⁵⁹⁷ It was common for members of the Roman elite to purchase groups of gladiators. Cicero congratulates his friend Atticus on a collection that he had recently purchased in one of his letters. See Cicero, *Ad Atticum*, IV, 5.

Jacobelli suggests that 'the weapons and armour that characterize the different types of gladiators were delineated with more precision, and a great deal of emphasis was placed on these details in the representations' as they became more common in domestic art.⁵⁹⁸ It is likely the arms were used to identify the different types of gladiator in the domestic depictions in the same way that they were used by spectators in the amphitheatre. In order for the domestic depictions to be understood as gladiators, the weaponry had to accurately reflect that seen on the gladiators in the arena. However, as we have already seen, the ability to distinguish between gladiatorial weaponry and captured arms has proven troublesome for previous scholarship.⁵⁹⁹ Whilst those examples that show gladiators in combat would be easy to identify, decorative schemes that only use arms and armour to reference gladiators require this realism in order to be interpreted correctly by the Roman observer. The ability to differentiate between captured and gladiatorial arms remains the challenge for this chapter, whilst remembering that the development of gladiatorial arms from war booty, could make a definitive differentiation between the two groups of arms elusive.

The use of motifs of arms and armour to represent gladiators is clearly demonstrated by a terracotta oil lamp from Pozzuoli. The lamp is decorated with a series of images of different pieces of gladiatorial armour (Figure 66).⁶⁰⁰

⁵⁹⁸ Jacobelli, 2003, 69.

⁵⁹⁹ Polito, 1998, 36-37.

⁶⁰⁰ British Museum. Lamp: Part of the Temple Collection, Item Number: GR 1856.12.26.414 & Catalogue reference Q876.

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FIGURE 66: TERRACOTTA LAMP DECORATED WITH GLADIATORIAL ARMS

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE BRITISH MUSEUM.

The lamp is decorated with two swords, one with a curved blade. There are two shields, both rectangular in shape although one was probably the *parma* type used by the *Thraex* and the other larger *scutum* shaped shield with central boss would have been used by the *Murmillio* type.⁶⁰¹ These arms could all just as easily be interpreted as items of booty were it not for the inclusion of the helmets, which are obviously gladiatorial. Both are depicted with stylised crests and wide rims that are characteristic of the *Thraex* and *Murmillio* types, as well as the *Hoplomachus* and one appears to show the visor we connect with gladiatorial helmets. The lamp highlights how motifs of arms could be used as symbols of gladiatorial combats as well as of the defeat of Rome's enemies, even in Campania. The lamp also supports Polito's suggestion that the exclusion of any corselets of armour can indicate that the arms displayed are gladiatorial, but this exclusion alone is not a convincing argument.⁶⁰²

⁶⁰¹ Junkelmann, 2000, 110; 119. All future references to gladiatorial armour types, unless otherwise noted, will be based upon the identifications and reconstructions in Junkelmann's chapter 'Armaturae,' pages 96-129.

⁶⁰² Polito, 1998, 36-37.

5.3: The Identification of Gladiatorial Arms in the Evidence Catalogue

It seems unlikely that any of the examples of arms and armour I have provided in the accompanying evidence catalogue will be immediately obvious as representations of gladiatorial armour unless they contain specific gladiatorial panoply.⁶⁰³ However, it would be unwise to dismiss the impact that the gladiatorial games could have had on the stucco, mosaic and fresco examples I have collated. In consequence, this chapter will now look at the representations of arms and armour collected in the evidence catalogue from this perspective. Since many of the depictions are similar, either in terms of their decorative context, or the types of arms and armour that they portray, I will address the items in groups of stucco, mosaic and painted representations.

5.3.1: Stucco

5.3.1a: Gladiatorial Arms in Coffers? (Type 6)

Stucco coffers depicting motifs of arms that could have a gladiatorial connection are found in the House of the Cryptoporticus at Pompeii (1-1D) and the House of Augustus from the Palatine Hill in Rome (83, 84 and 85-85D). The arms and armour from the House of the Cryptoporticus are depicted in great detail. Item 1 depicts two oval shields decorated with a central umbo and spine and one short sword as its central motif. By applying a gladiatorial interpretation to these arms, it is possible to see a similarity between this equipment and the weaponry of an *Essedarius*. This type of gladiator is identified by Ville as the first and the only type of gladiator to use the oval shield.⁶⁰⁴ There is no helmet included in the coffer, so

⁶⁰³ Polito, 1998, 36.

⁶⁰⁴ Grenier & Ville, 1961, 271f.

it is impossible to relate the coffer to a complete gladiatorial panoply, but the sword depicted in the coffer could also have a gladiatorial identification. It appears very much like a sword that Polito identifies as a gladiatorial sword with hemispherical pommel on the hilt, either smooth or perforated with a wrist-strap.⁶⁰⁵ No wrist-strap is present in the stucco decoration, but the hemispherical pommel is visible. Whilst having some features that could allow it to be interpreted as gladiatorial weaponry, the arms cannot be interpreted exclusively this way as the arms are not specific enough for us to connect with gladiatorial arms alone. Another section of the same stucco frieze that shows weaponry with gladiatorial characteristics is Item 1C. The coffer clearly shows a rectangular shield that is slightly smaller than those depicted in other coffers. This could be speculatively identified as a *parma* shield type.⁶⁰⁶ Also present is a sword with a curved blade that can be identified as a *sica*.⁶⁰⁷ These arms are commonly associated with the Thraex gladiatorial type.⁶⁰⁸ However, as with the weaponry from Item 1, these arms could be interpreted as captured barbarian weapons rather than gladiatorial.

Looking at the other surviving sections of the frieze that depict arms and armour (1A, 1B and 1D), a gladiatorial interpretation becomes less likely. Items 1A and 1B present arms that are more generic. They could be identified as gladiatorial, but there is little to distinguish them as such. Item 1D is interesting, for it depicts a pelta shield and double headed axe commonly associated with Amazons. Some later female gladiators may have adopted the pelta shield to fit with this 'Amazonian' costume, but we have little evidence to support this, so a

⁶⁰⁵ Polito, 1998, 55.

⁶⁰⁶ Junkelmann, 2000, 119.

⁶⁰⁷ Polito type H.4. Polito identifies this as a *sica* himself, see Polito, 1998, 131.

⁶⁰⁸ Junkelmann, 2000, 119-120.

gladiatorial interpretation seems unlikely.⁶⁰⁹ The stucco excavated in the House of Augustus (83, 83 and 85-85D) is dated by Polito to around 28 BC, which is from the same period as those found in the House of the Cryptoporticus. Item 83 has suffered some damage, but several types of shields and other weaponry remain visible. Polito has identified a round shield combined with the presence of several spears or lances, which could indicate that the frieze represents the arms and armour of the *Eques gladiator*.⁶¹⁰ However, the other weaponry that Polito identifies in the frieze contradicts a gladiatorial interpretation; Boeotian helmets and corselets of mail armour belong to the world of Classical and Hellenistic reliefs or captured arms and armour, not to the panoply of gladiators.⁶¹¹ As with the stucco from the House of the Cryptoporticus, some of these weapons appear to be open to the possibility of a gladiatorial connection, but this is not supported by the constituent arms or their decorative context.

A relief depicting a mixed pile of arms was recently discovered in the Villa of the Papyri in Herculaneum (78). The stucco was found in a newly excavated room in the *basis villae*. There were originally two stucco panels, although only one survives with its frieze of arms intact.⁶¹² Similar to the House of the Cryptoporticus and the House of Augustus, the stucco is surrounded by an *ionic kyma* design and a wide range of weaponry is represented. Guidobaldi and Esposito describe how ‘some of the weapons of the Hellenistic tradition are

⁶⁰⁹ One female gladiator associates herself with the Amazonian warriors by calling herself “Amazonia” on a relief in the British Museum, although she does not use a pelta style shield. Inventory Number: GR 1847.4-24.19 (Sculpture 1117). Junkelmann also mentions that a shield that was ‘highly divergent from the normal pelta form’ was also found at Pompeii, but that it was not possible to distinguish it as a gladiatorial weapon – See Junkelmann, 2000, 81 and Bettinali-Graeber, 1999, No.19.

⁶¹⁰ Junkelmann, 2000, 123-124.

⁶¹¹ Polito, 1998, helmet type D (p.50), mail corselet (p.48).

⁶¹² Guidobaldi & Esposito, 2010, 38.

attested and some eastern and “barbarian” weapons, but especially prominent are weapons typical in North Europe.’⁶¹³ They do not believe that the weapons contained in the frieze are gladiatorial. They suggest the frieze belongs to ‘a well-known figurative tradition’ and that ‘the motif of the pile of weapons surely reproduce famous models, dating to the late Hellenist period.’⁶¹⁴ I would agree with this interpretation. The range of weaponry that the stucco represents does not fit with gladiatorial panoply and the inclusion of pelta shields also suggests that the mixed pile of arms replicates those seen on Hellenistic sculptures, displays of captured war booty, or even an imagined pile of mythological arms. Whilst it remains possible to interpret some of the arms and armour found in the House of the Cryptoporticus, the House of Augustus and the Villa of the Papyri as belonging to gladiators, it appears more probable that the weapons represent captured war booty or references to mythological panoply when considering their decorative context and the combinations of arms they include.

5.3.1b: Other Domestic Sites

As we have seen in Chapter 4, the two undecorated round shields found in Items 14 and 25 are difficult to interpret due to their lack of any decorative context. However, they take the *clipeus* form that is more commonly associated with captured enemy shields in our literary accounts and the *clipeus virtutis*.⁶¹⁵ This makes it seem highly unlikely that they would represent gladiatorial shields. Stucco decoration found during the excavations of the so-called Villa of Galba at Frascati also included decorative coffers with shields (104). Polito identifies two types of round shield in the decoration; the flat shield with a central umbo

⁶¹³ Guidobaldi & Esposito, 2010, 38.

⁶¹⁴ Guidobaldi & Esposito, 2010, 39.

⁶¹⁵ Type A.1, Polito, 1998, 39.

and boss and the circular shield with a spine.⁶¹⁶ Neither of these are linked to gladiatorial display by Polito's typology and, as with the previous examples, it seems likely that they represent captured booty, or Hellenistic precedents rather than gladiatorial arms. It appears that representations of arms in stucco collected in the evidence catalogue do not obviously allude to gladiatorial arms. As Guidobaldi and Esposito suggest, these may well be connected to the Hellenistic precedent of showing mixed piles of captured arms and armour in public sculptural decoration.⁶¹⁷ Sections of stucco that represent mixed piles of arms are most likely to allude to captured arms, as they match these earlier Hellenistic precedents for the display of captured arms and armour as well as the display practices utilised for Roman public buildings.⁶¹⁸ It may well be that stucco was not the most suitable medium for representing gladiatorial arms and armour as it mimicked the impression created by large scale sculptural reliefs from public buildings.

5.3.2: Mosaics

5.3.2a: The House of the Cryptoporticus (Item 3) and the Villa of the Volusii Saturnini (Items 112/112A)

A mosaic depicting arms and armour was discovered in the House of the Cryptoporticus in addition to the stucco decorations (3). The threshold mosaic is polychrome and the decorative motif at the centre of the design is a depiction of a shield, spear, sword and helmet. A mosaic very similar to this was discovered in the Villa of the Volusii Saturnini at

⁶¹⁶ Polito, 1998, 39-40.

⁶¹⁷ Guidobaldi & Esposito, 2010, 71.

⁶¹⁸ 'Defensive and offensive weapons in a mixed pile.' Ovid, *Epistulae ex Ponto*, 2.1, 40.

Lucus Feroniae, depicting two groups of arms and armour (112/112A).⁶¹⁹ The shield seen in the mosaic from the House of the Cryptoporticus appears semi-cylindrical, which Polito believes was used by gladiators and is depicted in reliefs depicting gladiators from this period.⁶²⁰ The shields found in Item 112 are oval shields that do not have an obvious gladiatorial link, but could be said to be similar to the shields of the early *Essedarius* type.⁶²¹ In Item 3 a long spear next to the shield could have a gladiatorial interpretation, although this is less likely, since lances and spears were not commonly used by gladiators that also carried the *scutum* style shield.⁶²² Damage to the design means that it is difficult to determine exactly what type of sword is included, but the helmet is much clearer. The cheek pieces are elongated, which Polito suggests is an indication of a gladiatorial helmet in its transition to designs incorporating a full visor, but this is not certain.⁶²³ The addition of two feathers decorating the sides of the helmet can also suggest a gladiatorial interpretation for the equipment, since this decorative addition can be seen on the helmets of several types of gladiator, including the Provocator and the Eques.⁶²⁴ The same type of helmet is also depicted in the mosaic found in the Villa of the Volusii Saturnini with a pair of feathers attached on to the helmet and a spiral decorative design (112A).

⁶¹⁹ Moretti, 1998, 34-35.

⁶²⁰ This shield type was particularly associated with the *Murmillio* type. Junkelmann shows a convincing range of reliefs, mosaics and other archaeological finds to link this shield type to the *Murmillio*. See Junkelmann, 2000, 110-111.

⁶²¹ Junkelmann, 2000, 116-117.

⁶²² Lances were used by the *Hoplomachus* type, but not the *Murmillio*. This is seen in the gladiatorial graffiti from the House of Obellius Firmus in Pompeii, as well as in other decorations. See Junkelmann, 2000, 123, fig. 191.

⁶²³ Polito, 1998, 49-50.

⁶²⁴ Junkelmann, 2000. For Provocator see 113-115, including fig.166 and fig. 171. For Eques, see 123-124, including fig.193.

Polito suggests, however, that the use of feathers as a form of decoration on the sides of the helmet was also employed by legionaries and is attested in Greek reliefs, meaning the helmet could be equally interpreted as Roman arms and armour as well as gladiatorial.⁶²⁵ It is difficult to confirm any interpretation from the context of Item 3 in the House of the Cryptoporticus, since the rest of the room is decorated with herms and small pinakes at regular intervals and there is no overwhelming theme of arms and armour. Some graffiti found in this room depict what could be an animal hunt of sorts, but this is not obvious as a depiction of the *venationes*.⁶²⁶ It could be that the inclusion of the *pilum* style spear in Item 3 may indicate that this small mosaic panel was designed to represent the arms of the Roman legionary, laid down in peace after victory, rather than gladiatorial arms. Pompeii was a colony of veterans, so this does not seem an unreasonable suggestion.⁶²⁷ For Items 112 and 112A a gladiatorial interpretation remains possible, but so do connections with captured arms or even Roman legionary equipment. Rather than clearly identifying with just gladiatorial arms, these motifs continue to illustrate their remarkable flexibility.

The two mosaics that depict arms and armour from these houses also appear to have decorative similarities. Item 10 from the atrium of the House of Paquius Proculus includes several mosaic 'coffers' that depict arms including the pelta shields and double headed axe, a round shield and a form of oval shield. In the depiction of each weapon a spear or arrow is also shown to pass behind the item and in the case of the round shield, two spears or arrows form a cross behind it. A fifth coffer next to these also depicts an anchor. Item 117

⁶²⁵Polito, 1998, 53.

⁶²⁶ Fragment of decoration on display at the British Museum in the 2013 exhibition 'Life and Death in Pompeii and Herculaneum' - 28th March to 29th September 2013. Item number SAP59469B. See Roberts, P, 2013, 79, fig 79.

⁶²⁷ The colony at Pompeii was established by Sulla in or around 80 BC. See Laurence, 1994, 20.

from Oderzo shows shields displayed in a similar style to those in Item 10; the weapons are paired with crossed spears or arrows. Two rectangular shields are seen in one 'coffer' of the design with two spears and another of the coffers also shows an anchor and trident. A gladiatorial interpretation for these items seems unlikely, since they show the pelta shield type in both of its forms and the hexagonal shield type that also does not appear to have a gladiatorial role.⁶²⁸ The presence of anchors also suggests that the weapons refer to a military victory of some sort, rather than a gladiatorial battle, although we cannot rule out the possible influence of *naumachia* battles that the patron may have seen staged. *Naumachia* battles have been suggested as the inspiration behind several fresco decorations found in Pompeii, so perhaps these nautically themed mosaic decorations depicting weaponry may also be linked to such displays in the arena.⁶²⁹ However, since Jacobelli connects this combination of anchors and weaponry with 'naval victories' and not with *naumachia* spectacles, it seems more likely that the arms and armour connect to a military victory and not the gladiatorial shows.⁶³⁰

The weapons included in these mosaics are more likely to allude to booty than gladiatorial arms, although the interpretation of arms used in a *naumachia* battle still remains possible. It may well be that when depicting gladiatorial battles, it was usual to depict images of the gladiators themselves, rather than represent them from just their arms and armour. This seems to be supported by the depictions of gladiators we see in mosaics from the later

⁶²⁸ Polito makes no mention of a gladiatorial use for this shield and none of Junkelmann's reconstructions show the use of a hexagonal type shield. See Polito 1998 & Junkelmann 2000.

⁶²⁹ See Leach, 2004, 246. However, the frescos from the House of the Vettii have also been identified as the Battle of Actium, further supporting a view that naval victories were celebrated in Roman decoration as well as land campaigns. See Kellum, 2010, 187-207.

⁶³⁰ Jacobelli describes the Schola Armaturarum (III, 3, 6) as a 'depository of gladiatorial armour,' but anchors are included in the decoration of its exterior. Jacobelli, 2003, 68.

Imperial period, for example a mosaic from Zliten that has been dated to around 200 A.D. (Figure 67).

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FIGURE 67: MOSAIC DEPICTING GLADIATORIAL COMBATS FROM ZLITEN

JACOBELLI, 2003, 23. FIG. 20.

In these figural mosaics it is obvious that the weaponry is connected to gladiatorial combat. Whilst shields and other weapons lie abandoned at the foot of the mosaic, they are obviously connected to the battles taking place around them. The decorative context of the weaponry, therefore, is particularly important to the interpretation of arms and armour as gladiatorial weapons. It appears that unless the arms and armour are held by figures that are clearly gladiators, it is very difficult to ascribe a gladiatorial use to them. This appears particularly true of mosaic and stucco decoration. The importance of decorative context and location will be likely to play an even more important role in the interpretation of painted representations of arms and armour.

5.3.3: Wall Paintings

Before looking at the depictions of arms and armour found in domestic space, it is important to explore any 'public' paintings of arms and armour that can be connected with

gladiatorial decoration, returning to those identified in Chapter 3. Several examples of wall paintings from Pompeii have been identified as depicting gladiatorial arms and armour not held by gladiators. The first of these is the series of paintings that once decorated the amphitheatre in Pompeii. These paintings depicted the scenes of individual gladiatorial combats as well as animal hunts. They also included a series of panels where individual items of gladiatorial weaponry, usually shields, are resting against herms. Some of these panels can be seen in Figure 68.

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FIGURE 68: FRESCO DECORATION FROM THE AMPHITHEATRE, POMPEII

JACOBELLI, 2003, 61. FIG.51

These weapons are clearly meant to be gladiatorial. This can be extrapolated from both their location, within the amphitheatre in Pompeii, and their decorative context alongside depictions of animal hunts and gladiatorial battles. It appears that, unlike in the mosaic and stucco examples we have seen, individual items of weaponry can represent gladiators and gladiatorial battles, but only if this is clearly demonstrated by their decorative and even their physical context. Other frescos are much more dependent upon their location and the types of armour they display. A fresco discovered during the excavation of the quadriporticus at Pompeii depicted arms piled together in a style similar to that seen in the Pergamum frieze (Figure 22). A drawing of the fresco includes many items linking directly to

the gladiatorial panoplies that Junkelmann describes, including the Retiarius type, the Murmillo, the Thraex type and most importantly the helmets that present the fully closed face guards we would expect for gladiatorial armour.⁶³¹ The weaponry identified in this frieze belonged to gladiators. When looking to identify gladiatorial arms and armour in the examples collected in the evidence catalogue, the presence of these more obviously gladiatorial types, particularly the fully closed helmets and the arms of the Retiarius, would also indicate that the arms depicted are those of gladiators. However, none of the mosaic or stucco evidence collected in the catalogue appears to present weaponry belonging to these specific and easily identifiable gladiatorial types. The only evidence that we have for gladiatorial arms and armour depicted in fresco as individual motifs rather than being included in depictions of gladiators in battle is the quadriporticus fresco, the decorations from the amphitheatre relying far more on context than the constituent arms to convey this allusion.

Based upon this assessment, many frescos in the accompanying catalogue can be ruled out as depictions of gladiatorial arms due to the style in which they present the shields and weapons. A large proportion of the frescos depict round shields that are hung, alone, from perspectival architectural structures. The shield is usually only partially attached to the wall and hangs above a view into a landscape scene (Type 3a). It seems highly unlikely that these single round shields were viewed as gladiatorial unless another part of the decoration specifically lends itself to a gladiatorial interpretation. We have very little evidence for gladiatorial weapons being hung from public buildings or private doorposts in the way that

⁶³¹ For references to the armour see the description of this fresco in Chapter 3 of this thesis.

captured booty was so it seems that these round shield motifs are much more likely to allude to captured arms, Hellenistic trophies or even the *clipeus virtutis* than they are to gladiatorial arms.⁶³² Based on these conclusions it appears that a majority of the items collected in the accompanying catalogue do not seem to make any obvious allusions to gladiatorial arms and any interpretation of the motifs in this light is weaker than the alternative interpretations discovered in Chapter 4. Using the typology described in Chapter 4, it is easier to see just how much of the material is unlikely to connect with gladiatorial games.

Referring back to Table 1 it seems that motifs of arms belonging to Type 3a are unlikely to have any connection with gladiatorial panoply due to their small size, round and unadorned style and apparent decorative function.⁶³³ We can also exclude the portrait shields of type 8, type 9 (anthropomorphic trophies) and type 10 (rostra) which we know have very little relevance to the gladiatorial games. It also seems that some particular types of weaponry are less likely to have a gladiatorial link. This is true of pelta shields, for which identification with mythological weaponry or perhaps as items of booty is more likely.⁶³⁴ Other examples of weaponry included in the catalogue are also unlikely to be interpreted as gladiatorial weaponry due to their decorative context. For some shields, the environment they are painted into would not allow the shields to be easily interpreted as gladiatorial, for example Items 2 and 2A where the presence of a sphinx in the decoration below one of the shields

⁶³² The exception to this is graffito inscription found in Pompeii: "Mansuetus the provocator, if victorious, will bring Venus the gift of a shield." CIL 2483. However, we cannot be sure if this shield was dedicated in the same way as war booty in temples and there is no indication that it would be put on display.

⁶³³ For the table referencing catalogue numbers for each of these types see Table 2.

⁶³⁴ See the description given earlier in this chapter about Amazonian links and the possible inclusion of pelta as booty in Pompey's campaigns.

would indicate that the decoration is more likely to relate to Greek precedents and contexts rather than weaponry used by gladiators.⁶³⁵ The collection of shields into racks would also not suit a gladiatorial interpretation as we would expect a wider variety of weaponry to be included in the frieze, so the items collected into Type 5 can be excluded. Weaponry depicted attached to perspectival columns in Type 4 also appears to show very little affinity with gladiatorial arms being more commonly associated with military triumph rather than gladiatorial battle.⁶³⁶ In spite of this large number of exclusions there remain some depictions of arms and armour that could well have been viewed as gladiatorial weapons by the Roman observer due to the decorative context in which they are found. The first fresco that I wish to look at in detail is one that is identified by Jacobelli as being likely to depict a scene connected with the games.⁶³⁷

5.3.3a: The *Venationes* at Home: The House of the Ceii (Items 8-8F) and the House of the Ephebus (Item 13).

Items 8- 8F are from the hortus of the House of the Ceii in Pompeii. As we have already seen in Chapter 4, these items can be interpreted as indications of a Hellenistic space and ritual, whilst also being the arms used during normal hunting activities for leisure. However, there remains a chance that the arms and armour, combined with their decorative context, could allow for a gladiatorial interpretation. Jacobelli mentions the frieze as one of ‘numerous frescos of fights between animals... [that] probably reminded the Pompeians of the

⁶³⁵ See Kleiner, D. E. E., 2009, 184.

⁶³⁶ I assume that these columns decorated with shields followed the same pattern as the *columna rostrata* that were set up for naval victories as early as the 3rd Century BC. See Dillon & Welch, 2006, 274.

⁶³⁷ Jacobelli, 2003, 70.

venationes.⁶³⁸ This identification with the beast hunts is based on the ‘scenery’ of mountains that she suggests was often used in the *venationes* themselves.⁶³⁹ Whilst this is a likely interpretation, Jacobelli makes no mention of the shields that are included in the border of this large panel painting, which could in fact support her identification. An image of the wall as a whole can be seen in Figure 69.



FIGURE 69: FRESCO FROM THE HORTUS OF THE HOUSE OF THE CEII, POMPEII

PHOTOGRAPH BY N. CRACKNELL, 2011.

The fresco is more likely to be based upon the *venationes* due to the pairings of animals with men and animals with other animals that are seen in the panel painting. Leach has even suggested that the painting commemorates a specific set of *venationes* held by the owner of the domus, L. Ceius Secundus, who was duovir of Pompeii in 78 A.D.⁶⁴⁰ The shields

⁶³⁸ Jacobelli, 2003, 70.

⁶³⁹ Jacobelli, 2003, 70.

⁶⁴⁰ Leach, 2004, 132.

around the outside, therefore, could be said to link to the gladiatorial theme of the central panel, evoking both the fights between animals and the fights between men that would have taken place. The difficulty with this connection is that we would expect the shields to relate to those used in the beast hunts, but other depictions of *venationes* suggest that the fighters were armed with just a long spear and had no defensive weaponry.⁶⁴¹ If the *venatores* were only armed with a spear and carried no shield, then the shields in this decorative scheme may, instead, be referring to the hand-to-hand combat of the gladiators themselves. This lighter equipment for the *venator* seems to be a development of the 1st Century AD, with earlier *venatores* appearing to be armed with much heavier defensive weapons, including shields, as in a relief from the British Museum (Figure 70).

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FIGURE 70: RELIEF OF A GLADIATOR FIGHTING A LEOPARD

KÖHNE & EWIGLEBEN, 2000, 72, FIG.81.

Whilst this could suggest a connection between the *venatio* and the shields incorporated into this decorative scheme, they are not a definite parity, as we have no specific evidence that could link these round shields to use by *venatores* in the games. In order to be certain of a link between these shields and the games, more than just a central panel painting of

⁶⁴¹ Köhne & Ewigleben suggest that 'After the middle of the 1st Century AD... *venatores* now, like ordinary hunters, wear only the tunica and short or knee-length wrappings (*fasciae crurales*), and their weapon is the hunting spear.' Köhne & Ewigleben, 2000, 71.

venationes is required. The decorative context of these weapons does much to suggest a link to the games, but cannot confirm it outright. A further clue is found in another type of armour that is painted into the scheme. Item 8E appears to be a type of helmet that is painted in the upper right of the decorative scheme on the north wall of the hortus. According to Polito's typography, the helmet probably belongs to type used by gladiators with the addition of lateral feathers being a common variant.⁶⁴² The helmet in this frieze, therefore, could have a link with the helmets used by gladiators in the games. However, the collection of arms does not present any specifically gladiatorial panoply, but is a mixture of different types. This evidence means we cannot firmly conclude that the arms and armour depicted in this decorative scheme were based upon observations of particular gladiatorial weapons. However, the overall impression that the scheme creates still may have been understood as an allusion to the games by the ancient observer.

The most powerful evidence to prove that the scheme evoked connections with the games can be seen in the graffiti that were also found in the hortus. Two depictions of gladiators with accompanying inscriptions were found on the south wall of the hortus, opposite the depiction of the animal fights and the arms and armour described above. The first shows two gladiators named as Oceanus and Aracintus in battle, with an inscription stating that Oceanus was the victor.⁶⁴³ The second depicts a combat between the gladiators Severus and Albanus.⁶⁴⁴ There is no clear depiction of a round shield in this graffito, but the presence of such detailed graffiti and inscriptions relating to gladiatorial contests allows us to see how

⁶⁴² Polito, 1998, 49-53.

⁶⁴³ *CIL*, IV, 8055.

⁶⁴⁴ *CIL*, IV, 8056

the decorative scheme of this room as a whole, with its arms and armour, inspired a response that was based on the experience of gladiatorial games by an ancient observer.

Another fresco that presents a similar composition was found decorating the outdoor triclinium in the hortus of the House of the Ephebus in Pompeii (13). This depicted a round shield that is decorated with ribbons and painted as though hung flat onto the wall. The shield is accompanied by the painting of a male figure that is nude apart from his weaponry.⁶⁴⁵ The quality of the photographs of this frieze make it very difficult to determine what weaponry the male figure carries, but it is possible that he could represent an idealised image of a gladiator. However, it is equally possible that this male figure could represent Mars, since Mars and Venus feature in a panel painting in another part of the hortus.⁶⁴⁶ The round shield that is found in the frieze is repeated on either side of a large central panel painting depicting an animal hunt, very similar to that seen in the House of the Ceii above. These shields could also be interpreted as gladiatorial arms connected with the arena, rather than the weaponry of a god or for any other purpose. It does not seem unreasonable to suggest, therefore, that some of the motifs of arms presented in these houses may have been inspired by the gladiatorial games.

⁶⁴⁵ Pitture e Mosaici, Vol. 1, 708.

⁶⁴⁶ Jashemski identifies the male figure as Mars in her analysis of the fresco. See Jashemski, 2002, 367.

5.3.3b: Round Shields with Gorgon Heads: Unnamed House I, 13, 1 (Item 24), The House of the Wounded Bear (Items 56/56A) and the House of the Tragic Poet (Item 35)

All of the decorative schemes in these houses depict round shields decorated with a gorgon's head. Item 18 no longer survives, so ascertaining any decorative context for the shield is impossible. The shield is very decorative, painted in the bronze colour that is typically used in depictions of shields in Roman wall painting. The central boss is replaced with a depiction of the head of the gorgon Medusa. Based on this fresco alone it is very difficult to make any associations with gladiatorial armour. It would seem more likely to connect with mythological weaponry and particularly the shield of Perseus.⁶⁴⁷ Shields depicting the head of Medusa also take on an apotropaic function. As Taylor describes, 'suddenly the shield, formerly a protective device made more protective by its capacity to reflect and thereby deflect, becomes a weapon.'⁶⁴⁸ Shields decorated with the gorgon head motif must, therefore, have been common and a specifically gladiatorial example survives from Pompeii (Figure 71).

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FIGURE 71: GLADIATORIAL SHIELD EXCAVATED AT POMPEII

JUNKELMANN, 2000, 78, FIG. 111.

⁶⁴⁷ The significance of the shield in the Perseus myth is fully explored by Taylor in his chapter on 'The Mirroring Shield of Perseus' in Taylor, 2008, 169-196.

⁶⁴⁸ Taylor, 2008, 193.

The shield in Figure 71 was found in the quadriporticus at Pompeii among a variety of other gladiatorial arms and armour.⁶⁴⁹ The gorgon depicted at its centre is far smaller than that shown at the centre of the painted shield in Item 24, but it proves that shields with this type of decoration were definitely in use by gladiators in Pompeii around the time which this fresco was painted.⁶⁵⁰ Whilst this cannot conclusively prove that Item 24 is a gladiatorial shield, it suggests that it could have been inspired by the use of similar shields in the local gladiatorial games. By contrast the representations of shields with gorgon heads found in the house of the Tragic Poet (35) are very small and seem to provide more of a decorative flourish than a faithful representation of gladiatorial arms. They act as a form of architectural support, holding up the painted structures above them. Whilst they may have been inspired by gladiatorial weaponry, it is almost impossible to ascertain this from the context in which they are painted, so their interpretation must remain open to debate.

A fresco from the House of the Wounded Bear, also depicts a shield decorated with a gorgon's head, as well as helmets (56/ 56A). The decoration is visible throughout the atrium of the house and even from the road outside the property, suggesting it was designed to draw the public eye.⁶⁵¹ The round shields that are found in the fresco (56) are small compared to those we have seen in decorations from Oplontis or even the House of the Ceii. This could be to put the shields in scale with the rest of the fresco, which is rendered in

⁶⁴⁹ See Junkelmann, 2000, 187; Köhne & Ewigleben, 2000, 55.

⁶⁵⁰ It seems likely that this was used by either a *Hoplomachus*, or was the round *parmula* type shield that was utilised by the *Eques gladiator* type. It is difficult to decide which, since the scale of the fresco may not be accurate. See Junkelmann, 2000, 80.

⁶⁵¹ This is assuming that no material barrier, furniture or temporary door existed when the property was in use that would have blocked visual access through the house. Visibility would also have been affected by contrasting light levels inside and outside of the domus meaning that this suggestion of visibility from the entrance of the domus must remain speculative.

a very small space. Also like in the House of the Ceii, the shields are attached to a red architectural frame, which means they are positioned in perspective in front of the garden frescos below them, appearing closer to the observer. The red perspectival architectural background is also found in the House of the Small Fountain, to which shields and other arms and armour are also attached (36). The replication of these similar features (broad, red architectural framework, central panel paintings & arms and armour decorating the red panels) could suggest that this inclusion of arms and armour in these cases are part of a “pattern book” design and they could have little meaning other than the replication of a decorative trend.⁶⁵² However, the arms and armour are all slightly different, suggesting that the type of weaponry depicted was in fact chosen by the patron to fit with his own ideals of how the scheme should look and how it should be interpreted, or by a painter producing variations on a pattern book theme for a different customer.

The shields in the House of the Wounded Bear are round with a *gorgoneion* decoration. As we have already seen from item 24, these shields can also be connected to gladiatorial panoply, as either the shield of an *Hoplomachus* or an *Equites gladiator* type.⁶⁵³ Once again it is difficult to determine which of these two types the shield belonged to, since the representation of the shield may not be to scale and there is no way of telling if it is the larger *clipeus* of the *Hoplomachus*, the smaller *parmula* of the *Equites*, or either of these

⁶⁵² Ling describes how these pattern books may have worked and how they would be adapted by the painter in each commission to suit the patron’s needs: “Most pattern books...probably gave little more than the main outlines; details of colour, shadow and setting were perhaps recorded in only the most general terms or not recorded at all. This will explain many of the variations which occur, such as the representation of the same scene against different backdrops.” Ling, 1999, 128-129.

⁶⁵³ See Junkelmann, 2000, 120-124.

gladiatorial allusions.⁶⁵⁴ In order to look for further clues as to the interpretation of these shields we must look to the helmet that survives in the fresco, but the form of the helmet is not obviously gladiatorial at first glance. Considering these arms and armour in light of what we know of the decorative scheme in the rest of the domus also suggests that a gladiatorial interpretation would be possible. The mosaic after which the house is named, depicting a bear wounded by a spear (Figure 72), could recall the *venationes* held in the arena and the shields and helmets visible at the far end of the sightline in the garden would create a reinforcement of this interpretation as visitors continued into the atrium and the rest of the domus.⁶⁵⁵

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FIGURE 72: MOSAIC FROM THE HOUSE OF THE WOUNDED BEAR, POMPEII

IMAGE FROM WWW.POMPEIINPICTURES.COM

It would appear, therefore, that as with the House of the Ceii, the arms and armour represented here could be linked with the spectacles shown in the arena. It seems reasonable to suggest, based upon their decorative context and their similarity to the arms and armour depicted in the House of the Ceii, that the shields and helmet depicted in the

⁶⁵⁴ Junkelmann, 2000, 80.

⁶⁵⁵ Image from <http://pompeiiinpictures.com/pompeiiinpictures/R7/7%2002%2045.htm> [Accessed December 2014].

House of the Wounded Bear could be representations of gladiatorial arms, but they remain open to other interpretations.

5.3.3c: Gladiatorial Helmets: The House of Venus in the Shell (Items 29/29A) and the first frescos discovered at Pompeii

The fresco decoration from the House of Venus in the Shell incorporates a round shield and a helmet that are found in the upper zone of the decoration (29/29A). The round shield appears to be one with a mixti-linear profile, with a large central boss, but also a second definition between the central boss and the rim.⁶⁵⁶ A helmet is also depicted on the wall adjacent to the shield and although it has been damaged, it appears to have a large crest built into the helmet in the style of the helmets used by the Secutor gladiator type.⁶⁵⁷ This helmet is surrounded and supported by thick garlands. A possible gladiatorial allusion is supported by a fragment of fresco now found in the National Archaeological Museum of Naples (Figure 73). This fresco was purportedly one of the first to be found in the excavation of Pompeii in 1748 and is identified as gladiatorial by its inventory label in the museum.

⁶⁵⁶ Polito's A.6 type.

⁶⁵⁷ Junkelmann, 2000, 111.



FIGURE 73: FRESCO OF A HELMET FROM POMPEII, NAPLES MUSEUM

PHOTOGRAPH BY N. CRACKNELL 2011.⁶⁵⁸

This helmet is a slightly different style to that depicted in the House of Venus in the Shell. This has a prominent visor and a feather crest attached to the top of it. Whilst the helmet type appears to have been slightly different in terms of the crests the helmets use, their painted context is almost identical, right down to the style of the garlands depicted below the helmet and the yellow background on which the helmet is found. It appears that the helmets may well have been taken from decorative pattern books in this format, but gladiatorial allusions must remain speculative. The museum description of the fresco fragment in Figure 73 suggests that ‘an owl’ and ‘other objects’ were also depicted in the frieze, but these are no longer clear from the surviving sections in the museum. It could be that the helmet is actually that of the goddess Minerva, by its connection with the owl that is the commonly understood symbol for the goddess from Greek myth.⁶⁵⁹ Equally the shield

⁶⁵⁸ “The garland with mask and gladiatorial helmet” – Inventory Number 8591, MANN, Naples. Photograph by N. Cracknell, 2011. Its discovery is recounted in *The Quarterly Review* of 1864 by an unknown author: “on the sixth of the same month he announces... the discovery of a painting representing... a helmet.” See *The Quarterly Review*, 1864, 318.

⁶⁵⁹ *The Quarterly Review*, 1864, 318. For weaponry and the owl as symbols of Minerva in Roman wall painting see Madigan’s description of decoration in the House of the Stags in Herculaneum: Madigan, 2012, 90.

and helmet painted in the House of Venus in the Shell could be interpreted as the weapons of the god Mars, since the largest fresco in the hortus depicts Venus and it would not be unusual for the weaponry of her lover to be displayed nearby.⁶⁶⁰ As in the majority of cases, gladiatorial allusions for motifs of arms remain possible, but not explicit.

5.3.3d: Mixed Bands and Groups of Arms: The House of Siricus, Pompeii (Items 52-52G) and the Villa of the Mysteries, Pompeii (67/67A)

The grouping of the weaponry together makes it quite difficult to identify specific items in these depictions of tightly packed arms and armour. The frescos from the Villa of the Mysteries and the House of Siricus both incorporate a large collection of arms and armour that could be gladiatorial. Fiorelli's original identification of the frieze in the House of Siricus suggests that the arms and armour on display belonged to gladiators, but a closer look at the weaponry included in the decoration could suggest that the arms and armour are open to wider interpretations.⁶⁶¹ The frieze is divided into 7 sections, each separated by a false perspectival pillar and tapered at one end to fit into what could be the end of a pediment structure. Each section contains a small group of arms. Moving from left to right the sections include the following weaponry:

⁶⁶⁰ Depictions of Venus and Mars, and particularly of Mars being disarmed by cupids in the presence of Venus, are common in Pompeii and were likely to have been a fashionable subject for wall paintings throughout the Empire.

⁶⁶¹ Fiorelli, 1862, 21-22; *Pitture e Mosaici*, Vol.6, 304-305.

Table 10

Section	Items Included
Section One: 52A	Pelta shield with single concavity and pelta shield with double concavity.
Section Two: 52B	Round shield, sword, cuirass of mail and cloak, horn/trumpet and helmet.
Section Three: 52C	Two oval shields, one appearing to be decorated with an animal skin and spear. Fragmentary remains.
Section Four: 52D	Two rectangular shields, very slightly curved sword, helmet, two unidentified spear-like items and a section of cloak or cloth draped over the wall on which the items are sat.
Section Five: 52E	Two sub-rectangular shields, two spears, sword with decorative ribbons or belt and plain helmet.
Section Six: 52F	Two round shields, one silver and one bronze, two spears and possibly a sword behind them. Relatively plain helmet. Also appears to be an item of cloth or a painting hung on the wall, similar to in section four.

Section Seven: 52G	Very little survives of this section other than what appears to be a stylised form of hat in an odd shape. It also appears to have a cloth or woollen surround to its base. Perhaps Phrygian.
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It is easy to see how the frieze has attracted a gladiatorial interpretation from Fiorelli, as the range of different shields that are present in the scheme creates the impression of several different panoplies.⁶⁶² The fourth and fifth sections contain the rectangular and sub-rectangular scutum forms we know can be connected with the Samnite, Murmillo, Provocator and even Thraex gladiatorial types.⁶⁶³ The sub-rectangular shields drawn in section four are decorated with a rhomboid pattern that Polito links to northern peoples and ‘barbarians,’ but could equally represent the *parma* shield used by the Thracian gladiator.⁶⁶⁴ The curved blade (possibly a *sica*?) could indicate a northern or Thracian identification, but could also support a gladiatorial identification, as it was used in the arena.⁶⁶⁵ The helmet is difficult to interpret, since it appears most similar in shape to the pseudo-attic types, but it has a stylised crest drawn above it that could be a representation of the Thracian style crests that curve forward.⁶⁶⁶ These items all allow for a gladiatorial interpretation by ancient observers. Similarly the sub-rectangular shields in section five could represent northern barbarians or gladiators.⁶⁶⁷ A sword that appears to look relatively

⁶⁶² Fiorelli, 1862, 21-22.

⁶⁶³ See Junkelmann, 2000.

⁶⁶⁴ Polito, 1998, 44 (see no. 22).

⁶⁶⁵ Polito, 1998, 55.

⁶⁶⁶ Polito, 1998, 49.

⁶⁶⁷ Polito, 1998, 43.

similar to type I described by Polito was also found.⁶⁶⁸ The wrist strap is clearly visible in the drawings, and the presence of a sword type connected with gladiators suggests that other weapons in the frieze could also be gladiatorial. However, these identifications are uncertain and the sword can also be interpreted as belonging to northern barbarians, or even as a gladius.⁶⁶⁹

Following the criteria Polito set out for identifying gladiatorial weaponry also offers mixed results.⁶⁷⁰ The second section of the frieze includes a section of body armour that is rendered in some detail. The presence of this section of body armour should immediately rule this frieze out from depicting gladiatorial arms and armour, but Polito does later contradict himself, describing how this particular type of body armour could in fact be identified with 'oriental, gladiatorial or barbarian arms in general.'⁶⁷¹ The helmets found in sections four, five and six appear to belong to Polito's 'pseudo-attic helmet types,' which he suggests could also 'often be called upon as a form of gladiatorial helmet.'⁶⁷² The gladiatorial versions of these helmets often showed elaborate crests or extra feathers, and the helmet in section five does have small white feathers that appear to be attached at the side of the helmet.⁶⁷³ The gladiatorial interpretation, therefore, cannot be dismissed out of hand.

⁶⁶⁸ The gladiatorial type. See Polito, 1998, 55.

⁶⁶⁹ Polito, 1998, 55.

⁶⁷⁰ Namely the absence of breastplate/mail and the types of helmet on display.

⁶⁷¹ Polito, 1998, 47.

⁶⁷² Polito, 1998, 50.

⁶⁷³ Polito suggests the additional features as appendices to this section on helmets on page 52. Polito, 1998, 50: 52.

However, section one contains pelta shields, which are traditionally associated with the mythical female Amazon warriors. These mythological associations could suggest that the pelta shields included in this frieze relate to a mythical battle or victory and not to gladiatorial arms or even captured booty. The pelta, as Anderson suggests, had great 'popularity...with Greek artists from the late Archaic period onwards,' and it may also be this tradition of including the pelta in Classical and Hellenistic Greek art that inspired their use in this frieze; a fresco of Hellenic weaponry that would fit with the desire for Hellenistic decoration and ornament in this period.⁶⁷⁴ As has already been seen, private decorations including weapons were highly likely to have been influenced by public sculptural depictions of arms, like those displayed at Pergamum. This Hellenic inspiration could explain the frieze as a whole, for it includes representations of mixed arms and armour on display as a homage to these well-known public representations.⁶⁷⁵ However, if this frieze were indeed copied from the mixed arms style of the Pergamum reliefs, we would expect them to look more like the painted arms from the Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii (67/67A). The regular spacing of the weapons and their division into sections suggests that this frieze is meant to reveal more than a desire for Hellenism and was open to multiple interpretations.

In my opinion these motifs allude to captured arms. Both section four and six have lengths of what appear to be cloth that are draped over the wall the arms lean against. The cloth in section four appears to be highly decorative, with coloured patterns upon it, whilst the remnants of the cloth in section six give the impression that it is decorated with a figural motif. The inclusion of sections of cloth in friezes of captured arms is also noted by Polito,

⁶⁷⁴ Polito, 1998, 52.

⁶⁷⁵ See Polito, 1998.

but he suggests that these sections of draped material represented the clothing of the defeated barbarians.⁶⁷⁶ Either way, these sections of cloth are not what we would expect to find in a gladiatorial frieze. Another item that suggests this frieze presents arms and armour from a range of defeated Roman enemies is the helmet that is depicted in section seven. This is the only fragment to survive of this section and it is almost certainly Phrygian. Polito suggests that this is rarely seen in friezes of arms, but was considered to be symbolic of eastern enemies of Rome.⁶⁷⁷ There is currently no known type of Phrygian gladiator, so this rules out a gladiatorial interpretation for at least this section of the frieze. It seems likely that this frieze alludes to a range of captured arms and armour, and not small collections of gladiatorial panoply as Fiorelli once suggested.

The depictions of mixed piles of weaponry in the friezes from the Villa of the Mysteries in Pompeii (67/67A) also appear to represent arms that are not gladiatorial. Polito identifies several types of round shields, oval shields and also pelta shields of both forms. He also identifies two different types of body armour and four different types of helmet along with greaves, lances and swords.⁶⁷⁸ The presence of body armour, which Polito disassociated from gladiatorial allusions, and pelta shields equally indicate a more ambiguous interpretation. It has generally been believed by scholars that the weaponry acted as a frame, of sorts, for several panel paintings that are now lost, the subject of which was likely to have been military success.⁶⁷⁹ Welch has even suggested that the panel paintings that this frieze surrounded were themselves trophies, captured during successful Roman

⁶⁷⁶ Polito, 1998, 48.

⁶⁷⁷ Polito, 1998, 52.

⁶⁷⁸ The full list of types he identifies from his typology are as follows: Shields: A.1, A.3, B.1, B.2e, and C.1 & C.2. Body Armour: A.1 & B. Helmets: A, C.2, C.3 & E. Swords: A. Also lances and greaves. See Polito, 1998, 128, f.33.

⁶⁷⁹ Guidobaldi & Esposito, 2010, 40.

campaigns and brought back as booty along with the weapons represented around them.⁶⁸⁰

This frieze has been generally understood by scholars to represent war booty and whilst it may also have Hellenistic links or allusions it seems very unlikely to be connected with gladiatorial arms.

These friezes demonstrate just how difficult it can be to specifically categorise motifs of arms as gladiatorial, booty or otherwise. It suggests that they would have been difficult for even Roman observers to ascribe a single interpretation to. Perhaps this ambiguity was part of their design, allowing the patron to explain the frieze as he wished and stimulating discussion on a number of possible topics, rather than just one aspect of Roman life?

5.4: Conclusions

The popularity of gladiators as a subject of decoration lasted long into the Imperial period and spread across the Roman world, with gladiatorial games being represented in domestic mosaics long after the destruction of Pompeii. However, the use of motifs of arms and armour to symbolize gladiators or the games does not appear to have been something that was emphasized in the domestic decoration in the accompanying catalogue. Whilst these individual items of weaponry could evoke associations with gladiatorial combat, the emphasis placed on this by the decorative schemes appears to have been heavily dependent upon the decorative context in which the weaponry is found. More often than not, this context will also suggest a link with religious scenes or mythological battles making identification more difficult. Sometimes the types of arms and armour on display also meant that a gladiatorial interpretation was less favourable and following Polito's belief that

⁶⁸⁰ Dillon & Welch, 2006, 143.

depictions of body armour were not gladiatorial rules out a large proportion of the evidence in my catalogue. It is also uncertain how much of a definition the Roman observers made between gladiatorial panoply and captured enemy weaponry as booty, since many gladiator types appear to have developed from the ethnic stereotypes of the armour captured on successful campaigns.

The majority of the arms and armour studied here appear not to be linked to the gladiatorial games and those examples that do indicate a connection, such as in the House of the Ceii at Pompeii, do so by the inclusion of wild beast hunts rather than depictions of gladiatorial fights in the arena. It seems likely, therefore, that whilst depictions of arms and armour could allow the Roman observer to recall the gladiatorial spectacles of the arena, their primary function is to refer to a different type of event or decorative practice, such as the triumphal procession, the desire for Greek ornament and learning, or the fashion for mythological references in domestic art that were outlined in Chapter 4 of this thesis.

Chapter 6: Location, Location, Location.

The analysis of the motifs of arms included in the accompanying catalogue has demonstrated a wide range of possible interpretations. Depending on their decorative context and constituent arms the motifs could refer to anything from gladiatorial gear to symbols of Hellenistic luxury. However, it seems that according to the ancient accounts explored in Chapter 2 of this thesis, the identity of captured arms is often determined by their idealised position in the home. It seems prudent therefore, to explore the location of these motifs of arms within their respective domus. By looking at precisely where in the property these motifs of arms are found it will be possible to see how closely these depictions kept to the idealised rules of displaying booty in the Roman home, or not. It will also give further indication of how valuable these motifs were to the Roman patron in expressing his wealth and status. If the motifs of arms are generally found near to the entrance of the domus, we could suggest that the arms are attempting to allude more closely to the display of real spoils of war, by following the idealised rules for their display. However, if the spread of the motifs throughout the home is more disparate, it would indicate that these motifs, whilst perhaps still alluding to the display of captured arms, are less directly connected with the rules of their display than has previously been believed and may have a more decorative role.

6.1: Hillier and Hanson's Location Analysis

The theories of 'Access Analysis' and 'Space Syntax' were first introduced by Hillier and Hanson in their work on *The Social Logic of Space*.⁶⁸¹ They explored how users experienced architecture based on the concept that access to certain spaces within buildings would be controlled by other spaces and rooms. Their work was split into two sections: the first, called 'Alpha Analysis' allowed the calculation of 'Relative Assymetry' values within both properties and also the relationship of individual properties to settlements as a whole. The second, 'Gamma Analysis' produces a 'gamma map' that represents the 'permeability of structures,' allowing the creation of a visual indicator of how easily spaces within a property can be accessed and how they relate to each other, for examples the 'depth value' of spaces.⁶⁸² Ultimately the theories allow us to understand how easy it was for visitors to a property to access individual rooms or spaces within a building and how likely people were to congregate in certain rooms of the property. Grahame was the first to apply this theory to buildings in Pompeii and in doing so he was able to identify the amount of access available to rooms in the Roman houses he studied.⁶⁸³ He discovered that it is usual for Pompeian houses to have a 'large circulation space' that controls access to almost all other areas of the Roman home.⁶⁸⁴ These 'nodes' are usually kept separated from the exterior of the property by an intervening space that allowed the inhabitants of the property to control access, namely the fauces.⁶⁸⁵

⁶⁸¹ Hillier and Hanson, 1984.

⁶⁸² Hillier and Hanson, 1984, 149.

⁶⁸³ See Grahame, 2000.

⁶⁸⁴ Grahame, 2000, 58.

⁶⁸⁵ Grahame, 2000, 58.

Whilst these findings of Grahame and also those of Hillier and Hanson offer an important aspect to understanding access to the Roman home, in terms of accessing artworks or images within the home, the calculation of 'Relative Assymetry' values seems to be overcomplicated. Of much greater use to this study is the 'Gamma Analysis' and particularly the calculation of 'depth value.'⁶⁸⁶ This 'depth value' for each space in the property is the 'minimum number of steps that must be taken to arrive in that space starting from the carrier, a step being defined as a movement from one space to another.'⁶⁸⁷ The carrier, in this case, will be the street outside the domus. The spaces are the individual rooms in the domus. In this chapter I will calculate the depth value for the rooms in which motifs are located. If this depth value is more than 2 then the representations of arms and armour are unlikely to be following the idealised rules for displaying captured arms and armour according to our literary sources, for they will inevitably be further away from the entrance to the property than the vestibule or doorposts.

There are obviously limitations to this analysis. In order to calculate a 'depth value' we must first have a clear plan of the property under study and know where the entrance to the property was from the street. Without these two things we are unable to calculate the number of rooms through which the ancient observer needed to travel to view these motifs of arms. Reviewing the evidence in the accompanying catalogue, this location analysis will be impossible for a large number of items. The motifs found in Rome itself are often from properties where excavation has not been completed and the location of the entry to the home is unknown. These will unfortunately have to be excluded from the analysis. Similarly

⁶⁸⁶ Hillier and Hanson, 1984, 149.

⁶⁸⁷ Hillier and Hanson, 1984, 149.

the villas, including the Villa of the Mysteries and the Villa at Oplontis are equally undermined by a lack of complete plan or firm knowledge of where the main entrance to the property was. The largest body of evidence that provides nearly complete house plans and where we know the location of the entrances comes from Pompeii, thanks to the preservation of the whole town by the 79 AD eruption of Vesuvius, however even in this case we can never be completely sure on how access through the home was guided or restricted by temporary barriers or objects that have since been lost. This location analysis must, therefore, be limited to the evidence from Pompeii alone and its results must be treated with a level of caution. It is also important to consider that even in Pompeii, full decorative schemes are not always preserved. There may be many rooms that once displayed motifs of arms which are now lost. The results of this analysis will, therefore, reflect the bias of the archaeological record. These are quite restrictive limitations and therefore the results of this analysis must be approached with caution. However, it is hoped that a brief analysis will reveal more about where motifs of arms were located within the domus and that this in turn can tell us a bit more about how the ancient observer may have encountered and understood them.

6.2: Analysis: Intra-domus location

Utilising the plans of the Pompeian properties included in the accompanying catalogue this chapter now looks at the 'depth values' for the motifs of arms within their respective domus. The 'depth value' in this case will be the number of spaces passed into or through in

order to access the room that is decorated with motifs of arms. A worked example, including a 'gamma map' for the House of the Cryptoporticus is shown in Figure 74.

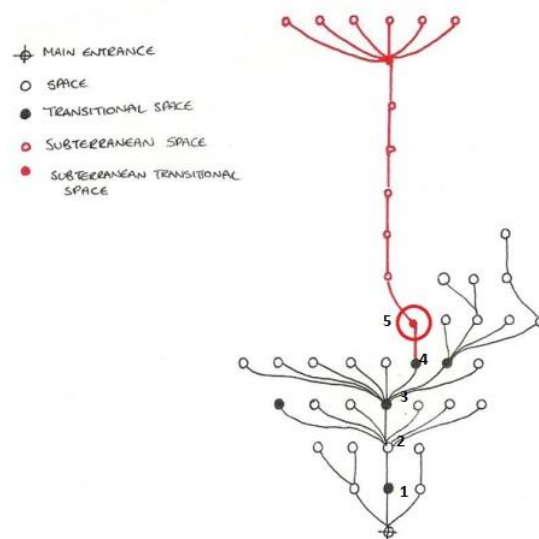


FIGURE 74: 'GAMMA MAP' OF THE HOUSE OF THE CRYPTOPORTICUS.

This 'Gamma Map' demonstrates the way that the rooms of the House of the Cryptoporticus interconnect. Entering the home through the fauces, a transitional space that is not designed for anything other than movement into and out of the atrium, we are able to count 5 spaces that needed to be crossed into in order to access the motifs of arms decorating the cryptoporticus, itself a form of transitional space. These steps are numbered on the diagram above. The cryptoporticus, where the coffered stucco decorations of arms and armour are found (1-1D), has a depth value of 5. This means the ancient observer needed to move into 5 different spaces on entering the home before they were able to view the motifs of arms. If the idealised descriptions in our literary sources of captured arms

being dedicated at the threshold of the house or in the most conspicuous places, then we would expect these motifs to have a depth value of 1 or 2 at most.

A 'depth value' of 5 seems to be far too high for the weaponry to be viewed by visitors on their direct entry to the domus. The atrium of the Roman property is often located at a 'depth value' of 2, and movement beyond this point in the domus was often controlled by the patron. It seems likely, therefore, that these stucco motifs decorating the Cryptoporticus were not likely to have been viewed by all visitors to the domus and that they do not follow the rules set out for the display of real captured arms in the Roman home. Whilst this is not unexpected, a survey of all the decorations from Pompeii should reveal if there are any trends for the locations in which motifs of arms were located. Table 11 shows the results of performing this 'depth value' analysis for each of the Pompeian rooms in the accompanying catalogue.

Table 11

Depth Value	Item numbers for motifs from Pompeii (excluding additional motifs in same room – e.g. 1A)	Total Number of Rooms
1	9, 37, 53, 62.	4
2	6, 10, 24, 26, 46.	5
3	4, 7, 11, 14, 15, 16, 18, 19, 27, 28, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 47, 48, 50, 54, 55, 60, 61, 65.	23
4	8, 17, 22, 25, 31, 36, 43, 44, 45, 49, 56, 57, 63, 64.	14
5+	1, 2, 3, 5, 12, 13, 20, 21, 23, 29, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 51, 52, 58, 59, 66.	20

Table 11 highlights that far from being common in areas of the domus nearest the entrance, the motifs of arms collected from Pompeii appear in greater numbers at a distance from the entrance. The idealised rules set out in our literary sources do not appear to apply to these motifs of arms as they did to real displays of captured weaponry. Four examples from Pompeii incorporate motifs of arms and armour at a depth value of 1. This is the vestibule or fauces of the domus and the location in which we would expect idealised mimesis of captured arms and armour to take place. Items 9 and 53, as we have already seen, are both pictorial mosaics making reference to spoils of war in various displays. Item 9 is the only motif to be incorporated into a context that appears to attempt any kind of mimesis of the display of real captured arms, but the other three examples found near to the entrances are

not the grand reproductions of captured arms that we would expect were they attempting to copy or allude to the display of real items in this space. The shields in both items 37 and 62 are actually very small and appear to be more decorative than having any particular agenda.

The number of items found at a depth value of 2, the level at which the atrium of a typical Roman domus is usually located, is also relatively low.⁶⁸⁸ Only five different rooms at this level incorporate motifs of arms. Most of the domus plans, however, are atypical and only two of the five rooms are actually atria. Item 10, from the House of Paquius Proculus continued the theme of captured arms begun in its vestibule mosaic (9), whilst the other atrium decoration from the House of the Great Altar incorporated portrait shields and not captured enemy arms (46). Once again, these are not the large depictions of bloody arms that would be expected if the motifs were following the social rules for displaying captured arms. Instead of being focused in the entrance halls of these Pompeian domus, the majority of motifs of arms are found at depth values of 3, 4 and 5 and above. Twenty three rooms incorporate motifs of arms that are found at a depth value of 3. These are most often small rooms, *alae* or *cubicula* that open up off the atrium itself. They are not conspicuous places, but are rooms that may have been used for entertaining guests, often accessed directly from the atrium. This suggest that the motifs may have held some value as symbols of prestige and power, but not quite to the extent that was expected. A further twenty rooms incorporate motifs of arms at a depth value of 5 or above, often in rooms at the very rear of the domus that would require permission from the *Paterfamilias* to enter, if Wallace-

⁶⁸⁸ According to the ideal plan of the Roman domus based upon Vitruvius' descriptions, the atrium should be the first room entered in the home after passing through the vestibule or *fauces* from the street. This would be the main reception room in which the *salutatio* would take place. Clarke, 1991, 12.

Hadrill's theories on public and private division in the home are correct (Figure 1).⁶⁸⁹ Some of these rooms are horti, like in the House of the Ceii (8-8F) and many more are peristyle locations.

It appears that the majority of the motifs of arms found in Pompeii are not in conspicuous locations near to the entrance of the home and not even in the atrium of the domus, but found in locations that require greater levels of access into the home itself. This is in contrast with what we would expect for motifs that are attempting to copy or perhaps even allude to the display of captured weaponry specifically within Roman domestic space. These locations, at a distance from the entrance, are in fact a good indication that the alternative interpretations for the motifs extrapolated in Chapters 4 and 5 may be far more useful in understanding how the ancient observer interpreted them, rather than a focus on their connection with captured arms.

6.3: Inter-Domus Locations in Pompeii

In Chapter 3 of this thesis I explored the possibility that the Via Dell'Abbondanza in Pompeii was connected in some way with a theme of military victory or captured arms.⁶⁹⁰ A number of shops decorated with arms and triumphal imagery, as well as the Schola Armaturarum, all opened onto this long street that bisected Pompeii. It seemed possible that this theme of triumph and the use of motifs of arms and armour was something that was frequent in this area of Pompeii and was worthy of further investigation.

⁶⁸⁹ Wallace-Hadrill, 1994, 17.

⁶⁹⁰ See Chapter 3.4.6 of this thesis.

Taking a plan of the town of Pompeii, I have marked the approximate location of houses that make use of motifs of arms in their interior decoration (Figure 75). It will be interesting to see where these houses are grouped together and what this can tell us about the choice to use motifs of arms in Roman domestic decoration.



FIGURE 75: PLAN OF POMPEII WITH HOUSES UTILISING MOTIFS OF ARMS
IN THEIR DECORATION, MARKED IN RED.⁶⁹¹

Reviewing Figure 75, it appears that of the forty five different domus marked there appears to be a grouping of properties using motifs of arms in Region 1, Insulae VI, VII and IX. A few additional properties in the vicinity that open onto the Via Dell'Abbondanza or the smaller

⁶⁹¹ Original plan from <http://www.skidmore.edu/classics/courses/2004spring/cl311/pompeii-city-plan.jpg> [Accessed December 2014], adapted by N. Cracknell.

streets leading to it cluster around this area, suggesting that this was a location where using motifs of arms and armour in domestic decoration was particularly popular. Reviewing the rest of the markers, many of the domus are found in Region VI of Pompeii. This is an almost entirely residential block located above the main Pompeian Forum. Many of these homes belonged to wealthy members of the local society, for example the grandeur and size of the House of the Golden Cupids at VI, 16, 7 indicated its owners were among the Pompeian elite. It is possible, therefore, that the properties in this area may have used motifs of arms in a form of competitive display. However, the prevalence of the smaller Fourth Style motifs in this area suggests that this may be lending too much significance to the role of motifs of arms in these decorative schemes. It seems that there is no particular pattern to the use of motifs of arms in Region VI, but the conglomeration of properties on the Via Dell'Abbondanza is worthy of greater attention.

There are several possible reasons for this cluster of houses utilising motifs of arms in their decorations. As one of the main streets through Pompeii, the Via Dell'Abbondanza was likely to be the ideal street on which to find houses displaying real captured arms, if indeed any houses in Pompeii had received this privilege at all. The presence of the Schola Armaturarum on the same street, decorated with its large frescos of trophies, cannot be ignored (Figure 49). Regardless of if the building were a repository for gladiatorial arms or perhaps even a public display case for captured enemy weaponry, the building and its decorations appears to have had some influence on the surrounding properties on the street.⁶⁹² Even shops like that of Verecundus with its large quadriga led by elephants, or the

⁶⁹² See Chapter 3.4.6. For Jacobelli's interpretations see Jacobelli, 2003, 68.

Fullonica of Stephanus with its small shield motifs in the main atrium area, are drawing on the same repertoire of imagery to suggest that this area of Pompeii had a connection with the display of arms and armour and possibly even with the triumph itself. Motifs of arms, it seems, may not be entirely decorative or arbitrary. They could be responding to real displays of weaponry in their local vicinity that have since been lost, or perhaps act as part of a local trend or theme for the use of the motifs based on local fashions or perhaps even a community experience of war.

From this brief analysis of the location of motifs of arms in Pompeii it is possible to conclude that whilst they may have been inspired by the display of real captured arms and armour in various contexts, the motifs of arms utilised in the decoration of the domus are not attempting any mimesis or replacement of real weaponry on display in the Roman home. Instead, motifs of arms are found at a wide range of depths into the domus, being most popular in rooms directly off the atrium and in rooms at the rear of the house, some distance from the entrance. The flexibility of motifs of arms, allowing them fit with anything from Hellenistic luxury to garden landscapes, is likely to be one of the main reasons for the wide range of locations in which we can find them within the domus. Above and beyond this internal analysis of the domus, the examination of the location of the houses themselves within the city suggests that the Via Dell' Abbondanza in Pompeii may have been a particularly appropriate area in which to make use of motifs of arms in domestic and public decoration, although we can only speculate at the reasons for this. Far more than just being a reference to spoils of war, motifs of arms are a versatile, complex motif, capable of being understood in a variety of ways based upon both their decorative and physical context.

Conclusions

This thesis set out to explore the use of motifs of arms in Roman domestic decoration, focusing on how ancient observers could have interpreted them within their decorative and physical context. Previous scholarship in this field has been limited and has often oversimplified the interpretation of motifs of arms in domestic spaces as allusions to the display of spoils of war in the Roman home. This study has sought to address this oversimplification, opening up a new discussion of motifs of arms for further research and has developed our understanding of the range of different types of weaponry motifs in use to decorate the Roman home. The research had several aims:

1. To collate a catalogue of evidence for the use of motifs of arms in Roman domestic decoration from across mainland Italy and between the dates of 100 BC to 100 AD.
2. To assess the ancient literary accounts for their descriptions of how spoils of war were displayed in Roman domestic decoration and extrapolate a set of rules or guidelines for how they should be displayed.
3. To review how motifs of arms may have developed in the decoration of public buildings in Italy as a basis for comparison with motifs used in Roman domestic decorations.
4. To produce a typology of the motifs of arms used in Roman domestic decoration in order to explore their development and popularity within the home.

5. To utilise both the catalogue of evidence and typology in order to assess if all motifs of arms in Roman domestic decoration really could be interpreted as allusions to captured arms and armour on display in a Roman domestic setting, as has been suggested by previous scholarship.

The first of these research aims has been successfully addressed by the production of the accompanying evidence catalogue. Whilst not an exhaustive collection of the use of motifs of arms and armour in Roman domestic decoration, it has provided a wide base of material on which to base this research and is the first attempt to collect together motifs of this type from the Roman home. The production of the catalogue was naturally limited by access restrictions at the archaeological sites and the lack of previous record of motifs of arms from excavation reports and previous studies of domestic decoration. However, the catalogue has incorporated 117 different rooms that incorporate motifs of arms from Pompeii, Herculaneum, Rome and various other villae and domus in Italy and particularly on the Bay of Naples. The number of examples collected has given a suitable breadth of evidence to support the research and findings of this thesis and will hopefully serve as a springboard for further research into motifs of arms in domestic decorations where new examples are excavated or where access to other sites is restored.

The second aim of this thesis, to explore the literary evidence for how captured arms were displayed in the Roman home, was addressed in Chapter 2. Reviewing a range of literary accounts it became clear that arms and armour displayed in the Roman home were ideally located near the entrance. Connections between the display of captured arms and the atrium are proven more tenuous than had originally been perceived by previous scholarship

and the possibility that arms could be found throughout the home was raised by the perplexing case of Trimalchio's rostrum. From this study, it is possible to see that whilst the majority of the sources position real spoils at the entrance to the Roman domus, the reality was likely to have been less strictly observed. Arms could be removed in the case of emergencies or even sold off to private collectors, much to the dismay of Cato. These guidelines and particularly the idealised location of arms by the threshold of the domus formed a basis on which to continue the analysis of motifs of arms in domestic space and their relationship to these rules.

Building upon the analysis of literary accounts describing the display of captured arms in public spaces in Chapter 2, Chapter 3 explored how motifs of arms were likely to have developed in public decorations. This assessment, considering numismatic material as well as sculptural decorations from public buildings in Italy and beyond, demonstrates how motifs of arms evolved throughout the chronological scope of this study. It highlights the changing types of motifs, including the divisions between paratactic friezes and conglomerations of arms as were initially identified by Polito. The focus on sculptural decorations, inspired by Polito's catalogue, is also extended to encompass a review of stucco and fresco motifs of arms found in public decorations. This is the first time that these public fresco and stucco decorations have been explored in detail and the new approach to the material has proven particularly rewarding with the discovery of new evidence for the use of these motifs in public spaces being found during recent excavations at Herculaneum. Assessing the sculptural, numismatic, fresco and stucco motifs of arms in public spaces, particularly in light of the practices for displaying real captured arms outlined in Chapter 2,

has revealed that even these public depictions could be open to multiple interpretations. Public motifs of arms and dedications of real arms could be interpreted not only as captured enemy weaponry, but also as an allusion to non-military awards like the *clipeus virtutis* or *clipeatae imagines*, a way of alluding to public spaces and buildings such as horti or temples, a reference to the luxurious decoration of Hellenistic palaces or Greek culture in general and finally as an allusion to the weaponry used by gladiators. All of these possible interpretations opened up the discussion of motifs of arms in public decorations and formed the foundations for the fundamental analysis of this thesis: the interpretation of motifs of arms in domestic decorations.

The fourth aim of this thesis was to develop a typology of motifs of arms used in domestic decorations. Chapter 4 presented the results of this undertaking, dividing the motifs of arms into nine categories. The typology incorporated portrait shields, anthropomorphic trophies and rostra, but the scope of this thesis does not allow for the detailed study these motifs deserve. It is hoped that the items collected in the accompanying catalogue and typology will be useful as a basis for further research into these three particular types of motif. The study of motifs of anthropomorphic trophies is likely to be particularly rewarding due to its complex development from Greek and Roman precedents and its use on a wide range of public monuments in the Imperial period.

The rest of the typology, although formed of broad categories, has allowed me to demonstrate the way that motifs of arms and armour may have developed from large bands of arms, most likely based upon Hellenistic sculptural precedents, and large, realistic depictions of weaponry to the small, repeated round shields of Type 3a that are most

common in Fourth Style decorations. This could be interpreted as a decline in the motifs, following what was hinted at by the public monuments and numismatic decorations that lacked images of mixed arms in the early Imperial period. However, it is also possible that these changes are the natural adaptation of the motifs for Fourth Style decoration, so the impact of political change and particularly changes in the triumphal procession on domestic motifs of arms remains uncertain. The typology, by its association with Mau's Four Styles, allows for suggestions of which motifs were most popular in different periods. Motifs of arms appear to be most popular in the Second and Fourth Pompeian styles, those found in the Second Style often being more realistic than those in the Fourth. The typology highlights the possibility of some motifs being pattern book or filler motifs, especially the small round shields of Type 3a and once again appears to signal a decline in the value of these motifs to something more decorative than allusive. Ultimately, the typology organised the material provided in the catalogue into a sequence that allowed the analysis of how these motifs of arms were interpreted to take place.

Demonstrating how the ancient observer could have interpreted the motifs of arms in domestic decoration, particularly in light of their decorative and physical context, was the main aim of this thesis. During the early stages of this research I was not certain if the motifs could be interpreted in different ways, but after collecting the evidence and beginning to study the motifs in their original decorative context it became apparent that these depictions of weaponry were much more than just a reference to spoils of war. Where the study of the public use of motifs of arms had revealed connections with Hellenism, non-

military commemorations, gladiatorial displays and spoils, the domestic evidence revealed an unexpected complexity and fluidity of interpretation. Motifs of arms in the Roman home could be understood not only as references to Hellenistic luxury and perhaps the decoration of palaces, but also as wider symbols of Greek culture and learning. The weaponry motifs could allude to the *clipeus virtutis* of Augustus, although perhaps never as overtly as the sculptural depictions of the honorific shield. The interpretation of the motifs as part of a wider allusion to public buildings and spaces within domestic decoration seems to be the most common way in which these motifs were likely to have been viewed. This means that previous scholarship is in fact partially correct in that the arms and armour could be representations of captured arms, however their decorative context is crucial. These arms are not found in locations that can generally be identified with the interior of a Roman domus, but are alluding to large public buildings like temples, portici and even public gardens. Rather than solving the dilemma of how the ancient observer interpreted these particular motifs, this raised further questions: did the ancient observer view the shield as part of the allusion to public space and therefore as a representation of spoils on display in a public space? Or did they view the motifs of arms as an adornment of a private space that happens to include a backdrop that is similar to public buildings? Since this is highly dependent on the subjective view of the ancient observers, we may never be able to answer this question. What appears certain is that motifs of arms were an iconographic language with a level of subtlety and nuance that is well beyond what was expected in previous scholarship.

The assessment of further motifs in Chapter 5 explored the likelihood of connections with gladiatorial armaments, although this did not always result in a positive correlation. The difficulties of differentiating between captured enemy arms and gladiatorial arms mean that very few motifs can be positively identified as gladiatorial and only those motifs incorporating the specific arms of the retiarius gladiator or the enclosed helmets of the *murmillo* can be firmly connected with this interpretation. In contrast, the study of the wider range of motifs in Chapter 4 revealed several new ways in which the motifs could be interpreted beyond those already predicted from the assessment of the public decorations. Some weaponry motifs appeared to act as boundary markers, distinguishing the point at which the perspectival decoration left the space in which the ancient observer was standing and extended into a vista, often a landscape or cityscape, which opened up beyond the room. This was a remarkably interesting discovery for it suggests that these particular motifs may be hung at entrances to the *domus* after all. These entrances are imaginary, constructed entirely within the fresco decoration of the wall, but the positioning of the equally imaginary arms and armour at these points could be a sign that the motifs responded to the guidelines for the display of real arms and armour outlined in Chapter 2. Another interesting point raised by the study of the typology in Chapter 4 was the lack of offensive weaponry depicted in the motifs. The majority of the motifs are of shields or other defensive weaponry, suggesting that whilst they could still allude to captured enemy weaponry, the arms may have had a defensive or apotropaic value within the decorations. This theory, supported by the application of moral virtues to shields throughout the period, indicated that the shield in particular was a very flexible motif that could generally be

interpreted in a way that was complimentary to the patron, be it as spoils of war or a symbol of his virtue.

The final chapter of this thesis aimed to set up a basis for further research into motifs of arms, particularly looking at their location within the home and within the community as a whole. Whilst this study is sadly limited to Pompeii, it has shown that motifs of arms are not generally found near the entrance to the domus. Those examples that are found in this location tend to be small depictions of shields or pictorial mosaic decorations, not the grand allusive depictions we would expect to find if the frescos are really attempting to convey the same importance and impression as real spoils of war. The majority of the motifs are found deeper within the home in spaces where the patron was likely to have needed to give permission for visitors to enter, perhaps indicating that these motifs are more decorative than allusive and in contrast with the literary accounts. Looking at the locations of the houses themselves it is possible to see a grouping of properties using motifs of arms on the Via Dell'Abbondanza. It could be that these motifs were inspired by a real display of arms and armour in this area. If excavations in Region IX of Pompeii continue then it is likely that more motifs of arms will come to light, building upon this localised trend.

This thesis has shown, quite convincingly, that motifs of arms and arms in Roman domestic decoration are much more than depictions of captured enemy arms. Whilst their connection with the display of captured weaponry in the triumphal procession, in public and in private cannot be denied, they allow a much broader range of interpretations than has previously been suggested. These interpretations are heavily influenced by their decorative context. They are symbols of a wide range of cultural interactions from a desire for Hellenistic

learning and decorations to reminders of gladiatorial combats. They are a part of an important iconographic language that can convey power and prestige as well as helping the patron to make his domus appear more like the grand public buildings of Rome. They can encapsulate moral values, apotropaic qualities and even be viewed as markers that differentiate between real and imagined space in domestic decorations. Motifs of arms appear to be among the most flexible motifs in the ancient artist's repertoire, which is likely to explain why these motifs were so enduring, found in decorations throughout the period and even continue to be used in modern contexts today.

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