

## THE GREAT POMPEIAN BROTHEL-GAP

### EMINENT VICTORIANS

The story of brothel-identification is an interesting one, worth at least a modest amount of attention. Unfortunately, the critical waters have been muddied by charges of “Victorianism,” which allegedly amounts to an overeagerness to identify a location as a brothel on the basis of its erotic art.<sup>1</sup> This strain of criticism, most prominent in a recent book by John DeFelice Jr., amounts to a crudely reductive version of Michel Foucault’s famous “repressive hypothesis,” which revealed the nineteenth century to be paradoxically a fertile source of discourse about sexuality.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, given the trend in revisionist history on the Victorian period that has been dominant since 1970, DeFelice and the others are in danger of paying the Victorians a compliment that they do not deserve.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Cf. the accusation of “nineteenth-century racial theory” raised recently in regard to the issue of Pompeii’s ethnic composition: Allison, “Placing Individuals” (2001) 70.

2. DeFelice, *Roman Hospitality* (2001) 7, in a published version of a doctoral dissertation that makes a similar point: *Women of Pompeian Inns* (1998). The other examples of this strain of criticism devote far less space to it: see Jacobelli, *Terme Suburbane* (1995) 65 n. 119; Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking* (1998) 179, with the comments of Anderson, review of *Looking at Lovemaking* (1998). For the repressive hypothesis, see Foucault, *History of Sexuality* 1 (1978) esp. 15–49. Supporting evidence for Foucault’s thesis is found, for example, in the enthusiasm of the popular press for the subject of brothels in nineteenth-century St. Paul, Minn.: Best, *Controlling Vice* (1998) 3, 11.

3. For a sense of this historiographical trend, see, for example, Walkowitz, *Prostitution* (1980) vii–viii. Of great importance is Marcus, *Other Victorians* (1966). See also the choice comments of

In evaluating this criticism, it is important to make two points. First, the modern history of scholarly and popular reaction to the discovery of erotic art at Pompeii is far more complex and interesting than such vague and value-laden terminology can suggest.<sup>4</sup> Second, I would argue that great care should be taken in attributing motives to those writing on Roman brothels, for reasons not only of fairness, but also of method.<sup>5</sup> It has long been customary, at any rate, to belabor, however gently, the naiveté of one's predecessors regarding sexual matters at Pompeii.<sup>6</sup> This is a tradition with which I hope to break, if possible. The sheer difficulty of doing so, however, might well form one of the themes of this book. As the reader will note, the fault is far easier to criticize in others' work than to avoid in one's own.

It must be conceded that the charge of "Victorianism," whatever one thinks of it, does raise the interesting question of just what constituted the nineteenth-century discourse on brothels at Pompeii. As noted in chapter 1, this book focuses particularly on late twentieth-century scholarship devoted to Pompeian brothels. While it is possible, even salutary, to spare a backward glance at the previous century, I must make a necessary caveat here to the effect that the coverage cannot be as complete as it is elsewhere for the twentieth century. One difficulty is that works from the nineteenth century are far less accessible as a rule than those from the twentieth.<sup>7</sup> There is also the problem of method. The nineteenth-century discourse on Pompeian brothels is so spare, as it turns out, that we are often left accounting for lacunae. Finally, there is the question of breadth of coverage. It would be interesting to place this discussion in the context of an "archaeology" of nineteenth-century tourism, with particular attention to women's role in that tourism. But that would take me far beyond the scope of my present purpose.

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Foucault, *History of Sexuality* 1 (1978) 3–13. For the purpose of this discussion, "Victorian" refers to the nineteenth century and somewhat beyond, and includes other European cultures, not just the British.

4. For a good sense of the various and mutable quality of these reactions, see Cantilena, "Vizi" (1992).

5. Excessive concern with motive has been identified as a flaw of the radical constructionist approach: see Boghossian, "Social Construction" (2001).

6. See Spano, "Illuminazione" (1920) 25, on the interpretation of the use of lamps in brothels (more on this subject in the text below).

7. This is not only true for published works but even more so for unpublished work of all periods, which in some cases can be found only in the archives of the Soprintendenza di Pompei. See Berry, "Domestic Life" (1997) 105, on this problem for 1.9.11–12 (= cat. no. 4), first excavated in the 1950s. For a similar challenge regarding an excavation from the nineteenth century, see Koloski Ostrow, *Sarno Bath Complex* (1990) 1–13. For an historical overview of problems with publication of finds from Pompeii, see Zevi, "Storia" (1981).

All the same, it is worth trying to locate information on brothels in the more general literature from this period. I freely concede that more brothel-identifications may be found lurking in the nineteenth-century excavation reports and specialist literature, the examination of which should properly form a separate object of study. The challenge I put to those who postulate the identification of a large number of brothels in the nineteenth century, or at any time before Hans Eschebach published a comprehensive attempt at listing all Pompeian brothels in 1970,<sup>8</sup> is to document their assertions as thoroughly as possible. The fact that only thirty (or, discounting doublets, twenty-seven) of the forty-one possible brothels listed in the catalog were first excavated in the nineteenth century might appear to impose that number as an upper limit, but this need not be the case at all.<sup>9</sup> If the Victorians were as active in this field as has been claimed, many more, albeit highly improbable, identifications must have been made.

My goal is not to attempt a complete inventory of brothel-identifications, but the more modest task of first locating the scholarly consensus on brothel-identification in the nineteenth century and then evaluating what became of this in the years that followed. What brothels were routinely and unambiguously identified as such and why? The results are interesting to the point of cautionary for the purpose of this study.

I must raise another caution in regard to periodization. Many persons would regard 1914 as the terminus of nineteenth-century culture. This is sensible enough, though it is remarkable all the same how long a shadow that culture went on to cast. Many of its classic works of scholarship continued to reappear in new editions (though often with few substantial changes or none at all) for many years to come. These editions routinely seem to have eclipsed their predecessors. This cultural drag (and what a drag it was) manifests itself here in the fact that I am able to cite several works from the early years of the twentieth century that are directly rooted in the previous one. Toward the conclusion of this section, I cite works from a bit later in the twentieth century, which help show that, while in some respects nothing essential changed in the attitude and approach of scholars in regard to brothel-identification, a new direction can be perceived in the work of Matteo Della Corte.

A good reason for preferring late- or even strictly post-Victorian products

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8. Eschebach, *Entwicklung* (1970) 175.

9. The years of first excavation are given for each entry in the catalog in appendix 1. The possible brothels first excavated in the twentieth century are cat. nos. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 15, 32, 40, 41.

is that the nineteenth century witnessed a great deal of excavation at Pompeii. Later works, or at least later editions of works published at that time, seem at least notionally to stand a better chance of rounding up more brothels. We might reasonably object that the “nineteenth century” may seem to prove almost as elastic a concept as “Victorian.” Nevertheless, it is essential to try to be as clear as possible about the method adopted here.

Despite the difficulties mentioned above, the chief threads of the nineteenth-century discourse on the subject of brothels are fairly easy to discern. The Victorians turn out to be surprisingly reticent on this subject at Pompeii. Whether this relegates them to some new subcategory (e.g., the Other, Other Victorians) or unmask them as no true Victorians at all, readers are left to decide for themselves.

We begin with guidebooks, or at any rate those with a scholarly bent. An early version is the guidebook by Ludwig Goro von Agyagfalva, which was published in 1825. It discusses one of the catalog entries (7.2.32–33, cat. no. 18), without identifying this establishment or any other as a brothel.<sup>10</sup> A later best-seller of this genre by August Mau was first published in 1893, then went through five editions in less than two decades and culminated in a sixth and final version in 1928. The last two editions, the first of which was edited by Walther Barthel, the second by Albert Ippel, appeared after Mau’s death in 1909.<sup>11</sup> The index to the fifth edition contains a reference to precisely one brothel. This is the relatively large installation familiar to most modern visitors to Pompeii and located not far from the Forum, which in this book I refer to as the Purpose-Built Brothel.<sup>12</sup> The description is one paragraph in length and spare at that and includes a bare allusion to “obscene paintings.”<sup>13</sup>

The sixth edition duplicates word for word the description of the Purpose-Built Brothel offered by the fifth, but adds a photograph showing the *outside* of the brothel (for an early twenty-first-century version, see fig. 4). The index offers, aside from this specimen, what appears at first glance to be a reference to another brothel. This is the so-called “*gran Lupanare*,” also known, among other names, as the “*Scavi degli Scienzati*” at 6.14.43. The odds this establishment was actually a brothel are so unlikely I have excluded it from my catalog

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10. Goro von Agyagfalva, *Wanderungen durch Pompeii* (1825) 110; cf. his index.

11. Mau/Barthel, *Führer durch Pompeji*<sup>5</sup> (1910); Mau/Ippel, *Führer durch Pompeji*<sup>6</sup> (1928).

12. So also in the second edition: Mau, *Führer durch Pompeji*<sup>2</sup> (1896) 54 (one-paragraph description of Purpose-Built Brothel), 112 (index reference to single *lupanar*).

13. Mau/Barthel, *Führer durch Pompeji*<sup>5</sup> (1910) 62 (description), 141 (index). The brothel in question is nos. 26 and 27 in the catalog in appendix 1.

of possible brothels. For that matter, it is unclear whether Mau, or rather Ippel, regarded it as one or was simply repeating a conventional designation.<sup>14</sup>

Such reticence on the part of the putatively sexually loquacious Victorians is rather surprising.<sup>15</sup> The brevity of the descriptions offered by these books of the Purpose-Built Brothel may be explained by the fact that in their day, as both editions acknowledge, this establishment was closed (“verschlossen”) to visitors. There might have seemed little point in extensively describing to visitors something they could not see for themselves. On the other hand, the descriptions are not really shorter than those provided in these guides for buildings that were open to the public. And this explanation does not account for why these guidebooks offer only one, or at the most two, examples of brothels. Here again we confront the difficulty, which I raised above, of speculating about motive. Nineteenth-century scholars knew of other venues for prostitution; hence why not allude to these?<sup>16</sup>

William Gell published a third version of his guide to the antiquities of Pompeii, not a guidebook in the sense Mau’s was, but which was wildly popular nonetheless, in 1832 after his first two editions were sold out.<sup>17</sup> The date was late enough for Gell to take notice of the brothel now known as 6.10.1, 19 (= cat. no. 12), which had been excavated just five years before, in 1827.<sup>18</sup> Gell does this almost grudgingly, however.<sup>19</sup> This establishment does appear to have been identified as a brothel very early on.<sup>20</sup> But not every nineteenth-century writer who discusses it mentions this fact, and as we shall see, some

14. See Mau/Ippel, *Führer durch Pompeji*<sup>6</sup> (1928) 73 (description of the *Scavi degli Scanzati/gran Lupanare*), 174 (description of the Purpose-Built Brothel), 261 (index).

15. For what it is worth, the later guidebook by Warscher, *Pompeji: Ein Führer durch die Ruinen* (1925) 144, describes the Purpose-Built Brothel in a brief paragraph. It justifies the identification of this establishment as a brothel by referring to “the obscene scenes on the walls.” Warscher does not canvass the possibility that sex was sold at the two *cauponae* located at 6.10.1, 19 and 6.10.2 (= cat. nos. 12 and 13), which she takes as one establishment, analogous to the modern *rosticceria* (71–72). We might conclude from the coy language she uses to describe 9.11.2–3 (= cat. no. 40), however, that she regards this as a brothel.

16. It is interesting to note that in a specialized work Mau identifies a brothel, which he was the first to characterize as such, but does not refer to this venue as a brothel in either of the guidebooks discussed here. Compare Mau, “Scavi” (1879) 209–10, with Mau/Barthel, *Führer durch Pompeji*<sup>5</sup> (1910) 69, and Mau/Ippel, *Führer durch Pompeji*<sup>6</sup> (1928) 42. The brothel in question is 9.5.14–16, no. 35 in the catalog. Mau and his epigones did not therefore attempt to enumerate in their guidebooks all of the brothels known to them.

17. Gell, *Pompeiana*, 1<sup>3</sup> (1832) i–ii. On the professional and popular success of this book, see Wallace-Hadrill, “Case” (2001) 114.

18. For the date of excavation, see Overbeck, *Pompeji* (1856) 437.

19. Gell, *Pompeiana* 2<sup>3</sup> (1832) 10–13, 135; the micromap in the first volume faces 182.

20. See, for example, the passing references in Bonucci, “Scavi” (1829) 146; Fiorelli, *PAH* 2 (1862) 204 (entry for January 1, 1828); 223 (entry for June 14, 1829).

later scholars back away from the identification, referring to the establishment as the “so-called brothel.”

As the century progressed, and more information on brothels became available, this development was not always received with enthusiasm by the writers of guides to Pompeii. Thomas Dyer, in his revised 1875 edition of a book that first appeared in 1867, is almost strident in his refusal to discuss the Purpose-Built Brothel:

A little beyond the house of Siricus, a small street, running down at right angles from the direction of the Forum, enters the Via del Lupanare. Just at their junction, and having an entrance into both, stands the Lupanar, from which the latter street derives its name. We cannot venture upon a description of this resort of Pagan [sic] immorality. It is kept locked up, but the guide will procure the key for those who may wish to see it.<sup>21</sup>

This is still more information than the reader receives from the later guide by Rolfe, who discusses the tavern at 6.10.1, 19 (= cat. no. 12) without mentioning the possibility that sex was sold there and who on one of his walking tours (“itineraries”) takes the reader right past the Purpose-Built Brothel without acknowledging its existence (though it does appear as “Lupanare” on the Italian-language map at the end of the book).<sup>22</sup> This trend toward reticence is developed further by Forbes in his 1893 guide to Naples and its surroundings, when the Pompeian brothel all but completely disappears from sight.<sup>23</sup> On the map of Pompeii provided in the book the wedge-shaped form of the Purpose-Built Brothel is discernible, although it is not labeled.

I am inclined to attribute this silence to the exigencies of the genre, though it is clear that differences of approach do exist. Even the guidebooks that do mention brothels, however, may be thought to fix on one or two for reasons of economy of presentation.<sup>24</sup> This is pure speculation, but when we

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21. Dyer, *Pompeii* (1875) 471.

22. Rolfe, *Pompeii* (1888) 250, 272.

23. Forbes, *Rambles in Naples* (1893) 43–87 (tour of Pompeii).

24. As late as 1982, a guidebook to Pompeii offers only three entries in the index under *lupanar*, 1.10.5 (= cat. no. 5), 7.9.33 (= cat. no. 25: 7.9.29–34), 7.12.18–20 (= cat. no. 26/27): A. De Vos and M. De Vos, *Pompeii* (1982) 378. A later publication gives only one entry in the index, 7.12.18–20 (= cat. nos. 26/27), though several others are mentioned in the text: La Rocca, A. De Vos, and M. De Vos, *Pompeii* (1994). A 1998 publication treats only that brothel, while alluding to “25 or so places of prostitution”: Guzzo and D’Ambrosio, *Pompeii* (1998) 71–73, 160; cf. Nappo, *Pompeii* (1998) 74 (“[o]ver 30”); Amery and Curran, *Pompeii* (2002) 90 (“an abundance”), 91 (“twenty-five organized brothels”), both of which focus on the Purpose-Built Brothel.

move on to other types of publication from the nineteenth century, the overall picture changes but little.

Francophone guidebooks from the nineteenth century appear to strike a balance between the scholarly and the popular, a fact that suggests that these were not so much mutually exclusive categories as types that fell along a broad spectrum. In André De Jorio's contribution from 1828 there is a brief description of the establishment I catalog as no. 25, without any hint that sex might have been sold there.<sup>25</sup> We at last emerge from this desert into the oasis, albeit a very small one, of Stanislas D'Aloe's 1861 guidebook. D'Aloe identifies two establishments as brothels, one a likely candidate, the other less so, and he misses two or more possibilities.<sup>26</sup> What is interesting is that he uses the criteria of erotic art and graffiti for this purpose, though he does so rather tentatively, and in both cases in the context of (that is in or near) a tavern, rather than, for example, a private house.

Ernest Breton seems to have had an interest in identifying brothels to judge from the second edition of his survey of Pompeii, an interesting combination of scholarly treatise and guide for tourists, published in 1855. His index contains only two "brothels."<sup>27</sup> The first is the tavern at 6.10.1, 19, identified as no. 12 in the catalog. Though Breton does not present criteria for this identification, he does mention the "obscene" wall paintings, suggesting that erotic art almost certainly played a role in this identification.<sup>28</sup> The other is the false identification of 6.14.43 as a brothel, which Breton is the first to make.<sup>29</sup> The criteria are of interest. First is the location of the establishment near the "*Vico Storto*." I am tempted to speculate that Breton depends here on the ancient cliché that had brothels on winding, secluded streets and that has had such a long life.<sup>30</sup> Next are the numerous epigraphs, which the author deems too obscene for a respectable establishment. Unfortunately the epigraphs were illegible only a decade after excavation, and Breton permits himself to cite only a few of the "more decent" examples, which do not prove much of anything about the presence of a brothel.

In the third edition of this book, dating to 1870, Breton displays an even

25. De Jorio, *Plan de Pompéi* (1829) 114.

26. See D'Aloe, *Ruines de Pompéi* (1861) 66 (= cat. no. 12), 113 (= cat. nos. 29 and 30: not canvassed as brothels), 116 (= cat. no. 7), 133–34 (= cat. no. 34: not canvassed as a brothel).

27. Breton, *Pompeia*<sup>2</sup> (1855) 368.

28. See Breton, *Pompeia*<sup>2</sup> (1955) 288–90. Cf. Schulz, "Scavi" (1838) 186–88, who is content only to mention nonerotic paintings from this location, which he refers to as the "Lupernale."

29. Breton, *Pompeia*<sup>2</sup> (1855) 305–6. Breton discusses at least one other possible brothel, 9.2.7–8 (= cat. no. 34), without identifying it as such: 315–16.

30. See chap. 9.

greater interest in the subject. In addition to the two brothels mentioned in the second edition,<sup>31</sup> there is the Purpose-Built Brothel at 7.12.18–20, discovered in 1862 (= cat. nos. 26 and 27), which receives a rather full description.<sup>32</sup> Erotic paintings and graffiti are mentioned without giving details, while Breton also acknowledges the presence of the masonry beds in the downstairs *cellae*. The author does not explicitly present any of these items as probative criteria for the existence of a brothel, but we might reasonably infer that they played such a role for him. Breton also cites a total of four cribs, one (evidently) at 7.12.33, plus 7.13.15, 16, and 19, the last three of which are said to explain the presence of a representation of a phallus, the name Daphne, and an obscene inscription.<sup>33</sup> Beyond this he expresses the belief that prostitutes, especially young ones, lived in houses on the *Vico Storto* on the ground that erotic art and objects were found there.<sup>34</sup>

Johannes Overbeck's monumental work on Pompeian antiquities contains, in its first edition, published in 1856, two references to brothels in its index, both of which are located on the map he provides. One of these is known now by the address of 6.14.43, the so-called *gran Lupanare* or *Scavi degli Scienziati*. In the text, Overbeck cites the authority of Ernest Breton for this identification, which as already noted is now regarded as almost certainly an error.<sup>35</sup> The other is a tavern with back rooms now identified as 6.10.1, 19 (= cat. no. 12), which quite likely was indeed a brothel.<sup>36</sup> These two brothels, plus the Purpose-Built Brothel, discovered subsequently, in 1862, are the only ones mentioned in the fourth edition to the work, published in 1884.<sup>37</sup> In the text of this edition, the existence of brothels at Pompeii is alluded to very sparingly indeed.<sup>38</sup>

As the nineteenth century wore on, excavators unearthed more and more of the ancient city. A progress report for a period lasting just over a decade, from 1861 to 1872, is offered by Giuseppe Fiorelli in *Scavi di Pompei*. Fiorelli,

31. Breton, *Pompeia*<sup>3</sup> (1870) 359–60 (= cat. no. 12); 379–81 (the false brothel at 6.14.43).

32. Breton, *Pompeia*<sup>3</sup> (1870) 434–36.

33. Breton, *Pompeia*<sup>3</sup> (1870) 441–42, 452.

34. Breton, *Pompeia*<sup>3</sup> (1870) 411.

35. Overbeck, *Pompeji*<sup>7</sup> (1856) 338–39 (which provides a brief discussion of the rationale for identifying 6.14.43 as a brothel), 437 (index for the map). The criterion employed was evidently the presence of erotic graffiti, which makes identification of this establishment as a brothel, though almost certainly erroneous, hardly absurd.

36. The already mentioned guidebooks identify this establishment simply as a tavern: Mau/Barthel, *Führer durch Pompeji*<sup>5</sup> (1910) 105–6; Mau/Ippel, *Führer durch Pompeji*<sup>6</sup> (1928) 230–32.

37. Overbeck/Mau, *Pompeji*<sup>4</sup> (1884) 673, 675.

38. Overbeck/Mau, *Pompeji*<sup>4</sup> (1884) 380.

*inter alia*, gives what by the standards of the day are fairly close descriptions of seventeen *Insulae*, or street blocks, on the plan he himself devised for Pompeii.<sup>39</sup> Ten of these contain establishments that are listed as possible brothels in appendix 1. Not all of these *Insulae* were completely excavated at the time of publication, but Fiorelli has references to nine of these entries, encompassing what are a minimum of seven possible brothels: catalog nos. 17, 18, 19, 20 (19 and 20 may be one brothel or two), 26, 27 (26 and 27 may also be one brothel or two), 31, 33, 34. Of these, he identifies only two explicitly as brothels, the downstairs and upstairs of the Purpose-Built Brothel (26 and 27), and at most implies that one other location served as such (here to take 19/20 as one establishment).<sup>40</sup> Again, this is a report on recent progress in excavation, not a survey of the entire city, but the low number of brothels reported is striking all the same.

The language Fiorelli uses to identify these brothels is of interest. He describes the downstairs of the Purpose-Built Brothel with a common Latin word for brothel, *formix*. Was he being euphemistic here? It does not seem so, given that Fiorelli uses *lupanare* to describe the upstairs. But there is no question that his overall description is laconic, to say the least: he mentions neither erotic paintings nor graffiti.<sup>41</sup> Of course we know that these items were present, and that they almost certainly figured into Fiorelli's own identification of these establishments as brothels. All the same, as they do not appear in his discourse, it is difficult to know exactly how much weight Fiorelli gave them. Aside from describing the layout of the *cellae*, with their masonry beds and pillows, he chiefly mentions that the brothel is recognizable as such "by the dark and narrow space in which it was contained" ("dal tetro ed angusto spazio ov'era confinato"), drawing on a brothel cliché traceable all the way back to antiquity, as we shall see in chapter 9.

In regard to the brothel he perhaps identifies through implication, Fiorelli writes the following: "Stairway to an upstairs dwelling, where various women were accustomed to congregate, among whom at one point there was Euplia, *cum hominibus bellis*."<sup>42</sup> Here the Latin reference to male partners, to say noth-

39. A list is provided at Fiorelli, *Scavi di Pompei* (1873) vi–vii. For a brief description of Fiorelli's system of Pompeian addresses, see my preface.

40. Fiorelli, *Scavi di Pompei* (1873) 20, 42–43. Fiorelli in this publication does seem to regard the Purpose-Built Brothel as two separate establishments: see chap. 8 for a discussion of this problem.

41. Fiorelli, *Scavi di Pompei* (1873) 20.

42. Fiorelli, *Scavi di Pompei* (1873) 42: "Scala di un'abitazione superiore, ove solevano convenir varie donne, tra le quali fuvi una volta Euplia, *cum hominibus bellis*." For more on this site, see below in the text.

ing of the description of the women as “various,” seems an unmistakable euphemism. It is not entirely clear, however, whether he understands this place to be an assignation house, rather than a brothel. I argue below in this chapter that the Romans did not distinguish between assignation houses and brothels, though Fiorelli may well have done so. Or, perhaps, for reasons given below, he employed a different definition of brothel than we do.

Matters do not improve in a lavishly produced survey of a later group of nineteenth-century excavations, covering the period 1874 to 1881, by Emil Presuhn. The author simply does not canvass one candidate for brothelhood at 9.5.19 (= cat. no. 36) as such, while for another, a tavern at 9.5.14–16 (= cat. no. 35), the author at most alludes to the possibility that sex was sold there, when he cites Bacchus and Venus as patrons of the clientele.<sup>43</sup>

When we come to August Mau’s great work on life and art in Pompeii, the second edition of which appeared in 1908, brothels seem to have disappeared entirely. There is no mention of them in the index, nor in the text, as far as I can see.<sup>44</sup> This silence is consistent with Mau’s treatment of Pompeian painting in this book, which ignores the presence of erotic subjects. The same holds for his discussion of graffiti.<sup>45</sup> The result is a brighter, cleaner, and nicer Pompeii than we believe it actually was. It is almost as if Mau had found the City of Venus and transformed it into a Victorian version of Chicago. Whether his motive was sheer hypocrisy or a sense of propriety difficult to contemplate in an age ruled by a radically different sense of honor and shame I leave to the reader to decide. A third alternative, mere lack of interest, is an even more unintelligible motive to us. But even this motive cannot be ruled out as a reason for Mau’s omitting this information in this work.

If lack of interest was indeed the motive behind such reticence, it may have been shared by others with an interest in the life and art of the ancient city of Pompeii. Wolfgang Helbig’s encyclopedic treatment of Campanian wall painting, published in 1868, virtually ignores erotic subjects. Although Helbig occasionally mentions prostitutes and brothels, he describes them in a manner that suggests their status as the proverbial exceptions that prove the rule. The apparent backing away from recognition of 6.10.1, 19 as a brothel

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43. Presuhn, *Pompeji*<sup>2</sup> (1882) Abt. 7.6, Abt. 8.5–6.

44. The lone exception appears in the appendix Mau published independently of the second edition, where he repeats Helbig’s skeptical identification of 6.10.1, 19 (= cat. no. 12) as a “so-called brothel”: Mau, *Pompeji: Anhang* (1913) 56. On Helbig, see below in the text.

45. Mau, *Pompeji in Leben und Kunst*<sup>2</sup> (1908) 419–24 (inns and wine shops), 472–89 (paintings), 509–15 (graffiti). See also the English translation of the first edition: Mau, *Pompeii: Its Life and Art* (1899) 392–96 (inns and wine shops), 461–74 (paintings), 481–88 (graffiti).

stands as the most striking instance, at least from my perspective.<sup>46</sup> Henry Thédenat's 1910 volume on Pompeian *vie publique* shows scant interest in venal sex. The chapter on taverns, hotels, shops, professions, and streets does not raise the subject, though at least one catalog item comes in for discussion, 6.10.1, 19 (= cat. no. 12).<sup>47</sup> The detailed map at the rear of the book shows two more such items, one of which, the Purpose-Built Brothel, is identified as a *lupanar*; the other, 6.16.32–33 (= cat. no. 15), is not.

Aside from Ernest Breton, Giuseppe Fiorelli cites the largest number of "brothels," for a grand total of four, in the index to his *Descrizione*. Only one of these, the Purpose-Built Brothel, is explicitly identified as a brothel in the text.<sup>48</sup> The four "brothels" are:

1. 6.10.1, 19
2. 6.14.a (scil. 6.14.43)
3. 7.4.42 (a misprint gives the *Regio* as 6)
4. 7.12.18–20

The first is a tavern that doubled as a brothel (= cat. no. 12), the second is now recognized as a likely misidentification (the *Scavi degli Scienziati*), the third is a crib, or *cella meretricia*, and the fourth is the Purpose-Built Brothel (= cat. nos. 26/27). At least four cribs not included in the index are found in the text. One is at 7.11.12, while the others are found in a cluster located at 7.13.13, 15, 19.<sup>49</sup>

Furthermore, there are three additional establishments that Fiorelli might also have considered to be brothels. For 6.11.5, 15–16 (= cat. no. 14), he declares that "facili donne" ("loose women") lived there on the basis of erotic graffiti.<sup>50</sup> According to Fiorelli, who again cites epigraphic evidence, at the tavern known as 7.3.26–28 (= cat. no. 19) "giocondamente passavano le ore

46. Helbig, *Wandgemälde* (1868) has a very brief section on "obscene paintings" (370–71, which refers to some published examples; see also 369), another on women, possibly *hetairai*, at banquets, plus a short survey of *Liebescenen* (342–45), and *hetairai* in scenes from Comedy (352–56). The identification of 6.10.1, 19 (= cat. no. 12) as a brothel is doubted (471: "Sog. Lupanar"), while the identification of 6.14.43 as such, now discarded, is accepted as secondary and evidently unreliable to judge from his description of its nomenclature (472: "Scavi degli scienziati, auch Gran lupanar genannt").

47. Thédenat, *Pompéi*<sup>2</sup> (1910) 118.

48. Fiorelli, *Descrizione* (1875) 461; cf. 286–87, where the Purpose-Built Brothel is identified as a *lupanare*. Fiorelli discusses at least two other possible brothels without identifying them as such: 7.7.18 (= cat. no. 24) and 9.2.7–8 (= cat. no. 34) at 248 and 379–80, respectively.

49. Fiorelli, *Descrizione* (1875) 279, 298.

50. Fiorelli, *Descrizione* (1875) 151, has this as 6.11.15.

uomini e donne” (“men and women were accustomed to pass time pleasantly”).<sup>51</sup> Elsewhere for 7.9.29–34 (= cat. no. 25) he refers to apartments that “non erano frequentati da donne pudiche” (“that were not used by chaste women”).<sup>52</sup> It is odd that Fiorelli, who does not hesitate to include four brothel-identifications in his index, should resort to euphemism elsewhere, and it may be that he did not in fact regard all of the three establishments in question as brothels. An explanation for this strange result might be that Fiorelli had a different, more restrictive, definition of brothel than our working one, which defines brothel as a public place where two or more prostitutes can service clients at the same time. A nineteenth-century European accustomed to a Parisian-style system of regulationism might have had a more elevated set of expectations for a brothel from the institutional perspective. In other words, he might more easily locate a brothel in the physical plant of the Purpose-Built Brothel, for example, than in most of the other places we would accept as Pompeian brothels using my definition.<sup>53</sup> Or, as already suggested, perhaps Fiorelli regarded these simply as assignation houses and not as brothels. Both solutions are far from certain, but might help explain why Fiorelli and some other nineteenth-century scholars identified far fewer brothels than we might have expected.

Even so, this last piece of information, together with the cribs missing from Fiorelli’s index, raises an obvious caution. The publication of brothels and cribs in the nineteenth century was far from systematic, so that it is easy to miss them in the literature. More are perhaps found elsewhere in Fiorelli’s published work or, as I have already pointed out, in the nineteenth-century specialist literature overall.<sup>54</sup> All the same, I do not believe the total of cribs identified, rightly or wrongly, in that period is going to exceed by more than a half dozen or so that which I have already unearthed. In regard to brothels, I would be surprised to find that their number exceeded the numbers identified as such in the course of the twentieth century by Matteo Della Corte, let alone by Hans Eschebach. It is interesting to note that in the second edition of

51. Fiorelli, *Descrizione* (1875) 206, has this as 7.3.27. See also the discussion above.

52. Fiorelli, *Descrizione* (1875) 267, has this as 7.9.32, the more usual listing.

53. On the experience of nineteenth-century regulationism in Italy, see Gibson, *Prostitution and the State in Italy*<sup>2</sup> (1999).

54. The collection of excavation records edited by Fiorelli that is known as the PAH (*Pompeianarum Antiquitatum Historia*) does not promise well in this regard. PAH 2.204 identifies what is evidently 6.10.1, 19 (= cat. n. 12) as a brothel on the basis of erotic art and graffiti; cf. PAH 2.223, 250, 3.84. Otherwise reticence appears to rule on the subject of brothels to judge from the sampling I have done. PAH 2.369–70, 446–47, 449–50 do not identify 6.14.43 as a brothel. Cf. PAH 2.64–65 (cat. no. 25), 2.381–82, 384, 400 (cat. no. 29), 2.496–99, 506–7 (cat. no. 34).

Pierre Gusman's book on Pompeii, published in 1906, in a chapter promisingly entitled "Les lupanars et les cellae meretriciae," a few specifics are included: the Purpose-Built Brothel, the (probably misidentified) *Scavi degli Scienzati*, and one crib, at 7.11.12.<sup>55</sup> Gusman's knowledge of Pompeian brothels and cribs appears to be derivative at best, but the results may serve as an indication of what was by then commonly known or accepted on the subject. Thus when the article on prostitutes in the great *Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines*, edited by C. Daremberg and E. Saglio, appears in 1918, the author, citing Gusman, confidently asserts that at Pompeii "at least two brothels" ("au moins deux lupanars") had been excavated.<sup>56</sup>

The brothels routinely and unambiguously cited as such by nineteenth-century scholars amount to a total of three, two of which are quite likely to be brothels (= cat. nos. 12 and 26/27), while the third is not likely to be one at all (6.14.43).<sup>57</sup> We may add to this tally the six cribs given by Breton and Fiorelli (three of which overlap).

This is a disappointing harvest, particularly in regard to the brothels. Given the sheer amount of excavation in the nineteenth century, a Foucauldian, or anyone for that matter, might reasonably have expected more. A passing remark of Ludwig Friedländer's in his classic encyclopedia on Roman life and manners, which originated back in 1861 and, like August Mau's work, continued to be published in new editions after the author's death (by sheer coincidence, in the same year as Mau's), suggests as much. Friedländer remarks that moral conditions in the capital could hardly be worse than in Pompeii, "where among so many hundreds of wall paintings obscene subjects were hardly found elsewhere than in brothels."<sup>58</sup> He makes as straightforward a connection between the location of erotic art and brothels as we would like, and so it is not surprising to find this text cited as a kind of "smoking gun" in the modern Victorian-*jagd*.<sup>59</sup> But Friedländer disappointingly fails to connect the dots. In other words, he does not employ the criterion of erotic art to identify any brothels, either real or imaginary.

Far from a smoking gun, then, this passage is a dead end. Nineteenth-cen-

55. Gusman, *Pompéii*<sup>2</sup> (1906) 271–73: there are also vague references to taverns and houses, the latter in the *Vico Storto*, an idea perhaps derived from Ernest Breton.

56. Navarre, *DS* s.v. "meretrices" (1918) 1836.

57. Compare Mau's index to *CIL* 4, published in 1909, which has (at 787–90), in addition to these three listings and the six *cellae meretriciae* of Breton and Fiorelli, the "*Casa del lupanare*" at 6.10.2 (= cat. no. 13).

58. Friedländer/Wissowa, *Sittengeschichte Roms* 1<sup>10</sup> (1922) 288: ". . . wo [sc. in Pompeii] unter so vielen Hunderten von Wandgemälden obszöne Bilder schwerlich anderswo als in Bordellen gefunden worden sind."

59. By DeFelice, *Roman Hospitality* (2001) 7.

ture scholars may have enjoyed the most lurid—or prosaic—fantasies about the large number of Pompeian brothels. If so, these fantasies found scant expression in the literature surveyed here. Their legacy regarding the identification of brothels in post-Victorian Pompeian studies is therefore somewhat negligible. It is significant that, as late as 1920, in his extensive study of street lighting in Pompeii, Giuseppe Spano cites only one “true brothel” in the city, the one characterized in this book as the Purpose-Built Brothel.<sup>60</sup> Though he does acknowledge that “alcuni termopoli” functioned as brothels, he gives only one example, the tavern-brothel known to us as 6.10.1, 19. For serious and sustained efforts at brothel-identification, at least as reflected in print, readers had to wait until the twentieth century was well underway.

Why this silence? A clue to Victorian reticence on the subject of brothels may be found in the Victorians’ bizarre approaches to ancient latrines. In terms of “hardware,” these latrines were more difficult to ignore than were the brothels. Perhaps for this reason, resort to fanciful explanations was a necessity; worth mentioning in this regard is the theory that the characteristic stone benches with perforations served as “amphora-holders.”<sup>61</sup> As with scatology, so perhaps with sex.<sup>62</sup> If feelings of embarrassment prevented nineteenth-century archaeologists from saying more about Pompeian brothels, this can easily be reconciled with Foucault’s repressive hypothesis. This is especially true if we assume that they were quite prepared to talk about sex in the present tense, just not in the past, as though uncovering certain aspects of Roman sexuality might undermine public confidence in the entire enterprise of ancient archaeology.

Another possible explanation—which is not inconsistent with the one just given—is simply that the tentative suggestions that were periodically made for the identifications of brothels in the specialist literature were tacitly rejected by mainstream scholars because they were deemed unconvincing.<sup>63</sup> We should not assume that these earlier scholars were, on the whole, less skept-

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60. Spano, “Illuminazione” (1920) 35.

61. See Neudecker, *Pracht der Latrine* (1994) 7–9, for this and alternative versions.

62. For a good discussion of the “prudish reticence about sex . . . in Anglo-American scholarship of the Victorian and post-Victorian era,” see Nussbaum and Sihvola, “Introduction” (2002) 2–7 (quotation at 3). On material culture in particular, see Johns, *Sex or Symbol* (1982) 15–35.

63. This point is impossible to prove. See perhaps the tentative identification of some shops at 6.6.14–16 as brothels by Mazois, *Ruines 2* (1824/38) 24. The suggestion evidently awaits Pirson, *Mietwohnungen* (1999) 33 n. 127, for explicit refutation. It is passed over in silence, for example, by Niccolini, *Case 2* (1862): 9. Another sign is the evident backing away from identification of 6.10.1, 19 (= cat. no. 12) as a brothel by scholars such as Helbig (see n. 46 above).

tical than some of us are, regardless of whether that skepticism is in the end justified. It is also possible that at least some of them, as noted above, defined brothel differently from the way we do and/or made tacit distinctions between assignation-houses and brothels.

Once we move past the limits of what may be reasonably described as “Victorian,” let alone nineteenth-century scholarship, a change occurs, which appears very dramatic in comparison to what precedes it, though much less so in comparison to what follows. In 1926 Matteo Della Corte published the first edition of his study of the houses and inhabitants of Pompeii. The work is in fact a collation of a series of articles that appeared from 1914 to 1925 in such journals as *Neapolis* and the *Rivista Indo-greco-italica*. In the text, Della Corte gives a total of seven brothels, a modest number by today’s standards but one which more than doubles the total of the consensus I have been able to unearth for the previous period.<sup>64</sup> In a postscript to the book, Della Corte adds one more example.<sup>65</sup> This did not, to be sure, exhaust the number of venues for venal sex in Pompeii known to Della Corte at that time,<sup>66</sup> but the question of why he did not add to the list of brothels in 1926 must remain a matter for speculation.

The original number of seven brothels given by Della Corte was taken up by the Pauly-Wissowa encyclopedia in an article on Roman prostitution published just five years later.<sup>67</sup> Thus it came to stand as, in a sense, canonical for much of the twentieth century. Indeed, it was cited as late as 1963 by J. P. V. D. Balsdon in his book on Roman women.<sup>68</sup> Guidebooks to Pompeii published in this period, however, including one written by Della Corte himself, mention the Purpose-Built Brothel and very little else.<sup>69</sup>

In the second edition of his book, published in 1954, Della Corte increases the number of brothels he lists to ten.<sup>70</sup> He also includes two cribs in his index,

64. Della Corte, *Case*<sup>1</sup> (1926) nos. 58 (= my cat. no. 14), 207 (= cat. no. 36), 220 (= cat. no. 22), 285 (= cat. nos. 26/27), 348 (= cat. no. 33), 399 (= cat. no. 1), 401 (= cat. no. 2).

65. Della Corte, *Case*<sup>1</sup> (1926) no. 208 (= my cat. no. 37). The change is reflected in the book’s index s.v. “Lupanar” (at 111), which therefore gives a total of eight brothels.

66. Cf. Della Corte, *Case*<sup>1</sup> (1926) index s.v. “Leno, Meretrices” (at 109).

67. Schneider, *RE* s.v. “meretrix” (1931) 1023.

68. Balsdon, *Roman Women* (1963) 225 (“at least seven” brothels for Pompeii, citing the Pauly article). See also Della Valle, “Amore” (1937) 149.

69. Della Corte, *Piccola Guida di Pompei* (1939) 40–41 (cf. 42 for the crib at 7.11.12); Ciprotti, *Conoscere Pompei* (1959) 93 (has two brothels, the Purpose-Built and cat. nos. 22/23).

70. The additions are found at Della Corte, *Case*<sup>2</sup> (1954) 122–23 (= my cat. no. 19), 378 (= cat. no. 12); see 429 s.v. “Lupanaria.”

but just two cribs, less than the number cited by nineteenth-century scholars such as Breton and Fiorelli.<sup>71</sup>

It is interesting to note that one of the two “new” brothels included in the second edition of *Case*, and only in a postscript, is my catalog number 12, which, for well over a century, some thought had functioned as a brothel. This fact, taken with Della Corte’s underreporting of cribs, suggests a significant break with the tradition of scholarship that preceded his publication. To put the matter another way, of the three “usual suspects” I have been able to unearth for the nineteenth century, Della Corte cites one (the Purpose-Built) consistently, names one (= cat. no. 12) belatedly, and completely ignores the third, which is probably a false attribution, as it turns out (6.14.43). The changes made between the first two editions are modest in nature, as are those between the second and third edition of *Case*, posthumously published in 1965, which contains two more brothels and one less crib, as we shall see.<sup>72</sup>

What all of this might suggest is that instead of simply relying on the reports of others, Della Corte relied on personal observation and knowledge of the physical remains and in so doing, generated a higher number of possible brothels for the ancient city of Pompeii. For now this explanation of Della Corte’s departure from precedent must remain an hypothesis. The same holds for the evident absence of a great legacy of Pompeian brothels identified, rightly or not, by generations of scholars in the nineteenth century. What does seem reasonably certain is that Della Corte and his twentieth-century successors moved well beyond the limits of the mainstream discourse on brothels recoverable from the Victorian period, and that it is at minimum an exaggeration to characterize these later developments as inevitably “Victorian” in nature. The systematic identification, collation, and above all counting of Pompeian brothels is a distinctly twentieth-century phenomenon and, apart from the contributions of Della Corte himself, a late one at that.

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71. Della Corte, *Case*<sup>2</sup> (1954) 72–76 (if anything this is likely to be a brothel and not a *cella meretricia*), 170 (the crib at 7.11.12); cf. 429, index s.v. “Meretriciae cellae.”

72. I am unable to verify the assertion of Berry, “Domestic Life” (1997) 104, that in an article published in 1958 Della Corte identified the then recently excavated 1.9.11 as a brothel, the “Lupanar di Amarantus” (sic). She gives no page reference, while Della Corte, “Pompei” (1958) twice refers to this establishment, once as the *Caupona Amaranti* (79) and again as an “osteria” (105). See also Della Corte, *Case*<sup>3</sup> (1965) 340, 504; *CIL* 4.9829a (editorial note), 10017 (editorial note). For what it is worth, Della Corte, *Amori e amanti* (1958) does not explicitly identify any brothels not given in the various editions of *Case*, though his coy description (72–73) of the establishment at 2.1.6 (scil. = 1.11.6–7) is of interest.

## COUNTING BROTHELS

The figure of “thirty-five or more” for the total number of Pompeian brothels introduced in chapter 1 is of late vintage, dating in published form to the 1994 harvest of books on Pompeii by Ray Laurence and Antonio Varone.<sup>73</sup> Before this date, counting the number of brothels in Pompeii seems to have held little interest for scholars.<sup>74</sup> These authors arrived at the number thirty-five by taking the largest number of brothels compiled up to that point, namely Gioacchino La Torre’s twenty-five,<sup>75</sup> adding the nine *cellae meretriciae* (cribs) identified at that time, and throwing in the recently excavated Suburban Baths for good measure.<sup>76</sup>

The result is vulnerable to criticism. Lumping the *cellae meretriciae* together with the brothels in this manner is a mistake, in my view.<sup>77</sup> Worth noting is that La Torre appears to be the first scholar to have done this, while Laurence and Varone are the first ones, as far as I know, to count the total number of brothels in more than a casual manner and publish a total for the entire city.<sup>78</sup> Beyond the error of including the *cellae meretriciae*, there is some double counting, as we shall see, and as for Laurence’s phrase “or more,” this may simply be a case of erring on the side of caution.

These criticisms may appear to be quibbles, and in a very real sense they are, but they are nonetheless important given the impact that the total num-

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73. Laurence, *Roman Pompeii* (1994) 73; Varone, *Erotica Pompeiana* (1994) 135 n. 228.

74. For a pre-90s tally, see Alföldy, *Social History of Rome* (1988) 135, who gives the number of twenty-eight, though this is evidently a casual estimate. Eschebach himself gives the number of twenty-three in *Pompeii* (1978) 18: “Bisher wurden ungefähr 23 Freudenhäuser (Lupanare) identifiziert” (“Up to this point approximately 23 brothels have been identified”). Cf. the desultory list given at Hermann-Otto, *Ex Ancilla Natus* (1994) 345 n. 10.

75. La Torre, “Impianti” (1988) 93 n. 29: “[a] Pompei sono attestati ben 18 lupanari e 9 *cellae meretriciae* . . . [v]i sono poi anche 7 lupanari connessi a case private. . . .” (“at Pompeii a good 18 brothels and 9 *cellae meretriciae* are in evidence . . . there are also 7 brothels attached to private houses”) Cf. 71, where he presents a bar graph giving the number of “lupanari” by *Regio*: (I:4, VI:4, VII:15, VIII:1, IX:10), once again without giving the total for the entire city. While La Torre distinguishes the *cellae* from the “lupanari” in the footnote, he does not do so in the graph.

76. So Varone, *Erotica Pompeiana* (1994) 135 n. 229. Laurence, *Roman Pompeii* (1994) 73, is silent about the basis of his calculation, though Wallace-Hadrill assures me that it derives ultimately from La Torre as well: Wallace-Hadrill, p.c.

77. Wallace-Hadrill, “Public Honour and Private Shame” (1995) 54, refers to the *cellae* as brothels, though at 53 he appears to distinguish *cellae* from *lupanar*.

78. I note that Wallace-Hadrill gave the original oral presentation of his paper, in which he added up the number of La Torre’s brothels for Pompeii, in July 1991: see Cornell and Lomas, *Urban Society* (1995) vii. Thirty-four is his top estimate for previously identified brothels: “Public Honour and Private Shame” (1995) 51 and 53.

ber of “thirty-five or more” brothels has had on the scholarly mind. This number has struck more than one researcher as wholly inappropriate, if not simply absurd, for a city of Pompeii’s size. In turn, it has helped inspire a search for a radical solution to the problem that I hope to show is not convincing.

Eliminating the *cellae* and the Suburban Baths from the total of thirty-five leaves us with twenty-five brothels,<sup>79</sup> which is still a large number and one that Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, the first scholar to employ criteria for identifying brothels in a manner that is both rigorous and clear, reduces to one certain example, the famous Purpose-Built Brothel.<sup>80</sup> Wallace-Hadrill’s three criteria for identification are: (1) “the structural evidence of a masonry bed set in a small cell of ready access to the public,” which the author regards as the most reliable measure; (2) “the presence of paintings of explicit sexual scenes”; and (3) “the cluster of graffiti of the ‘hic bene futui’ type” (they display male boasting: “I had a good fuck here”).<sup>81</sup> Appearing too late for Wallace-Hadrill to take it into account is the “revised Eschebach,”<sup>82</sup> which in raw form presents a very long list of brothels, forty-six, by my count. This number excludes the *cellae meretriciae*, which for the “revised Eschebach” numbered eleven. Before assessing the value of Wallace-Hadrill’s criteria, I want briefly to trace the genesis of the figure of twenty-five and then explore why this figure has ballooned to thirty-five, or as many as forty-six, of late.

Before Wallace-Hadrill’s intervention, there existed four important sources of information on the subject of Pompeian brothels. They are the descriptions of Pompeian buildings offered by Matteo Della Corte and the lists of brothel-locations provided first by Hans Eschebach, then by Gioacchino La Torre, and, most recently, by Liselotte Eschebach. Unlike the others, Della Corte gives explicit criteria for identifying a site as a brothel.<sup>83</sup> His approach

79. La Torre, “Impianti” (1988) 93 n. 29.

80. Wallace-Hadrill, “Public Honour and Private Shame” (1995) 51–54, followed by Hoskins Walbank, review *Urban Society* (1996); Savunen, *Women* (1997) 105–6, 111; Cantarella, *Pompeii* (1998) 87; Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking* (1998) 195; Flemming, “*Quae Corpore*” (1999) 45; Pirson, *Mietwohnungen* (1999) 55 with n. 233, 154; Guzzo and Scarano Ussani, *Veneris figurae* (2000) 12. For an echo, albeit critical, of the older view, see Dierichs, *Erotik* (1997) 73–78. This brothel—renamed the Purpose-Built Brothel for this study—is discussed in detail in chap. 8.

81. Wallace-Hadrill, “Public Honour and Private Shame” (1995) 52.

82. Eschebach and Müller-Trollius, *Gebäudeverzeichnis* (1993) 491–92.

83. See Della Corte, *Case*<sup>3</sup> (1965) 55, for the criteria (not expressed as clearly as one would like); on brothels and such: 55–56 (*caupona-lupanar*: 6.10.1), 60–61 (6.11.16), 149–50 (7.3.26–28), 162–63 (9.5.19), 163 (9.6.8), 169–72 (7.6.34–35), 203 (7.12.18–20), 204–5 (*cella meretricia*: 7.11.12), 237–38 (*gameum-lupanar*: 8.4.12), 272 (*caupona-lupanar*: 1.2.18–19), 273–74 (1.2.20–21), 299 (1.10.5–6), 440–43 (7 Occ. in front of the Porta Marina N).

is unsystematic and therefore somewhat arbitrary<sup>84</sup> and perhaps partly for this reason he does not name as many brothels as the Eschebachs and La Torre do. By my count, he comes up with nine, or at most twelve, brothels and one *cella meretricia*.<sup>85</sup> His most consistent criteria are, however, broadly similar to those employed by Wallace-Hadrill: (1) a particular design, with the difference that Della Corte is more concerned with the layout of the rooms than with the presence of a masonry bed; (2) the presence of erotic art; and (3) the presence of erotic graffiti. Della Corte also construes the latter two criteria more broadly than does Wallace-Hadrill, in that he considers art beyond painting and graffiti beyond the “hic bene futui” type. These differences in defining criteria are not by themselves sufficient, however, to explain the brothel-gap that has emerged in 1990s Pompeii.

Hans Eschebach lists twenty-two brothels, which represents a significant increase over the dozen given in Della Corte’s third and last edition.<sup>86</sup> La Torre offers twenty-five, eighteen of which are identified as “public” (ten of these are associated with *cauponae* and eight are independent) and seven of which are connected with private houses.<sup>87</sup> The discrepancy in their overall totals is explained by the fact that for three locations Eschebach lists one brothel and La Torre two.<sup>88</sup> In addition, each author gives two brothels not listed by the other author.<sup>89</sup> Finally, one more brothel is listed in the “Indirizzario” (“Address-Book”) of the publication in which La Torre’s article is found, than he himself offers in the article.<sup>90</sup> As noted above, the new list by Liselotte Eschebach shows forty-six items, though when duplicates, double counts, and other errors are discounted, the number is reduced to thirty-five.<sup>91</sup> To complicate matters even further, a late entry into the brothel fray, a doc-

84. In recent years, scholars have been increasingly critical of Della Corte’s work: see, for example, the severe treatment by Mouritsen, *Elections* (1988) 13–27. What follows should in no way be interpreted as a defense of his methods. At the same time, his contribution to Pompeian studies can scarcely be denied.

85. The higher total includes two items Della Corte places under the rubric of *caupona-lupanar* and one under that of *ganeum-lupanar*. This may well distort the author’s intent, it must be conceded.

86. Eschebach, *Entwicklung* (1970) 174–75.

87. La Torre, “Impianti” (1988) 93 n. 29.

88. The locations are 7.3.26–28 (E.), 7.3.27.28 (L.); 7.6.34–36 (E.), 7.6.34.35 (L.); 7.12.18–20 (E.), 7.12.18–19.20 (L.).

89. These are 6.14.43, 7 Occ. in front of the *Porta Marina* N, 6.14.4 (a mistake for 6.14.43?), 7.7.18.

90. This is 1.9.11–12 (= cat. no. 4): De Simone et al., *Pompei* (1988) 110.

91. Eschebach and Müller-Troilius, *Gebäudeverzeichnis* (1993) 491–92. Among others, I eliminate 7.12.34–35, which is given the wrong address in the list (491) and is not identified as a brothel in the text (332).

toral dissertation, now published as a book, by John DeFelice Jr., while accepting Wallace-Hadrill's criticism of the apparently high number of Pompeian brothels, goes on to suggest a handful of new candidates.<sup>92</sup>

As noted, neither the Eschebachs nor La Torre offer explicit criteria for identifying brothels. A skeptic might object that this omission is of little consequence, since the criteria available for this purpose are patently inadequate. To take that of design first, Della Corte's reliance on room layout seems too porous in that it provides no effective way of distinguishing a brothel, say, from an inn.<sup>93</sup> On the other hand, Wallace-Hadrill's insistence on the presence of masonry beds seems overlimited, in that it will only reveal the existence of a purpose-built brothel and no other kind.

It is impossible to believe that no Pompeian prostitute ever used a wooden bed (or no bed at all). Like other wooden objects from Pompeii, such beds are unlikely to have survived.<sup>94</sup> In a study surveying possible brothels at Rome, Giuseppe Lugli names two establishments where a form of wooden bed was used and another showing a lighter form of masonry than the one used at Pompeii.<sup>95</sup> Comparative evidence shows that low-budget brothels sometimes lack beds.<sup>96</sup> This evidence suggests that prostitutes may offer sexual services that do not require a bed, if indeed any of them do.

The other two criteria promise no better. As I discussed in chapter 4, erotic art appears to have been a near-universal feature of Roman social life,<sup>97</sup> a fact that has encouraged brothel-spotting in some controversial places.<sup>98</sup> Moreover, even where an identification is plausibly made, the kind and qual-

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92. DeFelice, *Women of Pompeian Inns* (1998) now published as *Roman Hospitality* (2001) (at 6–7, 11). The new brothels are given in the catalog in the first appendix.

93. Now-vanished wooden partitions may have divided space in brothels as they did in both shops and houses: see Gassner, *Kaufläden* (1986) 64, for shops; Wallace-Hadrill, "Houses and Households" (1991) 213, for houses.

94. Gassner, *Kaufläden* (1986) 38, estimates that only 5 percent of Pompeian shops had a stone or masonry table. Though wooden ones have not survived, they are amply attested in paintings and reliefs. On the problem of using beds to identify *cubicula* in private houses, see Riggsby, "Cubiculum" (1997) 42, with literature.

95. Lugli, *Monumenti* (1947) 143, 150, 158.

96. For an example of a brothel in nineteenth-century New York City that had no beds, but "a field bed of straw spread over the whole floor," see Hill, *Their Sisters' Keepers* (1993) 221.

97. On the broad construction and dispersal of erotic art, see chap. 4.

98. A good example is the House of the Vettii brothers (6.15.1, 27), which sports an apparent advertisement for a prostitute at its entrance (*CIL* 4.4592) and erotic paintings in a back room off the kitchen (Room x<sup>1</sup>) of a style and quality similar to those on the ground floor of the Purpose-Built Brothel. Varone, *Erotica Pompeiana* (1994) 133–34, connects the dots and argues for the presence of a brothel, an idea refuted by Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking* (1998) 169–77.

ity of erotic art in public establishments cannot serve as a straightforward index of the socioeconomic level of the clientele.<sup>99</sup>

As for the third criterion, graffiti, we do not have to be radical skeptics to note that they are as liable to communicate jokes, insults, and/or idle (male) boasting as the facts of commercial sex.<sup>100</sup> Some of the surviving examples almost certainly were meant as jokes, insults, or empty boasts, though it is difficult to determine which ones.

In regard to identifying the *cellae meretriciae*, Wallace-Hadrill seems to use the presence of masonry beds as the sole criterion, since he cites neither painting nor graffiti here. As far as erotic art and graffiti are concerned, 7.11.12 has a phallus made of tufa, 7.13.15 a phallic amulet, 7.4.42 an erotic painting, 7.13.15, 16, and 19 show a price nearby,<sup>101</sup> while 9.6.2 has sexual graffiti nearby, and 9.7.15 and 17 have several prices in the vicinity.<sup>102</sup> Evidence of this kind is not, of course, available for all cribs. The absence in some instances of such features raises the question of whether or not we should insist on the same criteria for both the brothels and the *cellae*. Perhaps not all of the latter were in fact venues for prostitution. Is it impossible that not one of these had a different use, for example, as storage or by a watchman?

All the same, it is possible to turn all of these objections inside-out, insofar as not one of the three criteria is essential to the operation of a brothel, ancient or modern. In fact, not one of these three criteria is employed to identify brothels in any other culture known to me.<sup>103</sup> The proper reply to the

99. Guzzo and Scarano Ussani, *Veneris figurae* (2000) 12, 47. For attempts to mimic an upper-class ambience in a classical Athenian brothel, see Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes* (1998) 94. See further my comments in chaps. 8 and 10.

100. On some difficulties of using Pompeian graffiti as a source, see Mouritsen, *Elections* (1988) 17. Those concerning sexual matters appear most vulnerable to misapprehension. For a discussion of the reliability of Pompeian prostitute graffiti, see chap. 2.

101. When the crib at 7.13.19 was excavated on February 25, 1863, the following objects were found: a gold ring with an engraving of Cupid holding a crown, a silver handle for a mirror, a fragment of a mirror, and a silver ladle. See Eschebach, "Casa di Ganimede" (1982) 248.

102. Savunen, *Women* (1997) 113–14. The erotic significance of the phallus is open to dispute: Spano, "Illuminazione" (1920) 25–27; Clarke, *Looking at Lovemaking* (1998) 13; Varone, *Erotismo* (2000) 15–27. Whatever view we take, insofar as such representations appear in venues like the Purpose-Built Brothel, they are treated in this article as "erotic art" for the purposes of brothel identification. This avoids having to create a cumbersome fourth category for evaluation. Representations of Priapus do have a role to play, however limited, in the identification of brothels: see chap. 9.

103. Cf. the criteria used to identify a building in the Athenian Ceramicus (Building Z) as a brothel, none of which correspond precisely with those used at Pompeii: Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes* (1998) 85. The ancient historian can only envy the resources at times available to those who study more recent periods. The archaeologists who excavated a nineteenth-century brothel in Washington, D.C., could rely on public records detailing the precise location, proprietor's

skeptic is that the three criteria, while far from definitive, are all—aside perhaps from a few modest suggestions given in chapter 10—that we have and are likely to have for the purpose of identifying brothels in ancient Pompeii.<sup>104</sup>

To take just one example of what we lack in terms of evidence for identifying brothels, let us look at the question of lamps. Lamps, when placed outside the door, may have served an iconographic purpose for the Romans akin to that of our “red light,” to judge from several passages from Tertullian.<sup>105</sup> The author inveighs in three separate places against the practice of decorating the doors and facades of houses by hanging both laurel branches and lamps (even in daytime, we are told in one text), particularly by Christians. He denounces this practice by asserting that it characterizes the adorning not just of a brothel, but a new brothel at that.

It is not precisely clear whether Tertullian is thinking of the equivalent of a “Grand Opening” etiquette for venues of prostitution, as has reasonably been proposed,<sup>106</sup> or is simply cautioning against presenting to the outside world any suggestion of a house-to-brothel makeover. In any case, lamps (and, if this is relevant, laurel branches) do not turn up in the archaeological record in a manner that permits us to exploit them for the purpose of identifying brothels, just as we cannot use the “red light” to identify most brothels today.<sup>107</sup> Tertullian’s information might be dismissed as mere cliché, but it seems entirely possible that brothels were equipped with more lamps than were other establishments and/or that, unlike elsewhere, the brothel lamps were lit both day and night.<sup>108</sup> All the same, no one has ever succeeded in identifying a brothel using this criterion and the outlook remains bleak.

It is not always the case that students of more recent cultures are blessed with better evidence for identifying brothels. Here is a description of a room

name, and the number of prostitutes: Himmelfarb, “Capitol Sex” (1999) 18; Seifert et al., “House” (2000). See also Gilfoyle, *City of Eros* (1992) 331–36 (a particularly useful treatment); Hill, *Their Sisters’ Keepers* (1993) 175–216; Costello, “Voices” (2000), and below in the text.

104. McDonald, “Villa or Pandokeion?” (1951) 368 with n. 13, hesitates to identify an establishment at Olynthus he views as an inn (*pandokeion*) as a brothel as well, because although it contains a mosaic inscription mentioning Aphrodite, “. . . there is no open indication of this aspect here, as there is in the seductive paintings and inscriptions in certain rooms of the *cauponae* at Pompeii.”

105. So Courtney, *Commentary on Juvenal* (1980) 277, citing Tert. *Apol.* 35.4 CCSL 1.145 and *Uxorem* 2.6.1 CCSL 1.390. See also Tert. *Idololatria* 15 CCSL 2.1115–17.

106. By Spano, “Illuminazione” (1920) 36; Casson, *Travel* (1994) 211.

107. This result emerges from the extensive study by Spano, “Illuminazione” (1920) who finds copious evidence of bronze and terracotta lamps adorning the facades of all manner of shops: see esp. 10, 17–23, 25–29 (for a discussion of Tertullian’s evidence, see also 33–36, 57–60).

108. See Spano, “Illuminazione” (1920) 33–36.

in a French brothel from the early twentieth century: “An iron bed with a flea-infested mattress, a wooden table, and a straw-stuffed chair were usually the only furniture in the rooms available to the inmates.”<sup>109</sup> What is an archaeologist, if she has no other information, to conclude from this description? It seems inevitable that archaeologists will underreport the presence of brothels and not just because of the “Victorian” constraints reviewed earlier in this chapter.

#### DEFINING BROTHEL

I propose to address the dilemma of brothel-identification by beginning, for the sake of clarity, with what everyone will agree are the *most* certain venues for the sale of sex at Pompeii, the *cellae meretriciae* and the Purpose-Built Brothel (see figs. 3 [a crib] and 4–11 [the Purpose-Built Brothel], as well as map 2 [cribs]).<sup>110</sup> First, however, there is the problem, knottier than it might at first appear, of setting forth a definition of brothel.<sup>111</sup> A brothel for our purposes is a location open to the public where sex is the principal business or, at any rate, is a major component of the business of the place, and where two or more prostitutes can work simultaneously.<sup>112</sup> Such a definition is hardly to be taken for granted, however. This is clear when we consider contemporary efforts to define the brothel in counties from the state of Nevada where prostitution is legal, though heavily regulated. The statute from Storey County, for example, has the following definition for “houses of ill-fame”: “any house, building, trailer (with or without wheels), vehicle, or other structure or property wherein or whereon acts of prostitution are committed, or offered to be committed.”<sup>113</sup>

Such a definition is left deliberately vague and open-ended, because the

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109. Corbin, *Women for Hire* (1990) 81. Cf. the inventory of furniture drawn up for a brothel in Nîmes in 1505: Otis, *Prostitution* (1985) 53.

110. I deliberately contrast my point of departure with the conclusion of Wallace-Hadrill, “Public Honour and Private Shame” (1995) 51–54, who argues that these are the *only* certain venues. Once again, his definition of brothel differs from mine, in that he would count the *cellae* as brothels: “Public Honour,” 54.

111. See chap. 1.

112. For a similar definition, see Sleightholme and Sinha, *Guilty without Trial* (1996) 56.

113. Chapter 5.16.010, citing Ord. 39 Section 1, 1971. The definition of “House of Prostitution” in the Nye County ordinance is almost identical, though it does include tents: Chapter 9.20.020 subsection 11; cf. subsection 4 “Brothel.” Lyon County curiously appears to avoid defining brothel entirely, preferring for the most part the euphemism “licensed operations” or the like in its statutory language. For these rules, see the Georgia Powers website (see list of abbreviations).

county's policy is to repress any sale of sex *not* under its regulatory purview. So the authorities, for the purposes of administrative (and ultimately judicial) flexibility, are both able and willing to rely on a means of identifying brothels that is simply beyond the reach of the ancient historian. A similar motive explains why the same Storey County statute establishes the following: “. . . evidence of general reputation shall be deemed competent evidence as to the question of the ill-fame.”<sup>114</sup> Legal definitions of brothel, like those of prostitution itself, are often baldly teleological in nature.

Disagreement on how to define—and in turn identify—brothels can reign even within a culture. To illustrate this crucial point, I present the answers offered by various state courts in the nineteenth-century United States to the following question: “Does one woman resorting to a room in a building for prostitution render that house ‘disorderly,’ that is, a brothel in the eyes of the criminal law?”<sup>115</sup>

North Carolina trial court: yes

North Carolina supreme court: no

Massachusetts trial court: yes

Massachusetts supreme court: no

Michigan trial court: yes

Michigan supreme court: no

There is an evident conflict here between the trial courts, which perhaps display a more “popular” conception of what makes a brothel, and the appeals courts, which seem more concerned with the role of logic in the law.

It is also worth noting that the definition of prostitution that we choose plays at least an indirect role in the number of brothels that we identify. The broader the definition of prostitution, the more numerous the possible venues we fill find. Nevertheless, I believe the Roman evidence supports the definition of brothel that I have offered here.<sup>116</sup> I therefore exclude the *cellae* (cribs) from my list of possible brothels, as well as one or two other places where sex was very likely to have been for sale, out of the conviction that an analytical approach allows for a better understanding of the scale of prostitution at Pompeii. Counting a venue where one prostitute worked in the same

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114. Chapter 5.16.040, citing Ord. 39C 1986, Ord. 39 Section 9 1970.

115. See Mackey, *Red Lights Out* (1987) 173–75 (see also 210 n. 35). Cf. Decker, *Prostitution* (1979) 129. For the classical Athenian moralist, just one “whore” might transform a home into a “house”: Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes* (1998) 112–13.

116. On defining prostitution, see chap. 1.

total as one where five or ten worked does not aid the cause of clarity and merely inflates the number of brothels. At the same time, most of the Pompeian brothels seem to have been relatively small, containing no more than a half-dozen prostitutes at most, so that distortion generated by a contrast in the size of brothels from large to small is minimized.<sup>117</sup>

Our literary and legal sources make it reasonably clear that multiple prostitutes worked in brothels, so that my definition conforms in this sense to the Roman notion of “brothel.”<sup>118</sup> It is not, however, absolutely bound by this notion. One example of a possible contradiction comes from Ulpian’s definition of pimp under the Praetor’s Edict.<sup>119</sup> The jurist draws a distinction between a pimp who prostitutes slaves in his *peculium* (fund-for-use) as a main component of his business and one who does this as a sideline to another type of business, such as managing a tavern, inn, or bath (*caupo*, *stabularius*, *balneator*). The legal consequences are the same in all of these cases, and Ulpian is of course defining pimp and not brothel. All the same, we could argue that he is operating from a core concept of brothel and extending this concept to other establishments, at least as far as the legal implications of defining pimp under the Edict are concerned.

Ulpian’s method is similar to the one he employs in another passage in which he defines prostitute under the *lex Iulia et Papia* to include not only the woman who sells herself in a *lupanarium* but also the one who does so, for example, in a *taberna cauponia*: both are liable under the law’s marriage prohibitions.<sup>120</sup> The aim here is to define prostitute, and not brothel, though the jurist does appear to depart from a notional distinction between brothel and tavern. He makes the relatively rare suggestion that the paradigmatic *lupanar/lupanarium* did not embrace the tavern. Ulpian, who is chiefly interested in the prostitute, does not draw any consequences at law from this, however, and it might even be said that he broadens the concept of brothel through the

117. Cf. chap. 6, where a generous notional average of four prostitutes per brothel is adopted.

118. For the sources, see chaps. 1 and 3 and the discussion in the first appendix. On the importance of a culturally specific concept of “brothel,” see P. Schuster, *Frauenhaus* (1992) 31–35; B. Schuster, *Freien Frauen* (1995) 12. An example may be taken from the complex scheme for classification of brothels in the licensed district of Yoshiwara in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Japan, which depended on the type of courtesan, the size of the establishment, as well as the style of construction of an internal partition: see Seigle, *Yoshiwara* (1993) 233–35.

119. Ulp. D. 3.2.4.2.

120. Ulp. D. 23.2.43 pr.; see also 9 for a similar implication regarding the definition of procurer. Even the woman who operates a *caupona* with prostitutes qualifies as a *lena* under the marriage law. Cf. Viv.-Cels.-Ulp. D. 4.8.21.11; Alex. Sev. C. 4.56.3 (a. 225).

inclusion of one or more new types of establishments, at least for the purpose of the Augustan marriage legislation.

All the same, even if we accept Ulpian's reasoning in a fairly broad sense, the postulated extension of the concept of "brothel" to baths in his fragment from the commentary on the Edict goes too far for us in most cases, for reasons explored below. As for the evidence from literature, this is so riddled with cliché that, used incautiously, it would place undue limits on its application to the archaeological evidence.<sup>121</sup> For that reason, a somewhat broader definition than the one that is implied by the literary sources is desirable here.

My definition is an expansive one in that it does not attempt to distinguish between primary and secondary venues of prostitution.<sup>122</sup> There are two reasons for this. First, the Pompeian evidence does not as a rule allow us to distinguish a "brothel" from, say, a *caupona* when the brothel is in the back and/or upstairs. These represent at most subtypes of brothel. Second, such a distinction is unnecessary for the argument that the Romans did not know moral zoning, which is the main thesis of this book: for this latter purpose, to underline the point, cribs count as well. It would make no sense to zone one subtype of brothel and ignore others, as well as the cribs.

I confess to inconsistency in that I do not, in principle, include public buildings (e.g., baths), where prostitution was commonly practiced in my definition of brothel. I do this because prostitution rarely qualifies as the main or a major business of the bath and so fails to meet my definition of brothel.<sup>123</sup> Such edifices are unlikely to preserve archaeological evidence of the practice of prostitution, making it impossible to measure the extent, or even mark the presence, of prostitution at most sites. Even if we do not consider them—for the most part—to be brothels, however, the literary evidence for the practice of prostitution in baths is strong enough to cast doubt on any theory of zoning. They functioned in this sense in a manner analogous to that of cribs, which were not brothels and yet are highly relevant to the question of segregating prostitution. This is so in spite of the fact that we can rarely be certain as to

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121. See chap. 9 and the first appendix.

122. See Hill, *Their Sisters' Keepers* (1993) 196, for the distinction—in nineteenth-century New York City—between, on the one hand, establishments such as the brothel, the prostitution-boarding house, and the assignation-house, all devoted to the express purpose of selling sex, and, on the other hand, other places of public entertainment, such as saloons, theaters, concert halls, and dance halls, which ostensibly served other commercial functions.

123. Prostitution is found in baths in a variety of cultures, such as ancient Greece, and medieval England, France, Germany, and Japan: Otis, *Prostitution* (1985) 98–99; Geremek, *Margins* (1987) 220; Seigle, *Yoshiwara* (1993) 45; Karras, *Common Women* (1996) index s.v. "Stews"; Kurke, *Coins* (1999) 199. On medieval Germany, see below in the text.

precisely which baths had prostitutes working in them and which did not.<sup>124</sup>

The problem with identifying baths as brothels also holds for the *cauponae*, *popinae*, and *deversoria*. For all of these types of establishment, the possibility that sex was sold on site should not be completely dismissed in some doubtful instances. That does not necessarily make them brothels under my definition, which requires sale of sex as a major component of the business. A specific example of the sale of sex as a possible sideline to a larger business occurs with the Sarno Baths at Pompeii, discussed below.

Like baths, *popinae* and *cauponae* would, we can reasonably assume, often have had a sexually charged atmosphere, like their modern counterparts, bars.<sup>125</sup> A factor to consider is the presence of waitresses assumed by their male customers to be sexually available and, if the modern parallel holds true, dependent on them for a share of their income, perhaps in the form of tips.<sup>126</sup> The physical proximity of waitresses to their customers when dispensing alcohol meant that they would have had to manage a balance between distance and intimacy that at times tipped toward prostitution.<sup>127</sup> In *popinae* and *cauponae*, the role of liquor would have functioned like that of nudity (or near-nudity) at the baths in fostering this kind of atmospheric.<sup>128</sup> The modern phenomenon of stripper bars perhaps conveys this idea most acutely, though it must always be kept in mind, as we saw in chapter 2, that baths alone of this group were respectable places for members of the elite. In most cases involving *popinae*, *cauponae*, *deversoria*, and baths, we are strictly uncertain about the presence of prostitution.<sup>129</sup> I deal with this uncertainty by placing all Pompeian baths in operation near the time of the city's demise on the maps I

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124. See the evidence collected by Fagan, *Bathing in Public* (1999) esp. 34–36. The issue is complicated by the fact that prostitutes at times attended the baths not to work but to bathe (see, e.g., Plaut. *Truc.* 324–25; Mart. 2.52, with Fagan, 45) and that at least some of the ambiguous evidence for their presence there might be explained by this factor. For more discussion of baths as venues for prostitution, see chap. 2.

125. See Prus and Irini, *Hookers* (1980) 116–17, 178–79, 202, 204, on the erotic atmospherics of twentieth-century bars. The authors find little or no substantive difference in the behavior of staff across different types of bars, meaning those with a reputation as havens for prostitution and notionally more respectable places: 189 with n. 40, 191.

126. On this assumption in antiquity, see McGinn, “Definition” (1997 [1998]). I know of no evidence for tips from antiquity, but believe that the crucial point in the next sentence in the text still holds.

127. See Prus and Irini, *Hookers* (1980) 148, 157–59, 168–74.

128. See Prus and Irini, *Hookers* (1980) 175.

129. Cf. the medieval English tavern, where every female role might be suspected of involving prostitution: Hanawalt, *Repute* (1998) 108–9.

include in this book, but indicating only those taverns that might actually be brothels (see maps 1, 3, and 5).

When we attempt to link baths with brothels, we experience a few near misses, which are worth citing in order to drive home the difficulty inherent in making such connections. First, at Roman Ephesus an inscription that appears to mention a brothel has been found, while the brothel itself remains impossible to locate.<sup>130</sup> At Ostia, a mosaic inscription in the Trinacrian Baths commemorating the “meeting place of cunt-lickers” (“statio cunnulngiorum”) is better understood as a joking reference to the clubhouses of merchants and members of the *collegia* than as evidence of venal sex on the premises.<sup>131</sup> At most the epigraph helps confirm the idea that baths were highly sexualized places.

An even less likely example comes from late-antique Ascalon (Ashkelon) in Palestine, where archaeologists have raised the possibility that a fourth-century bath might have also functioned as a brothel.<sup>132</sup> Aside from a fragmentary Greek inscription found on a plastered panel of a bathtub that read “*eiselthe apolauson kai* [. . .]” (“Enter, enjoy, and [. . .]”) which, as the principal author of this theory acknowledges, might have been found in almost any bath in the eastern half of the Empire, the excavators found the remains of nearly one hundred newborns in a sewer under the bathhouse.

Unfortunately, there are more plausible explanations for this burial than that prostitutes working in the bathhouse placed their newborn babies there. More likely, the local community buried in this place babies who were still-born, cut down by an epidemic (older children were presumably buried elsewhere), and/or victims of infanticide. At the site in Ascalon we have no satisfactory epigraphic evidence, no erotic art, and no remains of rooms or beds that might have been used for sex to suggest the presence of prostitution. We are not even certain whether the bathhouse was public or private. To admit this bath as a brothel, we would almost have to identify all baths in the Roman world as brothels, including a recent example asserted for Thessalonica. Here too there is no evidence to justify identifying the bath as a brothel, apart from the presence of a bath.<sup>133</sup> On the other hand, I hasten to add, we cannot prove

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130. See the discussion of this site in chap. 8.

131. See Pavolini, *Ostia*<sup>3</sup> (1989) 130; Jacobelli, *Terme Suburbane* (1995) 46–47; Scarano Ussani, “*Lenocinium*” (2000) 262 n. 93; Clarke, “Laughing” (2002) 180 n. 32.

132. Stager, “Eroticism and Infanticide at Ashkelon” (1991) 45–46. In this article, the author, to be sure, suggests the presence of a brothel and then backs away from the brothel-identification. It is accepted, however, by Dauphin, “Bordels” (1998) 189–90.

133. See Stavrakakis, “Brothel” (1998).

that prostitution was *not* practiced here, or at any other bath catering to male clients.

To make a point that is explored at greater length in chapter 2, baths were, apart from the issue of prostitution, highly sexualized places, and they might easily acquire a reputation as centers of prostitution, especially if both sexes were present. Peter Schuster makes an interesting argument along these lines for the baths of medieval Germany, which have been regarded by contemporary moralists and modern scholars as havens for venal sex. Schuster holds that this was in fact a fantasy—unlike in the case of baths in southern France of the same period, which did in fact function as brothels—promoted if not created by critics agog at the eroticism inherent in the enterprise.<sup>134</sup> The argument, despite its difficulties, makes for a good point.<sup>135</sup> We encounter more or less the same problem as the medievalist in our evaluation of Roman baths as havens of prostitution or loci of male fantasy about sexually available women. But in our case, the evidence is much, much more meager.

At Pompeii, the case of the Suburban Baths perhaps illustrates the problem of identifying baths as brothels most clearly. All three criteria for brothel-identification are found scattered throughout the complex, and so do not line up as neatly as we would like. Still, the possible presence of semiseparate facilities on-site makes, not precisely the Baths themselves, but an upstairs residential area a strong candidate for inclusion on the list of Pompeian brothels.<sup>136</sup>

The quality of the evidence, poor as it is, makes it worthwhile for us to focus on this one example. The changing room of the Baths (*apodyterium*) contains some notably erotic paintings, which are explicit to the point of being over the top (see figs. 13–17).<sup>137</sup> The jurist Ulpian, when defining “pimp” in the context of the Praetor’s Edict, mentions “. . . the bath-manager who, as is the practice in certain provinces, keeps in his baths slaves hired to watch over clothing and they ply this sort of trade in the workplace. . . .”<sup>138</sup> There is in fact a great deal of literary evidence for sex, and specifically prostitution, in the Roman baths, as seen in chapter 2. As noted in appendix 1, the location shows a few sexual graffiti, including a prostitute’s price. Finally, the upper-level complex of apartments, connected to the *apodyterium*, but also

134. Schuster, *Frauenhaus* (1992) 129–33.

135. For evidence that prostitution was in fact practiced in medieval German baths, see B. Schuster, *Freien Frauen* (1995) 217–21.

136. See cat. no. 32 in appendix 1.

137. See the discussion in chap. 4.

138. Ulp. (6 *ad edictum*) D. 3.2.4.2: “. . . sive balneator fuerit, velut in quibusdam provinciis fit, in balineis ad custodienda vestimenta conducta habens mancipia hoc genus observantia in officina. . . .”, with McGinn, *Prostitution, Sexuality, and the Law* (1998) 53–58.

equipped with an independent street entrance, seems a very likely venue for the sale of sex.

The conclusion is easy to criticize. The evidence relevant to the three criteria—graffiti, art, and design—is scattered throughout the complex, instead of cohering in one part of it. The evidence for the design-criterion is weak, insofar as there are no masonry beds and no obvious *cellae*, as in the Purpose-Built Brothel. The graffiti are hardly numerous, and, for the most part, they are not very clear. The art is perhaps a bit *too* erotic, if we agree with the point, advanced in earlier chapters, that over-the-top presentations were intended to provoke mirth, rather than sexual arousal, in many or even most viewers. There is also the problem that sex seems unlikely to have been sold in the *apodyterium* itself, which must reduce the probative value of the paintings, even if we concede that their content is suitable for a brothel. As for Ulpian's locker-room prostitutes, we can perhaps ignore his implication that this is provincial, as opposed to Roman or Italian, usage. Pompeii no longer existed in his day, anyway. But it seems highly unlikely that every bath complex sponsored prostitution, and he in no way implies that every changing room contained prostitutes. How can we be certain then that prostitutes plied their trade in this location?

Perhaps in this case we are being far too skeptical. Though the evidence is uncertain enough to deny the Suburban Bath complex status as a "definite" brothel, it is adequate to characterize it as "more likely" than not a brothel. The archaeological evidence may be as good as we can ever reasonably expect to get from such an establishment. In fact, it is better than any other bath complex excavated thus far at Pompeii, Herculaneum, or elsewhere in the Roman world. What distinguishes this location as a brothel, and not merely as baths with prostitutes operating in or near them, is precisely the feature of a quasi-independent residential quarters, quasi-independent in the sense that it is accessible both from the baths and from the street. The same person or persons, however, would have owned both baths and brothel.<sup>139</sup>

A more difficult example, again from Pompeii, is the series of seven (or more) small rooms at the privately owned Sarno Baths, which possibly were intended to serve as venues for venal sex.<sup>140</sup> If so, the fact that these cubicles,

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139. See the discussion of the Purpose-Built Brothel in chap. 8 for the legal principle. For the evidence of private ownership of the Suburban Baths, see Jacobelli, *Terme Suburbane* (1995) 20. On the basis of a comparison with the Purpose-Built Brothel, Clarke, "Laughing" (2002) 151–55 argues that there is no brothel here. In my view, it is unsafe to generalize from that example in attempting to identify other brothels: chap. 8.

140. In regard to the Sarno Baths, I prefer the cautious acceptance by Koloski Ostrow, *Sarno Bath Complex* (1990) 94–95 and by Fagan, *Bathing in Public* (1999) 67, against what I regard as the

though secluded, were not as isolated from the baths proper as the residential quarters were atop the Suburban Baths, suggests the practice of prostitution was merely a sideline in the context of the baths themselves. These small rooms very likely had other uses, such as massage, besides prostitution. All of this makes it difficult for us to characterize the Sarno Baths as a brothel. Complicating matters still further is the fact that these baths were under construction at the time of Vesuvius' eruption.<sup>141</sup> Expert opinion, however, does hold it possible that visitors enjoyed access to the cubicles and the surrounding area by then.<sup>142</sup>

There are other examples where the possibility of prostitution has been detected at baths open to the public but caution militates against identification of the baths as brothels. These include two small rows of rooms flanking the *apodyterium* of the Baths of Faustina at Miletus.<sup>143</sup> Another is the Suburban Baths of Herculaneum, where epigraphs seem to testify to the availability of on-site sex.<sup>144</sup>

One more example exists at Pompeii of a privately owned bath complex that, like the Sarno Baths, may have accommodated prostitution as a sideline, though the evidence is even more tenuous. This is the complex located near the amphitheater known as the *Praedia Iuliae Felicis* (2.4.4, 6), which advertises a *balneum* described (in part) as *venerium*.<sup>145</sup> This adjective does not necessarily stand as a specific or exclusive reference to prostitution, but may communicate broadly a sense of the availability of sexual pleasure.<sup>146</sup> The matter is far from clear.<sup>147</sup>

Unlikely as a brothel, but still worth mentioning as a possible venue for

hyperskepticism of Ioppolo, *Terme del Sarno* (1992) 70–75 (who would raise the number of rooms in question from seven to nine); Savunen, *Women* (1997) 114 n. 174.

141. See Fagan, *Bathing in Public* (1999) 66–67, who emphasizes that the connection between the Sarno Baths and the nearby Palaestra Baths, which were in operation in 79, remains unclear (see below).

142. Koloski Ostrow, *Sarno Bath Complex* (1990) 53.

143. See Guzzo and Scarano Ussani, *Veneris Figurae* (2001) 70 n. 87. For similar structures in baths at Tarracina and Magnesia-on-the Meander, see Fagan, *Bathing in Public* (1999) 67 n. 92.

144. Jacobelli, *Terme Suburbane* (1995) 97; Guzzo and Scarano Ussani, *Veneris figurae* (2000) 21.

145. *CIL* 4.1136.

146. Thus I agree with Pirson, *Mietwohnungen* (1999) 19, that the adjective need not refer to prostitution, at least not exclusively so. Perhaps the word has a double meaning here, referring both to the luxurious accommodation and to sexual pleasure. This would explain why the adjective was used instead of a substantive (i.e., *Veneris*), which we might otherwise expect on the basis of the comparative evidence cited by Pirson.

147. For attempts to elucidate the meaning of the adjectives *venerium* and *nongentum* (the latter is even murkier than the former) in describing this *balneum*, see Fagan, *Bathing in Public* (1999) 318–19.

prostitution, are the Stabian Baths, also of Pompeii. It appears that some erotic art was found in a *nymphaeum* in the complex, though the art has long since disappeared without being properly documented.<sup>148</sup> It is uncertain whether facilities for venal sex, like those postulated for the Sarno Baths, were available on-site.<sup>149</sup> What is really striking about these baths is their location, not simply in the center of the city, but in the midst of an area thickly populated by brothels, cribs, taverns, and hotels.<sup>150</sup> This hardly makes the Stabian Baths a brothel, but does put the complex on the map of prostitution at Pompeii.

The discussion of the uses and limits of the archaeological evidence in defining and identifying baths as brothels suggests the possible utility of setting forth the status of baths as possible venues for prostitution from our single richest source for such evidence, the city of Pompeii. It is necessary, however, to omit examples that had long since ceased operating at the time of the eruption, such as evidently the Republican Baths, as well as those that were incomplete at that time, namely the Central Baths, and those whose location is not known, such as the Baths of M. Crassus Frugi (thought to have been outside the city).<sup>151</sup> This leaves us with six sites for baths that were accessible to the public in Pompeii in the mid-first century A.D., though not all of these sites may have been operating precisely in 79 owing to seismic damage caused in or after 62 (see maps 3 and 5):<sup>152</sup>

- The Forum Baths (7.5.2, 7–8, 10, 12, 24)
- The Baths of Julia Felix (2.4.4, 6)
- The Palaestra Baths (8.2.22–24)
- The Sarno Baths (8.2.17–20)
- The Stabian Baths (7.1.8, 14–15, 17, 48, 50–51)
- The Suburban Baths (7.16.A)

The evidence for prostitution differs from place to place. There is no direct evidence for the Forum Baths, and that for the privately owned Baths of Julia Felix is very thin indeed.

For the privately owned Palaestra Baths, we depend on an inference that

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148. See Jacobelli, *Terme Suburbane* (1995) 10.

149. The Stabian Baths did have a row of secluded cubicles, which evidently included tubs for individual bathers, according to Fagan, *Bathing in Public* (1999) 67.

150. See chap. 8.

151. See Fagan, *Bathing in Public* (1999) 59–67.

152. See Fagan, *Bathing in Public* (1999) 64–65.

can be drawn from the seven (or nine) cubicles in the nearby Sarno Baths, which were also privately owned. As seen in the notes above, the relationship between these two baths remains to be clarified. I think it fair to suppose, however, that whether or not they were meant to be part of the same complex, merely had the same owner, or were in fact business rivals, the result for us is the same, in that the possible presence of prostitutes at the one spells the same possibility for the other. The cubicles in the Sarno complex may have been intended to supplement, or to surpass, whatever facilities for paid sex, if any, were available at the Palaestra Baths. This is not to deny that the evidence is thin and that it is hardly any better for the Stabian Baths. In fact, the privately owned Suburban Baths are among the baths the only example of a possible brothel, in my view.

How do we reconcile this poor showing with the thrust of the literary evidence for prostitution in baths, which I set forth in chapter 2? It seems that most baths fall into a different category than brothels, regardless of whether they contained on-site facilities for prostitution or did not. They were likely places for prostitutes to meet clients, even if the operators of the baths did not themselves sponsor prostitution. So it seems right that they take their place on the map of possible venues for the sale of sex, provided that they are distinguished from brothels in most cases.

As we have seen above in this section, the relationship between baths and prostitution is not exactly unique. A similar argument might be made regarding taverns, for example, which also might have been havens for prostitutes even if not they did not qualify as brothels. In this case, however, the Pompeian evidence does allow us to draw a more satisfactory distinction between tavern-brothels and other kinds of taverns. Though we can never be absolutely sure that the latter were in each and every case free of prostitutes, the archaeological evidence for prostitution in taverns does a better, by which I simply mean more adequate, job of accounting for what the texts tell us, so that we can more confidently set them aside where explicit evidence is lacking. That approach does not seem prudent in the case of baths.

Baths join some other places of public resort that, again on the basis of the literary evidence, we may reasonably suppose functioned in a similar fashion in regard to prostitution, at least on the occasion of a public performance. These are the two theaters (8.7.20–21, 27, 30; 8.7.17–20) and the amphitheater (2.6.1–11). All may be found on map 3 and again on the composite map 5.

So much can be said for the definition of brothel. Beyond this, I make no claims. Unfortunately, this definition, like any reasonable alternative one might propose, will not get us very far, as we shall see in chapter 8, where the problem of defining and identifying brothels is put to the test.

## CRIBS

The *cella meretricia*, or crib, is an important nonbrothel venue for prostitution (see fig. 3 and maps 2 and 5). The crib was a single room used by a lone prostitute (or perhaps more than one working in shifts) to entertain customers, and it often opened directly onto the street. Since Hans Eschebach compiled a list of them in 1970, there has been general agreement on the number and location of the *cellae meretriciae*,<sup>153</sup> with only two new candidates proposed by Liselotte Eschebach in 1993.<sup>154</sup> What makes the identification convincing is not so much the presence of a masonry bed,<sup>155</sup> but the presence of a single small room with direct access to the street. This corresponds closely with what in another culture is termed a “crib,” signifying a small, crude building or room which is used by a prostitute who does not work in a brothel and which is often clustered with other cribs in an alley or along a roadway.<sup>156</sup>

I introduce this term because it is convenient to do so and for the same reason continue to use the phrase *cella meretricia*, though I have not been able to find attestation of the latter in the ancient evidence.<sup>157</sup> It seems doubtful in any case that we would find this phrase used in a technical sense for the facility described here. When used to refer to a facility for prostitution, *cella* refers invariably to a booth in a brothel.<sup>158</sup> *Calyba*, featured in the *Copa* attributed to Vergil, appears to be a literary version of this.<sup>159</sup> This also seems true of *meritorium* as it appears in the scholia to Juvenal, if it does not simply mean “brothel.”<sup>160</sup> *Pergula* in Plautus may also refer to a crib, perhaps at the back of a shop or tavern.<sup>161</sup>

153. The 1970 list of *cellae meretriciae* consists of 7.4.42, 7.11.12, 7.12.33, 7.13.15, and 16 and 19, 9.6.2, 9.7.15, and 17.

154. Eschebach and Müller-Trollius, *Gebäudeverzeichnis* (1993) 492: 7.2.28 and 7.16.8. The former, which may have been associated with the brothel at 7.2.32–33, is identified as a public latrine at Pugliese Carratelli, *Pompei* 6 (1996) 718.

155. Only 7.16.8 seems to lack this feature, at least among the group of those *cellae* already identified: see Eschebach and Müller-Trollius, *Gebäudeverzeichnis* (1993) 347. The point is that a masonry bed is a sine qua non either for brothel or crib.

156. For the crib, a common feature in American frontier towns of the nineteenth century, and elsewhere as well, see Symanski, “Prostitution in Nevada” (1974) 357; Goldman, *Gold Diggers* (1981) 74, 93, 147; Butler, *Daughters of Joy* (1985) xviii, 60, 86; Otis, *Prostitution* (1985) 53 (described here as “huts”); Mackey, *Red Lights Out* (1987) 192, 195–96; Hill, *Their Sisters’ Keepers* (1993) 223, 226; Bernstein, *Sonia’s Daughters* (1995) 153; Davidson, *Courtesans and Fishcakes* (1998) 90–91; Cohen, “Economic Analysis” (forthcoming).

157. See, for example, *TLL* s.v. “*cella, meretricius*.”

158. See, for example, Petron. 8; *Iuv.* 6.122, 128.

159. [*Verg.*] *Copa* 7 (cf. *calybita* at 25). See Goodyear, “*Copa*” (1977) 125; Franzoi, *Copa* (1988) 68, 86; Rosivach, “Sociology” (1996) 609–10.

160. *Schol. ad Iuv.* 125, 127. Cf. *HA Tac.* 10.2, where *meritoria* must mean “brothels.”

161. *Plaut. Pseud.* 214, 229.

Of the eleven Pompeian cribs known up to this date, five are clustered together in two groups of three and two respectively,<sup>162</sup> while two others are in close proximity to the Purpose-Built Brothel.<sup>163</sup> Their location suggests they were used by prostitutes rather than by watchmen, for example.<sup>164</sup> My knowledge of Pompeian topography is not adequate to inspire confidence that these eleven examples exhaust the range of possibilities for Pompeian cribs. The (re)excavation of various sites might turn up more examples. A more expedient procedure would be to survey these eleven sites and then to look for other candidates whose dimensions and layout correspond closely. The presence of a masonry bed should not be an absolute requirement. All known examples appear to be located on the ground floor of a building; owing to the destruction pattern in Pompeii, where even second stories are rare to find, we will never know how many upstairs cribs we are missing.

The possibility of another subtype of crib, not directly accessible to the street, but located in the back room of a bar, is offered by two examples found adjacent to each other at 7.6.14–15. These have together been identified as a brothel on the basis of their decoration with erotic art.<sup>165</sup> The two taverns are joined together, and each has a back room in which sex might have been sold. Therefore, they may be identified as a brothel only if we use the most technical of definitions. It seems better to classify them as cribs, since explicit recognition might facilitate the discovery of new specimens.<sup>166</sup> Thus the number of cribs now rises to a minimum of thirteen.

What sorts of prostitutes used cribs in Pompeii? Direct evidence is lacking, but it seems unlikely that most of them were affiliated with brothels. Street-walkers and waitresses working in bars and restaurants without on-site facilities for the sale of sex are leading candidates.<sup>167</sup> Such prostitutes may also have

162. 7.13.15 and 16 and 19; 9.7.15 and 17.

163. 7.11.12; 7.12.33. 7.2.28 is not that far removed; 7.16.8 is located near a town gate.

164. Byzantine prostitution knew the *kellion* (derived from the Latin *cella*), also called the *tamieion*, which has been identified as a room for sex in a prostitute's house, but which in some cases at least might have been a crib in the sense described here: evidence and discussion in Leontini, *Prostitution* (1989) 59–60, 104. We cannot exclude the notion that at times these cribs were used for storage rather than for sex, as Wallace-Hadrill, p.c., suggests to me.

165. By A. De Vos and M. De Vos, *Pompeii* (1982) 52; Jacobelli, *Terme Suburbane* (1995) 96.

166. It is almost possible to identify the crib at 7.13.19 as an intermediate subtype between these two; though it opens on to the street, it is part of the same building plot as the possible tavern-brothel at 7.13.20–21 (see cat. no. 30): see the reconstruction by Pirson, *Mietwohnungen* (1999) 154.

167. Waitresses in nineteenth-century Parisian brasseries are thought to have worked mainly as prostitutes, though they often went off-site to service their clients: Clayson, *Painted Love* (1991) 138–42. For a contemporary parallel from New York City, see Hill, *Their Sisters' Keepers* (1993) 206. And from York in that period, see Finnegan, *Poverty* (1979) 61, 93, 102.

taken their clients to brothels or hotels.<sup>168</sup> In other words, the client would be expected to pay for the room as well as sex with a woman who worked independently, or quasi-independently, of the brothel itself. Another conclusion to draw is that there is little to distinguish, even if we accept Tönnies Kleberg's characterization of the first as offering food, drink, and lodging and the second only food and drink, between *cauponae* and *popinae* as centers for prostitution, if members of the staff did indeed sell sex.<sup>169</sup> What makes examples of either type brothels or cribs is the presence of on-site facilities for this purpose.

#### ADULTERY AND BROTHELS

The idea that some prostitutes more or less freelanced in brothels is suggested by Juvenal's tale of the empress Messalina setting up shop in one, though most historians now would not accept this story as literal truth.<sup>170</sup> Some brothel-prostitutes may have solicited on the street as well. We also know that brothels functioned in part as assignation-houses. This is securely attested, I believe, by the incident recounted by Petronius, where a prostitute charges the companion of Ascyrtos for the use of a room (*cella*).<sup>171</sup>

Occasional use of brothels for such purposes perhaps helped fuel the recurrent fantasy (realized by Caligula, at any rate) that respectable women worked in them as prostitutes.<sup>172</sup> This fantasy is reflected in the idea, popular with the writers of Comedy but above all with the declaimers, that adultery committed in a brothel was not in fact adultery.<sup>173</sup> This notion is consistent of course with the exemptions for prostitutes and their partners from the criminal penalties that came to be enacted in the Augustan law on adultery.<sup>174</sup> The idea that paid sex in a brothel could not qualify as adultery was a popular one in medieval Germany, though there it was the status of the *male* partner (as a married man) to the act that determined the issue of liability, an interesting departure from the Roman model.<sup>175</sup>

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168. An obvious point, but the reader might still with profit consult Prus and Irini, *Hookers* (1980) 15.

169. For Kleberg's distinction between *cauponae* and *popinae* see *Hôtels* (1957) 17. On the validity of such distinctions, see chap. 2. For the point about sale of sex, see Scarano Ussani, "Lenocinium" (2000) 256 (257) n. 9.

170. *Iuv.* 6.115–32.

171. Petron. 8.

172. For evidence and discussion, see McGinn, "Caligula's Brothel" (1998).

173. This idea does provide a kind of popular pretext for the exemption of prostitutes from penalty under the adultery law of Augustus: evidence and discussion at McGinn, *Prostitution, Sexuality, and the Law* (1998) 198.

174. McGinn, *Prostitution, Sexuality, and the Law* (1998) 194–202.

175. Schuster, *Frauenhaus* (1992) 61, 116–17, 216.

In the *Story of Apollonius of Tyre*, the idea that Tarsia's recounting of her noble lineage and cruel fate deterred, rather than encouraged, the men who approached her in a brothel, including the pimp's henchman, the brothel-manager (*villicus puellarum*), may safely be reckoned among the more miraculous aspects of that tale.<sup>176</sup> The cynicism displayed by Seneca's declaimers at the would-be priestess' allegation that she similarly fended off clients is telling in this regard.<sup>177</sup> It presents itself as a convincing reflection of the psychology of the vast majority of patrons of Roman brothels. The chance—however remote—of enjoying or humiliating a woman of higher status is very likely to have attracted many Roman men to the brothel in the first place.<sup>178</sup>

The line between brothels and assignation-houses is a thin one in many cultures.<sup>179</sup> What is more, in a Roman context, it makes sense that the latter would have operated discreetly, that is, as brothels, in light of the harsh punishment stipulated for persons who furnished venues to violators of the Augustan law on adultery.<sup>180</sup> The fact that brothels might have accommodated non-commercial sexual trysts means of course that we cannot strictly calculate numbers of prostitutes by counting cubicles and cribs. This does not, however, mean that the facilities outnumbered the personnel, since it is quite possible that some prostitutes worked in shifts.<sup>181</sup> And, surely, resort to brothels by adulterous couples did not have to be all that commonplace, in the sense of statistically significant, to ensure the notoriety of this practice.<sup>182</sup> Its role in the fantasy life surrounding the brothel was without doubt the most important aspect, as images and imaginings of sex with upper-class women came to be

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176. *Hist. Ap. Tyr.* 34–36.

177. *Sen. Contr.* 1.2.

178. See Roper, "Discipline and Respectability" (1985) 20, on the similar attraction of the brothel in late medieval Germany. Schuster, *Freien Frauen* (1995) 239, tells of a procureress in fourteenth-century Nuremberg who pretended to set her out-of-town clients up with the wives and daughters of the elite, whereas in fact these women were only spruced-up prostitutes. When these men returned home to their own cities to brag about their "conquests," word eventually got back to the town council of Nuremberg, brewing trouble quickly.

179. On assignation-houses (and brothels that have functioned as such), see Harsin, *Policing Prostitution* (1985) 246; Schuster, *Frauenhaus* (1992) 124; Hill, *Their Sisters' Keepers* (1993) 93–94, 198; Karras, *Common Women* (1996) 67.

180. On the offense of *domum praebere* under the *lex Iulia* on adultery, interpreted extensively by the jurists, see McGinn, *Prostitution, Sexuality, and the Law* (1998) index of subjects s.h.v.

181. See Hill, *Their Sisters' Keepers* (1993) 223.

182. On the assignation-house as a locus for male fantasy and fear in nineteenth-century New York City, see Hill, *Their Sisters' Keepers* (1993) 382.

reflected in brothel decoration.<sup>183</sup> What drew men to the brothel aside from sexual pleasure was the pleasure of transgression, real or imagined, seasoned with the spice of possible danger.<sup>184</sup>

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183. See chaps. 4 and 8. See Hershatter, *Dangerous Pleasures* (1997) 45, on the attraction of the trysting house in early twentieth-century Shanghai: “. . . within its walls a man could sleep with another man’s concubine or the daughter of a respectable family.”

184. See Hershatter, *Dangerous Pleasures* (1997) esp. 50–51.