

# Ostia antica

Design, Architecture



Ostia Antica Ostia is Imperial Rome's harbor that contains preservations that reflect the ical Roman culture and architecture. ical Roman architecture became evident as a consequence of the departure during the early Middle Ages, and speaks volumes about the way classical Rome looked like<sup>1</sup>. Originally, Ostia served as a military base, which was why a castrum was established near the city's centre. There were four equal parts of this fortified military colony<sup>2</sup> with the intersection of two main streets in the centre, namely the *Cardo Maximus* and the *Decumanus Maximus*. During the early Augustan period, a monumental theatre was constructed by Agrippa along with an adjacent rectangular double-colonnaded portico<sup>3</sup> with a large space in the center to offer the audiences a retreat as they reached the interval or the end of the show<sup>4</sup>. In the second half of the second century, a trade center was made out of this structure that was further divided into several parts that appear to be the offices of traders. There was a unique mosaic in each office, revealing different kinds of commodities that the overseas clients purchased<sup>5</sup>.

The Temple of Rome and Augustus is one of the landmarks which have preserved the Augustan period over the centuries. Roman sculptors carved its Italian marble façade<sup>6</sup>, which not only reveals the building's significance but also the amount of skill needed to achieve it. The *horrea* warehouses were the commercial buildings of extreme importance in Ostia. Ostia was like a bridge in Rome, which was used for different types of commodities, which imparted a need to store the imported goods. Commodities received in Ostia were numbered and catalogued before they were sent for Rome<sup>7</sup>. The audiences can also have a view of the imperial Roman lifestyle from the Bath

buildings that provided the slaves and working men and women with retreat as they had a place to get together in a good environment<sup>8</sup>.

The most common example of the Roman architecture of all time is the Roman tabernae. It is a very flexible and ordinary architectural unit often in the form of a single room that appeared like a “ tall, deep, barrel-vaulted chamber open in front almost to its full width” <sup>9</sup> in its enhanced form.

Tabernae served many purposes that included but were not limited to frontage of apartments, market-places, and street shops.

Owing to the constructors’ liking for the pattern and texture of it, brickwork was frequently employed in the decoration of the concrete buildings<sup>10</sup>. “ In urban architecture it was increasingly the patterns constituted by the wall surfaces, the doors and the windows which were left to tell the architectural story” <sup>11</sup>.

By the end of the third century, the architecture of Rome had significantly advanced in terms of its use in daily life; some of its key elements are still seen in the contemporary Roman architecture<sup>12</sup>.

It is only within the last twenty-five years that archaeologists have turned their attention to the side of Roman history represented by Ostia, and it is an interesting question why they have been so long in doing so. The explanation is, I think, that the questions and problems of the ancient world which people are most interested in at any period are the questions of their own day. <sup>13</sup>

Bibliography:

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Figure 1. From J. B., Ward-Perkins, Roman Imperial Architecture: Ostia, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 140

Figure 2. From W, Rollo, Greece and Rome: Ostia, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Vol. 4 [10], 1934), p. 52-53