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Reconstructing the Renovation of House B at Tyndaris

Abstract By the reign of Emperor Augustus (27 BC–14 AD) the houses of Sicily, Rome's first province, had witnessed centuries of Punic, Hellenistic, and Roman cultural exchange. As the needs of their owners changed, these residences underwent multiple renovations including alterations to their architecture, frescoes, and mosaics. Homeowners actively selected which decorative elements to keep, discard, or add to the domestic ensemble. What was the effect, on owner and visitor alike, of moving through these renovated spaces? And, more importantly, how did such decisions allow Sicilian residents to shape their identity within a culturally heterogeneous population? In this article I focus on the 1st cent. AD, when Sicily became culturally integrated into the Roman Empire and numerous houses throughout the island were renovated to include decorative elements *en vogue* on the Italian mainland. I examine the renovation of House B at Tyndaris, which is emblematic of this cultural shift in Sicily. House B features both a Hellenistic-style polychrome mosaic from the house's first phase in the 2nd cent. BC, as well as Roman or Italic black and white pavements installed in the mid-1st cent. AD. I argue that the juxtaposition of Hellenistic and Roman-style elements within Sicilian houses was a deliberate and desired phenomenon, one that allowed Sicilian residents to self-consciously communicate their multicultural heritage through the décor of their houses.

Introduction

Around 50 AD the owner of House B at Tyndaris, a city on Sicily's northeast coast, renovated their house. Black and white geometric mosaics, already *en vogue* on the Italian mainland, replaced mortar floors in every room but one – a reception space, known as room 7, decorated with an intricate polychrome mosaic from the house's Hellenistic phase. Why did House B's owner leave

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room 7's mosaic intact while altering the rest of the residence's pavements to reflect current trends? To begin, we can consider how ancient buildings served as a physical link between the past and present for those who moved through them. Such spaces allow us to analyze the connection between architecture, history, and lived experience. House B, as just one example, was continually occupied from the 2nd cent. BC through the 4th cent. AD. So, more broadly, we can ask how did a viewer's perception of the space changed over time?

In 21 BC, only a few decades before House B's renovation, the Roman Emperor Augustus designated Tyndaris a Roman *colonia* (colony). Tyndaris' new colonial status resulted in a flurry of imperial patronage and building, an influx of Roman colonists, and a direct link to the capital city of Rome. Often it is difficult to trace the impact of overarching, political changes at a smaller scale. But, given the timing of House B's renovation, we can consider the two events in tandem. In this article, I explore both the 'how' and the 'why' of House B's renovation, with a particular focus on the preserved mosaic in room 7. I suggest that the renovation, and the ways it encouraged a "second gaze," highlighted and framed the antiquity of room 7's pavement. In other words, anyone moving through House B experienced multiple phases of its history. The simultaneity of the Hellenistic past and the Roman present within House B allowed the owner to evoke Tyndaris' local history while at the same time advertising their position within the Roman provincial elite. By reconstructing the process of renovation at House B, we can better understand the local, Sicilian responses to Roman hegemony at Tyndaris.

Tyndaris' history and urban plan

Tyndaris began as a Greek city but developed a close political relationship with Rome early on. By the Augustan era, it was one of the most prosperous Roman outposts in Sicily. Dionysius I of Syracuse founded Tyndaris (modern-day Tindari) in 396 BC as a colony for Messinian exiles who had been driven from Greece after the close of the Peloponnesian War[1]. In the 3rd cent. BC, Rome began to assert its presence in the Mediterranean, especially on Sicily. Although Tyndaris originally sided with Carthage against Rome during the First Punic War (264–241 BC), by 255 Roman forces had conquered the city[2].

1 Diod. 16, 69, 3.

2 Diod. 23, 18, 5. For more on the Battle of Tyndaris (257 BC) see Pol. 1, 25, 1.

In Cicero's orations against the Sicilian governor Verres, Tyndaris is singled out amongst the island's cities as "the most noble". Cicero comments on its "loyalty to, and alliance with, the Roman people"[3]. The city's status is further reflected in Emperor Augustus' first visit to Sicily in 21 BC, during which he made Tyndaris one of only six official Roman colonies on the island. With this new role, the city functioned as a colony where Rome settled military veterans. Tyndaris' colonial city name during the Roman period appears on a 2nd-cent. inscription as *Colonia Augusta Tyndaritanorum*[4]. Cicero's accounts, and the colonization of Tyndaris, imply a sustained, continued dialogue with Rome.

Tyndaris is laid out according to a Hippodamian rectangular grid. Wide main streets that run east to west *(decumani)* are crossed by narrow side streets that run north to south *(cardines)*. Archaeologists have excavated only two major public monuments. The first is a theater complex, located in the southwestern part of the Tyndaris. Most likely, the theater was constructed at the beginning of the 3rd cent. BC[5]. Centuries later, the blocky *proskenion* was replaced with a more elaborate *scaenae frons*[6]. The second large public building at Tyndaris is the so-called Basilica, a massive stone building that takes the shape of a central covered hall, flanked by two passageways on either side, and spanned by nine massive arches. The function of the Basilica remains unclear, though Wilson suggests it is an amalgamation of a covered market, like that in the Forum of Trajan, and a grand propylon monumentalizing the entrance of Tyndaris' forum[7]. Other than the theater and Basilica, the best-preserved part of the city is Insula IV, a mostly-residential city block where House B is located.

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3 Cic. Verr. 2, 4, 84.

4 For the earliest inscriptions using Tyndaris' full colonial name, see CIL X 7474 and CIL X 7475. See also Fasolo 2013, 72–74.

5 This date is based on archaeological material and fill found within the lower foundations of the theater, including a late-4th cent. *lebes gameikos* fragment. See Bernabò Brea 1964–65, 99–144. U. Spigo, in his 2005 archaeological guide to the site, upholds this date (33).

6 U. Spigo and R. Leone 2008, 109 suggest the alteration to the theater occurred during the Flavian or Neronian period while R. Wilson believes it occurred in the late-second to early-3rd cent. AD (Wilson 1990b, 60). The updating of Hellenistic-era theaters in the Roman imperial period occurred throughout the Hellenistic East, especially at Athens and Corinth in the mid-1st cent. AD, see Welch 1999, 125–146.

7 Wilson 1990b, 55.

Insula IV, Tyndaris' only fully-excavated city block, was constructed on a series of four terraces that lead towards the Tyrrhenian Sea. It first took shape in the fourth or early-3rd cent. BC and was composed of eight to ten small lots. The entire block was re-organized in the 2nd cent. BC into four distinct lots. By the Roman imperial period, Insula IV was a multi-use city block comprised of a series of shops, a bath complex, and houses, including House B.

The renovation of House B

House B was constructed in the late-2nd or early-1st cent. BC and underwent a major renovation in the mid-1st cent. AD (fig. 1). This means the house had two distinct phases – the 2nd cent. BC until the mid-1st cent. AD renovation, then the 1st cent. AD through the fourth cent. AD, when an earthquake destroyed much of Tyndaris. Archaeologists found a coin dating to 41 AD, from the reign of Emperor Claudius, below the courtyard's shallow pool *(impluvium)*. Therefore, the renovation of House B likely occurred between 40 and 60 AD[8].

During the renovation, the entrance of House B moved from *cardo* d to *cardo* e, which means the entire circulatory pattern though the space reversed between the first and second phases. In addition, the owner replaced most of the floor pavements from the first phase with black and white mosaics, a style that was popular on the Italian mainland. However, the Hellenistic pavement of room 7 remained intact, although its doorway was shifted during the renovation. The black and white mosaics of House B find parallels in the mid-1st century houses of Pompeii, further supporting the proposed renovation date[9].

A 'walk' through House B after the 1st cent. AD renovation sets the stage for our analysis. During the Roman period, or second phase, a visitor to House B would have entered from *cardo* e into a narrow, square shaped entry room or vestibule (8). After turning a full ninety degrees to the north, one enters into the courtyard or peristyle. At the center of this space there was a rectangular garden with a pool *(impluvium)* surrounded by four columns on each side, which are no longer extant. The entirety of House B's peristyle is now covered over for the sake of preservation. All twelve columns

8 Von Boeselager 1983, 85.
9 Von Boeselager 1983, 85; Wilson 1990b, 122; Spigo 2005, 46.

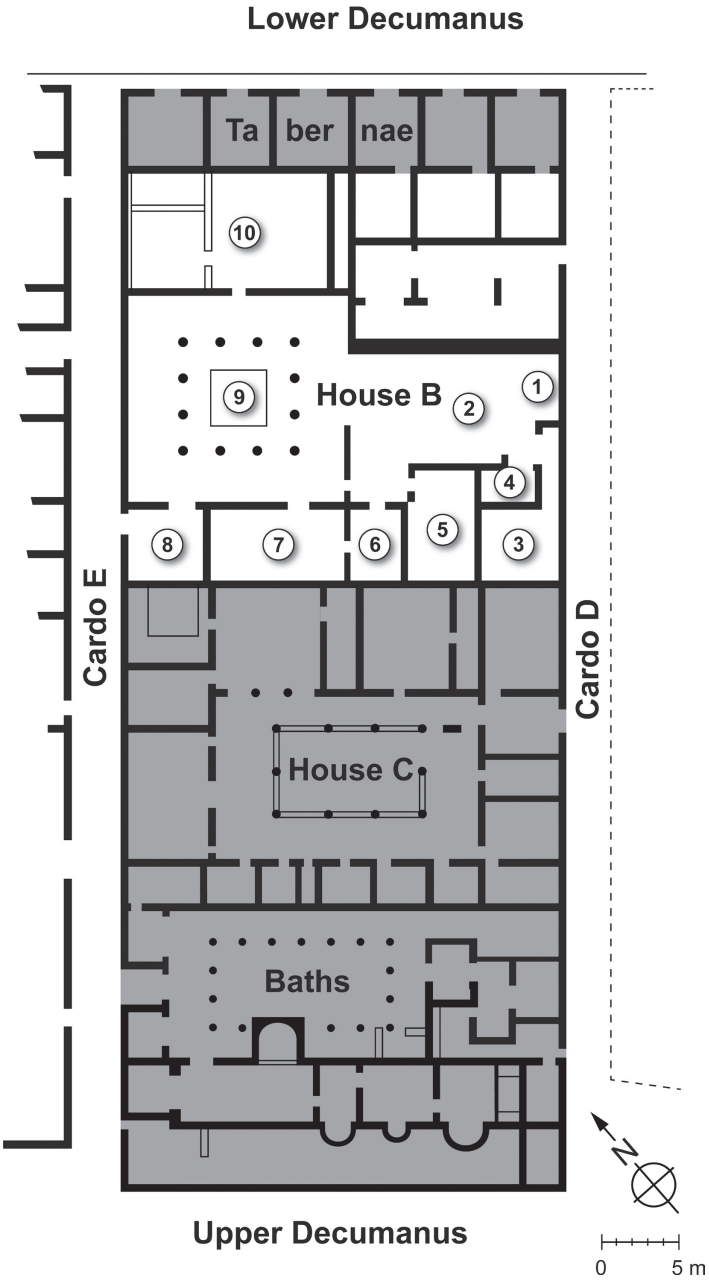

Fig. 1: Plan of Insula IV at Tyndaris
M. Grawehr after L. Bernabò Brea – M. Cavalier, Scavi in Sicilia, BdA 1965, 206 fig. 19

Fig. 2: Room 7 at House B
Photography N. Berlin

were composed of brick covered in stucco and, perhaps, brightly colored paint[10]. The courtyard is paved with an entirely white mosaic floor, with the exception of black guilloche bands that frame the inner and outer borders. From the courtyard one enters into a large, square room on House B's north side (10) that likely served as a reception space, given its large size and panoramic view of the Tyrrhenian Sea[11]. Room 7, an oblong reception space also accessible from the courtyard, retains its Hellenistic-style polychrome mosaic from the first building phase (fig. 2). From room 7 one can enter directly into room 6, whose function is unknown, or back into the courtyard (9).

10 Brick columns covered in stucco and painted with bright colors such as yellow and red were popular throughout Pompeii. See, for example, the Corinthian *oecus* and peristyle at the Casa del Meleagro or House of Meleager (VI 9, 2).

11 The northern sector of the house collapsed after its final occupation making this side of the house difficult to interpret. However, if we compare room 10 to room 3 in House C we can postulate that it was a reception space situated to take advantage of the view over the sea.

Leading from the courtyard (9) and into the large reception space (2) is a rectangular 'carpet' mosaic made up of a grid pattern of black bands that form white diamonds at their intersection. A similarly shaped rectangular 'carpet' decorates the southern border of the room, this one composed of black chevrons. The central portion of room 2 is framed by a series of motifs, including a thick band of scrolling acanthus and a band of shields or *peltae,* that surround another geometric 'carpet' of hourglass shapes. Like the courtyard, the mosaics in room two are now covered to preserve them. From the central circulation space of room 2 the visitor had access to four rooms of varying shapes (3–6). Room 5, possibly a dining room, is unusually long and narrow. It is decorated with a black goat in profile on white ground tesserae (figs. 3 and 4). The other rooms in this part of the house are badly preserved. Even though room 4 still has its white ground mosaic floor, the central, square decorative element is now lost. The original entrance to the house (1) was blocked with stone in the second building phase leaving no way to access *cardo* d from this side of the house. To exit, the visitor would have to go back the way they entered through the vestibule (8).

The framework of renovation

Renovation serves as a conceptual framework for analyzing the changes made to ancient houses, including their architecture and décor[12]. In this context, I define renovation as the process of actively selecting which decorative elements to keep or add to one's domestic ensemble. I use the term "renovate" as opposed to rebuild, redecorate, or transform because it implies a sense of continuity between old and new. It also allows us to think diachronically about continually occupied spaces such as the houses of Roman-era Sicily. The primary benefit of this approach, however, is that it restores the human element to the architectural evidence. By placing an emphasis on the architecture itself we can access both the "how" and "why" of changes made to a house over time. This framework foregrounds the decisions that various

12 For more on renovation as it applies to other contexts, especially public and monumental architecture see Yg – Swetnam-Burland 2018 and, for a review of the work, see Berlin 2019a. A number of recent studies use renovation as a specific methodological framework, see Ehrhardt 2012; Yasin 2015; Berlin 2019b. Renovation also plays an important role in Petersen 2006 and McAlpine 2006. For the parallel phenomenon of conservation, especially as it relates to public monuments and political competition in the city of Rome, see Aylward 2014.

Fig. 3: Room 5 at House B
Photography N. Berlin

Fig. 4: Detail of Room 5 at House B
Photography N. Berlin

homeowners made over the course of a building's life as opposed to simply documenting periodization or phases.

The central feature of House B's renovation is the owner's decision to preserve the Hellenistic-style mosaic in room 7, which stands in stark contrast to the black and white mosaics that the owner installed around 50 AD. Room 7 serves as evidence that renovating a house in the Roman period did not necessarily mean a complete overhaul of the décor, but that specific decisions were often made on a room-by-room basis[13]. The preservation of decorative elements from an earlier phase could be for pragmatic reasons, historical significance, or both. In the case of domestic art and architecture, 'antique' mosaics or frescoes often became works of art in their own right. They served as heirlooms to be passed down from an earlier age, which gain value simply from having existed and survived over a long period of time[14].

As we have established, the mosaic in room 7 dates from House B's first phase of occupation during the Hellenistic period, whereas those in the rest of the house dates to circa 50 AD. Would a viewer have realized the pavement from room 7 was older, and thereby 'historic'? If so, did this change their perception of the space, and how? In the next two sections I argue that the Hellenistic-era mosaic in room 7 served as the focal point of the domestic ensemble after the 50 AD renovation.

The renovation of House B encouraged the viewer to take a 'second gaze' at room 7's antique mosaic in two specific ways. First, the Hellenistic-style pavement demands a very different mode of viewer engagement than the Roman-style mosaics from the second phase. Second, the renovation shifted room 7's doorway so that its original threshold mosaic no long aligned with the room's entrance. This signaled to a viewer that the room's architecture had been altered but the floor had not. These two ways of marking room 7's antiquity, direct comparison and the physical changes to the house, lent authority to the space, and House B as a whole, through a connection to Tyndaris' past.

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13 The preservation of room 7's mosaic is parallel to a phenomenon described by A. M. Yasin as 'singularization,' when an older part of a site or building is preserved so that it might be put on display, Yasin 2015, 122.

14 For more on how an artwork, household décor, etc. gained value with age see Powers 2011; McAlpine 2016; Haug 2020.

Viewing 'through' the floor: Room 7's mosaic

Upon entering House B after the 50 AD renovation, a viewer likely noticed the stark contrast between room 7's Hellenistic-style mosaic and the Roman-style black and white mosaics throughout the rest of the residence, prompting a reconsideration or 'second gaze' of the older pavement. This contrast stems from the way each mosaic style engages the viewer. The pavement in room 7 uses trompe l'oeil and illusionism to create a three-dimensional composition while the black and white mosaics treat the floor as one solid surface, thereby highlighting its horizontality[15]. A comparison between the pavement in room 7 and a black and white mosaic from room 5 in House B illustrates this key difference.

Illusionistic mosaics, like that found in room 7, originated in the late-3rd cent. BC out of the black and white pebble mosaics that characterize sites such as Eretria and Olynthos[16]. They have been excavated throughout the eastern and western Mediterranean, from Asia Minor, Israel, Egypt, and even Southern Italy[17]. Sicily was an early adopter of tessellated mosaics. The House of Ganymede at Morgantina is one of the earliest examples of a tessellated mosaic in the Mediterranean (fig. 5). Its three-dimensional border reveals a major stylistic change that occurred at the end of the 3rd cent. BC – the floor, previously decorated as a uniform, flat surface, became a canvas for illusionistic scenes that encourage the viewer to see 'through' the floor[18]. Figural compositions, such as the Alexander Mosaic in the House of the Faun at Pompeii, are the most well-known examples of this style. Artists applied the same principles to geometric patterns, like those in room 7, to create illusionistic compositions. These mosaics, which I am calling 'Hellenistic-style', share a number of general characteristics including the use of small, polychrome tesserae to create delicate shading and, thereby, three-dimensional effects. Because these pavements were so intricate, they were labor intensive and extremely expensive.

Other than the cost, another downfall of this mosaic type is their limited flexibility. Hellenistic-style figural mosaics often appeared as a finely-tessellated panel at the center of a floor composition *(emblema).* Based on evidence

15 See Clarke 1979; Swift 2009, 60–137.

16 Dunbabin 1999, 21f. For more on early pebble mosaics see Franks 2018.

17 As Martin 2017, 53, argues, tessellated mosaics from the Hellenistic period are often called 'Greek' even though they were a pan-Mediterranean development that varied from place to place and emerged thanks to cross-cultural exchanges.

18 Dunbabin 1999, 22, see also Tsakirgis 1989, 395–416; Bell 2011, 105–123.

Fig. 5: House of Ganymede at Morgantina
Photography N. Berlin

from Delos and Pompeii, patrons most valued still life and marine scenes[19]. These Hellenistic panels have only one ideal vantage point, that is, there is only one place in the room from which the visitor could view the mosaic's image right side up. From anywhere else, such compositions would be upside-down or side-ways, much like a painting that has been hung with the wrong orientation. Because of their expense and limited flexibility, homeowners often reserved such mosaics for public spaces. As Ruth Westgate notes, most Hellenistic compositions consist of one or more geometric or vegetal decorative borders that surround a central field, which could be either left blank or filled with a figural panel[20]. In both cases the decorative borders separated a room's periphery, where couches for reclining could be placed, from the rest of the space.

19 Westgate 2000, 263–267.
20 Westgate 2000, 256.

To return to room 7's mosaic, we can consider how the viewer would have interacted with its two distinct sections. First, the floor is decorated with an intricate threshold rosette mosaic, which originally marked the entryway to the space before the doorway was shifted during the renovation. Hellenistic artists conceived of threshold mosaics independently from the rest of the floor. They are characterized by numerous complex geometric borders[21]. House B's threshold mosaic is composed of a rosette encircled by five different framing devices[22]. Black and white tesserae shade the petals of the central rosette, giving it a three dimensional or illusionistic effect, which would have been enhanced as a viewer crossed the threshold into the room.

The second part of room 7's mosaic, the wave band, is nearly unparalleled in the Mediterranean. One fragmentary example can be found at Rabat on Malta, but otherwise wave bands usually appear alongside figural compositions[23]. Here, as with the rosette, black and white tesserae create nuanced light and shadow. Three thick, black rows of tesserae visually separate the colorful band from the otherwise white-ground floor. Because of this delicate shading, the wave band becomes three dimensional and appears to oscillate as one moves across the floor. As Katherine Dunbabin notes, such designs "reveal the fascination felt by the Hellenistic arts for illusionistic effects [… that] are deliberately contrasted with the flat surface décor"[24]. Overall the Hellenistic-style mosaic in room 7 required that a viewer suspend their conception of the floor as flat while the illusionistic, geometric mosaic shifted and moved below their feet.

The rest of House B is decorated with Roman-style black and white mosaics. Black and white mosaics first appeared on the Italian mainland around 20 BC and from there spread throughout the Roman Empire. The change from Hellenistic to Roman-style mosaics, and their differing modes of viewer engagement, is paralleled in Roman wall painting. The architectural, or 'illusionistic' Second Style of wall painting, which often features trompe l'oeil compositions, dominated the 1st cent. BC. By the end of the century, the austere and elegant Third Style, which treats the wall as a flat surface, became

21 Dunbabin 1999, 32.

22 The House of the Masks at Delos has three nearly identical examples of illusionistic rosettes – one in room E, where it is a threshold mosaic and two in room I, where they are part of the room's central composition, see Bruneau – Nicolaou 1972, 240 no. 214; 256 no. 217.

23 Von Boeselager 1983, 45. For the Rabat mosaic, see von Boeselager 1983, pl. 8 figs. 14 and 15.

24 Dunbabin 1999, 32.

more popular[25]. This suggests that by the end of the 1st cent. BC there was a fundamental transformation in the way Romans were conceptualizing space, which impacted the entire decorative ensemble of private residences.

The most pragmatic explanation for this shift is that black and white pavements were more economical than the Hellenistic polychrome compositions in terms of both material and labor[26]. The flexibility of the later, Roman-era black and white figural mosaics meant that the compositions could be adapted to their architectural space, instead of restricted to a square or rectangular panel like the figural panels of the Hellenistic period. As John Clarke notes, black and white figural scenes "…clearly show an approach to figural composition that takes into consideration both architectural setting and spectator movement"[27].

Mosaic workshops began to experiment with this more flexible style[28]. The majority of black and white compositions from the 1st cent. AD are geometric – figural scenes remained rare until the 2nd cent. AD. By the mid-2nd cent. AD figural mosaics reached their peak as exemplified by the elaborate, 360-degree figural compositions at Ostia[29]. One exception is a group of mosaics at Pompeii dating to the second half of the 1st cent. AD that depict animals formed with black outlines on a white tessellated floor. Without a ground line to anchor the scene, a viewer's sense of the depicted space was ambiguous, lending a flatness to the floor overall. Most of these examples are found in the *fauces,* or the narrow corridor that led from the main entryway in the *atrium* of a house. Such passageways were a place of entrance and transition from the public world outside to the private world inside[30]. One of the best-preserved examples is from the Casa del Poeta Tragico or House of the Tragic Poet (Pompeii VI 8, 5) where a growling dog stands ready to pounce on anyone who should walk into the door with the warning "CAVE

25 Clarke 1991, 61.

26 Dunbabin 1999, 56.

27 Clarke 1979, 20.

28 Generally, tesserae within black and white mosaics range from .5 to 1 cm in width, as opposed to those in earlier Hellenistic compositions, which were significantly smaller and often made of expensive colored marble.

29 For more on the mosaics of Ostia see Becatti 1961.

30 The narrow *fauces* in Roman houses created an almost 'tunnel-vision' effect through which the spectator could look through and into the *atrium* (and perhaps the peristyle, if the house was axially aligned). Clarke 1991, 4, describes this viewing effect.

CANEM" or "BEWARE OF DOG". This image was clearly meant to intimidate or, at the very least, give pause to anyone entering the house[31].

Let us turn to a black and white figural composition within House B to consider this mosaic style within a Sicilian context. Room 5, which is located directly next to room 7, is a long, broad room (figs. 3 and 4). One must enter and turn to view the entire space. The floor in room 5 is composed of white tesserae with the exception of a thick black band that encircles the periphery, and divides the entryway from the rest of the room. At the northeastern end of room 5, just inside the main doorway, is the figure of a goat outlined with black tesserae and shown running to the left. A parallel example from Pompeii comes from the House of L. Caecilius Iucundus (V 1, 26)[32]. Here, a recumbent dog is waiting to greet a viewer entering through the doorway and into the *fauces* (fig. 6). This figure and ours at Tyndaris share a number of features – both are rendered in outline and, more importantly, are placed on a white mosaic floor with no indication of ground line or background. Nor is there any attempt to render either figure in three dimensions with shading, as we see in the example at the House of the Tragic Poet. Because the dog from the House of L. Caecilius Iucundus is depicted on a horizontal plane, as opposed to a vertical one, it appears less as a free-floating figure and more like an actual animal taking up space. In moving through the *fauces* of the House of L. Caecilius Iucundus, one has the desire to step around, or over, the dog even though it is not real. The white ground upon which it is placed thus enhances the reality of the animal's presence but without the illusionistic effects seen in Hellenistic mosaics like that in room 7.

The goat in room 5, unlike the dog in the *fauces* at Pompeii, is not conceived of as sitting still, but is shown running to the left. It adds a feeling of frenetic movement to the entryway. This effect is heightened by the goat's alignment perpendicular to the doorway. The goat, running from right to left, moves in the opposite direction of a viewer who was walking through the doorway. The lack of detail on the rest of the floor, which is all white tesserae, serves to highlight the goat as the room's focal point. Conceivably,

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31 The fact that a dog appears at both the House of the Tragic Poet and the House of Caecilius Iucundus suggests that it may be apotropaic in nature. About the dog in the House of Caecilius Iucundus J. Clarke says, "The attempt to hold the incoming spectator's full attention is epitomized in the frontally represented eye, an isolated detail whose topical overtones (i.e. the Argus-like watchdog) take on added, perhaps apotropaic, significance […]", Clarke 1979, 11.

32 Petersen 2006, 273, agrees with J. Clarke's reading of the dog mosaic (see above) but adds that the dog was there out of 'necessity' to ward off evil from a house that had experienced much good fortune.

Fig. 6: Recumbent Dog, House of Caecilius Iucundus at Pompeii (V 1, 26)
Argo Navis, CC BY-SA 4.0, CC BY-SA 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons, on concession of the Ministerio della Cultura – Parco Archeologico di Pompeii

the goat was meant to address or confront those entering room 5, as well as serve as a topic of discussion for those using the space for dining. For those sitting on couches arranged in the back half of room 5, the goat would have been right side up. Even from this vantage point at the back of the space, the goat still seems to be escaping from the room and may have provided a humorous point of departure for dinner conversation[33].

To sum up, engagement is a key part of understanding how an ancient viewer may have interacted with the 'Hellenistic-style' versus 'Roman-style' mosaics in House B, as they were radically different. Artists used delicate

33 Goats during this period are written about mostly in terms of breeding and farming by authors such as Varro and Columella. However, one feature of their personality that is often mentioned is their destructive appetite, for which reason Pliny says they are not sacrificed to Minerva (nat. 8, 70). Ovid, on the other hand, writes that goats are often sacrificed to Bacchus because they destroy his vines (fast. 1, 350). Goats were also associated with fertility and the festival of *lupricalia,* when women were gently hit with goatskin strips to ensure their ability to give birth (also discussed in Ov. fast. 5, 100–105).

shading to enhance the three-dimensionality of a 'Hellenistic-style' mosaic, whether it be figural or geometric, as we see in room 7 of House B. Not only did the central rosette of the threshold mosaic encourage one to view 'through' the floor, but the wave band seems to oscillate as one moves through the space. 'Roman-style' mosaics, composed of black and white tesserae, are inherently more flexible in their adaptability to a wide variety of spaces. The specific group of figural mosaics discussed here, and exemplified by the goat in room 5, reinforce the 'flatness' of the floor. The artist used black tesserae to outline the goat on an otherwise white-ground pavement. These characteristics only highlight the figure's lack of three-dimensionality. Essentially, what you see is what you get. Even a viewer not familiar with mosaic trends in the Mediterranean likely perceived the contrast between the illusionistic mosaic in room 7 and the 'Roman-style' mosaics throughout the rest of the house, prompting a reconsideration of the older floor. As I discuss in the next section, the owner more overtly emphasized the antiquity of room 7, encouraging a 'second gaze', through the room's renovated architecture.

History made perceptible: Architectural alterations

This architectural changes made to House B during the renovation not only re-structured how a viewer moved through the space, but also re-conceptualized how they would view the 'Hellenistic-style' mosaic in room 7. In phase two, the doorway of room 7 moved east. As a result, the entrance no longer aligned with the rosette threshold mosaic (fig. 7). The asymmetry between the new doorway and older mosaic indicated that the room's architecture had changed over time. As noted above, during the 1st cent. AD renovation the entrance of House B moved from *cardo* d, on the east side of the house, to *cardo* e, on the west side. Until the mid-1st cent.-renovation, House B presented an axial arrangement. The entrance (1) aligned with both the main reception space (2) and the courtyard (9). Consequently, one had an unobstructed sightline from the entrance on *cardo* d through to the back of the house. Once the entrance moved to *cardo* e after the renovation, the doorway opened into a small, confined vestibule. Given that the new entrance was not on axis with the *atrium,* the view of those walking by House B would have been limited to the small vestibule. For those permitted into House B, the vestibule served as an additional transition space before reaching the columned courtyard.

As a result of House B's new entrance on *cardo* e, the columned courtyard became the main circulation point for the entire house. Room 7, which before

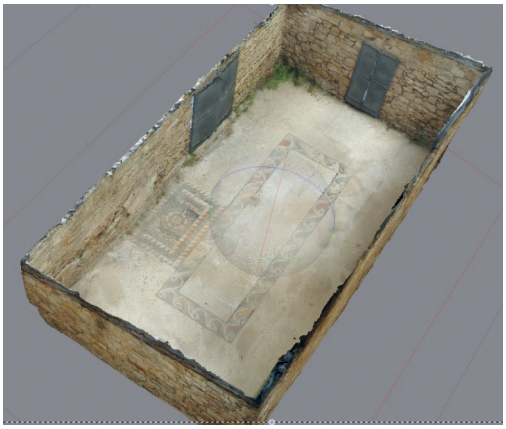

Fig. 7: 3-D model of House B
Created by N. Berlin

the renovation had been at the back of the house, became one of the first spaces a visitor could access. To account for this change in room 7's position, the owner moved its doorway off-center. This provided shelter from wandering eyes for those dining or banqueting within room 7, and perhaps heightened a visitor's desire to see what was occurring, or displayed, within the space. Only guests invited into room 7 could see the antique pavement on display. The new entrance of House B, its vestibule, and the new doorway position of room 7 all suggest a desire to more closely monitor, and control, sightlines and movement within the residence. In other words, the owner intentionally preserved the mosaic while re-structuring and controlling the viewer's gaze, which further emphasized the architectural shifts during phase two.

How did the movement room 7's doorway impact one's ability to view the antique mosaic? Archaeological evidence confirms that the Hellenistic-style mosaic remained visible in the Roman period, after House B's renovation. We can imagine that the ideal viewer in room 7 would be someone who could recognize the antiquity of room 7's floor due to its illusionistic, painterly quality[34]. Even for those who may not recognize room 7's pavement as an antique, the asymmetry between the threshold mosaic and doorway immediately alerted a viewer that the space had been renovated.

Up until this point I have analyzed how the renovation of House B served to highlight room 7 and its historic, Hellenistic-style pavement. This brings

34 For more on the 'model viewer' see Valladares 2005, 206–242.

us back to the process of 'singularization' as defined by Ann Marie Yasin[35], or 'preservation' as defined in this article. Lauren Petersen's study of the House of L. Caecilius Iucundus at Pompeii describes an example of 'singularization' within a domestic context. In terms of the goals of the homeowner, it is analogous to House B's renovation. Iucundus commissioned Third Style paintings for his residence's *tablinum* instead of the more contemporary, and on trend, Fourth Style. He thereby created what Petersen describes as a 'period room', or a room decorated to evoke a 'bygone era'[36]. This allowed Iucundus to "position himself publicly as a Roman with a past and to imbue his household with a sense of history and continuity"[37]. In this case, an older style of wall painting allowed Iucundus to fabricate a past for his house. The Third Style frescoes thereby historicized and authenticated the house, as well as the owner[38]. The House of L. Caecilius Iucundus demonstrates how the process of 'singularization' might play out in a domestic context of the early Imperial period. However, this example from Pompeii differs from that of House B in two fundamental ways. First, at House B there was no need to commission décor that evoked the past because it was already present within the house itself. In House B we have the renovation strategy of 'preservation' since an older part of the house was left intact, not created anew. Given Tyndaris' long history, as well as that of Sicily more generally, a building's long life was part of its inherited value. Second, the 'antique' decorative feature is a mosaic and not a wall painting, which profoundly changes how a viewer interacted with it, and consequently, the past.

With these two points in mind, I would suggest that the embodied, mobile viewer is fundamental to understanding room 7's mosaic. As we have discussed, the threshold mosaic from the Hellenistic period no longer aligned with the room's altered doorway. This means the threshold mosaic was not visible from the new doorway, but only from within the room itself, which dramatically shifted the viewer's gaze between the first and second phases. Once inside room 7, the displaced threshold mosaic suggested that the floor was preserved from an earlier phase. Thus, to experience the full impact of the room a viewer needed permission to enter the space and actually walk upon the pavement. This made it implicit that a viewer would physically engage with House B's centuries-long history. The Hellenistic-style mosaic

35 Yasin 2015, 122–125.
36 Petersen 2006, 182.
37 Petersen 2006, 182.
38 For more on this phenomenon see McAlpine 2016 as well as Ehrhardt 2012.

in room 7 made its history perceptible to anyone who walked through the space.

Tyndaris, Sicily, and the Roman Empire

At first glance, the mosaics of House B at Tyndaris seem to represent two separate phases of the city's history – its Hellenistic past (dating between the 2nd and 1st cent. BC) and the period during which it thrived as a Roman colony (1st cent. AD onwards). The vastly different colors, styles, and modes of viewer engagement between the polychrome mosaic in room 7 and those throughout the rest of the house are a testament to the dramatic change in Tyndaris' status when it became a *colonia* or colony in 21 BC. By preserving room 7's mosaic, House B's owner was able to harken back to a culturally rich Hellenistic past. This, at least, is the picture that emerges when we only consider House B in relation to the two '-isms' that tend to dominate the study of the ancient Mediterranean – 'Hellenism' and 'Romanism'[39]. While these concepts do have a place in considering broad political and ideological developments over wide periods of time or geography, they do not leave much room for a local perspective[40].

If we instead consider House B's décor from a local, Sicilian point of view then room 7's mosaic becomes a point of continuity between the Hellenistic and Roman phases of the house, as opposed to a marker of drastic change or alteration. In its original context, room 7's mosaic served as a luxurious example of décor that allowed the owner of House B to participate in Sicily's emergence as a thriving Hellenistic center in the Mediterranean. In its later, Roman-era context, the mosaic took on a second layer of meaning. Elsewhere, such as on the Italian mainland, homeowners had to 'import' Hellenistic culture in the form of mosaics, wall painting, and architecture to participate in the philhellenism that dominated Roman elite culture[41]. For the owner of House B, however, the mosaic of room 7 served as an authentic, local, and pre-existing example of Sicily's rich Hellenistic period. This, along with the newer black and white mosaics throughout the house, allowed the 1st cent. AD owner to engage with the ideals of Roman elite culture in two ways – through claims to the Hellenistic past as well as knowledge of what was fashionable on the Italian mainland.

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39 Perkins 2007.
40 Campagna 2011, 162.
41 Wallace-Hadrill 2010, 361.

What significance did room 7's mosaic have when it was originally laid, namely the 2nd and 1st centuries BC? It is well established that much of Sicily in the Hellenistic period fell within the sphere of influence of its cultural 'capital', Syracuse. Both Agathocles (317–289 BC) and Hieron II (270–215 BC) ruled eastern Sicily as a Hellenistic kingdom, much like those at Pergamon or Alexandria. The Sicilian tyrants established Syracuse as the island's epicenter for literary, artistic, and scholarly developments. By the 3rd cent. BC the elites of Sicily were part of a Mediterranean-wide Hellenistic culture that "was more cosmopolitan, more culturally and socially complex" than any period before[42]. The influence of Hellenism spread quickly from eastern Sicily to settlements elsewhere on the island[43]. This phenomenon is most visible in the houses of northern Sicily, in cities like Tyndaris, where owners decorated their residences with luxurious architecture, frescoes, and mosaics[44]. In discussing the mosaics of Hellenistic Sicily, Dela von Boeselager notes that while they do tend to have similarities with other cities such as Delos and Pergamon, there was significant local innovation in regards to this particular art form[45]. We can see this in room 7 at House B, whose rosette threshold mosaic finds direct parallels with the House of the Masks at Delos. The pavement thus served as an outward example of the owner's familiarity with the Hellenistic *koine* circulating in the Mediterranean, but one that was decidedly Sicilian in nature.

Beyond room 7 we have very little Hellenistic-era context for House B. However, the incorporation of room 7's mosaic into the Roman-era residence is perceptible even today. Of course, this change in context and the re-structuring of the viewer's gaze resulted in a parallel shift in the potential meaning or significance of the pavement. This means our inquiry into why the owner of House B chose to preserve room 7's pavement is also a consideration of the re-use and re-interpretation of the past during the 1st cent. AD-renovation. Sue Alcock describes a similar phenomenon in Augustus' re-ordering of the Athenian *agora* by updating older monuments or adding new ones of his own creation. This re-interpretation of the authentic, local Greek past within a Roman context was particularly successful because the Hellenic

42 Smith 1991, 7.
43 Campagna 2011, 178.
44 Campagna 2011, 167. Soluntum, Palermo, Halesa, and Monte Iato are examples of cities where this is happening.
45 Von Boeselager 1983, 80.

past served as cultural capital within elite spheres of Roman culture[46]. The newly re-ordered monuments, set within the context of the Athenian *agora,* created a "visible amalgam of past and present" where "the Hellenic past and imperial present were co-mingled"[47].

Spaces like the Athenian *agora* or House B appealed to a wide spectrum of viewers who recognized distinct cultural elements depending on their own background. At at House B, the 'use' of the local past authenticated the house and its owner, and emphasized continuity between the Hellenistic and Roman periods. Unlike on the Italian mainland where an idealized Greek or Hellenistic past had to be imported, on Sicily it was indigenous. At House B, the owner in the Roman period was able to draw upon the already-existing Hellenistic past of both the residence and the city to his own benefit.

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46 Alcock 1996, 42. A. Wallace-Hadrill discusses this phenomenon on a larger scale, arguing that the Augustan period was a key point in the dissemination of Eastern Mediterranean or Greek culture, describing the process as "that in which the wealth, skill, and people of the eastern Mediterranean are first drawn into Rome on a global scale, to be re-circulated not only westwards but also back eastwards" (Wallace-Hadrill 2010, 361). Essentially by the Augustan period Greek culture became a commodity for the wealthy throughout the Mediterranean, and a way to signal one's participation in elite dialogues and exchanges.

47 Alcock 1996, 58.

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