

The Romano-African *Domus*:
Studies in Space, Decoration, and Function

by

Margherita Carucci

Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham for the

Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

March 2006

Volume 1



PAGE

NUMBERING

AS ORIGINAL

Volume 1: Contents

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Abstract | 6 |
| Acknowledgments | 7 |
| Abbreviations | 8 |

Chapter 1: Introduction

| | |
|--|----|
| 1.1 Roman domestic architecture | 10 |
| 1.2 Literature survey of problems and perspectives in the study of mosaics | 10 |
| 1.3 Methodology | 13 |
| 1.4 Conclusions | 16 |

Chapter 2: *Vestibulum* and its annexes

| | |
|--|----|
| 2.1 Introduction | 18 |
| 2.2 Setting for <i>salutatio</i> | 18 |
| 2.3 Façade | 20 |
| 2.4 <i>Vestibulum</i> | 23 |
| 2.5 Audience-chamber | 25 |
| 2.6 <i>Cella ianitoris</i> | 29 |
| 2.7 Room for storing <i>sportulae</i> | 31 |
| 2.8 Decoration | 33 |
| 2.9 <i>Loca communia</i> and personal privacy | 36 |
| 2.10 Secondary entrance | 38 |
| 2.10.1 Architectural layout | 38 |
| 2.10.2 Decoration | 42 |
| 2.11 Conclusions | 43 |
| Table 2.1: <i>Vestibulum</i> | 45 |
| Table 2.2: <i>Vestibulum</i> and its annexes in the Romano-African house | 47 |

Chapter 3: Peristyle

| | |
|---------------------------------|----|
| 3.1 Introduction | 63 |
| 3.2 Use of the word peristyle | 63 |
| 3.3 Peristyle and <i>atrium</i> | 64 |
| 3.4 <i>Porticus</i> | 66 |
| 3.5 Court | 69 |
| 3.6 Basins and pools | 72 |
| 3.7 Decoration | 76 |
| 3.8 Functions of the peristyle | 88 |
| 3.9 Conclusions | 90 |
| Table 3.1: Peristyle | 91 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Table 3.2: Peristyle in the Romano-African house | 93 |
| Chapter 4: Secondary courtyard | |
| 4.1 Introduction | 116 |
| 4.2 Architectural layout | 116 |
| 4.3 Decoration | 119 |
| 4.3.1 Figured motifs | 119 |
| 4.3.2 Geometric designs | 121 |
| 4.4 Functions of the secondary courtyard | 122 |
| 4.5 Conclusions | 124 |
| Table 4.1: Secondary courtyard | 125 |
| Table 4.2: Secondary courtyard in the Romano-African house | 126 |
| Chapter 5: Main <i>triclinium</i> | |
| 5.1 Introduction | 135 |
| 5.2 Terms for dining room: <i>triclinium</i> , <i>stibadium</i> , <i>cenatio</i> , and <i>conclave</i> | 135 |
| 5.3 The identification of the main <i>triclinium</i> | 138 |
| 5.4 Decoration | 144 |
| 5.4.1 Figured motifs | 145 |
| 5.4.2 Geometric-floral designs | 154 |
| 5.4.3 <i>Opus sectile</i> | 155 |
| 5.5 Convivial space | 156 |
| 5.6 Conclusions | 163 |
| Table 5.1: Main <i>triclinium</i> | 164 |
| Table 5.1: Main <i>triclinium</i> in the Romano-African house | 166 |
| Chapter 6: Secondary <i>triclinium</i> | |
| 6.1 Introduction | 187 |
| 6.2 A question of terminology | 187 |
| 6.3 The identification of the secondary <i>triclinium</i> | 189 |
| 6.4 Decoration | 192 |
| 6.4.1 Figured motifs | 192 |
| 6.4.2 Geometric-floral designs | 203 |
| 6.4.3 <i>Opus sectile</i> | 204 |
| 6.5 <i>Cena</i> in the secondary <i>triclinium</i> | 204 |
| 6.6 Conclusions | 208 |
| Table 6.6: Secondary <i>triclinium</i> | 209 |
| Table 6.6: Secondary <i>triclinium</i> in the Romano African house | 211 |

Chapter 7: Assembly-rooms

| | |
|---|-----|
| 7.1 Introduction | 224 |
| 7.2 Textual evidence | 224 |
| 7.3 Proposal of a term | 228 |
| 7.4 The identification of assembly-rooms | 229 |
| 7.5 The decoration of assembly-rooms | 232 |
| 7.5.1 Figured motifs | 232 |
| 7.5.2 Geometric-floral designs | 238 |
| 7.5.3 <i>Opus sectile</i> | 239 |
| 7.6 Activities held in the assembly-rooms | 240 |
| 7.7 Conclusions | 244 |
| Table 7.1: Assembly-rooms | 246 |
| Table 7.1: Assembly-rooms in the Romano-African house | 248 |

Chapter 8: *Cubiculum*

| | |
|---|-----|
| 8.1 Introduction | 263 |
| 8.2 Terms for bedroom: <i>cubiculum</i> , <i>dormitorium</i> , <i>thalamus</i> , and <i>cella</i> | 263 |
| 8.3 The identification of the <i>cubiculum</i> | 264 |
| 8.4 Decoration | 267 |
| 8.4.1 Figured motifs | 267 |
| 8.4.2 Geometric-floral designs | 273 |
| 8.5 Use of the <i>cubiculum</i> : not just for sleeping | 275 |
| 8.6 Conclusions | 281 |
| Table 8.1: <i>Cubiculum</i> | 283 |
| Table 8.1: <i>Cubiculum</i> in the Romano-African house | 285 |

Chapter 9: Private apartments

| | |
|---|-----|
| 9.1 Introduction | 296 |
| 9.2 Terminology | 296 |
| 9.3 Public and private in the Roman house | 297 |
| 9.4 The identification of the private apartments | 299 |
| 9.5 Decoration | 305 |
| 9.5.1 Figured motifs | 305 |
| 9.5.2 Geometric-floral designs | 307 |
| 9.6 Gendered space | 311 |
| 9.7 Conclusions | 315 |
| Table 9.1: Private apartments | 317 |
| Table 9.2: Private apartments in the Romano-African house | 322 |

Chapter 10: Conclusions

| | |
|---|-----|
| 10.1 Decorative motifs on African mosaics | 340 |
| 10.2 Upper storeys | 345 |
| 10.3 Domestic interiors | 347 |
| 10.4 Mosaic programme and the patron's intentions | 352 |
| Table 10.1: Pavement-type | 357 |
| Table 10.2: Mosaic motifs | 358 |
| Table 10.3: Subject-pattern of the mosaics | 359 |

| | |
|------------------|-----|
| Catalogue | 361 |
|------------------|-----|

| | |
|---------------------|-----|
| Bibliography | 494 |
|---------------------|-----|

Volume 2: Maps, City Plans, Figures, Plates

Abstract

The introduction (chapter I) will present the topic of the present research in two paragraphs. The one will discuss the problems relating to the study of domestic art in Roman Africa and the approach of scholars to them in order to highlight the new aspect of this research. The second one will describe the methodology that will be used in the study of the relationship between architectural forms and mosaic decoration of African domestic architecture during the high and late Empire (Maps 1-2).

The following chapters will describe eight room-types in term of architectural layout and mosaic decoration. By following the imaginary route of an ancient guest visiting the Romano-African house, the analysis will begin with the description of the spaces of higher accessibility: the *vestibulum* as the point of transition from outside and inside and its annexed spaces such as audience-chamber, *cella ianitoris*, and room for storing *sportulae* (chapter 2); and the peristyle as a passageway to rooms arranged around it (chapter 3). The analysis of the peristyle as an open space will be followed by the study of the secondary courtyard in chapter 4. The discussion will continue with the description of the reception rooms as public spaces where the house-owner received his selected guests: main *triclinium* (chapter 5), secondary *triclinium* (chapter 6), and assembly-rooms (chapter 7). The analysis will end with the description of the most private parts of the house: the *cubiculum* as the room of a more selective admission (chapter 8) and the private apartments as the spaces reserved for the members of the master's family (chapter 9).

Conclusions will follow in chapter 10.

The whole analysis will be carried out with the support of the catalogue listing the main Romano-African houses.

Bibliography will follow.

Acknowledgments

This research could never have been carried out without the ongoing support of Prof. Roger Wilson as my supervisor. With his incomparable guidance and passion for archaeology, he helped me to broaden my cultural horizons and to exercise more critical observations in the analysis of archaeological evidence. To him I owe special thanks.

I am grateful to the Ministero degli Affari Esteri of Italy and to the Government of Tunisia for providing me with a grant, which allowed me to visit a number of archaeological sites in Tunisia.

To the staff of Tombola project in the Medical School I owe gratitude for the financial support. Elizabeth Williams in the first three months, Hazel Brook, and Brenda Cooper for treating me like her daughter have been not just colleagues at work, but also good friends. To the ladies of Tombola I will be always grateful for understanding the problems of doing a part-time job and a full-time PhD at the same time. I also thank the team of the Graduate School that I joined in the last months of my experience.

I would like to thank my family for always patiently supported and encouraged my academic career and for understanding my decision to carry on my studies far away from home.

Of course, special thanks are also due to my friends here in Nottingham for sharing with me achievements as well as problems. It is not possible to list all of them. Some of them accompanied me at the very outset of this project; some others have entered my life in the last months of my PhD. All of them have been supportive and somehow helped me in this experience at the expense of a lot of laughter.

Thank you.

Abbreviations

- CMGR I Picard, G. and Stern, H. 1965. *La Mosaïque Gréco-Romaine. Ier Colloque International pour l'étude de la mosaïque antique* (Paris, 29 Août- 3 Septembre 1963). Paris.
- CMGR III Farioli Campanati, R. (a cura di) 1983. *III Colloquio Internazionale sul Mosaico Antico. Ravenna, 6-10 Settembre 1980*. Ravenna.
- CMGR IV Darmon, J-P. and Rebourg, A. 1994. *La mosaïque gréco-romaine IV : IVe Colloque international pour l'étude de la mosaïque antique, Trèves, 8-14 Août, 1984*. Paris.
- CMGR V.1 Johnson, P., Ling, R. and Smith, D.J. (eds.) 1994. *Fifth International Colloquium on ancient Mosaics held at Bath, England, on September 5-12, 1987, Part One*. Ann Arbor.
- CMGR V.2 Ling, R. (ed.) 1995. *Fifth International Colloquium on ancient Mosaics held at Bath, England, on September 5-12, 1987, Part Two*. Ann Arbor.
- CMGR VI Batalla, C.M. (ed.) 1994. *VI Colloquio Internacional sobre Mosaico Antiguo, Palencia – Mérida, Octubre 1990*. Guadalajara.
- CMGR VII Ennaïfer, M. and Rebourg, A. (eds.) 1999: *La mosaïque gréco-romaine VII: Tunis, 3-7 octobre, 1994 : VIIe Colloque international pour l'étude de la mosaïque antique : actes*. Tunis.
- CMGR VIII Paunier, D. and Schmidt, C. (eds.) 2001. *La Mosaïque Gréco-Romaine VIII. Actes du VIIIème Colloque International pour l'Étude de la Mosaïque antique et Médiévale, Lausanne (Suisse), 6-11 octobre 1997*. Lusanne.
- CMT I. 1 Alexander, M.A., Ennaïfer, M. and Gretzinger, J. 1973. *Corpus des Mosaïques de Tunisie I. Région de Ghar el Mehl (Porto Farina), Atlas archéologique de la Tunisie, Feuille 7. Fasc. 1 Utique, Insulae I-II-III*. Tunis.
- CMT II. 1 Alexander, M.A., Ben Abed, A. and Besrour, S. 1980. *Corpus des Mosaïques de Tunisie II. Région de Zaghouan, Atlas archéologique de la Tunisie, Feuille 35. Fasc. 1: Thuburbo Majus, Les Mosaïques de la Région du Forum*. Tunis.

- CMT II.3 Ben Abed Ben Khader, A. 1987. *Corpus des Mosaïques de Tunisie II. Région de Zaghouan, Atlas archéologique de la Tunisie, Feuille 35. Fasc. 3: Thuburbo Majus, Les Mosaïques de la Région Ouest*. Tunis.
- CMT III. 1 Dulière, C. and Slim, H. 1996. *Corpus des Mosaïques de Tunisie III. Thrysdrus (El Jem), Atlas archéologique de la Tunisie, Feuille 81. Fasc. 1: Quartier Sud-Ouest*. Tunis.
- CMT IV. 1 Ben Abed Ben Khader, A. 1996. *Corpus des Mosaïques de Tunisie IV. Karthago (Carthage):atlas archéologique de la Tunisie, Feuille 81, Fasc. 1: Les mosaïques du Parc Archéologique des Thermes d'Antonin Pius*. Tunis.
- HommStern *Mosaïque : recueil d'hommages à Henri Stern*. Paris, 1983.
- R Balmelle, C. et alii 1985. *Le décor géométrique de la mosaïque Romaine. Répertoire graphique et descriptif des compositions linéaires et isotropes*. Paris.
- RII Balmelle, C. et alii 2002. *Le décor géométrique de la mosaïque romaine II: Répertoire graphique et descriptif des décors centrés*. Paris.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Roman domestic architecture

Until recently, scholars have tended to study architecture and decoration of Roman houses as separate, visual forms of classical art to be analysed in terms of description, classification, and typological survey. Recent scholarship, in contrast, has begun to examine domestic buildings as a source of information about certain aspects of Roman social realities. In particular the works of Thébert on the domestic architecture in Roman North Africa¹ and of Wallace-Hadrill on the social structure of the Pompeian house in the early Imperial times² gave new guidelines. Their analysis on the relationship between architectural structures and decorative elements showed that the investigation can be more fruitful, when it considers architecture and decoration not separately, but in association with each other. Following Thébert and Wallace-Hadrill, other scholars³ have written about the use of space and decoration in Roman architecture as a means of adding to the discussion of Roman society.

The present study takes part to the new pattern of recent scholarship, as it analyses a specific form of ancient decoration (mosaic) within the architectural framework of the houses in Roman Africa (Maps 3-4). However, approach and aim will be different. In order to explain the new aspect of my study, it may be useful to describe the problems relating to the study of African mosaics and the approach of scholars to them.

1.2 Literature survey of problems and perspectives in the study of mosaics

Until recently, mosaics have been analysed as art-works entirely extracted from their architectural and social context. For example, the catalogue of African mosaics⁴, published in 1910, contains 1056 entries, very few of which are illustrated; it was

¹ Thébert 1987.

² Wallace-Hadrill 1988.

³ Neudecker 1988; Clarke 1991; Gazda 1991; Allison 1992; Barton 1996; Laurence and Wallace-Hadrill 1997; Hales 2003.

⁴ Gauckler 1910.

followed by a volume⁵, which contains 458 entries. Mosaics were usually considered as mere forms of art which raised and still raise above all questions of chronology.

New developments for mosaic studies with a new methodological approach began with the publication of Dunbabin's work on the mosaics of Roman North Africa⁶: for the first time mosaics were analysed as works of art chosen and commissioned by patrons as visual expression of their tastes, thoughts, and beliefs. Moreover, with its analysis of the African mosaics in four main themes (hunting, circus, amphitheatre, and Dionysiac scenes), Dunbabin's work became a central tool of reference for future study of ancient mosaics. Following Dunbabin's work, three more volumes have been published as a collection and analysis of a number of African mosaics divided in main themes⁷. More recently, a new volume has come out⁸: this superbly illustrated book presents over 400 large colour photographs of Tunisia's mosaics presented by subject matter; among the essays included, four papers discuss recent discoveries of Roman and Byzantine mosaics.

Other scholars have preferred to focus on single thematic groups, such as marine scenes⁹, seasons¹⁰, and *xenia*¹¹. The advantage of these more specialised works is that they allow a more detailed analysis on the iconography of a decorative motif across a wider area, but it limits broader perspectives of investigation, as mosaics are often extracted from their architectural context.

All these works analyse above all figurative themes because of their potential value. Figured motifs, in fact, can be related to other decorative media (painting, sculpture); mythological subjects can be connected with literary forms (poetry, tragedy, comedy) telling ancient myths; secular themes (hunting, circus and amphitheatre scenes, farming) can highlight moments of daily life. However, any study of mosaics within the architectural frame of the buildings they decorated cannot exclude ornamental designs. In fact, geometric and floral compositions, which formed the greatest part of the mosaicists' repertory at all times, give as much information about type and function of

⁵ De Pachtère 1911.

⁶ Dunbabin 1978.

⁷ Fantar 1994; Yacoub 1995; Blanchard-Lemée et al. 1996.

⁸ Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003.

⁹ Belz 1980.

¹⁰ Parrish 1984.

¹¹ Balmelle et al. 1990.

rooms as figurative themes do. They differentiate spaces within a room by marking off areas designed to be hidden by furniture (e.g. bed in *cubicula* and couches in *triclinia*); they also differentiate between one room and another, as ornamental designs were often used for subsidiary spaces in contrast with the more elaborate figure scenes, which were reserved for the most important rooms, namely the rooms where guests were received.

Studies on the ornamental repertory are not many. The two volumes *Le décor géométrique de la mosaïque romaine*¹², which set out to catalogue and classify more than sixteen hundred different designs used between the 1st century BC and the 6th century AD; the article of Salies on the basic compositional schemata¹³; and the more specialised work of Schmelzeisen¹⁴ on a computer-based analysis to the ornamental mosaics of Africa Proconsularis represent just a few studies on a much wider repertoire. These works are a useful guide in matters of classification, comparisons, and chronology, but again the architectural context in which the mosaics were laid is entirely neglected.

It is then clear that both categories of mosaic (figurative and geometric/floral), if analysed in terms of their relationship with one other and with the architectural space they decorated, can give much information about how the ancient house worked.

Studies on African mosaics within their architectural context have been carried out since the 1960s in regional corpora which collect data from whole cities or large areas of them. The volumes of the *Corpus des Mosaïques de Tunisie*¹⁵, which cover Utica, Thuburbo Maius, El Jem, and Carthage, Blanchard-Lemée's book on Djemila and Hanoune's work on Bulla Regia not only record floor mosaics, as in the oldest catalogues, but they also analyse the archaeological and architectural context to which they belong. Further isolated articles on African mosaics within their architectural context appear in the series of International Colloquia on Ancient Mosaics¹⁶ (*CMGR* I-VIII). The volume *Mosaïque: recueil d'hommages à Henri Stern*¹⁷ too, contains a section on mosaics in North Africa.

Following modern scholarship, the present study analyses African mosaics as works of art closely linked to their architectural context. The analysis will be carried out on the

¹² Balmelle et al. 1985; id. 2002.

¹³ Salies 1974.

¹⁴ Schmelzeisen 1992.

¹⁵ *CMT* I. 1- IV.1, 1973-1996.

¹⁶ *CMGR* I-VIII, 1965-2001.

basis of a sample of wealthy houses in Roman Africa dated to the high to the late Empire. This group of monuments is particularly suitable for this investigation, as a great number of mosaics have been brought to light from well preserved domestic contexts.

The study will aim at answering some questions. How can the function of a room be identified? Can architectural details and floor mosaics tell us something about the activities carried out in domestic spaces? How did they influence the viewer in his thoughts, feelings, and actions? What can type, shape, and design of the floor mosaic say? Is it possible to detect a thematic organisation for the decoration of the whole house? What can we say about the patrons who were paying for the decoration of their houses, about their status, class-aspirations, and achievements? Can spatial organization and decoration detect pattern of social interactions taking place within the house?

1.3 Methodology

Since the research topic is the analysis of architecture and mosaic in relation to each other and to the whole house, I will choose only the houses whose physical structures and floor mosaics are totally or mostly preserved. The choice of individual African houses in the sample is also dictated by the availability of documentation. The *Maison de Lucius Verus* at El Jem and the *Maison de Vénus* at Mactar, for instance, are good examples of a well preserved and richly decorated peristyle-house in Roman Africa. However, the lack of detailed publications and/or the closing of the archaeological sites to the public make the analysis of their architectural and decorative layout difficult. Both houses, therefore, will be only cited in the discussion, when relevant to the function of the room-types. Similarly, the *Maison du Trifolium* at Thugga will be often cited in the discussion because of its well preserved architectural elements, but the lack of detailed information regarding the context and the iconography of the mosaics found there does not allow any further discussion.

As ancient houses were inhabited and transmitted from one generation to another, domestic buildings had long remodelled in order to meet the needs of new occupants. Given the variety of architectural and decorative forms that were changed, only the last, most important building phase will be considered.

¹⁷ *HommStern* 1983.

All the houses selected for this study were peristyle-houses. The Édifice du Satyre et de la Nymphe at Pupput, for example, is structurally well preserved and mostly decorated with mosaics: however, it is not included in the catalogue, as the house is lacking the peristyle. Similarly, the Maison des Océans at Sfax contains a suite of rooms decorated with geometric and figurative mosaics; at a distance of 18m an isolated *triclinium*, which is identified by the layout of its floor mosaic, was excavated a few years later. The badly preserved conditions of the villa make it difficult to ascertain the relation of the *triclinium* with the suite of rooms and therefore to identify the function of the excavated spaces; moreover, it is not certain whether the villa was provided with a peristyle or where the courtyard was located.

The advantage of choosing the same house-type is a considerable conformity within the sample, which makes it possible to identify a set of room-types in relation to the overall plan of each house.

The rooms are divided into eight types and analysed according to a theoretical framework which involves three basic stages of analysis:

1. architectural context: the description of each room in terms of position, size, and relation to other rooms can highlight aspects of its physical access, its public or private character, and its function;
2. mosaic decoration: the analysis of the mosaics will be essentially formal in order to highlight how the formal aspects of mosaics (technique, iconography, and style), that is the way in which subjects or elements are presented, can affect meaning and influence the viewer in his feelings and actions;
3. contextual analysis: the study of architectural layout and mosaic decoration of a certain room-type can give a deal of information about the activities held in the domestic spaces and about the way in which viewers experienced the space.

I have tried to see for myself houses and mosaics about which I have written, and to visit both museums and excavations in most archaeological sites of Roman Africa. On the basis of the direct observation of ancient remains, I will put forward suggestions about typology and functions of African domestic spaces regardless of the observations made by other scholars and/or excavators.

Archaeological data will be analysed with the support of literary sources for activity in the Roman household in general and in the African *domus* in particular. Vitruvius's

treatise on the ideal type of Roman house, Pliny's and Sidonius' descriptions of their particular villas, and Petronius' satiric account of a dinner-party in Trimalchio's house will be often cited as a source of information about Roman domestic life. Because of the uniformity of Imperial culture in terms of art, architecture, and indeed social habits in the elites, there is no reason why information given by Italian sources cannot be applied to Romano-African society, too. However, if possible, the less abundant African literature will be preferred, as it can give insights into how the local people of a Roman province may have viewed and experienced their domestic space and perhaps detect local traditions and a local identity.

The discussion will be supported by tables containing information on the spaces and on the mosaics of the rooms discussed in chapters 2 to 9. The advantage of using tables is that they allow the reader to easily look at and to compare architectural details and mosaic motifs within and among typologies of rooms. In these tables, the dimensions of the rooms are indicated in meters (width x length): when proportions and size of the selected rooms are not indicated in modern bibliography, measurements have been taken by the author with the aid of the scale with which the original house-plans are often provided (as no scale is indicated on the plan of the House of Africa at El Jem, I have personally taken measurements on the ground); the area is in square meters; 'Aspect' means the relation of the room-type to the adjoining spaces; in the section 'Mosaic motif', the term 'unpaved' is used when there is no archaeological evidence of floor mosaic.

At the core of this study is linked a catalogue listing a sample of 55 Romano-African *domus*. The houses will be named after the name given by the excavator and presented in alphabetical order within the same site. The sites are indicated with whichever name is more familiar in archaeological publications. With a few exceptions like El Jem and Oudna, which are named after the modern town or village, the sites are indicated with the Roman name.

Each entry in the catalogue of houses is divided into five sections:

- architectural context: the system for identifying the spaces of the house, whether by letter or by number, will be those of the excavator; the spaces, which are not

identified in the original plan, will be indicated by numbers or letters in running order;

- mosaic decoration: the main and subsidiary motifs decorating the architectural space will be briefly described; the different types of ornamental patterns will be described along with a number (R + number) relating to the categories included in the volumes *Le décor géométrique*: the advantage of this typology is that it highlights which mosaics share common patterns;
- date: the dating of the house and of its mosaics during the building phases will be both considered, when it is possible;
- references: the bibliography includes references to which to refer for more detailed descriptions and questions relating to both architectural layout and single mosaics;
- commentary: this section contains a brief discussion of problems relating to the modern conditions of the house and a sketchy presentation of the domestic spaces in terms of function in order to highlight how the house worked as a whole; the specific room-types will be analysed in more details in the relevant chapters.

The plans of the houses described in the catalogue and the plates containing architectural details and mosaic panels will be presented in a separate volume in order to make the reading of the text easier.

Each house-plan will be preceded by the plan of the city in which African houses were situated in order to relate individual houses to the city as a whole: the city plans give also the possibility to consider how domestic buildings were adapted to the surroundings and nature of the urban environment. Each house-plan will be then followed by plates illustrating details of the domestic building in order to easily relate the excavated spaces to their specific architecture and mosaic decoration. As this study focuses on a sample of eight room-types, not all architectural spaces and mosaics of each house will be included in the plates, but only those relevant to the discussion.

1.4 Conclusions

The ultimate goal of my investigation will be the understanding of the wealthy class of Romano-African society, its concerns, intentions, and desires. The present study will

show that architecture and mosaic, if analysed as the complementary parts of a whole, can give a much greater deal of information about the identity of the inhabitants and their relation with the society. Form, decoration, and use of domestic space are influenced not only by environmental and economic conditions, but also by the patterns of social interactions taking place within the house.

In conclusion, I hope my study will allow a new and deeper insight into the nature of social relations and material practices in Roman North Africa¹⁸.

¹⁸ In the last stage of my doctoral research, a new book on African domestic architecture has been published (Bullo and Ghedini 2003). The layout of the book (analysis of different types of architectural spaces within the African *domus*: vol. 1; and catalogue describing 136 African houses: vol. 2) may recall the format of my dissertation, but aims and objectives are different. The Italian work, in fact, focuses only on the architectural forms of the African house in a more restricted area corresponding to the modern Tunisia. Moreover, the architectural analysis of the African house is not followed by a critical examination of its implications in social terms.

Chapter 2

Vestibulum and its annexes

2.1 Introduction

In the description of Encolpius' and his friends' entrance to Trimalchio's house¹, we are confronted by a succession of elements which were typical in that part of the Roman house between the street and the interior. The notice posted by the entrance stating that 'any slave who leaves the premises without orders of the master will receive one hundred lashes'; the porter (*ostiarius*) shelling peas into a silver bowl in the entrance (*in aditu*); the golden birdcage suspended above the threshold (*super limen*); the watch-dog painted by the porter's cell (*ostiarii cella*); the painted frieze representing the master's rise in fortune under the patronage of Minerva and Mercury; the Homeric and gladiatorial pictures in the portico (*in medio*): all these elements greeted the visitor and announced the house-owner's wealth. Though Petronius' account is a descriptive parody of the house of a *nouveau riche*, it does serve to make clear that the architectural and decorative arrangement of the front of the Roman house, namely the *vestibulum* and its annexed spaces, served as an immediate display of the owner's status.

2.2 Setting for *salutatio*

The *vestibulum* and the adjoining rooms in Italy formed an architectural complex which was strictly associated with the ritual of *salutatio*, and there is no reason to doubt that it had a similar function in many African houses.

In their attempt to explain the meaning of the word *vestibulum*, Gellius² and Macrobius³ cite as their authority C. Aelius Gallus, the writer on legal vocabulary, who probably lived at the time of Augustus⁴. The linguist defines the *vestibulum* as 'an open place before the door of the house, through which there is approach and access to the house'. The term thus covers the doorway, the walls around the door (or façade), and the area in front of the door which separates the house from the street. Here clients stood waiting to enter the *atrium*, as the first living space of the Italic house and as the reception area for the morning *salutatio*. The linguist that the two Imperial writers cite as their authority

¹ Petr. *Sat.* 28-30.

² Gell. *Noc. Att.* 16.5.1-2.

³ Macr. *Sat.* 6.8.8.

⁴ Leach 1993, 24.

referred to the Italic *atrium* house. By Gellius' time, however, the meaning of the term *vestibulum* had become unclear and there was a certain confusion in defining the *pars prior* of the house as *atrium* or *vestibulum*. These changes of use were the result of the architectural changes which affected those domestic spaces in the early Empire. With the disappearance of the *atrium* as a reception room and as the centre of the house at the end of the 1st century AD, the *vestibulum*, as the first room inside the door, assumed the function of reception area; and the peristyle served now as the centre of the house⁵.

The shift of emphasis from the *atrium* and the consolidation of power in the emperor's hands did not affect the *patronus-cliens* relationship of the nobility. A number of literary accounts make this clear: the exchange between patrons and clients as an essential element in political, legal, social, and economic affairs continued into the Empire. It is, in fact, in Imperial times that the patronal rituals are most abundantly attested⁶. The analysis carried out by Saller on the basis of literary and epigraphical evidence shows that clientele relations were equally important in Roman Africa. For example, Apuleius married in the countryside in order to evade the patron's duty to distribute *sportulae* on his wedding day⁷.

The *vestibulum* and its annexed spaces was the setting for *salutatio*, the ceremony which was associated with the complex system of exchanges and obligations in Roman society. In the morning low-status *clientes* visited and greeted their *patronus* in his house to receive food or money (*sportula*) which they needed to survive that day, as well as seeking advice about such things as property or the betrothal of a daughter. The *patronus* obtained in return political support and was repaid by increased social prestige. In the exchange relationship between unequal partners, the favours bestowed by the superior to his social inferior proved the power and wealth of the former. The performance of the morning ritual, which involved the influx of a number of clients and servants, required a series of rooms of different functions: the *vestibulum*, where the *clientes* waited to be summoned individually to greet their *patronus*; the *cella ianitoris*, where the servant posted as guard watched those who came and went; the audience-chamber, where the master received his dependents for the *salutatio* and for the conducting of business; the room for storing *sportulae* and keeping official documents.

⁵ Meyer 1999, 109-11.

⁶ Saller 1982.

⁷ Apul. *Apol.* 87.

That complex of rooms as the spatial framework for the morning visits was clustered around a broad central space at the front of the house. The location had a twofold effect: the high visibility of the *vestibulum* and of its adjoining rooms from the street advertised the *dominus'* power and social status⁸; the performance of the morning ceremony in the front of the house also protected the privacy of the household from access by low-status clients.

2.3 Façade

As the symbolic and concrete point of transition from outside to inside, the entrance of the *domus* performed many complex functions. It was the first domestic space to be approached and as such it created a transitional space between public and private⁹. The closed gate protected the intimacy of the family, but its high visibility made the entrance an excellent place to display the status of those who dwelt within (Pl. 196). In the description of the fictional Palace of Psyche, Apuleius states that the visitor about to enter would have immediately perceived the divine nature of the building¹⁰. The magnificence of the house was supposed to be on display in the moment one crossed the threshold.

As a means of communicating social identity, the façade and the main entrance into the *domus* of Roman elites were given particular attention. The size and position of the door and the decoration of the façade with stucco, pilasters, columns, and pediment above the door combined to create a monumental impression. The Maison d'Asinius Rufinus at Acholla, for example, was approached by an elegant porch located two steps above the street: the two columns supporting the roof showed an elegant Corinthian capital adorned with rows of acanthus-leaves giving rise to graceful volutes. A similar arrangement seems to occur in the Maison de la Nouvelle Chasse at Bulla Regia: two bases of columns, perhaps supporting a roof, were set in the middle of a paved area between the street and the *vestibulum* (Pl. 36). In the Maison du Paon (Pl. 91) and in the Maison des Dauphins (Pl. 84) at El Jem too, two columns on either side of two steps marked the entrance into the *domus*. In the Maison du Trifolium at Thugga, the porch projected entirely into the street and was decorated by various good luck symbols evoking prosperity.

⁸ In *Ep.* 165.2.2, St. Augustine states that the layout of the *vestibulum* gives a hint of the whole house.

⁹ Thébert 1987, 353-57.

¹⁰ Apul. *Met.* 5.1.

The porch created an ambiguous space: projecting into the street, it was not really a part of the house's interior, but it served to emphasize the wealth of the house-dwellers to those passing by or approaching the door.

In some houses, a covered ambulatory preceded the whole principal front. Set on the unclear line of demarcation between public space and private domain, the *porticus* played an ambiguous function. For example, the Maison de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons (Table 2.2 n.3) and the Maison de Flavius Germanus (Pl. 225; Table 2.2 n.2), both at Volubilis, opened onto the *decumanus maximus*, which was bordered by colonnades. Great arches rested on six Corinthian pillars in a composition clearly related to the house. The pillars at either end of the property to mark the boundaries of the houses turned in such a way as to support arches perpendicular to the axis of the street. Functionally the cut did not destroy the coherence of the whole pattern, but aesthetically the space formed an essential part of the individual house. The Maison de l'Âne (Table 2.2 n.13) and the Maison d'Europe (Pl. 70) at Djemila were bordered by a *porticus* paralleling the major thoroughfare. As an element of urban design, the colonnade fulfilled an essentially public function, namely to facilitate pedestrian traffic. However, with their location along the colonnaded street, the houses received a particularly civic frontage. In the Maison d'Europe, the extension of *vestibulum* 1 out to the paving of the Great *Cardo*, interrupted the *porticus* and annexed the public space. The annexation of the public into the private occurs again in the Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus at Volubilis (Table 2.2 n.12): here the *porticus* has been swallowed up to become part of the house, a corridor running along the front.

The elegant layout of the entrance was often emphasized by a column on either side of the main door. In the Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque at El Jem, for example, the door was framed by two limestone pillars ornamented with mouldings; in the Maison de Flavius Germanus and in the Maison à l'Ephèbe, both at Volubilis, the pilasters *in antis* were of Corinthian type. In the Maison d'Orphée at Volubilis, pillars framed the door on both external and internal sides. In the Maison aux Travaux d'Hercule at Volubilis, the magnificence of the main entrance was enhanced by twin embedded columns the bases of which were carved with volutes, palmettes, and schematic trees. Further examples of columns *in antis* are in the Maison du Triomphe de Neptune at Acholla, in

the Maison des Nymphes at Neapolis, in the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna, and in the Maison de la Chasse at Bulla Regia (Pl. 29): here, column bases are the only traces left.

Some houses were equipped with two separate front doors for access from the entrance area into the *vestibulum*. The Maison aux Travaux d'Hercule (Table 2.2 n.1) and the Maison de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons at Volubilis (Table 2.2 n.3), for instance, were entered through a wide gate (2.65m and 2.30m respectively) and a small lateral door (0.85m and 0.60m respectively). The arrangement of two unequally-sized gates was dictated by a clear hierarchy. The large door was probably opened wide, when the master gave an important reception or in other prestigious occasions such as the *salutatio*. The small lateral door, on the contrary, was perhaps used by the household for everyday purposes. Further examples of two unequally sized doors opening into the same *vestibulum* are attested in the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna (Table 2.2 n.33) and some of the houses at Volubilis (the Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus, the Maison d'Orphée, and the Maison des Néréides: Table 2.2 nos. 12-7-11).

In the Maison d'Europe at Djemila (Table 2.2 n. 14), the main *vestibulum* (1) was provided with three front doors: a large gate (3.20m wide) was flanked by two smaller doors (0.80m wide). The latter seem to have been more suitable for everyday use because of their tiny size and unpretentious character. The secondary *vestibulum* 26, for instance, opened onto the same front *porticus* and led directly onto the peristyle as the main *vestibulum* did, but its plain architectural layout suggests that it may have been used by servants and by the members of the family on informal occasions. The size of the lateral doors and the fine moulding around the bays seem to have served to create an impression of great opulence: the opening wide of the three doors during showy occasions would have emphasized the hospitality and wealth of the house-owner.

The architectural components of the façade linked the wealthy African house with municipal and religious buildings in the public world. The column, for example, was the hallmark of public and sacred architecture in Greece¹¹. The porch screened by columns was an integral part of the temple space; the steps against the main door of the domestic building would have created the illusion of a small temple. The most outstanding

¹¹ Wallace-Hadrill 1988, 59-66; Wiseman 1987, 395-96.

example of a private house as a sacred building is the Maison de Castorius at Djemila. The main door opening onto court I was flanked by two statues each resting on an inscribed base (Pl. 67): the inscriptions recorded the dedications to Victoria and to Mercury by Claudius Brutto, son of Tiberius Claudius, *aedile, duovir augur*, in the first quarter of the 3rd century AD. Visitors approaching the house would have perceived to enter a sacred building, as it appeared, with its statues posted as a guard.

2.4 Vestibulum

The *vestibulum* was a room designed for the reception of *clientes* waiting to greet the *patronus*. The function of the *vestibulum* in relation with the institution of clientship is evidenced by the etymology of the word, as it can be explained as a combination of the particle ‘ve’ with *stare* to signify a place meant for standing¹².

The function of the *vestibulum* as a waiting-area is unmistakably clear in the presence of benches, which offered a place to sit. In the Maison du Triomphe de Neptune at Acholla, for example, the entrance area was provided with benches (0.45m wide) lined along three walls (Table 2.2 n.5). More examples are attested in other wealthy *domus* of the Empire, such as in a number of houses at Ostia¹³ and at in the so-called Palace of the Dux at Apollonia¹⁴. However, the absence of permanent benches of masonry in most of the imperial houses seems to suggest that movable wooden benches would have been more frequently used. Earlier examples of benches placed at the entrance of domestic buildings occur in the Punic site of Kerkouane. It is not certain how the benches were used or whether they were connected to some ritual of Punic society, but surely the arrangement of benches in the Romano-African house is drawn upon older, local traditions.

In his description of the ideal house, Vitruvius speaks of ‘*vestibula regalia alta*’ as rooms necessary in the rich *domus* of men holding public office¹⁵. The large number of *clientes* received daily required magnificent *vestibula*, which served also as an immediate declaration of the *patronus*’ power and status. In the description of an illustrious man, Apuleius mentions a house provided with an ample and richly decorated

¹² Gel. *Noc.Act.* 16.5.9-10.

¹³ Becatti 1948.

¹⁴ Ellis 1985.

¹⁵ Vitr. *De Arch.* 6.5.2.

*vestibulum*¹⁶. An African example of sumptuous *vestibulum* is in the Édifice des Asclepieia at Althiburos (Table 2.2 n.21), where the entry-area (1) was a long corridor (3.12 x 21.10m) (Pl. 20) set between two projecting front rooms (2-3): the lavish setting of the entrance-area, the windows which overlooked the street lying at a lower level, and the triple opening into the audience-chamber and into the side corridors 5-9 would have struck the *clientes* and made them perceive the wealthy status of their *patronus*¹⁷. The most outstanding example of '*vestibula regalia alta*' is in the Maison de Castorius at Djemila. The entrance area was an open court (86m²) ornamented with a row of eight columns around (Table 2.2 n.15). The *vestibulum* provided a very lavish setting for the *salutatio* ritual.

The survey of the preserved *vestibula* of Romano-African houses, however, shows that the waiting-area was often a room of moderate size¹⁸. The *clientes* would have been packed close together in the *vestibulum* and perhaps would have overflowed into the street. The appearance of large crowds of *clientes* packed in the entrance area of the Roman house occurs often in literary accounts as the proverbial condition of an influential aristocrat's *vestibulum*¹⁹. Seneca²⁰ uses the words *turba* and *caterva* to describe the throng, characterizing the entry area as a place 'full of persons, empty of friends' (*hominibus plenum, amicis vacuum*). Conversely an empty *vestibulum* is the condition of those who have forsaken the ambitious life. The *clientela* crowded about the *vestibulum* and the street conveyed a clear message of the house-owner's status and authority to those waiting or passing-by.

In spite of the small dimensions, the layout of the *vestibulum* may sometime, even in Africa, have been enhanced by elements alluded to in Vitruvius such as the '*vestibula regalia alta*'²¹. In the *vestibulum* of the Maison n. 3 at Bulla Regia, for example, a pair of columns standing in the middle of the room created an elegant setting for the admission of visitors (Table 2.2 n.9).

¹⁶ Apul. *Flor.* 22.

¹⁷ In the Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus at Volubilis too, *vestibulum* V1 appeared in the form of a long corridor (3.80 x 14.50m).

¹⁸ Room I of the Maison du Paon and room I of the Sollertiana Domus at El Jem: ca. 12m²; room I of the Maison des Animaux Liès at Thuburbo Maius: 22m²; room I of the Maison aux Communs at Thuburbo Maius: 14m²; room I of the Maison de Nicentius at Thuburbo Maius: 20m²; room I of the Maison de la Cascade at Utica: 20m²: see Table 2.1.

¹⁹ Cic. *Att.* 2.15.2; Ovid. *Met.* 1.368; Sen. *Cons. Marc.* 6.10.1, *Ep.* 76.11.6.

²⁰ Sen. *Ep.* 22.9.1.

²¹ Vitruv. *De Arch.* 6.5.2.

2.5 Audience-chamber

The *clientes* proceeded from the *vestibulum* into a further room where they were received individually by the *patronus*. In the Italic *atrium*-house the room where the *clientes* performed their *officium salutandi* to the master of the house was the *tablinum*²². Set at the end of the *atrium*-axis opposite the entrance, the *tablinum* offered a fine stage for the appearance of the *dominus* receiving his *clientes* from the adjoining *atrium*. With the disappearance of the *tablinum* as the *dominus*' office, its function in the Imperial house was replaced by the audience-chamber.

In his description of the ideal house, Vitruvius mentions the *basilica* among the rooms where public deliberations and private trials are transacted; because of its public function the *basilica* should draw on the magnificence of public structures²³. The *basilica*, in fact, evokes a public building directly inspired by the main hall of the Hellenistic palaces²⁴. In Roman society, the civic *basilica* was a large roofed hall divided into a wide central nave and two narrower side aisles by interior colonnade; at one end of the central aisle was the tribunal of the judge, in form either rectangular or circular²⁵. In the early Imperial period, the *basilica* for large audiences was adopted in domestic buildings. In the Casa dell'Atrio a Mosaico at Herculaneum²⁶, which can be dated between the Claudian and early Flavian eras, the *basilica* was set beyond the *atrium* in place of the conventional *tablinum*: a row of pillars on either side divided the hall into a nave and two aisles, and above the pillars raised a second storey with clerestory windows. The architectural form of the hall evokes the classical basilical form, while the position by the *atrium* recalls the juxtaposition of the *atrium* and the *consilium* hall in the Palace of Domitian on the Palatine. This is one of the rare clear examples of a *basilica* in a private house. In fact, the arrangement of a temple-like hall for meetings required large space that medium-sized houses could not afford: *basilicae* as magnificent as those described by Vitruvius are simply not been found.

As the Latin word recalls a specific architectural form, I therefore choose the more neutral term 'audience-chamber' to designate the room where the house-owner received his clients and conducted his business.

²² Zaccaria Ruggiu 1995b, 383-96; Dwyer 1991, 27-9.

²³ Vitr. *De Arch.* 6.5.2.

²⁴ Nielsen 1997, 20, 235 n. 293. For the origins of the basilica see Welch 2003 and Wilson 2005.

²⁵ Mau 1899; Carettoni 1959.

²⁶ Maiuri 1958, 282; Tamm 1960, 145; Wallace-Hadrill 1988, 59-60; Gros 2001, 61-2.

The most striking example of audience-chamber in Africa is room 4 of the Édifice des Asclepieia at Althiburos (Table 2.2 n.21). The architectural and decorative layout of the hall was intended to impress the humble *clientes* while received by the *dominus*. The walls were decorated with marble panels; the floor was covered with a mosaic representing a marine scene; on either side of the room was a rectangular basin paved with mosaic and ornamented with consoles on the borders, which probably supported statues: a 1m-high wall between the basins and the audience-chamber allowed the visitors standing in the room to look out onto the small courts. Moreover, the back wall of the audience-chamber was pierced with a large door (2.60m wide), through which the clients could have caught a glimpse of the huge peristyle.

In some houses, the audience-chamber was ornamented with columns framing the door: the monumental entrance was a message of power and wealth of the master, whom the clients were going to approach and greet. In the Maison du Triomphe de Neptune at Acholla, for example, the 2.10m wide door of audience-chamber II (28m²) was framed by pillars (Table 2.2 n.5). Audience-chamber IV of the Maison de Castorius at Djemila was a small room (19m²), but the elegant columns framing the triple entrance created a lavish setting (Table 2.2 n.15). Similarly, in the Maison de la Cascade at Utica, the U-shaped corridor II, which may have served as an audience-chamber, was ornamented with a basin: visitors entering the house from *vestibulum* I were greeted by the marine scene decorating the basin, which was suitably placed in front of the main entrance and ornamented with two small columns (Pls. 197-99).

The Maison des Dauphins at El Jem was provided with a very large audience-chamber (V: 106m²). The unpaved room was ornamented with an elegant structure (VI) opening in the middle of the wall opposite the entrance: it was composed of two elements paved with mosaics, a rectangular space (2.60 x 12m) ending into an apse (1.75m wide; 1.55m deep). As the structure would have been too small for accommodating the *dominus'* office, it probably served an ornamental function: the apse may have housed a statue (Pl. 85).

In the Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus at Volubilis, audience-chamber V2 was entered through two unequally sized doors on the same axis as the double bay of the main entrance V1. On the opposite side a triple archway, ornamented with columns, framed the entrance onto the peristyle, which was located three steps below the audience-

chamber (Pl. 214). The appearance of the master from the lower courtyard within the framework of the colonnaded entrance would have created an impression of power to low-status clients.

In the Maison de Vénus at Thugga, room III may have served as an audience-chamber, as its architectural and decorative layout seems to suggest (Table 2.2 n.22). Floored with a polychrome geometric mosaic which stood out against the simple white pattern of the adjoining corridor II and *vestibulum* I, room III would have offered a good setting for the reception of *clientes*. Moreover, the arrangement of the rooms (I-II-III-IV), which lay slightly under the floor on which the residential area stood, would have preserved the privacy of the master's family. A similar arrangement is attested in the Maison de Neptune at Thuburbo Maius (Table 2.2 n.23): the *dominus* received his *clientes* in audience-chamber I (30m²), which was located on the upper floor at the level with the street. The high visibility of the room from the street displayed the house-owner's power over the lower classes; the upper level of the floor, on the other hand, obstructed the view of the inner parts of the house.

Apsidal audience-chambers would have offered a better stage for the public appearances by the *dominus*. The apse, as an architectural form designated to frame and to exalt the figure and object enclosed, marked off the stage on which the *dominus* was set off as a static presence, like the image of a god in his sanctuary. Examples of apsidal audience-chambers seem to be rare in African domestic architecture. In the Maison de la Chasse at Bulla Regia, for instance, the so-called *basilica* 24 was a room with an apse (4m wide; 4m deep: Pl. 31), a transept, and a 16m-long nave flanked by dependencies (30-31-32, 39), which made it possible for traffic to move about the building. Cut in the eastern wall of the apse was a small rectangular niche, which could have been fitted with shelves for documents (Pl. 32). On the opposite side, rooms 27-28 may have been used for more private business: room 28, which was slightly raised above the adjoining anteroom 27, would have suited the dominant position of the *dominus* over his *clientes* and servants (Pl. 33). The rooms, however, would have lent themselves to dramatic entry by the master. The audience-chamber was provided with an independent entry set far away from the entrance into the private sector of the house in order to ensure privacy

for the family²⁷. Apse room 3 /4 of the Maison n.3 at Bulla Regia, too, seems to have been used as an audience-chamber (Table 2.2 n.9). The apse (3.5m deep; 4m wide) for the enhancement of the *dominus*' image; the long nave (ca. 6.50m) for the reception of *clientes*; the location next to the street²⁸; and the arrangement of the adjoining rooms as dependencies (6, 21-22-23) are all elements which may be identified in the arrangement of the audience-chamber in other late-antique houses of the Roman provinces²⁹.

As Ellis³⁰ correctly points out, the arrangement of such audience-chambers reflects a change in the system of patronage. From the 4th century AD the patron-client relationship became more autocratic and the ritual of *salutatio* was a more ceremonial and formal occasion. The appearance of the *dominus* in the apse, set up as a stage, increased the distance between the master and his clients and stated the elite's control over the lower classes. The location of the *vestibulum* and of the audience-chamber, set apart from the main reception area (the peristyle and associated rooms), differentiated among the social classes of guests. Unlike in the early Roman house, the *clientes* received in the late-antique house could have not seen much of the spaces which were reserved for the more privileged and influential guests.

Thébert has convincingly argued that large *vestibula* would have been a suitable setting for the *salutatio* ceremony³¹. That seems clear in those houses which apparently have no room suitable for fulfilling the function of an audience-chamber. In the Maison d'Europe at Djemila (Table 2.2 n.14), for instance, *vestibulum* 1 was a huge room (59m²), which could have accommodated a large number of clients. Opening onto the *porticus* of the Great *Cardo*, the *vestibulum* apparently served as waiting-area. However, at the far end of the room, opposite the large central bay, a flight of four stairs on three sides led up onto a landing (2.10 x 1.90m): this could have offered a stage for the *dominus* to make his formal appearance. In the Maison de l'Âne at Djemila (Table 2.2 n.13), the big *vestibulum* 1 (60m²) gave onto a medium-sized space (12m²) marked off by two columns: the *dominus* may have made his formal entrance from the adjoining

²⁷ Guests entering the private section of the house would have used room 3 that served as a *vestibulum* too, because of its dimensions and its large opening. The Maison de la Chasse is thus provided with two main *vestibula* for different classes of visitors (Table 2.2 n.8).

²⁸ The private sector of the house may have been entered from an independent entry, which has been destroyed or not excavated yet.

²⁹ Ellis 1985.

³⁰ Ellis 1988.

³¹ Thébert 1987, 358, followed by Dunbabin 1994, 169.

room XIII at the back and received his *clientes* in the space framed by the columns. Similarly, *vestibulum* I of the Maison d'Asinius Rufinus at Acholla seems to have served both as a waiting-area and as an audience-chamber (Table 2.2 n.10). The large size (64m²), the polychrome floor mosaic, and the inscribed base seem to indicate that the room was used for the ritual performance of the *patronus-clientes* ceremony. However, a more luxurious audience-chamber may have been located to the east of the *vestibulum*, in the area which has not been excavated yet. Corridor C1-C2, onto which *vestibulum* I opens by a triple bay, could have linked the two rooms.

In the Maison du Trifolium at Thugga, the *vestibulum*, which lay at the level with the street, was connected with the private sector of the house by an L-shaped flight of 21 steps. The arrangement would have obstructed the view into the core of the house and preserved the family's intimacy. Further examples of *vestibulum* serving as an audience-chamber may have been room 12 of the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna (Table 2.2 n.32), room 1 of the Maison aux Travaux d'Hercule (Table 2.2 n.1) and room 4 of the Maison des Néréides (Table 2.2 n.11)³², both at Volubilis.

2.6 *Cella ianitoris*

The openness of the Roman house to outsiders during the performance of social rituals displayed the owner's wealth and reflected the fulfilment of his social duties. However, the house was not open to any visitor: entrance into the *vestibulum*, as the first domestic space, was impossible without the knowledge of the porter³³. At the entrance to Trimalchio's house, after crossing the threshold of the front door, Encolpius and his friends are approached by a richly-dressed porter (*ostiarius*) shelling peas into a silver bowl³⁴. In the opening book of Ovid's *Fasti* (1.135-40), the god Janus is described as the door-keeper (*ianitor*), who sat near the threshold of the front of the building (*prope limina tecti*) and saw both the going out and the coming in of everyone. The above-cited accounts show that the servant in charge of the entrance into a domestic building may be referred to both as *ostiarius* and *ianitor*. However, the term *ianitor* seems to be more strictly associated with the domestic space than the correspondent *ostiarius*³⁵. The word *ianitor*, in fact, derives from *ianua*, which is the term normally applied to a house-

³² The arrangement of *vestibulum* 4 shows parallels with the architectural layout of audience-chamber V2 of the Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus at Volubilis (Table 2.2. n.12).

³³ Marquardt 1886, 228-36.

³⁴ Petr. *Sat.* 28.

³⁵ In the literary accounts (s.v. '*ostiarius*', *TLL*, vol. 9, 1150-51) the word *ostiarius* designed the door-keeper of both private and sacred buildings.

door³⁶; more importantly, *ianua* was the noun used to describe the principal door of the house. In his *De Natura deorum* (2.67), Cicero explains that the name Janus, the god who protected the principal doorway into a dwelling, comes from the root of the word ‘to go’ (*ab eundo nomen est dictum*).

The *ianitor* occupied a small room directly off the *vestibulum*. In this transitional space from the street to the heart of the house, the servant posted as a guard could easily watch who came in and went out. The word *cella*, which literary accounts often mention to describe the room where the door-keeper was posted, indicates a room of small size and is related to the verb ‘to hide’ or ‘to conceal’ (*celare*).

A review of the African house-layouts shows that a small, undecorated room often opened into the *vestibulum* and allowed who was in a good view of the main door. In the Maison de Vénus at Thugga (Table 2.2 n.22), for example, the location of room IV opening on both *vestibulum* I and corridor III would have allowed the *ianitor* to easily watch *clientes* entering the *domus* and walking towards audience-chamber III via corridor II. Moreover, the lack of floor mosaic seems to suggest that the room was used by a servant, unlike the adjoining decorated spaces. In the Édifice des Asclepieia at Althiburos, two small rooms (23m²) lay on either side of the *vestibulum* (Table 2.2 n.21). From their large door, these tower-like rooms would have allowed the porter to watch easily any visitor approaching the house. The floor mosaic of room 2 seems to suggest that the servant’s room was the unpaved chamber 3, but the hypothesis that room 2 was the porter’s lodge cannot be completely ruled out. In the Maison n.3 at Bulla Regia (Table 2.2 n.9), in fact, room 2 seems to have served as the *cella ianitoris*, though it was floored with black and white mosaic of geometric design. The small room (4.84m²), in fact, lay next to the main door of the *vestibulum* and contiguous to the audience-chamber, where the servant could have easily entered to announce the client’s arrival to his master. In the Maison des Dauphins at El Jem, too, two unpaved, small rooms (III-IV) opened on either side of the *vestibulum* (Table 2.2 n.32). However, as the *domus* does not seem to have been provided with a secondary entrance for the family’s use, room III may have been the *cella ianitoris*: from the double door of the room, the servant may have controlled the access both in space II-audience-chamber V by *clientes* and into service rooms LVI to LX by the household. In the Maison de Castorius at

³⁶ Holland 1961, 293 fn 32. The door of the Roman house is discussed by MacMahon 2002.

Djemila, the *cella ianitoris* may have been the small room (III) adjoining audience-chamber IV (Table 2.2 n.15). Though the chamber was slightly distant from the front door, the porter could have easily watched over the visitors approaching the house and waiting in the *vestibulum*. Further examples of *cella ianitoris* because of its location off the *vestibulum* and next to the main door may be room III of the Maison du Triomphe de Neptune at Acholla (Table 2.2 n.5), room XXV of the Maison de la Cascade at Utica (Table 2.2 n.6), room S of the Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque at El Jem (Table 2.2 n.20), room III of the Maison de Nicentius at Thuburbo Maius (Table 2.2 n.39), the unpaved room 39 opening into *vestibulum* 1 of the Maison aux Travaux d'Hercule at Volubilis (Table 2.2 n.1), and one of the small, unpaved spaces off the *vestibulum* in the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna (Table 2.2 n.33).

A group of African houses seems to lack the *cella ianitoris*. In the Maison de l'Âne at Djemila (Table 2.2 n.13), for example, the long *vestibulum* turned into an audience-chamber at the far end opposite the entrance and opened directly onto the peristyle through a bay pierced in the middle of one of its long walls. In the Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus at Volubilis (Table 2.2 n.12), the axis *vestibulum*-audience chamber-peristyle was emphasized by the axuality of the large openings by which they communicated with each other. In the Maison d'Asinius Rufinus at Acholla (Table 2.2 n.10), the huge *vestibulum* was set in the corner between corridors C1-C2. However, the lavish layout and the big size of those *vestibula*, capable of accommodating a large number of clients, are evidence to the wealthy status of the house-owner. The powerful man would have necessitated a servant who watched over the open, public spaces of his *domus* and insured the security of the family members. It is arguable that in those houses servants presented themselves as living barriers to access to the master³⁷. In the Maison de la Chasse at Bulla Regia, (Table 2.2 n.8) for example, a servant standing on the threshold of the zig-zag corridor 36 would have impeded the access into the audience-chamber to the visitor entering *vestibulum* 37.

2.7 Room for storing *sportulae*

Clients paying their respects to the patron often received a gift of food or money, called the *sportula*: for the majority of the *clientes*, indeed, the *sportula* represented the greater

³⁷ Wallace-Hadrill 1988, 78.

part of their income. *Sportulae* were probably stored in a room next to the *vestibulum* or audience-chamber: by order of his master the servant would have collected a chest with food from that room and handed out to the *cliens*. Secure identification of the room used for storing *sportulae* is not possible, as literary accounts do not contain any information about the physical appearance of the storeroom. However, as a room set apart for the storing of goods, it is likely to have been a small, undecorated space communicating with the audience-chamber and perhaps with the kitchen, where food for *sportulae* was prepared.

Thébert has suggested that rooms XII-XIII of the Maison de l'Âne at Djemila might have served as storerooms for *sportulae*³⁸ (Table 2.2 n.13). His proposal is persuasive, at least in part: lying behind the *vestibulum*, where the house-owner received his clients, and communicating with the peristyle, room XIII would have facilitated the coming and going of the servant carrying chests laden with food. However, it is not clear why room XII too would have been necessary for storing *sportulae*: because of its small dimensions and its floor mosaic the chamber could have served other, less subsidiary functions. In the Maison d'Europe at Djemila (Table 2.2 n.14), *sportulae* may have stored in the small room 2' (2.50m²), which led up onto space 5 and opened into *vestibulum* 1. While the *dominus* made his formal appearance on the raised platform 5 behind the *cliens* standing at the bottom of the stairs, the servant would have had easy access into room 2' to take the *sportula*. In the Maison du Triomphe de Neptune at Acholla (Table 2.2 n.5) too, the audience-chamber adjoined two small rooms (III-IV) lying at lower level. Set at the corner between *vestibulum* I and room III, chamber IV would have been appropriate as a room for keeping gifts in money or food, as they could have kept under the watchful eye of the servant in the adjoining space.

In the Maison du Paon at El Jem (Table 2.2 n.30), room VII (7.5m²) seems to have suited for storing *sportulae*, as it opened both into audience-chamber XII and onto the peristyle through corridor VII. Moreover, the traces of fire on the concrete floor seem to point to the preparation of food given as *sportula*. Juvenal describes a great man's vestibule crowded with his dependents, each attended by a servant bearing a portable kitchen to receive the viands and keep them hot while they were carried home³⁹. A further example may be room IV of the Sollertiana Domus at El Jem (Table 2.2 n.25):

³⁸ Thébert 1987, 358.

³⁹ Juv. *Sat.* 3.249.

opening into the audience-chamber, the small room communicated with two unpaved chambers (V-VI), which may have been served as service-rooms or kitchen. However, secure identification of the room for storing *sportulae* is not easy when there exists more than one small, unpaved room opening into the entrance-area. In the Maison de la Chasse at Bulla Regia (Table 2.2 n.8), for example, *sportulae* may have been kept in one of the dependencies of the so-called *basilica*. In the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna (Table 2.2 n.33), one of the small rooms (10-11, 13, 16) on either side of the *vestibulum* would have served as a storeroom.

2.8 Decoration

A review of the decorative layouts of the spaces forming the entrance area in Romano-African houses shows that they were usually not paved with mosaics or, if decorated, they showed very simple designs.

Most of the *vestibula* listed in the catalogue do not show any trace of floor mosaic: a layer of concrete⁴⁰ or of limestone⁴¹ usually paved the waiting-area. However, in the *vestibulum* of the Maison de l'Âne at Djemila, the space framed by two columns for the appearance of the *dominus* was paved by a thicker layer, which, according to Blanchard-Lemée⁴², may have been used as the foundation of a mosaic. In some houses, the undecorated floor of the *vestibulum* was paved with equally-sized slabs of stone⁴³: the paving enhanced the appearance of the entry-area, which was used also as an audience-chamber for the appearance of the master.

A group of the *vestibula* listed in the catalogue were carpeted with mosaics showing very simple geometric designs. In the Maison de la Chasse at Bulla Regia⁴⁴ and in the Maison de Vénus at Thugga, for example, the *vestibulum* was floored with a white mosaic. In the *vestibulum* of the Maison n.3 in the same town, the pattern consisted of a black and white grid of squares containing stylised flowers⁴⁵: the same arrangement is repeated with little variation in the *cella ianitoris* (Table 2.2 n.9). The design occurs

⁴⁰ *Vestibulum* I of the Maison des Dauphins at El Jem.

⁴¹ *Vestibulum* 1 of the Maison aux Travaux d'Hercules at Volubilis.

⁴² Blanchard-Lemée 1978, 23.

⁴³ Examples of *vestibulum* paved with slabs occur in the Maison d'Europe and in the Maison d'Amphitrite at Djemila; in the Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus at Volubilis; in the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna; in the Maison des Nymphes at Neapolis; and in the Insula de la Chasse at Bulla Regia.

⁴⁴ Ville 1961, 21, 39 n.7; CMT I.1, 1973, 69 n.76.

⁴⁵ Hanoune 1980, 28 n.1.

again in the *vestibulum* of the Maison des Animaux Liés at Thuburbo Maius: here the layout⁴⁶ is enriched with the combination of unequally sized squares and with polychromy, which made the room look more lavish. The use of polychromy as a means of conveying an idea of opulence is attested again in the *vestibulum* of the Maison d'Asinius Rufinus at Acholla (Pl. 1) and in the Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque at El Jem: the textile-like design of rectangular *tesserae* is embellished with rainbow colours, which creates a striking effect.

In the Maison aux Communs at Thuburbo Maius, the *vestibulum* was carpeted with a grid of curvilinear fillets, petal, and spindles⁴⁷ (Table 2.2 n.27).

The lack of mosaic decoration is attested in the audience-chambers, too. When the floor was carpeted with mosaics, it is the simple geometric design which prevails. In the Maison de Vénus at Thugga, for example, audience-chamber III⁴⁸ was carpeted with a plain pattern of *peltae* (Table 2.2 n.22). The geometric mosaic decorating audience-chamber II of the Maison des Animaux Liés at Thuburbo Maius⁴⁹ and apse 4 of room 3 in the Maison n.3 at Bulla Regia⁵⁰ consisted of a pattern of octagons forming squares and oblong hexagons. Variations come from the contrast of colours: green and white at Thuburbo Maius and black and white at Bulla Regia. Audience-chamber I of the Maison de Neptune at Thuburbo Maius was carpeted with a similar geometric pattern of adjacent octagons forming squares between them (Pl.163)⁵¹: the contrast of colours (yellow, green, and pink) and of the ornamental elements (Salomon's knots and flowers), which fill the compartments, created a lavish effect. The composition of octagons and squares occurs again in audience-chamber II of the Maison du Triomphe de Neptune at Acholla (Table 2.2 n.5): however, the replacement of hexagons with crosses and the use of polychromy created a more lavish effect. In the Maison des Palmes at Thuburbo Maius, audience-chamber III was carpeted with a rare mosaic motif: rows of green palms alternately upright and recumbent lay on white ground⁵² (Pl. 173). The motif may have been chosen only for its decorative value. However, in ancient iconography the palm was often associated with the representation of the

⁴⁶ CMT II.1, 1980, 92-3, 74.

⁴⁷ CMT II.3, n. 305.

⁴⁸ Jeddi 1999, 213.

⁴⁹ CMT II.1, 1980, 93-4 n.75.

⁵⁰ Hanoune 1980, 38 n.4.

⁵¹ CMT II.1, 1980, 143-44 n. 114

⁵² CMT II.1, 1980, 117.

charioteer holding a palm branch and a crown as symbols of victory. Perhaps the African mosaic alludes to the house-owner's interest in the games of the circus, but the lack of other decorative themes in the house cannot support that hypothesis. Much more likely the palm branch can be seen here as a lucky sign. As Dunbabin points out, the charioteer image functioned principally as a bringer of success and good luck: the palm, therefore, may have chosen for its fortunate connotations with victory as an aspect of earthly *felicitas*⁵³.

The only figurative mosaic decorating an audience-chamber comes from the Édifice des Asclepieia at Althiburos. A cross-shaped section is filled with boats scattered around in a sea full of fish: the boats, which represent different types of vessels such as the horse-transporter or *hippago*, are labelled with Latin or Greek inscriptions (Pl. 21). Many are also accompanied by an inscription from a Latin poet illustrating the use of the name: quotations from Lucilius, Ennius, and Cicero have been identified. The catalogue of the boats is surrounded by the head of Ocean and by the god River on either end of the longer branch of the floor. The ancient typology of the boats and the quotations from authors of the Republican period suggest that the catalogue have been copied from an illustrated manual. However, the illustration of a variety of boats may allude to the house-owner's involvement in the shipping business, which is here put under the protection of the sea-deities; the quotations from Republican authors, on the other hand, would have stressed the sophisticated literary interests of an educated man. We do not know whether clients and dependents, while being received by the *patronus* in the audience-chamber, would have been able to read and to understand quotations of such antiquity; nevertheless, the mosaic surely conveyed to them a message of wealth and superiority.

A marine motif occurs again in the Maison de la Cascade at Utica, but, unlike the Althiburos mosaic, the scene had simply a decorative value: the representation of a sea full of fish was appropriate for the decoration of a basin⁵⁴ (Pl. 199). Nevertheless, the polychrome mosaic enhanced the appearance of the audience-chamber, which was carpeted with a black and white grid of filets⁵⁵. The same geometric design, but

⁵³ Dunbabin 1982.

⁵⁴ *CMT* I.1, 1973, 39-41 n.43.

⁵⁵ *CMT* I.1, 1973, 38-9 n.42.

executed in colour, appears in audience-chamber II of the Maison aux Communs at Thuburbo Maius⁵⁶ (Table 2.2 n.27).

The use of a simple design, easy to arrange and cheap to lay out, or else the lack of mosaic decoration altogether seems to stress the function of the entrance-area as a reception space of low-status individuals and as an area of passage into the heart of the house. The house-owner preferred the richest mosaics in terms of decoration and their cost of lying in rooms to be places for receiving and entertaining high-status guests. However, the appearance of the entrance-area may have been enhanced by other, perhaps less expensive, items of decoration as a means of displaying the master's wealth to his dependents. Free-standing sculpture, wooden cupboards for storing *sportulae* and chests for keeping monetary handouts, tables for documents, carpets and draperies would have contributed to display the house-owner's wealth and to impress low-status clients. In his *Naturalis Historia* (34.17.5), the Elder Pliny relates that *clientes* often placed honorary statues of their patrons in the *atrium*. This custom is attested in Roman Africa, too. In the *vestibulum*/audience-chamber of the Maison d'Asinius Rufinus at Acholla, a *cippus* announced to visitors that the house-owner had attained the consulship in 184 AD. The inscribed base, which probably supported a statue, had been donated by the *cultores domus* to their *patronus*. A further example of an inscribed base in a domestic context is in the *vestibulum* of the Maison de la Pêche at Bulla Regia (Pl. 46): the inscription evokes the political career of a man during the reign of Marcus Aurelius.

2.9 *Loca communia* and personal privacy

In 6.5.1 Vitruvius mentions *vestibula* and *atria* among the *loca communia*, namely the parts of the house that are open to outsiders without invitation. The arrangement of those spaces next to the street made them easily accessible and visible from the outside. Ancient sources⁵⁷ speak of a custom of keeping the doors of the *domus* open as a symbol of the owner's participation in public life and of the fulfilment of his socio-political obligations. However, the concept of the openness of the house applies to two specific social rituals, the *salutatio* and the *cena*, which were performed at a certain time of the day and with a regular audience.

⁵⁶ CMT II.3, n.306.

⁵⁷ Cic. *De domo* 100; Vell. Pat. 2.14.3; Plin. *Pan.* 62-7.

The structure of the Romano-African house was designed to ensure the security of the family members by limiting the access to certain areas, especially during the *salutatio*. The bayonette plan, which is the most common in domestic architecture of Roman Africa, affected the relationship of the house with the outside world and the personal needs of its inhabitants⁵⁸. With the arrangement of the *vestibulum* at an angle to the axis of peristyle-*triclinium*, any passer-by or visitor standing in the waiting-area would have been unable to see into the heart of the house and to disturb the privacy of the family. When the doors stood open to the clients or to more important guests at other moments of the day, the *ianitor* was there to exclude from entering those not invited or without legitimate business.

The use of doors, curtains, and hangings, which leave no trace in the archaeological record, would have helped to secure the privacy of the family while clients were performing their *officium salutandi*. A number of literary accounts mention closed doors as a means of creating privacy and security⁵⁹.

⁵⁸ In the bayonette plan, the *vestibulum* is arranged at angle to the axis peristyle-*triclinium*: this arrangement affected the relation of the house with outside and the personal needs of its inhabitants (Carucci, M. 'Origins of the Romano-African House': in press).

⁵⁹ Petr. *Sat.* 94; Apul. *Met.* 1.11.14-15; 2.24, 30; 3.15; 9.2.30; 10.20.

2.10 Secondary entrance

A number of Romano-African houses had one or two entrances along with the main one. The expression ‘main entrance’ is ambiguous, as it may refer to the most architecturally elaborate entrance or to the gate most often used to enter the house. The two need not necessarily correspond. As noted above, the large door set within the framework of a monumental façade stood open for ceremonial occasions, which took place in two specific moments of the day: the *salutatio* of *clientes* in the morning and the *cena* with important *amici* in the evening. In between these events, servants and members of the family went out and came into the house through a less impressive entrance.

The main entrance to the Roman house is usually perceived to be the one which is associated with the master and his male guests (i.e. low-status *clientes* and influential *amici*): the monumental layout of the entry-area was intended to impress visitors and to communicate the *dominus*’ power and wealth at the first sight. This entry-area with the complex of rooms clustered around it has been described above as the *vestibulum* and its annexes. The term ‘secondary entrance’ may be used to designate the entrance used by others such as the master’s servants and his family members and characterized by less pretentious architecture by comparison with the main entrance.

2.10.1 Architectural layout

A review of the secondary entrances in Romano-African houses shows that the less important entry-area often consisted of either a small corridor or a tiny room set at one side of the house. The Maison d’Asinius Rufinus at Acholla, for instance, was entered through two openings (*vestibulum* I and corridor C3) on either side of the peristyle (Table 2.2 n.8). The architectural and decorative layout of C3, a small corridor adjoining some *tabernae* and opening onto a narrow street, by contrast with the magnificence of the *vestibulum* I opposite underlined its use for everyday purposes. The same arrangement occurs in the Maison de Neptune at Thuburbo Maius (Table 2.2 n.21). The secondary entrance was a small corridor (XXV) set on the other side of the main *vestibulum*. Opening directly onto the peristyle, the corridor offered easy access into the heart of the house. Similarly, in the Maison de Vénus at Thugga, secondary entrance XVII was situated on the other side of the slightly lower *vestibulum* with its annexes (Table 2.2 n.20). Lying on the same floor as the living quarters were, the room gave easy access into the peristyle.

In the Maison de l'Âne at Djemila, the secondary entrance was a small room (VIII: ca. 20m²) adjoining a *taberna* (VII) and overlooking the *cardo maximus* (Table 2.2 n.11). Set at the back of the secondary *triclinium* V, the room gave access into *stibadium* XI and onto the peristyle through anteroom IX. A further example of a secondary entrance opening into the back of the house seems to be room V of the Maison des Nymphes at Neapolis: lying at the north-west corner of the building, the room (ca. 20m²) communicated with the peristyle through rooms IV and VI (Table 2.2 n.18). However, as the northern wall of the *domus* has not been completely excavated, it is uncertain whether the room opened onto the street and therefore was used as a secondary entrance.

The term used to designate the back door of the Roman house is *posticum*⁶⁰. Cicero⁶¹ also calls it *pseudothyron* or 'false door' by contrast with the *ianua* which was the principal door of the house. The use of the word '*posticum*' occurs mainly in the Republican and early Imperial period. The word cannot be widely applied to the secondary entrance of the African peristyle house, as it was not always located at the back (*post*) of the dwelling. In the Maison du Triomphe de Neptune at Acholla, for example, the secondary entrance was a corridor running at right-angles to the *vestibulum* (Table 2.2 n. 5). It led into a storeroom (XLVI) and into a series of service rooms (XXXIX, XL to XLIV) lying along the eastern wall behind the peristyle and the reception rooms. Among those rooms, spaces XLII-XLIII might have been used as kitchen because an opening for evacuating water, traces of fire, fragments of kitchen utensils and bones of animals have been found here. Similarly, in the Maison de Bacchus et Ariane at Thuburbo Maius (Table 2.2 n.42), secondary entrance XXIV would have been placed at back of the *vestibulum*⁶². The entry-hall led into a row of service rooms (XXV-XXVI-XXVII) which communicated with each other and opened onto the peristyle⁶³. The location of the back door next to the service rooms is attested

⁶⁰ Plaut. *Mos.* 931; Titin. *Com.* 30; Hor. *Ep.* 1.5.31; Liv. 45.6.4; Suet. *Cl.* 18.2. Little variations of the word are attested in Apuleius: *postica* (*Met.* 9.2) and *posticula* (*Met.* 2.23).

⁶¹ Cic. *Post Red.* 6.

⁶² Today secondary entrance XXIV functions as the main entrance into the *domus*. However, as in the Romano-African peristyle-house the *vestibulum* usually led onto the peristyle directly or through an anteroom, room XXIV, which leads into service rooms is likely to have been the secondary entrance. The main entrance may have been on the north-eastern side, which has not been excavated yet.

⁶³ The opening of room XXVI into room XXVII seems to have been walled up in a later period.

in Apuleius' account on a rabid bitch, which rushed in the house of a rich man through the back gate (*per posticam*) and went in the stables⁶⁴.

The arrangement of the secondary entrance at right-angles to the *vestibulum* occurs again in the Maison des Néréides at Volubilis (Table 2.2 n.9). Here, entrance 29 was a small corridor that communicated directly with the private section of the house, as it turned into the north-eastern *porticus* of secondary courtyard 27.

In a number of houses the smaller entrance was located in the principal façade of the building not far from the main door. The secondary entrance into the Sollertiana Domus at El Jem, for instance, was a long corridor (XXXIX) running parallel to *vestibulum* I-audience chamber II (Table 2.2 n.23): on either side of the two entrances were *tabernae* (XLI to XLV). The corridor and the audience-chamber opened both onto the eastern *porticus* of the peristyle, but they offered access to different side-rooms at either end of the gallery. The secondary entrance gave easy access to the service rooms off the southern *porticus*; the complex *vestibulum*/audience-chamber, by contrast, did not allow the guests to wander in the private sector, as it was located next to the main *triclinium*. A similar arrangement occurs again in the Maison aux Travaux d'Hercule at Volubilis and in the Maison aux Communs at Thuburbo Maius. In the house at Volubilis (Table 2.2 n.1) the secondary entrances (12 and 14) on either side of the main *vestibulum* showed the same arrangement: they were both small corridors adjoining a pair of rooms (respectively 40-41/42-43 and 13-48/36-37) on either side. However, while entrance 14 led onto corridor 16 along main *triclinium* 2, corridor 12 communicated with the peristyle through anteroom 7. The *domus* at Thuburbo Maius (Table 2.2 n.25) seems not to have been provided with a secondary entrance, as it was entered from the street through a door opening into the *vestibulum*-audience chamber-peristyle axis. However, along the south-western wall of the *vestibulum* an opening gave access onto a corridor (XXIX: 1 x 3.10m), which runs parallel to the *vestibulum*-audience chamber complex and led onto the peristyle. The arrangement of the corridor allowed the family members to enter the private apartments which lay on the south-western side of the house without passing through the house-owner's reception rooms (audience-chamber II and main *triclinium* IX).

⁶⁴ Apul. *Met.* 9.2.

In some Romano-African houses the main gate and the secondary door opened next to each other⁶⁵. Though they both opened into the same entrance area, the architectural layout indicates that the two doors were used on different occasions: the main entrance was opened wide during the morning *salutatio* or when the owner gave a reception of some importance; by contrast, the small size and unpretentious character of the adjoining door emphasize its use for everyday purposes.

The arrangement of the African secondary entrance makes it clear that the narrow door served for everyday use. Opening directly onto the peristyle and adjoining service rooms and/or *tabernae*, the secondary entrance allowed servants and members of the family to enter easily into the private sector of the dwelling and its utilitarian facilities. However, easy access into the house does not imply that the family was eager to share its domestic life with passers-by. Like the main door, the secondary entrance was structured in such a way that passers-by would have been unable to penetrate into the heart of the house and to disturb the privacy of the family.

The principle dominating the bayonette plan seems to have had wide application in the arrangement of the secondary entrance, too. In the *Maison de la Chasse* at Bulla Regia, for example, the secondary entrance was a small court set on the peristyle-main *triclinium* axis (Table 2.2 n.6). However, the slight shift of the entrance to the main axis and the intervening *vestibulum* between the court and the peristyle did not allow passers-by to look into the heart of the house. In the *Maison des Muses* at Althiburos, too, the secondary entrance⁶⁶ was slightly off the peristyle-main *triclinium* axis (Table 2.2 n.19). However, the architectural layout of the entrance, which becomes a narrow corridor-like space (2.5m long), and the arrangement of intervening rooms (D-F) at the north-eastern corner of the peristyle, separated the domestic sector of the house from the street.

The architectural layout of some secondary doors suggests that they may have been opened for guests, too. In the *Maison de Castorius* at Djemila, for example, the architectural layout of *vestibulum* IX shows many parallels with the arrangement of the

⁶⁵ Those examples have been already discussed in the analysis of the main façade.

⁶⁶ The house is now entered from this space, which served probably as a secondary entrance, since it opened onto large, unpaved spaces, which appear to be service rooms (the traces of a leaden pipe in space E suggest that the room may have been used as a kitchen or latrine). It is uncertain where the *vestibulum* with its more elaborate architecture was located, perhaps in the not excavated area to south-west.

main entrance (Table 2.2 n.13). The location in line with the opening onto the *porticus* of the Grand *Cardo*, the tiled floor, the opening onto a small space (X: 7.80m²), which could have been used as a *cella ianitoris*, and the arrangement of the intervening chamber XI (13.5m²) three steps above the entry-room seem to indicate that the entrance was set aside for the admission of *amici* or important guests to the reception rooms of the house.

2.10.2 Decoration

Most of the secondary entrances listed in Table 2.1 do not bear any trace of floor mosaics. The lack of decoration seems to suit the utilitarian function of the entrance area for the admission of servants and family members into the house. There are only a very few examples of secondary entrances decorated with mosaics: their simple design in contrast to the lavish decoration of the main *vestibulum* emphasizes the different use of the two entrances. In the Maison d'Asinius Rufinus at Acholla, for instance, the secondary entrance was paved with a black and white pattern of adjacent scales (Table 2.2 n.8). The use of two colours and the simplicity of the geometric design in contrast with the polychrome mosaic paving the main *vestibulum* underline the everyday use of the secondary area.

Corridor XXIX of the Maison aux Communs at Thuburbo Maius was decorated with a more complex design: a pattern of intersecting octagons forming squares and oblong hexagons (Table 2.2 n.25). However, the mosaic panel did not cover the whole surface, as the south-western wall does not run parallel with the opposite wall⁶⁷. It seems as if the cartoon used by the mosaicist was not modified according to the architectural layout of the corridor because of the secondary importance of that space. The corridor-like entrance into the Maison de Neptune at Thuburbo Maius was decorated only in the end next to the peristyle: the mosaic (a poised square inscribed within a square) was destroyed or interrupted by the opening of a sewer (Table 2.2 n.21). An equally simple design decorated room 5 of the Maison des Nymphes at Neapolis (parallel rows of white *tesserae*), but it is uncertain whether the room was used as an entry-area (Table 2.2 n.35).

⁶⁷ The south-western wall, however, extended alongside the mosaic panel decorating the adjoining room XXIII.

2.11 Conclusions

The arrangement of the entrances into the Romano-African house shows a clear gradation according to two categories of people: occupants and visitors. Servants and members of the family entered the house through a small, unpretentious space, which gave easy access into the private sector of the *domus*: spaces set aside for domestic activities (service rooms), the peristyle as the centre of the house, and more secluded areas (private apartments). The main entrance and its annexed spaces, on the contrary, formed a lavish setting for the performance of the morning *salutatio* as one of the social rituals which stated and enforced the hierarchical order of Roman society. Humble *clientes* paying their respects to the *dominus* were not admitted to the heart of the house, but only just beyond the entrance. They would catch a glimpse of the interior, of columns and fountains in the peristyle, but the full impact of the luxury would be reserved for the more privileged guests (*amici*) who were received at dinner. In the evening the *vestibulum*-audience chamber complex functioned as a showy passage way for the owner's *amici* to the *triclinium*. A strong hierarchy of access dictated the arrangement of domestic spaces: low-status *clientes* were received in the forepart of the house; important guests were admitted to the peristyle at the heart of the *domus*; *amici* on intimate terms with the house-owner penetrated the building as far as the private apartments. Because of that organized hierarchy of access, Picard's statement, that *triclinia* too may have been used for the reception of *clients*, cannot be accepted⁶⁸. He mentions two examples, the Maison aux Banquettes at Hadrumetum and the Villa at Silin, which, however, are both open to discussion. The former, in fact, appears to have been a public building with its series of *triclinia*; the latter was a seaside villa as an aristocratic setting for leisure activities.

The uses of the main entry-area in accordance with the changing needs of different social situations show that the domestic space was flexible in the terms of the uses to which it could be put. The demand for flexibility was more urgent in those houses which seem to be lacking a secondary entrance for everyday use by the occupants. In those houses the way in which the entry-area was used by different categories of people would have been affected by the time of the day: *clientes* in the morning; *amici* in the

⁶⁸ Picard 1989.

evening; servants and family members in between. However, the paucity of houses with a single entrance⁶⁹ seem to indicate that in the domestic architecture of Roman Africa the arrangement of two entrances at different points of the house was the rule: independent access ensured that the public sector (*vestibulum* and *triclinium*) and the private area (service rooms and *cubicula*) of the house were independent of each other.

The analysis of the entrance into the Romano-African house highlights some aspects of the daily life of the Roman family, such as the socio-political obligations of the house-owner and the domestic activities of the household. However, other questions remain unanswered. For example, as it is not possible to reconstruct the full elevation of any house, we do not know anything about the arrangement of windows on the façade of Romano-African houses⁷⁰. How many and how big were they? How were they used? When were they kept open or closed? Did the house have balconies? Answers to those questions would contribute to make the relation between domestic space and street life clearer.

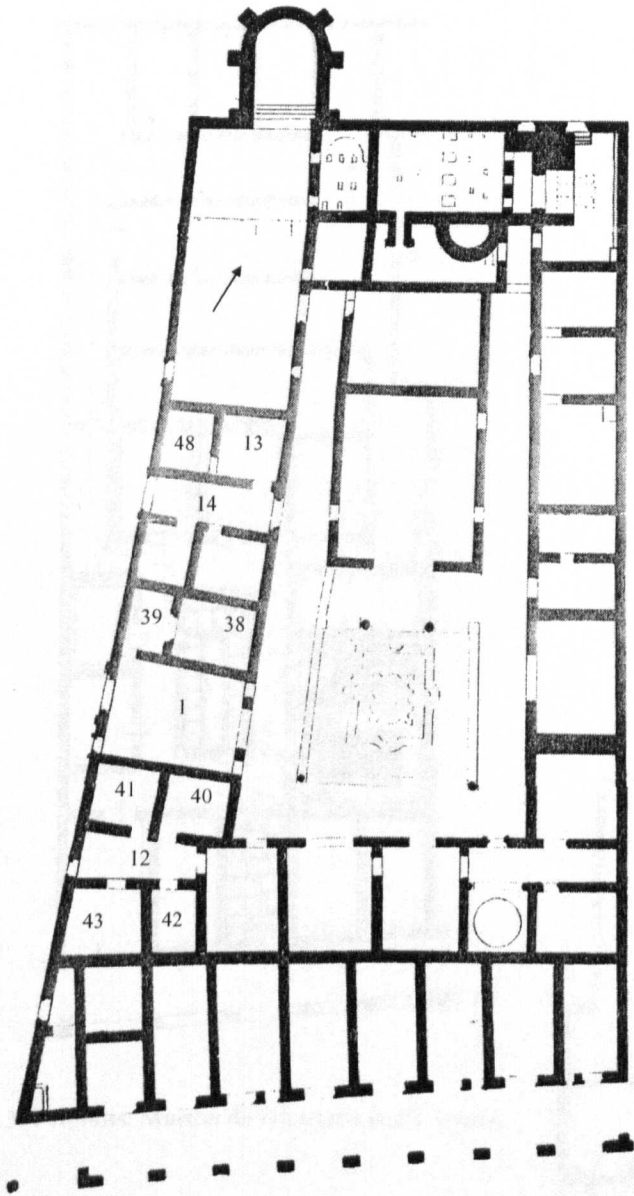
⁶⁹ Only one example may be recorded in the catalogue: it is the Maison d'Amphitrite at Djemila. There may have been more examples, but they are unknown because of the condition of the preserved houses (partly destroyed or not completely excavated).

⁷⁰ The use of windows in domestic buildings of Roman Africa is attested by Apuleius (*Met.* 1.21; 4.12).

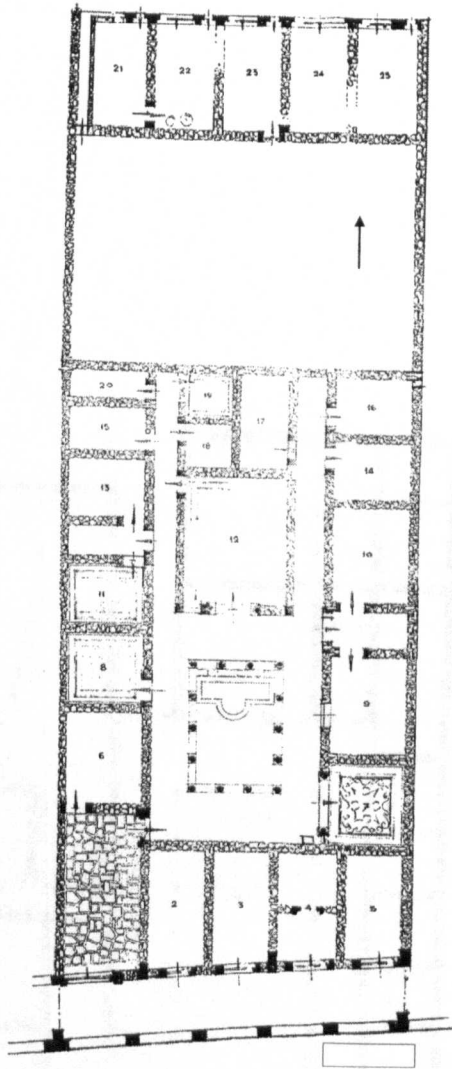
| Town | House | Room | Dimensions | Area | Façade | Number of entrances | Pavement |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|------|--------------|-------|-----------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Acholla | M. d'Asinius Rufinus | I | 7.8 x 8.25 | 64.35 | porch | 1 | geometric mosaic |
| Acholla | M. du Triomphe de Neptune | I | 6.3 x 2.5 | 15.75 | columns | 1 | concrete |
| Althiburos | Édifice des Asclepieia | 1 | 3.12 x 21.1 | 65.83 | landing | 1 | unpaved |
| Bulla Regia | M. d'Amphitrite | 14 | 1.65 x 10.89 | 17.96 | | 1 | unpaved |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Chasse | 3 | 5 x 5 | 25 | | 1 | slabs |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Chasse | 37 | 3.77 x 4.93 | 18.58 | | 1 | slabs |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Nouvelle Chasse | 1 | 7 x 6 | 42 | porch | 1 | slabs |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Pêche | 1 | 12 x 7.5 | 90 | stairs | 1 | unpaved |
| Bulla Regia | M. n. 3 | 1 | 3.6 x 6.4 | 23.04 | | 1 | geometric mosaic |
| Clupea | M. des Deux Chasses | I | 3.3 x 3.52 | 11.61 | | 1 | slabs |
| Djemila | M. d'Amphitrite | I | 3 x 10 | 30 | | 1 | slabs |
| Djemila | M. de Castorius | I | 8.6 x 10 | 86 | inscribed bases | 1 | unpaved |
| Djemila | M. d'Europe | 1 | 7.4 x 8 | 59.2 | <i>porticus</i> | 3 | slabs |
| Djemila | M. de l'Âne | 1 | 4 x 15 | 60 | porch | 1 | concrete |
| El Jem | M. de la Procession Dionysiaque | V1 | 2.9 x 3.8 | 11.02 | pillars | 1 | geometric mosaic |
| El Jem | M. des Dauphins | I | 2.3 x 8.3 | 19.09 | pillars | 1 | concrete |
| El Jem | M. du Paon | I | 4.5 x 4.5 | 20.25 | columns-stairs | 1 | unpaved |
| El Jem | Sollertiana Domus | I | 3.5 x 3.9 | 13.65 | | 1 | unpaved |
| Neapolis | M. des Nymphes | XVII | 5 x 5 | 25 | columns | 1 | slabs |
| Oudna | M. d'Ikarios | 12 | 7.18 x 8.97 | 64.4 | columns | 2 | slabs |
| Pupput | M. du Péristyle Figuré | I | 11 x 3.75 | 41.25 | | 1 | geometric mosaic |
| Pupput | M. du Triclinium en Noir et Blanc | I | 2 x 29 | 58 | | 1 | geometric mosaic |

Table 2.1: *Vestibulum*

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|-------|--------------|---------|-------------|---------|------------------|
| Pupput | M. du Viridarium à Niches | I | 3.2 x 6 | 19.2 | | 1 | geometric mosaic |
| Thurburbo Maius | M. aux Communs | I | 2.37 x 5.9 | 13.98 | | 1 | geometric mosaic |
| Thurburbo Maius | M. de Neptune | XXVII | 4m long | unknown | destroyed | unknown | unpaved |
| Thurburbo Maius | M. de Nicentius | I | 5.3 x 3.5 | 18.55 | | 1 | unpaved |
| Thurburbo Maius | M. des Animaux Liès | I | 3.95 x 5.7 | 22.51 | | 1 | geometric mosaic |
| Thurburbo Maius | M. des Palmes | I | unknown | unknown | destroyed | unknown | unpaved |
| Thurburbo Maius | M. du Char de Vénus | I | 2.87 x 1.75 | 5.02 | stairs | 1 | unpaved |
| Thugga | M. de Dionysos et d'Ulysse | I | 3 x 4 | 12 | upper floor | 1 | unpaved |
| Thugga | M. de Vénus | I | 3.65 x 1.5 | 5.47 | | 1 | geometric mosaic |
| Utica | M. de la Cascade | I | 3.75 x 3.57 | 13.39 | | 1 | unpaved |
| Utica | M. de la Chasse | I | 3 x 13.33 | 40 | | 1 | unpaved |
| Utica | M. Ouest | XIII | 4 x 4.64 | 18.56 | | 1 | geometric mosaic |
| Volubilis | M. à la Mosaïque de Vénus | V1 | 4 x 15 | 60 | porticus | 2 | slabs |
| Volubilis | M. à l'Ephèbe | 1 | 3 x 9 | 27 | pillars | 1 | unpaved |
| Volubilis | M. aux Travaux d'Hercule | 1 | 6 x 8 | 48 | columns | 2 | concrete |
| Volubilis | M. de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons | 3 | 4 x 12 | 48 | columns | 2 | slabs |
| Volubilis | M. de Flavius Germanus | 1 | 4.35 x 10.12 | 44.02 | columns | 2 | slabs |
| Volubilis | M. d'Orphée | 1 | 12 x 9 | 108 | columns | 2 | unpaved |
| Volubilis | M. des Néréides | 4 | 5.25 x 6 | 31.5 | pillars | 2 | unpaved |



1. Volubilis, Maison aux Travaux d'Hercule



2. Volubilis, Maison de Flavius Germanus

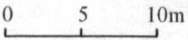
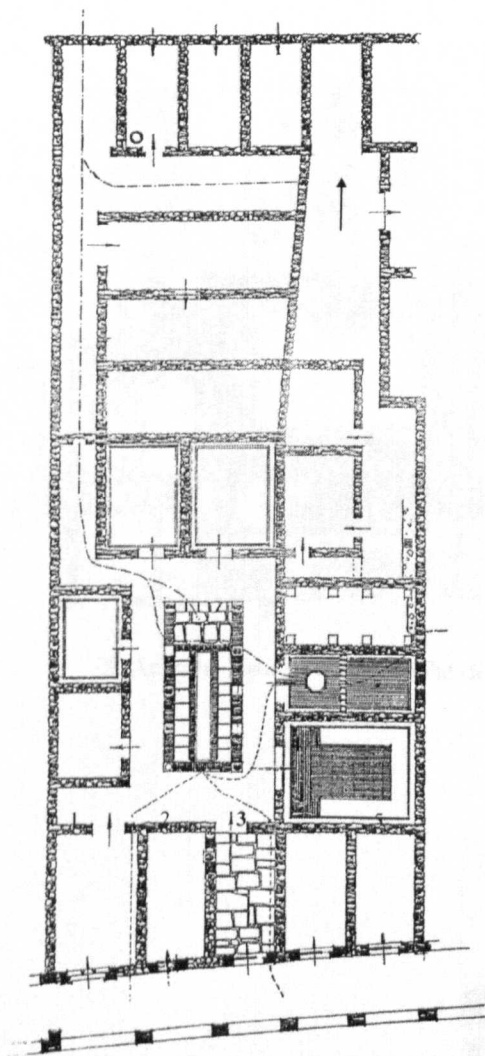
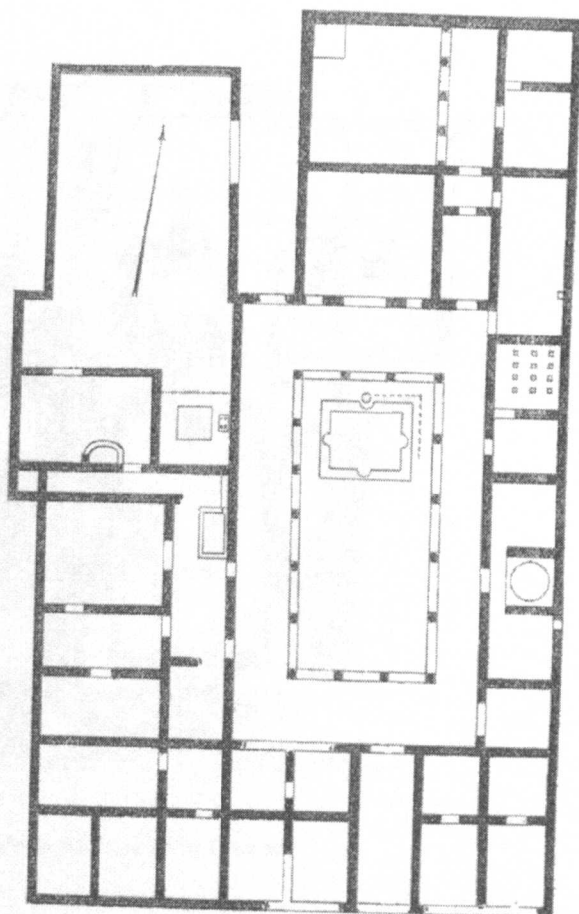


Table 2.2: *Vestibulum* and its annexes in the Romano-African house

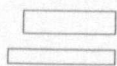


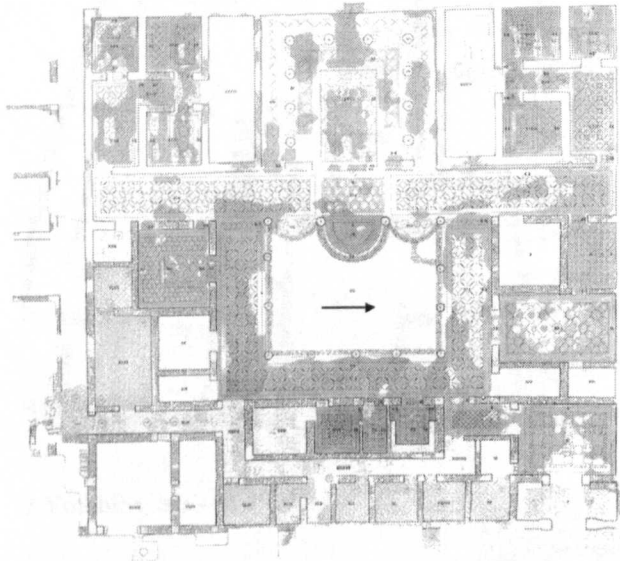


3. Volubilis, Maison de Dionysos et d'Ulysses

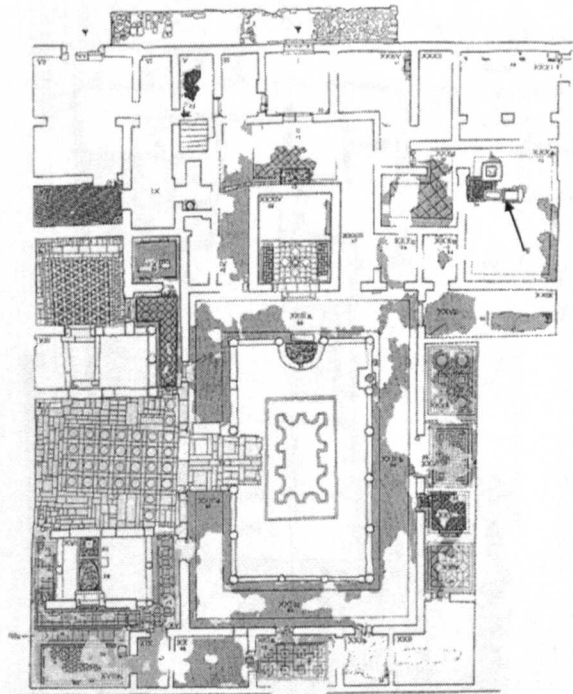


4. Volubilis, Maison de l'Éphèbe

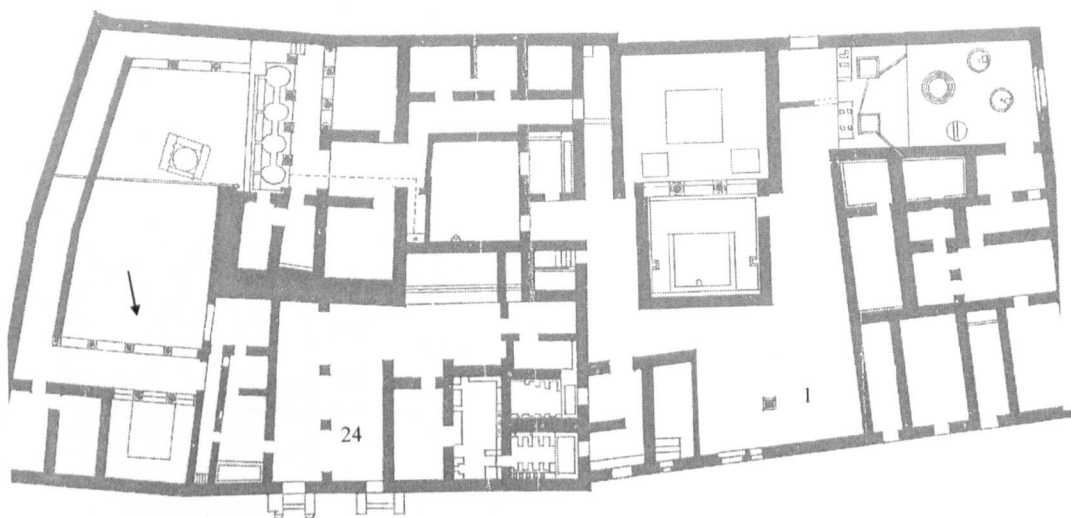




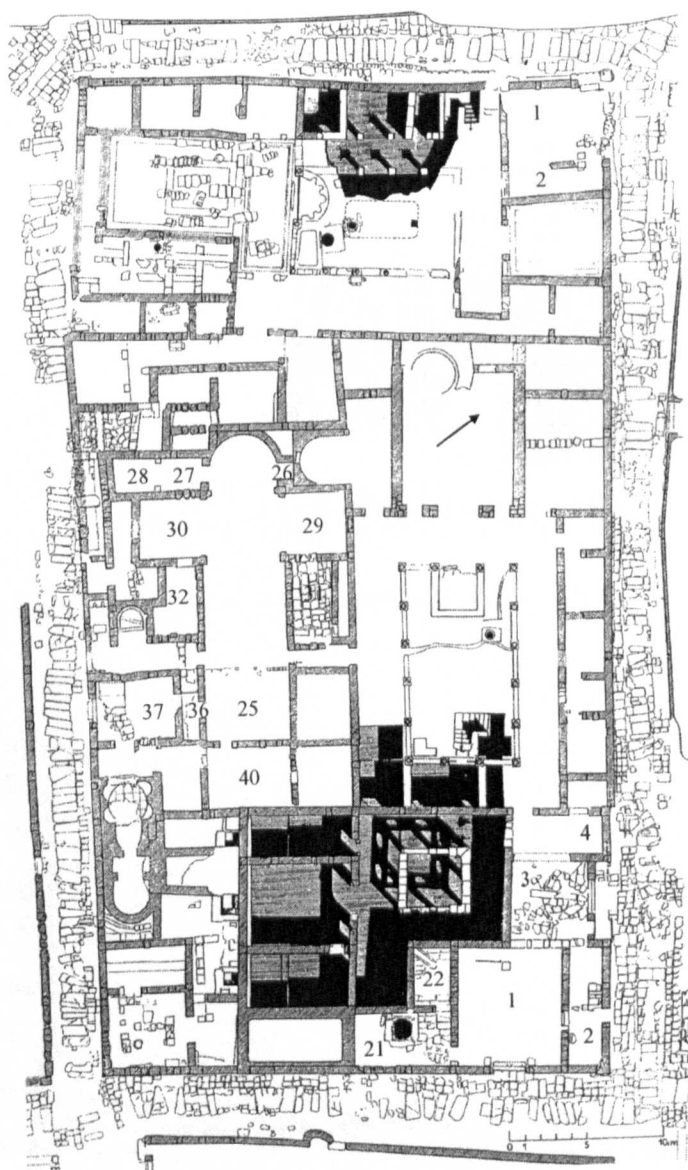
5. Acholla, Maison du Triomphe de Neptune



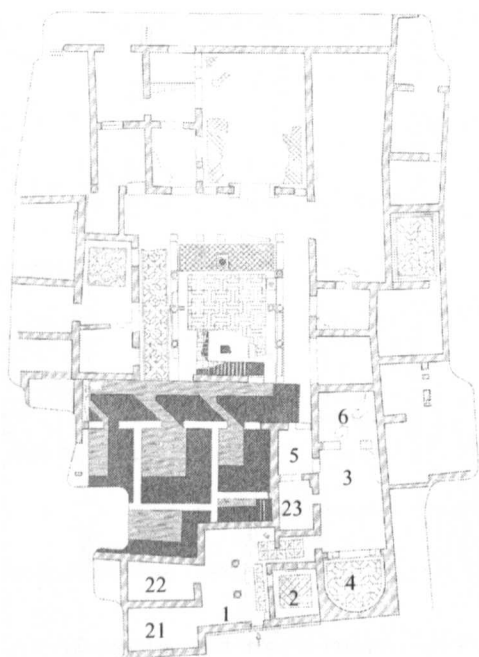
6. Utica, Maison de la Cascade



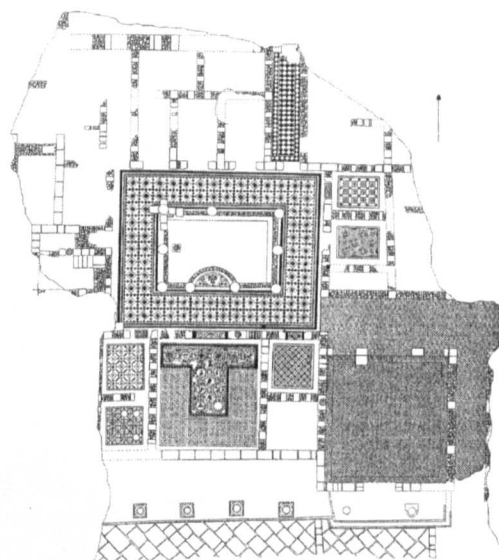
7. Volubilis, Maison d'Orphée



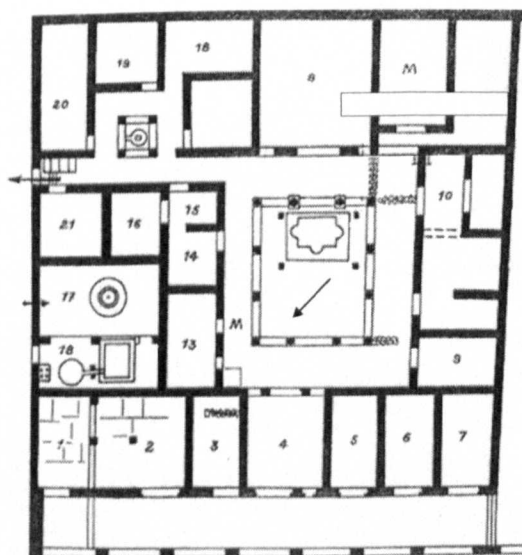
8. Bulla Regia, Insula de la Chasse



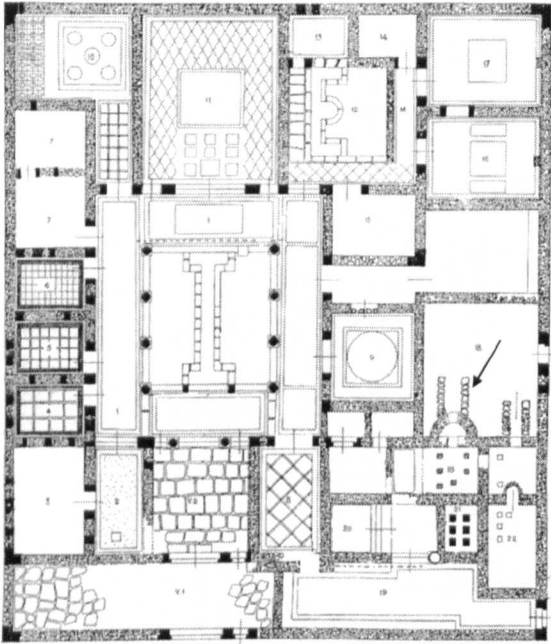
9. Bulla Regia, Maison n.3



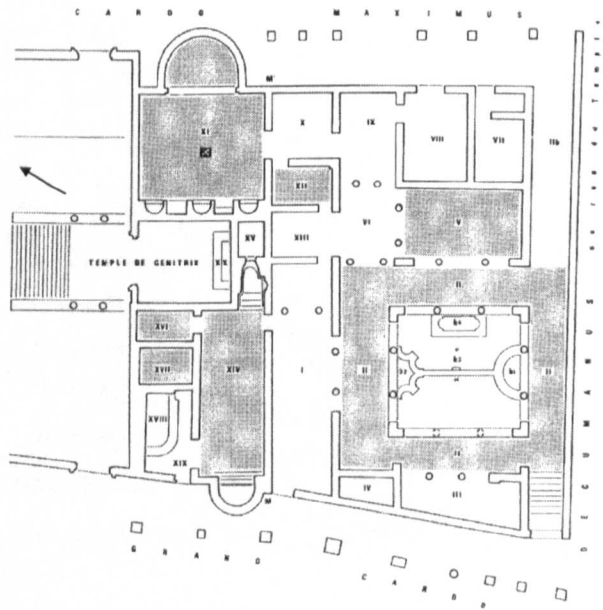
10. Acholla, Maison d'Asinius Rufinus



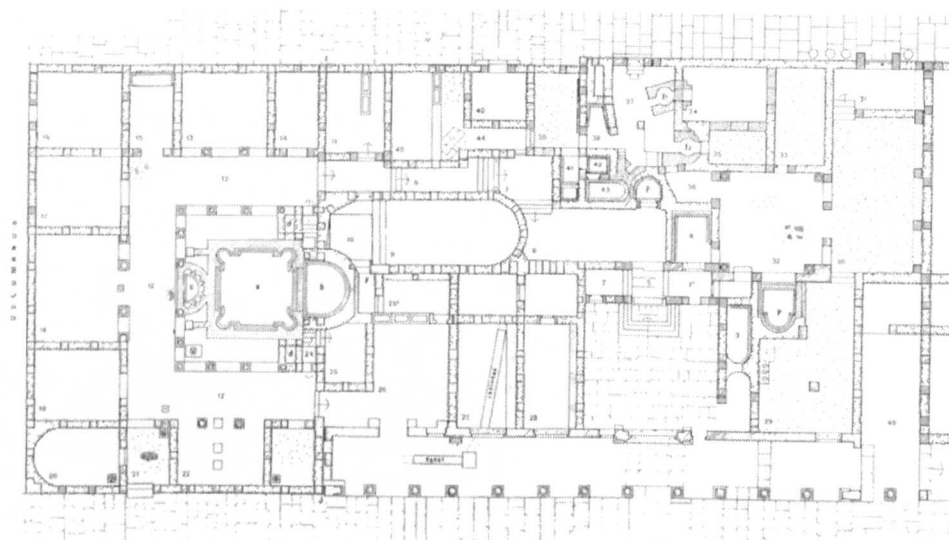
11. Volubilis, Maison des Néréides



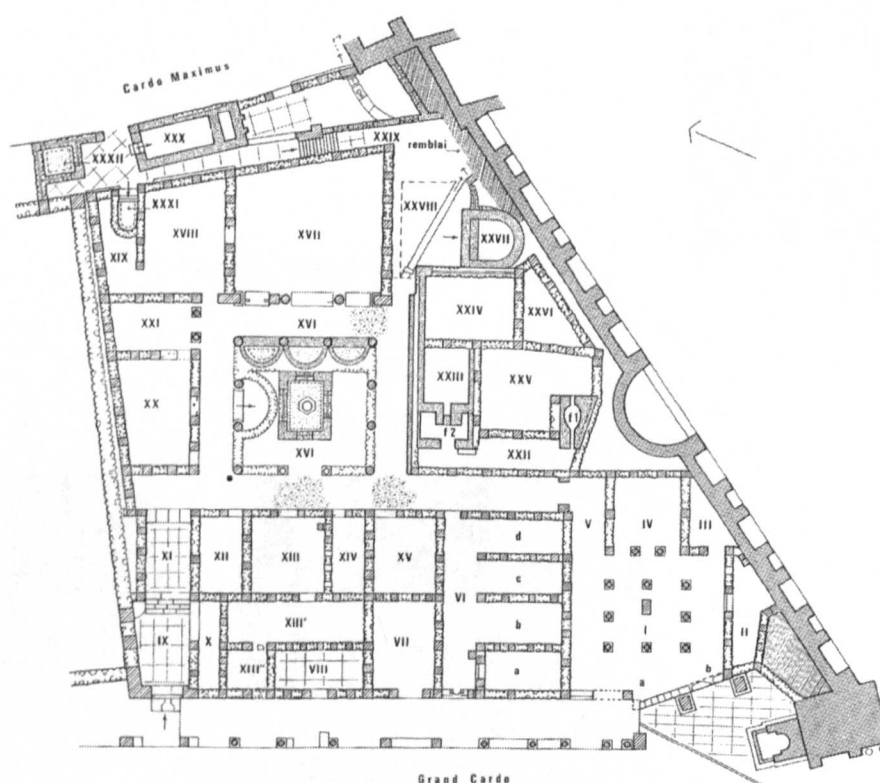
12. Volubilis, Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus



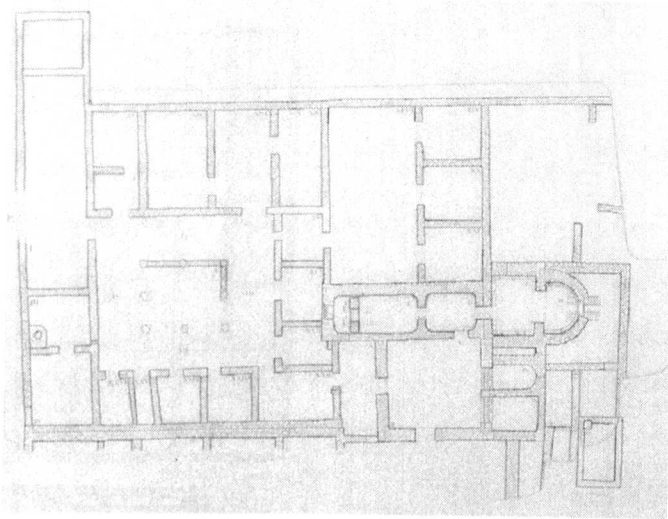
13. Djemila, Maison de l'Âne



14. Djemila, Maison d'Europe



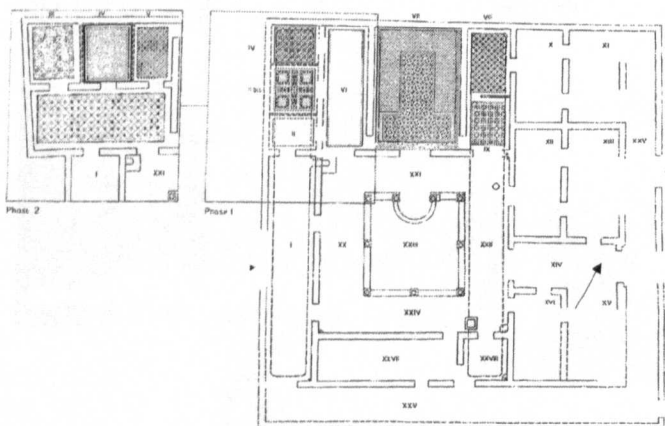
15. Djemila, Maison de Castorius



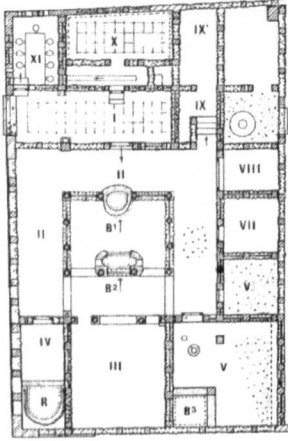
16. Puppstube, Maison du Péristyle Figuré



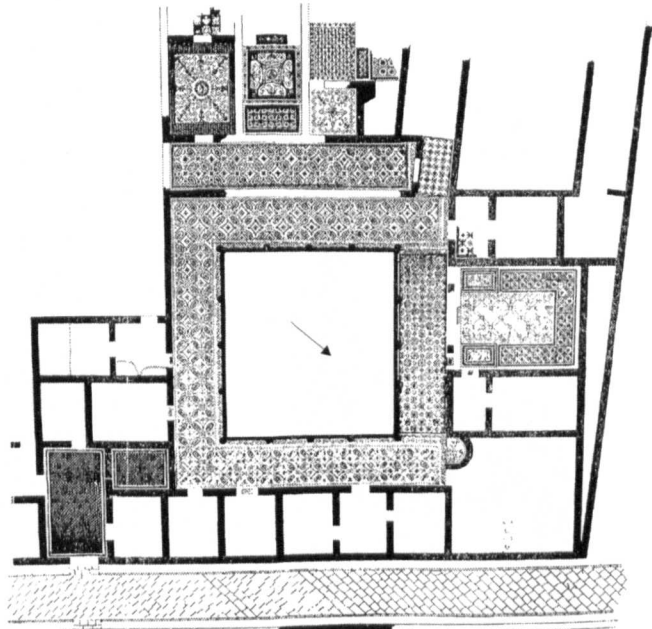
17. Thugga, Maison de Dionysos et d'Ulysse



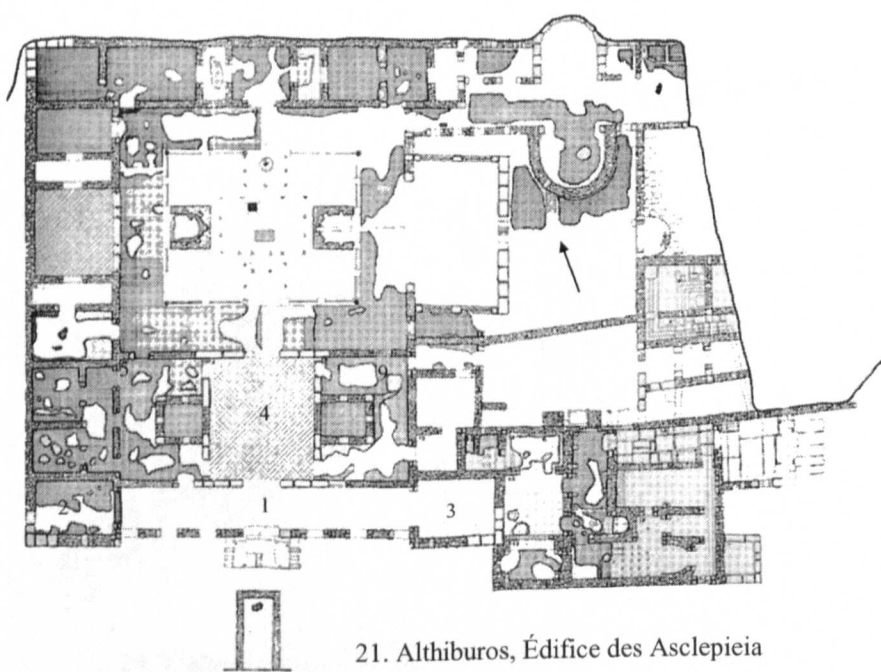
18. Puppstube, Maison du Triclinium en Noir et Blanc



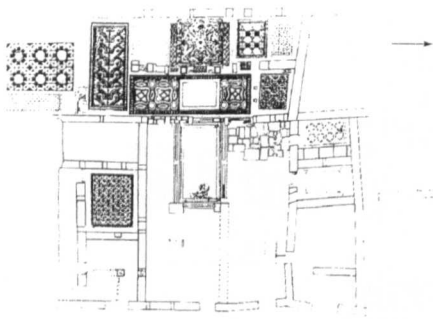
19. Djemila, Maison d'Amphitrite



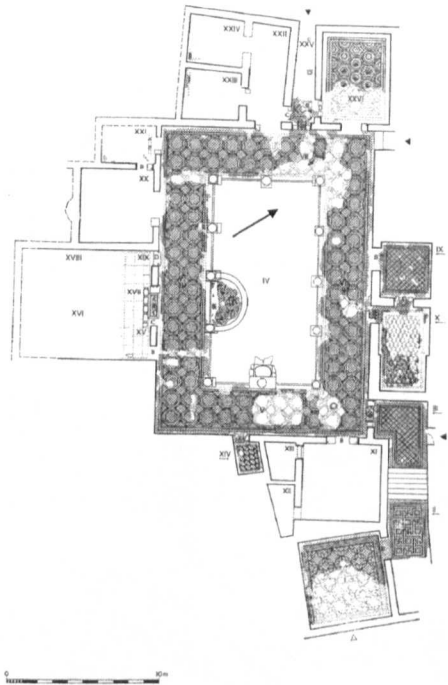
20. El Jem, Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque



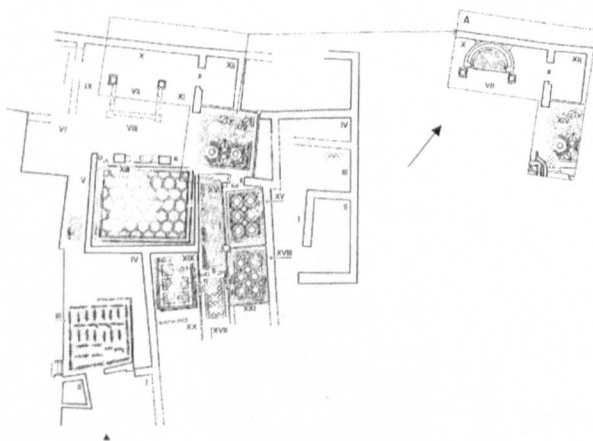
21. Althiburos, Édifice des Asclepieia



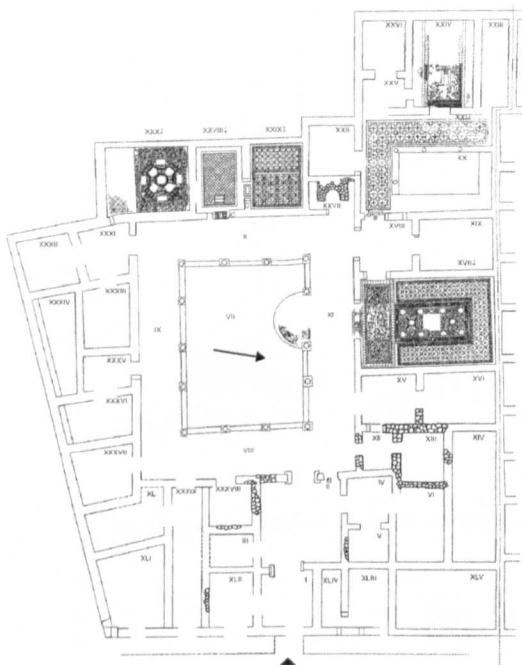
22. Thugga, Maison de Vénus



23. Thuburbo Maius, Maison de Neptune



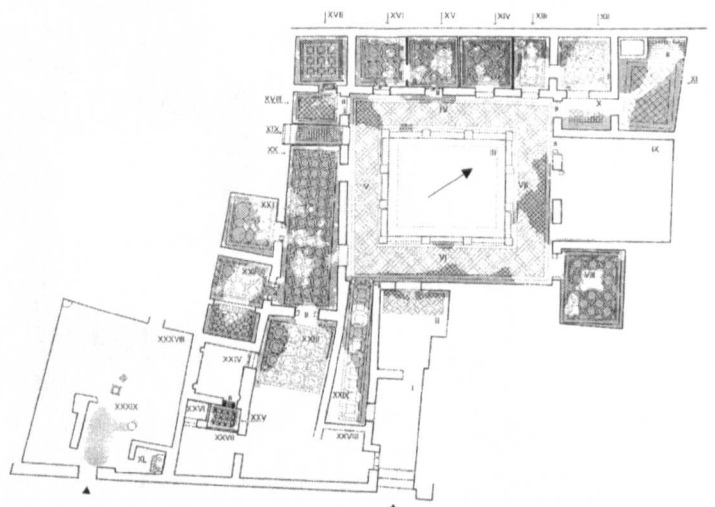
24. Thuburbo Maius, Maison des Palmes



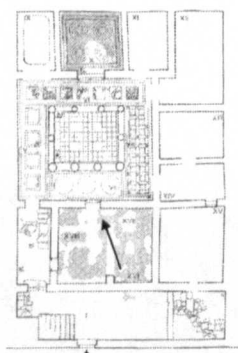
25. El Jem, Sollertiana Domus



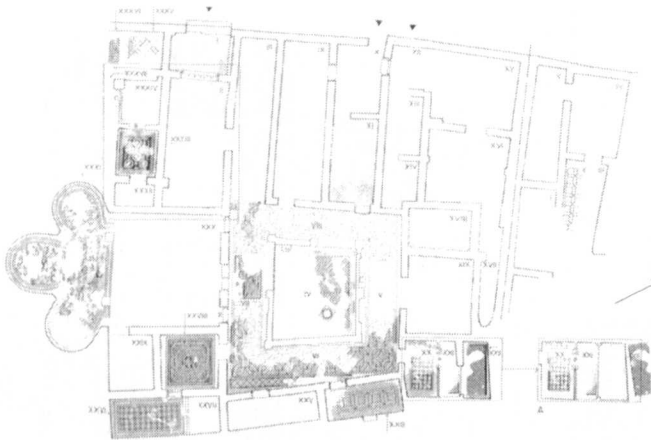
26. Thuburbo Maius, Maison des Animaux Liés



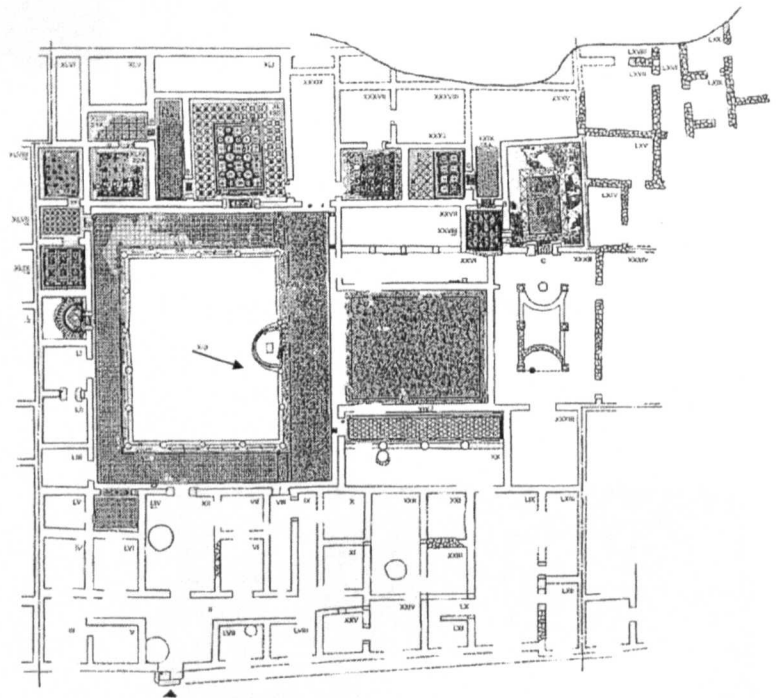
27. Thuburbo Maius, Maison aux Communs



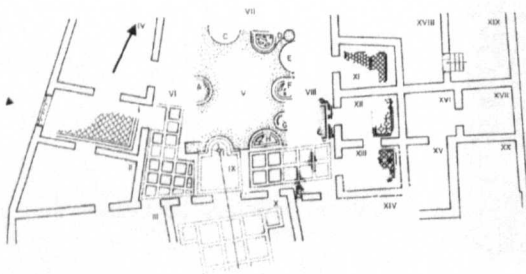
28. Utica, Maison de la Chasse



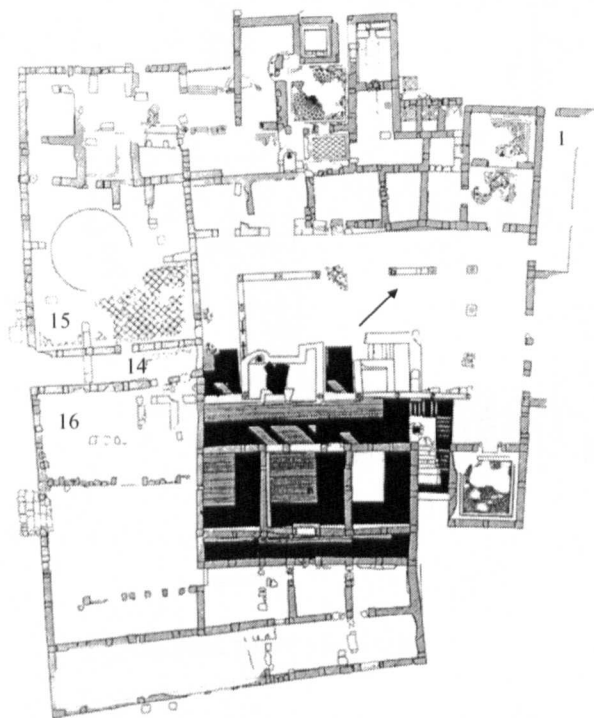
29. Thuburbo Maius, Maison du Char de Vénus



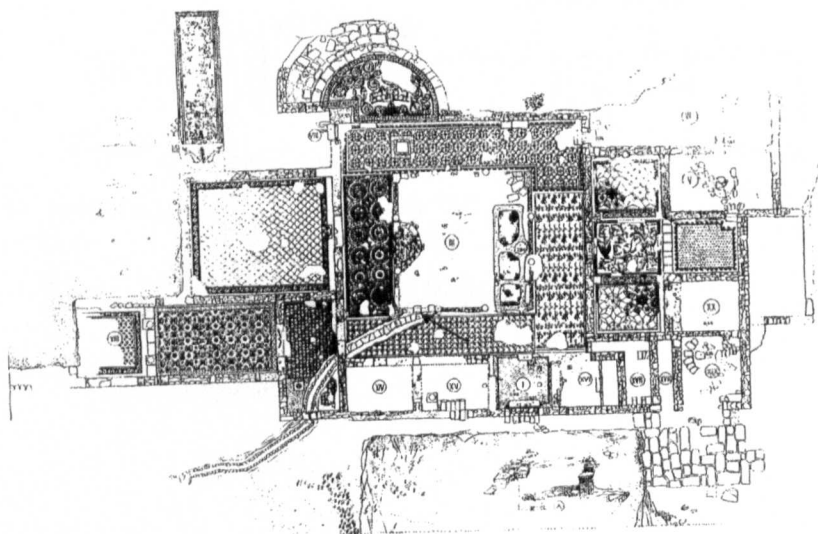
30. El Jem, Maison du Paon



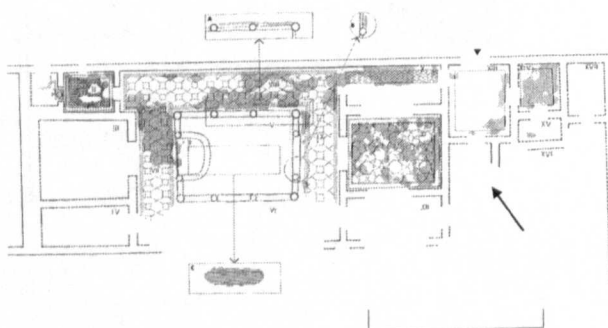
31. Pupput, Maison du Viridarium à Niches



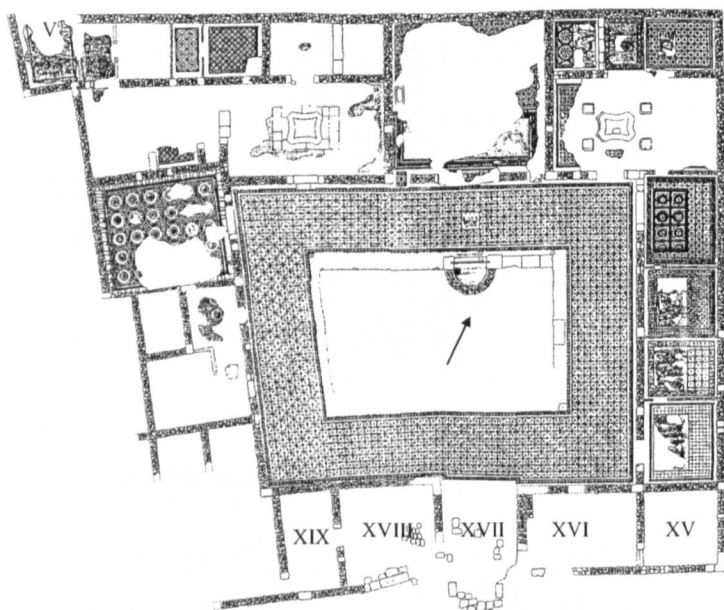
34. Bulla Regia, Maison d'Amphitrite



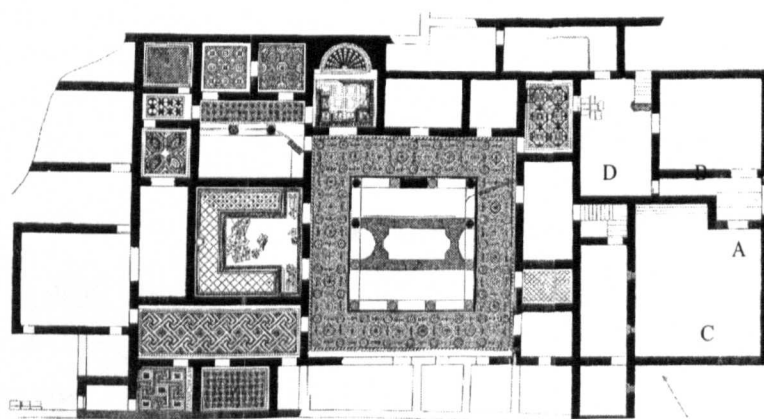
35. Clupea, Maison des Deux Chasses



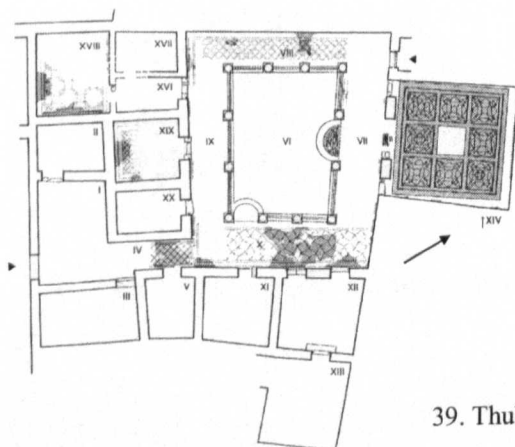
36. Utica, Maison Ouest



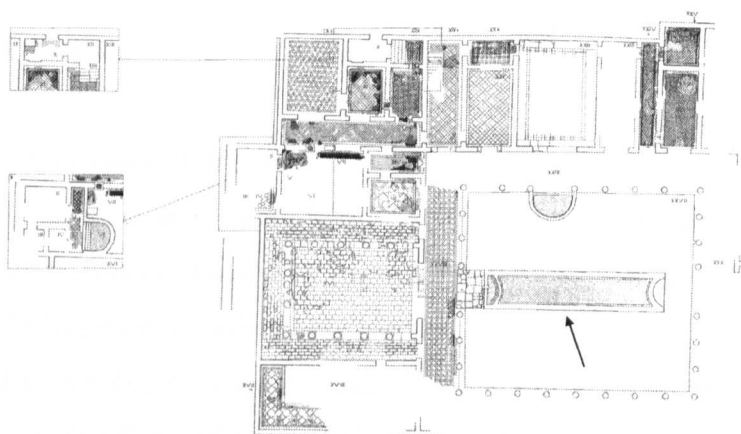
37. Neapolis, Maison des Nymphes



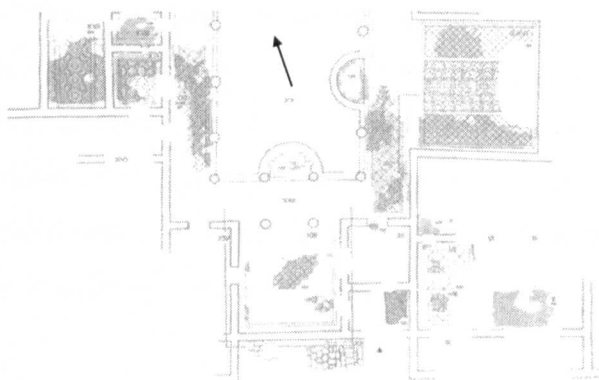
38. Althiburos, Maison des Muses



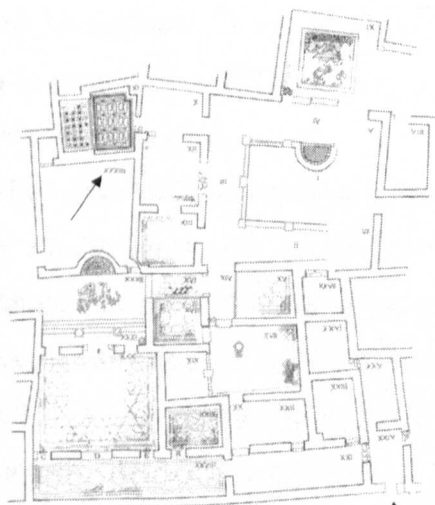
39. Thuburbo Maius, Maison de Nicentius



40 Utica, Maison au Grand Oecus



41. Utica, Maison H



42. Thuburbo Maius, Maison de Bacchus et Ariane

Chapter 3

Peristyle

3.1 Introduction

As a distinctive example of the peristyle house-type, the plan of the Romano-African house was dominated by the colonnaded court as the central hearth of the building and the largest unit in the entire layout.

The courtyard as open space allowing air and light into the surrounding rooms was a common feature in domestic architecture of the ancient Mediterranean: in Greek, Punic, and Roman houses, the court functioned as the organising principle around which a series of rooms was arranged. However, this does not mean that all courtyards were all of the same type: their lay-outs, the arrangement of the spaces around the central courtyard as well as the individual requirements of the occupants created very different examples of courtyard-type. The courtyard of the Romano-African house, for instance, as an open space surrounded by colonnades, or peristyle, was different from the Italic *atrium* as a central area roofed over but for a rectangular opening in the middle¹.

3.2 Use of the word peristyle

The word *peristylum* derives from the Greek *peristylos*, which may mean both the columns surrounding a building (i.e. externally as in a temple) or placed around a courtyard (i.e. internally).

The modern sense of the word, to mean an internal courtyard in a private house, is primarily a Latin adaptation². Varro mentions *peristylon* in his remarks about the Greek nomenclature that was widely being applied to the spaces of villas in his day³. Vitruvius lists *peristylia amplissima* among the room-types of the house suitable for a Roman aristocrat⁴. However, the term peristyle is rarely applied to Roman domestic space in the written sources: when it is used, the word predominantly refers to the public rather than the private part of the house⁵. Remarkably, neither Pliny nor Sidonius Apollinaris use the word peristyle in the description of their villas, preferring instead the technical Latin

¹ As a Greek invention, the peristyle was not adopted in the Italic house until 200 BC. From then, the peristyle ruled supreme there, too.

² Dickmann 1999, 35-7.

³ Var. *R.R.* 2.pr.2.4.

⁴ Vitr. *De Arch.* 6.5.20.

⁵ Leach 1997, 59.

term, *porticus*⁶. The word refers to the domestic space surrounded by columns on at least one side. The Laurentine villa of the Younger Pliny was provided with a *porticus* rounded like the letter D, which enclosed a small courtyard⁷. In *Ep.* 5.6.15, Pliny describes the *porticus* of his Tuscan villa as broad and long in proportion, with several rooms opening off it. In the description of his villa at Avitacum, Sidonius speaks of a *porticus* supported on round columns with capitals of the composite order⁸. The *porticus* of Trimalchio's house was ornamented with a *piscina*⁹ and was located in front of the entrance¹⁰.

A further functional term used by Latin writers to designate the peristyle is *ambulatio*. The word usually referred to the walk taken around noon or in the evening¹¹, but by the time of Cicero, it could also mean the part of the house in which the promenade took place, i.e. in the peristyle or similar garden area¹². Columella recommended that the *ambulatio* of the villa should be exposed to south so as to receive both the maximum of sun in winter and the minimum in summer¹³. In the Tuscan villa of the Younger Pliny an *ambulatio* enclosed a garden in front of the *porticus*¹⁴. However, literary texts do not give any indication of the relationship between *ambulatio* and colonnaded space.

In spite of the paucity of the occurrences of the word *peristylum* in Latin texts, the central courtyard of the Roman imperial house may be labelled peristyle, in line with scholarly convention, because it invariably has columns. The conventional word is helpful also in marking a semantic and technical shift from the *atrium* as the essential, central component of the Italic house.

3.3 Peristyle and *atrium*

The characteristic of the Italic *atrium*-house is the arrangement of the main rooms around the *atrium*, a roofed area at the hearth of the house with a central opening for the collection of rain-water into a corresponding basin below. In the 2nd century BC, under

⁶ Maiuri 1946.

⁷ Plin. *Ep.* 2.17.4.

⁸ Sid. *Ep.* 2.2.10.

⁹ Petr. *Sat.* 72.7.

¹⁰ Petr. *Sat.* 29.

¹¹ Cic. *De Orat.* 3.121; Gell. 11.3.1.

¹² Cic. *Dom.* 116; *Tusc.* 4.7; *ad Qfr* 3.1.1, 3.1.5; *Att.* 13.29.

¹³ Col. *R.R.* 1.6.2.

¹⁴ Plin. *Ep.* 5.6.15.

Hellenistic influence, the plan of the Roman house was modified with the addition of the peristyle as a secondary open space set at the far end of the building. In the final phase, the *atrium* fell out of fashion: with the introduction of columns, statuary, and fountains, it was replaced by the Hellenistic peristyle¹⁵.

This standard evolutionary account is mainly based on the extensive material evidence of housing found at Pompeii and Herculaneum (2nd century BC – 1st century AD), but it cannot be applied to the excavated examples of its African counterpart. The introduction of the peristyle in African houses is not the result of an evolutionary process, since the earliest example of a colonnaded courtyard in a domestic setting has been documented at Kerkouane, a Punic town that was abandoned in the mid-3rd century BC. It is arguable that African elites brought the peristyle into their houses directly from Greek architecture before coming under Roman influence. Punic Hellenistic architecture in North Africa, in fact, is clearly influenced by that of Hellenistic Greece¹⁶.

On his study of the wealthy houses in the north-eastern district of Volubilis, Etienne described the African courtyard as peristyle on the basis of quantitative data on the relation of covered and open space: the Volubilis courts with their lowest proportion of covered area should be classified as peristyle constructions¹⁷. Following Etienne, Thébert argues that the courtyards found in the houses of Roman Africa were not *atria*, as their layout and function were different from those of the so-labelled spaces in Pompeii¹⁸. There can be much argument over Thébert's statement and his use of the material evidence from Pompeii as evidence for labelling the spaces in African houses: in both cases we have no primary data for the label for these spaces¹⁹. Moreover, Thébert supports his statement by the evidence of African texts in which the word *atrium* appears only once, in the description of an eccentric structure²⁰, but the scholar omits to mention the total absence of textual references to the peristyle. However, the scholar's assertion that the Italic *atrium* was unknown in Africa is not completely wrong. Material evidence shows two different typologies of domestic open space in Roman house, which can be conventionally labelled as *atrium* and peristyle. The use of this nomenclature as conventional labels may help to differentiate the material remains

¹⁵ Dickmann 1997; George 1997a.

¹⁶ Carucci in press.

¹⁷ Etienne 1960, 120-22.

¹⁸ Thébert 1987, 325-26.

¹⁹ Allison 2001, 191.

²⁰ Apul. *Met.* 2.4.

of Roman domestic space. The review of the Romano-African houses show that the roofed space with central opening, which is conventionally designed as *atrium*, was unknown in Africa: domestic spaces were always arranged around a wide colonnaded court, the so-called peristyle²¹.

3.4 *Porticus*

In most examples of African peristyles, the central open space was surrounded on four sides by colonnades, which permitted the arrangement of rooms of different functions around their boundary (Table 3.1). An example is the Maison des Dauphins at El Jem (Table 3.2 n.10), but a very similar pattern could be illustrated by numerous houses from other cities of Africa (Table 3.2 nos. 1-9): the eastern and western *porticus* overlooked public areas such as the *vestibulum* complex to the east and the colonnaded *triclinium* to the west; rooms with more private functions opened off the northern and southern *porticus*²².

In some houses, the nature of the urban environment in which the building was located affected the design of the central peristyle plan, with rooms opening off only three sides. In some examples, it was the arrangement of public spaces to alter the design of domestic buildings. In the Maison d'Amphitrite at Djemila, the northern *porticus* of the peristyle was closed within the boundary wall, which ran along a public street (Table 3.2 n.12); in the Maison de Nicentius at Thuburbo Maius, the peristyle plan was affected by the arrangement of the Curia along the north-western wall of the domestic building (Table 3.2 n.13). In the Maison des Animaux Liés at the same town, the space enclosed between the north-eastern *porticus* V and *vestibulum* I was occupied by an oil-press, which impeded the arrangement of rooms on all sides of the courtyard (Table 3.2 n.14). The Maison de la Chasse at Utica lay in a densely populated quarter between the House of lot 6 to west and the house of lot 4 to east: this arrangement was not suitable for building a large house with rooms arrayed all around the peristyle.

Sometimes design constraints were imposed by local geological conditions. The Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna, for example, lay on an area which sloped gradually along the

²¹ The difference between *atrium* and peristyle is analysed by Zaccaria Ruggiu (1995b, 377-81).

²² Secondary *triclinium* XXV and kitchen XXVII overlooked the northern *porticus*; a range of small chambers opened onto the southern *porticus*.

eastern wing: the eastern *porticus* was enclosed with a surrounding wall that formed the eastern boundary of the building (Table 3.2 n.18).

As the peristyle was the hearth of the domestic building, as much the available space as possible was allocated to the colonnaded courtyard. However, when space was lacking, one or two galleries were eliminated. An example of incomplete peristyle is in the Maison de Dionysos at Thaenae: the central court was surrounded by a U-shaped colonnade, the ends of which opened onto a flight of stairs and room XX, on either side of a wall enclosing the north-eastern boundary of the court (Table 3.2 n.19). A further example of three-porticoed peristyle is in the Maison des Palmes at Thuburbo Maius (Table 3.2 n.20). The house was originally provided with a complete peristyle: a range of rooms was arranged around three sides of the court, while the north-western *porticus* X was enclosed with the boundary wall of the building. The layout of that *porticus* was affected by the placement of a semicircular basin in the portion of area between the central court and the north-western wall. In the Maison d'Europe at Djemila too, a semicircular basin encroached upon the *porticus* of an originally complete peristyle (Table 3.2 n.21): the basin lay between two small spaces (10 and 25) that Blanchard-Lemée describes as courts²³.

In the Maison des Colonnes Rouges at Acholla, the open court was surrounded by colonnades only on two sides: the roof was supported by two red painted columns to the south and by two pillars to the west; a cistern lay in the corner between the two galleries (Table 3.2 n.22). The lack of space may be again the reason why the house-owner might have had to settle for an incomplete peristyle, eliminating two *porticus*.

In most examples of complete peristyle, the arrangement of equally-sized galleries permitted a linear distribution of the surrounding spaces. However, in some houses, one *porticus* extended the boundary of the courtyard and turned into a corridor, which led into rooms serving different purposes. In the Maison de Castorius at Djemila (Table 3.2 n.26), for instance, the extension of the western *porticus* southwards permitted the connection of two reception areas for guests of different rank: to the north the peristyle and its surrounding rooms for the entertainment of privileged guests as well as for domestic affairs; to the south the *vestibulum* complex for the reception of low-status

²³ Blanchard-Lemée 1975, 137-38.

guests. In the Maison de Flavius Germanus (Table 3.2 n.29) and in the Maison aux Travaux d'Hercule (Table 3.2 n.28), both at Volubilis, the long galleries turned into corridors on either side of the main *triclinium* and led into a space beyond the front part of the house.

In the Maison du Triomphe de Neptune at Acholla, the western *porticus* extended over the northern and southern limits of the central court and led into a suite of private apartments on either side of the colonnaded *triclinium* (Table 3.2 n.27). Thus, the long gallery became the link between the public section (peristyle and *triclinium*) and the more secluded area (private apartments) of the *domus*. The same arrangement occurs in a number of houses at Volubilis, which are dated to the end of the 1st century AD²⁴. As Gozlan points out, the long *porticus* seems to feature the *pastas* associated with Greek housing²⁵. In a number of Classical peristyle-houses at Olynthos, one of the four *porticus* is given greater emphasis by its location off the major living rooms and its dimensions (it is always deeper and long than the other galleries): this feature seems to have been described in literary accounts as the *pastas*²⁶. The *pastas* occurs with greater frequency in the Hellenistic peristyle-houses of Delos and in the contemporary palaces and large residences²⁷, which however display a greater variety and experimentation in the treatment of the broader *porticus*, some to a degree where the *pastas* is barely recognizable: at this stage, the peristyle-court became independent of the *pastas*. It is this type of peristyle-court without *pastas* that was adopted in Roman domestic architecture during the process of hellenisation of Rome.

The early date of the African peristyles with *pastas* seems to reflect long continuity of Greek influence, which was already prevalent in the Punic world during the Hellenistic era. The integration of African provinces into Roman Empire and the adoption of Roman manners would have caused the spread of the Roman peristyle without *pastas*. However, the influence of Punic traditions, especially in those areas (like Volubilis and Carthage), where Carthaginian influence had been strong, is not to be underestimated.

In some African peristyles, a corridor was added across the width of the courtyard. In the Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque at El Jem (Table 3.2 n.30), for example, a

²⁴ They are the Maison à l'Ouest du Palais du Gouverneur, the Maison des Fauves, the Maison au Nord, and the Maison au Basin Tréflé.

²⁵ Gozlan 1971-1972, 78-80.

²⁶ Grahame 1966; Kutbay 1998, 105-14.

²⁷ Kutbay 1998.

corridor running along the north-eastern *porticus* opened into a suite of rooms (A-B-C-D-E): they were decorated with an opulence which suggests that the rooms were intended for the reception of guests. The badly-preserved structures in this part of the house do not allow us to know whether the corridor was separated from the adjoining *porticus* by a continuous wall or whether a door pierced in the wall served as a means of communication between the two spaces. However, the arrangement of a corridor parallel to the gallery permitted the extension of the peristyle-area and the creation of distinction between spaces. A lay-out of similar design seems to occur again in the Maison des Masques at Hadrumetum (Table 3.2 n.31). The partly preserved court was surrounded by a gallery lying 0.16m below the level of corridors I-II; the two kinds of passage were separated by a mosaic band, which would indicate the placement of columns²⁸. However, the lack of archaeological evidence for pillars or columns and the badly preserved mosaic band may suggest a different arrangement: corridors I-III might have been part of the same colonnade and floored with different mosaic motifs to highlight their different function.

3.5 Court

The covered galleries surrounded a central area, which was open to the sky and often ornamented with one or more basins.

There were different approaches to the floor-covering problems. Some courts were made of packed earth. In the court of the Maison des Colonnes Rouges at Acholla, for instance, a layer of grey concrete was interspersed with fragments of black stone. Traces of limestone have been found in the court of the Maison du Triconque at Carthage. In the Maison de la Pêche at Bulla Regia, the court of peristyle 2 was occupied by basins and openings, which admitted light and air into the underground rooms (Table 3.2 n.51): a paved alley was set between the central basin and a vaulted structure (Pl. 47). Some other courts were entirely paved with mosaics, which emphasized the architectural layout of the peristyle²⁹.

The arrangement of paved courts seems to draw upon older traditions of Punic and/or Greek origin. In fact, in a great number of houses excavated in the Punic town of

²⁸ Foucher 1965, 5-6.

²⁹ Examples of courts paved with mosaics will be discussed in the section relating to the mosaic decoration of the peristyle.

Kerkouane³⁰, the central court was covered with a layer of concrete or ornamented with *opus signinum*, a mortar-and-aggregate pavement with a range of colours derived from the use of green, yellow or brown ceramic fragments in the aggregate. However, examples of paved courts in a domestic setting have been documented in Greece, too: in the Hellenistic houses of Delos, Priene, and Pella, for example, the central courtyard was paved with concrete or with the more lavish *opus tessellatum*³¹. The tradition seems to have continued in Roman period, as several houses excavated in the Imperial towns of Ephesus³², Apamea³³, and Antiochia³⁴ show a court paved with marble slabs, flagstones or mosaic.

A greater number of African courts, as they are listed in the catalogue, do not show any trace of paving. Following literary, iconographical and material evidence, scholars have conventionally described the unpaved area of the peristyle as a *viridarium*, or interior garden, which seems to have been inspired by the Italic *hortus*, the garden enclosed within covered walkways. However, the arrangement of the garden-peristyle may have been modelled upon Hellenistic palaces, where the peristyle normally contained a garden formally laid out³⁵.

Archaeological evidence for peristyle-gardens in the African houses is very scanty and fragmentary. Preservation of green areas is ephemeral and a matter of chance survival: when a house falls into decay, wild vegetation becomes overgrown and confuses any remaining traces. However, Jashemki has discovered that it is possible to identify ancient tree roots in sites which have been abandoned and sealed by wind-blown soil: the decaying process of woody material may form soil of a different colour or texture³⁶. In her investigation of Roman gardens in Tunisia, the scholar has identified and reconstructed in some details two gardens in the Maison de Bacchus et Ariane at Thuburbo Maius³⁷. In fact, well-preserved evidence of plantings has been discovered in both the peristyle and the secondary courtyard (XXXIII); the peristyle may have enclosed a garden for vegetable produce, as the root cavities discovered along the south-

³⁰ Fantar 1987.

³¹ Fantar 1987, 117.

³² Jobst 1977.

³³ Balty 1984.

³⁴ Dobbins 2000.

³⁵ Nielsen 1994.

³⁶ MacDougall and Jashemski 1981.

³⁷ Jashemski 1995.

western edge were arranged in a straight row. However, as the garden has not been entirely excavated, it is difficult to identify the types of plants growing in the peristyle. The garden was at a lower level than its surrounding peristyle: in an area with a very dry atmosphere such as in North Africa, that measure was taken necessary in order to conserve moisture. The same arrangement of the peristyle with the central court lying a few centimetres below the *porticus* level has been documented in other African houses, such as in the Maison du Triomphe de Neptune at Acholla (Table 3.2 n.27), in the Maison des Masques at Hadrumetum (Table 3.2 n.31), in the Maison de la Volière at Carthage (Pl. 52)), in the Maison des Protomés section of the *Triconchos* at Thuburbo Maius (Table 3.2 n.40), and in the Sollertiana Domus (Table 3.2 n.5) and in the Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque at El Jem (Table 3.2 n.30). On the basis of the peristyle-garden of the Maison de Bacchus et Ariane at Thuburbo Maius, it is arguable that the open space of those peristyles was embellished with a garden, too. In the peristyle of the Sollertiana Domus at El Jem, the soil level of the court was 8 cm below the ambulatory; the court was provided with a number of terracotta waste-water outlets, which would have allowed surplus water to be directed to the planted area. Some of those gardens have now been replanted, as for example in the Maison du Paon and in the Sollertiana Domus at El Jem and in the Maison de la Volière at Carthage (Pl. 52). However, as the soil has not been examined before planting, evidence of ancient plantings has probably been destroyed.

In some houses, where the layout of the peristyle impeded the planting of a whole garden, plant containers may have served as substitutes. In the Maison 'Omnia tibi felicia' at Thugga, for example, the peristyle-court, which was paved with mosaics, was lined with built-in stone containers, that could have been ornamented with plants³⁸. A further example of plant containers in the peristyle seems to have been documented in the Maison d'Europe at Djemila (Table 3.2 n.21): on either side of the basins, which occupy almost the whole court area, two rectangular small containers may have been used as planters. Planted areas seem to represent an attempt to create the atmosphere of a peristyle-garden in a restricted setting.

³⁸ Poinssot 1983, 45-6.

In the African peristyle, the central court was separated from the surrounding ambulatory by barrier fences or walls inserted in the space between the columns: as they are almost entirely destroyed, it is arguable that those structures were mainly made of wood. In some peristyles, holes or slots are still visible in the side of columns: they indicate that a barrier fence had been inserted between columns. In some cases, if the barrier was high enough, a curtain pole may have been attached: the Elder Pliny mentions a red curtain, which was used to protect moss growing in the garden³⁹. A curtain may also be used to shade a colonnade during summer or to stop draughts in wintertime.

The central court may have been enclosed within low walls inserted between columns. In the *Maison de la Pêche* at Bulla Regia (Pl. 47), the court was separated by low walls on top of which there are traces of the fixtures as support of wooden studs or small stone columns (some of them are still in place). Access into this type of court was restricted: usually a whole *intecolumnation* of the peristyle was reserved for the entrance in line with the main *triclinium* or other important reception rooms.

3.6 Basins and pools

The inner area of the central court was often embellished with fountains (Table 3.1; Pl. 65). They could have been placed either in the middle of the courtyard or next to one *porticus* or in both positions; they could have been arranged in a simple form (square, rectangular, or semicircular) or showed a more complex design. In the *Maison de la Chasse* at Bulla Regia, for example, a square basin in the ground-floor peristyle was in axis with the central entrance in the main *triclinium* (Pl. 30). Archaeological evidence testifies to a variety of spatial arrangements and architectural layouts of the African water features.

The most common typology of fountains in African peristyles was a semicircular basin placed along the axis of the main *triclinium* as the most important reception room. The magnificent view of the peristyle and of its water features from inside the dining room would have enhanced the lavish setting of the dinner party and the host's wealth. However, a semicircular basin would have been also placed in front of other important reception rooms. In the *Maison de la Cascade* at Utica, for example, a semicircular basin faced assembly-room II (Pl. 198).

³⁹ Plin. *NH* 19.19.50.

The basin was enclosed within a marble or stone slab slotted into position on the straight side of the basin. In the *Maison de la Nouvelle Chasse* at Bulla Regia, for example, a marble blocking slab closed the semicircular basin from the surrounding *porticus* (Pl. 41). In the *Maison du Triclinium Noir et Blanc* at Pupput, the stone slab of the basin was placed between columns (Table 3.2 n.4). Placed at the edge of the peristyle, the semicircular basin would have been partly covered by the roof of the adjoining *porticus*. That would have helped to avoid too much evaporation of water in such a hot climate⁴⁰.

The appearance of the basin could have been enhanced by the arrangement of recesses along the semicircular wall. In the *Maison de la Nouvelle Chasse* at Bulla Regia, the edging of the basin was ornamented with a series of semicircular recesses (Table 3.2 n.16). In the semicircular basin opposite secondary *triclinium* XIII of the *Maison H* at Utica, the outline of the interior wall was designed in a series of alternating rectangular and curved recesses, which developed a more elaborate form (Table 3.2 n.34). The semicircular basin of the *Maison des Néréides* at Volubilis showed a more complex design: five niches were pierced into the semicircular wall (Pl. 233). Similarly, in the peristyle of the *Édifice des Asclepieia*, the niches were enclosed in a structure of parallelepipedal form (Table 3.2 n.52).

In a number of African peristyles, the semicircular basin was replaced by a structure showing similar layout, dimensions, and location. However, the lack of archaeological evidence of any blocking slab on the straight side and the layout of the floor mosaic, which continues onto the *porticus* beyond, indicate that its function was merely decorative. Rebuffat proposed two different terms to describe that structure: ‘abside-nymphée, when the floor mosaic illustrates marine scenes, and ‘abside decorative’ in absence of any mosaic theme bearing association with water⁴¹. However, as the use of two different terms to describe the same structure-type may be misleading⁴², I prefer to choose the term ‘pseudo-basin’ to refer to a semicircular structure, which resembles the water basin in appearance but has a different function.

⁴⁰ Further examples of basin closed by a gate have been documented in the *Maison au Grand Oecus* at Utica and in three houses of Thuburbo Maius: the *Maison des Palmes*, the *Maison de Bacchus et Ariane*, and the *Maison de Neptune*.

⁴¹ Rebuffat 1969, 662.

⁴² How can we describe the semicircular structure the floor mosaic of which has been destroyed?

Serving as a substitute for a fountain, the pseudo-basin was usually placed in front of the central entrance into the main *triclinium* and decorated with marine scenes. In the Maison des Nymphes at Neapolis, for instance, the pseudo-basin faced the main *triclinium* in axis with the central door; it was decorated with a head of Ocean (Pl. 120). The same arrangement occurs again in the Maison du Paon at El Jem: lying in front of the main *triclinium* XVIII, the pseudo-basin was floored with a marine scene within a frame (two-strand guilloche) that extended over the *porticus* beyond (Pl. 95). Further examples are in the peristyle of the Maison d'Asinius Rufinus at Acholla (Table 3.2 n.11), of the Maison des Deux Chasses at Clupea (Pls. 63-64), and of the Maison de Neptune at Thuburbo Maius (Pl. 164). In the Maison des Dauphins at El Jem, on the contrary, the pseudo-basin was located opposite secondary *triclinium* XXV (Table 3.2 n.50).

In the Maison du Triomphe de Neptune at Acholla, the western side of the central court was ornamented with a series of three pseudo-basins, which opened off the colonnaded *triclinium* XXXV (Table 3.2 n.27). The layout of the semicircular structures suited the triple entrance of the dining room: the central apse, which was bigger (3.50m wide; 2.53m deep) and was decorated with a marine scene, fitted the wide opening of the central entrance into the room; the side pseudo-basins, on the contrary, were smaller (2.85m wide; 1.40m deep) and ornamented with a plain vegetal motif: they were placed along the axis of the entrances into the ambulatory surrounding the inner colonnade of the dining room. A similar arrangement has been documented in the Maison de Castorius at Djemila, where along the eastern side of the central court three unequally-sized apses faced the corresponding openings of the main *triclinium* XVII (Table 3.2 n.26). However, the brick wall, which lined the straight side of the apses, indicates that semicircular structures served as basins.

In the Maison du Viridarium à Niches at Pupput, a series of 8 or 9 apses were placed all around the central area of the peristyle (Table 3.2 n.45). Although they have been partly destroyed by modern buildings, it is evident that the semicircular structures did not house basins, as there is no interruption between the apses and the mosaic foundations of the surrounding ambulatory. The pseudo-basins, which showed a variety of mosaic motifs and dimensions, seem not to have any balanced arrangement and relation both to one another and to the surrounding rooms. Pseudo-basin F, for example, faced the partition wall between rooms XI and XII; apses H-I were placed in axis respectively with the eastern and northern entrance into the main *triclinium*, but no pseudo-basin was

laid out in correspondence with the other side opening of the room. As no other example of pluri pseudo-basins in the courtyard has been documented, it is difficult to explain the peculiarity of this arrangement. It seems that the pseudo-basins with their mosaic scenes oriented outwards were intended for the eyes of the visitors walking around the court.

Although the largest proportion of domestic basins in African peristyle is of semicircular shape, archaeological evidence shows a variety of other forms and arrangements. Some basins show very simple forms (square and rectangular), which have been documented throughout the Roman provinces: for example, in the *Maison du Triconque* at Carthage (Table 3.2 n.39) and in the *Maison de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons* at Volubilis (Table 3.2 n.32).

However, in domestic architecture of Roman Africa, basin-types which result from the combination of different forms seem to have been preferred. In the peristyle of the *Maison de Flavius Germanus* at Volubilis (Table 3.2 n.29), for example, the basin shows a typology that Farrar⁴³ has classified as type 8: it is a rectangular basin with a semicircular recess in the middle of the inner side. Similar to the arrangement of the semicircular basin, that basin-type was placed at the edge of the court running parallel with the northern *porticus* and facing the central entrance into the main *triclinium*. A variant of this type is a rectangular basin with a semicircular recess at one or either extremity. In the *House of Africa* at El Jem, a basin extended over the length of the central court and ended into a semicircular fountain along the *porticus* off the main *triclinium*; on the opposite side a pedestal may have served as a support for a statue or for a further fountain (Pl. 73).

In the *Maison de Dionysos et d'Ulysse* at Thugga, the central court of the peristyle was occupied by a rectangular basin ending into two semicircular recesses on the short side; the apsed fountain to the eastern side was slightly off-center to the entrance of the main *triclinium* 10 (Table 3.2 n.49). A similar arrangement occurs in the *Maison au Grand Oecus* at Utica and in the *Maison des Protomés* Section of the *Protomai* at Thuburbo Maius, where the three basins were separate structures (Table 3.2 n.43). In the *Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus* at Volubilis, the two recesses on either side of a long, rectangular pool were of rectangular form (Table 3.2 n.1). In the peristyle of the *Maison de l'Âne* at Djemila, the arrangement of the basins shows a more elaborate layout: on either side of

⁴³ Farrar 1998, 73-4.

the long and narrow pool b3 was a semicircular basin b1 and a basin ornamented with semicircular caissons along the outer edge. In the eastern part of the court was one more differently-shaped water feature: a rectangular basin with two niches facing each other along the straight side (Table 3.2 n.25).

Some pools show a very elaborate and highly decorative design. In the *Maison aux Travaux d'Hercules* at Volubilis, for instance, a pool with alternating curved and rectangular recesses along the edge was enclosed within a rectangular framework, which curved in the middle of each side: those curved recesses faced inwards toward the central pool but the one placed along the north-western *porticus*, which faced outwards the main *triclinium* 2 (Pl. 223). The complex design of the inner pool occurs again in the *Maison de la Cascade* at Utica: the central area of the long court was occupied by a pool, which was edged with curved and rectangular recesses; at the edge of the court, along the northern *porticus*, a semicircular basin looked out onto assembly-room XXXIV. In the *Maison d'Europe* at Djemila too, the peristyle contained many pools of different designs connected to each other (Table 3.2 n.21). At the edge of the northern *porticus* along the main *triclinium* 18 was a semicircular basin (c) ornamented with a series of alternating curved and triangular recesses along the interior wall; this was connected to a large square pool (a) with curved recesses at each corner; this in turn was linked to a large semicircular basin (b).

3.7 Decoration

The importance attached to the peristyle as a reception area was emphasized by its décor. Elegant columns, basins of different design, luxuriant vegetation, and floor mosaics were intended to convey to visitors the owner's status and wealth. Architectural layout and functions of the peristyle components were highlighted by the different motifs of their floor mosaics. That is evident in those examples of peristyles which were all carpeted with mosaics.

In some examples of African peristyle, the central court was decorated with figured mosaics, while geometric and/or floral designs floored the ambulatory. The choice reflects the nature of the spaces: figured scenes tend to impose specific viewpoints and were suited to enclosed spaces into which people looked; geometric and floral patterns, on the other hand, were suited to areas of passage, as they did not present any focus on which viewers would linger and were capable of endless extension.

In the *Maison de Dionysos et d'Ulysse* at Thugga, the *porticus* were floored with a vegetal pattern of tangent circles framing flowers; the area surrounding the central pool was decorated with figured scenes, which run together at the angles: on each side the figures were turned to face the border beneath them⁴⁴. The frieze running along the eastern *porticus* represented a rare subject of Dionysus punishing the Tyrrhenian pirates (Pl. 184). In the middle is a boat on which are Silenus holding a tiller oar and a Satyr and a bacchante holding up Dionysus with their arms; the god, who is distinguished by a rich tunic, is armed with a lance pointed at the pirates that are seeking refuge in the sea: one of them is being turned into a dolphin and attacked by a panther, which is leaning out of the boat. On either side of the scene are two boats occupied respectively by three fishermen to the left and by two winged cupids to the right; fish of different species are all around. On the opposite side of the pool another mythological episode represents Ulysses' escape from the Sirens (Pl. 185). In the middle a ship is carrying four soldiers armed with their shield and looking rightwards while Ulysses, lashed to the mast of the ship, is looking to the Sirens on the opposite side. Represented with wings and the long legs and claws of wading birds, the Sirens are playing music and apparently singing on a mountainous landscape. To the right of the scene, a fisherman holding a big crayfish is standing in a small boat. The two mythological episodes were accompanied by conventional scenes of fishermen in boats on the others sides of the court. Picard claims that the two mythological scenes would symbolize the salvation of the just (Ulysses) and the divine punishment of the wicked (Tyrrhenian pirates), as the theme of Ulysses' escape from the Sirens is found with particular frequency on sarcophagi⁴⁵. However, as Dunbabin correctly points out, the symbolic interpretation of the scenes would be appropriate to their use on sarcophagi, but they would suggest a different meaning as a means of domestic decoration; moreover, the scene with the punishment of the pirates does not occur in the sarcophagus repertory⁴⁶. Rather, the mythological episodes including images of real fishermen and accompanied by conventional marine scenes on the other sides seem to have been connected by their marine background; moreover, it would seem appropriate to the decoration of an area surrounding a pool. The scene with Ulysses and the Sirens appears in other marine

⁴⁴ Poinssot 1965, 220-26; Marrou 1964, 167 n.298; Dunbabin 1978, 42, 147, 183, 257 n.8; Touchefeu-Meynier 1992, 963 n.167; Yacoub 1995, 171-74; Blanchard-Lemée et al. 1996, 115-16, 241-46; Lancha 1997, 71 n.29; Romizzi 2002.

⁴⁵ Ch. Picard 1957, 392-93, followed by Yacoub 1995, 174.

⁴⁶ Dunbabin 1978, 147-48.

contexts on the rim of a fountain at Cherchel; as a part of a bigger marine scene in the *frigidarium* of the Great Baths at Thaenae and in the thermal room of the Baths at Ammaedara.

In the Maison des Protomés Section of the *Protomai* at Thuburbo Maius, the covered galleries of the peristyle were carpeted with acanthus scrolls issuing from clumps in each corner and spreading thick branches along the sides; birds perch among them: a large peacock is represented with its tail fully opened (Pls. 177-178). The motif surrounded a figured frieze filling the panels between the columns: it showed wild animals fighting and pursuing their prey among hills, isolated clumps of plants, trees, and pools to suggest landscape. The frieze framed a central panel in the court with a scene of vintaging Erotes: in each corner of the main field, vine shoots are growing out of acanthus-bases and spreading their branches over the field; four vintaging Erotes are in the corner of the branches; a further one is in the middle⁴⁷. The effect of the whole is of great luxuriance. The figured mosaics have been adapted to the layout and function of the peristyle components: the *porticus* and the central area were carpeted with dense vegetal motifs, which could spread freely over the surface of the floor; the panels set between the columns were an adaptation of large-scale hunts and oriented outwards to be seen by visitors walking around the galleries.

Vegetal motifs occur again in the peristyle of the Maison de la Volière at Carthage⁴⁸. The area surrounding the octagonal-shaped garden in the middle of the courtyard was carpeted with a *semis*-design of scattered branches of foliage bearing fruits and flowers; among the branches were birds (Pl. 53). The polychromy of the mosaic in contrast with the black and white geometric design, which carpeted the surrounding colonnade, produced a striking effect.

In the Maison du Péristyle Figuré at Pupput, the *porticus* were floored with a rich geometric composition of differently-sized squares and rectangles ornamented with a variety of motifs (Pls. 142-143). The same variety of geometric motifs appears in the panel set between the columns: cubes in perspective, chessboard pattern, grids of bands, tangent circles, and octagons. The central area was decorated with a motif, which is a *unicum*: eight columns converge to bear the weight of a rectangular structure which encloses a central lighthouse; in the space between the columns are rose bushes. Ben

⁴⁷ Poinssot and Quoniam 1953, 155-67; Dunbabin 1978, 52-3, 167, 275 n. 4c; *CMT* II.3, 8-16; Blanchard-Lemée et al. 1996, 274.

⁴⁸ Dunbabin 1978, 125 n.58, 167, 253 n.38; Ennabli and Ben Osman 1983, 147-48; Yacoub 1998, 134 A188; Ben Osman 1990, 49; Blanchard-Lemée et al. 1996, 269; Ben Abed Ben Khader 2003, fig. 72.

Abed Ben Khader interprets the scene as the reflection of a peristyle with its main elements (columns and plants)⁴⁹, but the scholar omits to explain the reason why a lighthouse was represented in the middle of a colonnaded courtyard. The lighthouse may have had just an ornamental value, though very rare in ancient iconography; or perhaps the whole scene, which was conceived as the surface of a reflected vault, was designed to represent in a different perspective a more specific structure the nature of which is unknown.

In the *Maison de la Chasse* at Utica, the central court was carpeted with a simple pattern of *opus sectile* (grid of squares and rectangles): the variety of its colours made the floor appear lavish (Pl. 208). The field was framed by figured mosaics, which run along the surrounding *porticus*⁵⁰. The northern *porticus* VI was decorated with hunting scenes in separate compartments, which were framed by a laurel wreath; they represented a villa; two fowlers placing twigs in a tree (Pl. 210); two hunters chasing gazelles into a net; two hunters returning from a hare; the *dominus* hunting on horseback; the *dominus* returning from the hunt (Pl. 211); and two hunters returning from a gazelle-hunt. Further figured scenes may have decorated the western and southern *porticus*, too, but they have been destroyed: in *porticus* V, four square panels were framed by acanthus scroll and seem to contain traces of human figures; in *porticus* VII, the mosaic panel contained three medallions in laurel wreath. The eastern *porticus* VIII, on the contrary, was floored with a simple geometric design of squares. The mosaic motifs of the Utica peristyle seem to emphasize the routing of traffic through the courtyard and the function of the surrounding rooms. Figured scenes decorated the *porticus* opening onto the reception rooms X and XVI/XVII/XVIII; the figurative mosaic of *porticus* V seems to suggest that visitors entering the peristyle from anteroom III walked to assembly-room X via that gallery; geometric motifs, on the contrary, floored *porticus* VIII, which overlooked more private rooms. Faced inwards toward the central court, the scenes were supposed to be seen by visitors walking along the gallery towards the two reception rooms.

A similar decorative layout occurs again in the *Maison d'Amphitrite* at Djemila (Pl. 66)⁵¹. The *porticus* off main *triclinium* III was ornamented with a marine scene: Nereids

⁴⁹ Ben Abed Ben Khader 1994b, 180.

⁵⁰ Ville 1961, 45-74; *CMT* I.1, 73-80; Dunbabin 1978, 57, 62, 277 n.10.

⁵¹ Blanchard-Lemée 1975, 114-24; Dunbabin 1978, 125, 256 n.2.

on sea-monsters and Erotes riding dolphins flanked a central figure who is almost entirely destroyed, but the traces of trident and of sea-horse pulling the chariot allow for identification of Amphitrite. The scene is accompanied by a variety of motifs in the surrounding area of the peristyle: medallions containing vintaging Erotes in the southern *porticus*; a laurel medallion bearing a crater in the northern *porticus*; geometric designs in the eastern *porticus*; and *xenia*-motifs in the central court. The link connecting all the mosaics seems to have been the ideas of prosperity and fertility that the different scenes evoke.

In some examples, the components of the peristyle were all decorated with geometric and/or floral designs. In the Maison de Dionysos at Thaenae, for example, the central court was carpeted with a geometric arrangement (pattern of intersecting circles), that the vegetal outline of fine tendrils and the flowers filling the compartments made more lavish⁵². The same exuberance appears on the panel set between the columns; undulating acanthus lines enclosed circles bearing flowers. The covered galleries, on the contrary, were floored with a plain geometric design, which was very popular in Imperial times: a pattern of stars formed by eight lozenges, with squares between (Table 3.2 n.19). A variant of that geometric design as a decorative motif of the *porticus* occurs in the peristyle of the Maison d'Amphitrite at Bulla Regia, but the floor mosaic of the central court has been destroyed.

In the peristyle of the Maison n.3 at Bulla Regia, the central area was carpeted with a black and white grid of swastikas, which contrasted with the polychromy of the adjoining panel 8 and of the surrounding *porticus* (Table 3.2 n.6). Set in the northernmost area of the court, panel 8 was decorated with a pattern of intersecting circles and adjoined another panel (8') in the space between the columns: this was decorated with a simple geometric design; however, the use of different colours made it especially lavish. The adjoining *porticus* 10 was carpeted with a grid of simple fillets framing a panel with a richer composition of ellipses and cushions, outlined respectively by laurel garlands and undulating ribbons. Set along the axis of the main *triclinium* (18), the whole composition was intended for the eyes of guests looking outwards within the room⁵³.

⁵² Jeddi 1994, 138-42.

⁵³ The floor mosaic of *porticus* 11-12 has been destroyed.

A similar arrangement occurs in the Maison de la Chasse at Bulla Regia. The central court was floored with a pattern of white *tesserae*, which appears again in the south-western *porticus*: this gallery served as a link between the public and private sections of the house. The other surrounding *porticus*, on the contrary, were marked out by the polychromy of their floor mosaics and by the variety of the geometric motifs, as they overlooked more important rooms.

In the Maison d'Orphée at Volubilis, the court 2 was paved with panels of black and white geometric pattern framing a panel with marine motifs (Pl.229). The figured panel was oriented towards main *triclinium* 3.

A review of the African peristyles without paved court shows that the surrounding *porticus* were mostly decorated with geometric designs. The peristyle of the Édifice des Asclepieia at Althiburos, for instance, was decorated with a simple geometric composition (orthogonal pattern of adjacent scales), but the use of contrasting area of black and pink produced some optical effects⁵⁴. In the Maison des Dauphins at El Jem too, the peristyle was carpeted with a mosaic in two colours (black and white), but the pattern (circles and poised quadrilobes of peltae) was richer and more elaborate⁵⁵. A similarly plain pattern occurs in the peristyles of the Maison d'Asinius Rufinus at Acholla⁵⁶ and of the Maison aux Deux Péristyles at Hergla: a geometric schema is outlined in black on white ground, creating square compartments which are filled with polychrome ornament.

The geometric mosaics decorating the peristyles of the Maison de Neptune at Thuburbo Maius and of the Maison Ouest at Utica were based upon a pattern of octagons. Variations come from the treatment of the individual compartments: in the Thuburbo Maius example (Table 3.2 n.48)⁵⁷, the grid-pattern of octagons formed circles and spindles; in the Utica mosaic (Table 3.2 n.38)⁵⁸, on the other hand, the octagons themselves were filled by squares and hexagons creating an alternative pattern.

In the Maison des Muses at Althiburos, the *porticus* were carpeted with an elaborate pattern of Hercules' knots bearing circles with flowers (Pl. 23)⁵⁹. A richer composition

⁵⁴ Ennaïfer 1976, 107-08.

⁵⁵ CMT III.1, 79-80.

⁵⁶ Gozlan 1994, 165; id. 2001, 32-5 n. 59.

⁵⁷ CMT II.1, 146-47.

⁵⁸ CMT I.2, 22-3.

⁵⁹ Ennaïfer 1976, 65.

decorated the peristyle of the Maison H at Utica (Table 3.2 n.34)⁶⁰: here a plain geometric composition of circles and squares is enlivened by tracing its outline in fine tendrils and by filling the compartments with flowers.

The unity of the peristyle may have been broken by the insertion of different or more elaborate motifs in the *porticus* pavement. A survey of African peristyles shows that such panels were always laid in front of the main *triclinium*: the spatial arrangement underlined the importance of the dining room and the axial relationship of the two reception areas. In most examples of ‘carré de *triclinium*’⁶¹, the panel contained figured scenes which produced an immediate optical effect by contrast with the geometric motifs of the surrounding *porticus*. In the Maison du Char de Vénus at Thuburbo Maius, the marine scene in the *triconchos* (Pl. 181) is linked to a panel, which was set in the *porticus* in front of the entrance into the hall. It is divided by a ground-line into two registers: on the upper a horseman, an attendant holding a leash and a hound are pursuing a prey now lost; on the lower a hound is seizing a hare after a rider (Pl. 181)⁶². The names inscribed above the figures (NARCISSUS LASXIUNIOR and SAGITTA PERNICIES LEPORUM above the horseman or horse and the hound) create a great impression of realism. In the peristyle of the Maison d’Ikarios at Oudna, the panel in front of the colonnaded *triclinium* was decorated with winding acanthus foliage ending in animal *protomai*; on the edge were beasts, such as elephant, bear, stallion, and leopard (Table 3.2 n.18)⁶³. Gauckler stated that the central part of the mosaic, now destroyed, represented Orpheus. Son of the Muses and enchanter of animals, Orpheus might represent the pleasures of music and poetry to be enjoyed by guests in the nearby *triclinium*; he might be also an example and model of the owner’s culture⁶⁴. However, the panel might have represented only a range of animals usually displayed in the spectacles of the amphitheatre. Allied to the hunting scene, which decorated the threshold of the colonnaded *triclinium* (Pl.182), the animal-catalogue mosaic would have expressed the host’s munificence and aristocratic enjoyment.

In the Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus at Volubilis, a circus scene decorated the panel set in the *porticus* opposite the main *triclinium* (Pl. 216). Charioteers drive chariots drawn by pairs of birds around the *spina*; the last of them, the chariot of the blues drawn

⁶⁰ CMT I.1, 116-17 n. 137.

⁶¹ Rebuffat 1969, 447.

⁶² Dunbabin 1978, 60-1, 274 n.2a; Yacoub 1995, 252-53; Blanchard-Lemée et al 1996, 182; CMT II.3, 74-6.

⁶³ Gauckler 1896, 207-08; Dunbabin 1978, 266 l; Blanchard-Lemée et al.1996, 35, 286.

⁶⁴ Jesnick 1997.

by a pair of peacocks, has crashed after turning the *metae*. The figures of the charioteers and the elements of the *spina* (doors of the *carceres*, obelisk, *euripus*, and *metae*) are drawn upon the standard pattern of the circus scenes showing races in progress. However, the substitution of birds for horses shows that the whole scene is intended as a parody of representations of the actual circus-races.

The peristyle-*emblema* of the Maison des Nymphes at Neapolis illustrated a rare scene in African iconography: on either side of an amphora laden with golden pieces are two cocks facing each other and holding a yellow piece in their mouth, while other pieces are scattered over the ground (Pl. 124)⁶⁵. In his analysis of the motif of the cocks fighting, Bruneau pointed out that in Hellenistic and Imperial times the theme symbolised victory⁶⁶. On the basis of that interpretation, Darmon interpreted the *emblema*-panel as a symbol of victory and of desire in the sphere of love: the fighting cocks are often accompanied by the figures of Erotes as symbols of love; in a number of scenes represented on Greek vases, the lover gives a cock to his beloved youth as a symbol of love. The scholar's interpretation is based on the assumption that all the mosaics from the Maison des Nymphes formed a rich ensemble with a common theme (love). However, in Roman mosaics the Erotes are often represented engaged in activities (fishing, vintaging) which have no reference to love; moreover, the symbolic interpretation of the Greek scenes would be inappropriate to its use in Roman mosaics of Imperial date. Rather, the Neapolis mosaic seems to focus the viewer's attention on the golden pieces, which are scattered all over the ground: the scene may be a representation of prosperity and fortune, symbols which occur again in the mosaic of the nearby *triclinium*. The same association of cocks among golden pieces with the representation of sea occurs again in a fragmentary mosaic found in the nearby Sidi Mahrez⁶⁷.

In the Maison d'Orphée at Volubilis, a panel set on axis with the central entrance into main *triclinium* 3 was decorated with a marine scene: a sea-creature is standing on a chariot drawn by a sea-horse (Pl. 229); the image is surrounded by fish. Conveniently laid between the basin and the main *triclinium*, the marine scene suited the use of the water structure and functioned as a complementary part of the marine motifs illustrated in the side panel of the dining room.

⁶⁵ Darmon 1980, 79-84; Quet 1984, 85-6; Fantar et al. 1994, 15 with fig.; Yacoub 1995, 291-92.

⁶⁶ Bruneau 1965.

⁶⁷ Darmon 1983.

In some African peristyles, the panel inserted in the *porticus* off the main *triclinium* contained geometric and/or floral designs, which however had the same optical effect and permitted the same creation of distinction between rooms.

In the Maison du Triomphe de Neptune at Acholla, a panel of different motif was inserted in the middle of the western *porticus* in line with the central entrance into the colonnaded *triclinium* and the straight side of the pseudo-basin (Table 2.3 n.27). Its richer composition of intersecting circles broke the unity of the peristyle, which was decorated with a simpler pattern of squares. In the Maison de la Cascade at Utica, the same effect is achieved by the combination of two different paving types. The galleries were carpeted with a *semis* of *scutulae* and crosslets in *opus lithostroton*; a long panel connecting the threshold of the main *triclinium* with the opposite basin was paved in *opus sectile* (Pl. 202).

In some examples, it was the whole *porticus* off the main *triclinium* to be decorated with a different motif from that of the adjoining galleries. In the Maison des Masques at Hadrumetum, for example, the galleries surrounding the central court were paved with a simple motif based on intersecting circles; corridor III, on the contrary, which lay in front of the colonnaded *triclinium*, was carpeted with a more elaborate design of octagons, lozenges, and squares (Table 3.2 n.31)⁶⁸. In the Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque at El Jem the relationship is inverted: the *porticus* opposite the main *triclinium* was decorated with a simple arrangement of basic geometric forms (squares, rectangles, and circles), while the other three galleries showed a more elaborate geometric design (cushions and ellipses), which was embellished by inserting fine tendrils and flowers in the compartments (Table 3.2 n.30). In the Maison du Paon at El Jem, the same geometric pattern of intersecting circles decorated the *porticus* off the main *triclinium* (Pl. 93) and the other galleries (Pl. 94). However, the use of different colours (polychromy in the *porticus* off the main *triclinium* and black and white in the others) and the variety of motifs in the compartments created distinctiveness.

The majority of the African basins were decorated with marine motifs, which were clearly chosen to suit the use of those water features. In the Sollertiana Domus at El Jem, for example, the semicircular basin in the peristyle was ornamented with a floor

⁶⁸ Further examples are the peristyles of the Maison de Lucius Verus and of the House of Africa, both at El Jem.

mosaic (now partly destroyed) illustrating five fishers on a small boat among fish and shells of very large size; the waves were rendered by several zigzag lines⁶⁹. A similar scene of fishers and boats in a sea full of fish would have decorated the two basins of the Maison H at Utica, but the floor mosaics are seriously damaged⁷⁰: their walls were revetted with marble panels of different colours⁷¹, which would have enhanced the decorative value of the mosaic scene with their reflections upon the water.

A further marine scene decorated the basin opposite main *triclinium* XIV of the Maison de Nicentius at Thuburbo Maius (Pl. 168)⁷². The floor mosaic illustrated a sea filled with fish of various marine species such as triton, octopus, and conger, which are represented in a realistic manner. The fish-catalogue is accompanied by a fanciful marine scene, which decorated the wall of the basin. The partly destroyed mosaic shows three Erotes swimming in the middle; to the right two Erotes are on a boat: the one is paddling and the other one is touching on the sea surface with his right hand and leaning against the boat with the other hand; on the opposite side are traces of another boat. On both scenes the sea is represented by continuous lines, which is rare in African iconography.

An artificial marine scene occurs again on the floor of the semicircular basin in the Maison de la Cascade at Utica (Pl. 200). A naked, winged Eros is sitting in a boat and catching a large fish on his line; the fisherman appears in the midst of different species of fish⁷³.

In the Maison de Neptune at Thuburbo Maius, the basin was floored with a marine scene, which combines realistic and fantastic motifs⁷⁴. At the top is Neptune standing in a chariot, which is drawn by two hippocamps towards the right: the god holds the trident in his right hand and the reins in his left. The Triumph of Neptune is balanced by images of realistic fishermen in the bottom: two pairs of men paddling and sitting on boats of different types, and two fishermen sitting on a rock and fishing with rod and line. The fanciful and realistic scenes appear in the midst of a sea filled with fish.

⁶⁹ Foucher 1961, 16; Gozlan 1973, 87-8; *CMT* III.1, 18-9.

⁷⁰ *CMT* I.1, 115-16.

⁷¹ Red and yellow marble of Chemtou and green marble of Jendouba on the wall of the basin facing main *triclinium* XXVI; green and giallo antico panels on the wall of the basin opposite secondary *triclinium* XIII.

⁷² *CMT* II.1, 43-5.

⁷³ *CMT* I.1, 47-8 n.51; Dunbabin 1978, 17, 276 n.9; Yacoub 1996, 176.

⁷⁴ Dunbabin 1978, 274 n.5; *CMT* II.1, 158-61.

A further marine scene with a sea-divinity appears in the basin of the Maison de Vénus at Thugga⁷⁵. The fragmentary floor mosaic shows Venus on a sea-shell touching her hair with the right hand and holding in her left hand part of a veil, which streams over her head. Next to her a small winged Eros is holding up a mirror for the goddess to look at. The motif would have been accompanied by other sea-creatures. In a fragment is a Nereid being carried on the back of a Triton: like Venus, she is ornamented with bracelets and necklace with pendant; a veil streams over her head. The Triton, with his head turned toward the opposite side, holds a basket in his right hand and a horn in his left. The two groups are accompanied by massive Erotes swimming in a sea represented by straight horizontal lines.

In the Maison des Néréides at Volubilis, the figures of Nereids riding sea-horses, which decorated the floor of the basin, were accompanied by the head of Ocean on the wall of the water structure (Pl. 234).

Allusion to a marine setting seems to occur in the motifs decorating the basin opposite main *triclinium* IX of the Maison de Bacchus et Ariane at Thuburbo Maius (Pl. 158)⁷⁶. Although the basin was floored with a geometric design, the polychrome waves-like lines and their reflection over the water of the basin would have evoked a marine setting and created a general impression of lavishness and prosperity. The effect was enhanced by the representation on the wall of millet-stalks as a beneficial plant associated with fertility.

In the Maison des Protomés Section of the *Triconchos* at Thuburbo Maius, the rectangular pool in the middle and the semicircular basin opposite secondary *triclinium* XI were both decorated with marine motifs, which are very fragmentary. The two scenes were accompanied by a third motif decorating the semicircular basin along *porticus* II: it illustrates a hare and birds among bushes scattered over the ground⁷⁷. A similar motif may have decorated the south-eastern basin of the Maison de Nicentius at Thuburbo Maius: the mosaic, which showed some flowers when it was brought to light, is now completely destroyed⁷⁸. Covered with water as the source of all life, the elements of landscape would have emphasized the ideas of fertility and prosperity.

⁷⁵ Jeddi 1999, 222-26.

⁷⁶ CMT II.4, 44-5.

⁷⁷ CMT II.3, 37-8.

⁷⁸ CMT II.1, 43.

Some of the African basins listed in the catalogue were decorated with geometric motifs, which had simply an ornamental value⁷⁹.

A review of the pseudo-basins listed in the catalogue shows that a great part of them were mostly decorated with marine motifs as an immediately visual association with real water features.

A marine scene, for example, decorated the wall of the pseudo-basin in the *Maison des Nymphes* at Neapolis⁸⁰. The mosaic illustrated the head of Ocean with lobster-claws and antennae on his forehead in the midst of a sea featuring mullet, sea urchin, dolphin, lobster, grouper and sea bream. The motif was accompanied by an inscription, *Nympharum domus*, which seems to describe the pseudo-basin as the place of the nymphs, the marine creatures which inhabited both the sea and the fresh waters. The representation of the mask of Ocean seems to be appropriate here, as the god presided over the nymphs as his daughters.

A fanciful marine scene occurs again in the central pseudo-basin of the *Maison du Triomphe de Neptune* at Acholla (Pl. 11). The floor was decorated with fish, while Nereids riding sea-monsters covered the wall. The scene would have served also as a complementary motif to the Triumph of Neptune, which ornamented the opposite main *triclinium*. The smaller apses on either side of the pseudo-basin were decorated with an ornamental motif of vegetal scroll⁸¹.

As decorative apses, the pseudo-basins may have been decorated with a variety of other motifs not necessarily associated with water. The pseudo-basin of the *Maison d'Asinius Rufinus* at Acholla, for example, was decorated with a mosaic illustrating vine-scrolls growing out of a crater-vase placed in the middle; the foliage is laden with leaves and bunches of grapes (Pl. 3)⁸². As the same motif appears again in the threshold of the dining room on the opposite side, the pseudo-basin mosaic seems to enhance the allusion to the pleasures of drinking during the dinner.

⁷⁹ They are in the Édifice des Asclepiea at Althiburos, in the *Maison du Triconque* at Carthage, in the House of Africa at El Jem, in the *Maison au Grand Oecus* at Utica, and in the *Maison aux Travaux d'Hercule* at Volubilis.

⁸⁰ Dunbabin 1978, 265 n.1a; Darmon 1980, 84-90, 146-50.

⁸¹ Further marine subjects as ornamental motifs of the pseudo-basin seem to appear in the *Maison du Paon* at El Jem (*CMT* III.1, 44: the panel is very fragmentary) and in the *Maison des Deux Chasses* at Clupea, where Ennaïfer (1999, 236) speaks of fish motif.

⁸² Gozlan and Jeddi 2001, 35-7.

A variety of motifs ornamented the pseudo-basins of the Maison du Viridarium à Niches at Pupput⁸³. The fragmentary marine scenes, which decorated niches A and I, were appropriate motifs for a structure which recalled the architectural layout of the semicircular basin. Two other niches (D and H) were ornamented with birds among roses scattered over the ground (Pls. 147-148): the scene may evoke ideas of fertility and abundance. Niche F was decorated with a rare motif: two cocks faced each other across a green palm leaf; at the upper left corner is a bag bearing the inscription *1000 sextulae* (Pl. 149). The scene shows many parallels with a mosaic in the Museo Nazionale di Napoli and with a mosaic found in the Casa del Labirinto at Pompeii⁸⁴. The palm and the bag filled with money as an illustration of the kind of reward waiting for the winner clearly recalls the setting of the cock fighting. The Pupput mosaic may have commemorated a kind of spectacle that the house-owner sponsored for his fellow citizens or perhaps the theme of victory as it is represented on the mosaic was intended to bring good luck and happiness to the house where it was located.

3.8 Functions of the peristyle

As a combination of different spaces, the peristyle was a space in which a variety of activities took place. With its central court open to the sky, the peristyle fulfilled primarily a practical function, in allowing light and air into the surrounding rooms. The porticoed galleries, on the other hand, served as an elegant route of access toward a variety of rooms including *triclinia* and assembly-rooms. However, the columns which adorned the boundary of the central court, the garden which turned a plain court into a natural area, the elaborate waterworks, and the fine mosaics which carpeted the various components were the architectural features by which the peristyle fulfilled a further function, a symbolic one, in displaying the house-owner's aspirations to taste and wealth. The elegant layout may have been enhanced by the arrangement of sculptures, as the internal space of the peristyle would have offered ample area for their display. The use of decorative sculpture in courtyard has been documented in a number of houses and villas at Pompeii⁸⁵, but they have left virtually no trace in African domestic architecture⁸⁶.

⁸³ Ben Abed Ben Khader 1994a, 266-67.

⁸⁴ Both the mosaics are analysed by Bruneau (1965, 110 nos. 65, 67).

⁸⁵ Allison 1997, 339-41.

⁸⁶ A few examples of African domestic sculpture are discussed in the chapter 'Conclusions'.

The peristyle permitted the creation of distinctions between rooms of different functions in a variety of ways. For instance, variations in the *porticus* pavement, with the insertion of different or more elaborate motifs in front of the main *triclinium* emphasized the importance of the main reception room. The effect was enhanced by the placement of a basin in front of the room: the sparkling water seen through the ample doorways of the room would have had a refreshing and cooling effect in very hot weather and created a lavish view for the guests looking out onto the peristyle. A further decorative feature was the creation of a 'Rhodian' peristyle⁸⁷, with higher columns along the side of the main *triclinium*. An example of Rhodian peristyle in Africa is in the Maison aux Travaux d'Hercule at Volubilis. Because of its lavish layout, this part of the peristyle may have served as a complement to the *triclinium*. Perhaps, if more space was required during the dinner-party, the *porticus* beyond would have been used as a wider space for entertainers and servants. With that arrangement, the *triclinium*-peristyle area functioned as the central core of the house as the elegant reception suite.

In other moments of the day, when there was neither dinner party nor other occasions of entertainment, the peristyle served other functions. For the servants, the courtyard would have served as passageway and as work space for the performance of their domestic activities. The utilitarian character of the courtyard is shown by the arrangement of basins and pools in the central area: they could have provided water for laundry and other service needs. Water structures may have played also an important economic role as fish hatcheries. In the Maison de Castorius at Djemila, amphorae are embedded into the fabric of the walls of the central basin in such a way that only the open neck of the vessel remained visible: the small receptacles provided shady retreats and breeding areas for the fish.

The peristyle may have provided a spacious area for children's games. In a rare glimpse of children at play, Lucretius describes boys spinning around the columns of an *atrium* until they think the roof threatens to ruin down upon their heads⁸⁸; a similar image occurs in Vergil, who speaks of boys playing with a top in an empty court⁸⁹.

⁸⁷ Vitr. *De Arch.* 6.7.3.

⁸⁸ Lucret. 4.400-04.

⁸⁹ Verg. *Aen.* 7.378-80.

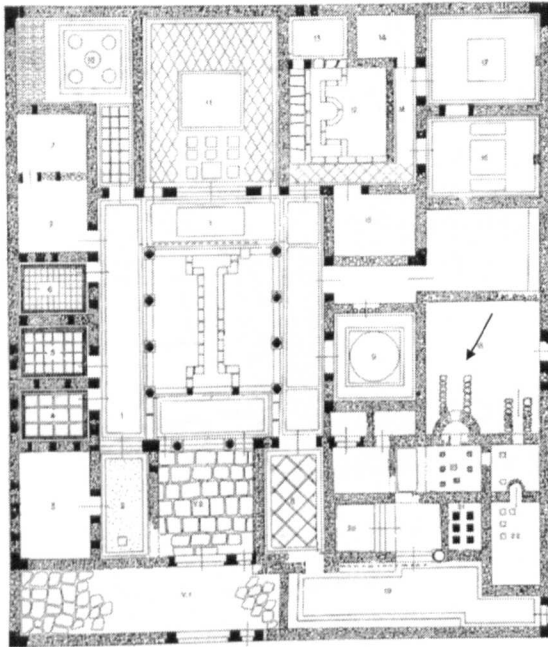
3.9 Conclusions

The analysis of the architectural and decorative elements of the African peristyle shows that the main role played by the courtyard was to provide a setting for the self-presentation of the house-owner. As the peristyle was central to the architectural design, the guest was thereby introduced to the overall splendour of the house: columns, basins of different shape, decorated mosaic floors, foliage, and sculptures were the elements by which the peristyle played its role in the reception of guests in the elite household.

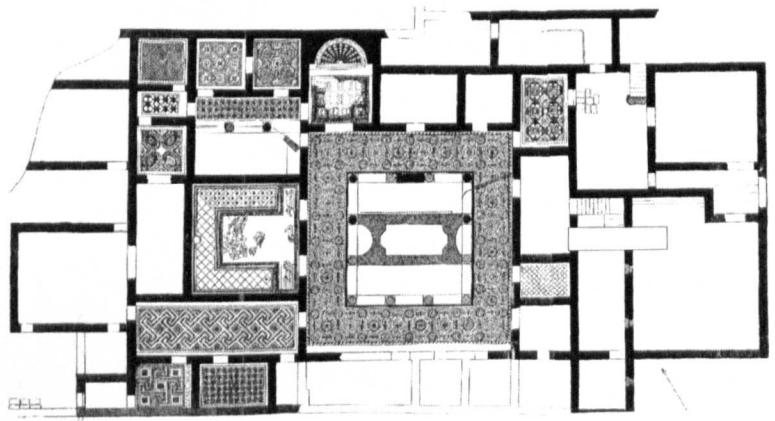
| Town | House | Dimensions | Area | Porticus | Basin |
|-------------|-----------------------------------|---------------|--------|--------------|-----------------------|
| Acholla | M. d'Asinius Rufinus | 13.65 x 10.7 | 146 | 4 | pseudo |
| Acholla | M. des Colonnes Rouges | 8 x 5.2 | 41.6 | 2 | |
| Acholla | M. du Triomphe de Neptune | 17.5 x 14.5 | 253.75 | 3+1 corridor | pseudo |
| Althiburos | Édifice des Asclepieia | 20.33 x 17.05 | 346.63 | 4 | semicircular |
| Althiburos | M. des Muses | 12 x 18 | 216 | 4 | oblong |
| Bulla Regia | M. d'Amphitrite | 14 x 20 | 280 | 4 | rectangular |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Chasse | 13 x 19 | 247 | 4 | square |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Nouvelle Chasse | 17.5 x 12.5 | 218.75 | 4 | rectangular |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Pêche | 22 x 16 | 352 | 4 | rectangular |
| Bulla Regia | M. n.3 | 12 x 15 | 180 | 4 | |
| Carthage | M. de la Volière | 15 x 17.5 | 262.5 | 4 | octagonal |
| Carthage | M. du Triconque | 16m wide | | 4 | square |
| Clupea | M. des Deux Chasses | 15.5 x 15 | 232.5 | 4 | pseudo |
| Djemila | M. d'Amphitrite | 13 x 11 | 143 | 4 | |
| Djemila | M. de Castorius | 10 x 8.6 | 86 | 3+1 corridor | semicircular |
| Djemila | M. d'Europe | 10 x 8.4 | 84 | 3 | semicircular + square |
| Djemila | M. de l'Âne | 15 x 13 | 195 | 3+1 corridor | semicircular + oblong |
| El Jem | House of Africa | unknown | | 4 | semicircular |
| El Jem | M. de la Procession Dionysiaque | 20 x 18 | 360 | 4 | |
| El Jem | M. des Dauphins | 22 x 23.5 | 517 | 4 | pseudo |
| El Jem | M. du Paon | 17.15 x 19.6 | 336.14 | 4 | pseudo |
| El Jem | Sollertiana domus | 14.5 x 17.4 | 252.3 | 4 | pseudo |
| Hadrumentum | M. des Masques | unknown | | 4 | |
| Hergla | M. aux deux Péristyles | 20m wide | | 3+1? | |
| Neapolis | M. des Nymphes | 25 x 20 | 500 | 4 | pseudo |
| Oudna | M. d'Ikarios | 20 x 14 | 280 | 4 | |
| Pupput | M. du Péristyle Figuré | 11 x 10 | 110 | 4 | |
| Pupput | M. du Triclinium en Noir et Blanc | 13 x 12 | 156 | 4 | |

Table 3.1: Peristyle

| | | | | | |
|----------------|--------------------------------------|---------------|--------|------|----------------------------|
| Pupput | M. du Viridarium à Niches | 12.5m wide | | 4 | pseudo |
| Silin | Villa du Taureau | 25.2 wide | | 3+1? | |
| Tagiura | Villa della Gara delle Nereidi | 13.5 wide | | 3+1? | |
| Thaenae | M. de Dionysos | 9.8 x 8.2 | 80.36 | 3 | |
| Thugga | M. de Dionysos et d'Ulysse | 8.5 x 8 | 68 | 4 | oblong |
| Thugga | M. de Vénus | unknown | | 4 | rectangular |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. aux Communs | 12.1 x 11.5 | 139.15 | 4 | |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. de Bacchus et Ariane | 11.5 x 10.5 | 120.75 | 4 | semicircular |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. de Neptune | 20.3 x 13.95 | 283.18 | 4 | semicircular |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. de Nicentius | 12.5 x 10 | 125 | 4 | semicircular |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. des Animaux Liès | 9 x 9 | 81 | 4 | |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. des Palmes | 7.5 x 6.6 | 49.5 | 4 | semicircular |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. des Protomés-Sect. Protomai | 8.5 x 8.6 | 73.1 | 4 | |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. des Protomés-Sect. Triconchos | 16 x 12 | 192 | 4 | semicircular + oblong |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. du Char de Vénus | 11 x 10.6 | 116.6 | 4 | |
| Utica | M. au Grand Oecus | 19 x 25 | 475 | 4 | semicircular + oblong |
| Utica | M. de la Cascade | 19.93 x 13.78 | 274.63 | 4 | semicircular + oblong |
| Utica | M. de la Chasse | 7.08 x 9.64 | 68.25 | 4 | |
| Utica | Maison H | 14m wide | | 4 | semicircular |
| Utica | M. Ouest | 13.2 x 11.15 | 147.18 | 4 | rectangular |
| Volubilis | M. à la Mosaïque de Vénus | 13 x 14 | 182 | 4 | semicircular + oblong |
| Volubilis | M. aux Travaux d'Hercule | 17 x 17 | 289 | 4 | square |
| Volubilis | M. de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons | 8.78 x 16.75 | 147.06 | 4 | rectangular |
| Volubilis | M. de Flavius Germanus | 10.4 x 14 | 146.6 | 4 | semicircular + rectangular |
| Volubilis | M. de l'Éphèbe | 15 x 28 | 420 | 4 | rectangular |
| Volubilis | M. d'Orphée | 10 x 4 | 40 | | rectangular |
| Volubilis | M. des Néréides | 16 x 13 | 208 | 4 | semicircular + rectangular |



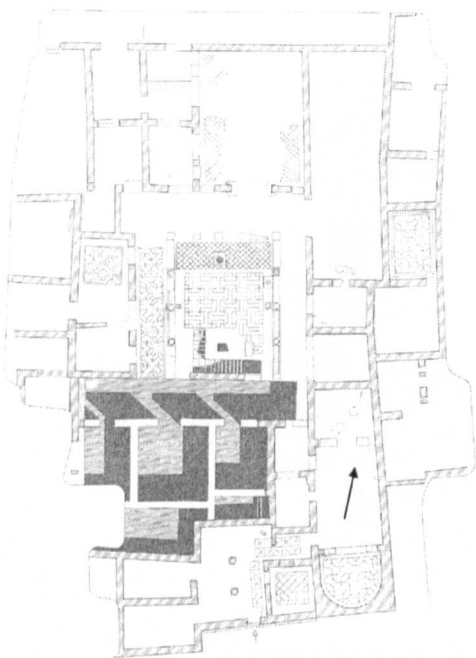
1. Volubilis, Maison à la Mosaïque de Venus



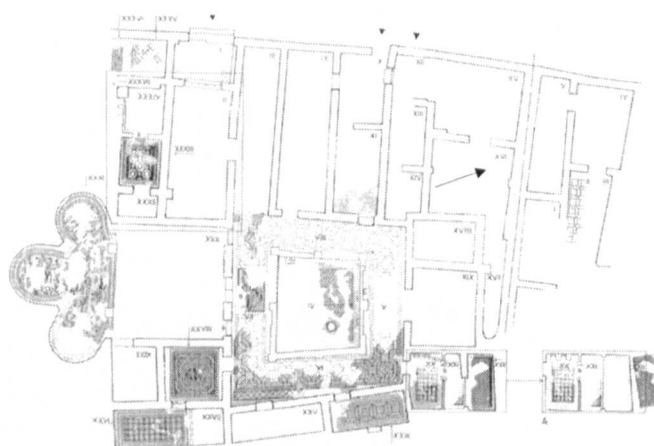
2. Althiburos, Maison des Muses

0 5 10m

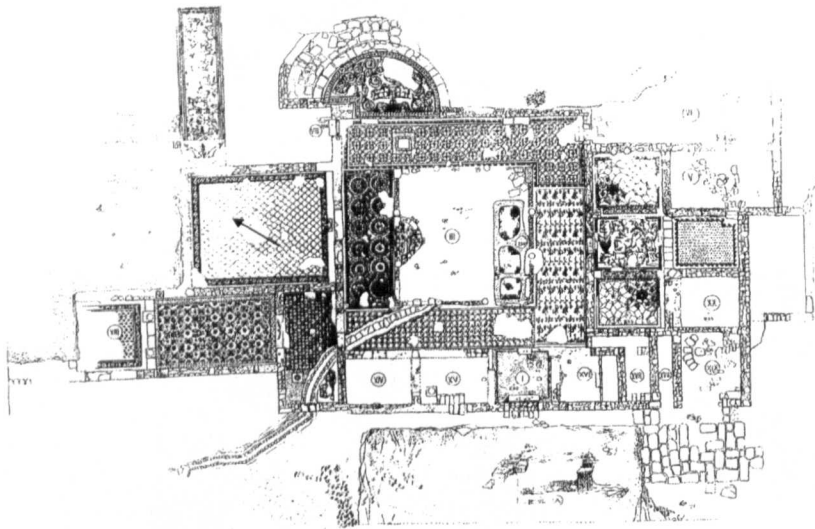
Table 3.2. Peristyle in the Romano-African house



6. Bulla Regia, Maison n.3



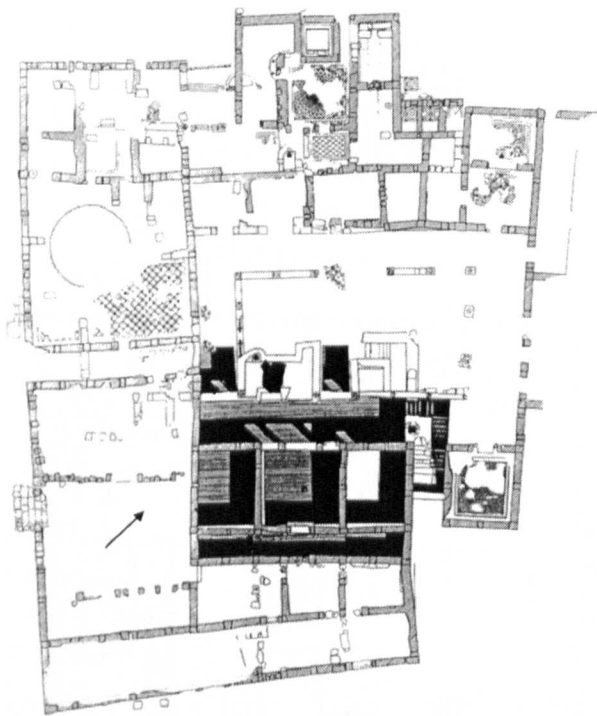
7. Thuburbo Maius, Maison du Char de Vénus



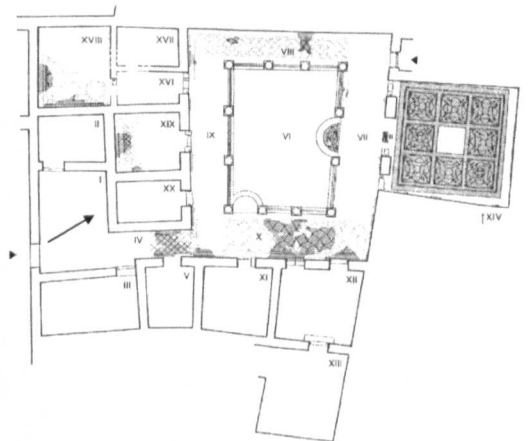
8. Clupea, Maison des Deux Chasses



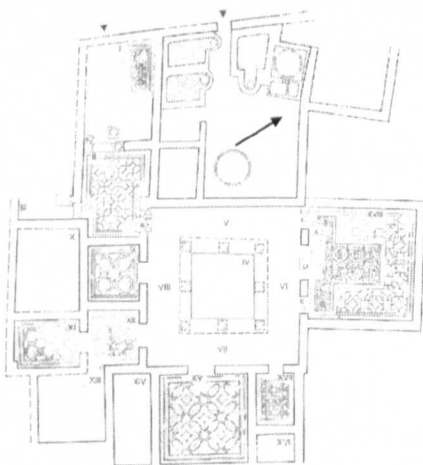
9. Thuburbo Maius, Maison de Bacchus et Ariane



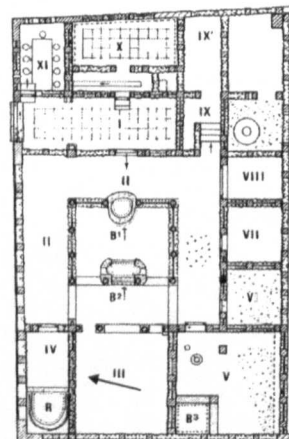
12. Bulla Regia, Maison d'Amphitrite



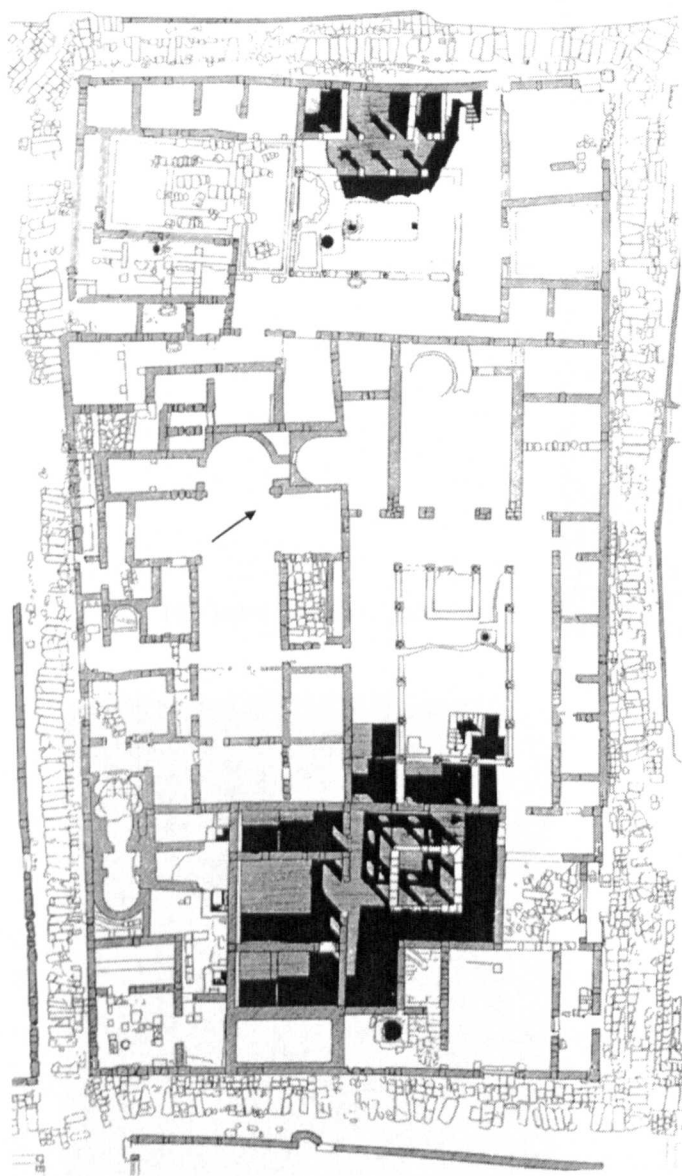
13. Thuburbo Maius, Maison de Nicentius



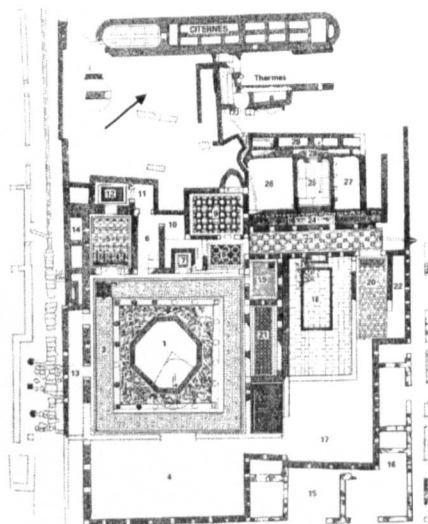
14. Thuburbo Maius, Maison des Animaux Liés



15. Djemila, Maison d'Amphitrite

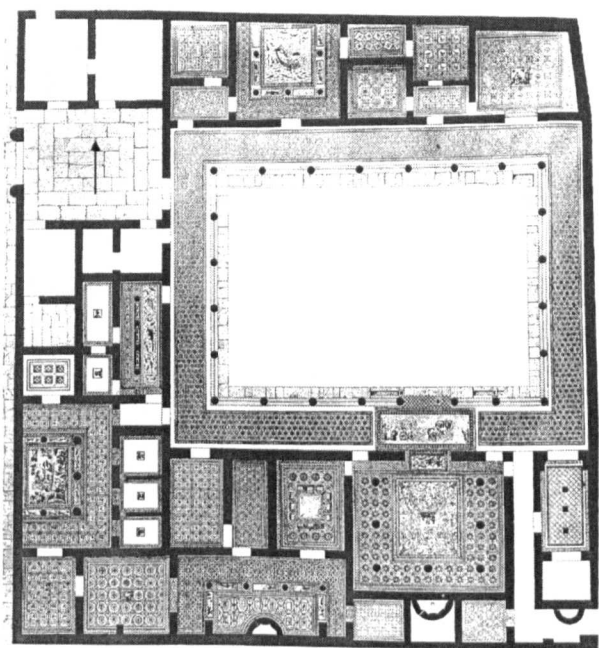


16. Bulla Regia, Insula de la Chasse

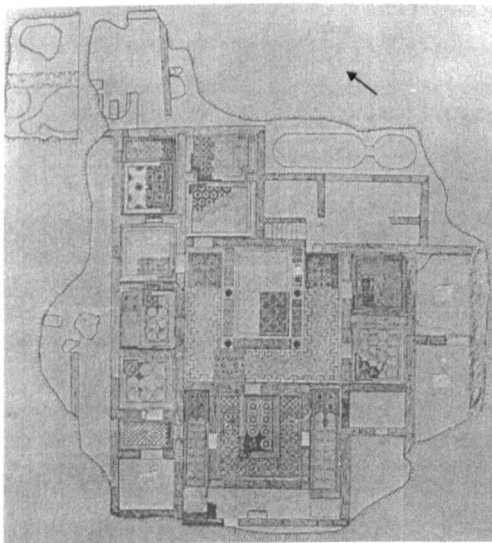


17. Carthage, Maison de la Volière

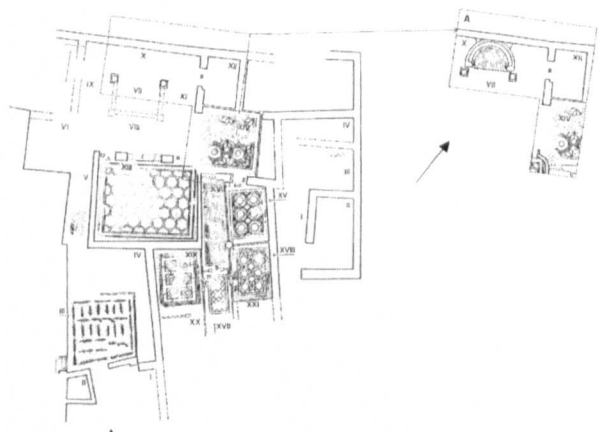
18. Oudna, Maison d'Ikarios

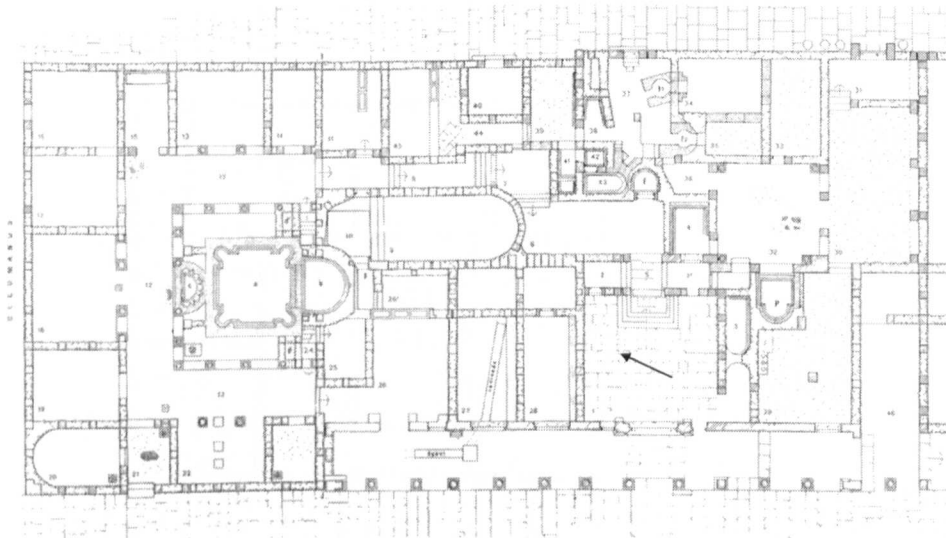


19. Thaenae, Maison de Dionysos

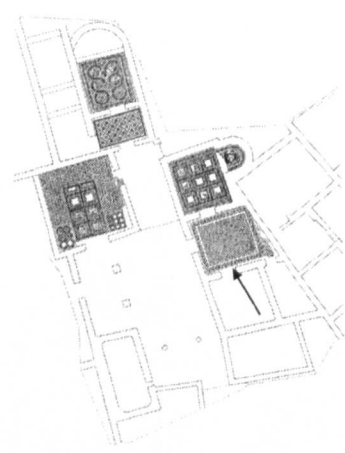


20. Thuburbo Maius, Maison des Palmes

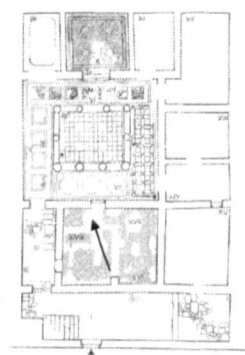




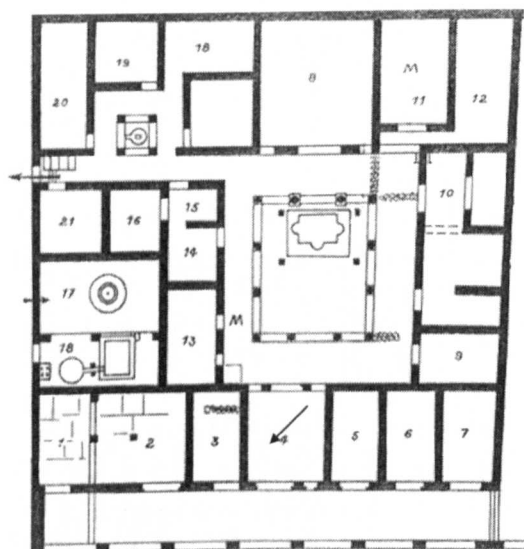
21. Djemila, Maison d'Europe



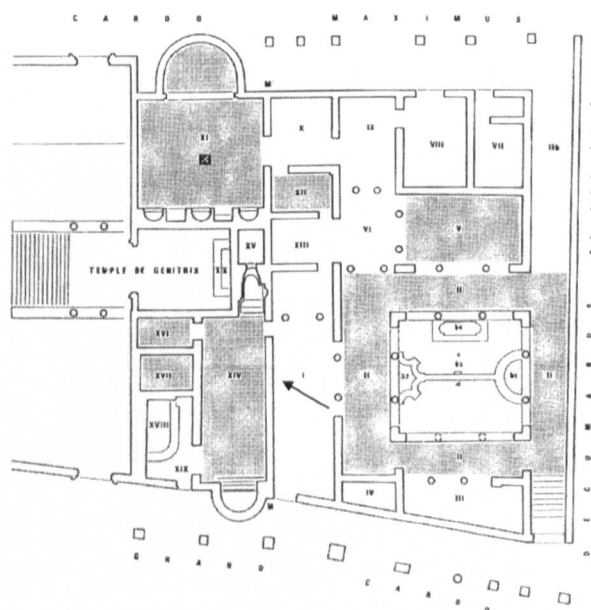
22. Acholla, Maison des Colonnes Rouges



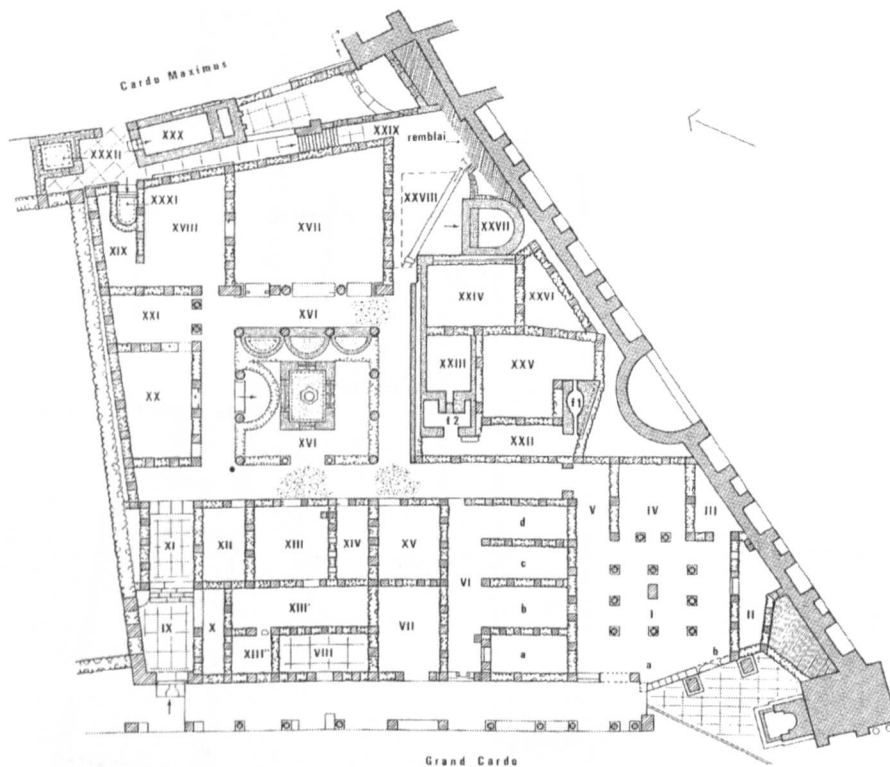
23. Utica, Maison de la Chasse



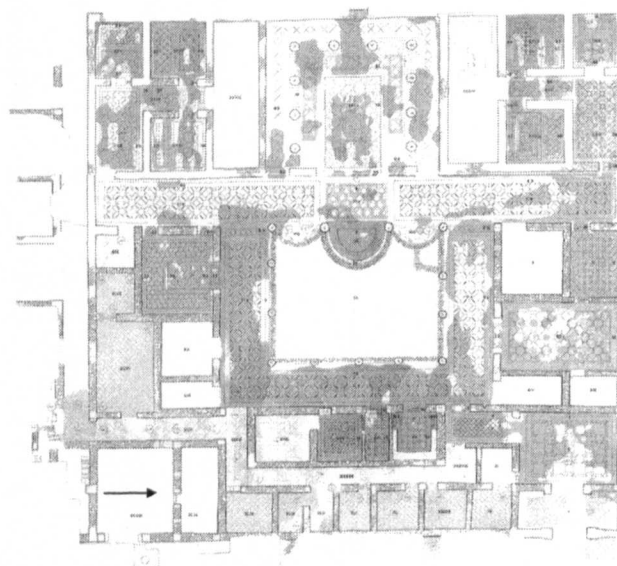
24. Volubilis, Maison des Néréides



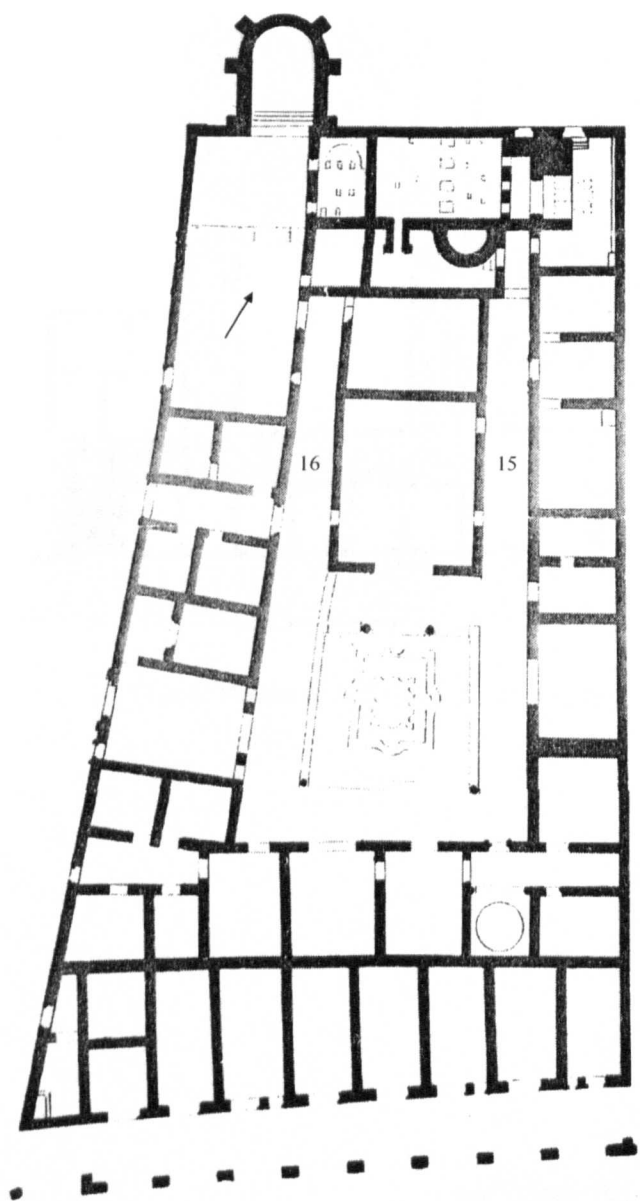
25. Djemila, Maison de l'Âne



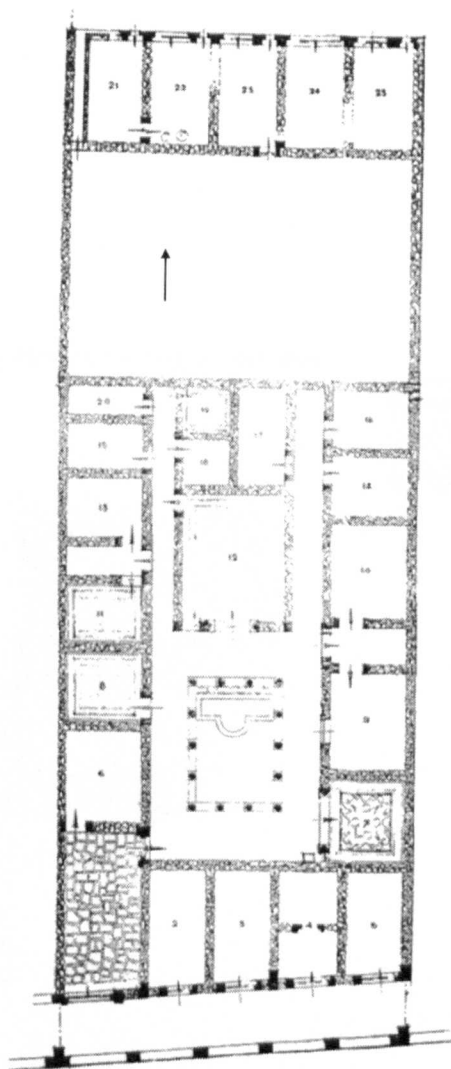
26. Djemila, Maison de Castorius



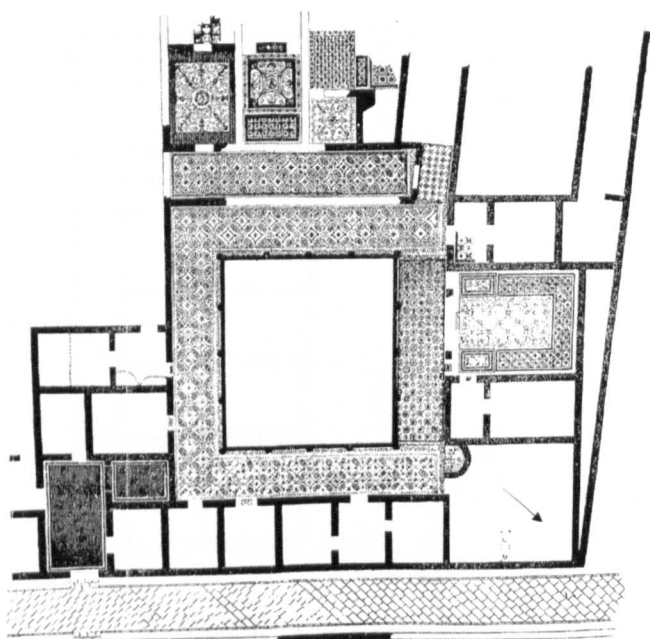
27. Acholla, Maison du Triomphe de Neptune



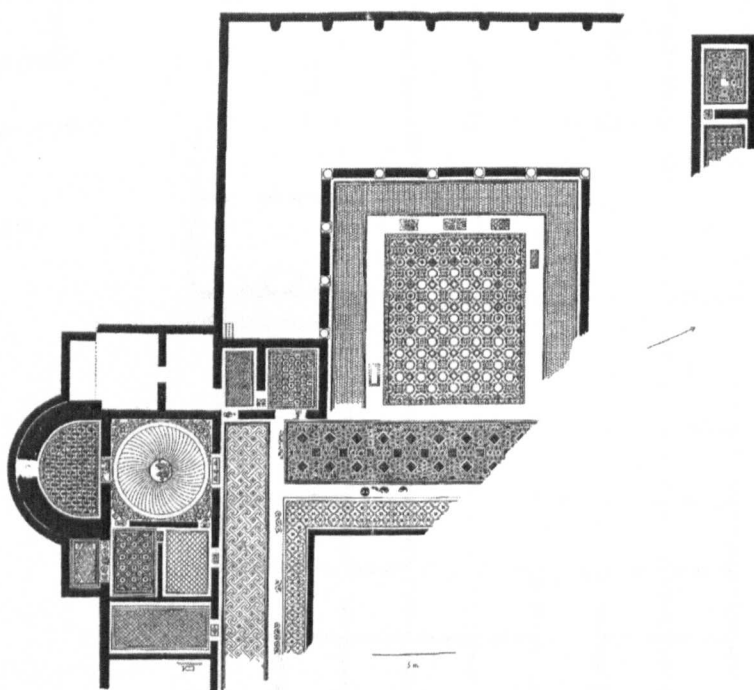
28. Volubilis, Maison aux Travaux d'Hercule



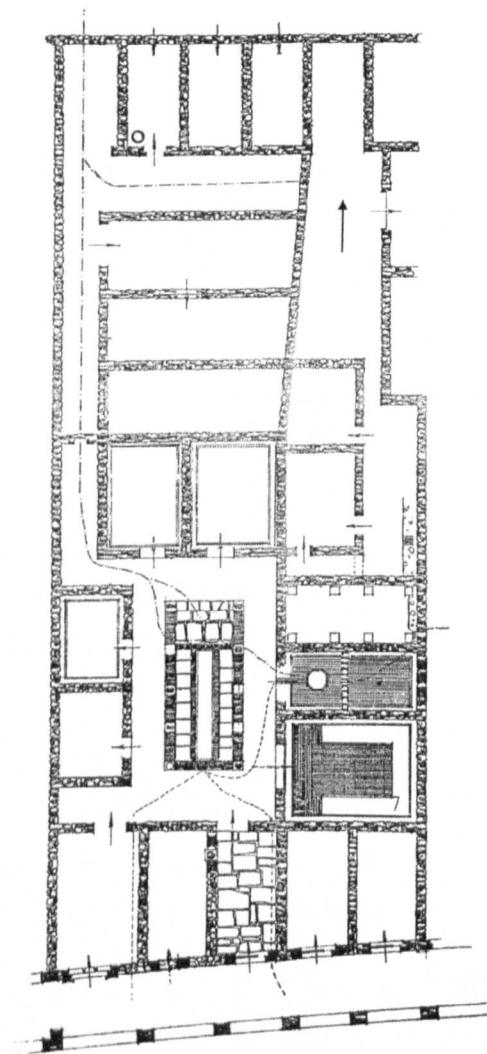
29. Volubilis, Maison de Flavius Germanus



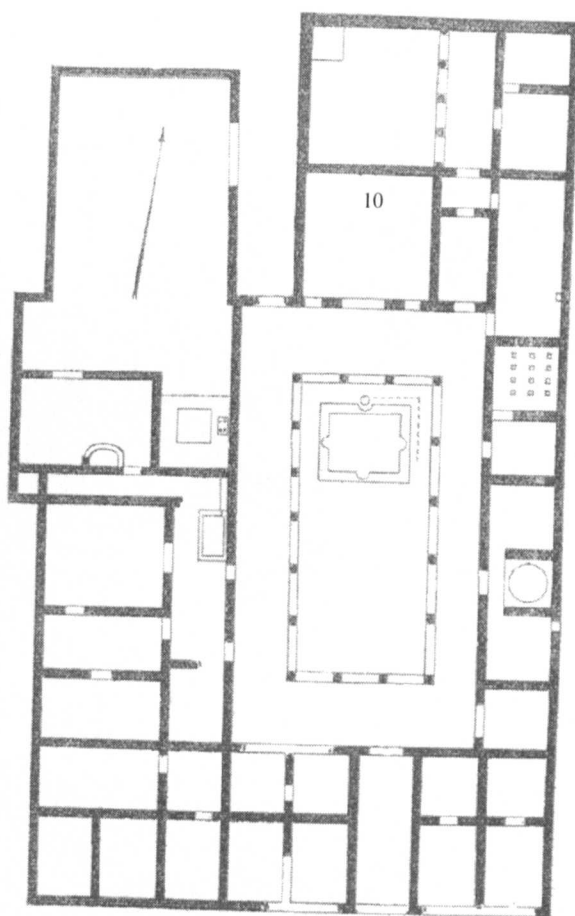
30. El Jem, Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque



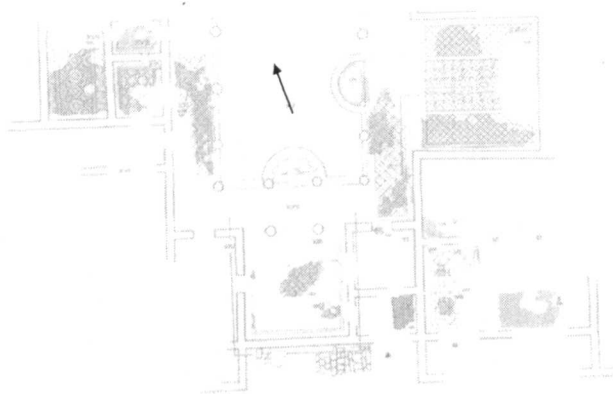
31. Hadrumetum, Maison des Masques



32. Volubilis, Maison de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons



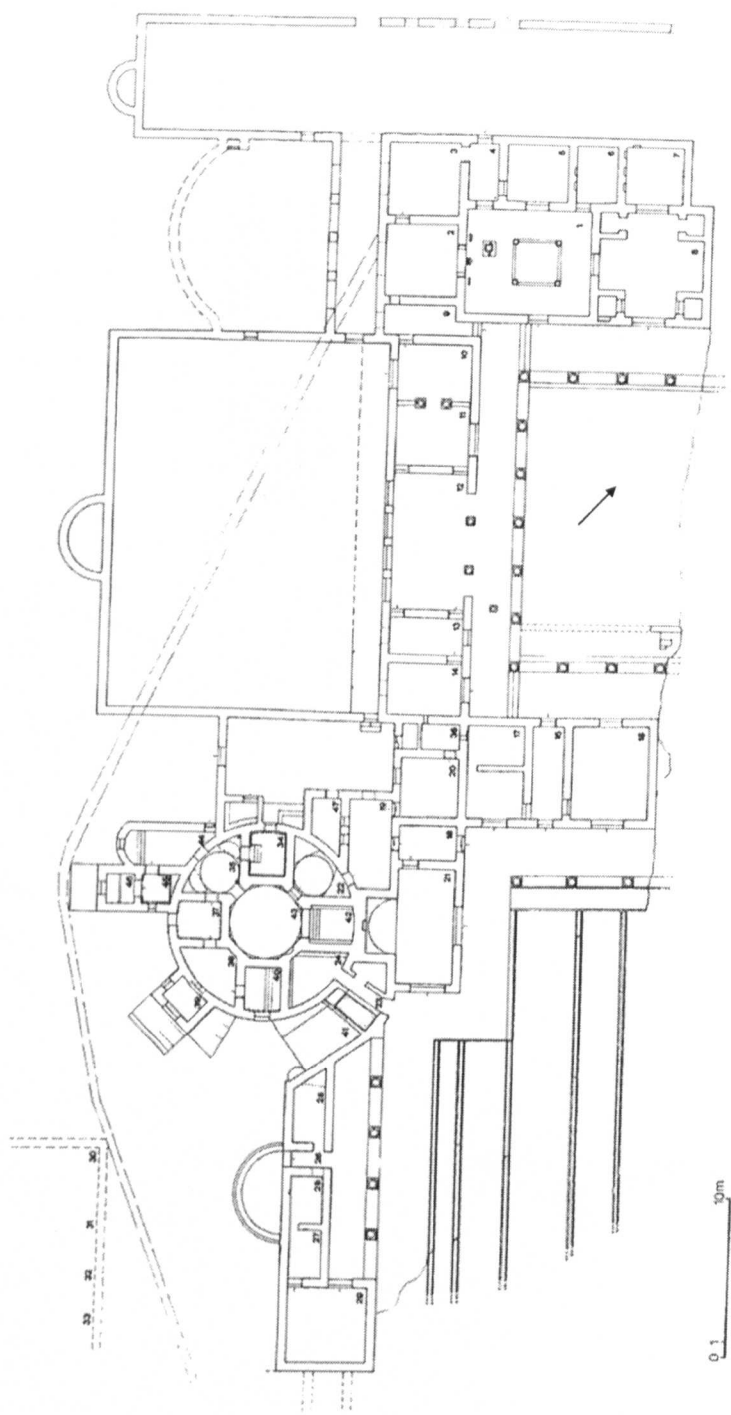
33. Volubilis, Maison de l'Éphèbe



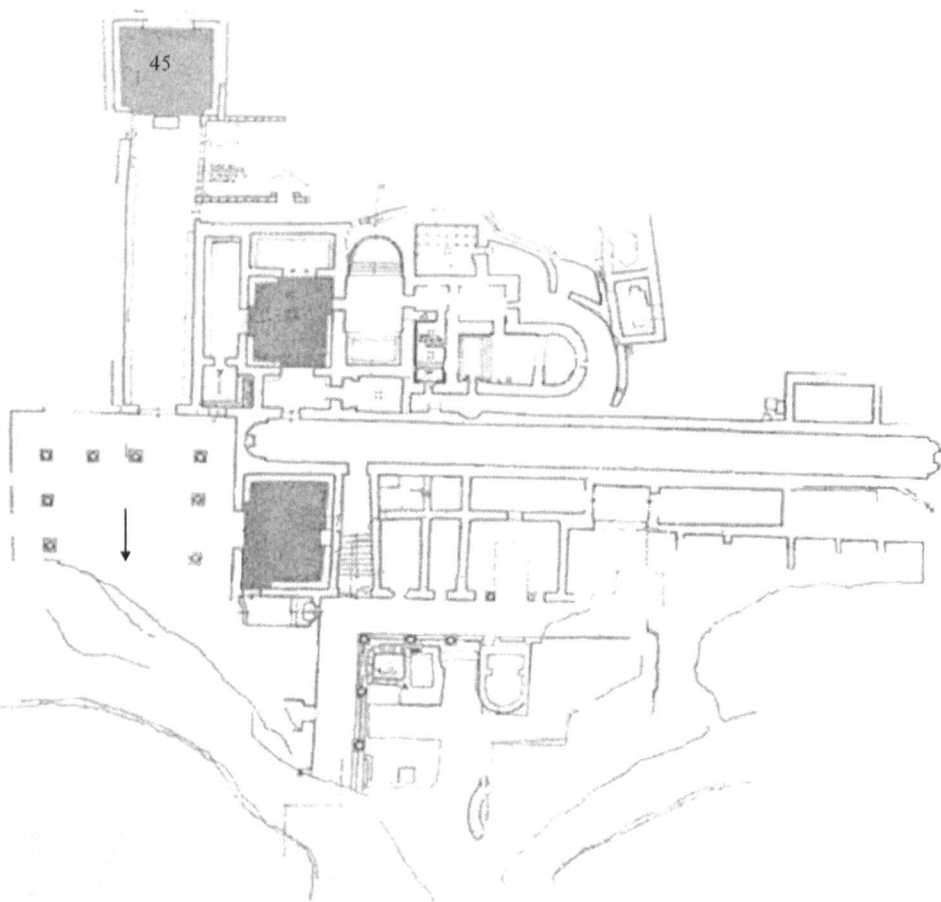
34. Utica, Maison H



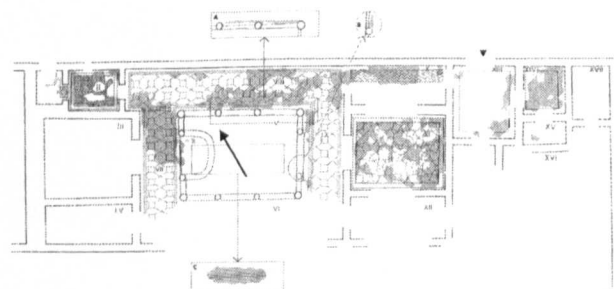
35. Hergla, Maison aux Deux Péristyles



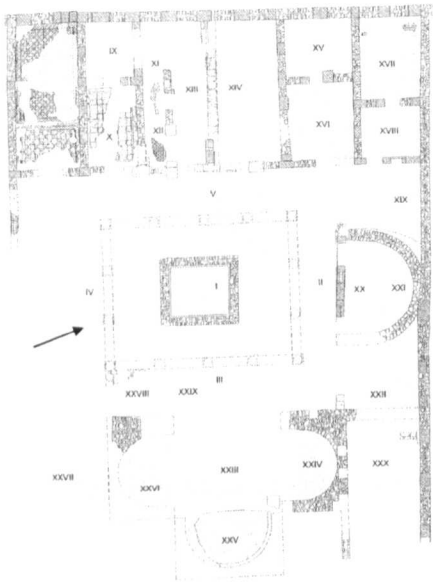
36. Silin, Villa du Taureau



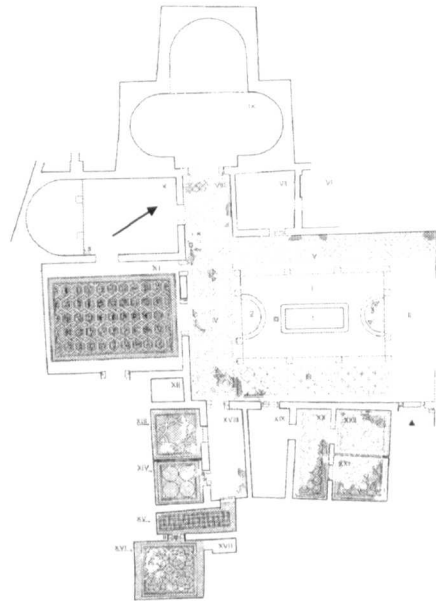
37. Tagiura, Villa della Gara delle Nereidi



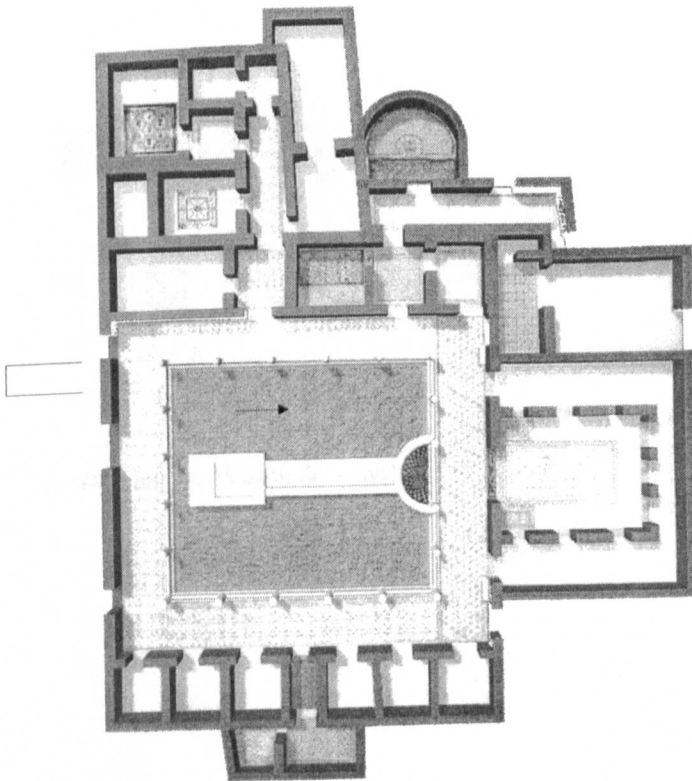
38. Utica, Maison Ouest



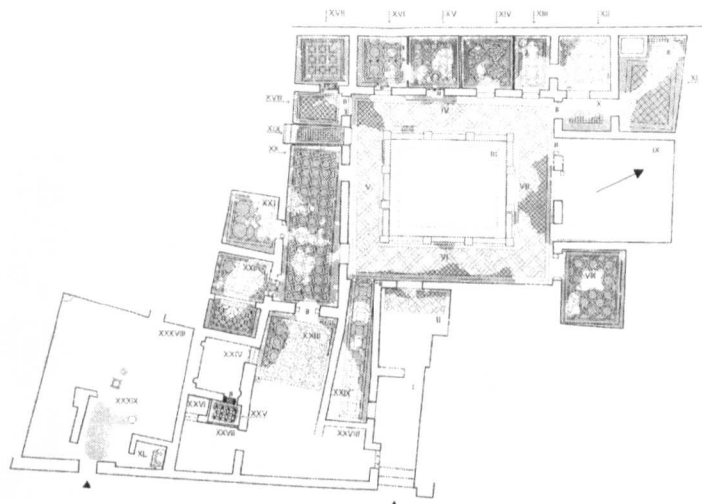
39. Carthage, Maison du Triconque



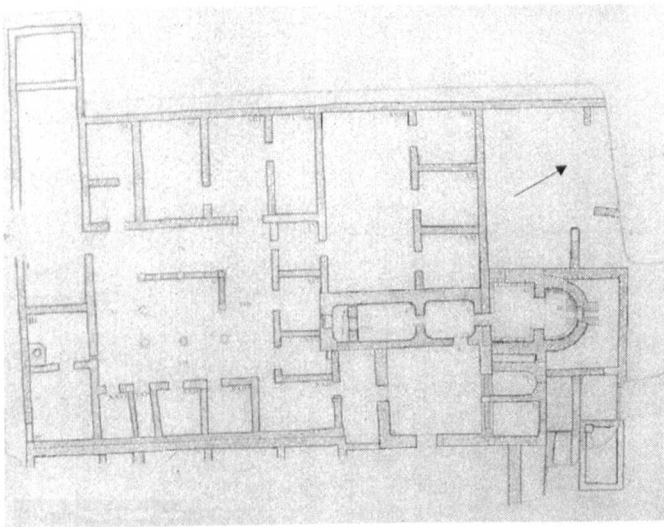
40. Thuburbo Maius, Maison des Protomés
section of the *Triconchos*



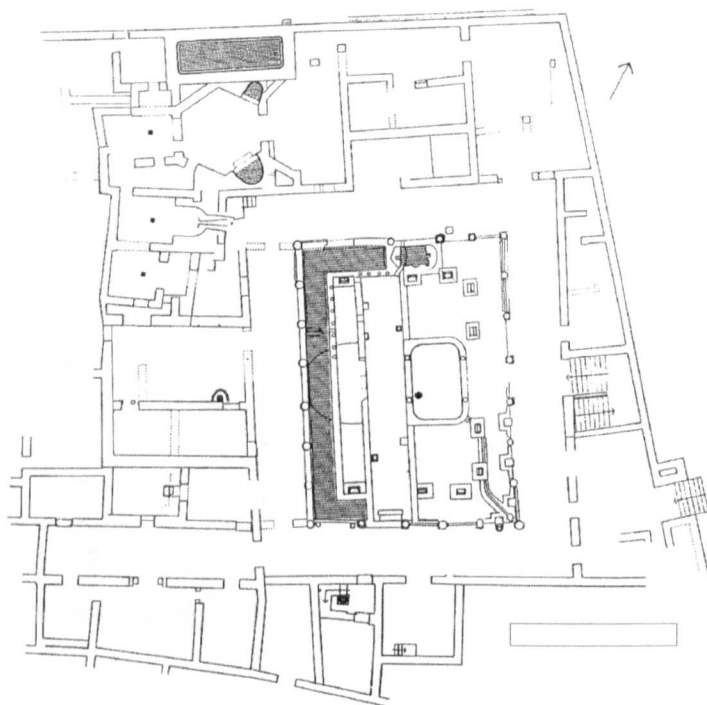
41. El Jem, House of Africa



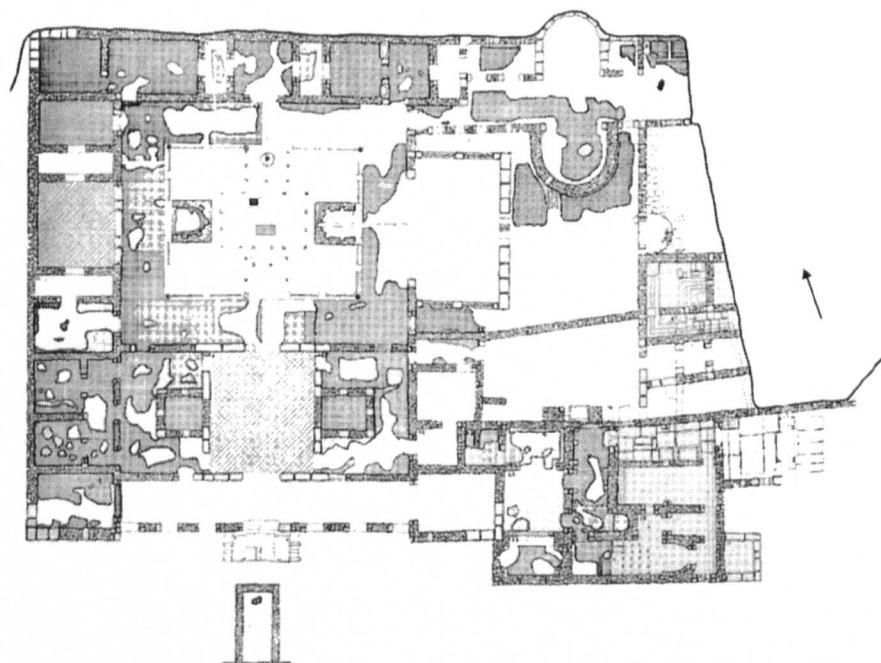
46. Thuburbo Maius, Maison aux Communs



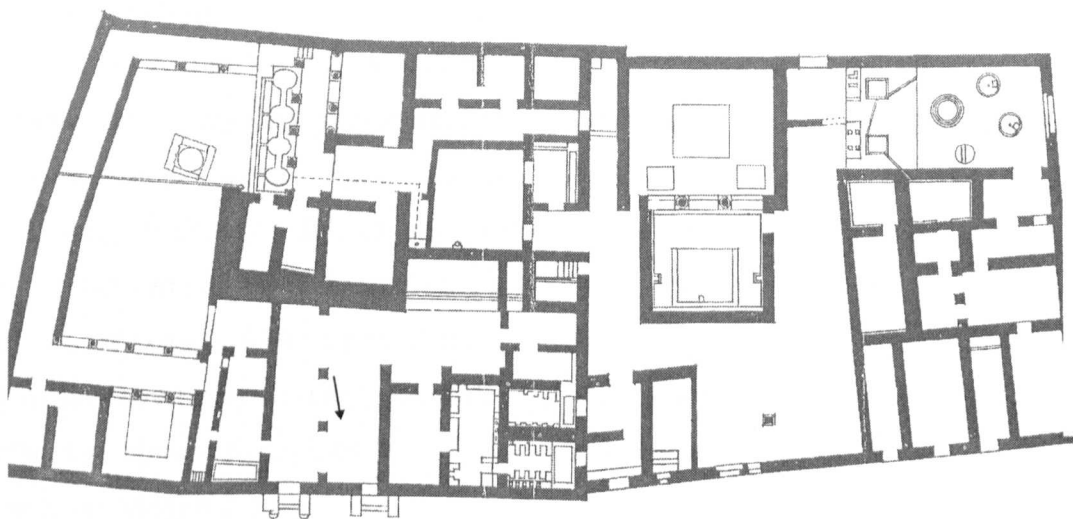
47. Puppit, Maison du Péristyle Figuré



51. Bulla Regia, Maison de la Pêche: ground floor



52. Althiburos, Édifice des Asclepieia



53. Volubilis, Maison d'Orphée

Chapter 4

Secondary courtyard

4.1 Introduction

A number of Romano-African houses had one or two courts along with the peristyle. Because of its tiny dimensions and architectural layout, this court is often described by modern scholars as an *atriolum*¹ or pseudo-*atrium*². Such a terminology is misleading, as it suggests falsely a link with the traditional pattern of the Italic *atrium*. The position of the African court and the activities which were presumably carried out there indicate that its role was different from the Italic *atrium*.

That tiny court may be designated by the term 'secondary courtyard', which lays stress upon the unpretentious character of the subsidiary court with respect to the peristyle as the main courtyard.

4.2 Architectural layout

A review of the African secondary courtyards shows a variety of architectural and decorative features. The subsidiary court may appear as an unpaved space completely open to the sky. In the Maison du Triomphe de Neptune at Acholla, for instance, the secondary courtyards on either side of the colonnaded *triclinium* occupied a small area, which do not show any trace of paving or other forms of embellishment (Table 4.2 n.1). Further examples of court without any decorative pattern occur again in the Maison d'Orphée at Volubilis (Table 4.2 n.12), and in the Maison de Bacchus et Ariane (XLII: Table 4.2 n.3) and in the Maison aux Communs (XXXIII-XXXVIII/XXXIX: Table 4.2 n.4), both at Thuburbo Maius, but here the open-air spaces lay in the sector of the outbuildings.

The barren appearance of the secondary courtyard was sometimes significantly altered by the introduction of decorative items such as floor mosaics, basins, and columns. In the Édifice des Asclepieia at Althiburos, for example, secondary courtyard 36 showed an irregular form because of the encroachment of apse 33 upon the open space, which created a small cul-de-sac (37). However, the mosaic flooring the court would have

¹ Gauckler 1896; Etienne 1960, 123-24; Hales 2003, 203.

² Darmon 1980, 15-8.

improved the irregular outline of the architectural space (Table 4.2 n.5). In the *Maison de Bacchus et Ariane* at Thuburbo Maius, too, the floor mosaic of secondary courtyard XVII would have created a more elegant setting (Table 4.2 n.2).

Further forms of decoration in the subsidiary court were structural elements, such as basins and columns, which are drawn from the arrangement of the peristyle. In the *Maison de Bacchus et Ariane* at Thuburbo Maius, for instance, secondary court XXXIII was embellished by a semicircular basin, which looked out onto the central entrance into *triclinium* XXX (Table 4.2 n.4). In the *Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus* at Volubilis, the inner area of court 12 was occupied by a rectangular basin showing a more complex design along one of its short sides: two rectangular projections were placed on either side of a semicircular recess (Table 4.2 n.6).

The resemblance to the peristyle is more pronounced in the secondary courts which were ornamented with columns on one or more sides of the central area. In the *Maison de Lucius Verus* at El Jem, for example, two columns framed one side of secondary courtyard 19, while the other sides were enclosed within walls. In the *Sollertiana Domus* at the same town, an L-shaped *porticus* framed court XX on its western and southern sides (Table 4.2 n.7). The same arrangement may have occurred in the *Maison au Grand Oecus* at Utica: the poor conditions of the area make it uncertain whether the open area XVIII was surrounded by a colonnade on two or three sides. In the *Maison d'Orphée* at Volubilis, secondary courtyard 22 was enclosed within a wall on the eastern side and with colonnades on the short sides (Table 4.2 n.12). The southern *porticus* joined a complex water structure (Pl. 232).

In the *Maison d'Ikarios* at Oudna all the secondary courts were ornamented with columns, which however show different arrangements (Table 4.2 n.14). The open area of secondary courtyards 7-21 was surrounded by columns on three sides; court 17 was decorated with a row of four columns placed in the middle of the whole area; and in court 30 the four columns surrounded one side of the open area, while two semi-pilasters on either side of a semicircular basin framed the fourth side enclosed within wall. The combination of basin with incomplete *porticus* occurs again in the *Maison de la Cascade* at Utica (Table 4.2 n.8). Here the basin of secondary courtyard XIII was surrounded by a L-shaped *porticus* supported by two columns on each side; on the northern side the columns framed the entrance into secondary *triclinium* XII. On the

opposite side, the central area of courtyard XVI was embellished with a rectangular basin in the middle and with columns only on the short sides³.

In some examples, the secondary courtyard seems a true minor peristyle with rooms arrayed around its covered ambulatory. In court 1 of the Villa du Taureau at Silin, for example, the four columns framed the central open space with inner basin and created a porticoed gallery, which was surrounded on three sides by rooms of different function (Table 4.2 n.20). Similarly in courts A1-A2 of the Maison des Nymphes at Neapolis, four columns framed a basin edged with curved recesses; rooms were arranged around three sides of the covered ambulatory (Pl. 123; Table 4.2 n.10). A more elegant arrangement occurs in the secondary courtyard XXXII of the Maison du Paon at El Jem: the columns were inserted within a masonry structure ending into two pseudo-basins (Pl. 96), which looked onto two reception rooms (*triclinium* XXXI and assembly-room XXXIII); a third room (XXXIV) opened onto the northern *porticus* of the court, but its function is uncertain because of the badly-preserved conditions of the structure (Table 4.2 n.15).

In the Maison de la Chasse at Bulla Regia, the subterranean courtyard functioned as a true peristyle with its colonnade on four sides (Pl. 35), with its axial relationship with the *triclinium*, which was emphasized by the pseudo-basin placed in front of the central entrance into the dining room, and with its opening into *cubicula* (Table 4.2 n.16).

The secondary courtyard of the Romano-African house was either entered directly from the peristyle or separated from the main courtyard by a corridor or anteroom. In the Maison de la Chasse at Bulla Regia, for example, peristyle and secondary courtyard 17 on the ground floor communicated with each other by two large openings along the central axis (Table 4.2 n.21). In the Villa du Taureau at Silin too, the secondary courtyard 16 led directly onto the peristyle through a small opening that, however, created two almost separate tracts within the house. Other examples are in the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna (courts 7 and 17).

The arrangement of two distinct sections organised around these primary and secondary central courts was often created by means of intervening corridors or anterooms, which

³ The courtyard was initially surrounded by columns on three sides, but with the enlargement of room XVIIIa the adjoining southern *porticus* was eliminated.

separated the peristyle from the smaller court. In the *Maison de Bacchus et Ariane* at Thuburbo Maius, for instance, secondary courtyards XVII-XXXIII were both separated from the peristyle by a L-shaped corridor (XIV/XVI), which permitted the creation of three distinct but mutually communicating areas (Table 4.2 n.2). Further examples are in the *Sollertiana Domus* at El Jem (XX: Table 4.2 n.7) and in the *Maison d'Ikarios* at Oudna (courts 21 and 30: Table 4.2 n.14).

4.3 Decoration

A review of the secondary courtyards listed in Table 4.1 shows a variety of paving-types, which suited the different functions a subsidiary court may have served.

4.3.1 Figured motifs

The only examples of a secondary court completely floored by mosaics occur in the *Maison d'Ikarios* at Oudna. The open area of court 17 was decorated with a marine scene, which illustrated two boats with men in a sea filled with a variety of fish. A different subject-matter ornamented the colonnaded ambulatory. The three panels set between the columns represented a panther chasing a horse, a stag and a gazelle; the covered gallery was carpeted with a vine-rinceau framing a row of panels each containing a bird (Pl. 135)⁴. The combination of marine motifs with animal scenes occurs again in court 7. The floor mosaic of the central area represented naked men fishing with nets in a sea full of fish; the scene was accompanied by the triumph of Neptune, but only traces of a chariot drawn by a pair of sea-horses are left. The spaces between the columns were ornamented with six panels representing a range of animals, some in combat, others in pairs facing each other⁵. The *porticus* was decorated with a geometric design. In both courts 7 and 17, the figured mosaics seem to re-create the architectural layout of the peristyle with its components (garden and basin); however, they may have also served to suggest a natural setting, which was appropriate to an open space. Animal scenes as a decorative element of the spaces between columns appear again in courts 21-30 of the same *domus*: respectively leopards chasing ibex and stag and pairs of beasts in combat (panther and stag; lion and horse; tiger and ibex). The open area, on the contrary, was decorated with rural scenes. The mosaic panel in court

⁴ Gauckler 1896, 197-99; Dunbabin 1978, 265 n.1c.

⁵ Gauckler 1896, 194-96; Dunbabin 1978, 65, 265 n.1b.

21 illustrates most unusually a range of agricultural activities⁶. In the centre, a shepherd stands at the door of a small farm watching his flock; a ploughman guides two oxen; a horse drinks from a well; a man drives a laden mule. Further scenes are represented around the edge all facing outwards in order that viewers approaching the court from different sides were able to view them right side up. The scenes illustrate hunters riding on horses and hunting a boar; a man disguised in a goat-skin chasing partridges into a net; a naked man hunting a boar; shepherds keeping their flocks; and a man placing twigs in a tree to catch birds (Pl. 135). The mosaic in court 30 illustrated pastoral scenes, birds, and fish included in foliate medallions, but the mosaic panel has been mostly destroyed⁷.

In the Maison de la Cascade at Utica, the basin in court XVI was ornamented with a marine scene, which was a popular ornament for water features. Two naked fishers on a boat net a variety of very large fish. Marine motifs were repeated on the floor of the upper panel, which permitted the fall of water into the basin: fish of different species appeared in a sea represented by zigzag lines (Pl. 201). The representation of various marine species was accompanied by a different subject-matter on the wall: the mosaic illustrated two peacocks confronted across sprays of roses⁸. The image of the peacock seems to reinforce the ideas of prosperity and fertility that the marine motifs on the floor evoke. The evocation of such ideas by the combination of different motifs occurs again in court XXXIII of the Maison de Bacchus et Ariane at Thuburbo Maius. A realistic fishing scene floored corridor XXXII, which overlooked secondary *triclinium* XXX (Pl. 159): the fragmentary panel shows a man sitting on a rock who is fishing with a line; two men standing on a boat net fish while a third one is rowing; and fish of different species are scattered in a sea rendered by zigzag lines⁹. The scene is accompanied by a fanciful marine scene, which decorated the basin of the adjoining court XXXIII (Pl. 161). The semicircular basin was floored with the representation of the head of Ocean: his beard becomes at each end acanthus-foliage, which spreads over the ground. The motif was balanced by a further marine scene on the wall of the basin: Nereids being

⁶ Gauckler 1896, 200-02; Dunbabin 1978, 51, 65, 112, 265 n. 1f; Fantar et al. 1994, 97-8; Blanchard-Lemée et al. 1996, 173; Yacoub 1996, 111-12 A105; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 521 fig. 67, 525 fig. 153, 537 fig. 366.

⁷ Gauckler 1896, 205-06; Dunbabin 1978, 266 n. 1j.

⁸ Sear 1977, 166 n. 230; Dunbabin 1978, 17, 276 n.9; Fantar et al. 1994, 22 (fig.); Yacoub 1995, 174; CMTI.1, 27-9, 53-6; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 535 fig. 317.

⁹ CMTI.4, 59-63.

carried on the back of sea-monsters; men fishing and Eros in front. A motif belonging to a different category appeared on the rim of the water structure: the fragmentary mosaic represented a variety of food and animals such as partridges, artichokes, and baskets¹⁰. The combination of *xenia*-motifs with realistic and fanciful marine scenes is again an evocation of prosperity and fertility.

4.3.2 Geometric designs

The majority of the secondary courtyards listed in Table 4.1 were floored with simple geometric designs, which contrasted with the lavish decoration of the peristyle and underlined the lesser importance of the subsidiary court. Secondary courtyard XXXa of the Maison de la Cascade at Utica, for instance, was floored with a *semis* of black florets in *opus lithostroton*¹¹: the use of one colour is evidence for the utilitarian function of the court by comparison with the more lavish polychrome mosaics paving the other open-air spaces of the *domus*. Further examples of monochrome mosaics have been documented both at Neapolis and at Utica. In the Maison des Nymphes at Neapolis, court A1 was ornamented with a mosaic of white *tesserae* laid to design lozenges and squares¹². A similarly simple mosaic decorated the peristyle of the Maison des Chapiteaux Historiés at Utica: white *tesserae* were laid in a pattern of parallel rows in the central court V and in an irregular way in *porticus* VII (Pl. 207)¹³.

In the Sollertiana Domus at El Jem, the L-shaped *porticus* XXI of secondary court XX was carpeted with a richer composition of tangent octagons forming four-pointed stars (Pl. 105)¹⁴. However, the use of black and white by contrast with the polychromy of the figured scene in the adjoining *triclinium* (XXIV) highlighted the unpretentious character of the court. Compositions of octagons appear again in *porticus* XV of court XVI in the Maison de la Cascade at Utica (Pl. 205)¹⁵ and in court A2 of the Maison des Nymphes at Neapolis¹⁶. Variations come from the layout of squares formed by the octagons: filling the compartments in the Utica example; set between the octagons in the Neapolis mosaic. The other two covered galleries of the Utica courtyard were floored with an equally simple design of circles and poised squares (Pl. 204).

¹⁰ Dunbabin 1978, 151 n.76, 274 n.1b; Yacoub 1982, 95-6; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 1990, 15-6; Ennaïfer 1990, 23; *CMT* II.4, 63-6

¹¹ *CMT* I.1, 49.

¹² Darmon 1980, 39 n.7.

¹³ *CMT* I.1, 88-9.

¹⁴ Foucher 1961, 19; Gozlan 1992, 157; *CMT* III.1, 19.

¹⁵ *CMT* I.1, 42-3 n.45.

¹⁶ Darmon 1980, 92-4 n.22.

Secondary courtyard XVII of the Maison de Bacchus et Ariane at Thuburbo Maius was carpeted with an orthogonal pattern of swastika-meanders¹⁷. A similar composition appeared in the *porticus* of the subterranean peristyle in the Maison de la Chasse at Bulla Regia, but here the insertion of a square between opposed peltae made the design richer.

4.4 Functions of the secondary courtyard

The secondary courtyard may have served a variety of functions, which were contingent upon location, architectural layout, and uses of the surrounding rooms.

As a space open to the sky, the court served primarily for allowing air and light into the neighbouring rooms. The secondary courts of the Maison du Triomphe de Neptune at Acholla may have fulfilled this fundamental function with regard to the nearby colonnaded *triclinium* and *cubicula*, as the lack of evidence for any form of architectural and decorative embellishment seems to suggest. In the Maison de la Chasse at Bulla Regia, too, the unpretentious layout of court 17 seems to indicate that the open-air space has been arranged in order to illuminate the surrounding rooms as well as the subterranean space.

Some of the African secondary courts appear to have been utility courtyard areas that servants used as passageway, work space, and store place. In the Maison de la Cascade at Utica, for example, court XXXa may have been used as complementary area to the adjoining service rooms and as water supply with its well and basin. The late placement of tanks and troughs in the nearby space XXXI, which was therefore turned into a stable, seems to confirm the utilitarian vocation of the whole area. The arrangement of the court with its adjoining rooms in proximity to the main entrance allowed servants to perform their domestic activities without disturbing the *dominus*, who received his guests in the public sector of the house.

Utility courtyards may have been used for more industrial or economic activities. In the Maison de Bacchus et Ariane at Thuburbo Maius, for instance, the big court XLII served an oil press (XLI). The arrangement of the subsidiary court connected to an oil press occurs again in the Maison aux Communs at the same town. But here the sector of

¹⁷ CMT II.4, 52-3

the outbuildings included another court (XXXIII), which seems to have been used as an area for placing wagons: the court, in fact, opened onto an entrance area (XXX) the threshold of which was framed by semi-cylindrical stone blocks that would have helped the wagons not to rub against the wall.

The architectural and decorative analysis of the secondary courtyards listed in Table 4.1 shows that the great part of them served to create a more private and secluded area for the house-owner and his family. The small size of the court, the arrangement of *cubicula* and private apartments around its boundary, and the choice of the decorative motifs are evidence for the intimate scale of the open area.

Because of its family associations, the secondary court would have housed domestic chapels, where family members honoured ancestral spirits along with the *genius* of the house. An example of a domestic chapel may be the semicircular structure (2.80m wide; 1.95m deep) opening onto court 36 of the Édifice des Asclepieia at Althiburos, as the apsidal form is typical of this kind of structure. Moreover, an altar has been found in the adjoining room 39, though there seems not to be evidence of an opening into the space: the structure rested upon a flight of three steps and was decorated with carved ornamental motifs¹⁸.

The more intimate atmosphere of the court area was suitable for outdoor dining among the family members, as archaeological evidence seems to suggest. Traces of dining facilities have been found in courtyard garden XXXIII of the Maison de Bacchus et Ariane at Thuburbo Maius: two large rectangular cavities at the back of the garden would have supported a table or bench that servants may have used for cooking food; a third cavity in the back of the semicircular basin perhaps supported a small table; a small area contained several olive pits and bones of domestic animals (pig, sheep, rabbit, and goat) showing evidence of burning¹⁹. Archaeological evidence seems to suggest that in the intimate atmosphere of the small garden the house-owner enjoyed meals with his family and a small group of friends. A further example of a subsidiary court used for outdoor dining is in the Sollertiana Domus at El Jem, as the presence of masonry couches on the northern and eastern sides of court XX suggests: servants may have cooked food in the nearby room XXII, as the concrete floor bear traces of burning.

¹⁸ Ennaifer 1976, 87-8.

¹⁹ Jashemski 1995.

The size and décor of some rooms around the secondary courtyard suggest that the whole area was not intended exclusively for the use of family members. In the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna, for example, the architectural and decorative layout of the secondary courts with their adjoining rooms provided a very elegant setting for the reception of privileged guests. Blanc-Bjon and Darmon point out that the mosaic motifs of each sector, which relate to one element of the Cosmos each time different and to one or two seasons, indicate the status of the family members and of their guests admitted into the secluded areas. The rooms off court 7 would have been the private apartments of the *domina*; the *dominus* would have used court 17 and its neighbouring rooms for the reception of *clientes* and the spaces around court 21 for the entertainment of high-status guests; the rooms off court 30 would have been the private apartments of the *dominus*²⁰. However, the multi-functionality of the spaces in the Romano-African house suggests a more flexible approach. Rather than looking for a specific use of each court-area, it is perhaps more appropriate to regard them as capable of accommodating a variety of activities in accordance with the changing needs of different social situations. Among the rooms opening off the secondary courtyard the *triclinium* was often decorated with an opulence which suggests that it was intended for the reception of guests: the open-air space would have enhanced the lavish setting of the dinner-party. In the Maison de la Cascade at Utica, for example, secondary courtyard XIII overlooked a *triclinium* carpeted with *opus sectile*: the lavish layout of the two adjoining spaces provided a very elegant setting for dining²¹.

4.5 Conclusions

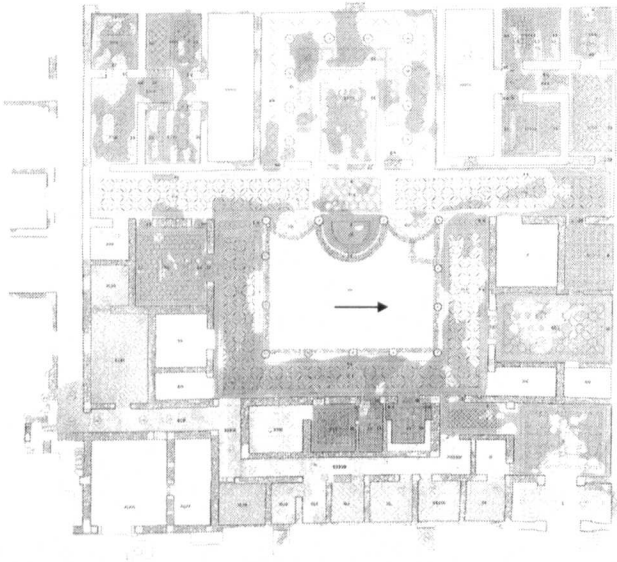
The investigation of the secondary courtyards listed in Table 4.1 shows a variety of architectural and decorative components, which reflects a plurality of functions which the subsidiary courts may have fulfilled. The small size of the secondary courtyard, the types of rooms arrayed around its boundary such as private apartments and service rooms, and the choice of the decorative motifs indicate that the open air space was used for more private and informal activities.

²⁰ Blanc-Bjon and Darmon 1988-1989.

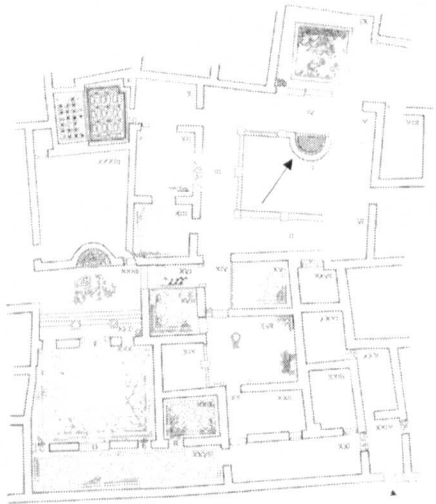
²¹ Further examples are discussed in chapter 6 'Secondary *triclinium*', 203.

| Town | House | Space | Dimensions | Area | Porticus | Basin |
|----------------|--------------------------------|--------|---------------|-------|----------|---------------------|
| Acholla | M. du Triomphe de Neptune | XXVIII | 3 x 9.5 | 28.5 | | |
| Acholla | M. du Triomphe de Neptune | XXXIV | 3 x 9.5 | 28.5 | | |
| Althiburos | Édifice des Asclepieia | 36 | 13.05 x 11.05 | 144.2 | | |
| Althiburos | M. des Muses | K/L | 6.5 x 5 | 32.5 | 1 | |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Chasse | 17 | 10 x 9 | 90 | | rectangular |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Chasse | 48 | 8.2 x 9.7 | 19.4 | 4 | pseudo-basin |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Nouvelle Chasse | 15 | 6 x 4 | 24 | 1 | |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Pêche | 33 | 5.5 x 4 | 22 | | semicircular |
| El Jem | M. du Paon | XXXII | 7.15 x 10.6 | 75.79 | 4 | semicircular+oblong |
| El Jem | Sollertiana Domus | XX/XXI | 7.6 x 5 | 38 | 2 | |
| Neapolis | M. des Nymphes | A1 | 10.5 x 6.2 | 65.1 | 4 | square |
| Neapolis | M. des Nymphes | A2 | 11 x 6.2 | 68.2 | 4 | square |
| Oudna | M. Ikarios | 7 | 7.85 x 6.42 | 50.39 | 3 | |
| Oudna | M. Ikarios | 17 | 8.57 x 2.85 | 24.42 | 1 | |
| Oudna | M. Ikarios | 21 | 10 x 6.43 | 64.3 | 3 | |
| Oudna | M. d'Ikarios | 30 | 11.4 x 5 | 57 | 3 | semicircular |
| Silin | Villa du Taureau | 1 | 7.8 x 6.5 | 50.7 | 4 | |
| Tagiura | Villa della Gara delle Nereidi | 9 | 14m wide | | 3 | |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. de Bacchus et Ariane | XVII | 5.5 x 4 | 22 | | |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. de Bacchus et Ariane | XXXIII | 5.75 x 6.75 | 38.81 | | semicircular |
| Utica | M. de la Cascade | XIII | 9 x 4 | 36 | 1 | rectangular |
| Utica | M. de la Cascade | XVI | 9 x 5 | 45 | 2 | rectangular |
| Utica | M. des Chapiteaux historiés | V | 6.25 x 6.12 | 38.25 | 4 | |
| Volubilis | M. à la Mosaïque de Vénus | 12 | 7.1 x 6.5 | 46.15 | 3 | semicircular+oblong |
| Volubilis | M. d'Orphée | 6 | 8.5 x 7 | 59.5 | no | |
| Volubilis | M. d'Orphée | 21 | 28 x 14 | 392 | 3 | circular |
| Volubilis | M. des Néréides | 27 | 5.7 x 4 | 22.8 | 3 | rectangular |

Table 4.1: Secondary courtyard



1. Acholla, Maison du Triomphe de Neptune



2. Thuburbo Maius, Maison de Bacchus et Ariane

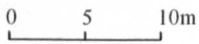
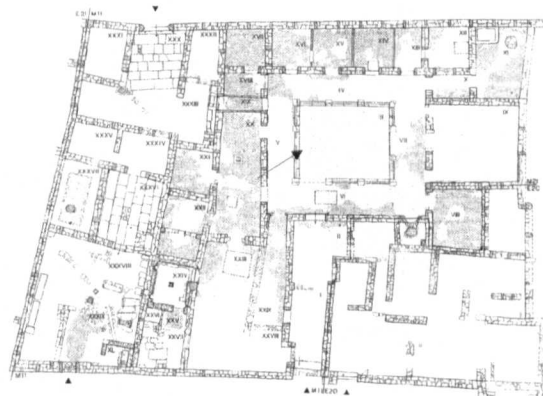


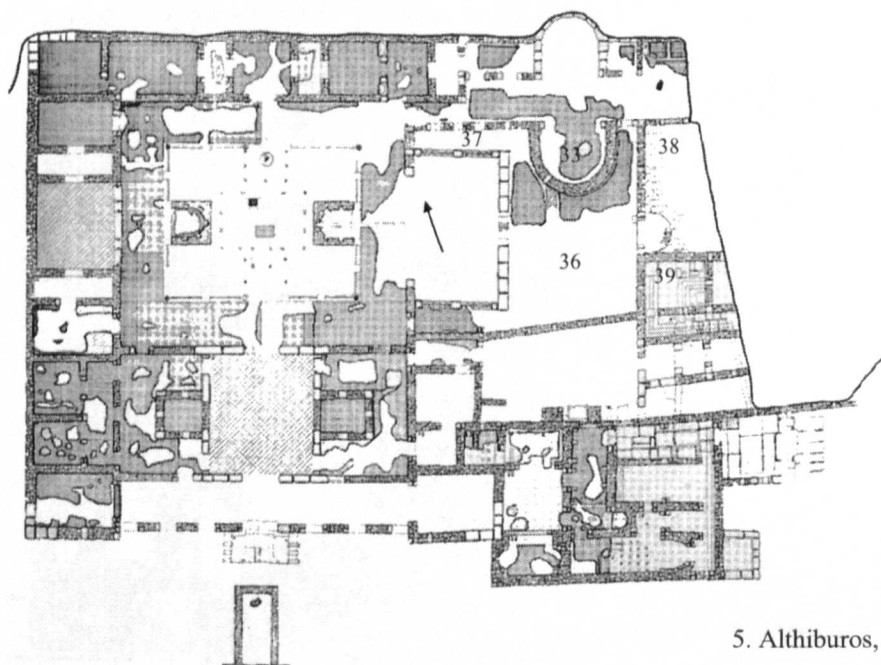
Table 4.2: Secondary courtyard in the Romano-African house



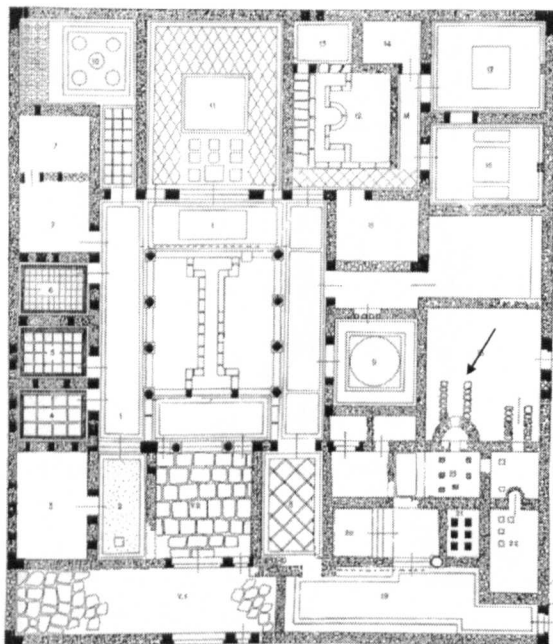
3. Thuburbo Maius, Maison de Bacchus et Ariane



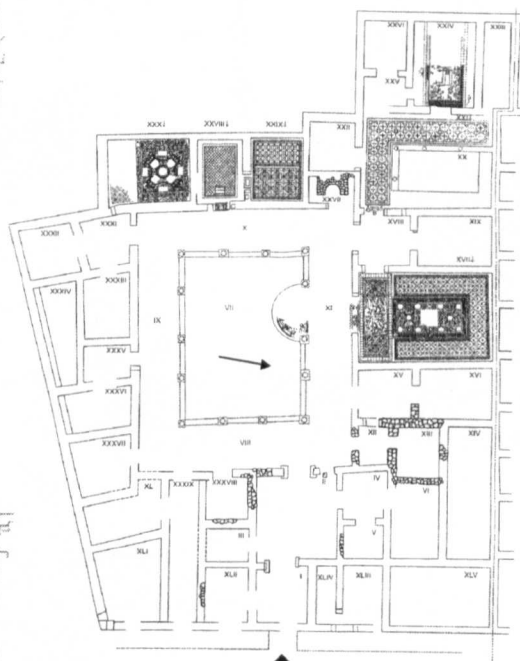
4. Thuburbo Maius, Maison aux Communs



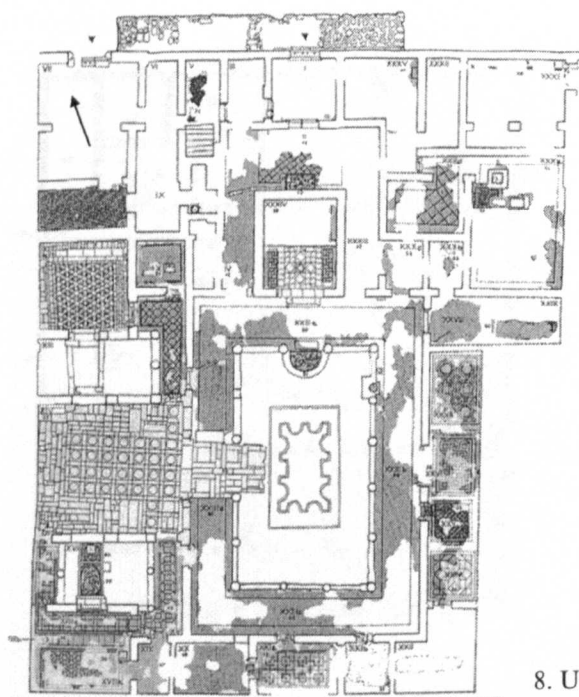
5. Althiburos, Édifice des Asclepieia



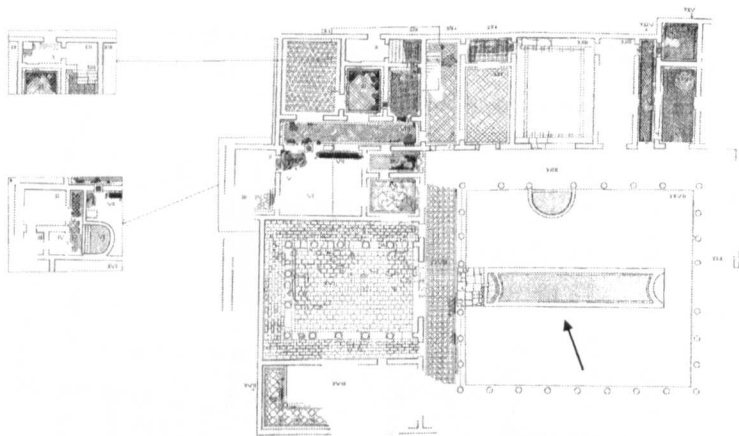
6. Volubilis, Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus



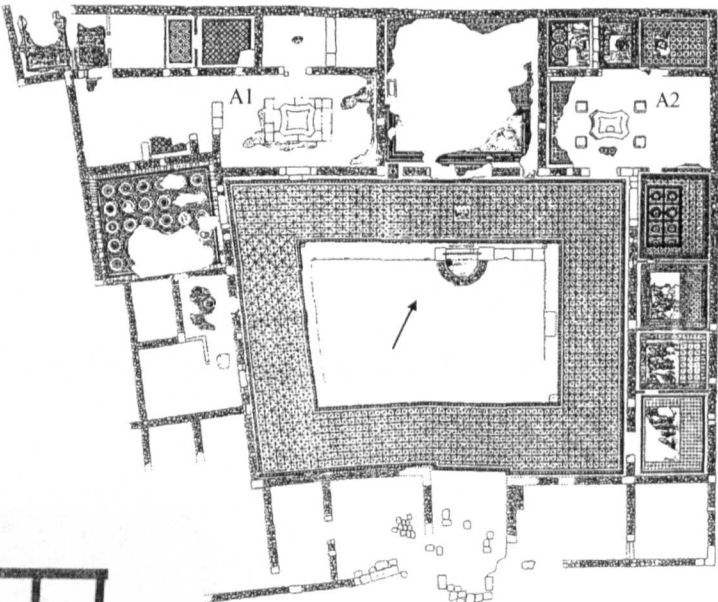
7. El Jem, Sollertiana Domus



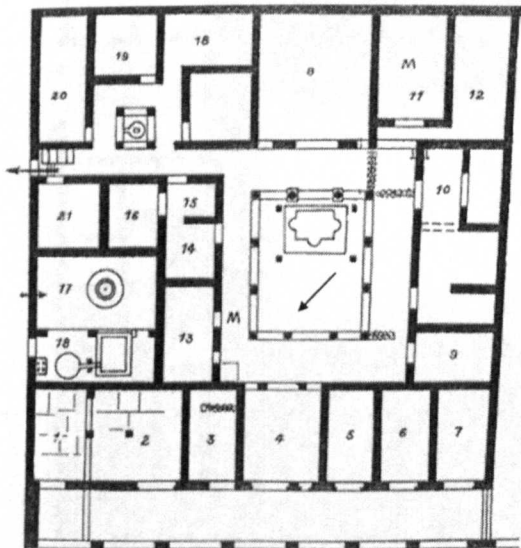
8. Utica, Maison de la Cascade



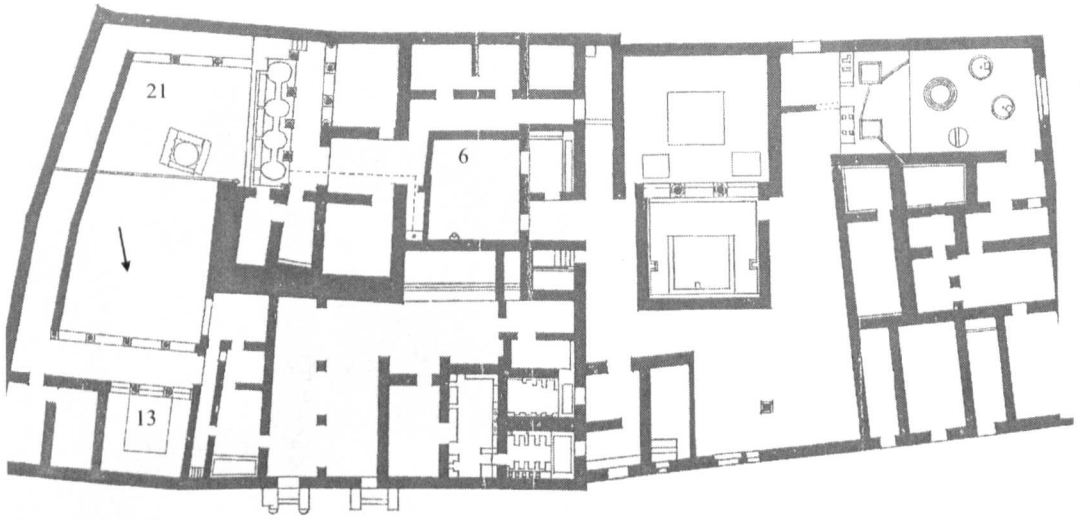
9. Utica, Maison au Grand Oecus



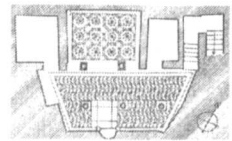
10. Neapolis, Maison des Nymphes



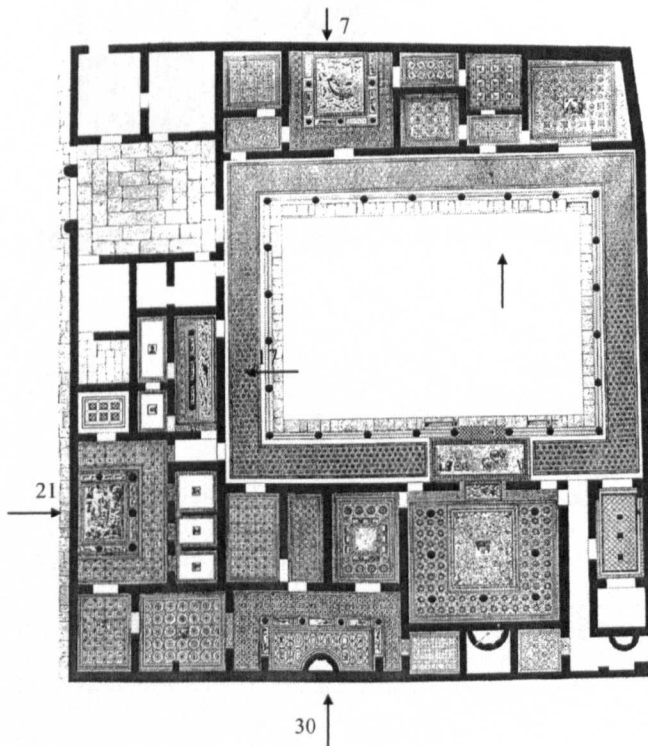
11. Volubilis, Maison des Néréides



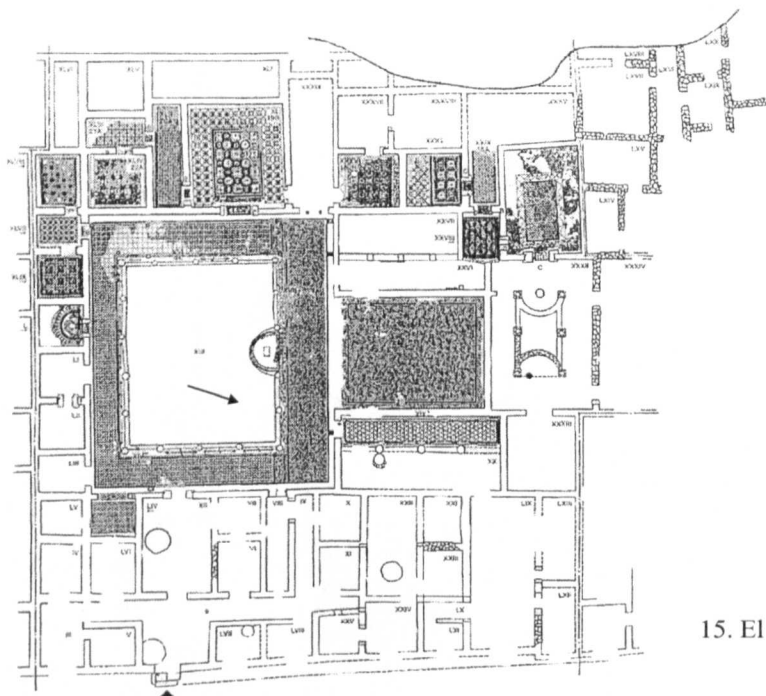
12. Volubilis, Maison d'Orphée



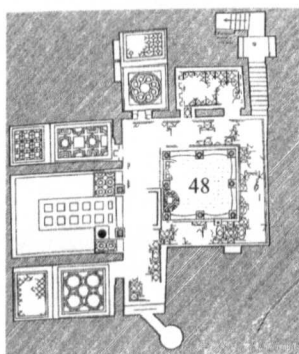
13. Bulla Regia, Maison de la Nouvelle Chasse: basement



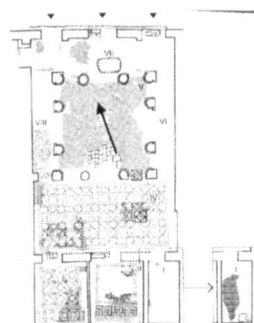
14. Oudna, Maison d'Ikarios



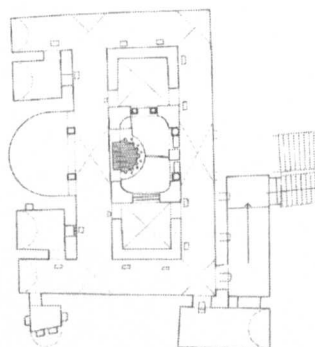
15. El Jem, Maison du Paon



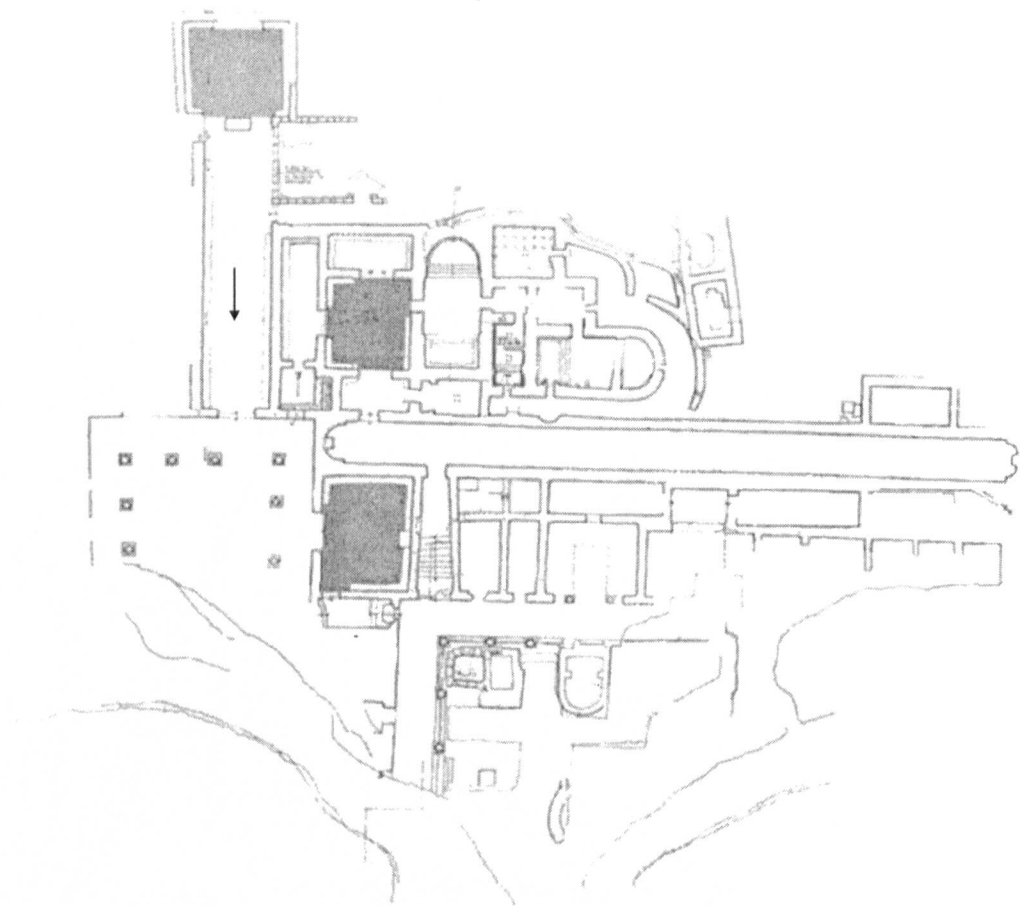
16. Bulla Regia, Maison de la Chasse: basement



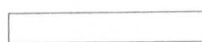
17. Utica, Maison des Chapiteaux Historiés

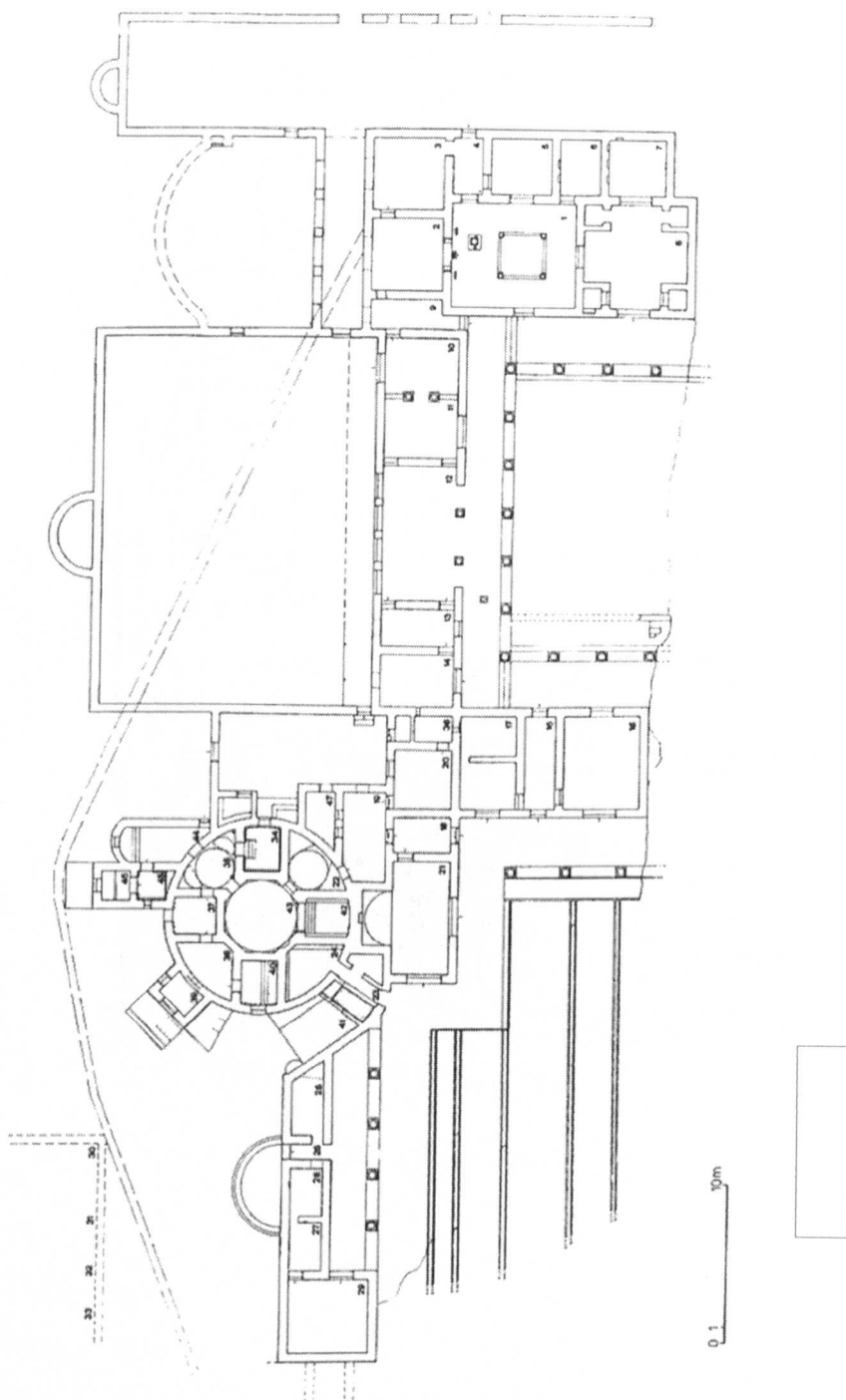


18. Bulla Regia, Maison de la Pêche: basement

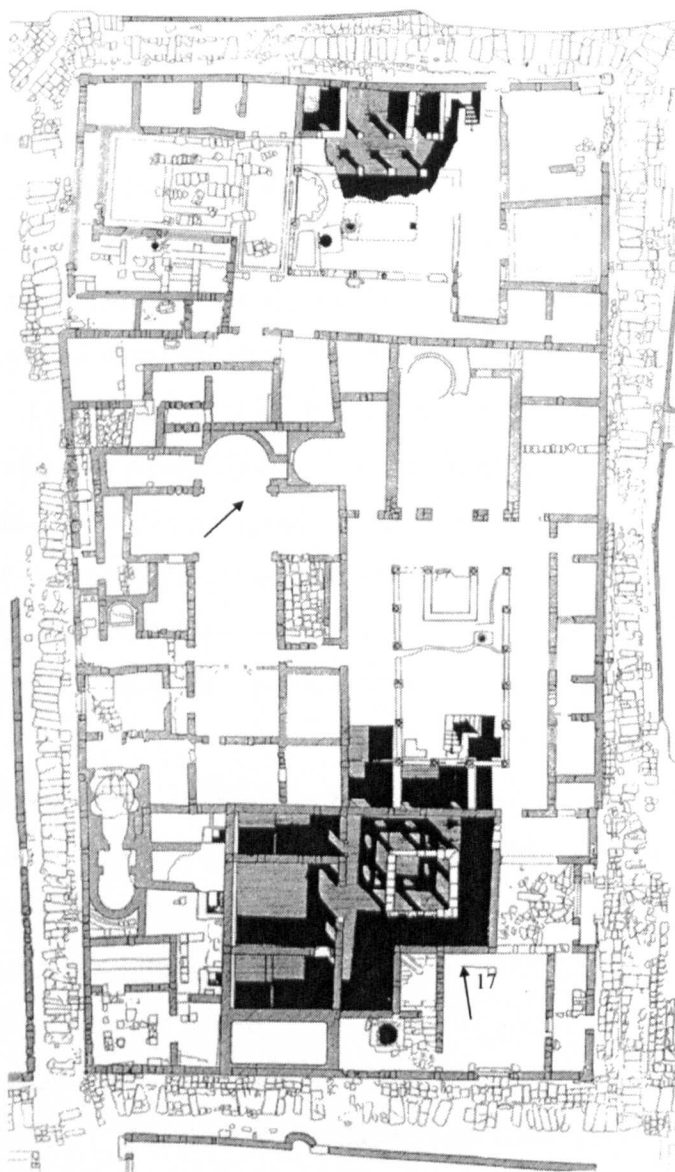


19. Tagiura, Villa della Gara delle Nereidi





20. Silin, Villa du Taureau



21. Bulla Regia, Insula de la Chasse

Chapter 5

Main *triclinium*

5.1 Introduction

Dining was a very important occasion in the social life of the Roman aristocracy, as it allowed the opportunity for the owner's display of wealth and power. The frequent accounts of dining and entertaining at villas and in town houses, which appear in Roman aristocratic literature from the time of Cicero onward, make this eminently plain. The number and character of the guests, the quality and variety of the food and drink, the value of the plate and drinking vessels, the style of the tables, couches and furnishings, the elegance of the setting, and the nature of the entertainments were the constituents of the spectacle in which the house-owner displayed his authority and power, enhanced his reputation, and announced his ties of friendship. Because of the great importance attached to the dinner ceremony or *convivium*¹, the room where banquets were held was the largest, most richly decorated space of the *dominus*' house.

5.2 Terms for dining room: *triclinium*, *stibadium*, *cenatio*, and *conclave*

Following the literary texts, scholars have conventionally labelled the Roman dining room as *triclinium*. The *triclinium* is named after the three rectangular couches (from the Greek *kline*) used for dining, which were set around the sides of the room; the term is used also for the room capable of containing such a rectilinear arrangement². However, that use is somewhat arbitrary. In Imperial times there was a tendency toward big dining rooms able to accommodate a larger number of couches than the traditional three. Moreover, in later Latin *triclinium* became a standard word to designate any dining room, regardless of the rectilinear arrangement of the couches.

Another word of Greek derivation, which refers to the arrangement of the dining couch, is *stibadium* or *sigma*³. The term is used for the room with a semicircular couch, which resembles the late Roman form of the Greek letter sigma. The *sigma*-couch is attested in

¹ Mau 1900; Dosi and Schnell 1984; Salza Prina Ricotti 1987; Murray 1990; Slater 1991; Murray and Teçusan 1995; Nielsen I. and Nielsen H.S. 1998; Garnsey 1999.

² s.v. *triclinium*, *OLD*, vol. II, 1977. See Zaccaria Ruggiu 1995a for the origins of the *triclinium*.

³ Rodenwalt 1923.

literary sources already in the 1st century AD: Martial refers to it in two of his poems⁴. As archaeological and figured evidence shows, it was originally intended for outdoor banquets: the *stibadium* that the Younger Pliny describes in his Tuscan villa was set under a vine pergola, with water gushing around it⁵. In the 3rd century the *sigma*-couch was adopted for indoor banquets in rooms mostly provided with an apse: the layout became increasingly common in the following century. Amedick argues that the term *stibadium* as an open-air banquet should be applied to the indoor dining rooms and even to the *triclinium* regardless of shape, as a transfer indoors of the type of arrangement used for outdoor dining⁶. The argument put forward by the scholar lays in the distinction between sofa-like *kline* and *stibadium*: on the *kline* one reclined parallel to the edge of the furniture, on the *stibadium* diagonally in towards the middle. Therefore, every arrangement in which the guests reclined pointing their head towards the centre should be called *stibadium*, regardless of shape. However, as Dunbabin correctly points out⁷, in the three-couch arrangement the guests must have reclined at oblique angle, in order to reach the central table; moreover, the rectilinear arrangement required three separate couches, while the term *stibadium* refers to a single, continuous cushion.

Literary sources attest the use of two more terms for dining room, which do not refer either to the shape of the room or to the couch arrangement: *cenatio* and *conclave*⁸. Prose writers of Imperial times often use the word *cenatio*⁹, which stresses the kind of activities taking place in the domestic space. The term, in fact, is derived from the word *cena*, the main Roman meal eaten in the evening. The term seems to designate a room of modest proportions for the meal of the *dominus*' family and friends. That is evident from the Younger Pliny's description of his villas. The author describes the *cenatio* of his Tuscan villa as an informal dining room where he entertained his personal friends (*cotidiana amicorumque*)¹⁰ and the *cenatio* of his villa at Laurentum, as a room which can be considered either a large bedroom or a moderate-sized dining room¹¹. But when Pliny describes the dining room of his Laurentine villa to be used on very formal

⁴ Mart. *Epigr.* 10. 48; 14.87.

⁵ Plin. *Ep.* 5.6.36-37; Salza Prina Ricotti 1987, 137-38.

⁶ Amedick 1994, 112-15.

⁷ Dunbabin 1996, 70 n. 22; id. 1998, 100 n. 33.

⁸ The use of the two terms in Latin texts is analysed by Tamm 1963, 193-96 and Leach 1997, 64-8; id. 2004, 52-3.

⁹ s.v. *cenatio*, *TLL*, vol. III, 782.

¹⁰ Plin. *Ep.* 5. 6. 21.

¹¹ Plin. *Ep.* 2. 17. 10.

occasions, he labels it as *triclinium*. The distinction is clear also in Petronius' account of the dinner party at Trimalchio's house. When the rich *libertus* describes his house, he counts four *cenationes* and a further *cenatio* upstairs; but when the banquet is described the room for it is called *triclinium*¹². However, other authors use the term *cenatio* to designate a large, richly decorated dining room. Suetonius describes the *cenationes* of Nero's Domus Aurea as banqueting halls with ceiling of ivory panels¹³. Seneca may refer to the same in *Ep.* 90.15, where he mentions *cenationes* with movable ceiling panels. In Seneca, who uses the word *cenatio* more than any other author, the term means a room for banquets: it is large enough to contain a city crowd¹⁴; it contains such luxuries as heating with hypocausts¹⁵, draperies (*vela*) and large windows (*specularia*)¹⁶, and books¹⁷. The Elder Pliny mentions a freedman, who had built a *cenatio* with thirty onyx columns¹⁸ and Sidonius describes the luxurious setting of a *cenatio* with its jewelled cups, garlands of flowers and reek of cinnamon¹⁹.

In the description of the fictional palace of Cupid and Psyche, Apuleius speaks of a *cenatorium*²⁰ to designate a small, but lavish *cenatio*: the room contained a semicircular platform, which would refer to the arrangement of the *stibadium*-couch.

The Roman dining room is sometimes called *conclave*. From examples quoted in *Thesaurus Linguae Latinae*²¹, it is clear that the use of *conclave* is concentrated in the late Republican and Augustan era. In fact, the dining room that Cicero labels as *conclave*²² was referred to by Valerius Maximus²³ and Quintilian²⁴ as a *triclinium*. However, *conclave* is a very general and neutral word to designate every room to be closed with a key. Therefore, the *conclave* may accommodate a great range of activities such as dining and sleeping and decorated either elaborately or simply. Suetonius reports that the *conclavia* of the modest house of Augustus had neither marble

¹² Petr. *Sat.* 77. 4.

¹³ Suet. *Nero*, 31. 2.

¹⁴ Sen. *Ep.* 115. 8: *capacem populi cenationem*.

¹⁵ Sen. *Prov.* 4. 9.

¹⁶ Sen. *Nat. Quaest.* 4. 13. 7.

¹⁷ Sen. *Tranq.* 9. 5: *libri non studiorum instrumenta sed cenationum ornamenta*.

¹⁸ Plin. *Hist. Nat.* 36.60.

¹⁹ Sid. *Ep.* 2. 13. 7.

²⁰ Apul. *Met.* 5.3.

²¹ s.v. *conclave*, *TLL*, vol. IV, 71-3.

²² Cic. *De Or.* 2.353

²³ Val. Max. 1.8 ext. 7.

²⁴ Quint. *Inst. Or.* 11.2.13.

decoration nor lavish flooring²⁵; Vitruvius, on the contrary, mentions the *conclave* along with the main reception rooms of the Roman house (*triclinia*, *exedrae*, and *oeci*)²⁶.

In what follows, I use the term *triclinium* to refer to the dining room capable of containing a rectilinear arrangement of couches and the term *stibadium* to the dining room with an apse able to accommodate the *sigma*-couch. As the African *domus* contained more than one *triclinium* according to the scale of the banquet and to the status of the diners, I conventionally label the biggest and most richly decorated dining room as the main *triclinium*.

5.3 The identification of the main *triclinium*

The function of a room as a *triclinium* may be established by features such as layout, size, plan and decoration²⁷.

The function of a room for dinner parties is unmistakably clear in presence of permanent masonry couches in the rectilinear arrangement. At Pompeii, a number of couches and tables of masonry has been preserved in private context: they are set out of doors in gardens or in half-enclosed rooms, as in the summer *triclinium* of the House of the Moralist or the House of the Cryptoporticus²⁸. Only one example is known in Roman Africa: the Maison aux Banquettes at Hadrumetum²⁹. The plan of the building shows three rooms with masonry couches on either side of a larger *triclinium* and a hypostyle hall: in each room the couches are set on three sides around a central space, which is decorated with black and white mosaics of geometric pattern (Pl. 109). On the basis of the mosaic decoration, the building is dated to the early 2nd century AD. The function of the building is not clearly identifiable, as it has never been published in detail (the brief report published by Ennabli is concerned primarily with the mosaics). However, it seems not to have been a domestic structure, as it does not show the typical plan of the Romano-African house with rooms of different function arranged around the peristyle. Rather the building seems to have been used as the seat of a *collegium* for its communal dinners, as the comparison with the Caseggiato dei Triclini at Ostia (2nd century AD)³⁰ and a building in Agro Murecine outside Pompeii (before 62 AD)³¹

²⁵ Suet. *Aug.* 72.

²⁶ Vitr. *De Arch.* 6.3.8.

²⁷ Hug 1948; Dunbabin 1991, 121-29.

²⁸ A list of masonry *triclinia* at Pompeii is in Soprano 1950.

²⁹ Ennabli 1975; Dunbabin 2003, 98-9.

³⁰ Packer 1971, 157-60; Hermansen 1981, 62-3; Bollmann 1998, 51, 58, 284-8 A30; Dunbabin 2003, 97-8.

suggests. In both structures a row of rooms furnished with permanent masonry couches lays off a peristyle; an inscription found in the Ostian building permits the identification of the structure as the seat of a wealthy *collegium* of the *fabri tignuarii*.

In the absence of permanent couches of masonry, the *triclinium* may be identified by the layout of its floor mosaic: a U-shaped mosaic of plain motif surrounds a central rectangular panel showing a more elaborate pattern. In *triclinium* 11 of the Maison à la Mosaique de Vénus at Volubilis, for example, strips of geometric design were set around differently-sized panels showing Venus in boat among Nereids and Erotes and a cat catching a rat (Table 5.2 n.1). In the Maison H at Utica, the function of the two spaces of the main *triclinium* (XXVI) is highlighted by the use of different techniques: *opus tessellatum* for the couch-area and *opus sectile* for the central space. In *triclinium* IX of the Maison de Bacchus et Ariane at Thuburbo Maius, the central panel with the representation of Dionysos, Ariadne and other dionysiac figures seems to cover the whole floor of the room. However, the fragments of geometric mosaic at the southern corner of the room seem to suggest that the figurative mosaic was surrounded by a U-shaped band for the accommodation of the couches (Table 5.2 n.2).

In the *triclinium* of the Romano-African house, a horizontal bar was often added to the central panel at the entrance to the room. That scheme, which is known as the T+U plan, provided more space for service and entertainment in the centre and at the entrance, which would be left unimpeded. The examples of *triclinium* with the T+U design are in the Maison d'Asinius Rufinus (IV) and in the Maison des Colonnes Rouges (II) at Acholla, in the Maison des Muses (G) at Althiburos, in the Maison de la Nouvelle Chasse (10) and in the Maison n.3 (18) both at Bulla Regia, in the Maison des Nymphes at Neapolis (XX: Pl. 121), in the Maison du Viridarium à Niches (X) and in the Maison du Triclinium en Noir et Blanc (Pl. 145) at Pupput, and in the Maison des Animaux Liés (XVIII: Pl. 171) at Thuburbo Maius (Table 5.2 nos 3-5, 7-10).

Minor variation could include substituting two panels for the ends of the bar of the T. The function of the two panels may vary depending upon their design. Panels with geometric patterns may provide space for the accommodation of more couches, if extra space was required: the design of the mosaic at the centre of the room would have not

³¹ Pagano 1983; Bollmann 1998, 79, 368-71 A52; Dunbabin 2003, 95-7.

been spoiled³². Panels showing figurative motifs were intended to be left unimpeded. In main *triclinium* G of the Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque at El Jem, the side panels represent combat of beasts in a landscape (Table 5.2 n.13; Pl. 81): the scene was intended for the eyes of the diners reclining along the long sides of the room and were complementary to the figured mosaic in the centre as representation of Dionysos' power to control the forces of nature. In main *triclinium* 7 of the Maison de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons at Volubilis, too, the figurative panels were oriented towards the long sides of the room (Table 5.2 n.11): they depict an unidentified female bust and a Medusa head. In main *triclinium* 10 of the Maison à l'Ephèbe and 3 of the Maison d'Orphée, both at Volubilis, the mosaic panels representing sea-creatures were laid on axis with the side doors of the room.

Rooms designed for dining can also be identified by the architectural element of the apse to hold a semicircular, continuous couch. Occasionally, the apse contains a masonry base for the *stibadium*, as in the villa from El Ruedo (Almendingilla) in Baetica, where a masonry *stibadium* was inserted into a previous rectilinear *triclinium*. From a *nymphaeum* set in the back wall of the room behind the couch water run to a basin in the centre of the couch and from there to a basin in the peristyle beyond³³. Apsidal dining rooms or *stibadia* are rare in domestic architecture of the Roman provinces³⁴. The identification of the apsidal room as *stibadium* cannot be always attested, as the apse can serve many functions in later Roman architecture. Its use for dining can be proven in only one example of the houses listed in the catalogue. In the Maison de l'Âne at Djemila, apsed room XI seems to have been used for the reception of the guests at formal dinners because of its elegant architectural and decorative setting (Table 5.2 n.21). The decorative elements of the square room were intended to offer a pleasant view to the guests reclining in the opposite apse. An elegant scene of the triumph of Venus, which was oriented toward the spectators, carpeted the floor; in the middle of the room was a square base, which may have supported a statue or a column; along the

³² Examples are *triclinia* XVII of the Sollertiana Domus at El Jem (Table 5.2 n.15) and X of the Maison de Dionysos at Thanae (Table 5.2 n.11).

³³ Vaquerizo Gil and Carrillo Diaz-Pines 1995, 145-47; Vaquerizo Gil and Noguera Celdrén 1997, 60-77. More examples of masonry *stibadia* in Morvillez 1996, 127-30.

³⁴ Dunbabin 1991, 130-48; Ellis 1997.

opposite wall a row of alternatively semicircular and rectangular fountains recalled the natural setting of the peristyle.

A similar arrangement occurs again in the *Maison aux Deux Péristyles* at Hergla (Pl. 117) and in *Villa du Taureau* at Silin: the apsidal hall was preceded by an anteroom. In the Silin example, the anteroom stressed the entrance into the apsidal hall by its two columns to the north and its three pillars to the south (Table 5.2 n.23). Picard maintains that the apsidal hall was an audience-chamber, as it was as big as the basilica of the villa at Piazza Armerina and the apse might have contained the owner's seat: the adjoining rooms 10-11 and 13-14 were the owner's office³⁵. However, as Ellis shows in his paper on the late antique peristyle-house in the eastern part of the Roman Empire³⁶, private audience-chambers were usually entered through the main door of the house onto the street to ensure the maximum of privacy for the family. The apsidal hall of Silin may have been used as *triclinium* on very formal occasions: the small apse on the southern wall may have contained a statue or a basin of ornamental function.

As the *stibadium* could accommodate a limited number of guests, dining rooms were often built with more than one apse. The most common formula was that of the *triconchos*, a room composed of three apses arranged around a central square³⁷. Three-apsed rooms are attested in many late antique villas and palaces of the Roman provinces, as they were provided with plenty of space³⁸. In North Africa, on the contrary, examples of three-apsed halls are attested in town-houses such as in the *Maison du Triconque* (XXXII) at Carthage (Pls. 59-60) and in the *Maison des Protomés* Section of the *Triconchos* (IX) at Thuburbo Maius (Table 5.2 n.25). A further example of a three-apsed hall is room XXX/XXXI of the *Maison du Char de Vénus* at Thuburbo Maius, but its plan seems to have no parallels in Roman architecture of Imperial times (Table 5.2 n.26). The apses, in fact, are not arranged along the three sides of a central square according to the common formula, but open onto one side of the room as in the *stibadium*. Perhaps the owner wanted to provide his house with the new fashion, which was adapted to the available space. The square room opened into a small chamber

³⁵ Picard 1985, 230.

³⁶ Ellis 1988, 569.

³⁷ Lavin 1962; Wilson 1983, 106 n.21.

³⁸ Villas at Piazza Armerina and at Patti Marina in Sicily; villa at Desenzano del Garda; villa at Eciya in Spain; the Governor's Palace at Aphrodisias; the Palace of Theoderic at Ravenna.

(XXIX) the function of which is uncertain. It seems to have been used for storing food that servants brought into the dining room without interrupting the spectacles held in room XXX and disturbing the guests reclining in apses XXXI. However, its floor mosaic (missing) may have suggested a less utilitarian function. A further unique example of *triconchos* is room IV of the Maison des Deux Chasses at Clupea: the arrangement of the couch-areas along the three sides of a central square is drawn from the formula of the *triconchos*, but the *stibadia* are replaced by rectilinear *triclinia* (Pl. 61). The plan of the T-shaped *triclinium* of Clupea seems not to have parallels in Roman architecture of Imperial times. A flight of stairs at the south-eastern corner led up onto spaces V-VI, which also communicated with the peristyle by a further flight of stairs in space VI: servants may have used those rooms to bring food in the nearby *triclinium*.

Some rooms may have been provided with more *stibadia* aligned in rows on either side and at the end. Because of their lavish layout, those multiconch dining halls are mainly attested in palace architecture: in Constantinople, the Great Palace of the Emperors contained a *triclinium* with nineteen couches, the Decanneacubita; a further dining hall, which may have been part of the Palace of Antiochus in the same ancient city, held seven *stibadia*. In Roman Africa, the only one known example of multiconch dining hall is attested in a private context, the Maison de Bacchus at Djemila (mid-fifth century)³⁹. The room had seven apses, three down each side and one at the end: each apse was framed by columns and enclosed a mosaic panel representing hunting and amphitheatre scenes in the middle of the room. The hall was preceded by a vestibule with two columns on each short side and overlooked a long courtyard.

In some *triclinia* the T+U plan is indicated by an inner colonnade on three sides of the room⁴⁰. Following Vitruvius, scholars have labelled this kind of room as *oecus*⁴¹. The term has derived from the Greek *oikos* to design a large reception room, but it does not highlight the main function of dining that the colonnaded room fulfilled. In fact, the lavish layout and the U-shaped colonnade, which seems to have drawn on the same formula as the T+U layout of the floor mosaic, shows that the room was mainly used for

³⁹ Lassus 1971; Blanchard-Lemée 1983.

⁴⁰ Nielsen 1998.

⁴¹ Vit. *De Arch.* 6.3.8.

grandiose dinner parties. Therefore, I will use the term colonnaded *triclinium* to designate that kind of dining hall, as it refers both to its main architectural element and to the rectilinear arrangement of the couches along three sides.

The big size of the colonnaded *triclinia* provided more extensive space for service and entertainment. The diners reclined on couches along the inner side of the columns and the entertainers performed in the middle of the room. The T+U layout of the floor mosaic in *triclinia* XXXV of the Maison du Triomphe de Neptune at Acholla (Table 5.2 n.28) and 11 of the House of Africa at El Jem (Table 5.2 n.29) makes it clear. The servants waited upon the guests in the area behind the columns: two small entrances on either side of the central door allowed the servants to enter the hall without obtruding upon the guests. Further elements may have enhanced the magnificence of the colonnaded *triclinia*. The main *triclinium* of the Maison des Masques at Hadrumetum was surrounded by a U-shaped *porticus* (2.40m wide) looking onto a garden: the peristyle opposite the main entrance and the garden at the back offered a pleasant view to the diners (Pl. 110). The same formula was adopted in the colonnaded *triclinium* (33) of the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna (Table 5.2 n.31; Pl. 129). The seven columns were plastered with stucco Cupids and foliage; a semicircular basin, perhaps supporting a statue or column, along the back wall recalled the natural setting of the opposite peristyle. In the Maison au Grand Oecus at Utica (13.40 x 14.80m: 12 columns) the importance of the colonnaded *triclinium* (XVI) was emphasised by the pavement decoration in *opus sectile* (Table 5.2 n.32)⁴².

The dining rooms are easily identified, when they are provided with architectural and/or decorative elements that hint at the arrangement of the diners, but the use of those elements is somewhat arbitrary. In many Romano-African houses there is apparently no element specifically relating to the setting of dinner: all rooms are rectangular or square and carpeted with mosaics covering the whole floor. However, the house must have been provided with a room for the *dominus'* dinner parties, since inviting friends at dinner was a social duty for all the members of the Roman aristocracy.

A survey of the identified dining rooms shows that the same architectural and decorative elements were required for the arrangement of the main dining room in the Romano-African house: big dimensions; monumental entrance, often tripartite; outlook

⁴² A further example of colonnaded *triclinium*, which is not included in the table, is in the Maison de Lucius Verus at El Jem.

on fountains in the peristyle; and lavish decoration with mosaics. The formula allows us to identify the main dining room in absence of specific elements relating to the setting of dinner. In the Maison d'Europe at Djemila, for instance, three rooms with triple entrance framed by columns opened into the peristyle: one of them (13) was certainly a dining room, as its floor mosaic marked the area for the accommodation of the couches. However, the main *triclinium* seems to have been room 18, as its bigger size and location in front of a semicircular basin made it look more lavish and important (Table 5.2 n.34). In the Maison du Paon at El Jem, *triclinium* XL (6.50 x 7.20m) off the western *porticus* of the peristyle was clearly recognised by the mosaic pavement. However, for more formal banquets the owner probably used room XVIII, although it was decorated with plain *opus tessellatum*. The bigger size (10.20 x 8.10m) and the position of the main entrance in front of a semicircular basin stressed the function of the room as a dining hall. The lavish layout of the main *triclinium* was enhanced by the arrangement of small courtyards on either side of the room: the peristyle facing the central entrance; two long, unpaved courts on either side separated from the dining room by two colonnaded corridors; and a moderately sized courtyard filled with basin at the back (Table 5.2 n.35). The courtyards would have enhanced the dinner ceremony performed in the *triclinium*; through windows opening onto them, the courts would have made the dining room much more luminous and offered a pleasant view to the guests reclining at dinner. Although the courtyards were primarily designed to enhance the magnificent *décor* of the *triclinium*, as their location close to it suggests, they also created a more private and independent area for the rooms arranged around them.

5.4 Decoration

The great importance attached to the dining room was emphasized by its *décor*. Valuable tableware, elaborate tables and couches, sculptures, wall paintings, and floor mosaics were carefully chosen by the house-owner in order to display his wealth and power. The vast majority of the Romano-African houses are only preserved at foundation level. Only in rare cases paintings decorating the upper part of the walls have been preserved⁴³, but they are not comparable with the range of murals from Pompeii. As the upper part and the furnishings of the dining room are missing, our attention must focus primarily on the mosaic floors as the only preserved part of the dining *décor*.

In order to determine what figurative motifs decorated the African *triclinia*, I have carried out a statistical check. I have not listed every single decorative motif, many of which are stock fillers, but I have concentrated on the most important subjects, which appear in the middle of the dining room. Therefore, when the bar and the shaft of the T in the T+U shaped *triclinia* are decorated with two different motifs, I have listed the subject decorating the stem. I have also eliminated the design of the U-shaped band in the *triclinia* and of the apse in the *stibadia*, as they were intended to be covered by couches. In the analysis and description of each subject matter, I will consider also the subsidiary figures of the main area and the figured mosaics decorating the threshold of the room, if any.

5.4.1 Figured motifs

A review of the figured mosaics decorating the main *triclinium* shows a preponderance of Dionysiac motifs. Of the six mosaics representing Dionysus three depict the god riding on an animal. In main *triclinium* G of the Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque at El Jem, the image of the god is inserted in the scene of a procession at the entrance of the room (Pl. 80)⁴⁴. The child Dionysus, who rides on a tiger and holds a *kantharos*, is accompanied by two satyrs holding out their hand to support the god. In front of this group, a bacchante plays a tympanon and dances; at the opposite end, a Silenus rides on a camel, at the feet of which walks a leopard, and a bacchante carries the *liknon* on her head. The scene takes place outside, as a bare tree, a ground-line, and two altars decorated with garlands and tympana suggest. The presence of the two altars and the *liknon* on the head of the bacchante make it clear that the scene represent the procession of an initiation ceremony. The panel is flanked by two scenes of animal combats⁴⁵ at the ends of the bar of the T (Pl. 81) and is linked to a large panel⁴⁶ containing Dionysiac figures, animals, fruits, and the Seasons in the shaft of the T (Pl. 82). The three panels are thematically linked by the figure of Dionysus: as a result of his religious initiation, the god is able to control the savage forces of nature and to stimulate the seasons' prodigality. However, the three panels seem to convey a further message, if seen in

⁴³ For instance in the Maison d'Asinius Rufinus at Acholla.

⁴⁴ Foucher 1963, 48-63; Dunbabin 1978, 110-1, 175-76, 260 n.27c; Fantar et al. 1994, 71-2; Yacoub 1995, 41-5; Blanchard-Lemée et al 1996, 88-9; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 527 fig. 199.

⁴⁵ Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 526 figs. 189-90.

⁴⁶ Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 520 fig. 55.

relation with the function of the room they decorated. The panel representing the Dionysiac procession declared the religious beliefs of the house-owner to the approaching guests: Dionysus may represent the master himself as initiate, which became assimilated to the god through the ceremony. The central panel representing *xenia* and the Seasons is a message of the house-owner's hospitality and prodigality.

Dionysus riding a tiger occurs again in *triclinium* 10 of the Maison de Dionysos et d'Ulysse at Thugga (Pl. 187)⁴⁷. The adult god holds a thyrsus in one hand and a *kantharos* in the other; a large veil streams over his head. He is represented in a central medallion surrounded by satyrs and maenads as members of his *thiasos*. The whole work is framed by a large frieze containing dolphins, tridents, and seashells. The representation of Dionysus in relation with water as the source of life declares the power of the god and the prodigality of the master. The motif seems appropriate for the decoration of a dining room.

The image of Dionysus riding on an animal suggests a different association in main *triclinium* XVII of the Sollertiana Domus at El Jem⁴⁸. The isolated figure of the god balances that of Mercury riding a ram in a corresponding compartment (Pl. 102) and links with the representation of Diana surrounded by animals in the panel forming the bar of the T (Pl. 103). Foucher explains the juxtaposition of the three gods as reminder of the *venationes*, but he is not entirely convincing⁴⁹. As Dunbabin correctly points out, the animals surrounding the statue of Diana do not represent *venationes*, but they are the natural surroundings of the goddess of hunt; the presence of Mercury on the grounds of his role as patron of El Jem does not entirely explain his association with Diana and Dionysus. The scholar argues that the three gods may have been just stock types associated for general decorative motifs⁵⁰. But this does not explain the reason why they decorated a dining room. The missing representation in the central panel may have been the link through which the three gods were associated.

The association of Dionysus as the god of fertility and the house-owner's prodigality appears clearly on two mosaics, the one from the Maison d'Ikarios (33) at Oudna, the other from the Maison de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons (7) at Volubilis. The Oudna

⁴⁷ Poinssot 196, 227-28; Dunbabin 1978, 257, n.8c; Yacoub 1995, 39; Blanchard-Lemée et al. 1996, 97; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 528 fig. 209.

⁴⁸ Foucher 1961, 10-20; Dunbabin 1978, 46, 184, 259 n.21a; Fantar et al. 1994, 86; *CMT* III.1, 10-8.

⁴⁹ Foucher 1964, 18.

⁵⁰ Dunbabin 1978, 184.

mosaic represents Dionysus' gift of the vine to Ikarios (Pl. 130)⁵¹. The god holds a thyrsos and a *kantharos*, from which he pours the contents onto a panther; on either side of Dionysus is a man wearing a short tunic and holding a bunch of grapes and a richly dressed man sitting and wearing a diadem. The identification of the two male figures is not certain. According to Gauckler, the seated man is Ikarios receiving vine from a servant; Yacoub and H. Slim⁵² suggest that Ikarios is the standing man, who receives the vine under the tutelage of some legendary king. However the two men may be identified, the scene celebrates Dionysus as the god of wine and generosity, as he allows men to participate in the joys of the divine drink. The vine composition with vintaging Erotes, which frames the mythological episode, is not just a natural surrounding, but it is also the representation of human activities. The whole mosaic invites the *dominus'* guests to enjoy the pleasures of wine but moderately: the image of the panther at the feet of Dionysus reminds them of the powerful effects of the divine drink.

In the Volubilis mosaic Dionysus is associated with the Seasons⁵³. Their appearance on the floor of a dining room evokes the ideas of prosperity and well-being. However, it is in main *triclinium* IX of the Maison de Bacchus et Ariane at Thuburbo Maius that the Dionysiac theme appears to be very appropriate for a dining room⁵⁴. The mosaic represents Dionysus and Ariadne's wedding divided into three registers (Pl. 160). On the top the divine couple is under a vine pergola: Dionysus is reclining and holding a thyrsos and a *kantharos*; next to him Ariadne is sitting with her back turned. In the middle register a satyr is giving a *kantharos* to a reclining figure (Hercules or Silenus); dancing bacchantes, satyrs and Pan occupy the register at the bottom. The mosaic may be the mythological representation of the banquets held in the *triclinium* where it was laid. Dionysus and Hercules/Silenus represent the male guests, which reclined and rested on their left elbow to eat and drink; Ariadne represents the women, which sat to dine as a mark of modesty and respectability. The satyr giving a *kantharos* in the middle register recalls the functions of the servants among the tables; satyrs and bacchantes in the lower register are the entertainers, which performed in front of the diners.

⁵¹ Gauckler 1896, 208-10; Dunbabin 1978, 117 n. 28, 182-83, 266 n.1m; Fantar et al.1994, 38; Yacoub 1995, 54-7; Blanchard-Lemée et al.1996, 115 ; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 528 fig. 210.

⁵² In Blanchard-Lemée et al.1996, 56.

⁵³ Dunbabin 1978, 277 n.3; Etienne 1951; Parrish 1984, 236-39 n.66; Risse 2001, 93.

⁵⁴ Poinssot and Lantier 1923; Dunbabin 1978, 274 n.1a; Fantar et al.1994, 82; CMT II.4, 1994, 45-8. Yacoub 1995, 79-81.

Figures of the Dionysiac repertory occur again in the central panel of the T+U *triclinium* II of the Maison des Colonnes Rouges at Acholla⁵⁵. A grid of laurel garland framed square compartments, which contained erotic encounters of Satyrs with Nymphs and Erotes hunting wild animals (Pl. 7). The two squares facing the back wall of the room have been destroyed. The preserved scenes as figurative representations of sexual love and hunt are not thematically related to each other: Satyrs, Nymphs and Erotes may be associated through their link with Dionysus, as they were members of the god's entourage. However, the representation of couples engaged in sexual activities and of small Erotes hunting dangerous animals seems to be intended as a form of *divertissement*, which was suitable for the kind of relaxing activities held in the *triclinium*.

The survey of the motifs decorating the main *triclinium* shows that mythological scenes representing heroes as the main decorative motif appear only in three examples. The mosaic flooring main *triclinium* IV of the Maison d'Asinius Rufinus at Acholla represented Hercules surrounded by medallions containing the defeated monsters (Pls. 5-6)⁵⁶. Picard stated that the subject was chosen by the house-owner (Asinius Rufinus, consul in 184) to honour the patron deity of the emperor Commodus, who had just given him the consulate⁵⁷. His thesis was based upon the assumption that the figure of Hercules corresponded closely to a coin-type of Commodus in 184, but it is not entirely convincing. The figure of Hercules holding the club in his right hand and the bow in the other is a very common type in ancient art⁵⁸. The function of the mythological scene as motif decorating a *triclinium* suggests to ascribe a different significance to the choice of subject. Schneider points out that the representation of Hercules and his adversaries in medallions, in which the figures are isolated within separate frames, recalls the compartmental type of composition used for the representation of *xenia*. As a result, the Labours of Hercules would evoke the prodigality of Nature (Ketos, the Eurymanthean boar, the Nemean lion, the Lernean hydra, and the hind of Ceryneia) and the abundance of food (the Stymphalian birds and the eagle of Prometheus). The central image of Hercules above the medallion containing the defeated Acheloos would emphasize the

⁵⁵ Gozlan 1999, 200-04; id. 2001, 121-30 nos. 85-9.

⁵⁶ Dunbabin 1978, 25, 40, 248 n. 3; Fantar et al. 1994, 33; Gozlan and Jeddi 2001, 37-48 nos. 61-2.

⁵⁷ Ch. Picard 1953a.

⁵⁸ Boardman 1998; id. 1990; Schwarz 1990.

concept of *virtus* and *gloria*⁵⁹. Amedick stresses the function of Hercules in the dining room as banqueter, who is often in association with Dionysus. Dionysiac elements are present in the panel decorating the threshold of a dining room at Cartama (the drunken Hercules is accompanied by figures of the Dionysiac *thiasos*) and in the mosaic carpeting the three-apsed dining hall of the Villa at Piazza Armerina. The scholar explains the images of the defeated monsters on the grounds of the origins of the *stibadium* as an outdoor banquet: the Labours recall the hunting activities of the aristocrats before the open-air picnic⁶⁰. Both Schneider and Amedick correctly point out that the significance of the Labours of Hercules lie in the relation with the dining room that they decorated. But the mythological scene should be interpreted as a whole. In the Acholla mosaic, the central figure of Hercules is the thematic link with the monsters represented in the surrounding medallions and the visual point where the eyes of the guests reclining at dinner converged. Through the image of the victorious Hercules, which was very common in Imperial iconography, the guests would have associated the house-owner with the emperor and perceived his power. As a senator, Asinius Rufinus might have gone to Rome and met the emperor Commodus.

In the Maison d'Amphitrite at Bulla Regia, main *triclinium* 5 was decorated with a scene, the delivery of Andromeda by Perseus⁶¹, which is rarely represented in Roman mosaics (Pl. 27). The panel represents Perseus who helps Andromeda step down from her rocky perch. The hero wears a mantle on his left shoulder and holds a sword and Gorgon's head in his left hand. The young girl wears a tunic, which partly covers her body, and chains on her wrists. The scene takes place by a river, which is represented in the form of a man leaning at the feet of Perseus and Andromeda. According to Muth, the representation of the two young heroes in their nudity and Perseus' gesture, which recalls the scenes of *dextrarum iunctio*, evoke the ideal of *concordia* between *dominus* and *domina*. The scholar's statement is suggestive, but not very convincing. A panel decorating a room associated with the *dominus* alone, such as the main *triclinium*, would have rather emphasized the host's interests and pretensions to his male companions. As the African mosaic probably derives from a work of the Greek painter

⁵⁹ Schneider 1983, 136. His thesis is accepted by Muth 1998, 233.

⁶⁰ Amedick 1994.

⁶¹ Gauckler 1910, 75 n.585; Ch. Picard 1941-1946, 59; Levi 1947, 153; Picard 1960, 47; Schauenburg 1960, 68; Phillips 1968, 5, 6; Thébert 1972, 22, 36, 42-3; Dunbabin 1978, 39, 250 n.3b; Jones Roccas 1994, 344 n. 206b; Fantar et al. 1994, 90-2; Yacoub 1996, 47 A390; Muth 1998, 200-04, 259, 263, 356-58 A5; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 531 fig. 242.

Nicias (5th century AD)⁶², is also possible that the house-owner chose to decorate his most important room with a rarely represented mythological scene in order to show off his highly prized culture and his artistic interests to his guests at dinner. Furthermore, the representation of the hero's exploits as image of *virtus* and *gloria* would reflect virtue and achievements of the house-owner.

A further representation of a classical hero occurs in main *triclinium* 3 of the Maison d'Orphée at Volubilis (Pl. 230)⁶³. A ring of trees growing from the outer border of the circle frame the image of Orpheus, who is seated and plays his lyre. The hero is semi-draped and wreathed. In the compartments created by the trees are beasts of different species, such as monkey, owl, horse, and deer; birds perch on the branches of the trees. In the spandrels are birds with *kantharoi* and baskets of fruit. The subject of Orpheus represents the pleasures of music and poetry as a form of entertainment to be enjoyed by the guests reclining at dinner; it is also image and example of the owner's culture. As a hero able to tame wild beasts with the charming power of his music, Orpheus functioned as a prophylactic image, too. The illustration of animals and baskets of fruit in the central medallion along with sea-creatures in the side panels evoked the ideas of prosperity and well-being that Orpheus would have ensured in the house.

In a group of pavement mosaics divinities or other mythological creatures are represented in a marine setting along with real fishers or linked with panels depicting realistic scenes. Those mosaics seem to form part of a genre repertory, in which the mythological figures may have been chosen for their decorative value. In *stibadium* XI of the Maison de l'Âne at Djemila, for example, the square room is decorated with a complex scene of marine subjects (Pl. 72)⁶⁴. In the central panel Venus is seated on a sea-shell supported by two Tritons: the goddess wears a veil, which covers her right leg, and a necklace with a long pendant. Next to her a small Eros holds a crown of roses and a mirror for Venus to look in. All the details emphasize Venus' role as the goddess of love and beauty, but the four Nereids riding sea-monsters at the corners, the two Tritons and fish in the surroundings connect the goddess to water over which she presides. At the top of the panel is a statue of Neptune supported by a base: the god rests his left arm

⁶² The prototype is reproduced with some variations in a painting in the House of the Dioscouri at Pompeii (Phillips 1968, 5).

⁶³ Chatelaine 1935, 1-10; Thouvenot 1936, 27; id. 1941, 43-7; Stern 1955, 74 n.31; Dunbabin 1978, 135, 277 n. 1; Ovadih 1980, 47; Garezu 1994, 94 n.133; Kondoleon 1994, 248-49; Jesnick 1997, 132-3 n.27; Risse 2001, 88-90; Panetier 2002, 109-10.

on a sceptre and holds a dolphin in his right hand; a sea-horse is on either side of the base. It is arguable that the mosaicist has inserted the figure of Neptune to balance that of Venus on the other side of the central base. The smaller dimensions of the god and the arrangement of the scene with the adornment of Venus in front of the entrance into the apse, where the guests reclined, make it clear that the goddess was the main subject. The whole scene is framed by a border containing generic marine figures (fishers, Erotes, boats full of musicians and dancers) and unrelated mythological scenes in the corners (Perseus and Andromeda, Hero and Leander, Ulysse and the Cyclops, and probably Orpheus and the Beasts). It is possible that the mythological scenes were inserted for influence of the sketches and mimes in water that are known to have been popular⁶⁵; perhaps, as a form of entertainment, they hint at the spectacles that the owner offered to his guests. However, as all the figures are associated with water and with Venus as the goddess of fecundity in all its forms, the mosaic is a message of the owner's prodigality and prosperity.

In main *triclinium* 11 of the Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus at Volubilis, the image of the marine Venus is linked to a panel representing an animal combat: the cat and its prey (a rat) are accompanied by the inscription *Luxurius Cullas Vincentius Enicesas*⁶⁶. The mosaic is a parody of the hunting scenes, which often represent the *dominus*' horses and dogs named by inscriptions pursuing more dangerous beasts. The parody scene does not seem to be associated with the figure of the marine Venus: perhaps the owner wanted to decorate the most important room of his house with very popular motifs. On the contrary, the panel is connected with another parody of the circus-races, which is represented in the panel opposite the entrance into the dining room⁶⁷. The two parody scenes were probably intended as humourous *divertissement* suitable to the atmosphere of joy and relax during dinner parties.

In the centre of the colonnaded *triclinium* XXXV of the Maison du Triomphe de Neptune at Acholla is set a panel representing the triumph of Neptune⁶⁸: the god standing on a chariot drawn by a pair of hippocamps is surrounded by medallions containing Nereids riding sea-monsters and Tritons (Pl. 10). The scene is associated

⁶⁴ Blanchard-Lemée 1975, 73-84; Dunbabin 1978, 43, 134, 156, 256 n.1c.

⁶⁵ Traversari 1960.

⁶⁶ Thouvenot 1958, 79-8; Aymard 1961; Dunbabin 1978, 277, 2e.

⁶⁷ Ch. 3, 81-82.

with a Dionysiac procession, which decorates the threshold of the central door of the room. Dionysus is often associated with water in mosaics, which suggest the power of the god as the governor of the world and the patron of fertility⁶⁹. The Dionysiac theme on the threshold announces and enhances the power of Neptune as the god who presides over the seas and the fertility: the motif is again appropriate for a dining room.

A further image of a sea-deity as the personification of the sea and symbol of fertility appears again in main *triclinium* 45 of the Villa della Gara delle Nereidi at Tagiura (Pl. 153)⁷⁰. The goddess is represented with the same attributes as those accompanying the illustration of the head of Ocean: lobster-claws and antennae on her forehead. The goddess wears a necklace with a row of pearls that emphasizes her feminine character and beauty.

In the *triclinium* of the Maison à l'Ephèbe at Volubilis⁷¹, the panel set in the shaft of the T represents a Nereid riding on a sea-horse and holding a veil which streams over her head (Pl. 227). The marine creature is surrounded by fish, which evoke again the idea of prosperity. On either side of the bar of the T two panels represent a sea-horse holding a *kantharos* as an invitation to enjoy the pleasures of the wine.

The representation of mythological creatures and realistic activities in mosaics decorating dining rooms raises the question whether the marine subjects were chosen by the house-owner as a message of his prosperity and well being or as allusion to his activities. Only once is a scene of commerce shown, on the mosaic decorating *triclinium* G of the Maison des Muses at Althiburos⁷². Nereids riding on sea-monsters and fishing Erotes surround a merchant-ship, laden with amphorae, with the inscription APAEONA LIBURNI on its sail. This was probably a confused form of an honorific inscription, though it is not clear whether it was addressed to the house-owner Liburnus or to a group called the Liburnii. The boat sailing under the protection of the sea-deities seems to be a real boat. It is likely that owner was involved in the shipping business and chose to represent his vessel on mosaics in order to protect it and to record his possessions.

⁶⁸ Dunbabin 1978, 20 n.28, 248 n.4a; Gozlan 1972, 168; id.1992, 280-83; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 536 fig. 344.

⁶⁹ For instance in the Thugga mosaic (Ch. 7, 232-33): other examples are cited in Gozlan 1992, 281-82.

⁷⁰ Di Vita 1966, 31, 33-4; Dunbabin 1978, 272 n.1b.

⁷¹ Chatelain 1935, 8-10; Thouvenot 1945, 121; Dunbabin 1978, 277 n.1b; Risse 2001, 94.

⁷² Ennaïfer 1976, 66-7; Dunbabin 1978, 127, 153, 248 n.1a.

The Althiburos mosaic belongs to the second main category of subject-matter, which is derived from the contemporary world of Roman North Africa. The themes chosen reflect the interests and activities of the wealthy patrons who commissioned them.

Hunting scenes are the mostly represented subjects in the main *triclinium*. In the Édifice des Asclepieia at Althiburos (16)⁷³, for example, the mosaic represents the activities of the hunt according to a customary plan: the departure of the hunting party, the scene of pursuit, the taking of the game, and the return (Pl. 22). The scenes are separated by broad stretches of ground or thin strips of ground-line, from which elements of landscape, rocks, trees, plants, and bushes grow. The details of the hunters' rich garments and the names inscribed above many of dogs and horses are intended to create an effect of lifelike realism and to recall the activities of the *dominus*.

Named hunters and attendants arranged freely over the surface occur again in *triconchos* IV of the Maison des Deux Chasses at Clupea (Pl.62). The central panel, which is framed on the three sides by panels of geometric design for the accommodation of the couches, represents hunters on horses hunting animals (hare and wild boar) at the top and hunters on foot hunting birds at the bottom. The representation of a realistic hunting scene in a *triclinium* displayed the social status of the *dominus* (the hunt of small animals was the kind of occupation which wealthy Africans practised on their estates), his wealth and possessions (the named dogs and horses may be identified as his own), and his prodigality (the pursued animals may hint at the kind of food the host offered).

A similar mosaic illustrating groups of figures engaged in hunting activities occurs again in main *triclinium* 10 of the Maison de la Nouvelle Chasse at Bulla Regia (Pls. 38-39)⁷⁴. The panel, which was damaged by a late cemetery, was framed by a foliated scroll containing *protomai* of animals (Pl. 40). A further example appears in the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna: the panel⁷⁵ forming the threshold of the colonnaded *triclinium* depicts two riders and an attendant with a leash and two hounds which pursue one a hare, the other a fox (Pl. 131).

The function of displaying the house-owner's wealth and hospitality was also served by the representation of *xenia* subjects. In the colonnaded *triclinium* of the House of Africa

⁷³ Ennaïfer 1976, 109-27; Dunbabin 1978, 50, 60, 248 n.3; id. 1999, 112-13; Yacoub 1995, 255-59; Blanchard-Lemée et al. 1996, 178-79 ; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 525 figs. 157-59.

⁷⁴ Beschtaouch et al. 1977, 64.

⁷⁵ Gauckler 1896, 208; Dunbabin 1978, 61, 266 n.1m; Fantar et al. 1994, 245 (fig.); Yacoub 1995, 250-51; Blanchard-Lemée et al. 1996, 179-82 ; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 525 fig. 152.

at El Jem⁷⁶, for instance, a foliate pattern of medallions contains representation of fruit and fish. In the Maison des Animaux Liés at Thuburbo Maius, the T+U *triclinium* XVIII is decorated with bounded animals in medallions and with fish in the interspaces (Pl. 172)⁷⁷. The mosaic is a declaration of hospitality and an invitation to the guests to enjoy the food offered to them by their host. In the Maison des Masques at Hadrumentum (12), the *xenia* subjects (fruit, vegetables, animals and fish) are associated with a variety of Dionysiac masks (Pl. 111)⁷⁸. The association with Dionysus as the god who regenerates the fruits of earth reinforces the message of the wealth of the goods available in the house.

In the Maison des Protomés Section of the *Protomai* at Thuburbo Maius, the main *triclinium* (IX/X) was carpeted with medallions containing the *protomai* of animals (Pl. 179)⁷⁹. The pattern recalls the compartmental composition used for the representation of *xenia* subjects. However, the range of the animals (lion, lioness, horse, ostriches, bears, zebus, boars, ram, tiger, leopards, stag, onyx, and goat) shows that the mosaicist has depicted the animals displayed in the spectacles of the amphitheatre. The mosaic may record a *munus* given by the owner of the house to his fellow-citizens: set before the eyes of the guests reclining at dinner, the panel displayed the host's munificence and wealth. However, the type of composition and the absence of any commemorative inscription leave it doubtful as to whether the animal-catalogue mosaic was intended to refer to a specific event or had a generic decorative function.

5.4.2 Geometric-floral designs

A little number of the main *triclinia* listed in Table 5.1 was decorated with ornamental designs. The complex designs and the polychromy of the compositions created an elegant setting and evoked the concrete reality of how much the house-owner had invested in the decoration of the grandest reception room. A splendid example of rich floral design appears in main *triclinium* VIII of the Maison de Vénus at Thugga: here polychrome vegetal pyramids surround a central octagon (Pls. 188-191).

⁷⁶ 'The House of Africa'

⁷⁷ Yacoub 1995, fig. 109; CMT II.1, 102-08 ; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 526 fig. 176.

⁷⁸ Foucher 1965, 23-4; Dunbabin 1978, 124 n.56, 271 n.31b.

⁷⁹ Dunbabin 1978, 65, 274 n.4b; Yacoub 1995, 281-82; CMT II.3, 17-22; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 525 fig. 161.

In the main *triclinium* of the Maison d'Amphitrite (III) at Djemila⁸⁰, for example, a pattern of adjacent octagons intersected on the shorter side.

In the Maison du Viridarium à Niches at Puppūt⁸¹, a grid of guilloche forming circles ornamented the T-shaped section of main *triclinium* X (Table 5.2 n.9). The geometric pattern is made richer by combinations of compositions and motifs in the T-shaped *triclinium* (X) of the Maison de Dionysos at Thaenae⁸² (Table 5.2 n.11) and in main *triclinium* XIII of the Maison des Palmes at Thuburbo Maius (Table 5.2 n.44)⁸³. In the former the circles are combined with concave squares and outlined by laurel wreaths; in the latter the tangent circles and the concave hexagons are filled with flowers. Floral-vegetal designs as decorative motifs of the dining room may evoke the idea of prosperity.

In the Maison du Paon (XVIII) at El Jem (Pl. 92)⁸⁴ and in the Maison de la Chasse (XVI/XVIII) at Utica⁸⁵, a white mosaic carpeted the main *triclinium*⁸⁶. The reasons why the owner chose to decorate the most important reception room with monochrome, plain design are not clear. The Utica mosaic was laid two centuries before the layout of the figurative mosaic in the peristyle: why did the new owner decide to keep the ancient decoration? In the El Jem example, on the contrary, the *triclinium* was carpeted after the layout of the geometric and figurative mosaics in the majority of the rooms.

5.4.3 *Opus sectile*

Some of the main *triclinia* were carpeted with *opus sectile*. The technique was highly appreciated in the Roman world because of the value of the materials and of its difficulty. As the decorations in this technique were more prestigious than regular mosaic, the owner of a wealthy house used to decorate his grandest reception room with *opus sectile* and the secondary areas with figurative and geometric mosaics⁸⁷. The two types of construction may be used in the same room. For example, in main *triclinium*

⁸⁰ Blanchard-Lemée 1975, 124-25.

⁸¹ Ennabli 1982.

⁸² CMGR V, 47.

⁸³ CMT II.1, 117-21.

⁸⁴ CMT III.1, 45.

⁸⁵ CMT I.1, 72.

⁸⁶ Fragments of white mosaic have been found in the T+U shaped *triclinium* of the Maison des Nymphes at Nabeul, too. But it is not certain whether the plain mosaic covered the whole T-shaped section or framed an *emblema* with different pattern.

⁸⁷ The rare examples of *opus sectile* in African houses, compared to the large number of examples in domestic architecture of Italy, seem to point to the high value of this form of decoration in Africa.

XIV of the Maison de la Cascade (Pl. 203)⁸⁸ and XXVI of the Maison H at Utica (Pl. 212)⁸⁹ a complex design in *opus sectile* decorated the central area, while a plain mosaic carpeted the area for the accommodation of couches.

The majority of the listed pavements show a system of composition based upon a module repeated over the entire field. The repeated pieces are in very simple and common shapes such as squares⁹⁰ and rectangles⁹¹. In the *triclinium* of the Maison de la Cascade at Utica, square and rectangle modules are combined to build up a more complex design. Pattern of greater complexity decorated the colonnaded *triclinium* of the Maison au Grand Oecus at Utica (Pl. 195)⁹²: here the centre was composed of disks and octagons alternating with lozenges and surrounded by a narrower band of disks and lozenges on either side. A further example of *opus sectile* in African domestic architecture occurs in the colonnaded *triclinium* of the Maison du Criptoportique at Carthage⁹³.

5.5 Convivial space

A mosaic from Carthage (late 4th century) depicts a scene of a banquet in progress⁹⁴. Around the edge of an oval pavement guests are seated cross-legged on high-backed couches in front of long tables laden with food and drink. Among them servants carry jugs of wine, bowls and trays of food; a cook watches a pot in one corner. The centre is occupied by the entertainers: an old man playing the syrinx and women dancing with clappers. The mosaic may either represent the kind of private banquet held in the room where it was laid, or record an *epulum* given by the house-owner to his fellow citizens. The panel shows that at dinner parties the space for the service of the attendants, for the performance of the entertainers and for the accommodation of the guests was codified.

The banquets of wealthy Romans required the presence of a great number of servants⁹⁵. In *Ep.* 47 Seneca describes the many tasks the servants were called on to perform: those who must mop up disgorged food; the carver; the wine server; the one who must watch

⁸⁸ CMT I.1, 26.

⁸⁹ CMT I.1, 117-19.

⁹⁰ For instance, in the *triclinium* of the Maison de Neptune at Thuburbo Maius and of the Maison aux Travaux d'Hercules at Volubilis.

⁹¹ They occur in the *triclinium* of the Maison de la Volière at Carthage and of the Maison au Grand Oecus at Utica.

⁹² CMT I.2, 12-3.

⁹³ *Criptoportique* 1990.

⁹⁴ Blank 1981; Dunbabin 1978, 124, 252 n. 29; id. 2003, 89-91.

out for the guests' behaviour to decide who deserves to be invited back a second time; and those who must note their master's tastes to know what food will sharpen their appetite.

Traditionally it was the wine waiter, the *vini minister*, on whom the real prestige was placed⁹⁶. Many sources relate that the wine server must be young, smooth-shaven, long-haired, elegantly dressed and sexually attractive. An iconographic type that corresponds to these descriptions is attested in some domestic mosaics, which represent dining room attendants against a plain background. A mosaic from Thugga⁹⁷ (mid-3rd century) depicts two huge servants carrying on their shoulders amphorae marked with the inscriptions ZHCHC ('long life') and PIE ('drink') and from which they pour wine into bowls held by two younger attendants; behind them, two smaller servants hold, the one roses and a branch of foliage, the other a jug and a towel. The huge size of the cupbearers compared with that of the younger attendants stresses the importance of the drinking section of the dinner party. The slaves serving drink occur again on two mosaics from Oudna. The one shows two servants named Myro and Victor serving drink to a richly dressed figure named Fructus, possibly the house-owner⁹⁸. The other represents two attendants serving two standing men⁹⁹. Both the mosaics decorated the threshold of a large room (possibly the *triclinium*) laying off the peristyle: the panels welcomed the guests entering the room and perpetuated the hospitality that was offered. The role of the servants as vehicles to express luxury and hospitality was exploited much more effectively when visualised in the particular context of the dining room. The crowd of standing slaves¹⁰⁰ outnumbering the diners evoked a powerful image. The highly differentiated servants declared the social status of their master: as Saller points out, the Roman aristocrat that had one servant fulfil two household functions was regarded as *déclassé*¹⁰¹.

Display and representation were more concentrated in the visual entertainment¹⁰² that the house-owner provided to his guests over dinner, or more precisely in the drinking

⁹⁵ D'Arms 1991; Dunbabin 2003, 150-56.

⁹⁶ For the use of crater and hot-water heater at Roman dinner see Dunbabin 1993 and 1995.

⁹⁷ Dunbabin 1978, 123; id. 2003, 152; Blanchard-Lemée et al. 1996, 76-9; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 529 figs 212-13.

⁹⁸ Dunbabin 1978, 123, 266 n.4; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 529 fig. 214.

⁹⁹ Dunbabin 1978, 123, 266 n.6c.

¹⁰⁰ Sen. *Ep.* 47. 2: *stantium servorum turba*.

¹⁰¹ Saller 1987, 71.

¹⁰² Bonaria 1983; Brugnoli 1983; Jones 1991; Dunbabin 1996.

stage following the dinner, the *comissatio*¹⁰³. The host may offer a variety of *acroamata*: music, from the lyre and flute to the water organ; recitations, poetry, and story-telling. More extensive performances might include dancing girls, acrobats, mime, pantomime, and even gladiatorial fights. Pliny's friend Unmilia Quadratilla owned a troupe of pantomimes that performed in her house as well as in the theatre¹⁰⁴. Visual description of spectacles held during a private banquet is Petronius' account of Trimalchio's dinner. The banquet is marked from beginning to end by exhibitions of any sort: acrobats, trumpeters, *Homeristai* acting a mythological scene in Greek, and the host himself staging his own mock-funeral. The dinner is fiction, but it can still be seen as a document of social life, as starting point is the familiar and reasonable that Petronius carries to grotesque extremes. The satyric description of the freedman's dinner exaggerates rather than invents the kind of performances held during the dinner parties of the Roman aristocrats.

Servants and entertainers provided the essential support of convivial comforts of Roman upper class. In Roman banquets diners reclined to eat, resting on the left elbow and taking food from a serving table with the right hand. The custom appeared in Greece by the 7th century BC and spread to peoples with whom the Greeks came into contact. In Rome the reclining banquet was established as aristocratic practice of the kings in the 6th century BC, but it spread soon to wider social groups under the influence of Hellenistic models. In Imperial times the practice was widely adopted by members of local elite eager to display their participation in Roman culture¹⁰⁵. In Greece as well as in Rome reclining never lost its connotations of high status and luxury, the mark of a privileged social class and behaviour, though the custom of reclining originally aristocratic was imitated by lower social groups and even by slaves on special occasions¹⁰⁶.

The arrangement of the diners was determined by the architectural forms of the dining rooms. In the *triclinium*, guests were arranged three per couch on three sides around a central space. Their positions were dictated by a strict hierarchy¹⁰⁷, which assigned the left couch seen from the opening of the U to the lowest social status guest and the right

¹⁰³ Mau 1900.

¹⁰⁴ Plin. *Ep.* 7. 24.

¹⁰⁵ Ellis 1995, 71.

¹⁰⁶ Dunbabin 2003, 11-35 with previous bibliography.

¹⁰⁷ Mrozek 1992.

to the highest. The place of honour or *locus consularis* was no. 3 on the middle couch (*imus in medio*); next to it was the place of the host, no. 1 on the lowest couch (*summus in imo*). This order of precedence was maintained in the *stibadium*, too, although the guests reclined on a continuous, semicircular couch. The place of honour was on the left horn of the couch (*in sinistro cornu*), at the opposite end to the right was the place of the host (*in dextro cornu*). Thus Sidonius, in the letter describing the banquet to which he was invited by Majorian, reports that the emperor reclined on the right horn of the couch (i.e. on the extreme left for the viewer), the consul in the next place at the opposite end, and the others in due order with Sidonius in the lowest position, next to (i.e. behind the shoulder of) Majorian¹⁰⁸. The physical setting of the dining room encouraged discussion and close contact between the diners, which were packed close together around the common table. However, the hierarchical positions of the guests reclining one “below” or “above” one’s companions show that the ideals of equality and fellowship at the Roman dinner table, as ancient sources express, were apparent. The emphasis on positions of honour and the order of precedence enforced the hierarchical order and the complex structure of exchange (*amicitia*) and of obligations (*clientela*) of Roman society¹⁰⁹.

We are well informed from written texts about the protocols, which dictated the position and behaviour of the diners¹¹⁰, servants and entertainers in the *convivium*. What these sources do not tell us is how the aristocratic dining rituals worked in practice. How did size and disposition of the dining room affect the practice of dining? How did changes of fashions of dining and entertaining influence the architectural environment created to support them? How did convivial space affect the nature of service and entertainment and the behaviour of the guests? To answer these questions we need to look at archaeological evidence for the design and use of the dining room in Romano-African houses.

A review of the *triclinium* layouts from the houses listed in the table suggests that the required width for accommodating a couch was in order of 1.50m to 2m¹¹¹. This is

¹⁰⁸ Sid. *Ep.* 1. 11.

¹⁰⁹ D’Arms 1984; id. 1990; Dunbabin 1998, 89.

¹¹⁰ Bradley 1998.

¹¹¹ McCartney 1934; Soprano 1950. See Mols 1999, 37-8 with slightly smaller dimensions for preserved bed and couches at Herculaneum, but many of these are beds rather than dining couches.

comparable to material from Pompeii¹¹² and from Roman Britain¹¹³. The number of the guests and the amount of space for service and entertainment depended upon the dimensions of the dining area. The T+U shaped *triclinium* (II) of the Maison des Colonnes Rouges at Acholla occupied an area of approximately 5.18 x 5.40m. The small room (28m²) offered space for the traditional Roman arrangement of three couches holding three guests each and for a small number of servants and entertainers: the central area was too small for the crowd of specialised servants and for dancers and acrobats. The main *triclinium* of the Maison des Nymphes at Neapolis measures 10.50 x 10m. The U-shaped area for couches (5.40m long on the sides and 9.80m on the side opposite the entrance) would have accommodated at least twice the traditional number of nine guests. The T-shaped area in the middle (ca. 5m wide) and at the entrance of the room (9.80 x 3.40m) would have allowed plenty of space for showy service and extensive performances.

The design of the floor mosaics affected the orderly arrangement of diners and attendants. This is clear from the comparison of three *triclinia* having the same dimensions (6.50 x 6.50m) but different mosaic layout. Main *triclinium* G of the Maison des Muses at Althiburos was paved with a T+U mosaic. The U-shaped area with geometric pattern (1.50m wide) was intended for the accommodation of the traditional number of nine guests; the T-shaped section (5 x 6.5m) decorated with a figurative motif offered space for service and entertainment in the middle and at the entrance of the room. The T+U layout occurs again in main *triclinium* X of the Maison de Dionysos at Thaenae, but it was capable of being adapted to occasions. The two ends of the bar of the T are marked off as separate panels, which correspond to the breadth of the U-portion (1.80m): if required, the couches could be extended over these to give extra space for guests, but the consequently U-plan allowed more limited space for servants and entertainers. The third example is from the Maison de Nicentius at Thuburbo Maius. The *triclinium* (XIV) is not marked out specifically to be used for dining, as the room is decorated with a grid of nine ornamental squares over the whole floor surface. This allowed for a more flexible use of space: when required, the house-owner might either accommodate a larger number of guests or offered more extensive entertainments.

¹¹² For instance, the masonry couch in Casa del Criptoportico was between 1.50m and 2m wide.

¹¹³ Witts 2000.

More suitable for grand banquets with a large number of guests as well as of attendants were the colonnaded *triclinia*. The space within the columns was large enough to accommodate a large number of guests and to arrange lavish entertainment. Moreover, the colonnade allowed the servants to circulate without obtruding upon the diners.

It is clear that the size of the room affected the atmosphere of the meal and the behaviour of the diners. In small *triclinia*, where the guests were packed close together around the common table, space enforced a close contact between the diners; the limited number of servants and performers allowed discussion between all the guests without distracting the attention of the diners. In large *triclinia*, on the contrary, the guests could not communicate easily with any but their immediate neighbours; they did not share a common table, but usually single tables were usually provided. The guests were the passive spectators of the lavish entertainment that the plenty of space provided in the central part of the room.

Applying the same width of 1.50m to 2m to the curved *stibadium* couch, an apse at least 4m wide and 2m to 2.50m deep would have been required to accommodate the couch¹¹⁴. These measurements correspond to the size of the apsidal rooms listed in the table. Further examples, which reinforce these measurements, are the masonry *stibadia* of the Maison du *Triclinium* at Chercel (4.60m wide and 2.50m deep)¹¹⁵ and of the Maison des Chevaux at Carthage (5m wide and 3m deep)¹¹⁶, and a mosaic from the dining room of Villa of the Falconer in Argos (late 4th- early 5th century): the curved part of the design, laid out into seven segments, is slightly over 4m wide and 3m deep¹¹⁷. The *stibadium* could hold a small number of guests. The segmental layout of the Argos mosaic shows that the *stibadium* could cater only to seven diners. Literary sources indicate between five and nine as the preferred number. According to Ausonius, the ideal number for an informal meal was six¹¹⁸; at Majorian's banquet, to which Sidonius was invited, the guests were eight¹¹⁹. In contrast, servants and entertainers might form a much larger group. The accommodation of the guests within the apse left the whole front part of the room completely free; a table for food and wine could stand

¹¹⁴ Witts 2000, 295. See also Morvillez 1996 with slightly smaller dimensions (3m wide) for his examples of sigma-couch, but they are taken from a wider range of sites in Imperial times.

¹¹⁵ Leveau 1982, 140-42 n. 26; Morvillez 1996, 128.

¹¹⁶ Salomonson 1965.

¹¹⁷ Åkerström-Hougen 1974, 34-6, 101-17; Dunbabin 2003, 170.

¹¹⁸ Auson. *Ephemeris* 5.

¹¹⁹ Sidon. *Ep.* 1.11.10.

in the curve of the couch without blocking what was going on in the rest of the room. Literary sources attest that performances were held “in front of the table”¹²⁰. The arrangement is well illustrated in a miniature in the Vienna Genesis (6th century) showing Pharaoh’s feast¹²¹. Pharaoh and his guests recline on the *stibadium* couch; servants, smaller in size, stand in front and behind the guests (a free space at least 1m wide between the couch and the wall of the apse was required for service behind); musicians with plenty of room play beyond the servants.

The seating limitations of the *stibadium* might be overcome by the arrangement of more apses. The *triconchos*, as the more widely adopted formula, allowed a couch to be placed in each apse, while the central space was again left open for showy service and entertainment. The architectural layout of the *stibadium* and the *triconchos* created a different atmosphere to that perceived by diners reclining in the *triclinium*. The concept is well illustrated by two examples of apsed dining rooms. The *stibadium* (XI) of the Maison de l’Âne at Djemila provided space for a small number of guests in its moderately-sized apse (4.70m wide and 3m deep), while the forepart of the room (8 x 7.50m) allowed showy service and extensive performances. The arrangement of a few diners packed closely on the semicircular couch seems to encourage conversation between the participants and to create a setting for dining as intimate as in the small *triclinium*. However, the spectacles held in the large space in front of the couch focused the attention of the diners on what was going on outside. The *triconchos* of the Maison du Triconque at Carthage allowed space for a larger number of guests: each of the three apses was as wide as the single *stibadium* couch of the Maison de l’Âne. The open space between the apses was again large enough (6.72 x 8.03m) for very lavish entertainment. That layout emphasised the importance of the internal spectacle as the focus at which the diners’ eyes converged, but left little room for conversation within the party: communication between the guests reclining in the adjacent or opposite apses was no longer possible.

¹²⁰ Macr. Sat. 3. 14. 4; Olymp. FGHIV, 63, frag. 23.

¹²¹ Genesis 40.20-3. Cod. Vindob. Theol. Gr. 31, fol. 17v; Mazal 1980, 121, 154-55; Dunbabin 1996, 78; id. 2003, 198-99.

5.6 Conclusions

In a passage of his *De Vita beata*, Seneca speaks of two Roman voluptuaries, notorious for their pursuit of pleasure in the dining room: at table they delight their ears with singing, their palates with flavours, their noses with roses and perfumes, and their eyes with visual show¹²². In the banquets of the rich a simultaneous assault upon all the senses seems to have continuously made in the dining room. However, in a society where the language of viewing and being viewed, of show, of marvellous display, dominated the rituals of Roman daily life, visual played the most important role. The banquet of the rich was essentially an image for the eye, a spectacle the special effects of which appealed to the sense of sight¹²³. The architectural layout of the dining room, the decorated mosaic floors, the showy service, the various entertainments, and the arrangement of the diners were all intended as methods of obtaining an optical effect. Through the visual impression the host as spectacle-maker conveyed a message of social significance: the banquet stood as symbol of political power and as self-advertisement of the house-owner.

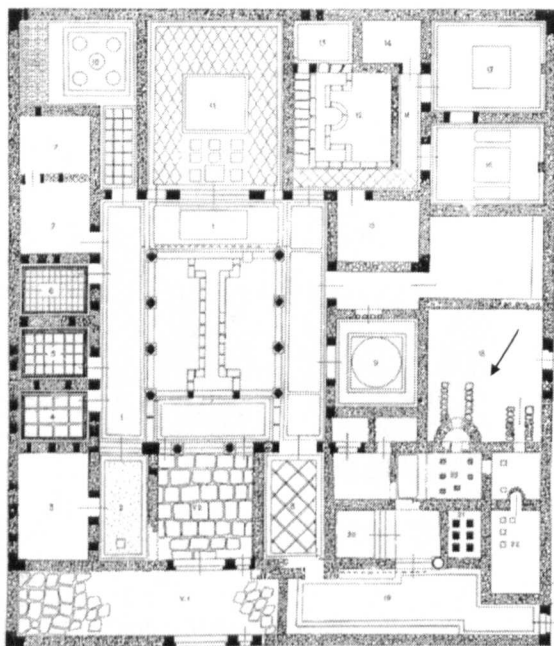
¹²² Sen. *Vit. beat.* 11.4.

¹²³ D'Arms 1999.

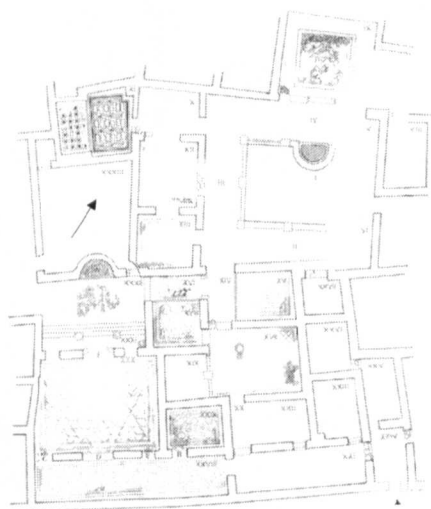
| Town | House | Room | Dimensions | Area | Layout | Triple entrance | Aspect |
|-------------|---------------------------------|------------|--------------|--------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------------|
| Acholla | M. d'Asinius Rufinus | IV | 6.7 x 7.05 | 47.23 | T+U | x | peristyle-pseudo basin |
| Acholla | M. des Colonnes Rouges | II | 5.15 x 5.4 | 27.81 | T+U | | peristyle |
| Acholla | M. du Triomphe de Neptune | XXXV | 11.1 x 9.6 | 106.56 | colonnaded | | peristyle-pseudo basin |
| Althiburos | Édifice des Asclepieia | 16 | 6.27 x 5.68 | 35.61 | all over | | peristyle-basin |
| Althiburos | M. des Muses | G | 6.5 x 6.5 | 42.25 | U | double entrance | peristyle-basin |
| Bulla Regia | M. d'Amphitrite | 5 | 5 x 5.4 | 27 | <i>emblema</i> | x | peristyle |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Chasse | 15 | 7.2 x 8.7 | 62.64 | unknown | x | peristyle-basin |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Nouvelle Chasse | 10 | 5.8 x 8.7 | 50.46 | U | | peristyle-basin |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Pêche | 3/4/5 | 8.41 x 8.7 | 73.16 | | | peristyle |
| Bulla Regia | M. n.3 | 18 | 7 x 8.8 | 61.6 | U | x | peristyle |
| Carthage | M. de la Volière | 18 | 7.3 x 12.9 | 94.17 | U | | corridor-nymphaeum |
| Carthage | M. du Triconque | XXIII-XXVI | 10 x 14.43 | 144.3 | <i>triconchos</i> | | peristyle |
| Clupea | M. des Deux Chasses | IV | | 61.22 | <i>triconchos</i> | | peristyle |
| Djemila | M. d'Amphitrite | III | 6 x 6.3 | 37.8 | all over | x | peristyle-basin |
| Djemila | M. de Castorius | XVII | 7.4 x 8.7 | 64.38 | unknown | x | peristyle-basin |
| Djemila | M. d'Europe | 18 | 6.5 x 5 | 32.5 | unknown | x | peristyle-basin |
| Djemila | M. de l'Âne | XI | 8 x 7.5 | 60 | <i>stibadium</i> | | basins |
| El Jem | House of Africa | 11 | 15 x 12 | 180 | colonnaded | x | peristyle-pseudo basin |
| El Jem | M. de la Procession Dionysiaque | G | 6.9 x 8.4 | 57.96 | U | x | peristyle |
| El Jem | M. des Dauphins | XXXVII | 13.45 x 10.2 | 137.19 | colonnaded | double entrance | peristyle-podium |
| El Jem | M. du Paon | XVIII | 8.1 x 10.2 | 82.62 | all over | | peristyle- pseudo basin |
| El Jem | Sollertiana Domus | XVII | 6.2 x 9.3 | 57.66 | T+U | | peristyle-pseudo basin |
| Hadrumetum | M. des Masques | 12 | 10.5 x 8.5 | 89.25 | colonnaded | | peristyle |
| Hergla | M. aux Deux Péristyles | 4b | 10 x 11.5 | 115 | <i>stibadium</i> | | peristyle-basin |
| Neapolis | M. des Nymphes | XX | 10.5 x 10 | 105 | T+U | x | peristyle-pseudo basin |

Table 5.1: Main *triclinium*

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|-----------|-------------|--------|-------------------|---|------------------------|
| Oudna | M. d'Ikarios | 33 | 9.6 x 8.2 | 78.72 | colonnaded | x | peristyle |
| Pupput | M. du Péristyle Figuré | XIII | 3.5 x 6.3 | 22.05 | all over | | peristyle |
| Pupput | M. du Triclinium en Noir et Blanc | VII | 6.5 x 9 | 58.5 | T+U | | peristyle-basin |
| Pupput | M. du Viridarium à Niches | X | 7.5 wide | | T+U | x | peristyle-pseudo basin |
| Silin | Villa du Taureau | 12a | 24 x 18 | 432 | unknown | x | anteroom |
| Tagiura | Villa della Gara delle Nereidi | 45 | 6.5 x 6.5 | 42 | emblema | | corridor |
| Thaenae | M. de Dionysos | X | 5.25 x 5.46 | 28.66 | U | | peristyle |
| Thurburbo Maius | M. aux Communs | IX | 6 x 6.2 | 37.2 | unknown | x | peristyle |
| Thurburbo Maius | M. de Bacchus et Ariane | IX | 6 x 5.8 | 34.8 | U | x | peristyle-basin |
| Thurburbo Maius | M. de Neptune | XV/XIX | 7.12 x 8.5 | 60.52 | unknown | x | peristyle-pseudo basin |
| Thurburbo Maius | M. de Nicentius | XIV | 6.31 x 6.52 | 41.14 | all over | x | peristyle-basin |
| Thurburbo Maius | M. des Animaux Liés | XVIII | 6.33 x 6.22 | 39.37 | T+U | x | peristyle |
| Thurburbo Maius | M. des Palmes | XIII | 6.42 x 5.17 | 33.19 | all over | x | peristyle-basin |
| Thurburbo Maius | M. des Protomés-Sect. Protomai | IX/X | 5 x 10.85 | 54.25 | all over | | peristyle |
| Thurburbo Maius | M. des Protomés-Sect. Triconchos | IX | | | <i>triconchos</i> | | anteroom |
| Thurburbo Maius | M. du Char de Vénus | XXX/XXXI | | 68 | <i>triconchos</i> | x | peristyle |
| Thugga | M. de Dionysos et d'Ulysse | 10 | 4.37 x 4.6 | 20.1 | all over | | peristyle-basin |
| Thugga | M. de Vénus | VIII | 4.4 x 3.3 | 14.52 | all over | | peristyle |
| Utica | M. au Grand Oecus | XVI | 13.4 x 14.8 | 198.32 | colonnaded | x | peristyle-basin |
| Utica | M. de la Cascade | XIV | 7.6 x 8.6 | 65.36 | T+U | | peristyle |
| Utica | M. de la Chasse | XVI/XVIII | 4.7 x 6.02 | 28.29 | all over | | peristyle |
| Utica | Maison H | XXVI | 8.4 x 8.05 | 67.62 | all over | | peristyle-basin |
| Utica | M. Ouest | III | 5.6 x 5.1 | 28.56 | all over | | peristyle-basin |
| Volubilis | M. à la Mosaïque de Vénus | 11 | 7.9 x 10 | 79 | U | x | peristyle-basin |
| Volubilis | M. aux Travaux d'Hercule | 2 | 8.4 x 10.45 | 87.78 | all over | | peristyle |
| Volubilis | M. de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons | 7 | 6.23 x 7.95 | 49.53 | T+U | | peristyle |
| Volubilis | M. de Flavius Germanus | 12 | 6.2 x 7.6 | 47.12 | unknown | x | peristyle-basin |
| Volubilis | M. à l'Ephèbe | 10 | 7 x 6 | 42 | T+U | x | peristyle-basin |
| Volubilis | M. d'Orphée | 3 | 11 x 10 | 120 | T+U | x | court-basin |
| Volubilis | M. des Néréides | 8 | 7.1 x 8.2 | 58.22 | unknown | x | peristyle-basin |



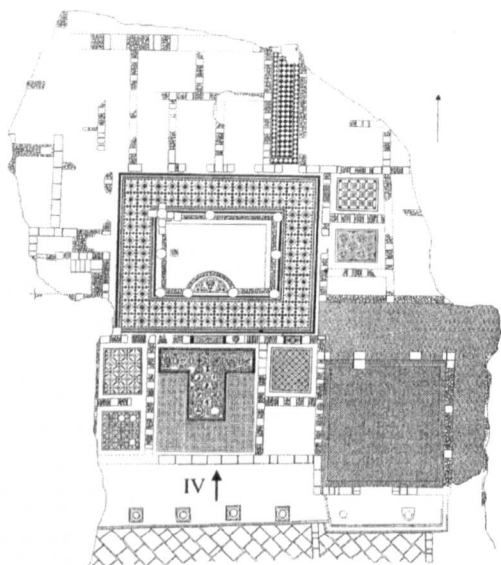
1. Volubilis, Maison à la Mosaïque de Venus



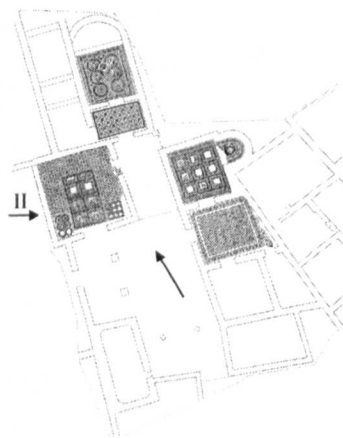
2. Thuburbo Maius, Maison de Bacchus et Ariane

0 5 10m

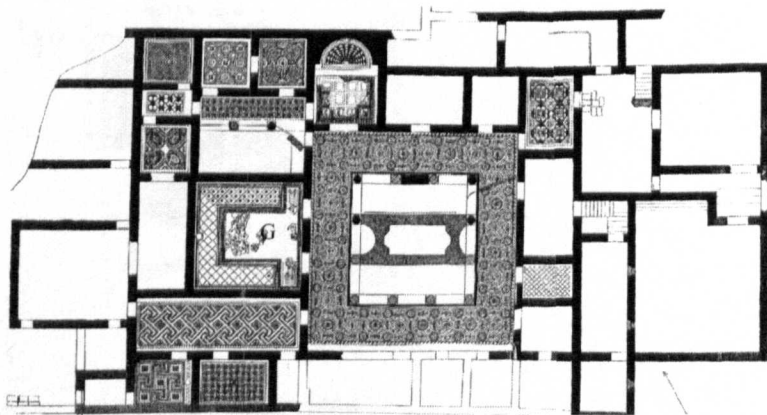
Table 5.2. Main *triclinium* in the Romano-African house



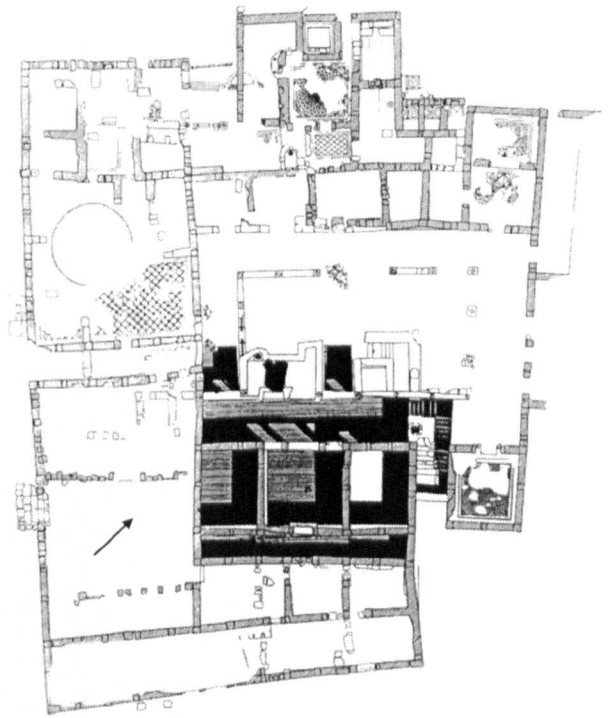
3. Acholla, Maison d'Asinius Rufinus



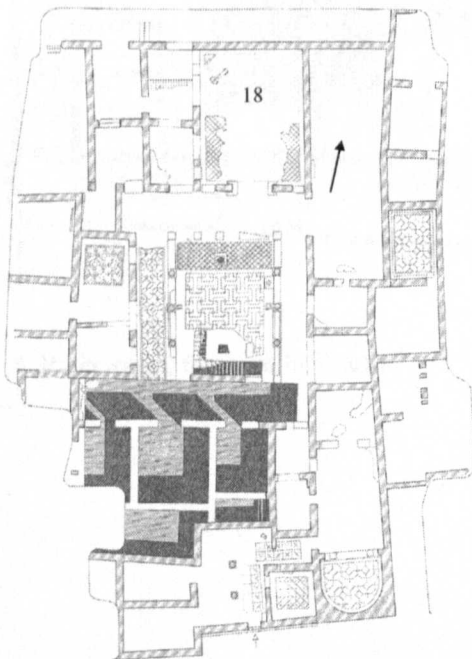
4. Acholla, Maison des Colonnes Rouges



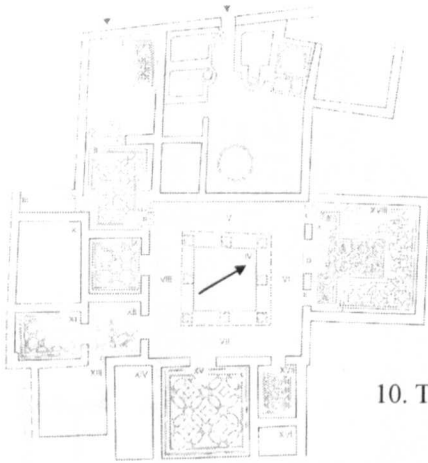
5. Althiburos, Maison des Muses



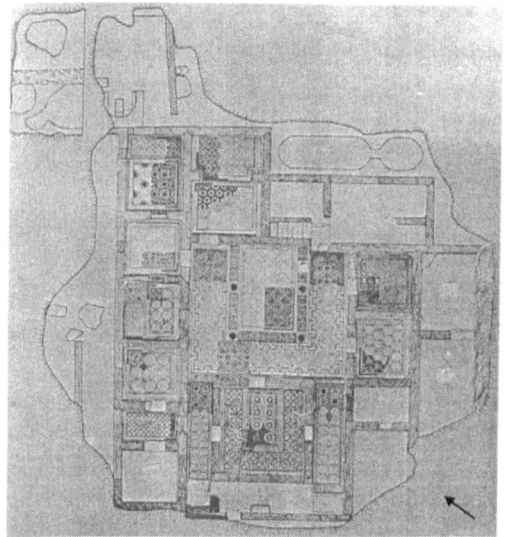
6. Bulla Regia, Maison d'Amphitrite



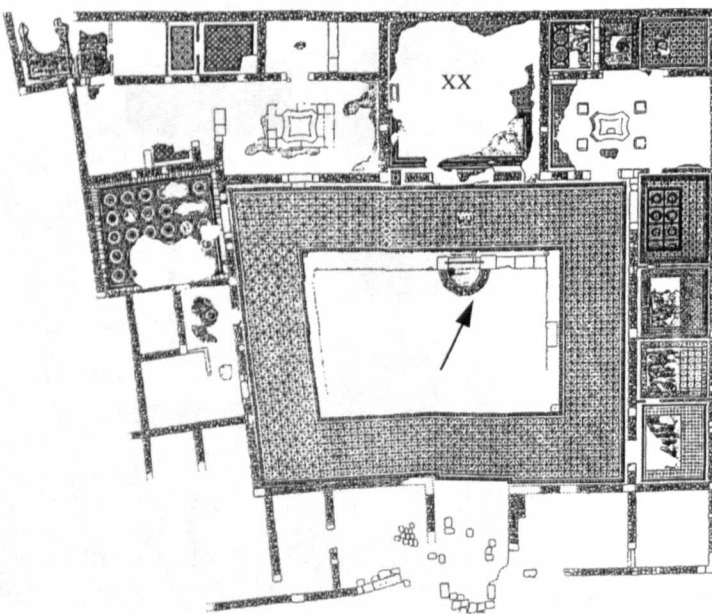
7. Bulla Regia, Maison n.3



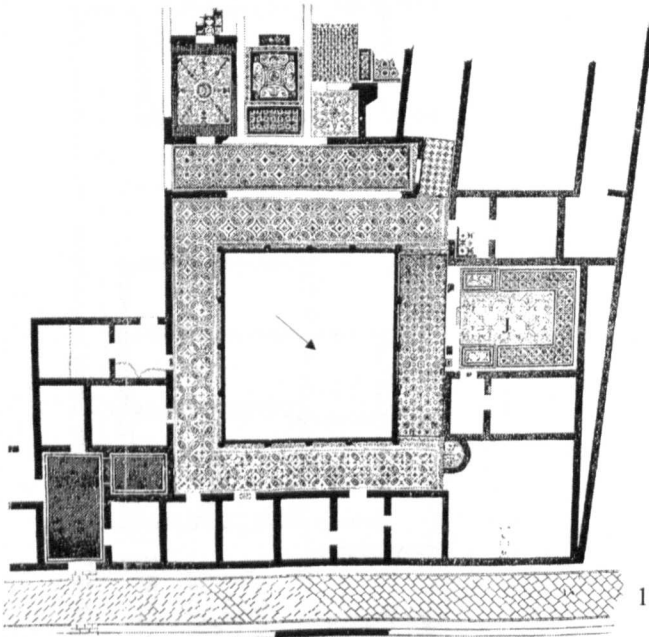
10. Thuburbo Maius, Maison des Animaux Liés



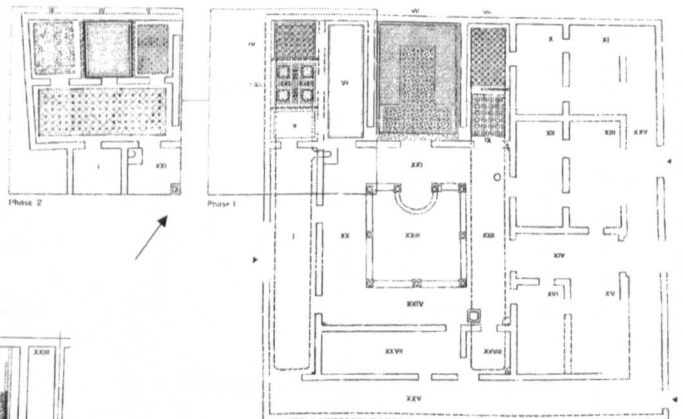
11. Thaeanae, Maison de Dionysos



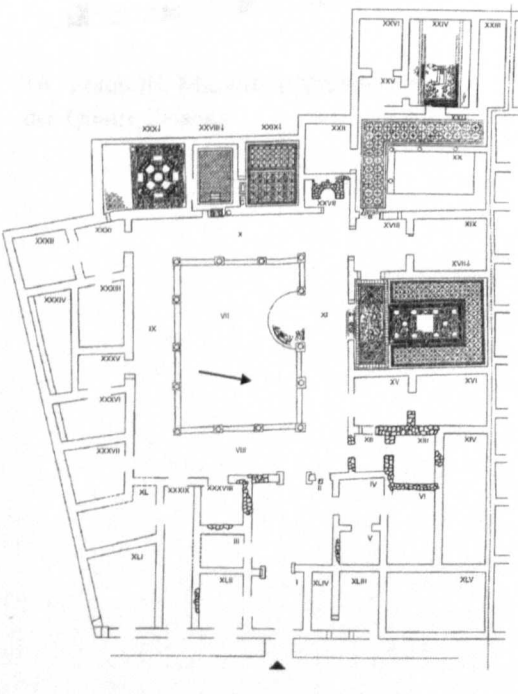
12. Neapolis, Maison des Nymphes



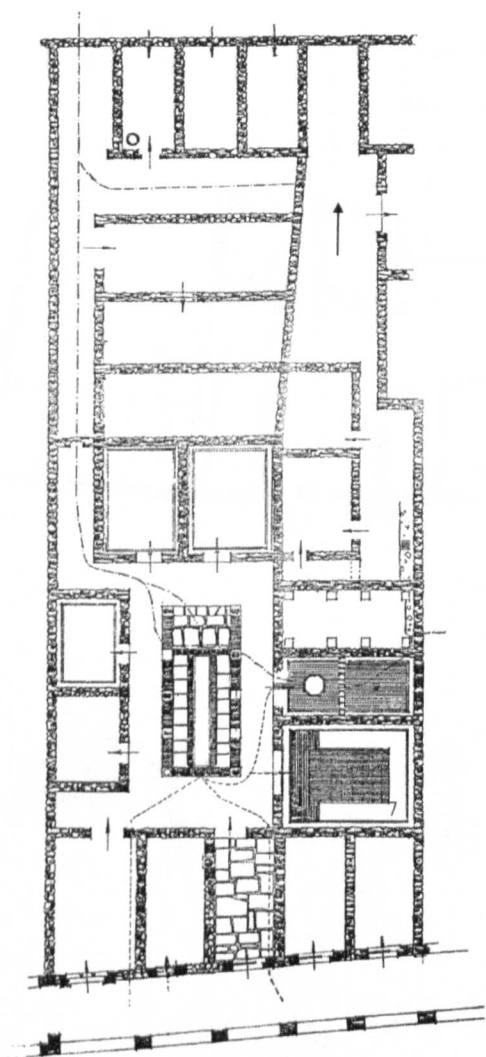
13. El Jem, Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque



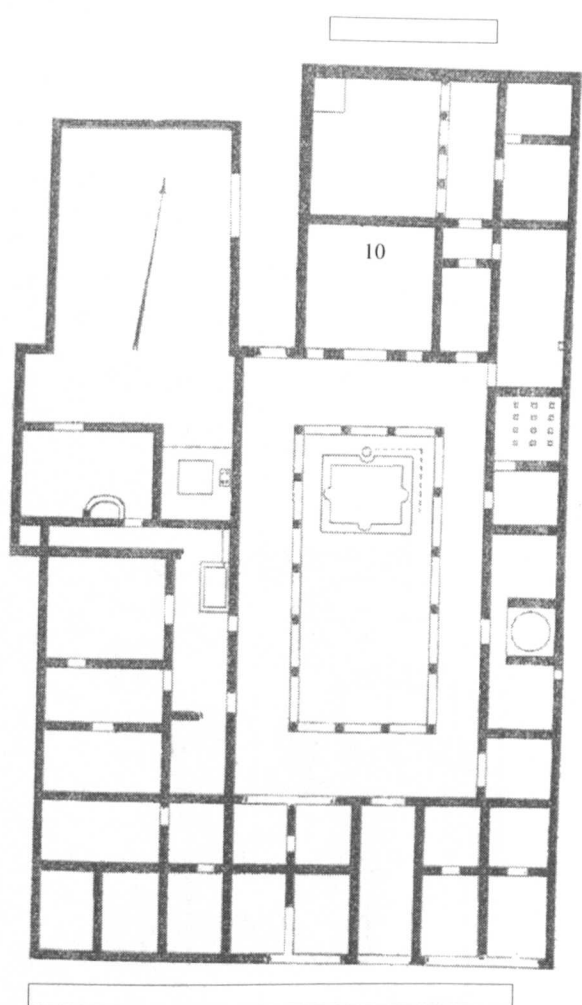
14. Puppit, Maison du Triclinium en Noir et Blanc



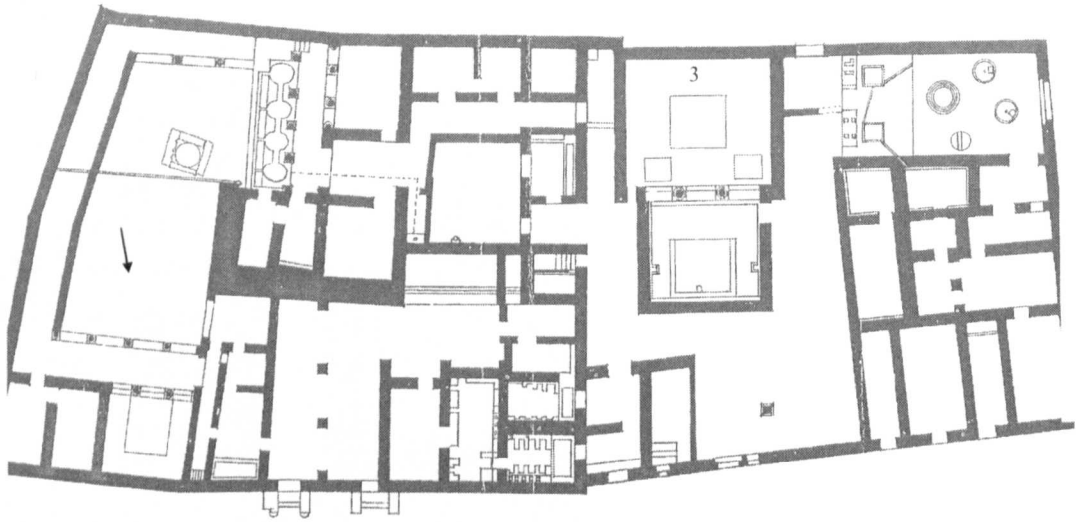
15. El Jem, Sollertiana Domus



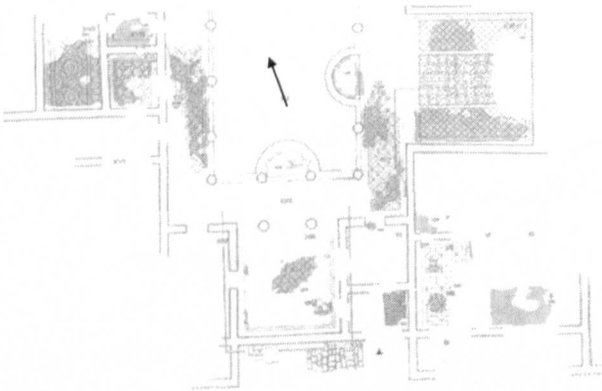
16. Volubilis, Maison de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons



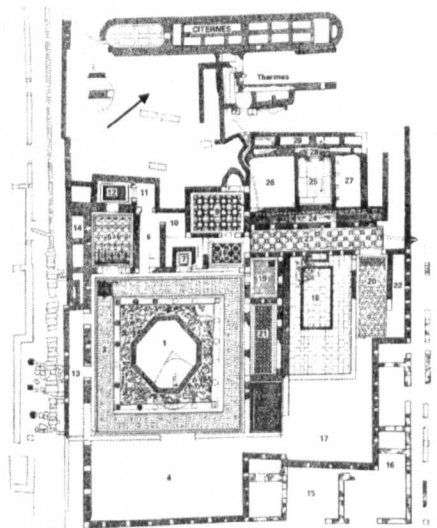
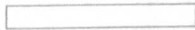
17. Volubilis, Maison de l'Éphèbe



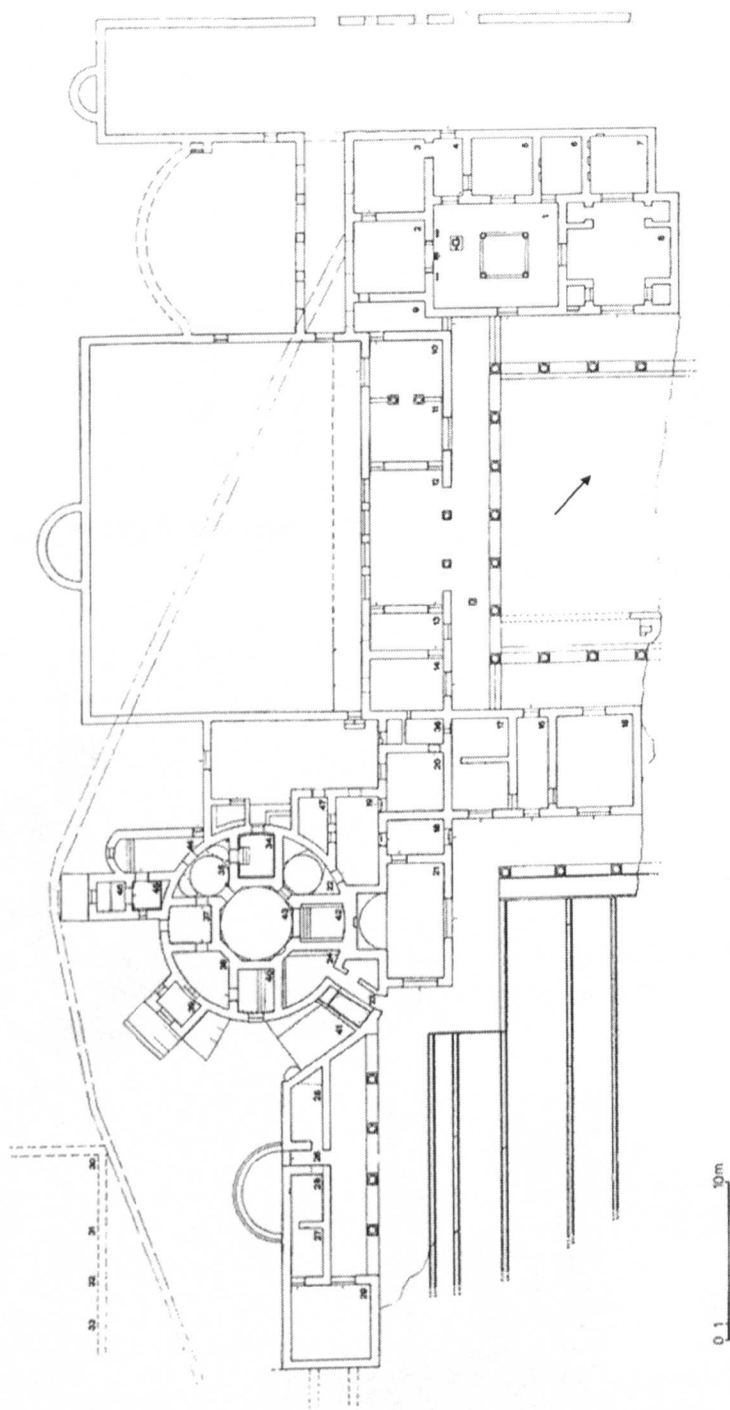
18. Volubilis, Maison d'Orphée



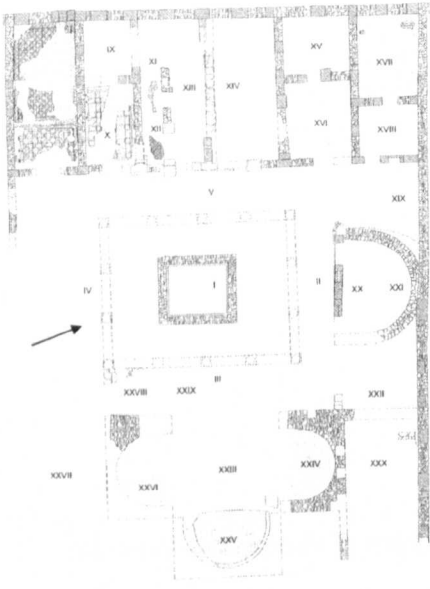
19. Utica, Maison H



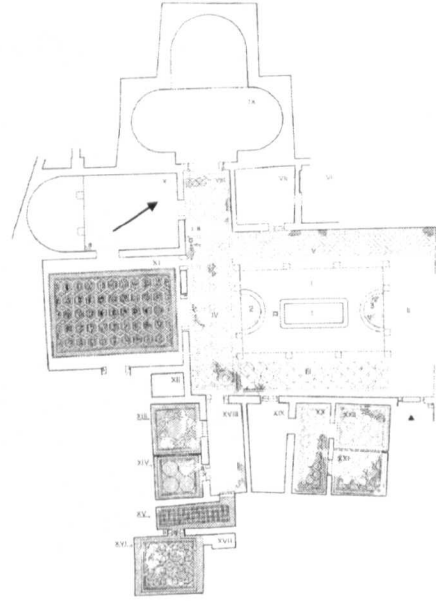
20. Carthage, Maison de la Volière



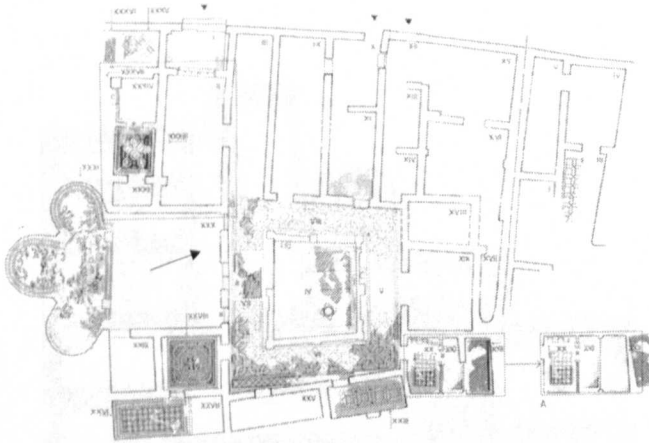
23. Silin, Villa du Taureau



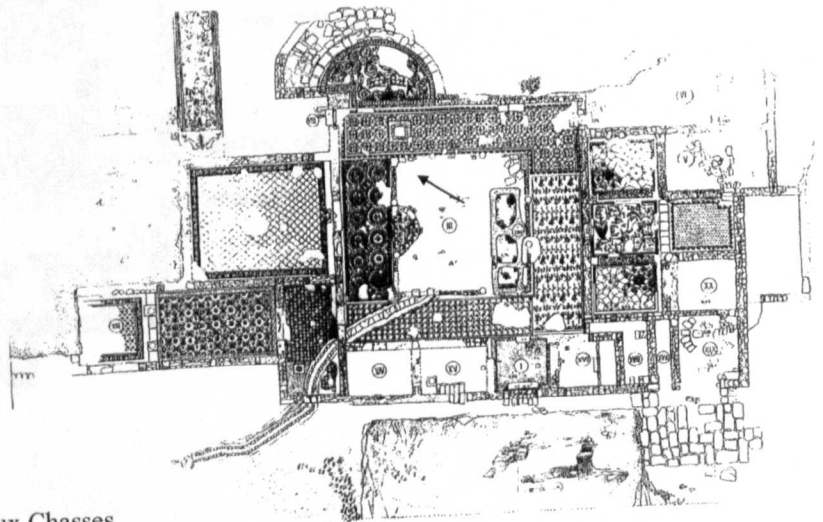
24. Carthage, Maison du Triconque



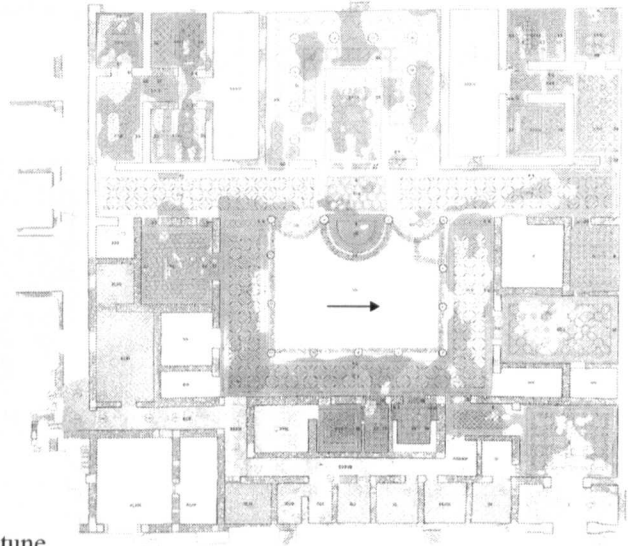
25. Thuburbo Maius, Maison des Protomés
section of the *Triconchos*



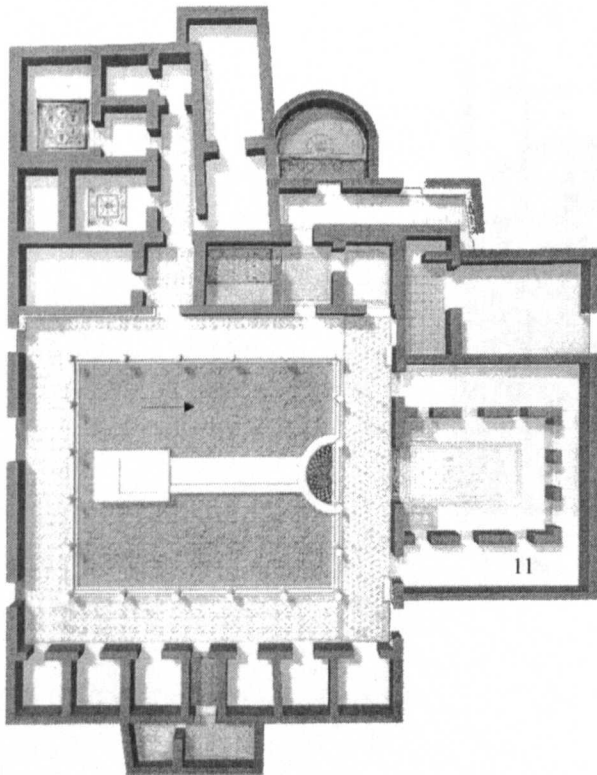
26. Thuburbo Maius, Maison du Char de Vénus



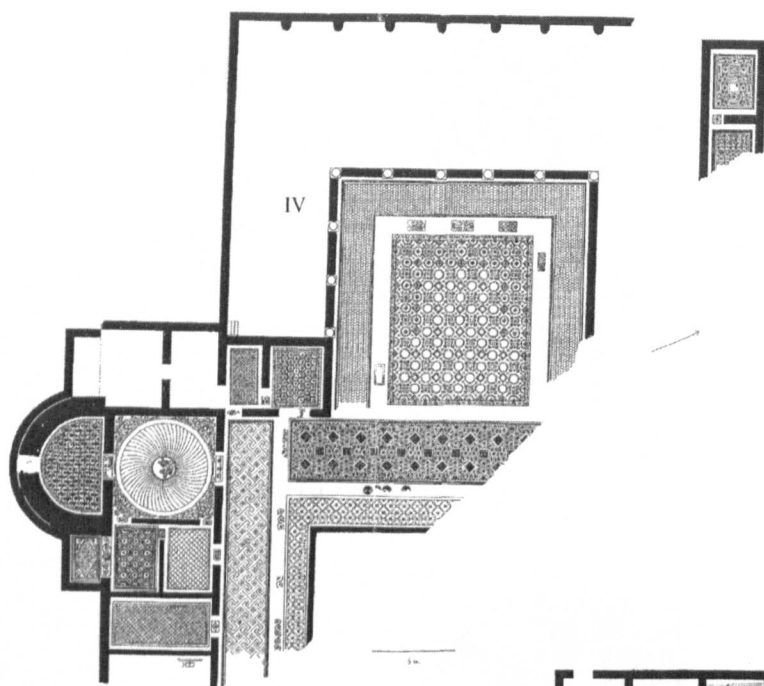
27. Clupea, Maison des Deux Chasses



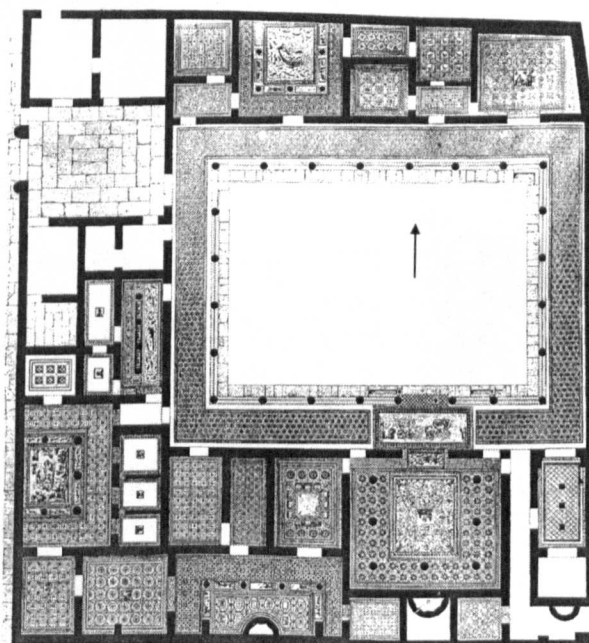
28. Acholla, Maison du Triomphe de Neptune



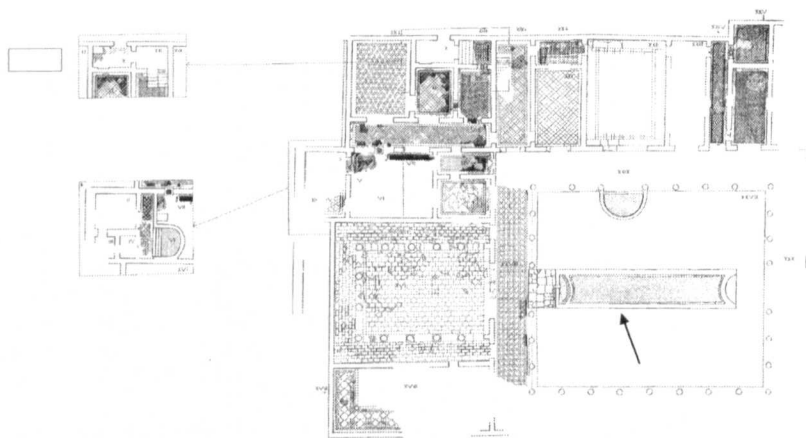
29. El Jem, House of Africa



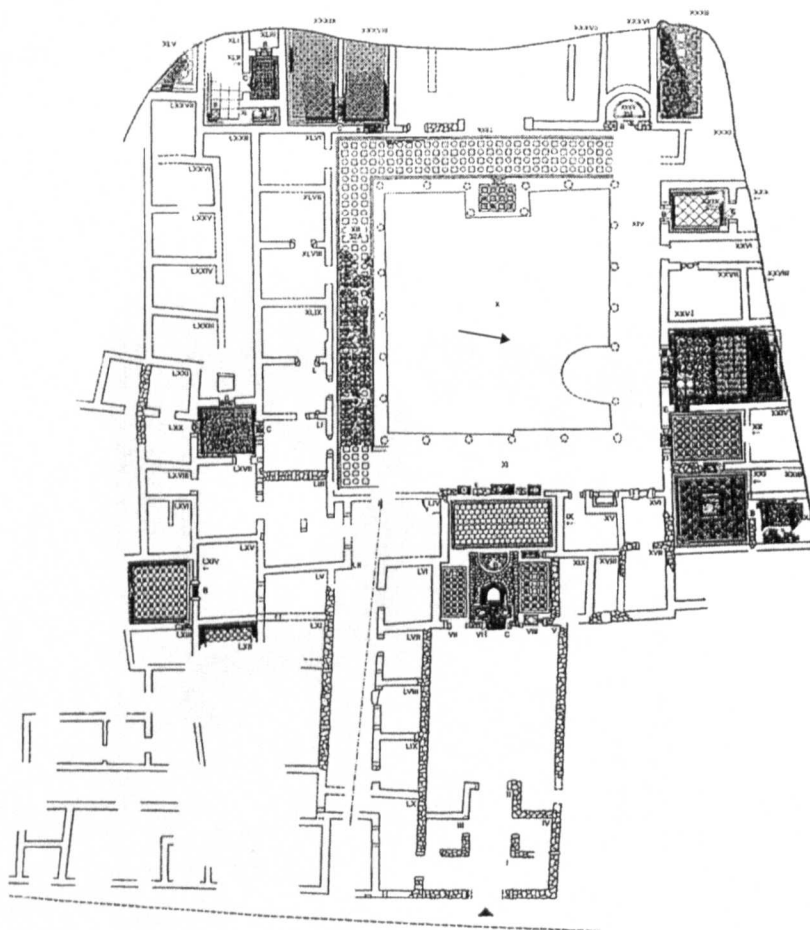
30. Hadrumetum, Maison des Masques



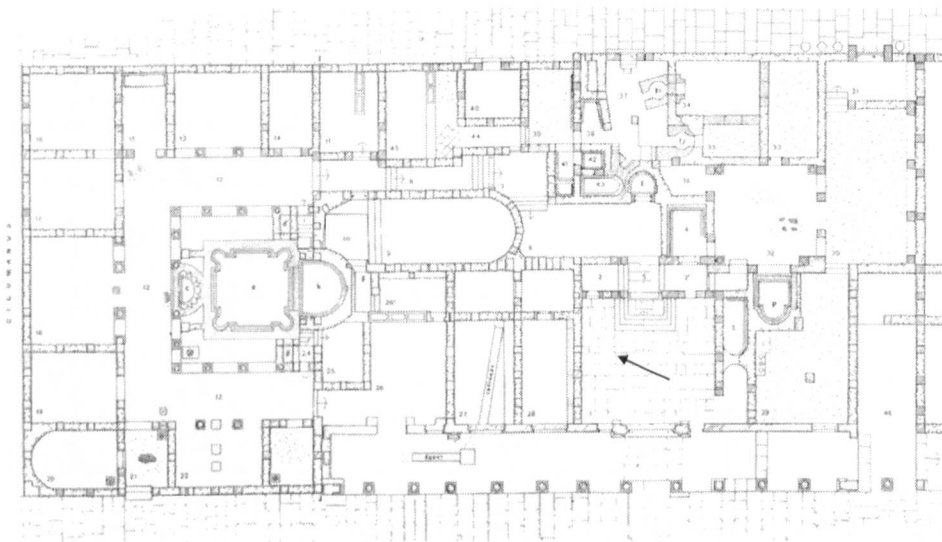
31. Oudna, Maison d'Ikarios



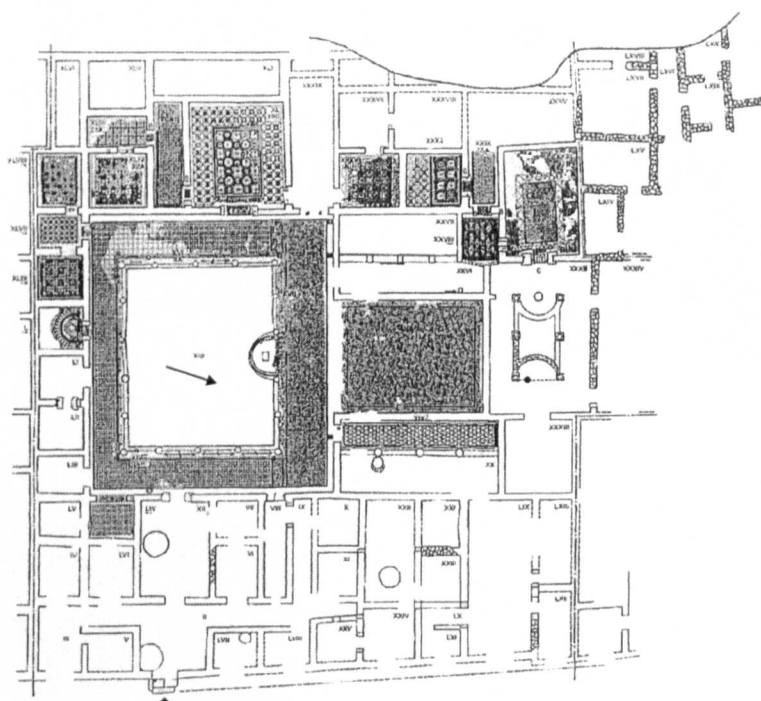
32. Utica, Maison au Grand Oecus



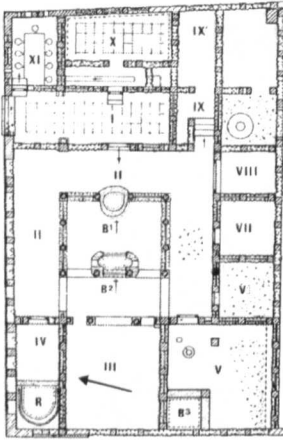
33. El Jem, Maison des Dauphins



34. Djemila, Maison d'Europe



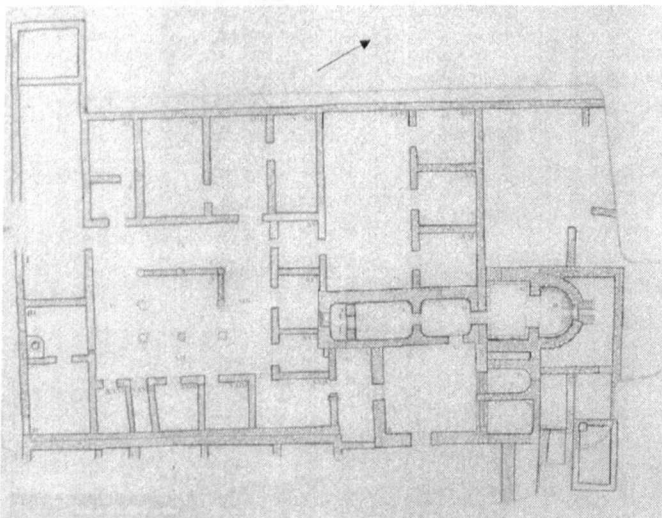
35. El Jem, Maison du Paon



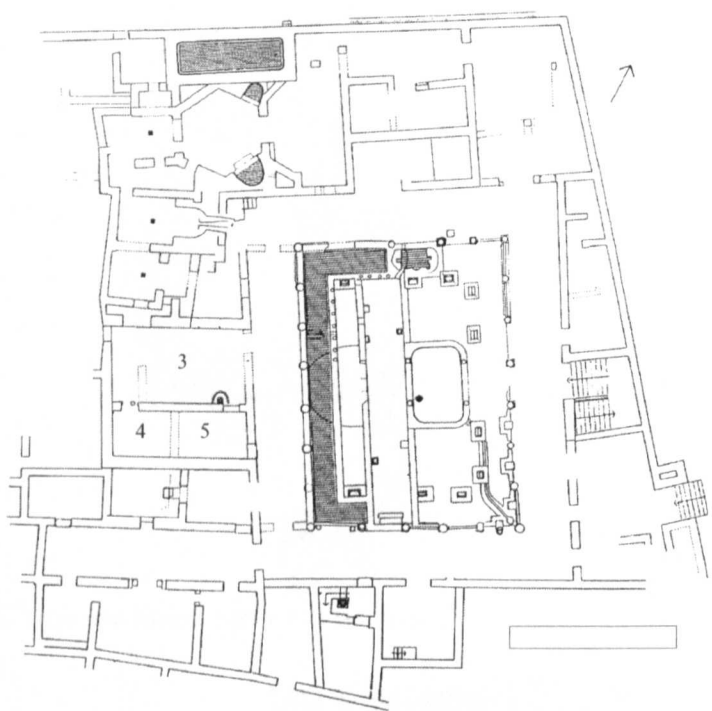
36. Djemila, Maison d'Amphitrite



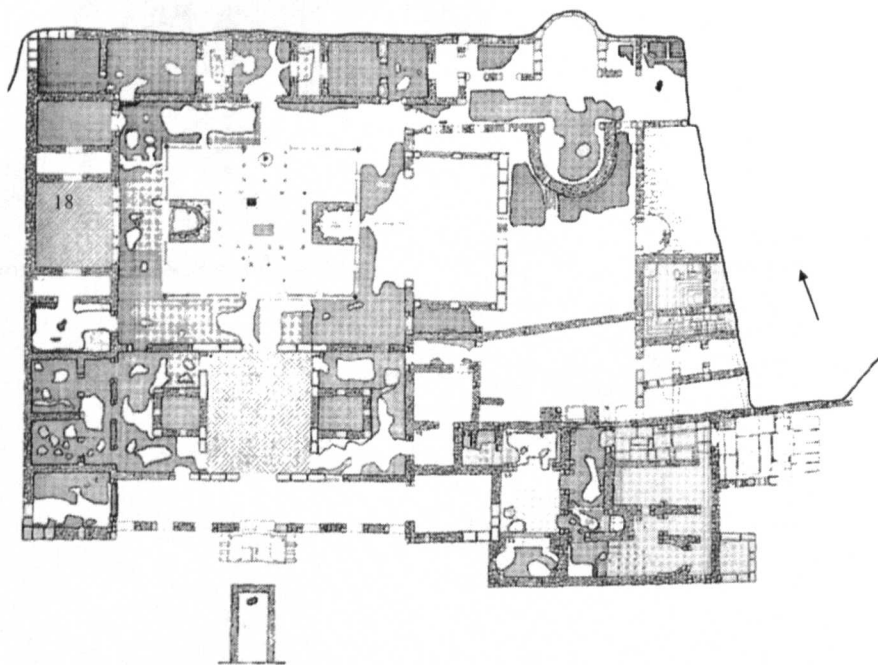
37. Djemila, Maison de Castorius



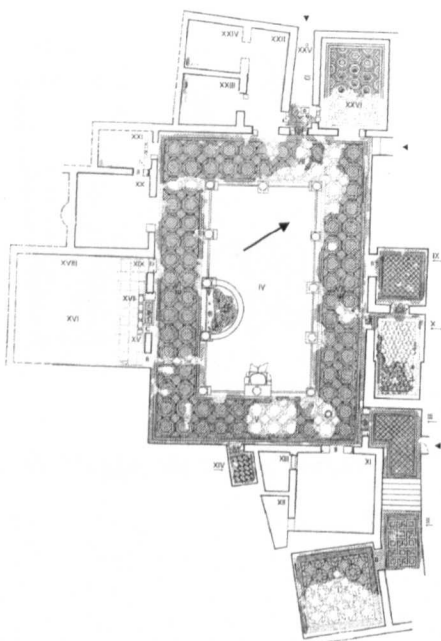
38. Pupput, Maison du Péristyle Figuré



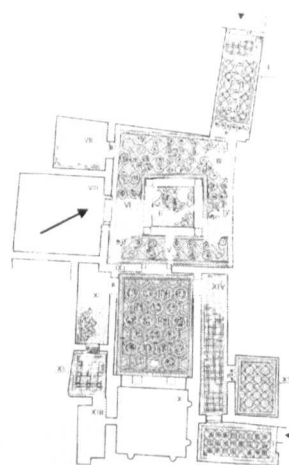
39. Bulla Regia, Maison de la Pêche: ground floor



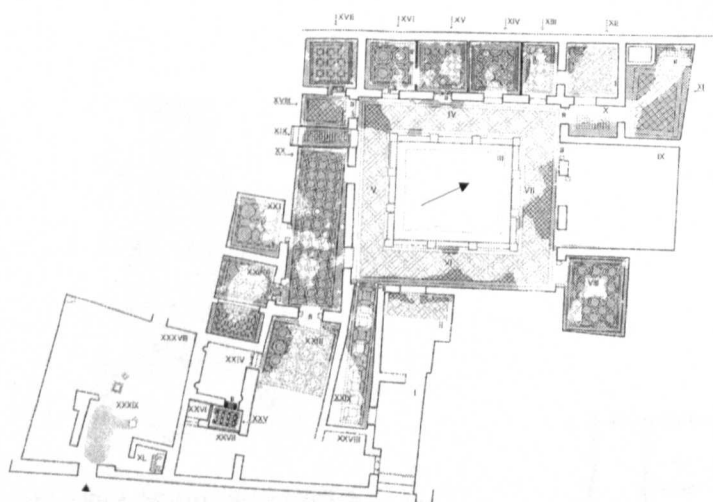
40. Althiburos, Édifice des Asclepieia



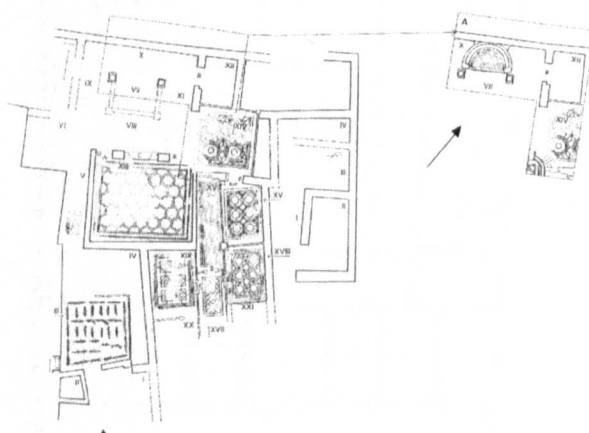
41. Thuburbo Maius, Maison de Neptune



42. Thuburbo Maius, Maison des Protomés
section of the *Protomai*



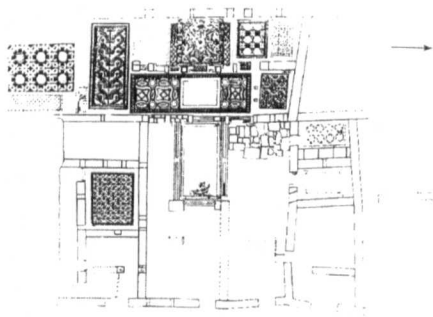
43. Thuburbo Maius, Maison aux Communs



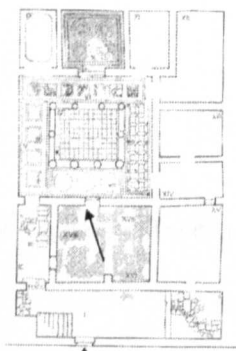
44. Thuburbo Maius, Maison des Palmes



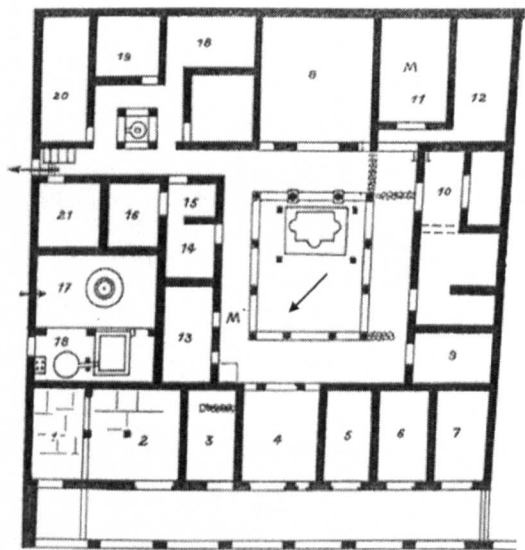
45. Thugga, Maison de Dionysos et d'Ulysse



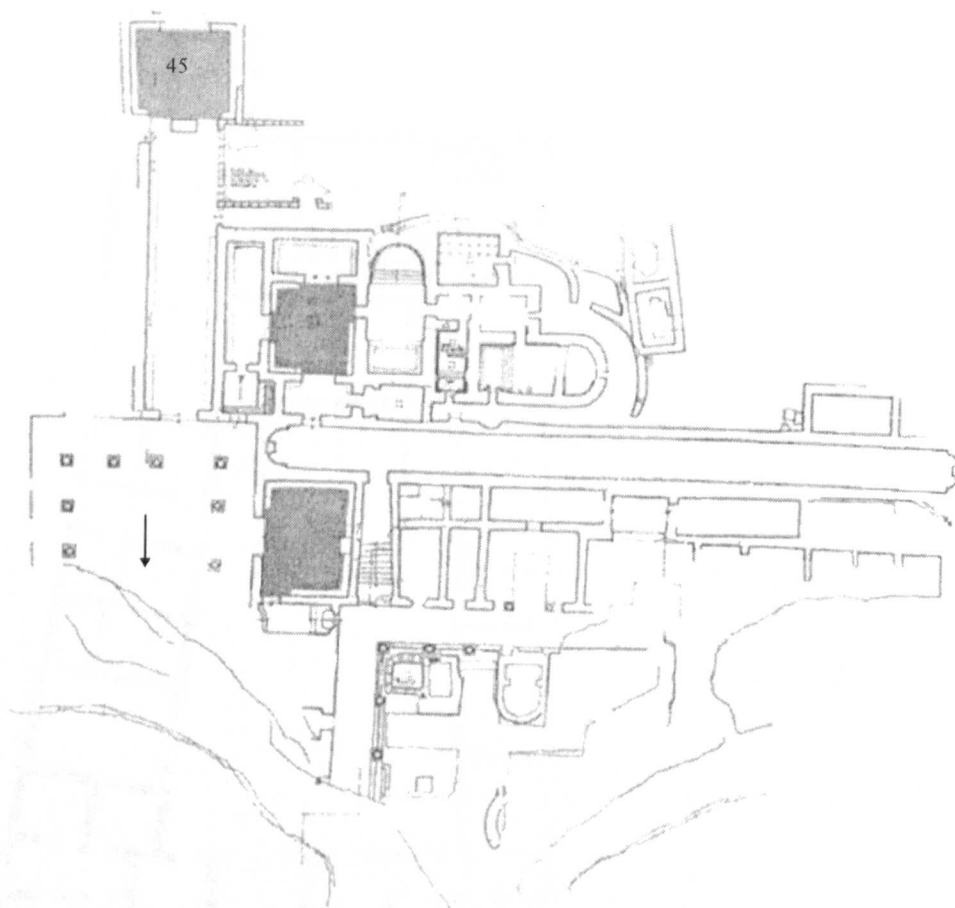
46. Thugga, Maison de Vénus



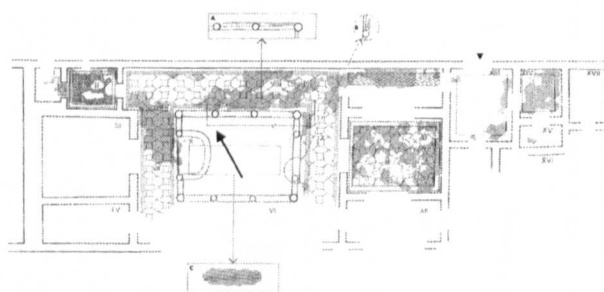
47. Utica, Maison de la Chasse



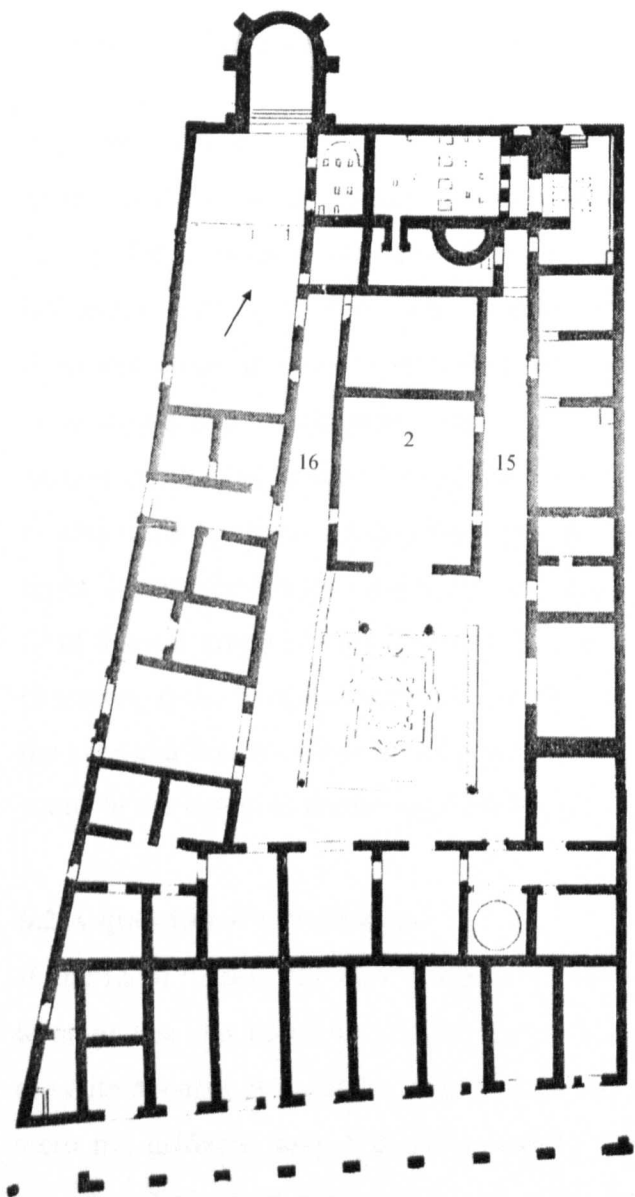
48. Volubilis, Maison des Néréides



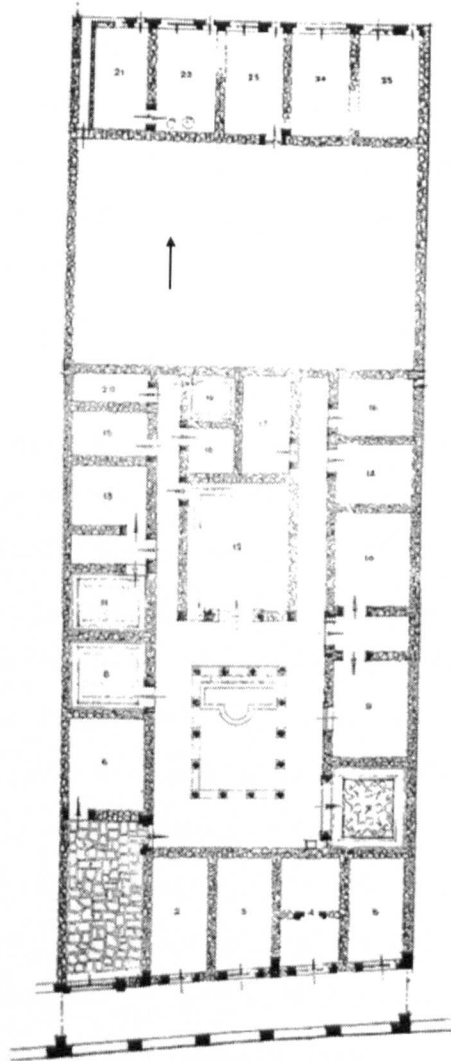
49. Tagiura, Villa della Gara delle Nereidi



50. Utica, Maison Ouest



51. Volubilis, Maison aux Travaux d'Hercule



52. Volubilis, Maison de Flavius Germanus

Chapter 6

Secondary *triclinium*

6.1 Introduction

Every wealthy house contained a *triclinium* whose size and layout provided an elegant setting for a really large party: here the master entertained his most important and influential friends, created political alliances and demonstrated his wealthy status. On those occasions, the owner opened the largest, most richly decorated room of his house as an appropriate stage, where the host and his guests performed an important social ritual of cultivated Roman living. However, Roman dinner was not exclusively a meal at which the company of important guests was invariably assumed as occurring every night. Within the Roman *domus*, the owner may have chosen the company of his family or of a small group of close friends for less formal banquets. Because of their intimate character, those banquets would have been held in a small, unpretentious dining room, the size and layout of which were appropriate for the small scale of the meal and the status of the diners as members of the family or close friends.

6.2 A question of terminology

In the Latin terminology, the banquet is designed as *epulum*, *convivium*, and *cena*. The term *epulum* was normally used for the public banquet or feast that wealthy members of the elite donated to members of their community. In some respects the *epulae publicae* were not different from the dinner parties that the rich *dominus* gave in his private house: in both cases the banquets were the occasion for the donor/host to display his generosity and wealth. The formal banquet held in the *domus* was commonly designated as *convivium*, which literally means ‘living together’: it conveys association of festivity and conviviality. Cicero describes the *convivium* as ‘the reclining of friends at a banquet, because it implies the conjunction of life’, in preference to the Greek term ‘drinking together’ or ‘eating together’ (i.e. *symposion* and *syndeipnon*)¹ The *convivium* as a banquet outside the family circle was held in the biggest and most richly decorated room of the *domus*: I have conventionally labelled that room as the main *triclinium*.

In Roman literature *cenae* is the word most frequently used for dinner or supper in the evening: it could take various forms, ranging from the simple situation of a *dominus*

eating alone to the more formal and lavish celebrations. The semantic ambivalence is implied again in the word *cenatio* as the architectural setting for *cenae*. Some authors of Imperial times label as *cenatio* the room of modest proportions in which the master had meals with his family or close friends. The Younger Pliny, for example, describes the *cenatio* of his villa at Laurentum as a moderate-sized dining room² and the *cenatio* of his Tuscan villa as an informal dining room where he entertained his personal friends³. In Petronius' account of the dinner party at Trimalchio house, the rich *libertus* counts four *cenationes* and a further *cenatio* upstairs: the rooms were probably used for informal dining, as the hall in which the sumptuous banquet takes place is called *triclinium*⁴. However, the term *cenatio* does not designate a room with specifically architectural and decorative features, as the same word is used by other writers⁵ to indicate a large, richly decorated dining room. Named after the word *cena*, the main Roman meal eaten in the evening, the *cenatio* is a standard word to designate any room in which dining activities take place.

Another word, which is commonly used in Latin literature to indicate the dining room of informal banquets, is *triclinium*. In the description of the suburban house at Comum of his friend Cannius Rufus, the Younger Pliny speaks of several *triclinia* for large and small gatherings of guests⁶.

In what follows, I use the term 'secondary *triclinium*' to refer to the dining room used for the owner's meals with his family or close friends. Although it is not attested in Latin literature, the word lays stress upon the lesser importance and unpretentious character of that room with respect to the main *triclinium*.

I choose to use the word *cena* as a generic term for the banquet that the master attended with his family or his closest friends in the room labelled as secondary *triclinium*, although the use of both words (*cena* and secondary *triclinium*) is somewhat arbitrary.

6.3 The identification of the secondary *triclinium*

In some Romano-African houses the function of a room laid out as a secondary *triclinium* is identified by the layout of its floor mosaic. The Maison du Triomphe de

¹ Cic. *Sen.* 13. 45.

² Plin. *Ep.* 2.17.10: *modica cenatio*.

³ Plin. *Ep.* 5.6.21: *cotidiana amicorumque cenatio*.

⁴ Petr. *Sat.* 77.4.

⁵ Suet. *Nero*, 31.2; Sen. *Ep.* 90.15, 115.8, *Prov.* 4.9, *Nat. Quaest.* 4.13.7; Plin. *NH.* 36.60; Sid. *Ep.* 2.13.7.

Neptune at Acholla, for instance, contained a small *triclinium* (4.50 x 5.25m) alongside the huge colonnaded *triclinium*: the floor pavement marked out the U-shaped area for the accommodation of the couches around a central space for service and entertainment (Table 6.2 n.2)⁷. In the Maison d'Europe at Djemila too, the U-layout of the floor mosaic designates room 13 as a *triclinium*. The room was ornamented with the same triple entrance framed by columns as the main *triclinium* 18 shows, but its smaller dimensions (4.40 x 5m) and its location behind the semicircular basin in the peristyle show that room 13 was used for more private dinner parties (Table 6.2 n.4). Similarly, in the Maison d'Orphée at Volubilis, the U-shaped *triclinium* 13 was ornamented with a triple bay framed by columns: located off the secondary courtyard in the private area of the house (Pl. 231), the room was designed for less formal banquets than the *convivia* held in main *triclinium* 3 (Table 6.2 n.3). Further examples of secondary *triclinia* marked out by their pavements are room XL in the Maison du Paon at El Jem (Pl. 97) and room 5 in the Maison aux Travaux d'Hercules at Volubilis (Pl. 223). In the houses at Bulla Regia, the arrangement of the T+U shaped *triclinium* in the basement recalls the layout of the main *triclinium* on the ground floor. In the Maison de la Chasse, for instance, secondary *triclinium* 52 was ornamented with a triple entrance framed by columns: the central, larger opening faced a pseudo-basin in the peristyle (Pl. 34). A figurative panel set in the middle of the adjoining *porticus* stressed the entrance into the room. In the Maison d'Amphitrite, secondary *triclinium* 18 opened onto a corridor, but again its triple entrance and the figurative *emblema* opposite the central opening are evidence for the importance of the room (Table 6.2 n.7; Pl. 28). On axis with the central entrance-*emblema* was a 2m-high niche revetted with marble slabs and housing a fountain, which would have recalled the natural setting of the peristyle.

The dining rooms, which are identified by the layout of their floor mosaics, show the frequent use of the same architectural and decorative elements in the arrangement of the secondary *triclinium* in the Romano-African house: outlook onto the peristyle, right-angled position to the main *triclinium*, and elaborate decoration. Those elements may serve as a model for the identification of those rooms that are not specifically marked out as *triclinia* by their pavements. For instance, room XXVI of the Maison de Neptune at Thuburbo Maius may have been used as secondary *triclinium*, as it was a moderate-

⁶ Plin. Ep. 1.3.1: *triclinia illa popularia illa paucorum*.

⁷ Gozlan 1992, 93-113, 175-208.

sized room (26m²) lying off the peristyle and alongside the main *triclinium* (Table 6.2 n.9; Pl. 166): the room was carpeted with an elegant representation of *xenia* motifs, which were frequently used for the decoration of dining rooms. In the Maison des Néréides at Volubilis, room 13 might have served as a *triclinium* because of its location at right-angles to the main dining room and its double door (Table 6.2 n.25).

In some African houses the layout of the secondary *triclinium* may have been enhanced by a further element, which is drawn from the arrangement of the main dining room: it is the view outward to a semicircular basin in the peristyle. In some houses both the main *triclinium* and the secondary *triclinium* faced a basin, which could have been either semicircular for both rooms (as in the Maison de Castorius at Djemila, in the Édifice des Asclepieia at Althiburos, in the Maison de Nicentius at Thuburbo Maius, and in the Maison au Grand Oecus and in the Maison H, both at Utica: Table 6.2 nos.10-11, 31, 12-13) or of different shape (as in the Maison de l'Âne at Djemila and in the Maison des Dauphins at El Jem: Table 6.2 nos.15, 1). In the Maison des Protomés Section of the *Triconchos* at Thuburbo Maius, only the secondary *triclinium* XI overlooked a semicircular basin, as the *triconchos*, where the main dining room was situated, was set apart from the central court of the peristyle (Table 6.2 n.14).

In the Maison des Deux Chasses at Clupea, the 2m-wide opening of secondary *triclinium* X was slightly off-centre in relation to the semicircular structure in the central courtyard (Pl. 63). The structure was simply a decorative element, but recalled the semicircular basin that often faced the main *triclinium* in Romano-African house.

The principles governing the method of construction and orientation of the secondary *triclinium* form a generic model, which could be modified or adapted to the outline of the domestic building. For instance, room 2 of the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna may have served as secondary *triclinium*, although it lies on the opposite side of the colonnaded *triclinium* (Table 6.2 n.17). However, the location off the peristyle, the moderate size (25m²) and the layout of the floor mosaic (an off-centred panel along the three sides of which couches could have been accommodated) suggest that the room may have served for small dinner parties.

A group of rooms identified as dining rooms by the layout of their floor mosaics shows that the secondary *triclinium* of the Romano-African house may have opened onto a

small courtyard. In the Maison du Paon at El Jem, for example, secondary *triclinium* XXI lay off a small court at the back of the main dining room: its entrance faced a semicircular basin (Pl. 98). In the Maison de Bacchus et Ariane at Thuburbo Maius, secondary *triclinium* XXX too looked onto the semicircular basin in the secondary courtyard, but its triple entrance framed by columns and its location three steps above the court created a more elegant setting (Table 6.2 n.18). In the Villa du Taureau at Silin, secondary *triclinium* 5 was set in the middle of a U-shaped group of rooms off a small courtyard: through its entrance on the axis with the opening onto the court, the diners could have caught a glimpse of the main peristyle (Table 6.2 n.21).

On the basis of those examples, further secondary *triclinia* off small courtyards may be identified. In the Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus at Volubilis, room 17 may have served as a medium-sized *triclinium* (6.60 x 5.10m): the geometric band framing the central figurative panel would have been large enough (about 2.50m) to accommodate the couches (Table 6.2 n.20). Rooms 26 and 27 of the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna, which communicate with each other but opened onto different courts, may have served the same function (Table 6.2 n.17). In room 26 (3 x 5m) the off-centred figurative panel allowed more space at the rear of the room; *triclinium* 27 offered a more elegant setting because of its bigger size (6 x 5m) and of its decorated threshold. In the Sollertiana Domus at El Jem, room XXIV seems to have been an informal *triclinium*, since its architectural layout (moderate size and location off the secondary courtyard) is similar to the arrangement of the *triclinia* discussed above (Table 6.2 n.19). However, the geometric bands on either side of the figurative panel were too narrow (0.30m wide) to hold couches without impinging upon the figured decoration. Moreover, as the mosaic has been destroyed along the back wall, it is uncertain whether a U-shaped band framed the figured scene. A further example of secondary *triclinium* off a small courtyard might have been room 14 of the Maison de l'Ephèbe at Volubilis: opening onto *porticus* 12 and adjoining kitchen 8, the medium-sized room would have offered an elegant, intimate setting for family's meals (Table 6.2 n.32).

In the Maison de la Volière at Carthage secondary *triclinium* 9 was preceded by anteroom 8 (Table 6.2 n.22). The *xenia* motifs of the floor mosaic seem to have been appropriate for a dining room: the decoration of the walls revetted with polychrome marbles and the semicircular basin onto which a window opened in the northern wall emphasized the lavish setting of the room. In the Maison de Vénus at Thugga too, the

secondary *triclinium* opened off an anteroom or corridor, which was lavishly carpeted with an elegant motif of polychrome guilloche (Table 6.2 n.23). A further example of *triclinium* preceded by an anteroom occurs in the Maison des Dauphins at El Jem: the off-centred panel set in the floor mosaic and the communication with a *cubiculum* (XXII) seem to suggest that the room was used for informal banquets (Table 6.2 n.16)⁸.

Single example of secondary *triclinium* in the shape of a *stibadium* occurs in the basement of the Maison de la Pêche at Bulla Regia. The semicircular dining room faced a basin (Pls. 48-49) and was decorated with fishing erotes (Pl. 50).

6.4 Decoration

The analysis of the motifs decorating the floors of the secondary *triclinia* will be carried out within the theoretical framework, which I outlined in the study of mosaic decoration of the main *triclinium*.

6.4.1 Figured motifs

Among the mythological scenes decorating the secondary *triclinium*, the Rape of Europa occurs in two rooms, in the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna (room 2) and in the Maison d'Europe at Djemila (room 13). The *emblema*-type panel at Oudna⁹ depicts the encounter of the young Europa with Zeus in the form of a bull (Pl. 132). The girl, who wears a veil covering her left shoulder and back, holds the horn of the animal in the right and a garland of flowers in the left: both the figures are turned to the left. To the right two of Europa's companions, the one standing and the other kneeling, offer garlands of flowers to the bull; behind them is a tree and an altar supporting a vase. In the upper left corner is a winged Eros holding an arrow. At the bottom a white ground-line is used to represent water. The panel is framed by an ornamental pattern containing flowers, birds, and fish. The mosaic decorating the U-shaped *triclinium* in the Maison d'Europe at Djemila¹⁰ represents the following moment of the mythological episode, when the bull rushing over the sea has abducted Europa (Pl. 71). The girl, who is sitting

⁸ Another example of *triclinium* preceded by anteroom, but not inserted in the catalogue, is in the Maison de Sertius at Timgad (Rebuffat 1970, 321 note 3).

⁹ Gauckler 1896, 189-92; Dunbabin 1978, 39, 265 n. 1a; Ben Mansour 1979; Robertson 1988, 84 n. 144; Wattel-de-Croizant 1995, 214-17; Yacoub 1995, 86; Blanc-Bijon and Darmon 1988-1989, 295-96; Muth 1998, 397-401 A41; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 531 fig. 241.

¹⁰ Allais 1939, 42ss; Blanchard-Lemée 1975, 143-51; Dunbabin 1978, 44, 256 n.3a; Robertson 1988, 85 n. 164; Wattel-de-Croizant 1995, 225-27; Muth 1998, 362-63.

on the bull's back, holds the animal's horn in her left hand and a basket laden with roses in her right; she is ornamented with bracelets and necklace with pendant; a veil streams over her head. On either side of the couple is a winged Eros holding garlands of flowers. Sea full of fish at the bottom and rocks at the top are the elements of the landscape. Though they illustrate two different moments (encounter and abduction) of the Rape of Europa story, the Oudna and Djemila panels show iconographical parallels: the half draped figure of Europa, the winged Erotes, the garlands of flowers, and the water occur in both the mosaics. It is arguable, therefore, that the panels as decoration of a secondary *triclinium* evoke the same idea. Blanc-Bijon and Darmon state that the scene illustrated in the Oudna mosaic represents the themes of water and of Spring: the panel is associated with the mosaics of the nearby rooms, which represent marine scenes; the sea-bull and the roses are often associated with the season of Spring and with the months of April and May. These scholars conclude that the themes of water and Spring as the source of life and fertility and the erotic character of the scene would indicate that the room was the *domina's* bedroom¹¹. However, the architectural arrangement of the room and the layout of the floor mosaic seem to point to the function of the room as a *triclinium*. Moreover, the U-shaped *triclinium* of the Maison d'Europe at Djemila shows that the Rape of Europa may have been chosen as a motif decorating a room always associated with the *dominus* and his banquets. The two panels illustrate a scene of beauty and sensual pleasure as symbols of joy and fertility, which the *xenia* motifs surrounding the Oudna *emblema* and the number of fish in the Djemila panel seem to emphasize. As motifs decorating a dining room, the mosaics are a message of the owner's hospitality and prodigality.

Another scene of abduction is illustrated in the central area of secondary *triclinium* 5 in the Maison aux Travaux d'Hercule at Volubilis (Pl. 223)¹². The central panel shows Ganymede carried away by Zeus, who had metamorphosed into an eagle, or by the eagle of the god: the young boy reaches upward with one arm and holds a spear in the other; he is nude except for boots and cloak that falls behind to his waist. At the feet of Ganymede, a dog looks at the scene; a cage for trapped animals is in the background.

¹¹ Blanc-Bijon and Darmon 1994, 295-96. Their interpretation is accepted by Wattel-de-Croizant (1995, 216-17).

¹² Thouvenot 1941, 75-6; id. 1948, 102; id. 1949, 53-4; Dunbabin 1978, 277 n.6a; Foucher 1979, 156; Parrish 1984, 239-43; Sichtermann 1988, 164 n.215; Kondoleon 1995, 125-27, 141-42; Muth 1998, 406-07 A47; Risse 2001, 90-3.

The panel is flanked by the busts of the Seasons in the corners and by the Labours of Hercules in the ovals, which are spread all over the field. Parrish suggests that the link between the three figurative themes – Rape of Ganymede, Seasons, and Labours of Hercules – may be that they all symbolize immortality: Ganymede and Hercules won heavenly bliss and the Seasons represented unending time¹³. However, the symbolic interpretation would be inappropriate for a mosaic decorating a room used for the festive consumption of food and drink. Rather, the mosaicist may have arbitrarily associated three themes, which were iconographically different but thematically related to each other as conveyors of the status of the owner/host. In its connection with dining, the Ganymede myth served as reminder of the munificence and hospitality of the house-owner. As Ganymede became the cupbearer at the banquets of the gods after his abduction to Mount Olympus, the image of the youth elevated the diners into a divine realm: the guests were meant to associate the host's *cenae* with an Olympic banquet served by the cupbearer of Zeus. Statius tells that Domitian had cupbearers from Mount Ida (i.e. *ganymedes*) for his public banquet in the Colosseum¹⁴. The message of the owner's hospitality was enhanced by the busts of the Seasons in the corners: they evoked the ideas of well-being and of the rich gifts of the earth. The Labours of Hercules as *exemplum virtutis* emphasized the *virtus* and *auctoritas* of the house-owner.

The busts of the Seasons to frame a central panel appear again in secondary *triclinium* 28 of the House of Africa (Pl. 76). The four Seasons and birds along with symbols of the seasons of the year surround a medallion illustrating the allegory of Africa¹⁵. The bust represents the goddess Africa wearing an elephant-hide headdress, which is ornamented with an elephant-trunk on the top. This attribute allow us to identify the female figure with the personification of Africa. The image of Africa in pre-eminent position and the surrounding busts of the Seasons are symbols which evoke the ideas of prosperity and fecundity. By invoking these symbols, the house-owner rendered homage to his land and to its patron-deity, who assured prosperity and happiness.

¹³ Parrish 1984, 243.

¹⁴ Stat. *Silv.* 1.6.34.

¹⁵ Blanchard-Lemée et al. 1996, 19-22; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 533 fig. 292.

The figure of Dionysus as decorative motif of the secondary *triclinium* appears in the Maison du Paon at El Jem (room XL: Pl. 97)¹⁶. The god, who wears a *nebris* across his chest and bunches of grapes in his hair, holds a *thyrsos* in the right and looks upwards: the bust of the god is inserted in a complex pattern of medallions containing the members of his entourage, the Seasons, and birds. Below Dionysus are the busts of Silenus wearing a crown of grapes and of a satyr playing a flute: the three figures are vertically aligned along the central axis of the pavement and face the room entrance. The central column is flanked by medallions containing bacchantes, satyrs, and the Seasons in the corners; birds fill the small circles of the design. Foucher suggests that the busts of the flute-player and of the bacchantes may portray the local residents of the house, who take part in a Dionysiac ceremony; but he is not convincing. Parrish argues that the mosaic represents a Dionysiac procession in a symbolic form, with the flute-player at the head and Dionysus in the place of honour further back, while the Seasons are left outside this event. However, the Seasons were often associated with Dionysiac figures and animals in the African pavements. In the main *triclinium* of the Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque at El Jem, for instance, the central panel containing Dionysiac figures, animals, fruits, and the Seasons was linked to the threshold panel, which represented a Dionysiac procession¹⁷. The same figures occur again in the T-shaped section of main *triclinium* 7 in the Maison de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons at Volubilis: the figures were framed by an ornamental pattern, which recalls the design of the El Jem mosaic¹⁸. The appearance of the Seasons along with the members of the Dionysiac entourage may evoke ideas of prosperity and well-being and emphasize the owner's prodigality, which is clearly announced to the guests entering the dining room by the representation of *xenia* motifs in the threshold panel. The damaged mosaic shows traces of a basket containing figs and three fish¹⁹. Set by the entrance into the dining room and oriented outwards, the mosaic welcomed the guests and conveyed a message of the hospitality of the host.

The association of *xenia* motifs with Dionysus seems to occur again in secondary *triclinium* XXI of the Maison du Triomphe de Neptune at Acholla²⁰. The T-shaped

¹⁶ Foucher 1961, 8-9, 14; id. 1963, 128-29; Dunbabin 1978, 185, 259 n.20d; Gozlan 1981, 81; Parrish 1981, 56; id. 1984, 44, 162-65 n.31; *CMT* III.1, 53-7.

¹⁷ The mosaic is described at page 143.

¹⁸ The small ovals of the Volubilis mosaic (see at page 146) are replaced by small circles in the El Jem panel.

¹⁹ Foucher 1961, 8, 14; Dunbabin 1978, 259 20d; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 1990, 82; *CMT* III.1, 56 C.

²⁰ Gozlan 1981, 75-6; id. 1990, 75; id. 1992, 280-81.

section of the room was decorated with *xenia* subjects (pears, figs, apples, grapes), which were framed by an interlacing wreath (Pl. 13); the threshold panel showed a greyhound devouring a bunch of grapes before an altar (Pl. 14). Gozlan argues that the motifs illustrated in the threshold mosaic belong to the Dionysiac repertory: the altar would emphasize the religious significance of the scene.

Dionysiac motifs seem to appear in secondary *triclinium* XXV of the Maison des Dauphins at El Jem (Pls. 89-90)²¹. The layout of the floor mosaic, which is divided into three horizontal panels (the one at the back contains a geometric pattern, the others two ones are figurative), is very rare in domestic decoration of Roman Africa and not always associated with a dining room: in the Maison du Péristyle Figuré at Puppūt, for example, the division of the floor mosaic in three panels occurs in the anteroom (XVIII) of private apartments. However, the location off a semicircular structure in the peristyle suggests that the room may have been used as a *triclinium*. As the borders framing the panels are about 1m wide, the couches would have encroached onto the figured decoration, but would have not affected the appreciation of the regularly repeated pattern of the mosaic. Moreover, the orientation of the figures toward different sides of the room would have allowed the diners to appreciate the mosaic from their couches. In the panel set by the entrance into the room a foliate grid of undulating bands contains alternating figures of panthers and of vintaging Erotes, which carry baskets of grapes, *peda*, and ladders. In most Romano-African mosaics vintaging Erotes are directly associated either with Dionysus, as the god of wine, or with figures from the narrower Dionysiac repertory. The panther too is often associated with Dionysus as the god who controls the savage forces of nature: in a panel from El Jem, for instance, the god reclines on the back of a panther²². The association of Erotes vintaging and panthers with Dionysus is clearly illustrated in the floor mosaic of the colonnaded *triclinium* in the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna: in the central *emblema* representing the gift of the vine to Ikarios a panther appears along with Dionysus; the mythological episode is framed by a vine composition with vintaging Erotes²³. The panel with Erotes vintaging and panthers in the El Jem *triclinium* is accompanied by another panel set in the middle of the room: it shows dolphins facing each other in sinusoidal patterns and containing

²¹ Fantar et al. 1994, 125 (fig.); *CMT* III.1, 86-9.

²² Dunbabin 1978, 258 n.9.

²³ Chapter 5, 145-46.

birds. Both the categories of animals seem to relate to Dionysus and to emphasize the links the god has both with water, as the source of life, and with animals, as symbols of fertility of the earth²⁴. With the association to Dionysus as the god of wine and abundance, the El Jem mosaic seems to declare the generosity of the owner/host. However, the ornamental character of the mosaic gives rise to a suspicion that the figures have been combined and repeated to fill spaces without any connection with the Dionysiac cult. The mosaic would have served any function beyond that of providing the reception room with an elegant ornament and of pleasing the diners' eye²⁵.

References to Dionysus and to the world over which the god presided occur again in the scene of Lycurgus and the vine, which decorated secondary *triclinium* 5 of the Villa du Taureau at Silin (Pl. 151)²⁶. Lycurgus, who is bearded and wears a mantle on his shoulders, has dropped his axe and is entangled in the growing branches of the vine. The mythological episode, which is set in an off-centred panel, is framed by an ornamental pattern. The mosaic does not represent either the *hybris* of Lycurgus, who was punished by Dionysus for having banned the cult of the god from his country, or his attempt to kill Ambrosia, already been saved by her metamorphosis into a vine²⁷. Rather, as a decorative motif of a *triclinium*, the mosaic panel seems to allude to the power of Dionysus as the god of wine and to invite the *dominus'* guests to enjoy the pleasures of the powerful drink moderately.

In secondary *triclinium* 26 of the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna, an off-centred panel contains the image of a woman holding a basket of harvested grain in her left hand and a sickle in her right: she wears a veil draped around her legs and a crown of wheat ears in his hair; on either side of the figure are stalks of wheat (Pl. 133). The woman is identified as Ceres, the goddess of agriculture and grain, or rather as the personification of Summer, since grain and sickle are the seasonal attributes that always accompany the

²⁴ Cf. also mosaic decorating the main *triclinium* of the Maison de Dionysos et d'Ulysse at Thugga, where a frieze of dolphins, tridents, and seashells frames the central medallion containing Dionysus on a tiger (Chapter 5, 145).

²⁵ The motif of the Erotes vintaging occurs again in secondary *triclinium* XXX of the Maison de Bacchus et Ariane at Thuburbo Maius, but the panel is missing. According to the brief description of Lantier (1943-1945, 283), the Erotes framed the central figure of a reclining naked woman the identification of which was not possible because of the damaged conditions of the mosaic.

²⁶ Al Mahjub 1978-1979, 73; Picard 1985, 230; Farnoux 1992, 316 n. 76.

²⁷ The mosaic shows parallels with a panel decorating the "*oecus*" of the Maison des Chevaux at Carthage. Ambrosia seems to have been turned already into vine, as the Silin mosaic shows; however, the maenad might have appeared in the damaged part of the panel (Salomonson 1965, 67-8; Farnoux 1992, 316 n.70).

representation of that Season²⁸. The *emblema*-type panel is set in an ornamental pattern the compartments of which enclose animals and birds. The whole representation seems to symbolize the fertility of earth and to emphasize the prodigality of the house-owner.

A further image of a goddess as the personification of a natural element is Amphitrite, who appears in secondary *triclinium* 6 of the Villa della Gara delle Nereidi at Tagiura (Pl. 154)²⁹. The goddess, who is ornamented with a diadem on the forehead and crab claws and sea-weed emerging from her head, is the personification of the sea and symbol of fertility. The bust of Amphitrite is surrounded by medallions representing the personification of the four Winds: they are shown as masculine heads, endowed with wings, alternately bearded and unbearded; a dark line coming out of their quasi open mouth indicates that they are blowing. Often associated with the sea, the Winds symbolize the cardinal points of the compass and the conditions of navigation. Perhaps the villa-owner was involved in the shipping business: he may have chosen the busts of Amphitrite and of the four Winds as decoration of his *triclinium* for the purpose both of protecting his business and of alluding to the source of his wealth. However, the significance of the mosaic may have been purely decorative. As the marine theme is represented in all the figured mosaics of the villa³⁰, the question arises whether the motifs were chosen as being suitable to a villa lying on the sea-coast.

Sea-creatures appear again in the underground secondary *triclinium* of the Maison d'Amphitrite at Bulla Regia and in secondary *triclinium* XXI of the Maison des Dauphins at El Jem. The former³¹ represents Venus seated on the back of two Tritons: the goddess wears bracelets, a necklace with pendant, and a veil covering her right leg. Two flying erotes hold a crown above Venus' head. Two further erotes appear at the bottom in a sea full of fish: riding on dolphins, the small creatures hold each a jewel-box and a mirror. The illustration of the Triumph of Venus contains motifs taken both from the representations of the adornment of Venus and from the scenes of the crowning of the goddess. All these details serve to emphasize the divinity of Venus as the goddess of beauty and fecundity and her relation with water over which she

²⁸ Gauckler 1896, 203-04; Dunbabin 1978, 145, 266 n.1h; Blanc-Bijon and Darmon 1994, 295; Fantar et al. 1994, 97 (fig.); Blanchard-Lemée 1996, 56 fig. 28; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 521 fig. 66.

²⁹ Di Vita 1966, 51-8; Dunbabin 1978, 272 n.1c; Kaempf-Dimitriadou 1981, 725 n.8.

³⁰ The bust of Amphitrite occurs again in main *triclinium* 45 and Nereids racing on sea-monsters decorate *apodyterium* 15.

³¹ Thébert 1972, 33-4; Beschtaouch et al. 1977, 72-77; Dunbabin 1978, 155-56, 250 n.3b; Blanchard-Lemée et al. 1996, 152.

presides. In the El Jem panel³², the theme of the fecundating power of water is evoked by a Nereid reclining on the back of a sea-monster (Pl. 88). The naked figure holds the rein in her left hand and a veil streaming over her head in the other. She is adorned with a necklace, a bracelet, and ribbon in her hair, which emphasize her nudity and beauty. A pair of dolphins swims at the bottom. The *emblema*-panel was surrounded by a geometric composition containing birds and accompanied by the representation of a hare eating grapes on the threshold. All the motifs as symbols of the fruits of earth evoke the ideas of prosperity and fertility.

The same association is evoked in secondary *triclinium* 13 of the Maison d'Orphée at Volubilis³³. In the T-shaped section of the dining room, a panel represents a number of dolphins in a sea rendered by horizontal lines (Pl. 231). Fish as emblem of good luck and water as the source of life emphasize the theme of fecundity and prosperity, which suited the use of the room for dining.

The secondary *triclinium* 17 of the Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus at Volubilis was decorated with a scene of mythological narrative: the bath of Diana (Pl. 217)³⁴. The scene was set in an *emblema*-type panel, which formed the centrepiece of an ornamental pattern, and was oriented toward the wall opposite the entrance into the room. The goddess is entering into the pool and raising her right arm to receive the water that Pegasus is pouring from his mouth: the small winged horse is on a massive, high pedestal. Diana is accompanied by a nymph on either side: one is standing and holds a veil in both hands; the other is sitting and washes her left foot with water, which is pouring out of the pool. All three female figures are ornamented with bracelets and necklace; the nymphs wear a crown of reed weeds in their hair. In the background is a bare tree, on which the bow and quiver of the goddess hang. In the left upper corner are traces of a figure, which may be Actaeon watching the scene. Thouvenot explains the scene of Diana and Actaeon as complementary to the Rape of Hylas, which decorated the adjoining room 16: both the mythological episodes would show the dangers of water and the punishment that imprudent mortals can get from sea-creatures. Rebuffat too maintains that the myth of Actaeon and the Rape of Hylas are thematically related to each other, as in both the episodes a young hero is going to die. The scholar suggests

³² CMT III.1, 82-5 n.34; Ben Abed Ben Khader 2003, 536 fig. 345.

³³ Thouvenot 1941, 50; Risse 2001, 60-1.

³⁴ Thouvenot 1958, 74-7; Rebuffat 1965; Dunbabin 1978, 277 n.2d; Guimond 1981, 465 n.117d; Simon 1984, 836 n. 335; Siebert 1997, 897 n. 77; Muth 1998, 238-39, 402-05 A45; Risse 2001, 94-5.

that the same motifs would allude to the historical figures of Cato and Juba I (or Ptolomy), the busts of whom decorated respectively rooms 16 and 17. However, the themes of *hybris* and death would have been inappropriate in a private house and for the decoration of what appears to be an ordinary *triclinium*. The interpretation of the two scholars raises many doubts, as it lies upon assumptions which are far from certain. In fact, the attribution of the bust of the man with diadem³⁵ to *triclinium* 17 lies on the assumption that the fragmentary stele found in the room would have supported a male portrait as a pendant of the bust of Cato in the adjoining room 16. However, the bust of the man with diadem may have not adorned any room of the Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus, as it was found in a nearby *domus*. Moreover, in the reading of the mosaic scene the two scholars focus on the duality Actaeon-Diana, but the presence of the young hunter in the Volubilis mosaic is not certain. The bearded man wearing horns with branches in his hair does not correspond with the type of the unbearded youth, as Actaeon is often represented in ancient art³⁶: the male figure may represent a mythological inhabitant of a wood. Rather, the mosaic seems to illustrate a scene of intimacy and beauty. The representation of the female bodies in their nudity and from different points of view and the natural setting, in which the scene takes place, create an erotic, intimate atmosphere, which seems to be appropriate to a *triclinium* set in the private section of the house³⁷.

A further elegant scene of intimacy and beauty appears in secondary *triclinium* 27 of the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna³⁸. The *emblema*-panel, which is set in the centre of an ornamental pattern, portrays Selene and Endymion (Pl. 134). The young hunter is sleeping at the feet of a tree, stretched out on the rocks, with his head resting on the right arm; he holds a javelin in the left and wears a mantle across his chest. Next to him a dog looks leftwards at Semele, who is admiring the youth. The goddess holds a branch of the tree in her right hand and a piece of her garment, which covers her legs and her left shoulder, in the left hand. Blanc-Bijon and Darmon maintain that the mosaic along with the panels decorating the nearby rooms (28-29-30, 32) evokes the idea of Winter.

³⁵ Juba I or Ptolomy, according to Rebuffat.

³⁶ In a panel at Timgad the image of Actaeon, which is mirrored in the pool, shows an unbearded youth.

³⁷ In the Maison du Bain des Nymphes at Volubilis too, the mosaic with the bath of Diana decorated a room opening off a secondary courtyard.

³⁸ Gauckler 1896, 204; Dunbabin 1978, 39, 266 n.1i; Gabelmann 1986, 731 n.28; Blanc-Bijon and Darmon 1994, 296; Fantar et al. 1994, 86; Yacoub 1995, 84-5; Blanchard-Lemée et al. 1996, 240; Muth 1998, 213, 215, 397-401 A41; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 532 fig. 267.

In the cosmological mosaic of Merida, Selene is represented along with the personification of that season; Endymion holding a javelin is portrayed as a hunter and the hunt is often associated with the symbols of winter. According to the two scholars, the theme of the hunt would indicate that the group of rooms formed the private section of the master. Muth too associates the hunter Endymion with the *dominus*. This scholar argues that the Oudna mosaic would celebrate Endymion-*dominus* as a symbol of *virtus* and the couple Selene-Endymion/*domina-dominus* as a symbol of marriage on which the *domus* is based. Both the interpretations of the myth raise questions: how much attention did ancient viewers paid to the iconographic details in order to associate them with evocative ideas and images? How often did viewers identify the mythological heroes or gods of domestic decoration with the inhabitants of the house? The process of identification between mythological figures and mortals is well known in funerary art, where the patron who commissioned the sarcophagus used to have himself portrayed as a god or hero. A similar approach does not seem to have been adopted very often in domestic mosaics: in hunting scenes, for instance, the *dominus* was preferably represented as a realistic hunter engaged in real activities. In the context of the *triclinium* as the architectural setting of festive dining, the scene of Selene and Endymion seems to evoke the ideas of pleasure, joy, and intimacy³⁹.

Some of the mosaics decorating the secondary *triclinia* in the Romano-African house belong to the genre repertory of *xenia* subjects. In secondary *triclinium* XI of the Maison des Protomés Section of the *Triconchos* at Thuburbo Maius and in secondary *triclinium* 9 of the Maison de la Volière at Carthage, for example, the floor was carpeted with a floral pattern of medallions containing *xenia* motifs (animals, birds, fish, and fruit); flowers fill the small medallions of the design. In secondary *triclinium* XXVI of the Maison de Neptune at Thuburbo Maius, the range of *xenia* subjects is less broad. The floor mosaic represents birds and flowers within the framework of vegetal design: the birds (partridge, duck, and guinea-fowl) rest on a thick ground-line, from which a plant grows. The reason why the *xenia* subjects are represented by the single category of birds is unknown: were birds the favourite meal of the *dominus*? Or did the owner choose the cartoon available in the mosaic workshop just because he liked it? In further examples, which have been discussed above, *xenia* motifs are found in relationship with Dionysiac themes.

³⁹ The secondary *triclinium* of the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna lay in the private section of the house.

The spectacles of the amphitheatre as a decorative motif of the secondary *triclinium* appear in room XXIV of the Sollertiana Domus at El Jem (Pl. 104)⁴⁰. The seriously damaged mosaic shows a platform or scaffold (*catasta*) in the centre, which supports four trophies at the corners, and beasts (bears and leopards) distributed along the sides. In the two surviving corners are scenes of criminal *damnati ad bestias*: one is pushed by a *bestiarius*, his face is being devoured by a leopard, which has planted its claws in the victim's thighs; the other is held by two *bestiarii*, while a leopard is ready to attack him. All the figures face the nearest edge; discarded spears and pools of blood cover the ground. The mosaic, which shows same similarity in subject matter with the Gladiator mosaic from the Villa at Zliten, but too far removed in time to be regarded as a model⁴¹, seems to represent an actual event in the amphitheatre, as the types of two barbarian prisoners appear very realistic and individual. Perhaps the scene records and commemorates a particular event, which occurred during the spectacles of the amphitheatre offered by the house-owner as a *munus*: set before the eyes of the guests reclining at dinner, the panel displayed the host's munificence and wealth.

References to the amphitheatre appear on the threshold panel of *triclinium* XXXI in the Maison du Paon at El Jem⁴². The black-and-white mosaic depicts a crescent-on-a-stick between two bars (Pl. 97). In a number of African mosaics⁴³ the emblem appears in scenes of the amphitheatre and in association with the Telegenii, which were responsible of the organization of *venationes* in the amphitheatre. The crescent-on-a-stick and the Telegenii were associated with Dionysus, too: on the mosaic of Magerius at Smirat, amphitheatre, *sodalitas*, Dionysus, and crescent-on-a-stick were clearly linked with the *venationes*. In the El Jem mosaic the presence of the god is perhaps alluded to by the ivy scroll, which frames the T-shaped section of the geometric floor mosaic. A further allusion to the factions of the amphitheatre occurs in the subterranean *triclinium* of the Maison de la Chasse at Bulla Regia⁴⁴. In the centre of an ornamental composition is a five-pointed radiate crown, which is repeated in the figurative panel in front of the dining room. The figurative scene, which illustrates Erotes dressed as

⁴⁰ Foucher 1961, 2, 19-21; Salomonson 1965 50-51; Ennaifer 1976, 108; Dunbabin 1978, 66, 259 n.21b; Parrish 1985, 136-37; Ch Picard. 1985, 235 n.6, 236, 238; id. 1990, 189-90, Brown 1991, 196-97; Kondoleon 1995, 332; Yacoub 1995, 287-90; Blanchard-Lemée et al.1996, 215; CMT III.1, 20-22; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 527 fig. 195.

⁴¹ The Zliten mosaic is dated to the late 1st century AD; the El Jem panel belongs to the end of the 2nd-beginning of the 3rd century AD.

⁴² Foucher 1961, 7, 58-9; Dunbabin 1978, 82-3, 185, 259 20a; CMT III. 1, 51-2.

⁴³ Listed in Dunbabin 1978, 82-3.

⁴⁴ Beschaouch et al. 1977, 63; Dunbabin 1978, 81, 250 n.1b.

venatores fighting beasts, clearly suggests the spectacles of the amphitheatre. The five-pointed crown was the emblem of one of the amphitheatre associations of which the house-owner was probably a member. On the El Aouja pottery, which is often decorated with appliqué figures from the amphitheatre, a wreath with five plumes is accompanied by inscriptions referring to the Pentasii⁴⁵. It is then arguable that the five-pointed crown in the Bulla Regia mosaic, as a symbol associated with the *sodalitas* of the Pentasii, indicates the affiliation of the house-owner to a specific association of professional *venatores*.

6.4.2 Geometric-floral designs

Geometric and/or floral designs decorated a small number of the secondary *triclinia* listed in Table 6.1. Secondary *triclinium* XVI of the Maison du Peristyle Figuré at Pupput, for example, was carpeted with a simple geometric pattern of adjacent lozenges forming squares between them. The same composition occurs in the T-portion of *triclinium* XXXI in the Maison du Paon at El Jem, but with some variations coming from the replacement of squares with octagons and from the use of a black and white scheme (Pl. 97). According to the description of Ballu⁴⁶, a pattern of lozenges decorated secondary *triclinium* V of the Maison de l'Âne at Djemila too, but the mosaic has been destroyed. A composition of octagons and squares appears in the T-shaped section of *triclinium* IX in the Maison de Vénus at Thugga. An equally simple pattern seems to have decorated secondary *triclinium* XIX of the Maison de Nicentius at Thuburbo Maius: the preserved fragment, which was set along the back wall of the room, shows a pattern of tangent circles and poised squares forming rectangles with two concave sides.

The mosaic flooring secondary *triclinium* XIII of the Maison H at Utica is an example of the African floral style: the geometric schema is 'vegetalized' by tracing its outline in garlands; *cornucopiae* fill the compartments of the design (Table 6.2 n.13). As a symbol of abundance, the *cornucopiae* may have referred to the prodigality of the house-owner.

The rich composition of the mosaics just described forms a contrast to the monochrome, plain design of room X in the Maison des Deux Chasses at Clupea (Table 6.2 n.10)⁴⁷.

⁴⁵ Salomonson 1960, 50-3.

⁴⁶ Ballu 1911, 105.

⁴⁷ Ennaïfer 1999, 240.

However, the border, a polychrome acanthus rinceau ornamented with fruit and *cornucopiae*, and the architectural layout of the room, create a very elegant setting for entertaining the guests. Perhaps the walls were highly decorated, or the owner's wealth was displayed by means of rugs or decorated tapestry hung on the walls⁴⁸.

6.4.3 *Opus sectile*

Examples of decoration in *opus sectile* in African secondary *triclinia* are attested at Utica. In *triclinium* XXII of the Maison au Grand Oecus, the partly preserved floor shows a combination of simple geometric forms (Table 6.2 n.12): squares of different size and rectangles, which are repeated in contrasting colours (giallo antico and grey). The T+U shaped *triclinium* XI of the Maison de la Cascade was carpeted with a more complex design in black and white: a pattern of tangent rectangles, hexagons and triangles created the effect of intersecting dodecagons (Pl. 206). The central panel was framed along the three sides by a simpler design of repeated rectangles, alternately black and white: the U-shaped band (2m wide) was intended for the accommodation of the couches. In the Utica examples both the main *triclinium* and the secondary *triclinium* were carpeted with *opus sectile*: the lavish, prestigious decoration indicates that the rooms were intended to accommodate formal banquets. However, the smaller dimensions of the secondary *triclinium* and the black and white layout of the decoration give some clues about the scale of the *cenae* and the status of the guests entertained in that room.

6.5 *Cena* in the secondary *triclinium*

In the Romano-African house the secondary *triclinia*, which are identified by the layout of their floor mosaics, were rooms of moderate size capable of containing the traditional Roman arrangement of three couches holding three guests each. In the Maison du Triomphe de Neptune at Acholla, for instance, secondary *triclinium* XXI measures 4.50 x 5.15m: the small room (23m²) offered space for the traditional number of nine guests in the U-shaped area (1.5m wide) and for a small number of servants and entertainers in the central area (ca.7m²). In the Maison du Paon at El Jem, the secondary *triclinium* XL was a little larger (48m²): the room could have accommodated a small number of

⁴⁸ I thank Prof. Roger Wilson for suggesting this possibility.

guests⁴⁹, but it would have allowed more extensive service and entertainment in the central area (13.60m²)⁵⁰.

The U-shaped *triclinium* 5 in the Maison aux Travaux d'Hercule at Volubilis shows an unusual plan. The layout of the room, which was broader than it was long (5 x 7.20m), recalls the so-called 'broad room' of the Hellenistic houses, but the arrangement of the couches on three sides conforms to the longitudinal layout of the Roman *triclinium*⁵¹. The U-shaped band (2m wide) at the rear of the room could have accommodated twice the number of the guests reclining along the short sides of the room; the central square area (3 x 3m) for serving and entertainment would have been decidedly cramped. A similar arrangement appears in secondary *triclinium* 13 of the Maison des Néréides in the same town, though there are no traces of pavement left.

A review of the secondary *triclinia* listed in the Table 6.1 gives a range between 20m² and 50m² for the area of the private dining room. The moderate size seems to be suitable for the intimate character of the *cenae* held in such rooms. Here the diners were packed close together around a small table, from which they ate communally; the cramped space, which could have accommodated a very limited number of entertainers, allowed intimate discussion between the assembled diners. In the letter to Fuscus Salinator about how the Younger Pliny spends summer in his Tuscan villa, the writer tells that during the *cena* with his wife or with a few friends a book was read aloud and after *cena* a comedy or some music was performed (it is not certain whether in the same *triclinium* or in another room)⁵². However, even in the intimate atmosphere of the *cenae*, the positions and behaviour of the diners enforced the hierarchical order of Roman society and the privileged status of the *paterfamilias*. At the informal banquet with a small number of close friends, the strict hierarchy, which dictated the positions of the diners and assigned the place of honour to the host, was maintained in the secondary *triclinium*, too. At the family dinner, the physical position of women and children, who attended meals seated on chairs, enforced their subordination to the reclining

⁴⁹ The U-shaped bands measure 1.31m on the two sides and 1.39m at the rear of the room: if the couches had obscured the geometric borders of the central panel, a maximum width of 1.61/1.69m could have been obtained before encroaching onto the figurative panel.

⁵⁰ Further examples of U-shaped *triclinium* of moderate size are room 13 of the Maison d'Europe at Djemila (22m²); room XI of the Maison de la Cascade at Utica (28m²); room XXXI of the Maison du Paon at El Jem (36m²); and room XXX of the Maison de Bacchus et Ariane at Thuburbo Maius (47m²).

⁵¹ The difference between Greek and Roman dining rooms is discussed by Dunbabin 1998.

⁵² Plin. *Ep.* 9.36.

paterfamilias. When Apuleius first describes Milo, he shows him lying on a low couch preparing to eat, while his wife seated at his feet⁵³.

As an informal banquet, the *cena* was less conventional than the *convivium* held in the main *triclinium*: the status of the diners –close friends or family members – and the availability of the resources affected the scale of the *cena* and the architectural layout of the secondary *triclinium*. For example, the Maison du Paon at El Jem contained two secondary *triclinia*, which seem to have been used for different classes of visitor (Table 6.2 n.1). The master may have used *triclinium* XL to entertain less formal banquets than the *convivia* held in the main dining room. The location off the peristyle and the figurative panels set in the middle and on the threshold of this big room (47m²) indicate that the room was used for the reception of high status guests whom the house-owner would have impressed. *Triclinium* XXXI, on the other hand, seems to have been suitable for more intimate *cenae*: in that smaller room (36m²), which opened onto a small courtyard and was decorated with black and white mosaics of geometric design, the master may have dined with his family or his closest friends. Differentiation between secondary *triclinia* occurs again in the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna. Formal *cenae* would have taken place in *triclinium* 2, as the view out from the room gave a visual image of the house-owner's wealth. From the couches set along the three sides of an elegant figurative panel the guests could have had a glimpse onto the huge peristyle (280m²) and into the colonnaded *triclinium* lying on the opposite side (Table 6.2 n.17). People on intimate terms with the *dominus* – family members and close friends – would have dined in *triclinia* 26 and 27, which were separated from the public section of the house by small courtyards and anterooms. The depth to which the visitors penetrated the building and the route they took (peristyle- anterooms- courtyard) show their high degree of intimacy with the owner.

The lavish layout of some dining rooms give rise to a suspicion that the secondary *triclinium* may have accommodated very sumptuous banquets, though not as much as the *convivia* held in the main *triclinium* and for a small number of guests. In the secondary *triclinium* XI of the Maison de la Cascade at Utica, for instance, the decoration in *opus sectile* and the location off a small courtyard provided a very elegant setting for dining. In the Maison des Protomés Section of the *Triconchos* secondary *triclinium* XI shows the same architectural and decorative elements used in the

⁵³ Apul. *Met.* 1.22.

arrangement of the main dining room: big dimensions (67m²), outlook on the semicircular fountain in the peristyle, and lavish decoration with mosaics (Table 6.2 n.14).

In many houses at Pompeii there is evidence of dining facilities set up on a terrace next to the house, in the peristyle, or in the garden or vineyard under a pergola. The majority are masonry couches set on three sides around a central space, as in the Casa dell'Efebo and in the so-called house of Loreius Tiburtinus. The simple layout of the garden *triclinia* leads us to assume that they were used by the family members for outdoor dining in summer. The investigations carried out by Jashemski⁵⁴ show that outdoor dining was performed in Roman Africa, too. In the Maison de Bacchus et Ariane at Thuburbo Maius, traces of burned animal bones and cavities, in which a table or a bench would have been set up, have been found in courtyard XXXIII (Table 6.2 n.18). Perhaps, the *dominus* ate in the garden with his family and close friends during the hot summer⁵⁵. Further examples of outdoor dining in the Romano-African house are unknown. In absence of secure evidence we cannot ascertain how often dining out of doors, perhaps using movable facilities, took place among the wealthy members of Romano-African society. However, as the courtyards would have provided a very simple setting, we may assume that outdoor *cenae* were held on very informal occasions that the owner celebrated with a few intimates.

The *triclinium*, as a setting either for the informal *cena* or for the more elaborate *convivium*, was in the first instance a room associated with the *paterfamilias* alone. As Bradley correctly points out, dining was not an affair that had anything of the familial about it in any modern sense: it was above all an occasion for the house-owner to meet his male friends and display his wealth and power⁵⁶. This makes one raise questions about the rooms where the family members had their meals, when they did not attend the *paterfamilias'* banquets: in what room did wife and children eat, when the *paterfamilias* entertained his guests in the *triclinium*? In what rooms did the *dominus* eat his meals, when he wanted to stay alone? Did more dining rooms exist in upper storeys, which are now lost? Unfortunately, though the archaeological record in Africa provides

⁵⁴ Jashemski 1995.

⁵⁵ The use of courtyards and peristyle for dining are analysed in more details in the chapter on the peristyle.

⁵⁶ Bradley 1998.

a wealth of material evidence about the design and decoration of domestic dining rooms, those questions remain unsolved.

6.6 Conclusions

As written texts describe at enormous length the dinner parties at which the rich entertained their friends, associates, or clients, we have a good deal of information about the normal family meal and the architectural setting where the daily consumption of food took place. However, the archaeological record in Roman Africa provides a wealth of material evidence: the architectural layout of the dining rooms and their mosaic decoration highlight some aspects of the private and family banquets in Romano-African society.

The architectural and decorative analysis of the secondary *triclinia* listed in the table shows that the rooms were used for intimate and informal dining. The small size of the secondary *triclinium* capable of holding a small number of guests, the proximity to secluded spaces such as *cubicula*, private apartments and small courtyards, and the choice of the decorative motifs are evidence for the scale of the *cenae* and the status of the diners. However, the category of the secondary *triclinia* cannot be totally analysed. The rooms where wife and children ate, when the *paterfamilias* entertained his guests in the *triclinium*, or where the master had his meals, when he wanted to stay alone, are difficult to identify because of the lack of literary and archaeological evidence and of the flexible use of space in a Roman *domus*: rooms used for such purposes simply leave no archaeological trace on the ground. The Younger Pliny tells us that the moderate-sized dining room of his Laurentine villa could be considered a large *cubiculum*⁵⁷; in his villa at Avitacum, Sidonius Apollinaris had a *stibadium* in a room, which could have been used either as a living room or as a small dining room⁵⁸. These literary accounts imply that the spatial use of the secondary *triclinium* was highly flexible.

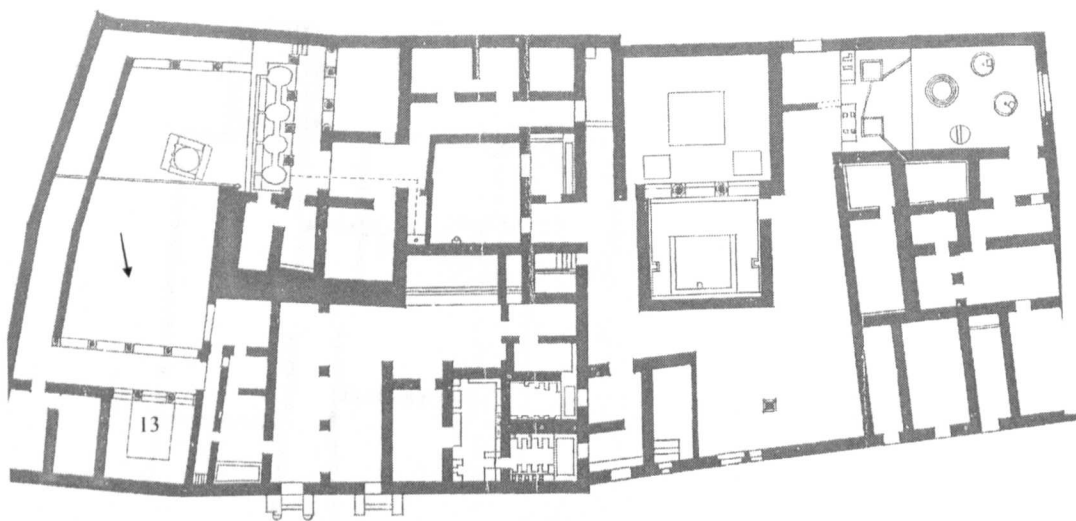
⁵⁷ Plin. *Ep.* 2.17.10.

⁵⁸ Sid. *Ep.* 2.2.11.

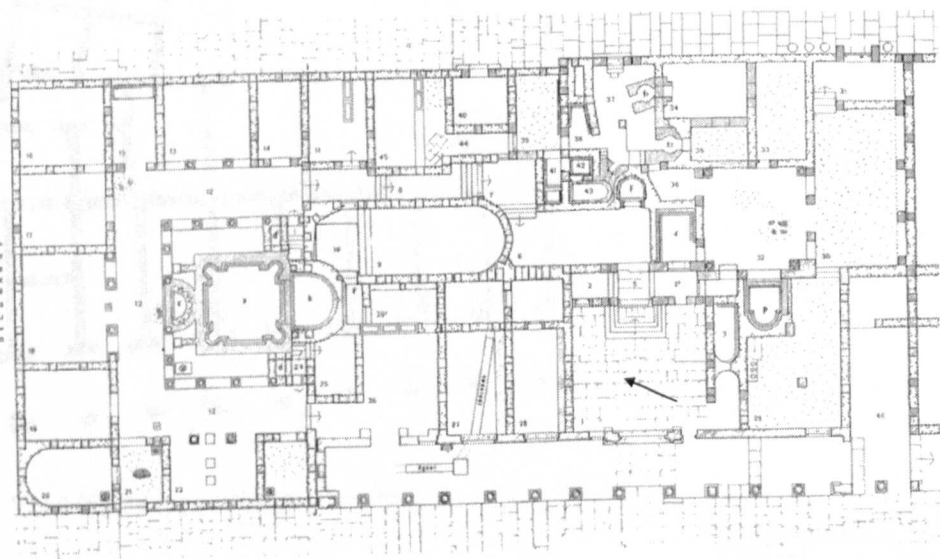
| Town | House | Room | Dimensions | Area | Layout | Triple entrance | Aspect |
|-------------|---------------------------|------|-------------|--------|----------------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| Acholla | M. du Triomphe de Neptune | XXI | 4.50 x 5.15 | 23.175 | U | | peristyle |
| Althiburos | Édifices des Asclepieia | 23 | 4.21 x 3.85 | 16.21 | | | peristyle-basin |
| Bulla Regia | M. d'Amphitrite | 18 | 5.25 x 6.75 | 25 | U | x | underground corridor |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Chasse | 19 | 6 x 5 | 30 | | | secondary courtyard |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Chasse | 52 | 5.2 x 6.6 | 34.32 | T+U | x | underground peristyle-basin |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Nouvelle chasse | 16 | 3.9 x 3.25 | 12.67 | all over | x | underground peristyle |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Pêche | 39 | 5.3 x 4.27 | 22.63 | <i>stibadium</i> | x | underground peristyle |
| Bulla Regia | M. n.3 | 27 | unknown | | unknown | | peristyle |
| Bulla Regia | M. n.3 | 31 | 4.7 x 4.9 | 23.03 | unknown | | underground corridor |
| Carthage | M. de la Volière | 9 | 5.6 x 4.3 | 24.08 | all over | | anteroom |
| Clupea | M. de Deux Chasses | X | 9 x 7.5 | 67.5 | all over | | peristyle-pseudo basin |
| Djemila | M. de Castorius | XX | 5 x 7 | 35 | all over | | peristyle-basin |
| Djemila | M. d'Europe | 13 | 5 x 4.4 | 22 | U | x | peristyle |
| Djemila | M. de l'Âne | V | 7.1 x 4.5 | 31.95 | all over | x | peristyle-basin |
| El Jem | House of Africa | 28 | 4.5 x 5 | 22.5 | off-centred <i>emblema</i> | | corridor |
| El Jem | M. des Dauphins | XXV | 5.05 x 7.6 | 38.38 | all over | | peristyle-pseudo basin |
| El Jem | M. des Dauphins | XXI | 5 x 5 | 25 | off-centred <i>emblema</i> | | anteroom |
| El Jem | M. du Paon | XXXI | 5.1 x 7.25 | 36.97 | U | | secondary court- pseudo basin |
| El Jem | M. du Paon | XL | 6.5 x 7.2 | 46.8 | U | | peristyle |
| El Jem | Sollertiana Domus | XXIV | 4.15 x 6.1 | 25.3 | U | | secondary courtyard |
| Oudna | M. d'Ikarios | 2 | 5 x 5 | 25 | off-centred <i>emblema</i> | | peristyle |
| Oudna | M. d'Ikarios | 26 | 3 x 5 | 15 | off-centred <i>emblema</i> | | secondary court |
| Oudna | M. d'Ikarios | 27 | 6 x 5 | 30 | off-centred <i>emblema</i> | | secondary court |

Table 6.1: Secondary *triclinium*

| | | | | | | | |
|----------------|----------------------------------|------|-------------|-------|---------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Silin | Villa du Taureau | 5 | 3.8 x 3.6 | 13.68 | U | | secondary courtyard |
| Tagiura | Villa della Gara delle Nereidi | 6 | 7.8 x 5.5 | 42.9 | central emblema | | secondary courtyard |
| Tagiura | Villa della Gara delle Nereidi | 21 | 5.8 x 5 | 29 | U | | peristyle |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. de Bacchus et Ariane | XXX | 7.3 x 7.5 | 54.75 | U | x | secondary court-basin |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. de Neptune | XXVI | 4.4 x 5.9 | 25.96 | all over | | peristyle |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. de Nicentius | XI | 3 x 4 | 12 | | | peristyle-basin |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. des Protomés-Sect. Triconchos | XI | 7.4 x 9.1 | 67.34 | all over | double entrance | peristyle-basin |
| Thugga | M. de Vénus | IX | 6.5 wide | | U | | corridor |
| Utica | M. au Grand Oecus | XXII | 10.1 long | | all over | | peristyle-basin |
| Utica | M. de la Cascade | XI | 5.35 x 5.3 | 28.35 | U | | secondary court-basin |
| Utica | Maison H | XIII | 6.35 x 7.15 | 45.4 | all over | x | peristyle-basin |
| Volubilis | M. à la Mosaïque de Vénus | 17 | 5.1 x 6.6 | 33.66 | off-centred emblema | | secondary court |
| Volubilis | M. a l'Ephèbe | 14 | 5 x 4.4 | 20 | unknown | | secondary court |
| Volubilis | M. aux Travaux d'Hercule | 5 | 7.2 x 5 | 36 | U | | peristyle |
| Volubilis | M. d'Orphée | 13 | 7 x 8 | 56 | U | x | secondary court |
| Volubilis | M. des Néréides | 13 | 6 x 1.64 | 9.84 | unknown | double entrance | peristyle |

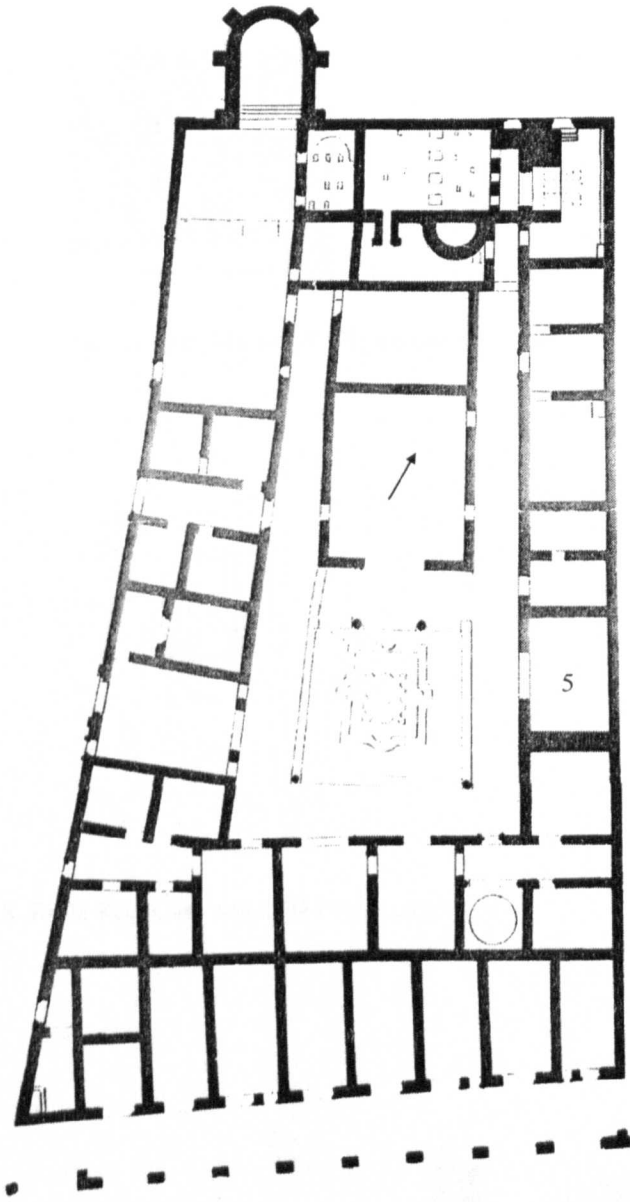


3. Volubilis, Maison d'Orphée

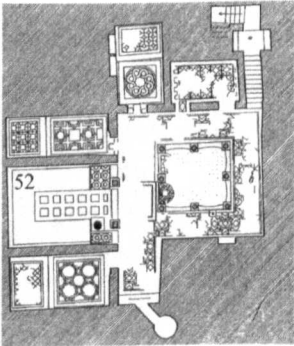


4. Djemila, Maison d'Europe

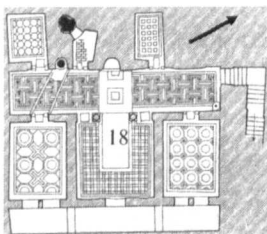




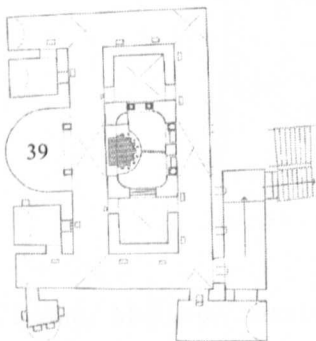
5. Volubilis, Maison aux Travaux d'Hercule



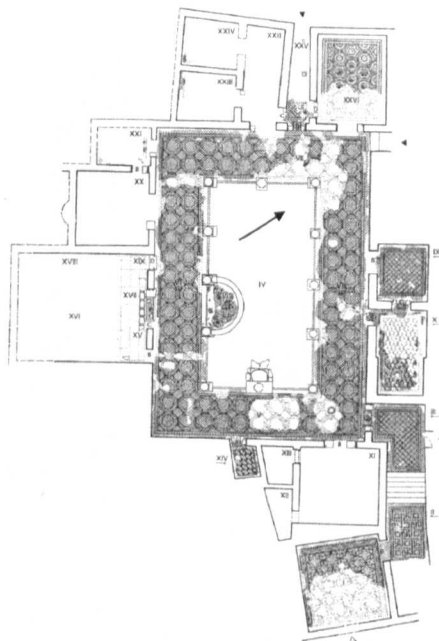
6. Bulla Regia, Maison de la Chasse: basement



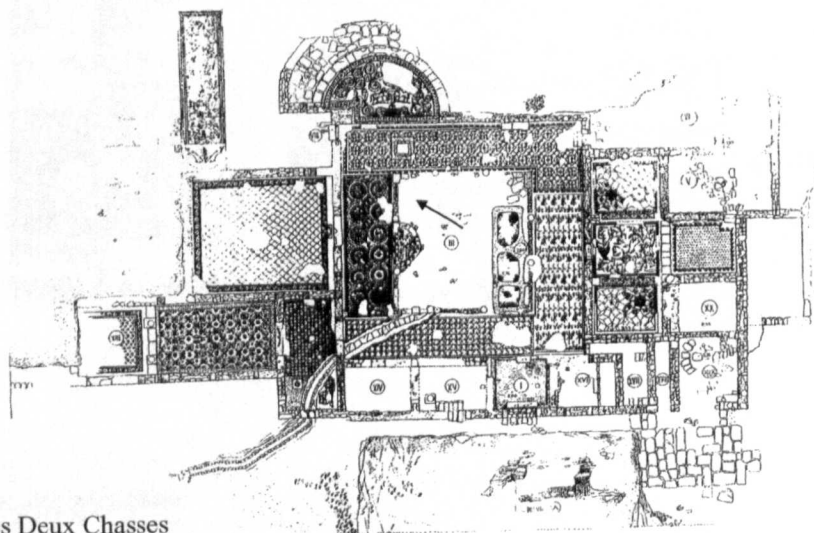
7. Bulla Regia, Maison d'Amphitrite: basement



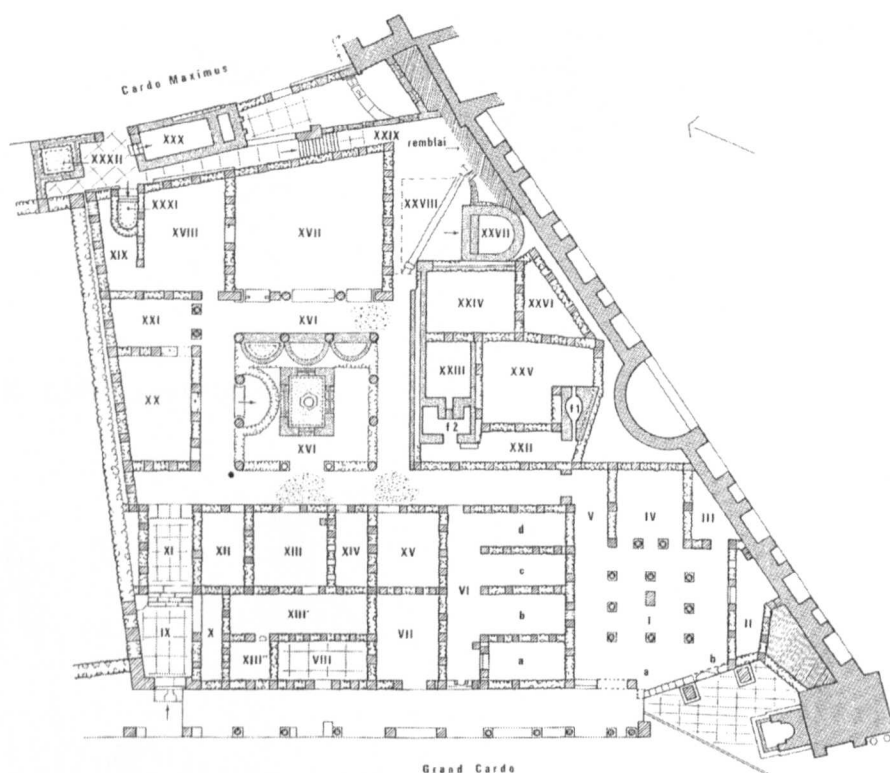
8. Bulla Regia, Maison de la Pêche: basement



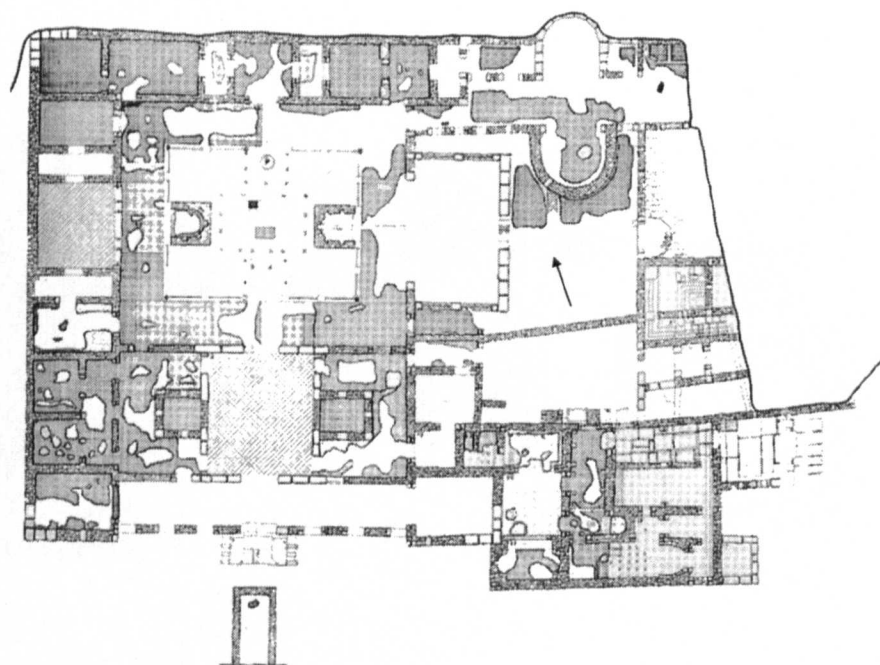
9. Thuburbo Maius, Maison de Neptune



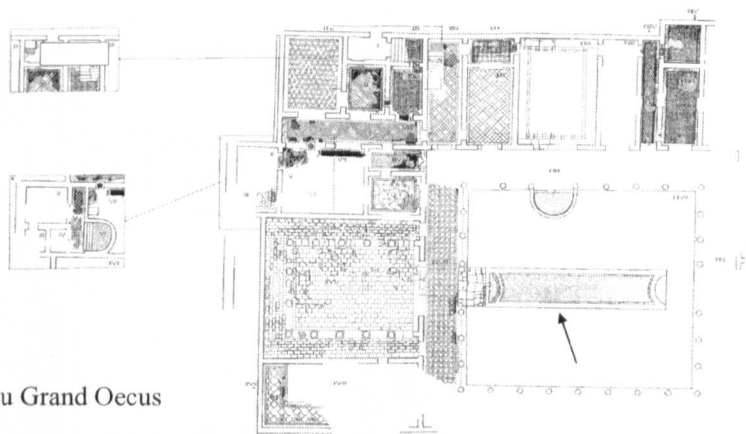
10. Clupea, Maison des Deux Chasses



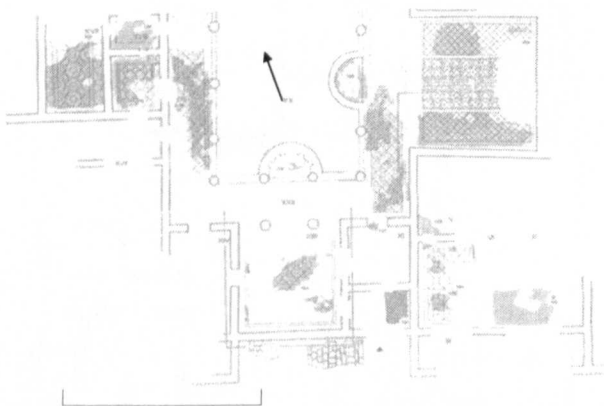
10. Djemila, Maison de Castorius



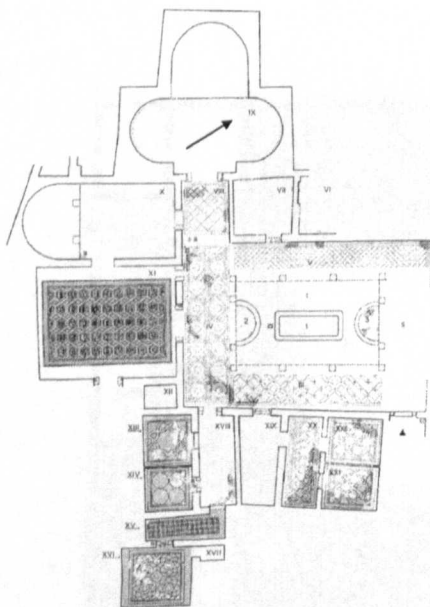
11. Althiburos, Édifice des Asclepieia



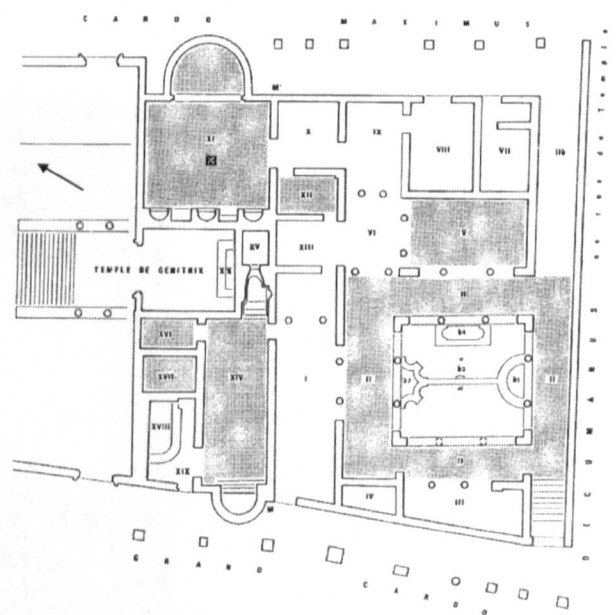
12. Utica, Maison au Grand Oecus



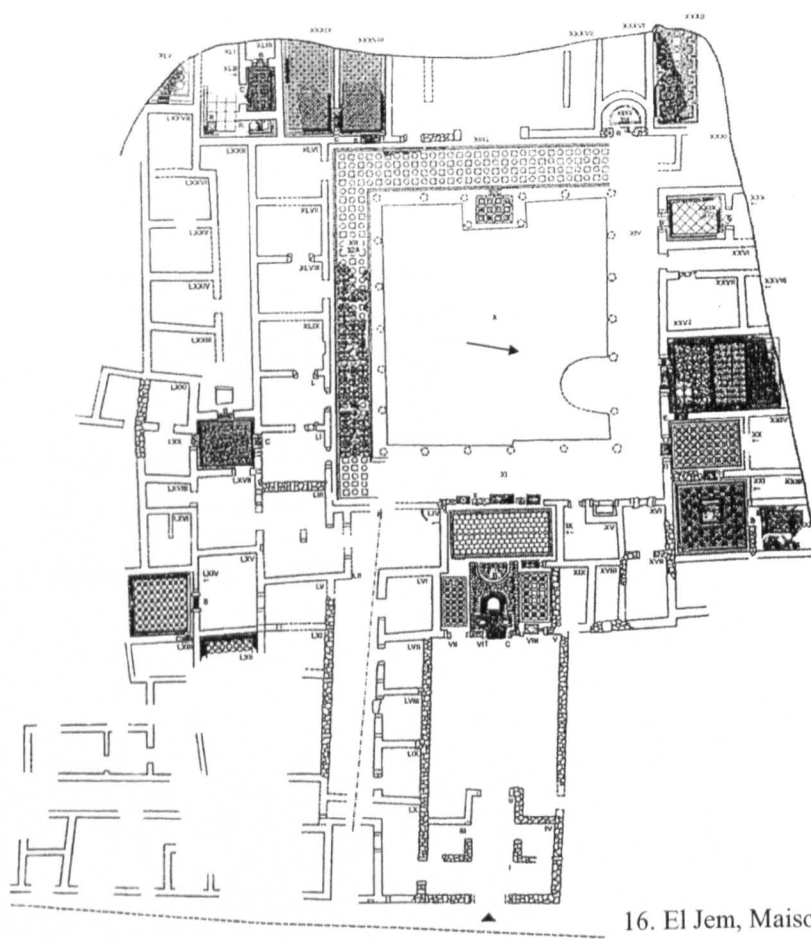
13. Utica, Maison H



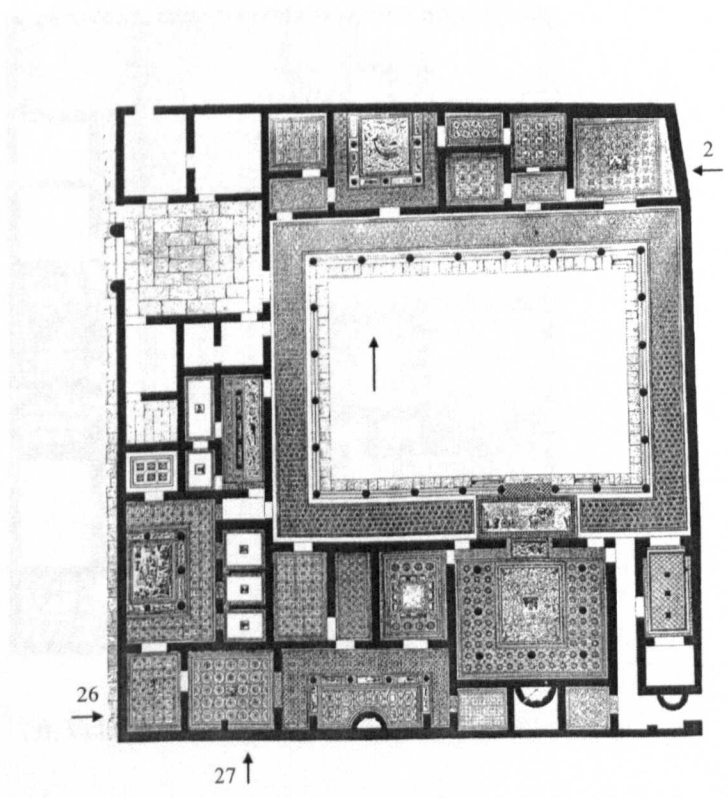
14. Thuburbo Maius, Maison des Protomés
section of the *Triconchos*



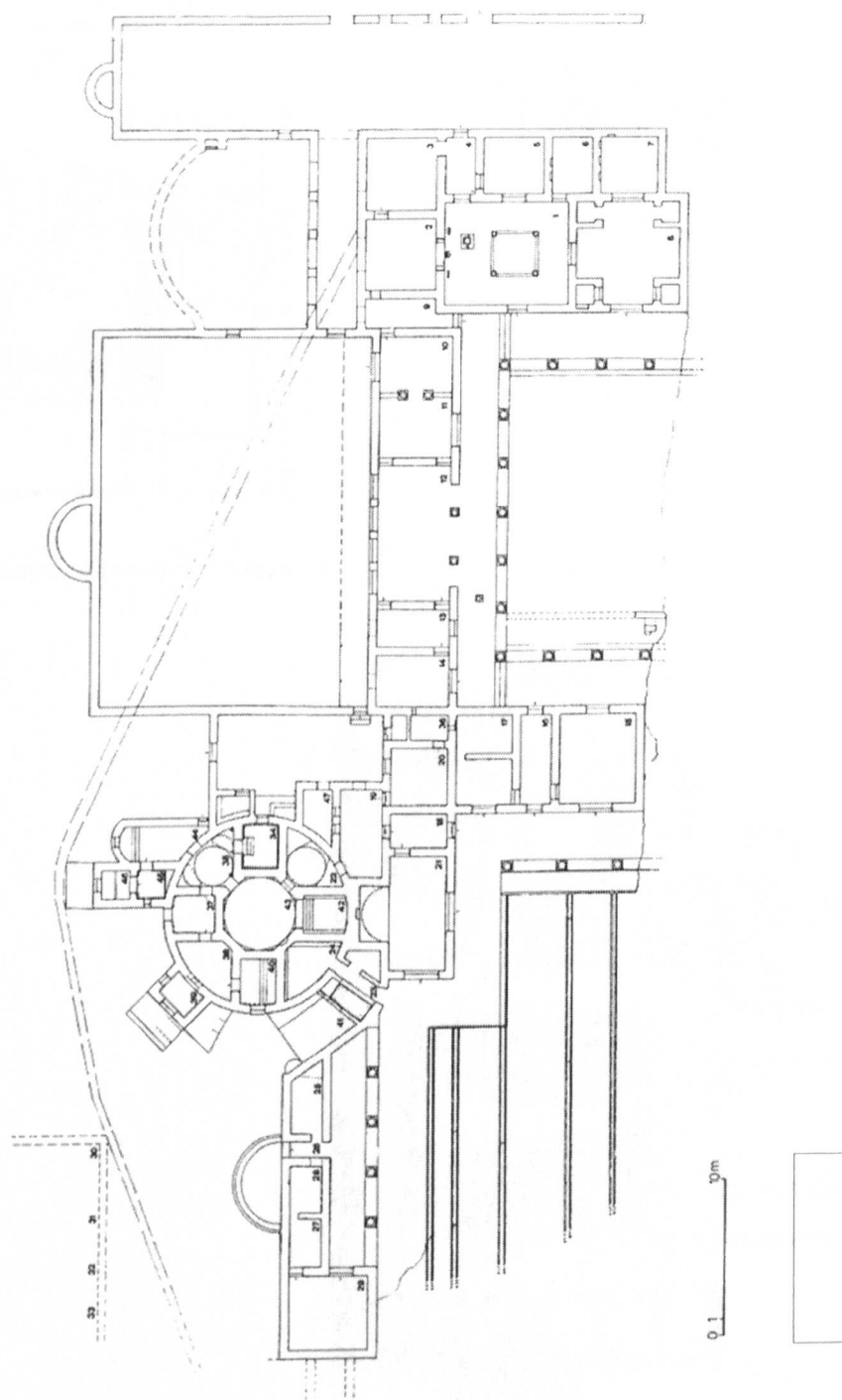
15. Djemila, Maison de l'Ane



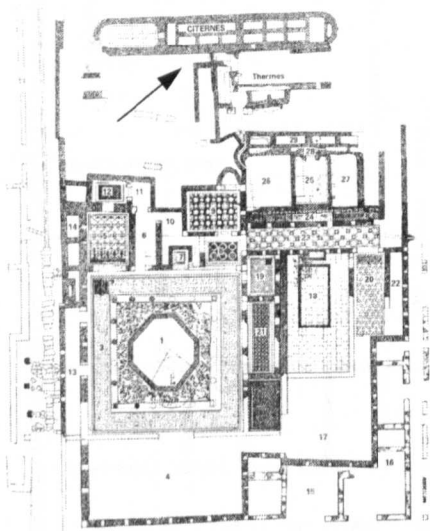
16. El Jem, Maison des Dauphins



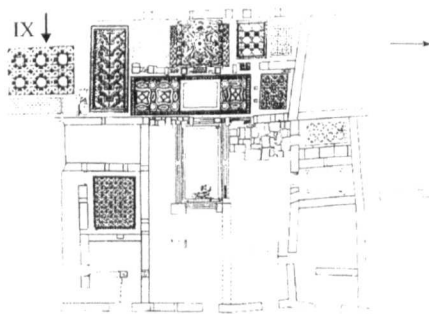
17. Oudna, Maison d'Ikarios



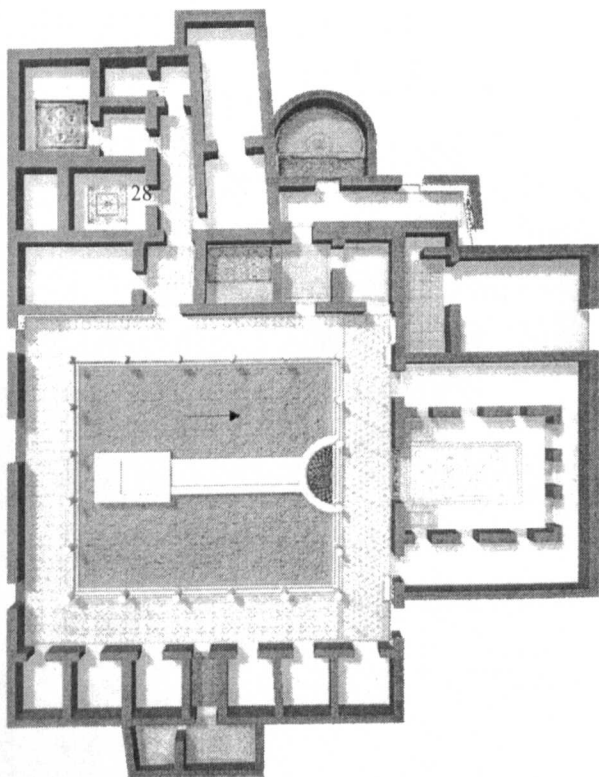
21. Silin, Villa du Taureau



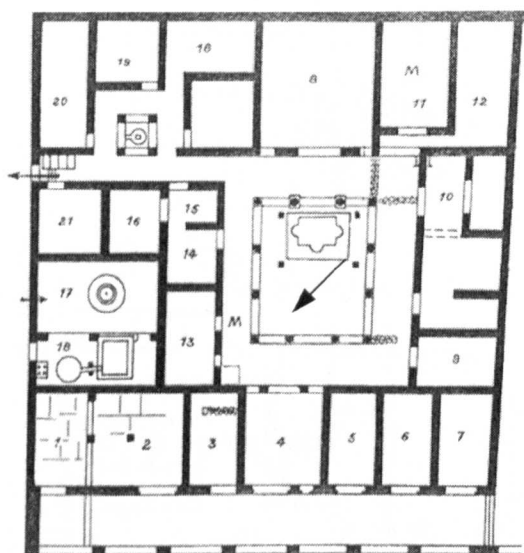
22. Carthage, Maison de la Volière



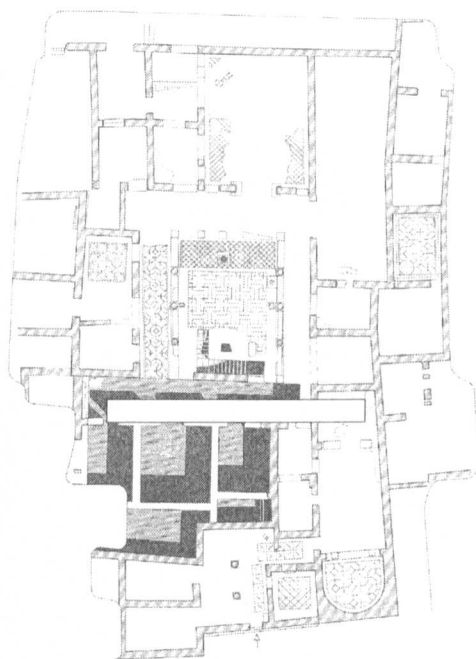
23. Thugga, Maison de Vénus



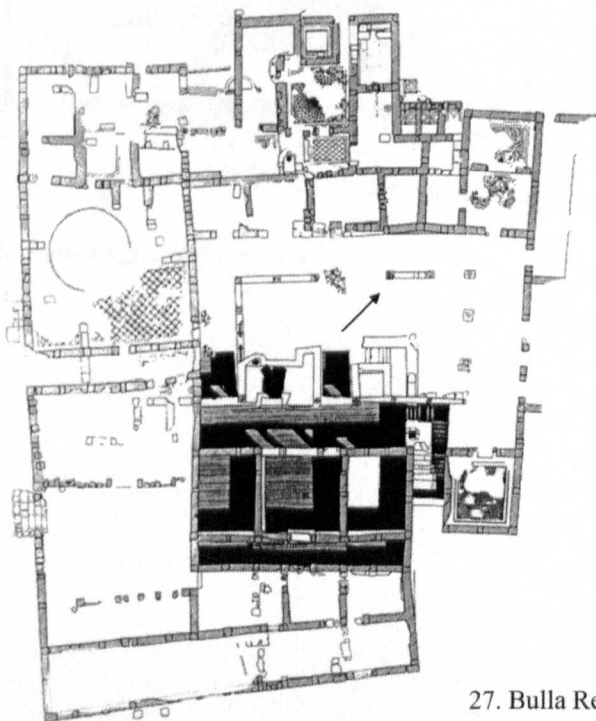
24. El Jem, House of Africa



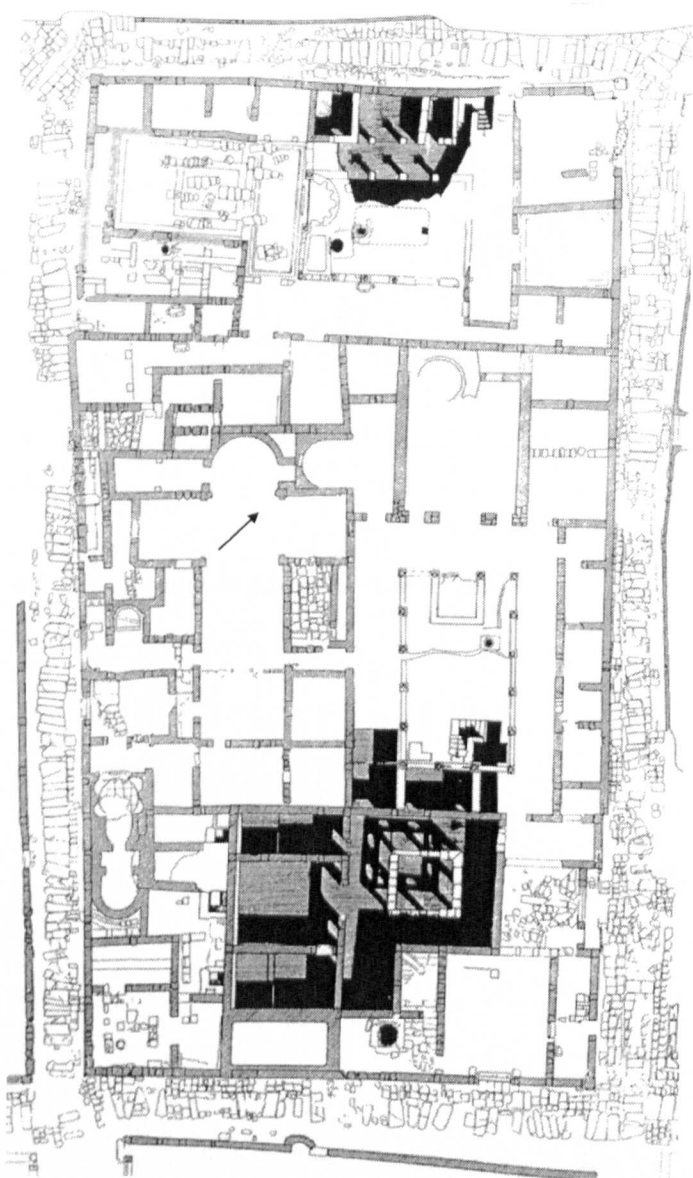
25. Volubilis, Maison des Néréides



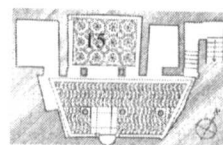
26. Bulla Regia, Maison n. 3



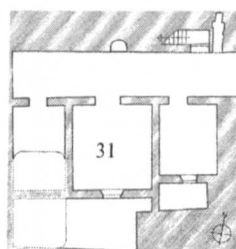
27. Bulla Regia, Maison d'Amphitrite



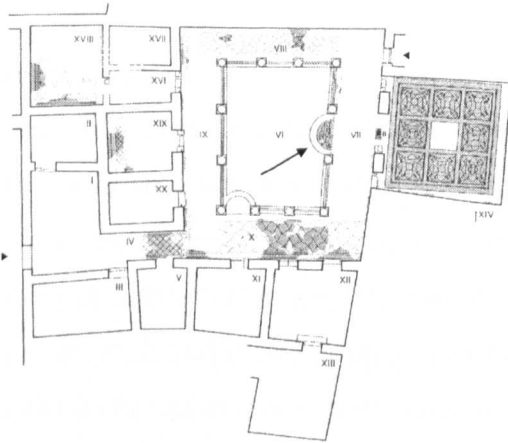
28. Bulla Regia, Insula de la Chasse



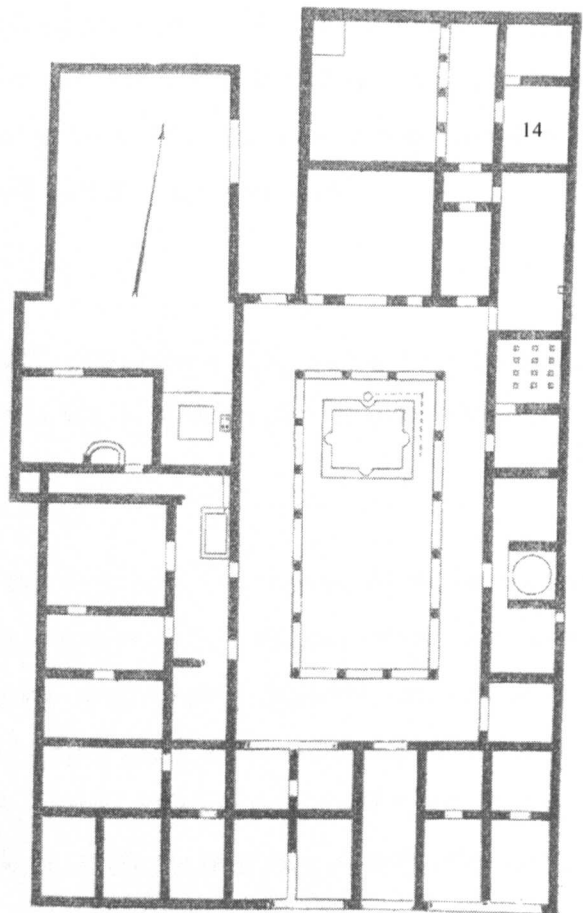
29. Bulla Regia, Maison de la Nouvelle Chasse: basement



30. Bulla Regia, Maison n.3: basement



31. Thuburbo Maius, Maison de Nicentius



32. Volubilis, Maison de l'Éphébe

Chapter 7

Assembly-rooms

7.1 Introduction

In a society where the complex system of exchanges and obligations was fundamental to the social structure, hospitality played a very important role in domestic life. The reciprocal exchange of private *hospitia* as an occasion for inviting and being invited encouraged interaction among the members of the elite, enlarged the circle of friends, real or potential, and enforced group solidarity.

Sumptuous banquets were the main vehicle of display for enhancing the host's reputation in a wider social group. However, a variety of other festive occasions allowed further opportunity for enforcing the ties of friendship and for displaying status, though on a less impressive scale. Family ceremonies, formal greetings by peers (on the occasion of entering upon magistracies, for birthdays, etc.), lectures, recitations, and so forth functioned as social occasions in which the host and his guests could perform the social rites of cultivated Roman living. Some of those public ceremonies may have taken place in dining rooms, though it would have necessitated ignoring the clear pattern in the floor, which identify many of them as *triclinia*. Some others would have required the arrangement of spaces with more specific characteristics.

7.2 Textual evidence

Textual references to the spaces in which public activities were carried out are not many and do not give any clue as to the reconstruction of their architectural and decorative layout.

In the description of his Laurentine villa, the Younger Pliny¹ speaks of rooms for the use of his servants and freedmen. However, because of their elegant setting, they may have been occasionally used for the reception of the guests. Sidonius' account of his villa at Avitacum in Gaul² contains a detailed description of the baths and of the dining rooms as the most important spaces for the accommodation of Roman rituals, but the writer does not mention any other public rooms where the host may have entertained his

¹ Plin. *Ep.* 2.17.9.

² Sid. *Ep.* 2.2.

guests. The lack of references to the rooms for entertaining the guests in both the literary accounts does not mean that those spaces did not exist in the arrangement of Roman domestic buildings. As the seat of private leisure and rest, the villa must have been provided with spaces to accommodate a range of recreational and social activities for the *dominus*' guests (games, reading, philosophical discussions, etc.).

In his architectural treatise on the ideal Roman house (book VI), Vitruvius speaks of a range of room-types to be found in the rich *domus* of men holding public office. In 6.3 the writer lists the rooms that should lie next to a peristyle. He mentions *triclinia*, *exedrae*, *oeci*, and *pinachotecae*, but does not tell us anything about the specific function of these rooms: surely the words were self-explanatory and referred to room-types which must have been well known to the ancient reader.

Unlike the word *triclinium*, which is frequently mentioned and specifically characterized by activity in literary sources, the terms *exedra*, *oecus*, and *pinachoteca* are rarely employed and do not give any structural and functional identity to the rooms to which they refer. Nevertheless, modern scholars tend to apply the Latin words to the components of the architectural remains of Roman houses and, on the basis of the scarce textual evidence for those terms, to allocate specific activities to the excavated parts. As a result, the use of terms, which are not well attested in the vocabulary of Roman everyday usage, is somewhat speculative, when applied to definite spaces to specific Roman house-plans³. That is evident from investigation of words such as *oecus* and *exedra*, which are commonly used to describe the rooms for the reception and entertainment of the house-owner's guests.

In 6.3.8 Vitruvius speaks of square *oeci* as rooms being of the same proportions as *triclinia*, save that their inner colonnade makes them more spacious. A review of its actual usage shows that the term *oecus*⁴ occurs in only one Latin author other than Vitruvius. The Elder Pliny⁵ refers to a kind of mosaic pattern, the *asarotos oikos* or "unswept floor", which represents scraps and refuse from the table on the floor of the

³ The modern use of Latin names to describe domestic spaces is discussed by Allison 2001 and id 2004, 161-77.

⁴ Leach 1997, 60-1.

⁵ Plin. *NH* 36.25.60.

room⁶. The U-shaped colonnade and the subject-pattern of the floor mosaic clearly indicate the function of the *oecus* as a pretentious dining room. Vitruvius describes a number of different types of *oeci* with names that carry an international flavour: tetrastyle, Corinthian, Egyptian, and Cyzicene. These names clearly indicate that the Roman domestic architecture, at any rate in Italy in late Republic, is likely to have borrowed elements of palatial architecture from the Hellenistic East and transferred then for use in the house of the Roman aristocrat. Drawing their nomenclature from Vitruvius, modern scholars use the term *oeci* to designate the rooms with interior colonnades, which are documented in some excavated houses of Pompeii⁷ and of Imperial Roman Africa⁸. However, the etymology of the word *oecus*, which derives from the Greek *oikos*, has led modern scholars to make a widely-used, but in fact misleading use of the term. In archaic Greek the word *oecus* indicated both the house in the overall and the main room set aside for ordinary daily use; at the end of the Classical period and in Hellenistic times, by contrast, the term came to be designated to refer to the banqueting hall. As Hellenistic architecture exerted great influence upon Roman domestic architecture⁹, the term *oecus* is frequently used in modern archaeological terminology for rooms of a certain size and of prominence in a Roman house. Two classes of label apply to such rooms: on the one hand *triclinium*, which is derived from the particular furnishing within the room (three couches); on the other hand *oecus*, which designates structure or form. Thus, the authors of *CMT* III.1 label hall XVIII of the Maison du Paon at El Jem as an *oecus* because of its imposing size, and room XL as a *triclinium* because of the pattern of its floor mosaic. However, both rooms probably served as dining rooms, though on different social occasions. The use of the two terms to designate the dining room with regard to the mosaic pattern of its floor suggests a certain ambiguity. For example, Darmon¹⁰ labels the main reception room of the

⁶ The type, which was invented by Sosos of Pergamon in the 2nd century BC, is best represented by a mosaic on the Aventine, now in the Vatican: it was signed by its maker Heraklitos and probably dating to the 2nd century AD (Moormann 2000, 84-94). In Africa, it occurs at El Jem in the border of a *triclinium* mosaic, now in the El Jem Museum.

⁷ For example in Casa del Labirinto, in Casa delle Nozze d'Argento, and in Casa del Meleagro: they are dated to the 1st century BC- 1st century AD.

⁸ In Rebuffat (1974) examples of *oeci* are at Djemila, Maison de la Chapelle Dionysiaque, 673 n.6; at Hadrumetum, Maison des Masques, 681 n.1; at El Jem, Maison du Terrain Salah Abdallah, 684 n.7; at Utica, Maison au Grand Oecus, 686 n.6; and at Oudna, Maison d'Ikarios, 686 n. 1.

⁹ The Greek derivation of names such as *peristylum*, *triclinium*, and *exedra* to designate the reception spaces of the Roman house is indication of that influence, as of course is the widespread adoption of the peristyle in houses in Italy from the 2nd century BC onward.

¹⁰ Darmon 1980.

Maison des Nymphes as *oecus-triclinium* as though the two terms may be used interchangeably.

Another word of uncertain meaning and use is *exedra*¹¹. Derived from the Greek *ex edre* (“seat out of doors”), the term is widely attested in Greek and Roman literature to indicate a chamber furnished with seats and with a wide opening onto a *porticus*. Following Vitruvius’ prescriptions, scholars use the word to designate those rooms with a large opening situated facing the peristyle and provided with lavish decoration. The employment of the term is, however, speculative and misleading, since *triclinia* too are distinguished by broad entrances and rich decoration. Moreover, the notion of the size of the opening determining room function is very controversial (how wide must the door be in order to label the room as an *exedra*?) and creates a certain ambiguity in archaeological literature. For example, the rooms described as *exedrae* by Thébert¹² do not appear in the list of rooms classed as *exedrae* drawn up by Rebuffat¹³. Room XVIII of the Maison du Paon at El Jem (Table 7.2 n.13) is labelled as *exedra* by Thébert¹⁴, but as *oecus* in *CMT* III.1¹⁵. Rebuffat¹⁶ designates room 5 of the Maison aux Travaux d’Hercule at Volubilis (Table 7.2 n.27) as an *exedra*, though the U-shaped layout of its floor mosaic clearly indicates a *triclinium*. This vague use of the term *exedra* is due to the uncertain function of the rooms so described in the literature, over which there has been much argument. Generally associated with the *porticus* of Greek gymnasia as the setting for philosophical discussions, the domestic *exedra* is thought to signify a chamber for ordinary rest and conversation. In *De Natura Deorum* 1.15, Cicero presents himself as a visitor who finds his friend sitting in an *exedra* and engaged in philosophical debate. However, a review of the Latin dictionary under ‘*exedra*’ shows that the term was used to denote a room which served a variety of functions: for sleeping¹⁷, or even for keeping birds¹⁸.

The ecclesiastical tradition is responsible for another inappropriate use of the word *exedra* in modern archaeological terminology. Following ancient glosses, which use the terms *exedra* and *absida* as synonyms to describe the apse of the church, modern

¹¹ *TLL*, s.v. *exedra*, vol. V, 1318-19; Settis 1973; Leach 1997, 61-2.

¹² Thébert 1987.

¹³ Rebuffat 1969; id. 1974.

¹⁴ Thébert 1987, 374.

¹⁵ *CMT* III.1, 1996, 45.

¹⁶ Rebuffat 1969, 668 n.7.

¹⁷ Cic. *De Or.* 3.5.17.

¹⁸ Var. *R.R.* 3.5.8.

scholars define *exedra* as a semicircular structure. However, literary sources make clear that rectangular *exedrae* were just as common as semicircular are.

7.3 Proposal of a term

In order to establish the function of particular rooms in excavated Roman houses, modern scholars tend to combine architectural room type with a ‘label’ borrowed from textual sources. That approach may be fruitful, as literary texts document private life and describe activities which were carried out in a domestic setting, though in the elite circle. Such a methodology shows its faults when it is based on the assumption that each Latin term fully explains the architectural form and/or of the functions of the excavated spaces¹⁹. Thus, as a similarity was seen between Vitruvius’ ideal plan and the plans of many houses excavated at Pompeii, the Roman writer’s treatise has been ransacked for labels, as if to designate an area as *oecus* or *exedra* was to explain it. However, Vitruvius’ treatise was inspired by Augustan building projects and is a product of Augustan rhetoric: the house, which he describes, is an *exemplum* of the ideal *domus* that perhaps no senator might actually have chosen to live in²⁰. As a result, it would seem unreasonable to apply the ideal expressed in this treatise to all the Roman periods and to divergent parts of the Empire. Imperial Africa was not Rome and one should question why such terms are apt for the African house, which conceivably had its own local traditions. On the basis of the above observations, we should probably acknowledge the absence of any clear term to define the rooms, which were designated for the accommodation of formal ceremonies and for the house-owner’s self-presentation.

The English language has no adequate term for this room-type. There is no equivalent in English for the Italian *Salotto di rappresentanza* or *Saloni*, which conveys ideas of prestige and power attached to men holding public office. The widely term “reception room” has slightly different connotations. The word lays stress upon the action of receiving guests in a formal or ceremonious manner: in this sense, the *triclinium* is also a place of reception, but, within the customs of Roman social life, the *cubiculum* too is a place of reception, though on a different scale. The need for a term that defines a room-type is not a mere question of terminology. Bearing in mind that each room of Roman domestic

¹⁹ Allison 1993; id. 2004, 166-77.

²⁰ The same Vitruvius admits at one point (6.6.11) that what he is giving is an ideal picture of a house.

buildings housed a variety of activities, categorizing the domestic spaces by terms, though generic, may help us to define a series of settings adapted for different activities.

As rooms set for a gathering of people for the purpose of social entertainment, they may be defined as “assembly-rooms”. The term is borrowed from the domestic architecture of 18th century England. In the “social house”²¹, like in the Roman *domus*, distinctions of rank and etiquette were dominant. In a world affected by mobility, social success depended partly on the ability to cement personal bonds and receive favours from the *patronus*. The game of contacts with others of varying social rank was mainly played out in country houses, which were an advertisement of the culture, education, and wealth of their owners. Consequently, the social house of the period, like the Roman house, was made up of an increasing number of public meeting places arranged for different social events. Along with the dining room, as the biggest and most richly decorated room of the house, a variety of assembly-rooms were intended for different types of entertainments (playing cards, drinking tea, or just walking and talking)²².

Though on a different scale and social pattern, the term ‘assembly-rooms’ may be applied to certain spaces in the Romano-African house, where the owner met his guests on social occasions and displayed his status.

7.4 The identification of assembly-rooms

Archaeological evidence shows that the Romano-African house was often provided with a grand dining hall alongside one or more rooms, which were distinguished by their size, architecture, and décor. The latter, which we may conventionally label as assembly-rooms, were slightly smaller than the main *triclinium* but were larger than other spaces in the house. In the Maison des Nymphes at Neapolis, for instance, assembly-room VII (62m²) was smaller than the main *triclinium* (105m²) but larger than the medium-sized chambers with figured mosaics which lay along the northern and eastern *porticus* of the peristyle (Pl. 122). In the Maison des Animaux Liés at Thuburbo Maius (Table 7.2 n.2), assembly-room XV stood out for its size (26m²) against the other rooms, though it was smaller than main *triclinium* XVIII (39m²). In both the examples at Neapolis and at Thuburbo Maius, the assembly-rooms were lit up by the adjoining

²¹ Girouard 1978, 181-212.

²² The assembly is described by Chambers (*Cycl*, 1751) as a ‘stated and general meeting of the polite persons of both sexes, for the sake of conversation, gallantry, news and play’.

light-well²³. In the *Maison de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons* at Volubilis (Table 7.2 n.5), the adjoining rooms 11-12 (ca. 30m²) formed a distinct group from the rest of the house and from main *triclinium* 7 (49m²). In all these examples, the T+U layout of the main *triclinium* indicates that the slightly smaller but lavishly decorated room was designed for a different kind of reception of guests.

When the main *triclinium* is not marked off by its pavement as a dining room, other clues can help us to distinguish the two types of meeting-rooms. In the *Maison de Dionysos et d'Ulysse* at Thugga, for example, rooms 10 and 13 stood out against the unpaved spaces and the chambers, which are identifiable as *cubicula* by the layout of their geometric mosaics (Table 7.2 n.4). Size, outlook onto the peristyle, and the presence of figured mosaics show that both rooms were used for receiving and meeting guests. However, the size (ca. 16m²) and the architectural layout of room 10, which faced the semicircular basin in the peristyle and adjoined a *cubiculum* on either side, suggest that it was used for the reception of the guests at formal dinners; room 13, on the contrary, smaller (ca. 6.30m²) and contiguous to the secondary entrance, seems to have been an assembly-room for other social occasions. The *Maison des Palmes* at Thuburbo Maius shows a similar arrangement of the architectural spaces (Table 7.2 n.6). Rooms XIII and XIV opened onto the peristyle and were floored with elegant geometric mosaics. But the triple entrance and the bigger size (ca. 33m²) of room XIII marked it off as the main *triclinium*, while the smaller room XIV (ca. 15m²) would have been used as an assembly-room.

As the setting of the rituals of reception and of leisure, the assembly-rooms were laid with elements drawn from the normal arrangements of the main *triclinium* to indicate the importance attached to those ceremonies, though on a smaller scale than the sumptuous banquets held in the main *triclinium*.

In some African houses the assembly-room was entered through a triple bay ornamented with columns. In the *Maison d'Europe* at Djemila, for example, assembly-room 22 was adorned with a pair of columns *in antis*, like main *triclinium* 18 and secondary *triclinium* 13 (Table 7.2 n.10). In the *Maison d'Orphée* at Volubilis, the

²³ Similarly, in the *Maison de Neptune* at Thuburbo Maius, room XXVI may have been used as an assembly-room, as it was a moderate-sized room (26m²) lying off the peristyle and alongside the main *triclinium*.

entrance into assembly-room 8 was framed by two central columns and two side semi-columns: the lavish layout of the room was enhanced by the arrangement of circular basins in the opposite court (Table 7.2 n.19). In other examples of assembly-rooms, the columns framed a single, wide opening. In the Maison de la Nouvelle Chasse at Bulla Regia, assembly-rooms 3 and 14 were both entered through a large bay framed by columns (Pls. 42-43), while main *triclinium* 10 was provided with a triple entrance. Assembly-room 7 of the Maison de Flavius Germanus at Volubilis was flanked by semi-columns on either side of a very wide opening (2.53m wide; the room was 4.65 x 4.60m): because of its large bay, the room was labelled as *exedra* by Rebuffat²⁴ (Table 7.2 n.9).

The layout of the assembly-room was sometimes enhanced by the introduction of an apse. In the Maison des Muses at Althiburos, for instance, assembly-room R was provided with an apse (3.30m wide), which was slightly raised above the main room (4 x 3m: Table 7.2 n.33). A similar arrangement is attested in the Maison des Masques at Hadrumetum, though square room 6 (6 x 6m) was separated by apse 7 by a wall (Table 7.2 n.32). In assembly-room X of the Maison des Protomés Section of the *Triconchos* at Thuburbo Maius, the entrance from the main room (5.10 x 6.25m) into the raised apse (5.10 x 3.80m) was framed by a pair of columns (Table 7.2 n.11). In the Maison des Colonnes Rouges at Acholla, on the other hand, assembly-room IV was provided with a raised semicircular structure along the wall at right-angles to the entrance (Table 7.2 n.12). The size of the apsed element (1.60m wide; 1.88m deep), which would have been too small for the accommodation of the guests, and the traces of waterproof coating seem to point to a fountain: the marine motif of the floor mosaic would suit such a use. The introduction of a raised element further back from the entrance occurs in a rectilinear arrangement, too. For example, in the Maison de la Cascade at Utica (XXXIV) and in the House of Africa at El Jem (20), the assembly-room contained a rectangular platform, which was carpeted in *opus tessellatum*, with a lower section in *opus sectile* (Table 7.2 nos. 14-15). The lavish decoration in *opus sectile* stressed the importance of the room for receiving guests. The rich decoration of the assembly-room at Utica was enhanced by a wide opening facing a semicircular basin in the peristyle.

²⁴ Rebuffat 1969, 668 n. 6.

As public spaces designed for the reception and entertainment of the guests, the assembly-room of the Romano-African house was often located directly off the peristyle, alongside the main *triclinium*. However, in some cases, the assembly-room may have been entered by a corridor or anteroom. In the Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque at El Jem, for instance, the adjoining assembly-rooms A-B opened off a corridor, which ran along the north-eastern *porticus* of the peristyle (Table 7.2 n.16). The rich figured mosaic of room A and the decoration in *opus sectile* of room B created an elegant setting, which would have been suitable for meeting and entertaining the guests.

In the Villa du Taureau at Silin, room 2 lay off a small courtyard (Table 7.2 n.18): the subject-pattern of the floor mosaic, which illustrated races in the circus as a representation of the interests and wealth of the house-owner, seems to stress the public function of the room. Though corridors or anterooms seem to have protected the privacy of those rooms, which were located just off the peristyle, the elegance of their architectural and decorative layout seems to suggest that, in spite of their location, they were intended for the reception of the guests whom the house-owner would want to impress. A similar arrangement occurs in the Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus at Volubilis, too. Assembly-room 16 lay in a private suite comprising a *triclinium* (17) and private apartments (13-14-15), which opened onto a small, elegant courtyard with basin (Table 7.2 n.17).

7.5 The decoration of assembly-rooms

The social function of the assembly-rooms was emphasized by their floor mosaics as a visual declaration of the owner's wealth and status. The choice of the decorative motifs makes it obvious that through them the host intended to convey a message of social significance.

7.5.1 Figured motifs

In the Maison de Dionysos et d'Ulysse (13) at Thugga and in the Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque (A) at El Jem, the assembly-rooms were both decorated with the image of Annus surrounded by the Seasons. In the Thugga mosaic²⁵ the bust of the young god is adorned with a crown of fruits and framed by a laurel wreath, which is similarly laden with fruits and flowers. At the corners the central medallion is

²⁵ Poinssot 1965, 228-29; Dunbabin 1978, 257 n.8b; Parrish 1981, 54; id. 1984, 136-38; id. 1981, 799, n.3.

surrounded by the Seasons, which are shown in the form of female busts. In the El Jem panel²⁶ the figures of Annus and of the Seasons are inserted in a rich, lavish pattern of rinceau, which includes nude satyrs, girls carrying a basket, birds, and heads of Ocean (Pl. 83). The two mosaics seem to relate to Dionysus, but such an association is not certain. Poinssot describes the central figure of the Thugga panel as “Dionysus-Annus”, but it is not certain that a reference to the god of wine was intended. The *canephorae* of the El Jem mosaic are described as bacchantes carrying the *liknon*, or first cradle of Dionysus, though it is difficult to identify the contents of their baskets. Rather, the women seem to be connected with Annus and the Seasons by the seasonal emblems that they hold in their hand. Whether associated with Dionysus or not, the two figured mosaics emphasize notions of fertility and prosperity, assured by Annus and by the four Seasons. Moreover, the figure of Annus as the personification of the eternal time seems to ensure that the fortune of the house will last throughout the course of the year.

The same idea that material representation of profusion emphasized the owner's prodigality and caused his house to continue in prosperity is expressed by *xenia* motifs. In assembly-room VII of the Maison des Nymphes at Neapolis, for example, a grid-pattern of Heracles' knots include *xenia* motifs (fruit, vegetables, and fish) among stylized flowers, knots, and a hydria²⁷. Darmon suggests that the water-pot may allude to the season of Summer, as it is often associated with the representation of August²⁸. However, the hydria may refer simply to its contents, water, which is the source of all life and a potent symbol of prosperity in as dry a country as Tunisia.

In assembly-room XII of the Maison du Triomphe de Neptune at Acholla the motifs of fruit, vegetables and flowers are combined with the representation of beasts (lion, tiger, panther) and of masks (maenad, old Silenus, young Satyr): both beasts and masks are linked with Dionysiac imagery (Pl. 15)²⁹. In their association with Dionysus as the god *Cosmocrator*, who regenerates the fruits of earth, the *xenia* are symbols of abundance and of eternal regeneration. A similar association appears in assembly-room 4 of the

²⁶ Foucher 1963, 36-42, 80, 82, 96-8, 137-45, 153; id. 1976, 197-98; id. 1981, 5; Dunbabin 1978, 150, 160, 260 n.27a; Parrish 1981, 52-3; id. 1981, 799 n. 1; id. 1984, 147-49 n.27; Blanchard-Lemée et al. 1996, 41-4; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 534 fig. 301.

²⁷ Darmon 1980, 45-54 n.10, 150-55.

²⁸ See Stern 1953, pl. X,1 and XVI,3.

²⁹ Ch. Picard 1968, 119; Dunbabin 1978, 248 4c; Gozlan 1981, 79-80, (81-2); id. 1992, 280-81; Ben Osman 1990, 74.

Maison de l'Éphèbe at Volubilis³⁰. The room was decorated with two panels divided by a circular basin: the badly-preserved Triumph of Dionysus in section B was accompanied by marine motifs illustrating fish around a fisherman in the adjoining section P.

In assembly-room 9 of the Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus at Volubilis the central medallion represents Erotes feeding birds³¹. Birds and seeds scattered all over the ground evoke ideas of fertility and abundance, while the delightful figures of the small Erotes create a humorous, amusing scene.

Elements of Dionysiac repertoire occur in assembly-room 31 of the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna³². Though the figured scene has been mostly destroyed, the preserved figure of a vintaging Eros and the motifs of peacocks and masks, which frame the central medallion, clearly refer to Dionysus and create a decorative link with the figured scene in the adjoining *triclinium* (vintaging Erotes framing a central panel with Dionysus's gift to Ikarios). By referring to the god of wine, the floor mosaic seems to suit the use of room 31 as a setting for receiving guests during the *comissatio*.

Some assembly-rooms were decorated with marine motifs. The apse of assembly-room IV in the Maison des Colonnes Rouges at Acholla, for instance, was decorated with the mask of Ocean (Pl. 8)³³. The large head, with lobster-claws on the forehead and a sea-monster on either side of it, is surrounded by fish, a Nereid riding a sea-bull, and an Eros fishing in a boat. The marine motif was appropriate for the decoration of what appears to have been a fountain. The opposite square room was carpeted with a grid of nine panels containing figured scenes, but only four have been preserved. They represent an Eros riding on a dolphin, a Nereid riding on a sea-bull, a gazelle, and a panther. It is not possible to ascertain whether the scenes were linked with one another and with the mask of Ocean in the apse or had just a decorative purpose.

A further example of marine scene is the triumph of Venus, which is illustrated in assembly-room XXVIII of the Maison du Char de Vénus at Thuburbo Maius (Pl. 183)³⁴.

³⁰ Thouvenot 1945, 118-19.

³¹ Thouvenot 1958, 65-6; Dunbabin 1978, 277 n.1a

³² Gauckler 1896, 206-07; Dunbabin 1978, 266 n.1k.

³³ Gozlan 1999, 204-07; id. 2001, 134-41, n. 91-2.; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 536 fig. 347.

³⁴ Poinssot, 1940, 218, 225-26; Ch. Picard 1941- 1946, 56, 83 n. 5; id. 1958, 148; Duval and Lézine 1959, 80 n. 5; Salomonson 1965, 33 n.4; Yacoub, 1970, 85 (1982, 89) inv. 2789; Dunbabin 1978, 274 n.2b; id. 1982, 72 n. 55; Darmon 1980, 52 n.6; CMT II.3, 1987, 80-2 n. 296; Blanchard-Lemée et al.1996, 154.

The central medallion contains Venus standing on a small chariot, which is drawn by four Erotes arranged symmetrically in two pairs and with the reins tied across their chests. The goddess is ornamented with necklace, bracelets, and diadem; her head is haloed. The scene is framed by interlaced laurel garlands containing sea-shells and by corner baskets on either side of roses. Though the representation of the ground line, the sea-shells clearly refer to the marine origin of Venus and, along with the roses and jewellery, as symbols of the beauty of the goddess, they seem to celebrate the goddess of fertility and of fortune and through her image to convey a message of the prodigality and prosperity of the house-owner. However, the mosaic suggests a further possible reading of the scene. The image of Venus in frontal chariot recalls the schema adopted for the representation of the victorious charioteer drawn by a chariot seen frontally. As Venus possessed the gift of giving good luck to racehorses and of guaranteeing their victory, the African mosaic may allude to the games of the circus.

A more explicit reference to the world of hippodromes and racetracks is in the mosaic panel flooring assembly-room 2 of the Villa du Taureau at Silin³⁵. The scene depicts a race taking place in a circus. The building is represented by its main monuments: the line of starting-gates (*carceres*) comprising eight stalls; the barrier (*euripus*), which separates the two halves of the tracks and on both sides of which a race is in progress; and the *metae*, which are decorated with coloured panels. The central *euripus* is a long raised basin on whose sides are set a variety of monuments including dolphins and eggs, which were raised and lowered to mark the laps. Picard and Al Mahjub stated that the mosaic represents the nearby circus of Leptis Magna, but, as Humphrey correctly pointed out, the representation of the Silin circus owes much to the circus iconography established in pattern books, an iconography which seems derived ultimately from the Circus Maximus at Rome. The details of the monuments on the Silin mosaic may well have commemorated a particular *munus* that the owner offered to his fellow-citizens, but if so it is unlikely to refer to a specific building. The palm branches scattered in the field seem to evoke the theme of victory, success and good fortune: as Dunbabin³⁶ points out, the image of the victorious charioteer functioned principally as a bringer of success and good luck.

³⁵ Humphrey 1984; Al Mahjub 1987, 72; Ch. Picard 1985, 230; Dunbabin 1999a, 122-23; Witts 1993, 27 n. 14.

³⁶ Dunbabin 1982, 82-6.

References to the amphitheatre occur in two panels decorating assembly-room 16 of the *Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus at Volubilis*³⁷. On one panel, a winged Eros is standing with his hands bound behind his back with a foliate garland the ends of which are held by two other erotes: the one on the right holds a baton in his raised right hand. At the feet of the punished Eros is a bird shot (Pl.219). On the other panel, a bound Eros is driven forward by another holding a whip in his raised right hand; before them, a further Eros is opening a cage from which a large tortoise emerges (Pl. 220). The two panels are placed on either side of a larger mosaic illustrating the Rape of Hylas by the nymphs (Pl. 218). The young boy is kneeling on his left knee and stretching his right leg out in the river; he wears a mantle covering his left shoulder and back. On either side of Hylas are two nymphs, who are ornamented with bracelets, necklace, reed-crown in their hair, and a mantle covering partly their bodies. In the background are hills and tree. Thouvenot and Rebuffat interpret this scene and the representation of the bath of Diana in the adjoining room 17 as complementary: both the mosaics would represent the themes of *hybris* and death³⁸. Lancha too gives an escatological interpretation of the Rape of Hylas, which however would symbolise the positive image of happy life after death. Muth analyses the iconographical details of the scene with the Rape of Hylas, which emphasises the erotic ideal of man as the desired beloved and the desiring lover. The escatological use of a myth decorating a secular building would be inappropriate; besides I do not see why the physical communication of two rooms would mean a thematic relation between their floor mosaics. The parodic representations of the scenes of amphitheatre and the inverted schema of rapist and raped seem to create a playful, amused atmosphere which would suit a room used for relaxed activities.

A few mosaics express the house-owner's cultural interests in literature and theatre. In apsidal assembly-room R of the *Maison des Muses at Althiburos*, the square area was decorated with a grid of twelve squares containing the busts of the nine Muses and three damaged figures, which it is not possible to identify (Table 7.2 n.33)³⁹. It is uncertain whether the three figures were associated with the Muses: they may have been

³⁷ Rebuffat 1965, 193, 214; Ling 1979; Dunbabin 1978, 86-7, 277 n.1a-b-c; Lancha 1983; Oakley 1990; Muth 1998, 100, 103-04, 115-17; 120-22, 132-33, 238-39, 403 A45 n.1.

³⁸ The two scholars' interpretation is analysed in chapter 6, 198-99.

³⁹ Merlin 1913, 39; Parlasca 1959, 141 n.5; Ennaïfer 1976, 69; Dunbabin 1978, 134, 248 n.1b; Theophilidou 1984, 325 n. 31; Lancha 1997, 71-2 n. 30

philosophers and animals, like in a panel from Bulla Regia, where the Muses are accompanied by animals (only traces of a deer and of a gazelle are now visible)⁴⁰ or just decorative elements, like in room 4 of the Maison des Mois at El Jem⁴¹. Though the Muses offered a convenient group of related figures with which to cover the floor, like the Seasons or Dionysiac figures, it seems possible that they were chosen to illustrate the cultural interests of the house-owner. Daughters of Jupiter and Mnemosyne, the Muses were the tutelary goddesses of all forms of culture. In *Florida* XX, Apuleius sings the praises of the Muses as his guides to supreme wisdom. Moreover, the architectural layout of apsidal assembly-room R at Althiburos seems to suggest that the subject of the Muses was chosen to suit the cultural function of the domestic space. In fact, the arrangement of the apse, which was raised and decorated with geometric motifs, seems to have been used for accommodating the guests⁴² and for offering a good view outwards to the private entertainments held in the opposite room.

A similar arrangement is attested in assembly-room 6/7 of the Maison des Masques at Hadrumetum, though the apse is separated from the main room by a dividing wall (Pl. 112). In the middle of the square room is a medallion, which illustrates a poet and an actor (Pl.113)⁴³. The poet is sitting on a chair: he is depicted in an attitude of thought, with one hand to his chin and a *volumen* in the other. Before him is a box containing scrolls and a base supporting a tragic mask. To his right an actor is standing: he rests his right elbow on a pedestal and holds a comic mask in his left hand. Though his features seem intended for a portrait, the poet does not bear any resemblance to the portrait of any known Roman poet. Foucher suggested that he may have been a local poet or even the owner of the house, who wanted to display his literary pretensions⁴⁴. The relationship with the cultural activities was stressed by the figurative mosaics decorating the thresholds of both room 6 and apse 7. The threshold of room 6, in fact, was decorated with three masks; on the threshold of the apse were two griffins facing each other on either side of a tripod (Pls. 114-115). The decorative elements (griffins, tripod, quiver) clearly refer to Apolline imagery, which would have been suitable for musical and poetical performances. A further mosaic that alludes to the cultural activities on the

⁴⁰ Hanoune 1974, 387; Beschtaouch et al. 1977, 111; Theophilodou 1984, 316 n.5; Lancha 1997, 70 n.28.

⁴¹ Foucher 1961, 29; Dunbabin 1978, 260 n.22; Theophilodou 1984, 323 n.11; Lancha 1997, 56-7 n. 17.

⁴² The 3.30m-wide apse would have been large enough for the reception of the guests

⁴³ Foucher 1965, 15-16, 56-9 ; 65 n. 10, 69 n. 23, 73-78; Dunbabin 1978, 131-32, 271 n. 31a; Bell 1979, n.239; Ch. Picard 1990, 229; Fantar et al. 1994, 199-200; Yacoub 1995, 145-47; Blanchard-Lemée et al. 1996, 219-22; Lancha 1997, 51- 53 n.14; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 530 fig. 233.

⁴⁴ Foucher 1965, 73.

house-owner decorated the library (room 8) of the Villa du Taureau at Silin⁴⁵. A geometric composition includes masks, dancing satyrs and bacchantes, birds and flowers. The masks, which are treated realistically with a careful distinction of types, are connected with the theatre and with Dionysus as the patron deity of theatrical performances. The link with Dionysus is reinforced by the figures of dancing satyrs and bacchantes as the members of the god's entourage. The Dionysiac elements are combined with birds and flowers, which may evoke ideas of fortune and well-being in the context of aristocratic leisure, but they may have only a decorative value.

7.5.2 Geometric-floral designs

Some of the assembly-rooms listed in Table 7.1 were decorated with geometric-floral motifs. The rich polychromy and the exuberance of the designs suited the function of the rooms as reception areas of high-status guests.

The most frequent design consisted of a pattern of eight-pointed stars. Variations come from the different figure-types combined to create a geometrical figure of eight radiating points. In assembly-room XI of the Maison Ouest at Utica, the lozenge-points diverge from a central circle and in the angles are enclosed between eight squares⁴⁶. In assembly-rooms VIII of the Maison aux Communs (Pl. 155)⁴⁷ and XIV of the Maison des Palmes (Pl. 175)⁴⁸, both at Thuburbo Maius, the eight-pointed stars result from the combination of two interlaced squares. Variations come from the different linear patterns used to outline the basic scheme (simple guilloche in the Maison aux Communs and Z-pattern in the Maison des Palmes) and from the filling of the compartments set between the stars (lozenges and octagons in the Maison aux Communs; an inscribed eight-lozenge star forming squares in the Maison des Palmes). The composition based upon an octagon occurs again in assembly-room XV of the Maison des Animaux Liés at Thuburbo Maius but in sinuous lines (Pl. 170)⁴⁹. Ellipses and cushions, which are formed out of concave squares with rounded angles, form irregular octagons⁵⁰.

⁴⁵ Al Mahjub 1978-79; 72; Dunbabin 1978, 133, 173.

⁴⁶ *CMT* I.2, 24-5 n. 177.

⁴⁷ *CMT* II.3, 102-04 n. 308.

⁴⁸ Poinssot and Lantier 1925, 255; Ch. Picard 1959a, 215; *CMT* II.1, 122 n. 95.

⁴⁹ Romanelli 1940, 174; *CMT* II.1, 98-101 n. 81.

⁵⁰ Geometric motifs seem to have decorated assembly-room XI of the Maison de Nicentius at Thuburbo Maius (*CMT* II.1, 47 n.39): according to the description of Merlin (1922, 43) it was a composition of squares bearing cross and of rectangles, but the mosaic has been destroyed.

In assembly-room X of the Maison de la Chasse at Utica, a geometric design contains vegetal elements in the manner of the Floral Style⁵¹: laurel wreaths are used as borders to frame the circles; peltae and florets with stems fill the compartments of the design (Pl. 209). An example of the African Floral style is in assembly-room 5 of the Maison de la Volière at Carthage⁵², the town where this style originated (Pl. 57). An exuberant design of acanthus scrolls and wine leaves, filling the spaces with petals and arabesques of tendrils, spread over the surface of the floor. The lavish composition and the rich polychromy conveyed the idea of prosperity and of wealth⁵³. Vegetalized design of flowers framed by sinuous lines would have appeared in assembly-room XI of the Maison de Neptune at Thuburbo Maius, but the panel has been destroyed.

7.5.3 *Opus sectile*

Examples of decoration in *opus sectile* are attested at Utica and at El Jem. In assembly-room XXI of the Maison au Grand *Oecus* at Utica, the pattern is based upon the simple repetition of square slabs⁵⁴. In the more elaborate pavement of assembly-room B in the Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque at El Jem, the squares contain disks, concave squares, and triangles⁵⁵. As the floor has been mostly destroyed, it is not possible to ascertain the variety of the filling motifs.

In assembly-room XXXIV of the Maison de la Cascade at Utica, two paving types are combined⁵⁶. A panel of *opus sectile* is used as a centrepiece in the main room: the centre is composed of four big squares containing concave squares and forming a cross; smaller squares surround the central panel. On either side of the panel is a band of squares in *opus tessellatum*: they are composed of four rectangles around a small square (Table 7.2 n.14). The composition of two paving types are both based upon the square module repeated over the entire field, but the different size of the module, the variety of the filling motifs and the use of colours (polychromy in the panel of *opus sectile*; black and white in the bands of *opus tessellatum*) created a luxuriant visual effect. The

⁵¹ Ville 1961, 43-5; *CMTI* 1.1, 80-1 n.89.

⁵² Ennabli and Ben Osman 1983, 148-49.

⁵³ According to the description of Poinssot and Lantier (1922), assembly-room XX of the Maison de Neptune at Thuburbo Maius seems to have been decorated with floral motifs, too, but the mosaic is missing.

⁵⁴ *CMTI* 1.2, 15 n. 162.

⁵⁵ Foucher 1963, 42.

⁵⁶ Cintas 1951, 83; Ch. Picard 1954b, 162-63, 165-66; Ville 1961, 42 n.55; Foucher 1965, 75; Lézine 1968, 115 n. 11, 122; *CMTI* 1.1, 51-3.

combination of areas of *sectile* with other paving types occurs again in assembly-room 20 of the House of Africa at El Jem (Pl. 77). The central section, which was made out of marble slabs of different colours, is framed by two vegetal bands in *opus tessellatum*; the borders are interrupted by a panel containing a figured scene off the entrance: a pair of peacocks faced each other on either side of a crater from which rose plants grow. The bird was often assimilated by the divinities of fertility or fecundity, such as Dionysus and Venus. However, the images of the peacocks with its multicoloured plumage and of the roses scattered over the panel seem to emphasize the lavish, luxuriant effect created by the *opus sectile*.

7.6 Activities held in the assembly-rooms

As an architectural setting for the performance of the rituals of reception and leisure, the assembly-room could have accommodated a great variety of social activities. Their architectural and decorative layout, in fact, implies that those rooms were not restricted to a set purpose, but were prepared for any event. However, in some examples, the arrangement of the assembly-room in term of its relation with the other architectural spaces of the house seems to suggest a more specific function, which it may have fulfilled on some occasions (Table 7.1).

The function of the assembly-room adjoining the main *triclinium* may have been related to the stages of the dinner ceremony. In the Maison du Char de Vénus at Thuburbo Maius, assembly-room XXVIII was contiguous to the square room of *triconchos* XXX/XXXI: its figurative motif stressed the importance and the public character of the room, which stood out against the other rooms carpeted with geometric patterns (Table 7.2 n.21). In the Maison de Neptune at the same town the lavish setting of room XX was enhanced by a niche opening in the wall opposite the entrance: it may have housed either a statue or a basin (Table 7.2 n.26). Those rooms may have accommodated the guests before the dinner party in the nearby *triclinium*, as literary sources suggest. In *Ep.* 2.9 Sidonius Apollinaris describes the social activities, which took place during his visit to the villa of his friend Tonantius Ferreolus in southern Gaul. The writer tells that he and the other guests gathered in a room for conversation and recreation before lunch. Sidonius does not describe the room in detail, but it is clear from his account that it was a library and was large enough to allow for different seating arrangements and activities. The women sat on *cathedrae* close to the codices of a devotional type; while the men on

subsellia read writings of Latin orators; in another part of the room other guests amused themselves at gaming tables. The writer tells how the guests were engaged in those recreational activities until a slave entered to announce that the meal was ready; the company then moved in another room (i.e. *triclinium*) for a light but varied lunch. A comparable episode is described by Macrobius in *Saturnalia* 1.6. The writer tells how a small group of Roman aristocrats convened in the *domus* of Vettius Agorius Praetextatus at Rome to debate on various topics. The room used for such a gathering of only men is labelled as *bibliotheca* (1.6.1): it was large enough for *tantum coetum* (1.7.4). The gathering continued for several hours, until the head slave entered to announce that the dinner was ready; the guests then proceeded from the library to the *triclinium*. These accounts of upper-class entertaining and dining left by 5th century writers describe two distinct stages of the *convivium*, which required two distinct but functionally interrelated reception rooms: one for receiving and entertaining the guests in the morning or afternoon, the other for accommodating the guests during the meal⁵⁷. Neither Sidonius nor Macrobius describe the room for the pre-dinner reception in detail, but it probably lay in the public sector of the house and opened onto the peristyle, like the *triclinium*. On the account of literary evidence it is arguable that the big, richly decorated room opening onto the peristyle and adjoining the main *triclinium* in the Romano-African house was intended as the reception room for pre-dinner entertainments. However, the same room may have been used for other social occasions not relating with the dinner in the main *triclinium*. In fact, both Sidonius and Macrobius describe the kind of activities that took place in a specific context. In Sidonius' account the scene takes place in a countryside villa, which provided a suitable setting for a variety of entertainments before dinner (hunt, conversation, reading, and bathing). In Macrobius the occasion for aristocratic conversation and recreation is the feast of Saturnalia. More usually, the guests convened in the owner's house at dinner time after the bath⁵⁸.

In the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna too, the main *triclinium* communicated with a big and richly decorated room (31), which may have been used for the reception of the owner's

⁵⁷ Rossiter 1991.

⁵⁸ Rossiter states that the accounts of the 5th century writers are proof for new social conventions at aristocratic dining, which are mirrored in the many late antique villas: they are always provided with two apsidal rooms, which were used for the two distinct stages of the *convivium*. However, those aristocratic dining rituals could have taken place in a rectangular room too, and in earlier times.

guests (Table 7.2 n.29). However, it is unlikely that it was used for the pre-dinner gathering, as the examples cited above suggest. The setting for the dining ritual must have emphasized the importance of the dinner as the focal point of aristocratic hospitality. The guests perceived the importance of the room they were going to enter by a figurative panel in the peristyle; by approaching the central door, they were welcomed by a panel representing a hunting scene, which was oriented outwards; once entered, the guests were invited to join the richness of the host by the tables laden with food and the floor mosaic laid in the central part of the room. The ceremony could have not taken place, if the guests had entered the dining room from the adjoining room. It is possible that the smaller reception room was used for receiving the guests in the drinking stage that followed dinner (*comissatio*) or for one more dinner⁵⁹. The same function as a reception room for after-dinner entertainments may have been fulfilled by apsidal assembly-room X in the Maison de Protomés Section of the *Triconchos* at Thuburbo Maius: the big room, in fact, was entered from the peristyle through secondary *triclinium* XI (Table 7.2 n.11). Similarly, the lavish setting of assembly-room 8 in the Maison d'Orphée at Volubilis suggests that the room was used for receiving guests. Though the columns and basin of the room recalls the arrangement of the main *triclinium*, it was fairly small for dinner parties: it might have been used as a pleasant place to relax after dining in *triclinium* 13 (Table 7.2 n.19).

Part of the assembly-rooms' function may have been to house private entertainments, whether literary, musical, or dramatic. Literary sources refer to public recitations and philosophical debates, which were held in the houses of rich men⁶⁰. The use of different terms (*auditorium*⁶¹, *exedra*, *bibliotheca*) to designate the place for those performances indicates the absence of a specific room-type. Nevertheless, the architectural layout of the apsidal assembly-room may have provided a more suitable setting for leisure activities. The apse, which was often slightly raised above the rest of the room and furnished with theatre-like row of benches⁶² allowed the audience-guests to get a better view into the front of the room, where the performances took place. Secure identification of apsidal rooms as the privileged setting for private entertainments cannot be always attested, as the apse can serve many functions in Roman domestic

⁵⁹ In Petr. *Sat.* 73, Trimalchio offered a second dinner to his guests after a break in his baths.

⁶⁰ Sen. Maior, *Saus.* 6.27; Mart. *Epigr.* 4.6.5; Plin. *Ep.* 8.12.2.

⁶¹ The term *auditorium* and its use in literary sources have been analysed by Tamm 1963, 7-23.

⁶² Bendinelli 1960.

architecture (for dining, for example). However, in some cases, the choice of the mosaic subject seems to suggest such a specialized function. In the Maison des Muses at Althiburos, for example, apsed assembly-room R was decorated with the busts of the Muses (Table 7.2 n.33). In the Maison des Masques at Hadrumetum, the representation of a poet and of an actor occupied a similar room (6/7), though the accommodation of the audience-guests in the apse is not certain because of its small size (Table 7.2 n.33). Moreover, as room 6 and apse 7 were separated by a wall, guests sitting in the apse could have not been able to look outwards to the private entertainments held in the opposite room. The presence of a niche in the apse 7 suggests that it housed a statue, perhaps representing Apollo, as the mosaic motif of the two griffins on either side of a tripod decorating the threshold of the room clearly points to this god. Foucher suggested that the room may have served some cult purpose, presumably dedicated to Dionysus as patron of the theatre. However, as patron of poetry and music, Apollo too had links with literature.

Libraries⁶³ too may belong to the category of the assembly-rooms, as literary evidence suggests. Vitruvius listed the libraries among the public rooms to be met with in the house of the elite, because of the public nature of much of the business done there⁶⁴. In Seneca's time, the library was as essential to a house as a bathroom⁶⁵, and Trimalchio, who tried to copy the habits of Roman upper class, had both a Greek and a Latin one⁶⁶. The arrangement of libraries in African *domus* is attested by Apuleius, who describes a library as a room that could be locked and that was guarded by a freedman⁶⁷. From Sidonius⁶⁸, and Macrobius⁶⁹, accounts, it is clear that the library was not only devoted to reading and relaxed conversation, but provided space also for games of backgammon and draughts⁷⁰. As a room belonging to the category of the assembly-rooms for the house-owner's self-display, the library must have been large (in *Sat.* 1.7.4, Macrobius uses the expression *tantum coetum*) and richly decorated. In the late 5th century Rome, the library in the house of the Boethii was decorated with rich wall mosaics⁷¹.

⁶³ For libraries, both public and private, in the ancient world, see Casson 2001 and Hoepfner 2002.

⁶⁴ Vitr. *De Arch.*, 6.5.2.

⁶⁵ Sen. *Tranq.* 9.

⁶⁶ Petr. *Sat.* 48.

⁶⁷ Apul. *Apol.* 87.

⁶⁸ Sidon. *Ep.* 2.9.

⁶⁹ Macrobius. *Sat.* 1.6.

⁷⁰ Macrobius. *Sat.* 1.6.11.

⁷¹ Boeth. *De Cons.* 1.5.

As literary sources do not describe the structural arrangement of the private library, secure identification of the room-type is difficult. However, African domestic architecture seems to provide some examples. In the Villa du Taureau at Silin, assembly-room 8 was perhaps a library, as the room was provided with cabinets at each corner: they may have been suitable for shelving books (Table 7.2 n.18). In both examples, both the archaeological and the literary ones, the library lay next to the main *triclinium*. On the basis of Sidonius' and Macrobius' accounts of aristocratic hospitality, room XXVIII of the Maison du Char de Vénus and room XX of the Maison de Neptune, both at Thuburbo Maius, may have functioned partly as libraries. However, many other assembly-rooms without any specific architectural form, may have been provided with shelves, like a library. But, since helpful elements such as furniture or utensils have been mostly destroyed, and because of the absence of helpful architectural indicators (such as niches for cupboards), which have enabled the archaeological identification of libraries elsewhere, the function of the assembly-room as a library defies identification.

7.7 Conclusions

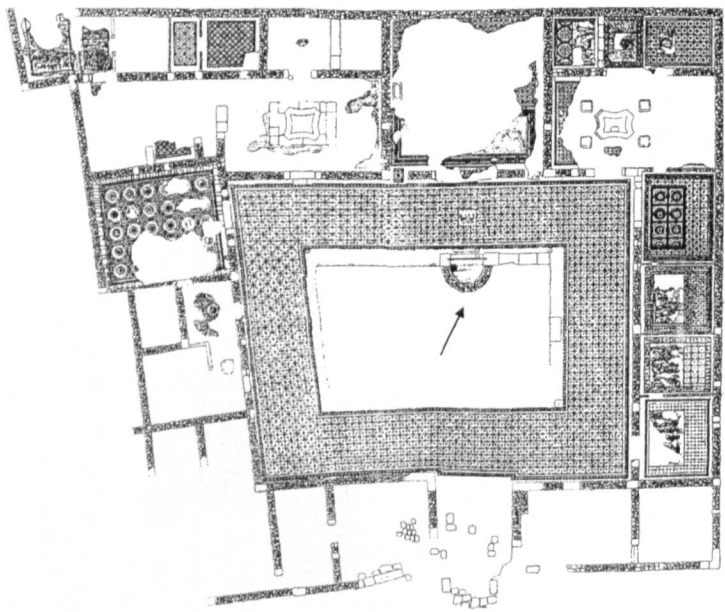
The assembly-rooms of Romano-African houses were appropriate in size and elaboration for a variety of social functions: dining, reading and philosophical discussions, and literary and theatrical performances, according to the changing needs of different social situations. Thus, rather than looking for a specific use of each assembly-room, it is perhaps more appropriate to regard them as deliberately multi-functional, prepared for any event. The portable nature of Roman furniture, which could have been moved from one to another space as desired, and the layout of the floor mosaics, which did not mark out the room for a specific activity, easily permitted a flexible approach to the use of domestic space. However, the variety of the activities which may have taken place in the assembly-room does not imply a plurality of functions. The assembly-room essentially served one only social purpose: to provide an appropriate setting for the reception of high-status guests and for the self-representation of host-owner. The importance of entertaining guests and of projecting a good impression of the household was emphasized by the lavish layout of the floor mosaics and by the choice of their motifs. That is particularly clear in the choice of the figured scenes, which evoke ideas of the prosperity of the house and of the prodigality of its owner.

This analysis of the assembly-rooms in domestic architecture of Roman Africa helps us to understand better the nature of Romano-African social life for which these rooms were the setting. The system of assembly-rooms serving a social function embodies African social structure and expresses the house-owner's need for interaction among the members of the wealthy class and for display of his role within that class.

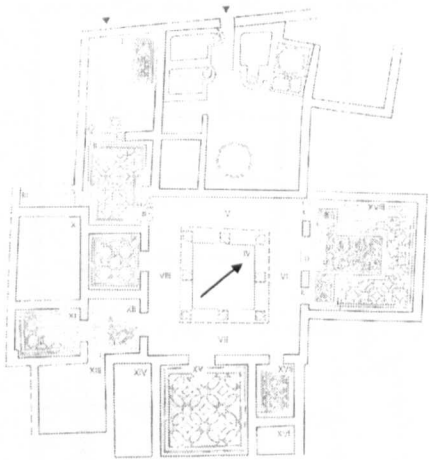
| Town | House | Room | Dimensions | Area | Layout | Aspect |
|----------------|----------------------------------|--------|-------------|-------|-------------|-----------------|
| Acholla | M. des Colonnes Rouges | IV | 3.8 x 3.5 | 13.3 | apsidal | anteroom |
| Acholla | M. du Triomphe de Neptune | XII | 4.35 x 7.5 | 33.93 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Althiburos | M. des Muses | R | 4 x 3 | 12 | apsidal | peristyle |
| Bulla Regia | M. d'Amphitrite | 3 | 4 x 4 | 16 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Nouvelle Chasse | 3 | 6.09 x 4.93 | 30.02 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Nouvelle Chasse | 14 | 3.04 x 3.48 | 10.58 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Carthage | M. de la Volière | 5 | 4.43 x 5.78 | 25.6 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Djemila | M. d'Amphitrite | V | 7 x 6 | 42 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Djemila | M. de Castorius | XIII | 4.8 x 4.8 | 23.04 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Djemila | M. d'Europe | 22 | 5 x 4 | 20 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| El Jem | House of Africa | 20 | 4 x 7 | 28 | platform | anteroom |
| El Jem | M. de la Procession Dionysiaque | A | 4.4 x 5.9 | 25.96 | rectilinear | corridor |
| El Jem | M. de la Procession Dionysiaque | B | 4.4 wide | | uncertain | anteroom |
| El Jem | M. du Paon | XXXIII | 4.7 x 5.2 | 24.44 | rectilinear | secondary court |
| Hadrumentum | M. des Masques | 6&7 | 6 x 6 | 36 | apsidal | peristyle |
| Neapolis | M. des Nymphes | VII | 7.3 x 8.5 | 62.05 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Oudna | M. d'Ikarios | 31 | 4 x 5 | 20 | rectilinear | secondary court |
| Silin | Villa du Taureau | 2 | 4.6 x 5 | 23 | rectilinear | secondary court |
| Silin | Villa du Taureau | 3 | 5.5 x 5.5 | 30.25 | rectilinear | secondary court |
| Silin | Villa du Taureau | 8 | 6.5 x 6.5 | 42.25 | rectilinear | secondary court |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. aux Communs | VIII | 4.45 x 3.7 | 16.46 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. de Neptune | XX | 4.7 x 4.76 | 22.37 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. de Neptune | XI | 5.1 x 5.1 | 10.2 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. des Animaux Liés | XV | 5.15 x 5.15 | 26.52 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. des Palmes | XIV | 3.75 x 4.12 | 15.45 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. des Protomés-Sect. Protomai | VIII | 5.07 x 5.5 | 27.88 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. des Protomés-Sect. Triconchos | X | | 31.87 | apsidal | anteroom |

Table 7.1: Assembly-rooms

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------------------------------|--------|-------------|-------|-------------|-----------------|
| Thurburbo Maius | M. du Char de Vénus | XXVIII | 3.5 x 3.8 | 13.3 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Thugga | M. de Dionysos et d'Ulysse | 13 | 3.2 x 3.8 | 12.16 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Thugga | M. de Vénus | XII | 2.92 x 2.4 | 7 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Utica | M. au Grand Oecus | XXI | 4.3 x 7.35 | 31.6 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Utica | M. de la Cascade | XXXIV | 4.28 x 5.14 | 21.99 | platform | peristyle |
| Utica | M. de la Chasse | X | 3.52 x 3.95 | 13.9 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Utica | M. Ouest | XI | 4.6 x 6.1 | 28.06 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Volubilis | M. à la Mosaïque de Vénus | 9 | 4.8 x 5 | 24 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Volubilis | M. à la Mosaïque de Vénus | 16 | 5 x 6 | 30 | rectilinear | secondary court |
| Volubilis | M. aux Travaux d'Hercule | 8 | 5 x 8 | 40 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Volubilis | M. de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons | 11 | 4.5 x 6.55 | 29.47 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Volubilis | M. de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons | 12 | 5.25 x 6.55 | 34.38 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Volubilis | M. de Flavius Germanus | 7 | 4.6 x 4.65 | 21.39 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Volubilis | M. de l'Éphèbe | 4 | 4 x 14 | 56 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Volubilis | M. d'Orphée | 8 | 8 x 5 | 40 | rectilinear | secondary court |
| Volubilis | M. d'Orphée | 14 | 4 x 5 | 20 | rectilinear | secondary court |
| Volubilis | M. des Néréides | 11 | 4.35 x 6.55 | 29 | rectilinear | peristyle |



1. Neapolis, Maison des Nymphes



2. Thuburbo Maius, Maison des Animaux Liés

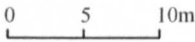
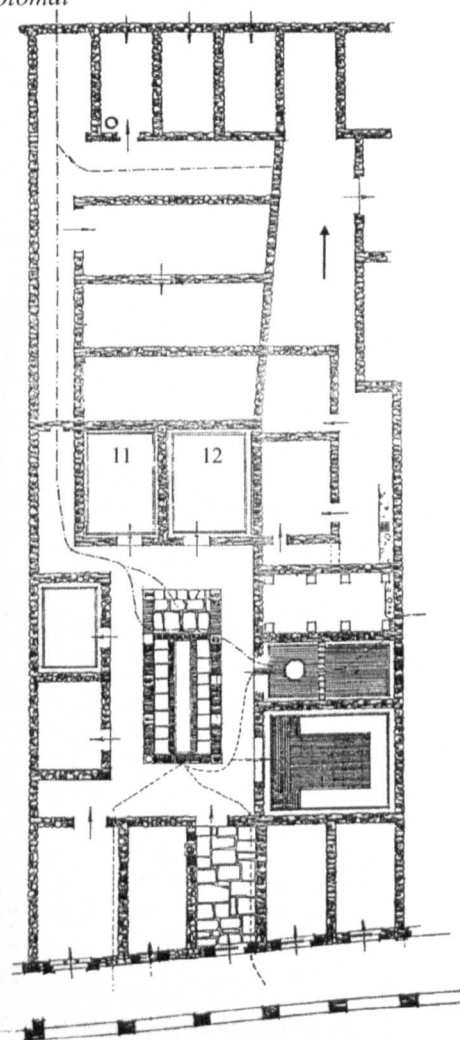
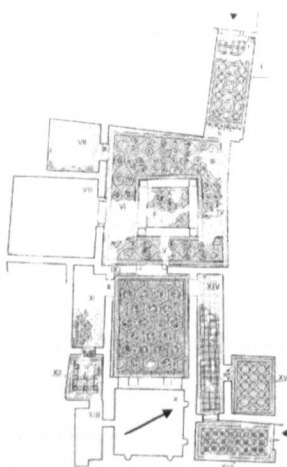
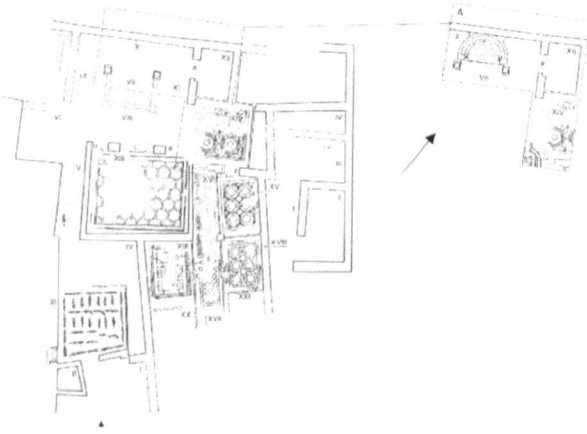
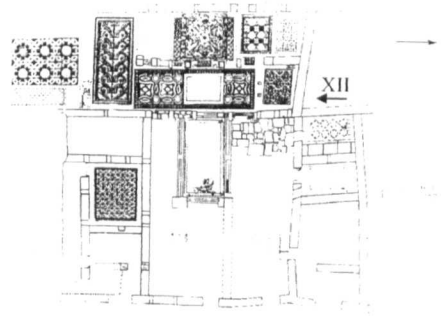


Table 7.2: Assembly-rooms in the Romano-African house

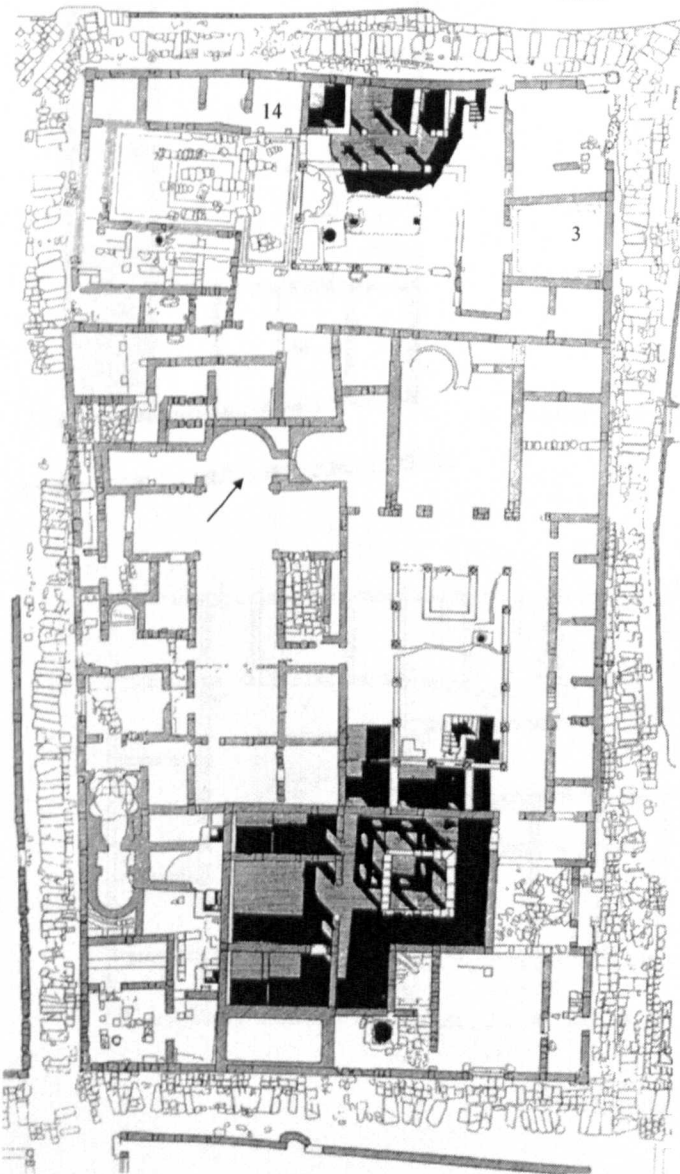




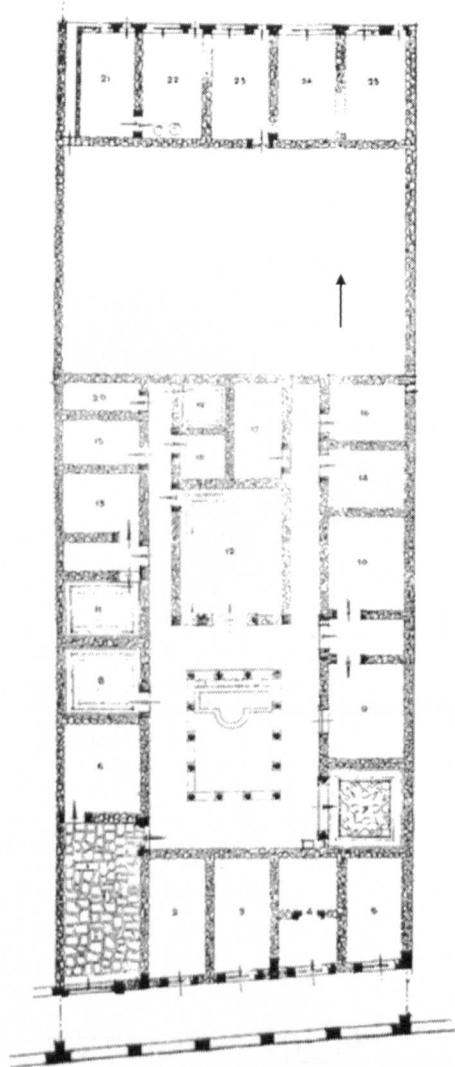
6. Thuburbo Maius, Maison des Palmes



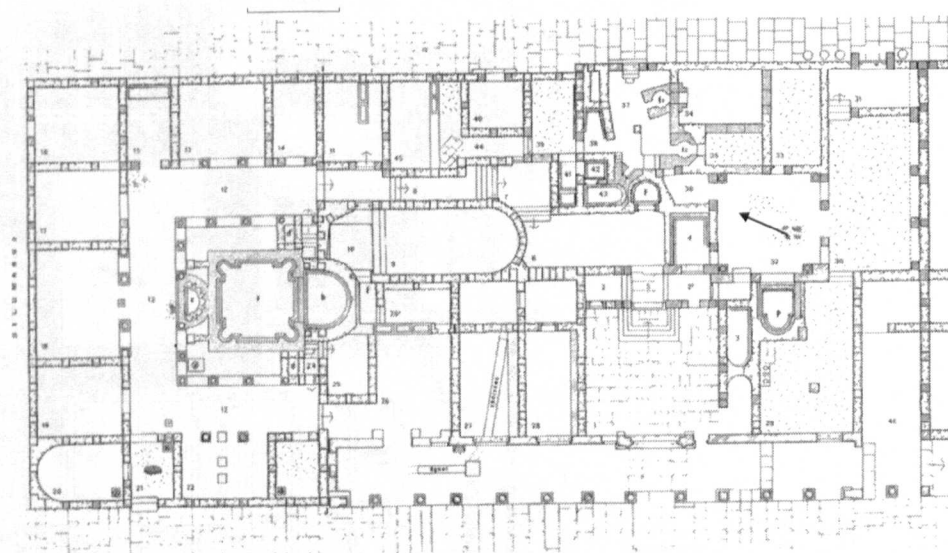
7. Thugga, Maison de Vénus



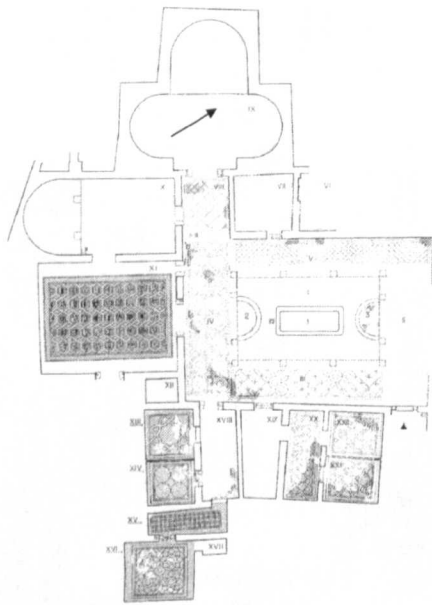
8. Bulla Regia, Insula de la Chasse



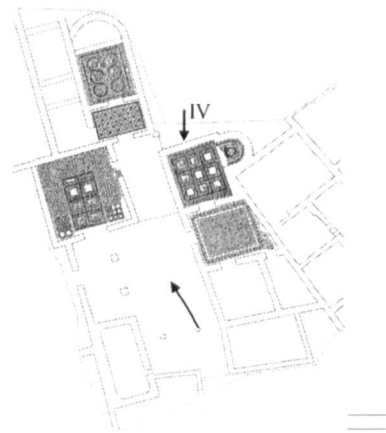
9. Volubilis, Maison de Flavius Germanus



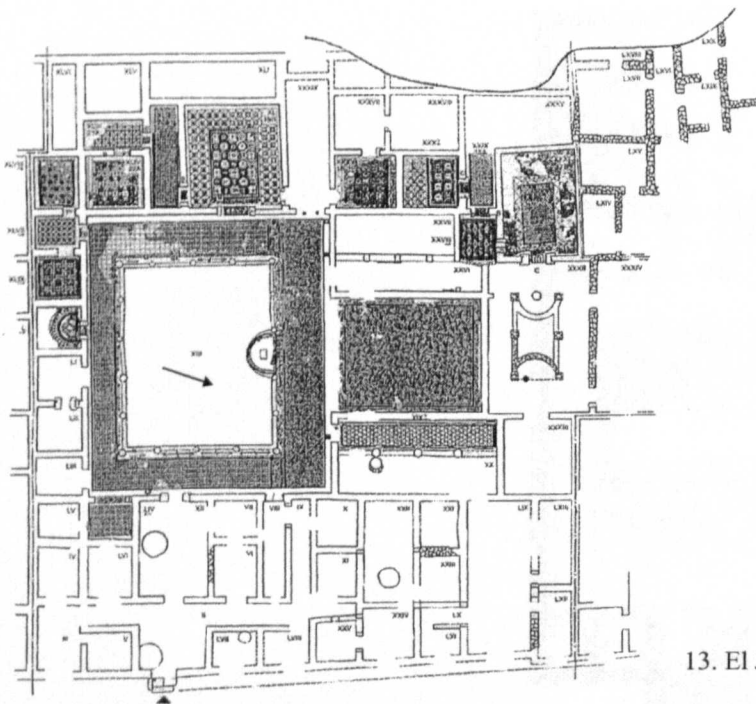
10. Djemila, Maison d'Europe



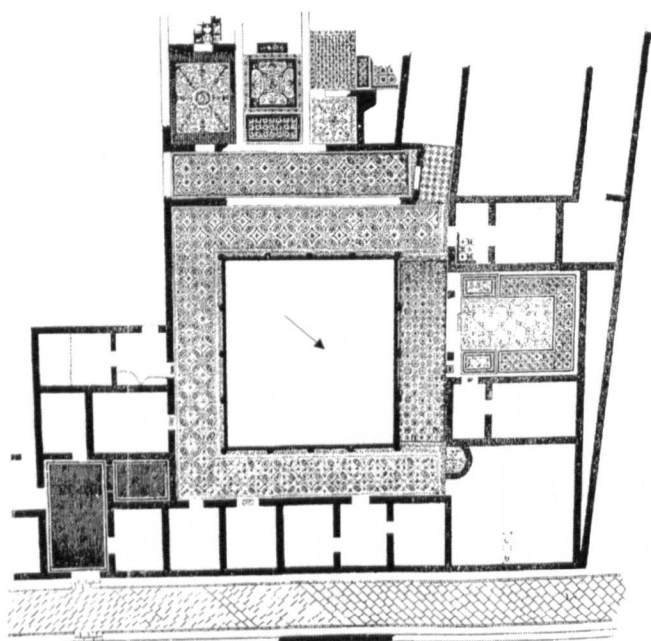
11. Thuburbo Maius, Maison des Protomés section of the *Triconchos*



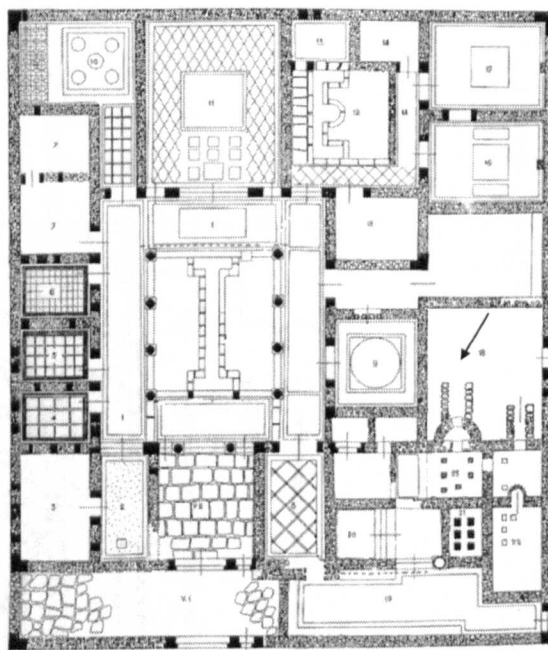
12. Acholla, Maison des Colonnes Rouges



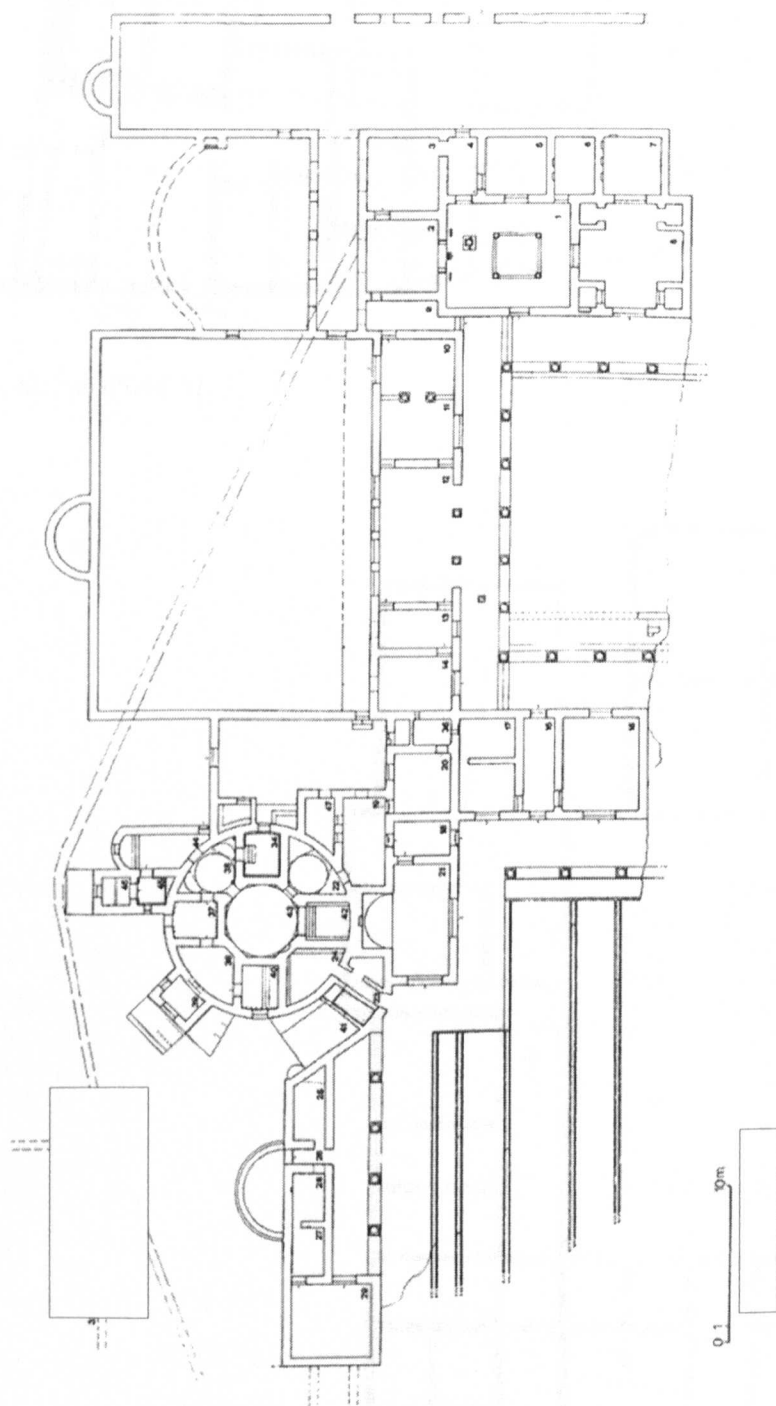
13. El Jem, Maison du Paon



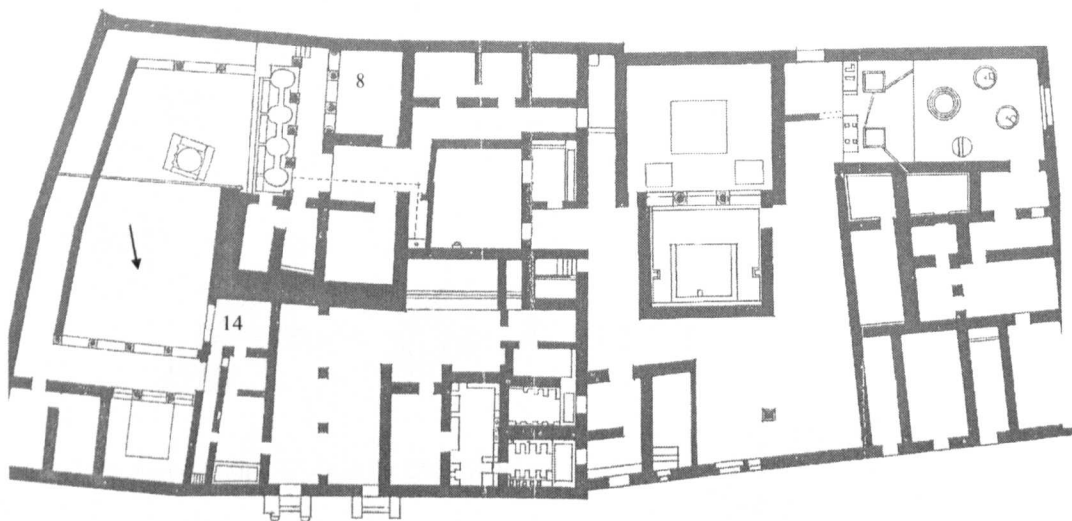
16. El Jem, Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque



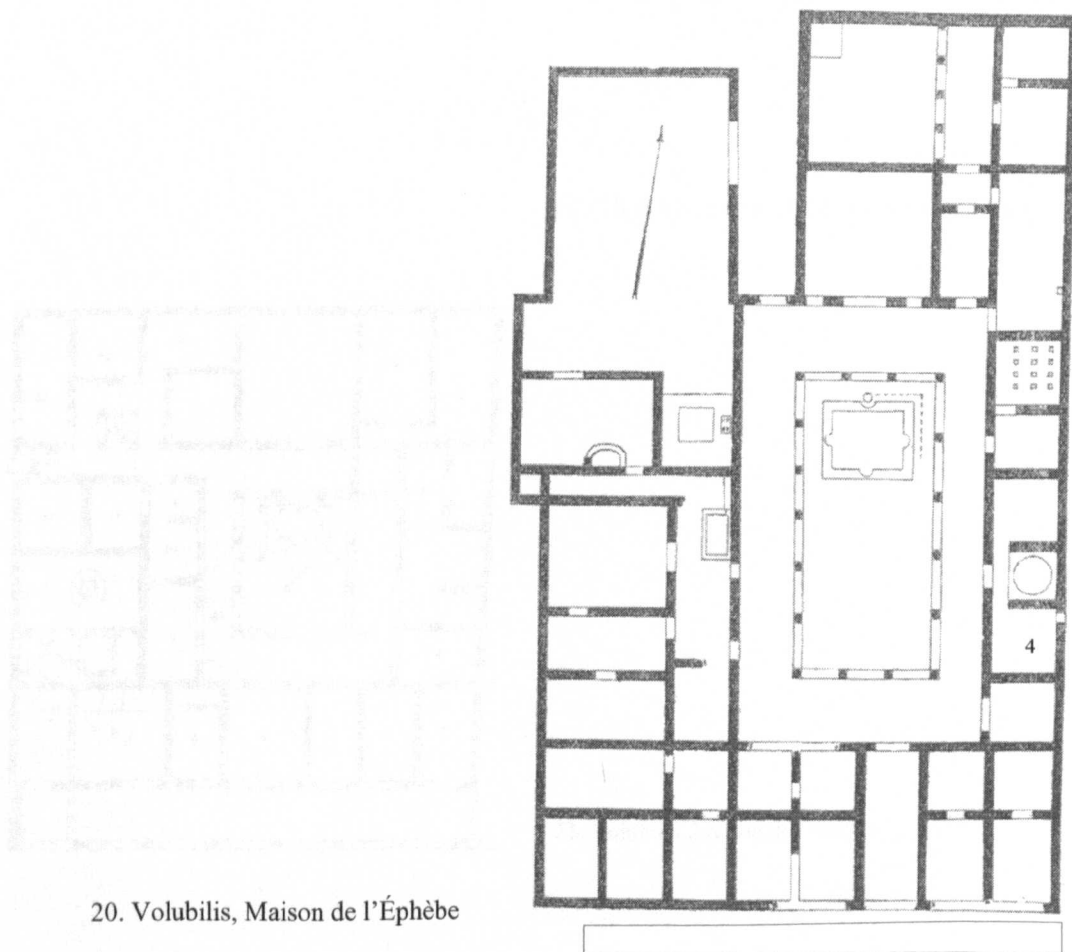
17. Volubilis, Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus



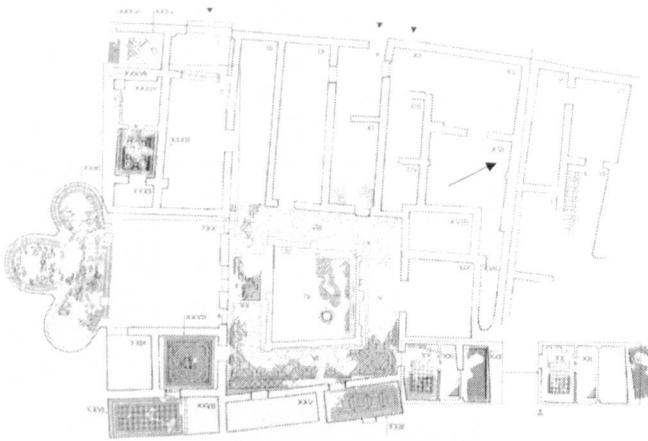
18. Silin, Villa du Taureau



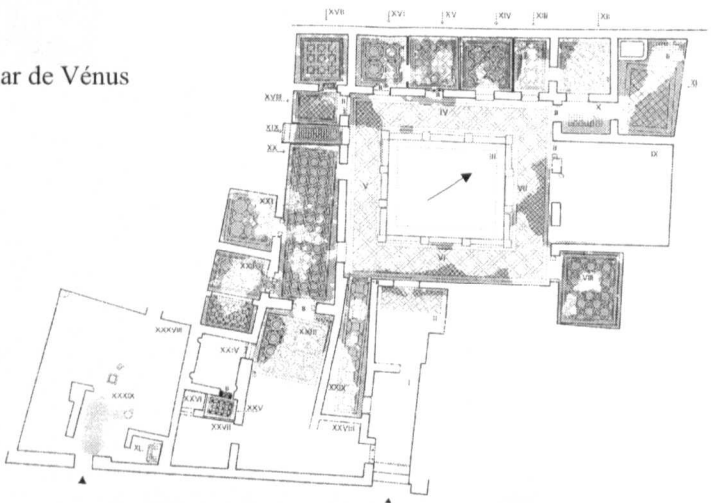
19. Volubilis, Maison d'Orphée



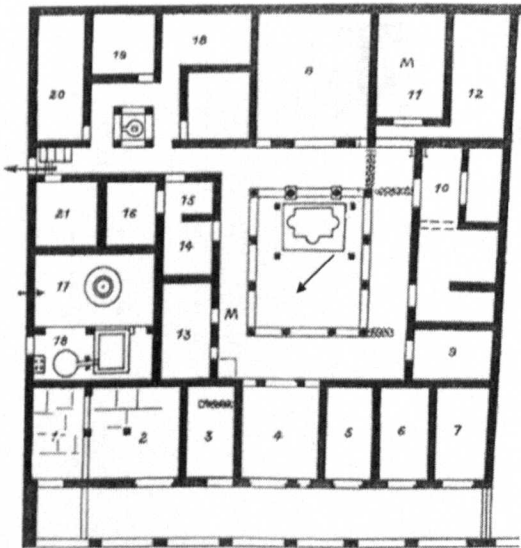
20. Volubilis, Maison de l'Éphèbe



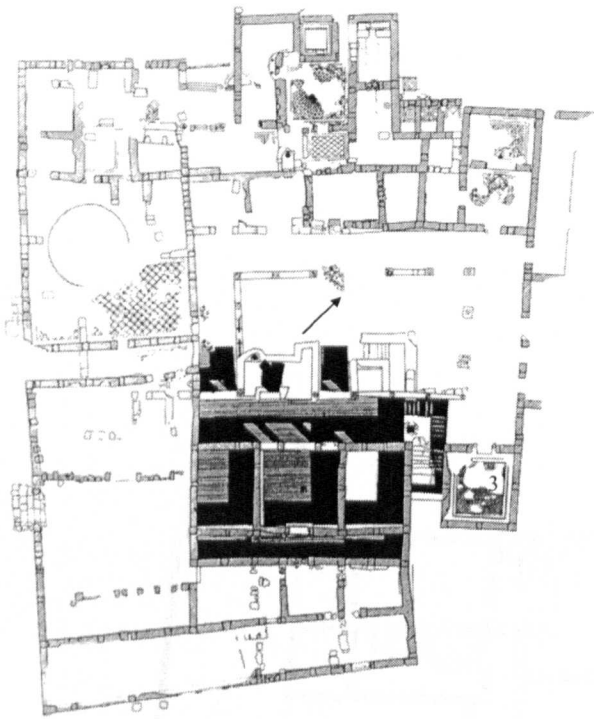
21. Thuburbo Maius, Maison du Char de Vénus



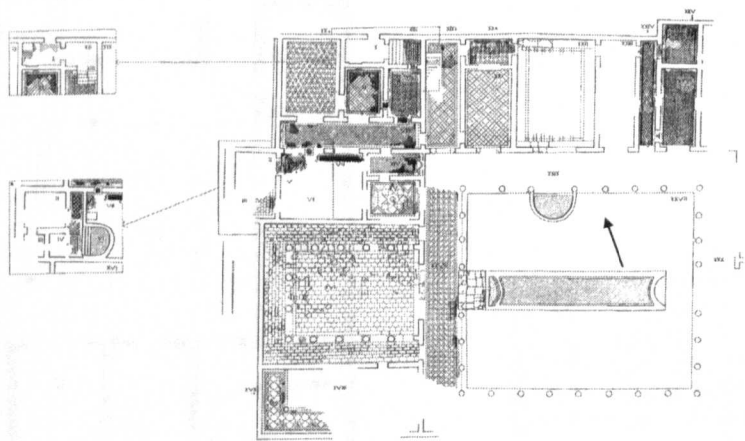
22. Thuburbo Maius, Maison aux Communs



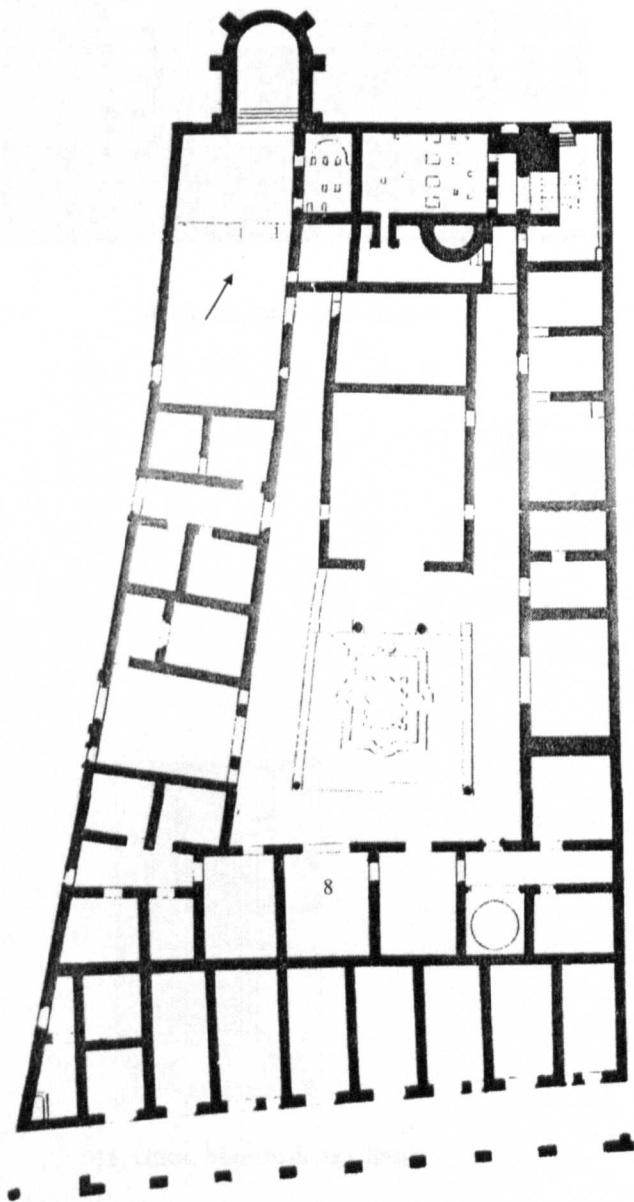
23. Volubilis, Maison des Néréides



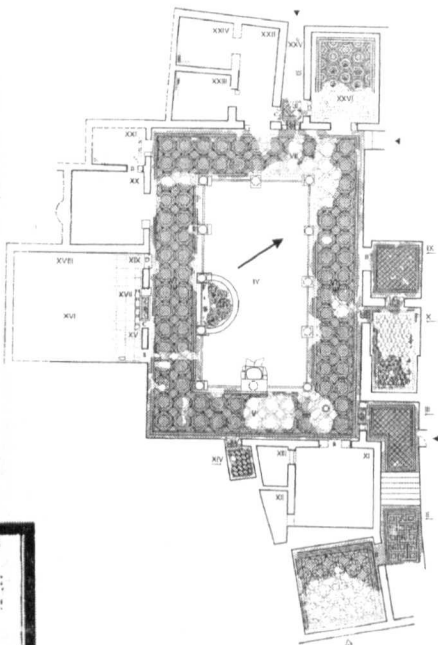
24. Bulla Regia, Maison d'Amphitrite



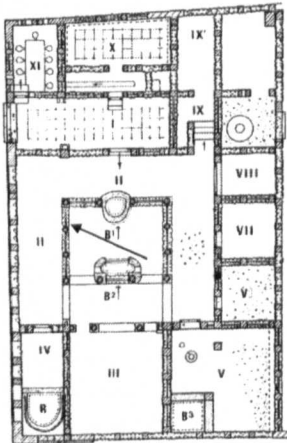
25. Utica, Maison au Grand Oecus



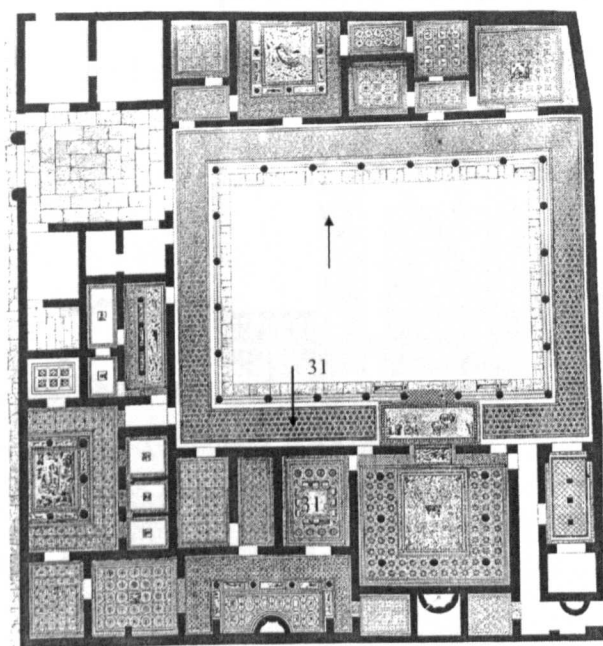
27. Volubilis, Maison aux Travaux d'Hercule



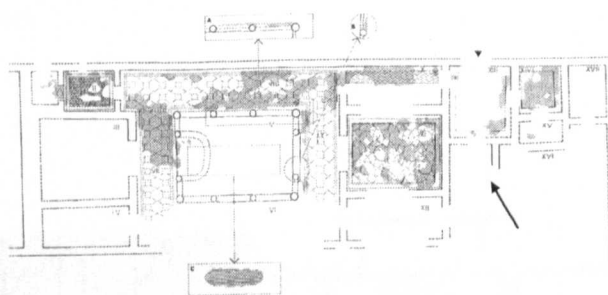
26. Thuburbo Maius, Maison de Neptune



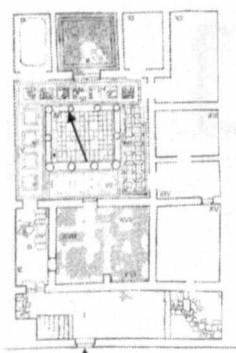
28. Djemila, Maison d'Amphitrite



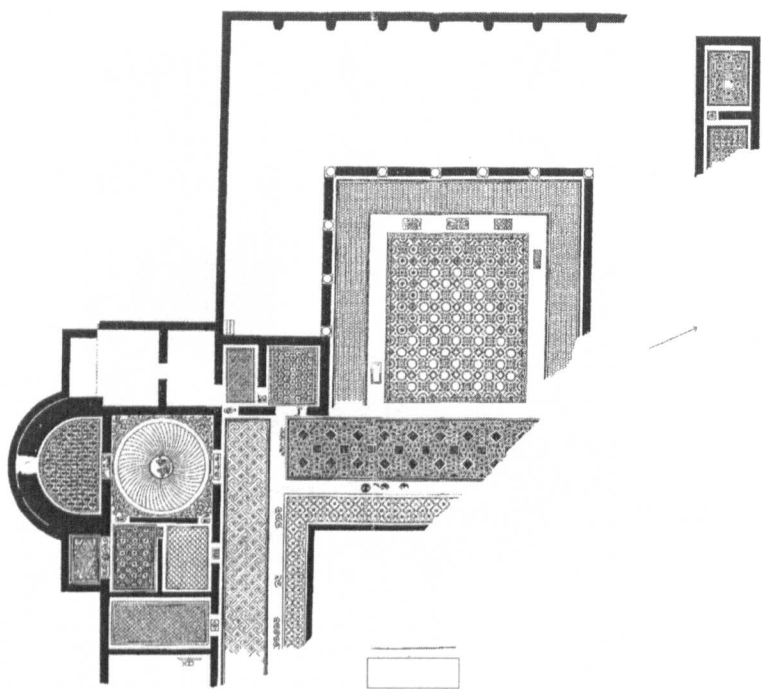
29. Oudna, Maison d'Ikarios



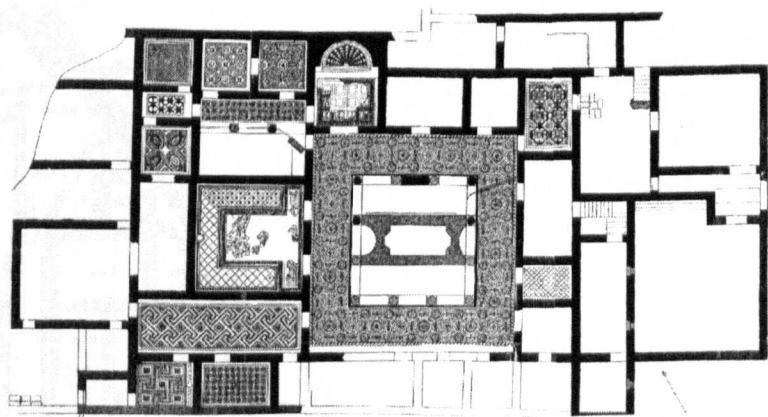
30. Utica, Maison Ouest



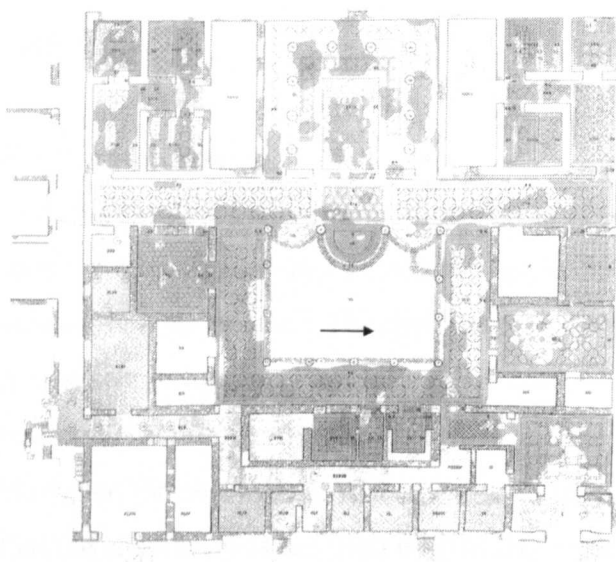
31. Utica, Maison de la Chasse



32. Hadrumetum, Maison des Masques

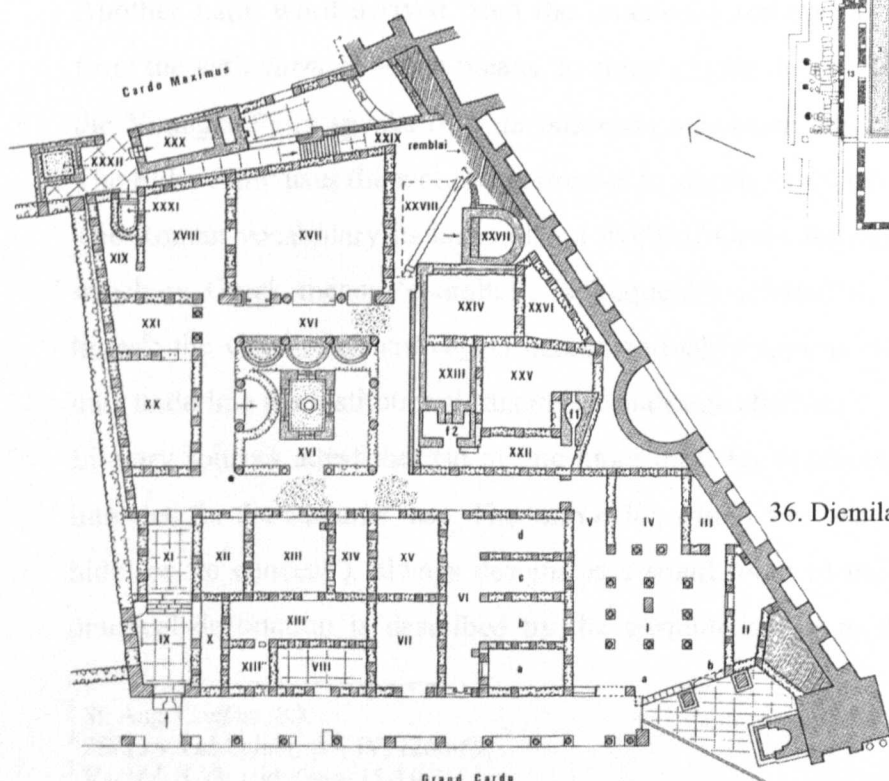
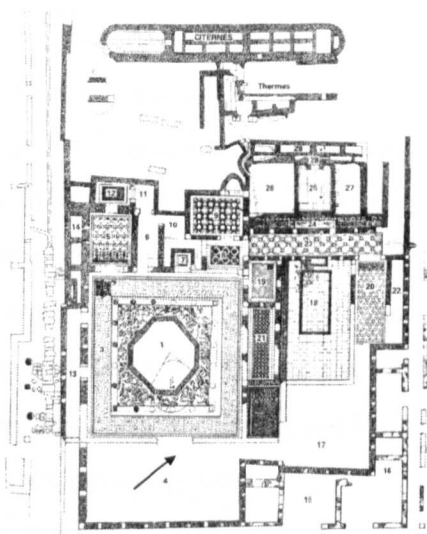


33. Althiburos, Maison des Muses



34. Acholla, Maison du Triomphe de Neptune

35. Carthage, Maison de la Volière



36. Djemila, Maison de Castorius

Chapter 8

Cubiculum

8.1 Introduction

In describing the violent turmoil preceding his conversion to Christianity, St. Augustine uses the metaphor of the *cubiculum* to describe his heart as the most secret and personal side of his own person¹. The definition of the *cubiculum* as the most private part of the house seems to reveal a close relationship with conception and use of the modern bedroom: consequently the so-called *cubiculum* is often translated as a bedroom. However, the analysis of African *cubacula* in terms of architecture and decoration shows that the chamber was not used exclusively for sleeping and was not totally private in the modern sense, but permitted subtle grades of relative privacy.

8.2 Terms for bedroom: *cubiculum*, *dormitorium*, *thalamus*, and *cella*

The Roman term for sleeping chamber, which appears most frequently in literary texts, is *cubiculum*². Derived from the verb *cubare* ('to recline, to lie asleep')³, the word stresses the kind of activities taking place in that domestic space.

Another Latin word derived from the functional activity in the room is *dormitorium*, from the verb *dormire* which means 'to sleep'. In the description of his Laurentine villa, the Younger Pliny speaks of a *dormitorium membrum* adjoining a suite of *cubacula*⁴. The Elder Pliny uses the word *dormitorium* to signify a place for convalescence⁵.

The Roman vocabulary includes also a word of Greek derivation. The term *thalamus*, which in Greek means 'chamber', is frequently attested in poetic texts of Imperial times⁶: the word often conveys a certain formality appropriate to royal apartments or may underline the institutional sanctity of marriage chambers.

Literary sources attest the use of one more term for bedroom, which was exclusively intended for the servants' use. The term *cella*, which derivates from the verb *celare* ('to hide' or 'to conceal'), always designates a small room of unspecified function whose practical destination is described by the attribute added to the word. In the section

¹ St. Aug. *Confess.* 8.8.

² *TLL*, s.v. *cubiculum*, vol. IV, 1266-69.

³ Var. *LL.* 5.33; Isid. *Orig.* 15.3.9.

⁴ Plin. *Ep.* 2.17.9.

⁵ Plin. *NH* 30.17.51.

relating to the women's quarter in the Greek house, Vitruvius describes the *cellae* as *familiaricae* ('belonging to house-servants') to distinguish them from *cubicula*⁷. In his description of the *villa rustica*, Columella speaks of a *servis cella*⁸.

In what follows, I use the term *cubiculum* to refer to the room whose primary function was for sleeping. Wide attestation of the word in the vocabulary of Roman everyday usage shows that '*cubiculum*' is not a misleading label applied by modern scholars to a specific component part of the excavated houses, but a well-defined category of architectural space.

8.3 The identification of the *cubiculum*

The function of the rooms in the excavated Roman houses is often attested by the arrangement of their decoration along with other elements such as location within the house, proportions, and design. The *triclinium*, for example, is easily identified by the layout of its floor mosaic, which marked the U-shaped area for the accommodation of the couches and the central space for service and entertainment. However, in absence of specific decorative arrangement relating to the setting of dinner, other elements may hint at the function of a room as a *triclinium*: big dimensions, monumental entrance, and outlook on fountains in the peristyle. In the case of the *cubiculum*, the layout of the floor mosaic and/or the presence of the raised platform are fundamental to the identification of the room-type, as no other specific choice of architectural details is on display. As any small room with no fixed location or specific architectural details may serve a variety of functions, architectural layout and/or mosaic decoration become fundamental to the identification of the *cubiculum*. Those features, in fact, often mark out the area for the accommodation of the couch and the front part of the room, which would be left unimpeded. In the description of his Laurentine villa, the Younger Pliny speaks of a *cubiculum* with an alcove (*zotheca*) large enough to hold a bed and two armchairs and separated from the rest of the room by glass doors and curtains⁹.

In African *cubicula*, the area designed for holding a bed is structurally indicated by the presence of a platform, which is slightly raised above the rest of the room (0.15-0.20m).

⁶ Verg. *Aen.* 6.623; Ov. *Met.* 10.456, *H* 12.57; Prop. 2.15; 37.

⁷ Vitr. *De Arch.* 6.7.2.

⁸ Colum. *RR* 1.6.

In the unpaved *cubiculum* 8 of the Maison des Masques at Hadrumetum, for example, the platform, which was 0.15m above the forepart of the room, indicates that it was designed for the accommodation of the bed (Table 8.2 n.1). A similar arrangement occurs in *cubiculum* 20 of the Maison de la Chasse at Bulla Regia, where a dais indicates the position of the bed (Table 8.2 n.4).

In absence of a permanent platform, the *cubiculum* may be identified by the layout of its floor mosaic, which emphasizes the different function of the two spaces: a narrow band of mosaic of plain motif adjoins a larger panel showing a more elaborate pattern. In the underground *cubicula* of the Maison de la Chasse at Bulla Regia, for example, the floor was divided in two unequally-sized panels both showing geometric motifs (Table 8.2 n.5). However, the simple pattern at the back of the room indicates that the area was expected to be hidden by the bed, while the rest of the chamber with its more complex design would have been left unimpeded. A similar arrangement occurs in *cubicula* XVI-XVIII of the Maison de Dionysos at Thaenae, in *cubicula* II-III of the Maison des Chapiteaux Historiés at Utica, in *cubiculum* 14 of the Villa della Gara delle Nereidi at Tagiura, and in *cubicula* XI-XII of the Maison du Viridarium à Niches at Pupput¹⁰ (Table 8.2 nos. 6, 3, 7, 2).

The distinction between the two parts may have been emphasized by the contrast of colours (black and white in the couch-area and polychromy in the main area) and/or by the juxtaposition of motifs (geometric in the inner area for the bed and figurative in the rest of the room): this would have made a visual impact on viewers. In the Maison du Triomphe de Neptune at Acholla, for instance, the two spaces of the *cubicula* (XXV-XXVII-XXXI-XXXII-XXXIII) were both decorated with geometric motifs (Table 8.2 n.8; Pls. 17-19). However, the forepart of the chambers showed a polychrome carpet, while the setting for the couch was floored with black and white mosaics of simpler design. A similar arrangement occurs in *cubiculum* 10 of the Maison d'Orphée at Volubilis (Table 8.2 n.19). In *cubicula* XI-XII-XIII-XIV of the Maison des Nymphes at Neapolis, on the contrary, both spaces were floored with polychrome mosaics (Table

⁹ Plin. *Ep.* 2.17.21.

¹⁰ The adjoining chamber XIII may have been a *cubiculum*, too: communicating with each other, *cubicula* XII-XIII might have been used as the *dominus'* and *domina's* apartments. However, the fragmentary floor mosaic of chamber XIII does not allow us to ascertain the function of the room.

8.2 n.9). However, the geometric pattern of the inner area of the rooms and the figured scenes of the main area emphasized the different function of the two spaces¹¹.

A combination of the two techniques would have enhanced the visual differentiation of the two parts. In the Sollertiana Domus (XXIX), in the Maison du Paon (XXX), and in the House of Africa (18), all at El Jem, the inner area of the *cubicula* was floored with black and white mosaics of geometric design, while the rest of the room was carpeted with polychrome panels showing figured scenes (Table 8.2 nos.12-13, 11: Pl. 79).

In the Maison de Vénus at Thugga, the function of the two spaces in *cubiculum* XIV was highlighted by the use of different techniques: slabs for the couch-area and mosaic for the main area (Table 8.2 n.14). This arrangement is not widely attested in the domestic architecture of Roman Africa.

In some cases, the *cubiculum* may be recognised by both a raised platform and the layout of the floor mosaic. In the Sollertiana Domus at El Jem, for example, *cubiculum* XXX was architecturally and decoratively divided in two parts: a 0.15m-high platform was decorated with black and white mosaic of geometric design, while the forepart of the room was carpeted with a polychrome figured mosaic (Table 8.2 n.12). Similarly, in *cubiculum* XI of the Maison de Bacchus et Ariane at Thuburbo Maius, the couch-area and the main part of the room were distinguished both by a 0.12m high platform and by different mosaic panels: but here the mosaics are both polychrome (Table 8.2 n.15). A similar arrangement occurs in *cubicula* 9 of the Maison de Dionysos et d'Ulysse (Pl. 186) and XII of the Maison de Vénus at Thugga (Table 8.2 nos.10, 14); in *cubicula* XXI/XXII of the Maison du Char de Vénus and XXII of the Maison aux Communs at Thuburbo Maius (Table 8.2 nos.16-17); in *cubicula* C1-C2 of the Maison des Nymphes at Neapolis (Table 8.2 n.9), and 7 of the Maison d'Amphitrite at Bulla Regia (Pl. 26).

Variations in the ceiling can also indicate the position of the bed, which was often placed in an alcove or under a barrel vault. This arrangement, which seems to have been very popular in the setting of Pompeian *cubicula*¹², is rarely documented in domestic architecture of Roman Africa, as the vast majority of African houses are only preserved at foundation level. Only in the underground *cubicula* of the Bulla Regia houses, a

¹¹ A further example is *cubiculum* 11 of the Maison de Dionysos et d'Ulysse at Thugga.

¹² Elia 1932.

barrel vault at the back was combined with a cross vault in the forepart of the chamber; differentiation of spaces was also visible on the floor with the juxtaposition of two differently decorated bands of mosaic.

The function of a room as a *cubiculum* might also be established by the architectural element of an apse to hold the bed. The Younger Pliny describes a *cubiculum* in his Laurentine villa, which was provided with an apse (*in hapsida curvatum*) to let the sun in as it moves round¹³. However, the identification of the apsidal room as a *cubiculum* cannot be attested on secure grounds, as in Roman architecture the apse may serve many functions.

8.4 Decoration

In the analysis of the mosaic motifs decorating the African *cubicula*, I have selected the most important subjects, which appear in the unobstructed areas of the chambers. Within these rooms, I have not listed the simple geometric patterns of the couch-area, as this space was intended to be hidden by the bed.

8.4.1 Figured motifs

Most of the *cubicula* listed in Table 8.1 were decorated with mosaics representing birds. The finest example appears in *cubiculum* XI of the Maison de Bacchus et Ariane at Thuburbo Maius¹⁴: the birds within rectangular panels are framed by an elegant composition of laurel garlands bearing roses and rosebuds (Pl. 162). The roses, which were often associated with springtime and Venus, and the birds created a luxuriant ambience, which evoked ideas of prosperity and fertility. In *cubiculum* 11 of the Maison de Dionysos et d'Ulysse at Thugga (Table 8.2 n.10)¹⁵, the representation of birds perking at a plant was inserted in a geometric schema of octagons. In *cubiculum* XIV of the Maison de Vénus at Thugga¹⁶ too, the birds were inserted in a vegetal pattern of two confronted sprays of acanthus bearing roses, but here the volatiles are accompanied by the representation of plants¹⁷.

¹³ Plin. *Ep.* 2.17.8.

¹⁴ Blanchard-Lemée et al. 1996, 275; *CMT* II.4, 48-9.

¹⁵ Poinssot 1965, 227.

¹⁶ Jeddi 1999, 228-29.

¹⁷ A similar decorative pattern seems to occur in *cubiculum* II of the Maison des Chapiteaux Historiés at Utica (*CMT* I.1, 90-1), but the mosaic has been mostly destroyed (Table 8.2 n.3).

In *cubiculum* XI of the Maison des Nymphes at Neapolis (Table 8.2 n.9), the illustration of birds was inserted in a more complex design of six laurel garlands bearing *xenia* subjects (fish, birds, and fruit). Darmon claims that the mosaic evokes the four Seasons, the duck standing for Winter, the swallow for Spring, the fig for Summer, and the pomegranate for Autumn; the mosaic would also symbolise the three elements of air (birds), of earth (fruit), and of water (fish)¹⁸. However, the inclusion of the other two emblems (millet and fish of unidentified species), which not correspond to the system of Seasonal symbols, would have created an unbalanced representation of the Seasons. The Neapolis mosaic seems rather to illustrate a selection of the typical motifs of *xenia* as images of abundance and of prosperity.

A clearer allusion to the four Seasons appears in the mosaic panel of *cubiculum* XXX in the Maison du Paon at El Jem (Pl. 99)¹⁹. In the centre of the field are four *emblemata* showing a basket of seasonal fruit: Spring's roses, Summer's wheat, Autumn's grapes, and Winter's olives. The figured scene is flanked on the left and right by two panels of geometric design.

The motif of the Seasons occurs again in *cubiculum* 10 of the Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus at Volubilis and in *cubiculum* XXX of the Sollertiana Domus at El Jem. In the Volubilis mosaic²⁰, the four Seasons are represented in the form of a female bust inserted in a medallion of eight-pointed stars (Pl. 221). The figures surround an octagonal compartment in the centre bearing a damaged male figure of uncertain identity. Thouvenot describes the central figure as Dionysus, though no attribute of the god seems to appear. Rather, as Parrish correctly points out, the bust with his nudity and floral crown seems to correspond to the image of Annus surrounded by the Seasons, motif that appears in the assembly-rooms of the Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque (A) at El Jem and of the Maison de Dionysos et d'Ulysse (13) at Thugga²¹. The scene evokes ideas of prosperity and fertility, assured by Annus and the Seasons; as the personification of the eternal time, the figure of Annus ensures the continuity of the fortune of the house throughout the course of the year. In the El Jem panel²², the female personifications of the Seasons holding their seasonal products are inserted in a more

¹⁸ Darmon 1980, 110-14 n.28, 150-56.

¹⁹ Foucher 1961, 7-8; Parrish 1981, 56; id. 1984, 160-62 n.30; Eastman 1999, 292; *CMT* III.1, 48-50.

²⁰ Thouvenot 1958, 54; Dunbabin 1978, 277 n.2; Parrish 1984, 234-36 n.65.

²¹ Ch.5, 144-45.

²² Foucher 1961, 22-5; id. 1979, 158; Dunbabin 1978, 39, 148, 259 n. 21d; Parrish 1984, 165-68 n.32; Alexander 1994; Blanchard-Lemée et al.1996, 254-55; Kondoleon 1995, 141-42; *CMT* III.1, 25-9; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 532-33 figs. 257-59.

complex design, which seems to project a painted ceiling vault. A large cross encloses a central medallion representing Ganymede being carried away by the eagle of Jupiter; at the ends of the arms are masks. Within semicircular lunettes appear four mythological love scenes: one represents Jupiter in the form of a swan seducing Leda; the other three shows satyrs in pursuit of maenads (Pl. 108). The Seasons as symbols of prosperity may be connected to the rape of Ganymede and to the other erotic scenes by their prophylactic and beneficent values. The theme was emphasised by the eponymous inscription, which welcomed visitors entering the private suite: the inscribed panel (*Sollertiana Domus semper felix cum suis*), in fact, contained an invocation to good fortune for ensuring the continuity of prosperity of the house of the Sollertii (Pl. 106).

Another scene of abduction appears in anteroom of *cubiculum* C2 in the Maison des Nymphes at Neapolis²³. The *emblema*, which was placed in the centre of a simple pattern of white *tesserae*, illustrates Neptune sizing the nymph Amymone. The god holds a trident and wears a mantle, which billows out behind him; Amymone, dressed in a transparent tunic, is falling to the ground. The scene takes place near a river, as the presence of the river god on the top (partly destroyed) suggests: the god leans on his elbow on an urn, from which water pours out, and holds a reed in his hands.

The scene is linked to another mythological episode, which decorated the adjoining *cubiculum* C2²⁴. The mosaic, which is partly destroyed, illustrates the myth of the creation of the Hippocrene spring by Pegasus (Pl. 128). The winged horse is immersing his hoof into the spring, from which a Nymph is coming out with the help of another Nymph, who is extending a hand to her companion. A third Nymph is holding a mantle suspended behind her naked body. The three creatures are ornamented with bracelets, necklace, and reed crown. Hills and shrubs are the elements of the landscape. The motif of abduction and the representation of the three Nymphs in their nudity and in three different poses as scenes of beauty and sensual pleasure, create an erotic, intimate atmosphere, which would have been appropriate to a *cubiculum* area.

²³ Darmon 1980, 95-8 n. 24, 160-63, 198-210; Yacoub 1995, 93; Blanchard-Lemée et al. 1996, 134, 139; Muth 1998, 40-1, 211, 378.

²⁴ Darmon 1980, 98-103 n. 25, 158-60, 210-17; Quet 1985, 871-76, 907; Yacoub 1995, 91-2; Blanchard-Lemée et al. 1996, 240-41; Lancha 1997, 37-8 n.4; Muth 1998, 241-42, 378; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 532 fig. 248.

The image of Pegasus seems to appear again in *cubiculum* C1 of the same house²⁵. The badly damaged mosaic shows the fragments of a wing, which may belong to Pegasus, and of a female figure, which holds a garland in her left hand and wears bracelets, necklace, and reed crown. The iconographical schema allows for the identification of the scene as the rooming of Pegasus by the Nymphs. The motif was accompanied by a mosaic²⁶ of uncertain subject in the adjoining couch-area of the chamber: only the fragment of a centaur is left. The same iconographical schema seems to have been adopted in the mosaics decorating the two *cubicula* on either side of the main *triclinium*: the illustration of Pegasus with the Nymphs is accompanied by a scene including marine motifs. The connecting link seems to lie in the marine background of all the scenes: the water, as the source of all life, emphasises the idea of fertility, which would have been appropriate to a *cubiculum*.

A range of *cubicula* (XII-XIII-XIV) in the Maison des Nymphes at Neapolis were decorated with mythological scenes of rare and unique character that makes their identification difficult. The fragmentary mosaic decorating chamber XIV (Pl. 127)²⁷ represents a bearded man that his sword, diadem, and purple mantle identify as a king. The royal figure is presenting a young veiled woman before a female attendant, who holds out to escort her; a young man behind holds a large crown ornamented with a gem over the girl's head. On the other side, a young man, wearing a robe over his left shoulder and his legs, extends his right arm toward the girl. The fragment of a wing, which appears behind the youth's head, seems to belong to Pegasus. The representation of the winged horse suggests that the scene involves some unknown episode in the myth of Bellerophon. Darmon interprets the scene as the representation of the marriage between Bellerophon and the young Philonoe in the presence of the girl's father, the king Iobates. Darmon's interpretation was rejected by Quet, who pointed out that the scenes of marriage in Roman art include some details that the Neapolis mosaic does not show. The mosaic rather would represent a scene of departure: Philonoe is symbol of the soul enamoured of wisdom, which is carried away by Pegasus as the personification of wisdom under Bellerophon's guide²⁸. However, the symbolic interpretation of a

²⁵ Darmon 1980, 40-2 n.8, 158-60, 210-17; Quet 1985; Lancha 1997, 36-7 n.3; Muth 1998, 34, 379.

²⁶ Darmon 1980, 43-5 n.9.

²⁷ Darmon 1980, 125-29 n.32, 163-75, 204-10; Quet 1984, 83, 101; id. 1985; Yacoub 1995, 95-6; Blanchard-Lemée et al. 1996, 241; Lancha 1997, 41-2 n.7, 307, 338-39; Muth 1998, 204-05, 377.

²⁸ Quet's interpretation is accepted by Lancha (1997).

mosaic, which decorated a domestic setting, would seem inappropriate: the owner may have chosen a rarely represented subject drawn from the literary and theatrical repertory²⁹ to show off his highly-prized culture.

A further uncertain subject from mythology decorated *cubiculum* XII (Pl. 125)³⁰. In the centre is a young man sitting on a rock and resting his left arm on a quiver: a cloth is draped over his right thigh and hides his left foot. To his left a man dressed in a mantle extends his hand toward the youth: he is leaning on his lance and resting his right foot on a rock. Behind him are two men wearing lances. To the left of the scene are fragments of a male figure sitting on a rock and holding an unidentified object, and a young woman holding a rose in her left hand. A body of water in the foreground indicates that the scene takes place near a river. Donderer suggests that the mosaic represents the embassy of the Greeks to Philoctetes, who is the young man sitting on a rock and hiding his wounded heel beneath the cloth. The embassy is led by Ulysses, who is shown having a discussion with Philoctetes, under the watchful eye of Neoptolemus, who is depicted behind the two heroes. To the left the river god and a nymph contemplate the scene. Donderer's interpretation has been widely accepted by scholars and also by Darmon³¹, who, in the reading of the mosaic program of the *Maison des Nymphes*, had previously identified the seated man as Apollo in company with Kyrene and Eurypylos.

Another scene from the *Iliad* decorated the adjoining *cubiculum* XIII (Pl. 126)³². To the left a bearded man, wearing diadem and military dress, is sitting and resting his right foot on a pedestal; behind him, a nude man is holding a diadem in his left hand; in the background, two soldiers wearing helmets, hold spears and shields. In his attempt at interpreting all the figured mosaics found in the *Maison des Nymphes* at Neapolis as episodes of the myth of Bellerophon and Pegasus, Darmon stated that the mosaic represents the offering of present to the king Iobates after Bellerophon's victory over the Solymes. However, the interpretation previously given by Garcia y Bellido has found much greater favour with scholars. The panel seems to illustrate the embassy of Chryses, who is shown kneeling before Agamemnon, for the return of his daughter; the

²⁹ Lancha 1997, 307.

³⁰ Darmon 1980, 115-20 n.30, 178-86, 201-04; id. 1989; Donderer 1983; Yacoub 1995, 93-5; Blanchard-Lemée et al. 1996, 241; Lancha 1997, 38-9 n.5, 307; Muth 1998, 378; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 529 fig. 221.

³¹ Darmon 1989.

scene takes place in the presence of Achilles represented in his heroic nudity and of Ulysses, who meditates on the whole event. The use of scenes drawn from the Iliad and theatrical works, which are now lost, as rare motifs of domestic decoration suggests an exceptional degree of literary interest on the part of the house-owner. Unlike us, ancient viewers would have immediately interpreted the mythological scenes by means of which the master showed off his highly-prized culture.

A further rare subject in African mosaics appears in *cubiculum* 27 of the House of Africa (Pl. 78)³³. The main area was ornamented with a design of two-strand guilloche which forms six hexagonal compartments around a central one, each containing a female personification of the Roman provinces with their appropriate attribute. The central medallion is occupied by the allegory of Rome, which is sitting and wearing a military dress: she holds a sphere in her right hand and a lance in her left hand; a shield decorated with Gorgon's head rests against the seat. The medallion is surrounded by the provinces, which are shown either as busts or as standing figures. The busts represent Africa wearing an elephant-hide headdress with an elephant trunk on the top; Egypt holding a *sistrum* (Egyptian musical instrument); and Asia with diadem and turreted crown. The standing figures represent Spain holding an olive branch, Sicily clothed as a huntress and holding the antlers of a stag, and an unidentified province with *patera* and vessel. The image of Rome in pre-eminent position and the surrounding personifications of the provinces are symbols which emphasize the unity of the Empire under the control of the *caput mundi* and its wealth (Africa, Egypt, Sicily, and Spain played an important role as exporters of foodstuffs). By invoking these symbols, the owner showed his attachment to the Empire and rendered homage to Rome, who assured prosperity and happiness.

In *cubiculum* 18 of the same house, a vegetal design of undulating lines forms medallions, which contain a range of animals such as lion, bull, lioness, and leopard (Pl. 79). The beasts are represented some in attitude of combat, others standing peacefully against a plain white background. The catalogue of animals usually displayed in the

³² Garcia y Bellido 1972; Darmon 1980, 121-25 n.31, 175-77, 190-93; Ch. Picard 1985; Fantar et al. 1994, 209-10; Yacoub 1995, 97-8; Blanchard-Lemée et al. 1996, 241; Lancha 1997, 39-41 n.6, 307, 325-27; Muth 1998, 235-36, 377; Dunbabin 1999a, 114; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 529 fig. 222.

³³ Yacoub 1995, 196; Blanchard-Lemée et al. 1996, 24-34; Slim 1999; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 533-34 figs. 293-95.

spectacles of the amphitheatre may commemorate a *munus* given by the house-owner. However, as there are no clear references to a real event, the scene may be a more general representation of a very popular motif in African iconography, though the use of amphitheatre scenes as decorative motif of a *cubiculum* is not widely attested.

A clearer example of scene of amphitheatre occurs in *cubiculum* 14 of the Villa du Taureau at Silin (Pl. 152)³⁴. Two small figures are being tossed by a huge white bull, while a third one is pushed towards the animal by a man wearing an animal skin; another figure hands out a hooked staff towards the two figures in the air. Above the scene is an inscription, *Filoserapis comp.* The mosaic represents a scene of *damnatio ad bestias*, with the victims identified by their carefully differentiated costume (tunic and trousers). Picard identifies the victims as easterners, perhaps the prisoners captured during Caracalla's campaigns in 216; and as the name *Filoserapis* is an epithet of Caracalla, the scholar suggests that the villa-owner used this epithet to show off his devotion to the emperor. However, as Dunbabin correctly points out, the hypothesis seems too speculative. The Silin mosaic represents another scene of the executions of the amphitheatre, as that of Zliten and of El Jem³⁵, perhaps organised by *Filoserapis*. The victims' costume may indicate a specific group, which is difficult to identify, or may allude to a specific ritual involved in the execution.

8.4.2 Geometric-floral designs

A number of the *cubicula* listed in Table 8.1 show an ornamental design in the forepart of the chamber. For instance, in the Maison aux Deux Péristyles at Hergla, *cubiculum* 7 was ornamented with a pattern of scales³⁶, which increase in size as one moves from the centre to the periphery (Pl. 118).

Cubicula XXV-XXVI of the Maison du Triomphe de Neptune at Acholla and XXIX of the Sollertiana Domus at El Jem³⁷ were decorated with a composition of non-contiguous squares. Variations come from the figure filling the intersections (swastika-meander in *cubiculum* XXV and hexagons with circles in room XXVI, both at Acholla: Pl. 17; peltae tangent to a poised square at El Jem: Pl. 107) and from the colour (polychromy in the Acholla examples; black and white in the El Jem mosaic).

³⁴ Al Mahjub 1983, 303; G.Ch.Picard 1985, 235-40; Dunbabin 1999a, 123-24.

³⁵ Ch. 6, 201.

³⁶ Ennaïfer and Ouertani 2001, 221.

In the Maison de la Chasse at Bulla Regia, the mosaics decorating the underground *cubicula* 4-5 show a more complex design, as the squares intersect to form eight-pointed stars (Table 8.2 n.5). In *cubiculum* XVI of the Maison de Dionysos at Thaenae, the squares are set between tangent circles (Table 8.2 n.6).

Cubiculum XI of the Maison du Viridarium à Niches at Puppūt³⁷ shows a simple pattern of tangent hexagons (Table 8.2 n.2). The geometric figure occurs again in *cubiculum* XIII of the Maison de Vénus at Thugga³⁹, but here the hexagons are inserted in a more complex design of squares and oblong hexagons (Table 8.2 n.14).

Some of the *cubiculum* mosaics show a geometric composition based upon the octagon, which is elaborated and varied within the listed examples. In *cubiculum* XXII of the Maison aux Communs at Thuburbo Maius (Table 8.2 n.17)⁴⁰, in *cubiculum* XXXI of the Maison du Triomphe de Neptune at Acholla (Pl. 18), and in *cubiculum* II of the Maison des Chapiteaux Historiés at Utica (Table 8.2 n.3)⁴¹, the geometric scheme creates compartments, which are filled either with circles (Thuburbo Maius) or four-pointed stars (Acholla) or spindles (Utica). In the underground *cubiculum* 3 of the Maison de la Chasse at Bulla Regia, a single central octagon is framed by an interlaced band. In *cubiculum* 14 of the Villa della Gara delle Nereidi at Tagiura⁴², octagons are combined with chevron to frame a central square.

In some *cubicula*, the use of vegetal and floral design made the appearance of the room more lavish and luxuriant. In *cubiculum* 11 of the Maison de Dionysos et d'Ulysse at Thugga⁴³, for instance, the geometric composition of squares and circles is vegetalised by tracing their outline in fine tendrils and by filling the compartments between the circles with dense vegetal motifs (Table 8.2 n.10). Similarly, in *cubiculum* XXXII of the Maison du Triomphe de Neptune at Acholla, the circles are ornamented with a pair of volutes framing flowers. Further examples of vegetalised geometric compositions occur again in other *cubicula* (XXVI-XXXIII) of the Maison du Triomphe de Neptune at

³⁷ Foucher 1961, 22; *CMT* III.1, 24-5 n. 6.

³⁸ Ben Abed-Ben Khader 1994, 269.

³⁹ Jeddi 1999, 226-27.

⁴⁰ *CMT* II.3, 116-18 n. 322.

⁴¹ *CMT* I.1, 91-3 n. 101.

⁴² Di Vita 1966, 38.

⁴³ Poinssot 1965, 130.

Acholla. However, the most lavish example of floral-vegetal design appears in *cubiculum* XVIII of the Maison de Dionysos at Thaeanae⁴⁴ with its composition of flowers with voluted tendrils (Table 8.2 n.6). The decoration of the chamber was enhanced by a painting on the ceiling representing Dionysos on a panther⁴⁵.

8.5 Use of the *cubiculum*: not just for sleeping

The analysis carried out by Riggsby on the occurrences of the word *cubiculum* in Latin literature shows that the term was associated with a variety of activities: rest, sex and adultery, murder and suicide, display of art, and reception⁴⁶. Therefore, despite its etymology, the term *cubiculum* cannot be translated as 'bedroom'. The use of a modern term to describe Roman domestic space may wrongly suggest an analogical relationship between the ancient and modern use of space and risks a certain amount of subjectivity⁴⁷. The separation of domestic activities among different spaces is a modern concept that cannot be applied to Roman domestic architecture. Pliny, for example, uses the term *cubiculum* frequently for a variety of rooms in both his villas; Trimalchio boasts that his house is provided with twenty *cubicula*, while the one in which he sleeps is located on the upper floor⁴⁸; similarly, Seneca speaks against the luxury of the rich houses provided with a number of *cubicula*, while only one is used for sleep⁴⁹. Literary evidence shows that the term *cubiculum* had a much broader use than just 'bedroom' and can be applied to many small-to middle-sized rooms serving several functions. A review of the *cubiculum* dimensions from the houses listed in Table 8.1, in fact, shows that the average dimensions were about 4.50m long by 4m wide, while the required width for accommodating a bed was in order of 1.15m.

The primary function of the *cubiculum* as a room designed to accommodate a bed⁵⁰ was sleep. Literary accounts refer to this specialised room-type as the *cubiculum dormitorium*⁵¹ or as the *cubiculum noctis et somni*⁵². The use of the adjective to describe more definitely the room indicates that, while the function of the *cubiculum* for sleep

⁴⁴ Jeddi 1994, 146-47.

⁴⁵ Ch. 10, 348.

⁴⁶ Riggsby 1997.

⁴⁷ Allison 2001.

⁴⁸ Petr. *Sat.* 77.4.

⁴⁹ Sen. *Ep.* 15.89.21.

⁵⁰ For the terms used in written sources to describe the bed see Mols 1999, 41-2.

⁵¹ Plin. *NH* 3.52; Plin. *Ep.* 5.6.21; Sid. *Ep.* 2.2.10.

⁵² Plin. *Ep.* 2.17.22.

was characteristic, it was not definitive of the type. In both Pliny's and Sidonius' accounts of their villas, the sleeping chamber is described as a room lying in the private section of the dwelling⁵³, where neither voice nor sound could penetrate. Thus, location in private areas and possibly plain decoration may be evidence for archaeological identification of the *cubicula*, which were primarily used as sleeping chambers, though it is somewhat arbitrary. Because of the flexible use of space in Roman house, in fact, it would be misleading to regard those rooms restricted to a set purpose. In the *Maison du Triomphe de Neptune* at Acholla, for example, two groups of three *cubicula* were set to right and left of the colonnaded *triclinium*: they opened off an antechamber and corridor on either end of the long *porticus* (Table 8.2 n.8). The setting of the chambers a little apart from the more public areas and the plain decoration with geometric and/or floral motifs suggest that they may have been used as *cubicula dormitoria*. In the *Maison des Masques* at Hadrumetum, *cubiculum* 8 was separated from the *porticus* off the colonnaded *triclinium* by a range of three anterooms (9-10-11), which ensured the maximum of privacy (Table 8.2 n.1). The absence of floor mosaic, which produces a striking effect in contrast to the lavish decoration of the adjoining spaces, may be a further indication that the chamber was mainly used for sleeping. In the *Maison du Char de Vénus* at Thuburbo Maius, *cubiculum* XXI/XXII was entered from anteroom XX at the north-eastern corner of the peristyle (Table 8.2 n.16). The section of wall, which separated the inner area from the rest of the room, and the asymmetrical arrangement of the doors secluded the chamber from the public area.

A further element that may help to identify the rooms designed for sleeping is the heating system. The *cubiculum noctis et somni* that lay in Pliny's private apartments, in fact, was provided with a hypocaust, which retained or circulated the heat underneath by a narrow outlet⁵⁴. An African example has been documented in the *Maison aux Communs* at Thuburbo Maius (Table 8.2 n.17). A furnace was arranged within the south-eastern wall of the space XXIV from which the *pilae* took the heat into the adjoining *cubiculum*. The heating system and the location of corridor XX, which run parallel to *porticus* V of the peristyle, suggest that the chamber served as *cubiculum dormitorium*. A further example of heated *cubiculum*, which is not included in the catalogue, comes from the *Maison de Vénus* at Mactaris. Here, the chamber, which is

⁵³ In Pliny's villa (*Ep.* 5.6.21) the chamber opened off a small court; in Sidonius' estate (*Ep.* 2.2.10) at the end of a cryptoporticus.

⁵⁴ *Plin. Ep.* 2.17.23.

identified as a *cubiculum* by the layout of its floor mosaics, was heated by the adjoining apsidal space in the north-western corner of the house, far apart from the public section. Further examples of heated *cubicula* in African houses seem not to be attested: because of the warm climate, such a means of heating would not generally have been necessary.

Literary evidence attests to another function of the *cubiculum* as a place for reception of guests and transaction of business. The Younger Pliny, for example, speaks of a *cubiculum grande*, that could have been used, when required, as a moderate-sized dining room (*caenatio*) for more intimate *cenae*⁵⁵; similarly, Seneca relates an anecdote concerning the orator Caelius who dined with a client *in cubiculo*⁵⁶. The *cubiculum* may also be used for summoning private *consilium*⁵⁷ and for reading verses⁵⁸.

Though literary texts do not describe either location or decorative layout of this kind of *cubiculum*, the chambers located near the peristyle and richly decorated are more likely than hidden ones to be used not exclusively for sleeping, but also for sociability and intellectual pursuits. Perhaps, it is this kind of rooms to which Pliny refers, when he speaks of *cubicula diurna* in distinction to the chambers specifically used at night (*cubicula nocturna*)⁵⁹. In the Maison des Nymphes at Neapolis, for instance, a range of four *cubicula* lay off the peristyle (Table 8.2 n.9). The *cubicula*, which were placed on opposite sides (XI-XIV), opened directly onto the courtyard and served also the function as anterooms into the central *cubicula* (XII-XIII). The architectural arrangement thus created a suite of linked chambers that was also emphasized by their decorative motifs: the *cubicula*, in fact, were decorated with floor mosaics illustrating rare scenes drawn from mythological and literary repertory. The lavish decoration would have continued on the walls, as traces of painting and of *opus sectile* have been found respectively in rooms XII and XIV. Location in the most public section of the house and decorative themes chosen by a highly cultivated patron clearly indicate that the *cubicula* served for receiving and entertaining a selected group of guests, whom the house-owner would want to impress.

⁵⁵ Plin. *Ep.* 2.17.10.

⁵⁶ Sen. *De Ira*, 3.8.6.

⁵⁷ Plin. *Ep.* 5.1.6; Gell. *NA* 2.2.2; Tac. *Ann.* 11.2.

⁵⁸ Plin. *Ep.* 5.3.10; Tac. *Dial.* 3.1.

⁵⁹ Plin. *Ep.* 1.3.1.

In the Sollertiana Domus at El Jem (Table 8.2 n. 12) and in the Maison de Dionysos at Thaenae (Table 8.2 n.6), a pair of *cubicula* was situated on either side of a medium-sized anteroom, but with a different arrangement of the spaces: the chamber with the couch-area opposite the entrance was bigger and richly decorated⁶⁰; on the contrary, the *cubiculum* with the bed located at right angles to the door was smaller and decorated with simpler geometric motifs. The architectural and decorative layout of the two chambers may suggest a different grade of seclusion and use of spaces: more appropriate for the entertainment of selected visitors the one; more restricted and intended only for the use of family members the other.

In the House of Africa and in the Maison du Paon at El Jem, the *cubicula* (respectively 27 and XXX) were placed in the private section of the house, far away from the peristyle (Table 8.2 n.11, 13). The subject-pattern of the mosaics flooring the chambers⁶¹ suggests that the *cubicula* may have been used to receive and entertain a selected group of people on intimate terms with the house-owner. The depth to which a visitor penetrated the building and the route he took emphasized his degree of intimacy with the master. However, it is also possible that those *cubicula* and the adjoining rooms formed the master's private suite and their figured subjects were chosen for their own sake. The Younger Pliny speaks of a suite of rooms, which were his favourite in his villa at Laurentum: the suite included a *cubiculum* with alcove and a specifically night-time bedroom⁶². Located at some remove from the central areas of the dwelling and apart from domestic noise, the writer's suite appears to have been designed and reserved for his personal use. Eastman claims that the *cubiculum* and the adjoining rooms in the Maison du Paon formed a private suite for the leisure of one occupant, who would have been the master or mistress of the house; the space of the *cubiculum* extended into the adjoining room XXXVI that may have been the *studium* or the *bibliotheca*⁶³. However, the setting of the bed on the narrow band of black and white geometric design would have blocked any communication between the two rooms.

⁶⁰ The *cubiculum* at El Jem contained the Ganymede mosaic, which was the only polychrome mosaic in the three rooms; the *cubiculum* at Thaenae was decorated with a lavish pattern of floral design.

⁶¹ The *cubiculum* of the House of Africa was decorated with the personifications of Rome and the provinces; the mosaic in the chamber of the Maison du Paon showed a representation of the Seasons.

⁶² Plin. *Ep.* 2.17.20-22.

⁶³ Eastmann 1999. The scholar's reading of the house is based upon the plan executed by Foucher, which shows an opening between the two rooms XXX-XXXVI. However, there is a discrepancy between that plan and the disposition of the wall on the actual site, which is reproduced in *CMT* III.1 (pls. 3-4): according to this plan, *cubiculum* XXX and room XXXVI did not communicate with each other, but

A review of the *cubicula* listed in Table 8.1 shows that a number of them were located next to the *triclinium*. In his villa at Laurentum, Pliny had a suite of differently sized *cubicula* on either side of the main *triclinium*⁶⁴. The arrangement would have created a suite of linked *triclinium-cubiculum*, which suggests that the activities taking place in the chamber were somehow related to the stage of the reception in the adjoining dining room. Literary sources seem to confirm this, with their descriptions of *cubicula* as the settings for sex during the dinner-party or for rest soon after the *convivium*⁶⁵. During the banquet in the *triclinium* of an ex-consul, Octavian led off his host's wife into a *cubiculum* and brought her back to the table (*rursus in convivium*) with her hair in disorder and her ears glowing⁶⁶. As the architectural arrangement of the *cubiculum* next to the *triclinium* is attested in Roman houses from the 2nd century BC, Zaccaria Ruggiu suggests to find its social origin and significance in the introduction of the *luxuria asiatica*, which caused a more hedonistic conception of the *convivium* as display of luxury and expression of pleasure, which is taken both at table and in bed⁶⁷.

In the arrangement of the linked *triclinium-cubiculum*, the two rooms may have communicated either directly or through an intervening space. In the Maison de Vénus at Thugga, for instance, *cubiculum* XII opened into main *triclinium* VIII, but the chamber may have been also entered from the peristyle (Table 8.2 n.14). A similar arrangement occurs in the Maison aux Deux Péristyles at Hergla, but here the *cubiculum* (7) was separated from the main *triclinium* and the peristyle by an anteroom on the eastern and southern sides (Table 8.2 n.21). In the Maison de la Chasse at Bulla Regia, on the contrary, *cubiculum* 20 was accessible from the only adjoining secondary *triclinium* 19: the arrangement created a stronger link between the two rooms (Table 8.2 n.4).

In other examples, the *cubiculum* lay next to the *triclinium*, but did not communicate with it. In the Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus at Volubilis, for instance, *cubiculum* 10 adjoined the main *triclinium*, but the arrangement of a narrow anteroom and the location of the couch-area far way from the dining room ensured privacy (Table 8.2 n.14). In the Maison de la Chasse at Bulla Regia, the underground *cubicula* 51-53 were placed on

opened onto different spaces (respectively anteroom XXIX and corridor XXXIX on the opposite side of the two chambers).

⁶⁴ Plin. *Ep.* 2.17.6-10.

⁶⁵ Apul. *Met.* 2.16; 3.13. Other references in Zaccaria Ruggiu 1995a, 401.

⁶⁶ Suet. *Aug.* 69; see also Gell. *NA* 10.13.

either side of the *triclinium*: all three rooms were provided with a separate entrance from the south-western *porticus* of the peristyle (Table 8.2 n.5). In the *Maison de Dionysos et d'Ulysse* at Thugga too, two *cubacula* (9 and 11) lay on either side of the main *triclinium*. *Cubiculum* 9 was entered directly from the peristyle and opened into a suite of rooms in the eastern corner of the house (Pl. 186). On the other side of the dining room, *cubiculum* 11 seems to appear more secluded, as it was separated from the courtyard by an anteroom. However, the arrangement of the spaces seems to point to a more public use of the chamber. The bed, in fact, would have faced the entrance into the anteroom, which also led into assembly room 13 on the opposite side. Similarly, in *cubiculum* XI of the *Maison de Bacchus et Ariane* at Thuburbo Maius, the raised platform faced the entrance into anteroom X, which communicated with both the peristyle and room XII (Table 8.2 n.15). Slightly larger than the inner space for the bed, the main area of the *cubiculum* would have provided more space for receiving visitors; moreover, the lavish floor mosaic with its representation of birds and roses would have created a more elegant setting.

In the *Villa du Taureau* at Silin too, the architectural layout of *cubiculum* 14, which was entered from both peristyle and colonnaded anteroom 12 of the main *triclinium*, and the decoration with a scene of amphitheatre clearly indicates that the chamber was intended to be used for receiving guests (Table 8.2 n.20).

Because of their open accessibility and rich decoration, some of those *cubacula* may have been reserved for the accommodation of owner's guests, as it was customary to receive travellers, relatives, and people sent on the recommendation of a friend. On his travels, Lucius was received in Milo's house and accommodated in a *cubiculum* as a *honestum receptaculum*, which was located next to the room where the host and his wife had dinner⁶⁷. In the description of his villa to Domitius, Sidonius speaks of a room (*deversorium*) preceded by an anteroom, where his friend may retire after meal⁶⁹. In Roman writings, the term *deversorium* is used to designate any place for temporary accommodation ("inn, boarding house")⁷⁰. Sidonius seems to use the word with a slightly different meaning: as he is describing his private house, it is possible that *deversorium* indicates a guest-room. The writer does not describe the room in detail,

⁶⁷ Zaccaria Ruggiu 2001.

⁶⁸ *Apul. Met.* 1.23.

⁶⁹ *Sid. Ep.* 2. 9. 7.

but, as his guest could easily reach it after meal, the room must have been not far from the *triclinium*. The *cubicula* identified in many Romano-African houses cited above may have been used as *deversoria* (i.e. guest-rooms), as they were close to the *triclinium* or lay in the public sector of the *domus*.

8.6 Conclusions

In his analysis on how habitation related to the disposition of domestic space in Pompeii and Herculaneum, Wallace-Hadrill poses a number of questions, which seem pertinent to the discussion on domestic architecture of Roman Africa, as well: how many sleepers should we allow per bed? How many beds were slept in on a regular basis? How many slept elsewhere than in bed, for example, on mattresses on the floor?⁷¹ These questions cannot be convincingly answered. For example, we do not know whether *dominus* and *domina* shared a common *cubiculum*. Archaeological evidence shows that the couch-area would have been large enough for accommodating a bed for two people, but we do not know how often it was occupied. Although literary texts refer to conjugal *cubicula*⁷², numerous passages suggest that in many cases aristocratic husbands and wives had their own separate *cubicula*. Pliny's wife Calpurnia, for example, had a suite of private apartments, including a *cubiculum*, for her personal use⁷³.

In a number of houses at Pompeii, the *cubiculum* was provided with alcoves for the arrangement of two beds. There is no archaeological evidence in the excavated remains of the African houses. Moreover, we do not know by whom a pair of beds would have been used: a married couple? brother and sister? mother and child?

No *cubicula* are clearly attested as belonging to children. It is often assumed that those spaces did not exist in Roman household, because children used to sleep in servile areas together with slave carers⁷⁴. However, there is no archaeological or literary evidence to support this. In Apuleius' account, a girl of a rich family tells that she used to share her *cubiculum* and bed with her cousin, when they were both children⁷⁵: however, the scanty account does not tell us whether the room was for only children's use or it was located in a servile area.

⁷⁰ s.v. *deversorium*, *TLL* vol. V, 852-53.

⁷¹ Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 97.

⁷² Gell. *NA* 6.13; Sen. *Controv.* 7.5.pr; Luc. *Phars.* 5.735-815; Juv. *Sat.* 6.116-32.

⁷³ Plin. *Ep.* 7.5; see also Tac. *Ann.* 3.15.

⁷⁴ Wallace-Hadrill 1988, 52.

The rooms where servants slept are difficult to identify, too. The *cubicularii*, servants who staffed any aristocratic *cubiculum*, normally slept on mattresses at the *cubiculum* door or in the antechamber. As a guest at Milo's house, Lucius was accommodated in a *cubiculum* and provided with *servi cubicularii*, who reclined on the ground outside the door⁷⁶. In Sidonius' villa, the guest-room (*deversorium*) was preceded by a narrow chamber, where the *cubicularii* could have dozed⁷⁷. However, in particularly confidential situations, when the master or mistress wished to stay alone, the *cubicularii* were dismissed⁷⁸. Other servants slept in small rooms called *cellae*, but they are difficult to identify on archaeological ground. It is not possible, in fact, to restrict any small room, presumably simple and undecorated, to such a purpose. Perhaps, upper storeys may have provided space for the servant's apartments because of their marginality⁷⁹, but, as literary references suggest, owners too may have had a *cubiculum* on the upper floor of their house. In Apuleius' tale, an old woman is described sleeping in her *cubiculum* on the upper floor of a cottage⁸⁰; Pliny's villa at Laurentum was provided with a tower, which contained a *cubiculum*⁸¹; Trimalchio had his personal *cubiculum* on the upper floor of his house⁸². However, in most houses upper storeys are missing or are inadequately preserved: only the ground-floor stairwells furnish the only evidence of an upper storey⁸³.

⁷⁵ Apul. *Met.* 4.26.

⁷⁶ Apul. *Met.* 2.15.

⁷⁷ Sid. *Ep.* 2.2.13. See also Apul. *Met.* 10.20; Tac. *Ann.* 13.44; Val. Max. 1.7.7.

⁷⁸ Riggsby 1997, 44-5.

⁷⁹ George 1997b, 21.

⁸⁰ Apul. *Met.* 4.12.

⁸¹ Plin. *Ep.* 2.17.13.

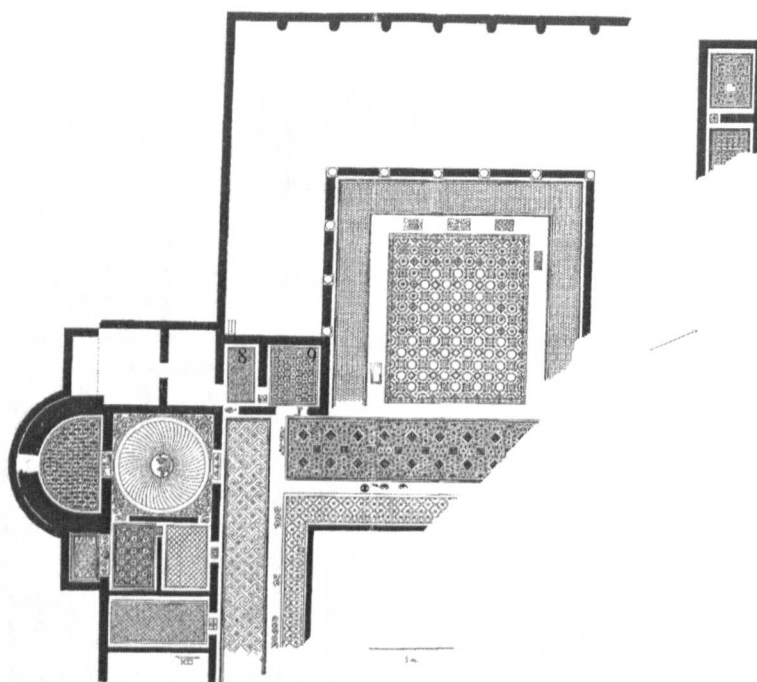
⁸² Petr. *Sat.* 77.

⁸³ Evidence and use of upper-storey rooms in African house are discussed in chapter 10, 345.

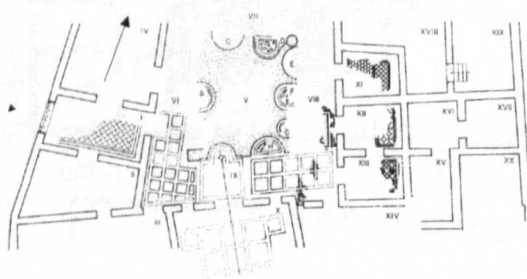
| Town | House | Room | Dimensions | Area | Layout | Aspect | Anteroom |
|-------------|---------------------------|--------|-------------|-------|-----------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| Acholla | M. du Triomphe de Neptune | XXV | 3 x 3.5 | 10.5 | mosaic | secondary court | x |
| Acholla | M. du Triomphe de Neptune | XXVI | 3.55 x 3.55 | 12.6 | mosaic | secondary court | x |
| Acholla | M. du Triomphe de Neptune | XXVII | 3.5 x 3.4 | 11.9 | mosaic | secondary court | x |
| Acholla | M. du Triomphe de Neptune | XXXI | 3 x 3.4 | 10.2 | mosaic | secondary court | x |
| Acholla | M. du Triomphe de Neptune | XXXII | 3.8 x 3.45 | 13.11 | mosaic | secondary court | x |
| Acholla | M. du Triomphe de Neptune | XXXIII | 3.7 x 3.4 | 12.58 | mosaic | secondary court | x |
| Bulla Regia | M. d'Amphitrite | 7 | 5 x 3 | 15 | mosaic | peristyle | x |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Chasse | 20 | 3.6 x 6.6 | 23.76 | platform | secondary court | |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Chasse | 50 | 3 x 5 | 15 | mosaic | secondary court | |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Chasse | 51 | 2.4 x 6.6 | 15.84 | mosaic | secondary court | |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Chasse | 53 | 3.6 x 6.6 | 23.76 | mosaic | secondary court | |
| El Jem | House of Africa | 18 | 4 x 4.5 | 18 | mosaic | peristyle | x |
| El Jem | House of Africa | 27 | 6 x 4.5 | 27 | mosaic | private area | x |
| El Jem | M. des Dauphins | XXII | 3m wide | | mosaic | secondary <i>triclinium</i> | |
| El Jem | M. du Paon | XXX | 4 x 3.8 | 15.2 | mosaic | secondary court | x |
| El Jem | Sollertiana Domus | XXIX | 4.7 x 3.7 | 17.39 | mosaic | peristyle | x |
| El Jem | Sollertiana Domus | XXX | 5.95 x 4.75 | 28.26 | platform+mosaic | peristyle | x |
| Hadrumentum | M. des Masques | 8 | 4.1 x 2.8 | 11.48 | platform | peristyle | x |
| Hergla | M. aux Deux Péristyles | 7 | 4 x 5 | 20 | mosaic | peristyle | x |
| Neapolis | M. des Nymphes | C1 | 4.2 x 3.6 | 15.12 | platform+mosaic | secondary court | |
| Neapolis | M. des Nymphes | C2 | 3.5 x 3 | 10.5 | platform+mosaic | secondary court | |
| Neapolis | M. des Nymphes | XI | 6 x 4.9 | 29.4 | mosaic | peristyle | |
| Neapolis | M. des Nymphes | XII | 4.6 x 4.9 | 22.54 | mosaic | peristyle | x |
| Neapolis | M. des Nymphes | XIII | 4 x 4.9 | 19.6 | mosaic | peristyle | x |
| Neapolis | M. des Nymphes | XIV | 5.5 x 4.9 | 26.95 | mosaic | peristyle | |
| Pupput | M. du Viridarium à Niches | XI | 3.6 x 2.8 | 10.08 | mosaic | peristyle | |
| Pupput | M. du Viridarium à Niches | XII | 3.6 x 2.8 | 10.08 | mosaic | peristyle | |

Table 8.1: *Cubiculum*

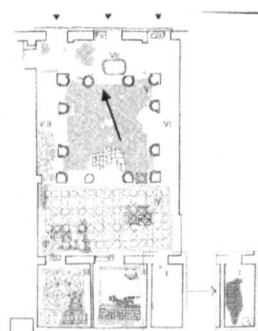
| Silin | Villa du Taureau | 14 | 5 x 3 | 15 | mosaic | peristyle | x |
|----------------|--------------------------------|----------|-------------|-------|-----------------|-----------------|---|
| Tagiura | Villa della Gara delle Nereidi | 14 | 3 x 5 | 15 | mosaic | peristyle | |
| Thaenae | M. de Dionysos | XVI | 3.8 x 3.8 | 14.44 | mosaic | peristyle | x |
| Thaenae | M. de Dionysos | XVIII | 3.8 x 4.9 | 18.62 | mosaic | peristyle | x |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. aux Communs | XXII | 4.5 x 3.15 | 14.17 | platform+mosaic | private area | x |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. de Bacchus et Ariane | XI | 3.7 x 4.8 | 17.76 | platform+mosaic | peristyle | x |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. du Char de Vénus | XXI/XXII | 3.55 x 3.15 | 11.18 | platform+mosaic | peristyle | x |
| Thugga | M. de Dionysos et d'Ulysse | 9 | 4.2 x 3 | 12.6 | platform+mosaic | peristyle | |
| Thugga | M. de Dionysos et d'Ulysse | 11 | 4.2 x 2.5 | 10.5 | mosaic | peristyle | x |
| Thugga | M. de Vénus | XIII | 4.6 x 3.2 | 14.72 | platform+mosaic | peristyle | |
| Thugga | M. de Vénus | XIV | 3.45 x 2.7 | 9.31 | mosaic | peristyle | |
| Utica | M. des Chapiteaux Historiés | II | 3.74 x 3.13 | 11.7 | mosaic | secondary court | |
| Utica | M. des Chapiteaux Historiés | III | 3.7 x 3.15 | 11.65 | mosaic | secondary court | |
| Volubilis | M. à la Mosaïque de Vénus | 10 | 6.6 x 4.8 | 31.68 | mosaic | peristyle | x |
| Volubilis | M. d'Orphée | 10 | 5 x 2.5 | 12.5 | mosaic | secondary court | |



1. Hadrumetum, Maison des Masques



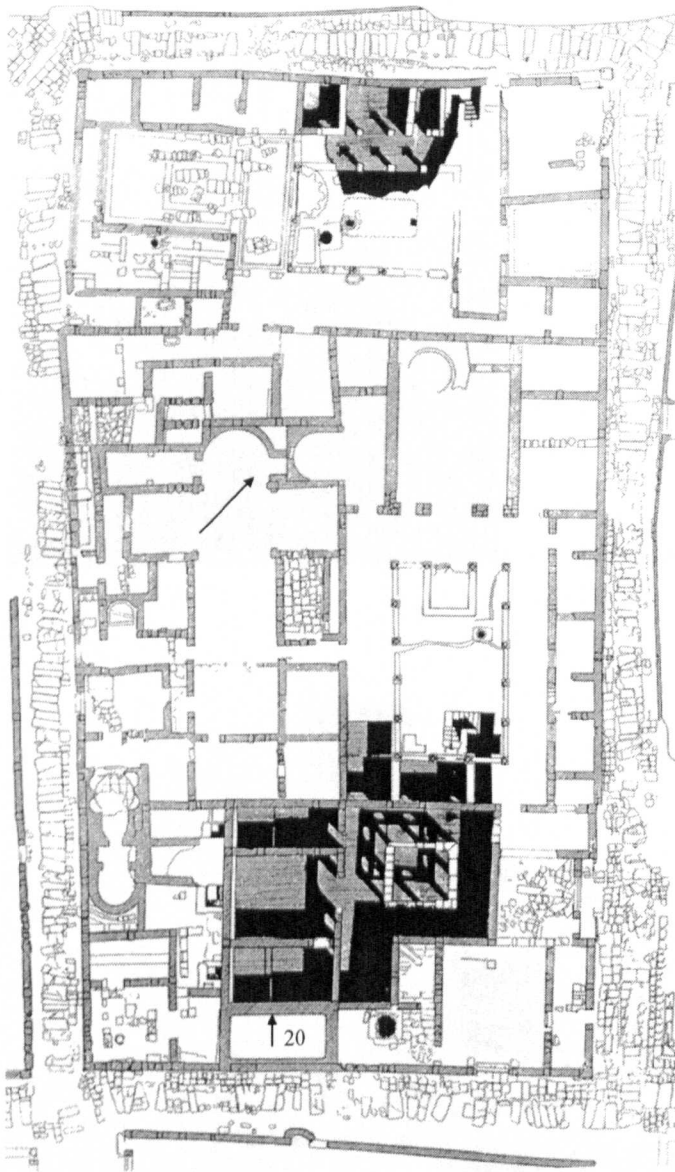
2. Pupput, Maison du Viridarium à Niches



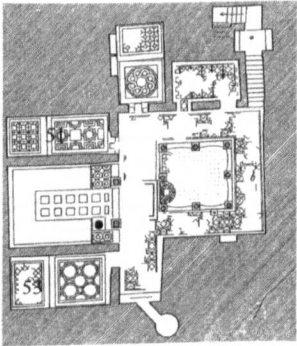
3. Utica, Maison des Chapiteaux Historiés

0 5 10m

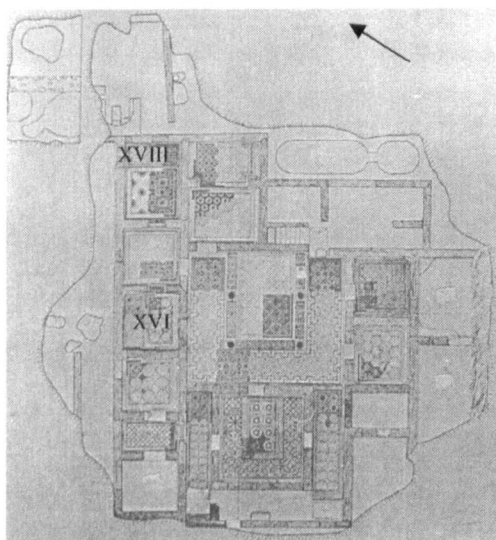
Table 8.2: *Cubiculum* in the Romano-African house



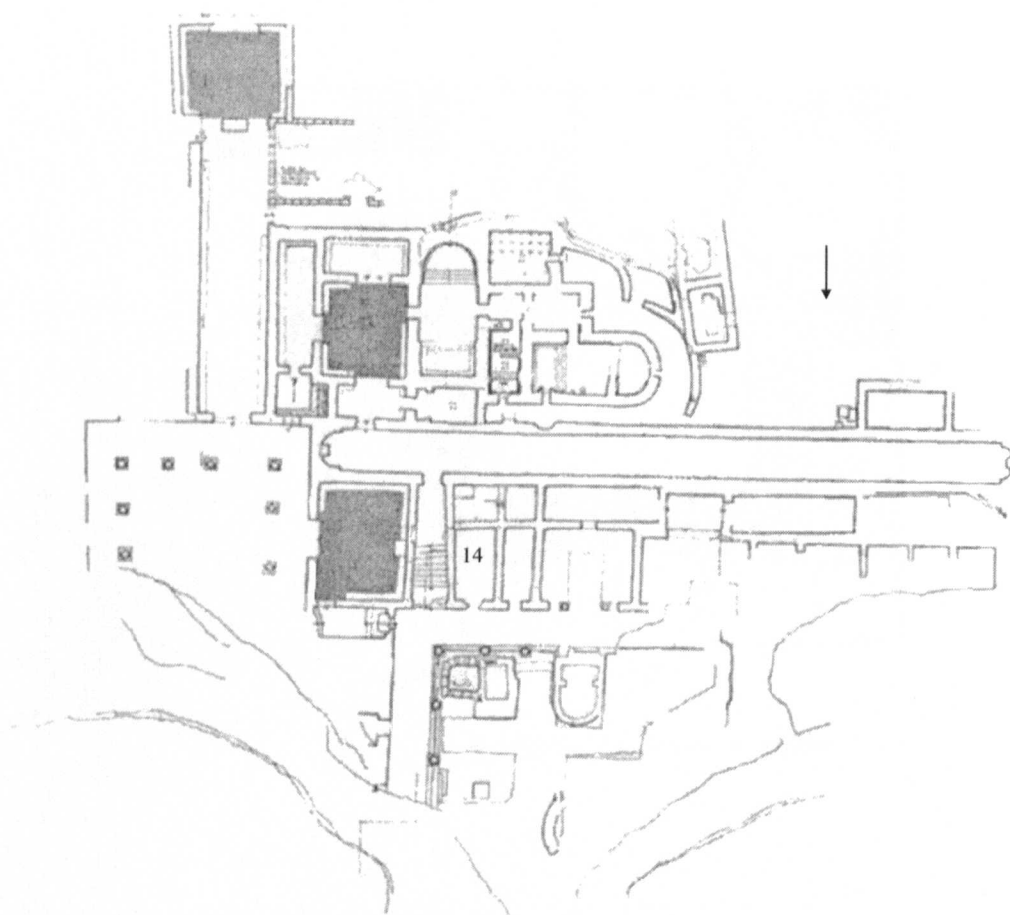
4. Bulla Regia, Insula de la Chasse



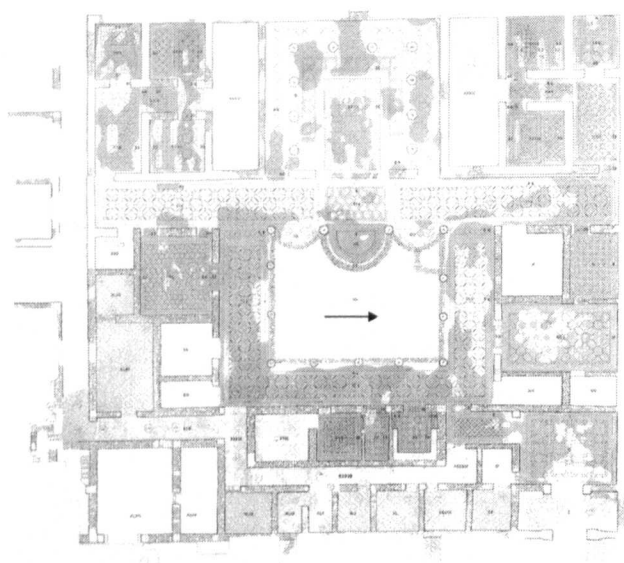
5. Bulla Regia, Maison de la Chasse: basement



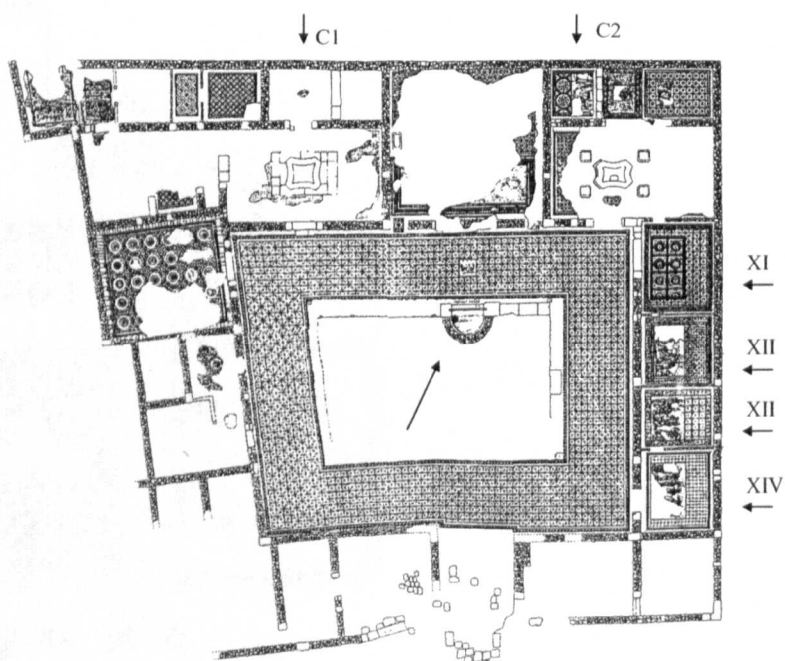
6. Thanae, Maison de Dionysos



7. Tagiura, Villa della Gara delle Nereidi



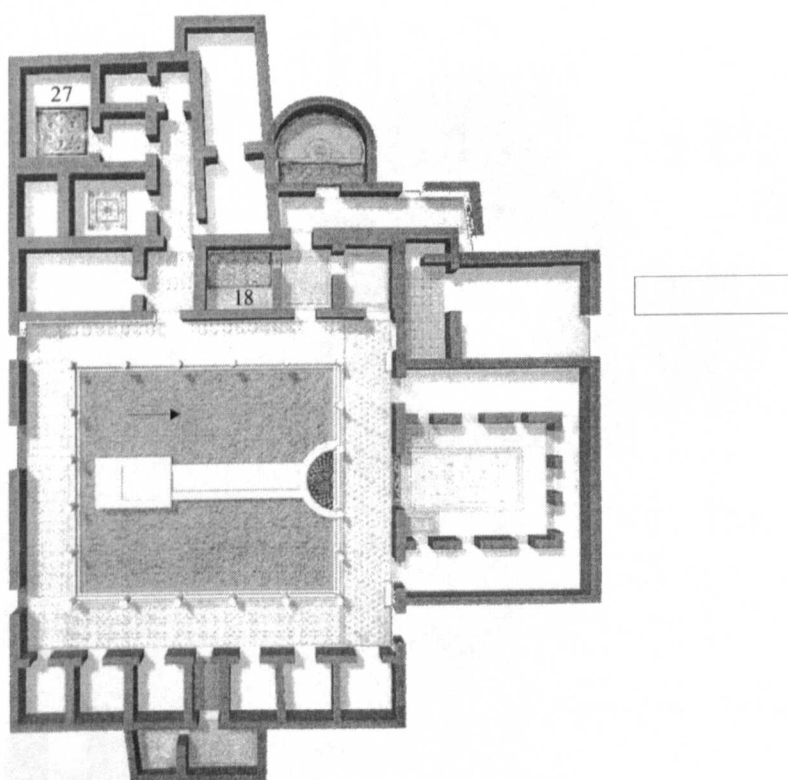
8. Acholla, Maison du Triomphe de Neptune



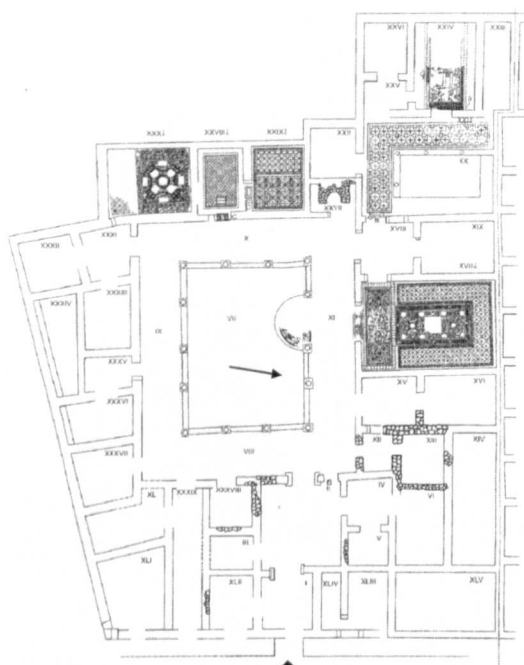
9. Neapolis, Maison des Nymphes



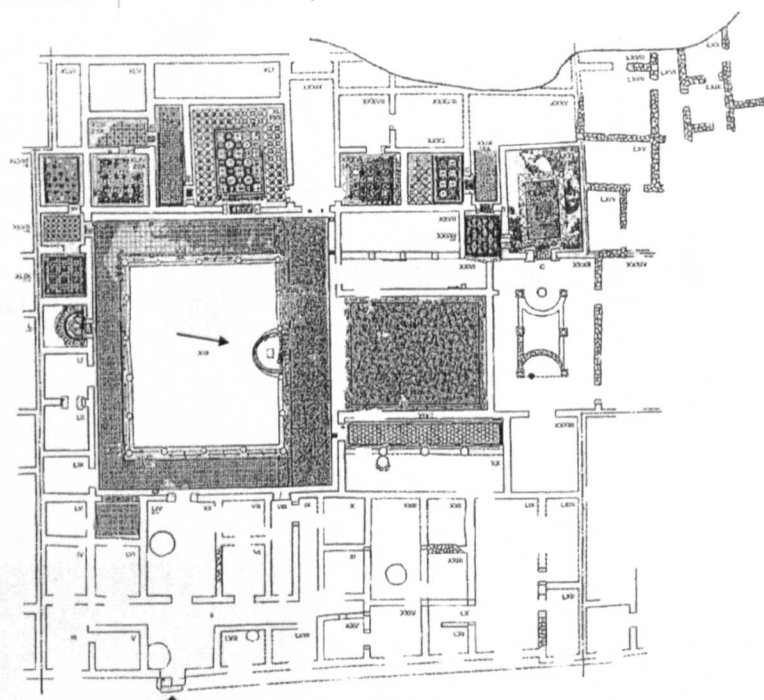
10. Thugga, Maison de Dionysos et d'Ulysse



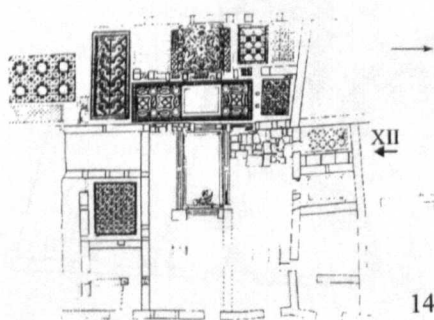
11. El Jem, House of Africa



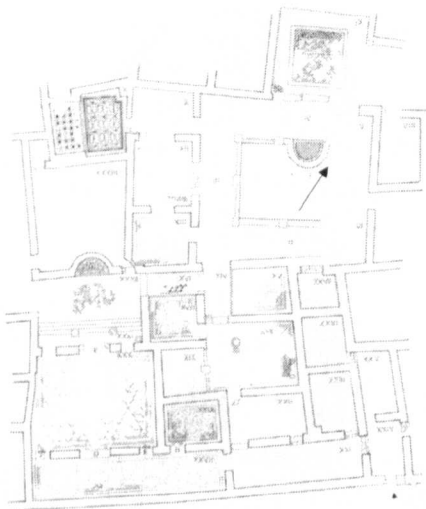
12. El Jem, Sollertiana Domus



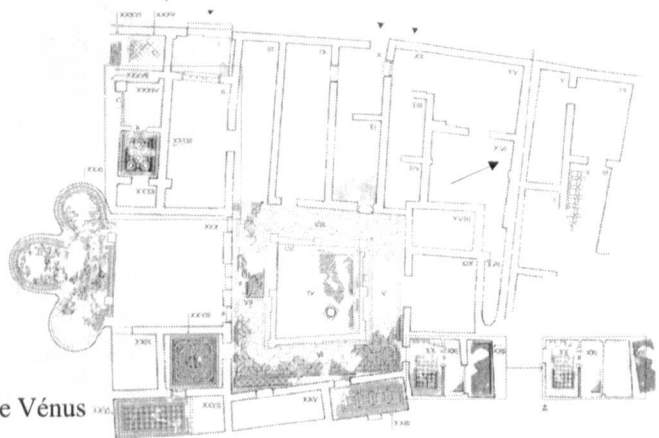
13. El Jem, Maison du Paon



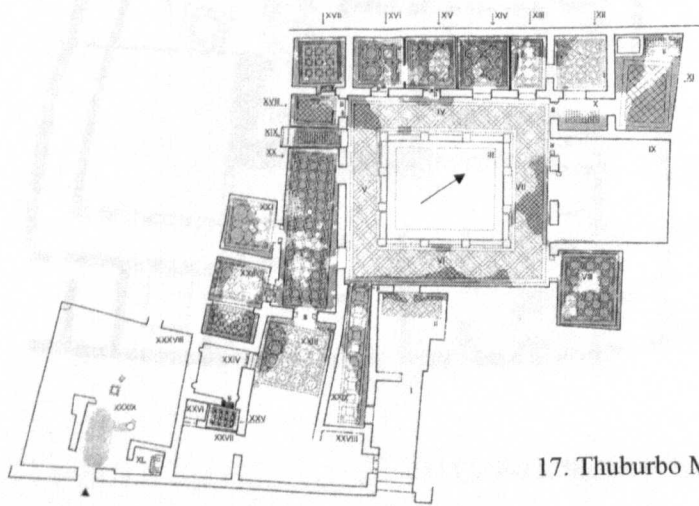
14. Thugga, Maison de Vénus



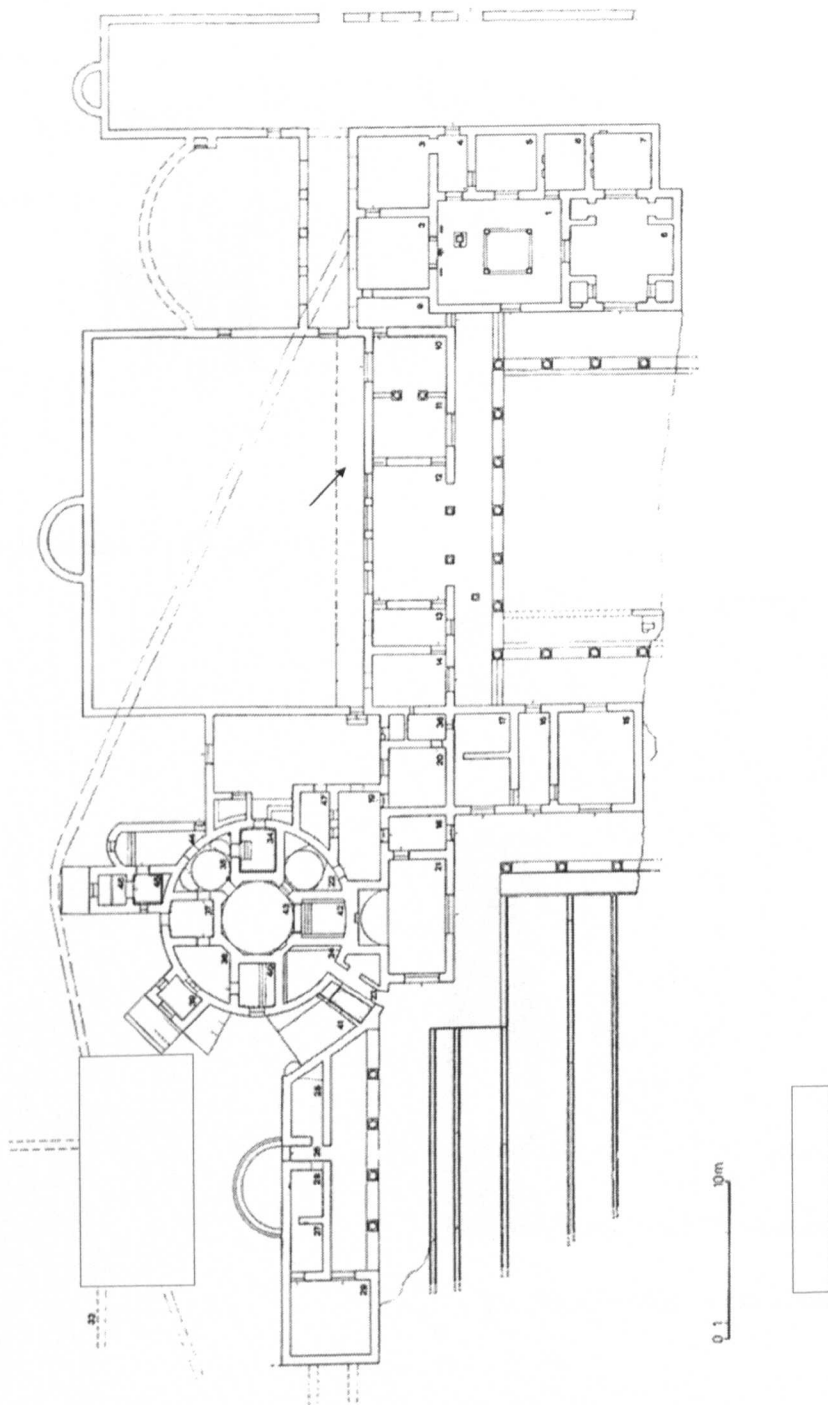
15. Thuburbo Maius, Maison de Bacchus et Ariane



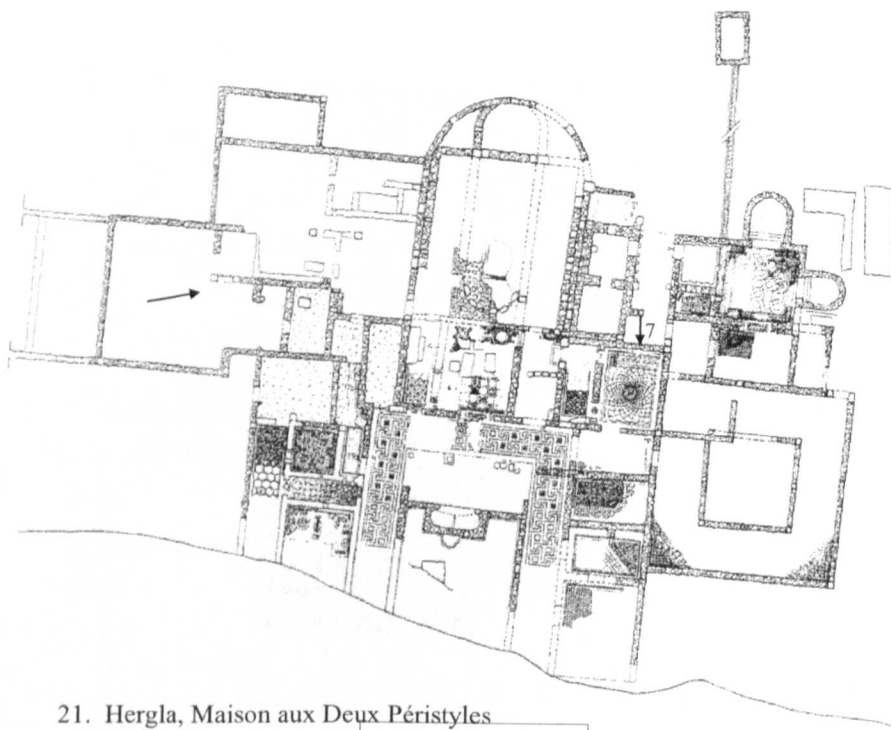
16. Thuburbo Maius, Maison du Char de Vénus



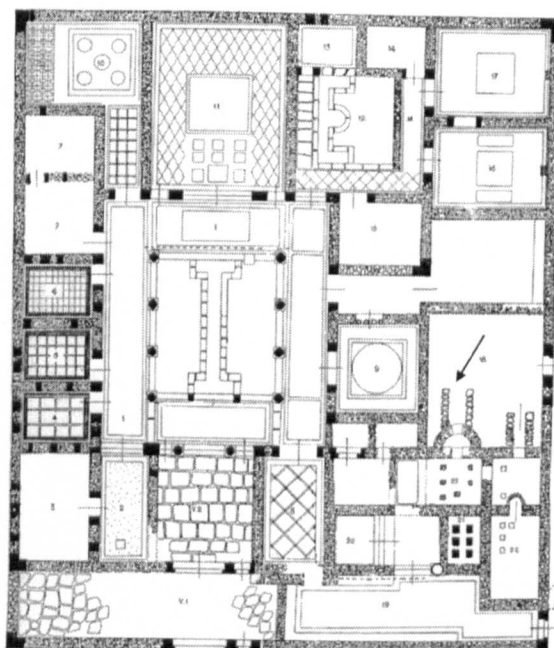
17. Thuburbo Maius, Maison aux Communs



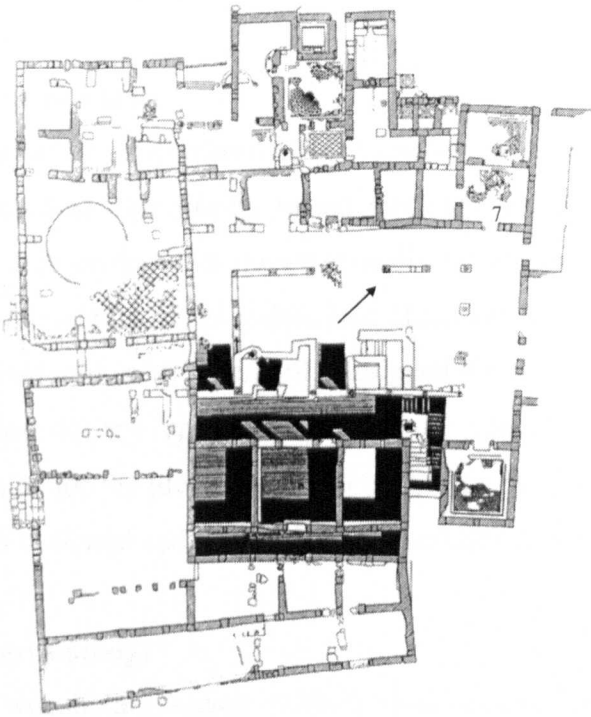
20. Silin, Villa du Taureau



21. Hergla, Maison aux Deux Péristyles



22. Volubilis, Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus



23. Bulla Regia, Maison d'Amphitrite: ground floor

Chapter 9

Private apartments

9.1 Introduction

In a number of Romano-African houses, there is no evidence of rooms which can be identified as *cubicula* by raised platforms or by differences in mosaic pattern on the floor. It is evident that the internal division of space was not an essential component of the arrangement of the *cubiculum*. However, those domestic dwellings must have been provided with rooms primarily designed for rest and for other more private activities. In absence of any specific architectural and/or decorative element which serves as evidence for the identification of the *cubicula*, it is perhaps better to speak in general of rooms designed and reserved for the personal use of the family members.

9.2 Terminology

Latin vocabulary seems to lack terms to describe rooms, where the master and his family carried out private activities. In the description of his villas, the Younger Pliny uses the term *diaeta*¹ several times to describe a suite containing a *cubiculum* and *triclinium* or several *cubicula*. Located at some remove from the central areas of the dwelling, the *diaeta* afforded privacy to its inhabitants. Among the several *diaetae* in his villas, Pliny describe his favourite in Laurentum comprising three *cubicula*: removed from domestic noise, the suite was appropriate to his cherished intellectual pursuits². However, the term *diaeta* may also designate a guest-chamber, as a passage in Pliny's letter indicates: as a guest in Pomponius' house, the Elder Pliny was accommodated in a *diaeta* on the night of Vesuvius' eruption³. In a broader sense, the word *diaeta* designates domestic space affording a high degree of privacy and concealment. In the situation of panic and confusion following Caligula's murder, Claudius took refuge in a *diaeta*: it was there that some guardsmen found the future emperor cowering behind a curtain⁴. The use of the word *diaeta* in the present context would be misleading. In the arrangement of spaces of the Romano-African house, the rooms set aside for daily, secluded activities were not necessarily arranged in a suite. Moreover, the term *diaeta*

¹ *TLL*, s.v. *diaeta*, vol.V, 947-48; Leach 1997, 67; id. 2004, 49-50.

² Plin. *Ep.* 2.17.20-24.

³ Plin. *Ep.* 6.16.3.

⁴ Suet. *Claudius*, 10.

includes rooms, such as secondary *triclinia* and *cubicula*, which have been already described in the chapters devoted to those specific room-types. Rather, it seems more appropriate to use a more generic term such as ‘private apartments’ to designate a range of rooms that the master and his family used for a variety of private activities⁵.

9.3 Public and private in the Roman house

The analysis of private spaces in the Romano-African house cannot be carried out without questioning of the meaning of ‘private’ as opposite to ‘public’ in Roman society⁶.

At the first sight, the distinction between public and private is quite clear, as we deal with it as a routine part of our daily life: we know that some places cannot be entered without express permission (private) and some others may be used and shared by a wider number of people (public). However, the modern concept of privacy seems to be ambiguous and inadequate, when it is transferred to the excavated spaces of the Roman house in order to interpret them. The concept of the house as a separate place of retreat and of seclusion from the world outside is an elaboration of modern society and the result of its capitalistic system, which separates the official world of the state and work from the world of home and family. In Roman society, on the contrary, the house of a wealthy man was a focus of public activities: *salutatio*, *convivium*, business of all sorts, political dealings, leisure activities, and family ceremonies were social duties that played an important role in the public life of a rich man as a means of creating a network of social contacts and of reinforcing his power and prestige. The house provided a stage designed for the performance of those social rituals and for the self-presentation of the owner.

In his analysis of the spatial organization of the Roman house, Wallace-Hadrill maintains that the domestic dwelling permitted subtle grades of relative privacy: how far any visitor was allowed to penetrate the house depended on his relationship to the master of the house. Low-status individuals and clients gathered in the *vestibulum*; influential guests were admitted inside in the main *triclinium*; intimate friends penetrated deeper into more private areas such as the *cubiculum*. Differentiation within

⁵ The category of private apartments includes *cubicula* and secondary *triclinia*, which however are discussed in the relevant chapters.

⁶ The concept of private and public spaces in the Roman house is analysed by Wallace-Hadrill 1998; Dunbabin 1994; Zaccaria Ruggiu 1995b; Grahame 1997; Grassigli 1999, 43-7; Ellis 2000, 166-70.

the Roman upper-class house worked along an axis that run from the 'public' space of the exterior to 'private' interior space: the architectural arrangement of space alone is a crude indicator, if it is not accompanied by decoration, which regulates the flows of interaction around the house by signalling the status of any space⁷. Wallace-Hadrill's theory offers a better understanding of the social patterns which dictated the structure and decoration of the spaces used by the male head of the household. However, it cannot be applied to the house as a whole, because the axis public-private necessarily excludes the other members of the *familia* (women, children, servants), who had no social duties.

For a discourse about privacy in Roman households comprising members of different status and gender, Grahame's analysis of the nature of Roman privacy seems to be more appropriate, as it allows for a wider application of the terms public and private. The scholar states that private may be seen operating in two dimensions: one that relates the private world of the inhabitants of the house to the public world of the visitors, and another that relates the inhabitants to one another. Within this double dimension privacy is about the need to remove oneself from the scrutiny of others⁸. The arrangement of *vestibula*, *triclinia*, and assembly-rooms, as spaces designed for the admittance of visitors from the public world of outside, allowed the master to perform his social duties in high visibility, while at the same time permitting the inhabitants to continue their daily activities without coming under the scrutiny of strangers. The *cubiculum*, on the other hand, allowed a higher degree of privacy because of its low level of presence-availability⁹: in this room, which was located at some remove from the central areas of the house, the master may have concealed himself from both the public world of outside and from the other inhabitants of the house¹⁰. However, as the room was also designed for the reception of visitors, a different degree of privacy was achieved. The identity of the visitors, who formed a selected group of intimates with the *dominus*, and the kind of activities encouraged the development of secrecy as concealment of information or

⁷ Wallace-Hadrill 1988.

⁸ Grahame 1997.

⁹ Literary texts make it clear that servants were dismissed from the *cubiculum*, when special intimates were brought in for questions requiring confidentiality.

¹⁰ See Pliny's favourite rooms in his Laurentine villa (*Ep.* 2.17.20-24).

activity from the public outside and from the private interior: in this sense, privacy is secrecy¹¹.

Private apartments may be seen as spaces where both the dimensions of privacy operate. Here, all the members of the household (not just the master of the house, but also his wife, his sons, and relatives living in the same *domus*) could carry out personal activities without coming under the scrutiny of both one another and strangers. In this sense, service rooms too may be categorised as private, since their location apart from the owner's living areas permitted a high degree of privacy. However, as the present discussion analyses the relationship between architectural arrangement and floor mosaics in domestic space, the undecorated service rooms are not included. The category of private apartments comprises here the chambers used by the house-owner and his close relatives (wife, sons, and kins) for private purposes.

9.4 The identification of the private apartments

Rooms designed as private apartments are not easily identified, as they lack any specific architectural device and fixed space. However, as rooms set aside for secluded activities, the private apartments show a close resemblance to the *cubiculum*, which was used not only for rest but also for receiving close friends, for reading verses, for being removed from public view, and for a range of other private activities. It is arguable therefore that the architectural components of the identified *cubicula* may have been adopted for the arrangement of the private apartments, too.

Rooms opening onto a secondary courtyard or entered from an anteroom are more likely to have been used for private activities because of their secluded arrangement. In the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna, for instance, a group of medium-sized rooms opened onto secondary courts 17 and 21, which communicated with each other by a small anteroom off the peristyle (Table 9.2 n. 1). Chambers 18-19 were linked by a door, which may have been shut when more privacy was required: the rooms, in fact, were also provided with an independent access, which was not in line with the entrance of the court from

¹¹ Riggsby 1997, 43-4.

the peristyle. Chambers 22-23-24-25-26 were more secluded, as they were arranged around a court set apart from the peristyle¹².

In the *Maison des Muses* at Althiburos, secondary court K/L overlooked private apartments M-N, which also communicated with each other, and opened into chambers P-Q through anteroom O (Table 9.2 n. 2). Here too, the arrangement of the entrances ensured the maximum of privacy, as visitors entering space L from the north-western corner of the peristyle or going onto *porticus* K from assembly-room R would have been not able to look into the private apartments. Further examples of private apartments off a small court are in the *Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus* at Volubilis (13 to 17: Table 9.2 n. 4) and in the *Villa du Taureau* at Silin (2 to 8: Table 9.2 n. 3): the small court and its surrounding rooms formed a secluded area, set apart from the public sector of the house. In the *Maison de la Volière* at Carthage, a small chamber (12) overlooked an open-air space (11), which could have served as a small court (Table 9.2 n. 7). Ennabli identified the chamber as a light-well, as the window in the south-eastern wall could have illuminated the adjoining assembly-room 5. However, as the room was floored with mosaic and opened into a small courtyard (11), it may have been reserved for private activities. A further example of private apartments off a small courtyard occurs in the *Maison des Néréides* at Volubilis (Table 9.2 n.6).

In a number of African houses, two or more chambers were arranged in a suite separated from the main courtyard by a corridor or anteroom. Though the small room preceding the more private chamber may have been used for other purposes, here it is its primary function as a room permitting entrance into another room which is to be considered. In the *Maison aux Communs* at Thuburbo Maius, for instance, chamber XXI was situated in a suite comprising a *cubiculum* (XXII) and a *triclinium* (XXIII), which were connected by a corridor (XX) off the peristyle (Table 9.2 n.8).

In the *Sollertiana Domus* at El Jem, private apartments XXXII-XXXIII lay along two different sides of anteroom XXXI, which opened onto the peristyle (Table 9.2 n.11). The same arrangement occurs in the *Maison de Nicentius* (XVI-XVII-XVIII) and in the *Maison des Animaux Liés* (XI-XII-XIII), both at Thuburbo Maius (Table 9.2 nos. 9, 12), and in the *Maison H* (XVII-XIX) at Utica (Table 9.2 n.14).

¹² A similar arrangement occurs in the *Maison de Lucius Verus* at El Jem, where a suite of chambers overlooked two small courts communicating with each other.

In some examples, the private apartments were both situated on one side of a corridor. In the *Maison de Neptune* at Thuburbo Maius, for instance, a pair of rooms (XXIII-XXIV) opened onto one side of corridor XXII, which communicated with both secondary entrance XXV and with the peristyle (Table 9.2 n.13). Similarly, in the *Maison des Muses* at Althiburos, a corridor running along the main *triclinium* put private chambers I-J in communication with both the peristyle and an unidentified space on the opposite side (Table 9.2 n.2). In the *Maison des Protomés* Section of the *Triconchos* at the same town, two adjoining anterooms (XVIII-XIX) in the form of a corridor off the peristyle led into a pair of private apartments (respectively XIII-XIV and XXI-XXII), which show a similar arrangement. However, the insertion of a further anteroom (XX) before private apartments XXI-XXII made the two chambers more isolated and secluded. In the other suite, the corridor-antechamber ended into another corridor (XV), which led into private room XVI (Table 9.2 n.15). In the *Maison du Péristyle Figuré* at Pupput, three rooms (XIX-XX-XXI) opened onto a big space (XVIII), which functioned as an anteroom; on the opposite side, anteroom XV put the suite in communication with the peristyle (Table 9.2 n.16).

In the *Maison aux Travaux d'Hercule* at Volubilis, a suite of four rooms lay off a corridor (44) at the south-eastern corner of the peristyle: space 10 with its circular basin and large opening may have been served the adjoining rooms 6-9-11; room 9 appears to have been less secluded, as it communicated with assembly-room 8 and was lit by a window looking out onto the peristyle (Table 9.2 n.17). Thouvenot states that the elegant suite was reserved for guests, as it was located far way from a public area like the peristyle¹³. However, the elegant layout of the suite does not necessarily mean that the inhabitants of the house, who would have required the same degree of privacy, could not use those rooms for their private activities¹⁴.

The arrangement of a small-to medium-sized chamber off an anteroom, which served as a means of separating the room from the more public areas of the house, may be evidence for the function of that chamber as a private apartment. In the *Maison de la Nouvelle Chasse* at Bulla Regia, for example, chamber 5 may have been used for private activities, as it was separated from the peristyle by anteroom 4: the arrangement

¹³ Thouvenot 1948, 78.

¹⁴ A further example of private apartments entered from an anteroom off the peristyle may be rooms 6-7 in the House of Africa at El Jem, but this sector of the house has not been published and analysed in details.

of the adjoining *porticus*, which was enclosed within a wall leaving a narrow, open space before the antechamber, made room 5 more secluded (Pl. 37). In the Maison du Triconque at Carthage too, a series of rooms (VII/VIII, XV, XVII) were preceded by an antechamber (respectively VI, XVI, XVIII), which separated the apartments from the peristyle (Table 9.2 n.20). Similarly, in the Maison de Dionysos at Thaenae (Table 9.2 n.19) and in the Maison Ouest at Utica (Table 9.2 n.21), a chamber (respectively XIX and I) was preceded by a room off the peristyle: however, the big size of the anteroom suggests that the space did not function merely as an entrance into the private apartment.

In the Maison de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons at Volubilis, chamber 9 was ornamented with a hexagonal basin in the forepart, which served as an elegant anteroom leading into a more secluded area (Table 9.2 n.22). Etienne suggests that the chamber was used in the summer, as the narrow entrance and the basin seem to indicate¹⁵. The elegant layout of the area, however, seems to point to the owner's private apartment.

In some examples, the arrangement of the anteroom or of its entrance at right angles to the private apartments maximised the privacy and seclusion of the chambers. In the Maison aux Communs at Thuburbo Maius, for example, rooms XII and XVII at either end of *porticus* IV were both preceded by an anteroom (respectively X and XVIII)¹⁶, whose openings into the rooms and into the courtyard were set at right angles to each other: no person would have been able to see into the room from the courtyard, even if the door was open (Table 9.2 n.8). Similarly, in the Édifice des Asclepieia at Althiburos, rooms 19 and 25 on either end of the northern *porticus* were preceded by an anteroom (respectively 20/21 and 26), which lay on axis with the private chambers, but the perpendicular setting of the two entrances of the anteroom guaranteed a high level of privacy (Table 9.2 n.23). A similar arrangement occurs in the Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus at Volubilis (7: Table 9.2 n.4), in the Maison de la Chasse at Bulla Regia (9: Table 9.2 n.18), and in the Maison de Neptune at Thuburbo Maius, where chamber X communicated with the peristyle both directly and via anteroom IX (Table 9.2 n.13).

In the Maison de la Cascade at Utica, two private chambers (XXIV-XXVII) were entered from separate anterooms (respectively XXV-XXVI), which lay next to each other (Table 9.2 n.25). The arrangement recalls the layout of *cubicula* off the peristyle

¹⁵ Etienne 1954, 63-4.

¹⁶ Room XII was also entered from anteroom XIII, which was similarly arranged.

in the Maison des Nymphes at Neapolis, though the relation of the anteroom with the private chamber is here inverted.

In the Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque and in the Maison du Paon, both at El Jem, two rooms (respectively L-P and XLVIII-XLIX) were set on either side of an anteroom opening onto the peristyle (Table 9.2 nos.26-27; Pl. 101). The two chambers may have been used as *cubicula*, since a similar arrangement occurs in the nearby Sollertiana Domus, where an anteroom (XXVIII) was set between two chambers (XXIX-XXX) marked off as *cubicula* by the layout of their floor mosaics (Table 9.2 n.11). In the Maison des Dauphins at El Jem too, an anteroom (L) opened into two private chambers (XLIX-LI) on opposite sides, but here room LI also functioned as an entrance into a range of rooms (LXXIII to LXXVI) the function of which is not certain (Table 9.2 n.28).

In the Maison des Deux Chasses at Clupea, a suite of three rooms were arranged in a straight line: adjoining the main *triclinium*, anteroom XI led into a bigger room (XII), which led in its turn into space XIII through an entrance framed by two columns (Table 9.2 n.29). The elegant layout of the suite set a little apart from the peristyle suggests the function of the rooms as the master's private apartments: the *dominus* may have received his guests in the big room while appearing in the framework of the colonnaded entrance. A similar arrangement occurs in the Maison des Colonnes Rouges at Acholla, but here the furthest space X is an apsidal structure that a low wall separated from the adjoining room IX (Table 9.2 n.30). Gozlan suggests some possible functions of the apse as a place for housing a fountain or a cultic statue, which could have provided the elegant ornament of a reception suite¹⁷. However, the room may have functioned as an elegant *cubiculum* provided with a library in the semicircular space. In Pliny's villa at Laurentum, in fact, a *cubiculum* was ornamented with an apse fitted with shelves to hold the books that the writer used to read many times¹⁸.

In a number of African houses, rooms preceded by an anteroom lay next to the *triclinium*. As a similar arrangement occurs in some examples of identifiable *cubicula*, it is arguable that those chambers too may have been used as private apartments. In the Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque at El Jem, for example, main *triclinium* J was

¹⁷ Gozlan and Jeddi 2001, 118.

¹⁸ Plin. *Ep.* 2.17.8.

flanked on both sides by an anteroom leading into a bigger chamber (I-L: Table 9.2 n.26). However, the arrangement of the entrances in relation to the dining room underlines a different grade of seclusion and a differing function of the two apartments. Room I appears to have been more secluded, as it was separated from the public areas of the peristyle and of the *triclinium* by anteroom H; room L, on the contrary, may have been used for the reception of guests or as a guest-room, as it was architecturally linked to the dining room. The close relationship between *triclinium* and private apartments has been documented in other examples, such as in the Maison du Paon at El Jem (XLIV) and in the Maison des Protomés Section of the *Protomai* at Thuburbo Maius (XII-XIII-XV): here the dining room gave access into a corridor, which led into more secluded areas (Table 9.2 nos. 27, 32). Similarly, in the Maison des Palmes at Thuburbo Maius, private apartments XIX-XXI were set on either side of an anteroom (XVII) accessible from corridor XVI at the south-western corner of assembly-room XIV (Table 9.2 n.31). Though the apartments were entered from a more public space, the arrangement of two intervening spaces (corridor and anteroom) ensured privacy for their inhabitants.

In other examples, the room preceding the private chamber may have been entered from both the *triclinium* and the peristyle. In the Maison de Dionysos at Thaenae, for instance, private apartments XIV-XV were set on either side of an anteroom (XIII), which communicated with both main *triclinium* and peristyle through corridor XII (Table 9.2 n.19). The same arrangement occurs in the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna (4-5: Table 9.2 n.1), in the Maison au Grand Oecus at Utica (XXV-XXVI: Table 9.2 n. 33), and in the Maison du Triclinium en Noir et Blanc at Pupput (III-IV-V), where however the communication with the *triclinium* was also made through chamber V (Table 9.2 n. 34).

In some houses, a row of small chambers lay off one *porticus* of the peristyle. Despite their location in the most public sector of the domestic building, those chambers may have been used by the family for ordinary use, as their small size and their simple decorative layout seem to suggest. Moreover, their location at right angles to the main *triclinium* and the use of doors or hangings would have preserved the privacy of the inhabitants even during the *convivium*. In the Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus at Volubilis, for example, a row of three small chambers (4-5-6) opened onto the north-

eastern *porticus* of the peristyle: the location of the rooms at right angle to the *triclinium* and the arrangement of the off-centred doors removed those chambers from the more public peristyle (Pl. 215). Further examples of private apartments off the main courtyard are in the Maison d'Asinius Rufinus at Acholla (VIII-X: Table 9.2 n. 37), in the Maison d'Amphitrite at Djemila (VI-VII-VIII: (Table 9.2 n. 38), in the Maison aux Communs at Thuburbo Maius (XIV-XV-XVI: (Table 9.2 n. 8), and in the House of Africa at El Jem (2-3-4-8-9-10: Table 9.2 n. 36).

9.5 Decoration

In the analysis of the mosaic motifs decorating the African private apartments, I have not listed the simple geometric patterns of the anterooms, as those spaces functioned primarily as a passageway and as an entrance into more secluded areas¹⁹, but I have included the motif decorating room XVIII of the Maison du Péristyle Figuré at Puppūt, since the lavish decoration along with its large dimensions seems to suggest that the room may have not been used simply as entrance into the private apartments but it may also have provided space for a number of private activities, for example dining and entertaining.

9.5.1 Figured motifs

Figured motifs appear in a few examples of the private apartments listed in Table 9.1. Some of the private apartments of the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna show the same decorative layout: in the middle of a plain surround is an *emblema*-type panel containing the bust of a god. In rooms 18-19 the *emblemata* represent respectively Sun²⁰, who is ornamented with nimbus and rays (Pl. 137), and Minerva²¹, who wears a helmet and holds a shield bearing the *gorgoneion* (Pl. 138). Opening onto court 21, chambers 23-24-25 were ornamented with the busts of a Silenus, bold and bearded (Pl. 140), Dionysus wearing a crown made of bunches of grapes (Pl.139)²², and a satyr dressed with a mantle and holding a syrinx (Pl. 141)²³. Blanc-Bijon and Darmon maintain that chambers 18-19 were used by the *dominus* for receiving his *clientes*:

¹⁹ The floor mosaics of private apartments 6-7 of the House of Africa are not listed either, as they have been not published or described.

²⁰ Gauckler 1896, 199; Dunbabin 1978, 145, 265 n.1d; Tomei 2002, 69-70.

²¹ Gauckler 1896, 200; Dunbabin 1978, 145, 265 n.1d; Tomei 2002, 69-70.

²² Because of his attribute, the male figure may represent Autumn (Ben Mansour 1984, 148-52; Tomei 2002, 72).

²³ Gauckler 1896, 202-03; Dunbabin 1978, 184, 265 n.1g; Tomei 2002, 72-4.

through the representation of Sun and Minerva as symbols of power and sovereignty, along with the illustration of the three elements of Cosmos in the adjoining court 17, the master would have appeared as a *cosmocrator* who has power and authority over low-status individuals²⁴. Tomei suggests a different interpretation of the mosaic panels and consequently a different function of the rooms: as Sun is the god of poetry and Minerva the goddess of wisdom, chambers 18-19 would have housed literary activities that the *dominus* enjoyed together with a selected group of guests²⁵. According to this scholar, the adjoining chambers 23-24-25 may have had a cultic function: the busts of the gods and the rural scenes in court 21 seem to relate to the rustic world and to its abundance and fecundity²⁶. However, as Dunbabin²⁷ correctly points out, the representation of individual deities cannot necessarily point to a particular religious function of the rooms in which they appear: figures of gods were chosen from the general traditional repertory without specific reason. The general decorative value of the Oudna mosaics seems rather to suggest that the rooms were designed to house a variety of activities, specifically relating to the private sphere.

Chamber XLIV of the Maison du Paon at El Jem was decorated with *xenia* motifs inserted within a geometric framework (Pl. 100)²⁸. The square panels include cucumbers, grapes, citron, pomegranates, a plate filled with figs, and pairs of birds (pigeons, partridges, and doves). The *xenia* motifs represent fruitfulness and vegetation in general, which are announced in the panel decorating the threshold of the room: the partly destroyed mosaic shows a gazelle before some fruit; traces of a tree seem to appear in the background²⁹. The two mosaics evoke a general state of fertility and prosperity, motifs which occur again in the square space of apsidal chamber IX/X in the Maison des Colonnes Rouges at Acholla (Pl. 9)³⁰. A foliate pattern forms medallions, which contain the female busts of the four Seasons: the idea of abundance is

²⁴ Blanc-Bijon and Darmon 1988-1989, 297.

²⁵ Tomei 2002, 77. At the basis of the scholar's interpretation is a mosaic panel from the Maison des Mois at El Jem, where Minerva is associated with the Muses and with two missing figures, which could have represented Apollo/Helios and a poet or philosopher.

²⁶ Tomei 2002, 78.

²⁷ Dunbabin 1978, 145.

²⁸ Foucher 1961, 10, 14; Gozlan 1981, 75; Parrish 1984, 76; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 1990, 82; Kondoleon 1994, 60; *CMT* III.1, 59-61 n. 22.

²⁹ The combination of gazelle with *xenia* subjects occurs again on the floor of an apse in the Maison de l'Arsenal at Hadrumetum, but the insertion of a four-pointed crown in the centre of the composition clearly evokes the world and the spectacles of the amphitheatre.

³⁰ Parrish 1984, 93-5 n.1; Gozlan 1999, 207-08; id. 2001, 142-48 n.95; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 533 fig. 289.

emphasised in the two central compartments, which enclose a basket of seasonal fruit and a stylised crater with emerging vines.

The same idea seems to be evoked in the panel decorating private room 13 of the Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus at Volubilis: the mosaic illustrated a number of dolphins in a sea rendered by horizontal lines (Pl. 222)³¹. The subject may have been chosen simply for its decorative value, but the significance of fish as emblem of good luck and as a means of preserving the prosperity of the house seems to point to a different interpretation of the mosaic panel. Perhaps, fish and its natural element, water, evoked the theme of fecundity, though the reason why the dolphin was chosen among several species of fish to carry that idea is unknown. Isolated representations of single species of animals occur again in private apartments 4 of the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna³² and 9 of the Maison de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons at Volubilis³³ with their floor mosaics illustrating birds within a vegetal framework. Here too, it is unknown whether the subject had just a general decorative value or the representation of birds as a specific category of *xenia* motifs evoked the theme of prosperity.

9.5.2 Geometric- floral designs

Most of the private apartments listed in Table 9.1 were decorated with geometric and/or floral motifs, which suggest the private use of those spaces by the members of the family by contrast to the elegance and richness of the mosaics flooring the rooms, where the master received and entertained his important guests.

The simplest geometric pattern appears in chamber I³⁴ of the Maison Ouest at Utica with its white plain mosaic; in the adjoining room II³⁵, the use of three colours made the pattern of cubes richer (Pl. 213). In the Maison au Grand Oecus at Utica, chambers XXV³⁶-XXVI³⁷ were both carpeted with black and white mosaics of plain geometric pattern, but the white marble *tesserae* laid on *opus tessellatum* ground in room XXV created an elegant effect (Table 9.2 n. 33).

³¹ Thouvenot 1958, 56.

³² Gauckler 1896, 193.

³³ Etienne 1954, 80-1.

³⁴ CMT I.2, 20 n.171.

³⁵ CMT I.2, 20-21 n.171.

³⁶ CMT I.2, 16 n.165.

³⁷ CMT I.2, 16-17 n.166.

Equally simple is the grid of fillets, which appears in room 25 of the Édifice des Asclepieia³⁸ and in room P of the Maison des Muses (Table 9.2 n. 2), both at Althiburos. In the former, the compartments are filled with florets; in the latter, the alternately different colours create the effect of a chessboard pattern.

A number of floor mosaics show a system of composition based upon a square module. Variations come from the type of framework within which the square is inserted: grid of swastika-meander in rooms XLVIII of the Maison du Paon at El Jem (Pl. 101)³⁹ and I of the Maison des Muses at Althiburos (Table 9.2 n. 2)⁴⁰; grid-pattern of adjacent crosses in chamber 4 of the Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus at Volubilis, and in rooms XVII of the Maison aux Communs (Pl. 156)⁴¹ and XIX of the Maison des Palmes⁴², both at Thuburbo Maius; grid of bands in rooms X of the Maison d'Asinius Rufinus at Acholla (Pl. 4)⁴³ and XII of the Maison des Protomés Section of the *Protomai* at Thuburbo Maius (Table 9.2 n. 32)⁴⁴; pattern of peltae in room XIV of the Maison aux Communs at Thuburbo Maius⁴⁵. In more elaborate pavements, two interlaced squares form a pattern of eight-pointed stars: they appear in chamber XXVII of the Maison de la Cascade at Utica (Table 9.2 n. 25)⁴⁶, in rooms XVI⁴⁷ and XXI-XXII⁴⁸ of the Maison des Protomés Section of the *Triconchos* at Thuburbo Maius (Table 9.2 n. 15).

Other compositions are based upon the circle module. In chamber 5 of the Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus at Volubilis, a pattern of tangent circles is laid under a grid of filets. In room XIX of the Maison du Péristyle Figuré at Puppūt⁴⁹ and in room 11 of the Maison aux Travaux d'Hercule at Volubilis, the circles are combined respectively with spindles and peltae. A pattern of circles forming squares appears in room 12 of the Maison de la Volière at Carthage⁵⁰, in chamber XV of the Maison de Dionysos at Thaenae (Table 9.2 n. 19) and in room N of the Maison des Muses at Althiburos (Table

³⁸ Ennaïfer 1976, 133 n.40.

³⁹ CMT III.1, 68 n.24.

⁴⁰ Ennaïfer 1976, 67.

⁴¹ CMT II.3, 110-11 n.317.

⁴² CMT II.1, 126-27 n.100.

⁴³ Gozlan 2001, 62-4 n.73.

⁴⁴ CMT II.3, 24-5 n.265.

⁴⁵ CMT II.3, 107-08 n.314.

⁴⁶ CMT I.1, 35-6 n.37.

⁴⁷ CMT II.3, 55-6 n.282.

⁴⁸ CMT II.3, 58-60 n.285-86.

⁴⁹ Ben Abed-Ben Khader 1994, 175.

⁵⁰ Ennabli and Ben Osman 1983, 149.

9.2 n. 2)⁵¹. The same composition is made richer with the insertion of quatrefoils in chamber XII of the Maison aux Communs at Thuburbo Maius (Pl. 156)⁵².

The octagon pattern appears in a number of variations. It is set between quadrilobes in room XI of the Maison des Deux Chasses at Clupea; hexagons in room XXI of the Maison aux Communs at Thuburbo Maius (Table 9.2 n. 8)⁵³; and squares in chamber XVIII of the Maison des Palmes at Thuburbo Maius (Pl. 176)⁵⁴. The solid outline of the square is replaced by lines of swastika-meander in room X of the Maison d'Asinius Rufinus at Acholla (Table 9.2 n. 37)⁵⁵. In chambers XI of the Maison des Animaux Liés⁵⁶ and XVI of the Maison aux Communs⁵⁷, both at Thuburbo Maius, and in room M of the Maison des Muses at Althiburos (Pl. 24)⁵⁸, the octagons in curvilinear outline are inserted in a grid pattern of tangent spindles and circles. In room XVIII of the Maison de Bacchus et Ariane at Thuburbo Maius⁵⁹, the circles are replaced by cushions. In room 19 of the Édifice des Asclepieia at Althiburos⁶⁰, the irregular octagons are framed by cushions and ellipses.

In room XXI of the Maison du Péristyle Figuré at Pupput⁶¹, the octagonal figure is inserted in a less common pattern of rectangles forming lozenges.

Compositions based on lozenges appear in chambers I⁶² and Q⁶³ of the Maison des Muses at Althiburos (Table 9.2 n. 2): in the former alternately upright and recumbent tangent lozenges form concave squares⁶⁴; in the latter lozenge-shaped spaces are combined with spindles. In rooms XVII⁶⁵-XIX⁶⁶ of the Maison H at Utica, lozenge-compartments are inserted within a composition including circles and poised squares

⁵¹ Ennaïfer 1976, 68.

⁵² *CMT* II.3, 106-07 n.312.

⁵³ *CMT* II.3, 115-16 n.321.

⁵⁴ *CMT* II.1, 126 n.99.

⁵⁵ Gozlan and Jeddi 2001, 59-61 n.71.

⁵⁶ *CMT* II.1, 96-7 n.79.

⁵⁷ *CMT* II.3, 109-10 n.316.

⁵⁸ Ennaïfer 1976, 68.

⁵⁹ *CMT* II.4, 53-4 n.385.

⁶⁰ Ennaïfer 1976, 128 n.30.

⁶¹ Ben Abed-Ben Khader 1994, 175. In room XXIV of the Maison de la Cascade at Utica (*CMT* I.1, 32-3 n.34) the octagon consists of an eight-lozenge star.

⁶² Ennaïfer 1976, 67.

⁶³ Ennaïfer 1976, 69.

⁶⁴ The same pattern seems to have decorated chamber XVII of the Maison du Triconque at Carthage (*CMT* IV.1, 71 n.100) too, but the mosaic has been destroyed.

⁶⁵ *CMT* I.1, 114-15 n.134.

⁶⁶ *CMT* I.1, 109 n.125.

(Table 9.2 n. 25); in the chamber XV of the Maison aux Communs at Thuburbo Maius⁶⁷ the squares are inserted within tangent crosses of interlaced *scuta* (Pl. 157).

In some instances, the geometric framework of the circle-pattern is vegetalised, like in room 21 of the Édifice des Asclepieia at Althiburos⁶⁸. The foliate pattern of circles may form squares (room XIV of the Maison des Protomés Section of the *Triconchos* at Thuburbo Maius⁶⁹: Table 9.2 n.15; and chamber 5 of the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna: Table 9.2 n. 1) or octagons (room XLIX of the Maison du Paon at El Jem⁷⁰: Pl. 101) or combine squares and spindles (room XXIX of the Maison de Bacchus et Ariane at Thuburbo Maius⁷¹). Squares and spindles appear in combination with octagons in room XVIII of the Maison de Nicentius at Thuburbo Maius (Table 9.2 n. 9)⁷².

In room XIII of the Maison des Protomés Section of the *Triconchos* at Thuburbo Maius⁷³, the foliate composition of octagons and circles is enriched by the insertion of bunches of grapes (Pl. 180). In room X of the Maison de Neptune at Thuburbo Maius⁷⁴, peacock feathers are inserted within a scale pattern of garlands issuing from craters. Similarly, in room XIII of the Maison des Deux Chasses at Clupea⁷⁵, the simple pattern of adjacent scales is made more exuberant by the insertion of roses in the compartments (Table 9.2 n. 29). The same composition occurs in room 8 of the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna⁷⁶, but here the compartments are filled with rectangles, which are ornamented with flowers in a more geometric schema. The motif of the roses appears again in room XVIII of the Maison du Péristyle Figuré at Pupput (Pl. 144)⁷⁷. The flowers are arranged in a pair of squares on either side of a richer composition: shells and pyramids-like plants issuing from vases on high support frame a curvilinear octagon, which contains a pair of birds and vine foliage emerging from a crater⁷⁸.

⁶⁷ CMT II.3, 108-09 n.315.

⁶⁸ Ennaïfer 1976, 129 n.33.

⁶⁹ CMT II.3, 53-4 n.280.

⁷⁰ CMT III.1, 62-3 n.25.

⁷¹ CMT III.1, 62-3 n.25.

⁷² CMT II.1, 40-1 n.33.

⁷³ CMT II.3, 51-2 n.279.

⁷⁴ CMT II.1, 148-50 n. 119.

⁷⁵ Ennaïfer 1999, 240.

⁷⁶ Gauckler 1896, 196.

⁷⁷ Ben Abed 1983; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 1994, 175.

⁷⁸ According to Poinssot and Lantier (1925, 260), vegetal motifs combined in the same pattern decorated chambers XXIII-XXIV of the Maison de Neptune at Thuburbo Maius too, but the floor mosaics have been destroyed.

9.6 Gendered space

The architectural layout of the private apartments shows a close resemblance to the arrangement of the identifiable *cubicula*. It may be inferred that both categories of rooms housed the same kind of activities as those which are documented for the *cubiculum* from literary evidence. In some instances, the lavish layout of the private apartments seems to suggest that they were used not just for rest but, like the *cubiculum*, also for the reception of friends⁷⁹. However, most of the chambers listed in the table show a more unpretentious and plain layout, which seems to suggest that the so-called private apartments were rather used as family rooms, where the members of the family may have rested, performed household work, or withdrawn for solitary pursuits. This brings the notion of gendered space in question. There is a tendency to regard the smallest and unpretentious chambers as the Roman woman's and servant's territory in contrast with the more lavish rooms reserved for the male head of the household. As a result, small private apartments would have been part of the women's quarters.

To the Roman mind the contrast between male and female space was fundamental to the Greek house. In the preface to the lives of famous men, both Greeks and Romans, Cornelius Nepos warns his Roman reader that there were a number of cultural contrasts between Greek and Roman society. Romans, for example, do not segregate their women; at home the *materfamilias* holds the place of honour and circulates in full public view. In Greece, on the contrary, the woman is not invited to a party except with relatives and spends all her time in the women's quarter (*gynaekonitis*)⁸⁰. The same contrast is implicit in Vitruvius' account of domestic architecture. In his description of the Greek house, the writer stresses upon the division between women's quarter (*gynaekonitis*) and men's space (*andronitis*), a distinction which does not appear in the Roman *domus*⁸¹ but might have in Africa.

Current work on Greek houses suggests that the separation of space was not the major architectural feature, as Roman writers imply. The Greek household was a place of integration, where male and female members negotiated norms and space: the segregation was not achieved through spatial dispositions but by behavioural

⁷⁹ See, for example, the private apartments of the Maison des Colonnes Rouges at Acholla and of the Maison des Deux Chasses at Clupea, but also chamber 9 of the Maison de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons at Volubilis and room XLIV of the Maison du Paon at El Jem.

⁸⁰ Corn.Nep. *praef.* 6-8.

⁸¹ Vitruv. *De Arch.* 6.7.2-4.

conventions and organisation of time⁸². Rather, it is in the Roman house that spatial arrangements seem to reveal gendered places. *Vestibulum*, audience-chamber, *triclinium* and assembly-rooms were in the first instance spaces associated with the *paterfamilias* alone. Their architectural and decorative layout was constructed principally as a means of display for the enhancement of the *dominus*' reputation and for his self-presentation⁸³. The Roman *domus* is thus the place that constructs and reproduces relationship of power. That emerges constantly from Saint Augustine's writings: the household head maintains control both over the members of his family (as father over his child, as husband over his wife, as master over his servant) and over the visitors of the house (as host over his guest and as *patronus* over his *cliens*)⁸⁴.

On the other hand, the lady of the house too had a separate complex of rooms for her personal use. That can be inferred from Pliny's letter to his wife Calpurnia: in her absence, the lonely husband records his nocturnal wakefulness and how during the day his feet by habit carry him to her rooms (*ad diaetam tuam*) at the times when he usually visited her⁸⁵. Trimalchio distinguishes his personal *cubiculum* from his wife's rooms (*sestorium*)⁸⁶; again, in the description of his villa, Sidonius speaks of a *triclinium matronale*, which lay next to the storeroom and the weaving room⁸⁷, domestic spaces traditionally associated with women's household work. However, such scattered passages are a poor basis for generalisation about female space in the Roman house, especially in the context of Africa where different attitudes may have presented.

Archaeological evidence may be instrumental in marking gendered space. Concentration of artefacts associated with female activity such as mirrors, jewellery, toiletries, or items associated with sewing and weaving would indicate the use of that space by women. But in most cases, those finds have been destroyed or not published by the excavators. Moreover, room contents cannot provide a secure illustration of space use because of the portable nature of ancient furniture and of the flexible use of domestic space.

⁸² Goldberg 1999 with previous bibl.

⁸³ Wallace-Hadrill 1988; id. 1996.

⁸⁴ Shaw 1987.

⁸⁵ Plin. *Ep.* 7.5.

⁸⁶ Petr. *Sat.* 77.4. The term is rarely attested in Latin literature: derived from *sedeo+torem*, the word indicates a dwelling place, a sitting-room, or parlour. The term seems to be associated with women, as the so-called Palatium Sessorium was originally the private residence of Helena, Constantine's mother.

⁸⁷ Sidon. *Ep.* 2.2.9.

Written evidence was socially constructed and frequently reflects the ideals and norms of a particular class and gender, which are the male upper-class of Rome. Local traditions may have influenced the behaviour and ideal of woman in the provinces of the Roman Empire, but the uneven and scattered evidence makes it difficult to assess whether and how much diversity there was. Roman male writers repeatedly implied that domestic space was strongly gendered, as their literary accounts of domestic moments focus on male-defined activities, such as *convivium*, meetings with peers, lecturers, and recitations, which served the male household head to enforce his ties of friendship and to display status; even in the accounts of sexual encounters it is the male view which dominates. However, a considerable body of literary evidence indicates that the Roman *matrona* enjoyed a certain amount of autonomy and participated in a wide range of activities, which took her out of the house⁸⁸. In the male-defined household, too, the *matrona* seems not to have been totally subordinate to his husband. Calpurnia, Pliny's wife, moved to Campania to recover from illness in a countryside retreat, while his husband stayed at Rome to carry on his political activity⁸⁹. Pliny does not specify whether his wife owned the property in her own right, but a number of inscriptions on lead plumbing pipes found at Rome and around the bay of Naples testify to the ownership of villas by rich women. Apuleius' wife, Pudentilla, is described as a wealthy woman, who possessed a country house near Oëa and other estates: fertile fields, a luxuriously decorated house, great quantity of wheat, barley, wine, olive oil, and other crops, hundreds of slaves, and herds formed only a small part of her property that her sons would have inherited⁹⁰. It was because of that big property and the money involved in the dowry that her son Pudens, pushed by his father-in-law, prosecuted Apuleius as a fortune-hunter who had seduced the rich widow by witchcraft.

Insights into how social and gender categories were marked and ordered within the Romano-African house cannot exclude a discussion on space reserved for children. In Roman mind, in fact, children and women were often associated as individuals lacking the ability of self-control. In monumental representations and in literary descriptions, children and women figure are represented as weak by contrast to the men, who

⁸⁸ Lefkowitz and Fant 1992.

⁸⁹ Plin. *Ep.* 6.4.

⁹⁰ Apul. *Apol.* 93.

distinguish themselves in two specifically male activities: fighting and drinking wine⁹¹. Children were in the power of their father (*patria potestas*) or, in case of premature death of the father, under the authority of their mother (*maternal auctoritas*). After her husband's death, Monnica, Saint Augustine's mother, supervised her son's education and continued to subject him to the *disciplina ac severitas* that was commonly associated with the *patria potestas*. Severe education was considered necessary to shape the personality of the future citizens and wives and to teach them the behaviour appropriate to their social standing and gender⁹².

Ariès' thesis that childhood is a relatively modern invention⁹³ and the consequent association with the idea that Romans were indifferent to their children cannot be accepted. Literary and epigraphical evidence makes it evident that Romans perceived childhood as a separate stage of life and children were raised to suit the status of life into which they were born. Written evidence provides us with a guide to how adults viewed the world of their children. However, as the product of the dominant male elite who were not necessarily directly involved in day-to-day child rearing, literary accounts of childhood reflect adults' concern about the growth of the child's mental faculties and character of someone who was to form a future member of society. There are not descriptions of the children's daily lives or of the domestic spaces where they slept and played, when they were not at school.

Modern western houses often include spaces set apart for children- the nursery, the playroom, and the children's bedroom. No trace of such rooms is evident in archaeological record. There is a tendency to assume that those spaces did not exist in the Roman household, because children used to sleep and spend their time in servile areas together with slave carers, to whom children were handed over at birth⁹⁴. However, there is no archaeological or literary evidence to support this. When writers give rare glimpses of children at play, it is in the colonnaded *atrium*⁹⁵ or in places presumably located in open-air spaces because of the nature of the games (e.g. skimming pebbles into the sea, building castles in the sand, games with balls)⁹⁶. In terms of gendered games, Huskinson's analysis of the scenes with children at play on Roman

⁹¹ Wiederman 1989.

⁹² Wiederman 1989; Harlow and Laurence 2002, 34-53. On children in general, see Rawson 2003 with previous bibl.

⁹³ Ariès 1962.

⁹⁴ Wallace-Hadrill 1988, 52.

⁹⁵ Lucr. 4.400-4; Verg. *Aen.* 7.378-80.

⁹⁶ A number of literary references to children's games are in Evans 1991; Harlow and Laurence 2002, 46-9.

sarcophagi shows that boys and girls played in separate groups and architectural details may suggest that the boys played outside while the girls were inside⁹⁷. However, the architectural details are drawn schematically and the scale is small: there can be no possibility to identify the interior spaces.

The principle of Roman household seems to have been negotiation of space, rather than separation. Roman *domus* was a place, where individuals who were separated by gender distinctions interacted with each other and negotiated time and space. As Laurence correctly suggests, division of male and female space in the house was temporal rather than structural⁹⁸. The household space was male-dominated in the morning at the *salutatio* and in the evening during the *convivium*, but in the central portion of the day, when the *dominus* was in the *forum* or in the baths, the whole house belonged to the woman. It was then probably that the *matrona* supervised arrangements within the household, for example dinner and entertainers, and assigned duties to the specialised members of the staff. In the satirical description of a dinner-party in the house of a freed slave, the lady of the house, Fortunata, is described as a woman in charge of Trimalchio's money and 'not even a drop of water does she put into her mouth until she has arranged the silver and divided the leftovers among the slaves'⁹⁹. Like Fortunata, the *matrona* of other households may have participated in the male-defined ritual of the *convivium*, but her presence was not automatically taken for granted. In the literary accounts of dinner-parties, the guest list was predominantly male. In this and other male-dominant moments, the wife may have continued her daily activities in a more private, separate part of the house from that of her husband and his guests.

The image of children playing in the *atrium* seems to suggest that they were not confined to any part of the house: in the male-defined moments of sociability, children may have accompanied their mother or their carers in more private spaces of the house.

9.7 Conclusions

In the study of the gendered use of the words *paterfamilias* and *materfamilias* in written texts, Saller suggests that decoration of the *domus* may signify gendered differences of

⁹⁷ Huskinson 1996, 16-7.

⁹⁸ Laurence 1994.

⁹⁹ Petr. Sat. 37.

meaning and taste, depending on whether the owner was male or female¹⁰⁰. The analysis of the mosaic motifs decorating the Romano-African house, however, shows that the spaces traditionally associated with the male head of the household were decorated with motifs, which clearly served as expression of male ideology and as a means of the *dominus*' self-presentation. On the other hand, the mosaics flooring the private apartments, which are conventionally associated with women and children, show that those spaces were not necessarily gender-specific. In the African private apartments figured motifs, which were drawn from the traditional repertory, and the standard geometric/floral designs do not indicate any clear demarcation between male and female space. This suggests that private apartments were intentionally genderless because of their wider use by both the male and female members of the household.

¹⁰⁰ Saller 1999.

| Town | House | Room | Dimensions | Area | Aspect | Anteroom |
|-------------|--------------------------|-------|-------------|-------|-----------------|----------|
| Acholla | M. d'Asinius Rufinus | VIII | 2.92 x 3.7 | 10.8 | peristyle | |
| Acholla | M. d'Asinius Rufinus | X | 2.47 x 3.42 | 8.44 | peristyle | |
| Acholla | M. des Colonnes Rouges | IX/X | 3.4 x 3.6 | 12.24 | peristyle | x |
| Althiburos | Édifice des Asclepieia | 19 | 3.85 x 4.69 | 18.05 | peristyle | x |
| Althiburos | Édifice des Asclepieia | 20/21 | 3.85 x 4 | 15.4 | peristyle | |
| Althiburos | Édifice des Asclepieia | 25 | 3.85 x 3.82 | 14.7 | peristyle | x |
| Althiburos | M. des Muses | I | 2.8 x 4.3 | 12.04 | corridor | x |
| Althiburos | M. des Muses | J | 2.8 x 3.5 | 9.8 | corridor | x |
| Althiburos | M. des Muses | M | 3 x 3 | 9 | secondary court | |
| Althiburos | M. des Muses | N | 3 x 3 | 9 | secondary court | |
| Althiburos | M. des Muses | P | 2.8 x 3 | 8.4 | secondary court | x |
| Althiburos | M. des Muses | Q | 3 x 3 | 9 | secondary court | x |
| Bulla Regia | M. d'Amphitrite | 19 | 3.5 x 3.3 | 11.55 | corridor | |
| Bulla Regia | M. d'Amphitrite | 20 | 3.3 x 3.3 | 10.89 | corridor | |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Chasse | 9 | 2.5 x 3.2 | 8 | peristyle | x |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Nouvelle Chasse | 5 | 3 x 3 | 9 | peristyle | x |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Nouvelle Chasse | 18 | 1.5 x 2.5 | 3.75 | basement | |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Nouvelle Chasse | 17 | 2.5 x 2.5 | 39.06 | basement | |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Pêche | 38 | 3.5 x 4 | 14 | basement | |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Pêche | 40 | 3.5 x 4 | 14 | basement | |

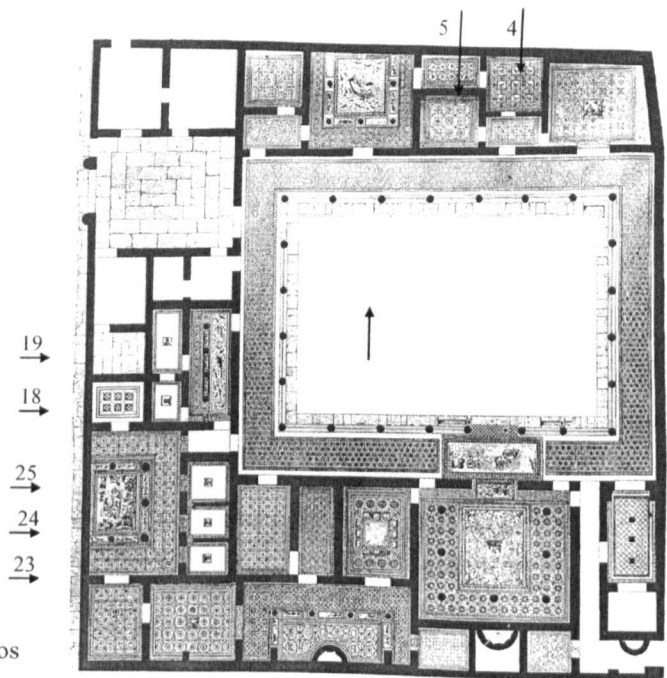
Table 9.1: Private apartments

| | | | | | | | |
|-------------|---------------------------------|----------|----|-------------|-------|--------------------------------|---|
| Bulla Regia | M. n.3 | | 30 | 3m wide | | basement | |
| Bulla Regia | M. n.3 | | 32 | 3 x 3.5 | 10.5 | basement | |
| Carthage | M. de la Volière | | 12 | 2.4 x 3.7 | 8.88 | court | x |
| Carthage | M. du Triconque | VII/VIII | | 4.03 x 6.4 | 25.79 | peristyle | x |
| Carthage | M. du Triconque | XV | | 4.3 x 3.75 | 16.12 | peristyle | x |
| Carthage | M. du Triconque | XVII | | 5.33 x 3.97 | 21.16 | peristyle | x |
| Clupea | M. des Deux Chasses | XII | | 4.65 x 8 | 37.2 | peristyle | x |
| Clupea | M. des Deux Chasses | XIII | | 4.65 x 4.4 | 20.46 | peristyle | x |
| Djemila | M. d'Amphitrite | VI | | 3.5 x 3.6 | 12.6 | peristyle | |
| Djemila | M. d'Amphitrite | VII | | 3.4 x 3.6 | 12.24 | peristyle | |
| Djemila | M. d'Amphitrite | VIII | | 2.6 x 3.6 | 9.36 | peristyle | |
| Djemila | M. d'Europe | 14 | | 2.4 x 4.4 | 10.56 | peristyle | |
| Djemila | M. d'Europe | 15 | | 2.4 x 4.4 | 10.56 | peristyle | |
| El Jem | House of Africa | 2 | | 2 x 2.5 | 5 | peristyle | |
| El Jem | House of Africa | 3 | | 2 x 2.5 | 5 | peristyle | |
| El Jem | House of Africa | 4 | | 2 x 2.5 | 5 | peristyle | |
| El Jem | House of Africa | 6 | | 2.5 x 2 | 5 | peristyle | x |
| El Jem | House of Africa | 7 | | 2 x 2 | 4 | peristyle | x |
| El Jem | House of Africa | 8 | | 2 x 2.5 | 5 | peristyle | |
| El Jem | House of Africa | 9 | | 2 x 2.5 | 5 | peristyle | |
| El Jem | M. de la Procession Dionysiaque | N | | 4 x 3.5 | 14 | peristyle | x |
| El Jem | M. de la Procession Dionysiaque | P | | 4 x 3.5 | 14 | peristyle | x |
| El Jem | M. de la Procession Dionysiaque | Q | | 4 x 3.5 | 14 | peristyle | |
| El Jem | M. de la Procession Dionysiaque | R | | 4 x 3.5 | 14 | peristyle | |
| El Jem | M. des Dauphins | XLVI | | 3 x 4.7 | 14.1 | peristyle | |
| El Jem | M. des Dauphins | XLVII | | 2.5 x 4.7 | 11.75 | peristyle | x |
| El Jem | M. des Dauphins | XLIX | | 2.5 x 4.7 | 11.75 | peristyle | x |
| El Jem | M. des Dauphins | LI | | 2.5 x 4.7 | 11.75 | peristyle | x |
| El Jem | M. du Paon | XLIV | | 3.9 x 3.6 | 14.04 | secondary <i>tricladium</i> | x |
| El Jem | M. du Paon | XLVIII | | 3.2 x 3.6 | 11.52 | peristyle | x |
| El Jem | M. du Paon | XLIX | | 3.2 x 3.05 | 9.76 | peristyle | x |

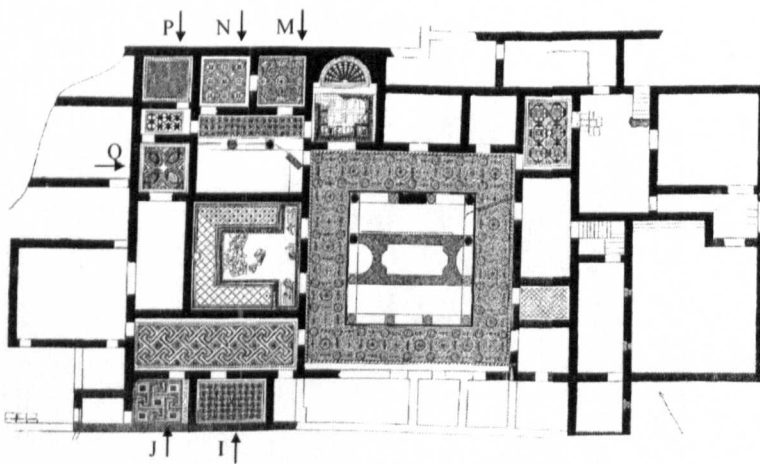
| | | | | | | |
|----------------|-----------------------------------|--------|-------------|-------|-----------------|---|
| El Jem | Sollertiana domus | XXXII | 3 x 3.5 | 10.5 | peristyle | x |
| El Jem | Sollertiana domus | XXXIII | 3 x 4 | 12 | peristyle | x |
| Oudna | M. d'Ikarios | 4 | 3.25 x 3.5 | 11.37 | secondary court | x |
| Oudna | M. Ikarios | 5 | 3.25 x 3.5 | 11.37 | secondary court | x |
| Oudna | M. d'Ikarios | 8 | 3.25 x 3.5 | 11.37 | secondary court | x |
| Oudna | M. d'Ikarios | 18 | 2.75 x 1.75 | 4.81 | secondary court | |
| Oudna | M. d'Ikarios | 19 | 4 x 1.75 | 7 | secondary court | |
| Oudna | M. d'Ikarios | 23 | 2 x 2.75 | 5.5 | secondary court | |
| Oudna | M. d'Ikarios | 24 | 2 x 2.75 | 5.5 | secondary court | |
| Oudna | M. d'Ikarios | 25 | 2.75 x 2.75 | 7.56 | secondary court | |
| Oudna | M. d'Ikarios | 32 | 2.5 x 3.25 | 8.12 | secondary court | |
| Pupput | M. du Péristyle Figuré | XVIII | 5.9 x 11.7 | 69.03 | peristyle | x |
| Pupput | M. du Péristyle Figuré | XIX | 3.5 x 3.5 | 12.25 | peristyle | x |
| Pupput | M. du Péristyle figuré | XX | 3.5 x 3.5 | 12.25 | peristyle | x |
| Pupput | M. du Péristyle Figuré | XXI | 3.5 x 3.5 | 12.25 | peristyle | x |
| Pupput | M. du Triclinium en Noir et Blanc | III | 4.25 x 5 | 21.25 | peristyle | x |
| Pupput | M. du Triclinium en Noir et Blanc | IV | 3.75 x 5 | 18.75 | peristyle | x |
| Pupput | M. du Triclinium en Noir et Blanc | V | 3 x 5 | 15 | peristyle | x |
| Thaenae | M. de Dionysos | V | 4 x 3.5 | 14 | peristyle | |
| Thaenae | M. de Dionysos | VI | 3.8 x 3.5 | 13.3 | peristyle | |
| Thaenae | M. de Dionysos | XIV | 3.8 x 3.1 | 11.78 | secluded area | x |
| Thaenae | M. de Dionysos | XV | 3.8 x 3.1 | 11.78 | secluded area | x |
| Thaenae | M. de Dionysos | XIX | 4.2 wide | | peristyle | x |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. aux Communs | XII | 3.2 x 3.1 | 9.92 | peristyle | x |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. aux Communs | XIV | 3.1 x 3 | 9.3 | peristyle | |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. aux Communs | XV | 3.05 x 3 | 9.15 | peristyle | |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. aux Communs | XVI | 3 x 3 | 9 | peristyle | |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. aux Communs | XVII | 2.95 x 3.05 | 8.99 | peristyle | x |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. aux Communs | XXI | 3.25 x 2.95 | 9.58 | peristyle | x |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. de Bacchus et Ariane | XVIII | 2.85 x 3.1 | 8.83 | secondary court | |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. de Bacchus et Ariane | XIX | 2 x 3 | 6 | secondary court | |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. de Neptune | X | 5.6 x 3.05 | 17.08 | peristyle | x |

| | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|--|-------|-------------|-------|-----------------|---|
| Thurburbo Maius | M. de Neptune | | XXIII | 3.1 x 3.65 | 11.31 | peristyle | x |
| Thurburbo Maius | M. de Neptune | | XXIV | 3.1 x 3.65 | 11.31 | peristyle | x |
| Thurburbo Maius | M. de Nicentius | | XVII | 3 x 2 | 6 | peristyle | x |
| Thurburbo Maius | M. de Nicentius | | XVIII | 4.25 x 3.85 | 16.36 | peristyle | x |
| Thurburbo Maius | M. des Animaux Liés | | XI | 2.75 x 3.75 | 10.31 | peristyle | x |
| Thurburbo Maius | M. des Animaux Liés | | XIII | 4 x 4 | 16 | peristyle | x |
| Thurburbo Maius | M. des Palmes | | XV | 2.54 x 3.85 | 9.77 | assembly-room | |
| Thurburbo Maius | M. des Palmes | | XVIII | 3.28 x 1.76 | 5.77 | corridor | |
| Thurburbo Maius | M. des Palmes | | XIX | 4.27 x 2.9 | 12.38 | corridor | |
| Thurburbo Maius | M. des Protomés-Sect. Protomai | | XII | 2.26 x 2.95 | 6.66 | corridor | x |
| Thurburbo Maius | M. des Protomés-Sect. Protomai | | XV | 3.7 x 2.75 | 10.17 | corridor | x |
| Thurburbo Maius | M. des Protomés-Sect. Triconchos | | XIII | 3.25 x 3.2 | 11.26 | peristyle | x |
| Thurburbo Maius | M. des Protomés-Sect. Triconchos | | XIV | 2.9 x 3.1 | 8.99 | peristyle | x |
| Thurburbo Maius | M. des Protomés-Sect. Triconchos | | XVI | 4.64 x 4.1 | 19.02 | corridor | x |
| Thurburbo Maius | M. des Protomés-Sect. Triconchos | | XXI | 2.9 x 3.55 | 10.29 | peristyle | x |
| Thurburbo Maius | M. des Protomés-Sect. Triconchos | | XXII | 2.9 x 3.55 | 10.29 | peristyle | x |
| Utica | M. au Grand Oecus | | XXV | 3.3 x 3.63 | 11.97 | peristyle | x |
| Utica | M. au Grand Oecus | | XXVI | 3.23 x 3.75 | 12.11 | peristyle | x |
| Utica | M. de la Cascade | | XXIV | 3.05 x 2.92 | 8.9 | peristyle | x |
| Utica | M. de la Cascade | | XXVII | 3.07 x 4.85 | 14.88 | peristyle | x |
| Utica | Maison H | | XVII | 3.6 wide | | peristyle | x |
| Utica | Maison H | | XIX | 3 x 3.56 | 10.68 | peristyle | x |
| Utica | M. Ouest | | I | 2.15 x 1.65 | 3.54 | peristyle | x |
| Utica | M. Ouest | | II | 2.55 x 3.18 | 8.1 | peristyle | |
| Volubilis | M. à la Mosaïque de Vénus | | 4 | 3 x 4.2 | 12.6 | peristyle | |
| Volubilis | M. à la Mosaïque de Vénus | | 5 | 3 x 4.2 | 12.6 | peristyle | |
| Volubilis | M. à la Mosaïque de Vénus | | 6 | 3 x 4.2 | 12.6 | peristyle | |
| Volubilis | M. à la Mosaïque de Vénus | | 7 | 4.2 x 2.5 | 10.5 | peristyle | x |
| Volubilis | M. à la Mosaïque de Vénus | | 13 | 3.55 x 2.56 | 9.08 | secondary court | |
| Volubilis | M. à la Mosaïque de Vénus | | 14 | 3.25 x 2.55 | 8.28 | secondary court | |
| Volubilis | M. à la Mosaïque de Vénus | | 15 | 4.75 x 3.5 | 16.62 | secondary court | |
| Volubilis | M. aux Travaux d'Hercule | | 3 | 5 x 2.15 | 10.75 | peristyle | x |

| | | | | | | |
|-----------|--------------------------------------|----|-------------|-------|-----------------|---|
| Volubilis | M. aux Travaux d'Hercule | 6 | 5 x 5.1 | 25.5 | peristyle | x |
| Volubilis | M. aux Travaux d'Hercule | 11 | 5 x 4 | 20 | peristyle | |
| Volubilis | M. de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons | 6 | 5.28 x 4.33 | 22.86 | peristyle | |
| Volubilis | M. de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons | 8 | 5.4 x 4.33 | 23.38 | peristyle | |
| Volubilis | M. de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons | 9 | 3.55 x 7.95 | 28.22 | peristyle | x |
| Volubilis | M. de Flavius Germanus | 9 | 4.6 x 6.15 | 28.29 | peristyle | x |
| Volubilis | M. de Flavius Germanus | 10 | 4.6 x 5.75 | 26.45 | peristyle | x |
| Volubilis | M. de Flavius Germanus | 11 | 4.35 x 3.6 | 15.66 | peristyle | x |
| Volubilis | M. de Flavius Germanus | 13 | 4.35 x 3.1 | 13.48 | peristyle | x |
| Volubilis | M. de Flavius Germanus | 14 | 3.52 x 4.6 | 16.19 | corridor | |
| Volubilis | M. de Flavius Germanus | 16 | 3.45 x 4.6 | 15.87 | corridor | |
| Volubilis | M. de l'Ephèbe | 7 | 5 x 5 | 25 | peristyle | x |
| Volubilis | M. d'Orphée | 7 | 5 x 5.5 | 27.5 | secondary court | |
| Volubilis | M. d'Orphée | 12 | 5.5 x 3.5 | 19.25 | secondary court | x |
| Volubilis | M. des Néréides | 16 | 4 x 3.27 | 13.08 | peristyle | x |
| Volubilis | M. des Néréides | 18 | 6 x 3.25 | 19.5 | secondary court | |
| Volubilis | M. des Néréides | 19 | 4 x 4 | 16 | secondary court | |



1. Oudna, Maison d'Ikarios

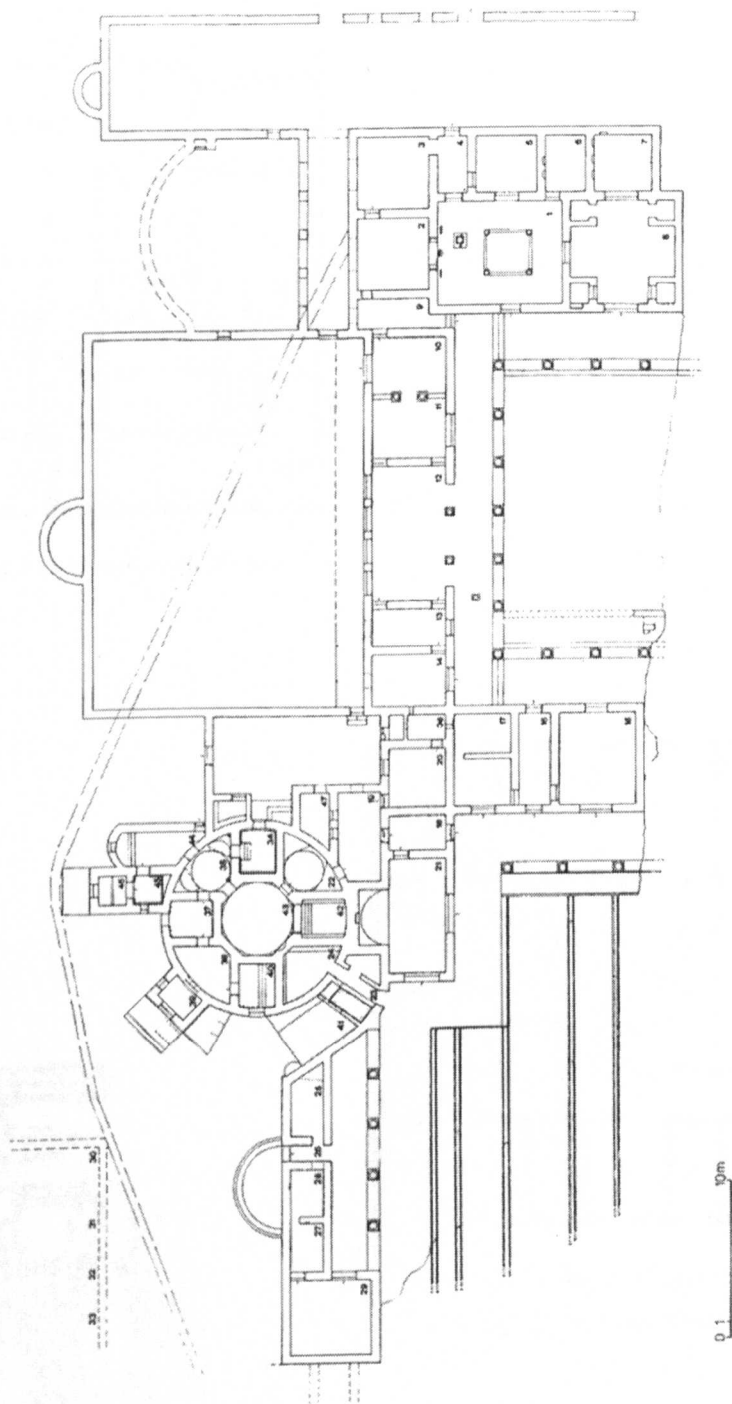


2. Althiburos, Maison des Muses

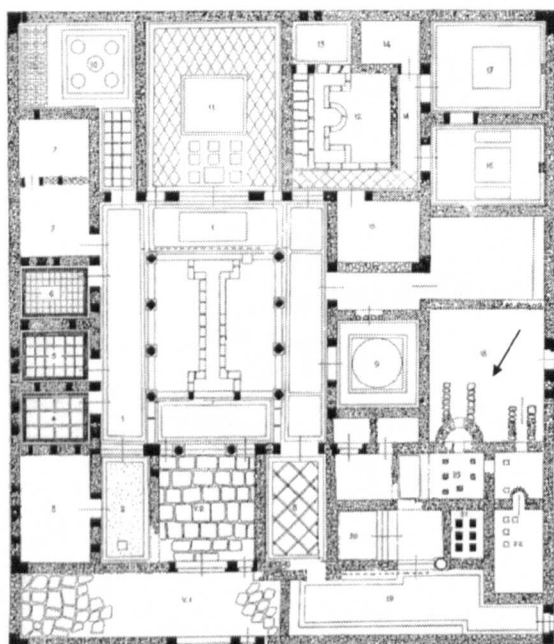
0 5 10m

Table 9.2: Private apartments in the Romano African house





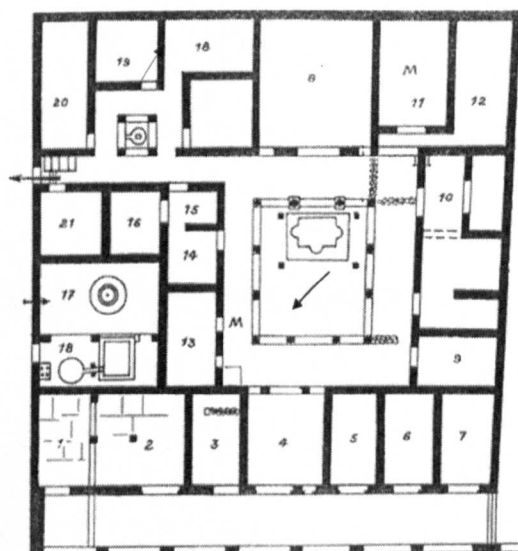
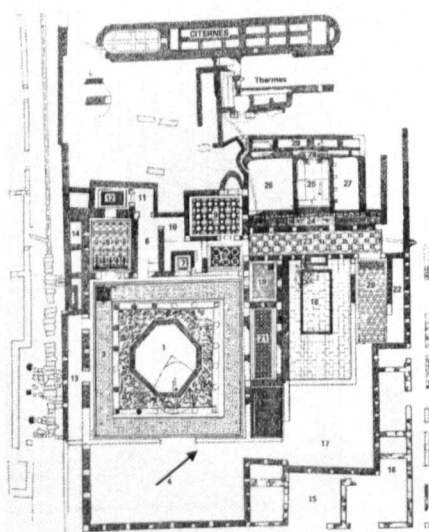
3. Silin, Villa du Taureau



4. Volubilis, Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus

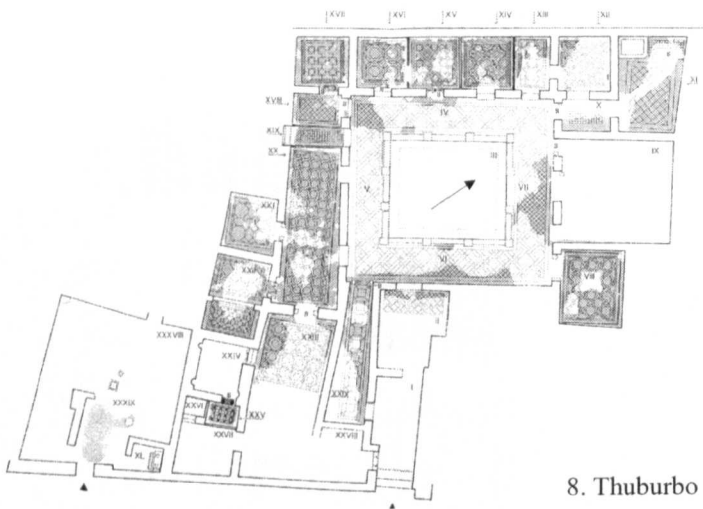


5. Thuburbo Maius, Maison de Bacchus et Ariane

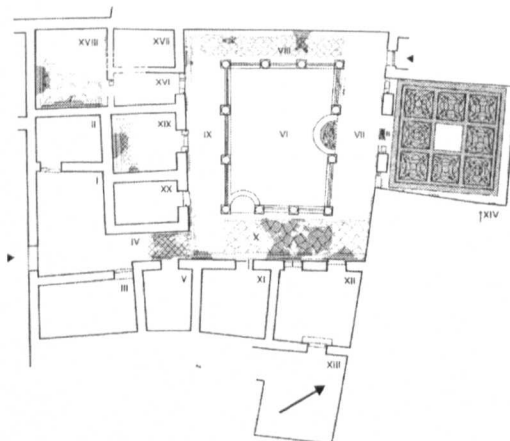


6. Volubilis, Maison des Néréides

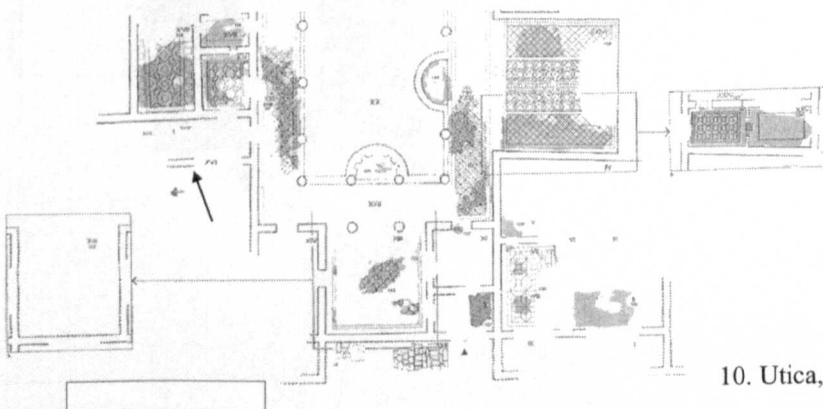
7. Carthage, Maison de la Volière



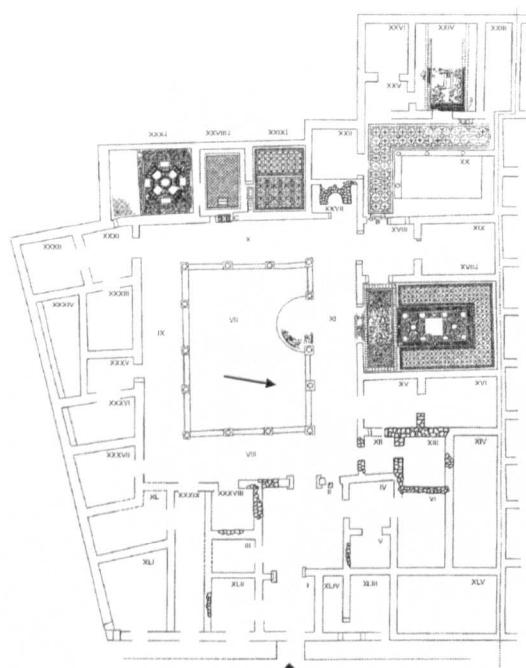
8. Thuburbo Maius, Maison aux Communs



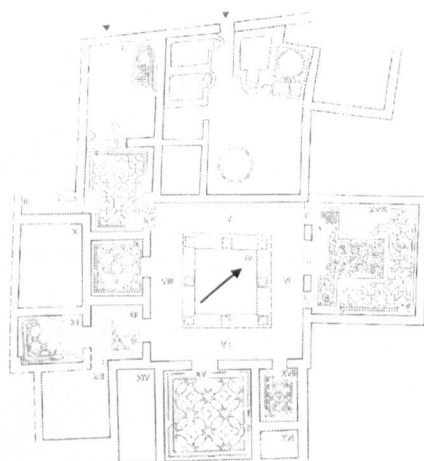
9. Thuburbo Maius, Maison de Nicentius



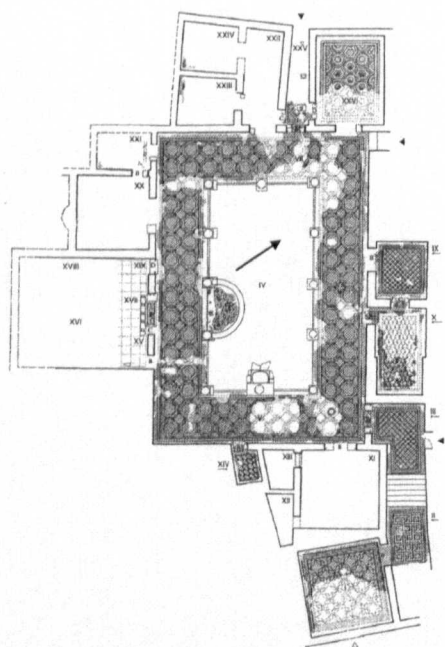
10. Utica, Maison H



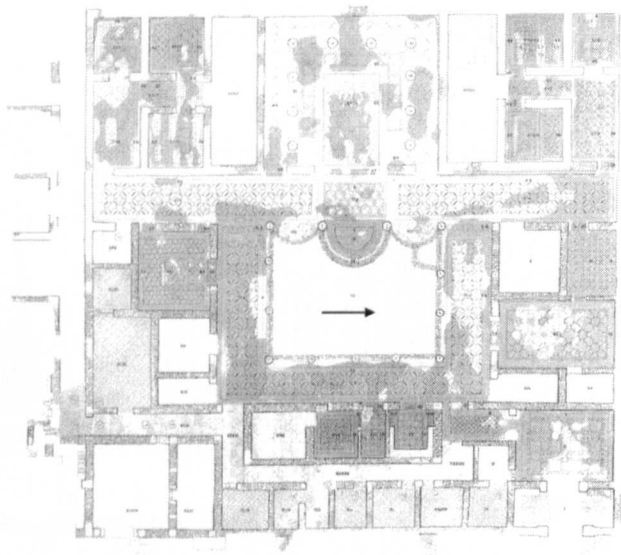
11. El Jem, Sollertiana Domus



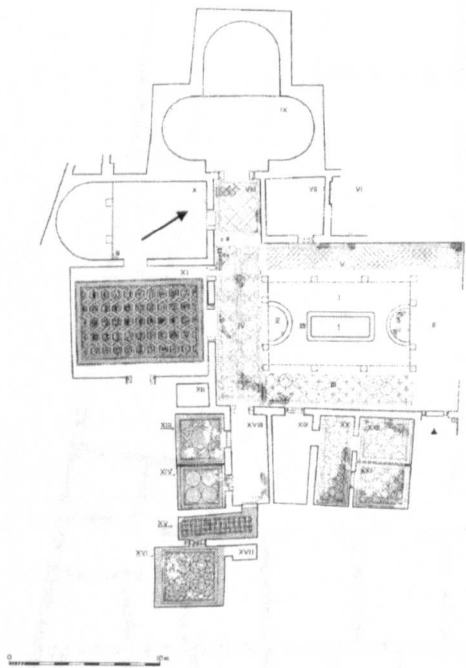
12. Thuburbo Maius, Maison des Animaux Liés



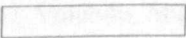
13. Thuburbo Maius, Maison de Neptune

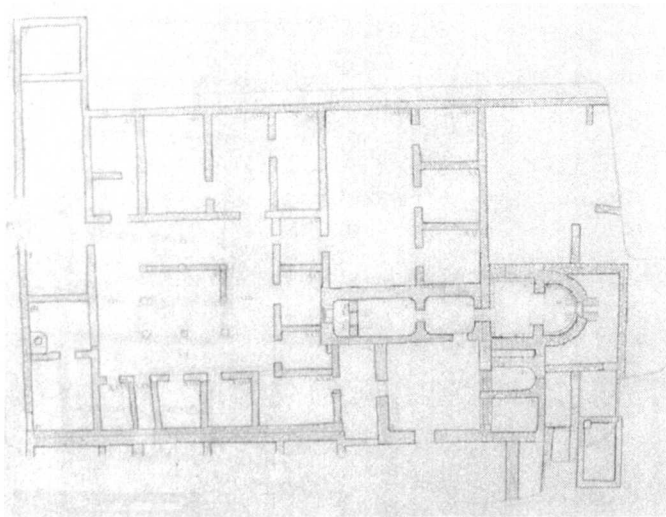


14. Acholla, Maison du Triomphe de Neptune

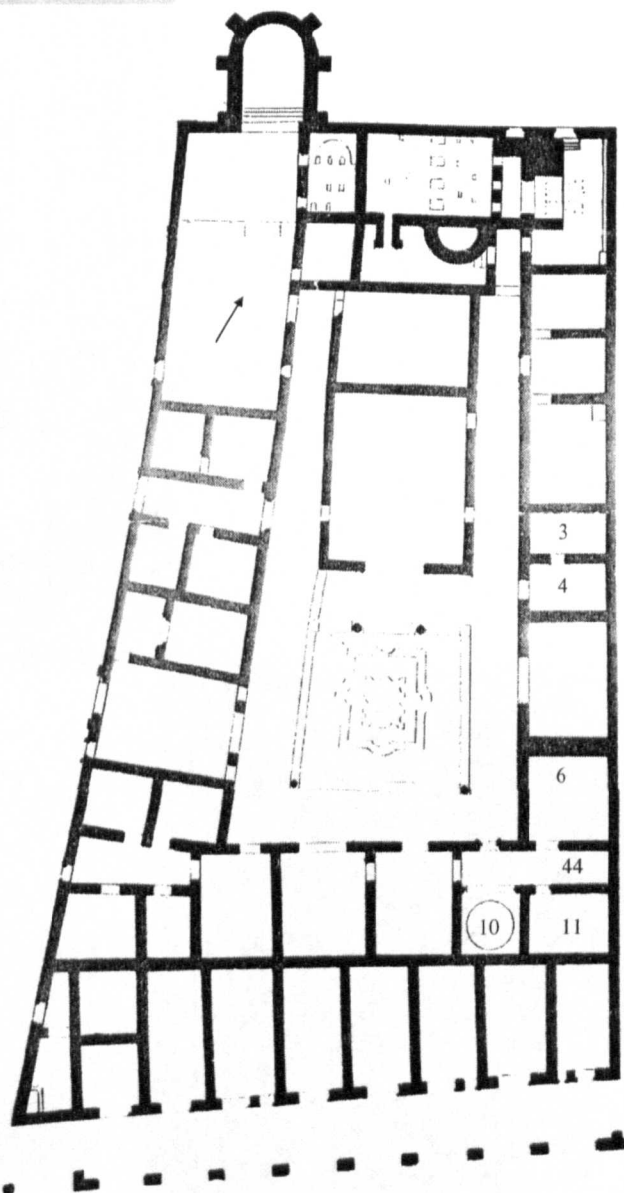


15. Thuburbo Maius, Maison des Protomés, section of the *Triconchos*

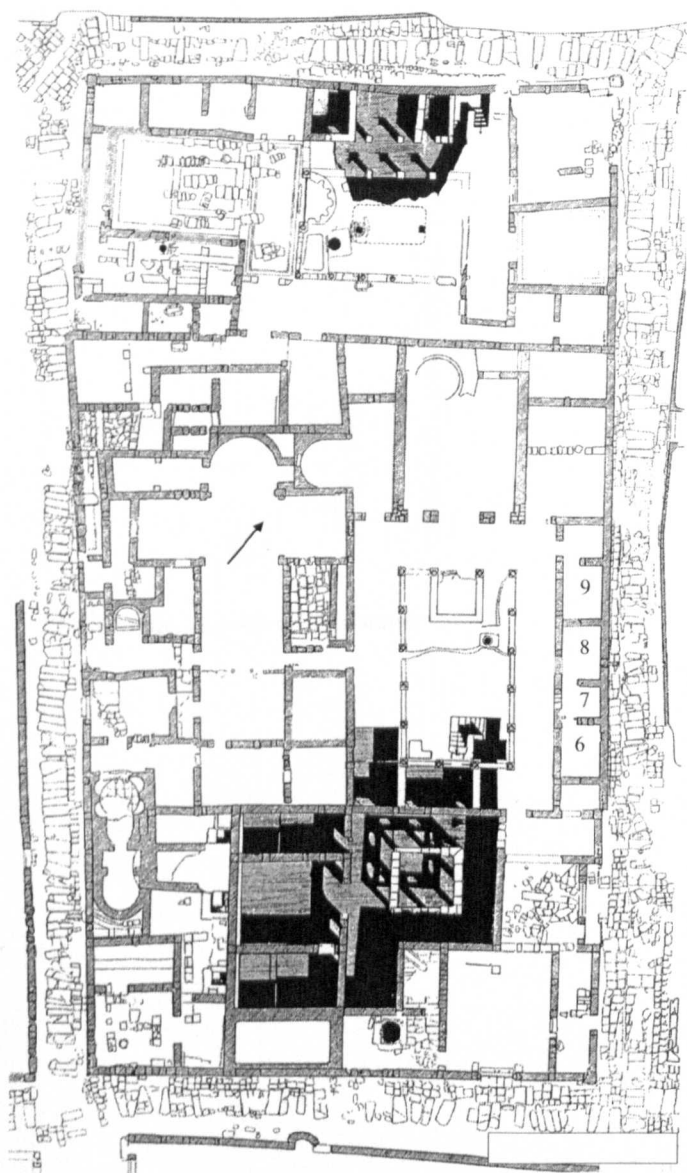




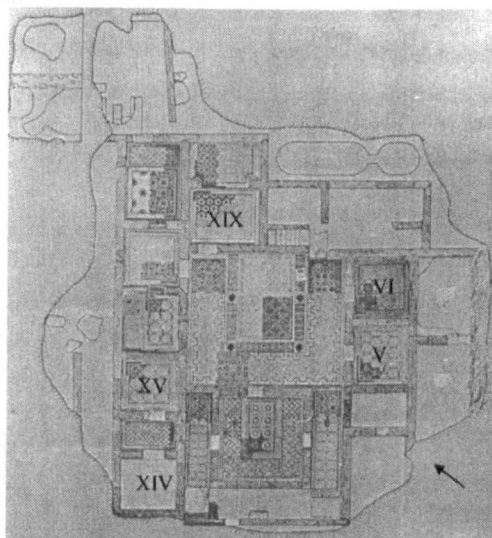
16. Pappus, Maison du Péristyle Figuré



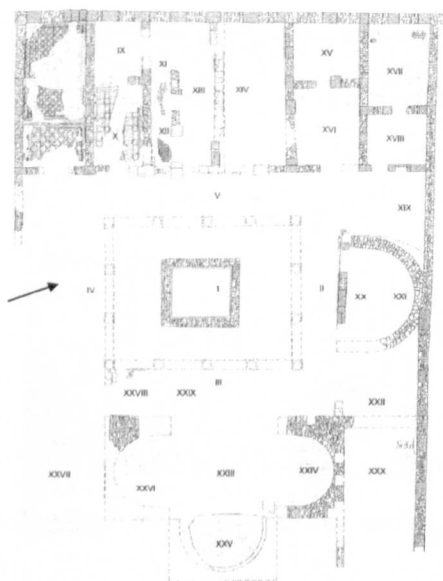
17. Volubilis, Maison aux Travaux d'Hercule



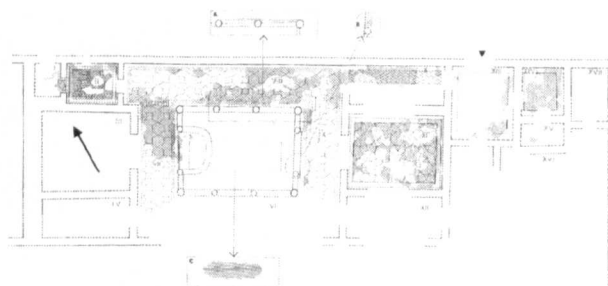
18. Bulla Regia, Insula de la Chasse



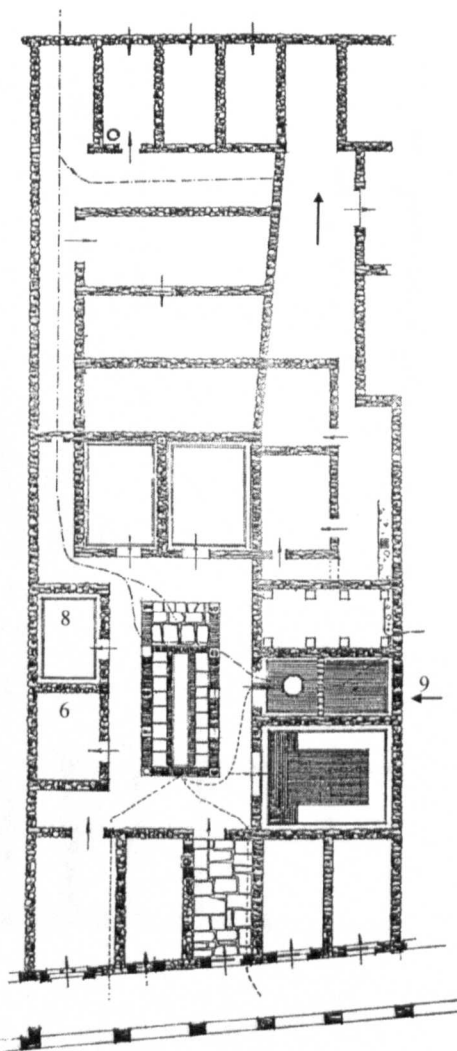
19. Thanae, Maison de Dionysos



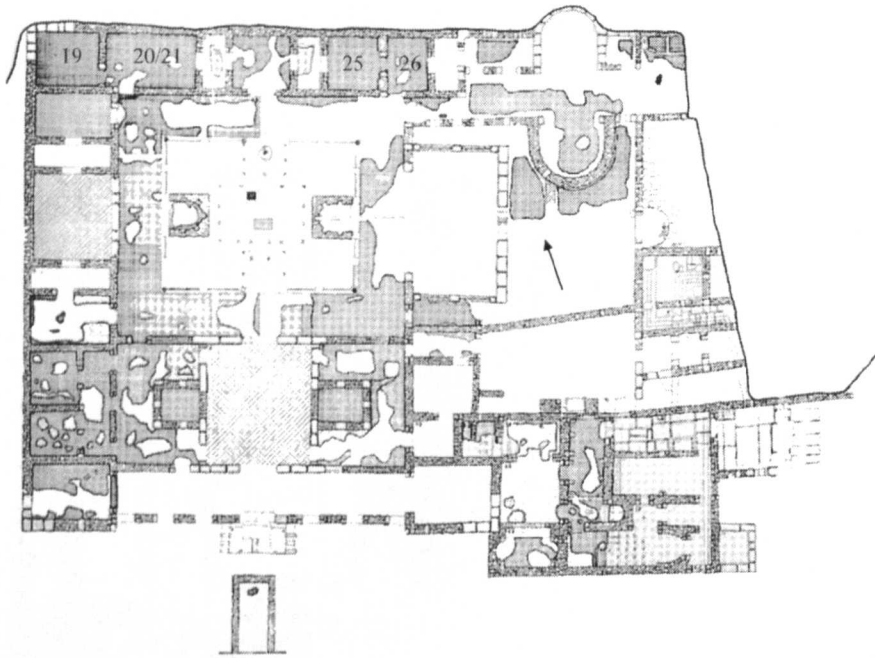
20. Carthage, Maison du Triconque



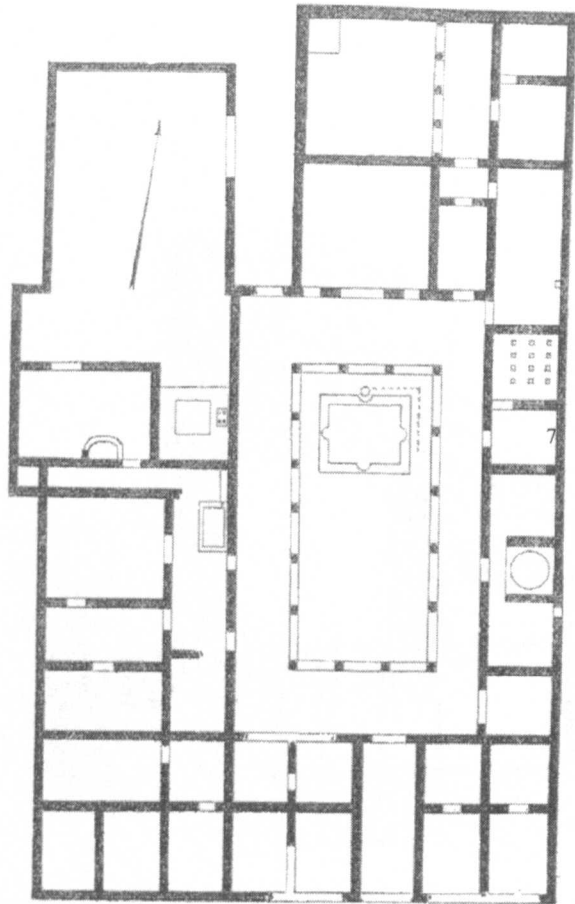
21. Utica, Maison Ovest



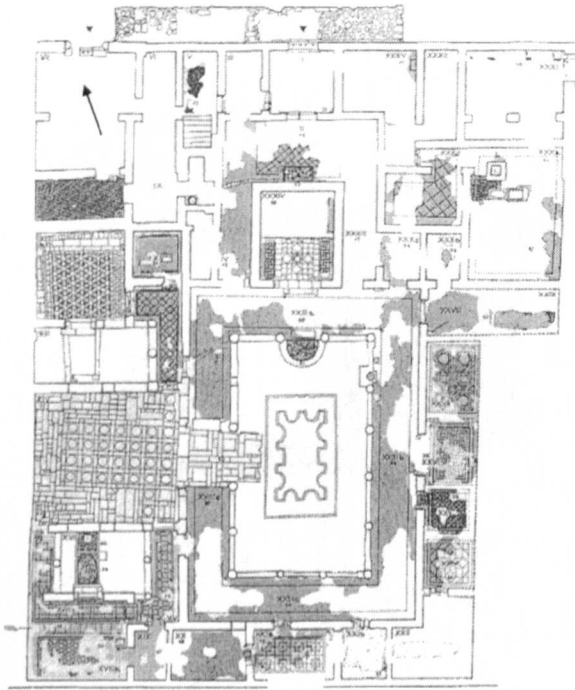
22. Volubilis, Maison de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons



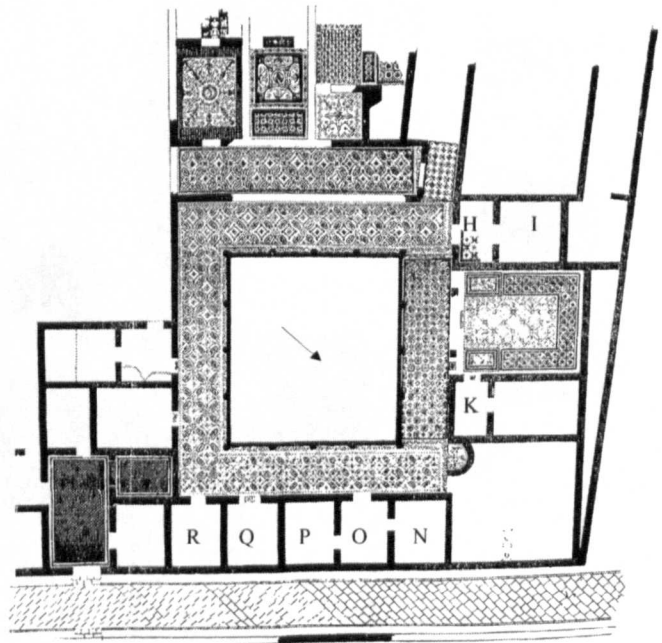
23. Althiburos, Édifice des Asclepieia



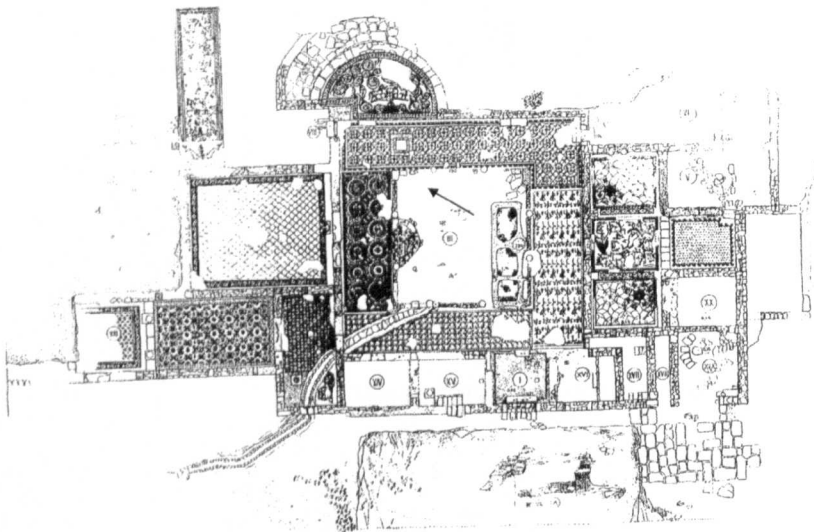
24. Volubilis, Maison de l'Éphèbe



25. Utica, Maison de la Cascade



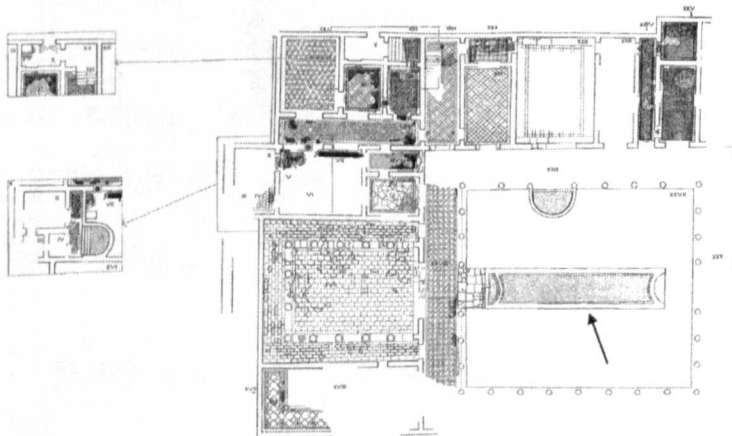
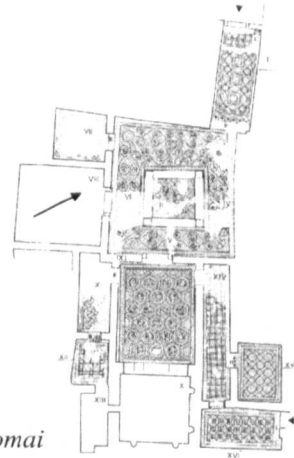
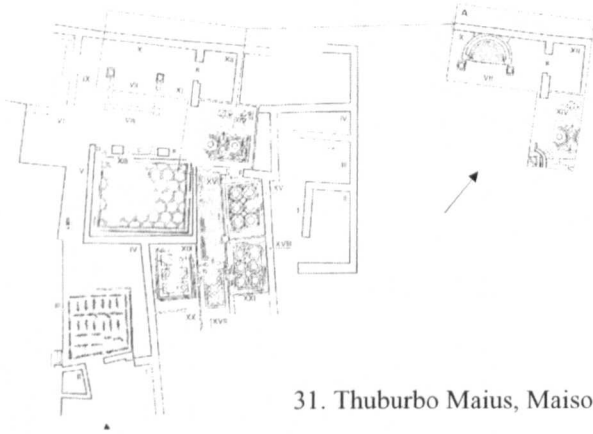
26. El Jem, Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque

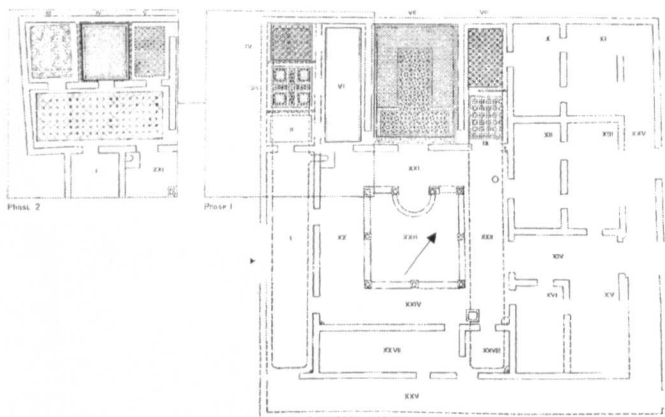


29. Clupea, Maison des Deux Chasses



30. Acholla, Maison des Colonnes Rouges



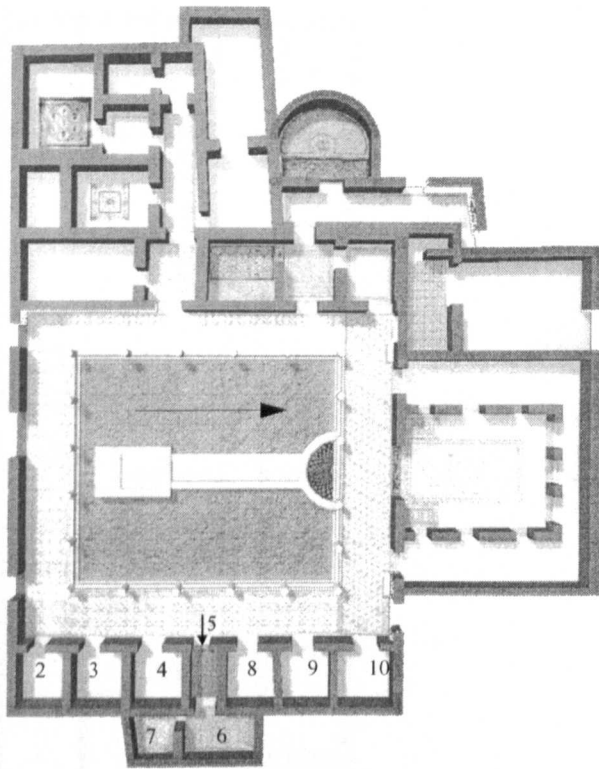


34. Pupput, Maison du Triclinium en Noir et Blanc

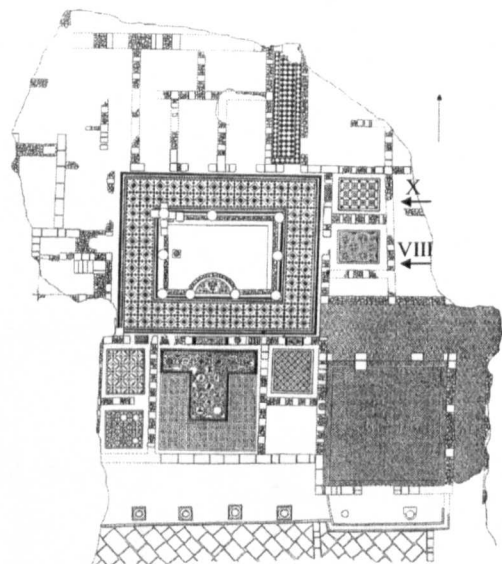


35. Bulla Regia, Maison de la Pêche

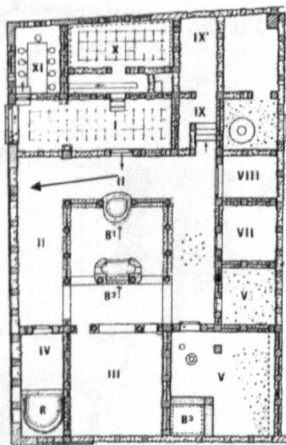




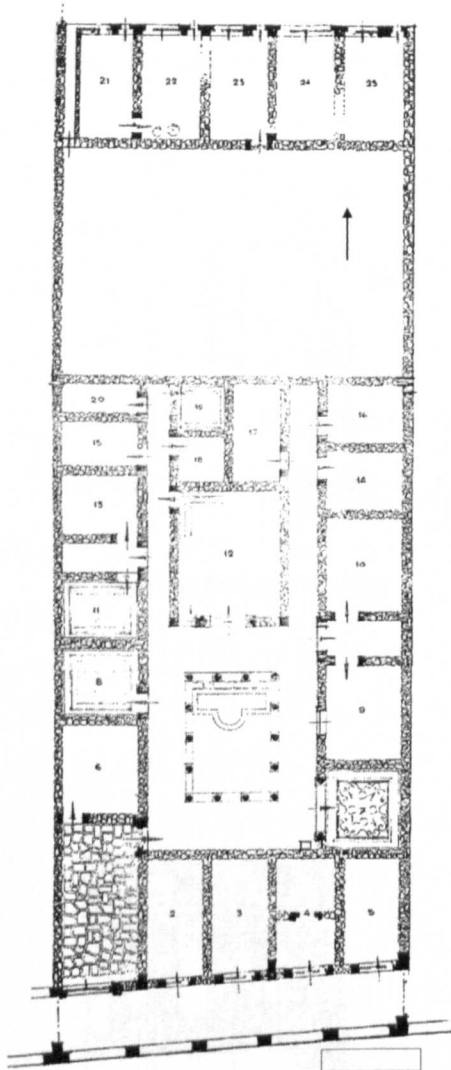
36. El Jem, House of Africa



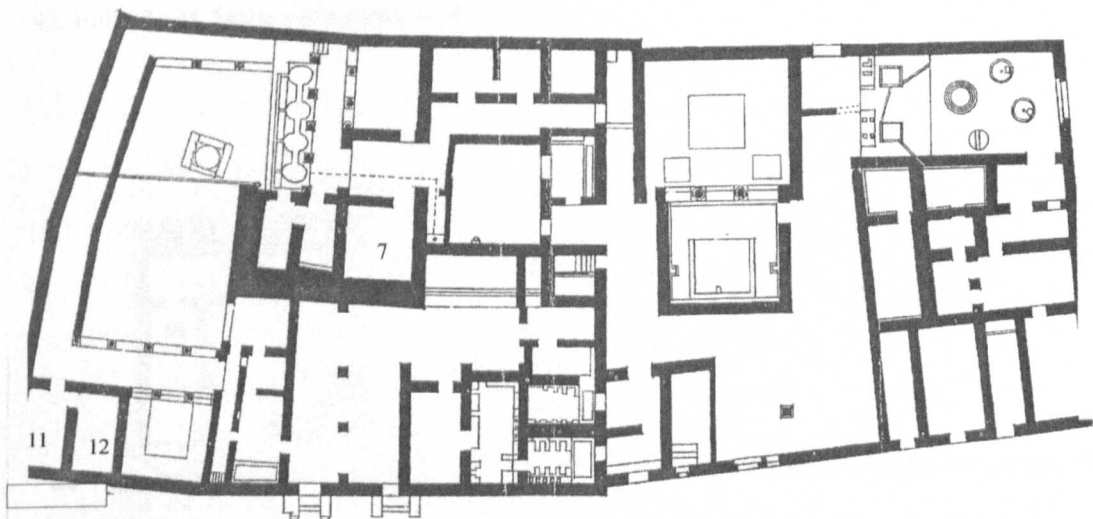
37. Acholla, Maison d'Asinius Rufinus



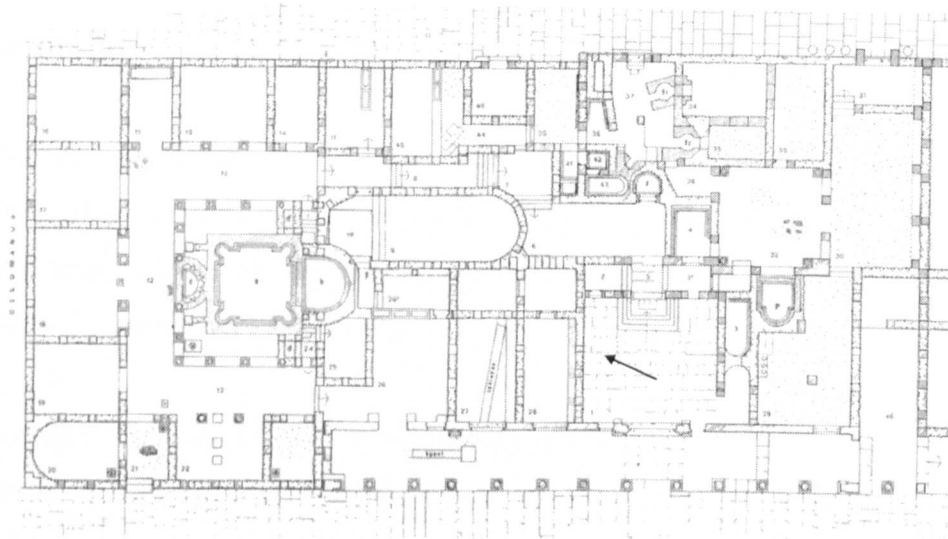
38. Djemila, Maison d'Amphitrite



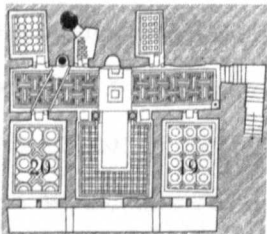
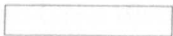
39. Volubilis, Maison de Flavius Germanus



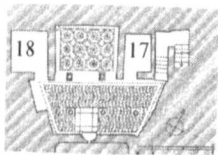
40. Volubilis, Maison d'Orphée



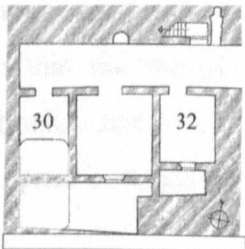
41. Djemila, Maison d'Europe



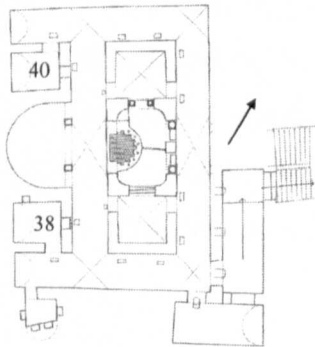
42. Bulla Regia, Maison d'Amphitrite: basement



43. Bulla Regia, Maison de la Nouvelle Chasse: basement



44. Bulla Regia, Maison n. 3: basement



45. Bulla Regia, Maison de la Pêche: basement

Chapter 10

Conclusions

The analysis of the mosaics within the architectural context of Romano-African house shows that the study of mosaic and architecture as the component parts of a whole can give deep insights into how wealthy house-owners experienced domestic spaces; it also offers the possibility of exploring some aspects of social relations in Roman Africa.

Domestic mosaics fulfilled a variety of functions. As a form of art, they primarily served an aesthetic function, namely to make the rooms they decorate more attractive and luxurious. Because of their intrinsic or aesthetic value, mosaics also functioned as a means of displaying the owner's wealth and social status. At the same time, as the room-types discussed in the previous chapters make evident, the choice of designs and subject-patterns within a given decoration reflects the function of the room. Before proceeding with the discussion of mosaic motifs in terms of occurrence and meaning within a given room-type, a cautionary word is necessary. The data displayed in the accompanying tables come from a selected sample of Romano-African houses, which cannot give a complete picture of the typical African house in Imperial times. Excavations of a larger number of well-documented houses with well-preserved mosaics would obviously provide us with a larger sample of archaeological data and would allow more comprehensive conclusions. In an ideal condition of having a number of completely excavated archaeological sites with a large number of well-documented houses and with well-preserved mosaics, we could compare a large sample of archaeological data and get very comprehensive information. However, though the African houses selected for discussion here are far from perfect as a resource, this does not mean that the sample of archaeological data available, with its limitations and imperfections, cannot provide useful information for an interpretation of the use of domestic space in Roman North Africa.

10.1 Decorative motifs on African mosaics

In order to determine the extent to which motifs and designs appeared in the decoration of the selected room-types, a statistical check has been carried out. Table 10.1 illustrates in percentage form the rate of occurrences of a certain pavement-type in the domestic

spaces discussed in the previous chapters. As we can see, the most important reception rooms (main *triclinium*, secondary *triclinium*, and assembly-rooms) were floored with mosaics illustrating figurative motifs; audience-chambers, peristyles, *cubicula*, and private apartments were mostly decorated with complex geometric/floral designs; *vestibula* and secondary entrances were often unpaved: when they are floored with mosaics, they show simple geometric compositions. The important point that emerges from the table is that the choice of pavement-type was closely linked to the function of the room. Mosaics representing figured scenes, which involved expenditure of time and money because of the variety of colours and amount of *tesserae* used, were reserved for the rooms designed to receive and to entertain high-status guests whom the house-owner wanted to impress. Figured motifs occur in *cubicula* too, as these rooms were also used for the reception of selected guests. Geometric and floral patterns of complex design and rich colours were mostly used in *cubicula* and private apartments, namely the rooms reserved for a limited number of guests who were on intimate terms with the house-owner and for the members of his family. Geometric compositions of reduced complexity and limited colours decorated subsidiary spaces for the reception of low-status *clientes* (*vestibula*) or for the household's use (secondary entrance): in most cases these spaces were unpaved.

Within figurative mosaics, the main categories of subjects represented include classical mythology, illustrations of Seasons and *xenia*, marine motifs, and subjects drawn from contemporary life, such as hunting, the amphitheatre, and the circus (Table 10.2).

The range of mythological subjects in our sample of African mosaics is limited, in contrast to the extensive repertoire found in mosaics of the eastern provinces, in Pompeian paintings, or in contemporary Roman sarcophagi. It is difficult to ascertain the reason why only a few mythological subjects were represented in African domestic mosaics. Perhaps, the range of models available at the mosaicist's workshop was small, though this does not explain why the mosaicist did not seek new models, which were widely adopted in other provinces of the Empire and in other artistic repertoires. Perhaps most patrons were not interested in this kind of subject-matter for reasons that are difficult to ascertain.

Within the mythological series, two general groupings may be distinguished. The one includes individual figures of the traditional divinities, such as those decorating private

apartments 18-19-23-24-25 of the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna: chosen from the general traditional repertory, the figures of the gods seem to have fulfilled a more decorative function. The other grouping includes scenes of mythological narrative, which are more common than scenes showing individual deities.

As far as the choice of subjects within the mythological repertoire (Table 10.3), Dionysus is by far the most popular and is represented the most in the selected African mosaics. Representation of the god along with the members of his entourage occur exclusively in *triclinia* (both main and secondary) as the most appropriate setting for the illustration of the god of wine and of fruitfulness. Dionysiac motifs served as a kind of hospitable greeting to the guests entering the dining room and as an invitation to them to enjoy the pleasures of wine. The message of these scenes as a symbol of conviviality and pleasure is emphasized in the mosaics in which Dionysus is associated with the Seasons as generalised symbols of abundance and well-being¹. The imagery formed an appropriate décor for a place of banqueting and conviviality. The same message is evoked in assembly-room 31 of the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna: as the setting for receiving guests during the *comissatio*, the room was closely linked to the stages of the dinner ceremony taking place in the adjoining main *triclinium*. Dionysiac motifs appear again in assembly-room 2 of the Villa au Taureau at Silin, but here the insertion of masks among satyrs and bacchantes clearly emphasize a different function of Dionysus as the patron deity of theatre. The decorative motifs conveniently suited the use of the room as a library.

A further subject-matter widely adopted in African mosaics is the representation of heroes. In our sample of mosaics, the scenes of Hercules with the defeated monsters (Maison d'Asinius Rufinus at Acholla), of Perseus delivering Andromeda (Maison d'Amphitrite at Bulla Regia), and of Orpheus playing the lyre among animals (Maison d'Orphée at Volubilis) significantly occur in the main *triclinium*. As the setting for the performance of rituals of social importance, the dining room provided the owner with a lavish setting for magnificent self-presentation. The guests reclining at a banquet would have associated the image of the hero before them with the host and the heroic condition with the position of the *dominus* within the social order. All three heroes, in fact,

¹ Main *triclinium* G of the Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque at El Jem; main *triclinium* 7 of the Maison de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons at Volubilis; secondary *triclinium* XL of the Maison du Paon at El Jem.

symbolise the restoration of harmony and order by means of strength and physical power (Hercules and Perseus) or of music and poetry (Orpheus).

By contrast, the female counterparts of mythological heroes appear in the secondary *triclinium*. The scenes illustrating Diana bathing (Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus at Volubilis), Europa being raped by Zeus, and Semele watching over Endymion (Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna) created an atmosphere of pleasure and intimacy, which would have suited the function of the room as the setting for informal banquets with a selected group of intimate guests.

Mosaics illustrating mythological scenes drawn from literary or dramatic works appear in both *cubicula*² and assembly-rooms³. As a room used for sociability and intellectual pursuits with a selected number of friends, the *cubiculum* offered a suitable setting for displaying the high degree of culture possessed by the owner. Because of its more public nature, the assembly-room would have provided larger spaces for accommodating lectures, recitations, musical performances, and so forth.

The representations of the Seasons and *xenia* motifs appear widely in a variety of room-types. As symbols of prosperity, good fortune, and well-being, Seasons and *xenia* could have easily been adapted to a variety of architectural contexts and room-functions. The appearance of these motifs in *triclinia* and assembly-rooms, for example, emphasizes the owner's hospitality and illustrates the wealth of goods available in the house. The choice of these themes in *cubicula* and private apartments, as the rooms for more private and intimate activities, emphasized their prophylactic and beneficial values. The popularity of such motifs in domestic decoration may be due to the fact that they were thought capable of bringing good fortune to the viewers and to the house in which they were represented. The message is emphasised in those mosaics in which the Seasons are associated with Annus, who represents the fertility of the whole course of the year. As decorative motifs of assembly-rooms, the representation of Annus in association with the Seasons reinforces a general sense of well-being and happiness, which suits the use of the room-type for a variety of enjoyable, social occasions.

² Maison des Nymphes at Neapolis.

³ Assembly-room R of the Maison des Muses at Althiburos and assembly-room 6/7 of the Maison des Masques at Hadrumetum, though here the mosaic represents two human figures who are associated with cultural activities.

A further category of subject widely represented in African mosaics includes marine scenes. They may represent either mythical creatures, such as sea-deities, Nereides, and sea-monsters, or realistic fishermen and fish, or a combination of both fanciful and realistic scenes.

Marine subjects were especially popular for the decoration of fountains and basins⁴: as an appropriate motif for structures associated with water, the mosaic had simply a decorative value. As decorative motifs within a given room, by contrast, marine scenes seem to suggest a symbolic meaning, which originated from the belief that the representation of fish of different species and the illustration of marine scenes of mythological narrative had a beneficial effect and ensured the continuity of prosperity in the house. Marine subjects occur mainly in the *triclinium*. There are many reasons for the predilection for aquatic themes in the dining room. In as dry a country as Africa, representations of marine motifs gave the illusion of dining in a cool and airy place. As fish were the pre-eminent sign of a rich table and were likely to have been comparably expensive in North Africa, floor mosaics illustrating marine scenes would have emphasized the owner's opulence and prodigality. Marine motifs may have been chosen as an allusion to the owner's involvement in shipping business, as the Althiburos mosaic suggests: the pavement was intended to display the source of the host's wealth and allude to the benevolent owner distributing the fruits of his wealth to his guests at banquet.

Subjects drawn from contemporary life also provided a rich source of material for domestic decoration. Scenes of hunting activities appear mainly in the main *triclinium* and in the adjoining *porticus* of the peristyle, which was closely linked to the decoration and function of the dining room. The adoption of hunting themes in the main reception area may be attributed to the owner's desire to display his social status and possessions to his fellow-citizens. The realistic representation of activities drawn from contemporary life is presumably intended to allude to the owner's involvement in a typical aristocratic occupation, as well as to his wealth, and his possessions⁵.

A further popular subject in African mosaics is the representation of the spectacles of the amphitheatre and of the circus. Our selected mosaics occur in the main reception

⁴ It includes the apsidal structure in assembly-room IV of the Maison des Colonnes Rouges at Acholla, which seems to have been used as a basin.

⁵ For the formal development of hunting scenes in African mosaics see Lavin 1963, 229-44.

rooms (*triclinia* and assembly-rooms) as part of the cycle of self-presentation on the part of the owner. The representation of the games, in fact, whether as historical record or as imaginary projection, clearly alluded to the status of the owner as a member of the elite, who actually donated the games. As decorative motifs of rooms designed for the reception of high-status guests, the amphitheatre- and circus-mosaics were intended to display the political power, wealth, generosity, and status of the owner. Surprisingly, perhaps, scenes of the amphitheatre occur in the *cubiculum*, too (room 18 of the House of Africa at El Jem and room 14 of the Villa du Taureau at Silin). The mosaic subjects are again evidence for the use of the *cubiculum* as a place for the reception of those guests who were on intimate terms with the owner. The choice of amphitheatre scenes in *cubacula*, which were conveniently located in the public part of the house, indicates the owner's intention to display his association with the elite to which his selected guests also belonged.

10.2 Upper storeys

The mosaics which have been discussed so far decorated rooms lying either on the ground floor or in the basement of the selected houses. However, remains of stairways leading upward from the ground floor clearly attest the presence of upper storeys in at least some of the African houses. It raises the question as to whether mosaics decorated upper-storey rooms too. The apparent lack of evidence of mosaics from collapsed upper floors seems to suggest that the adoption of mosaics as lavish items of domestic decoration was exclusively reserved for the ground-floor area, which comprised the most important rooms for both social and private activities. This seems to be confirmed by the architectural arrangement of the stairways within the African house and by literary accounts of upper-storey rooms.

Evidence of stairways in our sample of houses suggests that the location of upper floors varied among houses. The staircase was sometime placed in proximity to the entrance. In the Maison des Néréides at Volubilis, for example, traces of a flight of stairs have been found in a secondary entrance; in the Maison de la Chasse at Utica, a staircase was located next to the entrance into *vestibulum* I; in the Maison de la Cascade at Utica, the stairway lay between *vestibulum* I and secondary entrance VII, in an area occupied by service rooms (V-VI-IX). In some houses, the staircase was located in the innermost part of the building. In the Maison au Grand Oecus at Utica, for instance, a stairway lay

in corridor XX off the peristyle; in the Maison de l'Âne at Djemila, it was at the far end of the southern *porticus* of the peristyle; and in the Maison d'Asinius Rufinus at Acholla, the staircase lay next to an apsidal structure, which would have been used as a *lararium*, and to a group of rooms which have not been completely excavated. In the Maison des Masques at Hadrumetum, the staircase was located in the southern corner of the gallery surrounding the colonnaded *triclinium*. Its location may suggest that the function of the upper floor was related to the activities taking place in the dining room: perhaps, there were storerooms for keeping the dining apparatus.

It is difficult to ascertain how the upper-storey rooms were used: literary sources attest that they could have fulfilled a variety of functions. Trimalchio boasted that on the upper floor of his house were his personal *cubiculum*, the private apartments of his wife Fortunata, and a suite of small rooms (*cellatio*)⁶, which could have been used as storerooms or as servants' sleeping chambers⁷.

Varro's definition of a *cenaculum* as a dining room that had been moved upstairs⁸ suggests a further function of the upper-storey rooms. However, a survey of the occurrences of the word *cenaculum* in the Latin literature of Imperial times shows a broader use of the term to designate any room located on the upper floor of a domestic building without any specific function. Apuleius tells us that Lucius as an ass was hidden by his master in the *cenaculum* of a friend's house⁹. In another passage, Apuleius describes Lucius hiding in an upper-storey *cubiculum* and watching Pamphile practising magic through a crack in the door¹⁰. The location of the upper-storey room at the back of the house admirably functioned as a hiding place for Pamphile's secret activities¹¹.

These literary passages and the location of the preserved stairways at some remove from the central areas of the house suggest that on the upper-floor of the African house were rooms used less for display than for private activities.

⁶ The term *cellatio* is derived from *cella*, which designates a variety of rooms of small dimensions.

⁷ Petr. Sat. 77. More literary references to *cubicula* on the upper floor are discussed in chapter 8, 'Cubiculum'.

⁸ Varro LL 5.162.

⁹ Apul. Met. 9.40.

¹⁰ Apul. Met. 3.21.

¹¹ Apul. Met. 3.17.

10.3 Domestic interiors

Since the majority of African houses are only preserved at foundation level, the mosaic floor is the only indication of the décor of a room. However, floor mosaics were only one of the several types of domestic ornament. Wall paintings, wall mosaics, sculptures, furniture, and textiles were all assembled along with floor mosaics in the same room in order to embellish and to enhance the architectural layout of domestic space.

There are only isolated and fragmentary remains of wall painting in African houses: this may be due partly to a lack of modern excavation and publication and partly to the destruction of the upper part of the walls. Evidence of wall painting, for example, has been attested in the Maison d'Asinius Rufinus at Acholla, but the fragmentary paintings with representation of actors, charioteers, and masks are described by Trabelsi without any relation to their architectural context¹².

Nevertheless, the scanty evidence may suggest some important considerations about the use of wall painting in the Romano-African house. In the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna, ceiling, walls, and columns of main *triclinium* 33 were covered with stucco featuring erotes among foliated ornaments. The stucco decoration was thematically linked to the scene represented on the floor mosaic (vintaging erotes surrounding the scene of Dionysus giving the vine to Ikarios). The effect of the whole decoration was of great luxuriance, which enhanced the lavish architecture of the colonnaded *triclinium*. In the Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque at El Jem, the ceiling of assembly-room A was painted with caryatids holding garlands, which framed rectangular panels illustrating hunting scenes and still-life subjects. Here too, the decorative motifs of the ceiling and the representation of Annus and the Seasons on the mosaic pavement were closely linked by the notion of prosperity and well-being. These examples show that the choice of painted and mosaic motifs in a given room was dictated by the intention of creating a suitable correspondence in theme between floor mosaic and wall or ceiling decorations. This does not mean that the effort to achieve consistent thematic links was always pursued¹³. In the Maison des Nymphes at Neapolis, for example, the walls of *cubiculum* XIV were revetted with polychrome panels of marble and porphyry, while the floor was decorated with a rare mythological scene. Similarly, in audience-chamber 4 of the

¹² Trabelsi 1991.

¹³ In Piazza Armerina in Sicily, for example, the subject-matter of the frescoes show no relationship with the floor mosaics of the same room (Wilson 1983, 32-3).

Édifice des Asclepieia at Althiburos and in secondary *triclinium* 9 of the Maison de la Volière at Carthage, the figured motifs of the floor mosaic were accompanied by marble panels on the walls¹⁴. In *cubiculum* XVIII of the Maison de Dionysos at Thaenae, the lavish floral design of the mosaic pavement coordinated with a fresco-painting in the ceiling representing Dionysus on a panther among masks and bacchantes¹⁵. These examples seem to suggest that the choice of decorative motifs on the floor, walls, and ceiling of a given room may have been dictated in Africa by formal factors. Figured mosaic pavements were balanced by plain wall decorations; geometric compositions on the floor were accompanied by figured motifs on the ceiling. This generic rule may be applied to the decoration of basins, too. In the Maison de Nymphes at Neapolis, the basin in secondary courtyard A2 was painted blue as a colour evoking water in the inner part and with marine scenes on the outer walls¹⁶. African evidence seems to confirm Clarke's analysis of the relationship between painted and mosaic decoration in a series of well-preserved houses in Campania and at Ostia. Here, simple black and white floor mosaics combined with polychrome, figured decorations of walls and ceiling, which focus the viewer's attention¹⁷. The same aesthetic consideration may have dictated the choice of geometric motifs on both walls and floors. In the underground private apartments 19-20 of the Maison d'Amphitrite at Bulla Regia, for example, the geometric mosaic pavement was combined with wall paintings showing zones framed by blue bands. The mosaics and the paintings seem to have been conceived as chromatically sober complements to each other.

Floor-, wall-, and ceiling-decorations joined sculpture as the fourth ingredient of interior décor. The fragmentary remains of sculptures and the lack of publication make it difficult to determine the criteria by which the owner chose sculptures to decorate his

¹⁴ Introduced in the late republic and early Empire for the decoration of real or artificial grottoes, the wall and vault mosaic was mainly used for the decoration of grottoes and *nymphaea*; at least by the 2nd century, it expanded into other buildings of the provinces (baths, tombs, theatres, circuses, and the halls of imperial palaces). The very fragmentary traces which have been found in North Africa show that wall and vault mosaics were used for the decoration of semicircular basins on tops, walls, and floors (examples have been described in Chapters 3-4).

¹⁵ Yacoub 1996, 147 Inv. 3621. Because of the fragmentary conditions of these rooms it is not possible to ascertain whether and how the floor mosaic related to wall- and ceiling- decorations.

¹⁶ Barbet 1999.

¹⁷ Clarke 1991. See also Barbet 1983 for similar considerations.

house¹⁸. In the Maison de la Volière at Carthage, for example, the basin in secondary *triclinium* 9 was adorned with statuettes of Dionysus, Venus, and Eros. The lack of description of the statuary types, which have never been published in detail, make it difficult to ascertain whether the statuettes were thematically linked to the mosaic pavement illustrating *xenia* and to the function of the room. Evidence suggests that in some cases floor mosaic and sculpture were conceived as complements to each other. In the villa at Piazza Armerina, to take an interesting example outside of Africa, an apsidal room off the peristyle was carpeted with a mosaic representing Orpheus and was adorned with a statue of Apollo, which stood in the apse. The thematic link between Apollo, the divine patron of music and the arts, and Orpheus, the mortal musician, suggests that the room may have been used for musical entertainments¹⁹.

In other cases, the arrangement of sculptures in a given space seems to have been dictated by the appropriateness of the sculptured images to the function of the room. For example, in the Maison d'Asinius Rufinus at Acholla and in the Maison de la Pêche at Bulla Regia, the *vestibulum* was ornamented with an inscribed base recording the name and career of the *dominus*. As the *vestibulum* was the first domestic space to be approached by guests and the setting for the morning *salutatio* with *clientes*, the engraved bases served to announce to any visitor entering the house the status of the *dominus* who dwelt within. In the House of the Greek Charioteer at Carthage a small marble group representing Ganymede and the eagle seems to have decorated a *triclinium*²⁰. The late-antique sculpture was found in a cistern, located beneath the dining room, which contained animal bones and household pottery, probably refuse from a kitchen. The fine execution of the sculpture suggests that the marble group was intended for decorating a luxurious setting such as a *triclinium*: perhaps it was placed in one of the two *aedicula* ornamenting the long walls of the dining room.

In the Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus at Volubilis, assembly-room 16 was decorated with a bust of Cato standing against the back wall and with the scene of the Rape of Hylas on the mosaic floor. The decorative layout recalls the arrangement of sculpture and floor mosaic in the room of the Villa at Piazza Armerina, but unlike in the Sicilian example, there seems no thematic link between the two forms of decoration. Rebuffat

¹⁸ In the *vestibulum* of the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna, were found fragments of hand holding a *patera*. The fragmentary status of the sculpture does not allow to confirm Gauckler's (1896, 197) interpretation that the hand belonged to a statue of Hygeia.

¹⁹ Wilson 1983, 24, room 39.

²⁰ Gazda 1981.

maintains that sculpture and floor mosaic were thematically linked by the representation of a young hero, who is going to die²¹. However, the parody representations of the amphitheatre spectacles on either side of the scene with the Rape of Hylas seem rather to create a humorous *divertissement*, which would not suit the theme of noble death evoked by the image of Cato. This example shows that thematic link and formal coordination, which joined mosaic pavements, wall paintings, and sculptures, were not considered as necessary elements of interior decoration. The sculptures may have been chosen because of their formal and aesthetic values, which satisfied the owner's personal tastes. In his account on Lucius' entrance into Byrrhena's house, Apuleius describes a marble group of Diana and Actaeon which stood in the middle of the colonnaded area²². The description, which lays stress upon the formal qualities of the sculpture, and the reaction of Lucius, who repeatedly ran his eye over the scene with intense delight²³, clearly shows that the lavish marble group exclusively served as an immediate, visual display of the household's wealth to any visitor entering the house.

In most cases, it is not easy to ascertain whether the sculptured images employed in decorating rooms were thematically linked with the activities taking place in them or were chosen for their formal appearance. Unlike mosaics, which were a more durable and permanent form of decoration, sculptures may have been easily moved from one room to another. As a result, they cannot be associated with the architectural context for which they were originally commissioned or thematically linked to other forms of domestic decoration such as mosaics.

Other movable items of domestic interior were furnishings. Along with architecture and floor mosaics, furniture is a valid indicator of a room's function. Thus, the well-preserved artefactual evidence at Pompeii has allowed Allison to discuss the question of room-function from a sample of *atrium* houses²⁴. Her study shows the potential of artefactual evidence as a means of adding to the discussion of Roman domestic organisation. However, outside Pompeii (the almost-perfect archaeological site), artefactual evidence is very scanty: the perishable material of the artefacts along with the lack of publication and the excavation practices of the past, which have destroyed

²¹ Rebuffat 1965.

²² Apul. *Met.* 2.4.

²³ *haec identidem rimabundus eximie delector* (Apul. *Met.* 2.5).

²⁴ Allison 1997; id. 2004. Wooden items of domestic decoration in Herculaneum are analysed by Mols 1999. See also Allison 1999 for the modern labels used to describe ancient artefacts.

potentially useful artefacts, make it difficult to study furniture in any particular house. Moreover, the scarce reports of excavated artefacts often lack any indication of their provenance. Thouvenot, for example, describes the lavish items which have been found in the *Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus* at Volubilis (statuette of an old fisherman, small marble lion, fragments of a couch, and a lamp support)²⁵, but the scholar omits to indicate in which room each was exhibited.

In spite of the lack of artefactual evidence, the lay-out of the floor mosaic may hint at the arrangement of furniture in a given room. This is evident in *triclinia* and *cubicula*, where plain mosaic panels were intended to be covered by couches. The mosaic lay-out also indicates that in these room-types furniture was given a prominent location. In fact, because of the portable nature of furniture and of the limited range of possible items, furniture was easily moved between rooms, when occasion required. The great number of literary accounts of banquets gives much information on the kind of artefacts used in the *triclinium*: tables of citrus wood and ivory²⁶, elaborate tableware, candelabra, drinking cups of precious material²⁷, coverlets, and cushions²⁸ enhanced the lavish setting of the dining room. Similarly prestigious furniture as visual display of the owner's wealth was arranged in other rooms for reception, such as *vestibula*²⁹, assembly-rooms, and *cubicula*³⁰.

As luxury items imported from the rich courts of the Hellenistic East³¹, curtains were widely used in banquets. Horace speaks of *cenae sine aulaeis et ostro* ('dinners without curtains or purple') as an example of simplicity in the country³². During the banquet offered by the parvenu Nasidienus to Maecenas, collapsing curtains raised a cloud of black dust³³. An illustrative example of textiles' use in the dining room is a miniature of the *Vergilius Romanus* manuscript (5th century), which shows a curtain suspended behind Dido and Aeneas reclining on a *stibadium*³⁴. Curtains were often hung or stretched between the columns of the peristyle as a protection against rain or as shade from sunlight. In the fragmentary mosaic decorating the *triconchos* of the *Maison du*

²⁵ Thouvenot 1958, 78-85.

²⁶ Apul. *Met.* 2.19; Juv. *Sat.* 2.120-21.

²⁷ Apul. *Met.* 2.19; Hor. *Sat.* 2.4.78-80; Petr. *Sat.* 73; Sen. *Ep.* 119.3; Plin. *NH* 36.59.

²⁸ Apul. *Met.* 2.19; Petr. *Sat.* 73; Juv. *Sat.* 2.128.

²⁹ See chapter 2.

³⁰ Apul. *Met.* 10.20.

³¹ Prina Riccotti 1989.

³² Hor. *Carm.* 3.29.15-17.

³³ Hor. *Sat.* 2.8.53-8.

³⁴ Weitzmann 1979, 227-28 n. 204.

Triconque at Carthage, the scene with erotes is set before a *porticus* at the end of which an arched doorway is ornamented with furled curtains at the entrance (Pl. 58).

Elegant curtains in the peristyle enhanced the lavish setting of the main courtyard, but they also served to hide a wing of the peristyle and to allow the members of the household to carry out personal activities without coming under the scrutiny of the owner's guests, while they were entertained in the nearby reception rooms. For the same screening purposes, hangings were widely used inside a room, as literary sources attest. After the murder of Caligula, Claudius withdrew into a room hiding between the curtains hung in the doorway before a *solarium* (terrace or balcony)³⁵. In the description of his Laurentine villa, Pliny mentions a *cubiculum* with an alcove that could be opened or closed off by a curtain³⁶. Obviously how far such contains were in use in North Africa is not ascertainable.

10.4 Mosaic programme and the patron's intentions

The great number of mosaics decorating the excavated African houses raises questions as to whether or not the owner chose the decorative themes as part of an overall mosaic programme. Some scholars argue that the subjects within the decoration of a single building were linked in a consistent programme embodying moral or religious ideas. Thus, Foucher interpreted the Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque at El Jem as the site of a dionysiac cult, since all figurative mosaics of the building allude to Dionysus³⁷. Darmon detected symbols of marriage in all mosaics decorating the Maison des Nymphes at Neapolis: the building, therefore, would have been used, according to him, by the young people of the town to celebrate their marriage³⁸. According to Blanc-Bijon and Darmon, each apartment of the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna was dominated by a prevailing topic displayed in its floor mosaics: the iconographic programme would allow for the identification of the function of each subdivision of the house³⁹. There is no evidence to support all these interpretations; rather, there are valid arguments against the suggestion that houses were decorated according to cohesive programmes. The plan of the buildings at El Jem and Neapolis closely resembles that of wealthy town-houses in Roman Africa with rooms arranged around a central peristyle. Moreover, house-

³⁵ Suet. *Cl.* 10.

³⁶ Pl. *Ep.* 2.17.21.

³⁷ Foucher 1963. His interpretation has been rejected by Parrish (1981).

³⁸ Darmon 1980. His theory has been reviewed by Quet (1984).

³⁹ Blanc-Bijon and Darmon 1988-1989.

owners frequently repaired their mosaics, and replaced or added new ones over a long period; new owners may have read the interior décor in a different way to those who had originally commissioned them. A further argument that militates against the theory of programmatic links is the use of different routes inside the house according to the status of the visitors. In order to detect thematic links among mosaics and to discern deeper meanings, visitors must have had access to all spaces of the domestic building. However, spaces in the African house were so arranged as to route guests of different ranks on different paths: low-status *clientes* stopped in the *vestibulum*; influential guests were admitted to *triclinia* and assembly-rooms; intimate friends penetrated deep into *cubicula* and private apartments.

In the choice of particular designs and specific subjects in the decoration of his house, the owner was inspired by several factors, which are now difficult to determine. At a simple level, the owner who commissioned a pavement was motivated by a desire to embellish his house and to display his wealth and the great deal of money he could afford to visitors. In the choice by the owner of certain decorative motifs, several other factors may have been influential: personal fondness for certain stories; devotion to a particular god; interest in particular forms of entertainment; and range of subjects available in the mosaicist's workshop. In most cases it is not possible to get far in discovering the real intentions of the patron commissioning a pavement, mainly due to the anonymity of most African house-owners. Only a few of these can be identified by inscriptions recording their family's name and career. For instance, an inscribed base found in the Maison d'Asinius Rufinus at Acholla records the name of the owner, Asinius Rufinus Valerius Verus Sabinianus, who attained the consulship in 184 A.D. during the reign of Commodus. An inscription which has been found in the peristyle of the Maison de Flavius Germanus at Volubilis identifies the owner as a *procurator equestris* who became Roman citizen under Marcus Aurelius and Commodus. In some cases, names are inscribed on mosaics, which make the identification of the individual controversial⁴⁰. In the Maison de Castorius at Djemila, for example, an inscribed mosaic in the eastern *porticus* of the peristyle celebrates a certain Castorius who undertook to repair some of the floor mosaics: *Viribus / e nostris fac / tu est quotcumque potimur / ut domus dicatur / Castorius feci*. Castorius may be either the house-owner who was

⁴⁰ For the use of mosaic inscriptions see Dunbabin 1999b and Notermans 2001.

responsible for the creation of new mosaics⁴¹ or the mosaicist, as the craftsman often signed the mosaic with his name followed by the verb meaning ‘made [this]’. A second mosaic inscription, which decorated secondary *triclinium* XX, gives more clues about the social standing of the owner. The damaged inscription states that the house belongs to young men (*haec domus est hinc orti iuvenes*), who were clerks in the courts of Africa (*Lybiae tribun[al]ibus [a]dsunt*)⁴². Other examples of mosaic inscriptions bearing the name of the house-owner are attested in the Sollertiana Domus at El Jem (anteroom XXVIII)⁴³ and in the Villa du Taureau at Silin (*cubiculum* 14)⁴⁴. Here, however, the short formula does not allow us to associate the owners with any individual known from historical record.

Though the owners of African house cannot be identified with specific historical figures, it is possible to construct a generic image of the patrons who commissioned the mosaics. In fact, the popularity of certain themes, which frequently occur in the domestic decoration of Imperial North Africa, and the layout (both architectural and decorative) of the domestic buildings, which provides evidence for the social status of the owners as members of the municipal elite, allow a broader view on interests, concerns, intentions of a whole class.

The house-owner played an important role in the choice of decorative motifs, though he might be guided by the patterns offered by the mosaicist⁴⁵. The high value of mosaics as luxury items of certain durability and their function in conveying message of social significance are arguments enough to show that no owner would have allowed artisans to exercise their virtuosity in the decoration of his house without his control. Either drawn from pattern-books or invented by the mosaicist, the decorative motifs were adapted to the needs and desires of the owners. The number of variations among the mosaics illustrating the same subject-pattern (hunting scenes, for example) suggests that the mosaicist did not copy designs directly from the pattern-book, but rather adapted them to the patron’s requests and to the architectural layout of the room.

⁴¹ Blanchard-Lemée 1975, 166-67; Thébert 1987, 398-400.

⁴² Blanchard-Lemée 1975, 167-68.

⁴³ The inscription states that the house belongs to the family of the Sollertii (Ch. 8, 269).

⁴⁴ The inscription *Filoserapis comp(suit)* at the top of an amphitheatre scene perhaps records the name of the owner who organized the spectacle.

⁴⁵ For mosaic pattern-books and workshops, see Bruneau 1984 and Allison 1991.

The architectural arrangement of domestic spaces too, was greatly influenced by the social status and needs of the *dominus*. In the preface to book VI on domestic architecture, Vitruvius makes interesting comments on the social relationship between architect and patron. The writer maintains that the architect should not use or advertise his *doctrina* to achieve wealth and notoriety, as many architects did in his time; the architect must be of good family and well educated, as he is entrusted with the expenditure of the patron's capital⁴⁶. Vitruvius' assertion makes it evident that the social function of the Roman house required a respectable skilled architect, who was able to adapt his work to the social status of the inhabitants. This discourse on the social proprieties of domestic architecture is explained in chapter 5, in which Vitruvius sets forth a hierarchical correlation between space and professions. Ordinary men do not need sumptuous reception rooms (*vestibula*, *atria*, and *tablina*), as these men discharge their obligations by visiting the houses of other men; bankers and tax collectors need houses that are somewhat showy and secure from thieves; men with forensic occupations require more elegant and ample houses for the reception of their hearers; men holding public office must have magnificent houses comprising lofty atria, spacious peristyles, libraries, *pinacothecae*, and *basilicae*, because of the public nature of the business done there. Though Vitruvius describes an *exemplum* of the ideal *domus* inspired by Augustan building projects, his assertion that the layout of the house must suit the social rank of its occupants proves to have been widely adapted in domestic architecture of Roman Africa. Architectural elements as well as floor mosaics were laid in order to provide apt settings in which the owner could play his assigned social role and perform important rituals of Roman life.

The social implications of the house on its owner's identity are well witnessed in Apuleius' *Apologia*. The African writer presents himself as a man fully integrated into the social life of the Roman elite, upholding his father's rank of *duumvir*⁴⁷, attending dinner parties, and receiving *clientes* in the morning *salutatio*. His reputation as a social figure was damaged when a household slave revealed to the outside world that he had practised magic in the house of Junius Crassus⁴⁸. These slanders (*male dicta*) gave grounds for charging Apuleius with using magic to gain the attentions and fortune of the wealthy widow he married. In spite of their private nature, the activities carried out in

⁴⁶ Vit. *De Arch.* 6.5-6.

⁴⁷ Apul. *Apol.* 24.

⁴⁸ Apul. *Apol.* 58.

the realm of the house might have consequences on public life if revealed to the outside world. It is then evident that the house as a stage designed for the performance of social rituals is fundamental in constructing its owner's identity and in announcing his social status. Within the domestic building, the architectural arrangement of spaces and the decorative layout are the visual, immediate display of the owner's position, beliefs, and aspirations. It is this close nexus between housing and social standing on which Petronius constructs his parody account of Trimalchio's dinner party. Wall paintings, silverware, sculptures, household staff, food and spectacles offered during the banquet were all carefully chosen by the *libertus* as an ostentatious claim to his position in society⁴⁹. Trimalchio's attempt to assume the rituals of the Roman elite is bound to fail, as a freedman is permanently excluded from the political and social power of the elite. The lack of authority is compensated by creating an impression of power within his own house by means of fantasy: Trimalchio is able to create so effective a visual world that his fantasies seem real to the guests. Petronius thus acknowledges the power of impression that domestic display can convey. Like Trimalchio, African house-owners use architecture and decoration to project an impression of power, status, and wealth. But, unlike the fictional world created by the Italic freedman, the African house of the upper class owner functioned as a visual display of real status and wealth that its architectural and decorative layout served to enhance.

⁴⁹ For a more detailed analysis of the decoration in Trimalchio's house see Dumont 1990.

ACHOLLA

MAISON D'ASINIUS RUFINUS

SITE

In the middle of the ancient town, close to the Trajan's Baths.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

To the south-east *vestibulum* I opens into L-shaped corridors C1-C2, which lead onto peristyle III to the west. The southern *porticus* overlooks main *triclinium* IV, anteroom V which leads into private apartment VII, and assembly-room VII. At the back of assembly-room VII is light-well II. The eastern *porticus* opens into private apartments VIII and X: the latter is contiguous to a small space to the south. The northern *porticus* overlooks corridors C3 and rooms XIII-XIV-XV. Opposite the western *porticus* are an apsidal structure (XIX) and a flight of stairs in space XX.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Vestibulum I. Rainbow-pattern of long *tesserae* (R 199d)

Corridors C1-C2. Rainbow-pattern of adjacent lozenges (R 202c)

Peristyle. Porticus. Grid of rows of tangent poised squares (R 133c)

Pseudo-basin. Ivy-scroll spreading from crater

Main triclinium IV. *U-shaped section.* Orthogonal pattern of swastika-meander and squares (R 190)

T-shaped portion. Grid-pattern of Hercules' knots forming 15 medallions, which represent Hercules, the defeated victims of his Labours and flowers

Eastern threshold mat. Chessboard pattern (R 198)

Northern threshold mat. Two ivy-scroll spreading from crater

Western threshold mat. Outlined pattern of tangent undulating lines containing flowers (R 249)

Anteroom V. Grid-pattern of tangent spindles and poised squares, forming octagons with four concave sides (R 151b)

Private apartment VI. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent octagons forming squares (R 167a)

Assembly-room VII. Outlined pattern of intersecting and non-tangent circles (R 240c)

Threshold mat. Lozenge inscribed in rectangle

Private apartment VIII. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent octagons separated by swastika-meander and bearing medallions (R 166)

Private apartment X. Grid of bands with concave squares at the intersections and bigger squares (R 143d)

Threshold mat. Outlined pattern of squares of four rectangles (R 141a)

Corridor C3. Black and white outlined pattern of adjacent scales (R 217c)

DATE

As stratigraphical investigation shows (it has been carried out in *vestibulum* I, in the space between corridor C2 and south-eastern corner of the house, in main *triclinium* IV and in the rooms to the north), the Maison d'Asinius Rufinus was built in Tiberian times. In fact, floors in terrazzo and fragments of Italian sigillata and of lamps dated to the early 1st century AD have been found under the floor of main *triclinium* IV. Archaeological material found under and in the *statumen* attests a second building phase in the last quarter of the 2nd century. They are African red slip ware types A1 (dated to the first half of the 2nd century), A1/2 and A2, Hayes 181 (dated to the second half of the 2nd century), and A/D (dated to the end of the 2nd century). Moreover, on the base of a statue found in the north-western corner of *vestibulum* I, was inscribed the name of M. Asinius Rufinus Valerius Verus Sabinianus that was consul in 184 under Commodus.

Traces of wall painting representing satyr, comic masks, Ocean, and an actor have been found in the northern section of the house. They presumably decorated the house in the second building phase and do indeed seem to belong to the half of the 2nd century.

REFERENCES

Ch. Picard 1947a, 557; 1953a, 123-25; *id.* 1954a; *id.* 1959b; Rebuffat 1974, 454 n.2; Dunbabin 1978, 25, 40, 248 n.3; Schneider 1983; Fendri 1985, 159; Thébert 1987, 332-33; Trabelsi 1991; Amedick 1994; Fantar et al. 1994, 32-3; Gozlan 1994; Gozlan and Jeddi 2001, 7-87; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 12-4 n.2.

COMMENTARY

The front side of the Maison d'Asinius Rufinus faced a large paved area that was probably the *forum*. From here two columns supporting a *porticus* marked the entrance into *vestibulum* I, which was probably used as an audience-chamber, too. The triple entrance on the northern side of the *vestibulum* would have marked the passage of guests into the public area of the house: the peristyle and *triclinium*. Room IV was a *triclinium*, as the T+U arrangement of its mosaic and the triple entrance show. The dining room adjoined assembly-room VII. The two reception rooms were probably lit by light-well II lying at the corner: this space, in fact, had neither opening nor floor mosaic. On the opposite side, room V served as an anteroom of private apartment VI.

Rooms VIII and X might have been used as private apartments. Chamber VIII adjoined a small and undecorated space, which could have been a light-well. The function of the undecorated rooms (XIII-XIV-XV) overlooking the northern *porticus* is uncertain. They appear to be service rooms, as they adjoin some *tabernae* at the back and corridor C3, which led onto the street, but their location off the peristyle would indicate a more important function. There would have been some rooms by the western *porticus* of the peristyle, but the area has not been fully excavated. Only remains of an apsidal structure (perhaps a *lararium*) and of stairs leading up to a missing floor have been brought to light. Further rooms would have been to the east (the area has not been excavated yet). In fact, corridor C3 shows an opening to the east and sections of wall appear behind rooms VIII and X. Therefore, it is possible that corridor C1 put a group of rooms to the east in communication with the *forum* and, through corridor C2, with the peristyle.

The inscribed base with the name of the owner and the mosaics suggest some observations. The black-and-white geometric mosaics of most rooms contrast with the polychrome mosaics of *vestibulum* I and main *triclinium* IV. It is possible that the *vestibulum* was built and decorated with polychrome mosaics in 184, when Asinius Rufinus became consul: as a senator, he would have needed an audience-chamber for reception of clients. The *triclinium* would have been carpeted with a new mosaic representing the Labours of Hercules on the same occasion.

MAISON DES COLONNES ROUGES

SITE

In the centre of the ancient town, to the south-east of the Trajan's Baths.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

To the south a door gives access onto *porticus* Ia (5.30 x 3m) of peristyle I. To the east anteroom III leads into assembly-room IV to the north and into chambers V (3.53 x 3.51/3.63m) and VI (3.75/4.14 x 1.25/2.50m) to the south. The western *porticus* Ib overlooks space XV to the west. To the north main *triclinium* II and corridor VII (2.75/3.06 x 6m) communicate to each other. Corridor VII leads into antechamber VIII (3.60 x 2.30m), which opens into private apartment IX/X to the north. Private apartments VIII-IX-X adjoin rooms XI (2.40 x 3m)-XII (2.40 x 1.30m)-XIII (2.40 x 3.50m)-XIV (2.40m wide) to the west.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Main *triclinium* II. *U-shaped section.* Floral pattern of tangent hexagons, forming triangles (R 209d)

T-shaped section. Grid of laurel garlands, forming squares (R 137b) representing figurative scenes: Erotes hunting and erotic scenes with Satyr and Nymph

Western panel. Orthogonal pattern of tangent circles in simple guilloche (R 233a)

Eastern panel. Outlined grid of interlaced opposed undulating bands (R 233c)

Threshold mat. Band of involuted hearts, forming wave-pattern (R 94)

Anteroom III. Orthogonal pattern of tangent circles and poised squares, forming bobbins (R 156b)

Assembly-room IV. *Room a.* Grid of laurel garlands, forming squares (R 137b) representing Eros riding a dolphin, Nereid and Ichthyocentaur, gazelle, and panther

Apse IVb. Head of Ocean surrounded by fish; below, Nereid riding a sea-monster; above, *putto* in a boat

Room V. Destroyed

Anteroom VIII. Grid-pattern of tangent poised squares (R 133a)

Private apartment IX. Foliate grid of opposed undulating bands, forming medallions (R 251f) containing busts of Seasons, and basket of flowers and fruit

DATE

The Maison des Colonnes Rouges cannot be dated by stratigraphical evidence, as the fragments of pottery found under the mosaic floors of rooms III-IVa belong to ordinary vases in use in the ancient Tunisia in

the 1st to the 3rd centuries. The stylistical analysis of the mosaics indicates that the *domus* would have been decorated in the mid-3rd century (mosaics of rooms II, III, IVa, VIII) and partly redecorated in the third quarter of the 3rd century (apse IVb and private apartment IX).

REFERENCES

Ch. Picard 1947a, 561; id. 1947b, 316; id. 1946-1949, 304; id. 1950a, 132; Parrish 1984, 93-5 n.1; Gozlan 1999; Gozlan and Jeddi 2001, 115-57; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 533 fig. 289, 536 fig. 347; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 15-7 n.3.

COMMENTARY

The Maison des Colonnes Rouges is now entered through a large opening flanked by two red columns (after which the *domus* has been named), which leads directly onto the peristyle. It is unknown where the *vestibulum* lay.

Peristyle I was surrounded by *porticus* only to the south (Ia) and to the west (Ib), since on its eastern and northern sides it led directly into room III and corridor VII respectively. At the south-western corner, the rectangular space with waterproof coating was a cistern. *Porticus* Ib with two square pillars overlooked space XV to the west, but this part of the house has not been excavated yet.

Room II was a *triclinium*, as the T+U arrangement of its mosaic shows. Slabs of different dimensions paved its threshold. The dining room overlooked *porticus* Ib, which, with its floor paved with grey concrete and scattered black *tesserae*, does not seem to have offered a fine view to guests reclining inside. Anteroom VIII gave access into apsidal assembly-room IV whose eastern wall shows traces of painting. On the opposite site were room V and space VI, which does not seem to have been paved with mosaic. The function of these spaces is uncertain: they adjoined an earlier house, which affected the building of the eastern wing. Rooms XI-XII-XIII-XIV would have been closed spaces that did not communicate either with each other or with the house. They appear to have been light-wells that illuminated the adjoining private apartments VII-VIII-IX: however, their floors, which were paved with white concrete, *semis* of *tesserae* and marble elements of different colour and size, seem to point to a different function. Rooms XVI-XVII-XVIII would have not belonged to the *domus*, as their thick walls without northern opening seem to show.

MAISON DU TRIOMPHE DE NEPTUNE

SITE

In the northern area of the western part of the ancient town.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

At the north-eastern corner *vestibulum* I leads into audience-chamber II, which opens into the adjoining *cella ianitoris* III-service room IV and onto the north-western corner of peristyle VII by anteroom V (4.25 x 2m). To the north-east anteroom V opens into anteroom XXXVIII, which communicates with corridor XXXVII. Off the eastern side of this corridor are service rooms XXXIX, XL-XLIII-XLIV and kitchen

XLII-XVLIII. At the south-eastern corner corridor XXXVII turns into corridor XXXVI, which communicates with secondary entrance XLV. The entry-area opens into storeroom XLVI (3.60 x 5.70m) and into service room XLVII (2.50 x 2.50m) to the west. The northern *porticus* (11.65 x 3.10m) overlooks assembly-room XII and room XIV (4 x 1.75m). Assembly-room XII opens into anteroom XI (3.05 x 4.25m) and into service room XIII on either side. The eastern *porticus* (17.65 x 2.60m) opens into room XV (2.10 x 2.40m), into anteroom XVI (1.45 x 2.95m) and onto corridor XXXVI. Anteroom XVI leads into private chambers XVII (2.80 x 2.95m)-XVIII. The southern *porticus* (11.55 x 3.15m) overlooks rooms XIX (3.25 x 1.65m)-XX (3.25 x 3.40m) and secondary *triclinium* XXI (4.50 x 5.15m). The western *porticus* opens into anterooms XXIII (3 x 5.50m)-XXIX (3 x 5.50m) on either side of main *triclinium* XXXV (11.1 x 9.60m). Anteroom XXIII leads into *cubiculum* XXV and onto corridor XXIV (4 x 1.55m), which leads into *cubacula* XXVI-XXVII on either side and onto secondary courtyard XXVIII. Anteroom XXIX leads into *cubiculum* XXXI and onto corridor XXX (4.30 x 1.47m), which leads into *cubacula* XXXII-XXXIII and onto secondary courtyard XXXIV. The northern part of the western *porticus* opens into room X (3.90 x 4m) to the east.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Audience-chamber II. Grid-pattern of crosses and octagons, forming squares (RII 268b)

Anteroom V. Black and white orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles (R 237a)

Threshold mat. Lozenge bearing flower inscribed in a rectangle (RII 266d)

Peristyle. Porticus. Grid-pattern of tangent spindles and poised squares, forming octagons (R 151b)

Panel in porticus VI. Outlined pattern of intersecting circles, forming trefoils and hexagons (RII 266c)

Central pseudo-basin. Wall. Nereids on sea-monsters

Floor. Fish

Side pseudo-basins. Vegetal scroll

Anteroom XI. Grid of bands with a concave square at the intersections (R 143d)

Threshold mat. Lozenge bearing flower inscribed in a rectangle

Assembly-room XII. Cushion-pattern (RII 269j) containing *xenia*, animals, Dionysiac figures, and masks

Threshold mat. Fish

Room XV. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent octagons, forming squares (R 166)

Side niches. Pair of peltae across a poised square

Threshold mat. Vegetal motif

Anteroom XVI. Black and white grid of bands with a concave square at the intersections (R 143d)

Threshold mat. Black and white orthogonal pattern of adjacent octagons, forming squares and oblong hexagons (R 169a-b).

Room XVII. Black and white running-pelta pattern (R 222d)

Threshold mat. Black and white vegetal scroll

Secondary triclinium XXI. *U-shaped section.* Outlined pattern of intersecting circles, forming trefoils and hexagons (R 247)

Central field. Interlacing wreaths (R 251f), containing *xenia*-motifs

Northern threshold mat. Hare eating grapes

North-western threshold mat. Pair of opposed peltae

South-western threshold mat. Black and white chessboard pattern (R 114a)

Anteroom XXIII. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent octagons, forming squares and oblong hexagons (R 169c)

Corridor XXIV. Orthogonal pattern of swastika-meander and squares (R 190d)

Threshold mat. Thyrsos

Cubiculum XXV. *Couch-area.* Black and white outlined pattern of pairs of opposed scales (R 220b)

Main area. Orthogonal pattern of swastika-meander and squares (R 194e)

Threshold mat. Destroyed

Cubiculum XXVI. *Couch-area.* Orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles (R 240c)

Main area. Foliate orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles (R 240e)

Threshold mat. Chessboard pattern (R 114e-f)

Cubiculum XXVII. *Couch-area.* Black and white grid of rows (R 125b)

Main area. Row of tangent circles and oblong hexagons (RII), framing two square panels

Threshold mat. Quatrefoil

Anteroom XXIX. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent octagons, forming squares (R 167)

Threshold mat. Lozenge bearing flower inscribed in a rectangle

Corridor XXX. Grid of simple filets (R 124a)

Cubiculum XXXI. *Couch-area.* Black and white running-swastika meander (R 193c)

Main area. Orthogonal pattern of tangent octagons, forming four-pointed stars (R 183a)

Cubiculum XXXII. *Couch-area.* Black and white orthogonal pattern of adjacent squares (R 141a)

Main area. Row of circles with pair of volutes framing grid of flowers (RII 266e)

Threshold mat. Bipelta

Cubiculum XXXIII. *Couch-area.* Black and white orthogonal pattern of intersecting octagons in swastika-meander (R 171d)

Main area. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent scales framing vegetal spindle with volutes (RII 265d)

Threshold mat. Flower inscribed in a square (RII. 269c)

Main triclinium XXXV. *U-shaped section.* Grid of rows of tangent poised squares (R 133c)

Central section. Central panel with Triumph of Neptune, surrounded by medallions (R 233a) with marine subjects

Side panels. Destroyed

Spaces between and behind columns. Pair of crossed thyrsi

Eastern threshold mat. Dionysiac procession

South-western threshold mat. Semis of flowers

DATE

The Maison du Triomphe de Neptune was built and decorated at the same time, as the *nucleus* supporting the floor mosaics and the archaeological material found under that appear to be homogeneous. The fragments of lamps (type Deneauve VII/Ennabli 11/Salomonson f.2) and of African red slip ware type A, which have been found under the floors of rooms IV, X, XV-XVI, XXIX to XXXIV, show that the *domus*

was built in 150-70 and abandoned in the mid-3rd century. The mosaics are stylistically dated to the second half of the 2nd century.

REFERENCES

Gozlan 1971-1972; *id.* 1972; *id.* 1974; *id.* 1992; Gozlan and Bourgeois 1984; Rebuffat 1974, 454 n.1; Dunbabin 1978, 20 n.28, 248 n.4; Fendri 1985, 158, 174-75; Thébert 1987, 361, 384, 389; Ch. Picard 1994; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 536 fig. 344; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 8-11 n.1.

COMMENTARY

The Maison du Triomphe de Neptune was entered from *vestibulum* I at the north-eastern corner by a large door (2.20m) framed by pillars. The *vestibulum* adjoined a suite of rooms for the reception of *clientes*: audience-chamber II, *cella ianitoris* III, and room IV for storing *sportulae*. Situated at the right angle to rooms I-II, anteroom V prevented clients and passers-by from looking through the core of the house. By anteroom XXXVIII it led down into a row of chambers (XXXIX to XLIV) off corridor XXXVII. The location far from the residential area of the *domus*, the small size and the absence of decoration indicate that they were service rooms. Moreover, they could have been entered also from a secondary entrance along the southern street via the L-shaped corridor XXVI/XLV. At the south-eastern corner between corridor XXXVI/XLV and service room XLIV spaces XLVIII-XLIX communicated with each other and with the street. They seem not to have belonged to the *domus*, but, as their walls have the same orientation and building material as those of the house, they could have been used by the owner for his charts. Moreover, the door at the north-western corner of space XLVIII could have been walled up in a later phase. Along the southern wall of the *domus* are traces of structures that seem not to have belonged to Maison du Triomphe de Neptune.

The reception rooms were situated each off a *porticus* of the peristyle. Room XXXV was the most important *triclinium* of the house, as its architectural setting and its decoration show. Room XXI was a *triclinium*, too, as the U arrangement of its floor mosaic shows; however, because of its smaller dimensions, it would have been used on less formal occasions. Room XII on the opposite side was probably an assembly-room, as its location off the peristyle, its dimensions and its figured mosaic suggest. It opened into an undecorated small chamber (XIII), which could have been a service room in relation with the activities that took place in the reception room.

On either side of colonnaded *triclinium* XXXV a suite of *cubicula* were arranged off secondary courtyards XXVIII-XXXIV, which created a private, elegant area. Room XV was ornamented with two rectangular niches at the north-western and south-western corners, which were created by adding a thick layer of masonry to the previous walls. The function of these niches and therefore of the room is uncertain: shelves for book in a library? Support for statues in a *lararium*? The function of rooms X, XIV, XIX-XX is uncertain, too. Lying off the peristyle, rooms XIV, XIX-XX belonged to the public area of the house, but the lack of decoration suggests their less importance. Facing the private apartments at the north-western corner and adjoining assembly-room XII, the big room X stands out for the lack of mosaics; its opening on the western *porticus* suggests a private use.

The overall mosaic composition of the Maison du Triomphe de Neptune shows that an evident hierarchy of pattern and colours indicated the different functions of the spaces. Polychrome mosaics and figurative themes were reserved for the reception rooms (*triclinia* XXI-XXXV and assembly-room XII) and for the semicircular structure opposite the central entrance of the main *triclinium*; polychrome geometric patterns with ornamental motifs decorated room II for the reception of clients, the peristyle, anterooms XI, XXIII and XXIX of important apartments, and the main area of the *cubicula*; black and white geometric design of plainer motif floored anterooms V and XVI, room XVIII and the couch-area of the *cubicula*.

ALTHIBUROS

ÉDIFICE DES ASCLEPIEIA

SITE

In the north-eastern sector of the ancient town, to the north of the Maison des Muses.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

To the south, six flights of steps on either side of a platform lead onto *vestibulum* 1 which opens into rooms 2 and 3, onto corridors 5 and 9, and into audience-chamber 4. Corridor 5 overlooks by a triple entrance corridor 6 (7.59 x 1.75m) that leads into the nearby rooms 7 (3.05 x 3.20m) and 8 (3.05 x 3.85m). Corridor 9 leads into room 12 (2.75 x 2.75m), which opens into room 11 (4.10 x 3.44m: to the north-east), and onto corridor 10. Both the corridors and the central audience-chamber 4 lead to the south-western *porticus* of the peristyle, which is provided with two semicircular basins along the short sides, a basin to the north-east and a rectangular basin in the centre. The north-western *porticus* overlooks room 14 (5.90 x 3.55m), space 15 (5.68 x 1.52m), main *triclinium* 16 (6.27 x 5.68m), space 17 (5.68 x 1.60m) and room 18 (5.68 x 1.07m). The north-eastern *porticus* leads into room 20/21 (4 x 3.85m), which opens into private apartment 19 to the north-west, assembly-room 23, and room 26, which leads into private apartment 25 to the north-west. On either side of assembly-room 23 are spaces 22 (3.85 x 1.17: to the north-west) and 24 (3.85 x 2.89m: to the north-east). The south-eastern *porticus* opens into room 28 (10.50 x 6.38m) and corridors 27 and 29. Corridor 27 leads into room 31 (4.90 x 2.10m), which opens into chamber 30 (1.60 x 3.85m) to the north-west, to the opposite apses 32 (4.10m wide) and 33 (4.13m wide), and into rooms 34 (2.05 x 2.10m) and 35 (2.95 x 2.50m). Corridor 29 leads to secondary courtyard 36 which lies at the back of apse 33 (to the north-west of the apse the oblong space 37 is contiguous to room 28) and to the east of chambers 38 (9.20 x 3.85m), 39 (5.80 x 3.85m) and 41 (5.80 x 1.56m). Corridor 10 leads to the space 40, which opens into the contiguous rooms 42, 43, and 44 and room 45. To the south-east of spaces 40 and 45 is the bath-suite. Contiguous to space 46, corridor 48 (6.90 x 2.60m) leads to the *apodyterium* 49 (6 x 2.55m), which opens into room 50 (4.40 x 4.40m). The latter overlooks *frigidarium* 51 (2.40 x 4.30m) and space 52 (2.60 x 2.40m) to the north-west, and the pool 53 (3 x 4.65m) to the south-west. Spaces 54 and 55 give access to *caldarium* 56 (2.60 x 4.20m), to *sudatorium* 57 (1.80 x 1.40m), and to *tepidarium* 58 (2.40 x 1.60m). This sector adjoins corridor 59 and space 47.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Room 2. Vegetal composition of acanthus scrolls

Threshold mat. Foliate orthogonal pattern of opposed tangent undulating lines, enclosing flowers and birds (R 249a-d)

Audience-chamber 4. *Floor.* Cross-shaped section illustrating fishermen on boats named with inscriptions; head of Oceani and the god River on either ends of the vertical stem; at the rectangular

corners, orthogonal pattern of tangent hexagons forming equilateral triangles and creating the effect of six-pointed stars (R 209a)

Wall. Polychrome marbles

Corridor 5. Grid of bands bearing pairs of opposite triangles and squares

North-western threshold mat. Poised square inscribed in a rectangle

Corridor 6. Grid-pattern of tangent spindles and poised squares, forming octagonal compartments (R 151b)

Side thresholds. Pattern of parallel rows of yellow *tesserae*

Central threshold. Fragments of black fillet

Room 7. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent octagons bearing an inscribed square tangent to four peltae in opposed pairs

South-western threshold mat. Square inscribed in a rectangle

North-western threshold mat. Pattern of parallel rows of yellow *tesserae*

Room 8. Medallion containing outlined honeycomb (R 204b); at the triangular corners, flowers

South-western threshold mat. Rectangle containing a eight-pointed star

North-western threshold mat. Pattern of parallel rows of yellow *tesserae*

Corridor 9. Grid of rows of tangent poised squares (R 132d)

Corridor 10. Outlined honeycomb pattern of oblong hexagons (R 204f)

Peristyle. Porticus 13. Orthogonal pattern of black and pink adjacent scales (R 217d)

Basin north-west. Floor. Foliate outlined pattern of opposed tangent undulating lines (R 249c-d)

Basin g. Floor. Pattern of parallel rows of white *tesserae*

Room 14. Grid-pattern of Hercules' knots in interlaced bands (R 254a)

Main triclinium 16. Border. Acanthus scrolls peopled with birds

Field. Hunting scenes arranged in registers in rocky landscape: departure; bird-hunt; hare-hunt, return.

Room 18. Grid of simple guilloche (R 134a)

Threshold mat. Square (fragment)

Private apartment 19. Outlined grid-pattern of adjacent cushions and recumbent ellipses, forming irregular concave octagons (R 253e)

Threshold mat. Pair of crossed *thyrsoi*

Room 20. Outlined pattern of double-axes (R 221a-c)

Room 21. Foliate orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles (R 243e)

Threshold mat. Pair of crosses

Room 22. Orthogonal pattern of tangent crosses of *scuta*, forming circles and lozenges (R 153a)

Assembly-room 23. Outlined honeycomb pattern in laurel wreaths; inscription ACK? H? EIA in the central hexagon

Room 24. Pattern of adjacent circles and poised squares

Private apartment 25. Grid of serrated simple fillets (R 124a)

Threshold mat. Lozenge inscribed in a rectangle

Room 26. Orthogonal pattern of tangent hexagons, forming triangles

Threshold mat. Swastika enclosed in a rectangle

Corridor 27. Orthogonal pattern of circles of interlaced guilloche

Corridor 29. Orthogonal pattern of spaced swastika-meander containing a square (R 191a-b)

Room 31. Orthogonal pattern of tangent lozenges and poised squares

Apse 33. Central panel. Orthogonal pattern of eight-pointed stars of two interlaced squares of simple guilloche (R 178b)

Side panels. Grid of simple fillets (R 129b)

Room 34. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent scales (R 217c)

Room 35. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent squares (R 141a)

Space 37. Grid of bands with tangent peltae (R 136c)

Apodyterium 49. Latchkey pattern of swastikas, enclosing a rectangle of guilloche (R 189a)

Room 50. Destroyed

Threshold mat. Zigzag rainbow-pattern (R 199c)

Room 51. Orthogonal pattern of trichrome cuboids (R 212c)

Room 52. *Semis* of small serrated squares (R 113e)

Threshold mat. Kantharos, five-pointed crown, palm

Basin 53. Pattern of parallel rows of yellow *tesserae*

Room 54. Grid of rows of tangent spindles (R 131a)

Basin. Pattern of parallel rows of white *tesserae*

Threshold mat. Four foliate spindles tangent to the centre

Room 55. Foliate orthogonal pattern of intersecting spindles (R 246i)

Threshold mat. Outlined orthogonal pattern of adjacent scales (R 215c)

Caldarium 56. Destroyed

DATE

The *domus* of the Asclepieia was built on the top of a previous building, as sections of wall under the floors of audience-chamber 4 and of the south-western *porticus* of the peristyle seem to show. In the first stage, phase A *porticus* 1 gave access to audience-chamber 4, which was flanked on either side by two *impluvia* and by corridors 5 and 9 leading respectively to rooms 7-8 and 11-12 through an antechamber. The rooms overlooking the north-eastern *porticus* of the peristyle faced the corresponding ones on the north-western wing. Room 30 marked the boundary of the *domus* to the north-west. Rooms 6, 7, 8 and 14 were paved with mosaics that are stylistically dated to the first quarter of the 3rd century. In the phase B, the antechamber and the two rooms adjoining corridor 9 were turned into three heated rooms (11, 12, 52): 12 and 52 communicated with each other. The room at the northern corner of the south-eastern *porticus* was paved with two mosaics that extended beyond the north-eastern wall.

In the second stage, phase A, the base with stairs was added to *vestibulum* 1; the basins were inserted in the peristyle; apse 32 was inserted between rooms 31 and 34 and the bath-suite was built to the south-east. The baths were entered from room 11 through space 40; room 51, which opened into chamber 12 to the south-west, communicated also with chamber 52 of the baths. New mosaics were laid in rooms 2, 4, 5, 6, 16, and 23. In the phase B, two corridors were built on the south-eastern wing: 10, which led from corridor 9 to space 40, and 29, which put the south-eastern sector in communication with the peristyle.

Corridors and peristyle were decorated with new mosaics, while the mosaics of rooms 18, 20, 25, 26 and 31 were replaced with other ones.

In the third stage, the *domus* underwent the last changes. The *impluvia* of audience-chamber 4 were turned into basin decorated with mosaics; the hypocausts under rooms 11, 12, 52 were filled and the door between 12 and 52 was walled up; in the peristyle, the wells were filled and a small basin was built in the ground. On the north-eastern wing room 28 was extended by incorporating the rooms that flanked its short sides and apse 33 was built in front of apse 32. In the bath-suite, the door between 40 and 49 was walled up and two flights of steps were built in front of the former entrance (space 40).

The lack of archaeological material does not allow us to date the different building phases of the Maison des Asclepieia. Ennaïfer suggests dates on the basis of mosaic style and of not well specified criteria. First stage, phase A: first quarter of the 3rd century (mosaics of rooms 6, 7, 8, 14); phase B: mid-3rd century (reason not specified); second stage, phase A: 280-90 (mosaics of rooms 4, 16); phase B: 300-10; third stage: second half of the 4th century.

On the basis of archaeological evidence only two building phases may be dated. In fact, under the floor of antechamber 15 there were a coin of Claudius II, fragments of plates of African red wire slip type A and of a lamp dated to the late 3rd century. Ennaïfer points out that evidence can date the phase B of the second stage. However, it is not sure that room 15 was turned into antechamber of room 14 in that phase. A coin of Constantius II or Julian (335-60) has been found under the floor mosaic of room 19: it would give a *terminus post quem* for the last building phase.

REFERENCES

Gauckler 1896d, 8; id. 1898; id. 1900, 11; 1905b; 1910, nos. 576-577; Schulten 1899; 69; id. 1901, 69; 1905, 83; 1907, 169; id. 1908, 230-39; Rebuffat 1969, 679 n.1; id. 1974, 497; Romanelli 1970, 332-33; Ennaïfer 1976, 71-152; Dunbabin 1978, 50, 60, 248 n.3; id. 1999, 112-13; Thébert 1987, 355; Sodini 1995, 183; Yacoub 1995, 255-59; Blanchard-Lemée et al. 1996, 178-79; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 525 figs. 157-59; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 21-6 n.1.

COMMENTARY

The Édifice des Asclepieia was separated from the Maison des Muses by a long platform (9.30 x 2.35m) that seems to have been a *euripus* (water channel). Platform and stairs at the entrance marked the upper level on which the house laid. Rooms 2-3 were on either side of corridor 1 and had the same dimensions, but their decoration may suggest different functions, though uncertain. Audience-chamber 4 could have been also used to collect rain in the nearby basins by its sloping roof: consoles on the borders of the basins supported perhaps statues. Servants would have collected water from the basins and carried it to the nearby rooms through passages 5 and 9. Rooms 7-8 might have been private apartment that corridor 6 separated from the area of passages (4, 5, 13). However, their proximity to the public sector of the *vestibulum* and its annexed spaces makes their private function uncertain. The function of rooms 11-12 behind space 9 is uncertain. In the previous building phases, as heated rooms, they were connected with the bath-suite by room 52. But in the last building phase, rooms 11-12 stopped being heated or even connected with the baths (the door between 12 and 52 was walled up): their floors in red concrete were

kept. Groups of three windows on either side of the entrance into *vestibulum* 1, doors that put the rooms in communication with each other and basins must have illuminated the southern part of the house quite well.

The basins that ornamented the peristyle on each side faced the most important reception rooms of the house (audience-chamber 4, main *triclinium* 16, and assembly-room 23) and created an elegant setting to be seen from inside. Room 16 was probably a *triclinium*, as location, triple entrance marked by pairs of pillars *in antis*, dimensions and figurative mosaic seem to indicate. The dining room would have been well illuminated by the two windows on the side walls and the three entrances. Room 23 also faced a basin in the peristyle: placed along the axis entrance- *vestibulum*- peristyle, it appears to be used for public activities. Ennaïfer states that the name Asclepieia inscribed in the floor mosaic would indicate that the room was a chapel; however, as Festugière points out (Ennaïfer 1976, p. 131 n. 439), the inscription of the assembly-room ("festival of Asclepios") would indicate that the owner was a doctor votary of the god Asclepios. The room was illuminated on either side by two windows, which overlooked spaces 22 and 24 (respectively to the north-west and to the north-east). As those long and narrow spaces had no opening, they were probably light-wells. Also space 17 would have been served the same function for main *triclinium* 16 and room 18. Space 15, on the other hand, would have been used for other purposes than lightening up *triclinium* 16 (which the northern window overlooked), as it opened into room 14. The function of the rooms that laid in the eastern wing is less certain. At the north-eastern corner, rooms 30-31-34-35 and apses 32-33 seem to form a close group that corridor 27 separated from the peristyle. The function of the rooms was probably connected with the use of the apses, which were not separated from each other by any partition. Behind apse 33, the paved space 36 could have been a courtyard.

Rooms 38-39-41 were not connected with the house. 38, whose floor was covered by slabs of limestone, was entered from the east by a door that is now blocked by stones. 39 and 41 would have been part of a road: afterwards (the date is not indicated) 39 was closed and used to house an altar whose typology resembles the altars found to the south of the house and in a building close to a fountain (a possible temple).

Space 40 and rooms 42-43-44-45 might have been used as service rooms, as they were connected with each other and were not decorated. According to Ennaïfer, space 40 was a *palaestra* when it communicated with 49. However, in the last building phase the door between 40 and 49 was walled up and the space was occupied by a flight of stairs between pillars that led up, perhaps to a floor or to a landing. Afterwards (the date is not certain), a basin replaced the flight of stairs. It is not clear how space 40 was used in the last building phase (its floor has been destroyed) and how the baths to the south-east were in communication with the house. As the bath-suite was entered from the street through space 46, to the south-east, it seems not to belong to the house. Lying at the south-eastern corner of the house and entered from the street, the bath-suite would have been used by outsiders and ensured privacy for the family.

MAISON DES MUSES

SITE

In the north - eastern sector of the ancient city, on the right bank of the Oued El Abid.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

To the south- east secondary entrance A lead into rooms B (to the north) and C (to the south). Becoming a narrow corridor-like space (2.5m long), it leads also into room D (7.10 x 4.30m), which communicates with rooms B and E (7.10 x 2.85m, to the north) and lead down to room F (4.50 x 3m, to the north- west). The last opens onto the peristyle is surrounded by rooms on all sides. Main *triclinium* G opens onto the north- western *porticus* by a double bay; it adjoins corridor H (10.20 x 3.30m), which leads into private apartments J and I and to some others to the north, but they are badly preserved. To the north of the main *triclinium*, *porticus* K of secondary courtyard L, leads into private apartments M and N in communication with each other; into anteroom O (1.57 x 3m, to the north-west), which opens into private apartments P and Q; and into assembly-room R (to the north-east), which overlooks the north-eastern *porticus* of the peristyle. To the east of assembly-room R, rooms S (3 x 4.75m) and T (3 x 3m) overlook the north-eastern *porticus*. The south-eastern side of the peristyle opens into rooms U (3 x 2.80m), V (3 x 2.10m) and X (3 x 6m): the last leads to the underground rooms Y (2.85 x 6.80m) and Z (3.10 x 2.85m), which communicate with each other.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Room F. Orthogonal pattern of quasi-tangent quadrilobes of peltae tangent to a central square, forming a concave octagon of guilloche (R 228a)

Peristyle. Grid-pattern of Hercules' knots with curvilinear spaces bearing circles ornamented with flower (R 254c)

Main *triclinium* G. U-shaped section. Grid of fillets, enclosing four-pointed stars (R 124)

T-shaped section. Fragments. Marine scene with Nereids on sea-monsters, Erotes fishing, head of Ocean, merchant-ship with inscription APAEONA LIBURNI

Corridor H. Orthogonal pattern of swastika-meander in simple guilloche, containing squares with Salomon's knot (R 190)

Private apartment I. Orthogonal pattern of alternately upright and recumbent tangent lozenges, forming concave squares

Private apartment J. Grid of swastika-meander forming squares ornamented

Corridor K. Outlined pattern of adjacent hexagons and lozenges (R 213)

Private apartment M. Grid-pattern of tangent spindles and circles, forming concave octagons (R 150c)

Private apartment N. Orthogonal pattern of tangent circles, forming concave squares (R 231d)

Anteroom O. Running-pelta pattern (R 222d)

Private apartment P. Grid of fillets (R 124)

Private apartment Q. Four tangent horizontal spindles, forming concave lozenges (R 252f)

Assembly-room R. Apse. Rows of triangles increasing in size from the centre to the periphery

Square room. Damaged. A three-strand guilloche frames twelve squares (0.64m) arranged in 3 x 4 rows representing the busts of the nine Muses and of three unidentifiable figures

Room V. Grid of fillets, enclosing crosses (R 124)

DATE

Merlin dated the *Maison des Muses* to the second half of the 3rd century, when most of the public buildings were built as effect of Romanisation. However, as the excavators did not carry out a careful stratigraphic investigation, it is difficult to date the house on external grounds. Recourse must be had to internal criteria (mosaics).

REFERENCES

De la Blanchère and Gauckler 1897, A32, nos. 166-168 ; Gauckler 1898 ; id. 1905b, 119-22; id. 1910, nos. 574-576; Schulten 1899, 69; id. 1901, 69; id. 1905, 83; id. 1907, 69; id. 1908, 230-39; Merlin, 1913, 39-45; Rebuffat 1969, 679 n.2; Romanelli 1970, 248; Ennaïfer 1976, pp. 64-70; Dunbabin 1978, 127, 134, 153, 248 n.1; Theophilidou 1984, 325 n. 31; Gros and Torelli 1988, 360; Lancha 1997, 71-2 n. 30; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 27-9 n.2.

COMMENTARY

The peristyle and the rooms arranged around it were separated from the street by secondary entrance A, rooms D and F that ensured the maximum amount of privacy for the family. Secondary entrance A led to a group of undecorated rooms that might have been served as service rooms. Merlin suggested that rooms B-C may have been storerooms, but there are no elements to support his hypothesis: as their walls are levelled off, inner partitions might have divided them in smaller chambers. Room D contains traces of a stair that would have led to an upper floor. Room E might have been a kitchen or latrine because of its fragmentary leaden pipe: however, the pipe might have been part of a sewage system and not related with the function of the room that run through. Further service rooms would have been Y and Z: laying in the basement, they were entered from room X whose function would have been connected with the transport of food from the cellars Y and Z.

The peristyle occupied the biggest area (168m²) of the *domus*. As the 2.50m wide *porticus* and the central basin did not give much space to the *viridarium* (a garden could have been only in the rectangular bands between basin and columns), the peristyle served as passageway and as source of light and air to the surrounding rooms. Room G was a *triclinium*, as the T+U layout of its mosaic and the double opening into the peristyle show. Opening off the peristyle to the north-east of the *triclinium*, was apsidal assembly-room R. Further reception rooms could have been also the three rooms that overlooked the south- western *porticus* of the peristyle, but their mosaics are missing. Room S and T appear to be reception rooms or private apartments, as they opened onto the peristyle and adjoined assembly-room R (to the north-west) and room F (to the north-east). However, they seem to be also service rooms because of their undecorated floors, but their location makes such a function uncertain. Rooms I-J and M-N-P-Q were private apartments that corridors H and K separated from the public spaces of the peristyle and of the *triclinium*.

More rooms were entered from corridor II and room J, but their function is unknown, as their walls and mosaics have been destroyed.

BULLA REGIA

MAISON D'AMPHITRITE

SITE

In the northern section of the ancient town: to the east of the Baths of Venantii and to the north of the *insula de la Chasse*.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Ground floor. To the south *vestibulum* 14 leads into peristyle 2 and into spaces 15-16 on either side. The eastern *porticus* overlooks assembly-room 3 and chambers 4-6 on either side of main *triclinium* 5. The western *porticus* opens into *cubiculum* 7, anteroom 9, chambers 12-13 and ends to the north into corridor 1. *Cubiculum* 7 leads into room 8; chamber 9 opens into private apartments 10-11. Between rooms 3 and 4 a flight of stairs leads down onto the basement.

Basement. Corridor 17 overlooks private apartments 19-20 and secondary *triclinium* 18 to the east: at the back of those rooms is light-well 21. On the other side of the corridor are rooms 22-23-24.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Ground floor

Peristyle 2. *Central courtyard.* Destroyed

Porticus. Orthogonal pattern of eight-pointed stars, forming a concave square

Room 3. Geometric design (R 217)

Main *triclinium* 5. Laurel garland laden with fruit and flowers framing panel with the delivery of Andromeda by Perseus

***Cubiculum* 7.** *Couch-area.* Floral composition

Main area. Floral composition

Room 11. Overlapping scale pattern

Space 15. Orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles (R 237-238)

Space 16. Destroyed

Basement

Corridor 17. Pattern with swastikas (R 188-189) framing central panel with female bust

Secondary *triclinium* 18. *U-shaped section.* Grid of bands (R142f)

T-shaped section. Triumph of Venus, supported by Tritons; Erotes flying and riding on dolphins, with crown, mirror, and jewel-box

Private apartment 19. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent octagons (R 166b)

Private apartment 20. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent octagons and crosses, forming hexagons

Room 22. Orthogonal pattern of tangent circles (R 231)

Room 23. Ashlar pattern (R 139)

Room 24. Grid of bands

REFERENCES

Gsell 1902, 64 note 4; Carton 1910a; id. 1910b; id. 1911a, 148; id. 1911b, 463-64; id. 1911c, 769-74; id. 1911e; Merlin and Lantier 1922, 15 n.390; Ch. Picard 1941-1946, 59; id. 1960, *RA* 2, 47 n.3; Levi 1947, 153; Lézine 1954, 175; Schauenburg 1960, 68; id. 1981, *LIMC* I, 781 n. 75; Romanelli 1966, 643; id. 1970, 235; Phillips 1968, 5, 6; Thébert 1972, 22-3, 26-9, 31-6, 41-6; Beschtaouch et al. 1977, 72-7; Dunbabin 1978, 39, 155-56; 250 n.3; Hanoune 1983, 37; Ravera 1986; Yacoub 1993, 47 Inv. A390; id. 1995, 88, 343-47; Fantar et. al. 1994, 90-1; Jones Roccas 1994, 344 n. 206b; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 531 fig. 241; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 36-9 n.1.

DATE

The architectural elements of the house, such as the *tubi fittili* vaults of the rooms in the basement, date the Maison d'Amphitrite to the late 2nd-3rd century. It is possible that the figurative mosaics of *triclinium* 5 on the ground floor and of *triclinium* 3 on the basement were laid in the first building phase, as they may be dated to the first half of the 3rd century.

The house underwent many modifications, which are difficult to be dated, as the building has not completely excavated.

COMMENTARY

Ground floor. The Maison d'Amphitrite was entered from corridor-like *vestibulum* 14 to the south. The *vestibulum* opened into spaces 15-16 on either side the function of which is unknown, as their architectural layout is not clearly distinguished. Space 15 may have been divided in smaller areas, as the fragments of different floor mosaics seem to suggest. Room 5 was a *triclinium*, as the layout of its floor mosaic and its triple entrance show. The adjoining rooms 4 and 6 may have been private apartments, as the *triclinium* is often flanked by this kind of room in the domestic architecture of Bulla Regia. However, because of their dimensions and of location off the peristyle, they might have been used as reception rooms. It is not clear whether room 6 opened onto the peristyle and/or into *triclinium* 5. Room 7 was a *cubiculum*: the couch-area was slightly raised above the main area. Room 10/11 seem to have been used as private apartments, which were separated from the peristyle by anteroom 9. The function of rooms 12-13 is not clear (living room? secondary *triclinium*? reception room?). They were apparently not decorated with mosaics. Space 1 was a corridor leading onto the peristyle. As the area to west of it has been not excavated, it is unclear what space corridor 1 connected with the central courtyard. Thébert (1972, 22) identified the corridor as the *vestibulum*, but the arrangement of the main entrance next to a *cubiculum* (7) makes it unlikely. A flight of 23 stairs between rooms 3 and 4 led down onto the basement floor, which was 4.80m below the ground floor.

Basement. Corridor 17 gave admittance into the basement rooms. Room 18 was a *triclinium*, as the U-shaped layout of its floor mosaic and its triple bay framed with columns show. Rooms 19-20 may have been private apartments, as in the Bulla Regia houses *cubicula* often lay in either side of the *triclinium*. The southern wall of those chambers and of *triclinium* 18 was pierced with windows, which admitted light and air from the long, contiguous light-well 21 at the back.

MAISON DE LA CHASSE

SITE

In the northern section of the ancient town, to the north-east of the *insula* with the Maison n.1, to the east of the Maison du Paon, and to the south-east of the Maison de la Nouvelle Chasse.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Ground floor. To the south-east secondary entrance 1 opens into space 2 and into service room 21. To the north *vestibulum* 3 leads into chamber 5 and onto the south-eastern *porticus* of peristyle 4. This *porticus* opens onto secondary courtyard 17, which adjoins to the west room 18 and *cubiculum* 20 on either side of secondary *triclinium* 19. The north-eastern *porticus* overlooks anteroom 10 and chambers 6 and 8, which communicate to each other by anteroom 7. Anteroom 10 leads into private apartment 9. The north-western *porticus* opens into rooms 11-12, into main *triclinium* 15, and into assembly-room 16: at the back of rooms 12 and 16 are respectively light-wells 13/14 and 66. The south-western *porticus* leads into audience chamber 24 through corridor 23. Hall 24 opens into rooms 27/28 and onto niche 26 on either side of the apse; it is flanked by rooms 29-30 and by anterooms 25-33. Anteroom 33 opens into basin 34 and latrine 35. Anteroom 25 leads into *vestibulum* 37 through anteroom 36. *Vestibulum* 37 opens into anteroom 38 and *caldarium* 42.

In the south-eastern corner of the peristyle a flight of steps leads onto the north-western corner of the peristyle on the basement.

Basement. The north-western *porticus* of peristyle 48 opens into room 49 and into *cubiculum* 50. The south-western *porticus* overlooks *cubacula* 51-53 on either side of secondary *triclinium* 52.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Ground floor

Peristyle 4. *Central courtyard.* Pattern of white *tesserae*

South-eastern porticus. Fragments of swastika meander

North-eastern porticus. Orthogonal pattern of peltae

North-western porticus. Grid-pattern of squares and rectangles

South-western porticus. Pattern of white *tesserae*

Room 6. Grid of serrated filets

Room 16. Honeycomb pattern (R 204a)

Corridor 23. Fragments of black and white *tesserae*

Niche 26. Black geometric figure on white floor

Room 27. Destroyed

Room 28. Destroyed

Latrine 35. Grid of serrated filets (124c)

Corridor. Grid of serrated filets (R 124)

Caldarium 42. *Wall.* Pattern of white *tesserae*

Basement

Peristyle 48. Porticus. Pattern of running swastikas, with a square between two opposed peltae (R 189b)
Panel in south-western porticus. Erotes as venatores fighting with bear, boar, and panther; five-pointed crown in centre

Room 49. Pattern of tangent circles (R 232d)

Cubiculum 50. Couch-area. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent octagons (R 169c)

Main area. Interlaced band framing a central octagon

Cubiculum 51. Couch-area. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent octagons (R 169a)

Main area. Orthogonal pattern of squares tangent to eight-pointed stars of two interlaced squares

Secondary triclinium 52. U-shaped section. Black and white grid of bands with a square at the intersections (R 143a)

T-shaped section. Floral grid-pattern (R 137c) containing five-pointed crown enclosing five bars

Side panels. Orthogonal pattern of tangent octagons

Cubiculum 53. Couch-area. Grid of serrated filets (124)

Main area. Orthogonal pattern of eight-pointed stars of two intersecting squares (R 178a-b)

DATE

Stratigraphical evidence shows that the Maison de la Chasse was built in the Severian period on earlier structures, which lay in three rectangular lots of Hellenistic origin. At the beginning of the 3rd century the south-eastern lot and the north-eastern lot were joined: a large peristyle was erected to the north and a smaller courtyard replaced a previous room on the basement.

The house underwent many modifications in the second half of the 4th century, when the owner acquired the south-western lot: the new area was occupied by the private baths and room 18. At the same time most of the mosaics on the ground floor was replaced.

REFERENCES

Gauckler 1903a; id. 1904a; id. 1905b; id. 1910, n.585; Schulten 1904a, 128; id. 1906, col. 159; Carton 1911a, 768; id. 1922; Lézine 1954, 176-78; Salomonson 1960, 43; Romanelli 1970, 249-50; Thébert 1972, 19-20, 25-9, 31-2, 39-43; id. 1986, 34, 42; id. 1987, 334-39, 343-51, 356, 361, 373, 378, 380-81, 383, 387; Dunbabin 1978, 81, 86, 249 n.1; Beschaouch 1983; Beschaouch et al. 1977, 54-63; Ling 1998, fig. 87; Sodini 1995, 184; Gozlan 1999, 201; Baldini Lippolis 2001, 165-66; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 50-3 n.5.

COMMENTARY

Ground floor. The Maison de la Chasse may be divided into two sections: the private one with the basement and the rooms surrounding the main peristyle on the ground floor; the public one with the audience chamber and the baths.

The private section was entered from two *vestibula* (1, 3), which adjoined to each other but overlooked two different streets. To the south secondary entrance 1 adjoined service room 21 which was provided with a well. *Vestibulum* 3 was entered from the eastern street through a small anteroom. At the south-

eastern corner of the house space 2 contained a flight of steps leading to a missing upper floor or terrace. Secondary courtyard 17 contained a central opening through which air and light were admitted in the underground peristyle. The surrounding pathway gave access into *cubicula* 18 and 20 on either side of secondary *triclinium* 19. Their function is suggested by the corresponding rooms in the basement; moreover, the platform in the back of chamber 20 shows that the room was used as *cubiculum*. Room 15 was the main *triclinium*. The big hall was provided with a triple entrance: the central one faced the rectangular basin in the peristyle. Later on (the date is unknown) an oven was set in the north-western corner of the room. The closed spaces 13/14 and 66 were probably light-wells. Contiguous to the dining room was apsidal assembly-room 16.

The public section of the house was entered from *vestibulum* 37, which overlooked the western street: it gave access into audience chamber 24 with its annexed dependencies (25 to 31) and into the baths of the house. On the northern side of *vestibulum* 37 were pool 34 and two-hole latrine 35. On the opposite side were the baths: *caldarium* 42 was provided with a circular structure surrounded by four apsidal niches and with a semicircular pool.

Basement. A flight of 22 steps and two landings from the main peristyle led down onto the basement floor, which lay 5.15m below the ground floor. The lowest landing had two rectangular niches or cupboards cut on either side of its wall. The underground floor comprised three *cubicula* (50-51-53) and a *triclinium* (52).

MAISON DE LA NOUVELLE CHASSE

SITE

In the northern section of the ancient town, in the *Insula de la Chasse* to the north of the Maison de la Chasse.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Ground floor. At the north-eastern corner of the building *vestibulum* 1 leads onto *porticus* 6a of peristyle 6 through anteroom 2. That *porticus* overlooks assembly-room 3 and anteroom 4, which leads into private apartment 5. *Porticus* 6b opens into room 7 and corridor 8, which leads into private apartment 9 to the south-west. Main *triclinium* 10 overlooks *porticus* 6c: along its north-western wall the dining room adjoins room 12, anteroom 13, and assembly-room 14, which opens onto *porticus* 6d. At the north-western corner of the house is light-well 11. *Porticus* 6d overlooks chambers 15 and 17 on either side of secondary *triclinium* 16. At the eastern corner a flight of stairs leads down onto the basement.

Basement. The north-western *porticus* of peristyle 15 overlooks private apartments 17-18 and secondary *triclinium* 16.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Ground floor

Peristyle 6. *Basin.* Sea full of fish; Greek inscription *en seauto tas elpidas exe*

Porticus 6a. Grid of bands (R 142f) framing a panel containing interlaced band forming scales

Porticus 6b. Orthogonal pattern of tangent circles (R 231)

Porticus 6c. Orthogonal pattern of six-point stars of two triangles, forming hexagons (R 214b)

Corridor 8. Destroyed

Private apartment 9. Destroyed

Main triclinium 10. *U-shaped section.* Pattern of white *tesserae*

T-shaped section. Hunting scene framed by a foliated scroll containing forequarters of animals

Assembly-room 14. Pattern of foliated scroll containing animals

Room 17. Pattern of white *tesserae*

Basement

Peristyle 15. Pattern of parallel rows of peltae (R222b)

Secondary triclinium 16. Orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles

DATE

Stratigraphical analysis shows that the east-west oriented block, on which the Maison de la Nouvelle Chasse stands, is of Hellenistic origin. The house was built on a previous building (the floor of *vestibulum* 1 was laid above an earlier mosaic floor), but the date of the building is unknown: perhaps in the Severan period, when the adjoining Maison de la Chasse was built.

The house may be dated on the basis of the style of its floor mosaics. The building underwent some modifications in the 4th-5th century, as the style of its floor mosaics shows. In the second half of the 4th century new mosaics were laid in the main *triclinium* and in adjacent *porticus* on the ground floor. At the end of the 4th century the mosaic floors of *porticus* 6a-6b and of anteroom 4 were replaced, too. Probably during the 5th century, the mosaic of the *porticus* 6a was extended towards the *porticus* 6b: that created a new space, which was enclosed by a wall and provided with two doors. Perhaps at the same time *porticus* 6b was separated from *porticus* 6c by another wall pierced by an opening. When the house was abandoned (the date is unknown), the area was partly occupied by a cemetery, which damaged the floor mosaics.

REFERENCES

Thébert 1972; id. 1987, 361, 364, 373-74, 390-92; Beschtaouch et al. 1977, 64; Hanoune 1983, 288; id. 1990, 70-5; id. 1994, 282; Ennaïfer 1994a, 234; Baldini Lippolis 2001, 165-66; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 47-50 n.4.

COMMENTARY

Ground floor. The Maison de la Nouvelle Chasse was entered from *vestibulum* 1, at the north-eastern corner of the building, through a door framed by columns. Anteroom 2, which separated the *vestibulum* from the peristyle, ensured privacy for the family. The reception rooms of the house were main *triclinium* 10, secondary *triclinium* 16, and assembly-rooms 3 and 14, which were arranged around the central peristyle. To the south main *triclinium* 10 adjoined a closed space which stands on a higher platform than the rest of the house: it is uncertain whether it belonged to the Maison de la Nouvelle Chasse. As a closed

space in the north-western corner of the building, space 11 was probably a light-well. Room 7 was a medium-sized room opening onto the peristyle: its function is uncertain. Chamber 9 may have been used as the house owner's private apartment: the room was ornamented with two columns *in antis* and entered from corridor 8.

Rooms 15 and 17 may have been used as *cubicula* or private apartments lying on either side of secondary *triclinium* 16. As their floors have been destroyed, their function is suggested by the corresponding rooms in the floor below. However, it is not possible to go beyond a pure hypothetical reconstruction, as the area is all collapsed.

Basement. A flight of stairs along north-eastern wall of chamber 17 led down onto the basement, which contained a trapezoidal peristyle and three rooms overlooking the north-western *porticus*.

The triple-bay room 16 was a *triclinium*: its central door was framed by pillars and faced a fountain decorated with painting. The adjoining rooms 17-18 may have been *cubicula* or private apartments, as in the contiguous Maison de la Chasse.

MAISON DE LA PÊCHE

SITE

In the northern section of the ancient town, to the east of the *insula* de la Chasse.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Ground floor. To the south-east a flight of stairs leads up to *vestibulum* 1, which opens onto peristyle 2. The western *porticus* overlooks corridor 9 and rooms 5 and 31 on either side of main *triclinium* 3. Room 5 and main *triclinium* 3 communicates with chamber 4. Corridor 9 leads into chamber 7-8 to the north; off its southern side are secondary *triclinium* 11 and chambers 10-12. Room 31 opens into room 30 to the west. The southern *porticus* overlooks room 15 and anteroom 13, which leads into chamber 14. Opening onto the eastern *porticus* is room 16, which communicates with chambers 17-18-19. The northern *porticus* opens into rooms 20-21, which adjoin anteroom 23 and room 22. Anteroom 23 leads into the bath-suite, which occupies the north-western section of the house. It includes *frigidarium* 25, *praefurnium* 26, and *tepidarium* 30.

Basement. Adjoining the northern side of *vestibulum* 1, a flight of stairs leads down onto corridor 32, which opens onto secondary courtyard 33. On either side of the central basin are rooms 34-35. To the west are *stibadium* 39 and private apartments 38-40. Along the southern *porticus* are rooms 36-37.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Ground floor

Vestibulum 1. White mosaic

Peristyle 2. *Porticus*. Orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles forming spindles (R 237f)

Room 4. Geometric design

Room 5. Geometric design

Corridor 9. Pattern of tangent circles (R232f)

Secondary triclinium 11. *U-shaped section*. Grid of filets (R124c –f)

Central field. Destroyed

Room 12. Orthogonal pattern of interlaced *scuta* (R153a)

Private apartment 16. Destroyed

Private apartment 17. Destroyed

Private apartment 18. Fragments of geometric composition

Private apartment 19. Fragments of geometric composition

Room 21. Fragments of black and white *tesserae*

Basement

Secondary courtyard 33. *Porticus*. White mosaic

Basin. Fish

Room 34. Black and white orthogonal pattern of octagons (R183)

Room 35. Black and white orthogonal pattern of octagons (R183)

***Stibadium* 39.** Fishing erotes.

REFERENCES

Gaukler 1910, n.585a; Quoniam 1952, 469; Boulouednine 1958; Lassus 1965, 181; Mac Donald 1965, 67 note 64; Romanelli 1966, 642-43; id. 1970, 249; id. 1973-1974; Rebuffat 1974, 455, n.1; Thébert 1971, 11-17; id.1972, 21-2; Beschaouch *et alii* 1977, 67-71; Dunbabin 1978, 250 n.2; Beschaouch 1983, 35-40; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 40-4 n.2.

DATE

The Maison de la Pêche is dated on stylistic grounds. The geometric mosaics decorating the ground floor along with the type of vaults suggest to date the house to the second half of the 2nd century. The house underwent decorative modifications in the 3rd century, as the mosaics in the basement seem to indicate. The inscribed base in the *vestibulum* shows that the house was still in use in the 4th century.

COMMENTARY

Ground floor. The Maison de la Pêche raised above the level of the adjoining street: a flight of seven stairs led up to *vestibulum* 1. Around the big peristyle were arranged a number of rooms.

Main *triclinium* 3 and the adjoining room 4-5 might have formed a single vast hall, as the inner thin partition seems to suggest. A further dining room (11) lay in the south-eastern corner of the house, as the U-layout of its floor mosaic indicates: its location off a corridor, separated from the peristyle, shows that the room was used for the family's meal. Secondary *triclinium* 11 communicated with chambers 10-12 on either side: their function is not certain.

Along the eastern *porticus* was a suite of chambers (16-17-18-19) which communicated with each other. Their small dimensions and geometric mosaics suggest that they might have been used as private apartments.

Basement. Corridor 32 gave admittance into the basement rooms. Room 39 was a *stibadium*, which was ornamented with triple bay framed with columns. Chambers 38-40 on either side of the *stibadium* would have been used as private apartments. Rooms 34-35 may have been used for relaxing in the hot summer, as they widely opened into the central court of secondary courtyard 33. The function of 36-37 along the southern side of the court is uncertain.

MAISON N. 3

SITE

Along the northern side of the east-west road leading onto the *forum*.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Ground floor. To the south *vestibulum* 1 leads into rooms 21-22 to the west and into *cella ianitoris* 2 to the east. The *vestibulum* turns into a narrow corridor leading into assembly-room 3/4, which opens into chambers 5 (2.60 x 2.06m)-6 and 23. Anteroom 5 leads onto the southern *porticus* 12 of peristyle 7: the *porticus* overlooks rooms 26-28 and secondary *triclinium* 27. The western *porticus* 9 opens into rooms 13 and 25. The northern *porticus* 10 overlooks main *triclinium* 18 and anterooms 14-16. Anteroom 14 leads into chamber 15; room 16 opens into *cubiculum* 17. The eastern *porticus* 11 opens into rooms 19, 20 and 24. A flight of stairs in the southern part of the central courtyard leads down onto the basement floor.

Basement. Corridor 29 (14.80 x 2.60m) overlooks private apartments 30-32 on either side of secondary *triclinium* 31. At the back of rooms 30-32 are light-wells.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Ground floor

Vestibulum 1. Black and white grid of filets (R 123a)

Room 2. Black and white grid of serrated filets (R 124e)

Threshold. Destroyed

Assembly-room 3/4. Room 3. Orthogonal pattern of poised squares, lozenges and triangles

Apse 4. Black and white orthogonal pattern of adjacent octagons, forming squares and oblong hexagons (R 169c)

Anteroom 5. Pattern of white *tesserae*

Room 6. Octagon bearing an inscribed poised square tangent to four peltae and framed by semi-squares

Peristyle. Court 7. Black and white linear grid of swastikas (R 188b)

Band 8. Orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles (R 237d)

Panel 8'. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent scales (R 215b)

Porticus 9. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent octagons (R 167b)

Porticus 10. Grid of simple filets (R 124h) framing a panel containing a composition of ellipses of laurel garlands and cushions of undulating ribbon

Porticus 11. Destroyed

Porticus 12. Destroyed

Room 13. Orthogonal pattern of tangent circles and poised squares, forming bobbins (R 156a)

Anteroom 14. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent octagons, forming squares and oblong hexagons (R 169c)

Room 15. Grid of filets (R 124e)

Anteroom 16. Orthogonal pattern of circles and poised squares in interlaced laurel garland

Cubiculum 17. Couch-area. Destroyed

Main area. Floral motif

Main triclinium 18. U-shaped section. Grid of simple filets (124a)

T-shaped section. Destroyed

Room 19. Fragment b. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent scales (R 215b)

Room 20. Destroyed

DATE

Because of the lack of stratigraphical evidence, the Maison n.3 is dated on the basis of its floor mosaics. The analysis of the mosaic decoration shows two building phases. In the first one (possibly in the 3rd century) the mosaics of apse 4, of court 7, of *porticus* 9, and of rooms 13-14 were laid. Perhaps at the same time *porticus* 10 and main *triclinium* 18 were decorated with *opus sectile*: fragments of earthenware and traces of concrete have been found under the mosaic floors of the two spaces.

In the 4th century, room 6 and the northern part of the *domus*, which contains band 8, panel 8', *porticus* 10, room 16, *cubiculum* 17, main *triclinium* 18, and room 19, were decorated with new mosaics. The layout of the polychrome mosaic 8 to the north of the black and white court 7 made the peristyle bigger.

REFERENCES

Lézine 1954; Thébert 1972, 24-7, 30, 32, 36, 44; Beschtaouch et al. 1977, 39-41; Hanoune 1980, 37-54; id. 1983, 38; Baldini Lippolis 2001, 165; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 66-8 n.14.

COMMENTARY

Ground floor. Nowadays the Maison n.3 (or Villa des Mosaïques) is entered from *vestibulum* 1 along the southern street. According to Hanoune (1980, 38), it is not the originary vestibule: the small entrance and the pair of columns standing in the middle of the room would point to a small court. However, space 1 could have been served as an elegant *vestibulum*, as the function of the nearby room 3 /4 seems to suggest. Lying next to the street and adjoining several rooms, apsidal hall 3/ 4 may have been an audience-chamber: its arrangement recalls the audience-chamber 24 of the nearby Maison de la Chasse.

Anteroom 5 connected the public portion and the private area of the *domus*. The main rooms of the private section were main *triclinium* 18 and secondary *triclinium* 27. Chambers 26 and 28 on either side of secondary *triclinium* 27 might have been *cubicula* or private apartments, as the arrangement of a *triclinium* between two *cubicula* is very common in domestic architecture of Bulla Regia. Room 19 might have been a further reception room because of its big dimensions. The different motifs of the two preserved fragments of its floor mosaic would indicate two separated rooms, but no trace of inner

partition has been found. The arrangement of space in the room is not clear. Anteroom 16 led into *cubiculum* 17, which also communicated with room 15. Nowadays, room 15 serves as entrance into the private section of the *domus*, but its proximity to *cubiculum* 17 and main *triclinium* 18 along with the poor conditions of the excavated area makes its function uncertain. The function of rooms 20-24-25 is uncertain, too: opening off the peristyle they may have been used for different purposes.

Basement. A flight of 18 stairs in the peristyle led down onto the basement, which lay 3.80m under the ground floor. The area is divided into three rooms (30-31-32) overlooking corridor 29. The rooms were illuminated through a window pierced onto the wall opposite the entrance and looking onto light-wells at the back. The collapse of the ceiling has destroyed the decoration of the basement rooms: only a few traces of wall painting have been preserved. However, as the arrangement of the three rooms along the corridor and behind light-wells recalls the basement of the Maison du Trésor, it is likely that room 31 was a secondary *triclinium* and the adjoining chambers 30 and 32 were private apartments.

CARTHAGE

MAISON DE LA VOLIÈRE

SITE

On the top of the hill of the Odeon, bordered by *decumanus* V (south), *kardo* VIII (west), *decumanus* VI (north), and *kardo* IX (east).

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

The *domus* is composed of two sections.

Rooms of the north-western section overlook the central peristyle, which is provided with octagonal *viridarium* 1 and *porticus* 3. The southern *porticus* (9.65 x 3.35m) overlooks space 4 (8.70 x 16.80m). The northern *porticus* (10 x 3.35m) opens into assembly-room 5, at the back of which is private apartment 12, corridor 6 (2.40 x 6.45m, *lararium* 7 (4 x 3.20m), and antechamber 8 (3.90 x 3.20m). Corridor 6 leads into space 10 (2.25 x 2.55m) and ends into anteroom 11 (2 x 2.70m). Anteroom 6 opens into secondary *triclinium* 9. The north-western *porticus* (10.80 x 3.20m) opens into corridor 13 (10.5 x 1.35m).

In the north-eastern section main *triclinium* 18 is flanked by space 17 to the south-west, rooms 19 (3 x 4.40m)-21 (3 x 7.70m) to the north-west, space 20 with balcony 22 (9 x 1.50m) to the north-east, and *porticus* 23 (ca. 14 x 2.80m) to the north-east. The *porticus* overlooks *nymphaeum* 25 (5.18 x 3.65m) and the sides 26-27 of the canal leading to it. Traces of a bath-suite and a cistern (24.50 x 2.60m) lay to the north-east of the two sections.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Peristyle. *Space 2.* *Semis* of plants, fruits, and flowers with birds among them

Porticus 3. Orthogonal pattern of spaced swastika-meander and squares (R 190b)

Assembly-room 5. *Floor.* Pattern of undulating sprays of acanthus and vine-leaves

Walls. Marble slabs separated by pillars

Lararium 7. *Floor and walls.* Marble slabs

Antechamber 8. Orthogonal pattern of circles forming poised squares

Secondary triclinium 9. Orthogonal pattern of circles and curvilinear octagons in garland (RII 263c) containing *xenia*-motifs

Anteroom 11. White plain mosaic

Private apartment 12. Orthogonal pattern of secant circles, forming poised squares

Threshold mat. Pair of peltae facing a poised square inscribed in a rectangle

Main triclinium 18. Isodomic ashlar pattern in *opus sectile*

Threshold mat. Rectangle bearing a hexagon inscribed in a lozenge

Room 19. Missing. Pattern of secant circles, forming sexfoils and concave triangles

Room 20. Honeycomb-pattern of tangent squares, forming hexagons and equilateral triangles (R 205b)

Room 21a. Orthogonal pattern of tangent circles, forming concave squares

Room 21. Destroyed. Grid-pattern of squares and poised squares

Porticus 23. Missing. Orthogonal pattern of tangent circles, forming poised squares

Space 24. *Opus sectile*

Niches. Acanthus-scroll; sea full of cuttlefish

Fountain. Hunting scene; fishers; water-fowl in landscape

DATE

The area in which the Maison de la Volière lay was originally a Punic cemetery: tombs and objects, which are dated to the 4th and early 3rd century B.C., have been found to the north and south-east of the house. During the Roman occupation (Ennabli does not give any more precise date), the area was turned into an *insula* by embankment and digging works. It was probably on the occasion of those works that the Maison de la Volière was built: the *domus*, in fact, fits quite well in the topography of the *insula*. Traces of stucco and painting under the floor mosaic of the peristyle and fragments of a basin under the *nymphaeum* are indicative of previous phases in the life of the house that, however, are not dated. As no dated archaeological material has been found and no careful stratigraphic investigation has been carried out, the house has to be dated on internal criteria alone. Ben Osman divides the mosaics into two groups that would suggest two different phases. Through iconographical parallels with other examples, the mosaics of the first group (*porticus* 3 of the peristyle, main *triclinium* 18, and rooms 19-20-21) are dated to the 2nd -early 3rd century, while those of the second group (space 2 of the peristyle, assembly-room 9; and walls of the *nymphaeum*) are dated to the late 3rd -early 4th century.

REFERENCES

Gauckler 1904b, 13-6; id. 1910, nn. 640-49; Gsell 1904, 354; Schulten 1904a, 122; id. 1905, 77-8; Merlin 1920a, 122; Pace and Lantier 1925, 141; Picard C. 1951, 44-5; Rebuffat 1970; Romanelli 1970, 247; Dunbabin 1978, 125 n.58, 167, 253 n.38; Ennabli and Ben Osman 1982; Belz 1989, 192-93; Thébert 1987, 362; Ben Osman 1990, 49; Letzner 1990, 504 n. 439; Picard G.Ch.1990, 185-93; Sodini 1995, 179; Yacoub 1995, 112-14; Blanchard-Lemée et al. 1996, 269; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 521-22 figs. 72-5; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 125-28 n.9.

COMMENTARY

The Maison de la Volière occupies the southern part of the *insula* that lies on the south-eastern side of the hill of the Odeon. Since this side slopes down toward the shore, embankment and digging works were necessary to create a building area on following landings. The topographical aspects affect the architecture of the *domus*. In fact, the western wing is on a lower level than the *kardo* VIII and the eastern one, on the contrary, is on the upper level than the *kardo* IX: both the sides are linked by *decumanus* V to the south.

The Maison de la Volière is composed of two different sections that communicate with each other via anteroom 8. The central space of the peristyle was unusually occupied by a *viridarium* of octagonal shape in the middle and carpeted with mosaics at the corners. However, trees must have been also in the surrounding space 2, as traces of square holes where there is deliberately no mosaic show: one is in the

middle of the south-western side of the peristyle, one is at the eastern corner. Plants, water and floral motif of the floor mosaic would have created a particular atmosphere of luxuriant vegetation.

The north-western *porticus* of the peristyle overlooked four differently used rooms. At the north-western corner, room 5 seems to be an assembly-room because of its dimensions, its location off the peristyle and its floral mosaic. To the north the room was illuminated by a window, which opened into private apartment 12. Space 11 led into peristyle 1/2/3 through corridor 6, that lacks a mosaic; traces of stairs would indicate as stair-well leading to a missing upper floor: there could have been slave quarters or bedrooms located there. To the east of that, room 7 was a *lararium*, as it housed an *aedicula* (2.35 x 1.98m) that could have contained an altar. The function of space 10, at the back of *lararium* 7 and in communication with space 11, is uncertain. Opposite rooms 5-12, to the south of the peristyle, space 4 would have occupied by more rooms like reception rooms and bedrooms: however, they have collapsed. Only traces of the southern supporting wall and of the northern opening into the peristyle are visible. Running along the western *porticus* of the peristyle, *porticus* 13 supported columns and small rooms (paved with *opus sectile*) on the same level as the *kardo* VIII is. Space 13 was then a cryptoporticus that joined the upper level of the street with the lower section of the peristyle. Ennabli points out that gallery 13 could have been used as storeroom and, as passageway connecting outside and inside, could have housed the *vestibulum* to the south. To the south-east, some stalls (15-16) adjoined the enclosing wall of the house and opened to the *decumanus* V and to the *kardo* IX. They belonged to the same *insula* as the *domus* did, but they were not part of the domestic building, which laid on the upper terrace above the stalls and the streets.

In the more public section of the *domus* was main *triclinium* 18 opposite a sumptuous fountain that would have offered an ideal stage to the dinners: in order to offer a better view, the space between the central columns (3 and 4) of the *porticus* 23 was 1.20m wider than the space between the side columns. If a window had been opened on the back wall, the *triclinium* would have received more light and air from the terrace 17. At the north-western corner of *triclinium* 18 a door gave access to room 19, which opened also to the eastern *porticus* of the peristyle: it is not certain whether it communicated also with room 21 and *porticus* 23. Owner and servants may have used room 19 as passage from the peristyle to *triclinium* 18, while guests would have walked through antechamber 8 and *porticus* 23 and entered the reception room by their entrance to it. Room 19 could have been used also as antechamber of room 21, which may have been a bedroom, but there are no traces of opening in any of its sides. The house-plan shows a chamber to the south-west of room 21, which is not mentioned by Ennabli: it is therefore difficult to relate it to the adjoining rooms and hence to specify its function.

Room 20 could have been a reception room, as from within guest could have enjoyed the view of the fountain to the north and of the sea by the loggia-belvedere 22 to the east. Because of its location, it would have been suitable for readings and philosophical discussions before dinner in *triclinium* 18.

It adjoined at the back a bath-suite (only a few remains of which are left) and a big cistern divided in three parts. Located on the top of the hill, the cistern probably supplied water to the fountain and to the bath-suite.

In conclusion, the two parts that make up the *domus* seem to have served different purposes. It is possible that the section with peristyle was used by for small gatherings of guests and the owner's family, as the

small assembly-rooms and the *lararium* suggest. The section with the *nymphaeum*, on the contrary, with its theatrical appearance and its big *triclinium*, could have been suitable to more formal occasions.

MAISON DU TRICONQUE

SITE

In the archaeological park of Antonine Baths, in the middle of *insula* XI.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

The centre of the house is occupied by the peristyle, which is provided with a central basin 1 (3.38 x 4.09m) and *porticus* II-V. The north-western *porticus* V overlooks pairs of rooms communicating with each other: anteroom VI (2.70 x 4.10m)-private apartment VII/VIII and anteroom IX (3.35 x 3.11m)-room X (5.30 x 3.20m) to the west; anteroom XVI (5 x 4.30m)-private apartment XV and anteroom XVIII (3.26 x 3.95m)- private apartment XVII to the east. Between those are corridors XI (5.40 x 1.50m)-XII (3.90 x 1.50m)-XIII and room XIV (4.30 x 9.20m). Along the north-eastern *porticus* II is apse XX/XXI (6 x 4.47m). The south-eastern *porticus* III (2.28 x 26.10m) opens into *triconchos* XXIII/XXIV/XXV/XXVI, which adjoins room XXX to the east.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Peristyle. Basin 1. Floor. Plain white mosaic with pink, black and white *tesserae*

Porticus III. Square, pelta and floret

Anteroom VI. Orthogonal pattern of quasi-tangent quadrilobes of peltae tangent to a central square (R 228c)

Private apartment VII/VIII. Grid-pattern of tangent poised squares containing an inscribed cuboid (R 133e)

Room IX. Scales

Room X. Grid of bands bearing quasi-tangent lozenges and squares with the squares at the intersections (R 144b)

Corridor XI. Black and white orthogonal pattern of tangent oblong hexagons forming isosceles triangles (R 211d)

Corridor XII. Orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles, forming saltires of quasi-tangent spindles and concave squares (R 237d)

Private apartment XVII. Outlined pattern of adjacent lozenges and squares (R 161b)

Triconchos. Apse XXV. Four putti dancing and holding garland in a domed *tholos* flanked by colonnades; flowers and garlands scattered throughout building; large vine scroll filling space above.

DATE

The Maison du Triconque in its present form is the product of three building phases that can be dated by fragments of pottery found under the floors of rooms VI/VII, IX, XX/XXI and XXIV. The dates cannot

be verified, because the authors of *CMT IV.1* do not describe in details what fragments have been found nor do they publish these finds.

In the late 2nd or early 3rd century, the rooms were arranged along the long sides of an oblong peristyle, provided with a semicircular basin in the eastern corner and a rectangular basin in the centre. The north-western *porticus* V opened into room XIII/XIV that corridor XI/XII separated by room VI/VII/X. That room led into chambers VIII and IX at the back. The south-eastern *porticus* III overlooked rooms XXII/XXIV and XXIII/XXVI/XXIX, which adjoined the oblong room XXVII. In that phase rooms XIII/XIV, VI/VII/X, XVI, and XXII/XXIV were paved with *opus sectile*, while black and white geometric motifs carpeted corridor XI/XII and rooms VIII, XXVIII and XXIII/XXVI/XXIX.

In the first half of the 5th century important modifications affected the arrangement of the rooms. The shape of the peristyle was changed with the introduction of two spaces along the north-eastern and south-eastern sides, which allowed the building of the apse XX/XXI. Rooms XIII/XIV and VI/VII/X were divided in smaller rooms and the walls between rooms VII and VIII were broken down to form a single chamber: the decoration in *opus sectile* of that wing was replaced by polychrome mosaics. The rooms lying on the south-eastern side were replaced by *triconchos* XXIII/XXIV/XXV/XXVI.

In the first half of the 6th century a wall was built in apse XX/XXI and room VII/VIII was divided in two chambers communicating with each other.

REFERENCES

Ch. Picard, 1950b, 155; *id.* 1952a, 191; *id.* 1952b; *id.* 1953c, 39-40; *id.* 1965a, 173-82; Romanelli 1964, 12; *id.* 1970, 198-99; Duval 1973, 109-12; *id.* 1984, 468; *id.* 1997, 134, 136; Duval and Février 1964; Lézine 1968a, 169-75; Rebuffat 1974, 455 n.4; Baïrem-Ben Osman 1981, 402-05; Richardson 1988, 290-92; Rossiter 1990, 223; Morvillez 1995; Sodini 1995, 179-80; Alexander et al. 1996, 361-65; Alexander 1999, 285-90; *CMT IV.1*, 1999, 54-74; Baldini Lippolis 2001, 170-71; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 139-42.

COMMENTARY

The Maison du Triconque adjoined the Baths and the *kardo* XIV to the north, the building with *exedra* to the south-east and the *kardo* XV to the south. As the south-western wall has been destroyed, it is not possible to know whether more rooms laid in the unexcavated area to the south-west or the western wall of rooms VI and VII/VIII in *opus africanum* marked the boundary of the building on this side.

Triconchos XXIII/XXIV/XXV/XXVI was the most outstanding element of the *domus* because of its dimensions (10 x 14.43m) and architectural layout. On the opposite side was a series of private apartments (VII/VIII, XV, and XVII) preceded by anterooms to ensure more privacy.

The function of the oblong room XIV is uncertain. In the first building phase of the house, when XIII and XIV formed a single room paved with *opus sectile* and facing a semicircular basin in the peristyle, space XIII-XIV served probably as the main *triclinium*. The building of a wall (it is not lined up with the two sections of wall on either ends) made room XIV smaller and created space XIII. The function of corridor-like space XIII is not clear, as it did not open either into a room or courtyard but into another corridor (XII).

CLUPEA

MAISON DES DEUX CHASSES

SITE

To the north of the ancient *forum* and to the south of the rampart.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

At the south-west *vestibulum* I leads onto peristyle II. The south-western *porticus* IIa opens into a pair of rooms on either side of *vestibulum* I: service rooms XIV (4.50 x 3m) and XV to the south-west, service room XVI and latrine XVII to the south-east. The south-eastern *porticus* IIb overlooks *triconchos* IV, which adjoins *taberna* XIX-XX to the south and space V-VI to the north. At the northern corner of the north-eastern *porticus* IIc is an apsidal structure VII (4.50m wide and 3.60m deep). The north-western *porticus* IId overlooks corridor VIII, which leads into room IX, secondary *triclinium* X, and anteroom XI. Room XI leads into private apartments XII-XIII, which communicate with each other.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Peristyle. *Basin.* Marine scene

Porticus IIa. *Semis* of roses

Porticus IIb. *Semis* of roses, *hederae*, and millets

Porticus IIc. Orthogonal pattern of four peltae tangent to a central square (R 228c)

Porticus IId. Orthogonal pattern of tangent circles, forming concave squares (R 233a) and containing flowers, barking watchdog, basket of roses

***Triconchos* IV.** *South-western section.* Hunting scenes: named hunters with named horses hunting animals in landscape

North-eastern section. Honeycomb patterns (R 204)

North-western and south-western sections. Orthogonal pattern of octagons, forming squares and lozenges

Apse VII. Acanthus scrolls framing pair of horses confronted across *modius*, with names (*Amor*, *Nynficus*)

Room IX. Diana in temple surrounded by hunting scenes

Secondary *triclinium* X. Orthogonal pattern of monochrome adjacent scales (R 215a-c)

Anteroom XI. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent scales, containing flowers (R 215d-f)

Threshold. Vine scroll

Private apartment XII. Orthogonal pattern of quadrilobes, forming concave octagons (R 226a)

Threshold. Pair of palm leaves confronted across *hedera*

Private apartment XIII. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent scales, containing roses (R 215d-f)

Service room XV. *Opus signinum*

Service room XVI. *Opus signinum*

Latrine XVII. *Opus signinum*

DATE

The Maison des Deux Chasses is dated to the 5th-6th century AD on the base of the style of its mosaics. However, stratigraphical evidence shows previous building phases, which are difficult to be dated, as the archaeological material has not completely analysed yet. The *domus* seems to have been built on salt-works and to have used some of its facilities, such as the four basins in court III. Rooms I and XV were floored respectively with *opus tessellatum* and *opus signinum*, which were partly covered by the mosaic laid in the south-western *porticus* of the peristyle.

A fragment of pot (type Hayes 197: late 2nd-mid-3rd century) has been found under the floor mosaic of *triconchos* IV. More fragments have been found under the floor mosaic of room IX: they are fragments of a lid (type Hayes 182), and two fragments of pottery (type Hayes 10A and type Hayes 183). They are dated in the second half of the 2nd century to the first half of the 3rd century. Those fragments give a *terminus post quem* for the layout of *triconchos* IV and room IX. Apse VII and corridor VIII seem to have been built in the same period as room IX, since this group of rooms are 0.65m above the floor of the peristyle. In the new layout the door of apse VII encroached upon the north-eastern *porticus* and the wall between corridor VIII and room IX was built with discarded material. Perhaps in the same building phase a flight of stairs leading to a missing upper floor was built in the north-eastern corner of *porticus* IIc: it encroached upon the floor mosaic of the *porticus*.

In an uncertain date room IX was provided with a semicircular basin decorated with a pair of dolphins confronted across a palm. The new mosaic obscured part of the panel with Diana, which was completely covered by a geometric panel (orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles of eight spindles, forming octagons and squares: R 245e) in the last building phase.

REFERENCES

Ennaïfer 1987-89; id. 1994a, 238-39; id. 1994b, 314-15; id. 1999; id. 2002; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 80-3 n.1.

COMMENTARY

The Maison des Deux Chasses was entered directly from the street by *vestibulum* I. The entrance room communicated with chamber XV, which could have been used either as porter's lodge or as service room (a 4.60m deep well was in the south-western corner). Along the south-western wall of room XV are remains of slabs lying perpendicularly to the facade of the *domus*: they may have closed an ancient opening onto the street. The adjoining rooms XIV and XVI may have been service rooms, too: traces of a cupboard have been found in room XVI, the floor of which shows the same pattern in *opus signinum* as that of room XV. Space XVII, which was entered from *porticus* IIb via a narrow corridor, was used as latrine. *Triconchos* IV was the most important reception room of the *domus*. Room IX was a *triclinium*, as its dimensions and its location off a semicircular basin suggest. Further reception rooms may have been apse VII and room IX because of their lavish figurative mosaics. However, apse VII could have accommodated a very limited number of guests, because of its dimensions and of the lack of a rectangular space in front of the apse. Room IX was provided with a basin and laid far way from the peristyle.

At the southern corner of the *domus* a room (XIX) opened onto the street and led into a smaller chamber (XIX), which was decorated with *opus signinum*: the two rooms were probably a shop. Adjoining room XIX is a small space (XVIII), which could have accommodated a flight of stairs leading from the street to some rooms above the shop.

DJEMILA

MAISON D'AMPHITRITE

SITE

To the east of the *Forum*.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Vestibulum I leads into latrine XI and service room X (6.80 x 4.50m) to the east and onto peristyle II to the west. The western *porticus* (2.20m wide) overlooks room IV (2.60 x 3.60m) and assembly-room V on either side of main *triclinium* III. The southern *porticus* opens into private apartments VI -VII -VIII and leads up into service rooms IX/IX' at the north-eastern side.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Peristyle. Central court. Orthogonal pattern of tangent hexagons containing fish, animals and flowers

Northern porticus. Square panel containing crater in laurel medallion

Eastern porticus. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent lozenges and squares (R 161a)

Southern porticus. Acanthus scroll; medallions representing *putti* vintaging

Western porticus. Triumph of Amphitrite with Erotes, Tritons, Nereids, and sea-monsters

Main triclinium III. Orthogonal pattern of irregular octagons adjacent and intersecting on the shorter sides (R 169a-c)

Room IV. Orthogonal pattern of quasi-tangent circles, forming irregular poised squares

DATE

The lack of a careful stratigraphic examination and of photographs makes it difficult to date the Maison d'Amphitrite. On the basis of the mosaic decoration, Blanchard-Lemée indicated two building phases. In the late 3rd-early 4th century the *domus* would have been built in its present form and the mosaics would have been laid out in the western *porticus* (triumph of Amphitrite) and in main *triclinium* III. In the end of the 4th or beginning of the 5th century, the peristyle would have been decorated with the basins, the columns and the mosaics in the central court and in the other *porticus*.

REFERENCES

Ballu 1921, 33-4; Rebuffat 1969, 673 n.1; Blanchard-Lemée 1975, 107-28; Dunbabin 1978, 155, 256 n.2.

COMMENTARY

The northern wall was covered by a layer of brick, which would have protected the rooms against the humidity, as they lay at a lower level than the *decumanus*. Paved with slabs, the long *vestibulum* I connected the living quarters of the *domus* with the service rooms.

Room III was a *triclinium*. The adjoining room IV contained a semicircular structure to the east, which was probably used to collect water, as traces of coating on its wall show. However, it is difficult to know

whether it was a tank or a *nymphaeum*, because the height of the wall is unknown. Room V might have been an assembly-room because of its dimensions and location off the peristyle. Afterwards (the date is unknown), the room was turned into an oil press, as the square basin, the circular stone containing a drain-pipe and the block of stone found in the chamber seem to suggest. It is arguable that the rooms at the north-eastern corner of the house were turned into an oil press and connected with the nearby building in the same period. Perhaps, they had originally belonged to the *Maison d'Amphitrite*, which would have occupied a regular rectangular space. Along the southern *porticus* was a group of private apartments (VI-VIII-VIII).

Space IX/IX' and rooms X-XI would have been service rooms that flights of stairs connected respectively with the upper peristyle and *vestibulum* I. Space IX/IX' could have been used as storerooms or cellars. Room X was divided into two unequal parts by a low wall: the part by the door contained a sewer; the bigger part was paved with slabs. The hollow space XII at the south-eastern corner may have been used as basin or as fireplace. Room XI served as latrine with eight seats.

MAISON DE CASTORIUS

SITE

To the north of the Severan *Forum*, just inside the walls of the original *colonia* and to the south of a temple.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

At the southern corner *vestibulum* I opens into assembly-room IV, into rooms III-IV (4.40 x 4.40m), and into corridor V (4.40 x 2.20m), which connects this area with the private section of the *domus* through the western *porticus* of peristyle XVI. This *porticus* overlooks secondary entrance IX-X, chambers XII (2.80 x 4.80m)- XIV (4.80 x 2m) and XV (4.80 x 4m) on either side of assembly-room XIII, and corridor VI. Assembly-room XIII opens into spaces XIII' and XIII'' (2.60 x 2.60m) at the back. Corridor VI overlooks service rooms VI a-b-c-d. The northern *porticus* opens into secondary *triclinium* XX and into room XXI. The eastern *porticus* overlooks main *triclinium* XVII and space XVIII (5.40 x 6.40/7.30m), which opens onto space XIX. To the south-east is the bath-suite provided with *vestibulum* XXII, *caldaria* XXIII and XXV, *tepidarium* XXIV, room XXVI and *frigidarium* XXVIII with *piscina* XXVII. *Frigidarium* XXVIII opens into landing XXIX which leads into smaller baths (warm rooms XXX and XXXII and cold *piscina* XXXI to the east of space XIX).

MOSAIC DECORATION

Peristyle. Eastern porticus. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent lozenges and squares (R 161a), containing a panel with inscription

Northern porticus. Panel containing inscription in a medallion

Pseudo-basin. Scallop

Secondary triclinium XX. Rectangular panel containing inscription

Uncertain provenience. Fragment. Grid of outlined bands

DATE

The material structures of the domestic walls show that the *Maison de Castorius* underwent several changes: the building phases are difficult to be dated. As spaces II-III lean against the wall of the Severan Forum, they were built after the demolition of the rampart and the building of the *forum* under Caracalla. According to Allais (1938, 49), followed by Blanchard-Lemée, spaces II-III belonged to an *atrium*-house whose eastern and northern boundaries were respectively the eastern wall of room IV and the northern wall of rooms VII and XV. In fact, rooms VI a-b-c-d are separated from each other and from rooms VII and XV by thin partitions: as their southern wall leans against the northern wall of *atrium* I, it is arguable that originally rooms VI a-b-c-d opened onto courtyard I and extended to the northern wall of rooms VII and XV. That *atrium*-house might have belonged to some members of *gens* Claudia in the first quarter of the 3rd century, as their names were inscribed on two bases of statues set on either side of the main entrance onto *atrium* I. Afterwards (the date is unknown), the *atrium*-house was included into a more elegant *domus* provided with *vestibulum*, peristyle and bath-suite. In fact, the bases of the columns of the peristyle are slightly lower than the floor supporting the mosaic of the semicircular basin and the mosaic panels with inscriptions, which recorded the decoration of house by Castorius and glorified the position of the family. It is clear that peristyle XVI and secondary *triclinium* XX were paved with new mosaics in the second building phase by Castorius, which could have been either the new owner or the architect. In the third building phase, the peristyle-house was provided with a small bath-suite off the *Cardo Maximus*. In fact, the floors of main *triclinium* XVII and spaces XVIII-XIX-XX are 2m higher than the *Cardo Maximus* and the eastern wall of rooms XVII-XVIII was raised by about 1m.

REFERENCES

Ballu 1921, 42-44; Allais 1938, 39; Rebuffat 1969, 673 n. 5; Blanchard-Lemée 1975, 153-73; Dunbabin 1978, 256 n.6; Thébert 1987, 355, 367, 398-401; Donderer 1989, 142-43 n. 140.

COMMENTARY

The *Maison de Castorius* had two entrances on either side of the western *porticus*: vestibulum I at the south-western corner for the reception of clients and secondary entrance IX at the north-western corner. Off the peristyle were the reception rooms XIII (assembly-room), XVII (main *triclinium*), and XX (secondary *triclinium*). Rooms VI a-b-c-d might have been service rooms. They, in fact, formed an ensemble separated from the peristyle and the reception rooms; moreover, rooms VI b-c-d were not closed by doors, but opened directly onto corridor VI. Because of their opening onto the *porticus*, rooms VII-VIII do not seem to have belonged to the *domus*: they appear rather to have been shops. However, as they were well set in the architectural arrangement of the house, they could have been part of the *domus* and afterwards separated from that. Rooms VII-VIII could have entered respectively from corridor XIII' and space XIII'', as the partition walls between those spaces seem to suggest.

The bath-suite appears now as a closed ensemble. It is possible that it was entered by *vestibulum/apodyterium* XXII. Furnaces f1 and f2 warmed up respectively *caldaria* XXV and XXIII,

which adjoined to the east *tepidarium* XXIV and space XXVI (the function of that space is uncertain). *Piscina* XXVII was used for cold baths in *frigidarium* XXVIII: the area is mostly destroyed, as it was built on an embankment that slid toward the *Cardo*. To the east of *frigidarium* XXVIII, flight of eleven stairs and paved corridor XXIX led to smaller baths provided with *caldarium* XXX and cold *piscinae* XXXI-XXXII. Because of its dimension and its opening onto the street on the eastern side, the bath-suite was probably used by servants.

MAISON D'EUROPE

SITE

To the north of the *Forum* and to the west of the baths of the *Capitolium*.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

A *porticus* (32m long) to the south-west overlooks *vestibulum* 1, secondary entrance 26, and entrance 29. *Vestibulum* 1 leads up to landing 5 (1.90 x 2.10m) that adjoins spaces 2 and 2' (1.40 x 1.80m): they on either side and opens onto corridor 6 (8.60 x 3m). Spaces 2-2' open into space 4 (2 x 3m) to the east. Corridor 6 leads down onto the eastern *porticus* of peristyle 12 through landings 7 and 8. Secondary entrance 26 leads down onto the western *porticus* of peristyle 12. The northern *porticus* overlooks rooms 17 and 19 (4 x 5.10m) on either side of main *triclinium* 18. Room 17 opens into chamber 16 (4.40 x 5m) at the northern corner. The western *porticus* opens into assembly-room 22, room 23, and anteroom 21. The eastern *porticus* overlooks secondary *triclinium* 13 and private apartments 14-15 (4.40 x 2.40m); it leads up into chamber 11 (3.40 x 2.60m) to the south-east. Flights of stairs on either side of basin b lead down into a corridor, which leads onto a courtyard and into a cellar. Above those is apsidal room 9. Entrance 29 (8.80 x 5.40m) leads into the baths through room 30 (5.30 x 9m) that communicates with the street by space 31 (5.30 x 2.20m) and opens into *frigidarium* 32 (6 x 6m), which adjoins *piscina* P to the west, *tepidarium* 33 (5.70 x 2.80m) to the south-east and space 36 and *caldarium* 37 to the north-east. Room 37 adjoins chambers 34 (3.20 x 5m) and 35 (3.30 x 1.90m) to the south and space 38 and rooms 39 (2.60 x 4.40m), 44 and 45 (2.40 x 5.80m), which communicate with each other, to the north.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Peristyle. *Porticus* 12. Destroyed

Secondary *triclinium* 13. *U-shaped section.* Orthogonal pattern of tangent quadrilobes of four scallops adjacent to a central square or circle

T-shaped section. Rape of Europa and Erotes with wreath and baskets of flowers

Main *triclinium* 18. Fragments. Vintaging Erotes in vine-scrolls, with two heads of Ocean at angles

Anteroom 21. Destroyed

***Frigidarium* 32.** Destroyed

DATE

According to Blanchard-Lemée, the Maison d'Europe would have been built in Severan times and ornamented with the baths and the *porticus* at the beginning of the 4th century. The dates suggested by the scholar are not certain, as they are based upon the style and the iconography of a few mosaics that decorated the *domus*. The absence of archaeological evidence cannot give any information about chronology.

REFERENCES

Allais 1939; Février 1965, 47; Rebuffat 1969, 673 n.3; Blanchard-Lemée 1975, 133-151; Dunbabin 1978, 44, 256 n.3; Thébert 1987, 332, 358-60; Robertson 1988, 85 n. 164; Wattel-de-Croizant 1995, 225-27; Muth 1998, 240, 247, 256, 259, 362-63 A11.

COMMENTARY

The Maison d'Europe showed a monumental entrance with an outer *porticus* of 12 columns and three *vestibula* (1, 26, 39) that would have been used for different purposes. *Vestibulum* 1 was probably used for receiving clients and for welcoming important guests, as its dimensions and its paved floor seem to indicate. Secondary entrance 26 would have been served in daily use, as its smaller dimensions and its proximity to peristyle 12 seem to indicate. The rectangular structures set between 26 and space 26' were probably used as containers of provisions: traces of grooves and holes would indicate that they were covered. Entrance 29 gave access into the bath suite: it contained a cistern and small latrine against the northern wall; a rectangular slab in the middle of the concrete floor would have supported a table or a basin. Entry-halls 1, 26 and 29 adjoined rectangular rooms divided in two unequal parts (27, 28, 46), that would have been *tabernae*, as they did not communicate with the *domus*. However, since they are well integrated in the architectural plan of the domestic buildings, it is possible that they had belonged to the *domus* before being turned into shops.

The peristyle was ornamented with columns and three basins of different shape. Basin b lay above the stairs leading down to the cellar and the southern wall of the peristyle. The basins were built after the peristyle, as their brick structures lean against the columns of the central court. On either side of basin a were two low hollow spaces (d-d') that might have been used as ornamental pots with flowers: in fact, the use of spaces d-d' as basins would have been not necessary because of their proximity to the bigger basins a-b-c. Off the three sides of the peristyle were main *triclinium* 18, secondary *triclinium* 13, and assembly-room 22.

The bath-suite occupied the south-eastern corner of the house. It was entered from the street by two *vestibula* (26 and 31) on either side. The *frigidarium* 41, *tepidarium* 42 and hot *piscina* 43 formed a small ensemble that could have been used by servants.

MAISON DE L'ÂNE

SITE

In the south-eastern part of the town, between the *Forum* and the Temple of Venus Genetrix to the north and a temple and the Maison de Castorius to the south.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

To the east *vestibulum* I leads onto the northern *porticus* of peristyle II. Running along the southern wing of the *domus*, the southern *porticus* (2.50m wide) opens onto the *Cardo Maximus* to the east and to a flight of 5 stairs leading up to a landing to the west. The western *porticus* (8.50 x 2m) overlooks space III (8 x 4/ 2.80m), which adjoins space IV to the north. The eastern *porticus* opens into secondary *triclinium* V, which communicates with anteroom VI. At the back of the dining room are *taberna* VII and secondary entrance VIII. The latter opens into anteroom IX, which communicates with anteroom VI to the west and with room X (3.80 x 4.20m) to the north. Room X leads into chamber XII (to the west) and into *stibadium* XI (to the north). To the west of room X, chambers XII-XIII (3.80 x 2.50/3m), which communicate with each other, lead into *vestibulum* I.

In the north-western part of the *domus*, between the temple and *vestibulum* I, there are the private baths. *Frigidarium* XIV (10.50 x 4m) with *piscinae* P1 and P2 on its short sides (P2 is flanked by space XV (2.20 x 1.60m) to the west), adjoins chamber XVI (3.45 x 1.90m), the warm rooms XVII and XVIII (3.30 x 1.80m) and space XIX, which opens onto the Grand *Cardo* to the west.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Peristyle. Southern porticus. Orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles, forming quatrefoils (R 244a)

Secondary triclinium V. Geometric composition

Stibadium XI. Square room. Border. (1.10m-wide) Boats full of musicians and dancers approaching buildings on islands, fishers, and Erotes. Small mythological scenes at corners: Hero and Leander; Ulysses and the Cyclops; Perseus and Andromeda; Orpheus

Field. Venus in shell supported by two Tritons, with Eros holding mirror. Surrounded by Nereids on sea-monsters, dolphins, fish; Neptune with sceptre above

Apse. Vegetal scrolls spreading from vases and peopled with putti

Room XII. Fragments. Bands of circles and pair of peltae facing a circle bordering squares enclosing crater in the centre of laurel garland

Frigidarium XIV. Vine-rinceaux forming medallions containing birds, animals, Erotes and *putti* vintaging and dancing; in the central row medallions represent genre figures and ass with inscription *ASINUS NICA*, genre figures, and Eros holding lizard on string

Steam room XVI. Orthogonal pattern of quasi-tangent quadrilobes of peltae tangent to a square (R 228c); panel containing ass with inscription *ASINUS NICA*

Room XVII. Black *tesserae*

DATE

The structural analysis of the walls shows that *stibadium* XI and the bath-suite were built after the rest of the house and the temple of Venus Genetrix, against which they leaned. Fragments of African red ware slip type D, which have been found under the apse of *stibadium* XI, give the second half of the 4th century as *terminus post quem*. The lack of evidence makes it difficult to date the first building phase of the *domus*. It is very likely that the Maison de l'Âne was built as a peristyle-house in an area occupied by previous buildings, as sections of dry-stone wall found under the northern *porticus* of the peristyle show. The wall M-M' was the northern boundary of the *domus*.

REFERENCES

Ballu 1911, 105; id. 1921, 38-41; Lassus 1954, 194; Rebuffat 1969, 673 n.1; Blanchard-Lemée 1976, 23-106; id. 1981; Dunbabin 1978, 43, 102, 117 n.28, 134, 156, 256 n.1.

COMMENTARY

The Maison de l'Âne had two entrances that were both paved with slabs and preceded by *porticus*. *Vestibulum* I to the west was the main entrance, as it overlooked the main road (Grand Cardo) and led onto the peristyle through a door framed by columns. Room VIII was the secondary entrance because of its moderate size and its communication with a narrow street (*cardo maximus*); moreover, to the south it adjoined room VII, which was probably a shop, as it did not communicate with the *domus*. The eastern *porticus* of the peristyle turned into corridor IIb, which ended onto *cardo maximus*; however, as no traces of threshold and door have been found, the corridor was not a further entrance into the house. To the west it ended into a flight of five stairs leading up to a landing that must have led to a missing floor: in fact, neither service rooms nor many *cubicula* seem to have been on the basement of this elegant *domus*. Opposite secondary *triclinium* V was a room (III) that seems to have been a reception room because of its columned entrance and location off the peristyle. However, as it was a small room that overlooked a garden (there was no basin on that side of the courtyard), its function is uncertain. It adjoined to the north cistern IV, as its lack of openings and its coating show. *Stibadium* XI was connected with secondary *triclinium* V and with peristyle II by rooms VI, IX-X that with their columns at the entrances served as elegant passageway.

The bath-suite lay at the north-western corner of the house. It was entered both from *vestibulum* I through *frigidarium* XIV and from the Grand Cardo through space XIX. *Frigidarium* XIV was provided with two lower *piscinae* (P1-P2) along its short sides: to the east *piscina* P2 adjoined space XV, which was a cistern because of lack of openings and traces of inner coating. Room XVII was a *caldarium*, as hypocausts under its floor show: it adjoined space XVIII, which could have been a warm *piscina* because of its shape. The function of room XVI is uncertain. As stratigraphical investigation shows any trace of hypocausts or any *underground* communication with the adjoining *caldarium* XVII, it could have been neither a *tepidarium* nor a *laconicum*, as respectively Ballu and Blanchard-Lemée suggest. It could have been an *apodyterium*, although its location far way from the entrance would indicate a different function.

EL JEM

HOUSE OF AFRICA

SITE

In the south-eastern quarter of the ancient town, close to the Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque. The house has been partially rebuilt at rear of the Archaeological Museum.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT*

**Conventional direction North*

The eastern *porticus* of peristyle 1 overlooks two groups of three private apartments (2-3-4 and 8-9-10) each on either side of anteroom 5, which leads into private apartments 6-7. The northern *porticus* opens into colonnaded *triclinium* 11 and into anteroom 12, which leads into kitchen 13. The western *porticus* overlooks anterooms 14-15 and 19. Anteroom 15 opens into *cubiculum* 18 to the south, and onto corridor 16 to the west. Corridor 16 leads into apsidal structure 17. Anteroom 19 opens into assembly-room 20 to the south and corridor 21 to the west. Corridor 21 leads into rooms 22-23 to the north; into anterooms 24-26, into secondary *triclinium* 28 and into assembly-room 20 to the south. Anterooms 24 and 26 open respectively into room 25 and *cubiculum* 27. At the back of secondary *triclinium* 28 is light-well 29.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Peristyle 1. *Semicircular basin. Floor.* Pattern of adjacent half-scales

Wall. Row of rectangular panels containing geometric figures

Long basin. Pattern of white *tesserae*

Northern porticus. Outlined pattern of intersecting circles (R 247a-b)

Anteroom 5. Geometric composition

Private apartment 6. Geometric composition

Private apartment 7. Orthogonal pattern of tangent lozenges

Colonnaded triclinium 11. *T-shaped section a.* Foliate orthogonal pattern of tangent circles (R 231c) containing *xenia*-motifs

Side panels b. West. Foliate pattern of tangent circles, containing birds

East. Foliate pattern of tangent circles, containing busts

U-shaped section. Black and white orthogonal pattern of four rectangles around a small square

Gallery d. Black and white honeycomb pattern (R 204a)

Central threshold mat. Nereids riding sea-monsters

Anteroom 12. Grid-pattern of tangent lozenges and concave squares (R 152)

Anteroom 14. Pattern of white *tesserae*

Anteroom 15. Pattern of white *tesserae*

Corridor 16. Black and white honeycomb pattern (R 204a)

Apsidal room 17. *Apse.* Birth of Venus

Floor. Foliate orthogonal pattern of tangent circles (R 231c) containing *xenia*-motifs

Cubiculum 18. *Couch-area.* Black and white grid-pattern of tangent spindles (R 131b)

Main area. Vegetal pattern of undulating lines (R 249b) containing beasts

Anteroom 19. Rainbow pattern of lozenges (R 202C)

Assembly-room 20. *Northern part.* Geometric composition of *opus sectile*

Platform. Grid-pattern of tangent spindles and poised squares (R 151a-b)

Threshold. Pair of peacocks faced around a crater from which rose plants grow

Corridor 21. Black and white honeycomb pattern (R 204a)

Anteroom 26. Black and white geometric pattern

Secondary triclinium 28. Bust of Africa and the Seasons in corners

Cubiculum 27. *Main area.* Allegories of Rome and the provinces

DATE

The *domus* is dated to the second half of the 2nd century on the basis of the style of the mosaic floors. Archaeological evidence shows that the House of Africa was occupied up to the end of the 4th - beginning of the 5th century.

REFERENCES

Blanchard-Lemée 1975, 11-34, 73; Yacoub 1995, 196-97; Blanchard-Lemée at al. 1996, 19-22; Slim 1999; "The House of Africa" 2002; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 533 fig. 280, 533-34, 292-95.

COMMENTARY

The House of Africa, which occupies a 3000m² area, is one of the largest domestic buildings of Roman Africa. The house has been partly reconstituted with its mosaic floors nearby the Archaeological Museum of El Jem. The advanced state of decay of the house, the difficulty of access into the area where it lay, and the high costs of building new premises as a museum for the accommodation of a large number of mosaics were some of the reasons of such a reconstitution. The reconstituted plan allows the visitor to wander inside a very sumptuous *domus* and to have a true perception of spaces, elevations and decoration. However, the visitor cannot experience totally the domestic life of a rich family in Roman Africa. In fact, because of the high cost of the project, only the noble part of the *domus*, which is the rooms adorned with mosaics, has been reconstituted. The "humble" parts of the house, such as the *vestibulum*, the chambers overlooking the eastern *porticus*, the service rooms, and some ancillaries of the private quarters, have been excluded as unimportant. Moreover, the comparison of the reconstructed house with the original plan shows some dichotomies. Room 17, for example, has been reconstructed as a chamber with an apse. However, the apsidal structure does not appear on the original plan which shows a rectangular room divided into two unequal parts by a pair of columns. Moreover, room 17 is now accessible from both anteroom 15 and corridor 16, while on the original plan it is entered via a narrow corridor at the north-eastern corner. In the reconstructed house, room 23 is entered from corridor 21 through anteroom 22: on the original plan, in contrast, the two chambers seem to have been divided by a wall and room 23 opened into a group of rooms to the north.

The service rooms occupied the north-western corner of the building, as the original plan of the *domus* shows. Room 13 is labelled as kitchen. The absence of decoration and the location next to the main *triclinium* and to the service rooms make it likely that the room was a kitchen. The service room was entered from an anteroom (12) decorated with polychrome mosaics and opening into the northern *porticus* of the peristyle. However, the original plan seems to show a further opening into the western gallery of the colonnaded *triclinium*.

MAISON DE LA PROCESSION DIONYSIAQUE

SITE

In the southern part of the town, to the south of the amphitheatre and opposite the Maison de Tertulla.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

To the south-west *vestibulum* V1 leads into room T (3.80 x 3.10m), into *cella ianitoris* S and onto the peristyle through anteroom V2. The north-eastern *porticus* opens onto corridor C1 (16 x 3.10m) that leads into assembly-rooms A-B, into rooms C (9.40 x 3.70m) and D (3 x 2.90m), and onto corridor C3. Room D opens into space E and adjoins space F. Corridor C3 leads into space G. The south-eastern *porticus* overlooks anteroom H (4.10 x 2.30m), main *triclinium* J, and room M (8 x 7.60m). Anteroom H leads into chamber I (4.1 x 3.9m); main *triclinium* J communicates with chamber L (3.70 x 5.50m) through anteroom K (3.70 x 2.20m). The south-western *porticus* opens into anteroom O, which leads into private apartments N and P, and into private apartments Q and R. The north-western *porticus* overlooks rooms U (5 x 3.85m) and V, which opens into W (4.8 x 3.5m).

MOSAIC DECORATION

Vestibulum V1. Rainbow-pattern (R 199c)

Anteroom V2. Rainbow pattern (R 199c)

Peristyle. *North-eastern, north-western, south-western porticus.* Outlined grid-pattern of adjacent cushions and recumbent ellipses, forming concave octagons (R 253e)

South-eastern porticus. Grid-pattern of circles, rectangles and squares

Corridor C1. Outlined grid-pattern of adjacent cushions and recumbent ellipses, forming concave octagons (R 253e)

Assembly-room A. Central medallion containing the bust of Genius Anni, surrounded by spreading acanthus rinceau; corner plants enclosing seasons, satyrs, maenads, and birds

Assembly-room B. Squares in *opus sectile*

Room C. Panel 1 (3.70 x 1.85m). Outlined pattern of alternately upright and recumbent spindles, forming concave squares (R 162d)

Panel 2. Central medallion with Dionysus *Pais* riding tigress, surrounded by vine tendrils and acanthus décor, with Seasonal plants at angles (RII.371b)

Panel 3 (3.38 x 0.70m). Four masks in tangent floral medallions

Room D. Floral composition

Space E. Panel 1. Pattern of adjacent scales bearing a peacock feather (R 216b)

Panel 2. Four birds in tangent floral medallions

Panel 3. Orthogonal pattern of tangent floral medallions (R 231c)

Corridor C2. Orthogonal pattern of quasi-tangent flowers and poised squares (R 127a)

Anteroom II. Pattern of poised squares between two opposed peltae

Main triclinium J. U-shaped section. Orthogonal pattern of tangent poised squares, forming four-pointed stars (R 183a)

T-shaped section. Bar of T: Dionysiac procession: Dionysus *Pais* riding lion, with satyrs, bacchantes, Sylenus riding camel, and woman carrying basket

Side panels (2.30 x 21.61m): combats of beasts in landscape

Shaft of T. Border. Acanthus rinceau filled with animals, women with seasonal attributes, and nude *genii*

Field. Orthogonal pattern of intersecting and tangent circles (R 241e), containing busts of Seasons, satyrs, Dionysiac figures, masks, fish, birds, and fruit.

Threshold mats S6-S7. Square containing flower

Threshold mat S3. Ivy-tendrils surrounding a circle ornamented with cross

Threshold mat S4. Concave square between circles bearing cross

Threshold mat S5. Tendril

Room M. Apse. Vine tendril spreading out from vase

DATE

As the excavations have brought to light fragments of common pottery that is difficult to date, the Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque is dated on the grounds of the mosaic style. The house is dated to 140-60 by Foucher and to the late Antonine period by Parrish: Dunbabin thinks that both dates may be widely accepted.

REFERENCES

Foucher 1963; Rebuffat 1969, 683 n.1; Dunbabin 1978, 20, 22, 110-11, 150, 160, 173-76, 260 n.27; *id.* 1999, 105-7; Parrish 1981; *id.* 1984, 147-56 nn. 25-8; Fantar et al.1994, 71-2; Yacoub 1995, 41-5; Blanchard-Lemée et al.1996, 88-9; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 520 fig. 55, 526 figs. 189-90, 527 figs. 198-99, 534 fig. 301; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 303-05 n.11.

COMMENTARY

The L-shaped *vestibulum* V1-V2 was made of two rooms of different size. The biggest one (V1), opposite the street and ornamented with a pair of pillars at the entrance, was probably served for the reception of clients. Room S, to the south-east, could have been the porter's lodge. The smallest V2 gave access into the *domus*: its location did not allow passers-by and clients lingering in V1 to look through the house. Main *triclinium* J adjoined on either side a pair of rooms (I-L) entered by anterooms (H-K). Room I adjoined an irregular space and a corridor in the unexcavated area, which makes their function uncertain.

Room L, which communicated with *triclinium* J through anteroom K, may have been either a *cubiculum* or a space from which servants brought food into the dining room.

A row of smaller rooms (A-B-C-D-E) opening off corridor C1 were decorated with an opulence which suggest that they were intended for the reception of guests. The destruction of the area to the north-west of those rooms makes it difficult to identify their function. As room C was decorated with three different panels, with the figurative one in the central area and the back one on a raised platform (0.18m higher), the chamber might have been either a *cubiculum* or an assembly-room. The platform could have been used either in the *cubiculum* for accommodating couches or in the assembly-room to allow guests to enjoy entertainment in the lower part of the room. Also chamber E was floored with three panels and was provided with a raised platform: as it was entered by anteroom D, it would have been a *cubiculum*. The function of the adjoining space F is uncertain. Lying 1.10m below the floor mosaics, it could have been neither a cistern nor a cellar, as its walls were decorated with painting. However, it is also possible that the group of rooms A to F were reserved only for the owner's family. Room W was entered from the peristyle through anteroom V: in later times, room V was turned into a stall provided with two troughs and W was divided into three parts. Room M seems to have been a kitchen, because two tanks have been found against its south-western wall. However, some elements make that function uncertain. The room appears too big to be a service room: Parrish (1981, 53) maintains that the generous proportions of the kitchen might be explained by a fondness for lavish dining on the part of the owner. Parrish' explanation may be plausible, but further elements raise doubts about the function of M as kitchen. The tanks could have added later. Moreover, the room lay off the reception area of the peristyle and was ornamented at the entrance with a semicircular niche that could have been used either for the domestic cult or for supporting a statue that welcomed visitors entering from V2. Service rooms could have been at the north-western corner of the house, but the area has preserved a few remains that are difficult to be identified.

The abundance of Dionysiac motifs and the arrangement of spaces led Foucher to suggest that the *Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque* was the site of a Dionysiac cult. However, the Dionysiac motifs were part of a general repertory with little religious significance; moreover, in its architectural form, the building shows no specifically religious features: it was a typical peristyle-house of Roman Africa. From the evidence of Dionysiac mosaics decorating other private buildings in Roman Africa, Parrish (1981) suggests that the mosaic program of *Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque* may be seen as a rich elaboration of a popular artistic theme and as expression of the economic and social status of the owner, which insisted upon the Dionysiac theme because it reflected his own good fortune and prosperity.

MAISON DES DAUPIHNS

SITE

In the south-western of the ancient town, to the south of the *Maison du Paon*.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

To the east *vestibulum* I leads into *cella ianitoris* III (2.50 x 2m) and into room IV (2.20 x 2.20m) on either side and into anteroom II (8.85 x 4.45m) to the west. Anteroom II opens into audience-chamber V, which overlooks corridors VII (2 x 3.90m)-VIII (2.20 x 4.10m) on either side of apsidal space VI (2.60 x 1.12m). The corridors lead onto peristyle X-XI-XII-XIII-XIV through anteroom IX (7.20 x 3.70m). The eastern *porticus* XI (22.05 x 3.15m) opens into service rooms XV (3.65 x 3.53m)-XVI (2.70 x 3.12m)-XVII (2.75 x 4.05m) and onto corridor LII (2.95 x 17.50m). Service room XVII adjoins spaces XVIII (1.45 x 3.78m)-XIX (1.85 x 3.78m) at the back. Corridor LII leads into service rooms LIV, LVI-LVII-LVIII-LIX (all: 2.55/3 x 3.05/3.75m)-LX (2.50 x 6.10m) along the southern wall of spaces I to VII. The southern *porticus* XII (3.40 x 24.10m) overlooks private apartment XLVI, room LI and anterooms XLVIII and L, which lead respectively into private apartments XLVII and XLIX. To the south room LI opens into anteroom LXIX that leads into chambers LV-LXII-LXIII-LXIV-LXV-LXVI-LXVII-LXVIII to the east through anteroom LIII, into chambers LXX-LXXI to the south, and into corridor LXXII to the west, which leads into rooms LXXIII-LXXIV-LXXV-LXXVI-LXXVII. The western *porticus* XIII (21.90 x 3.80m) opens onto space XXXV (2.85m wide), into main *triclinium* XXXVII, and into rooms XXXVIII (3.20 x 5.60m)-XXXIX (3.30 x 6.20m). Room XXXVIII leads into space XL/XLI (5.05 x 4.60m), which opens into space XLIII through anteroom XLII. The northern *porticus* XIV (3.05 x 24.10m) overlooks anteroom XX (4.90 x 3.35m), secondary *triclinium* XXV (5.05 x 7.6), corridor XXVI (5.35 x 1.45m), and anteroom XXIX (3.90 x 3.05m), and kitchen XXXI. Anteroom XX adjoins *lararium* XXIV (2.80 x 5.10m) and leads into secondary *triclinium* XXI, which communicates with *cubiculum* XXII (3.2 x 3.05m) and chamber XXIII (2.65 x 1.65m). Corridor XXVI leads into kitchen XXVII to the south of space XXVIII. Anteroom XXIX opens into space XXX at the back. Kitchen XXXI adjoins chamber XXXII.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Space VI. Apse. White *tesserae* laid in an orthogonal pattern of adjacent scales (R 215a)

Eastern panel. Orthogonal pattern of eight-pointed stars of two interlaced squares (R 178b)

Threshold mat. Guilloche mat (R 140e)

Corridors VII-IX. Black and white grid of bands with a concave square at the intersections (R 143d)

Threshold mat B. Floral motif

Threshold mat C. Lozenge inscribed in a rectangle

Anteroom IX. Black and white outlined honeycomb pattern (R 204a) with a central row of tangent lozenges

Apse B. Vegetal scroll spreading from crater

Threshold mat C. Triangle

Threshold mat D. Guilloche mat

Threshold mat E. Lozenge inscribed in a rectangle

Peristyle. Porticus XI-XII-XIII-XIV. Black and white pattern of circles and poised quadrilobes of peltae (R 230d)

Structure 32C. Black and white orthogonal pattern of intersecting octagons, forming squares and oblong hexagons (R 169b)

Basin 32 D. Destroyed

Anteroom XX. Black and white grid of bands with a concave square at the intersections (R 143d)

Threshold mat. Crescent-on-stick between two vertical bars

Secondary triclinium XXI. Panel with Nereid on a sea-monster framed by a geometric pattern (R 186e) containing birds

Threshold mat. Hare eating grapes

Cubiculum XXII. *Couch area.* White plain mosaic

Main area. Grid-pattern of adjacent cushions and circles (R 253g)

Secondary triclinium XXV. Three panels representing: erotes vintaging in foliate grid of undulating bands (R 251b); birds in pattern of undulating lines (R 249) formed by dolphins; grid of simple guilloche (R 135a)

Southern threshold mat. Spray of acanthus.

Eastern threshold mat. Black and white lozenge inscribed in a rectangle

Anteroom XXIX. Grid of serrated simple filets (R 124h)

Northern and southern threshold mats. Grid of serrated simple filets (R 124h)

Room XXXII. Orthogonal pattern of tangent eight-lozenge stars forming squares and poised squares (R 173b)

Lararium XXXV. White *opus tessellatum* in parallel rows of *tesserae* (R 105a)

Room XXXVIII. Grid of serrated triple filets (R 124c)

Eastern threshold mat. Outlined pattern of intersecting circles, forming dentilled spindles and concave squares (R 237c)

Southern threshold mat. Lozenge inscribed in a rectangle

Room XXXIX. Grid of serrated triple filets (R 124c)

Anteroom XL. *Southern panel.* Black and white grid of rows of tangent poised squares (R 133c)

Northern panel. Floral pattern of intersecting circles, forming spindles and concave squares (R 242)

Anteroom XLII. Black and white orthogonal pattern of spaced swastika-meander, containing a square (R 191c)

Western threshold mat. Four triangles in triple dentilled filet

Southern threshold mat. Spindle

Room XLV. Grid-pattern of ellipses and irregular octagons, forming poised concave squares (R 253g)

Room LXII. Black and white orthogonal pattern of tangent hexagons, forming squares and four-pointed stars (R 186e)

Room LXIV. Black and white outlined pattern of intersecting oblong hexagons, forming squares and hexagons (R 172c)

Northern and eastern threshold mats. Flower

Room LXV. Destroyed

Room LXVII. Destroyed

Anteroom LXIX. White *opus tessellatum* in parallel rows of *tesserae* (R 105a)

Western threshold mat. Black and white floral scroll

Northern threshold mat. Black and white pair of opposed peltae

Southern threshold mat. White *opus tessellatum* in parallel rows of *tesserae* (R 105a)

DATE

Traces of floors, of a wall and of a sewer under *porticus* XIII show that the Maison des Dauphins was built on previous structures, which may be dated to the beginning of the 2nd century AD. Fragments of pottery have been found in the same area. They are a lamp type Deneauve V D, which is dated to the last quarter of the 1st century AD, and a fragment of pottery form Hayes 6A, which is dated to the end of the 1st-early 2nd century AD.

The Maison des Dauphins was probably built in the first half of the 3rd century. In fact, the archaeological material found under rooms VI, XXXVIII and XLII is dated between the 2nd and the beginning of the 3rd century and most of the mosaics are dated to the first half of the 3rd century. Afterwards new mosaics were laid in rooms VI, XXV, XXXVIII, XXXIX, and XLII: they are stylistically dated to the second half of the 3rd or in the early 4th century.

REFERENCES

Fantar et. al. 1994, 125 (fig.); *CMT* III.1, 1996, 67-99; Slim 2001, 710; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 536 fig. 345; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 309-11 n. 13.

COMMENTARY

The Maison des Dauphins was entered by a T-shaped *vestibulum* I/II that led into two different parts of the house: audience-chamber V and anteroom LX. Because of its dimension and location by the street, space V might have been used both as reception room for clients and as passage onto the peristyle through corridors VII-VIII and anteroom IX. It is uncertain whether that space was uncovered (court).

Corridors VII-VIII fulfilled two functions. As passageway between court V and anteroom IX, they let guests enter the *domus*. Lying on either side of space VI, they did not allow passers-by and clients received in audience-chamber V to look through the heart of the house, although *vestibulum*-peristyle-*triclinium* were set along the same axis east-west. Anteroom IX was provided with three mosaic threshold mats that stressed the entrance into *porticus* XI of the peristyle. All those elements made the entrance into the house especially elegant. Room LX was a sort of *vestibulum* that led into rooms LIV-LVI-LVII-LVIII-LIX via corridor LII. As those undecorated chambers were entered both from *vestibulum* 1 (though anteroom LX) and from the peristyle (through corridor LII), they would have been service rooms. Chambers XV-XVI-XVII were possibly service rooms, too, because of their small dimensions and their unpaved floors. To the east they adjoined spaces XVIII-XIX, the entrance and the function of which is uncertain. At the north-western corner of room XV was a small rectangular space that could have been an *aedicula* for the domestic cult.

Room XXXVII was a very elegant *triclinium*, but it has been mostly destroyed. Room XXV was probably a secondary *triclinium*. Both main *triclinium* XXXVII and secondary *triclinium* XXV adjoined rooms of different function on either side. The semicircular space XXXV was probably used for the domestic cult.

At its back it adjoined a partly preserved space (XXXVI) that could have been a light-well. Rooms XXXVIII-XXXIX appear to have been a sort of double anteroom leading into chamber XLII through L-shaped anteroom XL. Anteroom XX led into secondary *triclinium* XXI, which communicated with *cubiculum* XXII, as the layout of its floor mosaic shows. Anteroom XX and secondary *triclinium* XXI opened respectively into spaces XXIV and XXIII, the function of which is uncertain, as they have been partly excavated.

Because of several traces of burning, rooms XXVII and XXXI might have been kitchens that served respectively for main *triclinium* XXXVII and secondary *triclinium* XXV. Kitchen XXVII was separated from the peristyle by corridor XXVI, which probably led also in the adjoining space XXVIII. Kitchen XXXI adjoined space XXII, but the relation between the service room and the paved chamber is unknown. Chamber XXIX was an anteroom that led into the undefined space XXX.

Anterooms LIII and LXIX, which were entered from the peristyle respectively through corridor LII and room LI, led into a group of chambers (LXI to LXVII; LXX to LXXVII) the function of which is not clear (undecorated private apartments or service rooms?). Rooms XLVI, XLVII, XLIX appear to have been private apartments, as they were separated from the peristyle by anterooms. Would these rooms have been used by guests, while the private apartments lying to the south and to the east of them were served for the owner's family?

At the south-eastern and the north-eastern corners of the house are fragments of structures the relation of which with the *domus* is uncertain, as their walls have been completely levelled.

MAISON DU PAON

SITE

In the south-western of the ancient town, to the north of the Sollertiana Domus.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

On the east *vestibulum* I opens onto corridor II (17.80 x 1.50m), which leads into room XII (4.80 x 6.80m), into service rooms III (3.10 x 4.90m)-IV (3.10 x 3.50m)-V (3.10 x 3m)-LVI (3 x 3.50m) to the south, into spaces VI (3 x 3.10m)-VIII (1.45 x 6.70m)-IX (1.25 x 7.25m)-XI (2.80 x 3.10m) to the north. Room XIII and corridor VIII lead onto the eastern *porticus* XIV (17.10 x 2.95m) of peristyle XIII-XIV-XV-XVI-XVII. The same *porticus* overlooks also anteroom LIV (3.10 x 2.60m), which leads into chamber LV (3.10 x 2.50m). The southern *porticus* XV (19.60 x 2.35m) overlooks anteroom XLVII (3.20 x 2.30m), space L (3.20 x 3.05m), anteroom LI (3.20 x 3m), and room LIII (3.10 x 2.65m). Anteroom XLVII leads into private apartments XLVIII-XLIX on either side; anteroom LI leads into room LII (3.20 x 3.05m). The western *porticus* XVI (17.10 x 3.05m) opens into secondary *triclinium* XL, which opens onto corridors XLII (2.10 x 7.20m)-XXXIX (3.40 x 3.80m) on either side. Corridor XLII leads into private apartment XLIV through anteroom XLIII (3.95 x 2.10m): both rooms adjoin light-wells XLI (8.95 x 2.35m) and XLVI (1.65 x 5.80m) at the back. Corridor XXXIX leads into rooms XXXVII (3.40 x 3.80m)-XXXVIII (4.8 x 3.9m) through room XXXVI (4.25 x 3.70m). The northern *porticus* XVII (19.60

x 3.80m) overlooks *porticus* XIX (11.25 x 2.15m) and XXVI (10.10 x 2.15m) on either side of main *triclinium* XVIII, and anteroom XXXIX. *Porticus* XIX opens onto secondary court XX (11.40 x 2.70m), which adjoins service rooms XXI (2.70 x 3.20m)-XXII (3.50 x 7.05m)-XXIII (2.75 x 3.25m)-XXIV (3.60 x 3.55m)-XXV (2.90 x 2.80m). *Porticus* XXVI leads onto secondary court XXVII (8.45 x 2.75m) and into anteroom XXVIII (2.60 x 3.40m). Anteroom XXVIII opens onto secondary courtyard XXXII and into corridor XXIX (2.05 x 3.80m). The secondary courtyard overlooks secondary *triclinium* XXXI and assembly-room XXXIII on the opposite side and space XXXIV, which leads into rooms LXIV (2.40 x 4.35m)-LXV (4.60 x 3.10m)-LXVI (1.87 x 3.19m)-LXVII (4.65 x 5m)-LXVIII-LXIX-LXX. Corridor XXIX leads into *cubiculum* XXX. At the north-eastern corner space LIX (4.55 x 10.48m) overlooks rooms LX-LXI (2.90 x 1.80m) to the south and LXII (2.25 x 4.20m)-LXIII (2.25 x 5.80m) to the north.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Room XII. *Threshold mat.* Lozenge inscribed in a rectangle

Peristyle. *Porticus XIV-XV-XVI.* Black and white grid-pattern of spindles with a circle on the intersections (R 241d)

Porticus XVII. Orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles (R 237c)

Basin. Marine scene

Main triclinium XVIII. White *opus tessellatum* in zigzag pattern

Porticus XIX. Triaxial pattern of tangent hexagons forming tangent triangles

Porticus XXVI. Destroyed

Anteroom XXVIII. Outlined pattern of adjacent lozenges and rectangles (R 162a-b)

Corridor XXIX. Outlined honeycomb pattern (R 204a)

Threshold mat. Orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles (R 237a)

Cubiculum XXX. *Couch-area.* Black and white grid of bands with concave squares at the intersections

Main area. Grid of bands containing baskets with plants of the Seasons

Threshold mat. Lozenge inscribed in a rectangle

Secondary triclinium XXXI. *U-shaped section.* White *opus tessellatum* in parallel and perpendicular rows of *tesserae*

T-shaped section. Black and white outlined pattern of adjacent hexagons and lozenges (R 213a)

Threshold mat. Black and white crescent-on-stick between bars

Room XXXVI. Grid-pattern of adjacent crosses between octagons and squares containing busts of girls.

Secondary triclinium XL. *U-shaped section.* Black and white orthogonal pattern of intersecting octagons forming oblong hexagons (R 169b)

T-shaped section. Interlacing garlands forming medallions (R 236a) with busts of Dionysus, Silenus and bacchantes, busts of Seasons at angles, satyrs and maenads

Threshold mat. *Xenia* motifs

Anteroom XLII. Outlined pattern of upright and recumbent spindles, forming concave squares (R 162d)

Threshold mat. Chessboard pattern (R 114e)

Anteroom XLIII. Black and white grid of rows of tangent poised squares (R 133c)

Threshold mat. Triaxial pattern of cubes (R 212a)

Private apartment XLIV. Orthogonal pattern of tangent eight-lozenge stars forming squares (R 173b) that represent *xenia*-motifs

Threshold mat. Gazelle

Anteroom XLVII. Black and white orthogonal pattern of intersecting octagons (R 171d)

Threshold mats. Flower

Private apartment XLVIII. Orthogonal pattern of swastika-meander containing squares (R 194e)

Private apartment XLIX. Foliate pattern of tangent circles and concave octagons (R 157b)

Space L. Floor. Peacock with spread tail, flanked by pair of Erotes with torches

Wall. Marble slabs

Threshold mat Panel with a dog catching hare

Room LIV. Black and white orthogonal pattern of adjacent squares formed by four rectangles around a small square (R 141a)

Threshold mat. Black and white pair of poised squares facing a rectangle

DATE

On the basis of the style of the mosaics of the Maison du Paon, Foucher and Dunbabin indicated three different phases in the decoration of the house: in the early 2nd century (mosaics in *porticus* XIV-XV-XVI, in *triclinia* XVIII and XXXI, and in room LIV); at the end of the 2nd century (mosaics in *porticus* XVII, in secondary *triclinium* XL, in private apartments XLIV-XLIX, and in space L); and in 220-30 (mosaics in *porticus* XIX, in corridor XXIX, in *cubiculum* XXX, and in room XXXVI). However, the stratigraphical investigation that the team of CMT has carried out in many rooms indicates different dates for the laying of the mosaics. The fragments of pottery that have been found under the floor mosaics of *porticus* XV (form Hayes 181: 150-250), of private apartment XLIX (form Hayes 184: I-III century), of secondary *triclinium* XXXI (form Hayes 197: end of the II-mid III century), of court XXXII (form Hayes 181) and of anteroom XLII (type Hayes 183: I-III century) show that the *domus* was decorated with most of its mosaics after the first half of the 3rd century. After the end of the 3rd century main *triclinium* XVIII was paved with a plain mosaic. The fragment of African red slip ware type Hayes 5a/b (mid- to the end of the 3rd century) that have been found under the floor of the dining room gives a *terminus post quem* for the layout of that mosaic. The fragment of African red slip ware type Hayes 54/55 (mid to the end of the IV century) that have been found at the north-western corner of *porticus* XVII indicate that the mosaic of that area was laid out after the end of the 4th century.

REFERENCES

Foucher 1961, 3-14; Rebuffat 1969, 116 n.5; Dunbabin 1978, 82, 168, 185, 259 n. 20; Parrish 1981, 56; id. 1984, 44, 162-65 n.31; Thébert 1987, 357, 385-86; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 1990b, 82; Slim H. 1990b, 196-99; id. 1996, 109; Kondoleon 1994, 60; CMT III.1, 1996, 31-66; Eastman 1999; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 313-16 n.14.

COMMENTARY

The Maison du Paon was entered from *vestibulum* I, which led into rooms of different function via corridor II. Rooms LVI and IV-V (entered from anteroom III) to the south and rooms VI and X-XI (entered from corridor IX) to the north were probably service rooms because of their proximity to the street and their undecorated floors. Rooms LVII-LVIII were probably *tabernae*, as they did not communicate with the house. Also rooms LX-LXI-LXII-LXIII, which were entered from anteroom LIX, did not open into the *domus*.

The *domus* was provided with three *triclinia*, which were used on different occasions. Room XVIII was the main *triclinium* for very formal dinner-parties. Room XL was a *triclinium*, too, as the layout of its mosaic shows: off the peristyle, it was probably used on less formal occasions and/or for smaller gatherings of guests. Secondary *riclinium* XXXI would have been served for the meals of the owner's family, as its location far from the main peristyle (and facing a smaller peristyle) made it a private room.

Secondary court XX adjoined a group of unpaved rooms (XXI-XXII-XXIII-XXIV-XXV) that may have been service rooms, as remains of a well and traces of fire have been found respectively in XXII and XXV. Rooms XLVIII-XLIX on either side of anteroom XLVII seem to have been used as private apartments. The adjoining space L was possibly used for the domestic cult, as the raised floor (0.15m high) at the back and a semicircular front to it suggest a platform suitable for a statue or altar. The function of rooms LV-LVI, which were entered from the peristyle through anteroom LIV, is uncertain.

Lacking of opening, spaces XXXV and XLI-XLVI were probably light-wells that lit up respectively rooms XXIX-XXX-XXI-XXXVIII and XL-XLII-XLIII-XLIV-XLV-XLVIII. Scattered remains of structures (XXXIV, LXIV to LXX) lay to the north-west, but their relation with the Maison du Paon is uncertain.

SOLLERTIANA DOMUS

SITE

In the south-western part of the ancient town, to the south of the Maison du Paon.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

To the east *vestibulum* I opens into audience chamber II, which communicated with rooms III (3.05 x 2.40m: to the south)-IV (3.10 x 3.10/3.25m: to the north) and with the eastern *porticus* VIII (15 x 3.10m) of peristyle VII/VIII/IX/X/XI. Room IV opens into chambers V (3 x 2.50m) and VI (3 x 5.50m), which adjoins light-well XIV (3.15 x 9.40m). The eastern *porticus* VIII opens also into room XXXVIII (2.90 x 3m) and onto secondary entrance XXXIX, which leads into chamber XL (ca. 4.70 x 3.10m) to the south. The southern *porticus* IX (18 x 3m) overlooks anterooms XXXI (3.25 x 3.35/3.65m)-XXXV (3.50 x 2.30/2.55m) and room XXXVII (4 x 3.35m). Anteroom XXXI leads into private apartments XXXII-XXXIII. Anteroom XXXV leads into chamber XXXVI (4.45 x 3.30/5m). Rooms XXXIII and XXXV adjoin light-well XXXIV at the back. The western *porticus* X (15 x 3m) overlooks anteroom XXVIII (3.25 x 4.75m) and *lararium* XXVII (3.10 x 2.15m). Anteroom XXVIII leads into *cubicula* XXIX-XXX

on either side. The northern *porticus* XI (18 x 3.30m) opens into anterooms XII (2 x 2.70m)-XV (3.60 x 3.55m)-XVIII (3.60 x 3.60m) and into main *triclinium* XVII. Anteroom XII leads into chamber XIII (2.95 x 3.50m); anteroom XV communicates with both main *triclinium* XVII and room XVI (5.15 x 3.55m). Similarly, anteroom XVIII communicates with main *triclinium* XVII, kitchen XIX (5.10 x 3.60m), and with secondary courtyard XX. *Porticus* XXI of the small court opens into room XXII (3.1 x 3.5m), into space XXIII (2 x 6.10m), into secondary *triclinium* XXIV, and anteroom XXV (3.10 x 2.10m). Anteroom XXV communicates with secondary *triclinium* XXIV and room XXVI (3.05 x 3.60m)

MOSAIC DECORATION

Peristyle. *Basin.* Fishing scene

Main *triclinium* XVII. *U-shaped section.* Outlined pattern of intersecting circles (R 240c)

T-shaped section. Bar of T. Panel with shrine of Diana in landscape surrounded by animals

Stem of T. Border. Laurel wreath laden with Dionysiac motifs

Field. Ornamental pattern containing compartments with Dionysus *Pais* riding leopard and Mercury riding ram, surrounded by animals and fish

Side panels. Foliate grid-pattern of tangent spindles (R 252f)

Threshold mat. Fish pouring out of overturned basket

***Porticus* XXI.** Black and white orthogonal pattern of tangent poised octagons, forming four-pointed stars (R 183a)

Secondary *triclinium* XXIV. Amphitheatre scenes

Side strips. Fragments of rinceau

Threshold mat. Pattern of adjacent scales (R 217e)

Anteroom XXVIII. Black and white orthogonal pattern of adjacent scales (R 215b); below, inscription *Sollertiana domus semper felix cum suis*

Threshold mat. Black and white lozenge inscribed in a rectangle

***Cubiculum* XXIX.** *Couch-area.* Black and white grid of bands with a concave square in the intersections (R 143d-e)

Main area. Black and white grid-pattern of peltae tangent to a central poised square (R 226b)

Threshold mat. Black and white rectangle inscribed in a bigger rectangle

***Cubiculum* XXX.** *Couch area.* Black and white orthogonal pattern of intersecting octagons (R 171d)

Main area. Central circle with rape of Ganymede; Seasons on diagonals; small panels at edges with erotic scenes: Leda and Swan; Apollo and Daphne; satyrs and maenads. Pattern (RII. 294e) between containing confronted griffins and snakes

DATE

The stratigraphical investigation has brought to light poor archaeological material. The most interesting elements in term of chronology are a rim of vase (end of the 2nd-beginning of the 3rd century) and a fragment of pottery type Hayes 184/185 (2nd or 3rd century), which have been found under the floor mosaic of *cubiculum* XXX, and fragments of a lamp (1st century AD), of African red slip type A, and of pottery form Hayes 184/185 (2nd or 3rd century), which have been found under the floor mosaic of

secondary *triclinium* XXIV. The Sollertiana Domus, therefore, was possibly built between the 2nd and the 3rd century: the western wing was built on previous structures that caused the different orientation of this part from the rest of the house. The stylistic analysis of its mosaics allows us to suggest a more precise date. They, in fact, are stylistically dated by Dunbabin to the last quarter of the 2nd century; the mosaic representing the rape of Ganymede in *cubiculum* XXX, on the contrary, was probably laid in 220-35 (Dunbabin; Alexander).

The *domus* was abandoned and its western side was turned into a cemetery in the end of the 3rd-beginning of the 4th century. In fact, one of the graves cut through the amphitheatre mosaic in secondary *triclinium* XXIV contained a bowl of form Hayes 181 and a lamp type Salomonson H1 that are dated to second half of the 3rd century.

REFERENCES

Foucher 1961, 15-25; id. 1979, 158; Rebuffat 1969, 116 n.6; Dunbabin 1978, 39, 46-7, 66, 148, 184, 259 n.21; Parrish 1984, 165-68 n.32; Thébert 1987, 385; Fantar et al. 1994, 86; Alexander 1994, 243-48; Kondoleon 1995, 141-42; Blanchard- Lemée et al. 1996, 254-55; *CMT* III.1, 1996, 1-29; Lancha 1997, 63 n. 22; Muth 1998, 391-3 A36; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 527 fig. 195; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 317-19 n.15.

COMMENTARY

The Sollertiana Domus was entered from the street through two *vestibula* (I and XXXIX) that adjoined shops on either side (XLI, XLII, XLIII/XLIV, XLV). Lying in the centre of the eastern façade, *vestibulum* I was the main entrance that led onto the peristyle through room II. As its two doors were not lined up with the openings of room II, passers-by could have not looked through the kernel of the house. The small and undecorated rooms IV-V-VI and the adjoining anteroom XII and room XIII would have been used by servants. That group of chambers adjoined space XIV, which was probably a light-well because of its lack of openings. Similarly, the group of rooms (XXXI to XXXVII) lying on the southern wing of the *domus* and entered by secondary entrance XXXIX may have been service rooms, as they were not paved with mosaics and were separated from the peristyle and from the reception area of the house by anterooms XXI and XXV. The close space XXXIV was probably a light-well. The northern and eastern wings formed the reception area of the house decorated with geometric and figurative mosaics. Room XVII was the main *triclinium*. On either side the dining room adjoined rooms XVIII-XIX and XV-XVI. The presence of big ovens in room XIX suggests that it was a kitchen used for the preparation of food that servants brought into *triclinium* XVII through anteroom XVIII and its side door. Ovens have been found also in room XVI, which was entered from the peristyle through anteroom XV: the specific activities that took place in that service room are unknown. A further *triclinium* lay off the secondary courtyard XX/XXI. Like *triclinium* XVII, the dining room was entered also from the side door of anteroom XV, which communicated with anteroom XVIII and kitchen XIX through *porticus* XXI. Kitchen XIX would have been served for both *triclinia*. The function of the oblong space XXIII is uncertain. Room XXVIII was an anteroom that led into *cubacula* XXIX-XXX on either side. Space XXVII was perhaps used for the domestic cult because of its masonry apse.

HADRUMETUM

MAISON DES MASQUES

SITE

On the right side of the road to Ksiba.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

The peristyle is provided with courtyard and *porticus* II (1.38m wide), which are 0.16m lower than the floors of the rest of the house. It is surrounded by corridors, onto which several rooms open. Overlooking the southern corridor I (2.75m-wide) are rooms 2 to 7. Chamber 2 (6 x 3.10m) adjoins room 1 to the east and space with traces of latrine to the south. To the west of room 2, anteroom 3 (2.80 x 4.10m) leads into chambers 4 (2.80 x 4.10m) and 5 (2.86 x 1.85m), which communicate with each other. Rooms 3-4 open also into assembly-room 6 which is provided with apsed space 7 to the south. Corridor I ends to the west into anteroom 10 (3.70 x 2.10m), which directly leads into rooms 9 and 11 (3.70 x 3.20m) on the opposite sides. Anteroom 9 opens into *cubiculum* 8. Room 11 overlooks corridor III, onto which colonnaded *triclinium* 12 opens: it is surrounded on its three sides by an inner *porticus* IV (2.40m wide; 4 x 6 columns) and an outer garden. Rooms 13 (3.90 x 2.80m) and 14 (2.80m wide) lie in the northern corner and communicate with each other.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Peristyle. *Porticus II*. Outlined pattern of intersecting and non-tangent circles, forming curvilinear octagons, concave squares and dentilled spindles (R 240c)

Panel r. Damaged. Opposite peltae

Panel s/t/u. Interlaced ivy scroll

Corridor I. Orthogonal pattern of spaced swastika-meander, containing squares (R 190d)

Room I. Fragments. Composition of rectangles and squares

Room 2. Grid of double fillets, forming concave squares (R 124a-f)

Threshold mat a. Concave square bearing a floret

Anteroom 3. Outlined orthogonal pattern of adjacent scales (R 215c)

Threshold mat b. Stems of vine-leaves faced each other

Threshold mat c. Two crossed stems

Room 4. Orthogonal pattern of tangent floral circles, forming concave squares (R 231)

Threshold mat d. Lozenge containing central hexagon and two side triangles bearing smaller triangles

Threshold mat e. Two crossed stems

Room 5. Pattern of swastika-meander in a large lozenge inscribed in a rectangle (R 196b); at triangular corners, stylized scrolls

Threshold mat f. Stylized scrolls spreading from spray of acanthus

Assembly-room 6/7. *Square room 6. Floor.* Rows of cubes in perspective decreasing toward the centre (RII. 338b) and framing the central medallion, which illustrates a figurative scene: seated poet, actor

holding mask, tragic mask, and box of scrolls; at the corners of triangular shape ivy branches spread out of craters

Walls. Fragments of marble

Threshold mat h. Band supporting three comic masks

Apse 7. Pattern of scales, bearing peacock feather (R 231b)

Threshold mat g. Pair of griffins confronted across a tripod

Anteroom 10. Orthogonal pattern of intersecting and non-tangent circles, forming dentilled spindles and concave squares (R 237)

Threshold mat i. Pair of interlaced ivy scrolls

Threshold mat j. Four floral circles separated by florets

Room 11. Outlined pattern of circles intersecting at 12 points, forming dentilled spindles and concave hexagons (R 248f)

Threshold mat k. Damaged. Male figure dressed in short garment; below, the inscription NIKA

Corridor III. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent octagons, forming squares and lozenges (R 175b)

Panel v. Circles bearing pair of smaller circles

Colonnaded triclinium 12. Orthogonal pattern of circles and curvilinear squares alternating with rows of circles and concave squares (R 154c): all of the geometric figures contain fruit, animals, and masks;

Panel m. Pair of stylized scrolls, forming a concave square

Panel n. Pair of opposite bouquets of acanthus

Panel o. Orthogonal pattern of intersecting and non-tangent circles, forming dentilled spindles and concave squares (R 240c)

Panel p. Orthogonal pattern of alternately upright and recumbent tangent dentilled spindles, forming concave squares ornamented with floret.

Corridor IV. Outlined honeycomb (R 204a)

Room 13. Grid-pattern of eight – lozenges stars, concave squares and squares, framing a square illustrating two figures in a pedimented building

Threshold mat q. Square containing vegetal medallion bearing a flower

Room 14. Outlined pattern of oblong hexagons intersecting and adjacent on the longer sides, forming squares, hexagons, and oblong hexagons

DATE

The Maison des Masques may be dated by archaeological and stylistical evidence. The *domus* was probably built and decorated in the second half of the 2nd century. In fact, under the floor mosaics of corridors I-II-III-IV and of rooms 11-12 have thirty-nine tombs been found: they may be dated to the late I-early II c. because of tile stamps; moreover, most of the mosaics are stylistically dated to 170-180. The mosaics were covered by a layer of ash or rubble and above that by three groups of tombs of different type set on different levels. The tombs of the first group, which were covered by slabs (0.20m above the *domus* floors), may be dated to the third quarter of the 3rd century, as a coin of Tetricus Caesar (272-273) shows. However, a single coin cannot be a sufficient element of chronology. The second type of tombs would belong to the first half of the 4th century because of a coin of Constantine Augustus. Those two

types of tombs have been found in the northern part of the house. The tombs of the third group (0.60-0.80m above the mosaic floors) may be dated to the second half of the 4th to the early 5th century by the coins of Constantius II, of Julian, of Valens and of Theodosius that have been found at the same level. Moreover, several fragments of inscriptions with Constantinian chi-rho and of lamps of the 4th century have been found among the tombs. At the same level, but in the southern part of the house where no tombs have been found, there were fragments of 4th century's plates and bowls in African red slip ware; vase with convex bottom without base; vase with flat bottom and base; and fragments of a rectangular plate decorated with the scene of the grooming of Pegasus by Nymphs. Stratigraphical evidence would indicate that the Maison des Masques was destroyed by fire and later turned into a cemetery in the last quarter of the 3rd century. As the mosaics decorating rooms 6-7, 11 and corridor III are stylistically dated to 220-30, the house would have been destroyed between 230 and 270.

REFERENCES

Foucher 1965; Rebuffat 1969, 681 n.1; Dunbabin 1978, 124 n.56, 131-2, 271 n.31; Thébert 1987, 364-65, 374, 390; Fantar et al. 1994, 199-200, 216 (fig.); Yacoub 1995 145-47; Blanchard-Lemée et al. 1996, 219-22; Lancha 1997, 49-53, nos. 13-14; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 530 fig. 233; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 103-05 n.3.

COMMENTARY

As the northern and eastern sections of the house have been destroyed by the building of a road, it is not possible to reconstruct its plan in its entirety. The preserved part seems to suggest a peristyle-house, but the missing rooms could have been arranged around the central courtyard in several different ways other than the hypothetical plan of Foucher gives us. The *vestibulum*, for example, might have been either to the north or to the east; in the eastern wing it might have opened into the peristyle either in front of the peristyle (although the orthogonal plan was not common in North Africa) or to into *porticus* I or to the north-eastern corner of the house. As far as the remains show, the peristyle would have occupied the centre of the house. Laying on a lower level, the central court and *porticus* II were surrounded by corridors I and III that extended the space of the peristyle. Main *triclinium* 12 was the most outstanding architectural element of the preserved house because of its dimensions and layout. Corridor III, larger and carpeted with a more elaborated mosaic composition than corridor I, marked the passage into the dining room; a *porticus* surrounded three sides of it and opened onto a garden in a very unusual way. In the Foucher's plan the garden surrounds *porticus* IV and overlooks a row of rooms to the north. However, usually rooms opened onto a garden through corridors or *porticus*; in the Maison des Masques room 13 opened into room 14 that led into an unknown space (it may be the garden or another room). Moreover, it is not clear how rooms 13-14 (*cubicula*, according to Foucher) related to the garden and to the house. The back wall of the garden, which appears to be the enclosing wall of the *domus* decorated with half columns, was not aligned with the western wall of room 13: if it was extended to the northern wall of rooms 13-14, it would have created a narrow space behind 13 of uncertain function. However, the northern wall of the garden might have been the enclosing wall of the house on this side and the adjoining rooms 13-14 might have belonged to a different building.

On the northern side were *cubiculum* 8, assembly-room 6/7, and rooms 3/4/5 which communicated with one other and with apsidal room 6/7. The function of those chambers is uncertain.

Latrine would have been close to rooms 1-2, as traces of a channel and a slab of concrete and fragments of re-used marble seem to indicate.

HERGLA

MAISON AUX DEUX PÉRISTYLES

SITE

Villa overlooking the sea, to the south of the modern town.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

To the east peristyle 2-3 is surrounded by rooms along its southern, western and northern sides. The southern *porticus* (ca. 14 x 2m) opens onto corridors 13 (ca. 5 x 2m) and 17a-b. Corridor 13 leads into room 14 (ca. 3 x 4m) and secondary entrance 16 (ca. 5 x 4.50m) via corridor 15 (ca. 2.20m wide). Corridor 17a-b into service rooms 18 (ca. 2.20 x 1.90m)-19 (ca. 2.20 x 6m) at the south-western corner. Corridors 13 and 15 adjoin room 12 (ca. 4.50m wide) to the east. The western *porticus* (ca. 2m wide) overlooks anteroom 4a, which adjoins corridors 4c (ca. 1 x 4m) and 5 (ca. 2.50 x 4m) on either side and *stibadium* 4b at the back. The northern *porticus* (ca. 2m wide) adjoins rooms 10 (ca. 4.50 x 3m)-11 and opens onto antechamber 8 (ca. 5 x 3m), which leads into *cubiculum* 7 and into chamber 9 (ca. 5 x 3m) on either side. *Cubiculum* 7 communicates with corridor 5 through antechamber 6 (ca. 1.50 x 6m). To the north anteroom 8 opens onto peristyle 20 (ca. 13 x 13m) of the bath-suite 21 to 30.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Peristyle. Porticus 2. Orthogonal pattern of spaced swastika-meander containing square (R 191c)

Anteroom 4a. Grid-pattern of adjacent crosses and lozenges, forming squares and octagons (R 179)

Eastern threshold mat. Flower inscribed in a spindle

Southern threshold mat. Circle bearing flower inscribed in an octagon

Corridor 4c. Grid of filets (R 124)

Anteroom 6. Running-pelta pattern (R 222d)

***Cubiculum* 7. Couch-area.** Orthogonal pattern of irregular octagons, forming squares and oblong hexagons (R 169b)

Main area. Outlined pattern of irregular scales

Room 9. Orthogonal pattern of irregular octagons, forming squares and oblong hexagons (R 169b)

Room 10. Grid of serrated filets (R 124a)

Room 11. Outlined honeycomb (R 204a)

Room 12. Orthogonal pattern of rectangles and oblong hexagons, forming octagons

Corridor 13. Orthogonal pattern of swastikas, with an inscribed lozenge (R189)

Southern threshold mat. Lozenge inscribed in a square

Room 14. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent octagons, forming squares (R 175b, 177a)

Corridor 15. Outlined pattern of intersecting circles, forming hexagons and spindles (R 248f)

Secondary entrance 16. *Opus signinum*

Corridor 17b. *Opus signinum*

Service room 18. *Opus signinum*

Service room 19. *Opus signinum*

Threshold mat. Ribbon

Peristyle 20. Grid of filets (R 124)

DATE

Mosaic decoration and archaeological material show three building phases of the Maison aux Deux Péristyles. The mosaics decorating anteroom 6, *cubiculum* 7, and rooms 9-10-11 were laid out after a fire traces of which are visible on the floor mosaics. The fragments of pottery type Hayes 21 and 182, of African red slip ware *A* and of African amphorae type IIA, which have been found under the floors, give the late 2nd-early 3rd century as *terminus post quem*. At the same time the bath-suite was built, as the eastern wall of *caldarium* 30 leans against the western wall of anteroom 6; moreover, the mosaic of peristyle 20 is stylistically dated to the first half of the 3rd century. The mosaics of anteroom 4a, of corridor 4c, of rooms 12 and 14, and of corridor 15, on the contrary, show a richer composition: they may be dated to the 3rd century. When *stibadium* 4b was built and room 4a was turned into its anteroom, those spaces were carpeted with new mosaics that may be dated in the mid-4th century because of the archaeological material (pottery of Pentellaria, coin of Valenticus) found under the *nucleus* of the floor of the *stibadium* at the south-eastern corner. It is probably at the same time that spaces 16-17b-18-19 were floored with *opus signinum*. Their floors, in fact, are at the same level as that of *stibadium* 4b; moreover, traces of an ancient floor have been found under the floor of secondary entrance it is at the same level as the floors of the mosaics decorating the southern part of the house.

REFERENCES

Ghalia 1998, 15 n.1; Ennaïfer and Ouertani 2001, 216-37.

COMMENTARY

The plan of Maison aux Deux Péristyles raises many questions, as it has been destroyed by the sea along its eastern side and has not been completely excavated. The house is now entered from room 16 at the south-western corner. It seems to have been a secondary entrance, because of its floor in plain *opus signinum* and of its location. The main *vestibulum* for the reception of clients and of guests might have lain on the eastern side. The function of the partly destroyed room 12 is uncertain. It may have been a either private apartment entered from corridor 15 or used as an assembly-room opening off the peristyle. Room 14 would have been a private apartment as corridors 13 and 15, from which it was entered, separated it from the peristyle and ensured privacy. However, as the chamber lay in an excavated area, its function cannot be ascertained.

Spaces 17b-18, which were entered from the peristyle via corridor 17a, and space 19 might have been used as service rooms because of their irregular shape and their floor in *opus signinum*. Space 18 opened onto an unspecified space to the south-west. Space 8 was an anteroom that led into chambers 7 and 9 on either side. A window on its northern wall overlooked peristyle 20 of the adjoining building. The layout of its floor mosaic shows that room 7 was a *cubiculum* that anterooms 6 (to the south) and 8 (to the east) separated from the peristyle. The function of rooms 10-11 is uncertain, as their southern and eastern walls

have been destroyed. If they had an independent access from the peristyle, chamber 10 may have been a private apartment because of its small size and room 11 a reception room because of its bigger dimensions. However, room 11 may have been a private apartment entered from anteroom 10: the small size and the mosaic decoration (usually used for area of passage) of chamber 10 suggest that hypothesis.

To the north/north-west the *domus* adjoined a building that probably belonged to the same owner, as the window on the northern wall of anteroom 8 overlooked peristyle 20. However, the communication between the two buildings is still unknown. Ennaïfer and Ouertani maintain that the building was a bath-suite, but they do not describe its rooms and its mosaic decoration. Remains of structures adjoin the *domus* at the south-western corner: their function and their belonging to the same domestic building are uncertain.

NEAPOLIS

MAISON DES NYMPHES

SITE

In the southern part of the ancient town, on the road to Hammamet.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

To the south the *vestibulum* adjoins on either side five rooms (XV-XVI, XVIII-XIX) that communicate with each other (to the east of the entrance: 7 x 5m; at the south-eastern corner: ca. 5 x 5m; to the west of the entrance: 6.80 x 5m; in the middle: 3.50 x 6.80m; at the south-western corner: 4 x 6.80m). The *vestibulum* leads onto the peristyle. The western *porticus* overlooks assembly-room VII and rooms VIII (3.20 x 4.10m) and IX (4.30 x 4.60m), which communicate with each other. The eastern *porticus* overlooks *cubicula* XI-XII-XIII-XIV. The northern *porticus* overlooks courtyards A1 and A2 on either side of the main *triclinium*. Courtyard A1 overlooks room VI (6 x 9.60m) to the west and *cubiculum* C1 (4.2 x 3.6m) to the north. Courtyard A2 opens into room XI to the east, chamber X (3.40 x 4.70m) and *cubiculum* C2 to the north. To the north room VI leads into chamber IV (2.20 x 3.80m), which adjoins rooms I (4 x 3.50m), II (1.90 x 3.50m) and III (3.50 x 3.60m) to the east and space V (ca. 5 x 4m) to the west.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Peristyle. Porticus. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent octagons (R 169c)

Panel in the northern porticus. Two cocks facing an amphora laden with golden pieces

Basin B3. Floor. Rainbow pattern

Wall. Head of Ocean in sea full of fish; inscription *NYMPHARUM DOMUS*

Main triclinium. U-shaped section. Running-pelta pattern (R 222d)

T-shaped section. Laurel garland laden with fruits and flowers

Northern threshold mat. Erotes picking roses

Western threshold mat. Lozenge inscribed in a rectangle

Eastern threshold mat. Palm and ivy scroll

Room I. Orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles (R 237c)

Threshold mat. Fruit

Room II. Orthogonal pattern of swastika-meander and squares (R 190d)

Room IV. Parallel rows of *tesserae* forming a zigzag pattern (R 105b)

Room V. Parallel rows of *tesserae*

Rooms VI. Orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles (R 237c)

Assembly-room VII. Grid-pattern of Hercules knots (RII. 275i), containing *xenia* motifs

Room VIII. Outlined pattern of secant octagons, forming oblong hexagons and circles

Rooms IX. Orthogonal pattern of swastika-meander and squares (R 190d)

Room X. Erotic scene with Satyr and Nymph

Threshold mat. Building with columns and towers in country setting

Cubiculum XI. *Couch-area.* Outlined pattern of adjacent hexagons and lozenges (R 213a)

Main area. Grid of four-strand guilloche, containing laurel medallions with *xenia*-motifs

Threshold mat. Ivy scroll

Cubiculum XII. *Couch-area.* Grid of fillets of squares and spindles (R 124)

Main area. Embassy of Greeks to Philoctetes

Cubiculum XIII. *Couch-area.* Outlined pattern of adjacent hexagons and lozenges (R 213a-c)

Main area. Embassy of Chryses to Agamemnon

Cubiculum XIV. *Couch-area.* Grid of serrated triple fillets (R 129c)

Main-area. Pegasus, Bellerophon and the crowning of a young woman

Courtyard A1. Orthogonal pattern of monochrome *opus tessellatum* with tangent recumbent and upright lozenges, forming poised squares

Cubiculum C1. *Western panel.* Grooming of Pegasus by Nymphs

Eastern panel. Ichthyocentaur

Courtyard A2. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent octagons, forming squares (R 164a)

Cubiculum C2. *Western panel.* Pegasus and Nymphs bathing

Eastern panel. Rape of Amyclone by Poseidon

DATE

The Maison des Nymphes may be dated to the second quarter of the 4th century by archaeological evidence on the basis of a coin of Constantine II (316-337) found under the floor mosaic of the peristyle, at the north-eastern corner. A coin of Gordian III, found under the floor of room XIII, shows that the house was built not before the second half of the 3rd century. The date suggested by archaeological evidence, though it is scanty and not reliable, seems to be confirmed by the mosaics, which are stylistically dated to the first half of the 4th century. They appear to be homogeneous: the mosaics of the peristyle, of the main *triclinium*, of *cubiculum* C2 (western panel), and of *cubacula* XII-XIII-XIV show the same *nucleus*. Moreover, the same iconographic motifs appear in different rooms: I and VI; II and IX; VII, XII and XIII. The mosaics were probably laid out in the same time as the architectural structures were built, since architect and mosaicist seem to have worked together in order to hide subtle distortions of the house-plan.

REFERENCES

Darmon 1967-1968; *ib.* 1980; Rebuffat 1969, 681 n.1; Garcia y Bellido, 1972, 796; Dunbabin 1978, 40, 265 n.1; *id.* 1999a, 114; Donderer 1983; Quet 1983; *ib.* 1984; *ib.* 1985; Thébert 1987, 351; Fantar et al. 1994, 15, 209-10; Slim and Khanoussi 1995, 21-2; Sodini 1995, 182-83; Yacoub 1995, 90-8, 291-92; Blanchard-Lemée et al. 1996, 134, 240-40, 275; Lancha 1997, 36-42 nos 3-7; Muth 1998, 376 A23; Baldini Lippolis 2001, 229-30; Slim et al. 2002, 178-80; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 529 figs. 221-22, 531 fig. 244, 532 fig. 248; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 179-82 n.1.

COMMENTARY

The *vestibulum* adjoined some undecorated rooms that were probably used as service rooms. In fact, a number of amphorae have been found in chambers XVIII-XIX, which might have been used either as storerooms or as kitchen; moreover, they adjoined some *tabernae*, which overlooked the street and communicated with each other. The seat found in room XV at the south-eastern corner of the house indicates that it may have been used as latrine. The service rooms did not communicate directly with the peristyle, as they lay at a slightly lower level.

Room VI connected the service rooms III-IV-V with the peristyle through courtyard A1. Because of its location, it did not allow passers-by or people entering from secondary entrance V to look into the heart of the house. Traces of masonry against the southern wall seem to suggest that a masonry structure supported a flight of stairs (wooden?) leading to the upper floor. Traces of bases of columns indicate that the peristyle was provided with columns surrounding the central space of the court.

Courtyards A1 and A2 on either side of the main *triclinium* were small courtyards, which were provided with basins (B1 and B2) and opened respectively into chambers C1 and C2. Those were *cubicula*, as the division of the mosaic floor into two panels (geometric for the couch-area and figurative for the main part of the room) shows. They were entered from an antechamber (to the west for *cubiculum* C1 and to the east for *cubiculum* C2): Darmon suggests that *cubiculum* and antechamber were separated by a gate, but there is no evidence in support of that.

Rooms XII and XIII appear to have been *cubicula* because of the layout of their mosaics: they were entered respectively from chambers XI and XIV, which could have been *cubicula*, too, as their mosaics suggest. However, as the figurative panels were oriented outwards, only the mosaics that carpeted anterooms XI and XIV would have been appreciated by visitors lingering on their thresholds. It is not clear, on the contrary, how visitors lying on the couch in rooms XII-XIII could have appreciated the figurative scenes of the main area of the chambers, scenes that would have required time and attention to be read carefully.

UDNA

MAISON D'IKARIOS

SITE

In the north-western section of the ancient town, close to the amphitheatre.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

To the west *vestibulum* 12 leads into service rooms 10-11 (ca. 4 x 5m) to the north, into anterooms 13 and 16 to the south and onto peristyle 1 to the east. Anterooms 13 and 16 open respectively in service rooms 14-15. The northern *porticus* overlooks secondary *triclinium* 2, anteroom 3, secondary court 7, and anteroom 9 (ca. 3 x 2m). Anteroom 3 opens into private apartments 4-5. Anteroom 9 leads into private apartment 8 and onto court 7. The western *porticus* opens into secondary courtyard 17, which overlooks private apartments 18-19 and anteroom 20, which communicates with both secondary courtyard 21 and the peristyle. Court 21 overlooks room 22 (ca. 3 x 2.50m), private apartments 23 –24-25, and secondary *triclinium* 26. The southern *porticus* overlooks room 28 (ca. 3 x 5m), main *triclinium* 33, corridor 37, and room 38 (ca. 2.50 x 5m). Room 28 leads into secondary courtyard 30 through anteroom 29 (ca. 2.50 x 5m). Court 30 overlooks secondary *triclinium* 27 to the west, assembly-room 31 to the north-east, and private apartment 32 to the east. Corridor 37 leads into room 35 (2 x 2m) and turns into space 36. Room 38 opens into room 39.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Peristyle 1. Outlined honeycomb (R 204a)

Panel in southern porticus. Acanthus-rinceau with volutes ending in animal *protomai*

Secondary *triclinium* 2. Foliate orthogonal pattern of intersecting ellipses (R 246i), whit central panel representing Rape of Europa

Threshold mat. Garland laden with flowers and fruit

Anteroom 3. Foliate orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles, forming squares (R 243g) that contain birds

Private apartment 4. Square compartments containing birds in foliate grid of bands

Private apartment 5. Foliate orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles, forming squares (R 243g) that contain flowers

Anteroom 6. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent lozenges and squares (R 161a)

Court 7. *Porticus*. Grid of bands bearing tangent lozenges and poised squares (R 147c)

Panels between columns. Animal scenes

Main area. Fishing scene

Private apartment 8. Orthogonal pattern of scales of bands of laurel, containing rectangles

Anteroom 9. Orthogonal pattern of eight-pointed stars bordered by eight squares (R 178d)

Court 17. *Porticus*. Vine-rinceau forming rectangles that represent birds

Panels between columns. Animals

Main area. Marine scene with boats and fish

Private apartment 18. White plain mosaic with *emblema*-type panel with bust of Sol

Private apartment 19. White plain mosaic with *emblema*-type panel with bust of Minerva

Anteroom 20. *Threshold mat.* Poised square inscribed in a square

Court 21. *Porticus.* Foliate orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles, forming squares (R 243g) that contain animals

Panel between columns. Animals chasing prey

Main area. Rural scenes

Room 22. Orthogonal pattern of intersecting hexagons

Private apartment 23. White plain mosaic with *emblema*-type panel with bust of Dionysus

Threshold. Flower

Private apartment 24. White plain mosaic with *emblema*-type panel with bust of Silenus

Threshold mat. Flower

Private apartment 25. White plain mosaic with *emblema*-type panel with bust of satyr

Threshold mat. Flower

Secondary triclinium 26. Foliate orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles, forming squares (R 243g) that contain animals and bird; central panel with Ceres in field of corn

Secondary triclinium 27. Foliate orthogonal pattern of tangent circles; central panel with Selene and Endymion

Threshold mat. Pair of lozenges inscribed in rectangles

Room 28. Foliate orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles, forming squares (R 243g) that contain birds and flower

Anteroom 29. Orthogonal pattern of eight-pointed stars, forming squares

Court 30. *Porticus.* Grid of bands with tangent quatrefoils (R 136a)

Panel between columns. Animal combats

Main area. Foliate orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles, forming squares (R 243g) that represent pastoral scenes, birds, and fish

Assembly-room 31. Vintaging Eros in floral pattern

Private apartment 32. Orthogonal pattern of eight-pointed stars of two intersecting circles, forming octagons and lozenges (R 178b)

Threshold mat. Cross inscribed in a square

Main triclinium 33. *U-shaped section.* Foliate grid of bands

Stem of T. Vines containing Erotes and birds; central panel with Dionysus giving vine to Ikarios

Threshold mat. Two hunters and attendant, with dogs named *Ederatus* and *Mustela* pursuing hare and jackal.

Room 35. Grid-pattern of foliate motifs and circles (R 225g)

Threshold mat. Flower in a square

Space 36. White *tesserae* laid in an orthogonal pattern of adjacent scales (R 215a)

DATE

Because of the lacking archaeological evidence, the Maison of Ikarios is dated on the basis of its mosaics showing however some signs of restoration, which make it difficult to suggest precise dates. The only external evidence comes from the *porticus* of the peristyle, where between two superimposed layers of mosaic were found two coins, of Commodus and of Julia Mamaea. Gauckler dated the mosaics at the end of 1st or the beginning of the 2nd century AD and on the basis of the coins assumed that the alterations were part of a restoration in the mid-3rd century. However, they could be later and it is not clear if the changes of the peristyle are to be connected with other alterations in the house. Dunbabin (1978, 240-1) suggests that most mosaics (especially floral patterns and *emblemata*) belong to 160-80, while the panel with Selene and Endymion in secondary *triclinium* 27, the panel in peristyle in front of main *triclinium* 33 with its threshold mat were laid out in the late 3rd or early 4th century.

REFERENCES

Gauckler 1893, 382; id. 1895, 430-31; id. 1896a; id. 1897, n.10; id. 1901, 19; id. 1904c, 2112; id. 1910, nos. 348-80; Gsell 1898, 100-02; Schulten 1898, 113-15; id. 1904b, 18-9; Cagnat 1927, 114, 116; Bérard 1935, 128; id. 1936, 157; Poinssot 1940, 226; Levi 1947, 522; Crema 1959, 459-60; Lézine 1964, 97-8; id. 1990, 188, 291; Rebuffat 1969, 686 n.1; Romanelli 1970, 244-45; Dunbabin 1978, 21, 39, 61, 65, 101, 117 n.28, 145, 185, 240-1, 265-6 n.1; Ben Mansour 1979; Parrish 1982, 53; Février 1983, 159-60; id. 1989-1990, II.63, 65-6; Gabelmann 1986, 731 n.28; Robertson 1988, 84 n. 144; Blanc-Bijon and Darmon 1988-1989; Belz 1989, 76-9; Ben Mansour 1993; id. 1996; id. 2001; Fantar *et al.* 1994, 38-40, 86-7, 98, 136, 168, 211, 219, 245; Yacoub 1995, 54-7, 84-5, 200-03, 250-51; Wattel-de-Croizant 1995, 214-17; Blanchard-Lemée *et al.* 1996, 115; Ben Hassen and Maurin 1998, 100; Muth 1998, 397-401 A41; Conti 1999; Tomei 2002; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 521 figs. 66-7, 525 figs. 152-53, 528 fig. 210, 531 fig. 241, 533 fig. 267, 537 fig. 366; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 325-29 n.1.

COMMENTARY

The Maison d'Ikarios was a peristyle-house with the rooms arranged around three *porticus*. In fact, the sloping ground did not allow the building of more rooms on the eastern wing: this was enclosed with a surrounding wall that formed the eastern boundary of the house.

Paved with regular slabs of limestone, *vestibulum* 12 was the only entrance into the *domus*. The adjoining chambers 10-11, 13-14-15-16 were probably service rooms because of their proximity to the street and of their undecorated floors that contrasted with the rich decoration of the rest of the house.

Room 33 was the main *triclinium*, which lay opposite secondary *triclinium* 2. Further secondary *triclinia* (26-27) lay off the secondary courtyards (7, 17, 21, 30), which were aligned around the peristyle. The smaller courts and its surroundings *triclinia* and private apartments created an elegant setting for more private uses. The function of the L-shaped corridor 36/38/40 and of spaces 38-39 is uncertain. According to Gauckler, they led into a group of structures that were connected with the *domus*. A more careful investigation has shown that it was a temple with circular *cella* decorated with *opus sectile* (Ben Hassen/Maurin 1998, 99, 105). Moreover, the scholar asserted that the adjoining baths, named of the Laberii after an inscription in the *frigidarium*, belong to the same owner of Maison d'Ikarios. As more

secure evidence is lacking, it is difficult to know whether the building was a private bath-suite used by the owner's family of the close *domus* or a public structure. Therefore, the name 'Maison d'Ikarios' is better and less misleading than the name Maison des Laberii given by Gauckler.

PUPPUT

MAISON DU PÉRISTYLE FIGURÉ

SITE

In the southern part of the ancient town.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

To the south *vestibulum* IA opens into rooms II (ca. 4 x 3m) to the west and I to the east (the western wall of room I has just been brought to light and is not indicated on the house plan). The latter adjoins at the south-eastern corner rooms III (ca. 4 x 3m)-IV (ca. 4 x 5m), which communicate with each other. *Vestibulum* IA leads also onto *porticus* VI of the peristyle via a flight of stairs. The western *porticus* IX opens into anteroom X (ca. 3 x 2m) and into main *triclinium* XIII. Anteroom X opens into chamber XI (ca. 3 x 4m); main *triclinium* XIII leads into chambers XII (ca. 3.50 x 6.20m) and XIV (ca. 2.80 x 6.20m) on either side. The northern *porticus* VIII overlooks anteroom XV (ca. 2.80 x 3m) and rooms XVI (ca. 3.5 x 2.8m)-XVII (ca. 2.70 x 2.50m). Anteroom XV leads into private apartments XIX-XX-XXI (ca. 3.50 x 3.50m) through room XVIII (11.70 x 5.90m) to the north. The eastern *porticus* VII overlooks chambers XXIII (ca. 3.80 x 3m), XXIV (ca. 3.80 x 3m) and XXVI (ca. 2 x 3m), stairwell XXV (ca. 1 x 3m), and anteroom XXII (ca. 5 x 3m), which leads into space A (ca. 2.50 x 6m) of the baths. Space A opens into *frigidarium* B, which is provided with pools P1 and P2 and leads into *tepidarium* D through passage C (ca. 6 x 6m) to the east. *Tepidarium* D opens into *caldaria* E (to the south) and G with semicircular pool (to the north).

MOSAIC DECORATION

***Vestibulum* IA.** Outlined honeycomb (R 204a)

Room I. Fragments. Sailing ship in the sea; above, inscription [VELA P]ANSA

Room II. Destroyed

Room III. Orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles

Peristyle. *Porticus VI-VII-VIII-IX.* Grid of bands

Central courtyard. Columns surrounding a lighthouse among *semis* of roses

Spaces between columns. Rectangular panels containing geometric compositions

Anteroom X. Plain mosaic

Room XI. Orthogonal pattern of tangent circles and squares forming bi-concave squares.

Room XII. Black and white grid of bands

Main *triclinium* XIII. Floral pattern of recumbent and upright lozenges, forming squares

Room XIV. Floral pattern of recumbent and upright lozenges, forming squares

Anteroom XV. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent lozenges and squares (R 161a)

Room XVI. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent lozenges and squares (R 161a)

Room XVII. Grid of bands

Room XVIII. Central panel. Vegetal pyramids surrounding curvilinear octagon containing crater and birds

Side panels. Grid of bands, with the central squares bearing roses

Private apartment XIX. Grid-pattern of tangent spindles and circles (R 150d)

Threshold mat. Lozenge inscribed in a rectangle

Private apartment XX. Grid of outlined bands

Private apartment XXI. Orthogonal pattern of tangent octagons and rectangles, forming lozenges

Frigidarium B. Grid-pattern of circles and spindles

Piscinae P1-P2. Plain mosaic

Passage C. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent octagons, forming squares

Threshold mat. Pair of poised and concave squares

Caldarium G. Destroyed.

DATE

Stratigraphical and architectural evidence shows four building phases. In the first building phase (not datable because of a lack of evidence) spaces E, F, D of the baths adjoined a structure that extended into room XVIII, as its previous *terrazzo* floor 0.60m below the mosaic floor shows. In the second building phase (4th century from the style of the mosaics) these spaces were joined with spaces A, B, C to form a thermal building. *Frigidarium B* communicated with an undefined space to the east and with rooms D-E via corridor C; hypocausts were built in rooms E-F; through a door in its eastern wall, room E opened onto corridor A, which led onto the street through an opening in the north-eastern corner. In the third building phase the house was built and connected with the baths by space A, which was used as an entry-area. Rooms XIII-XIV and XV-XVI formed a single room; *frigidarium B* was provided with *piscinae* P1-P2 and carpeted with new mosaics; rooms E-F were warmed up by a furnace built under the *piscina* of the new room G. Stratigraphical evidence (fragments of pottery found under the floor mosaics of rooms I, XVII-XVIII, XX-XXI) allows us to date the third building phase to the 5th century. According to Ben Abed Ben Khader, the *domus* was built after the first quarter of the 5th century, as most fragments of pottery are dated to 400-425. They are rims of bowls type Fulford 3-4 (room I), type Fulford 30 and type Fulford 7 (room XX). However, the rim of amphora type Fulford 42, which have been found under the floor of room XVII, would lower the *terminus post quem* to the second quarter of the 5th century. In the fourth building phase (not datable because of a lack of evidence) room XIII-XIV and XV-XVI were divided into two chambers by a wall that was built on the floor mosaic of the previous phase; the spaces between the columns of the peristyle were closed by a wall.

REFERENCES

Ben Abed 1980; *id.* 1983b; Ben Abed Ben Khader 1994b; Beschtaouch 1994; Sodini 1995, 183; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 194-96 n.4.

COMMENTARY

Overlooking the seaside, *vestibulum* IA was a long corridor that adjoined two small rooms (I-II) on either side. Their function is uncertain: the mosaic decoration seems to rule out the hypothesis that they may have been used as service rooms or as a *cella ianitoris*. Lying at the south-eastern corner of the house, rooms III-IV seem not to have belonged to the domestic building. The plan, in fact, shows no opening neither in the eastern wall of room III nor in the northern wall of rooms III-IV, which, on the contrary, communicated with the street by a door at the south-eastern corner of IV. However, as several building phases followed one other and rooms III-IV seem to have belonged to the *domus*, it is possible that there was an opening onto the peristyle. They might have been used as service rooms (a well was at the south-eastern corner of room III) and afterwards turned into a shop.

In the third building phase rooms XIII-XIV formed a single room that might have been used as *triclinium* because of its dimension and location off the peristyle. It is possible that, when the room was divided into two chambers in the fourth building phase, XIII continued being served as dining room and XIV was turned into a *cubiculum* for guests because of its opening into main *triclinium* XIII.

The function of room XII is uncertain. Its dimension and communication with main *triclinium* XIII seem to indicate that the room could have served for the reception of guests in moments other than that of the dinner. However, it is not clear why the owner would have received his guests in a room paved with black and white mosaic, while he showed off polychrome compositions in the rest of his house.

A group of medium-sized rooms opened off the peristyle: their architectural layout and plain geometric floor mosaics do not give any clue about their functions.

Rooms XXIII-XXIV and XXVI appear to have been service rooms because of their concrete floors, although their location off the peristyle would suggest a more important function. Between XXIV and XXVI, stairwell XXV led up either to a landing or to a floor: in either case, they are missing. To the east those rooms were closed by a double wall that would have marked the boundary between two adjoining buildings (section of walls to the east of the double wall indicate a different building). Room XXI was a passageway that connected the house with the bath-suite. That was provided with space A, which could have been used as *apodyterium*, *frigidarium* B and *caldaria* E/F and G on either side of *tepidarium* D. Structures of an unspecified building adjoined cold *piscinae* P1-P2 (to the north and to the east) and hot *piscina* H (to the north and to the east).

MAISON DU TRICLINIUM EN NOIR ET BLANC

SITE

In the southern part of the ancient town; to the north of the Maison du Peristyle Figuré.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Along the north-eastern side of the house *vestibulum* XXV leads onto *porticus* XXII of the peristyle via anteroom XIV. The latter also opens into a pair of service rooms on either side: XII-XIII to the north-east and XV-XVI to the south-east. The north-western *porticus* XXI opens into main *triclinium* VII, which

communicates with anterooms II and IX on either side. Anteroom II leads into private apartments III-IV-V to the north-west and onto corridor I to the south-west. Corridor I overlooks the south-western *porticus* XX. Anteroom IX opens into room VIII, which leads into service rooms X-XI. The south-eastern *porticus* XXIV overlooks space XXVII and room XXVIII: they open at the back onto *vestibulum* XXV.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Anteroom II. Orthogonal pattern of irregular octagons (R 169b)

Private apartment III. Outlined pattern of intersecting and non-tangent circles (R 204c)

Private apartment IV. Foliate pattern of tangent circles (R 231c) bearing Dionysiac motifs

Private apartment V. Outlined pattern of intersecting and non-tangent circles (R 204c)

Main *triclinium* VII. *U-shaped section.* Black and white pattern of intersecting oblong hexagons
T-shaped section. Black and white composition of adjacent octagons (R 164)

Room VIII. Black and white grid of bands with a square at the intersections (R 143a)

Anteroom IX. Black and white pattern of adjacent crosses (R 130b)

***Vestibulum* XXV.** Pattern of white *tesserae*

DATE

The analysis of the floor mosaics shows that the Maison du Triclinium en Noir et Blanc underwent two building phases, which affected the north-western corner of the house. In the first building phase, anteroom VI was an oblong space lying between the north-western wall of main *triclinium* VII and a row of three chambers (II-IIbis-IV). The black and white mosaics of rooms IIbis and IV were probably laid along with the black and white mosaics decorating main *triclinium* VII, anteroom IX and room VIII. Those mosaics are stylistically dated to the second half of the 2nd century. In the second building phase, anteroom VI was turned at right-angles to the *triclinium* and private apartments III-IV-V were lined along the north-western wall of the anteroom. The whole sector was paved with polychrome mosaics, which are dated to the first half of the 3rd century (Ben Abed Ben Khader 1989) or to the first half of the 4th century (Duval 1991).

REFERENCES

Ben Abed Ben Khader 1989; id. 1990c; Duval 1991, 335; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 188-90 n.1.

COMMENTARY

The Maison du Triclinium en Noir et Blanc was entered through *vestibulum* XXVI, which was a L-shaped corridor running along the north-eastern and south-eastern sides of the building. Two openings onto the north-eastern wall allowed visitors to enter different sectors of the house. However, the house is nowadays entered from corridor I, too. Opening directly onto the peristyle, the corridor may have used as secondary entrance by servants and family members.

The central courtyard XXIII was delimited by columns that a low wall connected to one another. Room VII was marked off as a *triclinium* by the T+U layout of its floor mosaic. Rooms III-IV-V may have been used as private apartments, as they were separated from the peristyle by anteroom II. Room VIII too may

have been a private apartment or daily room, as it was preceded by anteroom IX and floored with mosaics. However, its opening into the service rooms makes this function uncertain. The groups of rooms X-XI-XII-XIII and XV-XVI on either side of anteroom XIV and along *vestibulum* XXV may have been used as service-rooms because of their floor in *cocciopesto*.

MAISON DU VIRIDARIUM À NICHES

SITE

In the western part of the ancient town.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

To the west *vestibulum* I leads into spaces II (ca. 7 x 4m)-IV on either side and onto the north-eastern *porticus* VI of the peristyle. This *porticus* leads onto space III in the south-eastern corner. The north-eastern *porticus* VIII opens into *cubicula* XI-XII and into room XIII (ca. 4 x 3m). The south-eastern path IX overlooks main *triclinium* X and space XIV, which leads into rooms XVI-XVII through room XV. At the back of *cubiculum* XI are rooms XVIII-XIX.

MOSAIC DECORATION

***Vestibulum* I.** Orthogonal pattern of adjacent scales (R 215a)

Peristyle. *Niche A.* Marine scene

Niche C. Destroyed

Niche D. Birds among *semis* of rose branches

Niche F. Cocks fighting; inscription *1000 sextulae* on a bag (*bourse*) at the upper left corner

Niche G. Destroyed

Niche H. Birds among *semis* of rose branches

Niche I. Fragments. Marine scene

Porticus VIII. Fragments. Putto holding olive branch (?) among *semis* of rose branches

Porticus VI and IX. Fragments. Grid of laurel wreath forming medallions containing *xenia*-motifs

Main *triclinium* X. Fragments. *T-shaped section.* Grid of five-strand guilloche forming medallions

***Cubiculum* XI.** *Couch-area.* Grid of serrated triple fillets (R 124c)

Main area. Outlined honeycomb containing poised squares

***Cubiculum* XII.** *Couch-area.* Outlined orthogonal pattern of adjacent octagons, forming squares and oblong hexagons (R 169c)

Main area. Destroyed

Room XIII. Fragments. Orthogonal pattern of tangent four-pointed stars

DATE

Stratigraphical evidence indicates three building phases. The fragments of pottery (dated to the 2nd-3rd centuries), which have been found in the southern corner of the peristyle, and the traces of geometric

mosaics under the floors of rooms XV-XVI-XVII belong to the first building phase, which cannot be dated with certainty. The *domus* was rebuilt in the second half of the 4th century, as archaeological evidence shows: fragment of the rim of a bowl type Hayes 50C (350-400) found in the southern corner of the peristyle and fragment of the rim of an oinochoe, whose typology was common at Carthage in the 4th-5th centuries, found in *cubiculum* XI. In the third building phase (the date is unknown), the *domus* underwent the last architectural changes: the rooms were paved with new floors, which have been destroyed; the doors of *vestibulum* I were walled up; a partition wall was built to divide space II/III.

REFERENCES

Ben Abed Ben Khader 1990a, 16; id. 1990b, 82-3; id. 1994a; Sodini 1995, 183; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 197-98 n.5.

COMMENTARY

The Maison du Viridarium à Niches has been partly destroyed by modern buildings: the north-western part has been destroyed by a hotel; the south-eastern part has been covered by a golf-course; the unearthed part has been disfigured by a channel running north-west/south-east. However, the present form of the house (that is the second building phase) and the mosaic decoration allows us to identify some architectural structures. The plain mosaic of *vestibulum* I indicated the function of that space as passageway into spaces II/III and IV and into the peristyle. Spaces II/III and IV could have been service rooms, as they were next to the street and were probably not paved with mosaics.

The peristyle showed a rare form of court ornamented with niches along its sides but in the southern corner, which probably gave access into the inner garden. It is not certain whether the northern corner was occupied by a niche (B) that has been destroyed by the modern channel. As there is no interruption between the mosaic foundations of the niches and those of the *porticus*, the niches did not house basins. Room X was a *triclinium*, as the T-shaped layout of its mosaic shows (the medallions would have contained figurative motifs). Rooms XI-XII were *cubicula*, as the layout of their mosaics indicates. Perhaps room XIII was a *cubiculum*, too, but the mosaic panel that carpeted the possible main area of the bedroom has been destroyed. The function of rooms XIV to XX is not certain; it is not clear how they were paved. Traces of stairs are visible on the house-plan, but it is not clear whether they led up to a missing floor or into room XVIII.

SILIN

VILLA DU TAUREAU

SITE

To the west of the uadi Iala and ca. 15Km west of Leptis Magna.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

The north-western *porticus* (12 x 3.50m) opens into secondary courtyard 1 around which a suite of rooms are arranged: room 2 (5 x 4.60m), assembly-room 3(4.50 x 4.50m), anteroom 4(3.60 x 1.90m), secondary *triclinium*, private apartment 6, chamber 7, and library 8. The southern *porticus* (25.20 x 2.73m) overlooks anterooms 11(4.70 x 3.85m) and 13 (4.70 x 2.40m) on either side of anteroom 12. Anteroom 11 opens into *cubiculum* 10 (4.70 x 3.60m); anteroom 13 leads into *cubiculum* 14 (4.60 x 3.30m); anteroom 12 opens into an apsidal hall (24 x 18m) to the south. At the south-western corner of the southern *porticus* anteroom 9 leads into communicates with assembly-room 2. The north-eastern *porticus* (10 x 3.50m) opens into anteroom 16 (3.50 x 2m), which leads into secondary *triclinium* 15 (5.70 x 4.80m) and *cubiculum* 17 (5.70 x 3.50m) on either side. To the south-east is the bath-suite.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Peristyle. Southern porticus. Field. Grid of simple guilloche (R 135a)

Space between columns. Interlaced ivy scrolls spreading out of amphora

North-western and north-eastern porticus. Field. Grid of simple guilloche (R 135a)

Space between columns. Pygmies fighting against crocodiles and storks in a Nilotic setting

Courtyard 1. Porticus. Geometric pattern

Spaces between columns. Floral composition

Assembly-room 2. Chariot races of the circus

Room 3. Geometric composition with central panel containing Aion holding a circle through which the four Seasons pass; Venus sitting with Eros at one side; above, the son-god driving his chariot

Anteroom 4. Orthogonal pattern of tangent circles, forming concave squares (R 232b-d)

Secondary triclinium 5. U-shaped area. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent lozenges and squares (R 161a)

Main area. Orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles with panel representing Lycurgus and Ambrosia

Library 8. Orthogonal pattern of tangent eight-lozenge stars, forming squares ornamented with masks, dancers, *putti*, birds and flowers

Anteroom 9. Orthogonal pattern of squares

Room 10. Couch-area

Main area. Orthogonal pattern of four peltae tangent to a central quatrefoil, forming squares (R 230); in the middle, panel containing Nereid and Triton

Room 11. Couch-area. Chessboard-pattern of triangles (R 197);

Main area. Orthogonal pattern of four peltae tangent to a central quatrefoil, forming squares (R 230); in the middle, missing *emblema*

Anteroom 13. Running-pelta pattern (R 222e)

Cubiculum 14. *Couch-area.* Orthogonal pattern of four peltae in opposed pairs

Main area. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent octagons in swastika-meander (R 167d) with panel representing scene with bull tossing victims; above, inscription *Filoserapis comp.*

Room 15. Running-pelta pattern (R 222e), with panel containing marble slabs

Anteroom 16. Orthogonal pattern of squares

Cubiculum 17. *Couch-area.* Black and white geometric pattern

Main area. Central panel containing marble slabs

DATE

As the archaeological material from the excavation at Silin is still under investigation, the villa is dated on the grounds of its mosaics. In the analysis of the mosaic of the bull, Picard states that the costume identifies the victims as easterners, and suggests they may be prisoners captured during Caracalla's eastern campaigns in 216. This and the use of the name *Filoserapis* as an epithet of Caracalla allow the scholar to date the mosaic to the latter's reign. Picard's theory seems to be too speculative. Dunbabin points out that the geometric mosaics of Silin were executed by the same workshop as those of the villa at Zliten, which are dated by the scholar to the first half of the 2nd century. As the mosaics of Silin appear to be slightly later, Dunbabin suggests they may have been laid out in the mid- to the second half of the 2nd century.

REFERENCES

Al Mahjub 1983; *id.* 1987; Humphrey 1984; Ch. Picard 1985, 227-41; Farnoux 1992, 316 n. 76; Dunbabin 1999a, 122-24.

COMMENTARY

The northern wing of the Villa has been destroyed by the sea, which is now 10m distant from the building. Room 14 was a *cubiculum*, as its floor mosaic shows. It was entered both from the peristyle and from anteroom 13.

Arranged around three sides of courtyard 1, rooms 2 to 9 were probably used for more private activities. Room 2 may have been an assembly-room because of its location off the courtyard and its dimensions: as its central figured panel covered the whole length of the room, furniture and visitors would have been accommodated on the geometric panels on either side. It communicated with the peristyle by courtyard 1 and anteroom 9. Entered from room 2 and anteroom 4, chamber 3 seems to have been a *cubiculum* because of the division of the floor into two parts (geometric and figurative). However, the lack of illustrations in the references makes that identification uncertain. Anteroom 4 led into an oblong structure ending with an apse: its function is unknown. Room 5 was a *triclinium*, as the U-layout of its mosaic suggests. The adjoining chamber 6 may have been a *cubiculum* because of its small dimensions. Room 8 was reserved for literary activities: in fact, the corner cabinets, which were probably used for shelving books, suggest its function as library. The library gave access into a smaller room (7) at the north-western corner that may have been used by the owner as private room.

Room 17 was probably a *cubiculum* that a 2m-high wall divided into two parts: their function is indicated by the floor mosaics. The black and white geometric pattern of the inner part was reserved for the bed; the central panel of *opus sectile* in the outer part marked the main area. Room 15 was a *triclinium*, as the U-layout of its mosaic shows. The location off the peristyle and the central panel of *opus sectile* stressed its importance. Chamber 16 fulfilled a double function: as anteroom of *cubiculum* 17 and as service room of *triclinium* 15. Rooms 15-16-17 opened into an unspecified area at their back.

To the south-east was the bath-suite, which, however, is not described by the authors. Its communication with the villa is uncertain.

TAGIURA

VILLA DELLA GARA DELLE NEREIDI

SITE

Villa overlooking the sea, close to the radio station of Tagiura.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

To the north the central court 2 is surrounded by *porticus* 1 to the south and to the east. The southern *porticus* 1 overlooks *cubiculum* 14 (ca. 2.3 x 5m), room 17 (ca. 1.80 x 5m), secondary *triclinium* 21, and assembly-room 28. Rooms 14-17-21 adjoin respectively spaces C (ca. 2.30 x 2m), D (ca. 1.80 x 1.20m) and E (ca. 7 x 2m) at their back; assembly-room 28 leads up onto landing 29 (ca. 3.20 x 2.20m), which leads into service rooms E (to the east) and F (to the west: ca. 8 x 2m). To the west of room 28 are rooms 31, 38, 42-44. At the south-eastern corner *porticus* 1 opens into anteroom 5 and a flight of steps 13. Anteroom 5 (ca. 4.50 x 2m) leads into secondary *triclinium* 6 (to the south) and onto peristyle 9 (to the east), which leads into main *triclinium* 45 via corridor 8 (ca. 18 x 3m) to the south. Flight of steps 13 leads up onto corridor 11 (45 x 2.60m), which leads into the bath-suite through *vestibulum* 23 to the south-east. *Apodytherium* 15 (ca. 5 x 5.50m) opens into *apodyteria* 18 (to the east, ca. 2 x 2.70m: it leads into latrine 17: ca. 2 x 2.20m) and 19 (to the south: ca. 5 x 2.10m) and into *frigidarium* 16 (to the west: ca. 3.40 x 5.30m). The adjoining room β leads into *tepidarium* 26 (ca. 3.70 x 2.10m), *laconicum* 25 (ca. 3 x 6m) and *caldarium* 24 (ca. 7 x 3m) to the west and into *laconicum-caldarium* 22 a-b to the north. *Tepidarium* 12 (ca. 3.70 x 2.10m) opens into *vestibulum* 23 (ca. 4 x 2m).

MOSAIC DECORATION

Peristyle 1. Black and white grid of rows of tangent poised squares (R 133c)

Anteroom 5. Outlined pattern of circles intersecting at six points (R 247a)

Second step. Pair of vine shoots spreading from a vase

Secondary *triclinium* 6. Central medallion with bust of Amphitrite, surrounded by medallions with head of Winds

Landing 13. Outlined pattern of adjacent chevrons and lozenges, forming squares

***Cubiculum* 14. Couch area.** Orthogonal pattern of quasi-tangent quadrilobes of peltae tangent to a central square, forming circles (R 229-30)

Main area. Outlined pattern of adjacent chevrons and octagons forming a central square

Threshold mat. Poised square inscribed in a square

Room 17. Orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles (R 237-238)

Assembly-room 28. Outlined pattern of circles intersecting at six points (R 247a)

Main *triclinium* 45. Medallion with bust of Amphitrite emerging from coils of sea-dragon, surrounded by snake

Latrine 7. Orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles (R 237-238)

***Apodytherium* 15.** Four winged Nereids racing on sea-monsters; dolphins in corners

Frigidarium 16. *Basins.* Bichrome pattern of *tesserae*

Eastern threshold mat. Poised square inscribed in a square

Apodyterium 19. *Threshold mat.* Row of squares

Laconicum 22a. Pattern of cuboids (R 212b)

Southern threshold mat. Poised square inscribed in a square

Caldarium 22b. Outlined pattern of irregular octagons in swastika-meander

Vestibulum 23. Outlined pattern of irregular octagons in swastika-meander

DATE

The earliest phase of Villa della Gara delle Nereidi is dated to 150-60 by the brickstamps that have been found in corridor 11 and that bear the workshop's signature of Domitia Lucilla Minor, the Marcus Aurelius' mother. It may reasonably be assumed that the building was decorated shortly after its construction, since its mosaics appear to be homogeneous. In the later phase, the baths underwent some modifications: anteroom β was connected with *laconicum-tpidarium* 22a-b and room 12 was turned into a *tpidarium* in communication with anteroom 23 (in the first phase, it opened onto corridor 11 and had no relation with the bath-suite). The mosaic decorating 22a-b dates the second building phase to the first half of the 3rd century.

REFERENCES

Di Vita 1966, 13-62; Romanelli 1970, 253-4; Dunbabin 1978, 23 n.41, 30, 272 n.1; Kaempf-Dimitriadou 1981, 725 n.8.

COMMENTARY

The plan of Villa della Gara delle Nereidi raises many questions, as it has been mostly destroyed by sea and floods. Its architectural spaces were arranged on three terraces at different level.

On the lower terrace, a few meters distant from the sea, peristyle 1-2 overlooked a row of rooms off its southern *porticus*: *cubiculum* 14, *triclinium* 21, and assembly-room 28. To the west are remains of rooms (31, 38, 42-43-44) the function of which is difficult to identify. In fact, they might have been either reception rooms opening onto the southern *porticus* of the peristyle or private apartments entered from a corridor or small courtyard. More rooms might have laid along the eastern *porticus* of the peristyle, but they have been destroyed. Spaces C, D E and F lay behind rooms 14, 17, 21, 28, 31 and 38 on 2m higher level. Spaces C and D, behind *cubiculum* 14 and room 17 respectively, appear to have been used for collecting water, as they did not have any opening and contained traces of pipe. Spaces E and F were probably service rooms: they were entered from landing 29, which led down into assembly-room 28, and space E was lit up by a window in the partition wall of *triclinium* 21. The eastern *porticus* adjoins remains of structures (3-4), the function of which is unknown.

Spaces arranged on the middle terrace communicated with the rooms of the lower level by landing 5 at the south-eastern corner of peristyle 1-2. Landing 5 led into secondary *triclinium* 6. Both the spaces overlooked peristyle 9 to the east. Its southern *porticus* opened onto a long corridor (8) provided with benches along its long sides. The corridor led into an unspecified structure (33) and ended into room 45,

which would have been a *triclinium* because of its dimensions and mosaic decoration. Di Vita maintains that the eastern and part of the southern *porticus* of peristyle 9 opened into service rooms, which, however, are neither described nor indicated on the plan.

Flight of steps 13 led up onto corridor 11, which connected the living apartments of the lower terrace with the bath-suite of the upper level. The corridor showed a lavish decoration: its walls were coated with panels representing stylized trees and imitating marble; the ceiling was ornamented with geometric and figured stucco-works; the semicircular ends contained a pedestal that probably supported statues. To the south-west it adjoined an oblong room (41), the function of which is uncertain. Fragments of stucco indicate that it was decorated like corridor 11, but it is unknown where its access was and whether it had relation with other possible rooms to the south.

The bath-suite was entered from *vestibulum* 23, which led into the communicating rooms 15, 18 and 19: they were *apodyteria*, as the benches along their walls suggest. *Apodyterium* 18 opened into space 7, which was turned into latrine when its opening into peristyle 9 was walled up. *Frigidarium* 16 was provided with two basins of different shape (semicircular the southern one and rectangular the northern one) and led into the small anteroom β, which led into the warm rooms (22a-b, 24, 25, 26) of the baths. Room 26 was used as *tepidarium* because of its *suspensurae*, 25 as *laconicum* with *tubuli* along its walls and 24a-b as *caldarium* provided with a rectangular basin. Spaces 22a-b contained a *laconicum* and a *caldarium*: those and *tepidarium* 12 were smaller baths that could have been used either by the owner's family or by a smaller group of guests or by servants. The *praeefurnia* used for heating the warm rooms of the baths were in the semicircular corridors 20-27; the adjoining spaces 30 and 40 were probably water tanks from which a pipe led water to the close rooms.

THAENAE

MAISON DE DIONYSOS

SITE

In the western area of the ancient town, to the west of the road leading to the Thermes du Pugiliste.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

The three-porticoed peristyle IX is surrounded by several rooms. The south-eastern *porticus* overlooks private apartments IV-V to the south and service rooms VII (ca. 6 x 5m) and VIII (3.90 x 3m) to the east. The south-western *porticus* overlooks main *triclinium* X, which opens into corridors XI (ca. 7.90 x 1.90m) and XII (ca. 5.10 x 2m) on either side. Corridor XI leads into antechamber XIII (3.80 x 2m) of private apartments XIV-XV. The north-western *porticus* overlooks anteroom XVII (ca. 3.80 x 3.80m) and room XX (ca. 4.20 x 3.50m). Anteroom XVII opens into *cubicula* XVI and XVIII; anteroom XX adjoins private apartment XIX at the back.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Private apartment IV. Orthogonal pattern of squares bordered by alternate concave squares and oblong hexagons

Private apartment V. Orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles, forming curvilinear octagons, spindles, and concave squares (R 240c)

Peristyle IX. Central court. Foliate orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles forming saltires and poised concave squares (R 243h)

Spaces between columns. Opposing and undulating acanthus lines, enclosing dentilled circles ornamented with flower (R 249)

Porticus. Orthogonal pattern of eight-lozenges stars forming squares and concave squares

Main triclinium X. U-shaped section. Grid-pattern of tangent spindles and poised squares, forming octagons with four sides concave (R 151b)

T-shaped section. Orthogonal pattern of quasi-tangent floral medallions, forming concave squares

Side panels. Grid of serrated triple fillets (R 124c)

Corridors XI-XII. Outlined pattern of circles, forming concave hexagons and dentilled spindles (R 248f)

Anteroom XIII. Grid of serrated fillets (R 124c)

Private apartment XV. Orthogonal pattern of tangent circles, forming concave squares

Cubiculum XVI. Couch-area. Orthogonal pattern of swastika-meander enclosing squares

Main area. Orthogonal pattern of tangent circles, forming concave squares

Anteroom XVII. Pattern of multiple round-tongued guilloche, opened to form eyelets

Cubiculum XVIII. Couch-area. Orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles, forming curvilinear octagons, dentilled spindles and concave squares (R 240c)

Main area. Orthogonal pattern of flowers with voluted tendrils (R 242c)

Private apartment XIX. Pattern of quasi-tangent opposed undulating bands with a circle included in the interspaces (R 250a)

Room XX. Grid of undulating bands, enclosing circles

DATE

The Maison de Dionysos is dated to the beginning of the 3rd century on the stylistical grounds of the mosaics.

REFERENCES

Fendri 1964, 48; *id.* 1985, 160; Jeddi 1990, 54-196; *id.* 1994; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 209-10 n.1.

COMMENTARY

The Maison de Dionysos is named after a painting representing Dionysos riding a leopard. The *domus* raises many questions, as it has not been completely excavated and published by its excavators. Only a few rooms may be identified with certainty by their mosaics. As far as the plan shows, the peristyle would have lain in the middle of the *domus*, but it is not certain, since the total area occupied by the domestic building is unknown. The house might have extended to the west and/or to the south with more rooms and spaces (among which a *vestibulum*).

Main *triclinium* X opened onto two corridors (XI-XII) on either side, which seem to have led into an oblong space at the back of the *triclinium* and, through it, perhaps, into private apartments, as in the Maison des Muses at Althiburos. It is uncertain whether the floor of room XIV was originally paved with mosaics. Opening onto the peristyle, private-apartments IV-V adjoined a group of undecorated rooms (I-II to the south-east and III-IV to the south-west) that do not seem to belong to the Maison de Dionysos. Rooms VII-VIII would have been service rooms, as they were not decorated and adjoined a cistern and flight of stairs, which would have led down to further service rooms like cellars.

THUBURBO MAIUS

MAISON AUX COMMUNS

SITE

In the western part of the ancient city, to south-east of the Rue du Char de Vénus and to north-west of the rue de la Maison aux Communs.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

The *domus* is made of two sections: living quarters to the north-east and outbuildings to the south.

Section of living quarters. To the south-east *vestibulum* I leads onto the south-eastern *porticus* VI (2.35 x 12.10m) of the peristyle via anteroom II (4.20/2.70 x 4.10/3.10) and corridor XXIX (8.30 x 2.40/1.30m). The north-western *porticus* IV (2.20 x 12.10m) opens into anteroom XIII (3.15 x 2m), which leads into private apartment XII (3.20 x 3.10m), and into private apartments XIV-XV-XVI. Anteroom XIII leads into room XII. The north-eastern *porticus* VII (11 x 2.40m) overlooks assembly-room VIII, main *triclinium* IX, and anteroom X (1.85 x 2.80m), which leads into rooms XI (5.60/4.30 x 4/3.20m)-XII. The south-western *porticus* V (11 x 2.10m) overlooks anteroom XVIII (1.80 x 2.85m) and corridors XIX (1 x 3.10m)-XX (9.60 x 3.35/3m). Anteroom XVIII opens into private apartment XVII. Corridor XVIII leads into the outbuildings; and corridor XX leads into private apartment XXI, into *cubiculum* XXII (4.5 x 3.15m), and into room XXIII (4.20 x 4m). Along the south-western wall *cubiculum* XXII adjoins space XXIV (3 x 2.50m)-XXV (1.40 x 1.85m).

Section of outbuildings. Adjoining rooms XXXI and XXXII on either side, *vestibulum* XXX leads onto secondary court XXXIII that corridor XIX puts in communication with the living quarters. Court XXXIII leads onto court XXXVIII/XXXIX through rooms XXXIV-XXXV, which are flanked respectively by rooms XXXV and XXXVII. At the eastern corner of the court XXXIX are latrine XL.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Vestibulum I. Grid of curvilinear fillets, petal, spindles

Room II. Grid of serrated triple fillets (R 124c)

Peristyle. Court III. Destroyed

Porticus IV-V-VI-VII. Grid of triple fillets (R 124c)

Assembly-room VIII. Orthogonal pattern of eight-pointed stars of two interlaced squares (R 178b)

Main triclinium IX. Destroyed

Anteroom X. Black and green ashlar pattern (R 139c)

Room XI. Chessboard-pattern of concave squares (R 120a); above, panel with orthogonal pattern of rectangles and squares (R 141a)

Private apartment XII. Orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles, forming quatrefoils and concave squares (R 243g)

Anteroom XIII. Orthogonal pattern of tangent circles and poised squares, forming bobbins (R 156a)

Private apartment XIV. Orthogonal pattern of quasi-tangent quadrilobes of peltae tangent to a central concave square (R 228a)

Private apartment XV. Orthogonal pattern of tangent crosses of interlaced *scuta*, forming circles and lozenges (R 153a)

Threshold mat. Simple meander

Private apartment XVI. Grid-pattern of tangent spindles and circles, forming irregular octagons (R 231d)

Threshold mat. Thyrsos

Private apartment XVII. Grid-pattern of adjacent crosses, forming squares (R 130a)

Threshold mat. Pair of peltae facing a concave square

Anteroom XVIII. Grid of triple fillets (R 124c)

Threshold mat. Destroyed

Corridor XIX. Green-and-black ashlar pattern (R 139)

Corridor XX. Orthogonal pattern of tangent circles, forming poised concave squares (R 233a)

Private apartment XXI. Orthogonal pattern of tangent octagons and oblong hexagons

Cubiculum XXII. *Couch-area.* Grid-pattern of tangent ellipses, forming squares (R 252e)

Main area. Orthogonal pattern of irregular octagons, forming circles (R 168d)

Threshold mat. Lozenge inscribed in a rectangle

Room XXIII. Grid-pattern of tangent spindles and circles, forming concave octagons (R 150e)

Threshold mat. Destroyed

Space XXIV. Destroyed

Threshold mat. Black-and-red chevrons

Space XXV. Grid of bands with a square at the intersections ((R 143a)

Threshold mat. Black-and-pink chessboard pattern

Corridor XXIX. Orthogonal pattern of intersecting octagons, forming squares and oblong hexagons (R 169a)

Threshold mat. Thyrsos

Oil-press XXXIX. *Basin.* Black *opus tessellatum* in parallel rows of *tesserae* (R 105a)

DATE

The Maison aux Communs is dated to the first half of the 3rd century on archaeological and stylistic grounds. The fragments of pottery that have been found under the floor mosaics in room XII (pot, bowl, dish) and XIV (lid) are dated to the late 2nd-early 3rd century. The mosaics are stylistically dated to the first half of the 3rd century.

The outbuildings seem to have undergone several structural changes that, however, it is not possible to date. In the first building phase, *vestibulum* XXX, court XXXIII and spaces XXXI, XXXIV-XXXV formed a single large area and latrine L did not communicate with the *domus* by means of the door on the north-eastern wall.

REFERENCES

Lézine 1964, 97; id. 1968b, 31; Rebuffat 1969, 682 n.4; *CMT* II. 3, 1987, 95-122; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 252-54 n. 17.

COMMENTARY

The Maison aux Communs is made up of two parts connected by corridor XIX: the living quarters to the north-east and the outbuildings to the south-west.

The residence area was entered from *vestibulum* I through room II and corridor XXIII, which led both onto the south-eastern *porticus* VI of the peristyle but were probably used on different occasions. Corridor II was paved with a mosaic that does not cover the whole surface, since the south-western wall is not straight. It seems that the mosaic was laid out before the building of the wall; however, the wall runs parallel to the mosaic panel of the adjoining room XXIII. Both the mosaics are stylistically dated to the first half of the 3rd century. In the core of the house the rooms were arranged around the central area of the peristyle: main *triclinium* IX and assembly-room VIII to the north-east and private apartments (XIV-XV-XVI-XVII) to the north-west.

The authors of *CMT* II.3 label chamber XI as bathroom, since the room was provided with a bath with waterproof coating and with a well on the north-western side. However, as the baths of a Roman *domus* were made of different rooms, it is possible that those structures were built later for industrial purposes. Chamber XI may have been a private apartment entered by anteroom X. Along the south-western *porticus* lay a suite of private apartments that the corridor XX separates it from the peristyle. In this suite was *cubiculum* XXII. At the south-western corner spaces XXIV-XXV-XXVI-XXVII-XXVIII were service rooms. Space XXIV was provided with hypocausts that warmed up the adjacent rooms XXII-XXII; XXVII was paved with slabs that covered a water channel. The function of XXVIII paved with trodden earth is uncertain: it may have been a storeroom, as it was connected with *vestibulum* I.

The living quarters were flanked by outbuildings to the south-east. The lack of mosaics, the tiled floor of the courts XXX and XXVI and the floor in cocciopesto of space XXXIII, the cisterns (XXXIII, XXXVII-XXXIX) and the oil press in space XXXVIII-XXXIX highlight the function of those service rooms.

MAISON DE BACCHUS ET ARIANE

SITE

In the eastern section of the ancient town, to the west of the *forum* and to the north-west of the Thermes des Etoiles.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

To the north-east is peristyle I-II-III-IV-V/VI. The north-western *porticus* IV opens into main *triclinium* IX, which leads into service room VIII to the south-west. The south-western *porticus* III overlooks anteroom X (2.90 x 2.65/3.90m), and rooms XII (4.20 x 3.75m)-XIII (3.30 x 3.75m), which communicate with each other and with X. Anteroom X leads into *cubiculum* XI. At the south-western corner of the south-eastern *porticus* II corridor XIV adjoins room XV (3 x 3.90/3.70m) and leads into secondary

courtyard XVII and onto corridor XVI (1.50 x 3.40m). Secondary courtyard XVII overlooks private apartments XVIII-XIX to the north-west and room XX/XXII to the east. Room XX/XXII opens also onto corridor XXI that leads into service room XXIII, into secondary entrance XXIV, and onto corridor XXVIII (2.60 x 12.50m), which leads into private apartment XXIX and into secondary *triclinium* XXX. Secondary entrance XXIV leads into service rooms XXV-XXVI-XXVII. Corridor XVI leads onto corridor XXXII (2.80 x 6.70m), which overlooks secondary *triclinium* XXX and secondary courtyard XXXIII on either side. At the back secondary *triclinium* XXX opens into corridor XXVIII, which leads into room XXIX and onto corridor XXI. Corridor XVI leads also into anteroom XXXVIII, which opens into room XXXIX and through oil-press XLI onto court XLII and rooms XLIII-XLIV.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Peristyle. *Basin. Floor.* Zigzag rainbow pattern (R 199c)

Wall. Stems of millet and slabs imitating marble

Main *triclinium* IX. *Central area.* Dionysus and Ariadne lying under vine; beneath them, Silenus and satyr, dancing bacchantes, satyrs and Pan

Southern corner. Ashlar pattern (R 95b)

Threshold mat. Destroyed

Anteroom X. Destroyed

Cubiculum XI. *Couch-area.* Grid of bands with a square at the intersections (R 143a)

Main area. Foliate pattern with panels containing birds

Room XII. Destroyed

Room XIII. Destroyed.

Room XV. Grid of bands, forming cruciform compartments (R 146a)

Corridor XVI. Orthogonal pattern of tangent hexagons, forming triangles (R 211d)

Secondary courtyard XVII. Two panels: orthogonal pattern of spaced swastika-meander (R 190d) and orthogonal pattern of adjacent scales (R 215f)

Private apartment XVIII. Orthogonal pattern of cushions and spindles, forming octagons

Corridor XXVIII. Orthogonal pattern of eight-pointed stars of two interlaced squares (R 178b).

Private apartment XXIX. Foliate pattern of intersecting circles, forming spindles and concave squares (R 242d)

Threshold mat. Pair of peltae facing a lozenge

Secondary *triclinium* XXX. Panel with erotes vintaging in triaxial pattern of hexagons and triangles

Threshold mats C-E-F. Flower

Threshold mat D. Thyrsos

Platform XXXI. Destroyed.

Corridor XXXII. Fishing scene

Secondary courtyard XXXIII. *Basin. Floor.* Head of Ocean

Inner wall. Nereids riding sea-monsters; fruit and vegetables on the top

Outer wall. Male figure

DATE

The Maison de Bacchus et Ariane is dated on stylistic grounds. The mosaics may be divided into two groups that suggest two different building phases. The mosaics in rooms XIII, XV, XVIII, XXIX and in secondary courtyard XVII would have been laid out in the first half of the 3rd century. In fact, the fragments of pottery, which have been found under the mosaic of court XVII, are dated between the end of the 2nd and the beginning of the 3rd century. The figurative mosaics in main *triclinium* IX, in *cubiculum* XI, and in the basin of the peristyle and the geometric compositions in corridors XVI and XXVIII and in room XXX seem to belong to the early 5th century. The building of a wall in *porticus* V/VI indicates structural modification that it is difficult to date.

REFERENCES

Poinsot and Lantier 1926, CCIV-VI; Lantier 1943-1945; Rebuffat 1969, 682 n.3; *id.* 1974, 498 n.31; Carandini 1964, 62; Lézine 1964, 105; Dunbabin 1978, 274 n.1; *CMT* II.4, 1994, 39-66; Fantar et al. 1994, 82; Jashemski 1994, 239-44; *id.* 1995; Yacoub 1995, 79-81, 163; Blanchard-Lemée et al. 1996, 275; Muth 1998, 388 A32; Baldini Lippolis 2001, 307-13; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 214-17 n.1.

COMMENTARY

The Maison de Bacchus et Ariane was made up of two sections, living quarters to the north-east and outbuildings to the south-west. The residence area was made up of three sub-sections arranged around courtyards I-II-III-IV-V/VI, XVII and XXXIII: I-II-III-IV-V/VI and XXXIII were both provided with a semicircular basin facing the dining room and with *viridarium*, as the investigations carried out by Jashemski have shown. The three sub-sections were connected with each other by corridors XIV and XVI. Main *triclinium* IX extended to the north-east on an unpaved space that opened into room VIII: perhaps that space was used as passageway by servants bringing food from service room VIII into the dining room. It is not clear in which building phase service room VIII and chamber VII communicated with each other. Secondary courtyard XVII communicated with peristyle and *vestibulum* XXIV by rooms XIV/XV and XX/XXII respectively, which served as passageway. As a thin partition wall separated corridor XIV and chamber XV, which did not show any opening, they may have been a single room. Room XX/XXII led into the service rooms XXIII-XXV-XXVI-XXVII through corridor XXI and *vestibulum* XXIV. The decorated rooms XVIII-XIX on the opposite side were probably private apartments. Courtyard garden XXXIII was entered from corridor XXXII at the eastern corner and from space XXXV to the south-west; a small space (XXXIV) at the north-western corner was probably used for storing gardener's tools. It is possible that on other occasions the family enjoyed meals in the garden, as traces of table or bench have been found behind the basin. Room XXX was a *triclinium* located three steps above the courtyard. Three openings were at the back wall off corridor XXVIII: it is not clear what they served for.

Outbuildings XXXIX-XL-XLI-XLII-XLIII-XLIV were connected with the living quarters by space XXXV and anteroom XXXVIII, which communicated with each other. They were provided with an oil press (XLI) and a court (XLII), which served as entrance into the outbuildings.

The *domus* adjoined several structures at the northern and western corners and along the north-western side: the relation of the domestic buildings with those spaces is uncertain. The structures to the north and north-west lay below the floor mosaics of the house.

MAISON DE NEPTUNE

SITE

In the western part of the area of the *forum*: to the north of the Rue de Neptune, to the north-east of the Annexes A-B and to the south-east of a damaged building.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

The *vestibulum* lay at the south-eastern corner and leads into audience-chamber I and onto corridors II (3.62/4.05 x 2.60m)-III (4.55 x 2.45m; 3.33 x 2.57m), which communicate with each other by stairs. Corridor III opens into Annexe B to the north-east and to the eastern corner of the peristyle to the north-west. The north-eastern *porticus* VIII opens into room IX (3.58/3.64 x 3.30m) and into private apartment X, which communicate with each other. The south-eastern *porticus* V overlooks assembly-room XI and room XIV (2.05 x 1.60m). Assembly-room XI opens into spaces XII-XIII. The south-western *porticus* V overlooks main *triclinium* XV-XIX, assembly-room XX, and room XXI (2.45 x 3.50m). The north-western *porticus* VII opens into anteroom XXII (6.15/6.35 x 2.30/2.50m), which leads into private apartments XXIII (3/3.20 x 3.65/3.70m)-XXIV (3/3.20 x 3.65m), onto secondary entrance XXV, and into secondary *triclinium* XXVI.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Audience-chamber I. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent octagons (R 167b)

Threshold mat. Lozenge inscribed in a rectangle

Corridor II. Orthogonal pattern of spaced swastika-meander, bearing a square (R 191c)

Corridor III. Grid of triple fillets (R 124c)

Threshold mat. Poised square between two reverted peltae

Peristyle. Porticus V-VI-VII-VIII. Grid-pattern of tangent spindles and circles, forming concave octagons (R 150d)

Basin IV. Triumph of Neptune in chariot drawn by hippocamps, with boats and fishers

Room IX. Grid of triple fillets (R 124d)

North-western threshold mat. Pattern of squares and rectangles

South-eastern threshold mat. Floret

Private apartment X. Lattice-pattern of adjacent scales formed of serrated bands springing from craters (R 216c)

Threshold mat. Lozenge inscribed in a square

Assembly-room XI. Destroyed: floral composition (Poissot/Lantier 1925, 260)

Threshold mat B. Destroyed

Room XIV. Orthogonal pattern of tangent oblong hexagons (R 211d)

Threshold mat B. Poised square inscribed in a square

Main triclinium XV-XIX. Grid of squares in *opus sectile*

Threshold mat B. Destroyed

Threshold mat C. Vegetal stems springing from crater in *opus sectile*

Threshold mat D. Marble slab

Room XX. Missing: floral composition (Poinssot/Lantier 1925, 259-60)

Threshold mat B. Missing." *Hedera*" (Poinssot/Lantier 1925, 259-60)

Room XXI. Destroyed: floral composition (Poinssot/Lantier 1925, 259-60)

Anteroom XXII. Missing: foliate circles (Poinssot/ Lantier 1925, 260)

Private apartment XXIII. Destroyed: vegetalised pattern (Poinssot/Lantier 1925, 260).

Private apartment XXIV. Destroyed: vegetalised pattern (Poinssot/Lantier 1925, 260).

Corridor XXV. Poised squared inscribed in a square

Threshold mat B. Poised square inscribed in a square

Threshold mat C. Destroyed

Threshold mat D. Destroyed

Secondary triclinium XXVI. Honeycomb pattern of tangent circles and concave hexagons in laurel wreath (R 234d) containing birds and flowers

DATE

Fragments of pottery, which have been found under the floor mosaics of *porticus* VII (lip type Hayes 181), of rooms XI (bowl type Hayes 14A or 14/17) and XXIV (bowl type Hayes 196), give the second half of the 2nd century as *terminus post quem*. The mosaics are stylistically dated to the early 3rd century. Main *triclinium* XV-XIX was divided in smaller rooms in the first half of the 5th century, as a coin dated to the end of the 4th-early 5th century shows.

REFERENCES

Poinssot and Lantier 1922; *id.* 1924b, XXXI; *id.* 1925, 251, 255 n.1, 256-61; Romanelli 1940, 175-76; Poinssot and Quoniam 1953, 163 n.78; Ch. Picard 1959a, 215; Lézine 1968b, 31; Rebuffat 1974, 458 n.6; Dunbabin 1978, 274 n.5; CMT II.1, 1980, 141-61; Sodini 1995, 182; Yacoub 1995, 281-82; Gros 2001, 171; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 240-43 n.13.

COMMENTARY

The Maison de Neptune was entered by two passageways that were used for different purposes. To the north-west the narrow corridor XXV would have been used by the members of the household: it gave access to the peristyle and the rooms arranged around it. It was closed at an unknown date. On the south-eastern corner was the main entrance (destroyed) through which visitors were admitted. Clients were probably received in room I: the upper level of the floors of the *vestibulum*, of room I and of corridor II obstructed the view of the inner parts of the house. Domestic intimacy was therefore protected from clients and passers-by. Guests admitted to the house, on the contrary, went further downstairs and by

lingering on the threshold of corridor III would have taken a glance at the peristyle and the main reception rooms, properly located to the left, in front of and to the right of the viewer.

The peristyle was the most outstanding element of the *domus*: it was 283m². A further prominent feature is the number of the reception rooms (XI, XV-XIX; XX, XXVI). The most important one was *triclinium* XV-XIX because of its exceptional architectural and decorative layout. Assembly-room XI adjoined space XII, which was probably a light-well because of its lack of openings, and XIII, which may have been a service room because of its floor in *cocciopesto*. In *CMT* it is labeled as restroom, but it might have used also as space where servants put what was necessary for the entertainment of the guests (dishes, food, etc.). The function of rooms XIV and XXI is uncertain.

Along the northern wall the Maison de Neptune adjoined a building that a late wall divided into two sections, Annexe A and Annexe B. They are dated respectively to the beginning of the 3rd century and to the first half of the same century on the grounds of the style of their mosaics. As they communicated with the *domus* by two openings at the northern corner of the peristyle (Annexe A) and on the northern wall of corridor III (Annexe B), they are said to have belonged to the same household and to have fulfilled different functions. In the Annexe A, there would have been living rooms (I, III) and rooms for servants (not decorated area: VI-VIII); in the Annexe B, on the contrary, the small and decorated rooms would have been private apartments. However, the building may also have been part of the adjoining Maison des Palmes on the opposite side, as corridor IX of Annexe B communicated with audience-chamber III. The two buildings were excavated in the same time and published by Poinssot and Lantier (1925, 256-58) as parts of the same house. As the area has been partly destroyed, the question about the function of Annexe A-B keeps open. They might have formed a single house that was connected either with the adjacent Maison de Neptune or with the Maison des Palmes in a late period.

MAISON DE NICENTIUS

SITE

In the area of the *forum*, along the south-eastern wall of the *Curia*.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

To the south-west *vestibulum* 1 leads into room II to the south-west and turns into corridor IV (1.45 x 4.60m) to the north-east. Corridor IV opens into *cella ianitoris* III and room V to the south-east and leads onto the south-eastern *porticus* X of the peristyle. *Porticus* X (12.50 x 2.48m) overlooks secondary *triclinium* XI and room XII (ca. 3.70/4 x 4.10/4.30m), which opens into room XIII at the back. The north-eastern *porticus* VII (12.50 x 1.72/1.80m) opens into main *triclinium* XIV, which adjoins light-well XV at the back. The south-western *porticus* IX (12.50 x 1.95/2.15m) overlooks anteroom XVI and rooms XIX (3.12/3.18 x 3.42m)-XX. Anteroom XVI leads into private apartments XVII and XVIII.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Corridor IV. Grid of filets of squares of four *tesserae* enclosing cross (R 124e)

Peristyle. *South-eastern basin.* Floral pattern

North-eastern basin. Floor. Sea full of fish

Wall. Putti playing on boats

Porticus VII. Destroyed

Porticus VIII. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent scales (R 215f)

Porticus IX. Destroyed

Porticus X. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent lozenges and squares (R 161a)

Room XII. Destroyed: geometric composition of squares bearing cross and rectangles (Merlin 1922, 43)

Main triclinium XIV. Laurel garland forming nine squares ornamented with craters and shells around a geometric figure

Threshold mat B. Tabula ansata bearing inscription *ex officina Nicenti*

Side threshold mats Destroyed.

Private apartment XVIII. Floral grid-pattern of tangent spindles and poised squares, forming octagons (R 151g)

Room XIX. Orthogonal pattern of tangent circles and poised squares, forming bobbins (R 156a)

DATE

The Maison de Nicentius may be dated on the grounds of the style of its mosaics and of archaeological evidence. The mosaics may be stylistically divided into two groups. The mosaics in rooms XVIII-XIX are dated to the late 2nd-early 3rd century because of the fragments of pottery and of a lamp, which have been found under the floor mosaic of room XIX. The mosaics in corridor IV, in the peristyle and in main triclinium XIV are dated to the early 4th century by two late 3rd century's fragments of pottery, which have been found under the floor mosaic of corridor IV.

REFERENCES

Gauckler 1910, n. 347d; Merlin 1914, CLXXXII-III; *id.* 1922, 39-43; Lézine 1964, fig. 29; *id.* 1968b, fig.2; Rebuffat 1969, 682 n.5; *CMT* II.1, 1980, 39-50; Donderer 1989, 101 A76; Sodini 1995, 182; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 221-23 n.4.

COMMENTARY

The Maison de Nicentius was entered from the Rue de Nicentius, which was provided with flights of steps and landing: it led both onto the south-eastern *porticus* of the *forum* to the north-west and from the Rue du Labyrinthe to the south-east. The *vestibulum* led onto the peristyle around which rooms of different use were arranged. Main triclinium XIV did not adjoin any room on either side: it would have caught the eye of the visitor that entered the peristyle from corridor IV. It would have been well illuminated by the peristyle *in front* and the light-well XV at the back. At right-angles to the main dining room was secondary triclinium XI overlooking a basin. A further reception room may have been room XII because of its double entrance: however, its further opening at the back into an unidentified space (XIII) makes the function of the room uncertain. Chamber XVIII appear to have been a private apartment, as it was separated from the peristyle by anteroom XVI. A masonry bench has been found at the north-western corner of XVIII. At the corner between rooms XVI and XVIII was space XVII, which was

floored with *cocciopesto*: its relation with the adjoining rooms is not certain (was it a closed space or did it communicate with anteroom XVII?)

MAISON DES ANIMAUX LIÉS

SITE

In the northern sector of the area of the *forum*: to the north-west of an oil-press and to the east of the baths of the *Capitolium*.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

To the north-west *vestibulum* I leads into anteroom II, which opens onto corridor III (0.95 x 3.20m) to the north-west and onto the north-eastern *porticus* V of the peristyle. The south-western *porticus* VIII overlooks room IX (3.15 x 2.95m) and anteroom XII (3.10 x 2.96m). Room IX adjoins space X at the back. Anteroom XII leads into private apartments XI and XIII. The south-eastern *porticus* VII opens into chamber XVII (2.97 x 2.18m) and into assembly-room XV, which adjoins light-wells XIV to the south-west and XVI to the south-east. The north-western *porticus* VI overlooks main *triclinium* XVIII.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Vestibulum I. Grid of rows of adjacent squares (R 138c)

Anteroom II. Green and white orthogonal pattern of irregular octagons, forming squares and oblong hexagons (R 169c)

Threshold mat. Poised square inscribed in a rectangle

Space III. *Opus tessellatum* in parallel rows of *tesserae* (R 105a)

Peristyle. Porticus V-VIII. Destroyed

Room IX. Grid-pattern of tangent spindles and circles, forming concave octagons (R 150c)

Private apartment XI. Grid-pattern of tangent spindles and circles, forming concave octagons (R 150c)

Anteroom XII. Orthogonal pattern of tangent saltires of intersecting spindles with an inscribed poised squares (R 246c)

Assembly-room XV. Grid-pattern of adjacent cushions and recumbent ellipses, forming irregular concave octagons (R 253e)

Room XVII. Grid of rows of adjacent squares (R 138c)

Main triclinium XVIII. U-shaped section. Grid-pattern of tangent spindles and poised squares, forming concave octagons (R 151b)

T-shaped section. Twelve floral medallions bearing animals; fish in the interspaces

Threshold mats C-D-E. Destroyed

DATE

The Maison des Animaux Liés may be dated to the beginning of the 3rd century on the basis of archaeological material, which have been found in the *nucleus* of the mosaics flooring anteroom XII and *triclinium* XVIII. They are fragments of a bowl dated between the half of the 2nd and the early 3rd century,

of sigillata dated to the 1st or the 2nd century AD, and of pottery type Hayes 183, dated to the 2nd or the 3rd century. Though only two rooms may be dated with certainty by archaeological evidence, it is arguable that the whole *domus* was built and decorated in the same period, as its mosaics show same *nucleus* and same stylistic characters.

REFERENCES

Poinssot and Lantier 1925, LXXV; Schmelzeisen 1992, 125, 130; CMT II.1, 1980, 91-108; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 526 figs. 189-90; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 226-28.

COMMENTARY

The Maison des Animaux Liés was entered from *vestibulum* I and anteroom II. Room II was rather a passageway, as its mosaic in two colours stressed: it led both into the core of the house and onto a space not yet excavated via space III. This space would have been occupied by a room or group of rooms adjoining *vestibulum* I. The main reception rooms lay at right-angles to each other: main *triclinium* XVIII to the north-east and assembly-room XV to the south-east. The importance of the dining room was emphasized by its floor mosaics of figurative motifs which stood out against the geometric compositions of the other living spaces. Assembly-room XV adjoined two small spaces (XIV and XVI) on either side, which were probably light-wells, as they did not communicate with any room. However, space XVI might have been a room entered from assembly-room XV before its door was blocked: in that case, it could have been a small storeroom. Chambers XI and XIII seem to have been private apartments, as anteroom XII separated them from the reception area of the peristyle. The function of room X is uncertain, as it has been partly excavated.

To the north-west the *domus* adjoined an oil-press that opens to the Rue de Neptune and is not in communication with the house. Its mosaics are dated to the second half of the III century.

MAISON DES PALMES

SITE

In the north-western section of the area of the *forum*: to the south of the Annexes A and B, to the south-east of the Rue des Palmes; to the north-east of the Rue de l'Aurige and to the north-west of the Rue de Neptune.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Vestibulum I adjoins space II and leads into audience-chamber III, which communicates with space IV. Space IV also opens into corridor V (4.35 x 1.42/1.65m), which leads into room VI to the north-west and onto the peristyle to the north-east. The south-eastern *porticus* VIII overlook main *triclinium* XIII. The south-western *porticus* XI opens into room XII (3.05 x 2.07m) and into assembly-room XIV. The latter opens into private apartment XV and onto corridors XVI (5.70/6.05 x 1.45/1.73m)-XVII (3.28 x

1.74/1.78m) in communication with each other. The corridors lead into private apartments XVIII-XIX, which adjoin respectively space XX and light-well XXI at the back.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Audience-chamber III. Rows of green palms alternately upright and recumbent

Corridor V. Grid of bands with a square in the intersections (R 143a)

Room VI. Destroyed: floral composition (Poinssot/Lantier 1925, 256)

Threshold mat. Destroyed: flower (Poinssot/ Lantier 1925, 256)

Peristyle. Porticus VIII-XI. Destroyed: geometric motifs (Poinssot/Lantier 1925, 255-6)

Basin. Chevrons

Room XII. Destroyed

Threshold mat B. Curvilinear squares

Main triclinium XIII. Honeycomb pattern of tangent circles and concave hexagons (R 234d)

Threshold mat B. Pelta;

Threshold mat C. Destroyed: lozenge (Poinssot/Lantier 1925, 256)

Threshold mat D. Thyrsos flanking pair of crosses and squares

Assembly-room XIV. Orthogonal pattern of eight-pointed stars of two interlaced squares (R 177d)

Private apartment XV. Grid-pattern of tangent spindles and circles, forming concave octagons (R 150d)

Threshold mat B. Chevron

Corridor XVI. Zigzag rainbow pattern in serrated simple fillets (R 199c)

Threshold mat B. Destroyed : flower (Poinssot/Lantier 1925, 255).

Corridor XVII. Orthogonal pattern of secant squares, forming smaller squares and crosses

Private apartment XVIII. Outlined orthogonal pattern of adjacent octagons (R 167c)

Threshold mat. Flower

Private apartment XIX. Grid-pattern of adjacent crosses, forming squares (R 130a)

Threshold mat. Flower

DATE

According to the authors of *CMT II.1*, the date of Maison des Palmes is the beginning of the 3rd century. In fact, a fragment of a bowl, which is dated between the half of the 2nd and the early 3rd century, has been found under the floor mosaic of assembly-room XIII. Also the mosaics seem to suggest the same date: their *nucleus* and motifs show that they were laid out in the same time as those decorating some buildings in the nearby area. Those buildings belong to the early 3rd century. Afterwards (the date is unknown) a basin was placed in the north-western *porticus* X and rooms XVII, XX, XXI were cut off by walls parallel to the new direction of the Rue des Palmes.

REFERENCES

Poinssot and Lantier 1924a, XXXI; *id.* 1925, 252-56; Romanelli 1940, 175-76; Ch. Picard 1959a, 215; Rebuffat 1974, 548 n.6; *CMT II.1*, 1980, 115-27; Schmelzeisen 1992, 131-32; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 237-39 n.12.

COMMENTARY

The plan of Maison des Palmes raises some questions. In the typical Romano-African house the peristyle is the core of the *domus* around which rooms are arranged. In the Maison des Palmes, on the contrary, the courtyard is relegated to the back with a basin that replaces the north-western *porticus* and main *triclinium* XIII becomes the very centre of the house. Lying at right-angles with the dining room, room XIV would have served as an assembly-room. It adjoined a chamber (XV) that in *CMT* is labeled as a *cubiculum*, but the destroyed mosaic floor cannot help us to ascertain its function.

Chambers XVIII-XIX were probably private apartments, since corridors XVI-XVII separated them from the reception area of the *domus*. They adjoin two undecorated spaces (XX-XXI) that the change of direction of the Rue des Palmes cut down. Space XX might have served as a light-well, as it does not communicated with any room.

However, many other questions are still open. Against the southern wall of the *vestibulum* I a close space (II) lean: was it a basin? The function of room VI is uncertain, too, as no inner walls appear on the plan. A further question relates to the location of the service rooms. All the rooms are paved with polychrome mosaics that rule out the hypothesis that some of them might have been used for service activities. The Annexes A and B to the south, the Rue de Neptune to the north-west, some shops to the north-east and the Rue des Palmes to the south-east indicate the bounds of the *domus* that, therefore, might have not wider. It seems to have extended at an uncertain date, when a door was opened between the southern wall of the room III and the northern wall of the corridor IX of the Annexe B: however, the mosaic floors of the Annexe B show that the adjoined building might have not used as service rooms. For some domestic activities the household could have used the court adjoining the western *porticus* IX of the peristyle, although its opening to the street and its being shared with the *familia* of the Annexe A were rather restrictive.

MAISON DES PROTOMÉS

SITE

In the south-western area of the ancient town.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

The house is made up of two distinct sections (each with its own peristyle and rooms arranged around it) that communicate with each other via corridor I (6.75 x 2.50m) to the north.

Section of *Protomai* (south-east). Corridor I leads onto peristyle II. The south- western *porticus* VI (9.05 x 2.15m) opens into room VII (3.32/3.08 x 3.28/3.24m) and into assembly-room VIII. The south- eastern *porticus* V (2.90 x 8.10m) overlooks main *triclinium* IX/X that adjoins *preafurnium* XIII and side corridors XI (5.20/4.60 x 2/1.30m) and XIV (8.90 x 1.70m). Corridor XI leads into private apartment XII; corridor XIV leads and into private apartment XV and onto corridor XVI (2.45 x 5.10m).

Section of the *Triconchos* (north-west). Corridor I leads onto the north-eastern *porticus* II of the peristyle (11/13.40 x 2.55/3.55m). The north-western *porticus* V (2.55 x 13.40m) opens into room VII (3.70 x 3.80m), which adjoins room VI (ca. 3.75 x 2.80m). The south- western *porticus* IV (11 x 3.55m)

overlooks secondary *triclinium* XI and extends by anteroom VIII (4.20 x 3.10) and corridor XVIII (5.90 x 2.30m) on either side. Secondary *triclinium* XI opens into assembly-room X. Anteroom VIII leads into *triconchos* IX. Corridor XVIII leads into private apartments XIII-XIV and into private apartment XVI via corridor XV (1.82/1.44 x 5.30/5.20m). The south-eastern *porticus* III (2.85 x 12.80m) opens into anteroom XIX, which communicates with private apartments XXI-XXII by means of anteroom XX (5.90 x 2.25m).

MOSAIC DECORATION

Corridor I. Panel A. Grid of bands bearing squares, lozenges and circles (R 147d)

Panel B. Row of spaced squares in a simple meander (R 30d)

Panel C. Grid of bands with a square at the intersections (R 143a)

Section of *Protomai*

Peristyle. Courtyard. Four rectangular panels illustrating beasts in landscape surround a central scene of vintaging Erotes in vine scrolls

Porticus III-VI. Thick bands of acanthus scroll containing birds

Room VII. Pelta

Assembly-room VIII. Destroyed

Main *triclinium* IX/X. Wall. Slabs of marble

Floor. Honeycomb-pattern of tangent circles and concave hexagons in laurel wreath containing *protomai* of animals (R 234d)

Corridor XI. Chessboard –pattern of double axes (R 221c)

Threshold mat. Stems of millet

Private apartment XII. Grid of bands bearing lozenges, squares and squares inscribed in circles at the intersections (R 144b)

Threshold mat. Band of rectangles containing smaller rectangles

Corridor XIV. Grid of bands with a square at the intersections (R 143a)

Private apartment XV. Grid pattern of tangent circles and concave squares, forming concave rectangles

Corridor XVI. Orthogonal pattern of irregular octagons in swastika-meander (R 171d)

Section of the *Triconchos*

Peristyle I. Pool 1. Outer wall. Squares and rectangles imitating marble

Inner wall. Painted stucco

Basin 2. Floor. Destroyed

Outer wall. Destroyed

Inner wall. Marine scene

Basin 3. Floor. Birds and hare in landscape on white ground

Porticus III-V. Walls. Slabs of marble

Porticus III. Orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles in acanthus wreaths, forming saltires of spindles and concave squares (R 237a-g)

Porticus IV. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent octagons, forming squares and interlacing quadrilobes

Porticus V. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent scales ornamented with rose (R 215-6)

Room VI. Destroyed

Room VII. Destroyed

Anteroom VIII. Grid of serrated fillets (R 124a-f)

Triconchos IX. Central apse. Destroyed

Side apses. Border. Row of dolphins

Field. Fragments. Dolphins and putto in sea full of fish

Assembly-room X. Destroyed

Secondary triclinium XI. Pattern of adjacent hexagons and lozenges (R 213c), bearing respectively *xenia*-motifs and smaller lozenges

Private apartment XIII. Pattern of curvilinear octagons and tangent circles forming pairs of semi-ellipses bearing bunch of grapes

Private apartment XIV. Orthogonal pattern of four tangent vegetal circles, forming a central concave square

Threshold mat. Grid of bands with a square at the intersections (R 143a)

Corridor XV. Grid of bands with a square at the intersections (R 143a)

Private apartment XVI. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent octagons forming squares and ornamented with eight-pointed stars surrounded by squares

Threshold mat. Crater

Corridor XVIII. Destroyed

Anteroom XX. Grid of opposed and spaced undulating band of laurel

Private apartment XXI. Orthogonal pattern of eight-pointed stars of two interlaced squares (R 178b)

Private apartment XXII. Orthogonal pattern of eight-pointed stars of two interlaced squares (R 178b)

DATE

Section of *Protomai*. The fragments of lamp (dated in the first half of the 2nd century) and of bowl ARSW type Hayes 3b (dated to 75-150 AD), which have been found under the floor mosaic of *porticus VI*, and the fragment of dish ARSW (dated before the first quarter of the 4th century), which has been found under the floor mosaic of *porticus III*, show that the area was occupied by previous buildings from the 2nd to the first quarter of the 4th century. The present form of the *domus*, therefore, is later than the first quarter of the 4th century. In spaces I, VII, VIII, XII, the *nucleus* of the mosaics is made up of lime, sand, particles of lime and splinters of tiles that make the mortar very hard. On the contrary, in spaces II-VI, IX, XI, XIV, the *nucleus* is more friable, as it is composed of only lime and sand; the floors of room XV and of corridor XVI seem to belong to this group. From that it can be inferred that the mosaics of spaces I, II-VI, VII, VIII, IX, XI and XII were laid out after the first quarter of the 4th century, while spaces II-VI, IX, XI, XIV, XV, XVI were probably decorated or redecorated in the second half of the 4th century.

Section of the *Triconchos*. The area was occupied by a building in the late 1st-early 2nd century AD, as the archaeological material found in a section of wall in secondary *triclinium XI* proves. The section of

the *Triconchos* is likely to be much earlier on general grounds. In fact, fragments of pottery and a coin found under the floor of the *triconchos* IX give the first half of the 4th century as *terminus post quem*. Moreover, the analysis of the walls of rooms XIX-XXI shows that they were later than the adjacent chambers XV-XVII of the Section of *Protomai* that is dated to first quarter of the IV c. The style of the mosaics suggests the second half of the 4th century.

REFERENCES

Merlin 1916, CXLII; *id.* 1917, CXLIV; Poinssot and Quoniam 1953; Lavin 1962, 26; Lézine 1964, 52, 93, 95; 1968b, 30-1; Rebuffat 1969, 682 n.2; *id.* 1974, 459 n.7; Dunbabin 1978, 65, 274 n.4; *id.* 1999a, 110-11; Ben Abed 1983a; *CMT*, II.3, 1987, 1-60; Sodini 1995, 182; Yacoub 1995, 81-2; Blanchard-Lemée et al. 1996, 274; Baldini Lippolis 2001, 313; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 245-48 n.15.

COMMENTARY

The Maison des Protomés is composed of two distinct sections laying at different level and connected by the corridor I: they might have been two separated houses joined in the 4th century. A cistern at the northern corner was used to catch rainwater from the roof and to supply the close rooms. The *vestibulum* or *vestibula* might have been to the north-west of the corridor. However, as the area has not been completely excavated, many questions are still open.

In the Section of *Protomai* peristyle and main *triclinium* IX/X formed an axis around which the other rooms were arranged. Along the long sides of the *triclinium* corridors XI and XIV led into two small rooms (XII and XV respectively) that appear to have been private apartments. Corridor XIV led also onto a long and narrow space (XVI), which appears to have been another corridor leading to a room or a group of rooms to the north-east (the area has not been excavated).

The Section of the *Triconchos* was arranged along two perpendicular axes about which different rooms are arranged: the one with the basins 1-3 of the peristyle and the secondary *triclinium* XI and the other one with the *triconchos* IX. Room XI might have been used also as *triclinium*, since the *xenia*-motif of its mosaic would have been quite appropriate to a dining room. *Triconchos* IX was a more formal dining room: its three apses and the large space in front of would have allowed the owner to give larger parties.

On the opposite side of the *triconchos* corridor XVIII led to a group of rooms (XIII-XIV and XVI via corridor XV) that were probably used as private apartments. XIII and XVI adjoined small spaces (XII and XVII) that might have served respectively as light-well because of its lack of openings and as cupboard. Trodden earth covered the floor of corridor XIX under which there was a water channel. The apse of assembly-room X and the north-western side of *triconchos* IX were contiguous to a building whose relation with the *domus* is not clear. The function of rooms VI-VII off *porticus* V is not clear, as the area has not completely excavated yet.

MAISON DU CHAR DE VÉNUS

SITE

In the western region, opening to the Rue du Char du Vénus leading to the western door.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

To the north-west landing I (2.40 x 3.90m)- *vestibulum* II (ca. 4.10 x 8.20m) and corridor III (10.80 x 2.35m) lead onto the north-western *porticus* VIII (2.10 x 11.30m) of the peristyle, which also opens onto corridors X and XI (5.60 x 2.90m). Corridor XI is flanked at the back by the space X that opens to the street and leads to a group of not completely excavated rooms XII-XVII. The south-western *porticus* VII (12.10 x 2.50m) overlooks *triconchos* XXX/XXXI and assembly-room XXVIII. *Triconchos* XXX/XXXI opens into chamber XXIX to the south. Assembly-room XXVIII communicates with room XXVI (2.50 x 5m)/XXVII. The south-eastern *porticus* VI (2.70/2.40 x 11.20m) opens into spaces XXIII (2 x 5/4.90m)-XXV. The north-eastern *porticus* V (10.60/10.30 x 2.50m) overlooks secondary *triclinium* XIX and anteroom XX (3.70 x 2.10m), which leads into *cubiculum* XXI/XXII. At the angle between main *triclinium* XXX/XXXI and *vestibulum* I-II are four rooms (XXXII; XXXIII: 2.98 x 2.58m; XXXIV: 2.90 x 2.60m; XXXV: 2.40 x 2.60m; XXXVI), in communication with each other.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Landing I. White *opus tessellatum* in parallel rows of *tesserae* (R 105a)

Peristyle. *Court IV.* Green mosaic imitating *cipollino*

Porticus V-VIII. Grid pattern of tangent spindles and poised squares forming octagons (R 151a)

Porticus VI. *Joining band.* Row of tangent poised squares (R 15)

Porticus VII. *Central panel.* Hunting scene in two registers; inscriptions *Narcissus*, *Lasx iunior*, *Sagitta Pernicies Leporum*

Corridor XI. Simple white mosaic

Anteroom XX. Grid of bands with a square in the intersections (R 142a)

Cubiculum XXI/XXII. *XXI.* Destroyed

XXII. Guilloche mat (R 140e)

Anteroom XXIII. Intersecting grid and diagonal grid of filets (R 128a)

Space XXVI/XXVII. Grid of bands with a square in the intersections (R 142a)

Assembly-room XXVIII. Interlacing laurel garlands framing central medallion representing Venus on chariot drawn by four erotes

Room XXIX. Missing

Triconchos XXX/XXXI. *Square room.* Destroyed

Apses. Three boats with fisher in sea full of fish

Room XXXIII. Grid-pattern of tangent spindles and circles, forming irregular octagons in laurel (R 150e)

Room XXXIV. Fragment of petal

Room XXXV. Grid of serrated double filets (R 124b)

Room XXXVI. Orthogonal pattern of spaced swastika-meander and squares (R 190b)

DATE

The Maison du Char de Vénus was built on previous structures that lay 0.50m below *vestibulum* II (XXXII-XXXIII-XXXIV, 1, 2, 3) and three-apsed space XXX. Their floors of *cocciopesto* and their basins suggest that they may have fulfilled an industrial function until the mid-3rd century. In fact, the material covering the floor of *cocciopesto* under space XXX contain fragments of pottery dated between the 2nd and the mid 3rd century. When spaces 1,2,3 were inserted in a new structure that included *triconchos* XXX-XXXI, landing I and *vestibulum* II, they were turned into a small area communicating with *triconchos* XXX/XXXI by a door in the south-eastern wall and paved with a mosaic (destroyed). It is not known whether rooms XXXII-XXXV continued to be used. A coin of Constantine II, which has been found in the *nucleus* of the mosaic in area 1,2,3, would date the building of the *domus* to the first half of the 4th century. Area 1, 2, 3 was destroyed, when *vestibulum* II was extended to the north-western wall of *triconchos* XXX and paved with slabs of limestone. In the same time *triconchos* XXX and peristyle were decorated with new mosaics and a wall was built to create two rooms in *cubiculum* XXI-XXII. Two fragments of dish in ARSW (type Hayes 67: 360-470 and type Hayes 61A: 325-400/420) found under the paved floor of *vestibulum* II date that building phase to the second half of the 4th or beginning of the 5th century.

REFERENCES

Poinssot 1940, 218-27 n. 18; Lavin 1962, 26-7; Lézine 1964, 95; Rebuffat 1969, 681 n.1; Dunbabin 1978, 60-1, 274 n.2; *CMT* II.3, 1987, 61-91; Sodini 1995, 182; Morvillez 1995; Yacoub 1995, 252-53; Blanchard-Lemée et al.1996, 182; Baldini Lippolis 2001, 313-15; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 524 fig. 143; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 249-51 n.17.

COMMENTARY

The Maison du Char de Vénus was entered from the north-east through landing I, *vestibulum* II and corridor III. The plain mosaic (I) and the slabs of limestone (II-III) paving their floors and the cistern in corridor II show that the space would have been used for domestic activities. On the contrary, the lavish mosaics decorating the peristyle and the reception rooms enhanced the importance of this public sector of the house. Courtyard IV was paved with a mosaic panel imitating the marble cipollino: the cistern used to catch rainwater at the eastern corner was placed diagonally so that its sides were parallel to the edges of the imitated slabs of marble. Since *porticus* VI was wider than and not parallel to the opposite *porticus* VIII (a road or a building to the south-east might have been the reason), the mosaicist inserted a narrow band of different pattern along the south-eastern wall in order not to alter the geometric motif of the peristyle. *Triconchos* XXX/XXXI was a *triclinium*. It was made up of two spaces that two columns separate from each other (square room XXX: 7.40 x 7.40m and *triconchos* XXXI: south-eastern apse: 3.50m wide, 2.60m deep; south-western apse: 3.80m wide, 3.10m deep; north-western apse: 3.30m wide, 2.60m deep). The function of rooms XXVI-XXVII is uncertain, too. In *CMT* II.3 (p. 63) they are said to be separated by a partition wall that has been destroyed; it is not clear how the close space XXVII would have been used (light-well?). However, XXVI-XXVII may have been a single room used as *cubiculum*,

as its division into two unequal spaces seems to suggest. The long and narrow chambers XXIII and XXV appear to have been corridors or anteroom leading into rooms that have not been excavated yet: XXIII overlooks an area (XXIV) enclosed within traces of walls. In the northern section of the house there is a group of rooms (IX to XVII) that have been partly excavated. The simple mosaic of corridor XI, the tiled floor of room XII, the court XV and the cistern or well in the apsed corridor XVII seem to indicate service rooms.

THUGGA

MAISON DE DIONYSOS ET D'ULYSSE

SITE

To the south of the *Forum*.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

To the north the *vestibulum* 1 leads down onto peristyle 3. The eastern *porticus* overlooks main *triclinium* 10 and *cubiculum* 9, which opens onto corridor 5. The corridor leads into spaces 6-7-8 through room 4 to the north. The southern *porticus* opens into antechamber 12, which leads into *cubiculum* 11 at the south-eastern corner, into assembly-room 13 and into secondary entrance 14, which opens onto the street to the south and into room 15 to the west. The western *porticus* overlooks flight of stairs leading upstairs.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Peristyle 3. *Porticus*. Orthogonal pattern of tangent circles, forming poised concave squares (R 233a)

Rectangular basin. *Semis* of *tesserae*

Semicircular basins. Sea full of fish

Around basin. Ulysses and Sirens (west); Dionysus and Tyrrhenian pirates (east); two fishing scenes (north and south)

Main *triclinium* 10. Central medallion with Dionysus riding tiger, surrounded by eight rectangular panels containing satyrs and maenads (RII.378a)

***Cubiculum* 9. *Couch-area*.** Orthogonal pattern of tangent poised squares, forming circles

Main area. Foliate orthogonal pattern of tangent circles and squares

Corridor 5. Grid of serrated fillets

Room 4. Geometric composition

***Cubiculum* 11. *Couch-area*.** Grid of bands, forming squares

Main area. Orthogonal pattern of tangent octagons (R 164c), containing birds pecking at a plant

Anteroom 12. Geometric composition

Assembly-room 13. Bust of Dionysus and the Seasons in medallions

DATE

The Maison de Dionysos et d'Ulysse was built on previous structures (as sections of ancient wall show) and decorated with the mosaics that the scholars cited in the references date to the second half of the 3rd century. According to Poinssot, the *domus* would have been built with the establishment of the colony of Thugga under Gallienus, which promoted the building of several public and private structures in the town.

REFERENCES

Golfetto 1961, 44-5; Poinssot 1965; *ib.* 1983, 46-7; Rebuffat 1969, 683 n.4; Romanelli 1970, 248; Dunbabin 1978, 42, 147, 183, 257 n.8; Thébert 1987, 390; Touchefeu-Meynier 1992, 963 n.167; Yacoub

1995, 39, 57, 171-74; Blanchard-Lemée et al. 1996, 97, 115-19, 241, 246; Lancha 1997, 71 n. 29; Romizzi 2002; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 528 fig. 209; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 269-70 n.6.

COMMENTARY

In a note of his article (1965, p. 219 note 6), Poinssot stated that the *Maison de Dionysos et d'Ulysse* would have been analysed in more details in a volume on the houses of Thugga. However, the work was never published and many questions remain still open.

The *domus* had two entrances on opposite sides. The main *vestibulum* to the north faced the east-west road, which led to the *Maison des Trois Masques*, to the *Maison du Labyrinthe* and to the *Licinius' Baths*. The *vestibulum* lay above two cisterns and led down onto the peristyle by 14 flights of stairs. Secondary entrance 14 to the south-west was on the basement and communicated with a private street, which started from the road East-West and run along the western wall. As the area was drastically affected by the building of a surrounding wall in late antiquity, it is not possible to know with what buildings (shops, houses) the *domus* communicated at the back. The *vestibulum* opened to the west into an undecorated space (2), which could have been used either as latrine or as kitchen, because traces of a sewer have been found along the western wall of the *vestibulum*. To the north of the service room a flight of stairs lead to an upper floor that has been destroyed.

Rooms 9 and 11 on either side of main *triclinium* 10 were *cubicula*, as the layout of their floor mosaics shows. *Cubiculum* 9 opened onto the peristyle and into a room through a corridor. The function of that room is uncertain: its dimension and decoration, in fact, seem to suggest an important room; however, it communicated with three rooms at the back that seem to have been service rooms because of the lack of decoration. Moreover, the plan shows three rectangular structures along the long sides of the room: Poinssot does not say anything about their nature and function.

MAISON DE VÉNUS

SITE

To the south of the *Capitolium*, the house adjoins the temple of Victoria of Caracalla.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

The *domus* has two floors. At the south-eastern corner of the ground floor *vestibulum* I opens into *cella ianitoris* IV and onto corridor II (9.50 x 1.30m), which leads into audience-chamber III. To the west room III adjoins space XVIII (2.50 x 5.20m). On the first floor the peristyle is surrounded by rooms on three sides. *Porticus* VII (2.75 x 8.30m) overlooks room VI (3.30 x 1.72m), main *triclinium* VIII and *cubiculum* XIII to the west, assembly-room XII to the north, and corridor X (6.45 x 3.01m) to the south. Corridor X leads into secondary *triclinium* IX to the south. *Porticus* VI (3.85 x 8.30m) opens into *cubiculum* XIV, rooms XV (3.85 x 2.10m)-XVI (4.50 x 3.85m). Chamber XVI opens into secondary entrance XVII to the east.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Vestibulum I. White plain pattern

Corridor II. White plain pattern

Audience-chamber III. Running-pelta pattern (R 222e)

Peristyle. Basin V. Venus in shell, with Eros holding mirror, surrounded by Nereids, Tritons, and putti swimming in sea full of fish

Porticus VI. Fragments of orthogonal pattern of secant circles, forming spindles and squares

Porticus VII. Grid-pattern of adjacent cushions and spindles framing a pseudo-*emblema* with hunting scene

Main triclinium VIII. Central panel. Vegetal pyramids surrounding curvilinear octagon

Western side panels. Orthogonal pattern of secant octagons, forming squares and hexagons (R 169c)

Eastern side panels. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent lozenges and squares (R 161a)

Threshold mat. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent scales (R 215)

Secondary triclinium IX. U-shaped section. Grid of serrated fillets and squares (R 124f)

T-shaped section. Orthogonal pattern of octagons, forming squares and hexagons

Eastern threshold mat. Hedera

Northern threshold mat. Destroyed.

Corridor X. Pattern of straight-tongued multiple guilloche opened to for eyelets

Assembly-room XII. Pattern of quasi-tangent circles and peltae tangent to a central square (R 230d)

Cubiculum XIII. Couch-area. Grid-pattern of adjacent crosses, forming squares (R 130a)

Main area. Outlined pattern of oblong hexagons, intersecting and forming squares and hexagons

Threshold mat. Orthogonal pattern of oblong hexagons, forming isosceles triangles (R 211d)

Cubiculum XIV. Couch-area. Grid of slabs

Main area. Ornamental pattern containing birds and vegetables

Room XV. Orthogonal pattern of quasi-tangent ellipses

DATE

As stratigraphical investigations have not been carried out yet, Jeddi dates the Maison de Vénus on the basis of the style of its floor mosaics, which show three building phases. The geometric mosaics flooring room III and *cubiculum* XIII would have been laid in the 3rd century. The floral and ornamental compositions decorating *porticus* VII and *triclinia* VIII and IX seem to have been laid in the 4th century. The mosaic of *cubiculum* XIV seems to have been laid in the 5th century. Perhaps, in the same period, the northern *porticus* was enlarged, rooms XIV to XVII were moved northwards and room XV was provided with hypocausts.

REFERENCES

Jeddi 1999; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 266-67 n.5.

COMMENTARY

The Maison de Vénus has been partly excavated: in the preserved area (400m²) the peristyle is surrounded by rooms on the two sides.

Room VIII was a *triclinium*, as its architectural layout seems to show. The adjoining room VI would have been a service room: it was the only chamber to be undecorated in that suite of floored rooms. Room IX was a *triclinium* too, as the U-layout of its floor mosaic shows. The *triclinium* may have been illuminated by the adjoining space XVIII: lying 0.95m below the level of the close rooms, it may have been used as a light-well. Lying on the opposite side of *triclinium* IX, room XII may have been a further reception room or the private suite of the house owner. Rooms XIII and XIV were *cubicula*, as the layout of their floor mosaic show.

UTICA

MAISON AU GRAND OECUS

SITE

In the north-eastern part of the ancient town, to the east of the Maison Ouest.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

The western *porticus* XXVIII (26.80 x 3.35m) of peristyle XXVII/XXVIII/XXIX/XX overlooks *lararium* XIV (1.97 x 5.40m), chamber XV (3.65 x 5m), colonnaded *triclinium* XVI and secondary courtyard XVIII. Rooms XIV-XV are placed off court V/VI/VII (6.15 x 8.75m), which overlooks rooms II/III/IV on the opposite side. *Lararium* XIV adjoins corridor VIII (2.45 x 13.35m) to the north. Corridor VIII leads into rooms IX (7.10 x 5.58m)-XI (4.72 x 3.60m)-XII (2.13 x 3.03m). Room XII leads into *vestibulum* X (2.08 x 3.60m) via anteroom XIII (4.58 x 3.05m). The northern *porticus* XXIX opens into corridor XIX (10.20 x 3.32m), into *oecus* XXI (7.35 x 4.30m), into secondary *triclinium* XXII (10.1m long), into room XXIII and onto corridor XXIV (10.37 x 1.62m). *Oecus* XXI adjoins XX (2.35 x 4.28m) at the back; corridor XXIV leads into private apartments XXV (3.63 x 3.30m)-XXVI (7.35 x 3.23m)

MOSAIC DECORATION

Room II/III/IV. Black and white outlined honeycomb (R 204)

Court V/VI/VII. Floral pattern with stylised scrolls

Threshold mat B. Lozenge inscribed in a lozenge

Band C. Black and white chessboard-pattern of triangles (R 198e)

Corridor VIII. Black and white grid of bands with a square at the intersections (R 142a)

Room IX. Honeycomb-pattern of tangent squares forming hexagons and triangles in *opus sectile* (R 205a-b)

Vestibulum X. Western part. Opus figlinium

Eastern part. Opus tessellatum in parallel rows of *tesserae* (R 105)

Room XI. Black and white orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles, forming saltires of spindles and concave squares (R 243b)

Threshold B. Black and white four-pointed star inscribed in a square

Anteroom XII. Black and white grid of rows of adjacent squares enclosing a parallel square (R 138c)

Threshold B. Black and white lozenge inscribed in a rectangle

Room XIII. Black and white pattern of four rectangles around a small square (R 141a)

Lararium XIV. Black and white chessboard-pattern of triangles (R 198e)

Room XV. Central octagon containing eight-pointed star of triangles and squares

Main triclinium XVI. Trichrome chessboard-pattern of rectangles in *opus sectile*

Corridor XVII. Orthogonal pattern of lozenges forming eight-pointed stars and of central circle

Corridor XIX. Black and white grid of filets (R 124)

Room XX. Black and white grid of bands (R 145b)

Room XXI. Grid of filets in *opus sectile*

Secondary *triclinium* XXII. Grid of bands in *opus sectile*

Threshold B. Slabs of marble.

Corridor XXIV. Grid of serrated filets (R 124)

Threshold B. Black triple filet on white ground

Private apartment XXV. *Semis* of white poised squares, in black *opus tessellatum* of *tesserae* laid in parallel rows (R 107a-c)

Threshold B. Black and white poised square

Private apartment XXVI. Black and white pattern of four rectangles around a small square (R 141a)

Threshold B. Black and white poised square

Peristyle, court XXVII. *Opus tessellatum* in parallel rows of white *tesserae* (R 105a)

Central basin. *Opus tessellatum* in parallel rows of white *tesserae* forming a zigzag pattern (R 105b)

Porticus XXVIII. Grid of rows of adjacent squares enclosing a parallel square (R 138c)

DATE

Traces of a previous building have been found under the floor of room X: there are fragments of a floor of *cocciopesto* and, above that, fragments of *arretina*, which give the 1st century AD as *terminus post quem*. Maison au Grand Oecus seems to have been built in the last quarter of the 1st or at the beginning of the 2nd century AD. In fact, a lamp Deneauve type VII A or C (end of the 1st or early 2nd century AD), a fragment of African Red Slip Ware (Flavian period) and the lip of a cup (1st century AD) have been found under the floor mosaic of *triclinium* XV. Moreover, a fragment of African Red Slip Ware A (Hayes 5), which is dated to the flavian period, has been found in the *nucleus* of the mosaic flooring the north-western corner of space V/VI/VII.

In the second half of the 2nd century spaces II to VI were turned into a bath-suite: corridor VIII led into *frigidarium* V, which was provided with semicircular basin VI; to the west were *tepidarium* III and *caldarium* II and to the west of court VII a *praefurnium*. The baths are dated by bipedales recording the name of Lucius Verus and Marcus Aurelius (161-69) and by fragments of pottery which have been found above the mosaic panel flooring the north-western corner of space V/VI/VII. They are lips Hayes 11 (2nd century), Hayes 8 n.30 (80-160), Hayes 5 C (150) and fragments of lamps Deneauve VII B n. 867 and Deneauve VII B n. 877 (150). Afterwards the bath-suite was destroyed and a new floor mosaic was laid in the space IV/V: fragments of a lamp Deneauve VIIA n. 1018 (200-250) and the lip of African Red Slip Ware A, Hayes 8B (150-200) date the mosaic to the 3rd century.

An inscribed base recording the name of Sulpicia Dyminia (3rd century), which has been found by the eastern entrance of the *domus*, and the bronze coins of Constantine (301-11), of Licinus (308-24) and of Constance II (346-61), which have been found on the floor of court XXVII, show that the *domus* was still in use in the 3rd and 4th centuries.

REFERENCES

Lézine 1968a, 101; id. 1970, 61; Veyne 1961-1962, 10; Rebuffat 1969, 686 n.6; CMT I.2 1974, 1-18; Gros 2001, 172; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 341-43 n.3.

COMMENTARY

The Maison au Grand Oecus has been partly destroyed: what may be seen nowadays is a group of rooms arranged along the northern and western *porticus* of the peristyle.

Room XV was the most important *triclinium*, as its big dimensions, its inner colonnade, its floor mosaic in *opus sectile*, and its three entrances show. The central threshold faces a semicircular basin and a panel of square slabs, which is set between the basin and the western *porticus*.

Room XXII too was a *triclinium*, but it was less big than XV. Its large entrance faced a semicircular basin and its floor was paved with *opus sectile*. It opened into rooms XX and XXIII on either side. Chamber XX may have been a *cubiculum* because of its small size: it was entered also from corridor XIX. Traces of stairs leading to a possible upper floor have been preserved in corridor XIX. Room XXIII may have been used by servants during the meal in *triclinium* XXII, as it led into the back of the dining room and was apparently undecorated. A further *triclinium* might have been room XXX, as it lay off the semicircular basin in the peristyle and was opposite *triclinium* XVI. However, as only a few traces of walls have been preserved, it is not possible to go beyond a mere hypothesis.

A group of private rooms (II/III/IV, IX, XI, XIII, XIV, XV) lay in the north-western corner of the *domus*: they were separated from the peristyle by corridors XIX and VII. The adjoining space V/VI/VII might have been a court allowing light and air into those rooms. Two mosaic panels with different decorative motifs have been preserved in the northern part of the court: it is not clear how they related to each other and how the rest of the floor was decorated. Room IX would have been used both as *triclinium* for the family's meals and as a room for the reception of close friends: its floor in *opus sectile* underscored the importance of that room. A wall east-west was built on the foundations of the floor to the north.

Space XIV was a *lararium*, as its semicircular structure between two columns at the back wall could have housed a statue. The function of space II/III/IV is uncertain, as it underwent many structural modifications when a bath-suite was built in. Rooms XII-XIII were used as area of passage, which put the private sector of the house and the peristyle into communication with outside by *vestibulum* X. Because of its small dimensions and position close the private room, *vestibulum* X was probably a secondary entrance that communicated with the lower level of the house by a flight of steps into room XII. Afterwards (the date is unknown) the flight of steps was replaced by a new one, which encroached upon the floor mosaic of room XIII.

The badly preserved status of spaces XVII-XVIII makes their function uncertain. However, the L-shaped mosaic panel and the column along its inner edge would suggest a court (XVIII) surrounded by *porticus* (XVII) on three sides. Windows opening onto courts V/VI/VII and XVIII on either side of *triclinium* XVI would have allowed light and air into the dining room.

MAISON DE LA CASCADE

SITE

In *Insula* II (lots 2, 3, 8, 9, 10), to the east of the Maison du Trésor and to the west of the Maison des Chapiteaux Historiés.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

To the north *vestibulum* I leads into audience-chamber II to the south and into service rooms III-XXXV on the opposite side. Room III leads to a group of service rooms (V-VI-VII-VIII-IX). Room XXXV (3.60 x 4.42m) and the adjoining service room XXXII lead into secondary courtyard XXXa (7.67 x 5.30m) and into a group of service rooms (XXXI: ca. 5.15 x 5.73m; XXXb: 2.80 x 2.10m; XXXc: 2.80 x 2.10m; XXXd: 3 x 4.47m). Audience-chamber II extends into corridors IV and XXXIII (ca. 5.65 x 1.80/1.90m), which end into the northern *porticus* XXIIIa of peristyle XXIII. The same *porticus* overlooks assembly-room XXXIV. The western *porticus* XXIIIc overlooks *porticus* XII (5.67 x 1.50/2.72m) and XV on either side of main *triclinium* XIV. *Porticus* XII of secondary courtyard XIII, leads into room X (2.73 x 2.83m) and into secondary *triclinium* XI. *Porticus* XV of secondary courtyard XVI leads into rooms XVIIIa (2.73 x 5.83m) and XIX (2.95 x 2.01m). The southern *porticus* XXIIIc of the peristyle overlooks chambers XX (2.81 x 4.39m), XXIa (2.89 x 4.79m), XXIb (2.86 x 2.53m) and XXII. Along the eastern *porticus* XXIIIb there are private apartments XXIV-XXVII on either side of the adjoining anterooms XXV (2.90 x 2.95m)-XXVI (3.80 x 3.02m), and room XXVIII/XXIX (2.81 x 7.54m).

MOSAIC DECORATION

***Vestibulum* I.** Destroyed

Room II. Grid of serrated filets of single *tesserae* and squares of four *tesserae* (R 124f)

Basin. Fish

Corridor IV. White and ochre *tesserae* laid in pattern of adjacent scales

Assembly-room XXXIV. *Platform.* *Opus tessellatum*

Main area. Composition in *opus sectile* of four poised squares forming central square and groups of four smaller squares at corner; in side panels, outlined row of squares of four rectangles, forming a central square (R 95a)

Peristyle. *Porticus* XXIIIa-d. Semis of *scutulae* and crosslets in *opus lithostroton* of *tesserae* laid in parallel rows (R 109a)

***Porticus* XXIIIa.** *Basin.* Fishing scene

***Porticus* XXIIIc.** Panel in *opus sectile* representing grid of bands forming squares

Service room V. *Opus figlinum*

Service room VIII. *Opus figlinum*

Room X. Semis of black-and-white crosslets set as saltires (R 108a)

Threshold mat. Chessboard-pattern of black and white squares

Secondary *triclinium* XI. Black-and-white honeycomb-pattern (R206a) in *opus sectile*

Southern threshold mat. Slabs of marbles

Eastern threshold mat. Slabs of marbles

Porticus XII. Orthogonal pattern of circles and poised squares

Threshold mat. Two-strand guilloche

Main triclinium XIV. *U-shaped section.* Grid-pattern of slabs of marble

T-shaped section. Grid of bands forming rectangles and squares enclosing circle in *opus sectile*

Secondary court XVI. *Basin.* Two fishers on boat catch fish by a big net

"Cascade". Floor. Fish

Wall. Pair of peacocks facing roses

Porticus XV. Orthogonal pattern of irregular octagons, forming squares and oblong hexagons (R 169b);

Porticus XVII, XVIIIc. Grid of outlined bands with the squares at the intersections (R 145b)

Band XVIIIb. Band of alternating squares and vertical rectangles (R 18c)

Room XVIIIa. Black-and-white honeycomb-pattern (R206b)

Threshold mat. Square panel ornamented with flower

Room XIX. White and ochre plain mosaic

Room XX. White-pink-ochre plain mosaic

Room XXIa. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent crossed of four chevrons, forming squares (R 130b)

Room XXIb. Destroyed

Threshold mat. Black and white lozenge

Private apartment XXIV. Octagon consisting of an eight-lozenge star ensconced in the angles between eight small squares and eight peripheral lozenges (R 177a)

Threshold mat. Irregular poised square inscribed in a square.

Anteroom XXV. Black and white orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles, forming saltires of spindles and concave squares containing an inscribed poised square (R 238b)

Threshold mat. Irregular poised square containing flower and inscribed in a square; colours: black, red, pink, white

Anteroom XXVI. Black and white orthogonal pattern of spaced swastika-meander

Private apartment XXVII. Orthogonal pattern of eight-pointed stars of two interlaces squares

Room XVIII-XIX. White *tesserae* laid in pattern of adjacent scales

Secondary courtyard XXXa. *Semis* of black florets in *opus lithostroton*

Basin. *Opus figlinum*

Service room XXXb. *Tesserae* laid in pattern of adjacent scales.

Service room XXXc. Beige simple mosaic

Service room XXXd. Black and white grid of serrated triple fillets (R 124c)

Service room XXXI. Destroyed

Service room XXXV. White and brown plain mosaic

DATE

The Maison de la Cascade in its present form is the product of different building phases.

The lots 2, 3, 8, 9, 10 had been occupied by one or more domestic buildings since the beginning of the 1st century AD: the floors were in *cocciopesto*, trodden earth, *opus figlinum* and *terrazzo*. In the late 1st - early 2nd century (as fragments of pottery and lamps found in the north-eastern corner of the peristyle and in *porticus* XVIIIc appear to show) the lots were occupied by a new and more elegant peristyle-house called 'Maison de la Cascade' after the panel of the basin in courtyard XVI. In that phase the *domus* got the present size and basic architectural plan: the rooms were arranged around *vestibulum* I, hall XXXIV/II/IV/XXXIII and peristyle XXIIIa-d. However, between the second half of the 2nd and the beginning of the 3rd century some structural changes modified part of the house (the date is suggested by fragments of lamps and pottery found in the *nucleus* of the mosaics decorating the northern section). The arrangement of rooms XXXa-d was changed; hall XXXIV/II/IV/XXXIII was divided into a room (XXXIV) surrounded by corridor IV-XXXIII and by audience-chamber II on its three sides; the peristyle was adorned with a multi-niched fountain. New mosaics were laid out to replace old panels or to decorate rooms *ex novo*. Later, possibly in the second half of the 4th or in the early 5th century, the basin in the courtyard XVI was decorated with the mosaic after which the *domus* is called.

REFERENCES

Cintas 1951, 80-4; id. 1954, 147-54; Ch. Picard 1954b, 162-67; Lézine 1956, 1-37; id. 1964, 120 n.10; id. 1968a, 113-22; id. 1970, 52-7; Rebuffat 1969, 685 nn. 2-3; id. 1970, 32-3; *CMT* I.1, 1973, 19-56; Sear 1977, 166 n. 230; Dunbabin 1978, 17, 276 n.9; Fantar et al. 1994, 21-22; Yacoub 1995, 174-76; Baldini Lippolis 2001, 319-20; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 535 fig. 317; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 351-54 n.7.

COMMENTARY

The Maison de la Cascade may be divided into two distinct sections: the service rooms to the north and the reception area to the south. The service rooms lay on either side of the central *vestibulum* I: III, V-IX to the west and XXXa-d, XXXI-XXXII, XXXV to the east. According to Lézine, room XXXV might have been the porter's lodge, space VII the area for lodging carts because of its large opening (2.05m) in the street, and the long and narrow room VIII either a kitchen or bathroom because of its floor in *opus figlinum*. As there is no evidence that proves a different use of those spaces, Lézine's hypothesis may be accepted. The stairs in room V, belonging to the second building phase, might have led to a landing. On the other hand, space XXXa might have been a courtyard with its well and basins, room XXXI a stable but the traces of tanks and troughs found here may belong to a very late phase and not related to the Roman *domus*. A basin abutted the eastern wall of the room XXXV.

The reception sector of the house showed more lavish rooms. Visitors entering the house from *vestibulum* I were greeted by the marine scene decorating the basin in room II. The basin abutted the northern wall of the assembly-room XXXIV that hid the core of the house from the view of passers-by. Visitors admitted to the house walked through corridor IV and by lingering on the threshold they might have looked at the peristyle and the reception rooms. To the west the panel in *opus sectile* inserted in the mosaic decoration of the *porticus* would have caught the viewers' eye and marked off the entrance into main *triclinium* XIV. The small courtyards (XIII, XVI) with their basins overlooked further rooms. They appear to be more private, as L-shaped corridors separated them from the peristyle, but not less lavish and elegant. Room XVIIIa seems to be a reception room, as it faces courtyard XVI and the marine scenes decorating the

basins were oriented towards the inner room. However, its long and narrow shape does not seem suitable for a reception room. Furthermore, its northern side was completely open to the garden, since the wall between the room and *porticus* XVIIIc was pulled down and the area decorated with a mosaic joining the two spaces: the room, therefore, might have been used only in summer. A further reception room was hall XXXIV because of its location in front of a semicircular basin in the peristyle and its floor mosaic in *opus sectile*. The hypothesis that it might have been a chapel (CMT I.1, 21) does not seem to me persuasive. To the east, the Maison de la Cascade communicated with the adjoining Maison des Chapiteaux Historiés through service room XXXI.

MAISON DE LA CHASSE

SITE

In *Insula* II (lot 5), to the east of the Maison de la Cascade.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

To the south *vestibulum* I opens into room II (3 x 13.33m) to the east and onto corridor III (4.98 x 2m) to the north-west. The corridor leads onto the peristyle (courtyard IV: 3.12 x 4.06m; *porticus* V: 5.75 x 1.94m; VI: 1.67 x 8.45m; VII: 1.77 x 4.85m; VIII: 5.90 x 1.80m). The northern *porticus* VI overlooks assembly-room X, which is flanked on either side by rooms IX and XI. The eastern *porticus* VIII opens into service room XII and room XIV on either side of room XIII (2.80 x 4.03m). Room XIV communicated with room XV to the south. The southern *porticus* VII overlooks main *triclinium* XVI/XVII/XVIII.

MOSAIC DECORATION

***Vestibulum* I.** Pattern of white *tesserae*

Corridor III. *Opus figlinum*

Peristyle. Court IV. Orthogonal pattern of tangent squares and rectangles in *opus sectile*

***Porticus* V.** Acanthus scroll forming four figurative square panels

***Porticus* VI.** Laurel wreath forming seven square panels that represent hunting scenes: villa; fowlers; gazelle-hunt; return from the hare-hunt; *dominus* hunting; return of *dominus*; attendants with nets returning from gazelle-hunt

***Porticus* VII.** Three medallions in laurel wreath

***Porticus* VIII.** Grid of bands with a concave square at the intersections (R 143d-e)

Assembly-room X. Four medallions in laurel wreath bearing floret

Main *triclinium* XVI/XVII/XVIII. Pattern of squares of white limestone

DATE

In the early 1st century AD the lot 5 was occupied by a small, humble house. In the late 1st or early 2nd century it was extended as much as it is today and raised at the same height as the *decumanus* A: *vestibulum* I opened onto corridor III, which led onto courtyard IV/V/VI/VII/VIII. Provided with tanks,

the court opened into rooms IX/X and XI the north, into rooms XII and XIII to the east, and into hall XVI/XVII/XVIII to the south. In the south-eastern corner room XIV/XV, 9.22m lower, opened into hall XVI/XVII/XVIII by a step and into *vestibulum* I. In the second half of the 4th century (the date is suggested by a coin of Constantius II and fragments of pottery and lamps found under the floor of *porticus* VIII), some important modifications were carried out. The courtyard was occupied by the peristyle; the northern section was raised (9.70/9.87m); room IX/X was divided in two parts; the door of room XIII was closed and another one was opened to the south; room XIV/XV was divided in two chambers. Possibly after the Vandal destructions, main *triclinium* XVI/XVII/XVIII was subdivided. In an uncertain date, a silos (II) was built at the eastern end of *vestibulum* I.

REFERENCES

Ville 1961, 16-76; Lézine 1968a, 123-25; id. 1970, 59-61; Rebuffat 1969, 685 n.4; Dunbabin 1978, 57, 62, 277 n.10; *CMT* I.1, 67-81; Sodini 1995, 183; Baldini Lippolis 2001, 320-22; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 358-59 n.10.

COMMENTARY

Vestibulum I and corridor III served as passageway, as their long and narrow shape and their decoration (plain mosaic in I/II and *opus figlinum* in III) stress. Traces of slabs are evident on the floors of II and III: their relation with the mosaic composition is uncertain. The simple mosaic motif of *vestibulum* I and of corridor III contrasted with the lavish mosaics that carpeted the peristyle. The re-used slabs of *opus sectile* in courtyard IV, the figurative scenes in *porticus* V-VII and the polychrome mosaic in assembly-room X, and the huge dimensions of main *triclinium* XVI/XVII/XVIII stressed the importance and the public character of that space. The geometric pattern of *porticus* VIII indicated the lesser importance of the adjacent rooms XII-XV that might have been service rooms. Room II might have been a kitchen because of its white simple mosaic floor and the presence of a cistern along the western wall. The function of rooms IX and XI on either side of assembly-room X is uncertain. The walls of room X draw an oval shape in the inner part. The location of living quarters and *cubicula* is uncertain, too: perhaps, they were located in the upper storey.

MAISON DES CHAPITEAUX HISTORIÉS

SITE

In *Insula* II (lot 10), to the east of the Maison de la Cascade.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

To the north three entrances open onto *porticus* VII of peristyle V (6.25 x 6.12m). The southern *porticus* IV (4.19 x 8.34m) overlooks room I (3.70 x 1.74m) and *cubicula* II-III.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Peristyle. *Court V.* Grid of white *tesserae* laid in pattern of parallel rows

Porticus VII. White *tesserae* set in irregular way

Porticus VIII. *Terrazzo*

Porticus IV. Grid of bands bearing quasi-tangent lozenges and squares, with the squares at the intersections being inscribed in a circle tangent to the lozenges (R 144b)

Room I. *Opus figlinum*

Cubiculum II. *Couch-area.* Orthogonal pattern of four rectangles around a small square (R 141a)

Main area. Outlined pattern of opposed tangent undulating line (R 249), bird

Cubiculum III. *Couch-area.* Row of irregular octagons intersecting on the shorter sides (R 28a)

Main area. Outlined grid-pattern of spindles forming concave octagonal compartments (R 241d)

DATE

The Maison des Chapiteaux Historiés is supposed to have been built at the beginning of the 1st century AD. In the next century rooms II and III were divided by a wall and paved with polychrome mosaics in the same way as *porticus IV*.

REFERENCES

Lézine 1956, 1-37; *id.* 1968a, 126-7, *id.* 1970, 43, 57; Rebuffat 1969, 685 n.3; CMT I.1, pp. 87-93; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 351-54 n.7.

COMMENTARY

The Maison des Chapiteaux Historiés is named after the historiated capitals of some columns in the peristyle (the type was common in the first half of the first century BC). The house-plan shows not clear features. The building was entered by three doors that opened directly to the northern *porticus* (VII) of the peristyle: space VII served both as *vestibulum* and *porticus*. That does not match with the typical plan of the Romano-African house, where the peristyle is always hidden from the view of passers-by by a corridor or a room. The lay-out of the mosaic suggests the use of rooms II-III as *cubicula*. But the function of the room I with its row of tangent stones along the eastern wall is not clear. At the north-eastern corner the *domus* opened into service room XXXI of the Maison de la Cascade. Because of its unusual architectural layout, it is arguable that the Maison des Chapiteaux Historiés and the adjoining Maison de la Cascade were two distinct parts of the same house. Perhaps the Maison des Chapiteaux Historiés with its *cubicula* off an elegant courtyard formed the private section of the Maison de la Cascade. However, it is not clear why a private suite opened directly onto the street by three openings that would have not preserved any privacy. Moreover, the inhabitants of the Maison de la Cascade or their guests would have walked through the service rooms, which would have been noisy for the most part of the day.

MAISON H

SITE

In *Insula* III (lots 2, 3, 4, 9, 10), to the east of the Maison du Bassin Figuré.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Different rooms are arranged around the peristyle of this partly destroyed *domus*. The southern *porticus* XXII (2.82m wide) overlooks secondary *trclinium* XIII, which is flanked by secondary entrance X and anteroom XI (3.60 x 3.85m) to the east and by chamber XIV to the west. Opening onto the eastern *porticus* XXIII (2.88m wide) is main *triclinium* XXVI. To the south of the dining room are rooms IV/V and VI/VII/VIII. To the west of *porticus* XXI (2.77m wide) are private apartment XIX, room XVI (2.50 x 3.50m) to the south and anteroom XVIII (2 x 3m) to the north; private apartment XVII is at the back.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Peristyle. *Courtyard XX, eastern basin. Floor.* Marine scene

Wall. Slabs of marble

Southern basin. Floor. Marine scene

Wall. Slabs of marble

Porticus XXI, XXII, XXIII. Outlined pattern of spaced circles and groups of four spindles tangent to a central square

Secondary *trclinium* XIII. Foliate pattern of opposed undulating garlands, with a cornucopia included in the interspaces (R 249-250a)

Room V. White *tesserae* laid in a pattern of adjacent scales

Room VI/VII/VIII. Intersecting grid and diagonal grid of filets (R 128a)

Secondary entrance X. *Opus figlinum*

Room XI. Acanthus scroll with flower

Room XVI. Black and white *tesserae* laid in a pattern of adjacent scales

Private apartment XVII. Grid of bands with a poised square superimposed on the intersections (R 146d)

Anteroom XVIII. White *tesserae* laid in a pattern of adjacent scales

Private apartment XIX. Grid of bands with a poised square superimposed on the intersections (R 146d)

Main *triclinium* XXVI. *U-shaped section.* Grid of serrated triple fillets (R 124c) in *opus tessellatum*

T-shaped section. Grid of bands with circles, octagons and lozenges; in side bands, orthogonal pattern of four-pointed stars, with circle and lozenge in the compartments: all mosaics in *opus sectile*

DATE

The Maison H was built in the 2nd century AD on the lots 2, 3, 4, 9-10, that had been occupied by previous domestic buildings paved with *terrazzo*, simple white mosaic and *opus figlinum*. In that building phase the most important reception room laid to the south opposite a semi-circular basin in courtyard XX; rooms XXIV and XXV communicated with each other and opened onto the eastern *porticus* XXIII. In the

second half of the 2nd or at the beginning of the 3rd century the big *triclinium* XXVI replaced rooms XXIX, XXV and the space on the north of those; a new basin was added in front of the new hall and niches were inserted in the first basin to the south; many rooms (*porticus*, XI, XIII, XVII, V, VI/VII/VIII) were redecorated with new mosaics. Later walls were built in rooms I-VIII, in the south-western corner of the peristyle and in the southern part of room XIII.

REFERENCES

Cintas 1951, 83; *id.* 1954, 83; Lézine 1968a, 127-28; *id.* 1970, 61; Rebuffat 1969, 685 n.5; *CMT* I.1, 1973, 105-19; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 346-47 n.5.

COMMENTARY

The most impressive elements of the Maison H in its final phase are the reception rooms XXVI and XIII: both opened onto the peristyle and faced a basin decorated with marine scene. Room XXVI was a *triclinium*, as the arrangement of the mosaics shows. Equally elegant was room XIII, which in the first building phase would have been the most important reception room. The smaller size with respect to hall XXVI indicates that room XIII was later used as a secondary *triclinium*. To the west the small dining room opened into room XIV whose function is uncertain. However, as in the Romano-African house a room often adjoins the *triclinium*, its function would relate to the parties and entertainments that took place in the adjacent reception room.

The identification of the other rooms is more difficult, as the house has been partly destroyed. Room X adjoining secondary *triclinium* XIII to the east might have been used as a secondary entrance because of its location close to the reception area: its floor decoration in *opus figlinum* stressed its function of passageway. Spaces I/IX, II, IV/V, VI/VII/VIII form a group of rooms that seem not to have communicated with the house. However, the partition walls could have been built in a very late date. Some of them (II, V) seem to be service rooms because of their simple mosaics. Space VI/VII/VIII, on the contrary, was floored with a geometric mosaic that marked out an L-shaped area. Rooms XVII-XVIII-XIX appear to be private apartments. The room XVIII, which was floored with white simple mosaic, would have been used as an anteroom of private apartment XIX. However, the room XVIII might have led also into another chamber to the south and into room XVII (the northern wall is later); room XIX might have opened also to the peristyle. Sections of wall at the south-western corner of room XVII and at the south-eastern corner of space I/II might have belonged either to the same house or to a different building.

MAISON OUEST

SITE

In the north-eastern part of the ancient town, to the west of the Maison au Grand Oecus.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

To the north-east *vestibulum* XIII leads into service rooms XIV (2.90 x 2.60m)-XV (1.50 x 2.60m)-XVI (2.50 x 3.50m)-XVII to the east and onto corridor X (2.50 x 6m) to the west. Corridor X leads onto the eastern *porticus* of peristyle V/VI/VIII/VIII, which overlooks assembly-room XI and space XII (2.70 x 6.10m). The western *porticus* VII overlooks main *triclinium* III and room IV (2.50 x 5.50m). The northern *porticus* VIII ends into private room II, which leads into chamber I.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Private apartment I. White *tesserae* laid in an orthogonal pattern of adjacent scales (R 215a)

Private apartment II. Triaxial pattern of cubes (R 212a)

Threshold mat B. Circle inscribed in a lozenge

Main *triclinium* III. Destroyed

Peristyle V/VI/VII/VIII/IX. *Basin.* Destroyed

Porticus VII-VIII-IX. Outlined pattern of adjacent squares, hexagons and oblong hexagons (R 172a)

Corridor X. Black and white pattern of intersecting double filets (R 201a)

Assembly-room XI. Grid-pattern of squares and lozenges forming eight-pointed stars

Vestibulum XIII. Black and white chessboard pattern of *tesserae*

Room XIV. Black and white *semis* of poised *tesserae* (R 107-108)

Room XV. Simple white pattern

DATE

Archaeological evidence gives a very few chronological elements. In the first building phase of the Maison Ouest the central court V of the peristyle was closed by a painted wall and the *porticus* were decorated with a mosaic a few traces of which have been preserved. A fragment of *arretina* (50 AD), which has been found under the floor mosaic, gives the half of the 1st century AD as *terminus post quem*. In the second building phase the wall enclosing court V was enlarged and repainted and the *porticus* was carpeted with a new mosaic; perhaps in the same time the mosaic flooring room XI was laid. The style of those new mosaics dates the second building phase to the end of the 2nd or to the beginning of the 3rd century. In an uncertain date a rectangular basin was built in court V: decorated with *opus figlinum*, it encroached upon the semicircular basin to the east.

REFERENCES

Lézine 1968a, 88; CMT I.2, 1974, 19-26; Bullo and Ghedini 2003.2, 339-40 n.2.

COMMENTARY

The plan of the Maison Ouest shows a particular oblong shape with the rooms lying on either side of the central peristyle, since the house was bordered by a street to the north and a *porticus* to the south.

The *domus* was entered from *vestibulum* XIII to the north, but it is not certain whether it was the main entrance. The room led both onto the peristyle via corridor X to the west and into a group of chambers (XIV-XV-XVI-XVII) to the east, that seem to have been service rooms because of their simple mosaic

decoration. To the south corridor X adjoined a space, which may have been a light-well. Room III was probably a *triclinium*, though its floor mosaic has been destroyed. However, its big dimensions and its entrance in front of a semicircular basin seem to point at the function of the room as dining room. A further reception room may have been assembly-room XI on the opposite side. Both reception rooms adjoined two oblong rooms (IV and XII respectively) to the south: their function is uncertain. Lying at the north-western corner of the house, rooms I-II would have been private apartments.

VOLUBILIS

MAISON À LA MOSAÏQUE DE VÉNUS

SITE

In the north-eastern part of the ancient town, along the southern *decumanus* I.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

To the north *vestibulum* V.1 leads up into audience-chamber V.2, which leads down into peristyle 1. The eastern *porticus* (2.50m wide) overlooks private apartments 4 –5-6-7 (4.20 x 7.80m) to the east and ends into antechamber 2 (6 x 2.75m) and into *cubiculum* 10 on either side. Anteroom 2 opens into room 3 (6.25 x 4m). The southern *porticus* (3m wide) overlooks main *triclinium* 11. The western *porticus* (2.50m wide) opens into assembly-room 9 and ends into chamber 8 (6 x 3.40m) and into secondary courtyard 12 on either side. Off court 12 are private apartments 13-14-15, assembly-room 16, and secondary *triclinium* 17. To the north-west *apodyterium* 19 leads into *frigidarium* 20 (to the east) and into *caldarium* 21 (to the west: 2.85 x 1.88m), which adjoins *tepidaria* 22 and 23. To the south are *caldarium* 18 (6.50 x 7.50m) and service rooms 25 and 26.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Peristyle 1. *Northern porticus.* Running-pelta pattern (R 222d)

Eastern porticus. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent and superposed half-scales

Southern porticus. Charioteers driving chariots drawn by pairs of birds around *spina*

Western porticus. Central panel. Grid of opposed undulating bands (R 251a)

Side panels. Grid of serrated triple fillets (R 124c)

Anteroom 2. Random *semis* of single *tesserae* (R 109c); square panel containing swastika

Private apartment 4. Grid-pattern of adjacent crosses, forming squares (R 130b)

Private apartment 5. Pattern of tangent circles and a superimposed grid of filets (R 232e)

Private apartment 6. Grid of tripartite bands

Threshold mat. Pair of opposed tridents

Room 8. Grid of serrated triple fillets (R 124c)

Assembly-room 9. Orthogonal pattern of tangent poised squares and lozenges surrounding panel representing Erotes feeding birds

Cubiculum 10. *Couch-area.* Orthogonal pattern of four rectangles around a square (R 141a)

Main area. Bust of Dionysus in compartment, surrounded by busts of Seasons

Corridor. Pattern of tangent circles and a superimposed grid of fillets (R 232d)

Main triclinium 11. *U-shaped section.* Fragments

T-shaped section. Venus seated in boat rowed by Nereids, surrounded by Nereids on sea-monsters and Erotes; panel with cat catching rat; inscriptions, above rat: *Uxurius cullas*; behind cat: *Vincentius enicesas*.

Secondary courtyard 12. *Northern corridor.* Grid of bands

Western corridor. Outlined pattern of tangent hexagons, forming triangles (R 209b)

Private apartment 13. Rows of dolphins

Assembly-room 16. *Central panel.* Rape of Hylas by Nymphs

Side panels. (i) Punishment of Eros, whipped by two other for stealing birds; (ii) Eros punished in amphitheatre, driven towards cage from which large tortoise is released

Secondary triclinium 17. Panel with Diana and Nymphs bathing

DATE

The structure of the walls shows that the *Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus* was built in two building phases. In the first phase, the *domus* opened onto the *porticus* to the north and extended to the courts 24 and 18; chambers 26-26 formed a single room opening onto peristyle 1; to the west of room 8 were three chambers. Afterwards, the *domus* included the *porticus* and was provided with bath-suite to the north-west (court 18 was turned into *caldarium*) and rooms 16-17 to the south-west. The house would have been built and decorated in the end of the 2nd century, as the coins of Marcus Aurelius found under several mosaic floors and the style of the most mosaics indicate. It would have been provided with baths and partly decorated in the mid-3rd century, as the coins of Severus Alexander, of Maximinus and of Gordian III and the style of the mosaic decorating room 17 suggest. Neither Thouvenot nor Etienne indicate in which room the coins were found.

REFERENCES

Thouvenot 1958; Etienne 1960, 77-80; Aymard 1961; Dunbabin 1978, 91, 106, 277 n.2; Guimond 1981, 465 n. 117d; Parrish 1984, 234-36 n.65; Simon 1984, 836 n. 335; Siebert 1997, 897 n. 77; Muth 1998, 238-39, 402-05 A45; Risse 2001, 81-2, 94-5.

COMMENTARY

The *Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus* was entered by two spaces that were paved both with concrete slabs. *Vestibulum* V.1 was a public *porticus* that was included in the *domus* in the second building phase. Two pairs of pilasters on either side of the doors and one flight of stairs marked the passage into audience-chamber V.2, which led down directly into peristyle I by two elegant columns (the southern side was completely open). The different levels on which the two spaces laid ensured privacy for the family. Room 11 was a *triclinium*, as the layout of its floor mosaic shows. A further reception room seems to have been chamber 9 because of its location off the peristyle, its dimensions and its figurative mosaic in the central medallion. A bronze statuette of an old fisher has been found in this room. Off the eastern *porticus* of the peristyle was a row of private apartments (4-5-6-7) with *cubiculum* (10). Another private area lay at the south-western corner: it included private apartments (13-14-15-16-17) off a smaller court (12). However, the big dimensions and lavish figurative mosaics of rooms 16-17 suggest that those spaces may have been used for the reception of guests, perhaps on intimate terms with the house-owner. Room 17 seems to have been a secondary *triclinium* because of the layout of its floor mosaic.

The bath-suite occupied the north-western corner of the house. It had two entrances for two different classes of visitors: communicating with peristyle 1 by a short corridor, court 24 would have been used by

the owner's family; visitors, on the other hand, would have entered the baths from the street through *porticus* 19. However, also *vestibulum* 19 communicated with the peristyle by corridor 8. Both *vestibula* were provided with masonry benches that indicate the function of those spaces as changing rooms, too. The hypocausts in rooms 21-22-23 indicate the function of those spaces as *tepidaria*, which adjoined on either side *frigidarium* 20 (entered by three flights of stairs) and *caldarium* 18 (provided with two furnaces and a semicircular bath). Chambers 25 and 26 were probably service rooms.

MAISON AUX TRAVAUX D'HERCULE

SITE

In the north-eastern part of the ancient town, between *decumanus maximus* and *decumanus nord I*, to the west of the Maison de Flavius Germanus.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Vestibulum 1 leads into rooms 38-39 in communication with each other and onto the peristyle. The eastern *porticus* overlooks secondary *triclinium* 5 and anteroom 4 (5 x 3.20m), which leads into private apartment 3. The southern *porticus* overlooks anteroom 7 and assembly-room 8. Anteroom 7 communicates with the street through secondary entrance 12, which opens into service rooms 40-41 and 42-43 on either side. Assembly-room 8 opens into private apartment 9, which adjoins private apartments 6- 11 and room 10. The northern *porticus* overlooks main *triclinium* 2, which opens onto corridors 15-16 on either side. Corridor 15 opens into anteroom 40, which leads into chambers 39 and 41 on either side. Corridor 16 opens into secondary entrance 14, into room 35 and into *apodyterium* 26 (8 x 11.25m) of the baths. Secondary entrance 14 leads into service rooms 13-48 and onto the street. *Apodyterium* 26 opens into *frigidarium* 27-28, into service room 34 and into warm room 32, which adjoins warm rooms 30-31-33. *Vestibulum* 29 was at the north-eastern corner.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Peristyle. *Northern porticus.* Row of three squares, containing geometric design

Eastern, southern and western porticus. Destroyed

Basin, outer side. Pattern of trichrome cubes (R 212)

Main triclinium 2. Marble slabs

Secondary triclinium 5. *U-shaped section, northern band.* Orthogonal pattern of tangent hexagons forming squares and four-pointed stars (R 186d)

Eastern band. Pattern of tangent hexagons, forming triangles (R 209a-b)

Southern band. Orthogonal pattern of chevrons, squares and circles

Central field. Cushion pattern with central medallion containing Rape of Ganymede, with busts of Seasons at angles, and with twelve medallions representing labours of Hercules

Assembly-room 8. Pattern of squares representing animals

Room 9. Destroyed

Room 10, basin. *Bottom.* Pattern of white *tesserae*

Edge. Black and white apotropaic and magical signs: kantharos, tridents, laurel branches, swastikas, dolphins, dish, sea-monsters, etc.

Private apartment 11. Pattern of quasi-tangent circles and quadrilobes of peltae tangent to a central square (R 230d)

DATE

The Maison aux Travaux d'Hercule seems to have been built during the creation of the north-eastern sector at the end of the 1st century AD, as stratigraphical evidence shows (Italian and Gaulish pottery, fragments of amphorae). It was built after the Maison de Flavius Germanus, as its eastern wall leans against the adjoining *domus*. As the mosaics are stylistically dated to the end of the 2nd or beginning of the 3rd century, they were probably laid in the second building phase. However, since Volubilis was given up in 275-85, the second building phase must be earlier than that. The bath-suite appears to have been added in a later phase, as the analysis of its structures (door of *apodyterium* 26 and *frigidarium* 28) suggests: the phase is, however, difficult to be dated.

REFERENCES

Thouvenot 1941; id. 1948, 69-108; id. 1949, 53-4; Etienne, 1960, 31-4; Rebuffat 1969, 668 n.7; Romanelli 1970, 237; Dunbabin 1978, 164, 277 n.6; Foucher 1979, 156; Parrish 1984, 239-43; Thébert 1985, 341, 366, 374; Akerraz 1987, 452; Sichtermann 1988, 164 n.215; Makdoun 1994, 268, 278; Muth 1998, 231, 406-07 n. A47; Kondoleon 1995, 125-27, 141-42; Risse 2001, 90-3.

COMMENTARY

The Maison aux Travaux d'Hercule was entered from three *vestibula* (1, 12, 14) overlooking the same street. The central *vestibulum* 1 was an elegant and big room that would have been used both for welcoming guests and receiving clients. The smaller entrance halls 12 and 14 on either side of *vestibulum* 1 would have been daily used by the owner's family and servants. Both secondary entrances adjoined pairs of rooms on either side, which may have been service rooms. The reception rooms of the house lay on the three other sides of the peristyle. Room 2 was the most important *triclinium* of the *domus*. Room 5 was a smaller *triclinium*, as the U-shaped layout of its floor mosaic shows. Lying off the peristyle, room 8 may have been both a further *triclinium* for the family and an assembly-room. The private apartments 6-11 lay at the south-eastern corner of the peristyle. The suite included room 10, too: it was ornamented with a basin and two demi-columns on either side of its large opening. The function of room 35 at the back of *triclinium* 2 is uncertain. As it was entered from corridor 16, it seems to have been a private room. However, because of its dimensions and location close to the service rooms, it may have been used as storeroom.

The bath-suite occupied the northern wing of the *domus*. It was entered from a big space (26), which was probably used as *apodyterium*, and from a smaller room (29) at the north-eastern corner, which may have been used by servants. The baths were provided with *frigidarium* 27 with its semicircular pool 28, warm rooms 30-31-32-33 with hypocausts and service room 34. The baths appear to be made of two

independent groups separated by a wall (26-27/28-31-32 and 29-30-31-33): it is not clear how users moved from the *frigidarium* to the warm rooms without going out onto the street.

MAISON DE DIONYSOS ET DES QUATRE SAISONS

SITE

On the *decumanus maximus* of the north-eastern part of the ancient town, to the east of the Maison de Flavius Germanus.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

To the south *vestibulum* 3 adjoins *tabernae* 1-2 and 4-5 on either side and leads onto the peristyle. The eastern *porticus* opens into main *triclinium* 7 and private apartment 9, which adjoins space 10 (3.50 x 7.95m). The northern *porticus* overlooks assembly-rooms 11-12. The western *porticus* opens into private apartment 6-8. At the corner between rooms 8 and 11 corridor 14 (2.15 x 0.63m) leads into storerooms 15 (3.85 x 10.25m)-17 (3.80 x 10.25m)-18 (4.25 x 10.25m) and onto spaces 19-21. Space 19 adjoins service rooms 22-23-24 (3.15 x 6.43m).

MOSAIC DECORATION

Main *triclinium* 7. *U-shaped section.* Orthogonal pattern of tangent hexagons, forming squares and four-pointed stars (R 186d)

T-shaped section. Shaft of T. Grid-pattern (R 150) of octagons containing Dionysus, Ariadne, and bacchantes and of circles containing busts of Seasons and Erotes with seasonal attributes

Side panel. Central head of Gorgon and female bust

Private apartment 8. Destroyed

Private apartment 9. *Western part.* Destroyed

Eastern part. Floral composition with birds

Assembly-room 11. Destroyed

DATE

The stratigraphical analysis, which has been carried out in room 8 of Maison de Dionysos et de Quatre Saisons and in rooms 12 and 5 of the adjacent Maison au Bain des Nymphes, shows three building phases. In the first phase (dated to the end of the 1st century AD by gallic sigillata and amphorae Dr 7/11), the Maison de Dionysos et de Quatre Saisons was entered from *vestibulum* 1 and extended to the northern wall of rooms 11-12-13. In the second phase (dated to the 2nd century by African red ware slip type RS.A), *vestibulum* 1 was turned into a shop and shop 3 became the new *vestibulum*; the *domus* extended northwards with the building of corridor 14, service rooms 15, 17-18, spaces 19 and 21 and shops 22-23-24; room 13 became part of the Maison au Bain des Nymphes. In the last phase (dated to the 3rd century by African red ware slip type RS.C), room 20 was enlarged to the east and the door between the adjoining northern corridor and the peristyle was walled up. As the mosaic decorating *triclinium* 7 is stylistically dated to the first half of the 3rd century, it was probably laid out in that building phase.

REFERENCES

Étienne 1950, 93-117; id. 1954, 58-89; id. 1960, 39-41; Rebuffat 1969, 667 n. 5; Dunbabin 1978, 277 n. 3; Parrish 1984, 236-39 n. 66; Akerraz 1987, 452 n.23; Makdoun 1994, 278; id. 2000; Risse 2001, 93.

COMMENTARY

The Maison de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons underwent a number of structural modifications that makes it difficult to define the function of and the relation between the rooms. *Vestibulum* 1 was the main entrance of the *domus* in the first building phase: it opened onto the street by two differently sized doors: the biggest one was framed by pillars. Lying at the south-western corner and leading onto the peristyle via a bayonette passage, the *vestibulum* preserved the intimacy of the *domus* from passers-by. However, in the second building phase *vestibulum* 1 was turned into a shop and the function of entrance was fulfilled by shop 3: its floor was paved with slabs of limestone. Laying on the same axis as the peristyle, the new *vestibulum* allowed visitors and passers-by to look through the house.

Room 7 was a *triclinium*, as the T+U layout of its floor mosaic shows. Lying at the south-eastern corner of the peristyle and by *vestibulum* 3, the dining-room was not in a privileged position. Visitors could have got a better view of the whole peristyle from within rooms 11-12, which seem to have been used as smaller *triclinia* or assembly-rooms.

Chambers 6 and 8 may have been private apartments because of their smaller size and location off the peristyle. The function of room 10 is uncertain. Now it appears to be a close space with four cubes of stone along its northern and southern walls: one of them was decorated with a phallus in relief. From the traces of thresholds in the northern and southern walls, it is arguable that space 10 originally communicated with the peristyle and with room 13 via a small corridor to the north. Afterwards that door was walled up and a new one was opened in the southern wall in communication with room 9; later on that door was closed and a floor was set on the dices to store corn. It is arguable that in the first two phases room 10 fulfilled an important function because of its location off the peristyle; since it was entered not directly from the courtyard, it may have been used as a private apartment.

Étienne (followed by Makdoun) maintains that spaces 15-17-18-19-21-22-23-24 fulfilled a public function and were not in relation with the house. In the scholar's hypothesis, rooms 22-23-24 would have been shops that communicated with warehouses 15-17-18 through *vestibulum* 21 and court 19: shop 22 would have been a bakery, as dough though has been found at the south-western corner. However, no traces of thresholds have been found in the badly preserved northern walls of spaces 21-22-23-24. Those spaces could have been service rooms, as they lay at the back of the *domus*: they would have communicated with the residential area via corridor 14, which ensured the privacy of the two parts. Room 22 may have been a kitchen and spaces 15-17-18 storerooms because of their dimensions.

MAISON DE FLAVIUS GERMANUS

SITE

On *decumanus maximus* of the north-eastern part of the ancient town, between the Maison aux Travaux d'Hercule (to the west) and the Maison de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons (to the east).

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

To the south *vestibulum* 1 leads into room 6 (4.35 x 5.60m) to the north and onto the peristyle to the east. The eastern *porticus* overlooks assembly-room 7 and an anteroom leading into private apartments 9-10 on either side. The northern *porticus* opens into main *triclinium* 12 on either side of which run two corridors. The eastern corridor leads into private apartments 14-16 and into room 17 (3.35 x 3.10m); the western corridor leads into private apartments 11-13 on either side of an anteroom, into service rooms 15 (4.35 x 2.60m)-18(2.85 x 2.68m)-20 (4.35 x 1.55m), and into room 19 (3.10 x 2.75m). The western *porticus* overlooks room 8 (4.35 x 4.25m).

MOSAIC DECORATION

Peristyle. *Basin.* Marble

Assembly-room 7. Traces of figures in floral pattern

Room 8. Ornamental pattern

Cubiculum 11. *Western band.* Composition of *kantharoi* between circles

Central field. Floral composition

Main triclinium 12. Destroyed

Room 19. Floral composition

DATE

Étienne asserts that the Maison de Flavius Germanus was built in two undated phases. In the first phase, the *domus* would have extended to the northern wall of rooms 16-17, 19-20; in the second one, a door would have been opened onto the courtyard that communicated with *tabernae* 21-22-23-24-25 via a narrow corridor at the north-western corner. However, the scholar does not support his hypothesis with archaeological evidence; moreover, the house-plan does not show any opening onto the courtyard.

Stratigraphical evidence (Italian and Gallic pottery, fragments of amphorae) shows that the Maison de Flavius Germanus was built at the end of the 1st century AD during the creation of the north-eastern sector and before the building of the adjoining the Maison aux Travaux d'Hercule, which leans against the western wall of the *domus*. The house probably underwent some modifications in the second half of the 2nd century, as the altar found at the south-eastern corner of the peristyle suggests. It bears a partly destroyed inscription (*CIL* XIV, 2922) that Thouvenot reads as (*genio*) (*do*)*mus* *T(itus) Flavius Germanus v(otum) s(olvit) l(ibens) a(nimo)*. Flavius Germanus, the owner of the *domus*, is identified as a *procurator equestris* that became Roman citizen under Marcus Aurelius and Commodus.

As the mosaics show plain and common motifs, it is uncertain in what building phase they were laid out.

REFERENCES

Etienne 1954, 27-58; *id.* 1960, 34-9; Rebuffat 1969 668 n. 6; Romanelli 1970, 237; Akerraz 1987, 452; Makdoun 1994, 268, 278.

COMMENTARY

Vestibulum 1 was a long room carpeted with slabs of limestone and ornamented with columns at the entrance. To the east the *vestibulum* adjoined a row of shops (2-3-4-5) that did not communicate with the *domus*. Room 6 seems to have been the porter's lodge, as it faced the main entrance; however, it may have been used also as storeroom because of its size and its location. As the biggest room of the house, 12 was the main *triclinium*. Room 7 would have been an assembly-room, as its large opening framed by semi-columns seems to suggest. Carpeted with mosaics and opening off the peristyle, room 8 may have been either a *triclinium* reserved for the family's meals or the owner's *cubiculum*, as its door at the south-western corner seems to ensure more privacy.

Spaces 15, 18, 20 may have been service rooms, since they formed a group of small chambers that a corridor separated from the residential area. Moreover, an opening in the north-western corner of *triclinium* 12 suggests that it could have been used by servants bringing food from the service rooms into the dining room without disturbing the guests. The function of the adjoining room 19 is uncertain, as its floor mosaic suggests a different function from that of service room. The most northern rooms of the house (16-17, 19-20) adjoin a big courtyard (14m long) that does not seem to have had any relation with the domestic building. It was entered from the north by a narrow corridor at the north-western corner and by space 23 in the middle. The latter adjoined a couple of similar spaces on either side (21-22 and 24-25) that were probably shops, as they opened onto the street.

MAISON DE L'ÉPHÈBE

SITE

In the central area of the ancient town, to the north-west of the Triumphal Arch.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

To the south *vestibulum* 1 adjoins *tabernae* a-b and c-d-e on either side and leads onto peristyle 2. The eastern *porticus* opens into chambers 3 and 6 on either side of assembly-room 4, which is divided into two parts (B-P) by a basin. Part B leads down into a vaulted space (5). Chamber 6 opens into private apartment 7, which adjoins kitchen 4 to the north. The northern *porticus* overlooks main *triclinium* 10 and corridor 5, which leads into secondary courtyard 12 through anteroom 6. The small court overlooks secondary *triclinium* 14, which opens into private apartment 13. The western *porticus* communicates with the outbuildings (15-16-17-18-19-20), which were provided with a basin in corridor 15 and with an oil-press in space 20.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Peristyle. *Basin.* Pink marble slabs

Northern porticus. Three panels containing geometric motifs

Southern, western, and eastern porticus. Destroyed

Room 3. Orthogonal pattern of tangent circles.

Assembly-room 4. *Part B.* Central panel with triumph of Dionysus

Part P. Central panel with fisherman, surrounded by medallions containing fish

Basin C, border. Fish

Main triclinium 10. *U-shaped section.* Geometric composition

T-shaped section. Shaft of T. Medallions containing fish, surrounding a central panel with Nereid on sea-horse

Side panel. Sea-horses holding a *kantharos*

Corridor 5. Geometric composition containing a crater

DATE

The discovery of a number of coins of Antonine and Severan date allows to date the *Maison de l'Éphèbe* to the mid-2nd century. The *domus* underwent many structural modifications, which are difficult to date: for example, in an unknown period, corridor 5 was divided in two parts by a wall, which encroached upon the figurative mosaic. When the house was abandoned, a cemetery was built.

REFERENCES

Chatelain 1935; Thouvenot 1941, 69; id. 1945; Dunbabin 1978, 181-82, 277 n.1a; Risse 2001, 94.

COMMENTARY

The *Maison de l'Éphèbe* was entered by a long and narrow *vestibulum*, which adjoins *tabernae* on either side. At the back of the *taberna* to the west of *vestibulum* 1 was found a bronze statuette of an *ephebus* after which the house was named. A further sculpture has been found in corridor 5: the figure with snake would represent Aesculapius or a local god.

The house was divided into two sections: the living quarters along the eastern and northern *porticus* of the peristyle and the outbuildings to the west. The residential area included two main reception rooms: the T+U shaped *triclinium* 10 and assembly-room 4, which was ornamented with a basin in the middle. A further *triclinium* (14) for the family's meals opened onto secondary courtyard 11. Chambers 7 and 13 may have been private apartments, as they were entered by anterooms (respectively secondary *triclinium* 7 and room 6) that ensured more privacy. Chamber 7 was heated by hypocausts. Room 8 seems to have been used as a kitchen, as it was provided with a fireplace and with a fragmentary masonry structure, which might have been a furnace.

The outbuildings included an oil-press and a basin. However, as the area has been mostly destroyed, it is difficult to ascertain the functions of all spaces.

MAISON D'ORPHÉE

SITE

In the southern sector of the ancient town, close to the Gallienus' baths.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

To the north *vestibulum* 1 adjoins room 4 and leads into peristyle 2, which overlooks main *triclinium* 3. To the west of the main *triclinium* is an oil-press, which was entered through two openings to the west and to the south. To the east of peristyle 2 were latrine 5 and an L-shaped corridor 16-17, which leads into chambers 19-20-21. In the corner between latrine 5 and corridor 17 is court 6. To the east corridor 17 turns into corridor 18, which opens into private apartment 7, chamber 9, and *cubiculum* 10 to the north and assembly-room 8 to the south. Secondary *triclinium* 8 opens onto secondary courtyard 21, which overlooks anteroom 11 and secondary *triclinium* 13 to the north, and assembly-room 14 and kitchen 15 to the west. Anteroom 11 opens into private apartment 12. Kitchen 15 opens into anteroom 23 to the south and secondary entrance 24 to the west. Secondary entrance leads into the bath-suite to the west. The baths include *tepidarium* T, *laconicum* L, *caldarium* C, and *frigidarium* Fr.

MOSAIC DECORATION

Peristyle 2. Black and white geometric pattern framing black and white panel with sea-creature on chariot drawn by sea-horse, surrounded by fish

Main *triclinium* 3. *U-shaped section.*

T-shaped section. Orpheus seated and surrounded by beasts among trees (RII. 351e)

Side-panels. West. Sea-creatures on chariot

East. Destroyed

Latrine 5. White mosaic.

Secondary courtyard 22. *Basins.* Dolphins

Room 9. Geometric composition

***Cubiculum* 10.** *Couch-area.* Black and white pattern of lozenges

Main-area. Geometric composition of cubes

Secondary *triclinium* 13. *U-shaped section.* Grid-pattern of fillets

T-shaped section. Rows of dolphins

Assembly-room 14. Floral composition

Tepidarium. Floral composition of circular and polygonal medallions, containing flowers

DATE

The plan of the Maison d'Orphée shows that the house in its present form is the product of five different buildings, which were joined together in an unknown date. The first building included secondary courtyard 21 and its surrounding rooms: it was entered from secondary *vestibulum* 24 through the door on the eastern side. The second building lay in the area which was later occupied by the bath-suite. The third house was made up of the rooms off secondary court 6. The fourth and fifth buildings comprised

respectively the public section of the Maison d'Orphée (*vestibulum* 1, peristyle 2, and main *triclinium* 3) and the oil-press.

REFERENCES

Chatelaine 1935, 1-10; Thouvenot 1936, 27; id. 1941; Stern 1955, 74 n.31; Dunbabin 1978, 135, 277 n. 1; Ovadia 1980, 47; Garezu 1994, 94 n.133; Kondoleon 1994, 248-49; Jesnick 1997, 132-3 n.27; Risse 2001, 58-61, 88-90; Panetier 2002, 109-10.

COMMENTARY

The Maison d'Orphée is made of two distinct parts: the public section to the west and the private area to the east.

The public section, which included *vestibulum*, courtyard, and main *triclinium*, would have been used for the reception of important guests. However, the whole area may also have been used for receiving *clientes* in the morning *salutatio*: clients gathered in the large *vestibulum* would have been received by the *dominus* in the room 3, which would have served as an audience-chamber.

In the private section, the rooms were arranged off two open spaces (6-22). The rooms would have been used by the owner's family in more private occasions. However, the lavish layout of some spaces, as secondary *triclinium* 13 and assembly-room 8, suggests that the rooms may have been used for the reception of guests in less formal occasions.

Along the western side of the house was an oil-press, which was entered from both south and west. It is not certain whether it communicated with the domestic building, too. The oil was kept in three basins, which were turned into rooms in Islamic time. Rooms a-b-c, which were entered directly from the street and did not communicate with the house, may have been used as shops or as private rooms of the servants working in the oil-press.

The bath-suite occupied had two entrances for two different classes of visitors. The eastern door close to the residential area of the house would have been used by the owner's family; visitors, on the other hand, would have entered the baths from the western door next to the *tepidarium*. The different use of the two doors is emphasized by the architectural layout of secondary entrance 24: a row of pillars divided the space into two parts, which were differently paved (slabs and concrete).

MAISON DES NÉRÉIDES

SITE

In the north-eastern part of the ancient town, in the western *insula* to the south of *decumanus maximus*.

ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

To the north-west a groups of three *tabernae* are on either side of *vestibulum* 4 (6 x 5.25m), which leads onto peristyle 22 (16 x 13m). The south-western *porticus* overlooks chamber 9 (ca. 5 x 3m) and anteroom 23-10. The south-eastern *porticus* overlooks corridor 26 and main *triclinium* 8, and turns into

corridor/secondary entrance 29. Corridor 26 leads into assembly-room 11 (ca. 5 x 8m) and space 12 (ca. 3 x 8m). Corridor 29 leads into secondary courtyard 26 (ca. 6 x 6.5m) and onto service-room 21 (ca. 4.50 x 4.50m), and opens into the street to north-west. The secondary courtyard overlooks private apartments 18 (ca. 7 x 3.50m)-19 (ca. 4.50 x 4.50m)-20 (ca. 3 x 9m)-28. The north-western *porticus* opens into secondary *triclinium* 13 (ca. 3 x 7m) and into room 14 (ca. 3 x 3.50m), which communicates with anteroom 15 (ca. 3 x 2m) and private apartment 16 (ca. 3 x 4.50m). At the corner between rooms 13-14 and 16-21 is oil-press 17-18.

MOSAIC DECORATION.

Peristyle. *Porticus*. Grid of filets

Basin. Edge. Nereids on sea-monsters

Wall. Head of Ocean

Anteroom 10. Destroyed

Assembly-room 11. Pattern of circles and polygons

Secondary courtyard. Black and white pattern of circles and lozenges

DATE

Etienne maintains that the architectural arrangement of the peristyle and of the basin suggests to date the Maison des Néréides to the beginning of the 3rd century. However, the fragments of amphorae and of Italian and Gallic pottery, which have been found in the north-eastern area of the ancient town, shows that the *domus* was built at the end of the 1st century AD. It is unknown whether the mosaics were laid out at the same time or in a later building phase.

REFERENCES

Thouvenot 1948, 122-32; Etienne 1960, 68-70; Rebuffat 1969, 668-69 n. 12; Dunbabin 1978, 277 n. 7.

COMMENTARY

Vestibulum 4 had two differently sized doors ornamented with pillars onto the street and three openings onto the peristyle on the opposite side (see the Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus at Volubilis). The *vestibulum* adjoined shops 1-2-3 and 5-6-7 on either side: the row of spaces was preceded by a *porticus*.

Room 8 was the main *triclinium*, as its dimensions and its three doors of unequal size shows: the central one faced a basin set between the two central columns of the southern *porticus*. Room 13 may have been used as a secondary *triclinium* because of its double door. Room 11 may have been an assembly-room: it adjoined an oblong space (12) the function of which is uncertain.

Private apartments 24-25 were entered by an anteroom (respectively 23 and 10) off the peristyle. The door of anteroom 10 was with demi-columns. Similarly, the opening into room 9 was framed by pillars.

On the opposite side, anteroom 15 led into a pair of private apartments (14-16).

Rooms 18-19-20-28 were private apartments arranged around a small courtyard with basin. They adjoined a flight of steps leading up to a missing floor and a door opening onto the street. Space 21 seems to have been a service room because of its location close to the street. At the corner between rooms 13-14 and 21-16 was an oil-press, which was provided with a millstone (in 17) and with a basin (in 18). It is

uncertain whether the oil-press was used by the household of the Maison des Néréides, as it was entered from the southern *cardo* and did not communicate with the domestic building.

Bibliography

- Akerraz, N. 1987. "Nouvelles observations sur l'urbanisme du quartier nord-est de Volubilis". In: A. Mastino (a cura di), *L'Africa Romana*, IV. Sassari, 445-57.
- Åkerström-Hougen, G. 1974. *The Calendar and Hunting Mosaics of the Villa of the Falconer in Argos. A Study in Early Byzantine Iconography*. Acta Instituti Atheniensis Regni Sueciae, 4°, XXIII. Stockholm.
- Alexander, M. A. 1994. "The Ganymede Mosaic from the House of the Sollertii at Thysdrus (Tunisia)". *CMGR*, IV, 243-48.
- Alexander, M. A. 1999. "New Discoveries in the Park of the Antonine Baths, Carthage (Tunisia)". *CMGR* VII, 285-89.
- Alexander, M. A. et alii 1996. "The Corpus of the Mosaics of Tunisia. Carthage Project, 1992-1994". *DOP*, 50, 361-68.
- Allais, Y. 1938. *Djemila*. Paris.
- Allais, Y. 1939. "La maison d'Europe à Djemila". *Rev Afr*, LXXXIII, 35-44.
- Allison, P. M. 1991, "Workshops and Patternbooks". *Kölner Jahrbuch für Vor- und Frühgeschichte*, 24, 79-84.
- Allison, P. M. 1992. "The Relationship between Wall-decoration and Room-type in Pompeian Houses: A Case Study of the Casa della Caccia Antica". *JRA*, 5, 235-49.
- Allison, P. M. 1993. "How Do We Identify the Use of Space in Roman Housing?". In: E.M. Moormann (ed.) *Functional and Spatial Analysis of Wall Painting. Proceedings of the Fifth International Congress on Ancient Wall Painting*. Leiden, 1-8.
- Allison, P. M. 1997. "Artefact Distribution and Spatial Function in Pompeian Houses". In: B. Rawson and P. Weaver (eds.) *The Roman Family in Italy: Status, Sentiment, Space*. Oxford, 321-54.
- Allison, P. M. 1999. "Labels for ladles: Interpreting the material culture of Roman households". In: Allison, P.M. (ed.). *The Archaeology of Household Activities*. London and New York, 57-77.
- Allison, P. M. 2001. "Using the Material and Written Sources: Turn of the Millenium Approaches to Roman Domestic Space". *AJA*, 105, 181-208.
- Allison, P. M. 2004. *Pompeian Households. An Analysis of the Material Culture*. Los Angeles.
- Al Mahjub, O. 1983. "I Mosaici della Villa Romana di Silin". *CMGR* III, 299-306.

- Al Mahjub, O. 1987. "I Mosaici della Villa Romana di Silin". *Lybia antiqua*, 15-16/1978-79, 69-74.
- Amedick, R. 1994. "Herakles in Speisesaale". *MDAIR*, 101, 103-19.
- Ariès, P. 1962. *Centuries of Childhood*. London.
- Aymard, J. 1961. "A propos de la mosaïque au chat de Volubilis". *Latomus*, 20, 52-71.
- Bairem-Ben Osman, W. 1981. *Catalogue des mosaïques de Carthage, Musée du Bardo, Musée des thermes d'Antonin, Quartier de Demerch, Quartier de l'Odéon*. Aix-en-Provence.
- Baldini Lippolis, I. 2001. *La domus tardoantica. Forme e rappresentazioni dello spazio domestico nelle città del Mediterraneo*. Bologna-Imola.
- Balmelle, C. et alii 1990. *Recherches franco-tunisiennes sur la mosaïque de l'Afrique antique, I. Xenia*. Roma.
- Ballu, A. 1911. "Rapport sur les travaux de fouilles et de consolidation du Service des Monuments historiques d'Algérie". *BCTH*, 105.
- Ballu, A. 1921. *Ruines de Djemila (antique Cuicul)*. Alger.
- Balty, J. (ed.) 1984. *Apamée de Syrie. Bilan des recherches archéologiques 1973-1979. Aspects de l'architecture domestique d'Apamée*, Actes du Colloque (Bruxelles, Mai 1980). Bruxelles.
- Barbet, A. 1983. "Quelque rapports entre mosaïques et peintures murales à l'époque romaine". In *HommStern*, 43-53.
- Barbet, A. 1999. "Une peinture de bassin dans la Maison des Nymphes à Nabeul. Ses relations avec les mosaïques". *CMT*, VII.1, 311-19.
- Barton, I. M. (ed.) 1994. *Roman Domestic Buildings*. Exeter.
- Belz, C. 1980. *Marine genre mosaic pavements of Roman North Africa*. Diss. University of California, PhD 1978. Ann Arbor.
- Ben Abed, A. 1980. "Découverte de mosaïques romaines en Tunisie". *Archéologia*, 139, 48-50.
- Ben Abed, A. 1983a. "A propos des mosaïques de la Maison des Protomés à Thuburbo Majus". *CMGR*, III, 291-98.
- Ben Abed, A. 1983b. "Une mosaïque à Pyramides végétales de Pupput". *HommStern*, 61-4.
- Ben Abed Ben Khader, A. 1989. "Présentation de la Maison du Triclinium en noir et blanc à Pupput (Hammamet)". *Bulletin des Travaux de l'Institut National d'Archéologie et de l'Art (Tunis). Comptes rendus*, 3, 31-41.

- Ben Abed Ben Khader, A. 1990a. "Quelques pavements à xenia inédits de Thuburbo Maius, Pupput et Uzitta". In: Balmelle *et alii*, 15-22.
- Ben Abed Ben Khader, A. 1990b. "Mosaïques à xenia et architecture en Afrique". In: Balmelle *et alii*, 79-84.
- Ben Abed Ben Khader, A. 1990c. "A propos de la Maison du Triclinium en noir et blanc de Pupput, quelques documents inédits". *BSAF*, 167-68.
- Ben Abed Ben Khader, A. 1994a. "Les mosaïques de la Maison du viridarium à niches à Pupput (Tunisie)". *CMGR IV*, 265-70.
- Ben Abed Ben Khader, A. 1994b. "Les mosaïques de la Maison du 'Péristyle figuré' et de ses thermes à Pupput (Hammamet)". *CMGR*, V1, 173-85.
- Ben Abed Ben Khader, A. (ed.) 2003. *Image in Stone: Tunisia in Mosaic*. Paris.
- Bendinelli, G. 1960. s.v. 'Esedra'. *EAA*, III, 436-39.
- Ben Hassen, H. and Maurin, L. (eds.) 1998. *Oudhna (Uthina). La rédecouverte d'une ville antique de Tunisie*. Bordeaux-Paris-Tunis.
- Ben Mansour, S. 1993. *Uthina*. Tunis.
- Ben Mansour, S. 1996. "Les mosaïques in situ de la maison d'Ikarios (dite des Laberii) à Uthina". *Africa* 14, 113-31.
- Ben Mansour, S. 2001. "Le décor végétalisé à Uthina (Oudna)". In : Ben Abed Ben Khader *et alii*. 27-38.
- Ben Mansrour, S. 1979. "La mosaïque d'Europe de la Maison des Laberii". *AntAfr*, 14, 197-211.
- Ben Osman, W. 1990. "Mosaïques à xenia de Carthage". In: Balmelle *et alii* 1990, 43-50.
- Bérard, J. 1935. "Mosaïques inédites de Cherchel". *MEFRA*, 52, 113-42.
- Beschaouch, A. 1983. "Notes sur la mosaïque des Amours 'venatores' qui a donné son nom à la Maison de la chasse". In : A. Beschaouch *et alii Recherches archéologiques franco-tunisiennes à Bulla Regia, I : Miscellanea, I*. Rome, 49-54.
- Beschaouch, A. 1994. "Un vœu de navigation heureuse sur une inscription mosaïquée de la Maison du Péristyle figuré". *CMGR V*, 185-86.
- Blanc-Bijon V. and Darmon J-P. 1988-1989. "Proposition pour une lecture du programme iconographique de la maison d'Icarios à Oudna (Tunisie)". *Bulletin de l'AIEMA*, 12, 294-304.
- Blanchard, M. 1982. "La notion de programme iconographique d'après les mosaïques de l'Ane a Djemila". In: Y. Duval (ed) *Mosaïque romaine tardive: l'iconographie du temps, les programmes iconographiques des maisons africaines*. Paris, 69-72.

- Blanchard-Lemée, M. 1975. *Maisons à mosaïques du quartier central de Djemila (Cuicul)*. Paris.
- Blanchard-Lemée, M. 1983. "Nouvelle recherches sur les mosaïques de Djemila". *CMGR* III.1, 277-86.
- Blanchard-Lemée, M. et alii 1996. *Mosaics of Roman Africa: Floor Mosaics from Tunisia*. London.
- Blank, H. 1981. "Ein spätantikes Gastmahl. Das Mosaik von Duar-ech-Chott". *RM*, 88, 329-44.
- Bollmann, B. 1998. *Römische Vereinhäuser. Untersuchungen zu den Scholae des römischen Berufs-, Kult-, und Augustalen-Kollegien in Italien*. Mainz.
- Bonaria, M. 1983. "La musica conviviale dal mondo latino antico al Medioevo". In: *Spettacoli conviviali dall'antichità classica alle corti italiane del '400*. Atti del VII Convegno di studio (Viterbo, 27-30 Maggio 1982), 119-47.
- Boulouednine, M. 1958. "*Bulla Regia*, Hammam-Derradji (*Procunsularis*, Tunisia)". *FA*, XIII, 285-86.
- Bradley, K. 1998. "The Roman Family at Dinner". In: I. Nielsen and H. S. Nielsen (eds.) *Meals in a social context: Aspects of the communal meal in the Hellenistic and Roman world*. Aarhus, 36-55.
- Brown, S. 1991. "Death as Decoration: Scenes from the Arena in Roman Domestic Mosaics". In: A. Richlin (ed.) *Pornography and Representation in Greece and Rome*. New York, 180-211.
- Brugnoli, G. 1983. "Mimi edaces". In: *Spettacoli conviviali dall'antichità classica alle corti italiane del '400*. Atti del VII Convegno di studio (Viterbo, 27-30 Maggio 1982), 77-90.
- Bruneau, P. 1965. "Le motif des coqs affrontés dans l'imagerie antique". *BCH*, 89, 90-121.
- Bruneau, P. 1984. "Les mosaïstes antiques avaient-ils des cahiers de modèles? ". *RA*, 241-72.
- Bullo, S. and Ghedini, F. (a cura di) 2003. *Amplissimae atque ornatissimae domus (Aug. civ.,II, 20, 26). L'edilizia residenziale nelle città della Tunisia romana, vol. I, Saggi*. Roma.
- Bullo, S. and Ghedini, F. (a cura di) 2003. *Amplissimae atque ornatissimae domus (Aug. civ.,II, 20, 26). L'edilizia residenziale nelle città della Tunisia romana, vol. II, Schede*. Roma.

- Cagnat, R. 1927. *Les villes d'art célèbres. Carthage, Timgad, Tébessa et les villes antiques de l'Afrique du Nord*. Paris.
- Carandini, A. 1964. *Ricerche sullo stile e la cronologia dei mosaici della villa di Piazza Armerina. StudMisc*, 7 (1961-1962). Roma.
- Carettoni, G. 1959. s.v. 'basilica'. *EAA*, II, 2-12.
- Carton, L. 1895. *Découvertes épigraphiques et archéologiques faites en Tunisie*. Paris.
- Carton, L. 1910a. "Séance du 9 décembre". *CRAI*, 769-70.
- Carton, L. 1910b. "Séance du 16 décembre". *CRAI*, 777-79.
- Carton, L. 1911a. "Compte rendu de la 40^e session". Dijon.
- Carton, L. 1911b. "Huitième Chronique Archéologique nord-africaine". *RevTun*, XVIII, 448-66.
- Carton, L. 1911c. "Le palais souterrain d'Amphitrite à Bulla Regia". In: *Association Française pour l'Avancement des Sciences. Congrès de Dijon*, 766-77.
- Carton, L. 1911d. "Les fouilles de Bulla Regia". *RevTun*, XVIII, 184-87.
- Carton, L. 1911e. "Notes sur les fouilles exécutées en 1910-1911 à Bulla Regia". *CRAI*, 595-603.
- Carucci, M. "Origins of the Romano-African House". In: *Proceedings of the 8th annual Symposium on Mediterranean Archaeology, February 20-22/2004, Trinity College. Archaeopress in British Archaeological Reports*: in press.
- Casson, L. 2001. *Libraries in the ancient world*. New Haven.
- Chatelain, L. 1935. "Mosaïques de Volubilis". *PSAM*, I, 1-10.
- Cintas, P. 1951. "Deux campagnes de fouilles à Utique". *Karthago*, II, 5-88.
- Cintas, P. 1954. "Nouvelles recherches à Utique". *Karthago*, V, 87-154.
- Clarke, J.R. 1991. *The Houses of Roman Italy, 100 B.C. – A.D. 250: Ritual, Space, and Decoration*. Berkeley.
- Crema, L. 1959. "L'architettura romana". *Enciclopedia Classica sez. III, vol. XII.1*. Torino.
- Cryptoportique 1990 = "Recherches sur les pavements de la Maison du Cryptoportique à Carthage. Premiers sondages, 1987". In: *Histoire et archéologie de l'Afrique du Nord, I. Carthage et son territoire dans l'Antiquité*, Actes du IV^e Colloque International réuni dans le cadre du 113^e Congrès National des Sociétés Savantes (Strasbourg, Avril 1988.). Paris, 157-73.
- Darmon, J.P. 1967-1968. "Neapolis". *Africa*, II, 271-83.
- Darmon, J-P. 1980. *Nympharum Domus: les pavements de la Maison des Nymphes à Nèapolis (Nabeul, Tunisie) et leur lecture*. Leiden.

- Darmom, J.-P. 1983. "Les mosaïques inédites de Sidi Mahrsi à Nabeul (antique Neapolis, Tunisie)". In *HommStern*, 103-108.
- D'Arms, J. 1984. "Control, Companionship, and *Clientela*: Some Social Functions of the Roman Communal Meal". *EchCl*, 28, 327-48.
- D'Arms, J. 1990. "The Roman *Convivium* and the Idea of Equality". In: Murray 1990, 308-20.
- D'Arms, J. 1991. "Slaves at Roman *convivia*". In: Slater 1991, 171-83.
- D'Arms, J. 1999. "Performing Culture: Roman Spectacle and the Banquets of the Powerful". In: B. Bergmann and C. Kondoleon (eds.) *The Art of ancient Spectacle*. Washington, 301-19.
- De la Blanchère, R. and Gauckler, P. 1897. *Catalogues des Musées et collections archéologiques de l'Algérie et de la Tunisie. Musée Alaoui*. Paris.
- Dickmann, J.-A. 1997. "The Peristyle and the Transformation of Domestic Space in Hellenistic Pompeii". In: Laurence and Wallace-Hadrill 1997, 121-136.
- Dickmann, J.-A. 1999. *Domus frequentata. Anspruchvolles Wohnen im pompejanische Stadthaus*. Munich.
- Di Vita, A. 1966. *La Villa della 'Gara delle Nereidi' presso Tagiura: un contributo alla storia del mosaico romano*. Tripoli.
- Dobbins, J. J. 2000. "The Houses at Antioch". In: C. Kondoleon (ed.) *Antioch. The Lost Ancient City*. Catalogue of the Exhibition. Princeton, 51-61.
- Donderer, M. 1989. *Die Mosaizisten der Antike und ihre wirtschaftliche und soziale Stellung: eine Quellenstudie*. Erlangen.
- Dosi, A. and Schnell, F. 1984. *A tavola con i Romani antichi*. Roma.
- Dumont, J. C. 1990. "Le décor de Trimalcion". *MEFRA*, 102.2, 959-81.
- Dunbabin, K. M. D. 1978. *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa. Studies in Iconography and Patronage*. Oxford.
- Dunbabin, K. M. D. 1991. "Triclinium and Stibadium". In: Slater 1991, 121-48.
- Dunbabin, K. M. D. 1994. "The Use of Private Space". In: *La ciudad en el mundo romano*. XIVe Congrès Internacional d'Arqueologia Clàssica, Tarragona 1993, 165-75.
- Dunbabin, K. M. D. 1996. "Convivial Spaces: Dining and Entertainment in the Roman Villa". *JRA*, 9, 66-80.
- Dunbabin, K. M. D. 1998. "Ut Graeco More Biberetur: Greeks and Romans on the Dining Couch". In: I. Nielsen and H. S. Nielsen 1998, 81-101.
- Dunbabin, K. M. D. 1999a. *Mosaics of the Greek and Roman World*. Cambridge.

- Dunbabin, K. M. D. 1999b. "Mosaics and their Public". *CMGR* VII.2, 739-45.
- Dunbabin, K. M. D. 2003. *The Roman Banquet: Images of Conviviality*. Cambridge.
- Duval, N. 1973. *Les Églises africaines à deux absides, II: Inventaire des monuments-Interprétation*. Paris.
- Duval, N. 1984. "Les maisons d'Apamée et l'architecture 'palatiale' de l'antiquité tardive". In: J. Balty (ed.) *Apamée de Syrie. Bilan de recherches archéologiques 1973-1979. Aspects de l'architecture domestique d'Apamée. Actes du Colloque (Bruxelles, Mai 1980)*. Bruxelles, 447-70.
- Duval, N. 1991. "Les nouveautés de l'archéologie tunisienne (a propos du *Bulletin des travaux de l'Institut National de l'Archéologie et Arts*, Comptes rendus, fasc. 3, janvier-avril 1989, Tunis, 1990)". *REAug*, 37, 334-37.
- Duval, N. 1997. "Le lit semi-circulaire de repas: une invention d'Hélagabale? (Hel. 25, 1.2-3)". In: G. Bonamente and K. Rosen (a cura di) "*Historiae Augustae*" *Colloquium Bonnense*, V. Bari, 129-52.
- Duval, N. and Février, P-A. 1964. "Colloque de Sousse". *CT*, 18-20.
- Duval, N. and Lézine 1959. "Nécropole chrétienne et baptistère souterrain à Carthage". *CahArch*, X, 17-147.
- Eastman, E. 1999, "Two Private Suites in Roman Thysdrus (El Jem, Tunisia)". *CMGR*, VII.1, 291-93.
- Elia, E. 1932. "I cubiculi nella case di Pompei". *Historia*, 6, 394-421.
- Ellis, S. P. 1985. "The 'Palace of the Dux' at Apollonia, and Related Houses". In: G. Barker, J. Loyd and J. Reynolds (eds.) *Cyrenaica in Antiquity*. Oxford, 15-25.
- Ellis, S. P. 1988. "The End of the Roman House". *AJA*, 92, 565-76.
- Ellis, S. P. 1997. "Late-antique Dining: Architecture, Furnishings and Behaviour". In: Laurence and Wallace-Hadrill 1997, 41-51.
- Ellis, S. P. 2000. *Roman Housing*. London.
- Ennabli, A. 1975. "Maison aux banquettes ou à banquets à Sousse". *CMGR*, II, 103-18.
- Ennabli, A. and Ben Osman, W. 1982. "La Maison de la Volière a Carthage". *HommStern*, 128-55.
- Ennaïfer, M. 1976. *La cité d'Althiburos et l'édifice des Asclepieia*. Tunis.
- Ennaïfer, M. 1987-89. "Nouvelles chasses de Tunisie". *BCTH*, 22B, 211-15.
- Ennaïfer, M. 1994a. "État de la recherche dans le domaine de la mosaïque en Tunisie". *CMGR*, IV, 229-40.

- Ennaïfer, M. 1994b. "La mosaïque africaine à la fin de l'antiquité et au début de l'époque médiévale". *CMGR*, V, 307-19.
- Ennaïfer, M. 1999. "La Maison des deux chasses à Kelibia". *CMGR*, VII, 233-50.
- Ennaïfer, M. 2002. "La chronologie de la Maison des deux chasses à Kélibia". *AntTard*, 10, 223-32.
- Ennaïfer, M. and Ouertani, N. 2001. "Les mosaïques de la Maison dite aux deux péristyles de Hergla: originalité d'un atelier byzacénien". *CMGR*, VIII, 216-37.
- Etienne, R. 1950. "Maisons et hydraulique dans le quartier". *PSAM*, 25-211.
- Etienne, R. 1954. "Dionysos et les quatre Saisons sur une mosaïque de Volubilis (Maroc)". *MEFRA*, LXIII, 93-118.
- Etienne, R. 1960. *Il quartier nord-est de Volubilis*. Paris.
- Evans, J. K. 1991. *War, Women and Children in Ancient Rome*. London and New York.
- Fantar, M. H. 1987. *Kerkouane, une cité punique au Cap-Bon*. Tunis.
- Fantar, M. H. et alii, 1994. *La mosaïque en Tunisie*. Paris.
- Farnoux, A. 1992. "Lykourgos". *LIMC*, VI, 309-19.
- Farrar, L. 1998. *Ancient Roman Gardens*. Stroud.
- Fendri, M. 1963. *Découverte archéologique dans la région de Sfax. Mosaïque des Océans*. Tunis.
- Fendri, M. 1964. "Les thermes des Mois à Thina". *CahTun*, 45-46, 47-68.
- Fendri, M. 1985. "Cités antiques et villas romaines de la région sfaxienne". *Africa*, 9, 151-208.
- Février, P. A. 1965. *Fouilles de Sétif. Les basiliques chrétiennes du quartier nord-ouest*. Paris.
- Février, P. A. 1983. "Images, imaginaire et symbolisme. A propos de deux maisons du Maghreb antique". *HommStern*, 159-62.
- Février, P. A. 1989-1990. *Approches du Maghreb romain. Pouvoirs, différences et conflits, I-II*. Aix-en-Provence.
- Foucher, L. 1961. *Découvertes archéologiques à Thrysdrus en 1961*. Tunis.
- Foucher, L. 1963. *La Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque à El Jem*. Paris.
- Foucher, L. 1965. *La Maison des Masques à Sousse*. Tunis.
- Foucher, L. 1979. "L'enlèvement de Ganymède figuré sur les mosaïques". *AntAfr*, 14, 155-68.
- Gabelmann, H. 1986. "Endymion". *LIMC*, III, 726-42.
- Garcia y Bellido, A. 1972. *Arte Romano (Enciclopedia Clasica)*, 1. Madrid, 797.

- Garezou, M. X. 1994. "Orpheus". *LIMC*, VII, 81-105.
- Garnsey, P. 1999. *Food and society in classical antiquity*. Cambridge.
- Gauckler, P. 1893. "Séance du 8 décembre 1893". *CRAI*, XXI, 381-84.
- Gauckler, P. 1895. "Séance du 11 octobre 1895". *CRAI*, XXIII, 429-32.
- Gauckler, P. 1896a. "Le domaine des Laberii à Uthina". *MonPiot*, 3, 177-229.
- Gauckler, P. 1896b. *Compte rendu de la Marche du Service des Antiquités en 1896*. Tunis.
- Gauckler, P. 1897. "Rapport épigraphiques sur les découvertes faites en Tunisie par le Service des Antiquités dans le cours des cinq dernières années". *BCTH*, 362-471.
- Gauckler, P. 1898. "Séance du 7 Octobre". *CRAI*, XXVI, 642-43.
- Gauckler, P. 1900. *Compte rendu de la Marche du Service des Antiquités en 1900*. Tunis.
- Gauckler, P. 1901. *Compte rendu de la Marche du Service des Antiquités en 1899*. Tunis.
- Gauckler, P. 1903. *Marche du Service en 1903*. 13-16.
- Gauckler, P. 1904a. "Séance du 12 juillet". *BCTH*, CLXXXV-CLXXXVI.
- Gauckler, P. 1904b. *Compte rendu de la Marche du Service en 1903*. Tunis.
- Gauckler, P. 1904c. s.v. Musivum opus. *Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines*, III.2, 2088-2129.
- Gauckler, P. 1905b. "Un catalogue figuré de la batellerie gréco-romaine. La mosaïque d'Althiburos". *MonPiot*, XII, 113-54.
- Gauckler, P. 1907. *Catalogue du Musée Alaoui, 1er Supplement*. Paris.
- Gauckler, P. 1910. *Inventaire des Mosaïques de la Gaule et de l'Afrique, II. Afrique Proconsulaire Tunisie*. Paris.
- Gazda, E. K. 1981. "A Marble Group of Ganymede and the Eagle from the age of Augustine". In: J. H. Humphrey (ed.), *Excavations at Carthage 1977 conducted by the University of Michigan VI*. Ann Arbor, 125-178.
- Gazda, E. K. (ed.) 1991. *Roman Art in the Private Sphere. New Perspectives on the Architecture and Decor of the Domus, Villa, and Insula*. Ann Arbor.
- George, M. 1997a. "Repopulating the Roman House". In: B. Rawson and P. Weaver (eds.) *The Roman Family in Italy: Status, Sentiment, Space*. Oxford, 299-319.
- George, M. 1997b. "Servus and Domus: the Slave in the Roman House". In: Laurence and Wallace-Hadrill 1997, 15-24.
- Ghalia, T. 1998. *Hergla et les mosaïques des basiliques chrétiennes de Tunisie (Plan, décor et liturgie)*. Tunis.
- Girouard, Mark, 1978. *Life in the English country house: a social and architectural history*. New Haven.

- Goldberg, M. Y. 1999. "Spatial and Behavioural Negotiation in Classical Athenian City Houses". In: Allison 1999, 142-61.
- Golfetto, A. 1961. *Dougga. Die Geschichte einer Stadt in Schatten Kartaghos*. Basel.
- Gozlan, S. 1971-1972. "La maison de Neptune à Acholla – Botria (Tunisie). Problèmes posés par l'architecture et le mode de construction". *Karthago*, XVI, 42-99.
- Gozlan, S. 1972. "La maison dite de Neptune à Acholla (Botria)". *RA*, 2, 168-70.
- Gozlan, S. 1974. "Les pavements en mosaïques de la maison de Neptune à Acholla-Botria (Tunisie)". *Mon Piot*, 59, 71-135.
- Gozlan, S. 1992. *La maison du triomphe de Neptune à Acholla (Botria, Tunisie), I, Les mosaïques*. Roma.
- Gozlan, S. 1994. "Les mosaïques de la Maison d'Asinius Rufinus à Acholla (Tunisie)". *CMGR*, V, 161-72.
- Gozlan, S. 1999. "Les mosaïques de la Maison des colonnes rouges à Acholla (Boutria, Tunisie). Essai de datation". *CMGR*, VII, 195-210.
- Gozlan, S. and Bourgeois, A. 1984. "Nouvelle recherches à la maison de Neptune (Acholla-Botria)". *BCTH*, 17/B, 75-89.
- Gozlan, S. and Jeddi, N. 2001. *Recherches archéologiques franco-tunisiennes à Acholla : les mosaïques des maisons du quartier central et les mosaïques éparses*. Rome.
- Graham, W. J. 1966. "Origins and Interrelations of the Greek House and the Roman House". *Phoenix*, 20, 3-32.
- Grahame, M. 1997. " 'Public' and 'Private' in the Roman House: The Spatial Order of the *Casa del Fauno*". In: Laurence and Wallace-Hadrill 1997, 137-64.
- Grassigli, G. L. 1999. "La scena domestica e il suo immaginario. I temi figurati nei mosaici della Cisalpina". *Ostraka*, 9.1, 199-226.
- Gros, P. 2001. *L'architecture romaine du début du IIIe siècle av. J.-C. à la fin du Haut-Empire, 2. Maisons, palais, villas et tombeaux*. Paris.
- Gros, P. and Torelli, M. 1988. *Storia dell'urbanistica. Il mondo romano*. Roma-Bari.
- Gsell, S. 1898. "Chronique archéologique africaine". *MEFRA*, XXIV, 329-70.
- Gsell, S. 1902. *Musée de Tebessa*. Paris.
- Gsell, S. 1904. "Chronique archéologique africaine". *MEFRA*, 24, 329-70.
- Guimond, L. 1981. "Aktaion". *LIMC*, I, 454-59.
- Hanoune, R. 1980. *Recherches archéologiques franco-tunisiennes à Bulla Regia, IV, Les mosaïques, I*. Roma.

- Hanoune, R. 1983. "Mosaïques en noir et blanc de Bulla Regia (Tunisie)". *CMGR*, III, 287-90.
- Hanoune, R. 1990. "Le paganisme philosophique de l'aristocratie municipale". In : *L'Afrique dans l'Occident Romain : Ier siècle av. J.-C. – IVe siècle ap. J.-C.* actes du colloque organisé par l'Ecole française de Rome sous le patronage de l'Institut national d'archéologie et d'art de Tunis ; Rome, 3-5 décembre 1987. Rome, 63-75.
- Hanoune, R. 1994. "Le travail de l'ouvrier mosaïste à Bulla Regia". *CMGR*, IV, 281-83.
- Harlow, M. and Laurence, R. 2002. *Growing Up and Growing Old in Ancient Rome*. London and New York.
- Hermansen, G. 1981. *Ostia. Aspects of Roman City Life*. Edmonton.
- Hoepfner, W. 2002 (ed.). *Antike Bibliotheken*. Mainz am Rhein.
- Hug, A. 1948. s.v. 'triclinium'. *RE*, VII A, 92-101.
- Humphrey, J. H. 1984. "Two New Circus Mosaics and Their Implications for the Architecture of Circuses". *AJA*, 88, 392-97.
- Huskinson, J. 1996. *Roman children's sarcophagi: Their decoration and its social significance*. Oxford.
- Jashemski, W. F. 1994. "Roman Gardens in Tunisia and the Vesuvian Area". In: *La Ciudad en el Mundo Romano*, XIV Congreso Internacional de Arquelogia Clàsica (Tarragona, septiembre 1993), 1. Tarragona, 239-44.
- Jashemski, W. F. 1995. "Roman Gardens in Tunisa: Preliminary Excavations in the House of Bacchus and Ariane and in the East Temple at Thuburbo Maius". *AJA*, 99, 559-76.
- Jeddi, N. 1990. *Les mosaïques de Thaenae, étude descriptive et analytique*. (Thèse de Doctorat, soutenue à Paris IV-Sorbonne). Paris.
- Jeddi, N. 1994. "Quelques mosaïques de la Maison de Dionysos à Thaenae (Tunisie)". *CMGR*, V, 138-48.
- Jeddi, N. 1999. "Les mosaïques de la Maison de Vénus à Dougga". *CMGR*, VII, 211-32.
- Jesnick, I. J. 1997. *The Image of Orpheus in Roman Mosaic*. Oxford.
- Jobst, W. 1977. *Römische Mosaiken aus Ephesos, I. Die Hanghäuser des Embolos*. Forshungen in Ephesos, VIII.2. Wien.
- Jones, C. P. 1991. "Dinner theatre". In: Slater 1991, 185-98.
- Jones Roccas, L. 1994. "Perseus". *LIMC*, VII, 332-48.
- Kaempf-Dimitriadou, S. 1981. "Amphitrite". *LIMC*, I, 724-35.
- Kondoleon, C. 1994. *Domestic and Divine. Roman Mosaics in the House of Dionysos*. Ithaca-London.

- Laurence, R. 1994. *Roman Pompeii: Space and Society*. London and New York.
- Kutbay, B. L. 1998. *Palaces and Large Residences of the Hellenistic Age*. Lewiston.
- Lancha, J. 1983. "L'iconographie d'Hylas dans les mosaïques romaines". *CMGR*, III, 381-91.
- Lancha, J. 1997. *Mosaïque et culture dans l'Occident Romain (I - IV S.)*. Roma.
- Lantier R. 1931. "Les grands champs de fouilles de l'Afrique du Nord (1915-1930)". *Archäologischer Anzeiger*, XLVI, 535-52.
- Lantier R. 1943-45. "Séance du 12 juin 1944. Un bassin à mosaïque de Thuburbo Majus". *BCTH*, 280-82.
- Lassus, J. 1965. "Vénus marine". *CMGR*, I, 175-90.
- Lassus, J. 1971. "La salle à sept absides de Djemila-Cuicul". *AntAfr*, 5, 193-207.
- Laurence, R. and Wallace-Hadrill, A. (eds) 1997. *Domestic Space in the Roman World: Pompeii and beyond*. *JRA*, Suppl. Ser., 22, Portsmouth.
- Lavin, I. 1962. "The House of the Lord: Aspects of the Role of Palace of Triclinia in the Architecture of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages". *Art Bulletin*, XLIV, 1-27.
- Lavin, I. 1963. "The Hunting Mosaic of Antioch and their Sources: a study of compositional principles in the development of early medieval style". *Dumbarton Oaks Papers*, 17, 181-286.
- Leach, E. W. 1997. "Oecus on Ibycus: investigating the vocabulary of the Roman house". In: S. E. Bon and R. Jones (eds.) *Sequence and space in Pompeii*. Oxford.
- Leach, E. W. 2004. *The Social Life of Painting in Ancient Rome and on the Bay of Naples*. Cambridge.
- Lefkowitz, M. R. and Fant, M. B. 1992. *Women's Life in Greece & Rome: A Source Book in Translation*. Baltimore, 2nd ed.
- Leveau, P. 1982. "Les maisons nobles de Caesarea de Maurétanie". *AntAfr*, 18, 109-65.
- Letzner, W. 1990. *Römische Brunnen und Nymphaea in der westlichen Reichshälfte*. Münster.
- Levi, D. 1947. *Antioch Mosaic Pavements*. Princeton.
- Lézine, A. 1954. "Les voûtes romaines à tubes emboîtés et le croisées d'ogives de Bulla Regia". *Karthago*, V, 168-81.
- Lézine, A. 1956. "La maison des chapiteaux historiés à Utique". *Karthago*, VII, 1-37.
- Lézine, A. 1964. *Architecture romaine d'Afrique, recherches et mises au point*. Paris-Tunis.
- Lézine, A. 1968a. *Carthage-Utique. Etudes d'architecture et d'urbanisme*. Paris.

- Lézine, A. 1968b. *Thuburbo Maius*. Tunis.
- Lézine, A. 1970. *Utique*. Tunis.
- Ling, R. 1995. "The Decoration of Roman tTriclinia". In: O. Murray and M. Teçusan (eds) *In Vino Veritas*. London, 239-51.
- Ling, R. 1998. *Ancient Mosaics*. London.
- Mac Donald, W. L. 1965. *The architecture of the Roman empire, I. An introductory study*. New Haven.
- MacDougall, E. B. and Jashemski, W. F. (eds.) 1981. *Ancient Roman Gardens*. Washington.
- Maiuri, A. 1946. "Portico e peristilio". *La Parola del Passato*, 3, 306-22.
- Makdoun, M. 1994. "Encore sur la chronologie du quartier nord-est de *Volubilis*". In: A. Mastino and P. Ruggeri (a cura di), *L'Africa Romana*, X. Sassari, 263-81.
- Makdoun, M. 2000. "La maison de Dionysos et des quatre saisons et la maison au bain des numphes à *Volubilis*: problèmes de mitoyenneté et de chronologie". In: M. Khanoussi, P. Ruggeri, C. Vismara (eds) *L'Africa romana*, XIII. Sassari, 1708-20.
- Mau, A. 1899. s.v. 'Basilica'. *RE*, III, 83-96.
- Mau, A. 1900. s.v. 'convivium'. *RE*, IV, 1201-08.
- Mazal, O. 1980. *Kommentar zur Wiener Genesis, Faksimile Ausgabe des Codex theol. Gr.31 der Österreichischen Nationalbibliothek in Wien*. Frankfurt am Main.
- McCartney, E. 1934. "The Couch as a Unit of Measurement". *ClPhil*, 29, 30-5.
- Merlin, A. 1913. *Forum et Maisons d'Althiburus*. Paris.
- Merlin, A. 1914. "Séance du 10 mars 1914". *BCTH*, CLXXXII-III.
- Merlin, A. 1916. "Séance du 15 février 1916". *BCTH*, CXLII.
- Merlin, A. 1917. "Fouilles à Thuburbo Majus en 1916". *CRAI*, 66-77.
- Merlin, A. 1920a. "Séance du 16 avril". *CRAI*, 116-22.
- Merlin A. 1922. *Le Forum de Thuburbo Majus, Notes et Documents*. Tunis.
- Merlin, A. 1933. "L'histoire municipale de Thuburbo Majus". In : *Congrès international d'Archéologie (Alger, avril 1930)*. Alger, 205-25.
- Merlin, A. and Lantier, R. 1922. *Catalogues des Musées et collections archéologiques de l'Algérie et de la Tunisie. Musée Alaoui, II, Suppl.* Paris.
- Merlin, A. and Poinssot, L. 1949. "Factions du cirque et saisons sur des mosaïques de Tunisie". In : *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire offerts à Ch. Picard, II*. Paris, 732-45.

- Mols, S. T. A. M. 1999. *Wooden Furniture in Herculaneum: Form, Technique and Function*. Amsterdam.
- Moormann, E. M. 2000. "La bellezza dell'immondezza. Raffigurazioni di rifiuti nell'arte ellenistica e romana". In: X. Dupré Roventós and J.A. Remolà (eds.) *La eliminación de residuos en la ciudad Romana*. Rome, 75-94.
- Morvillez, E. 1995. "Les salles de réception triconques dans l'architecture domestique de l'Antiquité tardive en Occident". *Histoire de l'Art*, 31, 15-26.
- Morvillez, E. 1996. "Sur les installations de lits de table en sigma dans l'architecture domestique du Haut et du Bas-Empire". *Pallas*, 44, 119-58.
- Mrozek, S. 1992. "Caractère hiérarchique des repas officiels dans les villes romaines du haut-empire". In: M. Aurell, O. Dumoulin, F. Thélamon (eds) *La sociabilité à table. Commensalité et convivialité à travers les ages. Actes du Colloque de Rouen, 14-17 novembre 1990*. Rouen, 181-86.
- Murray, O. 1990 (ed.). *Symptotica: a Symposium on the Symposion*. Oxford.
- Murray, O. and Teçusan, M. (eds.) 1995. *In Vino Veritas*. London.
- Muth, S. 1998. *Erleben von Raum-Leben im Raum: zur Funktion mythologischer Mosaikbilder in der römisch-kaiserzeitlichen Wohnarchitektur*. Heidelberg.
- Neudecker, R. 1988. *Die Skulpturenausstattung römischer Villen in Italien*. Mainz am Rhein.
- Nielsen, I. 1994. *Hellenistic palaces: Tradition and Renewal*. Aarhus.
- Nielsen, I. 1998. "Royal Banquets: The Development of Royal Banquets and Banqueting Halls from Alexander to the Tetrarchs". In: I. Nielsen and H.S. Nielsen 1998, 102-33.
- Nielsen, I. and Nielsen, H. S. (eds.) 1998. *Meals in a Social Context: Aspects of the Communal Meal in the Hellenistic and Roman world*. Aarhus.
- Notermans, A. 2001. "Speaking Mosaics". *CMGR*, VIII, 459-63.
- Oakley, J. H. 1990. "Hylas". *LIMC*, V, 574-79.
- Ovadia, A. 1980. *Geometric and floral patterns in ancient mosaics. A study of their origin from the classical period to the age of Augustus*. Roma.
- Pace, A. and Lantier, R. 1925. "Carta archeologica di Cartagine". *MonAL*, 30, 130-028.
- Packer, J. 1971. *The Insulae of Imperial Ostia*. *MAAR*, 31, Roma.
- Pagano, M. 1983. "L'edificio dell'Agro Murecine a Pompeii". *RendNap*, 58, 325-61.
- Panetier, J-L. 2002. *Volubilis. Une cité du Maroc antique*. Paris.
- Parrish, D. 1981. "Annus". *LIMC*, I, 799-800.

- Parrish D. 1981. "The Mosaic Program of the Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque at El Jem", in Y. Duval (ed.) *Mosaïque romaine tardive: l'iconographie du temps, les programmes iconographiques des maisons africaines*. Paris, 51-64.
- Parrish, D. 1984. *Season Mosaics of Roman North Africa*. Roma.
- Parrish, D. 1985. "The Date of the Mosaics from Zliten". *AntAfr*, 21, 137-58.
- Phillips, K. M. 1968. "Perseus and Andromeda". *AJA*, 72, 1-23.
- Picard, C. 1951. *Carthage*. Paris.
- Picard, G. Ch. 1941-1946. "Le couronnement de Vénus". *MEFRA*, 58, 43-108.
- Picard, G. Ch. 1946-1949. "Fouilles à Acholla (Botria)". *BCTH*, 300-05.
- Picard, G. Ch. 1947a. "Acholla". *CRAI*, 557-62.
- Picard, G. Ch. 1947b. "Acholla or Achulla, Botria (Procunsularis, Tunisia)". *FA*, 2, 314-18 n. 2790.
- Picard, G. Ch. 1950a. "Archaeological News. Tunisia". *AJA*, 54, 130-32.
- Picard, G. Ch. 1950b. "Séance du 11 décembre". *BCTH*, 154-63.
- Picard, G. Ch. 1952a. "Séance du 12 mai". *BCTH*, 179-217.
- Picard, G. Ch. 1952b. "Une *Schola* de collège à Carthage". *Karthago*, III, 167-91.
- Picard, G. Ch. 1953a. "Deux sénateurs romains inconnus". *Karthago*, IV, 119-35.
- Picard, G. Ch. 1953b. "Les places publiques et le statut municipal de Mactar". *CRAI*, 80-2.
- Picard, G. Ch. 1953c. "Séance du 9 mars 1953. L'archéologie romaine en Tunisie en 1952". *BCTH*, 39-59.
- Picard, G.Ch. 1954a. "Acholla (Bou-Tria) et Ruspae". *BCTH*, 57, 120-26.
- Picard, G. Ch. 1954b. "Notes sur les mosaïques de la maison à la cascade à Utique". *Karthago*, V, 162-67.
- Picard, G. Ch. 1958. s.v. 'Africano-romani centri'. *Enciclopedia Universale dell'Arte*, I.
- Picard, G. Ch. 1959a. *La civilisation de l'Afrique romaine*. Paris.
- Picard, G. Ch. 1959b. "Les mosaïques d'Acholla". *EAC*, 2, 73-97.
- Picard, G. Ch. 1960. "Mosaïques africaines du IIIe siècle après J.-C.". *RA*, 2, 17-49.
- Picard, G. Ch. 1965a. *La Carthage de Saint Augustin*. Paris.
- Picard, G. Ch. 1965b. "Un thème du style fleuri dans la mosaïque africaine". *CMGR*, I, 125-35.
- Picard, G. Ch. 1985. "La villa du taureau à Silin (Tripolitaine)". *CRAI*, 227-41.
- Picard, G. Ch. 1990. *La civilisation de l'Afrique romaine*. Paris.

- Picard, G. Ch., 1994. "La Maison du triomphe de Neptune à Acholla". *Bulletin archéologique du C.T.H.S.*, 23, 171-76.
- Poinssot, C. 1965. "Quelques remarques sur les mosaïques de la Maison de Dionysos et d'Ulysse à Thugga (Tunisie)". *CMGR*, I, 219-30.
- Poinssot, C. 1983. *Les ruines de Dougga*. Tunis.
- Poinssot, L. 1940. "Plusieurs inscriptions de Thuburbo Majus". *RevTun*, 43-44, 195.
- Poinssot, R. and Lantier, R. 1922. "Séance du 14 novembre 1922". *BCTH*, CLXXIII-VI.
- Poinssot, R. and Lantier, R. 1924a. "Séance du 17 juin". *BCTH*, CLVII-IX.
- Poinssot, R. and Lantier, R. 1924b. "Séance du 15 janvier 1924". *BCTH*, XXX-XXXI.
- Poinssot, R. and Lantier, R. 1925. "Séance du 10 février 1925". *BCTH*, LXXI-IV and 251-61.
- Poinssot, R. and Lantier, R. 1926. "Séance du 14 décembre 1926". *BCTH*, CCIII-VI.
- Poinssot, L. and Quoniam, P. 1953. "Mosaïques des bains des Protomés à Thuburbo Majus". *Karthago*, IV, 153-67.
- Quet, M. H. 1983. "Les mosaïques de la 'Maison des Nymphes' de Nabeul: Pavements romains, symbolique grecque?". In: *Proceeding of the 16th International Eirene Conference, Prague, 31/8-4/9, 1982, II*. 76-81.
- Quet, M. H. 1984. "De l'iconographie a l'iconologie: approche méthodologique. La symbolique du décor des pavements de la «Maison des Nymphes» de Nabeul". *RA*, 79-104.
- Quet, M. H. 1985. "Pégase et la mariée: de l'importance et de la signification de la figure Pégase dans les Mosaïques de la Maison des Nymphes de Nabeul". In: M. Mazza and C. Giuffrida (a cura di), *Le trasformazioni della cultura nella tarda antichità. Atti del Convegno tenuto a Catania Università degli Studi, 27 sett. - 2 ott. 1982, Vol. II*. Catania, 861-921.
- Quoniam, P. 1952. "Fouilles récentes à Bulla Regia (Tunisie)". *CRAI*, 460-72.
- Ravera, P. 1986. "Les maisons souterraines de Bulla Regia". *Archéologia*, 216, 48-54.
- Rawson, B. 2003. *Children and hildhood in Roman Italy*. Oxford.
- Rebuffat, R. 1965. "Les mosaïques du bain de Diane à Volubilis (Maroc)". *CMGR*, I, 193-218.
- Rebuffat, R. 1969. "Maisons à péristyle d'Afrique du Nord. Répertoire de plans publiés. I." *MEFRA*, 81, 659-724.
- Rebuffat, R. 1974. "Maisons à péristyle d'Afrique du Nord. Répertoire de plans publiés. II." *MEFRA*, 86, 445-99.

- Rebuffat, R., Hallier, G. and Marion, J. 1970. *Thamusida. Fouilles du Service des Antiquités du Maroc, II*. Paris.
- Richardson, L. 1988. *Pompeii. An Architectural History*. Baltimore.
- Riggsby, A. M. 1997. "Public and Private in Roman culture: the Case of the *Cubiculum*". *JRA*, 10, 36-56.
- Risse, M. (ed.) 2001. *Volubilis. Eine römische Stadt in Marokko von der Frühzeit bis in die islamische periode*. Mainz am Rhein.
- Robertson, M. 1988. "Europe". *LIMC*, IV, 76-92.
- Romanelli, P. 1940. "I monumenti romani della Tunisia". *Palladio*, IV, 155-83.
- Romanelli, P. 1964. "A proposito della '*Schola Iuvenum*' di Mactaris". *CT*, XII, 45-6.
- Romanelli, P. 1966. "Le case semisotterranee di Bulla Regia (Tunisia). In: *Mélanges offerts à Kazimierz Michalowski*. Warszawa, 641-47.
- Romanelli, P. 1970. *Topografia e archeologia dell'Africa Romana*. Torino.
- Romanelli, P. 1973-1974. "Ancora sulle case semisotterranee di Bulla Regia (Tunisia)". *ArchClass*, 25-26, 661-666.
- Romizzi, L. 2002. "Note su due mosaici figurati del peristilio della Casa di Dioniso e Ulisse a Thugga". *Antenor*, 3.
- Rossiter, J. J. 1990. "Villas vandales. Le suburbium e Carthage au début du VI^e siècle de notre ère". In: *Histoire et archéologie de l'Afrique du Nord, 1. Carthage et son territoire dans l'Antiquité*. Actes du IV^e Colloque international réuni dans le cadre du 113^e Congrès national des Sociétés Savantes (Strasbourg, avril 1988). Paris, 221-27.
- Rossiter, J. 1991. "Convivium and Villa in Late Antiquity". In: Slater 1991, 199-214.
- Salies, G. 1974. "Untersuchungen zu den geometrischen Gliederungsschemata römischer Mosaiken". *BonnJbb*, 174, 1-187.
- Saller, R. P. 1982. *Personal Patronage under the Early Empire*. Cambridge.
- Saller, R. P. 1999. "*Pater familias, mater familias*, and the gendered semantics of the Roman household". *ClPhil*, 94, 182-97.
- Salomonson, J. W. 1960. "The Fancy Dress Banquet. Attempt at Interpreting a Roman Mosaic from El Jem". *BABesch*, 35, 25-55.
- Salomonson, J. W. 1965. *La Mosaïque aux Chevaux de l'antiquarium de Carthage*. La Haye.
- Salza Prina Ricotti, E. 1987. "The Importance of Water in Roman Garden Triclinia". In: E. B. MacDougall (ed.) *Ancient Roman Villa Gardens*. Washington, 135-84.

- Salza Prina Ricotti, E. 1989. "Le tende conviviali e la tenda di Tolomeo Filadelfo". In: R.I. Curtis *Studia Pompeiana & Classica in Honor of Wilhelmina F. Jashemski*, vol. I. New Rochelle-New York, 199-231.
- Schauenburg, K. 1960. *Perseus in der Kunst des Altertums*. Bonn.
- Shaw, B. D. 1987. "The Family in Late Antiquity: The Experience of Augustine". *Past and Present*, 115, 3-51.
- Schneider, L. 1983. *Die Dömane als Weltbild. Wirkungsstrukturen der spätantiken Bildersprache*. Wiesbaden.
- Schmelzeisen, K. 1992. *Römische Mosaiken der Afrika Proconsularis. Studien zur Ornamenten, Datierungen und Werkstätten*. Frankfurt am Main.
- Schulten, A. 1898. "Archäologische Neuigkeiten aus Nordafrika". *AA*, 112-20.
- Schulten, A. 1899. "Archäologische Neuigkeiten aus Nordafrika". *AA*, 66-77.
- Schulten, A. 1901. "Archäologische Neuigkeiten aus Nordafrika". *AA*, 64-80.
- Schulten, A. 1904a. "Archäologische Funde im Jahre 1903. Nordafrika". *AA*, 117-39.
- Schulten, A. 1904b. "L'Afrique romaine". *RT*, 11-36.
- Schulten, A. 1905. "Archäologische Funde im Jahre 1904. Nordafrika". *AA*, 73-96.
- Schulten, A. 1906. "Archäologische Funde im Jahre 1904. Nordafrika". *AA*, 143-67.
- Schulten, A. 1907. "Archäologische Funde im Jahre 1904. Nordafrika". *AA*, 162-74.
- Schulten, A. 1908. "Archäologische Funde im Jahre 1904. Nordafrika". *AA*, 207-39.
- Schulten, A. 1911. "Archäologische Funde im Jahre 1910. Nordafrika". *AA*, 242-79.
- Sear, F. B. 1977. *Roman Wall and Vault Mosaics*. Heidelberg.
- Settis, S. 1973. "'Esedra' e 'ninfeo' nella terminologia architettonica del mondo romano. Dall'età repubblicana alla tarda antichità". *ANRW*, I.4, 661-745.
- Sichtermann, H. 1988. "Ganymedes". *LIMC*, IV, 154-69.
- Siebert, G. 1997. "Nymphaei". *LIMC*, VIII, 891-902.
- Simon, E. 1984. "Artemis/Diana". *LIMC*, II, 792-840.
- Slater, W. G. (ed.) 1991. *Dining in a Classical Context*. Ann Arbor.
- Slim, H. 1983. "Thysdrus, une des plus grandes villes romaines d'Afrique". *DossArch*, 69, 52-61.
- Slim, H. 1990a. "La maison dite du portrait de Lucius Verus à El Jem". *BSAF*, 87-8.
- Slim, H. 1990b. "Le modèle urbain romain et le problème de l'eau dans les confins du Sahel et de la Basse steppe". In: *L'Afrique dans l'Occident romain*, 169-201.
- Slim, H. 1996. *El Jem. Ancient Thysdrus*. Tunis.
- Slim, H. 1999. "Personnification de Rome et des provinces à El Jem". *CMGR*, VII, 181-93.

- Slim, H. 2001. "Notes sur quelques mosaïques à trame végétalisées d'El Jem". In : Ben Abed Ben Khader et al. 2001, 67-72.
- Slim, H. and Khanoussi, M. 1995. "Les grandes découvertes d'époque romaine". In: J.P. Morel, M.H. Fantar, and H. Slim (a cura di) *La Tunisie. Carrefour du monde antique*. *Doss.Arch*, 200, 18-29.
- Slim, H. et alii 2002. "Quelques données archéologique sur Néapolis à la fin de l'Antiquité". *AntTard*, 10, 178-82.
- Sodini, J. P. 1995. "Habitat de l'Antiquité Tardive". *Topoi (Lyon)*, 5, 151-218.
- Soprano, P. 1950. "I triclini all'aperto di Pompeii". *Pompeiana*, 288-310.
- Stern, H. 1953. *Le calendrier de 354, étude sur son texte et ses illustrations*. Paris.
- Stern, H. 1955. *La mosaïque d'Orphée de Blanzky-les-Fismes*. *Gallia*, 13.
- Tamm, B. 1963. *Auditorium and Palatium. A study on assembly-rooms in Roman palaces during the 1st Century B.C. and the 1st Century A.D.* Stockholm.
- The House of Africa at Thysdrus (El Jem): from discovery to reconstruction* 2002. Ministry of Culture National Institute of Heritage.
- Thébert, Y. 1971. "L'utilisation de l'eau dans la Maison de la pêche à Bulla Regia". *CT*, XIX.73-74, 11-17.
- Thébet, Y. 1972. "Les maisons à étage souterrain de Bulla Regia". *CT*, XX, 79-80, 17-44.
- Thébert, Y. 1986. "Permanences et mutations des espaces urbains dans les villes de l'Afrique du Nord orientale: de la cité antique à la cité medievale". *CT*, XXXIV.137-138, 31-46.
- Thébert, Y. 1987. "Private Life and Domestic Architecture in Roman Africa". In: P. Veyne (ed) *A History of Private Life. From Pagan Rome to Byzantium*. Cambridge-London, 313-409.
- Theophilidou, E. 1984. "Die Musenmosaiken der römischen Kaiserzeit". *TZ*, 47, 239-348.
- Thouvenot, R. 1936. "L'art provincial en Mauretanie Tingitane, les Mosaïques". *MEFRA*, 53, 25-36.
- Thouvenot, R. 1941. "La Maison d'Orphée à Volubilis". *PSAM*, VI, 42-67.
- Thouvenot, R. 1945. "La Maison à l'Éphébe". *PSAM*, VII, 114-31.
- Thouvenot, R. 1948. "La Maison aux travaux d'Hercule". *PSAM*, VIII, 69-143.
- Thouvenot, R. 1949. *Volubilis*. Paris.
- Thouvenot, R. 1958. *Maisons de Volubilis: le Palais dit de Gordien et la Maison a la mosaïque de Vénus*. *PSAM*, XII.



- Tomei, D. 2002. "Ancora sulla Casa d'Ikarios a Oudna. Qualche spunto di riflessione". *Antenor*, 3, 63-88.
- Trabelsi, F. 1991. "Le pitture della villa di Asinius Rufinus ad Acholla-Botria (Tunisia)". *Kölner Jahrbuch*, 24, 183-88.
- Traversari, G. 1960. *Gli spettacoli in acqua nel teatro tardo-antico*. Roma.
- Veyne, P. 1961-1962. "Une parente de Régalien à Utique". *Karthago*, XI, 9-16.
- Ville, G. 1961. "La maison et la mosaïque de la chasse à Utique". *Karthago*, XI, 17-76.
- Wallace-Hadrill, A. 1994. *Houses and Society in Pompeii and Herculaneum*. Princeton.
- Wallace-Hadrill, A. 1996. "Engendering the Roman House". In: D.E.E. Kleiner and S.B. Matheson (eds.) *I Claudia: Women in Ancient Rome*. New Haven and Austin, 104-15.
- Wattel-de-Croizant, O. 1995. *Les mosaïques représentant le mythe d'Europe (Ier-Vie siècles). Évolution et interpretation des modèles grecs en milieu romain*. Paris.
- Weitzmann, K. (ed.) 1979. *Age of Spirituality : Late Antique and Early Christian Art, Third to Seventh Century; Catalogue of the Exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, November 19, 1977, through February 12, 1978*. New York.
- Welch, K. 2003. "A New View of the Origins of the Basilica: the Atrium Regium, Graecostasis, and Roman Diplomacy". *JRA*, 16, 5-34.
- Wiedemann, T. 1989. *Adults and Children in the Roman Empire*. London.
- Wilson, R. J. A. 1983. *Piazza Armerina*. London.
- Wilson, R. J. A. 2005. "On the Origin of the Roman Civic Basilica: the Egyptian Connection". In: S.T.A.M. Mols and E.M. Moormann (eds.) *Omni pede stare. Saggi architettonici e circumvesuviani in memoriam Jos de Waele*. Napoli, 128-39.
- Witts, P. 1993. "Mosaics in Lybia". *Mosaic*, 20, 25-8.
- Witts, P. 2000. "Mosaics and Room Function: the Evidence from Some Fourth-Century Romano-British Villas". *Britannia*, 31, 291-324.
- Yacoub, M. 1995. *Splendeurs de mosaïque en Tunisie*. Juillet.
- Yacoub, M. 1996. *Le Musée du Bardo (Départments antiques)*. Tunis.
- Zaccaria Ruggiu, A. P. 1995a. "Origine del triclinio nella casa romana". In: G. Cavalieri Manasse and E. Roffia (eds.) *Splendida civitas nostra. Studi archeologici in onore di Antonio Frova*. Roma, 137-54.
- Zaccaria Ruggiu, A. P. 1995b. *Spazio privato e spazio pubblico nella città romana*. Roma.
- Zaccaria Ruggiu, A. 2001. 'Abbinamento triclinium-cubiculum: un'ipotesi interpretativa'. In: *Abitare in Cisalpina. L'edilizia privata nelle città e nel territorio in età romana*, Atti

della XXXI Settimana di Studi Aquileiesi (Aquileia, Maggio 2000), *AAAd*, XLIX, 59-101.