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# The Romano-African Domus: 

## Studies in Space, Decoration, and Function

by

Margherita Carucci

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Volume 1


## PAGE

## NUMBERING

## AS ORIGINAL

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#### 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.


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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.

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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.

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HommStern Mosaïque : recueil d'hommages à Henri Stern. Paris, 1983.
$\mathrm{R} \quad$ 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 Africa ${ }^{1}$ and of Wallace-Hadrill on the social structure of the Pompeian house in the early Imperial times ${ }^{2}$ 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 scholars ${ }^{3}$ 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 mosaics ${ }^{4}$, published in 1910, contains 1056 entries, very few of which are illustrated; it was

[^0]followed by a volume ${ }^{5}$, 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 Africa ${ }^{6}$ : 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 themes ${ }^{7}$. More recently, a new volume has come out ${ }^{8}$ : 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 scenes ${ }^{9}$, seasons ${ }^{10}$, 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

[^1]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 $1^{\text {st }}$ century BC and the $6^{\text {th }}$ century AD; the article of Salies on the basic compositional schemata ${ }^{13}$; and the more specialised work of Schmelzeisen ${ }^{14}$ 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 Mosaics ${ }^{16}$ (CMGR IVIII). 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

[^2]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.

[^3]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 18 m 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 ( $\mathrm{R}+$ 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 Africa ${ }^{18}$.

[^4]
## Chapter 2

## Vestibulum and its annexes

### 2.1 Introduction

In the description of Encolpius' and his friends' entrance to Trimalchio's house', 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, Gellius ${ }^{2}$ and Macrobius ${ }^{3}$ cite as their authority C. Aelius Gallus, the writer on legal vocabulary, who probably lived at the time of Augustus'. 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

[^5]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 $1^{\text {st }}$ 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 house ${ }^{5}$.
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 attested ${ }^{6}$. 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 day ${ }^{7}$.

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 audiencechamber, where the master received his dependents for the salutatio and for the conducting of business; the room for storing sportulae and keeping official documents.

[^6]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 status ${ }^{8}$; 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 private ${ }^{9}$. 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 building ${ }^{10}$. 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.

[^7]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 ( 2.65 m and 2.30 m respectively) and a small lateral door ( 0.85 m and 0.60 m 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 ( 3.20 m wide) was flanked by two smaller doors ( 0.80 m 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 Greece ${ }^{11}$. 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

[^8]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 $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 ' $v e$ ' with stare to signify a place meant for standing ${ }^{12}$.

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 ( 0.45 m 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 Ostia ${ }^{13}$ and at in the so-called Palace of the Dux at Apollonia ${ }^{14}$. 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 office ${ }^{15}$. 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

[^9]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 $(3.12 \times 21.10 \mathrm{~m})(\mathrm{Pl} .20)$ 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 $\left(86 \mathrm{~m}^{2}\right)$ 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 size ${ }^{18}$. 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 ${ }^{19}$. Seneca ${ }^{20}$ 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 crowed 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 ).

[^10]
### 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 structures ${ }^{23}$. The basilica, in fact, evokes a public building directly inspired by the main hall of the Hellenistic palaces ${ }^{24}$. 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 circular ${ }^{25}$. In the early Imperial period, the basilica for large audiences was adopted in domestic buildings. In the Casa dell'Atrio a Mosaico at Herculaneum ${ }^{26}$, 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.

[^11]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 1 m -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 ( 2.60 m 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 2.10 m wide door of audience-chamber II ( $28 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ) was framed by pillars (Table 2.2 n.5). Audience-chamber IV of the Maison de Castorius at Djemila was a small room ( $19 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ), 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 Ushaped 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: $106 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ). 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 ( $2.60 \times 12 \mathrm{~m}$ ) ending into an apse ( 1.75 m wide; 1.55 m 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 Mosaiqque 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 ( $30 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ), which was located on the upper floor at the level with the street. The high visibility of the room from the street displayed the houseowner'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 audiencechambers 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 ( 4 m wide; 4 m deep: Pl. 31), a transept, and a 16 m -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 family ${ }^{27}$. Apsidal 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 ( 3.5 m deep; 4 m wide) for the enhancement of the dominus' image; the long nave (ca. 6.50 m ) for the reception of clientes; the location next to the street ${ }^{28}$; 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 provinces ${ }^{29}$.
As Ellis ${ }^{30}$ correctly points out, the arrangement of such audience-chambers reflects a change in the system of patronage. From the $4^{\text {th }}$ century $A D$ 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 ceremony ${ }^{31}$. 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 $\left(59 \mathrm{~m}^{2}\right)$, 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 $(2.10 \times 1.90 \mathrm{~m})$ : 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 $1\left(60 \mathrm{~m}^{2}\right)$ gave onto a medium-sized space ( $12 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ) marked off by two columns: the dominus may have made his formal entrance from the adjoining

[^12]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 ( $64 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ), 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 $\mathrm{C} 1-\mathrm{C} 2$, 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 audiencechamber 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 porter ${ }^{33}$. 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 bowl ${ }^{34}$. 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-

[^13]door ${ }^{36}$; 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 ( $23 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ) 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 $\left(4.84 \mathrm{~m}^{2}\right)$, 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

[^14]Djemila, the cella ianitoris may have been the small room (III) adjoining audiencechamber 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 audiencechamber 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 axiality 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 $\mathrm{C} 1-\mathrm{C} 2$. 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 master ${ }^{37}$. 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

[^15]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 $2^{\prime}\left(2.50 \mathrm{~m}^{2}\right)$, 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 ( $7.5 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ) 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 home ${ }^{39}$. A further example may be room IV of the Sollertiana Domus at El Jem (Table 2.2 n.25):

[^16]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 RomanoAfrican 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 concrete ${ }^{40}$ or of limestone ${ }^{41}$ 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-Lemée ${ }^{42}$, 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 stone ${ }^{43}$ : 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 Regia ${ }^{44}$ 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 flowers ${ }^{45}$ : the same arrangement is repeated with little variation in the cella ianitoris (Table 2.2 n .9 ). The design occurs

[^17]again in the vestibulum of the Maison des Animaux Liés at Thuburbo Maius: here the layout ${ }^{46}$ 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 spindles ${ }^{47}$ (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 III ${ }^{48}$ was carpeted with a plain pattern of peltae (Table 2.2 n .22 ). The geometric mosaic decorating audiencechamber II of the Maison des Animaux Liés at Thuburbo Maius ${ }^{49}$ and apse 4 of room 3 in the Maison n. 3 at Bulla Regia ${ }^{50}$ 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 ground ${ }^{52}$ ( 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

[^18]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 Edifice 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 horsetransporter 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 Lucillius, 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 basin ${ }^{54}$ (Pl. 199). Nevertheless, the polychrome mosaic enhanced the appearance of the audience-chamber, which was carpeted with a black and white grid of filets ${ }^{55}$. The same geometric design, but

[^19]executed in colour, appears in audience-chamber II of the Maison aux Communs at Thuburbo Maius ${ }^{56}$ (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 sources ${ }^{57}$ 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 sociopolitical 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.

[^20]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 inhabitants ${ }^{58}$. 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 security ${ }^{59}$.

[^21]
### 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 C 3 , 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. $20 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ) 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. $20 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ) 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 ${ }^{60}$. Cicero ${ }^{61}$ 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 peristyle ${ }^{63}$. The location of the back door next to the service rooms is attested

[^22]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 stables ${ }^{64}$.

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 Iaudience 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: $1 \times 3.10 \mathrm{~m}$ ), 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).

[^23]In some Romano-African houses the main gate and the secondary door opened next to each other ${ }^{65}$. 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 entrance ${ }^{66}$ 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 ( 2.5 m 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

[^24]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 ( $\mathrm{X}: 7.80 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ), which could have been used as a cella ianitoris, and the arrangement of the intervening chamber XI ( $13.5 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ) 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 wall ${ }^{67}$. 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 ).

[^25]
### 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 accepted ${ }^{68}$. 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

[^26]evening; servants and family members in between. However, the paucity of houses with a single entrance ${ }^{69}$ 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 houseowner 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 houses ${ }^{70}$. 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.

[^27]| Town | House | Room | Dimensions | Area |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Acholla | M. d'Asinius Rufinus | I | 7.8×8.25 | Area | Façade | Number of entrances | Pavement |
| Acholla | M. du Triomphe de Neptune | I | 7.8 | 64.35 | porch | 1 | geometric mosaic |
| Althiburos | Édifice des Asclepieia | 1 | $6.3 \times 2.5$ | 15.75 | columns | 1 | concrete |
| Bulla Regia | M. d'Amphitrite | 14 | $3.12 \times 21.1$ | 65.83 | landing | 1 | unpaved |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Chasse | 14 | $\frac{1.65 \times 10}{5 \times 5}$ | 17.96 |  | 1 | unpaved |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Chasse | 37 | 3 | 25 |  | 1 | slabs |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Nouvelle Chasse | 1 | $7 \times 6$ | 18.58 |  | 1 | slabs |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Pêche | 1 | $12 \times 7.5$ | 42 | porch | 1 | slabs |
| Bulla Regia | M. n. 3 | 1 | $3.6 \times 6.4$ | 90 | stairs | 1 | unpaved |
| Clupea | M. des Deux Chasses | I | $3.6 \times 6.4$ | 23.04 |  | 1 | geometric mosaic |
| Djemila | M. d'Amphitrite | I | $3 \times 10$ | $\underline{1.61}$ |  | 1 | slabs |
| Djemila | M. de Castorius | I | $8.6 \times 10$ | 30 |  | 1 | slabs |
| Djemila | M. d'Europe | 1 | $7.4 \times 8$ | 86 | inscribed bases | 1 | unpaved |
| Djemila | M. de l'Âne | 1 | $4 \times 15$ | 59.2 | porticus | 3 | slabs |
| El Jem | M. de la Procession Dionysiaque | V1 | $2.9 \times 3.8$ | 60 | porch | 1 | concrete |
| El Jem | M. des Dauphins | I | $2.3 \times 8.3$ | 11.02 | pillars | 1 | geometric mosaic |
| El Jem | M. du Paon | I | $\frac{2.3 \times 8.3}{4.5 \times 4.5}$ | 19.09 | pillars | 1 | concrete |
| El Jem | Sollertiana Domus | I | 4.5 $5 \times$ | 20.25 | columns-stairs | 1 | unpaved |
| Neapolis | M. des Nymphes | XVII | $5.5 \times$ | 13.65 |  | 1 | unpaved |
| Oudna | M. d'Ikarios | 12 | $7.18 \times 8.97$ | 25 | columns | 1 | slabs |
| Pupput | M. du Péristyle Figuré | I | $11 \times 3.75$ | 64.4 | columns | 2 | slabs |
| Pupput | M. du Triclinium en Noir et Blanc | I | $2 \times 29$ | 41 |  | 1 | geometric mosaic |
|  |  |  |  | 58 |  | 1 | geometric mosaic |

Table 2.1: Vestibulum

| Pupput | M. du Viridarium à Niches | I | $3.2 \times 6$ | 19.2 |  |  |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. aux Communs | I | $2.37 \times 5.9$ | 13.98 |  | 1 | geometric mosaic |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. de Neptune | XXVII | 4 m long | unknown |  | 1 | geometric mosaic |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. de Nicentius | I | $5.3 \times 3.5$ | unknown | destroyed | unknown | unpaved |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. des Animaux Liès | I | $3.95 \times 5.7$ | 18.55 |  | 1 | unpaved |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. des Palmes | I | unknown | unknown |  | 1 | geometric mosaic |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. du Char de Vénus | I | $2.87 \times 1.75$ | unknown | destroyed | unknown | unpaved |
| Thugga | M. de Dionysos et d'Ulysse | 1 | $3 \times 4$ | $\frac{5.02}{12}$ | stairs | 1 | unpaved |
| Thugga | M. de Vénus | 1 | $3.65 \times 1.5$ | 5.47 | upper floor | 1 | unpaved |
| Utica | M. de la Cascade | I | $3.75 \times 3.57$ | 5.47 |  | 1 | geometric mosaic |
| Utica | M. de la Chasse | I | $3 \times 13.33$ | 13.39 |  | 1 | unpaved |
| Utica | M. Ouest | XIII | $4 \times 4.64$ | 1856 |  | 1 | unpaved |
| Volubilis | M. à la Mosaïque de Vénus | V1 | 4× $\times 15$ | 18.56 60 |  | 1 | geometric mosaic |
| Volubilis | M. à l'Ephèbe | , | 3×9 | 60 | porticus | 2 | slabs |
| Volubilis | M. aux Travaux d'Hercule | 1 | $6 \times 8$ | 48 | pillars | 1 | unpaved |
| Volubilis | M. de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons | 3 | $\frac{6 \times 8}{4 \times 12}$ | 48 | columns | 2 | concrete |
| Volubilis | M. de Flavius Germanus | 1 | $4.35 \times 10.12$ | 48 | columns | 2 | slabs |
| Volubilis | M. d'Orphée | 1 | $\frac{4.35 \times 10.12}{12 \times 9}$ | 44.02 108 | columns | 2 | slabs |
| Volubilis | M. des Néréides | 4 | 12x9 5.25 | 108 | columns | 2 | unpaved |
|  |  |  | $5.25 \times 6$ | 31.5 | pillars | 2 | unpaved |


2.Volubilis, Maison de Flavius Germanus


Table 2.2: Vestibulum and its annexes in the Romano-African house $\square$


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. Pupput, Maison du Péristyle Figuré
17. Thugga, Maison de Dionysos et d'Ulysse


18. Pupput, 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

26. Thuburbo Maius, Maison des Animaux Liés
25. El Jem, Sollertiana Domus

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

32. El Jem, Maison des Dauphins


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 middle ${ }^{1}$.

### 3.2 Use of the word peristyle

The word peristylium 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 adaptation ${ }^{2}$. Varro mentions peristylon in his remarks about the Greek nomenclature that was widely being applied to the spaces of villas in his day ${ }^{3}$. Vitruvius lists peristylia amplissima among the room-types of the house suitable for a Roman aristocrat ${ }^{4}$. 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 house ${ }^{5}$. Remarkably, neither Pliny nor Sidonius Apollinaris use the word peristyle in the description of their villas, preferring instead the technical Latin

[^28]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 courtyard ${ }^{7}$. 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 order ${ }^{8}$. The porticus of Trimalchio's house was ornamented with a piscina ${ }^{9}$ and was located in front of the entrance ${ }^{10}$.

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 evening ${ }^{\prime \prime}$, 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 perisyle or similar garden area ${ }^{12}$. 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 summer ${ }^{13}$. 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 peristylium 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 $2^{\text {nd }}$ century BC , under

[^29]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 peristyle ${ }^{15}$.
This standard evolutionary account is mainly based on the extensive material evidence of housing found at Pompeii and Herculaneum ( $2^{\text {nd }}$ century BC $-1^{\text {st }}$ 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- $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 Greece ${ }^{16}$.

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 constructions ${ }^{17}$. 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 Pompeii ${ }^{18}$. 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 spaces ${ }^{19}$. 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 structure ${ }^{20}$, 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

[^30]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 peristyle ${ }^{21}$.

### 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 oilpress, 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

[^31]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 BlanchardLemée describes as courts ${ }^{23}$.

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

[^32]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 $1^{\text {st }}$ century $\mathrm{AD}^{24}$. As Gozlan points out, the long porticus seems to feature the pastas associated with Greek housing ${ }^{25}$. 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 residences ${ }^{27}$, 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

[^33]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 0.16 m below the level of corridors I-II; the two kinds of passage were separated by a mosaic band, which would indicate the placement of columns ${ }^{28}$. 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 peristyle ${ }^{29}$.
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

[^34]Kerkouane ${ }^{30}$, 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 ${ }^{3 l}$. The tradition seems to have continued in Roman period, as several houses excavated in the Imperial towns of Ephesus ${ }^{32}$, Apamea ${ }^{33}$, and Antiochia ${ }^{34}$ 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 out ${ }^{35}$.
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 of texture ${ }^{36}$. 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 Maius ${ }^{37}$. 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-

[^35]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 peristylegarden 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 plants ${ }^{38}$. 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.

[^36]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 garden ${ }^{39}$. 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).

[^37]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 (PI. 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 climate ${ }^{40}$.

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: 'absidenymphée, when the floor mosaic illustrates marine scenes, and 'abside decorative' in absence of any mosaic theme bearing association with water ${ }^{41}$. However, as the use of two different terms to describe the same structure-type may be misleading ${ }^{42}$, 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.

[^38]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 $(3.50 \mathrm{~m}$ wide; 2.53 m 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 ( 2.85 m wide; 1.40 m 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 unequallysized 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 Farrar ${ }^{43}$ 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

[^39]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 them ${ }^{44}$. 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 sarcophagi ${ }^{45}$. 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 repertory ${ }^{46}$. 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

[^40]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 middle ${ }^{47}$. 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 Carthage ${ }^{48}$. 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

[^41]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 $\mathrm{XVI} / \mathrm{XVII} / \mathrm{XVIII}$; 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

[^42]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 lavish ${ }^{52}$. 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 room ${ }^{53}$.

[^43]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 southwestern 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 effects ${ }^{54}$. 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 elaborate ${ }^{55}$. A similarly plain pattern occurs in the peristyles of the Maison d'Asinius Rufinus at Acholla ${ }^{56}$ 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

[^44]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 (P1. 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 culture ${ }^{64}$. 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

[^45]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 victory ${ }^{66}$. 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 Mahrez ${ }^{67}$.
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.

[^46]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 (PI. 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

[^47]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 lines ${ }^{69}$. 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 damaged ${ }^{70}$ : their walls were revetted with marble panels of different colours ${ }^{71}$, 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 fish ${ }^{73}$.
In the Maison de Neptune at Thuburbo Maius, the basin was floored with a marine scene, which combines realistic and fantastic motifs ${ }^{74}$. 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.

[^48]A further marine scene with a sea-divinity appears in the basin of the Maison de Vénus at Thugga ${ }^{75}$. 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 (P1. 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 ground ${ }^{77}$. A similar motif may have decorated the south-eastern basin of the Maison de Nicentius a Thuburbo Maius: the mosaic, which showed some flowers when it was brought to light, is now completely destroyed ${ }^{78}$. Covered with water as the source of all life, the elements of landscape would have emphasized the ideas of fertility and prosperity.

[^49]Some of the African basins listed in the catalogue were decorated with geometric motifs, which had simply an ornamental value ${ }^{79}$.

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 Neapolis ${ }^{80}$. 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 scroll ${ }^{81}$.

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 $(\mathrm{Pl} .3)^{82}$. 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.

[^50]A variety of motifs ornamented the pseudo-basins of the Maison du Viridarium à Niches at Pupput ${ }^{83}$. 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 leave; 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 Pompeii ${ }^{84}$. 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 Pompeii ${ }^{85}$, but they have left virtually no trace in African domestic architecture ${ }^{86}$.

[^51]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' peristyle ${ }^{87}$, 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 heads ${ }^{88}$; a similar image occurs in Vergil, who speaks of boys playing with a top in an empty court ${ }^{89}$.

[^52]
### 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 selfpresentation 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 | $13.65 \times 10.7$ | 146 | 4 | pseudo |
| Acholla | M. des Colonnes Rouges | $8 \times 5.2$ | 41.6 | 2 |  |
| Acholla | M. du Triomphe de Neptune | $17.5 \times 14.5$ | 253.75 | $3+1$ lorridor | pseudo |
| Althiburos | Édifice des Asclepieia | $20.33 \times 17.05$ | 346.63 | 4 | semicircular |
| Althiburos | M. des Muses | $12 \times 18$ | 216 | 4 | oblong |
| Bulla Regia | M. d'Amphitrite | $14 \times 20$ | 280 | 4 | rectangular |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Chasse | $13 \times 19$ | 247 | 4 | square |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Nouvelle Chasse | $17.5 \times 12.5$ | 218.75 | 4 | rectangular |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Pêche | $22 \times 16$ | 352 | 4 | rectangular |
| Bulla Regia | M. n. 3 | $12 \times 15$ | 180 | 4 |  |
| Carthage | M. de la Volière | $15 \times 17.5$ | 262.5 | 4 | octagonal |
| Carthage | M. du Triconque | 16 m wide |  | 4 | square |
| Clupea | M. des Deux Chasses | $15.5 \times 15$ | 232.5 | 4 | pseudo |
| Djemila | M. d'Amphitrite | $13 \times 11$ | 143 | 4 |  |
| Djemila | M. de Castorius | $10 \times 8.6$ | 86 | $3+1$ corridor | semicicular |
| Djemila | M. d'Europe | $10 \times 8.4$ | 84 | 3 | semicircular + square |
| Djemila | M. de l'Âne | $15 \times 13$ | 195 | $3+1$ corridor | semicircular + oblong |
| El Jem | House of Africa | unknown |  | 4 | semicircular |
| El Jem | M. de la Procession Dionysiaque | $20 \times 18$ | 360 | 4 |  |
| El Jem | M. des Dauphins | $22 \times 23.5$ | 517 | 4 | pseudo |
| El Jem | M. du Paon | $17.15 \times 19.6$ | 336.14 | 4 | pseudo |
| El Jem | Sollertiana domus | $14.5 \times 17.4$ | 252.3 | 4 | pseudo |
| Hadrumentum | M. des Masques |  |  | 4 |  |
| Hergla | M. aux deux Péristyles | 20 m wide |  | $3+1 ?$ |  |
| Neapolis | M. des Nymphes | $25 \times 20$ | 500 | 4 | pseudo |
| Oudna | M. d'Ikarios | $20 \times 14$ | 280 | 4 |  |
| Pupput | M. du Péristyle Figuré | $11 \times 10$ | 110 | 4 |  |
| Pupput | M. du Triclinium en Noir et Blanc | $13 \times 12$ | 156 | 4 |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |

Table 3.1: Peristyle

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



1. Volubilis, Maison à la Mosaïque de Venus

2. Althiburos, Maison des Muses


Table 3.2. Peristyle in the Romano-African house

3. Neapolis, Maison des Nymphes


6. Bulla Regia, Maison n. 3

7. Thuburbo Maius, Maison du Char deVénus

8. Clupea, Maison des Deux Chasses

9. Thuburbo Maius, Maison de Bacchus et Ariane

10. El Jem, Maison des Dauphins

11. Acholla, Maison d'Asinius Rufinus

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 Voliere


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


B4. 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

42. Utica, Maison au Grand Oecus

43. Thuburbo Maius, Maison des Protomés section of the Protomai
44. Thugga, Maison de Vénus

45. Pupput, Maison du Viridarium à Niches

46. Thuburbo Maius, Maison aux Communs

47. Pupput, Maison du Péristyle Figuré

48. Thuburbo Maius, Maison de Neptune

49. Thugga, Maison de Dionysos et d'Ulysse

50. El Jem, Maison du Paon

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

52. Althiburos, Édifice des Asclepieia $\square$

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 ${ }^{l}$ 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

[^53]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 semipilasters 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 sides ${ }^{3}$.

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

[^54]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 pavingtypes, 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 other ${ }^{5}$. 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

[^55]21 illustrates most unusually a range of agricultural activities ${ }^{6}$. 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 destroyed ${ }^{7}$.

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 roses ${ }^{8}$. 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 lines ${ }^{9}$. 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

[^56]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 baskets ${ }^{10}$. 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 ${ }^{\prime \prime}$ : 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 Al was ornamented with a mosaic of white tesserae laid to design lozenges and squares ${ }^{12}$. 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 Neapolis ${ }^{16}$. 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).

[^57]Secondary courtyard XVII of the Maison de Bacchus et Ariane at Thuburbo Maius was carpeted with an orthogonal pattern of swastika-meanders ${ }^{17}$. 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

[^58]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 $(2.80 \mathrm{~m}$ wide; 1.95 m 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 motifs ${ }^{18}$.

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 burning ${ }^{19}$. 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.

[^59]The size and decor 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 highstatus 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 courtarea, 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 dining ${ }^{21}$.

### 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.

[^60]| Town | House | Space | Dimensions | Area | Porticus | Basin |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Acholla | M. du Triomphe de Neptune | XXVIII | $3 \times 9.5$ | 28.5 |  |  |
| Acholla | M. du Triomphe de Neptune | XXXIV | $3 \times 9.5$ | 28.5 |  |  |
| Althiburos | Édifice des Asclepieia | 36 | $13.05 \times 11.05$ | 144.2 |  |  |
| Althiburos | M. des Muses | K/L | $6.5 \times 5$ | 32.5 | 1 |  |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Chasse | 17 | $10 \times 9$ | 90 |  | rectangular |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Chasse | 48 | $8.2 \times 9.7$ | 19.4 | 4 | pseudo-basin |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Nouvelle Chasse | 15 | $6 \times 4$ | 24 | 1 |  |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Pêche | 33 | $5.5 \times 4$ | 22 |  | semicircular |
| El Jem | M. du Paon | XXXII | $7.15 \times 10.6$ | 75.79 | 4 | semicirculartoblong |
| El Jem | Sollertiana Domus | XX/XXI | $7.6 \times 5$ | 38 | 2 | , |
| Neapolis | M. des Nymphes | A1 | $10.5 \times 6.2$ | 65.1 | 4 | square |
| Neapolis | M. des Nymphes | A2 | $11 \times 6.2$ | 68.2 | 4 | square |
| Oudna | M. Ikarios | 7 | $7.85 \times 6.42$ | 50.39 | 3 |  |
| Oudna | M. Ikarios | 17 | $8.57 \times 2.85$ | 24.42 | 1 |  |
| Oudna | M. Ikarios | 21 | $10 \times 6.43$ | 64.3 | 3 |  |
| Oudna | M. d'Ikarios | 30 | $11.4 \times 5$ | 57 | 3 | semicircular |
| Silin | Villa du Taureau | 1 | $7.8 \times 6.5$ | 50.7 | 4 |  |
| Tagiura | Villa della Gara delle Nereidi | 9 | 14 m wide |  | 3 |  |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. de Bacchus et Ariane | XVII | 5.5. $\times 4$ | 22 |  |  |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. de Bacchus et Ariane | XXXIII | $5.75 \times 6.75$ | 38.81 |  | semicircular |
| Utica | M. de la Cascade | XIII | $9 \times 4$ | 36 | 1 | rectangular |
| Utica | M. de la Cascade | XVI | $9 \times 5$ | 45 | 2 | rectangular |
| Utica | M. des Chapiteaux historiés | V | $6.25 \times 6.12$ | 38.25 | 4 |  |
| Volubilis | M. à la Mosaïque de Vénus | 12 | $7.1 \times 6.5$ | 46.15 | 3 | semicirculartoblong |
| Volubilis | M. d'Orphée | 6 | $8.5 \times 7$ | 59.5 | no | sam |
| Volubilis | M. d'Orphée | 21 | $28 \times 14$ | 392 | 3 | circular |
| Volubilis | M. des Néréides | 27 | $5.7 \times 4$ | 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


9. Utica, Maison au Grand Oecus


12. Volubilis, Maison d'Orphée

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

14. Oudna, Maison d'Ikarios

17.Utica, Maison des Chapiteaux Historiés
16. Bulla Regia, Maison de la Chasse: basement
18. Bulla Regia, Maison de la Pêche: basement


19. Tagiura, Villa della Gara delle Nereidi


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 arrangement ${ }^{2}$. 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

[^61]literary sources already in the $1^{\text {st }}$ century AD: Martial refers to it in two of his poems ${ }^{4}$. 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 $\mathrm{it}^{5}$. In the $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 dining ${ }^{6}$. 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 out ${ }^{7}$, 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 room ${ }^{11}$. But when Pliny describes the dining room of his Laurentine villa to be used on very formal

[^62]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 panels ${ }^{13}$. 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 crowd ${ }^{14}$; it contains such luxuries as heating with hypocausts ${ }^{15}$, draperies (vela) and large windows (specularia) ${ }^{16}$, and books ${ }^{17}$. The Elder Pliny mentions a freedman, who had built a cenatio with thirty onyx columns ${ }^{18}$ and Sidonius describes the luxurious setting of a cenatio with its jewelled cups, garlands of flowers and reek of cinnamon ${ }^{19}$.
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 Maximus ${ }^{23}$ and Quintilian ${ }^{24}$ 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

[^63]decoration nor lavish flooring ${ }^{25}$; 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 decoration ${ }^{27}$.
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 Cryptoporticus ${ }^{28}$. Only one example is known in Roman Africa: the Maison aux Banquettes at Hadrumetum ${ }^{29}$. 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 $2^{\text {nd }}$ 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 (2 ${ }^{\text {nd }}$ century AD$)^{30}$ and a building in Agro Murecine outside Pompeii (before 62 AD$)^{31}$

[^64]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 Mosaïque 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 $\mathrm{T}+\mathrm{U}$ 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 $\mathrm{T}+\mathrm{U}$ 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

[^65]been spoiled ${ }^{32}$. 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 $5.2 \mathrm{n} .13 ; \mathrm{Pl} .81$ ): 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 (Almendinilla) 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 beyond ${ }^{33}$. Apsidal dining rooms or stibadia are rare in domestic architecture of the Roman provinces ${ }^{34}$. 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 1'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

[^66]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 office ${ }^{35}$. However, as Ellis shows in his paper on the late antique peristyle-house in the eastern part of the Roman Empire ${ }^{36}$, 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 square ${ }^{37}$. Threeapsed rooms are attested in many late antique villas and palaces of the Roman provinces, as they were provided with plenty of space ${ }^{38}$. 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

[^67](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) my 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 $\mathrm{T}+\mathrm{U}$ plan is indicated by an inner colonnade on three sides of the room ${ }^{40}$. 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 $\mathrm{T}+\mathrm{U}$ layout of the floor mosaic, shows that the room was mainly used for

[^68]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 $\mathrm{T}+\mathrm{U}$ 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 ( 2.40 m 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 ( $13.40 \times 14.80 \mathrm{~m}: 12$ 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

[^69]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 ( $6.50 \times 7.20 \mathrm{~m}$ ) 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 $(10.20 \times 8.10 \mathrm{~m})$ 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 preserved ${ }^{43}$, 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 combats ${ }^{45}$ at the ends of the bar of the T (P1. 81) and is linked to a large panel ${ }^{46}$ 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

[^70]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 $\mathrm{El} \mathrm{Jem}{ }^{48}$. 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 convincing ${ }^{49}$. 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 motifs ${ }^{50}$. 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

[^71]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. Slim ${ }^{52}$ 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 Seasons ${ }^{53}$. 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 room ${ }^{54}$. 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.

[^72]Figures of the Dionysiac repertory occur again in the central panel of the $\mathrm{T}+\mathrm{U}$ triclinium II of the Maison des Colonnes Rouges at Acholla ${ }^{55}$. 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 consulate ${ }^{57}$. 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 art ${ }^{58}$. 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

[^73]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 picnic ${ }^{60}$. 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 Perseus ${ }^{61}$, 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

[^74]Nicias ( $5^{\text {th }}$ 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 semidraped 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

[^75]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 popular ${ }^{65}$; 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 room ${ }^{67}$. 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 Neptune ${ }^{68}$ : 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

[^76]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 fertility ${ }^{69}$. 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 Volubilis ${ }^{71}$, 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 Althiburos ${ }^{72}$. 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.

[^77]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 panel ${ }^{75}$ 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

[^78]at $\mathrm{El} \mathrm{Jem}{ }^{76}$, for instance, a foliate pattern of medallions contains representation of fruit and fish. In the Maison des Animaux Liés at Thuburbo Maius, the $\mathrm{T}+\mathrm{U}$ 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 Hadrumetum (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).

[^79]In the main triclinium of the Maison d'Amphitrite (III) at Djemila ${ }^{80}$, for example, a pattern of adjacent octagons intersected on the shorter side.
In the Maison du Viridarium à Niches at Pupput ${ }^{81}$, 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 Thaenae ${ }^{82}$ (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. Floralvegetal 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 Utica ${ }^{85}$, 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 mosaics ${ }^{87}$. The two types of construction may be used in the same room. For example, in main triclinium

[^80]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 squares ${ }^{90}$ and rectangles ${ }^{91}$. 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 Carthage ${ }^{93}$.

### 5.5 Convivial space

A mosaic from Carthage (late $4^{\text {th }}$ century) depicts a scene of a banquet in progress ${ }^{94}$. 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 servants ${ }^{95}$. In $E p .47$ 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

[^81]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 placed ${ }^{96}$. Many sources relate that the wine server must be young, smooth-shaven, longhaired, 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 Thugga ${ }^{97}$ (mid-3 ${ }^{\text {rd }}$ 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-owner ${ }^{98}$. The other represents two attendants serving two standing men ${ }^{99}$. 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 slaves ${ }^{100}$ 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 entertainment ${ }^{102}$ that the house-owner provided to his guests over dinner, or more precisely in the drinking

[^82]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 Unmidia Quadratilla owned a troupe of pantomimes that performed in her house as well as in the theatre ${ }^{104}$. 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 $7^{\text {th }}$ century $B C$ 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 $6^{\text {th }}$ 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 culture ${ }^{105}$. 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 occasions ${ }^{106}$.
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 hierarchy ${ }^{107}$, which assigned the left couch seen from the opening of the $U$ to the lowest social status guest and the right

[^83]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) Majorian ${ }^{108}$. 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 society ${ }^{109}$.

We are well informed from written texts about the protocols, which dictated the position and behaviour of the diners ${ }^{110}$, 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 archacological 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 1.50 m to $2 \mathrm{~m}^{111}$. This is

[^84]comparable to material from Pompeii ${ }^{112}$ and from Roman Britain ${ }^{113}$. The number of the guests and the amount of space for service and entertainment depended upon the dimensions of the dining area. The $\mathrm{T}+\mathrm{U}$ shaped triclinium (II) of the Maison des Colonnes Rouges at Acholla occupied an area of approximately $5.18 \times 5.40 \mathrm{~m}$. The small room ( $28 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ) 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 10 m . The U-shaped area for couches $(5.40 \mathrm{~m}$ long on the sides and 9.80 m 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. 5 m wide) and at the entrance of the room ( $9.80 \times 3.40 \mathrm{~m}$ ) 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 ( $6.50 \times 6.50 \mathrm{~m}$ ) but different mosaic layout. Main triclinium G of the Maison des Muses at Althiburos was paved with a $\mathrm{T}+\mathrm{U}$ mosaic. The U-shaped area with geometric pattern ( 1.50 m wide) was intended for the accommodation of the traditional number of nine guests; the T-shaped section ( $5 \times 6.5 \mathrm{~m}$ ) decorated with a figurative motif offered space for service and entertainment in the middle and at the entrance of the room. The $\mathrm{T}+\mathrm{U}$ 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 $(1.80 \mathrm{~m})$ : 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 omamental 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.

[^85]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 1.50 m to 2 m to the curved stibadium couch, an apse at least 4 m wide and 2 m to 2.50 m deep would have been required to accommodate the couch ${ }^{114}$. 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 $\left(4.60 \mathrm{~m}\right.$ wide and 2.50 m deep) ${ }^{115}$ and of the Maison des Chevaux at Carthage ( 5 m wide and 3 m deep) ${ }^{116}$, and a mosaic from the dining room of Villa of the Falconer in Argos (late $4^{\text {th }}$ - early $5^{\text {th }}$ century): the curved part of the design, laid out into seven segments, is slightly over 4 m wide and 3 m deep ${ }^{117}$. 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 six ${ }^{118}$; at Majorian's banquet, to which Sidonius was invited, the guests were eight ${ }^{119}$. 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

[^86]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 ( $6^{\text {th }}$ century) showing Pharaoh's feast ${ }^{121}$. 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 1 m 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 ( 4.70 m wide and 3 m deep), while the forepart of the room ( 8 x 7.50 m ) 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 ( $6.72 \times 8.03 \mathrm{~m}$ ) 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.

[^87]
### 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 show ${ }^{122}$. 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 sight ${ }^{123}$. 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 selfadvertisement of the house-owner.

[^88]| Oudna | M. d'Ikarios | 33 | $9.6 \times 8.2$ | 78.72 | colonnaded | X | peristyle |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Pupput | M. du Péristyle Figuré | XIII | $3.5 \times 6.3$ | 22.05 | all over |  | peristyle |
| Pupput | M. du Triclinium en Noir et Blanc | VII | $6.5 \times 9$ | 58.5 | $\mathrm{T}+\mathrm{U}$ |  | peristyle-basin |
| Pupput | M. du Viridarium à Niches | X | 7.5 wide |  | $\mathrm{T}+\mathrm{U}$ | X | peristyle-pseudo basin |
| Silin | Villa du Taureau | 12a | $24 \times 18$ | 432 | unknown | X | anteroom |
| Tagiura | Villa della Gara delle Nereidi | 45 | $6.5 \times 6.5$ | 42 | emblema |  | corridor |
| Thaenae | M. de Dionysos | X | $5.25 \times 5.46$ | 28.66 | U |  | peristyle |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. aux Communs | IX | $6 \times 6.2$ | 37.2 | unknown | x | peristyle |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. de Bacchus et Ariane | IX | $6 \times 5.8$ | 34.8 | U | X | peristyle-basin |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. de Neptune | XV/XIX | $7.12 \times 8.5$ | 60.52 | unknown | X | peristyle-pseudo basin |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. de Nicentius | XIV | $6.31 \times 6.52$ | 41.14 | all over | X | peristyle-basin |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. des Animaux Liès | XVIII | $6.33 \times 6.22$ | 39.37 | $\mathrm{T}+\mathrm{U}$ | X | peristyle |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. des Palmes | XIII | $6.42 \times 5.17$ | 33.19 | all over | X | peristyle-basin |
| Thuburbo Maius | M.des Protomés-Sect. Protomai | IX/X | $5 \times 10.85$ | 54.25 | all over |  | peristyle |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. des Protomés-Sect.Triconchos | IX |  |  | triconchos |  | anteroom |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. du Char de Vénus | XXX/XXXI |  | 68 | triconchos | X | peristyle |
| Thugga | M. de Dionysos et d'Ulysse | 10 | $4.37 \times 4.6$ | 20.1 | all over |  | peristyle-basin |
| Thugga | M. de Vénus | VIII | $4.4 \times 3.3$ | 14.52 | all over |  | peristyle |
| Utica | M. au Grand Oecus | XVI | $13.4 \times 14.8$ | 198.32 | colonnaded | X | peristyle-basin |
| Utica | M. de la Cascade | XIV | $7.6 \times 8.6$ | 65.36 | $\mathrm{T}+\mathrm{U}$ |  | peristyle |
| Utica | M. de la Chasse | XVI/XVIII | $4.7 \times 6.02$ | 28.29 | all over |  | peristyle |
| Utica | Maison H | XXVI | $8.4 \times 8.05$ | 67.62 | all over |  | peristyle-basin |
| Utica | M. Ouest | III | $5.6 \times 5.1$ | 28.56 | all over |  | peristyle-basin |
| Volubilis | M. à la Mosaïque de Vénus | 11 | $7.9 \times 10$ | 79 | U | x | peristyle-basin |
| Volubilis | M. aux Travaux d'Hercule | 2 | $8.4 \times 10.45$ | 87.78 | all over |  | peristyle |
| Volubilis | M. de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons | 7 | $6.23 \times 7.95$ | 49.53 | $\mathrm{T}+\mathrm{U}$ |  | peristyle |
| Volubilis | M. de Flavius Germanus | 12 | $6.2 \times 7.6$ | 47.12 | unknown | x | peristyle-basin |
| Volubilis | M. à l'Ephèbe | 10 | $7 \times 6$ | 42 | $\mathrm{T}+\mathrm{U}$ | X | peristyle-basin |
| Volubilis | M. d'Orphée | 3 | $11 \times 10$ | 120 | T+U | X | court-basin |
| Volubilis | M. des Néréides | 8 | $7.1 \times 8.2$ | 58.22 | unknown | x | peristyle-basin |



1. Volubilis, Maison à la Mosaïque de Venus

2. Thuburbo Maius, Maison de Bacchus et Ariane


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

8. Bulla Regia, Insula de la Chasse

9. Pupput, Maison du Viridarium à Niches

## 10. Thuburbo Maius, Maison des Animaux Liés

11. Thaenae, Maison de Dionysos

12. Neapolis, Maison des Nymphes

13. El Jem, Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque


14. Volubilis, Maison de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons

15. Volubilis, Maison de l'Éphèbe

16. Volubilis, Maison d'Orphée

17. Utica, Maison H
18. Carthage, Maison de la Volière


19. Djemila, Maison de l'Âne

20. Hergla, Maison aux Deux Péristyles

21. Silin, Villa du Taureau

22. Carthage, Maison du Triconque

23. Thuburbo Maius, Maison des Protomés section of the Triconchos

24. Clupea, Maison des Deux Chasses
25. Acholla, Maison du Triomphe de Neptune

26. El Jem, House of Africa

27. Oudna, Maison d'Ikarios

28. Utica, Maison au Grand Oecus

29. El Jem, Maison des Dauphins

30. Djemila, Maison d'Europe

31. El Jem, Maison du Paon

32. Djemila, Maison d'Amphitrite
33. Djemila, Maison de Castorius

34. Pupput, Maison du Péristyle Figuré

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

36. Althiburos, Édifice des Asclepieia


37. Thuburbo Maius, Maison de Neptune

38. Thuburbo Maius, Maison des Protomés section of the Protomai

39. Thuburbo Maius, Maison aux Communs

40. Thuburbo Maius, Maison des Palmes

41. Thugga, Maison de Dionysos et d'Ulysse

42. Utica, Maison de la Chasse

43. Volubilis, Maison des Néréides

44. Tagiura, Villa della Gara delle Nereidi

45. Utica, Maison Ouest

46. Volubilis, Maison aux Travaux d'Hercule


## 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 room ${ }^{2}$ and the cenatio of his Tuscan villa as an informal dining room where he entertained his personal friends ${ }^{3}$. 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 writers ${ }^{5}$ 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 guests ${ }^{6}$.

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

[^89]Neptune at Acholla, for instance, contained a small triclinium ( $4.50 \times 5.25 \mathrm{~m}$ ) 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 ( $4.40 \times 5 \mathrm{~m}$ ) 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 $\mathrm{T}+\mathrm{U}$ 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 $6.2 \mathrm{n} .7 ; \mathrm{Pl} .28$ ). On axis with the central entrance-emblema was a 2 m -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, rightangled 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-

[^90]sized room ( $26 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ) 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 2 m -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 $\left(25 \mathrm{~m}^{2}\right)$ 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 ( $6.60 \times 5.10 \mathrm{~m}$ ): the geometric band framing the central figurative panel would have been large enough (about 2.50 m ) 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 $26(3 \times 5 \mathrm{~m})$ 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 $(6 \times 5 \mathrm{~m})$ 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 ( 0.30 m 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 Vènus 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 Oudna ${ }^{9}$ 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 groundline 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 $\mathrm{d}^{\prime}$ Europe at Djemila ${ }^{10}$ represents the following moment of the mythological episode, when the bull rushing over the sea has abducted Europa (PI. 71). The girl, who is sitting

[^91]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 bedroom ${ }^{\prime 1}$. 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.

[^92]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 time ${ }^{13}$. 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 houseowner. 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 Colosseum ${ }^{14}$. 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 Africa ${ }^{15}$. 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.

[^93]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 fluteplayer 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 procession ${ }^{17}$. 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 mosaic ${ }^{18}$. 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 fish ${ }^{19}$. 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 Acholla ${ }^{20}$. The T-shaped

[^94]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 Pupput, 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 1 m 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 panther ${ }^{22}$. 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 Erotes ${ }^{23}$. 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

[^95]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 earth ${ }^{24}$. 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' eye ${ }^{25}$.
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 vine ${ }^{27}$. 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

[^96]representation of that Season ${ }^{28}$. 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 see-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 villa ${ }^{30}$, 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 former ${ }^{31}$ 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 jewelbox 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

[^97]presides. In the El Jem panel ${ }^{32}$, 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 Volubilis ${ }^{33}$. 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 Actacon 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

[^98]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 diadem ${ }^{35}$ 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 art ${ }^{36}$ : 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 house ${ }^{37}$.

A further elegant scene of intimacy and beauty appears in secondary triclinium 27 of the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna ${ }^{38}$. 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.

[^99]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 intimacy ${ }^{39}$.

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.

[^100]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 model ${ }^{41}$, 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 Jem ${ }^{42}$. The black-and-white mosaic depicts a crescent-on-a-stick between two bars (Pl. 97). In a number of African mosaics ${ }^{43}$ 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-astick 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 Regia ${ }^{44}$. 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

[^101]venatores fighting beasts, clearly suggests the spectacles of the amphitheatre. The fivepointed 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 Pentasii ${ }^{45}$. 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 Ballu ${ }^{46}$, 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) ${ }^{47}$.

[^102]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 rags or decorated tapestry hung on the walls ${ }^{48}$.

### 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 $\mathrm{T}+\mathrm{U}$ 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 ( 2 m 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 5.15 m : the small room ( $23 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ) offered space for the traditional number of nine guests in the U-shaped area ( 1.5 m wide) and for a small number of servants and entertainers in the central area ( $\mathrm{ca} .7 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ). In the Maison du Paon at El Jem, the secondary triclinium XL was a little larger ( $48 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ): the room could have accommodated a small number of

[^103]guests ${ }^{49}$, but it would have allowed more extensive service and entertainment in the central area $\left(13.60 \mathrm{~m}^{2}\right)^{50}$.

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 ( $5 \times 7.20 \mathrm{~m}$ ), 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 ( 2 m 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 ( $3 \times 3 \mathrm{~m}$ ) 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 $20 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ and $50 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ 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

[^104]paterfamilias. When Apuleius first describes Milo, he shows him lying on a low couch preparing to eat, while his wife seated at his feet ${ }^{53}$.

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 ( $47 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ) 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 $\left(36 \mathrm{~m}^{2}\right)$, 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 ( $280 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ) 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

[^105]arrangement of the main dining room: big dimensions ( $67 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ), 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 Jashemski ${ }^{54}$ 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 summer ${ }^{55}$. 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 power ${ }^{56}$. 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

[^106]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 RomanoAfrican 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 moderatesized 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 room ${ }^{58}$. These literary accounts imply that the spatial use of the secondary triclinium was highly flexible.

[^107]| Town | House | Room | Dimensions | Area | Layout | Triple entrance | Aspect |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Acholla | M. du Triomphe de Neptune | XXI | $4.50 \times 5.15$ | 23.175 | U |  | peristyle |
| Althiburos | Édifies des Asclepieia | 23 | $4.21 \times 3.85$ | 16.21 |  |  | peristyle-basin |
| Bulla Regia | M. d'Amphitrite | 18 | $5.25 \times 6.75$ | 25 | U | X | underground corridor |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Chasse | 19 | $6 \times 5$ | 30 |  |  | secondary courtyard |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Chasse | 52 | $5.2 \times 6.6$ | 34.32 | $\mathrm{T}+\mathrm{U}$ | X | underground peristyle-basin |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Nouvelle chasse | 16 | $3.9 \times 3.25$ | 12.67 | all over | X | underground peristyle |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Pêche | 39 | $5.3 \times 4.27$ | 22.63 | stibadium | X | underground peristyle |
| Bulla Regia | M. n. 3 | 27 | unknown |  | unknown |  | peristyle |
| Bulla Regia | M. n. 3 | 31 | $4.7 \times 4.9$ | 23.03 | unknown |  | underground corridor |
| Carthage | M. de la Volière | 9 | $5.6 \times 4.3$ | 24.08 | all over |  | anteroom |
| Clupea | M. de Deux Chasses | X | $9 \times 7.5$ | 67.5 | all over |  | peristyle-pseudo basin |
| Djemila | M. de Castorius | XX | $5 \times 7$ | 35 | all over |  | peristyle-basin |
| Djemila | M. d' Europe | 13 | $5 \times 4.4$ | 22 | U | X | peristyle |
| Djemila | M. de l'Âne | V | $7.1 \times 4.5$ | 31.95 | all over | X | peristyle-basin |
| El Jem | House of Africa | 28 | $4.5 \times 5$ | 22.5 | off-centred emblema |  | corridor |
| El Jem | M. des Dauphins | XXV | $5.05 \times 7.6$ | 38.38 | all over |  | peristyle-pseudo basin |
| El Jem | M. des Dauphins | XXI | $5 \times 5$ | 25 | off-centred emblema |  | anteroom |
| El Jem | M. du Paon | XXXI | $5.1 \times 7.25$ | 36.97 | U |  | secondary court- pseudo basin |
| El Jem | M. du Paon | XL | $6.5 \times 7.2$ | 46.8 | U |  | peristyle |
| El Jem | Sollertiana Domus | XXIV | $4.15 \times 6.1$ | 25.3 | U |  | secondary courtyard |
| Oudna | M. d'Ikarios | 2 | $5 \times 5$ | 25 | off-centred emblema |  | peristyle |
| Oudna | M. d'Ikarios | 26 | $3 \times 5$ | 15 | off-centred emblema |  | secondary court |
| Oudna | M. d'Ikarios | 27 | $6 \times 5$ | 30 | off-centred emblema |  | secondary court |


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



Table 6.2: Secondary triclinium in the Romano-African house

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. Djemila, Maison de Castorius

11. Althiburos, Édifice des Asclepieia


17. Oudna, Maison d'Ikarios

18. Thuburbo Maius, Maison de Bacchus et Ariane

20. Volubilis, Maison à la Mosaïque de Vénus


23. Thugga, Maison de Vénus
22. Carthage, Maison de la Volière

24. El Jem, House of Africa

25. Volubilis, Maison des Néréides

27. Bulla Regia, Maison d'Amphitrite

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 Pliny ${ }^{1}$ 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 Gaul ${ }^{2}$ 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

[^108]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 roomtypes 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-plans ${ }^{3}$. 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 Pliny ${ }^{5}$ 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

[^109]room ${ }^{6}$. 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 Pompeii ${ }^{7}$ and of Imperial Roman Africa ${ }^{8}$. However, the etymology of the word oecus, which derivates 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 architecture ${ }^{9}$, 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, Darmon ${ }^{10}$ labels the main reception room of the

[^110]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 Thébert ${ }^{12}$ do not appear in the list of rooms classed as exedrae drawn up by Rebuffat ${ }^{13}$. Room XVIII of the Maison du Paon at El Jem (Table 7.2 n .13 ) is labelled as exedra by Thébert ${ }^{14}$, but as oecus in CMT III. $1^{15}$. Rebuffat ${ }^{16}$ 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 sleeping ${ }^{17}$, or even for keeping birds ${ }^{18}$.
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

[^111]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 spaces ${ }^{19}$. 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 $\mathrm{in}^{20}$. 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 selfpresentation.

The English language has no adequate term for this room-type. There is no equivalent in English for the Italian Sale 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

[^112]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 $18^{\text {th }}$ century England. In the "social house ${ }^{\text {" }}$, 1 , 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 $\left(62 \mathrm{~m}^{2}\right)$ was smaller than the main triclinium $\left(105 \mathrm{~m}^{2}\right)$ 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 ( $26 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ) against the other rooms, though it was smaller than main triclinium XVIII ( $39 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ). In both the examples at Neapolis and at Thuburbo Maius, the assembly-rooms were lit up by the adjoining

[^113]light-well ${ }^{23}$. In the Maison de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons at Volubilis (Table 7.2 n .5 ), the adjoining rooms $11-12$ (ca. $30 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ) formed a distinct group from the rest of the house and from main triclinium $7\left(49 \mathrm{~m}^{2}\right)$. In all these examples, the $\mathrm{T}+\mathrm{U}$ 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. $16 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ) 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. $6.30 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ) 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 ( $\mathrm{ca} .33 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ) of room XIII marked it off as the main triclinium, while the smaller room XIV (ca. $15 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ) 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, assemblyroom 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

[^114]entrance into assembly-room 8 was framed by two central columns and two side semicolumns: 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 ( 2.53 m wide; the room was 4.65 x 4.60 m ): because of its large bay, the room was labelled as exedra by Rebuffat ${ }^{24}$ (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 ( 3.30 m wide), which was slightly raised above the main room (4 x 3 m : Table 7.2 n .33 ). A similar arrangement is attested in the Maison des Masques at Hadrumetum, though square room $6(6 \times 6 \mathrm{~m})$ 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 ( $5.10 \times 6.25 \mathrm{~m}$ ) into the raised apse $(5.10 \times 3.80 \mathrm{~m})$ 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 ( 1.60 m wide; 1.88 m 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.

[^115]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 mosaic ${ }^{25}$ 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

[^116]surrounded by the Seasons, which are shown in the form of female busts. In the El Jem panel ${ }^{26}$ 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 gridpattern of Heracles' knots include xenia motifs (fruit, vegetables, and fish) among stylized flowers, knots, and a hydria ${ }^{27}$. Darmon suggests that the water-pot may allude to the season of Summer, as it is often associated with the representation of August ${ }^{28}$. 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

[^117]Maison de l'Éphèbe at Volubilis ${ }^{30}$. 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 birds ${ }^{31}$. 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 Oudna ${ }^{32}$. Though the figured scene has been mostly destroyed, the preserved figure of a vintanging 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 (vintanging 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 seamonster 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) ${ }^{34}$.

[^118]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 seems 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 Silin ${ }^{35}$. 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 Dunbabin ${ }^{36}$ points out, the image of the victorious charioteer functioned principally as a bringer of success and good luck.

[^119]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 (PI. 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 death ${ }^{38}$. 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

[^120]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 $\mathrm{El} \mathrm{Jem}^{41}$. 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, scems to have been used for accommodating the guests ${ }^{42}$ 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 (PI. 112). In the middle of the square room is a medallion, which illustrates a poet and an actor (PI.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 pretensions ${ }^{44}$. 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

[^121]house-owner decorated the library (room 8) of the Villa du Taureau at Silin ${ }^{45}$. 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 squares ${ }^{46}$. In assembly-rooms VIII of the Maison aux Communs (Pl. 155) ${ }^{47}$ and XIV of the Maison des Palmes (P1.175) ${ }^{48}$, 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 octagons ${ }^{50}$.

[^122]In assembly-room X of the Maison de la Chasse at Utica, a geometric design contains vegetal elements in the manner of the Floral Style ${ }^{51}$ : 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 Carthage ${ }^{52}$, the town where this style originated (PI. 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 wealth ${ }^{53}$. 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 assemblyroom XXI of the Maison au Grand Oecus at Utica, the pattern is based upon the simple repetition of square slabs ${ }^{54}$. 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 triangles ${ }^{55}$. 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 combined ${ }^{56}$. 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

[^123]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 writers tells how a small group of Roman aristocrats convened in the domus of Vettius Agorius Praetextatus at Rome to debate on vary 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 $5^{\text {th }}$ 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 meal ${ }^{57}$. 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 take 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 bath ${ }^{58}$.

In the Maison d'lkarios 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

[^124]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 dinner ${ }^{59}$. 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 men ${ }^{60}$. 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 benches ${ }^{62}$ 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

[^125]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.

Libraries ${ }^{63}$ 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 there ${ }^{64}$. In Seneca's time, the library was as essential to a house as a bathroom ${ }^{65}$, and Trimalchio, who tried to copy the habits of Roman upper class, had both a Greek and a Latin one ${ }^{66}$. 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 freedman ${ }^{67}$. From Sidonius ${ }^{68}$, and Macrobius ${ }^{69}$, 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 draughts ${ }^{70}$. 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 $5^{\text {th }}$ century Rome, the library in the house of the Boethii was decorated with rich wall mosaics ${ }^{71}$.

[^126]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 multifunctional, 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 | $3.8 \times 3.5$ | 13.3 | apsidal | anteroom |
| Acholla | M. du Triomphe de Neptune | XII | $4.35 \times 7.5$ | 33.93 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Althiburos | M. des Muses | R | $4 \times 3$ | 12 | apsidal | peristyle |
| Bulla Regia | M. d'Amphitrite | 3 | $4 \times 4$ | 16 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Nouvelle Chasse | 3 | $6.09 \times 4.93$ | 30.02 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Nouvelle Chasse | 14 | $3.04 \times 3.48$ | 10.58 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Carthage | M. de la Volière | 5 | $4.43 \times 5.78$ | 25.6 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Djemila | M. d'Amphitrite | V | $7 \times 6$ | 42 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Djemila | M. de Castorius | XIII | $4.8 \times 4.8$ | 23.04 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Djemila | M. d'Europe | 22 | $5 \times 4$ | 20 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| El Jem | House of Africa | 20 | $4 \times 7$ | 28 | platform | anteroom |
| El Jem | M. de la Procession Dionysiaque | A | $4.4 \times 5.9$ | 25.96 | rectilinear | corridor |
| El Jem | M. de la Procession Dionysiaque | B | 4.4 wide |  | uncertain | anteroom |
| El Jem | M. du Paon | XXXIII | $4.7 \times 5.2$ | 24.44 | rectilinear | secondary court |
| Hadrumentum | M. des Masques | $6 \& 7$ | $6 \times 6$ | 36 | apsidal | peristyle |
| Neapolis | M. des Nymphes | VII | $7.3 \times 8.5$ | 62.05 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Oudna | M. d'Ikarios | 31 | $4 \times 5$ | 20 | rectilinear | secondary court |
| Silin | Villa du Taureau | 2 | $4.6 \times 5$ | 23 | rectilinear | secondary court |
| Silin | Villa du Taureau | 3 | $5.5 \times 5.5$ | 30.25 | rectilinear | secondary court |
| Silin | 8 | $6.5 \times 6.5$ | 42.25 | rectilinear | secondary court |  |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. aux Communs | VIII | $4.45 \times 3.7$ | 16.46 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. de Neptune | XX | $4.7 \times 4.76$ | 22.37 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. de Neptune | XI | $5.1 \times 5.1$ | 10.2 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. des Animaux Liès | XV | $5.15 \times 5.15$ | 26.52 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. des Palmes | XIV | $3.75 \times 4.12$ | 15.45 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Thuburbo Maius | M.des Protomés-Sect. Protomai | VIII | $5.07 \times 5.5$ | 27.88 | rectilinear | peristyle |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. des Protomés-Sect.Triconchos | X |  | 31.87 | apsidal | anteroom |


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



1. Neapolis, Maison des Nymphes

2. Thuburbo Maius, Maison des Animaux Liès


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

4. Thugga, Maison de Dionysos et d'Ulysse
3. Thuburbo Maius, Maison des Protomé section of the Protomai


6. Thuburbo Maius, Maison des Palmes

7. Thugga, Maison de Vénus

8. Bulla Regia, Insula de la Chasse

10. Djemila, Maison d'Europe

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

12. Acholla, Maison des Colonnes Rouges


14. Utica, Maison de la Cascade
15. El Jem, House of Africa


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


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

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


## 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 person ${ }^{1}$. 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 cubicula 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')', 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 cubicula ${ }^{4}$. The Elder Pliny uses the word dormitorium to signify a place for convalescence ${ }^{5}$. 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 times ${ }^{6}$ : 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

[^127]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'. 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 curtains ${ }^{9}$.

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 ( $0.15-0.20 \mathrm{~m}$ ).

[^128]In the unpaved cubiculum 8 of the Maison des Masques at Hadrumetum, for example, the platform, which was 0.15 m 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 XVIXVIII 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 Pupput ${ }^{10}$ (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

[^129]$8.2 \mathrm{n} .9)$. 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 spaces ${ }^{11}$.

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 0.15 m -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 0.12 m 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

[^130]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 round ${ }^{13}$. 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 Maius ${ }^{14}$ : 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 Thugga ${ }^{16}$ 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 plants ${ }^{17}$.

[^131]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 mosaic ${ }^{20}$, 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 Thugga ${ }^{21}$. 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 panel ${ }^{22}$, the female personifications of the Seasons holding their seasonal products are inserted in a more

[^132]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 Neapolis ${ }^{23}$. 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 $\mathrm{C} 2{ }^{24}$. 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.

[^133]The image of Pegasus seems to appear again in cubiculum Cl of the same house ${ }^{25}$. 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 bracelcts, 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 mosaic ${ }^{26}$ 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 guide ${ }^{28}$. However, the symbolic interpretation of a

[^134]mosaic, which decorated a domestic setting, would seem inappropriate: the owner may have chosen a rarely represented subject drawn from the literary and theatrical repertory ${ }^{29}$ 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 Darmon ${ }^{31}$, 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 Bellorophon'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

[^135]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 un 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

[^136]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 (PI. 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 Jem ${ }^{35}$, 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 scales ${ }^{36}$, 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 $\mathrm{El} \mathrm{Jem}^{37}$ 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).

[^137]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 eightpointed 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 Pupput ${ }^{38}$ 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 Thugga ${ }^{39}$, 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 Tagiura ${ }^{42}$, 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 Thugga ${ }^{43}$, 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

[^138]Acholla. However, the most lavish example of floral-vegetal design appears in cubiculum XVIII of the Maison de Dionysos at Thaenae ${ }^{44}$ 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 panther ${ }^{45}$.

### 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 reception ${ }^{46}$. 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 subjectivity ${ }^{47}$. 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 floor ${ }^{48}$; similarly, Seneca speaks against the luxury of the rich houses provided with a number of cubicula, while only one is used for sleep ${ }^{49}$. 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 4.50 m long by 4 m wide, while the required width for accommodating a bed was in order of 1.15 m .

The primary function of the cubiculum as a room designed to accommodate a bed ${ }^{50}$ 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

[^139]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 dwelling ${ }^{53}$, where neither voice nor sound could penetrate. Thus, location in private areas and possibly plain decoration may be evidence for archacological 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 outlet ${ }^{54}$. 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

[^140]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 verses ${ }^{58}$.

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.

[^141]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 mediumsized anteroom, but with a different arrangement of the spaces: the chamber with the couch-area opposite the entrance was bigger and richly decorated ${ }^{60}$; 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 $8.2 \mathrm{n} .11,13$ ). The subject-pattern of the mosaics flooring the chambers ${ }^{61}$ 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 bedroom ${ }^{62}$. 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.

[^142]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 glowing ${ }^{66}$. As the architectural arrangement of the cubiculum next to the triclinium is attested in Roman houses from the $2^{\text {nd }}$ 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 bed ${ }^{67}$.
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 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

[^143]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 cubicula (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 cubicula 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 dinner ${ }^{68}$. In the description of his villa to Domitius, Sidonius speaks of a room (deversorium) preceded by an anteroom, where his friend may retire after meal ${ }^{69}$. 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,

[^144]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 coucharea 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 $c^{c u b i c u l a}{ }^{72}$, 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 use ${ }^{73}$.
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 carers ${ }^{74}$. However, there is no archacological 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 children ${ }^{75}$ : 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.

[^145]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 door ${ }^{76}$. In Sidonius' villa, the guest-room (deversorium) was preceded by a narrow chamber, where the cubicularii could have dozed ${ }^{77}$. However, in particularly confidential situations, when the master or mistress wished to stay alone, the cubicularii were dismissed ${ }^{78}$. 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 marginality ${ }^{79}$, 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 cottage ${ }^{80}$; 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 house ${ }^{82}$. However, in most houses upper storeys are missing or are inadequately preserved: only the ground-floor stairwells furnish the only evidence of an upper storey ${ }^{83}$.

[^146]| Town | House | Room | Dimensions | Area | Layout | Aspect | Anteroom |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Acholla | M. du Triomphe de Neptune | XXV | $3 \times 3.5$ | 10.5 | mosaic | secondary court | X |
| Acholla | M. du Triomphe de Neptune | XXVI | $3.55 \times 3.55$ | 12.6 | mosaic | secondary court | x |
| Acholla | M. du Triomphe de Neptune | XXVII | $3.5 \times 3.4$ | 11.9 | mosaic | secondary court | X |
| Acholla | M. du Triomphe de Neptune | XXXI | $3 \times 3.4$ | 10.2 | mosaic | secondary court | x |
| Acholla | M. du Triomphe de Neptune | XXXII | $3.8 \times 3.45$ | 13.11 | mosaic | secondary court | X |
| Acholla | M. du Triomphe de Neptune | XXXIII | $3.7 \times 3.4$ | 12.58 | mosaic | secondary court | X |
| Bulla Regia | M. d'Amphitrite | 7 | $5 \times 3$ | 15 | mosaic | peristyle | x |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Chasse | 20 | $3.6 \times 6.6$ | 23.76 | platform | secondary court |  |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Chasse | 50 | $3 \times 5$ | 15 | mosaic | secondary court |  |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Chasse | 51 | $2.4 \times 6.6$ | 15.84 | mosaic | secondary court |  |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Chasse | 53 | $3.6 \times 6.6$ | 23.76 | mosaic | secondary court |  |
| El Jem | House of Africa | 18 | $4 \times 4.5$ | 18 | mosaic | peristyle | x |
| El Jem | House of Africa | 27 | $6 \times 4.5$ | 27 | mosaic | private area | X |
| El Jem | M. des Dauphins | XXII | 3 m wide |  | mosaic | secondary triclinium |  |
| El Jem | M. du Paon | XXX | $4 \times 3.8$ | 15.2 | mosaic | secondary court | X |
| El Jem | Sollertiana Domus | XXIX | $4.7 \times 3.7$ | 17.39 | mosaic | peristyle | X |
| El Jem | Sollertiana Domus | XXX | $5.95 \times 4.75$ | 28.26 | platform+mosaic | peristyle | X |
| Hadrumentum | M. des Masques | 8 | $4.1 \times 2.8$ | 11.48 | platform | peristyle | X |
| Hergla | M. aux Deux Péristyles | 7 | $4 \times 5$ | 20 | mosaic | peristyle | X |
| Neapolis | M. des Nymphes | C1 | $4.2 \times 3.6$ | 15.12 | platform+mosaic | secondary court |  |
| Neapolis | M. des Nymphes | C2 | $3.5 \times 3$ | 10.5 | platform+mosaic | secondary court |  |
| Neapolis | M. des Nymphes | XI | $6 \times 4.9$ | 29.4 | mosaic | peristyle |  |
| Neapolis | M. des Nymphes | XII | $4.6 \times 4.9$ | 22.54 | mosaic | peristyle | x |
| Neapolis | M. des Nymphes | XIII | $4 \times 4.9$ | 19.6 | mosaic | peristyle | X |
| Neapolis | M. des Nymphes | XIV | $5.5 \times 4.9$ | 26.95 | mosaic | peristyle |  |
| Pupput | M. du Viridarium à Niches | XI | $3.6 \times 2.8$ | 10.08 | mosaic | peristyle |  |
| Pupput | M. du Viridarium à Niches | XII | $3.6 \times 2.8$ | 10.08 | mosaic | peristyle |  |



1. Hadrumetum, Maison des Masques

2. Pupput, Maison du Viridarium à Niches

3. Utica, Maison des Chapiteaux Historiés


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. Thaenae, 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


19. Volubilis, Maison d'Orphée


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 pursuits ${ }^{2}$. 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' eruption ${ }^{3}$. 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 curtain ${ }^{4}$. 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

[^147]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 activities ${ }^{5}$.

### 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 society ${ }^{6}$.

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 selfpresentation 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 penctrated deeper into more private areas such as the cubiculum. Differentiation within

[^148]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 space ${ }^{7}$. 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 nced to remove oneself from the scrutiny of others ${ }^{8}$. 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 presenceavailability ${ }^{9}$ : 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 house ${ }^{10}$. 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

[^149]activity from the public outside and from the private interior: in this sense, privacy is secrecy ${ }^{11}$.

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

[^150]the peristyle. Chambers 22-23-24-25-26 were more secluded, as they were arranged around a court set apart from the peristyle ${ }^{12}$.

In the Maison des Muses at Althiburos, secondary court $\mathrm{K} / \mathrm{L}$ overlooked private apartments $\mathrm{M}-\mathrm{N}$, 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).

[^151]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 (XXIIIXXIV) 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 peristyle ${ }^{13}$. 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 activities ${ }^{14}$.

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

[^152]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 indicate ${ }^{15}$. 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

[^153]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 suite ${ }^{17}$. 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 times ${ }^{18}$.

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

[^154]flanked on both sides by 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 form 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 suggests. 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 areas ${ }^{19}$, but I have included the motif decorating room XVIII of the Maison du Péristyle Figuré at Pupput, 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 $\mathrm{Sun}^{20}$, who is ornamented with nimbus and rays (Pl. 137), and Minerva ${ }^{21}$, 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:

[^155]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 lowstatus individuals ${ }^{24}$. 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 guests ${ }^{25}$. 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 fecundity ${ }^{26}$. However, as Dunbabin ${ }^{27}$ 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 background ${ }^{29}$. 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

[^156]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 Oudna ${ }^{32}$ and 9 of the Maison de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons at Volubilis ${ }^{33}$ 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 Gcometric- 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 $\mathrm{I}^{34}$ of the Maison Ouest at Utica with its white plain mosaic; in the adjoining room $\mathrm{II}^{35}$, the use of three colours made the pattern of cubes richer (Pl. 213). In the Maison au Grand Oecus at Utica, chambers $\mathrm{XXV}^{36}-\mathrm{XXVI}^{37}$ 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 ).

[^157]Equally simple is the grid of fillets, which appears in room 25 of the Édifice des Asclepieia ${ }^{38}$ 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 Mosaiqque de Vénus at Volubilis, and in rooms XVII of the Maison aux Communs (Pl. 156) ${ }^{41}$ and XIX of the Maison des Palmes ${ }^{42}$, 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 Maius ${ }^{45}$. 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 XVI ${ }^{47}$ and XXI-XXII ${ }^{48}$ 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 Pupput ${ }^{49}$ 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 Carthage ${ }^{50}$, 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

[^158]$9.2 \mathrm{n} .2)^{51}$. 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 Liés ${ }^{56}$ and XVI of the Maison aux Communs ${ }^{57}$, 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 Maius ${ }^{59}$, the circles are replaced by cushions. In room 19 of the Édifice des Asclepieia at Althiburos ${ }^{60}$, the irregular octagons are framed by cushions and ellipses.
In room XXI of the Maison du Péristyle Figuré at Pupput ${ }^{61}$, the octagonal figure is inserted in a less common pattern of rectangles forming lozenges.

Compositions based on lozenges appear in chambers $I^{62}$ and $Q^{63}$ of the Maison des Muses at Althiburos (Table 9.2 n. 2): in the former alternately upright and recumbent tangent lozenges form concave squares ${ }^{64}$; in the latter lozenge-shaped spaces are combined with spindles. In rooms $\mathrm{XVII}^{65}-\mathrm{XIX}^{66}$ of the Maison H at Utica, lozengecompartments are inserted within a composition including circles and poised squares

[^159](Table 9.2 n .25 ); in the chamber XV of the Maison aux Communs at Thuburbo Maius ${ }^{67}$ 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 Althiburos ${ }^{68}$. The foliate pattern of circles may form squares (room XIV of the Maison des Protomés Section of the Triconchos at Thuburbo Maius ${ }^{69}$ : 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 Jem ${ }^{70}$ : Pl. 101) or combine squares and spindles (room XXIX of the Maison de Bacchus et Ariane at Thuburbo Maius ${ }^{71}$ ). 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 Maius ${ }^{73}$, the foliate composition of octagons and circles is enriched by the insertion of bunches of grapes (PI. 180). In room X of the Maison de Neptune at Thuburbo Maius ${ }^{74}$, peacock feathers are inserted within a scale pattern of garlands issuing from craters. Similarly, in room XIII of the Maison des Deux Chasses at Clupea ${ }^{75}$, 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 Oudna ${ }^{76}$, 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 crater ${ }^{78}$.

[^160]
### 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 friends ${ }^{79}$. 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 (gynaeconitis) ${ }^{80}$. 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 (gynaeconitis) 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

[^161]conventions and organisation of time ${ }^{82}$. 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 selfpresentation ${ }^{83}$. 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 her ${ }^{85}$. Trimalchio distinguishes his personal cubiculum from his wife's rooms (sessorium) ${ }^{86}$; again, in the description of his villa, Sidonius speaks of a triclinium matornale, which lay next to the storeroom and the weaving room ${ }^{87}$, 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.

[^162]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 house ${ }^{88}$. 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 activity ${ }^{89}$. 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 inherited ${ }^{90}$. 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

[^163]distinguish themselves in two specifically male activities: fighting and drinking wine ${ }^{91}$. 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 gender ${ }^{92}$.
Ariès' thesis that childhood is a relatively modern invention ${ }^{93}$ 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 houschold, because children used to sleep and spend their time in servile areas together with slave carers, to whom children were handed over at birth ${ }^{94}$. 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

[^164]sarcophagi shows that boys and girls played in separate groups and architectural details may suggest that the boys played outside while the girls were inside ${ }^{97}$. 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 structural ${ }^{98}$. 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 houschold, 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

[^165]meaning and taste, depending on whether the owner was male or female ${ }^{100}$. 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.

[^166]| Town | House | Room | Dimensions | Area | Aspect | Anteroom |
| :--- | :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :--- | :--- |
| Acholla | M. d'Asinius Rufinus | VIII | $2.92 \times 3.7$ | 10.8 | peristyle |  |
| Acholla | M. d'Asinius Rufinus | X | $2.47 \times 3.42$ | 8.44 | peristyle |  |
| Acholla | M. des Colonnes Rouges | $\mathrm{IX} / \mathrm{X}$ | $3.4 \times 3.6$ | 12.24 | peristyle |  |
| Althiburos | Édifice des Asclepieia | 19 | $3.85 \times 4.69$ | 18.05 | peristyle | x |
| Althiburos | Édifice des Asclepieia | $20 / 21$ | $3.85 \times 4$ | 15.4 | peristyle | x |
| Althiburos | Édifice des Asclepieia | 25 | $3.85 \times 3.82$ | 14.7 | peristyle |  |
| Althiburos | M. des Muses | I | $2.8 \times 4.3$ | 12.04 | corridor | x |
| Althiburos | M. des Muses | J | $2.8 \times 3.5$ | 9.8 | corridor | x |
| Althiburos | M. des Muses | M | $3 \times 3$ | 9 | secondary court |  |
| Althiburos | M. des Muses | N | $3 \times 3$ | 9 | secondary court |  |
| Althiburos | M. des Muses | P | $2.8 \times 3$ | 8.4 | secondary court |  |
| Althiburos | M. des Muses | Q | $3 \times 3$ | 9 | secondary court | x |
| Bulla Regia | M. d'Amphitrite | 19 | $3.5 \times 3.3$ | 11.55 | corridor | x |
| Bulla Regia | M. d'Amphitrite | 20 | $3.3 \times 3.3$ | 10.89 | corridor |  |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Chasse | 9 | $2.5 \times 3.2$ | 8 | peristyle |  |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Nouvelle Chasse | 5 | $3 \times 3$ | 9 | peristyle | $\mathbf{x}$ |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Nouvelle Chasse | 18 | $1.5 \times 2.5$ | 3.75 | basement | x |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Nouvelle Chasse | 17 | $2.5 \times 2.5$ | 39.06 | basement |  |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Pêche | 38 | $3.5 \times 4$ | 14 | basement |  |
| Bulla Regia | M. de la Pêche | 40 | $3.5 \times 4$ | 14 | basement |  |

Table 9.1: Private apartments

| Bulla Regia | M. n. 3 | 30 | 3 m wide |  | basement |  |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Bulla Regia | M. n. 3 | 32 | $3 \times 3.5$ | 10.5 | basement |  |
| Carthage | M. de la Volière | 12 | $2.4 \times 3.7$ | 8.88 | court | x |
| Carthage | M. du Triconque | VII/VIII | $4.03 \times 6.4$ | 25.79 | peristyle | x |
| Carthage | M. du Triconque | XV | $4.3 \times 3.75$ | 16.12 | peristyle | x |
| Carthage | M. du Triconque | XVII | $5.33 \times 3.97$ | 21.16 | peristyle | x |
| Clupea | M. des Deux Chasses | XII | $4.65 \times 8$ | 37.2 | peristyle | x |
| Clupea | M. des Deux Chasses | XIII | $4.65 \times 4.4$ | 20.46 | peristyle | x |
| Djemila | M. d'Amphitrite | VI | $3.5 \times 3.6$ | 12.6 | peristyle |  |
| Djemila | M. d'Amphitrite | VII | $3.4 \times 3.6$ | 12.24 | peristyle |  |
| Djemila | M. d'Amphitrite | VIII | $2.6 \times 3.6$ | 9.36 | peristyle |  |
| Djemila | M. d'Europe | 14 | $2.4 \times 4.4$ | 10.56 | peristyle |  |
| Djemila | M. d'Europe | 15 | $2.4 \times 4.4$ | 10.56 | peristyle |  |
| El Jem | House of Africa | 2 | $2 \times 2.5$ | 5 | peristyle |  |
| El Jem | House of Africa | 3 | $2 \times 2.5$ | 5 | peristyle |  |
| El Jem | House of Africa | 4 | $2 \times 2.5$ | 5 | peristyle |  |
| E1 Jem | House of Africa | 6 | $2.5 \times 2$ | 5 | peristyle | x |
| El Jem | House of Africa | 7 | $2 \times 2$ | 4 | peristyle | X |
| El Jem | House of Africa | 8 | $2 \times 2.5$ | 5 | peristyle |  |
| El Jem | House of Africa | 9 | $2 \times 2.5$ | 5 | peristyle |  |
| El Jem | M. de la Procession Dionysiaque | N | $4 \times 3.5$ | 14 | peristyle | x |
| El Jem | M. de la Procession Dionysiaque | P | $4 \times 3.5$ | 14 | peristyle | x |
| El Jem | M. de la Procession Dionysiaque | Q | $4 \times 3.5$ | 14 | peristyle |  |
| El Jem | M. de la Procession Dionysiaque | R | $4 \times 3.5$ | 14 | peristyle |  |
| El Jem | M. des Dauphins | XLVI | $3 \times 4.7$ | 14.1 | peristyle |  |
| El Jem | M. des Dauphins | XLVII | $2.5 \times 4.7$ | 11.75 | peristyle | x |
| El Jem | M. des Dauphins | XLIX | $2.5 \times 4.7$ | 11.75 | peristyle | x |
| El Jem | M. des Dauphins | LI | $2.5 \times 4.7$ | 11.75 | peristyle | X |
| El Jem | M. du Paon | XLIV | $3.9 \times 3.6$ | 14.04 | secondary triclinium | X |
| El Jem | M. du Paon | XLVIII | $3.2 \times 3.6$ | 11.52 | peristyle | x |
| El Jem | M. du Paon | XLIX | $3.2 \times 3.05$ | 9.76 | peristyle | x |


| El Jem | Sollertiana domus | XXXII | $3 \times 3.5$ | 10.5 | peristyle | x |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| El Jem | Sollertiana domus | XXXIII | $3 \times 4$ | 12 | peristyle | x |
| Oudna | M. d'Ikarios | 4 | $3.25 \times 3.5$ | 11.37 | secondary court | x |
| Oudna | M. Ikarios | 5 | $3.25 \times 3.5$ | 11.37 | secondary court | x |
| Oudna | M. d'Ikarios | 8 | $3.25 \times 3.5$ | 11.37 | secondary court | x |
| Oudna | M. d'Ikarios | 18 | $2.75 \times 1.75$ | 4.81 | secondary court |  |
| Oudna | M. d'tkarios | 19 | $4 \times 1.75$ | 7 | secondary court |  |
| Oudna | M. d'Ikarios | 23 | $2 \times 2.75$ | 5.5 | secondary court |  |
| Oudna | M. d'Ikarios | 24 | $2 \times 2.75$ | 5.5 | secondary court |  |
| Oudna | M. d'Ikarios | 25 | $2.75 \times 2.75$ | 7.56 | secondary court |  |
| Oudna | M. d'Ikarios | 32 | $2.5 \times 3.25$ | 8.12 | secondary court |  |
| Pupput | M. du Péristyle Figuré | XVIII | $5.9 \times 11.7$ | 69.03 | peristyle | x |
| Pupput | M. du Péristyle Figuré | XIX | $3.5 \times 3.5$ | 12.25 | peristyle | x |
| Pupput | M. du Péristyle figuré | XX | $3.5 \times 3.5$ | 12.25 | peristyle | x |
| Pupput | M. du Péristyle Figuré | XXI | $3.5 \times 3.5$ | 12.25 | peristyle | $x$ |
| Pupput | M. du Triclinium en Noir et Blanc | III | $4.25 \times 5$ | 21.25 | peristyle | x |
| Pupput | M. du Triclinium en Noir et Blanc | IV | $3.75 \times 5$ | 18.75 | peristyle | x |
| Pupput | M. du Triclinium en Noir et Blanc | V | $3 \times 5$ | 15 | peristyle | x |
| Thaenae | M. de Dionysos | V | $4 \times 3.5$ | 14 | peristyle |  |
| Thaenae | M. de Dionysos | VI | $3.8 \times 3.5$ | 13.3 | peristyle |  |
| Thaenae | M. de Dionysos | XIV | $3.8 \times 3.1$ | 11.78 | secluded area | x |
| Thaenae | M. de Dionysos | XV | $3.8 \times 3.1$ | 11.78 | secluded area | x |
| Thaenae | M. de Dionysos | XIX | 4.2 wide |  | peristyle | $x$ |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. aux Communs | XII | $3.2 \times 3.1$ | 9.92 | peristyle | x |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. aux Communs | XIV | $3.1 \times 3$ | 9.3 | peristyle |  |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. aux Communs | XV | $3.05 \times 3$ | 9.15 | peristyle |  |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. aux Communs | XVI | $3 \times 3$ | 9 | peristyle |  |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. aux Communs | XVII | $2.95 \times 3.05$ | 8.99 | peristyle | x |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. aux Communs | XXI | $3.25 \times 2.95$ | 9.58 | peristyle | x |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. de Bacchus et Ariane | XVIII | $2.85 \times 3.1$ | 8.83 | secondary court |  |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. de Bacchus et Ariane | XIX | $2 \times 3$ | 6 | secondary court |  |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. de Neptune | X | $5.6 \times 3.05$ | 17.08 | peristyle | x |


| Thuburbo Maius | M. de Neptune | XXIII | $3.1 \times 3.65$ | 11.31 | peristyle | x |
| :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: | :---: |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. de Neptune | XXIV | $3.1 \times 3.65$ | 11.31 | peristyle | x |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. de Nicentius | XVII | $3 \times 2$ | 6 | peristyle | x |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. de Nicentius | XVIII | $4.25 \times 3.85$ | 16.36 | peristyle | x |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. des Animaux Liés | XI | $2.75 \times 3.75$ | 10.31 | peristyle | x |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. des Animaux Liés | XIII | $4 \times 4$ | 16 | peristyle | x |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. des Palmes | XV | $2.54 \times 3.85$ | 9.77 | assembly-room |  |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. des Palmes | XVIII | $3.28 \times 1.76$ | 5.77 | corridor |  |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. des Palmes | XIX | $4.27 \times 2.9$ | 12.38 | corridor |  |
| Thuburbo Maius | M.des Protomés-Sect. Protomai | XII | $2.26 \times 2.95$ | 6.66 | corridor | x |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. des Protomés-Sect.Protomai | XV | $3.7 \times 2.75$ | 10.17 | corridor | x |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. des Protomés-Sect.Triconchos | XIII | $3.25 \times 3.2$ | 11.26 | peristyle | x |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. des Protomés-Sect.Triconchos | XIV | $2.9 \times 3.1$ | 8.99 | peristyle | x |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. des Protomés-Sect.Triconchos | XVI | $4.64 \times 4.1$ | 19.02 | corridor | x |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. des Protomés-Sect.Triconchos | XXI | $2.9 \times 3.55$ | 10.29 | peristyle | x |
| Thuburbo Maius | M. des Protomés-Sect.Triconchos | XXII | $2.9 \times 3.55$ | 10.29 | peristyle | x |
| Utica | M. au Grand Oecus | XXV | $3.3 \times 3.63$ | 11.97 | peristyle | x |
| Utica | M. au Grand Oecus | XXVI | $3.23 \times 3.75$ | 12.11 | peristyle | $x$ |
| Utica | M. de la Cascade | XXIV | $3.05 \times 2.92$ | 8.9 | peristyle | x |
| Utica | M. de la Cascade | XXVII | $3.07 \times 4.85$ | 14.88 | peristyle | x |
| Utica | Maison H | XVII | 3.6 wide |  | peristyle | x |
| Utica | Maison H | XIX | $3 \times 3.56$ | 10.68 | peristyle | x |
| Utica | M. Ouest | I | $2.15 \times 1.65$ | 3.54 | peristyle | x |
| Utica | M. Ouest | II | $2.55 \times 3.18$ | 8.1 | peristyle |  |
| Volubilis | M. à la Mosaïque de Vénus | 4 | $3 \times 4.2$ | 12.6 | peristyle |  |
| Volubilis | M. à la Mosaique de Vénus | 5 | $3 \times 4.2$ | 12.6 | peristyle |  |
| Volubilis | M. à la Mosaique de Vénus | 6 | $3 \times 4.2$ | 12.6 | peristyle |  |
| Volubilis | M. à la Mosaíque de Vénus | 7 | $4.2 \times 2.5$ | 10.5 | peristyle | $x$ |
| Volubilis | M. à la Mosaiqque de Vénus | 13 | $3.55 \times 2.56$ | 9.08 | secondary court |  |
| Volubilis | M. à la Mosaïque de Vénus | 14 | $3.25 \times 2.55$ | 8.28 | secondary court |  |
| Volubilis | M. à la Mosaíque de Vénus | 15 | $4.75 \times 3.5$ | 16.62 | secondary court |  |
| Volubilis | M. aux Travaux d'Hercule | 3 | $5 \times 2.15$ | 10.75 | peristyle | x |


| Volubilis | M. aux Travaux d'Hercule | 6 | $5 \times 5.1$ | 25.5 | peristyle | x |
| :--- | :--- | :---: | :---: | :---: | :--- | :---: |
| Volubilis | M. aux Travaux d'Hercule | 11 | $5 \times 4$ | 20 | peristyle |  |
| Volubilis | M. de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons | 6 | $5.28 \times 4.33$ | 22.86 | peristyle |  |
| Volubilis | M. de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons | 8 | $5.4 \times 4.33$ | 23.38 | peristyle |  |
| Volubilis | M. de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons | 9 | $3.55 \times 7.95$ | 28.22 | peristyle | x |
| Volubilis | M. de Flavius Germanus | 9 | $4.6 \times 6.15$ | 28.29 | peristyle | x |
| Volubilis | M. de Flavius Germanus | 10 | $4.6 \times 5.75$ | 26.45 | peristyle | x |
| Volubilis | M. de Flavius Germanus | 11 | $4.35 \times 3.6$ | 15.66 | peristyle | x |
| Volubilis | M. de Flavius Germanus | 13 | $4.35 \times 3.1$ | 13.48 | peristyle | x |
| Volubilis | M. de Flavius Germanus | 14 | $3.52 \times 4.6$ | 16.19 | corridor |  |
| Volubilis | M. de Flavius Germanus | 16 | $3.45 \times 4.6$ | 15.87 | corridor |  |
| Volubilis | M. de l'Ephèbe | 7 | $5 \times 5$ | 25 | peristyle | x |
| Volubilis | M. d'Orphée | 7 | $5 \times 5.5$ | 27.5 | secondary court |  |
| Volubilis | M. d'Orphée | 12 | $5.5 \times 3.5$ | 19.25 | secondary court | x |
| Volubilis | M. des Néréides | 16 | $4 \times 3.27$ | 13.08 | peristyle | x |
| Volubilis | M. des Néréides | 18 | $6 \times 3.25$ | 19.5 | secondary court |  |
| Volubilis | M. des Néréides | 19 | $4 \times 4$ | 16 | secondary court |  |

1. Oudna, Maison d'Ikarios

2. Althiburos, Maison des Muses


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


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. Pupput, Maison du Péristyle Figuré


18. Bulla Regia, Insula de la Chasse


20. Carthage, Maison du Triconque

21. Utica, Maison Ouest


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

27. El Jem, Maison du Paon

28. El Jem, Maison des Dauphins

29. Clupea, Maison des Deux Chasses

30. Acholla, Maison des Colonnes Rouges

32. Thuburbo Maius, Maison des Protomés section of the Protomai

33. Utica, Maison au Grand Oecus

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

40. Volubilis, Maison d'Orphée

41. Djemila, Maison d'Europe

43. Bulla Regia, Maison de la Nouvelle Chasse: basement
42. Bulla Regia, Maison d'Amphitrite: 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 houseowner 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 lowstatus 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-being'. 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,

[^167]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-rooms ${ }^{3}$. 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 roomtypes. 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.

[^168]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 basins ${ }^{4}$ : 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 a 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 possessions ${ }^{5}$.
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

[^169]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 cubicula, 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 chambers ${ }^{7}$.
Varro's definition of a cenaculum as a dining room that had been moved upstairs ${ }^{8}$ 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 house ${ }^{9}$. In another passage, Apuleius describes Lucius hiding in an upper-storey cubiculum and watching Pamphile practising magic through a crack in the door ${ }^{10}$. The location of the upper-storey room at the back of the house admirably functioned as a hiding place for Pamphile's secret activities ${ }^{11}$.

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.

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### 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 context ${ }^{12}$.
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 pursued ${ }^{13}$. 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

[^171]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 walls ${ }^{14}$. 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 bacchantes ${ }^{15}$. 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 walls ${ }^{16}$. 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 attention ${ }^{17}$. 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

[^172]house ${ }^{18}$. 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 entertainments ${ }^{19}$.

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

[^173]maintains that sculpture and floor mosaic were thematically linked by the representation of a young hero, who is going to die ${ }^{21}$. However, the parody representations of the amphitheatre spectacles on either side of the scene with the Rape of Hylas seem rather to create a humourous 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 area ${ }^{22}$. 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 delight ${ }^{23}$, 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 wellpreserved artefactual evidence at Pompeii has allowed Allison to discuss the question of room-function from a sample of atrium houses ${ }^{24}$. 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

[^174]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 ivory ${ }^{26}$, elaborate tableware, candelabra, drinking cups of precious material ${ }^{27}$, coverlets, and cushions ${ }^{28}$ 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 East ${ }^{31}$, 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 country ${ }^{32}$. During the banquet offered by the parvenu Nasidienus to Maecenas, collapsing curtains raised a cloud of black dust ${ }^{33}$. An illustrative example of textiles' use in the dining room is a miniature of the Vergilius Romanus manuscript ( $5^{\text {th }}$ 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

[^175]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 houschold 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 curtain ${ }^{36}$. 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 Dionysus ${ }^{37}$. 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 marriage ${ }^{38}$. 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 house ${ }^{39}$. 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-

[^176]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 dceper 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 controversial ${ }^{40}$. 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

[^177]responsible for the creation of new mosaics ${ }^{41}$ 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 mosaicist ${ }^{45}$. 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.

[^178]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 capital ${ }^{46}$. 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 Crassus ${ }^{48}$. 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

[^179]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 society ${ }^{49}$. 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.

[^180]
## ACIIOLLA

## 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 217 c )

## 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 $1^{\text {st }}$ 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 $2^{\text {nd }}$ century. They are African red slip ware types A1 (dated to the first half of the $2^{\text {nd }}$ century), $\mathrm{A} 1 / 2$ and A 2 , Hayes 181 (dated to the second half of the $2^{\text {nd }}$ century), and $\mathrm{A} D$ (dated to the end of the $2^{\text {nd }}$ 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 $2^{\text {nd }}$ 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 $\mathrm{T}+\mathrm{U}$ 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 C 3 , 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 Cl put a group of rooms to the east in communication with the forum and, through corridor C 2 , 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 $(5.30 \times 3 \mathrm{~m})$ of peristyle I. To the east anteroom III leads into assembly-room IV to the north and into chambers V ( $3.53 \times 3.51 / 3.63 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and VI ( $3.75 / 4.14 \mathrm{x}$ $1.25 / 2.50 \mathrm{~m}$ ) 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 ( $3.60 \times 2.30 \mathrm{~m}$ ), which opens into private apartment IX/X to the north. Private apartments VIII-IX-X adjoin rooms XI $(2.40 \times 3 \mathrm{~m})$-XII $(2.40 \times 1.30 \mathrm{~m})$-XIII $(2.40 \times 3.50 \mathrm{~m})$-XIV $(2.40 \mathrm{~m}$ 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 233 a )
Eastern panel. Outlined grid of interlaced opposed undulating bands ( R 233 c )
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 137 b ) 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 $1^{\text {st }}$ to the $3^{\text {rd }}$ centuries. The stylistical analysis of the mosaics indicates that the domus would have been decorated in the mid- $3^{\text {rd }}$ century (mosaics of rooms II, III, IVa, VIII) and partly redecorated in the third quarter of the $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 $\mathrm{T}+\mathrm{U}$ 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 TRIOMPIIE DE NEPTUNE

## SITE

In the northern area of the western part of the ancient town.

## ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

At the north-eastern comer 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 2 m ). 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 ( $3.60 \times 5.70 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and into service room XLVII ( $2.50 \times 2.50 \mathrm{~m}$ ) to the west. The northern porticus $(11.65 \times 3.10 \mathrm{~m})$ overlooks assembly-room XII and room XIV ( $4 \times 1.75 \mathrm{~m}$ ). Assembly-room XII opens into anteroom XI $(3.05 \times 4.25 \mathrm{~m})$ and into service room XIII on either side. The eastern porticus $(17.65 \times 2.60 \mathrm{~m})$ opens into room XV ( $2.10 \times 2.40 \mathrm{~m}$ ), into anteroom XVI ( $1.45 \times 2.95 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and onto corridor XXXVI. Anteroom XVI leads into private chambers XVII ( $2.80 \times 2.95 \mathrm{~m}$ )-XVIII. The southern porticus $(11.55 \times 3.15 \mathrm{~m})$ overlooks rooms XIX ( $3.25 \times 1.65 \mathrm{~m}$ )-XX ( $3.25 \times 3.40 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and secondary triclinium XXI ( $4.50 \times 5.15 \mathrm{~m}$ ). The western porticus opens into anterooms XXIII ( $3 \times 5.50 \mathrm{~m}$ )-XXIX ( $3 \times 5.50 \mathrm{~m}$ ) on either side of main triclinium XXXV (11.1 x 9.60 m ). Anteroom XXIII leads into cubiculum XXV and onto corridor XXIV (4 $x 1.55 \mathrm{~m}$ ), which leads into cubicula XXVI-XXVII on either side and onto secondary courtyard XXVIII. Anteroom XXIX leads into cubiculum XXXI and onto corridor XXX ( $4.30 \times 1.47 \mathrm{~m}$ ), which leads into cubicula XXXII-XXXIII and onto secondary courtyard XXXIV. The northern part of the western porticus opens into room $X(3.90 \times 4 \mathrm{~m})$ 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 (R114e-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 233 a ) 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- $3^{\text {rd }}$ century. The mosaics are stylistically dated to the second half of the $2^{\text {nd }}$ 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 $(2.20 \mathrm{~m})$ 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.

## ALTIIIBUROS

## ÉDIFICE DES ASCLEPIEIA

## SITE

In the north-eastern sector of the ancient town, to the north of the Maison des Muses.

## ARCIIITECTURAL CONTEXT

To the south, six flights of steps on either side of a platform lead onto vestibulum lwhich opens into rooms 2 and 3 , onto corridors 5 and 9 , and into audience-chamber 4 . Corridor 5 overlooks by a triple entrance corridor $6(7.59 \times 1.75 \mathrm{~m})$ that leads into the nearby rooms $7(3.05 \times 3.20 \mathrm{~m})$ and $8(3.05 \times$ $3.85 \mathrm{~m})$. Corridor 9 leads into room $12(2.75 \times 2.75 \mathrm{~m})$, which opens into room $11(4.10 \times 3.44 \mathrm{~m}$ : to the north-east), and onto corridor 10 . Both the corridors and the central audience-chamber 4 lead to the southwestern 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 $14(5.90 \times 3.55 \mathrm{~m})$, space $15(5.68 \times 1.52 \mathrm{~m})$, main triclinium $16(6.27 \times 5.68 \mathrm{~m})$, space $17(5.68 \times 1.60 \mathrm{~m})$ and room $18(5.68 \times 1.07 \mathrm{~m})$. The north-eastern porticus leads into room $20 / 21(4 \times 3.85 \mathrm{~m})$, which opens into private apartment 19 to the north-west, assembly-room 23, and room 26 , which leads into private apartment 25 o the north-west. On either side of assembly-room 23 are spaces 22 ( $3.85 \times 1.17$ : to the north-west) and 24 ( $3.85 \times 2.89 \mathrm{~m}$ : to the north-east). The south-eastern porticus opens into room 28 ( $10.50 \times 6.38 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and corridors 27 and 29 . Corridor 27 leads into room $31(4.90 \times 2.10 \mathrm{~m})$, which opens into chamber $30(1.60 \times 3.85 \mathrm{~m})$ to the north-west, to the opposite apses $32(4.10 \mathrm{~m}$ wide) and $33(4.13 \mathrm{~m}$ wide), and into rooms $34(2.05 \times 2.10 \mathrm{~m})$ and $35(2.95 \times 2.50 \mathrm{~m})$. 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 $38(9.20 \times 3.85 \mathrm{~m}), 39(5.80 \times 3.85 \mathrm{~m})$ and $41(5.80 \times 1.56 \mathrm{~m})$. 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 $48(6.90 \times 2.60 \mathrm{~m})$ leads to the apodyterium $49(6 \times 2.55 \mathrm{~m})$, which opens into room $50(4.40 \times 4.40 \mathrm{~m})$. The latter overlooks frigidarium $51(2.40 \times 4.30 \mathrm{~m})$ and space $52(2.60 \times 2.40 \mathrm{~m})$ to the north-west, and the pool $53(3 \times 4.65 \mathrm{~m})$ to the south-west. Spaces 54 and 55 give access to caldarium $56(2.60 \times 4.20 \mathrm{~m})$, to sudatorium $57(1.80 \times$ $1.40 \mathrm{~m})$, and to tepidarium $58(2.40 \times 1.60 \mathrm{~m})$. 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 253 e )
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 129 b )
Room 34. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent scales (R217c)
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 (R212c)
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 (R215c)
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 3 rd 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 comer 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 3 rd 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 $4^{\text {th }}$ 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 3 rd 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; Ennaifer 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 ( $9.30 \times 2.35 \mathrm{~m}$ ) 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. Ennaifer states that the name Asclepieia inscribed in the floor mosaic would indicate that the room was a chapel; however, as Festugière points out (Ennaifer 1976, p. 131 n .439 ), the inscription of the assembly-room ("festival of Asclepios") would indicated 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 comer 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 ( 2.5 m long), it leads also into room $\mathrm{D}(7.10 \times 4.30 \mathrm{~m}$ ), which communicates with rooms $B$ and $E(7.10 \times 2.85 \mathrm{~m}$, to the north $)$ and lead down to room $\mathrm{F}(4.50 \times 3 \mathrm{~m}$, 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 $H(10.20 \times 3.30 \mathrm{~m})$, 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 $\mathrm{O}(1.57 \times 3 \mathrm{~m}$, 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 $\mathrm{S}(3 \times 4.75 \mathrm{~m})$ and $\mathrm{T}(3 \times 3 \mathrm{~m})$ overlook the northeastern porticus. The south-eastern side of the peristyle opens into rooms $U(3 \times 2.80 \mathrm{~m}), V(3 \times 2.10 \mathrm{~m})$ and $\mathrm{X}(3 \times 6 \mathrm{~m})$ : the last leads to the underground rooms $\mathrm{Y}(2.85 \times 6.80 \mathrm{~m})$ and $\mathrm{Z}(3.10 \times 2.85 \mathrm{~m})$, 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 228 a )

Peristyle. Grid-pattern of Hercules' knots with curvilinear spaces bearing circles ornamented with flower (R254c)
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 1I. 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 (R150c)
Private apartment N. Orthogonal pattern of tangent circles, forming concave squares (R 231d)
Anteroom O. Running-pelta pattern (R222d)
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 ( 0.64 m ) arranged in $3 \times 4$ 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 $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 ( $168 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ) of the domus. As the 2.50 m 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 H 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.

## ARCIITECTURAL 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; Beschaouch 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 Roccos 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 $2^{\text {nd }}-3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 4.80 m below the ground floor.
Basement. Corridor 17 gave admittance into the basement rooms. Room 18 was a triclinium, as the Ushaped 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 CIIASSE

## 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.

## ARCIIITECTURAL 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 comer 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 cubicula 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)
Calidarium 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 169 c )
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 (R137c) 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 $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 $4^{\text {th }}$ 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 5.15 m 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.

## ARCIITTECTURAL CONTEXT

Ground floor. At the north-eastern corner of the building vestibulum 1 leads onto porticus $\mathbf{6 a}$ of peristyle 6 through anteroom 2. That porticus overlooks assembly-room 3 and anteroom 4, which leads into private apartment 5. Porticus 6 b opens into room 7 and corridor 8 , which leads into private apartment 9 to the south-west. Main triclinium 10 overlooks porticus 6 c : along its north-western wall the dining room adjoins room 12, anteroom 13, and assembly-room 14, which opens onto porticus 6d. At the northwestern corner of the house is light-well 11. Porticus 6 d overlooks chambers 15 and 17 on either side of secondary triclinium 16. At the eastern comer 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 $6 a$. Grid of bands (R 142 f ) framing a panel containing interlaced band forming scales Porticus $6 b$. Orthogonal pattern of tangent circles (R231)
Porticus $6 c$. Orthogonal pattern of six-point stars of two triangles, forming hexagons ( R 214 b )
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 $4^{\text {th }}-5^{\text {th }}$ century, as the style of its floor mosaics shows. In the second half of the $4^{\text {th }}$ century new mosaics were laid in the main triclinium and in adjacent porticus on the ground floor. At the end of the $4^{\text {th }}$ century the mosaic floors of porticus $6 \mathrm{a}-6 \mathrm{~b}$ and of anteroom 4 were replaced, too. Probably during the $5^{\text {th }}$ century, the mosaic of the porticus 6 a was extended towards the porticus 6 b : that created a new space, which was enclosed by a wall and provided with two doors. Perhaps at the same time porticus 6bwas separated from porticus 6 c 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; Beschaouch 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 comer 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 PÊCIIE

## 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

Gauckler 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 $2^{\text {nd }}$ century. The house underwent decorative modifications in the $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 $4^{\text {th }}$ 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.

## ARCIITECTURAL 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 $5(2.60 \times 2.06 \mathrm{~m})-6$ 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 ( $14.80 \times 2.60 \mathrm{~m}$ ) 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 (R169c)

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 (R215b)
Porticus 9. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent octagons (R 167b)
Porticus 10. Grid of simple fillets ( R 124 h ) 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 156 a )
Anteroom 14. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent octagons, forming squares and oblong hexagons ( $R 169 \mathrm{c}$ )
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 $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 $4^{\text {th }}$ century, room 6 and the northern part of the domus, which contains band 8 , panel $8^{\prime}$, 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; Beschaouch 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 3.80 m 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 Tresor, 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).

## ARCIIITECTURAL 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 ( $9.65 \times 3.35 \mathrm{~m}$ ) overlooks space $4(8.70 \times 16.80 \mathrm{~m})$. The northern porticus ( $10 \times 3.35 \mathrm{~m}$ ) opens into assembly-room 5 , at the back of which is private apartment 12 , corridor $6(2.40 \times 6.45 \mathrm{~m}$, lararium $7(4 \times 3.20 \mathrm{~m})$, and antechamber $8(3.90 \times 3.20 \mathrm{~m})$. Corridor 6 leads into space $10(2.25 \times 2.55 \mathrm{~m})$ and ends into anteroom $11(2 \times 2.70 \mathrm{~m})$. Anteroom 6 opens into secondary triclinium 9. The north-western porticus $(10.80 \times 3.20 \mathrm{~m})$ opens into corridor $13(10.5 \times 1.35 \mathrm{~m})$.
In the north-eastern section main triclinium 18 is flanked by space 17 to the south-west, rooms 19 ( $\mathbf{3} \mathbf{x}$ $4.40 \mathrm{~m})-21(3 \times 7.70 \mathrm{~m})$ to the north-west, space 20 with balcony $22(9 \times 1.50 \mathrm{~m})$ to the north-east, and porticus 23 (ca. $14 \times 2.80 \mathrm{~m}$ ) to the north-east. The porticus overlooks nymphaeum $25(5.18 \times 3.65 \mathrm{~m})$ and the sides $26-27$ of the canal leading to it. Traces of a bath-suite and a cistern ( $24.50 \times 2.60 \mathrm{~m}$ ) 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

Anteroom11. 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 205 b )
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 $4^{\text {th }}$ and early $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 $2^{\text {nd }}$-early $3^{\text {rd }}$ century, while those of the second group (space 2 of the peristyle, assembly-room 9 ; and walls of the nymphauem) are dated to the late $3^{\text {rd }}$-early $4^{\text {th }}$ 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 ( $2.35 \times$ 1.98 m ) 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 1.20 m 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 comer 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 bathsuite.
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 archeaological 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 ( $3.38 \times$ 4.09 m ) and porticus II-V. The north-western porticus V overlooks pairs of rooms communicating with each other: anteroom VI ( $2.70 \times 4.10 \mathrm{~m}$ )-private apartment VII/VIII and anteroom IX ( $3.35 \times 3.11 \mathrm{~m}$ )room X ( $5.30 \times 3.20 \mathrm{~m}$ ) to the west; anteroom XVI ( $5 \times 4.30 \mathrm{~m}$ )-private apartment XV and anteroom XVIII ( $3.26 \times 3.95 \mathrm{~m}$ )- private apartment XVII to the east. Between those are corridors XI ( $5.40 \times 1.50 \mathrm{~m}$ )XII ( $3.90 \times 1.50 \mathrm{~m}$ )-XIII and room XIV ( $4.30 \times 9.20 \mathrm{~m}$ ). Along the north-eastern porticus II is apse XX/XXI ( $6 \times 4.47 \mathrm{~m}$ ). The south-eastern porticus III ( $2.28 \times 26.10 \mathrm{~m}$ ) 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 (R211d)

Corridor XII. Orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles, forming saltires of quasi-tangent spindles and concave squares (R237d)
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 $C M T$ IV. 1 do not describe in details what fragments have been found nor do they publish these finds.
In the late $2^{\text {nd }}$ or early $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 northwestern 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 $5^{\text {th }}$ 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 southeastern 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 $6^{\text {th }}$ 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; Bairem-Ben Osman 1981, 402-05; Richardson 1988, 29092; 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 ( $10 \times 14.43 \mathrm{~m}$ ) 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 corridorlike 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 $(4.50 \times 3 \mathrm{~m})$ 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 comer of the north-eastern porticus IIc is an apsidal structure VII ( 4.50 m wide and 3.60 m 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 Ila. Semis of roses
Porticus IIb. Semis of roses, hederae, and millets
Porticus IIc. Orthogonal pattern of four peltae tangent to a central square (R228c)
Porticus IId. Orthogonal pattern of tangent circles, forming concave squares ( R 233 a ) 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 $5^{\text {th }}-6^{\text {th }}$ 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 saltworks 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 $2^{\text {nd }}$-mid $-3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 $2^{\text {nd }}$ century to the first half of the $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 0.65 m 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 245 e ) 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 4.60 m 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'AMPIIITRITE

SITE
To the east of the Forum.

## ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

Vestibulum I leads into latrine XI and service room X ( $6.80 \times 4.50 \mathrm{~m}$ ) to the east and onto peristyle II to the west. The western porticus ( 2.20 m wide) overlooks room IV ( $2.60 \times 3.60 \mathrm{~m}$ ) 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, Nercids, 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 $3^{\text {rd }}$-early $4^{\text {th }}$ 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 $4^{\text {th }}$ or beginning of the $5^{\text {th }}$ 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 ( $4.40 \times 4.40 \mathrm{~m}$ ), and into corridor $\mathrm{V}(4.40 \times 2.20 \mathrm{~m})$, 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 $\times 4.80 \mathrm{~m})$ - XIV $(4.80 \times 2 \mathrm{~m})$ and XV $(4.80 \times 4 \mathrm{~m})$ on either side of assembly-room XIII, and corridor VI. Assembly-room XIII opens into spaces XIII' and XIII' $(2.60 \times 2.60 \mathrm{~m})$ 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 ( $5.40 \times 6.40 / 7.30 \mathrm{~m}$ ), 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 $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 2 m higher than the Cardo Maximus and the eastern wall of rooms XVII-XVIII was raised by about 1 m .

## 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 comer 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 f 2 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 ( 32 m long) to the south-west overlooks vestibulum 1 , secondary entrance 26 , and entrance 29. Vestibulum 1 leads up to landing $5(1.90 \times 2.10 \mathrm{~m})$ that adjoins spaces 2 and $2^{\prime}(1.40 \times 1.80 \mathrm{~m})$ : they on either side and opens onto corridor $6(8.60 \times 3 \mathrm{~m})$. Spaces $2-2$ ' open into space $4(2 \times 3 \mathrm{~m})$ 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 $19(4 \times 5.10 \mathrm{~m})$ on either side of main triclinium 18 . Room 17 opens into chamber $16(4.40 \times 5 \mathrm{~m})$ 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 $14-15(4.40 \times 2.40 \mathrm{~m})$; it leads up into chamber $11(3.40 \times 2.60 \mathrm{~m})$ to the south-east. Flights of stairs on either side of basin blead down into a corridor, which leads onto a courtyard and into a cellar. Above those is apsidal room 9. Entrance $29(8.80 \times 5.40 \mathrm{~m})$ leads into the baths through room $30(5.30 \times 9 \mathrm{~m})$ that communicates with the street by space $31(5.30 \times 2.20 \mathrm{~m})$ and opens into frigidarium $32(6 \times 6 \mathrm{~m})$, which adjoins piscina P to the west, tepidarium $33(5.70 \times 2.80 \mathrm{~m})$ to the south-east and space 36 and caldarium 37 to the north-east. Room 37 adjoins chambers $34(3.20 \times 5 \mathrm{~m})$ and $35(3.30 \times 1.90 \mathrm{~m})$ to the south and space 38 and rooms 39 $(2.60 \times 4.40 \mathrm{~m}), 44$ and $45(2.40 \times 5.80 \mathrm{~m})$, 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 $4^{\text {th }}$ 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 Al1.

## 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 $26^{\prime}$ 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 communicated 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 ( $\mathrm{d}-\mathrm{d}$ ') that might have been used as ornamental pots with flowers: in fact, the use of spaces $d$ - $d^{\prime}$ 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 ( 2.50 m 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 ( $8.50 \times 2 \mathrm{~m}$ ) overlooks space III ( $8 \times 4 / 2.80 \mathrm{~m}$ ), 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 ( $3.80 \times 4.20 \mathrm{~m}$ ) 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 ( $3.80 \times 2.50 / 3 \mathrm{~m}$ ), which communicate with each other, lead into vestibulum 1 .
In the north-western part of the domus, between the temple and vestibulum I , there are the private baths. Frigidarium XIV ( $10.50 \times 4 \mathrm{~m}$ ) with piscinae P 1 and P 2 on its short sides ( P 2 is flanked by space XV ( $2.20 \times 1.60 \mathrm{~m}$ ) to the west), adjoins chamber XVI ( $3.45 \times 1.90 \mathrm{~m}$ ), the warm rooms XVII and XVIII ( 3.30 $\times 1.80 \mathrm{~m})$ 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. ( 1.10 m -wide) Boats full of musicians and dancers approaching buildings on islands, fishers, and Erotes. Small mythological scenes at comers: 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 seamonsters, 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 wire slip type D, which have been found under the apse of stibadium XI, give the second half of the $4^{\text {th }}$ 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, 23106; 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 1 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 P 2 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

## IIOUSE 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 2426 , 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 patter (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 231 c ) containing xenia-motifs

Cubiculum 18. Couch-area. Black and white grid-pattern of tangent spindles (R 131b)
Main area. Vegetal pattern of undulating lines (R249b) 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 comers
Cubiculum 27. Main area. Allegories of Rome and the provinces

## DATE

The domus is dated to the second half of the $2^{\text {nd }}$ 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 $4^{\text {th }}$ - beginning of the $5^{\text {th }}$ 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 Ilouse of Africa, which occupies a $3000 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ 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 northeastern 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 $\mathrm{T}(3.80 \times 3.10 \mathrm{~m})$, into cella ianitoris S and onto the peristyle through anteroom V2. The north-eastern porticus opens onto corridor $\mathrm{Cl}(16 \times 3.10 \mathrm{~m})$ that leads into assembly-rooms A-B, into rooms $C(9.40 \times 3.70 \mathrm{~m})$ and $\mathrm{D}(3 \times 2.90 \mathrm{~m})$, and onto corridor C 3 . Room D opens into space $E$ and adjoins space $F$. Corridor C3 leads into space $G$. The south-eastern porticus overlooks anteroom $\mathrm{H}(4.10 \times 2.30 \mathrm{~m})$, main triclinium J , and room $\mathrm{M}(8 \times 7.60 \mathrm{~m})$. Anteroom H leads into chamber I (4.1 x 3.9 m ); main triclinium J communicates with chamber $\mathrm{L}(3.70 \times 5.50 \mathrm{~m})$ through anteroom $\mathrm{K}(3.70 \times 2.20 \mathrm{~m})$. 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 $(5 \times 3.85 \mathrm{~m})$ and V , which opens into $\mathrm{W}(4.8 \times 3.5 \mathrm{~m})$.

## 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 (R253e)
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 253 e )
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 $1(3.70 \times 1.85 \mathrm{~m})$. 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 ( $3.38 \times 0.70 \mathrm{~m}$ ). 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 (R183a)

T-shaped section. Bar of T: Dionysiac procession: Dionysus Pais riding lion, with satyrs, bacchantes, Sylenus riding camel, and woman carrying basket
Side panels ( $2.30 \times 21.61 \mathrm{~m}$ ): 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 241 e), 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.l; 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 C 1 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 ( 0.18 m 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 1.10 m 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 DAUPIIINS

## 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 ( $2.50 \times 2 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and into room IV ( $2.20 \times 2.20 \mathrm{~m}$ ) on either side and into anteroom II ( $8.85 \times 4.45 \mathrm{~m}$ ) to the west. Anteroom II opens into audience-chamber V, which overlooks corridors VII ( $2 \times 3.90 \mathrm{~m}$ )-VIII ( $2.20 \times 4.10 \mathrm{~m}$ ) on either side of apsidal space VI ( $2.60 \times$ 1.12 m ). The corridors lead onto peristyle X-XI-XII-XIII-XIV through anteroom IX ( $7.20 \times 3.70 \mathrm{~m}$ ). The eastern porticus XI ( $22.05 \times 3.15 \mathrm{~m}$ ) opens into service rooms XV ( $3.65 \times 3.53 \mathrm{~m}$ ) -XVI ( $2.70 \times 3.12 \mathrm{~m}$ )XVII ( $2.75 \times 4.05 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and onto corridor LII ( $2.95 \times 17.50 \mathrm{~m}$ ). Service room XVII adjoins spaces XVIII ( $1.45 \times 3.78 \mathrm{~m}$ )-XIX $(1.85 \times 3.78 \mathrm{~m})$ at the back. Corridor LII leads into service rooms LIV, LVI-LVII-LVIII-LIX (all: $2.55 / 3 \times 3.05 / 3.75 \mathrm{~m}$ )-LX ( $2.50 \times 6.10 \mathrm{~m}$ ) along the southern wall of spaces I to VII. The southern porticus XII ( $3.40 \times 24.10 \mathrm{~m}$ ) 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 $\times 3.80 \mathrm{~m}$ ) opens onto space XXXV ( 2.85 m wide), into main triclinium XXXVII, and into rooms XXXVIII ( $3.20 \times 5.60 \mathrm{~m}$ )-XXXIX ( $3.30 \times 6.20 \mathrm{~m}$ ). Room XXXVIII leads into space XL/XLI ( $5.05 \times 4.60 \mathrm{~m}$ ), which opens into space XLIII through anteroom XLII. The northern porticus XIV ( $3.05 \times 24.10 \mathrm{~m}$ ) overlooks anteroom XX ( $4.90 \times 3.35 \mathrm{~m}$ ), secondary triclinium XXV ( $5.05 \times 7.6$ ), corridor XXVI ( $5.35 \times 1.45 \mathrm{~m}$ ), and anteroom XXIX ( $3.90 \times 3.05 \mathrm{~m}$ ), and kitchen XXXI. Anteroom XX adjoins lararium XXIV ( $2.80 \times$ 5.10 m ) and leads into secondary triclinium XXI, which communicates with cubiculum XXII ( $\mathbf{3 . 2} \mathbf{x}$ 3.05 m ) and chamber XXIII ( $2.65 \times 1.65 \mathrm{~m}$ ). 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 178 b )
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 253 g )
Secondary triclinium XXV. Three panels representing: erotes vintaging in foliate grid of undulating bands (R251b); birds in pattern of undulating lines (R 249) formed by dolphins; grid of simple guilloche (R135a)
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 124 h )
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 253 g )
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 L.XIX. 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 $2^{\text {nd }}$ 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 $1^{\text {st }}$ century AD, and a fragment of pottery form Hayes 6 A , which is dated to the end of the $1^{\text {st }}$-early $2^{\text {nd }}$ century AD.
The Maison des Dauphins was probably built in the first half of the $3^{\text {rd }}$ century. In fact, the archaeological material found under rooms VI, XXXVIII and XLII is dated between the $2^{\text {nd }}$ and the beginning of the $3^{\text {rd }}$ century and most of the mosaics are dated to the first half of the $3^{\text {rd }}$ century. Afterwards new mosaics were laid in rooms VI, XXV, XXXVIII, XXXIX, and XLII: they are stylistically dated to the second half of the $3^{\text {rd }}$ or in the early $4^{\text {th }}$ 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-peristyletriclinium 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 Lshaped 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 ( $17.80 \times 1.50 \mathrm{~m}$ ), which leads into room XII $(4.80 \times$ $6.80 \mathrm{~m})$, into service rooms III $(3.10 \times 4.90 \mathrm{~m})$-IV $(3.10 \times 3.50 \mathrm{~m})$-V $(3.10 \times 3 \mathrm{~m})$-LVI $(3 \times 3.50 \mathrm{~m})$ to the south, into spaces VI $(3 \times 3.10 \mathrm{~m})$-VIII $(1.45 \times 6.70 \mathrm{~m})$-IX $(1.25 \times 7.25 \mathrm{~m})-\mathrm{XI}(2.80 \times 3.10 \mathrm{~m})$ to the north. Room XIII and corridor VIII lead onto the eastern porticus XIV ( $17.10 \times 2.95 \mathrm{~m}$ ) of peristyle XIII-XIV-XV-XVI-XVII. The same porticus overlooks also anteroom LIV ( $3.10 \times 2.60 \mathrm{~m}$ ), which leads into chamber LV $(3.10 \times 2.50 \mathrm{~m})$. The southern porticus XV ( $19.60 \times 2.35 \mathrm{~m}$ ) overlooks anteroom XLVII ( $\mathbf{3 . 2 0}$ $\times 2.30 \mathrm{~m})$, space L ( $3.20 \times 3.05 \mathrm{~m}$ ), anteroom LI ( $3.20 \times 3 \mathrm{~m}$ ), and room LIII ( $3.10 \times 2.65 \mathrm{~m}$ ). Anteroom XLVII leads into private apartments XLVIII-XLIX on either side; anteroom LI leads into room LII ( 3.20 $\times 3.05 \mathrm{~m})$. The western porticus XVI ( $17.10 \times 3.05 \mathrm{~m}$ ) opens into secondary triclinium XL, which opens onto corridors XLII ( $2.10 \times 7.20 \mathrm{~m}$ )-XXXIX $(3.40 \times 3.80 \mathrm{~m})$ on either side. Corridor XLII leads into private apartment XLIV through anteroom XLIII ( $3.95 \times 2.10 \mathrm{~m}$ ): both rooms adjoin light-wells XLI ( 8.95 $\times 2.35 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and XLVI ( $1.65 \times 5.80 \mathrm{~m}$ ) at the back. Corridor XXXIX leads into rooms XXXVII ( $3.40 \times$ 3.80 m )-XXXVIII ( $4.8 \times 3.9 \mathrm{~m}$ ) through room XXXVI $(4.25 \times 3.70 \mathrm{~m}$ ). The northern porticus XVII ( 19.60
x 3.80 m ) overlooks porticus XIX ( $11.25 \times 2.15 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and XXVI ( $10.10 \times 2.15 \mathrm{~m}$ ) on either side of main triclinium XVIII, and anteroom XXXIX. Porticus XIX opens onto secondary court XX ( $11.40 \times 2.70 \mathrm{~m}$ ), which adjoins service rooms XXI ( $2.70 \times 3.20 \mathrm{~m}$ )-XXII ( $3.50 \times 7.05 \mathrm{~m}$ )-XXIII ( $2.75 \times 3.25 \mathrm{~m}$ )-XXIV ( 3.60 x 3.55 m )-XXV ( $2.90 \times 2.80 \mathrm{~m}$ ). Porticus XXVI leads onto secondary court XXVII ( $8.45 \times 2.75 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and into anteroom XXVIII ( $2.60 \times 3.40 \mathrm{~m}$ ). Anteroom XXVIII opens onto secondary courtyard XXXII and into corridor XXIX ( $2.05 \times 3.80 \mathrm{~m}$ ). 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 4.35 m )-LXV ( $4.60 \times 3.10 \mathrm{~m}$ )-LXVI ( $1.87 \times 3.19 \mathrm{~m}$ )-LXVII ( $4.65 \times 5 \mathrm{~m}$ )-LXVIII-LXIX-LXX. Corridor XXIX leads into cubiculum XXX. At the north-eastern corner space LIX ( $4.55 \times 10.48 \mathrm{~m}$ ) overlooks rooms LX-LXI ( $2.90 \times 1.80 \mathrm{~m}$ ) to the south and LXII $(2.25 \times 4.20 \mathrm{~m})$-LXIII $(2.25 \times 5.80 \mathrm{~m})$ 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 (R241d)

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 (R162d) Threshold mat. Chessboard pattern (R114e)
Anteroom XLIII. Black and white grid of rows of tangent poised squares ( R 133 c )
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 $2^{\text {nd }}$ century (mosaics in porticus XIV-XVXVI, in triclinia XVIII and XXXI, and in room LIV); at the end of the $2^{\text {nd }}$ 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 $C M T$ 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 $3^{\text {rd }}$ century. After the end of the $3^{\text {rd }}$ century main triclinium XVIII was paved with a plain mosaic. The fragment of African red slip ware type Hayes $5 \mathrm{a} / \mathrm{b}$ (mid- to the end of the $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 $4^{\text {th }}$ 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 $(0.15 \mathrm{~m}$ 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.

## ARCIITECTURAL CONTEXT

To the east vestibulum I opens into audience chamber II, which communicated with rooms III ( 3.05 x 2.40 m : to the south)-IV ( $3.10 \times 3.10 / 3.25 \mathrm{~m}$ : to the north) and with the eastern porticus VIII ( $15 \times 3.10 \mathrm{~m}$ ) of peristyle VII/VIII/IX/X/XI. Room IV opens into chambers V ( $3 \times 2.50 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and VI ( $3 \times 5.50 \mathrm{~m}$ ), which adjoins light-well XIV ( $3.15 \times 9.40 \mathrm{~m}$ ). The eastern porticus VIII opens also into room XXXVIII ( 2.90 x 3 m ) and onto secondary entrance XXXIX, which leads into chamber XL (ca. $4.70 \times 3.10 \mathrm{~m}$ ) to the south. The southern porticus IX ( $18 \times 3 \mathrm{~m}$ ) overlooks anterooms XXXI ( $3.25 \times 3.35 / 3.65 \mathrm{~m}$ )-XXXV ( $3.50 \times$ $2.30 / 2.55 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and room XXXVII ( $4 \times 3.35 \mathrm{~m}$ ). Anteroom XXXI leads into private apartments XXXIIXXXIII. Anteroom XXXV leads into chamber XXXVI ( $4.45 \times 3.30 / 5 \mathrm{~m}$ ). Rooms XXXIII and XXXV adjoin light-well XXXIV at the back. The western porticus $\mathrm{X}(15 \times 3 \mathrm{~m})$ overlooks anteroom XXVIII $(3.25 \times 4.75 \mathrm{~m})$ and lararium XXVII ( $3.10 \times 2.15 \mathrm{~m}$ ). Anteroom XXVIII leads into cubicula XXIX-XXX
on either side. The northern porticus XI ( $18 \times 3.30 \mathrm{~m}$ ) opens into anterooms XII ( $2 \times 2.70 \mathrm{~m}$ )-XV ( 3.60 x 3.55 m )-XVIII ( $3.60 \times 3.60 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and into main triclinium XVII. Anteroom XII leads into chamber XIII ( 2.95 $\times 3.50 \mathrm{~m}$ ); anteroom XV communicates with both main triclinium XVII and room XVI ( $5.15 \times 3.55 \mathrm{~m}$ ). Similarly, anteroom XVIII communicates with main triclinium XVII, kitchen XIX ( $5.10 \times 3.60 \mathrm{~m}$ ), and with secondary courtyard XX. Porticus XXI of the small court opens into room XXII ( $3.1 \times 3.5 \mathrm{~m}$ ), into space XXIII ( $2 \times 6.10 \mathrm{~m}$ ), into secondary triclinium XXIV, and anteroom XXV ( $3.10 \times 2.10 \mathrm{~m}$ ). Anteroom XXV communicates with secondary triclinium XXIV and room XXVI ( $3.05 \times 3.60 \mathrm{~m}$ )

## 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 (R217e)
Anteroom XXVIII. Black and white orthogonal pattern of adjacent scales ( R 215 b ); 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 (R143d-e)

Main area. Black and white grid-pattern of peltae tangent to a central poised square ( R 226 b )
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 $2^{\text {nd }}$-beginning of the $3^{\text {rd }}$ century) and a fragment of pottery type Hayes 184/185 ( $2^{\text {nd }}$ or $3^{\text {rd }}$ century), which have been found under the floor mosaic of cubiculum XXX, and fragments of a lamp ( $1^{\text {st }}$ century AD), of African red slip type A, and of pottery form Hayes $184 / 185$ ( $2^{\text {nd }}$ or $3^{\text {rd }}$ century), which have been found under the floor mosaic of
secondary triclinium XXIV. The Sollertiana Domus, therefore, was possibly built between the $2^{\text {nd }}$ and the $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 $2^{\text {nd }}$ 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 $3^{\text {rd }}-$ beginning of the $4^{\text {th }}$ 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 Hl that are dated to second half of the $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 cubicula XXIX-XXX on either side. Space XXVII was perhaps used for the domestic cult because of its masonry apse.

## IIADRUMETUM

## MAISON DES MASQUES

## SITE

On the right side of the road to Ksiba.

## ARCIIITECTURAL CONTEXT

The peristyle is provided with courtyard and porticus II ( 1.38 m wide), which are 0.16 m 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 ( 2.75 m -wide) are rooms 2 to 7 . Chamber $2(6 \times 3.10 \mathrm{~m})$ adjoins room 1 to the east and space with traces of latrine to the south. To the west of room 2 , anteroom $3(2.80 \times 4.10 \mathrm{~m})$ leads into chambers $4(2.80 \times 4.10 \mathrm{~m})$ and $5(2.86 \times 1.85 \mathrm{~m})$, 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 $10(3.70 \times 2.10 \mathrm{~m})$, which directly leads into rooms 9 and $11(3.70 \times 3.20 \mathrm{~m})$ 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 ( 2.40 m wide; $4 \times 6$ columns) and an outer garden. Rooms $13(3.90 \times 2.80 \mathrm{~m})$ and $14(2.80 \mathrm{~m}$ wide) lie in the northern corner and communicate with each other.

## MOSAIC DECORATION

Perisytle. 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 (R215c)
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 (R231b)
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 (R237)

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 248 f )

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 154 c ): 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 240 c )
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 $2^{\text {nd }}$ 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 $(0.20 \mathrm{~m}$ above the domus floors), may be dated to the third quarter of the $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 4 th 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 (0.600.80 m above the mosaic floors) may be dated to the second half of the $4^{\text {th }}$ to the early $5^{\text {th }}$ century by the coins of Constantius II, of Julian, of Valens and of Thedosius that have been found at the same level. Moreover, several fragments of inscriptions with Constantinian chi-rho and of lamps of the $4^{\text {th }}$ 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 $4^{\text {th }}$ 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 $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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.l; 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, 21922; 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. $14 \times 2 \mathrm{~m}$ ) opens onto corridors 13 (ca. $5 \times 2 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and $17 \mathrm{a}-\mathrm{b}$. Corridor 13 leads into room 14 (ca. $3 \times 4 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and secondary entrance 16 (ca. $5 \times 4.50 \mathrm{~m}$ ) via corridor 15 (ca. 2.20 m wide). Corridor 17a-b into service rooms 18 (ca. $2.20 \times 1.90 \mathrm{~m}$ )-19 (ca. $2.20 \times 6 \mathrm{~m}$ ) at the south-western corner. Corridors 13 and 15 adjoin room 12 (ca. 4.50 m wide) to the east. The western porticus (ca. 2 m wide) overlooks anteroom 4a, which adjoins corridors $4 \mathrm{c}(\mathrm{ca} .1 \times 4 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and 5 (ca. $2.50 \times 4 \mathrm{~m}$ ) on either side and stibadium 4 b at the back. The northern porticus (ca. 2 m wide) adjoins rooms 10 (ca. $4.50 \times 3 \mathrm{~m}$ )-11 and opens onto antechamber 8 (ca. $5 \times 3 \mathrm{~m}$ ), which leads into cubiculum 7 and into chamber 9 (ca. $5 \times 3 \mathrm{~m}$ ) on either side. Cubiculum 7 communicates with corridor 5 through antechamber 6 (ca. $1.50 \times 6 \mathrm{~m}$ ). To the north anteroom 8 opens onto peristyle 20 (ca. $13 \times 13 \mathrm{~m}$ ) 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 $\mathbf{4 c}$. 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 169 b )
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 248 f )
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 $2^{\text {nd }}$-early $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 $3^{\text {rd }}$ century. The mosaics of anteroom 4 a , of corridor 4 c , of rooms 12 and 14 , and of corridor 15 , on the contrary, show a richer composition: they may be dated to the $3^{\text {rd }}$ century. When stibadium 4 b was built and room 4 a was turned into its anteroom, those spaces were carpeted with new mosaics that may be dated in the mid-4 ${ }^{\text {th }}$ 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 4 b ; 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; Ennaifer 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 comer. 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 $17 \mathrm{~b}-18$, which were entered from the peristyle via corridor 17 a , 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. Ennaifer and Ouertani maintain that the building was a bathsuite, 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 NYMPIIES

## 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: $7 \times 5 \mathrm{~m}$; at the south-eastern corner: ca. $5 \times 5 \mathrm{~m}$; to the west of the entrance: $6.80 \times 5 \mathrm{~m}$; in the middle: $3.50 \times 6.80 \mathrm{~m}$; at the south-western corner: $4 \times 6.80 \mathrm{~m}$ ). The vestibulum leads onto the peristyle. The western porticus overlooks assembly-room VII and rooms VIII $(3.20 \times 4.10 \mathrm{~m})$ and IX $(4.30 \times 4.60 \mathrm{~m})$, 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 ( $6 \times 9.60 \mathrm{~m}$ ) to the west and cubiculum Cl $(4.2 \times 3.6 \mathrm{~m})$ to the north. Courtyard A2 opens into room XI to the east, chamber X ( $3.40 \times 4.70 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and cubiculum C 2 to the north. To the north room VI leads into chamber IV ( $2.20 \times 3.80 \mathrm{~m}$ ), which adjoins rooms I $(4 \times 3.50 \mathrm{~m})$, II $(1.90 \times 3.50 \mathrm{~m})$ and III $(3.50 \times 3.60 \mathrm{~m})$ to the east and space $V(\mathrm{ca} .5 \times 4 \mathrm{~m})$ 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 (R164a)
Cubiculum C2. Western panel. Pegasus and Nymphs bathing
Eastern panel. Rape of Amymone by Poseidon

## DATE

The Maison des Nymphes may be dated to the second quarter of the $4^{\text {th }}$ 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 $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 $4^{\text {th }}$ century. They appear to be homogeneous: the mosaics of the peristyle, of the main triclinium, of cubiculum C2 (western panel), and of cubicula 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 ( B 1 and B 2 ) and opened respectively into chambers Cl and C 2 . 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 Cl 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.

## OUDNA

## 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. $4 \times 5 \mathrm{~m}$ ) 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. $3 \times 2 \mathrm{~m}$ ). 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 2 loverlooks room 22 (ca. $3 \times 2.50 \mathrm{~m}$ ), private apartments $23-24-25$, and secondary triclinium 26. The southern porticus overlooks room 28 (ca. $3 \times 5 \mathrm{~m}$ ), main triclinium 33, corridor 37, and room 38 (ca. $2.50 \times 5 \mathrm{~m}$ ). Room 28 leads into secondary courtyard 30 through anteroom 29 (ca. 2.50 x 5 m ). 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 $35(2 \times 2 \mathrm{~m})$ 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 243 g ) 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 243 g ) 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 (R178d)
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 243 g ) 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
 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 243 g ) 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 225 g )
Threshold mat. Flower in a square
Space 36. White tesserae laid in an orthogonal pattern of adjacent scales (R215a)

## 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. Gaukler dated the mosaics at the end of $1^{\text {st }}$ or the beginning of the $2^{\text {nd }}$ century AD and on the basis of the coins assumed that the alterations were part of a restoration in the mid- $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 $3^{\text {rd }}$ or early $4^{\text {th }}$ 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. $4 \times 3 \mathrm{~m}$ ) 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. $4 \times 3 \mathrm{~m}$ )-IV (ca. $4 \times 5 \mathrm{~m}$ ), 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. $3 \times 2 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and into main triclinium XIII. Anteroom X opens into chamber XI (ca. $3 \times 4 \mathrm{~m}$ ); main triclinium XIII leads into chambers XII (ca. $3.50 \times 6.20 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and XIV (ca. $2.80 \times 6.20 \mathrm{~m}$ ) on either side. The northern porticus VIII overlooks anteroom XV (ca. $2.80 \times 3 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and rooms XVI (ca 3.5 $\times 2.8 \mathrm{~m}$ )-XVII (ca. $2.70 \times 2.50 \mathrm{~m}$ ). Anteroom XV leads into private apartments XIX-XX-XXI (ca. $3.50 \times$ 3.50 m ) through room XVIII ( $11.70 \times 5.90 \mathrm{~m}$ ) to the north. The eastern porticus VII overlooks chambers XXIII (ca. $3.80 \times 3 \mathrm{~m}$ ), XXIV (ca. $3.80 \times 3 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and XXVI (ca. $2 \times 3 \mathrm{~m}$ ), stairwell XXV (ca. $1 \times 3 \mathrm{~m}$ ), and anteroom XXII (ca. $5 \times 3 \mathrm{~m}$ ), which leads into space A (ca. $2.50 \times 6 \mathrm{~m}$ ) of the baths. Space A opens into frigidarium B , which is provided with pools P 1 and P 2 and leads into tepidarium D through passage C (ca. $6 \times 6 \mathrm{~m}$ ) 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 0.60 m below the mosaic floor shows. In the second building phase ( $4^{\text {th }}$ 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 undefinied 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 entryarea. Rooms XIII-XIV and XV-XVI formed a single room; frigidarium B was provided with piscinae P1P2 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 $5^{\text {th }}$ century. According to Ben Abed Ben Khader, the domus was built after the first quarter of the $5^{\text {th }}$ 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 $5^{\text {th }}$ 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; Beschaouch 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 southeastern 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 $\mathrm{E} / \mathrm{F}$ 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-IVV 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 ( $R 231 \mathrm{c}$ ) 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 $2^{\text {nd }}$ 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 $3^{\text {rd }}$ century (Ben Abed Ben Khader 1989) or to the first half of the $4^{\text {th }}$ 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 NICLIES

SITE
In the western part of the ancient town.

## ARCHAEOLOGICAL CONTEXT

To the west vestibulum I leads into spaces II (ca. $7 \times 4 \mathrm{~m}$ )-IV on either side and onto the north-eastern porticus VI of the peristyle. This porticus leads onto space III in the south-eastern comer. The northeastern porticus VIII opens into cubicula XI-XII and into room XIII (ca. $4 \times 3 \mathrm{~m}$ ). 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 LX. 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 $2^{\text {nd }}-3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 $4^{\text {th }}$ 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 $4^{\text {th }}$ $5^{\text {th }}$ 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. 15 Km west of Leptis Magna.

## ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT

The north-western porticus ( $12 \times 3.50 \mathrm{~m}$ ) opens into secondary courtyard 1 around which a suite of rooms are arranged: room $2(5 \times 4.60 \mathrm{~m})$, assembly-room $3(4.50 \times 4.50 \mathrm{~m})$, anteroom $4(3.60 \times 1.90 \mathrm{~m})$, secondary triclinium, private apartment 6 , chamber 7 , and library 8 . The southern porticus ( $25.20 \times 2.73 \mathrm{~m}$ ) overlooks anterooms $11(4.70 \times 3.85 \mathrm{~m})$ and $13(4.70 \times 2.40 \mathrm{~m})$ on either side of anteroom 12 . Anteroom 11 opens into cubiculum $10(4.70 \times 3.60 \mathrm{~m})$; anteroom 13 leads into cubiculum $14(4.60 \times 3.30 \mathrm{~m})$; anteroom 12 opens into an apsidal hall ( $24 \times 18 \mathrm{~m}$ ) 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 ( $10 \times 3.50 \mathrm{~m}$ ) opens into anteroom $16(3.50 \times 2 \mathrm{~m})$, which leads into secondary triclinium $15(5.70 \times 4.80 \mathrm{~m})$ and cubiculum $17(5.70 \times 3.50 \mathrm{~m})$ 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 (R161a)
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)<br>Cubiculum 14. Couch-area. Orthogonal pattern of four peltae in opposed pairs<br>Main area. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent octagons in swastika-meander ( R 167d) with panel representing scene with bull tossing victims; above, inscription Filoserapis comp.<br>Room 15. Running-pelta pattern ( R 222 e ), with panel containing marble slabs<br>Anteroom 16. Orthogonal pattern of squares<br>Cubiculum 17. Couch-area. Black and white geometric pattern<br>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 eastemers, 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 $2^{\text {nd }}$ 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 $2^{\text {nd }}$ 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 10 m 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 2 m -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 Ulayout 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. $2.3 \times 5 \mathrm{~m}$ ), room 17 (ca. $1.80 \times 5 \mathrm{~m}$ ), secondary triclinium 21 , and assembly-room 28. Rooms 14-17-21 adjoin respectively spaces $C$ (ca. $2.30 \times 2 \mathrm{~m}$ ), D (ca. $1.80 \times 1.20 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and E (ca. $7 \times 2 \mathrm{~m}$ ) at their back; assembly-room 28 leads up onto landing 29 (ca. $3.20 \times 2.20 \mathrm{~m}$ ), which leads into service rooms $E$ (to the east) and $F$ (to the west: ca. $8 \times 2 \mathrm{~m}$ ). 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. $4.50 \times 2 \mathrm{~m}$ ) leads into secondary triclinium 6 (to the south) and onto peristyle 9 (to the east), which leads into main triclinium 45 via corridor 8 ( $\mathrm{ca} .18 \times 3 \mathrm{~m}$ ) to the south. Flight of steps 13 leads up onto corridor 11 ( $45 \times 2.60 \mathrm{~m}$ ), which leads into the bath-suite through vestibulum 23 to the south-east. Apodytherium 15 (ca. $5 \times 5.50 \mathrm{~m}$ ) opens into apodyteria 18 (to the east, ca. $2 \times 2.70 \mathrm{~m}$ : it leads into latrine 17: ca. $2 \times 2.20 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and 19 (to the south: ca. $5 \times 2.10 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and into frigidarium 16 (to the west: ca. $3.40 \times 5.30 \mathrm{~m}$ ). The adjoining room $\beta$ leads into tepidarium 26 (ca. $3.70 \times 2.10 \mathrm{~m}$ ), laconicum 25 (ca. 3 $\times 6 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and caldarium 24 (ca. $7 \times 3 \mathrm{~m}$ ) to the west and into laconicum-caldarium $22 \mathrm{a}-\mathrm{b}$ to the north. Tepidarium 12 (ca. $3.70 \times 2.10 \mathrm{~m}$ ) opens into vestibulum 23 (ca. $4 \times 2 \mathrm{~m}$ ).

## 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)
Apodyterium 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 $ß$ was connected with laconicum-tepidarium $22 \mathrm{a}-\mathrm{b}$ and room 12 was turned into a tepidarium 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 $22 \mathrm{a}-\mathrm{b}$ dates the second building phase to the first half of the $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 2 m 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 perisytle 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 $B$, which led into the warm rooms ( $22 \mathrm{a}-\mathrm{b}, 24,25,26$ ) of the baths. Room 26 was used as tepidarium because of its suspensurae, 25 as laconicum with tubuli along its walls and $24 \mathrm{a}-\mathrm{b}$ as caldarium provided with a rectangular basin. Spaces $22 \mathrm{a}-\mathrm{b}$ 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 praefurnia 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. $6 \times 5 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and VIII ( $3.90 \times 3 \mathrm{~m}$ ) to the east. The south-western porticus overlooks main triclinium X, which opens into corridors XI (ca. 7.90 x 1.90 m ) and XII (ca. $5.10 \times 2 \mathrm{~m}$ ) on either side. Corridor XI leads into antechamber XIII ( $3.80 \times 2 \mathrm{~m}$ ) of private apartments XIV-XV. The north-western porticus overlooks anteroom XVII (ca. $3.80 \times 3.80 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and room XX (ca. $4.20 \times 3.50 \mathrm{~m}$ ). 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 240 c )
Peristyle IX. Central court. Foliate orthogonal pattern of intersecting circles forming saltires and poised concave squares ( R 243 h )

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 fours 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 124 c )
Corridors XI-XII. Outlined pattern of circles, forming concave hexagons and dentilled spindles ( R 248 f )
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 240 c )

Main area. Orthogonal pattern of flowers with voluted tendrils ( R 242 c )

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 $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 (III 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 12.10 m ) of the peristyle via anteroom II ( $4.20 / 2.70 \times 4.10 / 3.10$ ) and corridor XXIX ( $8.30 \times$ $2.40 / 1.30 \mathrm{~m})$. The north-western porticus IV $(2.20 \times 12.10 \mathrm{~m})$ opens into anteroom XIII $(3.15 \times 2 \mathrm{~m})$, which leads into private apartment XII ( $3.20 \times 3.10 \mathrm{~m}$ ), and into private apartments XIV-XV-XVI. Anteroom XIII leads into room XII. The north-eastern porticus VII ( $11 \times 2.40 \mathrm{~m}$ ) overlooks assemblyroom VIII, main triclinium IX, and anteroom X $(1.85 \times 2.80 \mathrm{~m})$, which leads into rooms XI (5.60/4.30 x $4 / 3.20 \mathrm{~m}$ )-XII. The south-western porticus $\mathrm{V}(11 \times 2.10 \mathrm{~m})$ overlooks anteroom XVIII ( $1.80 \times 2.85 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and corridors XIX ( $1 \times 3.10 \mathrm{~m}$ )-XX ( $9.60 \times 3.35 / 3 \mathrm{~m}$ ). Anteroom XVIII opens into private apartment XVII. Corridor XVIII leads into the outbuildings; and corridor XX leads into private apartment XXI, into cubiculum XXII ( $4.5 \times 3.15 \mathrm{~m}$ ), and into room XXIII $(4.20 \times 4 \mathrm{~m})$. Along the south-western wall cubiculum XXII adjoins space XXIV ( $3 \times 2.50 \mathrm{~m}$ )-XXV ( $1.40 \times 1.85 \mathrm{~m}$ ).

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 124 c )
Peristyle. Court III. Destroyed
Porticus IV-V-VI-VII. Grid of triple fillets (R124c)
Assembly-room VIII. Orthogonal pattem 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 243 g )
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 228 a )
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 (R124c)
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 (R150e)
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 $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 $2^{\text {nd }}$-early $3^{\text {rd }}$ century. The mosaics are stylistically dated to the first half of the $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 communicated 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 $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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, XXXVIIXXXIX) 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 ( $2.90 \times 2.65 / 3.90 \mathrm{~m}$ ) , and rooms XII ( $4.20 \times 3.75 \mathrm{~m}$ ) -XIII ( $3.30 \times 3.75 \mathrm{~m}$ ), 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 ( $3 \times 3.90 / 3.70 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and leads into secondary
courtyard XVII and onto corridor XVI ( $1.50 \times 3.40 \mathrm{~m}$ ). 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 ( $2.60 \times 12.50 \mathrm{~m}$ ), 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 ( $2.80 \times 6.70 \mathrm{~m}$ ), 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 215 f )
Private apartment XVIII. Orthogonal pattern of cushions and spindles, forming octagons
Corridor XXVIII. Orthogonal pattern of eight-pointed stars of two interlaced squares (R178b).
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 $3^{\text {rd }}$ century. In fact, the fragments of pottery, which have been found under the mosaic of court XVII, are dated between the end of the $2^{\text {nd }}$ and the beginning of the $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 $5^{\text {th }}$ century. The building of a wall in porticus V/VI indicates structural modification that it is difficult to date.

## REFERENCES

Poinssot 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 ( $3.62 / 4.05 \times 2.60 \mathrm{~m}$ )-III ( $4.55 \times 2.45 \mathrm{~m} ; 3.33 \times 2.57 \mathrm{~m}$ ), 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 northwest. The north-eastern porticus VIII opens into room IX $(3.58 / 3.64 \times 3.30 \mathrm{~m})$ and into private apartment X , which communicate with each other. The south-eastern porticus V overlooks assembly-room XI and room XIV ( $2.05 \times 1.60 \mathrm{~m}$ ). Assembly-room XI opens into spaces XII-XIII. The south-western porticus V overlooks main triclinium XV-XIX, assembly-room XX, and room XXI ( $2.45 \times 3.50 \mathrm{~m}$ ). The northwestern porticus VII opens into anteroom XXII ( $6.15 / 6.35 \times 2.30 / 2.50 \mathrm{~m}$ ), which leads into private apartments XXIII $(3 / 3.20 \times 3.65 / 3.70 \mathrm{~m})$-XXIV $(3 / 3.20 \times 3.65 \mathrm{~m})$, 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 124 d )
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 234 d ) 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 $2^{\text {nd }}$ century as terminus post quem. The mosaics are stylistically dated to the early $3^{\text {rd }}$ century. Main triclinium XV-XIX was divided in smaller rooms in the first half of the $5^{\text {th }}$ century, as a coin dated to the end of the $4^{\text {th }}$-early $5^{\text {th }}$ 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 southeastern comer 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 $283 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$. 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 sevants 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 $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 4.60 m ) 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 ( $12.50 \times 2.48 \mathrm{~m}$ ) overlooks secondary triclinium XI and room XII (ca. $3.70 / 4 \times 4.10 / 4.30 \mathrm{~m}$ ), which opens into room XIII at the back. The northeastern porticus VII ( $12.50 \times 1.72 / 1.80 \mathrm{~m}$ ) opens into main triclinium XIV, which adjoins light-well XV at the back. The south-western porticus IX ( $12.50 \times 1.95 / 2.15 \mathrm{~m}$ ) overlooks anteroom XVI and rooms XIX ( $3.12 / 3.18 \times 3.42 \mathrm{~m})$-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 124 e )
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 oficina Nicenti
Side threshold mats Destroyed.
Private apartment XVIII. Floral grid-pattern of tangent spindles and poised squares, forming octagons (R151g)
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 $2^{\text {nd }}$-early $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 $4^{\text {th }}$ century by two late $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 northwestern 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 ( $0.95 \times 3.20 \mathrm{~m}$ ) to the north-west and onto the north-eastern porticus V of the peristyle. The south-western porticus VIII overlooks room IX ( $3.15 \times 2.95 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and anteroom XII ( $3.10 \times 2.96 \mathrm{~m}$ ). 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 ( $2.97 \times 2.18 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and into assembly-room XV, which adjoins light-wells XIV to the southwest 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 (R169c)

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 (R150c)
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 $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 $2^{\text {nd }}$ and the early $3^{\text {rd }}$ century,
of sigillata dated to the $1^{\text {st }}$ or the $2^{\text {nd }}$ century AD, and of pottery type Hayes 183 , dated to the $2^{\text {nd }}$ or the $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 AbedBen 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 southeast 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.

## ARCIITECTURAL CONTEXT

Vestibulum I adjoins space II and leads into audience-chamber III, which communicates with space IV. Space IV also opens into corridor V ( $4.35 \times 1.42 / 1.65 \mathrm{~m}$ ), 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 ( $3.05 \times 2.07 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and into assembly-room XIV. The latter opens into private apartment XV and onto corridors XVI ( $5.70 / 6.05 \times 1.45 / 1.73 \mathrm{~m}$ )-XVII ( 3.28 x
$1.74 / 1.78 \mathrm{~m}$ ) 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 (R150d)
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 $3^{\text {rd }}$ century. In fact, a fragment of a bowl, which is dated between the half of the $2^{\text {nd }}$ and the early $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 $I(6.75 \times 2.50 \mathrm{~m})$ to the north.
Section of Protomai (south-east). Corridor I leads onto peristyle II. The south- western porticus VI (9.05 $x 2.15 \mathrm{~m}$ ) opens into room VII ( $3.32 / 3.08 \times 3.28 / 3.24 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and into assembly-room VIII. The south- eastern porticus V ( $2.90 \times 8.10 \mathrm{~m}$ ) overlooks main triclinium IX/X that adjoins preafurnium XIII and side corridors XI ( $5.20 / 4.60 \times 2 / 1.30 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and XIV ( $8.90 \times 1.70 \mathrm{~m}$ ) . Corridor XI leads into private apartment XII; corridor XIV leads and into private apartment XV and onto corridor XVI ( $2.45 \times 5.10 \mathrm{~m}$ ).

Section of the Triconchos (north-west). Corridor I leads onto the north-eastern porticus II of the peristyle ( $11 / 13.40 \times 2.55 / 3.55 \mathrm{~m}$ ). The north-western porticus $\mathrm{V}(2.55 \times 13.40 \mathrm{~m})$ opens into room VII ( 3.70 x 3.80 m ), which adjoins room VI (ca. $3.75 \times 2.80 \mathrm{~m}$ ). The south- western porticus IV ( $11 \times 3.55 \mathrm{~m}$ )
overlooks secondary triclinium XI and extends by anteroom VIII ( $4.20 \times 3.10$ ) and corridor XVIII ( 5.90 x 2.30 m ) 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 ( $1.82 / 1.44 \times 5.30 / 5.20 \mathrm{~m}$ ). The south-eastern porticus III ( $2.85 \times 12.80 \mathrm{~m}$ ) opens into anteroom XIX, which communicates with private apartments XXI-XXII by means of anteroom XX ( 5.90 x 2.25 m ).

## 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 234 d )

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 $I V$. 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 213 c ), bearing respectively xenia-motifs and smaller lozenges

Private apartment XIII. Pattern of curvilinear octagons and tangent circles forming pairs of semiellipses 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 (R178b)
Private apartment XXII. Orthogonal pattern of eight-pointed stars of two interlaced squares (R178b)

## DATE

Section of Protomai. The fragments of lamp (dated in the first half of the $2^{\text {nd }}$ 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 $4^{\text {th }}$ century), which has been found under the floor mosaic of porticus III, show that the area was occupied by previous buildings from the $2^{\text {nd }}$ to the first quarter of the $4^{\text {th }}$ century. The present form of the domus, therefore, is later than the first quarter of the $4^{\text {th }}$ 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 IIVI, 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 $4^{\text {th }}$ century, while spaces II-VI, IX, XI, XIV, XV, XVI were probably decorated or redecorated in the second half of the $4^{\text {th }}$ century.

Section of the Triconchos. The area was occupied by a building in the late $1^{\text {st }}$-early $2^{\text {nd }}$ century $A D$, 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 $4^{\text {th }}$ 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 $4^{\text {th }}$ 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; BlanchardLemée 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 $4^{\text {th }}$ century. A cistern at the northem 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 CIIAR 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 ( $2.40 \times 3.90 \mathrm{~m}$ )-vestibulum II (ca. $4.10 \times 8.20 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and corridor III ( $10.80 \times$ $2.35 \mathrm{~m})$ lead onto the north-western porticus VIII $(2.10 \times 11.30 \mathrm{~m})$ of the peristyle, which also opens onto corridors X and XI $(5.60 \times 2.90 \mathrm{~m})$. 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 ( $12.10 \times 2.50 \mathrm{~m}$ ) 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 $5 \mathrm{~m}) / \mathrm{XXVII}$. The south-eastern porticus VI ( $2.70 / 2.40 \times 11.20 \mathrm{~m}$ ) opens into spaces XXIII ( $2 \times 5 / 4.90 \mathrm{~m}$ )XXV. The north-eastern porticus V ( $10.60 / 10.30 \times 2.50 \mathrm{~m}$ ) overlooks secondary triclinium XIX and anteroom XX ( $3.70 \times 2.10 \mathrm{~m}$ ), which leads into cubiculum XXI/XXII. At the angle between main triclinium XXX/XXXI and vestibulum I-II are four rooms (XXXII; XXXIII: $2.98 \times 2.58 \mathrm{~m}$; XXXIV: 2.90 $\times 2.60 \mathrm{~m} ; \mathrm{XXXV}: 2.40 \times 2.60 \mathrm{~m} ; \mathrm{XXXVI}$ ), 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 140 e )

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 (R150e)
Room XXXIV. Fragment of petal
Room XXXV. Grid of serrated double filets ( R 124b)

## DATE

The Maison du Char de Vénus was built on previous structures that lay 0.50 m 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- $3^{\text {rd }}$ century. In fact, the material covering the floor of cocciopesto under space XXX contain fragments of pottery dated between the $2^{\text {nd }}$ and the mid $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 $4^{\text {th }}$ 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 $4^{\text {th }}$ or beginning of the $5^{\text {th }}$ 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: $7.40 \times 7.40 \mathrm{~m}$ and triconchos XXXI : south-eastern apse: 3.50 m wide, 2.60 m deep; south-western apse: 3.80 m wide, 3.10 m deep; north-western apse: 3.30 m wide, 2.60 m 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 111 at the southeastern 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 (R164c), 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 $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 ( $9.50 \times 1.30 \mathrm{~m}$ ), which leads into audience-chamber III. To the west room III adjoins space XVIII ( $2.50 \times 5.20 \mathrm{~m}$ ). On the first floor the peristyle is surrounded by rooms on three sides. Porticus VII ( $2.75 \times 8.30 \mathrm{~m}$ ) overlooks room VI ( $3.30 \times 1.72 \mathrm{~m}$ ), main triclinium VIII and cubiculum XIII to the west, assembly-room XII to the north, and corridor $\mathrm{X}(6.45 \times 3.01 \mathrm{~m})$ to the south. Corridor X leads into secondary triclinium IX to the south. Porticus VI ( $3.85 \times 8.30 \mathrm{~m}$ ) opens into cubiculum XIV, rooms XV ( $3.85 \times 2.10 \mathrm{~m}$ ) -XVI ( $4.50 \times 3.85 \mathrm{~m}$ ) . 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 169 c )
Eastern side panels. Orthogonal pattern of adjacent lozenges and squares (R161a)
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 230 d )
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 211 d )
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 $3^{\text {rd }}$ century. The floral and ornamental compositions decorating porticus VII and triclinia VIII and IX seem to have been laid in the $4^{\text {th }}$ century. The mosaic of cubiculum XIV seems to have been laid in the $5^{\text {th }}$ 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 $\left(400 \mathrm{~m}^{2}\right)$ 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 0.95 m 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 ( $26.80 \times 3.35 \mathrm{~m}$ ) of peristyle XXVII/XXVIII/XXIX/XX overlooks lararium XIV ( $1.97 \times 5.40 \mathrm{~m}$ ), chamber XV ( $3.65 \times 5 \mathrm{~m}$ ), colonnaded triclinium XVI and secondary courtyard XVIII. Rooms XIV-XV are placed off court V/VI/VII ( $6.15 \times 8.75 \mathrm{~m}$ ), which overlooks rooms IL/IILIV on the opposite side. Lararium XIV adjoins corridor VIII ( $2.45 \times 13.35 \mathrm{~m}$ ) to the north. Corridor VIII leads into rooms IX ( $7.10 \times 5.58 \mathrm{~m}$ )-XI ( $4.72 \times 3.60 \mathrm{~m}$ )-XII ( $2.13 \times 3.03 \mathrm{~m}$ ). Room XII leads into vestibulum X $(2.08 \times 3.60 \mathrm{~m})$ via anteroom XIII $(4.58 \times 3.05 \mathrm{~m})$. The northern porticus XXIX opens into corridor XIX $(10.20 \times 3.32 \mathrm{~m})$, into oecus XXI ( $7.35 \times 4.30 \mathrm{~m}$ ), into secondary triclinium XXII ( 10.1 m long), into room XXIII and onto corridor XXIV ( $10.37 \times 1.62 \mathrm{~m}$ ). Oecus XXI adjoins XX ( $2.35 \times 4.28 \mathrm{~m}$ ) at the back; corridor XXIV leads into private apartments XXV ( $3.63 \times 3.30 \mathrm{~m}$ )-XXVI $(7.35 \times 3.23 \mathrm{~m})$

## 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 243 b )
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 138 c )
Threshold B. Black and white lozenge inscribed in a rectangle
Room XIII. Black and white pattern of four rectangles around a small square (R 14la)
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 (R105b)
Porticus XXVIII. Grid of rows of adjacent squares enclosing a parallel square (R138c)

## 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 $1^{\text {st }}$ century AD as terminus post quem. Maison au Grand Oecus seems to have been built in the last quarter of the $1^{\text {st }}$ or at the beginning of the $2^{\text {nd }}$ century AD. In fact, a lamp Deneauve type VII A or $C$ (end of the $1^{\text {st }}$ or early $2^{\text {nd }}$ century $A D$ ), a fragment of African Red Slip Ware (Flavian period) and the lip of a cup ( $1^{\text {st }}$ 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 $\mathrm{V} / \mathrm{VI} / \mathrm{VII}$.
In the second half of the $2^{\text {nd }}$ 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 (2 ${ }^{\text {nd }}$ 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 8 B (150-200) date the mosaic to the $3^{\text {rd }}$ century.
An inscribed base recording the name of Sulpicia Dyminia ( $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 $3^{\text {rd }}$ and $4^{\text {th }}$ 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 $x 4.42 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and the adjoining service room XXXII lead into secondary courtyard $\mathrm{XXXa}(7.67 \times 5.30 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and into a group of service rooms (XXXI: ca. $5.15 \times 5.73 \mathrm{~m} ; \mathrm{XXXb}: 2.80 \times 2.10 \mathrm{~m} ; \mathrm{XXXc}: 2.80 \times 2.10 \mathrm{~m}$; XXXd: $3 \times 4.47 \mathrm{~m}$ ). Audience-chamber II extends into corridors IV and XXXIII (ca. $5.65 \times 1.80 / 1.90 \mathrm{~m}$ ), which end into the northern porticus XXIIIa of peristyle XXIII. The same porticus overlooks assemblyroom XXXIV. The western porticus XXIIId overlooks porticus XII ( $5.67 \times 1.50 / 2.72 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and XV on either side of main triclinium XIV. Porticus XII of secondary courtyard XIII, leads into room X ( $2.73 \times 2.83 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and into secondary triclinium XI. Porticus XV of secondary courtyard XVI leads into rooms XVIIIa (2.73 $\times 5.83 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and XIX ( $2.95 \times 2.01 \mathrm{~m}$ ). The southern porticus XXIIIc of the peristyle overlooks chambers XX $(2.81 \times 4.39 \mathrm{~m})$, XXIa ( $2.89 \times 4.79 \mathrm{~m}$ ), XXIb ( $2.86 \times 2.53 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and XXII. Along the eastern porticus XXIIIb there are private apartments XXIV-XXVII on either side of the adjoining anterooms XXV ( 2.90 x 2.95 m )-XXVI ( $3.80 \times 3.02 \mathrm{~m}$ ), and room XXVIII/XXIX ( $2.81 \times 7.54 \mathrm{~m}$ ).

## 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 95 a )

Perisytle. 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 XXIIId. 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 18 c )
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 (R130b)
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 238 b )
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 $1^{\text {st }}$ century AD : the floors were in cocciopesto, trodden earth, opus figlinum and terrazzo. In the late $1^{\text {st }}$ early $2^{\text {nd }}$ 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 $2^{\text {nd }}$ and the beginning of the $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 $4^{\text {th }}$ or in the early $5^{\text {th }}$ 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 ( 2.05 m ) 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, Lezine'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 (CMTI.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 CIIASSE

## 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 ( $3 \times 13.33 \mathrm{~m}$ ) to the east and onto corridor III ( $4.98 \times 2 \mathrm{~m}$ ) to the north-west. The corridor leads onto the peristyle (courtyard IV: $3.12 \times 4.06 \mathrm{~m}$; porticus $\mathrm{V}: 5.75 \times$ $1.94 \mathrm{~m} ;$ VI: $1.67 \times 8.45 \mathrm{~m}$; VII: $1.77 \times 4.85 \mathrm{~m}$; VIII: $5.90 \times 1.80 \mathrm{~m}$ ). 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 ( $2.80 \times 4.03 \mathrm{~m}$ ). 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 $1^{\text {st }}$ century $A D$ the lot 5 was occupied by a small, humble house. In the late 1 st or early $2^{\text {nd }}$ 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, 9.22 m lower, opened into hall XVI/XVII/XVIII by a step and into vestibulum 1 . In the second half of the $4^{\text {th }}$ 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 $(9.70 / 9.87 \mathrm{~m})$; 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 $(6.25 \times 6.12 \mathrm{~m})$. The southern porticus IV ( $4.19 \times 8.34 \mathrm{~m}$ ) overlooks room I ( $3.70 \times 1.74 \mathrm{~m}$ ) 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 (R28a)
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 $1^{\text {st }}$ 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 1.1, 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 northeastern 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 II

## 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 ( 2.82 m wide) overlooks secondary trclinium XIII, which is flanked by secondary entrance X and anteroom XI ( $3.60 \times 3.85 \mathrm{~m}$ ) to the east and by chamber XIV to the west. Opening onto the eastern porticus XXIII ( 2.88 m 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 ( 2.77 m wide) are private apartment XIX, room XVI ( 2.50 x 3.50 m ) to the south and anteroom XVIII $(2 \times 3 \mathrm{~m})$ 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 trcilinium 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 (R146d) 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 (R124c) in opus tesselatum
$T$-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 $2^{\text {nd }}$ century $A D$ 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 $2^{\text {nd }}$ or at the beginning of the $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 comer 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-XVIIIXIX 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 ( $2.90 \times 2.60 \mathrm{~m}$ )-XV ( $1.50 \times 2.60 \mathrm{~m}$ )-XVI $(2.50 \times 3.50 \mathrm{~m})$-XVII to the east and onto corridor $\mathrm{X}(2.50 \times 6 \mathrm{~m})$ 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 6.10 m ). The western porticus VII overlooks main triclinium III and room IV ( $2.50 \times 5.50 \mathrm{~m}$ ). 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 215 a )
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 $1^{\text {st }}$ 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 $2^{\text {nd }}$ or to the beginning of the $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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; CMTI.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 ( 2.50 m wide) overlooks private apartments $4-5-6-7(4.20 \times 7.80 \mathrm{~m}$ ) to the east and ends into antechamber $2(6 \times 2.75 \mathrm{~m})$ and into cubiculum 10 on either side. Anteroom 2 opens into room 3 $(6.25 \times 4 \mathrm{~m})$. The southern porticus ( 3 m wide) overlooks main triclinium 11 . The western porticus $(2.50 \mathrm{~m}$ wide) opens into assembly-room 9 and ends into chamber $8(6 \times 3.40 \mathrm{~m})$ 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: $2.85 \times 1.88 \mathrm{~m}$ ), which adjoins tepidaria 22 and 23 . To the south are caldarium $18(6.50 \times 7.50 \mathrm{~m})$ 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 124 c )
Anteroom 2. Random semis of single tesserae (R109c); 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 (R209b)
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 northwest (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 $2^{\text {nd }}$ 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- $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 audiencechamber 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'IIERCULE

## 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 $4(5 \times 3.20 \mathrm{~m})$, 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 $26(8 \times 11.25 \mathrm{~m})$ 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 30-3133. 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 $1^{\text {st }}$ 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 $2^{\text {nd }}$ or beginning of the $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 611 lay at the south-eastern corner of the peristyle. The suite included room 10 , too: it was omamented 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 $10(3.50 \mathrm{x}$ 7.95 m ). 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 $14(2.15 \times 0.63 \mathrm{~m})$ leads into storerooms 15 $(3.85 \times 10.25 \mathrm{~m})-17(3.80 \times 10.25 \mathrm{~m})-18(4.25 \times 10.25 \mathrm{~m})$ and onto spaces $19-21$. Space 19 adjoins service rooms 22 - $23-24$ ( $3.15 \times 6.43 \mathrm{~m}$ ).

## MOSAIC DECORATION

Main triclinium 7. U-shaped section. Orthogonal pattern of tangent hexagons, forming squares and fourpointed 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 $1^{\text {st }}$ century AD by gallic sigillata and amphorae $\mathrm{Dr} 7 / 11$ ), 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 $2^{\text {nd }}$ 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 22-2324; room 13 became part of the Maison au Bain des Nymphes. In the last phase (dated to the $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 comer. 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 $6(4.35 \times 5.60 \mathrm{~m})$ 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 ( $3.35 \times 3.10 \mathrm{~m}$ ); the western corridor leads into private apartments 11-13 on either side of an anteroom, into service rooms 15 ( 4.35 x $2.60 \mathrm{~m})-18(2.85 \times 2.68 \mathrm{~m})-20(4.35 \times 1.55 \mathrm{~m})$, and into room $19(3.10 \times 2.75 \mathrm{~m})$. The western porticus overlooks room 8 ( $4.35 \times 4.25 \mathrm{~m}$ ).

## 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 $1^{\text {st }}$ 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 $2^{\text {nd }}$ century, as the altar found at the south-eastern comer 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 1969668 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 communicated 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 southwestern 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 ( 14 m 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 $\mathrm{a}-\mathrm{b}$ 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 adjoin 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 oilpress 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 seahorse

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- $2^{\text {nd }}$ 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 $\mathrm{T}+\mathrm{U}$ 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'ORPIIÉE

## 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; Ovadiah 1980, 47 ; Garezou 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 $4(6 \times 5.25 \mathrm{~m})$, which leads onto peristyle $22(16 \times 13 \mathrm{~m})$. The south-western porticus overlooks chamber 9 (ca. $5 \times 3 \mathrm{~m}$ ) 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. $5 \times 8 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and space 12 (ca. 3 $x 8 \mathrm{~m}$ ). Corridor 29 leads into secondary courtyard 26 (ca. $6 \times 6.5 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and onto service-room 21 (ca. $4.50 \times$ 4.50 m ), and opens into the street to north-west. The secondary courtyard overlooks private apartments 18 (ca. $7 \times 3.50 \mathrm{~m}$ )-19 (ca. $4.50 \times 4.50 \mathrm{~m}$ )-20 (ca. $3 \times 9 \mathrm{~m}$ )-28. The north-western porticus opens into secondary triclinium 13 (ca. $3 \times 7 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and into room 14 (ca. $3 \times 3.50 \mathrm{~m}$ ), which communicates with anteroom 15 (ca. $3 \times 2 \mathrm{~m}$ ) and private apartment 16 (ca. $3 \times 4.50 \mathrm{~m}$ ). 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 $3^{\text {rd }}$ 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 $1^{\text {st }}$ 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.

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della XXXI Settimana di Studi Aquileiesi (Aquileia, Maggio 2000), AAAd, XLIX, 59101.


[^0]:    ${ }^{1}$ 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.

[^1]:    ${ }^{5}$ 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.
    ${ }^{14}$ Balmelle et al. 1990.

[^2]:    ${ }^{12}$ 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.

[^3]:    ${ }^{17}$ HommStern 1983.

[^4]:    ${ }^{18}$ 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.

[^5]:    ${ }^{1}$ Petr. Sat. 28-30.
    ${ }^{2}$ Gell. Noc. Att. 16.5.1-2.
    ${ }^{3}$ Macr. Sat. 6.8.8.
    ${ }^{4}$ Leach 1993, 24.

[^6]:    ${ }^{5}$ Meyer 1999, 109-11.
    ${ }^{6}$ Saller 1982.
    ${ }^{7}$ Apul. Apol. 87.

[^7]:    ${ }^{8}$ 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.

[^8]:    ${ }^{11}$ Wallace-Hadrill 1988, 59-66; Wiseman 1987, 395-96.

[^9]:    ${ }^{12}$ Gel. Noc.Act. 16.5.9-10.
    ${ }^{13}$ Becatti 1948.
    ${ }^{14}$ Ellis 1985.
    ${ }^{15}$ Vitr. De Arch. 6.5.2.

[^10]:    ${ }^{16}$ 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 ( $3.80 \times 14.50 \mathrm{~m}$ ).
    ${ }^{18}$ Room I of the Maison du Paon and room I of the Sollertiana Domus at El Jem: ca. $12 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$; room I of the Maison des Animaux Liès at Thuburbo Maius: $22 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$; room I of the Maison aux Communs at Thuburbo Maius: $\mathbf{1 4 m}^{\mathbf{2}}$; room I of the Maison de Nicentius at Thuburbo Maius: $20 \mathrm{~m}^{\mathbf{2}}$; room I of the Maison de la Cascade at Utica: $20 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ : 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.
    ${ }^{21}$ Vitr. De Arch. 6.5.2.

[^11]:    ${ }^{22}$ Zaccaria Ruggiu 1995b, 383-96; Dwyer 1991, 27-9.
    ${ }^{23}$ Vitr. De Arch. 6.5.2.
    ${ }_{25}^{24}$ 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.

[^12]:    ${ }^{27}$ 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.

[^13]:    ${ }^{32}$ 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).
    ${ }^{34}$ Marquardt 1886, 228-36.
    ${ }^{34}$ Petr. Sat. 28.
    ${ }^{35}$ In the literary accounts (s.v. 'ostiarius', $T L L$, vol. $9,1150-51$ ) the word ostiarius designed the doorkeeper of both private and sacred buildings.

[^14]:    ${ }^{36}$ Holland 1961, 293 fn 32 . The door of the Roman house is discussed by MacMahon 2002.

[^15]:    ${ }^{37}$ Wallace-Hadrill 1988, 78.

[^16]:    ${ }^{38}$ Thébert 1987, 358.
    ${ }^{39}$ Juv. Sat. 3.249.

[^17]:    ${ }^{40}$ 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.

[^18]:    ${ }^{46}$ 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.

[^19]:    ${ }^{53}$ Dunbabin 1982.
    ${ }^{54}$ CMT I.1, 1973, 39-41 n. 43.
    ${ }^{55}$ CMT I.1, 1973, 38-9 n. 42.

[^20]:    ${ }^{56}$ CMT II.3, n. 306.
    ${ }^{57}$ Cic. De domo 100; Vell. Pat. 2.14.3; Plin. Pan. 62-7.

[^21]:    ${ }^{58}$ 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.

[^22]:    ${ }^{60}$ 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.

[^23]:    ${ }^{64}$ Apul. Met. 9.2.

[^24]:    ${ }^{65}$ 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.

[^25]:    ${ }^{67}$ The south-western wall, however, extended alongside the mosaic panel decorating the adjoining room XXIII.

[^26]:    ${ }^{68}$ Picard 1989.

[^27]:    ${ }^{69}$ 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).

[^28]:    ${ }^{1}$ 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.

[^29]:    ${ }^{6}$ 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.

[^30]:    ${ }^{15}$ 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.

[^31]:    ${ }^{21}$ 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.

[^32]:    ${ }^{23}$ Blanchard-Lemée 1975, 137-38.

[^33]:    ${ }^{24}$ They are the Maison à l'Ouest du Palais du Governeur, 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.

[^34]:    ${ }^{28}$ 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.

[^35]:    ${ }^{30}$ 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.

[^36]:    ${ }^{38}$ Poinssot 1983, 45-6.

[^37]:    ${ }^{39}$ Plin. NH 19.19.50.

[^38]:    ${ }^{40}$ 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?

[^39]:    ${ }^{43}$ Farrar 1998, 73-4.

[^40]:    ${ }^{44}$ Poinssot 1965, 220-26; Marrou 1964, 167 n.298; Dunbabin 1978, 42, 147, 183, 257 n.8; TouchefeuMeynier 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.

[^41]:    ${ }^{47}$ Poinssot and Quoniam 1953, 155-67; Dunbabin 1978, 52-3, 167, 275 n. 4c; CMT II.3, 8-16; BlanchardLemée 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.

[^42]:    ${ }^{49}$ 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.

[^43]:    ${ }_{52}$ Jeddi 1994, 138-42.
    ${ }^{53}$ The floor mosaic of porticus 11-12 has been destroyed.

[^44]:    ${ }^{54}$ 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.
    ${ }^{59}$ Ennaifer 1976, 65.

[^45]:    ${ }^{60}$ 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; CMTII.3, 74-6.
    ${ }^{63}$ Gauckler 1896, 207-08; Dunbabin 1978, 266 1; Blanchard-Lemée et al.1996, 35, 286.
    ${ }^{64}$ Jesnick 1997.

[^46]:    ${ }^{65}$ 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.

[^47]:    ${ }^{68}$ Further examples are the peristyles of the Maison de Lucius Verus and of the House of Africa, both at El Jem.

[^48]:    ${ }^{69}$ 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.
    ${ }^{72}$ CMTII.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.

[^49]:    ${ }^{75}$ Jeddi 1999, 222-26.
    ${ }_{76}^{76}$ CMT II.4, 44-5.
    ${ }_{77}^{77}$ CMT II.3, 37-8.
    ${ }^{78}$ CMT II.1, 43.

[^50]:    ${ }^{79}$ 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.la; 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.

[^51]:    ${ }^{83}$ 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'.

[^52]:    ${ }^{87}$ Vitr. De Arch. 6.7.3.
    ${ }^{88}$ Lucret. 4.400-04.
    ${ }^{89}$ Verg. Aen. 7.378-80.

[^53]:    ${ }^{1}$ Gauckler 1896; Etienne 1960, 123-24; Hales 2003, 203.
    ${ }^{2}$ Darmon 1980, 15-8.

[^54]:    ${ }^{3}$ The courtyard was initially surrounded by columns on three sides, but with the enlargement of room XVIIIa the adjoining southern porticus was eliminated.

[^55]:    ${ }^{4}$ Gauckler 1896, 197-99; Dunbabin 1978, 265 n.1c.
    ${ }^{5}$ Gauckler 1896, 194-96; Dunbabin 1978, 65, 265 n.1b.

[^56]:    ${ }^{6}$ Gauckler 1896, 200-02; Dunbabin 1978, 51, 65, 112, 265 n. If; Fantar et al. 1994, 97-8; BlanchardLemée 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, $266 \mathrm{n} . \mathrm{lj}$.
    ${ }^{8}$ Sear 1977, 166 n. 230; Dunbabin 1978, 17, 276 n.9; Fantar et al. 1994, 22 (fig.); Yacoub 1995, 174; CMT I.1, 27-9, 53-6; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 535 fig. 317.
    ${ }^{9}$ CMT II.4, 59-63.

[^57]:    ${ }^{10}$ Dunbabin 1978, 151 n. 76, 274 n.lb; 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 1.1, 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.

[^58]:    ${ }^{17}$ CMT II.4, 52-3

[^59]:    ${ }^{18}$ Ennaïfer 1976, 87-8.
    ${ }^{19}$ Jashemski 1995.

[^60]:    ${ }^{20}$ Blanc-Bjon and Darmon 1988-1989.
    ${ }^{21}$ Further examples are discussed in chapter 6 'Secondary triclinium', 203.

[^61]:    ${ }^{1}$ 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.

[^62]:    ${ }^{4}$ 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.

[^63]:    ${ }^{12}$ Petr. Sat. 77. 4.
    ${ }^{13}$ Suet. Nero, 31. 2.
    ${ }_{14}^{14}$ 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.
    ${ }_{22}^{22}$ Cic. De Or. 2.353
    ${ }^{23}$ Val. Max. 1.8 ext. 7.
    ${ }^{24}$ Quint. Inst. Or. 11.2.13.

[^64]:    ${ }^{25}$ 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, 978.

[^65]:    ${ }^{31}$ Pagano 1983; Bollmann 1998, 79, 368-71 A52; Dunbabin 2003, 95-7.

[^66]:    ${ }^{32}$ Examples are triclinia XVII of the Sollertiana Domus at El Jem (Table 5.2 n .15 ) and X of the Maison ${ }^{33}$ de Dionysos at Thaenae (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.

[^67]:    ${ }^{35}$ 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 Ecija in Spain; the Governor's Palace at Aphrodisias; the Palace of Theoderic at Ravenna.

[^68]:    ${ }^{39}$ Lassus 1971; Blanchard-Lemée 1983.
    ${ }^{40}$ Nielsen 1998.
    ${ }^{41}$ Vitr. De Arch. 6.3.8.

[^69]:    ${ }^{42}$ A further example of colonnaded triclinium, which is not included in the table, is in the Maison de Lucius Verus at El Jem.

[^70]:    ${ }^{43}$ 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.

[^71]:    ${ }^{47}$ 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. 21 a; Fantar et al. 1994, 86; CMT III.1, 10-8.
    ${ }^{49}$ Foucher 1964, 18.
    ${ }^{50}$ Dunbabin 1978, 184.

[^72]:    ${ }^{51}$ Gauckler 1896, 208-10; Dunbabin 1978, 117 n. 28, 182-83, 266 n. 1 m ; 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, 458. Yacoub 1995, 79-81.

[^73]:    ${ }^{55}$ 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.
    ${ }^{57} \mathrm{Ch}$. Picard 1953a.
    ${ }^{58}$ Boardman 1998; id. 1990; Schwarz 1990.

[^74]:    ${ }^{59}$ 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 Roccos 1994, 344 n. 206b; Fantar et al. 1994, 90-2; Yacoub 1996, 47 A390; Muth 1998, 200-04, 259, 263, 35658 A5; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 531 fig. 242.

[^75]:    ${ }^{62}$ 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; Ovadiah 1980, 47 ; Garezou 1994, 94 n.133; Kondoleon 1994, 248-49; Jesnick 1997, 132-3 n.27; Risse 2001, 88-90; Panetier 2002, 109-10.

[^76]:    ${ }^{64}$ Blanchard-Lemée 1975, 73-84; Dunbabin 1978, 43, 134, 156, 256 n.lc.
    ${ }^{65}$ Traversari 1960.
    ${ }^{66}$ Thouvenot 1958, 79-8; Aymard 1961; Dunbabin 1978, 277, 2e.
    ${ }^{67}$ Ch. 3, 81-82.

[^77]:    ${ }^{68}$ 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.lb.
    ${ }^{71}$ Chatelain 1935, 8-10; Thouvenot 1945, 121; Dunbabin 1978, 277 n.lb; Risse 2001, 94.
    ${ }^{72}$ Ennaïfer 1976, 66-7; Dunbabin 1978, 127, 153, 248 n. 1a.

[^78]:    ${ }^{73}$ 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.
    ${ }_{75}{ }^{74}$ Beschaouch et al. 1977, 64.
    ${ }^{75}$ Gauckler 1896, 208; Dunbabin 1978, 61, 266 n. 1 m ; Fantar et al. 1994, 245 (fig.); Yacoub 1995, 25051; Blanchard-Lemée et al. 1996, 179-82 ; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 525 fig. 152.

[^79]:    ${ }^{76}$ '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. 31 b .
    ${ }^{79}$ Dunbabin 1978, 65, 274 n.4b; Yacoub 1995, 281-82; CMT II.3, 17-22; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 525 fig. 161.

[^80]:    ${ }^{80}$ 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 $\mathrm{T}+\mathrm{U}$ 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.

[^81]:    ${ }^{88}$ 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.

[^82]:    ${ }^{95}$ 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. 6 c .
    ${ }^{100}$ Sen. Ep. 47. 2: stantium servorum turba.
    ${ }^{101}$ Saller 1987, 71.
    ${ }^{102}$ Bonaria 1983; Brugnoli 1983; Jones 1991; Dunbabin 1996.

[^83]:    ${ }^{103}$ Mau 1900.
    ${ }^{104}$ Plin. Ep. 7. 24.
    ${ }^{105}$ Ellis 1995, 71.
    ${ }^{106}$ Dunbabin 2003, 11-35 with previous bibliography.
    ${ }^{107}$ Mrozek 1992.

[^84]:    ${ }^{108}$ 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.

[^85]:    ${ }^{112}$ For instance, the masonry couch in Casa del Criptoportico was between 1.50 m and 2 m wide.
    ${ }^{113}$ Witts 2000.

[^86]:    114 Witts 2000, 295. See also Morvillez 1996 with slightly smaller dimensions ( 3 m 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.
    ${ }_{117}$ Akerström-Hougen 1974, 34-6, 101-17; Dunbabin 2003, 170.
    ${ }^{118}$ Auson. Ephemeris 5.
    ${ }^{119}$ Sidon. Ep. 1.11.10.

[^87]:    ${ }^{120}$ 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.

[^88]:    ${ }^{122}$ Sen. Vit. beat. 11.4.
    ${ }^{123}$ D'Arms 1999.

[^89]:    ${ }^{1}$ 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.

[^90]:    ${ }^{6}$ Plin. Ep. 1.3.1: triclinia illa popularia illa paucorum.
    ${ }^{7}$ Gozlan 1992, 93-113, 175-208.

[^91]:    ${ }^{8}$ 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.

[^92]:    " 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, 40607 A47; Risse 2001, 90-3.

[^93]:    ${ }^{13}$ 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.

[^94]:    ${ }^{16}$ 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.

[^95]:    ${ }^{21}$ Fantar et al. 1994, 125 (fig.); CMT III.1, 86-9.
    ${ }^{22}$ Dunbabin 1978, 258 n. 9.
    ${ }^{23}$ Chapter 5, 145-46.

[^96]:    ${ }^{24} \mathrm{Cf}$. 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 ).

[^97]:    ${ }^{28}$ 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.
    ${ }_{3}$ Thébert 1972, 33-4 ; Beschaouch et al. 1977, 72-77 ; Dunbabin 1978, 155-56, 250 n.3b; BlanchardLemée et al. 1996, 152.

[^98]:    ${ }^{32}$ 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.

[^99]:    ${ }^{35}$ 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.

[^100]:    ${ }^{39}$ The secondary triclinium of the Maison d'Ikarios at Oudna lay in the private section of the house.

[^101]:    ${ }^{40}$ Foucher 1961, 2, 19-21; Salomonson 1965 50-51; Ennaïfer 1976, 108; Dunbabin 1978, 66, 259 n. 21 b; 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 $1^{\text {st }}$ century $A D$; the El Jem panel belongs to the end of the $2^{\text {nd }}-$ beginning of the $3^{\text {rd }}$ century $A D$.
    ${ }^{42}$ 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.

[^102]:    ${ }^{45}$ Salomonson 1960, 50-3.
    ${ }^{46}$ Ballu 1911, 105.
    ${ }^{47}$ Ennaïfer 1999, 240.

[^103]:    ${ }^{48}$ I thank Prof. Roger Wilson for suggesting this possibility.

[^104]:    ${ }^{49}$ The U-shaped bands measure 1.31 m on the two sides and 1.39 m at the rear of the room: if the couches had obscured the geometric borders of the central panel, a maximum width of $1.61 / 1.69 \mathrm{~m}$ 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 ( $22 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ); room XI of the Maison de la Cascade at Utica ( $28 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ); room XXXI of the Maison du Paon at El Jem ( $36 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ); and room XXX of the Maison de Bacchus et Ariane at Thuburbo Maius ( $47 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ).
    ${ }^{51}$ The difference between Greek and Roman dining rooms is discussed by Dunbabin 1998.
    ${ }^{52}$ Plin. Ep. 9.36.

[^105]:    ${ }^{53}$ Apul. Met. 1.22.

[^106]:    ${ }^{54}$ Jashemski 1995.
    ${ }^{55}$ The use of courtyards and peristyle for dining are analysed in more details in the chapter on the peristyle.
    ${ }^{36}$ Bradley 1998.

[^107]:    ${ }_{58}^{57}$ Plin. Ep. 2.17.10.
    ${ }^{58}$ Sid. Ep. 2.2.11.

[^108]:    ${ }^{1}$ Plin. Ep. 2.17.9.
    ${ }^{2}$ Sid. Ep. 2.2.

[^109]:    ${ }^{3}$ 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.

[^110]:    ${ }^{6}$ The type, which was invented by Sosos of Pergamon in the $2^{\text {nd }}$ 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 $2^{\text {nd }}$ 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 $1^{\text {s }}$ century $\mathrm{BC}-1^{\text {s }}$ 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 peristylium, 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 $2^{\text {nd }}$ century BC onward.
    ${ }^{10}$ Darmon 1980.

[^111]:    ${ }^{11}$ 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.

[^112]:    ${ }^{19}$ 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.

[^113]:    ${ }^{21}$ 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'.

[^114]:    ${ }^{23}$ 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 ( $26 \mathrm{~m}^{2}$ ) lying off the peristyle and alongside the main triclinium.

[^115]:    ${ }^{24}$ Rebuffat 1969, 668 n. 6.

[^116]:    ${ }^{25}$ Poinssot 1965, 228-29; Dunbabin 1978, 257 n.8b; Parrish 1981, 54; id. 1984, 136-38; id. 1981, 799, n.3.

[^117]:    ${ }^{26}$ 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.

[^118]:    ${ }^{30}$ Thouvenot 1945, 118-19.
    ${ }^{31}$ Thouvenot 1958, 65-6; Dunbabin 1978, 277 n. 1 a
    ${ }^{32}$ Gauckler 1896, 206-07; Dunbabin 1978, 266 n. 1 k.
    ${ }^{33}$ 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 .2 b ; id. 1982, 72 n. 55; Darmon 1980, 52 n.6; CMT II.3, 1987, 80-2 n. 296; Blanchard-Lemée et al.1996, 154.

[^119]:    ${ }^{35}$ Humphrey 1984; Al Mahjub 1987, 72; Ch. Picard 1985, 230; Dunbabin 1999a, 122-23; Witts 1993, 27 n. 14.
    ${ }^{36}$ Dunbabin 1982, 82-6.

[^120]:    ${ }^{37}$ 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.lb; Theophilidou 1984, 325 n. 31; Lancha 1997, 71-2 n. 30

[^121]:    ${ }^{40}$ Hanoune 1974, 387; Beschaouch 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 3.30 m -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.

[^122]:    ${ }^{45}$ 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.

[^123]:    ${ }^{51}$ Ville 1961, 43-5; CMT I.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 Nepune at Thuburbo Maius seems to have been decorated with floral motifs, too, but the mosaic is missing.
    ${ }^{54}$ CMTI.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; CMT I.1, 51-3.

[^124]:    ${ }^{57}$ Rossiter 1991.
    ${ }^{58}$ Rossiter states that the accounts of the $5^{\text {th }}$ 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.

[^125]:    ${ }^{59}$ 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.

[^126]:    ${ }^{63}$ 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.
    ${ }^{69}$ Macrob. Sat. 1.6.
    ${ }^{70}$ Macrob. Sat. 1.6.11.
    ${ }^{71}$ Boeth. De Cons. 1.5.

[^127]:    '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.

[^128]:    ${ }^{6}$ 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.

[^129]:    ${ }^{9}$ 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.

[^130]:    ${ }^{11}$ A further example is cubiculum 11 of the Maison de Dionysos et d'Ulysse at Thugga.
    ${ }^{12}$ Elia 1932.

[^131]:    ${ }^{13}$ Plin. Ep. 2.17.8.
    ${ }_{15}^{14}$ 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 ).

[^132]:    ${ }^{18}$ 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.

[^133]:    ${ }^{23}$ 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;BlanchardLemée et al. 1996, 240-41; Lancha 1997, 37-8 n.4; Muth 1998, 241-42, 378; Ben Abed-Ben Khader 2003, 532 fig. 248.

[^134]:    ${ }^{25}$ 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).

[^135]:    ${ }^{29}$ Lancha 1997, 307.
    ${ }^{30}$ Darmon 1980, $115-20$ n. 30, 178-86, 201-04; id. 1989; Donderer 1983; Yacoub 1995, 93-5; BlanchardLemée 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.

[^136]:    ${ }^{32}$ 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, 53334 figs. 293-95.

[^137]:    ${ }^{34}$ Al Mahjub 1983, 303; G.Ch.Picard 1985, 235-40; Dunbabin 1999a, 123-24.
    ${ }^{35} \mathrm{Ch} .6,201$.
    ${ }^{36}$ Ennaïfer and Ouertani 2001, 221.

[^138]:    ${ }^{37}$ 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.

[^139]:    ${ }^{44}$ 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.

[^140]:    ${ }^{53}$ In Pliny's villa ( $E p .5 .6 .21$ ) the chamber opened off a small court; in Sidonius' estate ( $E p .2 .2 .10$ ) at the end of a cryptoporticus.
    ${ }^{54}$ Plin. Ep. 2.17.23.

[^141]:    ${ }^{55}$ 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.

[^142]:    ${ }^{60}$ 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-XXVI. 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

[^143]:    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.

[^144]:    ${ }^{67}$ Zaccaria Ruggiu 2001.
    ${ }^{68}$ Apul. Met. 1.23.
    ${ }^{69}$ Sid. Ep. 2. 9. 7.

[^145]:    ${ }^{70}$ 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.

[^146]:    ${ }^{75}$ 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.

[^147]:    ${ }^{1}$ 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.

[^148]:    s 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.

[^149]:    ${ }^{7}$ 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).

[^150]:    ${ }^{11}$ Riggsby 1997, 43-4.

[^151]:    ${ }^{12}$ 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.

[^152]:    ${ }^{13}$ 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.

[^153]:    ${ }^{15}$ Etienne 1954, 63-4.
    ${ }^{16}$ Room XII was also entered from anteroom XIII, which was similarly arranged.

[^154]:    ${ }^{17}$ Gozlan and Jeddi 2001, 118.
    ${ }^{18}$ Plin. Ep. 2.17.8.

[^155]:    ${ }^{19}$ 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. 1 d; Tomei 2002, 69-70.
    ${ }^{21}$ Gauckler 1896, 200; Dunbabin 1978, 145, 265 n. 1 d; 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. 1 g; Tomei 2002, 72-4.

[^156]:    ${ }^{24}$ 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.

[^157]:    ${ }^{31}$ 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.

[^158]:    ${ }^{38}$ 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.

[^159]:    ${ }^{51}$ 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.
    ${ }^{56}$ CMTII.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.
    ${ }^{63}$ Ennaiffer 1976, 69.
    ${ }^{64}$ The same pattern seems to have decorated chamber XVII of the Maison du Triconque at Carthage (CMTIV.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.

[^160]:    ${ }^{67}$ 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.

[^161]:    ${ }^{79}$ 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.

[^162]:    ${ }^{82}$ 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+toreum, 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.

[^163]:    ${ }^{88}$ Lefkowitz and Fant 1992.
    ${ }^{89}$ Plin. Ep. 6.4.
    ${ }^{90}$ Apul. Apol. 93 .

[^164]:    ${ }^{91}$ 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, 469.

[^165]:    ${ }^{97}$ Huskinson 1996, 16-7.
    ${ }_{98}$ Laurence 1994.
    ${ }^{99}$ Petr. Sat. 37.

[^166]:    ${ }^{100}$ Saller 1999.

[^167]:    ${ }^{1}$ 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.

[^168]:    ${ }^{2}$ 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.

[^169]:    ${ }^{4}$ 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.

[^170]:    ${ }^{6}$ 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.

[^171]:    ${ }^{12}$ 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).

[^172]:    ${ }^{14}$ 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 $2^{\text {nd }}$ 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.

[^173]:    ${ }^{18}$ 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.

[^174]:    ${ }^{21}$ 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.

[^175]:    ${ }^{25}$ 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.

[^176]:    ${ }^{35}$ 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.

[^177]:    ${ }^{40}$ For the use of mosaic inscriptions see Dunbabin 1999b and Notermans 2001.

[^178]:    ${ }^{41}$ 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.

[^179]:    ${ }^{46}$ Vitr. De Arch. 6.5-6.
    ${ }^{47}$ Apul. Apol. 24.
    ${ }^{48}$ Apul. Apol. 58.

[^180]:    ${ }^{49}$ For a more detailed analysis of the decoration in Trimalchio's house see Dumont 1990.

