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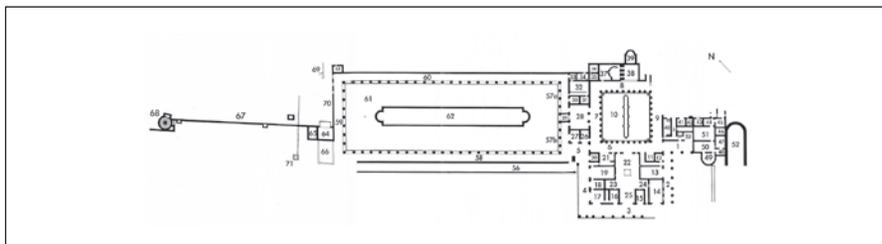
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MANTHA ZARMAKOUPI

THE ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN OF ROMAN LUXURY VILLAS AROUND THE BAY OF NAPLES (CIRCA 100 BCE – 79 CE)

The cultural phenomenon of luxurious villas flourished in the Italian peninsula from the middle of the first century BCE to the beginning of the second century CE. It mainly developed in the suburbs of Rome, along the coast near Rome and especially around the bay of Naples, where the rich senators would retreat from their public obligations to their private luxury villas in order to enjoy a sophisticated life of leisure. Even if the purpose was that these places were retreats from the public life of political affairs, they participated in the social staging of the Roman nobles and *nouveaux riches*. This cultural phenomenon was inextricably linked to the influx of resources in Italy after the conquest of the Hellenistic East in the second century BCE. Romans, wishing to display their wealth in the private sphere, transformed their plain country houses into sumptuous edifices. The moralists of the period interpreted the lifestyle of luxury and its supporting premises, that is the luxury villa, as indicative of the corrupting influences coming from the Hellenistic East. But it was more their socio-political interests rather than their ethical distress that incited their criticisms. Indeed in the Romans' bid for social ascendancy luxury villas operated as cultural status symbols.

Previous studies have studied the cultural phenomenon of luxury villas, singled out their distinguishing architectural structures and tackled their cultural and intellectual affiliations¹. This paper analyzes the architectural design of Roman luxury villas around the bay of Naples to point to the culturally informed concepts that underpinned it. In doing so, the present study sheds light on the ways in which the architecture accommodated the life led in luxury villas, the life that was intertwined and became identified with the luxury villa cultural phenomenon.² Three well-preserved examples are the focus of this paper: Villa of the Papyri on the outskirts of Herculaneum (fig. 1, fig. 2), Villa A at Torre Annunziata (fig. 3), and Villa San Marco in *Stabiae* (fig. 4)³. These villas date roughly from the beginning of the first century BCE till 79 CE.

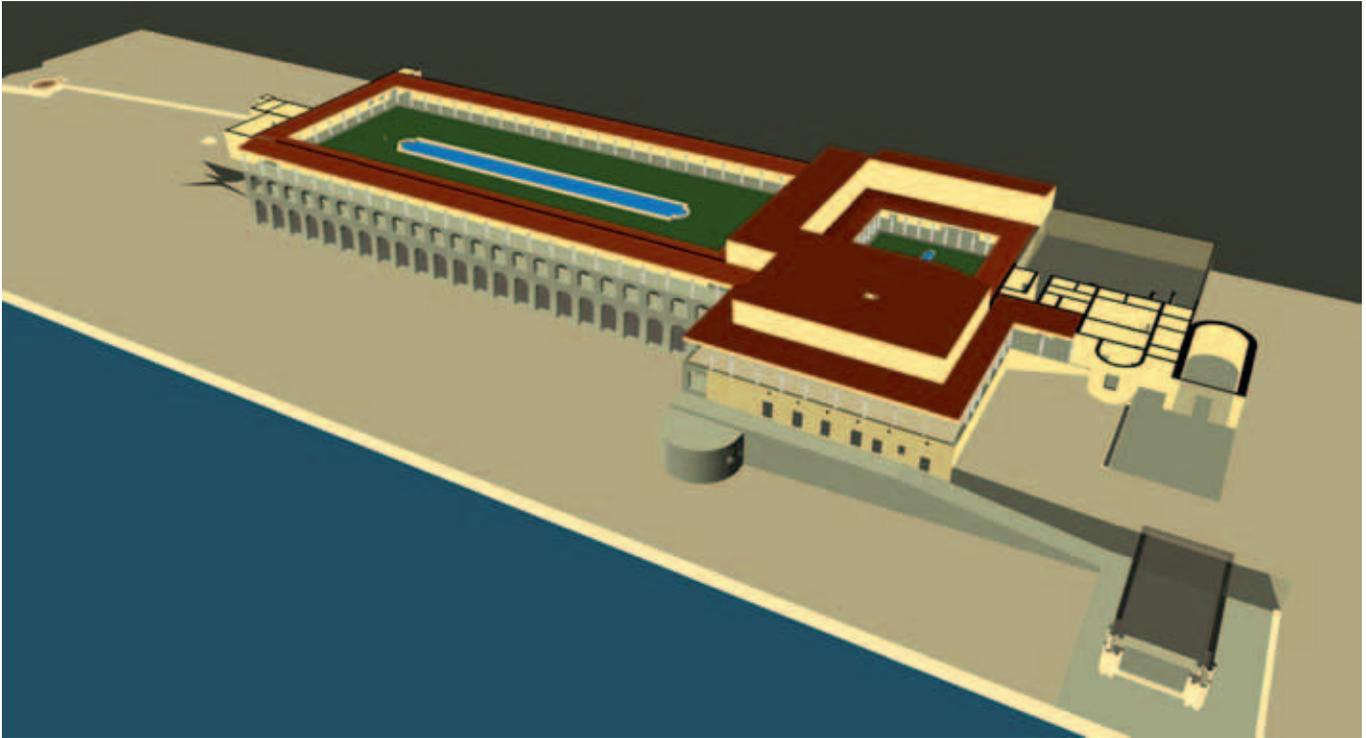


¹ J.H. D'ARMS, *Romans on the Bay of Naples: a social and cultural study of the villas and their owners from 150 B.C. to A.D. 400*, Cambridge Mass. 1970; IDEM, 'Ville rustiche e ville d'otium', in *Pompei 79. Raccolta di studi per il decimonono centenario dell'eruzione vesuviana*, edited by F. Zevi, pp. 206-40, Naples 1979; H. MIELSCH, *Die römische Villa: Architektur und Lebensform*, München 1987; *The Roman villa: villa urbana*, edited by A. Frazer, Philadelphia 1998 (*University Museum monograph*, 101); L. ROMIZZI, *Ville d'otium dell'Italia antica: (II sec. a.C.-I sec. d.C.)*, Perugia 2001; X. LAFON, *Villa maritima. Recherches sur les villas littorales de l'Italie romaine (IIIe siècle av. J.-C. / IIIe siècle ap. J.-C.)*, Rome 2001; A. MARZANO, *Roman villas in central Italy: a social and economic history*, Leiden 2007 (*Columbia studies in the classical tradition*, 30).

² This paper is based on my doctoral research on Roman luxury villas around the bay of Naples: M. ZARMAKOUPI, *Villae expolitae: aspects of the architecture and culture of Roman country houses on the Bay of Naples (c. 100 BCE-79 CE)*, Oxford 2007.

³ Villa of the Papyri: M.R. WOJCIK, *La Villa dei Papiri ad Ercolano. Contributo alla ricostruzione dell'ideologia della nobilitas tardorepubblicana*, Roma 1986; C. MATTUSCH, *The Villa dei Papiri at Herculaneum: life and afterlife of a sculpture collection*, Los Angeles 2005; *The Villa of the Papyri at Herculaneum. Archaeology, reception and digital reconstruction*, edited by M. Zarmakoupi, Berlin 2009 (*Sozomena*, 1) forthcoming; new excavations: A. DE SIMONE, 'La Villa dei Papiri. Rapporto preliminare: gennaio 1986 - marzo 1987', in *Cronache Ercolanesi*, 17, 1987, pp. 15-36; A. DE SIMONE, F. RUFFO, 'Ercolano 1996-1998. Lo scavo della Villa dei Papiri', in *Cronache Ercolanesi*, 32, 2002, pp. 325-344; IDEM, 'Ercolano e la Villa dei Papiri alla luce dei nuovi scavi', in *Cronache Ercolanesi*, 33, 2003, pp. 279-311. Villa A at Torre Annunziata: A. DE FRANCISCIS, 'La Villa Romana di Oplontis', in *Neue Forschungen in Pompeji und den anderen vom Vesuviusbruch 79 n. Chr. verschütteten Städten*, edited by A. Bernard and H. Kyrieleis, Recklinghausen 1975, pp. 53-59; L. FERGOLA, M. PAGANO, *Oplontis: le splendide ville romane di Torre Annunziata. Itinerario archeologico ragionato*, Torre del Greco 1998; P.G. GUZZO, L. FERGOLA, *Oplontis. La Villa di Poppea*, Milano 2000; *Fergola, Oplontis e le sue ville*, Pompei 2004; J.R. CLARKE, M.L. THOMAS, 'The Oplontis Project 2005-6: observations on the construction history of Villa A at Torre An-

Fig. 1 – Villa of the Papyri plan (after WOJCIK 1986, cit. in note 3, pl. 1)



Cultural phenomenon of luxury villas

The appreciation of the life of educated leisure, the lifestyle *à la grecque*, and of the qualities of landscape culturally informed and shaped the luxury villa lifestyle. The contact with the Hellenistic East had, long before its conquest, had an impact on Roman culture⁴. The Roman luxury villa trend was informed and formed by this contact.

The architecture of the villas was stylistically informed by the grandiose architecture of the colonnaded royal capitals with monumental terraces, such as the Acropolis of Pergamon⁵, by the architecture of Hellenistic palaces, such as the palace at Aigai⁶, and by the architecture of the Hellenistic *gymnasia*, in which elite Romans studied philosophy⁷. The conquest of the Hellenistic East gave access to luxurious material, such as coloured marbles, and refined techniques; but also finished products, such as columns, capitals, statues were imported to Italy from the Hellenistic East⁸. The Roman lifestyle *à la grecque* was infused with discussions on Greek history, philosophy, art and mythology, and was peppered with the apt “visual referents”, not only Greek architectural elements and structures but also wall paintings and sculptural groups featuring palatial architecture, Greek mythological themes, busts of Greek philosophers and Hellenistic kings and copies of famous Greek sculptures⁹. The Roman luxury villa was shaped in such a way so as to enhance this idealized encounter with Greek culture in the private sphere.

While being informed by this approach to Greek culture, the Roman luxury villa trend was influenced by another cultural current, which was thoroughly Roman in the nature of its conceptualization

nunziata’, in *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 20, 2007, pp. 223-232; the owner of this villa has been argued to have been the consort of Nero, *Poppaea Sabina*: A. DE FRANCISCIS, ‘Beryllus e la villa “Di Poppea” ad Oplontis’, in *Studies in classical art and archaeology: A tribute to Peter Heinrich von Blanckenbagen*, edited by M.B. Moore and G. Köpcke, New York 1979, pp. 231-233; S. DE CARO, ‘The sculptures of the Villa of Poppaea at Oplontis: a preliminary report’, in *Ancient Roman Gardens 1984*, edited by W. Jashemski, Washington 1987 (*Dumbarton Oaks Colloquium on the History of Landscape*, 10) pp. 79-133, pp. 131-133. Villa San Marco: *La Villa San Marco a Stabia*, edited by A. Barbet and P. Miniero, Rome Naples, Pompei 1999; G. BONIFACIO, A.M. SODO, *Stabiae: guida archeologica alle ville*, Castellammare di Stabia 2001.

⁴ On the cultural phenomenon of Roman luxury villas: D’ARMS 1970, cit. in note 1; D’ARMS 1979, cit. in note 1; MIELSCH 1987, cit. in note 1.

⁵ H. LAUTER, *Die Architektur des Hellenismus*, Darmstadt 1986, pp. 106-109, 122, 290-301.

⁶ I. NIELSEN, *Hellenistic palaces: tradition and renewal*, Aarhus 1999, pp. 81-94.

⁷ An inscription from Attica attests the presence of young Romans studying in a *gymnasium* as early as 119-8 BCE (*IG*, II.2, 1008). Cicero and his son had studied in Athens (*Cic. Att.* 12.32.2; *ad fam.* 7, 16). See also: H.I. MARROU, *Histoire de l’éducation dans l’antiquité*, Paris 1965; N.B. CROWTHER, *Athletika*:

Fig. 2 – Villa of the Papyri, overview of digital reconstruction (after *The Villa of the Papyri* 2009, cit. in note 3)

and expression. Roman luxury villas were part of a cultural *koine*, or common language, attested in contemporary literary and visual sources, which was concerned with what may be termed «an appreciation and praise of landscape». We see the expressions of this cultural trend in wall paintings featuring mythological and religious landscapes as well as garden paintings. From the late Republic onwards, landscape was singled out as a theme in its own right: it was accurately described, its qualities were eulogized and sought in everyday life, and its representations permeated the public and private spheres¹⁰. The villas were the architectural expressions of this cultural current.

Within the stream of these coexistent cultural currents, Roman designers appropriated the available architectural vocabularies to satisfy the needs of the owners and in doing so created a novel architectural language. This paper addresses this new architectural language by focusing on the peristyle-garden, as indicative of the appropriation of Hellenistic and Roman architectural practices and its transformation in order to accommodate the evolving needs of the life led in the villas. What becomes apparent from the present analysis is that in their effort to accommodate for the Greek style Romans created something completely unprecedented and intrinsically Roman.

Peristyle-garden and its transformation

The porticoed structures seen in the courtyards of the Hellenistic palaces and sanctuaries and in the training grounds of Hellenistic *gymnasia* were first appropriated in Roman public architecture: for example the Sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia in *Praeneste* and the *Porticus of Metellus* in the *Circus Flaminius* in Rome¹¹. The assimilation of these porticoed structures in the Roman private sphere is first attested in wall paintings of the second style, such as the ones in this room of Villa A at Torre Annunziata¹², when the villa has not yet acquired its eastern wing to become the grandiose villa that we know¹³. By incorporating these monumental public structures in domestic architecture Roman designers wished to assimilate both the *luxuria* of the Hellenistic East and the grandiose character of Roman public architecture¹⁴. But it was not merely the public, monumental and sumptuous character of these structures to which Romans aspired. These colonnaded structures were representative of the architectural forms of the Greek educational institution, the *gymnasium*, as is suggested by the literary sources¹⁵, in which some Roman elites had studied¹⁶.

The *stoa* and *palaestrae* of the Hellenistic *gymnasia* were situated in the midst of big parks, which were the earliest form of *gymnasia*, and these were not designed landscapes or pleasure gardens¹⁷. In the incorporation of the peristyle in the architecture of the villas however, the colonnades do not surround paved courtyards but lavish gardens. In these lavish gardens the landscaping complemented the architecture, for example the vines climb around the columns of *porticus* 40 in Villa A at Torre Annunziata (fig. 3)¹⁸, and water installations accentuated the reality of landscape within the villas, for example in Villa San Marco the water running down in pool 15 from the *nymphaeum* in the middle of this semi-circular exedra 62-63 would have been «a pleasure both to see and to hear» to quote Pliny the Younger's words (fig. 4)¹⁹.

Studies on the Olympic Games and Greek athletics, Hildesheim 2004 (*Nikephoros*, 11), ch. 11 'Roman attitudes to Greek athletics', pp. 375-422. On the institution of the Hellenistic *gymnasion*: J. DELORME, *Gymnasion. Étude sur les monuments consacrés à l'éducation en Grèce (des origines à l'empire romain)*, Paris 1960; *Das hellenistische Gymnasion*, edited by D. Kahand and P. Schulz, Berlin 2004 (*Wissenskultur und Gesellschaftlicher Wandel*, 8).

⁸ The Mahdia shipwreck found off the coast of Tunisia, illustrates a villa kit en route to Italy: W. FUCHS, *Der Schiffsfund von Mahdia*, Tübingen 1963; *Das Wrack: der antike Schiffsfund von Mahdia*, edited by G. Hellenkemper Salies, Köln 1994.

⁹ Wall paintings: K. FITTSCHEN, 'Zur Herkunft und Entstehung des 2.Stils - Probleme und Argumente', in *Hellenismus in Mittelitalien*, edited by P. Zanker, Göttingen 1976, pp. 539-63; R.A. TYBOUT, *Aedificiorum figurae. Untersuchungen zu den Architekturdarstellungen des frühen zweiten Stils*, Amsterdam 1989, pp. 5-13, 46; W. EHRHARDT, 'Bild und Ausblick in Wandbemalungen Zweiten Stils', in *Antike Kunst*, 34, 1991, pp. 28-65; A. KUTTNER, 'Prospects of patronage: realism and *Romanitas* in the architectural vistas of the 2nd style', in *The Roman Villa: Villa Urbana*, edited by A. Frazer, Philadelphia 1998 (*University Museum monograph*, 101), pp. 93-107. Sculptures: R. NEUDECKER, *Die Skulpturenausstattung römischer Villen in Italien*, Mainz am Rhein 1988; S. DILLON, 'Subject selection and viewer reception of Greek portraits from Herculaneum and Tivoli', in *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 13, 2000, pp. 21-40; M. MARVIN, 'Copying in Roman Sculpture: the replica series', in *Roman art in context: an anthology*, edited by E. D'Ambra, Englewood Cliffs 1993, pp. 161-188; Z. NEWBY, *Greek athletics in the Roman world*, Oxford 2005, p. 91.

¹⁰ Literature: E.W. LEACH, *The rhetoric of space: literary and artistic representations of landscape in Republican and Augustan Rome*, Princeton 1988. Gardens: P. GRIMAL, *Les jardins romains à la fin de la République et aux deux premiers siècles de l'Empire: essais sur le naturalisme romain*, Paris 1943 (*Bibliothèque des Écoles Françaises d'Athènes et de Rome*, 155); W.M.F. JASHEMSKI, *The gardens of Pompeii: Herculaneum and the villas destroyed by Vesuvius*. New Rochelle 1979 (vol. 1) and 1993 (vol. 2); W.M.F. JASHEMSKI, F.G. MEYER, *The natural history of Pompeii*, Cambridge 2002. Wall paintings: C.M. DAWSON, *Romano-Campanian mythological landscape paintings*, New Haven 1944 (*Yale Classical Studies*, 9); W.J.T. PETERS, *Landscape in Romano-Campanian mural painting*, Assen 1963; B. BERGMANN, 'Painted perspectives of a villa visit: landscape as status and metaphor', in *Roman art in the private sphere: new perspectives on the architecture and decor of the domus, villa, and insula*, edited by E.K. Gazda and A. E. Haecckl, Ann Arbor 1991, pp. 49-70; IDEM, 'Exploring the grove: pastoral space on Roman walls', in *The pastoral landscape*, edited by J.D. Hunt, Washington D.C 1992, pp. 21-48; EADEM, 'Art and nature in the villa at Oplontis', in *Pompeian brothels, Pompeii's ancient history, mirrors and mysteries, art and nature*

It is generally assumed that the inspirations for the Roman pleasure garden, with its sumptuous waterworks and its ornamental plantings, were the luxurious pleasure gardens of the Hellenistic world and East Persia: the royal parks of the successors of Alexander, for example, in the *basileia* of Alexandria and in the royal palace of the Seleucids in Antioch (situated on an island in the river Orontes)²⁰, which, in turn, emulated the Persian *paradeisoi*, for example, the park around the palace complex at Pasargadae²¹. Although there is no evidence for this, the Roman pleasure gardens with their ornamental plantings, sumptuous waterworks do seem to point towards the east. But the pleasure gardens in the Roman villas were not purpose-built *paradeisoi*. Roman designers subordinated the *paradeisos* theme to the architecture of the villas and followed the tradition of the Roman domestic garden, where green spaces were enclosed constructed landscapes, or Purcell's «domestic buildings»²². This approach to the garden as a constructed landscape is clear in the design of the peristyle-garden, where the garden is framed and accessed by the portico structure.

During the first century BCE the colonnaded gardens entered the design vocabulary of luxury villas as intact, rectangular or square, porticoed structures, for example the ones in the Villa of the Papyri and Villa San Marco (first phase)²³. Towards the end of the first century BCE, designers started breaking the strict form of the peristyle to form loose articulations of porticoes and gardens, for example in Villa A at Torre Annunziata²⁴. This transformation of the strict rectangular peristyle structure was related to the cultural practice of the symposium, or the dinner party, and the increasing importance that it gained in villa life. In the urban houses the atrium was the centre of its organization because of its instrumental role in the social staging of the owner (Vitr. *De Arch.* 6.5.1), a role which was played down gradually, but reminiscent of its previous function the atrium retained its importance in the organization of most houses since it was also the “face” of the houses on to the street²⁵. In the country houses however, where the atrium had no precedent in importance and the face of the house were the porticoed façades, the social staging and political games took place in the dining rooms, during the symposium, a cultural practice that was also styled after the Hellenistic world²⁶.

In the first phases of the villas the rooms designed for dinner parties, the *triclinia*, would cluster around the atrium, for example rooms 13, 14 and 19 in the Villa of the Papyri (fig. 1, 2). As the dinner parties became more important for the social staging of the owners, they also became more elaborate. Literary sources inform us that performances of music, dance and pantomime entertained the participants of a dinner party. For example, Varro described the spectacle for a dinner party at his villa, where a music player “acted” Orpheus in the midst of a park of wild animals²⁷; Plutarch talked about mimes acting in the private dining parties that staged his *Quaestiones convivales*, or “Table talk” (Plut. *Quaest. conv.* 7.8.3, 711 E); and Petronius' dinner hosted acrobat displays and mimic performances (*Sat.* 53.8-11; 59). The life of pleasure that the elites led in their villas was in the company of actors and mimes, and they would probably invite their guests to act out an impromptu performance during their dinner parties²⁸. The triconch arrangement, which provided a central space for the dinner entertainment that was equally viewed from the three apses (for example, in Villa at Desenzano on Lake Garda), shows the ways in which the increasing importance of the dinner entertainment affected the design of dining rooms in the villas of the late empire²⁹. In the

at Oplontis, the *Herculaneum “Basilica”*, Portsmouth R.I. 2002 (*Journal of Roman Archaeology, Supplement*, 47), pp. 87-120; E. LA ROCCA, *Lo spazio negato. Il paesaggio nella cultura artistica greca e romana*, Milano 2008. Art and politics: G. SAURON, *L'histoire végétalisée: ornement et politique à Rome*, Paris 2000.

¹¹ F. COARELLI, *I santuari del Lazio in età repubblicana*, Rome 1987 (*Studi NIS archeologia*, 7); A. NÜNNERICH-ASMUS, *Basilika und Portikus: die Architektur der Säulenballen als Ausdruck gewandelter Urbanität in später Republik und früher Kaiserzeit*, Köln 1994. Sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia: J.M. MERZ, *Das Heiligtum der Fortuna in Paestrina und die Architektur der Neuzeit*, München 2001 (*Römische Forschungen der Bibliotheca Hertziana*, 29); I. NIELSEN, *Cultic theatres and ritual drama: a study in regional development and religious interchange between East and West in antiquity*, Aarhus 2002 (*Aarhus studies in Mediterranean antiquity*, 4), ch. 5; J.A. HANSON, *Roman theater-temples*, Princeton 1959, pp. 31-36. NÜNNERICH-ASMUS 1994, cit. in this note, pp. 189-196. *Porticus* of Metellus: *ivi*, pp. 203-205.

¹² F. RAKOB, ‘Hellenismus in Mittelitalien. Bautypen und Bautechnik’, in *Hellenismus in Mittelitalien*, edited by P. Zanker, Göttingen 1976, pp. 366-386, 374; FITTSCHEN 1976, cit. in note 9; TYBOUT 1989, cit. in note 9, pp. 5-13; EHRHARDT 1991, cit. in note 9; KUTTNER 1998, cit. in note 9.

¹³ For an overview of the history of the villa and relevant publications: CLARKE, THOMAS 2007, cit. in note 3.

¹⁴ RAKOB 1976, cit. in note 12; H. DREURUP, *Zum Ausstattungsluxus in der römischen Architektur: ein formgeschichtlicher Versuch*, Münster 1981² (*Orbis antiquus*, 12); H. VON HESBERG, ‘*Publica magnificentia*. Eine antikklassizistische Intention der frühen augusteischen Baukunst’, in *Jahrbuch des Deutschen archäologischen Instituts*, 107, 1992, pp. 125-147; M. TOMBRÄGEL, ‘Überlegungen zum Luxus in der hellenistischen Wohnarchitektur: das Bild der römischen Otiumvillen’, in *Städtisches Wohnen im östlichen Mittelmeerraum. 4. Jb. v. – 1. Jb. n. Chr.*, edited by S. Ladstätter and V. Scheibelreiter, Vienna (*Archäologische Forschungen*), forthcoming.

¹⁵ Cic. *De or.* 2.19-20 (the architectural structure of the peristyle [*palaestra*] as an evocation of a *gymnasium*); Cic. *ad fam.* 7.23.2 (statues chosen for the *palaestra* in the fashion of the *gymnasia*).

¹⁶ See note 9.

¹⁷ DELORME 1960, cit. in note 7, pp. 336-361; C. WACKER, ‘Die bauhistorische Entwicklung der Gymnasien. Von der Parkanlage zum “Idealgymnasium des Vitruv”’, in *Das hellenistische Gymnasium*, edited by D. Kah and P. Scholz, Berlin 2004, pp. 349-362, 353; The *Akademia* was situated in a big park with plane trees, olive trees, white poplars, and elms, amongst which the athletic structures and the religious monuments were disseminated: ARISTOPH. *Nub.* 1002-1008; PLIN. *nat.* 12.5; PAUS. 10.30.2; PLUT. *Sulla* 12.3. DELORME 1960, cit. in note 7, pp. 41-42

imperial period the entertainment activities affected not only the design of the dining rooms but also the overall design of the villas.

The increasing importance that live performances gained in the dinner parties during the imperial period rendered the *triclinia* rooms insufficient to satisfy the needs of the dining practices. On the one hand this must have led owners to use a range and variety of rooms for their dinner parties, and designers on the other to create bigger rooms that were not only designed for dining, as the *triclinia*, but were multifunctional. Indeed the luxury villas, dating from the first century BCE and the first century CE, provide no examples of built masonry couches and typical *triclinia* rooms are found only in their early phases, for example *triclinium* 14 in Villa Oplontis A, that is before they assume their grandiose outlook³⁰. The big rooms and complex of rooms that appeared towards the end of the first century BCE in luxury villas could accommodate the dining practice and its accompanying entertainment; for example, big rooms: rooms 21 and 69 in Villa A at Torre Annunziata (fig. 3) and room 16 in Villa San Marco (fig. 4); and *diaetae* complexes: rooms 66, 78, 79 and symmetrical room 94, and the unexcavated ones to the north, in Villa A at Torre Annunziata and rooms 53, 50 and 30 and symmetrical rooms 12, 8, 4 in Villa San Marco. The big dinner about which we hear in the contemporary literature required a number of bigger rooms to accommodate them and these big rooms fit the qualities described.³¹ In fact the contemporary discussions on the dining rooms in luxury villas indicate that they could have a variety of forms and qualifications, for example, the word *diaetae* designated nuclei of two or three rooms for day-time (as opposed to night-time), of which one could be a *triclinium*.³² The main concerns when designing them were their seasonal and spatial qualities³³, and their view towards the landscape³⁴. Although, we cannot assert this development, we cannot fail to observe the staging qualities that these big rooms have, both in staging the diners and in providing stages to entertain the diners (fig. 5)³⁵.

It is probable that the designers' decision to break the austere form of the rectangular peristyle-garden towards the end of the first century BCE and disperse big rooms and cluster of rooms onto the landscape was taken in response to the needs of the enlarged symposium and its accompanying entertainment. The positions of these big rooms were well chosen in order to enjoy both the interior and exterior landscapes of the villas: for example, in Villa San Marco, room 16 took advantage of the views to its interior landscape, the garden, as well as to its exterior landscape, the bay of Naples (fig. 6). But the view to the landscape was not the only landscape qualities designers considered. Vitruvius indicated another, more practical, quality that was relevant in the design of dining rooms, namely their orientation. Spring and autumn *triclinia* should look to the east, because it enjoyed the sun's course, which rendered them temperate by the evening when these rooms were used. Conversely, summer *triclinia* should look to the north because it is turned away from the sun's course and winter *triclinia* towards the west because they needed the evening light³⁶. By breaking the architectural form of the peristyle-garden and dispersing the villas' rooms on the landscape designers created not only privileged views to the landscape but also numerous choices that could accommodate dining parties in different seasons.

In this fluid articulation of the villas' architectural body, the open or closed colonnaded ambulatories operated as the "connecting cement".

¹⁸ W.M.F. JASHEMSKI, 'The Campanian peristyle garden', in *Ancient Roman Gardens*, edited by W.M.F. Jashemski and E.B. Macdougall Washington D.C. 1981, pp. 29-48, 43, 46.

¹⁹ PLIN. JUN. *Ep.* 5.6.23-24 N. BLANC, 'Le nymphée de la Villa San Marco à Stabies', in *Stabiae: Storia e Architettura. 250° anniversario degli scavi di Stabiae 1749-1999*, edited by G. Bonifacio and A.M. Sodo, Rome 2002, pp. 81-91.

²⁰ GRIMAL 1943, cit. in note 10, p. 226; NIELSEN 1999, cit. in note 6, pp. 35-51; I. NIELSEN, 'The gardens of Hellenistic palaces', in *The royal palace institution in the first millennium BC*, edited by I. Nielsen Athens 2001 (*Monographs of the Danish Institute at Athens*, 4), pp. 165-187, part. p. 167.

²¹ D. STRONACH, 'The royal garden at Pargadae: Evolution and legacy', in *Archeologia Iranica et Orientalis. Miscellanea in Honorem Louis Vanden Berghe*, edited by L. de Meyer and E. Haerincx, Gant 1989, pp. 475-502; A. KUERT, 'The Palace(s) of Babylon', in *The royal palace* 2001, cit. in note 20, pp. 77-93, 82; NIELSEN 2001, cit. in note 20, pp. 169-172.

²² N. PURCELL, 'Dialectical gardening', in *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 14, 2001, pp. 546-556, 551.

²³ For the chronology of the Villa of the Papyri see forthcoming publication of M.P. GUIDOBALDI, D. ESPOSITO, in *The Villa of the Papyri* 2009, cit. in note 3. For the chronology of the Villa San Marco: J. ROUGET, 'L'architettura. 1. Construction et architecture', in BARBET, MINIERO 1999, cit. in note 3, pp. 41-58.

²⁴ CLARKE, THOMAS 2007, cit. in note 3.

²⁵ A. WALLACE-HADRILL, *Houses and society in Pompeii and Herculaneum*, Princeton 1994, pp. 38-61, ch. 3, 'The articulation of the house', pp. ???; IDEM, 'The social spread of Roman luxury: sampling Pompeii and Herculaneum', in *Papers of British School in Rome*, 58, 1990, pp. 145-192, 166-170; IDEM, 'Rethinking the Roman atrium house', in *Domestic space in the Roman world: Pompeii and beyond*, edited by R. Laurence and A. Wallace-Hadrill, Portsmouth, R.I. (*Journal of Roman Archaeology*, Supplement 22), pp. 219-240.

²⁶ K.M.D. DUNBABIN, 'Triclinium and Stibadium', in *Dining in a classical context*, edited by W. J. Slater, Ann Arbor 1991, pp. 121-148; EADEM, 'Ut Graeco more biberetur: Greeks and Roman on the dining couch', in *Meals in a social context: aspects of the communal meal in the Hellenistic and Roman world*, edited by I. Nielsen and H. Sigismund Nielsen, Aarhus 1998, pp. 81-101; EADEM, *The Roman banquet: images of conviviality*, Cambridge 2003; *Roman dining*, edited by B.K. Gold and J.F. Donahue, Baltimore 2005.

²⁷ VARR. *Rust.* 3.13.2-3. On the context of this dinner party: *Rust.* 3.4.3, 3.5.9-17

²⁸ J. GRIFFIN, 'Augustan poetry and the life of luxury', in *Journal of Roman Studies*, 66, 1976, pp. 87-105, part. p. 94. Private performances were given to elite audiences by the pantomimes, either in their own homes or in the houses of their aristocratic fans. Seneca com-

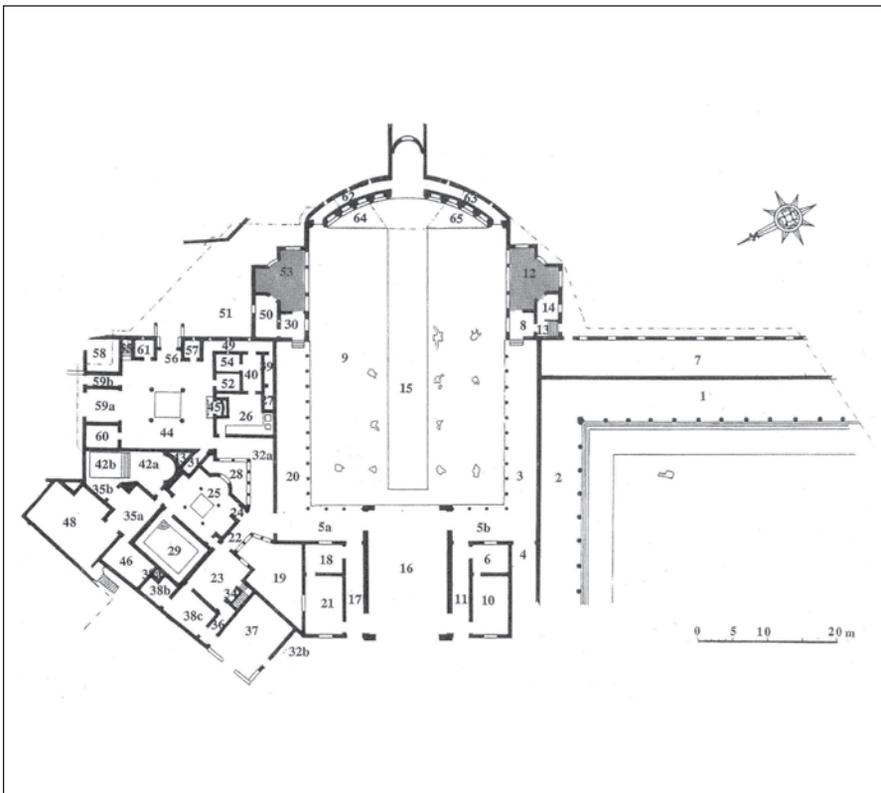
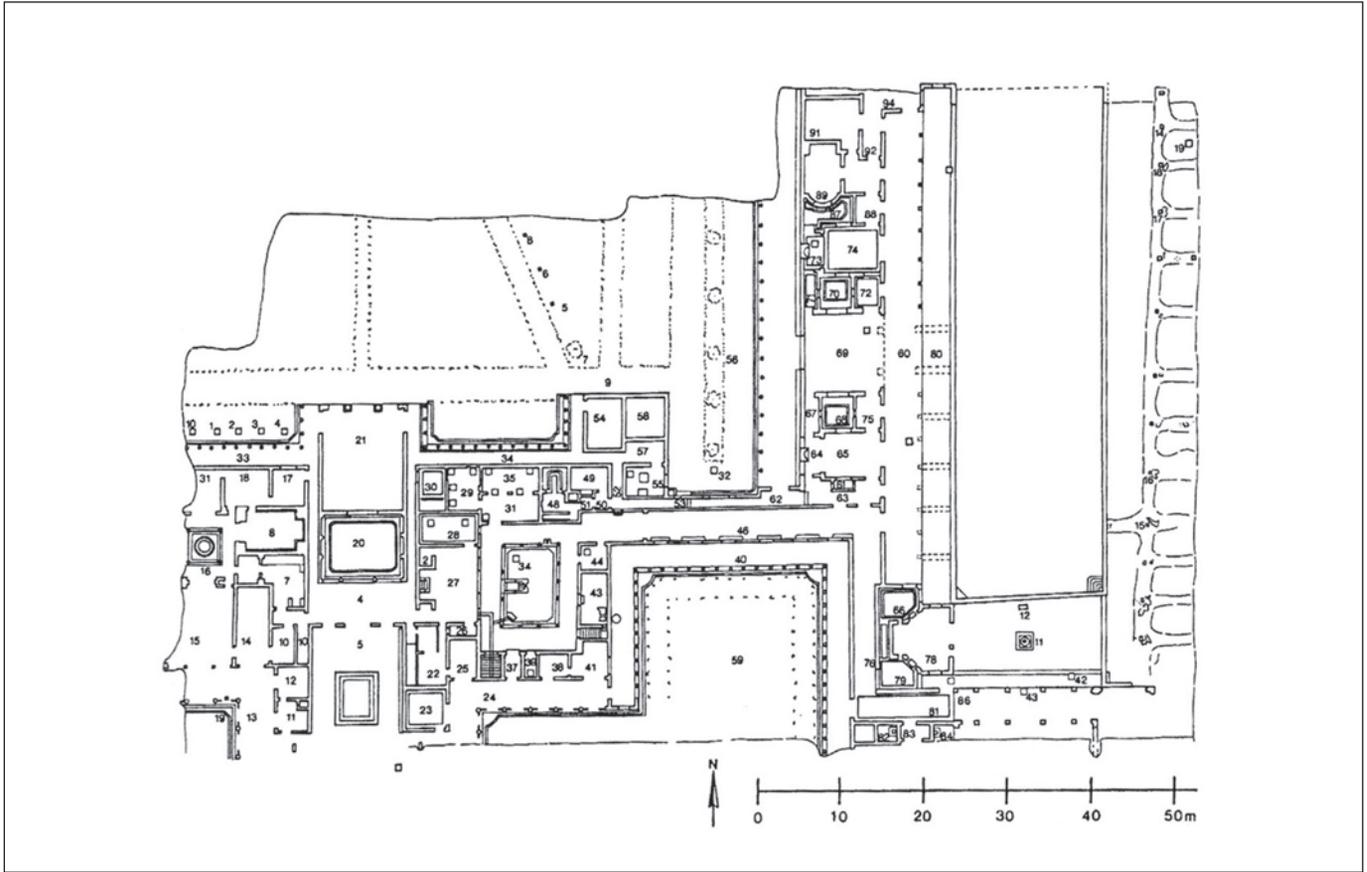


Fig. 3 – Villa A at Torre Annunziata, plan (FOERTSCH 1993, pl. 69.4)
 Fig. 4 – Villa San Marco, plan (BARBET 2002 (??), p. 32, fig. 1) (??)
 Fig. 5 – Villa A at Torre Annunziata, view from room 69 towards north garden (author’s photo)

They provided access to the rooms and protection from the weather and bound together the freely disposed rooms of the villas and masked the façade of the house. The peristyle-gardens had already created the precedent of the porticoes as providing a movement in parallel to a chain of rooms in succession and as mediating their relationship to the interior landscape. By breaking the rigid form of the peristyle-gardens into loose articulations of porticoes and interior or exterior landscapes, designers viewed the architectural concept of the colonnade under the light of the larger “landscape”. They used the colonnaded ambulatories, now liberated from their rectangular formations, to provide access to the sprawling rooms but also protect the perforated architectural body, which was now more exposed, from the weather³⁷. Furthermore, they used the colonnades not only to join the rooms of the villas that spread on the landscape but also to mask the villas’ façade and signify their presence in the landscape. In the Mediterranean climate, where the strong sun accentuates the volumes and features of an architectural object located in different perspectival depths by casting their shadows, a colonnaded structure and its variations can be creatively used to embellish a façade that would strike a viewer from afar.³⁸ Finally, designers disrupted the sprawling porticoes with big monumental *propyla* that marked the presence of the big multifunctional rooms, which accommodated the dining practice in the villa, for example the *propylon* in front of room 69 as well as the *propylon* in front of room 21 in Villa A at Torre Annunziata (fig. 7). In doing so designers used the architecture of the sprawling porticoes and big multi-functional spaces to satisfy the owners’ social staging within the villa as well as the staging of their villas in the landscape.

Conclusion

The architectural design of the peristyle-garden combined the rigid form of the peristyle, which emulated the Greek educational institution, with the sensual character of the pleasure garden, which made reference to the *paradeisos* theme of the eastern traditions. By framing the pleasure garden with colonnades of the peristyle structure Roman designers did something very “Roman”, the domestication of the garden, and utilized the existing architectural vocabularies to create a new architectural language³⁹. The transformation of the peristyle-garden, to create loose articulations of porticoes and big rooms dispersed onto the landscape in order to accommodate the life in the villas, led to a further development in this new architectural language: the articulation of a dialogue between architecture and landscape that formulated in space the Roman preoccupation with landscape that literary and visual representations described.

In conclusion, the particular economic, social, political and, more broadly, cultural factors not only provided the conditions but also shaped the design of luxury villas. The building of luxurious country house residences, in which owners staged themselves (for example, in banquets) and about which they could boast to their peers (for example, in their letters), partook in the social and political games of the period and served to satisfy the owners’ bid for political power and social climbing. The design for luxury was informed, on the one hand, by the wish to make a deliberate reference to Greek culture and, on the other, by the Roman

plains that the noise of pantomime activity on the private stage was said to fill the whole city (SEN. *Ep.* 47.17; cf. PLIN. *Nat. Hist.* 7.184). For what went on the private stage: SEN. *Q. Nat.* 7.32.3. W.J. SLATER, ‘Pantomime riots’, in *Classical Antiquity*, 13.1, 1994, pp. 120-144, 131. Also: IDEM, ‘Three problems in the history of drama’, in *Phoenix*, 47, 1993, pp. 189-212, especially pp. 205-211; C.P. JONES, ‘Dinner Theater’, in *Dining in a classical context*, edited by W.J. Slater, Ann Arbor 1991, pp. 185-198. As part of luxury life, the entertainment of dinner parties was also criticized and measures were taken for its restriction – a response to which were the pantomime riots of 15 CE. Tacitus indicates that pantomimes were forbidden to appear except in public, which means that they were forbidden to appear in private houses. TAC. *Ann.* 1.77; DIO, 57.14.10; VELL. *Pat.* 2.126.2; SUET. *Tib.* 34.1; ZOS. 1.6.1. SLATER 1994, cit. in this note, p. 125.

²⁹ K.M.D. DUNBABIN, ‘Convivial spaces: dining and entertainment in the Roman villa’, in *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 9, 1996, pp. 66-80.

³⁰ This difficulty led Dunbabin to focus on the built *triclinia* or rooms identifiable as *triclinia* by mosaic decoration in the villas in order to contextualize her discussion of dining and entertainment in the Roman villa. DUNBABIN 1996, cit. in note 29. Especially on the identification of rooms for dining in luxury villas, see pp. 67-70.

³¹ In support of this argument: E.W. LEACH, ‘*Oecus* on Ibycus: investigating the vocabulary of the Roman house’, in *Sequence and space in Pompeii*, edited by S. E. Bon and R. Jones, Oxford 1997, pp. 50-72; DUNBABIN 1996, cit. in note 29. Zanker’s exercise on the dining arrangement of the Domus Flavia indicated that it could hold a party of about 500 guests: P. ZANKER, ‘Domitian’s palace on the Palatine and the imperial image’, in *Representations of empire: Rome and the Mediterranean world*, edited by A. Bowman and F. Millar, Oxford 2002, pp. 105-130.

³² LEACH 1997, cit. in note 31, p. 67.

³³ VITR. *De Arch.* 6.4.1-2. Also: VARR. *Ling.* 8.28.4

³⁴ Lucullus’ villas near Tusculum, PLUT. *Luc.* 39, 3-5; Pliny the Younger’s villas, PLIN. *Ep.* 2.17, 5.6; Sidonius’ account of his dining room at *Avitacum*: SID. APOLL. *Epist.* 2.211. DUNBABIN 1996, cit. in note 29, p.66.

³⁵ L. BEK, *Towards paradise on earth. Modern space conception in architecture. A creation of Renaissance Humanism*, Odense 1980, pp. 164-203; EADEM, ‘*Questiones convivales*. The idea of the *triclinium* and the staging of convivial ceremony from Rome to Byzantium’, in *Analecta romana. Instituti Danici*, 12, 1983, pp. 81-107; A.F. STEWART, ‘To entertain an emperor: Sperlonga, Laokoon and Tiberius at the dinner-table’, in *Journal of Roman Studies*, 67, 1977, pp. 76-90.

³⁶ VITR. *De arch.* 6.4.1-2. M. ZARMAKOUPI, ‘Designing the landscapes of the Villa of Livia at Prima Porta’, in *Essays in Classical Archaeology for Eleni Hatzivassiliou 1977-2007*, edited by



Fig. 6 – Villa San Marco, view from room 16 towards the bay of Naples (author's photo)

Fig. 7 – Villa A at Torre Annunziata, view of north garden, to the right propylon of room 21 (author's photo)

The images taken from the villas are taken with the permission of the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali and the Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Napoli e Pompei.

appreciation of landscape. The architectural expression of the luxury villa was formed in response to the overwhelming incoming cultural stimuli of the period and conditioned by the economic, social and political circumstances. But in their effort to accommodate for the Greek style Romans created something completely unprecedented and intrinsically Roman. The architectural language of Roman luxury villas was indeed an amalgamation of Hellenistic and Roman architectural vocabularies and took part in the construction of Romans' cultural identity in the new socio-political situation of the Mediterranean world.

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D. Kurtz *et alii*, Oxford 2008 (*Studies in Classical Archaeology*, 4), pp. 269-276.

³⁷ The invention of the form of the covered and enclosed ambulatories, the *cryptoporticus*, as a variation of the colonnades, was probably a product of this latter concern, for example the *cryptoporticus* 13 and 24 in Villa A at Torre Annunziata. The environmental advantages of the *cryptoporticus* are described by Pliny the Younger (PLIN. *Ep.* 2.17.16-19). M. ZARMAKOUPI, 'Porticus and *cryptoporticus* in Roman luxury villas: architectural design and cultural implications', in *Pompeii: Cultural Standards, Practical Needs*, edited by K. Cole, E. Poehler and M. Flohr, Oxford, forthcoming.

³⁸ The appreciation of the visual effect of the sun entering the retreating volumes created by the colonnades and enclosed ambulatories is revealed in Pliny's descriptions of his villa in «Tusculum», where he speaks about the way in which the wide and long colonnade, that masked its south façade and entrance, received the sun: «Its (the villa's) greatest part faces south and in summer it almost invites (receives) the sun from the sixth hour, in the winter quite earlier, into the wide and beyond measure long (long in proportion) colonnade; many chambers (open) in this (colonnade), as well as an entrance hall of the old-fashioned type» (PLIN. *Ep.* 5.6.15). Compare also: STRABO 5.4.8 [247c]).

³⁹ M. ZARMAKOUPI, 'The architectural design of the *peristylum*-garden in early Roman luxury villas', in *Städtisches Wohnen im östlichen Mittelmeerraum. 4. Jb. v. – 1. Jb. n. Chr.*, edited by S. Ladstätter and V. Scheibelreiter, Vienna (*Archäologische Forschungen*), forthcoming.

