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Porticus and cryptoporticus were among the most characteristic architectural elements of Roman luxury villa architecture. The frequent use of these structures in villa architecture as well as their prominent depiction in representations of villae point to their importance in luxury villa life. As contemporary authors inform us, the appropriation of porticus and cryptoporticus in villa architecture emulated the grandeur of public architecture, which was in turn informed by the Hellenistic East (Stat. Silv. 2.2.30; Plin. Ep. 2.17.16; Förtsch 1993, 28, n. 224, 92–93; Gros 1996, 95–99). Their use in the repertoire of luxury villa architecture has been argued to be indicative of the reception of Hellenistic culture in the Roman private sphere (Fittschen 1976, 549–556; Rakob 1976; Mielsch 1987, 120–125; Zanker 1998, 136–142). By incorporating these monumental public structures into domestic architecture, Roman designers wished to assimilate both the luxuria of the Hellenistic East and the grandiose character of Roman public architecture (Tombrägel 2010). The proliferation of these structures in villas exemplifies the reception of Hellenistic public architecture in the Roman private sphere, just as the incorporation of the peristyle at the end of the second century BC (e.g. Casa del Fauno, VI 12, 2.5) and the subsequent shift of the main living-areas of the houses from the atrium to the peristyle does in the town houses of Pompeii (Dickmann 1997).

In this paper, I examine the meaning and function of porticus and cryptoporticus in the luxury villa architecture of first century BC to first century AD Campania. I focus on the term cryptoporticus, which was only used by Pliny the Younger (Ep. 2.17, 16–17; 2.17, 19–20; 5.6, 27–31; 7.21, 2; 9.36, 3; Luschin 2002, 15–23) in the first century AD and propose that the architectural structure it described was invented in this period in order to satisfy the evolving needs of luxury villa owners. Specifically, the cryptoporticus, which Pliny the Younger defined as a covered and enclosed walkway (above-ground as well as semi-subterranean; Förtsch 1993, 41–42), provided an alternative to open-air walkways, such as porticus (a colonnade: Förtsch 1993, 60–61) or xystus (an open-air walk aligned with trees: Förtsch 1993, 66; 73–74), in which the light, air and ventilation could be regulated. In doing so, I tackle the ways in which the design of both porticus and cryptoporticus accommodated the life led in luxury villas on the basis of contemporary literary sources. Four luxury villas around the Bay of Naples (c. 100 BC–AD 79) are the focus of this paper: Villa A (Fig. 3.1) at Oplontis (De Franciscis 1975; Fergola and Pagano 1998; Guzzo 2000; Fergola 2004; Thomas and Clarke 2007; 2009), the owner of which has been argued to have been the consort of Nero, Poppea Sabina (De Franciscis 1979, 231–233; De Caro 1987, 131–133), Villa San Marco (Fig. 3.2) and Villa Arianna A (Fig. 3.3) at
Stabiae (Barbet and Miniero 1999; Bonifacio and Sodo 2001) and Villa of the Papyri (Fig. 3.4) in the outskirts of Herculaneum (Wojcik 1986; De Simone 1987; De Simone and Ruffo 2002, 2003; Mattusch 2005; Guidobaldi and Esposito 2009; Zarmakoupi 2010). These four villas provide a relatively small, yet representative sample of the luxury villa phenomenon around the Bay of Naples.
Mantha Zarmakoupi

Terminology
Recent studies have addressed the modern mis-application of ancient terminology (Leach 1997) and the ways in which the evidence is sometimes compromised by the use of literary texts when interpreting material remains (Allison 1993, 2001). They have pointed out that we need to judge these concerns on a case-by-case basis (Riggsby 1997) and that the study of material remains is more insightful in understanding the ways in which spaces were used in the Roman house (Allison 1997; 1999; 2004). Although the material remains enable us to address the multivalent character of walkways (such as porticus and cryptoporticus), such as their use as temporary storage spaces of sculptures (e.g. in porticus 34 in Villa A at Oplontis, Fig. 3.1), they do not provide sufficient information for analyzing the meaning and function of these architectural structures as passages within the house. Consequently, in order to define the walkways in Roman luxury villas I examine references to these structures by contemporary villa owners of the period examined here (first century BC–first century AD), mainly Cicero and Pliny the Younger. Although their letters present a highly self-conscious self-representation that implicitly theorizes Roman
culture and stage villa life in order to fit their sociopolitical ambitions (Ludolph 1997; Hoffer 1999; Henderson 2002; 2003; Morello 2007; Marchesi 2008), they describe the ways in which the architecture accommodated the owners' daily activities (Förtsch 1993; Riggsby 2003).

The meaning of a term is very flexible and can change through time and differ from author to author. For example, Vitruvius (De arch. 6.5.3; 6.3.7), writing some time after 27 BC, used the term *porticus* interchangeably with the term *peristylium* when describing colonnaded structures in the Roman housing. Conversely, Pliny the Younger, writing at the end of the first century AD, made a clear distinction between the two terms and used *porticus* when speaking about houses and villas (Ep. 5.6, 14–15) and *peristylium* when referring to public architecture (Ep. 10.70, 1–4; 10.71; Förtsch 1993, 85–86). The fact is that a variety of terms were used for the same structures and Roman authors often used Greek terms to “season” their writings in the Greek style. Cicero (Att. 1.5.7; 1.6.2; 1.7; 1.8.2) for example, writing around the middle of the first century BC, used *gymnasium* to name colonnaded structures and was in fact the only author that used this term in descriptions of Roman villas and both Cicero (Att. 1.8.2; Brut. 3.10) and Pliny the Younger (Ep. 2.17.17; 5.6.19; 9.7.4; 9.36.3; Gros 2001, 296–297) used the term *xystus* to describe an open-air walk planted with trees (for Cicero’s villas see Schmidt 1990, 23–30; for Pliny the Younger’s villas see Förtsch 1993, 66–74). Cicero’s (Rep. 1.9.14; 1.12.18; De or. 1.7.28; 2.20) dialogues in fact suggest that the Greek names given to colonnaded structures such as *xystus* and *gymnasium* were meant to recall areas connected with the traditions of philosophy in Athenian life and to assume the symbolic role of a bridge between the private and public sphere (Leach 2004, 37).

The meaning of the term *porticus* has subtle variations in passages that describe villa architecture. Vitruvius (De arch. 6.7.3) used the term *porticus* to signify the row of columns, for example, of the *peristylium* or *peristylium*: “Next to this is a larger block of buildings with more splendid peristyles; in which the four colonnades have columns (*porticus*) of equal height, or else the colonnade which faces the south has higher columns (*porticus*)” Pliny the Younger (Ep. 5.6, 14–15), however, used the term *porticus* to signify both the row of columns and the colonnaded space they defined, for example, the row of columns screening a façade (Förtsch 1993, 59): “My villa is on the lower slopes of a hill but commands as good a view as if it were higher up… It faces mainly south, and so from midday onwards in summer, a little earlier in the winter, it seems to invite the sun in the wide and protruding colonnade (*porticus*).” The term *cryptoporticus* is first attested in Pliny the Younger’s (Ep. 2.17, 16–17; 2.17, 19–20; 5.6, 27–31; 7.21, 2; 9.36, 3) letters and no other author used this term until Sidonius Apollinaris (Épist. 2.2, 10) in the fifth century AD (Coarelli 1973, 9–21; Förtsch 1993, 41–48; Luschin 2002, 15–19). In his letters, Pliny (Ép. 2.17, 16–19; 5.6, 30) used the term *cryptoporticus* to describe an above-ground or semi-underground covered and enclosed passageway with side walls and windows on one or both sides (Förtsch 1993, 41–43; Luschin 2002, 17–19).

The use of the term *cryptoporticus* to describe an underground and/or vaulted passage is a result of a modern confusion between the term *crypta* and *cryptoporticus* (Luschin 2002, 19–23). The publication of the seminal conference in the école française de Rome entitled *Les cryptoportiques dans l’architecture romaine* in 1972, reflected and perpetuated this confusion, and has influenced the ways in which the term has been used in subsequent scholarship on Roman architecture (Etienne 1973). For example, Coarelli (1973, 9–21) traced the origin of the term from the word *crypta, cripta*, which most likely originated from the Greek terms κρυπτή and κρυπτὸς περίπατος, first attested in Callixenus of Rhodes and cited by Athenaeus (Deipnos. 205; Caspari 1916, 31). Martin (1973, 23–43) addressed the Hellenistic precedents and Staccioli (1973, 57–66) identified the purpose and use of these structures in Roman architecture. Thus, *cryptoporticus* was used in the conference to signify above-ground *porticus* with barrel vaults (e.g., in the sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia at Praeneste; Giuliani 1973, 84) as well as underground barrel-vaulted passages of villas (e.g., in the underground complexes of Hadrian’s villa; Salza Prina Ricotti
1973, 219–259). It was only in 2002 that Luschin (2002, 15–23) pointed out that this use of the term was problematic and made clear that Pliny’s *cryptoporticus* was not a subsequent development of the *basis villae*, or terrace substructures. The confusion of the meaning of the term *cryptoporticus*, however, is still dominant in the field of ancient studies and although the architectural structure of the above-ground *cryptoporticus* has been identified (Förtsch 1993, 41–44; Luschin 2002, 15–23) it has not been critically examined.

Pliny the Younger’s description of the above-ground *cryptoporticus* in his Laurentine villa indicates that it was a covered and enclosed ambulatory, which had side walls with windows on one or both sides. Pliny also states that what the above-ground *cryptoporticus* offered that the *porticus* or the *xystus* did not, was a walkway in which, the air, light and temperature could be regulated.

Here begins a *cryptoporticus*, almost like a public one. It has windows on both sides, but more facing the sea, as there is one in each alternate bay on the garden side. As the sun beats down, the *cryptoporticus* increases its heat by the reflection of the sun; it not only retains the sun but also drives back the north wind; and as much as it is hot in the front side, that much it is cold on the back side. In the same way it stops the southwest wind, thus breaking and restraining the various winds on each side. This is its advantage [sc., of the *cryptoporticus*] in winter, but more so in the summer, for before noon its shadow moderates the terrace (*xystus*), and after noon it [sc., its shadow] moderates the nearest part to it, which, as the day increases and decreases, gets low, sometimes shorter, sometimes longer, on one side or the other. The *cryptoporticus* itself does not receive the sun to a great extent because at its highest point the sun stops at the top [sc., of the *cryptoporticus*] (Plin. Ep. 2.17, 16–19).

Since only Pliny the Younger used the term *cryptoporticus* in the first century AD it was probably not a frequent term. It is probable that Pliny the Younger invented the term *cryptoporticus* to describe what was until then known with the generic term *crypta*; for example the covered hallway that runs around the north, east and south sides of the building of Eumachia in Pompeii and features windows looking into the internal courtyard was described as a *crypta* in the dedicatory inscription of the building (*CIL* X, 810, c. 2 BC; Moeller 1972; 1975; Förtsch 1993, 42; Wallat 1993, 62–71; Luschin 2002, 17–19; 86–90; Fentress 2005, 225–229; Pesando and Guidobaldi 2006, 51). Both terms are used here in the sense that Pliny the Younger used them, that is, *porticus* as a walkway delimited by columns (e.g., rooms 20, 5, and 3 in Villa San Marco; Figs. 3.2, 3.5).
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and cryptoporticus as an above-ground covered and enclosed passageway with side walls and windows on one or both sides (e.g., rooms 13 and 24 in Villa A at Oplontis, Figs. 3.1, 3.6).

Daily activities in the villas’ porticus and cryptoporticus

In order to examine the ways in which porticus and cryptoporticus accommodated daily life in villas and tackle their meaning and function in villa architecture, the activities that Cicero and Pliny the Younger describe as taking place in them must be examined. Although not all villa owners would have engaged in the tightly scheduled intellectual occupations that Cicero and Pliny the Younger offer, they give us an understanding of the daily rhythm in villas (Laidlaw 1968, 50–52; Leach 2003, 154–165).

An examination of Pliny the Younger’s letters shows that villa owners passed some hours of their day working (whether work was an intellectual activity or not), walking, or sitting and relaxing in open-air promenades (usually called xystus, cf. Vitruvius, De Arch. 5.11.4; 6.7.5), which were shaded by the adjacent, or nearby, porticus or cryptoporticus:

I wake when I like, usually after sunrise, often earlier but rarely later. My shutters stay closed, for in the stillness and darkness I feel myself surprisingly detached from any distractions and left to myself in freedom; my eyes do not determine the direction of my thinking, but, being unable to see anything, they are guided to visualize my thoughts. If I have anything on hand I work it out in my head, choosing and correcting the wording, and the amount I achieve depends on the ease or difficulty with which my thoughts can be marshaled and kept in my head. Then I call my secretary, the shutters are opened, and I dictate what I have put into shape; he goes out, is recalled, and again dismissed. Three or four hours after I first wake [but I don’t keep to fixed times] I betake myself according to the weather either to the xystus or to the cryptoporticus, work out the rest of my subject and dictate it. (Plin. Ep. 9.36, 1–3).

As in the description of the above-ground cryptoporticus of his Laurentine villa (Ep. 2.17, 16–19), here again Pliny defines the function of the cryptoporticus on the basis of its environmental qualities: the decisive factor for preferring cryptoporticus to xystus was the weather, otherwise both structures provided comparable workspaces for the owner.

An examination of the cryptoporticus and porticus in Villa Arianna A and Villa A at Oplontis indicates
the ways in which they accommodated work space for the owners. In Villa Arianna A (Fig. 3.3), cryptoporticus 71 was located in between garden area V and crypta-ramp 76 that led to the sea through a series of ramps cutting through the substructures of the villa’s platform (spaces 76–61, 62, 68). The windows on both sidewalls of cryptoporticus 71, a series of wide conical-shaped windows along the southwest wall and two wide funnel-shaped windows along the northeast one, provided for air circulation, a concern that Pliny the Younger (Ep. 2.17, 16–19) expressed in the description of his Laurentine villa. The southwest side of cryptoporticus 71 opened onto a porticus (73), which had a different orientation than cryptoporticus 71 and was aligned with another porticus (U) at the other side of the garden (V) (Nappo 2002b, 53; 56–57). Here, the owner had a choice between cryptoporticus 71 and porticus 73 in which to conduct his/her work.

Likewise, in Villa A at Oplontis (Fig. 3.1) the owner could choose from the numerous porticus and cryptoporticus to conduct his work: between cryptoporticus 13 and 24, and porticus 40 looking to the south, porticus 60 looking to the east, porticus 56 and 76 looking west and porticus 33 and 34 facing north. The choice of one porticus and/or cryptoporticus over another would have depended not only on the weather, but also on the mood and personal taste of the owner. For example, porticus 33 and 34, facing north and having a smaller width and extent, would have been preferred on the hottest days of the summer or when the owners sought some privacy from the noise of the household, concerns that Pliny the Younger (Ep. 2.17, 18; 5.6, 21) expressed in his villa letters. By providing more than one space with similar environmental qualities, but with different extents and contexts, designer(s) not only emulated the monumental character of public architecture but also provided a number of choices for the daily life in villas.

Going for a walk was an intrinsic part of the daily life of otium in villas (O’Sullivan 2003, 38; 2006; Leach 2003, 160–165; 2004, 37). Owners with their friends would go for leisure walks in the cryptoporticus, porticus and xystus in order to exercise or to engage in philosophical discussions. For example, Pliny the Younger (Ep. 9.36, 1–3), continuing the description of his summer days in his villa in Tuscany cited previously, went for a walk after finishing the dictation of the piece on which he was working since he woke up:

I go for a drive, and spend the time in the same way as when walking or lying down; my powers of concentration do not flag and are in fact refreshed by the change. After a short sleep and another walk I read a Greek or a Latin speech aloud with emphasis, not so much for the sake of my voice as my digestion, though of course both are strengthened by this. Then I have another walk, am oiled, take exercise, and have a bath. If I am dining alone with my wife or with a few friends, a book is read aloud during the meal and afterwards we listen to a comedy or some music; then I walk again with the members of my household, some of whom are well educated. Thus the evening is prolonged with varied conversation, and even when the days are at their longest, comes to a satisfying end (Plin. Ep. 9.36, 3–4).

As Pliny the Younger’s description indicates, for the longer walks villa owners went with carriages outside their estates. For their shorter walks however, after a mid-day nap, after reading for digestion, after taking exercise and after dinner, owners may have used the numerous long walkways (porticus, cryptoporticus and xystus) inside the villas.

A quick count of the total length of the walkways in Villa Arianna A and Villa of the Papyri is indicative. In Villa Arianna A the big peristyle garden H-W (Fig. 3.3) provided a colonnaded walkway at least 320m long around the rectangular garden and in Villa of the Papyri the big peristylium-garden (57–61; Fig. 3.4) provided a 280m long colonnaded walkway around the rectangular garden. Walking would indeed give a functional justification to the proliferation of these elements in luxury villa architecture (Fig. 3.7). These colonnaded walkways would have provided shaded and pleasant areas for all the hours of the day (Blanas 1990; Förtsch 1993, 45–47; Zarmakoupi 2008, 271–272). In Villa A at Oplontis (Fig. 3.1), porticus 60 and porticus 56, surrounding the east wing of the villa, provided
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Fig. 3.7 – Herculaneum, Villa of the Papyri, bird’s eye view of digital model.

Fig. 3.8 – Oplontis, Villa A: view of porticus 40 enclosing garden 59.

walks for different times of the day: porticus 56 at the west side for the morning hours, when the rooms behind it provided shade from the rising sun, and porticus 60 at the east side for the evening hours, when the rooms behind it provided shade from the setting sun. Both walks were equally pleasing, the one along the big park-like garden, the other along the swimming pool (96) and garden (98). Room 69 provided access from one to the other and provided ventilation for both, a concern that is expressed by Pliny (Ep. 2.17, 17). The cryptoporticus 13 – cryptoporticus 24 – porticus 40 sequence protected the villa’s south-facing interior spaces during the summer and provided a chain of walkways with a view to the seascape (Figs. 3.6, 3.8). In Villa San Marco at Stabiae, several porticus (20, 5a, 5b,
3) formed a U-shaped enclosure that confined a garden (9) with a pool (15) in the middle (Figs. 3.2, 3.5). These provided a walkway protected from the west and thus suitable for the evening hours, while cryptoporticus open to the southeast (7, 51) provided walks suitable for the midday and those porticus open to the west (1, 2) were suitable for the morning hours.

An examination of the construction dates of porticus and cryptoporticus in the aforementioned examples indicates that these structures appear after the middle of the first century BC and become very popular at the beginning of the first century AD. In Villa of the Papyri, the peristyle-garden (57–61) and the cryptoporticus (56) to its southwest were added towards the end of the first century BC (Wojcik 1986, 35–38). In Villa Arianna A, cryptoporticus 71 dates from the Augustan period and the big peristyle-garden from the Claudio-Neronian period (Bonifacio and Sodo 2001, 155–166; Nappo 2002b, 54–57). In Villa A at Oplontis the porticus (33–34) and cryptoporticus (13, 24) around the atrium core were constructed during the Augustan period, while the porticus and cryptoporticus of the east wing (40, 46, 56, 60) were built towards the middle of the first century AD (Fergola and Pagano 1998, 30–31; 49; 56–57; 60–62; 66–68; Fergola 2000, 23–24; Thomas and Clarke 2007, 226–232). In Villa San Marco, porticus (1, 2), actually date from the Augustan period, but only became parts of the villa during the Claudio-Neronian period. In this period the owner of Villa San Marco took possession of the villa next-door, to which porticus (1, 2) originally belonged, and connected porticus 1 and 2 to porticus 3 through ramp 4 (Rougetet 1999, 53; 56). It is during the same period that the owner added the arch-shaped cryptoporticus (62, 63) with the nymphaeum (64, 65) facing and also porticus 51 at the southeast (Blanc 2002, 81). In this way the owner probably tripled the length of walkways within his villa – if one judges from the size of the remains – and created a monumental villa façade.

As owners enlarged their properties, designers used the porticus structures to augment the monumental character of the villas and to provide spaces that accommodated the owners’ daily activities. In doing so, I propose, designers modified the design of the porticus and created the cryptoporticus as an alternative in the daily life in villas: a walkway that had closed walls, instead of an open-air colonnaded walkway (xystus or porticus), the air, light and temperature of which could be regulated, and in which owners could work or walk protected from the elements. As it has been already addressed, Pliny the Younger’s (Ep. 2.17, 16–19; cf. Ep. 9.7, 4) descriptions emphasize the importance of the environmental qualities of the cryptoporticus and indicate that a cryptoporticus would have been used instead of an open-air walkway because of the protection it offered from the elements (Ep. 9.36, 3). It is possible that this period of rebuilding and appropriating properties gave designers the opportunity to develop an architectural solution to the owners’ evolving needs and the term cryptoporticus was coined to describe it.

We cannot ascertain whether the precedents of the cryptoporticus structure were found in the Hellenistic architecture in Asia Minor (Luschin 2002, 24–28), however, as Luschin’s (2002, 15–16) analysis has shown, the cryptoporticus structure did bear similarities to the covered passageway around the Nile ship of Ptolemy IV. It is probable that Roman designers were fascinated with the architecture of travel just as Le Corbusier (1923, 76) in the 20th century was interested in the steam-powered ocean liners, the lay-out of which he emulated in his designs (e.g., Villa Savoye).

**Porticus and Cryptoporticus as elements of the villas’ circulation**

Pliny the Younger’s letters indicate that another important function of porticus and cryptoporticus within the villa was circulation. As walkways, porticus and cryptoporticus connected sections of the villa and in doing so gave access to the rooms along their way. Indeed, they serve to structure the narrative as Pliny the Younger (Ep. 2.17, 4–5; 16–19; 5.6, 19–22; 27–31) guided his readers to the various rooms and spaces of his villas. As designers stretched out the villas’ spaces onto the landscape, it was the porticus and cryptoporticus they used in order to provide different ways of access to those spaces.

In Villa A at Oplontis, a parallel porticus (40)
Fig. 3.9 – Oplontis, Villa A: view of cryptoporticus 46 looking towards peristyle 32.
and cryptoporticus (24) provided different ways to access the east wing from the central body of the villa and I will argue that they served different purposes. In this villa there were two ways to go from the central atrium (5) towards the big reception rooms (61, 65, 69, 73, 74, 78). I focus here on the route to one of the rooms, room 78. The first route ran through cryptoporticus 24 and porticus 40. The cryptoporticus (24), accessed from the southeast corner of the atrium (Fig. 3.6), led to a porticus (40; Fig. 3.8) that ran around the garden (59) and led through passages 81 and 42 to room 78. The second approach to this large reception room was through another cryptoporticus (46; Fig. 3.9), which could be reached from the northeast corner of the atrium via a corridor (4), room 27 and peristyle 32. The cryptoporticus (46) led directly to a corridor (76), which was connected to reception room 78.

I propose that the first route was intended for the leisurely walks of the owner and his friends, whereas the second one was for the more everyday operations of the villa. In the first route, which ran around the garden (59), the only visual connection with the interior of the villa was through a corridor (37) leading to the peristyle (32). Although cubicula (23, 25, 38, 41) open onto the cryptoporticus (24), their doors could have been shut and the porticus (40) did not give access to any room. Thus, the owner and his friends could have enjoyed a leisurely promenade: first enjoying the view to the sea at the south from the cryptoporticus (24) and then the view of garden (59) from the porticus (40). Taking this route, the owner could have led his guests to the large reception room (78) without much interaction with the interior of the villa. The paintings and mosaics adorning the Porticus (40), corridor (81), and room (79) on this route are of the same character (Fergola and Pagano 1998, 57–58) and provide a stylistically unified architectural setting for this promenade.

The second route passed through what is generally interpreted as the service area of the house (Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 39). This argument was based on the presumption that the so-called zebra stripe decoration in peristyle 32, the rooms around it and the cryptoporticus (46) was used in service areas. However, the studies by Corrado Goulet (2001, 74–83; figs. 43–68) and Laken (2003, 177–181; figs. 20–23) have shown that these zebra patterns were in fact richer and more decorative than their current state suggests and that the areas in which the patterns appeared have been incorrectly thought of as servile. The “stripes” were originally black waves, blended to achieve a gradation that would result in the appearance of simulated marble as the best-preserved examples indicate (Corrado Goulet 2001, 56–58). The design was indeed used to adorn service or secondary areas but it would not only feature in such areas. The design was used in areas of public buildings that were not well lit, inclined, angled or curved or that were much trafficked, for example the corridor H in the Stabian Baths at Pompeii (Corrado Goulet 2001, 63–65; figs. 18–19; Laken 2003, 182), the interior passageways of the amphitheater at Pompeii (Corrado Goulet 2001, 62–63; figs. 11–12; Laken 2003, 181; fig. 8) and the cryptoporticus in the palaestra of Insula Orientalis II at Herculaneum (Corrado Goulet 2001, 67–68; figs. 25–26; Laken 2003, 177; figs. 5–6). In private dwellings the design appeared in entrance spaces, corridors and passages, for example the corridors in the apartment complex above the Suburban Baths in Pompeii (Corrado Goulet 2001; Laken 2003, 174–175, fig. 17) and in the fœces, vestibulum and passage E of the Casa di Julius Polybius (IX 13, 1–3; fig. 5.4; Corrado Goulet 2001, 86–88; figs. 80–85; Laken 2003, 175–176; figs. 18–19). The zebra patterns were probably meant to create an eye-catching and repeating design that would encourage movement in the more public areas of a house rather than signifying the service areas of the house (Corrado Goulet 2001, 59–62; Laken 2003, 176–177). In fact, the only rooms that are known archaeologically to be service areas (35, 48, 49, 50, 51, 53) in Villa A at Oplontis do not bear zebra patterns, but rather are decorated in white, third style wall paintings (Fergola and Pagano 1998, 51).

The zebra patterns featuring in the spaces of this second route provided a unified style of decoration and in doing so guided the person walking towards the eastern part of the house from the atrium (5). Visitors would have been led through a room (27), peristyle (32) and into the cryptoporticus (46) where they might sit on the benches along it, waiting to be
received by the owner of the villa, or a member of his staff (Fig. 3.9). Their view would have been directed through the zebra patterns of the cryptoporticus through the opening of the porticus (60) onto the pool and garden complex (80, 96, 98). Above the zebra patterns the wall decoration consisted of white rectangular panels decorated with garlands and aediculae and the ceiling presents panels decorated in a style comparable to that of the Domus Aurea. This large cryptoporticus was 4 meters wide, 30 meters long and at least 4 meters high. It was an appropriate area for business guests as it allowed a relatively restricted access to the villa: following this route visitors did not interact with the activities within the porticus (40) – cryptoporticus (24) route or the cubicula to which they provided access.

It is clear that the designer(s) intended a clear-cut separation between the two ways of accessing the eastern wing of the villa. Although the zebra-striped cryptoporticus (46) ran parallel to the north wing of porticus (40), there was no direct connection between these spaces. This deliberate separation between a porticus and a cryptoporticus often occurs in luxury villa architecture, for example, in Villa San Marco (2, 7, 51; Fig. 3.2), Villa of the Papyri (54, 56; Fig. 3.4) and Villa del Pastore, where in all cases a long cryptoporticus was placed right next to an equally long porticus and/or a xystus with access only at the beginning and end of the walkways. Furthermore, in both Pliny’s (Ep. 2.17, 17; 5.6, 16) villas, a cryptoporticus and/or a porticus were positioned next to a xystus. Villa A at Oplontis elucidates the concept behind this design composition. The entire east part of the villa, starting from the beginning of cryptoporticus (46), was built towards the middle of the first century AD (Thomas and Clarke 2007, 229-232; 2009, 357-364; De Caro 2005, 372–398). It was during this period that the southern cryptoporticus (24) together with a new porticus (40) were decorated in the fourth Pompeian style and that peristyle (32), the rooms around it and the associated cryptoporticus (46) were decorated in zebra patterns, both of which present a unified, and distinctive, architectural and decorative design. These two routes to the east wing were part of the circulation plan of the design project initiated after AD 45. The designer(s) aimed at providing two types of access to the east wing of the villa, one more private and more public, and clearly distinguished one from the other in terms of decoration.

Conclusion
The frequent and sometimes excessive appearance of porticus and cryptoporticus in luxury villa architecture follows a familiar topos in Roman art. From the first century BC the representation of colonnades with regal proportions in the second Pompeian style wall paintings, for example in the oecus (15) of Villa A at Oplontis, were a means of accentuating the social status of the owner by associating his private milieu with that of monumental architecture – and especially with the ideas of architectural magnificentia that were brought into Italy from the recently conquered Greek East (Rakob 1976, 374; Tybout 1989, 5–13; 46; Von Hesberg 1992; Kuttner 1998). From the Augustan period onwards, the visual representations of colonnades inside villas gave way to their actual construction around the villas. As the period of Pompeian second style painting indicates the first step in the internalization of Hellenistic architecture within the domestic space of the villa or the domus (Borbein 1975; Fittschen 1976; Mielsch 2001, 33–40; Baladassare 2002, 91–92), the porticus that begin enveloping the villa façades during the Augustan period and their later reception as emblematic images in the panels of the late third and fourth Pompeian style may be seen as second and third steps (Peters 1963, 110–118; 155–166).

While the use of porticus in villa architecture points to the assimilation of the architectural repertoire of Hellenistic and Roman public buildings in the private sphere, the invention of the cryptoporticus structure exemplifies the ways in which Roman designers further appropriated this repertoire and proposed new architectural forms in order to provide alternatives for the daily life of otium in villas. In doing so, designers employed both porticus and cryptoporticus in their designs as elements of the villas’ circulation plan as well as means of socially distinct accesses to the villa’s spaces.


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