15. Deenup 1939: 145–74. In public architecture, the closest similar design is at the Sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia at Praeneste, where a devotee had to deviate from the axis of the whole to climb the 100 m artificial mountain through one of the two lateral vaulted ramps connecting terraces IV and V.
24. Mauri in a similar configuration in the eastern peristyle of the House of the Menander in Pompei, where the sigillati signaled the importance of room 18, a huge reception space, but Wallace-Hadrill (1988: 61–4) caustic on the reconstructions.
26. If the floor was removed, evidence of its bedding should have been present, but this was not the case.
31. There was probably a twin or matching polygonal room in the area of room 97 (only partially excavated) at the northern extremity of portico 60, which would have made a symmetrical pendant to room 78.
35. The decoration of portico 60 has a close parallel in area 7 of the House of the Centenary at Pompeii, conclusively dated after the earthquake of 62 CE: Esposito 2009: 114–16.
36. All find spots are recorded in the Giornali di Sarno, housed in the Ufficio degli Stati at the site. Bergmann 2003: 92–4, with previous bibliography in note 26.
38. Luxury Villas and the Bay of Naples

Luxurious villas and their culture were linked to the conquest of the Hellenistic east in the second century BCE and the ensuing influx of resources into Italy. Criticism of luxury country houses began in the period after the defeat of Persia at Pydna in 168 BCE; one of the traditional dates assigned to the introduction of wealth, boorish slaves, luxury, grand houses, and not incidentally—fine villas for those members of Roman society who benefited from the rewards of foreign conquest. Members of the senatorial and equestrian orders who wished to display their new wealth in a private context transformed their plain country houses into sumptuous edifices on the model of monumental Hellenistic architecture, and morality were provoked to criticise as much political as ethical. Living in a luxurious villa in the countryside in retreat from the political affairs of the City intertwined with an idealized Greek notion of educated leisure (ostium). The attraction of this lifestyle was a frequent topic of Latin letters—no less those of Cicero—and centered on discussions of Greek philosophy, history, mythology, and the arts while downplaying productive agricultural endeavors of the estates on which the villas stood. Owners and designers enhanced this encounter with an idealized Greek culture, filling villas with Greek
architectural elements and structures, wall paintings, famous statues and sculptural groups featuring Greek mythological themes, busts of philosophers, and Hellenistic kings — some shipped directly from Greece. These Greek imports — actual objects or versions of them — as well as ideas and topics of conversation were widely distributed in the culture of villas. However, one genuinely original — Italian or Roman — element in early villa design was a relation to the landscape setting. Villas came to lead the way in a cultural common language, prominently attested in contemporary literary and visual sources, that was concerned with nature in its pictorial aspect. For the first time in Western culture, landscape was singled out as a theme in its own right. The qualities of landscape were praised in the pastoral poetry of Virgil, and its idealized and symbolic representations permeated public and private spaces; the garden paintings from the underground dining room of the Villa of Livia at Prima Porta and the sculpted reliefs of lush floral and vegetable elements on the altar enclosure of the Ara Pacis Augustae are but two of many examples. This romance of landscape found an architectural expression in Roman luxury villas.

In the realm of rural dwellings, landscape could simultaneously be represented in wall painting and framed by architectural design. Interior landscapes were embellished with water and sculptures and surrounded by views of and out to painted, sculpted, and real landscapes, the professional and architectural body of villas opened its spaces to engage both interior and exterior landscapes; the sprawling elements of villas responded to the landscapes and dressed them with masonry and marble; the visually potent connecting elements of this fluid architecture marked the position of the villas in their landscape. In designing for luxury, Romans shaped a sophisticated interplay of architecture and landscape, an interplay that Renaissance architects rediscovered and that persists to this day. Villa A at Torre Annunziata (Oplontis) is a prime example of early imperial luxury villas in the Italian peninsula (Figure 4.1 in Chapter 4). It was built in the mid-first century BCE to a design following other villas with the atrium-centered plan of town houses; it was expanded and constantly refurbished until its destruction in 79 CE. Villa A embodies many of the cultural and visual manners of the early imperial period and its architectural language is a case-study, with others in the Bay, of how patrons and designers could exercise their ideas. The Bay and the Campanian and Sperlonga-Gaeta coastlines were the first concentration-points of villos maritimae. The Bay had attracted Romans since the Early Roman period BCE; while some villas were simple villos maritae like that described by Cato, many were turned by the beginning of the first century BCE into luxurious edifices; for example, the villa under the Aragonese Castle of Baiae, the so-called villa of Caesar. Villa Prato at Sperlonga (second century BCE) is a notable example of an early monumental villa on the Sperlonga-Gaeta coastline that combined the luxury of bathing facilities and the practicalities of pisciculture. Impressive properties on the Bay were numerous, but the social scene was mixed: illustrious Romans of famous historical families and municipal magnates of merely local importance, or descendants of ex-imperial or ex-senatorial slaves who had accrued wealth or influence, mingled in a life of luxury and leisure. During the first century BCE, Cumae on the northern coast of the Bay became a center for luxury villas, a "Rome in miniature." By the end of the century, villas presented so dense a front around the Bay that they resembled a single city; others were built along sea-coasts and lakesides all over Italy.

Hellenistic Elements in Luxury Villa Architecture

The architecture of luxury villas was informed by the civic, religious, and royal architecture that Romans encountered in their conquest of the Hellenistic east. Roman military expeditions included some cultural study and travel, and it was inevitable that monumental colonnaded architecture would be emulated in country houses and, in miniature, in city houses. The peristyle courtyards of Hellenistic palaces and athletic training grounds (the palaestra of the gymnasia), such as those of the palace at Aigai in Macedonia and the palaestra in Olympia, informed the structure of the Roman peristyle garden, and the monumental terracing of colonnaded sanctuaries and royal capitals, such as the sanctuary of Asklepios in Kos and the Acropolis of Pergamon, was emulated in the raised terraced substructures of villas (villi villae). These elements had first entered the Roman design vocabulary in the public and religious sphere: the colonnaded Portico of Meidus in Rome (after 166 BCE) and the terracing of the Sanctuary of Fortuna Primigenia at Praeneste (early second century BCE) are significant examples. Peristyle structures had entered the design vocabulary of urban dwellings by the mid-second century BCE but were not fully integrated for 75 or 100 years, in the first century BCE, when, as in the case of the House of the Faun in Pompeii, they came to be fully incorporated in the actual plan of the house. In villas, they could appear in two-dimensional representations in Second-Style wall paintings (mid-first century BCE), and Villa A has an impressive example of a painted monumental colonnade on the east wall of Room 15 dating from the early phase of the villa (Figure 5.1). In the representation, a double-tiered portico of noble size appears behind the columns of a grand propylon. In the building phases of the Oplontis villa itself — and many other villas — these peristyle structures entered the design vocabulary at about the same time. In Villa A, porticoes 13, 24, 33, and 34 (Figure 4.1 in Chapter 4) were added, or remodeled, around the end of the first century BCE, and porticoes 40 and 50 were built around the middle of the first century CE (Figures 5.2, 5.3, and 5.4). The peristyle courtyards migrated from being two-dimensional representations painted on walls to being actually built around them.

By incorporating these monumental public structures in luxury villa architecture, Roman designers assimilated both the iconia of the Hellenistic east and the relatively new grandiose character of Roman public architecture. Romans, however, did not aspire merely to the public, monumental, and sumptuous character of these structures. The peristyle and portico structures were representative of the architectural forms of the Greek educational institution, the gymnasion. Indeed, Cicero...
used the words gymnasion and palaestra interchangeably to describe the porticoed structures in his villas, although the former signified the institution and the latter the architectural structure of the peristy training ground. Whatever the name used, the peristy structure bore, for members of the Roman elite, associations with the places in which, in fact, they had studied and not merely visited. In a discussion held at one of Crassus’ grand villas in the second quarter of the first century BCE, one of the participants asked a question of Greek culture which was answered in a Roman architectural way:

... surely you do not think this is an inappropriate place (se for discussion)? Here, where this portico, in which we are now walking, and this palaestra, and sitting at so many places, awaken somehow the memory of the gymnasion and the philosophical disputes of the Greeks?²³

However, in Roman luxury villas, porticoes did not surround paved courtyards as they had in Hellenistic palaces and training grounds. Rather, they framed and enclosed lavish gardens. In villas, the contained space was a carefully constructed landscape that complemented the architecture: In Villa A, vines were planted in portico 40 and trained to climb the columns (Figure 5.2), and plantings shaped the design of the villa’s gardens, such as the contoured beds that lined the paths of the north garden. Gardens of villas were often lavishly furnished with waterworks: at Villa A, the pool 96 to the east of portico 60 supplied movement and reflection of architecture, vegetation, the sky, and sculpture (Figures 5.3 and 5.4). In such internal landscapes, certain themes could be evoked in copies of Hellenistic sculptures: nature tamed and mastered in the sculptural group of satyr and hermaphrodite that was placed to the south of pool 96; athletic prowess as divine and human in the two Hercules herms and the Ephebe statue in area 98 on the east side of the pool (Figures 5.3 and 5.4). Pleasure gardens were laid out in the royal parks of the successors of Alexander, such as those at the palace of the Seleucids in Antioch situated on an island in the river Orontes; these in turn emulated Persian “paradies” or heaven-like parks (paradisus) around the palace complexes at Pasargadae and Susa.²⁴ A direct reference to Hellenistic and Persian architecture may not have been intended, but the gardens of Roman luxury villas with their waterworks and ornamental plantings alluded to the luxury and pleasure with which the East was associated.²⁵

Roman gardens were not independent designs in which, as in a peristy, the garden itself dominated. Rather, gardens were subordinated to the architecture of the villas by being enclosed in peristyles framed by porticoes. In this way, and no matter how luxurious, such gardens alluded to the homely Roman domestic garden (hortus, which included herbs and green staples for the table) within the architecture of the house.²⁶ This homeliness could be readily played down: Exotic trees, ornamental shrubberies, moving water, and statues could accentuate a new glamour.

For villas in Italy, the pleasure garden and the colonnaded peristy with free-standing colonnades had been distinct concepts with contrasting associations: the pleasure garden denoted the luxury of the East, while the architecture of peristy and portico evoked the sternness and discipline of Greek educational institutions and venues. By incorporating the pleasure garden inside the structure of the peristy, Roman designers “tamed” the unruly nature of the coming “Eastern” influence, constructing spaces in which pleasure was made acceptable to owners who wished for luxury without imputation of decadence. As Foucault has shown, the experience of pleasure is constituted, negotiated, and organized through certain forms of discipline.²⁷ In the framed gardens of the peristy, the foreign pleasures of the East were under Roman moral control.²⁸

Villa Designs: Architecture and Landscape

The peristy garden entered the design vocabulary of luxury villas in the first century BCE as a simple square or rectangular structure: At the Villa dei Papiri, there were two such gardens, and the Villa San Marco had one in its first phase. A little later, the formula of the square or rectangular peristy centered on a garden was given some variations: designers retained the colonnaded structures but started using them in more open arrangements. We see this at Villa A when it was enlarged in the early first century CE and then again after 45. Although the form of the rectangular porticoed enclosure was retained (for example, peristy-garden 40–59; Figure 5.3), it was more freely interpreted. The porticoes and gardens now followed the sprawling architectural body of the villa (portico 60 and garden 96–98) and created views to the surrounding landscapes as well as to the villa’s architectural elements (Figures 5.3, 5.4, and 5.5). Porticoes as screening and liminal spaces between the closed rooms of the villa and its gardens were kept, but the result was that the architectural form of the closed peristy was deconstructed, losing its character as a porticoed enclosure but retaining its other elements. The peristy, portico, and garden were articulated in new ways.

This reordering of portico and garden opened up the architectural composition of villas and created a more immediate relationship to, and mastering the view of, the landscape around them. The change took place at a time when appreciation of landscape...
an accidental subject, as we will see. The parataxic representation of landscapes alternating with still-lives had appeared about 20 BCE (late Second Style) in the corridor F-G of the Villa "Farnesina" in Rome, where – besides xonia – landscapes alternated with theater masks from tragedy and comedy; there too, the scenes are painted in clear colors on white backdrops. Thirty or so years later, and unlike the Villa "Farnesina" landscapes, which are placed as a frieze rather high on the wall, the Villa A landscape pisellata of portico 60 were placed at eye-level in the median zone of the wall. Painted with frames, they stand out robustly against the white-ground walls, delicately outlined with metallic distresses and thin tendrils inhabited by tiny insects and birds; with compositions such as these, the landscapes have become an essential element of the decoration.

These Fourth-Style landscapes of portico 60 retained both the central placement of the landscape of the Villa A’s Third-Style decorations in caldarium 8 (Figure 5:6) and the miniature size of the Second-Style pisellata of room 15 (Figure 5:5). The almost bare walls of portico 60 with its small landscapes and xonia have now become the backdrop of the real – and very robust – actual columns of the colonnade of portico 60 and the propyla in front of room 69 that interrupts it. A viewer standing on the east side of pool 66 looking toward portico 60 would see that the view recedes, in solid form, the Second-Style painting on the east wall of room 15 executed about a century before (Figure 5:2). Both are variations on the same theme: monumental architecture (painted or real) in combination with garden views, but now much more loosely conceived. Portico 60 does not enclose the east garden as a peristyle would (as in the view on the east wall of room 15 where a colonnade surrounds a garden) but is an intermediate space between the closed rooms of the east wing and the east garden and pool. This open composition enabled designers to create views of real monumental colonnades: the view from portico 60 through room 59 frames the propyla in front of room 21 (Figure 5:3), an arrangement that repeats certain landscapes in portico 60 showing villas with prominent propyla.

The architectural and decorative developments at Villa A over the course of about 100 years mark a changing appreciation for the landscape that Romans developed from the late Republic onward. From a marginal decorative accent in the Second-Style representations of monumental Hellenistic architecture, landscape became a bold protagonist in the decorative schemes of the Third Style and acquired a more refined and balanced role in the compositions of the Fourth. Two aspects of architecture and decoration were at play: the first was the transformation of the enclosed peristyle to open arrangements of portico structures adjacent to gardens, the architectural response to the growing appreciation for the qualities of the landscape around the villas. The second was painting the back walls of porticoes in the new Fourth Style as the decorative solution for big spaces facing the landscape. Designers departed from the norms of Hellenistic architecture to create an architecture that responded to the specific landforms and took advantage of the views to the surrounding landscape, while wall painters moved away from the solemn perspectives of the Second Style to create the sophisticated, almost-flat schemes of the Fourth.

Landscape and Luxury

The transformation of the peristyle enclosing a garden to more open articulations between colonnades and gardens was also associated with the needs of new, spatially demanding dining practices. In the early imperial period, hospitality became increasingly important in the social and political strategies of villa owners and, as a result, dining became more elaborate. Literary sources mention entertainment for the diners that could include performances of music, dance, and pantomime, and Varro gave a spectacle for a feast at his villa in which a musician acted the part of Orpheus in a park with wild animals. Plutarch mentions mimes acting in private dining parties in his "Table Talk." The result of these augmented entertainments made the traditional dining room, the triclinium, insufficient: Triclinia had accommodated three oblong couches (about
while the pool worked as a reflective surface for actors entertaining the diners—reminiscent of the pictorial interweaving of dining, theatrical performance, and landscape staging in corridor F-G of the Villa "Farnesina."

The dining arrangements at Villa A represent a significant departure from habits of dining and hospitality that had been current in late Republican villas, namely the traditional indissol. For a time, these were retained, but the old square U of couches plus the T for the central service area and the little tables were replaced, by the early imperial period, with a greater variety of shapes and sizes.98 Villa A furnishes an example: Tridinium 14 c. 50 BCE as in the old square-U shape (though without a "U+T" floor pattern), whereas the three new dining rooms (64/65, 69, and 73/74; after 45 CE) ranged along portico 60 are quite different in design conception. It may also be that the use of the rooms depended on the time of day and the season: Roman rooms could be converted for convenience and circumstance.99 Such changeable uses were doubtless available in Villa A; the landscape views and the weather would also have suggested the best use of a specific room.80

Besides being new and quite untraditional, the adaptation of Villa A’s new dining facilities to spectacles during the feast was precocious. In the late empire, entertainment while dining in luxury villas led to designs in a triconch arrangement in which three adjacent spaces (often apsidal) were set around a central space. This disposition provided a venue for the entertainment (dance, music, theatre, even gymnastic shows) that could be viewed equally from the three apses.80 All such triconch arrangements are variations on the architectural theme of festivity while viewing. Villa A did not have a triconch, but the design of its facilities from which viewers could look out to open vistas or through a colonnade onto spaces for spectacles is an early instance of what would become a norm of hospitable reception later on.

PORTICOES: THE CONNECTIVE TISSUE

Columnar porticoes in the new late Republican designs of villas took on a new aspect: they marked as well as opened up the villa’s façade, and expanded in presence in the landscape. The strong sun of the Mediterranean accentuates the volumes and features of an architectural object with cast shadows, giving focus and rhythm as seen from afar. Such effects are clear at the north façade of Villa A: Colonnades 33 and 34 enter in relation to the propylon of room 21, and the shading accentuates the forward-breaking volume of the propylon (Figure 5.9). Pliny the Younger, in describing his own Tuscan villa, remarks on precisely these effects:

A big part faces mainly south, and so from midday onwards in summer, a little earlier in winter, it seems to invite the sun into the wide and protruding colonnade. Many chambers open in this colonnade, as well as an entrance hall of the old-fashioned type.80

As the rooms of villas spread onto the landscape, their colonnate porticoes operated as connective tissue, providing access and direction, protecting them from the elements and unifying the disparate disposed rooms behind them. Porticoes took on a new function in villas: They set the stage for the villa in the landscape and set the owners’ social staging within the villa itself.80

Another type of portico came to be used in late Republican villas: the cryptoponito, a form that had various manifestations but that, when above ground, was characterized by tracts of wall alternated with doors or windows to provide more protection from the elements than rows of columns.80 Villa A had two I-shaped above-ground cryptoporitones, corridors 13 and 24 (Figure 4.13), or its south façade, framing the forward-breaking block of the atrium (room 3) and surrounding rooms Pliny describes the environmental advantages of cryptoporitones in some detail for his seaside villa at Laurentum, explaining how the windows on both sides allowed for air circulation while maintaining a stable temperature; the corridors broke the north and southwest winds, thus protecting adjacent gardens and walkways (scorci).81 The cryptoponito at Villa A may have functioned in the same way.

CONCLUSION

In designing for modern luxury, Romans used the existing vocabularies of Hellenistic and Roman architecture to create a new language of architecture in landscape. The appropriation of Greek columnar porticoes in public and athletic venues, when combined with a reinvocation of the traditional and
homely persimly garden, ingeniously located Greek intellectual culture in the private sphere of villas without the corruption of its lair. In turn, poets 
were adapted to open, rather than enclosed, compositions to make a dialogue between architecture 
and landscape, and in doing so embodied a sense of nature as garden, nature as landscape and view, and nature as strong poetic theme and appropriate subject of painting. Villa architecture thus both led and fol-
lowed new ideas particular to late Republican cul-
tural developments.

NOTES

1. See also Zarrakoupi 2008, 200a, 201, 201c, 202, 201, 2011 and 2014.


4. Cicero on villas: De r. 2.19–20; on the cultural speech of villas: Miehls 1987; on the estates and their place in the cultural discussion: D’Arms 1981, 72–96; Marzano and Marzano in this volume.


6. On the demand for copies of Greek sculpture around the Bay of Naples attended by discarded casts from the Baise sculptor’s workshop (Hadjinicola or Antoneino) see Landwehr 1918; Métraux 2006, 136–7 and n. 10.


9. De Francis et al. 1975; Fergola and Guzzo 2000. For the more recent work conducted at the Villa see Thoma and Clarke 2007 and 2008, as well as Clarke in the book (Chapter 42) and Clarke and Mantonier 2014.


11. Cornelia, the daughter of P. Cornelius Scipio Africanus Maier, wife of Ti. Sempronius Gracchus and mother of the Gracchi, owned the first attested seaside villa at Misenum. Plut., C. Gnaeus 1.2–3; Vili Max. 6.4.1; D’Arms 1970, 8–9.

12. Caro’s agricultural treatise (mid-second century BCE, Agr. 1.1–7) defined the villa as a farmstead producing agricultural goods and providing only minimal comfort. Discussion in Termano 2001; Becker 2006. The few luxurious villa mentioned in the literary sources is of C. Marcus, a novus homo, at Misenum on the northwest corner of the bay of Naples, built before 88 BCE (Piat, Mar. 34.2; Sen., Ep. 51.11). In general, D’Arms 1970, 10–15.


23. s. 15 BCE; phase 2B of the Second Style.

24. Cicero on the gymnasion: De or. 1.58; on the palaisena: QFV 3.1; An inscription from Artaeus attests the presence of young Romans studying in a gymnasion as early as 119–8 BCE: IG II.2, 1208. Cicero and his son studied in Athens (Cic., Att. 12.3.2; Cic., Fam. 7.10). See also: Mannouv 1967; Cloister 2004, 375–423. On the institution of the Hellenistic gymnastic

49. The triclinia of the villa at Desenzano on Lake Garda is one example of many: Dunnbin 1991, 1996; Rose 1991; see Brogiolo and Chavarri (Chapter 11), Teichner (Chapter 14), and Ripoll (Chapter 22) in this book.

50. Pliny, Ep. 3.6.15.


52. The term *cryptopetra* could also be applied to partially below-grade corridors without fittings (doors or windows) at floor level, or to completely underground corridors with openings to the outside at roof level. On the form of the *cryptopetra* in Roman villas: Loschin 2002, 15–23; Förtsch 1993, 41–2; Zarmakoupi 2011, and 2014, 75–102.


THE SOCIAL STATUS OF THE VILLAS OF STABIAE
THOMAS NOBLE HOWE

INTRODUCTION: THE SITE OF STABIAE

Ancient Stabiae lay only 4 km from Pompeii, but it was very different from that small bustling port city: it was almost nothing but villas, a dense cluster of half a dozen enormous seaside villas built next to the site of Stabiae, a pagan (village) without municipal status (Map 2). These are among the largest known Roman villas, up to 22,000 m², built directly next to one another over a distance of c. 1.8 km along the edge of a sea-cliff, c. 50 m high, facing the Bay of Naples. The ensemble constitutes the largest concentration of well-preserved large seaside villas (*villae maritimae*) in the Mediterranean (Figure 6.1).  

Campania and the Bay of Naples were one of the richest and most beautiful parts of Roman Italy, and the villa were built there in part for the same reason that Madame de Staël noted early in the nineteenth century: “Nothing . . . gives a more voluptuous idea of life than the climate which intimately unites man to nature.” In the first century BCE, shortly after the Social War of 91–80 and the granting of citizenship to all allied Italians (*sapii*) including Campanians, the area became one of the favorite resorts of the Roman elite. So many villas sprang up around the Bay that the geographer Strabo described the area about 9 CE as: 

…strewn, in part with these cities … and in part with residences and plantations which, following in unbroken succession, present the aspect of a single city.  

The first villas at Stabiae were built in the last decades of the Roman Republic (c. 80–49 BCE), a time of accelerating political competition within senatorial social circles that climaxed in the civil wars of Pompey, Caesar, and Crassus and, later, between Mark Antony and Octavian (33–31 BCE). It was during this period that the Roman elites sponsored, among other things, a new type of architettura: the panoramic luxury villa, designed to unite the arts of urban culture and the appreciation of nature.  

Villas on the Bay of Naples were not merely resorts of the rich and famous: They were a major center of political power. In the spring and fall months of the first century BCE, the capital virtually moved from Rome to the Bay.  

Augustus, the first emperor, often vacationed in his villas on the island of Capri (mod. Capri), so proximity to his person may have been desirable. In 27 CE, the capital literally moved, when Augustus’ successor Tiberius (emporer 14–37 CE) withdrew to his villas on Capri for the rest of his reign, never returning to Rome. Tiberius’ decision might well have been based as much on the Bay’s long history as a political center as on a desire to shirk his duties for what the ancient sources record as dalliance and debauchery.

Several events of the late Republic and early Empire occurred not in Rome but in the villas of the Bay. To secure political support from Cicero, Julius Caesar visited him at his villa near Puteoli (mod. Pozzuoli) in December 45 BCE (accompanied