Imperial Villas in Italy, Antoninus Pius to Maxentius

A study in Architecture and Functions



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To my Sister

Abstract

This thesis considers the architecture, functions, and usage patterns of imperial villas in Italy, with a focus on the period between Antoninus Pius and Maxentius (AD 138–312). Modern scholarship has been concerned either with imperial ownership—which has been examined in its historical issues—or with Roman villas; some imperial villas have been analysed individually, but a work addressing them as a study subject per se is lacking. Using data from ten residences, combined with textual and epigraphic evidence concerned with the period under consideration, this thesis investigates the forms in which imperial villas provided a venue for the activities which emperors performed in fulfilment of their role. After discussing villa-use patterns as they emerge from literary sources, the study tackles the settings of the emperors' official business, the entertainment buildings installed at imperial residences, their bathing suites, dining halls, and the facilities for wine production. Lastly, it looks at the features employed to define a spatial hierarchy within individual residences, and seeks to define the routes on which different categories of individuals could circulate to reach the areas where they were permitted access.

The thesis reveals that, both in the villas built from scratch and in those which were altered in the timeframe under consideration, the necessities of more-or-less long stays of the imperial court are reflected in their configuration: a concern existed towards equipping imperial villas with the facilities which emperors needed to fulfil their functions when they were not in Rome. It shows that a distinction existed between villas which were alternative to the main residence in Rome, and others which were ancillary to it: the acquisition of the functions of the *Palatium* on the part of specific residences culminated in the institution of the Tetrarchy and in the consequent creation of four different imperial seats.

This dissertation is the outcome of my own work and includes nothing which is the outcome of work done in collaboration except where specifically indicated in the text.

This dissertation does not exceed 80,000 words, including footnotes.

Alice Poletto
2 October 2021

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Introduction

A distinctive trait of several pre-modern cultures, ranging from ancient Egypt to pre-revolutionary France, is the absence of premises serving exclusively as venues where sovereigns could perform the activities and fulfil the functions that their role entailed:[1] it was customary for rulers to use their own residences as seats of government. This consideration is particularly valid for the Roman world, where, from Republican times onwards, some of the duties of the holders of temporary magistracies were fulfilled in their houses in Rome.[2] The practice was consolidated upon the institution of the Principate with the consequent concentration of the functions of different political entities in a single individual;[3] it was at their palatial complex on the Palatine hill that Roman emperors customarily conducted official business and carried out the range of activities connected to their role: as early as Augustus, the Palatine had become a prime centre for the government of the Empire.[4] Interestingly, a similar function was fulfilled by the many secondary residences that the emperors owned outside Rome, where they used to spend substantial periods without this causing them to neglect public business. In fact, the way of life of the imperial court developed from the Republican upper-class lifestyle:[5] senators were

[1] Egypt: Bietak 1996; Crete: Hägg and Marinatos 1987; Mycenaean world: Galaty and Parkinson 2007; Achaemenid Persia: Brosius 2007; Hellenistic world: Nielsen 1994, and Ferrara 2020 on Macedonian palaces; comparative studies of royal residences between Roman times and the early nineteenth century are collected in Featherstone *et al.* 2015.

[2] Cic., *Off*. XXXIX.138–39; Vitr., *De arch*. VI.5.2.

[3] Crook 1996.

[4] Millar 1992, 20.

[5] *Ibid.*, 22–24.

often found at their many extra-urban villas, where they could continue to supervise their properties alongside enjoying a leisured, sophisticated existence.[6]

This thesis is a study of the usage patterns of imperial villas in Italy, with a focus on the 200-year time span subsequent to the construction of Hadrian's Villa, until the transfer of the capital to Constantinople (AD 330). Villa sites will be analysed not as mere locales for the display of conspicuous consumption—as modern scholarship has often treated them[7]—but rather as fully fledged seats of government, where emperors could carry out their duties. Far from being limited to political and judicial concerns, imperial activities included giving and participating in spectacles, bathing, holding banquets, and so forth; furthermore, imperial villas were often the venues of events involving members of the imperial family, such as births, deaths, or weddings, as well as stopping places during journeys, strategic outposts close to military areas, or even places of exile for one's enemies.

This research aims to investigate the relationships between imperial activities and the architectural layout of imperial villas, in order to determine the forms in which imperial residences provided emperors with a venue where they could carry out their duties. When fulfilling their functions, what emperors did was interact with other people; the number, identity, and social status of these individuals depended on the nature of the interaction and on their relationship with the emperor: the identification and analysis of the possible spatial settings of these interactions will provide clues as

[6] Zarmakoupi 2014, 1–8.

[7] For instance, the monographic works on Hadrian's Villa (MacDonald and Pinto 1995, Salza Prina Ricotti 2001), or on the villa of Livia ad Gallinas Albas (Messineo 2001a).

to their more-or-less formal nature.

Scope and Nature of the Research

This thesis investigates ten imperial villas in Italy, built from scratch, brought into imperial possession, or extensively altered or refurbished between the principate of Antoninus Pius and the transfer of the capital of the empire to Constantinople (fig. 1). A description of each site is found in the catalogue annexed to the thesis, which brings together information collected from secondary literature, fieldwork on the sites, and archival research. In the main body, I will address imperial villas from multiple viewpoints, ranging from the distribution map of the residences used by the imperial family in specific periods to the different facilities which allowed emperors to carry out their activities.

My work is limited to the few villas whose identification as imperial properties is certain, or extremely likely, as they allow me to determine the extent to which they served as venues for imperial activities, to investigate the mutual relationships between their architectural layout and the spatial needs of imperial activities, and to study their usage patterns throughout the period under examination. The most reliable evidence to ascertain their ownership comes from waterpipes (*fistulae*) featuring the names of members of the imperial family in the genitive case, which attest that the building(s) to which water was transported was, most likely, in imperial possession;[8] *fistulae* have been identified at the imperial villa at Antium, at the residence at

[8] Bruun 1991, 20–26.

Laurentum, at the villa of the Quintilii, and at the *Horti Spei Veteris*. In other cases, the attribution to imperial ownership has been possible thanks to the cumulative occurrence of different classes of evidence. A suburban villa on the *uia Flaminia*, whose original nucleus dates to the late-Republican period, could be identified as the villa *ad Gallinas Albas* thanks to the accurate account of Pliny, who reported that Livia's *Veientanum* was located *iuxta nonum lapidem Flaminiae uiae*.[9] In no case can imperial villas be identified based solely on their architectural layout and decoration: extreme luxury is not sufficient per se to attribute a residence to imperial possession.[10] For the reasons outlined above, the 'Palazzo Imperiale' at Baiae and the so-called 'Villa dei Gordiani' on the *uia Praenestina* have not been included in this research. As regards Baiae, the reassessment carried out by Cairoli Giuliani of the features commonly attributed to the imperial residence—'Villa dell'Ambulatio', 'Settore di Sosandra', 'Settore di Mercurio', Settore di Venere'—has shown that the presumed Palazzo Imperiale is in fact an enormous thermal establishment, which consisted of a number of separate residential facilities connected with baths.[11] The interpretation of the site at the third mile of the *uia Praenestina* as the villa which, according to the *HA*, the Gordiani owned on this road, is based on the size of the complex and on the absence of evidence for equally luxurious residences along the *uia Praenestina*, but is not supported by more solid evidence.

[9] Plin., *HN* XV.136–37.

[10] Maiuro 2012, 159–69, on the hierarchy of the classes of evidence which allow the identification of imperial possessions. Further discussion below, 16–17.

[11] Giuliani 1977.

Three privately owned villas in the south-eastern *suburbium* of Rome, namely the villa of the Valerii Paullini, of Ulpius Phaedimus, and delle Vignacce, were transferred into imperial ownership throughout the second century AD; as they yielded no evidence for alterations in the period under consideration, they are not discussed in this thesis.

My research has proceeded on four different lines of enquiry: spaces, activities, subjects, and routes; in fact, this approach is not directly reflected in the chapter structure, but it is the backbone of most of the work. After the identification of the possible physical settings of the several imperial activities, I have sought to establish which individuals participated in each category of social gatherings, and to understand how they reached the areas where they needed to go and into which they were allowed at a specific time.

Space is the starting point of the sub-analyses carried out in chapters 2–6. Imperial activities included conducting official business, giving spectacles, bathing, and holding banquets; imperial villas were equipped with features which allowed emperors to perform these activities and fulfil their duties even when away from Rome. Chapters 2–5 include a discussion of the possible architectural layout of these facilities, which could serve to identify and locate them in the different villas (unless their configuration is sufficient for a secure interpretation, as in the case of entertainment buildings, for instance). Subsequently, each chapter looks at the position of these spaces relative to the remainder of the residence, and investigates the facilities serving to connect them with specific areas, such as different categories of lodgings, or

different entrances to the villa. The primary goal of this analysis is to establish the spatial hierarchy existing within individual imperial residences; alongside the position of the different features under consideration, I have considered other elements: the presence and quality of decoration, heating, and latrines.

Decoration proves particularly useful to establish the different degrees of importance of individual spaces. The presence or absence of decorative elements, combined with the type of decoration featured in each area, served to differentiate spaces, and helped individuals understand the spatial hierarchy and behave consequently.[12] Despite the constraints imposed by the fragmentary nature of our evidence, I have been able to establish a hierarchy of the decoration featured in some of the residences under examination, and to combine this element with data on the position of specific facilities, and on the presence of heating and latrines. To define this hierarchy, I took into account both flooring and wall veneer, even though the latter is preserved less frequently than the former.[13]

The use of marble for floor *opus sectile* and wall revetment is normally to be found in the most prominent rooms,[14] such as audience halls, *triclinia*, or even high-ranking *cubicula*, as at the villa of the Quintilii. Floor mosaics could also be used to mark out important spaces; a distinction between formal and humble areas was achieved through the elaborateness of the decorative patterns. Similar considerations apply to

[12] Wallace-Hadrill 1988.

[13] The following considerations are based on the guidelines provided by Berry 2016, Grahame 1999, Ellis 1991, and Wallace-Hadrill 1988.

[14] DeLaine and Corcoran 1994, 269.

wall paintings: elegant decorations are found in formal spaces, whilst areas where prominent individuals were not supposed to circulate—such as functional sectors—often feature a more modest revetment.[15]

The definition of the spatial hierarchy will help the identification of the different categories of subjects for whom each area was reserved. Imperial villas were peopled with a wide variety of individuals—the emperor, his family, the court, his guests, and external visitors, as well as slaves and freedmen—whose number and presence varied over time, depending on circumstances. Each and every individual was engaged in the performance of the activities taking place at imperial residences, though tasks and duties varied according to roles. This consideration leads to the fourth thread of my research, that is, the ways in which each category of subjects could reach the space allocated for the performance of a specific activity; in fewer words, the functioning of routes. A hierarchy of paths can be established based both on intrinsic features—decoration, for instance—and extrinsic factors, such as the facilities linked to each other by each route.

By focusing on the 200 years between the principate of Antoninus Pius and the foundation of Constantinople (AD 138–330), my works aims to follow in the vein of the doctoral theses of Manfred Leppert (Freiburg 1974) and Dirk Booms (Cambridge 2009),[16] which discussed the public role and usage patterns of the villas of the Julio-Claudian and Flavian emperors, and analysed the Antonine period to a limited

[15] Barbet 1985, 57–77.

[16] Leppert 1974; Booms 2009.

extent.[17] The timeframe under consideration in this work features substantial differences from both the previous period and Late Antiquity; whilst the reign of Constantine is a clear turning point, as will be discussed below, the boundary between the principate of Antoninus Pius and earlier periods is harder to define.

Literary sources attest that, as early as Augustus, emperors adjudicated lawsuits and held court not only in public spaces, such as the Forum Romanum,[18] the Curia,[19] or the Pantheon,[20] but also in the palaces on the Palatine and at their many villas outside Rome.[21] Emperors conducting official business at their residences often aroused the disapproval of contemporaries, owing to the presumed inappropriateness of the practice: secrecy and lack of transparency were the main concerns, especially when the emperor was giving justice. The most harshly criticised emperor was Tiberius, whose withdrawal to Capri is depicted by Tacitus and Suetonius as having been prompted by his pursuit of secrecy: the location of his self-imposed exile was chosen, allegedly, because of its inaccessibility.[22] He was so well hidden from public gaze, the authors claimed, that he ended up neglecting official business; in fact, it is precisely from these accounts that we know that he continued to run the state from Capri, giving instructions through correspondence.

Even if problems of secrecy and ambiguity were not a concern, official business

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[17] Scholarship on the subject is discussed *infra*, 'History of Previous Research'.
[18] Cass. Dio, LVII.7.2, LX.4.3, LXV.10.5; Suet., *Dom*. VIII.1.
[19] Cass. Dio, LXIX.18.1, LX.4.3.
[20] Cass. Dio, LXXIX.7.1.
[21] Literary sources mentioning emperors adjudicating at their residences are discussed in chapter 2, 56–64.
[22] Suet., *Tib*. XLIII–XLIV; Tac., *Ann*. IV–V.

conducted within imperial residences could often entail issues of appropriateness. Pliny reports that Domitian adjudicated a lawsuit against the Vestal virgin Cornelia, charged with immorality, in his *Albanum*; the practice was frowned upon not because of its secrecy—in fact, the emperor had summoned the other pontiffs to the villa—but because Domitian, acting as Pontifex Maximus, should have prosecuted a Vestal virgin in the Regia in Rome.[23]

The attitude of ancient authors towards emperors carrying out official duties at their villas changed from the Trajanic period onwards. Trajan himself was praised by Pliny when he gathered his *consilium* to his villa at Centumcellae: even though he was not in Rome, the emperor did not neglect his duties.[24] Likewise, if we trust Fronto, Marcus Aurelius used to work late into the night even when he spent some time in his seaside retreat at Alsium: his mentor expressed concern that he was not taking some deserved rest.[25] It seems that, starting from the Trajanic period, the use of imperial villas as one of the possible locations of imperial activities was increasingly tolerated by ancient authors. In fact, the palaces on the Palatine offered a venue for lawsuits or hearings as early as Augustus, but the practice was never criticised: it may be suggested that, as the Palatine residence was located in Rome, and thus was accessible and visible—at least virtually—to a much higher number of people, emperors fulfilling their duties on the Palatine did not raise issues of secrecy or appropriateness.

Hadrian's residence at Tibur, probably the most famous specimen of imperial villa,

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[23] Plin., *Ep*. IV.11.6; Gusso 2003.
[24] Plin., *Ep.* VI.31.
[25] Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Ant. de Fer. Als.* 3.7.

is a crucial watershed in the scholarship on the subject. Equipped with lodgings for different categories of dwellers—the emperor and his family, his guests, the imperial court, as well as the service personnel—halls for audiences and banquets, bathing facilities, and entertainment buildings, the residence is designed as a multi-functional complex which could cater to all the necessities entailed by prolonged stays of the whole imperial court.

The site is the ultimate expression of the 'revolution' emerged under Nero and Domitian, which invested Roman architecture on a much larger scale during the principate of Hadrian.[26] Well aware of the possibilities offered by a skilful use of concrete, Hadrian and his architects took the opportunity of a constraint-free site to experiment with venturesome architectural solutions, which merged traditional building types with innovative forms. The result is an unprecedented suburban complex, in which residential units are combined with formal areas, the layout of which takes on several suggestions from public architecture.[27]

It has been pointed out that, starting from the Trajanic period, emperors conducting official business in their villas outside Rome were increasingly praised by contemporary authors, because they did not neglect their duties even in settings originally associated with *otium*. The unique configuration of Hadrian's Villa seems to reflect the changed attitude of literary sources as regards the use of imperial villas as venues for imperial activities, thus standing at the culmination of a 150-year long

[26] Giuliani 2020b.

[27] MacDonald and Pinto 1995, 47–116.

process (hence my definition of the complex as a watershed in the evolution of imperial villas): the residence was meant to accommodate the whole imperial court, alongside service personnel and guests, and could therefore function as a fully equipped alternative to the imperial headquarters on the Palatine. By focusing on the villas built or altered after Hadrian, my thesis aims to investigate the influence which the configuration of Hadrian's Villa had on the layout of later residences, in order to define the extent to which it served as a model for the design and usage patterns of imperial villas. As far as the post-Hadrianic occupation of the villa is concerned, research addressing it as a study subject on its own is still a desideratum in modern scholarship; a recent article has brought together evidence for post-Hadrianic—yet so far undated—alterations to different building units,[28] but a more systematic analysis is necessary to understand the issue exhaustively. Its size (more than 120 ha) does not allow the complex to be addressed in sufficient detail here; each chapter will discuss the possible influence of Hadrian's Villa on the layout of the features under consideration, and treat it as a comparative example rather than a case study. For reference, I will include a dedicated record in the catalogue, which will necessarily be condensed; details on specific features and issues can be found in the bibliography cited in the record.

The differences between the period under examination and the following decades are more evident. In AD 330, Constantine named Constantinople as the new capital of

[28] Giuliani 2020a.

the Empire;[29] its re-foundation and the consequent transfer of the imperial headquarters to the Bosphorus cannot be considered a sudden event, but rather the culmination of a long process. Since at least the time of Marcus Aurelius, the focus of imperial activities had progressively shifted eastwards, on the route from the Danube to the Euphrates, as Rome was too distant from the main military areas.[30] The setting of imperial activities was where the emperor and his court were: emperors are increasingly found conducting their business in military camps at the borders of the empire and in provincial cities by the *limes*.[31] After AD 235, they were often kept away from Rome by constant military necessities; many of them never even went to Rome.[32] Interestingly, Constantine is reported to have resided at villas by the Bosphorus, from where he often conducted official business.[33] The imperial court settled in Constantinople upon the institution of the new capital: Italy was no longer the main setting of imperial activities. As a result, imperial villas in Italy, from the early fourth century AD, seem to have progressively lost their role as alternative foci of official business outside Rome.

While Constantine's reign marks the beginning of a different phase in the imperial period, and will be discussed only with regard to his building activity in Italy,

[29] Odahl 2004, 196.

[30] Millar 1992, 45–53.

[31] *Ibid.*, 40–53. The peregrinatory character of the imperial court was a distinctive trait of the Roman empire since earlier periods (Hadrian undertook three long journeys throughout the Empire, without neglecting official business; Galimberti 2014). The trend increased from Marcus Aurelius onwards (Halfmann 1986).

[32] Johne, Hartmann and Gerhardt 2008, 161–423.

[33] Millar 1992, 56.

Maxentius is worth considering in detail. His suburban residence on the *uia Appia*, the final result of a sequence of alterations and enlargements which followed one another on the same site over the course of four centuries is, on current evidence, one of the latest instances of imperial building activity in an Italian villa. In fact, literary and archaeological evidence attests that substantial alterations were carried out under Constantine to the Severan *Horti Spei Veteris*, which was subsequently referred to as *Palatium Sessorianum* or *Sessorium*.[34] Notwithstanding the limited time which he actually spent in Rome, it is most likely that his building activity in the *Horti Spei Veteris* had the purpose of associating this residence to his persona, and of serving as a statement of his rule.[35] The Sessorian Palace was connected by Federico Guidobaldi with another important building project sponsored by Constantine in this area of Rome: the construction of the *Basilica Saluatoris* on the site of the dismantled *Castra Noua Equitum Singularium*, which Guidobaldi has proposed to explain as the intention of combining the new Christian pole of Rome with an imperial residence which was linked to Constantine himself.[36] For these reasons, the Constantinian phase of the *Sessorium* will be considered and discussed.

History of Previous Research

Despite their importance for our knowledge of Roman elite domestic architecture and for a thorough understanding of the functioning of the imperial court, imperial

[34] The toponym is recorded as late as the sixth century AD (Guidobaldi 1999).
[35] Discussion in chapter 5, 222–23.
[36] Guidobaldi 2004.

villas have so far been relatively neglected by modern scholarship, which has instead focused either on imperial ownership or on Roman villas in general: a comprehensive work analysing imperial villas from an archaeological perspective is still lacking. As mentioned above, the issue is the subject of the unpublished doctoral theses of Leppert and Booms, who focused, respectively, on the villas of the Flavian and Antonine emperors, and on those of the Julio-Claudian and Flavian dynasties.[37] Both authors investigated the relationships between specific emperors and the residences which they used most often, and provided insights on the ideological and practical functions of imperial villas. Notwithstanding their importance for this research, the two works are mainly concerned with literary and epigraphic sources, and do not address archaeological evidence systematically, besides some discussion on the distribution map of the villas under consideration. An exception is the second chapter of Booms' thesis, which strays from the timeframe under consideration and looks at the patterns of accessibility of Domitian's *Albanum*, of Trajan's villa at Arcinazzo, and of Hadrian's Villa;[38] the results that emerged from this analysis have offered food for thought for the discussion carried out in chapter 6 of my thesis. Villa-use patterns in the Severan period have been addressed by Andreas Grüner in an article published in the edited volume *Palast und Stadt in Severischer Rom*.[39] Grüner examined the archaeological and literary evidence for occupation and alterations of previously existing villas in the Severan period, and argued that the Severans sought to establish a continuity between

[37] Leppert 1974; Booms 2009.
[38] Booms 2009, 16–33.
[39] Grüner 2013.

their *villeggiatura* and the villas which the Antonine emperors used most often. Grüner's work, albeit useful to set the issue in context, does not analyse the Severan alterations systematically and with the purpose of explaining the architectural layout of the Severan villas in light of the changed historical circumstances and of the evolution of the Roman imperial court.

The proceedings of the workshop *Residenze Imperiali nel Lazio* (2004) brought together contributions on investigations at imperial villas in Latium, but they represented an update on research in the field rather than a work addressing the topic as a study subject of its own.[40] In 2020 Massimiliano Valenti, the coordinator of the 2004 workshop, organised the seminar series *Imperatori a Palazzo, Imperatori in Villa*, the proceedings of which were published in September 2021.[41] Similarly to the one published in 2008, the book is a useful update on recent data from the field, but, by its very nature, does not offer overarching interpretations of the possible role of imperial villas in the life pattern of the imperial court.

A small number of imperial residences have been addressed in monographic works. The most extensively studied ones are the palatial complex on the Palatine and Hadrian's Villa at Tibur, which have attracted scholarly attention on the grounds of their remarkable degree of preservation and of their importance for research on Roman elite residences.[42] Other imperial villas investigated in monographic studies include

[40] Valenti 2008.

[41] Valenti 2021.

[42] Palatine: Coarelli 2012, Sojc 2012a, Cecamore 2009, Royo 1999; Hadrian's Villa: Chiappetta 2008; Salza Prina Ricotti 2001; MacDonald and Pinto 1995; De Franceschini 1991. Space limitations do not allow a comprehensive review of the literature on the two sites: I have only cited the most recent monographs.

Villa Magna,[43] the villa of Ossaia (Cortona, AR),[44] the villa of Livia *ad Gallinas Albas*,[45] and the villa of Maxentius.[46]

Any study on imperial possessions produced from the twentieth century onwards built upon the ground-breaking work of Otto Hirschfeld, who, in 1902, gathered the literary and epigraphic sources concerned with imperial landholding in Italy.[47] The results of Hirschfeld's study are long outdated; however, his methodology, which involved a systematic collection and an accurate sifting of the evidence, has proved influential for the research carried out more than a century later by Marco Maiuro, whose *Res Caesaris* is the most recent and comprehensive work on imperial ownership and landholding patterns.[48]

Alongside updating Hirschfeld's catalogue with evidence from research undertaken up to the early twenty-first century, Maiuro examined the several ways in which imperial possessions entered and left imperial control, and investigated their economic impact on Italy and, to some extent, on the Roman empire. Together with Hirschfeld's, Maiuro's approach to textual and epigraphic evidence has been crucial to my work: his discussion on the hierarchy of the sources used to identify imperial possessions has offered useful guidelines for the selection of the residences to include in this research. The presence of an imperial possession or villa at a particular place is

[43] Fentress *et al.* 2016.
[44] Gualtieri 2014.
[45] Messineo 2001a; Clark Reeder 2001.
[46] Ioppolo and Pisani Sartorio 1999; Pisani Sartorio and Calza 1976.
[47] Hirschfeld 1902a, Hirschfeld 1902b.
[48] Maiuro 2012.

suggested by literary and epigraphic sources; the cumulative occurrence of different classes of evidence offers greater or lesser support for the identification. The most reliable information comes from *fistulae* reading the names of members of the imperial family in the genitive case or by inscriptions of individuals involved in the administration of imperial *praedia* or villas, such as *procuratores* or *tablarii*; the mention of their role is not sufficient per se to argue that they administered imperial possessions: in order for us to postulate the existence of an imperial property, the inscription must include details on the possession for which the individual was responsible. Further evidence comes from the inscriptions of members of the *familia Caesaris*, who were often employed as service personnel at imperial residences. Literary sources which record events that happened at particular villas attest their existence, but in no case can they be used as the sole piece of evidence for the interpretation of a particular site as an imperial villa. Likewise, extraordinarily luxurious villas cannot be interpreted as imperial possessions without the support of reliable information from literary and epigraphic sources.

Notwithstanding its importance for the history of imperial ownership in the early and high empire, Maiuro's work is predominantly historical in its orientation: the catalogue in the third section of his book, albeit useful as a reference work that brings together sources concerned with individual imperial properties alongside discussing some of the secondary literature, does not address archaeological evidence in detail.

Another influential work for this research has been Fergus Millar's *The Emperor in the Roman World*, which investigates the figure of the Roman emperor from a variety

of angles.[49] Despite having highlighted that imperial residences were one of the settings where emperors could fulfil their duties, Millar argued that 'we cannot get any clear conception of how the functions of the emperor and the architecture of imperial residences affected each other', and that 'such mutual effects cannot have been profound'.[50] In fact, my analysis of the several facilities that offered a venue for imperial activities has led to the identification of remarkably different trends: as will be discussed in chapters 2–5, the architectural configuration of imperial residences was designed to allow emperors to fulfil several and diverse functions.

Equally, studies on Roman villas are not lacking: Roman domestic architecture has been addressed extensively over the past two centuries, and *domus* and *uillae* have been investigated from manifold viewpoints. A review of the whole wealth of scholarship on Roman villas would not be of help for the present research: I will only discuss the works which have influenced my own.

Some of Andrew Wallace-Hadrill's works on the social issues of Roman domestic architecture, despite being primarily concerned with urban *domus*, offer valuable tools for the architectural analysis of elite villas: his most important contribution to the field is the investigation of the mutual relationships existing between the spatial layout of *domus* and the social ranking of the individuals who peopled them.[51] The role of decorative elements for the definition of the spatial hierarchy of Roman dwellings has been analysed more extensively by John Clarke, who went beyond the chronological

[49] Millar 1992.
[50] *Ibid.*, 22.
[51] Laurence and Wallace-Hadrill 1997; Wallace-Hadrill 1994; Wallace-Hadrill 1988.

framework of Wallace-Hadrill's works, and addressed decorative elements of domestic spaces dated from the late Republic to the mid-third century AD.[52]

Architectural issues are discussed more thoroughly in Lucia Romizzi's monographic study of Italian *otium* villas between the second century BC and the first century AD.[53] She sought to set out a typological analysis of leisure villa sites, depending on the presence of an atrium and of a peristyle, and their reciprocal position within the villa. The five categories of villa layout identified by Romizzi are hardly applicable to this research, as the elaborate architectural configuration of most of the villa under consideration often escapes a rigid classification. The added value of Romizzi's work lies in the catalogue annexed to her architectural analysis, which offered a description of seventy villa sites, including both leisure residences and productive estates. Another useful catalogue is the one assembled by Marina de Franceschini, which collects evidence from one hundred villas in the *suburbium* of Rome.[54] Unlike Romizzi's, de Franceschini's book does not include an overarching analysis of the sites described in the catalogue, but it is a valuable starting point for a research on luxury villas in the imperial period, because it gathers secondary literature on several sites.

Architectural features of Roman elite villas are addressed in the works of Mantha Zarmakoupi[55] and Carla Sfameni,[56] focused, respectively, on the villa phenomenon in

[52] Clarke 1991.
[53] Romizzi 2001.
[54] De Franceschini 2005.
[55] Zarmakoupi 2014.
[56] Sfameni 2006.

the bay of Naples and in Late Antiquity. In particular, Zarmakoupi investigated the spatial settings of activities which would soon be identified with the luxury-villa lifestyle itself: the porticus and cryptoporticus, porticoed gardens, water features, and dining facilities. By combining architectural analysis with the distinctive traits of villa culture, as they emerge from literary sources, she has accounted for the mutual relationships between physical spaces and the cultural factors that intervened to shape the space itself. Sfameni's work has the merit of having analysed systematically the many functions of apsidal reception halls, which spread widely in late-antique villas, and of having investigated the possible role of imperial residences in providing models for upper-class villas.

A more global approach was pursued by Annalisa Marzano for her study of the social and economic history of Roman villas in central Italy between the second century BC and the second century AD.[57] Despite having addressed architectural issues superficially, Marzano's work offers insights on the role played by imperial residences in shaping the distribution map of luxury villas sites. Furthermore, her analysis of the social function of agricultural production even after the Republican period has proved useful for my discussion on the role of winemaking at imperial villas.

As has emerged from the review of secondary literature on the topic, what is lacking is a thorough analysis of the architectural layout of imperial villas, which could identify the spatial settings of the different categories of imperial activities. Such absence has encouraged me to engage in the present research, which seeks not only to

[57] Marzano 2007.

address imperial villas as peculiar examples of Roman elite residences, but also to investigate the different purposes for which they were used by emperors.

My thesis seeks not only to foster our knowledge of the functioning of imperial villas, but also to follow their evolution as a setting for imperial activities, and not just as luxurious retreats where emperors withdrew to indulge in the leisured existence that was typical of the Roman upper class. My methodology brings together archaeological evidence with the information that we can gather from literary sources, in order to determine the extent to which the spatial requirements of more-or-less prolonged stays of the imperial court are reflected in the architectural layout of imperial villas.

Chapter Structure

The work is structured as a thematic analysis of the usage patterns of imperial villas, as they emerge from literary sources and archaeological evidence. The first chapter is almost entirely concerned with the information that we can gather from ancient authors, which allows a reconstruction of tendencies in villa usage on the part of different emperors, or dynasties. Chapters 2–5 investigate the different imperial activities for which residences offered a venue; the discussion of individual villas follows the chronological order in which the features under consideration in each chapter were installed. Chapter 2 looks at the possible locations of official business, which ranged from the welcoming of the emperors' intimate *amici* in the imperial *cubiculum* to the reception of embassies or the adjudication of lawsuits; depending on

the nature of the hearing and on the number of individuals involved, the venues of imperial business could differ significantly in terms of size, position, or character. Chapter 3 is concerned with entertainment facilities at imperial villas, and explores the possible functions of the different categories of spectacles staged there, as well as the number and the identity of the participants. Chapter 4 examines bathing facilities installed at imperial residences, with the purpose of determining the different classes of individuals for whom specific baths were reserved, and the possible identity of the privileged persons who were allowed to bathe with the emperor. Chapter 5 addresses imperial banquets and drinking parties, by investigating not only their physical venues, but also the facilities for wine production. Two of the ten sites under consideration—Villa Magna and the villa of the Quintilii—yielded evidence for wineries; the two facilities stand out for their extraordinarily luxurious decoration, as they both featured marble veneer on the walls and on the floor: wine production, thus, does not appear to have been a mere source of income, but a luxurious pastime to entertain the emperor's most prestigious guests. In chapter 6, lastly, I investigate circulation patterns within imperial villas, with the purpose of identifying the routes by which the different categories of individuals who peopled them could reach the features which they were permitted to enter, and which were allocated for the fulfilling of their respective functions. Similarly to the structure of chapters 2–5, the villas analysed in chapter 6 are ordered chronologically.

The analytical method used in the chapters is based on the data collected in the catalogue of the villas under consideration, which is provided as a separate section of

the thesis. Each residence is described in a dedicated record, which includes information on its location, architectural layout, decoration, and on the origin of imperial possessions in the area, as well as on previous research on the site. Literary and epigraphic sources that allowed the identification of each villa as an imperial property are examined in detail, and included at the end of each record; unless otherwise specified, translations are taken from the Loeb Classical Library editions. The records are numbered sequentially from C1 to C11; their order within the catalogue is based on the chronology of the attestation of imperial possessions in the villa—or the area—under consideration, with the exception of Lanuuium, where the villa owned by Augustus is hardly the same residence where Antoninus Pius was born in AD 86, and Hadrian's Villa, whose relationships with previously existing imperial possessions cannot be ascertained.[58]

In the site analysis carried out in chapters 2–6, catalogue records are referred to in the heading of each of the sub-sections concerned with specific villas. For the ease of the reader I refer to the catalogue for the consultation of primary and secondary literature, while, when a specific feature is discussed, the relevant references are cited in the footnotes.

The catalogue is complemented by plans of all the villas. When published drawings were of sufficient quality, I have digitised them using AutoCAD and Adobe Illustrator; this has allowed me to take accurate measurements of the different features under examination. The available plans of the villas of Alsium, Antium, Laurentum,

[58] Discussion in the catalogue.

and that of Lucius Verus could not be digitised, owing to their low level of detail. General plans of each villa are listed in the relevant catalogue entry, to which I refer the reader; the discussions carried out in chapters 2–6 are often supported by specific plans, which offer a reconstruction of the relevant circulation patterns and are therefore cited in the main text.

1.
A Theatre of History:
Imperial Villas in Literary and Epigraphic Sources

The distribution map of imperial possessions in Italy and the identification of imperial residences and *praedia* rest upon the information provided by literary sources and inscriptions, which can sometimes be combined with the archaeological record to allow the interpretation of given sites as imperial villas. The presence of emperors, of members of the imperial household, or of imperial possessions in a particular place or territory may 'produce' evidence,[59] that is, it may be recorded by literary sources, or attested in inscriptions concerned with imperial *praedia* (e.g. *fistulae* featuring the names of emperors in the genitive case). Imperial residences and/or estates were often the setting of events involving emperors or members of the imperial family—such as births, deaths, weddings, exiles, omens, stops during journeys, official business[60] or mere *villeggiatura*—which are recorded by ancient literature or inscriptions because they are historically relevant: in other words, they seem to have been perceived by contemporary authors as a fully fledged 'theatre of history'.[61]

While the following chapters will mostly be concerned with the archaeological record, this one will seek to trace the use of imperial villas in the period under

[59] Maiuro 2012, 159–60.

[60] Ancient sources concerned with the undertaking of public business at imperial residences are analysed in chapter 2 and will not be discussed here.

[61] Maiuro 2012, 160.

consideration through the data that we can gather from textual and epigraphic evidence. Information on imperial residences can be found in a variety of sources, ranging from the biographies of emperors collected in the *HA* to the letters of Fronto, from annalists like Cassius Dio to historians/rhetoricians like Herodian: ancient authors locate a number of historically relevant events at imperial villas, and offer evidence for possible connections between particular emperors and the residences that they used most often (such as Antoninus Pius with the villa at Lorium). The picture that emerges from the analysis of the sources concerned with the residences used by different emperors or dynasties can suggest their varying interest, or the lack thereof,[62] in particular residences and areas. The analysis of these patterns will provide room for speculation as to the possible 'villa-programmes' of emperors and dynasties, that is, their ideological associations with particular villas or, on the contrary, the deliberate choice not to use residences favoured by some of their predecessors, in order to convey specific messages. Different villa-programmes will then be compared with one another, in order to identify patterns of continuity and change with earlier practices, and read them in light of the possible ideological use of imperial villas.

It first was Leppert, followed by Booms, who pointed out how the choice to use—or not to use—certain villas can be explained in light of more-or-less defined villa-programmes.[63] The two authors focused primarily on the Julio-Claudian and Flavian

[62] Even though the absence of evidence cannot automatically be regarded as evidence for absence, the lack of information on imperial use of some villas is a datum which we must not ignore wholly.

[63] Leppert 1974, especially 33–55 and 76–116; Booms 2009, 34–84. The bulk of literary, epigraphic, and archaeological evidence for imperial possessions in Italy during the Principate has been collected by Maiuro 2012.

emperors, and, to a lesser extent, on the Antonine period. The purpose of this chapter is to analyse the historical and epigraphic sources concerned with the use of imperial villas in the period under consideration here, in order to compare the picture that has emerged for the early empire with second- and third-century practices, and to outline the evolution of villa-programmes up to the transfer of the capital to Constantinople and the subsequent decline in the political importance of Italy.

The use of ancient literature entails several *caueats*, especially as regards the Antonines and later emperors. The letters of Fronto, which include his correspondence with Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius, are fairly reliable, because they date to the same time period as the events to which they refer, though their modern editors have highlighted that the original manuscript—published as late as the third century AD—was not immune from some polishing: even its very authenticity has often been called into question.[64]

Another source that will be taken into account, yet with due prudence and cautiousness, is the collection of the biographies of emperors spanning from Hadrian to Numerian known under the title of *Vitae Diuersorum Principum et Tyrannorum a Diuo Hadriano usque ad Numerianum Diuersis Compositae*: in more common parlance, the *Historia Augusta*. Purportedly, the thirty biographies are the work of six otherwise unknown authors, writing during the first decades of the fourth century AD. The authorship of the *HA*, however, has long been questioned by modern scholarship: in 1889, Hermann Dessau suggested that the *uitae* might actually be the composition of

[64] Van den Hout 1999, vii–xi; Van den Hout 1988, viii–xcvi; Henderson 1928, ix–xxii.

one single author working under Theodosius, who claimed to be writing as six different biographers living in the time of Diocletian and Constantine.[65] Dessau's argument was repeatedly disputed in the following decades;[66] a step forward on the matter was reached in 1971, when Ronald Syme argued that the *HA* can be but the work of one author—referred to as *Ignotus*—who might have used an assistant to compile the so-called 'Hauptviten' (the nine biographies of the emperors and usurpers between Hadrian and Caracalla, exclusive of Aelius Verus).[67] Even if Syme's hypothesis has not always been accepted,[68] the use of modern technologies to analyse textual sources has helped confirm his arguments. Computational studies and stylometry have demonstrated that the frequency with which the same words and expressions occur in biographies attributed to different authors indicates that all the *uitae* were in fact written by a single person.[69] The suggested date of the composition of the *HA* still fluctuates within the latter half of the fourth century AD, between Julian and Theodosius. While this acknowledged forgery compels us to be cautious, it nonetheless provides us with information as to the forger's *Weltanschauung*. Whatever his identity, it is plausible that the author belonged to the senatorial class: throughout the biographies, emperors are treated quite differently from one another, depending

[65] Dessau 1889.

[66] Early-twentieth-century scholarship on the authorship of the *HA* is discussed by Momigliano 1954, 27–31.

[67] Syme 1971, 30–53. The labels 'Hauptviten' and 'Nebenviten' (Aelius Verus, Avidius Cassius, Pescennius Niger, Clodius Albinus, Geta) were proposed by Mommsen 1890.

[68] Tse, Tweedie and Frischer 1998.

[69] Lastly Stover and Kestemont 2016, with discussion on post-Syme scholarship. Computers were first employed to scan the language of the *HA* in 1979 (Marriott 1979), but Ian Marriott's criteria were soon disputed.

on their—alleged—attitude towards the senate.[70] Besides the chronological distance from the events being reported[71] and the use of blatantly false documents, such as letters by emperors and other important individuals,[72] the reliability of the texts is also biased by its very genre: it has widely been demonstrated that ancient biographers paid little attention to chronological information and historical events, focusing instead on anecdotes and aspects that could define the character of individual emperors.[73]

Much less interested in such details is Cassius Dio, who structures his *Roman History* as an annalistic work whose prime concern is to report events that the author deems worthy of a dignified historical treatise. The author's education as a rhetorician also affected his work: the result is a dramatic and impressionistic picture of events, in which information such as names, numbers, exact dates, and geographical details are missing, scanty, or blurred.[74] Further evidence on the period from Commodus to the Gordians is provided by Herodian's *History of the Empire after Marcus Aurelius*, which instead shows some interest in those aspects, such as ambitions and vices, which help define the characters of his subjects.[75]

The varying reliability of the literary sources discussed above may affect the veracity of the information on which we can build to reconstruct villa-use patterns in

[70] Cameron 2014, 163.
[71] Rohrbacher 2013 and Kolb 1995 on the possible sources of the *HA*.
[72] Momigliano 1954, 25–26.
[73] Saller 1980 on the relationship between biographies and anecdotes.
[74] Madsen 2020; Millar 1964.
[75] Kemezis 2014, 227–72; Cassola 1963.

the period under consideration, especially in the case of the *HA*, which was written much later than the events it reports. It is thus necessary to differentiate between facts for which substantial evidence was available to the compiler(s) of the biographies (such as the birth or death of emperors) and anecdotes, which may have been affected by the *Weltanschauung* of the different authors (as is the case, for example, of Elagabalus' passion for circus races reported in the *HA*). In the case of anecdotes, it is useful to have other texts, possibly closer or contemporary to the events that they record, which can confirm the truthfulness of the accounts: the works of Herodian and Cassius Dio have often proved helpful in such instances.

The information regarding the birth of an emperor or of a member of the imperial household are amongst the most valuable pieces of evidence that could suggest the presence of an imperial residence in a cited locality: births took place in domestic settings. As we shall see, several emperors maintained a tight connection with the place where they were born or raised, or both, upon which they tended to bestow particular honours.[76] Alongside births, other 'dynastic events' often took place at imperial villas, such as omens,[77] weddings,[78] or deaths of members of the imperial family.[79]

Imperial villas located near important roads might also have served as stopping

[76] Booms 2009, 37–40 on Julio-Claudian and Flavian emperors, with discussion of the relevant literary sources.
[77] Plin., *HN* XV.136–37, Suet., *Galba* I, and Cass. Dio, XLVIII.52 on the omen received by Livia at the villa of Prima Porta.
[78] Suet., *Calig*. VIII.2 and Cass. Dio, LVIII.25.2 on the party for Caligula's wedding held at Antium, for which Tiberius left his self-imposed exile at Capri.
[79] SHA, *Marc*. XXI.3–4 on the untimely death of Marcus Aurelius' seven-year-old son while the imperial family was residing in a villa at *Praeneste*.

places during journeys throughout the empire.[80] We cannot say, however, if all the localities at which, according to literary sources, emperors stopped, were also the seat of an imperial villa. The journeys of Roman emperors were fully fledged events involving a retinue of remarkable size and substantial financial expenditure:[81] it is plausible that, in order not to cause excessive hardship to the local populace, emperors stayed at imperial residences on the occasion of longer visits.[82] A number of papyri and literary sources offer evidence for the financial and logistical organisation of imperial stays being the responsibility of the communities that emperors visited, all through the imperial period.[83] When not using imperial residences, emperors could stay either at public guest houses provided by the city, or at the houses of prominent citizens;[84] the use of facilities referred to as *mansiones* is also attested,[85] even though the sources provide no details as to their actual configuration.

In the following, literary and epigraphic sources will be analysed in chronological order, with the purpose of outlining villa-use habits of different emperors and dynasties, alongside continuity and discontinuity with earlier and later practices. Unlike the following chapters, I will also discuss villas of which we know nearly

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[80] On imperial journeys, above all Halfmann 1986. See also Millar 1992, 28–40. Imperial travelling practices in the Antonine and Severan period are discussed in the papers collected in Hostein and Lalanne 2012. The increased complexity of late-antique practices is discussed most recently by Guidetti 2018.

[81] Millar 1992, 35, described imperial journeys as 'social and economic events of significant proportions'.

[82] Maiuro 2012, 161–62.

[83] Caligula: Philo, *Leg.* 33; Vitellius: Tac., *Hist.* II.62.1, II.67.2, II.70–71, Suet., *Vit.* X.2; Domitian: Plin., *Pan.* XX; Hadrian: papyri discussed in Sijpesteijn 1969 and Sijpesteijn 1991; Septimius Severus and Caracalla: *PSI* 683; Caracalla: Cass. Dio, LXXVII.9.5–7; Diocletian: Skeat 1964, I.

[84] Millar 1992, 30.

[85] Suet., *Tit*. X.1; Lactant., *De mort. pers*. XXIV.5; *Pan. Lat*., VII (6).16.1.

nothing from the archaeological record: the mere fact that literary or documentary sources connect them with specific emperors or dynasties is relevant for this analysis.

Antonine Emperors

One of the letters that Marcus Aurelius wrote to Fronto, dated to AD 143, includes a list of localities in central Italy with which the young prince was evidently familiar, to the point of being able to compare their climate with one another: Neapolis, Laurentum, Lanuuium, Algidum, Tusculum, Puteoli, and Tibur.[86] In order to acquire such a detailed knowledge of these different places, Marcus Aurelius, in my opinion, must have spent substantial time there: it is most likely that imperial villas were present at all the localities that he mentions in his letter. At least in the cases of Laurentum, Lanuuium, and Tibur, the information we can gather from textual evidence is corroborated by the archaeological record. If we trust a passage from the *HA*, according to which Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius, over the course of the twenty-three years that they spent together, were apart for three nights only,[87] we can argue that Marcus Aurelius must have resided in all the villas in which Antoninus Pius is known to have spent some time: the imperial family, therefore, seems to have often used the residences mentioned in this letter.

Antoninus Pius was allegedly born in Lanuuium in AD 86,[88] in a villa belonging to one or other of his parents, though we cannot be more precise as to which. A dedication

[86] Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Caes.* II.6.3.
[87] SHA, *Marc.* VII.2–3.
[88] SHA, *Ant. Pius* I.8.

to him by the *Senatus Populusque Laniuinus Veteres*, dated to AD 139 and interpreted as an honour which the city bestowed upon the emperor in acknowledgement of an act of euergetism,[89] has been linked by Willy Hüttl with the restoration of the *templa Lanuuiana* recorded by the *HA*.[90] In fact, the inscription does not provide details as to the possible reasons for the dedication, nor did the area of the sanctuary of Juno yield evidence that can corroborate this interpretation.[91] A sestertius issued between AD 140 and 144, featuring an image of Juno and the words *Iunoni Sispitae* on the reverse,[92] seems to attest a connection between Antoninus Pius and Juno Sospita.[93] The cursory mention of the restoration of the *templa Lanuuiana* may acquire further credibility in light of Antoninus Pius' connection with Juno; the chronology of the mintage, however, counters Hüttl's argument: the motivation for the honours that Antoninus Pius received from the senate and the people of Lanuuium remains unidentified to date.

Another residence which the Antonine family favoured is that at Lorium (modern-

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[89] *CIL* XIV.2100; discussion in Segenni 2001, 376. The adjective *ueteres* has been explained by Garofalo 2014, 254 as aimed to distinguish the city's original citizen body from the *noui ciues* settled in the territory of Lanuuium by Hadrian (*Lib. colon.* I.235.1).

[90] SHA, *Ant. Pius.* VIII.4; Hüttl 1936, 172, n. 248.

[91] Leppert 1974, 228–29, has suggested that the information gathered from the *HA* should be combined with Giuseppe Lugli's proposed chronology of the porticus at the foot of the acropolis of Lanuuium (seat of the temple of Juno), which he dates roughly to the years 50–180 AD (Lugli 1957, 525). Despite the vagueness of this timeframe, modern scholarship on the topic has not been able to offer a detailed analysis of the archaeological evidence from the imperial-period sanctuary, which could lead to a more precise definition of post-Republican interventions. Ceccarelli and Marroni 2011, 211–16 report restorations carried out by Antoninus Pius, but their argument is based solely on the passage from the *HA*; Coarelli 1987, 141–63, is focused mostly on earlier phases, and mentions the alleged refurbishments financed by Antoninus Pius in passing.

[92] *RIC* III, Antoninus Pius 608.

[93] A few decades later, a relationship between Juno Sospita and Commodus is attested by a number of coin types minted under Marcus Aurelius (*RIC* III, Marcus Aurelius 645, 646, 1582, 1583).

day Castel di Guido, on the ninth mile of the *uia Aurelia*).[94] In AD 147, Marcus Aurelius was at Lorium when he received the congratulations on the birth of a son from the synod of Briseus Dionysus at Smyrna.[95] According to the *HA*, Antoninus Pius was educated at Lorium,[96] where he subsequently built a *palatium* and died in AD 161.[97] The residence seems to have retained its importance well beyond the period: the calendar of Philocalus (AD 354) reports that *ludi circenses* were held yearly at Lorium on 25th February, to celebrate the *adoptio* of Antoninus Pius.[98] The mention is not sufficient to argue that *circenses* were actually held at Lorium as late as the mid-fourth century AD, but it nonetheless provides evidence for the tight connection between the Antonine family and this residence even almost two centuries after Antoninus Pius' death.

Alongside the retreats where the Antonine emperors stayed more regularly, literary sources offer evidence for other residences in Italy. A villa at Caieta has been postulated on the basis of Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Caes.* V.5; the datum is corroborated by the text of Symm., *In Valent. Sent.* I.16, which mentions Antoninus Pius' *otia Caietana*; the fact that the emperor is said to have invested in the restoration of the city's port[99] may offer further support for the argument. At Centumcellae, where Trajan built a villa equipped with a large harbour,[100] Antoninus Pius is reported to have installed a

[94] Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Caes.* III.20, V.4; M. Aur., *Med.* XVI.8 on Antoninus Pius' predilection for Lanuuium and Lorium.
[95] *IGR* IV.1399.
[96] SHA, *Ant. Pius* I.9; the biography reports that the emperor spent his childhood with his paternal grandfather (*cum auo paterno*): could this suffice to suggest that the villa of *Lorium* was in the possession of T. Aurelius Fulvus?
[97] SHA, *Ant. Pius* XII.4-8.
[98] *InscrIt* XIII,2.43.
[99] SHA, *Ant. Pius* VIII.3.
[100] Plin., *Ep*. VI.31.

uiuarium.[101] The imperial family is also known to have spent some time, in the autumn of either 144 or 145, at a countryside residence in the territory of Anagnia during the vintage,[102] the Villa Magna mentioned in an inscription dating from the reign of Septimius Severus.[103] A brief stay at Baiae is attested as well.[104] In light of this overview of the many villas that Antoninus Pius frequented during his lifetime (fig. 1.1), it is not surprising to read that the emperor did not undertake any expedition throughout the empire—allegedly, not to burden local communities—preferring, instead, to stay *in agros suos*.[105]

Apart from the residences where he is reported to have stayed with his adoptive father, Marcus Aurelius seems to have spent little time at suburban villas during his reign (fig. 1.2), with the notable exception of the seaside retreat of Alsium, c. 9 miles to the north-west of Lorium along the *uia Aurelia*, where he withdrew for some time in AD 162.[106] The emperor's behaviour is presented in sharp contrast with his adoptive brother's, who is reported to have built a luxurious villa on the *uia Clodia*, where he invited Marcus Aurelius to join him.[107] The *HA* mentions that while Lucius Verus indulged in banquets and leisure, Marcus did not take his retreat as an excuse to neglect official business, and held *cognitiones* for five days. The possibility cannot be ruled out, however, that Marcus Aurelius' commitment to official business should be

[101] Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Caes.* III.20.
[102] Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Caes.* IV.4–6.
[103] *CIL* X.5909.
[104] Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Caes.* I.2, I.4.2.
[105] SHA, *Ant. Pius* VII.11.
[106] Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Ant. de Fer. Als.* 1-4.
[107] SHA, *Verus* VIII.8-10.

read as one of the many instances in which the *HA* chose to attribute positive characteristics to a 'good' emperor, as opposed to 'bad' rulers.[108] Lucius Verus' biographer reports that, as the two co-emperors were returning from the war against the Marcomanni, he was struck by apoplexy, and upon the worsening of his symptoms he was taken to Altinum (modern-day Altino, at the mouth of the Piave River), where he died in AD 169.[109] The argument for the possible presence of an imperial possession at Altinum is corroborated by two inscriptions found in the area, mentioning an imperial slave and a freedman, dating both before the reign of Lucius Verus.[110]

Commodus was also born at Lanuuium,[111] where he is reported to have regularly spent time: his biographer mentions that he received the epithet of Roman Hercules, as he was accustomed, so the *HA* reports, to kill beasts in the amphitheatre of Lanuuium.[112] His assassination was allegedly announced by an omen, which occurred in his *cubicula* both in the palace of Rome and at his residence in Lanuuium:[113] the latter is presented as a quasi-pendant of the former. Still according to the *HA*, he was at Centumcellae when, as a child, he ordered that a slave be thrown into a furnace for not having prepared the bath of the young emperor.[114] When a plague was raging in Rome in the years 187–88, Commodus withdrew to a seaside villa in Laurentum: according to his doctors, the area was much healthier than the capital, owing to the local laurel

[108] Bonamente 2010; Bonamente 1991.
[109] SHA, *Marc*. XIV.8; SHA, *Verus* IX.11; Aur. Vict., *Caes.* XVI.9; *Epit. de Caes.*, XVI.5; Eutrop., VIII.9.5.
[110] *CIL* V.2156; *CIL* V.2217.
[111] SHA, *Comm*. I.2–3.
[112] SHA, *Comm*. VIII.5.
[113] SHA, *Comm*. XVI.3–5.
[114] SHA, *Comm*. I.9.

groves.[115] Another residence in which Commodus stayed most willingly was the villa of the Quintilii at the fifth mile of the *uia Appia*, which he confiscated in AD 182/183.[116] Commodus is also the last emperor to have seemingly used the villa(s) on Capri, where he exiled his wife Bruttia Crispina and his sister Lucilla in AD 182.[117] The distribution map of the villas used by Commodus is shown in fig. 1.3.

I have highlighted that the *palatium* which Antoninus Pius built at Lorium provided a venue for yearly festivals, which commemorated his adoption by Hadrian. Specific imperial villas had served as settings for similar dynastic games since the Julio-Claudian period: we know that the one at Bouillae hosted spectacles celebrating the Julian *gens*, whilst the Claudian emperors were honoured with games held yearly at the villa of Antium.[118] His residence at Albanum provided Domitian with a meaningful setting to stage the *Quinquatrus Mineruae*, a yearly five-day festival including *uenationes* and gladiatorial games, as well as oratory and poetry contests.[119] Dedicated to Minerva—whom he worshipped as his divine ancestor, following the model of the Iulii with Venus—the *Quinquatrus* were probably used by Domitian as a tool to legitimise his increasingly authoritarian power, by adopting practices similar to those of the first imperial dynasty and assimilating himself to the Julio-Claudians.[120]

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[115] Hdn., I.12.

[116] Cass. Dio, LXXIII.5.3–4, LXXIII.7.2 LXXIII.13.4; SHA, *Comm.* IV.9.

[117] Cass. Dio, LXXIII.4. Leppert 1974, 26–28 on the use of imperial villas on small islands as places of exile for members of the imperial family.

[118] Tac., *Ann.* XV.23.

[119] Suet., *Dom*. IV.4; Juv., IV.94–101; Stat., *Silu.* III.5.28–31, IV.2.63–67; Cass. Dio, LXVII.1.2, LXVII.14.3. Interestingly, the *Quinquatrus* held at Albanum are not mentioned after the reign of Domitian.

[120] Girard 1981.

Apart from Lorium, our sources testify to a significant interest by the Antonine emperors in villas on the southern outskirts of Rome. The evidence for the residence of Lanuuium seems to suggest that Antoninus Pius, who was born there, maintained a tight relationship with his hometown. Literary sources allow us to postulate an even stronger connection between Lanuuium and Commodus, who established a bond with his birthplace along the lines of Domitian's use of the *Albanum* (even though he was not born there).

Leppert's hypothesis of a link between the omen that Faustina received before the birth of Commodus[121] and the snakes sacred to Juno—one of whose temples was on the *arx* of Lanuuium[122]—is rather conjectural; epigraphic evidence, however, seems to indicate a close connection between Commodus, Hercules, and the city of Lanuuium. Alongside Tibur and Tusculum, Lanuuium was the seat of a cult of Hercules, attested since the early Republican period;[123] a dedication from the final decades of the second century AD attests that Hercules was sometimes venerated jointly with Juno.[124] Associated with the cult of Juno Sospita are the *Iuuenes Lanuuini*, as shown by a group of lead tesserae belonging to the association and carrying images of Juno.[125] Interestingly, a second group of tesserae from the eastern and southern outskirts of Rome, dating to the period when Commodus was co-emperor with Marcus Aurelius

[121] SHA, *Comm*. I.4: when pregnant with Commodus and his twin brother, Faustina dreamed that she gave birth to two snakes, one of which was more aggressive than the other.
[122] Lastly di Fazio 2017, with references.
[123] Garofalo 2009.
[124] *Eph. Epigr*. IX.605; Colonna 2016.
[125] Rostovtzeff and Prou 1900, 81–81, nos. 4, 5, 6, 8.

(AD 177–80), testify to the existence of a youth corporation (or possibly more than one) carrying the titles *Antoniniani*, *Herculanei Antoniniani*, or *Herculanei Augustales*.[126] We know that Marcus Aurelius bestowed on Commodus the title of *princeps iuuentutis*,[127] which had last been carried by Domitian;[128] whether he also received his knightly education (including hunt training) with the *Iuuenes Lanuuini*, as argued by Leppert,[129] cannot be ascertained based on the available evidence. As reported in his biography, Commodus received, allegedly, the title of *Hercules Romanus*, as he used to kill beasts in the amphitheatre of Lanuuium;[130] he seems to have been connected with Hercules, however, as early as AD 177—when he gave up the title of *princeps iuuentutis*—and increasingly so after AD 182.[131] This Hercules propaganda therefore seems the result of a carefully designed association, whose roots lie in the possible connection between Commodus and the *Iuuenes Lanuuini* and in the link between these *Iuuenes* and the public cult of Hercules, which is attested at Lanuuium from the Republican period. Interestingly, no amphitheatres are attested in the archaeological record of the city of Lanuuium: it can be suggested that Commodus' biography refers to the amphitheatre identified at the villa of the Antonine emperors (more than 1.5 km from Lanuuium), the more so in light of the specification that it was his custom to kill beasts *domi*.[132]

As discussed above, one of Marcus Aurelius' letters to Fronto mentions a villa at

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[126] *Ibid.*, 87–88, nos. 28, 29, 31.
[127] SHA, *Comm*. II.1.
[128] *RE* XXII, s.v. 'Princeps Iuventutis', 2303–04.
[129] Leppert 1974, 230.
[130] SHA, *Comm*. VIII.5.
[131] Lastly Hekster 2002, 117–28.
[132] The amphitheatre and its association with the villa are discussed in chapter 3, 105–7.

Laurentum in a list of residences where the imperial family stayed regularly; it was there that Commodus withdrew to escape from a plague. The *ager Laurens* carries significant connections with the mythical origins of Rome, as the landing of Aeneas was traditionally located at Lauinium;[133] the legend has it that the Penates which he had brought from Troy were preserved still there in the first century BC.[134] The Julio-Claudians constructed their propaganda on a different version of the legend, according to which the *pignora imperii*—the Penates, the cult of Vesta, and the Palladium—were translated to the *arx Albana*, and thence to the Roman forum (Vesta) and the Palatine (the Penates).[135] Domitian's choice to favour the *Albanum* over the ancestral countryside residence of the Flavian *gens* in Sabina may be explained against this background: allegedly, Alba Longa was founded by Aeneas himself. A renewed emphasis on the celebration of Rome's mythical past is attested under Hadrian,[136] and increasingly so under Antoninus Pius, who associated himself with Aeneas through his very epithet 'Pius', the reverence for his father, and his love for his adopted son.[137] Such a deliberate connection with crucial figures from the legendary origins of Rome finds an explanation in the peculiar nature of the Antonine dynasty: on the one hand, the provincial origin of Trajan and Hadrian was a shortcoming; on the other, by the very nature of this dynasty, the Antonine emperors probably found themselves in the

[133] Castagnoli 1972, 85–90: the toponym *Lauinium* refers to a city located in the *ager Laurens*.
[134] Varro, *Ling*. V.144.
[135] *RE* XIX, s.v. 'Penates'.
[136] Toynbee 1944, 143, pl. XXV, no. 4: medallion of Hadrian with a depiction of a sow suckling piglets on the reverse.
[137] Most recently Chiappini 2009.

position of reiterating the legitimate nature of a lineage constructed almost entirely on adoptions rather than on blood ties.[138]

Alongside supporting the dynastic claims of the Antonine emperors, the residence of Laurentum seems to have also had a functional connection with the one at Lanuuium. We know that an imperial freedman held the office of *procurator Laurento ad elephantos*:[139] the herd of elephants of which he was in charge in the *ager Laurens* may be identified with the *armentum Caesaris* mentioned by Juvenal.[140] In chapter 3, I propose to connect the imperial elephants of Laurentum with the regular occupation of the villa at Lanuuium by the Antonine emperors, whose marked interest in hunting is highlighted by several sources: thanks to the road linking the two residences, elephants could easily be transported to the amphitheatre of Lanuuium, enabling emperors to display their hunting prowess to crowds gathered for the purpose.[141]

Leppert has suggested a similar connection between Lanuuium and the residence referred to as Algidum in Marcus Aurelius' letter (modern-day Monte Artemisio). If the one at Lanuuium was the main villa on the southern outskirts of Rome, those of Laurentum and Algidus served, according to Leppert, as its *dépendances*, the former as a seaside resort, the latter as a retreat in the mountains.[142] The argument, albeit fascinating, is hard to prove on current evidence: our knowledge of the Algidum does not go beyond Marcus Aurelius' letter.

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[138] Further discussion in Leppert 1974, 249–50.
[139] *CIL* VI.8583.
[140] Juv., XII.102–107.
[141] Discussion in chapter 3, 106–7.
[142] Leppert 1974, 246.

Surprisingly, there is a great absentee in the pool of residences used by the imperial family between Antoninus Pius and Commodus: Hadrian's Villa. In fact, Tibur is included in the list of localities which Marcus Aurelius compares with one another (and since he was nearly always with his father, Antoninus Pius must have spent time there too),[143] but literary sources do not mention other stays of the Antonine emperors at Hadrian's Villa; however, the residence yielded a gallery of imperial busts dating from Antoninus Pius to Caracalla,[144] which attests its occupation by the imperial family well beyond the Hadrianic period. Absence of literary evidence for the use of Hadrian's Villa by the Antonines must not lead us to uncritically argue that it was ignored after Hadrian, particularly because most of the information on villa-use patterns in the Antonine period come from the *HA* and are largely chance anecdote. It may be suggested that, owing to its absolutely unique configuration, and to the consequently personal character that Hadrian—having actively intervened in its design—bestowed on it, his residence at Tibur remained tightly connected to his persona even after his death; as discussed below, the place of exile of Zenobia of Palmyra was an imperial villa lying at a short distance from the *palatium Hadriani*: despite all the *caueats* which the *HA* requires, the information suggests that the monumental complex at Tibur was still associated with Hadrian well into the fourth century AD. The fact that literary sources do not report imperial stays at Tibur in the Antonine period may therefore be explained against this background: as imperial

[143] Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Caes.* II.6.3.

[144] MacDonald and Pinto 1995, 138–39. Raeder 1983 on the sculptural decoration of Hadrian's Villa.

villas were a means through which emperors could convey messages about their persona and the nature of their power, Antoninus Pius—as well as Marcus Aurelius, Lucius Verus, and Commodus—may have sought to define their character by associating themselves with villas which had not hitherto been linked so tightly with a specific emperor.

Severan Emperors

Our evidence for patterns of villa use in the Severan period is much scantier (fig. 1.4). A lead *fistula* from the area of the *Horti Spei Veteris*, dated to AD 202 and carrying the names of Septimius Severus and Caracalla,[145] can be combined with the information found in Herodian and in the biography of Septimius Severus in the *HA*: the former reports that, after the execution of Plautianus (AD 205), Septimius Severus spent little time in Rome, preferring to stay in his possessions at the outskirts of the city or on the coast of Campania;[146] the *HA* says that he only owned an unpretentious house in Rome and a *fundus* in Venetia, and purchased *horti spatiosi* in AD 189.[147]

In fact, the first two emperors of the Severan dynasty spent significant time on military campaigns.[148] Alongside securing the frontiers, Septimius Severus' main concern was not to lose contact with the army: if victories over external enemies served to consolidate his power, the loyalty of soldiers was essential to avoid the insurgence

[145] *CIL* XV.7364.
[146] Hdn., III.13.1.
[147] SHA, *Seu*. IV.5.
[148] Schöpe 2014, 258–67.

of usurpers.[149] Caracalla, in his turn, also spent little time in Rome. His style of government was influenced by the example of his father: the power of the new dynasty was established and strengthened, on the one hand, through military victories, and on the other hand, through a travel policy that involved visits to troops stationed at the borders.[150]

Different villa-use patterns are attested under Elagabalus and Severus Alexander, both too young to participate actively in military campaigns. Elagabalus reached Rome in AD 219, and never left it until his assassination in AD 222.[151] Cassius Dio highlights his passion for chariot races, which he often organised at his residence,[152] and in which he allegedly forced his guests to participate; Herodian's report of the festivals linked to the cult of *Sol Inuictus* suggests that Elagabalus celebrated the rituals in honour of the god—of whom he was the high priest—in a residence at the outskirts of Rome, which, interestingly, was equipped with a circus.[153] The clues from Cassius Dio and Herodian may be combined with a few passages from Elagabalus' biography in the *HA*, according to which he withdrew to a suburban possession referred to as *Horti Spei Veteris* after sending assassins to murder his cousin, adopted son, and future emperor Severus Alexander.[154] Elagabalus' alleged custom of retreating to a suburban residence where he could indulge in debauchery of all sorts follows in the vein of Tiberius'

[149] Halfmann 1986, 50–51.
[150] *Ibid.*, 52.
[151] Cass. Dio, LXXX.3.2.
[152] Cass. Dio, LXXX.14.2.
[153] Hdn., V.6.6–9. Further discussion in chapter 3, 113–16.
[154] SHA, *Heliogab.* XIII.5–6. On his alleged, insane passion for chariot races, SHA, *Heliogab*. XXVII.1, XXVIII.1.

portrait as depicted by Suetonius and Tacitus, who report that he withdrew to Capri to hide himself from the public gaze.[155]

Our information as regards villa use in the reign of Severus Alexander is even scantier. According to Herodian (VI.2–3) the young emperor was attached to the comforts of Rome, where he spent substantial time. Herodian's comment may partially be linked with the evidence for the ownership patterns of the villa of the Valerii Paullini on the *uia Latina*, which, as suggested by inscriptions on waterpipes, became an imperial possession under Severus Alexander. The residence was owned by the Seruilii Silani in the late second century AD.[156] Three inscriptions on lead *fistulae* (*CIL* XV, 7334a-b-c), bear the name of the *officinator* Valerius Primitiuus. The name of Primitiuus appears on its own on *CIL* XV.7334b–c, and is combined with that of Severus Alexander on *CIL* XV.7334a. Owing to the scarcity of our sources, whether the villa of the Valerii Paullini was also used by the emperor is impossible to say; the archaeological record does not indicate building activity in the third century AD.

The *HA* reports that Severus Alexander built a *palatium cum stagno in Baiano*—which he dedicated to the memory of his mother—alongside public works and pools at Baiae.[157] In fact, he did take part in campaigns against the Sasanians and the Alamanni, but was too young and inexperienced to gain the respect of his legions: he was murdered at Mogontiacum in AD 235, as the army deemed him incapable of

[155] Introduction, 8.
[156] *CIL* XV.7535.
[157] SHA, *Alex. Seu.* XXVI.9–11.

leading the war.[158]

Barracks Emperors

Evidence is even scantier for patterns of villa use in the fifty years between the fall of Severus Alexander and the accession of Diocletian, during which fifty-one individuals held the title of Roman emperor, legitimately or illegitimately (fig. 1.5). The military issues that had arisen in the last quarter of the second century AD, and which increased dramatically after the year 235, compelled most emperors to spend most of their time at the frontiers, to the point that many of them never even went to Rome. In fact, the majority of these emperors were chosen by the army, and despite their investment of time, their fortunes declined rapidly: their reigns were too brief for them to be able to dwell at, let alone to build, a villa.[159]

An exception to the picture outlined above are the three Gordians, whose residences are mentioned in passing by the *HA*: allegedly, Gordian I owned the house of Pompey in Rome (*ad Carinas*);[160] the family's extremely luxurious villa was on the *uia Praenestina*.[161] A lead *fistula* from the villa of the Quintilii featuring the name of Gordian I[162] attests the persistent interest of emperors in the property, which

[158] Hdn., VI.8–9.

[159] Details in Drinkwater 2005.

[160] SHA, *Gord.* II.3.

[161] SHA, *Gord.* XXXII.2–3. The villa of the Gordians has traditionally been identified with the complex of ruins at the third mile of the *uia Praenestina*, even though the cursory note from the *HA* is the only piece of evidence in this regard. An ongoing project led by Domenico Palombi is currently investigating the site (Palombi 2019); its secure identification with the residence of the three Gordians, however, is still disputed (Maiuro 2005).

[162] *CIL* XV.7339.

underwent remarkable building activity under the Gordians.[163] A connection has recently been proposed between the villa of the Quintilii and the remarkable number of statues portraying eastern and western deities, found in a lime kiln uncovered during excavations at a site at the seventh kilometre of the via Appia Nuova.[164] According to Rita Paris, the statues attest the existence of an otherwise unknown suburban sanctuary, which was in use in the second and third centuries AD, and was probably dedicated to Zeus *Bronton*. The Asian origin of this epiclesis of Zeus has been connected with the Quintilii themselves, who were native to Alexandria Troas; unfortunately, the sanctuary remains unlocated to date. Alongside statues of deities, the lime kiln yielded a portrait bust of Herennia Etruscilla, the wife of the emperor Decius (AD 249–51):[165] if a connection existed between the villa and the sanctuary of Zeus *Bronton*, it is not unlikely that the bust of Etruscilla had some relationship with the residence, thus attesting the persistent use of the villa of the Quintilii well into the third century. If we trust the *HA*, the residence remained in use at least until the 270s: Tacitus' biographer reports that a portrait of the emperor was placed there.[166]

The picture is even more blurred for the second half of the century. Epigraphic evidence suggests a remarkable interest, on the part of Valerian and Gallienus, in the Tiber valley: a waterpipe with the name of Gallienus in the genitive case, found at Ocriculum, attests the existence of imperial *praedia* in the area;[167] dedications to

[163] Construction of a luxurious *cella uinaria*: chapter 5, 210–12.
[164] Paris and Pettinau 2008; details on the excavation in Annibaldi 1935.
[165] Details in Ackers 2016, catalogue entry no. 57.
[166] SHA, *Tac.* XVI.2.
[167] Pietrangeli 1943, 159.

Valerian and Gallienus from Visentium,[168] Forum Clodii,[169] Carsulae,[170] Lucus Feroniae,[171] and Falerii,[172] which celebrate the euergetism of the two emperors, testify to their connection with this territory. In fact, we know that Gallienus' mother Egnatia Mariniana was a native of Falerii, where she probably owned properties.[173] Interestingly, two medallions[174] and an antoninianus,[175] struck in the years 253–60 and 260–68 respectively (that is, when Gallienus was still the Caesar of Valerianus and when he was reigning independently) celebrate the *pietas Faleri* and the *uirtus Faleri*. As argued by Wilhelm Kubitschek and Andreas Alföldi,[176] the word *Faleri*, here in the genitive case, should be interpreted as a *signum* (nickname) of Gallienus: the medallions and the coin commemorate virtues of the emperor, referred to as *Falerius*. Furthermore, the reverses of the medallions feature a goat suckling a baby, which has been interpreted as a representation of the goat Amalthea nurturing the baby Jupiter: if Alföldi's reading is correct, the presence of this scene on medallions struck when Gallienus was still a Caesar served to celebrate the young prince as the bringer of a new golden age.[177] The apparent connection between Gallienus and the city of Falerii is not surprising, as the *gens* of his mother, the Egnatii, is largely attested in the area.[178]

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168 *CIL* XI.2914.
169 *CIL* XI.3310.
170 *CIL* XI.4567, 4568.
171 Papi 2000, 209.
172 *CIL* XI.3093.
173 Chausson 1997; *PIR* E39.
174 *RIC* V, Gallienus and Salonina 1–2.
175 *RIC* V, Gallienus 596.
176 Kubitschek 1915, 165–66; Alföldi 1929, 268–73.
177 Alföldi 1929, 270.
178 Chausson 1997.

Maiuro has proposed that we interpret the substantial record of imperial euergetism in several settlements in the Tiber valley as evidence for the economic interests of the emperors, who may have supported those towns as part of a larger plan of commercial development along the course of the Tiber.[179]

A cursory note from the *HA* reports that Aurelian exiled the rebel queen Zenobia of Palmyra at Tibur, in a residence lying at short distance from Hadrian's Villa.[180] The specification on the actual location of the place of her exile seems to attest that, as late as the second half of the fourth century, the location of the *palatium Hadriani* was still well known; whether the residence was also used by members of the imperial family cannot be ascertained from textual and epigraphic evidence.[181] When in Rome, according to his biographer, Aurelian used to stay at the Gardens of Sallust or of Domitia.[182]

Tetrarchy

The division of the empire and the consequent creation of four different seats for the newly instituted rulers were the result of the progressive shift of the focus of imperial activities towards the Rhine/Danube *limes* and towards the East. Milan, Trier, Nicomedia, and Thessaloniki, as the new *sedes imperii*, acquired the political role that

[179] Maiuro 2012, 308–09.

[180] SHA, *Tyr. Trig*. XXX.27.

[181] The investigations carried out by Columbia University as part of the APAHA-Tibur project (2014 – present) have yielded evidence for a seamless occupation of an area of the villa (so-called Macchiozzo) well into the fourth century; discussion on the post-Hadrianic occupation of the site in Giuliani 2020a and Lugli 1933.

[182] SHA, *Aurel*. XLIX.1–2.

had hitherto been played by Rome, which nonetheless remained the centre of the empire well into the fifth century.[183] As discussed by Emanuel Mayer, not only were the new imperial cities equipped with palaces for the new rulers, whose configuration and architectural relationship with a circus is reminiscent of the main residence in Rome, but the public space was also redesigned in order to make the presence of each emperor tangible to its inhabitants.[184]

This delocalisation of the centre of power and the consequent absence of the emperors from Italy caused the Italian villas to be used by the imperial family much more sporadically, if at all.[185] The archaeological record of the residences under consideration here suggests similar usage patterns: more substantial alterations are recorded at the villa of Herodes Atticus on the *uia Appia*, which Maxentius turned into a suburban palace, and at the *Horti Spei Veteris* (fig. 1.6), whilst some occupation and building activity is attested at Villa Magna (construction of the apsidal winery[186]) and, to a lesser extent, at the villas of the Quintilii, of Lucius Verus, and *ad Gallinas Albas*.

Whether these residences were still in imperial possession after the Severan period is hard to ascertain on current evidence; even if they were, the majority of them were most likely managed by agents of different social statuses: absentee landlords were a

[183] Mayer 2002, 1–3. The historical, cultural, and archaeological implications of the Tetrarchy are beyond the scope of this research: I refer to Mayer's work for a wide-ranging analysis of the Tetrarchic seats. The architectural relationships between imperial palace and circus are discussed in chapter 3, 131–34.
[184] Discussion in *Ibid.*, 28–39.
[185] *Ibid.*, 68–69.
[186] Chapter 5, 199–200.

common feature of landowning in the Roman world.[187]

I have mentioned that the institution of new imperial seats resulted in a much more sporadic presence of emperors in Italian villas; a trend reversal is recorded under Maxentius, who, despite never being legitimately recognised as emperor, chose Rome as his seat when he ruled as usurper in the years 306–12. Seeking to establish and secure his power, he drew inspiration from the imperial residences of the new *sedes imperii*, and turned a suburban villa at the third mile of the *uia Appia* into a Tetrarchic-style palace, whose layout resembles that of the newly constructed residences.[188] Mayer suggested that, since the villa of Maxentius lies outside of the city, its inspiration did not come from the palaces of the Tetrarchs: it was merely a suburban villa with a private circus and an annexed mausoleum intended to serve as dynastic tomb. Mayer's argument is hard to accept: it seems evident to me that Maxentius did not build his residence *in* Rome because Rome *already* had an imperial palace.[189] Maxentius claimed—especially through coin issues—a special connection with Rome, to the point of calling her *urbs sua*, and of defining himself her *conseruator*.[190] Despite his brief reign, he was one of the most vigorous of Rome's builders:[191] the Chronograph of 354 reports that he restored the temple of Venus and Rome destroyed by a fire,

[187] The management of landed estates in the Roman world is a multifaceted issue, which is beyond the scope of the present research. Reference works for the Republican and imperial period are Carlsen 2010 and Schumacher 2010; on late-antique developments, Vera 2012, Vera 1999, Vera 1993, Vera 1986, and Jones 1964, 767–823, especially 788–92.

[188] Mayer 2002, 183–85.

[189] Dumser 2019, 59–60, who argued that Maxentius chose to reside on the *uia Appia* to give the impression that he was in control of the *suburbium*, does not take into account the whole body of evidence for Maxentius' building activity in Rome.

[190] Lastly Corcoran 2017, 64. See also Drost 2013, 77–84, and Cullhed 1994, 46–49.

[191] Corcoran 2017, 67–69; Hekster 1999, 8–14.

added a bath complex to the imperial residence on the Palatine, dug a ditch around the city walls, and built a circus by the catacombs (which has been identified as the one attached to his suburban palace).[192] Aurelius Victor, furthermore, clarifies that the basilica that the senate dedicated to Constantine had in fact been built by Maxentius.[193]

By choosing Rome as his official seat, restoring or adding new buildings in the city centre, and strengthening its military defences, Maxentius presented himself as a genuinely Roman emperor with Roman values, caring for the city of Rome and for her people: if the institution of the Tetrarchy caused Rome to decline in importance and to lose her political role, Maxentius' propaganda placed renewed emphasis on the former capital of the empire.

Concluding remarks (table 1.1)

This overview of the programmatic usage of imperial villas between the Antonine emperors and the fall of Maxentius suggests that a prime concern of newly instituted rulers was the legitimisation and the consolidation of their rule: imperial residences were a valuable tool in this sense, because they allowed emperors to convey messages as to the origin and nature of their power. Hadrian and Antoninus Pius exploited the legends concerned with the mythical origins of Rome to integrate themselves in the great arc of Rome's history, by associating their personae with, respectively, Anchises and Aeneas. Commodus, in his turn, chose Hercules as his divine counterpart, and

[192] *MGH AA* IX, *Chron. Anni CCCLIIII*, 148.
[193] Aur. Vict., *Caes*. XL.26.

constructed his link with the god through the residence of Lanuuium, hometown of both himself and Antoninus Pius as well as the seat of a cult of Hercules.

The changed circumstances of the late second/early third century AD compelled Septimius Severus to find a different legitimisation basis for his rule, which he secured and consolidated through victories against external enemies and through constant contacts with the army in crucial military areas. The residence he built on the outskirts of Rome was subsequently used by Elagabalus: it is plausible that it was there that he celebrated rituals for *Sol Inuictus*, the god of Emesa which he forcibly tried to integrate in the Roman pantheon.

Due to the problematic nature of our literary sources, alongside the brief reigns of many the barracks emperors and their absence from Italy for long periods of time, patterns of villa usage are more difficult to trace in the fifty years between the fall of Severus Alexander and the rise of Diocletian. Epigraphic evidence attests a remarkable interest on the part of Valerian and Gallienus in a number of towns in the Tiber valley, which has been explained as the intention to support trade along the course of the river.

The progressive shift of the focus of imperial activities towards the *limes* of the empire—attested as early as Marcus Aurelius—is certainly one of the reasons that led Diocletian to share its administration with three co-emperors, and to institute four new *sedes imperii*. Maxentius's interest in Rome can perhaps be explained in light of the relative facility with which it could be conquered, as the legitimate emperors were too

busy at the time of his uprising to intervene effectively.[194] By presenting himself as a genuinely Roman emperor who chose Rome as his seat, in open contrast with the tetrarchic system which caused Rome to lose its role as the sole capital of the empire, Maxentius claimed the legitimate nature of his power: he was not a usurper, but the one who restored Rome to its former role and glory.

The alterations which Constantine carried out in the Severan *Horti Spei Veteris*, in which he installed a church where his mother had the relics of the Holy Cross preserved, find a possible explanation in light of his substantial building activity on the south-eastern outskirts of Rome, where he established the new pole of the Christian city.[195] interestingly, it seems that the *Basilica Saluatoris* was installed on the site of the *Castra Noua* of the *Equites Singulares*, which Constantine suppressed on the grounds of their alleged loyalty to Maxentius.[196] The *Palatium Sessorianum* was thus combined with the cathedral of Rome to define the new core of the Christian city: religion and political power are therefore linked not only ideologically, but also geographically.

[194] Corcoran 2017, 59–64.
[195] Guidobaldi 2004.
[196] Cecchelli 1999; Buzzetti 1993.

2.
Official Business at Imperial Villas

In their capacity as rulers of the empire, Roman emperors were concerned with, and responsible for, its government and administration. Their functions and duties have been discussed by Millar, whose *The Emperor in the Roman World* is a comprehensive analysis of the responsibilities which the role of emperor entailed; to quote Millar's expression, 'the emperor was what the emperor did'.[197]

Millar defined government in terms of what a society demands from its ruler: in the case of Roman emperors, literary and epigraphic evidence suggests that they were first and foremost required to guarantee military protection; when not busy defending or expanding the frontiers of the empire, what their subjects demanded from emperors was a willingness to listen, and, as a result, to respond to demands, to grant gifts and privileges, to give justice, and to issue legal rulings.[198] The petition-and-response pattern on which most of the emperors' relationships with their subjects were based points towards the importance of interactions between persons as the main form of action for the administration of the empire.

After the analysis of the range of interactions between emperors and subjects, this chapter will seek to identify their possible venues within imperial villas. In the first section, I will discuss the different categories of imperial hearings—legal, socio-

[197] Millar 1992, viii.
[198] *Ibid.*, 10–12.

political, and diplomatic—as they emerge from literary and epigraphic evidence, in order to identify their main features: the number of individuals involved and the spatial necessities of each kind of meeting. The data gathered in the first section will serve to define the characteristics of the locations for official business; in the second section, I will try to pinpoint the spaces allocated to hearings at imperial villas, in order to understand to what extent and in what forms villas provided emperors with venues for the performance of official duties.

The Emperor at Work[199]

The definition of the functions of Roman emperors requires a comprehensive understanding of their role. In his *Annals*, Tacitus reported that Augustus 'step by step began to make his ascent and to unite in his own person the functions of the senate, the magistracy, and the legislature'.[200] Tacitus was acknowledgedly biased, and aimed to reveal the deceitful nature of the Principate, whose falsity lay in the fiction that emperors were voluntarily offered supreme authority, which they received in a legal manner.[201] His words, however biased, should not be rejected wholly: as pointed out by John Crook, the newly instituted figure of the emperor assumed the power of the Republican institutions, and concentrated decision-making in his hands.[202] His role

[199] The reference work discussing imperial duties and functions, as well as the staff assisting the emperor on his business, is Millar 1992, in particular chapters II ('From Rome to Constantinople'), III ('Entourage, Assistants and Advisers'), V ('The Emperor at Work') and Part Three ('Subject and Emperor'). A focus on the administration of the empire up to the Severan period is offered by Eck 2000a, 2000b, and 2000c; the Late Empire is discussed by Lo Cascio 2005.

[200] Tac., *Ann*. I.2 (LCL 249).

[201] On the reliability of Tacitus' account of the transition from Republic to Empire, Syme 1958, 408–19.

[202] Crook 1996; see also Lo Cascio 2000, 13–79.

was inspired by the functions of the Republican magistrates: the locations where they used to perform their duties had thus a significant influence on the settings of official business in the imperial period.

One of the most peculiar features of the Roman state is the almost complete absence of determined locations where magistrates could fulfil their functions: while some of their duties were performed in the senate, in the Roman Forum, or in the Campus Martius, it was also customary for Roman magistrates to use their dwellings as settings for public business.[203] Likewise, emperors used to spend substantial time in their residences inside and outside Rome, and to conduct official business in a setting which modern observers would deem private rather than public.[204]

This chapter will investigate the interplay between imperial residences and functions, in order to assess the extent to which they affected each other: whilst the persistence of a social pattern in which the holders of magistracies fulfilled part of their duties in their homes might have influenced the very nature of these duties, it is also possible that the functions of Roman magistrates and emperors contributed to shaping domestic spaces, in order for their houses and villas to satisfy their needs.

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[203] Vitr., *De arch.* VI.5.2: "For persons of high rank who hold office and magistracies, and whose duty is to serve the state, we must provide princely vestibules, lofty halls and very spacious peristyles, plantations and broad avenues finished in a majestic manner; further, libraries and basilicas arranged in a similar fashion with the magnificence of public structures, because, in such palaces public deliberations and private trials are often transacted" (LCL 280). On the *salutationes*, Goldbeck 2010; see also Dickmann 1999, 23–49. On the reception of embassies in the grandees' houses, Diod. Sic., XL.1.1.

[204] The wealth of literary and epigraphic evidence concerned with the fulfilling of public functions at imperial residences is enormous, and impossible to discuss in detail here. The most comprehensive collection of ancient sources relevant to the topic is found in Millar 1992. Specific texts and inscriptions from the period under consideration in this thesis will be quoted and discussed here as relevant.

'Surely nothing so befits a king as the work of justice'.[205] Plutarch's words from his biography of Demetrius Poliorcetes reflect some well-established ancient conceptions, according to which dispensing justice was one of the prime concerns of a ruler. Texts and inscriptions offer abundant evidence for the involvement of emperors in the administration of justice, in a range of settings.[206] Besides markedly public venues such as the Forum Romanum, the Curia, or military encampments, we are well informed that emperors used to hold lawcourts in their residences, both the headquarters on the Palatine and their villas outside Rome.[207]

If adjudication in residences was originally viewed with suspicion by ancient authors, on the grounds of the presumed secrecy and inappropriateness of trials held in private settings,[208] a trend reversal is noticeable from the beginning of the second century AD.[209] Trajan is praised by Pliny the Younger because, when at his newly constructed villa at Centumcellae, he never neglected the work of justice.[210] Likewise,

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[205] Plut., *Vit. Dem*. XLII.5.

[206] Augustus: Suet., *Aug*. LXXVII, Joseph, *BJ* II.6.1; Tiberius: Tac., *Ann*. II.34.2–4, Cass. Dio, LVII.7.2; Gaius: Cass. Dio, LIX.18.1, Philo, *Leg*. 349–68; Claudius (the adjudicating emperor *par excellence*): Tac., *Ann.* XI.1–3, Cass. Dio, LX.4.3; Nero: Tac., *Ann*. XIII.4.2; Vespasian: Cass. Dio, LXV.10.5; Domitian: Suet, *Dom*. VIII.1, Plin., *Ep*. IV.11; Trajan: Plin., *Ep*. VI.31, Cass. Dio, LXVIII.10.2; Hadrian: Cass. Dio, LXIX.7.1; Antoninus Pius: Philostr., *VS* I.8.539–40; Marcus Aurelius: Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Ant. de Fer. Als.* 3.7, SHA, *Verus* VIII.8–9; Septimius Severus: Cass. Dio, LXXVII.11.1, Hdn., III.13.1; Caracalla: *SEG* XVII.759; Elagabalus: Cass. Dio, LXXVIII.35.3; Aurelian: Zos., I.56; Constantine: Euseb., *Vit. Const.* IV.4 (only to cite some).

[207] Courtrooms in imperial residences (both urban and extra-urban) are often referred to in the sources as *auditoria* or βασίλεια δικαστήρια. Discussion in Tamm 1963.

[208] See, for instance, Tacitus' and Suetonius' position on Tiberius' retirement to Capri, which he chose, allegedly, because of its inaccessibility (Suet., *Tib*. XLIII–XLIV, Tac., *Ann*. IV–V; discussion in Devillers 2014 and Prokoph 2014). The trial which Domitian held at his *Albanum*, where he prosecuted a Vestal virgin, is harshly criticised not because of its secrecy (other pontiffs had been summoned at the villa), but because Domitian, acting as Pontifex Maximus, should have been adjudicating in the Regia in Rome (Plin., *Ep*. IV.11.6).

[209] De Angelis 2010.

[210] Plin., *Ep*. VI.31.

the *HA*—which reflects what the fourth-century aristocracy expected the duties of an emperor to be—describes Marcus Aurelius' commitment to it in open contrast with Lucius Verus' debauched lifestyle: while staying at his brother's villa on the *uia Clodia*, Marcus Aurelius 'busied himself continuously with the examination of law-cases',[211] as though wishing to show his brother how a ruler should spend his time.[212]

Can we suggest figures for the possible number of people present in imperial courtrooms? The answer to this question must be based on a degree of circumstantial reasoning: the wide array of trials at which emperors presided implies significant variations in the number of participants.[213] First, we must envisage the presence of the concerned parties, each with their own advocates; the emperors were often accompanied by their *consilium*, a group of advisers whose size varied over time and was also affected by the location of the trial (emperors adjudicating during military campaigns could rarely rely on the whole *consilium*);[214] alongside their advisers, emperors were assisted by a pool of secretaries[215] in charge of recording the final deliberations, which were to be signed by the emperor in order to have the force of laws.[216] A certain number of individuals entrusted with the emperor's security at all

[211] SHA, *Verus* VIII.8–9 (LCL 139).
[212] On the dichotomy between the description of the characters of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, chapter 1, 35–36.
[213] The nature of the disputes that came before the imperial court is examined by Peachin 1996.
[214] The pioneering work on the *consilium principis* is Crook 1955. The topic has been extensively discussed in the following decades, from legal perspectives (Amarelli 1983) and in its late-antique developments (contributions collected in Winterling 1998; Castello 2012, 59–131; Porena 2018).
[215] Eck 2000b.
[216] *Dig*., I.4.1.1. See Turpin 1991.

times is to be presumed as well.[217]

The number of people present at imperial trials, therefore, varied significantly, for reasons that are often hard to grasp. The smallest one we know of is that of Valerius Asiaticus, held in Claudius' bedroom, to which only two people beyond the emperor and the accuser were admitted, according to Tacitus.[218] By contrast, in 4 BC, a delegation of fifty Jews was sent to Augustus to ask him to put an end to the rule of Archelaus. The hearing took the fashion of a trial: according to Josephus' report, Augustus summoned his counsellors in the sanctuary of Apollo (ἱερόν Ἀπόλλωνος) annexed to his house on the Palatine, where he also received the Jewish envoys, who were in turn joined by more than eight thousand of the Jews living in Rome.[219]

Based on Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*, Leanne Bablitz has attempted to reconstruct the arrangement of furniture and the disposition of people in a Roman courtroom (fig. 2.1).[220] Her reconstruction, though useful for an overall understanding of the spatial configuration of courtrooms, does not allow any assessment of their average size. She suggested that the importance of a trial was reflected by the size of the audience, but the argument cannot be accepted: we know that the trial of Cornelius Cinna, who led a conspiracy against Augustus himself, was held in the emperor's

[217] Discussion on the identification of the individuals present at imperial court-rooms in Bablitz 2007, 34–39. On the emperor's staff, Millar 1992, 59–131.

[218] Tac., *Ann*. XI.1–3. See also De Vivo 2009 and Tagliafico 1996.

[219] Joseph., *AJ* XVII.299–320. Literary sources attest the customary use of the sanctuary for meetings of the senate (Suet., *Aug*. XXIX.3,) or for the reception of embassies (POxy., 25.2435). The layout of the complex is discussed by Iacopi and Tedone 2006; Thompson 1981 on its use for meetings of the senate.

[220] Bablitz 2007, 51–70.

cubiculum[221]—a setting which could hardly accommodate a large audience—yet it certainly cannot be considered of minor importance.

It emerges from the considerations outlined above that the needs of Roman lawcourts were not so compelling as to make it impossible to hold trials in spaces whose chief function was to serve as something other than a courtroom. Unlike bathing or entertainment—activities that required purposely designed venues—the administration of justice could take place almost anywhere. The same applies to imperial residences: besides the *auditoria* or the βασίλεια δικαστήρια mentioned in literary sources,[222] virtually any location that satisfied the requirements of lawsuits (the presence of the judge and of those concerned in the matter at hand) could be used. The identification of the spaces used for justice within imperial residences, as a result, will prove challenging, since elements such as architectural layout and ground plan can rarely support the interpretation of a certain space as a courtroom.

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While dispensing justice was probably the main concern of emperors whenever they were not on a military campaign,[223] it was not their only occupation: a substantial part of an emperor's work involved receiving individuals and embassies, listening to petitions and requests, and replying through letters, edicts, or decrees.[224] Receptions

[221] Sen., *Clem*. I.9.1–12.

[222] Philostr., *V S* I.25.19; Censorinus, *DN* XV.6; *Dig*., 36.1.23pr.

[223] Millar 1992, 4.

[224] Above all *Ibid*., 203–72. Evidence for the wide array of imperial duties is found in Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Ant. de Eloquentia*, Suet., *Vesp*. XXI, and Cass. Dio, LXXVII.17.1–3. The similarity of the three accounts should not lead us to argue that imperial duties did not vary over time; it is more plausible that they

were intertwined with the handling of a large bulk of written material, for which emperors were helped by several categories of assistants.[225]

A key moment in the emperor's daily routine was that of the *salutatio*, the greeting he received nearly every morning from several categories of subjects. *Salutationes* provided large numbers of citizens, ambassadors, or foreign rulers with the opportunity of seeing the emperor up close; the most fortunate of the *salutatores* could even submit requests or written petitions (*libelli*) to his attention.[226] The size, layout, and position of the locations of imperial *salutationes* were affected by the number—and categories—of people allowed to appear before the emperor; fashions changed over time and were influenced by each ruler's attitude.[227]

Besides the litigants who came for lawsuits and those who gathered for the *salutationes*, well-placed observers of daily life at the Roman imperial court—such as the younger Pliny, Suetonius, or Cassius Dio—report another category of visitors, who flocked in immense numbers to address the emperor in person: ambassadors of cities, provincial communities, or foreign states.[228] Embassies appeared before the emperor essentially to request the solution to a range of local problems; the emperor, with or without the help of his *consilium*, intervened to solve the issue, usually delivering his

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were inspired by a literary tradition that celebrated the virtues which defined the 'good emperors', with the purpose of legitimising the dominant political and social order. Discussion in Noreña 2011, Wallace-Hadrill 1983, Wallace-Hadrill 1982, and Wallace-Hadrill 1981.

[225] Weaver 1972, 199–294.

[226] Gell., *NA* IV.1.1, XX.1.2. On the presentation of *libelli* during *salutationes*, Winterling 1999, 117–18.

[227] Arena 2015; Schöpe 2014, 38–57; Winterling 1999, 117–44, especially 122–38. On the *adoratio*, further discussion below, 78–79).

[228] On emperors receiving embassies, Cornwell 2020, 88–91. On imperial hearings, Millar 1992, 363–436, especially 375–85. See also Plin., *Pan*. LXXIX.6–7; Cass. Dio, LXVIII.24.1–2.

responses in written form.

Where did emperors receive ambassadors? Literary sources are rarely detailed as regards the locations of imperial hearings. It is most likely that the reception of embassies was a formal event, which could rarely have happened in the intimate atmosphere of imperial bedrooms. Apart from that, virtually any space whose size, position, and decoration suited the needs of formal receptions could serve as a venue for the welcoming of embassies.

The issues discussed in this section make it clear that it is hardly possible to securely pinpoint the venues for official business in imperial residences, the more so in light of the frequent multifunctionality of rooms and of their rare characterisation as use-specific spaces (apart from particular cases, such as entertainment buildings or bathing facilities). Since hearings, which made up many of the tasks of Roman emperors, happened on a daily basis, the frequency with which emperors were away from Rome could not hinder the handling of public business, even though their actual approachability—which was influenced both by the location of the emperor at a specific time and by the accessibility of his residence—may have impacted on the number of people who were able to address emperors in person. The reception of individuals and embassies, thus, often took place in non-specific locations, which could be replicated wherever the emperor was.

In the following sections, I will examine the case studies whose archaeological record is sufficiently detailed to allow some discussion on the potential locations of official business. The spaces allocated to *salutationes* were presumably close to the main

entrance to the villa, such that visitors could easily reach them; receptions, hearings, and trials could be held in venues whose position, configuration, and decoration could suit the needs of these events.

It has been mentioned that imperial *cubicula* could be used for lawsuits, as well as to welcome the emperor's closest *amici*. The identification of *cubicula* is usually based on the evidence offered by floor decoration, which suggests the position of the *lectus*; recognising the *cubicula* reserved for the emperor is less straightforward, as emperors may have used different residential areas on the occasion of different visits. To recognise the possible imperial *cubicula*, I have looked at the presence and quality of decoration and heating in rooms interpreted as *cubicula*, examined their position within the villa, and considered the facilities linking them with spaces where emperors could carry out other activities, such as baths or dining halls.

Similar considerations apply to the identification of audience halls, whose role as venues for hearings is often suggested by an elaborate decoration—including floor *opus sectile* and marble veneer on the walls—by their size compared to the nearby spaces, and by their position relative to the entrance to the residence and to residential areas.

Ad Gallinas Albas (C1)

The villa of Livia *ad Gallinas Albas* is preserved in sufficient detail to allow the identification of the possible venues for the emperors' official business, most of which date to the earliest construction phase of the residence.

Upon accessing the villa from vestibule 40 (fig. 2.2, plan C1.IV), at the end of the side road connecting the residence with the *uia Flaminia*, visitors were welcomed by a tetrastyle atrium (43, part of alterations carried out in the Flavian period), which served as a distribution space and, possibly, as the setting for *salutationes*, following social practices established since the Republican period.[229]

The grandest audience halls of the villa were located in the south-western sector, beyond the bath complex and peristyle 79 (fig. 2.3). Our knowledge of this area of the villa is less detailed: the hall installed above the underground *triclinium* 1 (plan C1.I), when its vault collapsed in the late first century BC, was almost completely dismantled in the years 1863–64, as a result of restorations aimed to preserve the paintings of the *triclinium*.[230] The hall installed above the garden room had marble veneer on the walls and floor *opus sectile*: its size and luxurious decoration support its interpretation as a grand space for receptions.

The nearby halls 3, 4, 5, and 6 (plan C1.I), despite the poor preservation of the extant architecture, yielded evidence for mosaic and *opus sectile* flooring, combined with marble veneer on the walls. Halls 3 and 6, owing to both their luxurious decoration and their size (respectively 12.9 by 6.1 m and 7.4 by 5.5 m), can be interpreted as audience halls, even though their layout and ground plan cannot help define the kind of social gatherings held there; 4 and 5, owing to their positions, may well have served as vestibules to, respectively, 3 and 6.

[229] Goldbeck 2010, 130–45.
[230] Messineo 1991, 240–41.

The alterations and refurbishments carried out throughout the imperial period did not modify substantially the original layout of the residence, apart from the installation of atrium 43 and of the bath complex to the north of peristyle 79. In other words, it seems that the reception facilities of the Augustan villa remained in use until it ceased to be used by the imperial family.

In *cubiculum* 50 and in the adjacent room 51, the floor mosaics attest second-century restorations of damaged sections of the paving, which replicate the patterns of the original decoration, dated to the Augustan period (fig. 2.4).[231] As will be discussed with regard to *triclinium* 58,[232] it seems that post-Augustan alterations and refurbishments respected the layout and decoration of the original villa, old-fashioned as they may have been, as if the purpose was to preserve a physical memory of the residence of Augustus.[233] A similar practice is recorded with regard to the two huts—one on the Palatine and one on the Capitol—which were claimed to be the *casae* of Romulus. As discussed by Christopher Siwicki, the dwellings of Rome's mythical founder were monuments standing as a vivid symbol of the city's past: their architecture was maintained in its original configuration because it was perceived as a core component of the historical identity of the buildings. Interestingly, it seems that the practices connected with the maintenance of the hut on the Palatine spanned several centuries: the feature was preserved as a relic, and the custom was a clearly

[231] Carrara and Messineo 2001, 139–40.

[232] Chapter 5, 192.

[233] Suet., *Aug*. VI reports that, in the countryside villa of the Octavii in the territory of Velitrae, the room where (according to local rumours) Augustus himself was born was pervaded by the spirit of the first emperor, to the point that whoever entered it needed a ritual purification beforehand.

established one.[234] It can be suggested that *cubicula* 50–52, as well as halls 3, 4, 5, and 6, remained mostly unchanged for similar reasons: the fact that those spaces had allegedly been used by Augustus himself may have been exploited by later emperors to hold receptions in a unique setting.

Villa of the Quintilii (C9, fig. 2.5)

The luxurious *suburbanum* owned by the Quintilii brothers at the fifth mile of the *uia Appia* was confiscated by Commodus in AD 182/183; the alterations he carried out in the villa did not affect its reception facilities, which date to the installation of the residence in the Hadrianic period.

The monumental corridor X (see plan C9.VII), added by Commodus when he confiscated the villa of the Quintilii,[235] connected the entrance to the property on the *uia Appia* with the main body of the residence, and opened onto area R2, from which visitors could reach courtyard B34 (fig. 2.6). Entirely paved in white marble, B34 was one of the main communal spaces of the residence; given its position and size, it seems that it served as a distribution and circulation facility for the eastern half of the block.

On its northern side, B34 opened through a colonnade towards a sequence of formal spaces—as suggested by their marble decoration—the functions of which can partially be reconstructed. A7 most likely served as an antechamber to the octagonal *coenatio* A1.[236] A8 is probably the final section of a monumental path reserved for the

[234] Siwicki 2020, 141–67.
[235] Paris, Frontoni and Galli 2019, 66–69.
[236] Chapter 5, 204–6.

emperor, which linked the presumed imperial *cubicula* B26 and B27[237] with other sectors of the residence (B33, B20, B64, A14bis, A19bis, A6, A8). B26 and B27 were not directly open towards B34, to the west; instead, the transition spaces B30 and B12 linked them both with A7 and with B34. A9 (fig. 2.7), located at the western corner of B34 and accessible both from the courtyard and through the route reserved for the emperor, was probably one of the main audience halls. Its architectural layout and ground plan do not suffice to indicate its possible functions, but the marble paving[238] suggests that it was most likely a high-ranking space: owing to its position and size (17.2 by 8.6 m), it might have served to receive external visitors, who reached the heart of the villa from corridor X, waited in the courtyard, and then had access to room A9 where they could meet the emperor himself; he could use his reserved path to reach the audience hall from his residential quarters.

As regards B34, we may suggest that it partially fulfilled the functions of an atrium, and served as a sort of waiting area where the emperor could meet visitors who gathered there to greet him. The architectural relationship between B34 and the presumed imperial *cubicula* facilitated circulation in both senses: on the one hand, the courtyard could quickly be reached from the *cubicula*; on the other, the privileged pool of visitors who were allowed into the imperial bedroom could get to it without going through the entire residence: rooms B12 and B30 may have served to exercise control over who entered the *cubicula*.

[237] On the interpretation of rooms B26 and B27 as *cubicula* reserved for the emperor, below 96–97.

[238] The original flooring has almost entirely disappeared; the preserved remains include Proconnesian marble and *breccia corallina*. Details in Frontoni and Galli 2014a, 150.

In the southern corner of the main block, close to the exedra-theatre R13 – R15 and to the circular vestibule R14, several rooms had marble paving, floor mosaics, and marble wall veneer. While some of them were most likely *disimpegni*, aisles, or passageways (such as R11, R18, R20, R21, and R21a), others were sufficiently spacious to have served as reception facilities.

We can probably interpret the large hall R59, adjacent to and interconnected with A9, as a formal space: measuring 20.2 by 8.6 m, its *opus sectile* floor included *marmor carystium (cipollino)*, *marmor numidicum (giallo antico)*, and alabaster, while its walls were partially veneered with *marmor chium (africano)*. In chapter 5, I propose to interpret R59 as a space allowing the staging of performances for the entertainment of those who dined in hall R58, which may be read as a summer *coenatio*.[239] Again, the functions of formal areas cannot be defined precisely based on their architectural layout and ground plan, given the frequent multifunctionality of domestic spaces: it was often through furniture that the purpose of rooms and halls was defined. Variations in usage patterns may be suggested for room A7, which could have functioned both as an antechamber to *coenatio* A1 and as an audience hall. Similar considerations apply to room R19, smaller in size but no less luxurious in decoration than the formal spaces analysed above.

As discussed in the introductory section, one of the most peculiar locations for public business was the emperor's *cubiculum*, where he could receive his most

[239] Chapter 5, 208–9.

important visitors, such as the closest *amici*,[240] or hold lawsuits. The two *cubicula* B26 and B27, on the eastern side of courtyard B34, yielded evidence for marble decoration and heating; the small space B25, on the south-eastern corner of B26, is a single-user latrine. Owing to their luxuriousness, to the presence of a reserved *balneum* to the east, and to the monumental route connecting them with the remainder of the main block, they may be interpreted as high-ranking residential facilities, reserved for the most important dweller(s) of the villa. The identity of these individuals is hard to ascertain on current evidence, but it seems plausible that, when the emperor resided at this villa, he stayed in the *cubicula* to the east of B34.

Villa of Lucius Verus (C8)

Our knowledge of the luxurious suburban villa which Lucius Verus built on the fifth mile of the *uia Clodia* is rather patchy,[241] due to the significant damage caused by the construction of a residential villa in the mid-1920s and to the fragmentary nature of the archaeological investigations undertaken since the 1980s, which have followed restorations and refurbishments of the modern villa.

Spaces that might have served as venues for hearings have been identified both in the area of the modern-day villa (plan C8.III) and to the west of it (plan C8.V). The most impressive is room 16 (9.5 by 8.7 m), whose extraordinarily lavish *opus sectile* decoration, which combined marble with glass, suggests that it was one of the central

[240] Discussion in Brunt 1988.

[241] Caserta 2015; Caserta 2011.

features of this part of the villa (fig. 2.8). Its wide open doorway (more than 4 m) faced what has been interpreted as a garden, letting plenty of light in the room and creating elaborate colour effects. On current evidence, we can reconstruct the decorative pattern, but it is hard to determine where the glass was featured.[242]

The sector found about 20 m to the west of the modern-day villa includes a small *balneum*, possibly for the emperor's everyday use,[243] a dining hall combined with a nymphaeum,[244] and a number of thus-far uninterpreted rooms, whose floor decoration suggests that they were not service spaces. One of them, room 23, stands out for its size (9 by 4 m) and decoration, with *opus sectile* flooring and marble veneer on the walls.[245] Despite the poor preservation of the extant architecture, the excavations revealed the remains of a small, square-shaped fountain in the south-eastern section of the room, with some evidence for marble revetment; the building sequence suggests that the installation of the fountain was concurrent with the construction of the imperial residence.[246] Emmanuela Caserta, who directed the 2005–09 excavations, has not provided suggestions for the possible functions of room 23: its size and decoration indicate that it was a high-ranking feature serving as a venue for receptions or audiences. The small fountain was possibly aimed to create and enhance the light

[242] Details on the decorative patterns in Caserta 2011, 89–94 and Saguì 2005.
[243] Chapter 4, 160–61.
[244] Chapter 5, 212–13.
[245] The floor *opus sectile* included, at least, *marmor carystium (greco scritto)*, *marmor alabandicum (rosso antico)*, and *marmor chium (africano)*; owing to the heavy spoliations that have occurred since the seventeenth century, our knowledge of the architecture and decoration of the villa is remarkably poor.
[246] Caserta 2011, 106–09.

effects of the polished marble veneer,[247] alongside serving—perhaps—as a cooling device.

Villa of Maxentius (C11)

Alongside the construction of a circus and of a mausoleum, the alterations carried out by Maxentius to Herodes Atticus' Τριόπιον included the installation of formal spaces (halls L and M) in the residential heart of the second-century villa, whose layout remained mostly unchanged.[248]

M is a rectangular hall (33.1 by 19.5 m) with an apse pierced by a quadrangular niche on the north-eastern side, opposite the entrance (fig. 2.9, plan C11.IV). The hall was accessed from atrium N, a rectangular space perpendicular to M reached by the monumental corridor C/P, which linked the core of the residence to the *puluinar* of the circus. Openings in the north-western and south-eastern walls led, respectively, into areas F and G, which Pisani Sartorio has proposed to interpret as the residential quarters of both the Τριόπιον and the later imperial villa.[249] Despite the poor preservation of the extant architecture, the hall still features evidence for coffers on the conch, and for heating through *tubuli*. The original floor level is completely lost, but metal clamps on the eastern wall indicate that the walls were partly decorated with marble veneer. The heating system and sophisticated decoration of the hall testify to

[247] Dessales 2013, 374–78, on the use of domestic fountains to create light effects.
[248] Details on the formal spaces of the villa of Maxentius in Pisani Sartorio and Calza 1976, 82–98.
[249] Based on a comparison with the much bigger *aula Palatina* in Trier, Giuseppina Pisani Sartorio argued that M was flanked by peristyles on either side (*Ibid.*, 124–25).

its role as one of the most important spaces of the residence: meant to be used for several hours during cold times of the year, it was clearly a space for audiences and receptions.

To the north-west of M, beyond the presumed residential quarter F, there lay another audience hall (L), as grand as hall M (it yielded evidence for heating and marble veneer), but with a different layout and orientation. Much deeper and narrower than M (49.6 by 10.5 m), its apse is on the south-western side. Despite its poor preservation, it seems that the main access to L was on its north-eastern side, opposite the apse; smaller doorways opened in the north-western and south-eastern sides.

Besides halls M and L, Pisani Sartorio interpreted the elongated apsidal room I as a formal space, based on evidence for heating and marble decoration;[250] the structures are preserved too poorly to allow arguments on the architectural relationships with the adjacent features, which would allow a more thorough understanding of the function of I. The scanty preservation of the extant architecture, alongside the limited extension of the excavations carried out in the villa, affect our understanding of individual features, the more so because a detailed comprehension of circulation patterns would significantly help in defining space hierarchy in further detail.

As argued by Pisani Sartorio, the Maxentian palace was most likely accessed from the *uia Asinaria*; the semi-circular feature O, apparently isolated from the core of the villa, was interpreted as a monumental gateway, based on parallels with similar and

[250] *Ibid.*, 122.

contemporary features serving as formal vestibules.[251] It seems that O allowed visitors coming from the *uia Asinaria* to reach the core of the residence, even though we cannot envisage if, and how, people were directed to individual features.

The monumental corridor C/P functioned as the backbone of the whole complex, by linking the core of the villa with the presumed imperial *puluinar* of the circus, and giving access to the features to the north of it, including atrium N, which led to the *aula* M. Hall L, on the other hand, had no connections with the corridor, as its main entrance was from the north-east. The differences in the orientation and layout of L and M, as well as the absence of a relationship between L and C/P, might be explained in light of a specialisation in the role of the two halls. As will be discussed below, the apsidal plan is hardly sufficient to envisage specific functions for the two audience halls, even though the opposite position of the main entrance to L and M might reflect different usage patterns determined by distinct functions. While M was meant to be accessed primarily from corridor C/P, L could seemingly be reached without passing through the core of the residence: it may tentatively be suggested that the social gatherings taking place in L were such that the involved individuals came to the villa mainly, if not exclusively, for this purpose. Any attempt to define the functions of L in further detail would inevitably be speculative.

The layout of hall M draws inspiration from a well-known architectural model, largely used since the late third century AD for formal spaces (fig. 2.10). Apsidal halls,

[251] *Ibid.*, 125–26, argued that the visible remains of O are part of an originally circular feature, which she compared with the vestibule of Diocletian's palace in Split and with the so-called Tempio della Tosse in Tivoli, which was in fact a grand access to a late-antique villa.

however, are not a novelty of Late Antiquity: besides the *cellae* of a number of late-Republican and early imperial temples—such as those of Venus Genetrix (fig. 2.11) and of Mars Ultor (fig. 2.12) in Rome[252]—the forerunners of late-antique apsidal audience halls seem to be, on current evidence, three formal spaces of the *Domus Flauia* on the Palatine: the so-called *coenatio Iovis*, *Aula Regia*, and basilica (fig. 2.13).[253]

Licia Luschi has sought to identify the possible architectural layout of the features referred to as private *basilicae* in ancient literature, and pointed out that Vitruvius included *basilicae* amongst the features that could not be missing from the residences of prominent men of the Republican period. Their layout and decoration, Vitruvius added, should be such that they could compete with public *basilicae*.[254] Interestingly, Vitruvius wrote that private *basilicae* were often the setting for public deliberations and private trials (*publica consilia et priuata iudicia*), and that they were necessary not only in urban houses, but also in extra-urban villas (*non solum in urbe sed etiam ruri*).[255]

Several sources suggest that such basilicas were commonly used for lawcourts in the subsequent centuries: a passage from Apuleius' *Apology* labels *basilicae* as 'locations of trials' (*locus auditorii*);[256] Palladius' description of a *cella uinaria* compares it with the layout of a *basilica*, suggesting that the *calcatorium* should be raised similarly to the *tribunal*, the dais where the magistrate sat;[257] several centuries later, the *Acta Sanctorum*

[252] Further discussion in Gros 1967.
[253] Wulf-Rheidt 2019, 29; Zanker 2002.
[254] Luschi 1983; Vitr., *De arch*. VI.5.2. An overview of the configuration of public Republican *basilicae* in Gros 2001, 235–60.
[255] Vitr., *De arch.* VI.5.3.
[256] Apul., *Ap*. LXXIII.
[257] Palladius, *Opus Agriculturae* I.18.1.

report that St Laurence was tried by the emperor Decius in a building referred to as the *basilica Iouis*, which was part of the imperial palaces on the Palatine.[258]

Other sources allow us to outline fashions as regards the installation of *basilicae* in private and imperial residences. The earliest is a passage from Plutarch's biography of Publicola, which mentions a *basilica* in a cursory description of the *Domus Flauia*;[259] further accounts are much later, and date at least from the fourth century AD.[260] According to literary evidence, private basilicas were an established fashion in the fourth century AD, even though the first examples are a few decades earlier: if we trust the *HA*, the suburban residence owned by the Gordians on the *uia Praenestina* included three buildings referred to as *basilicae centenariae*. Imperial residences seem to have inspired the installation of basilicas in upper-class *domus* and *uillae*, according to St Jerome.[261]

Luschi connected the significant number of late-antique sources mentioning private basilicas with the more-or-less simultaneous spread of apsidal halls in *domus* and *uillae*,[262] and argued that those halls could be identified with the *basilicae* which became increasingly fashionable from the early fourth century AD. Luschi's interpretation is corroborated by the passage from Palladius' *Opus Agriculturae* discussed above, in which the author takes the architectural layout of *basilicae* as an

[258] *Acta Sanctorum Augusti mensis tomus II*, 519.6 (1735). The reliability of the text is dubious, as it was seemingly written c. seven centuries after the events reported.
[259] Plut., *Popl*. XV.
[260] SHA, *Gord*. III.32; Pseudoclem., *Recognitiones*. X.71; Hieron., *Epist*. XLVI.11; Serv., *Aen*. I; Sidon., *Epist*. II.2.8.
[261] Hieron., *Epist*. XLVI.11.
[262] Data in Luschi 1983, 171–73.; see also Guidobaldi 1986.

example of the *cellae uinariae*: it was the slightly raised floor level often seen in apses that might have offered a parallel for the configuration of *calcatoria*, which should be installed on a dais. While Palladius is chronologically closer to the period under consideration, Vitruvius offers an interesting hint to support Luschi's identification. In the fifth book of his *De architectura*, after presenting the main characteristics of public *basilicae*, he describes the basilica at Fanum, whose construction he supervised personally.[263] Interestingly, Vitruvius reports that a semi-circular *tribunal* (*hemicycli schematis*) was installed in a shrine dedicated to Augustus.[264] The passage is not sufficient to argue that the basilica had a projecting apse on the side opposite the main entrance towards the forum, but the use of semi-circular *tribunalia*—which Vitruvius explains was necessary to define a space for lawsuits, lest they interfere with other business carried out in the basilica—may have inspired further architectural developments.

Whether or not the identification of apsidal halls as *basilicae* is correct, we cannot fail to note their significant spread in late-antique residential architecture. As it emerges from literary and archaeological evidence, imperial residences acted as trendsetters, and prominent individuals strove to follow ongoing architectural fashions by equipping their urban and suburban dwellings with grand, luxuriously decorated apsidal halls. As repeatedly mentioned above, the layout and ground plan of audience halls is hardly sufficient to suggest the kind of social gathering for which

[263] Vitr., *De arch*. V.6-10.
[264] Gros 2001, 242–44.

they were used. The considerable investment in decoration (which often featured *opus sectile* floors and marble veneer on the walls) marks them as spaces for sumptuous hearings; the apse opposite the main entrance served as the room's focal point, and enhanced the ceremonial and solemn nature of the hearings taking place there. If we accept Luschi's identification of apsidal halls as *basilicae*, we could argue that one of their functions was to serve as courtrooms, the apse allowing the installation of the *tribunal* of the adjudicating magistrate.

While the interpretation of apsidal halls as courtrooms is possible, we can confidently argue that they also served as monumental and sumptuous settings for solemn audiences and hearings. Modern scholarship has extensively addressed the evolution and development of imperial ceremony, and pointed out that Diocletian, drawing inspiration from some of the customs of earlier emperors, set the main characteristics of the much more complex ceremonies of fourth-century and later emperors.[265]

In his study on court ceremonial between the late third and the late fourth century AD, Ignazio Tantillo offered a detailed overview of the sequence of events involved in the *adoratio*, the ritual kissing of the emperor's cloak,[266] a privilege granted to an extremely restricted circle of individuals.[267] First and foremost, those who were

[265] Lastly Tantillo 2015; see also Roberto 2014, 65–70, Burkhardt 2013, Bravo 1997, Teja 1993, MacCormack 1981, Stern 1954, Avery 1940, and Alföldi 1934. On ceremonial habits at the Byzantine court, which may offer details for the reconstruction of earlier customs, Angelidi 2013, Pfeilschifter 2008, and Cameron 1987.

[266] The *adoratio* is described in a handful of sources, slightly later than the period under consideration, yet useful for an overall understanding of how the ritual functioned.

[267] Herrmann-Otto 1998.

allowed to pay respects to the emperor were admitted into the audience room;[268] the entrance was often screened through a door or a curtain (*uelum*), which functioned as a physical diaphragm between the inside and the outside.[269] The person permitted this honour was welcomed by an *admissionalis*, or even by the *magister admissionum*,[270] and by a number of higher court officers, who had the privilege of paying homage to the emperor before him.[271] The emperor sat on a throne at the opposite end of the room, usually raised on a low dais;[272] it seems that curtains were also used to divide the imperial throne from the rest of the hall. Once allowed into the audience hall, the person admitted could reach the person of the emperor, kneel down, and finally kiss a hem of his cloak.[273]

Our sources do not provide information as regards the possible layout of the halls in which such *adorationes* normally took place, apart from suggesting that the throne was slightly raised above the floor level.[274] This apparently insignificant detail acquires considerable importance in light of the architectural evidence of apsidal audience halls, both in imperial residences and in privately owned *domus* and *uillae*: in several cases, the floor of the apse is slightly higher than the rest of the room.[275] This feature, however, is attested before the establishment of the *adoratio*, and cannot therefore be

[268] Tantillo 2015, 568–71, for a description of the ritual.
[269] SHA, *Alex*. *Seu.* IV; Corippus, *In laudem Iustini* III.222 ss.
[270] On the role of *admissionales*, Noethlichs 1998, especially 29–31.
[271] *Pan. Lat.*, XI (III).11.3; Euseb., *Vit. Const*. IV.67.
[272] The trait has not been identified in the four apsidal halls of the *Horti Spei Veteris* and the villa of Maxentius, where the original floor level is never preserved.
[273] Details on ritual genuflection (προσκύνησις) in Bravo 1997.
[274] For instance, Ambrosius, *Ep*. XXIV.3.
[275] Baldini Lippolis 2001, 45–49.

interpreted as linked solely with the spatial necessities of this ritual: as will be discussed in chapter 5, *stibadia* were often installed in apsidal halls and sometimes raised on a shallow dais in the apse.[276]

A higher degree of visibility of the furniture installed in the apse is one of many characteristics that provided apsidal halls with a heightened measure of luxury and solemnity, along with the significant investment in marble decoration, the frequent presence of heating, the lighting, and the remarkable height of these halls.[277] The concomitant occurrence of most—if not all—of these features marked apsidal audience halls as extraordinarily sumptuous spaces, which could well have served as the setting for solemn and awe-inspiring *adorationes*: the emperor sat on a throne raised above the floor level, architecturally framed by the apse,[278] such that his subjects could behold and pay homage to his increasingly divine person. The best-preserved example of this layout is the Aula Palatina at Trier, the core of the imperial residence built by Constantine, which stood as landmark of Roman rule in the region of the Rhine *limes*.[279]

As stressed in the introductory paragraphs, spaces with a specific architectural layout, such as apsidal halls, were not necessarily used only for *adorationes*: their function could vary, and was often defined through the arrangement of furniture. In chapter 5, I propose to interpret hall M, as well halls 8 and 9 of the Sessorian Palace (see below), as venues for grand banquets: the apse allowed the installation of a

[276] Chapter 5, 184–86.

[277] Guidobaldi 1986, 206–10.

[278] Scagliarini Corlaita 1995, 839, defined apses as 'diademi architettonici di immediata efficacia celebrativa'.

[279] Goethert and Kiessel 2007.

stibadium where the emperor, raised on a dais, could be admired by his guests lying on *klinai* arranged in the lower area of the hall.[280]

Horti Spei Veteris/Palativm Sessorianvm (C10)

As early as its construction by Septimius Severus, the suburban complex of the *Horti Spei Veteris* included a large audience hall (1), on which the modern-day Basilica di Santa Croce in Gerusalemme nowadays stands (fig. 2.14, plan C10.I). The hall is referred to as 'Grande Atrio' in the study of Antonio Colini, who was followed by later scholarship, even though its position does not suggest that the feature fulfilled the functions of domestic atria.[281]

The recent reassessment of the extant architecture carried out by Serena Guglielmi, however, led her to a different reading of the hall (fig. 2.15). The entrance to the complex (5) was c. 400 metres to the north-west of the alleged atrium; further features—the baths (6)[282] with their water reservoir (7), lodgings for the imperial court (12, 13), and the monumental façade with fountains and *nymphaea* (10)—were spread between the entrance and the hall, excluding its interpretation as something fulfilling the functions of an atrium.[283] Its position, layout, and tight connection with the monumental gallery (4) leading to the amphitheatre and to the presumed *puluinar* of the circus seem rather to suggest the identification of the feature as a grand hall for

[280] Chapter 5, 214–15.
[281] Colini 1955, 154–60. See also Restaino 2017.
[282] In chapter 4, 161–67, I discuss the possible chronology of the *Thermae Helenianae*, and suggest that the bath complex restored by Helena was part of the *Horti* since their installation in the Severan period.
[283] Guglielmi 2014, 36–44.

sumptuous receptions; the scanty remains of marble decoration, reported by Antonio da Sangallo il Giovane and Colini and no longer visible,[284] support this interpretation.

Hall 1 is a large rectangular building, measuring c. 35 by 21 m, with five openings on each of the longer sides and one on each of the shorter. Modern scholars have not yet reached an agreement on the interpretation of the openings on the longer sides, because the lower section of the original walls of the hall is no longer visible. Two main reconstructions have been proposed: one envisages five doors on each of the longer sides (and thus twelve for the whole feature); another suggests that only the central openings on the longer sides were proper doorways, and that they were flanked by two pairs of windows on both sides.[285] The distribution of accesses suggest that it was originally oriented north-east/south-west, and that the transformation into a church altered its orientation. Its remarkable capacity and luxurious decoration point towards the interpretation of the hall as a space mainly intended for receptions; its architectural configuration and tight connection with the monumental corridor 4, which led to the amphitheatre and to the circus, suggest that it was also meant to serve as a distribution and transition area, hence its—at least—four doorways. The extant architecture does not allow more detailed speculations on the kind of receptions for which it was used.

The vicissitudes of the complex at the beginning of the fourth century AD, when Constantine established his seat in Rome, may offer further evidence for the identification of hall 1 as an audience hall. The residence was named the *Palatium*

[284] Sangallo: Firenze Uffizi sch. 899 r; Colini 1955, 155.

[285] A review of the literature on the topic in Restaino 2017, n. 32.

Sessorianum, and the Severan hall was turned into a church, where Helena had fragments of the Holy Cross preserved (hence the name of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme). The complex underwent substantial alterations under Constantine (plan C10.III), among which were the construction of two apsidal halls to the north of the church (8, fig. 2.16, and 9, fig. 2.17); the ground plan and scanty remains of *opus sectile* on the floor of hall 8[286] suggest that they were spaces for receptions, even though their function cannot be specified securely. While the transformation of hall 1 into a church can be explained by the desire to equip the Sessorian residence with a palatine chapel,[287] the two apsidal halls added by Constantine probably acquired the functions hitherto fulfilled by the Severan 'atrium'.

Of the larger hall (8), erroneously interpreted as a temple dedicated to Venus and Cupid, only the back wall with the apse is visible; its dimensions (c. 41 by 23.4 m) have been reconstructed based on those of the basilica at the imperial palace of Trier (fig. 2.18).[288] The smaller hall (9) could be identified and located thanks to the analysis of a drawing by Pirro Ligorio.[289] The hall, 19.4 m in length by 12.3 m in width, opened onto a relatively deep portico on the north-western façade, and was seemingly connected to church 1 by a corridor. Owing to the almost complete destruction of the ancient remains, circulation and access patterns are known poorly; the audience halls were most likely reached by a path that connected them to the presumed entrance of the

[286] Bottiglieri, Colli, and Palladino 2016.
[287] Argentini and Ricciardi 2000, 260–63.
[288] Colli 1996, 782–89.
[289] *Ibid.*, 789–95.

residence (5), but their architectural relationships with other areas cannot be understood on current evidence.

Concluding remarks

This chapter has sought to identify the possible locations of public business at imperial villas, in order to understand to what extent and in which forms imperial residences provided emperors with venues for the performance of their official duties. As the literary evidence discussed in the first section of the chapter suggests, we can define public business as an ensemble of more-or-less formal interactions between emperors and subjects: hearings and trials formed a substantial part of the daily commitments of Roman emperors. Literary sources collectively report that emperors dealt with public business in Rome as well as elsewhere, and that a significant portion of their duties was fulfilled in their urban and extra-urban residences.

The analysis of the archaeological record has shown that the identification of features serving as settings for public business is often a difficult task, owing not only to the diversity of the activities under consideration, but also to the frequent multifunctionality of spaces, whose role was often defined through now-lost furniture. The wide-ranging term 'audience hall' is rather vague, as imperial hearings varied significantly in nature, atmosphere, and size: the architectural layout and ground plan of reception spaces are not sufficient per se to define the kind of event for which they served as venue. My analysis of the settings of public business at imperial villas was further affected by the fragmentary nature of archaeological evidence: rarely have

villas been excavated wholly, and structures are often preserved only to a limited extent.

In the introduction to this thesis, I have defined Hadrian's Villa as a watershed in the evolution of the architectural configuration of imperial villas, and I have proposed to explain its unique layout in light of the changed attitude of ancient authors as regards the performance of official business at imperial residences.[290] This argument is supported by the villa's remarkable number of spaces for receptions and hearings, which are featured in great variety alongside entertainment buildings, dining facilities, as well as lodgings and baths for different categories of dwellers. Venues for official business are found in different sectors of the villa, but are concentrated—unsurprisingly—in the central areas of the complex. Reasons of space do not allow an extensive treatment of Hadrian's Villa's reception facilities, for which I refer to the relevant bibliography; in this section, I will try to evaluate the extent to which later villas were influenced by the architectural experience of the Tiburtine complex.

The residential core of Hadrian's Villa—the Imperial Palace—was provided with many and diverse reception facilities, distributed on the eastern and southern sides of a large open area (marked in red on fig. 2.19).[291] The Imperial Palace lie at short distance from the Hospitalia and the so-called Macchiozzo, where members of the imperial court were housed (fig. 2.20):[292] the Palace's connection with the apartments of the

[290] Introduction, 9–11.

[291] Salza Prina Ricotti 2001, 199–210.

[292] On the Hospitalia, Salza Prina Ricotti 2001, 153–56. The ongoing investigations of the APAHA Tibur Project at the Macchiozzo have revealed a new quarter of the villa, consisting of residential units of a medium quality, which have been interpreted as lodgings for members of the court.

court was evidently aimed to allow the court officers to reach the main administrative area of the residence rapidly and conveniently.

Whilst the reception facilities of the Imperial Palace are not remarkable for their size and decoration, a much more conspicuous area for official business is that of the Palazzo d'Inverno – Stadium Garden – Three Exedras, to the south-west of the Imperial Palace (fig. 2.21), where Giuliani has proposed to locate the throne hall of the villa (marked in red on fig. 2.21).[293] The Three Exedras, together with the Great Vestibule further southwards, served most likely as a waiting area,[294] where visitors could gather before being directed to the audience halls where they were to meet the emperor; reception facilities are also found to the south and east of the Great Vestibule (fig. 2.22).

The Stadium Garden complex and the Great Vestibule were added at a later stage to the earliest nucleus of the residence, which consisted solely of the Poecile, the Philosophers' Hall, the Maritime Theatre, the Heliocaminus Baths, and the Republican villa incorporated in the Imperial Palace. Before the construction of the Stadium Garden – Three Exedras, the villa's chief location for official business was most likely the Philosophers' Hall—reached from the Maritime Theatre, where the emperor stayed, and the Poecile, which was the residence's main entrance—which is remarkable for its apsidal plan.

It emerges from the remarkable number of formal spaces at Hadrian's Villa, as

[293] Giuliano, Giuliani and Veloccia Rinaldi 1988, 93.

[294] Galli and Bozza 2013.

well as from their diverse layout and distribution within the residence, that it was customary for the emperor to carry out official business there: the presence of multiple reception facilities can be read as aimed to cater to the spatial needs of different categories of hearings, even though the layout of these spaces, as discussed in this chapter, is not sufficient to suggest the kind of event for which they offered a venue. The poor degree of knowledge and the chronological sequence of the other villas examined in this chapter allow limited considerations on the possible influence of the layout of Hadrian's Villa on the residences built or used by the imperial family immediately after Hadrian's death: at the villas of Livia and of the Quintilii, reception facilities date respectively to the pre-Hadrianic period and to the original configuration of the residence, when it was still a private property. The villa of Lucius Verus is not known in sufficient detail to evaluate the impact of Hadrian's Villa on its formal spaces.

The only site for which some parallels with Hadrian's Villa are possible is Villa Magna: although the 2006–10 excavations have concentrated on the monumental winery and on the worker's barracks, gradiometer surveys have revealed building units—tentatively attributed to the installation of the residence in the Hadrianic period—which have been interpreted, respectively, as high-ranking residential quarters and as apsidal audience halls (plan C6.I).[295] This multiplicity of reception facilities can possibly be explained in light of the influence of Hadrian's Villa, whose many and diverse formal spaces were presumably allocated to the fulfilment of

[295] Fentress and Fenwick 2016.

different categories of official business. As these features have only been identified from gradiometer surveys, my argument must remain but a suggestion that needs be confirmed through excavations.

Similar considerations can be made as regards the configuration of the villa of Maxentius and of the *Palatium Sessorianum*. The Maxentian alterations to Herodes Atticus' residence included, as we have seen, the installation of two sumptuous audience halls, but the core of the Τριόπιον—where scanty evidence for formal rooms has been recorded—remained unchanged. Likewise, the *Palatium Sessorianum* was equipped, under Constantine, with at least two apsidal halls that acquired the functions hitherto fulfilled by the Grande Atrio, which was turned into a church. The presence of multiple reception facilities can be explained, again, as the necessity to provide venues for different categories of official gatherings—ranging from lawsuits to *adorationes*—and can therefore be read as having been influenced by the architectural experience of Hadrian's Villa, which is nevertheless c. 170 years earlier. I have elsewhere suggested, however, that apsidal halls might also have served as venues for sumptuous banquets:[296] once again, the frequent multifunctionality of Roman domestic spaces complicates an already blurred picture.

From the analysis of the number, size, and layout of formal spaces in the villas discussed in the central section of this chapter, two main trends emerge (fig. 2.23). The reception facilities of the villas at Prima Porta and of that of Lucius Verus, luxuriously decorated yet of modest dimensions, stand in sharp contrast with the majestic apsidal

[296] Chapter 5, 213–16.

halls of the Sessorian Palace and of the villa of Maxentius, which are not only much larger, but also more prominent within the imperial residence. A similar distinction will emerge with regard to the features discussed in chapters 3–5.

The installation of grand apsidal halls with opulent decoration was most likely inspired by the magnificent *Aula Regia* of the *Domus Flauia*—and possibly by the Philosophers' Hall at Hadrian's Villa—and might have been a response to the new need to stage the increasingly complex ceremony of *adoratio* in an appropriate setting: it is no surprise that sumptuous halls with a similar layout are found in the imperial residences built in the newly established centres of power—Trier, Thessaloniki, Milan, Constantinople—as well as in the residences of Split and Gamzigrad, which served not as official seats as much as retreats for retired emperors.[297] The apsidal halls at the *Horti Spei Veteris* and at the villa of Maxentius, which had the probable purpose of providing a setting for a specific section of the imperial ceremonial, may also be explained by the difference in the nature of these residences as opposed to the suburban villas. As discussed in chapter 3, literary sources and archaeological evidence jointly suggest the 'official' nature of the imperial residences installed in the newly established Tetrarchic seats: centres of power whose primary role was to allow closer control of the borders of the Empire.[298] This consideration is not directly applicable to the Sessorian Palace or to the villa of Maxentius, as their architectural layout—a combination of residential features with a circus—is evidently inspired by the palace-circus compound seen in

[297] Hidalgo Prieto 2015, 44–46.
[298] Chapter 3, 130–33.

Rome as well as in Antioch, Milan, Trier, and Thessaloniki.[299] As mentioned above, grand apsidal halls are also attested in many of the Tetrarchs' residences: on the one hand, the spread of these particular features can be ascribed to the growing complexity of the imperial ceremonial, and to the need to stage *adorationes* in a setting which subjects could perceive as both intimidating and awe-inspiring; on the other, it was precisely in the official residences of emperors (even of retired ones) that sumptuous audience halls were most required: centres of power needed to be equipped with all the facilities which emperors needed to fulfil their public duties.

We cannot stress enough that some spaces in Roman residential architecture were not use-specific, and that the configuration necessary for the performance of particular activities might always have been obtained through the arrangement of furniture, in ancient as well as in modern times: it is often difficult to distinguish a bedroom from a study in a modern apartment by simply looking at its plan. This is to say that apsidal halls installed in imperial residences from the late third century onwards must not be interpreted as exclusively serving as the setting for *adorationes*: they could also have catered to the needs of large, sumptuous banquets, the apse allowing an unparalleled emphasis on the figure of the emperor, probably lying on a *stibadium*.[300]

Reception facilities also featured in the villa at Prima Porta and in that of Lucius Verus, even though their size cannot be compared with the apsidal halls of fourth-

[299] A combination of an imperial residence with a circus is also attested in Constantinople; as the city was raised to the rank of imperial capital as late as AD 330, it cannot have served as a model for the Sessorian Palace. Its layout, nonetheless, is evidently inspired by that of the Tetrarchic palaces.

[300] Discussion in chapter 5, 220–22.

century imperial residences. The layout of these facilities does not have unusual characteristics. In the case of the villa *ad Gallinas Albas*, it seems that the post-Augustan alterations and refurbishments sought not to affect the features belonging to the Augustan phase of the residence, as if to preserve some of the appearance and materiality of earlier times. This unusual choice might have been determined by the desire to provide the villa *ad Gallinas Albas* with a unique atmosphere: later emperors could receive their guests in the same spaces that had been used for similar purposes by Augustus himself. At the villa of Lucius Verus, the extraordinarily luxurious *opus sectile* identified in room 16, which combined marble slabs with glass elements, provided the receptions held there with a heightened measure of luxury and elegance.

As will be pointed out with regard to dining facilities, in terms of size, the audience halls identified at the villa of the Quintilii stand halfway between the smaller features of Prima Porta and of Lucius Verus' villa and the magnificent apsidal halls of the *Palatium Sessorianum* and of the villa of Maxentius. The reception facilities at the villa of the Quintilii date to the original building phase of the residence (Hadrianic period), and did not undergo visible alterations after the villa was confiscated by Commodus: he was probably content with the configuration of the audience halls of the private villa, and did not feel the need to alter them. Literary sources indicate that emperors used the villa of the Quintilii until the 270s;[301] substantial building activity of a remarkable standard (installation of the luxurious winery[302]) is attested in the 240s:

[301] SHA, *Tac.* XVI.2.

[302] Chapter 5, 210–11.

combined together, the two bodies of evidence suggest that from the 180s and until at least the 240s the villa of the Quintilii was used assiduously, even though it never acquired the role of 'official' seat of the emperor. As I will argue in chapter 5, the fact that this villa seems to have replicated the sense of *urbanitas* inspired by the palaces on the Palatine might be interpreted as a reflection of the desire to define it as one of the most important residences of the late second and early third centuries AD: it can be suggested that Commodus was not driven to provide the villa with more complex audience halls because, on the occasion of particularly formal hearings, he and his entourage could easily relocate to the headquarters on the Palatine.[303]

If the wide array of imperial duties can be defined as the complex of more-or-less formal interactions between emperors and subjects, the analysis of literary and archaeological evidence shows that spaces for official business were as diverse as the social gatherings for which they were used. High-ranking, formal spaces are frequently marked by lavish decoration; position, size, layout, and ease of access can serve to define the nature of the hearings held there (more or less formal, more or less intimate, and so forth). As will be discussed with regard to dining facilities, the architectural evolution of audience halls and the emergence of a hitherto little-used layout, combined with the information provided by literary sources, point towards the increasingly elaborate practices associated with imperial audiences: if the first emperors were praised for the ease with which they could be approached, the distinctive trait from Diocletian onwards seems to have been the significantly smaller

[303] See also Grüner 2013, 236–42.

number of individuals who were allowed to meet and pay homage to the emperor. In fact, it is from literary sources that we learn that imperial *adorationes* were restricted to very few people, as the increasing size of late-antique audience halls seems to argue in favour of large events. It may be suggested that the impressive dimensions of these halls are not evidence of the actual extent of the receptions held there, but, rather, of the intention of creating a solemn, hieratical atmosphere—as in the *Aula Regia* of the *Domus Flauia*[304]—which foreshadows practices attested in the Byzantine court ceremonial.[305]

[304] Zanker 2002, 114–16.

[305] Angelidi 2013; Burkhardt 2013.

3.

The Emperor and the Stage:

Entertainment Buildings at Imperial Residences

An architectural and functional connection between a royal residence and buildings for entertainment is attested since the Hellenistic period: in the centres of Aigai, Pella, Pergamon, and Alexandria, the dynasts' palaces were closely associated with a theatre (figs. 3.1, 3.2, 3.3).[306] This relationship has been analysed by Inge Nielsen, who has explained the theatres combined with *basileia* as creating a particular location in which kings could reveal themselves to their subjects; by associating their palace—often installed on a commanding position—with the city's theatre, Hellenistic dynasts could make a scenographic appearance before the whole citizen body, gathered there to watch a performance in which the social and civic values of *paideia* were conveyed and reiterated.[307]

This peculiarity of Hellenistic palaces had some influence on a number of late-Republican elite residences, where their owners, often familiar with the courts of eastern dynasts, installed theatres and theatre-like features. In her unpublished doctoral thesis, Elsa Laurenzi has convincingly linked this efflorescence of domestic

[306] Nielsen 1994. In detail, 81–84 (Aigai); 84–93 (Pella); 102–111 (Pergamon); 130–138 (Alexandria). Theatres have been identified in the archaeological record only at Aigai and Pergamon; Paolo Storchi's recent work on aerial photographs from Pella has led him to identify the position of the city's theatre (Storchi 2018), whose relationship to the palace needs be clarified. At Alexandria, a theatre is recorded by Polybius, who mentions a vaulted corridor (σῦριγξ) linking it with the palace (Polyb., XV.30.6).

[307] Ferrara 2020, 369–77.

theatres with the historical circumstances of the late-Republican period, and with the crucial role which the great men's dwellings played in their political career,[308] as emerges from a wealth of literary evidence.[309] Prominent individuals wishing to run for public office were aware of the importance of their identity and status for their political claims: a substantial part of the interactions between members of the upper class, as well as between them and the people, involved seeing and being seen.[310] Their urban and suburban residences were therefore equipped with an increasing number of facilities through which Roman grandees could display their persona and wealth. Entertainment facilities installed at *domus* or *uillae* could cater to both necessities: on the one hand, they provided a venue for the staging of performances whose nature and messages were selected by the *dominus*; on the other, they were expensive features requiring substantial economic effort, which indicated his financial means.

A milestone in the architectural and functional evolution of the theatre-residence compound, which must have exerted some influence on the installation of entertainment facilities at imperial residences, is the theatrical complex that Pompey built in the Campus Martius, inaugurated in 55 BC (fig. 3.4). Despite its almost complete loss, we know that the complex, extending from the *uia Triumphalis* to the area of the temples of Largo Argentina, consisted of a theatre and of a huge *porticus post scaenam*; as reported by Tertullian, Pompey 'justified' the construction of a stone theatre—

[308] Laurenzi 2004, 10–16. The author has my gratitude for her willingness to share and discuss her doctoral research with me; some of it is published as Laurenzi 2014 and Laurenzi 2005.

[309] Above all, Vitr., *De arch.* VI.5. Sources concerned with the political role of late-Republican *domus* are discussed in Rilinger 1997.

[310] Flower 2014.

hitherto forbidden in Rome—by claiming that it served as a monumental staircase for a temple of Venus Victrix, which he built on top of the *cauea*.[311] On the eastern wing of the portico, opposite the theatre, he included a curia for meetings of the Senate. Interestingly, Plutarch mentions that the complex was erected on land owned by Pompey himself, and that he built his own house nearby.[312]

Many interpretations have been suggested for Pompey's theatrical complex, ranging from the function of a *heroon* celebrating its builder[313] to its use as a gymnasium-like area for promenades;[314] following a reassessment of the complex as part of her doctoral research, Eleonora Zampieri has proposed to read it as a triumphal monument celebrating the figure, virtue, and deeds of Pompey himself, through the centrality given to his patron goddess and the constant reference to his military victories.[315] Furthermore, she has highlighted the distinctly political function of the complex, which provided additional space for conducting public business: the senate could gather in the curia, whilst the theatre could serve, on occasion, as a venue in which the people could convene for political purposes. If Zampieri's reconstruction is correct, Rome was thus provided with a new political centre—far away from the original one, the Roman Forum—which bore Pompey's name, was under the protection of his patron deity, and lay on land he owned (even if his house was not actually attached to it): official public business—such as the infamous meeting of the

[311] Tert., *De spect.* X.5.
[312] Plut., *Vit. Pomp.* XL.5.
[313] Sauron 1987.
[314] Cadario 2011.
[315] Zampieri 2018.

senate during which Caesar was assassinated in 44 BC—could now be carried out in a setting with a distinctly personal character.[316]

The Hellenistic *basileia* discussed above resulted in a similar relocation of the political centre of the cities in which they were erected: power was now exerted in the residence of the king.[317] A further similarity emerges from the celebrations for the dedication of Pompey's theatre: Cicero reports the staging of tragedies, gladiatorial games, and *uenationes*, and the representation of Pompey's victories under the gaze of Venus Victrix.[318] This last performance is reminiscent of a ceremony held in honour of Mithridates, in which he was crowned by a Victory—artificially descending from above as *deus ex machina*—in the theatre of Pergamon (88/87 BC),[319] and of a similar scene in which Metellus Pius was the protagonist in Spain in the autumn of 74 BC.[320]

Theatres combined with royal residences, thus, allowed both an effective 'staging' of the ruler, who could appear before a large number of his subjects gathered in a building that expressed the cohesion of the citizen body, and the conveyance of specific messages serving to legitimise his rule and the *status quo*.

Roman emperors did not fail to exploit theatres in this sense. We know that Domitian chose his residence at Albanum (fig. 3.5)[321] as the venue for the *Quinquatrus Mineruae*, a yearly, five-day festival through which he celebrated the association with

[316] The influence of Pompey's complex on the usage pattern of imperial residences—certainly not public, yet serving as centres of government away from Rome—seems evident.
[317] Nielsen 1994, 12–25.
[318] Cic., *Fam*. VII.1.
[319] Plut., *Vit. Sull.* XI.
[320] Sall., *Hist*. III.10.
[321] von Hesberg 2009; Liverani 2008.

Minerva, whom he worshipped as his patron deity, having raised her to the level of divine ancestor. The manifold performances included in the festival—oratory and poetry contests, as well as *uenationes*—were staged in the theatre of the imperial villa,[322] which had a capacity of c. 1,000 people;[323] from the evidence provided by a number of entrance tokens to the spectacles of the *Quinquatrus*, Booms has suggested that the invitees included not only the emperor's closest friends, but also people from lower social classes.[324] Interestingly, we know that Domitian himself took part in the celebrations: Suetonius reported that large crowds had had the opportunity to watch him slaying wild beasts in his *Albanum*.[325] The role of imperial *uenationes* as tools to consolidate a ruler's power will be discussed below; what emerges from Domitian's practice is the use of the theatre at his countryside residence to convey and reiterate his close association with Minerva—following the model provided by the Julio-Claudians with Venus—and the quasi-divine nature of his power.

In the period under consideration in this work, another category of entertainment buildings was installed at imperial villas, which catered to the needs of different kinds of spectacles: amphitheatres. Originally designed to stage gladiatorial shows, which were intended to be watched from all sides,[326] amphitheatres soon served as the setting for *uenationes*—especially after the construction of the Flavian Amphitheatre[327]—often

[322] Suet., *Dom*. IV.4; Cass. Dio, LXVII.1.2; Cass. Dio, LXVII.14.3.
[323] von Hesberg 2006a.
[324] Booms 2012, 95–97; the tokens are published in Rostovtzeff 1898.
[325] Suet., *Dom*. XIX.
[326] Welch 2007, 30–71; Bomgardner 2000, 32–60; Golvin 1988, 15–67.
[327] Le Roux 1990, 209–11.

through the installation of scenographic features which served to recreate the atmosphere of Persian and Hellenistic *paradeisa*.[328]

The practice of *uenatio* by Roman emperors followed the tradition of royal hunts celebrating and displaying the courage of ancient sovereigns, following a custom of Egyptian pharaohs,[329] which was in turn replicated by Persian kings,[330] Hellenistic dynasts, and Roman republican generals in their triumphs.[331] Hunting prowess was an allegorical representation of military skill: rulers who excelled in the hunt were thought to be equally talented at slaying wild animals and eliminating threatening enemies, thus ensuring peace and stability for their state.[332]

Literary sources provide information on the passion for hunt of a substantial number of emperors, many of whom are reported to have engaged in beast-killing *uirtutis ostendendae causa*.[333] While in the cases of Tiberius and Nero, Suetonius clearly aimed to describe their hunting customs in negative terms,[334] the active participation of later emperors in hunts is presented as an example of bravery. As mentioned above, Domitian took part in the celebration of the *Quinquatrus Mineruae*, and performed a *uenatio* before the eyes of a large crowd;[335] Trajan, Antoninus Pius, Marcus Aurelius,

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[328] Aymard 1951, 185–96. 'En définitive, l'amphithéâthre, dans son épanouissement, se révele comme une adaption italique du paradis oriental'.

[329] Decker and Thuillier 2004, 20–34.

[330] Spawforth 2012.

[331] Fox 1996.

[332] Tuck 2005, 237–38.

[333] This particular wording comes from *Dig*., III.1.1.6.5–15.

[334] Suet., *Tib*. LXII: he slayed a boar in an arena with the purpose of showing that he had no physical infirmity; Suet., *Nero* LIII: in order to display his courage he killed a lion *spectante populo*, but Suetonius remarks that the lion had been tamed beforehand.

[335] Suet., *Dom*. XIX.

and Lucius Verus used to chase wild animals in a natural setting.[336] Hadrian was accustomed to hunting both in the wild[337] and *in circo*;[338] the importance of hunting prowess for his own propaganda is further evidenced by the four roundels set in the Arch of Constantine and by a number of medallions depicting hunting scenes.[339] Commodus, whose performances at Lanuuium had earned him the title of Roman Hercules, slayed animals in an amphitheatre to showcase his bravery and talent.[340] Literary evidence becomes scantier for later periods: Herodian and the *HA* agree that Caracalla had a passion for beast-killing,[341] and the biographer of Severus Alexander reports in passing that his leisure activities included hunting.[342] In fact, the cursory mention of Severus Alexander's moderate interest in hunting should probably be ascribed to the desire to depict him as a 'good emperor', as opposed to the debauchery of his predecessor.

What emerges from the picture outlined above is the persistent practice of hunting by Roman emperors, not only as an aristocratic pastime, but also as a means to display their courage and *uirtus*. Literary sources suggest two antithetical attitudes as regards hunting customs: on the one hand, Tiberius, Nero, Domitian, Hadrian, and Commodus performed in front of an audience; on the other, Trajan, Antoninus Pius,

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336 Trajan: Plin., *Pan*. LXXXI. Antoninus Pius: SHA, *Ant. Pius* XI.2; Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Caes.* IV.5.2. Marcus Aurelius: SHA, *Marc*. IV.10; Cass. Dio, LXXI.36.2. Lucius Verus: SHA, *Marc*. VIII.12; SHA, *Verus* VI.9, IX.8. Discussion in Leppert 1974, 56–75.

337 SHA, *Hadr*. II.1, XX.13. Cass. Dio, LXIX.10.2, 10.3[2]. See also Kasulke 2000.

338 SHA, *Hadr*. XIX.7.

339 Martini and Schernig 2000.

340 SHA, *Comm*. VIII.5.

341 Hdn., IV.7.2, IV.11.9; SHA, *M. Ant.* V.9.

342 SHA, *Alex. Seu.* XXIX.3.

Marcus Aurelius, Caracalla, and Severus Alexander preferred to chase wild animals in a natural setting. Both practices, nonetheless, had the main purpose of displaying the emperors' talent to the people: while performances in entertainment buildings could be watched by an audience gathered for the purpose, the prowess of emperors hunting in the wild was recorded, praised, and celebrated by a number of contemporary authors.[343]

The installation of circuses at imperial villas was evidently inspired by the topographical, functional, and ideological connection between the Palatine—where emperors resided as early as Augustus—and the Circus Maximus. Festivals held in the circus offered the setting for a highly codified form of interaction between emperors and subjects, which served to glorify the sovereign, reiterate the social hierarchy existing within the community, and emphasise the bond between the emperor and the people.[344] Besides their importance for imperial propaganda, festivals in the Circus Maximus—and in particular chariot racing—were among the most popular forms of entertainment in the Roman world, which emperors might well have enjoyed watching from the *puluinar* annexed to the Palatine residence (see below).

While a proper architectural connection between the Circus Maximus and the imperial residences on the Palatine was not achieved until the second century AD, Augustus was the first who sought to establish a symbolic association between his

[343] Discussion in Le Roux 2009. Manolaraki 2012 on the celebration of Trajan's hunting prowess in Pliny's Panegyric.

[344] Arena 2010, 11–22.

house and the circus.[345] Ulrike Wulf-Rheidt pointed out that, even though it is impossible to ascertain if the proximity to the Circus Maximus had influenced his choice to purchase his house on the Palatine—which was later to become the earliest nucleus of the imperial palaces—the temples of Magna Mater and of Apollo (the latter built by Augustus himself), not far from his house, were certainly linked to celebrations staged in the circus.[346] During the Flavian period, the imperial palaces remained separate from the Circus Maximus; at the beginning of the second century AD, a large exedra (c. 300 m in width) was added to the south-western façade of the imperial palaces,[347] which allowed the emperors to present themselves in a spectacular way above the people gathered in the circus.[348] Further, fragment 8g of the Severan Marble Plan seems to suggest that a bridge-like feature provided a direct connection between the imperial residence and the *puluinar*:[349] following in the vein of Hellenistic palaces, the house of the ruler was thus architecturally and ideologically linked with an entertainment building which allowed an effective *mise-en-scène* of the emperor and of the power he embodied.

The emperors' custom of attending spectacles in the Circus Maximus from a feature referred to as a *puluinar* is attested as early as Augustus, who is however reported to have most frequently watched the games from the dining rooms of his

[345] Royo 2008, 483–85.
[346] Wulf-Rheidt 2012a; Wulf-Rheidt 2011.
[347] Wulf-Rheidt and Sojc 2009, 268; see also Wulf-Rheidt and Bukowiecki 2015, Wulf-Rheidt 2012b.
[348] Wulf-Rheidt 2011.
[349] Humphrey 1986, 80–82.

friends or freedmen.[350] In its original meaning, the word indicated a dais provided with cushions, on which the statues of deities were set on the occasion of performances in the circus and during *lectisternia* or *sellisternia*, as though the gods were really watching the circus games or participating in the banquets held in their honour.[351] Patrizia Arena has pointed out that the use of the term *puluinar* to indicate the box from which the emperors watched the games is deliberately ambiguous, because it elevated emperors to the status of semi-divine entities.[352] Further, by placing himself above the citizen body gathered in the circus, the emperor himself became a spectacle, eliciting the admiration of his subjects.

This chapter will seek to identify the functions of entertainment facilities at imperial villas, by analysing their capacity,[353] their position, and the facilities connecting them with other sectors of the residence, as well as the different kinds of performances that they could stage. Entertainment buildings have been identified in four of the ten sites under consideration: the villa at Lanuuium, the villa of the Quintilii, the *Horti Spei Veteris*, and the villa of Maxentius.

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350 Suet., *Aug*. XLV.1.

351 Hugoniot 2006, 213–14, with references.

352 Arena 2010, 110–12.

353 Despite figures being provided in some of the publications on the villas under consideration, for the sake of consistency I have personally re-calculated the capacity of the entertainment buildings discussed here following the guidelines provided by Rose 2005, 114–17 (based on the methodology proposed by Golvin 1988, 346–54), who has suggested to allow for a *maximum* of 0.4 m^2 per person, a *medium* of 0.28 m^2, and a *minimum* of 0.15 m^2. This variation in the average space allocated to the spectators sitting in the *cauea* depends, of course, on the social differences existing between them. I suggest that, especially as regards theatres and amphitheatres, the audience participating in spectacles staged at imperial villas must have been of a relatively high status, and that attention was paid to ensuring due comfort for the spectators: to calculate the capacity of theatres and amphitheatres installed at imperial villas I will allow for an average space fluctuating between 0.28 m^2 and 0.4 m^2 per person.

LANVVIVM (C6)

As part of an ongoing research project which Montclair State University has been conducting at the villa of the Antonines at Lanuuium since 2010, investigations have been carried out in a curvilinear feature which, owing to its proximity to a bath complex and to the presence of a drainage system, had hitherto been read as a nymphaeum (plan C7.I).[354] Thanks to geophysical surveys that revealed its elliptical shape, the building could be interpreted as a small amphitheatre, measuring c. 52 m on the major axis and c. 40 on the minor, with the arena extending for 36.2 by 24 m.[355] The estimated capacity of the building varies between 2,000 and 3,000 spectators. Excavations in the south-eastern quarter of the amphitheatre revealed a network of functional spaces in the basement, which could be accessed from a spiral staircase; the lack of evidence for vaults suggests that the underground facilities were covered by wooden flooring at the level of the arena. Based on brick stamps and on the ceramic assemblage from the excavations, the amphitheatre has been dated to the central decades of the second century AD.

The archaeological record of the villa of the Antonines accords with the information on the residence that we can gather from textual and epigraphic evidence.[356] According to the *HA*, the residence was the birthplace of Antoninus Pius (AD 86) and Commodus (AD 161);[357] further, a particular connection seems to emerge

[354] Cassieri and Ghini 1990.
[355] Details on the amphitheatre in Chatr Aryamontri and Renner 2017, 377–82.
[356] More extensive discussion in chapter 1, 33–40.
[357] SHA, *Ant. Pius* I.8; SHA, *Comm*. I.2–3.

from literary and epigraphic sources between Commodus, Lanuuium, and the local cult of Hercules. Owing to his custom of slaying animals in the amphitheatre of Lanuuium, the flattering title of Roman Hercules was said to have been bestowed on him.[358] Lacking any evidence for a public amphitheatre at Lanuuium, I suggest identifying the amphitheatre mentioned in Commodus' biography with the one at the imperial residence; notwithstanding the limited and inconsistent reliability of the *HA*, the reference to his custom of engaging in beast-killing *domi* offers further evidence in this regard.

I propose to read the villa of Lanuuium in relationship with another imperial residence, which the Antonine family seems to have used persistently: the villa of Laurentum.[359] In the *ager Laurentinus*, literary and epigraphic sources suggest the presence of a herd of elephants, which was an exclusive possession of the imperial house (*armentum Caesaris*),[360] and for which there was a dedicated *procurator*.[361]

The display and slaughter of elephants during spectacles in the arena was a long-established practice, which symbolised the defeat of Rome's most threatening enemies, and its supremacy over the rest of the world:[362] having defeated the Carthagininan army at Panormus (250 BC), L. Caecilius Metellus returned to Rome with no fewer than 140 elephants, which were used for mock battles staged in the Circus Maximus.[363]

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[358] SHA, *Comm*. VIII.5.
[359] Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Caes.* II.6.3. See also Hdn., I.12 on Commodus' withdrawal to Laurentum in the years 187–88.
[360] Juv., XII.102–07.
[361] *CIL* VI.8583.
[362] Further discussion in Shelton 2004.
[363] Plin., *HN* VIII.6.

Venationes involving the slaughter of elephants were offered by Pompey as part of the celebrations for the inauguration of the temple of Venus Victrix (55 BC), and by Caesar, at games held in 46 BC; under Claudius and Nero, fighting an elephant was considered the culmination of a gladiator's career.[364]

The villa at Lanuuium could easily be reached from the *ager Laurentinus*, c. 20 miles to the west, via the Ardea-Lanuuium road (fig. 3.6).[365] If the games held in the amphitheatre annexed to the imperial villa involved the exhibition or slaughter of elephants, those of the *armentum Caesaris* could be transported to Lanuuium rapidly and conveniently.

Villa of the Quintilii (C9)

After he confiscated the property of the Quintilii brothers on the *uia Appia*, Commodus equipped it with no less than three entertainment facilities: a theatre, an amphitheatre and a circus (plan C9.III).

The installation of the theatre exploited a large exedra (R15) on the southern frontage of the main block of the villa, which had hitherto served both as a monumental façade and as a distribution facility, providing access to the features behind it. Through the addition of four shallow steps abutting the innermost wall of the exedra, and the installation of a *scaenae frons* and of a stage on the opposite side,

[364] Plin., *HN* VIII.7.

[365] The road has partially been identified: Dalmiglio *et al.* 2019, 107.

the exedra was turned into a small theatre,[366] which can be calculated to have had a capacity of c. 200–300 spectators (fig. 3.7).[367] Behind the exedra-theatre, a circular room (R14), conventionally interpreted as a summer *coenatio* (but which I propose to read as a monumental vestibule leading to the Large Baths[368]), underwent some alterations that have been dated to the same timeframe: the installation of four similarly sized walls in the middle of the room and the closure of the northern doorway. The walls have been explained as features supporting a platform installed above, which was reached from a staircase to the south. In its new layout, R14 was interpreted as a privileged box from which the emperor could watch the spectacles staged in the theatre;[369] this reading does not sound convincing, particularly because the doorway (3.5 m) through which R14 opening onto the orchestra would not have offered an enjoyable view of the stage. Instead, I propose explaining it as a feature ancillary to the theatre, which could have served, for instance, as space for breaks in between spectacles;[370] a box reserved for the emperor was most likely located to the south of R14.

Parallels for this architectural layout and for the modest proportions of the theatre

366 Paris, Frontoni, and Galli 2019, 56–59; based on stratigraphic data, the alterations have been dated to the age of Commodus.

367 These figures account for the capacity of the four steps; the presence of a proper *cauea* has not been ascertained on current evidence. It has been suggested (*Ibid.*, 58–59) that removable wooden seating could be installed if necessary; in that case, the capacity of the theatre would have been somewhere between 670 and 960 people.

368 Chapter 6, 255–56.

369 Paris, Frontoni and Galli 2019, 58.

370 A similar interpretation has been proposed by Giovanni Ioppolo for the hexagonal feature annexed to the *tribunal iudicum* of the Circus of Maxentius (Ioppolo 1999, 169). His use of the word *recreatio* for this room is not corroborated by any textual evidence.

are found in a number of villas dated to the late-Republican/early imperial period,[371] two of which belonged to members of the imperial family: the villa of Vedius Pollio at Pausilypon (bequeathed to Augustus in 15 BC, fig. 3.8),[372] and the villa on the island of Pianosa (fig. 3.8), where Agrippa Postumus was exiled in AD 7.[373] A similar configuration has also been identified at Abano Terme (fig. 3.9),[374] even though the ownership of this residence remains impossible to ascertain on current evidence.

The examination of the different routes leading to the theatre suggests that it was attended by at least three categories of people (fig. 3.10). The network of monumental corridors B33, B20, B64, A14bis, A19bis, A6 linked the residential quarter at the eastern corner of the main block to the transitional space R59, which gave access to the theatre; I have proposed to read the *cubicula* B26 and B27 as reserved for the villa's most important dweller—possibly the emperor himself—owing to their decoration, to the presence of heating and of a latrine (B25), and to the elaborate *opus sectile* walls of the facilities connecting them with other sections of the residence.[375]

To the west of the theatre and adjacent to it, excavations have revealed a compact building unit; its plan—a number of rooms arranged around the central space R42—is reminiscent of that of a small residential facility. The evidence for heating and for *opus sectile* walls in at least one of the rooms corroborates the interpretation of this feature as a living space, rather than as a service area. This independent 'apartment' was

[371] A catalogue in Tosi 2003.
[372] Busen 2016; Günther 1913.
[373] Pisani Sartorio 2002.
[374] Tosi 1987, 189–91; Rinaldi 1966.
[375] Chapter 2, 69–70.

directly linked to the theatre, via a staircase leading to aisle R11—whose elaborate floor mosaic marks it as a high-ranking space—and thence to the theatre. Despite not being as luxurious as the presumed imperial *cubicula*, this residential area was probably reserved for individuals of some importance, as suggested by the presence of heating and its direct connection to the theatre and to the Large Baths (see chapter 4): I suggest interpreting it as lodgings for high-ranking guests.

The main block of the villa was reached by the curvilinear ends of two monumental corridors extending for c. 300 m towards the *uia Appia*, to the west (plan C9.VII). The southern one, X, provided a direct connection between the monumental nymphaeum marking the entrance to the property and the facilities in the southern half of the main block. The northern doorway of the bulb-shaped space (R1) at the eastern end of corridor X led to the area behind the *scaenae frons*, and thence to the seating of the theatre. External guests accessing the residence from the *uia Appia* could thus reach the theatre without circulating in areas of the villa where they were probably not allowed.

In the central decades of the third century AD, the orchestra and the seating steps of the theatre were obliterated by a marble flooring installed above, and a number of radial walls were erected in the semi-circular corridor behind the steps, to define a sequence of separate compartments.[376] Evidence for *opus sectile* walls and for high-quality paintings in the radial rooms, as well as for waterpipes in space R15, suggests

[376] A chronological range for these alterations was provided by a coin of Severus Alexander found in the mortar of one of the radial walls (Paris, Frontoni and Galli 2019, 59).

that the post-Commodan alterations were intended to reconfigure the area by turning the theatre into an open area with fountains and water features, surrounded by rooms whose decoration corroborates their interpretation as formal spaces.

A secure interpretation of the elliptical feature at the north-eastern corner of the main block (F1, fig. 3.11) is still hard to provide on current evidence. It consisted of two concentric ellipses defining an inner space extending for 29.6 by 25.2 m, surrounded by a 4.5-metre-wide corridor, probably covered by a colonnaded portico, which may have had an upper storey in its southern section. The building was reached by an aisle linked to the network of formal corridors discussed above, which provided a direct connection between the presumed imperial quarters and the remainder of the villa.[377]

Investigations carried out both in the inner space and in the surrounding corridor have revealed that construction activities in this area went on for c. thirty years. Riccardo Frontoni has argued that, in its original architectural layout—dated to the age of Commodus—the building was a sort of *ludus*/amphitheatre; the interpretation, suggested by the very shape of the feature, is corroborated by the possible parallel with the small amphitheatre installed in the Palazzo Imperiale of Portus in the Severan period. Besides their ground plan, the two buildings are comparable for their dimensions (numbers 2 and 3 on fig. 3.19), respectively 38.5 by 34.3 m (villa of the Quintilii) and 41.6 by 33 m (Portus).[378]

[377] Details in *Ibid.*, 38–43.

[378] Keay, Earl and Felici 2011, 78–80.

The amphitheatre was accessed from the south, thorough a corridor perpendicular to A19bis; the opening on the western side seems a way out towards the open area L3est rather than an entranceway. Owing to its position and to its direct connection with the presumed imperial quarters, I suggest reading it as an exclusive facility, which could only be accessed by the emperor and by special guests, who were granted the immense privilege of entering the emperor's personal space: in order to reach it, external visitors needed to access the formal route A6–A19bis.

Building activity in the amphitheatre was interrupted in the final years of the third century AD, but resumed shortly thereafter. The building underwent a change in its design, which implied a transformation of its functions. The upper level of the colonnade was dismantled, as suggested by the removal of the two staircases leading upstairs; it seems that the inner elliptical wall was removed as well. Investigations in the arena have revealed features linked to the supply and disposal of water, dated to the construction of the building, which were seemingly reused in the post-Commodan phase for the installation of fountains or water features: the elliptical building was seemingly turned into a *uiridarium*.

To the south of the main block, the 1998–2018 excavations revealed the starting gates of a circus (fig. 3.12), whose full extension (c. 500 m, comparable to the circus at the villa of Maxentius) had been suggested by Thomas Ashby and subsequently identified in a few mid-twentieth-century aerial photographs (fig. 3.13).[379] Since most of the building lies on privately owned land, it has only been possible to investigate

[379] *Ibid.*, 70–72; Ashby 1910.

the circus' *carceres*; a feature interpreted as the imperial *puluinar*, lying on the eastern side of the circus c. 100 m to the south of the starting gates, remains unexcavated to date; likewise, the extension and capacity of the seating are impossible to calculate.

The *carceres* of the circus, dated to the age of Commodus based on stratigraphy and ceramics, were obliterated in the mid-third century AD by the installation of a luxuriously decorated winery, including grape-pressing facilities, a cellar with sixteen *dolia defossa*, and dining rooms.[380] The theatre and the circus thus remained in use for a relatively short time span: presumably installed by Commodus after he confiscated the villa, they were both dismantled after c. sixty years.

Horti Spei Veteris (C10)

In the suburban residence of the *Horti Spei Veteris*, allegedly built by Septimius Severus on the south-eastern outskirts of Rome, a circus and an amphitheatre were added, respectively, under Caracalla and Elagabalus (plan C10.I); it is not clear if the two buildings were part of the original project of the *Horti* and were completed after Septimius Severus' death or if, on the contrary, they were part of alterations carried out by his successors.

Measuring more than 600 m in length and c. 150 m in width, with the *carceres* on its north-western end, the Circus Varianus (fig. 3.14) was probably installed by Caracalla, but underwent some alterations under Elagabalus, who reduced the length

[380] Discussion on the winery in chapter 5, 210–11.

of the building by moving the starting gates to the south-east.[381] A rectangular feature measuring c. 33 m in width and a least 45 m in length, with the same orientation as the circus and seemingly installed on the area of the erased *carceres* (16), has likewise been attributed to Elagabalus: it has been suggested that the starting gates were dismantled to provide space for this so-far-unidentified structure. The building, uncovered during excavations carried out in the years 1959–63, was not documented in sufficient detail: the only existing plan lacks any characterisation.[382] As will be discussed below, this feature might tentatively be identified as a suburban temple which Elagabalus dedicated to *Sol Inuictus*, whose cult he introduced forcibly into the Roman pantheon.

Despite the poor preservation of the whole complex, it seems that the circus was directly connected to the sumptuous reception hall 1[383] by the monumental gallery 4, whose south-eastern end probably led to the imperial *puluinar* (fig. 3.15); the circus went out of use in the late third century AD, when it was truncated by the construction of the Aurelianic walls (270–75).

A passage from Herodian describes the elaborate celebrations linked to the worship of *Sol Inuictus*,[384] which the eccentric emperor, in his role as high priest of the sun god, had imported from Emesa.[385] Herodian reports that the baetyl symbolising the god was brought each year 'ἐν τῷ προαστείῳ', where Elagabalus had constructed a grand temple; upon reaching the suburban sanctuary, the emperor climbed on to

[381] Chronological developments in Paterna 1996, 839–53.
[382] Guglielmi 2014, 54–55; Borgia *et al.* 2008a, 6–7.
[383] The reading of the feature 1 as a reception hall is discussed in chapter 2, 81–82.
[384] Hdn., V.6.6–9.
[385] SHA, *Heliogab*. III.4; Martin 1998, 89–92; Halsberghe 1984, 2184–93.

high towers that he had built for the purpose, and threw down all sorts of goods to the crowd gathered below. The festivals included chariot races held in a circus allegedly built by Elagabalus himself—the towers from which Elagabalus showered the crowd with gifts can thus be identified with those either side of the *carceres* of the Circus Varianus, which Elagabalus remodelled—as well as banquets offered to the people.

Giuseppe Restaino's recent reassessment of the archaeological and literary evidence concerned with the suburban sanctuary of *Sol Inuictus* has led him to argue that the temple was probably located within the residence *ad Spem Veterem*: the προάστειον in which Elagabalus celebrated the rituals for the sun god should be interpreted as a 'suburban property' (Lat. *suburbanum*) rather than as a generic indication that the temple was located at the outskirts of Rome.[386] Regardless of the verisimilitude and accuracy of Herodian's account of the celebrations for *Sol Inuictus*, which mentions chariot races held in a circus with which we may be tempted to identify the Circus Varianus, we are nonetheless informed by other sources[387] that the suburban residence where Elagabalus stayed most often is that of the *Horti Spei Veteris*, hence Restaino's proposal to identify it with the προάστειον mentioned by Herodian.

In her work on the Circus Varianus, Claudia Paterna has suggested interpreting the rectangular building installed by Elagabalus on the site of the erased *carceres* as the temple of *Sol Inuictus*, based on its presumed chronology and on its apparent functional connection with the circus; as the building was backfilled in the 1960s,

[386] Restaino 2020, 249–58.

[387] Cass. Dio, LXXX.14.2; SHA, *Heliogab*. XIII.5–6, XIV.2–8, XXVII.1, XXVIII.1.

Paterna's argument cannot be verified. The location of building 16 offers some support to Paterna's interpretation: the circus seems to have been truncated to provide space for the installation of 16. Serena Guglielmi, on the contrary, has proposed to interpret a circular building at the opposite end of the circus as the temple of *Sol Inuictus*, which she identified in a number of sixteenth-century drawings.[388] The drawings do not include the feature within its topographical context, but mention that its remains lay at about one mile from Porta Maggiore, on the road running along the aqueducts: it is much more plausible to locate the building near the circular end of the circus. If we are to trust the indications of its position, however, the building lay c. 1 km to the south-east of the circus: its connection to the residence *ad Spem Veterem* is hard to ascertain.

Dated to the age of Elagabalus,[389] the *Amphitheatrum Castrense* is the latest example of the installation of an amphitheatre in an imperial residence (fig. 3.16). Similarly to the circus configuration, the monumental gallery 4 provided a direct connection between the amphitheatre's northern access and reception hall 1 (fig. 3.15). The southern entrance of the amphitheatre led into a vaulted corridor running around the building, which provided access to the *uomitoria*;[390] from this configuration, it seems that the northern entrance served as a privileged access for people coming from the ceremonial section of the palace (the emperor, his guests, or senior officials of the court), whereas the southern access was intended for lower-status individuals, possibly external invitees.

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[388] Guglielmi 2014, 55–61.

[389] Colini 1955, 153–54.

[390] Barbera 2001; Colli *et al.* 1997; Tosi 1995. See also Golvin 1988, 219–20.

The capacity of the *Amphitheatrum Castrense* can be calculated at between 6,400 and 9,200 spectators. This was much more modest than that of the Flavian Amphitheatre (c. 60,000 people), yet significantly bigger than that of the other amphitheatres under consideration here: an interpretation as a facility reserved almost exclusively for members of the imperial court[391] does not seem convincing. The higher capacity of the *Amphitheatrum Castrense* can be explained in light of the peculiar position of the residence, which is not only at the immediate outskirts of Rome, but lies also at a short distance from three forts of military corps responsible for the security of the emperor.[392] As will be discussed more extensively below, it is possible that the amphitheatre served predominantly for the entertainment of the troops housed in the forts—*castra*—near the residence, hence the name *Amphitheatrum Castrense*.

The architectural layout of the *Horti Spei Veteris* replicated, albeit on a slightly smaller scale, that of the imperial palaces on the Palatine, also associated with a circus and an amphitheatre. If we trust Herodian's account of the rituals for *Sol Inuictus*, there seems to be a connection between the Circus Varianus and the celebration of the newly introduced cult of *Sol Inuictus*, of which Elagabalus was the high priest. Both Cassius Dio and the *HA*, furthermore, remark on Elagabalus' passion for chariot races, which he often held in his own residence: notwithstanding the limited reliability of the biographies collected in the *HA*, it seems that the Circus Varianus catered to the religious needs of an emperor who had reformed the Roman pantheon, alongside

[391] Schöpe 2014, 247–48; Barbera 2001.
[392] Volpe 1993.

providing a venue for exclusive chariot races in which he could drive himself.[393] As regards the *Amphitheatrum Castrense*, its smaller capacity compared to that of the Flavian Amphitheatre suggests that a more selected pool of guests was invited, which may be explained in light of different usage patterns; the possible identity of these invitees will be discussed in the concluding section of this chapter.

Villa of Maxentius (C11)

The alterations carried out by Maxentius in the residential complex at the third mile of the *uia Appia* included the construction of a circus[394] and a monumental mausoleum, as well as spaces serving as reception facilities (plan C11.IV). The circus[395] was installed in a shallow valley to the south-east of the residence proper, to which it was linked by a 190-metre-long roofed corridor (P).

The western side of the building was entirely occupied by the *oppidum* (fig. 3.17), which included twelve starting gates (six on each side of the *porta pompae*) flanked by two towers, and a box reserved for the organiser of the performances (*editor spectaculorum*); the *porta triumphalis* opened into the curvilinear end of the circus, on the eastern side. The aforementioned corridor P connected the formal spaces of the imperial residence with a feature on the northern side of the circus, which has been interpreted as the *puluinar* reserved for the emperor and his most important guests,

[393] The *Circus Vaticanus*, which may have likewise served as a track for less 'official' races, had been dismantled a few decades before Elagabalus (Liverani 2005; Tomei 2001; Liverani 1999, 21–27).
[394] MGH *Chron. Min.*, ed. Mommsen (1892), 148.
[395] Details on the architecture of the circus and on the interpretation of individual features in Ioppolo 1999, 103–88.

owing to its position in correspondence with the *alba linea*[396] marking the official starting point of the race, from which the chariots were allowed to overtake one another. A box on the opposite side of the circus, overlooking the finishing line, has been identified as the *tribunal iudicum*, as it offered a clear view of both the *alba linea* and the finishing line: the judges could thus ensure that races started and ended without irregularities.[397] The circus had a capacity of c. 12,000 people.[398]

The spectacles probably began with a *pompa circensis*, which introduced the races proper.[399] A wide variety of individuals were employed in both performances, ranging from musicians, dancers, mimes, and priests to charioteers and race judges, as well as a pool of attendants and assistants who took care of horses and chariots before and after the races. We must imagine that, owing to the substantial number of people watching the performances, some security staff were employed, in charge of protecting the person of the emperor and preventing potentially hazardous situations. A full day of spectacles required detailed and accurate planning: efficient management of circulation patterns was crucial to their success.

Giovanni Ioppolo has suggested that the quadriporticus surrounding the mausoleum of Romulus also served as space ancillary to the circus, as it provided room for a sequence of stables where horses and teams were accommodated before and after the races.[400] This interpretation is hard to accept: the sacred nature of the mausoleum

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396 Fauquet 2008, 264–65.
397 *Ibid.*, 274–81.
398 Seating arrangements are discussed *infra*.
399 Arena 2010, 53–102.
400 Ioppolo 1999, 104–06.

is hardly compatible with the simultaneous presence of stables.

The imperial *puluinar* was linked, through corridor P, to the heart of the residence, which included the dwelling areas F and G and the sumptuous apsidal hall M, opening onto the corridor through atrium N; this layout is partially reminiscent of that of the *Horti Spei Veteris*, where the *puluinar* of the circus seems directly connected to the main reception hall of the Severan residence by the monumental gallery 4 (fig. 3.18).

The number and distribution of entrances to the circus might shed some light on the possible identity of the people invited to the performances. Giuseppina Pisani Sartorio has convincingly interpreted the curvilinear feature O as a monumental gateway welcoming the people accessing the residence from the *uia Asinaria*, to the north;[401] I suggest reading it in connection with the much smaller number of entranceways on the northern side of the circus, which could have been reserved for higher-ranking individuals using the monumental access to the villa. Conversely, entrances were more numerous on the opposite side of the circus, towards the *uia Appia*. This variation in access patterns might be explained in light of differences in the number and rank of the people allowed in the circus: whilst the entrances on the northern side were probably reserved for individuals of a higher social status, more ordinary spectators coming from the *uia Appia* could access the circus from the south (fig. 3.18). Upon entering the circus, spectators could reach their seat from staircases accessed from the vaulted gallery supporting the *loca*. Owing to the steep inclination of the seating and the modest depth of the steps, Ioppolo has argued that people sat

[401] Chapter 2, 73–74.

on every other tier; the remarkable inclination of the *loca* has been explained as an attempt to provide better visibility of the racing track even to the spectators sitting on the upper steps.[402]

Can the archaeological evidence of the villa of Maxentius provide room for speculation as to the possible functions of the circus? As will be discussed more extensively below, its architectural configuration draws inspiration not only from the layout of the *Palatium* in Rome, but also from that of the imperial residences installed in the newly instituted tetrarchic capitals. In the introduction to this chapter, it has been pointed out that the Circus Maximus, architecturally and functionally linked to the imperial headquarters on the Palatine, provided a venue for highly codified interactions between the emperor and the civic community; the building, however, was not associated with a specific emperor, as much as with the power which emperors embodied. In the complex at the third mile of the *uia Appia*, Maxentius combined a suburban palace with a circus and with a mausoleum that served, as argued by Dennis Graen and Cornelius Vollmer, both as a burial site and as a temple for a familial cult.[403] Through its connection with the imperial residence and with the dynastic tomb, the circus acquired a distinctly personal character, inextricably linked with the emperor residing in the nearby palace.

[402] Ioppolo 1999, 139–40.
[403] Graen 2008, 60–74; Vollmer 2006.

Concluding remarks

The analysis of the installation of entertainment facilities at imperial villas from the mid-second to the early fourth century AD has allowed me to follow the transformations in the nature and functions of the different forms of entertainment staged at imperial residences (fig. 3.19, table 3.1). In this section, I will try to identify the probable evolutions in the life pattern of the imperial court underlying the development of entertainment practices at imperial villas, and discuss the possible identity of the invitees to the different spectacles.

As early as the Hellenistic period, and increasingly so in the late Republic, rulers and grandees did not fail to understand the political potential of associating their residences with entertainment facilities. First, providing easily accessible entertainment to the civic community was a means to keep the people under some level of control, and to reduce the risk of turmoil. Second, through the staging of performances that conveyed specific messages, rulers could maintain the status quo. Third, entertainment buildings were a venue for ritualised forms of interaction between sovereigns and subjects: alongside providing a setting for the holding of spectacles, they served to stage the ruler, allowing him to appear before the whole community in a spectacular fashion.

Throughout the first and early second centuries AD, the only class of entertainment facilities installed at imperial villas is that of theatres, which have been identified at

Albanum,[404] Pausilypon,[405] and Pianosa.[406] The configuration of Hadrian's Villa stands in sharp contrast with the Julio-Claudian, Flavian, and Trajanic villas: the complex at Tibur is equipped with at least three entertainment buildings, a fourth one having been planned, seemingly, but never built.

The two theatre-like facilities of the villa, the Greek Theatre and the Odeum,[407] are found respectively at the northernmost and southernmost ends of the most densely built-up area. Whilst the Greek Theatre (fig. 3.20)[408] was next to the road which connected the villa with the Ponte Lucano and the *uia Tiburtina*, the Odeum (fig. 3.21) was served by one of the branches of the 'via carrabile' B (fig. 3.22):[409] both buildings could therefore be accessed easily from outside the villa. Likewise, the small amphitheatre to the east of the Piazza d'Oro (fig. 3.23) was reached by the 'via carrabile' B, which branched off from the main access road c. 150 m to the south-west of the Greek Theatre. A marble model of a stadium reproduced at a 1:48 scale, discovered between the Large Baths and the Praetorium, led Eugenia Salza Prina Ricotti to argue that the project of the villa must have included a stadium, which was however never built;[410] the author's argument on the stadium's possible location—the Valley of Tempe—is impossible to demonstrate.

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[404] von Hesberg 2006a.
[405] Busen 2016.
[406] Pisani Sartorio 2002.
[407] The names Greek Theatre and Odeum are the result of antiquarian studies, and do not reflect the layout and functions of the two buildings.
[408] León Alonso 2007.
[409] Salza Prina Ricotti 1997, 144–45.
[410] *Ibid*., 113–17.

The capacity of the Greek Theatre, the Odeum, and the amphitheatre (respectively 2,700, 2,200, and 2,000 people), suggest that the performances held there were aimed at a relatively selected audience. Owing to their peripheral position and ease of access through the carriageways, spectators arriving from outside the villa could reach them without passing through the built-up areas of the complex, where they may have interfered with other individuals' activities.

I propose to read the remarkable variety of Hadrian's Villa's entertainment buildings as aiming to reproduce the range of entertainment facilities—and, as a result, the diverse choice of spectacles—of Rome. As discussed widely in this work, the peculiar configuration of Hadrian's Villa suggests that the complex was designed to cater to the needs of long stays of the whole imperial court. The presence of no less than three—and potentially four—entertainment buildings seems to follow in this vein: by replicating, to some extent, the variety of entertainment facilities available in Rome, the emperor aimed to bestow on the Tiburtine residence the role of a fully fledged centre of power, where the whole range of imperial activities—including giving and perhaps even participating in spectacles—could be relocated for the entire duration of the imperial stay. The following paragraphs will seek to identify and investigate the possible influence of the architectural experience of Hadrian's Villa on the installation of entertainment buildings at imperial villas built or used after the Hadrianic period.

Entertainment facilities have been identified in four of the ten villas under consideration; interestingly, only one of them is a theatre. The installation of theatres

or theatre-like facilities at imperial residences spanned from Augustus to the late second century AD, peaking between Domitian and Hadrian. Whilst the specific functions of the Augustan villas equipped with theatres—Pausilypon and Pianosa—are hard to reconstruct on current evidence, the picture is much clearer in the case of Domitian's *Albanum*: the theatre offered a venue for the staging of festivals in honour of his tutelar goddess, through which he established a connection with the practices of the Julio-Claudian emperors. Whether it was at the same theatre that Domitian slaughtered wild beasts in front of large crowds[411] is impossible to say.

I will now try to identify the functions of the small theatre of the villa of the Quintilii, based on the possible reasons underlying the decline in the number of theatres installed at imperial residences in the second century AD. This decrease may be explained, in my opinion, not as the progressive disappearance of the performances normally staged in theatres, but as their 'relocation' to a different setting.

As will be discussed more extensively in chapter 5, a substantial component of Roman banquets was the staging of increasingly elaborate forms of entertainment, which ranged from music and dramatic performances to acrobats and stunt animals; Katherine Dunbabin has pointed out that dinner entertainment served not only to amuse the diners, but also to support the political aims of the *dominus*.[412] From the analysis of dining facilities carried out in chapter 5, it will emerge that, starting from the final decades of the first century AD and steadily more so in the following century,

[411] Suet., *Dom*. XIX.
[412] Dunbabin 2008.

the size and capacity of imperial *coenationes* increased significantly, and that a growing emphasis was placed on the space reserved for dinner entertainment.

I propose to bring together here the two tendencies discussed above, and to explain the gradual decline in the number of theatres installed at imperial residences as linked to the growing importance of dinner entertainment, which resulted in the relocation to dining halls—that is, smaller spaces for poetry recitations or exclusive vocal performances—of some of the spectacles hitherto staged in theatres. As I will discuss more extensively below, it also seems that, starting from the central decades of the second century, the role of theatres associated with imperial villas was gradually acquired by amphitheatres, which were probably more suited to the staging of *uenationes* showcasing the emperors' hunting prowess.

Owing to its modest capacity (c. one fifth of that of the *Albanum*), the theatre at the villa of the Quintilii could accommodate a small audience: I suggest explaining it as little more than a luxurious toy, to which the emperor could invite special guests; this should not lead us to conclude, though, that it lacked any political function. By admitting a limited number of individuals to his villa, he bestowed on them the great honour of sharing his leisure activities: the simple permission to access an exclusive facility of the imperial residence served to convey and reinforce the social hierarchy. The bathing and dining facilities of the villa of the Quintilii, as discussed in chapters 4 and 5 respectively, suggest similar usage patterns.

A completely different picture emerged as regards amphitheatres. In the period under consideration, amphitheatres were installed in three villas, in a time span of c.

fifty years; another one was built at the so-called Palazzo Imperiale at Portus, an urban residence rather than a villa, which nonetheless had some importance as the imperial headquarters at the harbour of Rome.

It has been pointed out that amphitheatres, alongside serving as the foremost venue for gladiatorial fights, could also allow the staging of *uenationes*. The opportunity to slay beasts in an arena led a significant number of emperors to hunt not only in natural settings, but also in amphitheatres, where they could display their prowess to an audience gathered for the purpose. I suggest explaining the efflorescence of amphitheatres installed at imperial villas between the mid-second and the early third century AD by the evolution in the messages that the performances held at imperial residences served to convey, which may in turn indicate a transformation in the ways in which emperors sought to consolidate their power.

While the performance of *uenationes* is recorded by literary sources with regard to several emperors, the persistent engagement in hunting of nearly all the Antonines has been linked by Patrick Le Roux with the necessity of establishing and consolidating a dynasty whose members were selected, allegedly, on the basis of their *uirtus* rather than through blood ties.[413] Interestingly, his argument agrees with the results of the analysis carried out in chapter 1:[414] the necessity was constantly felt by the Antonine emperors to reiterate the legitimate nature of their power and the strength of the adoptive dynasty.

[413] Le Roux 2009, 26.
[414] Chapter 1, 40–42.

These considerations can apply to the villa of Lanuuium, whose tight connection with the Antonine dynasty has emerged from the analysis of literary and epigraphical evidence; to explain the possible functions of the amphitheatres installed at the villa of the Quintilii and at the *Horti Spei Veteris*, we need to consider their dimensions and the location of the residences to which they were associated.

The modest size of the amphitheatre of the villa of the Quintilii accords not only with the capacity of the theatre, but also with that of its baths and dining halls, as discussed in chapters 4 and 5. The analysis of these features indicates that they were meant to be used by a restricted number of individuals, whom the emperor welcomed in his luxurious suburban retreat. The examination of access patterns to the amphitheatre, furthermore, has revealed that those wishing to enter it needed to pass through the emperor's personal space. These considerations suggest that the people allowed to access the theatre and the amphitheatre of the villa of the Quintilii must have been of a significantly high social status; as already discussed with regard to its theatre, I propose reading the amphitheatre as little more than a divertissement, a venue where the emperor could entertain his most important guests. The possibility cannot be ruled out, furthermore, that it also served as a private exercise arena, where Commodus could practise his *uenatio* skills.

As we have seen, the villa of the Quintilii was also provided with a circus; despite it being impossible to calculate its actual capacity, as no evidence suggesting the extent of the seating is preserved, we cannot fail to note that the association of an imperial residence with an amphitheatre—albeit small—and a circus mirrored the layout of the

imperial headquarters on the Palatine. It seems that, through the installation of an amphitheatre and of a circus at the villa of the Quintilii, Commodus sought to replicate the configuration of the *Palatium* on the outskirts of Rome, that is, in a setting where he could fulfil his role in a different architectural and social environment. The influence of Hadrian's Villa on the layout of the villa of the Quintilii is evident; as we shall see, similar considerations can be made as regards bathing facilities.

The much larger size of the Amphitheatrum Castrense, together with the position of the *Horti Spei Veteris*, indicates different usage patterns. The capacity of the amphitheatre, which I have proposed to calculate at between 6,400 and 9,200 people, suggests that the spectators were hardly as selected as at the villa of the Quintilii or at Portus. Interestingly, the *Horti Spei Veteris* lie in an area of Rome which is characterised by the presence of the forts of the military corps involved with the security of emperors: the Praetorian Guard (who stayed at the Castra Praetoria, to the north of the area under examination) and the *Equites Singulares Augusti* (housed in the Castra Priora and in the Castra Noua, respectively on the slopes of the Caelian Hill and underneath the Lateran Basilica[415]). Amphitheatres associated with military forts are attested since the Augustan period: arenas installed at *castra* served as venues for both training and entertainment.[416] It may be suggested, as a working hypothesis, that some connection existed between the amphitheatre of the imperial residence and the substantial presence of imperial bodyguards in the area, which may also offer an

[415] Buzzetti 1993.

[416] Golvin 1988, 154–58.

explanation for the appellative *Castrense* by which the building is referred to in the Regionaries. Owing to its dimensions and to its position relative to the three forts, I would hardly interpret it as used for military practice; instead, I propose reading it as a facility for the entertainment of the imperial guard, which may have also served as a privileged venue for interactions between the emperor and his bodyguards. The fact that the construction of the Castra Noua was sponsored by Septimius Severus may offer further evidence in this regard.

As discussed in the introduction, the installation of circuses at imperial residences draws inspiration from the architectural and functional association between the *Palatium* and the Circus Maximus (fig. 3.24). The reasons behind the circuses discussed in this chapter, however, seem to differ significantly from one another.

I have proposed to read installation of a circus at the villa of the Quintilii, combined with a theatre and an amphitheatre, as aiming to reproduce the multiplicity of entertainment facilities available in Rome at the outskirts of the city. The functions of the circuses at the *Horti Spei Veteris* and at the villa of Maxentius can be defined more accurately, based on the information provided by literary evidence and on parallels with the imperial headquarters installed in the tetrarchic capitals.

As discussed in the relevant section, the Circus Varianus at the *Horti Spei Veteris* may have provided a setting for the celebration of rituals connected with the cult of the solar god of Emesa. If Herodian's account is trustworthy, Elagabalus exploited the building as a tool to support his reform of the Roman pantheon: the circus was thus linked not only with the new cult, but also with the persona of Elagabalus in his role

as the high priest of *Sol Inuictus*.

It is precisely a deliberate association between a specific ruler and a circus that seems to emerge from the configuration of the imperial headquarters installed at the new *sedes imperii* created with the institution of the Tetrarchy. Circuses connected with the establishment of new imperial seats are recorded by literary and epigraphic evidence at Antiochia, Nicomedia, Trier, Sirmium, Milan, Aquileia, Thessaloniki, and Constantinople (fig. 3.25); this efflorescence has been linked with a potential new role for circuses, in light of a possibly renewed imperial ceremonial.[417]

The creation of a system of multiple emperors and the establishment of new seats of power resulted in the creation of permanent imperial courts outside Rome, in which the proper imperial residence was tightly connected with a circus.[418] The newly invested rulers, even if they had not obtained their power in a completely unconventional fashion,[419] must have felt the need to legitimise their role and position to the community of the city where they had their headquarters. As discussed above, venues for ritualised forms of interaction between emperors and subject were crucial to the public representation of imperial power; until the late third century AD, this function had been fulfilled by the Circus Maximus. Emanuel Mayer has pointed out that in the seats of the Tetrarchs, the construction of an imperial palace was the

[417] Humphrey 1986, 579–637.

[418] von Hesberg 2006b; Mayer 2002, 28–38.

[419] The joint government by two emperors was not a new idea, even if it was formalised by Diocletian (Bowman 2005). Likewise, the practice according to which still-alive emperors could nominate a sequence of successors had already been seen with Hadrian, who ordered Antoninus Pius to adopt Marcus Aurelius (Birley 2000).

foremost sign of imperial presence;[420] furthermore, a passage of the fourth-century *Expositio totius mundi et gentium* links the performance of *circenses* at Antiochia with the constant presence of the emperor:[421] in the newly instituted *sedes imperii*, the palace-circus compound was a meaningful and tangible sign of imperial presence, alongside offering a setting where the tetrarchs could meet their subjects.[422]

The configuration of the tetrarchic residences, evidently influenced by that of the *Palatium* of Rome, was in turn replicated by Maxentius at his suburban villa. The discussion of Maxentius' building activity in Rome[423] has highlighted that through the construction of new facilities for public usage and the restoration of some of the city's monuments, as well as the installation of his own residence at the outskirts of Rome, Maxentius deliberately sought to connect the old *Caput Mundi* to his persona, in clear contrast with the shift of imperial activities at the *limes* of the empire. Furthermore, by mirroring the layout of the tetrarchic palaces in his suburban villa, he evidently aimed to present himself as a legitimate ruler, and to conceal the fact that he had actually usurped his power.

The proposed reconstruction of the usage patterns of the circus of the *Horti Spei Veteris*, as well as the symbolic and ideological functions suggested with regard to the circus installed at the villa of Maxentius, are corroborated by the very position of these two residences, which lie both within three miles from Rome. It has been highlighted

420 Mayer 2013, 111.
421 *Expositio totius mundi et gentium*, 32.
422 Hidalgo Prieto 2015; Otero Alvarado and Verdugo Santos 2001.
423 Chapter 1, 51–52.

that the cult of *Sol Inuictus*, which Elagabalus sought to introduce in the Roman pantheon, had a distinctly personal character; I propose to read the use of the Circus Varianus for the festivals connected with *Sol Inuictus* as meant to acquire—at least, in Elagabalus' intentions—the role which had hitherto been played by the Circus Maximus as the venue for religious celebrations where the emperor could appear before the people of Rome.[424] The residence's association with two entertainment facilities can convincingly be read as aimed to replicate the configuration of the imperial headquarters on the Palatine, as suggested with regard to the villa of the Quintilii. Owing to the position of the *Horti Spei Veteris*—at the immediate outskirts of Rome rather than five miles away from the city—I would not call into question Hadrian's Villa as the *Horti*'s model; rather, it seems that the residence was directly influenced by the Palatine.

As for the circus of Maxentius, its topographical connection with Rome accords with Maxentius' attempts to associate himself with the city, which he pursued since the beginning of his reign. The position of his residence can thus be explained in light of the possible functions of the tetrarchic palaces, which I have outlined above; in particular, it has been highlighted that the construction of a tetrarchic residence served, first and foremost, to mark the presence of the emperor in the city where he had his seat. Maxentius' choice to connect to his persona a residence which had not hitherto been used by emperors follows in the same vein; the villa's proximity to Rome conveyed the message that it was in Rome that Maxentius acted as emperor, along the

[424] Arena 2010, 24–27.

lines of the practices pursued by the other tetrarchs. The possible reasons why he did not establish his headquarters on the Palatine have been discussed in chapter 1.[425]

From the discussion above it has emerged that, similarly to entertainment buildings installed in urban settings, theatres, amphitheatres, and circuses associated with imperial villas had an inherently political function, which is suggested by their capacity, by the position of the villa, and by the nature of the performance. In the period under consideration, the progressive decline in the number of theatres and the growing frequency with which circuses were installed at imperial villas points towards the increasing formalisation of the subject-ruler interactions for which entertainment buildings offered a venue. This development accords with the evolutionary patterns identified with regard to reception halls and dining facilities: in chapters 2 and 5, I highlight that the actual number of people who were able to meet the emperor personally diminished from the time of Diocletian onwards, as the figure of the emperor acquired increasingly hieratical traits. Even though circuses allowed large crowds to see the emperor, the vast majority of these individuals could hardly approach him in person: the growing distance between subject and ruler, as has been highlighted in chapter 2, seems to anticipate the ceremonial practices of the Byzantine court.

[425] Chapter 1, 51–52.

4.

Bathing with Caesar:

Bathing Facilities at Imperial Residences

Very few building categories can be deemed as representative of *romanitas* as bathhouses. Besides domestic architecture, bathing facilities are by far the most recurrent building type in the Roman world: the number of archaeologically attested bath complexes in the Roman empire is in the order of one thousand, spread over around eight centuries.[426] This chapter will look at the role of bathing facilities installed in imperial villas, with the purpose of identifying the possible users of each bath, of determining inner circulation patterns, and of understanding the ways in which individual baths were operated.

As discussed with regard to entertainment buildings, the installation of bathing facilities at imperial residences follows practices attested since the late-Republican period.[427] Bathing was a social phenomenon in the Roman world, a communal activity that combined necessity with luxury like no other: besides their importance for health routine, baths were used as a prelude to banquets and drinking parties (which will be discussed in detail in the following chapter).[428] Their originally public nature made baths the ideal location for a variety of social interactions, ranging from official and

[426] DeLaine 1999b, 8–9.

[427] Fabbricotti 1976 on the earliest examples of domestic bathing suites. The custom of equipping one's house with a bathing facility is first attested by Plaut., *Mostell.* 754–56.

[428] Nielsen 1990, 119–48.

public business to petty everyday gossip.[429]

The installation of bathhouses in private *domus* and *uillae* probably only partially stemmed from the elite's desire to provide their dwellings with a further layer of luxury. The role of baths not only as markers of status, but also as privileged settings for more-or-less formal meetings with their peers, must have been clear to members of the Roman elite early on: the efflorescence of domestic bathing facilities from the late second century BC,[430] when political competition was approaching its culmination, is no surprise. These considerations hardly apply to imperial residences, whose owner had—virtually—no political opponents: the installation of baths in imperial palaces and villas is but the ultimate development of a life pattern that originated in the late Republic, in which domestic bathhouses were one of the preferred settings for interactions among members of the upper class. A thorough understanding of the role of bathing suites in imperial residences must necessarily build upon their late-Republican predecessors, and look both at architectural issues and at their social function within Roman domestic buildings.

When instructing his readers on space distribution within a Roman house, Vitruvius includes baths amongst the *propria loca*, which nobody could access unless invited by the master of the house.[431] The Vitruvian distinction between *propria loca* and *communia loca* is not merely between areas reserved for inhabitants versus areas

[429] Fagan 1999, 22–24.

[430] de Haan 2010b, 11–38; details in the catalogue; see also de Haan 2010a.

[431] Vitr., *De arch.* VI.5.1: 'For into the private rooms no one can come uninvited (*non est potestas omnibus intro eundi nisi inuitatis*), such as the bedrooms, dining rooms, baths and other apartments which have similar purposes' (LCL 280).

for welcoming guests: the difference is between spaces for invited visitors and spaces for uninvited visitors.[432] In other words, domestic bathhouses were facilities whose access patterns were manipulated by the *dominus*, who could exercise control over who could, or could not, enter them.

Domestic baths are found both in urban *domus* and in *uillae*. The reasons for the installation of bathing facilities in villas are partially found in the position of suburban and extra-urban dwellings relative to urban centres, which made it not always easy and convenient to rely on public (i.e. urban) facilities for daily bathing.[433] Furthermore, countryside villas were not infrequently equipped with at least two bathing suites, often markedly different in terms of position, size, and decoration:[434] a multiplicity and diversity that necessarily implied some kind of stratification. A possible key to understanding this is provided by a passage from Columella, still concerned with space distribution and inner organisation of villas. When describing the different arrangements of, respectively, the *pars urbana*, the *pars rustica*, and the *pars fructuaria*, the author draws a clear line between bathing facilities reserved for the master's family—which he includes in the *pars urbana*—and the *balnea rustica*, which are supposed to be used by the slaves.[435] This pattern has frequently been attested in imperial villas, where the presence of multiple bathing suites suggests a variety of users and functions.[436]

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[432] Wallace-Hadrill 1988, 81.
[433] de Haan 2010b, 89.
[434] Cossard-Martini 2014, 162–66.
[435] Columella, *Rust*. I.6.2, I.6.19–20.
[436] Cossard-Martini 2014.

In the following analysis, I will look at the position of every bathing facility within each residence, at the capacity of the different baths, at the features connecting baths with other foci of the villa (e.g. entrances, reception and dining halls, residential quarters, and so forth), and at the service facilities that allowed the baths to operate.

As recommended by Vitruvius, the size of a bath (or of part of a bath) needed to be proportional to the number of its expected occupants.[437] The proposed capacity of the baths under consideration is calculated following the guidelines provided by Janet DeLaine,[438] which have been developed and expanded by Garrett Fagan and Giuseppe Ceraudo.[439] DeLaine and Fagan have suggested that each of the bathers sitting on the pools' benches required a minimum width of 0.5 m; it is unlikely, however, that the patrons of high-ranking bathing facilities installed at imperial villas would have sat shoulder-to-shoulder: the figures proposed by Ceraudo, who allows for at least 0.6 m per bather, seem a more reasonable estimate for the purposes of this work. My calculations consider the dimensions of the *caldaria* of the baths under consideration, as unheated pools are not always preserved; the volume of traffic through *frigidaria*, however, can be estimated to have been roughly equivalent to that of *caldaria*.[440] The estimated capacity of the baths, combined with evidence for decoration and with information on their position within individual villas, may offer room for speculation as to their possible users.

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[437] Vitr., *De arch*. V.10.4.
[438] DeLaine 1990.
[439] Fagan 2000; Ceraudo 2019.
[440] Fagan 2000, 282.

Ad Gallinas Albas (C1)

In the villa Livia bequeathed to Augustus after the couple got married in 38 BC, a bath complex was installed in the Domitianic period to the north of peristyle 79 (plan C1.III); notwithstanding the substantial alterations that it underwent in the Severan period, its original configuration can be understood and reconstructed faithfully.[441]

In its original configuration (Domitianic) the bathhouse (fig. 4.1) was accessed from the south, through the area labelled with number 30. The room was not heated, and a manhole suggests that it was probably an open space; even if its function cannot be ascertained, it seems that it served as a transition and connecting facility. Room 30 was reached, from the east, by corridor 44, which provided a direct link with the residential quarter to the east; on the western side, it was connected with room 23, which allowed the guests staying in the *hospitalia* (rooms 5–9) to directly reach the baths, bypassing the reception area (3–4). On the southern side, room 30 opening onto peristyle 79, to which a large *natatio* (22) was added in the Flavian period: as the baths lacked an unheated pool, it may well be that the *natatio* fulfilled the functions of the cold suite. Alongside providing a facility for cold baths, the peristyle allowed a direct connection between the bath complex and *triclinium* 58. On the northern side, 30 led into a sequence of two rooms (27 and 26), both equipped with large *piscinae* heated through an elaborate system, consisting of a bronze container (a so-called 'samovar', fig. 4.2 and reconstruction on fig. 4.3) installed on a rectangular feature. This device is exceptionally rare in the landscape of Roman baths, on the grounds of its installation

[441] Carrara 2012; Carrara and Messineo 2001, 37–71.

and operating costs; parallels are of the order of a dozen in the whole Roman world.[442]

Owing to their position and to the size of the bathing pools, I suggest interpreting rooms 27 and 26, respectively, as the *tepidarium* and *caldarium*: the smaller pool of 27 suits shorter stays in the room, which can be explained by the role of the *tepidarium* as a transition space, whilst a larger *piscina* is better suited to longer baths in the *caldarium*. Bathers could leave the *caldarium* through a passageway on the eastern corner, and thence move to a sequence of heated rooms (28, 29, 31, 32) before passing through 30 and leaving the complex.

The baths were served by two separate heating systems. The furnaces beneath the samovars in rooms 26 and 27 were operated from a network of underground chambers accessed from the functional space 16 (fig. 4.4), which was in turn reached from the northern corner of corridor 13. Rooms 28, 29, 31, and 32, on the other hand, were heated by *praefurnia* installed in the underground corridor below 44. Room 33, which gave access to the service corridor in the basement, might also have functioned as storage space for fuel.

The bathhouse was modified at the beginning of the third century AD (fig. 4.5 and plan C1.V): the functions of several rooms changed, and circulation and access patterns were adapted to the new layout. Marble revetment with *marmor carystium (cipollino)*

[442] The samovar system is described by Manderscheid 2000, 514–19. Details on the two *piscinae calidae* in this villa in Messineo 2002. I am grateful to Konogan Beaufay for discussing this bath complex with me, and for suggesting the presence of samovar systems in rooms 26 and 27. Well-preserved parallels are found in the Suburban Baths at Herculaneaum (Pappalardo and Manderscheid 1998), in the Villa San Marco at Stabiae (Barbet and Miniero 1999, 50–51), and in a private *domus* on the Palatine, dated to the Julio-Claudian period (Loreti, Pergola and Villedieu 1996, 436–37).

replaced the previous mosaic decoration. The installation of a heated *apodyterium* (25) to the south-west of room 26—now a *frigidarium*—allowed the creation of a corridor (24), aligned with the previously existing corridor 13, to the south-west. Corridor 13 continued until the southern limit of the residence, providing direct access to the baths from the outside. The *apodyterium* led into the *frigidarium* 26, and thence to the hot suite. Rooms 28, 31, and 32 served probably as *tepidaria* or *sudatoria*; room 29, through the installation of two pools and a *praefurnium* on the outside (59), was transformed into the *caldarium*. After the hot bath, bathers could leave the complex, retracing their steps.

The alterations to access patterns testify to a widened user base. In the Flavian period, the baths were accessed from corridor 44—which connected them to the main residential quarter—and through the sequence of rooms 12 – 15 – 23, linked to the *hospitalia* in the southern half of the villa. *Cubicula* 50 and 52 were most likely reserved for the main dwellers of the residence, probably emperors or members of the imperial family, whilst the *hospitalia* were presumably allocated to guests: until the early third century, the bath complex was thus only used by individuals staying at the villa, for whom different pathways were designed. Usage patterns changed in the Severan period, when corridors 13 – 24 provided a direct entrance from the outside: access to the bath complex was thus extended to external guests, who could bypass the reception facilities to the south. In room 27, which had hitherto served as a proper bathing facility (probably the *tepidarium*), the *piscina* was dismantled, whilst the heating system was maintained. Its functions in the Severan period can possibly be explained in light of the installation of room 25, which clearly served as an *apodyterium*

for bathers coming from the outside: given its position, 27 could be interpreted as another *apodyterium*, reserved for internal guests and members of the imperial family who stayed in the residential quarter.

The bath complex of the villa of Livia shows a considerable investment in cutting-edge technology, since its installation in the Domitianic period. The facility was clearly reserved for selected users (the pool in 26 had a maximum capacity of c. thirty-eight people, that in 27 of c. twenty-four), who could appreciate the exceptionality of the two *piscinae calidae* heated by samovars. Despite the widening of the user base in the Severan period, the bathhouse remained an exclusive facility, which could accommodate only few bathers: the *frigidarium* had a capacity of thirteen to thirty-six people, the *caldarium* of fourteen to twenty-four people.

Villa Magna (C6)

The investigations carried out by the British School at Rome at the countryside estate of the Antonine family in the territory of Anagnia have revealed at least one bath complex, annexed to the winery block (plan C6.I). Another possible set of baths has been postulated based on a number of hypocaust bricks collected c. 200 m to the north of the winery; curvilinear features revealed by gradiometer surveys undertaken in the area may corroborate the evidence offered by the hypocaust bricks.

Dated to the late Trajanic/early Hadrianic period, the *balneum* annexed to the winery block (fig. 4.6) was accessed from corridor 17, which led into the squared space

18;[443] the feature has been interpreted as an atrium allowing bathers to reach either the hot or the cold suite. A shallow basin in the middle of room 18, filled with water as shown by the trace of a *fistula*, has been read as aimed to augment the light in the atrium, which was decorated with polished marble on the walls. A doorway on the western side of 18 led into a circular room (19), identified as a *tepidarium*, from which it was possible to proceed to room 26 and thence to 9, an almost-squared room with an apse on the southern side; excavations have not reached its floor,[444] but its configuration and orientation suggest interpreting it as the *caldarium*. Room 19 also opened onto a terraced space to the south of it, on top of rooms 22, 24, and 25, which has been linked to sunbathing practices. The purpose of room 26 is not easy to identify, due to its transformation into a storage space for the nineteenth-century *casale*; as it is located between 19 and 9, it was probably part of the hot suite. Once the warm bath was completed, bathers could return to the atrium passing through rooms 26 and 19, and thence move to the cold suite. The southern half of the bath complex has not been investigated, and the *frigidarium* has not been identified. A possible candidate could be room 21, a rectangular space to the south of *apodyterium* 20, although the reconstruction must remain hypothetical. Circulation could also have functioned the other way around: once undressed in the *apodyterium*, bathers could take a cold bath in the *frigidarium* and then move to the hot suite. The capacity of the *caldarium* can be calculated at between nine and thirteen people.

[443] Booms *et al.* 2016, 100–04.

[444] The installation of the nineteenth-century *casale* hindered the excavation of rooms 26 and 9.

The complex was operated from service rooms lying at a lower level (22, 23, 24, 25), accessed from a staircase in the south-western corner of 18, leading into room 22, which probably contained the *praefurnium* heating room 19.

The *balneum* was in close connection with the nearby winery, which included the *cella uinaria* proper and a *calcatorium* for grape-treading, as well as a semi-circular space interpreted as a luxurious *coenatio*.[445] The architectural association between a bathhouse and a dining facility reflects the bathing practices attested from literary sources: it was customary in the Roman world to bathe in the afternoon, before the evening meal.[446] Given its modest capacity and its connection with the *coenatio*, it is clear that the *balneum* of the winery complex was an exclusive facility, reserved for the imperial family and selected guests.

As the residence has not been investigated wholly, nothing is known about other potential bathing facilities, reserved for different categories of users. While the barracks for low-status workers were probably installed in the Severan period, the chronology of the so-called *hospitalia*, interpreted as dwellings for members of the court, remains unknown at the moment, as the building has only been identified from gradiometer surveys. We must suppose, nonetheless, that other categories of individuals peopled the villa, for whom other bathing facilities could have existed.

At some time during the third century AD, probably in the first half, the *balneum* went out of use and was turned into a storage facility. By then, however, the villa was

[445] More extensive discussion on the *coenatio* and on the wine-producing features in chapter 5, 192–98.
[446] Yegül 1992, 33–35.

seemingly provided with another bathing suite, evidence for which was identified further northwards. At the intersection of the two axes of the residence, to the east of the colonnaded street, an electricity switching tower hides the remains of a monumental nymphaeum, which in turn covered a water reservoir behind it (fig. 4.7 and plan C6.II). To the east of the reservoir, gradiometer surveys revealed a complex including straight and curvilinear structures; furthermore, hypocaust bricks were collected during field walking. The building to the east of the nymphaeum has been interpreted as a bath complex, supplied by the reservoir hidden by the nymphaeum. The bathhouse has been ascribed to the alterations undertaken in the Severan period, although no evidence for this dating was provided. If the reconstruction is correct, the complex installed in the Severan period could have replaced the earlier *balneum*, which had gone out of use by then. As long as the bathing suite remains unexcavated, no assumptions are possible on its chronological sequence, decoration, and potential users.

The residence was supplied with fresh water by two reservoirs, both installed on the top of a hill to the south of the winery complex. The southern existed as early as the first phase (Trajanic/Hadrianic), whilst the south-eastern was probably installed in the Severan period.[447]

LANVVIVM (C6)

The imposing vestiges of *opus latericium* structures at the southernmost end of the

[447] Miliaresis and Cavalieri de Pace 2016.

villa of the Antonines belong to a large bath complex dated to the central years of the second century AD, only part of which has been identified and investigated (plan C7.I). The building to the south-east of the villa's amphitheatre stood on two storeys; the preserved structures belong to the heated areas, but a cold suite must be envisaged.[448]

The ground level included substructures and service spaces (fig. 4.8). A sequence of rooms (C, D, E, F, G, H) faced to an irregularly shaped courtyard (B), which served as a distribution space providing access to the features on the ground floor.

The upper storey (fig. 4.9) was occupied by the actual bathing suite, although its poor preservation only allows a limited reconstruction of the whole facility. A corridor paved in *bipedales* (I), probably a service space due to the lack of evidence for decoration, allowed access to the thermal rooms.[449] The remains of the massive wall still marking the modern landscape belong to a roughly squared room, with three rectangular apses on the northern, western, and southern sides, which accommodated one pool each. Remains of *tubuli* and the orientation of the room towards the south-west to take advantage of solar warmth support its interpretation as a *caldarium*. One of the *praefurnia* was seemingly identified on the southern side, although nothing of it is preserved. *Caldaria* with a similar architectural layout are relatively common in bath complexes of the same period, including the Large Baths at Hadrian's Villa (fig. 4.10),

[448] So far, the only available publication on the bath complex at the villa of Lanuuium is Cassieri and Ghini 1990.

[449] The limited preservation of the structure hinders a comprehensive understanding of its architectural layout. Arguably, the building featured a more formal entrance leading into the proper bathing area, the visible corridor I functioning as a service facility.

the Terme del Foro in Ostia (fig. 4.11), and the Baths of Varius in Ephesus (fig. 4.12).[450]

To the east of the *caldarium*, scanty structural remains suggest the presence of a hall with an apse on the southern side (N, fig. 4.9), giving access to a poorly preserved room to the north (O). Room O, small in size and probably circular in shape, has tentatively been read as a *sudatorium* or a *laconicum*. Evidence for further rooms to the east is even scantier. The impressions of *tubuli* on some poorly preserved walls suggest the presence of another heated hall: the parallel with the Baths of Varius might allow its interpretation as a *tepidarium*. Further south-eastwards, the feature requiring massive substructures on the lower floor is most likely a *piscina calida* (Q), with wall heating, *cocciopesto* on the floor, and modest remains of marble cladding.

Facilities linked to water supply and storage have not been identified to date. A report from the beginning of the twentieth century, however, mentions features interpreted as the remains of an aqueduct, to the north of the structures linked with the imperial residence.[451]

Our understanding of the bathhouse is affected by its poor preservation, and by the limited extent of the excavations carried out in the area; while the heated areas have been identified, the remainder of the complex remains unknown to date. Likewise, its architectural and functional relationships with the remainder of the villa are far from clear, not least because the residence has not been investigated wholly. The possible spatial connection between the baths and the nearby amphitheatre might

[450] Nielsen 1990, nos. C.27 (fig. 69), C.54 (fig. 72), C.296 (fig. 224), with references.
[451] Cassieri and Ghini 1990, 174–75.

partially be explained by the need to create a joint drainage system for two buildings utilising significant amounts of water;[452] the location of the two buildings at the southernmost end of the plateau on which the villa was built corroborates this argument: the slope would have facilitated water drainage. A functional relationship between the two facilities is suggested by the particular activities performed in each of them: as bathing was a late-afternoon practice,[453] it may well have occurred after some time spent watching spectacles in the amphitheatre, where one could easily get covered in sand and dust.

The calculation of the capacity of the baths—only applicable to the *caldarium* at the moment—was somewhere between eighteen and seventy-four bathers; in the landscape of imperial residences, similar figures are found in the Small Baths at Hadrian's Villa (fig. 4.13),[454] which have been interpreted as mainly reserved for members of the court and for important guests.[455] The marble decoration of the bathhouse at Lanuuium is preserved poorly; nonetheless, the proximity of the baths to the amphitheatre, combined with the data on its capacity, as well as the parallel with the Small Baths of Hadrian's Villa, may suggest that it was reserved for high-ranking users.

[452] I am grateful to prof. Cairoli Fulvio Giuliani and to Ilaria Trivelloni for their helpful suggestions on this matter.

[453] Yegül 1992, 33–49; Nielsen 1990, 135–38.

[454] The capacity of Hadrian's Villa's Small Baths varied between 21 and 62 bathers (calculations based on the plan provided by Giuliani and Verduchi 1975).

[455] Lastly Chiappetta 2008, 117–25; see also Salza Prina Ricotti 2001, 171–76, and MacDonald and Pinto 1995, 90–92. A detailed description of the building in MacDonald and Boyle 1980.

Lavrentvm (C4)

Out of the eight building units attributed to the imperial villa in the *ager Laurentinus*, scattered along the path of the so-called *uia Seueriana*, three are bathing facilities (plan C4.I).

The bath complex labelled with number 1 (fig. 4.14) seemingly defines the western limit of the residence.[456] The building, dated to the latter half of the second century AD,[457] is unexcavated; in the 1980s, it was only the object of structural surveys, with almost no attempt to understand its architectural layout and internal organisation; the baths are currently inaccessible.[458] A squared *caldarium* (1)[459] with three semi-circular basins is the only clear feature visible in the plan; its capacity is between fourteen and thirty-eight people. Lacking data from systematic research, the potential decoration of the building remains unknown, not to mention that the residential quarters and the reception facilities of the villa have not been located to date: any attempt to identify the bathhouse's users would be little more than speculation.

Another bath complex (3) is found c. 300 m to the south-east of 1.[460] The feature has never been excavated systematically: it is essentially known from a plan produced by Rodolfo Lanciani (fig. 4.15), which Giuseppe Lugli erroneously ascribed to a

[456] Lauro and Claridge 1998, 52.

[457] The chronological sequence of the bath complex is not discussed, and dating elements are not provided: it seems that it was ascribed to the latter half of the second century AD based on the building technique.

[458] Details on individual rooms and spaces have not been provided; the following interpretation is entirely mine. As the building is not accessible at present time, my arguments are based solely on the available plan.

[459] As individual rooms on available plans have not been labelled, I numbered the features mentioned in the text.

[460] Lauro 1998b, 72–77.

bathing facility in the vicinity of Portus.[461] Another plan was drawn in the 1980s; even though the overall extension of the bathhouse remains unknown, the two plans allow a relatively detailed interpretation of its configuration.

The building seems to consist of two adjacent units, installed at different stages and joined by a large exedra (9) facing the sea. The northern half, dated to the second century AD, included the typical features of a bath complex: from a large *frigidarium* (1) with three pools it was possible to access two *tepidaria* (2–3), and then move either to a *natatio* (4) or to the *caldarium* (5). The *caldarium* had a minimum capacity of twenty-four people, and a maximum of ninety-two.

The southern unit is less well preserved than the northern, and its internal organisation is barely intelligible; Lanciani's plan helps integrate details that are no longer visible. On the southern end, a circular room with two niches (6) could probably have served as a *sudatio* or *laconicum*. Seemingly, it led into a room with a pool on the southern side (7): even though no evidence for heating is known, the position of the pool supports its interpretation as a heated feature. Further northwards, there lay an elongated space with a large apse on the eastern side (8), whose architectural layout is partly reminiscent of that of the so-called *heliocaminus* of the Heliocaminus Baths at Hadrian's Villa (in fact, a *sudatio*, fig. 4.16).[462] I suggest interpreting the known features of the southern unit as another heated suite, possibly intended for particular usage patterns, or for different categories of bathers. Lacking solid information from

[461] Lanciani's plan is reproduced in Lugli and Filibeck 1935, 99, fig. 62, and captioned '*pianta di un edificio termale presso il porto di Claudio*'.

[462] Giuliani and Verduchi 1975, 69–73.

excavations, the interpretation of this bathhouse cannot go any further.

The bath complex labelled with number 4 (fig. 4.17), dated to the central decades of the second century AD, is the only feature of the imperial residence that has been excavated almost completely (fig. 4.18).[463] The arrangement of the rooms allowed a variety of inner routes: upon accessing the building from two entrances on the north-western side, leading into a large *palaestra* (25), people could proceed to the *frigidarium* (19) and then to a sequence of heated rooms (18, 21, 17) that led into the *caldarium* (15). Alternatively, it was possible to bypass the cold section, and to reach the *caldarium* walking through a succession of lukewarm rooms (1, 2, 3, 4, 12, 13). After taking the warm bath, bathers could then leave the building following either route.

As revealed by excavations in the *caldarium*, the southern apsidal pool was seemingly turned into a *laconicum* at some point between the late-second and early third century AD. This change in function resulted in a decrease in the capacity of the *caldarium*: while it varied between a minimum of twenty-nine and a maximum of seventy-six people in its original configuration, it was lowered to, respectively, eighteen and forty-eight bathers. The bath complex was operated from a system of functional spaces in the basement accessed from a staircase in room 11, from which it was then possible to reach the *praefurnia* on the southern side of the building.

The villa was supplied with fresh water from an aqueduct running perpendicular to the *uia Laurentina*, and parallel to the side road leading to the residence from the main route (fig. 4.19). The two structures were seemingly built simultaneously, at some

[463] Lauro 1998b, 77–100.

time between the late first and the early second century AD.[464]

Almost every room was provided with floor mosaics or *opus sectile*, and walls often featured marble cladding.[465] The architectural sophistication of the building and the quality of the decoration corroborate the interpretation of the bathhouse as a high-ranking one; likewise, the variety of routes suggests that the users of the facility were cultivated individuals, with a good knowledge of different bathing rituals implying different circulation patterns. The Small Baths of Hadrian's Villa offer a close parallel to the complex under consideration, in terms of architectural layout, decoration, capacity, and as regards the multiple options for bathing routes.

A satisfactory understanding of the imperial villa at Tor Paterno is hindered by the fragmentary nature of its archaeological record: buildings appear scattered on the shoreline, without mutual relationships and connecting facilities being clear. In addition, large areas of the residence remain unknown to date: the only unit that can convincingly be interpreted as a dwelling (2 on the general plan), located c. 150 metres to the north-east of bath complex 1, has not been investigated in such detail as to allow assumptions on its potential users. Likewise, reception halls, dining facilities, and entrances are mostly unknown. As a result, it is almost impossible to establish a hierarchy between the three bathhouses of Tor Paterno. If, on the one hand, the complex labelled with number 4 looks higher-ranking than 1 and 3, on the other, our knowledge of the latter features is not solid enough to allow us to argue that they were

[464] *Ibid.*, 63–72.

[465] The evidence for floor mosaics or wall revetments is not discussed in such detail as to allow a precise identification of the decorated or undecorated rooms.

of a lower category. This multiplicity of bathing facilities most likely bears evidence for different categories of users, as is the case at Hadrian's Villa. Accurate investigations in individual baths, as well as wide-ranging, extensive research in the residence, are necessary to gain a clearer picture.

Villa of the Quintilii (C9)

The luxurious *suburbanum* that Commodus confiscated from the Quintilii brothers included at least three bathing facilities; a fourth set of baths whose chronological sequence accords with that of the villa of the Quintilii has been ascribed to the property, but the association is uncertain.

The *balneum* to the east of the presumed imperial *cubicula*, on the other side of corridor B20 (plan C9.III), has been attributed to the alterations carried out by Commodus, thanks to the impression of a waterpipe with the inscription *Imp(eratoris) Commodi* found in the mortar of one of the pools (fig. 4.20).[466] The bath complex, modest in size yet lavishly decorated,[467] is not accessible, nor has it been published in detail:[468] it is barely possible to offer an accurate identification of individual spaces and a reconstruction of the possible circulation patterns.[469] Room B31, probably the *caldarium*, was equipped with a semi-circular pool on the southern side. The position of the bathing pool does not make the most of sunlight, but the installation of the baths

[466] Paris *et al.* 2012, 18.
[467] Galli *et al.* 2006, 288.
[468] In the available publications, no distinctions have been made between heated and unheated spaces.
[469] The following reconstruction is entirely mine.

was evidently affected by the previously existing structures to the west. The bathhouse was accessed from corridor B33, which let into a small room (B10). Due to its size and position, B10 might have served as an *apodyterium*: it led into room B21, a rectangular space with an apse on the south-eastern side, which could tentatively be interpreted as the *frigidarium*, even though the bathing pool is not visible clearly. The space labelled B21b, lying between the presumed *frigidarium* and the *caldarium*, might perhaps have served as the *tepidarium*.

The heating system was operated by functional spaces further north-westwards, on the lower level of the substructures (sector C).[470] On the now-almost-lost upper storey, the substructures featured lower-ranking residential facilities, presumably reserved for the staff at the villa.

The capacity (c. ten people), position, and decoration of this bath complex, together with its direct connection with the presumed imperial quarters to the west, suggest interpreting it as an exclusive facility, reserved for the highest-ranking inhabitants (probably the emperor and his closest family members).

A larger, more monumental bath complex (Large Baths) occupies the north-western corner of the main block, with the imposing remains of the *frigidarium* (D1) and the *caldarium* (E1) still marking the skyline of the via Appia (fig. 4.21, plan C9.IV).[471] The *frigidarium* is a large, rectangular hall, paved in *opus sectile*, with two bathing pools on the western and eastern sides (fig. 4.22). Four similarly sized rooms

[470] Paris *et al.* 2012, 10–11.

[471] Paris, Frontoni, and Galli 2019, 45–53.

at the corners of the *frigidarium*, each with *opus sectile* on the floor, probably served as vestibules or *apodyteria*. The *frigidarium* is connected with the *caldarium* through a sequence of rooms interpreted altogether as the baths' *tepidarium*, which allowed a gradual transition to the hot suite. The *tepidarium* included rooms with pools (D10, L3, L5) as well as facilities for sweat baths (E2c). The northernmost structure of the Large Baths is the *caldarium*, which does not have pools projecting from the walls but is entirely occupied by a rectangular *piscina calida*, accessed via five steps (fig. 4.23). The steps surrounding the pool on the northern, eastern, and southern sides allowed c. fifty-four people to bathe simultaneously.[472] Hot water was provided by three *testudines aluei* once installed above the *praefurnia*, on the western side of the pool;[473] a thin lead slab, still visible underneath the floor preparation, enabled the water to be maintained at a constant temperature.[474] The *praefurnia* were operated from functional rooms in the basement, to the north of the *caldarium*.

The analysis of access patterns reveals that the Large Baths were used by at least two, if not three, categories of bathers (fig. 4.24). The imperial lodgings at the south-eastern corner of the main block were linked to the Large Baths through the system of

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[472] I have not been able to find parallels for this architectural layout. A possible explanation for this unique configuration could be found in economic concerns: heating a large pool, measuring c. 140 m^2 (therefore containing c. 140 tons of water), required a considerable investment in fuel (c. 4,200 kg according to the guidelines provided by Wilson 2012, 149–50), hence the three boilers. Furthermore, the *caldarium* had a capacity of c. 54 people, which could easily be reached by installing six pools measuring 2.5 x 5 metres each; this would have required just 75 tons of water, which could be heated with 'just' 2,250 kg of fuel.

[473] The boilers were probably removed in post-ancient times (the stratigraphy of the hall had been contaminated by nineteenth-century excavations, thus making it impossible to understand the chronology of spoliations), and only their recesses are now visible.

[474] Manderscheid 2000, 498.

reserved routes B20, A14bis, A19bis, T1, and L9: when staying at the villa, the emperor could reach the baths without having to go through the reception area on the south-eastern quarter of the block. A luxuriously decorated, single-user latrine at the eastern corner of the *frigidarium*,[475] itself directly reached from the proposed imperial *cubicula*, corroborates this reconstruction.

The small apartment to the west of the exedra-theatre, which I have proposed to read as guests' quarters, also had a reserved access route to the Large Baths: the staircase to the west of corridor R11 led into room D18—with mosaic decoration on the floor—and thence to the vestibule/*apodyterium* on the southern corner of the *frigidarium*.

The capacity of the Large Baths and their conspicuous decoration suggest that they were hardly meant to be used only by the emperor and by guests staying at the villa, particularly since the imperial lodgings were equipped with a dedicated *balneum*: external users need be envisaged. I have elsewhere pointed out the role of the monumental corridor X as a facility linking the main block of the villa with the entrance to the property from the *uia Appia*, c. 300 m to the west (plan C9.VII). The eastern, bulb-shaped termination of the corridor opening onto the area behind the *scaenae frons* of the theatre, from which external visitors could access space R60, and then reach the halls R59–R58. The reconstruction of the last section of the route to the Large Baths is hindered by the scanty preservation of the features behind R58; at least two staircases suggest the presence of a now-lost upper storey, the layout of which is

[475] Paris *et al.* 2012, 23–24.

completely unknown. It may be suggested that external visitors, once they reached R58, headed westwards to R19, then northwards, to go through rooms that would have led them into the vestibule/*apodyterium* at the south-eastern corner of the *frigidarium*.

In chapter 5, I discuss the possible interpretation of R58 as a summer *coenatio*, as opposed to the octagonal hall A1 which, owing to the evidence for heating, was more suited to banquets in colder times.[476] As its floor decoration does not feature patterns which may suggest the position of furniture, I propose to interpret R58 as a multi-functional space, which could be set up as a dining hall when required: its western, northern, and eastern sides would offer room for three couches each. As regards R59, I suggest reading it as a space for dinner entertainment, which diners could enjoy through the large doorway between R58 and R59. If my reconstruction of the route from the monumental corridor X to the Large Baths is correct, it would also apply to circulation patterns between the baths and the two dining halls. As mentioned with regard to Villa Magna, the Large Baths' proximity to a banqueting hall does not surprise: bathing was often a prelude to dining and drinking events.

The bath complex was installed in the Hadrianic/Antonine period, when the villa was still a possession of the Quintilii, and underwent some alterations in the Severan period, mostly to the *frigidarium* and the *caldarium*. The overall architectural layout of the baths, however, does not seem to have been modified heavily. Since the small bathing suite at the eastern corner, seemingly annexed to the emperor's quarters, was added by Commodus, I would argue that, before Commodus confiscated it, the villa

[476] Chapter 5, 208–9.

was provided with a single bathhouse, and that bathing facilities were differentiated when the residence became an imperial possession: the small *balneum* was probably reserved for the emperor's daily bathing, whilst the Large Baths were a more conspicuous facility for more formal bathing rituals.

The villa was equipped with a third bath complex (the so-called Small Baths, sector M on plan C9.VII, partially investigated in the 1980s), to the south-east of the main block; the bathhouse was seemingly installed next to a previously existing nymphaeum, even though a precise chronological sequence is not provided in the available publications. Frontoni has proposed that the bathhouse should be linked with the nearby *puluinar* of the circus, c. 40 m to the south.[477] The scanty archaeological record does not allow solid arguments on the possible users of the Small Baths, or on the functions of individual features; given the potential roles of the Large Baths and of the *balneum* connected to the proposed emperor's apartments, it might be suggested that the Small Baths were a lower-ranking facility, possibly reserved for the personnel employed at the villa.

It is necessary to mention a fourth bathing suite, pertaining to a residential complex to the west of the villa of the Quintilii, closer to the *uia Appia*. The area has been excavated partially, revealing a small villa with a luxuriously decorated bathhouse (fig. 4.25), served by an underground water reservoir.[478] The structures have altogether been dated to the Hadrianic period, based on brick stamps; the

[477] Paris, Frontoni, and Galli 2019, 73–74.
[478] *Ibid.*, 113–22.

installation of black-and-white mosaics with gladiators and horses has been ascribed to alterations undertaken in the age of Commodus.[479] This chronological sequence seems to accord with that of the main block of the villa of the Quintilii: the structures have therefore been read as premises associated with the main property, reserved for high-ranking guests during the Hadrianic/Antonine period—when the villa was still a possession of the Quintilii—and then as military quarters for a corps in charge of supervising the entrance to the main residence on the *uia Appia*, c. 300 m to the south-east. The association of this small villa with the villa of the Quintili is impossible to ascertain on current evidence, as the features of Santa Maria Nova have not yielded any *fistulae* with names: Frontoni's reconstruction, albeit tempting, must remain a working hypothesis.

The operation of at least three baths required a substantial water supply. The villa of the Quintilii could rely on its very own aqueduct—a stretch of which has been identified c. 2 kilometres to the south-east—which entered the property parallel to the garden's wall[480] and supplied water to no fewer than five reservoirs (fig. 4.26), which may have served not only the villa's bathing facilities, but also its gardens.[481] The monumental nymphaeum at the entrance of the villa was equipped with its own small cistern. Two other reservoirs (P and G) are behind the wall which defined the southern side of the entrance garden. A fourth circular reservoir (Q) is located to the north of

[479] Frontoni and Lugari 2009.
[480] Galli *et al.* 2006, 284–86. The aqueduct, branching off from the *aqua Claudia* and from the *Anio Nouus*, is generally referred to as the 'acquedotto dei Quintili'.
[481] Chapter 5, 231–32, will discuss the possible presence of vineyards in the villa, which supplied the luxurious winery installed in the 240s.

corridor Z. The last reservoir (B3) is part of the main block, to the south of courtyard B34, and was presumably intended to supply water to the residential features and to the annexed *balneum*, as well as to the Large Baths.

Villa of Lucius Verus (C8)

In the luxurious villa that Lucius Verus built on the *uia Clodia*, a small *balneum* was identified in the western area of the site (fig. 4.27);[482] the facility is no longer visible. The bathhouse, facing south and with rooms at different elevations to take advantage of sunlight and warmth, was accessed from the north, through a large corridor that probably served as an *apodyterium* (32). The *apodyterium* led into the *frigidarium* (35), with two pools on the northern and southern sides. From the *frigidarium*, bathers could move to a room interpreted as a *tepidarium* (42), and thence to the *caldarium* (48). Room 47, due to its position between the *tepidarium* and the *caldarium*, has been identified as a facility for sweat baths. The underground corridor 50 allowed the operation of the *praefurnia* of the *tepidarium* and the *caldarium*. The functions of rooms 41, 44, and 46—linked to the *balneum* due to their position and to scattered evidence for heating—are unclear.

Even though the circulation patterns between the bathhouse and the nearby *coenatio* (rooms 24 – 25) are not entirely clear, the two features are in evident connection:[483] again, this is unsurprising, as dining usually followed the daily bath. In

[482] Caserta 2011, 114–19.

[483] The *coenatio* is discussed in chapter 5, 212–13.

spite of the poor preservation of the visible features, the luxury of the summer *coenatio*, to which the nymphaeum provided a scenographic background (its layout and size are reminiscent of those of the Serapeum at Hadrian's Villa) makes it clear that it was a facility reserved for selected users, particularly given the modest size of the nearby bath complex: the *caldarium* had a capacity of no more than thirteen bathers. Furthermore, both the nymphaeum and the *balneum* yielded evidence for marble cladding and glass-paste mosaic on the walls and ceilings.

Horti Spei Veteris/Palativm Sessorianvm (C10)

The only bath complex allegedly belonging to the residence bears the name of Helena, Constantine's mother: as reported by the inscription *CIL* VI.1136—originally from the area—between AD 317 and 324 Helena refurbished a bathhouse destroyed by a fire, hence the name *Thermae Helenae* or *Thermae Helenianae,* by which the building is referred to in modern scholarship.[484]

The bath complex was partially demolished at the end of the sixteenth century, and completely destroyed at the beginning of the twentieth; nowadays, only its water reservoir, presumably supplied by the *Aqua Alexandrina*, is preserved (figs. 4.28–29). Drawings by Andrea Palladio (fig. 4.30) and Antonio da Sangallo the Younger (fig. 4.31), albeit incomplete, allow a partial reconstruction of the architectural layout and internal configuration of the baths. The two Renaissance architects reported an L-shaped building, oriented north-east/south-west; by combining the information

[484] Palladino 2005; Palladino 1996.

inferred from Palladio's and Sangallo's plans with a bird's-eye view of Rome by Étienne Dupérac (fig. 4.32) and with structures brought to light at the beginning of the twentieth century, Lanciani, followed by Colini, located the baths a few metres to the south-east of the still-preserved water reservoir.[485]

The bathhouse, installed in a shallow valley that protected it from the wind, was seemingly accessed from the north-east. The sixteenth-century drawings allow only tentative assumptions on the possible functions of individual spaces: the entrance led into two small rooms probably serving as *apodyteria*, and thence towards a grand *frigidarium*. The hot suite was presumably located on the perpendicular axis of the building, facing south.[486] This layout finds some parallels in the landscape of public baths in Roman Africa, such as the Large South Baths at Timgad (fig. 4.33) and the Large Baths in Madaurus (fig. 4.34); interestingly, the former were installed in the second century AD and underwent substantial alterations in the Severan period, and the latter were erected under Septimius Severus.[487]

The water reservoir featured a sequence of niches on the façade facing the bath complex, presumably decorated with statues. The building, sited on a higher level, was probably flanked by two descending ramps on the shorter sides, accessed from a now-lost upper storey that led to the baths.

Extensive redevelopment works conducted at the beginning of the twentieth

[485] Lanciani 1901, pl. XXXII.

[486] Discussion on the possible functions of individual features in Palladino 1996, 860–61.

[487] Nielsen 1990, respectively C. 239 and C.236. On the Large South Baths in Timgad, Maréchal 2020, 143–51; on the Large Baths in Madaurus, Manderscheid 1988, 144, fig. 231.

century involved the area of the *thermae Helenae*, and yielded a wealth of brick stamps dated to the early Severan period.[488] The brick stamps, together with a dedication to Julia Domna[489] and a mosaic depicting portraits of athletes—closely resembling that of Caracalla's Baths—discovered in 1879 on the extrados of the reservoir's vault,[490] show that the area had been built up intensively in the Severan period; this is hardly surprising, given the ongoing installation of the *Horti Spei Veteris*.

The inscription celebrating Helena's refurbishment of a bath complex indicates that there was a previously existing bathing facility in the area, even though it does not allow a more accurate definition of its chronology. Sergio Palladino has proposed that the archaeological evidence for building activity in the area in the Severan period should be linked with the construction of the *Aqua Alexandrina*, attributed to Severus Alexander, which supplied water to the baths in the *Horti*.[491] A Severan chronology has been deduced from a passage in the biography of Severus Alexander, which records that the emperor built bathhouses in all the *regiones* of Rome that lacked them, allocated certain forests for their fuel supply, and, by donating oil for illumination, enabled bathing facilities to remain open after dusk.[492] Elke Merten's analysis on baths and bathing practices as described in the *HA*, however, compels us to take this report cautiously: she argues that munificence of this kind should rather be read as one of the

[488] *CIL* XV.324, 413, 753.
[489] *CIL* VI.1048. The inscription is dated between AD 212 and 217.
[490] Palladino 2005, note 6.
[491] Palladino 1996, 870.
[492] SHA, *Alex. Seu.* XXIX, XXXIX.3–4.

practices indicating a good emperor.[493]

Scholars have not yet come to a conclusion as regards the association of the baths with the imperial residence. The complete lack of structures datable to the Severan period complicates an already blurred picture: it might be possible, for instance, that the baths were originally part of the *Horti Spei Veteris*, and that they were given to public use at a later stage. From the *Liber Pontificalis*, we know that Helena's property at the south-eastern outskirts of the city (the *fundus Laurentus*) included a *balneum*[494]—and it cannot have been otherwise, given the extraordinary status of the owner—but a more precise identification of the bathhouse is not possible on current evidence.

The inscription reporting Helena's refurbishments, Palladino argued, seems to point towards the public function of the baths: had they belonged to the imperial residence, the restorations carried out by the empress would hardly have been celebrated by a public inscription.[495] His argument should not be rejected entirely, but the whole picture might have been more nuanced. I will thus try to offer a different interpretation of the *thermae Helenae*, based on access patterns to private and imperial *horti* in earlier periods, and on the practices linked to female patronage in the Roman empire.

The ambivalent nature of the residences of Roman grandees is now widely acknowledged: despite being private spaces from the legal standpoint, they fulfilled a

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493 Merten 1983, 31–33.

494 *LP*, I (ed. Duchesne), 182–183: "*Fundus Laurentus iuxta formam cum balneum et omnis ager a porta Sessoriana usque ad uia Penestrina* (sic) *a uia itineris Latinae usque ad montem Gabum, possessio Augustae Helenae*".

495 Palladino 1996, 870–71.

number of functions linked to the public sphere. The presence of outsiders of different social status was no extraordinary occurrence, and this was increasingly true during the turbulent vicissitudes of the last decades of the Republic. The practice of exploiting one's dwelling to support political claims applied not only to urban *domus* and to *uillae*, but also to the *horti* that several grandees owned in Rome. Pompey was the first to welcome large crowds of commoners into his κῆποι to secure the election of Afranius as consul in 61 BC.[496] Caesar, wishing to outdo the *liberalitas* of his deceased rival, invited the Roman people into his *Horti Trans Tiberim*, where he held two *prandia* to celebrate his victory against Sex. Pompey in Munda (45 BC);[497] further, he bequeathed his *horti* to the people of Rome in his will.[498] His example was followed a few decades later by Agrippa, who left to the people his gardens in the Campus Martius, which included a set of baths carrying his name; we also know that Augustus was entrusted with the maintenance of the baths.[499]

Helena's refurbishment of a bath complex fits within a long-standing practice: female euergetism is known as early as the second century BC, and spans the entire empire.[500] Bathhouses, in fact, were the most common object of women's munificence,[501] even though imperial bath building by women was probably

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496 Plut., *Vit. Pomp*. XLIV; discussion in D'Arms 1998, 34.

497 Val. Max., IX.15.1; *AE* 1950.93.

498 Suet., *Iul*. LXXXIII.2.

499 Cass. Dio, LIV.29.4. On the *Horti Agrippae*, Coarelli 1996.

500 The topic is too vast and wide to be discussed in due detail here. Most recently Hemelrijk 2015, 109–80, with earlier bibliography. An overview on munificence and benefactions with regard to public bathhouses, especially during the imperial period, in DeLaine 1999a, with reference to primary evidence.

501 Hemelrijk 2015, 124.

pioneered by Helena herself. The restorations she sponsored served as the forerunner for a substantial and consistent engagement by empresses in the construction and upkeep of public baths, as the focus of their euergetism progressively switched towards Constantinople.[502]

Diliana Angelova pointed out the increasing engagement of Christian empresses in the construction and upkeep of public bathhouses in the new capital, due to the role of baths as a privileged setting for status display and their connection with miraculous healing.[503] It seems that Helena acted as a trendsetter: after the refurbishment of the *thermae Helenae* in Rome, we have evidence for the construction of five public baths in Constantinople, all sponsored by imperial women.[504] Some empresses, furthermore, had authority over the imperial treasury: Helena was one of them.[505]

In Rome, the construction and maintenance of public baths was consistently pursued by emperors or by members of the imperial family, who proved particularly generous as regards bathhouses for public use.[506] It seems that the upkeep of bathing facilities built by emperors in Rome was an imperial concern from the beginning of the period, as the vicissitudes of the baths of Agrippa show.

To summarise, what we can securely infer from the available evidence is that Helena, between AD 317 and 324, sponsored the restoration of a bathhouse destroyed by a fire. She probably relied on the imperial treasury, over which she had been

[502] Angelova 2015, 161–74.
[503] *Ibid.*, 174–79, with discussion of literary and material evidence.
[504] *Ibid.*, 179–80.
[505] Euseb., *Vit. Const.* III.44.
[506] Fagan 1999, 104–23.

granted authority by her son. The baths must predate Helena's refurbishments, although their chronology is hard to ascertain. Archaeological evidence, albeit scanty, points towards substantial building activity in the area during the Severan period, which can most likely be associated with the ongoing installation of the *Horti ad Spem Veterem*. Restorations sponsored by an empress might indicate that the bathhouse had originally been built by an emperor, or by someone linked with the imperial family. As regards the association of the bath complex with the imperial residence, the question remains unanswered. It may be that the *thermae Helenae* were indeed part of the Sessorian Palace, yet at the same time accessible to different categories of individuals. Whether commoners could use the baths as early as their installation, or if, on the contrary, it was Helena who widened the user base, is impossible to say. The baths were located in the western area of the residence, the closest to the city centre: it could tentatively be suggested that, due to their position, they were actually accessible to the people of Rome. The praise of Helena's munificence on a public inscription thus acquires further significance in light of the possible usage patterns of the *thermae Helenae*, and suggests reassessing Palladino's argument: it was the public accessibility of the baths, not their ownership, that led to the celebration of the empress's refurbishment.

Concluding remarks

As discussed in the introductory section, the installation of bathing facilities in imperial residences fits within a long-standing practice: domestic buildings were

equipped with bathhouses from the late-Republican period. Far from just providing *domus* and *uillae* with a heightened measure of luxury, they played a crucial role in the life pattern of the *nobilitas*, by offering a privileged setting for social interactions between members of the upper class. The analysis of bath complexes installed at imperial villas has led me to identify similarities and differences not only with late-Republican dwellings, but also within the landscape of imperial residences. In this section, I will try to define the role of bathing facilities in imperial villas, by analysing what we can infer from the identity and number of their users (table 4.1) and from their operating patterns.

Having acknowledged the function of domestic bathhouses as venues for more-or-less formal interactions, the main difference that seems to emerge between late-Republican dwellings and imperial residences lies in the relationship patterns between host and guests; in the former case, prominent individuals essentially invited their peers, whilst emperors interacted with subjects—as important as they may have been, they were still subjects—or foreigners.

Access patterns, size, position, equipment, and decoration have allowed tentative assumptions on the identity of the baths' users, and of the emperors' guests. The villa *ad Gallinas Albas* is a case in point. Despite its relatively small capacity, in the Flavian phase the *balneum* featured samovars to heat the water of the two *piscinae calidae*. Access patterns suggest that the bathhouse was only used by members of the imperial family and by guests staying at the villa: outsiders were apparently not invited. Investment in cutting-edge technology and restricted access suggest an exclusive

facility for highly selected guests. Things changed in the Severan period, when the expensive samovars were dismantled, and the baths could also be accessed from the outside: these alterations point to a widening of the user base, notwithstanding the small capacity of the complex, which still marks it as an intimate facility for close acquaintances. Similar considerations may be suggested with regard to the bathing suites of the villa of Lucius Verus and of Villa Magna, the modest size of which accords with the capacity of the annexed dining halls.

Different usage patterns are indicated by the architectural layout of the villa of the Quintilii, where the Large Baths, which outsiders could easily reach from the entrance of the residence through the dedicated corridor X, are much larger in size and capacity. The presence of a smaller *balneum* near the proposed imperial *cubicula*, most likely reserved for the emperor's daily bathing routine, suggests that the Large Baths probably served as a formal facility, where the emperor could bathe both with external visitors and with guests of a higher rank, who stayed in the apartment at the western corner of the main block. The presence of a bath complex with a larger capacity and luxurious decoration accords with the results of the analyses carried out in chapters 2, 3, and 5: at the villa of the Quintilii, Commodus sought to replicate all the urbane amenities which he could find in Rome.

The picture that emerges from the record of Lanuuium is slightly different. Its bath complex, albeit known partially, had a capacity of up to seventy-four people, and yielded evidence for marble decoration: I have suggested interpreting it as a high-ranking facility. In chapters 1 and 3, I have proposed to read the villa of Lanuuium as

a means through which at least two of the Antonine emperors consolidated their rule; as regards Commodus in particular, his custom of slaying wild beasts *domi* accords with the association of an amphitheatre with the imperial residence. Owing to its distance from Rome (eighteen miles, more than a day's trip), the usage patterns of the villa at Lanuuium were probably different from those of the villa of the Quintilii: whilst the latter, however luxurious, remained secondary to the *Palatium*, it was more complicated for emperors staying at the villa of Lanuuium to relocate to Rome with the whole court to fulfil particularly formal functions. Thus, while the amphitheatre allowed Commodus to display his *uirtus*, the bath complex offered a location for meetings with a relatively high number of people.

As discussed in the introductory paragraphs, besides its importance as a prelude to dining and drinking parties, bathing was a necessity connected with personal hygiene and body care. Domestic baths were much more than a display of conspicuous consumption: Columella suggested that a well-equipped villa should necessarily include bathing facilities for personnel.[507] His recommendation is reflected in the archaeological record: the Small Baths at the villa of the Quintilii are probably a lower-ranking complex, reserved for lower-ranking users.[508] Likewise, the three bathing facilities in the villa at Tor Paterno may be explained by the need to accommodate different categories of people; it is hard to speculate on their identity, lacking a deeper

[507] Columella, *Rust*. I.6.2, I.6.19–20.

[508] A possible parallel for this usage pattern is offered by the Large Baths at Hadrian's Villa, which are easily reached from the slave quarters at the Hundred Chambers, and larger and less decorated than the other bathing facilities of the complex.

knowledge of the whole residence.

This diversification of baths is most evident at Hadrian's Villa, which is equipped with no less than four bathing facilities: the Heliocaminus Baths (fig. 4.16), presumably reserved for the emperor and his most important guests; the Small Baths (fig. 4.13), for senior officers of the court; the Large Baths (fig. 4.35), for the lower-ranking staff employed at the villa; the small *balneum* incorporated in the Maritime Theatre (marked in red on fig. 4.36), which completed the miniature *domus* of the island and was evidently reserved for the emperor.[509] The presence of multiple baths for different categories of users, in accordance with the aforementioned recommendation of Columella, provides further evidence for the suggested role of Hadrian's Villa as a complex where the emperor could fulfil all his functions and the whole imperial court could reside for long periods of time: its bathing facilities could cater to the necessity of the different categories of individuals—the emperor and his family, his guests, the imperial court, and the personnel—who peopled the villa.

Baths reserved for different individuals probably had different operating patterns. Whilst the facilities for the villas' permanent personnel—*procuratores*, *uilici*, and the staff in charge of daily upkeep—must have functioned more or less continuously, the suites reserved for the emperors' bathing, as well as decorative water features such as nymphaea, were probably operating at full capacity only during the times the emperors were there, i.e. on few occasions and for limited amounts of time. We do

[509] Salza Prina Ricotti 2001, 145–50 (Heliocaminus Baths), 171–76 (Small Baths), 177–98 (Large Baths), 127–38 (Maritime Theatre).

know of members of the imperial family staying at imperial villas for substantial time, but the 'pace' at which those residences functioned normally must have been different from that of the periods when the emperor was on site.

This intermittent imperial presence, on the one hand, resulted in moderate—yet unquantifiable—consumptions of water and fuel; on the other hand, it required imperial villas to be supplied rapidly and efficiently in case of imperial stays.[510] We know that the emperor was the largest recipient of the water distributed outside Rome: Frontinus reports that, at the time when he was serving as *curator aquarum* under Nerva and Trajan, 42.3% of the water supplied *extra urbem* was issued *sub nomine Caesaris* (1,728 out of 4,063 *quinariae*).[511] Interestingly, the majority of imperial villas under consideration are located within a twenty-mile radius from Rome, with the exception of Alsium, Antium, and Villa Magna; five of them (villa of Lucius Verus, villa *ad Gallinas Albas*, *Horti Spei Veteris*, villa of Maxentius, villa of the Quintilii) lay at the outskirts of Rome. The enormous amount of water distributed *sub nomine Caesaris* outside Rome, which corresponds to the capacity of the *Aqua Iulia*, the *Aqua Virgo*, and the *Aqua Alsietina* altogether, can hardly have served just the irrigation of plantations lying on imperial possessions: part of it must have been distributed to imperial villas, where both basic needs and conspicuous consumption needed be accommodated.[512] The data provided by Frontinus agree both with the evidence for water supply

[510] In this regard, see in particular Plin., *Ep.* II.17.26, where he remarks on the convenience of having his villa at Laurentum at short distance from the nearby *uicus Augustanus*: the village had three bath complexes, which could easily be used in case of sudden arrivals or short stays.
[511] Frontin., *Aq*. II.78–79.
[512] Maiuro 2012, 372–73.

through aqueducts, which is recorded in four of the villas under consideration—Lanuuium, Laurentum, villa of the Quintilii, *Horti Spei Veteris*—and also with the abundance of facilities requiring large quantities of water, such as luxurious bath complexes or nymphaea. If imperial villas in the *suburbium* normally operated on small quantities of water, larger amounts were supplied only when necessary: aqueducts guaranteed a faster and more reliable distribution.

The analysis conducted in this chapter does not allow the identification of changes in the role of baths installed at imperial villas during the period under consideration, as the evidence from later residences is not sufficiently detailed. The two bathing facilities of the villa of Maxentius (the area A to the north of the mausoleum,[513] plan C11.III and the spaces G4 and G5 to the east of hall M,[514] plan C11.V) have not been investigated wholly. Likewise, the architectural relationship of the *thermae Helenae* with the remainder of the residence is unclear; furthermore, we do not know if the *Horti Spei Veteris*/*Palatium Sessorianum* included other bathing facilities.

What has emerged clearly, however, is the political function of baths installed at imperial residences, which follows in the vein of practices attested since the late-Republican period. Notwithstanding its inherently social nature, bathing was a relatively intimate activity, in which interactions were restricted to small numbers of individuals; unlike entertainment facilities or reception halls, where a physical distance between subject and ruler is maintained and reiterated, the most important

[513] Pisani Sartorio and Calza 1976, 10–21.
[514] Cossard-Martini 2020, 315–16.

characteristic of baths at imperial villas is the removal—fictitious rather than factual—of the barriers existing between the emperor and those who bathed with him. Bathing with Caesar in an imperial residence was thus a true privilege, bestowed on people of the highest rank or on the emperor's closest acquaintances: while bathing the emperor was much more approachable and vulnerable, as opposed to more formal and ceremonial interactions such as solemn hearings or circus games.

5.
Food and Wine:
Reception, Consumption, Production

The role of convivial eating and drinking as one of the most significant social rituals in the Roman world emerges from a wealth of literary and archaeological evidence, which testifies to the importance of commensality at each level of Roman society, in different geographical and chronological settings. This chapter will explore the role of banquets and drinking parties in the life pattern of the imperial court, by tackling the topic from a mainly archaeological angle: the physical layout of the spaces devoted to *conuiuia*. Particular attention will be paid to the theatrical aspect of the 'banquets of the powerful'[515] and to identifying and analysing the role of their manifold actors: the emperor, his guests, the performers offering live entertainment, and the service staff. Alongside dining practices and *coenationes*, I will also investigate the evidence for wine production at imperial villas, in order to understand its possible economic impact and its role as a luxurious pastime combining *utilitas* with *elegantia*. Since the villas under consideration have only yielded evidence for winemaking, other methods of food production—such as fish farming or oil pressing—will not be discussed. A discussion on the architectural evolution of Roman dining halls, with guidelines as to how to identify *coenationes* in the archaeological record, will be followed by an overview of the involvement of emperors in winemaking; in the central

[515] D'Arms 1999.

section of this chapter, I will present the archaeological evidence from individual villa sites, before moving on to conclusions.

At the Emperor's Table: Dining halls of imperial residences

Roman banqueting culture has been the subject of several studies, which tackled the issue from multiple viewpoints. A milestone in modern scholarship is Katherine Dunbabin's monograph,[516] which investigates the interplay between communal meals and social life in different timeframes, with valuable insights into the chronological developments of the layout and decoration of dining facilities. Banquets held by emperors, however, have been investigated from a mainly historical perspective: while Inge Nielsen and Lise Bek have analysed the continuity and change with royal feasts at the Hellenistic courts and in the Byzantine period,[517] Aloys Winterling and Björn Schöpe addressed imperial banquets as part of the progressive institutionalisation of the imperial court,[518] and Konrad Vössing developed Nielsen's and Bek's works in a wide-ranging study on royal banquets in the ancient world.[519] As regards archaeological issues, the banqueting halls of imperial villas and palaces have not been the subject of a comprehensive work as yet,[520] but have rather been analysed as part of

[516] Dunbabin 2003; modern scholarship on Roman dining habits is reviewed in chapter 1.
[517] Nielsen 1998; Bek 1983.
[518] Winterling 1999, 145–60; Schöpe 2014.
[519] Vössing 2004, 265–539; banqueting fashions and habits of individual emperors are discussed in less detail by Vössing 2007 and Stein-Hölkeskamp 2005, 41–57.
[520] An exception is Sojc and Winterling 2009, in which dining facilities in the *Domus Augustana* are compared with the configuration of Nero's Golden House.

studies on individual residences.

In the late-Republican period, political competition between ambitious elements of the *nobilitas* was a matter of course, and the banquets of the grandees one of its backdrops. Grand dinner parties hosted by the heads of the great noble families were semi-public events, where members of the elite—as well as those aspiring to belong to it—took the opportunity to establish a complex network of relationships, which were to play a crucial role for their careers.[521] The political character of this category of social gatherings seems not to have waned in the imperial period: imperial banquets provided ambitious individuals valuable opportunities for career advancement, in the form of a codified setting which offered increasing proximity to the emperor. Emperors, in their turn, did not fail to exploit the potential of grand dinner parties, both as a means of control over members of the elite and as backdrops for more-or-less formal meetings with representatives of foreign communities.[522]

Roman houses and villas were foci of public life, and *triclinia* served the masters' need for a space in which they could interact with, and offer entertainment to, their most prestigious guests.[523] As already discussed with regard to domestic baths, dining halls are amongst the features that Vitruvius defined *propria loca patribus familiarum*,

[521] Schnurbusch 2011, 219–53.

[522] For instance, Suet., *Calig*. XVII.2 on Caligula inviting the whole senatorial and equestrian order, including wives and children, to a banquet; Cass. Dio, LXVII.9 on Domitian's 'Banquet of the Dead',, a dinner with constant references to the afterworld, aiming to horrify the emperor's guests; Plin., *Ep*. VI.31 on Pliny's stay at Trajan's villa at Centumcellae, where the emperor held manifold lawsuits right before heading to dinner; literary evidence on the political and public aspects of imperial banquets are discussed by Wallace-Hadrill 2011 and Dalby 2001.

[523] Wallace-Hadrill 1988, 46–47.

which only invited visitors could access.[524] Based on Vitruvius' text, Andrew Wallace-Hadrill has proposed that Roman domestic spaces should be differentiated according to their degree of privacy, and their level of grandeur: dining facilities for the house master and for his most eminent guests, which he classified as both private and grand, are amongst the most exclusive features of a Roman house.[525] Notwithstanding the useful guidelines set in his work, Wallace-Hadrill's approach is restricted to the period between Cicero and Pliny the Younger, and is primarily concerned with urban *domus* rather than with villas. The transformations of dining habits in the imperial period and the resulting developments of banqueting halls make it necessary to adopt a more fluid and wide-ranging approach: my analysis will take Wallace-Hadrill's method as a starting point, but will address imperial dining facilities as part of a constantly evolving microcosm, to which the categories used for late-Republican and early-Imperial dwellings only partially apply.

A secure identification of dining facilities in the extant architecture is often hard to achieve: unlike baths or entertainment buildings, banqueting halls do not have a peculiar architectural layout, or fixed features—such as hypocausts in the hot suite of bathhouses, for instance—which unmistakably suggest their function. An exception is represented by masonry couches, which allow the immediate identification of a space as a dining facility; this kind of permanent furniture, however, is rarely attested.

[524] Vitr., *De arch.* VI.5.

[525] Wallace-Hadrill 1988, 50–58, in particular the diagram on page 55. In chapter 6, I discuss the use of the modern terms 'public' and 'private' (and their equivalents in other modern languages) with regard to Roman domestic spaces, as the two words do not entirely reflect the meaning of the Latin adjectives *proprius* and *communis* (chapter 6, 238–40).

Furthermore, a few rooms of Roman dwellings, and certainly reception halls broadly speaking, were multi-purpose spaces: it was often the arrangement of furniture that determined their specific functions under different circumstances. The size and location of a residence affected the allocation of space for dining facilities: unlike urban houses, villas allowed the installation of much larger halls, alongside offering room for architectural experimentation.[526] Lastly, the evolution and transformations of dining fashions from the mid-Republic all the way to the late Empire resulted in substantial changes in the architecture of banqueting halls: the traditional layout of earlier *triclinia* could not cater to the needs of the grand *conuiuia* of the late antique imperial court.[527] Developments in architecturally ambitious dining facilities are attested from the late second century BC, especially in the form of large peristyles.[528] As a result, the identification of dining halls must take into account a wide variety of elements, which will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

It has been mentioned that, given the frequent multifunctionality of reception halls broadly speaking, furniture can sometimes allow a more precise identification. On a few fortunate occasions, *triclinia* are equipped with masonry couches, as in the House of the Moralist at Pompeii (fig. 5.1),[529] which leave no room for doubt. The presence of wooden furniture is sometimes suggested by cuttings in the walls—as in the House of the Dioscuri in Pompeii—which indicate the position of couches.[530]

[526] Zarmakoupi 2014, 179–212.
[527] Schnurbusch 2011, 169–77.
[528] Dunbabin 1996.
[529] Dunbabin 2003, 37–38.
[530] Richardson 1955, 46–48.

Further evidence for the identification of banqueting halls is provided by floor decoration, when preserved. The traditional Roman *triclinium* features three couches set in the form of the letter Π and surrounding a single table serving all the diners. This arrangement is often suggested by floor mosaics: the space reserved for the couches had simpler patterns, whilst the centre of the room featured more complex decoration, such as *emblemata* or articulate compositions (figs. 5.2–3).[531] In fact, this layout is most frequent in late-Republican times, less so in the imperial period, when *coenationes* underwent substantial changes in size and ground plan, which suggest corresponding transformations of dining fashions. Research on the topic identified a number of features peculiar to dining rooms of the imperial period, which offer some hints on the changed habits underlying the architectural developments.[532]

Increasingly frequent in banqueting halls of the imperial period is a wide doorway allowing a view of the area immediately outside of the room, which in turn seems to acquire larger proportions. Literary sources highlight the steadily growing importance of live entertainment—music, singing, dancing, recitations, poetry, story-telling, and even gladiatorial fights—during grand dinner parties, which required a proper setting to be staged.[533] The space outside *triclinia* could therefore have functioned as a performance area for entertainers—often with a garden or the fountains of the peristyle serving as a backdrop—which the diners could enjoy through the wide open doorway. A spatial and architectural connection between dining halls and peristyles

[531] *Ibid.*, 41–46.
[532] Ellis 1997; Dunbabin 1996, 68–76; Rossiter 1991.
[533] E.g. Plut., *Mor. Quaest. Conu.* VII.7, VII.8. Discussion in Dunbabin 2008 and Jones 1991.

is also frequently attested.[534] The importance of the view during banquets was such that, if a landscape vista could not be offered to the diners, it was often suggested by illusionistic wall paintings.[535]

The increasingly important role of the area outside of banqueting halls seems to suggest a shift of focus, and a corresponding transformation of dining habits. While late-Republican and early-imperial *triclinia* were clearly oriented inwards, in the course of the first century AD dining halls acquired a more outward orientation: earlier dinner parties were conceived as spectacles in themselves, whilst later banquets emphasise the live performances staged outside the dining room.[536]

This steadily growing emphasis goes hand in hand with a substantial increase in the size of parties: if traditional *triclinia* of the late-Republican and early imperial period rarely accommodated more than nine guests, literary sources report that, from the mid-first century onwards, the invitees to imperial banquets were of the order of several dozen, if not hundreds.[537]

Large dining halls orientated to the outside were not the only possible solution for banquets with several guests. In the Golden House and the *Domus Augustana*, large

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[534] Dunbabin 1998.

[535] Nielsen 1998, 123.

[536] Dunbabin 1996, 70, with discussion on continuity and change with the Greek *deipnon* and *symposion*.

[537] See, for instance: Sen., *Dial. De ira* II.33.4 on a banquet held by Caligula, to which a hundred guests were invited; Suet., *Claud*. XXXII, on Claudius' habit of regularly inviting six hundred people to his dinner parties; Suet., *Nero* XLIII on Nero's plan to invite the whole senate to a banquet, in order to have all the senators poisoned; Nero's custom of holding huge dinner parties in public places is criticized by Tacitus, who remarks that the extravagant emperor 'treated the whole city as though it were his house' (*totaque urbe quasi domo uti*, Tac., *Ann*. XV.37.1; see also Champlin 1998). Predecessors of the grandiose banquets organised from the mid-first century are probably the *epula* held by Pompey and Caesar in their *horti*, to which they invited hundreds of commoners (D'Arms 1998).

halls featured alongside smaller suites, which could accommodate a high number of guests.[538] The atmosphere of banquets held in these suites must have been different from that of the parties taking place e.g. in the *Aula Regia* of the *Domus Flauia*, where the emperor reclined on a couch in the apse for his guests to behold.[539] Smaller dining suites, often oriented towards the inside such as in the sunken peristyle of the *Domus Augustana*, provided space for more enclosed—and possibly more exclusive—banquets. The coexistence of large dining halls and smaller suites suggests that banquets with different atmospheres were organised, which were probably intended for different categories of guests and provided a setting for different interactions between the emperor and the invitees.

Larger parties required a more structured and articulated service, and consequently a much larger and more specialised staff. Alongside the performers providing entertainment to the diners, the service functions can be grouped into three main categories: supervisory duties, gate keeping, and guest control; food service; wine service.[540] A grand and elaborate banquet such as those organised by Claudius required a huge crowd of servants to take care of all the needs: in order for the personnel to fulfil its duties efficiently and in due time, dining facilities must have expanded well beyond the room allocated to the banqueters and the entertainers, to include functional spaces where the household staff could circulate easily.

It emerges from the issues outlined in the previous paragraphs that the restricted

[538] Sojc 2012b, 29–37; Sojc and Winterling 2009.
[539] Zanker 2002, 113.
[540] D'Arms 1991; epigraphic evidence is discussed by Treggiari 1975.

space of late-Republican and early imperial *triclinia* could no longer cater to the increasingly elaborate character that banquets gradually assumed. The augmented dramaturgical needs, the much bigger size of dinner parties, and the higher number of servants led owners and architects to equip villas with larger reception rooms, which were not necessarily use-specific and often had a multifunctional character.

If banqueting rooms cannot always be securely distinguished from audience halls broadly speaking, the simultaneous occurrence of some of the elements outlined above might help their identification. Students of villa architecture whose aim is to pinpoint banqueting halls should look for ample rooms provided with wide doorways, facing out onto a space that could serve as a stage for entertainers, or overlooking peristyles or gardens, if not the landscape itself. Floor mosaics suggesting the position of furniture, and/or wall paintings with illusionistic vistas can facilitate the identification, but their absence should not lead us to reject an interpretation as a dining hall. Another element that can help is the position of these halls within the dwellings. As pointed out by Mantha Zarmakoupi, in the imperial period a growing interest in perfecting the seasonal character of banqueting facilities emerged:[541] while winter *triclinia* were frequently oriented southwards to make the most of the sunlight and were occasionally provided with heating, summer dining halls tended to face north, or to assume the form of semi-hypogeal rooms, where banqueters could enjoy their meal in a cool and pleasant environment.[542]

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[541] Zarmakoupi 2014, 191–95.

[542] Among the most famous examples of semi-hypogeal summer *triclinia* is that at the villa of Livia *ad*

Dining fashions seem to have changed towards the end of the third century AD, as the rectangular *klinai* were gradually replaced by a particular type of couch, semi-circular in shape, known as a *stibadium*, combined with a small, semi-circular table.[543] Even though curved couches are attested from the first century AD,[544] it seems that these earlier examples are connected with outdoor dining (with the exception of the Serapeum at Hadrian's Villa): the archaeological record suggests that indoors *stibadia* spread widely as late as the final years of the third century AD.[545]

The adoption of *stibadia* reflects some transformations in dining practices: diners could recline together on the same couch, and help themselves from communal serving vessels placed on the central table. As pointed out by Dunbabin, banquets held on *stibadia* were marked by an increased intimacy,[546] even though the fact that diners shared the same couch and serving vessels does not argue in favour of a supposedly egalitarian setting: Simon Ellis, who has connected the progressive spread of *stibadia* with the increasing formalisation and ritualisation of dining practices, highlighted that the use of semi-circular couches implied a more rigid definition of roles and ranks.[547]

To equip a residence with a *stibadium* required substantial financial effort. On the one hand, masonry *stibadia* implied the ossification of the function of the rooms where

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Gallinas Albas, where a lush garden is suggested by illusionistic wall paintings. A particular category of summer *triclinia* is that of dining facilities installed in grottos, as at the villa of Tiberius at Sperlonga, or even in artificially created caves, like the imperial nymphaeum at Punta Epitaffio (*Baiae*), or the imperial *triclinium* at the southern end of the Canopus at Hadrian's Villa (see Lavagne 1988, 513–616).

[543] Morvillez 2008; Morvillez 1996; Dunbabin 1996, 74–78 ; Dunbabin 1991, 128–30.

[544] Plin., *Ep.* V.6 reports on a marble *stibadium* in his villa in Tuscany; slightly later is the curved base for a couch in the so-called Serapeum of Hadrian's Villa.

[545] Ellis 1997, 41.

[546] Dunbabin 1991.

[547] Ellis 1997.

they were installed, which could only have served as dining facilities, and required the owner to have and use other rooms as, for instance, reception halls. On the other hand, movable *stibadia* were pieces of fine woodwork that must hardly have been for every budget. The progressive spread of semi-circular couches, as a result, seems not only to have followed the evolution of dining fashions, but to have also been affected by the social and economic status of their owners.

Semi-circular couches were most frequently installed in apsidal rooms, although this was not necessarily a rule; a few examples of rectangular dining halls are known, with mosaics marking the position of the *stibadium* and occasionally even the wedge-shaped areas defining the space allocated for each diner on the couch (figs. 5.4–5).[548] Apsidal reception rooms were widespread in Late Antiquity, in both private and public settings: as already discussed with regard to earlier periods, it is not always possible to discern banqueting facilities from reception halls based only on the ground plan.[549] The interpretation of apsidal halls as dining rooms for *stibadia*, as a result, must rely on the architectural layout and on other features.

As pointed out by Ellis, dining halls can often be identified by the entrance, which assumed the form of a monumental doorway marked by columns, by wall paintings and floor mosaics, and/or by an inscription placed at the threshold.[550] Differences in the patterns of floor mosaics might suggest the position of furniture, when not

[548] Villa at Dargoleja (Spain); villa of the Falconer (Argos). These and examples are discussed in Dunbabin 1991, 129–33.

[549] The use of apsidal rooms for sumptuous receptions, such as the *adoratio*, is discussed in chapter 2, 74–81.

[550] Ellis 1997, 43–45.

preserved, and facilitate the identification, as in earlier *triclinia*. The entrance section gave access to a large area, rectangular or squared in shape, at the opposite end of which was the *stibadium*, sometimes installed in an apse. The positions of the dining party and of the area in front of it allowed the staging of elaborate entertainment, which diners could enjoy from the *stibadium* that was usually installed on a shallow dais. Further, the fact that diners reclined on the same couch and helped themselves from communal vessels must have encouraged conversation, by setting the dinner in a self-enclosed and more intimate space.[551]

Even though the word *triclinium*, in its original meaning, designated a space that could accommodate three couches (*klinai*), after the late-Republican period it came to signify dining facilities broadly speaking, irrespective of size, capacity, and shape; the use of the word *coenatio* is also attested.[552] In this work, I will refer to dining facilities either as *triclinia* or as *coenationes*, regardless of their actual configuration; details on their layout and capacity will be provided in the discussion of individual villa sites.

A secure identification of banqueting halls has been possible in only four of the ten imperial villas under consideration: the villa *ad Gallinas Albas*, Villa Magna, the villa of the Quintilii, and the villa of Lucius Verus. At two sites—the *Horti Spei Veteris* and the villa of Maxentius—large apsidal halls might also have served as dining facilities, alongside reception or ceremonial purposes. Based on the criteria outlined above, I will attempt a more precise interpretation of these features, even though a secure

[551] Ellis 1997; on the use of table vessels to reconstruct dining habits, Hudson 2010.
[552] Dickmann 1999, 30–33.

identification is almost impossible to achieve. The imperial residences of Alsium, Antium, Lanuuium, and Laurentum are not known in sufficient detail to allow speculations on the layout and functions of dining facilities.

The chapter will first address the villas in which banqueting halls have been identified securely, then move to the other residences. *Triclinia* will be analysed both with respect to their architectural relationships with the remainder of the villa and to their layout and decoration. The position of dining facilities relative to other features, such as high-ranking residential areas or bath complexes, will lead to the identification of the routes that allowed different categories of individuals to circulate within the villa; their architectural layout will allow tentative considerations on the nature of dinner parties—whether they aimed more or less at social interactions, for instance—and of the entertainment offered to diners.

Wine production at imperial praedia

The progressive involvement of emperors in wine production is set against a well-established background: the growing engagement of senatorial aristocrats in viticulture since the second century BC.[553] Although a wealth of literary sources from the Republican period agree in celebrating agricultural production and animal husbandry as the only respectable sources of wealth for the Roman elite,[554]

[553] Manacorda 1978.

[554] Above all, Cic., *Off*. I.150–51, especially 151: 'of all the occupations by which gain is secured, none is better than agriculture, none more profitable, none more delightful, none more becoming for a free man' (LCL 30). See also Cic., *Off*. II.87, and Varro, *Rust*. I.4.1–2, III.2.1–18. An overview of literary sources

winemaking was largely considered a risky business, often subject to the vagaries of climate, and the occasionally exceptional profit it could yield was deemed indecent for a reputable man.[555]

As discussed by Nicholas Purcell, this picture changed at the turn of the common era, when multiple factors stimulated a growing interest among Roman senators in viticulture. First, the downward social diffusion of wine-drinking stimulated a steady increase in demand, especially in the urban market of Rome. Second, a substantial transformation is recorded in the social background of senators: a significant number of Italian *gentes*—which had hitherto been the backbone of wine production in Republican Italy—were progressively introduced into the Senate. Third, the goods distributed as part of the *annona* were increasingly obtained from the provinces: the immediate outskirts of Rome, hitherto devoted to the cultivation of staple goods, became an area of high-profit agriculture—including viticulture—with easy access to the urban market of the city. Fourth, it became more convenient to purchase even cheaper wines (and not just high-quality *crus*) from Italy, instead of the wine produced in the provinces (Gaul and Spain above all): *cépages* from Italy could reach Rome at lower cost and in less time.[556]

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concerned with Roman agriculture in Lomas 1996, 137–63. See also Roselaar 2021, Witcher 2016, Launaro 2015, Marzano 2007, 82–101, and Purcell 1995.

[555] Plin., *HN* XIV.48–52. Discussion in Purcell 1985, 3–6.

[556] The history of viticulture in Roman Italy is discussed by Purcell 1985, in particular 9–13 on the early imperial boom in viticulture summarised here. In his effort to trace the evolution of Italian wine through amphorae, André Tchernia divided wines into *crus* (high-quality wines, Tchernia 1986, 60–65) and *cépages* (low-quality wines, *Ibid.*, 184–88 and 197–201). Space constraints do not allow me to address wine-making in the Roman world in due detail: extensive reference works are Thurmond 2017, Brun 2004, and Brun 2003.

Despite the abundance of evidence—archaeological, epigraphical, literary—we are ill informed about wine production at imperial *praedia*. Pressing facilities have so far been identified and investigated only at Villa Magna and at the villa of the Quintilii; as part of the Vagnari Project led by Maureen Carroll, the *cella uinaria* of the imperial estate at Vagnari (Apulia) has been partially excavated, although pressing devices or vats have not been identified to date.[557] A passage from Martial mentions the cellars of Caesar (*Caesareis cellis*) at Albanum, whose wine was renowned for its quality.[558] One of Fronto's letters to Marcus Aurelius seems to mention vineyards at the imperial estate at Alsium, although a lacuna hinders our understanding of the text.[559]

Amongst the villas under consideration, wineries have been identified at Villa Magna and at the villa of the Quintilii; their remains will be addressed as part of the wider analysis of the two sites. In the concluding section, I will discuss the data that emerged from the two villas in the wider framework of wine production in the imperial period, in order to offer a possible interpretation of their wineries in light of what we can infer from a combined reading of the distribution map of imperial possessions in Italy and the evolution of tastes for wine in the imperial period.

Ad Gallinas Albas (C1, fig. 5.6)

In its original configuration, the villa of Livia at Prima Porta was equipped with at least two dining facilities: the *triclinium* 58, on the eastern side of peristyle 79, and the

[557] Lastly, Carroll 2019, especially 6–7.
[558] Mart., *Spect*. XIII.109.
[559] Fronto, *Ep. ad. M. Ant. de Fer. Als.* 2.

luxurious underground room 1, which yielded the famous wall paintings with the representation of an illusionistic garden (fig. 5.7, plan C1.I).[560] Hall 1, installed under Augustus, remained in use for a short time span—the collapse of its vault is attributed to an earthquake that occurred in 17 BC—and will not therefore be discussed in this work.[561]

The identification of hall 58 (fig. 5.8) as a *triclinium* hall is supported by its ground plan. The room can roughly be divided into two halves. In the foreground is a large rectangular space (58a), measuring c. 8.30 by 5.60 metres, behind which are three smaller compartments: a roughly squared space in the middle of the eastern side (58b), 3.90 metres long and 3.70 metres wide, is flanked by two equally sized, rectangular rooms to the north and south (58c and 58d). It has been calculated that Roman dining couches measured, on average, c. 2.5 metres in length and 1.5 metres in width, and could accommodate three guests each; traditional *triclinia* usually had three couches, thus providing space for up to nine diners:[562] the central space 58b could perfectly accommodate three *klinai*, suiting the spatial needs of a regular nine-person party.

The dining hall was oriented towards the south-west, which suggests that it was probably intended to be used during colder times of the year: this orientation would have allowed an efficient exploitation of sunlight.[563] This interpretation is corroborated by the size of the doorway opening onto peristyle 79: less than 1.70 metres wide, it

[560] Jones 2013; Settis 2002.
[561] Details on its configuration and interpretation are found in Zarmakoupi 2008; Carrara and Messineo 2001, 29–34; Gabriel 1955; Sulze 1932.
[562] Dunbabin and Slater 2011, 441.
[563] Vitr., *De arch.* VI.4.1–2.

would have led to very little heat dispersion.

The large rectangular space (58a) off the dining hall proper would have easily served for entertainment purposes. As 58b had no actual doorways, banqueters could fully enjoy the live performances staged before their eyes. The entertainers, however, were probably not meant to perform with the garden peristyle 79 as a backdrop, even if the door had a window: the use of clear glass for windows was not introduced until the second century AD.[564]

Rooms 58c and 58d may have served, respectively, as a feature subordinate to the dining hall proper and as a transition space linking the *coenatio* with the nearby residential quarter to the east,[565] which was probably reserved for the villa's highest-ranking dwellers.[566] Architecturally connected with the dining hall are rooms 57 and 55, whose floor mosaics mark them as formal spaces; their relationship with the *triclinium* corroborates their identification as ancillary features. Whilst 57 could have served as a transition space linking the *triclinium* with corridor 44, and then with the baths,[567] hall 55, measuring 3.20 by 4.50 m and reached only from 58, may have catered to the needs of a banquet for lower-ranking people, such as the *umbrae* (individuals of free or servile status whose role was to accompany invitees to grand dinner parties).[568] It is unlikely that features like 55, as well as the L-shaped spaces adjacent to hall at the

[564] Jennings 2015.

[565] The doorway between 58d and garden 48 was blocked with a wall of an extremely low quality, without facing, which suggests a late chronology (Carrara and Messineo 2001, 77, n. 102).

[566] Chapter 2, 66–67.

[567] On the bathhouse, chapter 4, 139–42.

[568] Vössing 2012, 126–27; Vössing 2004, 222–24; Salza Prina Ricotti 1993, 25. The role of *umbrae* is discussed in Plut., *Mor. Quaest. Conu.* VII.6.

villa of the Quintilii—separated from the main dining hall, yet evidently linked to it—served as the venue for distinct parties restricted to female diners: as early as the mid-first century BC, women were accustomed to participating in banquets *cum uiris*.[569]

The features on the eastern side of peristyle 79 are part of the original nucleus of the imperial residence, dated to the Augustan period; however, the mosaics in rooms 58b and 57, with black-and-white vegetal motifs, are part of the refurbishments undertaken in the Hadrianic/Antonine period.[570] As already discussed with regard to *cubicula* 50 and 52,[571] the alterations that the earliest features of the villa underwent after the Augustan period seem to signify an intention to maintain the original layout of a villa which was allegedly used by Augustus himself. The capacity of the *triclinium* accords with the modest size of the baths, which I have proposed were reserved for a small number of selected guests.

Villa Magna (C6)

The southernmost block of Villa Magna (plan. C6.I) included a small *balneum*,[572] a monumental winery, and a dining hall facing the *cella uinaria* (plan C6.IV).[573] The structures have been razed almost completely by the construction of a farmhouse in the nineteenth century, and could be investigated partially. Standing on three storeys,

[569] Val. Max., II.1.2. The involvement of women in Roman banquets is discussed by Roller 2003.
[570] *Ibid.*, 77–78.
[571] Chapter 2, 66–67.
[572] Chapter 4, 142–45.
[573] Data on the villa in Fentress *et al.* 2016; specifically on the winery block, Booms *et al.* 2016 and Booms 2016.

with vaulted substructures that provided storage space and allowed a more efficient exploitation of the hillslope, the winery complex was accessed from the south through corridor 17, which was in turn reached by the colonnaded street coming from the entrance to the villa and the presumed imperial quarters. Corridor 17 led into a monumental staircase (5), with a white mosaic floor and walls clad in *opus sectile*, which served as a privileged access route to the winery block.

The winery (1, fig. 5.9), which includes both the *calcatorium* for grape treading and a *doliarium*, is amongst the most remarkable wine-producing facilities of the Roman world, probably rivalled only by the winery installed at the villa of the Quintilii in the mid-third century AD (see below). The *cella uinaria*, extending for c. 150 m^2 in the southern section of the winery, is entirely paved in *opus spicatum*, a pattern widely attested in functional spaces. In the case of Villa Magna, however, each and every brick of the *opus spicatum* flooring is of *marmor chium (portasanta)*: despite its originally productive function, the winery was provided with unexpected luxury by this elaborate flooring, which must have required no less than thirteen tonnes of marble.[574] A grid-shaped arrangement of squared postholes in the *cella uinaria* offers evidence for an awning set on wooden posts, which would have offered shade from the sun: the area was probably not roofed. The *cella uinaria* provided space for 38 *dolia defossa*, arranged in four rows; a circular strip of serpentine seems to have marked the two central *dolia*, which may have contained wine of a higher quality.[575]

[574] Figures in Booms *et al.* 2016, 97–98.
[575] *Ibid*., 97.

To the north of the *doliarium* is the *calcatorium*, a concrete platform for grape-treading, built over a low vault. Even though the poor preservation of the winery hinders the understanding of circulation patterns, it has been suggested that grapes were brought to the *calcatorium* from the north: based on parallels from the Vesuvian area, such as the Villa Regina at Boscoreale,[576] a large opening has been envisaged in the wall to the north of the treading platform, through which grapes could be deposited on the *calcatorium*. The use of an alternative route from the south has been deemed implausible: as grapes waiting to be trodden were probably stored in the substructures, workers would have had to climb the steep staircase 6, pass through the formal spaces 10, 11, and 2, and then cross the *doliarium*. The vaulted substructures to the north and east of the cellar were covered by a terrace, sections of which have been identified, suggesting that the space behind the *calcatorium* was probably meant for circulation.

Excavations in the *cella uinaria* did not reveal any features that could be securely interpreted as pressing machines: it seems that grapes were simply trodden on in the *calcatorium*. This arrangement might suggest an investment in producing wine of the highest standards: it was only by *treading* upon the grapes that this quality could be obtained, as presses could often over-squeeze seeds and grapeskins, damaging the taste.[577]

The must squeezed from the grapes flowed into a marble-lined vat in front of the

[576] De Caro 1994, 42–43.

[577] Rossiter 1981, 346–53. The issue is discussed by Cato, *Agr*. XXIII.4 and Varro, *Rust.* I.54.2–3.

centre of the treading platform; another vat has been identified on the western side of the room, and a third one can probably be envisaged on the eastern side, which could not be investigated as it lies below the nineteenth-century farmhouse.

The *cella uinaria* is abutted on the southern side by a large exedra (2), which, albeit poorly preserved, has been interpreted as a semi-circular dining hall, presumably equipped with a now-lost *stibadium*. Even though nothing is preserved of the original floor decoration, its preparation is identical to that of the rooms paved with *opus sectile*, thus suggesting that the dining hall featured marble flooring as well.[578] The exedra is delimited by the external corridor 3, whose lower-quality floor mosaic supports its interpretation as a functional space; given its relationship with the dining hall, it may well have served as a circulation feature for service personnel bringing food to the diners.

The loss of the dining couch makes it hard to reconstruct the capacity of the room, which can only be assumed based on comparisons with similarly sized banqueting halls. In the landscape of imperial residences, the so-called Serapeum of Hadrian's Villa (fig. 5.10) is a very close parallel to Villa Magna's dining hall, from both the dimensional and the chronological viewpoint. The most spectacular dining facility of Hadrian's residence at Tibur, comprising both the Canopus channel and the luxurious *coenatio* at the pool's southern end, was seemingly installed in the years 125–26, and modified shortly thereafter.[579] The facility is therefore slightly later than the winery

[578] Booms *et al.* 2016, 94.

[579] Salza Prina Ricotti 2001, 249–56.

complex of Villa Magna, which has been dated to the years 108–23, based on brick stamps.[580] As argued by Salza Prina Ricotti, at Hadrian's Villa the emperor and his most important guests dined on the semi-circular couch in the *coenatio* at the end of the Canopus, which could accommodate up to eighteen diners.[581]

The capacity of *stibadia* is determined by the length of the inner semicircle; modern scholarship, however, has not discussed in detail the possible space allocated to each diner, which would affect the calculation of the actual size of dinner parties. Some evidence in this regard is offered by the mosaic flooring of a number of dining halls, which, as discussed in the introductory section, indicate the position of *stibadia* and the wedge-shaped areas reserved for each diner. The archaeological record from the villa at Dewlish and from the villa of the Falconer at Argos suggests that the space allocated to each diner on the inner semicircle of *stibadia* was c. 0.4/0.5 m.[582] Conversely, Salza Prina Ricotti's analysis of the Serapeum at Hadrian's Villa, which is based on the evidence for the position of serving tables, indicates that each diner occupied c. 1 m on the inner semicircle.[583]

In my calculations of the potential capacity of *stibadia* in the residences under consideration, I will offer both a minimum estimate, obtained allowing for 1 m per person, and a maximum estimate, in which I have assumed that the space allocated to each diner was 0.5 m. Further, as it is the length of the inner semicircle of the *stibadium*

[580] Bernard 2016.
[581] Salza Prina Ricotti 2001, 246.
[582] Dewlish villa: Ellis 1995, pl. I; villa of the Falconer: Dunbabin 2003, fig. 100.
[583] Salza Prina Ricotti 2001, 246.

which determines its actual capacity, the dimensions of the apse where it was installed can suggest its maximum size, but are not sufficient to deduce its inner diameter. Floor mosaics in apsidal dining halls seem to indicated that *stibadia* were normally 2 m deep, and that they were installed at c. 1 m from the walls, so that service staff could circulate easily. My analysis will build upon these figures.

In the recent publication of the excavations at Villa Magna, the *stibadium* is reconstructed as a small couch located at the centre of exedra 2, which could accommodate no more than nine guests.[584] Based on the methodology discussed above, I propose that room 2 could fit a *stibadium* measuring up to 11 m in its inner diameter, which could accommodate between eleven and twenty-two people (fig. 5.11); the figure accords with the capacity of the small *balneum*.[585]

The winery and the *coenatio* are in clear architectural relationship with the bathhouse on the south-western corner of the block. Rarely are we so fortunate as to find a direct correspondence between the archaeological record and the literary sources; in the case of Villa Magna, we are provided with an extremely detailed account by no less a personage than the emperor Marcus Aurelius. Three of his letters to Fronto date to AD 144/145, when the young prince spent some time at the villa with his father and part of his family, during the vintage.[586] In describing to his tutor what looks like a typical day at the villa, Marcus Aurelius reports that the imperial family,

[584] No measures are provided on the 3D reconstruction of the dining hall: I am offering a very approximate calculation of its capacity.
[585] Chapter 4, 143.
[586] Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Caes.* IV.4–6. The letters are discussed in Fentress and Maiuro 2011, 333–35.

after assisting Antoninus Pius in a sacrifice and taking a bath, had dinner in the pressing room (*in torculari*), listening to the rustics teasing each other. Grape-treading, thus, was not only part of the wine-producing process, but also a proper entertainment for the imperial family dining in the room just off the *cella uinaria*. Unfortunately, the poor preservation of the structures, most of which are destroyed to below the threshold level, does not allow firm conclusions on the nature of the feature separating the *coenatio* from the *cella uinaria*. As Marcus Aurelius reported that the diners could watch and hear the rustics, this partition has been reconstructed as a sort of loggia, with a sequence of arches opening towards the winery.[587] With the *calcatorium* serving as a stage for the grape-treaders, and the semi-circular *coenatio* just off the *cella uinaria*, the layout of the core of the winery is reminiscent of that of a theatre: the imperial family dined in the *coenatio* as if sitting in a *cauea*, enjoying the entertainment of rustics pressing grapes on the *calcatorium*/stage, with the *cella uinaria* in the position of the *orchestra*.[588] The orientation of room 2, facing north, acquires further significance in light of Marcus Aurelius' account, set during vintage time (late September/mid-October): as the weather was still warm, a dining room facing north would have been cooler and more enjoyable.

Whilst the Antonine residence of Villa Magna stood out both for the lavishness of its formal spaces and for the evident emphasis on wine production, later periods witnessed a relatively reduced interest in luxury (the bathhouse was dismantled and

[587] Fentress and Maiuro 2016, 207.
[588] *Ibid.*, 207–08.

turned into a storage space, though the formal rooms seem to have maintained a commendable standard), and a substantial investment in the productive capacity of the estate.

A building (area D, plan C6.II) c. 200 m to the north of the winery block, consisting of three rows of small, squared rooms, has been interpreted as lodgings for low-status workers employed at the villa, based on the modest size of the individual rooms (c. 10 m^2 on average), paved in beaten earth, and on the substantial evidence for domestic pottery.[589] Stratigraphical data suggest dating the workers' barracks to the late Severan period. This chronology accords with the abandonment of the winery of the southern block (250s) and with the installation of an apsidal building c. 50 m to the south-west of the barracks (second half of the third century). The ground plan of this feature (fig. 5.12), as well as limited evidence for vats used for some production process, corroborate its identification as a wine-producing facility, which may have replaced the dismantled winery to the south.[590] This interpretation is further supported by a passage from Palladius providing instructions for laying out a *cella uinaria* 'in the fashion of a basilica',[591] in turn reflected by the configuration of a fourth-century winery identified at the villa of Passolombardo (fig. 5.13),[592] which provides a valuable parallel for the apsidal feature of Villa Magna. The stratigraphy and inner configuration of the later winery at Villa Magna have been completely obliterated by

[589] Andrews and Privitera 2016.
[590] Fentress and Fenwick 2016, 193–96.
[591] Palladius, *Opus Agriculturae* I.18.
[592] Ricci 2005.

the construction of the church of San Pietro in the late-fifth/early-sixth century: any speculation on its pressing devices and capacity is almost impossible.

Even though the actual employment of the workers lodged in barracks D is hard to ascertain, the chronological relationship between the construction of the barracks, the dismantlement of the earlier *cella uinaria*, and the installation of the later winery may suggest that, despite the decline in the formal aspects of the villa, wine production remained central to the estate, even after the residence ceased to be visited by the imperial family (c. 250s).

Villa Magna lies at the core of one of the most important wine-producing areas of the wider *suburbium* of Rome: Signia (modern-day Segni). *Signinum* wine is mentioned by literary sources from the Augustan period onwards,[593] even though it appears to have been used as a medication rather than as a table wine at least until the central decades of the second century: Galen and Athenaeus are the earliest and only authors to report that it was drinkable in the first years after the vintage, but became much more enjoyable when aged (at least six years, Athenaeus says).[594] *Signinum* wine is still mentioned as a remedy against dysentery in the fifth century AD;[595] even though Marcellus Empiricus most likely relied on Scribonius Largus (age of Claudius) for information on its use,[596] he was nonetheless aiming to provide first-hand remedies for those who could not go to a doctor: *Signinum* was evidently a wine that could still be

[593] Strab. V.3.10; Plin., *HN* XIV.65, XXIII.36; Mart., *Spect.* XIII.116; Sil., *Pun.* VIII.378. Dioscorides, *De materia medica* V.6.10.
[594] Gal., *De sanitate tuenda* V.334K, V.337K; *De methodo medendi* XI.831K; *De antidotis* I.15K. Ath., I.27b.
[595] Marcellus Burdigalensis 'Empiricus', *de Medicamentis* XXVII.1, XXVII.3, XXVII.26.
[596] Baldwin 1992.

purchased from the market.

The archaeological evidence from Villa Magna suggests that wine production was central to the property: an almost-uninterrupted investment in facilities for pressing and storage is attested from the Hadrianic period well into the fifth/sixth centuries. Based on the average capacity of the *dolia* identified in the southern winery (78 *urnae* each, c. 1,000 litres, according to the graffito on the rim of a *dolium*), as well as on the possible number of people lodged in the barracks, Maiuro has attempted to calculate the minimum productive capacity of the estate of Villa Magna.[597]

Based on indications from literary sources and on parallels with wine production in pre-industrial times, it has been calculated that ancient vineyards could produce an average of c. 30 hl of wine per ha.[598] The thirty-eight *dolia* of the earlier winery, with an overall capacity of up to 400 hl, could therefore have held the production of a vineyard extending for no more than 12 ha, or, if we were to follow Athenaeus' recommendation that *Signinum* be aged for six years, 2 ha. However, wine might also have been stored elsewhere, such as in the vaulted substructures of the winery.

The capacity of the workers' barracks has been calculated to be c. 200–240 people, only 80–100 of whom would have been male adults. Based on the figures provided by Todd Hickey for late-antique Egypt,[599] Maiuro has argued that the workforce housed in barracks D could have worked c. 40/50 ha of terrain. What is impossible to ascertain, of course, is whether these workers were employed in the vineyards, and what

[597] Fentress and Maiuro 2016, 202–03.
[598] Tchernia 1986, 359–60. Cato, *Agr*. XI; Columella, *Rust*. III.3.7–10.
[599] Hickey 2012, 150–55.

proportion of the overall extension of the estate was occupied by them.

The geomorphology of the site is ideal for vineyards: ancient authors were well aware of the importance of planting vines on a gently sloping terrain,[600] which guaranteed suitable drainage and prevented cold damming.[601] The two reservoirs to the south and south-east of the winery had a capacity of, respectively, at least 150 m^3 (southern one) and at least 350 m^3 (south-eastern one);[602] as demonstrated by Andrew Wilson, large above-ground or semi-interred cisterns are a chief archaeological indicator of intensive gardening and viticulture.[603] The chronology of the two reservoirs supports the argument on the increase in wine production in the Severan period: whilst the smaller one dates to the Hadrianic period, the larger one was installed in the early third century AD.[604]

What was the market for the wine produced at Villa Magna? The picture that has emerged from the analysis of literary sources suggests that *Signinum*, which physicians had celebrated for its healing properties in the early Imperial period, became widespread as a table wine under the Antonine emperors. Maiuro has proposed that the increased popularity of the wine from Signia should be linked with the praise that it received from ancient authors, which may in turn have been influenced by changes in the tastes of the imperial court. Comparable patterns have been identified with

[600] Columella, *Rust*. III.1.8.

[601] The tendency of cold air to pool in low-lying pockets (Thurmond 2017, 53–54).

[602] The capacity of the reservoirs is necessarily underestimated, as the height of neither building has been reached during excavations (Miliaresis and Cavalieri de Pace 2016, 69–73).

[603] Wilson 2008.

[604] Dufton 2016, 68.

regard to other wines, such as *Pucinum*, *Setinum*, and *Surrentinum*; interestingly, imperial possessions are attested in the areas where these wines were produced. A similar picture is also suggested for lower-quality *cépages*: we know of at least three cases in which the beginning of a wine's popularity and the involvement of emperors in its production appear to be connected.[605]

We can assume that a certain amount of the wine produced at imperial *praedia* was probably for the consumption of the imperial household. The information on the varying popularity of particular *crus*, on the other hand, could provide food for thought as to the other possible consumers of imperial wines. As felicitously expressed by Tchernia, the upper echelons of Roman imperial society lived 'with the eyes fixed on the prince':[606] the lifestyle of the imperial court influenced their choices from manifold viewpoints; the taste for wine must have been one of them.

We know that wine was never part of the free distribution of staples to the *plebs urbana*; even when it was included in the dole—at some time between the age of Aurelian and that of Constantine—it was never distributed at no charge, but sold at a subsidised price.[607] It is possible that the overall production of wine at imperial *praedia* was not substantial, at least in absolute terms, and definitely not sufficient to cater to the needs of those who benefited from the dole, otherwise it would have been distributed as a *species annonaria* much earlier. Besides the amount reserved for the imperial court's consumption, it is not unlikely that wine from imperial possessions

[605] Maiuro 2012, 217–23.
[606] Tchernia 1986, 204.
[607] Vera 2005.

was also sold: both by establishing fashions amongst the upper classes and by producing and trading *cépages*, emperors appear to have actively participated in the wine market; how consciously this was done is impossible to ascertain.

Villa of the Quintilii (C9)

The luxurious suburban property of the Quintilii confiscated by Commodus in AD 182/183 was equipped with at least two dining halls, the use of which seems to have followed seasonal criteria. These two *coenationes* are found in the southern half of the main block of the residence; a third dining facility is part of the winery installed above the *carceres* of the circus under the Gordians.

The central hall of the eastern quarter of the main block is a large octagonal room (A1), paved in *opus sectile* and fully heated (fig. 5.14, plan C9.I). Its four massive triangular piers, which occupy four sides of the octagon, suggest that it was covered by a dome. Its heating system indicates that the room was meant to be used for several hours in cold periods.[608]

It has been suggested that *klinai* could have been installed both in the central octagon and in the four L-shaped spaces at the corners of the hall, the former being reserved for higher-ranking diners, the latter for guests of a lower category.[609] Positioning couches in the central octagon would have been fairly easy: the inner sides of the four triangular piers measure more than 5 m each, thus allowing the installation

[608] Paris *et al.* 2012, 18–19.

[609] Frontoni and Galli 2014a, 149–50.

of up to eight *klinai*, each couch or pair of couches being provided with its own serving table. Understanding the arrangement of furniture in the L-shaped spaces is much more difficult, not least because the ones to the north of the central octagon are preserved poorly. Evidence from the recent excavations indicates that the two spaces to the south were divided into three smaller squared compartments by two pairs of pilasters placed to the right and in front of the doorways opening onto hall A7. This reconstruction is confirmed by variations in the patterns of *opus sectile* flooring; we can assume that the two compartments to the north had a similar layout. The L-shaped spaces could not accommodate the traditional *klinai*, which would have partially obstructed the doorways: we are thus dealing with rooms primarily serving reception purposes, as suggested by heating and floor decoration, yet evidently ancillary to the central octagon. I propose to read these spaces as reserved for lower-ranking guests, who did not necessarily recline during banquets, and could settle for benches or stools, which did not require as much space as *klinai*.

The winter *triclinium* A1 is the main focus of the eastern quarter of the villa, and could easily be reached both from the presumed imperial *cubicula* (B26–B27) and from the outside, through the open courtyard B34 and the large hall A7. The route that the emperors' guests took to reach it after having bathed in the Large Baths can be reconstructed based on the capacity of the *coenatio* and of the baths, as well as on the possible identity of the invitees to imperial banquets. It is most likely that the emperor, having left the baths from *frigidarium* D1, could use the route L9 – T1 – A6 – A8 to reach hall A7, which was probably the antechamber to the *triclinium* proper (fig. 5.15). The

capacity of the *caldarium* of the Large Baths suggests that few individuals were granted the immense privilege of bathing with the emperor: I argue that these people, owing to their social standing, were allowed to use the same route as the emperor to reach *coenatio* A1 from the Large Baths. Similar considerations must have applied to the guests staying at the miniature apartment to the west of the exedra-theatre.

Excavations at the villa revealed a network of underground spaces, especially in the north-eastern half of the main block.[610] Even though these features have not been entirely excavated and documented, they must have functioned as circulation and service facilities, for the personnel employed at the villa to both operate the *praefurnia* and fulfil service functions. Dwellings for servile staff have probably been identified in area C, on top of the substructures of the *basis uillae*.[611] The architectural relationships between the servile quarters and the underground facilities are hard to understand on current evidence, as most of the upper storeys are lost: however, the position of staff dwellings and service facilities allowed servants to easily circulate underground, without being seen by the higher-ranking individuals living on the upper floors.

At the western corner of the main block, a circular hall between the Large Baths and the theatre-exedra (R14) has been interpreted as a summer *triclinium*, on the grounds of its position and size—which can be compared with those of the octagonal hall A1—and of the absence of a heating system (fig. 5.16).[612] The room has two

[610] The available publications do not discuss the subterranean facilities in the north-eastern half of the main block.
[611] Paris *et al.* 2012, 10.
[612] *Ibid.*, 24–25.

openings to the north and south: the former, which was seemingly closed in the age of Commodus, connected it with the Large Baths, the latter opening onto the adjoining exedra R13.

Its interpretation as a dining space is problematic, not least because the only known example of a circular banqueting hall is Nero's legendary *coenatio rotunda* in the Golden House, a round *triclinium* which, according to Suetonius, was able to rotate day and night, imitating the movements of the Earth (fig. 5.17).[613] The luxurious dining hall of Nero's infamous residence, however, has not been identified securely in the archaeological record: the interpretation of the structures identified in the Vigna Barberini on the Palatine Hill as the *coenatio rotunda*[614] is fascinating, although not confirmed as yet. Given the lack of clear evidence for circular dining halls, the interpretation of R14 as a summer *triclinium* must remain at the level of hypothesis.

Its ground plan is rather reminiscent of that of features serving as distribution and circulation spaces,[615] which are attested in elite domestic architecture from the mid-second century onwards.[616] One of the closest parallels for R14, from both the architectural and the chronological viewpoint, is the so-called nymphaeum of the Gardens of Sallust in Rome, dating to the Hadrianic period and most likely serving as a monumental vestibule (fig. 5.18).[617] Later comparanda include the round vestibule of Diocletian's palace at Split, the circular hall O of the villa of Maxentius on the *uia*

[613] Suet., *Nero* XXXI.3.
[614] Villedieu 2016; Villedieu 2011; Villedieu 2010.
[615] I am grateful to Andrea Di Miceli for his suggestions in this regard.
[616] Scagliarini Corlaita 1995; Wilson Jones 1989.
[617] Hartswick 2004, 37–51; Innocenti and Leotta 2004, 161–75.

Appia,[618] and the so-called Tempio della Tosse in Tivoli, which Giuliani[619] has interpreted as a monumental vestibule added in the fourth century AD to a previously existing villa.[620]

Since the interpretation of R14 as a dining hall has been questioned, either we assume that the octagonal hall A1 served as both a winter and a summer *triclinium*, or we look for another dining room in the southern corner of the main block, which could be used in warmer periods. The preserved floor mosaics and *opus sectile* offer no clues for the identification of a *triclinium*: none of the halls feature a flooring pattern that could suggest the arrangement of dining furniture. The only possible candidate for the role of a second *triclinium* is room R58 (8.50 by 9.70 m): with its wide doorway open towards the adjacent hall R59, which could have served as space for entertainers, R58 could have easily accommodated up to twenty-seven guests, reclining on nine couches positioned on the western, northern, and eastern sides (figs. 5.15 and 5.19). This scenario does not necessarily imply that R58 would have permanently served as dining hall: as furniture could easily be moved at will, rooms were not use-specific and could fulfil different functions depending on circumstances.

The proposed interpretation of R58 as a dining hall is corroborated by the analysis of its access patterns. The hall was reached by the system of monumental corridors which connected the presumed imperial quarters with the remainder of the residence.

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[618] Pisani Sartorio and Calza 1976, 126.

[619] Giuliani 1970, 203–15.

[620] The possible role of R14 in the proposed circulation patterns of the villa of the Quintilii is discussed more extensively in chapter 6, 255–56.

Visitors arriving from the southern corridor X could access R58 after passing through the large space R59; a similar path was probably followed also by the guests housed in the miniature apartment to the west of the exedra-theatre (fig. 5.15).

The different architectural layout of the two dining halls implies differences in the type of entertainment offered to the diners: the winter *triclinium* had a clear inwards orientation, whilst the summer dining room was oriented outwards. If my reconstruction of the couch arrangement in the central octagon of A1 is correct, plenty of space was available at the centre of the hall for entertainment. Further evidence to corroborate this argument is offered by the size of the openings, and by their position relative to the couches: offering a view towards the outside was not the main design concern. As walls are preserved for a limited height, however, we have no idea as to where windows could have been placed. Shifting the focus towards the inside of the room makes particular sense in light of the seasonal role of the *triclinium*, meant to be used in colder periods: if entertainment could be staged at the centre of the octagon, there was no need for wide openings towards the outside, which would have caused substantial heat dispersion. The inwards orientation, however, must not lead to the assumption that conversation between the diners was encouraged: the distance between opposite pairs of *klinai* was more than 10 metres.

By contrast, the reciprocal position of rooms R58 – R59, along with the size of the doorway between the two halls, leads me to suggest that this dining hall was oriented outwards, with R59 serving as space for live performances. Since entertainment was not staged in the dining room (A1), but in a space adjacent to it, we can envisage that

spectacles varied according to the locations of the banquets. At winter parties taking place in the octagonal hall, guests were probably entertained by *recitationes* or poetry contests: performances that could be staged within the dining room. Conversely, the large space R59 would have allowed the staging of more elaborate performances in the warmer seasons, involving acrobats and dancers, which the revellers dining in room R58 could enjoy through the wide doorway.

The villa of the Quintilii was also equipped with a third dining facility, which I propose was the space to the north of the winery's *cella uinaria,* installed above the obliterated *carceres* of the circus built by Commodus (fig. 5.20). The construction of the winery was dated to the years 238–44, due to the impression on a lead *fistula* reading the name of one of the Gordians that remains on the mortar of the building.[621]

The southern section of the winery included the *calcatorium* flanked by two symmetrical *torcularia*, which were connected through *fistulae* to a sequence of spouts serving as a monumental façade for the *cella uinaria* (S12), providing space for 16 *dolia defossa* that could hold up to 160 hl of wine. The must obtained in the *torcularia* flowed to the spouts, which decanted it into the *dolia*.

The *cella uinaria* is flanked on the western and eastern sides by two identical rooms (S12 – S14), which open towards the *doliarium* with a large doorway punctuated by two columns. The two halls, with *opus sectile* on the floor and marble cladding on the walls, have been interpreted by Frontoni as facilities for wine-tasting events: the winery was intended to provide the emperors and their guests with the opportunity

[621] Paris, Frontoni, and Galli 2019, 71–72.

to both witness the wine-making process and taste the wine from previous vintages bottled in the *dolia*. Frontoni's reconstruction is rather forced: the luxurious decoration of the room and its association with the winery are not sufficient to argue that the social gatherings held there were wine tastings; I would rather interpret the two halls as serving reception functions broadly speaking.

The architectural layout of Villa Magna's winery complex, where productive facilities are tightly connected with a luxurious dining hall from which the banqueters could enjoy a view of the grape-treading and of the *doliarium*, might help us interpret the features at the villa of the Quintilii. The large hall to the north of the *doliarium* opened towards the monumental façade of the *cella uinaria*, with the five spouts decanting wine into the *dolia*: it was evidently meant for social gatherings whose participants could admire the productive facilities showcased before their eyes. Whilst the layout of rooms S12 and S14 does not seem ideal for the usual, U-shaped couch arrangement of Roman dinner parties—as the *klinai* on the northern and southern sides would have obstructed the opening towards the *cella uinaria*—the northern room could have fitted as many as nine couches, suited for a party of up to twenty-seven diners. If my reconstruction is correct, the architectural layout of the winery at the villa of the Quintilii replicates that of Villa Magna's, where the facilities for processing the grapes, as well as the *dolia* where the wine was bottled, were presented to the diners as a form of entertainment in itself.

The building could be reached both from courtyard B34 and from the southern corridor X: it seems plausible that the former path was reserved for members of the

imperial family staying in *cubicula* B26 – B27, on the opposite side of B34, whilst the latter was presumably allocated to guests coming from the main entrance to the villa, on the *uia Appia*.

Villa of Lucius Verus (C8)

The western wing of the villa of Lucius Verus, labelled with the letter D (fig. 5.21), included formal spaces facing a small garden (21 – 22 – 23), a *balneum*,[622] and a semi-circular exedra to the north of the bathhouse. The exedra (25) faces northwards, and was equipped with a sewer, which suggests reading it as a nymphaeum. Its orientation and drainage system, together with the impression of marble slabs on the floor preparation, point towards its interpretation as a luxurious summer *coenatio*, whose peculiar configuration has parallels at Hadrian's Villa (Serapeum),[623] and in the *Domus Flauia* (Hadrianic nymphaeum to the north of the garden stadium).[624] The inner area 25 was delimited by the external corridor 24, whose low-quality flooring supports its interpretation as a functional space, probably intended for service.

The combination of dining facilities with water features follows a well-established practice, attested as early as the first century AD.[625] Not only did domestic fountains function as cooling devices, which provided a pleasant atmosphere to summer banquets, but they also stood as evidence for the wealth of the *dominus*, symbolising

[622] Chapter 4, 160–61.
[623] Caserta 2011, 109–11.
[624] Schmölder-Veit 2016, 287–96.
[625] Richardson 1988. Plin., *Ep*. V.6.36 provides an accurate description of a luxurious water *stibadium*.

his control of water: besides their *utilitas*, water features had an undoubtable ostentatious power.[626]

Most interestingly, the layout and dimensions of the exedra are reminiscent not only of those of the Serapeum at Hadrian's Villa, but also of the configuration of the semi-circular dining hall of Villa Magna. The similarity in the size of these halls helps determine the capacity of the one at the villa of Lucius Verus, which can be calculated as roughly nine to eighteen diners. Its spatial connection with the nearby *balneum* (whose *caldarium* provided space for up to thirteen people) is not unexpected; unfortunately, the poor preservation of the structures does not allow a detailed and faithful reconstruction of circulation patterns, as the majority of doorways are no longer visible.

The area seems to have fulfilled reception functions up to the early fourth century, when corridor 24 was turned into a functional space for the storage of *dolia*. The installation of a *doliarium* indicates that productive activities had been installed in the area, but is not sufficient to specify the kind of goods—such as wine or oil—for which it provided storage.

Villa of Maxentius (C11)

As discussed in detail in chapter 2,[627] the apsidal hall M of the villa of Maxentius is part of the alterations that the young usurper carried out in Herodes Atticus'

[626] Dessales 2013, 300–03.
[627] Chapter 2, 72–81.

Τριόπιον (fig. 2.9, plan C11.IV).[628] Although its role as audience hall is suggested by its position, decoration, and heating system, the architectural layout of hall M is not suggestive per se of the nature of the social events happening there. It has been pointed out that apsidal halls could perfectly suit the needs of the imperial epiphany and of the practices connected with the *adoratio*;[629] their functions, however, were not necessarily limited to this ceremonial: as discussed elsewhere, the large halls of Roman *domus* and *uillae* were not use-specific spaces, and could host different kinds of social gatherings.

As dining furniture could easily be moved and arranged, setting up a banquet required little effort. The complete loss of the floor decoration of hall M hinders a precise definition of the positioning of couches; in the following, I will propose two different reconstructions (to which I will refer as scheme A or B), which I will consider when defining the capacity of the apsidal halls under examination. The reconstructions I am proposing are only two of the innumerable possible arrangements of dining furniture in apsidal halls. I am aware that other possibilities existed, which would have impacted on the calculation of the capacity of these halls,[630] but the ones I present are largely indicative of what might have been the case.

It is most likely that the apse on the northern side could fit a *stibadium* measuring up to 9 m in diameter, and whose inner semicircle was c. 8.5 m long; the capacity of the *stibadium* could therefore vary between eight and seventeen people.

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[628] Pisani Sartorio and Calza 1976, 91–96 and 141–47.

[629] Chapter 2, 78–81.

[630] See e.g. Zanker 2002, fig. 13 on the dining facilities of the *Domus Flauia*.

As for furniture configuration in the central area of the hall, I propose that *klinai* could either be disposed in two rows parallel to the room's longer sides (scheme A), or in three-couch parties arranged in the fashion of traditional *triclinia* (scheme B, fig. 5.22). Had hall M been arranged according to scheme A, it would have provided space for up to eighteen *klinai*; if furniture were disposed following scheme B, up to twenty-four couches could be fitted in. Depending on the actual capacity of the *stibadium* and on the positioning of *klinai*, the possible size of the banquets held in hall M could have varied between sixty-four and eighty-nine people.

Palativm Sessorianvm (C10)

The suburban residence of the *Horti Spei Veteris* underwent substantial alterations under Constantine, who, alongside turning the main reception hall of the Severan *Horti* into a Christian church, equipped the residence with at least two other reception halls to the north of the church, thus defining the core of the residence as a markedly official area (plan C10.III).[631]

As mentioned above, the layout of the two apsidal halls of the *Sessorium* was particularly suited to the needs of imperial *adorationes*. The duplication of this particular feature with the same orientation and at such short distance, however, could suggest a diversification of their functions; the additional use as dining halls may be a possibility. If rooms 8 (fig. 2.16) and 9 (fig. 2.17) occasionally hosted banquets, their

[631] The alterations which the Severan *Horti Spei Veteris* underwent under Constantine are discussed most extensively in Guglielmi 2014, 73–95.

nature and atmosphere would have been influenced, most likely, by their location: hall 8 (c. 41 by 23.4 m) could accommodate between 72 (scheme A and minimum capacity of the *stibadium*) and 129 people (scheme B), whilst room 9 (c. 19.4 by 12.3 m) was suitable for no more than 36/43 diners, as its width would not have allowed the arrangement of couches according to scheme B. This difference in the size of parties may be a reflection of their more-or-less hierarchical nature: whilst social difference was more marked in larger banquets where the degree of closeness to the emperor was determined by the guests' rank,[632] the relatively smaller parties held in hall 9 may have had a more egalitarian atmosphere, and were probably reserved for more selected guests.[633] Another possibility is that, on the occasion of particularly grand banquets, either room served as ancillary space for the other hall; it is hard to say, however, whether 8 was the main banqueting hall and 9 a secondary space, or if, on the contrary, the most exclusive and somewhat egalitarian party was held in the smaller room, whilst the larger one was reserved for a greater number of lower-ranking people.

Concluding remarks

The survey of dining halls in the imperial residences under consideration revealed a wide array of architectural and spatial solutions, as well as substantial variation in size and capacity. Having considered banqueting halls across a timeframe of more than three centuries, the question is what their physical and architectural evolution

[632] Zanker 2002, 113–15.

[633] Ellis 1997; Scagliarini Corlaita 1995, 837–40.

can tell us about the development of dining customs and the role of banquets and drinking parties in the life pattern of the imperial court.

Roman emperors never failed to exploit banquets as one of the tools for creating contact with their subjects: the capacity and layout of dining facilities can offer plenty of information on the atmosphere of these banquets, on the kinds and functions of the entertainment offered to diners, and on the nature of the relationships between the emperors and their guests (table 5.1). In this section, I will try to follow the architectural and spatial evolution of the dining halls in the imperial villas under consideration, and to identify continuity and change in the customs of imperial *conuiuia* as suggested by the transformations of their physical settings. As in the previous chapters, the discussion of the dining halls of the villas under consideration will be introduced by an overview of the *coenationes* of Hadrian's Villa.

The Tiburtine complex was provided with a wide range of dining facilities, which varied remarkably in size, ground plan, and general configuration, thus allowing the staging of banquets with different atmospheres. Similarly to what has emerged from the analysis of its audience halls,[634] the *coenationes* of Hadrian's Villa concentrated in the central area of the complex, that is, the Imperial Palace (1–2, fig. 5.23) and its surroundings (Stadium Garden 3, Libraries 4–5, Pavilion of Tempe 6, Piazza d'Oro 7), with the notable exception of the Serapeum (8).

Whilst the *coenationes* of the Libraries and the Pavilion of Tempe, as well as the cyzicene *triclinia* of the Stadium Garden complex, have a more traditional layout, the

[634] Chapter 2, 85–87.

Piazza d'Oro, unique in its configuration, offered a setting for extraordinarily lavish summer banquets (fig. 5.24).[635] Facilities suited for warmer times of the year are also found in the Imperial Palace and at the southernmost end of the Canopus,[636] where the Serapeum served as background for one of the most iconic dining areas of the villa.[637] Interestingly, both the *coenatio* in the Imperial Palace and the main dining space of the Serapeum are configured as water *stibadia*: the influence of the *stibadium* to the north of the Garden Stadium on the Palatine, dated to the Flavian period, seems evident.[638]

The presence of a wide range of dining facilities does not surprise. In the introduction to this chapter, I have briefly examined the *coenationes* of the imperial palaces on the Palatine, and proposed to explain their variety as aimed to allow the organisation of several kinds of dinner parties, characterised by a different number of invitees and a different degree of intimacy between the emperor and his guests: the size and atmosphere of imperial *conuiuia* could vary significantly. It should be noted, however, that the presence of multiple dining facilities in upper-class domestic architecture is attested since the late-Republican period,[639] and is therefore not peculiar of imperial residences: the many and diverse *coenationes* of Hadrian's Villa seem to have drawn inspiration not solely from the Palatine, but also from long-established fashions. It is against this background that I propose to explain the presence of

[635] Salza Prina Ricotti 2001, 167–70 (Libraries), 215–20 (Hospitalia-Tempe), 221–30 (Stadium Garden), 265–76 (Piazza d'Oro).
[636] Hidalgo Prieto 2020.
[637] Salza Prina Ricotti 2001, 241–64.
[638] Schmölder-Veit 2016, 287–96.
[639] Allison 2021.

manifold dining facilities at some of the villas under consideration in this work; as we shall see, however, the layout of particular *coenationes* of the Palatine residence and of Hadrian's Villa offered a model for some of the dining halls examined in this chapter.

At the villa of Livia at Prima Porta, the *triclinium* dating to the Augustan phase preserved its original layout and remained in use for at least three centuries, despite the alterations visible in other areas of the villa: the floor mosaics of rooms 58b, 58d, and 57 can all be ascribed to refurbishments carried out in the Hadrianic period.

It has been suggested that the choice to maintain a dining hall with such an old-fashioned layout was dictated by the desire to preserve some of the 'austerity' of the old times.[640] Further, the small capacity of *triclinium* 58 corresponds with that of the adjacent *balneum*, in which substantial investments in cutting-edge technology point towards a highly selected user base. The sophisticated configuration of the baths and the deliberate preservation of the architectural layout of the Augustan *triclinium* suggest that the invitees to imperial banquets, who most likely bathed with the emperor beforehand, were individuals of the highest rank, who could appreciate both the *piscinae calidae* heated through samovars and the unique opportunity to dine in a *triclinium* which had been used, allegedly, by Augustus himself.

At Villa Magna, we are faced with something completely different. The layout of the dining hall overlooking the winery is relatively new for the period, even though a few examples of *stibadia* are known from earlier times. The *coenatio*, however, is but a function of the luxurious *cella uinaria*: as if sitting on the steps of a *cauea*, the diners

[640] Discussion in chapter 2, 66–67.

reclining on the *stibadium* could enjoy a unique entertainment staged before their eyes. A deeper understanding of the role of the dining hall can be gained from a comprehensive reading of the whole winery complex, both in its architectural layout and as part of a residence in which the production of wine appears to have played a crucial role for almost three centuries. The ostentation of the productive capacity of Villa Magna fits within a practice established since the late-Republican period: as discussed in the introductory paragraphs, ancient authors insisted that the *elegantia* of a villa should not outdo its *utilitas*. Even though emperors did not need to justify the lavishness of their countryside retreats, the emphasis on the productive aspects of the residence allowed the emperor to present himself as a *bonus agricola*, as devoted to the care of the empire as he was to his estate.

The use of *stibadia* has been proposed for the apsidal halls of the *Palatium Sessorianum* and the villa of Maxentius, which could on occasion have served as locations for banquets.[641] The size, capacity, and layout of these halls, however, suggest that the atmosphere of the banquets was different from those held at Villa Magna. At the villa of Anagnia, the *coenatio* was suited for small and intimate dinner parties, whose focus was on the entertainment staged in the winery; at the *Palatium Sessorianum* and at the villa of Maxentius, on the contrary, the layout of the halls was such that their focal point was the apse opposite the main entrance, where the emperor himself dined. Some entertainment was presumably staged in the middle of the room—compatibly with the arrangement of couches—but the main concern was most

[641] Besides their possible use as audience halls: chapter 2, 72–84.

likely that of the spectacular display of the emperor.

The arrangement and staging of *conuiuia* in the large, apsidal halls of the *Palatium Sessorianum* and of the villa of Maxentius might have drawn inspiration from a much earlier hall, whose layout and decoration influenced those of the multi-functional *aulae* discussed above: the *coenatio Iouis*, the foremost dining hall of the Flavian palace (fig. 5.25).[642] Here, the shallow apse opposite the entrance from the peristyle served as a backdrop for the emperor. The ground plan is suggestive of practices that were increasingly common in Late Antiquity, both during banquets and at receptions: the emperor was progressively distanced from the majority of his guests, apart from those who could dine with him;[643] similar evolutionary patterns have emerged from the discussion of entertainment facilities at imperial villas (chapter 3). Paul Zanker suggested to reconstruct the arrangement of dining furniture in the *coenatio Iouis* as suited for up to 180 guests accommodated on sixty couches;[644] the schemes A and B proposed in this chapter, which would leave space for live performances in the middle of the room, could fit between twelve and eighteen couches, thus offering space for thirty-six (scheme A) to fifty-four people (scheme B):[645] these figures, albeit far from the much larger capacity of the large hall of the *Palatium Sessorianum*, are still not those of an intimate dinner party (figs. 5.26–27).

It appears that the layout of the Palatine *triclinium* served as the blueprint for

[642] Gibson, DeLaine, and Claridge 1994.
[643] Zanker 2002, 113–15; Bek 1983, 90–91.
[644] Zanker 2002, fig. 13.
[645] The possible arrangement of dining furniture according to scheme A or B is presented above (214–15).

imperial *coenationes* suited for grand and official banquets, in which the focus was not some live performance as much as the emperor himself, set against the background provided by the apse. Shallow as it was, the apse could hardly fit a *stibadium*; as suggested by Paul Zanker, the emperor—with or without some high-ranking invitees, who received the privilege of reclining next to him—lay on a *kline*.[646] A *stibadium* was seemingly installed in the Flavian period in the apsidal nymphaeum to the north of the stadium garden.[647] Owing to its configuration and size—it could accommodate a *sigma* suited for up to twelve people—this nymphaeum served probably for banquets with a different atmosphere from those held in the *coenatio Iouis*, reserved for a more strictly selected number of guests who reclined on the *stibadium* with the emperor, and characterised by an informal ambience (fig. 5.28). Together with its closest parallels—the Serapeum and the *coenatio* in the Imperial Palace at Hadrian's Villa—its seems to have provided the inspiration for the *stibadia* identified at Villa Magna and at the villa of Lucius Verus, which replicate closely their size and, in the latter case, the presence of water features. If this reconstruction is correct, it can be suggested that the *stibadia* on the Palatine and at Hadrian's Villa influenced those at Villa Magna and the villa of Lucius Verus not only as regards their capacity and layout, but also vis-à-vis the atmosphere of the banquets held there.

The archaeological record suggests that a relationship existed between the ideological nature of an imperial residence and the capacity and sumptuousness of its

[646] *Ibid*., 112.

[647] Schmölder-Veit 2016, 287–96.

dining halls. As discussed in chapter 3, the installation of a circus at the villa of Maxentius was inspired by the configuration of the imperial palaces of the tetrarchic seats: his villa on the *uia Appia* probably served to reiterate the legitimate nature of his power. Constantine's alterations to the *Horti Spei Veteris* may be explained against this background. After the defeat of Maxentius, Constantine needed to convey to the people of Rome the message that he was the sole ruler, and that Maxentius was but an usurper. Despite the limited time that he actually spent in Rome, Constantine sponsored numerous building projects, which transformed remarkably the urban fabric of the city: alongside the alterations identified in the *Horti Spei Veteris*, he built at least eight churches, and completed the construction of the basilica of Maxentius.[648] Even though the *Sessorium* was probably used on few occasions by Constantine himself, it can be suggested that the residence—connected to the nearby Lateran Basilica, and therefore to the persona of Constantine—served as tangible evidence of his presence in Rome, even if he was not there physically, as has been shown with regard to the tetrarchic palaces.[649] The possible reasons why Constantine did not choose the Palatine as his headquarters are suggested by the usage patterns of the *suburbanum* of Maxentius, which was not just an imperial villa, but a residence with a markedly personal character, tightly linked to its dweller.[650] In the same way as Maxentius sought to legitimate his illegitimate power, Constantine exploited the architectural language of the tetrarchic residences to associate to his persona the same

[648] Guidobaldi 2013.
[649] Mayer 2002.
[650] Chapter 1, 51–54.

city which Maxentius had previously claimed as his own seat.

The *stibadium* of Villa Magna can be explained in light of a different role of the villa. I have argued that at Villa Magna entertainment was not a function of banquets, but rather the contrary: the reciprocal positions of the dining hall and the *cella uinaria* suggest that the peculiar dinner entertainment staged at Villa Magna served to emphasise the pre-eminently productive role of the estate.

The *coenationes* of the villa of the Quintilii are halfway between the *stibadium* of Villa Magna or the *triclinium* at Prima Porta and the apsidal halls discussed above. Both the two *triclinia* in the main block (A1 and R58) and the dining hall off the *cella uinaria* could accommodate between twenty-four and twenty-seven diners: a much more intimate banquet than those held at the *Palatium Sessorianum* or in the villa of Maxentius, yet not as small as the parties at the villa *ad Gallinas Albas*, at Villa Magna, or at the villa of Lucius Verus. Apart from their capacity, the layout of the three dining halls of the villa of the Quintilii suggests that the primary concern was not the visibility of the emperor as much as the entertainment offered to diners.

It has emerged that between the 180s and the 240s (i.e., when we have evidence for its use by the imperial family), the villa of the Quintilii was probably one of the most important imperial villas, even though it was the complex of palaces on the Palatine that served as the chief imperial headquarters, as Rome was still the administrative centre of the empire. The capacity and layout of its dining halls suggest that the dinner parties held at the villa of the Quintilii were far from the grand banquets staged on the Palatine: couches were arranged so as not to place emphasis

on any of the diners, but on the entertainment staged before them. The orientation of the rooms, not towards some 'high table' but towards the space allocated for performances, points in the same direction. In other words, the atmosphere of the dinner parties held at the villa of the Quintilii seems to have been *egalitarian* rather than just *intimate*. The small number of people that its *coenationes* could accommodate stands as clear evidence for the high status of the imperial guests: as discussed with regard to bathing facilities, the individuals allowed to bathe with the emperor, who were subsequently invited to his *conuiuia*, must have been of the highest rank. I have argued that bathing with Caesar was an absolute privilege; likewise, if my argument on the egalitarian atmosphere of the dining halls at the villa of the Quintilii is correct, participating in a banquet held there must have been a honour bestowed on very few, rigorously selected individuals.

Interestingly, the two dining halls in the main block date both to the Hadrianic period, that is, before the villa was confiscated by Commodus, and did not undergo alterations thereafter: it seems that Commodus was content with the configuration of the villa's dining facilities, and did not feel the necessity of adding new ones. As discussed with regard to reception halls, the geographical location of the villa of the Quintilii (c. 5 miles from Rome) allowed the emperor to reach the Palatine within a few hours: banquets which required a particular spatial setting could be held in the *Palatium*.

The variations in size, capacity, and layout of imperial dining halls from Augustus to Constantine also indicate an evolution in the customs of imperial banquets. I have

argued that the architectural layout of the Palatine *triclinium* and the possible configurations of the banquets held there, where Domitian was placed in the shallow apse for his guests to behold, may have influenced the design and usage patterns of the apsidal halls installed at the villa of Maxentius and at the *Sessorium*, as well as in some of the tetrarchic palaces. Notwithstanding our inconsistent knowledge of imperial villas, it appears that dining halls which mirror the layout of the Palatine *triclinium* are not attested in imperial residences dating before the late third century AD. At Hadrian's Villa, where no less than two *stibadia* are known,[651] they are both associated with outdoor dining, which was probably characterised by an informal atmosphere.[652] With all the necessary *caueats* which the fragmentary nature of the archaeological record requires, it may be suggested that, up to the late-third century AD, it was in the Palatine *triclinium* that the most solemn imperial banquets were held, notwithstanding the variety of dining facilities, even of extremely luxurious ones, with which imperial villas outside Rome were equipped.

The *Palatium* in Rome and the residences of the tetrarchs have an important characteristic in common: they were the imperial headquarters in cities which served, at a certain point in time, as administrative centres of the Empire. The institution of the Tetrarchy resulted in a decline in the political importance of Rome: the functions of the Palatine were gradually acquired by the tetrarchic residences. The apsidal halls of the

[651] Alongside the Serapeum, another water *stibadium* features in the Palazzo Imperiale (lastly Hidalgo Prieto 2020).

[652] The influence of the water *stibadium* which Schmölder-Veit 2016, 287–96 identified on the Palatine is undoubtable.

tetrarchic residences, thus, may have fulfilled the role hitherto played by the Palatine *triclinium*, by offering a venue for the grandest banquets. Interestingly, these halls are attested not only in the palaces installed in the tetrarchic capitals, but also in the residences which Diocletian and Galerius built, respectively, at Salona (Split) and Felix Romuliana (Gamzigrad), where they dwelled after their abdication. The spread of apsidal halls from the late third century AD onwards, and their presence in imperial residences lying outside the main centres of government, suggest that the practices associated with imperial banquets changed substantially after the institution of the Tetrarchy. As discussed above, the configuration of dining furniture in apsidal halls indicates a growing concern towards the visibility of the emperor, who gradually became the focal point of the room, and points towards the increasingly ceremonial nature of imperial banquets.[653]

The architectural and ceremonial developments discussed in the previous paragraphs also implied transformations in the role played by the diners, both the emperors and their guests. In those banquets in which the focus was on entertainment, all the revellers were spectators. In the more ceremonial parties, on the other hand, the emperor was the protagonist of a show, in which the invitees were both audience and actors: audience, because they watched the spectacular *mise-en-scène* of the emperor, and actors, because imperial banquets allowed a clear—at least to a contemporary's eyes—display of the kind of relationships that existed between the sovereign and his

[653] A similar pattern has emerged from the analysis of the venues for imperial hearings (chapter 2, 88–93).

subjects.

The spatial setting of imperial banquets, the number of the invitees, the configuration of dining furniture, and the entertainment staged during banquets, allowed emperors to display the nature of their rule—whether more or less autocratic—and to define their relationships with subjects of different social standings. Entertainment played a crucial role in this pattern: first, banquets in which the visual focus was on entertainment gave the impression of a more egalitarian atmosphere, as mentioned above; second, the very nature of this entertainment could serve to convey specific message as to the persona of the emperor.

Two of the residences discussed in the previous section—namely, Villa Magna and the villa of the Quintilii—yielded evidence for a so-far unattested form of dinner entertainment: the display of grape-treading. The wineries installed at the two villas combine installations for grape treading and wine storage with opulent dining halls; the use of *opus sectile* and marble lining in the productive areas provides originally functional spaces with unexpected and so-far-unseen luxury.

The intertwining of productive facilities and formal areas, as well as the luxurious marble decoration, point towards the clear intention to upgrade the functional spaces, in order to display the winemaking process and its final product—the wine stored in the *dolia*—to the people gathered in the reception halls. The ostentatious display of the productive capacities of an estate followed a well-established practice: we know from a wealth of literary evidence[654] that, since agriculture and husbandry were the only

[654] See above all the discussion in Varro, *Rust*. III.2.1–18. Also Mart., *Spect*. III.58, and Plin., *Ep.* V.6.

acceptable sources of income of Roman senators, displaying the *pars rustica* of one's villa was a concern for the Roman aristocracy from the Republican period. The positive moral connotations of a villa's productive facilities allowed the Roman *locupletes* to justify the lavish *urbanitas* of their countryside retreats;[655] there was no incompatibility between *utilitas* and *elegantia*, as long as aesthetic concerns did not outdo a villa's productive aspects. Despite the abundance of literary evidence in this regard, the configuration of Villa Magna's winery is, on current knowledge, the earliest example of the performative display of wine-producing facilities in villas; even though a number of villas with *calcatoria* are known from earlier periods—such as the Villa Regina at Boscoreale,[656] whose winery dates to the Augustan period—the lack of a visual connection between *coenationes* and productive spaces suggests that winemaking was not central to dinner entertainment.

At Villa Magna, the uninterrupted investment in wine production, as well as the peculiar architectural layout of the winery, serve to mark the villa as a productive estate *par excellence*, suited first and foremost to viticulture in the wider *suburbium*: winemaking was the villa's *raison d'être*.

The evidence for the emperors' numerous acts of euergetism in the territory of Anagnia may be linked with the nearby imperial villa.[657] An inscription from Signia celebrates Hadrian as the builder of *opera reipublicae utilia*, for which he allocated

[655] Vitr., *De arch.* VI.6.5; Columella, *Rust*. I.4.1. Ample discussion on the topic in Wallace-Hadrill 1998 and Purcell 1995.
[656] De Caro 1994.
[657] Fentress and Maiuro 2011, 361–66.

finances both during his lifetime and in his will, to be fulfilled by Antoninus Pius.[658] Likewise, in AD 207 Septimius Severus and Caracalla paved the road that led to a residence referred to as Villa Magna, paying for it with their own money.[659] Filippo Coarelli has proposed that such acts of euergetism carried out by members of the imperial family in a specific territory should be connected with the presence of imperial possessions in the same area; alongside Signia, similar patterns are attested, for instance, at Antium, Laurentum, and in the area of the Fucine Lake.[660] This relationship may be explained, on the one hand, as the emperors' deliberate intention to support their economic activities—such as the construction of the *uia Claudia Valeria* and of the *uia Claudia Noua*, which would have facilitated sheep transhumance in the area, in which they were engaged—on the other hand, as a re-investment of the profits yielded by a nearby imperial possession.

Both scenarios seem plausible for Villa Magna, the construction of which has been dated to the late Trajanic/early Hadrianic period. It is possible that Hadrian's investment in features of public utility at Signia had the initial purpose of improving the quality of life in the neighbouring area, which may have in turn provided the seasonal workers needed in the vineyards of Villa Magna;[661] subsequently, Antoninus Pius may have financed the completion of the works initiated by Hadrian with the profits yielded by wine production. Unfortunately, the incomplete nature of the

[658] *CIL* X.5963; Horster 2001, 276.
[659] *CIL* X.5909. *Ibid*., 253.
[660] Coarelli 2000, with discussion on epigraphic and material evidence.
[661] Purcell 1985, 3 on the seasonal nature of the workforce employed in vineyards.

archaeological record of Villa Magna does not allow the accurate quantification of the wine produced there.

Whilst Villa Magna was a viticulture-oriented estate, the installation of a winery at the villa of the Quintilii might have followed a different logic. It clearly emerges from the archaeological record of the residence that wine production was not its *raison d'être*: the winery was built between AD 238 and 244, and probably used for no more than a couple of decades. As at Villa Magna, pressing and storage facilities are lavishly decorated and tightly connected with formal spaces: wine production is used as a form of spectacle. However, its limited period of use suggests that the winery of the villa of the Quintilii was but a *divertissement*. Its installation might have been inspired by earlier attitudes towards the importance of displaying the productivity of one's estate, but was certainly not determined by the need to justify the villa's *urbanitas* by showcasing the activities that supported the luxurious lifestyle of its owner.

As discussed in chapter 4, the property was equipped with no less than five water reservoirs, which can hardly have supplied water only to its baths and nymphaea:[662] cisterns P, G, and Q, whose overall capacity was over 2,000 m^3, must have catered to agricultural needs.[663] Their construction has been dated to the Hadrianic period,[664] which suggests that the property included cultivations since its early days; exact figures on the extension of the cultivated areas are impossible to provide based solely

[662] Chapter 4, 159–60.

[663] Wilson 2008, 735–42, on the capacity of cisterns for agriculture as opposed to those for baths or domestic use.

[664] Paris, Frontoni and Galli 2019, 59–63.

on the capacity of the reservoirs,[665] which nonetheless indicates that they must have been vast. The construction of a winery fits perfectly in this scenario: the cisterns would have guaranteed an efficient water supply to vineyards. As the winery was installed over the erased starting gates of the circus, it can tentatively be suggested that vineyards may have been planted over the former seating of the circus, which would have provided the gently sloping terrain ideal for vines.

Interestingly, the installation of the winery at the villa of the Quintilii dates to roughly the same timeframe of the dismantling of Villa Magna's one. Elizabeth Fentress has suggested that Villa Magna offered a setting for the *uinalia*, sacrifices celebrating the beginning of the vintage which the emperor would have administered as the *flamen Dialis* did in the Republican period;[666] despite the undeniable architectural similarities between the two complexes, any attempt to explain the role of the winery at the villa of the Quintilii for the celebration of *uinalia* would inevitably be speculative. If Villa Magna's winery emphasised and celebrated the importance of the property as a wine-producing estate, I propose reading the one at the villa of the Quintilii as aimed to offer an extremely elaborate entertainment, which took to the next level the ostentation of productive facilities that had permeated the ideological realm of Roman villas since the Republican period.

To conclude, it emerges from the different classes of evidence examined in this

[665] Water requirements vary from crop to crop: the same amount of water can suffice for different tracts of land, depending on the crop cultivated there.

[666] Fentress and Maiuro 2016, 203–10. I am grateful to Lisa Fentress for her time and willingness to discuss with me the winery at the villa of the Quintilii.

chapter that banquets provided emperors with a valuable tool for a clear display of social interrelations: the increasing ceremoniality and sacredness which appear from our evidence and the growing concern towards the visibility of the sovereign in dining halls are well reflected in the sacred nature that the imperial power acquired as early as Domitian—the first emperor to receive the epithet of *dominus et deus*[667]—and increasingly so during the Tetrarchy, reaching its peak with the Byzantine emperors: the banquet held by Constantine in 326, on the occasion of his *uicennalia*, is compared by Eusebius of Caesarea with a representation of the kingdom of Christ, such was the impression of sacredness it conveyed.[668]

[667] Suet., *Dom*. XIII.1–2; Cass. Dio, LXVII.4.7, LXVII.13.3.
[668] Euseb., *Vit. Const.* III.15.

6.
Circulation Patterns:
Access, Visibility, Security, Privacy

The previous chapters addressed imperial villas as one of the settings in which Roman emperors could perform the manifold activities which their role entailed. The issue that has emerged is how the different categories of individuals present at imperial villas could reach the areas where they were allowed and which were allocated for the fulfilment of their respective functions. This chapter investigates circulation patterns within imperial residences, with the purpose of understanding the mutual relationships existing between their spatial organisation and the social behaviour of their permanent occupants and temporary visitors. The topic will be addressed from different angles, in order to explore which aspects of the villas' spatial layouts were manipulated to allow both the cohabitation of various categories of occupants and the temporary presence of visitors of different social standing.

The first issue that I will discuss is that of access. On the one hand, I will consider the physical and symbolic features that allowed emperors to exercise control over who was allowed access to their residences, at which times of the day, and for which purposes. On the other, I will try to identify the devices employed to limit the outsiders' capacity to penetrate into the core of imperial villas and to access the person of the emperor (depending on their relationship to him): the subject of this chapter will

thus be, as Jens Pflug has defined it, 'der Weg zum Kaiser'.[669]

The second matter that my analysis will investigate is that of the controlled use of sight, or lack thereof, to convey and reiterate to visitors their social difference from the emperor and their condition as subjects, and to suggest the spaces into which they were allowed and the routes that they were supposed to take to reach the areas where they were directed.

The third is the security of the emperor. The most powerful man of the empire was also the most vulnerable, as repeatedly mentioned by Seneca in his *De Clementia*:[670] his security was a crucial concern, to be guaranteed not only when he was on military campaigns, travelling, or fulfilling official business in a public setting, but also at his residences. This section will partially overlap with the first one, as it will focus on the filters (physical, symbolic, and even human) that controlled access to the emperor, and on how the distance between ruler and subject was maintained.

Lastly, I will discuss the measures put in place to ensure that occupants and visitors circulated within imperial residences without interfering with each other's activities and disturbing the privacy of the emperor. This will mainly involve the analysis of dedicated paths and routes that allowed different categories of individuals to reach the spaces into which they were allowed without encountering higher- or lower-ranking people.

[669] Pflug 2014.

[670] Sen., *Clem*. I.8.4; Fertik 2015 on the vulnerability of the emperor according to the *De Clementia*.

Controlling movement: boundaries and spatial hierarchy

Accessing the house of a powerful man, let alone of a Roman emperor, was no simple business. This statement seems to contradict the image of the Roman *domus* which is so familiar to modern scholarship: that of the *domus frequentata*, the 'thronged house' reported by Seneca as a source of pride and prestige for its owner.[671] His reference is, of course, to the *clientes* who crowded the houses of grandees on a daily basis to greet their patrons.[672] Despite the throngs of *salutatores* who flocked into the urban and suburban residences of late-Republican big men, studies have recently been undertaken on the measures put in place to create a closely controlled and monitored environment, and to direct people's movements.[673] The houses of the élite were certainly *frequentatae*, though visitors were not allowed to enter and circulate as they pleased.

The analysis of accessibility of imperial villas will not be limited to the study of the measures that filtered human ingress to a given residence, but will also address the features that served to channel and enforce movement, as well as to allow or deny access to the person of the emperor. Permission to enter a certain space, or to approach the emperor, was granted depending on the time of the day, on the visitor's identity and social status, on his/her relation to the emperor, and on the purpose of the visit.[674]

In the sixth book of his *De architectura* Vitruvius remarked on the importance of

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671 Sen., *Ep*. XXI.6.

672 Literature on *salutationes* is discussed in chapter 2, 62.

673 E.g. Dauterman Maguire 2019, Berry 2016, Lauritsen 2012. Modern scholarship on this matter is discussed more extensively below.

674 Dickmann 2011.

laying out and decorating domestic spaces with due attention, so that occupants and visitors could unmistakably distinguish the *propria loca patribus familiarum* from those *communia cum extraneis*.[675] As he clarified shortly thereafter, *propria loca* were spaces into which not everyone was allowed access unless previously invited (*non est potestas omnibus intro eundi nisi inuitatis*), such as *cubicula*, dining halls, or bathing suites; *communia loca*, on the other hand, included vestibules or peristyles, that is, areas which also ordinary people could enter, even without an invitation (*communia autem sunt, quibus etiam inuocati suo iure de populo possunt uenire*).

A significant number of studies on Roman domestic architecture have built upon Vitruvius' classification of domestic spaces as *propria* and *communia*, and translated the two adjectives as, respectively, 'private' and 'public' (or their equivalents in modern languages).[676] The wording, however, is problematic: not only is it inevitably affected by preconceptions of what 'private' and 'public' mean in modern cultures, but it also does not seem to reflect Vitruvius' text faithfully. A reconsideration of this passage of the *De architectura* is therefore necessary, which could lead to a more precise understanding both of his words and of their reflection in the archaeological record.

The adjectives *proprius* and *communis* do not correspond exactly with *priuatus* and

[675] Vitr., *De arch.* VI.5.1.

[676] E.g. Platts 2020, Fertik 2019, Berry 2016, the papers published in Tuori and Nissin 2015, Dickmann 1999, Zaccaria-Ruggiu 1995, Allison 1993, or Wallace-Hadrill 1988. Winterling 2009, 58–76, especially 60–68, discussed the problems of using the words private/public, privat/öffentlich, privé/public, and privato/pubblico with regard to the Roman world, as modern terms have shades that may not correspond exactly to ancient ones. Zaccaria-Ruggiu 1995, 178–79 offered a more nuanced explanation of the term 'pubblico' used vis-à-vis domestic space: rooms referred to as 'spazi pubblici' were meant to fulfil a social and political function, that is, they offered a venue for interactions amongst the *dominus* and individuals whom he had invited.

publicus: their meanings overlap only partially. The grammarian Charisius (fourth century AD) provided a clear-cut distinction between *proprius* and *priuatus*: *proprius* is what is each one's own, *priuatus* is what is not *publicus* (*proprium cuiusque proprium, priuatum non publicum*).[677] The TLL defines *proprium* as something that pertains and belongs to a certain person or thing, to the point that it is not someone else's, nor is it *commune*.[678] *Proprius* and *communis* are therefore opposites, and *commune* is what is of more than one (individuals, animals, things, and so forth).[679] The lemmata may shed some light on the possible meanings of Vitruvius' text: *propria loca* are spaces which pertain to the *paterfamilias*, and which he can share with a number of selected individuals, who need an invitation to access them.[680] To classify them as *propria* implies that the decision to admit other individuals is the *paterfamilias*' and no one else's. Other features of Roman dwellings, on the other hand, are *communia cum extraneis*, that is, they do not pertain to the *paterfamilias* in an exclusive manner: access and circulation are not restricted to invited persons.

A more precise translation of the words *proprius* and *communis* seems therefore required, which could convey all the nuances of the expressions *propria loca* and *communia loca*. If *communia loca* can be rendered as 'communal spaces', I would suggest rephrasing the term 'private spaces' as 'the *paterfamilias*' exclusive spaces'[681], viz.

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[677] Charistius, *Gramm*. 394.27.

[678] "*Significatur potius quod pertinens est ad personam quandam uel rem, ita ut neque alterius cuiusdam sit neque commune*". TLL s.v. "proprius".

[679] "*De eo quod duorum (trium, plurium, omnium) est*". TLL s.v. "communis".

[680] See Cic., *Fam*. VII.30.2: "*Id enim est cuiusque proprium quo quisque fruitur atque utitur*".

[681] Given the scope of this research, the *propria loca* of imperial residences will be referred to as "the emperors' exclusive spaces".

spaces which belonged and pertained, first and foremost, to the *paterfamilias*, whose invitation was necessary for those who wished to access them.

Joanne Berry has recently investigated how access to Roman domestic space and movement within it were controlled through the use of boundaries,[682] which served to direct and organise behaviour and movement.[683] In the Oxford English Dictionary, a boundary is defined as 'that which serves to indicate the bounds or limits of anything whether material or immaterial; also the limit itself'.[684] Starting from this definition, I will try to offer an overview of the different categories of boundaries used to structure and mark out domestic space in the Roman world and to define and highlight social differences between the people who interacted in the same domestic setting. Boundaries in Roman houses were not necessarily physical features, such as doors or partitions, but also symbolic ones (e.g. decoration or lack thereof). In order for them to be effective, they needed to be intelligible to all the individuals present in a given setting, who were supposed to interact following a certain social etiquette: the possibility of misinterpretations—especially in the case of inter-cultural interactions—made it necessary to adopt a third category of boundaries, whose role was to enforce

[682] Berry 2016. Her analysis builds upon a long-lasting tradition of studies investigating domestic space from a social viewpoint, with a primary focus on its manipulation through the use of boundaries. The pioneering work is Lavin 1981, which set forth concepts developed in further detail by Hillier and Hanson 1984. The methodology proposed by Hillier and Hanson was applied, in the following decade and beyond, to the study of domestic space in classical antiquity, by Sanders 1990, Nevett 1997, George 1997, Grahame 1997, Riggsby 1997, Grahame 1999, Ellis 1999, and Hales 2003. These studies were probably influenced by the issues brought forward by Wallace-Hadrill 1988, who provided the guidelines to define spatial hierarchies in the Roman house and their relationships to the social standing of its occupants and visitors, but did so from a mainly historical viewpoint.

[683] Platts 2020, 2–3.

[684] 'Boundary, n'. OED Online. December 2020. Oxford University Press.

the physical and symbolic ones: humans. Boundaries could not be absolutely impenetrable barriers: to be effective, a boundary must be permeable in a selective manner, that is, it must allow certain individuals to cross it.[685]

Physical boundaries are the easiest to envisage, though their identification in the archaeological record often proves difficult. Doors are the first boundary one would think of,[686] but we shall not overlook the use of more ephemeral barriers,[687] such as wooden partitions,[688] curtains,[689] screens within intercolumniations, plants, or even trellises.[690]

The perishable nature of such boundaries has often caused them to be neglected by modern scholarship: a survey of the markers that can suggest the presence of doors, curtains, and ephemeral partitions has recently been carried out by Taylor Lauritsen.[691] Stone thresholds, when preserved, are the most reliable piece of evidence for doors, as

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[685] Grahame 1999, 54–55.

[686] On the frequency with which doors occurred in domestic space, as well as on the evidence which could support their identification, Proudfoot 2013, Lauritsen 2012, and Lauritsen 2011.

[687] An overview of ephemeral boundaries in Lauritsen 2012, 99–102.

[688] See, for instance, the one found at the House of the Wooden Partition at Herculaneum (lastly Tuori *et al.* 2017.

[689] On the use of folding doors and curtains, Plin., *Ep*. II.17.21. August., *Serm.* LI.4 reports that a man's rank was also judged by the number of curtains (*uela*) he had in his house, as prominent individuals needed their residences to be at the same time *frequentatae* and strictly controlled. The source is later than the period discussed in Berry 2016, but a number of houses from the Vesuvian area yielded evidence for the use of curtains as partitions for domestic space, e.g. the House of Argo at Herculaneum (Ruggero 1885, 545–49), the House of Menander at Pompeii (Allison 2006), the House of Trebius Valens at Pompeii (Spano 1915), the House of the Craftsman at Pompeii (Elia 1934, 286–87), and the villa of the Mysteries at Pompeii (Stephenson 2014, 18 and fig. 18). An overview on the social functions of curtains in domestic settings in Stephenson 2014.

[690] An example of a wooden trellis was identified at the House of the Bicentenary at Herculaneum (Berry 2016, 132–33 and fig. 6).

[691] Lauritsen 2012, Lauritsen 2011. Like a significant number of studies on Roman domestic architecture, Lauritsen's analysis builds upon evidence from the Vesuvian area. Even though his considerations on the materials used for threshold and doorjambs cannot apply to the whole Roman world, the discussion on the markers allowing the identification of partitions will prove useful for the analysis that I will carry out in this chapter.

they often feature holes and cuts for pivots and locking mechanisms. Doorways could also be screened with lighter boundaries, such as wooden partitions, whose identification, however, may prove harder: as argued by Lauritsen, such partitions did not rotate on pivots, but were installed into sockets cut in the doorjambs.[692] As a result, thresholds cannot suggest the presence of partitions: it is only when jambs are preserved to a sufficient height that we can identify these sockets (fig. 6.1).[693] Curtains or portières are even harder to pinpoint, as they did not require substantial features, such as hinges or bosses, for their installation; their use is often suggested by the presence of rods or rings in the archaeological record, which would allow curtains to hang above doorways or intercolumniations.[694] That curtains were often hung on rods throughout the Roman period is also proved by a wealth of figurative evidence, from the paintings of the Capitolium at Brixia (fig. 6.2)[695] to the wall mosaic of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo at Ravenna, depicting the Palace of Theoderic (fig. 6.3).[696] Scanty evidence remains *in situ* of the specific placement of textiles in domestic spaces. Hanging rods were most likely installed above doorframes, as the unique example of an *in situ* curtain rod from the *tablinum* of the Villa of the Mysteries at Pompeii suggests (fig. 6.4).[697] We would expect such curtain rods to be placed into shallow sockets cut above doorframes; surprisingly, Lauritsen's survey of the evidence for boundaries in

[692] Lauritsen 2011, 63.

[693] See for instance the *tablinum* in the Casa del Menandro at Pompeii (*Ibid.*, fig. 3).

[694] Allison 2006, 34, 133, 178, 342.

[695] Bianchi 2014.

[696] Longhi 2002. An overview of late-antique and Byzantine figurative evidence for curtains in Dauterman Maguire 2019.

[697] Stephenson 2014, 18 and fig. 18.

Campanian houses did not reveal any features that could convincingly be interpreted as holes for curtain rods.

In their role of tangible barriers between different spaces, physical boundaries were often combined with subtler and more symbolic ones: decorative elements. Luxurious decoration could enhance the importance of particular areas, and mark them as *loca* which only certain categories of outsiders could access;[698] a complete lack of decoration, on the other hand, was indicative of functional or low-ranking spaces, and served to discourage circulation in areas which were not meant for important people. Carefully designed changes in decoration—such as mosaic thresholds, for instance—marked the transition between one area and another, and helped visitors figure out both the importance of individual spaces and the social behaviour that they were expected to assume there.[699]

Architectural barriers and decoration might not suffice in every instance, and they sometimes needed to be combined with a strategically disposed household staff, in charge of enforcing the rules of the house and of directing the movements of visitors, with no potential for ambiguity. Physical guards could sometimes be replaced by virtual ones, as in the case of the decoration of the cryptoporticus of Domitian's *Albanum*, where painted soldiers[700] discouraged visitors from entering the emperor' *propria loca* (fig. 6.5),[701] or in the main peristyle of the Villa del Casale at Piazza

[698] Lavishly decorated spaces, however, were not necessarily *propria loca*; *atria* were certainly *communia loca*, which nonetheless served important reception functions: decoration was of the utmost importance.
[699] Berry 2016, 128–29.
[700] von Hesberg 2006a, 229.
[701] Booms 2012, 97.

Armerina.[702]

Security staff played a crucial role in filtering the visitors wishing to access a great man's house on the occasion of *salutationes*: before being admitted into the house, the throng of *salutatores* waited in the *uestibulum*,[703] where slaves selected those who would enter first (*qui in primam admissionem digeruntur*), dividing them from those who would be allowed access at a later stage (*secunda admissio*).[704] Upon entering the house, approaching the *dominus* was no simple business, as physical boundaries combined with slaves to exercise control over who could meet him privately (*in secretum*); those who were less closely acquainted with the *paterfamilias* were received either with other people (*cum pluribus*), or with the whole crowd of visitors (*uniuersos*).[705] If the headquarters on the Palatine were constantly thronged by large crowds of *salutatores* of different status and identity, imperial *horti* and villas were probably much less accessible to externals, as emerges from a wealth of literary sources stating that in times of crisis emperors withdrew to *horti* or villas.[706]

Architecture can rarely offer room for speculation as regards the disposition of individuals responsible for controlling circulation within upper-class *domus* and *uillae*. The wealth of epigraphic evidence concerned with soldiers from the imperial escort,

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[702] Pensabene and Barresi 2019.

[703] Gell., *NA* XVI.5.

[704] Sen., *Ben*. VI.33.4.

[705] Sen., *Ben*. VI.34.2. Seneca's passage is a polemic regarding the attitude of certain rulers, who called the people who had relationships with them for mutual benefit 'friends'. Nonetheless, it still bears witness to the extent to which circulation within Roman houses and access to their *domini* were controlled, and to how this served to establish and convey social hierarchies.

[706] Suet., *Aug*. LXII (Augustus in the gardens of Maecenas when sick); Cass. Dio, LXXIII.13.4 (Commodus withdrawing to the villa of the Quintilii to escape the turmoil in Rome).

often found in tight connection with imperial residences, indicates that a security staff was more-or-less permanently employed to guarantee the safety of the emperor even when away from Rome.[707]

Access to certain spaces or persons is not only physical, but also visual. The concern over the visibility of a prominent man's house pervaded the senatorial aristocracy from the late-Republican period: the utter transparency of the grandees' everyday life and activities was the most valuable proof of their moral rectitude and integrity.[708] Visibility went hand-in-hand with accessibility: as stressed in the *Commentariolum petitionis*—the electioneering handbook attributed to Cicero's brother Quintus—those wishing to run for the consulship should take care to be approachable by their potential voters at all times.[709] Displaying one's wherewithal, furthermore, served to indicate one's social rank and power, to both peers and subordinates.

This tight bond between power and visibility persisted throughout the imperial period. Unlike late-Republican big men, emperors did not have to compete for attention, as they attracted it by virtue of their role; the daily exposure to the public gaze, however, caused them to be under the constant judgement of their subjects: their degree of visual and physical accessibility influenced how their rule was perceived and recorded by contemporaries.[710] The ease with which individuals could see the emperor was also a tool through which the degree of intimacy between subject and

[707] Ricci 2018, 208–44; Ricci 2004.
[708] Tuori 2015, 8.
[709] Cicero, *Comment. pet.* XLIV.
[710] Fertik 2015.

ruler was defined. Visual access to the emperor, far from being limited to the social occasions on which he appeared before large crowds—such as games or spectacles—can also be defined in terms of how the architecture of imperial residences was manipulated to display him to or conceal him from his visitors.

As has emerged from the issues discussed above, the necessity of wielding control over access to, and movement within, imperial residences arose from persistent concerns for the security and privacy of the emperor: on the one hand, the movements of occupants and visitors had to be monitored constantly; on the other, it was necessary to ensure that everyday life and activities did not disturb the emperor, and that different categories of individuals had dedicated routes to circulate within the residence.

Ad Gallinas Albas (C1)

Excavations carried out since the 1980s have allowed a detailed reconstruction of chronological sequence of the villa *ad Gallinas Albas*: the evolution of access and circulation patterns can be followed in detail; furthermore, the preservation of the majority of thresholds, which I have mapped through fieldwork, provides room for speculation as to how movement was directed, channelled, or enforced (fig. 6.6).

The villa, installed on a low hill overlooking the Tiber valley from the north, was reached by a side road that left the *uia Flaminia* near the crossroads with the *uia Tiberina*. On the north-western slope of the hill, the entrance to the property was marked by an irregularly shaped open court (fig. 6.7) with a monumental, 4.60-metre-

wide gate. It is plausible that this space allowed a first screening of external visitors, serving as a transition area where guests could wait before being allowed into the villa.

The access road followed the ridge of the hill towards the south-east, and reached a smaller court at the entrance of the proper residence. The villa was accessed through vestibule 40 (fig. 6.8), in which a travertine threshold with two pairs of pivot holes suggests the presence of an outer door followed by an inner one.[711] Further westwards lay another entranceway (36), which connected the villa with service area 61; it seems that 36 led into the functional space 33, from which the staff operating the bath complex could reach the underground corridor beneath 44. Vestibule 40 was the villa's main access for high-ranking occupants and visitors, whilst 36 was a secondary entrance leading into the service areas. Functional spaces are also attested to the west of the baths; staircase 16 led into the features beneath rooms 25 and 26, from which the household staff could operate the *praefurnia* of the heated rooms above.

The Severan alterations to the western quarter of the residence resulted in the opening of a third access into corridor 13: in chapter 4, I linked it with the transformations of the bath complex, which seems to have thenceforth been accessible to external visitors alongside permanent occupants and temporary guests of the residence.[712] In its previous configuration, dated to the Flavian period, the bathhouse did not have a proper *frigidarium*: I have suggested that the large pool 22 in peristyle 79, which is equipped with access stairs on the northern side, may have served as a

[711] 'Type 2' in the analysis carried out by Proudfoot 2013. See in particular 95–101.
[712] Chapter 4, 140–42.

cold *natatio*. The alterations carried out in the Severan period included the transformation of *caldarium* 26 into a *frigidarium*: as a result, the baths were confined to the space to the north of the peristyle. I propose to read this new configuration in light of the widening of the baths' user base: if external guests needed to go to the peristyle for the cold bath, it could potentially have been more difficult to control their movement; instead, by creating a sort of independent 'thermal sector', the circulation of bathers could be monitored more efficiently.

Atrium 43 was the villa's main distribution space, from which occupants and visitors could reach other areas of the residence. Passage 46 led towards the presumed *dominus*' quarters to the south (*cubicula* 50 and 52, fig. 6.9, *exedra* 51, peristyle 48). A travertine threshold along the line of the northern wall of rooms 50–52 marks the transition between 43 and 46; pivot holes testify to the presence of a door blocking the way to both the *cubicula* and to garden 69 (via passageway 47). Likewise, the entrances to *cubicula* 50 and 52 were screened by doors. Visitors wishing to access the *dominus*' quarters could only do so via passage 46, as corridor 53 can more plausibly be interpreted as the route from the *cubicula* to the bath complex or, alternatively, from the presumed guest quarters to the *cubicula*.

On the western side of the atrium, corridor 44 led towards non-residential, formal areas: the bath complex, peristyle 79 with *triclinium* 58 on its eastern side, and the western corner of the villa, including both reception facilities (halls 3 – 4 – 5) and a secondary residential quarter, that was possibly reserved for guests staying at the villa

(rooms 6–10).[713] These presumed *hospitalia* were connected to the remainder of the villa through corridor 12 – 15, which led into hall 23 and thence to peristyle 79 or to corridor 44, from which guests could reach the bath complex, atrium 43, or *cubicula* 50 – 52.

The routes from the *hospitalia* towards the eastern half of the residence were designed in such a way that guests could only reach the area(s) to which they were directed and into which they were allowed at certain times: by screening specific passageways (through physical partitions or purposely employed servants), the guests' movement could be monitored and controlled. Thresholds with pivot holes and evidence for locking systems have been identified in the eastern and southern doorways of hall 23, leading respectively into corridor 44 and peristyle 79. At the opposite end of corridor 44, a door could separate it from atrium 43; likewise, the threshold on the passageway towards peristyle 79 has pivot holes. The northern wall of the peristyle is preserved poorly, especially in its central section; nonetheless, it is possible to reconstruct a third, wider passage, roughly in the middle of this wall, corresponding to the position of room 30. Drawings from the latest excavations seem to report a pivot hole on the western end of the threshold,[714] which bears evidence to some partition. On the eastern side of the peristyle, access to the *triclinium* 58 and circulation within the adjacent spaces were screened as well.

Further alterations are attested at the beginning of the fourth century AD, and

[713] The interpretation of rooms 6–10 as a guests' quarter is based on their decoration and on the presence of heating and of a single-user latrine (Carrara 2005).
[714] Carrara 2012, fig. 7. The passage is currently beneath a wooden boardwalk for visits, and cannot be inspected.

include the closing of a number of passages, as well as the installation of some poorly preserved features (14) outside corridor 13, abutting its northern wall. Building activity in this area might be related to the concurrent closing of the doorways at the eastern ends of corridors 13 and 15, leading, respectively, to the bath complex (via corridor 24) and to hall 23. As a result, the westernmost quarters were completely separated from the remainder of the villa. Likewise, a wall was built at the passageway between corridors 53 and 44: those wishing to reach the (still-operating) bath complex from the *cubicula* had now to cross the atrium.

Villa Magna (C6)

The villa was reached by a road coming from the north, seemingly connecting it with the Compitum Anagninum (the crossroads between the *uia Labicana* and the *uia Latina* and the seat of a sanctuary of the Hernici, 5.5 km to the north-east[715]). The first building unit one encountered upon accessing the residence was a large block to the west of the road (plan C6.I), which has tentatively been interpreted as high-ranking lodgings combined with representative spaces.[716]

The road reached an open courtyard to the south, and continued towards the south-east for c. 190 m, in the form of a colonnaded street; after turning around the southern block, it seemingly reached corridor 17, which served as a monumental entranceway to the block (plan C6.V). Corridor 17 was followed by feature 5, a shallow

[715] Gatti 2011.

[716] Fentress and Fenwick 2016.

staircase punctuated by four landings that led both into the small *balneum* (rooms 9 and 18–26) and into the winery. That 17 and 5 were intended as a monumental pathway, possibly reserved for the imperial family, is suggested by their luxurious decoration: the floor and the steps were paved in Luna marble, whilst wall decoration included both painting and marble veneer; the colonnaded street thus served as a privileged route linking the presumed residential quarters of the imperial family with the winery (fig. 6.10).

The northernmost end of corridor 17 gave access both to staircase 5, further northwards, and to the atrium of the *balneum* (18). The proposed reconstruction of the route followed by members of the imperial family (6.10) is based on the peculiar configuration of rooms 17, 5, and 12, whose marble decoration marks as high-ranking spaces.[717] The letters of Marcus Aurelius discussed in chapters 4 and 5 offer a precious account of the *rusticatio* of the imperial family at Villa Magna, and mention that he bathed with Antoninus Pius before eating in the *torcular*: the route reconstructed here builds upon the evidence offered by the luxurious decoration of rooms 17, 5, and 12, and combines it with the unique description provided by Marcus Aurelius' letter.

Owing to the gentle rise of staircase 5, it has been suggested that the members of the imperial family accessing the winery complex were carried on a litter, which was easier to transport on a slight slope.[718] This reconstruction is only partially convincing. Even though the average width of Roman litters is unknown, they were probably

[717] The same methodology has been used to reconstruct circulation patterns at the villas of Livia and of the Quintilii.

[718] Booms *et al.* 2016, 91.

slightly narrower than the *klinai* used for banquets (2.5 by 1.5 m): a measure ranging between 1 and 1.20 m seems a reasonable estimate. Whilst the staircase was c. 2.70 m wide, its northern doorway was as narrow as 1.30 m:[719] since *lecticae* were usually carried by four to eight slaves,[720] it would not have been easy to transport the imperial litter up corridor 17 and staircase 5. Litters may have been used, nonetheless, to carry the emperor on the colonnaded street linking the winery with the residential quarters c. 300 m to the north.

As discussed in chapter 5, multiple movement patterns have been envisaged in the winery. The workers in charge of transporting the grapes to the *calcatorium* can hardly have used the same route as the imperial family to circulate within the winery block: instead, it has been proposed that they walked on the terraced space covering the vaulted substructures on the western and northern sides of the block.[721] To reach the winery block, the workers—who probably transported grapes on carts—must have used the colonnaded street for the last part of the journey: as the wine-making process was displayed in a quasi-ceremonial manner, it is plausible that this was a part of the spectacle.

The residence underwent some alterations in the Severan period, including the construction of a low-quality residential block, which has been interpreted as lodgings for workers employed on the property, possibly in the winery itself. The 2006–10 excavations have revealed only a limited extent of Villa Magna: any argument on the

[719] The doorway between 5 and 17 is buried by modern features.
[720] Pisani Sartorio 1988, 31–34.
[721] Booms *et al.* 2016, 90

route linking the workers' barracks to the winery is not possible on current evidence.

Villa of the Quintilii (C9)

The residence was accessed from the *uia Appia*, where a grand, semi-circular nymphaeum emphasised the entrance (fig. 6.11, plan C9.VII). The presence of security staff, in charge of supervising the main entrance to the villa, is plausible here. The nymphaeum led into the south-western extremity of a monumental, 310-metre-long corridor (X), with circular features at each extremity, which connected the main entrance to the property to the main block of the villa. Its layout seems inspired by a relatively widespread architectural type, probably pioneered by the Poecile at Hadrian's Villa,[722] and identified in a number of upper-class villas from the high and late empire.[723]

The ground plan of the Poecile and an inscription providing details on its length[724] seem to suggest that one of its purposes was to serve as an *ambulatio*, the circular extremities allowing walkers to turn smoothly around the central spine.[725] It seems to belong to the earliest building phase of the villa (AD 118–121), together with the

[722] In fact, the earliest occurrence of a feature with this layout is the cryptoporticus of the *Horti Lamiani*, (Cima Di Puolo and La Rocca 1986, 54–55), even though its ground plan is not exactly the same as the Poecile's: the former has simple apsidal ends, whilst the latter terminates with bulb-shaped features.

[723] Villa of the Quintilii, villa of Maxentius (see discussion below), villa *ad duas lauros* (Volpe 2007), villa dei Sette Bassi (Fogagnolo 2016), villa del Casale at Piazza Armerina (Pensabene and Gallocchio 2006). A very similar feature is also reported at the outskirts of Tarracina, even though Giuseppe Lugli considered it as part of the city (Lugli 1926, 142–43, pl. 3, no. 90); Coarelli, conversely, ascribed it to the villa Domitian owned in the area (Coarelli 1982, 323). The attribution to the villa cannot be confirmed.

[724] *CIL* XIV.3695a. Based on parallels with inscriptions from Rome and Baiae (respectively *CIL* VI.29776 and *AE* 1889.71, see also De Rossi 1889), Coarelli 1997, following Hülsen (Treu and Hülsen 1896, 47–48), has proposed the integration of the word *triumphi* in the inscription from the Poecile. Archaeological evidence is not sufficient to ascertain whether the name *porticus triumphi* referred to a specific building type with peculiar features, let alone what these features were.

[725] Giuliano, Giuliani, and Veloccia Rinaldi 1988, 87–88.

Maritime Theatre, the Philosophers' Hall, the Heliocaminus Baths, and the late-Republican villa forming the nucleus of the imperial residence; the triporticus behind it was not added before AD 121–125.[726] It was reached by the so-called 'via carrabile' A, a paved roadway which, according to Salza Prina Ricotti, connected the villa with the Ponte Lucano, c. 1.7 km to the north-west: it may well be that, at least during the years 118–121, the main entrance to the villa was from this road.[727] The position and layout of the Poecile offer further food for thought as to its possible functions, besides that of *ambulatio* (fig. 6.12). Located as it was at the entrance of the villa, it may have served to channel movement towards the built-up areas (i.e. the Philosophers' Hall and, thence, the Maritime Theatre and the Heliocaminus Baths). We should never forget that construction work at Hadrian's Villa continued seamlessly until AD 138: apart from the features mentioned above, the remainder of the residence was still a work in progress when the Poecile was built. It may be that, alongside directing movement towards the Maritime Theatre, it also served to screen the ongoing construction works behind it (triporticus, Stadium Garden, Small Baths, Large Baths, and later on Vestibule and Canopus). The central spine, as a result, was both an essential element of the *ambulatio* and a huge partitioning feature that concealed something Hadrian would never have wished to display.

Corridor X marked the south-eastern boundary of a garden—seemingly decorated with statues[728]—extending for c. 90 metres towards the north-west, whose opposite

[726] Salza Prina Ricotti 2001, 123–49.
[727] *Ibid.*, 85–95.
[728] Neudecker 1988, 191–97.

limit was defined by another monumental corridor with a similar plan (Z), though slightly smaller in length (c. 297 m). The configuration of the entrance garden, which is paralleled by that of the Villa of the Sette Bassi, is reminiscent of the indications provided by Vitruvius regarding *palaestrae*;[729] the length of the corridors (c. 1,000 Roman feet, one fifth of a Roman mile) corroborates their interpretation as covered *ambulationes* of the same kind as the Poecile.

Alongside their possible use as running tracks or covered promenades, corridors X and Z, as mentioned above, provided a direct connection between the entrance to the property and its main block, c. 300 m to the east. Upon reaching the north-eastern extremity of corridor X, visitors could head either towards theatre-exedra R15 or to courtyard B34, which served as a distribution space for the eastern quarter of the main block. The northern of B34 side opening onto features which, owing to their size and to the presence of *opus sectile* and/or heating, have been classified as high-ranking spaces.[730]

In its original architectural layout—prior to the alterations undertaken by Commodus, who turned it into a theatre—exedra R15 may have served, arguably, as a monumental façade for the southern corner of the main block, opening towards the features behind it. In chapter 5, I have questioned the proposed interpretation of the

[729] Vitr., *De arch*. V.11. Similarly sized heated rooms to the south of corridor X have been interpreted by Frontoni and Galli as features for sweat baths and massages (Paris, Frontoni and Galli 2019, 66), and thus linked with the gymnasium-like configuration of the entrance garden. The interpretation is impossible to confirmed on current evidence, since the authors did not provide parallels with features serving similar purposes.

[730] Chapter 2, 67–68; chapter 5, 204–6.

circular room R14, to the north of R15, as a dining hall, and have highlighted its similarities with features which served as distribution and transition spaces.[731] The position and ground plan of R14, with two openings on its north/south axis, suggest reading it as a monumental vestibule for the Large Baths, through which visitors who had accessed the main block from exedra R15 could reach the bathing suite to the north. The alterations that aimed to turn R15 into a theatre resulted in the blocking of the two doorways of R14, which did not regain its previous function as a vestibule even when the theatre was dismantled; nevertheless, external visitors could still reach the Large Baths through corridor R11.

The main block of the residence was criss-crossed by a network of corridors and aisles, whose elaborate *opus sectile* decoration marks them as reserved pathways for users of the highest rank (fig. 6.13). Corridors B33 – B20 – A14bis – A19bis linked the residential quarters on the north-eastern side of courtyard B34 with the heart of the block: through staircase A6 and corridors T1 – L9 it was possible to reach, respectively, the formal sector A, the exedra-theatre, the Large Baths, or the *uiridarium* F1 (fig. 6.14). I have suggested reading *cubicula* B26 and B27 as reserved for the emperor, when he stayed at the villa: if my interpretation is correct, the monumental route discussed above allowed him to easily circulate within the villa, and to reach its different sectors without crossing other areas or encountering lower-ranking individuals.

I have argued that the features to the west of the exedra-theatre, whose layout is reminiscent of that of a residential unit, could have served as a miniature *domus* for

[731] Chapter 5, 206–8.

dwellers of a slightly lower rank, possibly guests. This separate apartment had its dedicated route to the theatre (via corridor R11) and to the Large Baths (via room D18).

Unfortunately, very few thresholds are preserved *in situ* (marble thresholds were removed much more frequently than travertine ones): we can pinpoint the position of a limited number of doors, adding little detail to the reconstruction of circulation patterns. The most important is certainly the one at the lower end of staircase A6, which separated the marble-veneered corridors—which gave access to the residential quarters of the *dominus*, including *cubicula* B26 and B27 and the annexed *balneum*—from the formal spaces at the upper level, thus establishing a clear distinction between areas with a higher or lower degree of privacy. In light of the issues discussed in the introductory paragraphs, I would not label the—presumed—emperor's personal spaces as *propria loca*: as explained by Vitruvius, bathing suites or dining halls (which, in the villa of the Quintilii, lie outside the area that I consider as reserved for the emperor) are *propria*.

The villa of the Quintilii features a remarkable number of heated spaces; besides its bathing facilities, evidence for a heating system has been identified in *cubicula* B26 and B27, in the winter dining hall A1, and in some of the rooms of the presumed mini-apartment south-west of the exedra-theatre. The operation of the *praefurnia* for this sheer number of heated features required an efficient network of functional spaces beneath the formal areas: the excavations revealed an elaborate system of underground spaces, both under the grand reception halls in the eastern quarter of the main block and annexed to the Large Baths. These functional spaces have

unfortunately not been investigated in sufficient detail to allow a reliable reconstruction of circulation patterns at the underground level. Though the features serving the Large Baths seem to have had a dedicated entranceway on the western corner of the block, the spaces beneath the formal areas are only known in broad terms.

Horti Spei Veteris/Palativm Sessorianvm (C10)

The archaeological record of the suburban residence of the *Horti Spei Veteris*, installed by Septimius Severus at the south-eastern outskirts of Rome, has now been researched thoroughly: extensive urban works carried out in the first decades of the twentieth century revealed its main features; excavations undertaken in the latter half of the century allowed a reconstruction of the overall layout of the residence, even though a detailed picture cannot be defined on current evidence. As a result, circulation patterns can be reconstructed to a limited extent.

The main access to the residence was from the north-west, through a road which connected it to the crossroads between the *uia Caelemontana* and the *uia Praenestina/Labicana*, the path of which was partially followed by the modern-day via Eleniana (plan C10.I). Even though Colini argued that the *Horti* extended until the *uia Caelemontana*, it seems more plausible that the north-western limit of the residence was marked out by a long wall with a north-east/south-west orientation (10), which modern scholarship has interpreted as part of a cryptoporticus serving as an enclosure for the *Horti*.[732]

[732] Guglielmi 2014, 86. Borgia *et al.* 2008a, 2.

Our knowledge is not sufficient to pinpoint a structure that we could securely identify as a guard post from which visitors were monitored and filtered. To the north-east of the access road and adjacent to the Aurelianic Walls, three residential units (*domus* 'dei mosaici', no. 12, *domus* 'ACEA', no. 13, *domus* 'dei ritratti/della fontana', n. 14, plan C10.III) have been identified by modern scholarship as lodgings for high dignitaries of the imperial court, owing to the quality of their decoration.[733] The attribution of the *domus* 'dei mosaici' to the imperial residence, in particular, is corroborated by a graffito reading the word *Sessori*, which Colini discovered in a room abutting the Aurelianic Walls.[734] The proximity of the *domus* to the *Horti*'s entrance may not be accidental, as it would have allowed the functionary living there to exercise control over who accessed the residence, similarly to the *cellae ostiariae* (porter's lodges) identified in a large number of Roman domestic buildings.[735] This interpretation, albeit plausible, must remain at the level of hypothesis.

One of the most remarkable features of the *Horti* is a 370-metre long, 14-metre wide covered gallery (4) with circular rooms at each extremity, which connected the large hall (1) with the amphitheatre (3), and continued to the south-east towards the circus (2); its configuration is the same as that of the Poecile at Hadrian's Villa and of corridors X and Z of the villa of the Quintilii (fig. 6.15). In the previous paragraphs, I have highlighted that these features served not only as covered *ambulationes* (as has

[733] Guglielmi 2014, 90–91. Details on layout, chronology, and decoration in Borgia *et al.* 2008b, 21–31, Barbera and Colli 2005, Chini and Grandi Carletti 2000, Conticello De' Spagnolis 1990, Conticello De' Spagnolis 1985.
[734] Colini 1957, 6.
[735] Berry 2016, 137–38, with evidence.

been argued for the Poecile at Hadrian's Villa) but also as connecting facilities; similar functions may be envisaged for the monumental gallery of the *Horti Spei Veteris*: its tight architectural relationship with the hall, the amphitheatre, and the circus bears witness to the necessity of ensuring smooth circulation between the three features. In chapter 3, I argued that it provided the emperor with a privileged route to reach his seat in the amphitheatre, and the possible imperial *puluinar* in the circus.[736] The absence of a central spine seems to suggest that is main function was not to serve as an *ambulatio* as much as a dedicated pathway through which emperors could circulate within the residence without being disturbed. We may suggest that guards were placed at both extremities, in order to prevent unauthorised—and potentially dangerous—individuals from accessing the emperor's personal space.

Later on, the residence underwent some alterations under Constantine, who added two reception spaces (8 and 9) and turned hall 1 into a Christian church (plan C10.III). Investigations in the area revealed the remains of what seems to be another, much smaller corridor linking hall 1 with the apsidal hall 9; the latter has been interpreted, in chapters 2 and 5, as a multi-functional space serving both reception functions and allowing the staging of banquets.[737] The scattered nature of the archaeological record does not support further speculations as to the particular role of this corridor in relation to the two halls that it served to connect: apart from pointing out the clear necessity of channelling movement, my analysis cannot go any further.

[736] Chapter 3, 116.

[737] Chapter 2, 83–84; chapter 5, 215–16.

Villa of Maxentius (C11)

Even though excavations carried out in the 1960s revealed most of the core of the villa, structures are preserved poorly: circulation patterns can therefore be reconstructed only to a limited extent.

The access to the villa has not securely been identified to date, even though a closer examination of the entrances to the circus might offer some clues in this regard. In chapter 3, I pointed out that the southern side of the circus is pierced by a much higher number of entranceways than the northern: as a working hypothesis, I suggested that the higher number of entrances can be explained in light of a higher number of individuals accessing the circus from the side facing the *uia Appia*, whilst the entranceways on the opposite side were allocated for fewer people (fig. 3.18). If this reconstruction is correct, it could allow a more accurate interpretation of the semi-circular feature O (Ø 7.60 m), c. 45 m to the east of apsidal hall M, which Pisani Sartorio reconstructed as a circular vestibule based on parallels with comparanda of similar purpose and date (fig. 6.16).[738] Despite its poor preservation, the structure yielded some evidence for marble decoration and heating, which suggest its interpretation as a high-ranking space. The formal nature of this circular feature can be linked with the smaller number of entranceways on the northern side of the circus: the smaller the number of people accessing it from this side, the higher their social standing. It may

[738] So-called Tempio della Tosse at Tivoli and vestibule of Diocletian's palace at Split (Pisani Sartorio and Calza 1976, 125–26).

be, then, that O served as a monumental vestibule for those entering the property from the *uia Asinaria*, whilst lower-status individuals accessed the circus (and the circus only) from the south.

The residential and reception facilities of the residence[739] extend onto a hill facing the *uia Appia*, whose slope is supported by a 190-metre-long cryptoporticus (C/P), on the upper level of which was an *ambulatio*, probably covered by a pitched roof.[740] The visible corridor is the result of Maxentius' extension of a shorter structure (c. 110 m), whose installation dates back to the late-Republican period. Despite the poor preservation of the villa's main nucleus, it is clear that the cryptoporticus, alongside serving as a substructure for the hillslope, was also the backbone of circulation patterns in this area of the residence, as it gave access to all the features to the north of it.[741] Amongst Maxentius' alterations to the residential and formal section of the villa, the most notable is the installation of a grand apsidal hall (M), preceded by a large antechamber (N) that opened onto the *ambulatio* (plan C11.IV).

The extension of the *ambulatio* towards the east was intended to link the core of the villa with a feature installed at the eastern end of cryptoporticus P, which Pisani Sartorio has convincingly interpreted as the imperial *puluinar* of the circus.[742] The apse

[739] The identification of the facilities to the north-east of the gallery as residential and representative spaces is based on the evidence for heating and marble decoration found during the 1960s excavations; the preservation is too limited to allow a more detailed interpretation of the structures' possible functions.

[740] Pisani Sartorio and Calza 1976, 104.

[741] A similar layout is visible at the villa of Piazza Armerina, where the corridor of the Great Hunt (whose ground plan is reminiscent of that of the *ambulatio* of the villa of Maxentius) let into a sequence of formal spaces to the east of it (Muth 1999).

[742] Pisani Sartorio and Calza 1976, 106–07.

at the eastern end of the *ambulatio* opens towards an irregularly shaped area, which led both into the *puluinar* and to the upper level of the circular feature P4 (plan C11.V).[743] The ground plan of P4 is not suggestive per se of its possible functions; its layout and position are reminiscent of the hexagonal hall annexed to the box on the opposite side of the circus, which Ioppolo has proposed to read as a *tribunal* reserved for the races' judges.[744] It may be that P4 was a feature ancillary to the imperial *puluinar*, possibly serving as recreation space for breaks in between races. The room on the ground level of P4, which was not connected with the one on the upper floor, has been read as a functional space, even though data on the surrounding features which could provide further clues for a more accurate interpretation are lacking.

Despite the constraints imposed by the fragmentary nature of the archaeological record, the proposed reconstruction of circulation patterns at the villa of Maxentius suggests that there was a remarkable concern for separating pathways reserved for the emperor from routes meant for other individuals, with the evident purpose of guaranteeing that the person of the emperor and his personal space were safeguarded at all times. This emerged, above all, from the analysis of access patterns to the circus: the emperor, his family, and his most important guests could reach the *puluinar* through the *ambulatio* that linked the circus with the residential and representative nucleus of the villa; external visitors of a certain social standing, who were allowed to

[743] The architectural configuration of the features behind the eastern end of the *ambulatio* has been reconstructed thanks to a drawing by Pirro Ligorio (reported in *Ibid.*, 107), because ancient structures were poorly intelligible when the area was investigated.

[744] Discussion in chapter 3, 119.

enter the property from the *uia Asinaria*, could access the circus from the dedicated entranceways on the northern side; more ordinary people, flocking to the villa in higher numbers, could use the more numerous entrances on the southern side of the circus.

In chapter 2, I proposed a differentiation between the possible functions of reception halls L and M, based on their access patterns: whilst M was mainly accessible from *ambulatio* C/P, the only entrance to L was from its northern side. Even though we do not possess further data, which may allow a more detailed interpretation of the respective functions of L and M, it seems that an attempt was made to control and channel the movement of individuals coming from the outside: visitors who were involved in the social gatherings happening in hall L did not need to use *ambulatio* C/P, from which they could potentially access the emperor's personal space to the north.

Concluding remarks

Much more than other architectural issues, the reconstruction of circulation patterns in imperial villas is affected by the degree to which a residence is preserved and has been investigated: the clearer the picture, the more complete and detailed our understanding of routes. Notwithstanding the constraints imposed by the inconsistent nature of the archaeological record, a wealth of information has emerged, which offer substantial food for thought on the functioning of imperial residences.

As has emerged from the analysis of the villas under consideration, a prime concern in their design was a clear definition of the hierarchy of spaces and paths,

which could allow the simultaneous presence of different categories of people: boundaries were designed to convey this hierarchy to occupants and visitors, in order for them to have an immediate understanding of the distinction between *propria loca* and *communia loca*, with no potential for misinterpretations. Likewise, movement was channelled in such a way that diversions were rarely possible, as they would have led individuals into areas where they were not meant—or allowed—to go. The social hierarchy of the community which peopled imperial residences was thus reflected in their spatial hierarchy, which was defined through an accurate use of physical and symbolic boundaries.

The works of Berry, Lauritsen, and Wallace-Hadrill have shown that a hierarchy of spaces and routes existed in Roman upper-class domestic architecture since the Republican period: imperial residences built on these earlier architectural experiences. The ultimate development of this phenomenon is seen at Hadrian's Villa, which is criss-crossed by a network of underground and above-ground routes—some of which were even accessible to vehicles—that allowed its inhabitants and visitors to circulate within the complex without interfering with each other's activities. As its site was almost free of constraints, Hadrian's Villa could be designed paying due attention to the planning and the hierarchy of routes; its extraordinary configuration follows in the vein of the aforementioned practices attested since the Republican period, which inspired the design of other imperial residences. Hadrian's Villa is therefore an exceptional architectural expression of the concerns towards the hierarchical organisation of routes, but its configuration, albeit unique in its elaborateness, is not

innovative; its influence on later imperial villas does not seem to go beyond the layout and functions of the Poecile.

The archaeological record of the villas *ad Gallinas Albas* and of the Quintilii suggests that particular attention was paid to screening the highest-ranking residential quarters, where the emperor was probably lodged when he stayed at the villa. In both instances, the presumed imperial quarters are neatly separated from spaces that were evidently *communia*—such as atrium 43 in the villa of Livia—or meant to be used by a higher number of people, like the reception halls in the south-eastern half of the villa of the Quintilii. The control wielded over physical access to the person of the emperor was based on the relationship which each and every individual had with the emperor himself: the higher the intimacy, the quicker and easier the access. Again, our evidence suggests that the spatial layout of imperial residences was a means through which a social hierarchy of occupants and visitors was established and conveyed: a restricted number of people were allowed into the emperor's *propria loca*, and were granted access to his most exclusive spaces depending on their relationship to him.

As discussed in the introductory section, access to the emperor was not restricted to the possibility of interacting with him personally (a privilege that was granted to a necessarily limited number of people), as the majority of individuals had no other way to meet the emperor but to see him on occasions in which he appeared publicly: at spectacles. In chapter 3, I analysed entertainment buildings installed at imperial residences (or in close connection with them) in their role as locations where subjects could access emperors at least visually. Whilst amphitheatres provided emperors with

a setting in which they could showcase their *uirtus* in *uenationes* that could be witnessed by large crowds, the installation of circuses at imperial residences was inspired by the architectural relationship existing between the palaces on the Palatine and the Circus Maximus, which served as the primary venue for codified meetings between emperors and a large number of people living in Rome.

The analysis of entertainment facilities installed at imperial villas highlighted how, in the period under consideration here, performances evolved from less to more formalised types of entertainment; this development is apparently paralleled by the evolution of the figure of the ruler, who acquired increasingly solemn traits. As acknowledged by modern scholarship, the ceremonial of fourth-century and later emperors had the form of a complex ritual referred to as the *adoratio* in literary sources, which involved an elaborate sequence of practices.[745] Our evidence provide substantial detail on the manifold boundaries employed to screen the emperor: not only were *admissionales* employed to filter those who required permission to adore the emperor, but partitioning features such as doors or curtains were also used widely, both to block the entranceway to the hall in which the *adoratio* took place and to conceal the figure of the emperor sitting on his throne. As a result, not only was physical access regulated in an increasingly strict manner, but even those wishing to just see him up close needed to pass through a significant number of boundaries. Late-antique emperors became increasingly inaccessible, to the point of turning into evanescent, semi-divine figures, only visible on the occasion of precisely staged epiphanies, which included both

[745] Chapter 2, 78–79.

adorationes (restricted to extremely selected individuals) and spectacles in the circus.

Conclusions

By means of a thorough analysis of the archaeological, epigraphical, and textual evidence, this thesis has sought to investigate imperial villas in their role as settings in which the numerous individuals who peopled them—the emperor, the imperial court, and the household personnel, as well as the wide range of external subjects with whom the emperor interacted—could perform the manifold functions that their roles entailed. Despite the constraints imposed by the fragmentary nature of our evidence, as well as by the inconsistency of our knowledge on individual villas, the main thread that has emerged is the persistent use of suburban and extra-urban imperial residences as fully fledged centres of government, notwithstanding their undoubtable function as leisure retreats, which they must have retained throughout the whole imperial period.

The public nature of imperial villas had already been pointed out by Leppert and Booms,[746] who showed that these residences were much more than leisure retreats away from the chaos of Rome, where emperors could indulge in the cultivated *otium* typical of late-Republican grandees; instead, they served both as venues for official business and as tools to support the claims to power of specific emperors. Roman emperors, by interacting with several categories of individuals in different settings and on different occasions, could define the relationship patterns with other subjects, as well as convey specific messages as to their persona and the nature of their rule.

[746] Leppert 1974; Booms 2009.

Despite their indisputable value, Leppert's and Booms' works are primarily concerned with literary sources, and address archaeological evidence to a limited degree; both scholars, furthermore, focus on the villas of the Julio-Claudian, Flavian, and early Antonine emperors, with limited insights on later periods. My thesis has continued in the same vein, but it has attempted to investigate imperial villas from a viewpoint that previous research on the topic has only explored marginally: the archaeological record. Further, the focus on the timeframe between Antoninus Pius and Maxentius has allowed me to follow the architectural evolution of imperial villas in a period in which, as has emerged from the analysis of literary sources, their use as venues for the emperors' official business was increasingly tolerated—if not even approved—by ancient authors, and to investigate the mutual relationships existing between the spatial needs of imperial activities and the architectural configuration of imperial villas.

Given the acknowledged role of imperial residences as seats of power, I have focused on the manifold activities that emperors performed in fulfilment of their functions—official business, entertainment, bathing, dining—in order to identify and investigate their spatial settings. Furthermore, I have examined the information offered by textual and epigraphic evidence on the events involving members of the imperial family—births, deaths, exiles, or simple *villeggiatura*—which sources locate at imperial villas. Lastly, I have looked at the circulation patterns of individual residences, to understand how space was designed to allow the simultaneous and harmonious presence of subjects of different echelons. A review of the conclusions of

each of these investigations is pertinent before moving on to wider discussions.

The analysis of literary and epigraphic sources that locate historically relevant events at imperial residences, despite their limitations and varying reliability, has allowed me to outline a story of the use of imperial villas in the period under consideration, as well as to point out patterns of villa usage on the part of specific emperors and dynasties. As has emerged from the discussion carried out in chapter 1, the emperors' choice to use—or not to use—specific villas was not exclusively determined by matters of personal taste, but also by the intention to convey specific messages regarding their persona, and the nature of their rule.

The custom of carrying out one's official functions in domestic settings is documented from the late-Republican period; the significant innovation of the empire lies in the fact that, as early as Augustus, emperors were used to spending substantial periods of time away from Rome, without their duties being neglected or conducted less efficiently: imperial residences were equipped with a variety of facilities that enabled them to carry out all the activities connected with the government and the administration of the empire. The identification of the settings of their official business proved challenging for several reasons, ranging from the wide variety of imperial hearings and of their spatial requirements to the multifunctionality of Roman domestic spaces. From the analysis carried out in chapter 2, which allowed me to pinpoint the possible venues of official business in five of the villas under consideration, two main trends have emerged: on the one hand, the grand apsidal halls of the villa of Maxentius and the Sessorian Palace, whose layouts catered to the needs of sumptuous, awe-

inspiring hearings; on the other hand, the features identified at the villa *ad Gallinas Albas* or of Lucius Verus, smaller in size yet no less luxurious in decoration.

Owing to the admittedly public nature of imperial villas, the presence of entertainment facilities at many of them cannot be explained by the simple desire to provide amusement for the emperor, his court, and his guests. Since conducting official business required emperors to interact with subjects and/or foreigners in more-or-less formal settings, the installation of entertainment buildings provided imperial residences with peculiar venues for these interactions, in which emperors could 'meet'—or, better, appear before—a much higher number of people. To define the functions of theatres, amphitheatres, and circuses installed at imperial villas, I have examined their capacities, the performances staged at each category of entertainment buildings, and the distance from Rome of individual residences. The most remarkable trend of the period under consideration is the efflorescence of circuses installed at imperial villas, which I have proposed to explain in light of the model provided both by the association between the Palatine and the Circus Maximus in Rome and by the imperial residences installed in the cities where the tetrarchs had their headquarters.

Different kinds of interactions with subjects and/or foreigners could take place in spatial settings whose presence in imperial villas is much less surprising, as they had been a recurring element of domestic architecture since Republican times: bathing suites and dining facilities. In chapter 4, I have pointed out that the installation of baths at imperial residences—which followed practices attested since the late Republic—was not only aimed to cater to hygienic needs, but also to provide a venue for relatively

informal and intimate interactions: bathing with Caesar was a privilege reserved for individuals of the highest social standing, whom the emperor admitted to his *propria loca*. The presence of multiple bathhouses in the same villa reflects different usage patterns; their capacity, layout, decoration, and position have helped define the identity of their patrons.

I have argued that more elaborate facilities—probably reserved for the emperors and their most important guests—as well as decorative water features such as fountains and nymphaea were operated sporadically: it would have been pointless for them to function when the emperor was absent. The figures provided by Frontinus as to the amount of water issued *nomine Caesaris* point towards the persistent need to provide imperial possessions with fresh water: a certain quantity of it must have been allocated to the operation of the manifold water features installed at imperial residences, in addition to agricultural purposes. The remarkable amount of water distributed to imperial possessions (more than 70,000,000 litres/day), has been linked—amongst other things—with the increased demands for water resulting from the temporary presence of the emperor at a specific residence, which required an efficient and reliable supply.

The villas under consideration have allowed me to follow the architectural evolution of imperial dining facilities from the age of Augustus to Late Antiquity, and to identify and investigate the parallel transformation of dining fashions. Throughout the imperial period, a growing desire to offer increasingly elaborate forms of dinner entertainment emerged. This tendency is exemplified by the two dining facilities from

the original phase (Hadrianic) of the villa of the Quintilii, both equipped with plenty of space for live performances; I have suggested to link this transformation in dining fashions with the parallel decline in the number of domestic theatres, as discussed in chapter 3. A unique form of spectacle was offered to the guests of imperial banquets held at Villa Magna and in the winery installed at the villa of the Quintilii in the 240s, where grape-treading was staged in front of the diners. Following a well-established practice attested since the late-Republican period, winemaking was displayed and celebrated. The involvement of emperors in wine production can be traced back to the age of Augustus, and has been linked with the fluctuating popularity of both *crus* and *cépages*, as reported by literary sources: changes in the taste of Roman society for wine have partially been explained as determined by fashions set by the imperial family, which seems to have intervened actively—hard to say if also consciously—in manipulating the wine market. The apsidal halls of the villa of Maxentius and the Sessorian Palace, which I have suggested may have been used as venues for solemn banquets, mark the ultimate development of imperial dining fashions, which, as has emerged also with regard to receptions and hearings, seem to have acquired increasingly formal traits.

The analysis of the variety of activities performed at imperial villas has revealed that the residences of emperors were peopled by a multitude of individuals with different ranks and roles, who resided in different sections, were allowed into different areas, and moved along different routes. In chapter 6, I have investigated the features employed to filter access to a specific residence, to convey its spatial hierarchy to those

who circulated inside, to control and enforce movement, and to allow or deny access to the person of the emperor. A prime concern has emerged regarding a clear definition of a spatial hierarchy, which could indicate to occupants and visitors the distinction between *propria loca* and *communia loca*, the areas into which they were or were not allowed, as well as the routes on which they could or could not circulate. The analysis of the occurrence and spatial distribution of boundaries has revealed that strict control was wielded over the 'Weg zum Kaiser', that is, the ensemble of routes leading from the exterior of the residence to the imperial quarters. A small percentage of the overall number of individuals wishing to interact with the emperor succeeded in meeting him personally; the remainder had to be content with visual access to his persona, e.g. on the occasion of spectacles. Towards the end of the period under consideration, the figure of the emperor underwent deep transformations, which resulted in both visual and physical access to him becoming increasingly complicated. This trend is attested by the results of the analyses carried out in chapters 2, 3, and 5: close interaction was allowed to few, selected people, whilst visual access was restricted to the occasions of imperial epiphanies.

The purposes for which imperial villas were used throughout the period under consideration, as suggested by literary and material evidence, shed light on their ideological and practical functions, both altogether and individually. On the one hand, literary and epigraphic evidence has allowed me to define the villa-programmes of specific emperors and dynasties, and to understand the ideological role of imperial residences; on the other, the combined analysis of reception spaces, entertainment

buildings, bathing suites, dining facilities, and circulation patterns has elucidated their practical functions. As will be discussed below, it is most likely that some hierarchy existed between imperial residences, which can be inferred from the capacity, layout, and decoration of the features discussed in chapters 2–5, as well as from their distance from Rome.

Whilst a number of villas are more likely to have served as little more than *buenos retiros* where emperors could indulge in leisured activities, others seem to have had a more official nature. Whereas the imperial headquarters were located in Rome until the institution of the Tetrarchy, the many villas that emperors frequented throughout the period were used as venues for official business, yet they remained, in the majority of cases, ancillary to the *Palatium*. In a few cases, though, archaeological and literary evidence suggests that particular imperial villas may have temporarily acquired the role and functions hitherto fulfilled by the principal residence, serving as the official centre of power for a certain period of time.

In AD 26, Tiberius withdrew to the island of Capri, where he was to spend the subsequent eleven years, until his death in AD 37. In spite of the negative accounts of Tacitus and Suetonius[747]—evidently influenced by their reluctance to acknowledge the fact that the empire could be governed *in absentia*—we know that his withdrawal did not result in an utter neglect of official business: notwithstanding his absence from Rome, he continued to run the empire, giving instructions via correspondence and

[747] Suet., *Tib*. XLIII–XLIV; Tac., *Ann*. IV–V.

communicating through an elaborate system of heliographs.[748] Recent investigations at the *uilla Iouis* have led to the identification of the main components of the residence, even though the poor preservation of the upper storeys does not allow speculation on the specific functions of individual features;[749] the venues for official business have not been located precisely. It has been noted that the architectural layout of the *uilla Iouis* is reminiscent of a fortress, rather than a maritime villa, as one would expect from a seaside residence on the bay of Naples.[750] Its unusual configuration seems to reflect the negative tones with which Tacitus and Suetonius reported his withdrawal: the island of Capri was chosen, allegedly, because it was particularly difficult to reach. Likewise, an impression of secrecy and inaccessibility was probably conveyed by its layout, even though it is hard to say whether it had deliberately designed by Tiberius is this fashion or if, on the contrary, Tacitus and Suetonius emphasised this particular characteristic to confer additional credibility to their accounts.

A century later, Hadrian undertook the construction of an enormous residence, extending over an area of more than 120 ha, in the vicinity of Tibur. The complex was equipped with reception facilities, entertainment buildings, bathing suites, and dining halls, as well as lodgings for the many categories of individuals who peopled it, temporarily or permanently (c. 3,000 people not including the imperial family, as suggested by Salza Prina Ricotti[751]). Despite having almost completely been ignored

[748] Suet., *Tib*. LXV.
[749] Krause 2005; Krause 2003.
[750] Giuliani 1982, 235–39.
[751] Salza Prina Ricotti 2001, 84

by literary sources—apart from the cursory description found in the *HA*[752]—the architectural layout of Hadrian's Villa does not give the impression of an inaccessible fortress where the emperor could hide from the public gaze; nonetheless, its configuration suggests that it was meant to serve as a residential complex where the whole imperial court—ranging from high-ranking officers to the household staff—could reside for substantial periods of time.

Notwithstanding their remarkably different layouts, Tiberius' *uilla Iouis* and Hadrian's Villa at Tibur have important traits in common. First, they are located at more than a day's journey from Rome, such that relatively short stays were not particularly convenient, especially in light of the increasingly peregrinatory character of the imperial court (which implied a substantial number of people travelling in the emperor's entourage). Second, literary sources—as regards the *uilla Iouis*—and archaeological evidence—in the case of Hadrian's Villa—suggest that the two residences were meant to serve not merely as *buenos retiros* for the emperors' luxurious leisure, but rather as imperial headquarters. On the one hand, despite their disapproval of Tiberius' choice to leave Rome, it is evident from Tacitus' and Suetonius' accounts that he was fully able to deal with official business from Capri. On the other, the facilities at Hadrian's Villa could cater to the needs of the whole imperial court for an extended period, alongside allowing the accommodation of guests of different ranks. This argument is corroborated by at least one imperial rescript issued

[752] SHA, *Hadr.* XXVI.5.

in a residence referred to as *uilla Tiburtina*, in AD 134.[753] The picture that has emerged from the analysis of literary and archaeological evidence regarding the *uilla Iouis* and Hadrian's Villa suggests that they were not ancillary to the imperial headquarters in Rome; instead, they functioned as fully fledged centres of power, where a substantial part of the imperial court and household staff relocated for the entire duration of the imperial stay.

It is against this background that I propose to define some hierarchy within the landscape of the imperial villas under consideration here, depending on their geographical location and on their facilities; much more than other issues, this reconstruction is hindered by the inconsistency of our knowledge.

As mentioned above, the distance from Rome of each residence, combined with the capacity, layout, and decoration of the features discussed in chapters 2–5, may provide food for thought as to the more-or-less 'official' nature of specific imperial villas; in the following paragraphs, I will try to bring together the results that emerged from the analysis of reception facilities, entertainment buildings, bathing suites, and dining halls, in order to understand the different functions of the imperial villas considered in this work, and to define their possible hierarchy within this background.

The villa *ad Gallinas Albas* and that of Lucius Verus have much in common. They were both located at a short distance from Rome (respectively, nine and five miles), and could be reached in a couple of hours;[754] their dining facilities and reception halls

[753] Eck 2019.

[754] Travel time is calculated based on the guidelines provided in the ORBIS Stanford Geospatial Network Model of the Roman World (https://orbis.stanford.edu).

are modest in size, but stand out for their peculiar configuration. At the villa *ad Gallinas Albas*, both *triclinium* 58 and *cubicula* 50 and 52 were maintained in their original architectural layout, dated to the period when the residence was frequented by Augustus; at the villa of Lucius Verus, reception hall 16 features a unique *opus sectile* decoration, in which marble was combined with glass; its apsidal dining hall offered space for a fashionable *stibadium* couch. The archaeological evidence from the two villas suggests that when emperors resided there, they did hold banquets and hearings, but the number of external people invited to such events must have been small. The old-fashioned layout of the *triclinium* at the villa *ad Gallinas Albas* and the glass decoration at the villa of Lucius Verus were thus most likely meant to be shared with a pool of highly selected individuals, whose refinement was such that they could enjoy the unique atmosphere of banquets held in the same *triclinium* where—allegedly—Augustus himself had dined, or the sophisticated *opus sectile* decoration which combined marble with glass. Similar considerations can be suggested with regard to bathing facilities: even though the *balneum* at the villa of Lucius Verus is not preserved in sufficient detail, the *piscinae calidae* at the villa of Livia were certainly meant for bathers who could appreciate their elaborate samovar systems. To summarise, even though the two villas were equipped with the facilities that allowed emperors to carry out their activities, they must have served as leisure retreats rather than as proper seats of government. Their short distance from Rome offers further support for this reconstruction: in case of particularly urgent business that required larger spaces, the imperial court could reach the Palatine in a timely manner.

A completely different picture is suggested by the archaeological record of the villa of Maxentius and the Sessorian Palace. Their grand apsidal halls, which I have proposed to interpret both as venues for sumptuous hearings and for dining, depending on the furniture arrangement, could cater to the needs of events involving large numbers of people. I have argued that the villa of Maxentius, despite being located at c. 3 miles from Rome, was most likely a fully realised imperial seat, raised to the role of alternative to the Palatine complex, where Maxentius had stayed between 306 and 309. Its architectural layout, inspired by that of the tetrarchic residences installed at the newly instituted imperial seats of Trier, Milan, and Thessalonica, was evidently meant to present him as a legitimate ruler, and to convey that his power was no less 'imperial' than that of the other tetrarchs. Even though Maxentius, having chosen Rome as his capital, could well have stayed only on the Palatine—hitherto, the imperial headquarters *par excellence*—he nonetheless chose, from 309 onwards, to associate himself with another residential complex: I have suggested that his villa on the *uia Appia*, where the mausoleum of Romulus served both as a dynastic tomb and as a temple for the cult of his *gens*, was not merely the residence of an emperor, but rather a complex that was inextricably linked with the persona of Maxentius and with his role.

Constantine's alterations to the *Horti Spei Veteris*, where he installed two monumental reception halls and a church for his mother to preserve the relics of the True Cross, resulted not only in a tight association of the residence to his persona, but also in a transformation of Rome's topography of power. The complex, closely

connected with the nearby Lateran Basilica—installed by Constantine on the site of the Castra Noua Equitum Singularium—was no longer a subsidiary of the Palatine, as it was at the time of its construction in the Severan period, but, rather, the principal imperial residence in Rome. The official nature of the villa of Maxentius and of the *Sessorium* is reflected in the configuration of their reception facilities: the grand apsidal halls offered a venue both for imperial *adorationes* and for sumptuous banquets with numerous guests.

The villa of the Quintilii, with its luxurious dining facilities, spacious bathing suite, entertainment buildings, and grand reception halls, seems to stand halfway between the leisurely villa *ad Gallinas Albas* or that of Lucius Verus and the headquarters of Maxentius and Constantine. Despite possessing all the venues where emperors could carry out their manifold activities—and thus apparently being able to function as an official residence where the whole imperial court could reside for substantial periods—it was located at c. 5 miles from Rome: the urban palaces could be reached in at most two hours. The elaborate configuration of the villa of the Quintilii, though inspired by the Palatine residence and, to a certain extent, by Hadrian's Villa, was not determined by functional necessities, as much as by the desire to replicate something of the 'urbane' character of the imperial headquarters in Rome.

As for Lanuuium, I have proposed to read the small amphitheatre annexed to the imperial villa as the venue for the ceremonial *uenationes* of Commodus. The presence of an entertainment facility used to showcase the emperor's prowess seems to suggest that it was not a simple countryside retreat: the celebration of his *uirtus* combines with

his association with the local cult of Hercules to highlight the ideological role of the residence. Owing to our fragmentary knowledge of the site, we are unable to locate and analyse reception halls or dining facilities, which could support the interpretation of the villa as one meant to cater to the needs of longer imperial stays. Its bath complex, albeit poorly preserved, seems nonetheless to have provided space for up to seventy-four bathers; despite it being impossible to define the functions of this residence in further detail, the presence of a spacious bathhouse may provide further evidence for its more official nature.

The layout of the winery block of Villa Magna, alongside its distance from Rome (c. 35 miles), suggests reading the residence as a luxurious countryside retreat, where the emperor could treat a highly selected pool of guests to an extremely sophisticated form of entertainment. Our limited knowledge of the configuration of the villa does not provide further room for speculation as to its position in the possible classification of imperial villas outlined above; investigations in its residential block and in the features identified through gradiometer surveys may shed further light in this regard. It has been highlighted, however, that Villa Magna lay at the core of one of the most important wine-producing areas of the wider *suburbium* of Rome: I therefore propose that it served, first and foremost, as an administrative hub for the production of the *Signinum* wine; its representative features argue in favour of its use by the imperial court—as suggested also by Marcus Aurelius' letters[755]—though, owing to their limited capacity, I would not classify the villa as official.

[755] Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Caes.* IV.4-6.

The picture is much more blurred as regards Alsium, Antium, Laurentum, and Portus. The three bathing facilities attributed to the imperial residential complex of Laurentum have been linked, in chapter 4, with different categories of users, even though the scanty information on decoration allows limited speculation as to the possible identity of these people. Its position (c. 18 miles from Rome) and the capacity of baths 3 and 4—which can be compared with that of the bath complex at Lanuuium—point towards the suitability of the villa of Laurentum for relatively long stays of the imperial court; evidence for its more or less official nature may be provided by the identification of its residential and reception facilities. As for the Palazzo Imperiale at Portus, its function as a control hub of the port system at the outlet of the Tiber is suggested by its strategic position,[756] from which it was possible to oversee the Claudian basin to the north and the Trajanic harbour to the south-east. Owing to our insufficient knowledge of the imperial villas at Alsium and Antium, any attempt to classify them would be purely speculative; two rescripts signed by Trajan and issued ἀπ᾽Ἀντίου attest the persistent use of the villa of Antium as an imperial seat, but do not suffice to argue that it served as an official one: imperial activities could also be carried out in villas whose architectural configuration suggests an interpretation as leisure retreats.

I have mentioned that the presence of particular features at the villa of the Quintili—namely a spacious bath complex, a circus, and a theatre—may have been inspired by the configuration of the imperial headquarters on the Palatine and of

[756] Keay, Earl and Felici 2011.

Hadrian's Villa. As discussed in the introductions of chapters 3 and 4, entertainment buildings and bath complexes are facilities originally meant for public usage, but, starting from the late-Republican period, they also increasingly featured in domestic architecture. Whilst their occurrence in the *domus* and *uillae* of late-Republican grandees can be explained in light of the fierce political competition of the late second and first centuries BC, such considerations cannot apply to the Palatine complex, or to imperial villas. Instead, I propose to read them as features aiming to provide imperial residences with a peculiarly urban—and urbane—character: by equipping their dwellings with facilities that were typical of urban environments, emperors turned them into complex organisms which functioned, to a certain extent, as miniature cities, that is, places where a number of individuals of different social ranks could reside for substantial periods of time, and carry out all the activities which their role entailed in spaces allocated for the purpose. Alongside fulfilling more practical functions, furthermore, these facilities conveyed the impression of elegance, refinement, and sophistication which characterised urban life. Even though the installation of peculiarly urban features in domestic settings is attested since the late-Republican period, their widespread occurrence in imperial villas may be explained in light of the ideological importance that the city as a paradigm of cultivated life acquired from the second century AD onwards, when *urbanitas*, following the parallel diffusion of the Second Sophistic, became a key feature of upper-class culture of the Roman Empire.[757]

I have highlighted that the configuration of the imperial villas for which we can

[757] Gros 2018.

suggest a more 'official' nature was inspired by the layout of the imperial headquarters on the Palatine; in fact, facilities that were necessary for the fulfilment of the emperors' functions were also featured in villas which may have served as leisure retreats—such as the villa *ad Gallinas Albas*, Villa Magna, or the villa of Lucius Verus—even though they were not as spacious, or grand, as the presumed official residences. Regardless of the specific nature of individual villas, a more-or-less prolonged stay of the imperial court could not result in the negligence of the emperor's duties: I propose to link the widespread presence, in imperial villas, of the facilities that provided a setting for imperial activities with the frequency with which emperors are found outside Rome. If the Palatine complex was the principal residence in the capital of the empire, the villas that emperors owned and frequented outside Rome functioned as its *pendants*. The proposed hierarchy of imperial residences discussed in the previous paragraphs is compatible with these considerations: whilst the villas which I have interpreted as *buenos retiros* could have served as a setting for imperial activities, despite not being equipped with the entire range of facilities that enabled emperors to carry out all their duties, it is in the apsidal halls of the villa of Maxentius or of the Sessorian Palace that the sumptuous *adorationes* of Maxentius and Constantine were probably held, or in the circus of his suburban residence that Maxentius could appear before a crowd of c. 10,000 people, along the lines of the usage patterns of the Circus Maximus and the circuses associated with the tetrarchic palaces.

I therefore propose that imperial villas should be classified into two main categories, depending on their specific functions as suggested by their distance from

Rome and by the configuration of the features which provided a venue for specific imperial activities. On the one hand, villas which served, most likely, as little more than leisure retreats, were *ancillary* to the imperial headquarters on the Palatine; on the other, residences equipped with facilities that allowed emperors to conduct official business even if away from Rome for a substantial period were *alternative* to the main imperial palace, and were meant to serve as centres of government fulfilling the same functions as the Palatine complex for the entire duration of the imperial stay.

A crucial role in this differentiation of the functions of imperial villas was played, needless to say, by Hadrian's Villa. This complex fully embodies the idea of the progressive assimilation of specific imperial residences to urban organisms, through the presence of features that were originally specific of public settings. Its unique configuration allowed it to function as a centre of power to all intents and purposes: the whole array of facilities that emperors needed to fulfil their duties in the palaces of Rome was replicated in the residence of Tibur. In other words, Hadrian's Villa was not meant to serve exclusively as a luxurious countryside retreat, ancillary to the Palatine, but rather as an alternative to the imperial headquarters in Rome, the functions of which it acquired wholly.

Modern scholarship on imperial villas has not gone beyond Millar's statement that the spatial requirements of imperial activities did not affect the architectural layout of imperial residences, and that, even if they did, these interactions were not so profound as to have left substantial evidence in the archaeological record. The detailed analysis of imperial activities in chapters 2–5, alongside the examination of circulation patterns,

has allowed me to call into question and rebut his argument: the variety of tasks that emperors carried out, which involved interactions with people of different ranks and in varying numbers, required very specific venues. My analysis has shown that imperial villas, particularly if they were meant to serve as alternative seats to the Palatine, were purposely designed in order to meet the spatial requirements of the many activities which made up an emperor's day.

The issues discussed in the previous paragraphs coalesce to point out that imperial palaces and villas, by virtue of their role as residences of the ruler, had an inherently political nature, much more than the *domus* of late-Republican grandees, which nonetheless played a crucial role for the career of their owners. This consideration applies not only to the practical functions of imperial residences—that is, their frequent use as venues for imperial activities—but also to their ideological role. Since the very beginning of the Principate, emperors did not fail to acknowledge and exploit the symbolic value of their residences, as well as their power to define and reinforce status.

A remarkable difference seems to emerge between the Early and High Empire, on the one hand, and the tetrarchic period on the other. I have suggested that villas which were meant to serve as alternatives to the Palatine were equipped with all the formal spaces that emperors needed to fulfil their duties; in the absence of the emperor, however, they did not have any political function. In other words, it was the presence of the emperor that raised specific imperial villas to the role of seats of government. The relationship between the tetrarchs and their residences, in my opinion, was exactly the opposite. The palaces installed in the newly instituted imperial seats, whose

architectural layout replicated that of the Palatine complex, served to announce the presence of the ruler, to make it tangible to the local population, and to act as the concrete manifestation of imperial rule, even when the emperor was not physically present. Thus, the residence of an emperor, as the concrete and indisputable expression of his power, could no longer be separated from his persona. To take this thought further, as the functions of the emperor came to coincide, progressively, with his person, imperial residences, in their role as the physical setting of imperial activities, served as a catalyst for the gradual transformation of emperors into increasingly autocratic rulers. This phenomenon is reflected in the evolution of the architectural layout of imperial residences, which underwent significant transformations with the institution of the Tetrarchy. I have emphasised that, in earlier times, a difference can be observed within the landscape of imperial villas, between specific residences which I have proposed to interpret as leisure retreats and others for which I have suggested more official usage patterns. This functional division seems to disappear gradually during the tetrarchic period, giving way to the idea that any imperial residence needed to be equipped with the spaces that were necessary for official business and imperial representation: very interestingly, apsidal halls are found, for instance, not only in the palaces installed in the tetrarchic cities, but also in the residences of 'retired' emperors at Split and Felix Romuliana.[758]

How much of this had already emerged prior to the institution of the Tetrarchy? To what extent did earlier practices influence the decentralisation of power, and the

[758] Mayer 2002, 69–93.

multiplication of seats of government? At the beginning of this thesis, I pointed out that it was customary for Roman emperors to spend substantial time at their residences outside Rome, where they could continue to deal with official business: the imperial court was a mobile, itinerant microcosm, which did not need a fixed location to fulfil its duties. Even though ancient authors, who had initially criticised this practice, came to approve of it from the age of Trajan onwards, it was never acknowledged fully. A turning point can be observed, in my opinion, between the final years of the second century AD and the beginning of the third. In the aftermath of Marcus Aurelius' death in AD 180, Commodus, who was on the *limes* with the army, was increasingly pushed to return to Rome, Herodian says, by the most dissolute of his advisers.[759] When attempting to convince his *consilium* that he needed to return to the capital to prevent ill-intentioned senators from seizing power, the most senior of his counsellors sought to convince him not to leave the frontier, arguing that urgent military matters had the absolute priority over other business and that, furthermore, '*Rome is where the emperor is*'.[760] A few decades later, Cassius Dio offers a detailed description of the institutional transformation brought about by the introduction of the Principate. When discussing the privileges granted to emperors, he mentions that they were entitled to hang an oak crown above their residence. The imperial residence, Dio explains, is called *Palatium*, because Augustus dwelled on the Palatine and had his headquarters there, in connection with the legendary location of Romulus' hut. Furthermore, if the emperor

[759] Hdn., I.6.1–5.

[760] Ἐκεῖ τε ἡ Ῥώμη, ὅπου ποτ᾽ ἂν ὁ βασιλεὺς ᾖ.

resided elsewhere for some time, his temporary dwelling was named *Palatium* after the main residence in Rome.

The passages from Herodian and Cassius Dio discussed above show that, in the late second and early third centuries AD, contemporaries were fully aware of the fact that the administrative centre of the empire—notwithstanding the political importance of Rome as its capital—corresponded with the place where the emperor found himself at a given time: his presence automatically raised any imperial residence to the role of more-or-less temporary seat of government. The historical moment in which the congruence between the emperor's functions, his persona, and his dwelling was gradually acknowledged by ancient authors marks the beginning of a period of remarkable instability, whose distinctive traits were the short duration of the reign of most emperors and their absence from Rome for substantial periods of time. According to Herodian and Cassius Dio, though, Rome is where the emperor is, to the point that his residence, regardless of its location, is called the *Palatium*. On the one hand, such statements on the correspondence between the emperor's physical location and the centre of the empire may be read as the deliberate attempt on the part of the emperor to manipulate public opinion in order to give the impression that, in spite of the military necessities which required him to reside away from Rome, official business remained under his control. On the other, Herodian's and Dio's remarks foreshadow the changed political circumstances of the Tetrarchy, the most peculiar element of which was the decentralisation of power, and the multiplication of the seats of government. Both the imperial villas for which I have argued a more official nature

and the tetrarchic residences, despite the different historical circumstances under which they emerged and evolved, served as alternative centres of power to the capital: both for the emperors who resided there and for the individuals who visited them, they were Rome away from Rome.

Catalogue of the Sites

The following catalogue constitutes the body of archaeological, epigraphic, and textual evidence on which the analysis conducted in the main body has built. For its compilation, I proceeded on two stages.

My starting point was the inventory of imperial possessions in Italy included in Marco Maiuro's book,[761] which offers a brief description of every property—not only villas, but also landed estates, *figlinae* and so forth—and, most importantly, a review of the epigraphic and literary sources which support the identification of a given site as imperial property. Maiuro's catalogue has allowed me to select the ten villas discussed in this research, from which residences whose imperial ownership is not corroborated by sufficient evidence have been excluded.[762] All the sites included in this work yielded evidence for substantial alterations and occupation in the period under examination.

The villas have subsequently been divided in two categories: those built from scratch (villa of Lucius Verus, *Horti Spei Veteris*) and those which underwent alterations in the period under examination; this classification has allowed me to gain a preliminary impression of the usage patterns of imperial villas in the timeframe under consideration.

The second stage of my research included a review of all the primary and secondary literature relevant to the villas under examination, which resulted in the drafting of ten catalogue entries, in which I have organised the body of information

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[761] Maiuro 2012, 241–348.

[762] See e.g. the examples of Baiae and the so-called villa of the Gordiani, which are referred to in the general introduction.

obtained from data collection. Each record includes the location of the villa—when possible, both the ancient and the modern toponyms are given—a summary of earlier excavations and research, a discussion on the possible origins of the imperial *praedium*, a detailed description of the archaeological record, an overview of its chronological evolution, and information on the decorative apparatus. Since this research is concerned mostly with architectural and spatial issues, decoration is discussed briefly in the catalogue records; I refer to the relevant secondary literature for a more detailed analysis. Literary and epigraphic sources that allowed the identification of each villa as an imperial property are included at the end of each record. Unless otherwise specified, the translations of texts are taken from the Loeb Classical Library editions, those of inscriptions are my own.[763]

The evidence collected from ancient sources and secondary literature has been complemented by fieldwork on the sites under consideration, which has proved particularly helpful for the understanding of circulation patterns, as it has allowed me to gain a much more vivid impression of the spatial configuration of specific villas—above all, the villa *ad Gallinas Albas* and that of the Quintilii—as well as to map the position of thresholds. In a number of sites—Alsium, Antium, Laurentum, Villa Magna, villa of Lucius Verus—fieldwork has certainly allowed me to appreciate their geographical position, even though it has not provided further information beyond what I had gathered from secondary literature, as archaeological remains were poorly visible, when not backfilled.

[763] I am truly grateful to Marco Zangheri for his generous help in reviewing my translations.

In the catalogue, entries are ordered chronologically, following the date of the attestation of imperial ownership for the villa—or the area—under examination. Thus, the first villa is that *ad Gallinas Albas*, inherited by Augustus when he married Livia in 38 BC, and the last one is that of Maxentius, as we do not have secure evidence for the residence being in imperial possession prior to the early fourth century AD.

Each record is complemented by plans of the villa—when multiple construction phases are recorded, different phase plans are provided—as well as by drawings and photographs. Most of these illustrations have also been referred to in the main body, whilst others have only been included in the catalogue entries. The numbering provided on the plans is that of the publication from which each plans has been digitised.

Hadrian's Villa is described briefly in a dedicated record, whose aim is to provide an overview of the site and a comprehensive review of the most important scholarly works on the complex; as discussed in the introduction, the residence is not treated as a case study proper, but rather as a comparative example for later villas. The record refers to a general plan of the villa; detailed and up-to-date plans of individual features can be found in Federica Chiappetta's book.[764]

[764] Chiappetta 2008, 179–298.

C1.
Villa of Livia ad Gallinas Albas

Location

i. **Modern-day region**: Latium

ii. **Ancient region**: Latium et Campania

iii. **Modern-day city**: Roma (locality Prima Porta)

iv. **Ancient city**: Roma

Plans: C1.I, C1.II, C1.III, C1.IV, C1.V, C1.VI

Livia's *Veientanum*, better known as the villa *ad Gallinas Albas*, is located at the ninth mile of the *uia Flaminia*, at short distance from the crossroads with the *uia Tiberina*, on a low tufa plateau overlooking the Tiber valley (fig. C1.1). Its position is particularly convenient not only for the availability of yellow tuff and pozzolana—quarried in the area since Roman times[765]—but also for its short distance from both the Tiber and two important roads, through which people and goods could easily reach the property. The identification of the site as Livia's *Veientanum* is possible thanks to the extremely accurate description provided by Pliny the Elder (*HN* XV.136–37), who mentioned that the residence lay *iuxta nonum lapidem Flaminiae uiae*.

The villa is oriented on a north-west/south-east axis; for convenience, directions will be referred to in terms of site north rather than compass north.

[765] Messineo 2001b, 21. Further details in Jackson and Marra 2006.

Sources

i. **Texts:** Pliny the Elder, Suetonius, and Cassius Dio offer a detailed report of the omen which happened to Livia either in the lead-up or in the immediate aftermath of her wedding with Augustus in 38 BC: while she was in her *Veientanum*, an eagle dropped into her lap a white hen holding a sprig of laurel in its beak.[766] The fowl was reared—hence the name *ad Gallinas Albas* by which the villa was known thereafter—and the laurel was planted, and gave origin to a lush grove from which the triumphant emperors of the Julio-Claudian dynasty gathered their wreaths.[767] Pliny's text mentions the exact location of the villa: *iuxta nonum lapidem Flaminiae uiae*.

ii. **Inscriptions:** *CIL* VI.37763 mentions two imperial freedmen serving as *procuratores praetori Fidenatium et Rubrensium et Gallinar(um) Albarum*. The inscription suggests that, at least from the Trajanic period onwards, the villa of Livia (with which we can doubtless identify the *praetorium Gallinarum Albarum*) was administered jointly with the *praetoria Rubrensium* and *Fidenatium*. The inscription is on a copper tablet which, as already argued by Dante Vaglieri, was most likely a *tabella immunitatis* affixed to a means of transport, which attested that the goods it carried came from imperial *praedia* and were therefore exempt from fees.[768] In light of the position of the three *praetoria*—even though the exact location of the *praetorium Rubrensium*

[766] Plin., *HN* XV.136–37; Suet., *Galba* I; Cass. Dio, XLVIII.52. Suetonius sets the event *post nuptias*, whilst Pliny dates it in the lead-up of the wedding.

[767] Allegedly, the grove dried up all at once during the last year of Nero's reign (Suet., *Galba* I); see also the omen announced by Cass. Dio, LXIII.29.3.

[768] Vaglieri 1910.

and of the *praetorium Fidenatium* is still disputed—Joël Le Gall, followed by Silvio Panciera,[769] suggested that the goods and commodities they produced were shipped to Rome along the course of the Tiber, through cargo boats carrying *tabellae* attesting their fiscal immunity.

Excavations, research, and scholarship

The earliest attempts to identify the villa date back to the seventeenth century, when Philipp Clüver proposed to locate it at the locality called Frassineto, on the *uia Tiberina*.[770] Famiano Nardini, followed by Antonio Degli Effetti, suggested that the residence lay near the crossroads between the *uia Flaminia* and the *uia Tiberina*.[771] It was Giuseppe Antonio Guattani who first, in 1828, identified as the villa of Livia the massive substructures visible from the *uia Tiberina*;[772] Guattani's argument was accepted by Antonio Nibby, who compared the construction technique of the substructures with that of the Mausoleum of Augustus.[773] Excavations were undertaken in the area as early as the sixteenth century: a note from 1596 reports the discovery of a statue—of a 'consul', allegedly—at the Osteria di Prima Porta.[774] Further research was carried out shortly after 1771, by Gavin Hamilton and Thomas Jenkins.[775]

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[769] Le Gall 1953, 261; Panciera 2006, 871–72.

[770] Clüver 1624, 527. Clüver's suggestion was followed by Fioravante Martinelli (Martinelli 1655, 98) and Francesco Eschinardi (Eschinardi 1750, 199).

[771] Nardini 1647, 84; Degli Effetti 1675, 102.

[772] Guattani 1828, 24.

[773] Nibby 1837b, 31.

[774] Lanciani 1992, 37.

[775] Michaelis 1882, 81.

Programmatic archaeological excavations for the purpose of gathering antiques began in 1863 on behalf of Francesco Senni, then the tenant of the estate *ad Gallinas* owned by the Convent of Santa Maria in Via Lata. Unfortunately, the reports written by Paolo D'Ambrogi and Gabriele Gagliardi, who directed the investigations, lack detailed topographical information on findspots, as well as plans or illustrations of architectural features and archaeological finds: the excavators' prime interest was to collect pieces of art.[776] And indeed they did so: on the days 20th and 30th April 1863 were brought to light, respectively, the cuirassed statue of Augustus which would thenceforth be called 'of Prima Porta' after the location of the villa, and the subterranean *triclinium* decorated with illusionistic wall paintings depicting an imaginary garden.[777]

Investigations resumed in 1878 under Francesco Piacentini, owner of the estate, but with no remarkable results.[778] In 1891 Ciro Nispi Landi, on behalf of the Direzione Generale Antichità e Belle Arti, compiled a report on the state of the monument, completed with a bird's-eye view of the villa from the *uia Flaminia* and with a plan of the rooms in the basement.[779] A more comprehensive study of the site was carried out by Giuseppe Lugli (1923),[780] whilst Heinrich Sulze concentrated on the underground rooms, of which he produced an accurate survey.[781] Monographic works on specific

[776] Calvelli and Messineo 2001, 10–13.
[777] Henzen 1863 and Brunn 1863 on the statue and the paintings, with cursory mentions of other finds.
[778] Fiorelli 1878, 370–71.
[779] A.C.S. *Min. Pubbl. Istr., Dir. Gen. AA.BB.AA.*, II vers., II parte, busta 504.
[780] Lugli 1923, 26–42.
[781] Sulze 1932.

subjects are those of Mabel M. Gabriel,[782] who focused on the garden paintings—detached in 1951 on the grounds of their progressive deterioration[783]—and of Heinz Kähler, who tried to identify the original position of the statue of Augustus.[784]

Limited excavations were undertaken in 1970 by the Sovrintendenza Capitolina ai Beni Culturali; even though no reports were produced, the results were partially documented by photographs.[785]

Following the expropriation of the area in 1973, the Sovrintendenza began systematic archaeological research in 1982, under the direction of Gaetano Messineo, and in cooperation with the University of Uppsala. The preliminary results of these excavations were published in a number of contributions,[786] and in a more comprehensive monograph including plans, illustrations, and archaeobotanical data from the study of the *lauretum*.[787] Investigations resumed in 2002 and continued until 2012 under the direction of Matilde Carrara; the publication of the last ten years of research is expected in 2021.

Origin of the praedium

Suetonius' account of the famous omen seems to suggest that the villa was a property of Livia Drusilla (*Veientanum suum*); we cannot be more precise as to whether

[782] Gabriel 1955.
[783] Calvelli and Messineo 2001, 14.
[784] Kähler 1959.
[785] Further details in Calci and Messineo 1984, 23–36.
[786] Messineo 1991; Calci and Messineo 1984.
[787] Messineo 2001a.

it belonged to the Livii Drusi or if, on the contrary, she inherited it from Tiberius Claudius Nero, her first husband. The residence was acquired into imperial possession either when the couple got married (38 BC) or when Livia was adopted by Augustus through his will (AD 14).

Wilhelm Henzen's report on the 1863 excavation mentions the discovery of a number of lead pipes reading 'il nome di Tiberio Cesare', as well as a bust which he identified as Septimius Severus.[788] If Henzen's interpretation is correct, it may suggest that the villa remained in imperial possession at least until the Severan period. The residence seems to have been frequented until the beginning of the sixth century AD, even though ownership patterns are difficult to follow after the early-third century.

Description[789]

The villa, installed on the levelled top of a tuff hill with substructures on the southern side, was accessed from the north, through a paved side road connecting it to the *uia Flaminia*. The entrance from the *uia Flaminia* was marked by an irregular courtyard, provided with a monumental, 4.60-metre wide gate (fig. C1.2). A horseshoe-shaped feature in *opus uittatum*, lying c. 20 metres to the north of the entrance gate, was interpreted by Messineo as a guard post, on the grounds of its position and layout (fig. C1.3). Despite the plausibility of Messineo's argument—the

[788] Henzen 1863, 72.

[789] The majority of data on the architectural layout and phasing of the villa are taken from Carrara and Messineo 2001, unless otherwise specified.

entrance to an imperial residence needed to be surveilled at all times—a secure identification is hard to achieve. The absence of hydraulic plaster hinders its interpretation as a water installation; I would tentatively suggest to identify it as some shrine or religious feature, even though its poor preservation does not allow further speculations.

The access road (fig. C1.4) followed the ridge of the hill towards the south, to reach a smaller, triangular courtyard which gave access to the residence proper (fig. C1.5), through a vestibule (40, plan C1.III) opening onto a rectangular atrium (43). As revealed by the excavations, the atrium was defined in its final configuration in the second century AD; this sector of the villa was probably laid out as a garden, with a portico on its southern side. The corridor 46 on the south-eastern corner of the atrium leads to an elegant residential quarter to the south, including two *cubicula* (50 and 52, fig. C1.6) on either side of the hall 51 (a small exedra, perhaps, fig. C1.7), facing a garden (48) surrounded by a three-wing portico.

To the west of the atrium and of the residential area are more formal sectors, arranged on the northern and eastern sides of a large peristyle (79, fig. C1.8) with a shallow pool in the middle (22). The features on the eastern side (fig. C1.9) include a dining hall (58) consisting of the *triclinium* proper (58b) flanked by two *alae* on either side (58c – 58d), opening onto a larger, rectangular area (58a), probably serving as a stage for dinner entertainment. To the north and the south of 58 are four differently sized rooms, whose partially preserved floor mosaics—featuring geometric and vegetal patterns—suggest their interpretation as more-or-less formal spaces (fig.

C1.10). The largest room (57) measures c. 10 by 3.73 m, and is accessible from the *triclinium*, from peristyle 79, as well as from corridor 44, to the north. To the south of 58 are the two smaller rooms (4.8 by 3.80 m) 55 and 54, which communicated, respectively, with the *triclinum* and with the residential area to the east.

The northern side of the peristyle is currently occupied by a small, yet technologically elaborate, bath complex, seemingly installed in the Flavian period and altered in the Severan period (rooms 25-33 and 59). It has been suggested, however, that the original layout of this area was similar to that of the eastern side. As noted by Messineo, the significant thickness of the eastern wall of the hall 23 is the result of the juxtaposition of a wall in *opus latericium* to a pre-existing feature in *opus reticulatum*, originally pierced by at least four openings, closed with *opus uittatum* at a later stage. The width of 23, furthermore, is nearly the same as room 57 (respectively, 3.94 and 3.73 m): Messineo suggested that 23 could originally have been the western wing of a sequence of rooms whose arrangement replicated that of the spaces on the eastern side of the peristyle. Owing to the shorter length of the northern side, the presumed central hall would have been located at its exact centre: as a result, Messineo argued, the features on the northern side would have been of higher importance than those on the eastern. If his reconstruction is correct, the complex on the northern side of the peristyle would have faced south, thus suggesting that it was mostly intended to be used as a summer *triclinium*. Further evidence for the seasonal use of this hall is provided by its doorway onto the peristyle: much wider than that of room 58 (respectively, 4.5 and 1.8 m), it would have allowed fresh air from the south to circulate

and cool the room. Given that the sumptuous underground *triclinium* probably went out of use in 17 BC, its function may have been acquired by the hall to the east of 23, which was then obliterated by the installation of the bathhouse in the Flavian period.

The bath complex installed in the Flavian period on the northern side of the peristyle was linked to the atrium through the corridor 44 (fig. C1.11), which led to the presumed vestibule 30 (fig. C1.12), and thence to the hot suite, which included a *tepidarium* (27) and a *caldarium* (26, fig. C1.13). Excavations revealed the elaborate heating system of these rooms, whose pools were warmed through samovars.[790] The *balneum* underwent significant alterations in the Severan period: room 26 was turned into a *frigidarium*, and a *caldarium* was installed in room 29; the *praefurnium* 59, added to the north of 29, served the adjacent *caldarium*.

A larger formal sector lay at the westernmost end of the villa, and included luxuriously decorated reception halls (4 and 3) and a cluster of rooms which Messineo interpreted as a secondary residential quarter, presumably reserved for guests (6 – 10, fig. C1.14). Hall 3, the largest space of the villa, measures 6.55 by 13.8 m. The features comprised between the representative halls and these presumed *hospitalia* have almost completely been obliterated by WWII bombing; after the collapse of the famous underground *triclinium*—probably on the occasion of the earthquake of 17 BC—it seems that an exceptionally large hall was installed above it. However, almost nothing of this hall is preserved at present time, which could allow further speculations as to the possible layout of this area in the first century AD and afterwards.

[790] Details in Carrara 2012.

The underground *triclinium* with the famous paintings depicting an imaginary, illusionistic garden (1, plan C1.I), was probably the main attraction of the Augustan villa. Reached through a steep staircase accessed from a portico to the south, the room was originally surrounded by a vaulted corridor, probably aimed at insulating it from soil dampness rather than intended for service. Its configuration proved ideal not only for summer banquets, but also for winter parties: the insulation offered by the surrounding corridor would have provided a pleasant environment even in colder weather. Sulze reported a water channel discovered in an outside wall, which he interpreted as evidence for a fountain in the centre of the garden room:[791] if we were to trust Sulze's account, the room combined its underground position with the sensation of freshness generated by water features, to offer guests a pleasant shelter from the summer heat.

The rooms 37, 38, and 39 (fig. C1.15), to the north of the atrium 43, date to the early fourth century, but their walls follow some previously existing features (probably Flavian), the layout and function(s) of which cannot be ascertained. Despite the difficulty of reading the archaeological dossier, owing to the many architectural modifications which this side of the atrium underwent, remains of flooring in *opus spicatum* and cocciopesto suggest that they served as functional spaces. Utilitarian purposes have also been attributed to the sequence of large spaces to the east of the atrium and of the residential complex (41, 42, 49), which separate the main block of the villa from a large garden surrounded by a three-wing peristyle (69 by 73 m), which has

[791] Sulze 1932, 191.

been identified as the famous *lauretum* celebrated by the literary sources.

Excavations also explored the features to the north of the main block, which included a large water reservoir (67, fig. C1.16), whose façade was laid out as nymphaeum in the Flavian period, as well as a number of functional facilities. The staircase 16 led into a network of underground spaces beneath the *balneum*, from which the *praefurnia* of 26 and 27 could be operated. A separate system of underground chambers, accessed from a staircase in room 33, served the heating of 28, 29, 31, and 32.

Phases – Chronology

As has emerged from the brief description of this residence, the villa of Livia, part of the imperial possessions since Augustus, was substantially enlarged and altered throughout the imperial period. Very interestingly, however, it seems that its earlier nucleus—including the *cubicula* facing the garden 48 and the features on the eastern side of the peristyle 79—maintained its original layout.

In its earliest configuration, the villa consisted of the features on the western end—including the underground *triclinium*, the presumed guest quarters to the west, and the large halls 3 and 4 to the east—of the peristyle 79 with the *triclinium* on the eastern side and rooms of unidentified purpose on the northern, of the residential spaces 50-52 facing the garden 48, and of the large peristyle 69, to the east of the main block of the villa, which has been interpreted as the laurel grove planted by Livia.

The bath complex installed to the north of the peristyle 79, which erased

completely the features beneath, dates to the Flavian period; the atrium 43 is part of modifications carried out in the second century AD, when floor mosaics were installed in the rooms adjacent to the *triclinium* 58 and in the guest quarters. The baths underwent some alterations in the Severan period: some of the rooms changed their functions, and the *apodyterium* 25 was installed to the west of room 26, now the *frigidarium*. Scattered building activity is attested until the beginning of the fourth century, but it is limited to the construction of the unidentified features labelled with the number 14, and to the blocking of a few doorways. Ceramic finds seem to attest that the residence was frequented until the sixth century AD, even though its ownership patterns are unknown; the property is not mentioned in the list of imperial possessions which Constantine donated to the church.

Decoration

The most impressive decorative element of the villa is the illusionistic garden represented on the wall paintings decorating the underground *triclinium* 1.[792] Painted decoration dated to the Augustan period—albeit obliterated by the installation of an unidentified structure—is also attested on the southern wall of the second-century atrium. Very interestingly, the residential spaces 50-52 still have the original floor mosaics, in which scattered refurbishments dated to the second century are visible, which nonetheless sought not to alter the pattern of the Augustan decoration.

[792] A detailed discussion in Settis 2002.

The decorative elements installed in the second century include, apart from the restoration of earlier mosaics, wall paintings in the presumed guest quarters, floor mosaics in the representative spaces 54-57, as well as marble *opus sectile* in the bath complex, which was dismantled and replaced when the baths underwent alterations in the Severan period.

The excavations conducted in the site in 1863 brought to light, together with the renowned wall paintings of the underground *triclinium*, the famous statue of Augustus named 'di Prima Porta' after the villa. Unfortunately, archaeological investigations carried out before the 1950s rarely followed scientific criteria, and were mostly conducted with the purpose of collecting antiquities: the findspot of the statue of Augustus is almost impossible to ascertain, let alone its original position in the villa.

Plin., *HN* XV.136–37 (38 BC)

Liviae Drusillae, quae postea Augustam matrimonii nomen accepit, cum pacta esset illa Caesari, gallinam conspicui candoris sedenti aquila ex alto abiecit in gremium inlaesam, intrepideque miranti accessit miraculum, quoniam teneret in rostro laureum ramum onustum suis bacis; conservari alitem et subolem iussere haruspices ramumque eum seri ac rite custodiri: quod factum est in villa Caesarum fluvio Tiberi inposita iuxta nonum lapidem Flaminiae viae, quae ob id vocatur Ad gallinas.

When Livia Drusilla, who afterwards received the name of Augusta on her marriage, had been betrothed to Caesar, while she was seated an eagle dropped into her lap from the sky a hen of remarkable whiteness, without hurting it; she regarded it with wonder, but undismayed, and there was a further miracle: it was holding in its beak a laurel branch bearing its berries. So the augurs ordered that the bird and any chickens it produced should be preserved, and that the branch should be planted in the ground and guarded with religious care. This was done at the country mansion of the Caesars standing on the banks of the river Tiber about nine miles out on the Flaminian road; the house is consequently called The Poultry.

Suet., *Galba* I (38 BC)

Liviae olim post Augusti statim nuptias Veientanum suum revisenti praetervolans aquila gallinam albam ramulum lauri rostro tenentem, ita ut rapuerat, demisit in gremium; cumque nutriri alitem, pangi ramulum placuisset, tanta pullorum suboles provenit, ut hodieque ea villa "ad Gallinas" vocetur, tale vero lauretum, ut triumphaturi Caesares inde laureas decerperent.

As Livia was returning to her estate near Veii, immediately after her marriage with Augustus, an eagle which flew by dropped into her lap a white hen, holding in its beak a sprig of laurel, just as the eagle had carried it off. Livia resolved to rear the fowl and plant the sprig, whereupon such a great brood of chickens was hatched that to this day the villa is called Ad Gallinas, and such a grove of laurel sprang up that the Caesars gathered their laurels from it when they were going to celebrate triumphs.

Cass. Dio, XLVIII.52

τό τε τῇ Λιουίᾳ συμβὰν ἐκείνῃ μὲν καθ᾽ ἡδονὴν ἐγένετο, τοῖς δ᾽ ἄλλοις δέος ἐνεποίησε· λευκὴν γὰρ ὄρνιθα, κλωνίον δάφνης ἐγκάρπου φέρουσαν, ἀετὸς ἐς τὸν κόλπον αὐτῆς ἐνέβαλε. καὶ ἐδόκει γὰρ οὐ σμικρὸν τὸ σημεῖον εἶναι, τήν τε ὄρνιθα ἐν ἐπιμελείᾳ ἦγε καὶ τὴν δάφνην ἐφύτευσε.

The incident that happened to Livia, although it caused her pleasure, inspired the rest with dread; a white bird carrying a sprig of laurel with the berries on it was thrown by an eagle into her lap. As this seemed to be a sign of no small moment, she cared for the bird and planted the laurel.

CIL VI.37763 (AD 98–117) – Copper tablet, probably a *tabella immunitatis*

M(arci) Ulpi Aug(usti) [l]ib(erti) Diadume/ni proc(uratoris) praetori Fide/natium et Rubrensium / et Gallinar(um) Albarum sa/crum quae praestu est usi/bus Caesaris n(ostri) // Glypti Aug(usti) lib(erti) proc(uratoris) / praetori Fidenatium et / Rubrensium et Gallinaru/m Albarum sacrum quae prae/stu est usibus Caesaris n(ostri)

Sacred (property) of Marcus Ulpius Diadumenus, freedman of Augustus and superintendent of the *praetorium* the *Fidenates*, *Rubrenses* and *Gallinae Albae*, which is lent for the use of our Caesar // Sacred (property) of Glyptus, freedman of Augustus and superintendent of the *praetorium* the *Fidenates*, *Rubrenses* and *Gallinae Albae*, which is lent for the use of our Caesar.

C2.
Imperial Villa at Alsivm

Location

i. **Modern-day region**: Latium

ii. **Ancient region**: Etruria (ager Alsiensis)

iii. **Modern-day city**: Marina di San Nicola (RM)

iv. **Ancient city**: Alsium

Plan: C2.I

The imperial villa of Alsium is located in the *ager Alsiensis*, at the twenty-fourth mile of the *uia Aurelia*, to which it was connected by a small side road (fig. C2.1). The coastal area near Alsium experienced a remarkable efflorescence of upper-class villas since the late second century BC.[793] Villa-owners in the *ager Alsiensis* include, amongst many of the late-Republican grandees, Caesar and Pompey the Great.[794] The identification of the villa of Marina di San Nicola as the retreat of Marcus Aurelius' *Feriae Alsienses* is based on the inscription found at short distance from the site, mentioning an imperial freedman who served as *procurator uillae Alsiensi*.

The villa is oriented on a north-west/south-east axis; for convenience, directions will be referred to in terms of site north rather than compass north.

[793] *RE* I, s.v. 'Alsium'.

[794] Cic., *Att*. XIII.50.4; Cic., *Fam*. IX.6; Cic., *Mil.* XX.

Sources

i. **Texts:** The villa which Caesar owned in the territory of Alsium is mentioned in Cic., *Fam*. IX.6 (46 BC) and Cic., *Att*. XIII.50.4 (45 BC). C. 200 years later (AD 162) Marcus Aurelius spent some time in a seaside villa at Alsium; his stay is described in detail in Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Ant. de Fer. Als.* 1-4.

ii. **Inscriptions:** The funerary inscription of Titus Aelius Eutychus (*CIL* XI.3720), who served as *procurator Augusti nostri uillae Alsiensi* under Antoninus Pius, corroborates the information provided in the correspondence between Fronto and Marcus Aurelius on the emperor's retreat in the *uilla Alsiensi*s. The inscriptions *AE* 2004.556a-b, on a lead pipe found in the northernmost building unit of the villa, provide evidence for a cult of *Sol Inuictus Elagabalus* in the area; as the name of the god is in the genitive case, water was supplied to a so-far unlocated temple of *Sol Inuictus*, which Christer Bruun has proposed to interpret as associated with the nearby imperial residence.[795]

Excavations, research, and scholarship

The impressive remains of a maritime villa, to the east of the village of Palo and to the west of the outlet of the *fosso* (ditch) Cupino,[796] were interpreted as part of Pompey's *Alsiense* by Antonio Nibby in 1837,[797] who argued that the villa was

[795] Bruun 1997.

[796] From the 1950s onwards, the Roman remains have been encapsulated by the sea resort of Marina di San Nicola, hamlet of the nearby city of Ladispoli.

[797] Nibby 1837a, 523–29, in particular 527–29.

confiscated by Caesar after Pompey was murdered in 48 BC. In 1867, Efisio L. Tocco conducted excavations in the area, which he documented in detail; Tocco's report is highly valuable, as a substantial part of the villa was progressively destroyed due to the urban expansion of Marina di San Nicola. Further research was carried out at the end of the nineteenth century by Rodolfo Lanciani.[798]

The results of the excavations led by Ida Caruso in the 1970s remain unpublished to date, despite their importance for the reconstruction of the history of the site (it was on that occasion that the *fistula* connected with the temple of *Sol Inuictus Elagabalus* was found). Further research was carried out by the Soprintendenza Archeologica per l'Etruria Meridionale in the years 1986-1990, in cooperation with the University of Strasbourg.

Origin of the praedium

Caesar's villa mentioned by Cicero was most likely inherited by Augustus. On current evidence, it is hard to ascertain whether Pompey's *Alsiense* was confiscated by Caesar after he was murdered in 48 BC. Cic., *Phil*. XIII.5 (43 BC) lists a number of suburban estates owned by Pompey, which were confiscated by Mark Antony and his associates, among which the *Alsiense* is not included: it is possible that Pompey's villa at Alsium is not mentioned in Cicero's speech against Antony because it was no longer a possession of Pompey's family in 43 BC, even though we do not possess sufficient

[798] Cod. Vat. Lat. 13045, f. 337 (published in Buonocore 2001).

evidence to reconstruct its vicissitudes. We know nothing of the residence between Caesar and the second half of the second century AD, when Marcus Aurelius spent some time in the *secessu maritimo* of Alsium.

Description[799]

Aerial photographs, field surveys, and excavations in the area allowed a fairly accurate, though not particularly detailed, reconstruction of the ground plan of the residence, which consisted of a number of diversely oriented building units scattered over an area of c. 20 ha. The different orientations of the buildings are due to the peculiar geomorphology of the area, which included low hills, no-longer existing swamps, and water ditches.

The main building unit is a rectangular block measuring c. 200 by 140 m, parallel to the coast line, with a projecting section in the middle of the western façade. The block, built in *opus reticulatum*, is installed above two cryptoporticoes serving as substructures (fig. C2.2). The eastern half of the block was less densely built-up than the western, and probably laid out as gardens. Curvilinear features at the north-western corner of the main block have been interpreted as pertaining to a bath complex.

The southern side of the main block is bordered by a 170-m long portico, to the south of which is another portico, extending for 200 m, with a tower at the eastern

[799] Enei 2008, 126–29; Enei 2001, 166–68, with references; Caruso 1995; Lafon 1990a; Lafon 1990b. See also De Rossi, Di Domenico and Quilici 1968, 44–48.

extremity which offered a panoramic view towards the sea and the hinterland (fig. C2.3).[800] The two *ambulationes* are not parallel to each other, and were installed on both sides of a slightly depressed area, which has been interpreted as the former riverbed of the *fosso* Cupino (now flowing further eastwards); the former outlet of the ditch probably served as shelter for boats of modest size.

A so-far uninterpreted building to the east of the main block, installed on the top of a low hill, was attributed to a late (unspecified) chronological range, based on the poor quality of its building technique; its relationships to the residential block are unknown to date.

The last sector is found to the north of the main building unit, where excavations brought to light an L-shaped block in *opus reticulatum*. The building combined a residential area on the western half with functional spaces on the eastern. Despite the substantial alterations caused to the ancient geomorphology by modern canalisation works, investigations in the area allowed the identification of a no-longer existing ditch. Modern levelling, furthermore, covered a slightly depressed area, which has been interpreted as a small harbour belonging to the imperial residence. Xavier Lafon has proposed to interpret this separate building unit as reserved for some senior officer or *procurator* in charge of administering the property, whilst the residential quarters of the imperial family were found in the main block. Current evidence offers no support for Lafon's reconstruction.

[800] Carrive 2019; Carrive 2014.

Phases – Chronology

The villa was probably installed in the late-Republican or early imperial period: the majority of the main block is built in *opus reticulatum*. On the occasion of the excavations which he carried out in 1867,[801] Tocco identified a remarkable number of brick stamps dated to the central decades of the second century,[802] which he interpreted as evidence for alterations undertaken under Antoninus Pius and Marcus Aurelius. The ceramic assemblage provides evidence for the frequentation of the residence until the sixth century AD,[803] even though it is not possible to ascertain whether it remained in imperial possession throughout the late Empire. Properties in the area are not mentioned in the list of imperial possessions which Constantine donated to the church.

Decoration

As mentioned above, the eastern half of the residence was not densely built-up, and probably laid out as gardens; based on the discovery of a herm portraying a male deity in this area of the villa, Lafon has argued that the garden was decorated with statues depicting mythological subjects.

Scattered evidence for decoration was collected in the *belvedere* tower at the eastern

[801] Tocco 1867.

[802] See in particular *CIL* XI.6689, 76, 126b, 128, 129. 233. The find spot of each stamp, unfortunately, is not provided, thus making it hard to securely attribute specific parts of the villa to the second-century phase.

[803] Enei 2001, 166–68; Enei 2008, 126–29.

extremity of the southern *ambulatio*, where excavations revealed fragments of opus sectile and wall paintings. On the northern half of the main block, field surveys recorded further evidence for mosaics.

Cic., *Fam.* IX.6 (46 BC)

Caninius noster me tuis verbis admonuit ut scriberem ad te si quid esset quod putarem te scire oportere. est igitur adventus [Caesaris scilicet] in exspectatione; neque tu id ignoras. sed tamen, cum ille scripsisset, ut opinor, se in Alsiense venturum, scripserunt ad eum sui ne id faceret; multos ei molestos fore ipsumque multis; Ostiae videri commodius eum exire posse.

Our friend Caninius told me from you to write if there should be anything which I thought you ought to know. Well, the arrival is awaited—that is no news to you. But when he wrote, as I suppose, that he would be coming to his place at Alsium, his friends wrote to dissuade him, telling him that there were many people thereabouts whose presence would be annoying to him, and many whom his presence would annoy; Ostia, in their opinion, would make a more convenient landing place.

Cic., *Att.* XIII.50.4 (45 BC)

Quaeris quid cogitem de obviam itione. quid censes nisi Alsium? et quidem ad Murenam de hospitio scripseram, sed opinor cum Matio profectum. Silius tuus igitur urgebitur.

You ask my plans about going to meet Caesar. Alsium is the obvious place. I had written to Murena about putting me up, but I think he has gone ahead with Matius, so I shall impose myself on your friend Silius.

Cic., *Mil.* XX (52 BC)

Videte nunc illum, primum egredientem e villa, subito: cur? Vesperi: quid necesse est? Tarde: qui convenit, praesertim id temporis? Devertit in villam Pompeii: Pompeium ut videret? Sciebat in Alsiensi esse. Villam ut perspiceret? Miliens in ea fuerat.

Look now at Clodius, first sallying forth from his house, suddenly—why? In the evening—what need for that? In a leisurely fashion—where was the sense of that—at that hour of day too? "He called at Pompeius's country-seat." Was it to see Pompeius? He knew that Pompeius was at his place near Alsium. Was it to view the villa? He had been there a thousand times.

Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Ant. de Fer. Als.* 1 (AD 162)

Magistro meo.

Ferias apud Alsium quam feriatas egerimus non scribam tibi, ne et ipse angaris et me obiurges, mi magister. Lorium autem regressus domnulam meam <leviter> febricitantem repperi. Medicus dicit, si cito nobis me .... tu quoque .... <si tu> valeas, <ego> laetior sim. Nam oculis spero te iam utentem sanis visere .... Vale, mi magister.

To my master.

In what holiday-wise we have kept our holiday at Alsium I will not put on paper, that you may not be yourself troubled and scold me, my master. On my return to Lorium I found my little lady slightly feverish. The doctor says, if we soon ..... If you were well, I should be happier. For I hope to see you already enjoying the use of sound eyes .... Farewell, my master.

Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Ant. de Fer. Als.* 2 (AD 162)

Domino meo Antonino Augusto.

Ferias Alsienses … misi … ni … in novellae quid cantetur vineae atque .... quid multarum rusticarum. Catonem quoque in oratione adversus Lepidum verbum cantari solitum commemorasse, quom ait statuas positas Ochae atque Dionysodoro effeminatis, qui magiras facerent. Id in .... velint post redire .... facit. Opportune .... cantandi ludendique initium capiunt. Et .... paravit.

To my Lord Antoninus Augustus.

The Alsian holiday … I sent … that it be sung of the new vineyard and … of many rustic things. That Cato also in his speech Against Lepidus mentioned a word in everyone's mouth when he spoke of statues set up to such unmanly creatures as Ocha and Dionysodorus who practised cooking … they then want to return … they begin singing and playing …

Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Ant. de Fer. Als.* 3 (AD 162)

Domino meo Antonino Augusto.

1. Quid? ego ignoro ea te mente Alsium isse ut animo morem gereres ibique ludo et ioco et otio libero quatriduum universum operam dares? Nec dubito quin te ad ferias in secessu maritimo fruendas ita compararis: in sole meridiano ut somno oboedires Cubans, deinde Nigrum vocares, libros intro ferre iuberes, mox ut te studium legendi incessisset, aut te Plauto expolires aut Accio expleres aut Lucretio delenires aut Ennio incenderes, in horam istic Musarum propriam, quintam; redires inde libris .... eres diss .... mitteres; Ciceronis si sermones ad te detulisset, audires; inde <de>vius quantum potis ad litus pergeres et raucas paludes ambires; <tum> vel, si videretur, aliquam navem conscenderes, ut aethere tranquillo in altum <provectus> portisculorum et remigum visu aduituque te oblectares; actutum inde balneas peteres, corpus sudorem uberem commoveres, | convivium deinde regium agitares conchis omnium generum, Plautino piscatu hamatili, ut ille ait, et saxatili, altilibus veterum saginarum, matteis pomis bellariis crustulis vinis felicibus calicibus perlucidis sine delatoria nota.

2. Quid hoc verbi sit, quaeras fortasse: accipe igitur. Ut homo ego multum facundus et Senecae Annaei sectator Faustiana vina de Sullae Fausti cognomento felicia appello; calicem vero sine delatoria nota quom dico, sine puncto dico. Neque enim me decet, qui sim tam homo doctus, volgi verbis Falernum vinum aut calicem acentetum appellare. Nam qua te dicam gratia Alsium, maritimum et voluptarium locum, et ut ait Plautus, loc<ul>um lubricum delegisse, nisi ut bene haberes genio, utique verbo vetere faceres animo volup. Qua, malum! volup? Immo, si dimidiatis verbis verum dicendum est, uti tu animo faceres vigil—vigilias dico—aut ut faceres labo aut ut faceres mole—labores et molestias dico—. Tu umquam volup? Volpem facilius quis tibi quam voluptatem conciliaverit. Dic, oro te, Marce, idcircone

Alsium petisti, ut in prospectu maris esurires? Quid? tu Lorii te fame et siti et negotiis agendis adfligere nequibas? In apopsi |..... iucundiores tibi esse videntur .... memini me ad .... pueros in balneis esse .... rescribas .... liber .... mare ipsum aiunt, ubi alcedonia sint, fieri feriatum. An alcedo cum pullis suis tranquillo otio dignior est quam tu cum tuis liberis? .... <v>etere<s> <tyr>annos.

3. At enim res plane iam postulat—num studium? num laborem? num <vigilias?> num munera? Quis arcus perpetuo intenditur? Quae fides perpetuo substrictae sunt? Oculi conivendo <tantum> durant, qui uno obnixi obtutu interissent. Hortus qui crebro pangitur, ope <si> stercoris | indiget, herbas et holuscula nihili procreat; frumento vero et solidis frugibus requietus ager deligitur; ubertas soli otio paratur.

4. Quid maiores vestri qui rempublicam et imperium Romanum magnis auctibus auxerunt. Proavus vester summus bellator tamen histrionibus interdum se delectavit, et praeterea potavit satis strenue. Tamen eius opera populus Romanus in triumphis mulsum saepe bibit. Avum item vestrum, doctum principem et navum et orbis terrarum non regendi tantum sed etiam perambulandi diligentem, modulorum tamen et tibicinum studio devinctum fuisse scimus, et praeterea prandiorum opimorum esorem optimum fuisse. Iam vero pater vester, divinus ille vir, providentia pudicitia frugalitate innocentia pietate sanctimonia omnes omnium principum virtutes supergressus, tamen et palaestram ingressus est et hamum instruxit et scurras risit.

5. Nihil de Gaio Caesare dico acerrimo Cleopatrae hoste <post moecho>, nihil de Augusto Liviae viro. Romulum ipsum urbis huius conditorem, quom hostium ducem manu comminus conserta obtruncavit quomque spolia opima | Feretrio vexit, huncne tenui victu usum putas? Profecto neque esuriens quisquam neque abstemius animum induxisset virgines adultas de spectaculis rapere. Quid? Numa senex sanctissimus nonne inter liba et decimas profanandas et suovetaurilia mactanda aetatem egit, epularum dictator, cenarum libator, feriarum promulgator? Saturatum et feriatum dico. E<x o>mn<ibus tu> esuriales ferias celebras? Nec Chrysippum tuum praeteribo, quern cotidie ferunt madescere solitum. Et pleraque .... Socratem <plane ipsum ex> Socraticorum Symposiis et Dialogis et Epislulis existimes hominem multum scitum et facetum fuisse—Socratem intelleges Aspasiae discipulum, Alcibiadi magistrum.

6. Iam si bellum mdixti ludo otio satietati voluptati, at tu dormi saltern, quantum libero homini satis est. Intensius ad supremam .... ad luminis ....? An tandem si ignem de caelo nemo surripuisset, sol non esset tibi satis ad iudicandum? Nae <tu> cum animo tuo reputes cotidiano te mendacio adstringi, quom te diem cognitioni dare ais et nocte cognoscis, | turn sive condernnes sive absolvas mendax futurus. Si quempiam condemnas, parum cavisse uidetur ais: istuc quidem, si lucernae removeantur, nihil videri poterit.

7. At tu obsecro vel ioco vel serio te exorari a me patere, ne te somno defraudes utique terminos diei et noctis serves. Agere de finibus <nondum divi> duis claros et nobiles Vesperum et Luciferum puta: utrique demonstrationem sui quisque limitis ostendunt. Horum cognitioni interesse postulat Somnus, nam se quoque adfinem esse negotio et adtingi iniuria ait. Vellem autem tantum mihi vigoris aut studii adesse, quantum adfuit quom ilia olim nugalia conscripsi, Laudem Fumi et Pulveris. Nae ego somni laudem ex summis opibus conscripsissem. Nunc quoque, si tibi fabulam brevem libenti est audire, audi.

8. Iovem Patrem ferunt, quom res humanas a primordio conderet, aevom vi<tae> medium uno ictu percussum in duas partes undique pares diffidisse: partem alteram luce, alteram tenebris amicisse, diem

noctemque appellasse, noctique otium diei negotium tradidisse. Turn Somnus necdum natus erat et omnes pervigiles aetatem agebant; sed quies nocturna vigilantibus pro somno adhuc | erat promulgata. Paulatim deinde, ut sunt ingenia hominum inquieta et agitandi et turbandi cupida, noctes diesque negotiis exercebant, horam otio nullam impertibant. Turn Iovem ferunt, ubi iam iurgia et vadimonia nocturna sisti et noctes quoque comperendinari videret, cum corde suo agitasse de suis germanis fratribus unum praeficere, qui nocti atque otio hominum curaret: Neptunum multas et graves curas maritimas causatum, ne fluctus terras totas cum montibus obruerent neve motu venti cuneta funditus percellerent, silvas et sata radicitus haurirent; Ditem quoque Patrem causatum multa opera multaque cura templa infera aegre coerceri, amnibus et paludibus et stagnis Stygiis Acheruntem aegre commoeniri, canem denique custodem apposuisse umbris territandis quae aufugere ad superos cuperent, eique cani trinas latrandi fauces ac trinos hiatus trinasque dentium formidines addidisse.

9. Tum Iovem deos alios percontatum animadvertisse, gratiam vigiliae aliquantum pollere; lunonem plerosque partus nocturnos ciere; Minervam artium atque artificum magistram | multum vigilari velle; Martem nocturnas eruptiones et insidias muta re iuvare; Venerem vero et Liberum multo maxime pernoctantibus favere. Capit turn consilium luppiter Somni procreandi eumque in deum numerum adsciscit, nocti et otio praeficit eique claves oculorum tradit. Herbarum quoque sucos, quibus corda hominum Somnus sopiret, suis Iuppiter manibus temperavit: securitatis et voluptatis herbae de caeli nemore advectae, de Acheruntis autem pratis leti herba petita. Eius leti guttam unam aspersit sed minimam, quanta dissimulantis lacrima esse solet. Hoc, inquit, suco soporem hominibus per oculorum repagula inriga: cuncli quibus inrigaris ilico post procumbent et artubus mortuis immobiles iacebunt. Turn tune timeto, nam vivent el paulo post, ubi evigilaverint, exsurgent.

10. Post id Iuppiter alas non ut Mercurio talares sed ut Amori humeris exaptas Somno adnexuit. Non enim te soleis, ait, et talari ornatu ad pupulas hominum et palpebras incurrere oportet <aut> curruli strepitu et cum fremitu equestri, sed placide et clementer pinnis teneris in modum hirun\dinum advolare nec ut columbae alis plaudere.

11. Ad hoc, quo iucundior hominibus Somnus esset, donat ei multa somnia amoena ut, quo studio quisque devinctus esset, aut histrionem in somniis fautor spectaret, aut tibicinem audiret, aut aurigae agitanti monstraret, milites somnio vincerent, imperatores somnio triumpharent, peregrinantes somnio redirent. Ea somnia plerumque ad verum convertunt.

12. Igitur, Marce, si quo tibi somnio hinc opus est, censeo libens dormias tantisper dum quod cupis quaque exoptas vigilanti tibi optingat.

To my Lord Antoninus Augustus.

1. What? Am I not aware that you went to Alsium with the intention of indulging yourself and there giving yourself up to recreation and mirth and complete leisure for four whole days? And I have no doubt that you have set about enjoying the holiday at your seaside resort in this fashion: after taking your usual siesta at noonday, you would call Niger and bid him bring in your books; soon when you felt the inclination to read, you would polish your style with Plautus or saturate yourself with Accius or soothe yourself with Lucretius or fire yourself with Ennius, to the hour in that case

appropriate to the Muses, the fifth.....; if he had brought you treatises of Cicero, you would listen to them; then you would go as far as possible off the beaten track to the shore and skirt the croaking marshes; then even, if the fancy took you, get on board some vessel, that, putting out to sea in calm weather, you might delight yourself with the sight and sound of the rowers and their time-giver's baton; anon you would be off from there to the baths, make yourself sweat profusely, then discuss a royal banquet with shellfish of all kinds, a Plautine catch hook-taken, rock-haunting, as he says, capons long fed fat, delicacies, fruit, sweets, confectionery, felicitous wines, translucent cups with no informer's brand.

2. Perhaps you will ask what do you mean? Listen then! I as a man greatly eloquent and a disciple of Annaeus Seneca call Faustian wines felicitous wines from Faustus Sulla's title; moreover when 1 speak of a cup without an informer's brand, I mean a cup without a spot. For it does not become a man so learned as I am to speak in everyday terms of Falernian wine or a flawless cup. For to what end can I say that you chose Alsium, a seaside and pleasure resort and, as Plautus has it, a slippery spot, if not to indulge yourself and, in ancient parlance, take your pleasu? How—the mischief!—pleasu? Nay, if the truth must be told in docked words, that you might to your heart's content indulge in watchin—I mean watching—, in labors—I mean labours—, in vexats—1 mean vexations. You ever indulge in pleasu? It were easier to reconcile you to a polecat than to pleasure. Tell me, Marcus, I beseech you, have you repaired to Alsium only to fast with the sea in sight? What, could you not wear yourself out at Lorium with hunger and thirst and doing business? With a fine view .... seem to you more delightful? I remember (telling) you ..... The very sea, they say, keeps holiday, when the halcyon broods. Is a halcyon with her chicks worthier of quiet ease than you with your children?

3. But you say that circumstances now plainly demand—not study surely? not toil? not wakefulness? not duties? What bow is for ever strung? what chords for ever stretched? By winking alone can eyes keep their sight, which could not but fail if fixed in one unwavering stare. A garden repeatedly planted, if it lack the aid of manure, bears only weeds and stunted vegetables of no value; for corn, however, and staple crops land that has lain fallow is chosen; rest restores fruitfulness to the soil.

4. What of your ancestors who enlarged the state and empire of Rome with huge additions? Your great-grandfather, consummate warrior as he was, yet at times took pleasure in actors and, moreover, drank pretty stoutly. Yet thanks to him the Roman people often drank mead at his triumphs. We know, too, that your grandfather, a learned ruler and a strenuous, loving not only to govern the world, but to go up and down in it, was yet devoted to music and flute-players, and was withal a right good eater of right rich banquets. Again, your father, that godlike man, who in his foresight, continence, frugality, blamelessness, dutifulness, and personal righteousness excelled the virtues of ail rulers, yet visited the palaestra, and baited a hook and laughed at buffoons.

5. I say nothing of Gaius Caesar, Cleopatra's keenest foe and afterwards paramour, nothing of Augustus, the husband of Livia. As regards Romulus himself the founder of this city, when he slew the leader of the enemy in a hand-to-hand combat and brought the Spolia Opima to Jupiter Feretrius, do you think he was content with half rations? Verily no hungry or ascetic man

could have conceived the idea of carrying off grown-up maidens from a public festival. What? did not the aged Numa, most holy of men, pass his life putting sacred offerings and tithes to secular uses, and sacrificing bulls, sheep, and swine, he the dictator of festivals, the inaugurator of banquets, the promulgator of holidays? I call him a gourmand and a holiday-maker. And do you of all men keep your holidays fasting? Nor will I pass over your own Chrysippus, who used to get mellow, so they say, every day in the year. And very many .... Plainly Socrates himself, as you may gather from the Symposia, the Dialogues, and the Letters of the Socratics, was a man of much shrewdness and wit—the Socrates, mark you, who was Aspasia's pupil and Alcibiades's teacher.

6. Now if you have declared war on play, relaxation, good living, and pleasure, yet do sleep as a freeman should. (When you have worked) hard till the last (hour of the day, will you continue your labours) till the dawn? Prithee, if no one had stolen fire from heaven, would not the sun suffice you for your judicial duties? Do realise in your conscience that you are tied to a daily falsehood, for, when you say that you "appoint the day" for trial of cases and yet try by night, then you are bound to be untruthful, whether you condemn or acquit. If you condemn anyone, you say, there appears to have been gross negligence; where indeed but for the lights nothing could appear at all.

7. But do, I beseech you, in jest or earnest let yourself be persuaded by me not to rob yourself of sleep, and to keep the boundaries of day and night distinct. Imagine that two noble and illustrious litigants, Evening and Morning, are having a lawsuit about boundaries not yet marked out. Each party puts in a description of his own frontier. Sleep claims to intervene in their trial, for he too is connected with the business, and declares that he suffers prejudice. Would that I had as much vigour and enthusiasm as I enjoyed when long ago I composed those trifles in praise of Smoke and of Dust. Verily I would have written a eulogy of Sleep to the top of my skill! Now, too, if you care to hear a short apologue on Sleep, listen.

8. They tell us that Father Jove, when at the beginning of things he was founding the human race, with one stroke clave asunder the continuity of man's life into two parts in every respect equal; the one he clothed with light, the other with darkness; called this day and that night, and assigned to night rest and to day work. As yet Sleep had not been born, and all men passed their whole lives awake. But in lieu of sleep the hush of night had been hitherto established for wakeful men. Then, little by little, men's disposition being restless and prone to action and excitement, they began to employ nights as well as days in business, giving not an hour to rest. Then they say that Jove, seeing that now quarrels and recognizances were fixed for the night, and suits were even put off from one night to another, took counsel with his own heart to set up one of his own brethren to preside over night and the repose of mankind. But Neptune pleaded his many heavy cares upon the seas, that the waves should not overflow whole lands, mountains and all, or cyclones in their fury level everything with the ground and suck up the woods and the crops by their roots. Father Dis too made his plea that hardly with immense pains and immense anxiety were the nether precincts kept under control, hardly was Hades impaled in on every side with rivers and marishes and the Stygian fens; that he had even set up a watch-dog

to terrify any Shades that had a mind to escape to the upper air, and had given him to boot a triple throat for barking, three gaping jaws, and threefold terror of teeth.

9. Then Jove after question had with other Gods perceived that a liking for wakefulness was considerably in the ascendant; that Juno called most children to birth at night; that Minerva, mistress of arts and artificers, was for much wakefulness; that Mars by the silence of the surroundings aided nightly sallies and ambuscades; that Venus, however, and Liber were by far the most in favour of the night-wakers. Jupiter then made up his mind to beget Sleep, and enrolled him among the Gods, set him in charge of night and repose, and gave into his keeping the keys of men's eyes. He also mixed with his own hands the juice of herbs, wherewith Sleep might soothe to rest the hearts of men. The herbs of security and delight he culled from the groves of Heaven, but the herb of death was sought in the meadows of Acheron. Of that death he mingled but one drop and that the tiniest, as is the tear of one who would hide his tears. With this juice, said he, instil slumber into men through the gateways of their eyes: all, into whom thou dost thus instil it, will thereafter at once fall down and lie prone with limbs motionless as though dead. But fear thou not, for they will be alive and anon, when they awake, will rise again.

10. That done, Jupiter furnished Sleep with wings, not as Mercury's attached to the ankles, but like Love's fitted to the shoulders. For thou must not, said he, dash into the eyelids and pupils of men with sandals and winged ankles, with the whirling of chariots and the thunder of steeds, but fly to them quietly and softly with gentle wings like a swallow and not with clapping of pinions like pigeons.

11. Furthermore, that Sleep might be the more welcome to men, he endowed him with many a lovely dream that, according to each sleeper's favourite hobby, he might—in his dreams—either watch an actor and clap him or listen to a flute-player or shout advice to a charioteer in his course; that soldiers might conquer and generals triumph—in their dreams; and wanderers come home—in their dreams. Such dreams generally turn out true.

12. So, Marcus, if you need a dream hereafter, I advise you to sleep with a will, until such time as what you desire and as you wish it may fall to your lot in your waking hours.

Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Ant. de Fer. Als.* 4 (AD 162)

Magistro meo salutem.

Modo recepi epistulam tuam, qua confestim fruar. Nunc enim imminebant officia δνσπαραίτητα. *Interim quod cupis, mi magister, breviter ut occupatus parvolam nuntio nostram melius valere et intra cubiculum discurrere.*

Dictatis his legi litteras Alsienses meo tempore, mi magister, quom alii cenarent, ego cubarem tenui cibo contentus hora noctis secunda—multum, inquis, cohortatione mea <commotus>! Multum, mi magister, nam verbis tuis adquievi saepiusque legam ut saepius adquiescam. Ceterum verecundia | officii, quam sit res imperiosa, quis te magis norit? Sed oro te, illud quid est, quod in fine epistulae manum condoluisse dicis? Illatenus dolueris, mi magister, si me compotem voti di boni faciunt. Vale mi magister optime, φιλόστοργε ἄθρωπε.

To my master, greeting.

I have just received your letter, which I will enjoy presently. For at the moment I have duties hanging over me that can hardly be begged off. Meanwhile I will tell you, my master, shortly, as I am busy, what you want to hear, that our little daughter is better and can run about the bedroom.

After dictating the above I read the Alsian letters, my master, at my leisure, while the others were dining and I was lying down at eight o'clock, satisfied with a light repast. Much good has my advice done you, you will say! Much, my master, for I have rested upon your advice, and I shall read it the oftener that I may the oftener rest upon it. But who knows better than yourself how exacting a thing is obedience to duty? But what I beseech you is that which you say at the close of your letter, that your hand pained you. If the Gods are kind, my master, and grant my prayers, you will not have suffered pain since. Farewell, my best of masters, man of the warm heart.

CIL XI.3720 (AD 138–68) – Funerary inscription

D(is) M(anibus) / T(ito) Aelio Eutycho / proc(uratori) Aug(usti) n(ostri) / villae Alsi/ensi / heredes

To the *Di Manes* / For Titus Aelius Eutychus, procurator of the villa at Alsium on behalf of our Augustus, the heirs (dedicated).

AE 2004.556 (AD 218–22) – Lead *fistula*

Dei Solis Invicti Magni Elagabal[i]

(Property) of the Great Sun-God Invictus Elagabalus.

AE 2004.556b (AD 218–22) – Lead *fistula*

Dei Sol(is) / dei Sol(is)

(Property) of the Sun God.

C3.
Imperial Villa at Antivm

Location

i. **Modern-day region**: Latium

ii. **Ancient region**: Latium et Campania

iii. **Modern-day city**: Anzio (RM)

iv. **Ancient city**: Antium

Plan: C3.I

The imperial villa of Antium lies on the coast of Latium, c. 31 miles to the south of Rome, and to the west of the area of the Roman colony (fig. C.3.1). The residence extended on the beach for c. 700 m, from the promontory of the Arco Muto to the west to the Neronian harbour to the east.

The villa is oriented on a north-west/south-east axis; for convenience, directions will be referred to in terms of site north rather than compass north. The identification of the site as an imperial villa is based on a wealth of lead pipes found in the area, which carry inscriptions reading the names of members of members of the imperial family in the genitive case.

Sources

i. **Texts:** As attested by Strabo, by the late Augustan period Antium, less than forty miles to the south of Rome, had experienced an impressive efflorescence of upper-

class villas (Strabo, V.3.5). A clear evidence for an imperial residence, however, is offered by Suetonius (*Aug.* LVIII), according to whom Augustus was staying in Antium when he was offered the title of Father of his Country by the people of Rome (2 BC). Fourteen years later, literary sources set Caligula's birth (AD 12) in Antium, and it could well have happened in a villa owned by the imperial house (Suet., *Calig*. VIII). Caligula's love for Antium was such that in AD 35 Tiberius left his self-imposed exile to Capri to hold a festival in Antium in honour of Gaius' marriage (Cass. Dio, LVIII.25.2). Among the Julio-Claudian emperors, however, it was Nero who had the strongest interest in Antium. Not only was he born there (Suet., *Nero* VI), but he also carried out large-scale building activities in the city, where he established a colony of veterans and built the harbour (Suet., *Nero* IX). Antium is also attested as one of the habitual dwelling places of Agrippina the Younger, who was staying there when her son conspired against her in AD 59 (Tac., *Ann*. XIV.3-4). What is more, in AD 63 Poppaea, then Nero's wife, gave birth to the couple's daughter in Antium, and the event was sumptuously celebrated by the emperor (Tac., *Ann*. XV.23). When, less than two years later, the infamous huge fire broke out in Rome, Nero was staying in Antium, and made his way to the capital only a few days later (Tac., *Ann*. XV.39). Later in the period, Hadrian is recorded as having preferred Antium to other imperial residences, to the point that he had some of the letters of Apollonius of Tyana preserved there (Philostr., *V A* VIII.20).

ii. **Inscriptions:** Lead *fistulae* from the villa attest a long-standing use of the residence

by members of the imperial house, as early as the Julio-Claudian period all the way to the age of Caracalla (Caligula: *AE* 1903.120; Domitian: *CIL* XV.7791, Caracalla: *CIL* XV.7792). The impressive inscription *CIL* X.6638 offers a list of freedmen members of a *collegium* at the imperial court at Antium, in the form of *fasti consulares*.[804] *CIL* X.6667, the gravestone of Titus Flavius Evangelus *tabularius praetorii Antiatini*, whose burial was taken care of by his son Marcus Ulpius Priscus *Augusti libertus*, offers further evidence for the presence of the *familia Caesaris* at Antium. Two inscriptions, respectively from Pessinus and Delphi, show Trajan replying to a friend named Claudianus and to an embassy from Delphi while staying in Antium on both occasions.[805]

Excavations, research, and scholarship[806]

Information on previous research at the imperial villa is really scanty. The earliest arguments for the existence of an imperial villa at Antium date back to the late nineteenth century;[807] scattered excavations were occasionally undertaken in the area at the end of the nineteenth century and in the first half of the twentieth century.[808] In 1940, Giuseppe Lugli published the first scholarly work on the residence, which

[804] Further discussion in Degrassi's comment to *Inscr. It.* XXIII.2.26.

[805] Buckler 1937, II.A (Pessinus); Plassart 1970, no. 288 (Delphi). In both documents, Trajan is recorded as replying ἀπ᾽Ἀντίου.

[806] An overview on previous research in Jaia and Di Mario 2009, 62–74.

[807] Borsari 1890, with references to scattered discoveries that occurred in the 1880s.

[808] See also Jaia 2002. Quite regrettably, no reports were produced after the excavations carried out in the 1930s.

combined archaeological evidence and information from archives.[809] Later on, the villa was briefly addressed by Maria Luisa Morricone Matini and Valnea Santa Maria Scrinari, in the introduction to their work on Roman mosaics from Antium.[810] The authors sought to define the chronology of the residence, and identified seven building phases from the late Republic all the way to the Severan period.

The archaeological remains of the villa, alongside the data and information found in regional and municipal archives, have repeatedly and accurately been re-examined by Alessandro Maria Jaia since the beginning of the present century.[811] Jaia, in particular, thanks to a completely different interpretation of the standing structures, undertook a reassessment of the chronology of each phase of the villa, which was hitherto based on masonry techniques only.[812] Jaia, in addition, presented notes and drawings from unpublished excavations directed by Guglielmo Gatti, and implemented the plan of the residence with previously unknown features.

Origin of the praedium

In spite of the detailed body of evidence for the use of the villa by some of the Julio-Claudian emperors, the origin of the property is hard to ascertain. As the

[809] Lugli 1940; in particular on the villa, 177–81.

[810] Santa Maria Scrinari and Morricone Matini 1975, 10–14.

[811] Jaia 2008.

[812] The keystone of Jaia's analysis is a completely different interpretation of the use of *opus reticulatum*, which had previously been read as evidence for an early chronology. Jaia focused, instead, on the structural function of this masonry technique, and ascribed it to the foundations and substructures of the villa. As a result, the chronology of the residence has completely been revised: instead of the seven building phases proposed by Santa Maria Scrinari and Morricone Matini 1975, Jaia identified only two main interventions, which he ascribed, respectively, to the early imperial period and to the late Antonine/early Severan period. Further discussion below, 'Phases – Chronology'.

historical record shows, Augustus himself is found staying at the villa, but it is not possible to say whether it was a seaside leisure residence of the Octavii,[813] if he inherited it from Caesar,[814] or if he purchased a villa which had originally belonged to a still-unidentified private individual.[815] Caligula, the grandson of Julia the Elder and therefore the great-grandson of Augustus, might well have seen the light in the great-grandfather's residence. Nero's birth is set by Marco Maiuro in an alleged villa of the Domitii Ahenobarbi at Antium, but literary sources do not seem to provide any information in this regard.[816] As argued by Anna Maria Andermahr, Nero, son of Agrippina the Younger and therefore Caligula's nephew, was probably born in the uncle's villa, the more so in light of Caligula's affection for Antium.[817] On the other hand, Tacitus' reference to dynastic games organised by Nero at Antium in honour of the gentes Claudia and Domitia, 'as the Julian race had its circus games at Bouillae', offers some food for thought on a potential, ancestral connection between either gens and Antium.[818] Dirk Booms has discussed the potential connection of the imperial villa at Antium with the Claudian house, based on the substantial increase in the imperial presence at Antium under the Claudii when compared to the Iulii. It is highly likely, Booms argued, that Antium was originally a property of the Claudii Nerones, and that

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[813] As argued by Coarelli 1982, 293, although with no reference to literary sources or epigraphic evidence. See also Jaia 2013, 199.

[814] Neither Shatzman 1975 nor Andermahr 1998, however, record possessions of Caesar at Antium.

[815] The earliest building phase of the villa can be ascribed to the second century BC, thus implying that it can hardly have been built from scratch by Augustus. Archaeological evidence discussed below, see 'Description' and 'Phases – Chronology'.

[816] The possessions of the Domitii Ahenobarbi in Italy are discussed by Carlsen 2006, 103–14.

[817] Andermahr 1998, 252.

[818] Tac., *Ann*. XV.23.

was acquired as an imperial possession already with Tiberius.[819]

Description

Coastal erosion,[820] unscrupulous building activity and bombing that occurred during the Second World War have heavily impacted on the preservation of the villa, to the point that it is now barely possible to get an overall understanding of the site plan. In addition to that, only the structures on the beach are actually visible; the extension and architectural layout of inland premises, if there were any, are completely unknown. Our understanding of the functions of the many sectors of the residence is therefore very poor.

The villa was installed above previously existing dwellings dated to the late-republican period, which were progressively destroyed and incorporated within the later imperial residence. Research identified a number of separate building units with different chronology and functions, scattered on the shoreline between the Arco Muto and the Neronian harbour. The villa incorporates and exploits the sandstone crag through massive substructures (fig. C3.2), which allowed the creation of a palace on at

[819] Booms' argument builds upon one of the bronze-carved decrees from Entella, dated to the third century BC and mentioning a Τεβέριος Κλαύδιος Γαίου υἱὸς Ἀντιάτας (*SEG* XXX.1120, lines 4–5). As discussed by Corsaro 1982, the term Ἀντιάτας refers to Claudius' origin from Antium, and can probably be ascribed to the presence of the Claudii in Antium as early as the establishment of the colony in 338 BC. Corsaro, furthermore, argues that the *praenomina* Tiberius and Gaius, both occurring in the inscription, are typically used by the Claudii Nerones, a patrician branch of the *gens* Claudia. Whether the Tiberius Claudius mentioned in this inscription is himself a member of the Claudii or merely a *cliens* of it, it still demonstrates that the Claudii featured within Antium's citizenry since the latter half of the fourth century BC: possessions of this *gens* at Antium are therefore quite likely.

[820] After Lanciani's notes and drawings, Jaia 2002, 25, calculates the landward retreat of the shoreline to approximately 16–20 metres, and the consequent destruction of roughly 43,000 cubic metres of archaeological features.

least four storeys, from the level of the beach to the modern-day ground level. According to Jaia's most recent study, the structures allegedly pertaining to the imperial villa had two different orientations, which followed the direction of the coast. The northernmost building units, oriented north/south, lay on the promontory of the Arco Muto, whereas the southern sectors are found between the promontory and Anzio's lighthouse and have a north-east/south-west orientation.

The southern section of the villa overlooks the sea, with a façade extending for c. 200 metres. The most impressive architectural feature is a large curvilinear structure, probably a porticoed promenade, now completely erased to the level of the foundations in *opus reticulatum* (fig. C3.3). This structure can tentatively be dated to the late Republican/early imperial period, although excavations carried out in 1931, without any attention for stratigraphy, make it impossible to reconstruct a properly reliable chronological sequence. According to Jaia, the southern sector of the villa underwent substantial alterations at some time between the late Antonine and the early Severan period, when the curvilinear structure was erased, to be replaced with a completely different building.

The later complex, Jaia argues, must have appeared as a proper palace, with a façade which extended directly into the sea, incorporating and exploiting the sandstone crag (fig. C3.4). From the sea inland, one first meets a porticoed corridor aligned to the coast, followed straightaway by a parallel cryptoporticus, which

provided access to a heated room flanked by two niches.[821] The upper level seems to be organised symmetrically on the longer sides of a rectangular courtyard, the axis of which follows that of the underlying heated room. The courtyard gave access to two large halls to the west and east of it, framed by two niches opening onto a hallway running above the substructures at the lower level. Beyond the northernmost niche and further westwards, there lay a hall with a large apse on the rear wall; an identical feature can be assumed on the opposite side, to the east of the niche, underneath the lighthouse of modern-day Anzio. A large nymphaeum, installed within the substructures, is found at the western end of the lower portico, right before a staircase leading to the upper storey (fig. C3.5).[822]

[821] In 1878, the northernmost niche yielded the famous statue of the so-called 'Fanciulla di Anzio' (see Mariani 1909, 168–77, for discussion on the exact findspot). The southern niche was revealed by a sea storm in 1887, alongside with a second statue, now lost, allegedly identified as Artemis (*Ibid.*, 169; Jaia 2002, 19).

[822] The interpretation of the nymphaeum as a library (Santa Maria Scrinari and Morricone Matini 1975, 13) is based on the sequence of niches on its rear wall, as well as on mentions of a library at Antium found in literary and epigraphic evidence. *Philostr. V A*, VIII.20 records that Pythagora's book was stored at the imperial villa at Antium, and the *Fasti Antiates ministrorum Domus Augustae* mention one *librarius*, two *glutinatores* and four *liberti a bibliothecis* employed at the villa between AD 23 and 37. In fact, due to the position of this structure, installed against the sandstone crag, an interpretation as substructure is much more convincing. The nymphaeum, which yielded frescoes of illusionistic gardens and hunting scenes, exploited part of the substructures. Scrinari and Morricone Matini provide a succinct description of the decoration of the nymphaeum, of which I could not find further information. The same authors, furthermore, dated it to alterations carried out by Domitian, on the basis of brick stamps from the Domitianic period found in the basement of the building. Although references are not provided, the authors are probably alluding to *CIL* XV.1755,3, the reading of which is unknown, but which Lanciani records as found during excavations *nelle fabbriche neroniane* in 1888. The author, unfortunately, does not provide the text of the stamp, and merely reports about *uno solo frammento di bollo figulino dalle fornaci domiziane* (Lanciani 1888). The production of the *figlinae Domitianae*, however, is attested as early as the age of Caligula all the way to the fourth century AD (Steinby 1975, 37; also Maiuro 2012, 314–16): the chronological range is therefore too wide to date the stamps from Antium to the age of Domitian. Further data on brick stamps from this sector are offered by Jaia 2002, 29 and note 65, who mentions stamps reading the name of Marcus Aurelius from the staircase to the west of the nymphaeum. Again, references are not provided, and the author refers to an upcoming publication of the excavations carried out in the area, which I have not been able to find.

The northern sector of the villa is found to the west of the nymphaeum, and extends until the promontory of the Arco Muto and beyond, following a NNE-SSW orientation. The area has repeatedly been investigated from the late nineteenth century to the 1930s, but excavations were mostly carried out with the mere purpose of uncovering sculptures for the Aldobrandini family, then owner of large estates in the area.

A large bath complex lay on the southernmost end of the promontory, facing south to take advantage of sunlight and heat. The building stands on four storeys, with warehouses and *praefurnia* installed in the substructures at the sea level, the actual baths on the first floor (fig. C3.6), a lightwell on the second level and a latrine and a heated pool on the upper floor (equivalent to the modern-day ground level). The baths are located at the southern end of a larger building, now completely lost but extraordinarily well documented in some drawings by Gatti, which Jaia has recently studied and published. Gatti's documentation reports a rectangular complex 30 metres wide, and extending for c. 100 metres to the north (fig. C3.7). Jaia identified three different sectors, with, respectively, large halls to the south, a courtyard in the middle, a narrow corridor flanked by a sequence of rooms on both sides to the north. This building featured floor mosaics in many of its rooms, as scattered mentions from the excavation reports show.[823]

The area between this building and the western edge of the promontory was

[823] See in particular Lanciani 1888, 394, Lanciani 1889, 164, Borsari 1890, *Vat. Lat.* 13045 271r, 272r, 274v. Further details on mosaics from this area below, 'Decoration'.

completely built-up. Due to the almost complete destruction of all the Roman features, however, it is not possible to give further details on space distribution, in spite of some pieces of information from archive documents. Lanciani recorded two rooms, one of which had painted plaster applied on tiles.[824] The same note reports a drawing of what seems to be a *tegula mammata*, which might demonstrate the existence of heated rooms in this are as well. Further buildings lay at the very end of the promontory, but their function and chronology is completely unknown. The structures yielded high-quality floor mosaics, some of which are currently at the Museo Nazionale Romano (see below, 'Decoration').

Caterina Paola Venditti ascribed to the imperial villa some structures found to the east, near the military hospital, which yielded mosaic floors dated to the third century AD, although the interpretation is not sufficiently supported by the archaeological evidence.[825]

The imperial villa may have been in functional connection with the harbour of Antium, c. 650 m to the east. Tacitus dates to AD 60 the establishment of a new colony at Antium, alongside with Puteoli and Tarentum.[826] His remark that veterans were dispatched there is followed by Suetonius,[827] who specifies that the veterans came from the praetorian guard, and includes chief centurions (*primipilarii*) among Antium's new

[824] *Vat. Lat.* 13045 272v.

[825] Venditti 2011, 183 (no. 234). The author refers to records found in Santa Maria Scrinari and Morricone Matini 1975, 76–77 (nos. 59–60), who provide a description of mosaics found during excavations in the area of the military hospital but no longer existing. The attribution of these structures to the imperial villa is therefore very weak, and cannot be verified.

[826] Tac., *Ann.* XIV.27.

[827] Suet., *Nero* IX.

colonists. The colonial deduction, Suetonius adds, came with the construction of a new harbour, for which Nero allocated a significant amount of money.[828]

Phases – Chronology

The chronological sequence reconstructed by Santa Maria Scrinari and Morricone Matini, who identified seven building phases from the late Republican period to the early third century AD, was questioned and revisited by Jaia. The author reassessed the archaeological evidence in the light of a potential, different use of *opus reticulatum*, and reduced the chronological development of the villa to two or three phases, in addition to the pre-existing dwellings from the late Republican period. The imperial villa proper, Jaia argues, was established at some time between the late Republican period and the Julio-Claudian age, when the curvilinear promenade was built. According to Borsari's report from 1890, the structures on the promontory of the Arco Muto can be dated to the Hadrianic period, but the author does not provide further evidence for his argument. The alterations undergone by the southern sector of the residence, when the curvilinear structure was replaced by the massive palace extending until the foreshore, are dated by Jaia to the late Antonine/Severan period, although no chronological element is provided.

[828] Technical details on the harbour in Felici and Baderi 1997; Felici 1993.

Decoration

Owing to the vicissitudes undergone by the villa in the last two centuries, no decoration from the imperial period is preserved *in situ*,[829] and very little can be reconstructed of the whole decorative apparatus of the residence.

The detailed analysis of Roman mosaics from Antium published by Santa Maria Scrinari and Morricone Matini includes mosaics from the imperial villa. Mosaics 49-55 and 58 from their inventory were found in the area of the Arco Muto, and can generally be dated between the late Antonine and the Severan period. Themes include geometric patterns, vegetal motifs and mythological subjects, all in black and white. Except for the mosaic n. 55 portraying Hercules and Achelous, which Jaia attributed to one of the rooms of the building to the north of the bath complex, it is not possible to locate the find spots of the other mosaics accurately.[830]

The nymphaeum installed in the substructures was provided with high-quality paintings, recently studied by Silvia Succi.[831] Frescoes feature a high-quality representation of an illusionistic garden, and a hunting scene. Succi, based both on Jaia's reassessment of architectural features and brick stamps, and on stylistic grounds, dated the paintings from the nymphaeum to the Hadrianic period.

Antium's villa was provided, as well, with marble decoration: marbles of different types featured both as architectural elements and in *opus sectile* floors. A recently-

[829] The still-visible mosaics belong to the Republican dwellings, which lay beneath the imperial villa and have therefore been destroyed by coastal erosion and unauthorised building activity to a much lesser extent.

[830] Santa Maria Scrinari and Morricone Matini 1975, 58–68; Jaia 2008, 78.

[831] Succi 2010.

published analysis of coloured marbles from excavations carried out at Anzio in the last three centuries offers some food for thought on the marble decoration of the imperial residence.[832] Older excavation reports lack detailed information on the exact findspots of marble elements: any reconstruction must remain tentative. The southern block of the villa had a portico founded directly on the foreshore, facing the sea; based on scattered mentions from some of Lanciani's notes, Beatrice Cacciotti reconstructed the portico as consisting of columns of *marmor taenarium (nero antico)*. *Opus sectile* floors included *marmor numidicum (giallo antico)*, red porphyry and green porphyry, and potentially *marmor chium (portasanta)* as well. The author, based on four eighteenth-century drawings of *opus sectile* floors from Anzio, ascribed the patterns to the age of Domitian. The villa yielded also a slate slab with small recesses, potentially for inlay work, a decorative technique found as early as Claudius and having its apogee in the age of Nero, with comparanda from a number of imperial villas, including the *Domus Transitoria*, the *Domus Flauia* on the Palatine, Domitian's *Albanum*, Hadrian's Villa, the *Palatium* at Baiae and the villa of the Quintilii.

[832] Cacciotti 2011.

Suet., *Aug*. LVIII (2 BC)

Patris patriae cognomen universi repentino maximoque consensu detulerunt ei: prima plebs legatione Antium missa; dein, quia non recipiebat, ineunti Romae spectacula frequens et laureata; mox in curia senatus, neque decreto neque adclamatione, sed per Valerium Messalam.

The whole body of citizens with a sudden unanimous impulse proffered him the title of Father of his Country: first the commons, by a deputation sent to Antium, and then, because he declined it, again at Rome as he entered the theatre, which they attended in throngs, all wearing laurel wreaths; the senate afterwards in the House, not by a decree or by acclamation, but through Valerius Messala.

Suet., *Calig*. VIII (AD 12)

C. Caesar natus est pridie Kal. Sept. Patre suo et C. Fonteio Capitone coss. Ubi natus sit, incertum diversitas tradentium facit. Cn. Lentulus Gaetulicus Tiburi genitum scribit, Plinius Secundus in Treveris vico Ambitarvio supra Confluentes; addit etiam pro argumento aras ibi ostendi inscriptas ob agrippinae pverperivm. Versiculi imperante mox eo divulgati apud hibernas legiones procreatum indicant:

In castris natus, patriis nutritus in armis,
Iam designati principis omen erat.

Ego in actis Anti editum invenio.

Gaius Caesar was born the day before the Kalends of September in the consulship of his father and Gaius Fonteius Capito. Conflicting testimony makes his birthplace uncertain. Gnaeus Lentulus Gaetulicus writes that he was born at Tibur, Plinius Secundus among the Treveri, in a village called Ambitarvium above the Confluence. Pliny adds as proof that altars are shown there, inscribed "For the Delivery of Agrippina." Verses which were in circulation soon after he became emperor indicate that he was begotten in the winter-quarters of the legions:

He who was born in the camp and reared in the arms of his country,
Gave at the outset a sign that he was fated to rule.

I myself find in the gazette that he first saw the light at Antium.

Cass. Dio, LVIII.25.2 (AD 35)

Ἐκ δὲ τούτου Γάιος μὲν Γάλλος καὶ Μᾶρκος Σερουίλιος ὑπάτευσαν, Τιβέριος δὲ ἐν Ἀντίῳ τοὺς τοῦ Γαΐου γάμους ἑώρταζεν. ἐς γὰρ τὴν Ῥώμην οὐδὲ δι᾽ ἐκείνους ἐσελθεῖν ἠθέλησεν.

After this, Gaius Gallus and Marcus Servilius became consuls. Tiberius was at Antium holding a festival in honour of Gaius' marriage; for not even for such a purpose would he enter Rome.

Suet., *Nero* VI (AD 37)

Nero natus est Anti post VIIII. mensem quam Tiberius excessit, XVIII. Kal. Ian. tantum quod exoriente sole, paene ut radiis prius quam terra contingeretur.

Nero was born at Antium nine months after the death of Tiberius, on the eighteenth day before the Kalends of January, just as the sun rose, so that he was touched by its rays almost before he could be laid upon the ground.

Suet., *Nero* IX (AD 61)

Antium coloniam deduxit ascriptis veteranis e praetorio additisque per domicilii translationem ditissimis primipilarium; ubi et portum operis sumptuosissimi fecit.

He established a colony at Antium, enrolling the veterans of the praetorian guard and joining with them the wealthiest of the chief centurions, whom he compelled to change their residence; and he also made a harbour there at great expense.

Tac., *Ann.* XIV.3–4 (AD 59)

3. Igitur Nero vitare secretos eius congressus, abscedentem in hortos aut Tusculanum vel Antiatem in agrum laudare, quod otium capesseret. Postremo, ubicumque haberetur, praegravem ratus interficere constituit, hactenus consultans, veneno an ferro vel qua alia vi. Placuitque primo venenum. Sed inter epulas principis si daretur, referri ad casum non poterat tali iam Britannici exitio; et ministros temptare arduum videbatur mulieris usu scelerum adversus insidias intentae; atque ipsa praesumendo remedia munierat corpus. Ferrum et caedes quonam modo occultaretur, nemo reperiebat; et ne quis illi tanto facinori delectus iussa sperneret metuebant. Obtulit ingenium Anicetus libertus, classi apud Misenum praefectus et pueritiae Neronis educator ac mutuis odiis Agrippinae invisus. Ergo navem posse componi docet, cuius pars ipso in mari per artem soluta effunderet ignaram: nihil tam capax fortuitorum quam mare; et si naufragio intercepta sit, quem adeo iniquum, ut sceleri adsignet, quod venti et fluctus deliquerint? additurum principem defunctae templum et aras et cetera ostentandae pietati.

4. Placuit sollertia, tempore etiam iuta quando Quinquatruum festos dies apud Baias frequentabat. Illuc matrem elicit, ferendas parentium iracundias et placandum animum dictitans. quo rumorem reconciliationis efficeret acciperetque Agrippina, facili feminarum credulitate ad gaudia. Venientem dehinc obvius in litora (nam Antio adventabat) excepit manu et complexu ducitque Baulos. Id villae nomen est, quae promunturium Misenum inter et Baianum lacum flexo mari adluitur. Stabat inter alias navis ornatior, tamquam id quoque honori matris daretur: quippe sueverat triremi et classiariorum remigio vehi. Ac tum invitata ad epulas erat, ut occultando facinori nox adhiberetur. Satis constitit extitisse proditorem, et Agrippinam auditis insidiis, an crederet ambiguam, gestamine sellae Baias pervectam. Ibi blandimentum sublevavit metum: comiter excepta superque ipsum collocata. Iam pluribus sermonibus, modo familiaritate iuvenili Nero et rursus adductus, quasi seria consociaret, tracto in longum convictu,

prosequitur abeuntem, artius oculis et pectori haerens, sive explenda simulatione, seu perituraе matris supremus aspectus quamvis ferum animum retinebat.

3. Nero, therefore, began to avoid private meetings with her; when she left for her gardens or the estates at Tusculum and Antium, he commended her intention of resting; finally, convinced that, wherever she might be kept, she was still an incubus, he decided to kill her, debating only whether by poison, the dagger, or some other form of violence. The first choice fell on poison. But, if it was to be given at the imperial table, then the death could not be referred to chance, since Britannicus had already met a similar fate. At the same time, it seemed an arduous task to tamper with the domestics of a woman whose experience of crime had made her vigilant for foul play; and, besides, she had herself fortified her system by taking antidotes in advance. Cold steel and bloodshed no one could devise a method of concealing: moreover, there was the risk that the agent chosen for such an atrocity might spurn his orders. Mother wit came to the rescue in the person of Anicetus the freedman, preceptor of Nero's boyish years, and detested by Agrippina with a vigour which was reciprocated. Accordingly, he pointed out that it was possible to construct a ship, part of which could be artificially detached, well out at sea, and throw the unsuspecting passenger overboard:—"Nowhere had accident such scope as on salt water; and, if the lady should be cut off by shipwreck, who so captious as to read murder into the delinquency of wind and wave? The sovereign, naturally, would assign the deceased a temple and the other displays of filial piety."

4. This ingenuity commended itself: the date, too, was in its favour, as Nero was in the habit of celebrating the festival of Minerva at Baiae. Thither he proceeded to lure his mother, observing from time to time that outbreaks of parental anger had to be tolerated, and that he must show a forgiving spirit; his aim being to create a rumour of reconciliation, which Agrippina, with the easy faith of her sex in the agreeable, would probably accept.—In due course, she came. He went down to the beach to meet her (she was arriving from Antium), took her hand, embraced her, and escorted her to Bauli, the name of a villa washed by the waters of a cove between the promontory of Misenum and the lake of Baiae. Here, among others, stood a more handsomely appointed vessel; apparently one attention the more to his mother, as she had been accustomed to use a trireme with a crew of marines. Also, she had been invited to dinner for the occasion, so that night should be available for the concealment of the crime. It is well established that someone had played the informer, and that Agrippina, warned of the plot, hesitated whether to believe or not, but made the journey to Baiae in a litter. There her fears were relieved by the blandishments of a cordial welcome and a seat above the prince himself. At last, conversing freely,—one moment boyishly familiar, the next grave-browed as though making some serious communication,—Nero, after the banquet had been long protracted, escorted her on her way, clinging more closely than usual to her breast and kissing her eyes; possibly as a final touch of hypocrisy, or possibly the last look upon his doomed mother gave pause even to that brutal spirit.

Tac., *Ann*. XV.23 (AD 63)

Memmio Regulo et Verginio Rufo consulibus natam sibi ex Poppaea filiam Nero ultra mortale gaudium accepit appellavitque Augustam dato et Poppaeae eodem cognomento. Locus puerperio colonia Antium fuit, ubi ipse generatus erat.

In the consulate of Memmius Regulus and Verginius Rufus, Nero greeted a daughter, presented to him by Poppaea, with more than human joy, named the child Augusta, and bestowed the same title on Poppaea. The scene of her delivery was the colony of Antium, where the sovereign himself had seen the light.

Tac., *Ann*. XV.39 (AD 64)

Eo in tempore Nero Antii agens non ante in urbem regressus est, quam domui eius, qua Palatium et Maecenatis hortos continuaverat, ignis propinquaret. Neque tamen sisti potuit, quin et Palatium et domus et cuncta circum haurirentur.

Nero, who at the time was staying in Antium, did not return to the capital until the fire was nearing the house by which he had connected the Palatine with the Gardens of Maecenas. It proved impossible, however, to stop it from engulfing both the Palatine and the house and all their surroundings.

Philostr., *V A* VIII.20

Ἀνάκειται τὸ βιβλίον τοῦτο ἐν Ἀνθίῳ καὶ σπουδάζεται διὰ τὴν αἰτίαν (τὸ δὲ Ἄνθιον Ἰταλῶν τῶν ἐπὶ θαλάττῃ). ταῦτα μὲν δὴ καὶ τῶν Λεβάδειαν οἰκούντων ξυγχωρῶ ἀκροᾶσθαι, περὶ δὲ τοῦ βιβλίου τούτου γνώμη ἀποπεφάνθω μοι, διακομισθῆναι μὲν αὐτὸ βασιλεῖ Ἀδριανῷ ὕστερον, ὅτε δὴ καί τινας τῶν τοῦ Ἀπολλωνίου ἐπιστολῶν, οὐ γὰρ δὴ πάσας γε, καταμεῖναι δὲ ἐς τὰ βασίλεια τὰ ἐν τῷ Ἀνθίῳ, οἷς μάλιστα δὴ τῶν περὶ τὴν Ἰταλίαν βασιλείων ἔχαιρεν.

This book is dedicated at Antium, and is highly regarded because of its history. (Antium is a town on the coast of Italy.) All this I must admit to having heard from the inhabitants of Lebadea, but let me give my belief about the book. This is that it came into the hands of emperor Hadrian later, at the same time as certain of Apollonius's letters, though not all, and that it remained in the residence at Antium, which he loved most among his residences in Italy.

AE* 1903.120 (AD 37–41) – Lead *fistula

C(ai) Caesar(is) Aug(usti) Germanici

(Property) of Gaius Caesar Augustus Germanicus.

CIL XV.7791 (AD 81–96) – Lead *fistula*

Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) Domitiani Au[g(usti)] / sub cur(a) Daphn{n}i l(iberti) proc(uratoris) fec(it) Faustus ser(vus)

(Property) of the emperor Caesar Domitianus Augustus. The slave Faustus made (this) under the supervision of Daphnis, freedman and *procurator*.

CIL X.6667 (AD 98–117) – Funerary inscription

Di{i}s Manibus / T(ito) Flavio Aug(usti) lib(erto) / Euangelo tab(u)lario / praetori(i) Antiatini / M(arcus) Ulpius Aug(usti) lib(ertus) [P]riscus / parenti bene merenti / h(oc) m(onumentum) h(eredem) n(on) s(equetur)

To the *Di Manes*. For Titus Flavius Evangelus, freedman of Augustus and archivist of the *praetorium* of Antium. Marcus Ulpius Priscus, freedman of Augustus, (did) for the well-deserving parent. This monument does not go to the heir.

C4.
Imperial Villa at Lavrentvm

Location

i. **Modern-day region**: Latium

ii. **Ancient region**: Latium et Campania (ager Laurens)

iii. **Modern-day city**: Tor Paterno/Riserva naturale di Castelporziano (RM)

iv. **Ancient city**: Lauinium/Laurentum

Plan: C4.I

The imperial residence of Laurentum is located in the *ager Laurens*, c. 15 miles to the south-west of Rome (fig. C4.1). The coastal area to the south of Ostia experienced an efflorescence of maritime villas from the late third century BC, which reached its peak in the late-Republican period.[833] The *ager Laurens* owed its attractiveness not only to its popularity among the Roman upper classes, but also to its connection with the mythical origins of Rome: it is on the *litus Laurentinum* that Aeneas' arrival to Latium is located.[834] The imperial residence was accessed from a road whose path was later followed by that of the so-called *uia Seueriana*.[835] The identification of the villa as an imperial possession is based on the numerous inscriptions of imperial freedmen found in the area, which corroborate the literary sources mentioning the existence of an imperial villa in the *ager Laurentinus*, where the Antonine emperors withdrew

[833] Purcell 1998.

[834] Castagnoli 1972, 94–95.

[835] Brandizzi Vittucci 1998 on the extension of the road referred to, in modern scholarship, as *uia Seueriana*.

frequently.

The villa is oriented on a north-west/south-east axis; for convenience, directions will be referred to in terms of site north rather than compass north.

Sources

i. **Texts:** A passage from Aulus Gellius reports that a maid servant of Augustus was honoured with a monumental tomb of the *uia Laurentina* when she died after giving birth to five children *in agro Laurente* (Gell., *NA* X.2). That an imperial estate existed in the area is confirmed by Juvenal, who reported that a herd of elephants owned by the imperial house (*armentum Caesaris*) was bred in the *ager Laurens* (Juv., *Sat.* XII.102-107). A villa, however, is attested as late as Antoninus Pius, and was amongst the residences where the Antonine family used to stay (Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Caes.*, II.6.3). Herodian reported that Commodus withdrew to the *ager Laurens* to escape from a plague which was raging in Rome: the presence of laurel trees—hence the name *ager Laurens*—made the air much healthier than elsewhere according to the emperor's doctors (Hdn., I.12). Amongst the imperial properties which Constantine donated to the church, the *uita Syluestri* of the *Liber Pontificalis* mentions the *massa Auriana*, located *territurio Laurentino* (*LP* I ed. Duchesne, 174), and the *possessio Patras sub ciuitate Laurentum* (*LP* I ed. Duchesne, 180).

ii. **Inscriptions:** Juvenal's mention of the herd of Caesar's elephants is compatible with the text of *CIL* VI.8583, the funerary inscription of Tiberius Claudius Speclator, who served as *procurator Laurento ad elephantos*. Inscription of other

imperial freedmen found in the area (*CIL* XIV.2045, *CIL* XIV.2085, *AE* 1995.248, *AE* 2003.287) offer further evidence for the presence of an imperial property.

Excavations, research, and scholarship[836]

The earliest mention of excavations undertaken at Tor Paterno dates back to 1456, when marble blocks spoliated in the area were purchased for the construction of the cathedral (*duomo*) of Orvieto.[837] The ancient remains at Tor Paterno were documented, firstly, in the early seventeenth century; plans and elevations of the Roman features were most likely produced on the occasion of the construction of a church dedicated to San Filippo Neri, which was installed in one of the Roman buildings. Further excavations were carried out in the years 1777-1780, when the Chigi family purchased the estate of Castel Fusano. Archaeological investigations were encouraged particularly between the final years of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, as the property was sold to the Savoia royal family, and increasingly so after the discovery of the *uicus Laurentum Augustanorum* at the locality called 'Grotta di Piastra', c. 3.5 km to the north-west of Tor Paterno. A milestone in the research in the area is Lanciani's report of the investigations which he led, published in 1903.[838]

Throughout the twentieth century, investigations in the *ager Laurentinus* concentrated in the areas to the north and to the south of Tor Paterno, with a focus on

[836] A complete overview on previous research in the area in Claridge 1997. See also Leppert 1974, 240–57.
[837] Lanciani 1903, 176.
[838] Lanciani 1903.

the *Vicus Augustanus* and on the nearby villas.[839] Archaeological research in the area was inspired by one of the letters of Pliny the Younger, in which his *Laurentinum* and the surrounding area are described in detail (Plin., *Ep*. II.17). Several villas in the *ager Laurentinus*, as a result, have tentatively been interpreted as Pliny's residence, without a secure identification having ever been achieved.[840]

Not until the 1980s were systematic investigations carried out in the area. In 1984 the Soprintendenza Archeologica di Ostia, in cooperation with the British School at Rome, started a still-ongoing, wide-ranging research project, which combined topographical survey, excavation and restoration of damaged structures.[841]

Origin of the praedium

The existence of an imperial property in the *ager Laurentinus* is attested as early as

[839] On the *uicus*, Claridge 1998; Thomas 1998; Claridge 1988; Claridge 1985; Patterson 1985; Simonazzi Masarich 1973.

[840] Earlier scholarship has sought to interpret the ruins at Tor Paterno as the villa of Pliny (Claridge 1997, 308). Eugenia Salza Prina Ricotti has identified it as the so-called Villa Magna, at the locality Grotta di Piastra (Salza Prina Ricotti 1988; Salza Prina Ricotti 1985; Salza Prina Ricotti 1984; Salza Prina Ricotti 1982). The Villa Magna yielded an inscription with a dedication to Silvanus and to the Nymphs from Marcus Antonius Balbus (*AE* 1998, 279; details in Lauro 1988c). Very interestingly, the inscription reports that Balbus, a man of equestrian rank who made an outstanding career and was *proconsul Africae* (he had then been promoted to senatorial rank), was born in that house. In the list of the noblemen murdered by Septimius Severus, SHA, *Seu*. XIII.2 mentions the name of an Antonius Balbus. It is highly likely that the Balbus who produced the dedication to Silvanus is the same mentioned by the *uita Seueri*: it has been suggested that his villa in the *ager Laurentinus* was confiscated by Septimius Severus when Balbus was killed, and that it was incorporated into the imperial possessions in the area. To the state of current knowledge, it is not possible to say whether the villa had always been a possession of the *Balbi* or if it actually was Pliny's *Laurentinum*. Later on, Anna M. Ramieri identified as the residence of Pliny another villa, to the north-west of the *Vicus Augustanus* (Ramieri 1995; Maria 2008).

[841] The results of this research have preliminarily been published in Lauro 1985, Lauro 1988b, Lauro 1998a. I am grateful to Amanda Claridge for inviting me to join a field trip at Laurentum organised by the British School at Rome as part of the City of Rome course, during which she generously shared information on her research at the *Vicus Augustanus*.

Augustus, and is confirmed by Juvenal's mention of the *armentum Caesaris* and by the funerary inscription of Claudius Tiberius Speclator. Not until the age of Antoninus Pius, however, is a villa reported by ancient authors; Laurentum is included in a list of localities in central Italy with which the young Marcus Aurelius was familiar, to the point of being able to compare their climate with one another (Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Caes.* II.6.3): it is most likely that he spent some time there, and that he stayed at an imperial residence, which is possibly the same where Commodus withdrew to escape the plague in Rome.

Description

The excavations carried out in the area of Tor Paterno have not revealed the whole imperial residence, the architectural layout of which is therefore difficult to understand. A number of separate building units have been identified, but, on current evidence, it is not possible to reconstruct the wider picture, the more so as vegetation has hindered fieldwork. Furthermore, the majority of the features associated with the residence have not been published in sufficient detail as to allow an accurate description and interpretation.[842]

The imperial villa extended over a relatively large area, parallel to the shoreline, and was accessible from a road which linked it to the *uia Laurentina*. North to south, the first building identified by modern research (1) is a bath complex, dated to the

[842] The building units attributed to the imperial villa are discussed and described in Lauro and Claridge 1998, 52–54, and more extensively in Lauro 1998b.

second century AD (fig. C4.2). To the east of it, across the modern-day via del Telefono—the path of which follows partially that of the ancient road—is another building unit (2), which has been interpreted as a residential complex. Excavations have identified two sequences of rectangular rooms arranged on both sides of a corridor; the building has been dated to the second century AD, with scattered evidence for later alterations and refurbishments.

Further southwards is another, more monumental bath complex (3, fig. C4.3)), originally smaller in size, but enlarged at a later stage through the addition of another building unit. A large, shallow exedra functioned as junction between the two sections, alongside serving as monumental façade for the south-western side of the baths. The building has been dated to the second century AD, and evidence for maintenance and refurbishments shows that it was frequented seamlessly until the late-fourth century AD.

The most outstanding building unit of the villa (4) lies to the east of the bath complex 3, within the modern site of Tor Paterno (fig. C4.4). The Roman features underwent substantial alterations throughout the post-antique and modern periods: we know that a defensive tower existed in the site since the ninth century (hence the name 'Tor Paterno') and that a church dedicated to San Filippo Neri was installed within the Roman structures in the seventeenth century (fig. C4.5).[843] The building, investigated thoroughly in the 1980s, has been interpreted as another bathing facility, and dated to the Trajanic/Hadrianic period, with refurbishments all through the third

[843] Mannucci 1988, 38–39.

century.[844]

Halfway between the bath complex 4 and the one labelled with the number 3 is another building unit (5), which Giuseppina Lauro has interpreted as a feature serving to connect the two bathing facilities.[845]

Two other buildings to the south of Tor Paterno (6-7) have been attributed to the imperial villa. The easternmost (7) has been interpreted as a nymphaeum installed above earlier features, probably residential buildings. The construction of the nymphaeum, which has been dated to the central decades of the second century AD, accords with the proposed timeframe of the buildings discussed above; the chronology of the earlier features has not been determined.[846] To the west of it is another, poorly preserved building unit (6), itself dated to the central decades of the second century. The remains of high-quality wall paintings and floor *opus sectile* have suggested interpreting the building 6 as a high-ranking residential feature.[847]

Between the buildings 4 and 6, investigations have identified a water reservoir (8), the chronology and architectural layout of which, however, are almost entirely unknown.[848] Water was supplied to the imperial residence by an aqueduct running north-east/south-west, several sections of which have been identified (fig. C4.6). The

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[844] La Rocca 2015; Lauro 1988a, 182.

[845] Lauro 1998b, 72. The building is not described in its chronology and architectural features. The figure 22 of the same publication is a general plan of the buildings 3 and 5, and the caption reads '*pianta generale dei complessi termali*'. Both buildings, therefore, have been interpreted as bath complexes, although building 5 had originally been mentioned as a feature connecting the buildings 3 and 4.

[846] *Ibid.*, 104–05. Lauro 1988d, 26–27.

[847] Lauro 1998b, 105. The decoration of this building remains substantially unpublished. The figure 66 from the same publications shows large section of a painted ceiling featuring Egyptian motifs.

[848] Lauro and Claridge 1998, 59 (no. F13, '*cisterna*').

installation of the aqueduct has been dated to the late-first/early second century AD; later alterations and refurbishments are attested under Commodus.[849]

Phases – Chronology

The installation of the villa dates to the central decades of the second century AD; the chronological framework suggested by the archaeological dossier accords with the information provided by literary sources, according to which the Antonine family often stayed in the area. Alterations, refurbishments, and maintenance are attested throughout the imperial period. The passages from the *Liber Pontificalis* which mention Constantine's donation to the church of the *massa Auriana, territurio Laurentino*, and of the *possessio Patras sub ciuitate Laurentum* attest that the emperors owned properties in the area at least until the early fourth century AD.

Decoration

Excavations at Tor Paterno yielded very sparse evidence for decoration. A cycle of imperial portraits found in the area (Agrippina the Younger, Hadrian, Aelius Caesar, Antoninus Pius, Faustina the Elder, Iulia Domna, Philip the Arab)[850] is most likely associated with the imperial residence.

During surveys and field walking in the area of building 2, fragments of marble veneer, stuccowork, and coloured mosaic were gathered, which must have belonged

[849] Mannucci 1985.

[850] Leppert 1974, 253, with references.

to the decoration of the building. Evidence for mosaic flooring, as well as for further, unspecified decoration (marble revetments?) has been recorded in connection with the building 4. Building 6 featured *opus sectile* and painted decoration, though both remain unpublished to date.

Gell., *NA* X.2 (27 BC–AD 14)

Sed et divo Augusto imperante qui temporum eius historiam scripserunt ancillam Caesaris Augusti in agro Laurente peperisse quinque pueros dicunt eosque pauculos dies vixisse; matrem quoque eorum, non multo postquam peperit, mortuam monumentumque ei factum iussu Augusti in via Laurentina inque eo scriptum esse numerum puerperii eius, de quo diximus.

But in the reign of the deified Augustus the historians of the time say that a maid servant of Caesar Augustus in the region of Laurentum brought forth five children, and that they lived for a few days; that their mother died not long after she had been delivered, whereupon a monument was erected to her by order of Augustus on the via Laurentina, and on it was inscribed the number of her children, as I have given it.

Juv., *Sat.* XII.102-107 (AD 20–27)

Existunt qui promittant hecatomben,
quatenus hic non sunt nec venales elephanti,
nec Latio aut usquam sub nostro sidere talis
belua concipitur, sed furva gente petita
arboribus Rutulis et Turni pascitur agro,
Caesaris armentum nulli servire paratum
privato.

There are people who will promise a hundred oxen—not elephants, seeing that here there are none, not even for cash. Such a beast doesn't breed in Latium or anywhere in our climate. It's grazing in Rutulian forests and the land of Turnus, for sure, but brought from the dark nation, a herd that belongs to Caesar. They are not prepared to be the slave of any private individual.

Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Caes.*, II.6.3 (AD 143)

Caelum Neapolitanum plane commodum, | sed vehementer varium. In singulis scripulis horarum frigidius aut tepidius aut horridius fit. Iam primum media nox tepida, Laurentina; tum autem gallicinium frigidulum, Lanuvinum; iam conticinium atque matutinum atque diluculum usque ad solis ortum gelidum, ad Algidum maxime; exim antemeridiem apricum, Tusculanum; tum meridies fervida, Puteolana; at enim ubi sol lautum ad Oceanum profectus <est>, fit demum caelum modestius, quod genus Tiburtinum; id vespera et concubia nocte, dum se intempesta nox, ut ait M. Porcius, praecipitat, eodem modo perseverat. Sed quid ego, qui me paucula scripturum promisi, deliramenta Masuriana congero? Igitur vale, magister benignissime, consul amplissime, et me, quantum ames, tantum desidera.

The climate of Naples is decidedly pleasant, but violently variable. Every two minutes it gets colder or warmer or rawer. To begin with, midnight is warm, as at Laurentum; then,

however, the cockcrow watch chilly, as at Lanuvium; soon the hush of night and dawn and twilight till sunrise cold, for all the world like Algidus; anon the forenoon sunny, as at Tusculum; following that a noon as fierce as at Puteoli; but, indeed, when the sun has gone to his bath in Ocean, the temperature at last becomes more moderate, such as we get at Tibur; this continues the same during the evening and first sleep of night, until, as M. Porcius says, the dead of night falls swiftly down. But why do I string together these Masurian banalities, when I started with saying 1 should write a few words only? So farewell, most kindly of masters, most honourable of consuls, and let your love be the measure of your longing for me.

Hdn., I.12 (AD 187–88)

Τότε ὁ Κόμοδος συμβουλευσάντων αὐτῷ τινῶν ἰατρῶν ἐς τὴν Λαύρεντον ἀνεχώρησεν· εὐψυχέστερον1 γὰρ ὂν τὸ χωρίον καὶ μεγίστοις κατάσκιον δαφνηφόροις ἄλσεσιν (ὅθεν καὶ τὸ ὄνομα τῷ χωρίῳ) σωτήριον εἶναι ἐδόκει, καὶ πρὸς τὴν τοῦ ἀέρος φθορὰν ἀντέχειν ἐλέγετο εὐωδίᾳ τε τῆς τῶν δαφνῶν ἀποφορᾶς καὶ τῇ τῶν δένδρων ἡδείᾳ σκιᾷ.

On the advice of his doctors, Commodus retired for the time to Laurentum, a cooler spot, shaded by huge laurel groves (which give the place its name). The doctors thought this place was safe because it was reputed to be immune from infectious diseases in the atmosphere by virtue of the redolent fragrance of the laurels and the pleasant shade of the trees.

***CIL* VI.8583 (AD 41–68) – Funerary inscription**

D(is) M(anibus) / Ti(berio) Claudio Speclatori / Aug(usti) lib(erto) procurator(i) / Formis Fundis Caietae / procurator(i) Laurento ad / elephantos / Cornelia Bellica coniugi / b(ene) m(erenti)

To the *Di Manes.* For Tiberius Claudius Speculator, freedman of Augustus, *procurator* of Formiae, Fundae and Caieta, *procurator* of the elephants in Laurentum. Cornelia Bellica (did) for the well-deserving husband.

***CIL* XIV.2045 (AD 141–160) – Honorary inscription (statue base)**

P(ublio) Aelio Aug(usti) lib(erto) / Liberali / procuratori annonae / Ostiensis procuratori / pugillationis et ad naves / vagas tribunicio collegi(i) / magni decuriali decuriae / viatoriae consul(aris) decuriali / gerulorum praeposito mensae / nummul(ariae) f(isci) f(rumentarii) Ost(iensis) ornato orna/mentis decurionatus col(oniae) Ost(iensis) / patrono / Laurentium vici Augustanor(um)

To Publius Aelius Liberalis, freedman of Augustus, *procurator* of the corn-supply in Ostia, *procurator* of the archive and of the freelance cargoes, tribune of the great college, member of the society of messengers at the service of consuls, member of the society of bearers, director of the

money-changing counter of the imperial treasury of Ostia, honoured with the insigna of the decurionate of the colony of Ostia, *patronus* of the *uicus* of the Laurentes Augustani.

CIL XIV.2085 (AD 51–100) – Lead *fistula*

Tiberi Claudi Caes[aris

(Property) of Tiberius Claudius Caesar.

AE 1995.248 (AD 101–200) – Marble altar

Marti Ficano / Agathon / Caesaris ser(vus) / vilicus saltua/riorum cum / suis voto libens / d(onum) d(edit)

To Mars Ficanus. Agathon, slave of Caesar and farmer overseer of the gamekeepers, together with his relatives willingly gave this as a votive offering.

AE 2003.287 (AD 101–200) – Dedicatory inscription

]s Aug(usti) l(ibertus) Agla[us qui] / [fuit inter sa]ltuarios et [3] / [3] Col(lina) Successus [3] / [3] Terenti[3] / [aedicul]am e[t i]magines dominor[um nn(ostrorum)] / [collegi]o salu[t]ari saltuariorum d(onum) [d(ederunt)].

Aglaus, freedman of Augustus who worked with the gamekeepers and [the countrymen? 3], [3] Successus, [freedman] of the Collina tribe, [3 chief slave on behalf of the clan] Terentia, (they) gave a small shrine and images of our emperors as a gift by the burial college of gamekeepers.

C5.
Hadrian's Villa

Location

i. **Modern-day region**: Latium

ii. **Ancient region**: Latium et Campania

iii. **Modern-day city**: Tivoli

iv. **Ancient city**: Tibur

Plans:

The enormous complex (more than 120 ha) identified by modern scholarship as *Villa Adriana* lies on the tufa hills to the south-west of Tibur, conveniently served by quarries of travertine, tuff, and pozzolana, and connected to Rome through the *uia Tiburtina* and the river Aniene. Its interpretation as the residence of Hadrian is based on a combination of literary and epigraphic evidence: the mention of a *uilla Tiburtina* in Hadrian's biography in the *HA* (SHA, *Hadr*. XXIII.7, XXVI.5) is corroborated by inscriptions on lead *fistulae* found in the area and mentioning the name of Hadrian in the genitive case (*CIL* XIV.3698; *CIL* XV.7896b-c-d).

Sources

i. **Texts:** The biography of Hadrian in the *Historia Augusta* reports that the emperor built a villa in the territory of Tibur, where he is said to have reproduced famous monuments or places of the known world, such as the Canopus, the Poecile, or the

valley of Tempe.[851] Surprisingly, the residence is not mentioned by any other sources, except for another of the biographies of the *HA*, which reports that Aurelian exiled Zenobia, queen of Palmyra, to a residence not far from the *Palatium Hadriani*.[852] Whether the Hadrianic complex exploited a previously existing imperial possession is hard to ascertain; we know that Augustus used to spend time in Tibur,[853] where he probably owned a villa, but any attempt to interpret the Republican structures incorporated in the area of the Palazzo Imperiale (see below, 'Description') would inevitably be speculative.

ii. **Inscriptions:** Inscriptions mentioning members of the *familia Caesaris* attest the existence of imperial possessions in the territory of Tibur since the Julio-Claudian period,[854] though the exact location of these possessions is impossible to establish: in other words, the information we possess is not sufficient to argue that Hadrian's Villa was installed on the site of previously existing imperial possessions. Inscription *AE* 2014.446 mentions a Marcus Ulpius Epaphroditus, freedman of Trajan, who served as *procurator praediorum Tiburtinorum*; David Nonnis, who published the inscription in 2014, dated the fulfilment of the procuratorship in the Hadrianic period:[855] the *praedia Tiburtina* to which it refers must have been linked to Hadrian's Villa. Lead *fistulae* from the villa have allowed its identification as a

[851] SHA, *Hadr*. XXIII.7; SHA, *Hadr*. XXVI.5.
[852] SHA, *Tyr. Trig.* XXX.27.
[853] Suet., *Aug*. LXII.3.
[854] *CIL* XIV.3644; *CIL* XIV.3647; *CIL* XIV.3787.
[855] Nonnis 2014.

residence of Hadrian.[856] The inscriptions of five imperial freedmen from the territory of Tibur report their employment: interestingly, three of these mention that they worked at the *uilla Tiburtis*.[857] Three other freedmen from the age of Hadrian or Antoninus Pius are attested by *CIL* XIV.3717, *CIL* XIV.3718; *CIL* XIV.3720. Epigraphic evidence records the presence of imperial freedmen in the area at least until the third century AD, which suggests that Hadrian's Villa was used by the imperial family well beyond the Hadrianic period.[858]

Excavations, research, and scholarship

A history of the reception of, and scholarly research at Hadrian's Villa is probably a study subject on its own, and cannot therefore be discussed extensively here.[859] The site was quarried repeatedly throughout the Middle Ages—some of the medieval buildings of Tivoli appear to have been constructed with material from Hadrian's Villa—and visited by fifteen-century humanists, such as Francesco di Giorgio Martini and Flavio Biondo, on multiple occasions, but it had hitherto been thought to be *Tibur Vetus*, the old Tivoli. The correct identification of the complex as the residence of Hadrian mentioned in the *HA* was achieved in the sixteenth century by the Neapolitan architect Pirro Ligorio, entrusted by cardinal Ippolito d'Este with the project of his

[856] *CIL* XIV.3698; *CIL* XV.7896b-c-d.

[857] *CIL* XIV.3635: *tabularius uillae Tiburtis*; *CIL* XIV.3636: *commentariensis uillae Tiburtis*; *CIL* XIV.3637: *tabularius uillae Tiburtis*; *CIL* XIV.3648: *topiarius*; *CIL* XIV.3641: *medicus*.

[858] *CIL* XIV.3638; *CIL* XIV.3730; *CIL* XIV.3731.

[859] The most detailed account of the history of research at Hadrian's Villa, from its rediscovery in the Renaissance to present times, is found in MacDonald and Pinto 1995, 206–330, to which I refer the reader for a more comprehensive discussion of the subject.

countryside villa in Tivoli, who explored, studied, and excavated the Roman site for several years between 1550 and 1566. The result is the earliest plan of Hadrian's Villa—originally attributed to Francesco Contini but then identified as Ligorio's—completed by a commentary, the *Descrittione della superba e magnificentissima Villa Tiburtina Hadriana*, in which the author attempted to name the building units he discovered after the names of the features mentioned in the *HA*, such as the Poecile, the Canopus, or the valley of Tempe. Ligorio's nomenclature is still in use, even though some attempts have been made to find more neutral names, that could reflect the actual function of the buildings to which they refer.[860]

Ligorio's plan marked the beginning of a fecund season of study at Hadrian's Villa, during which prominent names of the Italian Renaissance—Baldassarre Peruzzi, Palladio, and Raphael among many others—visited the site and drew inspiration from the configuration of its different units for their ongoing building projects.

The eighteenth century is the real golden age of research at Hadrian's Villa. A crucial role was played by the *vedutisti*, such as Pier Leone Ghezzi and the *pensionnaires* (resident fellows) of the French Academy in Rome, who produced a vast amount of views of different buildings, which have proved extraordinarily important, in recent years, for the understanding and reconstruction of no-longer existing features. Besides views, the most famous outcome of eighteenth-century research at Hadrian's Villa, and the watershed study on the site, is the plan drawn by Giovanni Battista Piranesi,

[860] See e.g. MacDonald and Pinto 1995.

on which he worked throughout his entire life and which was published posthumously by his son Francesco in 1781, three years after Giovanni Battista's death. Drawn at a 1:1,000 scale, the plan includes details such as different line darkness for existing or assumed structures, dotted lines to represent underground features, and information on the different types of vegetation, and is complemented by a commentary which provides identification and analysis of most features of the villa. Together with the plan, Piranesi produced ten views of different areas of the Villa.

Alongside being an invaluable source of inspiration to architects and scholars, the Villa suffered from continuous looting of antiquities (particularly statues but also mosaics) throughout the sixteenth, the eighteenth, and the first half of the nineteenth century, which caused a substantial loss of information on the original decoration. Furthermore, until 1870—when half of the site was purchased by the government of the Kingdom of Italy—the area of the villa was divided into more than forty properties in the possession of different landowners, who not only exploited them for cultivations or as grazing lands, but occasionally conducted excavations with the purpose of collecting antiquities. These uncontrolled excavations fuelled a long-lasting trade of archaeological items from the villa, which peaked in the eighteenth century: as a result, sculptures from Hadrian's Villa are today scattered from Malibu to Saint Petersburg.

The nineteenth century was characterised by a more scientific and rational attitude towards the Villa, stimulated by the ongoing archaeological progress in Rome and Pompeii. Archaeologists such as Antonio Nibby and Luigi Canina addressed the site as part of larger, systematic studies of the Roman Campagna, looking critically at

ancient sources and earlier scholarship, and incorporating data from recent excavations. Scholarly research went hand-in-hand with the production of an enormous amount of views of the ruins set in the picturesque landscape of the Campagna, stimulated by an increasingly Romantic attitude towards the Roman antiquities. The most impressive collection of views is gathered in Agostino Penna's *Viaggio Pittorico della Villa Adriana* in four volumes, which brings together drawings of buildings, statues, paintings, and mosaics, as well as of finds from excavations.

The purchase of the site by the Kingdom of Italy allowed scholars to analyse most of it as a single archaeological complex. As a result, the first guides aimed at non-experts were published, by Rodolfo Lanciani (then professor of Roman topography at the University of Rome La Sapienza),[861] Hermann Winnefeld,[862] and Pierre Gusman.[863] Unlike earlier commentaries on the site, which often included a few views, these works are provided with photographs, which allowed readers to gain a much clearer understanding of the site.

A turning point in contemporary studies on Hadrian's Villa is the plan produced by the students of Rome's School of Engineering (1905), which was also included in Lanciani's guide. After the first World War, further important research was carried out, including Giuseppe Lugli's articles on the Republican and Late-Antique phases of the villa[864] and Herbert Bloch's influential study on brick stamps from the site, which

[861] Lanciani 1906.
[862] Winnefeld 1895.
[863] Gusman 1904.
[864] Lugli 1927; Lugli 1933.

allowed later scholars to understand the different building phases of the complex.[865] The famous architect Italo Gismondi produced a model of the villa, which he updated in the 1950s and is today displayed on the site. Scientific works such as those by Heinz Kähler[866] and Salvatore Aurigemma[867] are the counterpart of romantic novels, such as Eleanor Clark's *Rome and a Villa* and Marguerite Yourcenar's most famous *Memoirs of Hadrian*.

The last fifty years saw a real profusion of studies on Hadrian's Villa, often fuelled by new excavations carried out with a scientific methodology, such as those in the Antinoeion,[868] in the so-called Palestra,[869] in the Greek Theatre,[870] in the *tholos* behind the Piazza d'Oro,[871] and in the so-called Macchiozzo.[872] Alongside the publication of data from excavations, research on specific subjects was carried out, such as mosaic decoration,[873] *opus sectile*,[874] gardens,[875] water features,[876] or monographic works on particular building units.[877]

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865 Bloch 1937.
866 Kähler 1950.
867 Aurigemma 1961.
868 Mari 2005.
869 Mari and Sgalambro 2012; Mari and Sgalambro 2006.
870 León Alonso 2007.
871 Ottati, Pensabene and Fileri 2014.
872 Excavations carried out by Columbia University and Sapienza Università di Roma, as part of the APAHA Tibur Project (2014–present).
873 Vincenti 2017; De Franceschini 1991.
874 Guidobaldi 1994.
875 Jashemski and Salza Prina Ricotti 1987.
876 Manderscheid 2010.
877 Bibliography on Hadrian's Villa has been collected by Marina De Franceschini, who administers the website http://www.villa-adriana.net. See also http://www.villa-adriana.net/pages/ita/page6.html.

Origin of the praedium

As indicated by epigraphic evidence, imperial possessions are attested in the territory of Tibur since the Julio-Claudian period; Suetonius' biography of Augustus, furthermore, reports that the emperor frequently spent time there, where he probably owned a villa. The information we possess, however, do not suffice to establish a topographical connection between Hadrian's Villa and the previous imperial properties. Attempts have been made to link it with possessions of the Aelii (Hadrian's *gens*),[878] but are not corroborated by solid data. On current evidence, the origin of the *praedium* of Hadrian's Villa cannot be ascertained.

Description[879]

The complex occupies three tufa terraces at the foot of the Monti Tiburtini, bordered by two streams—the fosso dell'Acqua Ferrata to the east and the fosso di Roccabruna to the west—which flow into the Aniene. This river must have played a crucial role in the choice of the site, because, together with the *uia Tiburtina*, it ensured a reliable and efficient transportation of building materials which could not be obtained locally, such as marbles or metal. Tufa, pozzolana, and travertine, on the other hand, were quarried nearby.

[878] Salza Prina Ricotti 2001, 65–69.

[879] Information on the architectural layout of the villa and its manifold building units is taken from Chiappetta 2008, Salza Prina Ricotti 2001, MacDonald and Pinto 1995, Giuliano, Giuliani and Veloccia Rinaldi 1988. The following description will necessarily be concise, and will not discuss all the features attributed to the villa; I refer the reader to the main reference works and to detailed studies on specific buildings.

The original extension of the villa is unknown, but it must have been more than 120 ha. The archaeological area that can be visited today is about 40 ha, and comprises a number of building units distributed along three different axes; another group of features, aligned on a fourth axis, lies outside the area accessible to visitors. Even though this characteristic may give the impression of careless construction, the efficiency of water supply and drainage systems, as well as of the network of underground routes which connect different building units with one another, demonstrate that the complex is the result of a single campaign of planning, notwithstanding a number of alterations which occurred as the construction progressed.

The villa was reached, from the north, by a side road leaving the *uia Tiburtina* near the Ponte Lucano (which exploits the foundations of a bridge dating to Roman times); paved roads have been seen by Piranesi, who reported them on his plan. The road forks into three branches reaching different areas of the complex: the easternmost ('via carrabile' B) extended until the area of the Palazzo imperiale; the central one ('via carrabile' A) arrived at the Poecile; the westernmost ('via carrabile' C) reached the Great Vestibule.

The Poecile is a massive quadriporticus (230 by 96 m) surrounding a rectangular pool, and with an east-west orientation; on the northern side of the quadriporticus is a monumental corridor with bulb-shaped ends, which has been interpreted as a *porticus miliaria* thanks to an inscription from the area, which reports the exact length

of the feature.[880] To the east the Poecile is the most important area of the complex, which comprised the imperial residence proper (the Palazzo Imperiale, including the imperial lodgings, luxurious *coenationes*, and reception facilities), a bath complex presumably reserved for the use of the emperor and of extremely selected guests (the Heliocaminus Baths), lodgings for officers of the imperial court (the Hospitalia), different categories of dining facilities (Libraries, Stadium Garden, Piazza d'Oro), and of audience and reception halls (Philosophers' Hall, Building with the Doric Pillars, Libraries).

The planimetric transition between the Poecile and the features discussed above, which are aligned on a different axis from that of the Poecile, is marked by a unique building unit: the so-called Maritime Theatre. The complex consists of an artificial island enclosed by a circular canal and by a peristyle; on the island is a miniaturised *domus*, equipped with all the main components of Roman houses: *cubicula*, a dining hall, audience facilities, and even a small *balneum* with a latrine. The canal served, seemingly, as the *balneum*'s *natatio*. The circular shape of the Maritime Theatre serves to connect two separate clusters of building units, which are characterised by two different orientations: to the west are the Poecile and the Stadium Garden/Three Exedras, to the east, the Imperial Palace with the adjacent Hospitalia and the Piazza d'Oro, further southwards.

To the south of the Poecile is a monumental building unit interpreted as the Villa's

[880] *CIL* XIV.3695a.

Great Vestibule, which welcomed visitors arriving from the 'via carrabile' C. The vestibule incorporates a small temple to the west, which has been interpreted as a lararium.

To the east of the Great Vestibule and to the south of the Stadium Garden are two separate bath complexes, the Small Baths and the Large Baths, characterised not only by a difference in size and capacity, but also, respectively, by a more or less elaborate layout and by a higher or lower degree of decoration. The Small Baths have therefore been interpreted as reserved for officers of the imperial court, whilst the Large ones have been linked with the use of lower-ranking staff, the more so as they are connected via an underground route to the Cento Camerelle, a dwelling area which accommodated the service personnel employed at the Villa.

To the south of the Large Baths is one of the Villa's most iconic features: a 119-m long pool (the Canopus) with an extraordinarily luxurious summer *coenatio* (the Serapeum) at the pool's southern extremity. Remarkably, the Serapeum is one of the earliest instances of the use of *stibadia* as dining couches; very interestingly, another *stibadium* is attested at Hadrian's Villa, in the summer *coenatio* at the south-western corner of the Imperial Palace.

The western limit of the complex is defined, seemingly, by an alignment of four features which follow an orientation different from that of the building units discussed so far. The northernmost (Roccabruna) is a circular belvedere installed on a squared podium, which was probably the counterpart of another belvedere, the Pavilion of Tempe, that is found to the east of the Hospitalia. To the south of Roccabruna is a large

terrace, at the southern end of which is the so-called Academy, a so-far poorly understood building unit which has tentatively been interpreted as a separate imperial residence, perhaps reserved for Vibia Sabina, Hadrian's wife. To the south of the Academy is the Odeum, a theatre, which was possibly the pendant to another entertainment building, the Greek Theatre, which seems to mark the northernmost limit of the complex. The pool of entertainment buildings of the complex was completed by a small amphitheatre to the east of the Piazza d'Oro.

One of the most conspicuous characteristic of Hadrian's Villa, which is, at the same time, one of the least discernible ones at a first glance, is the elaborateness of its paths and routes. An articulate network of subterranean roads linked different areas of the complex with one another, and allowed different categories of individuals to circulate within the villa without interfering with each other. These routes reached the principal nodes of the complex, such as lodgings, bathing facilities, and entertainment buildings, thus ensuring that the emperor circulated on a route where his safety was guaranteed, that the service personnel fulfilled their duties without being seen, and that external visitors reached the areas into which they were allowed without going through spaces which they could not access.

Phases – Chronology

Bloch's study on the brick stamps from Hadrian's Villa allowed later scholars to divide the different buildings of the complex into three groups, depending on the chronology of brick stamps, and to attribute these groups to specific periods of

Hadrian's reign, during which he was acknowledgedly in Italy, and could therefore have intervened actively in the planning of the complex. The chronology of a number of buildings, such as the Greek Theatre, is uncertain.

To the earliest nucleus of the villa, attributed to the years AD 118–21, belong the *porticus miliaria* of the Poecile, the Philosophers' Hall, the Maritime Theatre, the Heliocaminus' Baths, as well as the Republican villa incorporated in the Imperial Palace.

The complex was expanded in the years AD 121–25, with the extension of the Poecile to the south of the *porticus miliaria* (which was supported on massive substructures provided by the Cento Camerelle), the Stadium Garden/Three Exedras, the Small and Large Baths, the Hospitalia, the Building with the Doric Pillars, and the Piazza d'Oro.

To the third group of buildings, dated to the years AD 125–38, belong the two Libraries, the Pavilion of Tempe, the Great Vestibule, the Canopus, and the features comprised between Roccabruna and the Odeum.

If the expansion of the complex in the Hadrianic period has been reconstructed accurately, the post-Hadrianic phases are known in less detail. Evidence for later occupation and alterations has been recorded from different building units, but has never been analysed systematically.[881] Portraits of members of the Severan dynasty (Septimius Severus, Julia Domna, Caracalla)[882] suggest that the villa was probably

[881] Giuliani 2020a; Lugli 1933.
[882] MacDonald and Pinto 1995, 138–39.

frequented by the imperial family at least until the early third century AD. The excavations led by the APAHA Tibur project, which are investigating a residential area reserved, seemingly, for officers of the imperial court, have collected evidence for occupation well into the fourth century AD.

Decoration

The complex yielded a huge wealth of decorative elements, ranging from statues and marble furniture to *opus sectile*, mosaics, and wall painting.[883] A remarkable amount of this decoration was subtracted from the villa during the uncontrolled excavations carried out in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and can no longer be attributed to any specific building unit.[884]

Variations in the elaborateness and luxuriousness of the decoration of different building units allow a tentative identification of the categories of individuals for which each area was reserved. Unsurprisingly, marble revetment for floors and walls is found in high-ranking spaces, such as the Imperial Palace, the Piazza d'Oro, or the Canopus, as well as the Small Baths or the residential buildings of the so-called Macchiozzo: areas reserved not only for the exclusive use of the emperor, but also for senior members of the court or prominent guests. The mosaics which decorate the

[883] As mentioned with regard to both previous research and the configuration of the site, the decoration of Hadrian's Villa is a study subject on its own: in fact, a number of monographic works have been published in the last forty years, which address different categories of decoration (sculpture: Raeder 1983; flooring: De Franceschini 1991; *opus sectile*: Guidobaldi 1994; mosaics: Vincenti 2017) and to which I refer the reader for a detailed analysis and discussion.

[884] MacDonald and Pinto 1995, 286–305.

cubicula of the Hospitalia, with elaborate patterns yet not as luxurious as *opus sectile*, suggest that the complex was a residential facility for mid-ranking individuals, such as subaltern officers of the court. Dwellings or bathing facilities allocated to a humbler user base, such as the Cento Camerelle or the Large Baths, had a more modest decoration, such as white stucco with simple decorative patterns, or even just white plaster.

SHA, *Hadr.* XXIII.6–7

Omnes postremo, de quorum imperio cogitavit, quasi futuros imperatores detestatus est. et omnem quidem vim crudelitatis ingenitae usque eo repressit donec in Villa Tiburtinaprofluvio sanguinis paene ad exitum venit.

At last, he came to hate all those of whom he had thought in connection with the imperial power, as though they were really about to be emperors. However, he controlled all the force of his innate cruelty down to the time when in his Tiburtine Villa he almost met his death through a hemorrhage.

SHA, *Hadr.* XXVI.5

Tiburtinam Villam mire exaedificavit, ita ut in ea et provinciarum et locorum celeberrima nomina inscriberet, velut Lyceum, Academian, Prytaneum, Canopum, Poicilen, Tempe vocaret. et, ut nihil praetermitteret, etiam inferos finxit.

His villa at Tibur was marvellously constructed, and he actually gave to parts of it the names of provinces and places of the greatest renown, calling them, for instance, Lyceum, Academia, Prytaneum, Canopus, Poecile and Tempe. And in order not to omit anything, he even made a Hades.

SHA, *Tyr. Trig.* XXX.27

Cum illam Aurelianus cepisset atque in conspectum suum adductam sic appellasset, "Quid est, Zenobia? ausa es insultare Romanis imperatoribus?" […] *Huic vita ab Aureliano concessa est, ferturque vixisse cum liberis matronae iam more Romanae data sibi possessione in Tiburti, quae hodieque Zenobia dicitur, non longe ab Hadriani palatio atque ab eo loco cui nomen est Conchae.*

When Aurelian had taken her prisoner, he caused her to be led into his presence and then addressed her thus: "Why is it, Zenobia, that you dared to show insolence to the emperors of Rome?" […] Her life was granted her by Aurelian, and they say that thereafter she lived with her children in the manner of a Roman matron on an estate that had been presented to her at Tibur, which even to this day is still called Zenobia, not far from the palace of Hadrian or from that place which bears the name of Concha.

***CIL* XIV.3644 (AD 51–75) – Funerary inscription**

C(aius) Iulius Aug(usti) l(ibertus) Sam[ius] / proc(urator) / accensus divi Claudii et / Neronis Augusti / patronorum /

Caius Iulius Samius, *procurator*, subaltern of his patrons, the deified Claudius and Nero Augustus.

CIL XIV.3647 (AD 1–100) – Funerary inscription

Valeriae / Donatae uxori / carissimae fecit / Ti(berius) Claudius / Aug(usti) lib(ertus) / Lysimachus viator / sodalium Augustalium / et sibi posterisque suis et / libertis et libertabus / posterisque eorum

Tiberius Claudius Lysimachus, freedman of Augustus, messenger of the priests of Augustus, made (this tomb) for his dearest wife Valeria Donata, for himself, and for their offspring, as well as for their freedmen and freedwomen and for their offspring.

CIL XIV.3787 (AD 14–41) – Funerary inscription

Ti(berius) Iulius / Augusti lib(ertus) / Satyrio

Tiberius Iulius Satyrio, freedman of Augustus.

AE 2014.446 (AD 100–150) – Funerary inscription

D(is) M(anibus) / M(arco) Ulpio Aug(usti) lib(erto) Epaphro/dito proc(uratori) rationis / privatae proc(uratori) praedi/[orum] Tiburt[i]norum / [

To the Di Manes. To Marcus Ulpius Epaphroditus, *procurator* of the property of the emperor, *procurator* of the estates at Tibur [

CIL XIV.3698 (AD 117–138) – Inscription on lead *fistula*

Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) Traian(i) Hadriani Aug(usti) / sub cura Restituti Aug(usti) lib(erti) proc(uratoris) // VX

(Property of) the Emperor Caesar Trajan Hadrian Augustus, under the responsibility of Restitutus, freedman of Augustus, *procurator*. 5 10

CIL XIV.7896b (AD 117–138) – Inscription on lead *fistula*

Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) Traian(i) Hadriani Aug(usti) / sub cura Restituti Aug(usti) lib(erti) proc(uratoris) // XV

(Property of) the Emperor Caesar Trajan Hadrian Augustus, under the responsibility of Restitutus, freedman of Augustus, *procurator*. 10 5

CIL XIV.7896c (AD 117–138) – Inscription on lead *fistula*

Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) Traian(i) Hadriani Aug(usti) / sub cura Restituti Aug(usti) lib(erti) proc(uratoris) // IIII

(Property of) the Emperor Caesar Trajan Hadrian Augustus, under the responsibility of Restitutus, freedman of Augustus, *procurator*. 4

CIL XIV.7896d (AD 117–138) – Inscription on lead *fistula*

Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris) Traian(i) Hadriani Aug(usti) / sub cura Restituti Aug(usti) lib(erti) proc(uratoris) //

(Property of) the Emperor Caesar Trajan Hadrian Augustus, under the responsibility of Restitutus, freedman of Augustus, *procurator*.

CIL XIV.3636 (AD 117–138) – Funerary inscription

D(is) M(anibus) / Aelio Probo Aug(usti) lib(erto) / Aelius Irenaeus com/me(ntariensis) villae Tiburtis / amico et collib(erto) / b(ene) m(erenti) f(ecit)

To the Di Manes. Aelius Irenaeus, secretary of the villa of Tibur, made (this tomb) for his friend and co-freedman, the well-deserving Aelius Probus, freedman of Augustus.

CIL XIV.3635 (AD 138–161) – Funerary inscription

]I[3] / [3] ort [3] / T(itus) Aelius Au[g(usti) l(ibertus)] Euhodion / tabularius villae Tibur/tis et Victoria / filio dulcissimo / b(ene) [m(erenti)] f(ecerunt)

]I[3] / [3] ort [3] / Titus Aelius Euhodion, freedman of Augustus, accountant of the villa of Tibur, and Victoria, made for the sweetest and well-deserving son.

CIL XIV.3637 (AD 138–161) – Funerary inscription

Dis Manibus / Aeliae T(iti) f(iliae) Perpetuae / quae vixit annis III / mens(ibus) VII dieb(us) XXIII / T(itus) Aelius Aug(usti) lib(ertus) / Ampliatus / tabularius / villae Tiburtis et / Flavia Aphrodisia / parentes filiae / dulcissimae

To the Di Manes. Titus Aelius Ampliatus, freedman of Augustus, accountant of the villa of Tibur, and Flavia Aphrodisia, parents of Aelia Titi Perpetua, who lived three years, seven months, and twenty-three days, made (this tomb) for their sweetest daughter.

CIL XIV.3641 – Funerary inscription

D(is) M(anibus) / Ti(berio) Claudio Aelio / Sabiniano / medico Aug(usti) / Pedanius Rufus / amicus

To the Di Manes. To Tiberius Claudius Aelius Sabinianus, physician of Augustus, his friend Pedanius Rufus (made).

CIL XIV.3648 – Funerary inscription

[D(is)] M(anibus) / [3] Caes(aris) n(ostri) ve/[rnae 3]P topiario / [vixit an]n(os) LX Mariti[

To the Di Manes. To [3] slave of our Caesar, gardener, lived sixty years [

CIL XIV.3638 (AD 211–217) – Honorary inscription

Aeliae [3] / Tranquill [3] / Marci Festi [3] / et a memor[ia Imp(eratoris) Caes(aris)] / Antonini Pii [Felicis] / Invicti Ma[ximique] / Aug(usti) / s(enatus) p(opulus)q(ue) Tiburs [et] / iuvenes Anto[niniani] / Herculan[ii]

To Aelia Tranquill [3] of Marcus Festus [3] and (*procurator*) of the chancery of the Emperor Caesar Antoninus Pius Felix Invictus Augustus, the senate and the people of Tibur and the youth organisation of the Antoniniani Herculanii.

CIL XIV.3730 – Funerary inscription

D(is) M(anibus) / Aureliae M(arci) f(iliae) Erastinus / Augg(ustorum) lib(ertus) / pater filiae dulcissimae / fecit

To the Di Manes. Marcus Erastinus, freedman of the Augusti, made (this tomb) for his sweetest daughter Aurelia.

C6.
Villa Magna

Location

i. **Modern-day region**: Latium

ii. **Ancient region**: Latium et Campania

iii. **Modern-day city**: Sgurgola (FR)

iv. **Ancient city**: Anagnia/Signia

Plans: C6.I, C6.II, C6.III

The estate of Villa Magna is located c. 8 km to the south-west of Anagni (fig. C6.1), between the Monti Lepini, to the south, and the river Sacco, to the north, at a short distance from the *Compitum Anagninum* (crossroad between the *uia Latina* and the *uia Labicana* and seat of a sanctuary of the Hernici[885]). Geologically, the area combines volcanic soil, clays, and colluvial sediments, which prove particularly favourable to agriculture and viticulture. The interpretation of the villa as an imperial possession has been possible thanks to the extraordinary correspondence between the architectural configuration of the winery block and the text of Marcus Aurelius' letters which report a stay of the Antonine family in a villa in the territory of Anagnia.

Sources

i. **Texts:** In the late summer of either 144 or 145, Marcus Aurelius wrote three letters

[885] Gatti 2011.

to Fronto (Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Caes.* IV.4-6), in which he described in detail a stay of the imperial family at a countryside villa in the territory of *Anagnia*.

ii. **Inscriptions:** *CIL* X.5909 celebrates the restoration, on the part of Septimius Severus and Caracalla, of a road leading to a residence referred to as Villa Magna: the inscription attests that, still in AD 207, the villa was frequented by the imperial family. *CIL* X.5917 records the dedication of a statue to the imperial freedman Marcus Aurelius Sabinianus Euhodus, *quinquennalis* of the *collegium caplatorum* and honoured as the *patronus* of *Anagnia*.

Excavations, research, and scholarship[886]

The site has been investigated since the eighteenth century, but the majority of early works were mostly concerned with its medieval and post-medieval occupation, and particularly with the monastery of San Pietro. The earliest work which described the Roman villa in detail is Raffaele Ambrosi de Magistris' *Storia di Anagni* (1889), in which the residence is identified as the countryside estate mentioned in Marcus Aurelius' letters to Fronto discussed above; Ambrosi de Magistris' work was furthered by Pietro Zappasodi, who in his *Anagni attraverso i secoli* discussed the archaeological evidence from the villa in some detail. The early Christian vicissitudes of Villa Magna were addressed more thoroughly by Henry Stevenson Jr.

Systematic research on the territory of Anagni was carried out in the late 1960s by

[886] A detailed history of previous work on the site in Gatti 2016.

Matilde Mazzoleni, who published it in the *Forma Italiae* series;[887] a cursory mention of Villa Magna is found in Jeremy Rossiter's work on Roman farm buildings.[888] Throughout the last thirty years, the villa was addressed in works concerned with its medieval phases.[889]

Comprehensive research on Villa Magna was carried out between 2006 and 2010, as part of a project led jointly by the University of Pennsylvania, the British School at Rome, and the Soprintendenza ai Beni Archeologici del Lazio;[890] the gradiometric surveys which investigated the whole site have been followed by excavations focused on the majestic *cella uinaria* and on the medieval church.

Origin of the praedium

The origin of the *praedium* of Villa Magna is unclear, and cannot be ascertained from current evidence.

Description[891]

The plan of Villa Magna has been reconstructed based on standing remains, gradiometric surveys, and excavations. Most building units are arranged on a north-south ridge, which is met by an east/west ridge corresponding to the position of the

[887] Mazzolani 1969; on Villa Magna, 133–44, no. 104.
[888] Rossiter 1978, 39.
[889] De Minicis 1982; Motta 1982; Scarpignato 1982. In particular on the church Fiorani 1996, 19–37 and De Meo 1998, 41.
[890] Fentress *et al.* 2016.
[891] I entirely refer to *Ibid.* for details on specific features.

winery.

The residence was most likely accessed from the north, via a north/south side road which probably connected the property to the *Compitum Anagninum*, the path of which is followed by the modern-day via di Villamagna. A large complex (94 by 80 m) to the west of the road, which, according to the results of the gradiometric surveys, consisted of a peristyle with a sequence of rooms arranged on its northern side, has tentatively been interpreted as a high-level residential complex, possibly reserved for the imperial family. An apsidal building installed in its southern section at a later stage has been identified as a *cella uinaria*, based on a passage of Palladius' *Opus Agriculturae*.[892] To the south of the presumed imperial quarters and beyond an open courtyard which marked the spot where the two ridges met, surveys have revealed the shape of four buildings, the functions of which are unknown to date. To the south east of these features and beyond the colonnaded street, the gradiometric surveys have revealed the shape of another rectangular building, two consisting of sequences of similarly sized rooms (7.9 by 62. M) opening onto a larger space (11.7 by 37.5 m); as its ground plans has been compared to that of the *hospitalia* at Hadrian's Villa, the building has tentatively been interpreted as lodgings reserved for guests or for senior officials of the imperial guard.

The access road bent to the south-east after the courtyard, and continued as a colonnaded street for c. 175 m until a large block—the southernmost building unit of the villa—which included a monumental winery, a *balneum*, and a dining hall; the block stood on substructures which served also as storage facilities (plan C6.IV–V).

[892] Palladius, *Opus Agriculturae* I.18.1.

The complex could not be excavated entirely (fig. C6.2), as the construction of a farmhouse and of a granary in the nineteenth century partly reused the Roman features; its ground plan was reconstructed tentatively based on the assumed symmetry of the features to the left and right of the *cella uinaria*. The colonnaded street seems to have led to the formal entrance of the winery block (plan C6.IV), on its southern side (corridor 17); it has been argued that the complex could also be accessed from the north by the workers in charge of carrying the grapes. The corridor 17 opened, to the west, onto the space 18, which served as access and distribution area for the *balneum* (rooms 9 and 17-26, fig. C6.3); to the north, it continued as a luxuriously decorated, shallow staircase (5, fig. C6.4), which led into the winery proper. The productive spaces included a *cella uinaria* (17.7 by 8.7 m) which provided spaces for 38 *dolia defossa* (fig. C6.5), arranged in four rows to the south of the *calcatorium*; the functions of the four rooms on either side of the press-room have not been ascertained. The *cella uinaria* had a unique feature which marked it as an extraordinarily luxurious space: it was entirely paved in *opus spicatum* of *marmor chium* (*portasanta*). Furthermore, it seems that two of the *dolia* had a collar of *marmor lacedaemon* (*serpentino*), which may have served to mark them as containing wine of a higher quality, possibly reserved for the emperor.

To the south of the *cella uinaria* is a large exedra (diameter 17.4 m), facing north (fig. C6.6). Thanks to the letters in which Marcus Aurelius describes to Fronto his stay at Villa Magna, the exedra has been interpreted as an apsidal dining hall, which allowed the installation of a *stibadium* couch.

To the east of the presumed imperial quarters, beyond the access road, there lay another feature consisting of three sequences of squared, similarly sized rooms measuring, on average, c. 10 m^2, arranged on either side of a narrow (3.5 m) alley (fig. C6.7). The evidence for domestic pottery and the complete absence of decoration led to its identification as a low-level dwelling block for workers employed in the estate. Despite the absence of collars or chains, which would have allowed arguments on the legal status of these workers, the building gives the impression that considerable control was exercised on its dwellers, who were not allowed to circulate easily.

C. 12 m to the south of these barracks, a still-standing feature behind an electricity switching station has been interpreted as a nymphaeum, installed on the façade of a water reservoir; the reservoir has been linked with the hypocaust bricks collected during field walking, which offer evidence for the presence of a no-longer existing bath complex, presumably sited to the east of the nymphaeum. Villa Magna was equipped with two other water reservoirs, located to the east and to the south east of the winery block.

Phases – Chronology

The features revealed by the excavations have been attributed to at least three building phases dated between the late Trajanic period and the late third century AD, based on brick stamps and on structural stratigraphy. The building units identified in the gradiometric surveys could not be dated accurately.

The construction of the imperial residence has been dated to the late Trajanic/early

Hadrianic period; the features which have been attributed to this phase include the presumed imperial quarters, the winery block, and the southernmost water reservoir.

Alterations to the villa, as well as building activity in the area, are attested during the Severan period. Septimius and Caracalla are celebrated for having paid for the restoration of a road leading to a residence referred to as *Villa Magna*.[893] The construction of the workers' barracks and of the nymphaeum to the south of them have been attributed to this phase; likewise, the presumed bath complex suggested by the hypocaust bricks has tentatively been dated to this period. Further alterations have been identified in the winery block. The installation of a semi-circular corridor to the east of the imperial stair resulted in the definition of an open area between the two features, which has been interpreted as a garden; the corridor led to a latrine, added in the same timeframe. It seems that the exedra 2 lost its role of dining facility, and was turned into a functional space. Alterations identified in the winery seem to attest that the productive capacity of the complex was enhanced, whilst formal areas lost their functions; this datum has been linked with the simultaneous construction of the workers' barracks, despite it not being possible to ascertain where the workers were actually employed. The *balneum* went out of use, and its rooms were turned into spaces for storage. A water reservoir was added to the south-east of the winery complex.

The southern block was abandoned and spoliated from the mid-third century onwards; nonetheless, evidence for occupation has been collected in the remainder of the residence. Alterations are attested in the workers' barracks throughout the third

[893] *CIL* X.5909.

century; a rectangular, apsidal building was installed to the south of the presumed imperial quarters, which has been interpreted as a *cella uinaria*, based on a passage from Palladius' *Opus Agriculturae*. Finds and structural stratigraphy suggested dating it to the final decades of the third century AD.

The site was subsequently abandoned, and re-occupied in the Early Middle Ages. Since the period is beyond the scope of this thesis, I refer the reader to the relevant section in the monograph on Villa Magna.[894]

Decoration

The 2006-2010 excavations brought to light the marble fragments of at least twenty statues, a sarcophagus, ad evidences for pieces of furniture and architectural decoration. Evidence for mosaic, *opus sectile*, and wall painting was largely collected in the southern block.

Statues include both mythological subjects and portraits of members of the imperial family; their fragments were found scattered on the site after the destruction of the statues and of the sarcophagus: their original position is hard to ascertain.

In the winery block, a combination of *opus sectile* and wall paintings served to mark the formal spaces, which have therefore been interpreted as reserved for members of the imperial family and for high-ranking guests. The most impressive feature is the flooring of the *cella uinaria*, which consisted entirely of an *opus spicatum* pattern of

[894] Fentress *et al.* 2016, 229–441.

marmor chium (portasanta) marble. A luxurious marble veneer decorated the walls of the monumental access to the winery (corridor 17 – staircase 5).

Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Caes.* IV.4 (AD 144/145)

1. Postquam vehiculum inscendi, postquam te salutavi, iter non adeo incommodum fecimus, sed paululum pluvia aspersi sumus. Sed priusquam ad villam venimus, Anagniam devertimus, mille fere passus a via. Deinde id oppidum antiquum vidimus, minutulum quidem sed multas res in se antiquas hab<ens> et aedes sanctasque caerimonias supra modum. Nullus angulus fuit, ubi delubrum aut fanum aut templum non sit; praeterea multi libri lintei, quod ad sacra adtinet. Deinde in porta, quom exiimus, ibi scriptum erat bifariam sic: Flamen sume samentum.Rogavi aliquem ex popularibus quid illud verbum esset? Ait lingua Hernica pelli culam de hostia, quam in apicem suum flamen quom in urbem introeat imponit. Multa adeo alia didicimus quae vellemus scire; verum id solum est quod nolimus, quom tu a nobis abes: ea nobis maxima sollicitudo est.

2. Nunc tu postquam inde profectus es, utrumne in Aureliam an in Campaniam abiisti? Fac scribas mihi et an vindemias inchoaveris, et an ad villam multitudinem librorum tuleris, et illud quoque, an me desideres—quod ego | stulte requiro, quom tu per te facis. Nunc tu si me desideras atque si me amas, litteras tuas ad me frequenter mittes, quod mihi "solacium atque fomentum" sit. Nam decem partibus tuas litteras legere malim quam omnes Massicos aut Gauranos palmites: nam Signini quidem isti nimis rancidos racemos et acidos acinos habent, quod vinum malim quam mustum bibere. Praeterea istas uvas multo commodius passas quam puberes manducare; nam profecto malim eas pedibus calcare quam dentibus comesse. Sed tamen propitiae placataeque sint, et mihi pro istis iocularibus bonam veniam duint. Vale, mihi homo amicissime, suavissime, disertissime, magister dulcissime. Quom videbis in dolio mustum fervere, in mentem tibi veniat mihi sic in pectore tuum desiderium scatere et abundare et spumas facere. Semper vale.

1. After getting into the carriage, when I had said good-bye to you, we did not have such a bad journey, though we got a slight wetting from the rain. But before reaching our country house we turned aside to Anagnia, about a mile off the main road. Then we inspected that ancient township, a tiny place, indeed, but containing many antiquities and buildings, and religious ceremonies beyond number. There was not a corner without its chapel or shrine or temple; many books too, written on linen, and this has a religious significance. Then on the gate, as we came out, we found an inscription twice over to this effect: Flamen sume samentum. I asked one of the townsfolk what the last word meant. He said it was Hernican for the pelt of the victim, which the priest draws over his peaked cap on entering the city. Quite a number of other things we learnt which we were glad to know; but the one thing we are not glad of is that it was in your absence: that is our chief concern.

2. Now for yourself, did you, when you left us, go to the Aurelian district or into Campania? Mind you tell me, and whether you have begun the vintage, and whether you have brought crowds of books to your country house, yes, and this, too, whether you miss me; and yet that is a foolish question, for you need no reminder to do that. Well, then, if you do miss me and do love me, you will write to me often to console me and cheer me up. For I would ten times rather have the run of your letters than of all the vineyards of the Massic and the Gauran Mount: for your clusters of Signia are too nauseous and their berries too bitter, wherefore I would prefer their wine to their must for drinking. Besides it is much more agreeable to masticate the grapes

parched than pulpy, for beyond question I would rather stamp them with my feet than champ them with my teeth. Yet may they be gracious and forgiving, and for these pleasantries a kindly pardon grant. Farewell, to me most affectionate, most delightful, most eloquent of men, master most sweet. When you see the must fermenting in the cask, let it remind you that my longing for you wells up thus and overflows and foams in my breast. Fare ever well.

Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Caes.* IV.5 (AD 144/145)

Salve mi magister gravissime.

1. Nos valemus. Ego hodie ab hora nona noctis in secundam diei bene disposito cibo studivi; a secunda in tertiam soleatus libentissime inambulavi ante cubiculum meum. Deinde | calceatus sagulo sumpto—nam ita adesse nobis indictum erat—abii salutatum Dominum meum.

2. Ad venationem profecti sumus, fortia facinora fecimus, apros captos esse fando audiimus, nam videndi quidem nulla facultas fuit. Clivom tamen satis arduom successimus; inde postmeridie domum recepimus. Ego me ad libellos. Igitur calceis detractis, vestimentis positis, in lectulo ad duas horas commoratus sum. Legi Catonis orationem De bonis Pulchrae, et aliam qua tribuno diem dixit. Io, inquis puero tuo, vade quantum potes, de Apollinis bibliothecabus has mihi orationes apporta. Frustra mittis, nam et isti libri me secuti sunt. Igitur Tiberianus bibliothecarius tibi subigitandus est; aliquid in eam rem insumendum, quod mihi ille, ut ad urbem venero, aequa divisione impertiat. Sed ego orationibus his perlectis, paululum misere scripsi, quod autlymphis aut Volcano dicarem: ἀληθῶς ἀτμχῶς σήμερον γέγραπταί μοι, venatoris plane aut vindemiatoris studioium, qui iubilis suis cubiculum meum perstrepunt, causidicali prorsum odio et taedio. Quid hoc dixi? Immo recte dixi, nam meus quidem magister orator | est.

3. Ego videor mihi perfrixisse: quod mane sole-atus ambulavi an quod male scripsi, non scio. Certe homo alioqui pituitosus, hodie tamen multo muccu-lentior mihi esse videor. Itaque oleum in caput infundam et incipiam dormire: nam in lucernam hodie nullam stillam inicere cogito, ita me equitatio et sternutatio defatigavit. Valebis mihi, magister carissime et dulcissime, quem ego—ausim dicere—magis quam ipsam Romam desidero.

Hail, most reverend master.

1. We are well. By a satisfactory arrangement of meals I worked from three o'clock a.m. till eight. For the next hour I paced about in slippers most contentedly before my bedroom. Then putting on my boots and donning my cloak—for we had been told to come in that dress—I went off to pay my respects to my Lord.

2. We set out for the chase and did doughty deeds. We did hear say that boars had been bagged, for we were not lucky enough to see any. However, we climbed quite a steep hill; then in the afternoon we came home. I to my books: so taking off my boots and doffing my dress I passed nearly two hours on my couch, reading Cato's speech On the property of Pulchra, and another in which he impeached a tribune. Ho, you cry to your boy, go as fast as you can and fetch me those speeches from the libraries of Apollo! It is no use your sending, for those volumes, among others, have followed me here. So you must get round the librarian of Tiberius's library: a

little douceur will be necessary, in which he and I can go shares when I come back to town. Well, these speeches read, I wrote a little wretched stuff, fit to be dedicated to the deities of water and fire: truly to-day I have been unlucky in my writing, the lucubration of a sportsman or a vintager, such as those whose catches ring through my bedroom, a noise every whit as hateful and wearisome as that of the law-courts. What is this I have said? Nay, 'tis true, for my master is an orator.

3. I think I must have taken a chill, whether from walking about in slippers in the early morning, or from writing badly, I know not. I only know that, rheumy enough at all times, I seem to be more drivelling than ever to-day. So 1 will pour the oil on my head and go off to sleep, for not a drop of it do I intend to pour into my lamp to-day, so tired am I with riding and sneezing. Farewell for my sake, dearest and sweetest of masters, whom I would make bold to say I long to see more than Rome itself.

Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Caes.* IV.6 (AD 144/145)

Salve mi magister dulcissime.

1. Nos valemus. Ego aliquantulum prodormivi propter perfrictiunculam, quae videtur sedata esse. Ego ab undecima noctis in tertiam diei partim legi ex Agricultura Catonis partim scripsi, minus misere mehercule quam heri. Inde salutato patre meo, aqua mulsa sorbenda usque ad gulam et reiectanda fauces fovi, potius quam dicerem gargarissavi: nam est apud Novium, credo, et alibi. Sed faucibus curatis abii ad patrem meum et immolanti adstiti. Deinde ad merendam itum. Quid me censes prandisse? panis tantulum, quom conchim caepas et maenas bene praegnatas alios vorantes viderem. Deinde uvis metendis operam dedi|mus et consudavimus et iubilavimus et aliquot, ut ait auctor, reliquimus altipendulos vindemiae superstites. Ab hora sexta domum rediimus.

2. Paululum studui atque id ineptum. Deinde cum matercula mea supra torum sedente multum garrivi. Meus sermo hic erat: Quid existimas modo meum Frontonem facere? Tum illa: Quid autem tu meam Gratiam? Tum ego: Quid autem passerculam nostram Gratiam minusculam? Dum ea fabulamur atque altercamur, uter alter<utr>um vestrum magis amaret, discus crepuit, id est, pater meus in balneum transisse nuntiatus est. Loti igitur in torculari cenavimus: non loti in torculari, sed loti cenavimus; et rusticos cavillantes audivimus libenter. Inde reversus, priusquam me in latus converto ut stertam, meum pensum explico et diei rationem meo suavissimo magistro reddo, quem si possem magis desiderare, libenter plusculum macerarer. Valebis mihi, Fronto, ubiubi es, mellitissime, meus amor, mea voluptas. Quid mihi tecum est? Amo absentem.

Hail, my sweetest of masters.

1. We are well. I slept somewhat late owing to my slight cold, which seems now to have subsided. So from five a.m. till nine I spent the time partly in reading some of Cato's Agriculture and partly in writing not quite such wretched stuff, by heavens, as yesterday. Then, after paying my respects to my father, I relieved my throat, I will not say by gargling—though the word gargarissois, I believe, found in Novius and elsewhere—but by swallowing honey water as far as the gullet and ejecting it again. After easing my throat I went off to my

father and attended him at a sacrifice. Then we went to luncheon. What do you think I ate? A wee bit of bread, though I saw others devouring beans, onions, and herrings full of roe. We then worked hard at grape-gathering, and had a good sweat, and were merry and, as the poet says, still left some clusters hanging high as gleanings of the vintage. After six o'clock we came home.

2. I did but little work and that to no purpose. Then I had a long chat with my little mother as she sat on the bed. My talk was this: What do you think my Fronto is now doing? Then she: And what do you think my Gratia is doing? Then I: And what do you think our little sparrow, the wee Gratia, is doing? Whilst we were chattering in this way and disputing which of us two loved the one or other of you two the better, the gong sounded, an intimation that my father had gone to his bath. So we had supper after we had bathed in the oil-press room; I do not mean bathed in the oil-press room, but when we had bathed, had supper there, and we enjoyed hearing the yokels chaffing one another. After coming back, before I turn over and snore, get my task done and give my dearest of masters an account of the day's doings, and if I could miss him more, I would not grudge wasting away a little more. Farewell, my Fronto, wherever you are, most honey-sweet, my love, my delight. How is it between you and me? I love you and you are away.

CIL X.5909 (AD 207) – Commemorative inscription

Imp(erator) Caesar divi Marci / Antonini Pii Germ(anici) Sarmatici / filius divi Commodi frater divi / Antonini Pii nepos divi Hadriani / pronep(os) divi Traiani Parthici / abn(epos) divi Nervae adnep(os) / L(ucius) Septimius Severus Pius Perti/nax Aug(ustus) Arabic(us) Adiab(enicus) Parthic(us) max(imus) / pontif(ex) max(imus) trib(unicia) pot(estate) XV imp(erator) XII co(n)s(ul) III p(ater) p(atriae) et / Imp(erator) Caesar Imp(eratoris) Caesaris L(uci) / Septimi Severi Pii Pertinacis Aug(usti) Arabici / Adiab(enici) Part(hici) max(imi) fil(ius) divi Marci Anto/nini Pii Germ(anici) Sarm(atici) nepos divi Anto/nini Pii pronepos divi Hadriani / abnepos divi Traiani Parth(hici) adne<p=R>(os) M(arcus) Aurelius Antoninus Aug(ustus) / Pius Felix pontif(ex) trib(unicia) pot(estate) X imp(erator) II co(n)s(ul) III des(ignatus) (!) fortissimus ac super / omnes felicissimus / princeps / viam quae ducit in villam magnam / silice sua pecunia straverunt

The Emperor Caesar, son of the divine Marcus Antoninus Pius Germanicus Sarmaticus, brother of the divine Commodus, grandson of Antoninus Pius, great-grandson of the divine Hadrian, great-great-grandson of the divine Trajan Parthicus, great-great-great-grandson of the divine Nerva, Lucius Septimius Severus Pius Pertinax Augustus Arabicus Adiabenicus Parthicus Maximus, pontifex maximus, tribune of the *plebs* for the fifteenth time, (acclaimed as) emperor for the twelfth time, consul for the third, father of the nation, and the Emperor Caesar, son of the emperor Caesar Lucius Septimius Severus Pius Pertinax Augustus Arabicus Adiabenicus Parthicus Maximus, grandson of the divine Marcus Antoninus Pius Germanicus Sarmaticus, great-grandson of the divine Antoninus Pius, great-great-grandson of the divine Hadrian, great-

great-great-grandson of the divine Trajan Parthicus, Marcus Aurelius Antoninus Augustus Pius Felix, pontifex, tribune of the *plebs* for the tenth time, (acclaimed as) emperor for the second time, consul designated for the second time, the strongest and overall happiest first senator, (they) laid out by means of their own money the stone road which leads to Villa Magna.

CIL X.5917 (AD 161–200) – Honorary inscription (statue base)

Euhodi / M(arco) Aurel(io) Sabiniano / Augg(ustorum) lib(erto) patrono / civitatis Anagninor(um) / itemq(ue) collegi(i) caplato/rum decuriali decuriae / lictoriae popularis denuntiatorum / itemq(ue) gerulor(um) sed et decemviralis / s(enatus) p(opulus)q(ue) A(nagninus) erga amorem patriae / et civium quod thermas longa incuria / neglectas sua pecunia restituerit / statuam ex leg(atis) suis ponend(am) censuer(unt) / ob cuius dedic(ationem) dedit decur(ionibus) ⌊(denarios) V sexv(iris) / ⌊(denarios) II pop(ulo) ⌊(denarium) I et epul(um) suffic(iens)

(Statue) of Euhodus. For Marcus Aurelius Sabinianus, freedman of the emperors, patron of the Anagnian community and also of the collegium of wine/oil distributors, decurialis for the order of the lictors of announcers and likewise of porters, but also a former decemvir. On account of his love for his hometown and its citizens, because he restored with his own money the baths that had long been neglected through carelessness, the senate and people of Anagni decreed that a statue, (financed) from his legates, be put up to him. On the occasion of the dedication [he gave] 5 denarii to the decurions, 2 to the seviri, and 1 denarius to (each) of the people, and a public banquet sufficient for all.

C7.
'Villa of the Antonines' at Lanvvivm

Location

i. **Modern-day region**: Latium

ii. **Ancient region**: Latium et Campania (ager Lanuuinus)

iii. **Modern-day city**: Lanuvio/Genzano di Roma (RM)

iv. **Ancient city**: Lanuuium

Plans: C7.I

The site identified as the residence where both Antoninus Pius and Commodus were born, respectively in AD 86 and 161, lies on the south-western slopes of the Alban Hills, in the territory of the modern-day municipalities of Lanuvio and Genzano di Roma (fig. C7.1). The villa is located at the eighteenth mile of the *uia Appia*, c. 500 m to the south of it, to which it was linked by a side road. Inscriptions of imperial freedmen serving as *procuratores* suggest the presence of an imperial villa in the area; the identification of the site as an imperial villa, provisional yet extremely likely, is suggested by the series of portraits of members of the Antonine family found in the area, as well as by the possible correspondence between a passage of Commodus' biography—which mentions that the emperor used to perform *uenationes* in the amphitheatre of Lanuuium—and the small amphitheatre identified in the site of the villa.

Sources

i. **Texts:** An imperial villa in the *ager Lanuuinus* is attested as early as Augustus, who, according to Suet., *Aug*. LXXII.2, was accustomed to spend time there. It is unlikely, however, that Augustus' villa was the same where Antoninus Pius was allegedly born in AD 86 (SHA, *Ant*. *Pius* I.8), and where the Antonine family often stayed (M. Aur., *Med.* I.16; Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Caes.* II.6.3): Antoninus Pius was adopted by Hadrian as late as AD 138. A particular connection with the residence of Lanuuium is attested for Commodus, who not only was born there (SHA, *Comm*. I.2-3), but used to kill beasts '*Lanuuii in amphitheatro*', to the point that he was flatteringly called 'Roman Hercules' (SHA, *Comm*. VIII.5, XVI.6).

ii. **Inscriptions:** On current evidence, no epigraphic evidence directly relevant to the villa is known. Richard Neudecker, however, reported that Winckelmann mentioned that a *fistula aquaria* reading the name *Faustinae Nostrae* was found in the area.[895] The inscription remains unidentified to date. *CIL* XIV.2104 reports the dedication of a statues to Titus Aurelius Aphrodisius, freedman of Antoninus Pius and *procurator Augusti a rationibus*, by the senate and the people of Lanuuium. Two other imperial freedmen serving as *procuratores* are mentioned in *CIL* XIV.2087 and *CIL* XIV.2106.

[895] Neudecker 1988, 165.

Excavations, research, and scholarship[896]

The site has been known since the seventeenth century. In a drawing dated to 1637, which has been attributed to Domenico Parasacchi, ancient structures are reported along the via Appia, near the road leading from 'Gianzano' to 'Civita Lavinea' (respectively, modern-day Genzano and Lanuvio).[897] The existence of a suburban villa belonging to the Antonine emperors has been presumed since the early eighteenth century, when excavations carried out in the area yielded a remarkable number of marble portraits of members of the Antonine family.[898] The site was identified as the *uilla Lanuuina Antoninorum Imperatorum* by Giuseppe R. Volpi, in 1732.[899] The remains of the villa were mapped in the plan of the property of the duke Sforza Cesarini (1730), in which the Roman vestiges lay. Further excavations were carried out in 1826, 1854, and 1884,[900] but have not been documented exhaustively. In his overview on the history and archaeology of Lanuuium, Guy B. Colburn provided a description of the remains attributed to the villa of the Antonines, which included a large concrete platform supported by barrel vaults, granite columns, capitals, and part of a marble statue.[901]

Modern excavations were undertaken as late as the 1980s, when Giuseppina Ghini

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[896] An extensive overview of previous research in Lilli 2001, 38–42.

[897] Frutaz 1972, vol. II, XXIX. 2a–c, 80.

[898] Papini 2014; Baldassarri 2008. The findspots of these statues are unknown on current evidence. Edward Wright reported that the portrait busts were found in 'several niches in one room pav'd with mosaic' (Wright 1730, 314); this feature remains unidentified to date.

[899] Volpi 1732, xvii.

[900] Fiorelli 1884, 240.

[901] Colburn 1914.

and Nicoletta Cassieri, on the occasion of refurbishments of the still-extant features, carried out some investigations in the bath complex of the villa.[902] From 2010 onwards, the Montclair State University has been leading a comprehensive research project in the villa, which combines archaeological excavations, geophysical surveys, and archaeometric analyses to finds.[903]

Origin of the praedium

As mentioned above, it is unlikely that the villa of Lanuuium where Augustus often stayed is the same residence where Antonius Pius was born in AD 86: since he was adopted by Hadrian in AD 138, we must assume that the *uilla lanuuina* mentioned in SHA, *Ant. Pius* I.8 was a possession of one of his parents, though we cannot be more precise as to which. The residence of Augustus remains unidentified to date.

Description

The villa has not been excavated extensively, and only three building units have been identified so far: a bath complex, an amphitheatre, and a sequence of formal spaces to the north.

The bath complex is the only feature which has remained visible throughout the

[902] Cassieri and Ghini 1990.

[903] Preliminary results have been published in Chatr Aryamontri and Renner 2017; Chatr Aryamontri *et al.* 2016; Chatr Aryamontri and Renner 2014; Chatr Aryamontri, Renner and Cecchini 2014; Chatr Aryamontri, Renner and Cecchini 2013. I am grateful to Deborah Chatr Aryamontri and Tim Renner for the kindness with which they welcomed me to visit their excavations; as they requested that I did not take pictures of the site, I can only refer to those available in the published works.

centuries, being reported and mapped in a number of drawings from the eighteenth century onwards. Built in *opus mixtum*, the building stood on two storeys, with substructures and functional spaces on the ground floor and the proper baths on the upper level. Ghini and Cassieri investigated the hot suite, and identified the *caldarium*, the *tepidarium*, and a large pool, itself equipped with a dedicated heating system. The unheated areas are not preserved.

To the south of the baths are the remains of a curvilinear feature, whose elliptical shape (51 by 40 m) has been revealed by geophysical surveys. Its original interpretation as a nymphaeum, based on the proximity to the baths, has recently been rejected: the building is a small amphitheatre. Excavations carried out in the south-eastern quarter of the building have revealed an elaborate system of underground rooms and aisles, accessed from a spiral staircase.

C. 150 m to the north-east of the amphitheatre, excavations have brought to light another building unit, decorated with elaborate floor mosaics. The main feature is a large, circular space (c. 22 m in diameter), with four crescent-shaped niches at its corners; to the north are two rectangular rooms. This building unit lies c. 12 m above the ground level of the amphitheatre and of the baths, in a commanding position towards the plain, and enjoys a view as far as the sea. Based on their elaborate decoration and position, the rooms have been interpreted as formal spaces; a more accurate definition of their functions is not possible on current evidence.

Phases – Chronology

Brick stamps and ceramic finds suggest a context of the central decades of the second century AD. This chronological range is compatible with the information provided by literary evidence, according to which the residence was frequented extensively by members of the Antonine family. Paola Baldassarri has argued that the villa also had a Republican phase, but her hypothesis is not supported by any evidence.[904] If the villa is the findspot of the cycle of imperial portraits brought to light in the eighteenth century, we have evidence for its uninterrupted occupation at least until the age of Severus Alexander.

Decoration

The most impressive decorative element of the villa of Lanuuium is—provided that they were actually found in the residence—the gallery of imperial portraits, in which eight members of the imperial family are represented: Antoninus Pius with cuirass and cloak (dated to AD 138), Faustina the Elder (dated to AD 138-141), Marcus Aurelius as a young boy (before AD 140), Marcus Aurelius with cuirass and cloak (dated to AD 169 or slightly later), Faustina the Younger (AD 161-170), Commodus with tunic and cloak (AD 175?), a possible portrait of Annius Verus (dated to the late second century AD), and a bust of Severus Alexander wearing a *toga contabulata* (dated between AD 222 and AD 224).

[904] Baldassarri 2008.

This cycle of portraits must have been assembled over several decades. Baldassarri identified four different moments: the portraits of Antoninus Pius, Faustina the Elder and of Marcus Aurelius as a young boy belong to the earliest phase (the years immediately following Antoninus Pius' accession to the throne); Faustina the Younger and Annius Verus have been ascribed to a slightly later stage (around AD 170); the busts of Marcus Aurelius as emperor and of Commodus as a young boy were added after AD 175; Severus Alexander is the latest emperor to be represented in this sequence, his portrait being dated to AD 222-224.

Besides sculpture, the excavations led by the Montclair State University have revealed elaborate mosaics in the formal features to the north, as well as evidence for wall paintings and *opus sectile*. Marble veneers included white and coloured marbles, such as Proconnesian, *marmor lacedaemon (serpentino)*, porphyry, *marmor numidicum (giallo antico)*, *marmor carystium (cipollino)*, and *marmor chium (africano)*. It seems that the *opus sectile* combined both marble and glass elements.

Suet., *Aug.* LXXII.2

Ex secessibus praecipue frequentavit maritima insulasque Campaniae aut proxima urbi oppida, Lanuvium, Praeneste, Tibur, ubi etiam in porticibus Herculis templi persaepe ius dixit.

For retirement he went most frequently to places by the sea and the islands of Campania, or to the towns near Rome, such as Lanuvium, Praeneste or Tibur, where he very often held court in the colonnades of the Temple of Hercules.

SHA, *Ant. Pius* I.8 (AD 86)

Ipse Antoninus Pius natus est XIII. kal. Oct. Flavio Domitiano XII. et Cornelio Dolabella consulibus in villa Lanuvina.

Antoninus himself was born at an estate at Lanuvium on the thirteenth day before the Kalends of October in the twelfth consulship of Domitian and first of Cornelius Dolabella.

M. Aur., *Med.* I.16

Οὐκ [ἐν] ἀωρὶ λούστης, οὐχὶ φιλοικοδόμος, οὐ περὶ τὰς ἐδωδὰς ἐπινοητής, οὐ περὶ ἐσθήτων ὑφὰς καὶ χρόας, οὐ περὶ σωμάτων ὥρας. † ἡ ἀπὸ Λωρίου στολὴ ἀνάγουσα ἀπὸ τῆς κάτω ἐπαύλεως, καὶ τῶν ἐν Λανουβίῳ τὰ πολλά.† τῷ τελώνῃ ἐν Τούσκλοις παραιτουμένῳ ὡς ἐχρήσατο, καὶ πᾶς ὁ τοιοῦτος τρόπος.

He did not bathe at all hours; he did not build for the love of building; he gave no thought to his food, or to the texture and colour of his clothes, or the comeliness of his slaves. His robe came up from Lorium, his country-seat in the plains, and Lanuvium supplied his wants for the most part. Think of how he dealt with the customs' officer at Tusculum when the latter apologized, and it was a type of his usual conduct.

Fronto, *Ep. ad M. Caes.* II.6.3

Caelum Neapolitanum plane commodum, | sed vehementer varium. In singulis scripulis horarum frigidius aut tepidius aut horridius fit. Iam primum media nox tepida, Laurentina; tum autem gallicinium frigidulum, Lanuvinum; iam conticinium atque matutinum atque diluculum usque ad solis ortum gelidum, ad Algidum maxime; exim antemeridiem apricum, Tusculanum; tum meridies fervida, Puteolana; at enim ubi sol lautum ad Oceanum profectus <est>, fit demum caelum modestius, quod genus Tiburtinum; id vespera et concubia nocte, dum se intempesta nox, ut ait M. Porcius, praecipitat, eodem modo perseverat. Sed quid ego, qui me paucula scripturum promisi, deliramenta Masuriana congero? Igitur vale, magister benignissime, consul amplissime, et me, quantum ames, tantum desidera.

The climate of Naples is decidedly pleasant, but violently variable. Every two minutes it

gets colder or warmer or rawer. To begin with, midnight is warm, as at Laurentum; then, however, the cockcrow watch chilly, as at Lanuvium; soon the hush of night and dawn and twilight till sunrise cold, for all the world like Algidus; anon the forenoon sunny, as at Tusculum; following that a noon as fierce as at Puteoli; but, indeed, when the sun has gone to his bath in Ocean, the temperature at last becomes more moderate, such as we get at Tibur; this continues the same during the evening and first sleep of night, until, as M. Porcius says, the dead of night falls swiftly down. But why do I string together these Masurian banalities, when I started with saying 1 should write a few words only? So farewell, most kindly of masters, most honourable of consuls, and let your love be the measure of your longing for me.

SHA, *Comm.* I.2-3 (AD 161)

Ipse autem natus est apud Lanuvium cum fratre Antonino gemino pridie kal. Sept. patre patruoque consulibus, ubi et avus maternus dicitur natus. Faustina cum esset Commodo cum fratre praegnans, visa est in somnis serpentes parere, sed ex his unum ferociorem.

As for Commodus himself, he was born, with his twin brother Antoninus, at Lanuvium—where his mother's father was born, it is said—on the day before the Kalends of September, while his father and uncle were consuls. Faustina, when pregnant with Commodus and his brother, dreamed that she gave birth to serpents, one of which, however, was fiercer than the other.

SHA, *Comm.* VIII.5

Appellatus est etiam Romanus Hercules, quod feras Lanuvii in amphitheatro occidisset. erat enim haec illi consuetudo, ut domi bestias interficeret.

He was called also the Roman Hercules, on the ground that he had killed wild beasts in the amphitheatre at Lanuvium; and, indeed, it was his custom to kill wild beasts on his own estate.

SHA, *Comm.* XVI.6

Prodigia eius imperio et publice et privatim haec facta sunt: crinita stella apparuit. vestigia deorum in foro visa sunt exeuntia. et ante bellum desertorum caelum arsit. et repentina caligo ac tenebra in Circo kalendis Ianuariis oborta; et ante lucem fuerant etiam incendiariae aves ac dirae. de Palatio ipse ad Caelium montem in Vectilianas aedes migravit, negans se in Palatio posse dormire. Ianus geminus sua sponte apertus est, et Anubis simulacrum marmoreum moveri visum est. Herculis signum aeneum sudavit in Minucia per plures dies. bubo etiam supra cubiculum eius deprehensa est tam Romae quam Lanuvii. ipse autem prodigium non leve sibi fecit; nam cum in gladiatoris occisi vulnus manum misisset, ad caput sibi detersit, et contra consuetudinem paenulatos iussit spectatores non togatos ad munus convenire, quod funeribus solebat, ipse in pullis vestimentis praesidens. galea eius bis per portam Libitinensem elata est.

The prodigies that occurred in his reign, both those which concerned the state and those which affected Commodus personally, were as follows. A comet appeared. Footprints of the gods were seen in the Forum departing from it. Before the war of the deserters the heavens were ablaze. On the Kalends of January a swift coming mist and darkness arose in the Circus; and before dawn there had already been fire-birds and ill-boding portents. Commodus himself moved his residence from the Palace to the Vectilian Villa on the Caelian hill, saying that he could not sleep in the Palace. The twin gates of the temple of Janus opened of their own accord, and a marble image of Anubis was seen to move. In the Minucian Portico a bronze statue of Hercules sweated for several days. An owl, moreover, was caught above his bed-chamber both at Lanuvium and at Rome. He was himself responsible for no inconsiderable an omen relating to himself; for after he had plunged his hand into the wound of a slain gladiator he wiped it on his own head, and again, contrary to custom, he ordered the spectators to attend his gladiatorial shows clad not in togas but in cloaks, a practice usual at funerals, while he himself presided in the vestments of a mourner. Twice, moreover, his helmet was borne through the Gate of Libitina.

CIL XIV.2104 (AD 138–200) – Honorary inscription (statue base)

T(ito) Aurelio / Aug(usti) l(iberto) / Aphrodisio / proc(uratori) Aug(usti) / a rationibus / s(enatus) p(opulus)q(ue) L(anivinus) / dedic(ata) Q(uinto) Varinio Q(uinti) f(ilio) / Maec(ia) Laevinio aed(ile)

For Titus Aurelius Aphrodisius, freedman of Augustus, *procurator* of Augustus for the central fiscal administration, the senate and the people of Lanuvium (decreed). Dedicated by the aedilis Quintus Varinius Laevinius, son of Quintus, of the Maecia tribus.

CIL XIV.2106 – Honorary inscription

] / torquibus(?) [3] / Hesperi Aug(usti) lib(erto) proc(uratori) [
] / with collars? [3] / for Hesper, freedman of Augustus, *procurator* [

CIL XIV.2087 (AD 151–200) – Dedicatory base

Euphrates Aug(usti) lib(ertus) / proc(urator) ob effecta sibi / in hac statione / annua centena / Genio huius loci / d(onum) d(edit)

Euphrates, freedman of Augustus, *procurator*, on account of the annual payment of 100,000 HS that he received in this post, gave (this) as a gift to the Genius of this place.

C8.
Villa of Lucius Verus

Location

i. **Modern-day region**: Latium

ii. **Ancient region**: Latium et Campania

iii. **Modern-day city**: Roma, eighth km of the via Cassia

iv. **Ancient city**: Roma, fifth mile of the *uia Clodia*[905]

Plans: C8.I, C8.II, C8.III, C8.IV, C8.V

The villa of Lucius Verus is located on the modern-day via Cassia, in a locality called 'Acqua Traversa[906]' after a small watercourse—the fosso di Acqua Traversa—which flows into the Tiber near the *uia Flaminia*, in the area referred to as 'Due Ponti' (fig. C8.1). The residence is built on a low tuff hill that overlooks the *uia Cassia*, and of which it exploit the western, southern, and eastern slopes. The identification of the site as an imperial villa is suggested by a series of portraits of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus found the area, which corroborate the cursory mention of the *uilla* which Lucius Verus, according to his biographer, built on the *uia Clodia*.

Sources

i. **Texts:** According to the biography of Lucius Verus, the emperor, after he returned

[905] The *uia Clodia* and the *uia Cassia* followed the same path for the first eleven miles from Rome (Vistoli 2005, 41 and note 108). Caserta 2015, 179–80 on the path of the ancient *uia Cassia*.

[906] The area is alternatively referred to as 'Acqua Traversa' or 'Acquatraversa' in modern scholarship.

from the Parthian war in AD 166, built an 'exceedingly notorious villa'[907] on the *uia Clodia*, where he is reported to have spent some time indulging in luxury, whilst Marcus Aurelius busied himself with lawsuits for five days.

ii. **Inscriptions:** so far, we are not in possession of any epigraphic evidence concerned with the villa of Lucius Verus.

Excavations, research, and scholarship[908]

The earliest discoveries in the area date to the late sixteenth century, when Laziaro Manfredi received from pope Sixtus V the licence to lead excavations *in loco qui Aqua Traversa vulgariter nuncupatur*, in order to collect marble for the decoration of the basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore.[909] Three busts each of Marcus Aurelius and Lucius Verus, all larger than life-size, found during excavations undertaken between 1605 and 1621, led to the proposed identification of the site as the emperor's suburban residence mentioned in the *HA*.[910] The area was investigated throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[911]

In the year 1924, the diplomat Gaetano Manzoni received the licence to build a villa on the site of the residence of Lucius Verus, as he owned a landed estate at the seventh km of the via Cassia.[912] The firm opposition of Antonio Muñoz—then

[907] LCL 139, 225.
[908] A complete overview on research and excavations in the area in Mastrodonato 2000, 171–86.
[909] Lanciani 1992, 192.
[910] Caserta 2015, 180.
[911] Lanciani 1994, 282; Lanciani 1975, 54, 93.
[912] Mastrodonato 2000, 166.

responsible for the antiquities of Rome—was not sufficient to stop the construction works. However, Edoardo Gatti had the opportunity to lead archaeological investigations in the area on the occasion of the construction of the Villa Manzoni,[913] which nonetheless resulted in the destruction of a substantial part of the ancient villa.

After the death of Manzoni, his villa was turned, firstly, into a night club, then was purchased by the INPDAI,[914] and was thereafter largely abandoned. Proper excavations were undertaken as late as 1987-88, which investigated the areas to the west and east of the Villa Manzoni.[915] A thorough examination of previous research in the site and on the sculptural decoration of the villa of Lucius Verus was carried out by Valentina Mastrodonato as part of her BA dissertation.[916]

An enormous number of fragments of coloured glass (c. 30,000) from the collection of antiquities belonging to the tenor Evan Gorga, which has recently been investigated by Lucia Saguì, has been attributed to the decoration of the villa of Lucius Verus.[917] The so-called 'Gorga glasses', Saguì has shown, featured both in floor and wall *opus sectile* and as decoration for pieces of furniture.

The latest excavations in the area were carried out between 2005 and 2009, when the property was purchased by the Republic of Kazakhstan for the purpose of

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[913] *Ibid.*, 166–70. Mastrodonato has partially reported the correspondence between Muñoz and Paribeni (then Soprintendente ai Musei e agli Scavi di Roma, who had authorised the construction of the Villa Manzoni). Although Gatti was expected to publish the results of the excavations which he directed, this never happened: the only information concerning this works are reported in Lugli 1924, who only provided summary data, referring to a forthcoming work by Gatti in the *Notizie degli Scavi di Antichità*, which was never published.

[914] Institution responsible for retirement benefit for specific categories of workers.

[915] Results are published in Calci and Messineo 1988, albeit very briefly.

[916] Mastrodonato 2000.

[917] Saguì 2005.

establishing its embassy at the Villa Manzoni; the investigation were directed by Emmanuela Caserta on behalf of the Sovraintendenza Capitolina ai Beni Culturali.[918]

Origin of the **praedium**

Excavations in 1793 brought to light the funerary inscriptions of a Sextus Appius Severus and of his daughter, Appia Severa, who is reported to have built her father's tomb.[919] As argued by Annagabriella Bianchi, the two inscriptions belonged to a mausoleum sited within a property of the Appii Severi. Interestingly, Appia Severa was the wife of Lucius Ceionius Commodus, grandfather of Lucius Aelius Verus, the birth father of Lucius Verus, adopted by Hadrian in AD 136: Appia Severa is the great-grandmother of Lucius Verus. The research carried out by Gatti, subsequently published by Giuseppe Lugli, has revealed that the villa of Lucius Verus was installed on the site of a previously existing residence, which Bianchi has proposed to associate with the property of the Appii Severi: it is not unlikely that Lucius Verus inherited the property.[920]

[918] Results published in Caserta 2011.
[919] Bianchi 2001, 137–38.
[920] Maiuro 2012, 245.

Description[921]

Owing to the construction of Villa Manzoni, the archaeological dossier of the Villa of Lucius Verus is preserved unevenly: the residence appears divided into separate sectors with different orientations, depending on their functions, on their position in relation to the hillslopes, and on the conditioning of previously existing features. Circulation patterns are almost impossible to reconstruct.

The easternmost building unit ('settore A' in the most recent Italian publications, plan C8.II) consists of a horseshoe-shaped fountain (c. 16 by 17.5 m) supplied by a rectangular reservoir to the north of it, both built in *opus latericium*. The fountain yielded evidence for an elaborate marble decoration.

C. 45 m to the west of the fountain, investigations carried out in 1987-88 brought to light a rectangular hall (16, 9.5 by 8.8 m), on whose floor the preparation for *opus sectile* decoration is still preserved ('settore B' – 'settore C', plan C8.III). Caserta has pointed out that the slabs which were featured in the decoration must have been remarkably thin (i.e. less than 5 mm) and has proposed to reconstruct the pattern as including both marble *sectilia* and glass elements, based on the enormous number of fragments of coloured glass found in this room.[922]

To the south of room 16, excavations revealed a narrow, open space (18),

[921] I entirely refer to Caserta 2011 for details on individual features; despite having visited the site personally, thanks to the graceful permission of the embassy of Kazakhstan, I have not been able to collect additional information, as most of the features attributed to the villa have been backfilled. Furthermore, I was not allowed to take photographs which included the building of the embassy; the only picture I have been able to take is a view of the substructures/façade from the south.

[922] Caserta 2010.

potentially a garden or an area paved with beaten earth. Further southwards, a room with a floor supported on *pilae* has partially been revealed, but the lack of knowledge on the adjacent features hinders speculation on its possible function: it has not so far been ascertained whether it was part of a heated area, or if the supported floor was aimed to facilitate the circulation of air.[923] The presumed garden 18 seems to extend to the west of room 19, where a shallow apse with marble opus sectile opens towards 18.

The westernmost block of the imperial residence ('settore D') consisted of a garden faced by rooms arranged on its northern and eastern sides; the southern and the western have not been investigated. The spaces on the eastern side of the garden (rooms 21-22-23 and corridor 28, plan. C8.V), based on their elaborate floor mosaics and *opus sectile*, have been interpreted as representative rooms.

Other features have been identified to the south-east of this block (plan C8.IV). A semi-circular exedra facing north (25, diameter c. 25 m), based on its orientation and on the presence of a drain, has been identified as a nymphaeum serving as a summer *coenatio*; a corridor (24) bordering the exedra was interpreted as a functional space, based on its low-quality flooring. To the south of the dining hall is a *balneum*, modest in capacity yet with a sophisticated marble decoration.

The southernmost feature of the residence is the 'settore E', which consists of a wall oriented east/west, extending for c. 50 m and serving both as substructure for the hillslope and as monumental façade for the villa: it consisted of a sequence of niches in which the outlets of waterpipes created an elaborate water display (fig. C8.2). The

[923] Caserta 2011, 94–97.

open space comprised between this wall and the 'settore D' has not been investigated.

Phases – Chronology

As mentioned above, the imperial residence was installed on the site of a previously existing villa, dated to the late-Republican/early imperial period. The investigations conducted by Lugli have revealed at least two underground reservoirs, which offer evidence for the possible exploitation of the area for agricultural purposes.

The biographer of Lucius Verus reported that the *suburbanum* of the emperor was built from scratch, apparently in the year 166, right after he returned to Rome from the Parthian war. The majority of the features discussed above have been attributed to the latter half of the second century, and line up with the *HA*; scattered alterations date to the third century. The most important is the installation of an elaborate floor mosaic in room 32, which has been interpreted as the *apodyterium* of the bath complex. Further modifications affected the *coenatio* 25, in which the obliteration of the drain caused the nymphaeum to go out of use.

The ceramic assemblage from the villa attests that it was frequented throughout the fourth century, even though we cannot ascertain whether it remained in imperial possession. Evidence for this phase of occupation includes scattered refurbishments, as well as changes in the function of a number of features, such as the transformation of the service corridor 24 into a storage room for *dolia*, and the installation of a lime kiln into one of the niches of the substructure wall in the 'settore E'.

Decoration

The villa yielded substantial evidence for a luxurious decorative apparatus, which ranged from imperial portraits to elaborate *opus sectile*; since most of the decorative elements of the residence were collected on the occasion of excavations carried out with the purpose of gathering antiquities, their exact findspots cannot be ascertained.

Many of the representative spaces in the 'settore D' had floor mosaics, with patterns dating to the Hadrianic/Antonine period. The mosaic installed in the *apodyterium* 32 in the early third century AD is particularly remarkable: it featured a sequence of subjects connected with the organisation and the staging of an agon inspired by Greek games: athletes, poets, and orators are represented, who are to take part in a spectacle offered to the Capitoline Triad.

The most interesting characteristic of the villa of Lucius Verus, however, is the use of thin, coloured glass slabs, arranged in geometric and figurative patterns both as element of floor and wall *opus sectile* and as decoration for furniture, such as stools or *klinai*.

SHA, *Verus* VIII.8-10 (AD 166–69)

Villam praeterea exstruxit in Via Clodia famosissimam, in qua per multos dies et ipse ingenti luxuria debacchatus est cum libertis suis et amicis imparibus, quorum praesentiae nulla inerat reverentia. et Marcum rogavit, qui venit, ut fratri venerabilem morum suorum et imitandam ostenderet sanctitudinem, et quinque diebus in eadem villa residens cognitionibus continuis operam dedit, aut convivante fratre aut convivia comparante.

Furthermore, he built an exceedingly notorious villa on the Clodian Way, and here he not only revelled himself for many days at a time in boundless extravagance together with his freedmen and friends of inferior rank in whose presence he felt no shame, but he even invited Marcus. Marcus came, in order to display to his brother the purity of his own moral code as worthy of respect and imitation, and for five days, staying in the same villa, he busied himself continuously with the examination of law-cases, while his brother, in the meantime, was either banqueting or preparing banquets.

C9.
Villa of the Quintilii

Location

i. **Modern-day region**: Latium

ii. **Ancient region**: Latium et Campania

iii. **Modern-day city**: Roma

iv. **Ancient city**: Roma

Plans: C9.I, C9.II, C9.III, C9.IV, C9.V, C9.VI, C9.VII

The villa of the Quintilii is found at the fifth mile of the *uia Appia*, on a low plateau at the northern extremity of the lava flow of Capo di Bove (deposited by the Latium Volcano c. 320,000 years ago) on the left side of the road (fig. C9.1). This location has been crucial for the construction and the architectural development of the residence, as basalt, largely used in its structures, was quarried a few kilometres to the north of the villa.[924] The identification of the villa as an imperial possession has been possible thanks to the discovery of lead *fistulae* carrying the names of both the Quintilii brothers and Commodus; Cassius Dio and the *HA* agree in reporting that Commodus confiscated the properties of the Quintilii after murdering them in AD 182/83.

The villa is oriented on a north-east/south-west axis; for convenience, directions will be referred to in terms of site north rather than compass north.

[924] Galli *et al.* 2006, 287.

Sources

i. **Texts:** Cass. Dio, LXXIII.5.3-4, Cass. Dio, LXXIII.7.2, and SHA, *Comm.* IV.9 offer an account of the conspiracy against Commodus in which the Quintilii brothers, purportedly, took part, and which provided the emperor with an excuse to murder them. Very interestingly, Cass. Dio, LXXIII.13.4 reports that Commodus withdrew ἐν τῷ Κυιντιλίῳ προαστείῳ when the people of Rome rose up against food shortage. The passage demonstrates that Commodus did confiscate the villa after the two Quintilii were murdered, and that the property was not simply alienated. Hdn., I.12.5-6 reports about Commodus' habit of withdrawing to imperial possessions at the outskirts of Rome, though he does not provide detail on the exact location of Commodus' retreats. The biographer of Tacitus (SHA, *Tac.* XVI.2) mentions that a portrait of the emperor was preserved in the villa.

ii. **Inscriptions:** *CIL* XV.7518, a stamp on a lead pipe reading *II Quintiliorum | Condiani et Maximi*, allowed Antonio Nibby[925] to identify the site at the fifth mile of the *uia Appia* with the villa of the Quintilii. The transfer of ownership to the imperial fisc is further attested by a stamp on a lead pipe reading *Imp(eratoris) Commodi*, identified during excavations in the eastern corner of the main block.[926] The inscription on lead *fistulae CIL* XV.7334b and *CIL* XV.7339 provide evidence for alterations carried out, respectively, by Severus Alexander and Gordian III.

[925] Paris *et al.* 2012, 6.

[926] *Ibid.*, 18.

Excavations, research, and scholarship[927]

The earliest findings in the area date to the late fifteenth century, when the monks of Santa Maria Nova (modern-day Santa Francesca Romana) discovered the burial of a young woman and a funerary altar. The site was explored and excavated since the mid-eighteenth century, especially in the years 1783-1784 and 1788-1791, but not until the early nineteenth century was proper archaeological research carried out.[928] In the years 1827-1828, Antonio Nibby led systematic excavations in the villa of the Quintili on behalf of Giovanni Torlonia (then owner of the estate). Thanks to the discovery of a lead *fistula* with the inscription *CIL* XV.7518, the ruins at the fifth mile of the via Appia Antica were interpreted as a suburban residence of the Quintilii brothers. Further excavations were carried out in the years 1850-1851 by Giovanni Battista Guidi, who continued Nibby's research for the Torlonia family. These investigations occurred simultaneously with extensive research and urban redevelopments of the via Appia directed by Luigi Canina, on behalf of the papal government. The area was

[927] An account of the excavations carried out from the mid-eighteenth to the early twentieth century in Paris 2000, 5–21, and Ricci 1998, 29–79. A detailed reconstruction of these excavations was possible thanks to accurate excavation reports, which provided information regarding findings, workmen accommodation and consumption of lamp oil (in case of excavations taking place in poor light conditions). Substantial confusion, however, is caused by the widespread use of the name 'Romavecchia' or 'Roma Vecchia', which can either refer to an estate (the estate of Romavecchia, the boundaries and owners of which changed over the centuries) or to at least three different sites at the south-eastern outskirts of Rome (villa of the Quintilii, villa of the Sette Bassi, villa of the Gordians). Discoveries that occurred 'a Romavecchia', therefore, cannot always be ascribed to the villa of the Quintili.

[928] The excavation carried out in the 18th century, on behalf of Pope Pius VI, were mostly aimed at the acquisition of statues for the then-instituted Museo Pio-Clementino. That the area yielded a surprising number of statues is further attested by the name 'Statuario', which since the sixteenth century designates the area of the villa (Paris *et al.* 2012, 8; Galli *et al.* 2006, 280; Ricci 1998, 29–31).

explored thoroughly by Thomas Ashby at the beginning of the twentieth century;[929] even though he did not conduct excavations, he took several, valuable photographs, and produced detailed plans of the villa.[930] Scattered and occasional findings are attested throughout the 1920s and the 1930s.

The area, subsequently, was not investigated until the 1980s, when part of the site of the villa was acquired by the Italian government, and systematic research could be carried out by the Soprintendenza Archeologica di Roma. Large sections of the via Appia Antica, after the second World War, have suffered from illegal building activity, which has heavily impacted on the preservation of archaeological remains. The institution of the Parco Regionale dell'Appia Antica in 1988 was a major step towards the preservation of the cultural and natural values of the area, but did not result in the acquisition of all the areas which needed to be preserved. Investigations and restorations, aimed both at providing a more thorough understanding of the villa of the Quintilii and at making it fully accessible to visitors, are still in progress, under the joint direction of Rita Paris, Riccardo Frontoni, and Giuliana Galli.

Origin of the praedium

The villa was a private possession of the brothers Sextus Quintilius Condianus and Sextus Quintilius Valerius Maximus (*PIR* Q, 21 and 27), the latest members of a prominent and wealthy senatorial family of the second century AD, originally from

[929] Ashby 1910.

[930] A review of Ashby's research, photographs and drawings in Munzi 2003.

Alexandria Troas (both Q. Condianus and Q. Valerius Maximus were consuls in AD 151).[931] The two Quintilii, along with the son of one of them, were condemned to death in AD 182/183 under the pretext of a conspiracy against the emperor (in fact, the real reasons were their wealth and their beyond-reproach reputation), and their possessions were confiscated.[932]

Description

Extending over an area of roughly 20 ha, the villa of the Quintili is one of the most impressive specimens of upper-class suburban residences in the High Empire. The residence was accessed from the *uia Appia* through a rectangular garden defined by two covered galleries (X and Z, plan C9.VII) oriented east/west, with circular features at both extremities, extending for c. 300 by 90 m. The entrance to the garden was marked by a monumental, semi-circular nymphaeum (H) facing the *uia Appia* (fig. C9.2, C9.3).[933] In its original architectural layout, the feature consisted only of a large exedra; the nymphaeum and the monumental corridors X and Z were installed after the villa was confiscated by Commodus. This building unit underwent substantial alterations in the ninth/tenth century AD, when it was turned into a fortified feature

[931] Galli *et al.* 2006, 279–80, with references.

[932] In addition to the villa on the *uia Appia*, the Quintilii had another residence on the Alban Hills (identified underneath Villa Mondragone, Frascati, see Valenti 2003, 226–28) and a property at Antium (*CIL* XV.7799a). Apart from Italy, the Quintili must have owned possessions in Asia Minor, from which the household came. The overall size of the properties of the Quintilii made it necessary for the emperor (Commodus, most likely) to entrust an ἐπίτροπος τάξεος Κυντιλιανής (*AE* 1933.273) with the administration of the newly confiscated properties.

[933] Galli *et al.* 2006, 285.

serving to control the *uia Appia*.

Alongside defining the limits of the access garden, the corridors X and Z served to connect the entrance to the property with the main block of the villa, c. 300 m to the east (fig. C9.4). The core of the residence (sectors A, B, C, D, E, F, L, R, S, T) included the residential quarters, reception facilities, dining halls, spaces for entertainment, and bathing suites.

A sequence of rooms on at least two levels, on the eastern slope of the plateau (sector C), served as substructure for the features installed above (fig. C9.5).[934] Modern investigations have identified functional spaces on the lower floors and residential areas—presumably reserved for the staff employed at the villa—on the upper. Built in *opus uittatum mixtum*, the sector C has been attributed to the earliest building phase of the villa (Trajanic/Hadrianic).

The reception area occupies most of the southern half of the main block, and can roughly be divided into two sections. The eastern (sector A) is arranged around a large rectangular courtyard (B34, 14.7 by 36.5 m), paved in white marble, which served as distribution facility giving access to the features aligned on its northern side (fig. C9.6). A nymphaeum was installed at its southern corner, beyond which was a shrine which yielded a marble head of Asclepius (fig. C9.7). A porticus led into the rectangular hall A7 (10.21 by 17.5 m), which served as vestibule for the octagonal hall A1 (11 by 11.36 m), whose floor *opus sectile* and heating system suggested interpreting it as a winter

[934] Paris 2000, 40–41.

coenatio (fig. C9.8).[935] To the east and west of A1 are the formal spaces A8 (28.5 by 4.5 m, fig. C9.9), A9 (15 by 8.5 m, fig.C9.10), A13 (7.8 by 14.3 m), A14 (17.5 by 8.2 m). A13 and A14 have not been excavated; their decorative apparatus is unknown

On the eastern side of the courtyard are two *cubicula*,[936] equipped with heating and with a single-user latrine (fig. C9.11); the *cubicula* (B26-B27) are in close connection with a small *balneum*, further eastwards (B10, B13, B21, B21b, B31, B54, fig. C9.12). The overall exclusiveness of the area supported its interpretation as high-ranking residential quarters, reserved for the most important dwellers of the villa. Based on a brick stamp reading the inscription *Imp(eratoris) Commodi*, the installation of the *balneum* was ascribed to the alterations carried out by Commodus after he confiscated the villa.[937]

To the north of the sector A are two rectangular spaces (T2, 19.5 by 14.5 m, and, T7, 24.5 by 23 m) probably laid out as gardens and equipped with fountains and water features (fig. C9.13). To the north of the two courtyards is an elliptical feature (F1, 38.5 by 34.3 m) connected with the sector A through a corridor (T3) running between T2 and T7. The building, probably paved in beaten earth, has been interpreted as a small amphitheatre (fig. C9.14), and was seemingly surrounded by a peristyle. A sequence of five rooms to the east of F1, abutting its external wall, were probably functional and service spaces (fig. C9.15). Based on structural stratigraphy, brick stamps, and building technique, the elliptical feature has been dated to the age of Commodus. Excavations

[935] Paris *et al.* 2012, 18–19.
[936] Paris, Frontoni and Galli 2019, 33–34.
[937] *Ibid*., 18.

in the area, however, have revealed that construction works continued seamlessly for some time, and that the presumed original project was altered: in the Severan period, the feature was probably a *uiridarium*.[938]

In the western quarter of the main block are other reception facilities, arranged behind the exedra R15 (fig. C9.16, inner diameter 29 m), which served as monumental façade and distribution feature. Behind the exedra is a circular hall (R14, fig. C9.17, diameter c. 14 m), whose position in relation to the surrounding rooms corresponds to the location of the octagonal hall A1 within the eastern corner of the block. Based on this datum and on the absence of heating, R14 has been interpreted as a *coenatio* used during warmer times of the year. To the east and west of R14, excavations revealed rooms of different sizes, all adorned with *opus sectile* and floor mosaics, including large reception halls (R19, R58, R59), passageways (R18, R20, R21a, R53), and corridor connecting to the nearby areas (R11).

After the confiscation of the villa, the exedra underwent substantial alterations. The addition of three steps abutting the inner wall of the corridor and of an architectural feature serving as *scaena* on the front of the exedra turned it into a small theatre. The theatre remained in use for a very short time span: archaeological evidence shows that it was backfilled under Severus Alexander.

The western corner of the main block is entirely occupied by a monumental and luxuriously decorated bath complex, installed under Antoninus Pius and altered in the Severan period (plan C9.IV). To the north of the circular hall R14 is the grand

[938] Paris, Frontoni and Galli 2019, 38–43.

frigidarium D1, (11.6 by 13.8 exclusive of the two pools, fig. C9.18), behind which is a cluster of heated and non-heated rooms, with or without pools (sector L, fig. C9.19), interpreted as transition features between the *frigidarium* and the *caldarium* E1 (18 by 10.8 m, fig. C9.20). The *caldarium* consisted of a large, single pool, heated through three, no-longer preserved bronze boilers.

Another bath complex (M), much smaller in size, is found c. 70 m to the south of the main block, and has been excavated only partially (plan C9.VII). Investigations have identified at least two building phases: in its original architectural layout, the building consisted only of a nymphaeum, to which a bath complex was added at a later stage. The feature lost it function as bathing facility by the early sixth century AD.[939]

Excavations carried out in 2016-2017 have uncovered the starting gates of a circus (sector S), c. 50 m to the south of the main block (fig. C9.21). The full extension of the building has been identified in a number of aerial photographs from the mid-twentieth century. The circus was installed under Commodus, but its *carceres* were erased shortly thereafter: a luxuriously decorated winery was installed above them under the Gordians (fig. C9.22).[940] The configuration of this winery, where a luxuriously decorated *cella uinaria* is faced by a dining hall, was most likely inspired by that of the winery block of Villa Magna.

The functioning of at least three baths and two nymphaea required a constant and

[939] *Ibid*., 73–75.

[940] *Ibid*., 70–73. I am grateful to Riccardo Frontoni and Giuliana Galli for generously sharing information on their latest excavations in the area.

reliable water supply. The villa of the Quintilii could rely on its very own aqueduct, a stretch of which has been identified c. 2 kilometres to the south-east,[941] which entered the property parallel to the corridor X and supplied water to five reservoirs. A small cistern supplied water to the monumental nymphaeum which marked the entrance to the villa; to the south of the corridor X are two other reservoirs, the former (P) close to the nymphaeum, the latter (G) abutting the western side of the circus. A fourth, circular reservoir (Q) is found behind the corridor Z. The last reservoir (B3) is incorporated in the main block, to the south of the courtyard B34. This remarkable number of reservoirs may be explained in light of the needs entailed by its baths and nymphaea,[942] and by the necessity of irrigating crops. Since they were all seemingly installed in the Hadrianic period, it is most likely that the property included cultivations since the early first century AD; the winery built in the 240s on the erased *carceres* of the circus was probably supplied by vineyards belonging to the villa, which must have been irrigated through cisterns P, G, and Q.[943]

Alongside storage spaces, the features underneath the ground level of the main block included the *praefurnia* from which the heated suites of the baths were operated. The underground level has not been investigated entirely, and a detailed plan has not been produced: a complete reconstruction of circulation patterns is not possible.

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[941] Galli *et al.* 2006, 284–86. The aqueduct, branching off from the *aqua Claudia* and from the *Anio Nouus*, is generally referred to as the 'acquedotto dei Quintili'.

[942] Chapter 4, 159–60.

[943] Chapter 5, 231–32.

Phases – Chronology

To the earliest building phase of the villa (late Trajanic/early Hadrianic period) can only be ascribed the structures found underneath the *frigidarium* of the Large Baths. The core of the residence, including sectors A, B, C, H and R, was installed in the Hadrianic period, with some additions under Antoninus Pius (sectors D, E, L, and the small bath complex in the residential quarters).

The confiscation of the residence by Commodus resulted in further, more substantial alterations: a nymphaeum was added to the exedra H at the entrance of the villa, the access garden was delimited by two parallel corridors, the *ludus* was installed at the northern corner of the main block, the semi-circular exedra R15 was turned into a private theatre and a circus was added south-east of the main block.

Additions and changes in functions are attested in the Severan period as well: the *frigidarium* and the *caldarium* of the main bath complex were enlarged, and the theatre lost its function as a facility for entertainment. The destruction of the *carceres* of the circus and the installation of the winery are dated to the age of the Gordians. Ancient literature and inscriptions offer evidence for the occupation of the villa by emperors and members of the imperial house throughout the third century AD, up to at least Tacitus.

Later on, the villa was progressively and largely abandoned – most of the evidence for occupation is rather to be ascribed to productive activities (lime kilns, glass furnaces), than to any interest on the part of emperors.

Decoration

The villa of the Quintilii yielded a remarkable wealth of evidence for decoration, including sculptures, wall paintings, stucco, marble veneer, mosaic and *opus sectile*. The overall quality of the decoration, especially of that pertaining to the pre-Commodan phases, reflects the social level and means of the commissioner, as well as their access to resources and skilled labour.

The majority of statuary finds is to be ascribed to excavations carried out in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, undertaken with the purpose of gathering statues, respectively, for the collections of the Museo Pio-Clementino and for the residences of the Torlonia family. Sculptures depict a variety of male and female deities (Hercules, Dionysus, Apollo, Mercury, Zeus, Diana, Venus, Fortuna), muses, nymphs, satyrs and maenads, herms and genre motifs: a variety of subjects which is extremely well-suited to the decoration of gardens and nymphaea. Excavations undertaken in 1929, furthermore, yielded further statues, most of which have been attributed to the presumed sanctuary of Zeus Bronton.

Mosaics, marble veneer and *opus sectile*, alongside fresco and stuccowork, are widely featured in the reception and residential quarters of the villa, as well as in the Large Baths. The patterns of *opus sectile* found in sectors A, B and R date to the Hadrianic period; the floorings of the main baths (sectors D, E and L), on the other hand, pertain to enlargements carried out in the late second/early third century AD.[944]

[944] *Opus sectile* decoration featured a variety of coloured marbles from all over the empire, including

Mosaics follow the same chronological pattern: most of them were featured since the Hadrianic building phase, whereas those found in the upper floor of the *basis uillae* have been attributed to the alterations undertaken by Commodus.[945] Interestingly, Tacitus' biography in the *HA* mentions that a portrait (*tabula*) of the emperor, probably a mosaic or a painting, was placed in the villa,[946] which suggests that the residence was still probably used by emperors in the final decades of the third century AD.

Evidence for stucco and wall paintings is not as substantial as that for marble veneer. Excavations yielded a wealth of fragments of painted plaster from every sector of the villa, but not of such a preservation as to allow accurate reconstructions. Wall paintings, as far as it was possible to infer from the preserved fragments, have tentatively been ascribed to the central decades of the second century AD.

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marmor lacedaemon (serpentino), porphyry, *marmor numidicum (giallo antico)*, *marmor phrygium (pavonazzetto)*, slate, proconnesian marble, *marmor coraliticum (palombino)*, *marmor chium (africano)*, *marmor carystium (greco scritto)*, *marmor alabandicum (rosso antico)*, *breccia corallina*, *marmor carystium (cipollino)*, alabaster, *breccia corallina grigia*, *marmor atracium (verde antico)*, *marmor chium (portasanta)*, granite.

[945] Frontoni and Galli 2014a; Frontoni and Galli 2014b; Frontoni and Galli 2010.

[946] SHA, *Tac*. XVI.2.

Cass. Dio, LXXIII.5.3-4 (AD 182)

Ἐφόνευσε δὲ καὶ τοὺς Κυιντιλίους, τόν τε Κονδιανὸν καὶ τὸν Μάξιμον· μεγάλην γὰρ εἶχον δόξαν ἐπὶ παιδείᾳ καὶ ἐπὶ στρατηγίᾳ καὶ ὁμοφροσύνῃ καὶ πλούτῳ. ἐκ γὰρ δὴ τῶν προσόντων σφίσιν ὑπωπτεύοντο καλῶν, εἰ καὶ μηδὲν νεώτερον ἐνενόουν, ἄχθεσθαι τοῖς παροῦσι. καὶ οὕτως αὐτοί, ὥσπερ ἔζησαν ἅμα, οὕτω καὶ ἀπέθανον μεθ᾽ ἑνὸς τέκνου· διαπρεπέστατα γὰρ τῶν πώποτε ἐφίλησαν ἀλλήλους, καὶ οὐκ ἔστιν ὅτε οὐδὲ ἐν ταῖς ἀρχαῖς διεχωρίσθησαν. ἐγένοντο δὲ καὶ πολυκτήμονες καὶ παμπλούσιοι, καὶ ἦρχον ὁμοῦ καὶ παρήδρευον ἀλλήλοις.

Commodus likewise killed the two Quintilii, Condianus and Maximus; for they had a great reputation for learning, military skill, brotherly accord, and wealth, and their notable talents led to the suspicion that, even if they were not planning any rebellion, they were nevertheless displeased with existing conditions. And thus, even as they had lived together, so they died together, along with the son of one of them. They had offered the most striking example ever seen of mutual affection; and at no time had they ever been separated, even in the offices they held. They had grown prosperous and exceedingly wealthy, and were wont to hold office together and to act as assistants to each other.

Cass. Dio, LXXIII.7.2 (AD 182)

Ἔστιν ἐν Μαλλῷ πόλει τῆς Κιλικίας Ἀμφιλόχου χρηστήριον, καὶ χρᾷ δι᾽ ὀνειράτων. Ἔχρησεν οὖν καὶ τῷ Σέξτῳ, ὅ διὰ γραφῆς ἐκεῖνος ἐδηλωσε· παιδίον γὰρ τῷ πίνακι ἐνεγέγραπτο δύο δράκοντας ἀποπνῖγον καὶ λέων νεβρὸν διώκων. Οὐδὲ ἔσχον αὐτὰς συμβαλεῖν, τῷ πατρὶ συνὼν ἄρχοντι τῆς Κιλικίας, πρὶν πυθέσθαι τούς τε ἀδελφοὺς ὑπὸ τοῦ Κομμόδου, ὃς μετὰ ταῦτα τὸν Ἡρακλέα ἐζήλωσε, τρόπον τινὰ πνιγέντας, ὥσπερ καὶ ὁ Ἡρακλῆς ἔτι νήπιος ὢν ἱστόρηται τοὺς ὑπὸ τῆς Ἥρας ἐπιπεμφθέντας αὐτῷ δράκοντας ἀποπνῖξαι (καὶ γὰρ καὶ οἱ Κυιντίλιοι ἀπηγχονήθησαν), καὶ τὸν Σέξτον φεύγοντα καὶ διωκόμενον ὑπὸ τοῦ κρείττονος.

There is in the city of Mallus, in Cilicia, an oracle of Amphilochus that gives responses by means of dreams. Now it had given a response also to Sextus (i.e. Sextus Quintilius Condianus), that he had indicated by means of a drawing; the picture which he had put on the tablet represented a boy strangling two serpents and a lion pursuing a fawn. I was with my father, who was governor of Cilicia at the time, and could not comprehend what the figures meant, until I learned that the brothers had been strangled, so to speak, by Commodus (who later emulated Hercules), just as Hercules, when an infant, is related to have strangled the serpents sent against him by Juno (for the Quintilii, too, had been strangled), and until I learned also that Sextus was a fugitive and was being pursued by a more powerful adversary.

Cass. Dio, LXXIII.13.4 (AD 189)

Ἐγένετο μὲν γὰρ καὶ ἄλλως ἰσχυρὰ σιτοδεία, ἐπὶ πλεῖστον δ᾽ αὐτὴν Παπίριος Διονύσιος ἐπὶ τοῦ σίτου τεταγμένος ἐπηύξησεν, ἵν᾽ ὡς αἰτιώτατον αὐτῆς τὸν Κλέανδρον ἀπὸ τῶν κλεμμάτων ὄντα καὶ μισήσωσιν οἱ Ῥωμαῖοι καὶ διαφθείρωσι. καὶ ἔσχεν οὕτως. ἱπποδρομία τις ἦν, μελλόντων δὲ τὸ ἕβδομον τῶν ἵππων ἀγωνιεῖσθαι πλῆθός τι παιδίων ἐς τὸν ἱππόδρομον ἐσέδραμε, καὶ αὐτῶν παρθένος τις μεγάλη καὶ βλοσυρὰ ἡγεῖτο, ἣν δαίμονα ἐκ τῶν μετὰ ταῦτα συμβάντων ἐνόμισαν γεγονέναι. τά τε γὰρ παιδία συνεβόησαν πολλὰ καὶ δεινά, καὶ ὁ δῆμος παραλαβὼν αὐτὰ οὐδὲν ὅ τι οὐκ ἐξέκραγε, καὶ τέλος καταπηδήσας ὥρμησε πρὸς τὸν Κόμμοδον ἐν τῷ Κυιντιλίῳ προαστείῳ ὄντα, πολλὰ μὲν ἐκείνῳ κἀγαθὰ ἐπευχόμενος, πολλὰ δὲ καὶ κατὰ τοῦ Κλεάνδρου καταρώμενος.

A famine occurred, sufficiently grievous in itself; but its severity was vastly increased by Papirius Dionysius, the grain commissioner, in order that Cleander, whose thefts would seem chiefly responsible for it, might incur the hatred of the Romans and be destroyed by them. And so it came to pass. There was a horse-race on, and as the horses were about to contend for the seventh time, a crowd of children ran into the Circus, led by a tall maiden of grim aspect, who, because of what afterwards happened, was thought to have been a divinity. The children shouted in concert many bitter words, which the people took up and then began to bawl out every conceivable insult; and finally the throng leaped down and set out to find Commodus (who was then in the Quintilian suburb), invoking many blessings on him and many curses upon Cleander.

SHA, *Comm.* IV.9

Paternum autem et huius caedis auctorem et, quantum videbatur, paratae necis Commodi conscium et interventorem, ne coniuratio latius puniretur, instigante Tigidio per lati clavi honorem a praefecturae administratione summovit. post paucos dies insimulavit eum coniurationis, cum diceret ob hoc promissam Iuliani filio filiam Paterni, ut in Iulianum transferretur imperium. quare et Paternum et Iulianum et Vitruvium Secundum, Paterni familiarissimum, qui epistulas imperatorias curarat, interfecit. Domus praeterea Quintiliorum omnis exstincta, quod Sextus Condiani filius specie mortis ad defectionem diceretur evasisse.

Paternus, the instigator of this murder, who was believed to have been an accomplice in the plot to assassinate Commodus and had certainly sought to prevent any far-reaching punishment of that conspiracy, was now, at the instigation of Tigidius, dismissed from the command of the praetorian guard by the expedient of conferring on him the honour of the broad stripe. And a few days thereafter, Commodus accused him of plotting, saying that the daughter of Paternus had been betrothed to the son of Julianus with the understanding that Julianus would be raised to the throne. On this pretext he executed Paternus and Julianus, and also Vitruvius Secundus, a very dear friend of Paternus, who had charge of the imperial correspondence. Besides this, he exterminated the whole house of the Quintilii, because Sextus, the son of Condianus, by

pretending death, it was said, had made his escape in order to raise a revolt.

Hdn., I.12.5-6 (AD 189)

Οἱ δὲ Ῥωμαῖοι ἀπεχθῶς ἔχοντες πρὸς αὐτὸν καὶ τῶν δεινῶν τὰς αἰτίας ἐς ἐκεῖνον ἀναφέροντες μισοῦντές τε αὐτοῦ τὸ ἀκόρεστον τῆς τοῦ πλούτον ἐπιθυμίας, τὰ μὲν πρῶτα ἐν τοῖς θεάτροις συνιστάμενοι κατὰ πλήθη κακῶς ἠγόρευον, καὶ τὸ τελευταῖον, διάγοντος ἐν προαστείῳ τοῦ Κομόδου, ἐπελθόντες πανδημεὶ ἐβόων καὶ τὸν Κλέανδρον ἐς θάνατον ᾔτουν.

But the Romans hated him (Cleander) because they held him responsible for their troubles and loathed his never-ending greed for money. First they organized themselves in the theatres and shouted insults at him all together, but finally they went in a mass to where Commodus was living on the outskirts of the city, and set up a shout demanding Cleander's blood.

SHA, *Tac.* XVI.2

Tacitus congiarium populo Romano intra sex menses vix dedit. imago eius posita est in Quintiliorum, in una tabula quinquiplex, in qua semel togatus, semel chlamydatus, semel armatus, semel palliatus, semel venatorio habitu.

Tacitus scarcely gave any largess to the Roman people over a period of six months. His portrait was placed in the house of the Quintilii, representing him in five ways on a single panel, once in a toga, once in a military cloak, once in armour, once in a Greek mantle, and once in the garb of a hunter.

CIL* XV.7334b (AD 201–250) – Lead *fistula

Imp(eratoris) M(arci) Aureli Severi Antonini Alexandri Aug(usti) / Valerius Primitivus f[e]cit L

(Property) of the emperor Marcus Aurelius Severus Antoninus Alexander Augustus. Valerius Primitivus made. 50

CIL* XV.7339 (AD 238–244) – Lead *fistula

Imp(eratoris) M(arci) Antoni Gordiani Aug(usti) I

(Property) of the emperor Marcus Antonius Gordianus Augustus. 1

CIL XV.7518 (AD 140–183) – Lead *fistula*

II Quintiliorum / Condiani et Maximi

(Property) of the two Quintilii, Condianus and Maximus.

C10.
Horti Spei Veteris/Palativm Sessorianvm

Location

i. **Modern-day region**: Lazio

ii. **Ancient region**: Latium et Campania

iii. **Modern-day city**: Roma (Porta Maggiore)

iv. **Ancient city**: Roma – Esquiliae/Caelimontium

Plans: C10.I, C10.II, C10.III

The imperial residence of the *Horti Spei Veteris* was installed at the south-eastern outskirts of Rome, on the slopes of the Esquiline and Caelian hills, in a locality referred to as *ad Spem Veterem* in a number of literary sources (fig. C10.1),[947] and identified by modern scholarship with the area between Porta Maggiore and the Basilica of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme. The interpretation as an imperial residence is based, first and foremost, on a lead *fistula* found in the area, which carries the names of Septimius Severus and Caracalla. The Severan chronology of the earliest structures supports the information provided in the SHA, which reports that Septimius Severus purchased *horti* at the outskirts of Rome and that Elagabalus used to spend time in a residence referred to as *Horti Spei Veteris*.

[947] E.g. Dion. Hal., *Ant. Rom*. IX.24.4; Frontin., *Aq*. I.5, I.19–21, II.65, II.87.

Sources

i. **Texts:** SHA, *Seu*. IV.5 reports that, in AD 189, Septimius Severus purchased *horti spatiosi* in Rome; beforehand, he only owned an unpretentious house in Rome and a *fundus* in Venetia. This information accords with a passage from Herodian (III.13.1), who mentions that Septimius Severus, after the execution of Plautianus (AD 205), spent little time in Rome, preferring to stay in his possessions at the outskirts of the city or on the coast of Campania. According to Elagabalus' biographer (SHA, *Heliogab*. XIII.5-6, XIV.2-8) the young, extravagant emperor withdrew to a residence referred to as *Horti Spei Veteris* after sending assassins to murder his cousin, adoptive son, and future emperor Severus Alexander. Both the *HA* (*Heliogab*. XXVII.1, XXVIII.1) and Cassius Dio (LXXX.14.2) highlight that it was Elagabalus' custom to organise chariot races in his own residence (neither text, unfortunately, offer clues as to its possible location, though the presence of a circus at the *Horti Spei Veteris* might help the identification), in which he often forced his guests to participate. When describing the rituals associated with the cult of *Sol Inuictus*, which Elagabalus had forcedly introduced in the pantheon of Rome, Herodian (V.6.6-9) mentions that the temple was located at the outskirts of Rome, and that the celebrations included chariot races. At the beginning of the fourth century, the residence served as Constantine's headquarters in Rome, as demonstrated by *LP*, I (ed. Duchesne), 179, 182–83.

ii. **Inscriptions:** The waterpipe stamp *CIL* XV.7364, dated to AD 202 and reading the names of Septimius Severus and Caracalla, attests to the existence of an imperial

possession in the area. The reservoir supplying water to the complex known as Baths of Helena yielded the inscription *CIL* VI.1048, a dedication to Iulia Domna. *CIL* VI.1136 celebrates the refurbishments carried out by in a bath complex destroyed by a fire by Helena (6), Constantine's mother, hence the name *Thermae Helenae* by which the bathhouse is known in modern scholarship.

Excavations, research, and scholarship

The earliest findings in the area of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme are recorded in the late sixteenth century, when pope Sixtus V, as part of large urban redevelopments in Rome, built the Strada Felice, a road meant to connect the basilica of the Trinità dei Monti with those of Santa Maria Maggiore and Santa Croce in Gerusalemme.[948] The excavations carried out to define the path of the road yielded a remarkable number of statues, architectural items, and ancient structures.

About fifty years later, investigations undertaken in the Baths of Helena (then property of Lelio Orsini, duke of Bracciano) brought to light five statues, fragments of architectural decoration, and the inscription which attested the restoration of the baths.[949] In the years 1743-1744, the basilica of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme and the adjacent monastery were completely renovated by pope Benedict XIV.[950] In 1870, when Rome officially became the capital of Italy, the area, which had hitherto belonged to

[948] Lanciani 1992, 144–45.
[949] Lanciani 1994, 143.
[950] Krautheimer 1937, 170–71.

the monks of Santa Croce, was reclaimed by the Kingdom of Italy. The occasion of the construction of the Caserma Principe di Piemonte and of housing blocks for the society of railway workers (Cooperativa dei Ferrovieri) provided Rodolfo Lanciani with the opportunity of leading investigations in the area.

The first, clear-cut, and consistent research on the *Horti Spei Veteris* as an imperial residence was undertaken by Antonio M. Colini in the mid-twentieth century. Colini, who had previously investigated the Caelian hill,[951] continued his analysis of the south-eastern outskirts of Rome, and concentrated on the *Horti Spei Veteris*; the results of a two-year excavation were published in 1955.[952] Colini's research was updated by Valnea Santa Maria Scrinari, who led further investigations in the area between 1959 and 1963.[953]

During the last thirty years, the complex was re-examined on several occasions. Donato Colli, Sergio Palladino, Claudia Paterna, and Flavia Zisa investigated, respectively, the basilica of Santa Croce, the bath complex, the circus, and the amphitheatre, as part of their theses submitted to complete the Scuola di Specializzazione at the university of Florence.[954] Further research was then led by the Sovraintendenza Capitolina ai Beni Culturali, in the years 1996-2008[955] and in 2014.[956] The most recent and overarching work on the complex is the unpublished doctoral

[951] Colini 1944.
[952] Colini 1955.
[953] The results are published briefly in Santa Maria Scrinari 1973.
[954] Colli 1996; Palladino 1996; Paterna 1996; Zisa 1997.
[955] Borgia *et al.* 2008a; Borgia *et al.* 2008b.
[956] Bottiglieri, Colli and Palladino 2016.

thesis of Serena Guglielmi, defended in 2014 at La Sapienza University of Rome.[957]

Despite the extensive and long-lasting archaeological research in the area, a number of features are largely uninvestigated. Research on the Circus Varianus is limited to the few remains that are visible above the ground; its extension has been reconstructed based on the scattered features that have emerged during construction works in the area. Likewise, the nearby aqueducts have not been investigated systematically.

Origin of the praedium

The origin of the property cannot be established securely based on literary and archaeological evidence, but may be reconstructed by looking at ownership patterns in the south-eastern outskirts of Rome, that is, the area comprised between the *uia Appia* and the *uia Praenestina*. Filippo Coarelli has pointed out that imperial possessions are attested in this sector of the *suburbium* at least from the age of Trajan, or shortly thereafter: the villa of the imperial freedman M. Ulpius Phaedimus was probably inherited by the imperial family after Phaedimus' death. In AD 182/183 Commodus confiscated the villa of the Quintilii at the fifth mile of the *uia Appia*; a transfer of ownership between private individuals and the imperial family has also been demonstrated for the villas of the Valerii Paullini, delle Vignacce, and of Maxentius (fig. C10.2).[958] Whilst the villas of the Quintilii and of Maxentius are

[957] Guglielmi 2014. I am deeply grateful to the author for willingness to share the results of her work.
[958] Coarelli 1986, 35–58.

discussed in this thesis, those of the Valerii Paullini, delle Vignacce, and of Ulpius Phaedimus did not yield any evidence for alterations in the period under consideration, and have therefore not been treated. The interest of the emperors in the south-eastern *suburbium* seems attested, furthermore, by the construction of the *aqua Alexandrina*, which Filippo Coarelli and Rita Volpe have proposed to connect with the necessity of supplying water to imperial possessions.[959]

Among Constantine's donations to the basilica of Marcellinus and Peter on the *uia Labicana*, the *Liber Pontificalis* mentions the '*fundum Laurentum iuxta formam cum balneum et omnem agrum a porta Sessoriana usque ad uia Penestrina a uia itineris Latinae usque ad montem Gabum, possessio Augustae Helenae*'.[960] Volpe has interpreted the *fundus* and the *ager* as, respectively, the tract of land adjoining the *aqua Alexandrina*, and the area comprised within the Aurelianic Walls, the *uia Praenestina*, the *uia Latina*, and the *mons Gabus* (Monte Albano).[961] It has been suggested to interpret the indications provided in the *Liber Pontificalis* not as the boundaries of a single imperial property—which would therefore extend for more than 15,000 ha)—but, rather, of a large area in which imperial possessions were scattered throughout.[962]

To summarise, we have evidence for the presence of imperial properties in the south-eastern *suburbium* at least from the age of Trajan (fig. C10.2). By the age of Septimius Severus, at least two other private properties were brought into imperial

[959] Volpe 2003; Coarelli 1986.
[960] *LP*, I (ed. Duchesne), 183.
[961] Volpe 2003, 220–21; on the legal distinction between *fundus* and *ager*, *Dig.*, 50.16.211.pr.1 and *Dig.*, 50.16.60.pr.1.
[962] *Ibid.*, 220; Coarelli 1986, 50.

possession; two other villas were imperial properties from the age of Severus Alexander at the latest. It may be suggested that one of the reasons why Septimius Severus built his residence in this area could have been the presence of a number of villas which had long been frequented by the imperial family. The *Horti Spei Veteris* may have served, perhaps, as the administrative centre of the imperial properties scattered in the south-eastern *suburbium*.

Description

The residence consisted of a number of building units scattered over an area of c. 63 ha, following in the vein of the architectural layout of Roman *horti*. The north-western boundary of the property has been identified either with the *uia Caelemontana* or with a wall reported by Lanciani on the *FUR*; the north-eastern limit was probably the *uia Labicana*; the easternmost building is probably the Circus Varianus (2), whilst the south-western limit of the complex cannot be determined on current evidence.[963] The configuration of the residence is difficult to reconstruct, because the archaeological features revealed on the occasion of the substantial redevelopment works undertaken in the early twentieth century were not documented in sufficient detail.[964]

The complex was originally accessed from the north: it has been suggested that its entrance (5) was located to the north of the reservoir of the Baths of Helena (7, fig.

[963] Colini 1955, 171–72.
[964] Palladino 2005.

C10.3).[965] The path of modern-day via Eleniana follows that of an ancient road identified by Lanciani and mapped on the *Forma Urbis Roma*, which crossed the *arcus Caelemontani* and headed south-east.[966] Likewise, he reported a wall oriented north-east/south-west (10), which could have served as the north-western limit of the residence.

The core of the *Horti* is the building on which the basilica of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme now stands (1, fig. C10.4), interpreted by Colini as the atrium of the imperial residence; Colini's reconstruction, followed by the majority of later authors, has been refuted by Guglielmi, who proposed to interpret it as a reception hall. The feature is a large rectangular building (c. 35 by 21 m) in *opus latericium*, with five openings on the longer sides and two on the shorter. A secure identification as either doors or windows has not been reached by modern scholarship: Colini argued that they were all doorways, whilst Richard Krautheimer, followed by Susanna Argentini and Monica Ricciardi, suggested that only the central openings on the longer sides served as entrances to the hall, whilst the other were simple windows.[967] The apse on the south-eastern side of the hall is not part of its original configuration, and was added in the early fourth century, when the building was turned into a Christian basilica.[968]

To the north-east of the basilica, a sequence of corbels suggests the presence of a

[965] Guglielmi 2014, 40–41.
[966] Lanciani 1901, pl. XXXII.
[967] Krautheimer 1937, 174; Argentini and Ricciardi 2000, 260. A review on the different reconstructions of the layout of the hall 1 is provided by Restaino 2017.
[968] David 2012.

portico, while the south-western side opens onto a 370-metre long, 14-metre wide covered gallery (4), with circular features at each extremity, oriented north-west/south-east.[969] The gallery connected the hall 1 with the amphitheatre, to the north-west, and the circus, to the south-east; despite the lack of evidence, Claudia Paterna has suggested that it gave access to the *puluinar* from which the emperor watched the races.[970]

The amphitheatre (89 by 77 m), located on the highest spot of the area *ad Spem Veterem* and entirely built in *opus latericium*, stood originally on three storeys (fig. C10.5).[971] Based on the complete absence of brick stamps, Herbert Bloch has proposed to attribute its construction to the age of Elagabalus.[972] The building was incorporated in the construction of the Aurelianic Walls (270-275), but it may have remained in use as an entertainment facility: as argued by Adriano La Regina, a passage from Procopius suggests that, in the sixth century AD, it functioned as a *uiuarium*.[973] In the Regionaries, the building is referred to as *Amphitheatrum Castrense*: the adjective has been explained as either referred to its use for the entertainment of the court[974] or to its topographical proximity to the *Castra Noua Equitum Singularium*.[975] Based on drawings from the sixteenth and the seventeen centuries, Colli and Giovanna Tosi have

[969] Borgia *et al.* 2008a, 7–8.
[970] Paterna 1996.
[971] Barbera 2001; Zisa 1997; Volpe 1993.
[972] Bloch 1968, 301–03.
[973] Procop., *Goth.* I.22.10; see also La Regina 1997.
[974] *TLL*, *castrēnsis*, *-e*.
[975] Barbera 2001, 141–43.

tentatively calculated its capacity as c. 3,500 people.[976]

The Circus Varianus (fig. C10.6) was probably built by Caracalla,[977] and underwent some alteration under Elagabalus, when the *carceres* were dismantled and the length of the building was reduced by c. 70 m. These modifications have been explained as the necessity of providing space for of a so-far unidentified, rectangular feature, installed in the area of the original starting gates;[978] this building, uncovered during excavations carried out between 1959 and 1963, was not documented in sufficient detail: its chronology and building technique are unknown. The circus, truncated by the construction of the Aurelianic Walls (5), remained in use for just 50 years.

To the south of the main entrance to the *Horti* are the remains of a water reservoir, which originally supplied water to an adjacent bath complex destroyed in 1585 for the construction of the Strada Felice (see above). A tentative reconstruction of the ground plan of the baths, based on drawings by Andrea Palladio (fig. C10.7) and Antonio da Sangallo il Giovane, is provided in Lanciani's *FUR*.[979] The inscription *CIL* VI.1136, which celebrates the restoration of the baths on the part of Helena, attests that the building existed before the early fourth century AD:[980] a dedication to Julia Domna (*CIL* VI.1048), together with the discovery of a mosaic on the extrados of the reservoir, which has been compared with those of the Baths of Caracalla, suggest dating the

[976] Colli *et al.* 1997, 253–56; Tosi 1995.
[977] Paterna 1996, 847.
[978] Guglielmi 2014, 54.
[979] Lanciani 1901, pl. XXXII.
[980] Palladino 1996.

earlier complex to the Severan period.[981] The association of the baths with the imperial residence has not been confirmed on current evidence: Colini has proposed to attribute them to the *Horti*,[982] whilst Palladino rejected Colini's hypothesis and argued that they were destined to public use.[983]

Besides the features described above, excavations carried out throughout the twentieth century[984] revealed, to the immediate south of the Aurelianic Walls, a number of buildings interpreted as lodgings for members of the imperial court, or for some staff employed at the residence, based on their architectural configuration and on the evidence for mosaic and *opus sectile* decoration of a relatively high quality; at least three different *domus* have been identified: the *domus* 'dei mosaici', the *domus* 'ACEA', and the *domus* 'dei ritratti/della fontana'.

The *domus* 'dei mosaici' (12, fig. C10.8) lies to the north-east of the reservoir of the *Thermae Helenae*, and abuts the Aurelianic Walls. Excavations have identified at least three different phases: the *domus* was built in the latter half of the second century AD, was modified partially after the construction of the Aurelianic Walls, and underwent more substantial alterations in the late third/early fourth century, when a *balneum* was installed at its south-eastern corner.[985] The name of the *domus* refers to its high-quality mosaic decoration, which includes both geometric patterns and vegetal and marine

[981] Palladino 2005.
[982] Colini 1955, 140–43.
[983] Palladino 1996.
[984] Borgia *et al.* 2008b, 21–31.
[985] Guglielmi 2014, 23–24; Borgia *et al.* 2008b, 22–25.

motifs.[986]

The *domus* 'ACEA' (13, fig. C10.9) was partially brought to light between 1982 and 1984, on the occasion of emergency excavations carried out in the ACEA[987] water reservoir on via Eleniana. Archaeological evidence allowed a very partial reconstruction of its chronology and ground plan. Installed in the late-Republican period, the *domus* was enlarged in the late second century, with further refurbishments in the late third/early fourth century.[988]

The *domus* 'dei ritratti/della fontana' (14, fig. C10.10) is found to the south-east of the *domus* 'dei mosaici', and abuts the Aurelianic Walls. Colli has argued that it consisted, originally, of two separate *domus*, that is, the one 'dei ritratti' to the north-west, and the one 'della fontana' to the south-east, which were joined at a later stage.[989] As regards its chronology, the building is evidently later than the construction of the Aurelianic Walls; its mosaic decoration, which is not the result of alterations, has been dated to the late third/early fourth century AD.[990]

The Aurelianic fortification follows a rather odd path in this area. After incorporating the amphitheatre, the walls should have headed north, towards Porta Maggiore; instead, they turn eastwards, truncating the circus, then bend north-eastwards and proceed towards Porta Maggiore. This odd shape may be explained, on the one hand, as the necessity of defending an important stretch of the *Anio Nouus* and

[986] Details on the mosaics and on their chronology in Chini and Grandi Carletti 2000.
[987] Energy and water supply company of Rome and central Italy (*Azienda Comunale Energia e Ambiente*).
[988] Conticello De' Spagnolis 1990; Conticello De' Spagnolis 1985.
[989] Barbera and Colli 2005.
[990] Colli 1996, 804–07.

of the *aqua Claudia*, on the other, as the aim to incorporate features belonging to the imperial residences, which have not so far been identified.

The vicissitudes of the residence after the Severan period are unknown, apart from the transformations caused by the construction of the Aurelianic Walls. A passage from the *Liber Pontificalis* reports the construction, on the part of Constantine, of a church referred to as '*basilicam in palatio Sessoriano, ubi etiam de ligno sanctae Crucis domini nostri Iesu Christi in auro et gemmis conclusit*, […] *quae cognominantur usque in hodiernum die Hierusalem*'.[991]

Constantine, then, installed a Christian basilica in the imperial residence, where his mother preserved the relics of the True Cross.[992] Even though the modern-day basilica stands on the remains of the hall 1 of the Severan *Horti Spei Veteris*, some scholars—such as Massimiliano David—argued that the original church was installed in a small, apsidal hall (today serving as the Cappella di Sant'Elena) behind the hall.[993]

Together with the foundation of the basilica, Constantine amplified the representative sector of the imperial residence, through the installation of two apsidal halls to the north of the basilica. The smaller one (9, 12.3 by 19.4 m) is not preserved, but has been identified and located thanks to a drawing by Pirro Ligorio;[994] apparently, it was connected to the so-called atrium through a corridor. Of the largest hall (8, 23.8 by 41.7 m), usually referred to, in modern scholarship, as Tempio di Venere e

[991] *LP*, I (ed. Duchesne), 179.
[992] Rigato 2012; Sensi 2012.
[993] David 2012.
[994] Colli 1996, 789–95.

Cupido,[995] only the rear wall with the apse is preserved (fig. C10.11). Its size and layout have been reconstructed based on parallels with the Aula Palatina of Trier.[996]

Federico Guidobaldi has proposed to attribute to the Sessorian Palace the decagonal building known as Tempio di Minerva Medica, c. 600 m to the north-west, based on the analysis of its brick stamps (dated to the beginning of the fourth century AD) and the evidence of a number of fifth-century scholiasts, who argued that the *Sessorium* was in topographical connection with the *porta Esquilina* (c. 900 m to the north-west of the so-called Minerva Medica).[997] Guidobaldi has interpreted the Tempio di Minerva Medica, together with the structures adjacent to it, as a private sector of the imperial residence, which served to lodge the imperial family. The reconstruction is hard to confirm on current evidence, because the features under consideration are very distant from one another, and the archaeological dossier from the south-eastern *suburbium* is known poorly: the topographical relationships between the Sessorian Palace, the Tempio di Minerva Medica, and the *porta Esquilina* cannot be reconstructed in sufficient detail.

Phases – Chronology

The construction of the residence began under Septimius Severus, and was completed by Caracalla, who added the circus, and Elagabalus, who built the

[995] This definition is the result of the erroneous interpretation of a female statue discovered in the area as a portrait of Venus, which led the Anonimo Magliabechiano to identify the building as a temple dedicated to the goddess (Colini 1955, 164).
[996] Bottiglieri, Colli and Palladino 2016.
[997] Guidobaldi 2014; Guidobaldi 1998.

amphitheatre and altered the circus. The installation of the Aurelianic Walls truncated the circus, and caused a reduction in the overall extension of the residence. More substantial alterations are attested under Constantine, who turned the main hall of the Severan residence into a church, and built two other reception halls. The vicissitudes of the complex after Constantine are unknown; if we were to trust a note by Pirro Ligorio, who reports the discovery of a sculptural group portraying Theodosius and Onorius—whom he could identify thanks to the dedicatory inscriptions—in the area of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, the complex may have been frequented at least until the beginning of the fifth century AD.[998] Ligorio, though, is renowned for his attitude to forgery: the inscriptions which he claimed to have seen in the area cannot be accepted as reliable evidence for the existence—let alone the identification—of the group.

Decoration

The excavations carried out in the area since the sixteenth century yielded an incalculable number of statues, reliefs, and pieces of architectural decoration, which were probably part of the decorative apparatus of the residence. As the majority of these excavation have not been documented, the provenance of the individual items cannot be reconstructed.[999]

As part of her doctoral research, Guglielmi addressed archive documents

[998] Guglielmi 2016.

[999] Lanciani 1994, 143; Lanciani 1992.

concerned with the works carried out or allowed by popes, and sought to identify the possible findspots of a number of statues, and to reconstruct the decoration of the *Horti Spei Veteris*.[1000] The decorative programme followed, the author argues, that of Roman villas of the imperial period: the most favourite subjects are those which could suit the decoration of gardens, bath complexes, and fountains. Nymphs, mythological scenes, young deities, herms, and genre motifs are featured largely in the decoration of the *Horti.*

We have scanty information on non-sculptural decoration. Marble veneer is attested in the halls 1 and 8; evidence for wall painting is limited to the presumed lodgings for the imperial court, whilst mosaics have been identified in the *domus* 'dei ritratti' and 'dei mosaici'.

[1000] Guglielmi 2014, 97–263.

SHA, *Seu*. IV.5 (AD 189)

Post consulatum anno ferme fuit otiosus; dein Laeto suffragante exercitui Germanico praeponitur. proficiscens ad Germanicos exercitus hortos spatiosos comparavit, cum antea aedes brevissimas Romae habuisset et unum fundum in Venetia. et iam in his hortis cum humi iacens epularetur cum filiis parca cena, pomaque adposita maior filius, qui tunc quinquennis erat, conlusoribus puerulis manu largiore divideret, paterque illum reprehendens dixisset, "Parcius divide, non enim regias opes possides," quinquennis puer respondit, "Sed possidebo" inquit.

After the consulship he spent about a year free from public duties; then, on the recommendation of Laetus, he was put in charge of the army in Germany. Just as he was setting out for Germany, he acquired elaborate gardens, although he had previously kept only an unpretentious dwelling in the city and a single farm in Venetia. And now, when he was reclining on the ground in these gardens, partaking of a frugal supper with his children, his elder son, who was then five years old, divided the fruit, when it was served, with rather a bounteous hand among his young playmates. And when his father reproved him, saying: "Be more sparing; for you have not the riches of a king," the five-year-old child replied: "No, but I shall have".

Hdn., III.13.1 (AD 205)

Ὁ δὲ Σεβῆρος τοῦ μὲν λοιποῦ ἐπάρχοντας δύο τῶν στρατοπέδων κατέστησεν, αὐτὸς δὲ τὰ πλεῖστα τοῦ βίου διέτριβεν ἐν τοῖς βασιλικοῖς προαστείοις καὶ τοῖς παραλίοις τῆς Καμπανίας χωρίοις, δικάζων τε καὶ πολιτικὰ διοικῶν. ἀπάγειν γὰρ ἤθελε τοὺς παῖδας τῆς ἐν Ῥώμη διαίτης, καὶ χρηστῆς ἀπολαύειν,4ἐπείπερ αὐτοὺς ἑώρα περὶ τὰ θεάματα ἐσπουδακότας ἀπρεπέστερον ἢ βασιλεῦσιν ἥρμοζεν.

In future Severus appointed two military prefects and himself spent most of his life on the imperial property on the outskirts of Rome or on the coast of Campania, there doing his judicial and administrative work. His reason was that he wanted to remove his sons from the life in Rome and give them a taste of clean living, particularly when he saw that their enthusiasm for the shows was more disreputable than was proper for emperors.

SHA, *Heliogab*. XIII–XIV

XIII. nec defuit tamen furor usque ad exitum voti pessimi. nam ei percussores inmisit, et hoc quidem modo: ipse secessit ad hortos Spei Veteris, quasi contra novum iuvenem vota concipiens, relicta in Palatio matre et avia et consobrino suo, iussitque ut trucidaretur iuvenis optimus et rei publicae necessarius. misit et ad milites litteras, quibus iussit ut abrogaretur nomen Caesaris Alexandro. misit qui et in Castris statuarum eius titulos luto tegeret, ut fieri solet de tyrannis. misit et ad nutritores eius, quibus imperavit sub praemiorum spe atque honorum, ut eum occiderent quo vellent

XIV. modo, vel in balneis vel veneno vel ferro. sed nihil agunt improbi contra innocentes. nam nulla vi quis adduci potuit, ut tantum facinus impleret, cum in ipsum magis conversa sint tela quae parabat

aliis, ab iisque sit interfectus quibus alios adpetebat. Sed ubi primum lutati sunt tituli statuarum, milites omnes exarserunt, et pars in Palatium, pars in hortos, in quibus erat Varius, ire tendunt, ut Alexandrum vindicarent hominemque impurum eundemque parricidalis animi tandem a re publica depellerent. et cum in Palatium venissent, Alexandrum cum matre atque avia custoditum diligentissime postea in Castra duxerunt. secuta autem erat illos Symiamira mater Heliogabali pedibus, sollicita filio. inde itum est in hortos, ubi Varius invenitur certamen aurigandi parans, exspectans tamen intentissime, quando eidem nuntiaretur consobrinus occisus. qui subito militum strepitu exterritus in angulum se condit obiectuque veli cubicularis, quod in introitu erat cubiculi, se texit, missis praefectis alio ad compescendos milites in Castra, alio vero ad eos placandos qui iam in hortos venissent. Antiochianus igitur e praefectis unus milites qui in hortos venerant sacramenti admonitione exoravit ne illum occiderent, quia nec multi venerant et plerique cum vexillo, quod Aristomachus tribunus retinuerat, remanserant. haec in hortis.

XIII. Yet the Emperor's madness went the length of an attempt to carry out the basest design; for he despatched assassins to kill Alexander, and that in the following way: Leaving his mother, grandmother, and cousin in the Palace, he himself withdrew to the Gardens of Spes Vetus on the ground that he was forming designs against some new youth, and there he issued an order to slay Alexander, a most excellent young man and one of whom the state had need. He also sent a written order to the soldiers bidding them take away from Alexander the name of Caesar, and he despatched men to smear mud on the inscriptions on his statues in the Camp, as is usually done to a tyrant. He sent, furthermore, to Alexander's guardians, ordering them, if they hoped for rewards and distinctions, to kill him in any way they wished, either in his bath, or by poison, or with the sword.

XIV. But evil men can accomplish nothing against the upright. For no power could induce any to commit so great a crime, and the weapons which he was making ready for others were turned against himself, and it was by the same violent means that he was directing at others that he himself was put to death. But immediately after the inscriptions on Alexander's statues were smeared with mud, all the soldiers were fired with anger, and they set out, some for the Palace and some for the gardens where Varius was, with the purpose of protecting Alexander and finally ridding the state of this filthy creature full of murderous intent. And when they had come to the Palace they set a guard about Alexander and his mother and grandmother and then escorted them with the greatest care to the Camp; Symiamira, Elagabalus' mother, followed them on foot, filled with anxiety about her son. Then the soldiers went to the gardens, where they found Varius making preparations for a chariot-race and at the same time eagerly awaiting the news of his cousin's murder. Alarmed by the sudden clatter of the soldiers, he crouched down in a corner and covered himself with the curtain which was at the door of the bed-chamber, sending one of the prefects to the Camp to quiet the soldiers there and the other to placate those who had just entered the gardens. Then Antiochianus, one of the prefects, reminded the soldiers who had come to the gardens of their oath of allegiance and finally persuaded them not to kill the Emperor—for, in fact, only a few had come and the majority had remained with the standard, which the tribune Aristomachus had kept back. So much for what happened in the gardens.

SHA, *Heliogab*. XXVII.1

Quadrigas circensium in tricliniis et in porticibus sibi semper exhibuit pransitans et cenitans, convivas senes agitare cogens, nonnullos honoratos.

He often brought four-horse chariots from the Circus into his banqueting-rooms or porticoes while he lunched or dined, compelling his guests to drive, even though they were old men and some of them had held public office.

SHA, *Heliogab*. XXVIII.1

Canes quaternos ingentes iunxit ad currum et sic est vectatus intra domum regiam idemque privatus in agris suis fecit, processit in publicum et quattuor cervis iunctis ingentibus. iunxit sibi et leones, Matrem magnam se appellans. iunxit et tigres, Liberum sese vocans eodemque habitu agens quo dii pinguntur quos imitabatur.

He would harness four huge dogs to a chariot and drive about within the royal residence, and he did the same thing, before he was made emperor, on his country-estates. He even appeared in public driving four stags of vast size. Once he harnessed lions to his chariot and called himself the Great Mother, and on another occasion, tigers, and called himself Dionysus; and he always appeared in the particular garb in which the deity that he was representing was usually depicted.

Cass. Dio, LXXX.14.2

Ἤλαυνε μὲν γὰρ ἅρμα τῇ πρασίῳ στολῇ χρώμενος, ἰδίᾳ τε καὶ οἴκοι, εἴγε οἶκον ἔνι φάναι τοῦτ᾽ εἶναι ἔνθα ἠγωνοθέτουν οἵ τε ἄλλοι οἱ περὶ αὐτὸν πρῶτοι, καὶ ἱππῆς καὶ Καισάρειοι, καὶ οἱ ἔπαρχοι αὐτοὶ ἥ τε τήθη καὶ ἡ μήτηρ καὶ αἱ γυναῖκες καὶ προσέτι καὶ τῶν ἐκ τῆς βουλῆς ἄλλοι τε καὶ ὁ Λέων ὁ πολίαρχος, καὶ ἐθεῶντο αὐτὸν καὶ ἁρματηλατοῦντα καὶ χρυσοῦς ὥσπερ τινὰ τῶν τυχόντων αἰτοῦντα, τούς τε ἀγωνοθέτας καὶ τοὺς στασιώτας προσκυνοῦντα.

He also used to drive a chariot, wearing the Green uniform, privately and at home,—if one can call that place home where the judges were the foremost men of his suite, both knights and imperial freed men, and the very prefects, together with his grandmother, his mother and the women, and likewise various members of the senate, including Leo, the city prefect,—and where they watched him playing charioteer and begging gold coins like any ordinary contestant and saluting the presidents of the games and the members of his faction.

Hdn., V.6.6–9

Κατεσκεύασε δὲ καὶ ἐν τῷ προαστείῳ νεὼν μέγιστόν τε καὶ πολυτελέστατον, ἐς ὃν

ἑκάστου ἔτους κατῆγε τὸν θεὸν ἀκμάζοντος θέρους. πανηγύρεις τε παντοδαπὰς συνεκρότει, ἱπποδρόμους τε κατασκευάσας καὶ θέατρα, διά τε ἡνιοχείας καὶ πάντων θεαμάτων τε καὶ ἀκροαμάτων πλείστων εὐωχούμενον τὸν δῆμον καὶ παννυχίζοντα εὐφραίνειν ᾠετο. τόν τε θεὸν αὐτὸν ἐπιστήσας ἅρματι χρυσῷ τε καὶ λίθοις τιμιωτάτοις πεποικιλμένῳ κατῆγεν ἀπὸ τῆς πόλεως ἐπὶ τὸ προάστειον. τὸ δὲ ἅρμα ἦγεν ἑξάπωλον, ἵππων λευκῶν μεγίστων τε καὶ ἀσπίλων, χρυσῷ πολλῷ καὶ φαλάροις ποικίλοις κεκοσμημένων, τάς τε ἡνίας κατεῖχεν οὐδείς, οὐδὲ τοῦ ἅρματος ἄνθρωπος ἐπέβαινεν, αὐτῷ δὲ περιέκειντο ὡς ἡνιοχοῦντι δὴ τῷ θεῷ. ὁ δ᾽ Ἀντωνῖνος ἔθεε πρὸ τοῦ ἅρματος ἀναποδίζων ἐς τοὐπίσω, ἔς τε τὸν θεὸν ἀποβλέπων καὶ τοὺς χαλινοὺς ἀντέχων τῶν ἵππων· πᾶσάν τε τὴν ὁδὸν ἤνυε τρέχων ἔμπαλιν ἑαυτοῦ ἀφορῶν τε ἐς τὸ πρόσθεν τοῦ θεοῦ. πρός τε τὸ μὴ πταῖσαι αὐτὸν ἢ διολισθαίνειν, οὐχ ὁρῶντα ὅπου βαίνει, γῆ τε ἡ χρυσίζουσα παμπλείστη ὑπέστρωτο, οἵ τε προασπίζοντες ἑκατέρωθεν ἀντεῖχον, τῆς ἀσφαλείας τοῦ τοιούτου δρόμου προνοούμενοι. ὁ δὲ δῆμος ἑκατέρωθεν παρέθει μετὰ παντοδαπῆς δᾳδουχίας, στεφάνους καὶ ἄνθη ἐπιρριπτοῦντες· ἀγάλματά τε πάντων θεῶν, καὶ εἴ τι πολυτελὲς ἀνάθημα <ἢ> τίμιον, ὅσα τε τῆς βασιλείας σύμβολα ἢ πολυτελῆ κειμήλια, οἵ τε ἱππεῖς καὶ ὁ στρατὸς πᾶς προεπόμπευον τοῦ θεοῦ. μετὰ δὲ τὸ καταγαγεῖν αὐτὸν καὶ ἱδρῦσαι ἐν τῷ ναῷ τάς τε προειρημένας θυσίας καὶ πανηγύρεις ἐπετέλει, πύργους τε μεγίστους καὶ ὑψηλοτάτους κατασκευάσας, ἀνιών τε ἐπ᾽ αὐτούς, ἐρρίπτει τοῖς ὄχλοις, ἁρπάζειν πᾶσιν ἐπιτρέπων, ἐκπώματά τε χρυσᾶ καὶ ἀργυρᾶ ἐσθῆτάς τε καὶ ὀθόνας παντοδαπάς, ζῷά τε πάντα, ὅσα ἥμερα, πλὴν χοίρων· τούτων γὰρ ἀπείχετο Φοινίκων νόμῳ. ἐν δὴ ταῖς ἁρπαγαῖς πολλοὶ διεφθείροντο, ὑπό τε ἀλλήλων πατούμενοι καὶ τοῖς δόρασι τῶν στρατιωτῶν περιπίπτοντες, ὡς τὴν ἐκείνου ἑορτὴν πολλοῖς φέρειν συμφοράν. αὐτὸς δὲ ἐβλέπετο πολλάκις ἡνιοχῶν ἢ ὀρχούμενος· οὐδὲ γὰρ λανθάνειν ἤθελεν ἁμαρτάνων. προήει τε ὑπογραφόμενος τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς καὶ τὰς παρειὰς ἐρυθραίνων, φύσει τε πρόσωπον ὡραῖον ὑβρίζων βαφαῖς ἀσχήμοσιν.

In the outlying district of the city he constructed a vast, magnificent temple to which he brought the god each year at mid-summer. He instituted many different festivals and constructed circuses (for horse-racing) and theatres, imagining that, if he provided chariot races and all kinds of spectacles and entertainments, and if he feasted the people all night long, he would be popular. The god was set up in a chariot studded with gold and precious stones and driven from the city to the suburb. The chariot was drawn by a team of six large, pure white horses which had been decorated with lots of gold and ornamented discs. No human person ever sat in the chariot or held the reins, which were fastened to the god as though he were driving himself. Antoninus ran along in front of the chariot, but facing backwards as he ran looking at the god and holding the bridles of the horses. He ran the whole way backwards like this looking up at the front of the god. But to stop him tripping and falling while he was not looking where he was going, lots of sand gleaming like gold was put down, and his bodyguard supported him on either side to make sure he was safe as he ran like this. Along both sides of the route the people ran with a great array of torches, showering wreaths and flowers on him. In the procession, in front of the god, went images of all the other gods and valuable or precious temple dedications and all the imperial standards or costly heirlooms. Also the cavalry and all the army

joined in. After the god had been conducted and installed in the temple, the emperor carried out the festival sacrifices described above. Then he climbed on to some very large high towers that had been constructed and threw down on to the crowd, for anyone to catch, gold and silver cups, all kinds of clothes and fine, linen garments and every kind of domestic animal, except pigs, which he did not touch by Phoenician law. In the scramble lots of people were killed, trampled to death by one another or impaled on the spears of the soldiers. Thus the festival of Elagabalus was fatal for many people. The emperor himself was often to be seen driving his chariot or dancing, making no attempt to conceal his vices. He used to go out with painted eyes and rouge on his cheeks, spoiling his natural good looks by using disgusting make-up.

CIL XV.7364a–b (AD 202) – Lead *fistula*

Imp(eratore) Caes(are) L(ucio) Sep(timio) Severo Pio Pertin(aci) Aug(usto) n(ostro) / III et Imp(eratore) M(arco) Aurelio Antonino Aug(usti) fil(io) co(n)s(ulibus)

(During the year of) the third consulate of our Emperor Caesar Lucius Septimius Severus Pius Pertinax Augustus, and of the first consulate of the Emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus son of Augustus.

CIL VI.1048 (AD 212–17) – Dedicatory inscription

Iuliae Domnae / Aug(ustae) / matri Aug(ustorum) n(ostrorum) / et castror(um)

To Iulia Domna Augusta, mother of our Augusti and of the military camps.

CIL VI.1136 (AD 317–24) – Commemorative inscription

D(omina) n(ostra) He[lena venerabilis do]mini [n(ostri) Constantini A]ug(usti) / mater e[t] avia beatis[simor(um) et flore]ntis[simor(um)] / [Caesarum nostr]oru[m] therm[as incendio] / [de]stru[ctas restituit]

Our empress Helena, venerable mother of our emperor Constantinus Augustus and grandmother of our most blessed and illustrious Caesars, renovated the baths which had been destroyed by a fire.

C11.
Villa of Maxentius

Location

i. **Modern-day region**: Latium

ii. **Ancient region**: Latium et Campania

iii. **Modern-day city**: Rome (third mile of the via Appia Antica)

iv. **Ancient city**: Roma

Plans: C11.I, C11.II, C11.III, C11.IV, C11.V

The countryside residence turned by Maxentius into his suburban palace, at the beginning of the fourth century AD, is found on the left side of the *uia Appia*, between the second and the third milestone (fig. C11.1). The late-antique villa incorporated and exploited a number of pre-existing structures, most of which can be attributed to the Τριόπιον, a large estate probably extended between the *uia Appia* and the river *Almo* (modern-day Marrana della Caffarella), previously belonging to Herodes Atticus. The identification as an imperial residence is based on the inscription which commemorates the dedication of the mausoleum to Maxentius' deified son Romulus, and to a passage of the Chronograph of 354, which reports that the emperor built a circus 'by the catacombs' (most likely, the cemetery of San Sebastiano).

Sources

i. **Texts:** A few passages from fourth-century literary sources allowed the

interpretation of the residence at the third mile of the *uia Appia* as the villa of Maxentius. If the concise biography of Maxentius found in the Chronograph of 354 provides data on the installation of a circus in the area (MGH *Chron. Min.*, ed. Mommsen (1892), 148), a passage from one of the Latin Panegyrics might refer to the use of the villa as an alternative to the main imperial residence on the Palatine. The source, albeit partial, reports the final stages of the war between Constantine and Maxentius: having seized the whole of Italy to the north of Rome, Constantine moved to the capital, to find that Maxentius had withdrawn in a private dwelling (Pan. Lat. XII, XVI.5). Even if the text does not allow further speculations on the location of Maxentius' *priuata domus*, the Panegyric could well refer to the villa on the *uia Appia*, which he had provided with all the commodities of an imperial palace (see below, 'Description').

ii. **Inscriptions:** The circus of Maxentius had long been referred to, in post-antique documents, as *circus Caracallae*.[1001] It was only on the occasion of extensive excavations carried out by Antonio Nibby in the second quarter of the nineteenth century that the circus, and the whole complex including the palace and the mausoleum, could be attributed to Maxentius, thanks to the discovery of the fragmentary inscription *CIL* VI.1138, a dedication to Maxentius' deified son Romulus. Crucial to the definition of landholding patterns in the area are seven inscriptions, the exact findspot of which is not known for all of them. The inscriptions are all concerned with the property layout prior to Maxentius'

[1001] Pisani Sartorio and Calza 1976, 4.

takeover, and can all be attributed to Herodes Atticus' Τριόπιον,[1002] hence the denomination of 'Triopean inscriptions'. *IGUR* 1155 A-B, the texts of two Greek poems, celebrate, respectively, the consecration of the Τριόπιον to Minerva and Nemesis, and the dedication of a statue of Annia Regilla in the temple of Ceres and Faustina, itself lying within the Τριόπιον. The texts of *IGUR* 339 A-B, engraved on two columns of *marmor carystium (cipollino)*, reported that the Τριόπιον was located at the third mile of the *uia Appia*, and forbade anyone from removing them from the property. A lost inscription (*IGR* I.196) commemorates the cenotaph erected for the couple, the proper burial being in Greece. The last two inscriptions – a bilingual text in Latin and Greek – are engraved on a marble column reused by Maxentius as the seventh milestone of the *uia Appia*, and confirm Annia Regilla's ownership of the Τριόπιον.

Excavations, research, and scholarship[1003]

If a memory of the structures pertaining to the reception and dwelling sectors of the villa was probably lost relatively soon after the site was abandoned, remains of the circus and of the mausoleum have always been visible over the centuries. The circus, in particular, was represented in plans and views of Rome and its outskirts since the Renaissance, although erroneously labelled *circus Caracallae*. Unauthorised

[1002] The nature of the Τριόπιον is discussed below, 'Origin of the *praedium*'.

[1003] The topic is discussed in Pisani Sartorio and Calza 1976, 3–9; details on previous research in the circus in Ioppolo and Pisani Sartorio 1999, 1–88.

excavations with the purpose of collecting antiquities, unfortunately, are registered as early as 1594; as a result, when more systematic research was undertaken in the first half of the nineteenth century, substantial parts of the decoration were no longer *in situ*.

Explorations carried out in the area since the beginning of the sixteenth century led to the discovery of inscriptions and sculptures pertaining to Herodes Atticus' Τριόπιον, which he had inherited from his wife Annia Regilla when she died in AD 160.[1004]

Following an increase of interest in ancient architecture, research and studies on the circus intensified in the last decades of the eighteenth century: the drawing of a plan by Francesco Piranesi, and the publication of the first scholarly work on the circus in 1789[1005] are certainly the result of a widespread enthusiasm for Roman antiquities. Documents from the late eighteenth century are a valuable source to substitute for a substantial loss of archaeological evidence, especially as regards the proper residence, although some details are often inaccurate, or have been invented arbitrarily.

More systematic investigations were carried out in the 1820s. Nibby, who directed excavations in the circus on behalf of Giovanni Torlonia, discovered the fragments of the inscription *CIL* VI.1138, which led to the attribution of the whole complex to Maxentius, at least in its latest phase. In spite of his focus on the circus, Nibby explored part of the residential area, and interpreted it as forming a single complex with the

[1004] Pisani Sartorio and Calza 1976, 131–36.

[1005] Bianconi and Fea 1789.

mausoleum and the circus. Notwithstanding Nibby's excavations, scientific works published slightly later still feature substantial errors on plans and illustrations, as in the case of Luigi Canina's.[1006] Further excavations were carried out towards the end of the nineteenth century by Luigi Boccanera in the residential area of the villa, as Rodolfo Lanciani reported briefly.[1007] The latter, in particular, was the first to argue that Maxentius' palace lay on the site previously occupied by the Τριόπιον.

The first comprehensive study of the complex was undertaken by Giuseppe Lugli, who carried out a critical analysis of the chronological sequence of the residence, rejecting Lanciani's arguments.[1008] During the central decades of the twentieth century, the City Council of Rome progressively acquired large parts of the complex, providing the opportunity for proper archaeological excavations undertaken in the 1960s, the results of which have subsequently been published.[1009]

A joint research project involved the American Academy in Rome and Rome's city council; the site was extensively investigated between 2003 and 2012. These excavations, however, remain mostly unpublished: scholars can only rely on a report published in 2007.[1010]

Large areas of the complex, furthermore, still lie in private properties, especially as regards the palace proper: further acquisitions by public institutions, followed by

[1006] Canina 1853, pl. XI.
[1007] Lanciani 1883.
[1008] Lugli 1924.
[1009] Pisani Sartorio and Calza 1976; Ioppolo and Pisani Sartorio 1999. As mentioned in the introductory sections, the series should have also included a monograph on the mausoleum, which has never been published. The most complete work on the monumental tomb remains Rasch 1984.
[1010] Conlin *et al.* 2007.

accurate excavations, are therefore compelling.

Origin of the praedium

A comprehensive analysis of structures and finds from the area demonstrated that the villa of Maxentius incorporated and expanded Herodes Atticus' Τριόπιον, although it is not possible to identify the exact moment when the property was acquired by the imperial house. The extension of the estate remains unknown; it has tentatively been argued that the *uia Appia* and the *Almo* were its south-western and north-eastern limits. It is not even clear if the property was a single plot of land, or if, instead, it consisted of separate lots.[1011] *Praedia* belonging to Annia Regilla are mentioned in *CIL* VI.1342, and probably formed the latter's dowry when she married Herodes Atticus in AD 143. A potential kinship between Annia Regilla and the two Faustinae (whose complete name is Annia Galeria Faustina) as argued by Giuseppina Pisani Sartorio,[1012] albeit tempting, cannot be demonstrated on current evidence.

According to the information provided by epigraphic evidence (especially *IGUR* 1155 A-B), the *fundus* included cornfields, groves, vineyards, olive groves, and meadows, gathered around a *uicus*, as well as a temple dedicated to Ceres and Faustina the Elder, and a field sacred to Minerva and Nemesis. Alongside the proper residence expanded by Maxentius, it seems that other building units scattered between the *uia*

[1011] Pisani Sartorio, Maiuro and Rausa 2008, 191–92.

[1012] Pisani Sartorio and Calza 1976, 138.

Appia and the *Almo* were part of the property.[1013] The so-called Nymphaeum of Egeria, which was not turned into a nymphaeum or a fountain until the age of Maxentius, was probably, in its original layout, a sophisticated summer *coenatio* facing the river *Almo*.[1014] As regards the modern-day church of S. Urbano alla Caffarella, originally a small temple on a large podium, its attribution to the Τριόπιον has largely been discussed by modern scholarship, but the question remains unsolved. The so-called Temple of the Deus Rediculus is actually a temple-shaped tomb dated to the late Antonine period, which has unfoundedly been interpreted as the mausoleum of Annia Regilla.[1015] As it lies beyond the river *Almo*, however, its association with the Τριόπιον is still disputed.

Following some sixteenth- and eighteenth-century reports of finds that occurred in the area, two further buildings can be included in this list. The first is a small, round temple, or *heroon*, which should have featured the columns engraved with *IGUR* 339 A-B. The second is a building of unknown layout and function, decorated by at least five Caryatids.[1016] Recent research carried out on the western side of the via Appia Antica, c. 450 metres to the south of the mausoleum of Caecilia Metella, brought to light a bath complex dated to the Hadrianic/Antonine period, with alterations and

[1013] Lugli 1924, 92, warns about the risk of thoughtlessly attributing to the Τριόπιον any structure found in the Caffarella valley.

[1014] Pisani Sartorio, Maiuro and Rausa 2008, 195. Further details in De Cristofaro 2014; De Cristofaro 2004; De Cristofaro 2002.

[1015] Pisani Sartorio, Maiuro and Rausa 2008, 195, with references. Annia Regilla was buried in Greece, and so was her husband, seventeen years later: if we were to postulate a funerary monument for the couple in the Τριόπιον, we shall rather envisage a cenotaph.

[1016] *Ibid.*, 191–93; Pisani Sartorio and Calza 1976, 131–41. On the building with the Caryatids, see also Piranesi 1778, pl. LXVIII.

refurbishments carried out in the early third century AD, in the early fourth century AD, and in the post-ancient period.[1017] The building yielded a reused marble slab reading the inscription ΡΗΓΙΛΛΑ ΤΟ ΦΩC ΤΗC ΟΙΚΙΑC. According to the editor,[1018] the datum could possibly allow the attribution of the bath complex to the Τριόπιον, although this interpretation does not sound entirely convincing. In the first instance, inscriptions pertaining to the Τριόπιον have been reused for different purposes, and not at short distances from the property, as in the case of the marble column engraved with *IGUR* 340 and *CIL* VI.1342, which was reused by Maxentius as the seventh milestone of the *uia Appia*. The baths' straight-line distance from the residential quarters of Herodes Atticus' villa, furthermore, is almost 900 metres: a location which seems anything but convenient for daily use of the bathhouse.

If Herodes Atticus inherited the property when Annia Regilla died in AD 160, the vicissitudes of the Τριόπιον after Atticus' death (ad 177) are unknown. As postulated by Marco Maiuro,[1019] the imperial fisc might have taken possession of it at some time in the third century AD, when Atticus' heirs died. Conversely, Lucrezia Spera argued that Herodes bequeathed his property to the imperial house, which acquired it immediately after his death.[1020] In the lack of clear evidence for that, the question remains unsolved.

After Maxentius' defeat by Constantine, the latter acquired the whole of his

[1017] Most recently, Mazzotta 2015. Data on mosaic decoration in Mazzotta 2008; Mazzotta 2007; Mazzotta 2005.
[1018] Mazzotta 2005, 370.
[1019] Maiuro 2012, 251.
[1020] Spera 2003, 274.

predecessor's possessions, including the residence on the *uia Appia*. In the list of Constantine's donations to some of the churches of Rome, found in the biography of pope Silvester in the *Liber Pontificalis*, properties on the *uia Appia* are not mentioned in detail.[1021]

Description[1022]

As revealed by extensive excavations undertaken in the twentieth century, the villa of Herodes Atticus, which Maxentius incorporated into his palace, expanded an earlier residence existing since the late Republican period. The villa was installed on the southern slope of a low hill facing the *uia Appia*; Atticus' and Maxentius' alterations also concerned the shallow valley between the *uia Appia* and the residence.

The systematic study carried out by Pisani Sartorio in the 1960s led to a more accurate understanding of the complex, with the identification of several building units with different chronology and functions, scattered over an area extending for almost 50 ha.[1023]

The main body of the villa lay on the southern side of a low hill, to the north-east of the *uia Appia*. A 115-m-long cryptoporticus (C, plan C11.IV) served as substructure for the hillslope, allowing a more efficient exploitation of the available space. The cryptoporticus, consisting of two, parallel vaulted corridors running north-

[1021] Details on the vicissitudes of the estate after the Roman times are provided by Pisani Sartorio and Calza 1976, xxi–xxiv.

[1022] An accurate description of the standing remains is found in *Ibid.*, 10–112 the author provides plenty of detail from the excavations, including finds.

[1023] In the following description, I will adopt the numbering used by Pisani Sartorio and Calza 1976.

west/south-east, was featured since the earliest phase of the residence, but underwent substantial alterations in later periods. In the second century AD, when the villa was probably a possession of Herodes Atticus, two circular towers (C3 and C4) were built at each end of the cryptoporticus, and three similarly sized rooms (D1, 3.5 by 5.1 m; D2, 3.5 by 3.8 m; D3, 3.5 by 4.6 m) were installed in the middle of the northern corridor.

This layout was heavily altered by Maxentius: the circular towers were erased, and the cryptoporticus was extended by c. 76 m to the south-east. The construction of a thick terracing wall (P) to the south of the cryptoporticus, still dated to the age of Maxentius, provided the palace with an impressive façade overlooking the *uia Appia*. The overall feature, furthermore, functioned as a privileged pathway connecting the core of the residence with the *puluinar imperatoris*, a box on the northern side of the circus reserved for the emperor and his closest guests.[1024]

Prior to the alterations undertaken by Maxentius, it seems that the façade of the villa, much more modest in proportions, lay on a lower level. C. 20 m to the south of the cryptoporticus and parallel to it, two nymphaea (B and E) are found at each end of a poorly preserved, 80-metre-long wall, which served, seemingly, as the southern frontage of the residence towards the *uia Appia*.

Above the cryptoporticus, recent research identified further structures, with different chronologies and functions. Evidence for the pre-Maxentian residence is really scanty: apart for the aforementioned rooms identified with the letter D, two clusters of rooms (F and G) are found on each side of the later reception hall (M). The

[1024] More details on the circus and the imperial *puluinar* below.

two blocks, now almost erased to the foundation level, yielded traces of marble and mosaic decoration, as well as of a heating system. Due to the poor preservation, it is hard to make assumptions on their possible functions. Their architectural layout, alongside the evidence for decoration and heating, led G. Pisani Sartorio to interpret them as the residential quarter of the second-century villa, a function which might not have changed after Maxentius' takeover. The installation of the ceremonial hall M , (19.6 by 33.6 m), provided with its own atrium N (29.8 by 9.7), does not seem to have altered the previous layout: as revealed during excavations, the blocks F and G were still standing in the age of Maxentius, and were both somewhat connected to the ceremonial hall.

To the west of block F, there lay a rectangular hall with an apse on the south-western side (L1, 49.5 by 10.6 m), dated to the age of Maxentius. Even if it is almost completely erased, the heating system is partially preserved. The remarkable size of the room, combined with its features (it also yielded evidence for marble decoration on the floor and on the walls), seems to suggest that it fulfilled some important functions, probably connected with display and ceremonial. The installation of L1 has partly obliterated the western end of the cryptoporticus, including the circular tower. In the area between L1 and M, some poorly preserved structures might provide evidence for another, large room (L2), the layout and functions of which cannot be identified.

C. 10 m to the south-west of L1, adjacent to the quadriporticus enclosing the mausoleum (see below), some poorly preserved walls have been attributed to a modest

bath complex (A), of which only the *caldarium* is visible. The building has a peculiar orientation, which does not reflect that of any other sector of the residence and should probably be ascribed to the need of taking advantage of sunlight.

On the north-eastern side of L1, a wide doorway led into a large space (I2), probably a rectangular hall, the structures of which are almost completely erased. To the west of it, an elongated room with an apse on the north-eastern side (I1) yielded scanty evidence for a heating system. The poor preservation of both halls did not allow further assumptions on their possible functions.

On the top of the hill and further north-eastwards, a large reservoir (H) supplied the residence with fresh water. As excavation data revealed, the building dates back to the early imperial period. Another reservoir was identified c. 500 m to the east, although research has not determined whether it was part of the complex.

C. 25 m to the east of the reservoir, there stand the remains of a thus-far uninterpreted feature, only part of which survives (O, 9.7 by 5.1 m). A semi-circular apse with two niches in the inside, it was part of either a now-lost rectangular structure of unknown function, or, instead, of a circular feature, which the editors have tentatively interpreted as a monumental vestibule leading to the core of the residence, on the basis of comparison with late-antique structures with a similar architectural layout.[1025] The northern limit of the residence remains unknown for the moment, as the area lies in private property.

The most impressive alterations carried out by Maxentius are the installation of a

[1025] Pisani Sartorio and Calza 1976, 99–100 and 125–26.

circus to the south-east of the main block, and of a mausoleum surrounded by a quadriporticus to the south-west.

The circus was installed in a shallow valley; whether or not a private hippodrome was already featured in the second-century villa, as argued by Pisani Sartorio,[1026] cannot be ascertained on current evidence. The circus measures c. 515 m in length and c. 90 m in width, and had a capacity of c. 10,000 people. A structure on the northern side has convincingly been identified with the imperial *puluinar*; connected with the palace through a 190-metre-long corridor, it provided the emperor, his family and his most important guests with a privileged view of the racing track. On the opposite side there lay another box, which the editors have interpreted as the *tribunal iudicum*.

The western end of the building was occupied by the *carceres*, consisting of twelve boxes for *quadrigae*, arranged in two groups of six on each side of a wide passageway, the *porta triumphalis*. The *carceres* were framed by two, three-storey towers, still partially preserved; the northern led to a now-lost terrace above the *carceres*, which might have probably included a small loggia for the organiser of the shows (*editor spectaculorum*). As evidenced by modern research, the southern tower could not be accessed from the ground floor.

The seating (*loca*), supported by a vaulted corridor running all around the track,

[1026] *Ibid.*, 118. Further details are provided in Ioppolo and Pisani Sartorio 1999, 279, n. 31: the presence of carved reliefs dated to earlier periods should be evidence for a pre-existing facility for chariot racing. It was noted, however (see below), that the structures of the circus seem of a lower quality than those of the palace and of the mausoleum, as if the building needed to be completed in a relatively short time span. It could well be possible, therefore, that part of the decoration consisted of re-used elements, the original location of which is unknown.

consisted of twelve tiers with proper seats every other step, the in-between steps allegedly serving for foot resting. The tribunes have a very steep inclination, so that the spectators seating on the highest step were not too distant from the track. A parapet dividing the upper and lower parts of the *loca* could serve as evidence for some class distinctions among the spectators.[1027]

Between the *loca* and the *carceres*, two *aditus* let into the corridor which supported the *loca*, and thence to the many staircases leading to the seating, alongside offering a way out for the components of the *pompa circensis* and for the defeated racing teams. On the southern side of the circus, c. 125 m to the north-east of the *carceres*, a wide doorway was interpreted as the *porta libitinensis*, serving as a safe exit for chariots which overturned and needed to leave the racing track as fast as possible. The principal entrance to the circus was almost certainly from the east, through the *porta triumphalis*, at the semi-circular end; the access was emphasised through a monumental arch.

From the architectural viewpoint, the circus seems of a slightly lower quality than the residence and the mausoleum. A large part of the decoration, furthermore, was not featured in the earliest phase of the circus, and was added at a later stage. On this evidence, Giovanni Ioppolo has argued that, shortly after the construction works of the circus started, and urgency arose to complete the building as soon as possible.[1028] The circus was built, Ioppolo has it, to stage the celebrations held on the occasion of Romulus' funeral, who died at some time in AD 309. This reconstruction cannot be

[1027] Humphrey 1986, 592.

[1028] Ioppolo and Pisani Sartorio 1999, 92–93. Ioppolo 1999, 178, n. 99.

demonstrated on current evidence: pre-modern excavations have compromised the stratigraphic record, making it hard to have an accurate understanding of the chronology of the circus.

The last building unit of the Maxentian complex is a cylindrical mausoleum (27.6 by 30.4 m), enclosed within a large quadriporticus (120 by 104 m).[1029] The feature, although tightly connected with the rest of the complex, faces towards the *uia Appia* (the main accesses to the precinct and to the tomb are from the south-west) which influenced its orientation. The enclosure was provided with three more passageways; two of them led to the residence, the third, on the eastern side of the quadriporticus, led to the circus.

The rotunda, accessed from a colonnade porch, originally stood on two levels; nowadays, only the lower is preserved. The portico inside the precinct, no longer preserved, was linked by G. Ioppolo with the necessity of housing the racing teams before the competitions usually held in the circus started.[1030] The mausoleum at the villa of Maxentius has been compared with two, late-antique imperial mausolea, both enclosed within defined precincts, found at Split in tight connection with Diocletian's palace, and in Thessaloniki, where the tomb is part of a complex which included an imperial palace and a circus. Their connection with an imperial residence, as argued by A. Frazer,[1031] seems to suggest a strong link with the living emperor: if the rotunda

[1029] The most extensive study of the mausoleum is Rasch 1984; the building is set in the context of imperial mausolea by Johnson 2009, especially 58–109 as regards Late Antiquity.
[1030] Ioppolo 1999, 104–06.
[1031] Frazer 1966, 385–88.

was certainly intended as the ruler's burial after his death, it might also have served as a monument to the emperor when still alive. The mausoleum at the villa of Maxentius, Frazer suggested, could originally have been planned to fulfil similar functions and was later used for Romulus' burial.

Phases – Chronology

As mentioned above, the palace of Maxentius expanded a previously existing residence dated to the central decades of the second century AD, itself installed on the site of a late-Republican villa which underwent some alterations in the early imperial period. The chronological sequence is based on excavation data and on the construction technique of the standing structures.

The only standing remains of the late-Republican villa belong to the earliest phase of the cryptoporticus, which consisted of two barrel-vaulted, parallel corridors, separated by a sequence of rectangular piers. Scattered walls have provisionally been ascribed to this phase, but their interpretation is not possible on current evidence.

In the early imperial period, the residence was provided with a water reservoir and with a monumental façade facing south-westwards, towards the *uia Appia*. Two nymphaea completed the frontage of the villa.

More extensive alterations can be ascribed to the mid-second century AD, after the residence had probably been acquired by Herodes Atticus. The addition of two circular towers at each end of the cryptoporticus turned it into a much more impacting façade. In the middle of the northern corridor, the installation of three rooms divided it into

two separate segments. The clusters of rooms on each side of the later reception hall M, albeit poorly preserved, have been attributed to the residential quarters of the residence, on the grounds of the evidence for heating and decoration. The bath complex to the south-west of the later hall L1 is probably earlier than the alterations carried out by Maxentius, as the installation of the mausoleum has partially incorporated it. Based on the building technique, it seems to date to the mid-second century AD. The villa of Herodes Atticus included, also, some of the buildings scattered between the *uia Appia* and the river *Almo*, as well as the features mentioned by epigraphic sources.

Once acquired by Maxentius, the residence was transformed remarkably. Alongside the installation of the circus and of the mausoleum, the ceremonial functions of the villa were emphasised, with the addition of halls connected to display and reception. The core of the palace was directly connected to the *puluinar imperatoris* of the circus through a 190-metre long corridor, which allowed the emperor to easily circulate between his dwellings and the circus. The two nymphaea on the southern façade underwent some smaller refurbishments; early fourth-century alterations are also attested in the so-called Nymphaeum of Egeria, which was turned into a proper fountain, having hitherto served as summer triclinium.

After Maxentius was defeated and killed in AD 312, the fortunes of the villa are mostly unknown. The discovery of portraits of Constantine II and Claudius Gothicus (see below) might offer evidence for occupation of the residence in the age of Constantine.

Decoration

Evidence for in-situ decoration is very scanty. Scattered remains of high-quality fresco and *opus sectile* have been identified in the dwelling and reception areas of the villa (D, F, G, L, M, N); wall painting is partially preserved in the cryptoporticus too. The two nymphaea yielded limited evidence for floor and wall mosaics, which allowed a tentative reconstruction of their chronological sequence.

Marble decoration and wall paintings were certainly featured in the most prominent sectors of the circus (boxes reserved to the emperor and the judges, *carceres*, *porta triumphalis*). A sequence of herms, only one of which was discovered on the occasion of Nibby's excavations, decorated the inner side of the *carceres*. Investigations carried out in the circus brought to light several fragments of marble decoration, the exact findspot of which is almost impossible to ascertain. Most of these marble reliefs, furthermore, seem to pre-date the construction of the circus. As a result, it is hard to say whether they belonged to the second-century villa or if, on the contrary, they were originally part of now-unidentifiable monuments, and were reused by Maxentius.

As briefly mentioned above, it was noted that a large part of the decoration was not featured in the earliest phase of the circus, and was added at a later stage, as if the building needed to be completed as soon as possible. This urgency has been linked with the premature death of Romulus: if the circus might originally have been planned for different purposes, the chances are that it served as the stage of the celebrations held on the occasion of Romulus' funeral.

Alongside in-situ decoration, Nibby's excavation and, to a limited extent, recent

investigations brought to light a high number of objects of art, some of which are now lost.[1032] The circus yielded statues of Caracalla and Julia Domna, the portrait of a young boy, dated to the early-fourth century AD and tentatively identified as Constantine II, and a portrait of Claudius Gothicus. Some minor carving details led Raissa Calza to ascribe the portrait to the age of Constantine; very interestingly, we know that Constantine claimed Claudius Gothicus among his ancestors.

In addition to imperial portraits, the circus featured a number of statues and groups depicting mythological subjects, alongside a sequence of herms decorating the inner side of the *carceres*, only one of which is preserved.

[1032] Details in Pisani Sartorio and Calza 1976, 159–213.

MGH *Chron. Min.*, ed. Mommsen (1892), 148

Maxentius imperavit annos VI. Hoc imperatore templum Romae arsit and fabricatum est. Thermas in palatio fecit et circum in catecumbas.

Maxentius held the power for six years. While he was ruling, a temple in Rome burned down and was rebuilt. He built a bathhouse in the palace and a circus by the catacombs. (trans. A. Poletto)

Pan. Lat. XII (IX), XVI.5

Quid enim aliud illum sperasse credendum est, qui iam ante biduum palatio emigraverat, cum uxore ac filio in privatam domum sponte concesserat, ut res est, somniis terribilibus agitatus et nocturnis pulsus Vltricibus, ut tu iam olim exspectatus habitator sacris illis aedibus diu exalatis expiatisque succederes?

And what else is to believe that he feared when, two days before, he had left the palace and had withdrawn with his wife and son to a private house, driven in fact by terrifying dreams and expelled by nocturnal Avengers, so that you the long-expected occupant might succeed to that sacred edifice after it had been aired out and purified? (trans. A. Poletto)

***CIL* VI.1138 (AD 309–10) – Dedicatory inscription**

Divo Romulo n(obilissimae) m(emoriae) v(iro) / co(n)s(uli) or[d(inario) I]I filio / d(omini) n(ostri) Maxent[ii] Invict(i) / [ac perpet(ui)] Aug(usti) nepoti / [di]vi [M]axim[i]ani Sen(ioris) / [e]t divi [Maximiani Iu]/[ni]oris ac [

To the divine Romulus, man worthy of the noblest memory, twice ordinary consul, son of our emperor Maxentius Invictus and forever Augustus, grandson of the divine Maximianus Senior and of the divine Maximianus Iunior, and [

***CIL* VI.1342 (AD 160–61) – Funerary inscription**

Annia Regilla / Hirodis uxor / lumen domus / cuius haec / praedia / fuerunt //

Annia Regilla, wife of Herodes and light of the house, to whom these estates belonged.

***IGUR* III.1155 A-B (AD 160–161) – Poem inscribed on marble steles**

Μαρκέλλου.
δεῦρ’ ἴτε Θυβριάδες νηὸν ποτὶ τόνδε γυναῖκες
Ἠγίλλης ἔδος ἀμφὶ θυοσκόα ἱρὰ φέρουσαι.
ἣ δὲ πολυκτεάνων μὲν ἔην ἐξ Αἰνεαδάων,

Ἀγχίσεω κλυτὸν αἷμα καὶ Ἰδαίης Ἀφροδίτης,
γήματο δ’ ἐς Μαραθῶνα· θεαὶ δέ μιν οὐρανιῶναι
τίουσιν, Δηώ τε νέη Δηώ τε παλαιή.
τῆσί περ ἱερὸν εἶδος ἐυζώνοιο γυναικὸς
ἀγκεῖται· αὐτὴ δὲ μεθ’ ἡρῴνησι νένασται
ἐν μακάρων νήσοισιν, ἵνα Κρόνος ἐνβασιλεύει.
τοῦτο γὰρ ἀντ’ ἀγαθοῖο νόου εἴληχεν ἄποινον,
ὥς οἱ Ζεὺς ᾤκτειρεν ὀδυρόμενον παρακοίτην
γήραι ἐν ἀζαλέωι χήρηι περικείμενον εὐνῆι,
οὕνεκά οἱ παῖδας μὲν ἀμύμονος ἐκ μεγάροιο
ἅρπυιαι Κλωθῶες ἀνηρείψαντο μέλαιναι
ἡμισέας πλεόνων· δοιὼ δ’ ἔτι παῖδε λιπέσθην
νηπιαχώ, ἀγνῶτε κακῶν, ἔτι πάμπαν ἀπύστω,
οἵην σφι νηλὴς κατὰ μητέρα πότμος ἔμαρψε
πρίν περ γηραιῆισι ⟦ΝΕΠΙ⟧ μιγήμεναι ἠλακάτηισι.
τῶι δὲ Ζεὺς ἐπίηρον ὀδυρομένωι ἀκόρητον
καὶ βασιλεὺς Διὶ πατρὶ φυὴν καὶ μῆτιν ἐοικώς,
Ζεὺς μὲν ἐς ὠκεανὸν θαλερὴν ἔστειλε γυναῖκ[α]
αὔρηισι Ζεφύροιο κομίζεμεν ἠλυσίηισιν.
αὐτὰρ ὃ ἀστερόεντα περὶ σφυρὰ παιδὶ πέδιλα
δῶκεν ἔχειν, τὰ λέγουσι καὶ Ἑρμαῶνα φορῆναι,
ἦμος ὅτ’ Αἰνείαν πολέμου ἐξῆγεν Ἀχαιῶν
νύκτα διὰ δνοφερήν· ὁ δέ οἱ περὶ ποσσὶ σαωτὴρ
παμφανόων ἐνέκειτο σελ[ηναίη]ς κύκλο[ς εὐ]ρ[ύς]·
τὸν δὲ καὶ Αἰνεάδαι πο[τ’] ἐνερράψαντο πεδίλῳ
[ἔμμεναι] Αὐσ̣ο̣ν̣[ίοις ε]ὐ̣ηγενέεσσι γέραα.
οὔ μιν ὀνόσσηται καὶ Κεκροπίδην περ ἐόντα
Τυρσηνῶν ἀρχαῖον ἐπισφύριον γέρας ἀνδρῶν
Ἔρσης ἐκγεγαῶτα καὶ Ἑρμέω, εἰ ἐτεὸν δὴ
Κῆρυχ {[26]Κῆρυξ}[26] Ἡρώδεω πρόγονος Θησηιάδαο.
τοὔνεκα τειμήεις καὶ ἐπώνυμος, ἦ μὲν ἄνασσα[ν]
ἐς βουλὴν ἀγέρεσθαι, ἵνα πρωτόθρονες ἕδραι,
Ἑλλάδι δ’ οὔτε γένος βασιλεύτερος οὔτε τι φωνὴν
Ἡρώδεω, γλῶσσάν δέ τέ μιν καλέουσιν Ἀθηνέων.
ἣ δὲ καὶ αὐτή περ καλλίσφυρος Αἰνειώνη
καὶ Γανυμηδείη καὶ Δαρδάνιον γένος ἦην
Τρωὸς Ἐριχθονίδαο· σύ δ’, ἰ φίλον, ἱερὰ ῥέξαι
καὶ θῦσαι· θυέων ἀτὰρ οὐκ ἀέκοντος ἀνάγκη,
ε<ὖ> δέ τοι εὐσεβέεσσι καὶ ἡρώων ἀλεγίζειν.
οὐ μὲγ γὰρ θνητή, ἀτὰρ οὐδὲ θέαινα τέτυκται·
τοὔνεκεν οὔτε νεὼν ἱερὸν λάχεν οὔτε τι τύμβον.

οὐδὲ γέρα θνητοῖς, ἀτὰρ οὐδὲ θεοῖσιν ὅμοια.
σῆμα μέν οἱ νηῶι ἴκελον δήμωι ἐν Ἀθήνης,
ψυχὴ δὲ σκῆπτρον Ῥαδαμάνθυος ἀμφιπολεύει.
τοῦτο δὲ Φαυστείνηι κεχαρισμένον ἦσται ἄγαλμα
δήμωι ἐνὶ Τριόπεω, ἵνα οἱ πάρος εὐρέες ἀγροὶ
καὶ χορὸς ἡμερίδων καὶ ἐλαιήεντες ἄρουραι.
οὔ μ<ι>ν ἀτιμήσειε θεή, βασίλεια γυναικῶν,
ἀμφίπολον γεράων ἔμεναι καὶ ὀπάονα νύμφην,
οὐδὲ γὰρ Ἰφιγένειαν ἐύθρονος Ἰοχέαιρα
οὐδ' Ἔρσην γοργῶπις ἀπητίμησεν Ἀθήνη,
οὐδέ μιν ἡρῴνησι παλαιῇσιν μεδέουσα
Καίσαρος ἰφθίμοιο παρόψεται ὄμπνια μήτηρ
ἐς χορὸν ἐρχομένην προτεράων ἡμιθεάων.
ἦ λάχεν ἠλυσίῃσι χοροστασίῃσιν ἀνάσσειν
αὐτήι τ' Ἀλκμ<ή>νη τε μάκαιρά τε Καδμειώνη.
πότνι' Ἀθηνάων ἐπιήρανε Τριτογένεια
ἥ τ' ἐπὶ ἔργα βροτῶν ὁράᾳς Ῥαμνούσιας Οὖπι
γείτονες ἀγχίθυροι Ῥώμης ἑκατοντοπύλοιο,
πείονα δὴ καὶ τόνδε, θεά, τειμήσατε χῶρον,
δῆμον Δηῳοῖο φιλόξεινον Τριόπαο.
τόφρα κε καὶ Τριόπειαι ἐν ἀθανάτοις ἀλέγησθον.
ὡς ὅτε καὶ Ῥαμνοῦντα καὶ εὐρυχόρους ἐς Ἀθήνας
ἤλθετε δώματα πατρὸς ἐριγδούποιο λιποῦσαι.
ὣς τήνδε ῥώεσθε πολυστάφυλον κατ' ἀλωὴν
λήιά τε σταχύων καὶ δένδρεα βοτρυόεντα
λειμώνων τε κόμας ἁπαλοτρεφέων ἐφέπουσαι.
ὔμμι γὰρ Ἡρῴδης ἱερὴν ἀνὰ γαῖαν ἔηκε
τὴν ὅσσην περὶ τεῖχος ἐύτροχον ἐστεφάνωται,
ἀνδράσιν ὀψιγόνοισιν ἀκινήτην καὶ ἄσυλον
ἔμμεναι. ἦ δ' ἐπί οἱ ἐξ ἀθανάτοιο καρήνου
σμερδαλέον σίσασα λόφον κατένευσεν Ἀθήνη.
μή τωι νηποινὸν βῶλον μίαν ἢ ἕνα λᾶαν
ὀχλίσσαι, ἐπεὶ οὐ μοιρέων ἀτρεῖ<ε>ς ἀνάγκαι
ὅς κε θεῶν ἑδέ<ε>σσιν ἀλιτροσύνην ἀναθήῃ.
κλῦτε περικτίονες καὶ γείτονες ἀγροιῶται.
ἱερὸς οὗτος ὁ χῶρος, ἀκίνητοι δὲ θέαιναι
καὶ πολυτίμητοι καὶ ὑποσχεῖν οὖας ἕτοιμαι·
μηδέ τις ἡμερίδων ὄρχους ἢ ἐ<π>' ἄλσεα δενδρέων
ἢ ποίην χιλῶι εὐαλδέι χλῶρα θέουσαν
δμωὴν κυανέου Ἄιδος ῥήξιε {[26]πήξειε}[26] μάκελλαν
σῆμα νέον τεύχων ἠὲ πρότερον κεραίζων.

οὐ θέμις ἀμφὶ νέκυσσι βαλεῖν ἱρόχθονα βῶλ<ον>,
πλὴν ὅ κεν αἵματος ἦισι καὶ ἐκ γένος ἐσσαμένο<ιο>.
κείνοις δ' οὐκ ἀθέμιστον, ἐπεὶ τιμάορος ἑστώρ.
καὶ γὰρ Ἀθηναίη περ Ἐριχθόνιον βασιλῆα
νηῶι ἐνκατέθηκε συνέστιον ἔμμεναι ἱρῶν.
εἰ δέ τωι ἄκλυτα ταῦτα καὶ οὐκ ἐπιπείσεται αὐτοῖ<ς>,
ἀλλ' ἀποτιμήσ<ο>ι, μή οἱ νήτιτα γένηται.
ἀλλά μιν ἀπρόφατος Νέμεσις καὶ ῥόμβος ἀλάστω<ρ>
τίσονται, στυγερὴν δὲ κυλινδήσει κακότητα·
οὐδὲ γὰρ ἴφθιμον Τριόπεω μένος Αἰολίδαο
ὤναθ', ὅτε νειὸν Δημήτερος ἐξαλάπαξεν.
τῶι ἤτοι ποινὴν καὶ ἐπωνυμίην ἀλέ̣ασθα<ι>
χώρου, μή τοι ἔπηται ἔπι Τρ<ι>όπειος Ἐρινύς.

Come, daughters of Tibur, to this shrine, ladies
Who bring incense offerings to the abode of Regilla;
She was born of the wealthy race of Aeneas,
The famed stock of Anchises and Idaean Aphrodite;
She married into Marathon. The heavenly goddesses
Old and New Demeter honour her, goddesses
In whose shrine the image of the fair-girdled woman
Is dedicated. She herself, however, dwells with the heroines
In the Isles of the Blessed where Kronos is king.
She has received this as reward for her virtuous mind,
Since Zeus pitied her mourning mate,
Lying in withered age in a widowed bed,
Since the snatching black Fates carried off
More than half his children from his blameless halls.
Two children still were left him, very young and pure, innocent of all wrong,
From whom pitiless fate snatched such a mother
Before she had attained the old woman's spindle.
Zeus gave him [Herodes] a gift in his unceasing grief,
And [so did] the emperor, like to Zeus in his nature
and mind. Zeus brought his blooming wife to Ocean with
Elysian breezes of Zephyr;
While he (the emperor) gave Herodes' son the starry footgear
To wear about his ankles, which they say Hermes also wore
When he led Aeneas out of battle with the Greeks
Through shadowy night. And on his feet, the shining saviour,
Was a [broad] circle like the moon.
And this circle the descendants of Aeneas once upon a time sewed

onto their shoes
To be the privilege of well-born Ausonians.
Do not begrudge him, descendant of Kekrops though he be,
The ancient ankle-insignia of the Tyrian [Etruscan] men, [he is]
Descendant of Herse and Hermes, if true it is
That Keryx is the ancestor of Thesean Herodes.
For this reason he is honoured and eponymous [consul ordinarius],
Enrolled, on the one hand, in the ruling senate,
where are the front-row [consular] seats,
And in Greece, on the other hand, there is no one
more regal in birth or speech
Than Herodes; they call him 'the tongue of Athens'.
She herself, the fair-ankled descendant of Aeneas
And of Ganymede, was also of the Dardanian race
Of Tros, son of Erichthonios. But you, if you will, make offerings
And sacrifices. But sacrifices are not needed from the unwilling;
It is good, though, for the pious to pay heed also to the heroes.
She is not a mortal, but neither was she made a goddess.
Wherefore she received neither a sacred temple nor a tomb,
Not honours due to mortals, nor those due to the gods.
There is a temple-like monument for her in the city of Athena,
But her soul tends the sceptre of Radamanthes.
This statue [of Regilla] stands as a gift in honour of Faustina
In the Triopion, where there were formerly her broad fields,
A choir of vineyards, and olive orchards.
The goddess would not dishonour her, queen of women,
To be the handmaid of her honours and attendant nymph.
For Artemis, arrow-pourer of the lovely throne, scorned not
Iphigenia, nor did Gorgon-faced Athena scorn Herse,
Nor will the corn-bearing mother of mighty Caesar,
Guardian-goddess for the nymphs of old, overlook her as she
Enters the dance of the earlier demi-goddesses,
For it is her [Faustina's] prerogative to superintend the dances of
Elysium with blessed Alcmene and Kadmos' daughter.
Lady Tritogeneia, sovereign of the Athenians,
And you who oversee the works of men, Rhamnousian Nemesis,
Next-door neighbours of hundred-gated Rome,
Honour this rich land also, Goddess,
The home friendly to strangers of Triopian Demeter
As long as the Triopeiai are counted among the immortals.
As once you came to Rhamnous and Athens of the broad dancing

floors, leaving the house of your father the thunderer,
So strengthen likewise this vineyard rich in clusters,
Visiting the standing corn, the trees heavy with vines,
And the luxuriant tresses of the meadows.
Herodes released this land to be sacred for you,
An extent crowned by a smoothly running wall,
To remain unmoved and sacrosanct for generations
To come. Athena granted, shaking her helmet-crest
Terribly from her immortal head,
That [no one can] move one clod or rock
Without penalty, since the dooms of the Fates
Are to be reckoned with if anyone do mischief to the seats
of the gods. Listen, neighbouring landowners and labourers,
The ground is sacred, and the goddesses,
Immovable, and honoured, are ready to lend an ear.
Let no one take a mattock, servant of dark Hades,
To the rows of vines or groves of trees
Or verdant meadows luxuriant with fodder,
To build a new tomb here or plunder the old one.
For it is sacrilege to bury a body here with hallowed soil
Except for relatives and future descendants of the family.
For them it is not improper, since the founder is the avenger.
For even Athena herself, you see, once put King Erichthonios
In her temple to be partner in her cult.
If someone fails to heed these warnings and does not obey them,
But dishonours [the sanctuary], let this not go unavenged –
But dire Nemesis and an avenging whirlwind
Will pay him back and roll him in abominable evil.
For the strength of Triopas son of Aeolis
Availed him little when he sacked Demeter's temple.
Shun the punishment and the story that explains the place's
name, lest the Triopian Fury catch up with you! [1033]

IGUR II.339 A-B (AD 160–161) – Marble column

καὶ *h*οι κίο-
νες Δέμετρος
καὶ Κόρες
ἀνάθεμα

[1033] This translation is taken from Gleason 2010.

καὶ χθονί-
ον θεσῦ· καὶ
(col. II.7) ὀδενὶ θε-
μιτὸν με-
τακινεῖσαι
ἐκ τοῦ Τριο-
πίο *h*ό ἐσ-
τιν ἐπὶ τοῦ
τρίτο ἐν
τεῖ *h*οδοῖ
τεῖ Ἀππίαι
ἐν τοῖ *h*ερό-
δο ἀγροῖ.
ὀ γὰρ λοῖ-
ον τοῖ
κινέσαν-
τι· μάρτυς
δαίμον
Ἐν*h*οδία

It is not permitted for anyone to carry us away from Triopion, which is located at the third mile of the Via Appia, on the property of Herodes. He who removes us will not benefit from it. The goddess of the Underworld and the columns are given to Demeter and to Persephone and to the Manes; the goddess Enodia is witness to this.

IGR I.196 (after AD 177) – Funerary inscription

Ἡρῷδης μνημεῖον καὶ
τοῦτο εἶναι τῆς αὐτοῦ
συμφορᾶς καὶ τῆς ἀρε
τῆς τῆς γυναικός.
Ἐστὶν δὲ οὐ τάφος· τὸ
γὰρ σῶμα ἐν τῇ Ἑλλάδι
καὶ νῦν παρὰ τῷ ἀνδρὶ
ἐστίν. Τὸν ἐκ ταὐτης
παῖδα εἰς τοὺς Εὐ
πατρίδας ἐν Ῥώμῃ ἐνέγρα
ψεν Ἀντωνῖνος αὐτο
κράτωρ, Εὐσεβὴς ὑ
πὸ τῆς πατρίδος καὶ
πάντων κληθείς,

ἀνενεγκ᾽ϛν εἰϛ τὴν
βουλὴν συνκλήτου
δόγματι.

Be this monument of Herodes both for his own fortune and his wife's virtue. Yet this is not a tomb: the remains lay right now next to the husband, in Greece. Having addressed to the assembly of the Senate by means of a written prescription, the emperor Antoninus, who is acclaimed Pius by the homeland and by all the people, entrusted to the patricians in Rome the son born to her.

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The abbreviations used in this bibliography follow those in the *Archäologische Bibliographie*; ancient sources are abbreviated according to the Oxford Classical Dictionary.

Other abbreviations for frequently cited works include:

AE	*L'Année Epigraphique*
CIL	*Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*
Eph. Ephigr.	*Ephemeris Epigraphica*
IGR	*Inscriptiones Graecae ad Res Romanas Pertinentes*
IGUR	*Inscriptiones Graecae Urbis Romae*
InscrIt	*Inscriptiones Italiae*
IPOstie	H. Thylander, *Inscriptions du Port d'Ostie, Lund 1952*
Lib. colon.	*Libri coloniarum*
LP	*Liber Pontificalis*
LTUR	*Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae*
MGH	*Monumenta Germaniae Historica*
PIR	*Prosopographia Imperii Romani*
POxy	Oxyrhynchus Papyri
PSI	Papiri della Società Italiana (Edizioni dell'Istituto Papirologico G. Vitelli)
RE	Paulys Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft
RIC	H. Mattingly – E. A. Sydenham, *The Roman Imperial Coinage*
SEG	*Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*

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