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## THE REPUBLICAN HOUSES OF THE ROMAN COLONIES IN ANCIENT *MAGNA GRAECIA*. CULTURAL EXCHANGE FROM A WESTERN PERSPECTIVE

### ABSTRACT

This article presents an analysis that is being carried out within the framework of the 'Tetrastylon project' (Marie Skłodowska-Curie Research Fellowship). This project is designed to create the scientific basis for the identification and definition of a new type of Roman *domus*. This typological item is the result of the hybridisation of a house scheme drawn from the Greek and Roman conceptions of housing. In the recent decades, some studies have found a particular type of Roman house in different parts of the Empire. The structural scheme of this *domus* joins, in the first place, the developmental concept of the Greek dwelling with the use of the Roman atrium as the central distribution area of the house. As a result of this cultural symbiosis, it is possible to observe Roman distribution areas within housing built

following Greek structural conceptions and the combination of very different architectural influences between both cultures. The house, tentatively termed 'the tetrastyle courtyard house', has been observed in different Roman cities with a Greek past, but in different geographical contexts and chronologies. This type of house, with its variants, has not been sufficiently analysed in the Roman domestic architecture studies. This article will present different examples of this type of house within the territorial context of ancient *Magna Graecia* under the influence of the Roman dominion. This approach will show the same exchanges between the Greeks and the Romans in the East, but from the western perspective and at an earlier chronological stage.

**Keywords:** Roman architecture, *domus*, cultural exchange, *Magna Graecia*

### Introduction

The present article is focused on a specific Roman house which can be found in the Roman colonies and cities with a Greek background. This type of house is a hybrid concept of the Greek or Hellenistic scheme of a dwelling and a specific Roman courtyard type. It has been observed in different parts of the Roman Empire, but only in settlements with a Greek past. The geographical span of this project, financed by the European Commission,<sup>1</sup> is focused on ancient *Magna Graecia* and Sicily.

In the recent years, as stated above, various studies have identified a type of Roman atrium house<sup>2</sup> which does not match the definition of a common atrium house. In fact, some of these studies define the courtyard of these houses as a reduced peristyle, because the related household scheme shows the Hellenistic concept. This phenomenon is complex and requires a deep analysis. This type of house has been detected in some archaeological sites, but it has not been subjected to a comprehensive comparative study of its different examples. In the absence of an integral compilation of this *domus*, the first step is to create a scholarly foundation for the

<sup>1</sup> This project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation program under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement n° 747466

<sup>2</sup> Here are some of the bibliographical references to works describing western towns where this kind of house was detected, but some examples have been observed also in the eastern Mediterranean: Di Stefano 1974, 21–27; Tsakirgis 1984;

Olsen *et al.* 1995, 209–261; Campagna 1996, 111–122; Giardino 1996, 133–159; 2005, 387–432; Caruso 2003, 153–164; Wolf 2003; Ruga, Spadea 2005, 317–332; Bonini 2006; 2009, 121–162; Cicala 2006, 207–268; Osanna 2006, 35–50; Papaioannou 2007, 351–361; Bragantini *et al.* 2008; De Miro 2009; Cortés 2014a, 123–136; Aiosa 2016, 319–328.

identification and description of the mentioned type of house. This will result in a better understanding of the historical context, its actual influences, and the impact of this domestic structure, tentatively termed ‘the tetrastyle courtyard house’, on the Roman society.<sup>3</sup>

### The tetrastyle courtyard house

Morphologically speaking, this ‘new’ type of Roman house represents a hybrid architectural scheme. This *domus* combines, on the one hand, the developmental concept of the Greek or Hellenistic dwelling and, on the other hand, the use of the Roman atrium space as the central distribution area of the house. In other words, this house, which is found in the Roman Period, tends to the centripetal plan of those domestic areas which show little or no symmetry and axiality; however, their central and distribution area is not a peristyle or Greek courtyard but a Roman atrium. Obviously, this analysis is merely structural and in need of a deeper knowledge. However, the identification of the archaeological remains initiated an unsettled discussion. Sometimes it is difficult to correctly identify a Greek or Roman concept of house, and it is even more challenging to differentiate a reduced peristyle from a tetrastyle atrium. For this reason, we shall now expose what we understand as the crucial traits of the Greek or Hellenistic dwelling scheme and the Roman-Etruscan *cauaedium* or atrium house. At the same time, we are going to elaborate on the meanings and characteristics of the circulation space of the atrium. Nevertheless, we are perfectly aware of the difficulty of generalising over a particular household structure. As S. Guidone<sup>4</sup> very rightly states, the houses of *Magna Graecia* and their different characters and forms have only recently been included in the study of Greek private architecture. Therefore, the Greek house in the Eastern Mediterranean is evidently not the same as the Greek house in the western Mediterranean. For example, in Sicily after the Doric Period the island had a marginal position, and it showed a delay in both private and public models.<sup>5</sup> However, we will try to describe a trend in the development of Greek house features in order to be able to compare it with the tendencies seen in the Roman

house. Such approach seems justified, because it is very important to identify the different spaces of the house correctly in order not to deny one of the two influences and its consequences for the social life.

The first topic to be addressed in this paper is the ‘Trend of the Greek house structure in the Hellenistic era’. The courtyard or peristyle house in this era had a courtyard or peristyle as the central distribution and circulation space. We could summarise, following A. Zaccaria,<sup>6</sup> that this space is the articulator of the rest of the areas and rooms, which are arranged in a centripetal way. In her broad study, L. Nevett<sup>7</sup> observed that in the late 4<sup>th</sup> to early 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC, the tendency of the houses with a single open court in Greece and the Aegean continued to develop into a centripetal pattern of organisation around an open court as in previous centuries. Another important element in the Greek house is that, despite different house categories (*pastas*, *prostatas*, and single courtyard house), it shows various common features.<sup>8</sup> Except for the smallest examples, the access to the house was set apart from the domestic areas with enclosed entrances or angled passages. The entrance was indirect or lateral in a lot of cases. M.C. Hellmann<sup>9</sup> agrees with this pattern of entry and points out that an examination of all the houses of the classical times reveals a tendency toward time-stable features. A good example of this time-stability is House 33 of *Priene* – a *prostatas* house, which increased its domestic space by adding columns to the courtyard until it became a peristyle in the Hellenistic and Roman periods.<sup>10</sup> But, despite becoming a peristyle house, it maintains the centripetal spatial arrangement. In fact, according to S. Aiosa,<sup>11</sup> many Hellenistic aspects of domestic architecture in Sicily lingered until late Antiquity. L. Nevett<sup>12</sup> had also observed that in southern Italy and Sicily during the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC domestic architecture showed important similarities with Greek housing. The house with a double courtyard with separated domestic functions appeared and continued to expand throughout this century. However, at the same time, the characteristic isolation of the private sphere from the outside world became stronger, as can be seen in House 49 and House 19 of *Megara Hyblaia*<sup>13</sup> or the House of the Official of *Morgantina*.<sup>14</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The concept of the ‘tetrastyle courtyard’ was proposed by Bonini (2006, 56–59) in his study of the houses of Roman Greece in which he morphologically identified the discovered central space as an atrium tetrastyle, but showed that it functioned as a Hellenistic peristyle due to its location and disposition within the house.

<sup>4</sup> Guidone 2017, 250.

<sup>5</sup> Aiosa 2003, 52.

<sup>6</sup> Zaccaria Ruggiu 1995, 291.

<sup>7</sup> Nevett 1999, 123.

<sup>8</sup> Nevett 1999, 123–126.

<sup>9</sup> Hellmann 2010, 46.

<sup>10</sup> Gros 2001, 47, fig. 31; Hellmann 2010, 63.

<sup>11</sup> Aiosa 2003, 55.

<sup>12</sup> Nevett 1999, 150.

<sup>13</sup> Vallet *et al.* 1983, 47.

<sup>14</sup> Tsakirgis 1984.

In the case of the ‘Trend of the Roman-Etruscan *cauaedium* or atrium house since the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC’, we identify the atrium house as an interior and central courtyard house as well. However, it is a house whose origin is not easy to determine. The Republican and late Republican atrium house was the result of a long process of housing development in central Italy with oriental and Greek influences.<sup>15</sup> E. Dwyer<sup>16</sup> already wondered in the nineties of the last century what had been the beginning of the Pompeian atrium house. In the same decade, A. Wallace-Hadrill<sup>17</sup> had an important reflection about these issues. After his studies of the ancient houses of Cosa, *Fregellae* or *Palatium*, and the last excavations of A. Maiuri and Fiorelli<sup>18</sup> in the House of the Surgeon, he came to the conclusion that the origin of the atrium house was a dwelling with an open-roof courtyard. The annexation of the *compluvium* occurred at a time when a new focus of light existed, because the *compluvium* would darken the house. In other words, the *compluvium* appeared when the peristyle sector of the Roman house was created (the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BC), and, therefore, the essential part of the atrium house was the *impluvium*. But in the first phase of the House of the Surgeon the *impluvium* did not yet exist. As a result, the elite houses of central Italy were beyond the *compluvium* and *impluvium* binomial, just as V. Jolivet<sup>19</sup> shows in his extensive study of numerous Etrurian and Roman *cauaedium* or atrium houses and their diffusion. All of these examples have some distinguishing traits. Therefore, we can broadly conclude that the structure of these households was articulated around an interior distributor of space that searches some axiality regarding the entrance and the *tablinum*, while symmetry is imposed instead of surrounding the central space, which stands in contrast to the Greek scheme.<sup>20</sup>

Therefore, what was the courtyard of the atrium house like since the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC? As we have already seen, the origin of the atrium is debated even today. To quote P.A. Fernández-Vega,<sup>21</sup> this question remains so obscure that it could be the etymological root for the word ‘atrium’ itself. Either way, throughout the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, the houses in central Italy were laid out following the canonical plan of this central and interior courtyard.

It was a space which could show some differences with variants according to each territorial area, but with certain common distinguishing features. The plan was extended in Italy and other provinces at the end of the Republican Period. The recollection of the examples provided by V. Jolivet<sup>22</sup> shows how the concept of atrium was established at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. Due to some problems with dating the examples, important diffusion of this canonical plan could be traced since the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. The atrium in this century<sup>23</sup> is identified by the central opening in the roof (except for the *testudinatum* variant), and it usually has a limited entry of light compared to other courtyards. This open area would have a roof clearly designed for the collection of water, whereas its uncovered, paved space was comparable to the surface of the *impluvium*. This delimited uncovered space is possibly the most relevant difference between the Hellenistic peristyle or courtyard and the atrium. This is due to the uncovered area, the only one which would accommodate the dimensions of the *compluvium*. Just as mentioned before, this is the main difference between both types of courtyards, because the other characteristics, such as the presence or not of the columns, are more complex. M.C. Hellmann<sup>24</sup> also highlights that another difference between the atrium and the Greek peristyle courtyard is the general absence of columns in the former. That is true for the Tuscan variant; hence, numerous authors wonder whether the colonnaded variant of the atrium is a Greek influence. However, the columns are an element native to both cultures, which is a result of natural evolution and the necessities of many Mediterranean courtyards.<sup>25</sup>

Having distinguished these terms, perhaps we can better appreciate the impact that Roman conquests in southern Italy and Sicily had on the Greek household. If it is generally accepted that the introduction of the Hellenistic peristyle and luxury in the Etrusco-Italian atrium house is a Greek influence evoked as a result of the Roman conquests (even before the expansion of Rome in the east of the Adriatic<sup>26</sup>), we should consider the introduction of the atrium in the Greek and Hellenistic houses in *Magna Graecia* and Sicily as a consequence of the very same cultural and social collision. We will now analyse some examples of this type of hybrid house

<sup>15</sup> For the origin of the canonical plan of the atrium or *cauaedium* house and its evolution, see Jolivet 2011, 36–66. He analyses the archaeological remains in central Italy dated to the 10<sup>th</sup> century BC and onwards.

<sup>16</sup> Dwyer 1991.

<sup>17</sup> Wallace-Hadrill 1997, 219–240.

<sup>18</sup> Maiuri 1973.

<sup>19</sup> Jolivet 2011.

<sup>20</sup> Cortés 2014b, 72–75.

<sup>21</sup> Fernández-Vega 2003.

<sup>22</sup> Jolivet 2011.

<sup>23</sup> The listed characteristics are a product of the observation of the archaeological remains, because the ancient sources concerning the atrium (Vitr. 6. 3. and Var. L. L. 5, 161) are later than the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BC. Although these sources are the best indicator of the characteristics of the atrium, they describe the atrium as it was one and two centuries later.

<sup>24</sup> Hellmann 2010, 97.

<sup>25</sup> Fernández-Vega 2003, 113–116.

<sup>26</sup> Winter 2006, 160.

which we can find in several cities in the south of Italy or *Magna Graecia*.

### House A.I.2 of *Velia-Elea*

*Velia* is a good example of a city in which one can observe this particular kind of atrium house. The city, founded by the Phoeceans and conquered by the Romans, has a perfect background to analyse its domestic residential architecture, for example House A.I.2 (Fig. 1). The house was built in the Hellenistic Period in the lower city (the southern neighbourhood). Simultaneously, there was a documented reorganisation of the city, which destroyed many remains of the classical times. In the Hellenistic era, the city went through a period of economic splendour and maintained vivid relations across the Mediterranean. This bonanza has been fossilised in a new remodelling of the urban layout as well as the public and private architecture of the town's neighbourhoods (Terrazze, Vignale, and the southern ones). The houses of this phase are grouped up to a maximum of three per insula, each insula separated by a small *ambitus*. The preserved housing units occupy about 150 m<sup>2</sup>, but House A.I.2 is twice as big, measuring 300 m<sup>2</sup>. This *domus* could have belonged to a merchant of a certain economic status within this emerging social class of *Elea*.<sup>27</sup>

In the first construction phase of the house, the entrance corridor was blocked laterally in the south-eastern corner. The distribution area was also slightly moved toward the easternmost part of the house. This courtyard had an *impluvium* delimited by ashlar with tiled paving. The condition of the remains indicates that the *impluvium* was without columns in the corners. The north-eastern portico was shaped by a body of three rectangular rooms of similar dimensions, but there is no connection between them. In terms of planimetry, the house was divided into two sectors: the central circulation area and the body of three rooms with a big portico (Room 13) in the north. The dwelling shows traces of organisation of the *pastas* house. Room 13 is completely open to the courtyard, without any doorway, which is typical of a peristyle or *pastas* house.<sup>28</sup> In the Imperial Period, the house occupied a part of the *ambitus* and seems to have incorporated House A.I.1. This second phase is dated by the construction technique – the renovation works were performed with reused construction material. According to S. Guidone,<sup>29</sup> the creation of the *impluvium* should also be linked to this phase because of

the reclaimed material used for its construction and the central position of the cistern with respect to the rest of the courtyard. The latter could be obtained only through structural modification of the annex to the neighbouring House A.I.1 and the *ambitus*.

Whether the *impluvium* was constructed in the Hellenistic or the Imperial Period, the result is a house functioning in the Roman times with a centripetal arrangement and a courtyard without columns,<sup>30</sup> similar to the Tuscan atrium.

### The house of Area 5000/DR of Capo Colonna

The city of Crotona (near Capo Colonna) is another distinctive example of the residential architecture. The house from Area 5000/DR (Fig. 2) was built in a sector of the city whose population had been growing denser since the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, after Capo Colonna became a Roman city in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, during the second Punic war. At that time, the domestic structure had a rectangular perimeter and was organised in two sectors. One of them was characterised by being distributed around an almost square atrium (5.0 × 5.5 m) (Room 1). The second sector also included a courtyard (6), but it functioned as a domestic rather than reception area. The two sectors were separated by two unpaved areas. The first area (4) allowed access to both sectors and to the second part, which has been interpreted as a storeroom (5).<sup>31</sup> In the residential sector, the *impluvium* was built from reclaimed construction material and fitted with a pipeline oriented southwards. The room opening toward the atrium, considered a *tablinum* (2), offered access to the *triclinium* (3). This presumed *tablinum* had a broad threshold built with four reused sand blocks framed with a high and wide jamb. This room was paved with an *opus signinum tessellatum*, and it was connected to a square room which has been interpreted as a *triclinium*. In the other sector, we can find the kitchen, another storeroom, and a courtyard. In the north-eastern part of this courtyard (6), there was a circular structure related to the processing of grapes and wine grapes.<sup>32</sup> The south-western area of the house is believed to have had a porch. Throughout the lifespan of the house, only little refurbishments have been observed, such as the construction of a new cistern in the kitchen in the second half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC.

<sup>27</sup> Cicala 2006, 247.

<sup>28</sup> Cicala 2006, 234–248.

<sup>29</sup> Guidone 2017, 251.

<sup>30</sup> The possibility of an *impluvium* with columns has been hypothesised as well; see Guidone 2017, 250.

<sup>31</sup> Ruga 2013, 198.

<sup>32</sup> Ruga 2013, 198.

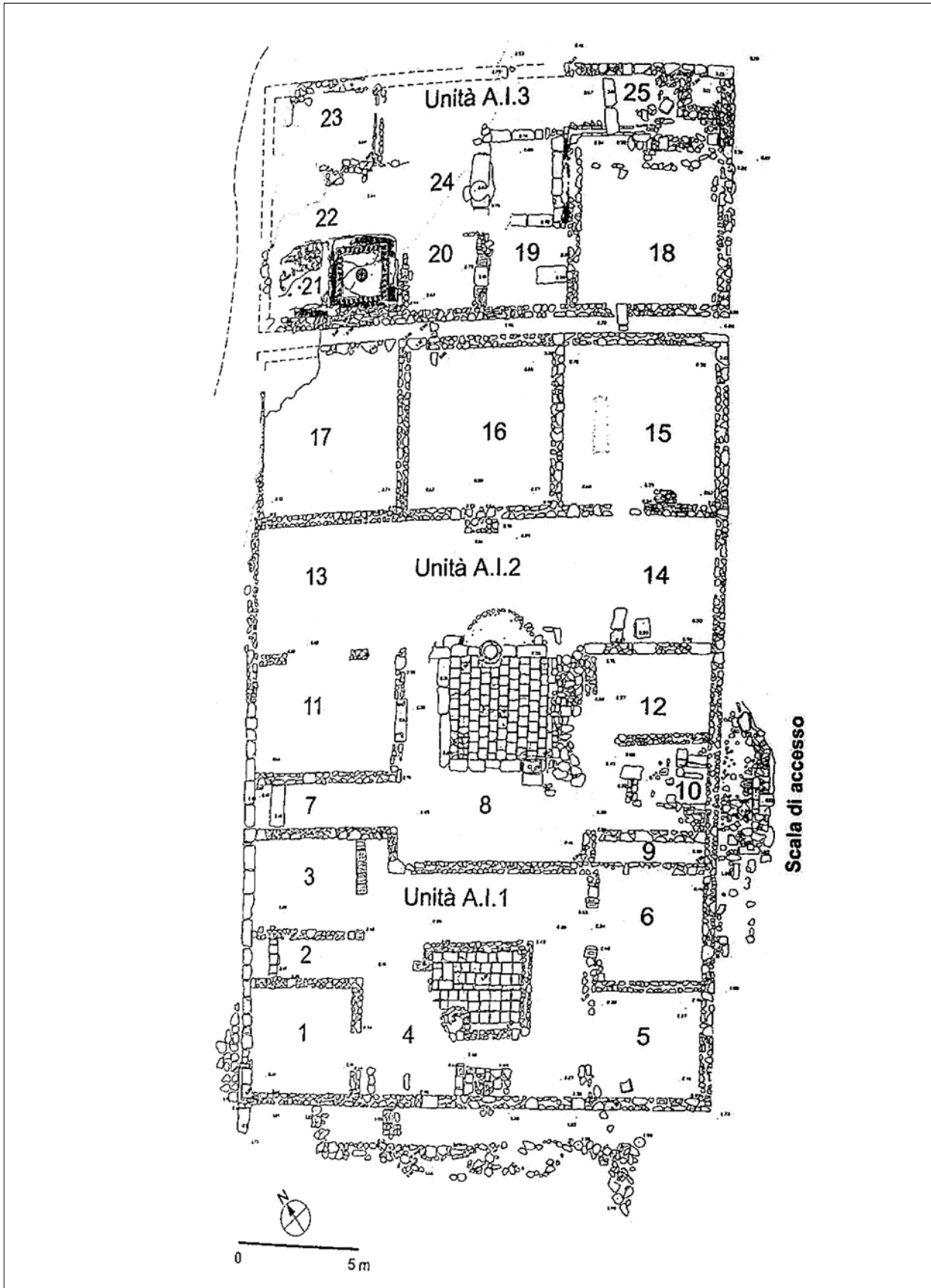


Fig. 1. Plan of House A.I.2, *Velia-Elea* (after Cicala 2006, 238, fig. 10).

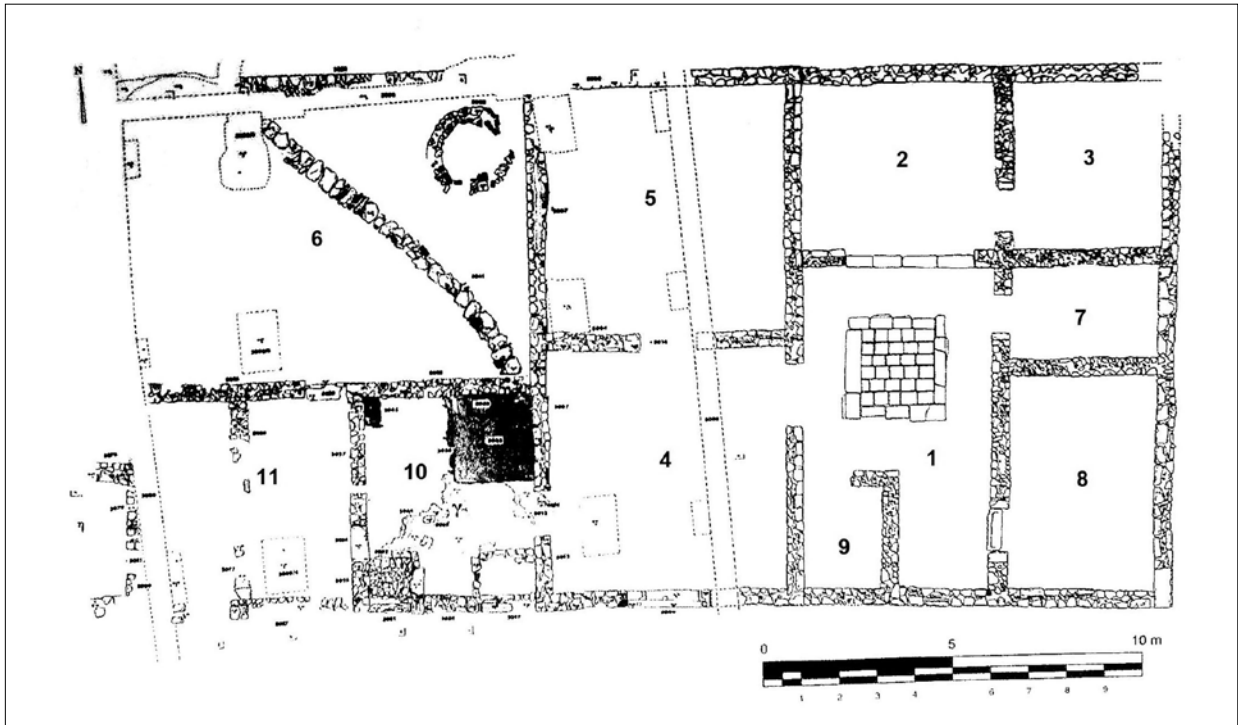


Fig. 2. Plan of the house from Area 5000/DR, Capo Colonna-Crotone (after Ruga, Spadea 2005, 321, fig. 4).

In this case, apparently the presumed atrium was also a Tuscan one without columns and with tiled pavement. This is also a house with a centripetal distribution around the atrium in the residential sector. This example has an interesting internal structure with two sectors separated to develop various functions. This fact implies a more indirect entry into the atrium.

### House CII of *Paestum*

The *Paestum* colony is one of the best examples of Roman cities in which to observe this particular atrium house because of its uninterrupted history since the Sybarite foundation all the way to the Roman Period. House CII (Fig. 3), located in the Northern Insula, is a very good example. The whole northern part of this insula is very complex, and it reflects the convoluted evolution of all of its houses, along with their different phases and unions between them.<sup>33</sup> But one of the most interesting phases of House CII is the period at the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC and the beginning of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC. The domestic structure around the atrium was organised according to a classic scheme of a central

courtyard house. In its final phase, the *domus* with a tetrastyle atrium (9) formed a large private complex which also incorporated House CI with a Tuscan atrium (2). It is also possible that it ended up being a complex of houses A-B-C.<sup>34</sup> Therefore, the plan which reached the present day is a *domus* with a double atrium, which also has a large courtyard in the eastern zone (19), as well as a secondary one (34). Although there seems to be no doubt about the first independent phase of House CII, it is difficult to accurately define the structure of the *domus* at the early stage. Nevertheless, it is comparable to the eastern part of House E and House D of *Paestum*.<sup>35</sup> For comparisons with other *Paestum* houses, the dating of the construction of the *domus* has been established at the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, but the annexation of the two other houses should also be dated to the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. The whole house is very complex and had different attachments throughout its lifespan. But the moment when it was just an atrium tetrastyle house came in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC at the latest.

In this first phase, the main entrance was moved to the right side. However, this space was refurbished in the second phase, when the main doorway became the

<sup>33</sup> Bragantini, De Bonis 2009, 41.

<sup>34</sup> Bragantini *et al.* 2008, 149–153.

<sup>35</sup> Bragantini *et al.* 2008, 111.

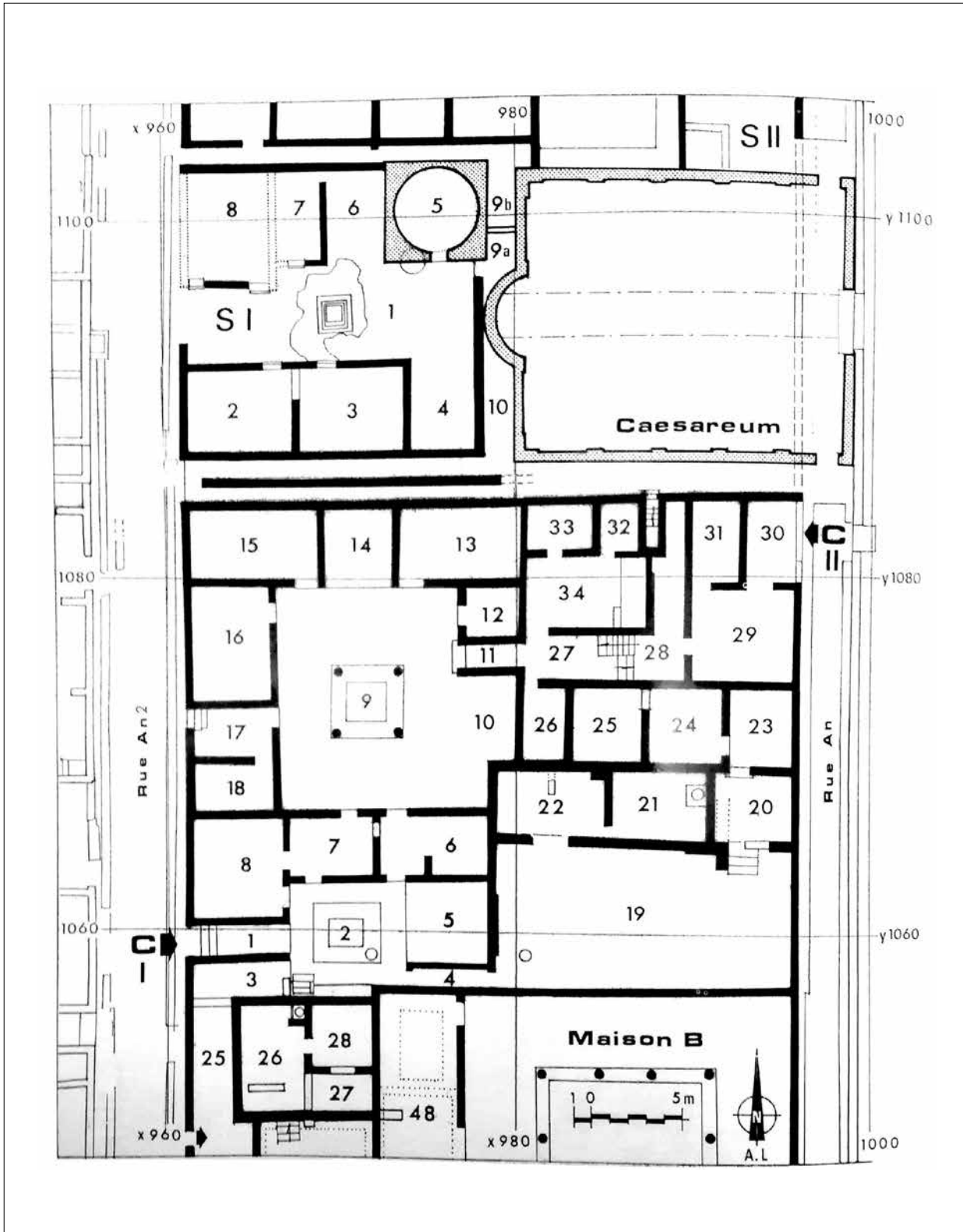


Fig. 3. Plan of House CII, *Paestum* (after Bragantini *et al.* 2008, fig. 6).

entrance of House CI (1). Room 10 has been interpreted as a possible *tablinum* or pseudo-*tablinum* for the rest of the marked *signinum*. Although this entry shows axially with Room 10 and the atrium, it could rather be interpreted as an *exedra* of a Greek house or an *exedra* of an *ala*,<sup>36</sup> since it does not have a surface big enough for a classical *tablinum*. In addition, the dominant space is the room located orthogonally with respect to entrance 17 (14). This complex has a tripartite arrangement formed by one central room and another two at the sides without any communication between them, much like House A.I.2 of *Velia*. When House CI was added to House CII, it was an attempt to find more axially. The principal entrance became the entry to House CI, presumably with an axial *tablinum* aligned with the vestibule (5). But rooms 7 and 8 were opened to create a path to the principal room of House CII. This fact indicates that this tripartite complex (15-14-13, a classical Hellenistic structure) is very important in this phase as well. This second phase looks as if House CII was intended to have its atrium transformed into a Roman peristyle area.<sup>37</sup> Despite the union of the houses, in this possible second phase both the tetrastyle atrium and the Tuscan atrium have a fairly clear structure of a Hellenistic courtyard house. They reflect their owners' desire for remodelling and adapting the rooms in search for Roman axially.

Whatever the case, when House CII was an independent house, although having a centripetal arrangement

with Greek reception rooms, its courtyard was similar to the atrium tetrastyle.

### The house with porticoed courtyard of *Heraclea Lucania*

The ancient colony of Taranto, which in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century lied within the Roman focus, shows a similar process in the development of its houses. For example the house of the *cortile porticato* (Fig. 4) – in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century the *domus* was a peristyle Greek house, but in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC its peristyle was transformed into an atrium with an *impluvium* in the same domestic plan. The *domus*, located in the central quarter, occupied a square of 17.90 × 17.90 m. At the time of the house with the porticoed courtyard, it seems that the household was used for artisanal activity (pottery production).<sup>38</sup> The presence of numerous looms in the houses of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, as well as in this one, also reflects the importance of wool production in *Heraclea*. There is a series of porticoed courtyard houses which indicate the artisanal class, but this porticoed patio house has a larger surface than the others (300 m<sup>2</sup>). This element indicates a higher social standing in comparison to other inhabitants of the Collina del Castello. For the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, a remodelling of the courtyard is observed – it transformed the *cortile* into an atrium with columns. During this

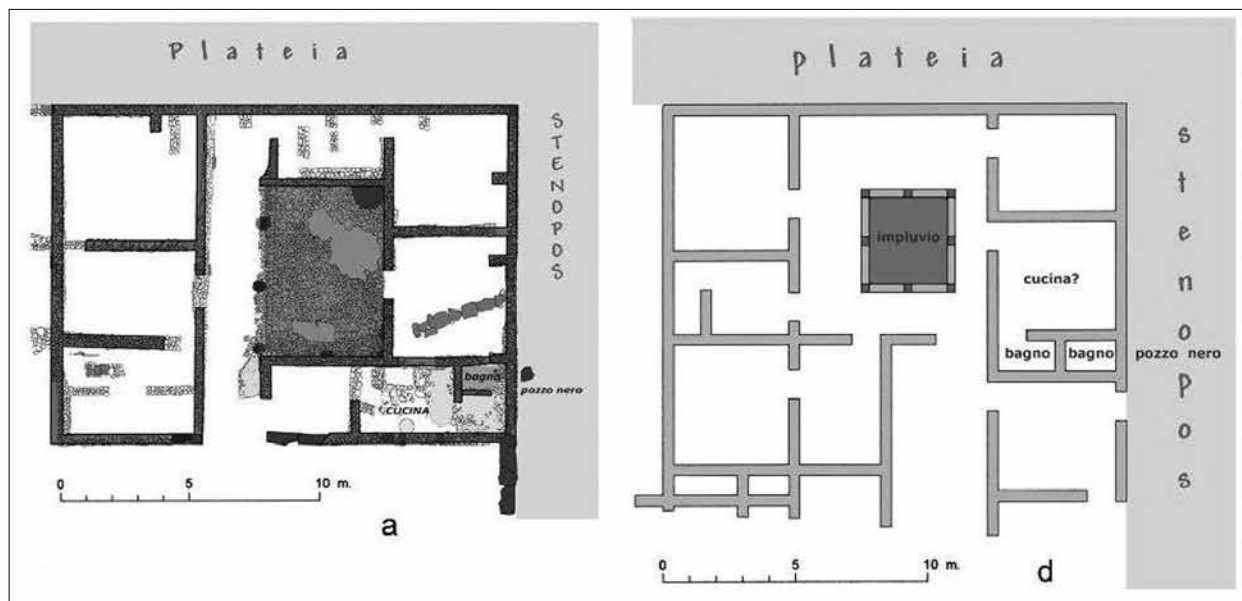


Fig. 4. Plan of the house with porticoed courtyard, *Heraclea Lucania* (after Giardino 2014, 1025, fig. 2).

<sup>36</sup> Bragantini *et al.* 2008, 123.

<sup>37</sup> Bragantini *et al.* 2008, 124, 136–151.

<sup>38</sup> Giardino 2005, 412–413; 2014.

refurbishing, there was also a change of the tiled pavement for an *opus signinum* with ceramic fragments. The interesting aspect of this private example is the determination of the owners of the already existing Greek house in their search for a Roman-style courtyard in the second phase.

## Conclusions

The above examples are some of the instances of this type of a 'hybrid house' found in southern Italy. Certainly, they share very clear common features. The substitution of a peristyle with a courtyard resembling an atrium is the most obvious one. But the review of additional cases revealed more egalitarian features which were not seen during the previous brief analysis. For example the tendency to build a lateral entrance located on the right side in some houses or an indirect entrance. It is also common to find a tiled pavement in the *impluvia*, the centripetal distribution, or the permanence of the tripartite complex of rooms without connectivity (such as House A.I.2 in *Velia* and House CII in *Paestum*), and so forth. However, this review is also raising many questions that we hope to solve in the future. One of the most important problem is the identification of the main rooms, such as the *tablinum*, as most examples were traditionally identified, or as Greek reception rooms also. This task will be one of the key elements allowing better assessment of the actual impact that this type of houses and their inhabitants had on the Roman social network. In order to identify the public spaces in the house and their correct circulation, the Network Science Analysis will be applied to understand the arrangement of the domestic areas. With the results, we will be able to analyse the relationship between the domestic spaces for social and public representation and the most private areas of the household. Hence, it will also be necessary to study the materials from the selected houses. The analysis of the materials recovered from the various *domus* will enable appreciating the productive functions of the house and the level of consumption, as shown by the artisanal

class of the house with porticoed courtyard of *Heraclea Lucania*. Such collection of data and a quantitative study of different materials (agricultural tools, equipment for industrial production, household equipment, *etc.*) could determine what type of domestic work was undertaken by the families who lived in these households, as well as what the production capacity for a given household or the consumption levels were. This information will help us understand what type of families lived in the houses and what kind of representative functions the domestic unit had. In this way, we will be able to try to establish the relation between their central distribution courtyards and reception rooms. Therefore, the existence or not of the ritual of *salutatio*, tightly-related to the *tablinum*, is definitely not the same in the context of their social lives. The atrium house is designed to perform very specific public functions between the owner and different segments of the society – functions which are not appreciated in the same way in the documented examples of the tetrastyle courtyard house, such as, for example, a *tablinum* or the axiality used to develop these political and public functions in the traditional Roman way. But it is also necessary to ask ourselves what the introduction of the Roman courtyard or Roman-influenced courtyard into the Greek house structure meant. Especially that it is not so important whether it was an atrium or a reduced peristyle, but rather whether it was a courtyard inspired by the Roman style or not. This fact only changes one morphological element of the house, like a 'fashion', or maybe it indicates a shift in the behaviour of the residents of the house with respect to their traditions and rituals. For this reason, it is very important to correctly identify the spaces and to try not to overlook either of the two vectors of influence, as well as their consequences for the social complexity of each city. In addition, we should not forget that we are talking about the Roman Period.

We hope that when this study is complete, it will prove helpful for the understanding of what was meant by the clash of cultures between the Greeks and the Romans throughout the Roman Empire.

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