

**International Conference:**

**Luxury Residences in the Eastern and Western Mediterranean, Hellenistic and Roman Periods, Program as of March 27, 2017**

**20.04.2017, Topoi-Building Dahlem**

Hittorfstraße 18  
D-14195 Berlin  
(<https://www.topoi.org/home/buildings/>)

15:00 opening

**1. Precursors**

15:30

Florian Knauß (München). Die Residenzen der Achämenidenkönige und ihrer Vasallen

**Summary**

Contrary to its immense historical impact on the cultures of the Ancient Near East and the Eastern Mediterranean, the Achaemenid Empire (539-331 BC) has been difficult to grasp archaeologically outside its centres, the impressive monumental complexes of Persepolis, Susa and Pasargadae. This is particularly surprising given the historic and epigraphic evidence for the existence of a very tight-knit, efficiently organized administration. Wherever major Achaemenian sites outside Iran had been investigated, it appeared that religious practices, local power structures and pre-existing customs were respected and adapted in a deliberate attempt at cooperative rule. During the past 20 years, excavations as well as the implementation of survey projects benefiting from technological advances in landscape archaeology led to new archaeological discoveries that have changed this picture. Firstly, in the centre of the empire, the extent and internal structure of centres like Pasargadae and Persepolis is now much better understood. The impressive monuments from these two sites are only the visible remains of cities loosely distributed within a landscaped environment made up of gardens and parks. Secondly, in a peripheral corner of the empire, the Southern Caucasus, administrative complexes were found which bear all hallmarks of 'Iranian Achaemenid' monumental architecture, from building standards to the physical organization of the landscape. Taken together, this suggests that the Achaemenids did create and export within their realm a fundamentally new way of representing rulership, by managing space on

an unprecedented scale and creating new imperial landscapes. Their 'paradises' were at the same time luxurious residences with spacious gardens and administrative centres, playing an important role for the control of the dependent territories.

16:15

Stephan G. Schmid (Berlin), Der Palast von Vouni (Zypern) erneut betrachtet

### Summary

Since its excavation by the Swedish Cyprus Expedition in the late 1920s, the palatial structure on an impressive hill near the bay of Morphou has mostly been interpreted following a clear bipolar model, established by the excavator, Einar Gjerstad: two clearly distinct building phases (with sub-phases), related to two clearly distinct political systems, first an Oriental (Persian) one, followed by a Western (Greek) one. Criticism of this (too) easy interpretation has been expressed since the 1970s onwards. A fresh look at the Vouni palace can be motivated by several recent developments. First, we do have much more information about "secondary" Persian/Achaemenid residences than was available in the 1920s, offering a wider spectrum for comparisons. Further, it is time to look at the Vouni palace not only from a local perspective, focussing on the allegedly contrast between Marion and Soloi, but from a wider regional context. Using elements from landscape archaeology, the regional and even pan-Cypriot importance of the structure shall be evaluated.

## 2. Hellenistic Residences, I

17:00

Francesco Maria Ferrara (Messina), A „hybrid“ dynastic architecture: The royal palace of Demetrias in Thessaly

### Summary

From the IV century BC the Macedonian kingdom started to be organized into a network of dynastic foundations in which the royal palace played the role of predominant "landmark", fulfilling the different functions of residence, court's setting and perhaps administrative, key element of the political propaganda. Although the existence of such a residence in all these royal cities is just suspected (as Amphipolis, Thessalonica, Cassandria, Ouranopolis), there is clear archaeological evidence only in the so called "capital cities" of the realm, findings that characterize within the kingdom the most important hubs of *Aigai*, Pella and *Demetrias*.

The latter was the last big city founded in the Macedonian area of influence, main Antigonid stronghold during the war with Cassander and Pyrrhus and afterwards the south-capital of the realm. Born by synecism around 293 BC on behalf of Demetrius Poliorketes itself, it claimed his international role due to a crucial strategic position, both on the sea and land route, and for the presence of a huge *basileion* in its center since the first planning phase. The excavations in the city area started from the '50 and, subsequently led by D. Theocharis and P. Marzloff, discovered only a part of the monumental royal quarter, fully embedded into the orthogonal urban grid that clearly follows the provisions of the Hellenistic period in term of urbanistic layout.

Thus, the most important feature of this new city is the centered position of the royal residence, due to its military function, alongside the detection of a systematic modular

calculation for the size of the whole *basileia* compared to the other city's areas; but the level of the destruction, the big extension of the investigated sector and the scant dating remains complicate the overall interpretation of the archaeological context. Through a critical and selective review of the available studies and graphic documentations, the author attempts an overview of the detected phases of the *basileion*, focusing on the relation among the constituent parts of the building with the surrounding *polis*. Looking at this impressive architectural complex within the development of the courtyard representative building, as better documented in the dynastic context of *Aigai* and Pella, the heart of the royal residence (the so-called *anaktoron*) shows a rare mingling of different typologies. This architectural *apax* combines the inner-courtyard palace (*aulè*) and an eastern stronghold model (*tetrapyrgos*) in a castle-like monumental building, which will be discussed as an original and syncretic typology that suits the need of luxury dwelling and military defense, moreover corresponding with a representation of royal wealth and political control within a period of experiment and new definition on the relation between architecture and power.

17:45

Stefan Riedel (Bochum), The Ptolemaic *Basileia* – Reconsidering Alexandrian Impact

### Summary

In the discussion on Hellenistic and Roman luxurious residences, the palatial quarter of the Ptolemies in Alexandria in Egypt, which covered up to a third of the whole city, often plays a crucial role. This holds especially true when it comes to trace back possible origins of luxurious lifestyle and its architectural implementations throughout the Mediterranean from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC well into the Roman imperial period.

The assumption of Alexandria having severely influenced the development of luxurious and especially royal residences in Hellenistic and Roman times is primarily based upon the comparatively large amount of descriptions and mentionings of the Ptolemaic residence preserved in literary accounts ranging from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC to the 12<sup>th</sup> century AD. These convey the often unquestioned impression of the fairly good knowledge about the Alexandrian royal residence, although the literary accounts are opposed by only few archaeological remains. Nevertheless, the later sharpen the picture of the Alexandrian *basileia* exceeding the literary accounts in certain parts.

Starting from this basic observation, the paper will consist of two main parts which address the Ptolemaic residence as a whole and try to identify specific elements which might have been broadcasted through the Hellenistic and Roman world. In this respect, in a first step the written accounts and the archaeological record will briefly be summarized and combined in order to reconstruct the general layout of the *basileia*. This layout shows an underlying urbanistic and partly ideologically charged concept of the royal quarter which is suitable to serve as a comparative model in regard to other royal residences.

Subsequently, specific elements within the Alexandrian *basileia* will be considered in order to discuss possible fields in which the Ptolemaic residence might indeed have had an impact on later luxurious residences in the Mediterranean. Since these in most cases do not share the political and social role of the Ptolemaic royal residence – and therefore lack several of the elements and institutions existing in Alexandria – this second part will focus on the structures related to the royal family in a more private sense such as the actual palaces and elements serving primarily recreational functions.

The twofold approach of focussing on the urbanistic layout of the Ptolemaic palatial quarter as a whole as well as casting a closer look at its primarily residential elements finally enables to integrate the *basileia* of Alexandria better into the discussion on Hellenistic and Roman luxurious residences and to re-evaluate the actual Alexandrian impact on these.

19:30

Reception / Dinner

### **21.04.2017, Topoi-Building Dahlem**

Hittorfstraße 18

D-14195 Berlin

(<https://www.topoi.org/home/buildings/>)

### **3. Hellenistic Residences, II**

08:30

Guy Lecuyot (Paris), Les grandes résidences gréco-bactriennes d'Āi Khanoum

#### Summary

The ancient discovery of the site of Ai Khanum had confirmed the settlement of Greeks in Bactria after the epic of Alexander the Great in this part of the world. The city located in the northeast part of present Afghanistan, at the confluence of the Darya i-Pandj (upper course of the Amu Darya) and the Kokcha river, was founded towards the end of the third century BC by one of the two first Seleucid kings: Seleucos I or Antiochos I.

The excavations on the site, directed by Paul Bernard, took place between 1964 and 1978, brought to light an original architecture characterized by large mud-brick constructions with Greek architectural decoration (columns, capitals, antefixes, etc.).

Inside the city, which is surrounded by an imposing fortification wall, there are a gymnasium, a theater, a huge palace and large aristocratic residences. The latter were built for colons or Hellenized Orientals. They show a very special plan which is not in line with the traditional Greek houses. Here, it consists of two parts: on the north side a large courtyard which communicates with the main building through a porch with two columns *in antis*. On the south, the main building is articulated around a central room opened on the courtyard through the porch and surrounded on three sides by a corridor that served the different parts of the house: private apartments, kitchen, bathroom. This architecture seems to reflect a very hierarchical kind of life, which can be seen in the private courtyard, central living room and circulations allowing independent progress for the masters of the house and the servants. The plan of these houses can also be found, but on a monumental scale, in the large palace located in the centre of the lower city. Our communication, beyond the evocation of life on the borders of the Greek world, focuses on the possible origin of these constructions as well as their posterity.

09:15

Winfried Held (Marburg), Die Residenz von Tulu adh-Dhahab im Vergleich mit befestigten Residenzen der Seleukiden und Hasmonäer

**Summary**

Since 2005, a previously unknown fortified residence of the Hellenistic period is being excavated in Jordan's Tulul adh-Dhahab. Since 2011, the Archäologische Seminar of Marburg University participates in the excavations directed by Thomas Pola (TU Dortmund). The present results are summarised in an extensive preliminary report published in MarbWPr 2015-2016; yet it is still unknown if the site is a Seleucid or a Hasmonaean residence. Starting from Tulul adh-Dhahab, characteristics of fortified residences of the Seleucids and the Hasmonaean will be discussed.

10:00

Christoph Baier (Wien/Athen), Eine hellenistische Residenz in Ephesos und ihre Inszenierung im Stadtbild

**Summary**

In our scholarly perception of the urban development of Ephesos, the period of Attalid rule between 188 and 133 BC has so far been of little concern. While literary and epigraphic sources suggest that the city came to be a major administrative centre for the Attalid state, the archaeological evidence available until now is comparatively sparse. Recent research at the western slope of Mount Panayırdağ, around the great theatre of the city, adds considerably to our knowledge of the structural and architectural development of Ephesos from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC onward.

A key monument for our understanding of the history and structure of this city district is a prestigious townhouse which takes up a commanding position above the theatre. The building was in use from the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC to the early 7<sup>th</sup> century AD and was reminiscent of contemporary palace architecture during each of its main phases. Its setting took thorough account of the surrounding urban landscape in order to create particular spatial relations and visual perspectives. While earlier studies on the urban development of Ephesos postulated that the cityscape was monumentalized only in the Augustan period, the new evidence suggests that already the Hellenistic townhouse was part of a carefully coordinated building programme which fundamentally changed the urban topography.

Against the background of the historical development of Ephesos, there is much reason to assume that the new image of the city was designed according to a particular political strategy. The same may be true for huge construction activities which remodelled the city district above the theatre during the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. The presentation shall put up for discussion whether we may consider the townhouse one of the few excavated examples of a Hellenistic governor's palace that continued to be used by the Roman administration. The discussed evidence may add to the debate on how political and ideological power was displayed by means of architecture and town-planning.

coffee break 10:45 – 11:15

#### 4. Nature, Water and Luxury

11:15

Monika Trümper (Berlin), Wassermanagement in Luxusresidenzen: extravagante Verschwendung?

##### **Summary**

Conspicuous consumption of water is a well-known feature of Roman villas and Roman Imperial palaces that were not only built close to or around water, but also equipped with all kinds of hydraulic amenities: e.g. ponds, pools and basins of different sizes and functions, nymphaea, fountains, grottoes, and bathing facilities. It is commonly assumed that these Roman palaces and villas were inspired by palaces of Hellenistic rulers in the eastern Mediterranean. This paper critically assesses, whether the eastern Hellenistic palaces also served as models for water luxury – a central question that has not yet been comprehensively investigated in scholarship.

While it is obvious that all palaces must have been provided with basic water management, comprising water supply and wastewater disposal, "water luxury" is defined more narrowly, including the above-mentioned features such as fountains, nymphaea, and bathing facilities that did not just serve basic needs. In a synthetic, comparative approach, it is analyzed whether the sufficiently preserved palaces of the various eastern royal dynasties provided clearly identifiable luxurious water amenities, and if so, when and where. Examples to be discussed include Vergina, Pella, Pergamon, Ai Khanoum, and the Hasmonean palaces at Jericho. If sufficiently known, each palace is evaluated within its local context in order to assess local standards and conditions.

It is argued that concepts and practices of water luxury were not yet standard of eastern Hellenistic palaces, and the conclusion discusses possible reasons for this phenomenon.

12:00

Matthias Nieberle (Köln), Villenanlagen in Baiae. Platzmangel als Chance für innovative „Luxus“-Architektur?

##### **Summary**

This paper provides a general overview of the villas in the bay of Baiae, and focuses on the remarkably dense spacing and relatively small dimensions of these early villas.

The coastal strip of Baiae, which has been called the earliest Roman luxury resort by some researchers, and probably not without justification, is central to any colloquium focusing on "luxury residences in the eastern and western Mediterranean in the Hellenistic and Imperial periods". It is therefore surprising that many aspects of the most famous spa resort in Roman antiquity have not yet been explored in detail. Thanks to his ongoing dissertation project on Baiae, the speaker is in a position to present first new research results. These will be presented as a brief introduction.

Establishing the paper within the context of the colloquium, it will discuss a special feature of Baiae which has received little attention so far, but leaves room for interpretation. Compared to other villas on the Gulf of Naples, the relatively small dimensions and dense spacing of the early villas in Baiae is particularly notable. The paper explores possible reasons for this density and illustrates architectural solutions of this "space problem" of Baiae at the hand of several examples.

A further focus of the paper is the "Villa della Sosandra". By tracing changes within this structure, it is possible to show what role the dense spacing of buildings and the elitist surrounding played on the basis of very innovative architecture.

In a final section, the discussion centres on the kind of architecture that could have been interpreted as '*more Baianu*' and the extent to which the demonstrated examples can be evaluated in this regard.

Lunch break 12:45 – 14:00

## 5. Exempla of Roman Imperial Residences

14:00

Ulrike Wulf-Rheidt (Berlin), Die Erschaffung künstlicher Landschaften auf dem Palatin

### Summary

Even if to this day the famous '*Hanging Gardens*' of Semiramis, one of the seven world wonders, are not securely located and reconstructed, their description in Greco-Roman literature had an enduring influence on antique landscaping architecture. This paper will argue that the image of a flourishing, artificial garden, rich with water, in a metropolis simmering in the desert heat fascinated such, that it had been the source of inspiration for the building not only of villas in the Roman Empire but also imperial palaces on the Palatine in Rome.

The ability and audaciousness of the architects and engineers to artificially create what nature refused, which blames Tacitus for the construction of the Domus Aurea of Nero, are among the most important features of Roman architecture. To exploit the natural conditions, and even to strengthen and to exaggerate with the construction of high substructures has not only influenced Roman villas, but also the Roman palace. The main floor of the palaces on the Palatine stood on a high basement and so dominated not only the surrounding city, but also offered a privileged view of the city. By integrating a variety of water installations in these large platforms, the aspect of creating an artificial landscape in form of a 'hanging garden' was increased. The paper aims to show how the construction and design of this 'hanging gardens' together with water luxury and bathing facilities were developed as elements from the villa architecture into the palace architecture.

14:45

Heinz Beste (Rom), Neros Domus Aurea – Luxus ist nicht gleich Luxus

### Summary

The most famous Neronian buildings are doubtlessly his palace complexes. His imperial predecessors and even some Republican senators had owned extravagant residences. The emperor Augustus may have lived on the Palatine Hill in a mixed lot of bought up aristocratic houses, but his home's outer façade towards the Circus Maximus was, due to its integration into the area of the Temple of Apollo, together with its libraries and archives, of exemplary

splendour. Augustus' successors enlarged this residence, but a uniform complex did not emerge.

Besides extending the *Domus Tiberiana*, the construction of the *Domus Transitoria* was another major project, which Nero probably began around AD 60. According to Tacitus and Suetonius (*Annals* 15.39.1; *Nero* 31.1) it outshone every luxury building that had been constructed before.

All these efforts to create a 'Neronian' representative architecture culminated in the *Domus Aurea*. It was bigger and more luxurious by far than the *Domus Transitoria*, which had been destroyed by the fire. Tacitus describes the palace thus: "Nero meanwhile availed himself of his country's desolation, and erected a mansion in which the jewels and gold, long familiar objects, quite vulgarised by our extravagance, were not so marvellous as the fields and lakes, with woods on one side to resemble a wilderness, and, on the other, open spaces and extensive views. The directors and contrivers of the work were Severus and Celer, who had the genius and the audacity to attempt by art even what nature had refused, and to fool away an emperor's resources." (*Annals* 15.42).

If Nero can be considered the initiator of the *Domus Aurea*, the design and construction management can be attributed to the ingenious architects Severus and Celer. They knew how to integrate parts of the building already in existence and undamaged by the fire into what was newly constructed, in order to create a high base (*basis villae*) for the principal floor, as was common for Roman mansions.

The question, however, remains whether all these Neronian buildings were innovative or megalomaniac (or both)? Quite apart from our ignorance about the details, it is difficult to find a suitable *comparandum* for the *Domus Aurea* in particular. For the Golden House clearly differs from all known types of villas or town houses. The base (*basis villae*) consisted of a close succession of chambers, where drinking parties were held. Similar particularities could have also characterized Nero's country mansions, but while these offer some helpful comparative evidence, many details still elude us.

## 6. Luxury Residences around Naples, I

15:30

Massimo Osanna (Pompeji), Neue Forschungen in der Villa von Oplontis

*to be confirmed*

15:15

Wolfgang Filser (Berlin), Vom Meer umgeben. Die römische Villa von Capo di Sorrento

### **Summary**

The paper offers a report of the new researches of the Roman Maritime Villa of Capo di Sorrento in the bay of Naples conducted by the Winckelmann-Institut under my guidance since 2014. During three campaigns, the villa was examined with surprising results that promise further fruitful studies. Not only have the new measurements shown that the well known building has hitherto not been judged appropriately, as the old plan from 1946 (by P.



Mingazzini and F. Pfister) lacks many pieces of information and is in some central points flawed. Further, the intensive survey of the bedrock on which the maritime part of the villa was built has revealed traces of the original layout of the structure and clues concerning the construction work. Due to the well preserved state of the monument and its fine accessibility the excavation of the pars rustica was begun in 2015 with the goal of understanding its size and plan, and, especially, its architectural relation to the pars maritima. With the aid of geo-electrical prospections we seek to get an idea of the original shape of the promontory before it was altered by the huge Roman terraces which until today dominate the appearance of the Cape of Sorrento; thus we will be able to learn about the manner in which the owner and his architect(s) changed and (re-)designed the natural outline of this very special landscape - a central topic in Roman villegiatura and the respective literary sources.

### **Keynote Lecture at the German Archaeological Institute**

Podbielskiallee 69-71

D-14195 Berlin

18:00

Francesco de Angelis (New York), Noch mehr Luxus in der Villa Hadriana

#### **Summary**

19:00

Reception within the premises of the German Archaeological Institute

### **22.04.2017, Topoi-Building Mitte**

Hannoversche Straße 6

D-10115 Berlin

(<https://www.topoi.org/home/buildings/>)

### **7. Luxury Residences around Naples, II**

09:00

Tommasina Budetta – Rosaria Perrella (Sorrent/Berlin), Le ville marittime della Penisola Sorrentina. Nuove indagini e ricerche

## Summary

The sea side villas located in so called Penisola Sorrentina, represent one of the most important archeological tributes of the Roman age. The area where the villas were found was extended from the ancient city of *Aequa* to the natural site called "Punta della Campanella". The area became so famous during that time because of the beautiful landscapes as well as the richness of the soil that many Roman aristocrats decided to build the villas alongside the sea coast.

The geographer Strabo described this residential landscape, choosing to focus his observations on the coast of *Cratere*, the ancient name for the gulf, the boundaries of which are defined by the Capo Miseno and the Capo Ateneo, today known as the Punta Campanella. The coast appeared to Strabo as an entire city because of the high density of estates. Although extant evidence of these villas survives into the present day, many of these villas remain partially buried under modern estates along the seaside; nonetheless, their mere-presence confirms thus the Strabo's well known. These beautiful houses were constructed in a very panoramic position with arcades facing the hills and private baths to the beaches. The huge number of these structures is witnessed by the amount of ruins being found in these sites which developed from *Aequa* until the Capri island. The balcony, made of local tufa, was designed by a continuous alternation of arcades and exedras, together with several paths to the coast sometimes enriched with tunnels, nymphaeums and natural fish ponds. Ancient architects showcased their prowess by exploiting the diverse geological composition of the Sorrentine landscape to its fullest.

These luxurious places were usually finished with piers and haulages. The majority of the villas was built between the end of the 1st BC and the middle of the 1st AC century. This time period overlaps with two important historical moments: the arrival of Augustus to the peninsula where, not only he bought the Capri island, but also relegated his adoptive son, Agrippa Postumo, to one of the villas. It also reminds the stay of the Emperor Tiberio between the 27th and the 37th AD. The villas will be examined in the light of recent excavations and researches.

## 8. Mediterrane Luxusarchitektur als Herrschaftslegitimation

10:00

Zbigniew Fiema (Kuopio), The Nabataean palatial complex in Petra

### Summary

According to ancient literary sources, Nabataean kings had royal quarters in the city of Petra in southern Jordan. Recent survey conducted by the Northeastern Petra Project (NEPP) on the high-ground location at the foot of al-Khubthah massif in Petra revealed the existence of a large architectural complex of monumental design, which clearly dominated the entire valley. During the five seasons of the intensive NEPP survey (2011-2015), fourteen large buildings and several other structures and installations were fully documented, surface material collected and assessed for chronological information, and more than 900 architectural decoration blocks, many of the highest artistic quality, were recorded. The complex may preliminarily be dated to the early 1st century A.D. One of the rooms in the largest, monumental building (Structure 2) at the site was excavated in 2016, confirming the initial impression that the building was richly decorated with painted wall plaster and floor mosaics.

At first, the locational analysis and a brief description of the specific components of the architectural complex will be presented, followed by the interpretive commentary and conclusions. It is apparent that in locational and spatial terms, the NEPP complex draws upon the concept of Hellenistic urban *basileia* while its architecture and decorative repertoire find some parallels in Herodian palaces and late Republican-early Imperial villas of *otium* type. However, no close parallel to the overall architectural design of the complex nor to specific architectural solutions has been found so far. It will be suggested that the complex represents the luxurious palatial quarters of the Nabataean elites, not unlikely of the Nabataean kings. If so, this consequently calls for the re-evaluation of other locations in Petra, previously proposed as Nabataean royal residences. Finally, the paper will underline the importance of the NEPP complex for the spatial organization and the urban development of the city of Petra.

brunch break 10:45-12.00

## 9. Synthesis and Final Discussion

12:00