

## HELLENISTIC LIVING IN THE AEGEAN

Hellenistic living in the Aegean is a subject which implies many questions concerning housing and houses of this time and place. The expression requires, on the one hand, that the Aegean Sea can be isolated from the rest of mainland Greece, thanks to a particular and exceptional situation during this period. It implies, on the other hand, that the Hellenistic period shows characteristic and definite changes which can be identified both in the ruins of ancient houses and in the texts. These two aspects have often been dealt with in a traditional manner by historians and archaeologists, and I will first recall the historical and economic situation which led to the particular development of the Aegean Sea during Hellenistic times. But what seems more promising is that the expression ›Hellenistic living‹ implies the existence of a unified culture of the Greeks which could be identified in their houses. The reality of a linguistic κοινή has been recognised, but it is more complex to highlight the phenomenon in ways of life and domestic constructions. Through the Delian examples we will see how the cultural interactions and exchanges between people from different origins can be recognised, and how the cosmopolitanism of the island generally amounts to a relative uniformity. Finally, the polysemy of the word ›living‹ reminds us that the subject implies to consider the house both as an architectural ensemble and as a home. Living is actually a social fact which is made up of many processes, activities and rules. Each of them requires more or less material equipment or techniques; their rules can be explicit or not. We will see through the example of storage areas how the processes of Hellenistic living in the Aegean can be enlightened by literary and archaeological evidence.

### The Historical and Economic Situation of the Aegean During Hellenistic Times: The Reasons of Urban Expansion

The economic and political situation of the Aegean during the Hellenistic period seems to have particularly favoured the development of urban centres. The islands' density and, sometimes, their proximity to Continental Greece or Asia Minor definitely turned them into privileged links in the economic and cultural exchanges between North, South, East and West. Moreover, increasing seaborne trade was promoted by the relative safety of the Aegean Sea, controlled by the Rhodians who hunted down the pirates during the 3<sup>rd</sup> c. Despite the traditional dangers of navigation, the seaborne trade was indeed the cheapest, the quickest and, all in all, the safest in antiquity, which bestowed a leading economic position to the Aegean in Hellenistic times.

This position was also reinforced by major historical facts. First, there was the foundation of the κοινὸν of the Nesiotes by Antigonos Monophtalmos centred on Delos, and its re-foundation around 200 BC by the Rhodians, this time centred on Tenos. The κοινὸν offered a guarantee of stability and security for seaborne exchanges in the Dodecanese and the Cyclades, up to Keos island. Secondly, the development of the Aegean islands was promoted by the strengthening of the Athenian influence after Pydna in 168 BC, and, behind Athens, the increase of Rome's economic strength to the detriment of Rhodes and Euboea. The Hellenistic period is actually characterised by Italy's increasing leadership in the economic system of the Mediterranean. Its social and economic reconstruction stimulated the demand for oriental products, grain and slaves which would develop the role of the Aegean islands as places of commerce and transit. The expansion of trade led to the reorientation of commercial routes from East to West: the Aegean then became the centre of a transit which crossed the whole Mediterranean. Thirdly, the economic attraction shifted to new or renewed urban centres after the disintegration of Macedonia and Continental Greece; also specific trading centres, especially Carthage and Corinth, were destroyed or at least violently hit in 146 BC.

These Aegean urban centres were essentially ports of trade, due to their insularity; some of them also offered an opening to local products which made up the prosperity of their islands. The data available for these centres concern mostly Thasos, Delos and Thera, and, to a lesser extent, the economic situation of the Dodecanese. In the Northern Aegean, Thasos represents a sizeable island. Despite the high mountains covering its centre, the natural and agricultural resources of the island made up its wealth and economic power through the exportation of timber, marble, gold and mining resources, craft products and its famous wine, which was deemed the best after the wine of Chios<sup>1</sup>. Its privileged position, near the coast, on the commercial routes especially leading to Macedonia and Thrace, was reinforced by the proclamation of its independence in 196 BC. During the Hellenistic period Thasos was densely inhabited, especially inside the fortification walls, even if persistent water problems caused some areas to be gradually deserted, such as the Quartier de la porte du Silène in the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> c.<sup>2</sup>

In the Dodecanese, the island of Kos represented another attractive economic centre. Unfortunately, the urban expansion of the town during the Hellenistic period was almost completely covered up by the intense building activities and uninterrupted occupation in Imperial times. Nevertheless, the prosperity of the island which attracted visitors, tradesmen, craftsmen and students with the sanctuary of Asklepios, its famous medical school and its natural resources, is well documented<sup>3</sup>. Kos was actually famous for its wine and its fine local-made amphorae, its perfumes and the silk fabrics which seem to appear on some Hellenistic statues. Its situation on the main commercial route leading from the Black Sea to the East offered Kos many opportunities of commerce and transit which encouraged its extension and wealth, both public and private.

In the Southern Aegean, the island of Thera was also relatively prosperous, due to its agricultural resources, the exportation of lava stones found e.g. in Delos, and the presence of a Ptolemaic garrison, which controlled the route between Egypt, Crete and the Aegean. The excavations of the town at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> c. hardly distinguished the different phases of occupation, so that we usually apply a ›Hellenistic-Roman‹ chronology to the houses of Thera<sup>4</sup>.

Finally, in the middle of the Cyclades, Delos was probably the most prosperous trading centre of the Aegean during the Hellenistic period. It is also, together with Thasos, the island we know best, both historically and archaeologically. Its natural and agricultural resources permitted an additional income, but the island's wealth and prosperity were mainly provided by the transit of a great amount of goods, grain and slaves, the presence of the sanctuary of Apollo and the exemption of taxes, which was granted to Delos by Rome in 167 BC. Moreover, after the eviction of the Delians, the development of economic activities and transit caused the installation of a new cosmopolitan population, mainly from the East and Italy. This favourable situation led to the expansion of the town to the North, especially during the 2<sup>nd</sup> c., and the construction of new residential districts to welcome all newcomers<sup>5</sup>.

Despite the geographical, climatic and topographical differences between all the examples of Aegean islands, we can also determine similarities in their economic and historical situation which triggered the general expansion of the towns, an intense building activity – especially for houses – and a massive arrival of people from overseas, in particular Italians and Orientals.

<sup>1</sup> Aristoph. *Plut.* 1021, *Eccl.* 1119, *Lys.* 196; *Athen. deipn.* 1, 28c; 1, 29 c–e; 1, 32a; 10, 432b. c; *Xen. symp.* 41; *Plut. Dem.* 19; *Plin. nat.* 14, 75. 95. 117.

<sup>2</sup> Y. GRANDJEAN, *Recherches sur l'habitat thasien à l'époque grecque*, *Études thasiennes* 12 (Athens 1988).

<sup>3</sup> *Strab. Geogr.* 14, 2, 19; S. M. SHERWIN-WHITE, *Ancient Cos* (Göttingen 1978); K. BURASELIS, *Kos between Hellenism and Rome: Studies on the Political, Institutional and Social History of Kos from ca. the Middle Second Century B.C. until Late Antiquity* (Philadelphia 2000).

<sup>4</sup> W. DÖRPFELD – F. HILLER VON GAERTRINGEN, *Thera 1* (Berlin 1899–1909); W. DÖRPFELD – F. HILLER VON GAERTRINGEN, *Thera 3* (Berlin 1899–1909).

<sup>5</sup> For a description of the urbanistic development of Delos cf. Ph. BRUNEAU, *Contribution à l'histoire urbaine de Délos à l'époque hellénistique et à l'époque impériale*, *BCH* 92, 1968, 634–658; Ph. BRUNEAU, *Deliaca* (III), *BCH* 103, 1979, 89 f.

## Hellenistic Living in the Aegean: A Theoretical Approach

In the studies of Hellenistic living, the case of Delos rapidly appeared as the finest example of the expansion, luxury and comfort of the Hellenistic period. This traditional conception of Hellenistic living concerning luxury and the extension of the houses is confirmed by literary references, e.g. Cicero<sup>6</sup> or Strabo<sup>7</sup>. It is still difficult to determine if the image of Delos can be applied to the other trading centres, because they are generally not so well preserved and excavated, but we indeed have many examples of houses which have been enlarged or modified during the Hellenistic period. When enough space was available, the owner of the house could decide to add a peristyle in the central courtyard. In Delos, particularly after the departure of the Delians, two neighbouring houses could have been put together to make a bigger one, as in the Maison de Cléopatra et Dioskouridès or in the Maison VI H in the Quartier du Théâtre. Houses are more generally fitted with latrines and private baths, amenities that are generally considered indicators of comfort, but this phenomenon had already been recognised in the oldest district of Delos<sup>8</sup>. Finally, elaborate, fine wall and floor decoration found in many houses highlight their lavish standing. One can notice the sophistication of the ornamentation both in the old Quartier du Théâtre with the Maison du Dionysos, the Maison du Trident, the Maison des Dauphins, the Maison des Masques or the Maison de l'Inopos, and in the new ones, as in the Maison des Comédiens, the Maison du Diadumène or the Maison du Lac.

These observations played an important part in the elaboration of a typical Hellenistic house layout, widely inspired by the examples of Delos for the Aegean. To a certain extent they can be illustrated by the plan of the Maison des Comédiens in the Northern quarter, which was used by W. Hoepfner and E. L. Schwandner<sup>9</sup> (fig. 1). The typology created by these two authors led to the setting of recurring features which characterise Delian domestic architecture of the Hellenistic period: the houses are generally centred on a courtyard around which we find several rooms on two, three or four sides. The presence of a peristyle seems to be a characteristic element of the time. The water supply is also located in the central courtyard and provided by cisterns or wells. One of the typical features is represented by the *oecus maior*, identified as an important and lavish room which is linked to one or two smaller ones. This group of rooms was probably devoted to many activities of Delian daily life and especially to dinners and entertainment<sup>10</sup>. This typical plan is mainly represented in the newly built quarters where enough space was available to plan such a ground floor. But the Delian typology established by W. Hoepfner and E. L. Schwandner is far from giving a complete account of the different layouts observed in Delos. e.g. in the Quartier du Théâtre, where inhabitants had to deal with previous dwellings, the layout and organisation of houses are of course less systematic and more variable. The comparison between the old and the new quarters of Delos shows that the topographic and historic conditions of domestic constructions have deeply influenced the houses' layouts (fig. 2). That is why these typological elements must not cover up the fact that they are far from being found in all houses and the population of these trading centres was certainly not uniformly wealthy and prosperous<sup>11</sup>. Indeed, houses without peristyle are still numerous at this time, the characteristic feature of Mediterranean houses actually being the presence of the central courtyard, not the columns. In Thasos, only two complete peristyles have been found in the Quartier de la Porte d'Hermès, Ilot I and in the Dimitriadis field; none of the Thasian houses had latrines or bathrooms. Moreover, the surface occupied by the

<sup>6</sup> Cic. orat. 242.

<sup>7</sup> Strab. Geogr. 10, 5, 2–5.

<sup>8</sup> Among other examples: in the Quartier du Théâtre, maisons II B, II C, II E, II F, III B, III C, IV B, VI A, VI F, VI G, VI H, VI J; Quartier du Stade, Maisons A, B, C, D; Maison du Lac, Maison des Dauphins, Maisons des Sceaux (latrines and *laconicum*, as in the Maison de Fourni), Maison des Tritons (only a bathtub), Maison de l'Hermès (latrines and bathtub). All the divisions and numbers of the Quartier du Théâtre are quoted from J. CHAMONARD, *Le Quartier du Théâtre, Délos 8* (Athens 1922–1924).

<sup>9</sup> HOEPFNER – SCHWANDNER 1994, 295–297.

<sup>10</sup> Unlike what we find in mainland Greece at the end of the Classical period, especially in Eretria or Olynthos, in Delos there is only one example of the classical feature of the *andron* in the Maison de l'Hermès; none were found in Thasos.

<sup>11</sup> One of the interests of recent studies lies precisely in highlighting humble and simple dwellings and in the questioning of the localisation of the less wealthy people who lived in these rich urban centres, which in fact also needed craftsmen, shopkeepers and workers. See in particular M. TRÜMPER, *Modest Housing in Late Hellenistic Delos*, in: AULT – NEVETT 2005, 119–139 and B. A. AULT, *Housing the Poor and Homeless in Ancient Greece*, in: AULT – NEVETT 2005, 140–159.

houses must often be interpreted regarding the presence of an upper floor, which could have been just as luxurious as the ground floor. This upper storey may have been occupied by the same family as the ground floor, or by a different one, which changes the interpretation of what we think today of antique luxury and comfort. To appreciate this particular notion of luxury, the mosaics are also to be considered cautiously and always in a general context. In fact, there are about 350 mosaics in Delos, found not only in houses. This is actually a small number regarding the extent of the excavated areas: the majority of the floors were in fact made of earth or paved with local stones, even in the so-called big and luxurious houses. In addition, mosaics are scarcely represented and much simpler in Hellenistic Thera and Thasos.

In general, the renewal and evolution of domestic and household studies should henceforth persuade us to consider the typology with caution. Indeed, it is mainly based on a sort of evolutionist and diachronic standpoint which leads to think that houses are continuously built with more space, comfort, decoration and luxury, as it was a kind of natural evolution. This point of view often makes one choose only the appropriate examples that show the original assumption, regardless of the variability of house planning which can be due to topographical and geographical differences, sociological and historical variations. In Eastern Crete, the city of Lato was inhabited during Hellenistic times, but one cannot see any traces of peristyles, floor or wall decoration, latrines or baths, except in one particular house. In this town, the construction of the houses is as simple as in the Archaic period and can be explained especially by a strong Cretan building tradition and an implantation in the uplands which did not allow an extension of the dwellings<sup>12</sup>. Finally, if the typology enables us to think about some particular change or persistence in the domestic architecture and layout, it fails to give an account of ›living‹ in Antiquity, because it only considers the plans of the houses.

In fact, living also deals with the whole range of activities which take place in a house, and therefore the whole equipment that can be found in it, the type of social relations and uses the houses enlighten and whether they changed from the previous period. Concerning this matter, I would like to take the opportunity to mention a little known article of Ph. Bruneau, published in 1995, which specifically points out the theoretical approach regarding houses and households<sup>13</sup>. This article proceeds from a general observation of the publications and analyses of Delian houses. From this point of view, Bruneau showed that Delos' dwellings were not spared the general problems of domestic studies even though it offers one of the best preserved examples of Hellenistic houses. One of his first statements is that, almost without exception, houses were emptied of their content during the excavations. The different artefacts were then studied in series, according to the traditional separation of disciplines and fields of research: first and predominantly, the architecture, then the sculpture, ceramic and terracotta and, finally, the heap of the so-called small finds. This last denomination highlights how trivial or even insignificant they can be considered. Instead of analysing the house as a whole for which each series of artefacts is meaningful, most studies have dismembered the house and its content, whenever there was one left: the result of this traditional separation is that we often have to wait a long time before all the artefacts of a house are published, offering us a clearer vision of its assemblage. When published separately, it is often with little consideration of the archaeological context. These facts contributed to turn the house into what Ph. Bruneau called a ›dead museum‹, a phrasing which finds its equivalent in the ›empty shell‹ used by L. Nevett and B. Ault<sup>14</sup>.

On the contrary, more than an architectural complex, the house is actually a home, what Bruneau called a ›tool for living‹ to make up for the lack in French of the pair ›house-home‹. In this regard, the house has to be considered with all its documentation, both written and archaeological. The texts must indeed be the fundamental and primary source of our understanding and appreciation of the people who lived in the houses we study. This theoretical approach found great echoes in the past ten or fifteen years, either by the

<sup>12</sup> V. HADJIMICHALI, Recherches à Latô 3. Maisons, BCH 95/1, 1971, 167–222.

<sup>13</sup> Ph. BRUNEAU, La maison délienne, Ramage 12, 1994/1995, 77–118, now also easily available in the collection of Bruneau's articles about Delos edited by J.-Ch. MORETTI, Études d'archéologie délienne, BCH Suppl. 47 (Paris 2006) 873–914.

<sup>14</sup> B. A. AULT – L. C. NEVETT, Digging Houses: Archaeologies of Classical and Hellenistic Greek Domestic Assemblages, in: P. M. ALLISON (ed.), The Archaeology of Household Activities (London – New York 1999) 43–56.

reconsideration of old excavations and the gathering of house assemblages, as P. Allison<sup>15</sup> did for Pompeii, or by the application of a new analysis model to newly excavated areas, as in Olynthos by N. Cahill<sup>16</sup>.

The model elaborated by Bruneau takes all aspects of houses and housing into account by gathering and assembling all the equipments found in a house and by analysing them both technically and socially<sup>17</sup>. Besides the equipment and artefacts which are not a matter of necessity but of individual taste, a house can be analysed according to its purposes: protecting people and goods, storing, producing food, cloth or water, entertaining, separating the household from the outside, and assuring privacy. First, the house is a construction which fulfils the animal and natural needs of human beings, that is to say the need for a vital space, the protection against cold, heat, rain, wind, humidity, the need for light and air, the minimal respect for hygiene. These vital needs can be equipped with artefacts such as lamps, braziers, curtains, bathtubs or »chamber pot«, but also be incorporated in the architectural and technical design: the peristyle is a protection against both rain and sun, the windows allow the air and light to go inside rooms, the house can be fitted with constructed latrines, the incorporation of ashes in the earth of the courtyard protects it from humidity. The possibility to interpret artefacts either as utilitarian or technical devices, or as sociological processes was already known in antiquity as shown in this quotation of Varro l, 1, 8. 31:

*Quod si quis duplicem putat esse summam, ad quas metas naturae sit perveniendum in usu, utilitatis et elegantiae, quod non solum vestiti esse volumus ut vitemus frigus, sed etiam ut videamur vestiti esse honeste, non domum habere ut simus in tecto et tuto solum, quo necessitas contruserit, sed etiam ubi voluptas retineri possit, non solum vasa ad victum habilia, sed etiam figura bella atque ab artifice ficta, quod aliud homini, aliud humanitati satis est.*

»But if one should think that the sum of those natural goals to which we ought to attain in actual use consists of two items, that of utility and that of refinement, because we wish to be clothed not only to avoid cold, but also to appear to be decently clothed; and we wish to have a house not merely that we may be under a roof and in a safe place into which necessity has crowded us together, but also that we may be where we may continue to experience the pleasures of life; and we wish to have table vessels that are not merely suitable to hold our food, but also beautiful in form and shaped by an artist – for one thing is enough for the human animal, and quite another thing satisfies human refinement«<sup>18</sup>.

A dwelling is secondly also a social construction which incorporates particular categories of people or excludes others. From this point of view, the house becomes a home. It reveals separation between men and women, freemen and slaves, children and adults, even if this separation is not architecturally determined<sup>19</sup>. Some literary examples, often studied in the past actually tell us about the importance of these social rules in daily life, for example, the existence in the ancient Greek language of the pair *gynaikonitis-andronitis*<sup>20</sup>. The difficulty experienced by scholars to determine precisely the localisation of rooms devoted to women, also shows that these rules and processes were not necessarily architecturally designed. They should have

<sup>15</sup> P. M. ALLISON (ed.), *Dwelling in the Past: the Archaeology of Household Activities* (London 1999); P. M. ALLISON, *Using the Material and Written Sources: Turn of the Millennium Approaches to Roman Domestic Space*, *AJA* 105, 2001, 181–208; P. M. ALLISON, *The Distribution of Pompeian House Contents and its Significance* (Ann Arbor 2003); P. M. ALLISON, *Pompeian Households: an Analysis of Material Culture* (Los Angeles 2004).

<sup>16</sup> N. D. CAHILL, *Olynthos: Social and Spatial Planning in a Greek City* (Berkeley 1991).

<sup>17</sup> Ph. BRUNEAU – C. VATIN – U. BEZERRA DE MENESES et al., *L'Ilot de la Maison des Comédiens, Délos 27* (Paris 1970).

<sup>18</sup> Translation by the author.

<sup>19</sup> For the archaeological data concerning slaves cf. I. MORRIS, *Remaining Invisible: The Archaeology of the Excluded in Classical Athens*, in: S. R. JOSHEL – S. MURNAGHAN (ed.), *Women and Slaves in Graeco-Roman Culture: Differential Equations* (London 1998) 193–220.

<sup>20</sup> For the restitutions of the separation between women and men cf. A. RUMPF, *Zum hellenistischen Haus*, *JdI* 50, 1935, 1–8; F. PESANDO, *Oikos e Ktesis. La Casa greca in età classica* (Perugia 1987), with the previous bibliography; K. REBER, *Aedificia Graecorum. Zu Vitruvs Beschreibung des griechischen Hauses*, *AA* 1988, 653–666. The hypothesis of a determined space devoted to women is reasonably abandoned today; cf. M. KREBB, *Das delische Wohnhaus. Einzelprobleme*, *AA* 1985, 93–111; L. C. NEVETT, *Gender Relations in the Classical Household: the Archaeological Evidence*, *BSA* 90, 1995, 363–381; M. TRÜMPER, *Wohnen in Delos. Eine baugeschichtliche Untersuchung zum Wandel der Wohnkultur in hellenistischer Zeit*, *Internationale Archäologie* 46 (Frankfurt am Main 1998) 88 f.

been an implicit notion depending mostly on the moment of the day, the activities performed and the degree of intimacy between the women of the family and the visitors.

Thirdly, the house is a construction which can entertain both its inhabitants and the visitors with statues, painted stuccoes, mosaics and all the furniture, in wood, stone, metal or cloth which have now largely disappeared. The display of works of art can also go with architectural features such as windows or openings to get more light.

Finally, a house is a construction which is appropriate for production and storage. Bruneau called these particular purposes the »officine« and the »resserre«. On the one hand, the »officine« determines the processes by which one can produce either food, clothes or water. The notion takes into account the presence of a kitchen, but also the portable stoves which were used in the courtyard or on the roof, the mills, presses and grindstones for oil, wine and cereals, the loom weights which identify the production of textile, and the whole architectural device which produces water for the house, that is to say the design of the roof, the pipes and the cistern. On the other hand, the resserre refers to the devices by which one can protect, store and put away objects and goods; consequently it concerns the design of rooms and pavements within the house, but also all the artefacts, movable or not, which contained things, such as amphorae, *dolia* and *pithoi*, chests, shelves, boxes a. s. o. The importance of storage and production can also be noticed, especially in Delos, through the topographical and architectural link between houses, shops and craft areas.

### The Case-Study of Production and Storage Areas

The final point of Bruneau's model stresses the fact that antique houses were also concerned with storage and production in general and especially in Hellenistic trading centres, where commerce and business were probably the main preoccupation of many inhabitants. This question has, to an important extent, been put aside in studies because only scattered and scarce information exists, especially when houses have been voluntarily abandoned and emptied. Nevertheless, it seems possible to gather pieces of information and to enlighten this matter by reconsidering the domestic data. The French School in Athens has in fact started a new research program focusing on storage areas in Delos. The program is conducted by V. Chankowski from the University of Lille III, and is linked to a more general research dealing with storage and *emporia* in the antique ports of the Mediterranean. The question of storage is considered from two points of view: the industries and shops meant to produce and sell manufactured goods, and the domestic production meant to guarantee the self-sufficiency of a household<sup>21</sup>. To collect information, we first analysed the structural and functional links between shops, storage areas and houses in the Quartier du Théâtre more thoroughly. Secondly, we try to identify and study the multi-functional rooms which may have been useful for storage in the houses, considering their architecture, surface, situation, wall and floor treatment and the artefacts which were found in the area. This last task is particularly difficult, due to the separation of the artefacts from their context during the excavations of J. Chamonard at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> c.<sup>22</sup>. The aim of this analysis is to see whether storage required a dedicated space in the Delian houses.

The first observations we made during the first campaign in 2007 led us to some tentative conclusions which still have to be supported by archaeological arguments. The ground floor of Delian houses appears to be multi-functional, devoted to many activities and purposes: reception and representation, storage, production, trade, daily activities. We did not manage to notice a necessary specialisation and predetermination of spaces or rooms, neither by situation, architectural features, nor by the treatment of walls and floors, except in the case of raised floors for the conservation of amphorae (Maison VI H). The presence of such floors is suggested by the traces of beams, at least the holes they left, situated at a low level (about 60 cm from the ground). On the contrary, we noticed the frequency of structures which can enlarge space, such as mezzanines, especially in the shops<sup>23</sup>, or which create open spaces possibly available for storage, such

<sup>21</sup> N. CAHILL, Household Industry in Greece and Anatolia, in: AULT – NEVETT 2005, 54–66.

<sup>22</sup> J. CHAMONARD, Le Quartier du Théâtre, Délos 8 (Athens 1922–1924).

<sup>23</sup> Rue du Théâtre shops 30, 34, 47; Rue 4, shops 12, 14.

as staircases<sup>24</sup>. The overlapping spaces devoted to work and to family, which did not seem as distinguished as we had thought, must also be taken into consideration: in the Maison du Trident a fine marble press for the production of olive oil was found, similar to the examples of the perfumery in the Quartier du Stade; the Maison VI L has been interpreted as a marble workshop; the Maison aux Stucs was linked to a glass workshop<sup>25</sup>. More generally, many shops are connected with the houses situated behind or nearby<sup>26</sup>. To a certain extent, the traditional separation between public and private spheres is, at least from an archaeological viewpoint, thin. The connection between shops and houses in Delos has a historical and an economical background which can explain the multifunctional aspect of the ground floor: the renting of professional premises could bring a substantial income to the owner of a house. Especially in the Quartier du Théâtre, one or two of the front rooms of a house could have been kept for this purpose. Moreover, the epigraphical documents illustrate a regular turnover of the tenants who occupied the shops, the workshops and the estates of Apollo. In the Maison du Dionysos, room d was walled up and integrated into the house itself, while room e was open onto the street and probably rented as a shop. The two rooms have exactly the same architectural profile and pavement device.

The analysis of the Maison des Sceaux is interesting from this point of view as well, as it shows how difficult it can be to shed light on the function of the rooms if we do not know anything about the artefacts that were found in it. Contrary to the Theatre Quarter, which was largely abandoned, the violent destruction of this building gave scholars the opportunity to find the whole equipment of the house *in situ*, both from the ground floor as well as from the upper storey<sup>27</sup>. The excavations revealed that many amphorae were stored in the reception rooms, maybe also because some work was carried out in the house after the first attack of the pirates; an exceptionally well preserved cupboard containing vases was found on the ground floor; the kitchen seems to have been located in the upper storey, which is very unusual<sup>28</sup>; the eastern part of the house was devoted to storage and the production of flour as shown by a mill constructed in the back of the house (figs. 3. 4). A similar grain mill has been found in the Quartier du Théâtre, shop 27 b. The production device is completed by a storage area still containing two *pithoi in situ*; the western wall has traces of counting marks in the stucco.

These observations show that the question of storage and production must be considered both in terms of architecture and furnishing: we must then take into account the permanent features which create available space and useful dispositions for storage, but we also have to focus on the traces of furnishings we can still notice in some houses, especially the empty spaces and recesses in walls which may have been used for shelves or cupboards. This part of the work requires attention to the excavation notebooks in order to trace the significant artefacts which were found, such as amphorae, vases and *pithoi*. It also requires a selection of texts, both epigraphical and literary, to complete the archaeological data. Even if they are often centred on the situation and the life in Athens, the literary evidences indeed give information on the use of domestic space, its organisation, its vocabulary and a great deal of furniture that has now disappeared: the curtains which might have divided space, hidden a place or protected from the heat of the sun<sup>29</sup>, but also the wooden furniture, cupboards and chests which were major elements of storage in Antiquity as shown in many literary quotations<sup>30</sup>. More generally, the texts highlight the fact that storage was subject to constant attention and care, since the preservation of goods depended on the quality of storage areas. To determine this particular room, the ancient Greeks mainly used the word *ταμειῶν* in literature<sup>31</sup>. It refers to the function of the *ταμίης*, who was responsible for all the goods and the valuable objects stored in the house; he could have

<sup>24</sup> Maison du Trident, Maison du Dionysos, Maisons VI A, VI H, IV A.

<sup>25</sup> M.-D. NENNA, *Les Verres, Délos 37* (Athens 1998) 165. 191.

<sup>26</sup> Maison II B room c; shop no. 2 with the Maison du Trident; shops no. 5 and 7 with III A; shop no. 6 with IV A; shop no. 31 and 33 with III Y.

<sup>27</sup> SIEBERT 2001.

<sup>28</sup> As the material has not yet been published, I thank J. Johnson and A. Peignard, who are working on the final publication and participated in the excavations, for their information.

<sup>29</sup> The traces of what may have been a fixation device for a curtain have been noticed by Ph. Bruneau in the Maison des Masques; cf. Ph. BRUNEAU, *Deliaca* (II), BCH 102, 1978, 126. For an ancient testimony cf. Poll. 10, 32.

<sup>30</sup> Cf. for examples Athen. deipn. 3, 84 a; 6, 232 a–b; Theophr. char. 18, 4; 10, 6; Poll. 7, 79.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. for examples Men. Sam. 394–405; Ach. Tat. 2, 19, 3. 4; Theophr. char. 4, 9.

been a slave or the owner himself. The word does not by itself give any clues concerning the localisation of the room, its particular floor or wall treatment, or the nature of the goods stored, which could have been variable, as shown by Xenophon's *Oeconomicus*<sup>32</sup>.

This new research program aims at confronting every type of document which will help us to understand the use of domestic space in Hellenistic times concerning storage and production, which have never been studied in detail before in Delos. It is also an opportunity to reanalyse the old excavation reports and to highlight a particular aspect of Hellenistic living by reconsidering the houses' assemblages. Of course, many things still have to be done in this matter.

#### From the Cosmopolitanism of the Hellenistic Period to the Graeco-Roman Culture in Imperial Times

As shown by the study of storage and production areas, the Delian quarters were little specialised in terms of activities, so that shops, workshops and houses are often clustered together. We notice similarly that the districts are neither determined by the level of wealth of the inhabitants nor by their ethnic origin. This remark is also valid, to a certain extent, for the examples of Thera and Thasos. Nevertheless, what seems to have been a characteristic of Hellenistic times, illustrated both in texts and archaeological data is the cosmopolitanism and the multicultural aspect of the society. This aspect can particularly be observed in the trading centres of the Aegean which attracted merchants and tradesmen because of their exceptionally good economic situation: people from the East and West, especially Italians, rushed to the Aegean from the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. onwards. Nevertheless, what has already been noticed in previous studies is that these ethnic particularities were not widely transferred in domestic space, and that the Delian houses were mostly characterised by a relative architectural uniformity<sup>33</sup>. Several explanations have been suggested to justify this kind of domestic *κοινή*. One of these interpretations is that Delian inhabitants were mostly tradesmen who were more interested in profit than in the expression of their origins<sup>34</sup>. As we lack elements to recreate Delian thoughts, this argument seems very fragile and has to be rejected. On the contrary, the newcomers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. were confronted with two different building situations: they could either deal with the old Quartier du Théâtre which was already built and crowded, or use the newly built Northern quarters which offered more space for the development of houses and the architectural choices of the owners. However, we find only little traces of the origins of the inhabitants in the architecture and these traces did not drastically change the organisation of layouts in any way. To a certain extent, the existing dwellings were probably multifunctional enough for the newcomers to allow them to fulfil their needs and ways of life. The presence of a central courtyard was actually a common feature, and probably one of the most useful, in Mediterranean domestic space, which could be used for the principal domestic activities. The ethnicity was often only specified in details: furniture, decoration features and personal belongings, now partially lost for us.

The question of ethnicity does not necessarily imply to identify the origin of the owners, but has to be considered in a more general point of view: what did ancient Greeks borrow from foreign cultures and how did they adapt the borrowings to the Greek context<sup>35</sup>. The cultural exchanges could have affected the ways of the construction: two examples of ›Campanian peristyles‹ have been recognised in Delos<sup>36</sup>. The specificity of these is that they are partially closed by a low wall constructed between the columns. If the peristyle is a traditional element of the Greek house, this way of closing can be observed in the Pompeian dwellings. The exchanges could have also affected the artefacts themselves. The phenomenon is particularly visible in the choice of foreign decorative motifs, such as the sign of Tanit on the entrance mosaic of the *Maison des Dauphins* and the protomes of the Rhodian peristyle in the *Maison du Trident*. We also notice traces of foreign

<sup>32</sup> Xen. oec. 9, 1–14.

<sup>33</sup> Ph. BRUNEAU, Contribution à l'histoire urbaine de Délos à l'époque hellénistique et à l'époque impériale, BCH 92, 1968, 143 f.

<sup>34</sup> N. RAUH, The Sacred Bonds of Commerce. Religion, Economy, and Trade Society at Hellenistic Roman Delos, 166–87 BC (Rome 1993) 218; B. TANG, Délos, Carthage, Ampurias. The Housing of Three Mediterranean Trading Centres, *AnalRom Suppl.* 36 (Amsterdam 2005) 67.

<sup>35</sup> For a theoretical analysis of the processes of Hellenisation cf. Ph. BRUNEAU, L'hellénisation par l'art, *Ramage* 13, 1996–1998, 17–34.

<sup>36</sup> Ilot des Bijoux, maison II and Ilot des Comédiens, *Maison des Tritons*.



domestic cult, especially Italian, painted on stuccoed altars or walls situated in the street<sup>37</sup>. The technique and the altars are not particularly Italian, but the paintings represent the sacrifice and the procession made during the *ludi Compitalicii*. But interpreting the presence of foreign decorative motifs as an indicator of the origin of the owner or inhabitants can only remain hypothetical: even if the decoration was possibly commissioned by a foreigner, it could have stayed in the house long after the departure of the original owner; moreover, it could have been possible for Greeks to choose such motifs because they were fashionable at the time or just because they liked them. In the lobby of the French School in Athens, the sign of Tanit is represented in a mosaic. Obviously, the motif does not indicate the origin of the members of the School but reminds us of a common Delian culture and of the history of French archaeology in Greece (fig. 5). If the Delian houses reflected exactly the image of the society of the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. BC, we should find more traces of ethnic origins. On the contrary, the traces are scarce and do not necessarily identify a Syrian, a Greek or an Italian inhabitant. The reason of this observation is that inhabitants do not systematically choose the features appropriate to their time, their ethnic or social origin. Some texts actually show us that the house could be very different from the owner's real status: in Apuleius' Golden Ass two rich men live in miserable houses and dress like very poor people in order to hide their fortune from the others<sup>38</sup>; in Petronius' Satyricon, Trimalcio is a rich freed man from the East who appropriated all the elements of the Roman domestic culture in the layout and decoration of his house, even though these elements were already out of fashion in the general context of the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD. Similarly in the archaeological context, the interpretation of what we consider as proofs of luxury or ethnic identity must always be analysed in a more general context.

In one particular Delian example, the Maison de Fourni, a similar analysis can be done to highlight the elements of ethnicity and of the Delian multicultural society. This example also illustrates the implication of multifunctional spaces in Hellenistic houses and in this way represents a pause and a kind of synthesis of the previous questions considered in this article. The house is situated beyond the urban centre and represents a kind of suburban house or villa which is rarely observed in Greece in this period. As enough space was available, the house is vast and extends laterally from the central peristyle courtyard (fig. 6). The localisation offers a spectacular view to the bay of Fourni and to Rheneia. The house has three entrances and reveals many multi-functional spaces: beside spaces for reception distributed around the peristyle and characterised by the presence of mosaics, we find spaces for storage, production and maybe commerce in the facade. The house is organised by a complicated network of communication with three stairs and three different parts; the peristyle is devoted both to circulation and cult with the presence of nine stuccoed altars. The house also has a secondary southern courtyard which has been interpreted as a possible garden. The complete plan of the house and a great deal of the artefacts which were found in it have not yet been published by Ch. Le Roy, who excavated it in the beginning of the 60's. Together with the French architect St. Zugmeyer and in collaboration with the excavator, we are once again taking up the publication work and will plot the complete layout in September 2008.

The traces of multicultural influences can be seen both in the techniques of pavements and motifs of decoration. The Maison de Fourni holds two of the scarce examples of *opus signinum* pavements found in Greece. The technique obviously comes from the Roman context, just as the representation of fish in the exedra, even if this observation should not lead to the identification of the inhabitants or owners as Italian. Several stone reliefs have also been found in the house showing the assimilation of Graeco-Oriental cults and iconography, particularly perceptible in Hellenistic times<sup>39</sup>. One of the reliefs represents the Delian Apollo as designed by Tectaios and Angelion for the cult statue of the god; more unexpectedly, Apollo is accompanied by two Nemesis and a pastoral deity with oriental characteristics. Another relief is the only representation of Helios known in Delos. If we consider them separately, the reliefs are rarely exceptional, apart from the two representations cited here, but the assemblage of the thirteen reliefs found in the house reflects the variety of religious influences and the kind of syncretism observed in the Delian context. Indeed,

<sup>37</sup> M. BULARD, La religion domestique dans la colonie italienne de Délos d'après les peintures murales et les autels historiés Athènes, BEFAR 131 (Paris 1926); Ph. BRUNEAU, Recherches sur les cultes de Délos à l'époque hellénistique et à l'époque impériale, BEFAR 217 (Paris 1970).

<sup>38</sup> 1, 21; 2, 9.

<sup>39</sup> J. MARCADÉ, Reliefs déliens, in: Études déliennes, BCH Suppl. 1 (Paris 1973) 329–369.

they integrate both ancient Greek cults, through the representations of Aphrodite, Hermaphrodite, Apollo, prophylactic images, and more recent Egyptian and Oriental beliefs through the representations of Helios and of the Isiac symbol.

The house has been interpreted as the seat of a religious association, but this example still shows the particular and multicultural society of Delos and illustrates the birth of a larger Graeco-Roman culture which will assimilate both oriental and western traditions.

The Aegean probably offers the best examples of the general movement of expansion which characterises the Hellenistic period: the extension of houses and the expansion of luxury and comfort. Especially so, since the Aegean was an important economic centre which attracted flows of money, goods and people. What we must keep in mind though, is that the majority of the houses we are dealing with are those of an upper class society which are not representative of all the features of Hellenistic living. That is why the general characteristics which are established in this presentation shall not hide the fact that typological variations are more important than we think, and that there must have been many changes in the type considering the place, the status and the time.

We can however notice that spaces, especially on the ground floor, were little specialised: they were mostly multifunctional, which is illustrated by the integration of spaces devoted to work and those for family in a same area. This characteristic makes sense if we also acknowledge that there was apparently no specialisation of quarters in terms of function (commercial, residential, industrial), nor in terms of ethnicity. The domestic *κοινή* noticed in Delos seems, from this point of view, to prepare the Graeco-Roman cultural community we found in the Imperial period, when interest and economical power shifted once more to other urban centres: to Achaia, to Patras and Corinth, to Epirus, to Nikopolis and more generally to the centres situated along the Via Egnatia, to Italy, to the ports of trade which allowed direct exchanges with the East, with a lesser transit through Aegean islands.

#### List of Bibliographical Abbreviations

The citation follows guidelines of the German Archaeological Institute <[www.dainst.org](http://www.dainst.org)> (16.01.2009) and those of the Austrian Archaeological Institute <[www.oeai.at/publik/autoren.html](http://www.oeai.at/publik/autoren.html)> (16.01.2009).

AULT – NEVETT 2005	AULT – L. C. NEVETT (ed.), <i>Ancient Greek Houses and Households. Chronological, Regional and Social Diversity</i> (Philadelphia 2005).
HOEPFNER – SCHWANDNER 1994	W. HOEPFNER – E.-L. SCHWANDNER, <i>Haus und Stadt im Klassischen Griechenland, Wohnen in der klassischen Polis</i> (Munich 1994).
SIEBERT 2001	G. SIEBERT, <i>L'Ilot des Bijoux, l'Ilot des Bronzes, la Maison des Sceaux, Délos 38</i> (Athens 2001).

#### Sources of Illustrations

Fig. 1: after HOEPFNER – SCHWANDNER 1994, 295.

Fig. 2: N. Bresch after PH. BRUNEAU et al., *Délos. Ile sacrée et ville cosmopolite* (Paris 1996) 65.

Fig. 3: after SIEBERT 2001, fig. 5.

Fig. 4: Ph. Fraisse after PH. BRUNEAU – J. DUCAT, *Guide de Délos* 4 (Athens 2005) 235 fig. 66.

Fig. 5: H. Wurmser.

Fig. 6: Ch. Gaston © EfA.

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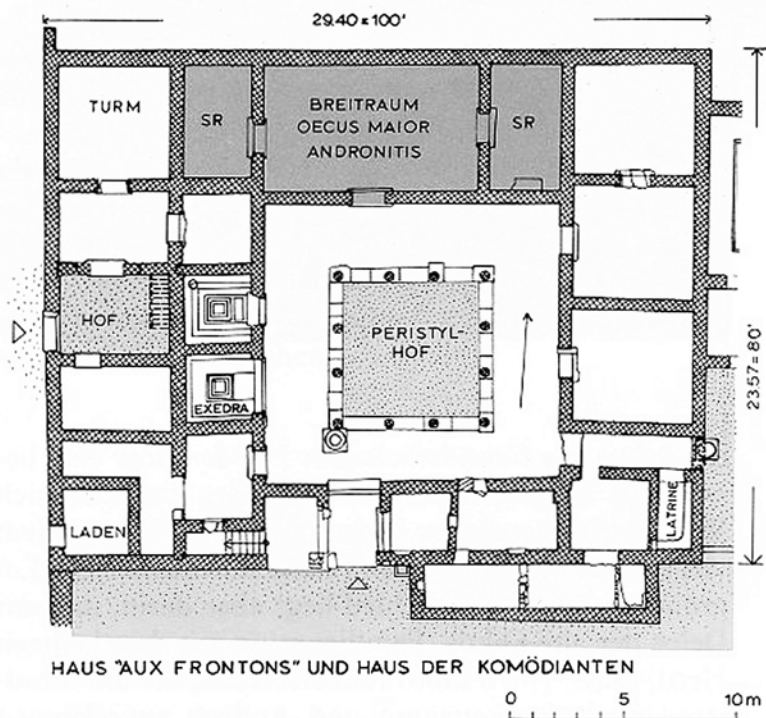


Fig. 1: Plan of the Maison aux Frontons and of the Maison des Comédiens



Fig. 2: Comparison between the layouts of the Quartier Nord and of the Quartier du Théâtre



Fig. 3: Plan of the Maison des Sceaux

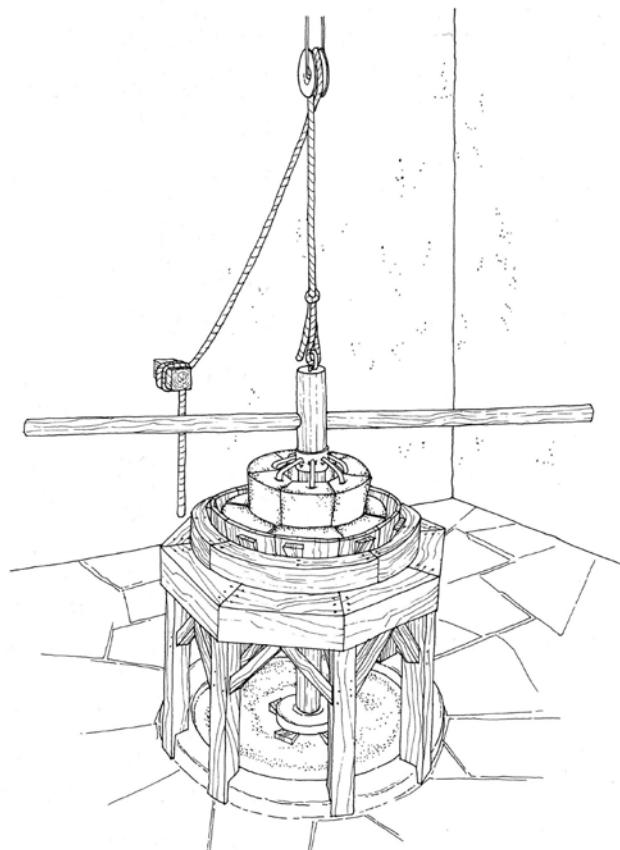


Fig. 4: Reconstitution of the mill in the Maison des Sceaux

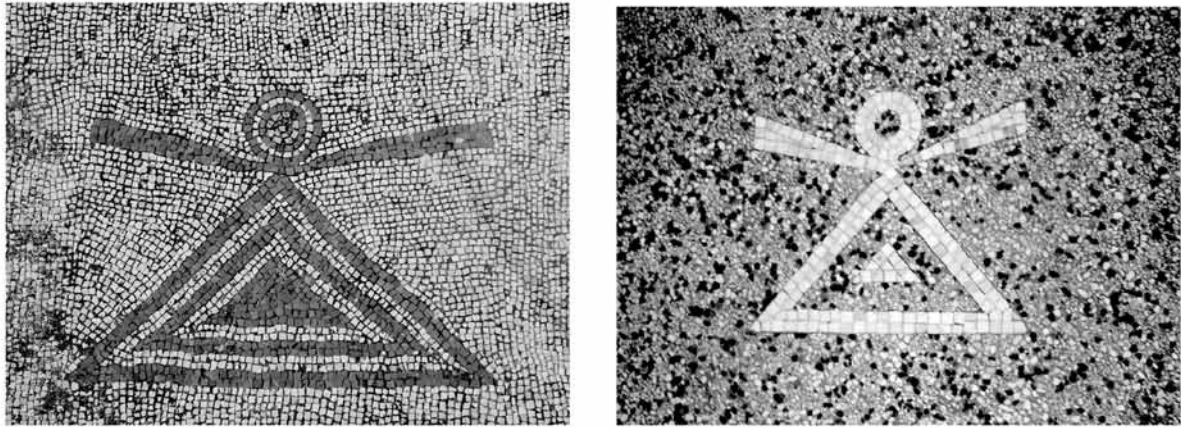


Fig. 5: The sign of Tanit in the Maison des Dauphins and in the lobby of the French School in Athens

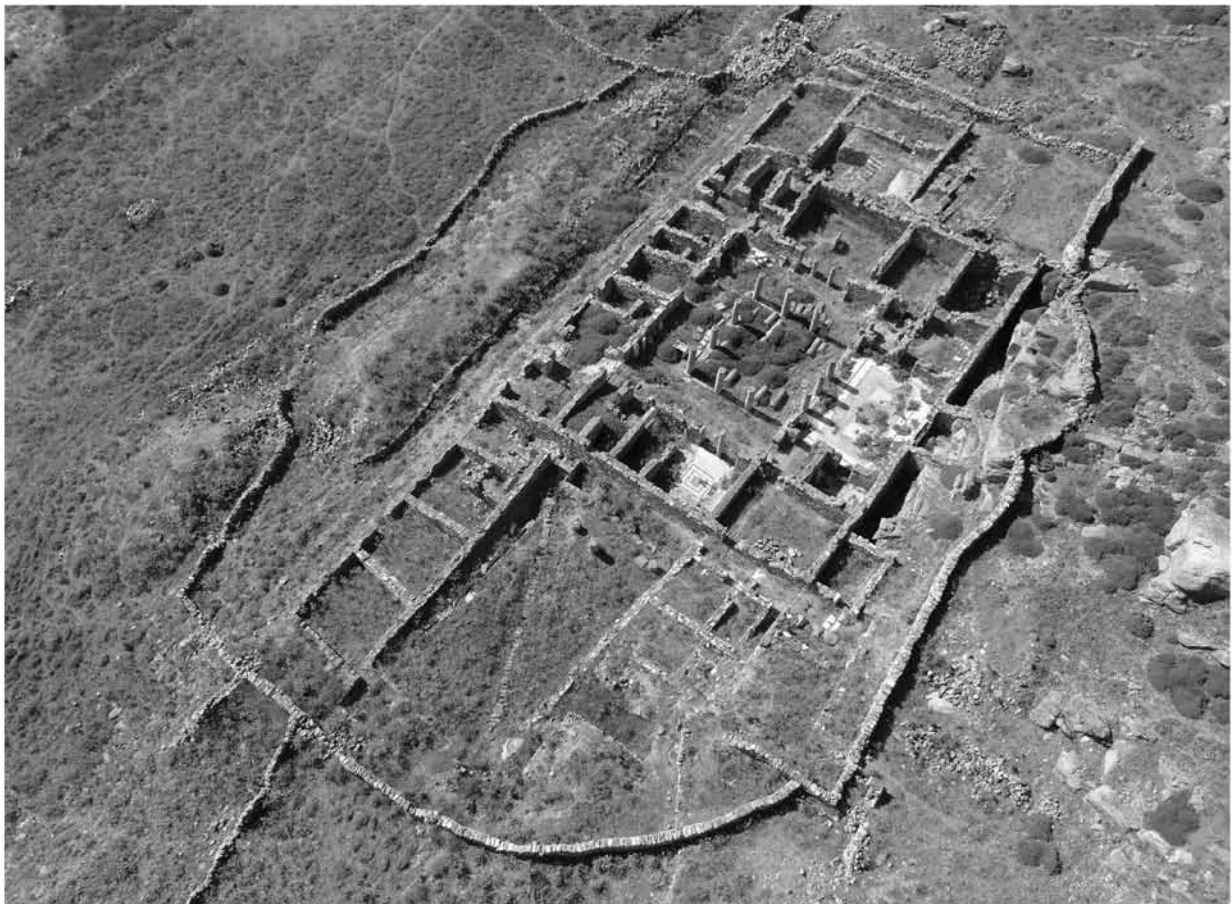


Fig. 6: The Maison de Fourni. Aerial photography

