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Interior Decoration in Hellenistic Houses: Context, Function and Meaning *

One of the most promising trends in the study of ancient interior decoration in recent years has been a move away from studying mosaics and wall paintings in isolation as ›works of art‹, and towards considering them as artefacts designed for a specific setting and purpose. Treating them in this way enables us to go beyond description and classification, and instead to use interior decor as historical evidence, which can give us insights into many aspects of ancient life, such as the values and aspirations of individuals, households and other groups, changing patterns in the use of domestic space, and wider social and economic trends[1]. This is not to suggest that the traditional art-historical approach is redundant: it is the foundation of any historical analysis, as it enables us to date mosaics and paintings, and to understand their stylistic and iconographic connections, both of which are essential if we are to use them as historical evidence; but it is a means to an end, not the end in itself, and I hope to show how the two approaches can complement each other.

This paper will explore the potential of the contextual approach through a series of case studies which draw on recent work by myself and others, starting at the level of the individual house, and then widening the perspective, first to the settlement, and then to the region.

The Domestic Scale: Decoration and Meaning in the House of the Mosaics

The House of the Mosaics at Eretria (fig. 1) offers a rare opportunity to study a complete ensemble of decoration in its architectural context[2]. It is one of the largest, richest and most complex houses known from the period, and therefore probably represents the upper end of the available range of architectural and decorative possibilities, and an ideal that other, less wealthy households might have aspired to. It is not normally considered as a Hellenistic house, as it was built in the second quarter of the 4th c. BC, but the destruction deposits reflect its appearance in the early Hellenistic period, and in any case, the conventional historical divisions between periods are less meaningful in relation to the large-scale social changes that we can study through housing: many trends in domestic architecture and decoration that are typical of the Hellenistic period have their roots in the late Classical period[3]. The decoration of the House of the Mosaics can be interpreted in various ways, using as a framework the different levels of meaning identified by A. Rapoport in a postscript to his work on non-verbal communication in the built environment[4]. He distinguishes broadly between »high-level meanings«, which may refer to sacred, cosmological, cultural or philosophical systems; »middle-level meanings«, which convey qualities like status, wealth, power and identity; and »low-level« or »instrumental« meanings, which provide cues for appropriate behaviour, for example by identifying settings or situations, indicating levels of privacy, or directing the viewer's movement.

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1 Cf. Bruneau 1994/1995, esp. 83 f. 118, for a critique of the traditional approach to studying and publishing ancient houses ›art by art‹, with the architecture, decoration and contents treated separately, by type, which reduces the house to a collection of objects rather than a living environment designed to serve the practical and social needs of the inhabitants.

2 Ducrey – Metzger – Reber 1993.

3 In particular, the fashion for monumentalising the house and elaborating the interior with paintings and mosaics is a product of the 4th c. BC: see Walter-Karydi 1994; Westgate 1997/1998.

4 Rapoport 1990, 219–225.

Thus, on one level, the decoration can be read as a set of behavioural cues directed at both residents and visitors. The house is structured around two courtyards, which are clearly differentiated by their architecture and decor. The larger west court is surrounded by a peristyle, and most of the decorative elements were found in this area, including three figured pebble mosaics (in rooms 5, 8 and 9), fragments of moulded and painted wall plaster, and various terracottas, sculptures and vases (figs. 2–5). The smaller east court is much less elaborate, with no peristyle and only plain pebble floors. As the excavators recognised, these differences probably indicate that the west court was the more public area of the house, used for entertaining guests (two of the rooms, 7 and 9, have raised borders for dining-couches), while the east court was more private; the kitchen (14) and bathroom (16) were in this area. The decoration would therefore have helped visitors to navigate around the house, by indicating which areas were accessible to them[5]. This would have been particularly important if, as has been suggested, the division of the house into two separate areas also reflected a distinction between male and female space, which is mentioned in some Classical and later texts[6]. If this was the case, the more luxurious appearance of the ›male‹ area of the house would also have formed part of a high-level expression of gender ideology, which would have helped to reinforce the female occupants' sense of their subordinate status[7]; the distinction between the two courts may also have functioned as a middle-level expression of the household's status, by ostentatiously advertising a degree of female seclusion and propriety that the occupants of smaller houses did not have the space to achieve.

Within the broad hierarchy of decoration that differentiates the two courts, the three dining rooms appear to be more subtly differentiated by their decor. The decorated mosaics are in the smaller, more intimate rooms 5 and 9, which had space for three and seven couches respectively (figs. 2. 3); room 9 is marked out as particularly special by its decorated anteroom (8), and by some small columns which probably formed part of its south wall[8]. The larger room 7, on the other hand, which held eleven couches, had only a plain pebble floor, although its fine moulded wall plaster was elaborated with painted marbling and a series of gilded terracotta appliqués (fig. 4). It seems likely that these differences were intended to be significant: one possibility is that the multiple dining rooms enabled the householder to differentiate between guests by entertaining them in different rooms, and that the differences in decoration underlined the degree of status or privilege attached to each room. But without a better understanding of the relative prestige of decorated mosaics and elaborate wall plaster, and in the absence of the portable furnishings that would have been an important element in the appearance of each room, it is hazardous to guess exactly how this might have worked[9]. No doubt the ability to choose between a variety of differently decorated rooms for entertaining was luxurious and prestigious in itself[10].

[5] Westgate 1997/1998, 101 f.

[6] K. Reber, *Aedificia Graecorum*. Zu Vitruvs Beschreibung des griechischen Hauses, AA 1988, 653–666. This seems plausible, although of course it is unlikely that the west court was used exclusively by men and the east court solely by women, as pointed out by L. C. Nevett, House and Society in the Ancient Greek World (Cambridge 1999) 6 f.

[7] Compare Wallace-Hadrill's comments (Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 36–44) on the way in which the inferior decoration of service areas in Roman houses may have contributed to the household slaves' sense of their position in society. It seems likely that the division between the two courts was also motivated by a desire to present a good impression to visitors by hiding away service functions in a separate area, in which case the relatively plain appearance of the east court would have helped to emphasise the low status of the non-free members of the household too. A fuller exploration of the role of non-verbal communication in Greek domestic architecture will appear elsewhere (R. Westgate, Space and Social Complexity in Greece from the Early Iron Age to the Classical Period [in preparation]).

[8] The location of these columns is discussed by Reber in this volume.

[9] At a slightly later date, such a hierarchy may be identifiable in the decor of the dining rooms in the Palace at Vergina; see Westgate 1997/1998, 106–108. Wallace-Hadrill 1994, 14 illustrates the potential for different types of furnishing to carry subtle social meanings, but also points to the difficulty – or even impossibility – of retrieving their precise significance. The evidence assembled by Andrianou 2006, esp. 259 f. gives a tantalising glimpse of the lost richness of Hellenistic furniture and hints at the complexities of meaning that it might have conveyed.

[10] The desirability of this may be reflected, on a much grander scale, in Kallixeinos of Rhodes' account of the pleasure-barge of Ptolemy IV (Athen. deipn. 5, 204d–206d), which describes an array of dining rooms of assorted sizes with differently ›themed‹ styles of decoration, including a 9-couch room decorated in Egyptian style, a room with columns of Indian stone, a 13-couch room decorated in ›Dionysiac‹ style, featuring a gem-studded artificial cave, and a 20-couch room with cypress-wood columns and fittings of gold, ivory and exotic wood.

However, most studies of the decoration of the House of the Mosaics have looked for what, in Rapoport's terms, might be described as high- or middle-level meanings. The quantity and quality of the decoration would have conveyed an obvious middle-level message about the wealth and status of the household, but this is likely to have been complemented by more subtle meanings. Interpretations of the decor have generally focused on the iconography of the pebble mosaics and wall decoration of rooms 5, 7, 8 and 9 (figs. 2–4), and in particular on the Dionysiac elements[11]. Many of the motifs are closely connected with Dionysos, such as the terracotta satyr and Silenos masks from the walls of room 7, the ivy scroll border of the mosaic in room 5, and the griffins and wild animals on the floors of rooms 8 and 9. Dionysiac meanings have also been suggested for the gorgon and serpent appliqués from room 7, the mosaic gorgoneion in room 5, the Nereid and Arimaspians in room 9, and the vegetal motifs on all the pavements, although in these cases there are other, equally valid readings, and there is a danger that we are selecting meanings in order to read a thematic coherence into the decoration that was never intended. As will be seen below, there could have been other reasons for the choice of these motifs – if indeed they were deliberately chosen at all[12].

This Dionysiac element in the decoration has been interpreted in various ways. I. Metzger read it as eschatological, referring to Dionysos as the god of death and rebirth, and offering the promise of eternal happiness in the afterlife. Her reading was based on the appearance of similar motifs in funerary imagery, especially some very close parallels in a series of gilded terracotta appliqués that were used to decorate wooden coffins at Taras[13]. Certainly most of the motifs that appear in the decoration at Eretria also occur in these terracottas – wild animals, especially griffins and lions, often killing deer or horses; Nereids, with and without armour and weapons; Arimaspians, satyrs and gorgons – and the poses and groupings are often remarkably similar. But this is a typical example of the problems raised by treating mosaics and wall paintings as ›art‹, independent of their context: can we assume so easily that a motif meant the same in a house as on a coffin, and the same in Eretria as it did in southern Italy? The temptation to do this is partly a product of the ease with which we can compare pictures of artefacts in books or journals, which tend to compress the distance in space and time between them, reinforced by the conventions of archaeological photography, which favour stripping away the context in order to focus on the individual object. It is also a consequence of the fact that artefacts have a better chance of surviving in tombs than in houses, which means that funerary material tends to dominate our interpretations[14].

It seems likely that motifs took on different meanings or nuances depending on their context. Many of the motifs in the House of the Mosaics (and in Greek domestic decoration in general) are also common in the funerary sphere, but they had a range of meanings which might have been appropriate for different contexts. Nereids, for instance, sometimes serve as escorts for the dead on their way to Hades, imagined as a journey over water; when they carry armour and weapons they allude more specifically to Achilles' renunciation of life, his death and his eventual immortalisation[15]. This makes them a very suitable decoration for a coffin, but less obviously appropriate for a dining room. However, they also had more cheerful associations: another of their major roles was escorting brides as they underwent a parallel but more joyful

[11] Metzger 1980; also Salzmann 1982, 49–53, and Guimier-Sorbets 2004a, in the context of wider discussions of the meaning of pebble mosaics. The weight given to the Dionysiac element in interpretations of the decor has been questioned by Ducrey 1989, 58 f.; Ducrey – Metzger – Reber 1993, 179; and Bentz 2001, note 53.

[12] Ducrey 1989, 59 questions the assumption that the decor of the House of the Mosaics was a carefully planned programme. In general, it is debatable how much thought went into the choice of subjects in ancient interior decoration, especially where minor or subsidiary motifs are concerned: I. Baldassare, Pittura parietale e mosaico pavimentale dal IV al II sec. a.C., DialA (3rd series) 2, 1984, 65–76 esp. 69 f., and Bruneau 1972, 107–110 argue that decoration was conventional and not designed to form coherent iconographic programmes. K. M. D. Dunbabin, Mosaics and their Public, in: Ennaïfer – Rebourg 1999, II, 739–745 raises the crucial but largely unanswerable question of how much notice ancient viewers actually took of mosaics.

[13] Metzger 1980. For the terracottas, which probably date from the 3rd quarter of the 4th c., see Lullies 1962.

[14] The problem is well illustrated by the wooden and stone couches found in Macedonian tombs, whose decoration draws on the same repertoire of Dionysiac and other motifs as pebble mosaics: Sismanidis 1997 suggests that the Dionysiac imagery on these couches had an eschatological significance, but, as Andrianou 2006, 242 points out, the decoration of funerary couches may simply reproduce the appearance of the furniture used by the living, which is almost entirely lost to us; if we had more furniture from domestic contexts, we might read its decoration quite differently.

[15] Barringer 1995, esp. 17–66.

rite of passage[16]. Two Classical pebble mosaics show Nereids carrying armour and weapons, and therefore relate to the story of Achilles, but a third shows them holding objects that seem more appropriate for a wedding[17]. J. Barringer also notes an increasing tendency for Nereids to appear topless or in transparent drapery in the 4th c., which suggests that their erotic and decorative qualities might have been appreciated as much as their deeper significance[18]. A celebratory or erotic meaning seems at least as likely in a dining room as allegorical allusions to death and the afterlife; the reference to Achilles and his heroization might also have been seen as flattering to the (male) users of the room. Likewise, although sphinxes and lions often appear as guardians of grave monuments[19], and feline-prey groups have been seen in this context as representing the cruelty of death[20], it does not necessarily follow from this that their appearance in the dining suite at Eretria was intended to remind the viewer of death. These motifs also had more generic properties, such as warding off evil or symbolising strength and power, which may have made them suitable for both contexts; these possible meanings are explored further below.

Moreover, the evidence for the eschatological reading of the decor mostly comes from Southern Italy, and it is debatable whether the conception of the afterlife as a place of eternal feasting and pleasure was universally held in 4th c. Greece[21]. R. Lullies interpreted the Tarentine appliqués in their local context, linking them to similar themes in funerary sculpture from the region, and to the idea of the heroisation of the dead, which seems to have been particularly important in Taras in this period[22]. Although he was writing before the House of the Mosaics was excavated, he was aware of other close parallels for the terracottas in pebble mosaics, and suggested that the similarity was simply because the mosaics and the terracottas shared the same iconographic models, possibly oriental textiles[23].

In fact, with the exception of the Arimaspians, all the motifs on the pavements of the House of the Mosaics are commonplace in pebble mosaics[24], and there seems to be no good reason to attribute a special meaning to them in this case, although of course it is possible that some patrons chose a particular combination of stock motifs to express a meaning that was personal to themselves. The prominent Dionysiac element in the decoration is characteristic of pebble mosaics in general, and different scholars have seen different shades of meaning in it. On one level, we can read it in connection with the activities that the rooms were designed for: Dionysos was the god of wine, and allusions to him and his retinue would be highly appropriate in the dining room, which is the most common location for pebble mosaics and other fine decoration[25]. Dionysiac motifs are no less prominent in other types of room, however, and P. Zanker interprets them more broadly as an advertisement of the luxurious lifestyle of the household[26]. Some interpretations emphasise the religious dimension of the motifs, to varying degrees. A.-M. Guimier-Sorbets argues that pebble mosaics were intended to evoke Dionysos in various guises, as the god of vegetation and life, as well as of wine[27]; and of course a more specifically cultic meaning is a possibility, as J. Morgan has pointed out: the symposium had a religious

[16] Barringer 1995, 69–137.

[17] The other two mosaics depicting Nereids are at Olynthos, in the anteroom (g) to a dining room in the Villa of Good Fortune, where they accompany Thetis bringing the new armour to Achilles (Salzmann 1982, 102 f. no. 88 pl. 14, 1), and in the *pastas* (d) of house A.vi.1, where they hold a ribbon, a wreath and a casket, and thus may be attendants at the wedding of Poseidon and Amphitrite (Salzmann 1982, 98 f. no. 77 pl. 18; Barringer 1995, 41 f.; only about a third of the scene survives).

[18] Barringer 1995, 41. 97. 117. The Nereid at Eretria is topless, and those in House A.vi.1 at Olynthos wear a variety of revealing outfits. A cavalcade of Nereids is a particularly well suited to long, narrow spaces like the *pastas* and anteroom, because it is easily extended to fill the space, forming a repetitive pattern enlivened by variations in the details of each figure.

[19] Hölscher 1972, 53–55; Stewart 1990, 49. 120.

[20] Hölscher 1972, 66.

[21] Murray 1988 argues that for Greeks of the Archaic and Classical periods the afterlife was the polar opposite of the symposium, a place characterised by the absence of physical pleasures; in this period, sympotic imagery in funerary contexts is found largely in areas on the margins of the Greek world.

[22] Lullies 1962, 65–82. The idea of the heroization of the ordinary dead does not seem to become more widely current until after the Classical period; see Murray 1988, 247; Stewart 1990, 50. 196.

[23] Lullies 1962, 85 f. For the relationship between mosaics and textiles, see further below.

[24] Guimier-Sorbets 2004a gives an overview of the frequency of different motifs.

[25] Westgate 1997/1998, 102.

[26] Zanker 1998, 81–85. For the distribution of Dionysiac motifs in Hellenistic houses, see Westgate 2007, 319–321.

[27] Guimier-Sorbets 2004a, esp. 918–923. She too rejects the assumption that the eschatological meaning attributed to similar motifs in funerary contexts can be straightforwardly transferred into the domestic context.

aspect, which is often overlooked, and some of the surviving dining rooms with mosaics may have been used, either exclusively or occasionally, by cult groups[28]. Others have preferred to see the motifs as banal and drained of any religious meaning that they might once have had: D. Salzmann, for example, noted the close parallels in funerary iconography, but argued that allusions to the afterlife would not be appropriate in rooms for the living; he suggested instead that the repertoire of Dionysiac motifs had a universal meaning, referring to life and prosperity in any context, whether domestic, funerary or sacred[29]. Any, or even all, of these meanings would have been appropriate to the dining room: generic allusions to conviviality and prosperity would create a suitably festive atmosphere and present the host in a flattering light, while the more religious aspect of the decoration might have come to the fore if the room was used for a cult meal.

However, for many of the motifs in the House of the Mosaics, a Dionysiac reading is not the only possible one, or even the most obvious. For example, some elements of the decoration could be interpreted as apotropaic, protecting the diners against the potential ill-effects of drinking or any evil spirits that might be jealous of their pleasure and take advantage of their inebriated state[30]. The most obvious candidate for this interpretation is the gorgoneion, which appears in rooms 5 and 7 (figs. 2. 4); the mosaic gorgon in room 5 is placed in a typical position for such images, in front of the door, where it protected the entrance through which evil might gain access[31]. An apotropaic power has also been attributed to images of ferocious animals, like the sphinxes and panthers on the mosaic in anteroom 8, and the lions killing horses in room 9[32]. Even the Nereid on the threshold of room 9 could be understood in this way, as J. Barringer has suggested that images of Nereids were regarded as protective, in an extension of their role as protectors of travellers by sea[33]. The three pebble mosaics depicting Nereids, mentioned above, are all in transitional spaces leading into a dining room, and it is tempting to link them to the poetic conception of the symposium as a sea voyage, potentially ending in the shipwreck of drunkenness: perhaps the company of Nereids on the way into the dining room was intended to protect the guests from the perils of the journey they were embarking upon[34].

From a different point of view, the wild animals and the overall design of the mosaics can be seen as intended to create a desirable ambience for entertaining, by evoking the proverbial luxury of the east. Griffins, sphinxes and groups of felines attacking prey were derived from Near Eastern art, along with many other common motifs in pebble mosaic[35], and it has long been thought that the concentric borders, dense patterning and bichrome colour schemes of early mosaics were inspired by carpets or textiles imported from the east[36].

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[28] J. Morgan, La sociabilité masculine et l'architecture de la maison grecque: l'*andrôn* revisité, in: F. Gherchanoc (ed.), La maison, lieu de sociabilité, dans les communautés urbaines européennes de l'Antiquité à nos jours (Paris 2006) 37–70.

[29] Salzmann 1982, 49–53.

[30] K. M. D. Dunbabin, *Baiarum grata voluptas*: Pleasures and Dangers of the Baths, BSR 57, 1989, 6–46 identifies a similar need for protection in baths, which is reflected in the frequency of apotropaic images in mosaics, especially at entrances.

[31] Panagiotopoulou 1994. It is possible, however, that by the 4th c. the gorgoneion had simply become a decorative motif, devoid of any real meaning, though Panagiotopoulou 1994, 376 sees this as a rather later development. It is not clear whether there is any significance in the difference between the mosaic gorgoneion in room 5, which is a simplified version of the traditional, grotesque type, and the terracotta appliqué from room 7, which is the later, ›beautiful‹ type. The gorgon's head also appears in the centre of a pebble mosaic in a dining room at Sikyon (K. Votsis, Nouvelle mosaïque de Sicyone, BCH 100, 1976, 575–588 figs. 1. 3; Salzmann 1982, 112 no. 119 pl. 10, 1).

[32] E.g. Kurtz – Boardman 1971, 239 f.; Hölscher 1972, esp. 66. 100 f., in relation to their appearance in Archaic funerary and temple sculpture.

[33] Barringer 1995, 55 f. 168.

[34] For the symposium as sea voyage, see W. J. Slater, Symposium at Sea, HarvStClPhil 80, 1976, 161–170. The other two mosaics with Nereids are in a *pastas* and an anteroom (above, note 17).

[35] Guimier-Sorbets 1999 reviews the use of oriental motifs in Classical and Hellenistic mosaics. For the origins of these motifs in the Archaic period, see Dentzer 1982, esp. 429–433, and von Hofsten 2007, 31–45, who identifies the original source of the feline–prey groups as Syro-Phoenician luxury objects, though the motif was extensively adapted by the Greeks.

[36] F. von Lorentz, Barbaron hyphasmata, RM 5, 1937, 165–222, though this theory may be over-simplified. The mosaics are certainly very similar in design to the few surviving textiles (e.g. those from Tomb II at Vergina, Andronikos 1993, 192 figs. 156. 157, and from the Black Sea region, Richter 1966, figs. 590. 591; Vickers 1999, figs. 4. 24), and to representations of rugs and elaborate clothing on painted pottery (e.g. Walter-Karydi 1994, pl. 8; Vickers 1999, figs. 15. 21); and some texts describe textiles decorated with fantastic creatures as ›Persian‹ or ›barbarian‹ (Aristoph. Ran. 937–938; Eur. Ion 1158–1162). But elaborate figured textiles are already depicted in Greek art in the Archaic period, and by the Classical period they were clearly being made in Greece and adapted to Greek taste, as indicated by, for example, Eur. Ion 1163–1165. 1417–1425, and the batik cloth from Kertch which depicts figures from Greek myth, labelled in Greek (Hermitage SBr VI.16: Walter-Karydi 1994, fig.

Oriental elements had been a prominent feature of the sympotic environment since the early Archaic period: J.-M. Dentzer has argued that the reclining symposium itself was borrowed from the royal iconography of the Near East, along with other motifs, including groups of predatory and fabulous animals, which became part of a symbolic ›package‹ that represented the prestige of the Archaic aristocracy[37]. The east continued to be a rich source of status markers in the Classical period[38], and even though the animal motifs had been part of the Greek artistic repertoire for several centuries by the time the House of the Mosaics was decorated, they may still have retained an exotic, luxurious aura.

But the mosaics and wall appliqués were not the only decoration in the house. There were other decorative elements that contributed to the overall effect, including a statue of a youth in the peristyle, and fragments from five Panathenaic amphorae, which were found in the north and west areas of the peristyle, close to the decorated dining rooms (fig. 5). The amphorae had holes drilled in their rims and bases, probably for wires to attach them to something and to secure their lids: M. Bentz concluded that they were probably displayed in the peristyle as decoration[39]. Although it is possible that the amphorae were won by someone associated with the House of the Mosaics, it is more likely that they were bought second-hand, specifically to decorate the house[40]. Presumably the intention was to imply victory and success on the part of the occupant, perhaps evoking the poetic motif of the victorious athlete bringing home prizes to adorn his house and glorify his family; the vases were antiques by the time the House of the Mosaics was destroyed, and may have created the impression of a distinguished lineage[41].

The statue and the vases suggest different readings of the decoration from those based on the mosaics and wall decoration alone. Bentz suggested, for example, that it might be possible to interpret the mosaics in the light of the vases as reflecting ideals of masculinity, projecting the householder's *arete* and *paideia*[42]. Several elements of the decor can be linked to the group of qualities, activities and images that Dentzer identifies as defining the status of the male, aristocratic elite in the Archaic period[43]: warfare is represented,

34; Vickers 1999, fig. 4; cf. E. J. W. Barber, Prehistoric Textiles. The Development of Cloth in the Neolithic and Bronze Ages with Special Reference to the Aegean [Princeton 1991] 360–365; Miller 1997, 75–81. 165; Vickers 1999, 34); it is debatable whether they were still regarded as purely ›oriental‹ rather than simply luxurious. Moreover, although the functional similarity between mosaics and carpets makes the supposed connection seem particularly plausible, the banded design and all the motifs found in pebble mosaics can be paralleled in other media, such as furniture and metalwork, where inspiration from textiles is less readily explained: it seems possible that this decorative repertoire was used to signify luxury and prestige in a variety of different media. The banded, concentric design of pebble mosaics can be explained as an adaptation to the position of the viewers in the dining room (Westgate 1997/1998, 102).

37 Dentzer 1982, esp. 429–452. See further below.

38 Miller 1997.

39 Bentz 2001, esp. fig. 1 pl. 2. He also observes that the vases show little sign of the wear and tear that would be expected after a century of use. They were made in the archonships of Charikleides (363/2 BC) and Kallimedes (360/59 BC).

40 Nine more pots from the same two batches were found in another area of Eretria, suggesting that they had all been bought from a dealer (Bentz 1998, 107; Bentz 2001, 9 f.). There was clearly a thriving market in second-hand Panathenaics (Bentz 1998, 89–95): at Olynthos, 20 from the same batch were found in contexts all over the site including one in a house (A.v.10: Bentz 1998, 106). In the few other cases where Panathenaic amphorae have been found in houses, it is impossible to tell whether they were bought or won, except the group of 102 vases listed by Alkibiades in the Attic Stelai, which were possibly won in an otherwise unattested Panathenaic victory (Bentz 1998, 106 f.).

41 e.g. Pind. I. 1, 19–22; N. 6, 25. 26. For the central place of the *oikos* (in both senses, the physical house and the family) in the imagery of athletic victory, see L. Kurke, The Traffic in Praise. Pindar and the Poetics of Social Economy (Ithaca 1991) esp. chapters 1 and 2; van Bremen 2007, 345–348.

42 Bentz 2001, 10 f.

43 Dentzer 1982, 429–452. These aristocratic status markers are reflected in the poetry and visual arts of the Archaic period: they include the symposium; wealth and luxury; warfare, either real or in mythological guise; leisure activities, especially competitive pursuits such as hunting and sport; horses and dogs; and images of wild animals. Most of these themes can still be traced in the decoration of pebble mosaics; hunting is not represented at Eretria, but appears elsewhere (e.g. Olynthos, Salzmann 1982, 101 no. 86 pl. 12, 2; Pella, Lion Hunt, Salzmann 1982, 105 f. no. 98 pls. 30. 31; Stag Hunt, Salzmann 1982, 107 f. no. 103 pl. 29). A. M. Christensen, From Palaces to Pompeii. The Architectural and Social Context of Hellenistic Floor Mosaics in the House of the Faun (Ph.D. diss. Florida State University, Tallahassee 2006) 94 f. identifies scenes of combat, hunting and sport as part of a prominent agonistic strand in Hellenistic mosaic imagery, reflecting the competitive ethos of the aristocracy; the groups of fighting animals could be seen in a similar way. Cf. also Dentzer 1982, 438.

in mythologized form, by the Nereid with the armour of Achilles and the Arimaspians fighting griffins[44]; the statue and Panathenaic amphorae allude to the prestigious male pursuit of athletics; and the lions killing horses may have been seen as symbols of courage, strength and power, perhaps to be read in the light of Homeric similes comparing heroes to lions or other predatory animals[45]. By the 4th c. these motifs may have become conventional to some extent, drawing their expressive power as much from their association with the aristocracy of an earlier era as from their original meanings.

Bentz also suggested that the statue and prize vases were intended to evoke the ambience of the gymnasium, which was another prestigious setting for elite masculine activities, intellectual as well as physical[46]. The architecture of the house is clearly designed to resemble a public building: the columns in the peristyle – a relatively new feature in Greek private architecture when the house was built – would have summoned up the prestige of monumental public or religious buildings, and perhaps specifically the colonnaded spaces of the gymnasium; less obviously, the western part of the house was roofed with expensive Corinthian tiles, the type usually found in public buildings, with lion-headed spouts at the corners of the peristyle[47]. The decoration also alludes to public architecture: the wall plaster was moulded and painted to resemble the ashlar blocks used in monumental masonry[48], and it has even been suggested that the composition of the mosaic in room 5, consisting of two square panels, was inspired by the coffered ceilings of monumental buildings[49].

Many other possible readings could be suggested for individual elements in the decoration of the House of the Mosaics – too many to explore them all here. The decor was probably intended to allude to a variety of different themes – conviviality and luxury; cult; athletics and the gymnasium; masculinity and power, and it is likely that different ancient viewers would have understood it in different ways depending on their perspective, as modern viewers have done. Whatever they meant, it is important to remember that the much-discussed mosaics and wall decoration were only part of an ensemble, along with the architecture and portable artefacts, and that much of what would have contributed to the visual impact of the house is now lost. There were fragments of other sculptures and marble tables[50]; the large dining room (7) was decorated with terracotta figurines of women, some of which were apparently displayed on a shelf along the west wall[51]; and no doubt all the dining rooms had expensive furniture, perhaps with elaborate carving, precious inlays or metal plating, and luxurious upholstery[52]. Rugs, curtains or hangings, and perhaps even plants in

[44] It might seem odd that the Arimaspians are clearly meant to be female, and the Nereid also seems like a curiously feminine figure to represent ideals of warfare and masculinity, but this is consistent with Dentzer's observation (Dentzer 1982, 449 f.) that scenes of battle and hunting in early Archaic pottery are replaced in red-figure by ›softer‹, more refined variations on the same themes, such as athletics and the symposium itself, which he sees as the result of the symposium becoming more bourgeois; pebble mosaics perhaps represent a much later stage of this process. Scenes of battle are less common in pebble mosaic than one might expect, given their peculiarly masculine context: there are four combats involving centaurs (Athens, Salzmann 1982, 86 f. no. 20 pl. 41, 1; Eretria, Salzmann 1982, 92 no. 41 pls. 49, 2; 50, 1; Olynthos, Salzmann 1982, 99–101 nos. 79. 86 pls. 12, 2; 15, 2), one with an Amazon (Pella, Salzmann 1982, 108 no. 104 pls. 32. 33); and a fighting figure who may be either a warrior or a hunter, on a mosaic of pebbles and tesserae from Alexandria (his opponent is missing: Salzmann 1982, 115 f. no. 133 pl. 87; Daszewski 1985, 101–103 no. 1 pls. 1–3).

[45] E.g. Hom. Il. 5, 136–143, 161–163; 11, 172–176; 12, 293. 299–305; 15, 630–637; 20, 164–175; Dentzer 1982, 442–444. Lions on grave monuments were intended to symbolise the courage of the deceased, as well to guard the tomb (Kurtz – Boardman 1971, 238 f.), and both Hölscher 1972, 65 f. and von Hofsten 2007, 53–55 interpret feline-prey groups in Archaic art as images of power – that of the dead person in a funerary context, or of the gods in cult contexts; in a domestic setting, the flattering connotations of the motif might have reflected on the host, or perhaps on all the participants in a symposium. Alexander the Great's affectation of a mane-like hairstyle indicates that the lion was still regarded as a symbol of masculine strength in the 4th c.: Plutarch (Plut. mor 335B) mentions his preference for artists who could represent his ›manly and leonine look‹.

[46] Bentz 2001, 10 f.; cf. Walter-Karydi 1994, 59–62. Fragments of Panathenaic amphorae have been found in gymnasia at two sites, one of which happens to be Eretria; they were perhaps presented or dedicated by local victors (Bentz 1998, 108). They have also been found in various other public contexts, including a deposit of state dining-ware in the Agora at Athens; see (Bentz 1998, 108–111).

[47] Ducrey – Metzger – Reber 1993, 66–69. 124 fig. 200a. b. Some of the service rooms in the east part of the house may have been roofed with Laconian tiles, which are more usual in domestic buildings.

[48] V. J. Bruno, Antecedents of the Pompeian First Style, AJA 73, 1969, 305–317.

[49] Ducrey – Metzger – Reber 1993, 86; Barbet – Guimier-Sorbets 1994, 26.

[50] Ducrey – Metzger – Reber 1993, 125.

[51] Ducrey – Metzger – Reber 1993, 118–120. 123 f.

[52] Richter 1966, 13–84. 117–129; Andrianou 2006.

the courtyards would also have contributed to the total effect[53]. In the absence of all this, it is problematic to read thesurviving elements of the decoration as a coherent whole, with a single unifying theme. What is clear, however, is that the decor was consciously designed to project an ideal image of the household: the impressive lion-headed spouts on the roof were ornamental rather than functional[54], and the prize amphorae were probably bought as decoration, not won in competition. Later in the Hellenistic period, we will see two-dimensional representations used in place of the real objects.

The Local Context: Aspiration and Emulation at Delos

The decoration of a single house can give us rich insights into the use of space, social relationships within the household, and the status, values and aspirations of the occupants, but if we look at domestic decoration in the wider context of the settlement, we can begin to reconstruct social structures and trends on a larger scale. At Delos, almost 100 late Hellenistic houses have been excavated, offering us not only a more representative sample, but also the opportunity to observe the context in which the residents would have chosen their decoration[55]. How people decorate their homes is likely to be influenced by what they have seen themselves, and especially by what their neighbours, friends and business or political associates have in their houses. These neighbours, friends and associates also constitute the principal audience for the decoration. It is therefore illuminating to study decoration as a product of this immediate local context, and of people's need to establish their status, identity and affiliations within a particular community[56].

The decorative strategies identified in the House of the Mosaics were still among the means that the residents of Delos used to achieve this: the architecture and decor of the houses are designed to create an impressive setting for social activities by evoking other prestigious spheres such as temples, civic buildings or the gymnasium, and the subjects or motifs of the decoration are chosen to advertise the occupants' learning or cultural affiliations, or to allude to success, prosperity and hospitality. But the survival of a wide range of housing on Delos, from modest apartments to grand, spacious houses, allows us to observe a further strategy, namely emulation of the appearance and facilities of wealthier homes. M. Trümper's detailed architectural study of the Delian houses has shown how the occupants continually altered them to incorporate luxurious or prestigious features, often in cut-price form, in their quest to keep up with and outdo their neighbours[57]. Perhaps the most desirable feature of all was the column, which served as ›shorthand‹ for monumental architecture: peristyles are crammed into houses that are barely big enough, and if there was not room for even a partial peristyle, just one column could make the necessary statement, as in the Maison à une seule colonne, whose eponymous column, assembled from an assortment of second-hand elements, may have served no

[53] Aristoph. Vesp. 1215 mentions ›weavings‹ *(krekadia)* in the courtyard of a house as something that a guest might admire, along with the ›bronzes‹ *(chalkomata)* and the ceiling – other features that we can only imagine. For domestic textiles, see Walter-Karydi 1994, 49–52; Andrianou 2006, 248–250; Tsakirgis in this volume. Evidence for gardens or potted plants in domestic courtyards is ambiguous: a number of rough terracotta containers were found in the houses at Olynthos, which Robinson identified as flowerpots (D. M. Robinson, Vases Found in 1934 and 1938. Olynthus 13 [Baltimore 1950] 415–417 nos. 1035–1042 pls. 22. 250–252), though M. Carroll-Spillecke, ΚΗΠΟΣ. Der antike griechische Garten, Wohnen in der klassischen Polis 3 (Munich 1989) argues that they were probably for culinary herbs rather than ornamental plants, and that the courtyards of Classical and Hellenistic houses were not planted.

[54] There were no gutters to channel the water through them, so most rainwater would have just drained off the edges of the roof; (Ducrey – Metzger – Reber 1993, 68).

[55] The surviving decoration of the houses is thought to date from the period between 166 and the attacks on the island in 88 and 69 BC. For the houses, see Chamonard 1922–1924; Chamonard 1933a; Bruneau et al. 1970; Bruneau 1994/1995; Trümper 1998; Siebert 2001; B. Tang, Delos, Carthage, Ampurias. The Housing of Three Mediterranean Trading Centres, AnalRom Suppl. 36 (Rome 2005); studies of their decoration include Bulard 1908; Bruneau 1972; Bezerra de Meneses 1984; Kreeb 1988; F. Alabe, Technique, décor et espace à Délos, in: E. M. Moormann (ed.), Functional and Spatial Analysis of Wall Painting. Proceedings of the Fifth International Congress on Ancient Wall Painting, Amsterdam, 8–12 September 1992, BABesch Suppl. 3 (Leiden 1993) 141–144; Westgate 2000a.

[56] S. Scott, Art and Society in Fourth-Century Britain. Villa Mosaics in Context, Oxford University School of Archaeology Monograph 53 (Oxford 2000) 14–17 argues for the importance of considering mosaics in their local context.

[57] Trümper 1998.

structural function whatsoever[58]. Wall paintings and mosaics were ideal vehicles for emulation and allusion because they could be adapted to a wide range of budgets, and their representative capabilities made it possible to combine references to a variety of themes or spheres within the same space. Wall plaster could be elaborately moulded and painted to look like ashlar masonry, but paint alone could achieve a similar effect, and if funds were really tight, the basic divisions of the Masonry Style scheme could simply be sketched on a flat, white surface with painted or incised lines, giving just enough information to make the allusion to monumental architecture clear[59]. Mosaics came in a range of different qualities as well, and savings could be made by reducing the quantity or complexity of patterning, or by using cheaper materials such as coarser tesserae or stone chips for all or part of the pavement[60]. The sculptures found in the houses are mostly small, and often reproduce well-known types, enabling the owner to display their appreciation of art at a relatively modest cost and on a scale suitable for the home[61].

In order to understand this process of aspiration, emulation and allusion, it is best to start by looking at some of the larger, grander houses, because, like the House of the Mosaics, they are likely to represent an ideal that neighbouring households might have aspired to. The Maison du trident (fig. 6) is one of the most regular and elaborately decorated houses on Delos, with ten rooms on three sides of a peristyle court[62]. The entire peristyle and three rooms (I, J, K) opening off the higher north-east colonnade are paved in fine tessellated mosaic, with coloured, moulded wall plaster in the Masonry Style; this is one of the largest expanses of fine mosaic in any of the Delian houses, though the designs are relatively simple. The house and its decor are arranged to make the best possible impression on visitors: the rooms with the finest decoration are located directly opposite the main entrance (through A), so that they would draw the attention of visitors as they entered, while the less prominent rooms alongside the entrance-passage and in the corners of the peristyle, which were probably service rooms, are made inconspicuous by their plain decor – a common strategy in houses that were not large enough to have a separate private court like the House of the Mosaics[63].

Like the House of the Mosaics, the Maison du trident is pervaded with allusions to monumental architecture. The marble columns of the peristyle were echoed by pilasters in stucco relief on the walls; two pilasters and a column found in the house may have framed the entrance to the exedra (I); and even the pulley for drawing water from the cistern was mounted on a marble frame consisting of two pillars and an entablature[64]. In addition, most of the rooms had wall plaster imitating ashlar masonry[65]: the largest room (K) had a particularly grand scheme with a Doric entablature in moulded stucco, which may have been intended to evoke a specific local model, as it had bulls' heads attached to the triglyphs, an unusual feature that it shares

[58] Trümper 1998, 244. Alternatively, it may have supported a roof over the north side of the courtyard.

[59] Westgate 2000a, 397–400.

[60] Westgate 2000a, 393–396.

[61] Kreeb 1988. For a wider discussion of the nature and functions of miniature sculpture, see E. Bartman, Ancient Sculptural Copies in Miniature (Leiden 1992) esp. chapter 3. Like the pebble mosaics discussed above, domestic sculptures could have had a religious significance as well as a decorative function, as argued by V. J. Harward, Greek Domestic Sculpture and the Origins of Private Art Patronage (Ph.D. diss. Harvard, Cambridge, MA, 1982).

[62] With a ground area of 286 sq. m it is larger than average for the Delian houses, though much smaller than the largest houses known from Delos and elsewhere (Trümper 1998, 166–168); it is almost exactly the same area as the standard houses at Olynthos, for example. Only part of the upper floor belonged to the house: a staircase in room H led to a separate apartment above the north rooms. For the architecture and decoration of the house, see Couve 1895, esp. 497–505 pl. 5; Bulard 1908, *passim*; Chamonard 1922–1924, *passim*, esp. 27–29 fig. 7; 139–152 pls. 3. 4. 9–12. 13. 49–51; Trümper 1998, esp. 255–257; Bruneau 1972, 261–268 nos. 228–236 figs. 211–221 pl. B 3; 302 no. 316 fig. 269. The rooms are designated here according to the system of letters used by Chamonard and later scholars, which is different from that used by Couve and Bulard.

[63] Westgate 2000a, 426; Trümper 2007, 331. Rooms E, F, L and M had plain pavements of rough stone chips and unmoulded white wall plaster, with minimal elaboration – incised divisions in E, F and L (Chamonard 1922–1924, 390 fig. 225), and a simple red frieze in F (Chamonard 1922–1924, fig. 224). For a fuller analysis of the decorative hierarchies that were used to create spatial distinctions in the Maison du trident, see Westgate 2000a, 401–405.

[64] Chamonard 1922–1924, 351 fig. 213. For the pilasters and column, see Chamonard 1922–1924, 152. 277 fig. 145; he thought the column might have stood in the centre of the opening, flanked by the pilasters.

[65] As well as the simple architectural schemes in rooms E, F and L (note 63), there was more elaborate wall plaster with relief moulding in the peristyle (D) and rooms B, J and K. For the wall decoration in the peristyle, see Bulard 1908, 110; Chamonard 1922–1924, 141 fig. 62; 152. 364 f. 372 f. fig. 229; 378. Room B: Bulard 1908, 103 f. fig. 39; Chamonard 1922–24, 376. 384. 391.

with the Portico of Antigonos in the nearby sanctuary of Apollo[66]. The smaller, more intimate room J had blocks painted to look like exotic marble (fig. 7)[67]. There may be more subtle allusions to public architecture in the mosaic floors: the perspective meander border used in the peristyle and room K is derived from a common architectural ornament, and the large expanses of white tessellation in the colonnades, with simple decoration in black and red, may have recalled the stone pavements of public buildings, which tended to be similarly austere; the pattern of *trompe l'oeil* cubes in room J could also have been inspired by prestigious *opus sectile* paving[68]. The mosaics may also have been intended to evoke the ambience and prestige of the Classical symposium, as they have the same concentric, carpet-like composition as the pebble mosaics at Eretria, a scheme which was originally designed for dining rooms but is here used in all the rooms regardless of their function; it is even applied to the colonnades of the peristyle, with a decorated ›carpet‹ in the north-east colonnade and small ›threshold mats‹ accentuating the entrances into the house[69]. The mosaic in room K had a fine central panel, now missing, which (judging from surviving examples) was probably designed to imitate painting – another prestigious cultural medium[70].

The decoration of the house also draws on some of the same themes as that of the House of the Mosaics. Here too a Panathenaic amphora is a prominent feature, but in this case only a picture of one, accompanied by an olive crown and a palm-branch, on the mosaic floor of room I (fig. 8). This has sometimes been interpreted as commemorating a victory won by the owner of the house or a member of his family[71], but if the occupant of the House of the Mosaics was willing to display real Panathenaic amphorae that had been won by someone else, there is no reason to assume that a mere picture of a prize amphora represents an actual victory: this is a classic example of what J. Whitley has termed the ›biographical fallacy‹ – the assumption that objects associated with an individual are direct or literal reflections of their life or character[72]. Whitley was writing about the contents of Early Iron Age warrior graves, but his point is equally valid for domestic decoration, which, like funerary imagery, is designed to construct an idealised persona; it is no coincidence that Panathenaic amphorae, both real and represented, are found in funerary contexts as well as domestic ones. Their appearance in the graves of women and non-Greeks should warn us against assuming that they necessarily identify the deceased as a Panathenaic victor, or even as an athlete[73], and the many reproductions and representations in pottery, stone and paint are even less likely to relate to actual victories: some are miniatures, perhaps used to contain scented oil[74], and some are decorated with events that never formed part of a real Panathenaia, such as the winged Nikai driving chariots on the amphorae painted in a 3rd c. tomb at

[66] Bulard 1908, 154. 160–162 fig. 52 e. The Portico of Antigonos was probably built by Antigonos Gonatas in the 3rd quarter of the 3rd c. BC; it had bulls' heads attached to alternate triglyphs, between the columns (Bruneau – Ducat 2005, 195 no. 29 fig. 50). The remains of the wall decoration in room K also included small stucco heads of gorgons and helmeted warriors; it is not clear where on the wall these belonged (Couve 1895, 472 fig. 1; Bulard 1908, 157 pl. 8A i. j. l. m). For the overall scheme in K, see Bulard 1908, 114 f. fig. 44 pl. 6A b; Chamonard 1922–1924, 364. 374. 378. 386. 391 fig. 232 pl. 49 B.

[67] Bulard 1908, 108 f. 140 f. 147. 176 f. pl. 6 a; Chamonard 1922–1924, 375. 378. 384 f. 391 pl. 49 A.

[68] Guimier-Sorbets 1994a, 19–24; Guimier-Sorbets 2001a, 45. 53, though no examples of this pattern in *opus sectile* survive in public contexts in the Hellenistic east. Guimier-Sorbets 2001a gives an overview of the pavements of Hellenistic and early Imperial public buildings.

[69] Westgate 2007, 319. Even the other rooms were probably not intended exclusively for dining, as their non-standard sizes and multiple doorways would have made it awkward to arrange couches around the walls; in the smaller rooms the plain borders of the mosaics are not wide enough for couches (Westgate 2007, 316; Trümper 2007, 326–330).

[70] In some cases, such as the comic mask *emblema* from Rhodes (below, note 98), the tesserae are actually arranged in short rows that resemble brush-strokes. It is generally assumed that mosaic *emblemata* were copies of famous paintings, though in many cases this is questionable (Westgate 2000b, 266–270).

[71] Couve 1895, 503; Valavanis 2001, 168 f., with references to earlier discussions; the idea is criticised by Bruneau, 1972, 73–75.

[72] J. Whitley, Objects with Attitude: Biographical Facts and Fallacies in the Study of Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age Warrior Graves, CambrAJ 12, 2002, 217–232.

[73] Bentz 1998, 95–102. For reproductions and images, see Bentz 1998, 18–22; Valavanis 2001. In the grave they serve broadly to glorify the dead person, with different shades of meaning depending on the region and the individual commemorated: for example, they may allude to heroization after death, or advertise the high status of the deceased or their membership of the leisure class, or compensate for their unfulfilled potential, cut short by premature death (Valavanis 2001, 162–166); some – though not all – of these meanings would also be appropriate in a house.

[74] These are mostly found in graves (Bentz 1998, 20 f.), although they also appear in domestic contexts: three were found in the Maison des comédiens on Delos (Bruneau et al. 1970, 249 f. nos. D70–72 pl. 43).

Maglij in Bulgaria[75]. The amphora in the Maison du trident is decorated with a chariot race, the most expensive and aristocratic event at the games, which was presumably chosen to maximise the prestige value of the mosaic; it is probably as much a fiction as the god-like, athletic bodies that the Delian merchants chose for their portraits[76]. It is part of a wider genre of images alluding to victory, which are a common feature of Hellenistic interior decor and were presumably intended to present the occupants as successful and prosperous; we might draw a parallel with the presentation of kings and other notables in Hellenistic encomiastic poetry, which has been characterised as praising their ›aptitude for victory‹ rather than any particular success[77]. As in the House of the Mosaics, the amphora may also have been intended to evoke the leisured elite lifestyle centred on the gymnasium: it decorated the floor of a small exedra, probably fronted by a marble column and pilasters, a type of room which was particularly characteristic of gymnasia and seems to have been introduced into houses on account of its prestigious associations with athletics and philosophy[78]. The mosaic was designed to be viewed by someone inside the room looking outwards, perhaps while they engaged in leisurely contemplation or conversation[79].

An alternative reading of the amphora sees it as a statement of the Athenian origins or allegiance of the house-owner[80]. This is perhaps more plausible, as there was a large Athenian population on Delos, but we should be alerted to the possibility that this is a different kind of biographical fallacy by the fact that another element of the decoration has been interpreted as evidence for a Syrian owner, namely the sculpted consoles set into the northern columns of the peristyle, which take the form of recumbent lions and bulls[81]. It is unlikely that the innumerable images and imitations of Panathenaic amphorae from around the Mediterranean could all have belonged to Athenians, but given the status of Athens by this period as the revered centre of classical Greek culture, it is possible that the mosaic and other representations of Panathenaic amphorae were intended to display admiration for Athens' heritage and culture, in addition to the meanings already discussed. The animal consoles could simply have been an exotic, oriental touch, like those in the decor of the House of the Mosaics; in fact, the kneeling bulls were repeated in stucco as consoles supporting a cornice in the peristyle of the house next door[82].

[75] J. Valeva, Le tombeau de Maglij, in: N. Blanc (ed.), Au royaume des ombres. La peinture funéraire antique, IVe siècle avant J.-C.–IVe siècle après J.-C. Exhibition catalogue Saint-Romain-en-Gal (Paris 1998) 32–36; Valavanis 2001, 162 fig. 1 pl. 42, 1. Here two popular victory-related motifs have been conflated for a more powerful effect: the motif of Nikai and chariots is sometimes used to decorate the frieze band of Masonry Style wall paintings, for example in the Maison des tritons at Delos (upper floor: Bruneau et al. 1970, 165 fig. 122; 183–185 pls. 25, 9; 26, 1–5; Kreeb 1988, 145 no. W6.2), and in a house at Rhodes, where the black-on-white style, with details indicated by incision, is reminiscent of Panathenaic amphorae (Konstantinopoulos 1973, 120 figs. 11. 12; Kreeb 1999, 202). Real amphorae of Panathenaic shape sometimes have the traditional figure of Athena on one side but substitute a suitably heroic mythological struggle for the athletic contest on the other, such as the Gigantomachy (Bentz 1998, 21 note 84) or Herakles wrestling the Nemean Lion (J. Neils, Panathenaics in the West, in: Bentz – Eschbach 2001, 125–130 esp. 125).

[76] E.g. the ›Pseudo-Athlete‹ and the statue of C. Ofellius from the Agora of the Italians (J. J. Pollitt, Art in the Hellenistic Age [Cambridge 1986] 73–75 figs. 73. 78). It is debatable whether the occupant of a relatively modest-sized house on Delos could afford to participate in equestrian events; the surviving lists of victors include a large contingent of kings, queens, princesses and courtiers (van Bremen 2007, 360–372).

[77] van Bremen 2007, 349 f. Related motifs include another amphora and various crowns, palms and purses on mosaics at Delos (Bruneau 1972, nos. 214. 217, discussed below; 305–310 no. 325 figs. 271–275), a mosaic with a victor's fillet at Morgantina (House of Ganymede, room 2: B. Tsakirgis, The Decorated Pavements of Morgantina I: The Mosaics, AJA 93, 1989, 395–416 fig. 5), and the painted friezes of Nikai driving chariots cited above (note 75).

[78] Chamonard 1922–1924, 176–179; Trümper 1998, 52–63. The open front of these rooms limited the range of activities they could be used for, and some are too small to have served any practical function. There was a trench along the south wall of room I, possibly marking the location of a bench (Chamonard 1922–1924, 152). For the marble pilasters and column, see note 64.

[79] In Roman contexts, certainly, the exedra was seen as a place for learned thought and discussion (e.g. Cic. nat. 1, 6; de orat. 3, 5).

[80] Valavanis 2001, 169, who points out the similarity of the mosaic to Athenian coins of the Imperial period.

[81] E.g. by Bruneau 1994/95, 107. The consoles supported the lower entablature of the east and west colonnades; see Couve 1895, 503–505 figs. 14. 15; Chamonard 1922–1924, 143–145 figs. 65. 67. Of course, the house may well have had many occupants, of different origins, during its life.

[82] House II B: Bulard 1908, 156 fig. 52 a. a′. Similar stucco bull-consoles, probably from the architectural frame of a niche, were also found in room N of the Maison des comédiens (Bruneau et al. 1970, 157 fig. 113). Bulard 1908, 160 and Chamonard 1922–1924, 144 suggested that the bulls could have been inspired by a local model, the eponymous pilaster capitals in the ›Monument des taureaux‹ in the sanctuary of Apollo (Bruneau – Ducat 2005, 191–193 no. 24; the building probably housed a ship dedicated to Apollo).

Another common strand of domestic imagery is represented by the painted frieze in room J, which is decorated with a vegetal scroll peopled by Erotes: the scroll might have suggested fertility and abundance, or the luxury of real flowers, while the Erotes embodied the charm and playfulness of children (fig. 7)[83]. The mosaic threshold mats in the peristyle are decorated with a dolphin twined around an anchor, and a trident with a ribbon tied to its shaft. The marine world is among the most popular themes in Hellenistic mosaics, but these motifs are particularly common on Delos, which suggests that they were the product of a local fashion[84]. It is possible that they had some local significance, perhaps representing the maritime and trading interests of the residents; they nearly always appear on thresholds, where they seem almost heraldic, although there is no parallel for mosaic motifs being used in this way at this date[85]. The decoration of the Maison du trident as a whole seems designed to create an ambience of monumental grandeur and luxury, and to project an impression of prosperity, success and leisure.

The attempts of Delian proprietors to emulate wealthier homes are particularly evident in another of the most elaborately decorated houses on the island, the Maison des masques (fig. 9)[86]. It has one of the largest areas of mosaic paving on Delos, covering three large rooms and a smaller one (E, G, I and H), and including an unusually high proportion of polychrome figural decoration (compared to the relatively subdued colour schemes and predominantly geometric designs in the Maison du trident, for example). But with the exception of the central panel in room E, which was a prefabricated *emblema*, the mosaics are in relatively coarse tessellation, and look like an ambitious attempt to imitate the decoration of richer houses. The use of fragments of blue glass vessels in the mosaics, rather than purpose-made tesserae, suggests improvisation[87], and this rough-and-ready impression is borne out by the careless execution of the wall plaster and the assortment of second-hand materials used to construct the peristyle, which included at least four different styles of Doric capital and three different types of column – four large granite ones on the higher north side, six smaller Doric ones in breccia, and two Ionic columns of poros, made up to the right thickness with stucco[88]. A desire to keep up with the neighbours may also be reflected in alterations to the decor, which made it even more elaborate. In room I, the original plain black lower zone of the wall plaster was replaced by painted marbling[89], and the central part of the mosaic floor was ripped out to add a figural element, an amphora of Panathenaic shape and a palm branch, with a little bird below; the intention may have been, as Trümper suggests, to imitate a fashionable motif, which the owner might have seen in neighbouring houses like the Maison du trident[90]. In general, the decoration suggests that the occupant of the Maison des masques was

[83] Zanker 1998, 67 f.; Westgate 2007, 320. Scrolls peopled by Erotes also appear on a frieze from House I C in the Stadium Quarter at Delos (upper floor: Kreeb 1988, 170 no. W11.2), and on the mosaic from the North-West Room of Palace V at Pergamon (see below). Erotes engaged in various activities are a popular motif in both mosaic (e.g. the mosaic from Shatby in Alexandria, discussed below) and wall painting (e.g. the frieze in room G of the Maison des dauphins on Delos: Kreeb 1988, 229 f. no. W28.1).

[84] The dolphin and anchor motif appears on threshold mosaics in room AL of the Îlot des bijoux (Bruneau 1972, no. 68, discussed below) and room I of House III N in the Theatre Quarter (Bruneau 1972, 274–277 no. 261 figs. 228. 229); an anchor alone is represented on a threshold in the nearby House III S (room D: Bruneau 1972, 283 f. no. 270 figs. 237–239); and a dolphin twined around an anchor and another with a trident are among the sea creatures on a large but fragmentary mosaic from the upper floor of House B in the Inopos Quarter (Bruneau 1972, 209–211 no. 166 figs. 135. 136). These mosaics are all quite different in style and quality of execution, so the motif is probably not simply the mark of a single local workshop or craftsman.

[85] Couve 1895, 503; Chamonard 1922–1924, 151, who thought that the proprietor of the house might have been a ship-owner. There is nothing in Greek decoration as explicitly commercial as the motifs on some Roman mosaics of the 1st and 2nd c. AD, such as the *garum* jars in the atrium of a house at Pompeii (R. I. Curtis, A Personalized Floor Mosaic from Pompeii, AJA 88, 1984, 557–566) or the ships, grain-measures and elephants in the Piazzale delle Corporazioni at Ostia.

[86] Chamonard 1933a; Chamonard 1933b; Bruneau 1972, 240–260 nos. 213–219 figs. 176–210; Trümper 1998, esp. 249–251 figs. 37. 38. This is one of the largest houses on the island, at 655 sq. m (Trümper 1998, 166).

[87] Recycled glass was identified in the mosaics in rooms E and H, and in fragments of a pavement from the upper floor (Bruneau 1972, nos. 214. 216. 219). Blue tesserae were usually cut from rods of glass; A.-M. Guimier-Sorbets – M.-D. Nenna, L'emploi du verre, de la faïence et de la peinture dans les mosaïques de Délos, BCH 116, 1992, 607–631 esp. 623.

[88] Chamonard 1933a, 7 f.; Trümper 1998, 46.

[89] Chamonard 1933a, 139.

[90] Trümper 1998, 250. Of course, the dating of the Delian mosaics is not sufficiently precise to determine which mosaic was the earlier.

keen to impress, but his aspirations outstripped his means, forcing him to cut corners to achieve the desired effect.

The Maison des masques is also an interesting case study because, like the House of the Mosaics, its decoration has sometimes been interpreted as a coherent thematic programme. The subjects of the mosaics include Dionysos flanked by crowns and a pair of centaurs in room E, an ivy scroll with comic masks in room G, and Silenos dancing to a flute played by Pan in room H (fig. 10). With their Dionysiac connections, these mosaics seem to form a more closely coordinated ensemble than the decoration of most houses, and this led Chamonard to suggest that the house was used as a base for visiting troupes of actors[91]. The mosaics in E, H and I have no specific allusions to drama, so this interpretation entailed reading them in a way that privileged Dionysos' role as patron of the theatre over his other interests: his long-sleeved robe in room E was identified as theatrical costume, the crowns in the same room were thought to commemorate a dramatic victory, and the palm branch and amphora in room I were interpreted, rather tenuously, as a tribute to the athletic success of the son of the actors' patron. However, as at Eretria, these are all common motifs in domestic decoration, and there is no obvious reason to interpret them differently here[92]: the Dionysiac themes could be seen as broadly related to drinking, hospitality and pleasure; the masks might advertise the owner's fondness for theatre, or a desire to appear cultured; and the crowns, amphora and palm branch are no more likely than the similar motifs in the Maison du trident to allude to a specific victory rather than to success in general or to the elite activities of the gymnasium. Moreover, the house originally had other figural decoration, now lost, which might have diluted this apparent thematic coherence: fragments of several marble and terracotta statuettes were found, but were never published[93].

The proprietors of other Delian houses adopted a range of different strategies to express their social aspirations within the constraints of their means. The owner of the Maison des tritons commissioned a mosaic in even cruder materials than those in the Maison des masques (fig. 11), but apparently made a virtue of necessity by having it designed to resemble a pebble mosaic, with simplified outlines, a limited range of colours (black, white, grey and red), and a subject – a Tritoness and (presumably) a Triton – that was typical of pebble mosaic[94]. As well as making the best of relatively cheap materials, this may have evoked the authority and prestige of Classical art, in the same way as the numerous copies and pastiches of Classical sculpture found in Hellenistic houses. Similarly, the raised border, edged with marble, around the sides of a room in the Îlot des bijoux may have been intended to recreate the appearance of an old-fashioned dining room (fig. 12)[95]. But although the room may well have been used for dining, the resemblance to a Classical dining room is superficial: at the same time as the marble edging was installed, the original off-centre door

[91] Chamonard 1933a, 8; Chamonard 1933b, 152 f.

[92] Dionysos or a Dionysiac figure riding a large feline appears on several mosaics from Delos (Bruneau 1972, 216 f. no. 169 fig. 143; 289–293 no. 293 figs. 247–253 pl. C 1. 2; 317 nos. 344. 345 fig. 295) and elsewhere (e.g. Pella, Salzmann 1982, 104 f. no. 96 pl. 34; Pompeii, House of the Faun, Andreae 2003, figs. on pp. 188–192). Z. Welch, The Mosaic of Dionysos in the House of the Masks at Delos, in: Morlier 2005, 941–950 esp. 942–945 refutes the theory that Dionysos' costume was specifically intended as theatrical dress, arguing instead that the mosaic alludes to the god's Indian triumph. Comic masks, often linked by a garland, are one of the most common motifs in Hellenistic mosaics: in addition to the mosaics from Delos, Pergamon and Rhodes discussed below, examples are known from Delos (Bruneau 1972, 317 f. no. 347 fig. 296), Tel Dor (A. Stewart – S. R. Martin, Hellenistic discoveries at Tel Dor, Israel, Hesperia 72, 2003, 121–145 esp. 132–143 fig. 8), Palermo (D. von Boeselager, Antike Mosaiken in Sizilien. Hellenismus und römische Kaiserzeit, 3. Jahrhundert v. Chr.–3. Jahrhundert n. Chr. [Rome 1983] 47–52 pls. 11–13) and Pompeii (several, including mosaics from the House of the Mosaic Doves and House of the Faun: Andreae 2003, figs. on pp. 164 f. 190 f.); scenes from drama are also widely reproduced in painting and mosaic (e.g. a painted frieze of comic scenes in the Maison des comédiens on Delos, Bruneau et al. 1970, 155–157 fig. 110; 168–183 pls. 21–25; further examples are illustrated by Andreae 2003, 218–245).

[93] Chamonard 1933b, 153; Kreeb 1988, 234. There was also a base outside room G with a socket, perhaps for a bronze herm (Kreeb 1988, 233 no. S29.6). In addition to the fragmentary sculptures, four more complete, under-lifesized statues were found in room G, but these had fallen from the room above, which may have belonged to a separate apartment (a seated god, perhaps Apollo; a draped female figure; a nude youth, perhaps Apollo or Dionysos; and a male portrait: Kreeb 1988, 231–233 nos. S29, 2–5).

[94] Ph. Bruneau, Une nouvelle mosaïque à Délos, BCH 88, 1964, 252–266; Bruneau et al. 1970, 143–147 pl. 20; Bruneau 1972, 174–178 no. 75 figs. 88–91.

[95] Habitation V, room AL: Ph. Bruneau – G. Siebert, Une nouvelle mosaïque délienne à sujet mythologique, BCH 93, 1969, 261–307 pl. 9; G. Siebert, Sur la mosaïque de l'habitation V de l'Ilot des bijoux à Délos, BCH 95, 1971, 147–165; Bruneau 1972, 156–169 no. 68 figs. 55–79 pl. A 3. 4; Westgate 2007, 319.

of the room was blocked, and replaced by a new door in the centre of the opposite wall, adapting the room to the fashion for symmetrical arrangements that was current in late Hellenistic Delos, but making it less convenient for couches[96]. To make the room seem even more impressive, two semi-circular marble strips were set into the pavement in front of the new axial door: A. Büsing-Kolbe suggested, irresistibly, that these were intended to look like tracks for rollers, which were needed to open the heavy doors of monumental buildings but would have been entirely unnecessary here, as the holes in the threshold block indicate a light folding door with four leaves[97]. Both mosaics also illustrate another, more common way of evoking the grandeur of monumental architecture in domestic decoration, through the use of motifs imitating architectural mouldings, represented realistically with shading to indicate their volume. The Tritoness panel and its missing twin are framed with egg-and-dart, perhaps suggesting ceiling-coffers[98], and the transition from border to field is marked by a row of dentils, which may have created an especially impressive effect[99]; the Îlot des bijoux mosaic has a border of bead-and-reel[100]. The latter mosaic also has a frieze of comic masks set in a lavish garland of leaves and fruits, perhaps meant as a statement of prosperity and hospitality as well as of cultural interests; its centrepiece is a large mythological scene whose subject appears not to be drawn from the usual Dionysiac and erotic repertoire[101]. This is one of the most elaborate mosaics on Delos, but as in the Maison des masques, the quality of execution does not quite match up to the ambition of the design.

Alterations to interior decor like those seen in the Maison des masques and the Îlot des bijoux are particularly illuminating, because they show people adapting their living environment to suit new social needs or changing fashions, and thus allow us to see social change or aspiration as a dynamic process. The way in which fashion and competitive display drove the development of the Delian houses can be seen particularly well in House IV B of the Theatre Quarter (fig. 13), which underwent a series of alterations intended to make its appearance more impressive and to upgrade its facilities to emulate those of grander houses[102]. Foremost amongst these was the construction of the peristyle, which left barely enough space to move around the colonnades – a telling illustration of the power of the desire to monumentalise the house, regardless of practicality[103]. The south side of the house was remodelled to create a latrine and a tiny bathroom (b and b′) alongside the entrance, in a miniature version of the service wing found in less cramped houses, which segregated

[96] Trümper 1998, 194 f.; Siebert 2001, 38–41. For the possible arrangement of couches, see Trümper 2007, 328 fig. 35, 5a.

[97] Büsing-Kolbe 1988, 99–102. One of the semicircular spaces enclosed by the strips is decorated with a version of the dolphin-and-anchor motif, which must have been added at the same time, presumably to conform to the fashion noted above.

[98] Barbet – Guimier-Sorbets 1994, 26. The coffer-like effect is particularly pronounced in a Hellenistic *emblema* from Rhodes depicting a comic mask, which is similarly framed with egg-and-dart (Konstantinopoulos 1965, 579 f. pl. 772; Konstantinopoulos 1986, 148 f. pl. 27).

[99] Dentils are not a common motif in Hellenistic mosaics, so it is striking that their few appearances include two pavements in public contexts, at Pheneos (Temple of Asklepios: E. Protonotariou-Deïlaki, Ἀνασκαφή Φενεοῦ, ADelt 17, 1961/1962, Chron 57–61 esp. 59 pls. 62γ. 64β. 66) and Xanthos (North Stoa at the Letoon: H. Metzger [ed.], La région nord du Létôon, les sculptures, les inscriptions gréco-lyciennes, FdX 9 [Paris 1992] 66–73 fig. 8 pls. 7, 32–35), and two in particularly grand colonnaded exedras, in the House of the Faun at Pompeii (room 37, where it frames the Alexander Mosaic) and the Casa del Mosaico Illusionistico at Cyrene (I. Baldassare, Mosaici ellenistici a Cirene e a Delo: rapporti e differenze, QuadALibia 8, 1976, 193–221 esp. 194–201 figs. 1–4). They usually occur, as here, at the inner edge of the decorated frame, paralleling their use in architecture to articulate a sharp transition between planes. Mosaics with dentil borders were also found in another house on Delos (Bruneau 1972, 127 no. 14 figs. 17. 18) and an unidentified building on Rhodes (Phatourou 1964, 466 pl. 547γ).

[100] The motif appears on several other Hellenistic mosaics, at Delos (Bruneau 1972, 234–239 no. 210 figs. 168. 175; 256–260 no. 217 figs. 204. 208; 274–277 no. 261 figs. 229–231 pl. B 4), Pergamon (Altar Room of Palace V, discussed below), and Rhodes (fish *emblema*, below, note 133).

[101] Because of the poor condition of the panel, the subject has never been conclusively identified, but it features Athena and Hermes rather than the more usual domestic deities of beauty and pleasure, Aphrodite and Dionysos. For the dominance of Aphrodite and Dionysos in domestic decoration, see Kreeb 1988, 58–62; Zanker 1998; Westgate 2007, 319 f. For mosaics featuring comic masks, see note 92.

[102] Chamonard 1922–1924, *passim*, esp. 50–52 fig. 22; 154 f. fig. 68 pls. 59 C. 62 E; Trümper 1998, 287–289. The history of the house is complex and difficult to reconstruct with certainty because of modern alterations, although the general direction is fairly clear.

[103] Trümper 1998, 288 fig. 49 argues that the peristyle was a later addition to the original plan. The construction of a new staircase between rooms b and d suggests that the upper floor might have been altered, or possibly even added, at the same time.

these desirable but unsightly facilities from the part of the house that was on show to visitors[104]. On the north side, a room was subdivided to create an additional reception room (g) and a second vestibule (h); the latter perhaps allowed some degree of social differentiation between people entering the house[105]. The decoration was also upgraded: marble furnishings were installed in the peristyle (a basin and two well-heads, one with relief decoration), and mosaic floors were laid in room e and the new room g (fig. 14). These are among the simplest decorated pavements on the island, with small black and white tessellated carpets set into very broad borders of rough stone chips, a common strategy used by householders who wanted a mosaic but could not afford an entire floor in regular tessellation[106], but even so they may incorporate an allusion to monumental architecture: A.-M. Guimier-Sorbets has suggested that the motif of a lozenge inscribed in a rectangle was intended to imitate pavements of *opus sectile*, which are found largely in public buildings in the Hellenistic east[107]. Through these alterations, the occupants of the house gained more convenient and private sanitary facilities, more rooms suitable for entertaining, and a more impressive setting for social events.

This process of aspiration and emulation fits well with what we know of Delian society from other sources. Material goods and fashions become especially important as ways of signalling and achieving status when the basis of social hierarchies is fluid or changing, and living in large urban communities tends to intensify the need for this kind of social display, as the inhabitants are less likely to know one another and therefore need more cues to help them to ›navigate‹ socially[108]. In the peculiar circumstances of Delos, these needs must have been unusually pressing. Its role as a trading centre meant that it was a large, diverse community, a melting-pot of people of different geographical origins and statuses, including many of slave descent[109]. Cut off from their roots and status in their places of origin, the inhabitants had the opportunity to present themselves as they wished to be seen. The house would have been the setting for a variety of occasions at which social and business relationships were created and cemented, and was thus a prime vehicle for advertising prosperity, success and status, both through the visible expense of the furnishings and through the meanings encoded in the decor. The power of the pressure to keep up with the neighbours and to project a suitably impressive image in this unusually heterogeneous and upwardly-mobile community is illustrated by the fact that Delos accounts for almost half the tessellated mosaics known from the entire Hellenistic world[110]. It probably also explains the lavishness of what are actually rather small houses, and in many cases only apartments: lack of space, especially in the cramped Theatre Quarter, limited the potential for building larger, more monumental houses, so the only way to make the desired impression was to cram as much decoration as possible into the available space[111].

It is tempting to regard the decoration of the Delian houses as evidence for vulgar, nouveau-riche taste, as Büsing-Kolbe and others have done – the shadow of Trimalchio falls over Hellenistic houses almost as

[104] For example, in the Maison des tritons and Maison des comédiens, which are in the more spacious and regularly planned North Quarter.

[105] Several of the Delian houses have two entrances, sometimes differentiated by their architecture and decor, which suggests that one may have been the service or ›tradesmen's‹ entrance (e.g. in the Maison du Dionysos: Trümper 1998, 35 f.); in some cases, the second entrance leads directly into the service and bathing area (e.g. the Maison des tritons: Westgate 2000a, 409).

[106] Bruneau 1972, 285–288 nos. 276. 277 figs. 242–245. It is possible that the unusually wide border in room e was designed to accommodate a Roman-style triclinium, although this would be almost unique on Delos, despite the well-attested presence of Italians on the island. At least one of the rooms on the upper floor had a fine polychrome mosaic, depicting Eros (Bruneau 1972, 288 f. no. 279 fig. 246 pl. C 3).

[107] Guimier-Sorbets 1994a, 24 f.; Guimier-Sorbets 2001a, 48–53.

[108] L. Foxhall, Village to City: Staples and Luxuries? Exchange Networks and Urbanization, in: R. Osborne – B. Cunliffe (eds.), Mediterranean Urbanization 800–600 BC, Proceedings of the British Academy 126 (Oxford 2005) 233–248 esp. 240–244 makes a persuasive case for the role of fashion in forming identities and hierarchies in the emerging towns of Archaic Greece; her argument can be extended to the much larger and more diverse cities of the Hellenistic world, although the relative expense and permanence of interior decor mean that fashions are likely to have changed more slowly than in the small personal items such as pins or perfume-bottles that she considers. Cf. also Rapoport 1990, 183 f.

[109] For the social and ethnic composition of the community at Delos, see Rauh 1993.

[110] Westgate 1997/98, 112 note 27; this proportion is gradually declining as more mosaics are found at other sites, but to put it another way, Delos has yielded about six times as many Hellenistic mosaics as any other site (see note 123).

[111] The ground areas of the houses range from 53 to 866 sq. m, with about half in the range 100–200 sq. m and few above 500 sq. m (Trümper 1998, 166–168). Many of the houses have independent staircases leading to separate apartments on the upper floors (Trümper 1998, 92–106; Trümper 2007, 331 f.).

much as Roman ones[112] – and the probability that some people at the time would have seen it in this way is implied by a fragment of Cicero's defence of Cornelius, in which he cites the Delians alongside slave-traders, merchants and Syrian and Egyptian eunuchs as examples of contemptible people who indulge in extravagant displays of material wealth[113]. But we cannot assume that Cicero's snobbery reflects a universally held scale of values: the Delian houses were designed primarily to create an advantageous impression within a particular social circle, and most visitors would have seen them in the context of the other houses on the island, or the homes of their friends and business partners elsewhere. Conforming to local fashions in interior decor may have been a way for the diverse residents of Delos to express their claims to integration and status in the community, regardless of their origin: several scholars have commented on the contrast between the ethnic diversity of the Delian population as attested in the epigraphic evidence, and the degree of standardisation in the plans and decoration of the houses[114].

The Bigger Picture: Kings and Commoners in the Eastern Mediterranean

Delos is perhaps an extreme case, because of its unique economic status, but it was a microcosm of what was happening in the wider Hellenistic world, where old hierarchies and identities were breaking down as a result of political and economic change, social and geographical mobility, and the growth of huge, cosmopolitan cities. This leads us to look at domestic decoration in a wider context still, that of the late Hellenistic eastern Mediterranean as a whole, and to ask how far it is possible to use interior decor as evidence for larger-scale social and economic trends. We have a variety of housing from across the region, representing the whole social and economic spectrum from the royal courts downwards. However, the evidence is dominated by mosaics, because of their better chances of survival, and it is unevenly distributed in both place and time, which means that the resulting picture is inevitably rather impressionistic. It is particularly difficult to get a reliable sense of change over time, but I think it is at least possible to identify some economic ›hotspots‹ and to get an idea of where the Delian houses stood in the broader context of Hellenistic society.

From the top of the social hierarchy, we have remains of the interior decor of at least one of the major royal palaces, and possibly more, although the surviving material is very fragmentary and does not live up to the literary descriptions of the spectacular luxury of the Hellenistic courts. The most securely identified and best-preserved remains of palatial decoration are at Pergamon, in the large peristyle buildings known as Palaces IV and V, which probably date to the reign of Eumenes II (197–159 BC) or his successor Attalos II (159–138 BC)[115]. There is little evidence for the functions of the two buildings, but it is usually assumed that Palace V was the official or ceremonial area, while the smaller Palace IV was a more private, residential area; both had fine mosaics and wall decoration. The mosaics are of extremely high quality, with decoration covering their entire surface and large areas of minute tessellation (fig. 15)[116]. They use a very wide range of

[112] For the way in which our view of ancient interior decor is distorted through the lens of Petronius' fictional freedman, see L. H. Petersen, The Freedman in Roman Art and Art History (Cambridge 2006) 3–12. 123–162; Trimalchio actually makes an appearance in Rauh's discussion of the Delian houses (Rauh 1993, 248). Cf. also Büsing-Kolbe 1988.

[113] Pro Cornelio II, fragment 9, quoted in orat. 232: *Neque me divitiae movent, quibus omnes Africanos et Laelios multi venalicii mercatoresque superarunt; neque vestis aut caelatum aurum et argentum, quo nostros veteres Marcellos Maximosque multi eunuchi e Syria Aegyptoque vicerunt; neque vero ornamenta ista villarum, quibus L. Paulum et L. Mummium, qui rebus his urbem Italiamque omnem referserunt, ab aliquo video perfacile Deliaco aut Syro potuisse superari* (»I am not impressed by his wealth, in which many slave traders and merchants have surpassed all the Africani and the Laelii; nor by clothes or engraved gold and silver, in which many a eunuch from Syria or Egypt has outdone our Marcelli and Maximi of old; nor indeed by those domestic ornaments, in which L. Paulus or L. Mummius, who crammed Rome and all Italy with such things, could easily have been surpassed by some Delian or Syrian.«).

[114] E.g. Bezerra de Meneses 1984, 86; Bruneau 1994/1995, 106–108; Trümper 1998, 136 f.

[115] Kawerau – Wiegand 1930; I. Nielsen, Hellenistic Palaces. Tradition and Renewal, Studies in Hellenistic Civilization 5 (Aarhus 1994) 102–111. 270–272; W. Radt, Pergamon. Geschichte und Bauten einer antiken Metropole (Darmstadt 1999) 63–78.

[116] Kawerau – Wiegand 1930, 53–65 figs. 39. 69–72 textpls. 26–39 pls. 8–19; D. Salzmann, Zu den Mosaiken in den Palästen IV und V von Pergamon, in: Studien zum antiken Kleinasien 3, AMS 16 (Bonn 1995) 101–112, with corrected reconstructions based on new investigations. Only fragments were found in Palace IV, from at least three rooms (A, D and the room above A), decorated with a variety of geometric patterns, perspective meanders, garlands, floral scrolls and fish. Two more complete pavements were found *in situ* in Palace V, in the Altar Room (a small shrine) and the North-West Room, which had a wide plain

colours, and a correspondingly wide range of materials, both natural and artificial, including some that were so precious or fragile that they did not survive Antiquity[117]. These materials are likely to have been obtained from a wide geographical area, and the mosaics thus display an impressive command of resources – and an equally impressive disregard for their value, shown by setting them in the floor to be walked on. The two pavements from Palace V alone must represent many months of highly skilled work: they had seven pictorial *emblemata* between them, four in the Altar Room, and three in the North-West Room, in the minute form of tessellation known as *opus vermiculatum*, which probably imitated the prestigious medium of painting; in addition, the North-West Room had a large central panel and a broad border which had been removed in Antiquity and were presumably in a similarly fine technique (plain grey in fig. 15). Instead of a plaster imitation of masonry, both rooms had real polished marble blocks in the lower zones, tall courses of blue-grey stone alternating with narrower bands of white, crowned by an elaborate white moulding[118]. The palace was also decorated with sculpture, although little of it survives: a statue of a female dancer or torch-holder was found in the North-West Room (though it may have fallen from the upper floor), and a stone base at the back of the Altar Room probably held a cult statue, perhaps of Dionysos[119].

The mosaics from the palace at Pergamon can be compared to several pavements found in the Royal Quarter of Alexandria, in the area where the palace is said to have been, although their contexts cannot be securely identified and the royal connection is less certain (fig. 16)[120]. Royal or not, they are certainly among the finest mosaics known from the Hellenistic world. Two have central figured panels in minuscule *opus vermiculatum*, depicting a dog and a pair of wrestlers, although in both cases the rest of the floor is less densely decorated than the Pergamene mosaics, with bands of plain white tessellation between the patterned borders. It is not clear whether this is an indication that they were less costly than the mosaics at Pergamon, or whether it represents a deliberate stylistic preference: the plainer, cooler effect of these mosaics has been characterised as ›classicising‹, in contrast to the ›baroque‹ effect of the more densely patterned pavements from Pergamon and Thmuis[121]. A third mosaic, also found close to the presumed site of the palace, depicts three Erotes hunting a stag, surrounded by a frieze of wild and mythological animals. Although it is made largely in tesserae, with a few coloured pebbles for details such as hair, the light-on-dark style is very close to pebble mosaic, which may indicate an early date, or, possibly, a desire to evoke the style of an earlier era[122]. The concentration of fine mosaics with pictorial *emblemata* at Pergamon and Alexandria suggests that the royal capitals were major centres for the production of fine figured mosaics, an impression that is reinforced

outer border that might have been used for dining-couches; they are now displayed, heavily (and incorrectly) restored, in the Pergamon Museum in Berlin (Inv. nos. 68–71).

117 The bead-and-reel border of the mosaic in the Altar Room of Palace V had highlights made of a material that has either disintegrated or been stolen; the excavators suggested crystal or mother-of-pearl (Kawerau – Wiegand 1930, 63).

118 Kawerau – Wiegand 1930, 31. 35–39 figs. 41. 42 textpls. 15. 18. The upper parts of the walls were destroyed, but were presumed to have been in rougher stone with either stucco or marble cladding; the decoration also included various marble architectural elements, though the position of these could not be reconstructed. The surviving wall decoration from Palace IV was entirely in plaster, but with painted marbling, a figured frieze and architectural elements in stucco relief: Kawerau – Wiegand 1930, 47–52 figs. 61–68 pls. 7. 8.

119 Kunze 1996, 116–120 fig. 5, who suggests that a second female statue found elsewhere in Bergama was a pendant to the ›dancer‹, and that the Graces by Boupalos, mentioned by Pausanias (9, 35, 6) as »in the *thalamos* of Attalos«, were also located in the palace.

120 Large portions of two very fine pavements, plus various smaller fragments, were found in 1993 on the site of the new Bibliotheca Alexandrina, near Cape Lochias: A.-M. Guimier-Sorbets, Alexandrie: les mosaïques hellénistiques découvertes sur le terrain de la nouvelle Bibliotheca Alexandrina, RA 1998, 263–290; Guimier-Sorbets 2004b; for the location, see J. McKenzie, The Architecture of Alexandria and Egypt, c. 300 BC–AD 700 (New Haven 2007) fig. 95, which also shows the findspots of several other mosaics, of varying quality, found within the Royal Quarter but further away from Cape Lochias. Very little survived of the buildings containing the mosaics. Daszewski 2001 has attributed them to a royal workshop, along with the Shatby stag hunt mosaic (note 122) and the *emblema* from Thmuis signed by Sophilos, which depicts a personification of Alexandria, perhaps with the features of Berenike II (Daszewski 1985, 142–158 no. 38 pls. A. 32; followed by Guimier-Sorbets 2001b, 286; Guimier-Sorbets 2004b, 31).

121 Daszewski 2001, 271; Guimier-Sorbets 2004b, 31 f.

122 From Shatby: Salzmann 1982, 116 no. 134 pls. 88. 89. 90, 1; Daszewski 1985, 103–110 no. 2 pls. C. 4–7, 1; for the possibility that it is a later, classicising imitation, see Westgate 2002, 232–234. Again, very little is known of the context of the mosaic, except that it was in a room with a raised border, like a Classical dining room.

by the fact that the only mosaicist mentioned in the ancient literary sources is associated with Pergamon[123]; there is also inconclusive but plausible technical and epigraphical evidence for a network of mosaic production centred on Alexandria[124]. It would not be surprising if the great royal cities provided a market that could support craftsmen making such luxurious products, and it is even possible that the development of the fine technique of opus vermiculatum was a result of demand from the courts for novel media for extravagant display; it seems very likely, as John Davies has argued, that the palaces were significant drivers of the Hellenistic economy, especially in the luxury sphere[125].

However, despite their exceptionally high quality and royal connections, the mosaics at Pergamon and Alexandria draw on the same repertoire of visual references as those on Delos and elsewhere. The Pergamene mosaics include Dionysiac or cultural allusions, represented by a pair of dramatic masks in the Altar Room, and images of prosperity and abundance in the form of luxuriant garlands and scrolls peopled by Erotes. The mosaics at both sites have borders derived from architectural mouldings, a bead-and-reel at Pergamon (perhaps conflated with precious jewellery, as there is a red ›string‹ linking the beads), and a perspective meander, Lesbian kymation and *trompe l'oeil* lion-head spouts at Alexandria, which recall the real but useless spouts in the House of the Mosaics at Eretria. But the meanings of these standard motifs might be slightly different in the context of a royal palace. The Dionysiac imagery, for instance, might be read in relation to the idea of the king as a new Dionysos, a key metaphor of Hellenistic royal power; this seems especially likely in the Altar Room at Pergamon, which is rich in Dionysiac motifs and was probably dedicated either to Dionysos as patron of the Attalid dynasty, or to the dynasty itself. Some elements of the decor may still be traceable back to the Archaic aristocratic iconography identified by Dentzer: the wrestlers, wild animals and hunting scenes reflect the agonistic ethos of the elite (albeit, in the latter case, softened by the substitution of Erotes for adult hunters), and the scenes of wrestling and hunting also represent traditional elite male leisure pursuits. The dog was a typical attribute of the leisured lifestyle; the closest parallel for this unusual

[123] Sosus, the creator of the ›Unswept Room‹ and a famous mosaic of doves perched on a basin, mentioned by Pliny (Plin. nat. 36, 184). However, it is not clear whether he was working during the period of the Pergamene monarchy. About 14 Hellenistic tessellated mosaics are known from Pergamon, and 15 from Alexandria, plus another five from nearby Thmuis and Canopus – among the largest groups in the eastern Mediterranean after Delos (c. 150 mosaics), and consisting largely of relatively elaborate, high-quality pavements, many with figured panels. Rhodes has yielded about 25 tessellated mosaics, but this total includes a number of relatively simple and coarse pavements as well as a handful of finer ones; see further below. (Totals are approximate because they include fragments from an unknown number of pavements.)

[124] A fragmentary mosaic at Segesta is signed by Dionysios of Alexandria, though he could have come from one of the many other Alexandrias: A. Pinna – P. Sfligiotti, Segesta: lo scavo dell'area 2000 (SAS 2), AnnPisa (3rd series) 21, 3/4, 1991, 897–915 esp. 906–908 pl. 289, 1. Much weight is often placed on the inclusion of »[....]*a alexandreina psephota*« in the inventory of a *heroon* at Apateira near Ephesos, dating to the early Imperial period, although it is not clear exactly what these objects were: for text, discussion and references, see Daszewski 1985, 15–22. M. Donderer, Alexandria – Exportzentrum für Mosaikemblemata?, in: C. M. Ciałowicz – J. A. Ostrowski (eds.), Les civilisations du bassin méditerranéen. Hommages à Joachim Śliwa (Cracow 2000) 235–239 argues that the missing word might refer to gem-encrusted cups (e.g. *poteria* or *ekpomata*), rather than mosaic *emblemata*. Guimier-Sorbets 2000 sees the use of faience in mosaics as an indication of Alexandrian manufacture or influence, though it is possible that it was exported as a raw material for use by mosaicists elsewhere. For Alexandria as a centre for the production and export of *emblemata*, especially in the early Roman period, see also W. A. Daszewski, An Old Question in Light of New Evidence: ἐμβλήματα ἀλεξανδρεινὰ ψηφωτά, in: G. Grimm – H. Heinen – E. Winter (eds.), Das Römisch-Byzantinische Ägypten. Akten des internationalen Symposions, 26.–30. September 1978, Trier, Aegyptiaca Treverensia 2 (Mainz 1983) 161–165; Guimier-Sorbets 2001b, 289 f.; W. A. Daszewski, Egypt, Birds and Mosaics, in: Morlier 2005, 1143–1152 esp. 1147–1152.

[125] J. K. Davies, The Economic Consequences of Hellenistic Palaces, in: Z. H. Archibald – J. K. Davies – V. Gabrielsen (eds.), Making, Moving and Managing. The New World of Ancient Economies, 323–31 BC (Oxford 2005) 117–135. I have suggested elsewhere (Westgate 2002, 230–238) that *opus vermiculatum* might have been developed by royal craftsmen from the relatively crude forms of tessellated mosaic found in the 3rd c.; R. Vollkommer, Zum Ursprung des Opus Tessellatum, in: Akten des XIII. Internationalen Kongresses für Klassische Archäologie, Berlin 1988 (Mainz 1990) 571–572, and Daszewski 2001, 268. 271 f. also see the Hellenistic courts as playing an important role in the development of mosaic technique. Compare Pliny's remarks (Plin. nat. 8, 196) on the invention of ›Attalid‹ textiles made with gold thread, which he attributes to the Pergamene court. It is significant, too, that the sole surviving contract for the laying of a mosaic, a papyrus from the Zenon archive, states that a ›model‹ *(paradeigma)* for part of the design will be supplied by some kind of royal agency *(ek basilikou)*, presumably in Alexandria; (PCairoZen. 59665, c. 256–246 BC (C. C. Edgar, Catalogue générale des antiquités égyptiennes du Musée du Caire, nos. 59532–59800, Zenon Papyri 4 [Cairo 1931] 102–104 pl. 15). The papyrus relates to the decoration of a bath, perhaps attached to a royal villa or belonging to a friend of the king: see the discussion by Daszewski 1985, 6–14.

motif, a painted grave stele from Athens depicting a dog standing on an upturned, broken *lekythos*, also shows the dead man's gymnasium kit – sandals, strigil and oil-flask[126]. This symbolic package was by now several hundred years old, but it may have retained its power in Alexandria through the influence of Macedonia, which clung to archaic aristocratic customs for much longer than other parts of Greece[127].

The surviving decoration of the royal palaces must represent something close to the top of the available range of possibilities, leaving aside the long-disappeared gold, ivory and precious stones that ancient writers tend to dwell on. The quality of the mosaics from Alexandria and Pergamon is rivalled by several pavements from the islands off the coast of Asia Minor. Large, ›palatial‹ buildings with exquisite mosaic floors have recently come to light on both Samos and Rhodes. The building at Samos has mosaics in two rooms, one with borders of floral scroll and coloured scales, and the other, larger one with a perspective meander and an unusual motif of griffin-heads linked by a snaky body (fig. 17)[128]. Both have white bands between the decorated borders, like the mosaics in Alexandria, and a plain white central field rather than a figural *emblema*, but the borders incorporate extensive areas of *opus vermiculatum*; as the rooms have plain outer bands that would have been suitable for dining-couches, having the finest work in the borders might have made it easier for guests to appreciate it from close quarters. In the larger room, the border is raised and edged with marble, like the mosaic in the Îlot des bijoux on Delos, and perhaps similarly intended to give a more monumental and traditional appearance. The complex at Rhodes has one surviving mosaic of Hellenistic date, which has several coloured stripe borders and a very similar frieze of griffin-heads to the one at Samos; the central area is paved in patterned *opus sectile*, apparently inserted at a later date[129]. In both cases the size and quality of the buildings has led to doubts about their domestic function, although Rhodes at least is known to have had some very wealthy and prominent residents, who might have lived in such a house[130]; it is difficult to be sure what is truly exceptional for a private house. Certainly the mosaics once again draw on a fairly standard decorative repertoire: there are vegetal designs (the floral scroll and various flowers used to fill corners), architectural motifs (the perspective meander and imbricated scales, which are shaded to look like a torus moulding), and an exotic element in the form of the griffin-head border, which seems to derive from Scythian metalwork (fig. 17b)[131]. The occurrence of this otherwise rare motif on both Rhodes and Samos may be evidence that both mosaics were made by the same craftsman or workshop, who travelled around the region to fulfil prestigious commissions[132]. Certainly the fact that a number of high-quality

[126] Kerameikos P863, dated c. 420–400 BC: R. Posamentir, Bemalte attische Grabstelen klassischer Zeit, Studien zur antiken Malerei und Farbgebung 7 (Munich 2006) 44 f. no. 15. Keeping and breeding dogs, for hunting or for pleasure, was an elite activity, and thus dogs are often shown under their masters' couches at symposia on black-figure pottery; cf. Dentzer 1982, 442. Daszewski 2001, 272 f. suggests that the Alexandrian mosaic represents one of these ›table dogs‹, and that the overturned vessel might allude to the separation of the dog from its master by death – a reading that would work even better for the broken *lekythos* on the grave stele.

[127] Hunting, for instance, still played an important role in Macedonian constructions of manhood in the late 4th c., which is reflected in the tradition that Macedonian men were not permitted to recline at dinner until they had killed a boar single-handed (Hegesandros ap. Athen. deipn. 1, 18a), and in the images of hunting in elite Macedonian houses and tombs (e.g. the pebble mosaics at Pella, Salzmann 1982, 105 f. no. 98 pls. 30. 31; 107 f. no. 103 pl. 29, and the painted facade of Tomb II at Vergina, Andronikos 1993, 106–119 figs. 57–69). The traditional aristocratic companions, dogs and horses, also feature prominently in Macedonian tomb decoration: for example, the chariots racing around the frieze of Tomb III at Vergina (Andronikos 1993, 202–206 figs. 166–168), and a dog depicted in relief under the stone couch from Tomb I at Pydna, now in the Louvre (Richter 1966, fig. 322; Sismanidis 1997, 105–111 pl. 31; perhaps early Hellenistic, though proposed dates range from the end of the 4th c. to the 2nd c. BC).

[128] V. Giannouli – A.-M. Guimier-Sorbets, Deux mosaïques hellénistiques à Samos, BCH 112, 1988, 545–568.

[129] Dreliossi-Herakleidou 1996; Dreliossi-Herakleidou 1999. The building remained in use in the Roman period.

[130] Dreliossi-Herakleidou 1996, 192. The Rhodian complex occupied an entire insula, and had three courts, a bath and a monumental water feature. V. Giannouli, Neue Befunde zur Wasserversorgung der archaischen Stadt Samos, AA 1996, 247–257 esp. 248. 257 suggests that the building at Samos might have had a public function.

[131] Guimier-Sorbets 1994b, 261–265; Guimier-Sorbets 1999, 32 f. The motif is exactly paralleled in a set of gold appliqués from a late Classical or early Hellenistic tomb at Vishneva Mogila, Ukraine, which were stitched onto a textile to form a row of waves with lion-heads (Museum of Historical Treasures, Kiev; I am grateful to Y. Boltrik and V. Bylkova for information about the provenance).

[132] Guimier-Sorbets 1994b, 262; Guimier-Sorbets 1999, 23. Dreliossi-Herakleidou 1999, 44–46 questions this, pointing out differences in the style of the two borders, although these might be explained to some extent by the adaptation of the motif to a narrower border in the Rhodian mosaic (32–35 cm, compared to 42 cm at Samos). The only other mosaic with this motif is in the Maison des dauphins on Delos, where it decorates an even narrower band (22 cm) and the technique is much more pointillistic

Hellenistic mosaics are known from the eastern Aegean islands – in addition, at least three fine emblemata have been found on Rhodes and Kos[133], as well as several less elaborate pavements on Rhodes – bears out H. Wurmser's remarks about the economic power of the Aegean islands in this period[134].

The surviving material from the royal capitals and the eastern Aegean goes some way towards putting the decor of the Delian houses into a wider perspective. Although Cicero's comment, quoted above, suggests that the Delians were famous for the decoration of their houses, the bulk of what survives there is of much lower quality than the mosaics from Pergamon or Samos. There are remains of a dozen or so fine figured panels (and almost as many holes where similar panels have been ripped out), and small areas of *opus vermiculatum* are sometimes set into larger designs, like the comic masks on the mosaic in the Îlot des bijoux discussed above; but even where the tesserae are very small, they are often quite sparsely set, with the mortar showing between them, rather than forming the smooth, continuous surface seen in the *emblemata* from further east[135]. Most of the Delian mosaics have broad bands and central fields of plain white tessellation, and many include large expanses of coarser materials. This impression of relatively low quality is distorted to some extent by the removal of *emblemata* and by the fact that the best mosaics and paintings were generally in the upper apartments, and therefore tend to survive only as fragments[136], although it is consistent with the relatively small size of the houses, which seem unlikely to represent the very highest echelons of Hellenistic society[137]. Conversely, the impressive mosaics from Alexandria, Pergamon and Samos are not a representative sample of the whole range of interior decor in those cities. Enough mosaics survive on Rhodes, however, to suggest that householders there adopted similar strategies of emulation and allusion to those on Delos: in addition to the fine *emblemata* and mosaic with dentils mentioned above[138], a number of more modest Hellenistic mosaics have been found, which show evidence of the economising techniques observed on Delos, such as the imitation of fine figured mosaics in coarser tessellation[139], the use of cheaper materials for the outer part of the pavement[140], and the choice of simple bichrome designs which, though probably cheap to produce, may have evoked the paving of public buildings[141]. The occupant of one

(Bruneau 1972, 234–239 no. 210 figs. 168–175 pl. B 1. 2). The Delian mosaic shows that mosaicists did move around the region, as it is signed by [Askle]piades from Arados in Syria; the signature of Dionysios of Alexandria at Segesta (note 124) indicates the distances that they might travel. In both cases, the mosaic was laid *in situ*, so the mosaicist himself must have travelled, unlike Dioskourides of Samos, who signed two *emblemata* with comic scenes found at Pompeii, which are set in marble trays and are therefore likely to have been imported from the east; by the end of the Hellenistic period, there was clearly a long-distance trade in such panels, set in solid trays to protect them during transit (Guimier-Sorbets 2000; Westgate 2000b, 272 f.).

133 The *emblemata* from Rhodes depict a comic mask (Konstantinopoulos 1965, 579 f. pl. 772; Konstantinopoulos 1986, 148 f. pl. 27) and a seascape with fish (Acheimastou-Potamianou 1976, 17 pl. 21β; Konstantinopoulos 1986, pl. 28); a panel from Kos also depicts fish (from the Casa Romana: Acheimastou-Potamianou 1976, 17 pl. 21α; L. M. de Matteis, Mosaici di Cos dagli scavi delle missioni italiane e tedesche [1900–1945], MSAtene 17 [Athens 2004] 144 f. no. 69 pl. 35, 1); all three had been reused in Roman houses. Some of the simpler Rhodian mosaics are discussed below.

134 Cf. Wurmser in this volume.

135 E.g. the masks and central mythological scene in the Îlot des bijoux (fig. 12), or the pointillistic technique of the griffin-head border in the peristyle of the Maison des dauphins (note 132).

136 Bruneau 1972, 83. 105 f.; Westgate 2000a, 424 f. It is also possible that more lower-quality mosaics survive at Delos because it was abandoned at the end of the Hellenistic period, whereas at sites that were continuously occupied, the less impressive mosaics were more likely to be replaced by the later inhabitants.

137 Although a few of the houses are towards the top end of the size range known from the Hellenistic Mediterranean as a whole, most are much smaller, and their size was reduced by the presence of separate apartments in the upper storeys: see note 111.

138 See notes 99 and 133. It is harder to form an overall impression of the wall decoration of Rhodian houses: most of the published material consists of figured friezes from Masonry Style schemes, with subjects including chariot cavalcades, Nikai, a marine thiasos and the battle of the pygmies against the cranes (Konstantinopoulos 1973, 120 figs. 11. 12; Kreeb 1999; details of their contexts have not been published). There is also at least one example of an elaborate scheme with stucco columns and architectural mouldings (I. D. Kontis, Ἀνασκαφικαὶ ἔρευναι εἰς τὴν πόλιν τῆς Ῥόδου, Prakt 1952, 547–591 esp. 580–584 figs. 22. 23). But this impression of high quality may simply be a reflection of the interests of archaeologists: paintings without figures or moulded stucco are perhaps less likely to be published.

139 E.g. a fragmentary mosaic of a comic mask from Rhodini, which seems very similar in technique and quality to the mosaics in the Maison des masques (Konstantinopoulos 1986, 149 f. pl. 50).

140 E.g. a mosaic of rough stone chips with a small central panel in tesserae, depicting a simple rosette, from the Magos plot on Odos Oikoumenikou Patriarchou Athenagorou I (Phatourou 1964, 473 pl. 555δ).

141 E.g. three mosaics found on the Diakidis plot on Odos Pindou, which are undated but very similar to the pavements in House IV B on Delos, with plain stripe borders, a wave pattern and a lozenge-in-rectangle design (Ch. Doumas, Αρχαιότητες καὶ μνημεία

Rhodian house kept up with fashion by converting a square dining room of the Classical type, with a raised border and decorated pebble mosaic, into a modern ›broad room‹ with a tessellated mosaic[142].

The majority of Hellenistic mosaics are closer to the ›Delian‹ end of the spectrum than the ›palatial‹, as is to be expected, and the majority of houses in the period had no decorative mosaics or paintings; many sites, and even whole regions, have yielded no examples at all[143]. Perhaps the most important thing to be aware of when analysing interior decoration in the Hellenistic world is that we are only looking at a minority of houses, and thus at a relatively privileged minority of people.

Conclusion

Despite its patchy survival and the uncertainties of interpretation, Hellenistic interior decoration has considerable potential as historical evidence, especially if we combine traditional detailed analysis of style and motifs with consideration of broader patterns. In the context of the house, we can see fundamental social distinctions and conventions reflected in the decor. We can also see in decoration a reflection of the ideals, values and aspirations that shaped the householder's self-representation: mosaics, paintings, sculptures and other artefacts typically allude to hospitality and luxury, prosperity and success, leisure and culture, power and public affairs. Analysis of the motifs used in domestic decoration suggests that many are distantly descended from symbols of aristocratic status that first appeared in the early Archaic period, though by the Hellenistic period they may have derived their power primarily from their long association with the elite. There is also a considerable overlap with funerary iconography, not because interior decoration was intended to remind the viewer of death or the afterlife, but because both domestic and funerary imagery served a similar purpose, namely to present an individual or family in a favourable or idealised light. Considered on a wider scale, domestic decoration can give us insights into social and economic patterns at both the local and the regional level, especially in the late Hellenistic period when profound political and social changes meant that material goods were more important than ever as a means of displaying and establishing status; by viewing specific examples in the context of these broader trends, we may even begin to appreciate the significance of the choices made by particular individuals or households.

List of Bibliographical Abbreviations

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

Acheimastou-Potamianou 1976	M. Acheimastou-Potamianou, Κέντρο Συντηρήσεως Αρχαιοτήτων, ADelt 31, 1976, Chron 14–20.
Andreae 2003	B. Andreae, Antike Bildmosaiken (Mainz 2003).
Andrianou 2006	D. Andrianou, Chairs, Beds and Tables: Evidence for Furnished Interiors in Hellenistic Greece, Hesperia 75, 2006, 219–266.
Andronikos 1993	M. Andronikos, Vergina. The Royal Tombs and the Ancient City (Athens 1993).

Δωδωκανήσου 1974, ADelt 29, 1973/1974, Chron 965–981 esp. 970 pl. 735α).

142 House Δ, on the Skaros plot: G. Konstantinopoulos, Αρχαία οικία εντός οικοπέδου Αντ. και Μαρίας Σκάρου επί παρόδου της οδού Αγίας Αναστασίας, ADelt 22, 1967, Chron 523–529 figs. 4. 5; G. Konstantinopoulos, Ανασκαφαὶ εἰς Ρόδον, Prakt 1976, 334–341 figs. 3. 4. The room was enlarged by removing a wall, and the new mosaic was laid over the original pebble mosaic, which depicted a centaur (Salzmann 1982, 110 f. no. 113 pl. 46, 2); a pebble mosaic of Bellerophon in one of the other rooms was retained (Salzmann 1982, 111 no. 114 pls. 45. 46, 1).

143 Even at Delos, only about 40% of the houses had a decorated mosaic (Westgate 1997/1998, 110), a figure that would be considerably lower if it included the many small units identified by M. Trümper, Modest housing in late Hellenistic Delos, in: B. A. Ault – L. C. Nevett (eds.), Ancient Greek Houses and Households. Chronological, Regional, and Social Diversity (Philadelphia 2005) 119–139, which combined working and residential functions and in most cases had no decoration at all.

Barbet – Guimier-Sorbets 1994	A. Barbet – A.-M. Guimier-Sorbets, Le motif de caissons dans la mosaïque du IVe siècle avant J.-C. à la fin de la République romaine: ses rapports à l'architecture, le stuc et la peinture, in: J.-P. Darmon – A. Rebourg (eds.), La mosaïque gréco-romaine IV, Trèves, 8–14 août 1984 (Paris 1994) 23–37.
Barringer 1995	J. M. Barringer, Divine Escorts. Nereids in Archaic and Classical Greek Art (Ann Arbor 1995).
Bentz 1998	M. Bentz, Panathenaïsche Preisamphoren. Eine athenische Vasengattung und ihre Funktion vom 6.–4. Jahrhundert v. Chr., AntK Beih. 18 (Basel 1998).
Bentz 2001	M. Bentz, Die Preisamphoren aus dem Mosaikenhaus in Eretria, AntK 44, 2001, 3–12.
Bentz – Eschbach 2001	M. Bentz – N. Eschbach (eds.), Panathenaïka. Symposion zu den Panathenaïschen Preisamphoren, Rauischholzhausen, 25.–29. 11. 1998 (Mainz 2001).
Bezerra de Meneses 1984	U. T. Bezerra de Meneses, Essai de lecture sociologique de la décoration murale des maisons d'habitation hellénistiques à Délos, DialA (3rd series) 2, 1984, 77–88.
Bruneau 1972	Ph. Bruneau, Les mosaïques, Délos 29 (Paris 1972).
Bruneau 1994/1995	Ph. Bruneau, La maison délienne, Revue d'archéologie moderne et d'archéologie générale 12, 1994/1995, 77–118.
Bruneau – Ducat 2005	Ph. Bruneau – J. Ducat, Guide de Délos 4(Paris 2005).
Bruneau et al. 1970	Ph. Bruneau – Cl. Vatin et al., L'îlot de la Maison des Comédiens, Délos 27 (Paris 1970).
Bulard 1908	M. Bulard, Peintures murales et mosaïques de Délos, MonPiot 14 (Paris 1908).
Büsing-Kolbe 1988	A. Büsing-Kolbe, Ein neureiches Haus auf Delos, in: H. Büsing – F. Hiller (eds.), Bathron. Beiträge zur Architektur und verwandten Künsten für Heinrich Drerup (Saarbrücken 1988) 99–106.
Chamonard 1922–1924	J. Chamonard, Le Quartier du Théâtre. Étude sur l'habitation délienne à l'époque hellénistique, Délos 8 (Paris 1922–1924).
Chamonard 1933a	J. Chamonard, Les mosaïques de la Maison des Masques, Délos 14 (Paris 1933).
Chamonard 1933b	J. Chamonard, Fouilles à Délos (juillet–septembre 1930), BCH 57, 1933, 98–169.
Couve 1895	L. Couve, Fouilles à Délos (juillet–septembre 1894), BCH 19, 1895, 460–516.
Daszewski 1985	W. A. Daszewski, Corpus of Mosaics from Egypt I. Hellenistic and Early Roman Period, Aegyptiaca Treverensia 3 (Mainz 1985).
Daszewski 2001	W. A. Daszewski, Un atelier 'royal' de mosaïques à Alexandrie, in: Paunier – Schmidt 2001, 266–281.
Dentzer 1982	J.-M. Dentzer, Le motif du banquet couché dans le Proche-Orient et le monde grec du VIIe au IVe siècle avant J.-C., BEFAR 246 (Rome 1982).
Dreliossi-Herakleidou 1996	A. Dreliossi-Herakleidou, Späthellenistische palastartige Gebäude in der Nähe der Akropolis von Rhodos, in: Hoepfner – Brands 1996, 182–192.
Dreliossi-Herakleidou 1999	A. Dreliossi-Herakleidou, A Hellenistic Mosaic Floor from the City of Rhodes, in: Ennaïfer – Rebourg 1999, I, 39–50.
Ducrey 1989	P. Ducrey, Architecture et poésie: le cas de la Maison aux mosaïques à Érétrie, in: R. Étienne – M.-T. Le Dinahet – M. Yon (eds.), Architecture et poésie dans le monde grec. Hommage à Georges Roux, Collection de la Maison de l'Orient méditerranéen 19, Serie archéologique 10 (Paris 1989) 51–62.
Ducrey – Metzger – Reber 1993	P. Ducrey – I. R. Metzger – K. Reber, Le Quartier de la Maison aux mosaïques, Eretria 8 (Lausanne 1993).
Ennaïfer – Rebourg 1999	M. Ennaïfer – A. Rebourg (eds.), VIIème colloque international pour l'étude de la mosaïque antique, Tunis, 3–7 octobre 1994 (Tunis 1999).
Guimier-Sorbets 1994a	A.-M. Guimier-Sorbets, Mosaïques et dallages dans le monde grec aux époques classique et hellénistique, in: P. Johnson – R. Ling – D. J. Smith (eds.), Fifth International Colloquium on Ancient Mosaics Held at Bath, England, on September 5–12, 1987, JRA Suppl. 9 (Ann Arbor 1994) I, 13–25.
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Sources of Illustrations

Fig. 1: after Ducrey – Metzger – Reber 1993, fig. 25.
Fig. 2. 6. 8. 10. 11. 14. 15: R. Westgate.
Fig. 3: Swiss School of Archaeology.
Fig. 4: after Ducrey – Metzger – Reber 1993, fig. 185.
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Fig. 7: after Chamonard 1922–1924, pl. 49 A
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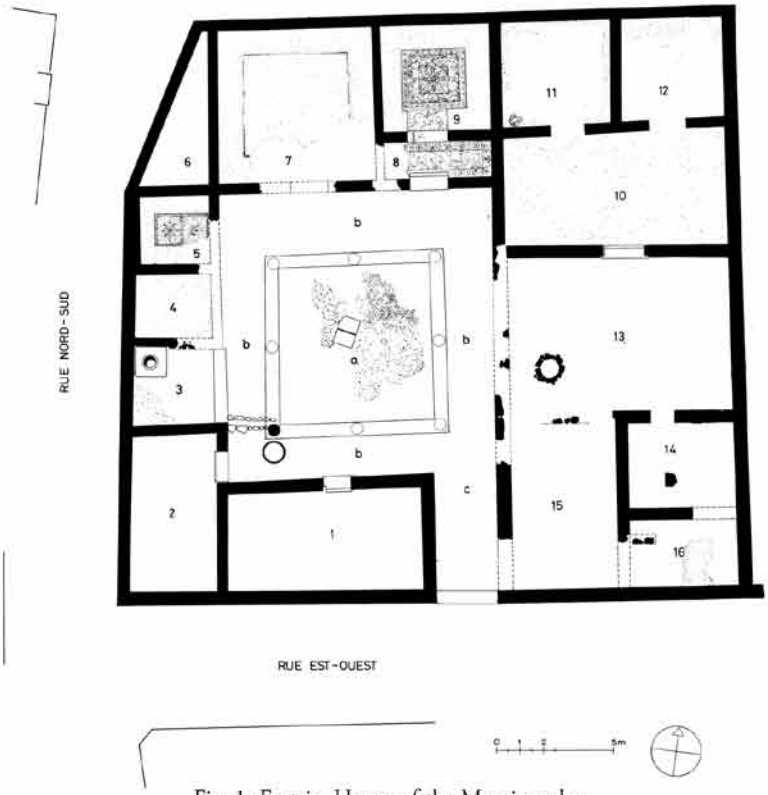

Fig. 1: Eretria, House of the Mosaics: plan

Fig. 2: House of the Mosaics: mosaic in room 5

Fig. 3: House of the Mosaics: mosaics in rooms 8 and 9

Fig. 4: House of the Mosaics: terracotta appliqué from room 7

Fig. 5: House of the Mosaics: one of the Panathenaic amphorae from the peristyle

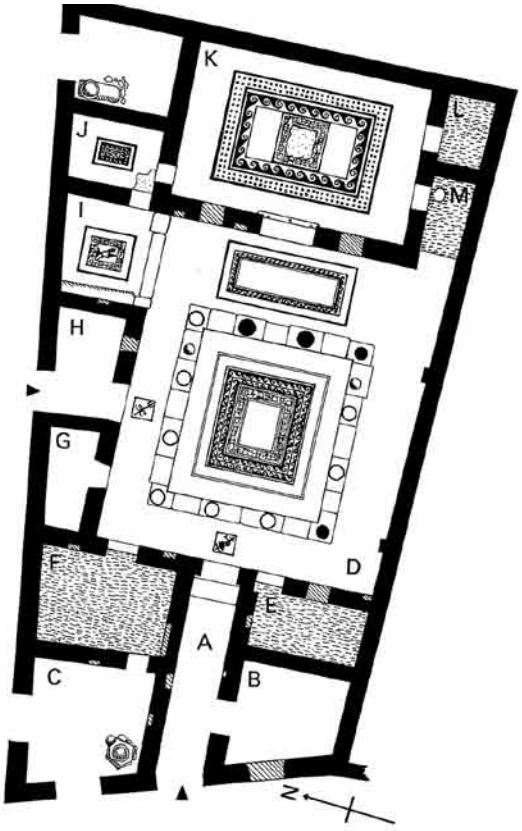

Fig. 6: Delos, Maison du trident: plan

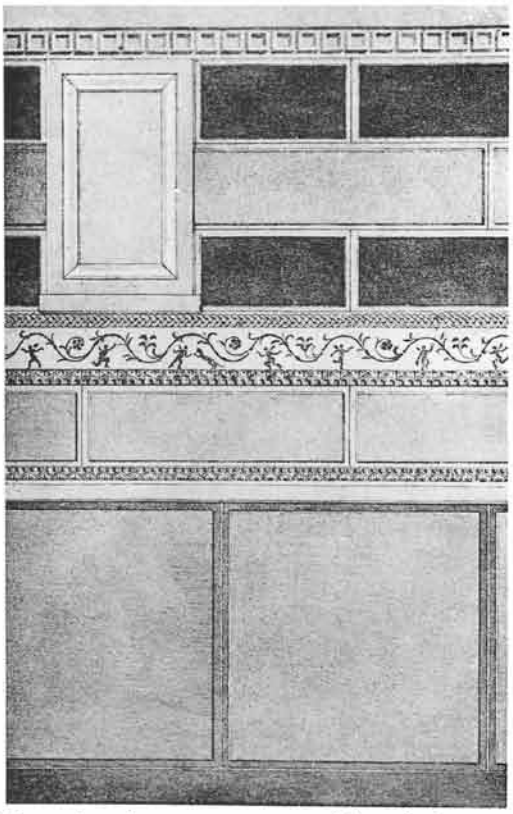

Fig. 7: Maison du trident: reconstruction of the wall plaster in room J. The orthostats were painted to resemble marble

Fig. 8: Delos, Maison du trident: mosaic of Panathenaic amphora in room I

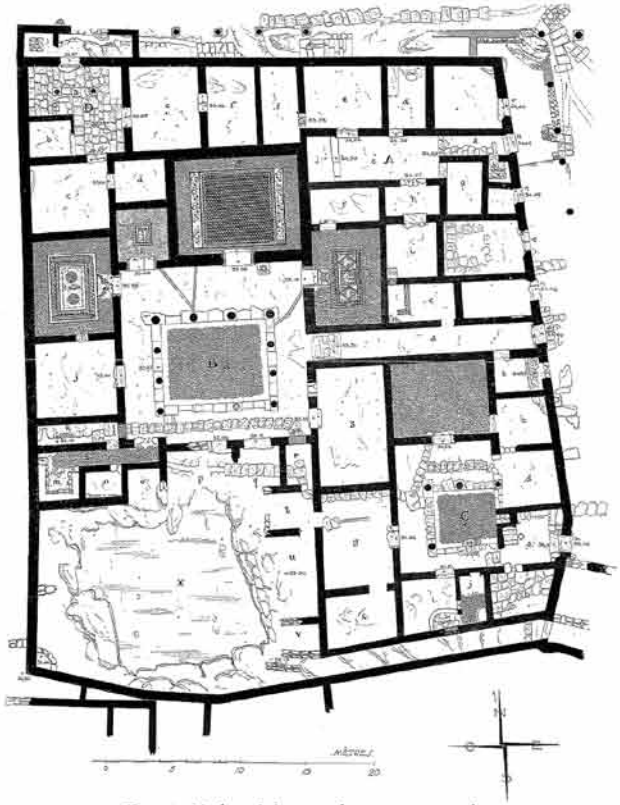

Fig. 9: Delos, Maison des masques: plan

Fig. 10: Maison des masques: mosaic of dancing Silenos in room H

Fig. 11: Delos, Maison des tritons: mosaic in room AE

Fig. 12: Delos, Îlot des bijoux, Habitation V: mosaic in room AL

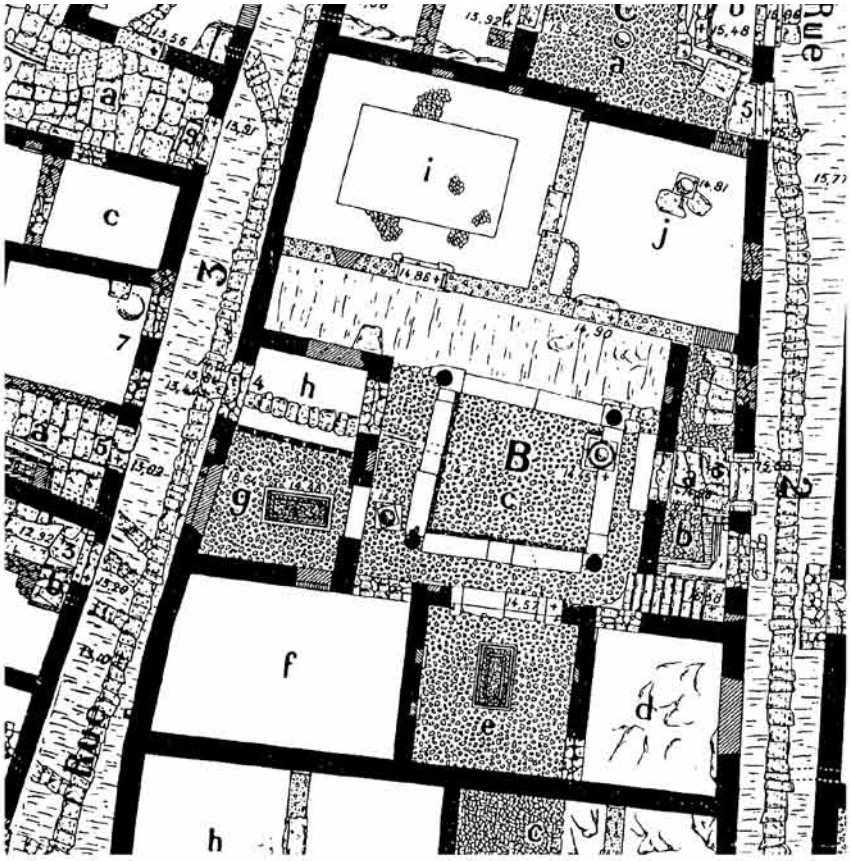

Fig. 13: Delos, House IV B in the Theatre Quarter: plan

Fig. 14: House IV B: mosaic in room g

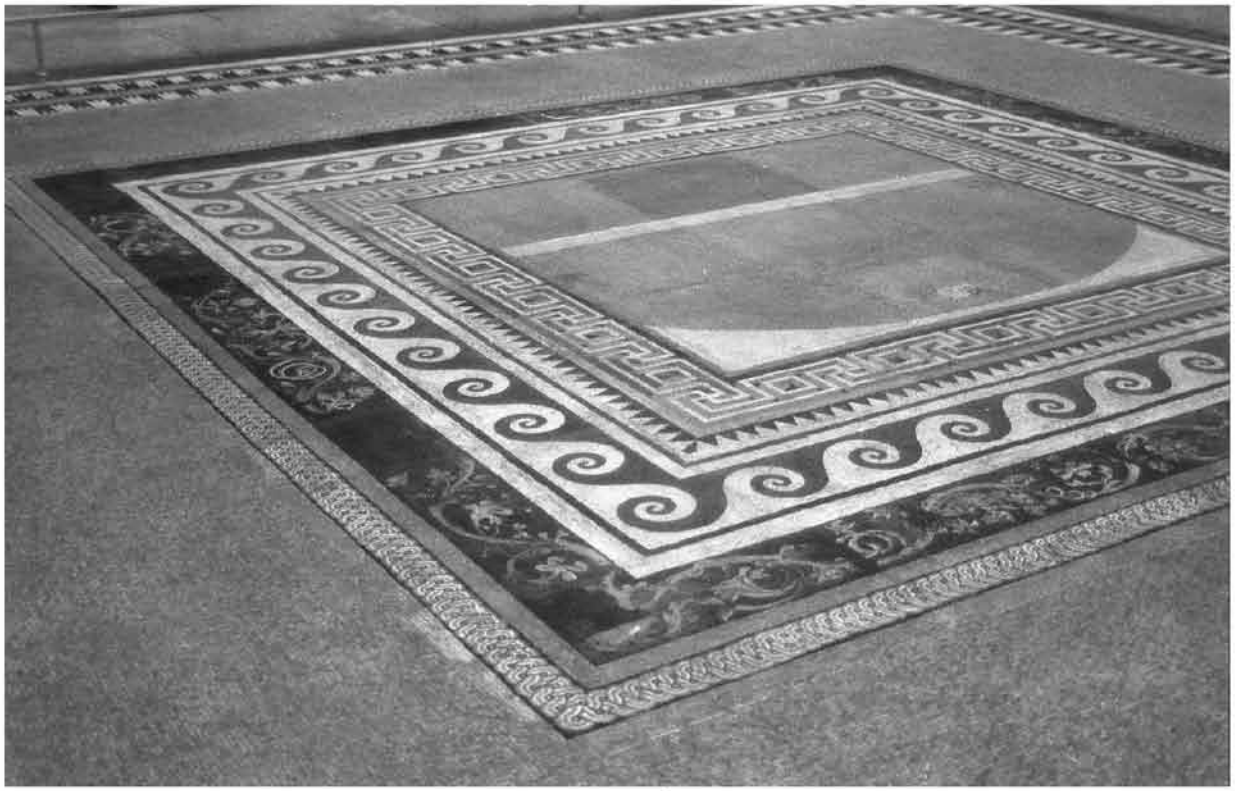

Fig. 15: Pergamon, Palace V: mosaic from the North-West Room

Fig. 16: Alexandria, mosaic from the site of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina

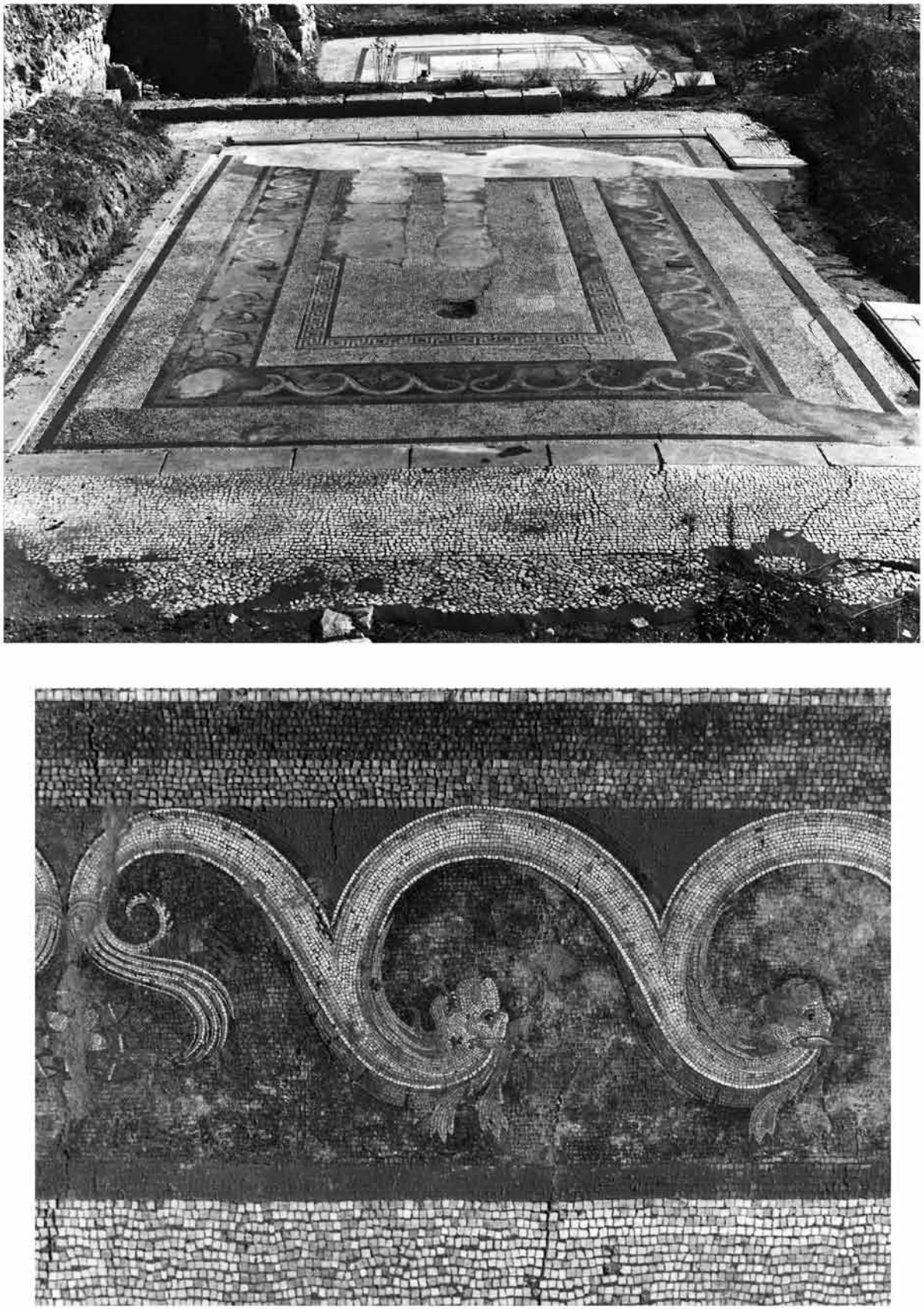

Fig. 17 a. b: Samos, late Hellenistic mosaic at Pythagoreio