THE HOUSE OF THE LORD
ASPECTS OF THE ROLE OF PALACE TRICLINIA
IN THE ARCHITECTURE OF LATE ANTIQUITY
AND THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

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I

THE TRICONCH AND THE SIGMA

Early in the fourteenth century in Tuscany was written a long allegorical poem entitled L'Intelligenza, author unknown. Since its discovery over a century ago, it has assumed a position of some importance in the history of allegorical and didactic verse after Dante. The poet sings of his love for a beautiful woman who appears to him as an angelic vision, in the bloom of spring. Dressed in silks of Cathay, with a mantle from Alexandria trimmed in white ermine, she wears a crown laden with a veritable lapidarium of precious and magical jewels. She lives in a splendid palace in the orient, built by divine Love “in the Indian manner” (a la guis' indiana). Most of the poem’s 309 stanzas in nona rima are devoted to a description of this incredible edifice, with its fabulous furnishings and decorations in mosaic. Finally, toward the very end, the grand edifying allegorical significance of the poem is revealed (Madonna = L'Intelligenza; the palace = Panima col corpo, i.e., Man).

As a whole, the work is perhaps most notable for the variety of late mediaeval conceits and themes from chivalresque poetry of which it is concocted. The description of the palace in particular has not the slightest reference to contemporary architecture, but fairly drips with the rhetoric of pure literary convention. And indeed the elements of the building are based upon a tradition that can be followed with some precision at least to the Carolingian period.

With appropriate elaborations and additions, the parts of the palace are essentially those of the following list given in the famous Historia Ecclesiastica of Ordericus Vitalis (1075 - ca. 1143).

1. proaulium
2. salutatorium
3. consistorium
4. tricorium
5. zetas hiemales
6. zetas aestivales
7. epicaustorium
8. thermas
9. gymnasia
10. coquinam
11. cymbobos
12. hippodromum

3. Ibid.

7. epicaustorium
8. thermas
9. gymnasia
10. coquinam
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12. hippodromum

3. Ibid.

4. What follows is a brief summary of an extremely complicated situation, as regards both the historical evidence itself and the scholarly bibliography that has grown up around it. Three studies are essential: Schlosser, “Beiträge...”; P. Clemen, “Der karolingische Kaiserpalast zu Ingelheim,” Westdeutsche Zeitschrift für Geschichte und Kunst, ix, 1890, pp. 111ff.; C. Huelsen, “Die angebliche mittelalterliche Beschreibung des Palatins,” Römische Mitteilungen, XVII, 1902, pp. 255ff. These investigations were, it seems, carried out independently; each makes fundamental contributions while overlooking material included in the others. To my knowledge no comprehensive study has been made.

6. In a number of versions (see below) hypodromum (= latrine) is used instead of hippodromum; L'Intelligenza
The list occurs in Ordericus' account of the life of the Apostle Thomas, who is supposed to have journeyed to India, where he was called upon to build such a palace for the ruler Gundaforbus. Ordericus' source was thus almost certainly the apocryphal Acts of St. Thomas, an extremely popular legend throughout the Middle Ages, as the many surviving versions—Greek, Syriac, Ethiopic, Armenian, Latin—testify. Yet the eastern redactions of the Acts, while they tell the story of the palace, do not give a description of it. The actual parts of the building, corresponding almost exactly to those of L'Intelligenza and Ordericus, appear only in the Latin versions.

Perhaps the Latin Passio S. Thomae is a translation from a Greek or Syriac original that contained the description. It seems far more likely, however, that the description is a purely Latin interpolation, the translator having appropriated an originally independent palace description, several versions of which are actually preserved. There is no way of determining exactly when this might have taken place. The only certain evidence is that the earliest manuscript of the Passio containing the description dates from the Carolingian period, as does the earliest manuscript of the independent description itself.

As regards the textual evidence, this is as far as even conjecture can take us. The most we can say is that sometime between the first century at the earliest, and the end of the eighth century at the latest, the foundations were laid for one of the most remarkable traditions of medieval architectural fantasy. Loaded with exotic and regal associations, the tradition culminated in the fourteenth century, when it epitomized for the author of L'Intelligenza the architectural setting of a magnificent, far away, and completely imaginary world.

In seeking the origin of this literary tradition, it was natural for the early editors of the mediaeval texts to suppose that they reflected an actual building, either extant or known to have existed from other sources. In the light of later research, however, all these suggestions proved groundless. The possibility of course remains that some structure as yet undiscovered was the model. But it is more probable that the original description amalgamated elements of perhaps quite disparate origin into a kind of ideal formula.

follows the former reading. This and other differences suggest that one of the related texts rather than Ordericus may have been the actual source.


3. The whole is certainly based on a Syriac or, more probably, a Greek source (James, Ibid.). But if the original contained the description, we are indeed confronted with a strange "historical conspiracy," since no versions other than the Latin have preserved it. Furthermore, the researches of Huelsen and Clemen have demonstrated the existence in various glosses and other texts of a rich tradition involving the same description, again exclusively Latin, having nothing to do with the Passio.


5. List of ms. Ibid., p. 257.

6. Huelsen postulates the existence of an original glossarium de domiciliis which, mainly on the analogy of the Horace and Juvenal scholia, he dates in the fifth or sixth century (p. 267). Schlosser also suggested a sixth century date ("Beiträge . . ." p. 51).

7. The Latin Passio seems to be referred to in a passage in Gregory of Tours (d. 593, cf. Bonnet, op. cit., p. xviii), but there is no reason to assume that the work mentioned by Gregory included the description, if indeed the latter was then in existence.

8. Schol. med. Montepess. 55, 8th-9th cent., Ibid., p. xxvii. In point of fact the Montpellier manuscript is fragmentary, beginning only after the passage concerning the palace.


11. The description has been variously derived from the palace of the Longobard dukes of Spoleto (because of a confusion of the manuscripts), the Carolingian palace at Farfa (because one of the manuscripts came from the monastery at Farfa), the Flavian palace on the Palatine (a misinterpretation of the texts), the Lateran palace (merely because it possessed a triconch, as did many other buildings as we shall see) for summaries of the earlier identifications, cf. Schlosser, "Beiträge . . .," pp. 41ff. and 51; Huelsen, op. cit., pp. 255ff. and 268. Schlosser himself used the Hellenistic palace at Palatina to reconstruct the described building, and Clemen, loc. cit., applied the description to the palace at Ingelheim.

12. Huelsen, op. cit., followed by L. Traube, Vorlesungen...
One of the difficulties in relating the description to real buildings is that for the most part the names refer to functions rather than shapes. The *proaulium* is a vestibule, but the word gives no idea of its appearance. The same is true of *consistorium*, a meeting place. On the other hand, *tricorium*, while it does not suggest a purpose, does imply a specific architectural form, namely a room with three apses. And purely as a result of this linguistic "accident," the triconch has acquired quite unusual significance in the historiography of late antique and early mediaeval architecture.

It happens that among the palaces built in the wastelands of Syria by the Omayyad Califs, one, the famous palace at Mschatta, included as the royal reception chamber a room with three apses—the *tricorium* of the Latin palace descriptions (Fig. 13). There could be no serious question of a direct connection between the descriptions and the palace at Mschatta. There must have been a common source, and for this Josef Strzygowski, who first considered the relationship, had a ready suggestion—the Temple of Solomon at Jerusalem, which he believed represented an oriental building idea of its appearance. The same is true of

\[\text{unusual significance in the historiography of late antique and early mediaeval architecture.}\]

conch became involved in that great perennial problem of the history of early mediaeval art, *Orient oder Rom*.

Strzygowski's hypothesis today seems rather na"\ıve, not to say tendentious, especially considering that there is not a particle of evidence to show that the Temple of Solomon actually had a triconch. Yet, the foundation upon which his theory rested remains firm; the triconch enables us to say that the Latin palace description and the palace at Mschatta, hence also the traditions they represent, are somehow related.

Since Strzygowski's day, and the period when the literary tradition was first being disentangled, a great deal of new material has become available bearing upon this problem, and a good deal of material known then has been neglected, perhaps because it is relatively obscure and difficult of access. The purpose of the first section of this study is to exploit this additional evidence in an effort to define the role of the triconch in late antique and early mediaeval domestic architecture. It should be said at the outset that many important questions will remain unanswered. In particular, we have seen that the triconch occupies a privileged position, and we cannot assume that its history is typical of other architectural features either in the literary sources or in the actual monuments to be discussed.

It is a curious and perhaps significant fact that although the word *tricorium* (*tricorum, trichorum*) is derived from Greek (*τριχωσθος*), it is used as an architectural term only in Latin. Even


18. A certain ambiguity is even possible here since the word might conceivably be applied to any arrangement of three apses in close proximity. Furthermore, it can be shown (see below, p. 15) that during the later Middle Ages the word could be used to refer to a function, rather than to a specific form. But on the whole, and especially for the early period, the familiar type with three apses at right angles, documented by references to known buildings (as at Nola, cf. R. C. Goldschmidt, *Paulinus' Churches at Nola*, Amsterdam, 1940, pp. 38, 125 and 127) should probably be assumed unless there is evidence to the contrary.


23. Most studies obscure the distinction between religious, funereal, and residential triconches; examples in Roman baths are often included as well. While there may be points of contact, these categories actually present quite different problems and should be investigated separately before their relationships can be accurately defined. Except for some remarks concerning the early use of the form in Christian martyria (see below, n. 170), we shall deal almost exclusively with the triconch in domestic architecture.

the Greek equivalent, τρικογχος, is known only from the Byzantine period, whereas Statius (ca. A.D. 40–96) already uses the Latin word in describing the villa of Manilius Vopiscus at Tivoli. Unfortunately, the poetical context makes the passage in Statius difficult to interpret precisely, but we can be certain that the architectural term was in use by the end of the first century A.D. A second instance is even more instructive. In the Historia Augusta it is said that in the house in Rome of Pescennius Niger (anti-emperor to Septimius Severus in A.D. 193–194) there was to be seen a statue of the emperor standing in a trichorum.

These texts suggest several important conclusions. The tri-apsidal form existed in Rome during the first two centuries after Christ, and in sufficient numbers to constitute an architectural type requiring a special name. Furthermore, the type seems to have been preferred as an important feature of private dwellings, such as villas and town houses, of quite pretentious character. The triconch was a mark of wealth and status. In fact, as the passage concerning the statue of Pescennius Niger suggests, it may even have been acquiring some association with the imperial cult.

In general, however, the motif must have remained relatively rare during the early empire, even in elaborate dwellings. Not a single example, so far as I know, occurs at Pompeii. The imperial associations too must have remained fairly limited, since no true triconches appear in the known imperial palaces of this period.

During the later empire, on the other hand, and presumably as a reflection of the noble residences of Rome, the triconch was thoroughly assimilated in the domestic architecture of the western provinces. This process of transplantation or “provincialization” must have been a typical phase in the evolution of Roman art, and it was certainly of great importance for the subsequent history of the triconch. Two villas with triconches have been found in Gaul, two in Spain, and no less than seven in Africa Proconsularis (roughly modern Tunisia), where the motif seems most readily to have found a home (Figs. 18–26).

Although few of these buildings can be dated accurately, a variety of evidence indicates that they range from the late third through the first half of the fourth century. No less than seven in Africa Proconsularis (roughly modern Tunisia), where the motif seems most readily to have found a home (Figs. 18-26). This process of transplantation or "provincialization" must have been a typical phase in the evolution of Roman art, and it was certainly of great importance for the subsequent history of the triconch. Two villas with triconches have been found in Gaul, two in Spain, and no less than seven in Africa Proconsularis (roughly modern Tunisia), where the motif seems most readily to have found a home (Figs. 18-26).

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early fifth century. And are found among those in North Africa, the Vandal conquest of that territory in 429-430 provides a fixed upper terminus for the whole series.

The implications of these facts seem plain enough. If one includes the two references to early triconches in Rome, we have mentioned thirteen examples preceding the second quarter of the fifth century. We shall shortly add one more also that can be dated well before the same chronological limit. This brings the total to at least fourteen, whereas to the best of my knowledge not a single triconch appears among the numerous palaces and villas in the eastern end of the Mediterranean during this entire period; the earliest member of the Syrian group that includes the palace at Mshatta dates from the late fifth century. In the face of such statistics there can be little doubt that priority for the development of the tradition should be assigned to the Latin west. The real problem becomes to discover how this western tradition, largely a provincial one at that, to judge from the available evidence, might have made itself felt in the palaces of Syria.

We have not yet considered the purpose for which the domestic triconches were actually used—a question, indeed, that often cannot be answered unequivocally.33 The presumption is that for the most part they were triclinia, dining rooms for special occasions; and we shall see that they never entirely lost this connotation. The triclinium, at first rather small and simple, early became the most important room in the Roman dwelling,34 so that, from the point of view of architectural history, the emergence of the triconch is part of a general development in which the triclinium is increasingly isolated, enlarged, and enriched.35 By the late third-early fourth century a variety of solutions can be found, including arrangements with one or two apses,36 full-fledged basilicas,37 and central plans.38 Thus, the triconch is one of several relatively complex types that replace the simple rectangle commonly used in the Hellenistic tradition.39 But it is doubtful if these more elaborate structures should be thought of as dining rooms in the usual sense.

34. RE, VII A 1, cols. 97ff., s.v. "Triclinium."
36. In North Africa this phenomenon is strikingly illustrated by comparing the plan of the well-known villa at Oudna (P. Gauckler, "Le domaine des Laberii à Utina," Monuments Piot, III, 1896, pp. 177ff., plans fig. 1, p. 185, pl. 22x) initially constructed in the late second or early third century (with later repairs), with that of the villa at Portus Magnus (our Fig. 11 S. Gsell, Les monuments antiques de l'Algérie, Paris, 1901, II, pp. 149ff.), probably of the late third century (on the dating see below, n. 55). In the former the rooms are all contained within the rectangular block of the building as a whole; in the latter the main triclinium projects with great emphasis from the rear (cf. K. M. Swoboda, Römische und romanische Paläste, and ed., Vienna, 1924, pp. 21 and 236).
37. Examples of triclinia with an apse at one end, while occurring earlier (Domus Aurea, Flavian palace on the Palatine in Rome, Casa del Capitelli at Pompeii), proliferate from the third century and thereafter. Particularly instructive are instances in which apsidal arrangements were added to preexistent buildings. This also happens earlier (e.g. a villa at Baiás, Hungary, J. Wollanka, "Ein römisches Mosaik aus Baiás," Jahreshefte des österr. arch. Instituts, XXXIII, 1949, pp. 1ff., cf. p. 6; Swoboda, op.cit., fig. 14, p. 23), but is particularly common in the early fourth century (cf. the villa at Parndorf recently excavated, Fatti Archeologici, 6, 1931, no. 6046, fig. 181, p. 468, and those at Chiragan, Cadelhan-Saint-Clar, and Lullingstone cited below, n. 201, the latter two among an interesting group in which the apse is more than a semicircle; also at Ostia, in the "Domus della Fortuna annonaria," G. Becatti, "Case ostensi del tardo impero," Bollettino d'arte, 33, 1948, fig. 23, p. 122).
38. For centralized design features that may follow Roman precedent (or is it vice versa)? At Djemila in Algeria a long basilica, which might be the reception room-triclinium of a private or official residence, has three apses along either side and a single apse at one end (cf. Y. Allais, Djemila, Paris, 1938, p. 57, adjoining no. 7 on the plan); the plan strongly recalls that of Santa Bialba in Rome (which may have been a pagan building originally, R. Krautheimer, Corpus basilicarum Christianarum Romae, 1, Rome, 1937, pp. 91ff.) and even more the church of Santi Quaranta at Saranda (E. Dyggve, "Die alchristlichen Klösterbauten an der Westküste der Balkanhäfen," Atti del IV Congresso int. di archeologia cristiana, Vatican, 1953, 1, Rome, 1940, p. 405, fig. 15 D). A villa at Cherchel in Algeria, probably of the fourth century, had a three-aisle vaulled basilica with apses at the end of each aisle (V. Wailie, "Nouveau rapport sur les fouilles de Cherchel," Revue africaine, 48, 1904, pp. 56ff., pl. VIII).
39. As we shall see, this whole development is also reflected in the eastern Mediterranean at a later period.
From the functional and ideological point of view one can only surmise that the evolution in design was accompanied, perhaps even motivated, by a general shift in the "style of living." It seems to imply a change in the character and significance of the social activities that took place in the villa. And in some instances at least the emphasis may have been specifically religious in nature. For example, the large triclinium that dominates the plan of a villa at Portus Magnus in Algeria (Fig. 1, see n. 35) had an elaborate mosaic pavement with scenes related to the cult of the Theban Cabiri (Fig. 2). To be sure, it is notoriously difficult to determine the precise religious content of mythological representations in private dwellings. But here it is hard to believe that such a complete program could have been conceived apart from the underlying ritual, even though the arrangement of the pavement (in the familiar T composition that allows for the placement of couches) shows that the room was intended primarily for dining.

Analogously, in the case of a triclinium in a villa at Douga, Tunisia (Fig. 22), the proximity of what is thought to have been the kitchen is again an indication of the essential purpose of the room. Yet it contained, it seems, an "omphalos" that would presumably have belonged to a statue of the Delphic Apollo. Whether secular or religious, or both, the requirements of social intercourse and ceremony must have been of special importance in the development of the "emphasized" triclinium.

From the sociological point of view it may be that provincialization also involved a certain degree of vulgarization, but it would be easy to overestimate this aspect of the development. The owners of these great provincial villas were enormously wealthy, often aristocratic. And the triconch remained a particularly lavish and expensive feature of domestic architecture. In the case of a villa at Carthage where the motif appears, there is even some evidence that the owner may have been an imperial official (Fig. 18). The pavement of the triconch contained the representation of a tholos covered with a cupola and flanked on either side by colonnaded porticoes (Fig. 4). The excavator pointed out the similarity between this and the traditional form of the imperial throne-tabernacle, and suggested that the building may have been the residence of the provincial governor. It is perhaps significant that no kitchen facilities were found, so that the triconch may here have served primarily as a ceremonial reception hall. And if the pavement contained an imperial emblem, might not the design of the room itself, recalling its use in the palace of Pescennius Niger, have had an imperial connection?

This at least would be the simplest explanation for the appearance of the triconch motif in what is at once perhaps the most important and problematic building of late antiquity that has come to light in recent years, the so-called "Imperial Villa" at Piazza Armerina in central Sicily (Fig. 5). The building aroused discussion from the moment of its discovery, by virtue of its spectacular decoration of mosaic pavements, and in the matter of determining its function and

40. Religious elements had of course long been an important factor in Roman triclinia, but we may note at least one instance at Pompeii: a triclinium with a vestibule that actually contained a permanent altar (VIII. v-vi. 16, cited by A. Mau, *Pompeii. Its Life and Art*, New York, 1907, p. 264, fig. 124).
44. A. Schulten, *Archäologischer Anzeiger*, Jahrb. d. deut. arch. Inst., 26, 1911, col. 2491; C. Poinsoat does not mention the "omphalos" (loc. cit.).
47. Ibid., pp. 183ff.; cf. p. 191, citing a letter from W. Saxon, who notes the analogy of the trifolium with the palaces at Ravenna and Constantinople, to be discussed below.
48. Ibid., p. 181.
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owner. Only extraordinary circumstances could account for such grandeur and magnificence (nearly fifty rooms, more than 3500 square meters of floor mosaics) in such a remote location.

The hypothesis that seems most promising, and has been accepted by the excavator, is that the building was erected by the emperor Maximianus Herculius as the retreat, or otium, to which he would retire after his abdication from the throne, which he shared with Diocletian, in 305. It would thus represent the counterpart of the famous palace of retirement built by Diocletian himself at Spalato. The evidence is too complex for presentation here; suffice it to say that there is mounting archaeological evidence for a date in the period of Maximianus and that while the attribution to him certainly cannot be taken as proved, it helps to explain many of the building’s remarkable features. Not the least of these is an iconographic peculiarity in the mosaics of the triconch. The great central square is filled with an elaborate representation of the Labors of Hercules, in the preserved part of which only the defeated victims are shown. Hercules appears in a scene of his “Glorification” in the north apse (Fig. 3), but he seems to have been omitted in the central square. One cannot but imagine that the emperor himself, who drew his ancestry from Hercules, was to be thought of in the role of the victorious hero.

If we accept the attribution of the building to Maximianus Herculius, as I think we must at least as a working hypothesis, then Piazza Armerina would make very explicit the association in palace architecture of the triconch with the imperial cult. But in that case, consideration of the design and decoration of the building leads to a remarkable paradox. The extraordinary plan, with its loose, organic relationships among and within the major groups of rooms, may represent a kind of planning that, having originated in Rome, was transferred to the provinces in the course of the third century. However, each group at Piazza Armerina retains a dominant central axis, along which the individual elements succeed one another. And if we compare the main ensemble at Piazza Armerina (Fig. 5, nos. 3, 15, 26, 30) with the late third century villa at Portus Magnus mentioned earlier (Fig. 1)—vestibule; peristyle flanked by living quarters; portico opposite the entrance extended as a long corridor; triclinium (isolated, on axis, projecting)—the immediate ancestry of the former becomes evident.

The mosaic pavements at Piazza Armerina are of interest in this connection. By and large, they


51. See now the important indications of finds above and below the mosaics cited by Gentili, I mosaici figurati, p. 74 (though it should be pointed out that strictly speaking the sealed coin of Maximianus provides only a terminus post quem on the hazards of dating mosaics by coins and pottery, cf. Levi, op. cit., pp. 5f.).

52. Other numismatic evidence yielding a date early in the fourth century has recently been offered by A. H. M. Jones, “The Origin and Early History of the Follis,” Journal of Roman Studies, 49, 1959, pp. 34ff.

53. A colossal head, identified as Hercules by L’Orange (“Il palazzo di Massimiano Eracleo di Piazza Armerina,” Studi in onore di Aristide Calderini e Roberto Parisi, 111, Milan, 1956, pp. 593ff.) was also found in the villa, probably from a statue to be placed in the niche of the apse of the great basilica. W. Sexton observes (Bulletin de la société nationale des antiquaires de France, 1953-1955, p. 152) that the Latin Panegyric of 289 specifically links Hercules to the palace of Maximianus (ed. E. Galletier, Panégyriques Latins, 1, Paris, 1949, p. 24).


fall into two groups: genre scenes, particularly scenes of the hunt, in a broad "painterly" style, and mythological subjects, equally colorful, but with voluminous "Pergamene" figures. The former group has from the beginning been recognized as directly related to a rich and peculiarly North African tradition in which such genre scenes for the decoration of private villas had a long history (compare Figs. 6 and 7). Yet, the mythological group too finds its closest parallels in North Africa, and particularly in the triclinium pavement of the same villa at Portus Magnus whose ground plan is so pertinent (Figs. 2 and 3). Everything seems to indicate that Piazza Armerina is the creation of a school, or schools, of artisans from North Africa. To be sure, study of the mosaics had already pointed in this direction. And even before the discovery of Piazza Armerina, Sicilian mosaic decoration as a whole had been regarded as basically an offshoot from the south. Thus, for a Sicilian villa to have its roots in North Africa is quite natural and in itself of little significance. But in this case the fact has important implications for the future, because the proprietor of Piazza Armerina may have been the emperor himself. If in the third century the triconch had become a trade-mark of the provincial landed aristocracy, it seems now to have been taken up again on the highest imperial level.

Once firmly established on this level the future of the motif was assured. It appears again in a building excavated at Ravenna, almost as grandiose as the villa at Piazza Armerina (Fig. 8). Again there is no conclusive evidence for the identity of the building's owner, though it has often been regarded as the palace of Theodoric the Great (d. 526). It is located just east of the church of Sant'Apollinare Nuovo (originally dedicated to the Savior), built by Theodoric as the Arian cathedral. And a palace of Theodoric is believed to have existed in precisely this area, i.e. between the church and the city wall. On the other hand, the excavation revealed several strata, from as early as the early Empire; the connections between the strata are quite complex, making it difficult to establish even a relative chronology. What does seem clear is that the basic elements, including the large peristyle, the apsidal basilica toward the center of one portico, and the triconch at the side, were in existence in the building's next-to-last phase and formed part of a unified plan. This plan bears pronounced similarities to that at Piazza Armerina. The triconch has been shifted to the main peristyle where it shares honors with the great basilica as the second

57. Fig. 7 is a mosaic from Hippo in Algeria, one among many examples that could be cited; in this case there is some archaeological evidence, which is supported by stylistic considerations, for a date in the latter part of the third century (Inventaire des mosaïques, 111, Algérie, F. G. de Pachètre, no. 45, pp. 12ff., ill., hereinafter Inv. Alg.; idem, "Les nouvelles fouilles d'Hippone," École française de Rome, Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire, XXII, 1911, pp. 321ff.; subsequent excavations in this villa are described by E. Marec, "Trois mosaiques d'Hippone à sijes marins," Libya, Arch.-Ép., vi, 1958, pp. 99ff.).


60. ibid., and refs. n. 31, p. 109.
61. G. Ghirardini, "Gli scavi del Palazzo di Teodorico a Ravenna," R. Accademia dei Lincei, Monumenti antichi, xxiv, 1918, cols. 737ff. The greatest over-all dimension at Piazza Armerina is of the order of 130 meters; at Ravenna, in so far as it was excavated, 90 meters.

62. A. Zirardini, Degli antichi edifici profani di Ravenna, Faenza, 1762, pp. 100ff.
63. Cf. Levi, op.cit., p. 691 n. 235. However, the confusion in the building, though abnormal, is not quite so complete as Levi makes out (see the next footnote). Nor is the writer quite as convinced as Levi that the mosaic pavements belonging to the building phase outlined below must be radically earlier than the period of Theodoric (arguments presented in the study alluded to above, n. 57).


64. Porticoes A', A'', had mosaics on from two to five levels, of which the last in each case is probably later than the pavement in the triconch; stylistically the figural mosaic in the triconch seems contemporary with the next-to-last level (which also had figural compositions) in porticoes A' and A''. The basilica had three levels; the uppermost was unfortunately lost, but since it covered a pavement in opus sectile, probably of the early Empire, the room must have been in existence before the next-to-last level in the peristyle, the mosaics of which certainly date from a later period (at which time, perhaps, the basilica was enlarged to its final shape). Cf. Ghirardini, op.cit., cols. 749ff., 771ff., on the porticoes; 775ff., on the basilica; 782ff., on the triconch.
of the palace's two chief rooms. But the analogy runs even deeper. For at Ravenna the peristyle had mosaic pavements with various genre scenes, including circus and amphitheater games, and elaborate hunts (Fig. 9). The building thus documents the existence of this formal and iconographical tradition at a place which, particularly after Honorius removed the imperial court to Ravenna in A.D. 404, ceased to be merely provincial.

The palaces at Piazza Armerina and Ravenna indicate that at least from the early fourth century the triconch regained its elevated social status if indeed it had actually lost it. And the next major phase in the development took place in the capital of the eastern Empire. Before examining the Byzantine contribution to our problem, however, we must consider another architectural motif that shows a parallel development to the triconch, and in a number of significant instances enters into a close partnership with it. We have observed that the triconch may be regarded as one of several forms adopted for the triclinium in the tendency to emphasize that element of the traditional villa plan. At Piazza Armerina this tendency has led to the creation of an independent unit, including both a peristyle flanked by smaller rooms and the triconch (Fig. 5, nos. 41-46). Here, moreover, the peristyle functions primarily as a kind of forecourt, introducing a degree of orientation and augmenting the concentration upon the triconch. This effect arises largely from the virtual elimination of two sides of the peristyle, while the lateral porticoes are bowed outward.

In all likelihood the curved peristyle at Piazza Armerina is an adaptation of the semicircular porticoes that had appeared frequently in Roman domestic architecture; and occasionally, in a manner recalling its use at Piazza Armerina, as the forecourt to the triclinium (Fig. 10). The simpler form actually occurs at Piazza Armerina in the entrance court and in a subsidiary group of buildings opening off the main portico, next to the great basilica (Fig. 5, nos. 2 and 31). The curved portico thus also constitutes a distinct architectural type, and, though known only from later sources, it too had a special name, 

66. If the Ravenna palace was actually Theodoric's the two buildings may be connected in another, quite unexpected way. We noted (above, n. 51) that there was a literary link between Hercules and the dwelling of Maximianus, a link perhaps reflected in the Hercules iconography of the pavement in the triconch at Piazza Armerina. E. Dyggve now points out ("Basilica Herculis," Festschrift W. Sas-Zaloszeczy, Graz, 1956, pp. 34ff.) that the Basilica Herculis which Theodoric built at Ravena (Casiodorus, Var., I, 6), usually thought of as a civil basilica, may on the analogy of Piazza Armerina this tendency has led to the creation of an independent unit, including both a peristyle flanked by smaller rooms and the triconch (Fig. 5, nos. 41-46). Here, moreover, the peristyle functions primarily as a kind of forecourt, introducing a degree of orientation and augmenting the concentration upon the triconch. This effect arises largely from the virtual elimination of two sides of the peristyle, while the lateral porticoes are bowed outward.

67. Cf. the analogous arrangement, a hunting scene in the portico preceding the triconch, in the Maison du Char de Vénus at Thuburbo Majus in Tunisia, discussed below (Appendix, p. 26, Fig. 25).


70. Cf. C. Du Cange, Glossarium ad scriptores mediae et infimae graecitatis, Lyons, 1688, 11, col. 1356. The term seems first to have designated semicircular dining tables and bath-tubs (cf. RE, II A 2, cols. 232f.) see also an interestingly ambiguous post-Constantinian inscription from a synagogue at Side in Asia Minor (J. B. Frey, Corpus inscriptionum iudaicarum, Vatican, 11, 1952, no. 271, pp. 181, L. Robert, "Inscriptions grecques de Sidé en Pamphylie," Recue de philologie, de littérature et d'histoire anciennes, XXII, 1958, pp. 381, 394, n. 1 and 2). A parallel case is that of the term gamma applied to forms suggesting the Greek capital letter Γ (e.g., a covered bazaar at Damascus so named in an inscription recording its construction in A.D. 330-340; C. Watzinger and K. Wulflinger, Damaskus, die antike Stadt, Berlin and Leipzig, 1921, no. 5, pp. 36ff., plan fig. 26, p. 27). Neuber, op.cit., p. 33 n. 8, in connection with the entrance court and court no. 31 at Piazza Armerina, makes reference to the D-shaped portico mentioned by Pliny the Younger, Letters, 11, 17, 4. The term porticus abidata (Platner and Ashby, op.cit., pp. 419f.) probably also applies to the semicircular design (A. M. Schneider, Arch. Am., 1933, col. 260 n. 1, see below n. 140).
at Constantinople (see below). But in fact both types had long since been introduced separately in the eastern capital. A triconch was certainly in existence near Constantine’s Capitol by A.D. 447. A portico shaped like a sigma served as the approach to a port built by Julian the Apostate (361–363) for the protection of ships approaching from the north. And no less than three actually preserved buildings in the city, two of them palaces, securely datable in the first half of the fifth century, have sigma porticoes as entrances to large central halls (Fig. 17; see below pp. 18ff.).

It seems clear that the first century and a half after the foundation of the city by Constantine was the crucial period in the transferral of these forms from the Latin west, to which they appear to have been exclusively confined therebefore, to the new capital. And it can hardly be coincidental that the second half of the fifth century witnessed the emergence in Syria of a tradition to which, as Strzygowski himself recognized, the palace at Mschatta certainly belongs. The earliest document in this Syrian group is an intriguing inscription from Bosra, the ancient capital of Provincia Arabia, which records the erection there of a “triconch sigma” (τρίκονχον σώμα) in A.D. 488. The tenor of the inscription makes it seem probable that the building was a public monument of some sort rather than a private palace, and the specific architectural meaning of the phrase τρίκονχον σώμα is subject to question. But the combination of these two forms, and the use of these technical terms, are clear links to the developments we have been following. Slightly later, and also at Bosra, a palace with a triapsidal triclinium is actually preserved (Fig. 11). From its close proximity to the cathedral it has generally been identified as the episcopal palace; and in fact it is very probably contemporary with the cathedral, which is dated A.D. 512.

A triconch is also present in a famous pre-Islamic palace at Kasr ibn Wardan, which is surely dated to the year A.D. 564 (Fig. 12). Here, the triconch dominates the plan and the peristyle serves mainly as its forecourt. This arrangement clearly anticipates that of the palace at Mschatta (Fig. 13), though the scale and proportions are quite different. And finally we reach Mschatta...
itself, which Strzygowski placed in the fourth-fifth century or even earlier. Recent Islamic scholarship regards it almost universally as Omayyad, probably of the early eighth century.79

The triconch at Mschatta thus emerges as an epigone of a local Syrian tradition that had developed as a kind of offshoot from the main channel of transmission.80 This at least is what the chronological evidence suggests. But there are several other indications that help to localize the source of the Syrian group. The Omayyad Califs are known to have imported artists and materials from Byzantium.81 The palace at Kasr ibn Wardan is built in a brick and stone technique that is almost unique in pre-Islamic Syria, but is indistinguishable from the architecture of Constantinople in the period of Justinian.82 Butler regarded a Constantinopolitan origin as certain, and even suggested that the architect might have been the nephew of Isidorus of Miletus, who seems to have worked in this same part of Syria. The “triconch sigma” at Bosra was dedicated, according to the inscription, under the governorship of one Flavius Arcadius Alexander; he is otherwise unknown, but as governor of the province he was appointed directly by the emperor and certainly had close relations with the capital. Finally it should be mentioned that a palace with a triconch was recently excavated at Side in Pamphylia; from its location near a large basilica, ascribed to the fifth-sixth century, it too has been regarded as the episcopal palace.83 Under the circumstances, it would be difficult to conceive a more likely source of inspiration than the imperial capital for a building with this motif at a site so near.

Having been adopted at Constantinople, therefore, our architectural tradition soon made itself felt in neighboring regions. Its noble, even imperial, associations were doubtless an important factor in this process, if indeed they were not the cause. And certainly the most spectacular fruit of this development was produced in the palace of the emperors at Constantinople itself.

In the eleventh year of his reign, according to tradition, the emperor Theophilus (829-842) built a triconch and a sigma in the Great Palace.84 These were only part, though the most splendid, of the many additions made to the imperial residence by this remarkable ruler, who was a militant iconoclast but created a great renewal of Byzantine architecture through his extensive building activities.85 The Triconchos and Sigma completely transformed the old palace and quickly became one of the most important ceremonial centers of the whole complex. The apses of the Triconchos, which had two stories, were oriented north, south, and east, while the entrance was at the west. Two columns framed three portals that gave access to the Sigma. The roof of the Triconchos was girt, its walls painted with genre and animal scenes, recalling the mosaic pavements with analogous subjects that we have encountered repeatedly. The entrance had three portals, the lateral two...
of bronze, the central one of silver. These gave access to the semicircular Sigma, which also had two stories, the upper with fifteen columns, the lower with nineteen.

The magnificent buildings of Theophilus bring to a climax the eastern, Byzantine phase of our tradition. And since the procedure for receptions that took place in the Triconchos and Sigma are described in the Book of Ceremonies of Constantine VII Porphyrogenitus, for once we are able to conjure up some image of the way in which the structure was used. From the beginning we have found traces of ceremonial implications. Here they are elaborately developed, and the Great Palace provides our richest example of the interplay between imperial ritual and architecture.  

The triconch thus appears as a kind of test case in the evolution of mediaeval "associative" architecture. We have seen that, largely as a result of its associations, a Roman architectural tradition was transferred to Byzantium, there to play a role that has no real parallel in the west. For whereas in the east we have been able to follow the triconch from at least the early fourth century, in the west after the palace at Ravenna, I know of not a single example before precisely this period, i.e. the period of Charlemagne. Then, however, there took place in Europe a great florescence of the triconch in palace architecture.  

Pope Leo III (795-816) undertook an ambitious building program, which included several additions to the Lateran palace. Foremost among these was a vast triclinium, "greater than any other"; it had three apses, one of which was decorated with mosaics, the others with paintings of diverse subjects, while the walls were covered with marble incrustation. The plan of the building given by Alemanni (Fig. 16) shows it to have had the familiar arrangement of the "royal" triconch. The fact that Leo adopted the motif bears witness to its implications as an architectural type. For certainly the outstanding aspect of Leo's reign was the association of the spiritual with the temporal power, formalized by his coronation of Charlemagne in 800. But that there was indeed a specific and conscious connection between the triclinium and these political notions is best appreciated from the mosaic decoration of the central apse. This is known from the famous

86. Bk. 1, ch. 75 (66), ed. A. Vogt, vol. 11, text, Paris, 1939, pp. 10f. The procedure was roughly as follows. Having traversed the gallery of the Forty Saints the emperor enters the Triconchos, where he dons the chlamys and is crowned by the praepositus (first chamberlain). The dignitaries of the court arrange themselves on either side, the spatharocubicularii (imperial arms-bearers) and the cubicularii (chamberlains) take their places behind them on the steps of the apse. The praepositus, having received a sign from the emperor, signals the ostiarius (ceremonial steward) who introduces the patricians and strategi (provincial military commandants). When all those present are in their proper places, the emperor receives their salutations. This procedure took place at every imperial reception. The emperor and his entourage then pass through the silver portal to the Sigma. Here they make the four petitions after each of which, having been given by Alemanni (Fig. 16) shows it to have had the familiar arrangement of the "royal" triconch. The fact that Leo adopted the motif bears witness to its implications as an architectural type. For certainly the outstanding aspect of Leo's reign was the association of the spiritual with the temporal power, formalized by his coronation of Charlemagne in 800. But that there was indeed a specific and conscious connection between the triclinium and these political notions is best appreciated from the mosaic decoration of the central apse. This is known from the famous

87. As we have seen, the immediate inspiration for Theophilus' triconch probably existed in Constantinople itself. But the situation is complicated by the fact that by then the type had indeed become established farther east and, as Michatta proves, had even been adopted by Islamic architects. Hence, there is the possibility of an influence from this quarter, another of Theophilus' palaces, at Bryas, is reported to have been modeled after that at Bagdad (Theophanes continuatus, Migne, Patr. Gr., vol. 109, col. 112; cf. Zonaras, ibid., vol. 134, col. 1401, and the references in Janin, Cons. Byz., pp. 145f., 447f.; S. Eyice has tentatively identified the Bryas palace with the remains at Kökçi-klı, "Quatre édifices insulits ou mal connus," Cahiers archéologiques, 10, 1959, pp. 21f. Cf. also Türk Tarih Kurumu, Belleten, 23, 1959, pp. 79f., with summary in French). On the other hand, the overwhelming Islamic influence often assumed for the period of Theophilus, largely on the basis of these passages, may be exaggerated.


89. Liber Pontiff, ed. cit., ii, pp. 1f.

Fecit autem et in patriarchio Lateranensi triclinium maiorem super omnes triclinoles nominii suo mire magnitudinis decoratum, ponens in eo fundamenta firmissima et in circuitu lamminis marmoreis ornatis, atque marmoribus in exemplis stravit et diversis columnis tam purificatis quamque albis et sculptis cum basibus et liliis simul postibus decoravit. Et camera cuio absida de musibo seu alias II absidas diversas storias pingens super magnorum constructione pariter in circuitu decoravit.


90. N. Alemanni, De laternenibus parietinis, Rome, 1655, pl. 11 cf. also the sketch by Pompeo Ugonio, Lauer, op. cit., fig. 40, p. 104.
1. Portus Magnus, Roman Villa (From Gsell)

2. Portus Magnus, Roman Villa, Triclinium Mosaic, detail (Inventaire)


4. Carthage, Roman Villa, Mosaic Pavement (photo: C. Poinssot)

5. Piazza Armerina, Roman Villa (From Gentili)
6. Piazza Armerina, Roman Villa, Mosaic Pavement, Hunting Scene  
   (photo: Gab. Fot. Naz., Rome)

7. Hippo Regius, Roman Villa, Mosaic Pavement, Hunting Scene (*Inventaire*)

8. Ravenna, So-called "Palace of Theodoric" (After Ghirardini)
9. Ravenna, So-called "Palace of Theodoric," Mosaic Pavement, Hunting Scene (From Ghirardini)

10. Teting, Roman Villa (From Grenier)

11. Bosra, Palace (After Butler)
12. Kasr Ibn Wardan, Palace (From Butler)

13. Mschatta, Palace, detail (From Cresswell)

14. Mt. Athos, Vatopedi Monastery, Refectory (From Orlandos)
15. Ingelheim, Palace of Charlemagne (From Rauch)

16. Rome, Lateran, Triclinium of Leo III (From Alemanni)

17. Constantinople, Palaces of Antiochus (S. Euphemia) and Lausus (After Duyuran)
eighteenth century reconstruction of the apse that still exists next to the Scala Santa, and from a number of descriptions, drawings, and watercolors made before the apse was dismantled. In the conch was a representation of the Mission of the Apostles, while on the spandrels of the arch two scenes were juxtaposed: on the left was Christ giving the Keys to Pope Sylvester (or Peter) and an oriflamme to Constantine the Great; on the right, St. Peter was shown giving the pallium to Pope Leo, while now it is Charlemagne who receives the standard.92

That the triconch held a powerful appeal for the papacy is shown by the fact that it was again adopted for the triclinium added to the Lateran palace by Gregory IV (827-844). But Leo's triconch makes explicit the reason for this appeal; with the decorations it embodied not only the association of spiritual with temporal power, but also the conception of that association in terms of the Renovatio Imperii Romanorum.93 In this latter respect it is of particular interest that, so far as we can tell, no triconches had been produced in the Latin west since the end of the fifth century at the latest.

The triconch, however, played a much greater role in the Carolingian Renaissance than even these papal examples would suggest. For modern excavations uncovered a triconch in Charlemagne's own palace at Ingelheim. There a hall with three apses, preceded by a rectangular room, opened off the main central courtyard (Fig. 15). It was located near the center of the complex, which to the north ended in a huge semicircular flight of rooms with a colonnade on the inner side. That it functioned primarily as a triclinium is indicated by its placement near the living quarters of the palace on the north side; the basilical hall with the famous paintings of ancient rulers and of Charlemagne's Frankish ancestors,94 was in the southwest corner of the court.

When the three greatest powers in Christendom, the Byzantine emperor, Charlemagne, and the pope, all employ the same architectural motif in their palaces, within two generations of each other, it cannot be regarded as coincidental.95 Yet, it is not a simple matter to determine what precisely was the relationship between them. The triclinium of Leo III can be dated within fairly narrow limits by its mosaic decoration. It must have been executed after Leo's election in 795, and before Charlemagne was crowned emperor in 800, since his portrait was labeled Rex.96

The palace at Ingelheim can be fixed only indirectly. Charlemagne had been to Rome in 774, and the construction at Ingelheim has recently been assigned to the period thereafter, up to the Roman visit of 787.97 Yet, Einhard in his life of the emperor seems to imply that the building

91. Ibid., pp. 108 f.; cf. also J. Wilpert, Die römischen Mosaiken und Malereien der kirchlichen Bauten vom IV. bis XIII. Jahrhundert, Text 1, Freiburg i. B., 1917, pp. 153 ff.
93. Liber Pont., ed. cit., II, p. 76: Verum etiam fecit in patriarchio Lateranense triclinium mire magnitudinis decoratum, cum absida de musibō, seu et alias abidas duas, dextra levaque posita in para­cellaria, variae storis depictas.
95. The excavations took place 1908-1914. Cf. C. Rauch, "Die Pfalz Karls des Grossen in Ingelheim am Rhein," in Neue deutsche Ausgrabungen, ed. G. Rodenwaldt (Deutschem und Ausland, 23-24), Münster i. W., 1936, pp. 266 ff. (fig. 1, p. 271, our Fig. 15).
96. Ermoldus Nigellus, De laude Hludowici, iv, vv. 244 ff., (cf. J. von Schlosser, Schriftquellen zur Geschichte der karolingischen Kunst, [Quellenschriften für Kunstgeschichte und Kunstechnik, N.F. vol. iv], Vienna, 1892, no. 1007, pp. 36 ff.)
97. The aula regia of Charlemagne's palace at Aachen (partially preserved in the present Rathaus) has also been restored as a triconch; cf. P. Clemen, "Fouilles et explorations dans l'encainte du Palais impérial carolingien et de la cathédrale d'Aix-la-Chapelle," Revue de Part chrétien, 62, 1912, pp. 213 ff. (plan p. 219). Later K. Faymonville and J. Laurent report that the assumption of apses on the north and south flanks is "ohne Belang," and reproduce a plan in which an apse appears on the north side and a solarium on the south (Die Kunstdenkmaler der Rheinprovinz, ed. P. Clemen, vol. x, pt. iii, Düsseldorf, 1924, p. 156, fig. 8, p. 65).
was only begun by him, and its decorations are attributed to Louis the Pious in Nigellus' eulogy. Thus Clemem dated the Ingelheim palace as late as 807-817. If the later date for the Ingelheim palace is correct, its triconch may well have been inspired by Leo's building in the Lateran. But it is possible that Ingelheim was the earlier of the two. And in any event we should still have to inquire what may have been the original source.

We are at liberty to assume that the Carolingian triconches were directly revived from an earlier western model. In that case the palace at Ravenna would acquire additional importance, particularly if it was indeed associated with Theodoric. Charlemagne certainly visited Ravenna on more than one occasion, and it hardly needs repeating that he actually transferred materials from Ravenna to Ingelheim as well as Aachen, including for the latter an equestrian statue of Theodoric. But it is also possible that the Carolingian examples were derived from Byzantium, since many other factors, some of which we shall consider below, point in the direction of Constanti

In fact, the available evidence does not permit a choice between the late empire in the west or Byzantium, as a source for the Carolingian triconches. Either explanation would be consistent both with the notion of a revived Roman empire and with the association of spiritual and temporal sovereignty. Indeed, since Byzantium was recognized even by Charlemagne as a legitimate continuation of the Roman empire, there is no doubt that the distinction we draw between them is largely anachronistic. And the triconch may have been regarded as a kind of architectural "sign of sovereignty," beyond time and space. One point stands out sharply. The Carolingian triconches were produced by an act of will, a deliberate emulation of some alien model.

That the motif was considered an important feature of palace design as early as the sixth century is indicated by the fact that it was included in the Latin palace-paradigm discussed at the beginning of this paper. This in itself suggests that the triconch was already becoming part of an ideal. But equally suggestive is the fact that the triconch was also considered appropriate when, in translating the Passion of St. Thomas into Latin, the description was added to the account of the palace.
designed by the apostle for the Indian monarch. In Latin eyes the triconch was becoming “oriental” as well as ideal. And indeed from the sixth through the eighth century, as we have seen, the triconch was dormant in the west, while it continued as a living tradition only in the east. Thus, it may be quite significant that the Carolingian examples seem at once a revival, the realization of an ideal, and a pointed reference to Byzantium.

After the florescence of the Carolingian period, the triconch seems to have disappeared from the repertory of mediaeval palace architecture. At least I have not encountered any later examples. Yet it left an indelible mark not only on literary tradition, but in what at first glance would seem to be a quite unexpected branch of architectural history. The trifolium was taken up for monastic refectories in the east, and was used for this purpose at a very late phase in the evolution of Byzantine monastic architecture (Fig. 14). This development may reflect a general shift of the architectural center of gravity from the secular to the ecclesiastical sphere. But perhaps more fundamentally, it represents a triumph of what might be called the “functional” basis of mediaeval architectural tradition. For the triconch evidently retained, beneath every associative overlay, an identification with the triclinium, a place to eat.

The full significance of this functional principle of continuity is best appreciated, however, from what happened in the west. There, so far as I can discover, the triconch played no role in the actual design of refectories. And yet, the term tricorium was often used as the name for the monastic dining hall. In the west, it would seem, the power of association was so strong as to override the logical implications of real architecture. This in a sense is analogous to the phenomenon we observed in the literary palace tradition; the triconch continued to accumulate associations until in the fourteenth century it formed part of an imaginary and divine world. At the beginning it may have been introduced into the Passio S. Thomae because, after a long development in the late antique period, it was “natural” that a royal palace have a triconch; it was included in L’Intelligenza because by then it had become unnatural.

II

THE CENTRAL PLAN IN PALACES AND CHURCHES

One of the most conspicuous forms adopted for the “emphasized” triclinium or reception hall is the central plan, examples of which are known from a very early period in Roman imperial palace architecture. Perhaps the most famous documented example is the revolving circular dining room

109. In fact, several of the texts contain a curious error which suggests that the eastern building tradition actually affected the Latin literary tradition. In order to understand it, however, a brief recapitulation of some of our results will be useful. We have seen that both the triconch and the sigma were Roman forms which, although brought together occasionally in the west, became closely associated as an architectural formula only in the east. We have also seen that the term tricorbury has a long history in Latin. The word sigma, on the other hand, although widely used in Greek from at least the fifth century, to my knowledge occurs in Latin as an architectural term only in certain manuscripts of the palace description, and in a related gloss (Huelsen, Röm. Mitt., 1903, p. 259; apparently Brussels ms. 9742 mentioned by Clemen, Westd. Zeit., 1890, p. 113, should be added). This in itself is an indication of some contact with the Greek east. But the context in which the term occurs is even more suggestive, and shows that the contact was with precisely the traditions we have been following. Many of the texts include short explanatory phrases after each term. Thus, the eleventh century grammarian Papias gives this description:

Tricorura tres camera vel abisidas.

But in the group in question the following definition occurs:

Tricorum vel tricoruru locus prandii, qui et sima dicitur.

The erroneous identification of tricoruru with sigma demonstrates not only that the eastern tradition in which the two motifs were linked was known in the west, but that it was sufficiently strange to engender a very obvious confusion. (The confusion was perhaps compounded by the prior use of sigma for a semicircular dining table. Sima or syma in the Latin texts is not necessarily a direct corruption of the Greek σύμα, since the form σύμα is also known, in the inscription from Side cited above, n. 70; cf. A. W. van Buren, “Inscriptions from Asia Minor, Cyprus, and the Cyrenaica,” Journal of Hellenic Studies, 28, 1908, pp. 196 ff.).


111. See the examples quoted in Du Cange, Glossarium medii et infniue latinissimi, Paris, 1840ff., vi, p. 668, s. v. "Trichorus."
in the Domus Aurea of Nero, described by Suetonius. Among the ruins of the Domus Aurea a great octagonal hall is actually preserved, and analogous centralized structures occur in the Domus Flavia and the Domus Augustana on the Palatine, and in the Villa Adriana.

From the late third and early fourth centuries several other notable examples are preserved or documented. In the palace of Diocletian at Spalato a vast circular hall with projecting niches formed the goal of the northern of the four axial ways that divide the plan. And we know that an "Octagonos" formed part of the palace built by Constantine in the new capital. Thus, even though the specific function cannot be determined in each case, certainly the central plan had become a prominent element in imperial palace architecture by the time Christianity was officially recognized.

Now Andreas Alfeldi has shown that in the elaborate complex of symbolism and ceremonial that developed with the cult of the Roman emperors, the palace played an important role. As all the emperor's activities were sacred, the ceremonies that took place in the palace were considered a holy ritual, a sancti palatii ritus. And the palace itself came to be regarded as a temple. This view of the royal residence as a sacred precinct also became a fundamental element in the mediaeval notion of kingship: the palace of Theodoric was called domus divina and that of the Byzantine emperors was commonly referred to as τὸ ἱερὸν παλάτιον, or the like; both the Lateran palace, as we have seen, and Charlemagne's palace at Aachen were sacra palatia.

An equally well-known fact is that with the establishment of Christianity as the state religion, many of its official aspects were conceived in terms of the imperial cult. Christ himself was identified with the emperor, as the heavenly βασιλεὺς. The heavens are "imperial domiciles," and the eternal city a palace. Of course the church as the "House of the Lord" is a familiar concept in early Christian ideology. But it is particularly important from the architectural point of view that the church is also described in the same terms as the royal palace. The name most frequently em-

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112. Nero, 31:
Præcipua cenationum rotunda, quæ perpetuo diebus ac noctibus vice mundi circumageretur


114. Janin, Const. Byz., pp. 115ff. cf. Ebersolt, op.cit., pp. 53ff. In the Book of Ceremonies the Octagonos serves as a waiting room and vestiary; Ebersolt observes, however (ibid., p. 55), that the palace had been considerably enlarged since Constantine's day, when it may have been part of the imperial living quarters (cf. Vogt, ed.cit., 1 commentary, p. 27).

115. It has been maintained (P. Grimal, "Les Horti Tauriani," École de Rome, Milances, llll, 1936, pp. 282ff.) that the so-called "Temple of Minerva Medica" was part of the palace built by Gallienus (253-268). Ward Perkins reports that recent study by Deichmann indicates it was a "formal garden-pavilion," datable A.D. 310-320 (Proc. Brit. Acad., 1947, n. 39).

Cf. also the rotunda of the Horti Sallustiani, described as a cenatio festiva d'estate by K. Lehmann-Hartleben and J. Lindros, "Il palazzo degli Orti Sallustiani," Opera archaologica, i, 1935, p. 221.


118. Alfeldi, op.cit., pp. 31ff.


120. Above, n. 107; on the palace at Aachen cf. Fichtena, op.cit., pp. 15ff., who regards this as a reflection of Byzantine usage.

121. With respect to art, A. Grabar, L'empereur dans l'art byzantin, Paris, 1936, part 3, pp. 189ff., see also below, n. 131.

122. J. Kollwitz, Oströmische Plastik der theodosianischen Zeit, Berlin, 1941, pp. 15ff., with numerous references; K. M. Setton, Christian Attitude towards the Emperor in the Fourth Century, New York, 1941, pp. 47ff., and passim. Kollwitz in Reallex. f. Ant. u. Chr., ii, cols. 1257ff., i.e. "Christus (Basileus)." I have been unable to consult the work of E. Peterson, Christus als Imperator (Beiträge zur Kontroverselogie, i, Catholica, no. 5), Paderborn, 1936.


played for a church, “basilica,” while it acquired generic significance, never lost the royal connotations of its derivation. Isidore of Seville (d. 636) indeed says that the word was first applied to the royal palace, and is now used for churches because in them worship and sacrifices are offered to God, “Ruler of all.” Similarly aula, which had taken on the meaning of “palace” in classical writers, became a usual form of reference to churches. Paulinus of Nola (d. 431) actually described the church of Felix at Nola as a palatium.

Thus textual evidence abounds to show that by the mid-fourth century there was a fully developed metaphorical equation between the royal palace and the Christian church. In fact various suggestions have been made for deriving the Christian basilica or certain of its prominent features from imperial palace architecture;128 suggestions that are valuable to the degree to which it is realized that a metaphor does not necessarily reflect actual practice, much less motivate it.129 And considering the importance of centralized palace triclinia and reception halls, as outlined above, the question also arises whether this tradition might shed some light on the origin of centralized Christian buildings.130 This too is a suggestion that has been made before,131 but again a certain amount of new material is available that makes it advisable to reexamine the matter.

We shall consider the problem under two headings, first as concerns centralized churches in general, and second with respect to the centrally planned chapels that became one of the most familiar features of palace design during the Middle Ages. It will become evident that conclusive proofs are available at only a few stages in the argument, which is therefore offered as an hypothesis, to be tested against the results of further research. Moreover, it includes only modest additions to the wealth of evidence regarding the central plan in Christian architecture considered in extenso by André Grabar in his monumental treatise Martyrium. In the main, the value of the present thesis lies in its ability to account for the difficulties that arise when certain key individual monuments and
whole traditions are derived entirely from martyrta and the cult of relics. But the hypothesis is of some importance to our basic conceptions of the nature of early mediaeval architecture; for (baptisteries aside of course) it entails the conclusion that the central plan, rather than being exclusively of funereal origin, was at least in part a legacy of later Roman aulic art.

The most direct connection obtains, of course, where it can be shown that a palace building was actually transformed into a church. This happened to a longitudinal building in Rome as early as the middle of the fourth century, when a basilica of the Sessorian palace was converted into Santa Croce in Gerusalemme. It is possible that a similar conversion took place in the case of a centralised building later in the century at Salonika, where a palace had been built by the emperor Galerius (305-317), one of Diocletian's successors in the tetrarchate. Here the great rotunda with eight radiating niches was definitely related to the imperial constructions, as was shown by the discovery of a broad avenue connecting it with the Via Egnatia at Galerius' triumphal arch. It later became a church known since the tenth century as St. George's. The original transformation presumably took place when the famous mosaics were added. These have generally been ascribed to the fifth century though the most recent studies would date them late in the fourth. An important difficulty from our point of view is that the original function of the building is uncertain. It has been regarded as Galerius' mausoleum; but no trace of a mortuary crypt was discovered to support the hypothesis, and it may have served some other purpose. (One suggestion is that it was Galerius' throne room.) Thus, we cannot really be sure of the ideological nature of the conversion, and the essential question remains open: can we point to a centralized palace triclinium actually adopted as a church?

The basis for an affirmative answer was supplied by a series of excavations carried out recently at a site adjacent to the Hippodrome in Constantinople. These disclosed one of the most venerated churches in the capital throughout the Middle Ages, St. Euphemia at the Hippodrome. The building was hexagonal in plan; from five of its sides projected large apses, while smaller circular chambers were placed at the angles between the apses (Fig. 17). One entered at the southwest side from a great semicircular portico. The identity of the building was assured by its location at the northwest side of the Hippodrome (the church of St. Euphemia is frequently referred to in the sources as being έν τῷ ἐντυποθόμῳ), and by the series of frescoes it contained depicting the life of St. Euphemia.

134. Cf. Krautheimer, Corpus basilicarum, 1, pp. 165ff., Review of Religion, 1939, pp. 136f., in the second half of the fifth century a private basilica that had been built in the early fourth century by one Junius Bassus (it is not certain which) became the church of Sant'Andrea in Cata Barbara (Krautheimer, Corpus basilicarum, 1, pp. 61f.); there is, as we noted above, n. 37 a strong possibility that the church of Santa Balbina (which recalls the certainly pagan building at Djemila Ausgrabungen im Review Ser. 2, no. 11), Budapest, 1941, pp. 63f., and most recently the fourth century, sometime before it is first mentioned in the fifth century a private basilica that had been built in the early

135. E. Dyggve, "Recherches sur le palais impérial de Thessalonique" in Studia orientalia Ioanni Pedersen, Copenhagen, 1953, pp. 59ff., where it is suggested that the building became a palace church under Theodosius the Great (also idem, Laureae Aquincenses, 11, 1941, p. 69).


137. H. Torp, "Quelques remarques sur les mosaiques de l'église Saint-Georges à Thessalonique," Congrès int. des ét. byz., 9th (Salonica, 1933), Athens, 1935 (Suppl. to Hellemika, 91), pp. 85ff.; cf. E. Dyggve, "Recherches sur le palais impérial de Thessalonique" in Studia orientalia Ioanni Pedersen, Copenhagen, 1953, pp. 59ff., where it is suggested that the building became a palace church under Theodosius the Great (also idem, Laureae Aquincenses, 11, 1941, p. 69).

138. Ibid., p. 67.

139. This was the original idea of A. Alfoldi and H. von Schöneck (ibid., p. 64). Another octagonal building was recently excavated in the vicinity, and may well have belonged to the palace (C. E. Makaronas in Praktika les Archaiologikes Hetaerias en Athenai, 1950, pp. 36ff.); it is virtually the same size as St. George, it is oriented in exactly the same direction, and the bricks correspond.


There were indications, however, that the building had not been built as a church. In particular, the synthonon, in the easternmost apse, was not opposite the entrance, suggesting that it was a later installation. The building itself could be dated to the early fifth century by its masonry, and the presumption was that it was converted into the church of Saint Euphemia soon after the council of Chalcedon in 451; 143 but there was no real certainty as to what its original function might have been. Subsequently the nonecclesiastical origin was confirmed by excavations that revealed a whole series of complex structures arranged symmetrically flanking the central hexagon, all opening off the sigma portico. 144 And the real identity of the structure is provided by a column base found in situ at the east corner of the western end of the sigma. 145 The base contains an inscription that reads ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΠΡΕΠΟ, 146 and is similar to one found in the neighborhood long before, also inscribed ΑΝΤΙΟΧΟΥ ΠΡΕΠΟΣΙΤΟΥ. 147

The eunuch Antiochus, who became praepositus under Theodosius II (408-450) is an extraordinary though little known figure in early Byzantine history. 148 Born in Persia he was sent to Constantinople by King Yazdigird I and was appointed, allegedly by the will of the emperor Arcadius, a guardian of the young Theodosius. He attained the highest offices at the Byzantine court, including besides praepositus, cubicarius, praetorian prefect, patrician; in 431 he became consul. But he misused his power, amassing great wealth, and acting "like an emperor, not an emperor's minister," 149 as one writer comments. 150 In 436 Theodosius dismissed him, confiscated his property, and forced him to take holy orders. 151

The palace of Antiochus, from which the surrounding quarter of the city took its name (rä Ἀντίοχος), is known from independent sources to have been located at the northwest side of the Hippodrome. 152 Finally, we may note that the church of St. Euphemia is also referred to in the sources as en tois Ἀντίοχος. 153 There can be no doubt that the building, with its inscription, was Antiochus' palace. And since we know that Antiochus' downfall took place in 436, whereas he had reached the height of his career five years earlier, we can date the building with reasonable security to the period ca. 420-436. 154

One of the most remarkable additional results of the later excavations at this site was the discovery of a second complex adjoining that of Antiochus-St. Euphemia (cf. Fig. 17). This again involves a great centralized structure, circular in plan with radiating apses, opening from a semicircular sigma portico. The wall-work is contemporary with that of Antiochus-St. Euphemia, and although the excavation did not make the relationship between the two complexes entirely clear, they were certainly interconnected. 155 Now it happens that another palace is known to have been located close to

The occasion may have been the transferral of St. Euphemia's relics from Chalcedon, which one source says happened after the death of Marcian (457), cf. Scriptores Orig. Const., ed. Pregner, ii, pp. 197ff.
147. The data on Antiochus is gathered by Sideropoulos, op.cit.
152. We can probably get still closer to the building’s exact dates. Schneider reports (Arch. Am., 1943, col. 236) that of 300 brick-stamps collected in the church, 78 are of the 14th and 1st. 190 of the 15th indiction (a cycle of fifteen years). During the reign of Theodosius II the 15th indiction fell twice before Antiochus’ downfall, in 417 and 433; since the latter is for independent reasons the more likely date, we may infer that the palace was built in the years immediately following Antiochus’ appointment as consul, i.e., 431-436.
that of Antiochus. It belonged to one Lausus, who was also a high functionary, patrician and praepositus, at the time of Arcadius.\[154\] There is thus every reason to suppose that the second building was Lausus' palace.\[155\] We can hardly doubt that Antiochus and Lausus were acquainted; it is tempting to regard these adjoining palaces as evidence of a close friendship.

However that may be, the buildings permit several observations that are of interest in the present context. To begin with they document the existence in Constantinople in the mid-fifth century of the "emphasized" triclinium, and the attendant sigma-shaped portico, whose earlier phases in the late antique domestic architecture of the Latin west we sketched in the first section of this paper.\[156\] As regards the meaning of these architectural forms, it is not without irony that Antiochus should have been accused of acting more like an emperor than an emperor's minister. But at this point it is of yet greater significance that his palace triclinium (for that surely it was), was transformed into a church.

Here then we have a secure foundation for the bridge between centralized designs in the domestic and ecclesiastical spheres. On this basis it becomes reasonable to suppose that an influence took place within a broader framework than simply the physical conversion of existing palace structures into churches. Particularly from the period of Constantine onward there is evidence to suggest that churches may have been built in imitation of centralized palace triclinia. It was after Constantine, certainly, that the relationship between the imperial cult and Christianity became especially meaningful and concrete. And it seems only natural that a point of view such as Eusebius', who likens a banquet given by Constantine to a vision of the reign of Christ,\[157\] should have expressed itself in architectural terms.

It has been pointed out that a number of important centralized churches of this period are located in capitals of the empire and may have been produced under imperial patronage.\[158\] This was certainly the case with the famous octagonal church built by Constantine at Antioch. Grabar sought to relate the building to the martyrium tradition by suggesting that it was intended as Constantine's mausoleum.\[159\] But there is no evidence that he ever contemplated being interred elsewhere than in the great tomb he had built in the church of the Holy Apostles at Constantinople.\[160\] Moreover the numerous sources refer to the building at Antioch only by such generic titles as the Great Church, the Golden Church, etc.;\[161\] none mention a titular martyr. On the other hand, it can now be shown to have stood in the immediate vicinity of the palace—\[162\] a fact that enhances the possibility that its form was determined primarily by its imperial connections. Another case is that of San Lorenzo in

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\[154\] The Synaxarium (above, no. 151) speaks of Saint Euphemia as being "at Antiochus', near Lausus" (év ròt Ἀντιόχου, παλάτιον τοῦ Ἀντίοχου). Moreover, the texts evidently locate the palace of Lausus to the left of the Mese at the Hippodrome (i.e., at the northwest side of the latter) and the palace of Antiochus at the left of Lausus', see Janin, "Les églises Sainte-Euphémie à Constantinople," Échos d'Orient, xxxi, 1932, p. 275, idem, Const. Byz., p. 352.


\[156\] Still another building of similar design (hexagonal with projecting niches, with a sigma portico added, significantly enough) and from the same period was excavated recently at the imperial palace of the Mangana in Constantinople (R. Demangel and E. Mamboüry, Le quartier des Manganes, Paris, 1939, pp. 81 ff., pls. 1 and 11). The identification of the building, however, is open to question. Demangel and Mamboüry regard it as an "agiasma" (miraculous water source) which allegedly existed at the monastery of the Hodegetria, where a church had been founded by Pulcheria, the sister of Theodosius II. Schneider (Byzant. Vorarbeiten zur Topographie und Archäologie der Städte [Istanbuler Forschungen, 8], Berlin, 1936, p. 90, and Byz. Zeits., 1943-49, p. 180 n. 1) considers it a bath or nymphaeum.

\[157\] Vita Const., 111, 15, Migne, Patr. Gr., vol. 20, cols. 1722 ff.; in the Triclinos of the Nineteen Couches, supposedly built by Constantine, the number of guests at the emperor's table, at least at the period of Constantine VII, was always twelve (Ebersolt, op. cit., p. 59).

\[158\] Krautheimer, ART BULLETIN, 1953, pp. 60 and 154-159. Martyrium, 1, pp. 234 ff.

\[159\] Eusebius, Vita Const., 11, 1, Migne, Patr. Gr., vol. 20, cols. 1209 ff. For an equally skeptical reaction to Grabar's theory, see Krautheimer, ART BULLETIN, 1953, p. 60.

\[160\] Theophanes, Chron., A.D. 319 (Migne, Patr. Gr., vol. 108, col. 116) refers to it as τὸ ἀρχαῖος εὐκεραῖος; Grabar, Martyrium, 1, p. 232, concludes that the building was dedicated to Christ, though the phrase could equally, if not preferably, means the "royal" or "imperial" octagon.

Milan, tetrafoil in plan, ascribed now to the fourth century. Here again, as at Salonica, there is no record of an early dedication (that to St. Lawrence does not appear until the sixth century). And the fact that investigation produced no trace of a reliquary or tomb scarcely supports the assumption that it was founded as a martyrium. But San Lorenzo may well have been an imperial foundation, and according to the most recent study it too may have been located near the imperial palace.

It should be emphasized, however, that the connection between centralized churches and the palace tradition was not necessarily dependent upon direct imperial sponsorship. On the contrary, our experience with the triconch makes it clear that similar “associative” processes operated on less exalted levels. Nor did derivation from the palace tradition preclude a dedication to martyrs. Both according to the most recent study it too may have been located near the imperial palace. The palace tradition was not necessarily dependent upon direct imperial sponsorship. Our experience with the triconch makes it clear that similar processes operated on less exalted levels. Nor did derivation from the palace tradition preclude a dedication to martyrs. Both according to the most recent study it too may have been located near the imperial palace.

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palace certainly suggests an ideological relationship, it can hardly be regarded as a palace church proper. On the other hand, a number of churches in the Great Palace of Constantinople are ascribed to Constantine, one of them with the suggestive dedication of Christ κιψος; but there is no reason to believe that any of them were centrally planned.173 From a later period, there is the famous cruciform chapel built by Peter II (494-518) in the archiepiscopal palace at Ravenna; but it is little more than a small chamber in the palace apartments, and is not likely to have played an important role in the monumental tradition that ultimately developed.174 Nor can we assume that the chapels the Merovingian kings were wont to include in their palaces provided such a prototype.175 It has been supposed that San Vitale at Ravenna was the palace church of the exarchate,176 though it cannot have been intended as such since it was founded (526) long before the Byzantine conquest (540). Even Hagia Sophia at Constantinople, in view of its proximity to the palace and the imperial functions that took place in it, has been regarded as a palace church,177 whereas it was in fact the seat of the patriarch.

Thus we have no evidence for an immediate and direct translation of the centralized triclinium into the centralized palace church. Of course it would be rash to conclude that no centralized palace chapels existed during this period, but certainly the familiar type of the later Middle Ages had not yet emerged. Ironically, it is possible that the form’s secular association with the palace tradition might, in the beginning, have prevented its use for the palace chapel itself.178 And in fact it seems there was an intermediate step, in which the palace triclinium acquired the characteristics of a church, while yet retaining its proper identity.

This crucial transitional role was performed by one of the most renowned of all centralized palace structures, the Chrysostriclinos (“Golden triclinium”) built by Justin II (565-578) in the Great Palace at Constantinople. It was octagonal in plan, with niches opening from the sides. With its subsidiary monuments it largely replaced Constantine’s Daphne palace as the functional center of the imperial residence, overshadowing all else by its size and the splendor of its decorations.179 It was the great ceremonial reception hall for the most important state occasions. Here the emperor, surrounded by the court dignitaries, greeted foreign ambassadors, distributed offices and honors, and was himself adulated, all in accordance with an intricate ritual. Some of the ceremonies indeed were explicitly religious in character. On Palm Sundays the emperor distributed crosses;180 on the Thursday after Easter he received the Kiss of Peace from the members of the court and ecclesiastical authorities.181

The decorations, first carried out under Tiberius II (578-582) and restored by Michael III (842-867), are particularly interesting in this latter respect. In the vault of the eastern apse, the "bema" as it is called in the sources, above the throne of the emperor, was an image of Christ enthroned. Over the entrance was a representation of the Virgin, while round about were depicted the apostles, martyrs, bishops, and the emperor Michael himself.182 Thus, the decoration was not merely

173. St. Stephen and a church of the Apostles are, with the ἱππος, the most important in the palace attributed to Constantine; Janin, La Géographie . . ., t, iii, pp. 35, 48ff., and 53ff.
175. Cabrol, op.cit., iii, 1, cols. 40ff.
176. E. Baldwin Smith, op.cit., p. 96, n. 66. The extraordinary theory, recently revived, that San Vitale was built by Theodoric as a reception hall, has been thoroughly demolished by K. Wessel (cited above, n. 66).
178. It is interesting to note that in one case where what seems to have been a palace chapel is preserved, adjacent to the palace with the triclinch at Kasr ibn Wardan, an entirely different kind of plan is used (cf. P.U.A.E.S., Div. ii, Sect. B, map opp. p. 26, pp. 29ff.).
181. Ibid., i, 25 (14), pp. 84ff.
182. Anthologia graeca epigrammatum palatina cum praefatione, ed. H. Stadtmueller, i, Leipzig, 1894, no. 106, pp. 28ff.; Ebersolt, op.cit., p. 82, probably misreads the last line of the text in assuming the presence of the archangel Michael.
religious; its program actually embodies essential features of an important phase in the development of the Byzantine system for the decoration of churches.185

Unfortunately we are without sure footing on a number of chronological points. The original decorations of the Chrysotriclinos were destroyed in the iconoclastic controversy; but it is reasonable to assume that they were reflected in the replacements of Michael III.186 Likewise, our knowledge of the ceremonies performed in the building is due to a later source, Constantine Porphyrogenitus (913-920); but his work is largely a compilation of earlier texts, and the traditions were doubtless maintained. Despite all such uncertainties, the Chrysotriclinos provides a richly documented instance of the formal as well as symbolic rapprochement of the palace triclinium to the Christian church.

That this development should have taken place in the years following the reign of Justinian the Great was by no means accidental. For then was inaugurated an era of spiritual intensification that lasted until the reactionary explosion of Iconoclasm.187 The period witnessed a vast increase in the importance of the cult of images, and, what is particularly important here, a new emphasis upon the concept of the emperor as the priestly Servus Christi. In fact, it was in the Chrysotriclinos perhaps for the first time, that the emperor’s role as Christ’s vicar was given an appropriate decorative setting, still within an essentially secular context. We have, in effect, a reversal of the process underlying the relationship discussed earlier between palace triclinia and early Christian churches generally. There we were dealing with an adoption of pagan tradition for Christian purposes, hence with an aspect of the transition from antiquity to the Middle Ages. Here, on the contrary, we have a peculiarly mediaeval phenomenon, permeation of the secular tradition with Christian religious meaning.188

But the significance of the Chrysotriclinos reaches far beyond the period in which it was created. It was of critical importance for future religious art not only in Byzantium but also, as seems likely, in the west.

It is a remarkable fact that the western tradition of centrally planned palace chapels begins with no less than three examples dating from the latter part of the eighth and the early ninth century: the church at Benevento built by the Lombard ruler Aarchis II around 765;189 the chapel at Germigny-des-Prêrs built for his summer palace by Theodulf, bishop of Orleans (798-818) and councillor of Charlemagne, dedicated in 806;190 and Charlemagne’s own chapel in the palace at Aachen, dedicated by Leo III in 805.191 The chapel of Charlemagne’s palace at Nymwegen may also be added if the replacement (interior octagonal, exterior with sixteen sides, as at Aachen), probably of the tenth century, reflects the original building.192 And Grabar has made a strong case for considering the round church with projecting apses (late ninth - early tenth century) at Preslav, the early capital of the Bulgars, to be a palace church.193 Grabar regarded this group (excepting Germigny-des-Prêrs) as stemming from a famous church in the Great Palace at Constantinople, the Virgin of the Pharos, which he conceived to be round or polygonal in plan.194 But this building has since been

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183. Profound analogies have been pointed out between the decorations of the Chrysotriclinos, those of Hagia Sophia, and those of the church described in the tenth homily of Photius (see below, n. 193), all conceived and mostly carried out under Michael III just after the middle of the ninth century; cf. S. Der Nersessian. "Le décor des églises du IXe siècle," Actes du VIIe Congrès intern. d'études byzantines (Paris, 1948), 11, Paris, 1951, pp. 315ff.
184. We do know that the image of Christ replaced an earlier one (Ebersolt, op.cit., p. 81); moreover, Der Nersessian very cogently suggests that the system adopted in the ninth century decorations of the group of buildings mentioned in the preceding note was taken from the originals of the late sixth century (op.cit., p. 320).
186. Compare G. Ostrogorsky, History of the Byzantine State, Oxford, 1956, p. 78, where the forces at work during this period are viewed as introducing the mediaeval history of Byzantium (cited by Kitzinger, op.cit., p. 127 n. 197).
192. Ibid., pp. 565ff.
shown to have been rebuilt a century later (864) than had been assumed, and to have had at that time at least, quite a different, unrelated plan. 193

Nevertheless, Grabar was perhaps right in connecting the group of the Carolingian period with a Byzantine tradition. It may be difficult to conceive how a Lombard church could reflect a Byzantine type; yet the chapel at Benevento is dedicated to the Holy Wisdom, a strictly Byzantine appellation. 194 It is difficult to see how Germigny-des-Prés even belongs to the group, since, while basically centralized, it is not round or polygonal; yet an early source specifically says that it was built in imitation of the chapel at Aachen. 195 And in point of fact it has recently been argued, independently of our problem, that the Chrysotriclinos was the ultimate source for the chapel at Aachen. 196 For the two buildings had essential elements in common, besides their octagonal plans: the emperor's throne was present in each, as was the image of the enthroned Christ, and, probably, a great chandelier; moreover, in both cases there was an additional emphasis upon the Virgin (the mosaic over the entrance at Constantinople; Aachen was dedicated jointly to the Virgin and the Savior).

The hypothesis has its difficulties since there are also many differences between the two buildings, and since we cannot be absolutely certain that Michael III's decorations of the Chrysotriclinos represented a tradition that Charlemagne's artists might have known. But several general considerations make the theory attractive. We have already seen that the Carolingian use of the triconch establishes a connection with the tradition of "emphasized" triclinia, to which the central plan of the Chrysotriclinos itself belongs. Another striking fact is that our investigation has not produced a single centralized palace church prior to the Carolingian examples that might have inspired them.

On the other hand, we need only recall the classic derivation of the Aachen chapel architecturally from San Vitale to realize that, as with the triconch, we are probably confronted with a combination of "ancient" and contemporary Byzantine sources. 197 On this basis the Carolingian artists seem to have ventured further than any of their predecessors, eastern or western. For judging from the available evidence, they were the first actually to build the palace chapel after the fashion of the centralized palace church prior to the Carolingian examples that might have inspired them.

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194. One of the ninth century sources (Erchempert) says specifically that Archis, . . . condidit quod Greco vocabulo Aigiam Sophiam, id est sanctam Sapientiam, nominavit; cf. Hubert, Bull. soc. ant. Fr., 1897, n. 3; Dumbarton Oaks Papers, vi, 1955, p. 218.


197. For correlative evidence of the influence of recent Byzantine, alongside revived ancient sources on Carolingian art, see the bibliography quoted by Kitzinger, "Byzantine Art in the Period between Justinian and Iconoclastm," Berichte zum XI. Internationalen Byzantinisten-Kongress, Munich, 1958, iv, 1, p. 8 n. 27.

198. After completing the manuscript the writer was delighted to find his arguments almost exactly paralleled in a recent monograph by J. Fleckenstein dealing with the court chapel from the point of view of institutional rather than architectural history. One of Fleckenstein's basic conclusions is that, while combining elements from a variety of sources, the court chapel as an institution was essentially a Carolingian creation (Die Hofkapelle der deutschen Könige [Schriften der Monumenta Germaniae historic, xvi, 1], Stuttgart, 1959, ch. 1, esp. p. 43, and passim). This study was carried out under ideal circumstances, while I was a Fellow at Dumbarton Oaks. To that institution and its staff I acknowledge an abiding sense of gratitude and indebtedness. Professor Ernst Kitzinger sacrificed many hours reading the manuscript in several versions, discussing various problems, and offering numerous suggestions. Professor Richard Krautheimer, whose insights were the point of departure for Section 11, generously discussed the material with me on more than one occasion. Professor Paul Underwood was particularly helpful in calling my attention to the Antiochus-St. Euphemia complex discussed in Section 11, and in going over the monument with me in situ. The work also profited from the expert advice of Dr. Cyril Mango, and Dr. Hans Lieb of Basel. The financial burden of typescript and photographs was removed by grants from the research funds of Vassar College. The plans labeled as being "after" a source were very kindly redrawn by Miss Susan Clifford of Vassar.
THE HOUSE OF THE LORD

APPENDIX

LATE ROMAN RESIDENTIAL TRICONCHES OF GAUL, SPAIN, AND NORTH AFRICA

The major problem that arises in connection with these provincial monuments is that of their chronology; none can be dated securely on archaeological grounds. Sometimes, however, a definite if broad framework is provided by the general history of the province. Thus, Gaul was prosperous through the first half of the third century, but thereafter suffered a recession, combined with ravaging barbarian invasions that would have made large scale private building very hazardous. Subsequently a pronounced recovery took place, especially under Diocletian and Constantine; destroyed buildings were restored and new ones undertaken. But again thereafter, until the final catastrophes of the early fifth century the decline was in progress. Thus, we might expect to find the more elaborate architectural forms, such as the triconch, during the latter part of the third and the first part of the fourth centuries. Naturally one cannot presume to date an individual monument on this basis, but the great mass of archaeological evidence is in harmony with it.

199. Altogether, the difficulties in dealing with this material are considerable. Many of the monuments were discovered before scientific archaeological methods were developed; reports, in widely scattered local journals, are usually very scant and imprecise. Although general conclusions are possible, specific points based upon such evidence must be regarded as tentative.


201. A typical pattern throughout Gaul is that of magnificent villas built or reaching an extensive stage of development around the latter part of the second or early in the third century; the remains of this period often show evidence of violent destruction; a more or less elaborate restoration follows in the early fourth century; then complete devastation in the fifth century, See the study of the villas in the region of Metz by A. Grenier, Habitations gauloises, vol. II, esp. pp. 116 ff. and 175 ff. Cf. for example, such widely separated villas as those at Mayen in the Rheinland (F. Oelmann, Coloquium Francorum antiques, 1964, pp. 182 ff., esp. pp. 194 ff.) summarized by Grenier, Archéologie gallo-romaine, II, pp. 784 ff. and 832 ff.; also in the latter region (Haute-Garonne), a villa at Montmaurin where the middle level, apparently dated by a coin of Gallienus (253-268) is separated by a layer of ashes from the Constantinian cement above, which in turn is surmounted by the ashes of the final destruction (G. Fouet, "La villa romaine de Montmaurin," Bulletin archéologique, 1953, pp. 268 ff.; M. Labrouse, Gallia, XII, 1954, p. 217; XIII, 1955, p. 205 ff.). A villa at Cadelhan-Saint-Clair, in nearby Gers, showed two states, the first of which may have been destroyed in the third century invasions, while the second included mosaics attributed by the excavators to the late third-early fourth century (M. Larrieu, Y. Le Moal, M. Labrouse, "La villa gallo-romaine de la Tasque à Cadelhan-Saint-Clair," Gallia, XI, 1953, pp. 41 ff., esp. pp. 65 ff.; 67, n. 67). Still in southwest France, at Montcaret (Dordogne), part of a villa was excavated (containing a cruciform chamber with one flat and two semicircular arms, see above, n. 75) in which three phases were discerned, the destruction of the second, an enlargement of the first, was attributed to the invasions, while mosaic pavements added later were clearly of the fourth century (P. Grimal, Gallia, IX, 1951, pp. 114 ff.; H. Stern, "La Mosaique d'Orphée de Blanzy-lès-Fismes," ibid., XIII, 1955, p. 65; cf. J. Formige, "Feuilles de Mont­caret," Congrès archéologique de France, CT, 1939, pp. 182 ff., esp. pp. 194 ff.). On the other hand, H. Mattingly in The Cambridge Ancient History, Cambridge, XIII, 1959, p. 314, warns against the indiscriminate attribution of coin hoards (which are important evidence on the subject) to fear of invaders; numerous hoards are found in Britain, where the same factors were not in operation. Indeed, a villa recently excavated at Lullington-stone shows a similar pattern of superimposition as the Gallic examples, though in this case the building seems to have been despoiled during the first half of the third century, when the Gallic villas were being enlarged (G. W. Meates, Lullington Roman Villa, London, 1955).


204. From a medallion of Volusian found under one of the pavements at Glézigny, Saint-Seven, cf. Sentenx, op.cit., XV, 1890, p. 236; XVI, 1891, pp. 66 ff., Inv. Gaula, no. 429, pp. 97 ff.

205. On the inscription cf. RE, VII, cols. 93 ff.; for the coin hoards of this region see A. Blanchet, Les trésors de monnaies romaines et les invasions germaniques en Gaula, Paris, 1900, pp. 251 ff.

206. See now the full discussion by Stern, Gallia, 1955, pp. 41 ff.
this case the style of the pavements indicates a date in
the early fourth century, so that it too probably belongs
to the "recovery" phase.207

It is quite clear, therefore, that our motif reached
Gaul by the end of the third century, but that it ever
really took root there seems doubtful. In fact the evi-
dence suggests that the preserved instances represent
direct influences from elsewhere. The mosaic pav-
ements of the building at Blanzy-lès-Fismes have been
recognized as being abnormal for Gaul, and it has been
suggested that they were the work of an itinerant
workshop from Italy, or even from North Africa.208
Likewise the mosaics decorating the examples from
southwest France form part of a distinct group.209

Here too North Africa may have been the source, or it
seems possible that in this case we should look to Spain
as intermediary. Two villas with triconch triclinia have
been preserved in Spain, one at Alemauras de Adaja
(Valladolid) in the north (Fig. 20),210 another near
Ecija in the southern province of Baetica (Fig. 21).211
There is no evidence to suggest a date for either of
these examples, except of course that they must precede
the conquest of Spain by the Vandals in A.D. 409.

Africa Proconsularis was easily the leader in domes-
tic triconch production, and may well have had an
important part in disseminating the motif.212 Here un-
fortunately the general historical background is of little
help in establishing a chronology. On the whole, eco-
omic conditions in North Africa were far more stable
than in most other parts of the empire. And while up-
risings of the indigenous populations were fairly fre-
quent, there were no major invasions until the final
conquest by the Vandals in 429-430.

Perhaps the earliest of the North African series is
a villa at Dou Tagga (ancient Thugga) in north central
Tunisia; it is the largest private dwelling so far exca-
vated at the site (Fig. 22).213 Its rich series of
mosaic pavements, including those found in an adjoin-
ing bath, suggest a date late in the second or early
in the third century.214 The compact plan, which re-
calls that of the villa at Oudna (see above, n. 35),
also points to a relatively early date for the original
building. The triconch was entered from the main
oecus, which in turn opened off the central rectangular
court. Thus relegated to a minor location in a corner
of the villa, it contrasts with the emphasis placed on
the triconch in most later examples. But there is also
the possibility that it may have been built into an
originally rectangular room.215

Three other examples in Tunisia are probably to be
dated fairly close together. A building with a triconch
was excavated recently at Cartaghe (Fig. 18, cf. Fig.
4).216 Here, a careful study of the mosaic pavements
found in the trilobium and several other rooms indi-
cated a date in the early fourth century for the period
in the building's history to which the triconch be-
longs.217 As we noted earlier, there is some indication
that the building may have been the palace of the
provincial governor.218

A second villa with trilobium was found at Thuburbo
Majus not far south of Cartaghe (Fig. 24).219 Here,
the lateral apses contained basins which may have
held water, though the villa's bathing establish-
ment was some distance removed. In this case the
mosaic pavements suggested a date at the turn of the
fourth century, in the period of the Tetrarchy.220 Still
another example occurs in the so-called Maison du
Char de Vénus also at Thuburbo (Fig. 25).221 In this
case the triconch and a major oecus of the villa seem
to have been combined into one large room opening
directly off the central peristyle. The mosaic pav-
ements, which include a hunting scene in the portico
facing the oecus, have also been ascribed to the late
third century;222 although the pavements throughout

207. Ibid., p. 62.
208. Ibid., pp. 49, 51ff., and Recueil général des mosaïques
de la Gaule (Callias, Suppl. x), 1, Paris, 1957, p. 19.
209. Cf. n. 203 above. They show a luxuriant colorism,
even in the geometric designs, that contrasts markedly with
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in L. Carton, Découvertes épigraphiques et archéologiques
faites en Tunisie, Lille, 1895 (Société des sciences, de l'agri-
culture, et des arts de Lille, Mémoires, 4th ser., fasc. IV) fig. 50, p. 171. Our Fig. 22 is from a rough sketch, kindly supplied by Poinssot.
214. Merlin, loc.cit., had placed it in the first or second
century. C. Poinssot, loc.cit., is certainly correct in assigning
a later date.
215. C. Poinssot, in litteris, who points out that the mosaics found in the floor above the trifolium are clearly
later in style than those on the ground floor (cf. Merlin,
loc.cit.).
217. Ibid., pp. 177ff.
218. Above, p. 6.
219. L. Poinssot and P. Quoniam, "Mosaiques des bains
220. Ibid., p. 167.
221. So far as I know, no plan has been published, that
reproduced here is from a sketch by C. Poinssot. The building
is mentioned and its hunting mosaic discussed by L. Poinssot,
"Plusieurs inscriptions de Thuburbo Maius," Revue Tunisi-
ie, 44, 1940, pp. 218ff. (a publication that does not seem
to have reached this country, but of which a microfilm, again
supplied by C. Poinssot, is in the Dumbarton Oaks Library).
222. Ibid., pp. 226ff.
the building seem to have been produced by a single workshop,\textsuperscript{223} the possibility has been suggested that the triconch may be an addition.\textsuperscript{224} On the whole, therefore, the late third or early fourth century appears to be the most likely period for this group of triconches.

At least a century later, at the end of the fourth or early in the fifth century, is the triconch at Tabarka, on the coast west of Carthage.\textsuperscript{225} This is one of the best known of all the North African villas, from the mosaic pavements representing rural scenes that decorated the three apses. So far as I have been able to discover, however, no plan of the building was ever published. Again, the approximate date is suggested by the mosaics, which in this case can be related to a monument datable in the early years of the fifth century.\textsuperscript{226} This is the latest of the North African secular triconches for which we have any evidence at all of a date.

Two other certainly domestic examples are referred to in the text above), located a few meters from a house in which several statues were discovered; the central apse had a mosaic pavement with birds facing each other in rinceaux of acanthus (\textit{Inv. Tun.}, no. 940, pp. 303f.).

A large triconch located near the great basilica at Hippo Regius, has been regarded as a chapel by the excavator (E. Marcq, \textit{Monuments chrétiens d'Hippone}, pp. 167f. and 231f.); but it does not communicate with the church, and opens off a peristyle in a manner very like the many domestic examples we have seen. (Cf. J. Lasus, "L'Archéologie algérienne en 1955," \textit{Libyca, Arch.-Épig.}, IV, 1956, p. 185, an article called to my attention by C. Poinssot.)

227. The Tunisian examples have been collected by P. G. Lapeyre, "La basilique chrétienne de Tunisie," \textit{Atti del IV Congresso internazionale di archeologia cristiana}, I, pp. 181ff.

228. The triconch of the villa at Dougga, for example, was regarded as a church before the building was excavated (cf. Carton, \textit{Découvertes . . . }, pp. 171f.).