

Lixus (Morocco): from a Mauretanian sanctuary to an Augustan palace

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INTRODUCTION

It has become increasingly clear that Gades (Gadir) and Lixus, Phoenician foundations beyond the Straits of Gibraltar attested archaeologically as early as the eighth century BCE, played a fundamental role in the process of the political and cultural transformation of native populations around the Straits (Aubet, 1995). This paper will consider the role of Lixus in the spread of Hellenistic culture to the kingdom of Mauretania¹ from the third century BCE to the assassination of Ptolemy in CE 41–2 (cf. Desanges, 1984–5). Until now, discussions of town planning at Lixus have emphasized the presence of production, residential and administrative areas, all clearly differentiated in topographical terms. This study does not reject this functional approach to urban space completely: however, our interpretation of the monumental heart of Lixus will try to relate it in addition to the political initiatives that affected the city. We shall examine a group of buildings in a central area of ancient Lixus that have been known since 1981. They have been seen, until now, as prototypes of Imperial Roman religious architecture; our purpose here is instead to establish their unique character and to consider them from the perspective of Mauretanian, rather than Roman, history.

The ‘Punic West’ (FIG. 1), situated between the Mediterranean and the Atlantic and corresponding to modern Morocco and Spain, was an ethnographically heterogeneous region that classical sources depict as being inhabited by Turdetani, Iberians, Berbers, Libyans, Numidians and Mauri (Desanges, 2006). From the first contacts with Tyre, metals and fish-based commodities would have been controlled by the Phoenician populations that had settled around the Straits. As a consequence of this trade, several maritime colonial cities were established and became wealthy; among these, Gades, with its famous sanctuary, stood out. The estuaries of the main rivers used by the Phoenicians were populated in a capillary manner, with smaller production

¹ The term ‘Mauretania’ will be used here with its traditional toponymic meaning; that is, a region whose boundaries are more or less similar to those of the present kingdom of Morocco.



FIG. 1. Ancient Mauretania.

centres established along their courses; the areas around Gades, Malaca, Lixus and Olissipo provide good examples of this (Blot, 2003). Colonial and indigenous populations shared the coast (Strabo 3.5.4; Pseudo-Scylax 112.2), but, despite some shared features, the resulting regional culture cannot be considered homogeneous (Van Dommelen, 2005).

Rome knew little about the Atlantic coast of Africa until the fall of Carthage. In 146 BCE a major expedition was organized to this coastline, under the command of Polybius (Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* 5.9–10). Eudoxus of Cyzicus then encouraged Bocchus I of Mauretania (118–81 BCE) to promote Atlantic exploration (Strabo 2.3–4). It was, however, Juba II (50 BCE–CE 23) who finally sailed to the Fortunate Isles (Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* 6.201–5), an expedition in keeping with his education, his political ambitions and the grand scale of his explorations (Coltelloni-Trannoy, 2005; Aranegui, 2008a). Placed on the throne of Mauretania by Rome in 25 BCE, this king needed the support and exploited the experience of the old port cities of Gades and Lixus, and thus in this period the latter city regained the important maritime role

it had played in earlier times — when the Phoenicians used to sail from Lixus to Mogador — and became one of the most important cities in Juba's extensive kingdom.

The conquest of Britain by the Emperor Claudius marked a Roman epilogue to this process of opening up the Atlantic: the coastal sailing route was improved alongside the military operations, and new port facilities were created (Martins, 2006; Morais and Carreras, 2003). At the same time, Iol-Caesarea, Tingis and Lixus — among other African cities — received the status of Roman colonies, together with new public buildings.

Recent archaeological work in northern Morocco has revealed the changes that took place in the main settlements in the region from the third century BCE onwards (Arharbi and Lenoir, 2002; Akerraz and Papi, 2004; Ichkhakh, 2006; Kbir Alaoui, 2007). Existing cities were rebuilt (Kouass, Lixus, Thamusida and Banasa), while new urban centres were created (including Zilil, Gilda and Volubilis). This was the context in which Hellenistic cultural traditions, and in particular building techniques, made their first appearance in Morocco.

LIXUS: REASSESSING THE 'TEMPLE QUARTER'

Some 70 km south of Tangier a hill rises 85 m above sea level (FIG. 2). This is the site of Lixus, close to modern Larache (Tarradell, 1959). The remains found date from the Phoenician (eighth–sixth centuries BCE), Punic (fifth–third centuries BCE), Mauretanian (second century BCE–CE 50), Roman (first–sixth centuries CE) and Islamic (twelfth–fifteenth centuries CE) periods. Excavations were carried out in the nineteenth century, by Tissot (1878) and De La Martinière (1890), and between 1921 and 1964 by Montalbán, Tarradell and Ponsich (Montalbán, 1927; Tarradell, 1959; Ponsich, 1981). Since 1995, joint European and Moroccan teams have been working here (Belén *et al.*, 1996; Aranegui, 2001; Habibi and Aranegui, 2005; Brouquier, El Khayari and Ichkhakh, 2006). Our team has been working on the pre-Roman phase of Lixus, under the direction of Hicham Hassini (Institut National des Sciences de l'Archéologie et du Patrimoine, Rabat) and Carmen Aranegui (Universitat de València): this paper is intended to complement that research.

One of the best-known areas of the archaeological site of Lixus, labelled 'Palace of Juba II?' in FIGURE 2, is on the upper slope of the south side of the hill, and traditionally has been referred to as the 'temple quarter' (Ponsich, 1981; Ponsich, 1982; Rebuffat, 1985; Lenoir, 1992; Hallier, 2003). The plan of this area published by Ponsich shows buildings from various periods, but we shall focus our attention here on the architectural remains from the Mauretanian and early Roman periods.

Since their discovery in the 1960s, the buildings making up this central nucleus have been interpreted as a complex of interconnected sanctuaries; the archaeological bibliography has, with a few exceptions (for example: Hallier, 2003), continued to use the explicit label 'temple quarter', thus conveying the predominantly religious function attributed to the area by most researchers. However, a brief glance at Ponsich's general floor plan of the structures revealed by earlier excavations (FIG. 3) is enough to make one realize that the functional interpretation

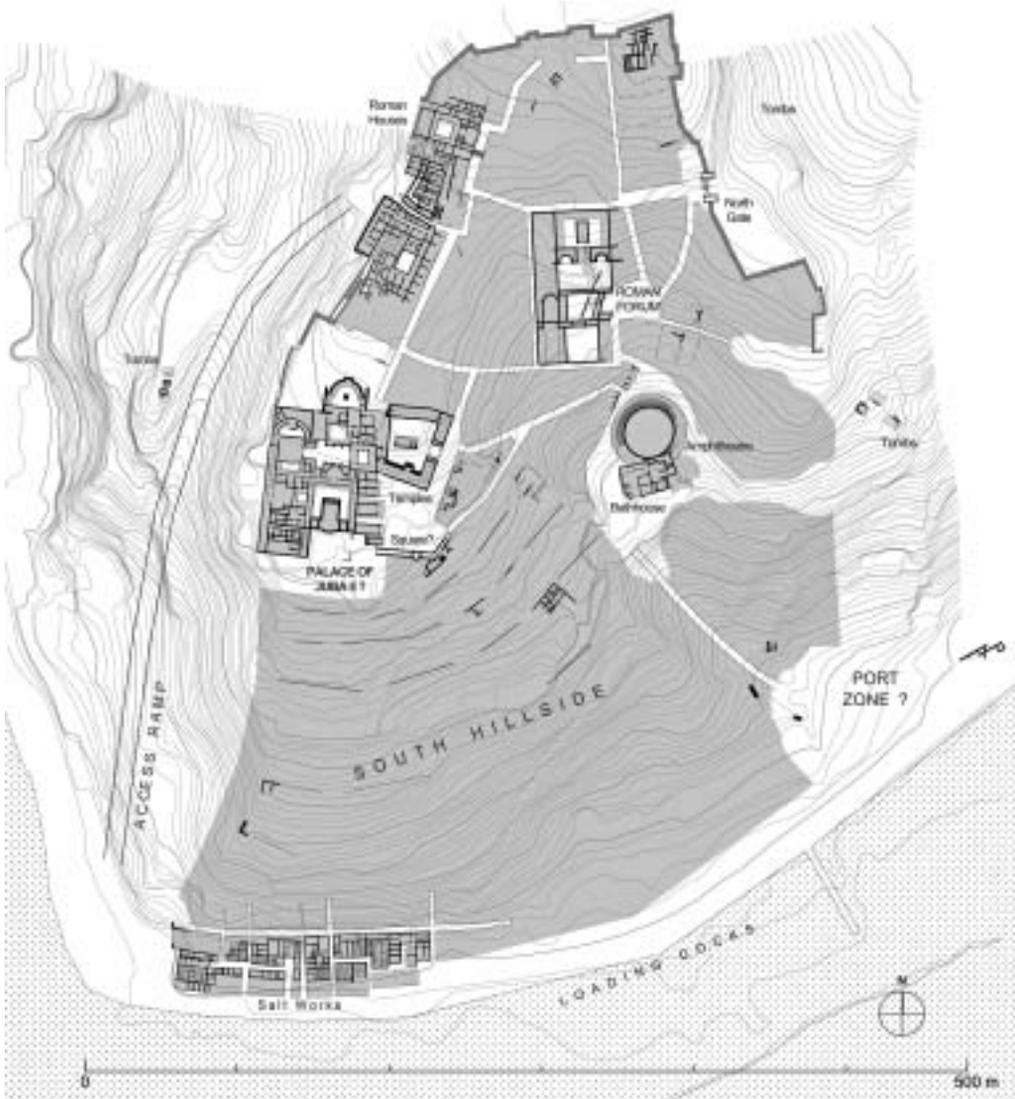


FIG. 2. Archaeological plan of Lixus, incorporating the interpretation proposed here. (Drawing: Ricardo Mar.)

of this quarter must be much more complex. In the eastern sector there are, indeed, free-standing buildings with a rectangular floor plan ('C', 'A/D', 'B'²), which might be interpreted as places of worship. Despite their modest size, they were built with high-quality materials and using painstaking techniques. Building 'C' (12.7 × 10.5 m) has a podium in *opus quadratum* and an almost square *cella* with double doors; building 'D' has superimposed floors in *opus*

² The letters in quotation marks are those assigned by Ponsich (1981) and shown in FIGURE 3.

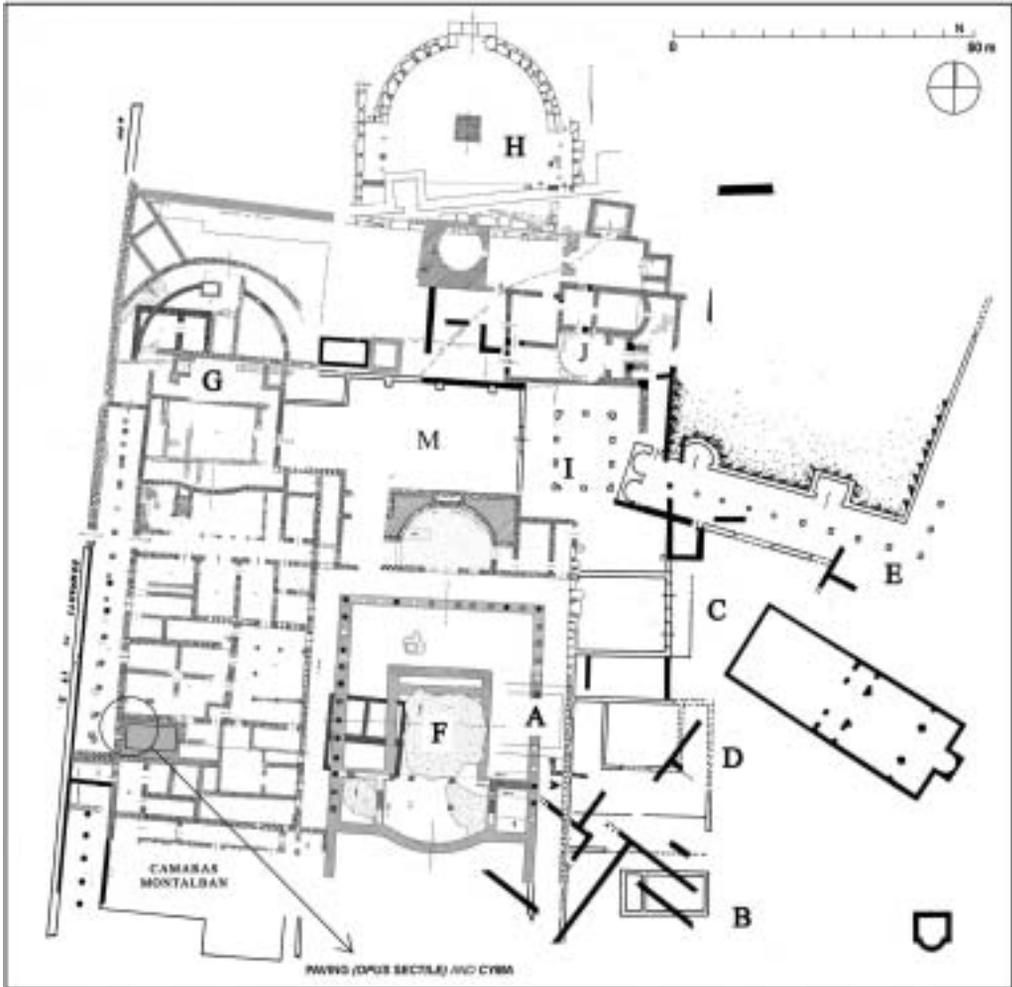


FIG. 3. The 'quartier des temples'. (After Ponsich, 1981: figs 7–15, 19.)

signinum with crushed marble and marble chips. Their location, in the upper part of the urban area, and with an open area in front of them, supports the proposal that they were temples. This impression is reinforced by the subsequent construction of a mosque, indicating reuse of this particular area for religious purposes in the medieval period (Akerraz, 1992). They are aligned in a row with their doors opening to the east, into an apparently empty space, perhaps a public square.

To the north, there is a large L-shaped cryptoporticus ('E', 40 m long and, at its maximum, 6 m wide), with a row of columns along its central axis. Four large niches, opening in the walls, may have housed sculptures. It supports an upper platform. In the context of ancient town planning, this cryptoporticus can be interpreted only as the substructure of a piazza to the north. This would coincide with the topography of the area, as the cryptoporticus hugs a natural rise in the

ground. In aerial photographs some walls can be made out within this area that could be part of the base of a building located in the centre of the supposed upper square (El Khatib-Boujibar, 1966; Bekkari, 1967: 659).³ If this interpretation is correct, it would suggest a large sanctuary, with a free-standing temple in the centre, surrounded by cryptoporticoes. Recent archaeological excavations (Brouquier, El Khayari and Ichkhakh, 2006) have dated this complex to the pre-Augustan period.

Continuing westwards, it is possible to reconstruct the layout of the area in the Hellenistic period, disregarding the later, superimposed, structures. There was no substantial building laid out behind the temples, but there was a cistern under the portico of building 'F', with twin chambers (9.5 m long and 3 m deep, one of which was divided into two parts) (Ponsich, 1981: 65–86; El Khatib-Boujibar, 1992: no. 14). This cistern may be related to a channel located slightly to the south and running from northeast to southwest (Aranegui, 2008b; Aranegui, Hassini and Tarradell, forthcoming). The material above this cistern was not described systematically at the time of its original excavation. However, in a small survey carried out later (Rebuffat, 1985) an isolated fragment of Hispanic Dragendorff 29 type *terra sigillata* of Flavian–Trajanic date was found inside the cistern. This fragment has been used to date the cistern to after the annexation of Mauretania in CE 43, although nothing is known about the stratigraphy or about the context from which the fragment came to light. However, the cistern was blocked off, truncated and covered by Augustan walls, evidence that in fact clearly negates the use of the fragment as a chronological indicator.

The southwestern side of the so-called 'temple quarter' is known as the 'Montalbán chambers' (FIG. 3, 'Camaras Montalban', and FIG. 4). The early excavations left pre-Roman walls exposed up to 4 m in height, and it was in fact in one of these chambers that Tarradell documented the complete sequence of ancient occupation of the quarter (Aranegui and Mar, 2008). The excavations that we resumed here in 2005 (illustrated in FIG. 4) have provided new data that can help us to understand better the complex development of this area. In particular, three pertinent conclusions can be highlighted: the chambers were built gradually, in several stages during the pre-Augustan period; as the front elevations of the walls show, they would have supported an upper storey; and they were then incorporated into a major project that involved the rebuilding of the whole 'temple quarter' between 30 and 10 BCE, including the building of the porticoed exedrae ('F' and 'G' in FIG. 3) and the large peristyle that covered the above-mentioned cistern.

This paper will discuss both the interpretation of the architecture and the two broad chronological phases that we have been able to identify in this sector (late Republican ('Mauretanian') and Augustan) by reconstructing its main features. In so doing, we shall highlight the distinctively public nature of the quarter.

³ This can be seen also in photographs by G. Gallot in the Museum of Archaeology in Tetouan.

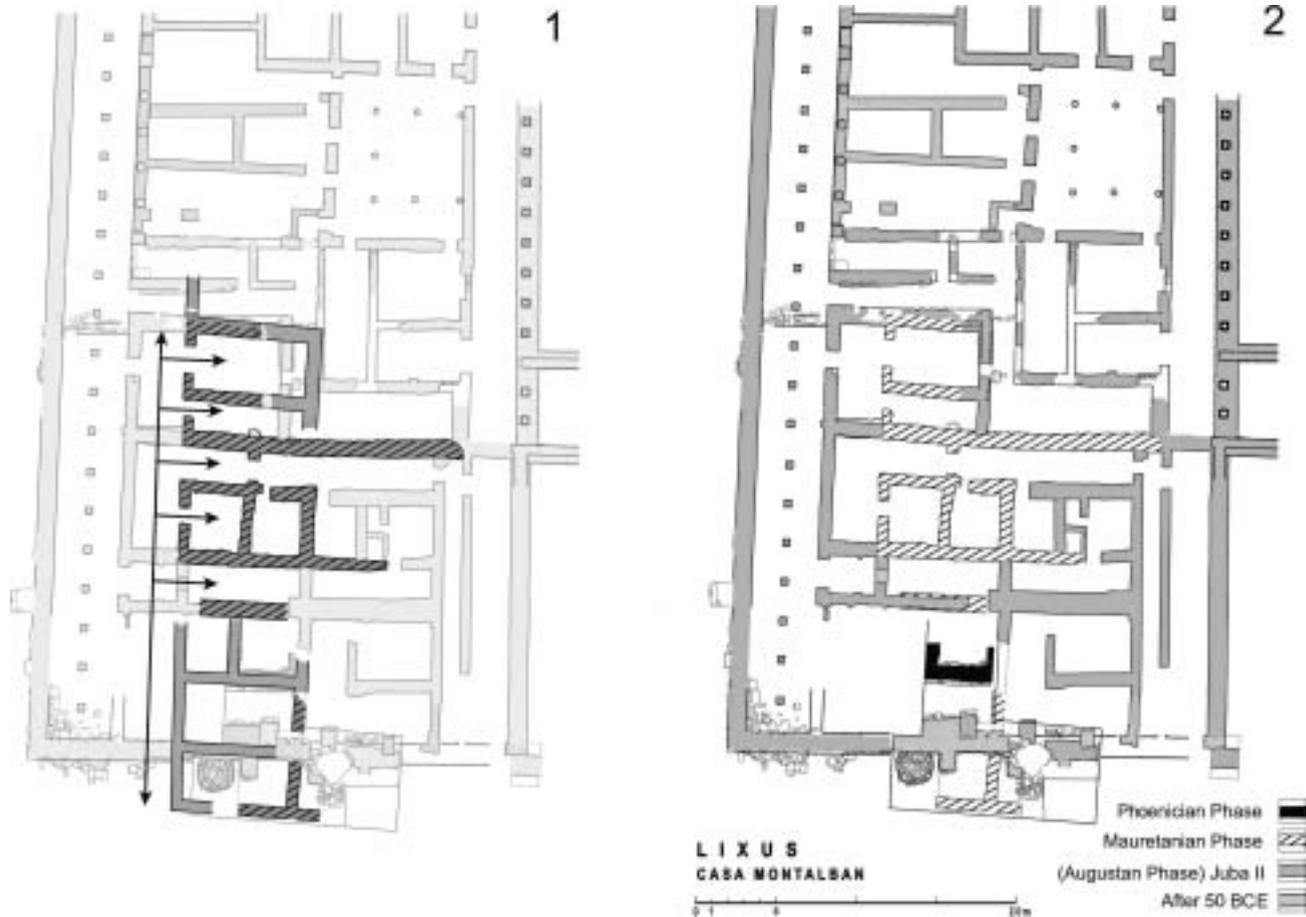


FIG. 4. The area of the Montalbán chambers. 1. Mauretanian storehouses, fourth–first centuries BCE (based upon the findings of the Moroccan-Spanish excavations in 2006–7). 2. The Augustan phase with the cryptoporticus and other rooms (based upon Ponsich, 1981: fig. 15). Wall SU 1001 (east–west) formed the basement of the south façade of the palace.

THE SANCTUARY (FIGS 5 and 6)

The archaeological evidence gathered in recent years confirms the very significant growth of Lixus from the beginning of the second century BCE. This is when the whole southern side of the city was developed on a series of terraces. The new excavations of the Montalbán chambers indicate that there were also terracing walls and stone paving in this upper part of the city. Graeco-Italic amphorae, early Campanian A (Lamboglia 23 and 36) and some Iberian pottery (painted *kalathoi* from the workshops at Fontscaldes, Tarragona) confirm this chronology. At the same time, the role and importance of fish products from the Straits in international trade increased (Trakadas, 2004; Aranegui, Hassini and Vives-Ferrándiz, forthcoming). In this period, after the Second Punic War, western Mauretania was ruled by kings, whilst Gades became a Roman city (206 BCE).

Evidence exists to date the earliest constructions in the ‘temple quarter’ as far back as Phoenician times: however, it is relatively slight. Only towards the end of the third century BCE is it possible to discern the urban layout of the quarter, with the construction of the

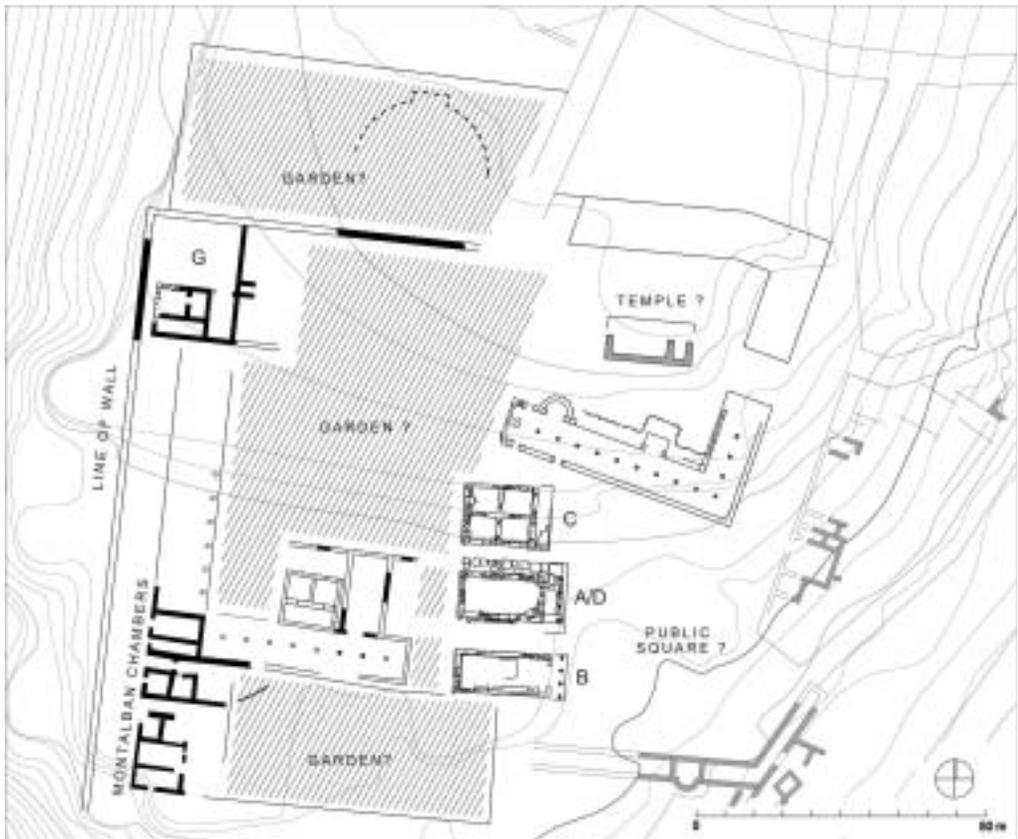


FIG. 5. The Mauretanian phase: a Hellenistic sanctuary with temples, storehouses and gardens. (Drawing: Ricardo Mar.)

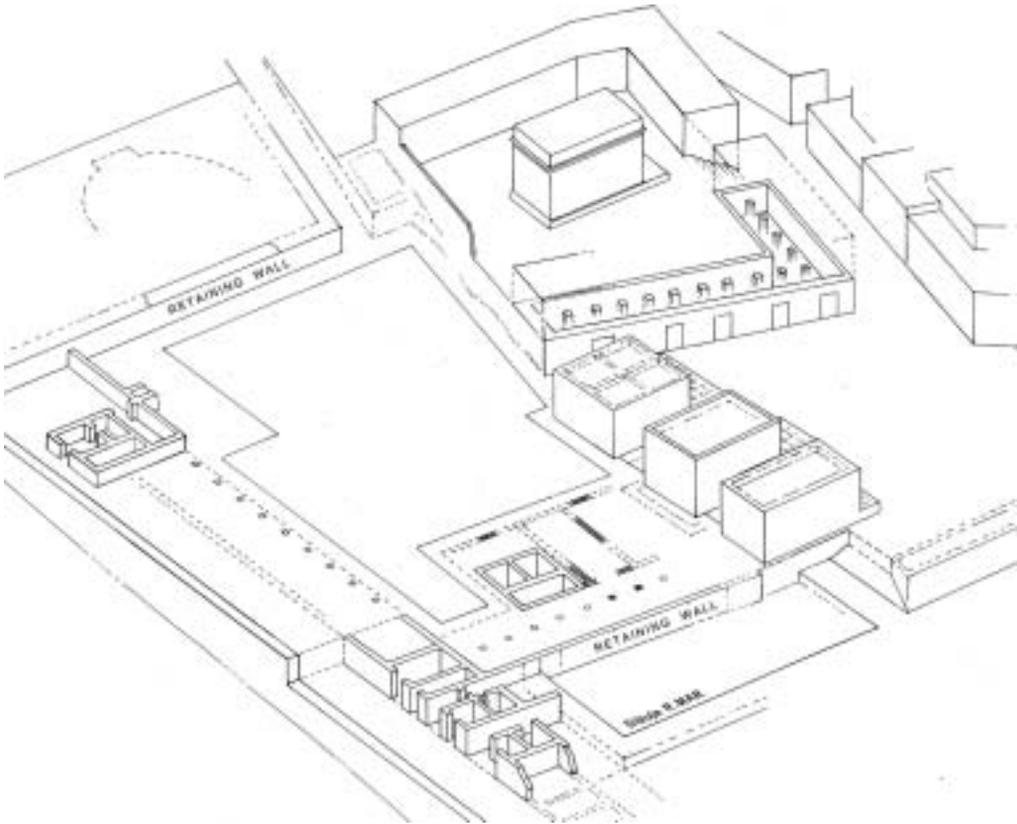


FIG. 6. Proposed reconstruction of the Mauretanian sanctuary. (Drawing: Ricardo Mar.)

religious buildings mentioned above. The probable temple surrounded by the L-shaped cryptoporticus and the row of small temples ('C', 'A'/D' and 'B') took up the eastern part of the central area and themselves faced east (FIGS 5 and 6). They were built at different times, but the *opus signinum* pavements and *opus quadratum* podium suggest, in a Moroccan context, that they had been built by the early second century; parallels for the techniques are to be found at Tamuda and elsewhere at Lixus. These temples survived until the final days of ancient Lixus. Behind them a large, primarily open, area extended as far as the line of the western wall of the city.

This space was bordered to the west by a row of rooms, parallel to the wall, with internal subdivisions that took advantage of pre-existing walls dating from the eighth–seventh centuries. Only the north and south ends of this building are known to us, and the southern end — the Montalbán chambers (FIG. 4) —, is better known, as it was extensively excavated (over an area of c. 850 m²). The northern end of the building was identified by Ponsich under building 'G' (on the basis of walls found as well as his understanding of the general topography). Consequently, during the Mauretanian phase, the whole of the façade overlooking the river Loukkos and the ramp linking the upper part of the city to the port was taken up by this long

structure.⁴ The rooms have doors in the west side, leaving space for a passageway behind the wall. These buildings might, therefore, be interpreted as being a storehouse. However, they do not display the architectural features normally associated with domestic storage, as found on the south side of Lixus (Habibi and Aranegui, 2005: 366–78). In fact, the closest parallels are buildings used for storage in eastern sanctuaries from the Hellenistic period, including the site of Oumm el-'Amed (Dunand and Duru, 1962: 232–6), Seleucid cities such as Dura-Europos (Downey, 1988) and the pre-Herodian phases in Hasmonean settlements such as Jericho and Masada (Netzer, 1991: 171–83; 2001: 131).

These storerooms were built into the slope of the hill and supported an upper floor, as shown by the thickness of the walls and the addition of buttresses and transverse walls to reinforce the foundations of the building. The Montalbán chambers are, therefore, the substructure of a linear building that bordered the western side of the space extending behind the temples.

There is little evidence for the layout of this large space. We know only of two retaining walls, which can be seen in FIGURE 6. The first lies to the east of building 'G' and the second extends east of the Montalbán chambers. Pottery finds associated with these and other terracing walls (early and middle Campanian A, Kouass black glaze and Graeco-Italic amphorae) indicate that the area was laid out in terraces before the first century BCE. In that period, the area between the western storehouse and the back wall of the small temples had no large buildings in it. It must have been an open space covering up to 4,000 m², arranged on three terraces, in which only a water feature has been found, the double cistern described above. The plan suggests that a detached ornamental building stood above it. Other walls and pillars, only partially documented by Ponsich but clearly visible underneath the *opus signinum* paving of building 'F', might suggest the presence of arcades and pergolas decorating the proposed terraced gardens. All these features lead to the hypothesis that in the days of the independent kingdom of Mauretania this whole area was a large urban sanctuary, including a variety of buildings laid out on different levels: some storage buildings, a temple surrounded by a cryptoporticus, and a relatively large cistern.

The buildings making up the sanctuary were built largely using the solid Tertiary sandy limestone from the hill itself. Quaternary fossil sandstone from the cliffs at Larache was used for some decorative architectural features rendered in stucco. The floors of the finest buildings, temple D and the cryptoporticus, were paved in alabaster *opus signinum* (Aranegui, 2008b); the use of tile or brick has not been documented before the reign of Juba II (25 BCE–CE 23). This elaborate paving, as well as stuccoes decorated in the first and second Pompeian styles, demonstrate Italic influences; the bronze sculpted groups of Hercules and Antaeus and of Theseus and the Minotaur (Boube-Piccot, 1969: 383–4) may suggest the same, as may some good-quality pieces of ancient fixtures and fittings (Boube-Piccot, 1975), but these were found mostly in other parts of the site.

⁴ The ramp was flanked by tombs, some of them pre-dating the first century CE (Tarradell, 1950; Aranegui, 2007).

These are all fairly clear indications of an ostentatious project alien to the western Punic tradition, but including late Hellenistic forms, such as cryptoporticuses and terraces. The overall picture is of a sacred area associated with an extensive garden closed off by a wing with storage space on the ground floor (FIG. 6). Since there are fragmentary remains (walls, pottery and graffiti) from the eighth–seventh centuries BCE underneath, it is probable that this sanctuary was Phoenician in origin (Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* 19.63; López Pardo, 1992).

Changes in the internal layout of the ‘Montalbán chambers’ were made around 30 BCE. This included the opening of new windows and doors with voussoir arches in the southern wall, dated by late Cales pottery (Lamboglia 5 and 31) and developed Dressel 1 and 12 amphorae. This did not involve a major reconstruction of the building, but is an example of the general refurbishment and maintenance work an urban project as complex as this must have required.

This early Mauretanian transformation of Lixus⁵ can be associated with public works in other parts of Morocco. The most recent excavations at many sites still await full publication, but it is known that monumental architecture begins to be found during the Mauretanian phase. Construction from this period can be found in Dchar Jdid (ancient Zilil) (the Citadelle: Kbir Alaoui, 2004), in Rirha (ancient Gilda) (Akerraz and El Khayari, 2005), in Banasa (Arharbi and Lenoir, 2002), in Volubilis, with its twin forum temples and sanctuary B (Ichkhakh, 2006), outside the walls of Sala (Boube, 1967) and, in particular, in Tamuda (El Khayari, 1996), where we also find the highest concentration of Italic Republican bronze vessels anywhere in Morocco (Boube-Piccot, 1991).

All this building activity is, beyond a doubt, contemporary with the appearance in Morocco of coins with Punic lettering (Mazard, 1955; Callegarin and El Harri, 2000). Those issued by the *mqm sms* mint, with the likenesses of Bocchus I (reigned c. 118–80 BCE) and Juba I (reigned c. 60–46 BCE), illustrate the role played by these monarchs in western Mauretania. Of particular note is the use of a small *naiskos* (a temple, not an altar) on the reverse in some late second-century BCE series from the Lixus mint (Manfredi, 1996; Tarradell, 2001) (FIG. 7). The temples portrayed on other Punic coins are thought to be purely symbolic. In this case, however, the winged sun decorating the *naiskos* on the reverse of these coins is a reference to the city’s sacred status as far back as its foundation (Oggiano, 2008). It is possible that such coins portrayed the principal monument of the pre-Augustan sanctuary, in the area bordered by the L-shaped cryptoporticus.

This new interpretation of the architecture of the ‘temple quarter’ makes Lixus the leading, but by no means unique, example of a new Hellenistic/Mauretanian/Republican *facies* in Morocco. The large number of minor examples might suggest that a centralized town-planning policy extended throughout western Mauretania from at least the reign of Bocchus I (118–80 BCE).

This phenomenon must have occurred also in some form in Numidia and more generally east of the river Moulouya, although no architectural projects comparable to the sanctuary at Lixus

⁵ On which, see also: Aranegui, 2001; Habibi and Aranegui, 2005.



FIG. 7. Coin from Lixus with Punic and Latin lettering. On its reverse is a *naiskos*. (Triton auction XI, 01.7.2008, lot 343, weight 10.63 g). (Reproduced courtesy of the Classical Numismatic Group (<http://www.cngcoins.com>).)

have been found in Algeria or Tunisia (Fentress, 2006). This may be due to the fact that archaeological research there has focused on the cities of the Roman Empire. It is known, however, that the Numidian kings had substantial residences (*regia*) and that large funerary tumuli were built during their reigns (Colonna, 2003; Rakob, 1983), as in Mauretania (Tarradell, 1952; Gozalbes, 2006). However, at present there is little evidence for pre-Roman activity in Numidian towns. Punic urban centres, such as Kerkouane on Cap Bon, are well-documented (Fantar, 1984–6: I, 147–293, 297), but do not seem to have had sanctuaries similar to the one at Lixus; in general they have more modest sacred buildings fitted unobtrusively into the street plan. The Punic area in the central Mediterranean is characterized more generally by sanctuaries with stelae (Bisi, 1967; Bondi, 2004).⁶ The only known group of stelae in Morocco is from sanctuary B at Volubilis, which is not earlier than the mid-first century BCE (Morestin, 1980; Brouquier, El Khayari and Ichkhakh, 1998). This exceptional case may have a political explanation: reinventing the Punic origins of this city at a later date through ritual practice might have represented a particular strategy for social cohesion adopted by this city alone. However, the absence of divinities with a recognizable iconography, and of inscriptions, distances the Volubilis stelae from the other examples in Punic-period north Africa (Berthier and Charlier, 1955; Ferjaoui, 2007).

Even if Mauretanian cities did not follow the same religious patterns as central mediterranean ones, this does not mean that the two territories did not have close links, in particular economic

⁶ Two or three small stelae preserved in the museum in Tetouan are believed to have been found at Lixus and Tamuda. There is also one stele still at Tamuda. Such small numbers do not contradict the statement that offerings of stelae were largely absent in Morocco.

ones. Rhodian and Graeco-Italic amphorae are to be found in both regions, and they could have arrived via the same distribution channels.⁷

To conclude, the sanctuary at Lixus represents an unusual sacred complex, covering about 6,000 m², *intra muros*. It therefore constitutes a new phenomenon in archaeological research in the western Maghreb. The complex described above could be the famous sanctuary of Melquart, ‘older than the one in Gades’ (Pliny, *Naturalis Historia* 19.63), although this hypothesis must, for the moment, be treated with caution due to the scarcity of supporting evidence in the form of inscriptions and iconography.

FROM SACRED GARDENS TO AULIC PALACE (FIGS 8 and 9)

The recent Spanish-Moroccan excavations of the Montalbán chambers have identified a new phase of activity, in which the Mauretanian storehouses were refurbished and built over. A substantial east–west wall with buttresses (SU 1001) (FIGS 4 and 10) is a crucial find that has clarified the stratigraphy of this area. This wall cuts the Mauretanian storehouses at the western limit of the ‘sacred gardens’, and forms the southern façade of a new monumental area that covered the storehouses, and will be referred to henceforth as the western wing (28 m wide by 100 m long). Its importance in chronological terms is that it provides three contexts dated by imported ceramics.

One of these contexts is a simple craft workshop at the base of wall SU 1001 (FIG. 10), with abundant archeological material: several hundred ceramic vessels, as well as gypsum and *cocciopesto*, and fragments of bronze nails. The assemblage of amphorae associated with this workshop is made up mostly of Ramon 7.4.3.3, Haltern 70 and Dressel 7–11 types. The fine pottery is mainly late Caes black glaze, although Italic thin-walled cups and a few fragments of eastern and Italic *sigillata* were also found. The assemblage includes fragments of Pompeian red glaze ware (Goudineau 12 type) and other African or Italic pots. This pottery dates to around 30–10 BCE. The northern part of this workshop was cut by the foundation trench (SU 1000) for wall SU 1001, the fill of this trench containing a similar range of early Augustan pottery: this, along with the unusually brief period of existence indicated by the range of pottery, suggests that the workshop was used solely during the construction of the new monumental complex. Wall SU 1001 was built at the same time as a western cryptoporticus, which was 80 m long. Both belong to a general transformation of the earlier storerooms, which were now covered by rooms accessible from the new double cryptoporticus. The Montalbán chambers were thus integrated into the new early Augustan complex. As it was built on a slope, its northern end stands about 8 m higher than the southern one. This major difference in level makes it clear that in the southern part there must have been two storeys above the Montalbán chambers. The height of

⁷ For Constantine: Aoulad Taher, 2004–5; for the Graeco-Italic presence at Lixus: Habibi and Aranegui, 2005: 111. We also found Rhodian amphorae in our excavations.

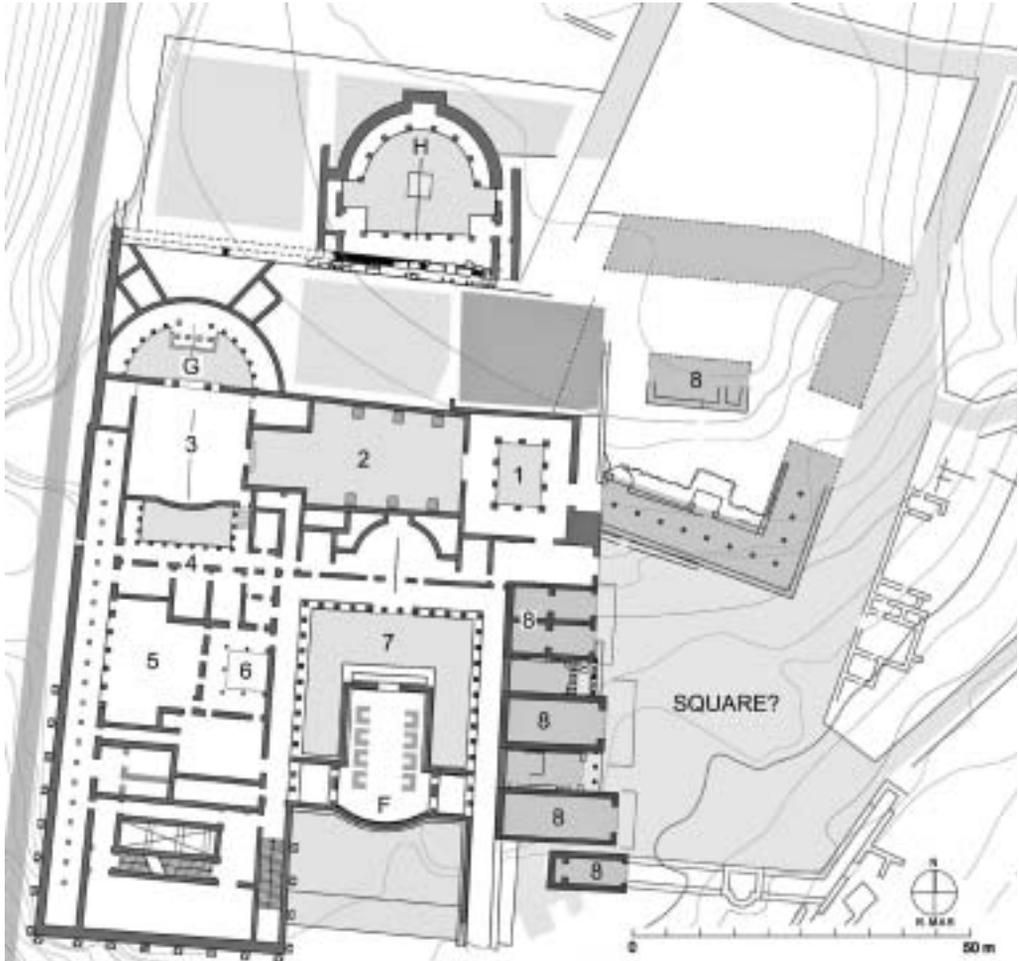


FIG. 8. The palace of Lixus at the time of Juba II. 1. Corinthian atrium; 2. rectangular court; 3. reception hall; 4. peristyle with cubicles; 5. large *oecus*; 6. skylight room; 7. triclinium complex; 8. temples. (Drawing: Ricardo Mar.)

the upper, or main, floor coincides with the level of the middle terrace of the earlier 'sacred gardens'. The lower floor must have been a storage space half sunk into the hill in the period of Juba II, when the earlier storerooms became a substructure and basement for the new building. The upper floor was laid out as a panoramic gallery with a central colonnade, with large openings to the outside. It must have had doors leading to the new rooms and areas making up the main floor of the building.

The main floor plan for this period, from the Montalbán chambers across to the back of the temples, can be read relatively easily for this period if the later internal dividing walls are ignored (FIG. 8): the extensive intercommunication between the rooms is a fundamental argument for the unity of the complex. When the western wing was built, between the cryptoporticus and Ponsich's building 'F', a series of interconnected rooms was laid out around a large hall or

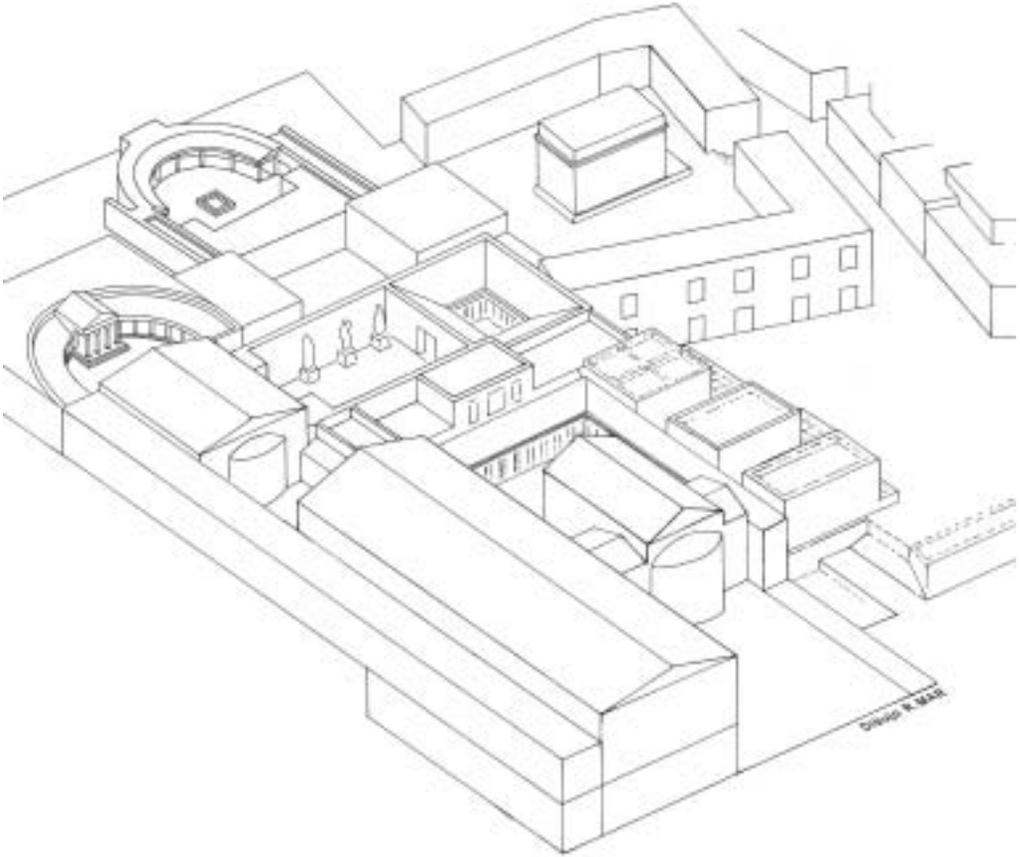


FIG. 9. Proposed reconstruction of the elevation of the palatial complex of Lixus. (Drawing: Ricardo Mar.)

oecus opening onto the *cryptoporticus*. These rooms probably included a stairway down to the lower floor.

Above the floor of one of the lower rooms, excavations by Tarradell (not yet published) found remains of a sumptuous mosaic that had adorned the room above (which covered the area of three of the lower rooms) until its destruction during the revolts following the death of Juba II's son, Ptolemy. This is a sophisticated Hellenistic *opus sectile* pavement (Guidobaldi, 1994: 451), decorated with diamond and lozenge shapes cut in hard green, white and black stones, framed in black and white *opus tessellatum* edged with a zigzag design. It is the most significant evidence of the decorative luxury of the new building.⁸ Moreover, in one of the lower rooms a

⁸ In 2007 Khadija Bouchouk, curator of the museum in Larache, allowed us to consult the records of this museum relating to a small fragment of lozenge paving (LR.79.79). It is labelled as coming 'from the hypocaust of the *thermae* in the sector with the historic buildings complex', and the lozenges measure 12.5×7.5 cm. It must, in fact, be from a level below the baths, since such a luxurious pavement would be impossible for a hypocaust.

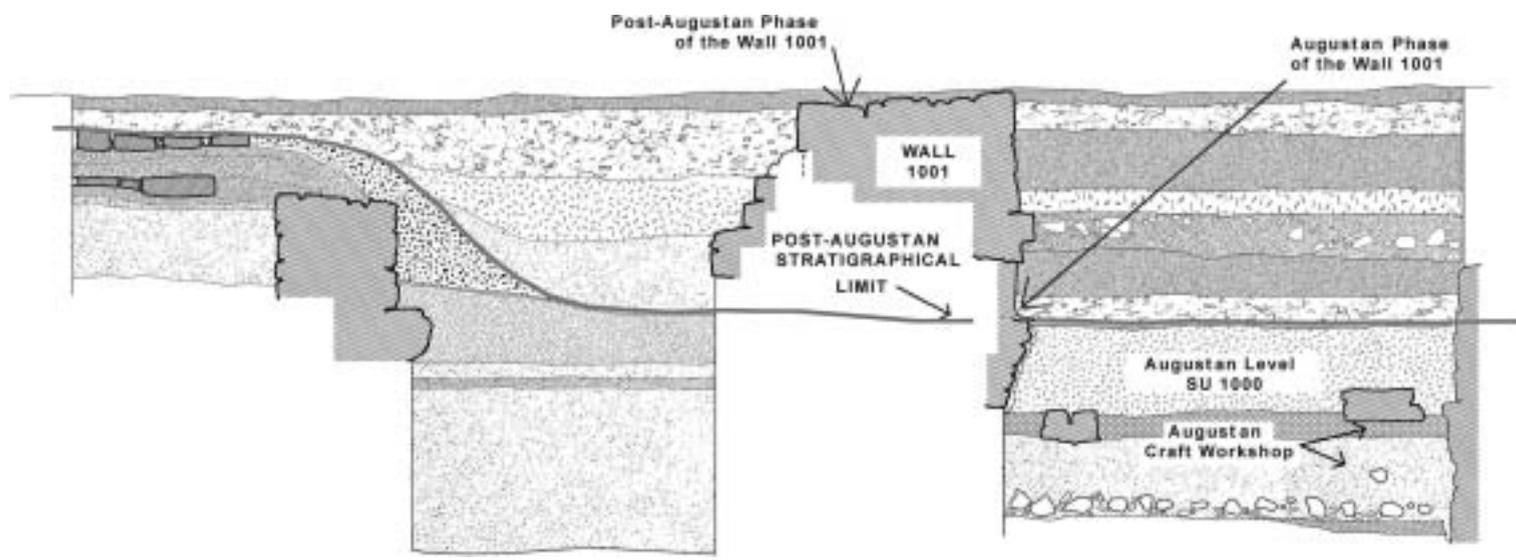


FIG. 10. Stratigraphical section: SU 1001. (Drawing: Ricardo Mar.)

fragment of Egyptian cyma has been found with the *cavetto* bordered by small straight mouldings, and with a radius of about 0.2 m: originally, this also must have been on the upper floor.

Next to the room with the *opus sectile* pavement is a large *oecus* that is the most important room in the whole of the western area. It is an enormous T-shaped hall measuring 14 × 12 m.⁹ None of the original architectural features clarifying the relationship between this room and the cryptoporticus now remain.¹⁰ They were perhaps connected through a 'partition' with three or five openings, formed by pilasters or columns. At the end opposite the cryptoporticus, on its axis of symmetry, the room adjoins a sophisticated chamber decorated with a kind of canopy resting on seven small cylindrical columns (Ponsich, 1981: pl. XXI). These are probably the supports for a skylight to provide overhead lighting in the room. The floor here is of the same *opus signinum* as in the large *oecus*. The hall and skylight room take up the whole 28 m width of the western wing.

Continuing northwards, a row of four cubicles opens onto a U-shaped peristyle decorated with columns with Ionic capitals (Ponsich, 1981: pl. XXII), which itself opens on to the upper gallery of the cryptoporticus through a door. All four of the cubicles had large doors opening onto the peristyle, and they were also interconnected with each other. The largest of them measures 4 × 7 m, while the easternmost is divided into two areas. The eastern passage of the peristyle housed a stairway with six steps leading to a large hall ('G' on FIGS 3 and 8). The stairway itself has disappeared, but its imprint on the side wall remains. It ended in front of the doorway, now blocked up.

An examination of all the walls described above reveals physical and functional connections between this western wing, complex 'G' (to the north) and complex 'F' (to the east): the Augustan project therefore affected the whole of the area to the west of the temples. The rooms making up the main floor of the western wing have five doors into the peristyle that surrounds the area labelled 'F' on FIGURES 3 and 8. (A sixth door further to the south opens onto a corridor leading into the peristyle.) The first opens into the southern end of the peristyle, behind the room with the *opus sectile* floor. The second leads into the room with the skylight. The third and fourth doors connect one of the above-mentioned cubicles with area 'F'. Finally, the fifth door connects the U-shaped peristyle ('G') to the large peristyle ('F') via a short passage.

To summarize, this western wing is just one part of a much more extensive complex, which includes, at the very least, structures 'G' and 'F'. Indeed, its walls continue northwards to run round complex 'G' and eastwards to enclose the peristyle surrounding what was described as temple 'F' (Ponsich, 1981). We are now in a position to state that complexes 'F', 'G' and 'H' were built at the same time, since the rooms in the western wing share walls with 'F' and 'G', and the latter also shares walls with 'H'. Their layout was therefore contemporary with and

⁹ This was later divided into six smaller rooms. The walls forming these smaller rooms rest largely on top of the *opus signinum* pavement of the *oecus*, though in some places they cut into it. Nevertheless, the original measurements can be seen clearly.

¹⁰ The post-Augustan transformation of this room also involved a new wall that separated it from the western cryptoporticus, hence the problem understanding the relationship.

corresponds to the project dated by our excavations to between 30 and 10 BCE. The new architectural layout also involved changes in the topography. The most obvious was the elimination of the southern terrace, when its ground level was raised to the same height as the central one. It is clear that the so-called 'temple quarter' underwent a radical transformation in the period 30–10 BCE, which affected and unified the whole area. It then suffered major destruction after a short time, followed by rebuilding that can be dated to between CE 40 and 50 (Fishwick, 1971: 473). For example, wall SU 1001 was essentially destroyed in the early years of the Christian era, and later reconstructed: layers with fragments of stucco and pavements (SU 1099) adjoin wall SU 1001 at the moment of its reconstruction, indicating the new level of the pavement of the lower floor, and new buttresses were added on the south face of wall 1001 to replace the earlier ones. Early South Gaulish *sigillata* associated with the southern buttresses gives a date of CE 40–50.

The work of the French-Moroccan team studying Roman temples in Morocco also supports this reinterpretation of the chronology of the site. In recent years a series of stratigraphic studies of the Lixus temples has been carried out, and although the full results are not yet available, preliminary reports (Brouquier, El Khayari and Ichkhakh, 2006) present the main chronological conclusions, and these match the results described here.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE AUGUSTAN COMPLEX

As we have shown, the buildings of the Mauretanian period, which we have suggested were a sanctuary, saw their initial layout altered with the construction of the large early Augustan building. This was added to the back of the original temples (which nevertheless retained their religious function), and occupied the space of the earlier 'sacred gardens', covering the cistern and storerooms. The unitary nature of the new project can be seen both in the continuity with which its walls were built, as discussed above, and in its architecture, which will be the main focus of this section. Buildings 'F', 'G' and 'H' were all structures with apses and porticoes, and various doors and passages allowed easy movement between the various buildings (FIG. 8).

The floor plan of the whole complex is organized as a set of porticoed hemicycles, rectangular peristyles, large halls and small cubicles based on three compositional axes. Firstly, there is an axis of symmetry running from north to south, which served to align the northern large semicircular exedra ('H') with the rooms in the central complex 'F'. 'H' is now cut off from 'F' by a later wall (fifth-century CE). Complex 'F', connected with the western wing, consists of a peristyle with a free-standing hall in the centre. This has an apse whose axis of symmetry coincides with the centre of exedra 'H'. Secondly, a second north–south axis runs along the western flank of the area, extending into complex 'G', and ending in another semicircular exedra. Thirdly there are the structures in the northern sector of the 'temple quarter', laid out around an axis running from east to west, which have not been discussed so far. They take up the space between exedra 'H' and building 'G' (FIG. 3 — J). This complex of buildings is interpreted as beginning with a Corinthian atrium with six pilasters, continuing with a court

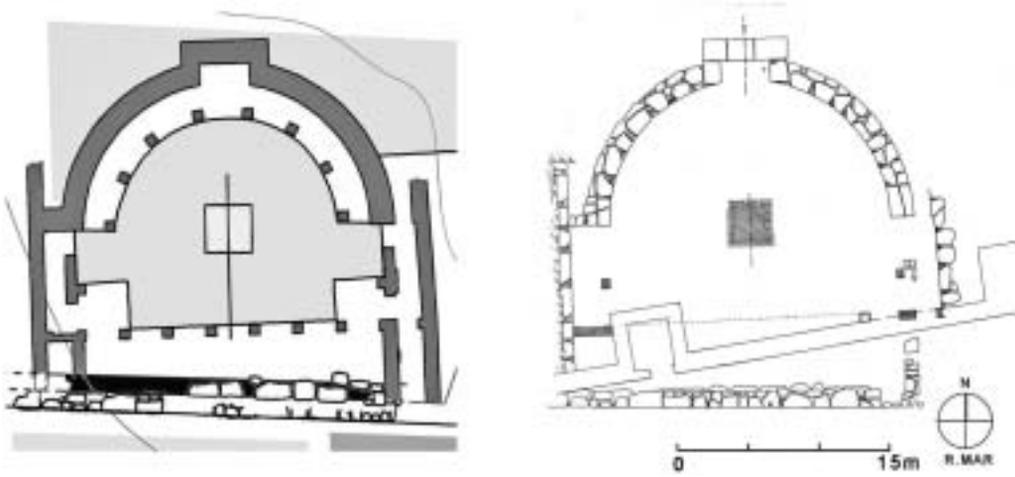


FIG. 11. Proposed reconstruction of building 'H'. Right: Ponsich's plan (1981: fig. 30). Left: our interpretation of it as a porticoed garden. (Drawing: Ricardo Mar.)

decorated with two lines of plinths set against the wall, and ending with a side entrance to complex 'G'. A bath complex was built against the northern wall of the atrium, which in their current form probably belong to the Flavian period. Nevertheless, some features have been found that are certainly older, perhaps associated with water facilities that would have lain underneath those now visible.

This unified approach to the construction undermines the traditional interpretation of the 'temple quarter', and is brought into further doubt when the architectural layout of each supposed 'temple' is analysed.

BUILDING 'H' (FIG. 11)¹¹

This complex was identified as a temple when it was discovered, and the label has been retained in subsequent studies. It is a peristyle on a semicircular floor plan (19.4 m wide), cut into the rock and surrounding an interior garden, in the centre of which is the base of an ornamental feature. At the centre of the apse there is a niche to house a statue. The southern side of the peristyle is masked by the later city-wall. Even so, the walls of the exedra that run south reveal traces of the beginning of a series of pilasters and a door to a passageway that no doubt linked building 'H' to the space with the bath complex. According to some authors, this building should be dated to the first half of the first century BCE (Habibi, 1994). Others, however, place it at the time of Juba II (Mongne, 2005) and consider it to be the palaestra for the baths. In our opinion there are certainly no grounds for considering it a religious building. It is simply a large semicircular

¹¹ Our reconstructions (FIGS 11–13) are based upon new topographical surveys of the site, resulting in some revisions to scale and orientation, for example, between our drawings and those of Ponsich.

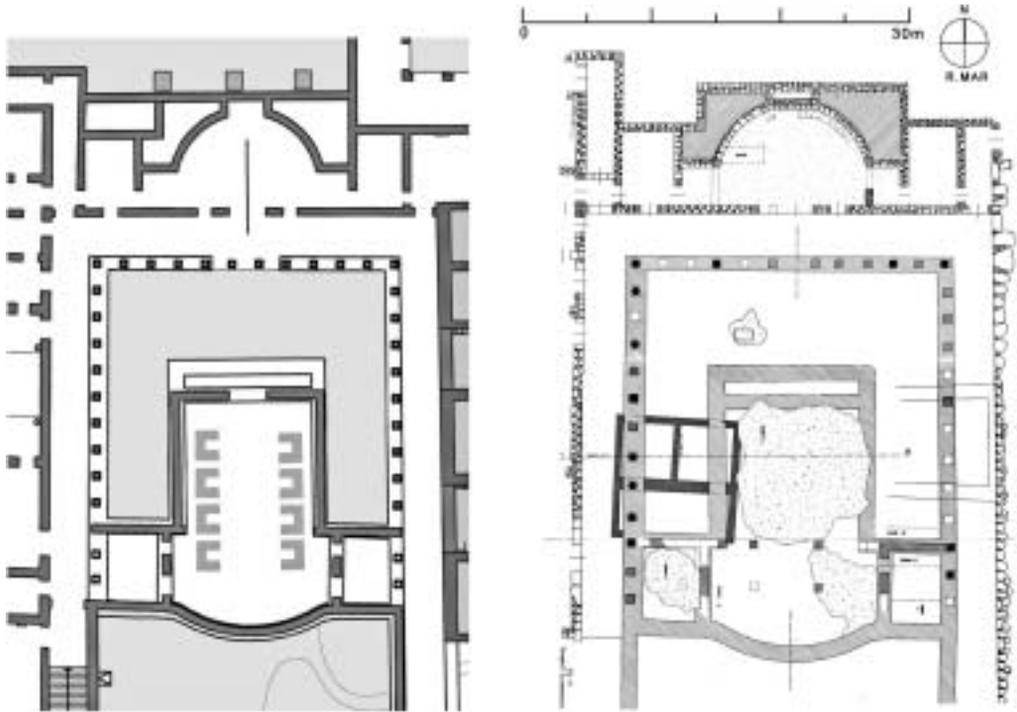


FIG. 12. Proposed reconstruction of building 'F'. Right: Ponsich's plan (1981: fig. 14). Left: our interpretation of it as a large triclinium. (Drawing: Ricardo Mar.)

exedra with gardens, with porticoes around the sides, and dating to the time of Juba II along with the rest of this complex, with which it shared a clear axis of symmetry, as described above.

BUILDING 'F' (FIG. 12)

Ponsich considered this to be a large temple, an opinion shared by later authors, who have insisted on its African religious peculiarities (Lenoir, 1992). It consists of a large peristyle with a rectangular plan surrounding a decorative garden, in the centre of which a large hall with a curving wall at the southern end was built. The apse follows the axis of symmetry that begins in exedra 'H'. The hall has two symmetrical wings situated on either side of the curved wall. The axis of symmetry of the northern portico of the peristyle widens out into a sophisticated exedra that is also semicircular. This is smaller in size (11.25 m in diameter) than those in buildings 'G' and 'H', but none the less they all form part of the same architectural composition.

The interpretation of hall 'F' as the *cella* of a temple must be doubted once its architectural features are considered. Its floor is at the same level as the porticoes and the ornamental garden in the peristyle. It therefore lacks the podium that is characteristic of buildings used for religious worship. In addition, the two wings open into the side porticoes of the peristyle. This means there are three doors allowing access between the hall and the porticoes, which is not usual

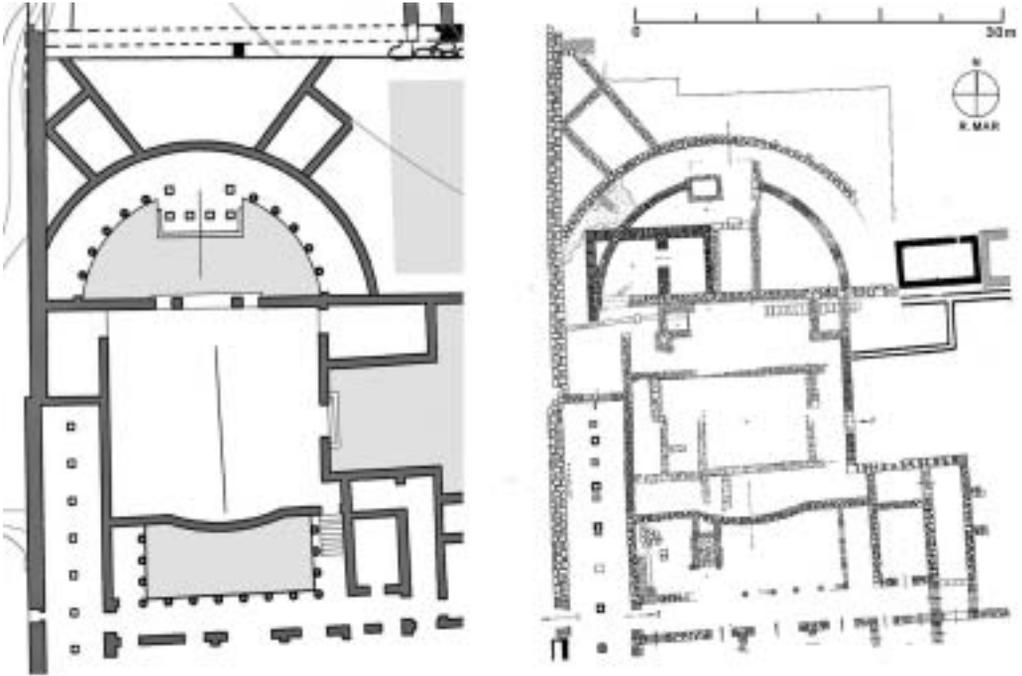


FIG. 13. Proposed reconstruction of the northeast hall of building 'G'. Right: Ponsich's plan (1981: fig. 29). Left: our interpretation of it as a reception hall. (Drawing: Ricardo Mar.)

in ancient temples. These considerations, taken together with the very large size of the hall, in our view rule out its use as a temple.

BUILDING 'G' (FIG. 13)

Building 'G', which has a complex floor plan, marks the northern end of the western wing. It has a semicircular apse of a similar size to building 'F', and a porticoed gallery. The wall supporting the base of the gallery has survived, along with the curved wall on which the pillars rested. Unlike building 'F', the open area of hemicycle 'G' had a paved floor ending in three steps at its northern edge, upon which stood a colonnade. Positioned on the axis of symmetry of the exedra, these steps formed a rectangular unit that was doubtless reflected in the height of the portico. Evidence has survived of the *opus signinum* rendering of the fountain located in the centre of the esedra. The curved wall enclosing the porticoed gallery is not broken on the axis of the exedra. Therefore, no door existed here to provide access to any axial room that might be interpreted as the *cella* of a temple.

The portico that closed the exedra to the south, now dismantled, led to an enormous rectangular room that covered almost the whole width of the porticoed hemicycle. Its southern wall, slightly curving, had windows opening onto the U-shaped peristyle that formed part of the western wing. In this case, too, there are no grounds for interpreting either the semicircular exedra or the large rectangular hall as a temple.

BUILDINGS 'I'–'M' (FIG. 3)

The large (16 × 16 m) square room 'I' had an interior portico with pilasters (FIG. 3). To build the southeastern corner of this porticoed room, the western end of the L-shaped cryptoporticus had to be blocked off and demolished. Ponsich (1981: 50) published a description of the door that led to this room from the outside of the Augustan complex. Unfortunately, the doorway, essential to an interpretation of the atrium as the main entrance to the large Augustan building, was dismantled during archaeological work.

This Corinthian atrium served as the antechamber to the rectangular court decorated, it is interpreted, with two rows of plinths ('M'). As described above, the third compositional axis in the complex, running from east to west, began with this atrium and continued across the court with the plinths to the entrance in the eastern wall of the large hall in complex 'G'. The architectural layout of the court, rigorously symmetrical, clearly supports this analysis. It is rectangular, with a square recess at its western end, where a great door led into the large hall 'G', the threshold of which is still in place. It is clear that all these features made up a visual axis that also governed movement in and access to this large hall. The size of the court (M) means that it cannot have had a built roof: it was an open interior space that served as a reception area.

The structural continuity of the walls of these three features (the *thermae*, the Corinthian atrium and the court with the plinths) indicates that they formed part of the major Augustan project. If they are taken together with complexes 'F', 'G', 'H' and the western wing, a single architectural project emerges on a compact floor plan, built in the time of Juba II.

A ROYAL PALACE

The religious buildings to the east remained in use after the early Augustan renovation of the quarter. It is highly probable that they were the temples that had presided over the city's civic space since Phoenician times, and that they had grown in number with the passage of time, in the same way that the *cellae* of Zilil or Sala multiplied (Boube, 1967). However, the area with the gardens, storehouses and facilities of the sanctuary, which had been built in the Mauretanian period, were replaced with an enormous building covering 7,000 m². These dimensions are exceptional when considered in the light of north Africa more generally. Leaving aside fora and venues for spectacles, only the architecture of the great mid-Imperial or late Roman palaces provides comparable examples (Leveau, 1982). Even so, this building is bigger than anything similar, including the misleadingly-named 'Palace of Gordianus' at Volubilis (Thouvenot, 1958; Ichkhakh, 2006), which covers only 4,554 m². If we look at similar buildings in Italy, we can note that the surface area of the complex in Lixus is three times larger than the House of the Faun in Pompeii, one of the largest known private houses; it is considerably larger than any known private house.

Any interpretation of it must, therefore, focus on a palatial residence, built on the initiative of an extremely important person. The magnitude of this architectural complex, built above Lixus's

sacred gardens and adjoining the city temples, is a sign of its owner's high status (Nielsen, 1997; 1999). It must have arisen from a political initiative, and the layout of the cryptocucuses, peristyles, halls and gardens introduces elements typical of palatial residences. Taking into account the dating of the complex as well, all the evidence points to the attribution of the palace to Juba II of Mauretania. It would also fit with the spread of cultural currents originating in the Hellenistic east (Nielsen, 1999; Etienne, 2006) that influenced the architecture used by social élites in other mediterranean countries, in particular Italy, in late Republican and early Augustan times.

It is plausible that the kings and notables of the client kingdoms of the western Mediterranean possessed great palaces, as is mentioned in the literary sources (Diodorus Siculus 16.83, for Sicily; Polybius 10.1–9, 17.52.4, for New Carthage). Luxurious residences of the type known in Ptolemais (Palazzo delle Colonne) and Cyrene (Casa del Propileo) (Stucchi, 1975: 215, 311) must have existed also in the former Numidia (Sennequier and Colonna, 2003), although none have been documented yet under the Roman levels of cities like Bulla Regia, Hippo Regius or, perhaps most pertinently, Iol-Caesarea (Benseddik, Ferdi and Leveau, 1983). However, it should be noted that the exceptional quality of the marble capitals and sculptures unearthed in Iol-Caesarea, Juba II's main capital, are unparalleled in the archaeology of western Mauretania. In Caesarea, the remains attributed to the time of Juba II bear the direct stamp of Augustan Rome (Pensabene, 1983: 69–76). The only Moroccan find comparable to those in Iol-Caesarea is the famous bronze bust of the monarch found in Volubilis, which recently has been attributed to a workshop in Caesarea itself (Landwehr, 2007: J7).

An analysis of the individual elements of the palace at Lixus suggests similarities, however, with some of Herod the Great's residences in Palestine. Complex 'F', for example, has its closest parallel in the great triclinium in the third palace of Jericho (Netzer, 2001: 233–9). Based on this interpretation, 'F' would be the principal triclinium of Lixus's palace. This would therefore be an *oecus cyzicenus* (Vitruvius, *De Architectura* 6.3.10), which could be used for feasting and, at the same time, enjoying the landscape. In the Lixus *oecus* guests would be treated to fine views of the estuary of the river Loukkos, with the Atlantic Ocean as a backdrop. Situated in the middle of the garden and surrounded by porticoes, this great triclinium would have been the venue for important official feasts.

However, in terms of the overall composition of its design, the great Augustan palace of Lixus is also in many ways close to contemporary architecture in Italy (Mar, 2005: 76–105). Particularly significant is the use of axes of symmetry, a principle little known in Punic-period architecture and town planning, as shown in the Mauretanian sanctuary of Lixus, where temples 'B', 'C' and 'D' are juxtaposed without any kind of axis of symmetry. This contrasts with the axial organization of certain elements of the palace, in particular the sequence that defines the two exedrae, 'H' and 'F'. This compositional organization appears in Italy in the largest late Republican villas and in Imperial palaces of the first century BCE–second century CE; this architectonic tradition, with its specific compositional language, explains many aspects of the palace building at Lixus, and is worth further consideration.

In the first place, some examples from the Vesuvian area stand out, such as the Villa of Diomedes and the Villa of the Mysteries, both near Pompeii, and the San Marco villa in Stabia (FIG. 14). The

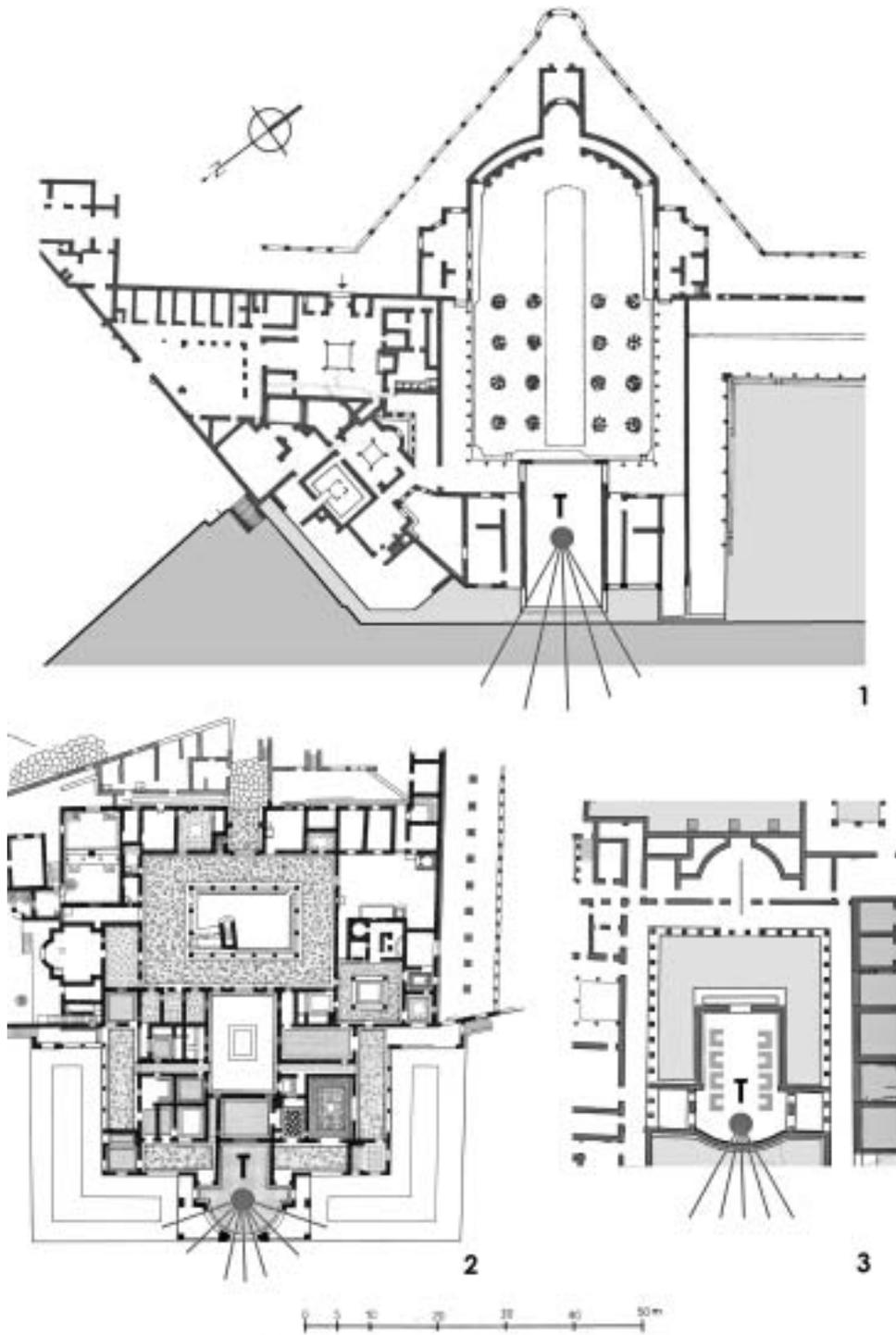


FIG. 14. Examples of an *oecus trilinaris* from: 1. San Marco Villa, Stabia; 2. Villa of the Mysteries, Pompeii (after De Vos and De Vos, 1982: 245, 323); 3. Augustan palace at Lixus.

Villa of Diomedes is arranged on two terraces: the upper one has the residential core of the villa; the lower one is occupied by a large peristyle open to the landscape. The articulation between the two terraces is achieved through a great hall, part of the residential core, which projects above the axis of symmetry of the peristyle below. The Villa of the Mysteries, after a Sullan renovation, engages with the landscape through the large new *oecus* and its panoramic terrace. The interior plan of the building is not symmetrical, but the building of a large apse projecting to the exterior defines a visual axis of symmetry that can be seen from outside the building. Finally, the great peristyle of the San Marco villa in Stabia is the best parallel to the composition of the large peristyle of the Lixus palace. The rigorously symmetrical structure of the garden is defined by an axis that begins with a large *oecus triclinalis*, and ends in the centre of a great curved exedra flanked by niches. In these three villas, as in the Lixus palace, the floor plan gives a visual symmetry to the building, even if its spatial distribution was not in fact symmetrical.

The compositional language found in these Campanian examples finds its closest parallel in two late Republican buildings from Latium: the Villa Farnesina in Rome and the so-called Villa of Pompey in Albano Laziale. The former is a building projecting out into the landscape through a sequence of porticoes leading towards a large *oecus* with a large convex exedra. In the Villa of Pompey, curving architectural elements arranged around a major compositional axis are reinforced by the spectacular landscape chosen as the site for the villa (FIG. 15).

However, it is the imperial residences built from the Augustan period on that developed this architectural language to its limit. The best documented examples are associated with the Emperor Tiberius on the island of Capri, in particular the Villa Iovis, whose architecture has been re-examined recently (Krause, 2000): though later than the complex at Lixus, it represents the best parallel for the Lixus palace. This compact building was built around an interior peristyle that covered a reservoir. Nevertheless, the building was extended by a semicircular basement that supported a large hall on top. The windows that opened in its curved façade gave a view of the Mediterranean.

All these buildings, as the Lixus palace, use numerous curving architectural elements such as apses or semicircular porticoes. In combination with large windows and triple doors (*triforae*), this shows a splendid use of ambiguity in the relation between covered spaces (halls and exedrae), porticoes, gardens and the landscape.

The most remarkable thing about the architectural design of the Lixus palace in fact is the sophisticated relationship between the main rooms and the space outside. This succeeds because of the dynamic interplay between the interior gardens enclosed by porticoes and the rooms that are visible and lit through windows and doors opening on to these garden areas. The *paradeisos*, with water, plants and exotic animals, was a royal prerogative (Xenophon, *Oeconomicus* 4.13–14) that was incorporated into aristocratic houses in the Hellenistic period. Gazing at the controlled, tamed nature of an enclosed orchard while reclining on a luxurious *kline*, in attendance at a *convivium* among equals, is undoubtedly an image that formed part of the way in which Hellenized élites saw themselves. In this context, the palace at Lixus takes full advantage of the panoramic possibilities of its position. The western cryptoporticus is certainly a reflection of its designer's sensitivity to the landscape; likewise, the central apse, probably with large

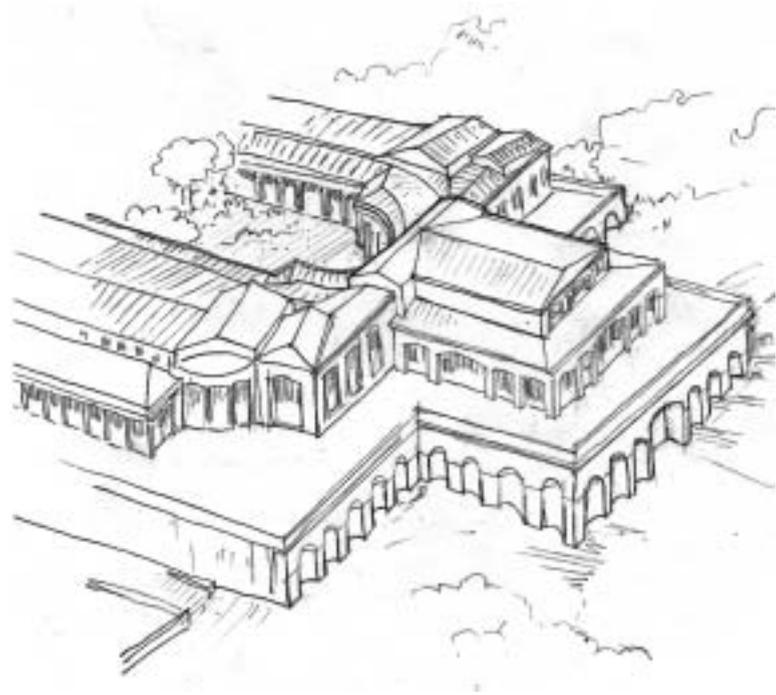
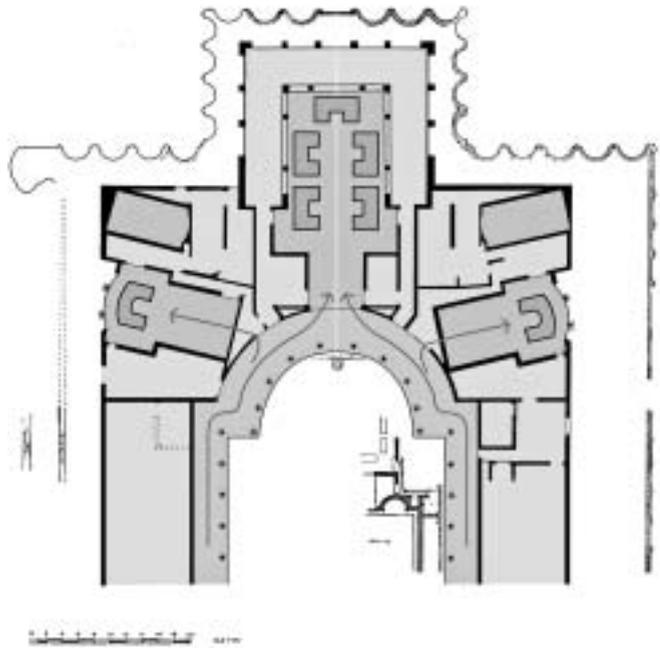


FIG. 15. Proposed reconstruction of the Villa of Pompey at Albano Laziale. (Drawing: Ricardo Mar.)

windows, in the *oecus triclinaris* 'F'. Once again, we are concerned with ambivalent architecture, laid out in relation to views of the landscape, with an elaborate system of compositional axes recalling the finest achievements of late Hellenism in the east and in Italy itself. At the same time, the complex and varied sizes of the interior spaces, together with their dialogue with the open spaces, is similar to that found in a simple form in a house with an atrium and peristyle.

In fact, the tradition of these houses in Italy (Wallace-Hadrill, 1994) explains some of the peculiarities of the palace in Lixus. The route that led visitors from the Corinthian atrium to the great reception hall ('G') has an analogy in the route that clients took to be received by the *dominus* in the tablinum of very wealthy late Republican houses. The typology of traditional great Roman houses reflects the development of architectural patterns based on this ceremony of the *dominus* seeing clients, who must cross the atrium to be received in the tablinum. The latter was the focus of a symmetrical composition, opening through the wall opposite the entrance and commanding views of the peristyle garden. It might be said that at Lixus the designer 'extended' the spaces intended for clients. In fact, the court with the plinths is the equivalent of the doorway to a conventional tablinum, and the hall in complex 'G' is, in a sense, an over-sized *oecus*. In the absence of statuary or inscriptions, it is impossible to know exactly how the court was decorated, though the idea that it was a gallery for the display of statues fits well with the palace concept of the time. The semicircular exedra at the north end of the large hall 'G', with its *aedicula* in the middle, could be the *lararium* (family shrine) for the whole complex. The route leading to the receiving room would have offered visitors an impression of solemnity as they came into the presence of the 'dominus' of the palace.

The western wing would have housed the master's private rooms, laid out around the great ceremonial *oecus* that opened out to the cryptoporticus. In fact, the panoramic gallery built over this cryptoporticus must be understood as an axis for movement inside the building, private in nature, which gave access to successive *cubicula* and private rooms. The layout of the palace at Lixus, like that of the Villa Iovis on Capri, stands out for its refined interplay of exedrae, niches, apses, peristyles, cryptoporticuses and large halls (Gros, 1996; Winter, 2006), without betraying any links whatsoever with Mauretanian architecture before Juba II.

The phenomenon of bronze-decorated furnishings for banqueting halls, abundant in Morocco and particularly in Lixus (Piccot-Boube, 1960; Boube-Piccot, 1975: nos. 63–74), fits neatly into this picture. The examples from Lixus were found in burnt levels in the area of the Houses of Mars and Rhea and of Helios (so-called because of their mosaics), which are some distance from the palace and in a higher part of the site (FIG. 2: 'Roman Houses'). None the less, the couches, tables and bronze candelabra that were found there would have been appropriate in the setting of the interior of the palatial residence described here, and in fact may have been found in secondary contexts. Only the mask of Oceanus (Boube-Piccot, 1969: 307–9) definitely comes from the palace area and dates, on the basis of technology and style, to the time of Juba II (García y Bellido, 1963: 107–8).

Couches (*klinai*) exported from Piraeus were sent to Numidia and Mauretania, as shown by the study of several shipwrecks off the north African coast. The examples of Mahdia (100 BCE), Anticythera (80 BCE) (Siebert, 1973; Coarelli, 1983; Faust, 1994) and Fourmigue on the French

coast (60 BCE: Baudoin, Liou and Long, 1994), all suggest that their sunken cargoes, including bronze Delian couches, tables, candelabra and kraters, had links to the north African courts. The chronology of the vessels and furniture covers a period from 150 BCE to the late first century BCE. The workshop at Delos that produced these luxury goods seems to have declined after 60 BCE, as did the distribution of such items in the western Mediterranean, although production of the same type of models continued in Italy. It was made clear in the first description (Piccot-Boube, 1960) that *fulcra* (from couches) with 'appliqué' in the form of mules, storks, Aphrodites, drunken Silenoi and so on are in the Delian style, and there are identical examples at Lixus, Banasa and, to a lesser extent, Volubilis, all of these cities where the presence of courtiers of the kingdom of Mauretania is highly probable.

However, the contrast between the sophisticated floor plan of the building and the quality of the building techniques is very surprising. Numerous blocks of stone from older buildings were used in the work, something that might seem to point to a minor project that, to save money or perhaps because of the urgency of its execution, recycled existing materials. The sparse decoration preserved in the building also is noteworthy. Decoration might have been lost, or it may simply be that few marble features were used. If that is correct, the palace at Lixus called for a much smaller investment than its contemporary at Iol-Caesarea, also attributed to Juba II.

MAURETANIA, A CLIENT KINGDOM

Following the assassination of Juba II's successor, Ptolemy, his kingdom was made into two Roman provinces, Mauretania Caesariensis and Mauretania Tingitana (Fishwick, 1971). The place names of Mauretania Caesariensis are repeatedly associated in written sources with the qualification *regius-regia*. This form of toponym, however, is not found in the province of Mauretania Tingitana. Pliny (*Naturalis Historia* 5.5.20) tells us that Juba II's capital was established at Iol-Caesarea (Cherchel, Algeria), the name of which expresses links with other political centres of the late Hellenistic eastern Mediterranean, such as Caesarea Maritima. Written sources, however, do not mention any city founded by or associated with the monarch in the western part of his realm. These gaps in the written record seem to mark a difference between the pre-Roman social statuses of the Caesariensis and Tingitana regions, and this distinction between the regions traditionally has been accepted in archaeological research. These differences could be explained by the differing authority of the Numidians and the Mauri in their respective areas (Gozalbes, 2005), or by differing policies on the part of the Roman client kings ruling these regions, the western area being much closer in terms of political and institutional links to Baetica and Hispania in general (Beltrán, 1980). Juba II and his son Ptolemy would have played a fundamental role in all of this, supported by the patronage of Augustus himself.

French archaeological research, in particular by Jérôme Carcopino (1933; 1943), made a decisive contribution to our knowledge of this matter (Gran Aymerich, 2006). The city of

Volubilis was elevated to the category of capital (*Regia Iubae*) mainly on the basis of the researchers' personal convictions, and as a result the lion's share of French archaeological endeavours were concentrated on Volubilis, which is today the ancient Moroccan site most visited by tourists. This supposed 'Regia' has maintained its position in academic circles up to the present day (Thouvenot, 1949; Euzennat, 1957; Camps, 1960; Desanges, 1960; Romanelli, 1966; Jodin, 1987). The only doubts have been raised by a small group of epigraphers (Gascou and De Kisch in Euzennat *et al.*, 1982: 59–63) and historians (Coltelloni-Trannoy, 1997: 81).

In fact, our re-evaluation of the role of Lixus within the Mauretanian kingdom undermines the exclusive role usually attributed to Volubilis. This, in turn, forces a reappraisal of the interpretation of the final period of the kingdom of Mauretania and its annexation by Rome. There is still no confirmation that Juba II and Ptolemy founded new cities in Morocco. Nevertheless, current research proves that cities with Libyan or local names (Dchar Jdid–Zilil, Rirha–Gilda, Rushadir, for example) were founded during the reigns of their predecessors, from Baga (c. 204 BCE) to Bogud (49–38 BCE). Furthermore, there is archaeological evidence indicating major replanning of cities during the Mauretanian period at Tamuda, Thamusida and Lixus itself. Juba II profited from the use and adaptation of the existing urban network in Mauretania.

Furthermore, all the data discussed here reflect the acceleration that occurred in the process of the political integration of local populations from the second century BCE onwards, if not before. This evidence for the first time breaks up the symmetry of the phenomenon known as the 'Circle of the Straits': no similar monumental building work is to be found in the south of the Iberian peninsula, where no ancient kingdoms are recorded.

A proper understanding of the archaeological picture that is currently emerging in Morocco must include the redefinition of the specific traits adopted by the Mauretanian monarchy under the influence of the colonial process. What is understood by 'capital' and 'regia' needs reconsidering. The case of Lixus makes it possible to rule out the existence of a single capital city, a phenomenon that is in fact alien to eastern and to northwest African traditions. The sovereign comes closer to the tribes by means of a movable concept of his residence that fosters negotiation with local powers. There were in fact groups of courtiers who were especially powerful in different regions of western Mauretania, where the local tribes did not always inhabit compact territories but were, on occasions, 'segmented', for reasons of tradition and geography. It is what Coltelloni-Trannoy (2005) has called a conciliation between local and official power, and what Alexandropoulos (1992) observed in the coinage of the Mauretanian kings: Roman in their general patterns, but nevertheless including lettering and motifs that might be Punic, Greek or Latin. Despite the fragility of its equilibrium, this system fostered political stability, on the one hand, and introduced a growing hierarchy between the cities, on the other. As is proposed in this article, evidence of this exercise of power and the related infrastructures can be detected in the archaeological record.

These circumstances help to explain historical events in what was to become Mauretania Tingitana, such as Aedemon's revolt. Much of the country rose up in armed rebellion when, following the death of Juba II's son Ptolemy, Rome instituted a provincial administration with

its capital in Tingis in CE 43, and for the first time the whole of the former kingdom was unified, at least in terms of taxation. In Lixus the evidence for destruction found in the western wing of the palace may be attributed to this revolt. The palace was repaired immediately, perhaps as an expression of the city's collaboration with Rome. Nevertheless, by that time, it had become an unnecessary building for a Latin colony whose forum had been moved to another zone of the city.

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