Antioch
The Lost Ancient City

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The elite of Antioch fashioned an opulent domestic realm for social rituals that displayed classical learning and evoked what must have seemed to be the eternal tradition of Greco-Roman culture. Some houses exploited bold vistas toward mountain and shore; others harnessed the rushing streams of Daphne to infuse their domestic space with nature's energy. Through the artifice of mosaic they presented images that connected viewers to timeless myths. And, through ephemeral but culturally laden activities, primarily the banquet, or symposium, the houses asserted the identities of their occupants as citizens of a city that was heir to Athens. While the famous Oration II of Libanius emphasizes the Hellenic, that is, Greek, strain of Antiochene culture, the houses and the manner in which the Antiochenes shaped domestic space for social ritual display an equally strong Roman legacy.

Broad general claims such as those above are easily made. In truth, our entry into the domestic world of Antioch is hampered by numerous conditions that frustrate attempts to reconstruct the specifics of any individual house. For example, although we know much about Antioch houses in general, it is impossible to trace in detail the history of a single house at the site. For this reason there is no definitive study of the structure, chronological development, artifact contents, or social history of the Antiochene house. In the sixty years since the excavations at Antioch only one general article has treated its houses, and that was nearly forty years ago. The excavation volumes and Doro Levi's Antioch Mosaic Pavements create the impression of an extensive treatment of the houses, but the focus is really on the mosaics. In the publications the houses are merely the framework for the mosaics and never form the center of an architectural discussion. While the excavation volumes provide a great deal of information about the houses, the preservation of critical features, such as walls and doors, was so poor that it was often impossible to locate the boundaries of individual houses or even to identify doorways between rooms. The published plans create the impression that boundaries and doorways are known, but they are misleading. A fresh examination of the evidence often proves that the excavators themselves were making educated guesses. A further irony is that the excavations that produced the information have themselves been an impediment because they were conducted in an era that did not engage in the thorough documentation that is now considered routine. The result is that much evidence is lost. In instances where some clues survive in the form of mosaic
design and orientation, excavation photographs, or excavation notes, we can offer some speculation. In other instances it is better just to admit that we do not know.

The reasons for the incomplete preservation of such fundamental architectural features as house walls are familiar to field archaeologists. A house in use for generations, possibly by several different owners, undergoes numerous changes as walls are taken down or added, rooms are expanded, divided, or reoriented, adjacent property is acquired or sold off, and doorways and entrances are altered. The more permanent mosaic floors may remain in place as walls come and go around them. Furthermore, when the houses were abandoned or seriously damaged by earthquakes of the sort that frequently struck Antioch, their standing or fallen walls became ready sources for stones for building new houses. In other words, the earlier houses became quarries for builders in need of supplies. Archaeologists use the term "robber trenches" to refer to the trenches used by later builders to dig out walls and foundations in their quest for stone.

In defense of the excavators it must be acknowledged that such extensive stone robbing deprived them of much evidence. Moreover, local residents in the 1930s occasionally reported that mosaics had been revealed by winter rains. In a kind of unanticipated salvage operation the excavators uncovered those mosaics and their associated buildings. In cases where houses were so shallowly buried, it was most unlikely that walls and the associated evidence for doorways would be preserved. Sometimes parts of houses have been lost due to the erosion of hillsides; whole rooms have slid downhill. In other cases the remains were buried deeply beneath orchards, rendering lateral expansion of excavation trenches difficult or impossible. All of these factors contributed to the incomplete excavation of individual houses. For example, unlike at Pompeii, where hundreds of houses and scores of city blocks have been disinterred, not one single whole block of houses has been uncovered at Antioch. This means that we cannot address such questions as: Where did the poor live? Were elite houses located in mixed-use neighborhoods as they were at Pompeii? Where were shops and light industry located? For six decades these conditions have discouraged investigators from incorporating Antiochene houses in more general studies of Roman architecture, interior decoration, and social history. The ultimate irony is that a wealth of information survives, but it has remained hidden because we have not made the effort to find it.

As part of the exhibition that presents anew the lost city of Antioch this essay strives to be a beginning in a renewed study of Antiochene houses. The time appears to be propitious for inspiring a new interest in the houses of Antioch because of the current interest among scholars in Greek and Roman domestic spaces. As one Roman archaeologist put it, "Houses are back on the archaeological agenda." Many recent studies look to Pompeii and Herculaneum because the evidence there is ostensibly complete and so vivid. A short time spent with some recent publications will show that the proverbial grass is not always greener in Pompeii, that the problems at Antioch are seen elsewhere, and that scholars interested in Roman domestic life have a lot in common no matter what the geographic focus of their work.

We begin with the reassembled pavement of the triclinium, or dining room, of the Atrium House in order to examine the banquet and its social role in the domestic realm. We then undertake an examination of three third-century C.E. houses that express both the standard features and the rich variety of domestic settings at Antioch. One is from the port of Antioch, Seleucia Pieria; the other two are from the suburb of Daphne. This is not the place for an exhaustive treatment of chronology and development, nor is it the place to distinguish between town house and villa or between the port at Seleucia and the suburb of Daphne. We shall use the evidence that we have to establish general principles.

In the triclinium reconstructed in the exhibition three dining couches, or klinai, are arranged in a U to accommodate nine banqueters, three per couch (see p. 62). Nine diners—the ideal number for a dinner party—reclined on cushions on their left elbows and partook of the dishes with their right hands. As knives, forks, and the practice of sitting upright lay still in the future, Antiochene diners ate in the manner of all elite Greeks, Etruscans, and Romans. The lavish floor mosaics, arranged in a T-shaped pattern that is found at Antioch as elsewhere in the empire, are reunited for the first time since their excavation. The high quality of the workmanship testifies to the importance of this room and by extension to the importance of the banquet that took place within it. The geometric pattern that surrounds the framed figural scenes indicates the location of the three couches. The two figural panels that form the stem of the T are oriented so as to be seen by those reclining in the triclinium; the three panels forming the top of the T face persons entering the room. This basic arrange-
ment, seen again and again in the *triclinia* at Antioch, indicates that the mosaics were part of an ensemble that recognized room use, viewing angles, and movement within architectural space.

Extensive literary and archaeological evidence from throughout the Greco-Roman world proclaims the primacy of the symposium among elite social rituals. Far more than just a repast to nourish the body, the lavish banquet nourished the mind through the philosophical and literary conversations it encouraged. Status was displayed through the architectural setting, the interior decoration, the tableware, the entertainment, one's position at the table, the menu, and the learned dialogue among guests. Even though there was a hierarchy of seating, the symposium was fundamentally an assembly of equals who mutually reaffirmed their status as a group each time they met. The prevalence of *triclinia* among the residences testifies to the importance of these events, and the profusion of classical imagery, especially in *triclinium* mosaics, appears to be a conscious assertion of Antiochene continuity with an unbroken tradition that extended back to classical Greece. To the extent that the Antiochenes actually pursued philosophical and literary discussions at banquets, they further defined themselves as heirs to the classical tradition. Although undoubtedly an exaggeration, Libanius's *encomium* in praise of Antioch supports such a reconstruction of domestic life.

**The House of the Drinking Contest**

The House of the Drinking Contest at Seleucia Pieria, which allows us to see the *triclinium* in a more complete architectural context, presents several typical components that define Antiochene domestic space (fig. 1). The drinking contest between Herakles and Dionysos is a thematically appropriate figural mosaic in the *triclinium* that provides the name for the house. This elite residence exploits internal and external vistas to lock the building, its mosaic program, and the social activities it housed into a system of architectural, iconographic, and landscape coordinates. The architecture and the iconography are of purely human design. The landscape reflects the Roman fascination for both linking and contrasting the built environment and the natural environment. This residence also illustrates a basic principle of Antiochene domestic design that links *triclinium*, *portico*, and *nymphaeum*, or fountain. In addition, on the level of social meaning we can discern through various cues that the *triclinium* is the key room in the house and that the events performed there must have been commensurably important.
The plan (fig. 1) reveals a large triclinium at the eastern end of the house (1), two porticoes (2a and 2b), a fountain court (3), and two possible bedrooms (4 and 5). All of these rooms were decorated with mosaic pavements. The unnumbered rooms to the west, which may have functioned as a service area, were not decorated with mosaics.

The richly decorated triclinium (fig. 3) communicates with portico 2a by means of a large door framed by columns. The portico, in turn, is amply decorated with a mosaic "carpet" whose figural panel is centered on and oriented toward the triclinium, thereby emphasizing the close association between the triclinium and the space in front of it. The relationship between the spaces is reciprocal. The portico conveys one to the triclinium and by means of its figural mosaic announces the triclinium's doorway; from within the triclinium the doorway directs one's gaze to the portico, through the colonnade, and ultimately to the open courtyard with its nymphaeum. This Roman practice of linking spaces by sight lines and emphasizing those visual coordinates through floor mosaics and three-dimensional architecture is universal and can be seen most easily in Pompeii, where sequentially arranged domestic spaces establish a dominant visual axis in many of the grand houses (fig. 2). Although the spatial structure is different at Pompeii, this empire-wide principle is the same and receives a particularly Antiochene twist in the frequent linkage of triclinium, portico, and nymphaeum.

Our understanding of the spatial relationship between the triclinium, the portico, and the courtyard with its fountain is enhanced when we take into account the order of seating on the three couches. The couch on the right as one looks into the triclinium is the high couch, or lectus summus. That in the center is the middle couch, or lectus medius, and the one on the left is the low couch, or lectus imus. The presence of a large door that provides a vista and diners' practice of reclining on their left elbows means that some positions were better than others for engaging fellow diners in conversation and looking from the triclinium to the fountain court. The two best positions were the left side of the middle couch and the right side of the low couch. The guest of honor occupied the former, and the host, the latter. When we examine the plans of Antiochene houses we frequently find that the optimal vantage point extends from this inner left-hand corner of the triclinium to the center of the fountain. The arrow on the plan shows that one's view from this corner leads directly to the center of the nymphaeum in courtyard 3.

If we physically follow the optimal sight line from the triclinium, we find ourselves in the small courtyard that measures approximately thirty by seven and three-quarter
The center of the mosaic pavement is a marine panel that can be viewed from all sides as one walks about the courtyard. In the mosaic, erotes are fishing on the backs of dolphins; several species of fish are accurately depicted. This panel establishes a thematic connection between the house and the nearby sea. A wonderful excavation photograph (fig. 4) allows us to see beyond this courtyard to the mountains in the distance, but it raises an important question: Did the ancient Antiochenes enjoy this view from the house, or did the southern wall of courtyard 3, now completely robbed out, close the view? Although we lack definitive information, a case can be made for the vista and for a low terrace wall or a wall with a large window whose shutters could be flung open. An a priori aesthetic judgment suggests that the carefully constructed vistas within the house are part of a larger pattern that also includes the dramatic external vista to the distant mountain peak.

More solid evidence comes from portico 2b, decorated with figures representing the four seasons, which run along the northern side of the house in front of rooms thought to be bedrooms. Its mosaics are oriented to be seen from the northern rooms, whose own pavements were of geometric design. As the overview of the uncovered parts of the House of the Drinking Contest (fig. 4) amply demonstrates, the season panels draw one’s view into the portico, whose screen of columns would have allowed that view to continue to the courtyard. Although the colonnade does not survive, markings on the stylobate between portico 2b and courtyard 3 reveal that its columns were irregularly spaced, as the plan indicates. Such an irregular spacing can best be explained as an accommodation to the view that extended to the portico and into the courtyard. As the trajectory of this view extends across the coastal plain, past the eastern end of the Mediterranean, and to the peak beyond, it would be very difficult to argue that the designers did not consciously create an ensemble in which architecture, mosaic, and nature were all components.

A similar arrangement of domestic space to highlight views can be found in the nearby House of Dionysos and Ariadne, where the extant rooms are steeply set on the slopes of Musa Dağ. The excavators and Levi suggested that perhaps the guests sitting in the triclinium, with the mosaic of Dionysos discovering the sleeping Ariadne, could look out beyond the corridor and its windows down to a panoramic view of the harbor. Such an appreciation of vistas and such a linking of the controlled environment and wild nature are typically Roman and occur repeatedly in Pliny the Younger’s famous description of his villas. For
Fig. 4. House of the Drinking Contest. Overview from the north with the mosaics *in situ*.

Fig. 5. House of Menander. Overview from the southeastern corner of the house; room 3 is in the foreground.
example, in his Laurentine villa Pliny delights in the long view that passes through his house and extends to the forests and different mountains, while in his Tuscan villa he juxtaposes the porticoed terraces accented by topiary creations and various trained plants with the wildness of the fields and meadows beyond the confines of the formal garden (Plin. Ep. 2.17, 5.6.16–18).10

If this interpretation of the House of the Drinking Contest is right, the courtyard is the place where the visual axes intersect and where acute observers would most fully appreciate the interconnected architecture, mosaic imagery, and natural vistas. In short, the House of the Drinking Contest at Seleucia demonstrates a sophisticated spatial construct.

The House of Menander

Named for the mosaic in room 11, the House of Menander is rich in information but also fraught with problems of interpretation (see p. 30).11 This illustration of the ground plan with mosaics inserted provides an overview of the house before the mosaics were lifted. In many ways the house illustrates both typical aspects of Antiochene domestic architecture and decoration and characteristic problems that the researcher faces in wrestling with the preserved evidence. To begin, the walls have been so extensively robbed that evidence for doorways and property divisions is almost completely lacking. Fundamental questions such as what the connections are between rooms and where this house stops and the adjoining properties start must be addressed before larger issues of room use, traffic patterns, the meaning of the mosaic programs, and the historical development of the house can be discussed. This ground plan provides a tentative answer to some of those fundamental questions.

The main entrance to the house appears to be from a colonnaded street to the south. Although the house is large and complex, its interior design is focused on three dining suites and one possible living area.12 The three dining areas are suite 1 (rooms 1, 2, 3, 9), suite 2 (rooms 11, 12, 19, and whatever was under the “late pool”), and suite 3 (room 13, a triclinium, and a fountain courtyard to its west). The residential section may have comprised the rooms around courtyard 17, including rooms to the north and northeast that are not defined. Such a multiplication of dining rooms is not unusual in the home of a Roman of high political and social status and in fact constitutes part of the evidence for recognizing the symposium as a critical social event.

Room 1 is the focus of the first dining suite. It is a courtyard with a nymphaeum onto which triclinia 2 and 3
open. The view from the inner left corner of each triclinium extends to the central niche of the nymphaeum. Clearly, room 2 is the more prestigious dining room, for it enjoys a more direct relationship with the nymphaeum than room 3, and more of its diners could see the fountain. Nonetheless, the fact that the host and honored guest occupying triclinium 3 could see the display of water underscores the principle of seating individuals of status in the best positions at the banquet.

Room 1 is a product of at least two periods of development. Figure 6 shows that the main mosaic of the courtyard overlies an earlier mosaic whose northern edge was incorporated into a later configuration that includes two columns whose plinths rest on the earlier pavement. A person leaving triclinium 2 would traverse the lower mosaic in a space that served as a kind of vestibule and then step up to the main space of room 1. Rather than being centered along the courtyard’s southern wall, the nymphaeum is pushed into its southwest corner. In addition, the circular niche at the western edge of the nymphaeum is not balanced by a pendant at the eastern edge. This asymmetrical design and placement of the nymphaeum at the courtyard’s southern end seems to accommodate sight lines originating at the optimal viewing points in rooms 2 and 3 (fig. 7).\(^1\)

The fountain itself was an elaborate affair in some ways resembling the nymphaeum in the well-known fourth-century C.E. House of Cupid and Psyche at Ostia. The similarities are the height of the nymphaeum, the statue niches, and their flanking columns. A closeup of the Menander nymphaeum shows the ample water basin that still retains much of its interior waterproof plaster (fig. 8). At the rear of the basin are statue niches of alternating rectilinear and curvilinear forms. Projecting into the basin in the areas between the receding niches are plinths for three pairs of columns. The nymphaeum terminates in single columns.\(^1\)

The above information evokes some of the splendor of the whole ensemble of suite 1. Rich food and drink from the sea and from the fertile land were served amidst mosaics, elegant couches, and walls whose treatment we can only imagine. As people moved about this busy space, conversation touched on many subjects, while the eye was drawn to statues set in a columned fountain and one’s ears heard the play of water and no doubt the sound of musical instruments played by entertainers.

There were practical considerations too. The western door of the courtyard provided access to the nearby latrine, which must have served tricinia 2 and 3. Diners in triclinium 11 of suite 2 could also reach the latrine by cutting through the corner of room 9 and crossing room 1. Rooms 4 and 9 are without mosaic pavements and appear to have been service rooms. It is impossible to conceive of a banquet without staging areas for final food preparation and presentation. Both could serve tricinia 2 and 3, while room 9 could also have served room 11. The kitchen was not uncovered. Rooms 5 and 6 may be related to the service area, but doorways cannot be reconstructed, and very little can be said about them. The rooms to the west of the latrine have not been documented.

Suite 2 cannot be discussed in such detail because the late pool located to the north of portico 12 covers the parts of the plan that were originally associated with rooms 19 and 11, a triclinium whose mosaic depicting the poet Menander (cat no. 40) provides the name for the house. It is likely that from this triclinium the host and honored guest could look between the columns of portico 12 to a now-vanished fountain. Such a sight line would require a triclinium door wider than that now reconstructed on the plan.

Suite 3 consists of triclinium 13 and a fountain court, but the poorly preserved walls and the absence of a detailed account in the excavation records make discussion of this ensemble very difficult. This suite is anoma-
lous in many ways, especially in the atypical relationship between the ostensible triclinium and the fountain. This entire suite appears to be experimental and cannot be forced into a standard mold. If the east end is indeed a triclinium, it is unusual in abandoning the framed figural mosaic emblema in favor of an overall design more typical of spaces in which the spectators were ambulatory and not reclining on couches. Moreover, the asymmetrical geometric surround of the couches and the adjacent long carpet mosaic, typical of porticoes, form a composition that is without parallel. The asymmetrical arrangement of the entrance panels appears to relate poorly to both triclinium and courtyard. And finally, the fountain relates more closely to the courtyard than to the triclinium. Clearly, there are many interesting features here, but at this stage of analysis it is impossible to provide an adequate explanation of this suite and its evolution.

The presence of so many dining suites makes one wonder if this is truly a "house." Could it be a dining club? Only when several entire blocks of houses or several villas have been fully and carefully excavated, studied, and published will we be able to address such a question adequately. It is possible that the rooms surrounding courtyard 17 are the residential rooms of this lavish complex, but here we confront a major problem that plagues the study of ancient houses, namely, the identification of room functions. Triclinia, porticoes, and fountain courts are easy to identify, and their functions are readily assigned, but the rooms surrounding courtyard 17 could have served various functions. Perhaps they and suite 2 constituted the residential part of the house, but that is pure speculation and does not take into account problems related to the adjacent house to the west, which cannot be introduced here. The House of Menander is a treasure from antiquity that gives us interesting spaces, splendid mosaics and finds, and a reason to speculate on ancient life. At the same time, it provides frustrations because our evidence from the ancient world is always incomplete. The role of this essay is to present evidence and offer cautious interpretations.

The House of the Boat of Psyches

Named for the main figural mosaic in room 3, the House of the Boat of Psyches at Daphne (see p. 72, fig. 5) presents some of the same problems as the House of Menander but offers individual variations. The core of the excavated portion of the house is a suite of three rooms that open onto a portico beyond which lies a nymphaeum. To the east of this primary unit are three additional rooms. All these rooms have mosaic pavements that are so closely integrated into the architectural design that in the absence of walls
and thresholds they constitute our primary evidence for reconstructing the main doorways. The familiar T-pattern of figural mosaics surrounded by geometric panels for the placement of couches indicates that rooms 1 and 3 are triclinia. There are three indications that we are justified in restoring doors between these rooms and portico 4. First, since triclinia are typically entered at the open part of the U-shaped configuration of the couches, there must have been doors from portico 4. Second, both rooms have entry panels oriented so as to be seen by those entering the rooms through doors from the portico. Third, if we employ the principle discussed regarding the mosaics of portico 2a in the House of the Drinking Contest, the two figural panels in front of rooms 1 and 3 must also mark entrances. Some of these arguments can also be applied to room 2, for which I would reconstruct a door to the portico; however, it is not included in the plan because of the lack of excavated evidence. The reciprocal nature of the standard spaces and their decorations is thus a great aid in reconstructing the basic traffic patterns.

There is less to go on in determining whether there were entrances to the northern and southern ends of the portico. What was the relationship between rooms 6, 7, and 8? Did room 7 connect with room 1 so that one could look and walk along the axis of the house when room 1 was not in use? Did the house extend beyond the basically squarish unit that we are discussing? Was this really a residence, or was it a facility for communal dining?

The special character of this house derives partly from the intimate relationship between architectural design and mosaic decoration. The typical linking of spaces is enhanced here as the architectural forms and mosaic decoration emphasize the central axis of the building. Turn the plan (see p. 72, fig. 5) so that the five-niched nymphaeum is at the top and imagine walking along the axis of the house from triclinium 1, over the central figural panel in the portico, and between the columns in order to view the nymphaeum and its mosaics. Here the eroses fishing from the backs of dolphins are actually under water and appear very real in their fountain setting; even the fish are accurately portrayed. The two dolphins at the left swim northward to the center, and the two at the right swim southward toward the center. The central dolphin dives straight down and points to the architectural axis on which the viewer stands. The orienting force of the architectural design and the decoration inevitably place the viewer in front of the central niche of the nymphaeum. Even the fragmentary portico panel in front of room 2 leads the ambulatory viewer leaving room 2 toward the central axis through the ithyphallic dwarf, who strides in that direction. The visual cues are so vivid that it is easy to imagine moving about the House of the Boat of Psyches.

In addition, these spaces are linked by the water themes in the three main rooms and in the nymphaeum—Europa and the Bull in room 1, Pegasus attended by nymphs at a spring in room 2, the Boat of the Psyches in room 3, and eroses fishing from the backs of dolphins in room 5. The Roman practice of incorporating water into the house here extends to the mosaic themes, which may allude to the springs of Daphne, the elegant suburb where this house and the House of Menander are located. This house becomes a tour de force of water displayed in the mosaic imagery and actual water harnessed to enliven the house.

Urban allusions become apparent when we recognize that we can read the house in the same way that we read the larger city. We should see the public and the domestic as two complimentary halves in the lives of the leading Antiochenes; we should not use a modern paradigm and imagine the public and the private to be two unrelated and separate wholes. A key component of the urban armature is the thoroughfare that leads one to the main plazas and public buildings. Visual signals in the form of architectural components inform the visitor to a city of options at intersections, announce important buildings or major plazas, such as the forum, and subtly encourage pedestrian traffic to move toward important places. Three-dimensional viewing corridors are constructed via arches that direct views and via facades and colonnades that mark edges. Way stations are spaces opening onto thoroughfares where people can pause in their movement through the city. Public benches, humble fountains, and grand nymphae, such as one finds at Apamea or Ephesos, line the great colonnaded streets. Libanius emphasizes that the porticoes of Antioch are among its great amenities (Lib. Or. 11.214–17). He praises not only their urban but also their social role in shaping the city.

At the core of the House of the Boat of Psyches we find many elements familiar from this urban armature (see p. 72, fig. 5). Portico 5 is like a thoroughfare in a city in that it connects the public spaces of the house and is defined by a colonnade. We might think of the portico as a three-dimensional city street onto which the main entrances of three buildings open from the left. The central doorway is the grandest, and it is this doorway on
which the *nymphaeum* focuses. The equation is clear. The domestic portico functions like the colonnaded street; the entrances to rooms are like the entrances to public buildings; and the domestic *nymphaeum* functions like the grand public *nymphaeum*. By the time this third-century house was built the practice of shaping elite domestic spaces with public architectural elements may have been commonplace.

1. I say “what must have seemed to be the eternal tradition of Greco-Roman culture” because in hindsight we know that the long classical period at Antioch and throughout the Roman Empire was about to end and the new Christian era was about to begin. Those who lived in these houses would not have known this even though Christianity was well established at Antioch during the period dealt with here. At the same time, we might ask if Christians who were classically educated might decorate their houses in the traditional manner while being committed to Christianity. On this very interesting question we have absolutely no information.

2. Libanius’s *Oration 11* is translated in Downey 1950.


7. The *triclinium* is the largest and most exquisitely decorated room in the house. Floor-level bedding surfaces are the basis for the columns flanking the door’s inner side, indicated on the plan. It is possible that the actual door treatment resembled the colonnaded opening that appears in the room’s floor mosaic.

8. Stillwell 1961, 48. Similar connections between domestic spaces are known from other late Roman sites. A town house at Sardis has rooms grouped into discrete wings featuring “conscious water display” and “long vistas” within the house (Raatman 1995). The “villa over the theater” at Ephesus exploits external views of the theater and the even longer vista down the colonnaded street, the Askadiane, to the port (Ellis 1997b, 41). In the Roman West, the House of Cupid and Psyche at Ostia is quite similar to Antiochene houses in its arrangement of *triclinium*, portico, and *nymphaeum*.


10. Pliny could just as easily be describing Antioch. Pliny’s emphasis on a vista that begins within his villa and then extends to distant landscapes could equally well characterize the arrangement at the House of the Drinking Contest. The point is that within their unique settings Antiochene houses display a universal penchant for linking the house and its users to the larger natural environment. The “villa over the theater” at Ephesus exploited the theater and the colonnaded street to lead the eye to the harbor and the expanse of sea beyond (Ellis 1997b). This kind of evidence supports the interpretation that reconstructs a view from the House of the Drinking Contest to the distant mountain peak as intentional.


12. It is possible that our current plan represents features from different phases of the house that never functioned together simultaneously. One of the frustrations of the Antioch material is that we cannot reconstruct in detail the chronological development of the house.

13. This asymmetrical placement to accommodate a visual rather than an architectural axis is also seen in the location of the *nymphaeum* in courtyard 3 of the House of the Drinking Contest.

14. The footing for the eastern end column is visible near the scale in fig. 8. On the plinth next to it are the footings for a pair of columns. The western end column was located where a section of conduit now stands on a footing. Antioch II 1938, 183–87; Levi 1947, 157–90.

15. The colonnade has been restored on the basis of unpublished comments of Richard Stillwell in the 1934 Field Report, Antioch Archives, Department of Art and Archaeology, Princeton University: “To the west of the hall [i.e., portico 5] was a colonnade through which one viewed a small pool with five niches in a row along the back wall. At a later date the colonnade was pulled down and the columns split and rebuilt into a wall which replaced the colonnade” (14). I have not been able to discover how column placement and spacing were determined.

16. See, in this catalogue, Christine Kondoleon’s essay “The Mosaics of Antioch,” where the water theme is further explored.

17. The works of Andrew Wallace-Hadrill and William L. MacDonald have direct bearing on these issues. Wallace-Hadrill (1994) examines the public nature of Roman domestic space and argues that elements of public architecture are intentionally quoted in the domestic realm to underscore the status of the Roman elite. Although his focus is on the Bay of Naples, the general principles would seem to apply to Antioch. More important for the arguments being made here is MacDonald’s study of “urban armatures” (1976), which identifies a structure of urban design and establishes a language for discussing that structure that can be equally well applied to the Roman house. This latter point would seem to be of some significance in interpreting the overall meaning of Antiochene domestic architecture.