

Antium, the Palatium and the Domus Tiberiana again

Pier Luigi Tucci

In the preceding article C. P. Jones has raised some interesting points. He suggests retaining the manuscript reading ἐν Ἀντίῳ in sections 16-18 of Galen's new work. He would take the library that Galen seems to distinguish from the libraries on the Palatine (or in the Palace) as the library in the imperial villa at Antium. I would take it as the library in the Domus Tiberiana, arguing that no part of the villa at Antium where the library might have stood can realistically be thought of as "low lying and marshy", and that the term χωρίον does not apply to a room but a place. I will then go back to consider the libraries of Rome and to make a distinction between the Palatium and the Domus Tiberiana proper.

Antium and the imperial villa

According to Jones, Galen implies that the library of the villa already existed between A.D. 162 and 166, but prior to the 180s there were no buildings next to the coast, so the library cannot be located low down towards the shore-line or have been lost there to erosion. Subsequent to the 1975 monograph on the villa, which dealt chiefly with its mosaic floors, a survey and re-examination of the earlier excavations have shed new light on its structures.¹ Between the 1st c. B.C. and the second half of the 2nd c. A.D. the cliff retained its natural state; on top of the plateau a curvi-linear portico opened towards the sea (the foundations remain today), while the residential quarter stood behind the portico.² In a second building phase dating to the late Antonine/early Severan age, the curvilinear portico was demolished and its area was occupied by a series of halls. At sea level the cliff was cut back and a huge substructure built, consisting of a rectangular portico flanked on the inside by a cryptoporticus,³ onto which opened a small hall, which was probably a *triclinium* rather than a library (it would have been too exposed to the waves). *Contra* Jones (p. 395), the possible identification of the library with the only other hall at sea level off the cryptoporticus was questioned not because of the proximity of the sea but because in its rear wall there were only three circular and two very shallow rectangular niches, which were plastered and not divided by shelves. The hall was also modified by partition walls, isolating each of the 5 niches. Decorated with frescoes depicting a garden and a hunt, it was probably a *nymphaeum*. The actual library of the villa must have been either in the original residential quarter on the plateau or above the substructures, but both locations are neither marshy nor extremely low-lying.⁴

The noun χωρίον may well indicate an interior space such as a hall or auditorium, but Galen himself used it in *On prognosis* 9.7-8 with a different meaning. In 169, when Marcus Aurelius left Rome on campaign against the Germans, Galen 'decided to retire at different times to the various spots where his [Marcus Aurelius'] son Commodus resided' (ἐγὼν ἀναχωρεῖν αὐτῆς ἄλλοτε εἰς ἄλλο χωρίον ἐν ᾧ περ ἂν ὁ υἱὸς αὐτοῦ Κόμμοδος). In this case χωρίον corresponds to an imperial residence, possibly "Lavinium, Lanuvium, Tibur and Antium".⁵ Of course, this list of places is conjectural and the possibility that Antium was among them should now be dismissed. Indeed, Galen used to go around with the young Commodus having the task 'to attend his [Marcus Aurelius'] son, should he ever fall ill' (*On prognosis* 9.7), 'to preserve him in a state of health', and 'to employ my [i.e., Galen's] services if he fell ill' (*On my own books* 2). If Jones

1 A. M. Jaja, "Anzio. La villa imperiale," in M. Valentini (ed.), "Residenze imperiali nel Lazio," *Trascultura - Quaderni del Museo di Monte Porzio Catone* 2 (Frascati 2008) 73-80.

2 Compare at Rome the *horti Licetullani* on the Palatine and the imperial palace itself, where the residential buildings were located behind similar curvilinear façades.

3 This is where the 'Maiden of Antium' was discovered.

4 The building in which the *Fasti Antiaties* were discovered might have been a library: F. De Polignac, "Archives de l'archéologie romaine du XVIIIe siècle," *MÉFRA* 112 (2000) 628. In any case it was on the plateau, not on the coast: cf. P. Brandizzi Vitucci, *Antium. Anzio e Nettuno in epoca romana* (Rome 2000) 35-37.

5 V. Nutton, *Galen. On Prognosis* (Berlin 1979) 119-21 and 211-13.