

THE MOSAIC OF  
NEPTUNE AND THE SEASONS  
FROM LA CHEBBA

THE MOSAIC OF  
NEPTUNE AND THE SEASONS  
FROM LA CHEBBA

by  
GIFTY AKO-ADOUNVO

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies  
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements  
for the Degree  
Master of Arts

McMaster University

© Copyright by Gifty Ako-Adounvo, April 1991.

MASTER OF ARTS

McMASTER UNIVERSITY

(Classical Studies)

Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: The Mosaic of Neptune and the Seasons from La Chebba.

AUTHOR: Gifty Ako-Adounvo, B.A. (Hons.) (University of Ghana).

SUPERVISOR: Professor K.M.D. Dunbabin

NUMBER OF PAGES: xiii, 162

## ABSTRACT

This thesis analyses the Roman mosaic of Neptune and the Seasons from La Chebba in North Africa (Africa Proconsularis). The mosaic was excavated in 1902 in a seaside villa at La Chebba which is about 10 km. south of El Alia. The mosaic has received but brief mention in publications since the beginning of the century, in spite of its fascinating subject matter.

Chapter 1 gives a detailed description of the mosaic, which depicts in a central medallion, Neptune standing in a frontal chariot attended by two members of the marine thiasos. Four female Seasons appear in the corner diagonals of the pavement. They are flanked by seasonal animals and little scenes of seasonal activity. These seasonal vignettes and the combination of Neptune with Seasons are unique features of this mosaic.

Chapter 2 deals with the subject of the "triumph"; its modern art historical terminology, its symbolism, and the iconography of Neptune's "triumph". Some very interesting parallels appear.

In Chapter 3 the iconography of the Seasons in North African mosaics is discussed. Of particular significance is the frequent combination of the Seasonal theme with a divine personage. The uniqueness of the La Chebba mosaic is acknowledged again with the discovery that it is the only mosaic



pavement that portrays the god Neptune in the company of the Seasons.

The discussion in Chapter 4 revolves around chronology, style, architectural location and the interpretation of the composition's motifs.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply grateful to my supervisor Dr. Katherine Dunbabin for overcoming the constraints of time and distance to give me sound advice and helpful suggestions for the writing of this thesis.

I am indebted to the other members of my supervisory committee, to Dr. A. Ajootian for her invaluable assistance and to Dr. G.M. Paul for painstakingly reading this thesis. Any errors that remain are my own.

Among the many other individuals to whom I owe a debt of gratitude I mention Maria Papadogianis, Noreen Humble and Karen Jones, as well as Sarah Fick and Pat Goodall of the Humanities Word Processing Centre.

At this point, a heartfelt thank-you to Kwaku Larbi Korang who has never obstructed my efforts and who has always supported me regardless of the odds.

Finally, I acknowledge Onyankopon without whom nothing is.

## DEDICATION

For my Grandmother, Veronique Ako-Adounvo, who held us all together and my Grandfather, Paa Nii Amanor Sackey, for giving me his love of books.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT .....	iii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS .....	ix
CHAPTER ONE: DESCRIPTION OF NEPTUNE AND THE SEASONS MOSAIC FROM LA CHEBBA ....	1
I Data .....	1
II Select Bibliography .....	1
III Figural Composition .....	2
IV The Border .....	8
CHAPTER TWO: NEPTUNE .....	11
I The terminology - "Triumph" .....	11
II The motif of the "Triumph" .....	12
III Dionysus in "Triumph" .....	14
IV Neptune and Poseidon .....	16
V Neptune and Augustus .....	18
VI Neptune in "Triumph": A survey of the Evidence .....	20
VII Neptune "Triumphant" in Italy .....	25
VIII Neptune "Triumphant" in North Africa .....	28
CHAPTER THREE: THE SEASONS .....	39
I Background .....	40
II Representations of the Seasons .....	44
III Imagery of the Seasons in North Africa .....	47
A. Winter .....	47
B. Spring .....	51
C. Summer .....	53
D. Autumn .....	56
E. Concluding Remarks .....	58

IV	Representations of the Seasons and Deities .....	59
A.	The Seasons and Dionysus .....	59
B.	Annus-Aion and the Seasons .....	65
C.	Venus and the Seasons .....	70
D.	Tellus and the Seasons .....	72
E.	The Mask of Ocean and the Seasons ..	73
V	The Seasons and Other Subjects .....	74
VI	Conclusions .....	75
CHAPTER FOUR:	ANALYSIS OF THE NEPTUNE AND THE SEASONS MOSAIC .....	84
I	The Composition: Meaning and function	84
II	The Architectural Context .....	88
III	Date: The Figural Scene .....	90
IV	Date: The Border .....	97
V	Conclusions .....	101
ILLUSTRATIONS	.....	108
BIBLIOGRAPHY	.....	155
ABBREVIATIONS	.....	161

## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

- Map. Parrish SMRNA pl. 1.
- Fig. 1 Parrish cat. 49 Neptune and the Seasons (La Chebba).
- 1a Mosaïques de Tunisie p.74 Neptune and the Seasons - central medallion (La Chebba).
- Fig. 2 P. Zanker, The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus (Michigan 1988) Fig. 81 Gem. Augustus in frontal chariot pulled by four Tritons (Rome).
- Fig. 3 P. Zanker, (supra fig. 2) fig. 82 Gem. Augustus in chariot with hippocamps (Boston MFA).
- Fig. 4 H. Mattingly, Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum (London 1968) v.1, 11 Coin. Neptune with foot on Globe (British Mus.).
- Fig. 5 G. Becatti, Scavi di Ostia IV (Rome 1961) pl.70 Neptune and hippocamps (Terme di Nettuno, Ostia).
- 5a Plan.
- Fig. 6 J. Clarke, Roman Black-and-White Figural Mosaics (New York 1979) pl.81 Neptune and hippocamps (Risaro).
- Fig. 7 M. Yacoub, Musée du Bardo (Tunis 1982) 157 fig.50 Neptune in chariot drawn by hippocamps, Sirens, Nereids and Tritons (Sousse).
- Fig. 8 S. Germain, Mosaïques de Timgad (Paris 1969) pl. 14 fig.27 Neptune in chariot drawn by 4 hippocamps (Timgad).
- Fig. 9 Mosaïques de Tunisie. Neptune in chariot with 2 hippocamps (Sousse).
- Fig. 10 Dela Von Boeselager, Antike Mosaiken in Sizilien. (Rome 1983) pl. 59 fig.119 Neptune in chariot with hippocamps (Palermo).

- Fig. 11 H. Stern, "Fontaine de Neptune au Musée de Cherchel (Algérie)" Ant.Afr. 15 (1980) pl. 2 Neptune and Hippocamps (Cherchel).
- Fig. 12 S. Gozlan, "Les Pavements en Mosaïques de la Maison de Neptune à Acholla Botria (Tunisie)" Mon Piot 59, (1974) fig. 51 Neptune in frontal chariot drawn by 2 hippocamps (Acholla).
- Fig. 13 K.M.D. Dunbabin, Mosaics of Roman North Africa; Studies in Iconography and Patronage (Oxford 1978) pl. 145 Neptune and Amphitrite in Frontal Chariot (Utica).
- Fig. 14 F. Baratte, Catalogue des Mosaïques Romaines et Paléochrétiennes du Musée du Louvre (Paris 1978) pl. 23 Neptune and Amphitrite in Frontal Chariot (Constantine).
- Fig. 15 C. Havelock "Archaistic Reliefs in the Hellenistic period" AJA 68 (1964) Figs. 18,19) Dionysus and the Seasons (now in Louvre).
- 15a Reconstruction Drawing.
- Fig. 16 C. Long, The Twelve Gods of Greece and Rome (Leiden 1987)fig. 97 Candelabrum base. Three Horae on "Ara Borghese" (Rome).
- Fig. 17 Hanfmann, SSDO II. fig. 96 Ptg. Winter (Hse of the Ancient Hunt, Pompeii)
- Fig. 18 Hanfmann, SSDO II. fig. 97 Ptg. Winter (Hse of Cn. Habitus, Pompeii)
- Fig. 19 Hanfmann, SSDO II. fig. 89 Ptg. Spring (Hse of Ganymede, Pompeii).
- Fig. 20 Hanfmann, SSDO II. fig. 87 Ptg. Spring (Hse of Cn. Habitus, Pompeii).
- Fig. 21 Hanfmann, SSDO II. fig. 92 Ptg. Summer (Hse of Loreius Tibertinius, Pompeii).
- Fig. 22 Hanfmann, SSDO II. fig. 100 Summer ("Constantinian" Villa, Daphne).

- Fig. 23 Hanfmann, SSDO II. fig. 95 Autumn Ptg. (Hse of the Ancient Hunt, Pompeii).
- Fig. 24 LIMC V no.192 Winter (Baths of Trajan, Acholla)
- 24a Parrish cat. 2 Dionysus and Seasons (Baths of Trajan, Acholla)
- 24b LIMC V no.192 Summer (Baths of Trajan, Acholla)
- Fig. 25 L. Foucher, Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque, (El Djem) (Paris 1963) Triclinium overall view.
- 25a Dionysiac procession.
- Fig. 26 Parrish, cat. 66 Dionysus and Seasons (Volubilis).
- Fig. 27 Parrish, cat. 68 Seasons (Zliten)
- 27a Spring.(Zliten)
- Fig. 27b Summer. (Zliten)
- Fig. 28 Parrish, cat. 44 Aion and the Seasons (Haidra)
- Fig. 29 Hanfmann, SSDO II fig. 93 Winter (Aumale)
- Fig. 30 Parrish, cat. 36 Venus and the Seasons (El Djem)
- Fig. 31 Parrish, cat. 9 Dominus Julius Mosaic (Carthage)
- Fig. 32 Parrish, cat. 29 Seasons and Months (El Djem)
- Fig. 33 Parrish, cat. 50 Dionysus and Seasons (Lambèse)
- 33a Reconstruction drawing.
- Fig. 34 Foucher, (supra fig. 25) Winter (El Djem)
- Fig. 35 Parrish, cat. 26 Child Dionysus and Seasonal Plants (Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque, El Djem)



- Fig. 36 Parrish, cat. 30 Baskets of Seasonal Produce (El Djem)
- Fig. 37a Parrish, cat. 12 Spring (Carthage)
- 37b Summer
- Fig. 38 Parrish, cat. 7 Seasons, Aion, Venus and Sacrificing figure (Maison des chevaux, Carthage)
- 38a Summer (Maison de chevaux)
- 38b Aion (Maison de chevaux)
- 38c Venus. Salomonson, J. W. La Mosaïque aux Chevaux de l'Antiquarium de Carthage (Le Haye 1965) 16 2 pl.XVII(2)
- Fig. 39 Parrish, cat. 48 Seasons (Djebel Oust)
- 39a Autumn (Djebel Oust)
- Fig. 40 Parrish, cat. 56 Seasons and Xenophon (Sbeitla)
- Fig. 41 Parrish, cat. 39 Dionysus, seasonal animals and marine thiasos (El Djem)
- Fig. 42 Parrish, cat. 32b Summer (Mosaic of Ganymede and the Seasons, El Djem)
- Fig. 43 Parrish, cat. 38 Dionysus and Seasons (El Djem)
- Fig. 44 LIMC I.2 no. 7 Aion (Aphrodisias)
- Fig. 45 Parrish, cat. 25 Annus and Seasons (El Djem)
- Fig. 46 Parrish, cat. 46 Aion and Seasons (?) (Hippo Regius)
- Fig. 47 Dunbabin, MRNA fig.158 Annus (Dougga)
- Fig. 48 Parrish, cat. 13 Tellus (Carthage)

- 48b      Reconstruction drawing of seasons.
- Fig. 49a      Parrish, cat. 22 Reconstruction drawing (El Haouria)
- 49b      Seasonal putti (El Haouria).
- Fig. 50.      Parlasca, Die Römischen Mosaiken in Deutschland (Berlin 1959)  
fig. 84.2 Sun God (Münster)
- Fig. 51.      S. Gozlan, "Deux motifs de bordure sur les mosaïques de  
Byzacène" Karthago 17 (1973-1974) Table I
- Fig. 52.      Type II, Border drawing from Mosaic of the child  
Dionysus and Seasonal plants (El Djem) (S. Gozlan supra fig. 51)
- Fig. 53.      Type III, Border drawing from Mosaic of the Triumph of Neptune  
(Acholla) (S. Gozlan supra fig. 51)
- Fig. 54.      Type IV, Border drawing from Mosaic of the Months and Seasons  
(El Djem) (S. Gozlan supra fig. 51)

## CHAPTER 1

### DESCRIPTION OF THE NEPTUNE AND THE SEASONS MOSAIC FROM LA CHEBBA

#### I. DATA

Provenance : La Chebba (Tunisia)

Location : "Atrium" of a seaside villa.

Excavation : 1902 by D.Novak and A.Epinat.

Materials : Limestone, marble and glass tesserae.

Dimensions of pavement : 4.90m x 4.85m.

Dimensions of tesserae : 2-4mm Aver. (central medallion and figures outside), 6mm. Aver. (in the field), 8-10mm. Aver.(in the border).

Dimensions of border motifs : Circles; 30cm.Aver., Hexagons; 33cm.-52cm x 25cm.

Present Location : Tunis, Musée National du Bardo. No.A.292

#### II. Select Bibliography

Balmelle, C., M. Lemée, J. Christophe et. al. eds. Le Décor Géométrique de La Mosaïque Romaine; Répertoire Graphique et Descriptif des Compositions Linéaires et Isotropes (Paris 1985) Pls.: 1. a,i,t; 23. j,m.; 48. e.

Dunbabin, K. M. D. The Mosaics of Roman North Africa. Studies in Iconography and Patronage (Oxford 1978) 20,110; pls. 97-98

Gauckler, P. Inventaire des Mosaïques de la Gaule et de l'Afrique, II: Afrique Proconsulaire (Tunisie) (Paris 1910) 34-35.

Gozlan, S. "Deux Motifs de Bordures sur des mosaïques de Byzacène" Karthago 17 (1976) 153-156.

Hanfmann, G. M. A. The Season Sarcophagus in Dumbarton Oaks (Cambridge, Mass. 1951) v.I. 256

Mosaïques de Tunisie (Tunis 1976)

Parrish, D. Season Mosaics of Roman North Africa (Rome 1984) Cat. 49. 201-204.

Précheur-Canonge, T. La Vie Rurale en Afrique Romaine d'Après Les Mosaïques (Tunis n.d.)

Rostovtzeff, M. I. A Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire (Oxford 1926) pl. 52.

### III. Figural Composition

#### A. Description:

An exterior border frames a figural composition consisting of a central medallion with a frontal depiction of Neptune "in triumph", standing in his sea-chariot with a Nereid and an Ichthyocentaur in attendance. Outside the central medallion, placed diagonally at each corner, is a female personification of one of the seasons. Between the Seasons, little pastoral scenes and animals symbolising the time of year are depicted.

#### III B. Central medallion:

The outermost circle of the medallion is a simple black fillet upon a white background. The inner tondo is defined by another simple black fillet. Between the two black fillets is a tri-coloured bead-and-reel band of yellow, white and reddish-black tesserae.

A depiction of Neptune "in triumph" appears on the white background of the inner tondo. Neptune stands in full frontal pose in his sea-chariot, clasping a fish in his outstretched right hand, his left hand gripping his trident. There is a nimbus around his head. He is naked apart from a loosely draped cloak that partially covers his right hip, sweeps over his left shoulder and falls into the crook of his left arm.

The sea-chariot is drawn by four rearing hippocamps. Two of the hippocamps look down at the sea while the other two glance up at Neptune.

On either side of Neptune's chariot is a sea-creature who holds the hippocamps' reins. To his proper left a long-haired Nereid holds a pedum in her left hand and the reins of a pair of hippocamps in her right. To Neptune's right is a figure crowned with lobster claws. He holds a conch in his right hand and gathers his drapery and the reins of the second pair of hippocamps in his left. This figure has been described in most of the literature as a Triton. However a closer look at the creature reveals two equine limbs, so he should be more correctly referred to as an Ichthyocentaur.<sup>1</sup>

The detailed rendering and robust colouring of Neptune's figure make him the most striking figure of the group. His beard and hair are made up of small brown tesserae with details such as locks rendered in outlines of black and grey. His face is a ruddy brown, features given prominence by black outlines and white highlighting on cheekbones, nose, eyes and lips. The

musculature of his torso is pronounced. To achieve a modelled effect, the artist has used several shades of brown for shading and yellow and white for highlights. The nimbus around his head constitutes a deep yellow outline, the area closest to his visage coloured white for better visual impact.

The folds of his drapery are outlined in black and grey/blue. The surface area of the cloak is a combination of brown, black, grey/blue, yellow and white. The prongs of his trident are black with white highlighting, the handle brown and highlighted in yellow. The fish in his hand is shaded blue and grey. The chariot is yellow and white.

The bodies of the hippocamps are made up of brown, grey and blue tesserae. There is a considerable amount of shading, and highlighting as is before done in white. One hippocamp has a fiery yellow mane outlined in black, the others have brown manes with similar black outlining. Their bridles and bits are a reddish-brown.

Some attempt at modelling is evident in the figures of the Ichthyocentaur and the Nereid, but the treatment is not as vigorous as that of Neptune's. The colours used on the two sea-creatures are pale yellow and white. The Nereid has small high breasts, a pronounced sternum line and a softly rounded belly. The Ichthyocentaur's torso is given some definition by a deeply marked rib cage and a high abdomen. The bodies of both creatures are a pale yellow with brown shading and white outlining. The Nereid's brown hair looks limp and

lifeless - very unlike Neptune's unruly locks. The Ichthyocentaur's hair is light brown, over which two brownish-red lobster claws appear.

The figures rise out of a calm blueish-grey sea. The sea is composed of white, blue and grey lines and zigzags. The figural ensemble cast their reflection on the water. Reflection is portrayed through the use of darker coloured tesserae for the area of the sea where reflection occurs. This results in a very convincing depiction of light, shadow and spatial depth. The La Chebba mosaicist shows an understanding of art and a willingness to experiment that is revealed in this rendition of water.

### III C. The Corner Diagonals and Surround:

Figures of the Seasons, framed within delicate sprays of the appropriate seasonal plant sprouting from acanthus calices, are placed diagonally in the four corners of the field outside the central medallion. Each season is personified as a woman. She is flanked by an animal representing the time of year to her proper right and by a labourer engaged in a seasonal activity to her proper left. These animals and labourers engaged in seasonal activity are some of the most innovative elements of this mosaic, that reveal the uniqueness of the work, as we will see.

Winter is a heavily draped and hooded woman. She is in motion, right sandalled foot forward, carrying off two ducks attached to the end of a pole. She has large deeply-set eyes that hold a leftward glance. She is dressed in a

purple robe and a crown of reeds sits upon her head. Two olive sprays with plump round fruit spring from naturalistically rendered acanthus-bases to frame her and cross over her head. To her left is the smaller figure of a labourer who is bent over, gathering fallen olives into his harvesting basket. Unlike Winter he wears a short tunic and no shoes. A charging boar is shown at Winter's right. Looped shadows are attached to the boar's hoofs. This is a stylistic feature which will be seen again in later mosaic pavements. Reeds grow on either side of the boar, framing it, thus giving this figure a "compartment" in the overall design. All the other figures also are set within a vegetal framework. An attempt is made by the artist to give the scene a certain amount of spatial depth. Slight shadow is cast by the labourer's legs that blends in with the ground, which is illustrated by the use of darker coloured tesserae against the white of the pavement. The artist only hints at shadows and groundlines, so that while a sense of setting is evoked, there is no extensive landscape or scenery.

Spring is a nude young woman. She wears a rose coronet, a necklace and bracelets. A pink shawl is draped over her arms. In her left hand she carries a basket of roses, extending a single rose in her right. Like the Nereid accompanying Neptune, Spring has small, high placed breasts, a rounded belly and low hips. Her deeply-set eyes look toward her right. There is an indication of groundline beneath her feet. She is framed by rose sprays in the same



manner as Winter. To her right, Spring's hound strains on its leash with which it is fastened to a rose spray. On Spring's left hand side a labourer wearing a short belted tunic carries on his head a basket of roses culled from the roses growing beside him. A thin strip of groundline runs at the base of the rose plants, while the labourer himself casts a looped shadow.

Golden-skinned Summer poses between framing stalks of wheat rising from an acanthus base. She wears a necklace, armlets and bracelets, and other than a purple shawl that she carries in her left hand, she wears no clothing. She holds also a basket of wheat and a sickle. Summer appears to be of a slightly heavier build than Spring. At Summer's right there is a lion on the prow. Long shadow lines are attached to its paws. To her left a labourer in a short tunic bends over, filling a basket with wheat. A thick band of tesserae constitutes the groundline that unites the landscape elements of the labour scene.

Autumn stands half-naked, framed by leafy vine boughs that spring from an acanthus base. Around her lower body she wears a golden cloak, the folds of which she gathers over her left forearm. In her left hand she holds a thyrsos, a kantharos whose contents are spilling clutched in her right. Like the other Seasons she too wears a necklace, armlets and bracelets. Her figure is like Summer's and her torso has a pronounced sternum line from breasts to navel. There is a hint of shadow at her feet. To her right there is a snarling

leopard. The crouching animal looks back towards Autumn. Its four paws cast short strips of shadow. The scene to her left shows a bearded labourer wearing a short tunic carrying over his shoulder a pole with a basket of grapes suspended from each end. A looped shadow is attached to his feet.

#### IV. Border:

The first decoration of the inner border is a black double fillet (1.i). After a white band there is a simple red fillet (1.a) and a row of waves. The waves are separated from a black meander pattern by a white band. After the meander is another white band and a black double fillet. Beyond the next white band is the simple inner fillet of a wide border of hexagons and circles. Another simple black fillet encloses the circle and hexagon border from the outside.

At each of the four corners of the circle and hexagon border (48.e) is a circle. From the circumference of every circle radiates a series of inward-facing dentils. A four-sided rosette occupies the centre of the circles. Throughout the border, circles of the same design alternate with hexagons.

The hexagons are composed of two straight and four concave sides. Within each hexagon, there is a yellowish-green floral design of two lanceolate and two pointed petals. The four petals converge at a small circle in the middle. Four tendrils sprout from the circle. Outside the hexagons at the point where each hexagon meets a dentilled circle, are two yellowish-green volutes

on either side of the meeting point. The volutes echo the concave sides of the hexagons.

There are seven hexagons and eight circles within the length of the border. The width has six hexagons and seven circles.<sup>2</sup>

Notes

1. According to S. Lattimore the figure may be referred to by either name, see S. Lattimore The Marine Thiasos in Greek Sculpture (Los Angeles 1976), glossary. However in the interests of clarity, I suggest we call him Ichthyocentaur and call his half-man, half-fish counterpart Triton.
2. The circles are counted twice in each direction.

## CHAPTER 2

### NEPTUNE

#### II. The Terminology: "Triumph"

The mosaic of Neptune and the Seasons from La Chebba is of interest not only because of its fine workmanship but also for its unique combination of familiar motifs. To arrive at an appreciation and understanding of the La Chebba mosaic, the depiction of the so-called "triumph" and its meaning and symbolism must be examined; the popularity of "Neptune's Triumph" must be recognized while carrying out a survey of the Neptune theme and conducting an enquiry into the combination of Neptune and other deities with the Seasons.

It is worth noting here that the term "triumph" as used conventionally in the artistic contexts to be discussed here applies to images of a god -- Neptune, Dionysus -- in a chariot drawn by appropriate animals. In some representations, as we will see, the chariot is absent even though the gods still appear with the animals, yet this imagery is also referred to as a "triumph". There appears to be a certain ambivalence in the use of the term by modern scholars, for we see that representations of Venus seated in a shell are also called "triumphs" of the goddess. This modern term, so frequently used by contemporary scholars, derives from the historical official triumphs of Roman

commanders, even though some of the mythological scenes to which the term is applied are not really political triumphs; thus the term is used by analogy.

## II. The Motif of The Triumph

The motif of the triumph must be differentiated from that of the thiasos which frequently included several members of the god's entourage, and sometimes the deity himself or herself. In the Greek world Dionysus and Poseidon often appear accompanied by their followers in a procession which is not always clearly part of a triumph. These processions or thiasoi appear in several artistic representations. However, in the Roman period, the imagery of the important personage, divine or mortal, in a chariot surrounded by followers becomes more complex, because now this acquires a special civic meaning, a high honor accorded only to certain individuals. As we consider the imagery of Neptune below, it is important to keep in mind the specific meaning of the term "triumph" as used with reference to the victory processions of actual Roman leaders, and the Classicizing tradition of imagery that shows gods and other personages drawn in quadrigae and bigae. We will see how, continuing in this tradition, the world of mythology and the world of Roman political life are brought together by Octavian/ Augustus' court artists.

The triumph was introduced into Rome during the period of the kings.<sup>2</sup> During the Republican period it developed and evolved into the form in which it was preserved for the next few centuries; it became a personal homage to the victorious general that held also blessings for the people of Rome.<sup>3</sup> This is a

very important aspect especially relevant to the ensuing discussion, for I will attempt to show that the imagery of the "triumph" on mosaics was considered symbolic of happiness and felicitas. The historians recorded the triumphant entries of victorious Roman generals into the city of Rome, poets flattered their emperors with eulogies of imperial triumphs, and artists depicted the triumphs in various media. The persistence of the theme until the late empire shows the fascination as well as the importance it held for the ancients.

When a victorious general was granted the right to a triumph, he entered Rome standing in the currus triumphalis (a high, two-wheeled chariot) which was drawn by four horses. He was arrayed in purple vestis triumphalis. On his head he wore a laurel crown (corona triumphalis).<sup>4</sup> Sometimes the triumphant general at Rome donned the robes and attributes of Jupiter and the Rex.<sup>5</sup> Prayers were said to the gods, however according to Versnel "the need to visualise the gods as corporeal and tangible might lead to the wish to invite the god to manifest itself, not as a statue but alive and indentifiable as a god".<sup>6</sup>

If the god did not appear, man had to impersonate the god and did so by donning the garments and attributes of the god. Versnel cites Greek examples of the phenomenon, two of which are presented here: priests of Demeter at Pheneos would wear the mask of the goddess and in the Dionysiac cult Dionysus was represented by humans.<sup>7</sup> The paradox here is that the attributes<sup>8</sup> of the anthropomorphic gods having been bestowed by humans, the

mortals, assuming the attributes of the gods on the day of the triumph, "repossess" these attributes. Interestingly enough the gods who are depicted in triumph have also "borrowed" from humans. The Sun-god, Dionysus and Neptune are deities who are mostly shown "triumphant" riding in chariots drawn by two or four animals.

It has already been noted that the triumph was not merely a manifestation of personal glory. Indeed an important function of the triumph was the imparting of felicitas (good fortune) to the people. The triumphant commander who had been blessed with the good fortune of victory by the gods, could in his turn bestow good fortune on the populace. One could therefore claim that representations of gods in "triumph" were at times symbols of felicitas too.

### III. Dionysus in Triumph

In order to investigate the meaning of Neptune's "triumph", and to see how, or if it may be related to historical triumphs, let us look briefly at the scene more properly called triumphs of the god Dionysus. Dunbabin comments on portrayals of the triumphant Dionysus (thought to draw generally on the episode of the god's victorious return from India) "The scene was especially well suited to representation in Roman terms, since the iconography and the religious significance of the triumphal procession were so firmly established in the Roman tradition".<sup>9</sup> Dunbabin also suggests that one interpret depictions of the triumphant Dionysus more generally as an "image of his victorious



powers over his enemies and of the joys which he bestowed on his followers."<sup>10</sup>

Of the many Dionysiac myths it is the god's victorious campaign against the Indians that is exploited in artistic representations. Scenes of the Dionysiac triumph are widespread.<sup>11</sup> As early as the late Classical period a triumphant Dionysus riding in a leopard - drawn chariot with an Eros and Pan accompanying him is depicted on a pebble mosaic from Olynthus.<sup>12</sup> The pompa of Ptolemy Philadelphos presented scenes of Dionysus in a carriage drawn by leopards and riding an elephant.<sup>13</sup> In fact the iconographical type that one finds most closely followed in both Greek and Roman representations is that of Dionysus riding in the leopard - drawn chariot, accompanied by Victory and various members of the Dionysiac cortège. And in Dionysus' triumphant appearance on the North African mosaics, as Dunbabin states, "despite the wide geographical and chronological distribution, most of the examples follow the same basic scheme and share certain common features".<sup>14</sup> This theory will be seen to hold good for the most part when applied to the analysis of representations of the "triumph" of Neptune on mosaics in North Africa and Italy.

In the following discussion, we will use the term "triumph" advisedly, fully aware that its art historical meaning is considerably broader than its political and civic one. Thus, we will refer to "triumphs" of personages other than Dionysus and actual Roman rulers when these figures are shown riding

in a chariot or guiding their team of animals. When we refer to "Neptune in triumph" we are fully aware that the phrase is simply an analogy to the actual Roman political event, and that here the god is riding in a chariot or guiding his hippocamps. While clearly not intended as the depiction of an actual political triumph, these scenes of Neptune may have been perceived as symbols of felicitas.

#### IV. Neptune and Poseidon

Like Dionysus, Neptune often appears in a chariot. From the second to the fourth centuries A.C., the "triumph" of Neptune seems to have enjoyed great popularity in the coastal towns of the North African provinces. While the triumph of Dionysus became popular during the imperial period on account of the growth and spread of the Dionysiac cult <sup>15</sup>, Neptune's popularity seems not to have stemmed from cult, but from his character as the chief marine deity whose providence had to be constantly invoked by the sea - faring townsfolk of coastal North Africa, as a deity of the fresh waters so important to the province, or simply as one whose very nature made him an appropriate decorative subject in their buildings.

A brief look at the history of the god shows that the Romans regarded him as their most prominent sea divinity. The Neptunalia is believed to have been celebrated in his honour each year on the twenty-third of July. <sup>16</sup> In Roman literature and art he is completely assimilated with Poseidon, the

Greek god of the sea, and accordingly all attributes of Poseidon are transferred to Neptune.<sup>17</sup>

The Greek god Poseidon was the sovereign of the seas, a domain allotted him by his brother Zeus.<sup>18</sup> He is also the earthquake god<sup>19</sup>, and the giver and tamer of horses.<sup>20</sup> Poseidon was also a god of streams<sup>21</sup> and of vegetation.<sup>22</sup> In his capacity as a vegetation god his cult was associated with those of agrarian divinities including Demeter at Eleusis, Troezen, Arcadia and Athens.<sup>23</sup> His association with fresh waters and vegetation is central to my interpretation of the Neptune and the Seasons mosaic from La Chebba. On account of his link with Demeter he was honoured as a vegetation god with a special procession during the festival Haloa in the month of Posideion in the demes of Attica.<sup>24</sup> At Troezen the first fruits of the harvest were offered to him.<sup>25</sup>

Poseidon's attributes were the trident and the dolphin<sup>26</sup>, both of which passed into Roman iconography of the god. In the Greek world, the earliest attested representations of the god date to the Archaic period.<sup>27</sup> In these representations Poseidon was not portrayed very differently from Zeus, except for the trident which replaced the thunderbolts.

One of the earliest Roman representations of the god must have been the statue of Neptune, who as one of Rome's twelve gods, was carried in the lectisternium of 355 or 399 B.C. (Livy V. 13.6; Dion. Halic. XII 9). Unfortunately we have no description of the statue. Pliny (N.H. 36.26)

mentions a now lost sculpture group by the fourth century B.C. sculptor Skopas that consisted of Neptune, Thetis, Achilles and a marine thiasos, that later stood in the delubrum of Cn. Domitius in circo Flaminio.<sup>28</sup> When the Roman armed forces came to comprise a naval force, sacrifices were made to the god before commanders put to sea with their fleets. After the battle of Actium, Octavian built a temple to Neptune in the Campus Martius and instituted a cult in his honour.<sup>29</sup> The dearth of literature on this temple and cult suggests that devotion to Neptune never enjoyed the kind of popularity achieved by the Dionysiac religion. We do know however, that cults of Neptune existed in North Africa.<sup>30</sup> Gsell has observed that in the coastal towns of the province he was worshipped as a sea divinity, while the people of the interior worshipped him as a god of fresh waters.<sup>31</sup>

#### V. Neptune and Octavian /Augustus

When does the motif of Neptune "in triumph" begin to appear in Roman Art ? It is difficult to provide a sure answer to this question, however, the evidence of two engraved gems of the Augustan period (figs. 2, 3)<sup>32</sup> suggests that the motif appeared in Rome at least by early in this period.

Octavian develops a close iconographical association with Neptune after the naval victory at Actium. The Roman conception of the imagery of the triumph is superimposed on the persona of the god in whose domain Octavian achieved one of his early and decisive victories. It is also after this event that Virgil describes the god Neptune riding in his sea-chariot ( Aen. I.156 ).

Neptune became one of Octavian's personal deities in the early years following the victory at Actium.<sup>33</sup> He had the obverse of coins decorated with images of Neptune resting his foot on the globe (Fig. 4).<sup>34</sup> Octavian went even further to assimilate himself with the god, by taking on the attributes of Neptune's marine "triumph". Two fine gems of the Augustan period very clearly depict this assimilation (Figs. 2, 3).<sup>35</sup> One of these objets d'art which is in the Vienna museum has a frontal depiction of a male figure riding in a sea-chariot drawn by four tritons (Fig. 2). The triumphator waves a laurel branch. The bearded tritons at each end hold aloft tokens, which according to Gagé allow for an identification of the triumphator as Augustus.<sup>36</sup> On one token two goats are seated in heraldic pose around a shield crowned with an oak wreath atop a globe; the other token is a little winged Victory extending a laurel crown. The distinctive oak leaf crown or corona civica, according to Gagé, was peculiar to Augustus, given to him by the people in 27 B.C., and the goats were his zodiac sign, capricorn.<sup>37</sup>

Even more fascinating is the other gem, now in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston (Fig. 3). The very fine style and the detailed work of this piece are singular. In this representation a beardless naked personage holding a trident is presented in three-quarter view. His right leg supports his weight in a low chariot, his outstretched left leg outside the car trailing in the sea. A dolphin and a man or triton swim alongside the chariot. Only the head and shoulders of the swimmer are visible above the waves. The "triumphator" wears a

mantle around his shoulders. The general iconography is in keeping with that on scenes of Neptune's "triumph" in baths at Ostia and Risaro (Figs. 5, 6) <sup>38</sup> to be examined below. The beardless personage on the gem is not Neptune, for in all representations of the deity we see a bearded figure of a type denoting a more mature or older individual. The personalised features of the Boston figure have led some scholars to identify the figure as Augustus. <sup>39</sup>

#### VI. Neptune "In Triumph": A Survey Of The Evidence

By studying mosaics and other artistic media on which the "triumph" of Neptune appears we will realise that very close similarities exist in the iconography of the subject in spite of chronological and geographic differences.

The "triumph" motif occurs on mosaic pavements in Africa, Sicily and Italy. The largest number is found in North Africa. The following sites have yielded mosaics of the "triumph" of Neptune (See Map):

From North Africa;

A. ACHOLLA. Neptune in large oecus 'S' (triclinium) of Maison de Neptune.

A rectangular panel with frontal portrayal of Neptune in a chariot drawn by two hippocamps. Panel surrounded by medallions with marine subjects. 170-180 A.C. S. Gozlan, "Les pavements en Mosaiques de la Maison de Neptune á Acholla Botria (Tunisie)" MonPiot 59 (1974) 113, 117, (Fig. 12).

B. LA CHEBBA. Mosaic of Neptune and the Seasons in "atrium" of seaside villa. Central medallion with frontal portrayal of Neptune in sea-quadrige, in the corner diagonals of the mosaic occur four full length female Seasons.

Seasonal animals and scenes of rural labours flank the Seasons. 130-150 A.C. Now in the Musée du Bardo. Inv. Mos. Tun. no. 86.; D. Parrish, Season mosaics of Roman North Africa (Rome 1984) 201 pls. 66b-68 (Fig. 1).

C. CHERCHEL. Neptune sitting frontally on two hippocamps (in profile), flanked by two swimming Nereids. Mosaic decoration of fountain basin wall. Fourth century A.C. H. Stern, "Fontaine de Neptune au Musée de Cherchel (Algérie)" AntAfr. 15 (1980) 285-302 (Fig. 11).

D. CONSTANTINE. Neptune and Amphitrite, both nimbed, stand in a chariot drawn by four hippocamps (frontal group). Two Erotes hold an arc of drapery over their heads. Fishing Erotes and other marine subjects occur around them. Second quarter of fourth century A.C. Now in the Louvre, Paris. F. Baratte, Catalogue des Mosaïques Romaines et Paléochrétiennes du Musée du Louvre (Paris 1978) 36-37 (Fig. 14).

E. OUDNA. Mosaic of Neptune and marine subjects. Neptune stands in a sea-chariot drawn by two hippocamps galloping to the viewer's right. The group is shown in three-quarter view. Located in "atrium" of the Maison des Laberii. Mid- second century or c. 160-180 A.C. Fragments in Bardo. P. Gauckler, Inv. Mos. Tun. 120 no. 355.

F. OUDNA. Mosaic of Neptune, Nereids, Erotes and Dolphins. Wall mosaic from piscina(?) Possibly from Maison des Laberii baths ( See Dunbabin MRNA 266.) Late first or early second century A.C. Now in Algiers Museum. P. Gauckler, Inv. Mos. Tun. 131. no. 387.

G. OUDNA. Mosaic of Neptune. Neptune stands in chariot drawn by two hippocamps that gallop to the right. Acanthus motifs occupy the corners of the composition. Also figured are Nereids riding sea-monsters and dolphins. Located in an oecus of the Maison de Neptune. Second - third century A.C. P. Gauckler, Inv. Mos. Tun. 150 no.444.

H. OUDNA. Mosaic of Neptune and Fishermen. Centrally placed motif of Neptune in chariot with Erotes in fishing boats around him. At the angles are fishermen wearing hats and sitting on rocks. Located in large house near Maison des Laberii. Undated. Fragments in Bardo. P. Gauckler, Inv. Mos. Tun. 137 no. 402, K.M.D. Dunbabin, MRNA 266.

I. SOUSSE. Neptune with Sirens, Nereids and Tritons. Central Neptune in chariot drawn by four hippocamps. Around the central motif are garland hexagon compartments containing Nereids and Tritons. Three Sirens occur in medallions surrounding the central tableau with Neptune. The Neptune group is rendered in three-quarter view. Located in oecus of Maison de Sorothus. ca. 190-200 A.C. P. Gauckler, Inv. Mos. Tun. no.125. M. Yacoub, Le musée du Bardo; Musée Antique (Tunis 1970) 157 (Fig. 7).

J. SOUSSE. Neptune in chariot drawn by two hippocamps. Group rendered in three-quarter view. Mid-third century A.C. Location unspecified. Maison de l'Oued Blibane. P. Gauckler, Inv. Mos. Tun. 68-69. no.180; Mosaïques de Tunisie (Tunis 1976) (Fig. 9).



K. TIMGAD. Frigidarium of the Grandes Thermes de l'Est. Neptune in chariot drawn by four hippocamps galloping to the left. Dated to the second half of the fourth century A.C. Now in Timgad Museum. S. Germain, Les mosaïques de Timgad. Étude descriptif et analytique (Paris 1969) 33-35 (Fig. 8).

L. UTICA. Neptune and Amphitrite in a chariot. Large marine mosaic with Head of Ocean flanked by Erotes on dolphins in apse at top. Beneath this figures a frontal portrayal of Neptune and Amphitrite in a chariot drawn by four hippocamps. Both deities are nimbed. Below this register are Nereid-riders, flying Erotes and two reclining goddesses. Located in baths of Maison de Caton. End of second or beginning of third century A.C. K.M.D. Dunbabin, Mosaics of Roman North Africa: Studies in Iconography and Patronage. (Oxford 1978) 153, 156 pl.145 P. Gauckler, Inv. Mos. Tun. Suppl. no. 929 (Fig. 13).

From Italy:

M. OSTIA. "Triumph" of Neptune from room B. of Terme di Nettuno. Neptune drives four hippocamps before him. The group is rendered in three-quarter view. Swimmers, Erotes riding dolphins, Nereid-riders, and several marine monsters occupy the rest of the pavement. 139 A.C. G. Becatti, Scavi di Ostia IV (Rome 1961) 47-48 no.70. J.R. Clarke, Roman Black-and-White Figural Mosaics (New York 1979) 71-73, pls.33, 37 (Fig. 5).

N. RISARO. "Triumph" of Neptune (Museo Nazionale delle Terme). Neptune drives four hippocamps before him. J. R. Clarke, *supra* Cat. M. p. 73, pl. 81 (Fig. 6).

O. PALERMO. "Triumph" of Neptune (Piazza della Vittoria). Fragmentary and damaged mosaic shows Neptune in a chariot drawn by two(?) hippocamps. Dela Von Boeselager, Antike Mosaiken in Sizilien. Hellenismus und römische Kaiserzeit 3.Jahrhundert v. Chr.-3.Jahrhundert n. Chr (Rome 1983) pl. LIX (Fig. 10).

There are three general iconographical types of Neptune's "triumph" to be observed in the Roman assemblage.

TYPE I. Neptune rides in a chariot drawn by four hippocamps that gallop to the left (viewer's). The group is shown in three-quarter view. To this group belong: Cat. I, K, M, N.

TYPE II.(a,b) Neptune rides in a chariot drawn by two hippocamps that gallop to the right (a) or to the left (b). The view is three-quarter for the figure of the god and almost profile for the hippocamps. Group IIa: Cat. E, G, J, O. Group IIb: Cat. C.

TYPE III.(a,b) Frontal composition with Neptune in chariot drawn by two hippocamps (a) or by four (b). In compositions which have a four hippocamp-chariot Neptune may appear alone or with Amphitrite; he is nimbed. Group IIIa: Cat. A. Group IIIb: Cat. B, D, L.

## VII. Neptune "Triumphant" In Italy

We will now consider the evidence from Italy. In the harbour-town of Ostia Neptune featured prominently in the decoration of bath floors. Without doubt his sea and waters link played no mean part in ensuring his popularity in a town that depended on the sea-trade for its livelihood. Of special interest for this study is the large composition depicting the "triumph" in room B of the Terme di Nettuno (see plan and fig. 5).

The so-called Triumph of Neptune, here (TYPE I) (Cat. M.) occupies a central position on the large black-and-white pavement (Fig. 5). The bearded god holds the reins of four hippocamps in his right hand and his trident in the left. Apart from his cloak which forms an arch of drapery over his head he is naked. Interestingly enough the god does not stand in a chariot although his right leg is raised and bent at the knee as though supporting his weight in a carriage. The raised right leg disappears at the knee where one hippocamp's tail is coiled around it. The leg is not continued, an omission which I believe points to the possibility that the artist was copying the design from another painting or drawing. The artist might have misunderstood the detail or the pattern may have been damaged at that detail, rendering it difficult to comprehend the workings of the detail. Neptune's left leg is outstretched, the lower half coiled around by the end of the same hippocamp's tail. Although there are four hippocamps only two tails are visible; another oddity which may be explained by the suggestion for the missing lower right leg. The artist

manages to convey the hippocamps' spiritedness by their twisting poses and their tossing heads. They are guided to the left <sup>40</sup> by their master Neptune. Neptune is depicted in three-quarter view. Around this central motif revolves an entourage of swimmers, conch-blowing Tritons, Nereids, Erotes riding dolphins and other marine motifs. The mosaic is dated to 139 A.C. on the basis of brick stamps and inscriptions found in the building. <sup>41</sup>

A mosaic from Risaro (cat.N.) (fig. 6) of which a fragment survives, depicts Neptune driving four hippocamps before him. This motif and its iconography can be classified under TYPE I, and as will be seen presently, finds a parallel in the mosaic of Neptune from Ostia (cat.M).

A further basis for the suggestion regarding the 'missing' leg and the argument for a prototype can be found in artistic representations that are produced after Octavian's naval victory over Antony and Cleopatra at Actium in 31 B.C. As mentioned above, Augustus had the reverse of coins decorated with images of Neptune resting his foot on the globe (fig. 4 ). <sup>42</sup> The gem engraved with Octavian /Augustus (as Neptune) in a sea chariot drawn by four hippocamps (Boston triumph studied above) can be classified under our TYPE I, and may even be a copy of a now lost prototype that also inspired the Ostia and Risaro "triumphs".

Striking similarities exist between the Boston "triumph", the early second century "triumph" from Ostia and the mid-second century example from Risaro, which suggest the existence of an Augustan prototype that was copied

and elaborated upon for the next few centuries. On all three scenes there are four hippocamps. The "triumphator" is naked, the trident is held in the left hand, there is a mantle, and the postures are basically the same: right foot raised and bent at the knee, left leg outstretched and dangling in the water. It is noteworthy that these similarities persisted from the Augustan to the Antonine periods as manifested in the three marine "triumphs". On the Boston gem two hippocamps' tails are visible but it is difficult to understand just how the tails relate to the bodies. The Ostia and Risaro "triumphs" share a similar detail; the nearest hippocamp's tail is continuous with its body, but a tail is draped over this hippocamp's back and it is difficult to know to which of the other hippocamps it belongs. In all three portrayals, the figure stretches out his right hand to hold the reins; only the Boston "triumphator's" hand does not actually connect with the reins. The hippocamps always gallop to the left.

The existence of these similarities furthers the claim for a prototype, even though there remain differences due perhaps to personal taste, misreading of the pattern or the passage of time. In the words of Lassus "L'existence d'un même schéma n'empêchera pas le tempérament de l'artiste de s'exprimer...avec un autre effet que celui auquel avait abouti le peintre original".<sup>43</sup> Although this statement was made with respect to modern artists it could apply equally to ancient artists like the masters of the Ostia and Risaro mosaics. Of the three scenes only the Boston "triumph" includes a chariot. The omission of the chariot in the other two scenes may be a

variation on the theme or may have arisen due to a misreading of the original or the copying of a circulating pattern on which the chariot did not exist. So there might have been earlier versions on which these images draw. The mantle billowing in an arc over their heads is a stylistic feature used as a framing device around the heads of other figures especially Venus <sup>44</sup>, and is part of a long tradition.

The Boston triumphator and the Ostia Neptune hold their tridents at the same angle forming an X with their outstretched right legs. The Risaro Neptune holds his trident at an angle which allows it to echo the continuous line formed by torso and outstretched leg. On the Boston gem the sea is portrayed by a series of wavy lines. On the Ostia and Risaro mosaics, however the sea is not shown.

#### VIII. Neptune "Triumphant" In North Africa

Having observed the imagery of Italy we now turn to the North African evidence in order to establish the iconography of Neptune's so-called triumph in the province. From Oudna comes our earliest example of Neptune in North African mosaics (cat. F). This late first or early second century A.C. mosaic is one of two wall mosaics depicting the god. The other example is a fourth century fountain mosaic from Cherchel (cat. C).

A second century A.C. mosaic from Sousse (TYPE I) (Cat. I, fig. 7) treats the iconography of the "triumph" of Neptune in a manner slightly different from what has been noted on the mosaics from Italy and the Boston gem. The

god is depicted almost frontally in a chariot whose high front conceals his lower body, a marked departure from the very low chariot of the Boston "triumph" and the absence of the vehicle from the Ostia and Risaro scenes. One chariot wheel is visible. A fluttering mantle wraps around the god's upper arms and back. The trident is held as usual in the left hand, the god leans forward in the high chariot, his right arm outstretched over the heads of the hippocamps as if urging them on. The reins are gathered in the god's left hand. We see for the first time a sea depicted by zigzags in the "triumph" of Neptune.

A third century mosaic from Timgad (Cat. K.) also portrays Neptune in a high chariot pulled by four hippocamps (Fig. 8). The chariot front is of a rectangular shape; in other "triumphs" of Neptune the chariot fronts have a rounded aspect <sup>45</sup>. The motifs on this mosaic are quite stylised; the hippocamps mesh into one mass, their heads almost all tilting at the same angle. As in the other mosaics only one hippocamp's entire body is visible, but the Timgad artist tries to give a sense of the presence of the other bodies with not very successful results; a tail presumably belonging to another hippocamp sprouts from the first one's neck, another tail springing out of the same creature's back. Neptune's figure is treated poorly and there is no real feel for the anatomy of the bent arm. The body is stunted in an attempt to make it fit into the carriage. The whole composition seems crowded and forced to fit within the surrounding border.

In another version of the scene, the god is portrayed riding in a chariot drawn by only two hippocamps 'galloping' to the right (TYPE IIa) instead of to the left as has been observed on the other mosaics. This type could have arisen on account of economic constraints where the patrons could not afford the costs of laying out four hippocamps, or more likely it was merely a variation on the traditional theme. This type can be seen on a second century A.C. mosaic from the Maison de l'Oued Blibane at Sousse (Cat. J, Fig. 9). The naked god rides in a low chariot drawn by two hippocamps. A billowing mantle forms an arc of drapery over his head. Unlike in his other depictions (except for the Timgad mosaic), Neptune holds his trident in his right hand and the reins in his left. A dolphin accompanies the group. The same scene seems to be represented on the very battered mosaic from Palermo (Cat. O, fig. 10).

The Neptune motif from the fountain mosaic at Cherchel (Cat.C, fig. 11) should be generally classified under TYPE IIb. It must be noted however, that this motif is a bit unusual. Whereas in other depictions Neptune stands behind the hippocamps, here he sits frontally on the coils of the creatures who gallop to the left.

All the mosaics introduced up to this point have presented the "triumph" in three-quarter view. It has also been established that there was a basic iconographical type for Neptune in which he is cast as a stern yet serene looking individual of mature years with a muscular build, usually nude except



for the mantle, and always bearing his symbol of power, the trident. Frontal representations of the "triumph" of Neptune (TYPE III a,b) from Acholla (cat. A, fig. 12), Utica (cat.L, fig. 13) and Constantine (cat. D, fig. 14) will now be examined. These mosaics are important to the discussion since they seem to have been influenced by the La Chebba mosaic, which is the earliest in this series, or by others of its kind presently unknown to us. While we note the general similarities in the frontal portrayal of the "triumph" motif in these mosaics we must always remember that the La Chebba "triumph" is the only one that is set within a Seasonal context.

The mosaic from Acholla (c. 170-180 A.C.) depicts in frontal view a naked, bearded Neptune standing in a chariot drawn by two hippocamps (fig. 12). His proper right hand is raised in salutation, in his left hand he carries the trident. The god looks to his right. A billowing mantle fans out over his proper left shoulder. He rides in a squarish chariot <sup>46</sup>; in his left hand he holds the reins of the hippocamps. Both hippocamps turn their heads toward Neptune. Their bodies are totally visible, as if the attelage is gliding on top of the water. The sea is indicated by the use of horizontal straight lines and zigzags punctuated by two or three vertical strips. Neptune's musculature is very pronounced, though the modelling is not as finely graded as that of the La Chebba Neptune. <sup>47</sup> The detailed rendering of the sea in the La Chebba mosaic has been replaced in this composition by a more summary form.

At Utica the "triumph" of Neptune and Amphitrite (fig. 13) appears beneath a large head of Ocean. The two deities in the frontal rounded chariot are nimbed. They stand frontally, side by side in the chariot which is drawn by four hippocamps. Amphitrite's drapery billows in an arc over her head, that of Neptune billows behind him. Both of them have one thigh covered with drapery, the rest of their bodies are nude. Neptune's appearance and pose here is quite similar to that on the La Chebba mosaic even though some aspects of the composition are different: he is accompanied by Amphitrite, therefore the hand holding a dolphin now holds her, and his drapery is altered to match hers. The god holds the trident in his left hand and clasps Amphitrite around her waist with the other. Neptune's dark, robust musculature contrasts sharply with Amphitrite's lighter, voluptuous curves. The two pairs of hippocamps frame the deities. The two inner hippocamps look towards each other (a stylistic feature which we will notice also in the Constantine pavement). Their heads are shown in profile. The outer pair look away. Their forelegs appear above the sea and their lower bodies are submerged. Horizontal lines of tesserae run across the lower part of their bodies, to indicate submergence. Coils of their tails appear in front of the chariot.

In the "triumph" of Neptune and Amphitrite from Constantine <sup>48</sup> (second quarter of fourth century A.C., cat. D, fig. 14). Neptune stands beside Amphitrite in a frontal chariot. He has a nimbus around his head, like Amphitrite, and wears a fillet in his hair <sup>49</sup>. The bearded god is naked except

for a mantle thrown over his left shoulder. He holds his trident in his left hand, gazing at Amphitrite who has one arm over his shoulder and a hand on his upper right arm <sup>50</sup>. She wears a crown. Her torso is nude, her legs covered with a mantle. Two Erotes hold an arc of drapery over their heads. Four hippocamps draw the chariot. Their upper bodies and forelegs are visible above the sea which is indicated by short, horizontal zigzags against a white background. The sea is mostly 'opaque', for no attempt is made to show submerged parts. Coils of the hippocamps' tails emerge from the sea. The two central hippocamps turn their heads towards each other, the other two look away. Neptune is not holding their reins, which are shown running straight back from the bridles and disappearing over the front edge of the chariot. The chariot, like at La Chebba and Utica, has a rounded front. The presence of the nimbus, the round-front chariot, and the four hippocamps whose reins are not held by the god, seem to belong to the La Chebba tradition.

The La Chebba "triumph" (130-150 A.C.) stands at the beginning of a tradition of frontal portrayals in the "triumph" of Neptune in North Africa. No frontal portrayals of the motif in North Africa (as far as I can tell) have been found to precede this one. In the examples presented here, elements such as the nimbus, the standing pose, the round-front chariot drawn by four hippocamps, and the reins not controlled by Neptune, persist in mosaics that span a period from the mid second century - second quarter of the fourth century A.C.

Even though it has been established that the La Chebba pavement precedes the others of this type, the question must be asked, whether this mosaic is truly innovative in the frontal depiction of the "triumph" motif in North Africa, or if the evidence is biased by an accident of archaeology ? Is there an earlier lost prototype ? There does not seem to be an easy answer.

### Notes

1. Pliny N. H. 34. 10 mentions a triumph of Tarquinius Priscus. See H. S. Versnel, Triumphus (Leiden 1970) 89-93.
2. Versnel (supra n. 1) 357-397
3. Versnel, (supra n. 1) 357-397. The author discusses the development of the triumph as a personal homage.
4. Versnel, (supra n. 1) 56-57.
5. Versnel, (supra n.1) 65, 72-78.
6. Versnel, (supra n. 1) 85
7. Versnel, (supra n.1) 85.
8. Versnel, (supra n.1) 84. Myth and cult had aided in a concretisation of the gods' attributes. Thus it came to be that Athena wears a warrior outfit, Hephaestus wields the hammer, Hermes wears winged sandals and Poseidon holds the trident while his brother Zeus claims the sceptre and the thunderbolts.
9. K. M. D. Dunbabin, "The Triumph of Dionysus on mosaics in North Africa," PBSR 39 (1971) 52.
10. Dunbabin (supra n.8), 52.
11. Dunbabin (supra n. 8) 53, for a list of locations where pavements depicting the Dionysiac triumph were found.
12. L. Foucher, "Le Char de Dionysos" CMGR II 55, pl. xix 1.
13. E. E. Rice, The Grand Procession of Ptolemy Philadelphus (Oxford 1983) 11
14. Dunbabin (supra n.8) 52. Dunbabin offers a detailed study of the iconographical relationships in the North African representations of the Dionysiac triumph.
15. Dunbabin, MRNA 174.

16. Very little is known about this festival. For a brief discussion see G. Dumézil, Fêtes romaines d'été et d'automne (Paris 1975) 25-37.
17. Wissowa, "Neptunus" in Roscher's Lexikon.
18. Homer Il. XV. 187ff. Homer, Od. XIII, 142. Apollodorus, 1,4,7.
19. L.W. Farnell, Cults of the Greek States IV, (Oxford 1907) 7
20. He was worshipped as Poseidon Hippios in Attica, Isthmia, Mantinea, Olympia, and Epidaurus. F. Durrbach in Dictionnaire Ant., 63-64
21. Homer, Il. XII, 17ff., Aeschylus, Sept. 309, Pindar, Ol. 6.58; Farnell (supra n. 18) 4
22. Farnell (supra n. 18) 7.
23. Farnell (supra n. 18) 7.
24. Farnell (supra n. 18) 7.
25. Plut. Thes. 6.
26. The trident appears in several Greek representations of Poseidon from the Archaic period onwards, See Dictionnaire Ant. "Neptunus" 70.
27. Dictionnaire Ant. s.v. "Neptunus" 69.
28. See also S. Lattimore, The Marine Thiasos in Greek Sculpture (California 1976) 16-18.
29. Jean Gagé, "Actiaca," MEFR 1936 58.
30. CIL VIII, 2652, 2653, 5297, 5298, 5299.
31. S. Gsell, L'Histoire Ancienne de l'Afrique du Nord IV (Osnäbruck 1972) 336-337; J. Toutain, Nouvelles Études de Mythologie et d'Histoire des Religions Antiques (Paris 1935) 62. Toutain mentions a statue of Neptune with a dedication to the god found in a nymphaeum near a stream. See also by the same author Les cultes païens dans l'empire romain (Paris 1920) I 372 ff. (n. v.). I think that both aspects of Neptune's character could be exploited as the artists saw fit, regardless of where they were producing. Thus, I will attempt to show that the La Chebba mosaic evoked Neptune's power as a god of the sea and also as the god of fresh waters despite the fact that the villa in which it was found is located by the sea.

32. For fig.3 see M.L. Vollenweider, Die Steinschneidekunst und ihre Künstler in spätrepublikanischer und augusteischer Zeit (Baden-Baden 1966) 109 pl. 49 no.2 now in Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. For fig. 2 see J.Gagé, (supra n. 29) 85-86 now in Vienna Museum.

33. Gagé (supra n. 29) 39; see also p.85 where he notes that Augustus' devotion to the god flagged after a while.

34. Gagé (supra n. 29) 40; See also H. Mattingly, Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum I (London 1965) pl. 15.1. Also Cambridge Ancient History. X. (London 1923-1939) 11

35. See Gagé (supra n. 29) 85-88 for a full discussion of the two objets d'art.

36. Gagé (supra n.29) 85.

37. Gagé (supra n. 29) 86.

38. Differences will be discussed in the course of the analysis.

39. Gagé (supra n. 29) 86 and n.2.

40. "Left" refers to the viewer's left.

41. Becatti, Scavi di Ostia IV :Mosaici e Pavimenti Marmorei (Rome 1961)

42. Gagé (supra n. 29) 40. Also see H. Mattingly, Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum I pl. 15.5 ; Cambridge Ancient History v. 10, 11.

43. J. Lassus, "Venus Marine," CMGR I 185.

44. Lassus, (supra n. 42) His comparanda include mosaics of Venus with the billowing mantle over her head.

45. For a discussion on bigae and quadrigae, see "Currus" in Daremberg and Saglio, Dictionnaire des antiquités grecques et romaines I, 1636-1642.

46. See S. Gozlan, "Pavements en Mosaique de la Maison de Neptune á Acholla -Botria (Tunisie)." 116 n.2 on the square chariot and other types.

47. On modelling and shading of the Acholla Neptune see Gozlan (supra n. 45) 119.

48. This mosaic is treated in F. Baratte, Mosaïques Romaines et Paléochrétiennes du Musée du Louvre (Paris 1978) 36-38.

49. No other representation of the god reveals this feature.

50. This type of pose seems to draw from a long tradition in Roman painting and sculpture.



### CHAPTER 3

#### THE SEASONS

The four females depicted in the corner diagonals of the La Chebba mosaic (fig.1) have correctly been recognised as personifications of the Seasons. These North African images derive from a long tradition of seasonal representations in the Greek and Roman world, but as we will see, the La Chebba mosaic is unique in its innovative combination of traditional themes and motifs.

The Seasons make their appearance in North African mosaics by the second century A.C., and often accompany divinities, but it should be stressed that the La Chebba mosaic expands the seasonal imagery by combining familiar Season figures with scenes of appropriate bucolic activity. These vignettes depict labourers gathering seasonal produce. Also accompanying the Seasons are animals appropriately related to the hunt and the zodiac. These scenes of rural life, employed at La Chebba to intensify Seasonal imagery, then appear to have been incorporated more generally into the repertoire of the North African mosaicists.

## I. Background

The triad of divinities called the Horae are generally considered the predecessors of the Seasons that became such popular images in Roman mosaics. The Greek origins of the Horae are attested by literature and art. The meaning of the Greek word hora is "a span of time" or "season" , and its root has also been thought to signify "to spring or to be in bloom". A cult of the Horae existed in Attica.<sup>1</sup> They were regarded as vegetation goddesses, who according to Philochorus (in Athenaeus, Deipn.xiv,656), received sacrifices in times of drought, for they were capable of promoting good weather suitable for the flourishing of crops and vegetation.

Homer provides our first literary picture of the Horae.<sup>2</sup> He however does not refer to them as spirits of vegetation, but rather as servants of Zeus and keepers of the sky-gate; they assembled and dispersed the clouds on Mount Olympus. In this capacity they would at least have control over the rains. Homer's Horae also cared for the divine horses of Hera and Athena. In Hesiod the Horae had names - Eunomia, Dike and Eirene, daughters of Themis and Zeus, through whose good influences humans could live in order and harmony.<sup>3</sup> Pindar (Hymn, 1. 30) likewise regarded the Horae as the guardians of law and peace as well as the moderators of the physical and spiritual worlds. In the Homeric Hymn to Aphrodite (VI, 3-18) the Horae are mentioned.

One of the earliest representations of the three Horae appears on the Francois Vase (c.570 B.C.).<sup>4</sup> The three Horae attend the wedding of Peleus and Thetis and are differentiated from other groups of women on the vase -- Graces and Muses -- by a painted inscription. Also identified by inscription on a Chalcidean black-figure vase are two Horae who stand in front of Phineas' couch looking towards the Boreads who chase the Harpies away.<sup>5</sup> They wear long robes and their heads are veiled; one of them holds a large flower.

Poets such as Aeschylus and Aristophanes reflect in their work the seasonal theories of their time whereby the Horae represented three seasons: Spring, which was the prelude to a warm season comprising Summer and Autumn as a single season, and Winter.<sup>6</sup> The traditional Horae therefore retained much of their character as vegetation goddesses and were also understood to signify the chronological Seasons.

Already in the fifth century B.C. Hippocrates recognised the four seasons (Airs, Waters, Places, ch. 10). In the Hellenistic period the four - season system gained acceptance. A neo-Attic relief that reflects a Greek original of around 300 B.C. shows Dionysus leading what appears to be the four Seasons (fig. 15,15a).<sup>7</sup> In the relief Dionysus is bearded, wears archaistic attire and holds a thyrsos over his shoulder. Behind him the figure identified as Spring holds flowers in her dress; we will see the use of flowers as attributes and the carrying of these and other attributes in later artistic representations of the

Seasons. The next figure is Summer who holds a bundle of wheat in one hand and leads Autumn with the other. Autumn, bearing a bunch of grapes, glances back at Winter who is well draped. The four seasons are thus shown as female personifications with definite attributes: the flower, wheat, grapes and heavy drapery which later also characterise the iconography of the Seasons in Roman art.

The four - Season tradition was also exploited in the Hellenistic period in the great procession of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285-242 B.C.). In the procession four gaily dressed women representing the seasons, each carrying appropriate fruit, followed the personification of the year and the pentaeteris.<sup>8</sup> Hanfmann connects the development of this seasonal tradition with literary and scientific activity in Ptolemy's court.<sup>9</sup>

Although by the second century B.C. poets such as Bion had accepted the four seasons as natural divisions of time,<sup>10</sup> the mythological Horae seem to have persisted as representations of the Seasons until the first century B.C.<sup>11</sup>

On the so-called Ara Borghese from Rome (dated by Long to the first century B.C.- second century after Christ) one of the lower registers contains the three Horae with seasonal attributes<sup>12</sup> (fig.16). The three Horae are clad in archaistic raiment; the first holds a flower bud, the next holds up a branch with grapes, while the third carries what may be either wheat or reeds.

To sum up: The Horae had a long tradition as mythological figures and as vegetation goddesses who apparently came to represent the seasons during the late Hellenistic period. We have also observed that at least by the mid-Hellenistic period a system of four seasons was introduced and Seasonal attributes such as flowers and grapes were established. These Seasonal attributes provide a bridge to a background discussion of seasonal imagery in Roman art.

In agricultural festivals such as the Ver Sacrum and the Brumalia the seasons played an important role in the lives of early Romans.<sup>13</sup> The Cerealia and the Liberalia are two more festivals that may have formed part of the core of agricultural activities around which the official Roman calendar was built.<sup>14</sup> Certain agricultural activities provided a handy repertoire from which Roman artists acquired several seasonal motifs, as we shall see. The fourfold division of the seasons is mentioned by Roman writers - Cicero, Virgil and Ovid.<sup>15</sup> Contemporary astrologers charted the course of the stars to aid farmers obtain maximum benefit of the seasons, and in conjunction with philosophers explored new theories of a cosmic universe in which the four seasons played a major role.<sup>16</sup> So at least by the beginning of the first century A.C. the four seasons were now connected with deities and were also correlated to the signs of the zodiac.<sup>17</sup>

We have already noted what the early Horae looked like in Greek art, so we now turn to an examination of the iconography of the Seasons in Roman art, especially in mosaics, the genre to which the La Chebba pavement belongs. We will learn what precedents existed for the seasonal representations on the La Chebba mosaic and when the Seasons begin to appear on mosaics.

Personified season types were often depicted in Roman art. Hanfmann classifies them under three headings: 1. Horae (i.e. full female figures), 2. Female busts with attributes, and 3. Male Seasons.<sup>18</sup> Female personifications of seasons were popular in the decoration of pavements: the Horae type during the second and third centuries A.C., bust types from the second to the fourth centuries A.C. Male personifications on the other hand were employed primarily in sculpture, especially on sarcophagi, in the second and third centuries A.C.<sup>19</sup> In North Africa female busts of the Seasons seem to be the preferred type for the adornment of mosaics. Scenes of seasonal activities were also representative of the seasons, as were plants and animals. Scenes of seasonal activities often bear close affinities to the labours of the months.

## II. Representations of the Seasons

Roman seasonal art shows a discrepancy between Winter's attributes and those of the other three Seasons. Winter often wears heavy drapery, a hood and footwear all referring to the season's cold, wet weather. The other Seasons,

while their dress reflects more moderate temperatures, are distinguished mainly by vegetal attributes -- roses for Spring, wheat for Summer and grapes for Autumn. In at least three Pompeian wall paintings, from the House of the Ancient Hunt (fig.17), the House of Cn. Habitus and the House of the Tragic Poet a warmly dressed female figure represents Winter.<sup>20</sup> Winter's other attributes include the boar, ducks and hares, all of which are representative of the hunt. The figure of Winter from the House of Cn. Habitus carries a hare and a duck (fig.18).

Although Spring's common attribute is the rose, which is thought to derive from the spring festival, Rosalia,<sup>21</sup> Spring may also be accompanied by other symbols of this time of year, for example a goat, an image that may draw on earlier Greek traditions. The goat is an appropriate symbol, for it was a sacrificial victim in the Greek festival, the Dionysia, which was celebrated during Elaphebolion (March-April).<sup>22</sup> The Roman equivalent, the Liberalia, was celebrated on March 17.<sup>23</sup> Spring's goat can be seen in a fresco from the House of Ganymede in Pompeii. In the painting, a young woman in fluttering drapery bears a goat on her shoulders and carries a fiscella of cheese in her proper right hand (fig. 19). In a painting from the House of Cn. Habitus also in Pompeii, a draped young woman holds a goat by its front legs and bears a fiscella of ricotta (fig. 20). The goat's connection with spring is long lived. It occurs in the much later Calendar of Filocalus (354 A.D.) in the tetrastich

under the figure of March: " the lascivious kid, the garrulous swallow , the pail of milk and the living verdure show forth spring ". <sup>24</sup>

Summer's most common attributes, wheat and a sickle, refer to the harvest. Pompeian frescoes of the first century A.C. show Summer carrying the sickle and holding stalks of wheat. <sup>25</sup> Another attribute emblematic of the harvest is the hat worn by the figure of Summer on a wall painting from the House of Loreius Tibertinus in Pompeii (fig. 21). This type of hat, which was worn by Roman farmers when cutting wheat, <sup>26</sup> appears three centuries later on Summer's head in the Constantinian mosaic from Daphne (fig. 22). Other attributes of Summer include poppies and a wreath. <sup>27</sup> Unlike Winter, not surprisingly, Summer is often clad quite lightly, and in many representations appears nude, as we will see.

Autumn is usually depicted holding grapes, the fruit of the vintage, an event which took place during the month of September. <sup>28</sup> In Pompeian wall paintings Autumn often carries fruit in her dress or in a basket, and a wreath (fig. 23), <sup>29</sup> and is clad in similar fashion to Spring. These attributes, which persist until the fourth century A.C., will be observed in several mosaics of Roman North Africa.

We now turn to an examination of the imagery of the Seasons in North African mosaics.



### III. Imagery of the Seasons in North Africa

While the imagery of the Seasons on mosaic pavements in North Africa reflects that employed in other parts of the Roman world, it differs in certain important aspects. It is in these aspects that we come to recognise the innovations of the North African artists. These artists adapted standard imagery to fit the North African context, as we will see. The particular and very important agricultural products of North Africa are employed in the region's mosaics as attributes of the Seasons. In fact, in the La Chebba mosaic these products are included in a very interesting form: labourers gathering crops. In North African representations of Winter, for example, the olive <sup>30</sup> -- berries, leaves and branches -- one of the region's most significant crops, frequently appears as an attribute, along with the hoe, <sup>31</sup> the implement with which this crop is cultivated. Also significant is Summer's wheat, a crop which was of great importance for the North African provinces. <sup>32</sup> The evidence to be discussed is taken from the period between the first and fourth centuries A.C., from mosaics at Acholla, <sup>33</sup> Carthage, <sup>34</sup> El Djem, <sup>35</sup> La Chebba, <sup>36</sup> Haïdra, <sup>37</sup> Volubilis <sup>38</sup> and Zliten. <sup>39</sup>

#### III. A. Winter

Winter may be represented as either female or male. The female Winter can usually be differentiated from her sisters by her heavy and abundant drapery. In the mosaic from La Chebba (fig.1), she wears a long hooded robe

that envelops her from head to toe. In most mosaics where she is rendered in bust form, her head is usually covered, clearly evoking the colder temperatures of the season. A few examples of this type include the figure of Winter from the mosaic of Dionysus and the Seasons from the Baths of Trajan at Acholla (mid-second century A.C., fig. 24), Winter in the mosaic of Annus and the Seasons (late Antonine) from the Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque at El Djem (fig. 45), also the mosaic of Dionysus and the four Seasons (217-235 A.C.) from the house of the same name at Volubilis (fig. 26), and Winter from a late Severan pavement at Zliten <sup>40</sup> (fig. 27).

A warmly dressed full male figure of Winter, complete with hood and long tunic, appears in an early fourth century mosaic from Hāïdra (fig. 28). In addition to being garbed, Winter sometimes wears shoes, just as the La Chebba Winter wears strappy sandals and the male figure in the Hāïdra pavement wears boots. There were, however, some exceptions to this form of dress; for example, the figure of Winter from Aumale (fig. 29) wears no shoes, and only a leopard-skin cape, his limbs quite bare. If we agree that Winter's heavy drapery evokes the colder temperatures of that time of year we must not fail to note the short tunic and bare feet of the winter labourer right beside the figure of Winter on the La Chebba mosaic (fig. 1) which accords neither with the season's temperatures nor with the heavily draped figure beside him.

Occasionally other busts of Winter wear sleeveless tunics even though their heads are hooded (fig. 24).

Reeds, and especially olives, appear as vegetal attributes of Winter in North African mosaics. In all the examples, Winter is crowned by a wreath of reeds or olives. Reeds may also appear as stalks sprouting from the earth, as in the La Chebba mosaic where they appear on both sides of a charging boar. In the same mosaic, olive sprays frame Winter's figure and olive-berries are gathered into a basket by a labourer. Olive sprays appear again in the early fourth century pavement from Haidra where they frame the image of Winter (fig. 28). Another variation on the portrayal of olives may be seen in the form of olive-filled baskets. This variation appears with a bust of the season in the mosaic of Venus and the Seasons from El Djem (fig. 30). Olive attributes appeared in mosaics of the Sahel region of Africa Proconsularis, a rich olive-cultivating area, during the second century A.C. and from there spread to other regions of North Africa.<sup>41</sup>

The duck, as in mosaics from other Roman regions, is another of Winter's attributes in North African mosaics. The birds are sometimes suspended from the end of a pole carried by Winter over her shoulder as can be seen in the La Chebba mosaic (fig. 1).<sup>42</sup> The Haidra mosaic shows Winter carrying a duck in his right hand, while in the late fourth or early fifth century mosaic of Dominus Julius from Carthage, a labourer in the winter scene carries the bird

in his arms (fig. 31). Such avine motifs are also adopted in other genres such as calendars. In the Calendar of 354, the description of February (the heart of the winter season) from the tetrastich presents a person wrapped up in a mantle setting out to catch the birds of the marshes.<sup>43</sup>

Also given as attributes to Winter are two animals representative of the winter hunt, the hare and the boar.<sup>44</sup> It is interesting to note that although boar-hunting was a popular sport -- a fact well documented by the many North African hunting mosaics<sup>45</sup> -- the La Chebba mosaic is one of only two seasonal pavements that makes use of this emblem.<sup>46</sup> Also peculiar is the fact that in the North African repertoire we have only one mosaic depicting the hare as an attribute of Winter - an early third century pavement from the Maison des Mois et des Saisons at El Djem (fig. 32).<sup>47</sup> Here a hooded man with girt up tunic carries in one hand a reed to which are attached two ducks, in his other hand he grasps a hare by its hindlegs.

The hoe is another distinctive North African attribute which accompanies the image of Winter on most mosaics, although not in the La Chebba pavement. Like the olive, the hoe is a particularly innovative North African seasonal motif, for it symbolises the agricultural importance of the season in the province. The earliest known representations are found at Acholla and El Djem, and were therefore probably introduced into Roman Seasonal art in this province and from thence spread to other regions.<sup>48</sup> The hoe may be the two-

pronged bidens mentioned by Columella (De Arboribus, XII), used to clear the earth around the vines, an operation which took place in the winter, or it may be the wedge-shaped sarculum used to hoe among the vines <sup>49</sup> (bidens; fig. 33; sarculum, fig. 34).

### III. B. Spring

Spring sometimes appears nude as she does in the La Chebba mosaic, with just a mantle draped over her arms, or like the winged putto from Haïdra (fig. 28), nude except for necklace and armlets. Elsewhere she wears light garments.

The rose is this Season's most common attribute. We have already noted that these flowers accompany images of Spring elsewhere in Roman art. Roses may appear in the form of sprays framing Spring's figure, as illustrated by the La Chebba mosaic (fig.1) and the fourth century mosaic from Haïdra (fig. 28). The plants may grow out of the ground near Spring (fig.1), may consist of a single spray held by the Season (fig.1) or may form a wreath crown adorning the head. In the mosaic of the Child Dionysus and Seasonal Plants from El Djem (Late Antonine ), a single spray actually represents the Season (fig. 35), while on another pavement in the Maison de Paon (El Djem) dated to the Severan period, a basket of roses (fig. 36) stands in lieu of Spring. Baskets of roses frequently accompany busts of Spring in the North African mosaics.

The unique La Chebba mosaic provides a landscape setting for this image. In the accompanying scene of seasonal activity a labourer fills a basket with rose blossoms. Another variant form of this motif appears two centuries later in the image of a labourer carrying a basket of roses to the mistress in the Spring scene of the Dominus Julius mosaic (fig. 31). In the Dominus Julius mosaic we see how the scene of seasonal activity introduced by the La Chebba mosaic has been expanded into a more complete narrative of seasonal labour. As in representations from other regions of the empire, roses may refer to the Rosalia.<sup>50</sup> Again, these plants may have special regional significance, since roses grow abundantly in North Africa,<sup>51</sup> and would therefore be an entirely appropriate local motif.

Also accompanying Spring in many North African mosaics, as in mosaics from other parts of the Roman world is a goat or kid. A goat appears beside the seated winged figure of Spring from Carthage (fig. 37a). Another example can be found on the mosaic of Months and Seasons (222-235 A.C.) from El Djem where a wreathed male figure representing spring carries a goat over his shoulders (fig. 32a). The goat and the wreath have Dionysiac connotations associated with Spring festivals as we have already seen.<sup>52</sup> Also connected with pastoral activities are a shepherd's crook and baskets of cheese that appear with Spring ( a winged figure ) in a late Severan mosaic from Zliten (fig. 27a). However, neither the shepherd's crook, nor the goat appear in our

mosaic from La Chebba, which is earlier than Zliten and Carthage. A more unusual attribute is the thyrsos linked with Spring in a mosaic (Severan) from Leptis Minor.<sup>53</sup>

Additional animal attributes of Spring in the North African repertoire include the peacock, the swallow, and the dog. Of these, only the dog features in our mosaic. Two peacocks accompany the Spring putto in the mosaic from Haidra (fig. 28). The peacock, which symbolises the beauty of spring, is also considered a bird of good fortune,<sup>54</sup> thus it is an appropriate motif for a seasonal mosaic. The swallow, which the tetrastich accompanying the month of March on the Calendar of 354 describes as spring's harbinger, accompanies Spring on a pavement from Carthage (fig. 37a).<sup>55</sup> It should be noted at this juncture, that the mosaics which feature the birds are later than the La Chebba mosaic. A dog accompanies Spring in the mosaic from La Chebba, and appears in the spring scene in the Dominus Julius mosaic from Carthage (figs. 1, 31). Precheur-Canonge sees in the dog's association with Spring its character as guardian of the flocks and its symbolic meaning as the April constellation.

<sup>56</sup>

### III. C. Summer

Summer appears nude in a few North African pavements (La Chebba, Haidra, figs. 1, 28), obviously in reaction to the weather. In some representations she retains some drapery, although most of her body is

exposed (fig. 42). Even the protome images of Summer sometimes expose their breast (fig. 33). Summer is sometimes elegantly dressed (fig. 38a), at other times is clad in similar fashion to her sister seasons.

The sickle, and shocks of wheat are the most usual of Summer's attributes. Again, these emblems bear a special significance in the North African context, they represent the region's role as a rich grain producer.<sup>57</sup> The sickle is held in one hand by the figures (figs. 1,28), or where the season is rendered in bust form the implement appears beside it (figs. 33,38a). Wheat is rendered in several variant forms: it may appear as separate stalks enclosing a figure (fig.1,28), a crown on a figure's head (illustrated by numerous depictions of Summer including the La Chebba mosaic, the mosaic of Aion and the Seasons from Haïdra, and the mosaic of Dionysus and the Seasons from Lambèse, figs. 1, 28, 33), a bundle of wheat carried by a figure (at La Chebba and Haïdra, figs. 1,28), in a basket or in drapery (the summer labourer on the La Chebba mosaic, Summer on the mosaic of the Months and Seasons from El Djem, figs. 1,32). It may also represent the season itself, as in the pavement from the Maison de Paon at El Djem (fig. 36).

The La Chebba mosaic evokes the summer harvest in the image of a labourer gathering a wheat crop into his basket. This scene emphasises the productivity of the summer season in North Africa. The motif of a figure actively engaged in reaping wheat is a long lived one throughout the Roman



and Early Christian world. It survives on the third century A.C. Dumbarton Oaks sarcophagus,<sup>58</sup> as winged putti harvesting the crop on the sarcophagus of Junius Bassus (Constantinian),<sup>59</sup> and in a Christian catacomb painting from San Ponziano.<sup>60</sup>

A tray laden with fruit representing produce of the season,<sup>61</sup> flowers and more rarely, gourds,<sup>62</sup> are additional attributes of Summer. A fragmentary figure in a mosaic from Lixus wears a hat,<sup>63</sup> which probably alludes to the heat of the summer sun. The fan is another attribute that refers to summer's heat. A woman fans herself in the mosaic of Dominus Julius. The fan appears with the bust of Summer in a pavement from Djebel Oust (fourth century A.C. fig. 39). Along with her fan, Summer's bust from Djebel Oust also carries a peacock feather, which Parrish believes was derived from a famous calendar such as that of 354 A.C., in which the August personification carried a peacock-feather fan.<sup>64</sup> Also possibly referring to the season's heat are amphorae (filled with water ?)<sup>65</sup> in a mosaic dated to the late fourth or early fifth century A.C. from Sbeitla (fig. 40).

As for seasonal animals, a prowling lion appears beside Summer in the La Chebba mosaic (fig. 1). This attribute probably refers to the constellation Leo (also a sign of the zodiac) manifest at the height of the summer. It should be noted here that although the lion appears on several non-seasonal mosaics in the province, only at La Chebba and El Djem is the animal associated with

summer. The same El Djem pavement (fig. 41) is the only other North African one that links the boar with Winter.<sup>66</sup> In this El Djem pavement, three of the same four animals representing the seasons at La Chebba survive: thus we have the boar of Winter, the lion of Summer, and the leopard of Autumn. Spring's animal, which is missing, may very probably have been a dog. If this was indeed the case, this would be the only other pavement apart from our La Chebba mosaic to employ the four animals together. It is also interesting to note that, like the mosaic of Dionysus and Seasons from the baths of Trajan at Acholla, this roughly contemporary El Djem mosaic combines a Dionysiac theme with seasonal and marine elements.

### III. D. Autumn

Autumn's appearance ranges from a mantle draped revealingly around her nude figure in the La Chebba mosaic, to her elegantly coiffed and richly attired<sup>67</sup> bust from Djebel Oust (fig. 39a). The putto of Autumn in the mosaic from Haidra (fig. 28) wears the leopard-skin cape in which the god Dionysus is often portrayed (fig. 35). The cape is also worn with a white garment by the female bust of Autumn in the mosaic of Dionysus and the Seasons at Lambèse (fig. 33).

As in the mosaic repertoire elsewhere in the Roman world, the vintage is a primary source of autumnal attributes in the North African pavements. The Calendar of the Months and Seasons from El Djem (222-235 A.C.) depicts two

men engaged in pressing grapes during the month of September. Connected with symbols of the vintage are motifs from the Dionysiac repertoire. Therefore we have grapes, grapevines, pruning knives, kantharoi, thyrsos, and panthers appearing as attributes of Autumn. The merging of Dionysiac elements with the agricultural symbols of this Season is so complete that in certain North African pavements the image of the god Dionysus actually replaces that of the Season.<sup>68</sup>

Three attributes from the Dionysiac repertoire appear in the La Chebba mosaic: the thyrsos held by Autumn, the kantharos spilling onto the ground and the snarling leopard beside her. The vine-leaf and grape wreath in her hair allude both to the god and to the vintage. These elements will be examined in our discussion of Dionysus and the Seasons later in this chapter (pp. 59-69). However we may note at this juncture that the various Dionysiac references in images of Autumn are probably a reflection of the influence of the Liber Pater cult in North Africa.<sup>69</sup> Liber Pater was a Roman divinity, a protector of the vineyard identified with Dionysus, and his cult was popular in North Africa.<sup>70</sup>

Grape bunches and vine leaves appear as framing devices for the figure of the season (figs. 1,28) and as wreaths crowning the head in several mosaics (figs. 1,33). Baskets full of grapes are a frequent attribute (fig. 1) as are single bunches of the fruit which may actually represent the Season (fig. 35).

In some mosaics, Autumn holds a bunch of grapes, while in others grapes appear beside the Season (figs. 28,30).

Once again in the La Chebba mosaic, seasonal vocabulary is developed in a new way. A labourer carries baskets filled with grapes in the autumnal scene thereby intensifying the nature of the seasonal activity. Vintaging motifs such as this one appear in later mosaics, sarcophagi and catacomb paintings.<sup>71</sup> In the North African mosaics, as we have already observed, the emphasis is on the Season as a productive entity. Further attributes derived from the vintage are the serpent held by Autumn in the mosaic from Sbeitla (fig. 40), and the hare, a scavenger of the vine, captured by a labourer carrying a basket of grapes in the Autumn scene of the Dominus Julius mosaic from Carthage (fig. 31).

### III. E. Concluding remarks

While North African mosaics share with other Roman pavements a rich iconographic vocabulary that enlivens seasonal representations, this assemblage contains certain unusual features. As we have seen, the La Chebba mosaic itself presents several innovative details including the multiplication of seasonal imagery on one pavement through the use of seasonal labourers derived from the labours of the months, and the introduction of seasonal animals. These supplementary seasonal images seem to have appeared first in the La Chebba mosaic, and although they do not seem to have caught on as a

new vogue in the representation of Seasons, they are important to the development of scenes of rural labours.

#### IV. Representations of the Seasons and Deities

A study of the iconography of the mosaic of Neptune and the Seasons from La Chebba cannot be complete without a discussion of the portrayal of Seasons in conjunction with various deities. In the North African pavements, several deities, including Dionysus, Annus-Aion, Tellus, Venus, and Neptune appear in the company of the Seasons. Of these deities, Annus-Aion and Dionysus appear most frequently, followed by Tellus, Venus, and Neptune. What is the nature of the relationship between these deities and the Seasons? We now turn to this question.

##### IV. A. The Seasons and Dionysus

The artistic evidence shows that the relationship between Dionysus and the Seasons is a far-reaching one. The earliest datable representation of the god in the company of the Seasons is the sixth century B.C. (ca. 570 B.C.) black figure Francois vase. It has already been suggested that the god also stood at the head of a procession of dancing Seasons in the Greek third century B.C. prototype of the neo-Attic reliefs that depict these personages, and we know that the Seasons appeared in the middle of a Dionysiac group in the grand pompa of Ptolemy Philadelphus.<sup>72</sup> Scholars are wary of reading religious significance into every representation of Dionysus and the Seasons,

since although they are linked, the Seasons do not seem to have played any great part in the cult of Dionysus.<sup>73</sup> However one might go so far as to suggest that Dionysus' role as a beneficent deity of wine, fruitfulness and vegetation makes him appropriate company for the Seasons who are also connected with growth, vegetation and prosperity.

The theme of Dionysus and the Seasons occurs on at least eight North African pavements dating from the mid- second century A.C. to the Severan period.<sup>74</sup> It must be pointed out at this juncture that Dionysus was a popular image in North African mosaics even when he was not in the company of Seasons.<sup>75</sup> We will now turn to the evidence.

The triumph of Dionysus with the Seasons and other motifs appears in a second century A.C. pavement in the frigidarium in the Baths of Trajan at Acholla (fig. 24a). In the centre of a rectangular composition the young god stands in a chariot pulled by two centaurs. He wears a long belted tunic and a billowing mantle. He holds a thyrsos in his proper left hand and a krater in the other. One centaur holds a torch and a thyrsos, the other carries a nebris. The group is shown in three-quarter view. This is the only North African representation depicting the god in this unusual centaur-drawn chariot. Dionysus is usually shown riding on a tiger or leopard, or driving a chariot pulled by the same animals.<sup>76</sup>

In the Acholla pavement the central motif of the triumph is flanked by the busts of Winter and Spring; Summer survives in a corresponding panel across the hall (fig. 24b). A marine thiasos decorates the area around the central composition with Dionysus. Outside the marine thiasos is a border of floral scrolls, fantastic semi-vegetal grotesques and floral candelabra. The combination of a divine triumph within a seasonal context recalls the theme of the La Chebba mosaic.

Busts of Seasons, as we have seen, seem to be the preferred type of seasonal image in the North African repertoire, and in this the Acholla busts are conventional. The marine thiasos is appropriate decoration for a bath building. The triumph of Dionysus, however, is not a common subject for the decoration of these buildings, although the motif itself is quite popular. The mosaicist employed conventional motifs, yet produced a work quite unique in its combination of elements.

The Seasons and Dionysus appear in three other pavements from El Djem, a town which has produced a large number of Dionysiac mosaics.<sup>77</sup> The first pavement is of late Antonine date; a mosaic of Dionysus and the Seasons form the stem of a "T" shaped composition within a "U" shaped surround of geometric motifs (fig. 25). Side panels of the "T" show a tiger attacking an onager, and two lions devouring a boar. A rectangular panel at the top of the "T" stem depicts a Dionysiac procession (fig. 25a). The god as a

child occupies the middle of the panel; he rides a lion moving to the viewer's left, toward an altar. Nude, Dionysus holds a krater in his proper left hand and the lion's reins in his right.

A semi-nude maenad wearing a grape wreath dances before him, beating a tympanon. Two male figures (satyrs ?) flank the child. Landscape elements, a ground line, a gnarled tree, a votive pillar and a little altar are introduced into the composition. A drunken Silenus riding a camel takes part in the procession. This motif is no doubt the African mosaicist's innovation, for the camel is not usually a member of the Dionysiac procession. Beside the camel, a maenad carrying a container on her head drives a leopardess before her with a thyrsos.

The stem of the "T" shaped composition is a panel with a mosaic of Seasons and xenia. The Seasons, rendered in bust form, are endowed with conventional attributes. Interlocking laurel garlands enclose wildlife, fish and fruit. The god's association with wine, the evocation of fruitful abundance through the portrayal of the Seasons, and the depiction of game, fruit and fish mark the appropriateness of the pavement for its location, the triclinium of the Maison de la procession Dionysiaque.<sup>78</sup>

From the same house comes a mosaic of Dionysus and Seasonal plants (fig. 35). In the central medallion of a square pavement the child Dionysus rides a tigress moving to the viewer's right. He is alone without any members



of his thiasos. Clad in a nebris he holds a thyrsos. The area surrounding the tondo is decorated with a lush arrangement of grapevines growing out of kraters. Acanthus scrolls fill four loaf-shaped compartments. The corner diagonals are taken up with seasonal plants: olives, roses, wheat, and grapes. Here, the use of seasonal plants by themselves represents the Seasons in a distinctive iconographic shorthand. The combination of motifs evokes abundance and prosperity.

Our third El Djem pavement is dated to the middle of the third century A.C. A bust of Dionysus appears within a square panel in the middle of a pavement containing fifteen other panels framed with a guilloche (fig. 43). Dionysus, no longer a child, wears a tunic, his hair bound by a fillet adorned with bunches of grapes, and there is a thyrsos beside him. He glances to the right. Above him busts of Winter and Autumn form an outward-turning pair. Summer and Spring appear below him looking inward. The rest of the pavement is taken up by three geometric panels, two other panels whose motifs are destroyed, one with a krater and four others with seasonal birds.

Dionysus appears in a seasonal context on yet another mosaic with maenads and Seasons, in the triclinium of the Maison de Dionysos et des Quatre Saisons at Volubilis (fig. 26). This mosaic is dated to 217-235 A.C. The season theme shows female busts with conventional attributes, and full figures of male seasons in guilloche medallions. Dionysus occurs here twice, once

seated in the topmost octagon of the pavement, and then standing in the third octagon.

A finely worked mosaic of the Severan period from Lambèse shows a bust of Dionysus with a nimbus around his head, framed by female busts of the four Seasons (fig. 33). This is ( as far as I can tell ) the first pavement on which Dionysus is shown with the nimbus. According to Parrish this attribute emphasises the god's role as cosmocrator and leader of the Seasons.<sup>79</sup> Spring, Winter and Summer are portrayed with conventional attributes. The image of Autumn however, almost merges with that of Dionysus in the same mosaic. She wears over a white garment, a nebris knotted over her right shoulder ( cf. Dionysus ) and her hair too is bound by a fillet of grapes and ivy leaves.

We may conclude from the foregoing evidence that:

- a. Dionysus was portrayed frequently in a seasonal context.
- b. The image of the god appears both in full-figure and in bust.
- c. He is shown both as a child and as an adult.
- d. The god appeared alone as the 'tiger-rider' or in the company of his entourage.
- e. Dionysus is portrayed in triumph even in a seasonal context.
- f. The theme of Dionysus and the Seasons enjoyed a long life, appearing from the Antonine to the late Severan period.

On the significance of the subject, we may agree with Dunbabin that -

" Rather, just as the Seasons in most of their appearances on mosaics seem principally to evoke a general, predominantly material, state of fertility and prosperity, so Dionysus when he accompanies them is thought of primarily, not as a god of the mysteries or of death, but as the god of wine and of fruitfulness and vegetation in general." <sup>80</sup>

#### IV. B. Annus-Aion and the Seasons

Another divine companion of the Seasons is Annus-Aion, <sup>81</sup> whose origins and iconography are complex. Aion, the Greek god of eternity, may be portrayed in both youthful and aged form, holding his primary attribute, the circle of the zodiac. <sup>82</sup> In the Greek world Aion first embodied an abstract notion of time which then, from the Hellenistic period to late antiquity, developed into a personification of eternal time. <sup>83</sup>

The earliest representations are of an old, draped Aion who appears on a fragment of a red-figure Apulian vase, and on a first century B.C. relief from Aphrodisias <sup>84</sup> (fig. 44). This divine personage in his later Roman manifestation was referred to by the names Saeculum, Aeternitas and Frugifer. <sup>85</sup> Roman Aion also appears as a youth holding up the circle of the zodiac in later representations. This latter type, sometimes surrounded by busts or full-figures of the Seasons, makes its appearance in the art of the second century A.C. Non-African examples include representations on coins of Hadrian and Commodus, <sup>86</sup> a patera from Parabiago, <sup>87</sup> a mosaic from Sentinum, <sup>88</sup> another from Ostia, and Philippopolis in Syria. <sup>89</sup>

The theme of the youthful god of the zodiac, allied with the Seasons, appears in several North African mosaics. In many of these mosaics Aion bears fruit attributes. These fruit attributes may be symbolic of the African cult of Aion as *Saeculum Frugiferum*,<sup>90</sup> for even on coins of the region<sup>91</sup> ears of corn accompany the image of Aion. In addition to fruits, another distinguishing feature of the North African mosaics is that Aion is given a centralised position among the Seasons, thus emphasising his role as a god of the year -- Annus -- who governs the Seasons. Annus was the Latin equivalent of Eniautos, the god of the year who led the Seasons in the great procession of Ptolemy Philadelphus. Thus, on account of his seasonal rapport, Aion's role is tied in with that of Annus.

For clarity I will discuss mosaics which show Aion with the circle of the zodiac and Seasons as works depicting Aion in his role as Annus, and mosaics employing a central male divinity without the band of the zodiac surrounded by the seasons, as works depicting Annus. The North African pavements depicting Aion in his role as Annus and those portraying Annus and the Seasons are dated from the late Antonine period to the first half of the fourth century A.C.

A mosaic of late Antonine date from a room in the *Maison de la procession Dionysiaque* at El Djem depicts the theme of Annus and the Seasons (fig. 45). In a central wreath decorated with fruit appears an

unbearded male bust crowned with seasonal fruit: grapes, wheat ears, olives, rosebuds, pomegranate, and pine cones. He wears a mantle over his left shoulder and turns slightly to his right; since there is no band of the zodiac present, I identify this figure as Annus.<sup>92</sup> Outside the central medallion there are four little nude figures with crowns, standing in rinceaux. Conventional female busts of the Seasons appear in the diagonals, placed above kanephoroi carrying seasonal attributes. Floral scrolls spring from bearded heads at the centre of each side. Annus' central position in the pavement reflects his role as guarantor of annual prosperity through the activities of the seasons.

A late third or early fourth century A.C. mosaic from Haïdra shows Aion in his role as Annus. The god, this time rendered as a full boyish figure, is nude. He stands in a band of the zodiac at the centre of a very decorative field (fig. 28). He looks up to his right, holding the zodiac in his upraised left hand and ears of wheat in his lowered right hand. He has short curly hair and wears a neck-piece (a wreath). Four male Seasons appear in the corner diagonals of the pavement. Three of them -- Spring, Summer and Autumn -- are winged putti, and the fourth, Winter, is a wingless child. Spring occupies the upper right corner. He holds a basket of roses and a single rose, and wears a necklace and bracelets. He stands within elaborate rose sprays which curl out forming rich rinceaux in which are perched two peacocks. Summer is in the lower right

diagonal. He holds a bundle of wheat and a sickle. Wheat stalks enclose him, and two pheasants in elaborate scrolls. The lower left corner is occupied by Autumn, who wears a little nebris,<sup>93</sup> a neckband and bracelets. Autumn is surrounded by grapevines which he grasps in a gesture echoing that of Aion at the centre of the pavement. His companions are two birds.<sup>94</sup> Winter is fully dressed in boots, a long tunic and a hooded cloak. He holds two ducks in one hand and a bidens over his shoulder. He is framed by olive branches and accompanied by two live ducks. The whole composition is lush and crowded.

Yet another appearance of Aion accompanied by Seasons(?) is a mosaic from Hippo Regius (first half of fourth century A.C. fig. 46). The half-draped god stands beside the circle of the zodiac which he supports with his right hand. In the left he holds a cornucopia overflowing with fruit.<sup>95</sup> Seasonal plants, flowers, olive branches, stalks of wheat and grapes, fill the area around him. Two masks and two female figures enclosed by laurel garlands make up part of the surrounding circular field. Damage to the pavement hinders a complete description, However the two are female: one playing a musical instrument, the other wrapping a strophium across her breasts. While Parrish describes them as entertainers connected with the theatre on account of the masks,<sup>96</sup> for Dunbabin "...though they follow an otherwise unexampled iconography, they presumably represent the Seasons." <sup>97</sup> The female figures, who would have been four in number, probably are meant to enhance the

seasonal theme introduced by the plants around Aion. The presence of seasonal plants and these figures, if indeed they are the Seasons, symbolise the hope of unending material abundance and prosperity.

Aion as Annus appears again in a mosaic dated to the first half of the fourth century A.C. from Carthage (fig. 38b). Here the god appears as a nude young man with a mantle draped over his shoulder. He holds a cornucopia in one hand and the circle of the zodiac with the other. He also wears a crown.<sup>98</sup>

He is surrounded by large female busts of the seasons, and seasonal plants fill the spaces around him.

A very interesting portrayal of Annus (fig. 47) occurs on a mosaic from Dougga (first half of fourth century A.C.). A nimbed, youthful male figure wearing a rich theatrical costume, boots and a mural crown, supports a cornucopia filled with fruit in his left arm and in his right hand holds a bunch of flowers and wheat stalks. Scrolls of hederae appear around his feet. This figure was surrounded by busts of the Seasons that are now lost.<sup>99</sup> Salomonson observes that this type of theatrical costume was worn by tragic actors in the fourth century, and connects this figure with the actor who impersonated Eniautos in the pompa of Ptolemy Philadelphus, since that actor also wore a tragic costume.<sup>100</sup> Parrish suggests a Dionysiac reading of such attributes as the nimbus, the costume and hederae.<sup>101</sup> The mural crown, the nimbus and the cornucopia link this figure to representations of Saeculum

Frugiferum in North Africa.<sup>102</sup> This figure may therefore be identified as Annus-Aion, governor of the Seasons who bring prosperity.

The popularity of the Seasons theme and the existence of an important local cult of Aion as Saeculum Frugiferum may have contributed to the appearance of the several mosaics depicting Annus-Aion in a seasonal context.<sup>103</sup> Aion's relationship with the Seasons has been well summed up by

Salomonson who writes "...il trouve son complément logique dans la représentation du temps 'empirique', qui se disloque en 'passé', 'présent', et 'avenir', et dont le caractère passager se manifeste le plus clairement dans la variation de quatre saisons. " <sup>104</sup> The popularity of the theme in mosaics,

especially in the first half of the fourth century A.C., need not be taken as manifestations of cult devotion by the patrons, yet we may agree with

Dunbabin that, " By representing on their floor the figure of the god of the Year, the owners believed that they were attracting some of the blessings which the divinities who ruled the year were capable of bestowing, and that the portrayal of the fruits of the earth in rich profusion would through a process of sympathetic magic cause profusion in their house." <sup>105</sup>

#### IV. C. Venus and the Seasons

Venus appears within a seasonal context only in two North African pavements, from El Djem (280-300 A.C.) and Carthage (first half of fourth century A.C.).

In the El Djem mosaic a square central panel shows a nude Venus Anadyomene, presumably just having emerged from the water, wringing out her hair while two attendant Erotes hand her her toilette articles (fig. 30).



Female busts of the Seasons occur at the corners of the rectangular composition. Moving clockwise, there is Spring in the lower left corner, Summer (partly damaged) above her, Autumn across from Summer, and Winter below Autumn. A basket of appropriate seasonal vegetation appears with each Season. They all turn toward the central image, giving it visual prominence.

The Carthage pavement (discussed *supra* p.69) that depicts Aion and the Seasons, also shows a nude Venus Anadyomene (fig. 38c). She has a nimbus around her head. She raises her hands towards her head, perhaps arranging her coiffure. She is attended by two figures, one of whom clearly carries some attribute. The inscriptions VERNACULUS and PRIMITIVA appear above the heads of the two attendants. The group is flanked by two birds. Despite differences of detail in the two works, similarities suggest that this type of Venus in conjunction with the Seasons was not altogether rare. Would it be an accident of archaeology then, that despite the large number of Season mosaics found in North Africa only two have been found that depict this theme? The dearth of evidence notwithstanding, we can suggest a reason for the combination of these images. As the goddess of fertility, and fortune, Venus finds a logical complement in the Seasons who were also symbols of fertility thought capable of bestowing good fortune upon their patrons.<sup>106</sup>

#### IV. D. Tellus and the Seasons

Although evidence from non-African art suggests that the image of Tellus, an Earth goddess, was frequently shown in a seasonal context, only one North African mosaic of the first half of the fourth century, from Carthage (fig. 48) depicts this theme. Non-African representations that show a reclining Tellus with four putti with seasonal attributes clustering about her include mosaics from Sentinum and Philippopolis, and the silver Patera from Parabiago.<sup>107</sup>

In the mosaic from Carthage the reclining goddess, generally identified as Tellus occupies the central medallion of a panel. The diagonals were filled with four male Seasons, of which only Winter survives (fig. 48a). Four 'Oceanus' heads with dolphins coming out of the beards appear in the corners of the central panel. Framed by a laurel wreath decorated with masks (only one survives), the goddess reclines in front of a stream. Flowers spring up around her. Her upper body is supported by her left arm which rests on a basket. Tellus is half-nude, her torso bare, her lower body draped. She holds up one end of her mantle which contains seasonal plants, including roses and wheat ears.<sup>108</sup> The garment is a bit damaged but it is reasonably certain that it contained other seasonal attributes. It is the combination of Seasons with roses and other harvest produce that has led to a plausible identification of this personage as Tellus.<sup>109</sup> A seated female figure in a drawing of a late fourth or early fifth century mosaic from Carthage, now lost, has been

variously identified as Tellus, Abundantia or even Annus.<sup>110</sup> The combination of an earth goddess and the Seasons, through their traditional relationship, provides a strong evocation of earthly happiness and abundance.

#### IV. E. The Mask of Ocean and the Seasons

The head or mask of Ocean, a popular motif on non-seasonal,<sup>111</sup> North African mosaics, also appears as a corner motif in the mosaic of Tellus and the Seasons from Carthage discussed above (fig. 48). The heads, with their dishevelled hair, are crowned with lobster claws. Dolphins leap out of the shaggy beards. The plurality of Oceanus head motifs around the figure of Tellus on this mosaic has led Voûte to suggest that they referred to the waters of Ocean flowing around the earth.<sup>112</sup>

The mask of Ocean also appeared as the central motif in a mosaic of the same period (first half of fourth century A.C.), at El Haouria (fig. 49a). The mosaic decorated a private bath in the Maison des Molphonii. Along each side, around the central mask of Ocean, was a putto holding out to an approaching hippocamp a wreath of seasonal plants (fig. 49b). Dunbabin suggests a prophylactic significance for the mask on account of its staring eyes and the inscription warding off evil that appears on the threshold leading to the mosaic.<sup>113</sup> According to Parrish, the wreath-bearing putti and the hippocamps suggest a marine "triumph" or a marine procession in honor of Oceanus.<sup>114</sup> While the allusion to a marine procession is plausible, the

allusion to a "triumph" is problematic. The depiction of the "triumph" usually includes a standing figure in a chariot drawn by appropriate animals, while in this mosaic only the mask of Ocean appears. The relationship between Ocean and the seasons is manifest in the god's rule over fresh water, vital to the growth of crops in North Africa, and the seasons' agricultural importance. Also very important is the god's domain, the ocean, the medium by which agricultural produce made its way to foreign markets.

The theme of Seasons and marine subjects, thiasos or Sea-deity, had already appeared in the mosaic in the frigidarium of the baths of Trajan at Acholla, and in the mid-second century mosaic of Neptune and the Seasons from La Chebba. Since the mosaic from La Chebba is the main subject of this thesis, it will not be discussed in this chapter dealing with the comparative material, but rather in the following chapter, where some conclusions may be drawn for it.

#### V. The Seasons and other subjects

We have been concerned mainly with representations of the Seasons and deities. The Seasons, however, were not confined to appearances with deities. As the evidence from North African mosaics shows, they are combined with various subjects including the Muses, the months, the circus, mythological subjects and individual portraits.<sup>115</sup> Themes from the hunt, estate management, wildlife and xenia were also employed.<sup>116</sup>

## VI. Conclusions

In the foregoing discussion we have traced the development of Seasonal imagery in Greek and Roman artistic contexts from the sixth century B.C. to the late fourth century A.C. We have also seen the different forms in which the Seasons were portrayed and their conjunction with various subjects. Special emphasis has been placed on the theme of deities occurring in a seasonal context, and much attention has been given to evidence in North African mosaics. This approach provides a background for an analysis of the Neptune and the Seasons mosaic from La Chebba.

### Notes

1. Hanfmann, SSDO I 78.
2. Iliad, v.749ff.
3. Hanfmann, SSDO I 85ff.n.60, citing Hesiod, Theogony= Deorum Generatio, 900ff.
4. LIMC V, 508, no. 45.
5. LIMC, V: 505, no.19
6. Aesch. Prom. 456 ff.; Aristoph. Av. 708ff.
7. LIMC, V: 505, nos. 22a, 23: 511 A1.
8. Athenaeus, Deipnosophistae v 198 A., E.E. Rice, The Grand Procession of Ptolemy Philadelphus (Oxford 1983) 11.
9. Hanfmann, SSDO I 112-113. Hanfmann suggests that this type of procession, by virtue of its prestigious conception would provide a stimulus in defining the iconography of various personifications including the seasons. He also compares the pompa of Ptolemy Philadelphus to the pageant of Antiochus Epiphanes at Daphne which had personifications including Day, Night, Earth, Heaven, Dawn, and Noon:- Polybius XXXI,3, SSDO II 60 n.57.
10. Bion, VI
11. Meleager of Gadara in Anthologia Palatina IX 363.
12. C.R. Long, The Twelve Gods of Greece and Rome (Leiden 1987) 37-38, figs. 96-98.
13. Livy, XXII 10.
14. Hanfmann, SSDO I 119.
15. Cic.Inv.I,34; Virgil, Georgics I,257-339; Ovid, Remedia Amoris,169ff.
16. See Hanfmann, SSDO I 121-123 for a summary of the various theories.
17. Hanfmann, SSDO I 124. The only certain representation of this type is a set of painted Season busts in the company of planetary gods of the week from Pompeii.

18. Hanfmann, SSDO II Catalogue 134-192.
19. See Hanfmann, SSDO I 3-72 for a discussion on Roman season sarcophagi; on African sarcophagi, H. Fournet-Pilipenko, "Sarcophages Romains de Tunisie," Karthago 11 (1961-1962) 77-163
20. Hanfmann, SSDO I 135, figs.96, 97, 98.
21. This festival was celebrated throughout the Roman empire in May. H. Stern Le Calendrier de 354 (Paris 1935) 108 n.5; Parrish SMRNA 34.
22. H. W. Parke, Festivals of the Athenians ( New York 1977) 101; Parrish SMRNA 35.
23. Stern, Calendrier 354 table opposite p.116; Parrish, SMRNA 35.
24. Stern, Calendrier 354 239; Levi, Allegories 257
25. Reinach, RPGR 137 no.9, 138 no.5; Hanfmann, SSDO II figs.90-92
26. Parrish SMRNA 31 and ref. Hanfmann, SSDO II fig.147.
27. Parrish suggests that the wreath may refer to a harvest festival. See Parrish, SMRNA 31 n.90.
28. Parrish, SMRNA 39 n.139
29. Reinach, RPGR 137 no.4,6,7, 138 no.5.
30. For the importance of the olive in in the economy of North Africa, see T. Précheur-Canonge, La vie rurale 48-53; H. Camps-Fabrer, L'Olivier et l'huile dans l'Afrique romaine, (Algiers 1953) 37-38. On the olive harvest in winter, see among the ancient sources , Columella De re rustica XII 52.1; Virgil Georgics I 307.
31. On description and use of this implement see, K. White, Agricultural Implements of the Roman world (Cambridge 1967) 43-47 no. 3, figs. 22-23; 47-52 no.4, figs. 27, 29.
32. North Africa as a rich grain-exporter; Parrish, SMRNA 37 n.127; I. M. Barton, Africa in the Roman Empire ( Accra 1972) 29-34
33. See Parrish, SMRNA cat.2.
34. Parrish, SMRNA cat.7, 9, 12, 13.

35. Parrish, SMRNA cat. 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, 36, 38, 39, 41.
36. Parrish, SMRNA cat. 49.
37. Parrish, SMRNA cat. 44.
38. Parrish, SMRNA, cat.66.
39. Parrish, SMRNA, cat. 68. The dating of the Zliten mosaics is controversial, for a summary of the various arguments see Dunbabin, MRNA 235-237; J. P. Darmon, "Les Mosaïques en Occident" ANRW II,12.2 (1981) 279 n.52.
40. References for the controversial date of the mosaic see Dunbabin and Darmon *supra* n.39.
41. Parrish, SMRNA 32-33, n.99,100.
42. This type appears also in a mosaic of Dionysus and the Seasons from Trier, Reinach RPGR 110 fig. 1. Levi in Allegories 257 describes the figure as male but surely it is female.
43. Levi, Allegories 255-257. Also, Stern, Calendrier 354 234-236 pl.VIII,1.
44. On the boar and the hare as objects of the hunt see, Dunbabin, MRNA 49-64; Précheur-Canonge, La vie rurale 80-84; Ancient sources, Xenophon Cyn. VI 13, VIII 1; Horace Epodes ii 29ff.
45. *Supra* n. 44.
46. Second mosaic portraying the boar as an emblem of winter, Parrish SMRNA 182-183, cat. no. 39.from El Djem.
47. The hare is also connected with Autumn in North African mosaics. Cf. mosaic of Dominus Julius where it appears in the Autumn vintage scene. In other parts of the empire where it is an attribute of Winter, A. Rainey: Mosaics in Great Britain; a Gazetteer ( Bath 1973 ) 40; J. Toynbee, Art in Roman Britain (London 1962) 199 no. 187, pl.216; on a bronze relief from Fenek, Hanfmann SSDO II fig. 145.
48. Parrish, SMRNA 33.
49. Bibliography *supra* n. 31. For a discussion on vintaging see Précheur-Canonge, La Vie Rurale 57-59.
50. *Supra* n.21.



51. Parrish, SMRNA 34.
52. Supra n. 22.
53. Parrish, SMRNA cat. no. 52 pl.71.
54. On the iconography of the peacock, see Dunbabin, MRNA 166-169.
55. Swallows also appear on non-African pavements, see Parrish, SMRNA 36 n. 125.
56. Précheur-Canonge, La Vie Rurale 72.
57. Supra n. 32.
58. Hanfmann, SSDO, I 3 pl.1.
59. Hanfmann, SSDO, I 223, 244.
60. Hanfmann, SSDO, I 222-223.
61. Parrish, SMRNA, 37.
62. Parrish describes the slender, curved objects beside Summer in a mosaic from Carthage as gourds, see Parrish, SMRNA cat. no. 11, 37 n. 130. Refs. on fruit as seasonal attribute, 37 n.129.
63. See Parrish, SMRNA, cat. 53. The figure of Summer in a hat has already been observed in Pompeian frescoes, see supra p. 46.
64. Parrish, SMRNA 38.
65. The Laus omnium mensium enumerating elements that provide relief from the summer's ardour include "a jar of wine, the fan and the melon", Levi, Allegories 266. Could the 'water vases' in the Sbeitla mosaic be amphorae of wine instead ?
66. See supra n.46.
67. Festive attire may refer to celebrations of the grape harvest, Parrish, SMRNA 40.
68. See Parrish, SMRNA cat. nos. 35, 47.
69. Parrish, SMRNA 40 n. 144 and refs.

70. Parrish, SMRNA, 40 n.144.
71. See Hanfmann, SSDO I, 64, 244ff., 277 for catacomb painting , for sarcophagus, 223, 244. On mosaics, Pr  cheur-Canonge, La Vie Rurale, 54-60.
72. See supra p. 42 ,and n.8
73. Dunbabin, MRNA 186.
74. See Parrish SMRNA, cat. nos. 2, 26, 28, 31, 35, 38, 50, 66.
75. See Dunbabin, MRNA 173-187 for a discussion of the god's image in the North African mosaics.
76. See K. M. D. Dunbabin, "The triumph of Dionysus on Mosaics in North Africa," PBSR 39 (1971) 52-65.
77. Dunbabin has noted that the image of Dionysus appears on at least fourteen other pavements from El Djem alone. See Dunbabin, MRNA 173 n.1
78. The panel is an illustration of Dionysiac ritual. See Dunbabin, MRNA 175-176 and notes.
79. Parrish, SMRNA 206
80. Dunbabin, MRNA 186.
81. Differences of opinion exist regarding the relationship between Annus and Aion. L. Foucher believes that the terms Annus and Aion refer to different individuals, in "La repr  sentation du g  nie de l'ann  e sur les mosa  ques", 3-10, Mos. Rom. Tardive. Other scholars including Parrish, SMRNA 46, however, believe that both names can be applied to the same god, and that the use of the term Annus depends upon Aion's rapport with the four seasons. I find the latter opinion convincing.
82. This attribute, and a similar one that appears in ancient Vedic texts may have been derived from a common ancient source, see Le Glay, s.v. Aion LIMC I
83. Le Glay, s.v. Aion, LIMC I 410 for development.
84. Le Glay, s.v. Aion, LIMC I 409
85. J. Salomonson, La mosa  que aux chevaux de l'antiquarium de Carthage, (Le Haye 1965) 62-65; Hanfmann, SSDO I, 227, 251-252; M. -H. Quet, La mosa  que

cosmologique de Merida (Paris 1981) 153-181; Dunbabin, MRNA 159; G. Becatti, s.v. Saeculum, EAA Suppl. (1970) 679-681; Le Glay, (supra n. 82) 399-411.

86. Le Glay, (supra n. 82) 404, figs.23, 24 and refs.

87. Parrish, SMRNA 46 n. 168.

88. H. Lavagne, " Remarques sur l'Aion de la mosaïque de Sentinum," Mos. Rom. Tardive, 27-40

89. Parrish, SMRNA 46 n.171, 172.

90. Parrish, SMRNA, 47; A. Alföldi, " From the Aion Plutonium of the Ptolemies to the Saeculum Frugiferum of the Roman Emperors," in Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean in Ancient History and Prehistory; Studies presented to Fritz Schachermeyr on the occasion of his eightieth birthday (Berlin 1977) 13-19.

91. Alföldi, (supra n. 90) 19, pl.G, 8.

92. A centrally placed bust (damaged) surrounded by busts of the Seasons with conventional attributes appears on a mosaic from El Djem (Severan), and has been identified as Annus-Aion, see Parrish SMRNA cat. no. 37.

93. This recalls the nebris-clothed child Dionysus on the late Antonine mosaic from El Djem (Maison de la procession Dionysiaque) fig. 35, Parrish, cat.26.

94. Parrish, SMRNA 191 describes the birds as Purple Gallinules.

95. The half-draped figure holding attributes including the cornucopia is paralleled in representations of Saeculum Frugiferum and Saeculum Aureum on coins from Hadrumentum, see A. Alföldi (supra n.90) 280-281.

96. Parrish, SMRNA 194-196. Parrish also compares them to the 'Bikini Girls' at Piazza Armerina, 195.

97. Dunbabin, MRNA 159.

98. In African coinage Saeculum Frugiferum is crowned, See Alföldi (supra n. 90) pl.D.

99. Upon discovery the pavement had busts of Seasons around the centrally placed figure of Annus. The part of the pavement with Annus was lifted, the surround left in situ and now lost, see Parrish, SMRNA 134. For a discussion of the figure, see

Salomonson, (supra n. 85) 62-65; Parrish, in Mos. Rom. Tardive 15-16, pl.VI fig. 1; Hanfmann, SSDO II 227, 251.

100. Salomonson, (supra n. 85) 63 n.6; on the figure of Eniautos, see Athenaeus, Deipnosophistae v, 198 a-c.

101. Parrish, SMRNA 136.

102. Alföldi, (supra n.90) 1-30.

103. Parrish, "Annus-Aion in Roman mosaics", Mos. Rom. Tardive 11

104. Salomonson, (supra n. 85) 62.

105. Dunbabin, MRNA, 160.

106. According to Parrish Venus has no direct seasonal rapport, Parrish, SMRNA 51.

107. See supra nn. 87, 88, 89 for refs. In these examples Tellus and the Season putti appear in the company of Aion.

108. P. Voûte, "Notes sur l'iconographie d'Océan à propos d'une fontaine a mosaïques découverte a Nole (Campanie)," MEFRA 84 (1972) 665 , claims that Tellus holds a Lobster.

109. The figure in the south-east corner of the Ara Pacis has been identified by some as Tellus, see now N. de Grummond, "Pax Augusta and the Horae on the Ara Pacis Augustae," AJA 94 (1990) 669-672.

110. The mosaic has long since disappeared, see Parrish, SMRNA 116 no. 11.

111. See Dunbabin, MRNA 149-154; Voûte, supra n. 108; L.Foucher, Maison de la procession Dionysiaque (Paris 1963) 139-142, tables I and III.

112. Voûte, (supra n. 108) 667.

113. Dunbabin, MRNA 152. Dunbabin disagrees with Poinssot's interpretation linking the motifs to circus factions, 107.

114. Parrish, SMRNA 53-54. Parrish also compares the mosaic to others depicting marine triumphs and processions, cat. nos. 2, 39, 49 in Parrish, SMRNA.

115. For the months see Parrish, SMRNA 54; Levi, Allegories 251-291; the circus see Dunbabin, MRNA 88-107; Parrish, SMRNA 52-54; on Muses and mythological subjects, Parrish SMRNA 51, 57; on individual portraits, Parrish, SMRNA 54-55, 57.

116. For the hunt see I. Lavin, "The hunting mosaics of Antioch and their sources " DOP 17 (1963), 204-244; Dunbabin, MRNA 46-64; Parrish, SMRNA 56; country estates, Dunbabin, MRNA 119-123; Précheur-Canonge, La vie rurale 77-90; - wildlife and xenia, Parrish, SMRNA 56-57; S. Gozlan, "A propos de quelques pavements africains; les xenia et l'iconographie Dionysiaque," Mos. Rom. Tardive 73-87.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS OF THE NEPTUNE AND THE SEASONS MOSAIC

In this chapter I will consider the portrayal of Neptune in the company of the Seasons in the La Chebba mosaic, including the relationship between the two subjects, the meaning and function of the pavement in its archaeological context, and finally, chronology.

#### I. The Composition: Meaning and Function

We have observed in the previous chapter that the representation of seasonal imagery on North African mosaic pavements during the second to the fourth century A.C. was a popular trend. It has also been observed that it was quite usual to portray the Seasons in combination with other themes including the images of deities. Images of the gods Dionysus, Annus-Aion, Tellus and Venus -- who had a traditional relationship with the Seasons -- appeared in these North African pavements. It should be noted at this point that out of the several mosaics combining Seasons and deities, only one, the La Chebba mosaic, portrays Neptune with the Seasons. This state of affairs is made more significant by the fact that Neptune appears in at least eleven <sup>1</sup> other mosaics in the region. The uniqueness of the La Chebba mosaic lies in the seasonal

context that sets the La Chebba Neptune apart from all other known representations of the Seasonal theme or divine imagery.

As the god of the sea, Neptune was an ideal subject for the decoration of mosaics in the coastal towns of North Africa. At La Chebba, however, it does not seem to have been his primary role as a sea deity that was being exploited, but rather, his role as a god of fresh waters and his resultant link with vegetation and growth. This connection provides the key to a better understanding of a combination of themes that might appear unconnected at first glance, and a deciphering of the meaning the images would have had for the ancient viewer.

The importance of agriculture for North Africa is enhanced through the iconography of the Seasons. We have seen how the non-agricultural reed of Winter in Roman imagery is replaced in North Africa by olive branches, and that the introduction of the hoe is a manifestation of how the African artists adapted images to suit their regional context, as well as to provide an emphasis on the productive nature of the season. For the first time, apparently, figures engaged in seasonal activity are portrayed in the La Chebba mosaic. This is an innovative element that stresses the agricultural importance of the seasons and also marks a revolutionary departure from earlier traditions that had conveyed the concept of the seasons by the use of individual figures. Presiding over the seasons and seasonal activity is Neptune, the god of fresh waters without whose good influences, water, a vital element

in the cultivation of crops and the beauty of nature, would be unavailable. We cannot disregard the extreme importance of fresh water in the dry heat of the North African province, but since the villa in which the mosaic is found lies so near the sea, we must also remember Neptune's role as the controller of the salt seas, for his beneficence in this domain enabled the export of the region's agricultural produce to foreign markets. The cumulative symbolism of the mosaic; the Seasons as symbols of happiness and material abundance, the representation of the fruits of the earth, and the triumphant god, suggests an evocation of growth, profusion and material prosperity.

I have interpreted the image of the triumphant Neptune as a symbol of the god's absolute power over the waters, and his concomitant link with vegetation, a symbol appropriately connected with the seasons' abundance and resultant material prosperity. Others choose to read a more cosmic and complex meaning in the composition. G.-Ch. Picard sees the La Chebba Neptune as a representation of eternity and also casts him in the role of cosmocrator.<sup>2</sup> According to Picard "Le dieu des mers est figuré en effet en cosmocrator non seulement par le nimbe qui entoure sa tête, mais par la présence de Saisons qui entourent le médaillon sertissant l'image du dieu triomphant."<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately Picard does not elaborate on this claim.

The claim is unconvincing in the first place because the nimbus was a symbol of divinity that adorns the heads of other deities. It appears for example around the head of Marine Venus (third century A.C.) from Timgad,<sup>4</sup> also on a mid-third century Venus from Bulla Regia,<sup>5</sup> on late fourth or beginning of fifth century A.C. Diana from Timgad,<sup>6</sup> and on other



representations of Neptune. These images include the "triumph" of Neptune and Amphitrite from Utica (end of the second century A.C.) (fig. 13),<sup>7</sup> and the "triumph" of Neptune and Amphitrite from Constantine (fourth century A.C. fig. 14).<sup>8</sup> None of the aforementioned deities can be referred to as a cosmocrator since they lack those additional iconographic attributes which distinguish the cosmocrator, as we shall see presently.

The cosmocrator was a ruler of the universe or cosmos. To evoke a sense of universal power, certain symbols of the cosmos customarily accompany the representation of the god. These symbols include a circle of the zodiac like the one encircling the chariot of the radiant sun-god on a second century A.C. mosaic in Münster (fig. 50),<sup>9</sup> or other astrological elements such as the sun and the moon. The Seasons are manifestations of time, which is a concept of cosmic theory<sup>10</sup>; however the already commonplace vogue of seasonal representation should discourage a search for deeply philosophical interpretations in our mosaic.

Intellectual theories concerned with the four Seasons in their beneficial role in the service of a major god, as well as their chronological character in the solar universe, gave rise to their portrayal in these roles in the art of the Hellenistic period.<sup>11</sup> According to Hanfmann, during this period, the Seasons occurred chiefly as symbols of an orderly universe.<sup>12</sup> By the early Imperial period the development of the Seasons had been influenced by agricultural phenomena in Roman literature.<sup>13</sup> If this development is taken into account,

the Seasons in the La Chebba mosaic should be considered primarily as symbols of the material abundance gained from agriculture when the Seasons are in harmony. In order for there to be a cosmocrator there must be a cosmos to be ruled over. In the La Chebba mosaic the cosmos is not sufficiently represented, for while the seasons were a part of the cosmological repertoire they could not by themselves be representative of all the elements of the cosmos. Consequently, the god depicted in their company need not be identified as a cosmocrator.

The very impressive treatment of Neptune "in triumph" elevates our mosaic to a position above the rank and file of other works depicting the god or the Seasons. In spite of this, I suggest that we maintain a practical interpretation of the themes. The owner of this pavement must have been an individual of some taste and means, as suggested by the quality of the work, perhaps an estate owner or a merchant with a seaside pied-à-terre in the small town of La Chebba, close enough to major centres like El Djem, yet far away from the hustle and bustle of city life. This individual would probably have appreciated the material symbolism of his pavement in a superstitious way, though not necessarily as a fervent religious devotee.

## II. The Architectural Context

The mosaic of Neptune and the Seasons adorned the "atrium" of a seaside villa.<sup>14</sup> Season mosaics were generally preferred for the adornment of private rather than of public buildings.<sup>15</sup> Social rooms in private houses,

especially oeci and triclinia, exhibited these mosaics. Very popular in triclinia were mosaics depicting Dionysiac themes within a seasonal context. The Dionysiac theme in mosaics had enjoyed a long tradition harking back to the late Classical Greek period.<sup>16</sup> The connotations of wine and happiness in Dionysiac imagery constituted an appropriate ambience for these dining areas. North African examples of the theme include the Season pavement with a Dionysiac procession adorning the triclinium of the Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque at El Djem (fig. 25a).<sup>17</sup>

It may be presumed that the beauty of the Neptune and the Seasons mosaic, and the high quality of its execution would have ensured its exhibition in a social area of the house where it could be admired by all. In fact, this pavement was the only figural mosaic in the villa -- the others were all geometric 'carpets'; -- the more reason why it would be shown off in a social room. However since North African villas did not have atria the location of the mosaic remains problematic.<sup>18</sup> It does not seem plausible however, that a work of such high quality would be left to the mercy of the elements in an unroofed area. Furthermore, the survival of this mosaic in almost its entirety suggests its location in a roofed area. The design of the pavement corresponds neither to the layout of a triclinium which would usually require a "T" within a "U" shaped composition,<sup>19</sup> nor to that of a cubiculum that would have necessitated the concealment of a portion of our mosaic. On the basis of the mosaic's composition and layout we can conclude that the pavement adorned

a vestibule or other reception area where it could be appreciated to the fullest by all.

### III. Date: The Figural Scene

I will now turn to the troublesome topic of chronology. A review of the literature reveals the highly problematic nature of the chronology of North African mosaics. Scholars have not been able to reach a consensus on this subject, vital to the study of North African mosaics. In this section I will present the various dates to which the La Chebba mosaic has been assigned by scholars. The limitations of my knowledge in this area prevent me from doing more than agreeing with a date that seems most persuasive in the light of the evidence used to support it.

The proposed dates for the La Chebba mosaic are c. 130-150 A.C.,<sup>20</sup> mid-second century,<sup>21</sup> 150-160 A.C.,<sup>22</sup> and last third of the second century A.C.<sup>23</sup> All told, the dates span a seventy year period in the second century A.C.

The chronology of mosaics is determined by several criteria, some of which are more reliable than others. External criteria such as brickstamps are one means by which a terminus a quo for the laying of pavements may be given, however these are rare<sup>24</sup> and even when they have been found, the terminus has sometimes been disputed.<sup>25</sup> Inscriptions are another criterion by which termini may be determined, but with these too, problems exist; for even when they provide the date of a building, one cannot assume contemporaneity with

the mosaics.<sup>26</sup> Coins, lamps and pottery finds may also provide termini post and ante quem.<sup>27</sup> Historical events such as the destruction of El Djem by Capellianus in 238 A.C. give us more general termini.

Internal criteria including treatment of space, composition, figure-style and ornament are not unproblematic, but do aid in determining the chronology of the mosaics.<sup>28</sup> Treatment of pictorial space had required figures (when they were not isolated motifs against a neutral background) to be set in a landscape where the white background of the pavement served as sky. In the second century A.C. figures are shown standing upon ground-lines and casting shadows. Naturalistic effects of spatial recession also appear. In the late second and third centuries A.C. certain ambiguities appear in the treatment of pictorial space. Figures move on strips of ground which may unite them with other figures in a single scene, landscape is suggested by plants growing out of the background and white areas of pavement are largely evident.<sup>29</sup> We also find that within a single scene changes of scale occur. In the late fourth and early fifth centuries the ground becomes a wavy line, with figures placed arbitrarily above it or just touching it.<sup>30</sup>

How is space treated in the La Chebba mosaic, and can the answer be used to place the pavement within a convincing chronological framework? One of the most striking features of our mosaic is the obvious white background, which by its very presence emphasises the figural composition and enhances the simplicity of design. It is this striking expanse of white background that

reveals the anomaly of spatial treatment in our mosaic. Where the four female Seasons occur, the white background is a neutral space for the season motifs. So we see that the four Seasons are isolated motifs against a neutral background. However, the treatment of pictorial space changes in the scenes of seasonal activity with the appearance of groundlines, cast shadows and landscape elements. This attention to the creation of spatial depth and recession is continued in the central medallion with Neptune's group. The white background appears as sky, and meets with the sea at a horizon line. In this naturalistic setting the god and his companions appear. It can therefore be argued that there is a co-existence of two different schemes and traditions of rendering space in the La Chebba mosaic. The design seems to incorporate older traditions and foreshadow later methods of treating pictorial space.

The full length figures of the Seasons enclosed within fine stalks of appropriate seasonal plants are separated yet linked with the rest of the composition by tendrils that cross over their heads and interlace with each other. An indication of spatial recession is provided by some use of ground-line underneath the feet of Spring and Autumn. This feature is absent from Summer and Winter. A flat band constitutes the ground-line for the labourer engaged in winter activity -- picking up olives. While his feet are planted firmly in the ground-line the olives appear above it, against the white background of the pavement. In the summer harvest scene, the worker and his basket are placed in a long thick band which constitutes the groundline.

Plants grow out of narrow strips of ground, and the presence of ground under the other figures is suggested by the shadows they cast. Winter's boar casts looped shadows upon the white background, as does Autumn's labourer. Parrish identifies this feature in other pavements as a third century A.C. style.<sup>31</sup>

The absence of shadows is also identified as a feature of the same period.<sup>32</sup> Is one therefore to suggest that the absence of shadows or ground-line under Winter and Summer, the looped shadows cast by the boar and the Autumn labourer, as well as the olives hanging above the ground-line are evidence of a third century A.C. date for the mosaic ? Or are these elements a foreshadowing of later style ? Other stylistic features, as we will see, seem to rule out a third century A.C. dating for our mosaic.

According to Parrish, the mosaic from Acholla depicting the triumph of Dionysus with the Seasons and a marine thiasos (fig. 24a), and the La Chebba mosaic exhibit stylistic features characteristic of the Late Hadrianic and Antonine periods -- "airy, restrained designs and elegant classicizing figures".<sup>33</sup>

Parrish and others connect the floral candelabra and grotesques of the Acholla pavement to the vault decorations in Hadrian's Villa and the Domus Aurea.<sup>34</sup> The overall design of the La Chebba mosaic, diagonal corner elements of triadic composition supporting a central medallion with a triumphant deity, has been seen as being similar to the design of a stuccoed ceiling in Hadrian's Villa (A.C. 118-135).<sup>35</sup> While this ceiling does present

a similar overall design, I do not see its "airy, restrained features". In fact the composition seems to be crowded with detail, as does the Acholla pavement.

A caveat must be presented with any discussion of figural style as a means of securing the dating of a work: the frequent evidence for the influence of older models upon later works.<sup>36</sup> However, the finely executed figures of Neptune and the Seasons in the La Chebba mosaic reveal a real attempt at plasticity through the tesserae which are arranged in fine gradations of colour to model limbs, folds of drapery and other details. This type of shading was proper to the second century A.C. and remained in use generally until the late third century A.C., after which a new method of modelling appeared.<sup>37</sup>

The Seasons and Neptune, who are presented in various stages of semi-nudity and nudity, stand in contrapposto poses reminiscent of the Classicizing Antonine vogue.<sup>38</sup> The Seasons exhibit the elongated figures of Antonine art, and the mosaicist portrays the supple firmness of these female forms (except Winter's) by careful arrangement of tesserae in fine gradations of flesh tones.<sup>39</sup> Parrish<sup>40</sup> and Hanfmann<sup>41</sup> believe that Winter's portrayal is not derived from Classical models as were the others, for her proportions are more ample. I, however, think that the abundance of drapery worn by Winter conceals the elongated proportions, and there is no real reason to doubt her origins as being the same as the others'. An examination of the folds of her drapery, which are rendered in fine gradations of colour, and modelled to convey heaviness and volume, reveals a Classicizing style.



The use of colour-graded tesserae to model body contours appears in Neptune's pronounced musculature. The highest muscle contours are picked out in white tesserae, while ridges and shadowed areas are rendered in darker tesserae. Neptune's weather-beaten, deeply bronzed skin is rendered in darker richer tesserae, which shows him clearly as the dominant figure in the central group, in contrast to the paler, younger-looking Nereid and Ichthyocentaur flanking him. This attention to detail in colour is also evident in the portrayal of the Seasons, where Winter has very pale flesh tones, Spring, slightly ruddier, Summer very golden and Autumn a mellow tan. This attention to body surface in respect to colour and modelling changes in the third century A.C., when musculature is outlined in harsher lines, and in the fourth and fifth centuries A.C., when a strongly linear manner of representing surface detail and modelling becomes apparent.<sup>42</sup>

The Neptune group is placed against a white background that presumably represents sky in the medallion. The horizon line is very low, and spatial depth and location are rendered by the smaller size (in relation to Neptune) of the Nereid and the Ichthyocentaur, by the overlapping of forms and by the naturalistic-looking sea. The areas of water right in front of the Ichthyocentaur and the Nereid are represented by closely set short parallel bands of brown and blue/grey tesserae against a white surface. This results in a tranquil area where a suggestion of shadow (or of the submerged part of the figures) is provided by darker tesserae. The expanse of sea in front of Neptune and the

hippocamps is slightly more turbulent -- rendered by zigzags of white, black and blue tesserae, contrasting parallel straight lines and wavy bands. A preponderance of dark tesserae over white conveys the suggestion of reflection or the illusion of a submerged mass.

A definite attempt to show submerged detail is evident in the portrayal of the Hippocamp's tail immediately before the Nereid. The tail is clearly visible but bands of tesserae run right across the shape except for two fins of the tail which are above the water; here the sea is rendered by a band which breaks off where a fin begins and picks up where it ends. I have found no parallels for this complicated and highly successful treatment of water in any other North African mosaics.<sup>43</sup> The mosaic of Dionysus and the Seasons from the Baths of Trajan at Acholla, usually dated slightly earlier than the La Chebba mosaic, shows a simple rendering of the sea through the use of long zigzags. Outside the province, in second century A.C. mosaics from Ostia, of which the Neptune mosaic (fig. 5) is one, the sea is not even shown. In the Ulysses mosaic from Tor Morancia<sup>44</sup> and the Nile mosaic from the Foro delle Corporazioni (ca.170 A.C.),<sup>45</sup> water is indicated by lines of black and white tesserae.

To sum up so far, we have noted the presence of the following features: the use of background as a neutral surface for the depiction of figural motifs in the La Chebba mosaic, the rendering of spatial depth through the use of cast shadows, groundlines and landscape elements, the attention to colour and

detail in the use of finely graded tesserae, and an airy and spacious composition. These features as far as can be deduced, place the La Chebba mosaic in the first two centuries after Christ. We will attempt to narrow this time frame down by analysing the borders of this mosaic and the pertinent comparanda.

#### IV. Date: The Border

Another, perhaps more secure method of dating North African mosaics is the study of ornamental motifs, especially borders. There seems to have been a tendency to progress from a system of plain patterns and motifs to a more crowded and elaborate one.<sup>46</sup> Thus, for example, the delicate sprays framing the Seasons in the La Chebba mosaic and the naturalistic acanthus bases<sup>47</sup> from which these sprays spring become rich, bold, almost stylised forms which cover the surface of the mosaic of Aion and the Seasons from Haïdra (fig. 28), in a manner suggesting "une horreur de vide".

A parallel development can be seen in the border of hexagons and circles which appears in a relatively simple form on the Mosaic from La Chebba (fig. 51), and then becomes more dense in the mosaic of The Child Dionysus and Seasonal Plants (fig. 52) from El Djem, and the mosaic of Months and Seasons from the same town (fig. 54). The progression from sparse to dense means that the two El Djem pavements (for which we have a probable terminus ante quem of 238 A.C.<sup>48</sup>) are later than the La Chebba mosaic. It is interesting to note that the lack of evidence for the use of this border outside the environs of El

Djem, Acholla and La Chebba suggests the presence of an atelier producing these designs during a certain limited period. <sup>49</sup>

In the circle and hexagon border of the La Chebba mosaic forms are simple. In the middle of each circle is a little rosette with four heart-shaped petals arranged around a single tessera (fig. 51 TYPE I). Denticles radiate inward from the circumference of the circle. Four simple volutes spring outwards from the circumference. The shape of each hexagon with its four concave ends is marked by a thin line of tesserae. Within the hexagon occurs a simple floral ornament made of three-pointed and lanceolate petals separated by curved tendrils. The row of hexagons and circles is enclosed by simple black fillets.

The border of hexagons and circles framing the mosaic of the Child Dionysus with Seasonal Plants from El Djem (fig. 52 TYPE II) reveals one phase in the progression of this type of border from simple to ornate. The circle pattern is similar to that in the La Chebba border (TYPE I). The volutes springing from the circle (where the point of the hexagon meets it) are now tendrils -- indicated by short broken lines underneath the curls. The hexagons have two alternating types of floral ornament inside them. One type consists of two central trifoliate petals with a fleur de lys pattern decorating each side of the hexagon. The other hexagon is enhanced by four spiral tendrils. The border is enclosed by a simple fillet.

Another variation occurs in a cubiculum in the Maison de Neptune at Acholla, where a circle and hexagon border frames a geometric pavement (fig. 53 TYPE III). The denticled circumference is of the type already seen, however the central rosette has developed into a more complex form. The four petals are here divided by four narrow lanceolate petals. As a result the interior of the circle looks more densely filled in. The floral pattern inside the hexagon has a new addition consisting of four short curls emerging from the centre of the floral ornament. A double fillet encloses the border.

The most ornate example of hexagons and circles to be presented provides a gridwork around panels depicting the Months and the Seasons in the pavement of the same name from El Djem (fig. 54 TYPE IV). The circle design comprises two concentric circles and a rosette. Denticles radiate outwards from the circumference of the inner circle. The central rosette has four heart-shaped petals separated by four lanceolate ones. A series of denticles outlines the hexagons. The floral ornament inside the hexagon consists of two fleur de lys motifs separated from the central axis marked by two notched petals. Volutes echoing the concave ends of the hexagon have an extra tendril.

Although the archaeological reports furnish little evidence by which we may attempt a precise dating of the La Chebba mosaic, the evidence of stylistic trends which we have observed in the foregoing discussion allow termini to be placed for it. On the basis of the 'developed' state of the hexagon and circle motif in the mosaic of Months and Seasons at El Djem, this pavement can be

used as a terminus ante quem for the La Chebba mosaic. The evidence of potsherds and lamp fragments found under various mosaics in the Maison des Mois et des Saisons has provided a terminus post quem at the beginning of the third century A.C. for the mosaic of the same name.<sup>50</sup> The representation in the October panel of two men in long robes pointing towards a star, has been interpreted as alluding to Alexander Severus' birthday, thus the mosaic has been dated to the period 222-235 A.C.<sup>51</sup> The terminus ante quem for the La Chebba mosaic may therefore be accepted as 222-235 A.C.

The border of the mosaic of the Child Dionysus with Seasonal Plants (fig. 52 TYPE II) is similar to the one border (fig. 53 TYPE III) from a pavement in the Maison de Neptune at Acholla examined above, which has been dated by Gozlan to ca.170-180 A.C.<sup>52</sup> Gozlan also points out the similar modelling of figures<sup>53</sup> within their figural compositions. My hypothesis is that the relative simplicity of the La Chebba border calls for a date ante 170-180 A.C., thus it precedes the mosaic of the Child Dionysus and Seasonal Plants from El Djem and the "Triumph" of Neptune in the Maison de Neptune at Acholla.

J.P. Darmon suggests a dating of the La Chebba mosaic to the last third of the second century A.C., presumably on account of its compositional style which according to him is "...toute proche de l'esthétique antonine...".<sup>54</sup> On the basis of our analysis of the border Darmon's date should be excluded. According to Picard, the mosaic belongs ca.150-160 A.C.<sup>55</sup> Parrish prefers a dating in the middle of the second century A.C.,<sup>56</sup> primarily on the basis of

overall design and figural style. The overall design, he believes to have been based on designs at Hadrian's Villa (118-138 A.C.), which he thinks would have reached the province by the middle of the century. Furthermore, (according to Parrish) the uncrowded design of the pavement follows Antonine aesthetics, as does the classicizing appearance of the nude and semi-nude figures. Italian artists working at the beginning of the second century A.C. exploited the concept of transforming floors into reflections of the ceilings above them. As early as the first century B.C. this exploration had already been attempted.<sup>57</sup> An interesting mosaic from the Terme dei Cisiari in Ostia (120 A.C.) shows how the compositional elements of the floor reflect directly the architecture of the overhead vaults.<sup>58</sup> The La Chebba mosaic with its diagonal type composition is probably a descendant of this type of design; thus it would be quite safe to present a terminus post quem of 120 A.C. for the La Chebba pavement.

Dunbabin attributes the pavement to the period 130-150 A.C.<sup>59</sup> This dating is arrived at on the basis of an analysis of floral designs and figured scenes in pavements from El Alia, Acholla and El Djem.<sup>60</sup> In the light of the evidence presented, the La Chebba mosaic should be dated to the period 130-150 A.C.

## V. Conclusions

We have seen that the portrayal of the four Seasons on North African mosaics was a popular trend that enjoyed a long life in the province. The

frequent depiction of other themes in combination with the Seasons has been seen to include images of deities. The La Chebba mosaic is unique in its combination of Neptune with the Season theme, for indeed, although the image of Neptune was a popular decorative subject on mosaics of the region, it is only at La Chebba that the two subjects are combined.

There exists a traditional relationship between the deities and the Seasons being portrayed together, and the La Chebba mosaic belongs to this tradition. In the La Chebba mosaic the relationship between Neptune and the Seasons is rich and complex. I have chosen to read in Neptune's appearance here his role as a god of fresh waters, which adds a different dimension to his association with the seasons and agricultural abundance and therefore, material prosperity. We must not however, disregard his primary role as the god of the seas, for in this role he protects the sea trade that North African merchants, and quite possibly the owner of the villa, depended on for their livelihood.

In his central position on the pavement he governs the harmonious working of the Seasons. The god, resplendent in his awesome majesty, stands in his chariot that crests the waves, wields his attributes of power, the trident and the dolphin. He is attended by two members of his cortege, a Nereid and an Ichthyocentaur. The imagery of the god in "triumph" is a symbol of felicitas that imparts blessings to all the household. Complementing and enhancing the



theme of happiness and prosperity are the Seasons, four beautiful females with attributes representing the fruitfulness and abundance of the times.

The La Chebba mosaic is unique not only in its innovative blending of traditional motifs, but also for the introduction of a new genre: seasonal vignettes. This genre reveals a revolutionary departure from earlier traditions of seasonal imagery that considered the individual human figure as a suitable vehicle to convey the concept of the seasons. The successful treatment of technical elements such as the frontal portrayal of the "triumph" and the sea contribute to the mosaic's outstanding beauty. We do not know who owned the villa in which this mosaic lay. We do not know which artist produced such a work of great quality in this little town of La Chebba, hardly ever mentioned. What we do know, is that a mosaic of great beauty and unique character has been preserved for us, and that this oeuvre with its symbols of happiness and prosperity will continue to intrigue for years to come.

### Notes

1. See catalogue in chapter II 20-23. Additional evidence suggesting a regional familiarity with the god comes from dedicatory inscriptions to Neptune from Guelma, Lambèse and Vada, CIL VIII pt.I 2652, 2653, 5297, 5298, 5299.
2. G. Ch. Picard, "Observations sur la mosaïque cosmologique de Merida" CMGR 122.
3. Picard *supra* n.2.
4. See illustration in Dunbabin, MRNA fig. 147. J. Lassus, "Venus Marine" CMGR 184 n.14. Lassus believes the nimbed head of Venus to be a restoration of the end of the third century or beginning of the fourth century A.C.
5. Dunbabin, MRNA 250 pl. LVII fig.148.
6. Dunbabin, MRNA 275 pl.VI fig. 13.
7. Dunbabin, MRNA 276 pl.LVII. fig.145
8. Dunbabin, MRNA pl.LXI fig. 154. On the nimbus see K. Scott, The Imperial Cult under the Flavians (Stuttgart 1936), ch. VIII "The Emperor's Numen".
9. See K. Lehmann "Dome of Heaven" ArtB 27 (1945) 7, for a discussion of an example of this type of imagery from Rome and Zaghuan. See also a mosaic from Beth Alpha: Lehmann fig.15; astrological mosaic from Bir-Chana in Dunbabin MRNA 161 pl.162.
10. Hanfmann, SSDO I 115.; Plato, Timaeus 37 d-e also M-H. Quet, La mosaïque cosmologique de Merida. Propositions de Lecture (Paris 1981) 145-146.
11. Hanfmann, *supra* n. 10.
12. Hanfmann, SSDO I 115.
13. Hanfmann, SSDO I 140.
14. P. Gauckler, Inv.Mos. Tun., 35; Parrish, SMRNA 201 no. 49
15. Parrish, SMRNA 69. Fifty-three out of the sixty-two season pavements in Parrish's catalogue decorated private dwellings, eight, public buildings including baths, and one, a private tomb.
16. Parrish, SMRNA 69 n. 239.

17. Foucher, Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque, 48-63

18. Gauckler and other turn-of-the-century scholars used the term "atrium" to refer generally to large halls and what we now identify as small peristyles, Inv. Mos. Tun. 35, no. 86; For a general overview of North African architecture, see Y. Thebert " 'Private' and 'Public' Spaces," in A History of Private Life ed. P. Veyne (Harvard 1987) 357-364; See also R. Rebuffat, G. Hallier, J. Marion, Thamusida. Fouilles de Service des Antiquités du Maroc II (Paris 1970) 282-328.

19. See the triclinium pavement of the Maison de la procession Dionysiaque (fig. 25 infra) and the mosaic of Neptune from La maison de Neptune at Acholla in S. Gozlan, "Les pavements en mosaïques de la maison de Neptune," Mon Piot 59 (1974) 112 fig.48. See also K. M. D. Dunbabin "Triclinium and Stibadium" Dining in a Classical Context ed. W. J. Slater (Ann Arbor 1991) 126-128. Other types of dining areas apart from "triclinia" were used in North African houses, however, on the basis of Dunbabin's discussion we may conclude that the layout of the La Chebba mosaic militates against a dining area location.

20. Dunbabin, MRNA 248, 254.

21. Parrish, SMRNA 201 cat.49.

22. G. Ch. Picard, "La Mosaïque Romaine en Afrique. A propos de l'ouvrage de K. Dunbabin The mosaics of Roman North Africa. Studies in Iconography and Patronage" RA (1980) 350-351.

23. J. P. Darmon, "Les mosaïques en Occident I," ANRW II 12,2 (1981) 319

24. Dunbabin MRNA 30

25. Darmon, supra n. 23 276-277.

26. Dunbabin, MRNA 30.

27. Dunbabin, MRNA 31

28. Dunbabin, MRNA 34-37.

29. Dunbabin, MRNA 35

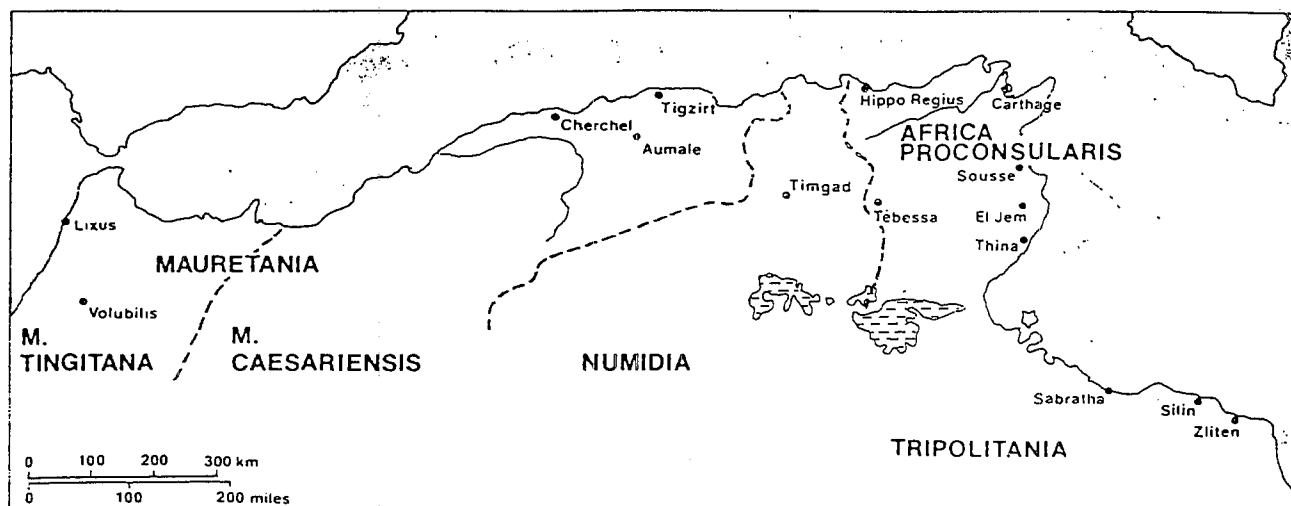
30. Parrish, SMRNA 79

31. Parrish, SMRNA 79.

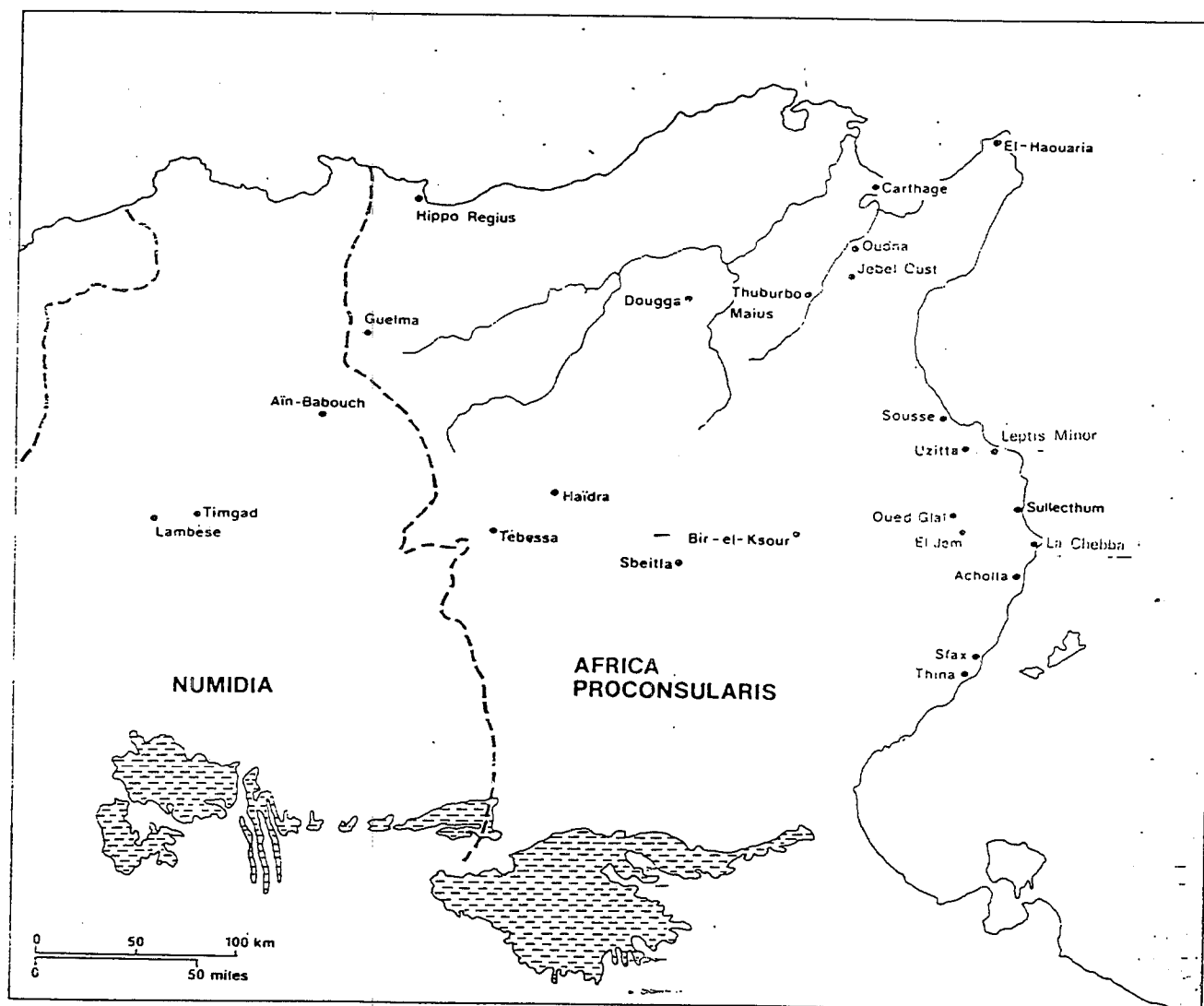
32. Parrish, supra n.31.

33. Parrish, SMRNA 81.
34. Parrish, SMRNA 81 n.291
35. Parrish, SMRNA 203; K. Lehmann, *supra* n. 9 fig. 10
36. Dunbabin, MRNA 35.
37. For an outline of technique and method see Dunbabin, MRNA 35 also n. 103.
38. Parrish, SMRNA 203.
39. L. Foucher, Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque (El Djem) (Paris 1963) 98.
40. Parrish, SMRNA 203.
41. Hanfmann SSDO I 133-134.
42. Parrish, SMRNA 77-78; Dunbabin MRNA 35-36; Foucher Maison de la procession Dionysiaque 98-100; J. Lassus, Réflexions sur la technique de la mosaïque (Algier 1957) 26.
43. See J. Lassus, "Venus Marine" CMGR II 186-189, for the representation of waves in mosaics of later date from North Africa. Lassus presents the style well but proposes only a very general chronology.
44. M. E. Blake, "Roman Mosaics of the Second Century in Italy." MAAR 13 (1936) fig. 33.2 ; J. Clarke, Roman Black -and- White Figural Mosaics (New York 1979) 74.
45. M. E. Blake, MAAR 8 (1930) figs. 135-137.
46. Dunbabin, MRNA 34 n.98.
47. J. Lassus, "Le rinceau d'acanthes dans les mosaïques de Timgad," in Hommages à Albert Grenier (Coll. Latomus LVIII, Bruxelles 1960) 948-960 for a discussion of this motif.
48. In 238 A.C. El Djem was sacked by Capellianus and never quite recovered.
49. Gozlan, "Deux motifs de bordure sur les mosaïques de Byzacène," Karthago 17 153-169. Seven out of eleven of these pavements come from El Djem alone. The other examples come from towns close to El Djem.
50. Parrish, SMRNA 159.
51. H. Stern, "Les calendriers Romains illustrés," ANRW II 12.2 (1981) 438 n.18

52. Gozlan, (supra n. 19) 135
53. Parrish SMRNA p.150; Gozlan, (supra n. 19) 91, 120 figs. 26,57.
54. Darmon, (supra n. 23) 312,319.
55. G. Ch. Picard, (supra n. 22) 351
56. Parrish, SMRNA 201,203.
57. M. E. Blake, "The Pavements of the Roman Buildings of the Republic and the early Empire" MAAR 8 (1930), mosaic from Teramo; Lehmann, (supra n. 19) n.30
58. Clarke, Black and White figural mosaics 24-25 figs.26-27.
59. Dunbabin, MRNA 254; Foucher "Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque" 83, places the mosaic in the mid second century A.C.; Levi, "Allegories" 278 dates the mosaic to early in the second century A.C.
60. Dunbabin, MRNA 21-22. Dunbabin suggests that these mosaics were executed by the same school.



Map. ROMAN NORTH AFRICA



Map. NUMIDIA AND AFRICA PROCONSULARIS



Fig. 1 Neptune and the Seasons (La Chebba)



Fig. 1a Neptune and the Seasons -- central medallion





Fig. 2 Augustus in chariot pulled by Tritons (Rome)

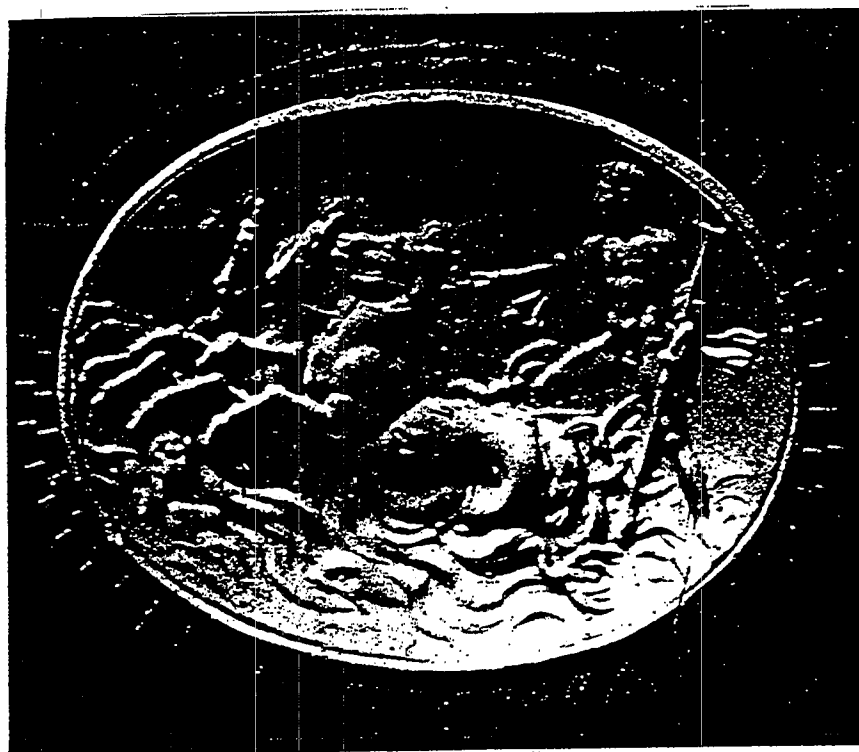


Fig. 3 Augustus in chariot pulled by hippocamps (Boston, Museum of Fine Arts)



Fig. 4. Neptune with foot on globe (British Museum)

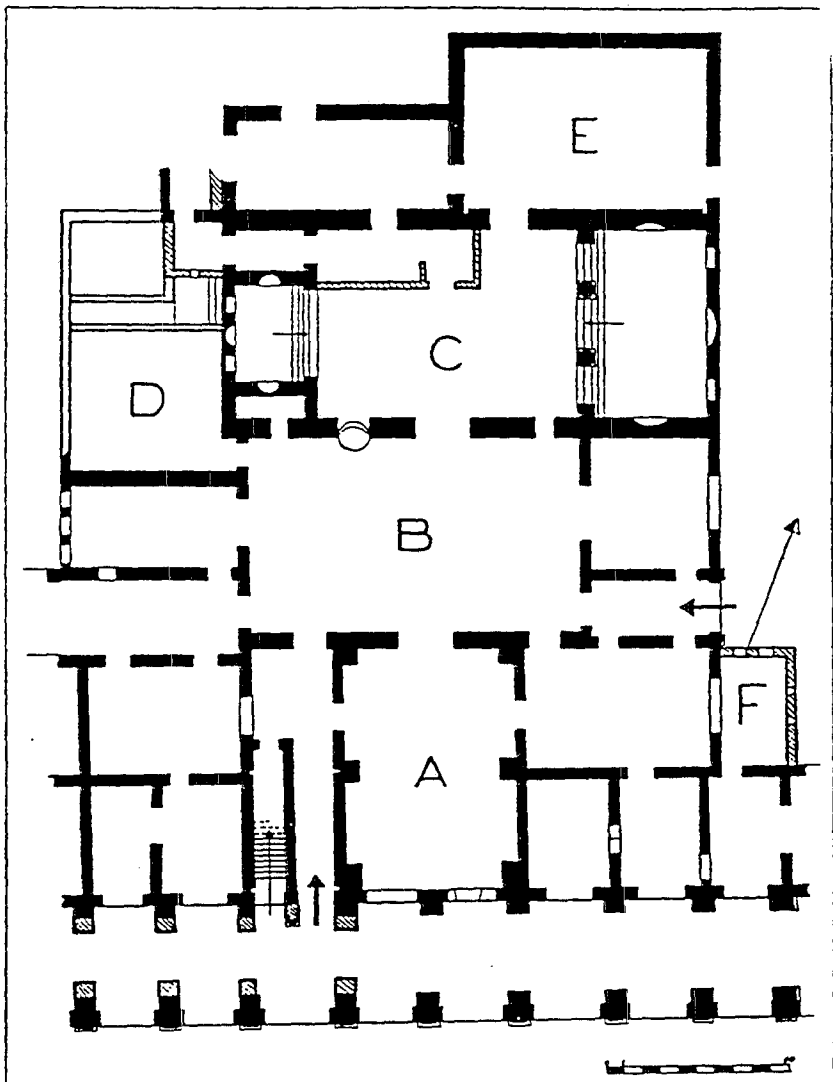


Fig. 5a Plan, Terme di Nettuno, Ostia



Fig. 5 Neptune and hippocamps (Terme di Nettuno, Ostia)



Fig. 6 Neptune and hippocamps (Risaro)

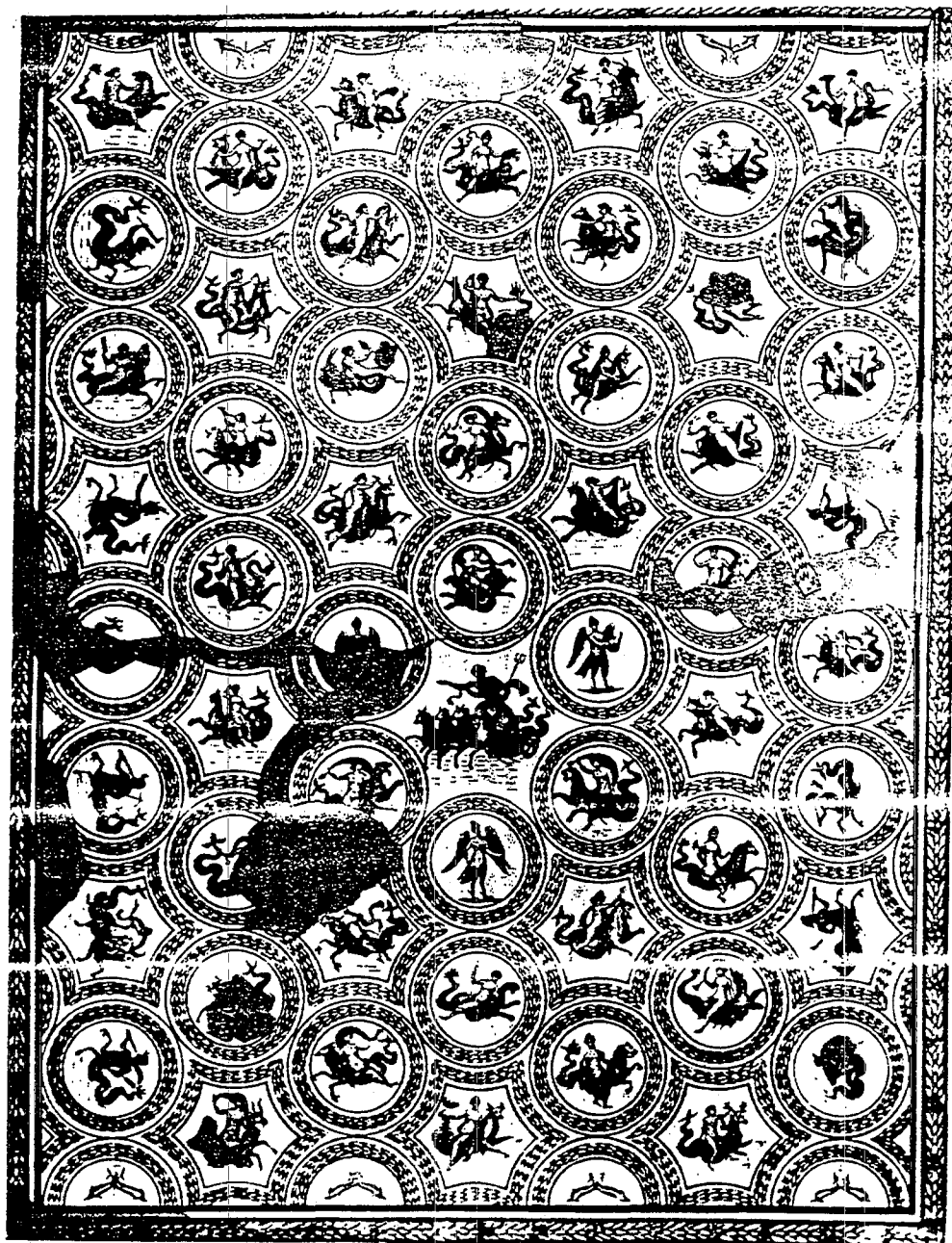


Fig. 7 Sirens, Nereids and Tritons (Sousse)

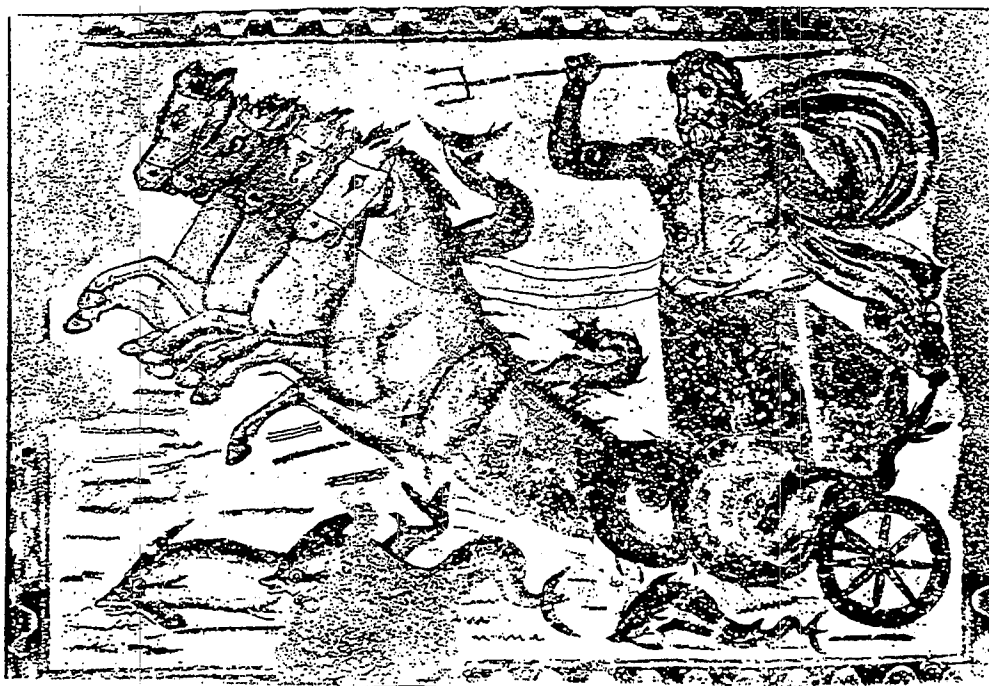


Fig. 8 Neptune in chariot drawn by four hippocamps (Timgad)



Fig. 9 Neptune in chariot with two hippocamps (Sousse)

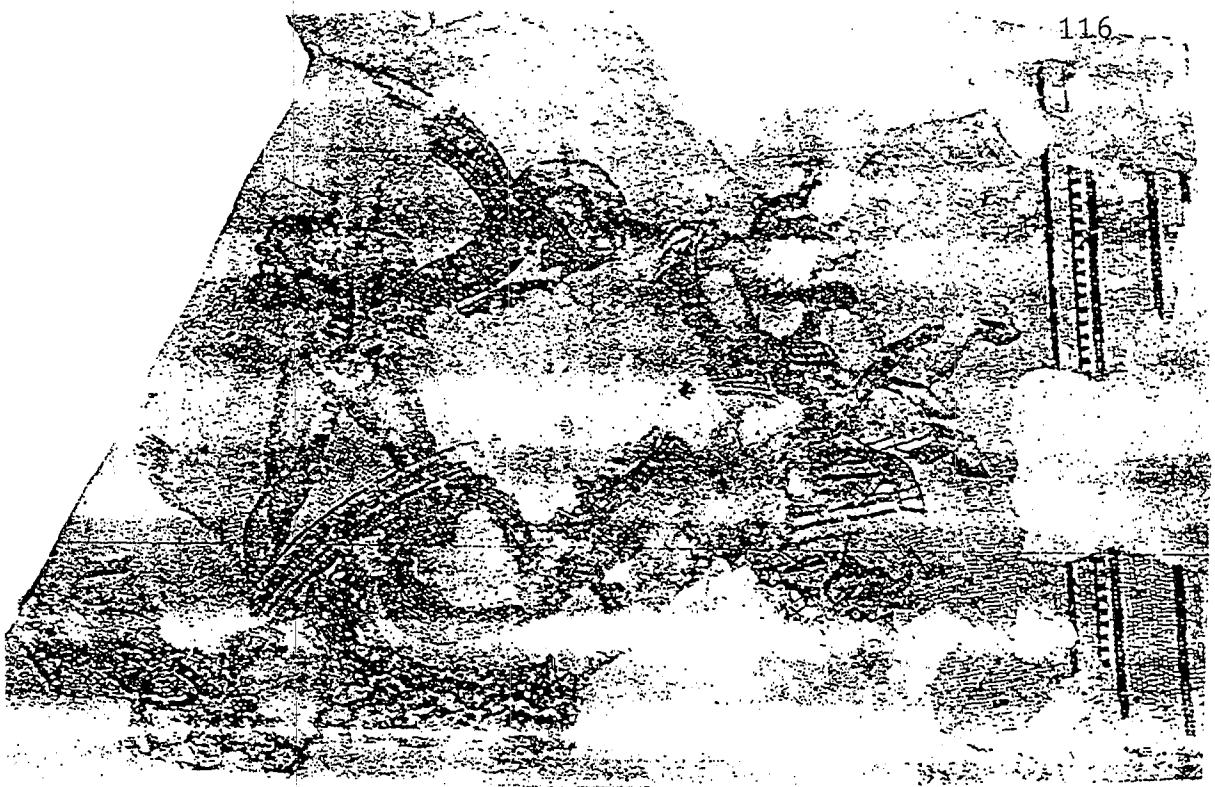


Fig. 10 Neptune in chariot with hippocamps (Palermo)



Fig. 11 Neptune and Hippocamps (Cherchel)



Fig. 12 Neptune in frontal chariot drawn by two hippocamps (Acholla)

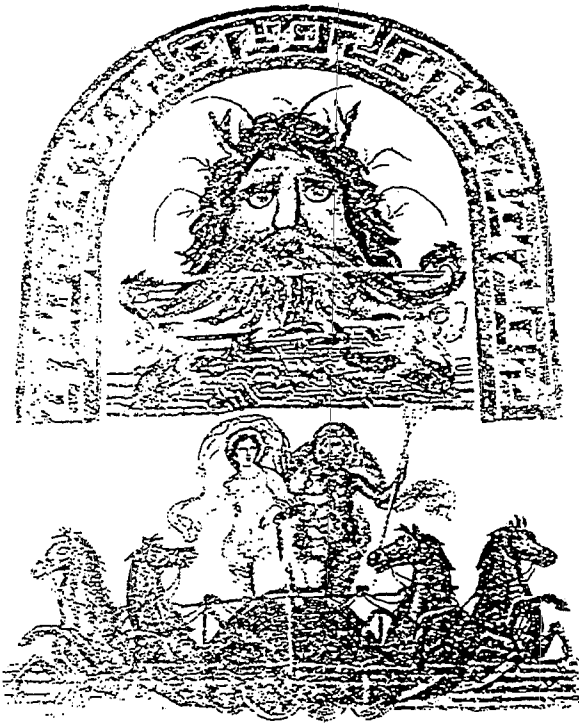


Fig. 14 Neptune and Amphitrite  
in frontal chariot (Constantine)



Fig. 13 Neptune and Amphitrite  
in frontal chariot (Utica)





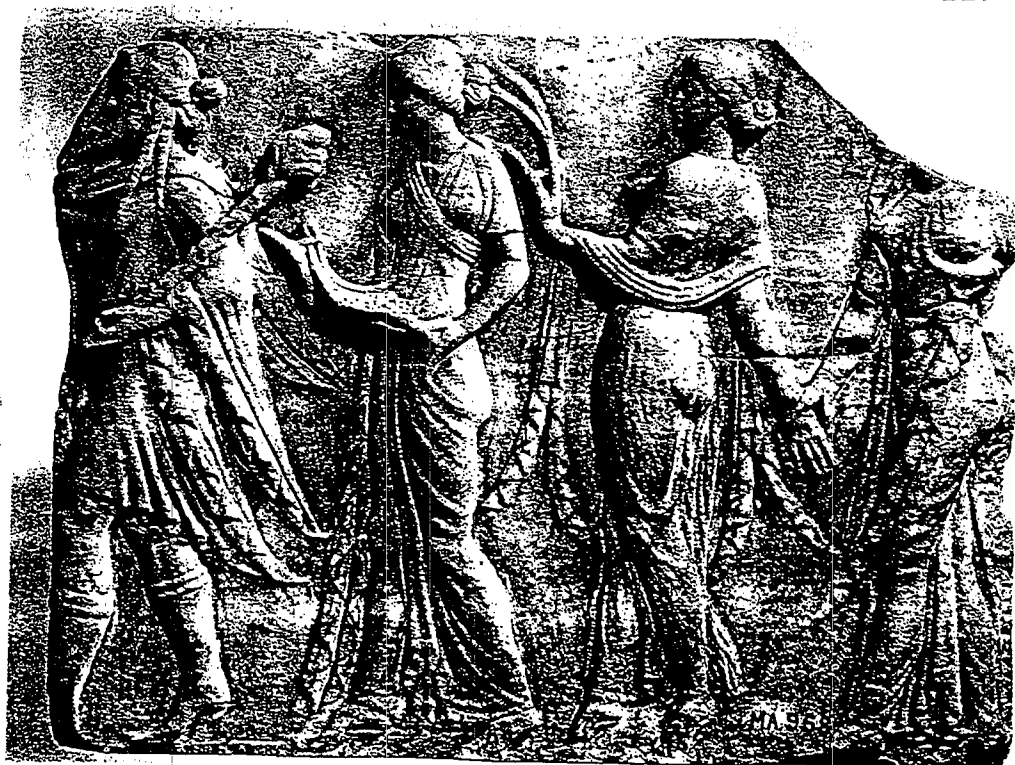


Fig. 15 Dionysos and the Seasons (now in Louvre)



Fig. 15a Dionysos and the Seasons -- reconstruction drawing

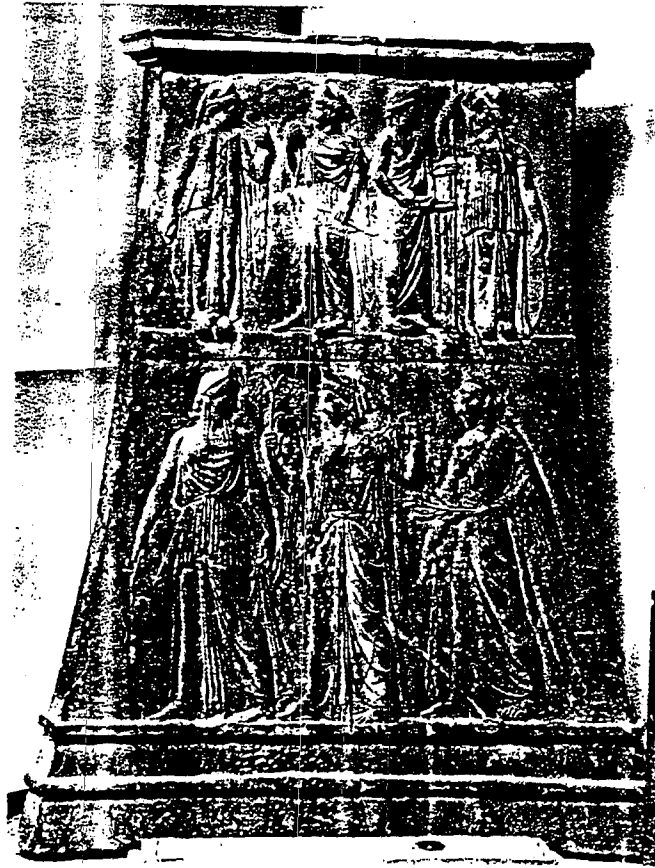


Fig. 16 Three Horae on "Ara Borghese" (Rome)



Fig. 17 Winter (House of the Ancient Hunt, Pompeii)



Fig. 19 Spring (House of Ganymede, Pompeii)



Fig. 18 Winter (House of Cn. Habitus, Pompeii)



Fig. 20 Spring (House of Cn. Habitus, Pompeii)



Fig. 21 Summer (House of Loreius Tibertinus, Pompeii)



122

Fig. 22 Summer ("Constantinian" Villa, Daphne)



Fig. 23 Autumn (House of the Ancient Hunt, Pompeii)



Fig. 24 Winter (Baths of Trajan, Acholla)



Fig. 24b Summer (Baths of Trajan)  
Acholla

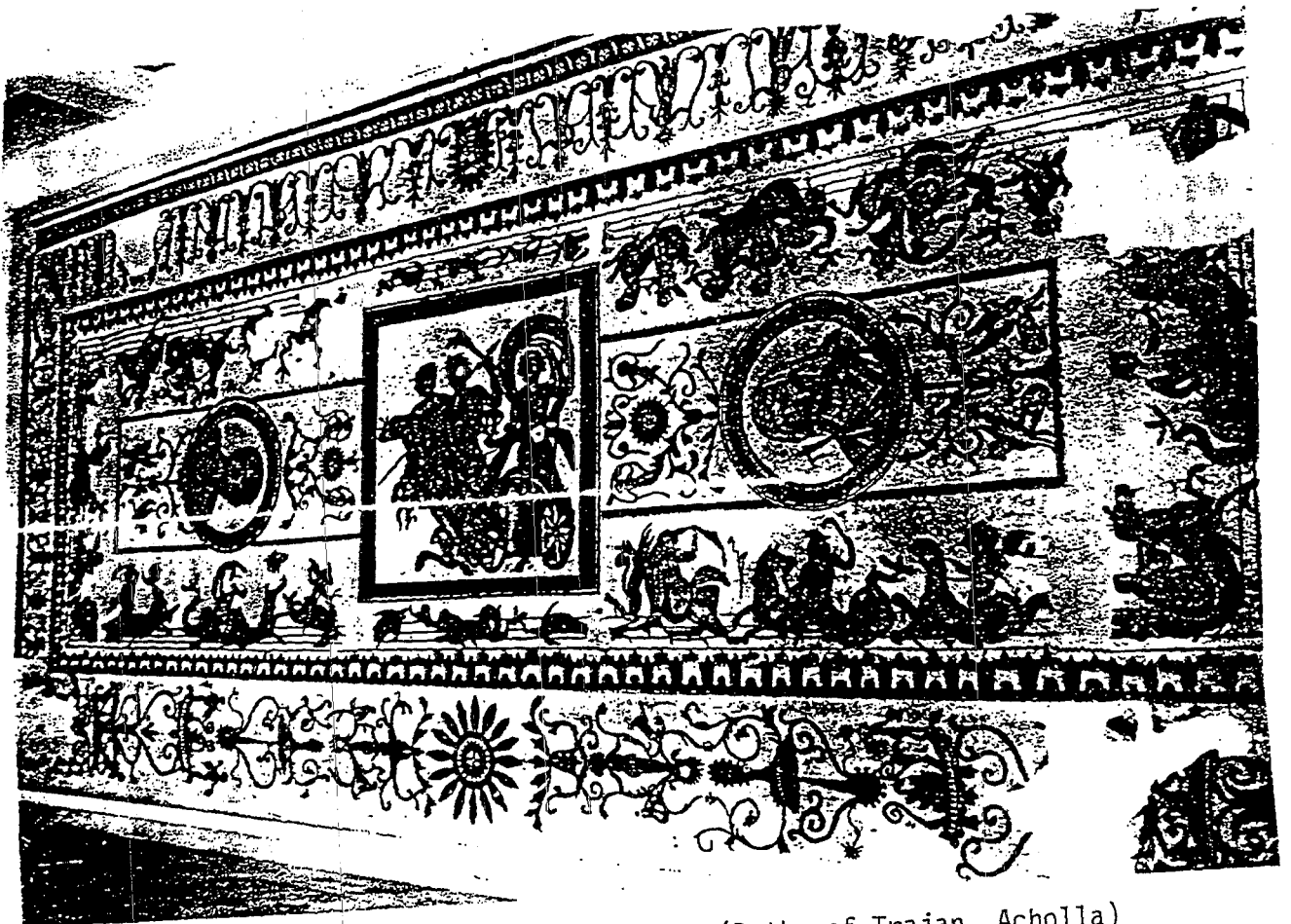


Fig. 24a Dionysos and the Seasons (Baths of Trajan, Acholla)

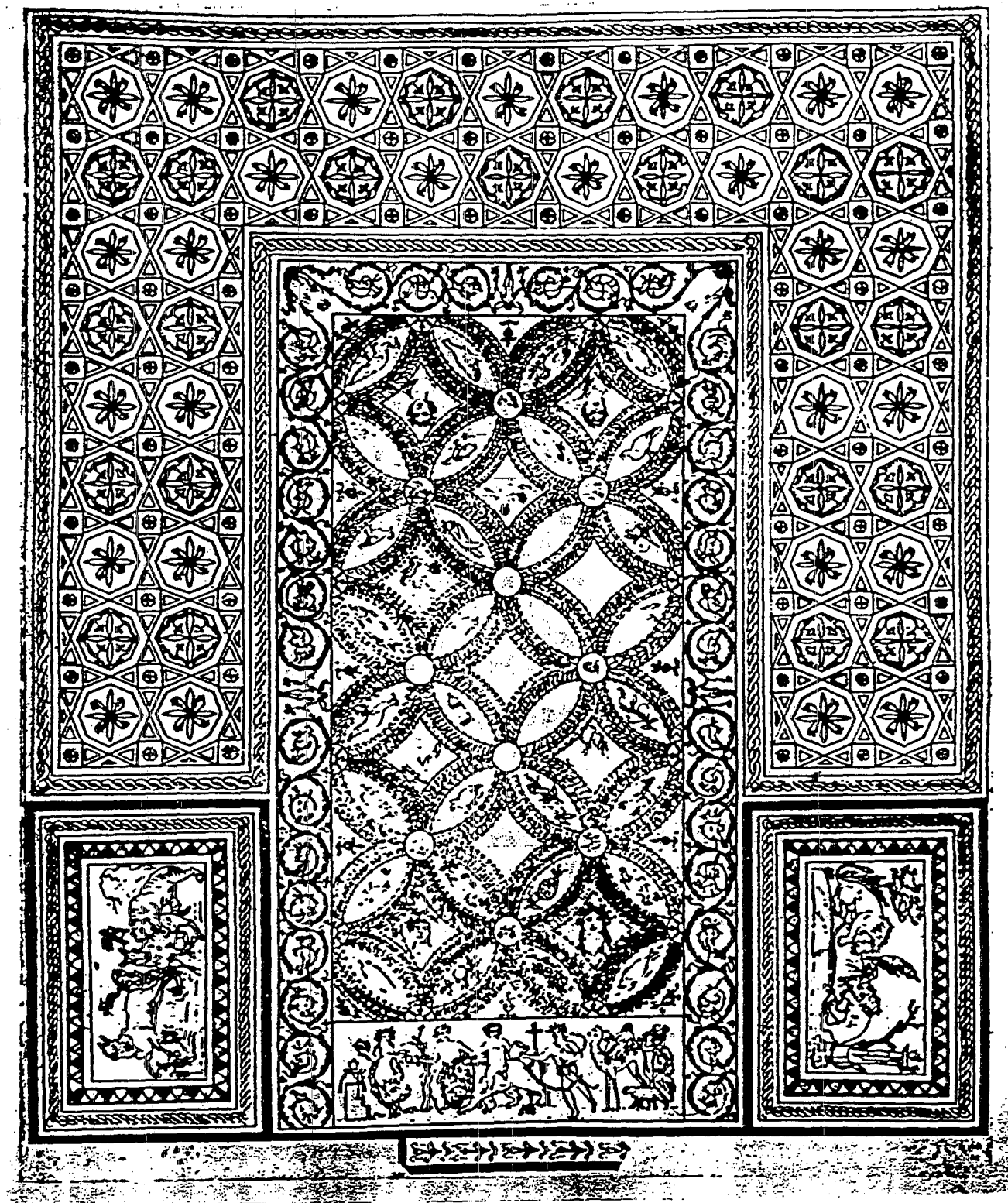


Fig. 25 Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque (El Djem) Overall view  
(triclinium)



Fig. 25a Dionysiac Procession (El Djem)





Fig. 26 Dionysos and the Seasons (Volubilis)



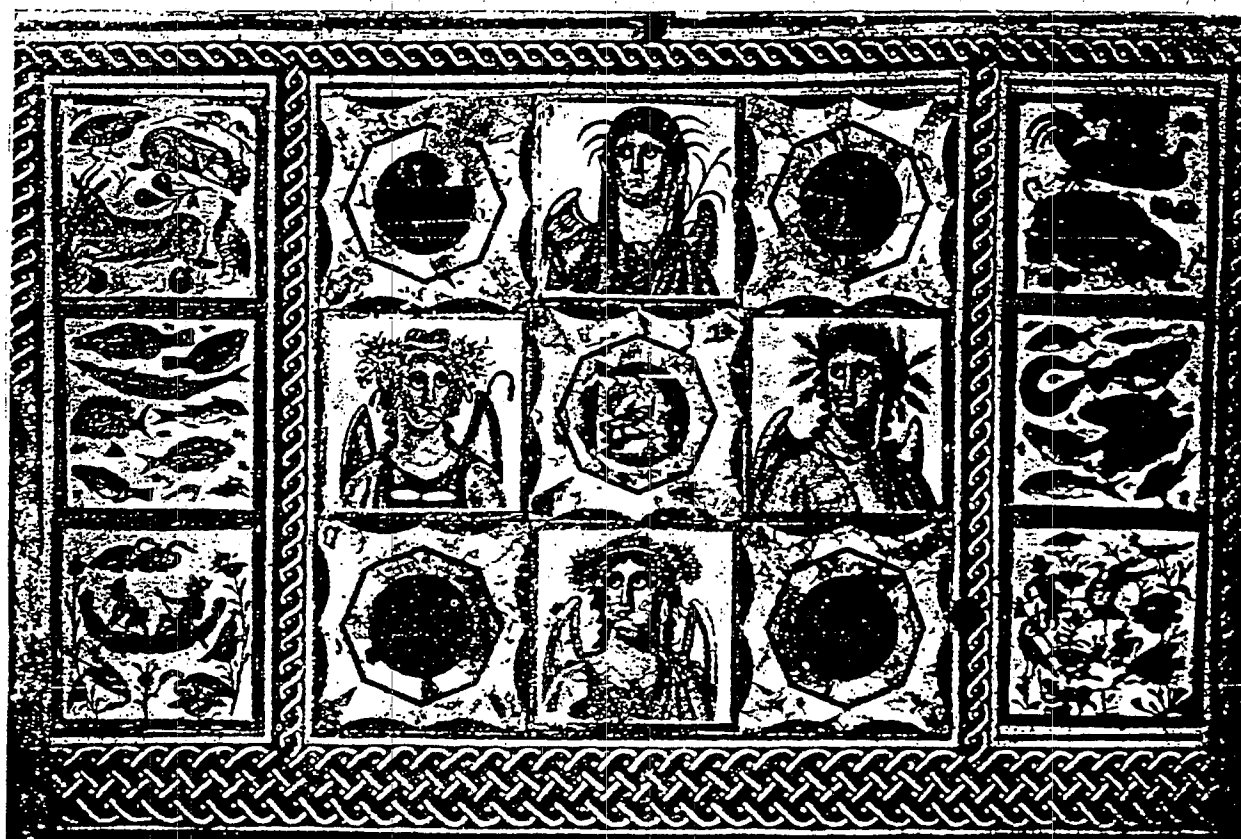


Fig. 27 Seasons (Zliten)



Fig. 27a Spring (Zliten)



Fig. 27b Summer (Zliten)



129

Fig. 28 Aion and the Seasons (Haidra)



Fig. 29 Winter (Aumale)



Fig. 30 Venus and the Seasons (El Djem)

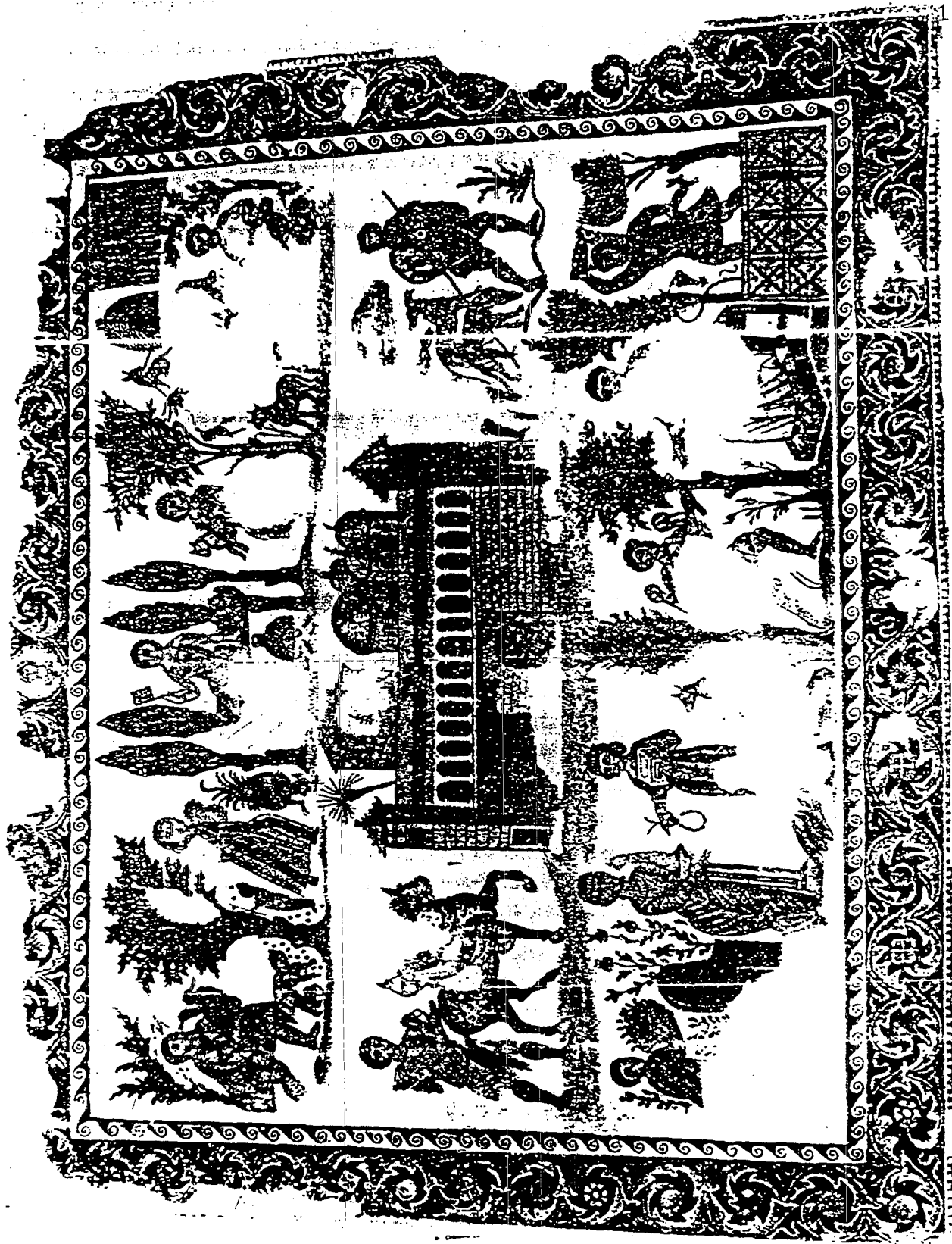


Fig. 31 Domus Julius Mosaic (Carthage)

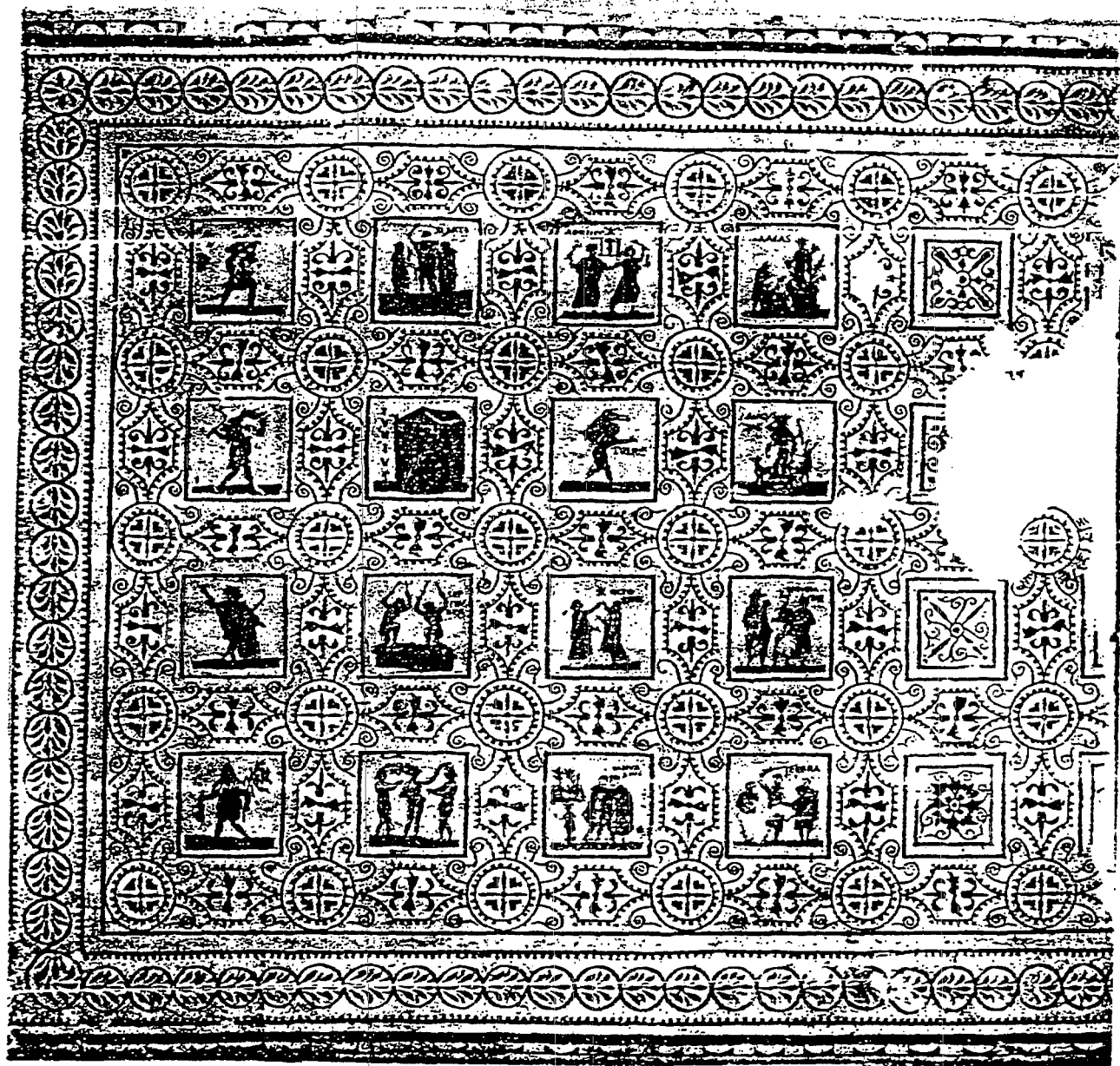


Fig. 32 Seasons and Months (El Djem)

Fig. 33 Dionysos and the Seasons  
(Lambèse)



Fig. 33a Dionysos and the Seasons





Fig. 34 Winter (Triclinium, Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque, El Djem)



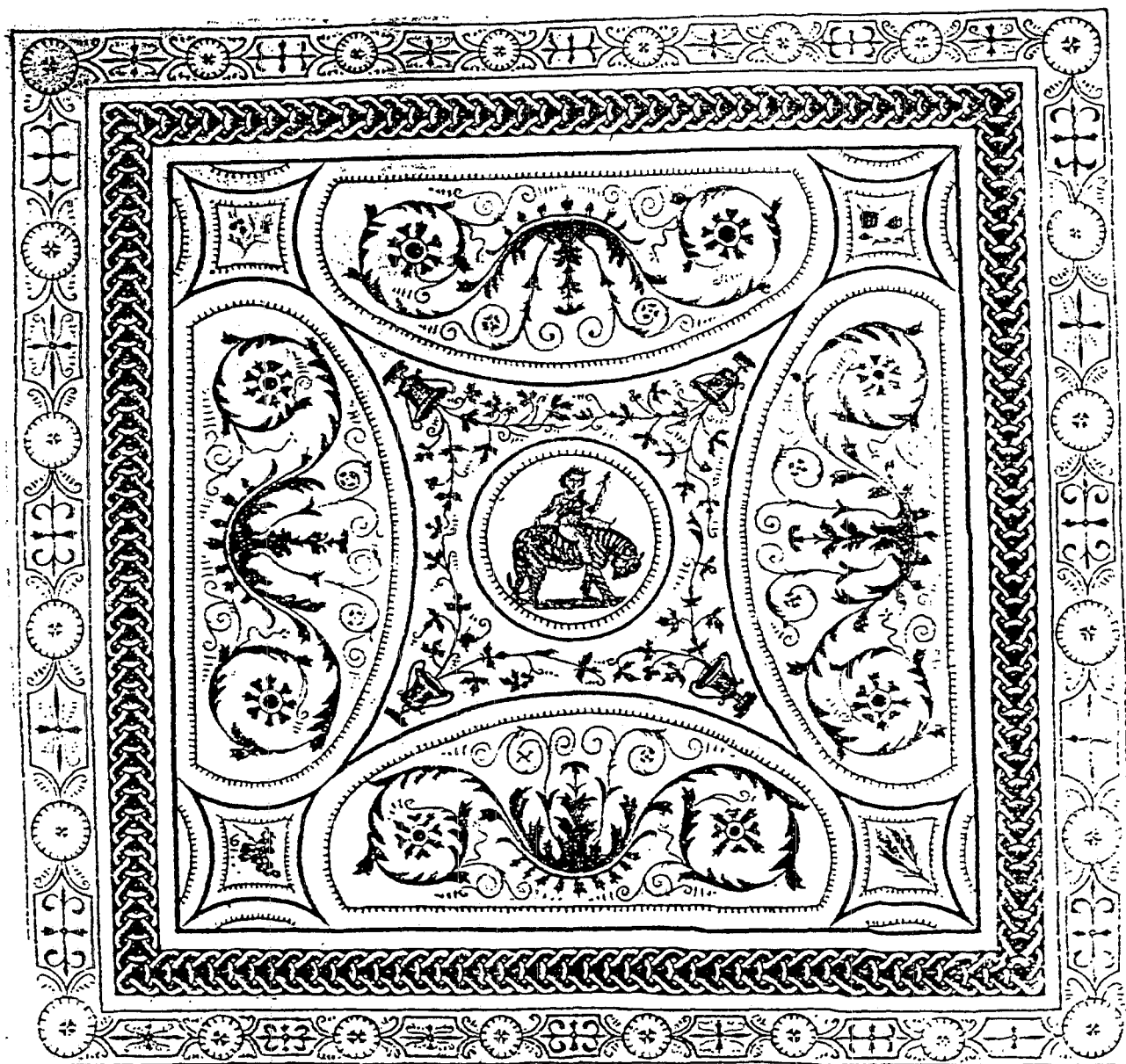


Fig. 35 Child Dionysos and Seasonal Plants

(Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque, El Djem)

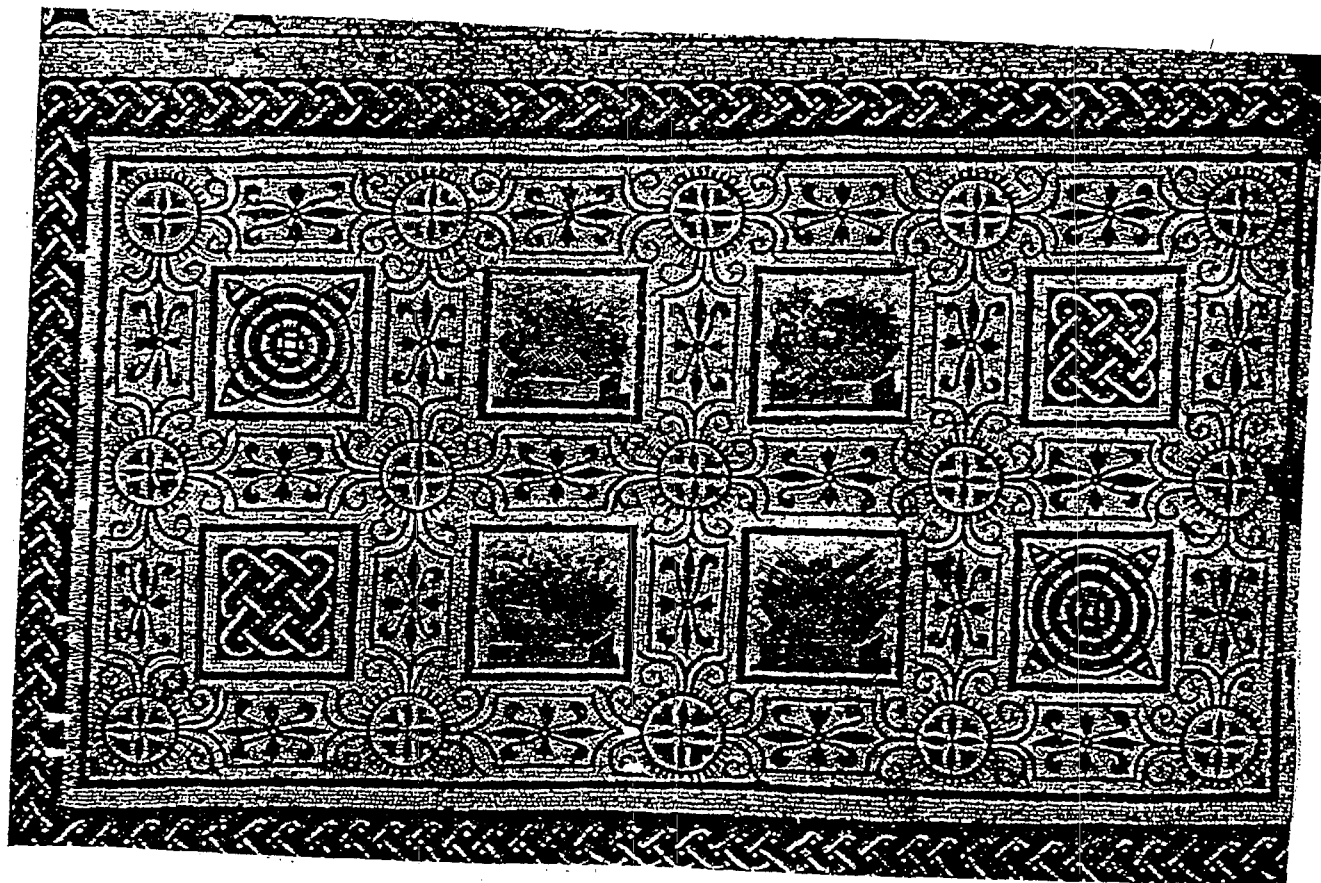


Fig. 36 Baskets of Seasonal Produce (El Djem)



Fig. 37a. Spring (Carthage)



Fig. 37b. Summer (Carthage)

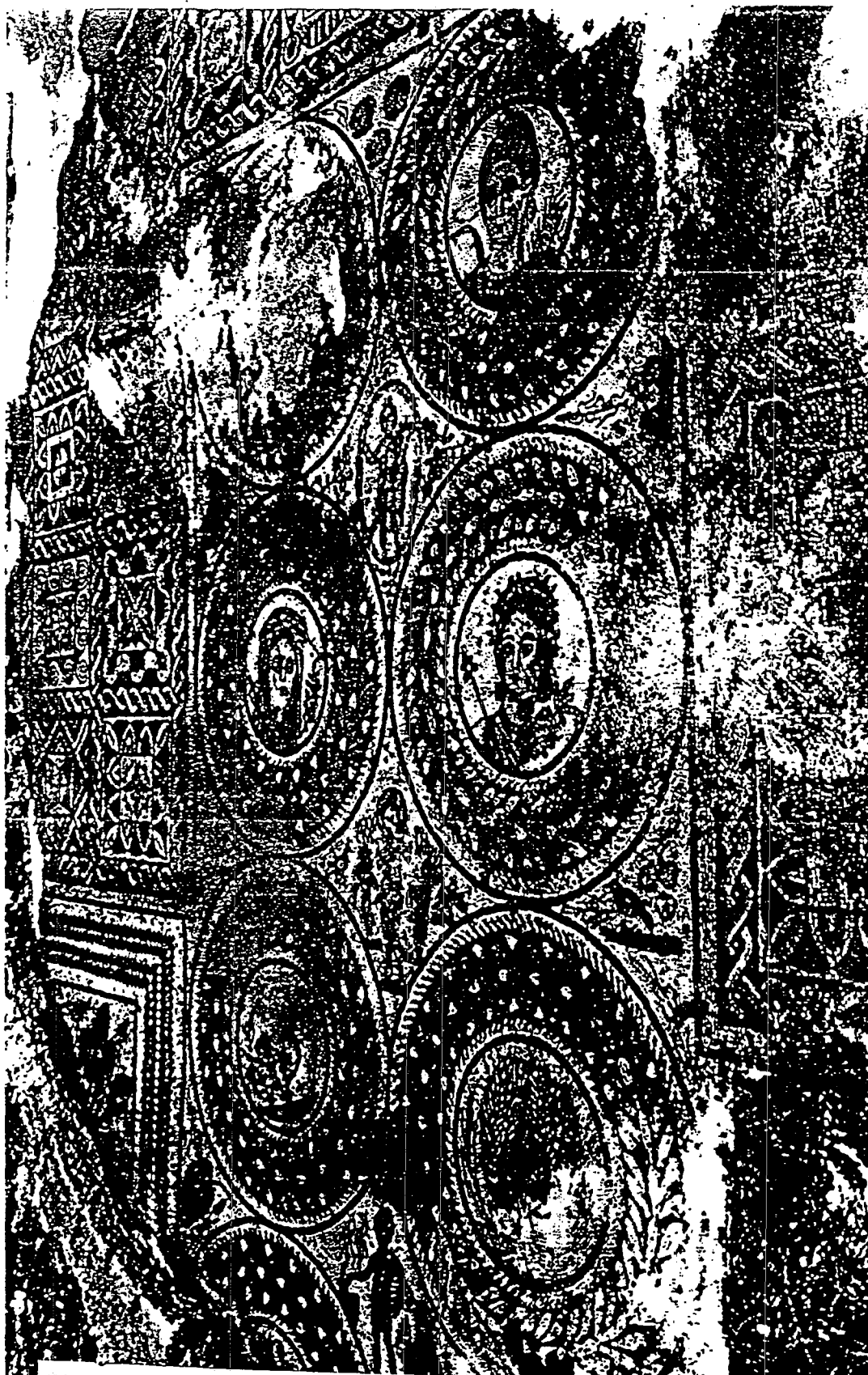


Fig. 38 Seasons, Aion, Venus and Sacrificing figures (Carthage)



Fig. 38a Summer (Carthage)



Fig. 38b Aion (Carthage)



Fig. 38c Venus (Carthage)

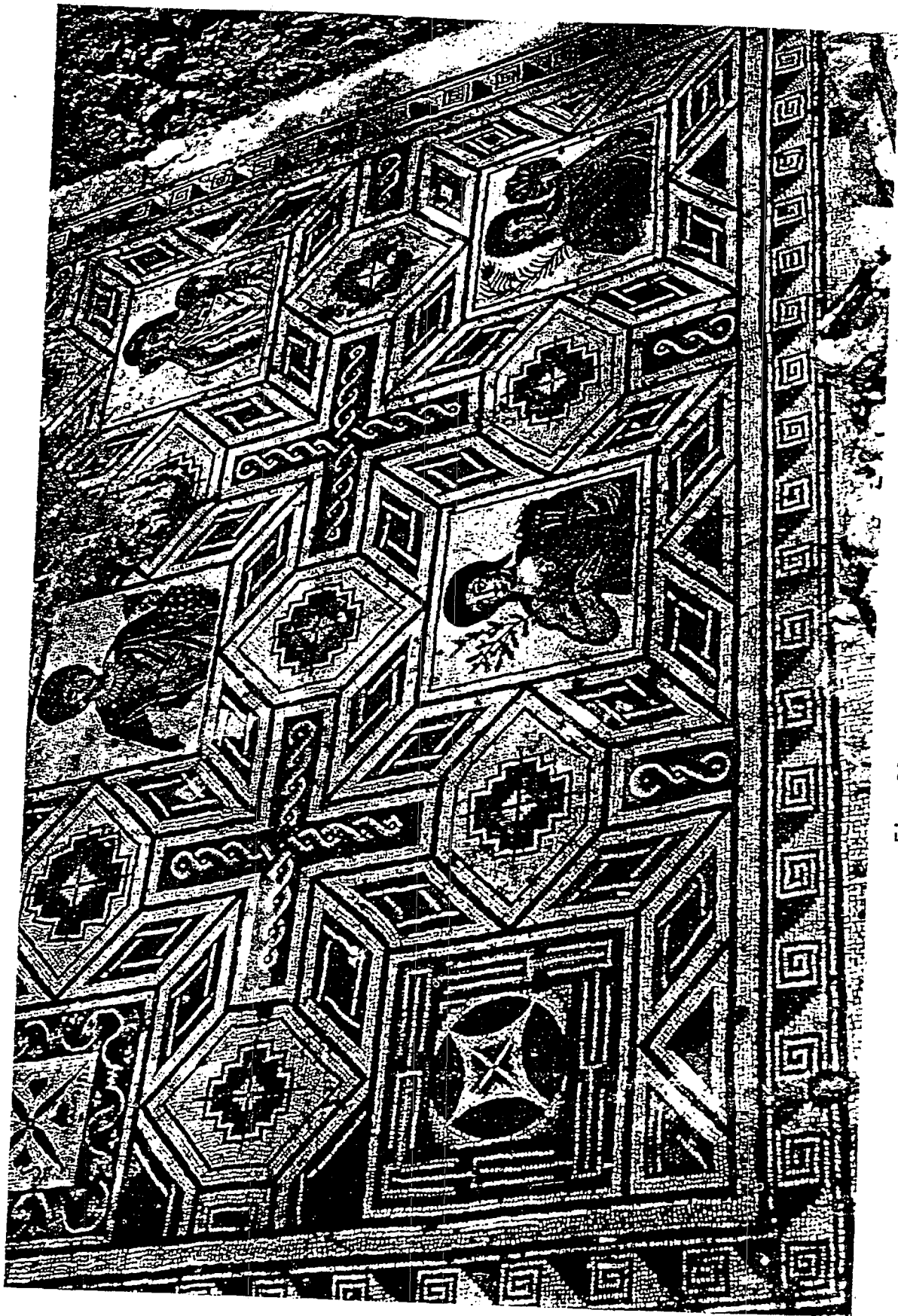


Fig. 39 Seasons (Djebel Oust)



Fig. 39a Autumn (Djebel Oust)



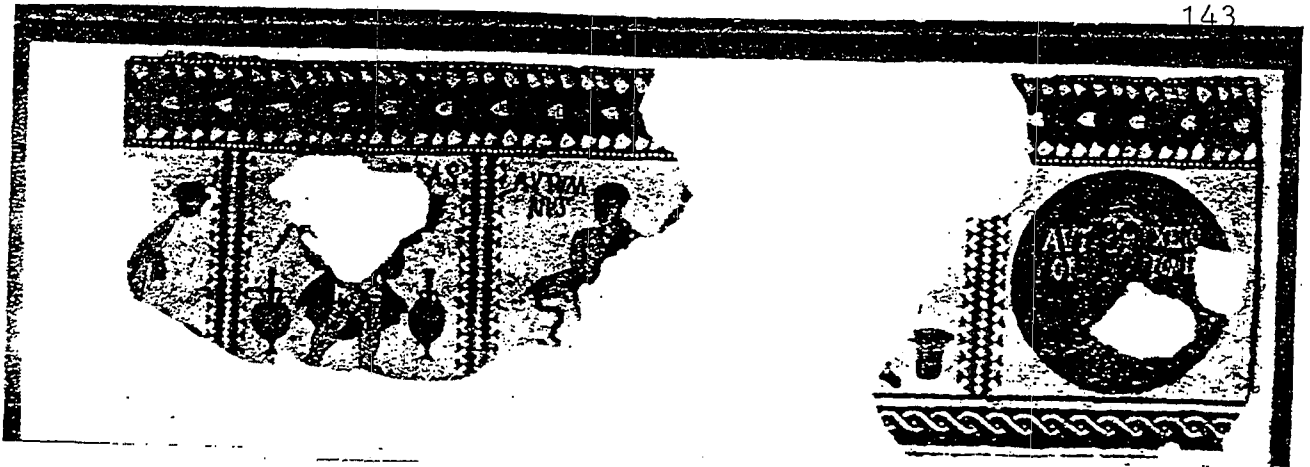


Fig. 40 Seasons and Xenophon (Sbeitla)



Fig. 41 Dionysos, seasonal animals, and marine thiasos (El Djem)



Fig. 42 Summer (Mosaic of Ganymede and the Seasons, El Djem)

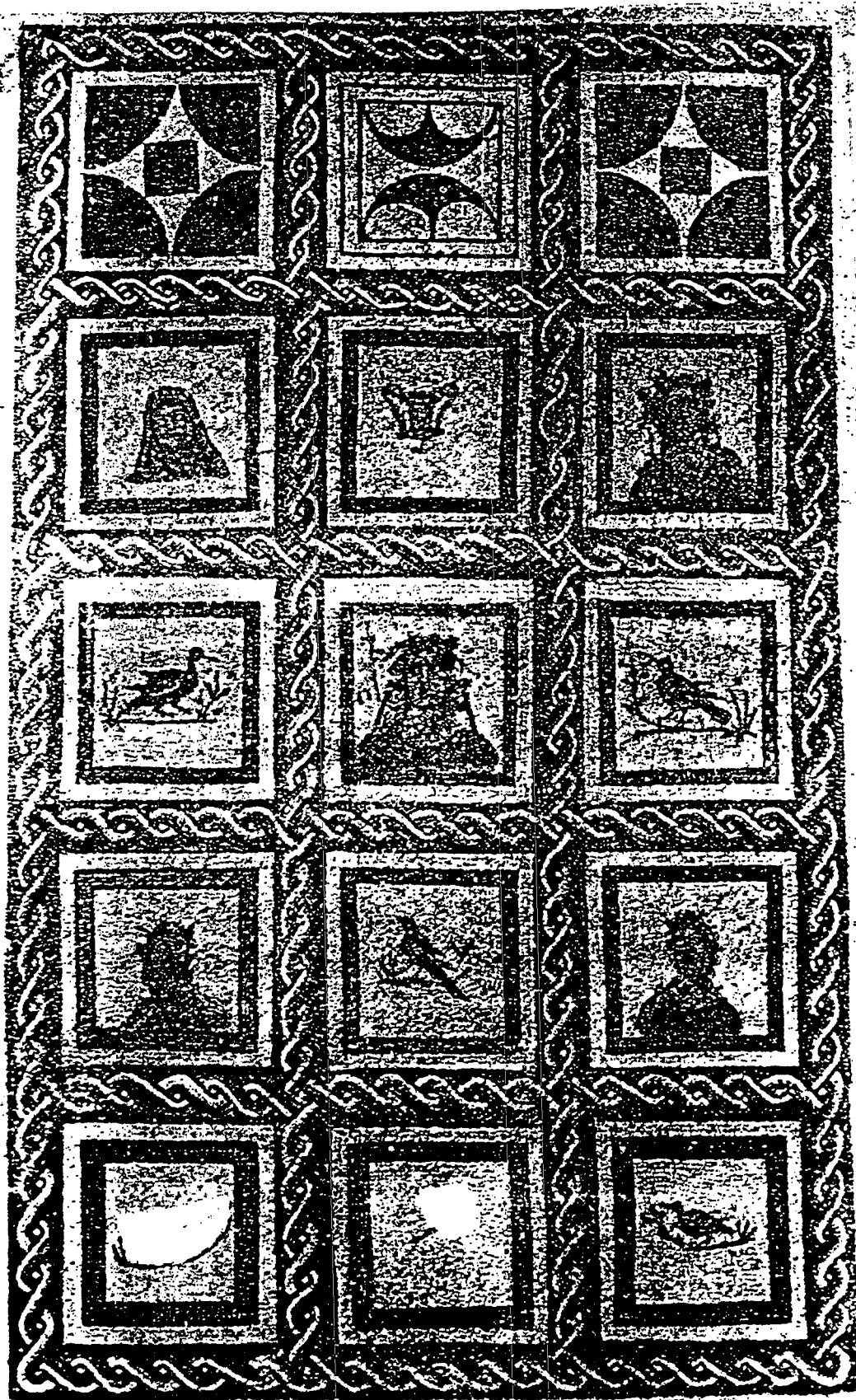


Fig. 43 Dionysos and the Seasons (El Djem)



Fig. 44 Aion (Aphrodisias)



Fig. 45 Annus and the Seasons (El Djem)

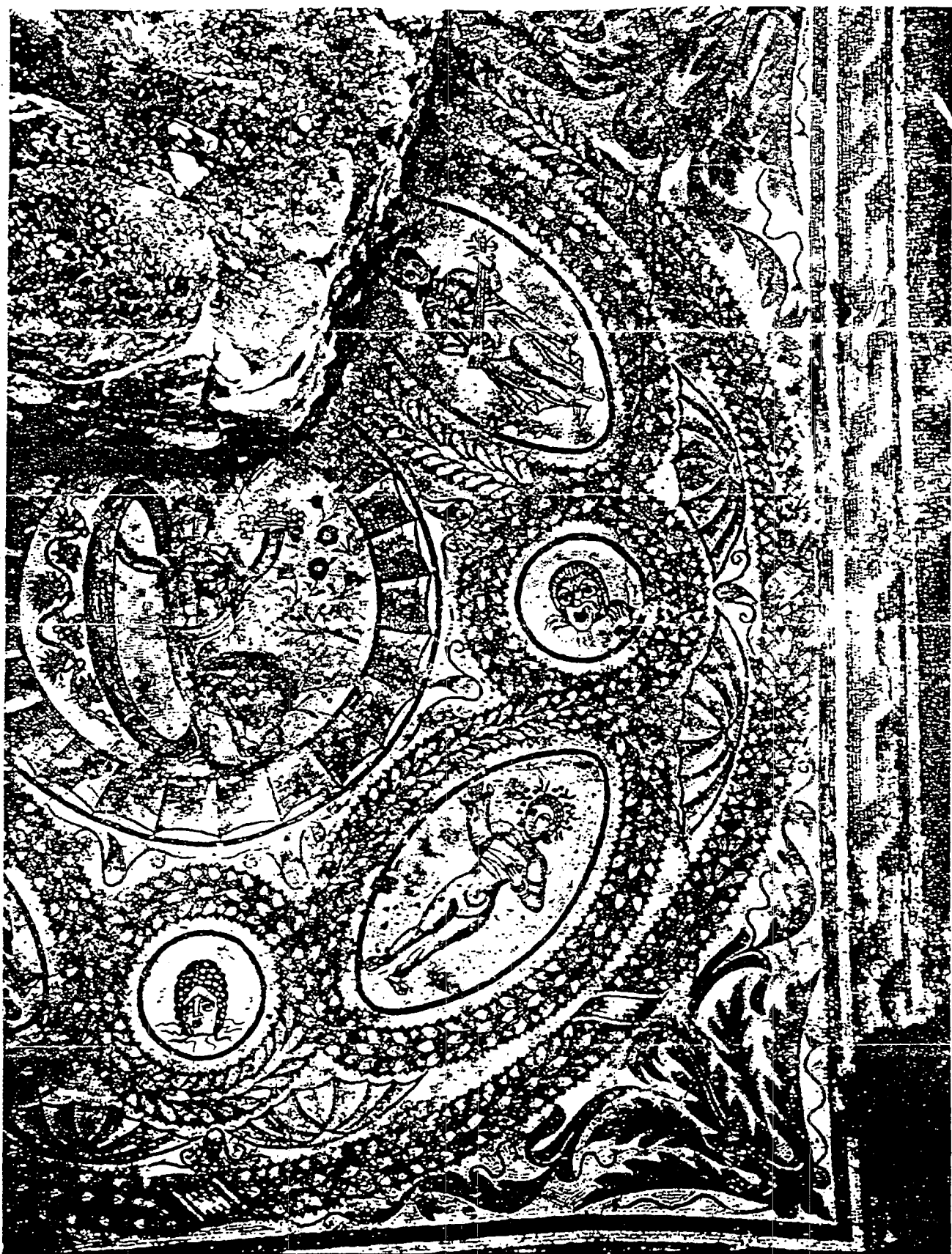


Fig. 46 Aion and Seasons (?) (Hippo Regius)



Fig. 47 Annus (Dougga).





Fig. 48 Tellus (Carthage)



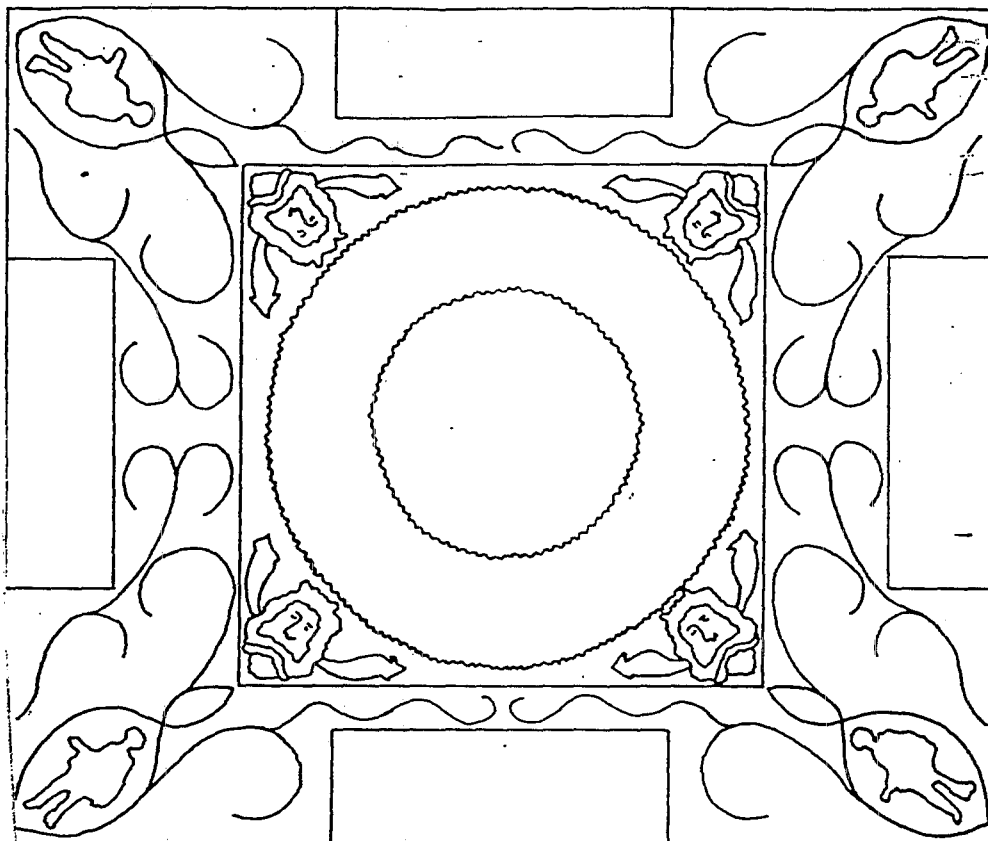


Fig. 48b Reconstruction drawing of Tellus pavement  
with Seasons

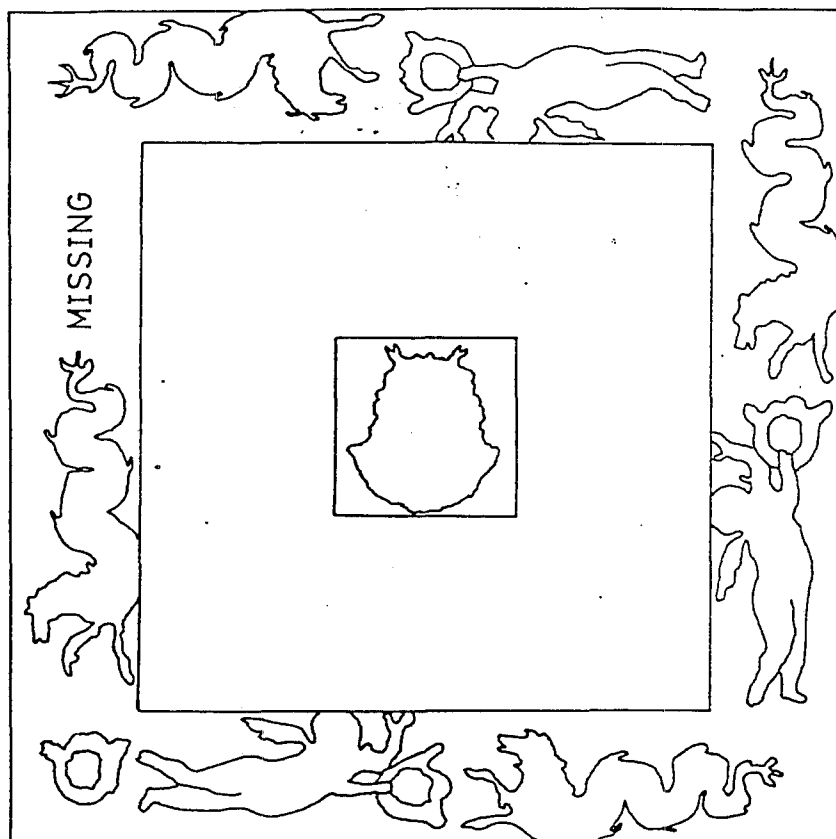


Fig. 49a Reconstruction drawing (El Haouria)



Fig. 49b Seasonal Putti (El Haouria).

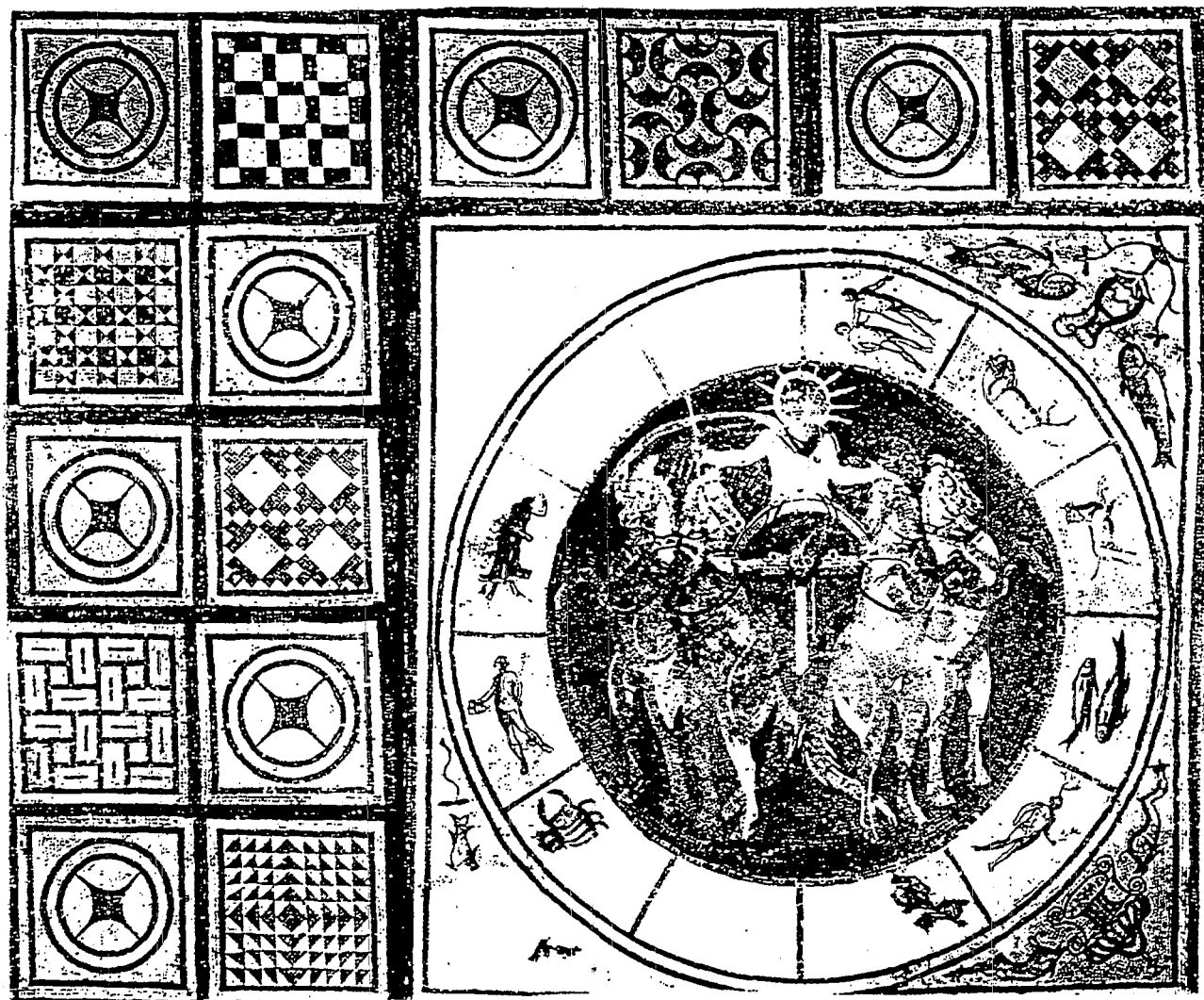


Fig. 50 Sun-God in Chariot (Münster)

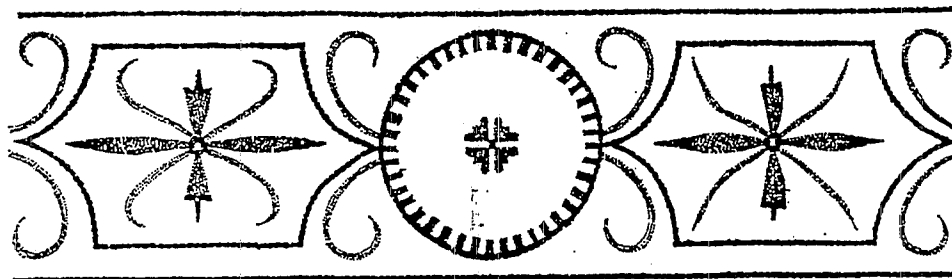


Fig. 51 TYPE I Triumph of Neptune (La Chebba)

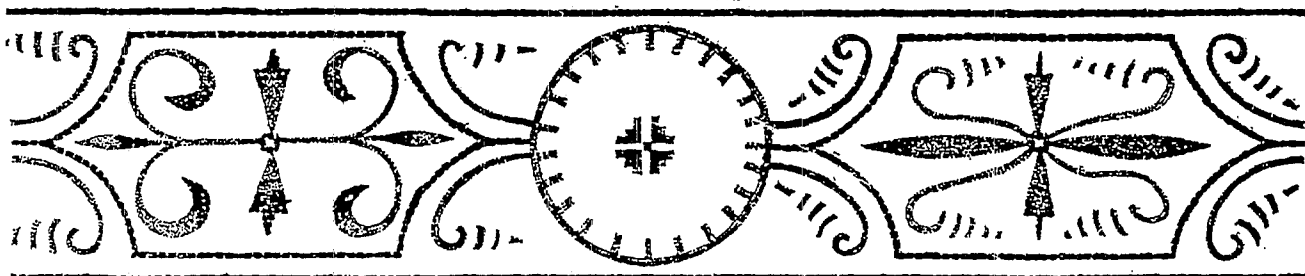


Fig. 52 TYPE II  
Mosaic of the Child Dionysus and Seasonal Plants

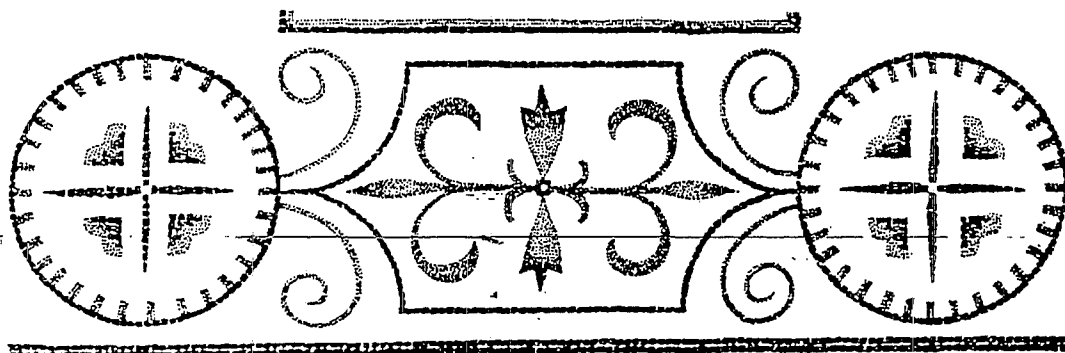


Fig. 53 TYPE III Triumph of Neptune (Acholla)

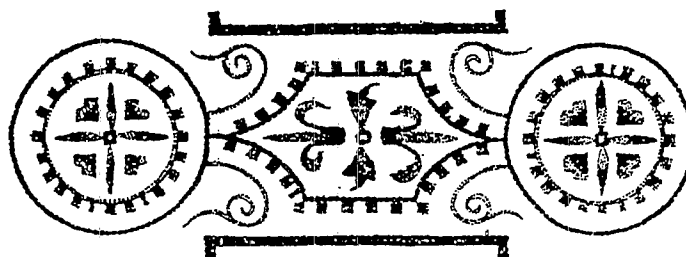


Fig. 54 TYPE IV Mosaic of the Months and Seasons (El Djem)

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Alföldi, A. "From the Aion Plutonium of the Ptolemies to the Saeculum Frugiferum of the Roman Emperors." in Greece and the Eastern Mediterranean in Ancient History and Pre-History: Studies Presented to Fritz Schachermeyr on the Occasion of his Eightieth Birthday, ed., K. H. Heinzl. (Berlin 1977) 1-30.
- Balmelle, Catherine, Michèle Blanchard-Lemée, Jeanine Christophe, et al., eds. Le Décor Géométrique de la Mosaïque Romaine Répertoire Graphique et Descriptif des Compositions Linéaires et Isotropes (Paris 1985).
- Balty, J. "Mosaïque de Ge et de Saisons à Apamée." Syria 50 (1973) 311-347.
- Baratte, F. Catalogue des Mosaïques Romaines et Paléochrétiennes du Musée du Louvre (Paris 1978).
- Blake, M. E. "Roman Mosaics of the Second Century in Italy." MAAR 73 (1936) 64-274.
- Boeselager Dela von. Antike Mosaiken in Sizilien. Hellenismus und Römische Kaizerzeit 3 Jahrhundert v. Chr. 3 Jahrhundert n. Chr. (Rome 1983)
- Brendel, O. "Dionysiaca." RöMitt 48 (1933) 153-181.
- Camps-Fabrer, H. L'Olivier et l'huile dans l'Afrique Romaine (Algiers 1953).
- Clarke, J. R. Roman Black - and - White Figural Mosaics. (New York 1979).
- Daremberg, C. H. and E-DM Saglio Dictionnaire des Antiquités Grecques et Romaines (Paris 1900).
- Dumezil, G. Fêtes Romaines d'été et d'automne (Paris 1975).

Dunbabin, K. M. D. "The Triumph of Dionysus on Mosaics in North Africa." PBSR 39 (1971) 52-65.

\_\_\_\_\_. The Mosaics of Roman North Africa Studies in Iconography and Patronage (Oxford 1978).

-----, "The Victorious Charioteer on Mosaics and Related Monuments." AJA 86 (1982) 65-89.

-----, "Triclinium and Stibadium." in Dining in a Classical Context ed. W. J. Slater (Ann Arbor 1991) 121-146

Duval, Yvette ed. Mosaïque Romaine Tardive. L'iconographie du temps. Les Programmes Iconographiques des Maisons Africaines. Paris n.d.

Edwards, C. "Greek Votive Reliefs to Pan and the Nymphs." Diss. New York Institute of Fine Arts, 1985.

Farnell, L. W. Cults of the Greek States v. 4 (Oxford 1907).

Foucher, L. "Le Char de Dionysos" La Mosaïque Greco-Romaine Colloques Internationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique Paris 1963 (1965) Vol. II.

-----, "La Representation du Genie de l'année sur les Mosaïques." Mos. Rom. Tardives.

-----, La Maison de la Procession Dionysiaque a El Djem (Paris 1963)

Fournet-Pilipenko, H. "Sarcophages romains de Tunisie." Karthago 11 (1961-1962) 77-163.

Fuchs, W. Der Vorbilder der neuattischen Reliefs (Berlin 1955)

Gage, Jean. "Actiaca." MEFR 53 (1936) 37-100.

Gauckler, P. Inventaire des Mosaïques de la Gaule et de l'Afrique, II : Afrique Proconsulaire (Tunisie) (Paris 1910)

Gozlan, S. "Les Pavements en Mosaïque de la Maison de Neptune à Acholla-Botria-Tunisie." MonPiot 59 (1974) 71-135.

-----, "Deux Motifs de Bordure sur des Mosaïques de Byzacène." Karthago 17 (1976) 153-184

Hannestad, N. Roman Art and Imperial Policy (Aarhus 1986)

Hanfmann, G. M. A. The Season Sarcophagus in Dumbarton Oaks v. 1-2, (Cambridge 1951).

Harrison, E. Agora 11 (Princeton 1965).

-----, "Alkamenes' Sculptures for Hephaesteion." AJA 81 (1977) 265-287.

Havelock, C. M. "Archaistic Reliefs of the Hellenistic Period" AJA 68 (1964) 44-58

Hild, J.-A. s. v. "Horai" Dictionnaire des antiquités Grecques et Romaines (Paris 1900)

Hinks, R. Myth and Allegory in Ancient Art (London, Liechtenstein 1968).

Lassere, J-M. Ubique Populus (Paris 1977)

Lassus, J. "La Mosaïque Romaine; Organisation des Surfaces." CMGR II.

-----, "Venus Marine." CMGR I 175-189.

Lattimore, S. The Marine Thiasos in Greek Sculpture. (Los Angeles 1976).

Lavin, I. "The Hunting Mosaics of Antioch and their Sources." DOP 17 (1963) 181-282.

Lehmann, K. "The Dome of Heaven." ArtB 27 (1945) 1-27.

Levi, D. "Aion." Hesperia 13 (1944) 269-314.

-----, "The Allegories of the Months in Classical Art." ArtB 23 (1941) 251-291.

- , Antioch Mosaics Pavements (Princeton 1947).
- Long, C. R. "The Gods of the Months in Ancient Art" AJA 93 (1989) 589-595.
- The Twelve Gods of Greece and Rome (Leiden 1987).
- Mattingly, H. Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum v. I (London 1968).
- Merlin, A. "Mosaïque de Bir-el-Ksour (Region de Kairouan)." in Mosaïques de Tunisie (Tunis 1976).
- Ovadiah, Asher. Geometric and Floral Patterns in Ancient Mosaics (Rome 1980).
- Parke, Herbert W. Festivals of the Athenians: Aspects of Greek and Roman Life (Ithaca 1977).
- Parlasca, Kl. Die Römischen Mosaiken in Deutschland (Berlin 1959).
- Parrish, D. "Annus-Aion in Roman Mosaics." Mos. Rom. Tardive.
- , Season Mosaics of Roman North Africa. (Rome 1984).
- , "Two Mosaics from Roman Tunisia, An African Variation of the Season Theme." AJA 83 (1979) 279-285.
- , "Annus" LIMC I
- Picard, G. Ch. "Observations sur la mosaïque cosmologique de Merida." CMGR II, 119-124.
- , et al. "Mosaïque romaine; l'âge d'or de l'école d'Afrique." (Dossiers de l'archéologie) 31.
- , "Les thermes de thiase Marin à Acholla." AntAf 2 (1968) 95-151.
- , "La Mosaïque Romaine en Afrique à propos de l'ouvrage de K. Dunbabin, The Mosaics of Roman North Africa. Studies in Iconography and Patronage." RA (2/1980) 341-351



- Précheur-Canonge, T. La vie rurale en Afrique d'après les mosaïques (Tunis n.d.).
- Quet, M. H. La Mosaïque Cosmologique de Merida (Publications CNRS, Paris 1981).
- Reinach, S. Répertoire des Peintures Grecques et Romaines (Rome 1970).
- Rice, E. E. The Grand Procession of Ptolemy Philadelphus (Oxford 1983)
- Rostovtzeff, M. I. The Social and Economic History of the Roman Empire v.I. (Oxford 1957).
- Ryberg, Inez S. "Rites of the State Religion in Roman Art." MAAR 22 (1955) 1-217.
- Salomonson, J. W. La mosaïque aux chevaux de l'antiquarium de Carthage. ( Le Haye 1965).
- Schmidt, E. Archaistische Kunst in Griechenland und Rom (Munich 1922)
- Scullard, H. H. Festivals and Ceremonies of the Roman Republic (Ithaca 1981).
- Stern, H. Le Calendrier de 354 (Paris 1953).
- , "Les calendriers Romains Illustrés." ANRW 12.2 (1981) 432-472.
- Taisne, A. -M. "Le thème du Triomphe dans la poésie et l'art sous les Flaviens." Latomus 32 (1973) 485-504.
- Thébert, Y. "Private Life and Domestic Architecture in Roman Africa." A History of Private Life eds. P. Veyne et al. (Harvard 1987) 313-409
- Thomson de Grummond, N. "Pax Augusta and the Horae on the Ara Pacis Augustae." AJA 94 (1990) 669-672.
- Toutain, J. Nouvelles Études de Mythologie et d'Histoire des Religions Antiques (Paris 1935)

- Toynbee, J. "Some Notes on Artists in the Roman World." Latomus 9 (1950) 389-394.
- Versnel, H. S. Triumphus. An inquiry into the origin, development and meaning of the Roman Triumph (Leiden 1970).
- Voûte, P. "Notes sur l'iconographie d'Océan à propos d'une fontaine a mosaïques découverte a Nole (Campanie)." MEFRA 84 (1972) 639-674.
- Webster, J. C. The Labours of the Months in Antique and Medieval Art to the End of the Twelfth Century (Princeton 1938).
- White, K. Agricultural Implements of the Roman World (Cambridge 1967).
- Wissowa, s. v. "Neptunus" Lexikon der Griechischen und Römischen Mythologie (Leipzig 1909)
- Yacoub, M. Le Musée du Bardo (Tunis 1982).

ABBREVIATIONS

<u>CMGR I</u>	=	<u>La Mosaïque Greco-Romaine. Colloques Internationaux du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique</u> Paris, 1963 (1965).
<u>CMGR II</u>	=	<u>La Mosaïque Greco-Romaine II. Deuxième Colloque International pour l'étude de la mosaïque antique</u> Vienne, 1971 (Paris 1975).
Dunbabin <u>MRNA</u>	=	Dunbabin, K. M. D. <u>The Mosaics of Roman North Africa: Studies in Iconography and Patronage</u> (Oxford 1978).
Hanfmann <u>SSDO</u>	=	Hanfmann, G. M. A. <u>The Season Sarcophagus in Dumbarton Oaks</u> 2 vols. (Cambridge 1951).
<u>Inv. Mos. Tun.</u>	=	Gauckler, P. <u>Inventaire des Mosaïques de la Gaule et de l'Afrique, II : Afrique Proconsulaire (Tunisie)</u> (Paris 1910)
Levi <u>Allegories</u>	=	"The Allegories of the Months in Classical Art" <u>ArtB.</u> 23(1941) 251-291.

- Mos. Rom. Tardive = Duval, Y. Mosaïque Romaine Tardive. L'Iconographie du Temps. Les Programmes Iconographiques des Maisons Africaines. (Paris 1981)
- Parrish SMRNA = Parrish, D. Season Mosaics of Roman North Africa (Rome 1984).
- Précheur-Canonge, La Vie rurale = Précheur-Canonge T., La Vie Rurale en Afrique d'après les mosaïques (Tunis n.d.).
- Reinach RPGR = Reinach, S. Répertoire des Peintures Grecques et Romaines (Rome 1970).
- Stern Calendrier = Stern, H. Le Calendrier de 354. Étude sur son texte et ses illustrations (Paris 1953).
- Versnel Triumphus = Versnel, H. S. Triumphus. An Inquiry into the Origin, Development and Meaning of the Roman Triumph (Leiden 1970).