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Address / Adres:

Bursa Uludağ University / Bursa Uludağ Üniversitesi  
Faculty of Art and Sciences / Fen Edebiyat Fakültesi  
Department of Archaeology / Arkeoloji Bölümü  
16059 - Nilüfer / BURSA - TÜRKİYE

Tel & Fax: + 90 224 2941892

E.mail: mosaicsjournal@gmail.com  
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# Roman Villa of Rabaçal, Penela, Portugal

A Mediterranean Production Centre and Palatial Home with Mosaic Floors from the Late Antiquity in the Territory of the Ciuitas of Conimbriga and the Lands of Sicó

## Rabaçal Roma Villası, Penela, Portekiz

Conimbriga Kentleri ve Sicó Toprakları Bölgesinde Geç Antik Dönemden Bir Akdeniz Üretim Merkezi ve Mozaik Tabanlı Saray Evi

Miguel PESSOA\* - Ana Luísa Ravara MENDES\*\* - Elsa SIMÕES\*\*\* - Sónia VICENTE\*\*\*\*

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### Abstract

*Considering that the word Villa at the same time designated an architectural structure and a land structure, at least three architectural types of Farm House or Pars Rustica are known in western Roman Villae (LEVEAU, BUFFAT, 2008, pp. 134- 135). The first type presents a previously established and highly architectural regular plan, with the buildings dedicated to production contiguous to the house, which was built with a centred plan. This type is traditionally considered as characteristic of the Mediterranean area, as it is the case of the Villa of Torre de Palma, Monforte, in the south of Portugal, dating from the beginning of the fourth century AD. This Villa is organized around three courtyards (one, integrating the pars urbana, another, connecting with the pars rustica, which is implemented around a third larger courtyard). The second type, also considered as a work of architecture and used as a model for in rure constructions in North Gaulle, presents non-contiguous agricultural buildings, although these are arranged in a regular form along a wide rectangular courtyard, with the palatial house of the Villa, normally integrating the baths, erected on one of the smaller sides of the rectangle, in an axial position. Thus, if on one hand the non-contiguous distribution of the constructions that integrate the components of the Villa of Rabaçal (palatial house with mosaic floors, baths, spring nucleus, farm house and workshops of several professions), dated from the middle of the fourth century AD, is similar to the pars rustica model of the second type, on the other hand it seems to be mainly related with what will be mentioned next, since it is a joint plan of constructions that, despite being very organized, is not confined to a geometrized design. In this third type, constructions are divided, in different planes, without regularity, in a space that is not clearly delimited and to which converge alternative paths and different crossings. This provisional classification of the type of location and distribution of farm and residential houses originates from the fact that, in many cases, the Villae have been transformed into luxurious houses without agricultural production facilities.*

**Keywords:** Roman Villa of Rabaçal, Conímbriga, Late Antiquity, architecture, mosaics.

\* Miguel Pessoa, Archaeologist, Coordinator, Museum of the Roman Villa of Rabaçal, Municipality of Penela, Portuguese Museum Network, Curator of the Monographic Museum of Conímbriga, General Management of Cultural Heritage, Portugal.

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8077-1654>. E-mail: [pesmig@sapo.pt](mailto:pesmig@sapo.pt)

\*\* Ana Luísa Ravara Mendes, Conservation and Restoration Technician in the Museum of the Roman Villa of Rabaçal, Portugal.

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8979-9856>. E-mail: [ana.ravara@cm-penela.pt](mailto:ana.ravara@cm-penela.pt)

\*\*\* Elsa Simões, Archaeologist, Museum of the Roman Villa of Rabaçal, Municipality of Penela, Portuguese Museum Network, Portugal.

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1057-1662>. E-mail: [caluchasimoes@sapo.pt](mailto:caluchasimoes@sapo.pt)

\*\*\*\* Sónia Vicente, Senior Technician of Archaeology in the Municipality of Penela, Portugal.

ORCID ID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7264-1451>. E-mail: [sonia.vicente@cm-penela.pt](mailto:sonia.vicente@cm-penela.pt)

Translation: Ana Marília Gonçalves Ferreira, E-mail: [anamariliaferreira@gmail.com](mailto:anamariliaferreira@gmail.com)

## Öz

*Villa kelimesinin bir mimari yapı ve aynı zamanda bir arazi yapısı olarak tanımlandığı göz önünde bulundurulduğunda, batı Roma Villası'nda en az üç mimari tipte Çiftlik Evi veya Pars Rustica olduğu bilinmektedir. İlk tip, daha önceden belirlenmiş ve son derece düzenli bir plan sunmakta olup, merkezi bir plan çerçevesinde evlerin bitişiğindeki üretime tahsis edilmiş binaları olan yapılardır. Bu tip, Portekiz'in güneyinde Monforte'de, MS 4. yüzyılın başlarından kalma Torre de Palma Villası örneğinde olduğu gibi, geleneksel olarak Akdeniz bölgesinin karakteristik villa tipi olarak kabul edilmektedir. Bu villa üç avlu etrafında düzenlenmiştir (biri pars urbanaya bağlanan, diğeri ise üçüncü büyük avlu etrafında konumlandırılan pars rustica ile birleşen). Kuzey Galya'daki kırsal yapılarda model olarak kullanılan ve bir mimarlık eseri olarak da kabul edilen ikinci tip, bitişik olmayan tarımsal yapılar sunar; ancak bunlar, geniş bir dikdörtgen avlu boyunca düzenli bir biçimde düzenlenmiş olsalar da, normalde dikdörtgenin küçük yanlarından birine konumlandırılmış olan hamamları aksel bir pozisyonda birleştiren villa tipidir. Bu nedenle, bir yandan, MS dördüncü yüzyılın ortalarından kalma Rabaçal Villası'nın bileşenlerini oluşturan yapıların bitişik olmayan dağılımı (mozaik zeminli saray evi, hamamlar, pınar kaynağı çiftlik evi ve çeşitli işlikler), ikinci türün pars rustica modeline benziyorsa da, daha sonra anlatılacağı gibi, temelde çok organize bir şema sunsa da geometriyi bir tasarımla sınırlı olmayan ortak bir yapı planını göstermektedir. Bu üçüncü tipte, yapılar farklı düzlemlerde, düzenli olmadan, açıkça sınırlanılmayan ve alternatif yolları ve farklı geçişleri birleştiren bir alanda bölünmüştür. Çiftlik ve konut evlerinin konum tipine ve dağılımına ilişkin bu geçici sınıflandırma, birçok durumda Villa'nın tarımsal üretim tesisleri olmadan lüks evlere dönüştürülmüş olmasından kaynaklanmaktadır.*

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Rabaçal Roma Villası, Conímbriga, Geç Antik, mimari, mozaikler.



Figure 1a  
Corner mosaic floor, between the north-west and west corridors from the *peristylum* of the *Pars urbana* of the Roman Villa of Rabaçal, with a pitcher and two dolphins.  
Drawing: José Luís Madeira 2005.

## Some Considerations about the Farm House and the Architecture of the Components of the Roman *Villa* of Rabaçal

### A Production Centre and Palatial House with Mosaic Floors of the Late Antiquity in the Territory of the *Ciuitas* of Conímbriga

#### Introduction

The Roman provinces of Hispania (*Lusitania*, *Tarraconensis*, *Baetica*, *Gallaecia*, *Carthaginensis*, and *Mauretania Tingitana*) are undoubtedly those in which a greater number of rural sites were catalogued and registered as *Villae*. The data for the Iberian Peninsula is mainly related to the *pars urbana*. The chronology of these *Villae* extends from the end of the Republican Era, in the first century BC,

to the beginning of the fifth century AD (Alarcão 1998: 107-110; Gorges 2008: 28). There are about 300 *Villae* registered in Portugal and Spain (Gorges 2008: 28). In addition, according to recent data, the inventory number of sites where Roman mosaics were identified (symptomatic of the presence of a seigniorial residence in the city or in the countryside) is, only in Portugal, of more than 254 sites (Abraços 2005: 15).

“It is possible to observe that the *Villae*, built or remodelled from the end of the third and beginning of the fourth centuries AD, despite being less numerous than in the preceding period, are in most cases larger and richer due to their dimension, a consequence of the continuous phenomenon of land concentration. This “Constantinian Renaissance” sporadically extended to the first decades of the fifth century. These “late” *Villae*, some with a very short life, despite the material and artistic luxury of their installations, are one of the most original phenomena of the late Roman colonization.

The Late *Villae* of the Peninsula escape in many cases the stereotype and present a great diversity, taking life forms and elements typical of a certain lifestyle in the Imperial Court (*Aula*), whose archetype it is possible to find in the Sicilian *Villa* of Piazza Armerina. These (sometimes excessively monumental) country half-palaces, half-farms are not separated from the world. On the contrary, they are the reflection of a new “socio-economic” typology linked to typical Roman art forms and lifestyles. They are also a reflection of the economic and political power of the upper social classes that ensure or seek to ensure the continuity of Rome in the provinces, at a time when it starts to be outlined, after the German invasions of 409, the agrarian and political system that will succeed the Roman model and which will be that of the High Middle Ages” (Gorges 2008: 29).

### Types of *Villae*

The Late Roman *Villa* of Rabaçal, in the territory of the *Ciuitas* of Conímbriga, *Conuentus Scallabitanus*, province of Lusitania, is presented, according to the typology table introduced by Gérard (Gorges 2008: 31 fig. 1), not as an example of a linear *Villa*, nor of a block *Villa*, with a *peristylum*, but rather as a type of palatial *Villa*, a monumental and complex sub-type. It is a radial construction, around a central *peristylum*, with the development of several architectural sets with mosaic floors (Figs. 1a-c).



Figure 1b  
Mosaic floor in the central panel from the *triclinium* of the *Pars urbana* of the Roman *Villa* of Rabaçal. It contains stone and glass and it is a pioneer of the use of stained glass. Photography: Delfim Ferreira 1990.



Figure 1c  
Mosaic of Autumn from the west corridor from the *peristylum* of the *Pars urbana* from the Roman *Villa* of Rabaçal. It includes stone and glass tesserae, particularly used in the jewellery representation, perhaps to suggest its value.  
Photography: Delfim Ferreira 1990.

This model was implemented particularly during the period of the tetrarchy and subsequent periods (Figs. 2-6).

Types	Villa linéaire			Villa-bloc à péristyle		Villa aulique	
Sous types	A Simple	B à galerie	C galerie et tours d'angle	D à plan simple	E à plan composite	F monumentale simple	G monumentale complexe
Variantes	1 à plan basilical	vérande ouverte	intégrées	carré	bipartite	sutour d'un péristyle	à juxtaposition
	2 à couloirs transversaux	corridor ouverte	saillantes	rectangulaire	tripartite	developpement linéaire	à effet d'agement
	3	panoramique fermée	formant pavillons	trapézoïdal	cour d'honneur	à developpement exagéré d'un ou plusieurs ensembles architecturaux d'appart. (potiques, pièces de réception, thermes, temple privé, etc...)	
Type d'exploitation	petite	petite/ moyenne	moyenne/ grande	grande	très grande		

Figure 2  
Layout plan typology: linear *Villa*, block *Villa*, with *peristylum*, and palatial *Villa* (Gorges 2008: 31 fig. 1).

However, although it incorporates a palatial house, this *Villa* is like all the others, bringing together in its various components the function of (temporary) home and (permanent) production centre (Figs. 7-11).

“In addition to a fashion phenomenon, inspired by the Imperial Court (*Aula*), this type of *Villa* can be considered as a greater illustration of the competition to which the elites of the Low-Empire dedicated themselves, through the luxury display of their homes. Faced with the decline of municipal life, it is in the halls, in the courtrooms, in the *triclinia* and even in the thermal baths of the large private residences that, at various levels, a large part of the businesses are conducted. This model is present, for example, in Italy, Hispania, South Gaul and Sicily” (Gorges 2008: 33).



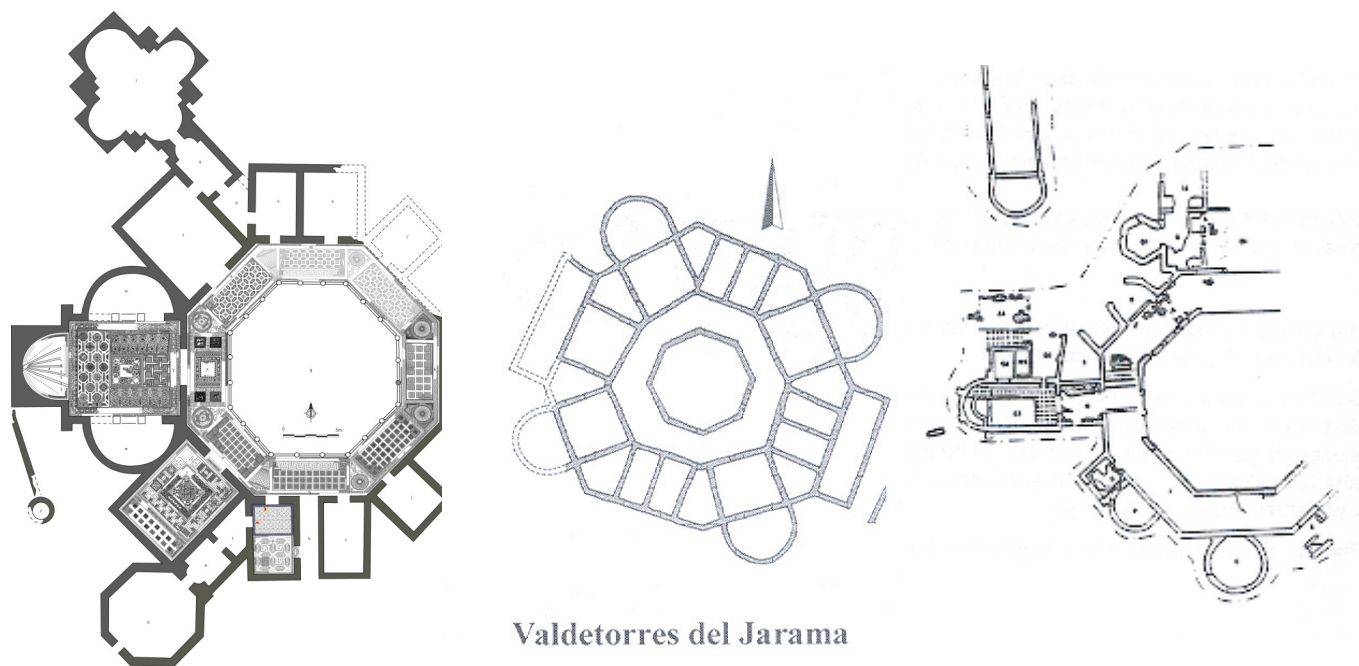


Figure 3  
Octagonal layout plan of the *Villa* of Rabaçal, Penela (Portugal), Valdeterres de Jarama, Madrid (Spain) and Palazzo Pignano, Cremona (Italy) (Gorges 2008: 43 fig. 6a).

The elaborate construction plan of the *pars urbana* of Rabaçal, in interconnection with the various components of this *Villa*, makes it, like its counterparts of Valdeterres de Jarama<sup>1</sup> (Madrid, Spain), and of Palazzo Pignano (Milan, Italy), a symbol of possession, source of income and a place of retreat (*recessus*) dedicated to relaxation and pleasure, within the framework of the new manifestations of artistic expression that were developed during the fourth century AD (Maciel 1996: 157).

In the eyes of the owner, the pride of displaying in the centre of the property the luxury of the residential and baths area would be equated with the pleasure of showing the logical disposition of the places dedicated to agricultural and livestock production, as well as those related with metallurgy, textile, the production of building ceramics and regional crockery, dairy products and other activities.

“But the attention has been essentially devoted to the *pars urbana* or the palatial house of the *Villae*, and the constructions devoted to agricultural activities, which give importance to the former, are the least known component. In fact, the word *Villa* designated at the same time an architectural and land structure” (Leveau - Buffat 2008: 134).

There is little left of the *pars rustica*<sup>2</sup> of the Villa of Rabaçal from the middle of the fourth century (whose archaeological discovery began in 1987, continued in 1989 and 1996, and resumed between 2002-2013 and then between 2014-2017, according to Component 4 of the Safeguard Plan (Pessoa et al. 2008: 676-679)).

1 Some authors interpret this octagonal structure as belonging not to the *pars urbana* of a *Villa* but to a *macellum*, *mansio* or *hospitium*. It is also important to note the similarity of this octagonal architectural with that of the *pars urbana* of the Roman *Villa* of Can Farrerons (Premià de Mar, Maresme) (Cf. Doria - Monteagudo - Piqueras s. d.: 171 fig. 2; 182)

2 It was not possible, during the useful time defined for the delivery of this work, to consult Alexandra Chavarría Arnau's monograph, (Arnau 2007), “ El final de las “villae” en Hispania, siglos IV-VII D.C.”, with structure examples of the *pars rusticae* of late *Villae* from Hispania (also containing the site inventory); the same occurred with Chris Wickham's work, *Framing the Early Middle Ages*, (Wickham 2005), considered fundamental for the vision of the social relations between the workers and the *dominus*. We put them together in bibliography.

As mentioned, the excavation revealed evidences of what was interpreted as being the north extension of the Agricultural Courtyard. This space could include corrals – for example, sheep and goats are adapted to the *pastio agrestis* and do not need quality constructions. It is also possible to state that very little remains of the Roman agricultural installation, rustic propriety or farm type, implemented in this same place, perhaps in the middle of the third century AD (Pessoa 2011: 177).

It should be noted that the Emperor Décio's milestone, dated from 250-252 (Mantas 1985: 159-179), in the Permanent Exhibition on the ground floor of the Museum, and discovered along the Roman road (connecting *Sellium*, Tomar, to *Aeminium*, Coimbra, while going through *Conímbriga*, Condeixa-a-Velha), on the east side of the Rabaçal Valley, more than 500 metres from the *Villa*, can correspond to a road improvement and to the recognition of the potential of the local agriculture that, at the same time, resulted in the improvement of the economic conditions in this area (Mantas 1985: 179). The implementation model of dispersed settlement type (Alarcão 1998: 92), used in the *Villa* of Rabaçal and in the territory of the *ciuitas* of Conímbriga, was elaborated in Italy at the beginning of the Imperial Period and spread throughout the west provinces (Alarcão 1998: 107-110; Gorges 2008: 137) until Late Antiquity. This last period was, for a long time, presented as a phase of settlement decline and production disorganization in the fields. In this period, it is included the fourth century, which was considered, for a long time, as one of decadence of the Roman Empire. And if, for the State, it was undeniably a period of political and financial crisis, the truth is that there must have been great and solid private fortunes. This is deduced from the architectural and decorative richness of many of the *Villae* built in the second half of the fourth century (Alarcão 2003)<sup>3</sup>.

### Types of *pars rusticae*

At least three architectural types are known of the Farm House or *Pars Rustica* for the western Roman *Villae* (Leveau - Buffat 2008: 135). The first type presents a previously established and highly architectural regular plan, with the buildings dedicated to production contiguous to the house, built with a centred plan. This type is traditionally considered as characteristic of the Mediterranean space, as it is the case of the *Villa* of Torre de Palma, Monforte, in the south of Portugal, dating from the beginning of the fourth century AD. This *Villa* is organized around three courtyards (one, integrating the *pars urbana*, another, connecting with the *pars rustica*, which is implemented around a third larger courtyard) (Fig. 7).

The second type, also considered as a work of architecture and used as a model for *in rure* constructions in North Gaulle (Leveau - Buffat 2008), presents non-contiguous agricultural buildings, although these are arranged in a regular form along a wide rectangular courtyard, with the palatial house of the *Villa*, normally integrating the baths, erected on one of the smaller sides of the rectangle, in an axial position (Fig. 8).

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3 Opinion regarding the application to international institutions.

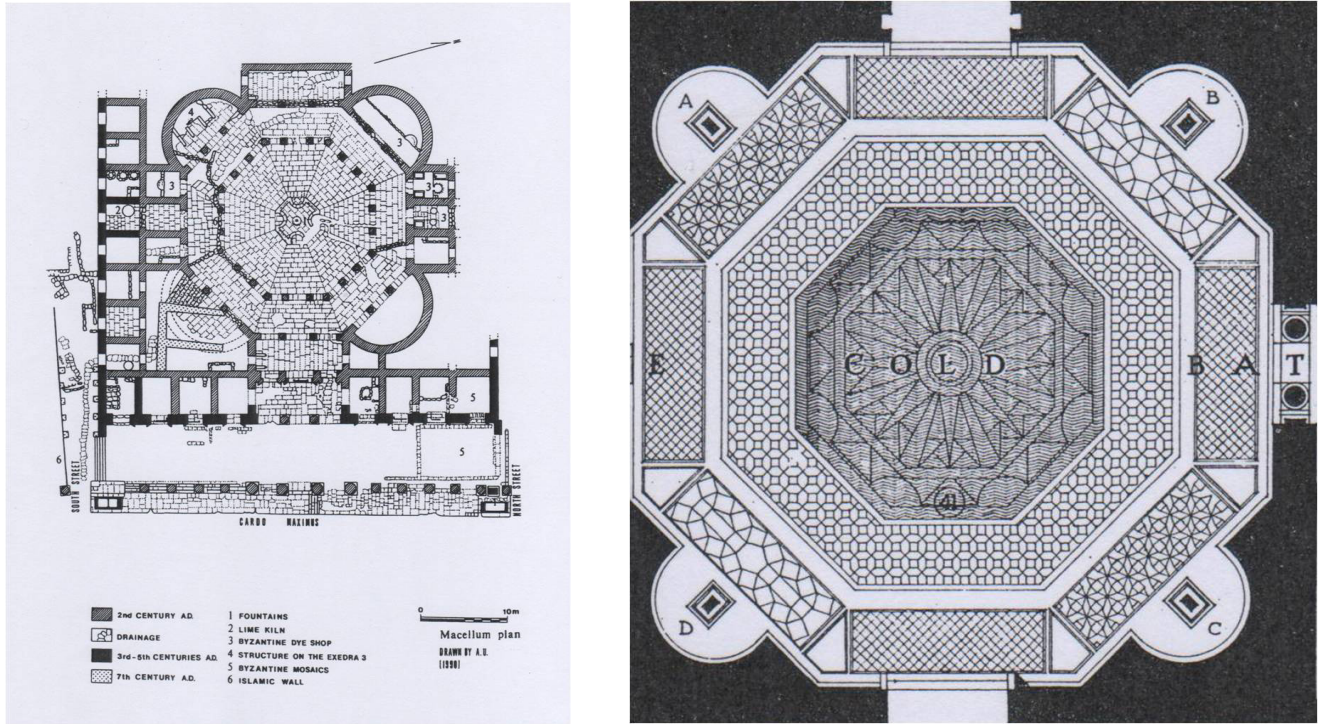


Figure 4  
Polygonal Roman constructions.  
a) Market of Jerasa, Jordan, from the second century AD (Uscatescu - Bueno 1997: 67-88); b) Hall of the *Frigidarium* of Bath C of Antioquia, Turkey, with mosaics of the fourth century AD (Levi 1947: 190 pl. 118).

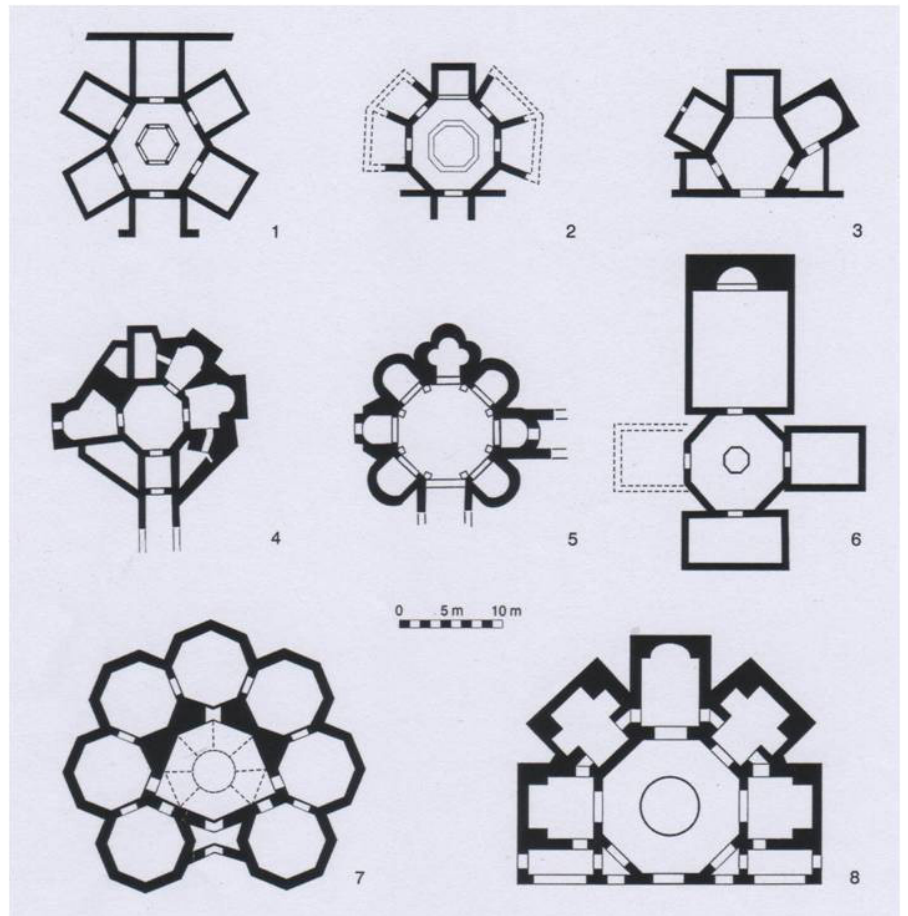


Figure 5  
Roman polygonal constructions. List 9 (Teichner 2008: 481-482 Abb. 272)  
- 1) Abicada, Mexilhoeira grande, Portimão, Algarve, Portugal; 2) Lufton, Somerset, England; 3) Keynsham, Somerset, England; 4) Holcombe, Devon, England; 5) Piazza Armerina, Sicily, Italy; 6) Villa of Santa Rosa, Cordoba, Andalusia, Spain; 7) Las Bovedas, Marbella, Malaga, Andalusia, Spain; 8) Domus Aurea, Rome, Italy.

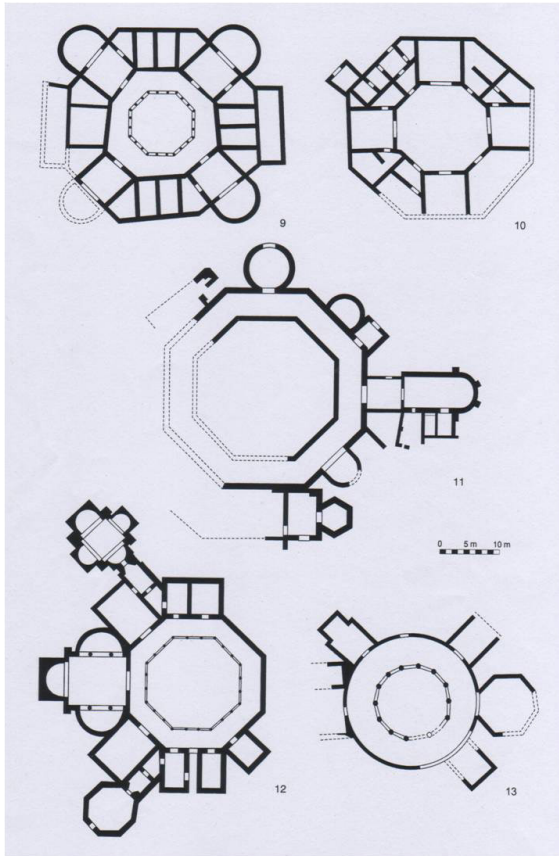


Figure 6  
Polygonal Roman constructions. List 9 (Teichner 2008: 481-482 Abb. 273) - 9) Valdetorres de Jarama, Madrid, Castile-Leon, Spain; 10) Can Farrerons, Maresma, Catalonia, Spain; 11) Palazzo Pignano, Cremona, Italy; 12) Rabaçal, Penela, Coimbra, Beira Litoral, Portugal; 13) Los Baños de la Reina, Calpe, Alicante, Spain.

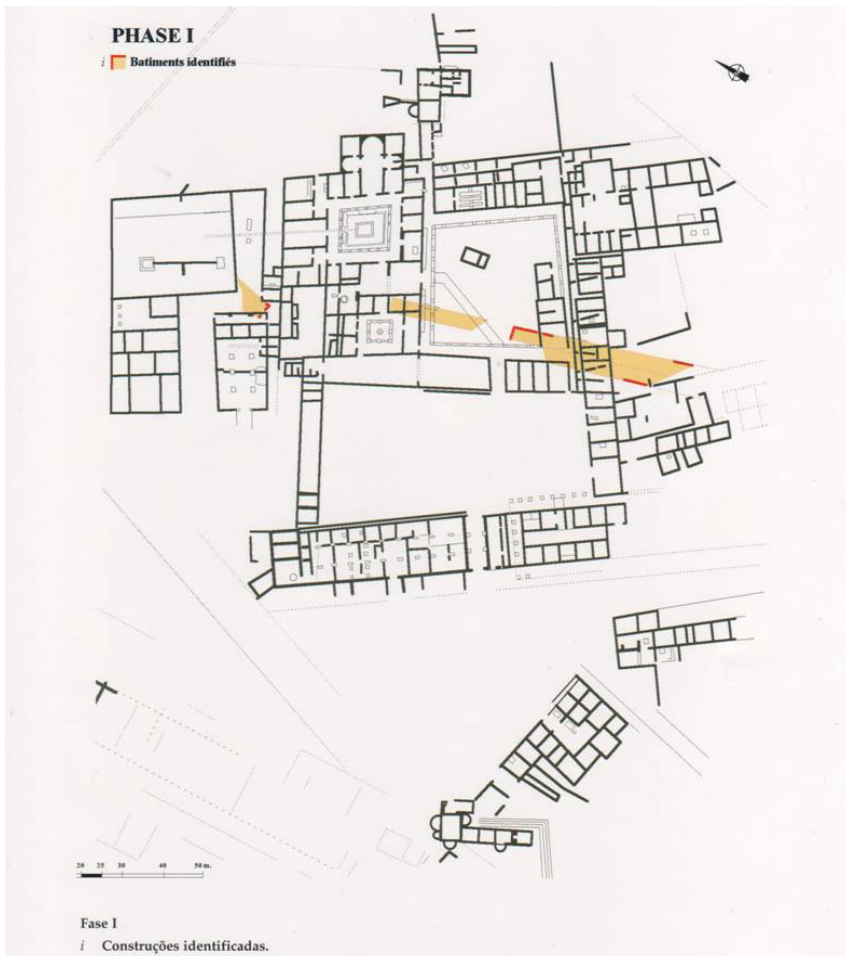
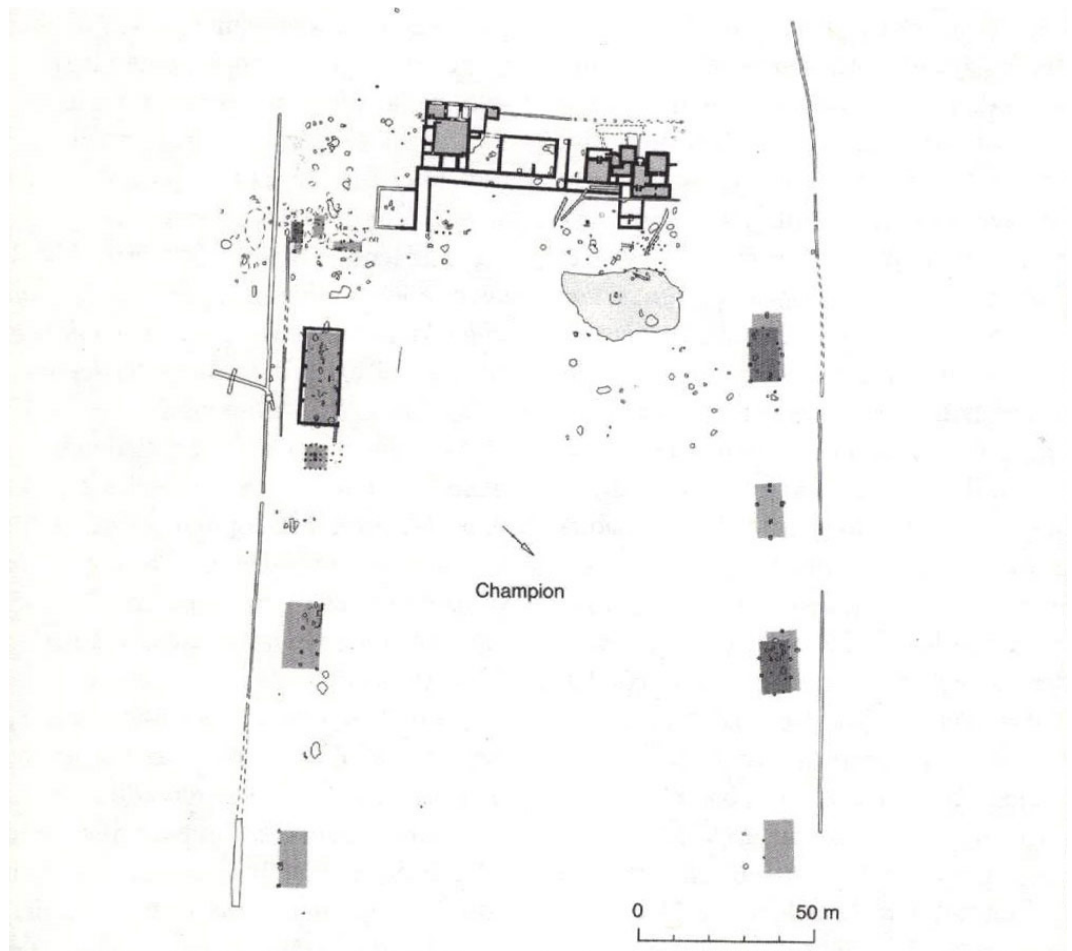


Figure 7  
Layout plan of the *Villa* of Torre de Palma, Monforte, Alentejo, Portugal (Lancha - André 2000).

Figure 8  
Layout plan of *Villa* of Champion, Belgium  
(Leveau - Buffat 2008: 141 fig. 5).

Therefore, if on one hand the non-contiguous distribution of the constructions that integrate the components of the *Villa* of Rabaçal (palatial house, baths, spring nucleus, farm house and workshops of several professions) is similar to the *pars rustica* model of the second type, on the other hand it seems to be mainly related with what will be mentioned next, since it is a joint plan of constructions that, despite being very organized, is not confined to a geometrized design. In this model-type, constructions are divided, in different planes, without regularity, in a space that is not clearly delimited and to which converge alternative paths and different crossings (Figs. 8-11).



In these situations, as it seems to be the case of Rabaçal, the distribution of these constructions may have resulted from both an original choice (Palatial House and Baths) and successive construction plans (Farm House). In this case, the establishment of the chronological data was fundamental for this realisation as the discovery of coins from the third century and, the majority, from the middle and the end of the fourth century, in the 2013 campaign (Report, 2011, Chapter I – Excavation: most representative assets) sustains the interpretation that a farm-type installation or agricultural propriety from the middle of the third century preceded the construction of the palatial house and baths in the beginning of the second half of the fourth century. Therefore, the enlargement or restructuring of the *pars rustica*, equipped with a large agricultural courtyard, a threshing floor, a porch, a kitchen, a barn, a mill, a metallurgy workshop, a loom house and a pottery workshop (this one next to the baths) must be contemporary to the implementation of the *pars urbana* in the middle or second half of the fourth century.

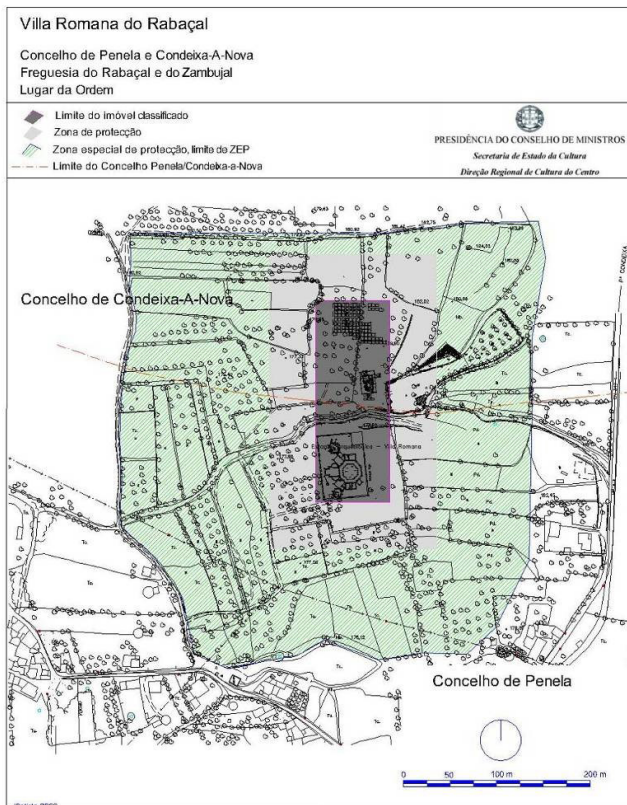
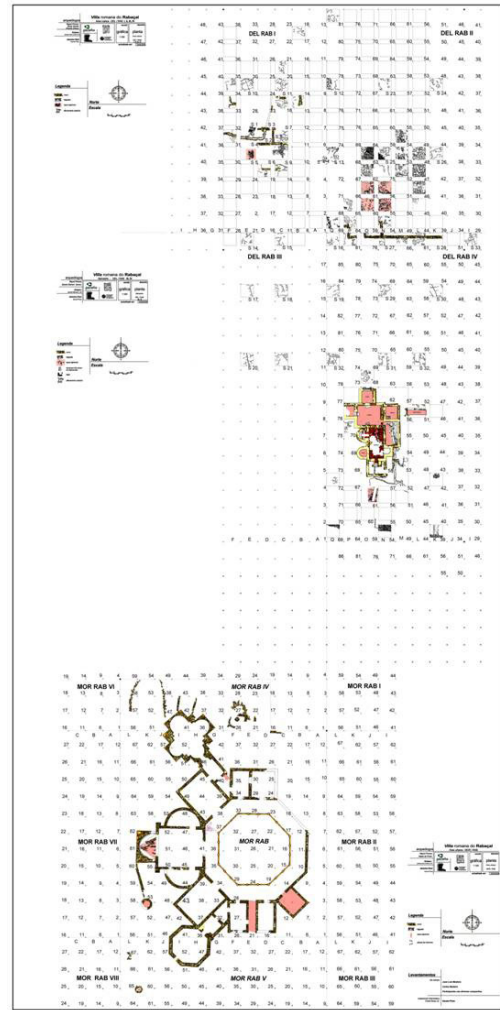
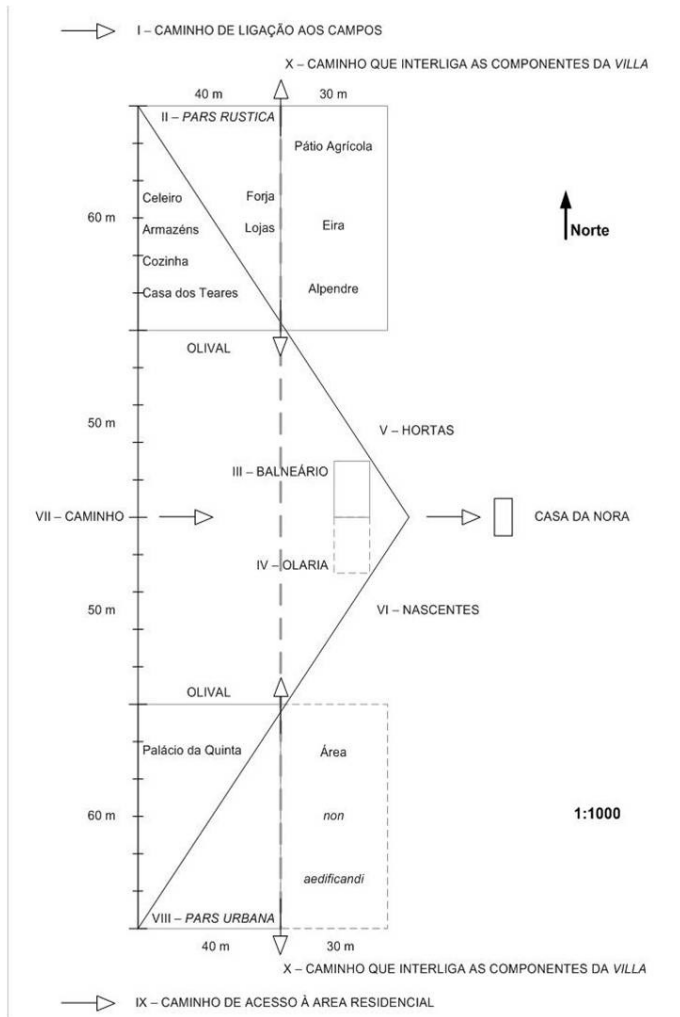


Figure 9  
Schematic proposal with the approximate distribution of the various components of the Roman *Villa* of Rabaçal, clearly visible to each other, since they are close and in different planes, within the same unit: I - Pathways to the property fields or fundus; II - Farm House or *pars rustica*; III - Baths; IV - Pottery workshop; V - Vegetable gardens and irrigation tanks; VI - Springs and watermill house; VII - Connection path from the Baths to the Pottery workshop, the vegetable garden and the springs; VIII - Palatial house of the farm or *Pars urbana*; IX - Connection path to the residential area or *pars urbana*; X - Path that linked the components of the *Villa* (Pessoa 2011: 24 fig. 5g).

Figure 10  
General plan and archaeological square of the Roman *Villa* of Rabaçal. Drawing: José Luís Madeira. 1998. Computerisation: Daniel Pinto. 2010. José Augusto Dias. 2011 (Pessoa 2011: 22 fig. 5e).

Figure 11  
Location plan. Classification process of the Roman *Villa* of Rabaçal as National Monument. Limit of the classified property, Protection Zone and Special Protection Zone. Author: J. Baptista. Regional Management of Culture of the Central Region 2011.

This temporary classification of the type of location and distribution of agricultural and residential constructions (Leveau - Buffat 2008) originates from the fact that, in many cases, the *Villae* were converted into luxurious houses, without facilities for agricultural production.

It seems to be a fact that the property organization in the Roman Empire suffered, during the second century, modifications (Leveau - Buffat 2008: 142), which were displayed in two very distinct ways. "The first is that the *Villa* becomes central for the purpose of rent payments and on the censuses. The fact that servile labour decreases in favour of settlers is translated, as seems to be proven, by the multiplication of sites. The second modification results from a classic process of property concentration for the benefit of the great landlords, who divide their *Villae* into two categories: the *Villae urbanae*, where the lords and families can live, and the *Villae rusticae*, the most numerous, entrusted to a *procurator*, who was assisted by *actores* (replacing the old *Vilicus*, who was assisted by a *Subvilicus*). This way, *Villae* of settlers start to exist in the *fundus* of a *Villa*." (Leveau - Buffat 2008: 142).

## Considerations

Therefore, regarding the constructions related to the agricultural component or *pars rustica* of the Roman *Villa* of Rabaçal, it is important to highlight the fact that here it is possible to observe its continuity and the amplification of its use, while in its proximities, in the *pars urbana* or the lord's house, in the middle of the fourth century, it is also possible to observe the establishment of places assigned to the administration. This evolution of the *Villa* during Late Antiquity, in the sense of its monumentalization, leads to the removal of the agricultural and artisanal facilities of the house. The equipment connected to various production activities (viticulture, olive oil production, cereal farming, livestock, textile, building ceramics and regional crockery, forestry, metallurgy) is installed at some distance from the residential centre and constituted as satellite facilities, ensuring the exploration of the *fundus*.

It is important to note that, in the *Villa* of Prés-Bas from Loupian (Narbonne), its monumentalization led to the disappearance of agricultural and artisanal installations (the separation between production and recreational facilities is already evident in maritime *Villae* in the first century BC) (Leveau - Buffat 2008: 160). The production equipment seems to have been installed on the outside of the residential centre, at about a kilometre away. Even a paleo-Christian church was found, inside the sphere of the property of the *Villa* of Loupian, supposed to have belonged to the same domain (Leveau - Buffat 2008: 143). On the other hand, in Aquitaine, the dissociation of the residential component, reaching the status of a palace, and the component that brings together the production constructions, seems to be, according to Catherine Balmelle, the most frequent case (Balmelle 2001).

As a final point, it is possible to state that the present cycle of archaeological campaigns under way in the Roman *Villa* of Rabaçal focuses on the lesser known component of *Villae* from Late Antiquity. On one hand, these constructions on their own, regardless of the other components to which they are attached, are an objective testimony of the agricultural activity, the basis of the Roman economy in a territory; on the other hand, the way they integrate into the architectural set of Rabaçal can be revealing of the evolution of each of the elements, implemented throughout the *Villa*, and considered an example of *a posteriori* planning,

integrating constructions of previous centuries, and an indicator of the potential and use of the local resources. Therefore, given the advance of the study of the archaeological collections, or of those that allow an objective dating, such as the imported crockery (Quaresma 2011: 96-108), the amphorae (Buraca 2011a: 153-159), the lucernes (Ponte - Miranda 2011: 131-137), the glass (Ferreira 2011: 170-182) and the coins (Pereira et al. 2012), or through the representative collection of pieces, more or less common to all periods of Roman times, such as loom weights, local and regional crockery (Vicente - Simões 2011: 109-121), metal tools (Ponte 2011: 122-130), metallurgical remains (Vieira -Osório 2011: 50-63), as well as through the study of faunal remains (Deus 2011: 39-40; Valente 2011: 36-38), it is possible to discern the type of economic activities present here, focused in two directions. Some of the activities are aimed at collecting products from which the owner obtains income. The other activities concern the service of the *Villa* and the occupation of its inhabitants (who are not all agricultural workers), since the maintenance of the buildings and utensils, the table service of the lord, and the feeding of the labour force needed a large number of staff to whom it was necessary to provide food (Leveau - Buffat 2008: 159-160). Thus, the Roman *Villa* of Rabaçal exhibits an architectural plan only apparently dispersed or multi-nucleated. Its *pars rustica* (Fig. 12) presents itself not only

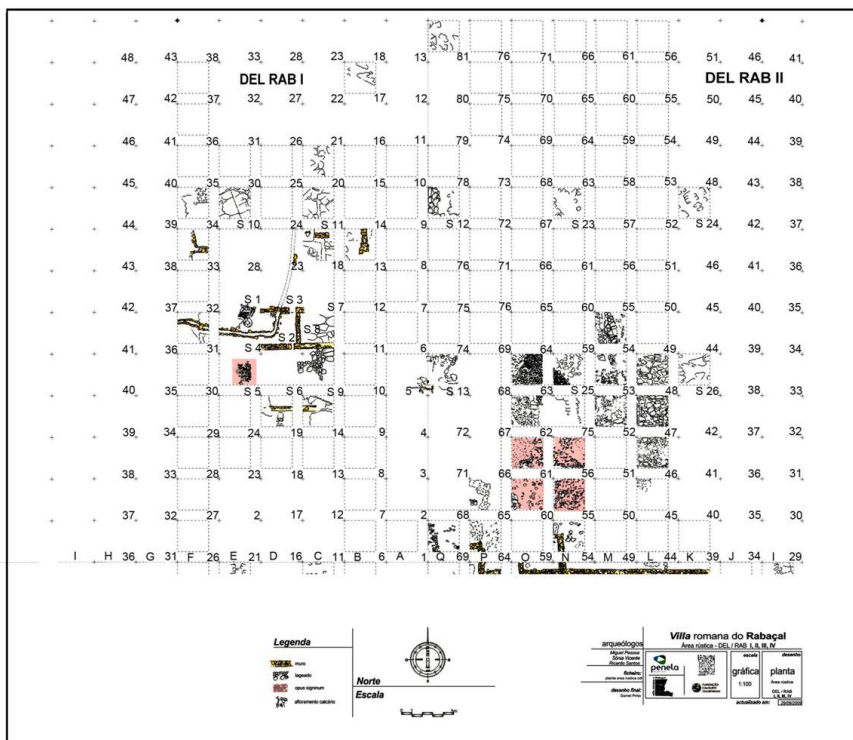


Figure 12  
*Pars rustica* layout plan of the Roman *Villa* of Rabaçal. Archaeological square. Design: José Luís Madeira, 1998. Computerisation: Daniel Pinto, 2010; José Augusto Alves Dias, 2011.

as a centre for agricultural and livestock activities, but also as a centre for various professions (metallurgy, pottery, textiles) and storage of products. Here we find the area where the threshing floor (a) and its porches (b) were installed; the agricultural courtyard (c); the granary (h); the grinding mill; the bread oven; the kitchen (g); the firewood house; the cellar to store wine and oil (h); the salting facility; the loom house (e) and basketry; the annexes of the pottery workshop (i), these next to the Baths; the metallurgy (f); the possible common meal place and the foreman's home (g); the farm workers and servants' quarters (d); the stables and the pens (Figs. 13-15). And, very briefly, it is possible to state this because,



Figure 13

Aerial view of the constituent parcels of the *Villa*. In the foreground, an open archaeological square on the *pars rustica*, where it is possible to observe the area where the threshing floor (a) and its porches (b) were installed; the agricultural courtyard (c); the granary (h); the grinding mill; the bread oven; the kitchen (g); the firewood house; the cellar for wine and olive oil storage; the salting facility; the loom house (e) and basketry; the pottery complex (i), south of the Baths; metallurgy (f); the possible common meal place, the foreman's house (g) and warehouse (h); the craftsmen, agricultural servants and servants' quarters(d); the stables and the pens.

Author: Francisco Pedro. 2008 (Pessoa - Rodrigo 2011: 52 fig. 22).



Figure 14

Reconstitution hypothesis of the *Pars rustica* of the Roman *Villa* of Rabaçal, Penela, Portugal. Author: Pedro Madeira 2011.

as far as the present excavations are concerned, the majority of the concrete structures mentioned have not been uncovered, only some material evidence was found that constitute a clear proof of their existence and the effect of the activities carried out on these infrastructures. And as it is possible to infer, yesterday and today, in the rural world, men and women went out, fulfilling the tasks of the agricultural cultures of the Mediterranean world. And they left the *pars rustica*, taking the nearby or pernicious paths, which led them, far from the Palace, to the

vineyard, the olive grove, the cereal field, the brushwood, the vegetable garden, the beehives, the orchard, the linen field, the willow grove and to the meadow, accompanying the flocks.

Incidentally, all these activities would bring wealth, later embodied in the sumptuousness of the Palace, creator of the aura of power, an essential asset in an exquisite environment of Imperial Court (*Aula*), of eastern influence (Pessoa - Rodrigo 2011: 53-56).

Figure 15  
Reconstruction hypothesis of the Roman *Villa* of Rabaçal, Penela, Portugal. *Pars rustica*, in the foreground; Baths, Aqueduct and Watermill House, in the middle; *pars urbana* in the background. Author: Pedro Madeira 2011.



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