NOTES TO CHAPTERS I–VII

Notes to Chapter I

1 See the detailed account by Pieralisi 1–15, extensive summaries in Aurigemma 44–53, Whitehouse 5–9, and the detailed account by Montagna 227 ff. I shall only discuss problems which in my opinion deserve further consideration.

2 See Delbrück I, 77–90, pls. XV–XVIII; II, 1–4; Gullini 1953, I, 41–49; II, pl. II; Whitehouse 1–3, fig. A. For the nymphaeum see further below, Ch. II, p. 8. Later the apse was walled in and the room in front of it served as a servant’s hall for the bishop’s servants, cf. Aurigemma 44, n.1; Delbrück I, pls. XV, XVII. Since the apse received no light it can only have been used as a store room. In Delbrück’s time the walled-in apse served as a wine cellar, see Delbrück I, fig. 79.

3 This comparatively late date is surprising in view of the fact that the plan of the apse appears in older drawings, see e.g. Delbrück I, fig.45, reproducing a plan by Giuliano da Sangallo from c. 1500. There are some short references to the mosaic by visitors from the 2nd half of the 16th century. These only mention the existence of the mosaic but do not give information on its subject matter (see Montagna 240 ff.). In several cases it is connected to the *lithostrotum* which Sulla is alleged to have had made at Praeneste, see Plinius NH XXXVI 64, 189, and further below Ch. II, p. 15f.

A short description dating from the years 1588–1607 in the town archive of Palestrina reads ‘...il pavimento fatto di Mosaico finissimo con alcuni animali , cioè Elefanti, con altri ucelli, galere con un Marinajo, ed altri fogliami bellissimi...’ (... the pavement made of the finest mosaic, with animals, i.e. elephants, and birds, boats and a mariner, and very fine foliage...), (see Pieralisi 12; Aurigemma 44, n.1; Montagna 234). In 1614 it was seen by Prince Federico Cesi, one of the founders of the Accademia dei Lincei, on the occasion of his marriage to Artemisia Colonna, to whose family the feud of Palestrina belonged (see Zevi 1988, 34; Montagna 254, and for Cesi: Dizionario biografico degli Italiani 24, 256 ff.; Atti dei Convegni Lincei 78: Convegno celebrativo del IV centenario della nascita di Federico Cesi, Acquasparta 1985 (1986). Cesi wrote a short description of the mosaic. This description has not been preserved, but a copy exists in the Barberini archives. This was made by Cesi’s fellow *Lynceus* (i.e. a member of the Academia dei Lincei) F. Stelluti, who gave it to G.M. Suarez in 1637 (see Montagna 229 f., 275 ff. Appendice I). The latter published it in his study on Praeneste (see Suarez II, 49 f.; Pieralisi 3, n.1; Whitehouse 6, 82, n. 31): ‘... Extantis modo lithostroti exemplum habeas, cuis occassione Praenestinae ipsius Fortunae frontem habuisti. In eo multa quidem perspicienda sunt, quae lapillorum interrasis miculis, crustulisque intercisis, superstiosis sedulitiae, summoque otii dispendio conficta apparet. Loco in ipso nonnisi accesisc facibus, superaffusaque ad perspicuitatem aqua, et saepe iterata inspersione pervidere expegingerea lictum. Sunt hominum animaliumque complures imaginis; Elephas,Rhinoceros, nomina litteris quibusdam peculiaribus expressa. Sunt et in aquis navigia, quae singillatim summa cum diligentia depicta apud doctrina simul ac nobilitate praedarum Equitem Cassianum de Puteo Lincaeum collegam nostrum spectare poteris. Sed et huius (lithostroti) pars aliqua spectanda simulque admiranda remanet in crypta quadem quae ad inferiores cellas aedium episcopi abscondita est’.
(...But you may have an example of an extant lithostron, the prototype of which you have had by reason of the Praenestine Fortune herself. Many indeed are the things to be seen in it, composed apparently of little chips of stone and cut fragments with assiduous attention to detail and painstaking care. At the site itself it was possible to see or draw only by torchlight and with water poured over [the surface of the mosaic] to aid visibility, and the washing down repeated frequently. There are various representations of men and beasts: elephant, rhinoceros, the names written out in some special letters; and in the water there are ships – you may behold these things meticulously portrayed, one by one, at the home of our fellow Lyncerus Cavaliere Cassiano dal Pozzo, noted alike for his erudition and excellence. But a part of the mosaic remained in the crypt in the cellar of the episcopal place, where it can still be seen and admired ...; translation partly after Whitehouse 6).

Since Cesi mentions the making of drawings, it seems that he had some made. These drawings may perhaps be referred to in a note by Dal Pozzo from 1631 which mentions a drawing of the room, and a ‘disegno colorito dell’historia che si vedono in detto mosaico’ (see A. Nicolò, F. Solinas, Cassiano dal Pozzo: appunti per una cronologia di documenti e disegni (1612–1630), in Nouvelles de la République des Lettres 2 (1987) 59 ff., esp. 82; H. Whitehouse, Copies of Roman paintings and mosaics in the Paper Museum, in Cassiano dal Pozzo’s Paper Museum I (1992) (Quaderni Puteani) 2) 105 ff., 119. No trace of these drawings remains. The note by Dal Pozzo seems to refer to one drawing of the entire mosaic, but could alternatively refer simply to the only seemingly historical scene in the mosaic, i.e. the gathering of the military before the pavilion in section 13 (see immediately below and Ch. IV, n. 57). Perhaps these drawings served as models for the reproductions of some parts of the mosaic in Suarez II, two plates opposite 288; Phillips, figs. 2,3; Montagna 266 ff., figs. 8, 9. If so, these drawings only represented isolated scenes, notably in the first plate: the man punting in the papyrus boat in section 13, and a fragment with a bird and a snail, and in the second plate: the pavilion with the soldiers of section 13, the fisherman of section 8, and a temple precinct with two towers. The temple precinct has not been preserved in this form in the mosaic (see further below n. 32).

The scene with the bird, which is rather a purple gallinule than an ostrich, may have belonged to a section of the local fauna in the Nile Mosaic which remained in situ and later got lost. It is, however, doubtful that it ever formed part of the Nile Mosaic at all since there is no trace of it, and the motif may have been taken from elsewhere, e.g. a mosaic in Sta Maria in Trastevere in Rome to which, on uncertain grounds, also a Praenestine origin has been attributed (see Phillips 105 ff; Whitehouse 84, n. 46; Zevi 1979, 19 ff.; Meyboom 1979, 61, n. 36; H.G.Beyen, Ueber Stilleben aus Pompeii und Herculaneum (1928) 40, 74, n.4; C. Gasparri, Due mosaici antichi in S. Maria in Trastevere, Alessandria III, 627 ff., pl. CII, 2; Montagna 270 ff.

4 See Pieralisi 10,12; Aurigemma 47 f.; Whitehouse 6 f.; Montagna 234 f. The removal was begun by the then Archbishop of Palestrina, Andrea Peretti. The mosaic was removed without a plan being made, as appears from an important account in a ms. in a miscellany of Cassiano dal Pozzo’s papers in Naples, dated 1642 (see below in this note). It is said that the removal was stopped by Peretti’s successor in 1626, because it was not popular with the townsfolk, and part of the mosaic may have remained in situ (see Montagna 234 f. and further below, n. 10). The removal of the mosaic seems to have been undertaken on request of Cardinal Magalotti who presented the pieces to his nephew Cardinal Francesco Barberini, a fellow Lyncerus of Cesi