

DAVID PARRISH

**SEASON MOSAICS OF ROMAN
NORTH AFRICA**

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PREFACE

The present volume grew out of my doctoral dissertation, submitted to Columbia University in 1977 and supervised by Drs. Richard Brilliant and Alfred Frazer. In the preparation of this book, I have benefited from the advice and assistance of several individuals, to whom I wish to express my gratitude. Drs. Richard Brilliant and Victorine von Gonzenbach kindly read and commented upon the manuscript in different stages of its revision. In addition, Drs. Noël Duval, Gilbert Charles Picard, Irving Lavin, and Morton Smith made many valuable suggestions that aided my research. I also thank Dr. Mongi Ennaïfer, Director of the Musée National du Bardo, Dr. Abdlemajid Ennabli, Conservator of the site of Carthage, Dr. Azedine Beschouch, Professor at the Institut National d'Archéologie et d'Art in Tunis, and Dr. Mounir Bouchenaki, former Assistant Director of Museums, Archaeology, and Historic Monuments and Sites in Algeria, for their permission both to examine and photograph numerous mosaics in Tunisian and Algerian museums, and to publish this material. Several individuals also generously gave me photographs; they include Drs. Margaret Alexander, Gilbert Charles Picard, Jan Salomonson, Suzanne Gozlan, Paul-Albert Février, Nicola Bonacasa, and Lucille Roussin. My field research in North Africa was greatly helped by two Summer Faculty XL Grants, in 1975 and 1977, from the Purdue Research Foundation, to which I am very grateful. In addition, Columbia University kindly supported my initial fieldwork with a travel grant in 1971.

DAVID PARRISH

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I – INTRODUCTION

Since Hellenistic Greek times, the seasons have been a popular and recurrent theme of Western art to the present day. It was the Greeks who first visualized the seasons as four in number, in contrast to other ancient traditions such as the Egyptian, which recognized only three seasons¹. The earliest recorded representation of the four seasons occurred in the Dionysiac procession of King Ptolemy Philadelphos (285-242 B.C.), in which actual women, called Horae, personified the times of year². Not until the succeeding Roman period, however, did the season theme achieve its greatest popularity in ancient art, appearing on a wide variety of public and private monuments. The present volume deals with one large group of seasonal monuments in Roman art, namely, floor mosaics, and specifically the examples from Roman North Africa – the region of the Empire where such pavements are especially abundant. Many of these African works (of which there are eighty-two known examples) reflect standard Roman iconography of the seasons, whereas others show original adaptations of that subject. Collectively, these pavements offer a rich and varied case study of the season theme in Roman art, complementing the research of G. Hanfmann and others based primarily on sculptural examples³.

The present book also forms part of the growing number of studies devoted specifically to the mosaics of Roman Africa. Recent scholarship has produced not

1) On Egyptian representations of the seasons, see esp. W. BARTA, « Bemerkungen zur Darstellung der Jahreszeiten im Grabe Mrr-wj-k3.j », *ZaZS* 97 (1971) pp. 1-7; E. EDEL and S. WENIG, *Die Jahreszeitenreliefs aus dem Sonnenheiligtum des Königs Ne-user-re (Mitteilungen aus der Ägyptischen Sammlung, VII, Berlin 1974)* pp. 13-14 of Textbeilage and descrip. of pls. A-F. In these monuments of the Old Kingdom in Egypt, one sees seasonal imagery in the form of both personifications and genre scenes, anticipating Western representations of these types.

2) See Athenaeus, *Deipn.* V 198 a-b. In Greek art of the preceding Archaic and Classical periods, the Horae, or vegetation goddesses, were represented as only three in number; see *infra* p. 30.

3) On Roman season sarcophagi, see esp. HANFMANN *SSDO* I pp. 3-72; II Nos. 290-306, 313, 316, 372, 385-396, 400-424, 431-435, 461-540, A-2 – A-46; MATZ *Röm. Meisterwerk* pp. 1-14, 31-41, 128-138, pls. A-H, 1-5, 20-21; M. LAWRENCE, « Season Sarcophagi of Architectural Type », *AJA* 62 (1958), pp. 273-295, pls. 72-79. The most complete catalogue of season sarcophagi from Roman Africa occurs in H. FOURNET-PILIPENKO, « Sarcophages romains de Tunisie », *Karthago* II (1961-1962), Nos. 4, 22, 100, III-III3, II7, 137, 140, 147-148, 152, 164, pls. III-XII, XXIV. One article on Roman seasonal art which cites several mosaic examples is E. SIMON, s.v. Stagioni, *EAA* VII pp. 468-473. See also A. RAPP, s.v. Horai, *ML* Vol. I Pt. 2, cols. 2712-2741; P. STENGEL, s.v. Horai, *RE* VIII, cols. 2300-2313.

only scientific inventories of mosaics from individual African sites, but also detailed iconographic and stylistic analyses, limited to particular groups of pavements or having a broad, regional scope⁴. The current work combines these different approaches, for it has both an interpretive text treating the more general issues regarding African season pavements, as well as a catalogue documenting these mosaics in detail. The catalogue will be of use primarily to specialists, while the main text will serve a wider audience whose interests in one way or another touch upon the season theme.

African season pavements adorned private houses primarily and also some public buildings, located at sites ranging from the province of Tripolitania in the east to Mauretania Tingitana in the west (see Maps 1-2). The greatest concentration of these mosaics occurred in Africa Proconsularis, where season pavements were made chiefly from the second to the fifth centuries A. D. (two examples may possibly be dated as late as the sixth century). This art had an essentially decorative purpose, for the seasons were conventional motifs in the mosaicist's repertoire.

4) To date, the most comprehensive study of African mosaic art is K. DUNBABIN, *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa; Studies in Iconography and Patronage*, Oxford (1978), a synthesis of the overall development of pictorial pavements from that region; in addition, an anthology of articles treating several different aspects of African mosaics is presented in G. CH. PICARD et al., *Mosaïque romaine; l'âge d'or de l'école d'Afrique (Dossiers de l'archéologie, 31)* (1978); an article of broad, regional scope that will appear in *ANRW* Vol. II Pt. 12,3 is L. FOUCHER, « La mosaïque en Afrique du Nord ».

Among the most recent references are also noted the following studies of pavements from particular African sites, or of particular iconographic or stylistic features: M. ALEXANDER, A. BEN ABED, S. BESROUR-BEN MANSOUR, D. SOREN, *Corpus des Mosaïques de Tunisie*, Vol. II Fasc. 1, *Thuburbo Maius*, Tunis (1980); A. BEN ABED, « Une mosaïque de Puppūt », *Hommages Stern*; M. BLANCHARD, « La scène de sacrifice du bouc dans la mosaïque dionysiaque de Cuicul », *Hommages Lassus* 2 pp. 169-181; J.-P. DARMON, *Nymfarum Domus; les pavements de la Maison des Nymphes à Néapolis (Nabeul, Tunisie) et leur lecture (EPRO 75)*, Leiden (1980); ID., « La mosaïque inédite de Sidi Mahrsi à Nabeul (antique Néapolis-Tunisie) », *Hommages Stern*; N. DUVAL, « Couronnes agonistiques sur des mosaïques africaines: d'Althiburos (IV^e s. ?) au Cap Bon (V^e s. ?) », *BAC* n.s. 12-14 (1976-1978) pp. 195-216; A. ENNABLI and O. BEN OSMAN, « La Maison de la Volière à Carthage: l'architecture; les mosaïques », *Hommages Stern*; O. BEN OSMAN also is preparing an inventory of the mosaics of Carthage for publication; L. FOUCHER, « Le culte de Bacchus sous l'empire romain », *ANRW* Vol. II Pt. 17,2 pp. 684-702 (an article citing several African mosaics); S. GERMAIN, « Logique et fantaisie dans les mosaïques de jonchées », *Hommages Lassus* 1 pp. 169-187; S. GOZLAN, « A propos de quelques pavements africains: les *xenia* et l'iconographie dionysiaque », *Mos rom. tardive* pp. 73-87; ID., « Deux mosaïques de Carthage au Kunsthistorisches Museum de Vienne », *Hommages Stern*; R. HANOUNE, *Recherches archéologiques franco-tunisiennes à Bulla Regia*, Vol. IV. *Les mosaïques*, Pt. 1 (*Coll. Éc. Fr. Rome* 28/IV), Rome (1980); D. PARRISH, « The Mosaic of Xenophon and the Seasons from Sbeitla (Tunisia) », *Hommages Stern*; G. CH. PICARD et al., *Recherches archéologiques franco-tunisiennes à Mactar*, Vol. I. *La Maison de Vénus*, Pt. 1. *Stratigraphies et étude des pavements (Coll. Éc. Fr. Rome* 34), Rome (1977); G. CH. PICARD, « De la Maison d'or de Neron aux Thermes d'Acholla. Étude sur les grotesques dans la mosaïque romaine », *Mon Piot* 63 (1980) pp. 63-104; H. SLIM, « La Mosaïque du labyrinthe de Thysdrus », *Hommages Lassus* 2 pp. 201-215; H. STERN, « Fontaine de Neptune au Musée de Cherchel (Algérie) », *ibid.*, pp. 285-302; M. YACOB, « Étude comparative du fond monumental dans les deux mosaïques de cirque de Piazza Armerina et de Gafsa », an article to appear in the *III Colloquio*.

Moreover, because of their four-part nature, the seasons were convenient corner emblems in the design of a square or rectangular surface. Yet illustrations of the seasons also had distinct associations in the minds of ancient viewers. They symbolized *felicitas temporum* (« happy, fortunate times »), a phrase which appears on Roman imperial coins of seasonal content⁵, and which is also applicable to private representations of this theme. In an imperial context, this term had a propagandistic meaning, referring to the Emperor's beneficent rule and the promised return of the Golden Age⁶. But in a private house, the seasons had more generalized associations with prosperity and good fortune, and lacked any direct political overtones⁷. Additional evidence for this latter interpretation comes from a mosaic of sixth-century date found in what is thought to be the dining room or *triclinium* of the so-called Palace of Theodoric at Ravenna⁸. That fragmentary floor, which depicted the hero Bellerophon and the four seasons, has an inscription inviting the viewer to profit from the universal bounty of the seasons⁹. In general, therefore, the seasons represented notions of recurrent happiness and well-being – pleasurable thoughts for the private mosaic owner. There are numerous variations on this theme in African mosaics, differing according to the types of pictorial subjects with which the four seasons are associated. Throughout this discussion the term « season mosaic » is used to refer to any pavement which represents the four seasons, alone or with another subject.

In African mosaics, the seasons appear in a great variety of forms, reflected in other Roman art of seasonal content. Most often they are represented as female personifications, a season type which originated in Hellenistic Greek art¹⁰, and

5) There also appear the related phrases *saeculi felicitas* and *felicita tempora*; for examples see *BMCRE* IV p. 787 No. *; V p. 256 No. 505, pl. 40,13; J. KENT, *Roman Coins*, New York (1978) p. 301 No. 354, pl. 103; F. GNECCHI, *I medaglioni romani*, Milan (1912) Vol. II p. 44 No. 1, pl. 72, 1; pp. 66-67 Nos. 135-138, pl. 87, 3-5; p. 119 No. 37, pl. 121,6; Vol. III p. 19 No. 91, pl. 146, 1; p. 38, Nos. 204-205, pl. 152,2.

6) In the reign of Hadrian, when there were issued the first Roman coins with representations of the seasons there also appeared coins with an image of Aion and the legend *SAEC(VLVM) AVR(EVM)*, *BMCRE* III pp. cxxxi, 278 No. 312, pl. 52, 10 (see *infra* p. 46). Another type of Roman imperial monument bearing seasonal images is triumphal arches, on which there is a direct association between the victory of the Emperor (who in the late Empire was proclaimed *victoriosus semper*) and public prosperity and happiness (*felicitas publica* or *felicitas saeculi*). On this iconography, see R. BRILLIANT, *The Arch of Septimius Severus in the Roman Forum* (*MAAR* 29), Rome (1967) p. 120; H. P. L'ORANGE and A. VON GERKAN, *Der spätantike Bildschmuck des Konstantinsbogens* (*Studien zur spätantiken Kunstgeschichte*, 10), Berlin (1939) p. 159. The earliest triumphal arch with seasonal figures on it is the Arch of Trajan at Benevento, M. ROTILI, *L'Arco di Traiano a Benevento*, Rome (1972) p. 76, pls. XLIX-LII.

7) See HANFMANN *SSDO* I pp. 141, 261.

8) Cf. F. BERTI, *Ravenna I* (*Mos.AntIt* Reg. 8), Rome (1976) pp. 53-54, 78-81 No. 60, fig. 20, pls. XLVIII-LI,1; H. STERN, « Remarques sur les sujets figurés des mosaïques du palais dit de Théodoric de Ravenne », *FelRav* 116 (4th ser. 1978/2) pp. 52-54; H. BRANDENBURG, « Bellerophon christianus? Zur Deutung des Mosaiks von Hinton St. Mary und zum Problem der Mythendarstellungen in der kaiserzeitlichen dekorativen Kunst », *RömQ* 63 (1968) pp. 63-64.

9) The inscription reads as follows: *Sume quod autumnus quod | ver quod aestas | alternis reparant et | toto creant in orbe.*

10) Aside from their occurrence in the *pompa* of Ptolemy Philadelphos, female seasons (who

which Roman mosaicists showed in the form of complete figures (Horae) or busts. Much less common than female seasons in African pavements are male seasons, an artistic type which first appeared in Roman sculpture¹¹, and was later adopted for mosaics. The males in African examples typically are youthful, but occasionally are shown as mature figures. It should be added that the individual seasons in a given group are distinguished from each other by many different kinds of attributes, referring to a wide range of human activities and natural events. Still other season images of human form, contrasting with personifications (who tend to be « passive »), are « active » figures engaged in seasonal occupations. This type, which originated in Roman art, primarily takes the form of genre figures, shown as single laborers or in group scenes; within the « active » category are also included laboring *putti*. Finally, animals and plants may symbolize the four seasons in African mosaics, either by themselves or as attributes of human figures. All of these season types were richly illustrated by African mosaicists.

Of special interest are those mosaics which give the four seasons a decidedly African character. This localization of the seasons theme is shown in a variety of ways. One way is to emphasize the agricultural aspect of Winter, a season which usually appears unproductive in pavements outside Roman Africa. In African works, however, the personification of Winter frequently has olive branches or olive fruits as attributes (cf. Cat. Nos. 1, 49), since olives were harvested at that time of year, and formed an important part of the local economy¹². Olives were

have antecedents in the three Horae, or vegetation goddesses, of earlier Greek art; see *infra* p. 30) appeared on Hellenistic monuments, and on Roman monuments based on Hellenistic prototypes. An early example is a calendar in the form of a sculpted frieze now located on the church of Hagios Eleutherios (formerly Panagia Gorgoepikos) in Athens; the dating of the frieze is controversial, but it (or its model) probably was made in the second century B.C. (see *infra* pp. 30-31 nn. 87-88 and Pls. 104-105 of the present volume). The preserved season personifications on the frieze take the form of two Horae (Winter and Autumn) and a mature male figure (Summer); see DEUBNER *Att. Feste* pp. 250 No. 6, 252 No. 24, 253 No. 35, pls. 36, 38-39.

There also are two different types of Roman terracotta reliefs of primarily Augustan date which depict Horae, and whose imagery reflects Hellenistic prototypes – namely, Arretine vases and Campana reliefs. On the Arretine vase examples, see A. OXÉ, *Arretinische Reliefgefässe vom Rhein (Materialien zur römisch-germanischen Keramik, 5)*, Bonn (1968) pp. 78-80 Nos. 132 a-g, 133-134, pls. XXXII-XXXIV; H. WALTERS, *Catalogue of the Roman Pottery in the Departments of Antiquities, British Museum*, London (1908) p. 20 London L 54, pl. VI. Both Oxé and Walters mistakenly reversed the identifications of the Spring and Autumn Horae in these examples. On Campana reliefs, see H. von ROHDEN and H. WINNEFELD, *Architektonische Tonreliefs der Kaiserzeit (Die Antiken Terrakotten Vol. IV Pts. 1-2)*, Berlin and Stuttgart (1911) pp. 89-91, 262, 267-268, 288, (London D 584-585, Louvre S 750, Würzburg H 2788), figs. 178-180, pls. XI, XLVII, LVII 1, XCVIII 1-2 (cf. *infra* p. 31). Similar Horae also appear on some glass pastes and engraved gems, HANFMANN *SSDO II* Nos. 61, 71-73.

11) On this point, see *infra* pp. 20-21, 24.

12) See J. DESPOIS, *La Tunisie orientale; Sahel et basse steppe; Étude géographique*² (*Publications de l'Institut des Hautes Études de Tunis, Section des Lettres, I*), Paris (1955) pp. 106-109, 298-299, 308; H. CAMPS-FABRER, *L'Olivier et l'huile dans l'Afrique romaine*, Algiers (1953) pp. 37-38. Among ancient literary and epigraphic sources on the olive harvest in Winter, see Columella *De re rustica* XII 52. 1; Virgil *Georg.* I 307; *Menologia rustica, Mensis December*, cited in A. DEGRASSI, *Inscriptiones Italiae* Vol. XIII, *Fasti et Elogia* Fasc. 2, *Fasti Anni Numani et Iuliani*, Rome (1963) p. 290 (*Menol. rust. colotianum*) line 15, p. 297 (*Menol. rust. vallense*) line 19.

occasionally associated with Winter in seasonal illustrations from other parts of the Empire¹³, but apparently at a later date than the earliest African examples with this fruit¹⁴ – suggesting that this iconography originated in Roman Africa. In addition, a farm implement, the hoe, may be linked with Winter in African mosaics (cf. Cat. Nos. 2, 4), in order to indicate the vine-tending operations performed locally in that season¹⁵. Yet another, very original adaptation of the four seasons occurs in the celebrated Mosaic of Lord Julius, which depicts an African estate in landscape form, with a centrally placed villa and hunting episode, and corner scenes of the four seasons (Cat. No. 9). Not only olive-gathering, but also other activities typical of African manorial life characterize the times of year. In still other mosaics, indigenous species of birds, or references to what may have been local festivals of individual gods, help illustrate particular seasons (cf. Cat. Nos. 44, 69). In these examples and more, one views the seasons through African eyes.

Several different types of artistic subjects may be represented with the four seasons in African mosaics. Some of the associated themes have a meaningful relation to the seasons, as was noted for the central motifs of the Julius Mosaic (Cat. No. 9). Certain deities and mythological figures also have a significant seasonal rapport. Most prominent among these is Dionysos, the traditional leader of the four seasons, who was associated with them in the Ptolemaic pageant cited above¹⁶. When represented with the seasons in African mosaics, Dionysos may be shown as a child or an adult, and is often accompanied by members of his *thiasos* (cf. Cat. Nos. 28, 31). Another divine companion of the four seasons in African pavements is Aion, god of eternity, who is also identifiable by the Latin names Saeculum (the age), Annus (the year), and less frequently, Aeternitas (eternity)¹⁷.

13) Among the examples in various artistic media: the Sarcophagus of Junius Bassus, F. GERKE, *Der Sarkophag des Junius Bassus*, Berlin (1936) p. 14, fig. 33; a fresco in the Catacomb of Marcus and Marcellinus in Rome, J. WILPERT, *Die Malereien der Katakomben Roms*, Freiburg im Breisgau (1903) p. 37, pl. 245,1; a mosaic in Toledo, R. MENÉNDEZ PIDAL, *Historia de España*, Vol. II. *España Romana*³, Madrid (1962) p. 710, fig. 555; J. MELIDA, « Un mosaico descubierto en Toledo », *BRAH* 83 (1923) p. 20, pl. after p. 20.

14) Contrary to G. HANFMANN's claim (*SSDO* I p. 216, II No. 290) that a garland sarcophagus of early Antonine date in New York associates olives with Winter, the Winter plants in that example appear to be laurel; see A. MCCANN, *Roman Sarcophagi in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, New York (1978) p. 28 No. 1 (Inv. 90.12) figs. 11, 20. F. MATZ (*Röm. Meisterwerk* p. 41, pl. 5 c) identified olives in the Winter image of a late second-century season sarcophagus in Genoa, although the fruits in that example can not be clearly distinguished. The earliest African mosaic with Winter's olives is the pavement from La Chebba (Cat. No. 49), which is dated to the mid-second century A. D.

15) See *infra* pp. 33-34.

16) This procession honoring the wine god included, in addition to numerous other features, colossal statues of Dionysos drawn on carts and hundreds of richly clad figures of satyrs and Silenoi; see Athenaeus V 197-201.

17) Scholarly opinions vary about the precise identification of this figure type in Roman art. Among the most recent references, see L. FOUCHER, « La représentation du génie de l'année sur les mosaïques », *Mos. rom. tardive* pp. 3-10; ID., « Annus et Aïôn », *Aion. Le temps chez les romains* ed. R. CHEVALLIER (*Caesarodunum*, X bis), Paris (1976) pp. 197-203; D. PARRISH

There are several different mosaic renderings of this individual (cf. Cat. Nos. 20, 25, 44), who moreover is closely linked with the god Saturnus¹⁸ – a figure especially venerated in Roman Africa and also depicted in a seasonal context (Cat. No. 32).

Besides these deities, other types of subjects with a clear seasonal rapport include the circus, calendars of the months¹⁹, commemorative portraits, and *xenia* (still lifes) of flora and fauna (cf. Cat. Nos. 16, 29, 55, 56). There are distinctive features to all of these images. Especially intriguing is a portrait bearing the name Xenophon, which most likely represents the Classical Greek philosopher (Cat. No. 56). Still other themes have a more generalized association with the seasons, or no significant connection at all. In the former category is the subject of the hunt, in relation to which the seasons seem to symbolize the perennial bounty or renewal of nature (cf. Cat. Nos. 6, 41). By contrast, the mythological images in some mosaics have a purely arbitrary association with the seasons; examples of this type include the contest of Apollo and Marsyas, and the discovery of Achilles on the island of Skyros (Cat. Nos. 24, 40).

Not only the content but also the formal properties of African season pavements hold interest, as does the mosaics' relation to their architectural setting. One issue is the different compositional patterns used by African artists to adapt the four seasons and their accompanying subjects to a variety of floor surfaces. Frequently, the artistic content alone shaped the design; an example is the grid-like arrangement of one mosaic calendar, matching individual groups of months with the corresponding four seasons (Cat. No. 29). In other instances, the architectural location of a mosaic, or the manner in which it was to be viewed by ancient spectators, influenced its layout. Thus, a pavement decorating a step required a horizontal shape (Cat. No. 27), whereas the floor of a *triclinium* was typically arranged as an inverted «T» within a «U», following the customary placement of Roman dining couches (cf. Cat. No. 7). It is also useful to know how season pavements fit into the decorative schemes of entire buildings. The theme of the four seasons was favored for certain types of domestic spaces, such as *oeci* (dining rooms) and *triclinia*, and to a lesser extent *cubicula* (bedchambers); moreover, some buildings contained more than one season mosaic, laid in different kinds of rooms. In a few instances, these pavements contributed to an overall mosaic program.

There remain a few other broad considerations for this entire group of pavements, namely, their overall chronology and their geographic distribution within the African provinces. A general pattern is apparent, although the dating of these

« Annus-Aion in Roman Mosaics », *Mos. rom. tardive* pp. 11-25; H. LAVAGNE, « Remarques sur l'Aion de la mosaïque de Sentinum », *ibid.*, pp. 27-40; A. ALFÖLDI, *Aion in Merida und Aphrodisias (Madriider Beiträge, 6)*, Mainz (1979) pp. 4-7, 14-15; M.-H. QUET, *La mosaïque cosmologique de Mérida; propositions de lecture (Publications du Centre Pierre Paris E.R.A. 522, No. 9; Collection de la Maison des Pays Ibériques, 5)*, Paris (1981) pp. 97-100, 153-181; M. LEGLAY, s.v. Aion, *LIMC I* pp. 399-411; DUNBABIN *MRNA* pp. 158-161; G. BECATTI, s.v. Saeculum, *EAA Suppl.* 1970 p. 681 (see also *infra* pp. 46-50 of the present volume).

18) On this point, see *infra* pp. 49-50 and n. 190.

19) For the most recent general discussion of this artistic subject, see STERN *CR* pp. 431-475.

mosaics is not always as precise as one would wish, due to a frequent lack of secure archaeological data. It is clear that the season theme enjoyed its greatest popularity in Roman Africa during the later second and early third centuries A.D., when that region of the Empire was at the height of its prosperity²⁰. Artists at one site specially favored this theme, namely, the town of El Jem (ancient Thysdrus) in Africa Proconsularis (see Map 2). Somewhat less than one-third of the total number of season mosaics found in Roman Africa comes from there. The explanation for this is partly economic, for El Jem grew rich from the local trade in olive oil²¹, and images of the four seasons very likely reflected the newly gained wealth. Later, in the fourth and early fifth centuries A.D., the geographic focus of season pavements shifted to Carthage, which maintained a generally high level of prosperity during that era²². The popularity of seasonal imagery at both sites probably was also due to the influence of local mosaic schools and the artistic traditions which they developed.

All of the above issues receive attention in the ensuing chapters of this book. In referring to individual mosaic sites, the most commonly used name, ancient or modern, is adopted. The original location of the pavements is indicated as precisely as possible in the catalogue entries, and a few maps are included. For several mosaics excavated in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the chief sources of archaeological information are reports in contemporary journals and notices in the *Inventaire des mosaïques de la Gaule et de l'Afrique*, Vols. II, *Suppl.*, and III, Paris (1909-1915), which sometimes use place-names that are no longer current. Otherwise, the degree of completeness of individual entries in the present catalogue depends upon the current availability of documentation.

20) Cf. R. HAYWOOD, *Roman Africa (An Economic Survey of Ancient Rome* ed. T. FRANK, Vol. IV Pt. 1), Baltimore (1938) pp. 73-75; G. CH. PICARD, *La civilisation de l'Afrique romaine (Civilisations d'hier et d'aujourd'hui)*, Paris (1959) p. 97; P. ROMANELLI, *Storia delle province romane dell'Africa (Studi pubblicati dall'Istituto Italiano per la Storia Antica, 14)*, Rome (1959) p. 430; G. LAPEYRE and A. PELLEGRIN, *Carthage latine et chrétienne (Bibliothèque historique)*, Paris (1950) p. 133.

21) See L. FOUCHER, s.v. Thysdrus, *EAA* VII pp. 845-846; DESPOIS (supra n. 12) p. 198.

22) There is much evidence – literary, epigraphic, archaeological, and artistic – to suggest that Carthage was a very vital city in the fourth and early fifth centuries A.D. Not only did Carthage and the surrounding province become the chief granary of Rome after A.D. 330, but also there apparently was much building activity and diverse entertainment in the African capital during the later fourth and early fifth centuries; see esp. F. CLOVER, «Carthage in the Age of Augustine», *Excavations at Carthage 1976 Conducted by the University of Michigan*, Vol. IV, ed. J. HUMPHREY, Ann Arbor (1978) pp. 2, 5-7, 13; G. CH. PICARD, *La Carthage de saint Augustin*, Paris (1959) pp. 14, 17, 26-29. Indeed, recent archaeological excavation at Carthage, conducted by different teams under the sponsorship of UNESCO, has provided fresh evidence of the city's prosperity in this general period; the results of much of this research are presented in J. PEDLEY ed., *New Light on Ancient Carthage*, Ann Arbor (1980) passim. Yet another index of the city's well-being during the fourth and early fifth centuries is the rich production of mosaics at that site; many of the pavements' imagery, moreover, reflects the prosperous way of life of the landed African nobility; see DUNBABIN *MRNA* pp. 53-64. There is also noted the testimony of one contemporary, non-African writer, namely, the Gallic poet Ausonius, who in his *Ordo urbium nobilium* II-III 1-2, ranked Carthage just after Rome and Constantinople among the major cities of the Empire.