

Zeitschrift: Cahiers d'archéologie romande
Herausgeber: Bibliothèque Historique Vaudoise
Band: 85 (2001)

Artikel: The Mosaic of Months from Thysdrus : origins and influences
Autor: Eastman, Eithne Mary
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-836068>

Nutzungsbedingungen

Die ETH-Bibliothek ist die Anbieterin der digitalisierten Zeitschriften auf E-Periodica. Sie besitzt keine Urheberrechte an den Zeitschriften und ist nicht verantwortlich für deren Inhalte. Die Rechte liegen in der Regel bei den Herausgebern beziehungsweise den externen Rechteinhabern. Das Veröffentlichen von Bildern in Print- und Online-Publikationen sowie auf Social Media-Kanälen oder Webseiten ist nur mit vorheriger Genehmigung der Rechteinhaber erlaubt. [Mehr erfahren](#)

Conditions d'utilisation

L'ETH Library est le fournisseur des revues numérisées. Elle ne détient aucun droit d'auteur sur les revues et n'est pas responsable de leur contenu. En règle générale, les droits sont détenus par les éditeurs ou les détenteurs de droits externes. La reproduction d'images dans des publications imprimées ou en ligne ainsi que sur des canaux de médias sociaux ou des sites web n'est autorisée qu'avec l'accord préalable des détenteurs des droits. [En savoir plus](#)

Terms of use

The ETH Library is the provider of the digitised journals. It does not own any copyrights to the journals and is not responsible for their content. The rights usually lie with the publishers or the external rights holders. Publishing images in print and online publications, as well as on social media channels or websites, is only permitted with the prior consent of the rights holders. [Find out more](#)

Download PDF: 09.07.2025

ETH-Bibliothek Zürich, E-Periodica, <https://www.e-periodica.ch>

*The Mosaic of Months from Thysdrus : origins and influences*¹

Eithne Mary EASTMAN

It is the object of this paper to ask if the calendar mosaic from *Thysdrus* (modern El Djem in Tunisia) is a factual record of monthly observances in that town, or if the seasonal and monthly images were copied from an existing set of stereotypes. While I am fully aware that there are problems here that may never be resolved to everyone's satisfaction, I hope to present evidence that goes some way towards resolving some of the problems.

The *Mosaic of Months* from *Thysdrus* is dated to the late 2nd, early 3rd century AD², and is today housed in the Sousse Museum. It is the earliest known complete cycle from a family of illustrated calendars that are found in nearly every part of the Roman world³. Almost all these cycles follow the order of the Julian year and they appear to take some or all of their subject matter from the Roman programme for the months. This programme is well known from a great many written sources from the time of the Julian calendar reform at mid-1st century BC to AD 5th century. In inscribed Fasti or rustic almanacs⁴, in lists on papyrus rolls⁵ or in manuscript books⁶, in poems⁷ or other didactic literature⁸, these sources summarise the main festivals, climatic conditions, zodiac signs, and other important features that characterise each month. It seems feasible, therefore, that the iconography of the months circulated along with the programmes.

The problem that confronts us is that the *Mosaic of Months*, because it is the earliest pictorial cycle complete in all twelve months, is accompanied by very little comparative material. It has three predecessors⁹ and a number of contemporaries, all incomplete¹⁰. The only month illustrations that can be brought to bear on this question are therefore those which have earlier or

¹ FOUCHER, 1961, p. 31-50, fig. 4-20, pl. 22-24.

² *Ibid.*, p. 51-3. The floor overlaid an earlier construction of the 2nd century. Fragments of pottery found beneath the mosaic itself were datable to the late 2nd, early 3rd century.

³ PARRISH, 1992, p. 479-500, presents the most recent and comprehensive survey of these cycles.

⁴ DEGRASSI.

⁵ For the papyrus roll from Dura Europos see FINK *et al.*, "The Feriale Duranum", *YCS* 7, 1940, p. 1-222.

⁶ For the manuscript calendar of Filocalus, AD 354, see STERN, 1953, and SALZMAN.

⁷ A. RIESE (ed.), *Anthologia Latina*, Leipzig 1894-1906; A.E. HOUSMAN, "Disticha de Mensibus", 1932, in *The Classical Papers of A. E. Housman*, Vol. 3, 1915-36, eds J. DIGGLE and F.R.D. GOODYEAR, Cambridge 1972, p. 1185-93; P. WALTZ and G. SOURY (eds), *Anthologia Palatina*, Paris 1974; E. COURTNEY, "The Roman Months in Art and Literature", *Mus.Helvet.* 45, 1988, p. 33-57.

⁸ e. g. HESIOD, *Works and Days*; ARATUS, *Phaenomena*; VIRGIL, *Georgics*; OVID, *Fasti*; MANILIUS, *Astronomica*; MACROBIUS, *Saturnalia*.

⁹ PARRISH, 1992, Catalogue No 2, 7, 29: 1st or 2nd century BC, the sculpted *Calendar Frieze* now on the facade of the church Hagios Eleutherios in *Athens*; early 2nd century AD, the fragmentary *Calendar Mosaic* from *Antioch*; mid 2nd century AD, the stone altar from *Gabii* in Italy.

¹⁰ PARRISH, 1992, Catalogue No 27, 30, 32, 34, 43: the *Mosaic from Hellin*; the *Calendar Fresco* from *Ostia*; a single panel from *Rome*, now held in the *Borghese Gallery*; the *Roman Arch at Rheims*; the *Mosaic of St Romain en Gal* from *Vienne*.

contemporary counterparts. In other words, the comparative sample is restricted. To this sample, three questions shall be directed.

No one doubts that the *Mosaic of Months* is a product of the Byzacene mosaic workshop¹¹; but Louis Foucher has shown that the panels containing the seasonal and monthly illustrations were laid according to the *emblema* technique¹². The first question therefore is: were the panels made elsewhere and then imported into *Thysdrus*, to be inserted by the mosaicists within the decorative surround? Secondly, if instead the panels were prepared locally, were they copies from imported cartoons? Lastly, could it be that the pictures are original and that this calendar is an unmediated record of the monthly observances that were celebrated in *Thysdrus*?

To take up the first question, whether the panels were made elsewhere and imported for this commission, it is argued for the following reasons, that they were made in the locality. (pl. 1) First, it can be seen from a comparison of the colours in the illustrated panels and in the decorative surround, that all the tesserae used in this mosaic were selected from the same range of stones. Secondly, it is evident that two or more hands worked on the illustrations. There is a master who is at ease with Roman lettering, as in IVNIVS (pl. 2), and who varies the size of the tesserae to highlight details of costume and accessories. Such are for example the satyr representing the autumn season (pl. 3) whose tight curls, wine skin and stripes, worked in large black tesserae, are made to contrast with the fine treatment of his brown tunic; or the contrasting textures of the skirt, boots and leggings of the winter season (pl. 4). The other mosaicist, who may be supposed an apprentice, cannot spell the word FEBRVARIVS (pl. 5), nor can he work the letters in a straight line. Details of his illustrations are confused and hinder interpretation, for example in the panels for January (pl. 15) and March (pl. 6), where imprecision of detail has led to conflicting conclusions as to the objects and activities portrayed¹³. Surely, had the panels been imported, they would have been the production of a specialist and shown a uniform quality. Such variations favour the conclusion that the panels were made at the same time and place as the decorative surround.

One may turn therefore to the second and more difficult question whether there is evidence for a transmitted cycle of illustrations.

¹¹ S. GOZLAN, "Deux motifs de bordure sur les mosaïques de Byzacène", *Karthago* 17, 1976, p. 153-84, esp. 162.

¹² FOUCHER, 1961, p. 31.

¹³ On January: FOUCHER, 1961, p. 46-7; STERN, 1968, p. 178-181; M. MESLIN, *La fête des Kalendes de janvier dans l'empire romain*, Coll. *Latomus*, vol. 115, 1970, p. 49-50; STERN, 1981, 438; D. PARRISH, "Variations in the Iconography of the Winter Season in Roman Mosaics", in *CMGR* IV, 1984 (1994), p. 42-4; PARRISH, 1992, Cat. 31, p. 492. On March: FOUCHER, 1961, p. 33-35; H. STERN, "La représentation du mois de Mars sur une mosaïque d'El Djem", in *Mélanges d'archéologie et d'art offerts à A. Piganiol*, 1966, p. 597-60; *id.*, 1968, p. 182; L. FOUCHER, "Sur une mosaïque du mois de Mars", *A. Bretagne* 81, p. 3-11; H. STERN, "Note sur deux images du mois de Mars", *REL.* 52, 1974, p. 70-74; *id.*, 1981, p. 436-7.

A common visual source is suggested by the month of March (pl. 6 & 7) where the illustration of three men beating an animal skin has a close likeness to a contemporary mosaic panel from Rome, now in the *Borghese Gallery*¹⁴. Although the Rome panel is not labelled with the month name, the image of the god *Mars* standing in the background, armed with his spear, characterises the ritual. A number of ceremonies to *Mars* are allocated to the month of March in the Roman calendar sources¹⁵; and a fragmentary figure representing March in the 2nd century calendar mosaic from *Antioch* appears to be holding a spear, perhaps to denote the military theme associated with *Mars*.¹⁶ (pl. 8) Although there is no proof that the panel from Rome formed part of a calendar cycle, there is no denying the similarity between these two illustrations from Rome and *Thysdrus*. It is possible, therefore, that a common pictorial model existed in the late 2nd, early 3rd century for the iconography of this rite to *Mars*, in his eponymous month.

In keeping with the Julian programme, the *Mosaic of Months* dedicates the month of May to *Mercury* and the month of August to *Diana*¹⁷. They have contemporary counterparts in calendars from *Hellin* (Albacete) in Spain¹⁸, from *Trier* in Gaul¹⁹ and from *Ostia* in Italy²⁰. While this agreement underlines the conformity to the Julian order in Italy and the provinces, it can hardly be said to reveal a common pictorial source. For *Mercury* in the *Mosaic of Months* is a standing figure identified by his caduceus, a money bag, a tortoise and a ram (pl. 9), while his counterpart at *Hellin* is *Mercury* the planet, riding on the back of a winged man who represents the Charioteer constellation (pl. 10). This man supports the minute *Gemini*, one at his shoulder, the other at his wrists. In the example from *Trier*, the image is defaced so that only the *caduceus* is visible. But there is an interesting precursor on the side of a mid 2nd century stone altar from *Gabii* in Italy, where the theme is a celestial one, showing the zodiac signs and some of the constellations²¹. On this altar we see why it is that *Mercury* in the *Mosaic of Months* has a

¹⁴ R. HERBIG, "Mosaik im Casino der Villa Borghese", *R.M.* 40, 1925, p. 289-318; A. ALFÖLDI, "Hasta - Summa, Imperii", *AJA* 63, 1959, p. 1-27. Since the discovery of the *Mosaic of Months* in 1961, this panel from Rome has entered the discussion in the articles cited at note 13, as a point of comparison with the March panel at Thysdrus.

¹⁵ OVID, *Fasti* BK 3; W.W. FOWLER, *The Roman Festivals of the Period of the Republic*, London 1899, p. 21, 35-65; DEGRASSI, p. 66; 74; 120-5; 242-3; 287; 293.

¹⁶ D. LEVI, *Antioch Mosaic Pavements* I, Princeton 1947, p. 37, pl. 5; *id.*, 1941, p. 255, 258-62, 289; STERN, 1953, p. 224-6; PARRISH, 1992, Cat. 7; *id.*, "The Calendar Mosaic from Antiochia. New Interpretation of its Illustrations of the Months", in *CMGR* VI, 1990 (1994), p. 383-389. To Parrish, the attributes of this figure are a cup and a staff.

¹⁷ OVID, *Fasti*, BK 5; W.W. FOWLER, *supra* note 15. May: p. 23; 111; 120-1. August: p. 26; 198-201; DEGRASSI, May: 56-7; 67; 102-3; 288; 246-7. August: 79; 134-9; 252-3; 289; 295.

¹⁸ A. FERNANDEZ DE AVILA, "Un nuevo mosaico descubierto en Hellin (Albacete)", *Archivo español de arqueología* 14, 1940-1, p. 442f.; H. STERN, "Mosaïque de Hellin (Albacete)", *Mon Piot*, 54, 1965, p. 39-59; *id.*, 1981, p. 442; SALZMAN, App. 2: 4; PARRISH, 1992, Cat. 27.

¹⁹ K. PARLASCA, *Die römischen Mosaiken in Deutschland*, Berlin 1959, p. 42-48; STERN, 1981, p. 443, pl. 22-3; SALZMAN, App. 2: 3; PARRISH, 1992, Cat. 28.

²⁰ A. PIGANIOL, "Le calendrier illustré d'Ostie", in (*id.*) *Recherches sur les jeux romains*, Strasbourg 1923, p. 44-57; STERN, 1953, p. 205; *id.*, "Le cycle illustré des mois trouvé à Ostie", *JS*, 1975, p. 122-9; *id.*, 1981, p. 440-1, pl. 8, 9; SALZMAN, App. 1: 2; PARRISH, 1992, Cat. 30.

²¹ WEBSTER, Cat. 5; STERN, 1981, p. 434, pl. 1 and 2; SALZMAN, App. 2: 1; PARRISH, 1992, Cat. 29.

tortoise as his attribute. *Mercury* used the shell of a tortoise to fabricate the first lyre²²; and this invention is signified in the Lyre constellation which rises on the 8th of May, a few days before the festival of *Mercury* on the Ides²³. One could say that the Lyre is the herald of the festival of *Mercury*. On the Italian altar, the tortoise-cum-Lyre is shown in conjunction with the *Gemini* to indicate the month of May (pl. 11). Thus, this earlier example is related thematically, though not pictorially, to *Mercury* in the *Mosaic of Months*.

Neither can we compare *Diana* in the *Mosaic of Months* (pl. 12 & 13), attended there by her dog and stag, with *Diana* in the mosaic from *Hellin*. In the *Mosaic of Months*, she holds her bow ready to be armed with the arrow that she is withdrawing from the quiver at her shoulder, while at *Hellin* *Diana* is the Moon goddess, floating through the heavens on the back of her centaur. The issue becomes complicated. If pictorial models were in circulation, the model used at *Hellin* is more likely to have been an illustrated astronomical treatise, whereas that used at *Thysdrus* has called on more conventional images of *Mercury* with caduceus and moneybag and *Diana* arming her bow with dog and stag in attendance. The *Diana* in the *Mosaic of Months* has a closer relation to the *Diana* in a contemporary fresco from *Ostia*, where she is depicted in the same pose, overlooking the celebrants at her August festival (pl. 14).

Now, on the basis of a likeness between the March panels from *Thysdrus* and from *Rome*, combined with those stereotypical images of *Mercury* and *Diana*, can one entertain the possibility that these pictures were transmitted for the purposes of calendar illustration? Unfortunately this hypothesis will not stand up, because both *Mercury* and *Diana* were, in any case, the pre-eminent patron deities of *Thysdrus*²⁴. Their images and effigies must have been familiar sights in that town²⁵; therefore for the mosaicists in *Thysdrus* an imported model, whether available or not, would have been quite superfluous. So far, the only plausible candidate for the case is the March panel, with its close relation in *Rome*. Let us then consider the third question concerning the originality of the calendar.

If evidence for a transmitted calendar cycle is slight, there are indications that local initiative played a part in the conception of the *Mosaic of Months*. I am intrigued, for instance, by a man whose image appears twice in the mosaic, and in a prominent position near the threshold (pl. 1, 15, 16).

²² HESIOD, *Works, The Homeric Hymns and Homeric*. Trans. Evelyn WHITE, LCL, 1936. *To Hermes*, p. 22-66.

²³ OVID, *Fasti*, 5. 415-16; 5. 599; ARATUS, *Phaenomena*, 269-70: "The tiny tortoise which Hermes pierced for strings and bade it be called the Lyre... and he brought it into heaven."

²⁴ The powers of *Mercury* are hailed in inscriptions: *CIL* VIII: 51; 8: 22848; H. SLIM, "Nouveaux témoignages sur la vie économique de *Thysdrus*", *BCTH* (NS) 19, fasc. B, 1985, p. 63-85, see p. 66-7, n. 18. *Diana's* powers over the lives of the young and newly born are discussed by L. SLIM, "A propos d'un cimetière d'enfants à *Thysdrus*", in *Africa Romana, Atti del I convegno di Studio, Sassari*, Dec. 1983, p. 167-177, see p. 176 where *Diana* is aligned with *Tanit*.

²⁵ In mosaics as an amphitheatre deity, *Diana* appears in the *Mosaic of Magerius* from nearby *Smirat*: A. Beschtaouch, "La mosaïque de chasse à l'amphithéâtre découverte à *Smirat* en Tunisie", *CRAI*, 1966, p. 134-7; K. DUNBABIN, *The Mosaics of Roman North Africa, a Study in Iconography and Patronage*, Oxford 1978, Cat. *Smirat* I, p. 67-9, pl. 12: 53; also, in *Thysdrus*, in the triclinium mosaic from *Sollertiana Domus*: FOUCHER, 1961, p. 16-17, pl. 17; DUNBABIN, Cat. *El Djem* 21a, p. 46, pl. 10: 20.

Occupying the central panel at the base of the mosaic is an illustration of two men exchanging New Year's greetings in January²⁶. Directly above this panel, in the second register, is another illustration of two men paying homage to a large star above their heads in the month of October. This image is now open to two interpretations : while Henri Stern saw the star as a reference to the birth date of the Emperor Alexander Severus on October 1st²⁷, Louis Foucher suggests that the occasion is *Augustalia*, celebrated on the 12th.²⁸ However, the man to our left in each panel wears a long cape, has short hair, a clean-cut profile and an upright bearing. It is here suggested that these are portraits of the same man and furthermore that he is the patron of the house, especially since he appears in January, a month which is elsewhere always reserved for a domestic or public leader²⁹. To take an earlier example, a consul has been reported in the fragment that survived from the January segment in the 2nd century *Antioch* mosaic³⁰. If our suggestion is correct, then it is clear that these two Thysdrus illustrations contain local references. Not only that, the October panel, unique in calendar iconography, probably follows the wishes of the patron, whether he be an adherent of the Emperor Alexander Severus or a member in the order of Augustales. At the same time, it is to be noticed in the January panel that the room is furnished with a small statuette, and a table top laden with objects. There are some foliage, a round cake, and other small pieces difficult to identify, which could represent fruit. It is usually agreed that these are the lucky tokens, or *strenae*, which were customarily exchanged along with the greetings on New Year's Day³¹ ; while the small statuette, representing the household *Lar*, refers to the important sacrifices that were made in January to the *Lares* of crossroads and thresholds and to the *Penates* of the hearth. Such an occasion is illustrated in the contemporary mosaic from *Vienne* in southern France where the master of the house, standing at his threshold, offers a libation in January, assisted by a small boy³² (pl. 17).

Once again, it appears that the comparative examples, such as they are, only serve to reveal thematic connections. January, standing at the head of the Julian year, is always represented by a head of state, or a head of the household. This is confirmed by the consul from *Antioch*, and the householders at *Thysdrus* and *Vienne*, each of whom appears in relation to the threshold. But, apart from their shared theme, it is evident that the illustrations have been conceived independently of each other. So far, however, and putting aside the unique illustration in

²⁶ *Supra* note 13.

²⁷ H. STERN, "L'image du mois d'octobre sur une mosaïque d'El Djem", *JS*, 1965, p. 117-31.

²⁸ L. FOUCHER, "Le mois d'octobre sur le calendrier de Thysdrus", in *CMGR*, Lausanne, Oct. 1997 (forthcoming).

²⁹ PARRISH, 1992, see January column, p. 492.

³⁰ LEVI, 1941, p. 255, fig. 4 ; PARRISH, 1992, p. 492.

³¹ D. PARRISH, "Variations in the Iconography of the Winter Season", in *CMGR* IV, 1984 (1994), p. 42-44, pl. XII : 1 and 3. Similar objects accompany the Winter Season in the mosaic from the *House of the Drinking Contest* at *Antioch*.

³² LAFAYE, p. 323-47 ; WEBSTER, p. 33, pl. 6, Cat. 12 ; STERN, 1953, p. 205-7 ; *id.*, 1981, p. 445-9 ; SALZMAN, App. 2 : 5 ; PARRISH, 1992, Cat. 43.

October, the month illustrations have depicted ritual - to *Mars*, festivals - to *Mercury* and *Diana*, and ceremony - appropriate to January. These occasions were nationally observed at fixed times in the Roman tradition. But there is a final example, dealing with a rustic subject, that appears to confirm the local character of the *Mosaic of Months*.

This is the September illustration of two men treading grapes in a large vat (pl. 18). There are plenty of counterparts to this illustration but they all reserve this occupation for the month of October and are all from north of the Mediterranean - in calendars from *Athens*³³, *Rheims*³⁴, *Vienne*³⁵ and *Italy*³⁶.

The *Mosaic of Months* is the only calendar to depict the grape treading activity so early in the year³⁷. Surely this is an accurate reflection of climatic conditions in *Thysdrus* - the vintage ripens slightly earlier in North Africa than in regions to the north.

I conclude, therefore, that the *Mosaic of Months* is a local product incorporating considerable local reference. But one cannot call it an entirely unmediated product because the ritual, festivals and ceremony it contains follow the Roman programme. Nevertheless, there is scant evidence apart from the March panels from *Thysdrus* and Rome, to suggest the circulation of a common iconography in the late 2nd, early 3rd century. Rather the contrary: wherever comparisons can be made with earlier or contemporary examples, the variations suggest that the Julian calendar merely provided the framework for a free and localised interpretation of the subject matter.

³³ The *Calendar Frieze from Athens*, 1st or 2nd century BC: WEBSTER, p. 7, Cat. I, pl. 1; E. SIMON, *Festivals of Attica*, Wisconsin, 1983, p. 90 f., pl. 3: 1; PARRISH, 1992, Cat. 2.

³⁴ The *Roman Arch of Rheims*, late 2nd, early 3rd century: WEBSTER, p. 34, Cat. 4, pl. 2; STERN, 1953, p. 207-10; *id.*, "Le cycle des mois de la Porte de Mars à Reims", *Coll. Latomus* 58, *Hommages à A. Grenier*, 1962, p. 1441-46; G. Ch. PICARD, "La 'Porte de Mars' à Reims", in *Actes du 95^e congrès national des sociétés savantes*, Reims 1970, (Paris 1974), p. 59-73; STERN, 1981, p. 452; PARRISH, 1992, Cat. 34.

³⁵ The *Mosaic of St Romain en Gal*, late 2nd, early 3rd century. LAFAYE, p. 342; STERN, 1953, p. 205; *id.*, 1981, p. 447.

³⁶ The *Ariadne Sarcophagus from Auletta*, late 3rd century. R. AMEDICK, "Monatsbilder auf einem antiken Sarcophag", *MDAI* 97, 1990, p. 197-216, p. 200, fig. 1.

³⁷ There is a possible, though illegible exception in the *Calendar Fresco* found beneath the church of *Santa Maria Maggiore* in Rome: F. MAGI, "Il Calendario dipinto sotto S Maria Maggiore", in *Mem. Pont. Acc.* XI. 1, Rome 1962, p. 1-103; M. SALZMAN, "New Evidence for the Dating of the Calendar at Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome", *TAPA* 111, 1981, p. 215-227; I. LEVIN, "A reconsideration of the Esquiline Calendar and its Political Festivals", *AJA* 86, 1982; STERN, 1981, p. 453; PARRISH, 1992, p. 489, Cat. 33. The most complete illustration, September, shows a country scene in which workers harvest fruit (apples?) in the grounds of a country villa, where a sacrifice is being performed. In the upper right portion of this panel, the head, shoulders and chest of a workman are depicted in a small open sided building. This vignette is described by LEVIN (p. 431) and STERN as the wine press, but PARRISH, whom I am following here, finds this activity "unclear".

DISCUSSION

Jean-Pierre **Darmon** : M^{me} Eastman admet-elle ou non l'interprétation donnée par Henri Stern de l'image du mois d'Octobre dans le calendrier de Thysdrus ? Je pose cette question parce que la datation de cette mosaïque du règne d'Alexandre Sévère est liée à cette interprétation de l'image d'Octobre (célébration du *Dies Natalis* d'Alexandre Sévère).

Eithne **Eastman** : 1) At present the interpretation given by Henri Stern remains to be proved. 2) It is my understanding that the dating of the Mosaic of Months is based on archaeological evidence evaluated by Louis Foucher (*Découvertes archéologiques à Thysdrus*, 1961, p. 51, 44) at the time of discovery and that Stern's hypothesis was aligned to that evidence.

Demetrios **Michaelides** : You have identified two hands in the mosaic of Thysdrus. Have you identified any other mosaics in the region made by either of these mosaicists ?

Eithne **Eastman** : The hexagon and circle pattern that defines the grid within which the month and season panels are contained, has a close relation in the neighbouring House of the Peacock. The fine outer border of pearls and pirouettes has a relation in the Triclinium Mosaic of the House of the Sollertii, where it frames a panel of Mercury. Although the House of the Sollertii is only known to me in a reproduction, I believe the figure styles are close to those in the Mosaic of Months. The three houses are contemporary, see L. Foucher, *Découvertes archéologiques à Thysdrus*, 1961, pls VII (a), XVIII (b) and XXVI.

Frequently cited works :

- DEGRASSI = A. DEGRASSI, *Inscriptiones Italiae* Vol. 13 : *Fasti et Elogia*, Fasc. 2, *Fasti anni Numani et Iuliani*, Rome 1963.
- FOUCHER, 1961 = L. FOUCHER, *Découvertes archéologiques à Thysdrus en 1961*, Institut d'archéologie, Tunis 1961. Notes et documents, Vol. 5, (nouvelle Série).
- FOWLER = W.W. FOWLER, *The Roman Festivals of the Period of the Republic*, Handbook of Archaeology and Antiquities, London 1899.
- LAFAYE = G. LAFAYE, "La mosaïque de St Romain-en-Gal", *R.A.* 19, 1892, p. 323-47.
- LEVI, 1941 = D. LEVI, "Allegories of the Months in Classical Art", *Art B.* 23, 1941, p. 251-95.
- PARRISH, 1992 = D. PARRISH, "Menses", *LIMC* VI, 1992, p. 479-500.
- SALZMAN = M. SALZMAN, *On Roman Time ; the Codex-Calendar of 354 and the rhythms of urban life in late Antiquity*, Berkeley 1990.
- STERN, 1953 = H. STERN, *Le calendrier de 354 ; étude sur son texte et ses illustrations*, Institut français d'archéologie de Beyrouth, Bibliothèque Archéologique et Historique 55, Paris 1953.
- STERN, 1968 = H. STERN, "Un calendrier illustré de Thysdrus (Tunisie)", in *Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei. Quaderno 105 Atti del convegno internazionale sul tema : Tardo Antico e alto medioevo*, Rome 1968, p. 177-200.
- STERN, 1981 = H. STERN, "Les calendriers romains illustrés", *ANRW* II, 12, 2, 1981, p. 431-75.
- WEBSTER = J.C. WEBSTER, *The Labours of the Months in Antique and Mediaeval Art to the end of the 12th century*. North-western University Studies in the Humanities 4, Chicago 1938.

Plates : the reproductions for which a source is not named have been taken from my own photographs.

I extend grateful thanks to Ingrid Barker who has typed this paper, to James Crouch for help with proof reading, to Klàra Doroszlay for her translation of the German article by Rita Amedick, and to Louis Foucher, who has kindly provided me with a copy of his paper "Le mois d'Octobre sur le calendrier de Thysdrus", due to appear in this issue of *CMGR*.

3. El Djem

4. El Djem

Plates : the reproductions for which a source is not named have been taken from my own photographs.

I extend grateful thanks to Ingrid Barker who has typed this paper, to James Crouch for help with proof reading, to Klàra Doroszlay for her translation of the German article by Rita Amedick, and to Louis Foucher, who has kindly provided me with a copy of his paper "Le mois d'Octobre sur le calendrier de Thysdrus", due to appear in this issue of CMGR.



1. El Djem / *Thysdrus*. The Mosaic of Months.



2. El Djem / *Thysdrus*. Mosaic of Months. June.



3. El Djem / *Thysdrus*. Mosaic of Months. Autumn Season.



4. El Djem / *Thysdrus*. Mosaic of Months. Winter Season.



5. El Djem / Thysdrus. Mosaic of Months. February.



6. El Djem / Thysdrus. Mosaic of Months. March.



7. Rome. Mosaic panel of March. Borghese Gallery.



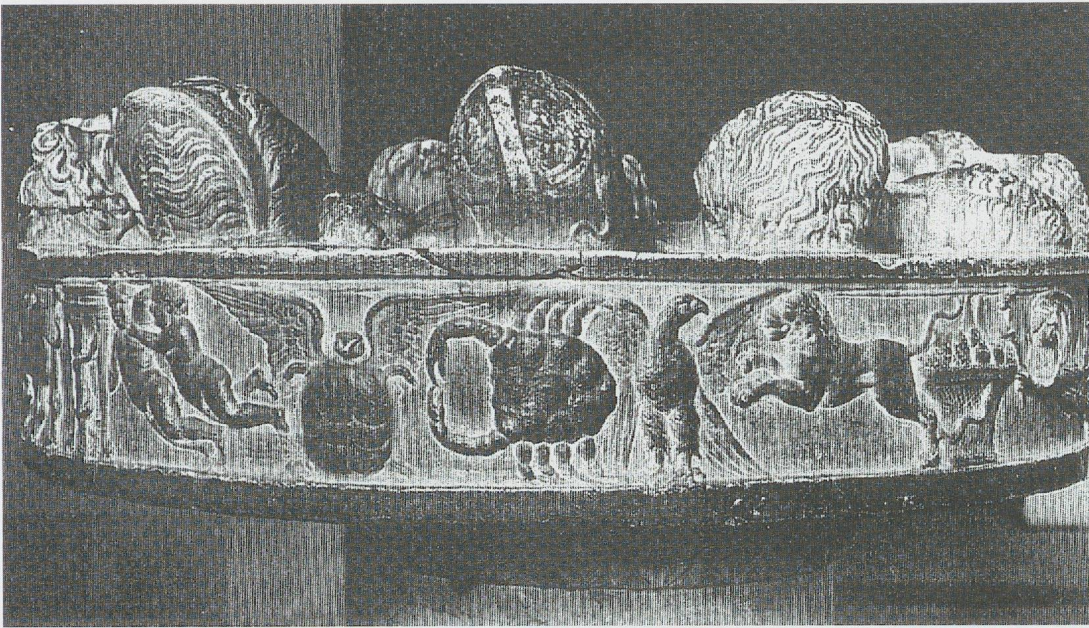
8. Antioch. Calendar Mosaic. Photo Princeton Museum.



9. El Djem / Thysdrus. Mosaic of Months. May.



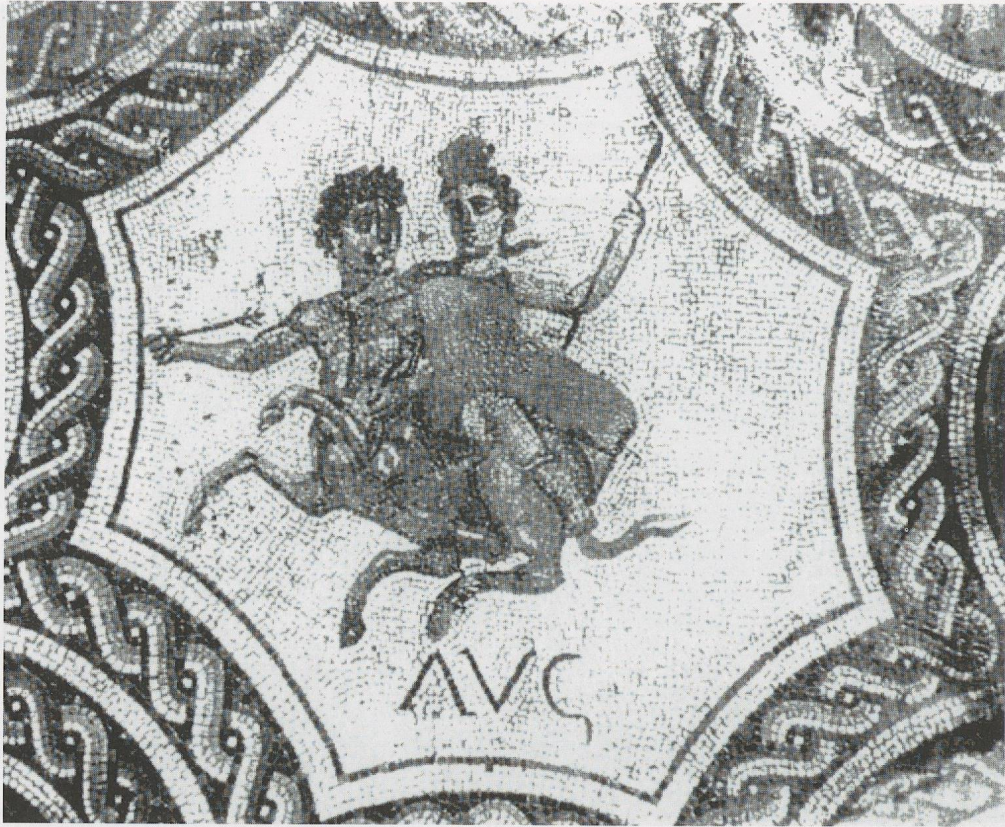
10. Hellin. Mosaic of Planets, Constellations and Zodiac Signs. May. Photo Stern.



11. Gabii. The Altar of Gabii. Lateral view from Gemini to Leo. Photo Stern.



12. El Djem / Thysdrus. Mosaic of Months. August.



13. Hellin. Mosaic of Planets, Constellations and Zodiac Signs. August. Photo Stern.



14. Ostia. Calendar Fresco. August. Photo Stern.



15. El Djem / Thysdrus. Mosaic of Months. January.



16. El Djem / Thysdrus. Mosaic of Months. October.



17. Vienne. The Mosaic of St-Romain-en-Gal. Domestic Sacrifice. Photo Museum St-Germain-en-Laye.



18. El Djem / Thysdrus. The Mosaic of Months. September.