

Salerno - *Domus* romana di Vicolo della Neve

In the ancient city of Salerno, in the so called *Antica Corte* district, a prestigious *Domus* of Roman origins was discovered, about 5 meters below the current street level, in the late 1980s. The discovery occurred during some restoration works on a private house, at the corner of Via Mercanti and Vicolo della Neve.

This is a late ancient age habitation (III-IV century AD), developed on two floors and planted on an pre-existing building of a first imperial age (I-II century AD) which, probably, originally overlooked directly the sea.

The *domus* is characterized by an atrium with *cocciopesto* flooring and painted decorations on the walls with the so-called garden scenes, which reproduce an ornamental design of trellis, reeds and gushing fountains.

Above the atrium are located the chambers belonging to the house, probably used as a service room, as witnessed by the discovery of a cistern for collecting rainwater.

During the V AD, a gradual phase of downfall and then abandonment started for the building, due to a series of strong floods that implicated the fall and the consequential demolition of the *domus* which was subsequently replaced by a wooden structure whose function had not been possible to define. The structure was demolished in the early medieval period due to recurring flood damage. For some centuries, the area remained undeveloped and intended for agricultural use, because of the cyclical destructive natural phenomena. Only during the XII century appeared in the area, structures intended to host craft activities, beginning the process of lively building growth in the *Antica Corte* district.

The recovery of this residence with its extraordinary pictorial equipment, allows us to reconstruct a cross-section of the city life over the centuries. It gives us an idea of what was the private residential building in the Roman Salerno, of which unfortunately, we still have little evidence.

The *domus* is currently closed to the public