

HORREUM

Museum of Narbonne



These subterranean galleries which might have been a public warehouse (*Horreum* in latin), don't really have equivalents in the Roman world. They are the only antique monument which can be visited in Narbonne.

Noticed in 1838, they were partly explored between 1935 and 1941, and more recently during punctual prospections.

The galleries are only partly cleared out, their plan and exact width still needs to be specified.

They have been organized and opened to the public since 1976.

Today, the North and West wings, the beginning of the South wing, a secondary corridor and a lately blocked passage are visible).

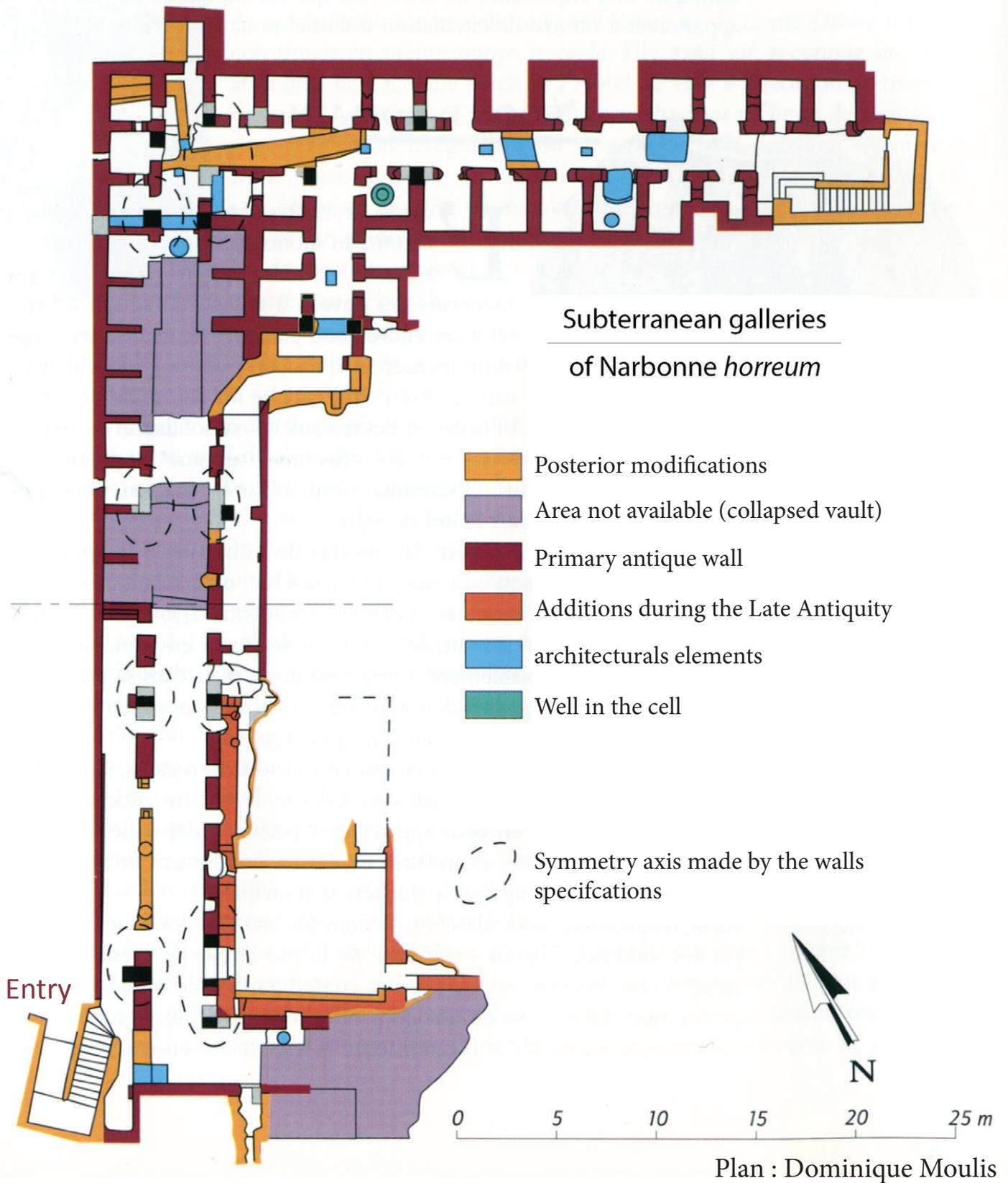
The wings are constituted of a central hallway flanked by tiny rooms, each one opened by a narrow doorway without any closing system. The total building is barrel vaulted. The wings cross each other at right angles and must have formed a 38x49 metre U plan developing around a central solid block which has not been excavated so far. The existence of a fourth wing has not been proved.

The galleries built at the end of the 1st Century B.C are located 5 meters below the ground level. They formed the basement of a building, probably a market located South of the forum and on the edge of the *cardo* (North-South axis of the Roman city, nowadays known as rue Droite).

The plan and the situation of this *Horreum* recall other *Horrea* (Ostia in particular) however they are always located at ground level and are mostly day lightened; and the cryptoporticoes (Arles, Bavay and Reims), imposing subterranean monuments, underlying porticoes of some Forums.

The galleries of Narbonne have been preserved throughout the centuries in spite of some reshapings in the West wing (suppression of cells, doubling of walls), and their use as private cellars.

The North wing, better conserved, now displays lapidary elements proceeding from the former ramparts, recalling some monuments of *Narbo-Martius* : capitals of columns, friezes, reliefs, inscriptions, steles, fragments of tombstones, depicting the world of theatre, baths, horse cart races or games of the amphitheatre ; an impressive collection of amphoras found in Narbonne in 1990 can also be seen.



Some dimensions :

Length of the north wing : 37,70 mètres

Length of the west wing: 50 mètres

Width of each wing : 7,25 mètres

Height under vaults : 2,30 mètres

Surface of cells(units): 3,80 m² to 5,50m²

