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The Apsidal Building of the *Vicus Martis Tudertium* (PG)

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Over the course of the past three seasons (2012-2014) at the putative site of the Vicus Martis Tudertium near the church of S. Maria in Pantano (Massa Martana, PG), excavation has focused on a large structure first observed in crop marks in fall 2008. We have uncovered a large building oriented along the putative Via Flaminia and possessing an apse at its eastern end, the precise function of which remains unclear. Excavation has also uncovered a series of early-medieval burials located just east of the structure.

Introduction

Several ancient itineraries preserve a series of stopping points on the *Via Flaminia*. On the Vicarello Cups, for example, the route along the western branch of the road from ancient Narnia (modern Narni) to Mevania (Bevagna) is interrupted by a site called both "Martis" and "ad Martis"[1]. The distances given in the itineraries, as well as the discovery of several inscriptions that refer to a "Vicus Martis Tudertium" led scholars to identify that place with the area around the medieval church of S. Maria in Pantano, now located in the territory of the *comune* of Massa Martana (PG) at the foot of the *Monti Martani*[2]. Excavations conducted at the site since 2008 have confirmed the presence of substantial remains from the Roman period, stretching from at least the 2nd c. BCE until the 5th c. CE[3]. Prior to the current program of excavation, the archaeological superintendency had identified several nearby portions of ancient construction as infrastructure for the *Flaminia*[4]. Our goals in starting this project included confirming the presence of a settlement that could be identified with the *Vicus Martis*, and assessing its geographical extent and state of preservation.

The presence of remains close to the surface, coupled with the planting of alfalfa in recent years, has resulted in the frequent visibility of crop marks in the fields around the church of S. Maria. Most noticeable on satellite images of the kind available on numerous websites is the N-S-running road that we have identified as the original course of the *Via Flaminia*. No doubt due not only to the shallow depth at which it lies, but also because of its width (~4m), the effects of the road may be seen with other crops that are less likely to show such marks. Late in the summer of 2008, after our first season of excavation, an unusual set of marks were visible in the area to the east of the church and the road, reaching the limit of the *particella* in which we were working. The crop marks (fig. 1) seemed to outline a semi-circle, opening to the west and with its end points connecting to and forming right angles with a straight N-S running wall on each side. These two walls in turn connected to and formed a corner with two longer walls which ran west, culminating close to the road. The semicircular wall and the plan of the structure indicated that in all likelihood this was an apse. We therefore turned our attention to this area for three seasons (2012-2014).

[1] ROLDÁN HERVÁS 1975.
[2] This identification was already made by Clüverius in 1659, though not followed by all; CLÜVERIUS, BUNO 1659.
[3] For reports of the results of previous seasons, see MUCCIGROSSO 2010; MUCCIGROSSO 2011; and MUCCIGROSSO *et al.* 2015.
[4] BRUSCHETTI 1994.

Fig. 1. Crop marks, looking west. The horizontal line in the distance, closer to the building complex around the church of S. Maria, shows the course of the road. (Photo C. Zoccoli).

Fig. 2. Apsidal structure at the end of the 2012 season, looking north.

Excavation

Our work was ultimately hampered by the water table which had risen significantly since the start of excavation in 2008. In consequence it was not possible to return in later seasons to the levels of the deeper strata excavated in 2012, and work in that year was also limited by the ground water.

Apsidal building – Excavation quickly confirmed the presence of an apsidal structure (fig. 2) with overall measurements of ~24m x 10m, and further investigation over the three seasons revealed the existence of several phases of construction. The curved portion of the apse itself (**711**), some 6m in diameter, appears to have been constructed immediately upon a pre-existing floor (identified as **721** in the interior of the apse, and **750**

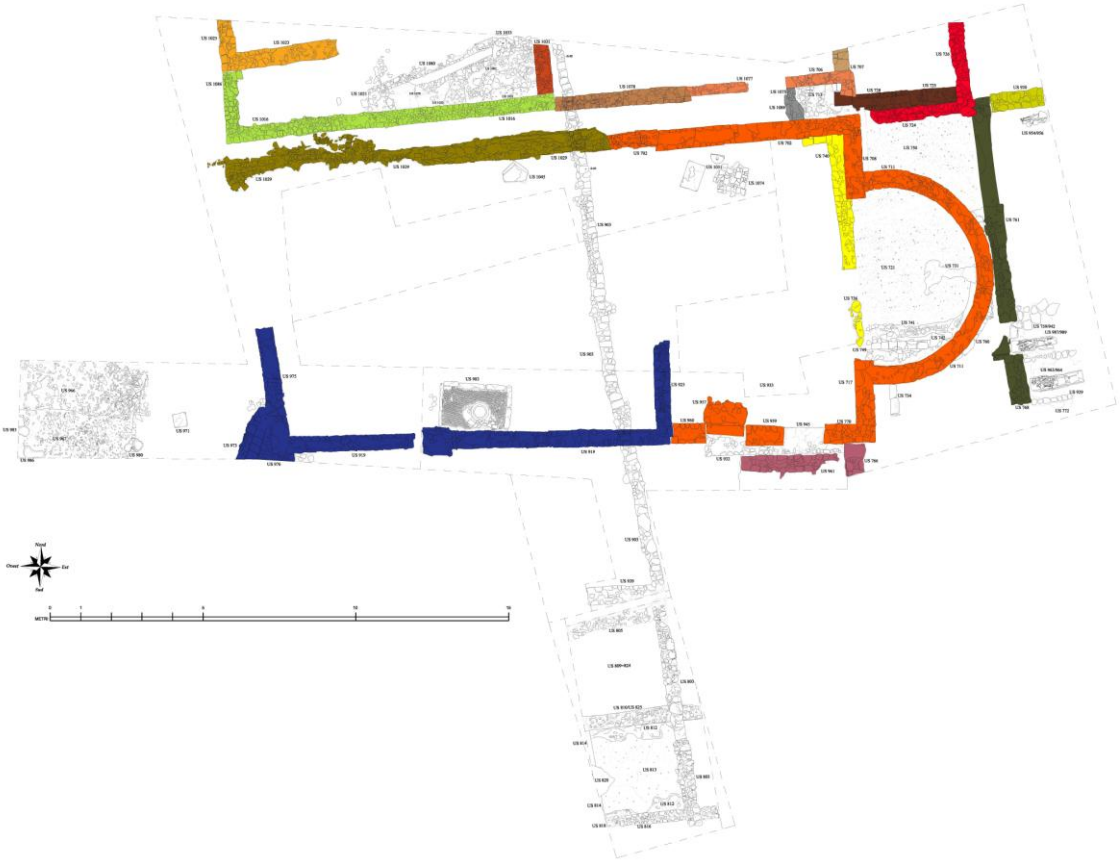

Fig. 3. Plan of the apsidal building and associated structures.

outside the apse to the northeast). (See the plan in fig. 3; fig. 4.) Immediately to the east, a feature running roughly N-S (**761**; dark green on the plan) lies flush with this pavement. Its surface is composed in its center of stones along with tile and amphora fragments; further north the surface transitions to a rough *cocciopesto*. The extreme eastern edge of the apse rests on **761**. Moving southward, after a short break (due at least in part to a later burial **941**, about which see below), a damaged section of wall (**768**) lies in line with **761** (fig. 4). To the west and parallel to these features is an earlier wall (**740** and **736**; yellow), lying partially underneath the N-S wall segments from which the apse springs. It (and so **761**) runs with a different orientation from the apsidal structure. Although complete excavation of this fea-

Fig. 4. Aligned features immediately east of the apse after the 2012 season.

*Fig. 5. Threshold stone **932** with floor preparation **957**.*

*Fig. 6. **1029** from the south, showing the many tile fragments in the wall with the flanges of the top layer forming the northern face. **1016** is visible at top.*

ture was not possible, its position suggests that it formed the western wall of room for which **761/768** was the eastern wall. In this interpretation, an earlier eastern wall was mostly razed below the level of the pavement, and then partially rebuilt to a level that was even with the floor, and helped form a platform for the apse.

The circular wall of the apse (**711**) forms a structurally cohesive unit with the walls of the rectangular portion of the structure (all in orange on the plan). From north to south (and as seen on the plan), those are **702**, which runs roughly E-W and corners at the south-running **708** from which **711** springs; curved **711** then encounters the N-S segment **717**, which corners with the west-running **770**. We were unable to excavate to a sufficient depth to determine whether the other walls also lie on top of earlier walls as **708** lies over **740**; in particular it is not clear whether **736** continues south far enough to underlie **717**. In the north N-S-running **740** does appear to turn west to run under **702**. Excavation did uncover another fragment of wall (**961**, purple in the plan) at the same elevation as **740** and running at roughly 90° to it, south of **770**. There was no evidence of these walls joining, nor did **961** run far west. In the end therefore, while it is tempting to think that the later phase of construction that included the apse overlies an earlier rectangular structure with a slightly different axis, conclusive evidence is lacking.

As the plan indicates, the northern wall (**702**) of the building associated with the apse runs for some distance to the west, though it abruptly changes width before being replaced by another type of construction. Its southern counterpart is a pair of rectangular pilasters, **959** and **960**, which are in line with 770 (also associated with the apse; orange in the plan). The openings provided access to the interior as shown by the presence of an irregularly shaped stone, which presumably functioned as a threshold (**932**), complete with circular depressions for hinge posts (fig. 5). Given the irregular shape of this stone, it may well have been repurposed from an earlier use. Immediately to the north of this threshold (and therefore inside the structure) a roughly rectangular feature, composed of a yellowish, large-grained *cocciopesto* is to be found. It lies <10cm lower than the level of the pavement inside the apse (**721**). This may have been the core of a step or other small structure, or perhaps all that remains of a floor preparation for the interior of the building. The area to the south of the threshold and pilasters, but north of the E-W wall **961** seems to be composed of this or very similar material at a lower elevation, with broken tile fragments embedded in its surface. This area was covered by a very clayey green soil and the water table was reached as it was being cleared, but it was very likely another floor level or preparation for one.

The westernmost pilaster abuts another rectangular series of walls (blue on the plan): farthest east, **923** runs north into the interior of the larger structure, where it ends abruptly and appears unfinished or broken off. It may be that this reflects only the upper preserved section of the feature, but it is also possible that this rough state resulted from some demolition when the apsidal area was added to what had been a structure closed (or more closed) to the east. Southward, **923** turns west roughly in line with the pilasters and after a continues as wall **919**, which runs to the west ~17m until it corners obliquely to the north to continue as **975/976**. This wall creates a southwest corner for the building, but there is a still a large opening onto the road further north. The length of the entire complex, from the end of the apse to this wall is ~24m.

On the northern side of the structure, while **702** does meet another wall, and like **919** that wall extends westward towards the road for a similar distance, it is of an entirely different style of construction. Instead of being of stone with mortar, this wall (**1029**; olive green) is composed of roof-tile fragments stacked so that their upward-facing flanges formed the sides of the wall. Fig. 6 shows the many tile fragments with the flanges of the top layer forming the northern face and covered in mortar. The westernmost portion of this wall preserves a short stretch where small ashlars were mortared to the tiles in a line inset from the northern limit created by the

*Fig. 6. **1029** from the south, showing the many tile fragments in the wall with the flanges of the top layer forming the northern face. **1016** is visible at top.*

*Fig. 7. Small ashlars on the tiles of **1029**.*

*Fig. 8: Drainage channel **973**.*

tiles (fig. 7). Evidence for this placement of the stones is also visible in the mortar in other portions of the wall. The southern face of **1029** is much more poorly preserved than the northern. This likely reflects the way in which the stone wall just to the north (**1016**; light green) protected that face from the damaging action of the plow.

This apsidal structure therefore is constructed out of walls built at different times and with different methods. The eastern apsidal portion was not only built over another building, but was added to an existing structure to its west. The rough transition from **702** to **1029**, its rough parallelism with **919**, and the composition of **1029** itself all suggest that it replaced an earlier wall whose nature is now unknown.

Storage and drainage features – There are several features of this structure that seem designed for storing or removing liquid.

First is the small drainage channel (**973**) built into the western wall of the structure, creating the division between the N-S running walls **975** and **976** (fig. 8), and, based on its slope, leading out of the interior. Its walls are composed of small flat-faced stone and its floor consists of bricks or carefully broken roof tiles. We were not able to determine whether it connected to any additional structures in the interior or exterior.

A partial break in **919** is related to the presence of an opening (~35cm in diameter) to a well or buried storage feature just inside and to the north of that wall (**983**, fig. 9)[5]. The mouth of the feature is made of a monolithic circular stone and a surrounding rectangular area is paved mainly with small bricks in a herringbone pattern. This *opus spicatum* floor fragment is itself bordered by limestone curbing of inconsistent size and shape, likely repurposed. It is worth noting that the herringbone pattern is not aligned with the wall, which in fact partially overlies the floor's southern edge. Additionally the herringbone shows signs of multiple repairs, partly with similar bricks aligned in a different pattern, partly with irregular fragments of tile or brick. All this suggests that the feature was present relatively

[5] The feature was discovered early in the season when the soil over it collapsed into its interior during excavation. While we were unable to excavate below the level of the opening, water was visible inside it, as can be seen in the figure, likely from the water table. Manual probing of the interior did not reveal any vertical surfaces that might be the sides of the feature.

*Fig. 9. Well or storage feature with surrounding pavement **983**.*

Fig. 10. Exposed drainage channel underneath the floor of the apse.

early in the history of this structure and was preserved through its evolution. The layout of the better preserved portion of herringbone style floor also suggests that it originally covered a larger area and the remainder was removed (at least in the area so far excavated).

A second, larger drainage channel (**749**) is present inside the apse itself, running from west to east, from the interior of the rectangular area under the floor of the apsidal area (fig. 10). The floor of the drain is composed of brick or tile, and the sides of brick, tile and small stones mortared together. The drain was covered with heavy, thick stones, at least one of which appears to be a reused paving stone, and these were in turn covered with roof tile fragments and flat stones to make the final surface flush with the rest of the apsidal area. It is not clear whether the floor was dug out to create this feature, or the floor ended here at another pre-existing structure. Possibly then the channel pre-dates the apse. The interior of the channel was mainly empty and the small amount of soil it contained was sterile. The eastern end of the drain appeared to be blocked, but extending its line leads to a break at the northern end of short section of the short wall **768** (green on the plan), where a series of finished stones were found surrounding a burial (**987**; see below, including fig. 18). Because of the curved shape of the stones, it is tempting to think that these once formed part of the opening for a well or other storage feature.

The final relevant item is another drainage feature at the northern side of the apse. The most significant part of the feature is a channel (**728**; brown on the plan) formed by a series of roof tiles, running west to east from a rectangular area formed just outside the northern wall of the apsidal structure, **702**, and leading to

*Fig. 9. Well or storage feature with surrounding pavement **983**. Fig. 11: Overhead view of the drain formed by roof tiles.*

Fig. 12. Area lying to the north of the apsidal building, showing pavement at a higher elevation. North to right.

another feature, **725** (fig. 11). The entire structure included a kind of collection area to the north of **702**, the surface of which was formed from mortared tiles and perhaps originally coated for waterproofing (**713**). The drain **728** was made of roof tiles, placed one inside the next, and covered by another series of tiles held in place by a course of stone and placed at right angles to the channel's base tiles. (See the flange on the partially exposed tile, running vertically in fig. 11 at the easternmost portion of **728**.) Perhaps water was collected from the roof or from building interior (though the surface of the collecting area lies some 30cm higher than the herringbone pavement of the well area). **725** must form part of another collection feature or provide a further route to one. It also seems likely that the western portion of the channel was covered as the east still is.

North of the apsidal structure – As is evident from the plan in fig. 3, we (partially) uncovered several nearby structures in addition to the one discussed at length here. These lie mainly to the north and were excavated in our most recent season, when the water table was highest. We therefore can say little about them beyond the highest preserved levels of their walls. However, the consistent pattern of one wall abutting another, as seen in the apsidal building (and indicated by the various colors on the plan), is notable. An interesting area may also be found in the small region formed by the walls **1031** and **1016** on the plan. **1016** (light green in the plan) runs parallel to the tile wall **1029** and it was suggested earlier that its presence helped to preserve the northern face of **1029**. This corner of the structure preserves a worn segment of *cocciopesto* pavement over a portion of its area (**1032**; fig. 12). In addition, an area in which the pavement is not preserved has what appears to be another drain feature (**1083**). What is perhaps most interesting is that the pavement and underlying feature are preserved at a relatively high elevation, with the top of the *cocciopesto* ~35cm above both the level of the pavement inside the apse, and the level of the floor fragment found in the despoiled southern area discussed immediately below.

Abandonment and Spoliation – Previous seasons of excavation have provided evidence that the *vicus* was heavily despoiled after its abandonment. An area just to the south of the apsidal structure offers a particularly clear example.

Crop marks, as well as geomagnetic survey done in our first season of excavation, suggested the

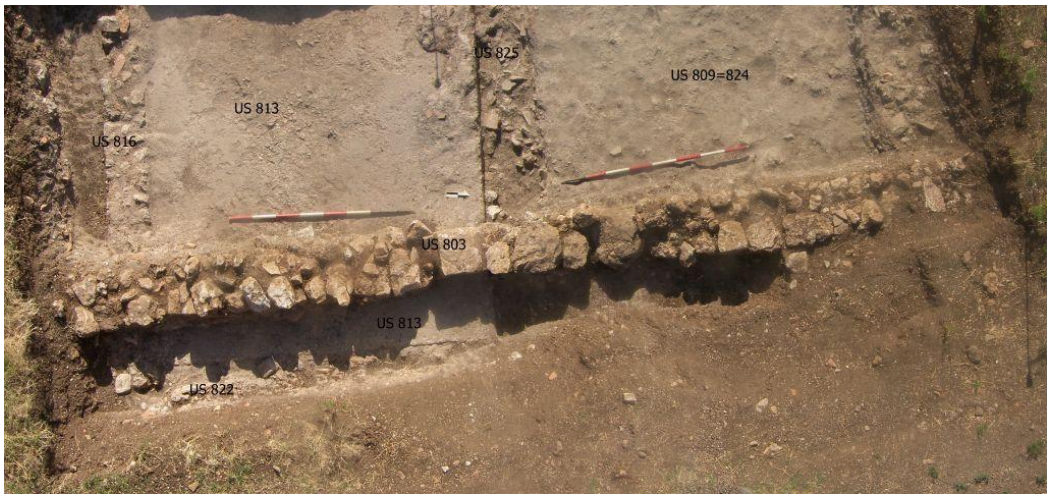

Fig. 13. Area to the south of the apsidal building showing significant spoliation.

*Fig. 14. Top of **1051** in the foreground with **903** at top (west).*

presence of a series of parallel E-W walls in this area behind the church, and we opened up a smaller trench when work began on the area of the apse. That area can be seen in fig. 13. Running across the eastern side of the entire zone is a N-S running dry-stone wall (**803**, the horizontal feature in the bottom half of fig. 13), which sits on a layer of soil ~10-15cm high[6]. In the southern half of the trench a pavement in *cocciopesto* was uncovered (**813**). It appears to run intact underneath **803** and has a neat, roughly N-S limit in the east where it encounters another wall (**822**), which is not well preserved in elevation, but extends into the eastern section of the trench. Likewise to the south it runs up to an E-W running wall (**816**) which is composed of limestone blocks with tile fragments and is preserved to an elevation only slightly higher (max. ~10cm) than the pavement. **816** also runs under **803** and even further east into the section. To the north the pavement similarly ends in a neat line, but this time it encounters what appears to be the trench that a wall formerly occupied. This was a systemic spoliation, for which the removed stones left perpendicular walls to the cut (**825**). To the north of the former wall (**810**), there is no *cocciopesto* pavement, but the stratum is compact and fairly level, suggestive of an earthen floor. Overall then we have here an area where a wall, likely composed of small ashlars was carefully dismantled to obtain its components. (The layout of the remaining walls is also consistent with the geomagnetic survey results).

The other area that shows some signs of post-abandonment work on the site is found inside the rectangular portion of the apsidal building, just south of **702** and **1029**. This area was crossed by the dry-stone wall **903** (the continuation of **803** in this area) which continues north into the section of the trench. **903** crossed several of the ancient walls (e.g., **919**), in some places resting immediately on top of them. Whenever **903** was constructed, therefore, the crests of these earlier walls must have lain at or just below the surface. At roughly the same elevation as **903** was built on, we encountered a large deposit composed of many smaller stones of the kind found in the walls on the site, many with mortar still attached, along with tile fragments, and some larger items as well (fig. 14). Fig. 15 shows two large stone pieces from this deposit, one a large, finished block

[6] This wall also continues across the entire excavated area of the apsidal structure where it is called **903**. See below.

*Fig. 15. Three large items resting inside the apsidal structure to the south of **706** and west of **903** (not shown).*

and the other a portion of a stone column, along with a series of ca. 10 bricks, likely the remnants of a pavement, but like the other pieces, out of its original position. This whole accumulation appears to be an intentional dump of material into the interior of the then out-of-use structure. The best evidence for the chronology of the area comes from the stratigraphic unit bordering the wall **903** in the east at the level of its foundation, which has material from the late medieval period (13-14th c.) and may well be contemporary with the wall, which post-dates the deposit (Lower strata provide latest datable material of the imperial period).

Function – The exact function of the apsidal structure remains unclear. Our inability to completely excavate the interior creates obvious difficulties for interpretation, and it may well be that the later, apsidal structure had a different purpose from the earlier one(s). That the building opened onto the road suggests that such access was important. The absence of a finished floor throughout most of the excavated area (the area of the herringbone is an exception) may indicate a production—or at least work—area with a beaten-earth pavement. A well-known stopping point along the *Flaminia* might also call for a place for travelers to restore themselves, but the presence of an apse would be unusual in this context.

The apse and the various drainage and possible storage features suggest another possibility: a wine-production area like that described by the late-antique agricultural writer Palladius[7]. As Palladius writes in his description of the *cella vinaria* (*Op. Agr.* 1.18), the area for the pressing of the grapes (*calcatorium*) should have the form of a basilica (*forma ipius basilicae*), which, based on other known examples of such structures, means a rectangular building with an apse at its short end. Such structures would also require significant storage facilities for the finished product, typically *dolia* buried in the floor, as well as tubes for conveying the liquid from the area of the press to the storage vessels. Both the poor state of conservation and our inability to completely excavate the interior of the building do not allow us to reach a definitive conclusion. The presence of the preserved well or storage-feature opening **983** indicates excavation below floor level in at least one part of the building's interior.

Burials

As was the case in other areas of our excavation, this one yielded several burials[8]. Whereas the other burials were found apparently resting directly upon the interior floors of other structures, the six discovered in this area were located outside the apsidal building to its east. (See the plan in fig. 3.) One (**733**) was located in a corner formed by the walls of the building, indicating that it post-dates the structure, while the others appear stratigraphically later as well. Radiocarbon dating of one of the burials confirms this relative chronology.

Burial 733 – The first burial (**733**), containing the remains of three individuals, was placed immediately to the south of the curved portion of the apse, where it forms a right angle with the N-S wall **717**. These two walls formed the northern and western limits of the burial, while an ashlar block and a fragment of a small column were aligned to form the eastern side (**734**, visible in fig. 2). No cover was found to the burials and the deposit

[7] We are indebted and grateful to Elizabeth Fentress for suggesting this interpretation, and for sharing a pre-publication version of the forth-coming work on the site of Villa Magna. For an overview of the Palladian *cella vinaria*, see RICCI, 2005.
[8] One of us (Rhodes) has conducted an extensive osteological examination of all the skeletal remains so far discovered on the site. Her results have been partially reported at several conferences (RHODES 2015; MUCCIGROSSO 2016), and a full report is planned.

*Fig. 16: Side by side burials of **963** and **987** after excavation, showing preserved surrounding stones.*

had been heavily disturbed, with the bones of the three individuals mixed together. Given this and the fact that the combined length of the two stones forming the eastern limit was ~1m, less than that of the wall **717** forming the western limit and also less than the height of an adult, it seems possible that the eastern side originally comprised another stone in line with the two extant ones.

The first individual was an older woman aged at least 45 years. The well preserved skeleton is largely complete with the lower legs represented only by fragment of a fibula and five foot bones. She had a number of dental caries and periodontal disease, as well as extensive *ante mortem* tooth loss. There was a hypoplastic defect found on a canine that identifies a period of severe illness or physiological stress at ca. 9.5-10 years of age. She also suffered from mild osteoarthritis of the vertebral column. An unusual aspect to her skeleton was the present of cranial flattening on the left side at the back of the head, affecting the occipital bone and creating an asymmetrical appearance to her skull that would have otherwise been asymptomatic.

The second individual is made up of the fragmentary and incomplete remains of a young child, approximately 4 years of age. The skeleton is less than 25% complete; however two deciduous teeth were recovered that, along with the size and development of the various bones, allowed the identification of these remains as that of a separate individual.

The third individual is more complete than that the second, with most areas represented. However, the well preserved skeleton is less than 50% complete. Teeth and skeletal development identify this as a child of ca. 9.5-11.5 years of age.

Burials 963 and 987 – These two burials, *a cappuccina* style, as those from previous years were, and with their heads to the west, were located side by side to the east of the short portion of a wall, **768**. Burial **963** lies immediately to the south of **987**. Both were disturbed after deposition, though much less so than the previous burial. In particular a heavy stratum (**938**) containing much fragmentary tile, pottery, wall plaster, *tubuli*, and other debris covered the preserved eastern portion of both burials. In addition the easternmost of the three pairs of covering tiles of both were absent, and the remaining covering tiles of **987** were heavily damaged. Both burials may have been originally surrounded by stones (many of which are now lost, creating the uncertainty), including in the case of **987** some with worked sides suggesting they originally formed part of another structure (fig. 16).

Burial **963** contained the largely complete remains of a large, robust male 60 or more years of age (fig. 17). He suffered from advanced osteoarthritis of the vertebral column, and had signs of osteoarthritis in the hips, shoulders, right elbow, right wrist, and left knee. He had significant tooth loss, calculus deposits on his teeth, and advanced periodontal disease. He also had a very well healed fracture of the right ulna that shows signs of medical treatment as there is no shortening, displacement or secondary infection.

Burial **987** contained the remains of a female, approximately 16-18 years of age (fig. 18). Preservation was generally good, though not as good as **963**; less than 75% of the skeleton remains. Absent elements include most of the skull, part of the left leg and both feet. She had dental caries and a hypoplastic defect in one

*Fig. 17. Burial **963** in situ.*

*Fig. 18. Burial **987** in situ, showing the finished stones which perhaps formed part of its northern border.*

tooth that indicates a period of severe ill health or physiological stress at 7.5–8 years of age. The westernmost tile (under the upper body) appears to have been placed immediately to the north of wall **768**. To the north at least some of the finished stones near this end of the burial appear to have been disturbed (visible in fig. 18), but the westernmost are shaped and situated as to suggest that they formed a corner, perhaps the border of an opening of some kind related to the drainage channel **749** (see above). This burial provides our only sure example of a grave good (see below). A bone sample was submitted for radiocarbon dating to the "Centro di Datazione e Diagnostica" (CEDAD) of the University of Salento. The analysis gave a 95.4% probability that the burial dates to the 540–670 CE, and a 68.2% probability of it dating to the shorter range of 590–660[9]. The results from two other burials from elsewhere on the site (to be published) overlap with this range. This dating is consistent with the analysis of artifacts from the site, which generally do not date later than the 4th c. CE, and suggests that the burials were placed after the major period of occupation of the *vicus* had ended.

*Fig. 19. Burial **954** in situ. **920** is visible to the right, and the eastern edge of **761** at top.*

*Burial **954*** – A final burial was located to the north of the previous two, immediately south of and adjacent to the wall **920** (fig. 19). Forming the southern border of the burial is a line of stones, while a cover was provided using broken roof tiles. It is

[9] The radiocarbon age of the sample was determined to be 1428 ± 45 ybp (∂^{13}C (‰) of 16.6 ± 0.6), and the conventional radiocarbon age was converted into calendar years by CEDAD, according to the method of REIMER *et al.* 2013, using the software OxCal, ver. 3.5.

*Fig. 20. Amphora halves **981** (right) and **1012** (left)* in situ.

perhaps similar in construction therefore to **733**, but better preserved. The upper portion of the burial extended into the northern section of the excavation and was therefore left in place. Fragments of a small glass bowl were discovered near the feet of the burial and possibly deposited with it. The remains are those of a child, approximately 6.5–7.5 years of age, determined by the growth and development of the long bones.

*Amphoras **981** and **1012*** – Lying in the floor of the trench to the south of burial **954** and also partly embedded in the eastern section were half (or less) of two amphoras (fig. 20). Given the proximity of the other burials, we suspected that these might have been used for the burial of infants. Although the soil (clayey and white) they contained was different from that of the surrounding matrix, little material and no human remains were found in either of them.

Fig. 21. Reverse of antoninianus *of* Gallienus*, 260-268 CE. Inv. 686272. RIC 163.*

Fig. 22. Reverse of denarius *of* Minucius Thermus*, 103 BCE. Inv. 686267. Crawford 319/1; Minucia 19; Sydenham 592.*

Small finds

Small finds were consistent in type and variety with those found in previous seasons. Among them were, in addition to pottery sherds, many small metal objects of iron, bronze, and lead, including for the last, numerous fragments of pipe (inv. 686378–80); fragments of marble wall revetment and cornice (inv. 686403); fragments of bone hairpins (e.g., inv. 686441); fragments of glass vessels and a glass pendant (inv. 686472); a stone weight (inv. 686509); and numerous mosaic *tesserae* and fragments of wall plaster. Coins were also well represented and dated mainly to the imperial period up to the 4th c. CE. A notable example is the *antoninianus* of Gallienus, datable to the period of his sole reign (260-268) and displaying a centaur on the reverse (inv. 686272; fig. 21). On the other chronological end is a heavily worn *denarius* in silver of Minucius Thermus, datable to 103 BCE (inv. 686267; fig. 22). The grave good from **987** mentioned above was an iron bracelet worn on the left arm of the young woman (inv. 626263; fig. 23). It was decorated with two parallel braids made of an organic material of which a small portion is still preserved.

*Fig. 23. Left: iron bracelet from **987** in situ; right: with remnants of braid, after conservation. Inv. 686267.*

Fig. 24. Fragment of a game board. Inv. 703785.

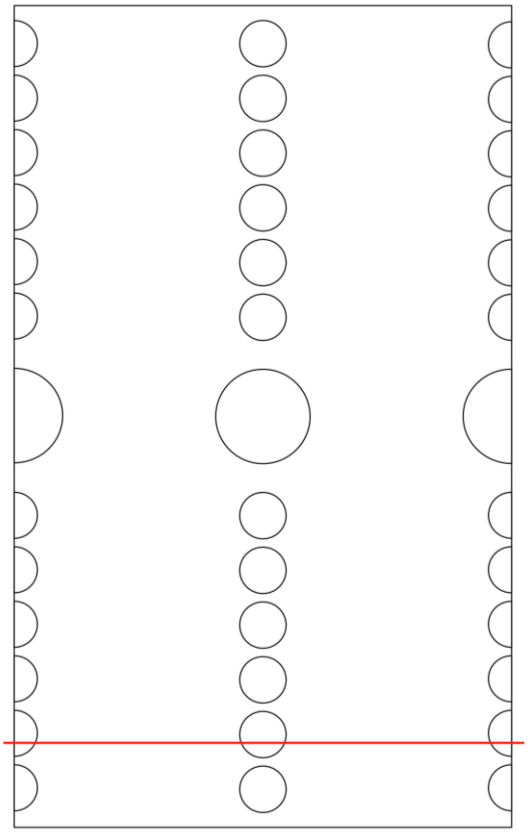

Fig. 25. Reconstruction of the game board for ludus duodecim scriptorum.

An unusual find was excavated from a context of reuse. In the fill (**709**) for a drainage trench of a kind we have encountered throughout the excavated area of the site was discovered a fragment of a game board, carved into a paving stone (fig. 24). The stone had been reworked before being placed into the trench, as can be seen from the series of relatively neat chisel marks along the right edge of the current orientation in the figure. It is likely that the trench diggers encountered the stone, which had already been re-cut, and simply threw it back into the trench. This suggests that whatever pavement or building the stone had originally been a part of had been reworked and the stone reused for some purpose that required a careful recutting. The board itself is of a kind well known from antiquity, used for the backgammon-like *ludus duodecim scriptorum*[10]. A basic reconstruction is in fig. 25, where our piece is the portion below the red line.

Interpretation

With some other data points added, we might construct a possible, if fairly loose, chronology for this area[11]. With the construction of the *Via Flaminia* beginning in 220 BCE, this area became an appealing location for a stopping point on the road. Although our earliest finds date to the late second c. BCE (for example, see the coin of Minucius below), there was likely some activity earlier on. For our complex, the apsidal part of the

[10] See ROUECHÉ, BELL 2007 for the wide variety of styles of such game boards.
[11] There are surely other ways to assemble our admittedly incomplete data into a credible timeline for the site.

structure was placed over an existing building at a slight angle, re-using the floor of at least one room for the apse itself to rest on. In another area of the site, we have reason to think that this later building phase may be dated to the late 2nd century[12]. The structure to the west to which the apsidal portion was added also appears to have had a predecessor of some kind, given its position partially on top of the herringbone pavement of the well, as well as the orientation of the herringbone pattern (though note that the orientation of that pattern also does not match that of the earlier structure that included eastern wall **740**). Likely at a later time, the northern wall of this complex was reworked using roof tiles (**1029**). Still later, likely in the late antique period to judge from the disappearance of material datable beyond the 4th or 5th c. CE (and also consistent with the historically attested barbarian invasions of this period, which led to an eventual shifting of traffic on the Flaminia to the eastern branch), the settlement was abandoned, but the structures were sturdy enough to appeal to the local population as a cemetery. The nearby city of *Carsulae*, also located on the *Flaminia*, appears to have been mostly abandoned in the 4th or 5th century as well[13]. The radiocarbon date for our burials is consistent with this dating. Likely beginning with or even before the cemetery period, the site began to be despoiled. At some point, perhaps even during the despoilment, the area of the former *vicus* was made more orderly, and the land divided up, as evidenced by our dry-stone wall **803/903**. Given the way this wall crosses the crests of several walls even in the small space of our excavations, it seems probable that few of those walls were preserved to any greater height by that time. This marking off of the land by a small wall may be related to the establishment of the church here, first attested in the early 12th century[14]. It seems likely too that the traces of the cemetery had by that time been obliterated, since no mention is made of it and the custom was not followed by the inhabitants of the monastery. In past seasons, burials have been found further west, closer to the modern road, and it seems likely that a long dry-stone wall (**803/903**) would not have been constructed through an active cemetery; thus the wall likely post-dates the burials which we know through radiocarbon dating of the skeletal remains were created sometime between the 5th and 8th centuries. It may well be that the remains of the *vicus* continued to be repurposed at this time, since the church of S. Maria was constructed in what may well have been a fairly dilapidated late-antique structure, and there was significant other building in the area, including the then relatively recent nearby town of Massa Martana, and the church of the Villa San Faustino (still notable for the *spolia* in its walls, *e.g.*, BORMANN[15], p. 684 = *CIL* XI, 4659 and 4660).

Subsequent to the building of the dry-stone wall the ground level rose significantly, perhaps partly due to the routine inundation that gave the church its name of "St. Mary of the Bog" (and continues to plague our work today). The wealth of the monastery in the medieval period may attest to significant agricultural activity in the fields. By the early 17th c. the site appeared more or less as it does today, and no memory of the ancient *vicus* was preserved beyond the numerous ancient inscriptions that had already surfaced. This is clear from the debate held by various scholars over the location of the place *ad martis*, known only from ancient itineraries[16]. By the 20th century, agricultural workers were constructing drainage trenches by hand in roughly E-W directions across the fields[17]. This is confirmed by one example we came across in which modern perforated bricks were used in place of the traditional field stones found elsewhere[18]. Most of these trenches are devoid of datable material, but one (**906**) which cut across the southern edge of the apse and ran up to **903**, but did not continue west of it, contained material providing a *terminus post quem* of the 17th c. Further agricultural activity is evident in other areas, including several holes cut down into the surface of the road near the apsidal building and containing material of the 18th c.

Future directions

Given the challenges posed by the high water table in this area, we are planning to shift our approach to the site. Following up on some success early in the project,[19] we intend to conduct more wide-ranging remote sensing to determine whether it would be possible to map some of the features of the site in sufficient detail

[12] MUCCIGROSSO 2010: 6.
[13] See, for example, WHITEHEAD 2010.
[14] PEPPUCCI 2005: 116ff.
[15] BORMANN 1926.
[16] See the work of CLÜVERIUS, BUNO 1659 cited above.
[17] Personal communication from a local informant from the town of Massa Martana who dug such trenches as a young man.
[18] MUCCIGROSSO 2011: 3.
[19] Mentioned above and in MUCCIGROSSO 2009.

without excavation. We hope our increased knowledge of the nature of the site will aid in this. We are also planning on moving excavation to areas of the site more distant from the church. In particular we are looking at the area around what is locally known as the "Mausoleo," an *opus caementicium* core from a Roman-period funerary monument, already partly investigated in the 1980s by the archaeological superintendency who uncovered the foundations of another funerary monument *a dado*. This area lies directly on the line of the road which runs through the site, and so the presence of funerary monuments, surely outside the limits of the inhabited area of the *vicus*, is not surprising.

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