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Villa or sanctuary?

The so-called villa of Clodius at the Via Appia

by S. AGLIETTI, F. DIOSONO, C. MANETTA, A. PALLADINO & B. POULSEN*

Abstract. Within the framework of a recently established Danish-Italian research project, “Contextualising the past in the Alban Hills”, it has been possible to undertake investigations of the Roman archaeological remains preserved inside Villa Santa Caterina, Castel Gandolfo, at the 13th mile on the Via Appia. The last scholar to study this complex was G. Lugli in 1914, and it has ever since been interpreted as a Roman villa, sometimes called the Villa of Clodius. This article reassesses this interpretation in light of the ongoing investigations and argues that the building on the site should rather be interpreted as the *sacrarium/sacellum* of the goddess Bona Dea known from literary sources.

Introduction (FD, CM, BP)

Within the framework of a recently established collaborative research project, we have had the opportunity to re-examine the archaeological remains preserved in the Villa Santa Caterina estate (Castel Gandolfo), situated on the eastern side of the ancient Via

Appia along the 13th mile (Figs. 1–2).¹ This article presents the preliminary results of the investigations conducted during four short campaigns between May 2017 and September 2019, in agreement with SABAP. The investigations have resulted in important new knowledge about the ancient ruin that also

* The authors of the individual sections of this article are indicated by their initials: Silvia Aglietti (SA), Francesca Diosono (FD), Consuelo Manetta (CM), Alessia Palladino (AP) and Birte Poulsen (BP). We would like to thank a number of people and institutions. Sincere thanks to the present owners of the site: CENSE Opus Dei prelate, in particular Gian Luca Giovannucci and Cristiana Dupré, the Soprintendenza Archeologia Belle Arti e Paesaggio per Area Metropolitana di Roma, la provincia di Viterbo e l'Etruria Meridionale (SABAP: Margherita Eichberg, Simona Carosi, Claudia Castagnoli and Giuseppina Ghini), and the Danish Academy in Rome (the former director, Marianne Pade and the present director, Charlotte Bundgaard). For funding in 2016–2019 we sincerely thank: AIAS/AU Collaborative projects, Classical Antiquity and its Heritage, School of Culture and Society, Aarhus University, the Beckett Foundation and Dronning Margrethe II's Arkæologiske Fond. We also thank Taylor FitzGerald for linguistic proofreading and Mette Moltesen for important comments on both content and

language. Our gratitude also goes to the anonymous peer reviewer for many constructive comments.

Abbreviations are made in accordance with those of the German Archaeological Institute and Oxford Classical Dictionary (OCD).

¹ The collaboration includes Aarhus University, Denmark, and the Soprintendenza Archeologia Belle Arti e Paesaggio per l'area metropolitana di Roma, l'Etruria Meridionale e la provincia di Viterbo. For a short description of the project and its participants and institutions, see the homepage of Accademia di Danimarca: Contextualising the Alban Hills: http://www.acdan.it/projekter/v_appia_c_albani/index.html. See also Diosono *et al.* 2019, 133–149. The site of Villa Santa Caterina is one of the case studies of C. Manetta's project CULTUS. The project has received funding from the European Union's Horizon 2020 research and innovation programme under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie grant agreement No 844113 (2019–2021) and was hosted at the University of Exeter.

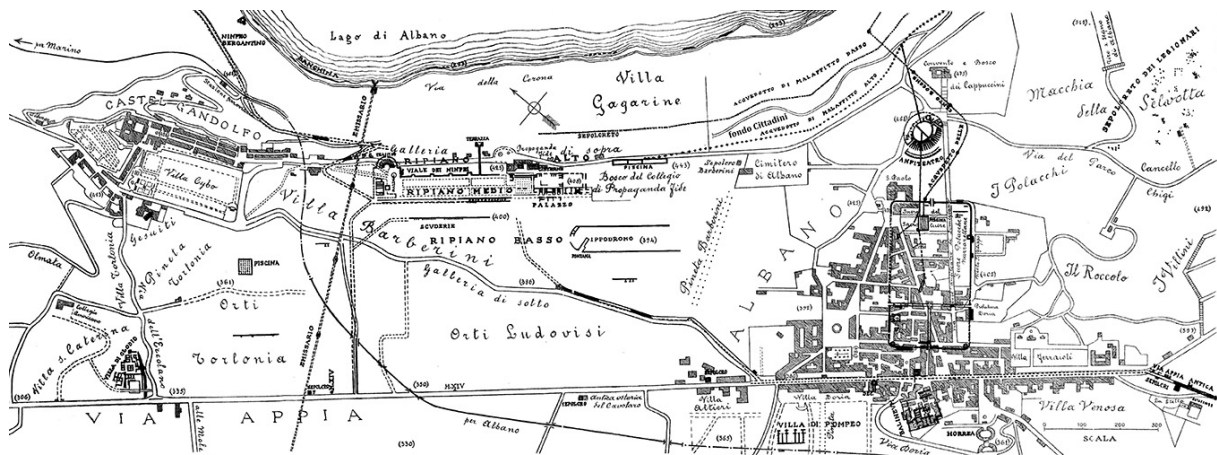


Fig. 1. Plan of the area of the 13th and the 14th mile on Via Appia with Castel Gandolfo and the so-called Villa of Clodius. From G. Lugli 1914, pl. IV.

challenges the traditional interpretation of the building complex.

While the nineteenth-century prevalent identification of these structures as the Alban villa of P. Clodius Pulcher (or part of it) no longer persists, its interpretation as a late Republican villa has so far never been disputed. The possibility to assign these remains to the *sacrarium* of Bona Dea, which literary sources relate to the fatal clash between Clodius and Milo at the 13th mile of the Via Appia, is discussed here for the first time.

In the following, the results of the archaeological investigations will be discussed in relation to the relevant literary record. In order to better understand and reconstruct the topography of the investigated area, literary sources will be scrutinised and compared to known topographical features and previous plans made of the remains of Villa Santa Caterina will be compared to new measurements of the site. To substantiate the new interpretation of the architectural features on the site, the securely identified sanctuaries of Bona Dea will be compared with our remains. Since architectural form may reflect cultic activities, aspects of her cult will also be presented.

This study has employed interdisciplinary

approaches and methods, combining traditional research tools and more innovative non-destructive technology (e.g. photogrammetry and geophysical surveys). Antiquarian and archival sources, as well as historical cartography, were also essential and provided us with important preliminary information on the discoveries made at Villa Santa Caterina and in its immediate vicinity over time. More importantly, they confirm that modern alterations occurred at Villa Santa Caterina that may have changed the original aspect of individual rooms and perhaps the overall building plan. The results of this study are published separately in this volume but are closely intertwined with our archaeological investigations.²

Mapping the Written Tradition: The Murder of Clodius (CM)

As a preferred place for the leisure retreats of the Roman ruling classes, including the emperors, the Alban Hills hosted several villas between the end of the 2nd century BC and the 4th century AD. Among them, the estate of the patrician tribune P. Clodius Pulcher has gained considerable attention because of its unconventional owner and of his tragic death, which occurred not far from his prop-

2 See Manetta's article in this volume.

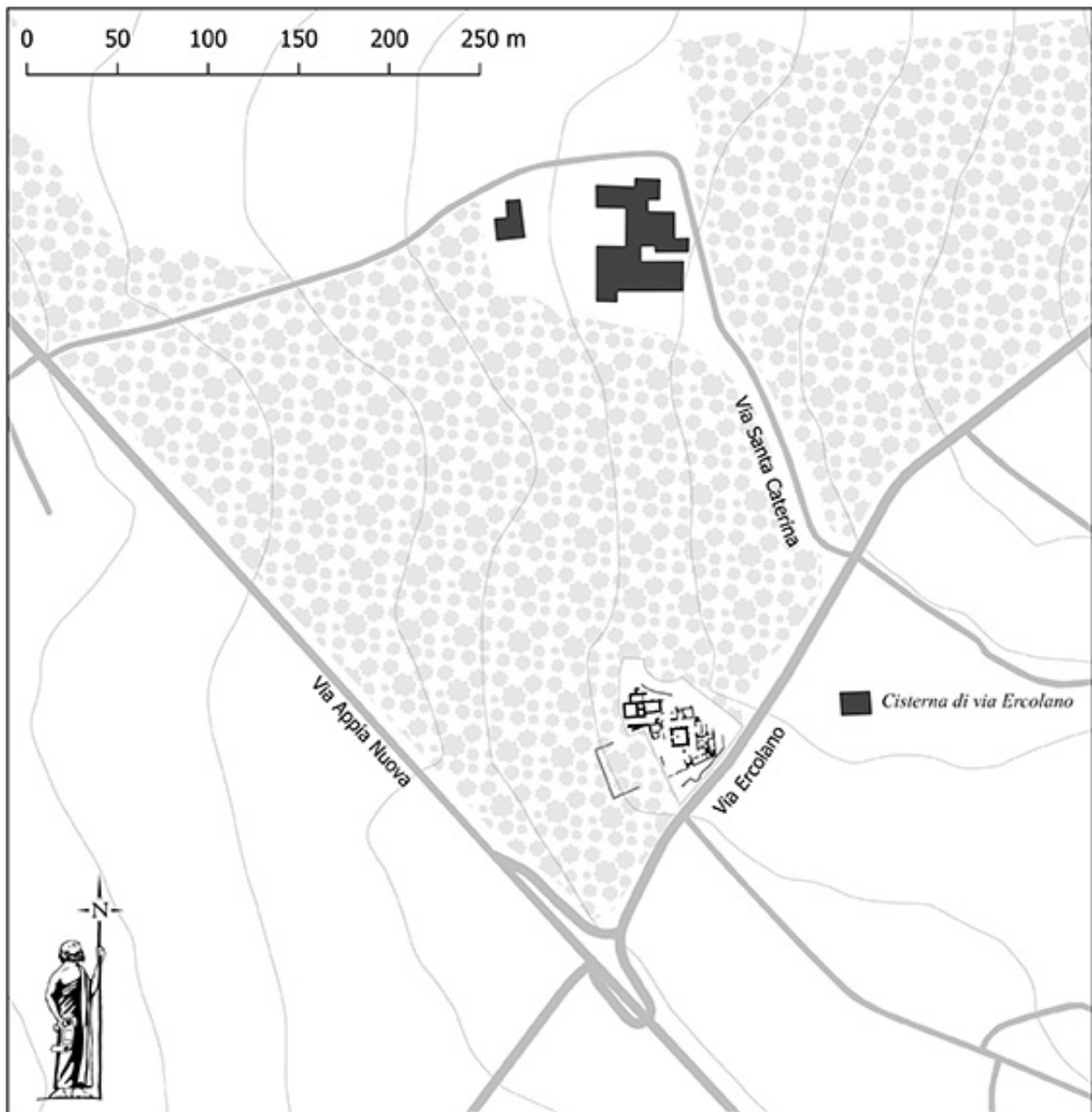


Fig. 2. Plan of Villa Santa Caterina. N. Bargfeldt 2020.

erty.³ The fatal incident took place at the 13th mile on the Via Appia in the territory of Albanum, Aricia, during the politically turbulent years of the late Republican period, in 52 BC (Figs. 1–2).⁴

Cicero and his commentator Asconius are

the only sources for this event.⁵ Although at risk of subjective interpretations, their accounts have always been essential for any topographical study of the examined area.⁶ The topographical information provided by Cicero and Asconius may sound quite cryp-

³ On Clodius and the political reasons or potential variations of the negative bias in Cicero's speeches about him: Tatum 1999; Fezzi 2008; Seager 2014, 226–240; Epstein 1986, 229–235. More specifically on the Bona Dea scandal, see below.

⁴ On the limits of Albanum and its inclusion within the territory of Aricia, see Granino Cerere & Ricci 2010, 151–152; Di Giacomo 2017.

⁵ *Cic. Mil. 51–54*; *Asc. Mil. 31–32, 55*.

⁶ Della Giovampaola 2008, 24–26; Della Giovam-

tic to us. This is due to the lack of clear archaeological landmarks that might allow us to reconstruct the topography of that area of the Alban landscape where the fatal crash occurred (along the 13th mile of the Via Appia). The landmarks mentioned in the texts include the Villa of Clodius, the Villa of Pompey, the Shrine of Bona Dea, and a tavern in Bovillae. In general, however, there is no reason to doubt the overall truthfulness of the information provided, since Cicero's contemporaries might easily have verified – and potentially questioned – the information.⁷ A close analysis of the accounts of Cicero and Asconius allows us to map the topographical scenario where the incident took place.

In the speech published after the trial in defence of T. Annius Milo (8 April, 52 BC), after which Milo was eventually found guilty of the murder of P. Clodius Pulcher, Cicero argues that Clodius' ambush of Milo was premeditated. Of course, the assertion of Cicero cannot be accepted without reservation, considering his role in the political scenery. According to Cicero, however, Clodius knew that Milo had official duties in Lanuvium on 20 January, and he therefore intentionally moved to his Alban villa one day before his rival. No place could have been more suitable for an ambush than his own villa. It was huge, built on high ground (*excelso loco superiorem*) atop gigantic foundations (*insanae substructiones*).⁸ In addition, we are informed that the grounds of his Alban property skirted the Via Appia (*quam viam tangeret deversurum*).⁹ As planned, Clodius met Milo in front of his manor (*ante suum*

fundum) the following night. Earlier that day, Clodius had a meeting in Aricia. While on his way back, he turned into his Alban villa (*devertit Clodius ad se ad Albanum*) instead of going directly to Rome as originally planned.¹⁰ Here, he waited for the arrival of Milo and his followers. When Milo approached, Clodius set out from his villa and intentionally bumped into him. In contrast, Clodius' defenders claimed that his presence on the road at this late hour was due to his intention to pay a visit to Pompey,¹¹ whose villa in Albanum is also mentioned in the literary sources.¹² The ambush happened *ante ipsum sacrarium Bonae deae, quod est in fundo T. Sertii Galli, in primis honesti et ornati adolescentis* ("in front of that very chapel of the Good Goddess that stands on the estate of the worthy and accomplished young man Titus Sertius Gallus").¹³ In the clash, Clodius was fatally wounded and died shortly after. Rather than an accident, his death was considered a kind of divine punishment from the Alban gods. According to Cicero, the many buildings belonging to the Alban Villa of Clodius had caused the destruction of several Alban places sacred to *Iuppiter Latiaris*.¹⁴ In saying so, Cicero implies that the Villa of Clodius skirted the west slopes of Lake Albano. Furthermore, Cicero indicates that the place of the clash and the death of Clodius – just in front of the Shrine of Bona Dea – was not accidental. Ten years earlier, Clodius was involved in (and even tried in court for) the so-called Bona Dea scandal in Rome.¹⁵

That the clash between Clodius and Milo occurred near the Shrine of Bona Dea is also

paola 2011, 161, note 3, with previous literature. Among others: Lugli 1914, 252-316; De Rossi 1979, 299, 303; Coarelli 1979, 67-68; Fezzi 2008, 104-112, and more recently Di Giacomo 2020, 62-63; Stassi 2020, 247-251. The two texts are somewhat different. In his role of defender of Milo, Cicero casts a shadow over specific details by selecting the provided information accordingly, and the comments of Asconius seem to reflect the trial differently.

⁷ Della Giovampaola 2008, 26.

⁸ Cic. *Mil.* 53.

⁹ Cic. *Mil.* 51.

¹⁰ Cic. *Mil.* 51, 53.

¹¹ Cic. *Mil.* 54: "...devertit in villam Pompeii?"

¹² Cic. *Rab. Post.* 3.6; Cic. *Att.* 1.7; 3.7; 4; 5.3-7; 8.2; 11; Cic. *Phil.* 13, 11; Cic. *Ps.* 77; Cass. Dio 45.9.4; 48.36.4-5; Plut. *Pomp.* 53.4, 80.6.

¹³ Cic. *Mil.* 86.

¹⁴ Cic. *Mil.* 85.

¹⁵ While the wife of Caesar and other women were performing rites to the goddess, from which men were excluded, Clodius had sneaked into Caesar's house dressed as a woman: Cic. *Att.* 1.12.3; Plut. *Vit. Cic.* 29.1. On the Bona Dea affair, Epstein 1986, 229-235 with previous literature; Tatum 1999, 202-208.

confirmed by Asconius.¹⁶ His account includes details that emerged during the trial. In contrast to Cicero and the prosecutors, the supporters of Clodius attempted to prove that Milo was responsible for the murder. According to them, Clodius had moved from Rome to Aricia simply to give a speech, accompanied by a retinue of 26 slaves. On the other hand, Milo had hastened to reach him with a retinue of more than 300 slaves.¹⁷ Accordingly, he attacked Clodius, while he was on his way back from Aricia, at a place just beyond Bovillae (clearly the direction follows Milo's perspective, who came from Rome), "near the site of a shrine (*sacellum*) to the Bona Dea". In contrast to Cicero, Asconius states that Clodius, fatally wounded, was moved to a nearby tavern that was located within the territory of Bovillae.¹⁸ Milo then attacked the tavern, dragged Clodius (by now in agony) out onto the Via Appia, and killed him. Afterwards, the corpse of Clodius was transferred to Rome, where the funeral took place. At the trial, several inhabitants of Bovillae gave testimony of the slaughter: how the innkeeper was killed, how the tavern was besieged, how Clodius was cruelly killed on the public road. Even the Vestal Virgins (*virgines albanae*) affirmed that a woman had come to them to fulfill a vow at Milo's instruction after the assassination of Clodius.¹⁹

When looking at the landmarks mentioned in the texts and trying to map them in the light of archaeological discoveries, we have no clue as to where the tavern in Bovillae was originally located. Clearly, it must

have been before the 13th milestone of the Via Appia, in the direction of Rome.²⁰ Similar uncertainty concerns the identification of the Villa of Pompey, for which no certain archaeological data exists. Cicero's account seems to indicate that the Villa of Clodius was not located far from that of Pompey.²¹ We do not know if Clodius was travelling along the Via Appia or if he was coming from one of the minor roads which possibly connected his villa to the Via Appia, perhaps one that – ancient or modern alterations aside – might have branched from the Via Appia at the end of the 13th mile.²² Milo was clearly travelling from Rome along the Via Appia, and the clash might have started where the gangs or retinues of the rivals met, plausibly at the crossing point between this minor road and the Via Appia. According to Asconius, Clodius met Milo while he was returning from Aricia along the Via Appia. While saying that the clash occurred just beyond Bovillae (clearly in the direction of Aricia), Asconius's version does not go against the assumption that it happened – again – at the crossing point between the Via Appia and the minor street on the left (when coming from Rome) at the end of the 13th mile. To prove this theory, however, we should be able to set into the map the last two missing parts of this jigsaw puzzle. These spots are the Villa of Clodius and the Shrine of Bona Dea near which the clash occurred: *ante ipsum sacrarium* (Cicero) and *prope eum locum* (Asconius).²³

¹⁶ Asc. *Mil.* 31C-32C, 35C, 40C, 55C.

¹⁷ Asc. *Mil.* 31C.

¹⁸ Asc. *Mil.* 35C.

¹⁹ Asc. *Mil.* 40C. On the Alban Vestals, Granino Cecere 2003.

²⁰ On the limits of Bovillae, among others Granino Cecere 1991; Pasqualini 2016, 81, note 51; Dalmiglio *et al.* 2019.

²¹ Cic. *Mil.* 54 and Cic. *Att.* 7.5.3. Usually, the Villa of Pompey in *Albanum* is identified with the remains of the late Republican villa between the 14th and the 15th milestones of the Via Appia (The Gardens of

Villa Doria Pamphili), Albano Laziale: Lugli 1914, 281-295; Lugli 1946, 60-83 (with plan); Tortorici 1975, 29-38. Doubt has been expressed by Lancetti 2015. More recently on this issue, Di Giacomo 2017, Di Giacomo 2020, and Cacciotti 2020, 97-101. Di Giacomo, in particular, convincingly suggests Castel Gandolfo as the possible location of the Villa of Pompey.

²² For remains of ancient roads in this area and a discussion of the various works during the ownership of the Orsini family, see the contribution by Manetta in this volume.

²³ Cic. *Mil.* 86; Asc. *Mil.* 31C.

Previous plans of the site (CM)

In 1830, Domenico Orsini became the owner of Villa Santa Caterina. In the years leading up to 1914, several scholars and antiquarians visited the site, and at least three illustrious scholars made plans of the ancient remains.²⁴ Before introducing the most recent plan, a brief description of the existing plans will be presented below.

The plans of Pietro Rosa

The architect and topographer Pietro Rosa visited Villa Santa Caterina in 1869, when excavations took place in the vineyard. This visit resulted in both a tracing paper and a watercolour plan of the site (Fig. 3).²⁵ Clearly, both the visit and the plans had a confidential and unofficial nature, and Rosa never published his plans. We know about their existence only from Rodolfo Lanciani, who received them directly from the Princess Orsini (most likely Maria Luisa Torlonia) in 1878. Lanciani himself did not publish Rosa's plans, which are now preserved in Rome.²⁶ The plan is not fixed according to the four points of the compass, but Rosa clearly understood that the structures at Santa Caterina belonged to different building phases and indicated these by different colours in the plan. The green colour indicates the walls in *opus quadratum* as well as the *atrium* (both made of peperino). The road is marked with grey. The pink colour seems to indicate walls in both *opus reticulatum* and *latericium*. Less clear is the meaning of the yel-

low colour used for a few walls to the north and south. According to Della Giovampaola, the yellow marks on a few walls between the *compluvium* and the room with one rectangular and three semicircular niches indicate post-antique structures, but the recent investigations have shown no trace of modern alterations in this area.²⁷ Finally, the more recent structures, such as the "modern road", are in orange.

Studies in the archives show that it is highly doubtful whether major modern alterations took place in the site before 1869.²⁸ However, considering that the excavations in this area of the estate were possibly caused by construction works related to the opening of two new entrances to the Via Appia, alterations could have occurred in the area of the so-called peristyle. As for the rest, Rosa's maps might possibly mirror the layout of the site closer to its original state. When the tracing paper and the watercolour plan are compared, there are some noticeable differences, from which we can deduce that the watercolour plan possibly shows Rosa's interpretation of the remains. On the other hand, the tracing paper shows the actual layout of the site at the time when the plan was finalised, including the Orsinian alterations. A good example of this procedure is offered by the depiction of the road. On the watercolour map it is labelled as ancient ("*Via antica*"). It skirts the southern side of the complex and is at a right angle to the Via Appia ("*Strada della Via Appia ad angolo retto*"). While the tracing paper marks the existence

²⁴ Villa Santa Caterina has always been in private hands, and apparently G. Lugli was the last scholar to visit the site in 1914 before it became inaccessible to visitors and archaeologists for a long period: Lugli 1914. More recently, in 2008-2009, Irma Della Giovampaola visited the site, being the last scholar to have access to the site before us: Della Giovampaola 2008; Della Giovampaola 2011. For the history of the estate and previous investigations, cf. Manetta in this volume.

²⁵ On the 1869 investigations, see Manetta in this volume. The watercolour has only recently been published by I. Della Giovampaola (2008, 57, pl. XXIII; Della Giovampaola 2011, 134, pl. XXI-II); Hesberg 2011. It is important to remark that

the date (ca. 1890) which appears in the librarian register at the Sala Lanciani, BIASA, with reference to Rosa's tracing paper may not be certain. In fact, considering that R. Lanciani received it at the time when he visited Santa Caterina in 1878, P. Rosa, who died in 1891, almost certainly made it earlier.

²⁶ BIASA, Roma Sala Lanciani, XI. 35, 195, no. 135 (tracing paper); XI. 35.136 (watercolour map). The drawing on the tracing paper is so weak that the plan is hardly distinguishable.

²⁷ Della Giovampaola 2008, 57. Lanciani's description of the plan is "Villa Orsini S. Caterina / autografo P. Rosa donatomi dalla vecchia Pssa Orsini".

²⁸ Cf. Manetta in this volume.

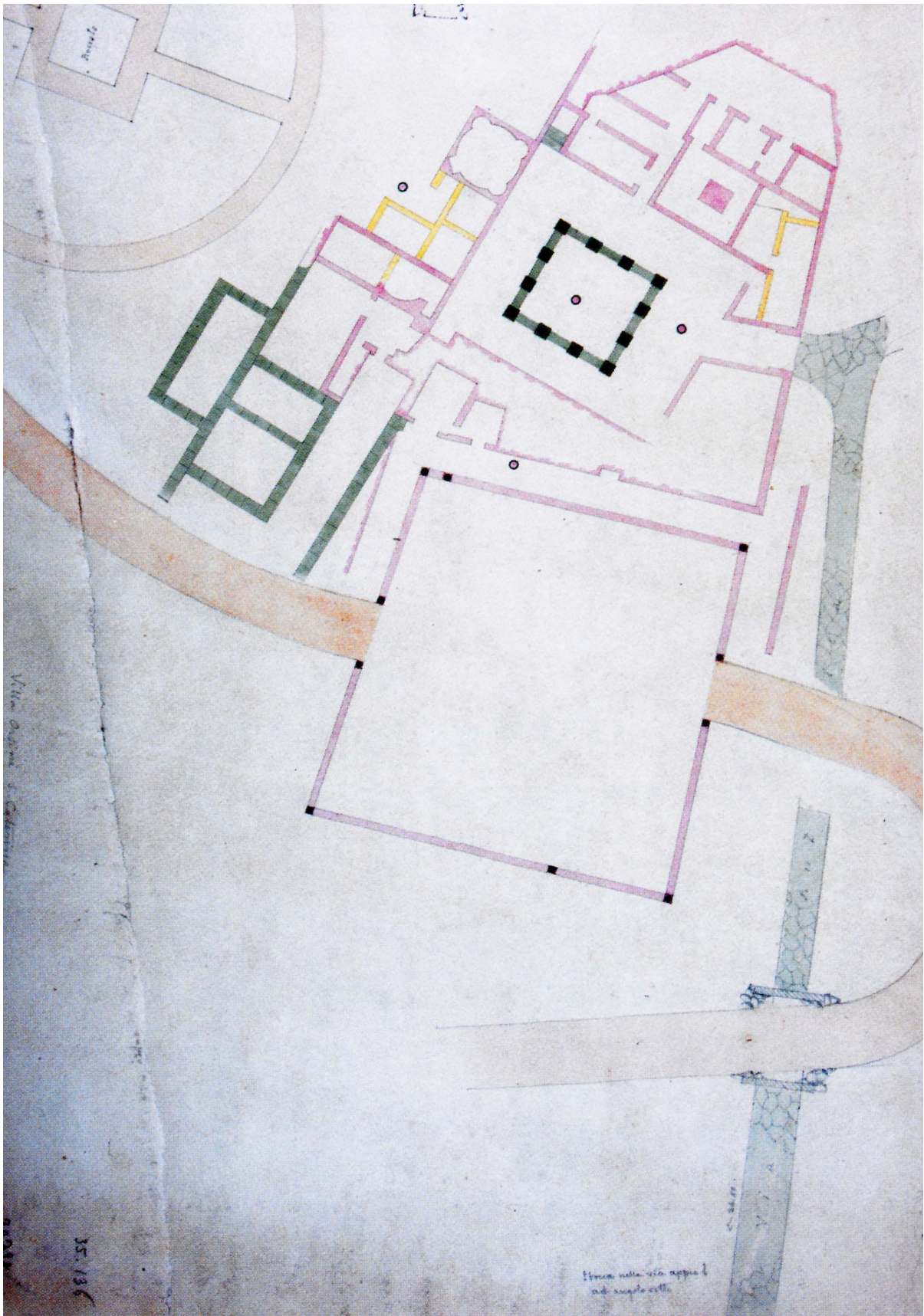


Fig. 3. Plan of the complex by P. Rosa. From I. Della Giovampaola 2008, pl. XXIII.

of the modern “exedra” just in front of the entrance, the watercolour map does not and it also suggests a different layout of the road. It starts from the entrance of the structure from where it runs in two directions. To the west, the road runs towards the Via Appia and is cut first by the modern road going directly through the “peristyle” and second where the modern road crosses the small, likewise modern bridge. In the watercolour, the road does not continue towards the east but rather towards the southeast, although there is no trace of the (modern) exedra. Also important is the fact that Rosa indicates the peristyle as ancient; he also indicates a manhole in front of the terrace wall.

As Della Giovampaola rightly assumes, Rosa’s first contacts with the Orsini family may possibly have been as early as 1852, when he was working on the *Carta Archeologica del Lazio*.²⁹ At that time, the excavations in the area known as a Roman villa at Santa Caterina may not yet have taken place, a fact that may be deduced by the absence of their ruins in Rosa’s first map of the area. Nevertheless, other details might not necessarily be imaginative reconstructions of the topographer, as Lugli claims, but rather the result of a thorough survey of the Orsini’s estate. In addition to the terrace-supporting walls (*sostruzioni*), that starts in the Vignole Baberini and continues at Villa Santa Caterina,³⁰ Rosa draws also an ancient road and a rectangular structure is clearly indicated. The road is no longer visible at Santa Caterina, but it is clearly indicated in the reduced map that Rosa derived from the main map, though it is difficult to locate it without clear indication of orientation. It is impossible to ascertain if the remains of this

road came to light at the time of the construction works that occurred in 1834, 1837, 1845–46, 1856–58, or 1869. In principle, we cannot exclude that the polygonal blocks of basalt might have been reused somewhere else in (as is most likely) or outside the estate.³¹ As indicated, a thorough topographical reassessment of the nature and the exact location of these structures in relation to the new plan is in progress.³²

The sketches by Rodolfo Lanciani

When Rodolfo Lanciani visited Villa Santa Caterina in 1878, he made a measured sketch of the building complex (Fig. 4).³³ Traces of the polygonal blocks of the road are drawn in front of the ancient entrance, as well as a small exedra. Whereas no traces of the road are visible to the north of the entrance, it seems to continue towards the south. In addition, Lanciani made two separate sketches of both the *atrium* and the *latrina*.

The plan of Giuseppe Lugli

The next scholar who seems to have had access to the site was the archaeologist and topographer Giuseppe Lugli in 1914, at the beginning of his career (Fig. 5). He was the first official scholar to draw, study, and publish a plan of the structures at Villa Santa Caterina. Clearly unaware of the plans made by Rosa and Lanciani, Lugli confirmed that the ruins were those of a late Republican villa. Initially, he attributed the estate to P. Clodius, but in 1946 he changed his mind and suggested that the tribune’s villa was instead situated inside the present-day Ville Pontificie, in accordance with the then-prevailing view.³⁴ In contrast to previous antiquarians, he believed that the

²⁹ Della Giovampaola 2011; Hesberg 2011. In 1853, Rosa also made a plan of the so-called Villa di Pompeo, Cacciotti 2020, 72-73, fig. 22. For different copies of this map, see Manetta, in this volume.

³⁰ Henzen 1853, 9. It should be stressed that these substructures have nothing to do with the walls in *opus quadratum* that we identify with a “temple” of Bona Dea.

³¹ This type of reuse was rather usual during this pe-

riod, and it can for instance be observed at Vigna Marzelli and at the Carabinieri di Castel Gandolfo, see Manetta in this volume.

³² For a detailed discussion of Rosa’s visits at Villa Santa Caterina, and these remains, see Manetta in this volume.

³³ BAV, Vat. lat. 13045, fol. 158; cf. Buonocore 2001, 167.

³⁴ Lugli 1914, 263-280; Lugli 1946, 60-62, note 4.

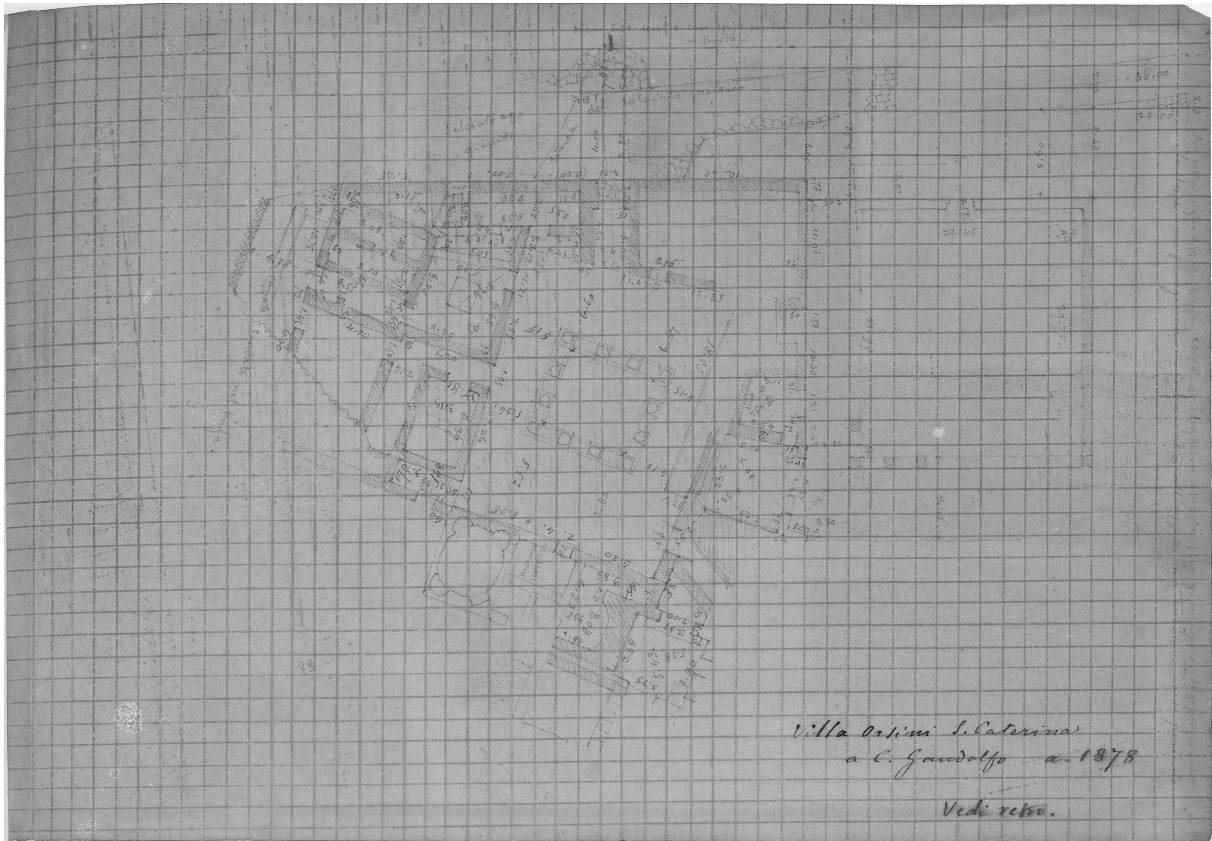


Fig. 4. Plan of the complex by R. Lanciani (1878). Sketch of the atrium and surrounding rooms of the structure in Villa Santa Caterina. Vat.lat. 13045, fol. 158 recto e verso © Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana 2020.

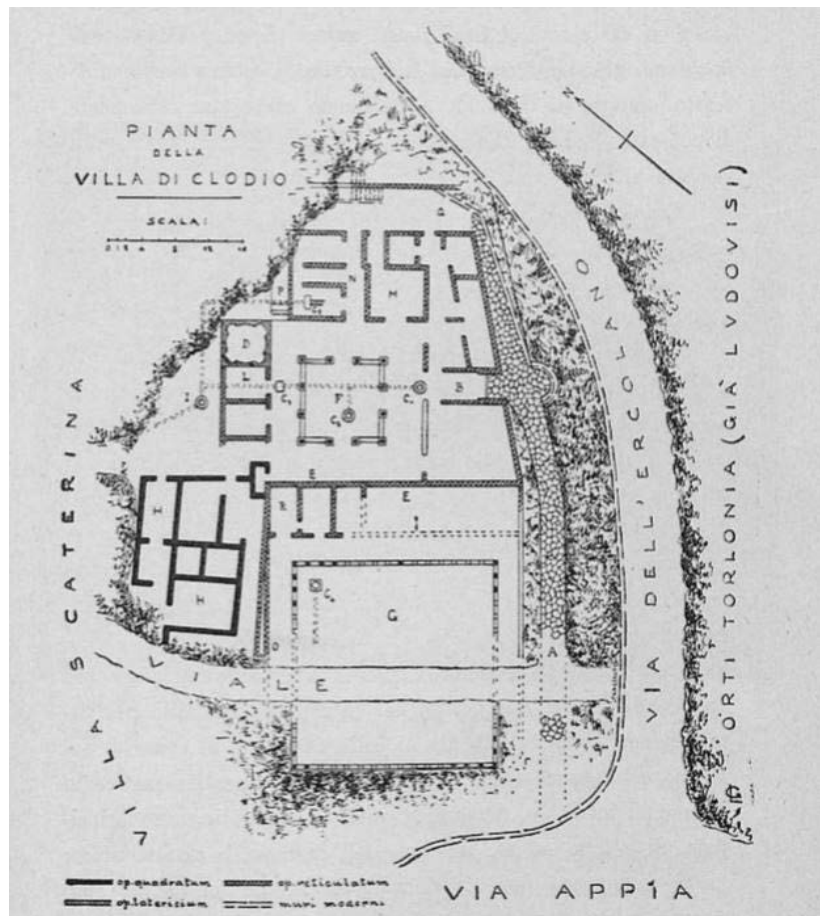


Fig. 5. Plan of the so-called Villa of Clodius. From G. Lugli 1914, fig. 3.

villa lay almost exclusively within the borders of the Orsini estate.³⁵ According to his reconstruction, the terraced multi-storeyed building included structures in *opus reticulatum*, in *opus quadratum* (H in the north-western sector of the site), and in *opus latericium* (Room D, adjacent to the so-called *tablinum*), perhaps a *nymphaeum* added much later than the initial construction of the building. The entrance of the villa was connected to a road and in front of it was a semicircular, exedra-like space. The vestibule opened onto an *atrium* (F) composed of four Doric columns on each side, four of which were “*rimesse in piedi*” (literally, re-erected). Another nineteen smaller peperino columns with Attic bases formed part of a portico of a rather square peristyle located on the lower terrace (G). According to Lugli, some of the shafts of the columns were still *in situ*. Two rooms supporting the upper terrace opened towards the peristyle. As discussed more in detail later, Lugli’s plan presents several problems and inaccuracies.

The investigations 2017–2019 (FD, BP)

The scope of the recent investigations was to study and measure the structure in combination with geomagnetic and georadar surveys.³⁶ Considering the short time of the campaigns, we had to choose a simple methodological approach. The first thing was to register all visible structures on the site and describe all visible walls, their construction and revetments, as well as the floors. A total of 33 different rooms, including at least 63 walls and structures, were identified and measured, resulting in a new and more precise plan of the building (Fig. 6).³⁷ Furthermore, the building has for the first time been fixed correctly according to the points of the compass.

The smaller finds mainly consist of fragments of tiles, *dolia*, amphorae, kitchen wares, a couple of coins, and a few fine wares like

black gloss and *terra sigillata*. Since the study of the finds is still in progress, only a single find will be presented in this preliminary report.

The ancient structure

The ancient structures in Villa Santa Caterina stand on a panoramic slope overlooking the Via Appia. It consists of an irregular building complex that measures approximately 55 m east–west and 50 m north–south with at least two terraced levels (Figs. 3–6). The four main features were already noticed by previous scholars and are as follows (designations according to Fig. 6):

- (I) To the south, the complex is lined by a road made of basalt blocks. The road continues across the different levels towards the Via Appia and is almost parallel to the present-day Via Ercolano. The basalt blocks of the road continue into the main entrance to a large and impressive threshold of peperino.
- (II) The main entrance (S) to the area, leading to the *atrium*, with four-by-four columns (K). At this level, rooms flank the *atrium* to the north (N, Y, Z), east (F–M, P, T–U, X), and south (C–E, S)
- (III) Towards the west – at a lower level – is a large peristyle (Q) with two rooms opening onto it (A–B). A ramp (R) between the peristyle and the building in *opus quadratum* seems to have equalised the difference between the two levels.
- (IV) To the north-west are the remains of an imposing building in *opus quadratum*, made of large blocks of tuff/peperino (α–ζ).

³⁵ Lugli 1914, 263–268.

³⁶ See below, note 48.

³⁷ The site was measured by N. Bargfeldt in September 2018. So far, no real excavation has been made, only predominantly the cleaning and measuring of existing structures.



Fig. 6. Plan of the structures on the site with room letters. N. Bargfeldt 2020.

The upper level in the so-called *atrium* is 354.38 m asl and that of the lower level (Rooms A–B) is 351.35 m asl. Our metric survey in 2018 (Fig. 6) revealed that the structure differs considerably from the plan published by Lugli in 1914 (Fig. 5) and it is much closer to that of Rosa (Fig. 3). The differences may be explained by the different grades of visibility of the ruin over the years.

The short duration of the field campaigns did not allow us to clean and analyse all the architectural elements. So far, we have been able to clean the road (1), the entrance (S), the central part of the *atrium* (K), the *latrina* (E), Room G, the room with four niches (N), part of the two rooms at the lower level (A–B), as well as two rooms of the structure of *opus quadratum* (ε–ζ). More importantly, the new plan includes: exact measurements and orientation of walls and rooms within the building complex itself; documentation of new rooms, entrances, and four cisterns (I, C₁, C₂ and

C₃); documentation of new pavements; and acknowledgement of modern (nineteenth-century) restorations. This last is possibly the most surprising and significant aspect and allows a better understanding of the ruin. As already noticed by Lugli, the majority of the walls are made of *opus reticulatum*, dated around the mid-1st century BC. Later additions in *opus latericium* can be noticed in Room N and near the upper north-eastern corner of Room A. The complex to the north-west (ε–ζ) was made entirely of large partly polygonal ashlar of peperino.

In accordance with both Rosa's (Fig. 3) and Lugli's (Fig. 5) plans, the building is not quite square, since the south-eastern corner forms an obtuse angle. Although the rooms to the north and east are oriented according to the *atrium* K, the rooms to the south – C, D, E (*latrina*), S (entrance), and U – seem to take a pre-existing structure into consideration. The southern wall of the building forms a contin-

uous straight line, apparently continued by the southern side of the square peristyle but this is still to be investigated. This results in two different axes in the building, which is partly compensated for by the two rooms (A–B) forming the terrace and the transition to the lower level, that of the peristyle (Q). Rooms A and B are highly irregular and not of the same depth. Furthermore, in 2018 it was observed that they face in slightly different directions, which is also clear from the obtuse angle of the western wall of the rooms, in contrast to Lugli's plan (Fig. 5). It seems that Room A is oriented according to the older structure in *opus quadratum* (α - ζ), but it is clearly contemporary with the smaller Room B, which has a trapezoidal plan. The remaining part of the lower terrace still has to be investigated. The same goes for the peristyle (Q), where modern restorations are visible. On the other hand, this part was also included in Rosa's plan, and some of the columns do seem ancient.

Some recent interventions

As it appears from the study of Consuelo Manetta, the remains of the structure should be interpreted with caution.³⁸ Among “the ruins”, structures of a more recent period can be clearly identified. They stem primarily from restorations made during the 19th century in order to reshape the building complex into an ancient villa, the purpose of which was solely to decorate the landscape. Further investigations are required to ascertain the modifications within the large peristyle (Q) in the lower terrace, now part of the park and intersected by a modern road. We do believe, however, that massive alterations occurred here at the time of the major excavation of the site around 1869 (if not a completely modern construction). It was perhaps during this period that trees were planted at regular intervals, perhaps to imitate the positions of the ancient peristyle's columns. At least two

of the columns found in this area have inscriptions going back to the Orsini.

Further Orsinian alterations can be detected in the upper terrace. This is particularly clear in the *atrium*, where at least two monolithic columns of peperino were raised to commemorate members of the Orsini family buried within the chapel dedicated at Santa Caterina. Fragments of ancient columns indicate that the recent ones imitate the ancient ones. Elsewhere at the site lie scattered architectural elements that are clearly products of modern craftsmanship combined with ancient architectural artefacts. Finally, recent drainage channels could be observed in the so-called *atrium* as well as at the road to the south.

Rooms and spaces

After highlighting the modern interventions, we aim to identify the various rooms of the building complex according to their architectural characteristics. While the previous excavations and reconstructions on the site have been taken into consideration, it is evident that only future stratigraphic excavations may provide a better understanding of the function of the rooms and their relations.

The rooms to the south and the *atrium*

A long hallway in *opus reticulatum* (S, Fig. 7) represents the main entrance to the building complex. The passage is 2.78 m wide; approximately in the middle is a large, slightly raised *peperino* threshold on which a double-leaf door opened. Outside the threshold, towards the basalt road, the walls are reinforced. At present, only recent dry-laid masonry can be seen to the south of the entrance along the road, but a small trial trench immediately to the south of the wall showed that this was laid on top of an ancient wall of *opus reticulatum*, which is preserved right up to the south-eastern corner. Although the

³⁸ Manetta in this volume.



Fig. 7. Entrance S with threshold in peperino seen from the south (2017).



Fig. 8. Latrine E and Room D seen from the north (2017).



Fig. 9. *Atrium* with two recent columns seen from the NE (2017).

rooms to the west have not yet been investigated, the structure of the rooms to the east is clear. A long rectangular room (C) opened onto an internal irregular hallway (T/U), which was paved with slabs of tuff of various dimensions and laid in a rather irregular way. Then follows an irregular room in the corner: a latrine (E), in which both the drainage channels and the pavement (two levels of *opus spicatum*) are well preserved (Fig. 8). The latrine has a trapezoidal plan due to the orientation of the southern wall as well as the wide “passage” (L) to the east. The latrine has a small anteroom (D), which also has *opus spicatum* floors.

Passage L is limited by an *opus reticulatum* wall to the east, creating a ca. 5 m wide passage. No traces of pavement have so far been found in this area, but a small trial trench showed that the level of the natural rock was

high and that a channel parallel to the eastern wall had been cut into the tuff embankment itself. It has not been possible to extend the cleaning of the area to the east because of the proximity of the fencing wall of the estate. It is so far impossible to determine if this forms part of the building, but it cannot be excluded that this “passage” should be identified as a narrow road between two different estates. The building could be accessed from L through Room M.

The rooms of the building are centred around the so-called *atrium* (K, Figs. 6 and 9). It does not lie along the axis of the main entrance but is oriented like the rooms to the east and north and the building built of ashlar. The columns stood on large ashlar blocks of tuff, forming a square with sides of 7.57 m, originally with four Doric columns on either side – thus, it was a Corinthian *atrium*. Every third



Fig. 10. Room F seen from the entrance to the south (2019).

block has been prepared for a column with a diameter of ca. 52 cm, but the blocks between them are of varying size, some quite irregular. None of the ancient columns still stand, but at least one capital seems ancient, and the capitals of the more recent monolithic columns clearly imitate this one. The porticos around the columns are proportionally very deep: 4.27 m on three sides, which is quite large for an *atrium*. Lugli observed three ancient “wellheads” in the area of the *atrium* (C₁–C₂–C₃, Fig. 5).³⁹

The rooms to the east

The rooms to the east (F–J, P, X) are oriented according to the so-called *atrium* (K). Of these, only Rooms F and G have been thoroughly cleaned. In Room F, sublayers for pavements were revealed along with a few traces of plas-

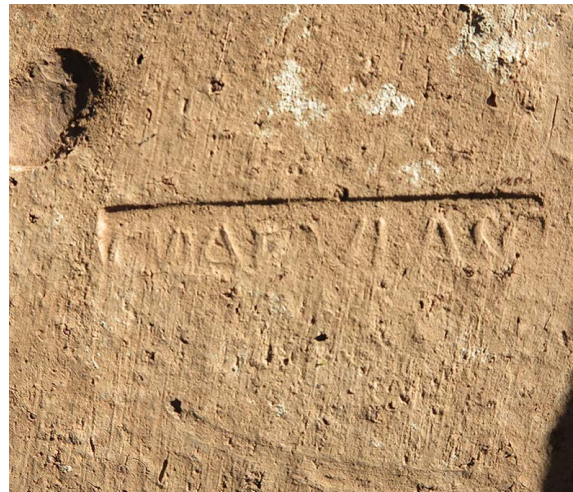


Fig. 11. C NAEVI[US] ASC[LEPIADES] found in Room F (2019).

³⁹ Lugli 1914, 276 (*pozzi profondi*). For the water installations, see the contribution by Aglietti further

below. In this part, wellheads and manholes are distinguished from each other.

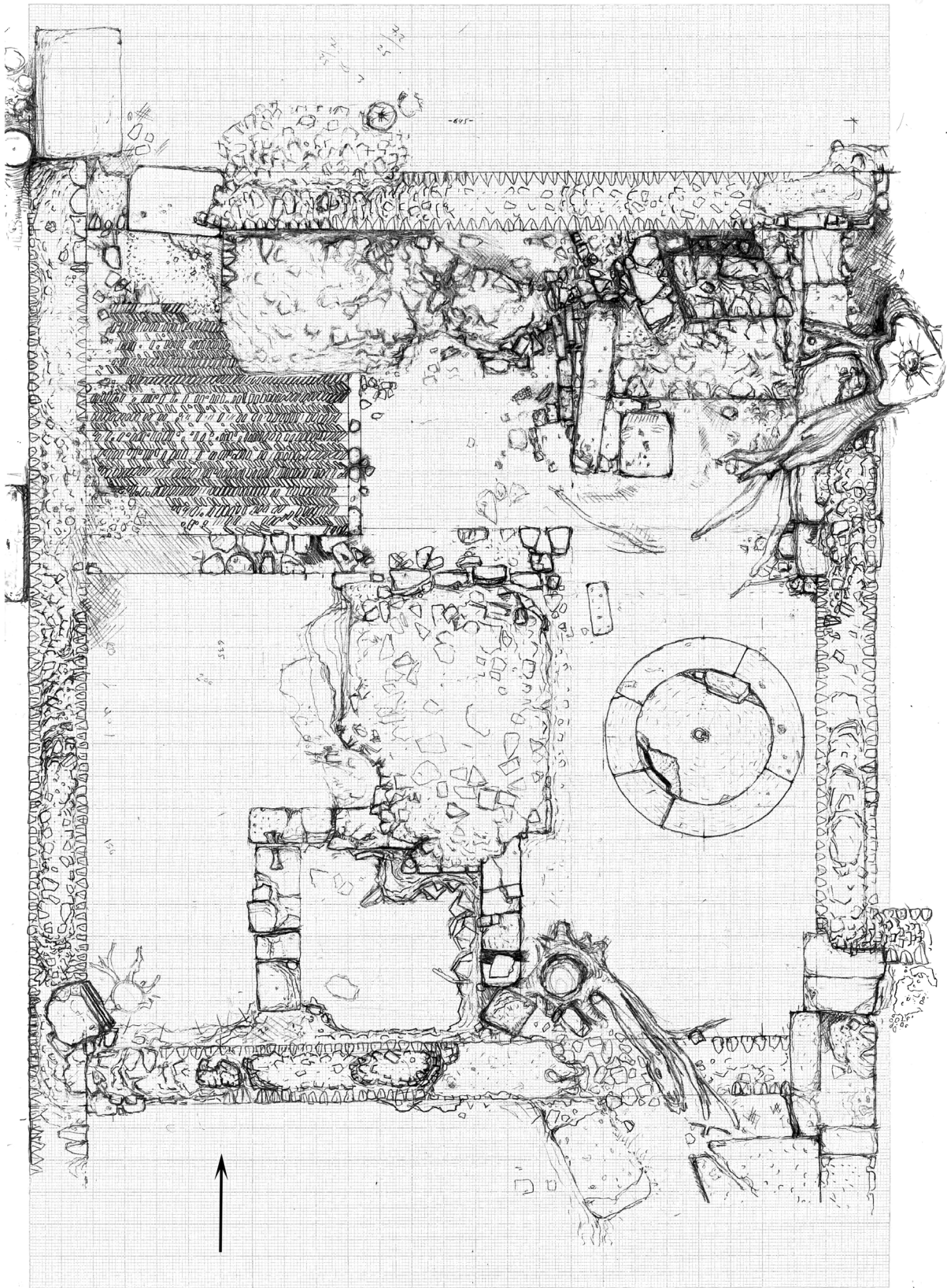


Fig. 12. Plan of Room G, 1:25. M. Holm 2019.



Fig. 13. View of Room G from NW (2019).



Fig. 14. Room G from the SE. The wellhead is seen to the right (2019).

ter on the walls (Fig. 10). In the north-western corner of this room was found a tile with a stamp: C NAEVI[US] ASC[LEPIADES], which can be dated between ca. 50 BC and the Augustan period (Fig. 11).⁴⁰ Room M gives direct access to the very interesting Room G, which was investigated more thoroughly in 2019 and which is the only room to have been measured in detail (ca. 6 m north–south and 5.50 m east–west, Figs. 6 and 12–14). Several building phases could be observed, like in many of the other rooms, but the really surprising discovery was that of a cistern with a well-preserved ancient wellhead of peperino (diam. 1.50 m), which had been unnoticed until now (Fig. 12). The cistern is bottle-shaped and more than 7 m deep, like the three other cisterns discovered in 2017 and 2018 (C₁, C₂, and I). These are described as wells (*pozzi*) by Lugli (Fig. 5). Room G had three entrances; besides these, there were entrances in Room M from T/U to the south and from X to the north. Part of an *opus spicatum* floor in the

north-western corner (Fig. 13) was later covered by an oblong structure of *opus caementicium* (ca. 1.10 x 3 m). A similar structure of *opus caementicium* was – perhaps at the same time – placed in the centre of the room, 1.70 x 2 m. This covered an earlier structure built of smaller ashlar blocks of peperino that lay to the south, measuring ca. 1.70 x 2 m. Inside this was found an extremely interesting destruction layer with a large number of tiles, and below this, a small domestic vessel, a jug, with a coin inside.⁴¹ The discovery of the cistern completely changes our earlier understanding of this room as inner yard or only partly roofed.

Though Lugli did not mention the *latrina* (E), he interpreted this group of rooms as service rooms. Some of the masonry structures are badly preserved, and except for the latrine, the original function of these rooms remains unclear.

⁴⁰ The stamp of C. NAEVIUS ASCLEPIADES was identified by Silvia Aglietti and Jesper Carlsen, *CIL* XV, 1323. Tiles with this stamp have been found in the Sanctuary of Diana at Lake Nemi, Stanco 2014, 571, 576, tabella 4-5, 594, fig. 44, as well as in Rome and the Suburbio, in the Alban

Hills and Pompeii. For references, Nonnis 2015, 301 and <http://www.bollidoliari.org/index.php/cil-xv-1200-1349?start=11> (visited 29.12.21).

⁴¹ Unfortunately, this important material has not yet been analysed, but a preliminary study of the coin seems to indicate a date in the 2nd century BC.

The rooms to the north

The third group of structures stands on the northern side of the so-called *atrium*. It consists of only three rooms (N, Y, Z; Fig. 6). In order to support his first identification of the Villa of Clodius, Lugli interpreted these rooms as a *tablinum* and a *triclinium* before they were transformed into a nymphaeum during the villa's second building phase.⁴²

In this area, the masonry techniques clearly indicate the existence of different building phases. A first phase is indicated by blocks of tuff and can be detected only in one part of Room Z. A second phase uses *opus reticulatum* and may date to the late Republican period. A third phase is shown in the use of *opus mixtum* (*opus reticulatum* combined with *opus latericium*), which can be seen on the northern wall of Room N (Fig. 15). An additional later building phase may exist, since the use of *opus latericium* can be noticed in the same room (N). Lastly, the use of *opus listatum* between rooms N and Y proves that there was later building activity in the mid-imperial period. This is the most recent ancient activity recorded within the site to date. While severely damaged by the presence of a tree, white *tesserae* of a mosaic have been discovered in Room Z.

Room Y, in the middle, is the smaller room of the series. It has two levels, the upper of which along the northern side is made of *caementicium*, which covers a vaulted channel.

The eastern room (N, Fig. 15) is the largest and the only one where *opus latericium* is used. It has a characteristic form with three semi-circular niches and one rectangular niche in the four “corners”, a plan usual for baths and nymphaea.⁴³ It has been suggested that it



Fig. 15. View of Room N from the north. N. Bargfeldt 2018.

had no entrance, being a basin at the time, but perhaps there was an entrance in the southwestern corner of the room through the semi-circular niche from Room Y. The pavement of this room seems to have been already removed in Antiquity. Only part of the preparatory or foundation layers is preserved.

In general, the existence of several wells, cisterns, and channel systems characterises this upper terrace and implies the significant role that water played within the building

⁴² Lugli 1914, 277-278.

⁴³ This type of room finds parallels in many of the late Republican and Imperial baths in Latium and Campania, such as the Stabian Baths in Pompeii (VII.1.8): Nielsen 1990, I, 31-36, II, 7, C.40, figs. 36-37, 75 (*laconicum/frigidarium*), ca. 80-50 BC; the Baths of Agrippa in Rome: Nielsen 1990, II, 2, C.1, fig. 49 (*frigidarium*); the Baths of Trajan: Nielsen 1990, II, 2-3, C.4, fig. 53 (*frigidaria?*); the Forum Baths in Herculaneum: Nielsen 1990, II, 7, C.38, fig. 74 (*frigidarium*), Augustan or Julio-Claudian; the Suburban Baths in Herculaneum: Nielsen 1990,

II, 7, C.39, fig. 76 (*sudatorium*), Julio-Claudian with Flavian restoration; the Forum Baths in Pompeii (VII.5): Nielsen 1990, 7-8, C.42, fig. 78 (*frigidarium*), Augustan with Flavian restoration; the Central Baths, Pompeii (IX.4): Nielsen 1990, II, 8, C.47, fig. 79 (*sudatorium*), AD 62-79; the Small Baths of the Villa of Hadrian: Nielsen 1990, II, 9, C.55, fig. 84 (*sudatorium/solarium*), Hadrianic, AD 121-126. Very interestingly, a similar structure (in a bath) with no traces of an entrance has been found in the late Republican villa in Cottanello, Restaino 2017, 136.



Fig. 16. Building in *opus quadratum*, seen from the SW (2017).

complex. A detailed description of the water supply on the site will follow below.

The building in *opus quadratum*

In the north-western corner of the complex is an impressive building that clearly stands out from the other parts. The building is entirely constructed in *opus quadratum* and some polygonal blocks, all in peperino. The blocks are set up without a binder. Particularly in the southern outer wall can it be observed that the blocks are adjusted to one another, although they are of different sizes and heights, reminiscent of polygonal masonry (Fig. 16). The building consists of a number of quadrangular rooms, of which only the western and southern limitations have been identified (total length ca. 20.20 m). It is still unknown if the building continues further to the east, but it definitely continues further towards the



Fig. 17. Building in *opus quadratum*, seen from the west (2017).

north. This part is difficult to clean, however, due to massive layers of soil (Figs. 6, 16–17).

It is important to note that the orientation of this building is identical to the rooms to the north and east of the so-called *atrium*, which is not shown in Lugli's imprecise plan. As men-



Fig. 18. Room ζ seen from the north (2019).

tioned above, he identified these impressive walls as the *insanae substructiones* of the Villa of Clodius, which Cicero mentions while describing the clash between Clodius and Milo. Lugli's first impression was that these walls of *opus quadratum* constituted the remains of a podium of a large temple,⁴⁴ but he rejected this idea due to the irregular plan of the complex. However, the building in question can hardly be identified as a simple substructure of the villa or a fortification, because of its complex and irregular system of rooms.

Even though the building of *opus quadratum* is not entirely laid free, it is clear that not all the blocks are *in situ*, but the main features of the walls can be outlined. It consists of at least seven square rooms of varying size (only six have letters: α–ζ). As already mentioned, it is difficult to determine whether there were one or more levels in the building (if only one, the east–west-oriented walls would have been standing particularly high towards the west). The antiquity of this building in comparison to all the other structures on the site is indisputable, however.



Fig. 19. Room A seen from the west showing remains of plaster (2018).



Fig. 20. The road seen from the west (2017).

The work in this part is very difficult due to tall pines with very thick roots. No floors have been preserved. During cleaning, one further room was discovered to the north (ζ; Fig. 18). It is a small room, measuring ca. 3 x 3 m, and the finds found between the walls include black-gloss pottery dating to the late 4th and 3rd centuries BC. This evidence, combined with the masonry technique, probably dates the building to this period. Similar masonry can be noticed among the supporting blocks of the ramp (R), which gave access to the upper terrace.

⁴⁴ Lugli 1914, 273-274: “...a primo aspetto, questi muri danno l’idea di un grande basamento di tempio”.



Fig. 21. The semicircular exedra in front of entrance (2017).

The lower terrace

At present, little work has been undertaken in this part of the building, where there are several modern alterations. According to Lugli (Fig. 5), the two rooms (his R) on the lower terrace were of approximately the same size and faced a large peristyle on a regular line.

In 2018, the modern filling of Rooms A and B was partly removed, and much new knowledge was obtained (Fig. 6). First, both rooms were constructed in *opus reticulatum* like the majority of the walls on the upper terrace. Second, they are of unequal size, Room A being larger. Third, they do not face in the same direction, since their front walls form an obtuse angle. The entrance to Room A has an impressive threshold in peperino, 2.28 m wide (Fig. 19). Cleaning along the northern wall of the room gave new information about the interior decoration. The beginning of a barrel vault can still be seen in the north-eastern corner, and there are remains of blue plaster in this corner and at the entrance. The lower part of the walls was covered by a dark red dado. Furthermore, many of the iron nails, which probably held the wooden grid for the plaster, are still *in situ* on the walls. Along this wall, the remains of a mosaic floor was found, which once decorated the room. It had ap-

parently been lifted in the 19th century, but it appears that the mosaic was made of white tesserae.

Access to the villa - the road

Even the first scholars visiting the site noticed the remains of an ancient road made of fine basalt blocks (Fig. 20).⁴⁵ The road follows the southern wall of the building and continues into the entrance (S) right up to the peperino threshold. It can be followed from the eastern corner to the modern fencing of the site (ca. 25 m). It is evident that the road slopes considerably from the northeast towards the southwest, and the geomagnetic and georadar surveys indicated that the road continued along the outer wall of the building towards the west. Another small part of the road is visible below a more recent built bridge further towards the southwest. This small stretch of the ancient road seems to be the continuation of the one following the southern side of the building. The direction of the road goes towards the ancient Via Appia, coming down the slope from the Lake Albano crater. So far, it is unclear how it joined the Via Appia, but the direction would indicate a point very near to the modern Via Ercolano.

Immediately in front of the entrance is a

⁴⁵ Already indicated on P. Rosa's plan, Della Giovampola 2008, pl. XXIII (here Fig. 3); Lugli 1914, 269,

fig. 3 (here Fig. 5); Lugli 1917, pl. III-IV; Severini 2001, 20, figs. 6 and 12.

semicircular exedra, which has caused some speculation from the beginning, since there are no parallels for such a feature in relation to a road or access to a villa (Fig. 21). Like the road, it is paved with basalt blocks, all of an irregular rounded form similar to basalt stones known from other roads.⁴⁶ During the cleaning of the road, it immediately became clear that many of the basalt blocks were not in their original position. This is made clear partly by wheel imprints that do not follow a steady course but are visible as traces on stones in various places. Furthermore, the kerb stones are missing. Two “modern” drain lids were found, one to the east near the southern wall and another to the southwest of the lower part of the preserved basalt stones.⁴⁷ Evidently the owners of the property at some point had to regulate water drainage, and this was apparently done by making a channel along the outer southern wall of the building. This may be the reason for the relaying of the paving stones. The cleaning of the exedra clearly showed that all the blocks there had been reused; some had even been used to limit the outer periphery of the exedra (Fig. 21). Furthermore, the exedra was surrounded by a bench, and it seems that at some (recent) point the owners had wanted to make a viewpoint to the ancient building. It seems very likely, however, that at least the basalt stones at the entrance are still *in situ* (Fig. 7).

Geomagnetic and Georadar survey (FD)

The aim of the geophysical investigations was to explore the existence of underground structures and cavities.⁴⁸ The results allowed us partly to reassess the existence of the

walls that were included in the previous plans (Figs. 3–6), of which several are underground at present, and partly to explore the potential existence of structures that have never been excavated. A further aim was to gain new knowledge of the canal systems and the cisterns.

Georadar surveys were made over two paved and narrow areas, where the use of electrical resistivity tomography would have been useless. They provided us with information about the morphology of the ground at a deeper level. Interestingly, the geomagnetic and georadar surveys appear to indicate that more water installations existed near or below the road, perhaps a further drain or another cistern.

Investigations using electrical tomography were performed in six selected areas (Fig. 22, VC 1–6). The selection included areas where investigations would have been otherwise impossible. Two cross-sections were conducted in the eastern part of the site: one (VC3) within the site where archaeological remains are known, the other (VC4) beyond the wall that divides the park of Villa Santa Caterina in two parts. Both have proved that the masonry structures known within the site continued to the east. In fact, high resistivity has been detected up to ca. 1.7 m of depth following a regular and geometric (orthogonal) arrangement.

Cross-section VC2 included part of the *atrium* and revealed the presence of an underground channel system. It is probably related to the cistern below the *atrium* (C₂). It seems that channels from the mouth of the cistern extended to the east and north-east. Further down the hill towards the west, walls

⁴⁶ Similar private roads, *diverticuli*, in relation to Roman private property are well known: Laurence 1999, 53–55. Archaeological remains are preserved at the Villa of Domitian: Lugli 1917, 41–46; the Villa of Livia at Primaporta: Messineo 2001, 19, fig. 6; 24, fig. 9; 87–90, figs. 106–107; and the imperial (?) villa at *loc. Santa Maria* at Lake Nemi: Poulsen 2020.

⁴⁷ We hope that future investigations will clarify the date of this intervention.

⁴⁸ The geophysics were conducted by IDROGEOTEC S.N.G. and were performed by Dr P. Boila and his team in 2017. The outputs of this investigations have here been summarised by F. Diosono, based on the detailed report that has been provided by Dr Boila.

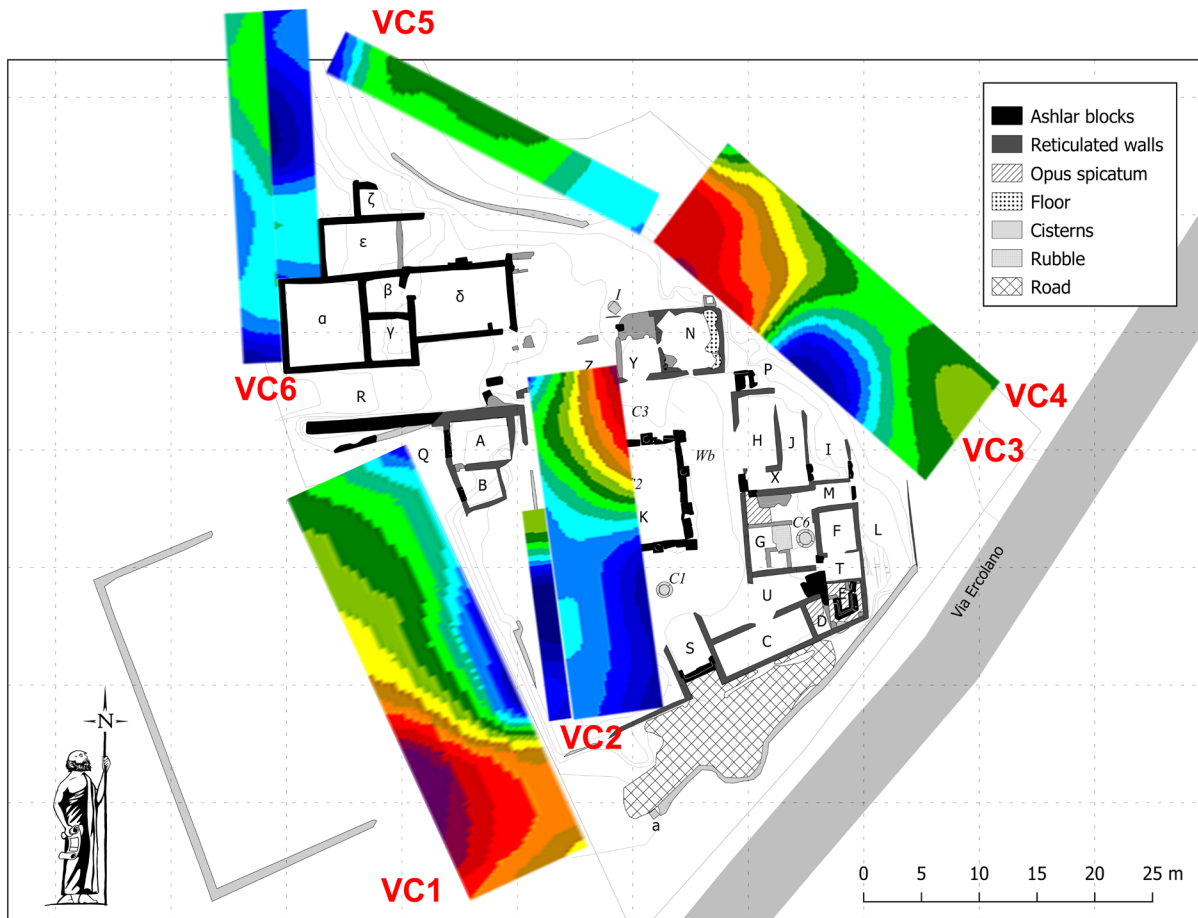


Fig. 22. Plan of the complex with sections investigated by geomagnetic survey 2017. N. Bargfeldt & P. Boila.

with the same orientation as the channel system have been recorded. They are probably the same as the ones identified by Lugli (Fig. 5). At this point, however, it cannot be determined if they belong to ancient or recent structures.

Cross-section VC1 covers the western part of the site. It is significant because it shows the continuation of the basalt road towards the west, down the slope. Finally, cross-sections VC5 and VC6 in the northern part of the site show increasing levels of electrical resistivity. At present, it cannot be determined if this reflects the existence of superficial structures or scattered detritus. Below a depth of 1.5 m, however, there were no noticeable signs of resistivity.

Water in the site (SA)

The site is characterised by an extensive infrastructure of water distribution and disposal. Apart from the sector close to the structure in *opus quadratum*, manholes and tunnels can be observed across the site. This indicates that water was a fundamental component within the complex in antiquity. With the exception of the *latrina*, however, we cannot be sure about the original use of water in the other rooms at this stage of the investigation.

In his study of the site, Lugli briefly touches upon water supply, distribution, and disposal systems. In his plan, six manholes are marked (Fig. 5), three of which (C_1 , C_2 , I) were connected with what he called deep “wells” and manholes.⁴⁹ He argued that the

⁴⁹ Lugli 1914, fig. 3.

water reached the building complex from the west (now our fixed north), specifically at Manhole I, through an aqueduct with a large channel measuring between 32 and 35 cm and with a cappuccina-tiled roof.⁵⁰ Conduits (pipes) of varying capacity were placed at different heights, which allowed water to be distributed to different rooms. An arm of this aqueduct was directed towards the south and reached Manhole C₁, in which draining water was collected. From here, water flowed out of the building towards the south. Inside the so-called *atrium*, Manhole C₂ gathered the water of the *impluvium*.⁵¹ A second arm of the main conduit bordered the northern rooms before turning south toward Manhole C₃ in order to serve the eastern rooms. Lugli describes the conduit as “tuff canalization”, roofed with big tuff ashlar. A further Manhole (C₄), perhaps independent from the others, is marked within the so-called peristyle (Q).

Four of the six manholes that Lugli originally uncovered were rediscovered during the 2017 survey (Figs. 5–6). Two of them, both original and *in situ*, show circular well-curbs and lids in peperino (C₁ and C₂); of the other two (C₃ and I), only broken and out-of-place parts of the well-curbs are still preserved. Much to our surprise, a previously unknown well-cover was discovered in Room G in 2019 (Figs. 12–14). Both the well curb and the lid are made of peperino and are well preserved (diam. ca. 1.5 m).

We also noticed the presence of three well-curbs of modern concrete; one is outside Room E, between the southern wall and the paving stones of the road, the second was found south-west of the road on its southern border (Fig. 6, wall A), and the third is in connection with the north-eastern outer corner of Room N (Fig. 6, wall B).

Water supply and storage

Although the water network has not yet been explored, the recent investigation allows us to consider the provenance of the water and its distribution. As mentioned above, Lugli argued that it came from the west (Fig. 5, Manhole I). At the moment, however, there is no evidence for the existence of such aqueducts. None of the three aqueducts that Lugli previously described as serving the Villa of Domitian seems to lead to our site. Indeed, all of those instead received water from the Pescaccio/Malaffitto springs, on the internal and southern slopes of the crater of Lake Albano (Fig. 1).⁵² Centobocche, which is considered the most ancient aqueduct of all, served the area of present-day Albano Laziale and flowed into the central aisle of the huge cistern, which is traditionally termed “Cisternoni”.⁵³ The other two aqueducts, Malaffitto Alto and Malaffitto Basso, led towards the main buildings of the Villa of Domitian. The first one flowed into the big cistern of Propaganda Fide, which now belongs to the Vatican, and the second one into the Cisterna Torlonia at Castel Gandolfo.⁵⁴ Although the Cisterna Torlonia was not far from the site of Villa Santa Caterina, Lugli strongly rejected the idea that this could be the cistern that served that site. In fact, this cistern is opposite to the main conduit that Lugli has identified in Manhole I to the north of the buildings (Figs. 5–6). In addition, the size of this conduit does not have the capacity to contain the water that would come from such a large cistern.⁵⁵ There is an additional problem with the identification of the Cisterna Torlonia as the water supply source for this site. In fact, this cistern is generally dated to the beginning of the 2nd century AD,⁵⁶ as it resembles the Cisternoni of Albano in both

⁵⁰ “L’acquedotto di immissione sbocca in (I), venendo da ovest”, Lugli 1914, 276-277.

⁵¹ Lugli 1914, 271-272.

⁵² Lugli 1917, 54-62.

⁵³ Lugli 1917, 54-57, dated to the Tiberian period. For the Cisternoni, Aglietti 2015, 103-111.

⁵⁴ For Malaffitto Alto: Lugli 1917, 59-62; Lilli 2002, 333-335, figs. 376-381, for the branch directly to Aricia. For Malaffitto Basso: Lugli 1917, 57-59. For the Cisterna Torlonia, see Ghini 1984.

⁵⁵ Lugli 1914, 276-277.

⁵⁶ Ghini 1984 dates the cistern to the period of Trajan

general size and in the masonry technique used (*opus mixtum*).⁵⁷ It is clear, therefore, that both these cisterns were part of a single project involving the water distribution within the Villa of Domitian. In contrast, the buildings at Villa Santa Caterina were almost completely built of *opus reticulatum*, and they are probably earlier in date. Since the water network of our site is likely to be associated with the phase that uses *opus reticulatum* (dated to the late Republican period), this excludes the possibility that the Cisterna Torlonia was connected to our site, at least during the most ancient phases of its use.

More recently, a new cistern has been identified nearby in Via Ercolano, south-west of the ancient remains of Villa Santa Caterina (Fig. 2).⁵⁸ It consists of two aisles with an internal revetment in *opus incertum*. Location, depth, and masonry technique all strongly suggest that this cistern may have served our site, possibly at the end of the Republican period.

While cleaning the site, the mouth of the Manholes I, C₂ and the newly discovered one in Room G revealed the existence of three bottle-shaped cisterns (“a fiasco” cisterns). All of them have been cut right through the peperino, and the upper part of the necks were partially walled with *opus caementicium*. They all have a depth of 6–7 m, and we hope that future studies may clarify their connection to the water supply system of the building.

Under Manhole C₂, slightly below the

opening of the neck, two recesses for the flow of water can be seen. This is the only manhole that Lanciani marks in the measured sketch of the *atrium* that he made in 1878 (Fig. 4).⁵⁹ This manhole is the same as Manhole C₂ in Lugli’s plan (Fig. 5), but neither Lugli nor Lanciani mention the existence of the underlying bottle-shaped cistern. Lugli states that this manhole is related to the *impluvium* of the *atrium* and additionally mentions that remains of a small portion of the original *spicatum* were visible in the *atrium*.⁶⁰ No such pavement has been found here during the recent investigations, however.

In *Albanum*, two examples of bottle-shaped cisterns have been discovered in the city centre of present-day Castel Gandolfo.⁶¹ These two cisterns have been cut through the tuff, are ca. 6 m deep, and have a diameter of about 3 m at the bottom. Dead-end channels were connected to them. It is possible that this type of cistern is a variant of the most popular water supply system in this area: tunnel-cisterns. Similar tunnel-cisterns are known elsewhere in the Alban Hills and date between the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC.⁶² A third bottle-shaped cistern (still unpublished) has been discovered on the south slope of Colle dei Cappuccini in present-day Albano Laziale. It is entirely cut through the tuff, and a channel goes through the bottom; it is probably identical with the Cento Bocche aqueduct.⁶³

It follows that the dating of these bottle-shaped cisterns is of immense importance to

or Hadrian.

⁵⁷ Aglietti 2015, 103-111.

⁵⁸ The discovery and a first inspection of the cistern was made by G. Ghini (Soprintendenza Archeologia Belle Arti e Paesaggio per l’Area Metropolitana di Roma, la provincia di Viterbo e l’Etruria Meridionale), who is preparing the publication of the cistern. The cistern was measured by H. Kumke and his team in 2018 (Technische Universität München).

⁵⁹ Buonocore 2001, 166 (here Fig. 4). This one, as well as manholes C₁, I and C₄ of Lugli’s plan, are also marked on Rosa’s plan (here Fig. 3).

⁶⁰ Lugli 1914, 272, 274.

⁶¹ Ghini 1986, 41-54, where an interpretation as *nevai* has been suggested.

⁶² The water-collection system implies an outer col-

lection source that links to the underlying closed channels through a cistern. There are three similar examples discovered nearby, one in Albano in the Campo Boario area, in the proximity of the railway station: Lugli 1921, 273, fig. 6a; in the so-called Villa of Pompey (first phase): Lugli 1946, 49; and more recently, in Via Vascarelle: Ghini *et al.* 2008, 17-20.

⁶³ Some years ago, within the framework of the DAI Rom project “Albanum”, directed by Alexandra W. Busch, I got the permission to conduct a survey to this cistern. The survey was possible thanks to the kind availability of Padre Mario Sinibaldi, director of the Convento dei Cappuccini, based on the directions of Riccardo Bellucci, to whom I express my acknowledgements.

the understanding of the first phase of the site, since they are approximately contemporary with the building of *opus quadratum*. Examples of bottle-shaped cisterns are known all over the Mediterranean from the Archaic to the Hellenistic periods.⁶⁴ Additional typologies – so-called “a fiasco”, “a otre”, “a bottiglia”, and “campanulate” types – have been discovered in Italy, such as two examples in Orvieto and Orte that date back to the Etruscan period.⁶⁵ Intriguingly, a bottle-shaped cistern belonging to the second phase (2nd century BC) of the *atrium* A of the Tor Vergata villa (*loc.* Carcaricola) gathered the water of the *impluvium*.⁶⁶ Although it is of a later date, the Tor Vergata cistern and the earlier Etruscan cisterns in Orvieto and Orte have a similar rainwater supply system.

Even though the antiquity of our cisterns at Villa Santa Caterina is undeniable, their chronology is uncertain due to the lack of technical details and excavation. The position of the cistern under Manhole C₂ in the so-called *atrium* at Villa Santa Caterina indicates that it may belong to the most ancient phases of the building complex, presumably the 3rd or 2nd century BC. At that time the impressive water supply system of the imperial villa did not yet exist. In contrast, the northern cistern under Manhole I was served by a rectangular conduit that comes from the east and runs at a rather superficial level. It is plausible that a drain of major size branched off toward the south from the bottom of the cistern.

Therefore, we can assume that during the first period of this building complex, that is, the mid-Republican period (3rd–2nd century BC), the water supply consisted of a simple rain-water collection system. Other cisterns might have been integrated during the later Republican phase as part of a more complex system like the nearby cistern in Via Ercolano. The inflow pipe of cistern/Manhole I may, in fact, be linked to later infrastructural

constructions in the area, such as the cistern in *opus incertum* or the imposing water-supply network of the Villa of Domitian.

The electrical resistivity tomography (VC2, Fig. 22) reflects a part of the bottle-shaped cistern under Manhole C₂. Here, a consistent electrical resistivity area has been detected that becomes increasingly broad with depth. Similar findings are evident in cross-sections VC1 in the so-called peristyle, where the anomaly reaches a depth of 7 m. Here too can resistivity be read as evidence for a cavity, presumably another cistern.

Use and disposal of water

Besides the much deeper channel system already noticed by Lugli, several superficial channels existed for the outflow of water.

In three rooms in particular, the use of water was essential: latrine E and Rooms N and Y to the north. The water reaches the latrine from the north through a conduit. We were able to recognise the conduit thanks to the relieving arches in the walls through which it originally passed. Both the wall between Rooms I and M and the south wall of the latrine have relieving arches in peperino included in the reticulate masonry. The water came into the latrine through the north wall, and the drain of the latrine had a *spicatum* pavement. Both water and sewage flowed toward the road through an arch in tuff at the level of the *spicatum* pavement (Fig. 8). The effluent flowed into an underground masonry sewer with a cappuccina tiled roof that ran underneath the road. Its flow was parallel to the wall that limits the building complex to the south. Due to a gap in the basalt stones of the road, another part of this sewer has been detected further to the west, where another pipe converges into it from the north. By looking into its opening, its underground course could be traced for a few meters below Room C. After an initial straight line, the conduit turns to the

⁶⁴ Castellani & Martellini 2006, 116-119.

⁶⁵ For the cistern in Orvieto: Marcelli & Napoletano

2006, 80; for the one in Orte: Stopponi 1991, 211.

⁶⁶ De Franceschini 2005, 206.



Fig. 23. Looking into the sewer and its underground course below Room C (2017).

north-east, where the channel becomes lower due to the foundations of the north wall of Room D (Fig. 23). The rough way in which the foundation is cut proves that the sewer was made later than the wall. Although we do not know where this sewer started, we can argue that it served the eastern rooms of the building complex.

To the north, Room N was originally identified as part of a *tablinum* of the “villa” by Lugli. According to him, this room was later closed on all sides and transformed into a fountain.⁶⁷ That this room seemingly had no entrances was noticed by Rosa and Lanciani (Figs. 3–4). The water probably came through the channel that already Lugli marked in his

plan (Fig. 5), but today only a short stretch of this can be seen at the outer side of the north-eastern corner.

On the contrary, Room Y clearly shows the presence of water installations in its interior (Figs. 5–6). Whereas the plan of this room is not entirely correct on Lugli’s plan, both Rosa’s and Lanciani’s sketches reproduced it perfectly (Figs. 3–4). The room has not yet been studied in detail, but the entrance was from the *atrium* to the south. A concrete conglomeration of two sewers with tiled cappuccino roofs could be seen to the north; it has a north–south direction. Whereas the western conduit is almost entirely buried, the eastern one can be seen at the top. It is made of con-

⁶⁷ Lugli 1914, 275, 277–278.

crete but is closed to the north by a *latericium* wall. Close to the mouth, a channel in *opus listatum* flows into the sewer, coming from the east. This proves the connection between the rooms N and Y and allows us to argue that the water came in this part of the building from the east or north-east. Near the entrance, a cave in the ground reveals the water-and-sewer channel towards Manhole C₃. This channel, made of *opus listatum*, suggests that the water infrastructure in Room Y was made or restored between the end of the 2nd and the beginning of the 3rd century AD. The end of the channel is missing, revealing part of a deep manhole that is connected to Manhole C₃ (Figs. 5–6). Within the well can be seen a further channel coming from the east.

At this stage, this dense system of channels, drains, conduits, and cisterns provides a rather confusing dataset, and we hope that future investigations may clarify the situation. It is, however, clear that water played a significant role during the entire existence of the site. Presumably, bottle-shaped cisterns were part of the water supply system of the complex during its very first phase of existence and from then – over centuries – the entire system was changed and developed.⁶⁸

Villa or a sacrarium/sacellum of Bona Dea?
(SA, CM)

Both Cicero and Asconius situate the shrine of Bona Dea at the 13th mile of Via Appia between present-day Albano and Frattoc-

chie. For centuries, scholars have therefore attempted to identify the sanctuary in this region. So far, however, no architectural remains in the area have been convincingly assigned to this complex.⁶⁹

Epigraphical and archaeological evidence may suggest that at least one private cult of Bona Dea might have existed in *Albanum*. To date, the only reliable evidence comes from the statuette of Bona Dea found in Albano.⁷⁰ Pirro Ligorio, who placed the shrine of Bona Dea at the 16th mile of Via Appia, where the Church Santa Maria della Stella was first built in 1571,⁷¹ mentions the discovery of a votive inscription in this area (*clivus aricinus*), dated to around the 2nd century AD.⁷² Ligorio also mentions a second (funerary) inscription, which was found “*fra l’Aricia et Alba Longa allato al Pompeiano*”.⁷³ Ligorio’s evidence remains problematic, however, since both these inscriptions are currently considered to be forgeries. Later, in the 18th century, Riccy placed the cult to Bona Dea at the “Eremitorio di S. Sebastiano”, where he also postulated that the clash between Clodius and Milo occurred.⁷⁴ Without providing any explanation, Giuseppe Tomassetti (1910) located the shrine of Bona Dea within Villa Santa Caterina.⁷⁵

When Lugli (1914) first located the Villa of Clodius at Santa Caterina, he suggested situating this shrine – and consequently the estate property of Sertius Gallus – on the western side of Via Appia, just in front of Santa Caterina.⁷⁶ Here, a 19th century build-

⁶⁸ The channel of an aqueduct can be seen to the north along the Via Appia, slightly before the crossing point with Via Santa Caterina. Further to the north, Lanciani noticed traces of an aqueduct with SE–NW orientation in the Terreno Barberini, again along the left edge of the Via Appia: Buonocore 2001, 165.

⁶⁹ Della Giovampaola 2008, 25, note 4. In antiquarian sources, the shrine is always located on the western side of the Via Appia: Nibby 1819, II, 116–117; Canina 1853, I, 213, note 19. Canina’s suggestion for the placing of the shrine relates to the controversial inscription *CIL* VI, 56 = *CIL* XIV, 179, most recently discussed by Stassi 2020, 247, note 1593.

⁷⁰ The statuette will be discussed by Manetta and Poulsen in a forthcoming article, but see Candilio

& Bertinetti 2013.

⁷¹ Ligorio’s identification of the shrine of Bona Dea at the 16th milestone of Via Appia seems to contradict his placing of the Villa of Clodius between the 13th and the 14th mile of Via Appia, as quoted by Volpi (1736, 85–86), who refers to the first book on villas by Pirro Ligorio, Della Giovampaola 2008, 31–33 with references. Cf. also Rausa 1997, 37.

⁷² *CIL* XIV, 107*; Della Giovampaola 2008, 30, note 24.

⁷³ *CIL* XIV, 106*; Volpi 1736, VII, 185.

⁷⁴ Riccy 1787, 126.

⁷⁵ Tomassetti 1910, 122–123; cf. Manetta in this volume.

⁷⁶ Lugli 1914, pl. IV.

ing that hosts the Istituto San Giuseppe now stands, and no ancient remains have been found justifying such an interpretation. The discovery of grave goods in this place dated as early as the 8th century BC and the existence of a wall in *opus reticulatum* incorporated into the masonry of the modern building only prove that this area was occupied continuously in antiquity. After Lugli, no further attempt to localise the shrine of Bona Dea has been made.⁷⁷

The following considerations allow us to suggest that the building complex at Villa Santa Caterina should be identified as the shrine of Bona Dea mentioned in the literary sources, and that its first phase of use certainly predates the late Republican period. Of particular interest are the structures in *opus quadratum* that have mostly been interpreted as strong supporting walls. Despite the fact, that the general plan of the building is not entirely known at this stage of our research, the masonry technique indicates that this building is a separate construction that differs from the building in *opus reticulatum*. It follows that this building cannot be interpreted as the supporting walls of a late Republican villa, and that its chronology is earlier than the surrounding structures in *opus reticulatum*.⁷⁸ An earlier date of this structure is also suggested by the few archaeological finds discovered around it, but more importantly, a mid-Republican phase of use of the site (3rd–2nd centuries BC) is suggested by the bottle-shaped cisterns discussed above.

The written sources leave no doubt that the Sanctuary of Bona Dea stood along the 13th mile of the Via Appia. No other structures on this side of the ancient road may be identified with such a *sacrarium* or are mentioned in antiquarian sources. In order to approach an identification of the remains on the site we

will now take a look at the identified sanctuaries of Bona Dea, the related epigraphical material, and the cult in a broader perspective.

The identified Sanctuaries of Bona Dea (FD, BP)

The archaeological evidence for Bona Dea sanctuaries is relatively scarce and limited to a few identified structures. This may be due to the nature of the early cult, which from its introduction seems to have been predominantly a domestic cult that had the form of a *sacellum* or a *sacrarium*, both buildings rather different from the *aedes* (i.e. consecrated temple on a podium).⁷⁹ Over the centuries these structures developed in various forms, which, from an archaeological point of view, often makes certain identification of the sanctuaries of Bona Dea difficult if this identification cannot be verified through other evidence, such as inscriptions or other characteristic findings. The evidence for the sanctuaries in the Latin literary sources is likewise scant and is concentrated on the cult of Bona Dea in Rome. On the other hand, if not for the literary evidence, in particular Cicero's account of the assassination of Clodius near Bovillae on the Via Appia in 52 BC, we would never have suggested that the remains on the Villa Santa Caterina site may perhaps be identified with a Sanctuary of Bona Dea.

The few securely identified sanctuaries of Bona Dea, such as the ones in Ostia, seem to indicate that the cult was not concentrated around usual Roman temples with a podium, even though some of the sanctuaries seem to include buildings with columns at the front. Such structures have their origin in a certain type of ritual that is related to the Italo-Roman domestic cult. This is also reflected in the terminology: instead of *aedes* and *templum*,⁸⁰ the buildings dedicated to Bona Dea or certain parts of them are often characterised as *sacrar-*

⁷⁷ Graen 2008, 235-236, cat. R3 accepts Lugli's placing of the shrine. For a list of the various placings of this *sacellum* of Bona Dea, see Stassi 2014, 9-11.

⁷⁸ Lugli (1914, 272-274) had already observed the

particular feature of the peperino structures in *opus quadratum*.

⁷⁹ Marcattili 2010, 21-23.

⁸⁰ Brouwer 1989, 400-402.

ia and *penetralia* by the literary and epigraphical sources, terms that are traditionally related to rooms/*sacelli* with a cultic or a ritual function of a domestic nature.⁸¹ In fact, the term *sacrum* is used by Cicero in relation to the place consecrated to Bona Dea on the Via Appia, in front of which Clodius lost his life.⁸² It is interesting to note that the same designation was used to indicate exactly this part of the house of Caesar in which the sacrilege of Clodius occurred.⁸³ Furthermore, with the designation *penetralia*, Lactantius indicates both the *aedes* of Vesta, Bona Dea, and Ceres.⁸⁴ Accordingly, it is clear that we are dealing with cults that are profoundly related to the *mundus muliebris* and to the domestic sphere. As Marcattili has recently highlighted,⁸⁵ the Bona Dea sanctuaries at Ostia share the lack of the podium with the Temple of Vesta in Rome.⁸⁶ Accordingly, it seems important to emphasise the public and institutional connotations of *aedes* (literally inaugurated *templa*) in comparison with the private and household dimension of the religious building without a podium, as the case of the sanctuaries of Bona Dea.⁸⁷ Architectural peculiarities have, in fact, established the basis of the identification of the suburban temple on the Via Latina at Fregellae (3rd century BC) as a Bona Dea shrine.⁸⁸ These peculiarities include the lack of the podium and the irregular proportions of the plan in comparison with a usual Roman temple. Additional factors include the peculiarity of the pottery, the general characteristics of the ma-

terial evidence, and more specifically, the votive materials, many of which are related to the massive presence of water in the area.

The diversity of the sacred areas dedicated to Bona Dea can be demonstrated by the description of a number of sanctuaries, the majority of which seem later than the structure preserved at Villa Santa Caterina, although there are also significant parallels. In Rome, the principal sanctuary, the one of Bona Dea Subsaxana, was situated on the Aventine, in the area of the Church of Santa Balbina and the FAO building.⁸⁹ The sanctuary is mentioned by Propertius in a passage related to the myth of Hercules.⁹⁰ More generally, he describes it as an ideal site, extra-urban and placed in natural and savage surroundings. He also specifies some details: a *lucus*, a *nemus*, a grotto, a spring, and a hut embellished with foliage that acted as an *aedes*. The latter is important for implying rituals perhaps related to fire and water. Macrobius also mentions the existence of a *herbarium*, and it has been proposed that pharmacological drugs were prepared in the sanctuary of the goddess.⁹¹

Marcattili has analysed the various material elements that seem to have belonged to the cult areas of the goddess,⁹² using as parallels the sanctuaries dedicated to Damia and Auxesia in the Sanctuary of Hippolytos in Troizen.⁹³ Here, the central element was a *megaron* surrounded by service rooms. In this way, it is similar to both a domestic complex and the elements of the sanctuaries of Bona

⁸¹ Torelli 2005; Bassani 2008, 49-63.

⁸² Cic. *Mil.* 31.86; cf. Brouwer 1989, 306, no. 18.

⁸³ Livy, *Per.* 103. In this excerpt, the house is confused with that of Metellus. For the sources relating the scandal, see above note 15.

⁸⁴ Lactant. *Div. Inst.* 3.20.4.

⁸⁵ Marcattili 2010, 23.

⁸⁶ This temple is also linked to household and private aspects, Aulus Gellius (*Gell.* 14.7.7.) defines it as an *aedes* rather than as a *templum*.

⁸⁷ Marcattili 2010, 19-24.

⁸⁸ Diosono 2019.

⁸⁹ For the (few) archaeological finds in the area, see Quinto & Di Manzano 1984; Brouwer 1989, 20-22, no. 8, pl. II.8; Chioffi 1993; Marcattili 2010; Cavalero 2019.

⁹⁰ Prop. 4.9.23-30. *Sed procul inclusas audit ridere puellas/ lucus ubi umbroso fecerat orbe nemus/femineae loca clausa deae fontisque piandos/impune et nullis sacra relecta viris/Devia puniceae velabant limina vittae/putris odorato luxerat igne casa/populus et longis ornat frondibus aedem/multaque cantantis umbra tegebat aves.* Cf. Marcattili 2010, 10-12.

⁹¹ Macr. *Sat.* 1.12.26; Marcattili 2010, 17. The production of drugs in relation to the sanctuary of Bona Dea may perhaps also be indicated by the association of snakes with the cult, since snakes were also an important element in the cult of the healing deity Asclepius; Marcattili 2010, 17.

⁹² Marcattili 2010.

⁹³ For parallels between Bona Dea and Damia, see Marcattili 2010, 17-21; Palladino, below.

Dea in the Roman world, including the ones that were apparently public. The existence of wells is among the most recurrent features in the sanctuaries of Bona Dea. In fact, *putealia* and/or *putei* have been found in both sanctuaries in Ostia, together with large basins (see below). The importance of water in the cult is also marked by the presence of *labra*, which were found in the sanctuary of Staranzano, Trieste,⁹⁴ as well as at San Gregorio in Sassola and at Fregellae (found in the drainage system).

Other elements characteristic of the sanctuaries of Bona Dea are known from the epigraphical and literary sources. A kitchen, *culina*, is attested as early as the late Republican phase of the Bona Dea sanctuary in Ostia (V.10.2), together with a plastered portico and benches.⁹⁵ An inscription from the Sanctuary of Bona Dea in Rome mentions a hearth (*focus*),⁹⁶ and an inscription from Fidenae mentions a closed chest (*armarium clu[...]*) as well as an armchair and a cushioned couch (*catbedra* and *pulvinar*).⁹⁷ Whether the cult was private or public, all the parts that composed a sanctuary of Bona Dea (e.g. *sacellum*, annexed building, porches, and wells) were incorporated into the buildings and made invisible from the outside. In addition, doors and gates protected the openings, as proved by the sanctuary at Laverna, Abruzzo (second half of the 1st century BC).⁹⁸ As previously observed by Brouwer, the main characteristic of the sanctuaries of Bona Dea is the privacy of the complex, which was probably related to the secrecy required by the cult itself.⁹⁹ A complex plan and

a strong association with water also characterise the Sanctuary of Bona Dea at Imola (2nd century BC).¹⁰⁰

Another possible sanctuary of Bona Dea is in Trastevere, near the then *insula Bolani* in the area of the present Via Anicia 13. A number of inscriptions found *in situ* in this area in 1744 refer to a Sanctuary of Bona Dea. According to a new study by M. Arnhold, more information may be gained about the elements of the sanctuary. During the time of Nero, the sanctuary contained a closed yard with a well, an altar, and an *aedes*.¹⁰¹

We have better information about the Bona Dea sanctuary excavated in Trieste. The building found during the excavation is square, measuring 12 m on each side.¹⁰² The sanctuary is situated at the outskirts of the town on the road leading towards Aquileia, and the sacred area is protected by a wall. Inside, there is a central room that is accentuated by a projection and a small portico and that is flanked by two smaller rooms. The larger central room contains a small building at its back, perhaps a small *sacellum* or *sacrarium*. The sanctuary is identified on the basis of inscriptions on the rims of three *labra* placed on high bases and made of limestone.¹⁰³ According to another inscription, it was constructed by the *duoviri* of the colony in the third quarter of the 1st century BC, and it should probably be considered as a public cult that still continued to the end of the 4th century AD.¹⁰⁴

In Ostia, we have knowledge about at least two sanctuaries of Bona Dea. The first testimony of the cult goes back to the late Repub-

⁹⁴ Scrinari 1955.

⁹⁵ With the mentioning of Octavia, wife of Gamala: *Octavia M(arci) f(ilia) Gamalae (uxor) portic(um) poliend(am) et sedilia faciun(da) et culina(m) tegend(am) D(eae) B(onae) curavit*, Cébeillac1973; Brouwer 1989, 68-69, no. 63; Zevi 1997, 446, fig. 8; Zevi 2004, 66-67; Cébeillac-Gervasoni 2004.

⁹⁶ *CIL* VI, 62; Brouwer 1989, 31-32, no. 18. We can add the already mentioned descriptions of the *sacrarium* on the Aventine Hill made by Propertius, as well as Plutarch (Plut. *Vit. Cic.* 20).

⁹⁷ Romanelli 1929, 263, no. 11; Brouwer 1989, 62-63, no. 54; Michetti 2001, 243; *AE* 2001, 738. See

Granino Cecere 2010 for further objects related to the sanctuaries of Bona Dea.

⁹⁸ *CIL* IX, 3138. The sanctuary was built under the patronage of public magistrates.

⁹⁹ Brouwer 1989, 429.

¹⁰⁰ De Santis *et al.* 2009; Manzelli 2017a; 2017b.

¹⁰¹ *CIL* VI, 65-67; Brouwer 1989, 24-27, nos. 10-12; Arnhold 2015.

¹⁰² Brouwer 1989, 123-125, 422-425; Fontana 2001, 107-118, fig. 9; Fontana 2016b, fig. 1.

¹⁰³ Fontana 2001, 108, figs. 11-12; Fontana 2016a, 17, fig. 2 (last quarter of the 1st century BC).

¹⁰⁴ Fontana 2001, 108, fig. 13; Fontana 2016a, 17, fig. 3.

lican period, from which time the original plan of the better-known sanctuary on the Cardine degli Augustales (V.10.2) also stems.¹⁰⁵ The plan of the sanctuary bears some similarities with that of Trieste. Its central part consists of a tetrastyle building surrounded by a peribolos wall. It has a central entrance, and along the sides of the peribolos walls, the sanctuary is provided with porticos and other smaller rooms and structures surrounding the cella. An inscription mentioning Octavia, wife of Gamala, testifies to this early period of the sanctuary. She restored part of the sanctuary: the portico was plastered, benches were made, and the kitchen was roofed.¹⁰⁶ Four building phases may be distinguished in the sanctuary: late Republican, Augustan, Julio-Claudian/Vespasianic, and finally Domitianic, when the sanctuary was probably adjusted according to the surrounding buildings of the quarter, since it has a certain relation to the nearby Terme del Nuotatore.

The other sanctuary of Bona Dea in Ostia is situated near Porta Marina (IV.8.3).¹⁰⁷ As with the previous sanctuary, here a small tetrastyle temple was closed off by a peribolos wall. Inside, the temple was – in its first phase – surrounded by a porticoed yard on three sides, and on the fourth, towards the north, were at least one room (f), open yards (c and e) with basins and other structures related to water, and a corridor (d). The entrance room (a) was flanked by a large fountain towards the west and a small room (b) on the other side. The sanctuary was paid for by the *duovir Marcus Maecilius Furr*[...] during

the early Julio-Claudian period, and it should be emphasised that in this case the sanctuary is clearly identified as an *aedes Bonae Deae* and accordingly as a public cult.¹⁰⁸

At Monte Sacro near Ponte Nomentano in the territory of ancient Fidenae, there is evidence for a sanctuary of Bona Dea that was later incorporated into the property, the *fundus*, of the Popilii. The inscription was placed on a marble architrave.¹⁰⁹ Another suburban sanctuary of Bona Dea is identified near Ficulea and it was restored some time during the imperial period. In the inscription, the sanctuary is called a *fanum Bona[e D]eae*.¹¹⁰

One of the best parallels for the complex in Villa Santa Caterina is, however, a recently excavated building near San Gregorio da Sassola (Fig. 24). An *aedes* of Bona Dea in this site has been known for centuries through a preserved inscription,¹¹¹ but only recently has an identification of the sanctuary been proposed resulting from the excavations.¹¹² The sanctuary has the form of an almost square structure (ca. 33 x 35 m) built of *opus quadratum* in tuff, placed near the aqueduct of Claudius. Whereas the upper part of the sanctuary is founded directly on the bedrock, the lower part is based on an artificial terrace. The strong tufa wall surrounds a peristyle yard to the north-east; adjacent to this were rooms on the three other sides. No divisions are visible in the south-western part (33 x 16 m) of the sanctuary. In its later phase, the yard was furnished with a tetrastylon, and a small fountain was built on its north-western side. The yard was surrounded by several rooms, some of

¹⁰⁵ Floriani Squarciapino 1959-1960; Meiggs 1973, 352; Cébeillac 1973; Brouwer 1989, 67-69, 425-427; Zevi 1997; Cébeillac-Gervasoni 2004; Coarelli 2004; Rieger 2004, 233-239; Zevi 2004; Falzone 2006; Pavolini 2006, 231; Pensabene 2007, 182-184; Medri *et al.* 2017; Medri & Falzone 2018; Medri 2019.

¹⁰⁶ Floriani Squarciapino 1959-1960; *AE* 1973, no. 127; Brouwer 1989, 68-69, no. 63.

¹⁰⁷ Calza 1942; Meiggs 1973, 352-353; Brouwer 1989, 63-67, nos. 55-59, 407-412; Rieger 2004, 233-237; Pavolini 2006, 185-186; Pensabene 2007, 182-184.

¹⁰⁸ *AE* 1946, no. 221; Zevi 1968, 84-85, fig. 1; *AE* 1968, no. 80; Brouwer 1989, 63-64, no. 55. For

other inscriptions, *CIL* XIV, 5411; 4679; Zevi 1968; Brouwer 1989, 64-67, nos. 56-59.

¹⁰⁹ *CIL* VI, 36765; Brouwer 1989, 287, no. 32; Michetti 2001, 244.

¹¹⁰ *CIL* XIV, 4001; Brouwer 1989, 58-59, no. 50; Michetti 2001, 244-245.

¹¹¹ *CIL* XIV, 3530 = *ILS* 3512; Cordischi 1990, 187-188, no. 16; Granino Cecere 1992, 132-140; Granino Cecere 2005: 618-619, no. 842 (with previous bibliography). Cf. also Barbagallo 1981.

¹¹² Mari 2012. The study of the site is still in progress, and we are deeply indebted to Zaccaria Mari for information of the site.

which still have well-preserved floors, despite some late-antique and post-antique destructions. Some of the rooms contained basins, and there are small rooms interpreted as bath and kitchen (*tubuli* and a large *dolium* are preserved). The inscription dates to AD 88 and confirms that an earlier building was restored by a certain L. Paquedius Festus. In accordance with this, the excavation has confirmed at least two building phases, the first dating to presumably the first half of the 2nd century BC and the other to the second half of the 1st century, the time of Domitian.¹¹³

The sanctuaries of Bona Dea and the structures in Villa Santa Caterina (SA, CM)

It appears that the identified sanctuaries of Bona Dea do not have a unified and easily identifiable central building, but mostly rather complex plans. However, some common features may be observed. Contrary to ordinary Roman temples, the sanctuaries are often concealed by being surrounded by other buildings, making them largely invisible from the outside. The sanctuary usually contains rooms that are sometimes arranged around an *atrium* or a peristyle, and it may contain a building with a temple-like front but no podium. The most revealing element, however, is the abundant presence of water. Water – as well as fire – was an element of special importance for ritual actions in the Bona Dea cult (see below). This is proved by both the *labra* and *putealia* found in sanctuaries in which Bona Dea was worshipped.¹¹⁴ Basins used for ritual baths exist both in the Bona Dea Sanctuary (Regio V) in Ostia and in the one at S. Gre-

gorio da Sassola (Fig. 24). In the first, two basins are located within the sacred space of the small temple, belonging to a refurbishment in the 2nd century AD. At S. Gregorio da Sassola, two basins have been built in the proximity of the *atrium*. The abundant presence of water has also been verified in the Bona Dea temple in Fregellae, where the channels contained a filling consisting of large ceramic vessels and basins dated to the 3rd and 2nd century BC.¹¹⁵ At Villa Santa Caterina, Rooms N and Y follow a similar arrangement, and these rooms are the ones closest to the structure in *opus quadratum*. They belong to the last building phase to be recorded in the site, however, and date to the 2nd century AD. So far, no opening can be detected in these rooms to the *atrium* to the south, and this feature may prove their close interrelation with the structures in *opus quadratum*. To date, only Rosa has observed the existence of further rooms that may link to Rooms N and Y and to the building of *opus quadratum* (Fig. 3). However late, the use of these rooms strictly relates to the presence of water. With caution, these may be interpreted as basins for cathartic rituals (e.g. *lavatio*), which are known to have taken place in Bona Dea sanctuaries. Although no finds of *labra* and *putealia* have so far been found at Villa Santa Caterina, the abundance of cisterns and the comparisons between the plan of our site with better-known identified Bona Dea sanctuaries might favour our identification of the site as the *sacrarium/sacellum* mentioned by Cicero and Asconius.

¹¹³ M.G. Granino Cecere (1992, 132-137) otherwise proposed to localise the Sanctuary of Bona Dea *sub monte Aeflano* (CIL XIV, 3530) at the nearby Monte Sant'Angelo in Arcese. However, this interpretation is based on the existence of architectural elements, which might have been possibly moved there at the time of the construction of the church and the medieval monastery. They consist of large, square tuff blocks, marble corbels and cornices, stamped bricks dated to the Hadrianic period, and 15 columns made of Cipollino marble. Regrettably, these architectural elements are no longer visible. It is

evident, however, that they came from the immediate surroundings. Particularly interesting is the suggestion by Granino Cecere that all the architectural fragments possibly stem from the Sanctuary of Bona Dea, which according to an inscription had tumbled down and was restored during the time of Domitian. Additionally, they reveal a constructive continuity *in loco* and in the proximity, as proven by the excavations of Z. Mari at S. Gregorio.

¹¹⁴ From the sanctuaries of Trieste and Ostia: Marcattili 2010, 19-22.

¹¹⁵ Diosono 2019.

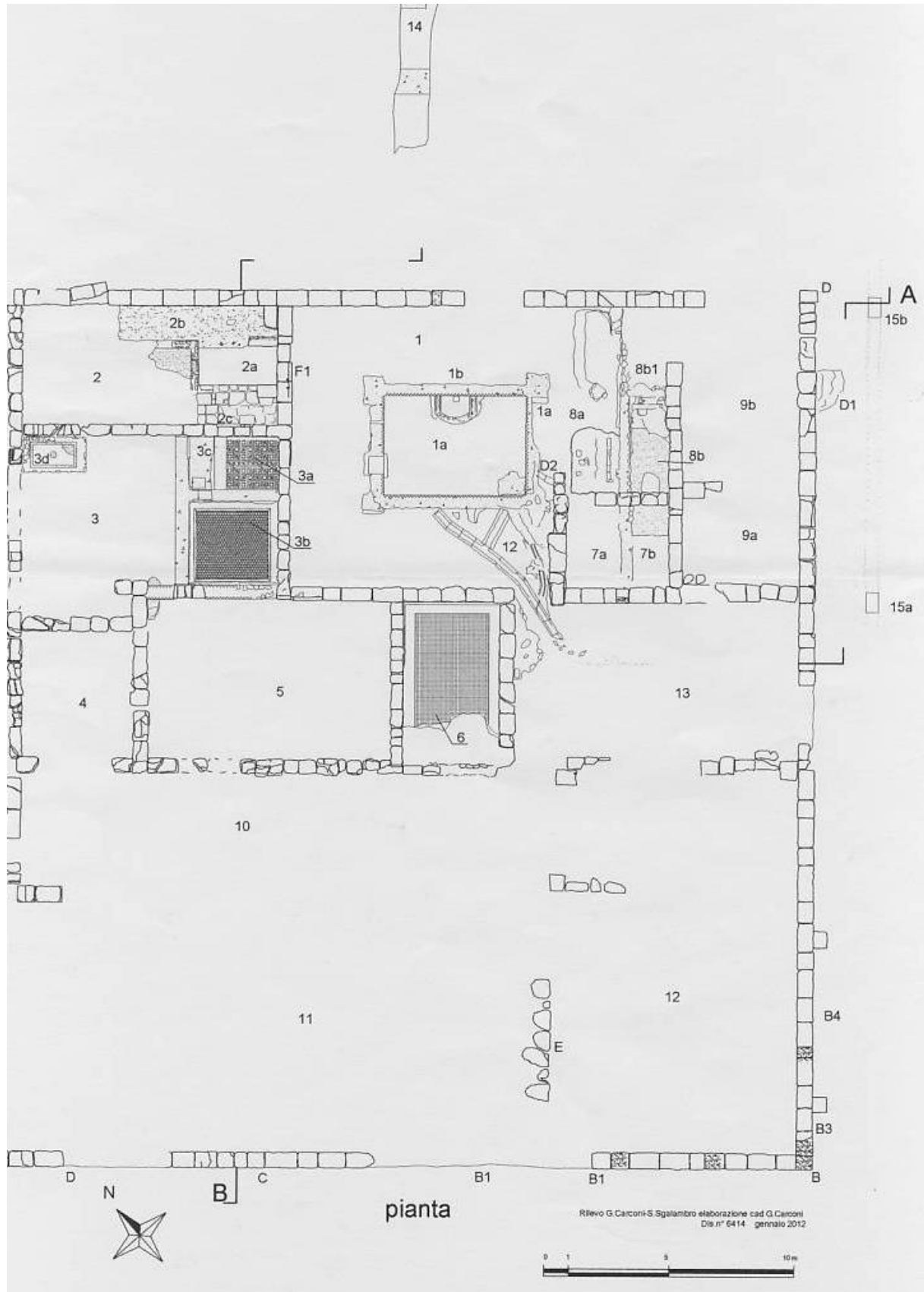


Fig. 24. Plan of the Sanctuary of Bona Dea in San Gregorio da Sassola. For permission to reproduce this plan we thank Zaccaria Mari.

The Cult of Bona Dea (AP)

The analysis of primary sources concerning Bona Dea proves the complex nature of her myth and ritual, a nature even contentious and contradictory.¹¹⁶ According to the written tradition, the goddess could either be identified as Fauna or she was understood as the wife/sister or daughter of the god Faunus.¹¹⁷ Fauna is characterised as a chaste, modest, and extremely secretive woman. Faunus is the only god to know her name and the only one with whom she has contact.¹¹⁸

Concerning her name, both Arnobius and Lactantius possibly transmit the real name of the goddess, deriving from authors of the 1st century (e.g. Varro, Gavius Bassus, Sextus Clodius). This name could possibly be *Fenteia*, *Fentia* or *Fenta Fatua*. Lactantius, who quotes Gavius Bassus, claims that the name Fatua, in particular, comes to the goddess from her talent to predict the future of women, just as Faunus could predict the future of men. Additionally, the connection between Fauna/Bona Dea and the oracular skills of the goddess are suggested by Servius in his commentary on the Aeneid VIII.¹¹⁹ Here, the philologist says that Faunus – as the son of Picus – is named after *fari* (literally “to predict”) because of his oracular skills.¹²⁰

An unexpected event caused the transformation of Fauna from a virtuous woman to a goddess. According to some sources, Fauna started hiding herself from Faunus while she was drinking excessively and getting drunk. When Faunus found out the truth, he killed Fauna using the branches of a myrtle. After her death, however, Faunus himself wor-

shipped her as a goddess. In contrast, those authors who consider Fauna as the daughter of Faunus think she suffered an incestuous sexual approach by her father. In an attempt to achieve his goal, Faunus first tried to beat her with a branch of myrtle, then he tried in vain to get her drunk, and lastly, he only obtained what he wanted by tricking her, transforming himself into a snake. In this way, Fauna moved from a human to a divine status.¹²¹

As already mentioned, the myth is complex and rather cryptic. However, elements such as the myrtle, the wine, and the exclusion of men seem to be intrinsic and central from a very early stage of the myth. Additionally, Bona Dea is related to spheres like health and fertility, as well as to the natural and agrarian spheres.

Part of the written tradition argues that the cult of the goddess is very ancient.¹²² More generally, the sources state that the cult was widespread and that a double level of worship existed: a public one, as we know from Roman festivities, and a private one. The private worship of the goddess is only known through epigraphical sources, from which a cultic organisation based on *collegia* emerged, in which both men and women had admission. Freedmen (*liberti*) appear to be the main donors in Rome, but the number of slaves is also considerable. However, free-born people constitute the largest group of donors in other parts of Italy and in the Roman provinces.¹²³

In Rome, two different public festivities were consecrated to Bona Dea, both of which excluded men.¹²⁴ One was linked to the *Ma-*

¹¹⁶ For an exhaustive presentation of the sources, see Brouwer 1989, chapters 1 and 2; Boëls-Janssen 2008.

¹¹⁷ For a general overview, see Daremberg-Saglio I, *s.n.* Bona Dea, 725-726; *LIMC* III, 1 *s.n.* Bona Dea, 120-123. Wife/sister: Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 20; Lactant. *Div. Inst.* 1.22.10; Arn. *Adv. Nat.* 5.18. Daughter: Macrob. *Sat.* 1.12.27; Tert. *Ad Nat.* 2.9.22.

¹¹⁸ Servius (*Aen.* 8.314) says that the tradition of naming her Bona Dea originates in the fact that it was forbidden to speak her actual name.

¹¹⁹ Servius (*Aen.* 8.314) adds that the *Fauni* were also

named *Fatui* because of their quite scatter-brained way of giving oracles. A similar etymology is offered by Isid. *Etym.* 10.103.

¹²⁰ Macrob. *Sat.* 1.12.21; Serv. *Aen.* 7.47; Mart. *Spect.* 2.167.

¹²¹ Macrob. *Sat.* 1.12.24.

¹²² Prop. 4.9.16-70 and Cic. *Har. Resp.* 36-38. According to these authors, the ceremony in honour of Bona Dea stems back to the royal period; Piccaluga 1964, 195-201; Pinotti 1977; Coli 1978. Cf. Gagé 1963, 140.

¹²³ Cébeillac 1973, 546-548.

¹²⁴ Boëls-Janssen 2008; Cic. *Har. Resp.* 17.37; *Schol. Bob.*

tronalia and was celebrated within the Sanctuary of Bona Dea *sub saxo*, on the slopes of the so-called Aventinus Minor, on the first of May, the anniversary of its foundation.¹²⁵ Written sources are more informative on the other festival, which was celebrated within the house of the magistrate “*cum imperio*” (clearly with a political meaning), and managed by his wife (or mother), who celebrated the rite together with the slaves, the matrons, and the Vestals.¹²⁶ Since the celebration occurred at the beginning of December, at night,¹²⁷ it was included among the “carnival” festivity of the *Saturnalia*.¹²⁸ This celebration occurred at the end of the year, and temporarily subverted the traditional nuptial values of the Roman society, which were thereafter reconfirmed during the *Matronalia*, the new year in March.

During the celebration in December, sacrifices were offered to Bona Dea. They included cooked food (as the presence of fire seems to indicate) and libations, probably in the shape of a *lectisternium*.¹²⁹ Factors like the nocturnal character of the ceremony, the abundance of music, the lack of moderation, and the use of pure wine (*merum*, as was usual in ritual contexts) made this rite similar to the

Orphic *mysteria*.¹³⁰ A similar character of the public cult of Bona Dea might be assumed for the private cult of the goddess. Although not much information about the nature of the private rites exist,¹³¹ significant details emerge from rare inscriptions, as the ones which have been discovered at Segni and at Fideane.¹³² Here, the offerings to the goddess included *vestimenta albata, tunicae, pulvinaria*, and a *palliolum*. The rites celebrated in December also included wine, an essential element for the prophecy. It was “concealed” as milk, however, and was placed in a vessel usually used to hold honey. In addition, the cups were covered with cloth until the time for the libation came.¹³³ Probably this was an expedient that served to block the liberating power of the wine until the libation, before showing its real nature. The camouflage of wine with milk and honey does not necessarily have anything to do with the feminine elements, milk and honey, and the masculine, wine, but all these nutrients have a strong initiatory value.¹³⁴

According to Plutarch, the festival in December included music and dance, and the women would decorate the ceilings of the rooms in which the rites to Bona Dea

P. 20H; Prop. 4.9.26; Plut. *Vit. Caes.* 9.6; Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 20.

¹²⁵ Gagé 1963, 13-24, 140; Ov. *Fast.* 5.149; Macrob. *Sat.* 1.12.21.

¹²⁶ Cic. *Har. Resp.* 17-18; cf. also Asc. *Mil.* 46; Plut. *Vit. Cic.* 19; Plut. *Vit. Caes.* 9. Mastrocinque 2011; Mastrocinque 2013 and 2014, 35-36, focusses on the similarities between the rites to Bona Dea in May and the Athenian Anthesteria in honour of Dionysus. On the presence of female slaves: Iuv. 6.317-326; Plut. *Vit. Caes.* 10. On the presence of matrons: Cic. *Har. Resp.* 37; Plut. *Vit. Caes.* 9; Plut. *Vit. Cic.* 19; Cass. Dio. 37.45.1. On the Vestals: Cic. *Har. Resp.* 46; Iuv. 9.117, and Schol.; Plut. *Vit. Cic.* 19. On the role of the wife or the mother of the magistrate: Plut. *Vit. Caes.* 9, Plut. *Vit. Cic.* 19.

¹²⁷ On 5 December, the festival of the *Faunalia* in honour of *Faunus* was celebrated. This is also related to wine, and therefore very similar to the rites related to Bona Dea, Piccaluga 1964, 222.

¹²⁸ Fontana 2016a, 8, note 46.

¹²⁹ Libations: Iuv. 2.86ss.; Macrob. *Sat.* 1.12.23; Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 20; Plut. *Vit. Cic.* 28; Cic. *Dom.* 53.136-137; Cic. *Har. Resp.* 3.4; Cass. Dio. 37. *Lectisternium*: Cic. *Har. Resp.* 5.8-9.

¹³⁰ Apart from these ceremonies, women were in general

forbidden to drink pure wine: Piccaluga 1964, 202-223; Brouwer 1989, 327-336; Bettini 1995. Orphic *mysteria*: Plut. *Vit. Caes.* 9.7-8. See also Iuv. 1.2.82-90; Iuv. 2.6.314-345; Iuv. 3.9.115-117; Cass. Dio. 37.39; Sen. *Ep.* 97.2. Boëls-Janssen (2014, 49) emphasises the strong purifying value of the myrtle because of its evergreen nature and its traditional use in Bacchic rites, as with the snake, symbolising immortality.

¹³¹ Cébéliac 1973, 533-545.

¹³² Segni: EE VIII, 624 = *ILS* 3495 = Brouwer 1987, 77-78, no. 69; Fideanae: Brouwer 1987, 62, no. 54.

¹³³ Lactant. 1.22.11; Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 20; Macrob. *Sat.* 1.12.25; Arn. *Gent.* 5.18. Several scholars have argued that women were prohibited from drinking wine because of a religious ban that would also exclude women from making this kind of libation. The actual reason for this ban, however, should instead be related to the rules of the status of matron. In fact, the written tradition informs us that offerings by women could also include wine and that these offerings should not be considered as exceptional: Serv. *Aen.* 1.737; Plaut. *Aul.* 23-24; Plut. *Quaest. Rom.* 57; *Corp. Tib.* III, 12, 14; cf. also Boëls-Janssen 2014, 35-44.

¹³⁴ Boëls-Janssen 2014, 52-54.

were to take place with branches of vines and other plants – except myrtle.¹³⁵ According to the myth, a sacred snake flanked the goddess. Furthermore, it was a sacrilege if a man moved close or simply was within the house while the rites were celebrated.¹³⁶ Some scholars ascribe a strong initiatory character to the rite, at least in its original phase.¹³⁷ Initiatory elements include the exclusion of men, the communal nature of the rite, which – apart from the transgression represented by the camouflaged wine – is celebrated for the entire community (*pro populo romano*), and the age of the initiates.¹³⁸ The relation between Bona Dea and Dionysus has been explored recently by A. Mastrocinque, who has analysed the decorations of the so-called Dionysiac sarcophagi.¹³⁹ His comparison between the iconography of the sarcophagi and the written sources describing the rite to Bona Dea has revealed several analogies, such as the presence of the snake and the absence of male characters who are sexually active. In addition, Faunus appears to establish an

important conjunction between the cults of Bona Dea and Dionysus as a representative of fecundity.

The public celebration that occurred on 1 May took place at the Aventine sanctuary.¹⁴⁰ Both Propertius and Macrobius describe it as placed in a wild landscape, with woods (*silvae*), caves, and springs.¹⁴¹ Even in antiquity, the therapeutic character of the cult to Bona Dea was emphasised within the Aventine sanctuary.¹⁴² This aspect of the cult can also be deduced by some epigraphical sources and her identification with the Greek goddess Damia, who was also linked to water and the related rites of prophylaxis.¹⁴³ The essential role of water within the cult of Bona Dea is also strengthened by some of the archaeological contexts.¹⁴⁴ The festival celebrated in May included the sacrifice of a pregnant sow.¹⁴⁵ The written tradition seems to mix some details of this celebration with the one in December, and this makes it difficult to reconstruct individual aspects of the two celebrations. Perhaps the two celebrations included similar

¹³⁵ Plut. *Vit. Caes.* 9.7-8. As for the nature and the origin of the goddess, Plutarch informs us about the different perceptions of the various populations. According to the Phrygians, Bona Dea was the mother of King Midas. The Greeks named Bona Dea “the goddess of the women” and considered her one among the mothers of Dionysus. In contrast, the Romans believed that she is one of the Dryads and in particular the bride of Faunus.

¹³⁶ According to Seneca the Younger (*Ep.* Lucilius 16.2.2), even the paintings depicting male animals were covered when these rites were celebrated.

¹³⁷ Piccaluga 1964, 227-230; Marcattili 2010 and 2016, 470-471, who sees similarities between the initiatory nature of the rites to Bona Dea and the ones to Venus Verticordia-Fortuna Virilis at the Circus Maximus. According to Boëls-Janssen (2014, 47-48), the only purpose of the ritual initiation was to repeat the initiation of the goddess symbolically, and it had no reference to the actual initiation of matrons and the *puellae*, mentioned by Ovid, as postulated by Piccalunga (*ibid.*).

¹³⁸ Cic. *Har. Resp.* 5.17; Asc. *Mil.* 46.

¹³⁹ Mastrocinque 2011; 2013; 2014. Previously, De Cazanove (1983) explored the relation between Bona Dea and Dionysus with a special focus on the representations depicting the moment when Dionysus finds Ariadne and their wedding with a retinue of satyrs and maenads.

¹⁴⁰ *LTUR* I, s.v. Bona Dea Subsaxana (L. Chioffi).

¹⁴¹ Prop. 4.9.16-70; Macrobius *Sat.* 1.12.28.

¹⁴² Bona Dea and Medea are linked by Macrobius (*Sat.* 1.12.26) since both were able to prepare herbal medicines.

¹⁴³ Cf. the case of *oculata* (*CIL* VI, 75 = *ILS* 3508 = Brouwer 1989, 27-28, no. 13; Radke 1979, 983) or the dedication *ob luminibus restitutis* (*CIL* VI, 68 = *ILS* 3513 = Brouwer 1989, 53, no. 44). For the epithet *Restitutrix*, *CIL* VI, 65 (cf. 3755 = *ILS* 3500) or *Felicula* (lit. “who brings luck, healthy”), *CIL* VI, 68 (3755=*ILS* 3513). See also the identification of the goddess with Hygieia (*CIL* VI, 72 = *ILS* 3514 = Brouwer 1989, 33, no. 21; Boëls-Janssen 1993, 435-437) or *Valetudo* (*CIL* VIII, 20747 = Brouwer 1989, 142, no. 141; Winkler 1995, 104-106; *LIMC* III, 120-123 s.v. Bona Dea). For the connection between Hygieia and Bona Dea, see also the particular case of the rural sanctuary with cultic activities related to water on the Monte Cimino: Gasperini 1987. The sacrificial animal on the Aventine was called after this *damium*, and the priestess was also called *damiatrix*: Placid. Gl. p. 431; Iuv. 2.83; Paul. *Fest.* 52 L.; Paul. *Fest.*, 60 L.; Marcattili 2010, 19.

¹⁴⁴ See Sanctuaries of Bona Dea, above.

¹⁴⁵ Ov. *Fast.* 5.147-158; Macrobius *Sat.* 1.12.20-29, cf. Boëls-Janssen 1993, 432. Like the libations mentioned above, it is hard to imagine that bloody sacrifices made by women were a rare thing.

rites.¹⁴⁶ As to the May celebration, we do not know who was officially responsible for the carrying out of the rite or what role the priestess of Bona Dea played.¹⁴⁷

Primary sources, especially inscriptions, allow us to reconstruct a wider cultic sphere of Bona Dea.¹⁴⁸ This includes feminine fecundity, particularly pregnancy and delivery. Both the previously mentioned Greek Damia (somehow assimilated to Bona Dea) and Auxesia are often depicted kneeling like a woman in labour.¹⁴⁹ In addition, the recent discoveries of the sanctuary at Imola should be considered.¹⁵⁰ Here, Bona Dea is related to the goddesses Nixi Dii, who are linked to delivery and birth more generally. Two Roman inscriptions name Bona Dea respectively as *Nutrix* and *Lucifera*, while an inscription found in Gallia Narbonensis assimilates her with Juno and as *feminarum dea*, according to the description of Macrobius.¹⁵¹

Additional spheres of the cult of the goddess include navigation, where the goddess is assimilated with Isis,¹⁵² the natural world, and the agrarian aspect in particular. In this latter role, Bona Dea is similar to Ops and to Ceres.¹⁵³ An inscription from Ostia names

Bona Dea as *Opifera* and an inscription from Aquileia names her *Cereria*.¹⁵⁴ Two inscriptions, one from Ostia, another from the Roman *suburbium* immediately to the north of the Vatican, describe Bona Dea as *Agrestis*.¹⁵⁵ Also quite interesting is the existence of the adjective *Castrensis*, which the goddess also shares with the god, Silvanus.¹⁵⁶

In conclusion, the complex and multi-faceted nature of the cult of Bona Dea has later favoured phenomena of religious syncretism. Within this frame, Bona Dea was partly assimilated with native (local) goddesses, as for example Heia in Istria or Cupra in Umbria and in Piceno, starting from the 1st century AD.¹⁵⁷

Conclusion and perspectives

Even though the working campaigns on the site of Villa Santa Caterina have been short, important new knowledge has been gained for a possible new interpretation of the so-called Villa of Clodius. In fact, it has become clear that the designation “villa” cannot be maintained. The peculiar building with several rooms built of large, partly trapezoidal peperino ashlar in the north-western corner of the complex can hardly be interpreted as a forti-

¹⁴⁶ Brouwer 1989, 271.

¹⁴⁷ The priestess is mentioned by the literary sources. Besides the mentioning of the old priestess by Propertius (above), Macrobius (*Sat.* 1.12.26) mentions *antistites* – which, however, is not one of the official titles for the priestesses. To this should be added the epigraphical evidence (*CIL* VI, 2240 = 4003 = Brouwer 1989, 47, no. 36; *NSc* 1891, 289, no. 3 = Brouwer 1989, 82, no. 72).

¹⁴⁸ Most recently treated by Panciera 2016.

¹⁴⁹ Marcattili 2010, 17-20.

¹⁵⁰ De Santis *et al.* 2009; Manzelli 2017a and 2017b. It may be this connection to motherhood, pregnancy, delivery and birth that may explain the sacrifice of a pregnant sow.

¹⁵¹ *CIL* VI, 73 (= Brouwer 1989, 33-34, no. 22) and *CIL* VI, 74 (= Brouwer 1989, 34-35, no. 23) respectively. Gallia Narbonensis: *CIL* III, 10400 (= Brouwer 1989, 130-131, no. 129); Piccaluga 1964, 224, note 132. *Feminarum dea*: Macrobius *Sat.* 1.12.28; Prop. 4.9.25 and Plut. *Vit. Caes.* 9.

¹⁵² *CIL* XI, 3243 = *ILS* 3509 from Sutri (= Brouwer 1989, 102-103, no. 99), and Brouwer 1989, 106-107, no. 101. The latter dedication stems from Orte, an area at the frontier between Lazio and Umbria in which the navigation on the Tiber is of consider-

able importance.

¹⁵³ Palmer 1974, 64; on the connection between Bona Dea and Magna Mater, see Brouwer 1989, 142-159 and cfr. *I.I.* IV, 1, 2ed., no.73.

¹⁵⁴ *Opifera*: Brouwer 1989, 67-68, no. 60. *Cereria*: *CIL* V, 761 = *ILS* 3499 = Brouwer 1989, 115-116, no. 112.

¹⁵⁵ Ostia: *CIL* VI, 68 = *ILS* 3513 = Brouwer 1989, 53-54, no. 44. Roman suburbium: *AE* 1980, 53; Marcattili 2010, 15. A third inscription from the *Hispania Baetica* might possibly be added, *CIL* II, 1907 = *CIL* II, 328; Gimeno Pascual 2008. Additional information come from the literary sources, Macrobius *Sat.* 1.12.20 and Plut. *Vit. Caes.* 9, mentioning Tellus, Maia, Hecate, Semele and Proserpine.

¹⁵⁶ Zaccaria 2000, in particular 1106-1110. According to S. Panciera (2016, 550-551) this epithet may relate to the fields where the priestesses of Bona Dea collected the herbs for the medicines rather than a connection to the *castra*, as suggested by L. Gasperini (1987, 141-142) for Bona Dea at Mt. Cimino.

¹⁵⁷ Heia: *AE* 1964, 270; Delplace 2000. Cupra: Giontella 2006, 154-158; Marcattili 2016, who stresses the ritual importance of the water within the Bona Dea cult, as well as for Cupra and Venus, to whom Bona Dea is assimilated.

fication related to a villa. In any case, it seems to predate the surrounding structures and walls mostly built of *opus caementicium*/*opus reticulatum*, which date to the second half of the 1st century BC. Fragments of monumental and monolithic columns found on the site are made of the same material (peperino), which seems to indicate that they belong to a rather large structure and not to a villa *atrium*. This seems supported by their placement on large, flat ashlar of irregular sizes, which may likewise stem from a monumental building. It is premature to propose a more exact date for the ashlar building, but parallels are found among the buildings of the mid-Republican period.¹⁵⁸

The recent investigations have indicated that the complex has many similarities to securely identified sanctuaries of Bona Dea: access to abundant sources of water,¹⁵⁹ the placing close to thoroughfares but not visible from them, surrounded by walls in order to control access. Furthermore, the sanctuaries are often characterised by a central, more monumental building that is surrounded by yards and rooms of varying size. All these elements would support an identification as a sanctuary of Bona Dea here at the 13th mile on the Via Appia, presumably the same as the *sacrarium* on the property of Sertius Gallus mentioned by Cicero.

The ongoing investigation has also shed important new light on the use of the ruin in more recent periods.¹⁶⁰ It is clear that the

owners of the site – first and foremost the Orsini – undertook certain changes during the 19th century, which also modified the ancient ruin. Besides constructing a sumptuous villa and a small church, the Orsini restored the ancient building and had it incorporated into the large surrounding park on the slope towards the Via Appia: Villa Santa Caterina.

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¹⁵⁸ See notes 111-112 and Diosono 2019 for the Bona Dea sanctuaries in S. Gregorio di Sassola and Fregellae.

¹⁵⁹ Cisterns, however, are also numerous and central to the villas in the area; see Aglietti above.

¹⁶⁰ Cf. Manetta in this volume.

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