

## A new late republican-early imperial villa at Campo della Chiesa, Tuscany

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During the summers of 1987 and 1988 an excavation by the University of California, Santa Barbara, under the writer's direction, partially unearthed a large Roman villa of the late republican – early imperial period.<sup>1</sup> The villa is dramatically situated to overlook the magnificent valley of the Albegna river which between Orbetello and Talamone meanders slowly west toward the Tyrrhenian sea. The villa site, about 8 km. south of the mountain town of Scansano in the province of Grosseto, has for generations carried the mistaken identity 'Campo della Chiesa' ('Field of the Church') from several column fragments once strewn about the *campo* but recently removed to a small public garden at Scansano.

As a result of the two initial campaigns (the first restricted to test-trenching) the perimeter including the platform of the villa has been delineated. It measures 45 x 80 m. (fig.1). In the southern quarter of this

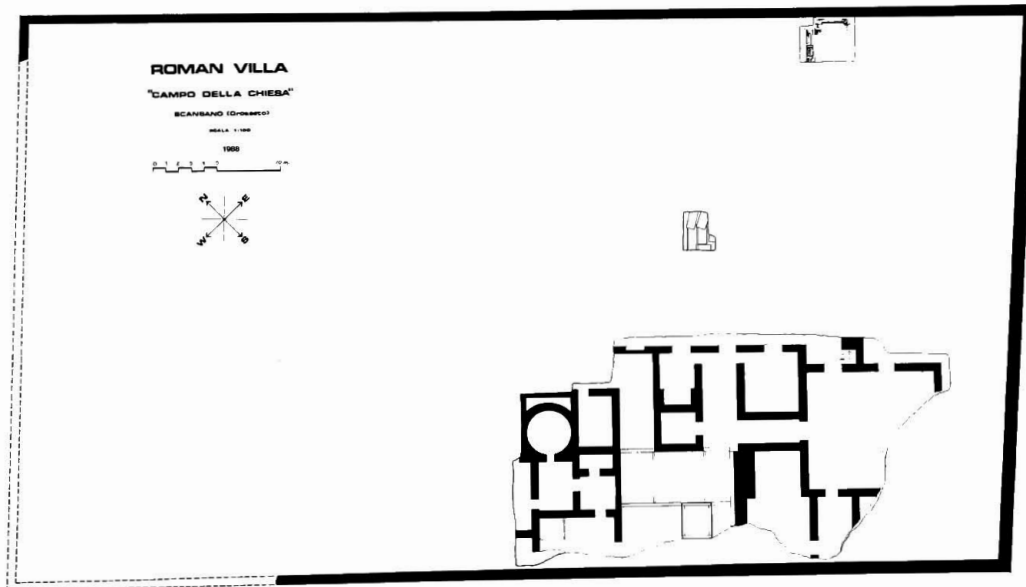


Fig. 1. Plan of the villa

extensive rectangle (fig. 2) a broad vestibule, 13 rooms of varying size, a series of corridors, and a well-planned and sturdily built drainage system have come to light. The south quadrant has disclosed a residential quarter (rooms 1-7) and a service quarter (rooms 8-13) separated by the vestibule and west corridor.

Only tested in 1987 but completely excavated in 1988, the circular room (13, measuring 3.5 m. in diameter, fig. 3) should be identified as a *laconicum* or *sudatorium*, thereby suggesting the presence of a

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