

Second interim report on the excavation of a Roman villa in Tuscany

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Excavations at the extensive and opulent Roman villa of late-republican and early imperial date, first reported in *JRA* 2 (1989),¹ continue to produce important architectural features and small finds. Many more examples of the handsome and distinctive roof tiles with stamp of the Anilius family were found,² and it is now necessary to study the rôle and status of this family from this early period until its reappearance in the forum at Ostia where the name is carved on the pedestal for a lost equestrian statue that honored Marcus Anilius Rusticus for serving as prefect responsible for the importation of grain destined for Rome.

In the summer of 1989 10 rooms were unearthed to add to the 13 excavated in 1988 (see fig.1). They now fall into the following groups: rooms 1-7 (inclusive of rooms 4a-4d), within the residential quarter; and rooms 8-19 within the baths and service quarter. There is now a fourth corridor (north), twice the width of those on the east, south and west, which, unlike them, possesses an earth floor rather than a *cocciopesto* pavement. On the evidence of two small fragments of a mosaic composed of black and white tesserae encountered within the debris in rooms 4c and 4d, it may be conjectured that their source of origin was a relatively large garden suspected at the east corner of the platform of the villa.³ Of the total area of the platform of the villa (c.45 x 80 m.) nearly one-third had been excavated by 1989.

Several notable architectural features were recorded in 1989. A *praefurnium* or furnace (fig. 2, room 16) was discovered directly northwest of the circular *laconicum* or sauna (room 13) excavated in 1988, where it served as the source of heat that passed through a damaged arch of the *laconicum* in order to circulate throughout a hypocaust which is relatively well preserved. Two travertine steps served as access to the furnace and to a convenient space for the storage of fuel. Complete clearance of a relatively large rectangular room (15) southwest of the *praefurnium* (partially revealed in 1988) confirmed the presence of a hypocaust which had some of the lowest terracotta bricks (22 x 22 x 7 cm.) of the *pilae* still *in situ*, or their imprint visible on the well-preserved tile pavement. The *praefurnium* (16) served the hypocaust for both the *laconicum* and the rectangular room 15.

An impressive travertine court (5.5 m. square) was found c.5 m. from the northeast wall and doorways into rooms 5 and 7. It was sloping markedly because of the collapse of a cistern situated beneath its large stone slabs (1.5 x 1 x 0.2 m. thick). At each corner of the court there originally stood a column; the easternmost column base was still in position (fig. 3). The circular imprints for the three missing bases are clear, and two column bases previously removed from the site to a public garden at Scansano match it. Assuming that the order was Tuscan, the upper diameter of the column base (c.70 cm.) suggests that the column stood about 5 m. high.

1 *JRA* 2 (1989) 111-16. See also M. Del Chiaro, "La villa romana di Scansano," *Archeologia* 28 (1989) 3, and "Villa with a view," *Archaeology* magazine (Sept.-Oct. 1989) 56-61. I wish to thank Soprintendente Francesco Nicosia of the Soprintendenza Archeologica per la Toscana, Florence, and Dott.ssa Paola Rendini, Ispettrice for the archaeological zone which incorporates the Comune of Scansano where the villa is located. I also wish to thank Rossano Teglielli, Mayor of Scansano, and members of his staff for their kind cooperation during 1989. I am particularly grateful to Dr. Georges Ricard, President of the California Institute of World Archaeology, for his continuing interest and financial support. I am also grateful to the University of California, Santa Barbara, and to "The Roman Study Group" (Mr. and Mrs. Aaron Basen) of the Long Island Chapter of the A.I.A. for small grants to be used for travel and excavation expenses. My thanks are due to Ann Wellman, who served as staff recorder, and to William Wellman who was responsible for the photographic documentation.

2 See further below pp. 159-62.

3 A garden in this location was suspected during test-trenching in 1987 because of two massive stone 'planting-boxes', each carved from a single block of travertine over 2.5 m. long and 0.65 m. deep, placed at right-angles to one another and adjacent to a pavement of small terracotta bricks set into a herringbone pattern.