

The period 1C bath-building at Fishbourne and the problem of the 'Proto-palace'

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In this paper I will offer a new interpretation of one of the major periods of the site, the so-called 'proto-palace' of period 1C, that disassociates it from king Cogidubnus. Period 1C preceded the period 2 palace of which the remains are well known and open to the public.

The baths of phase 1C

In fig.1 I have highlighted in black the walls actually found in the excavation, to show how much is restored.¹ In the baths on the S side of the courtyard, evidence for hypocausts was found in rooms 11 and 16, where the most extensive, though still limited, exploration of the internal areas of rooms occurred. A cold bath, or, from its dimensions, more properly a *natatio*, was postulated in room 8. Room 14, which had a tile floor set on clay and features built of tile upon it, was originally interpreted as the cold room (Cunliffe 1971a, 64), but, as Cunliffe showed (p.63), there are analogies at the nearby baths at Angmering (fig.2) for many of the elements, based on which, as he suggested (p.64), rooms 10-12 should constitute the main range of the baths. The central room 11 with its hypocaust would have functioned as a *tepidarium*. Room 12 would have been the *frigidarium*, terminating (as at Angmering) in line with the *natatio* and its drain. Herringbone floor bricks found in levels of period 1 may have covered this room. At Wiggonholt, cited as a parallel (pp.44-45), they formed the floor in the cold room. Perhaps a smaller cold bath lay S of room 12, and drains from it and from a cold douche within the *frigidarium* led E to join that from room 8, ultimately flushing a latrine in the S part of room 6 or 7. That would leave room 10 as the *caldarium* and 13, to its S, as a hot bath (*alveus*), as its proportions would indicate. Possibly an apsidal or rectangular projection on the N or W side of room 10 would have held a *labrum*.

If room 13 was the *alveus*, room 14 must have been the furnace, with which the type of flooring and tile-built features found in the small trench dug there would be compatible. Room 13 also occupies the right position for such a room, since separate stoke-holes and flues within it could have supplied heat both to the main range of heated rooms (10-11, 13) and to 16. Room 16 must have been the largest of the heated rooms and, as at Angmering, will have been a *laconicum*. The line of its E wall is not certain, but if, as postulated, a *piscina* lay S of room 12, it must have terminated not far from the line of the N-S wall between rooms 11 and 12. Within room 12, at or near its postulated NE corner, Cunliffe found a setting of tiles forming part of an arc. That may be analogous to features present in domestic hypocausts which excluded part of the sub-floor area from the circulation of heated air. I suggested before that they might mark the position of an entrance into a heated room.² The feature below room 16 was perhaps a quarter-circle in shape, adjoining the postulated cold bath and marking an entrance into room 16 from the *tepidarium* (11).

West of the baths and N of rooms 10-11 was a service courtyard. Rooms 17 and 18 may have been storerooms or perhaps accommodation for slaves. Other such rooms may have extended S of 18. Room 9, between the *natatio* and the postulated cold room 12, may be the undressing-room, or may simply have provided access between the two: the *apodyterium* (B) at Angmering measured 4.7 x 11 m, room 9 at Fishbourne 4.2 x 5.5 m, so the latter is more likely. If so, the *apodyterium* at Fishbourne must have lain somewhere in areas 6-7, or, better, at the S end of room 5 (just 3.3 m wide), otherwise it is difficult to ex-

1 The plan is taken from Cunliffe 1971a, fig.18 facing p.68. I have also made an alteration to his plan to take account of a small excavation in 1983 (D. J. Rudkin "Excavations at the Roman palace, Fishbourne, 1983," *Sussex Archaeological Collections* 123 (1985) 256-59). One must stress that the plan is far from complete and interpretations must remain provisional.

2 E. W. Black "Hypocaust heating in domestic rooms in Roman Britain," *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 4 (1985) 83.