

The First Archaeological Season at Podere Cannicci (Civitella Paganico - GR)

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The aim of this paper is to present the preliminary results of the first archaeological season (May-June 2017) at the archaeological site of Podere Cannicci (Civitella Paganico – GR). The excavations focused on a new small portion of a Roman settlement, previously investigated by the Soprintendenza Archeologia Toscana in the 1990s. The research revealed the existence of other functional spaces belonging to the settlement, which was interpreted as the pars rustica of a villa. Our research brought to light a blacksmith's workshop and some other facilities that were in use between the 3rd c. BC and the years of the Second Civil War (beginning of the 1st c. BC). The paper also offers a reassessment of the archaeological data of the earlier excavation seasons (1989-1990), as well as a preliminary overview of the territory of Civitella Paganico in the Roman period.

Introduction

During the last part of the month of May and the first two weeks of June 2017, the 1st archaeological season at Podere Cannicci took place under the umbrella of the IMPERO (Interconnected Mobility of People and Economies along the River Ombrone) Project. The excavations were carried out by the Department of Archaeology of the University of Sheffield (UK), in collaboration with Michigan State University (USA) and the Soprintendenza Archeologia, Belle Arti e Paesaggio per le Province di Siena, Grosseto e Arezzo.

The excavation area lies within the estate of the Tenuta di Monteverdi, a 15th century fortified farm located on a hilltop some 1.5km SE (fig. 1). The site was partially investigated by the Soprintendenza in 1989-1990, following the installation of a large gas pipeline through the territory of the modern Commune of Civitella Paganico (Grosseto). The results of that research are discussed in the paper below.

The first archaeological season of the IMPERO Project aimed to verify the consistency and preservation of the ancient deposits; moreover, it was necessary to identify other traces of the settlement, apart from those excavated in 1989-1990 and still visible on the ground. Thus, this paper provides an interim report of the 2017 archaeological campaign, an overview on the research project, a preliminary analysis of the settlement network in the area of Podere Cannicci and a reassessment of the previous archaeological data.

The IMPERO Project

In 2017, a new archaeological project was established in the area of southern Tuscany. Started by the University of Sheffield and now continuing under the Department of Classics of the University at Buffalo (SUNY – USA), the IMPERO project (Interconnected Mobility of People and Economies along the River Ombrone)

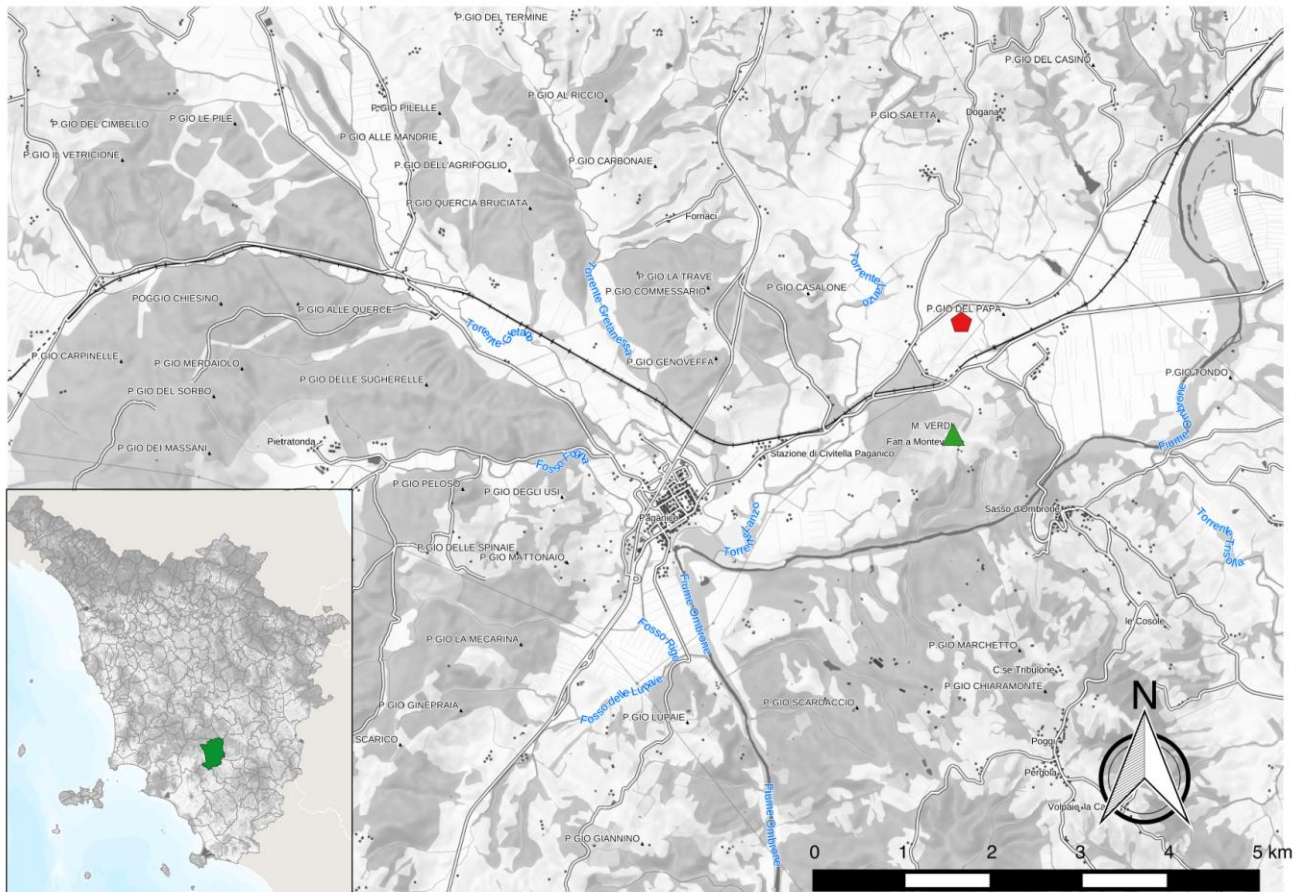


Fig. 1. Map of the territory of Podere Cannicci and Monteverdi, showing the excavation at Podere Cannicci (red pentagon) and the late medieval/Renaissance farm of Monteverdi (green triangle), (map realized through the GEOscopio WMS Service of Regione Toscana, <http://www.regione.toscana.it/-/geoscopio-wms>).

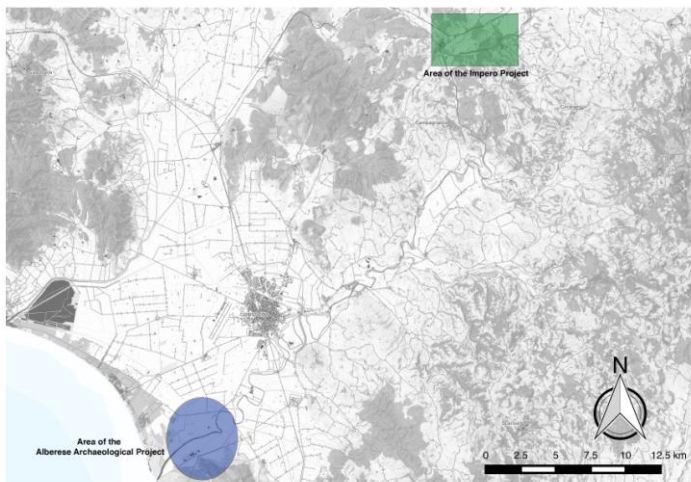


Fig. 2. Map showing the investigation area of the IMPERO Project and that of the Alberese Archaeological Project. The two areas are connected through the flow of the river Ombrone, (map realized through the GEOscopio WMS Service of Regione Toscana, <http://www.regione.toscana.it/-/geoscopio-wms>).

aims to investigate settlement and economical patterns in south Etruria from the Republican period to the Age of Charlemagne (3rd century BC to 9th century AD).

The chosen area of investigation lies in southern Tuscany, in the modern commune of Civitella Paganico (Province of Grosseto). Here, the remains of a large late Etruscan and Republican site are accompanied by the ruins of a small medieval castle. Both the settlements are set along with the valley of the river Ombrone, midway along its course. The selected area of investigation has been chosen because it includes a composite environmental and infrastructural network across the lower and middle valley of the river Ombrone, and a large portion of the Roman *ager Rusellanus*. It also includes the previously investigated region of Alberese along the Tyrrhenian Sea coastline (fig. 2) that has been the focus of a Marie Curie

IE Fellowship (project ALBTUSMED II) at the University of Sheffield¹. In addition, as part of the investigations, the research will aim to understand the relationships between different kinds of settlements (maritime, rural, riverine and urban) and the surrounding landscape. It is worth to note that the territory on the other shore of the river Ombrone has been widely investigated by the Roman Peasant Project², and archaeological excavations are currently carried out by the Universities of Siena and Trento at the nearby Roman villa-*mansio* site of Santa Marta³.

Another task of the project lies in the wider comprehension of economic trade routes and the subsequent distribution of economic land-markers and infrastructures in terms of mobility of goods and people along the course of the river. The latter clearly plays a crucial role in the understanding of the agency of interconnected landscapes, providing the *trait d'union* between the micro-local level of distribution (south Tuscany) and the macro-global market (the Mediterranean). So, the research project will investigate interconnected economic relationships, with a multi-scalar approach, between the wider Mediterranean and south Etruria. One of the foci will be the interpretation of the changes that occurred in the economy from the Republican period to the Early Middle Ages, through the lens of connectivity, mobility and landscape exploitation.

Connectivity within the Mediterranean Sea, its coastlands and hinterlands, as well as mobility of economic agents, has been the focus of major debates over the past decades. The recent establishment of “unity and distinctiveness” of the historical Mediterranean as suggested by Horden and Purcell⁴ has opened new directions in the investigation of the history of the Mediterranean area. This research aims to focus its paradigm around the idea of writing “... a history of the interaction of the Mediterranean environment and the human beings within it...”⁵. The area of investigation selected by the project will allow a reconstruction of the economic and social dynamics in the given timeframe, with attention to Braudel’s idea of a balance between physical environment and human decision-making⁶.

To summarize, the research project seeks to identify evidence of balance between environment and decision-making within a framework of changing economic agencies and social histories. These aspects have traditionally led to a radicalization of the problem and a polarization of the debate: on one hand, the end of the Western Roman Empire marked the dissolution of the interconnected economic system within the Mediterranean, opening the doors to decline, crisis and catastrophe⁷; on the other hand, Peter Brown and subsequent historians⁸, supported a sense of continuity through Antiquity (2nd to 8th century AD). A core challenge of this project is hence to identify a third possible way to understand the changes that occurred in this territory and to establish a resilient model for the interpretation of the data⁹.

A.S.

Geomorphology and settlement networks of the territory around Podere Cannicci. A preliminary assessment (figs. 3-5)

The modern territory of Civitella Paganico is set at the northern borders of the Province of Grosseto and extends for 192.97 km²; it stretches along the middle valley of the river Ombrone and constitutes a pillow area between the Maremma coast and the main hinterland.

The mountain reliefs to the northwest belong to the terminus of the middle Tuscan ridge and were formed during the first phases of the Apennines during the Paleozoic. Soils tend to be acid, sandy and not very deep, covered by woods, pastures and uncultivated lands of the mountains. Further south, the territory between the Fosso Lanzo and the Fosso Gretano becomes hilly with short and steep slopes, and minor flat-bottomed valleys; it is also characterized by quaternary sands, well-drained, mostly calcareous soils. This part of the landscape is dominated by enclosed fields, which are mainly dedicated to cereal crops, fodders and pastures. Agri-

¹ For an overview of the results of the Alberese Archaeological Project, see SEBASTIANI 2016.

² GHISLENI *et al.* 2011; VACCARO *et al.* 2013.

³ CAMPANA *et al.* 2016.

⁴ HORDEN, PURCELL, 2000.

⁵ HARRIS 2006: 5.

⁶ BRAUDEL 1972-1973.

⁷ Mainly WARD PERKINS 2005.

⁸ BROWN 1971; GASPARRI 2006; GOFFART 2006.

⁹ WALKER, SALT 2006.

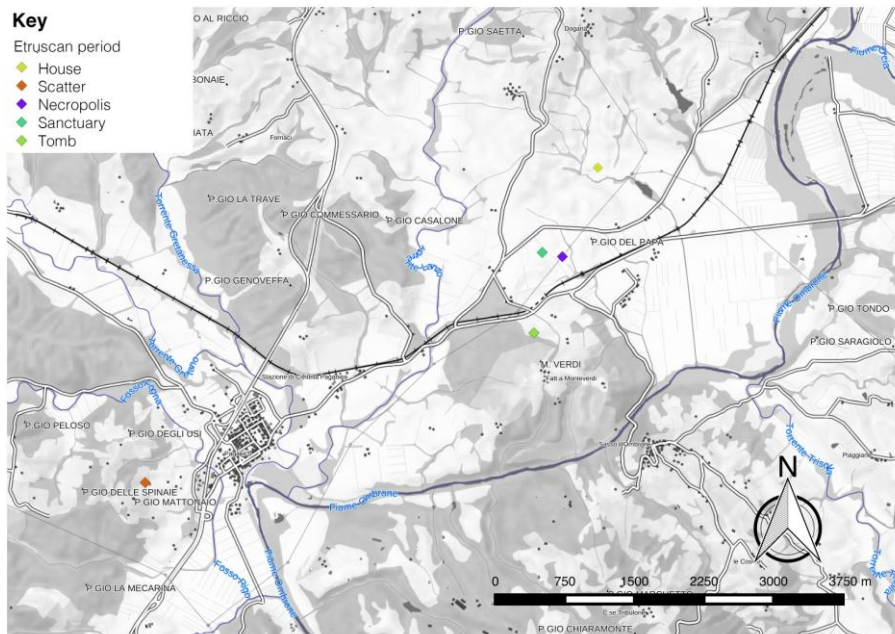
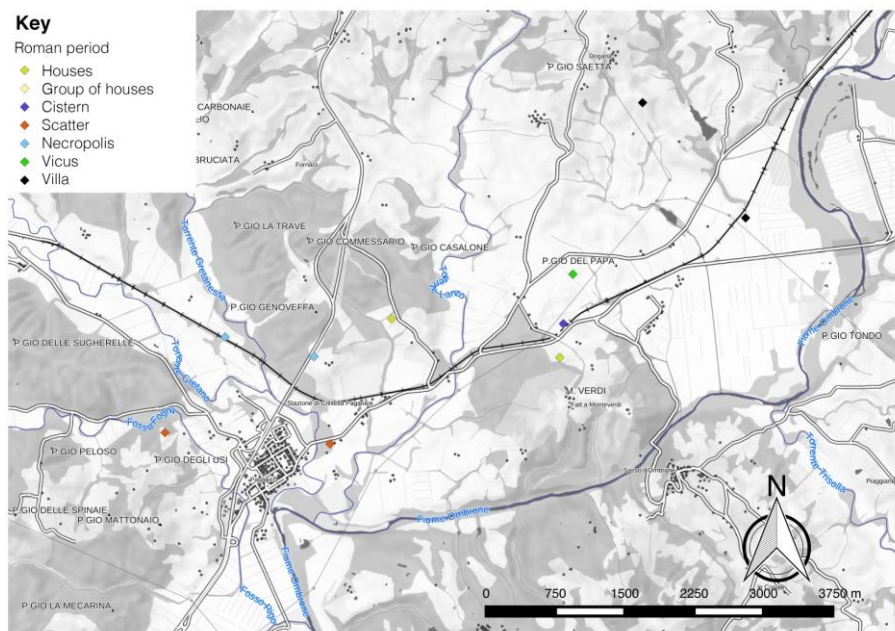


Fig. 3. The territory around Podere Cannicci – Sites of the Etruscan period after MARCOCCI 2015-2016, (map realized through the GEOscopio WMS Service of Regione Toscana, <http://www.regione.toscana.it/-/geoscopio-wms>).

Fig. 4. The territory around Podere Cannicci – Sites of the Roman period after MARCOCCI 2015-2016 (map realized through the GEOscopio WMS Service of Regione Toscana, <http://www.regione.toscana.it/-/geoscopio-wms>).



cultural fields are defined by a complex and dense network of hedges, wooden scrubs and isolated trees (generally oaks)¹⁰.

Geologically, the eastern part of the Commune is characterized by alternations of different neo-Quaternary deposits, with predo-minantly sandy soils and clays. In particular, along with the valley of the river Ombrone, alluvial deposits of the Quaternary are constituted by alternations of sandy, clayish and gravelly soils. Hills are marked by both olive groves and arable lands¹¹.

The settlement network is characterized by several medieval villages, located in strategic positions to control both the flow of traffic on the river Ombrone and the main

overland trade routes between Siena and the lower part of Maremma. Villages like Pari, Casal di Pari are set along the modern ex SS223 or its secondary roads, and on hilltops along the clefts of the Farma river. On the other hand, Civitella Marittima and Paganico are located on strategic positions to control the valleys of the rivers Ombrone and Lanzo¹².

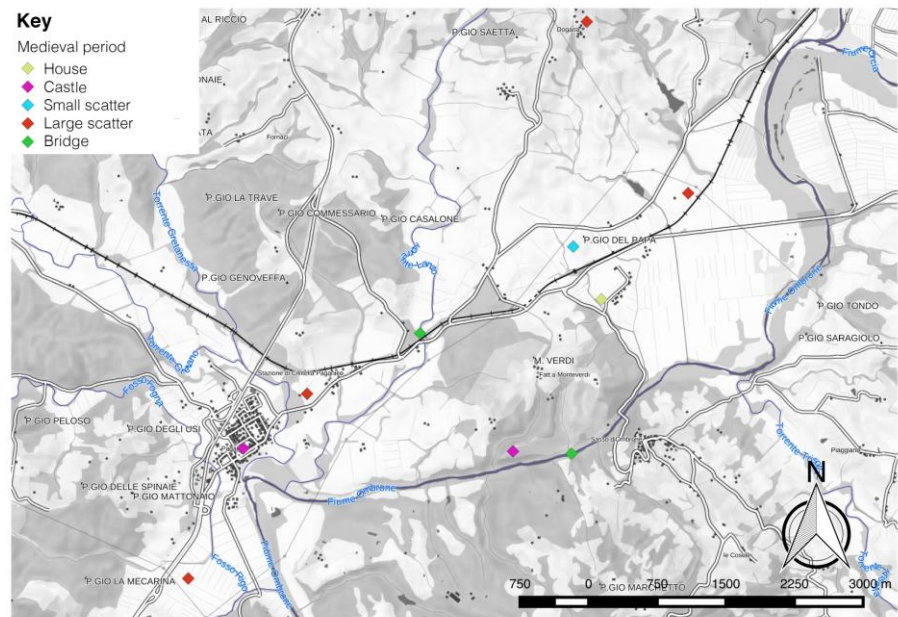
The same applies to the site at Podere Cannicci, located NW of Paganico, along the SP64, some 200m from the Fosso delle Macerine. The surrounding landscape is dominated by the late Medieval-early Renaissance fortified farm of Monteverdi; clearly the farm acted as a strategic place to control and manage the agricultural fields. Podere Cannicci is recorded under the place name of “Podere Nuovo” in the 19th c. historical

¹⁰ PIANO PAESAGGISTICO DELLA REGIONE TOSCANA, AMBITO 18: 50. (accessible at: <http://www.regione.toscana.it/-/piano-di-indirizzo-territoriale-con-valenza-di-piano-paesaggistico>).

¹¹ PIANO PAESAGGISTICO DELLA REGIONE TOSCANA, AMBITO 18: 20-23.

¹² MARCOCCI 2015- 2016: 5-17.

Fig. 5. The territory around Podere Cannicci – Sites of the Medieval period after MARCOCCI 2015-2016 (map realized through the GEOscopio WMS Service of Regione Toscana, <http://www.regione.toscana.it/geoscopio-wms>).



and registry¹³, while in the modern cartography it is located between Poggio del Papa and Serrata dei Tori, a place known also as Presella di Dogana.

Prehistoric sites are known mainly through recent field surveys; these have recorded the presence of some settlements, mainly dedicated to agricultural and pasture activities, in the 3rd and 2nd millennium BC. Their locations are usually along rivers and water streams as well as around fertile soils¹⁴. Between the Bronze and the Iron age, we witness a drop or a complete absence of settlements in the area, possibly linked to the contemporary phenomenon of proto-urbanization of Etruria: much of the previously scattered settlements could have been absorbed by growing, larger sites, intended to become the urban centers of this region¹⁵. In the case of the area of Podere Cannicci and Paganico, we assume that these larger settlements can be identified with Rusellae and Vetulonia, although Volterra could also have played a role in the decline of rural settlements¹⁶.

Between the end of the 4th and the beginning of the 3rd c. BC, the countryside seems to be settled permanently according to the archaeological record. The northern slopes of Monteverdi have yielded archaeological materials belonging to an Etruscan tomb¹⁷ that together with the recovery of a funerary *cippus* at Podernuovo¹⁸ suggests the presence of a necropolis related to a strategic settlement at Monteverdi.

This part of Tuscany was conquered by Rome between 294 BC (fall of Rusellae) and 282 BC (fall of Vetulonia) and a subsequent reorganization of the agrarian landscape can be followed from the early to the mid Republican period. The area at Podere Cannicci seems to have been occupied since the 4th c. BC, with a sacred area connected to fertility cults¹⁹, and an early Republican necropolis²⁰. With the Roman conquest, a residential and manufacturing settlement was built, initially interpreted as a *villa rustica*²¹. The excavations in 2017 may offer a different interpretation of the site (see *infra*) with a possible larger settlement with both agricultural and metal working activities, related to the presence of the nearby sacred area and of a main road system connecting the upper NE part of the *ager Rusellanus* with Mount Amiata²². According to field survey results, between the 3rd and the entire 2nd c. BC, the landscape was dominated by the presence of farms, *villae*, villages and scattered houses, especially along the valley of the river Ombrone, where secondary roads would have also facilitated communications with the coastal area²³.

¹³ The land registry is accessible at the webpage: <http://www502.regione.toscana.it/geoscopio/castore.html>.

¹⁴ MARCOCCI 2015-2016: 351-355.

¹⁵ References for the transformations and settlement networks in Etruria during the final Bronze Age and the early Iron Age are numerous. However, it is worth citing PACCIARELLI 2001, DI GENNARO 2006 and DI GENNARO, GUIDI 2010 among the many.

¹⁶ PIANO PAESAGGISTICO DELLA REGIONE TOSCANA, AMBITO 18: 9-10; MARCOCCI 2015-2016: 355.

¹⁷ MARCOCCI 2015-2016: 139-140.

¹⁸ BARBIERI 2005: 119-136.

¹⁹ FABBRI 2009: 113-120.

²⁰ BARBIERI 2005: 119-136.

²¹ MARCOCCI 2015-2016: 375-378.

²² SEBASTIANI, 2017: 281-290.

²³ BARBIERI 2005: 133; CIAMPOLTRINI 2001: 215; MARCOCCI 2015-2016: 378.



Fig. 6. Overview of the fallen Medieval bridge over the river Ombrone.

The Civil War between Marius and Sulla (1st c. BC) led to the destruction of Rusellae and Vetulonia and apparently the subsequent reprisals affected the site at Podere Cannicci, as a consistent series of burnt and fired deposits, sealing the abandonment of the settlement, seems to prove. Successively, the area at Podere Cannicci appears to have been partially reoccupied as testified by a number of coins dated between the 2nd and the 3rd c. AD²⁴.

At this stage, we have no archaeological evidence for the settlement at Podere Cannicci, or the surrounding territory, between late Antiquity and early medieval times. A medium scatter (140x40m) of medieval materials has been, however, recognized in the proximity of the excavation area²⁵. This has yielded 12th and 13th c. AD fragments of vessels, possibly belonging to an isolated household or farm. Yet the remains of two medieval bridges in this area inform us on the continuity that terrestrial routes preserved during the Middle Ages. One of these bridges is located some 1.6km SE of the Roman settlement at Podere Cannicci and represents the ancient route from Paganico towards Mount Amiata, through passage over the Lanzo creek²⁶. The second bridge is set along the river Ombrone and substantial remains are still visible today (fig. 6). This bridge and its connected roadway may have followed an early medieval route between Chiusi and Giuncarico for trading salt²⁷. The immediate castle at Monteverdi, known as Castellaraccio, which overlooks the fallen medieval bridge over the river Ombrone, is first mentioned in a document of 1140 AD: here Pope Innocent II confirms a third of the castle and the *curtis* of Monteverdi to the Monastery at Giugnano, while the other two-thirds, together with the church of San Giorgio, belong to the Abbadia Ardenghesca²⁸. Between 1294 and 1297, the Commune of Siena bought the already abandoned castle from Ugolino di Rustico's sons and the Bonsignori family. The church of San Giorgio survived until 1409, when it appears among the different churches belonging to the Sienese diocese²⁹.

V.T.

The 1989-1990 excavations

Between 1989 and 1990, during the installation of a gas pipeline, the remains of a Roman building were discovered and subsequently investigated by the Soprintendenza³⁰.

This building is still partially visible in the fields and was composed of a number of different rooms. Firstly, a rectangular space (14.1x3m) that housed at least 8 dolia, still *in situ*. Due to this discovery, the room has been interpreted as a warehouse for agricultural surplus. The storeroom faced a wide courtyard to the north (14x11m), with a *cocciopesto* basin situated on the southwestern corner, possibly related to a nearby wine

²⁴ BARBIERI 2005: 128; MARCOCCI 2015-2016: 380.

²⁵ MARCOCCI 2015-2016: 357-258.

²⁶ MARCOCCI 2015-2016: 104-105.

²⁷ FARINELLI 2009: 53-54.

²⁸ BARBIERI 2005: 119-136.

²⁹ CAMMAROSANO, PASSERI 2006: 239.

³⁰ ADEMBRI 2001; BARBIERI 2005: 128-129; FIRMATI 1992: 27.

press, which unfortunately has not been located³¹. On the eastern side of the courtyard, a narrow and elongated room (11.4 x 2.2m) faced the exterior of the building and had a drain system towards the north. On the northern side of the courtyard were at least two rooms, the eastern one measuring 5.7x4.4m. Finally, the rectangular warehouse faced another three rooms. As only a partial map of the investigated site has been published³², we propose a sketched draft of the building according to the description just given (fig. 7).

The building was constructed with drystone foundations composed of medium size blocks of Alberese limestone and sandstone, leveled with lines of tiles and bricks. Elevations were characterized by clay or mud bricks, some of the latter still *in situ* on the foundations. Barbieri suggests that the roof was made of perishable materials rather than finished with roof tiles³³. During the removal of one of the *dolia*, a small hoard of silver *denarii*, dated to the period of the Civil War, was recovered³⁴; these provide a *terminus post quem* for the destruction and subsequent first abandonment of the building. However, a later occupation seems to have occurred, as a number of 2nd and 3rd c. AD coins have been collected during the rescue excavations³⁵.

Not far away from the main building, an assemblage of votive offerings was collected during the laying of the gas pipeline (see Fabbri, *infra*).

Some 600m SW of the building, on an isolated hill facing the modern road to Mount Amiata, lie the remains of a possible Republican cistern: this is a quadrangular, underground structure constructed with rows of squared blocks of stone. The vault consisted of a thick layer of *cocciopesto*, remains of which can also be seen around in the field. A later entrance, clearly cut through the original *cocciopesto* vault, guaranteed access to the structure. The cistern is some 5x4m, although a precise measurement is not yet possible, due to the fill of rubble still within it. Barbieri suggests that the cistern was part of a larger settlement, located few meters NW of the structure, where traces of wasters seem to suggest the presence of kilns, possibly dedicated to pottery production³⁶.

A.S.

The votive offerings at Podere Cannicci (1989-1990)

In 1989, during the layout of the gas pipeline at Podere Cannicci, a substantial amount of fragmentary archaeological materials was recovered³⁷ on the slopes of a hill some 150m W of the main excavations of the Soprintendenza. Most of the materials consist of clay ex-voto and votive offerings, generally belonging to the

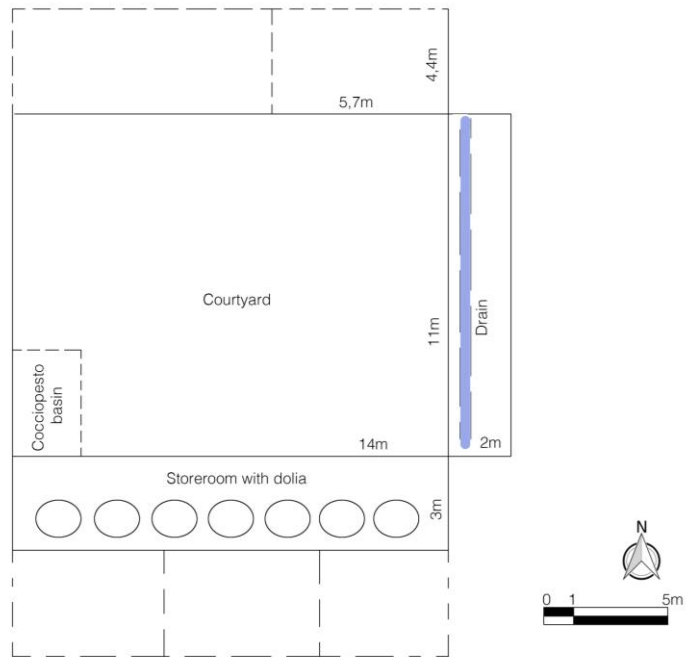


Fig. 7. Sketch plan of the 1989-1990 excavations, according to the description provided in BARBIERI 2005.

³¹ BARBIERI 2005: 128, footnote 21.

³² BARBIERI 2005: 128, fig. 8.

³³ BARBIERI 2005: 128, footnote 21.

³⁴ ADEMBRI 2001.

³⁵ BARBIERI 2005: 128, footnote 23.

³⁶ BARBIERI 2005: 128, footnote 24.

³⁷ Useful information can be found in ADEMBRI 2001: 203-207 and BARBIERI 2005: 128. The results of the analysis of these materials were published in a paper for the International Conference "*Depositi votivi e culti dell'Italia antica dal periodo arcaico a quello tardo-repubblicano*" held in Perugia between June 1 and 4, 2000 (FABBRI 2005).



Fig. 9. Fragment of votive head (FABBRI 2005, Tav. I c).

Fig. 8. Fragment of clay statuette (FABBRI 2005, Tav. I b).

Etruscan-Latium-Campanian typology³⁸: some statuettes, a votive head, two small conical cippi, several representations of uteri, a small breast, a loom weight, a fragment of a leg bent at the knee, a head sketched in profile on a small fragment of tile, a bronze statue of a bovine, together with pottery production in black gloss ware, some of which are of high quality³⁹.

Among the statuettes, one represents the lower part of a figure wearing a chiton with a top edge *apoptygma*, marked by a central fold. Characterized by accurate craftsmanship⁴⁰ (fig. 8), this representation shares close parallels with prototypes of Attic sculpture of the 5th c. BC and with contemporary Greek Sicilian examples, perhaps inspired by Phidias' work, of the beginning of the 4th c. BC. Such parallels suggest a slightly earlier chronology for this type of votive production than previously thought. The Classical clothing and the solemn pose bring it close to representations of deities, and especially with parallels to statuettes of Minerva⁴¹, with whom it is tempting to identify the sample from Cannicci. *Menerva* was worshipped in Etruria in her function of protector of childbirth, of childhood and of the domestic sphere: all these cult aspects are well represented by the votive offerings collected at Cannicci⁴² and, besides, the cult of Minerva was related to the presence of natural resources, such as those in the environs of the excavated area⁴³.

A fragmentary head, preserving only on the lower part of the face (fig. 9), seems to confirm the hypothesis of a rather fine coroplastic production at Cannicci: this appears to be related to Hellenic influences and connected to trade routes of good-quality molds. The head has parallels with south Etruscan examples and pieces from Latium, and can be dated between the end of the 5th-beginning of the 4th or the 3rd and 2nd c. BC⁴⁴.

From the spoil heaps come 18 entire examples and c. 30 fragmentary representations of female reproductive organs. They belong to the "Ovoide liscia" production, one of the oldest known for this kind of material,

³⁸ For a typological definition of these votive offerings: COMELLA 1981: 758-766. For the frequency of their occurrence in Etruria: FABBRI 1994-1995: 577-589 and FABBRI 2004-2005: 132-145.

³⁹ For a comprehensive description of the votive offerings assemblage see FABBRI 2005.

⁴⁰ FABBRI 2005: 307-309, Tav. I b; FABBRI 2009: 113-114, Fig. 1.

⁴¹ For parallels with similar materials from Vulci, *Lavinium*, Lucera and Capua see FABBRI 2005: 307-310 and 314, n. 1.

⁴² The two small *cippi*, the breast and the loom weight seem to confirm the presence of a cult focused more on the sphere of the reproduction, rather than health, as also attested in sanctuary areas like Gravisca and Fontanile di Legnissina. The small *cippi* would have substituted for *ex-votos* depicting male genitalia, which are completely absent in our assemblage.

⁴³ At least two natural springs are present within the area of Podere Cannicci.

⁴⁴ FABBRI 2005: 309, Tav. I c; FABBRI 2009: 114, Fig. 4.

usually dating from the end of the 4th c. BC⁴⁵ (fig. 10). The uteri were produced with both fine and coarse clay and are characterized by an elevated element representing the uterus; this has different shapes, as a beaker or cylindrical, and is located on a vertical, cylindrical or reel shaft; besides, the Podere Cannicci uteri do not exhibit the row of protuberances commonly found on other examples⁴⁶. These and other peculiarities of the votive uteri at Cannicci, together with the lack of any other later typologies for this material, offer a number of hypotheses on the relative chronologies that have been discussed in detail elsewhere⁴⁷. However, the proposed chronology of the votive materials may prove that the offerings were part of an earlier deposit, removed from a nearby cult area located possibly on the hilltop, to provide space for new *ex-votos*.



Fig. 10. Votive uterus from Cannicci, Type Fabbri 1 (FABBRI 2005, Tav. II a).

The votive assemblage at Podere Cannicci definitely provides evidence for the existence of a rural sanctuary area, located along one of the itineraries between the Tyrrhenian coast, Mount Amiata and the settlements of northern Etruria, whose cult was focused on reproduction and feminine fertility and whose worshippers have to be recognized in the rural communities of peasants who lived in the valley of the river Ombrone.

F.F.

The 2017 Archaeological Report

In the autumn of 2016, a simple field survey was carried out to try to identify the possible area for excavations during the coming archaeological season. Following the information provided by the published report⁴⁸, the field survey focused on the area around the remains of the Roman building, previously investigated. Different scattered areas of materials (mainly nails, roof tiles, bricks and pottery) were identified and it was decided to open a trial trench south of the previously investigated building (fig. 11).



Fig. 11. General, multiphase plan of the 2017 excavations.

⁴⁵ COMELLA 1978: 61-62; 93-95. COMELLA 1982: 140-141. FABBRI 2005: 315-316, nrr. 10-30.

⁴⁶ According to morphological variations, the votive uteri recovered at Cannicci have been classified according to six different types FABBRI 2005: 310-312, Tavv. II-III; FABBRI 2005: 315-316, nrr. 10-30; FABBRI 2009: 119, Fig. 6-13. Comparanda with other typologies of votive uteri in FABBRI 2010: 24.

⁴⁷ FABBRI 2005: 310.

⁴⁸ BARBIERI 2005: 128-130.



Fig. 12. Walls 6, 15 and 16 as they appeared soon after the removal of the topsoil, although still partially covered by the abandonment and collapse strata. The picture also shows the remains of some burnt mud bricks and burnt beams recovered during the removal of the collapse.



Fig. 14. The picture shows the three different building techniques of walls 6, 7 and 8 as described in the text.

excavated between the wall and the edge of the excavation area, exposing a brown context (3) rich in fragments of pottery. Further excavations proved the continuation of wall 15 underneath wall 6 (fig. 13).

Meanwhile, excavations in the inner part of the building continued, with the removal of the collapse deposits. This brought to light another context of red clay with mud bricks, hardened by a long exposure to fire. At this moment of the excavation, the walls started to delimit what seemed to be at least two separate rooms with walls 15 and 16 running towards wall 6. This latter wall soon appeared to be a later addition to the newly exposed walls 7 and 8. Altogether, walls 6, 7 and 8 formed a unique construction, but the analysis of the building technique clearly showed different building phases. The latest wall 6 was formed of large flat slabs of stone, bonded together with simple clay covering wall 15. Wall 7 was characterized by medium size blocks of stone, disposed on a single row, while wall 8 was entirely made up of river pebbles (fig. 14).



Fig. 13. Detail of the southern trench, located outside the main complex, showing the continuation of wall 15 below wall 6.

The 2017 excavations were carried out in a quadrangular area (c. 7x6m) towards the SE, trying to maintain the alignments of the still visible walls of the building. The removal of the topsoil (c. 0.5m deep) was conducted with a machine, until the first archaeological deposit appeared. This consisted of a red clay context, from which a series of medium to large sized blocks of stones emerged, clearly belonging to some kind of a structure.

The excavations revealed the existence of at least three walls, forming two possible rooms. Two of these walls (15 and 16) were built perfectly parallel and were oriented NW-SE, following the alignment of some of the walls of the previously investigated building. The third wall (6) ran E-W and was characterized by the presence of three large slabs of stone. However, at this stage, the area was still covered with a number of deposits of collapse and rubble: these were all characterized by the presence of a hard, red clay, the result of dissolved clay superstructure, as well as remains of burnt beams, most likely belonging to roof construction (fig. 12). As the removal of these deposits continued, the southernmost wall (6) started to define the external perimeter of the building. A small trench was then excavated



Fig. 15. Remains of the foundations of a possible pisé wall, found perpendicular to walls 15 and 16.



Fig. 16. The two stratigraphic basins recognized after the removal of the first collapse. Context 13 is characterized by a dark, black soil rich in iron powder and metal finds, while context 12 is a red, burnt deposit of clay, resulting from the collapse of clay elevations.

Once context 2 was completely cleared off, the foundation for a possible pisé wall appeared perpendicular to walls 15 and 16. The state of preservation was quite poor, but an alignment of small stones, securely bonded with lime and clay, was evident (fig. 15) measuring c. 2x0.7m and laid out over another context of rubble.

The removal of further deposits of burnt mud bricks and collapse of the superstructure was fundamental to a better definition of the situation in the main area. Further excavations here revealed the existence of two specific stratigraphic basins: one was located between the western face of wall 15 and the eastern profile of the trench, and the second, in the rest of the western area (fig. 16). Between wall 15 and the eastern edge of the excavation area, a dark, black context (13) proved to be highly rich in iron powder and metal slag. The rest of the area continued to reveal several contexts of burnt clay (12), but at the same time a wall (22) started to appear, running parallel to 15 at a distance of c. 0.8m (fig. 17).



Fig. 17. The picture shows wall 22 as it appeared after the removal of the collapse context 12.

The cleaning of the eastern part of the excavation revealed the presence of a metal-working facility (26, fig. 18) located in the southern corner of Room 1, which is now defined by walls 15 and 7. This installation was made up of reused, broken tiles and roof tiles and measured c. 1.14x0.92m. The possible kiln or furnace would have had a clay vault, which was found collapsed within its interior. The removal of the collapse of the furnace brought to light a number of fragments of cooking ware, a clear sign that the structure was also used for domestic purposes, alternated with working activities. A drain or a possible entrance to the furnace was provided by an upside down roof tile. This small drain/entrance of the furnace terminated in a void located between wall 15 and the newly discovered wall 22.

The excavation of this space exposed the foundations of wall 15 (30), consisting of large, flat stones, similar to those forming wall 7 (fig. 19). At the same time, it appeared clear that wall 22 was constructed with the same technique as wall 30, but was preserved only as the foundation of a wall that did not survive in elevation. Walls 15/30 and 22 formed a relatively large and deep drain that was perfectly aligned with other walls still visible in the previously excavated building. The drain was filled with a number of collapse deposits, again rich



Fig. 18. The remains of the furnace found within Room 1. It is possible to see few fragments of cooking ware still in situ along the drain/entrance of the installation.



Fig. 19. The picture shows the distinctive types of wall and wall foundations at the end of the excavations.

both in burnt mud bricks, carbonized beam debris and sporadic roof tiles. The drain continued over wall 6, a later addition, as noted above, to wall 15/30 and now also covering the terminus of wall 22 (fig. 20).

The situation is a little less precise in what is now Room 2, formed by wall 22, 16 and 7. Here, a structure constructed with fragmentary tiles was identified in the SE corner (fig. 21). The feature is defined by a squared perimeter on three sides, terminating in a semicircle on the fourth. At the center, a flat stone with evident traces of fire was revealed, but due to the limited amount of time available, excavations ceased before further exploration of the feature was possible.

E.V.



Fig. 20. The central drain during the excavations of its fill.



Fig. 21. The installation recognized in Room 2.

Interpretation and preliminary chronology of the archaeological data

The 2017 excavations clearly show the existence of a larger building in the area of Podere Cannicci. The southern part of the complex has revealed the presence of at least three new spaces with different functions. Room 1 was used as a blacksmith's workshop, as clearly shown by the furnace, the high amount of metal slag, metal objects and iron powder contained in the soil. The limited extension of the trench does not allow us to fully comprehend the full extent of this workshop and further excavations are needed to expose the rest of the room. A preliminary analysis of the pottery assemblage seems to confirm that this area was abandoned sometimes between the end of the 2nd and the beginning of the 1st c. BC.

The interpretation of Room 2 is more difficult, but what seems plausible is that the area, again, was used for some kind of activities involving the presence of a small furnace and/or kiln. Once again, the room seems to be abandoned at the end of the 2nd c. BC or at the very beginning of the 1st confirming the chronology of the abandonment of the building excavated in 1989-1990.

In between the two rooms, a large drain has been discovered. Given the absence of any kind of flat and paved basal surface, it is likely that the drain was used for the evacuation of waste rather than for collecting drinkable water. The continuation of the drain towards south and beyond the limit of walls 6, 7 and 8 has been archaeologically verified, however the real extent of the drain remains unknown. The excavations of the fills of the drains confirmed the general chronology for the abandonment of the area, but also provided the latest pottery fragments: a few pieces of *terra sigillata* (generally dated between the late 1st c. BC and the beginning of the 1st c. AD) as well as a fragment of a Goudineau 41 vessel, dated to the end of the 2nd and the beginning of

the 3rd c. AD⁴⁹. While this is limited evidence to support an Imperial reoccupation of the building, it is strengthened by the recovery of a number of coins minted under Trajan and Gordian III, found within the area⁵⁰.

However, traces of a squatters' reoccupation can be recognized in the perishable foundation of pisé wall that was built sometime after the complete filling of the main drain and the partial collapse of the clay wall. Although unclear in its final plan and function, this wall should have created a sort of dividing feature in between still visible walls. Its chronology should be fixed soon after the fire that destroyed the building, i.e. the end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 1st c. BC.

A.S., E.V.

Final remarks

A couple of hypotheses can be offered on the relationship between the previously excavated building and the new spaces discovered in 2017. The first hypothesis, the easiest to formulate, is that there is a single complex, divided into several rooms, some of them functioning as storerooms, others as a blacksmith's workshop, with a courtyard, wine presses (as proposed by the previous research) and other functional spaces.

Nevertheless, it is also possible that the two areas belong to a wider settlement characterized by the presence of different structures that coexisted and were abandoned due to a fire at the end of the 2nd or the beginning of the 1st c. BC. This could be supported by the existence of other archaeological remains within the area at Podere Cannicci (fig. 22). First of all we have to deal with the nearby presence of a rural sanctuary some 200m W of the excavation area (fig. 22, n.1). This is undoubtedly supported by the recovery of the votive offer-

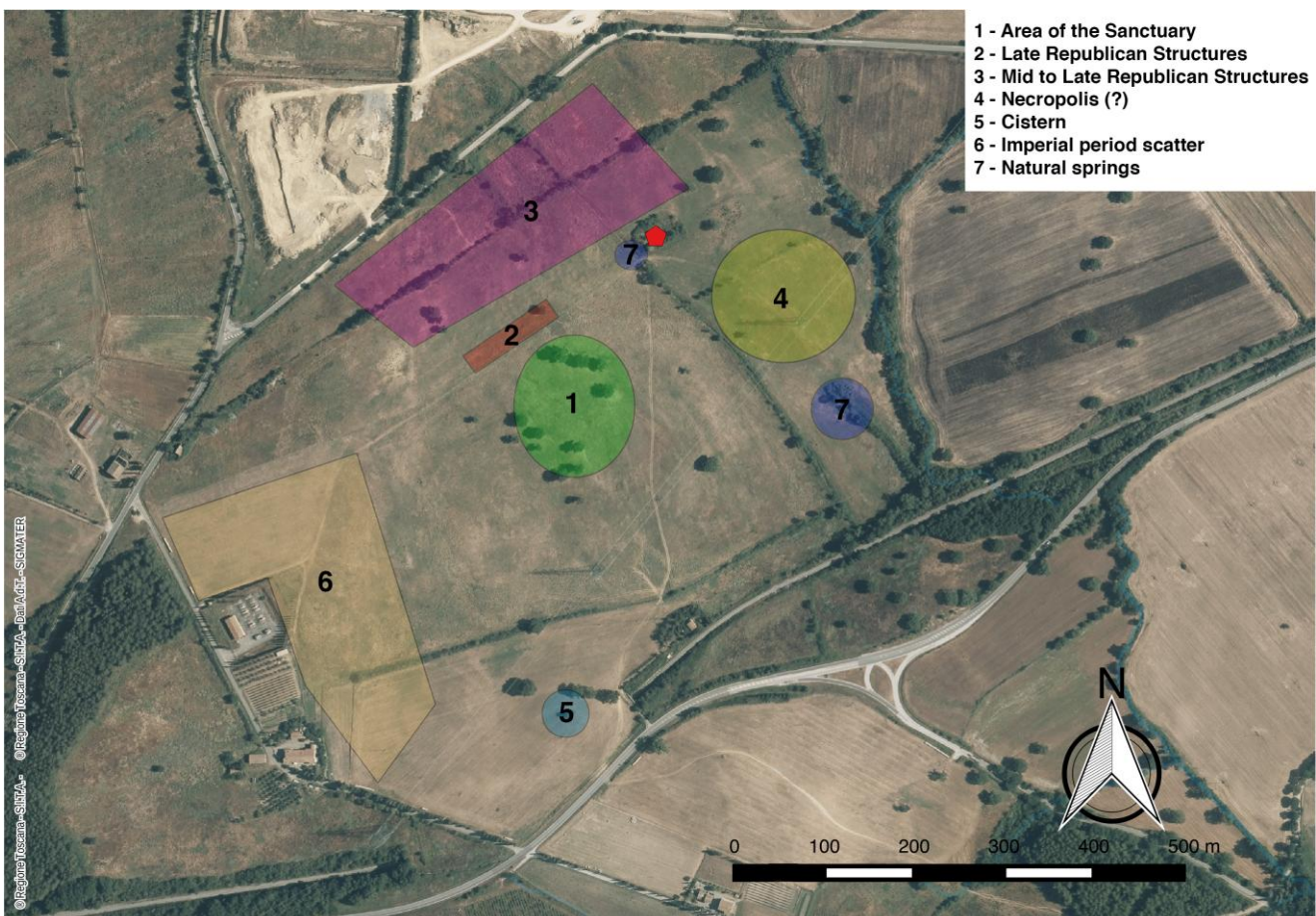


Fig. 22. Aerial, georeferenced photograph of the area at Podere Cannicci (© Regione Toscana – SITA, open access) with the different archaeological features and scatters of material, as described in the text.

⁴⁹ All preliminary data presented briefly here are part of a wider analysis of the recovered material culture, currently under investigation by Massimo Brando.

⁵⁰ BARBIERI 2005: 128, footnote 23.

ings analyzed here by Fabiana Fabbri. At the foot of the hill, in between the sanctuary and the building excavated in 1989-1990, other structures were discovered along the gas pipeline that still await a final publication (fig. 22 n. 2)⁵¹. Apparently, these structures belong to another building, not related to the main one located some 120m E. Field surveys, carried out in 1990 and 1991, have shown the existence of large scatters of mid to late Republican materials in the fields north of the cult area (fig. 22, n. 3), while a late Etruscan and Republican necropolis is known to be possibly located south of the 2017 excavation area⁵² (fig. 22, n. 4). Another interesting piece of the puzzle is represented by the Republican cistern, located some 600m SW of the excavation (fig. 23), that seems to be linked to a pottery production kiln⁵³



Fig. 23. The remains of the Republican cistern as they appear nowadays, with rubble and natural deposits.

(fig. 22, n. 5). A large scatter of materials dated to the early to mid Imperial age has been then recognized in the western part of this part of the study area (fig. 22, n.6). If analyzed under the lens of these different remains, we could assume in a very preliminary manner that the development of the area of Podere Cannicci was initiated by the construction of a rural sanctuary, linked to fertility and reproduction cults, in a micro-territory abundant in fertile soils and natural springs (fig. 22, n. 7). Around the sanctuary, a number of structures were erected supporting its activities, such as the buildings excavated by the Soprintendenza in 1989-1990, the new complex preliminary exposed in 2017, and other satellite structures identified as field survey scatters (among those is the kiln area which could have a reasonable function in connection with the votive offerings and their production).

Future investigations must, then, verify the presence, the precise location and functions of all these structures as well as widen the excavations of the 2017 building. It is for this reason that the 2018-2020 excavation seasons will aim to open a number of trial trenches in the areas of the sanctuary, the necropolis and the cistern. Hopefully, a georadar season will be carried out in order to reveal extensive portions of the settlement at Podere Cannicci and to further guide the research in the next years.

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⁵¹ Personal communication by Massimo Brando, who worked for the Cooperativa Archeologia, in charge of the rescue excavations in 1989-1990.

⁵² BARBIERI 2005: 121-122. The recovery of a late 3rd-2nd c. BC bronze mirror with the depiction of the Dioscuri has been interpreted as evidence for a late Etruscan-Republican necropolis at Poggio del Papa.

⁵³ BARBIERI 2005: 128, footnote 24.

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