

Le trasformazioni del V secolo
L'Italia, i barbari
e l'Occidente romano

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BREPOLS

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The last enclave.

Rural settlement in the 5th Century in Southern Italy:
the case of Apulia

In 468, during his tenure as urban prefect, Sidonius Apollinaris¹, recounted how, in the midst of mass protests provoked by a lack of food-stuffs, the riots were defused thanks to the arrival of five ships laden with grain and honey coming from Brindisi. This is just one of many passages in the late antique texts that reference the agricultural production of *Apulia et Calabria* and of Southern Italy in the 5th century, a century which offers decisive confirmation of the “late antique agrarian system”, according to the effective model advanced by Domenico Vera².

The 5th century was for southern Italy – or for at least some areas within it – not only a period which saw the maintenance of order brought about during the late 3rd and 4th centuries A.D., but also of expansion³. It is sufficient, at the start, to limit ourselves to two examples to which we will return (fig. 1): during the same years in which Rome was humiliated by the long sack of Genseric and imperial power in the West had all but disintegrated, the villa of Faragola⁴ (fig. 2) in the Carapelle Valley realized

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¹ Sidonius Apollinaris, *Epistulae* 1.10.2.

² D. Vera, «I paesaggi rurali del Meridione tardoantico: bilancio consuntivo e preventivo», in *Paesaggi e insediamenti rurali in Italia meridionale fra Tardoantico e Altomedioevo*, Atti del I Seminario sul Tardoantico e l'Altomedioevo in Italia meridionale (Foggia, 12-14 febbraio 2004), ed. G. Volpe, M. Turchiano, Bari, 2005 (*STAIM 1*), p. 23-38.

³ See G. Volpe, *Contadini, pastori e mercanti nell'Apulia tardoantica*, Bari, 1996.

⁴ G. Volpe, G. De Felice, M. Turchiano, «Faragola (Ascoli Satriano). Una residenza

its greatest splendour, while the villa of San Giusto⁵ (fig. 3) in the Celone Valley was giving rise to a rich, monumental paleo-Christian complex.

Certainly, one does not aim to diminish the disruptive importance of events that signalled the end of the empire or to propose again rose-



Fig. 1. Major late antique sites in Northern Apulia region (realized by A.V. Romano).

aristocratica tardoantica e un villaggio altomedievale nella Valle del Carapelle: primi dati», in *Paesaggi e insediamenti rurali*, p. 265-297; *Ibid.*, «La villa tardoantica di Faragola (Ascoli Satriano) in Apulia», in *Villas Tardoantiquas en el Mediterráneo Occidental*, ed. A. Chavarría, J. Arce, G. P. Brogiolo, Madrid, 2006 (*Anejos de Archivo Español de Arqueología*, XXXIX), p. 221-251; G. Volpe, «*Stibadium e convivium* in una villa tardoantica (Faragola – Ascoli Satriano)», in *Studi in onore di Francesco Grelle*, ed. M. Silvestrini, T. Spagnuolo Vigorita, G. Volpe, Bari, 2006, p. 319-349.

⁵ *San Giusto, la villa, le ecclesiae*, ed. G. Volpe, Bari, 1998; G. Volpe, «Architecture and Church Power in Late Antiquity: Canosa and San Giusto (Apulia)», in *Housing in Late Antiquity*, ed. L. Lavan, L. Özgenel, A. Sarantis, Leiden, 2007, (*Late Antique Archaeology*, 3.2), p. 131-168; *Id.*, «L'iniziativa vescovile nella trasformazione dei paesaggi urbani e rurali in Apulia: i casi di Canusium e di San Giusto», in *Ideologia e cultura artistica tra Adriatico e Mediterraneo orientale (IV-X secolo. Il ruolo dell'autorità ecclesiastica alla luce di nuovi scavi e ricerche* (Atti del Convegno Internazionale Bologna-Ravenna, 26-29 Novembre 2007), ed. R. Farioli Campanati, A. Augenti, C. Rizzardi, P. Porta, I. Baldini Lippolis, Bologna, 2009, p. 405-424.



Fig. 2. Late antique villa of Faragola (Ascoli Satriano): aerial view of the site (photo M. Attademo, A.V. Romano).



Fig. 3. San Giusto (Lucera). Aerial view in 1998: the early Christian complex and the late antique villa (photo G. Volpe).

coloured visions of “collapse without a sound”, but rather to characterize certain areas of the peninsula during this period.

Data arising from archaeological research have notably enriched our picture of late antique agrarian organization, even if this picture has not been constructed homogeneously throughout the South. A comprehensive perspective on the state of research is now available in the proceedings of I STAIM (2004), which followed on the heels of other important conferences in Naples and Taranto in 1998⁶. We are now living in time of highly developed studies that have definitively surpassed two historiographical stereotypes, often associated with one another: the obsessive use of the paradigm of backwardness and underdevelopment in the history of the Mezzogiorno and the idea of late antiquity as “the archetype for all decline”⁷. We prefer instead a more “positive” vision, privileging a neutral, and at the same time more complex, paradigm of the transformation. However, this is also not without risk of drifting towards scholarly positions that exaggerate the degree of continuity. This path has found fertile ground in post-processual archaeologies, which are more attentive to both cultural as well as structural phenomena.

To avoid such risks, we should heed A. Giardina’s advice⁸ to not undervalue the relevance of great events and morphological aspects that define the centuries of the Late Antique period, but also move beyond it. This includes returning with innovative approaches to an analysis of economic and social structures, while also valuing the methodologies of landscape archaeology and micro-historical approaches for the analysis of specific areas at the level of regions and subregions. In this sense, I am well aware that attention to the forms of rural settlement, on which I concentrate here for facility of explanation, cannot and should not be disconnected from a comprehensive analysis of economic, social and cultural systems. This is also the path that other archaeologists of Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages propose to follow, such as G.P

⁶ *L'Italia meridionale in età tardoantica*, Atti del XXXVIII Convegno di Studi sulla Magna Grecia (Taranto, 2-6 ottobre 1998), Taranto, 1999; *Modalità insediative e strutture agrarie nell'Italia meridionale in età romana*, Atti del Convegno Internazionale (Napoli 11-13 giugno 1998), ed. E. Lo Cascio, A. Storchi Marino, Bari, 2001; *Paesaggi e insediamenti rurali*.

⁷ A. Momigliano, «La caduta senza rumore di un impero nel 476 d.C.», in *Sesto contributo alla storia degli studi classici e del mondo antico*, I, Roma, 1980, p. 159-179.

⁸ A. Giardina, «Esplosione di Tardoantico», *Studi Storici*, 40, 1 (1999), p. 157-180; Id., «Considerazioni finali», in *L'Italia meridionale in età tardoantica*, p. 609-624.

Brogiolo with his perspectives on the “archaeology of complexity”, that I instead define as the “global archaeology of landscapes”⁹. As is evident, we are not arguing over mere terminological questions but over a way to understand our discipline.

Furthermore, this theme encourages us to reflect on the fundamental problem of the place of research. On the subject of Southern Italy, Giardina asked himself if this should be intended in a “weak” sense or a “strong” sense. While he states that “the formula of the two Italies, that which at first sight would seem to, more than any other, justify the use in a “strong” sense of the concept of the late antique South”¹⁰ we should think of “many Italies”, instead of just “two Italies”. It would be wrong, in fact, to consider the southern region of Italy as something unified and unspecified, an amorphous whole lacking any significant points of articulation. It is only in this dialectic between the valuing of spatial differences and the passing of time, and more general research that it is possible to propose a diverse impression of Southern Italy. For the study of the Late Antique period, this also includes taking up the initiative advanced by the sociologist Franco Cassano, scholar of the contemporary South, to “not think any longer of the South or ‘the Souths’ as a lost and unknown periphery of the empire, places where nothing has yet to happen and where one recreates too late and badly that which has happened first elsewhere”¹¹.

Francesco Grelle has underlined the role of deep institutional transformations but also socio-economic transformations and changes in settlement. These are confirmed by the effect of the actual “administrative earthquake” initiated by the Diocletianic-Constantinian reforms, which lead to the initiation of a new historical periodization¹². On various occa-

⁹ G. P. Brogiolo, «Dall’Archeologia dell’architettura all’Archeologia della complessità», *Pyrenae*, 38, 1 (2007), p. 7-38; G. Volpe, «Per una ‘archeologia globale dei paesaggi’ della Daunia. Tra archeologia, metodologia e politica dei beni culturali», in *Storia e archeologia della Daunia, in ricordo di Marina Mazzei*, Atti delle giornate di studio (Foggia 2005), ed. G. Volpe, M. J. Strazzulla, D. Leone, Bari, 2008, p. 447-462.

¹⁰ A. Giardina, «Considerazioni finali».

¹¹ F. Cassano, *Il pensiero meridiano*, Bari, 1996, p. 5.

¹² F. Grelle, «Ordinamento provinciale e organizzazione locale nell’Italia meridionale», in *L’Italia meridionale in età tardoantica*, p. 115-139; see A. Giardina, «Le due Italie nella forma tarda dell’Impero», in *Società romana e impero tardoantico, I. Istituzioni, ceti, economie*, ed. A. Giardina, Roma-Bari, 1986, p. 1-30; Id., «La formazione dell’Italia provinciale», in *Storia di Roma, 3.1. L’età tardoantica. Crisi e trasformazioni*, ed. A.

sions, one has had a mean to underscore how the events of this region represent “an emblematic case of the morphogenetic force of institutional structures” on economic, social and settlement organization¹³. The transformation of institutional organization favoured, in fact, the creation of a new ordering in the typology of settlements, in particular the phenomenon of promoting a marked hierarchy of urban centres¹⁴, the functional specialization of various urban centres, a significant reworking of the relationship between city and country, and a conditioning of economic activity on the part of the imperial *and* ecclesiastical administration. This, however, left ample opportunity to the unfettered entrepreneurial initiative of the senatorial and local aristocracies.

A decisive moment for the transformation of agrarian landscapes, with the definitive affirmation of the great senatorial and imperial properties based principally on the colonate, is identifiable in the final decades of the 3rd and the beginning of the 4th century, also if in some cases attestations have been verified between the 2nd and 3rd centuries. As D. Vera has underlined, it is necessary “to abandon definitively the myth of late antique state management, and the other myth, which follows on the first, that the requests of the tax system were determined to mould the productive geography”¹⁵. In reality, the tendency is evident to value and praise the productive systems of each territory (grain and wool for *Apulia*, pork for *Lucania et Bruttii*, wine for *Bruttii*), in an area that enjoyed a long period of relative tranquillity and security during the crisis of the 3rd century and also during the following century. One touches on an aspect of extreme importance that clearly distinguishes the southern regions from those of the center-north, which experienced, on the contrary, a destructuring of the economy and rural settlement already by the 2nd and 3rd cen-

Carandini, L. Cracco Ruggini, A. Giardina, Torino, 1993, p. 51-68; G. A. Cecconi, *Governo imperiale e élites dirigenti nell'Italia tardoantica. Problemi di storia politico-amministrativa (270-476 d.C.)*, Como, 1994.

¹³ G. Volpe, *Contadini, pastori*, p. 25-41.

¹⁴ See A. Giardina, «Le due Italie»; F. Grelle, G. Volpe, «La geografia amministrativa ed economica della Puglia tardoantica», in *Culto e insediamenti micaelici nell'Italia meridionale fra tarda antichità e medioevo*, Atti del Convegno Internazionale (Monte Sant'Angelo 1992), ed. C. Carletti, G. Otranto, Bari, 1994, p. 15-81; A. Giardina, «Il quadro istituzionale e sociale», in *Principi, imperatori, vescovi. Duemila anni di storia a Canosa*, ed. R. Cassano, Venezia, 1992, p. 819-820; F. Grelle, «La città tardoantica», *ibidem*, p. 821-823; F. Grelle, «Ordinamento provinciale».

¹⁵ D. Vera, «I paesaggi rurali del Meridione», p. 27.

tures¹⁶. This is an element that, associated with its fortuitous central position in the Mediterranean and its good connections on land and sea, constituted a strongly attractive factor for investment on the part of the rich Roman senatorial aristocracy and also local elites in the 4th and even more strongly in the 5th century, as demonstrated by the dense rural population in various areas of Southern Italy.

While elsewhere in Italy the process of destructuring inexorably rose during the 5th and the 6th century, the Southern Italian provinces were indeed the last enclave of the aristocratic property and the late Roman economic development tied to agriculture, to sheep-rearing, to crafts and trade.

One of the first pieces of data offered by systematic archaeological survey projects concerns the quantitative evolution of rural settlement between the early and middle Imperial period and Late Antiquity. From this evidence it is difficult to distinguish specifically the 5th century from the general period of Late Antiquity, which encompasses also the 4th and the first half of the 6th century.

In the study of the late antique countryside in Italy, the generalized rarefaction of villas, and of rural settlement in general, has been confirmed for this period when compared to the first centuries of the empire. Tamara Lewit has estimated the median levels of abandonment in Italy at 67% already by the second half of the 4th century¹⁷. However, the reduction of sites could be made up for by the expansion of rural structures, part of the general process of the concentration of property¹⁸. Abandonment, then, favoured some villas, which became larger and more luxurious: this fact has been confirmed absolutely.

¹⁶ G. Volpe, «Paesaggi e insediamenti rurali dell'Apulia tardoantica e altomedievale», in *Paesaggi e insediamenti rurali*, p. 299-314; Id., «Villaggi e insediamento sparso in Italia meridionale fra Tardoantico e Altomedioevo: alcune note», in *Dopo la fine delle ville: le campagne dal VI al IX secolo* (11° Seminario sul Tardo Antico e l'Alto Medioevo) (Gavi 8-10 maggio 2004), ed. G. P. Brogiolo, A. Chavarría Arnau, M. Valenti, Mantova, 2005, p. 221-250.

¹⁷ T. Lewit, *Agricultural Production in the Roman Economy A.D. 200-400*, Oxford, 1991 (BAR Int. Series 568), p. 27-28 (= *Villas, Farms and the Late Roman Rural Economy (third to fifth centuries AD)*, Oxford, 2004 (BAR Int. Series 568); Ead., «Vanishing villas': what happened to élite rural habitation in the West in the 5th-6th c?», *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 16 (2003), p. 260-274; Ead., «Bones in the Bathhouse: re-evaluating the notion of 'squatter occupation' in 5th-7th century villas», in *Dopo la fine delle ville*, p. 251-262.

¹⁸ D. Vera, «Dalla *villa perfecta* alla *villa* di Palladio. Sulle trasformazioni del sistema agrario in Italia fra Principato e Dominato», *Athenaeum*, 1-2 (1995), p. 189-211, 331-356;

Statistics have registered the level of abandonment in the various regions of Italy and have demonstrated a marked variability: approximately 50-60% for Southern Etruria¹⁹ and 70% for Calabria²⁰. In Puglia, in the hinterland of Brindisi, a reduction of sites is discernable when compared to the middle empire: approximately 33% between the 4th and 5th century, and 75% between the 5th and 6th²¹. Further examples are offered by the results of the Celone and Ofanto Valley projects, which have recorded a comprehensive increase in the number of sites in the late antique period, when compared to the earlier periods in these valleys, reversing the trend of site decline observed in the early and middle empire²². In addition, the increase in site numbers is accompanied by the growth in the size of settlements and, for the villas, accentuated displays of luxury. In both valleys, there has been recorded a total increase of 50% in the number of sites, that does not concern villas – whose numbers

Id., «*Massa fundorum. Forme della grande proprietà e poteri della città in Italia fra Costantino e Gregorio Magno*», *MEFRA*, III, 2, 1999, p. 991-1025; Id., «Sulla (ri)organizzazione agraria dell'Italia meridionale in età imperiale: origini, forme e funzioni della *massa fundo rum*», in *Modalità insediative*, p. 613-633.

¹⁹ F. Cambi, «Paesaggi tardoantichi dell'Italia peninsulare. *Etruria e Apulia* a confronto», in *Storia di Roma*, 3.2. *L'età tardoantica. I luoghi e le culture*, ed. A. Carandini, L. Cracco Ruggini, A. Giardina, Torino, 1993, p. 234-236; *Paesaggi d'Etruria. Valle dell'Albegna, Valle d'Oro, Valle del Chiarone, Valle del Tafone*, ed. A. Carandini, F. Cambi, Roma, 2002, p. 218-231 (E. Regoli), p. 232-241 (F. Cambi).

²⁰ A.B. Sangineto, «Produzioni e commerci nelle Calabrie tardo romane», in *La Calabre de la fin de l'antiquité au Moyen Age*, Actes de la Table Ronde (Roma 1989), *MEFRM*, 102, 2 (1991), p. 754-755; Id., «Per la ricostruzione del paesaggio agrario delle Calabrie romane», in *Storia della Calabria antica*, 2. *Età italica e romana*, ed. S. Settis, Roma, 1994, p. 584-585; Id., «Trasformazioni o crisi nei *Bruttii* fra il II a.C. ed il VII d.C.?», in *Modalità insediative*, p. 224-244.

²¹ M. Aprosio, *Archeologia dei paesaggi a Brindisi dalla romanizzazione al Medioevo*, Bari, 2005.

²² A. V. Romano, G. Volpe, «Paesaggi e insediamenti rurali nel comprensorio del Celone fra Tardoantico e Alto Medioevo», in *Paesaggi e insediamenti rurali*, p. 241-259; R. Goffredo, G. Volpe, «Il "Progetto Valle dell'Ofanto": primi dati sulla tarda antichità e l'altomedioevo», *ibidem*, p. 223-240; G. Volpe, «Paesaggi e insediamenti rurali», *ibidem*, p. 299-314; A. V. Romano, «La ricognizione nella Valle del Celone: metodi, problemi e prospettive nello studio dei paesaggi fra Tardoantico e Medioevo», in *Medioevo, paesaggi e metodi*, ed. N. Mancassola, F. Saggiaro, Mantova, 2006, p. 199-214; R. Goffredo, G. Volpe, «Fotografia aerea, archeologia globale e paesaggi antichi della Daunia. Esempi dalle valli dell'Ofanto e del Carapelle», in *Archeologia aerea, Archeologia aerea, Studi di aerotopografia archeologica*, II, ed. G. Ceraudo e F. Piccarreta, Roma, 2007, p. 219-246.

remain quite stable when compared to previous centuries – but instead more specifically the numbers of farm sites and *vici*. The significant presence in the late antique landscape of small farms identified with the *coloni*, which all but disappeared in the middle imperial period, represents a significant trend; members of the colonate would have found these types of settlement more congenial than concentrated village settlements. A passage from *Paulinus* of Nola, dating to the early 5th century²³ (405 or January 406 A.D) and describing *agricolae* who travelled from Puglia to the sanctuary of San Felice, makes reference to this type of farmer, evidently a small land holder.

It is possible to believe that this phenomenon would have been limited to two privileged areas, territories with a high settlement density, characterized by marked soil fertility, an efficient road system with easy connections to interregional networks (the *Via Traiana*, but also the coastal *Aecae - Sipontum*), the ports (*Sipontum* and Barletta-Trani), and the important and dynamic *civitates* like *Luceria* and *Aecae*, in the case of the Celone Valley, and *Canusium* and *Venusia* for the Ofanto Valley. An analogous situation has been identified in the Basentello Valley, an inland area far from urban centers and crossed by a major road artery, the *Via Appia*. It should be noted that the importance of this road diminished in late antiquity, with the increased use of the *Via Traiana*. In the Basentello Valley, 60 sites are dated to the late antique period, 38 more than were present in the earlier period. A. Small has rightly hypothesized a link between the increase of settlements in this area and the intensification of cereal production; this area, therefore, would have been central for the supply of grain to Rome and for the Italian market, with goods evidently shipped from the port of *Metapontum*²⁴.

For that which concerns the typology of rural settlement, our knowledge of two fundamental elements – the small farmsteads of the *coloni* and villages – is significantly lacking, and known almost exclusively from archaeological survey data. For this reason, future projects need to make the excavation of small farm structures and villages a priority.

There was a tendency in past scholarship to emphasize the centrality of the *vicus* in late antique settlement organization in Southern Italy²⁵. The

²³ Paulinus Nolanus, *Carmina*, 20.

²⁴ P. Favia, R. Giuliani, A.M. Small, C. Small, «La valle del Basentello e l'insediamento rurale di Vagnari in età tardoantica», in *Paesaggi e insediamenti rurali*, p. 193-222.

²⁵ G. Volpe, *Contadini, pastori*, p. 147-196; see also P. Arthur, «From *vicus* to village: Italian Landscapes, AD 400-1000», in *Landscapes of Change. Rural Evolutions in Late Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages*, ed. N. Christie, Aldershot, Hants, 2004, p. 103-133.

vicus was different from how it has been conceived: one ought not think that there was a re-emergence of village settlement organization, a system thought to have been in crisis and nearly vanishing after the break represented by Romanization. Instead, some *vici*, already settled by the end of the 4th-3rd century B.C., knew uninterrupted continuity for the entirety of the Roman period²⁶. In any case, there is now no doubt that in some areas, like Puglia, that villages were a dominant element in the late antique countryside. An imperial document conserved in the Trinitapoli Table contains a provision which states that the governor ought to canvas the interior of that territory under his jurisdiction *per pagos et vias* as a means to personally control the regularity of the tax collection, in order to mitigate abuses by officials that were detrimental to taxpayers²⁷. In late antique *Apulia*, concentrated settlements, often connected to a road network and functioning as postal stations or ports, constituted the idea type of settlement, as much for *coloni* providing agricultural labor on lands owned by villa-dwelling *padroni*, as for small landowners and also probably for artisans producing terracotta, metal or wood products. Many *vici* also housed a cult building. The success of the village was tied as much to its staunch adherence to the natural features of the area, in particular its hydrology (without falling into geographical determinism), as well as long-standing economic, social and administrative structures, such as “the vigorous process of the concentration of land and the re-elaboration of settlement structures in line with the new organization of property and production”²⁸.

The most significant example is without a doubt represented by the *vicus* of Montedoro (fig. 4), located along the road from *Aecae* to *Luceria*, in an area of the Celone Valley dominated by imperial property. It has been the subject of geophysical analysis and aerial photography; the study of topographic and epigraphic data has identified it with the *Praetorium Lauerianum*²⁹. The *vicus*, which extends for at least eight hectares, is com-

²⁶ L. Capogrossi Colognesi, *Persistenza e innovazione nelle strutture territoriali dell'Italia romana*, Napoli, 2002; M. Tarpin, *Vici e pagi dans l'Occident romain*, Roma, 2002; E. Todisco, «La percezione delle realtà rurali nell'Italia romana: i *vici* e i *pagi*», in *Epigrafia e territorio. Politica e società. Temi di antichità romane*, IV, ed. M. Pani, Bari, 2004, p. 161-184.

²⁷ A. Giardina, F. Grelle, «La Tavola di Trinitapoli: una nuova costituzione di Valentiniano I», *MEFRA*, 95, 1 (1983), p. 249-303.

²⁸ D. Vera, «I paesaggi rurali del Meridione», p. 32; G. Volpe, *Contadini, pastori*, p. 194-196.

²⁹ A. V. Romano, G. Volpe, «Paesaggi e insediamenti rurali nel comprensorio del Celone», p. 244-245.



Fig. 4. Montedoro (Lucera). Aerial view of the vicus (photo A.V. Romano).

prised of buildings of different kinds, an artisanal area, a cemetery and perhaps a cult structure.

The relationship between the village and the site believed to dominate the area – that of San Giusto (fig. 5-6) situated only a few kilometres away – is not in question, once placed in the context of the administrative organization of imperial property and associated with the *saltus Carminianensis*, an extensive imperial property in *Apulia*, which came under the control of the *sacrae largitiones* administration in late antiquity. In this area, in the second half of the 5th century, a diocese was established; by the early 6th century it was controlled by *Probus episcopus Carmeianensis* whose seat is believed to be the monumental paleochristian complex of San Giusto. Survey work has confirmed a noticeable development in population and settlement in the surrounding territory, realized in the same years in which the site of San Giusto was active, along with large, luxurious villas, small farms and villages.

In addition to the *vicus* of Montedoro, two other *vici* (one in the area of Santa Giusta, only 5 kilometers south of San Giusto, the other near Posticchio approximately 3.5 kilometers east of Santa Giusta and 6 kilometers southeast of San Giusto) (fig. 7-8), both endowed with cult structures, and three churches in the area of Borgo Segezia, near Foggia, have

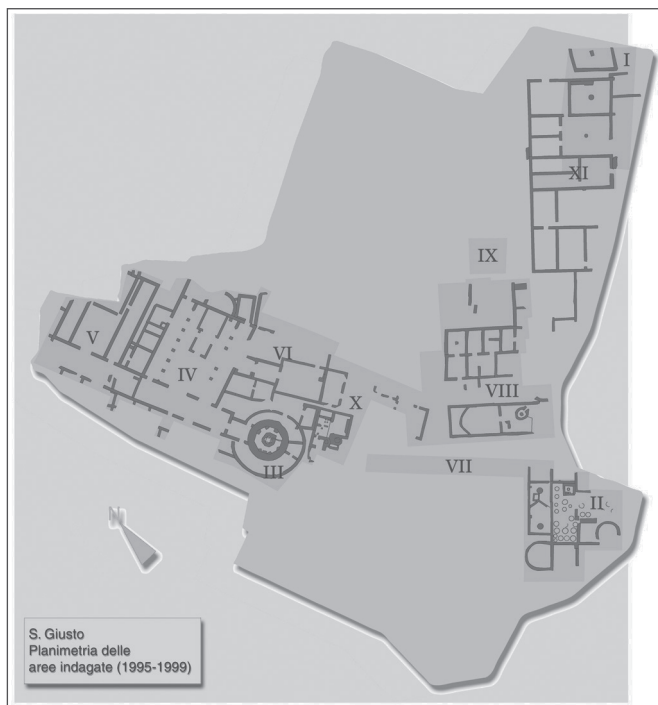


Fig. 5. San Giusto (Lucera). Plan of the rural site (realized by G. De Felice).



Fig. 6. San Giusto (Lucera). Aerial view of the early Christian complex (photo G. Volpe).



Fig. 7. Santa Giusta (Lucera). Aerial view of the vicus and early Christian church (photo A.V. Romano).

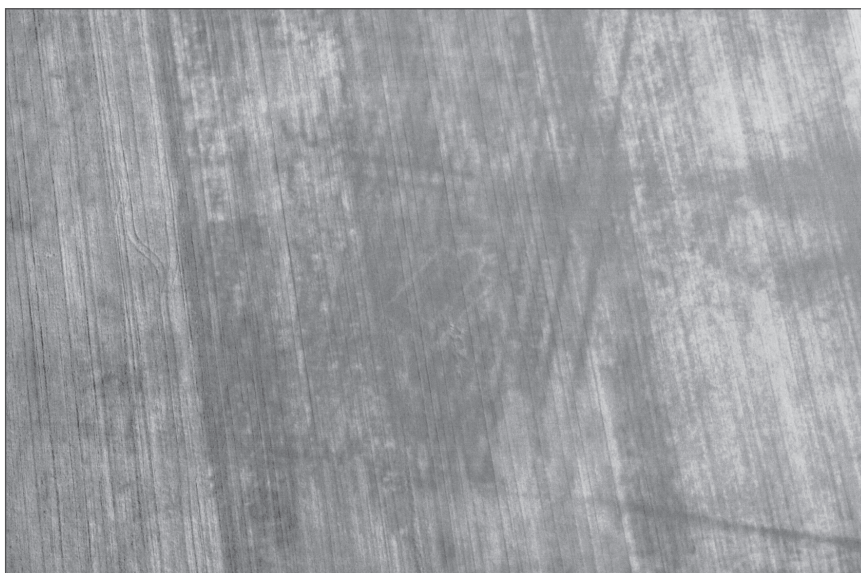


Fig. 8. Posticchio (Troia). Aerial view of the vicus and early Christian church (photo A.V. Romano).

been observed (fig. 9-11). This attests to the pervasiveness of this phenomenon within the same territory and it also points to a significant demographic density that required such a placement of a variety of cult structures utilized for the *cura animarum*³⁰. Although one should be cautious in the assessment of this evidence, one can begin to individuate for the first time an articulated rural diocese, with the site of San Giusto functioning as a bishopric and a few parishes located in nearby villages, with a range of approximately 5-8 kilometers.

Based on a series of archaeological data and other considerations it has been possible to reconstruct the extent of the *saltus Carminianensis* (fig. 12). This brought together a diversity of geomorphological patterns and, as a result, rural landscapes with a different productive and settlement potential. So it was a territory with a large area (384 square km = 152.380 *iugera*)



Fig. 9. Borgo Segezia (Foggia). Aerial view of the early Christian church 1
(photo A. V. Romano).



³⁰ A. V. Romano, G. Volpe, «Paesaggi e insediamenti rurali nel comprensorio del Celone», p. 253-255; G. Volpe, «Aristocratici, imperatori e vescovi nelle città e nelle campagne dell'Apulia tardoantica», in *La tarda antichità tra fonti scritte e archeologiche*, (dpm quaderni.dottorato 7), ed. P. Galetti, Bologna, 2009; Id., «L'iniziativa vescovile».



Fig. 10. Borgo Segezia (Foggia). Aerial view of the early Christian church 2 (photo A.V. Romano).



Fig. 11. Borgo Segezia (Foggia). Aerial view of the early Christian church 3 (photo A.V. Romano).

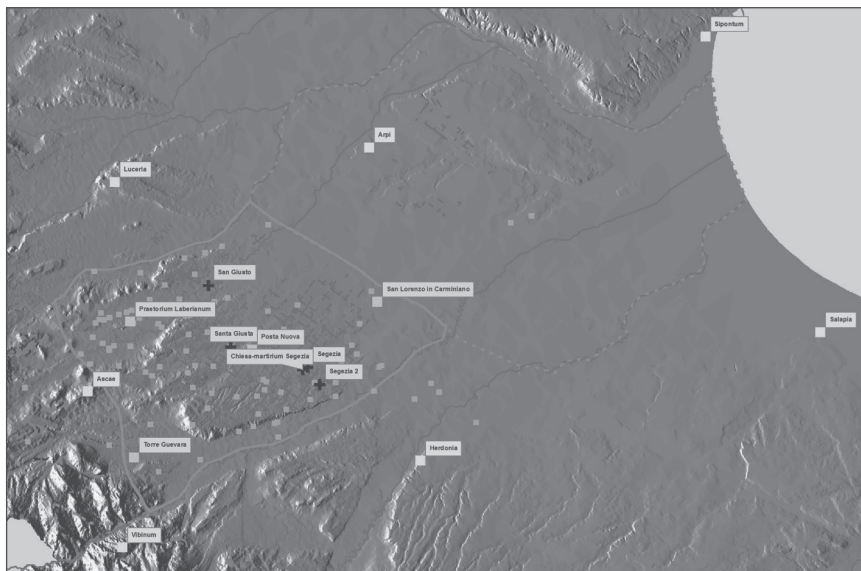


Fig. 12. Hypothetic reconstruction of the Saltus Carminianensis (realized by A.V. Romano).

which could have been even greater if one includes the part of the Tavoliere (1124 square km = 449.600 *iugera*) where probably pastoral land and agricultural fields were located³¹.

The example of San Giusto invites us to explore another fundamental theme for the study of central-southern Italy: that of the rural diocese. While this phenomenon first appeared in a few precocious examples in *Latium*, I believe that it should be dated to the 5th century, and probably in the second half of this century, as confirmed by the presence of various rural bishops in the Roman councils in the late 5th-early 6th century.

The diffusion of rural dioceses, along with the numerous cult structures present in the countryside, provide evidence that, with the exception of certain particular cases, the 4th century offers sparse material traces of the Christianization of cities and even less in rural contexts. In contrast, in the 5th century and more definitively in the 6th, the phenomenon assumed



³¹ See G. Volpe, «Il *saltus Carminianensis*: una grande proprietà imperiale e una diocesi rurale nella *Apulia* tardoantica», in *Saltus, ¿concepto geográfico, administrativo o económico?*, XXVII Curso de Verano (Irun 23-24.7.2008), Universidad del País Vasco, in press.

greater resonance and a marked pervasiveness throughout Italy, by now definitively demonstrated by the presence of bishops³².

There are numerous examples of rural churches known in Southern Italy, but our knowledge is limited and still largely incomplete, especially as regards their relationship to settlements, and in spite of the specific information we do have on singular cases (private churches, baptismal churches, episcopal churches, monasteries, etc.). It is possible to schematize some observations: the diffusion of rural churches concerned, in particular, the 5th and 6th centuries, which comprised the key moment in the Christianization of the countryside; some churches surely did not survive past the 7th century, while for others a life in later centuries has been documented (or can be hypothesized). The topography of cult structures was closely tied not only to the road network but also to the geographical distribution of late antique villas and villages. However, it is not entirely clear whether the church would have been integrated within the property of an active villa, as with San Giusto, or within a structure by that point abandoned and in a state of disuse. In these cases, often a cemetery attests to how the former structure was reused. The churches, while sites of religious activity, were also central places for gathering, for commerce and exchange, for the payment of fees and taxes, and places to receive legal aid³³.

Without going into too much detail, since I have already discussed this topic elsewhere, it is enough to underline how a certain number of *vici* were promoted to the episcopal seats, in spite of the fact that this process was not supported by the ecclesiastical hierarchy (with precise placements in the councils of Serdica, and then Laodicea, Carthage, Constantinople, and Calcedonia)³⁴. This phenomenon concerned, in particular, Southern Italy (*Turenum*-Trani, the *saltus Carminianensis*, *Trapeia*-Tropea, Nicotera, *Cerillae*, *Myria*, and with some doubt, San Vincenzo al Volturno) and cen-

³² G. Volpe, «Il ruolo dei vescovi nei processi di trasformazione del paesaggio urbano e rurale», in *Archeologia e società tra Tardo Antico e Alto Medioevo*, Atti del 12° Seminario sul Tardo Antico e l'Alto Medioevo (Padova 29 settembre-1 ottobre 2005), ed. G. P. Brogiolo, A. Chavarría Arnau, Mantova 2007, p. 85-106; Id., «Vescovi rurali e chiese nelle campagne dell'Apulia e dell'Italia meridionale fra Tardoantico e Altomedioevo», *Hortus Artium Medievalium*, 14 (2008), p. 31-47.

³³ See G. Volpe, «Il ruolo dei vescovi», p. 95-100; G. Cantino Wataghin, V. Fiocchi Nicolai, G. Volpe, «Aspetti della cristianizzazione degli agglomerati secondari» in *La cristianizzazione in Italia fra tardoantico e altomedioevo*, Atti del IX Congresso Nazionale di Archeologia Cristiana (Agrigento, 20-25 novembre 2004), ed. R. M. Carra Bonacasa, E. Vitale, Palermo, 2007, p. 85-134.

tral Italy, while examples from the north are scant. The overwhelming diffusion of rural dioceses in central-southern Italy is probably explained first by the attestation in these areas of the system of *vici*, second by the particular agricultural economic vitality in these places during Late Antiquity, and finally, by the ample presence of imperial property. In fact, one can compare the location of these kinds of episcopal seats in the countryside with the presence of imperial properties³⁵, which were known to have comprised autonomous territorial districts in respect to urban ones and were often transferred into church holdings and at times organized into *massae fundorum*³⁶. Despite some uncertainty about the presence of bishops at certain minor sites, often attested by later sources, their association with the sites of *Ad Baccanas*, *Ad Quintanas/Labicum*, *Trapeia*, *Nicothera*, *saltus Carminianensis*, *Subaugusta*, and *Vicobabentia* is almost assured³⁷. The example of the *saltus Carminianensis* is still significant: the ample imperial property re-entering into the administration of the *res privata*, managed by a *procurator* responsible for all the imperial holdings of *Apulia et Calabria*, merged into the property of the *domus regia* in the Gothic period, when San Giusto – with its character as a residential, productive and paleochristian complex – realized its greatest extent. It does not seem coincidental that, in a letter of Gelasius I³⁸, sent to the bishops *Iustus* and *Probus* (the latter perhaps the bishop of the *saltus Carminianensis*), a *procurator domus regiae* – *Moderatus* – is cited. He was involved in an incident in which the presbytery of a rural *monasterium* on the *fundus Lucianus* was in conflict with two others, who had the support of *Moderatus*. Additionally, the diffuse presence of rural property is well documented by Cassiodorus³⁹ on the subject of *vir clarissimus Thomas*, the *conductor* of the *praedia intra Apuliam Calabriamque provincias* who had accumulated an enormous debt of 10,000 solidi, which was owned to the

³⁴ L. Pietri, «L'organisation d'une société cléricale», in *Histoire du Christianisme*, 2, *Naissance d'une chrétienté*, ed. J.-M. Mayeur, Ch. Pietri, L. Pietri, A. Vauchez, M. Venard, Paris, 1995, p. 557-584.

³⁵ M. De Fino, «Proprietà imperiali e diocesi rurali paleocristiane nell'Italia tardoantica», in *Paesaggi e insediamenti rurali*, p. 695-706.

³⁶ D. Vera, «*Massa fundorum*»; Id., «Sulla (ri)organizzazione agraria».

³⁷ M. De Fino, «Proprietà imperiali e diocesi», p. 699.

³⁸ Gelasius, *Epistolae*, 2: see G. Otranto, *Italia meridionale e Puglia paleocristiane. Saggi storici*, Bari, 1991, p. 208-218; G. Volpe, *Contadini, pastori*, p. 415; Id., «Aspetti della storia di un sito rurale e di un territorio», in *San Giusto*, p. 326-328.

³⁹ Cassiodorus, *Variarum*, 5.5, 5.6, 5.31: see G. Volpe, *Contadini, pastori*, p. 412-414.

royal treasury. One cannot eliminate the possibility that this large property was reclaimed by the Byzantine administration after the Greek-Gothic Wars, or rather that it was already by that time reintegrated as part of church property.

The association between the rural dioceses and imperial property seems to be particularly significant to explain the relevance of this phenomenon, and can not only justify the particular success of rural dioceses in central-southern Italy where the great imperial properties were widely distributed, but also to clarify why the majority of them were also so ephemeral. The fact that a large number, if not all, of the rural dioceses grew up from imperial property – the common denominator linking those dioceses discussed here – could explain why they had such a limited life. Their existence was likely destabilized by the crisis in the imperial system, with the disintegration of its political, administrative and economic roles that these centers had served in the wider territory.

Furthermore, the “promotion” of certain *vici*-dioceses – Trani, Tropea, Nicotera – (with the likely precise “polis-generating” function of the bishop, as G. Otranto has suggested, taking up the hypothesis of Dupré Theseider⁴⁰) is also significant. The success of these *vici*-dioceses, however, creates a starker contrast with the “failure” of those *vici* where the presence of a bishop was not sufficient to guarantee an urban development, nor a continuity beyond the Early Middle Ages. The majority of *vici* that become bishop’s seats in Late Antiquity had a short life.

On the contrary, many are the cases where there was a relevant contrast between the institutional character (even with the continuation of an urban dimension guaranteed by the bishop) and the physical character of certain *civitates* that progressively lost status in the wider hierarchy of urban settlement, at times assuming the role of a roadside village or waystation, to finally be abandoned in the early medieval period. Examples of this trend can be found in *Herdonia*, *Egnathia*, and *Metapontum*; at *Herdonia*, even though it was the seat of a bishop by the end of the 5th century, it experienced an unstoppable process of ruralization during the course of the 5th century. *Egnathia* serves as another example. In a rather early period, around the second half of the 4th century, a village of fisherman and artisans, characterized by shops and warehouses and workspaces

⁴⁰ L. Dupré Theseider, «Problemi della città nell’altomedioevo», in Atti delle VI Settimane del CISAM (Spoleto 1958), Spoleto, 1959, p. 37; G. Otranto, *Italia meridionale*, p. 250.

for artisans, was installed in the forum space, very similar to the transformations hypothesized as well for *Metapontum*⁴¹.

The process of the progressive destructualization and ruralization of certain *civitates* needs further contextualization in a general “levelling process”, a kind of “balance” (according to the paradigm of S. Mazzarino) found between city and country, in which the ruralization of the urban fabric offered as its counterpoint the “urbanization” of the rural fabric, as in the example of San Giusto. In these cases, the oxymoron coined by Cassiodorus relative to the *Scolacium* of the *civitas ruralis* and the *villa urbana* is quite evocative (the expression refers to *Squillax civitatem credis ruralem, villam indicare possis urbanam*)⁴².

G.V.

Beyond the villages and the farms, another peculiar element of late antique rural settlement is represented by the large aristocratic villa, which in Southern Italy had a physical form, period of development and period of decline quite different from other areas of Italy⁴³.

⁴¹ R. Cassano *et al.*, «Ricerche archeologiche nell'area del 'foro' di Egnazia. Scavi 2001-2003: relazione preliminare», in *Epigrafia e territorio, politica e società. Temi di antichità romane*, VII, ed. M. Pani, Bari, 2004, p. 7-98; Ead. *et al.*, «Ricerche archeologiche nella città di Egnazia. Scavi 2004-2006: relazione preliminare», in *Epigrafia e territorio, politica e società. Temi di antichità romane*, VIII, ed. M. Pani, Bari, 2007, p. 7-136; L. Giardino, «*Grumentum* e Metaponto. Due esempi di passaggio dal tardoantico all'altomedioevo in Basilicata», in *La Calabre*, p. 827-858; Ead., «La fascia ionica della Basilicata in età tardoantica. Continuità e trasformazioni», in *L'Italia meridionale in età tardoantica*, p. 343-368.

⁴² Cassiodorus, *Variae* 12.15.5

⁴³ See some recent article with previous references. Regarding Apulia see: G. Volpe, *Pastori, contadini*, p. 197-236; Id. «Paesaggi della Puglia», p. 302-304; Id. «Les campagnes d'une région de l'Italie méridionale à l'époque tardive: l'Apulia», in *Les campagnes de la Gaule à la fin de l'Antiquité*, Actes du Colloque Ager IV (Montpellier 11-14 mars 1998), ed. P. Ouzoulias, C. Pellecier, C. Reynaud, P. Van Ossel, Antibes, p. 331-353; Id. «Paesaggi e insediamenti rurali», p. 300-307; regarding Basilicata: A. M. Small, «La Basilicata nell'età tardo-antica: ricerche archeologiche nella valle del Basentello e a San Giovanni di Ruoti», in *L'Italia meridionale in età tardoantica*, p. 331-342; M. Gualtieri, «Il territorio della Basilicata nord-orientale», *ibidem*, p. 369-390; Id., «La villa di Masseria Ciccotti di Oppido Lucano: Fasi edilizi, architettura, mosaici», in *Felicitas Temporum. Dalla terra alle genti: la Basilicata settentrionale tra archeologia e storia*, ed. A. Russo, H. Di Giuseppe, Lavello, 2008, p. 265-303; H. Di Giuseppe, «La villa romana di San Gilio di Oppido Lucano tra élites urbane e locali», in *Felicitas Temporum*, p. 305-353; Ead. «La villa romana di San Pietro di Tolve. Dalla proprietà

In the 5th century, in fact, there are numerous instances of substantial restructurings, if not new constructions (which elsewhere were quite rare, if we are to exclude particular cases, such as that of Galeata outside Ravenna⁴⁴). Not only does one then confirm the persistent vitality of the southern countryside for all of the 5th century, but one also refutes what Tamara Lewit⁴⁵ has recently proposed regarding Roman villas between the 5th and 6th century (or at least argues against generalization of these processes). She argues that the abandonment or the transformation of the residential quarters and bath buildings were closely tied to the profound “cultural revolution” afoot and were influenced by Christianisation, which would have encouraged the elite to become disinterested in the aesthetic qualities of their urban and rural residences. However, it is clear that we should not generalize the hypothesis of cultural transformation, being ever aware of local variations and different periodizations of this phenomenon (for example, making sure to distinguish clearly the 4th-5th century from the 6th-7th). We must also reaffirm the necessity to contextualize our reconstruction of the processes of transformation, of depopulation and of new forms of occupation for each territory. The example of San Giovanni di Ruoti is emblematic because the 5th century is the height of its development, first with the realization of a large building with a *praetorium*, a residential wing and bath complex of phase 3A, dated between 400 and 460, and then the impressive constructions of phase 3B1, that perhaps were erected following an earthquake, dated between 460 and 540 (fig. 13). In this phase, the size of the productive area was doubled; a new absidal *praetorium*, a dining room and a tower existed alongside various domestic and functional spaces. The first productive activity consisted of pork-rearing. A. Small has emphasized certain “postclassical” characteristics of the villa, among which should be included the development of an upper floor as residential space, the abandonment of the traditional court-

senatoria a quella imperiale», *ibidem*, p. 355-391; regarding Calabria: Gh. Noyé, «I centri del Bruzio dal IV al VI secolo, in *L'Italia meridionale in età tardoantica*, p. 431-470; S. Accardo, *Villae Romanae nell'ager Bruttius. Il paesaggio rurale calabrese durante il dominio romano*, Roma, 2000; B. Sangineto, «Per la ricostruzione del paesaggio agrario, p. 557-593; Id., «Trasformazioni o crisi nei Bruttii fra il II a.C. ed il VII d.C.?», in *Modalità insediative*, p. 203-246.

⁴⁴ *Nuove ricerche e scavi nell'area della villa di Teoderico a Galeata*, Atti della giornata di studi (Ravenna 26.3.2002), ed. S. De Maria, Bologna, 2004 (*Studi e Scavi* 7).

⁴⁵ T. Lewit, «Vanishing villas», p. 260-274; Ead., *Villas, Farms*; Ead., «Bones in the Bathhouse», p. 251-262.

yard and peristyle, and the disappearance of the *triclinium* as the principle room for presentation. To explain such transformations, Small has advanced the hypothesis – even if prudently – that the owner was a barbarian⁴⁶.

Recently, Small⁴⁷ has also proposed revising the chronology for the final phase of San Giovanni di Ruoti that would post-date significantly the end of the complex, based off of figures gleaned from C-14 analysis. He suggests extending the phase of occupation until approximately the mid-7th century. However, it should not be understated that this data comes from more transient forms of settlement (hearths, huts, etc.), which at San Giovanni, like at many other villas, would have characterized the final phases of the site.

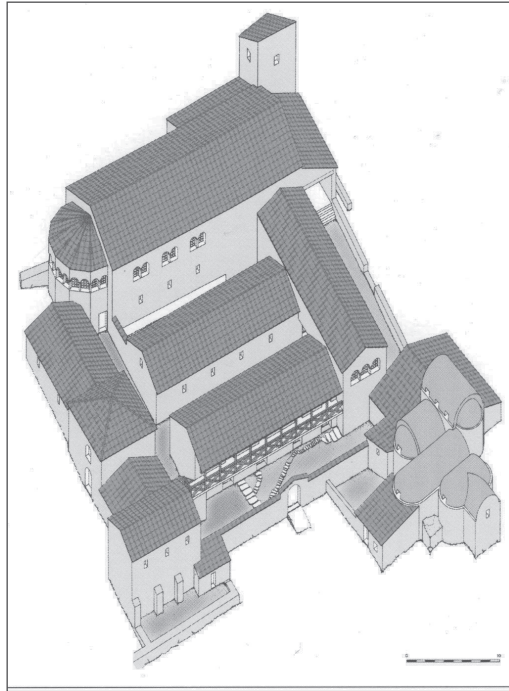


Fig. 13. Reconstruction of the villa of San Giovanni di Ruoti during the 3B phase.

⁴⁶ A. M. Small, R. J. Buck, *The excavations of san Giovanni di Ruoti, Volume I. The villas and their environment*, Toronto, Buffalo, London, 1994.

⁴⁷ A. M. Small, «Le analisi al radiocarbonio e la fine della villa di S. Giovanni di

In Locris, the villa of Quote di San Francesco displays certain structural similarities. Unfortunately, only a small fraction of this villa has been brought to light; this includes the bath and two apsidal rooms, which are dated to the 5th century⁴⁸.

Nonetheless, it is certainly the villa of Faragola in the Carapelle Valley in *Apulia* that represents the most significant case of a 5th century villa (fig. 14). It also offers the opportunity to deepen our understanding of

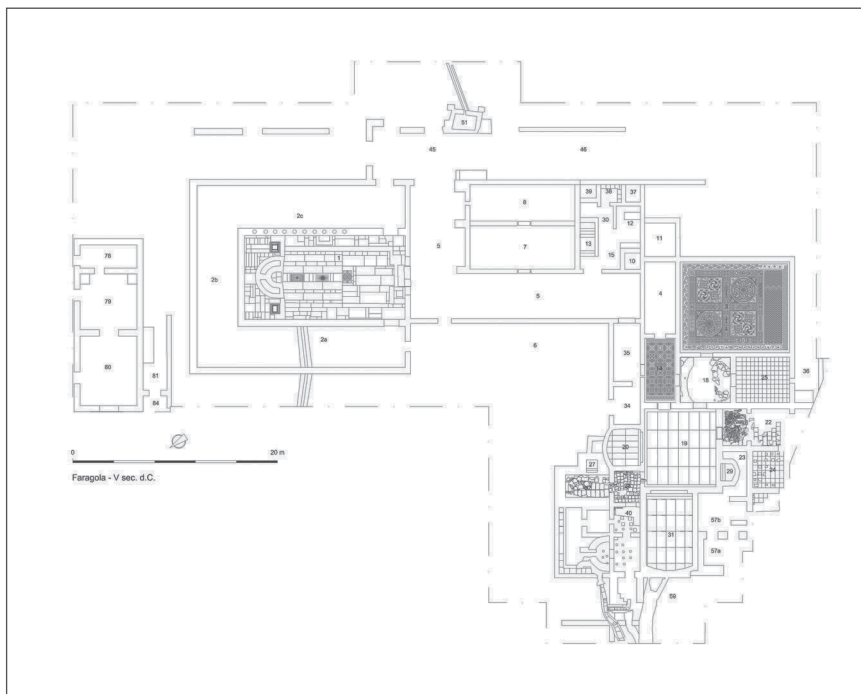


Fig. 14. Faragola (Ascoli Satriano): plan of the villa in the 5th century A.D. (elaborated by A. Fratta).

Ruoti», in *Paesaggi e insediamenti rurali*, p. 127-131. Id., «La villa romana di San Giovanni di Ruoti», in *Felicitas Temporum. Dalla terra alle genti: la Basilicata settentrionale tra archeologia e storia*, ed. A. Russo, H. Di Giuseppe, Lavello, 2008, p. 425-469.
⁴⁸ L. Avetta, M. Marcelli, L. Sasso D'Elia, «Quote S. Francesco», in *La Calabre*, p. 559-610; S. Accardo, *Villae Romanae*.

aristocratic property holdings, known in *Apulia* from numerous attestations, most notably the literature related to some of the principle aristocratic families of the empire, such as the *Nicomachi*, with their almost certain origins in Canosa, the *Symmachi*, the *Aradii* and the *Valerii*. The villas has, at this point, only been partially excavated⁴⁹. Magnetometry conducted in the surrounding area demonstrates that the complex extends over an enormous area. The villa, furthermore, also seems to have had a service area connected to it, which is nearly 1,500 meters far from the site in the area known with the placename Sedia di Orlando, along the bank of the Carapelle River (fig. 15-16). Here, survey work and geophysical prospection have brought to light productive spaces: a porticoed structure with three wings opened onto the Carapelle River, with a series of canals, and with kilns and a warehouse with *dolia*. In this case, we could be dealing with a productive settlement, equipped with areas for the storage of goods, a modest river harbor and a water mill; potentially a settlement which served the needs of Faragola and of other residences located a short distance away in the Carapelle Valley⁵⁰. These are hypotheses that can only be confirmed by excavation and soil coring, which would verify the possibility of at least the seasonal navigability of this tract of the river.

So far, two bath complexes at the villa of Faragola have been investigated: the larger has numerous cold, warm and hot rooms, tubs and a pool, floors with valuable mosaics and marble revetments. In addition, there have also been uncovered different service rooms and warehouses, and most notably, a luxurious summer *cenatio* (fig. 17-18) which no doubt constituted one of the central places of the villa, both architecturally and functionally. The dining room was connected to the baths via a corridor, which seems to have effectively delineated an official path: this fact is not very surprising since the importance of bathing structures and dining rooms in rural residences is already well-attested in the Late Antique period. This is a result of the importance attributed by the aristocracy to the care of their bodies and also to enjoying the pleasures of the banquet, and in general to the spaces and practices of sociability and conviviality, in places far from Rome but central to the management of the *dominus'* property⁵¹.



⁴⁹ G. Volpe, G. De Felice, M. Turchiano, «*Musiva e sectilia* in una lussuosa residenza rurale dell'*Apulia* tardoantica: la villa di Faragola (Ascoli Satriano)», *Musiva & Sectilia*, I (2004), p. 127-158; *Ibid.*, «Faragola (Ascoli Satriano). Una residenza aristocratica»; *Ibid.*, «La villa tardoantica di Faragola (Ascoli Satriano) in *Apulia*»; G. Volpe, M. Turchiano, G. Baldassarre, A. Buglione, A. De Stefano, G. De Venuto, R. Goffredo, M. Pierno, M.G. Sibilano, «La villa di Faragola (Ascoli Satriano) alla luce

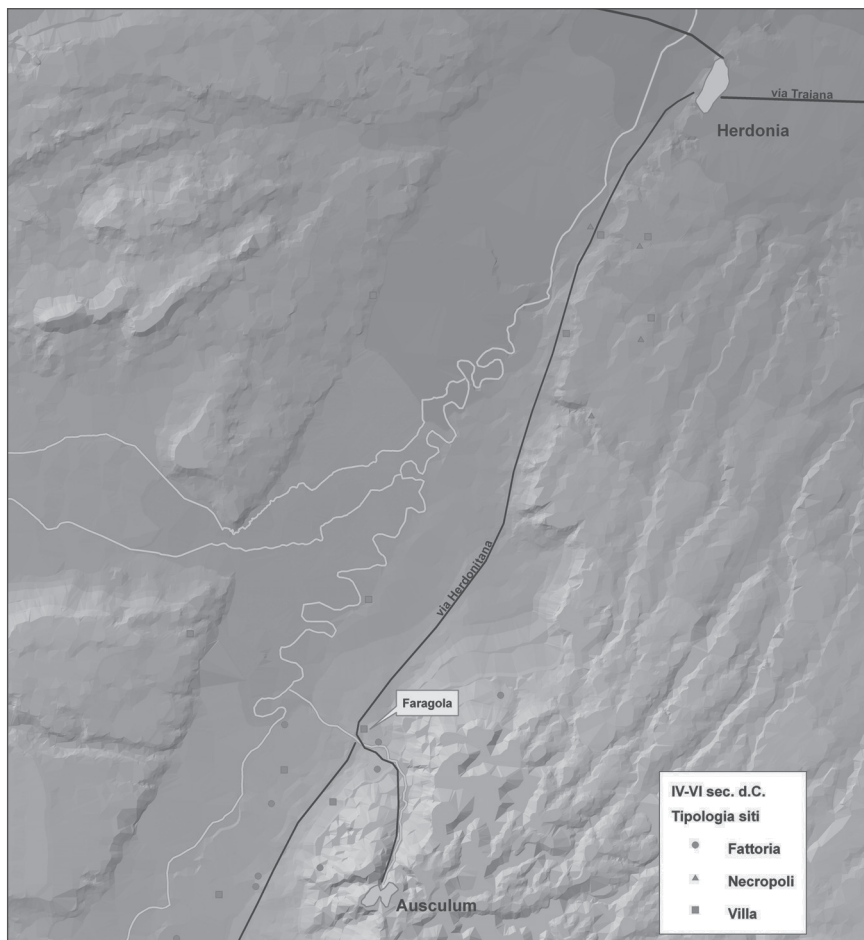


Fig. 15. Map of the late roman sites in the Carapelle Valley (realized by R. Goffredo).

delle recenti indagini archeologiche», in *Atti del 28° Convegno sulla Preistoria – Protostoria e Storia della Daunia* (San Severo 2007), ed. A. Gravina, San Severo, 2008, p. 405-454.

⁵⁰ R. Goffredo, «Archeologia delle tracce nella valle del Carapelle (Puglia settentrionale): metodologie di ricerca integrate per lo studio dei paesaggi di età romana e tardoantica», in *Archeologia aerea*, 4, in press.

⁵¹ J. Rossiter, «*Convivium* and *Villa* in Late Antiquity», in *Dining in a Classical Context*, ed. J. W. Slater, Ann Arbor, 1991, p. 199-214; K. M. D. Dunbabin, *The Roman Banquet, Images of Conviviality*, Cambridge, 2003; S. Ellis, «Late-antique dining: architecture, furnishings and behaviour», in *Domestic Space in the Roman World: Pompeii and Beyond*, ed. R. Laurence, A. Wallace-Hadrill, Portsmouth, 1997, p. 41-51.

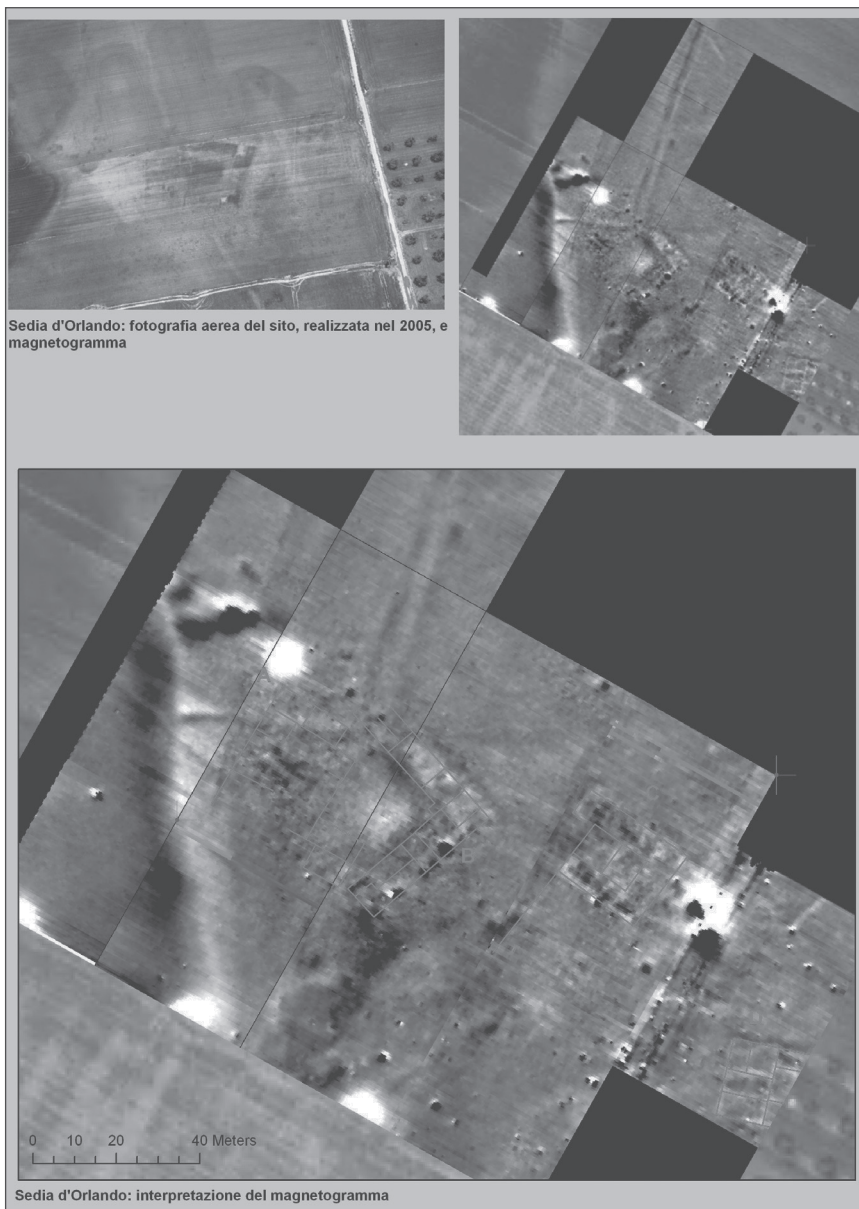


Fig. 16. Sedia d'Orlando (Ascoli Satriano). Aerial view and grey-tone magnetogram of the late antique site near the Carapelle River (photo R. Goffredo; magnetogram H. Becker).





Fig. 17. Faragola (Ascoli Satriano): view of the cenatio (photo G. Volpe).

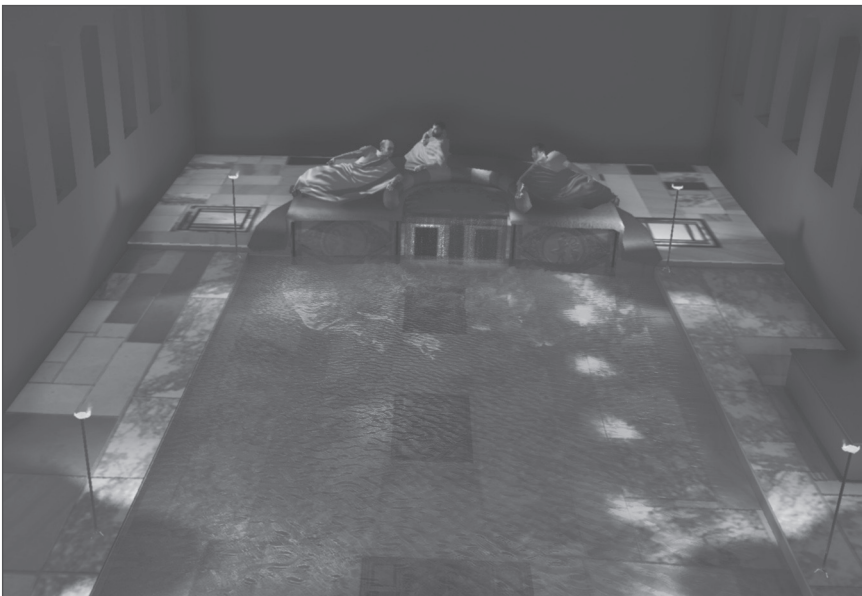


Fig. 18. Faragola (Ascoli Satriano): 3D reconstruction of the cenatio (realized by LAD-Laboratory of Digital Archaeology, Univ. Foggia).

The diffusion of this form of spatial organization in the villas of Southern Italy is confirmed by the recent discovery of a villa, at Maiorano di Viggiano in nearby Basilicata, in the territory of ancient *Grumentum*, located at 800 meters above sea level in the Val d'Agri. In this villa, some bath and residential rooms were explored, revealing valuable mosaic and marble pavements. An apsidal room was discovered, which can be identified as a summer *cenatio* destined to house a *stibadium*, also connected with the bath structure. This villa at Viggiano has been dated to the 4th-early 5th century⁵².

The plan of Faragola presents certain anomalies when compared to classical villa plans. Much like at San Giovanni and Quote San Francesco, the villa is characterized by the existence of a second floor, which indicates the vertical development of this rural complex, and of towers, which also point to elements of fortification⁵³.

But it is, above all, the dining room, with its rare *stibadium*⁵⁴ that offers the clearest indication of the architectural project set in place by the *dominus'* building program (fig. 19-20). This *stibadium* was constructed with masonry capable of supporting a tub and a solid white marble table, particular for the circular niches used to support the individual plates of diners, and with marble floors beautified further by three decorative panels in both marble and glass *opus sectile*. The *dominus* was surely a cultured person, besides the fact that he was endowed with conspicuous financial resources, fully and perfectly integrated into the style of life and the typical displays of late antique elite culture, to which he belonged.

The first phase of the *cenatio* had a mosaic pavement, datable to the early 5th century⁵⁵, and similar to that of the baths, while the impressive restruc-

⁵² A. Russo, «I mosaici della villa tardo-antica di località Maiorano di Viggiano (Potenza). Rapporto preliminare», in Atti del X Colloquio dell'Associazione Italiana per lo Studio e la Conservazione del Mosaico (AISCOM) (Lecce 18-21 febbraio 2004), Tivoli, 2005, p. 241-256.

⁵³ C. Sfameni, «Le *villae-praetoria*: i casi di San Giovanni di Ruoti e di Quote San Francesco», in *Paesaggi e insediamenti rurali*, p. 609-622.

⁵⁴ G. Volpe, «*Stibadium e convivium*»; E. Morvillez, «Sur les installations de lits de repas en sigma dans l'architecture du Haut et du Bas-Empire», *Pallas*, 44 (1996), p. 119-138; N. Duval, «Le lit semi-circulaire de repas: une invention d'Hélagabale? (Hel. 25, 1.2-3)», in *Historiae Augustae Colloquium Bonnense*, Atti dei Convegni sulla *Historia Augusta*, V (Bonn 1994), ed. G. Bonamente, K. Rosen, Bari, 1997, p. 129-152.

⁵⁵ G. Volpe, G. De Felice, M. Turchiano, «I rivestimenti marmorei, i mosaici e i pannelli in *opus sectile* vitreo della villa tardoantica di Faragola (Ascoli Satriano Foggia)»,



Fig. 19. Faragola (Ascoli Satriano): the stibadium (high view) (photo G. Volpe).

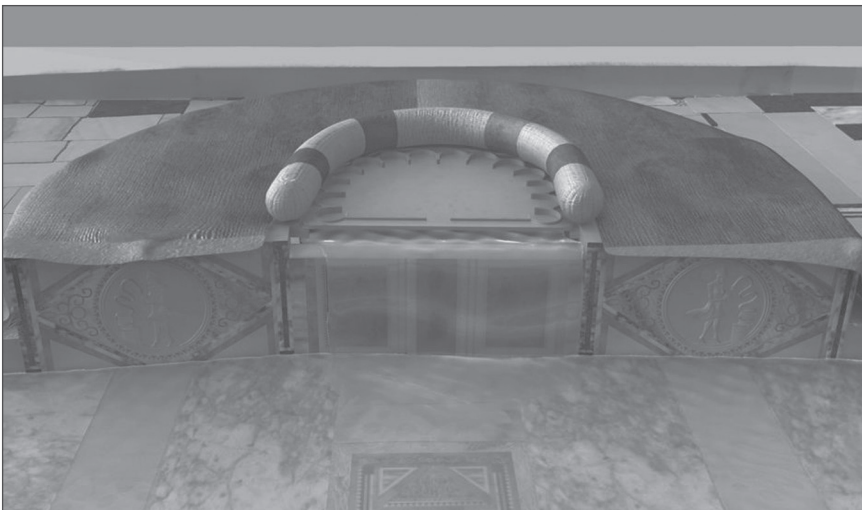


Fig. 20. Faragola (Ascoli Satriano): 3D reconstruction of the stibadium (realized by LAD-Laboratory of Digital Archaeology, Univ. Foggia).

in *Atti del X Colloquio dell'Associazione Italiana per lo Studio e la Conservazione del Mosaico (AISCOM)* (Lecce 18-21 febbraio 2004), Tivoli, 2005, p. 61-78; G. De Felice, A. De Stefano, M. Pierno, G. Volpe, «I mosaici e i rivestimenti marmorei della villa di Faragola (Ascoli Satriano, FG)», in *Atti del XIII Colloquio dell'AISCOM* (Canosa di Puglia, 21-24 febbraio 2007), ed. C. Angelelli, F. Rinaldi, Tivoli, 2008, p. 41-57.

turing is datable to approximately the mid 5th century, so demonstrating that indeed the 5th century comprised the period of its greatest splendor.

Related to this point are the results of recent analyses conducted on the glass and marble *opus sectile* panels⁵⁶ (fig. 21). Entering into the debate among scholars over the origin of these panels – whether they were “prefabricated” in Egypt and imported into Italy – we have advanced the hypothesis, based on archaeometric analyses and comparison with other published data, of an importation of semi-worked panels from the Syro-Palestinian area (with the use of sand from the banks of the Belus River). Once imported, these panels were possibly installed by a secondary workshop that was versed in production from imported raw glass material and in the prefabrication of panels. Hypotheses on this production are based on multiple types of data: 1.) the discovery of other fragments of *sectilia* in different rooms of the residential quarters, probably belonging to wall decoration 2.) the kind of materials used and the decorative schemes adopted in the *opus sectile* panels – both those found in front of the *stibadium* and in other glass wall revetments preserved – make it difficult to prove an entirely prefabricated decorative scheme. It is also difficult to overcome the problems that could arise between the planning phases and the actual construction 3.) the compositional homogeneity between the *sectilia* and the glass mosaic *tesserae* would imply a mass importation of these objects 4.) above all the presence, in some of the panels, of decorative elements (thread from thorns and spindles from tripetal flowers) realized using coral flakes of an hypothesized regional provenance. A short distance away, in the Gargano and the Murge plains, there are ample beds of this rocktype that archaeological and archaeometrical studies usually attribute to Turkey. These stones are also amply documented in the floor revetment of the baths and the *cenatio*⁵⁷.

⁵⁶ M. Turchiano, «I pannelli in *opus sectile* di Faragola (Ascoli Satriano, Foggia) tra archeologia e archeometria», in Atti del XIII Colloquio dell’AISCOM (Canosa di Puglia, 21-24 febbraio 2007), ed. C. Angelelli, F. Rinaldi, Tivoli, 2008, p. 59-70; A. Santagostino Barbone, E. Gliozzo, F. D’Acapito, I. Memmi Turbanti, M. Turchiano, G. Volpe, «The *sectilia* panels of Faragola (Ascoli Satriano, southern Italy): a multi-analytical study of the red, orange and yellow glass slabs», *Archaeometry*, 50, 3 (2008), p. 451-473; E. Gliozzo, A. Santagostino Barbone, F. D’Acapito, M. Turchiano, I. Memmi Turbanti, G. Volpe, «The *sectilia* panels of Faragola (Ascoli Satriano, southern Italy): a multi-analytical study of the green, marbled, blue and blackish glass slabs», *Archaeometry*, in press.

⁵⁷ Archaeometric analyses have been carried out by Elisabetta Gliozzo.

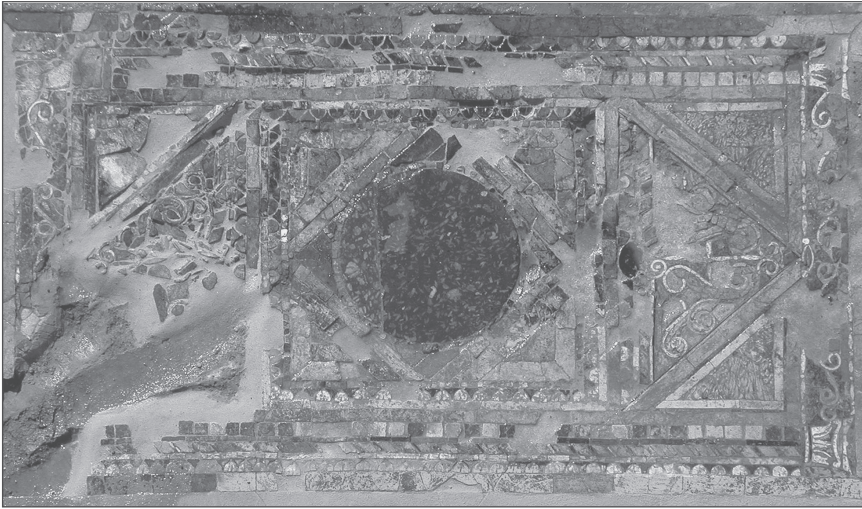


Fig. 21. Faragola (Ascoli Satriano): the panel in *opus sectile* (photo G. Volpe).

It is possible that a secondary workshop of itinerant specialists was called in to perform work during the restructuring and enlargement of the villa. In fact, in line with the well-documented phenomenon of the late antique workforce, specialist itinerant artisans were called into service for the highest echelon of the aristocracy, those endowed with conspicuous financial resources, and enticed by “exclusive” and “original” manufactures, representative of their own elevated status.

The hypothesized production scheme of the *opus sectile* panels, contextualized to the restructuring of the *cenatio*, calls for a re-dating of this activity from the late 4th century to instead a 5th century date. This would confirm the exceptional character of this site within the panorama of the Italian countryside in this period.

The site of Faragola appears to be extremely important for establishing an element of continuity for the aristocracy in the 5th century, still utilizing models that we know better from the preceding century. This comes mainly from the letters of Symmachus, owner himself of villas in Southern Italy⁵⁸,

⁵⁸ D. Vera, *Simmaco e le sue proprietà: struttura e funzionamento di un patrimonio aristocratico del quarto secolo d.C.*, in *Atti del Colloque Genèvois sur Symmaque*, Paris, 1986,

where he describes the pleasures of *otium*, of cultural reflection and study, of the hunt, of care for the body, of hosting of friends (*catervae amicorum*) and clients, and also of the banquet –activities not separated from the management of business interests and their ample landholdings. These activities should also not be read as a kind of flight from public responsibilities.

The *morbis fabricatoris* still seems diffuse in this area of Italy, well-known in the case of Symmachus, who was himself afflicted by this ailment. Symptoms included paying particular personal attention to construction work, to the restructuring and to the continual beautification of one's rural residences, to mosaic and wall decoration, to the construction of new rooms and to their specialization for specific activities and insertion into the hierarchy of spaces. In particular, there was the near maniacal care reserved for dining rooms, which, along with baths, gardens, libraries and reception rooms, comprise a distinctive element of rural aulic architecture, as is documented also at the villa of Faragola⁵⁹.

The testimony of Sidonius Apollinarius demonstrates that the practice of *secessus in villam* ought to have been practiced at least in some parts of Italy and the empire⁶⁰. It does not seem coincidental that the best description of a banquet at the *stibadium* was that held by the emperor Majorianus, at which Sidonius was present. And it is again to this elite Gallic author that we owe the testimony recounting various villas, among them his own at *Avitacum*, equipped with baths, a matron's banqueting room, a portico with a monumental colonnade, *cryptoporticus*, winter *triclinium*, and a *cenaticula* with *stibadium* offering views of a lake⁶¹. These are elements that we find also at Faragola, where the *cenatio* is placed at the interior of a *nymphaeum*, displaying the care taken in the architectural adaptation of

p. 234-235; G. Volpe, *Contadini, pastori*, p. 341-346; D. Vera, «Aristocrazia romana ed economie provinciali nell'Italia tardoantica: il caso siciliano», *Quaderni catanesi di studi classici e medievali*, X, 19 (1988), p. 115-172.

⁵⁹ Symmachus, *Epistulae* 2.60. Cfr. D. Vera, «Simmaco e le sue proprietà: struttura e funzionamento di un patrimonio aristocratico del quarto secolo d.C.», in *Atti del Colloque Genèveois sur Symmaque*, Paris, 1986, p. 231-270; C. Sfamini, «Committenza e funzioni delle ville 'residenziali' tardoantiche tra fonti archeologiche e fonti letterarie», in *Villas Tardoantiche*, p. 61-72; Ead. «Le ville in età tardoantica: il contesto storico-archeologico», in *Felicitas Temporum*, p. 471-487; G. Volpe, G. De Felice, M. Turchiano, «Una residenza aristocratica».

⁶⁰ G.L. Grassigli, *Splendidus in villam secessus. Vita quotidiana, cerimoniali e autorappresentazione del dominus nell'arte tardoantica*, Napoli, 2001.

⁶¹ Sidonius Apollinarius, *Epistulae* 2.2.11.

water and nature. At Faragola, as in the Spanish villa of El Ruedo⁶², the integration of architectural and decorative elements and the scenographic effects achieved with water and color demonstrate the desire to link internal spaces with external ones, knocking down walls and opening the space of the dining room up to the surrounding landscape.

We do not have conclusive evidence to be able to identify the owner, or better, the *gens*, which for many years inhabited the villa, in spite of the fact that some inscriptions may provide a glimmer of hope. More specifically, a fragment of an honorary inscription, datable to the 3rd century A.D.⁶³, refers most likely to a *Cossonius Scipio Orfitus*, son and heir of *L. Cossonius Eggius Marullus*. The latter was consul in 184 and proconsul of Africa in 198-199 A.D., representative of the first order of the *Cornelii Scipiones Orfiti*, the important family from the old tradition, well documented between the 2nd and 5th centuries A.D.⁶⁴ and linked by marriage with another remarkable family, the *Eggii*, originally of *Aeclanum*⁶⁵. This *gens* survived until the Late Antique period: Symmachus numbered among his friends a *Scipio, vir clarissimus*, while various descendents, both direct and indirect, are known between the 4th and 5th century. For example, there was *Memmius Vitrasius Orfitus, p.u.* of 353-355 and 357-358, father of *Rusticana* the wife of Symmachus, who had been implicated in a well-known scandal connected to the theft of money from the *arca vinaria*, and *Cynergus Orfitus* and *G. Orf[itius] Olympius*, senators of the late 5th century⁶⁶.

⁶² D. Vaquerizo Gil, J. M. Carrillo Diaz-Pines, «The Roman Villa of El Ruedo (Almedinilla, Córdoba)», *Journal of Roman Archaeology*, 8 (1995), p. 121-154; D. Vaquerizo Gil, J. M. Noguera Celdrán, *La villa romana de El Ruedo (Almedinilla, Córdoba). Decoración escultórica y interpretación*, Murcia, 1997, p. 60-77.

⁶³ M. Silvestrini, *Le città della Puglia romana. Un profilo sociale*, Bari, 2005, p. 182-189; G. Volpe, M. Silvestrini, «La villa di Faragola (Ascoli Satriano) e gli Scipioni Orfiti», in *Epigraphy and Public Space from the Severans to the Theodosian Era*, Atti della XII Rencontre sur l'épigraphie (Roma 16-18 settembre 2004), in press; V. Morizio, *Ausculum. La città romana e le sue iscrizioni*, Foggia, 2007, p. 22-27.

⁶⁴ F. Jacques, «L'ordine senatorio attraverso la crisi del III secolo», in *Società romana e impero tardoantico, I. Istituzioni, ceti, economie*, ed. A. Giardina, Roma-Bari, 1986, p. 176-177.

⁶⁵ G. Camodeca, «Ascesa al senato e rapporti con i territori d'origine. Italia: regio I (Campania, esclusa la zona di Capua e di Cales), II (Apulia et Calabria), III (Lucania et Bruttii)», in Atti del Colloquio Internazionale AIEGL, *Epigrafia e Ordine Senatorio*, II, Titoli, 5, Roma, 1982, p. 132-134.

⁶⁶ PLRE I, *Scipio*, p. 180; *Orfitus* 3, p. 651-653, Symmachus, *Relationes* 34; D. Vera, *Commento storico alle Relationes di Quinto Aurelio Simmaco*, Pisa, 1981, p. 254-272; PLRE I, p. 812, 804.

But we do not think it useful here to contribute something to the long and in certain ways inconclusive debate on the owner of the villa of Piazza Armerina. In fact, the identification of the *dominus* cannot but remain hypothetical, due to the lack of definite documentation (moreover, almost never available), but we do understand the characteristics of the “sociological type” of the owner of this rural residence, and the message that this structure aimed to communicate through the language of its architectural organization, decorative scheme and material culture. Furthermore, a social class as limited as the late antique aristocracy actualized a strongly homogeneous architectural style. The writings of Augustine⁶⁷ are very effective in explaining the desire for self-representation of aristocrats in their own residences and particularly by means of their baths and dining rooms; these could also be taken to refer to the owner of Faragola.

Another aspect of the Faragola villa, as with other southern Italian villas, sets it apart in its latest phases of occupation. The villa was inhabited for a long time, more or less in the same form, in spite of some transformations that point to a progressive decline for a good part of the 6th century. There has been documented, then, a persistence of use for luxurious residences, before a brief phase of abandonment and then reoccupation in the form of a small site (perhaps a farm) in the 7th century and later probably by an early medieval village, in the course of the 8th century⁶⁸.

G.V., M.T.

The economic dynamism of the Apulian countryside during the 5th century is also documented by material culture. In the ambit of commercial trade, there is an increase in this period of the diffusion of African Red Slip, represented by D production, which surpasses without a doubt the previous productions of this ware; its capillary penetration left it as pervasive on the coast as on the interior⁶⁹. In rural contexts, there seem to

⁶⁷ Augustinus, *Contra Academicos* I.2.

⁶⁸ G. Volpe, G. De Venuto, R. Goffredo, M. Turchiano, «L'abitato altomedievale di Faragola (Ascoli Satriano)», in *Atti del V Congresso Nazionale di Archeologia Medievale (Foggia-Manfredonia 2009)*, Firenze, 2009.

⁶⁹ D. Leone, M. Turchiano, «Aspetti della circolazione delle merci nell'Apulia tardoantica tra importazioni e produzioni locali», in *L'Africa Romana*, Atti del XIV Convegno di studio (Sassari 7-10 dicembre 2000), ed. M. Khanoussi, P. Ruggeri, C. Vismara, Roma, 2002, p. 857-890; C. Annese, «Ceramiche fini da mensa e circolazione delle merci nell'Apulia tardoantica», in *Atti del 26° Convegno Nazionale sulla Preistoria – Protostoria – Storia della Daunia (San Severo 10-11 dicembre 2005)*, ed. A. Gravina, San Severo, 2006, p. 469-494.

have been documented above all pans, plates and pots of large dimensions, which may refer to the consumption of certain foodstuffs or specific social uses. The most frequently attested forms are the Hayes 50B and Hayes 61B and their multiple varieties of form. The success of these wares is confirmed indirectly by the extremely diffuse phenomenon of imitations, that is manifest most clearly by the late 4th century. This phenomenon all but explodes in the 5th century, when many local workshops, often situated in local contexts, began to imitate the typologies and decorative repertoire of African Red Slip: Hayes 50, 58, 61 and Hayes 91 comprise the forms most imitated among the local productions of Late Roman painted common ware, above all in the interior of Southern Italy⁷⁰.

Starting in the mid 5th century, the state of imports is marked greatly by the appearance by Phocaeen Red Slip, documented also in the countryside at rather modest sites (with the exception of the villa at Agnuli)⁷¹.

The site of Faragola is interesting: the near total absence of ARS and the scarce appearance of imported wares, encourages us to reconsider using this category of manufactured goods as an indicator of economic status and of elevated social prestige (perhaps in this case one would prefer metal ornaments as an indicator). The interpretive limits of such a typology of finds, limitations tied to the “polysemic” character of these archaeological “sources”, have already been made clear by M. Bonifay⁷² and by E. Zanini⁷³.

But the most significant evidence derives from research on commonware ceramics of local production for dining, for distribution, and for cooking, which with certain exceptions, are absolutely predominant with

⁷⁰ C. Annese, *Le ceramiche tardoantiche della domus B*, in *Ortona X. Ricerche archeologiche a Herdonia (1993-1998)*, ed. G. Volpe, Bari, 2000, p. 285-342; D. Leone, *Le ceramiche tardoantiche della fattoria di Posta Crusta*, *ibidem*, p. 387-436; M. Turchiano, *La cisterna e il suo contesto. Materiali tardoantichi dalla domus B*, *ibidem*, p. 343-384; G. Volpe, C. Annese, G. Disantarosa, D. Leone, «Ceramiche e circolazioni delle merci in Apulia tra Tardoantico e Altomedioevo», in *La circolazione delle ceramiche nell'Adriatico tra Tarda Antichità e Altomedioevo*, in III Incontro di Studio Cer.am.Is, (Venezia 24-25 giugno 2004), ed. S. Gelichi, C. Negrelli, Mantova, 2007, p. 353-374.

⁷¹ C. Annese, *Ceramiche fini da mensa in Apulia et Calabria tra media età imperiale e tarda antichità*, Tesi di Dottorato in Scienze dell'Antichità classica e cristiana. Antico, tardo antico e medievale: storia della tradizione e della ricezione (XVIII ciclo), Università di Foggia, 2006.

⁷² M. Bonifay, *Etudes sur la céramique romaine tardive d'Afrique*, Oxford, 2004.

⁷³ E. Zanini, «Archeologia dello status sociale nell'Italia bizantina: tracce, segni e modelli interpretativi», in *Archeologia e società*, p. 23-46.

respect to imported wares. Fieldwork conducted in the last few years at sites in north and central Puglia has confirmed the extraordinary vitality of regional production⁷⁴.

The discovery of kilns and other indicators of production from urban and rural contexts has stimulated a wide-ranging archaeometric research project that, originally focused on ceramics, has progressively expanded to include also bricks, glass, metals, and marbles.

The excavations at San Giusto have brought to light an artisanal quarter, with rooms designated for ceramic production, the working of metal and the processing of wool and sheepskins⁷⁵. The kiln found seems to have been used to fire cookware ceramics, which imitate Aegean models⁷⁶ (fig. 22-24).



Fig. 22. San Giusto (Lucera). The investigated kiln (photo G. Volpe).

⁷⁴ M. Turchiano, *Aspetti dell'artigianato dell'Apulia in età tardoantica. Produzione, commercio e consumo*, Tesi di Dottorato in Civiltà tardoantica e altomedievale (XV ciclo), Università di Bari, 2003.

⁷⁵ *San Giusto*; G. Volpe, «Linee di storia del paesaggio dell'Apulia romana: San Giusto e la valle del Celone», in *Modalità insediative*, p. 315-361; Id., «San Giusto e l'Apulia nel contesto dell'Adriatico tardoantico», in *L'archeologia dell'Adriatico dalla Preistoria al Medioevo*, Atti del Convegno Internazionale (Ravenna 7-9 giugno 2001), Firenze, 2003, p. 507-536.

⁷⁶ E. Gliozzo, C. Fortina, I. Turbanti Memmi, M. Turchiano, G. Volpe, «Cooking and painted ware from San Giusto (Lucera, Foggia): the production cycle, from the supply of raw materials to the commercialisation of products», *Archaeometry*, 47, 1 (2005), p. 13-29; E. Gliozzo, M. Turchiano, C. Fortina, I. Memmi, G. Volpe, «La produzione di ceramica da fuoco di San Giusto (Lucera, Foggia): dall'approvvigionamento della materia prima alla commercializzazione del manufatto», in *Tecnologie di lavorazione e impiego dei manufatti*, Atti della 7^a Giornata di Archeometria della ceramica (Lucera, 10-11 aprile 2003), ed. B. Fabbri, G. Volpe, S. Gualtieri, Bari, 2005, p. 47-60.

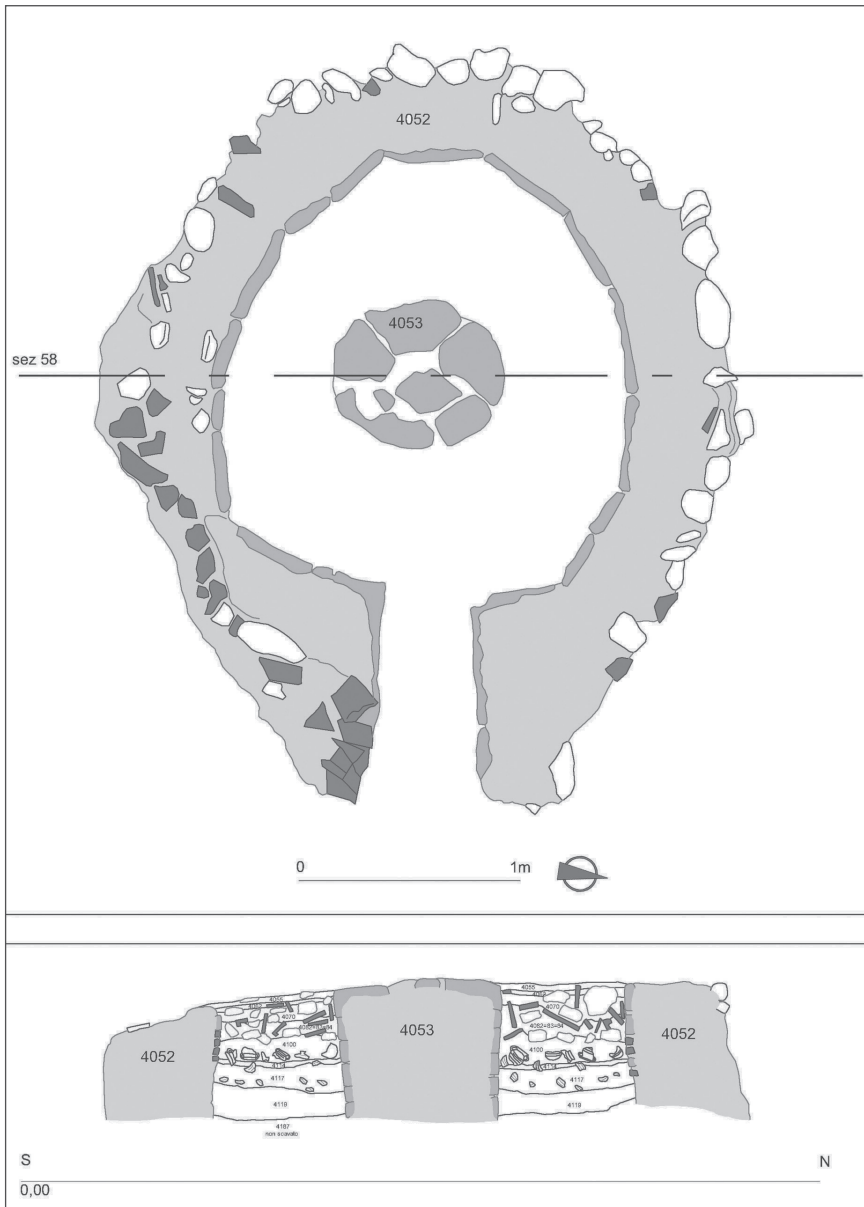


Fig. 23. San Giusto (Lucera). Plan and section of the kiln (realized by M. Turchiano).

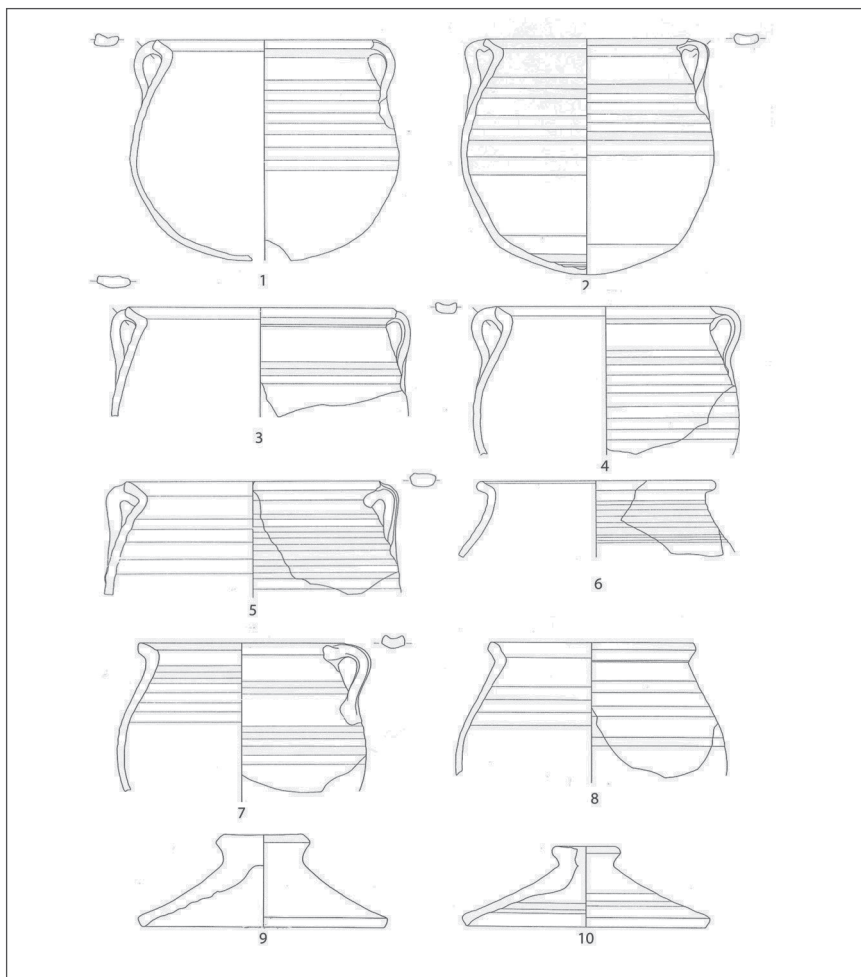


Fig. 24. San Giusto (Lucera). Plate of the cooking pottery found inside the kiln (scale 1:3) (realized by M. Turchiano).



At the site of San Giusto and/or the surrounding territory, there was also the production of polished cooking pottery (fig. 25), inspired by African cooking wares and Pantellerian wares, but also with its own unique series of forms, inspired by local tradition and the production of basins and the so-called “Calle ware” painted small amphorae⁷⁷. These ceramics, from the

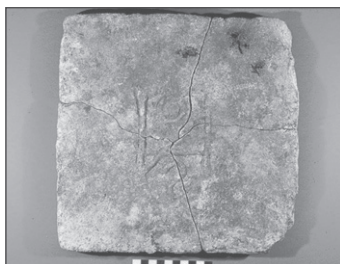


Fig. 25. Canosa di Puglia.
Brick with Sabinus' monogram
(photo G. Volpe).

5th century until the late 6th-early 7th, denote an archaeological *facies* comprising numerous production centers spread throughout Puglia, Basilicata, Campania and in part Calabria⁷⁸.

The structure of this artisanal system, of which these ceramics are an expression, harkens to a dispersed system of production, with branches in rural and urban centers, diverse in their specialization and integrated more at the level of exchange.

The standardization of manufacture, the diversification of production, a fair amount of organization, a knowledgeable use of the region's resources with a functional selection of the local materials, the productive capacity of the center, the hypothetical diffusion which seems to encompass rural

⁷⁷ H. Di Giuseppe, «La fornace di Calle di Tricarico: produzione e diffusione, in *Ceramica in Italia: VI-VII secolo*», Atti del Convegno in onore di John W. Hayes (11-13 maggio, Roma 1995) ed. L. Saguì, Firenze, 1998, p. 735-752; H. Di Giuseppe, C. Capelli, «Produzioni urbane e rurali di ceramica comune dipinta nella Lucania tardoantica e altomedievale», in *LRCW I. Late Roman Coarse Wares, Cooking Wares and Amphorae in the Mediterranean: Archaeology and Archaeometry*, ed. J. M^a. Gurt i Esparraguera, J. Buxeda i Garrigós, M. A. Cau Ontiveros, 2005 (*BAR Int. Ser. 1340*), p. 395-411.

⁷⁸ P. Arthur, H. Patterson, «Ceramics and early Medieval central and southern Italy: "a potted history"», in *La storia dell'Alto Medioevo italiano (VI-X secolo) alla luce dell'archeologia*, Convegno internazionale (Siena, 2-6 settembre 1992), ed. R. Francovich, Gh. Noyé, Firenze, 1994, p. 409-441; P. Arthur, C. De Mitri, E. Lapadula, 2007, *Nuovi appunti sulla circolazione della ceramica nella Puglia meridionale tra tarda antichità e altomedioevo*, in *La circolazione delle ceramiche nell'Adriatico*, p. 331-351.

and urban contexts in the area, the presence of an artisan's quarter engaged in different manufacturing activities and, in general, the character of sites seem to define the production in question as the model for an individual workshop. Activities managed by professional potters, who were able to act directly with the local market, lead one to hypothesize the presence of a *nundinae* near the site according to the model described by Cassiodorus at *Marcellianum*. This was a small site in the hinterland of *Consilinum*, in the Val di Diano, an important nodal point along the via Capua-Reggio, where a famous interregional rural fair took place and was described by Cassiodorus (*Var.* 8.33, 527 d.C.). The principal products sold at this fair were farm animals, fabrics and slaves. The presence of a baptistery possibly refers to the bishops seat at *Consilinum* rather than to a *martyrium*: this means that the seat would have then been situated on a small site in the suburbs and not in the city⁷⁹.

Potters could have also utilized intermediary conduits to regional, interregional and even Mediterranean markets, thanks to their strategic positions along a road that linked *Aecae*, *Arpi* and the port of *Sipontum*. From here, they were connected to Salona by a trans-Adriatic route, attested in the *Itinerarium Maritimum* (*Itin. Marit.* 497.7). This route, along which was conveyed grain, other foodstuffs, and also possibly wool, produced in *Apulia*, was located nearby other active links between Puglia and its opposite coast, between the ports of Brindisi and Otranto and those of Valona and Durazzo⁸⁰. Although exports to the western Mediterranean have also been attested, and Rome would have been an important market, there is not doubt that Apulian grain needed to be conveyed along Adriatic routes. The port of *Sipontum* was a hub for a flourishing class of *negotiators Apuliae sive Calabriae*, documented by Cassiodorus⁸¹.

The activities of the artisan quarter at San Giusto, located less than ten meters from the double basilica, seems to have coincided with the *floruit*

79 V. Bracco, «*Marcellianum* e il suo battistero», *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana*, 34 (1958), p. 193-207; V. Focchi Nicolai, S. Gelichi, «Battisteri e chiese rurali (IV-VII secolo)», in *L'edificio battesimale in Italia. Aspetti e problemi*, Atti dell'VIII Congresso nazionale di Archeologia Cristiana (Genova, Sarzana, Albenga, Finale Ligure, Ventimiglia, 21-26 settembre 1998), Bordighera, 2001, p. 358-360; R. Martorelli, «L'architettura dei battisteri di Napoli, Cuma e *Marcellianum*», in *L'edificio Battesimale*, p. 1046-1054.

⁸⁰ *Itinerarium Maritimum*, 497. 4-5).

⁸¹ Cassiodorus, *Variae*. 2.26, 2.38.

of the episcopal complex, suggesting a direct link between the ecclesiastical center and the artisan space. The discovery of a brick stamped with the monogram of *Iohannis*, is hypothesized to have been produced on site (fig. 26). It has been linked to an otherwise unknown bishop of the Carneianense diocese or to the Byzantine *magister militum*, Johannes, who was very active on the Adriatic coast during the Greek-Gothic War⁸².

However kilns of ecclesiastical ownership are documented in Apulia by the well known production of bricks stamped with the monogram of the bishop *Sabinus* (514-566 A.D.) (fig. 27), which were used in many buildings of Canosa and its territory⁸³.

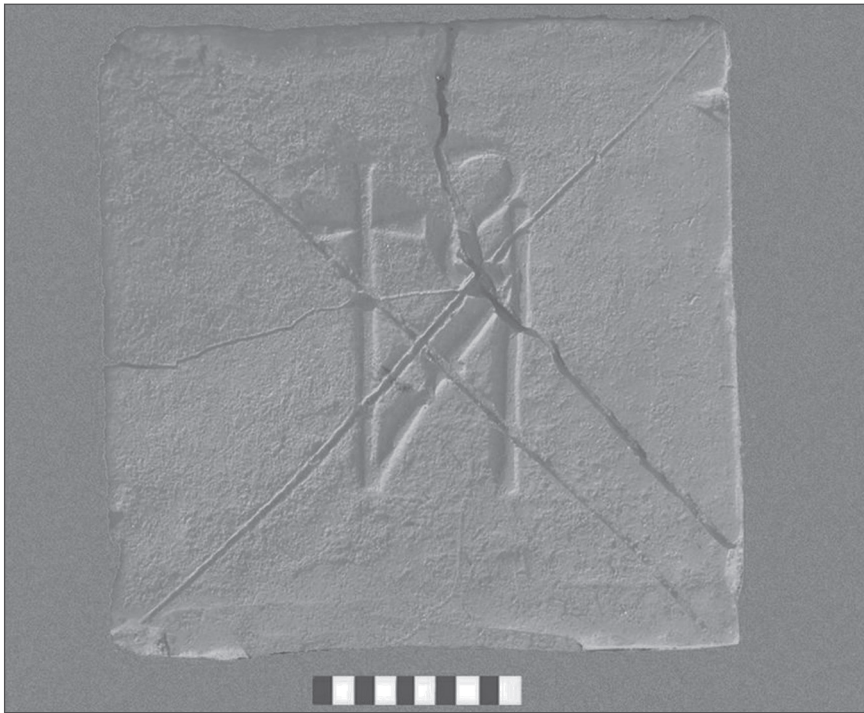


Fig. 26. San Giusto (Lucera). Brick with *Iohannis*' monogram (photo G. Volpe).

⁸² G. Volpe, «Il mattone di *Iohannis* (San Giusto, Lucera)», in *Humana sapit, Etudes d'Antiquité tardive offertes à Lellia Cracco Ruggini*, ed. J.-M. Carrié, R. Lizzi Testa, Turnhout, 2002 (*Bibliothèque d'Antiquité Tardive* 3), p. 75-89.

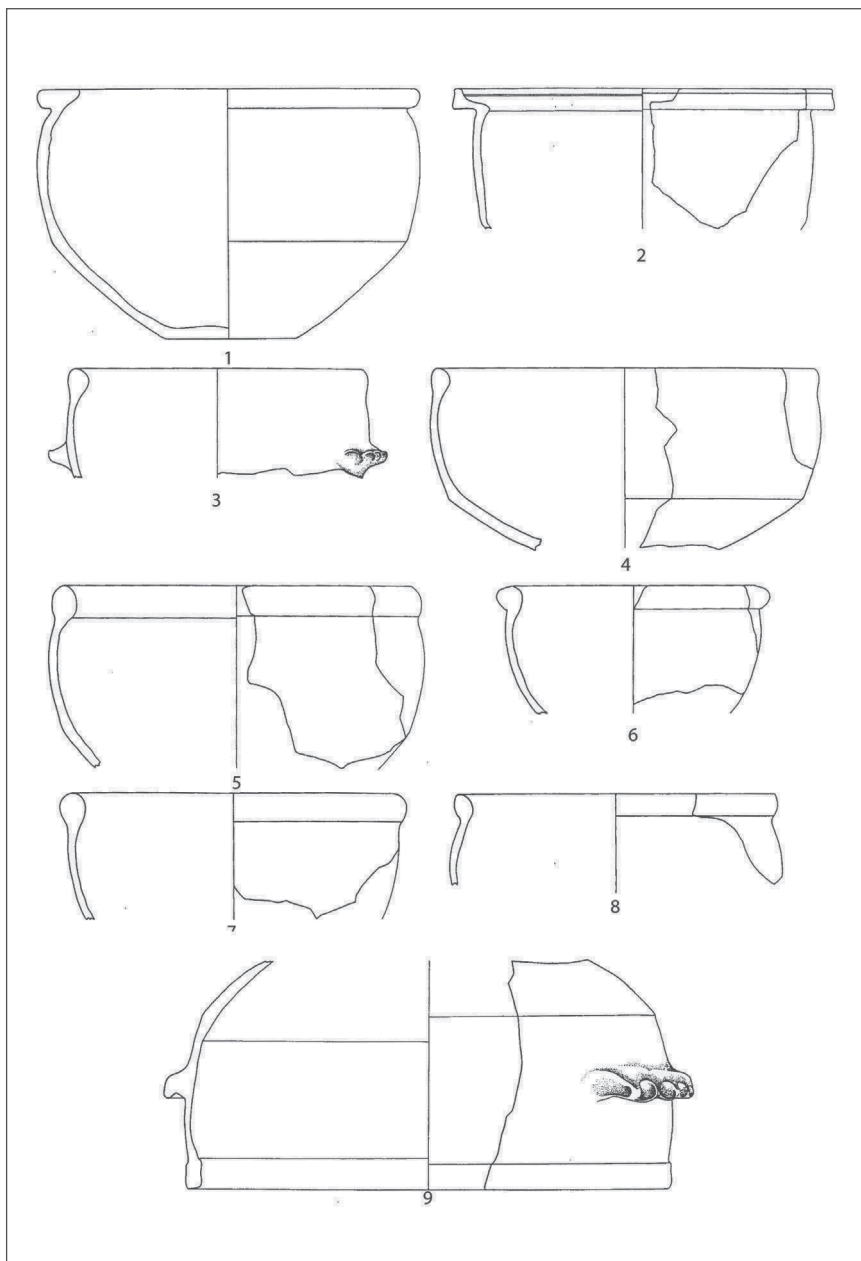


Fig. 27. Plate of the polished cooking pottery from some Apulia sites (scale 1:3) (realized by M. Turchiano).

This initiative on the part of the bishop could have contributed to renew old productive activities and to encourage manufacturing activity, in line with a phenomenon recorded in other areas⁸⁴. One can hypothesize the bishop's role in management and patronage, related also to the production and commercialization of ceramics at a fair sponsored by ecclesiastical authority operating within the *saltus Carminianensis*, and in particular by the bishop installed in the rural diocese. It also seems to have been structured somewhat demographically, based at least on the evidence of other churches within a 5-6 km radius from San Giusto, at the interior of two *vici*⁸⁵.

Archaeological field survey and aerial photography have made it possible to sketch out the late antique landscapes of the Valle del Celone, which was characterized by a dense rural population: this included villas with a short distance between them, interspersed farms and small farms, and a few villages⁸⁶. Nearly all of the villas display evidence of production of oil, wine and grain, helping to support a rather elevated agricultural prosperity, and furthermore, a commercialization of products, with the resulting creation of a possible market for ceramic goods. Only a few villas had sectors dedicated to ceramic production, which may indicate that they had diverse forms of specialist production, and also considered the use of *instrumenta* in the context of large landed properties⁸⁷.

Moving from San Giusto, the archaeometric project has been extended to sites which have been identified in the Celone Valley and some signif-

⁸³ G. Volpe, «Il ruolo dei vescovi»; Id., «*Spectabilis vir restaurator ecclesiarum*», in *Canosa, Ricerche storiche 2007*, Atti del Convegno (Canosa 16-18.2.2007), ed. L. Bertoldi Lenoci, Martina Franca, 2008, p. 23-52; Id., «L'iniziativa vescovile».

⁸⁴ R. Martorelli, «Riflessioni sulle attività produttive nell'età tardoantica e altomedievale: esiste un artigianato "ecclesiastico"?», *Rivista di Archeologia Cristiana*, 75 (1999), p. 571-596; L. Saguì, «Roma, i centri privilegiati e la lunga durata della tardoantichità. Dati archeologici dal deposito di VII secolo nell'edera della *Crypta Balbi*», *Archeologia Medievale*, 29 (2002), p. 7-42; A. Leone, «Topographies of Production in North African Cities during», in *Theory and Practice in Late Antique Archaeology*, ed. L. Lavan, W. Bowden, (*Late Antique Archaeology* 1), Leiden – Boston, 2003, p. 257-287.

⁸⁵ G. Volpe, «Il ruolo dei vescovi».

⁸⁶ G. Volpe, «*Paesaggi e insediamenti rurali*»; A. V. Romano, G. Volpe, «Paesaggi e insediamenti rurali nel comprensorio del Celone».

⁸⁷ D. Vera, «I silenzi di Palladio e l'Italia: osservazioni sull'ultimo agronomo romano», *Antiquité Tardive. Revue internationale d'histoire et d'archéologie*, 7 (1999), p. 283-297.

icant contexts like *Herdonia* and *Canusium*, two important administrative, economic and productive centers in *Apulia*⁸⁸.

The project, aimed at characterizing the late antique common ware ceramics produced and/or found in northern-central Puglia, using archaeometric and morpho-typological studies have enabled us to create reference groups and to recreate productive cycles. The geographical distribution of certain ceramics of local production, found in both urban and rural sites, and substantially homogeneous in their petrographic and chemical composition, creates a direct network of commercial links and functions between city and countryside. Lively contacts appear at the local level, between neighboring centers, but also at the interregional and Mediterranean-wide scale. For each site, there have been individuated at least four scales of consumption, corresponding to different quantities and qualities of production and different levels of distribution. The road links guaranteed by infrastructure (the *Via Traiana*, *Via Litoranea*, and *Via Herdonitana*), the relatively short distances between the urban centers of *Canusium*, *Herdonia*, *Ausculum Luceria*, *Aecae*, *Sipontum*, and the tightly woven settlement pattern of the fertile countryside of the Celone, Carapelle, and Ofanto Valley, leaves us to hypothesize, for the 5th century especially, the existence of commercial networks strongly integrated at short, medium and long-distances, and at the level of a great Adriatic and Mediterranean commerce.

The vivacity of commerce in this period also emerges from other indicators: decorative programs, sumptuary art, marble revetments, and certain architectural styles. Glassworking seems to have been an important craft, above all in its relationship to commercialization, both raw materials and semi-worked products, from the eastern Mediterranean. Beyond the information that has emerged from the study of the *opus sectile* panels of Faragola, also the study of late antique glass from the site of *Herdonia* seems to indicate a sizable importation of semi-worked products predominantly from the Syro-palestinian area (and other areas, depending on the color of the glass) and the final production in secondary local workshops, offering evidence for a market capable of integrating into various supply networks⁸⁹.



⁸⁸ G. Volpe, «Città apule fra destrutturazione e trasformazione: i casi di *Canusium* e di *Herdonia*», in *Le città italiane tra la tarda antichità e l'alto medioevo*, Atti del Convegno di studi (Ravenna, 26-28 febbraio 2004), ed. A. Augenti, Firenze, 2006, p. 559-587.

⁸⁹ M. Turchiano, «I pannelli in *opus sectile*»; A. Santagostino Barbone, E. Gliozzo, F.

Prestige goods, such as incised glass and glass *sectilia* most probably indicate the presence of itinerant workshops. Confirmation of this hypothesis comes from other areas of late antique production. The presence of itinerant mosaic artisans has also been hypothesized for the site of San Giusto, where the mosaic pavements of the paleochristian church seem to have been “conditioned by the presence of artists or the use of patterns originating from the opposite side of the Adriatic, or more generically, from the east”⁹⁰.

If in the field of specialist glass, mosaic and sculpture artisan work, the mobility of workers could have stimulated and facilitated the diffusion of techniques and the contact between different cultural traditions, then reinterpreted in their own autonomous forms in a local context. Perhaps, from the perspective of commonware ceramics of local production, fairs are key for understanding the mechanisms of circulation and transmission of formal models⁹¹. *Nundinae* played a central role in sharing technological knowledge and stylistic information, helping to nurture an artisanal *koine* based on a shared taste and expressed in a common language. This characteristic is comparable in many of the ceramics typical in the area under examination, and in part, can explain the imitation of African and Oriental wares and some forms of Pantellerian ware⁹².

The distribution of painted common ware and polished ceramics seem to delineate a well-defined area of production and consumption, suggesting a circulation of materials favored by trading networks based on urban

D’Acapito, I. Memmi Turbanti, M. Turchiano, G. Volpe, «The *sectilia* panels»; A. Santagostino Barbone, M. Turchiano, I. Turbanti Memmi, G. Volpe, «I materiali vitrei di *Herdonia* (Foggia, Italia): studi di caratterizzazione e ipotesi di provenienza», in *Ortona XI. Ricerche archeologiche a Herdonia*, ed. G. Volpe, D. Leone, Bari, 2008, p. 185-209.

⁹⁰ P. De Santis, «I pavimenti musivi della chiesa paleocristiana di San Giusto tra Oriente e Occidente: origini e modalità di trasmissione degli schemi geometrici», in *Acta Congressus Internationalis XIV Archaeologiae Christianae*, ed. R. Harreither, Ph. Pergola, R. Pillinger, A. Pülz, Città del Vaticano, Pontificio Istituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 2006, p. 325-336.

⁹¹ E. Gabba, «Mercati e fiere nell’Italia romana», *Studi Classici e Orientali*, 24 (1975), p. 141-163.; *Mercati permanenti e mercati periodici nel mondo romano*, Atti degli incontri capresi di storia dell’economia antica (Capri 13-15 ottobre 1997), ed. E. Lo Cascio, Bari, 2000.

⁹² S. Fontana, *Le «imitazioni» della sigillata africana e le ceramiche da mensa italiche tardo-antiche*, in *Ceramica in Italia*, p. 83-100; S. Santoro, «Pantellerian Ware nel Mediterraneo occidentale», in *L’Africa Romana*, p. 99I-1004.

markets and rural fairs, in a system of horizontal exchange in connection with long-distance transhumance routes and with the sale of wool⁹³. Studying the *indices nundiarum* from the imperial period, one interesting piece of evidence remains the trade flows documented in the *index Allifanus b*, from which emerges a regional sub-set gravitating toward the horizontal axis of eastern Campania-southern Samnium-northern Apulia (Calatia, Beneventum, Nuceria, Luceria).

The discovery at San Giusto of structures probably used for the washing and treating of wool and skins as well as the archaeozoological data about the predominance - between the 4th and 6th century - of ovicaprids in the territory of Apulia, confirm the importance of transhumance and wool-related activities for the economy of Apulia, where private workshops seem to have coexisted with state-owned ones⁹⁴. Apulia was the only suburban province with a *procurator rei privatae per Apuliam et Calabriam sive saltus Carminianensis* and state textile manufactures tied to the administration of the *sacrae largitiones*⁹⁵. The interregional scale of markets tied to sheep-rearing, to pastoralism and to manufacturing and commercial activities, surely involved a wider variety and quantity of commercial goods (ceramics, glass products, textiles, and tools for crafts and farming) with a capillary redistribution within the territory at a low cost.

It is reasonable to hypothesize a continuity in Late Antiquity of market places with those that came before, defining an "economic region", with areas differentiated ecologically, but also complimentary from an economic and productive point of view⁹⁶.

There exists, finally, a strong connection between many factors: the landholding of the most wealthy late antique aristocracy in Southern Italy, a movement of the productive center of gravity and economic forces

⁹³ A. Ziccardi, «Il ruolo dei circuiti di mercati periodici nell'ambito del sistema di scambio dell'Italia romana», in *Mercati permanenti e mercati periodici*, p. 131-148.

⁹⁴ D. Vera, «*Res pecuariae* imperiali e concili municipali nell'Apulia tardoantica», in *Ancient History Matters*, Studies Presented to Jens Erik Skydsgaard on His Seventieth Birthday, ed. K. Ascani *et al.*, Roma, 2002, 245-257; M. Corbier, «Proprietà imperiali e allevamento transumante in Italia», in *Le proprietà imperiali nell'Italia romana. Economia, produzione e amministrazione*, ed. D. Pupillo, Quaderni degli Annali dell'Università di Ferrara, Sezione Storia, 6 (2007), p. 1-48.

⁹⁵ G. Volpe, *Contadini, pastori*, p. 281-285.

⁹⁶ A. Storchi Marino, «Reti interregionali integrate e circuiti di mercato periodico negli *indices nundinarum* del Lazio e della Campania», in *Mercati permanenti e mercati periodici*, p. 93-130.

towards the South, a great flourishing of the area, the economic and functional links between Rome and the South, and a decisive increase of the production of regional ceramics in this area. Southern Italy was central to the economic geography of the Mediterranean, surely, because it was near to Rome and equipped with the infrastructure to maintain internal and external links⁹⁷.

There emerges, therefore, a regional and artisanal commercial system extremely vital in the course of the 5th century, whose supporting structure is represented by the economic vitality of the *Apulian* countryside. This ought to have encouraged economic investment not only of the Roman elite, but also local players, stimulated to accumulate a surplus by investing in other “business” activities, which included the production and marketing of different kinds of ceramics. These are activities which, as demonstrates the emblematic case of San Giusto, were not independent of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.

⁹⁷ D. Vera, «I paesaggi rurali del Meridione tardo antico».