

### **SVM8 Feb. 1995 KDF**

The trench known as SVM 8 is situated at the north-east corner of San Vincenzo Maggiore, and incorporates the north wall of the church and the area immediately to the north. Excavations commenced on the 4th of October 1994, under the supervision of William Murphy and later, by Adam Brossler.

The trench originally measured seven metres by three and was extended twice during the course of the excavations.

Various phases of activity were identified as the result of the excavations: The earliest relates to the construction of the church during phase 4. Two major walls, 10077 and 10196 represent the north wall and the facade of San Vincenzo Maggiore respectively. Both walls had been largely robbed to foundation level. During the construction, a large trench appears to have been dug into natural clay (10183) along the north side of the church. The foundations of the north wall were then built using heavy limestone boulders to a depth of three metres. A large posthole (10184), cut into the natural clay on the north side of the church, testifies to the existence of timber scaffolding during the construction phase.

On the north side of the church, traces of the same drainage ditch and wall excavated in SVM 4 were identified. The drainage system was already known to have extended along the north side of the church from excavations carried out in SVM North. IN SVM 8, the remains of a wall made from huge travertine blocks was located approximately one metre from the north wall. The wall showed no traces of the waterproof opus signinum mortar which was used to insulate the wall around the crypt, although the masonry was similar. The edge of the large drainage ditch cut into clay was located beneath the large blocks of fallen masonry derived from the ditch wall. It is not known how much further east the drainage system extends, although presumably it would have directed rain water down to the River Volturno.

The drainage wall had fallen into disrepair prior to the infilling of the drainage ditch. Tips of refuse, much of it industrial, were used to backfill the area. Some of the layers (10151, 10171) contained large quantities of painted plaster and others (10172) had high percentages of tile and charcoal. Generally however, most deposits contained a mixture of painted plaster, marble, pottery and animal bone. A preliminary analysis of the pottery (Patterson, forthcoming) has shown all the layers to contain both ninth and eleventh-century material including crucible fragments. Consequently, the infilling activity is assigned to the eleventh-century, possibly when the Abbots' Palace was constructed by Abbot John V (1053-76) during phase 7.

The final phase within SVM 8 is represented by the construction of three walls (10078, 10154 and 10204). The walls, which appear contemporaneous, were constructed within slit trenches. All of the walls are poorly built and none of them appear to have been part of a building although they may represent a terracing episode. Wall 10154 was probably constructed as a kind of revetment wall, to prevent debris and hillwash encroaching on the north wall of the church from Colle della Torre. Wall 10078, a poorly-built, insubstantial structure was constructed parallel to the north wall (10077) and the revetment wall (10078). The function of the wall is unclear and it may represent a small drain-type structure. Wall 10204 is also difficult to interpret, although it may have connected the other two walls. The evidence suggests that the walls were probably constructed whilst the church was still in use, probably during its' final phase.

Excavations within SVM 8 have been crucial in dismissing the possible existence of a passageway and entrance situated along the north side of the church. Consequently, the void which exists still needs to be explained and can only be done so by future excavation in the area.