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INTERIM REPORT ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK AT CASTELPORZIANO

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1. Vicus: Building Y, trenches YH, YGE and Y(XA)

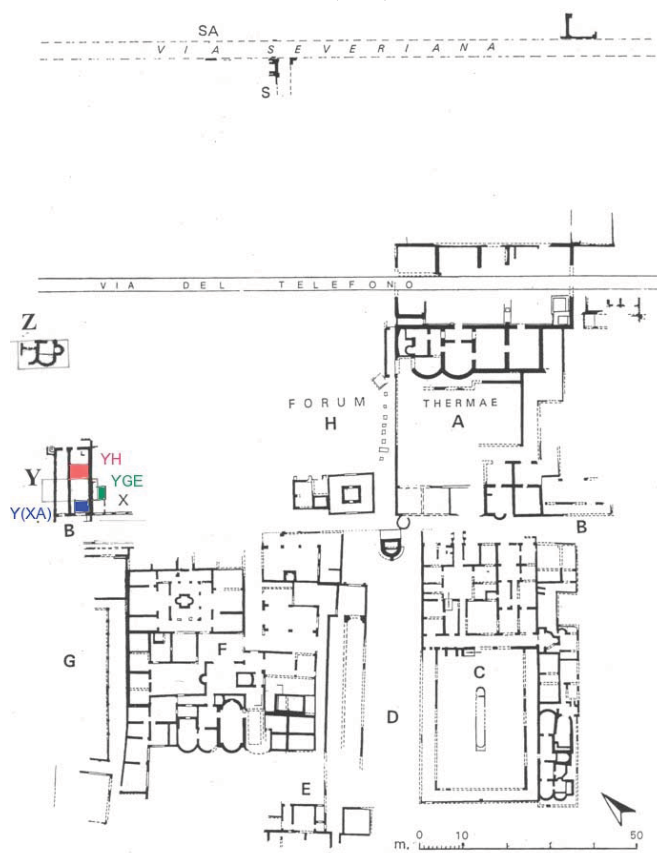


Fig.1 Vicus, site plan showing locations of trenches YH,YGE and Y(XA)

First identified on the surface during the excavation of Trench X in 1995-8, building Y is a substantial structure in concrete faced with alternating courses of brick and tufelli (*opus vittatum*) laid out on the north side of the Vicus' main E-W street (B).

The building measures c.17 x 9 metres, with outer walls 60 cms thick, divided internally along its length by a narrower wall (46 cms), which forms two elongated rooms of slightly different widths (c. 3 and 4 metres respectively). Trench YG was laid out in 2002 across the centre of the building to examine the stratigraphy both inside and outside the building in depth and detail. The fill of the two rooms proved to be very different, the eastern room being filled to a much higher level with almost solid building debris, apparently formed by the collapse of one or other of the walls bounding the room to east and west. Some of the debris seemed to have been removed to form a level platform or activity surface.

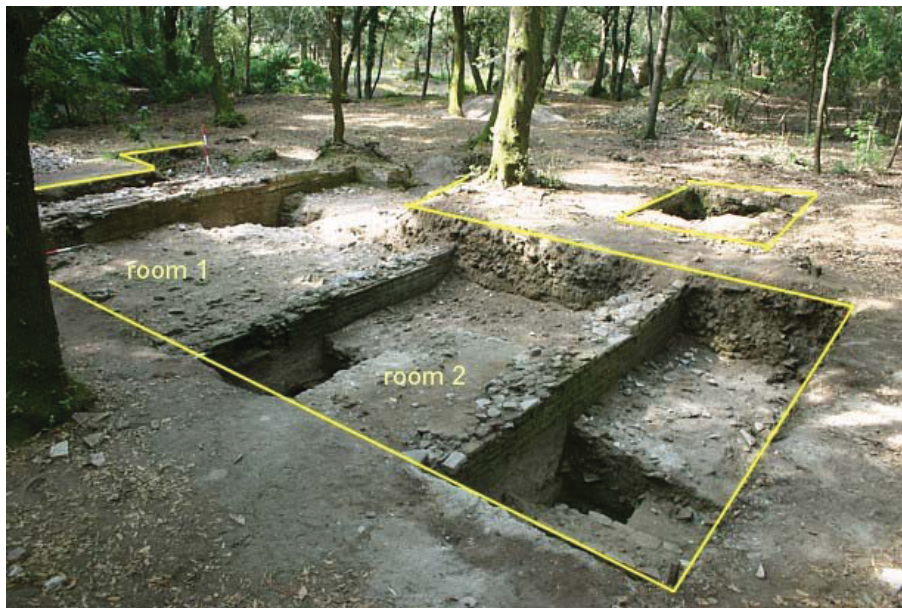


Fig. 2 Vicus, building Y, trench YG, viewed from north-west corner (2004)

Trench YH (3.00 x 5.00 m) was laid out in June 2005 on the north side of YG in order to expose more of the platform in the eastern half of the building and examine the stratigraphy of the overlying debris more closely, in case the excavations in YG had missed something. In April 2006 (see report) some possible post-holes, or footings of upright posts, were identified on the north side of an area of disturbed rubble and, having reduced the area of the trench to a spit 1.50 x 2.50 m., the deposits directly beside and underneath the collapsed walling were partially sampled.

In September 2006 within that same spit, a section of the fallen walling itself was removed and the underlying deposits excavated to below the foundation level of the east wall.

Trench YGE (1.30 x 2.20 m) extended the east side of trench YG, where the outside of building Y is associated with thick occupation deposits of the mid-4th century AD. A small sample collected in 2004, was judged by John Hayes to be a valuable assemblage for the later history of the site. The original section edge, left open after the excavations of 2004, was damaged in 2005-6, revealing quantities of pottery, glass, animal bone and metal objects. The section was straightened again and it was decided that it would be worth excavating a larger area of the deposits to examine their nature in plan. In September 2006 trench YGE examined the full depth of the deposits, which apparently formed in association with a succession of open hearths, down to an underlying horizon of earthquake debris.



Fig.3. Vicus, trench YH, spit sampling deposits underlying collapsed walling and foundation level of the east wall of building Y. View from west, final state. (photo scale 50 cms).



Fig.4. Vicus, trench YGE, sampling deposits on the outside of the east wall of building Y, in course of excavation (2006).



Fig. 5. Vicus, Building Y, south end, area Y(XA)

Trench Y (XA) continued the excavation of the south end of the eastern room of building Y, which had been started in 1996 (as XA) but remained at a level just above that of the rubble platform exposed in YG. The presence of a large tree in the area had compromised much of the upper stratigraphy, but the excavation clarified the sequence of deposits cut by, associated with, and overlying the foundation level of building Y.

2. Vicus, area H Forum: test trenches 2-7

Zone H, between the via del Telefono and the row of small temples at the centre of the Vicus, was designated in the 1986 survey as the forum. In April 2006, after a new RM15 resistivity survey (see Geophysical report April 2006), a trial trench (H tr 1) 3 x 5 m was opened to examine a possible linear feature, and exposed a reticulate wall, 45 cms wide running N-S, bounded to the east by a concrete gully and an expanse of irregular tufa rubble, laid on directly on sand, presumably the foundation for paving. A slab of white marble at the northern limit of the trench, possibly in situ, and a number of loose fragments scattered in the topsoil indicate that the paving was of marble. A wall of uncertain width abutted the reticulate wall on its west side, at a right angle.

In September 2006 the trench was extended 6.80 m. to the east, as H Tr 2, in which the rubble tufa foundations were found to continue to meet a parallel wall of similar reticulate construction (45 cms wide).



Fig. 6. Vicus, forum area H trenches H1-2, viewed from west



Fig. 7. Vicus, Forum area H, trenches H1-2, viewed from east.

On the west side of this second wall the rubble foundation was disturbed, and there was no trace of a concrete gully like that found beside the wall in trench 1, but the rubble tufa was bonded with concrete around a sub-circular pit, possibly part of a drain or a ritual feature. The excavated fill of the pit contained quantities of lamp fragments, gaming counters, iron nails, sea shells and animal and bird (chicken) bones.



Fig. 8. Vicus, Forum area H, trench H2, viewed from south

On the east side of the N-S wall in trench H2 lie the collapsed remains of the upper part of the wall, presumably brought down by earthquake, overlying a short wall in opus mixtum-vittatum, 30 cms wide, a later addition projecting at a right angle to the east.

An extension of trench H2 to the south uncovered the return of the N-S wall to the west (fig.8). The tufa block forming the corner above the brick corner has a rounded edge.



Fig.9. Vicus, Forum area H, trench H2, extension to south, viewed from east.

Five further surface trenches (H tr. 3-7 see figs. 12-13) were subsequently undertaken to establish the northern and southern limits of the tufa rubble platform and its enclosing walls. The NW and NE corners of the west and east walls respectively were found by trenches 3-4 (fig. 10) and 7, and the SW corner by trench 5 (fig. 11).



Fig.10. Vicus, Forum area H trench 3-4, viewed from north



Fig.11. Vicus, Forum area H trench 5, viewed from south

The building thus defined (henceforth H4) measured 7.07 m. from east to west and 8.00 m. from north to south, with walls constructed of tufa blocks (tufelli) and reticulate, with occasional brick coursing. The technique is similar to that of the first phase in Building C, and could date from the second half of the 1st century AD.

Along the interior of its north side H Tr 3 exposed two parallel rows of infill, the innermost 1.00 m deep and the outer one 0.35 m. deep. All four outer corners of the building were rounded, suggesting a freestanding structure. On the east side the outer face of the wall preserved traces of plaster and three small stone spacers, possibly indicating that it was veneered with marble. Attached to the front of the SW corner in a later phase was a concrete wall, again 45 cms thick, 3.16 m. long, faced on the outside with brick and on the inside with roughly dressed tufelli, ending in a right-angled return to the east. Traces of a similar extension on the east side, largely destroyed, were found when H. tr 2 was enlarged southwards.



Fig.12. Vicus, Forum area H, trenches H1-H7, general view from SE

The initial reticulate structure, to judge by the gutter on the inside of the west wall and the drain inside the eastern wall, could have been unroofed or only seasonally roofed. The brick-faced walls attached to its south side, if symmetrical, added another platform measuring 7.00 by 3.16 m. The infill to the rear could be a platform or podium to which the second forms a step. The building presumably faced south, and is of suitable dimensions and position to have been a temple, a possibility reinforced by the quantities of lamps and chicken bones found in the drain. Alternatively, it was a *templum ordinis* or *curia* – a council chamber for the local governing body. The later extension to its south side could have contained a flight of steps.

The discovery of building H4 (fig.13) establishes the position of the northern side of the Forum, confirming that the NE corner is marked by the large statue base placed at an angle the public baths (A) (see Fig. 1). The distance between H4 and the temples facing it from the south (H1 and H2) is about 26.5 metres, which the addition then reduced to 23.5 metres.

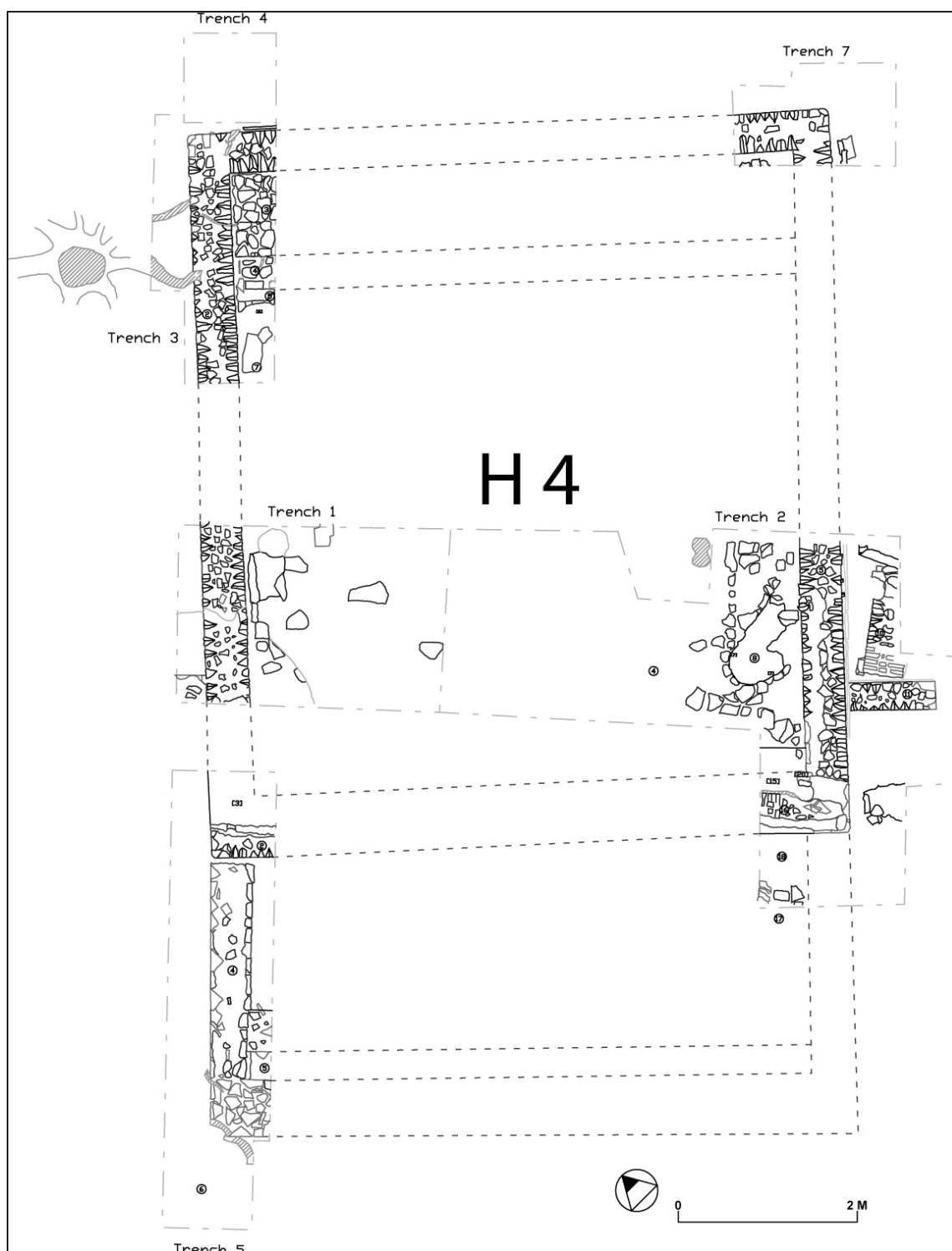


Fig.13 Vicus, Forum area H, plan of building H4 and trenches 1-7.

3. Zone west of Vicus, verification of DEM: CPS B2 Porticus: test trench 4

Site B2 is a linear mound of sand covered with building debris, which runs parallel with the coast for a distance of 180 metres, from B1 (the 'Villa del Confine') to B3B, the westernmost of the mounds immediately west of the Vicus. Excavations in 2004 established that the structure is a porticus, with two main phases, the second of which raised the floor level within the building and added a series of buttresses along the seafront. In April 2006 geophysical survey with RM15 filled in some more of the plan, confirmed by three test trenches. The geophysical survey was then extended as far as the villa del Confine (B1), with an extension also 20 metres in the direction of the sea. In September 2006 a fourth trench (CPS B2 tr.4) was dug to confirm the return of the portico in the direction of the sea, which it did, finding a reticulate wall running NS in line with that found in CPS B2 tr. 3.



Fig. 14. Zone west of Vicus, ridge B2 trench 4, viewed from east

4. Villa del Confine, verification of DEM: CPS B1 test trench 1

The trench was designed to investigate the nature of a circular mound in the centre of a large area of depressed ground beyond the end of the porticus B2, where the geophysical survey had indicated high resistance, possibly representing a circular building. Topographical survey indicated that the depression in which the feature was located had a regular rectangular shape, suggesting a peristyle. The trench revealed that the mound was formed of a pile of carbonized wood, presumably a charcoal burners platform, overlying a thin layer of bricks and tile, below which, at a depth of 70 cms, the subsoil changed to sand. It is possible that the geophysical results might refer to a still lower level (i.e. the charcoal burners exploited a mound of sand over some pre-existing ruin), but for the time being the evidence from the test trench is negative.



Fig.15. Villa del Confine, B1 trench 1, viewed from south-east