Journal of Ancient Egyptian Interconnections

Unpublished or Little-known Archaeological Evidence of the Roman Period in the Territory of Lugnano in Teverina—Umbria (Italy)

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Abstract
Lugnano in Teverina is internationally famous for its archaeology thanks to the remarkable discoveries made in Poggio Gramignano during the investigations of the American team of archaeologists from the University of Arizona, lead by Prof. David Soren. The archaeological campaigns of the late 1980s and early '90s revealed the remains of a Roman rustic villa, later reused as a children's necropolis dating to the mid-5th century CE. Nevertheless, the municipality is rich in other important archaeological evidence. The aim of this work is therefore to highlight some of this less-known evidence, in particular those belonging generally to the Roman period.

Lugnano in Teverina is a small town in the southwestern area of Umbria, Italy, near the Lazio frontier. The Tiber River borders it to the west and to the north, while the Nera River forms the southern border and the Narnese-Amerina mountain chain borders to the east (Fig. 1).

The municipality is internationally famous from an archaeological point of view for the remarkable discoveries made in Poggio Gramignano during the investigations of the American team of archaeologists from the University of Arizona, lead by Prof. David Soren. The archaeological campaigns of the late 1980s and early '90s revealed the remains of a Roman rustic villa, later reused as a children's necropolis dating to the mid-5th century CE.[1]

Nevertheless, the municipality of Lugnano in Teverina is rich in other important archaeological evidence from the pre-Roman period to the late Medieval Age, some of it being completely unpublished. On the other hand, some other remains have been only indicated to the authorities in charge of the heritage's protection, but never studied thoroughly. The goal of this work is therefore to highlight some of this less-known archaeological evidence, in particular the records of the Roman period (Fig. 2).

This paper aims to contribute further to the archaeological knowledge of the area. It is hoped that future effective enhancement projects and promotions will allow the development of the cultural touristic offer of this town. What is more, Lugnano in Teverina is placed in the intersection between two regions of great natural and archaeological interest—the Tuscia and the Umbria Tiberina.

No. 1. Località Poggio Murlo, Coste di Ramici (Page 137 I SW) (Fig. 3)

Description of the Location: The structure is located on the south-facing slope of a small hill (Poggio Murlo), just before arriving at the summit. The gently sloping upper part of the hill is covered by a plowed field. On the other hand, the wooded western and southern slopes decline sharply towards the ravines' area of the valley bottom, crossed by the Fosso Pescara. In contrast, the eastern slope looks quite bare and is bordered by the Archignano local road, which connects this area with the Tiber valley, 5 km away as the crow flies. Finally, higher hills dominate the whole area upstream.

Description of the Structure: Rectangular structure in opus caementicium (mortar and limestone and local travertine pieces), mostly underground and covered by vegetation. Only the western and southern walls are visible, 3 m wide and circa 2.5 m high (the former) and 1.5 m high and 5 m long (the latter). Both walls have steeply sloping exterior sides, while the interior sides are vertical and well polished, suggesting the existence of a layer of plaster coating. The walls are therefore thicker at the base and become thinner at the top, until a minimum thickness of circa 33 cm. Nevertheless, the upper part of the south-facing wall tilts perceptibly toward the inside, suggesting a vaulted ceiling over the structure (Figs. 4–6).

Interpretation: The well-polished interior walls clearly differ from the exterior scarp faces, which are quite irregular due to the prominent blocks of the opus

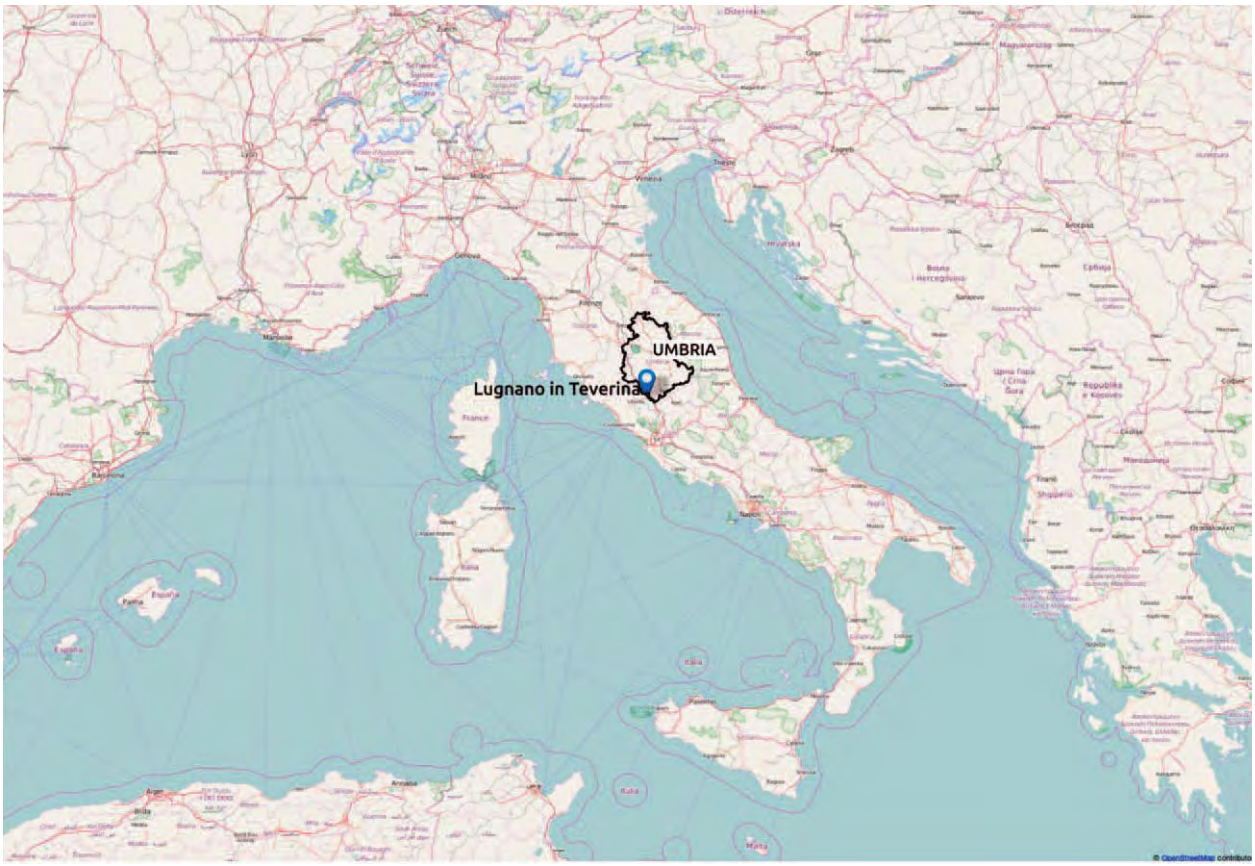


Figure 1: Geographic location of Lugnano in Teverina (Italy); carto-graphic source OpenStreetMap. Image processing: R. Montagnetti 2016.



Figure 2: Lugnano in Teverina (Italy), geographical location of the archaeological sites from the Roman Period identified in this paper (cartographic source: OpenStreetMap; image processing: R. Montagnetti, 2016).



Figure 3: Lugnano in Teverina (Italy), cistern of Poggio Murlo, eastern side.



Figure 4: Lugnano in Teverina (Italy), cistern of Poggio Murlo, front view of eastern side.

caementicium. This characteristic, along with the strategic position on the downward slope, strongly suggests that this structure was aimed at collecting rainwater descending from the summit of the hill. At the same time, this proposed cistern could have performed another function—the substructure of a structure above. This hypothesis is supported by the presence of brick fragments found on the surface of the hill summit (average presence of 2 fragments/m^2).

The poor quality of the exterior facades, without any sign of external coating, indicates the possibility that the structure could have been planned to be a basement area. It is probable that the only uncovered part of the structure was the upper roofing, provided with openings for channeling the water. The later erosion and runoffs over the centuries, so characteristic of this ravine formation, provoked the downstream slipping of the ground covering the structure, making part of the walls visible.



Figure 5: Lugnano in Teverina (Italy), cistern of Poggio Murlo, southern exterior facing.



Figure 6: Lugnano in Teverina (Italy), cistern of Poggio Murlo, southern interior wall.

Dating Elements: Italic and African Terra Sigillata.

Chronology: Based on the materials found inside the structure after a brief survey carried out next to the southern wall, it is possible to date its use between the mid-1st century BCE and the late Imperial Age.

unpublished finding

No. 2. Località Pozzalino, Coste di Ramici (Page 137 I SW) (Fig. 7)

Description of the Location: The structure is situated on the side of a gully. The slope is barren at the top and covered by shrub and broom when going down. The steep decline is rendered unstable by the erosive action of the rain, which provokes continuous runoffs of the characteristic clay subsoil towards the valley bottom. The valley below in a westerly direction is again the Fosso Pescara valley, while the already mentioned Achignano local road passes downstream along the ridge of the gully.

Description of the Structure: The structure is composed of an underground lower rounded part, situated inside the slope of the ravine. This part has a diameter of 2 m and continues circa 3 m in depth. In contrast, the upper section is partially covered and is composed of a conic covering, whose walls are inclined at approximately 45 degrees and in part collapsed inward. Its diameter is similar to the lower chamber. Both parts are made in masonry work of travertine rocks irregularly bonded with lime mortar in generally horizontal rows. Inside the construction, the structure is partially filled by debris from the collapse of the upper section and the soil that leaked inside after the rains (Figs. 8–9).

Interpretation: This structure is probably a vertical kiln with a fixed covering aimed to the production of lime.[2] This hypothesis is supported by the location of the structure, built on the side of a slope in order to take advantage of the constant temperature and the nature of the clay soils. In fact, clayey ground is always sought after for those structures, as, due to the heat, it hardens and provides an excellent solid and heat-efficient surround.[3] Moreover, the upper section of the construction, a cone with walls inclined at 45 degrees, may correspond to the *lamia*, a quite frequent solution for the top level of lime kilns. Those coverings are pierced by lateral openings, the



Figure 7: Lugnano in Teverina (Italy), Kiln of Località Pozzalino.

Figure 8: Lugnano in Teverina (Italy), Kiln of Località Pozzalino, Northern view, upper part of the structure.





Figure 9: Lugnano in Teverina (Italy), Kiln of Località Pozzalino, inside of the structure.

air vents, serving as chimneys, and have two advantages: in areas where rainfall is relatively abundant, which is the case in Umbria, the *lamia* protects the combustion chamber from water infiltrations, and in addition, the waterproofing that it brings to the interior, even thought it reduces the draft, maintains and even increases the temperature. Thus the burning is more even than in kilns open at the top and it avoids the risk of the lime load being ruined by a storm, causing the slaking in the combustion chamber.[4] It is possible to further support the interpretation of the structure as a lime kiln by comparing it with other installations of this type used today not only in other places of Italy but also in different Mediterranean countries (Greece, Tunisia, Syria and others), where the methods of production have hardly changed since antiquity.[5] Finally, the characteristic type of vegetation of the region, composed mostly of shrub, especially broom, may provide further indirect confirmation of this hypothesis, as this vegetation is particularly suitable for this type of kiln.[6] Given that the fuel is fairly small and perfectly dry, it burns quickly and provides the flame the intense heat needed for the calcinations of limestone (1000° C).[7]

Chronology: It is very difficult to determine the chronology of such a structure, given the absolute absence of stratigraphic data or dating materials. Nevertheless, a Roman chronology in not excluded, given the proximity of other settlements belonging to that period.

No. 3 Località Marcignano (Page 137 I SE) (Fig. 10)

Description of the Location: Wide field growing wheat with a faintly triangular perimeter. It declines considerably from the center towards the eastern, western and southern sides corresponding with the bifurcation of the Fosso della Para, which borders the site in those three directions. On the contrary, the northern border is delimited by the Marcignano local road.

Description of the Site: All the surface of the field is affected by the presence of emerging clay materials. Most

of the remains are concentrated on the summit of the plot (average presence of 7 fragments/m^2), then are evenly scattered throughout the slope, and finally decrease progressively as the slope arrives to the Fosso (average presence of 2 fragments/m^2). Also, the color of the land changes substantially from the lighter summit to the edges, where it turns a darker shade, probably because the concentration of the materials. Large quantities of brick fragments and sherds have been found (Figs. 11–18). Also plaster fragments (in Pompeian red) (Fig. 19), glass (Fig. 20), marble slabs of different qualities (Fig. 21), little tesserae of different colors (Fig. 22) and *opus signinum* pavement fragments emerge in lower proportions. After a slightly deeper plowing at the center of the summit, a big quadrangular marble block (1 m wide) was found, one of whose sides was completely preserved (1.80 m) and another one only partially. At the center of one of the bigger faces there is a shallow groove, an element that could certify that the artifact was a doorstep or part of a tub (Fig. 23). Regarding the pottery sherds, there are different types represented. The most common type is the achromous coarse ware, followed by Italic Terra Sigillata

Figure 10: Lugnano in Teverina (Italy), Località Marcignano. Location area of the Villa rustica remains.





Figure 11: Lugnano in Teverina (Italy), Località Marcignano, Villa rustica. Italic Terra Sigillata fragments.



Figure 12: Lugnano in Teverina (Italy), Località Marcignano, Villa rustica. Italic Terra Sigillata fragments.

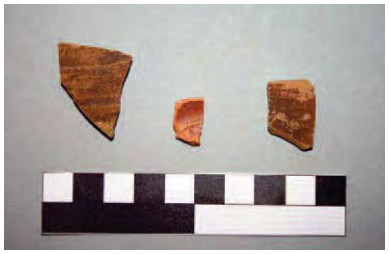


Figure 13: Lugnano in Teverina (Italy), Località Marcignano, Villa rustica. Achromous ware with supperposed color fragments and late Italic Terra Sigillata fragment (center).



Figure 14: Lugnano in Teverina (Italy), Località Marcignano, Villa rustica. Black glaze ware fragment.



Figure 15: Lugnano in Teverina (Italy), Località Marcignano, Villa rustica. Coarse achromous ware fragments.



Figure 16: Lugnano in Teverina (Italy), Località Marcignano, Villa rustica. Italic Terra Sigillata Chiara fragments.



Figure 17: Lugnano in Teverina (Italy), Località Marcignano, Villa rustica. Amphorae fragments.



Figure 18: Lugnano in Teverina (Italy), Località Marcignano, Villa rustica. Mosaic tesserae.

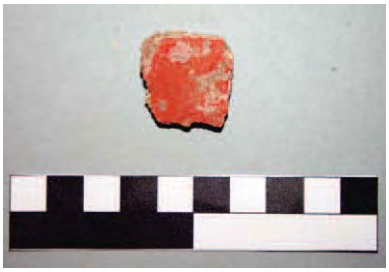


Figure 19: Lugnano in Teverina (Italy), Località Marcignano, Villa rustica. Plaster fragment.



Figure 20: Lugnano in Teverina (Italy), Località Marcignano, Villa rustica. Marble slabs fragments.



Figure 21: Lugnano in Teverina (Italy), Località Marcignano, Villa rustica. Glass fragments.



Figure 22: Lugnano in Teverina (Italy), Località Marcignano, Villa rustica. Fragment of *mortariu*..



Figure 23: Lugnano in Teverina (Italy), Località Marcignano, Villa rustica. Travertine block from a doorstep.

(Figs. 11–12), African Terra Sigillata, achromous fine ware (Fig. 13), thin-walled ware and finally black glaze ware (Fig. 14).

Among the bricks, three of the fragments were stamped tiles:

1. *CIL* XV,[8] 862 (Figs. 24–25):

[C · N]VNN F[ORT PRIM]
[*anulus quasi quidam extans qui occupat spatium versus secundi, in medio PP*]
[C. N]unn(idi) F[ort(unati), Prim(i ? – itivi ?) / P (…) P (…)][9]

G. Nunnidius Fortunatus is an *officinator* who served *Asinia Quadratilla domina* of the *figlinae Med* (…). It has recently been proposed that these installations could be located in the middle Tiber area, in the territory of Orte, as the finding of some stamps near the fluvial harbor of Seripola suggests.[10] The stamp is dated around 142 CE.



Figure 24: Lugnano in Teverina (Italy), Località Marcignano, Villa rustica. Carbon copy of the stamp *CIL* XV, 862.



Figure 25: Lugnano in Teverina (Italy), Località Marcignano, Villa rustica. Fragment of tile with the stamp *CIL* XV, 862.

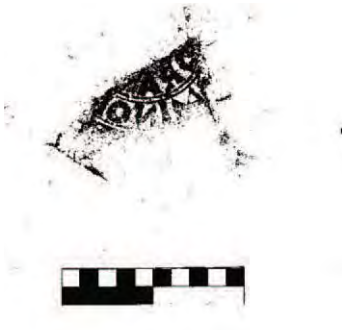


Figure 26: Lugnano in Teverina (Italy), Località Marcignano, Villa rustica. Carbon copy of the stamp *CIL* XV, 773.



Figure 27: Lugnano in Teverina (Italy), Località Marcignano, Villa rustica. Fragment of tile with the stamp *CIL* XV, 773.



Figure 28: Lugnano in Teverina (Italy), Località Marcignano, Villa rustica. Fragment of tile with unidentified stamp.

2. *CIL* XV, 773 (Figs. 26 –27):

[DE PRAEDIS D]OMINOR[VM]
[NOSTR]OR AV[GG]
[De praedis (duorum) d]ominorum / [nostr]or(um) Au[g(ustorum)]
[*protome Minervae vel Romae galeatae dextrorsum: ante hasta*][11]

Considering the *signum*, Steinby proposed attributing the stamp to the production of the *figlinae Genianae*. The same *signum* is repeated in the stamps *CIL* XV, 381 and 383, belonging to the *officinator Travius Felix* operating in the *figlinae Oceanae*. The "*minores*" section of the later has been located along the right banks of the Tiber between the territories of Bomarzo and Bassano in Teverina.[12]

3. Fragment (Fig. 28)

Only a small portion of the third stamp is preserved. Considering its circular or orbicular shape, it could date back between the end of the 1st century CE and Caracalla's period.[13]

Interpretation: The findings provide documentary evidence of a villa rustica. This hypothesis is further supported by the toponym "Marcignano," clearly of praedial origin.[14]

Dating Elements: Pottery fragments and stamped tiles.

Chronology: Roman Republican period–middle or late Imperial Age.

1 For a detailed study of this subject consult D. and N. Soren (eds.), *A Roman Villa and a Late Roman Infant Cemetery: Excavation at Poggio Gramignano Lugnano in Teverina* (Roma: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 1999).

2 For the ancient furnaces consult: C. F. Giuliani, *L'edilizia nell'antichità* (Roma: La Nuova Italia Scientifica, 1990), 125–148; N. Cuomo Di Caprio, "Proposta di classificazione delle fornaci per ceramica e laterizi nell'area italiana, dalla preistoria a tutta l'epoca romana," *Sibrium* 11 (1971/1972): 371–461; J.-P. Adam, *L'arte di costruire presso i Romani: materiali e tecniche*, translated by M. P. Guidobald (Milano: Longanesi, 1988), 63–74.

3 Adam 1988, 71.

4 Adam 1988, 71.

5 Adam 1988, 69.

6 Adam 1988, 72.

7 Adam 1988, 69.

8 *CIL = Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum* (Berlin: Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1893–).

9 M. Steinby, "La cronologia delle figlinae doliari urbane dalla fine dell'età repubblicana fino all'inizio del III secolo," *Bullettino della Commissione Archeologica Comunale di Roma* 84 (1974–1975): 66–67, note 11.

10 P. Aureli, M. A. De Lucia brolli, and S. Del Lungo, *Orte (Viterbo) e il suo territorio. Scavi e ricerche in Etruria Meridionale fra Antichità e Medioevo* (Oxford: John and Erica Hedges Ltd., 2006), 233–234.

[11] Steinby 1974–1975, 43–44.

[12] T. Gasperoni , "Un nuovo insediamento produttivo nella media valle del Tevere," in S. Menchelli and M. Pasquinucci (eds.), *Territorio e produzioni ceramiche. Paesaggi, economia e società in età romana* (Pisa: PLUS—Pisa University Press, 2006), 113–127.

[13] Steinby 1974–1975, 19–23.

[14] G. Uggeri, "L'insediamento rurale nell'Umbria Meridionale tra Tardoantico e Altomedioevo e il problema della continuità," in *L'Umbria Meridionale fra Tardoantico e Altomedioevo, Atti del Convegno di Studio, Acquasparta 6-7 maggio 1989* (Perugia: Università degli studi, 1991), 9–24; S. Del Lungo, "Cultura ed evoluzione del paesaggio dalla tardoantichità al medioevo nella toponomastica amerina," in E. Menestò (ed.), *Amelia e i suoi statuti medievali, Atti della giornata di Studio, Amelia 15 marzo 2001* (Spoleto: Centro italiano di studi sull'alto medioevo, 2001), 196–215.