

I. RURAL SETTLEMENT FARFA

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1. Research objectives

- i. To use field survey evidence (and, where appropriate/available, that from excavation and documents) to write a history of society and settlement in the region between the Tiber and the monastery of Farfa, from prehistory to the present.
- ii. To situate that history (or, more properly, histories) within broader regional (Tiber valley and the Sabina), national (Italy) and international (Mediterranean) perspectives.
- iii. To write detailed histories of transformations in patterns of power, social relationships, and settlement in the region from late Antiquity to the early middle ages, and to situate these within the kind of multi-scalar approach outlined above (1.i).
- iv. To take advantage of the unparalleled early medieval archive from Farfa both to write these histories and to show, in practice, how we can exploit the qualities of both texts and artefacts in the production of narratives about the past.

2. Data collection and analysis

- i. In another version of the multi-scalar approach referred to above (1.ii and 1.iii), I have used the datable ceramics (and, where possible, other material) to produce a series of maps/charts which illustrate the distribution of material culture across this part of the Sabine landscape.

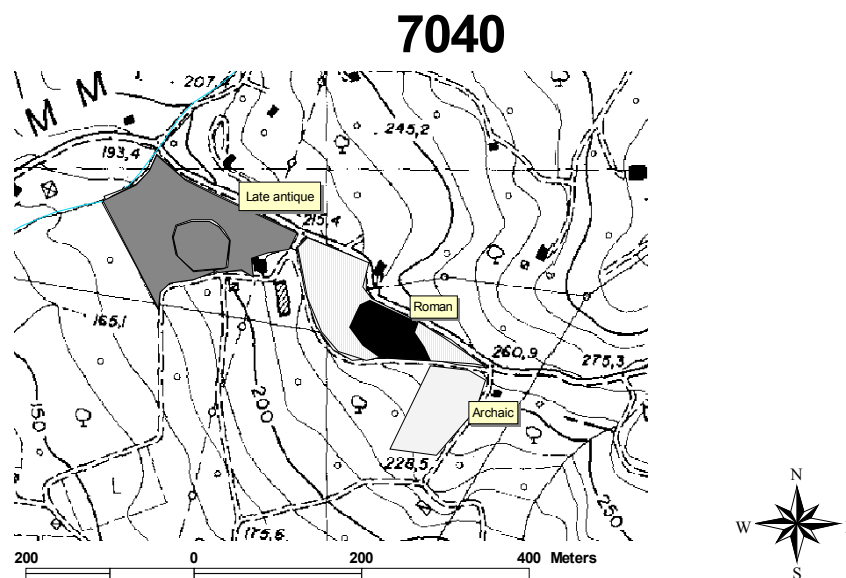


Figure 1: Site 7040 illustrating the distribution of material culture

These range from the distribution of (for example) Roman tile across the whole region, through the multi-period mapping of particular locales, to the

plotting of the distribution of particular classes of material culture on (for example) Roman villas.

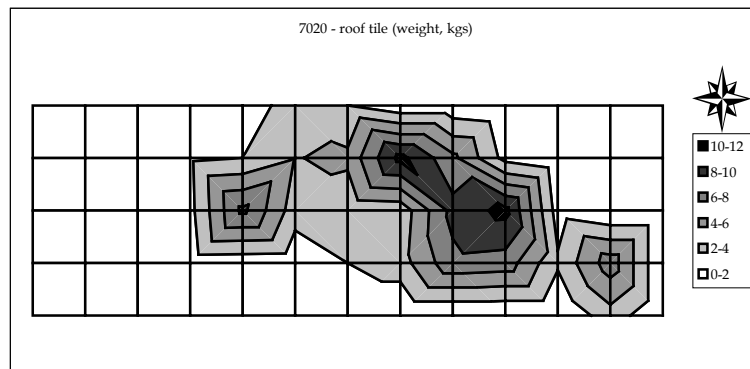


Figure 2: Distribution of roof tile at site 7020

- ii. On the basis of the datable ceramics (both fine and, where possible, coarse wares) I have produced a 'date-range' chart for each concentration ('site') of Roman and/or medieval material. These illustrate not only the beginning and end of human settlement at these particular locales, they also allow me to detect possible breaks in occupation, and to assess the likelihood that the locale was occupied at a particular moment in time.

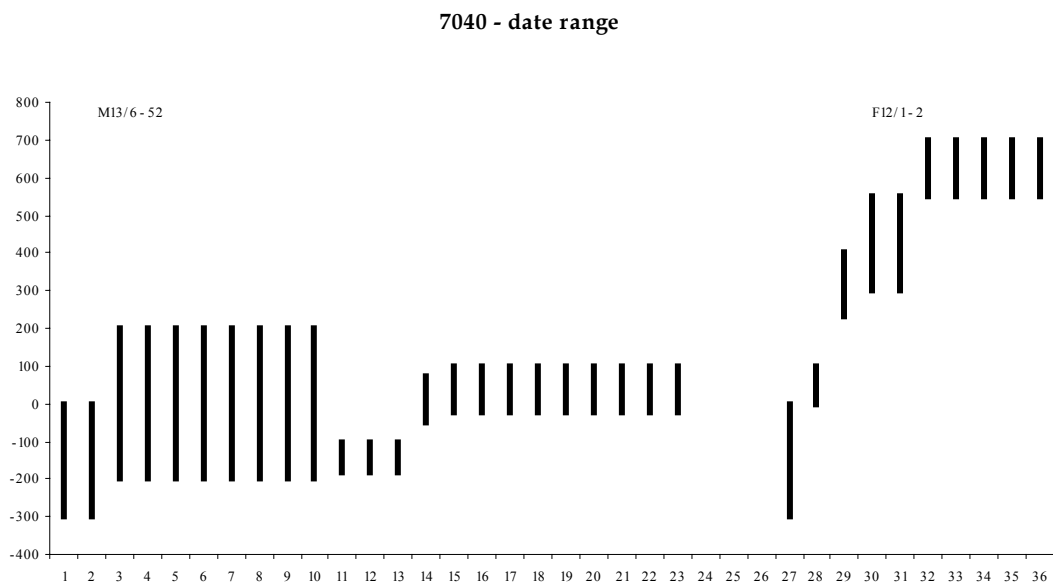


Figure 3: Date range chart for site 7040

- iii. On the basis of these charts, and including information from Maria Pia Muzzioli's earlier survey of part of the region, I have produced a series of century-by-century maps of the distribution of settlement in the valleys of the rivers Riana and Farfa, down to the latter's confluence with the Tiber. These maps are coded to indicate how certain we are that any particular settlement was occupied in the course of that century (see overleaf).

1st century AD

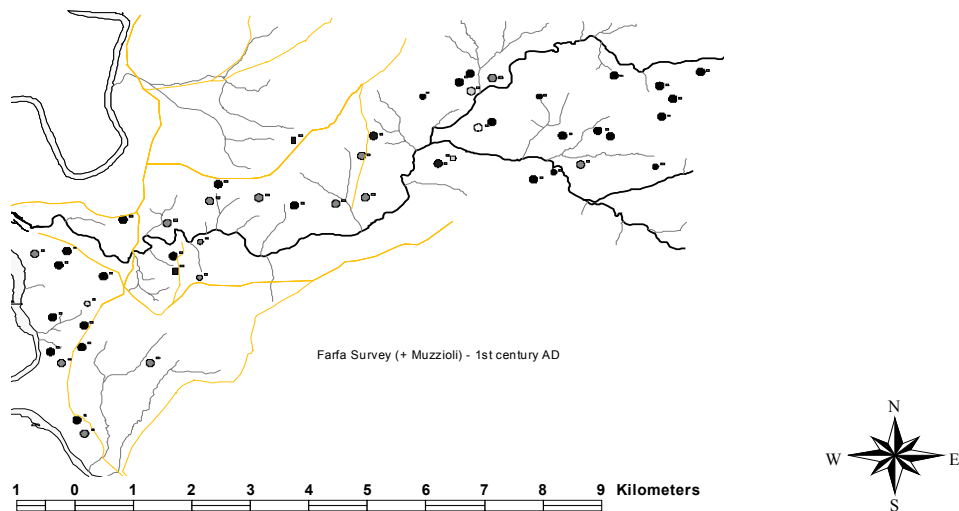


Figure 4: 1st century AD Farfa distribution map

- iv. On the basis of the date-range charts, I have also been able to produce a general understanding of changes in the numbers of settlements in the valley(s) between the third century BC and the seventh century AD .

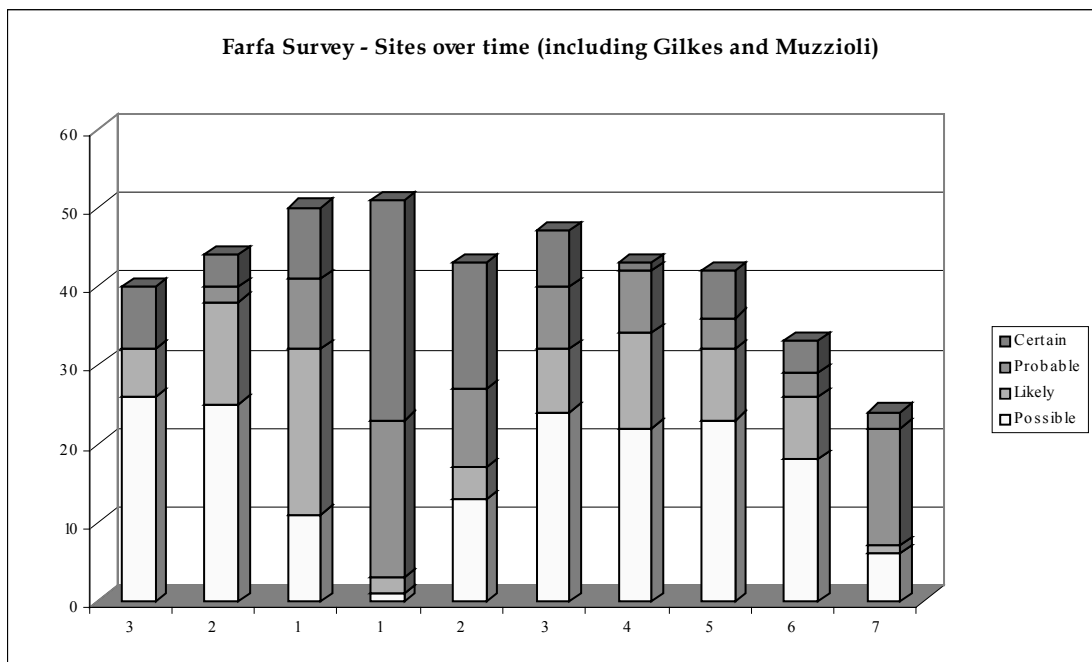


Figure 5: Graph illustrating the changes in the numbers of settlements (vertical) in the valley(s) between the third century BC and the seventh century AD (horizontal)

3. Results and conclusions

- i. Some continuity from the Archaic into the Roman periods, although we will only be able to measure this when we have the final results of the work on the Archaic material.
- ii. As in the rest of Italy, the peak of settlement in this part of the Sabina was in the first century AD. Our ability to be certain about the number of sites

occupied at this time is a product of our ability to date *terra sigillata* quite precisely.

- iii. There appears to be a fairly marked decline in the number of sites in the second century. Analysis of the ‘date range charts’ (see 2.ii, above) for many sites seemed to suggest a break in settlement in/an absence of evidence for the second/third centuries. (The second century is also the beginning of the period when we get an increasing number of sites about which we can only say that it is possible/likely that they were occupied. This is almost entirely due to the broad date ranges currently available for some of the ceramics, in particular the amphora and coarsewares (see section 5).
- iv. Although another major decline in site numbers begins between the fifth and the sixth centuries, and continues into the seventh, we should note that we now have some sites dating to the late Antique period. This was not the case before Helen Patterson and Paul Robert’s analysis of the material from my excavations at *Casale San Donato*. Several significant conclusions emerge from this new understanding (although we should note, before turning to these, that the availability of a tightly dated ceramic dramatically reduces the number of ‘likely/possible’ sites – even if it does not increase the absolute number of sites; but see 3.vi, below).
- v. Although the overall decline in site numbers cannot be denied, some of these seventh-century sites seem to represent continuity with the Roman past. In some cases we can suggest that they occupied only part of a Roman villa site (as in the case of 7040, illustrated in 2.i and 2.ii, above). Others appear to be new foundations, but even here there are hints that some of these were situated in locales that had been abandoned in the early Imperial period.

7th century AD

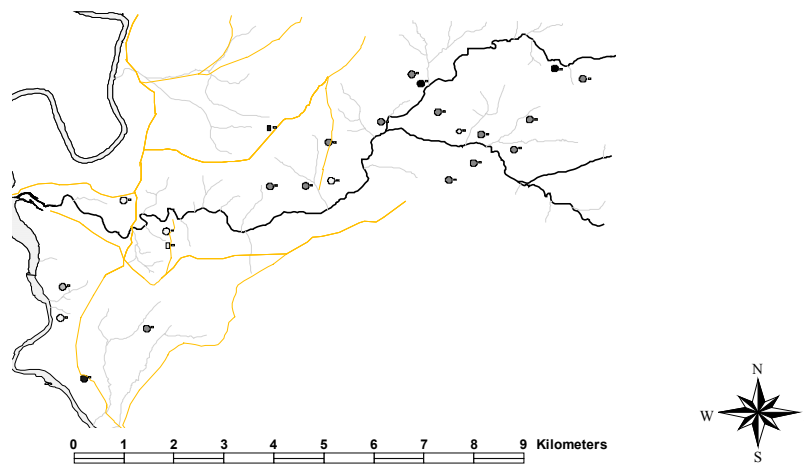


Figure 6: 7th century AD Farfa distribution map

- vi. Perhaps most significant is the fact that these seventh-century sites are not evenly distributed throughout the region between the monastery and the Tiber. If we draw a line north-south through Muzzioli’s site 161 and our site 7125, we find that 17 of our seventh-century sites lie to the west of it (closer to the hills, in the area around the monastery), and only 7 to the east (in the rolling landscape leading down to the Tiber valley; most of these also fall into the possible/likely categories). The equivalent figures for the first century AD

- are 28 and 22. The distribution of these seventh century sites may point to a re-orientation of settlement away from the Tiber valley (and Rome?).
- vii. These settlements also force us to rethink both currently available models for the transition from late antiquity to the middle ages. They directly undermine both the arguments for complete infrastructural collapse and demographic catastrophe. However, they also challenge Toubert's famous arguments for the continuity of the classical patterns of settlement up to the *incastellamento* of the tenth and eleventh centuries.
 - viii. We now have evidence (both documentary and archaeological) that some of these seventh-century sites continued in occupation into the period of *incastellamento* — some even became *castelli*. This undermines Toubert's argument that *incastellamento* constituted a rupture with the past (that *castelli* were founded on new sites) and his suggestion that it was complete — that everyone lived within the *castelli*. The survey (and documentary) evidence thus presents us with both the necessity and the opportunity to rethink the transition from Rome to the middle ages in the Sabina.

4. Publications

Arrangements for the final publication are still being discussed. A short paper was delivered at the Gronigen conference in April, and a version of which will be published in the proceedings.

5. What next?

- i. A detailed restudy of the Roman coarse wares and amphorae is currently underway. One of the results of which should allow us to remove some sites from the 'possible' and 'likely' categories from the second century onwards and produce a more reliable picture of change in the region.
- ii. Write up and publish Casale San Donato.
- iii. Further excavations at San Donato and/or one of the other 7th century sites located in the survey?