From the Field

Wiston Roman Fort, Wiston, Pembrokeshire (SN 0254 1844)

Following aerial photographic and LIDAR data analysis a possible Roman fort was identified on land to the northeast of Wiston in Pembrokeshire by Dyfed Archaeological Trust (DAT).

In July and August 2013 three trenches were opened up within the fort area by DAT with volunteer support, again grant-aided by Cadw. Trench 1 was located in the southwestern corner of the fort and revealed evidence for ramparts and a structure built on its internal edge. North of this was the intervallum road, founded on layers of local stone. Substantial stone lined post-holes were revealed on the inside of the road. Evidence for air dried clay bricks walls was also recorded.

Trench 2 in the centre of the fort revealed possible evidence for a courtyard surface and ephemeral remains that could be associated with the Principia, and the ditches of the trapezoidal enclosure.

Trench 3A crossed the three defensive ditches on the northwestern side of the fort and Trench 3B was placed through the turf and clay rampart.

Pottery analysis by Peter Webster indicates the Roman fort dates between the later 1st and early 2nd century AD, with predominantly imported continental wares. Pottery from the trapezoidal enclosure area indicates a mid-2nd to mid-3rd century date, comprising British manufactured wares.

The site is the first Roman fort to be identified within Pembrokeshire. Further investigative works are proposed in and around the fort site in 2014.

Volunteers clearing the intervallum road

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The excavation and restoration of a Roman nymphaeum at Segni (Lazio), Italy

The Republican nymphaeum at Segni was brought to light in the early 1990s (Cifarelli 1995, 2001; Zevi 1996). Constructed in the 2nd century BC, the nymphaeum is unique in that the mosaic decoration includes a Greek inscription recording the name of its architect, Quintus Mutius.

This inscription points to the Hellenising architecture and influences that are apparent in this area south of Rome. Quintus Mutius was probably born in Greece, and was one of a generation of artists who went to Rome and contributed to a new language of art and architecture in the late Hellenistic period. The

Two large stone-lined postholes

The mosaic inscription of Quintus Mutius
nymphaeum is the only known surviving example of a signed monument which dates to such an important period in Roman architecture, indicating the importance of the monument and the scientific value of the research which is being undertaken.

Laser scan data of the nymphaeum

Following a successful funding application made by the Comune di Segni to the Provincia di Roma in 2013, the monument was brought into the care of the local authority and will now be opened to the public. In late June 2013 the first phase of work took place: a detailed laser scanning of the monument to record its state of preservation and provide a precise plan of the nymphaeum. The work was undertaken by James Miles of the Archaeological Computing Research Group of the University of Southampton using a Faro Focus 3D laser scanner.

In January 2014 a first season of excavation was conducted. Previous illicit work had brought to light the back wall of the fountain, revealing two rows of 3 niches, decorated as wild natural caves by a thick plaster, enriched with pumice stones, sea shells and blue Egyptian glass. The new excavation revealed a single row of 3 niches on each side, with the fountain of the nymphaeum emptying directly into a pool, constructed from a thick red layer of cocciopesto, which completely fills the area within the alcove, retained in front by a low wall. The structure was in use for a considerable period, and was finally in-filled in the late 6th – early 7th century AD. Immediately to the east of the nymphaeum is a large cistern, still fed by a natural spring, which would have supplied the fountain. The surrounding area will be examined by a georadar survey to understand if this was an isolated monument or part of a much larger complex.

The excavation of the nymphaeum

The subsequent phase of work will see the removal of the modern illegal structure currently enclosing the monument, and its protection with a modern light structure. The final phase of the work will be the cleaning and restoration of the monument, which will be completed by the end of 2014. The excavation is jointly conducted by the Archaeological Museum of Segni and the British School at Rome, with the support of the Soprintendenza per I Beni Archeologici del Lazio. Francesco Maria Cifarelli, Federica Colaiacomo (Archaeological Museum of Segni), Stephen Kay (British School at Rome), Letizia Ceccarelli (Cambridge University), Camilla Panzieri and Dimosthenis Kosmopoulos (Independent Archaeologists)

Websites: www.bsr.ac.uk and www.museosegni.it
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F.M. Cifarelli, “Un ninfeo repubblicano a Segni con la firma di Q. Mutius architetto”, in Tra Lazio e Campania, Quaderni del Dipartimento di Scienze dell’Antichità, Università di Salerno, 16, 1995, pp. 159-188