

V.—*Further Excavations at Lanuvium.* By LORD SAVILE, G.C.B., F.S.A.

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SINCE the last communication on the subject of my excavations at Lanuvium, which the Society of Antiquaries did me the honour to publish in 1886,^a those excavations have been carried on continuously, but very slowly, in consequence of the difficulties arising from the necessity of devising some means for disposing of the earth extracted in the course of excavation.

The neighbours would not allow it to be placed on their land although the soil was admirably adapted for renewing that of their vineyards; the municipal authorities possessed no ground on which the soil could be shot, and the alternative of finding some waste land at a great distance, with the necessity of hiring carts and horses for its transport, was too expensive to be thought of.

The only course that remained open was to place the earth in the vineyard itself by raising a mound. This was done, but not without great trouble, labour, and expense, for owing to torrential rains the work had to be done over and over again, and at last it was found necessary to surround the mound with masonry.

The quantity of earth hitherto employed in making this mound is 4,828 cubic metres, and 1,000 cubic metres more will be required to complete the work; the length of the mound, which has now become a beautiful terrace, is 230 feet and its greatest height 132 feet.

The panoramic view from this terrace includes the whole chain of the Volscian mountains extending to Terracina with Monte Circeo, to the south the coast line from Nettuno to Pratica, and westward in the direction of Civita Vecchia.

^a *Archaeologia*, l. 58—65.

On removing the earth under which the western front of the villa was buried, the ruins of a portico or colonnade came to light; fragments of half columns or pilasters of reticulated work were scattered in every direction, while the bases and portions of other pilasters were found *in situ*, together with fragments of arches, cornices, and capitals, as well as an immense number of diamond-shaped wedges, employed in the reticulated work with which the columns and other parts of the building were formed.

It then occurred to me that if a portion of this part of the villa could be reconstructed with the original materials which were so plentifully to hand, some idea might be formed of the appearance which this villa offered in ancient times.

This restoration was accordingly undertaken and has been admirably carried out by the very able clerk of the works, Signor Vincenzo Seratrice, who has charge of the excavations.

Plate VI. fig. 1, shows the condition in which the ruined colonnade or portico was found when the earth with which it was covered, in some places to a depth of from 15 to 20 feet, was removed by excavation.

At the extreme distance on this plate is seen a column crushed under a mass of concrete which apparently formed part of the vaulted support of the upper story of the villa.

The portico evidently formed an ambulatory, the pleasure and comfort of which were greatly enhanced by the veranda of vines planted in front of it, where the stone sockets are seen which supported the wooden uprights of the pergola; acting on this hint I have caused vines to be planted in the places indicated.

The length of the restored portico is 83 feet, that of the unrestored portion on my property is 80 feet, while in the neighbouring vineyard the ruins extend to 152 feet, making a total as far as discovered of 314 feet. There is, however, reason to believe that this ambulatory may have continued along the west front and round to the north, in fact it probably enclosed two sides of the hill on the summit of which the upper stories of the villa were built.

The restored part of the portico consists of six complete arches and two lateral closed half arches; the height of the portico from base to summit of the cornice is 15 feet 2 inches, of the parapet 2 feet 2 inches.

The wall behind the portico must have supported another elevation which, however, it has been impossible to restore, as no architectural documents (if they may be so called) have been found to permit of such an attempt.

A large stone channel of peperino which ran along the above-mentioned wall seems to have been intended for carrying off the rain from the presumed upper building.



Fig. 2. Colonnade as reconstructed with the old materials.



Fig. 1. Colonnade as excavated.

The general effect and noble character of the portico as restored is well seen in Plate VI. fig. 2, but it must be borne in mind that this restoration comprises but a small portion of the building.

The vast extent of this ancient villa and the simple grandeur of its style leads one naturally to enquire who may have been its owners.

It is known that Antoninus Pius was born at Lanuvium A.D. 86, his father, Aurelius Fabius, must therefore have been in possession of a villa at Lanuvium long before that date and in all probability inherited it.

Marcus Aurelius, the son-in-law of Antoninus Pius, who changed his name from Annius to Aurelius on entering the Aurelian family, appears to have passed much of his time at the Aurelian villa, of which, in writing to his old tutor Fronto, he speaks, as the quiet retreat to which he returns with so much pleasure; here he lived very happily with the Empress Faustina and their numerous family, Faustina the much maligned, if we may judge from the words of the Emperor himself, who, in his work entitled *Meditations*, says that he thanks the gods for having given him such an amiable, affectionate, and simple wife.

It was here that several of their children were born, amongst them Commodus, who was particularly attached to Lanuvium, for it was here that he was able later to indulge in his favourite pastime of slaying wild beasts in the arena, which still exists beneath the "Grand Place of Civita Lavinia," not ten minutes walk from the villa on the hill above.

There can be no doubt therefore that a villa existed at Lanuvium which, during three reigns was inhabited by the imperial family, and the question has arisen whether this may not be the Aurelian villa "Lorium," from which the philosopher Fronto dates a letter, in his correspondence with his former pupil Marcus Aurelius, giving him an account of his boys. "I have seen your little brood," writes Fronto, "and nothing ever gave me greater pleasure, they resemble you to such a degree that no greater likeness ever was seen. I seemed to see you double, it was you on the right, it was you on the left I thought I saw. They have, thanks to the gods, a fine healthy colour, and good lungs to judge from their voices when they cry; one of them held in his hand a piece of white bread, like a royal child; the other, a piece of brown bread like the true son of a philosopher. Their little voices were so sweet and pretty that I seemed to recognise in their prattle the clear and pleasing sound of your own voice."

These children were the twins Commodus and Antoninus, who were born at Lanuvium, and probably in this villa. Ernest Renan considers that the villa "Lorium," from which Fronto wrote to Marcus Aurelius, was at Lanuvium; this

appears from his defence of the Empress Faustina in his work, *Mélanges d'Histoire et de Voyages*, in which he speaks of *cette villa de "Lorium," cette belle retraite de "Lanuvium."*

There is, however, reason to believe that "Lorium" was the name of another villa, of which at present no trace exists, but which belonged to Antoninus Pius, and was situated twelve miles from Rome between that capital and "Alsium," now Palo, the actual favourite summer bathing place of the modern Romans, which is one hour distant from Rome by railway.

In the correspondence above referred to, in a letter from Marcus Aurelius to his old tutor Fronto, he says he proposes remaining some time longer at "Lorium," as the season is not favourable for residing at Lanuvium. It is evident therefore that there were two villas and that Lorium was not at Lanuvium.

Be this as it may with regard to the *name* of the villa, the fact seems to be established that an imperial villa existed at Lanuvium, which belonged to the Aurelian family for at least four generations, and that this was the villa in question may be inferred from the circumstance that there is no other site in Lanuvium where a villa large enough for an imperial residence could have been built.

Another argument that may be adduced in favour of this view is the fact of the villa having been adorned with such an important work or copy of a work of Greek sculpture as the equestrian group of Parian marble of which fragments of seven horses have now been found; showing that the composition probably consisted of a chariot with four horses with two attendant warriors on horseback on either side, as may be seen on some Roman coins, for instance on one of Trajan in the British Museum, the reverse of which shows the Basilica Ulpia, on the entablature of which is represented a quadriga with horses led by genii and attended on each side by two warriors on horseback.

A similar group surmounts the triumphal arch seen in the background of the alto-relievo representing the procession of the spoils taken from Jerusalem on the arch of Titus at Rome.

The excavations have disclosed five torsos in armour and a sixth dressed in a tunic and mantle, which may have been that of the charioteer, in addition to which have been found the pendant sandaled foot of a rider, part of a saddle-cloth, numerous legs and hoofs and portions of tails of horses.

The fragment of the seventh horse's head was only discovered a few days ago, and it may be of interest to know what is the opinion with regard to it of the well-known sculptor in Rome, Mr. Macdonald, who kindly takes charge of the pieces of sculpture that are found in the excavations. Writing on the 28th April

he says, "I have just received the fragment of the seventh horse's head, found at Civita Lavinia a few days ago; it is even more beautiful than any of the others. The bold style of execution and the highly-finished details confirm the importance of the magnificent group in its original grandeur. This fragment differs from the rest, as it is broken off near the jawbone, and the fracture runs close to the eyes, so that it cannot possibly belong to any of the heads yet found; the expanded nostrils and the delicate work of the mouth are superior to anything I have seen, and it is certainly a very valuable discovery. If we had the good chance of finding the other pieces, this would be the best specimen of the equestrian group. One side of the marble head has been discoloured by fire and rendered almost like limestone."

Specimens of architecture and masonry of every period of Roman art are found at Lanuvium, but the latest excavations have brought to light some still more remarkable examples of what may be considered as prehistoric architectural decoration; these are terra-cotta antefixals, or finial ornaments of the "imbrices" or semicircular pipes which covered the tile-joints of the roof of a temple.

They represent female heads, each crowned with a tiara, above which rises a further elaborate head-dress.

The character of these heads is unmistakably archaic Greek, resembling in a remarkable way the archaic marble statues discovered a few years ago under the foundations of the Acropolis at Athens, which are supposed to be fragments of groups that formerly adorned the pediments of more ancient temples.

Plate VII. reproduces one of these heads, the only one of six that was found intact. The hair, eyes, and eyebrows have been painted brown, while deep red and purple have been employed in giving colour to the outer ornaments forming the aureole, if so it may be called, which surrounds the head.

This elaborate head-dress has at the back a support in terra-cotta which is connected with the "imbrex" covering the tile joints.

There is one remarkable feature in the head-dress of these antefixals which, as far as I am aware, is unique; a space 2 inches in width above the tiara is pierced with two rows of perforations; by this ingenious and beautiful contrivance the effect is produced of a halo of light surrounding the head, while, when the sun is shining upon it, the sky seen through the perforations would resemble turquoises or sapphires in a setting of gold. It is difficult to imagine a more beautiful and original decoration than these antefixals would present along the skyline of the roof of a temple in dazzling sunlight against a dark blue sky.

There are in the British Museum several antefixals in terra-cotta from Capua

of archaic Greek character, but they have not the remarkable head-dress which distinguishes those from Lavinium.

Recent discoveries at Olympia and elsewhere have produced numerous specimens of an original style of decoration in which the system employed in painting vases has been applied to protective slabs of terra-cotta, proving that in the archaic period Greek architects made use of painted terra-cotta slabs to cover the upper portions of temples, enabling them at the same time to obtain a polychrome ornamentation of great beauty.

What is known of the primitive architecture of the Greeks explains this method; in distant ages, when the Greek temples were built of wood, it was necessary to protect against bad weather the projecting parts, such as the cornice, the pediment, &c., and this was effectually done by terra-cotta coverings or casings. Later on, when the architects made use of stone in building temples, the necessity for covering portions of the building with terra-cotta no longer existed, but the custom continued, perhaps from habit, perhaps from a feeling of a want of colour. This is the case, not only at Lanuvium but also in the remains of the Artemision at Nemi, which I had the good fortune to discover in 1885, and where slabs of painted terra-cotta friezes were found with holes for the nails by which these slabs were fixed to the stone walls of the interior as well as the bronze nails themselves. When, however, marble was used in the temples the architects abandoned the system of terra-cotta protective decoration, which appears to have been employed only when the material was of a calcareous and porous character. With these antefixals were found several slabs of terra-cotta with friezes of bold and beautiful design purely Greek in character, which bore traces of having been painted, and which were pierced with holes for the bronze nails with which they were fixed to the interior walls of the temple.

It is almost impossible to give a date to works like these of pre-historic character; the date of the antefixals in terra-cotta from Capua, in the British Museum, has been ascertained to be of the sixth century before Christ, that is to say, about the time of Cræsus; but if I may venture to hazard a conjecture I think there is reason to believe that the antefixals of Lanuvium are of a more ancient date.

According to tradition Lanuvium was founded by a Greek colony under Diomedes after the fall of Troy, 1184 B.C.

There is no record of a Greek colony having been established at Lanuvium *after* the foundation of Rome, we are therefore led to the conclusion that Lanuvium must have existed before the time of Romulus.



TERRA COTTA ANTEFIXAL FOUND AT LANUVIUM.

That this was the case may be gathered from the circumstances attending the death of Tatius (king of the Sabines and co-regent with Romulus after the death of Remus), who was murdered at Lanuvium, B.C. 742, for having insulted the ambassadors of the Laurentini, Lanuvium being then the frontier town of the Latin confederation in the direction of the Volsci.

Lanuvium, therefore, must have been a place of some importance when Rome had been only eleven years in existence.

The date of the foundation of Rome being 753 B.C. it is evident that these archaic Greek antefixals, if they were ornaments of a temple built by Greek colonists, must be of a date prior to the foundation of Rome.

Given the time required for the rise and growth of a town that possessed such an important position as Lanuvium held at the date of the foundation of Rome, one hundred and fifty years would not seem too much for the requisite development of such town; this would bring the date of the foundation of Lanuvium to within three centuries of the traditional period given to it, and supposing the temple to have been built during the last fifty years of that period the date of the antefixals would be about 800 B.C.

This is, of course, mere surmise based upon what may be looked upon as mythical data. Still they are data that were accepted by the early Romans themselves, nor can we afford too lightly to discard traditions of even pre-historic and almost fabulous character, since the discovery of these archaic Greek works may prove that the *tradition* of Lanuvium having been founded by a Greek colony has been converted into a fact.

I had prepared several other photographs to accompany this paper but I have thought that it would be more interesting for the Society to see one of the original *antefixæ*, which I am glad to have been able to produce this evening, and which I am happy to think will find a place in that magnificent storehouse of archaeological treasures, the British Museum. I am aware that it was the custom of the Emperor Hadrian, and perhaps of other emperors, to introduce in the buildings with which they adorned their villas specimens of architecture and architectural ornaments from Egypt, Greece, and other countries; these *antefixæ* might therefore come under the head of such imitations were it not for two circumstances which are opposed to that supposition, for they not only differ in substance and colour from all the Roman *terra cottas* with which I am acquainted but in the manner in which they are painted.

The question of the employment of *terra cotta* in roof decorations by the early Greeks is one that has engaged the serious attention of the celebrated German

Professors Dörpfeld, Graeben, Siebold, and Bowman, who in 1881 travelled through Greece and Sicily for the express purpose of studying the employment of terra cotta in the roofs of ancient Greek buildings. In the course of these studies they came to the conclusion that the difference between the early Greek and the Roman terra cotta ornaments employed on roofs and exposed portions of buildings consisted in the mode of painting these ornaments; while the Romans painted them on a stucco preparation or white ground which gave the colours great brilliancy, the Greeks laid their colours on the clay itself, which was afterwards fired; but while the former proved unsuitable for external use, and the colours, like paintings on stone and marble, disappeared after a time, the colours employed by the Greeks have lasted for centuries, like those on the Gelo Treasury at Olympia, which are still fresh although they have been exposed to wind and weather from a date about 900 years before the Christian era.

The colours in the Greek mode being absorbed by the porous nature of the clay when burnt in the furnace, become so intimately connected with it that the colour can only be removed by scraping it off with the clay, whereas in many cases by the Roman system the colour can be lifted off in pieces with a knife. This is the opinion of Professor Bowman, and, if this test be a true one, there can be no doubt that the antefixals of Lanuvium are ancient Greek works, since they offer no trace of the intervention of stucco or white ground beneath the colours with which they have been ornamented.

It is impossible to say at present what was the temple to which these antefixals belonged, but the interest attached to them would be greatly increased if it could be proved that they adorned the celebrated shrine of Juno Sospita, for which Lanuvium was so renowned. At all events since the excavations are being continued on the site where the antefixals were discovered we may hope that some clue may be found ere long to these enigmatical specimens of archaic Greek art.