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## EXCAVATIONS AT ECCLES, 1963

### SECOND INTERIM REPORT

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#### INTRODUCTION

Excavations were continued<sup>1</sup> by the Lower Medway Archaeological Research Group during 1963 at the site of the Romano-British villa at Rowe Place Farm, Eccles, in the parish of Aylesford (N.G.R. TQ/722605; O.S. 6 in. Sheet TQ/76 S.W.).

The work was undertaken once again by kind permission of the land-owners, Messrs. Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers Limited, and with the most generous co-operation of the tenant farmers, Messrs. A. A. and A. E. Southwell, to whom I am greatly indebted for their continuous help. The excavation was entirely financed by generous grants from the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, the Kent Archaeological Society, the Craven Fund and the Haverfield Trust of the University of Oxford, and by public contributions.

My thanks are due to the many volunteers who made this excavation possible, and in particular to the following for their sustained support throughout a lengthy season: Misses A. M. Arnott, M. Bennett, L. S. Smith and M. Webster; and Messrs. D. Bartram, I. J. Bissett, P. Dives, D. Dorrington, L. A. Griffith, A. C. Harrison, B.A., T. Hetherington, W. A. Knowles, C. E. J. Martin, A. Miles, A. M. Rowland, B.A., E. R. Swain and P. Whiteoak. I am also greatly indebted to Dr. J. P. C. Kent, F.S.A., for kindly identifying the coins, and to Mr. R. G. Foord for taking charge of the monochrome photography and supplying the prints illustrating this report.

#### THE EXCAVATION

Work this season was carried on mainly to north and west of the 1962 area and fell into two distinct parts, (a) on the Bath Building, and (b) on the Living Quarters. In both areas the same three periods of construction were recognized as were noted in last year's interim report.

<sup>1</sup> *Arch. Cant.*, lxxviii (1963), 125-41. I am indebted to Professor Sir Ian Richmond, P.S.A., and to Professor S. S. Frere, V.P.S.A., who kindly read the present report in draft form and contributed many helpful suggestions.

*Period I: c. A.D. 75-100. (a) The Bath Building*

Very little was recovered during 1962 to suggest the purpose of the few structures known to antedate Period II. It is quite clear now, however, that some parts of an early bath building could have been recovered under the *opus signinum* floors of Rooms 20 and 21 where considerations of space and time at the very end of the earlier season of excavation prevented methodical examination at depth.

A part of this first bath building has now been exposed, but it is certain that much of it still awaits investigation to the west of the 1963 area. It was found partly under the successive structures of Periods II and III but, where its rooms had avoided subsequent destruction, it lay close to the topsoil. The plan of several of its rooms has been completely recovered and presents the normal bath-house plan with one rather unusual feature for a villa, a circular *laconicum*, Room 32, projecting beyond the main line of the building.

*Room 32.* This is a large *laconicum*, circular<sup>2</sup> in plan, except where it meets the north-east wall of the bath building where allowance was made for a doorway. Its wall was 1 ft. 6 in. thick, built of ragstone set in bright yellow mortar, and the room had an internal diameter of 18 ft. Internally, the wall was rendered with bright yellow mortar above the level of the suspended floor only, but no traces remained of any box-tiles; externally, the wall was similarly rendered and finished with a coating of whitewash (Plate I). The *laconicum* was heated by a hypocaust constructed on a floor of hard yellow mortar aggregate, which was laid on a very solid foundation of mortared ragstone resting directly upon the subsoil; the floor was 2 in. thick and the foundation 1 ft. The suspended floor, built of bridging-tiles none of which was recovered intact, was supported by *pilae*, consisting mainly of square tiles (9½ by 9½ by 2 in.) mortared together and rising, at a height of 2 ft. 4 in., to the level of the suspended floor; some larger tiles (of two sizes, 11 by 11 by 2¼ in., and 16 by 11 by 2¼ in.) were also used as bases for the *pilae*. The ragstone wall of the *laconicum* was interrupted, at a height of 1 ft. 8 in., by three courses of corbelled bonding-tiles, each course projecting a little further inwards so as to afford additional support to the suspended floor at its weakest points.

The hypocaust was originally served by a stokehole to its south-west. An original flue, 1 ft. 10 in. wide, pierced the wall which, at this point, was neatly finished with courses of bonding-tiles to give it a regular face; the floor of the *laconicum* was extended beyond the wall into this flue. Both the floor near the flue, the flue-walls and the *pilae* nearest to it showed evidence of considerable burning. This original flue was subsequently blocked by ragstones mortared to its walls, and the hypocaust was served by a new furnace to the north-west at a

<sup>2</sup> *'Ipsumque ad circumum fieri oportere videtur.'* Vitruvius, *De Architectura*, V x 5.

time when it would seem clear that some of the rooms were reconstructed (Plate II).

The construction of this secondary furnace necessitated breaching the wall of the *laconicum*. The new flue had cheeks 1 ft. thick, built entirely of bonding-tiles set in a bright yellow mortar, which appeared a little darker than its original colour due to burning; both cheeks were very reddened by fire and in a very brittle condition. The floor of the flue was constructed of roofing-tiles, which were laid directly on the subsoil outside the *laconicum* and projected slightly on to the room's floor; these roofing-tiles were covered with a thick deposit of soot and ash, in which were found pieces of charcoal and mineral coal, with much pottery and domestic refuse extending on to the floor of the *laconicum* beyond the mouth of the flue. The external walls of the stokehole were 2 ft. thick, of ragstone set in bright yellow mortar; the south-west wall of the furnace was built directly against the north-east wall of the bath building. The space between the south-west external wall and the south-west cheek of the flue contained much accumulated soot and ash as well as much domestic refuse.

Circular baths such as Room 32 are normally a feature of military establishments,<sup>3</sup> whose *laconica* have independent furnaces and are entered directly from their *frigidaria*; these are usually dated from the Flavian period to the middle of the second century A.D. Town baths, too, were equipped with circular *laconica* or *sudatoria*,<sup>4</sup> but there seem to be very few parallels for such circular baths in villa sites.

Grenier,<sup>5</sup> in discussing the Rouhling villa,<sup>6</sup> refers also to the villas at Friesdorf,<sup>7</sup> Wiltingen<sup>8</sup> and Bubenheim;<sup>9</sup> the Rouhling *laconicum* does not project beyond the line of the bath building, but is incorporated within it. The only close parallel to Room 32 in a British villa would seem to be at the Ashted villa,<sup>10</sup> which had a circular *laconicum* offset at one end of the bath block, but of smaller diameter (10 ft.) than Room 32.

The area immediately to the south-west of Room 32 has not yet

<sup>3</sup> For a general discussion, see M. C. Fair, *Circular Bath Buildings in Connection with Cohort Forts*, in *J.R.S.*, xvii (1927), 220 ff., with fifteen British and German military parallels; also, C. M. Daniels, *The Roman Bath House at Red House, Beaufort, near Corbridge*, in *AA*, xxxvii (1959), 85-176.

<sup>4</sup> E.g. the Roman baths at Bath, *Archæologia*, lxxv (1926), 1-18, and at Wroxeter, D. Atkinson, *Report on Excavations at Wroxeter, 1923-1927*.

<sup>5</sup> A. Grenier, *Habitations gauloises et Villas latines dans la Cité des Médiomatrices*, Paris, 1906. I owe this reference to Professor Sir Ian Richmond, P.S.A.

<sup>6</sup> *Op cit.*, 129.

<sup>7</sup> *Bonner Jahrbücher* 81, 212.

<sup>8</sup> *Jahresbericht des Gesellschaft für nützliche Forschungen*, Trier, 1856, 61 ff.

<sup>9</sup> *Bonner Jahrbücher* 72, 126.

<sup>10</sup> A. W. G. Lowther, *Excavations at Ashted, Surrey, Third Report (1929)*, in *Surrey Arch. Coll.*, xxxviii (pt. II), 132-48. I owe the original reference to Lt.-Col. G. W. Meates, F.S.A.



been examined, but it must clearly contain at least one room giving access to the *laconicum* through the doorway in its wall.

Room 30 is at present partly inferred and occupies an area, approximately 30 by 19 ft., containing Room 31. It is very likely that Room 30 was the *frigidarium* of the bath building, giving direct access to the *laconicum*, and Room 31 the cold plunge-bath of the *frigidarium*. Part at least of Room 30 was floored with a mosaic, a few square inches of which were found *in situ* at the north corner of the room; this mosaic was laid on an *opus signinum* bedding, some 4 in. thick, built on a foundation of tightly packed yellow mortar and gravel, which was found badly damaged by the later construction of the second period drain. No trace was found, within the excavated area, of a south-west wall continuing the alignment of the south-west wall of Room 31; but this is not necessary, if it can be accepted that the whole area was one room.

Room 31 is a small cold plunge-bath, 13 by 7 ft., with walls of ragstone set in the usual bright yellow mortar; these were found robbed down to their lowest foundation courses. The south-west wall of this room was only 1 ft. 6 in. wide; the other three walls were of the standard 2-ft. thickness of the rest of the bath building. This room was floored with a mosaic, in the well-known manner of other cold plunge-baths, laid over an *opus signinum* bedding, 1 ft. in thickness, itself laid on a mortared ragstone foundation resting directly upon the subsoil (Section K-L). The mosaic was almost completely destroyed—or perhaps its *tesserae* had been methodically removed for re-use elsewhere—except in one or two places at the junctions of floor and walls where a few square inches of *tesserae* still remained *in situ*. Nothing can, of course, be said about the pattern of this mosaic, except that it probably had a white border.<sup>11</sup>

Water from this plunge-bath was disposed of by a drain built at its west corner, which was later re-used in Period II (Plate IV). It was built with ragstone walls, of which the northern was 1 ft. and the southern 1 ft. 6 in. thick; these walls were set in bright yellow mortar within a construction trench cut through the subsoil. The bottom of the drain consisted of tiles, but both bottom and sides were covered internally with a coating of *opus signinum* forming a very effective seal. The channel of the drain was found to be virtually clean without any accumulation of silt.

The area between the south-east wall of Room 31 and the north-east wall of Room 28 was found completely unoccupied and filled with much *débris* resting upon the undisturbed subsoil (Section K-L). There was no trace of any kind of floor, nor any evidence for anything structural up to the south-east wall of the bath building which, though

<sup>11</sup> Cf. the Fishbourne mosaics of same date, in *Antiq. Journ.*, xlv (1964), 1-8.

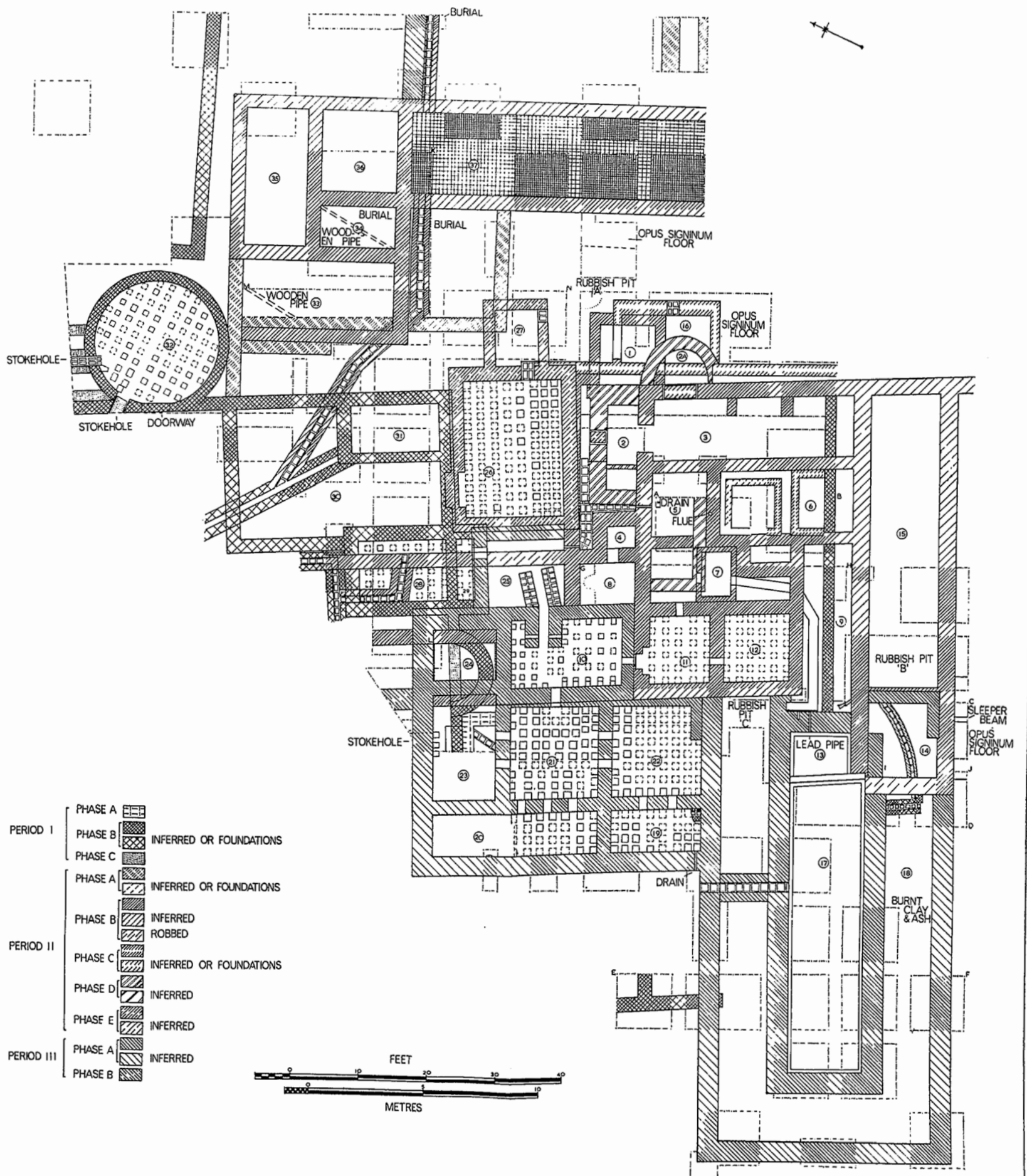


FIG. 1.

robbed down to its lowest foundation courses, could be traced to Rooms 28 and 29. No explanation can at present be offered for this vacant space, unless it can be considered as an entrance or corridor leading into the larger Room 30, with a floor which need not have been other than mortar and was completely destroyed in the subsequent robbing. This possibility is reinforced by the fact that the subsoil in this space was encountered at the same depth as the lowest level of the robbing of the walls of Rooms 28 and 31; this clearly suggests that the floor lay at a level only very slightly higher than the foundation courses of these walls.

Room 28 was found to have been completely demolished. It measured 12 ft. 6 in. by 9 ft., with walls of ragstone and bright yellow mortar; these were 2 ft. thick, except for the south-east wall dividing it from Room 29 which was only 1 ft. 6 in. wide. This room had contained a hypocaust, of which only three tiles (9 by 9 by 2 in. thick) of a *pila* were found *in situ* set upon an *opus signinum* floor with yellow mortar; the floor was 4 in. thick and laid on an extremely solid foundation of mortared ragstone to a thickness of 10 in. lying on the subsoil in identical manner to the foundation of the floor in Room 32 (Section K-L; Plate V). This room was so thoroughly destroyed in subsequent periods that it was impossible to deduce the height of the suspended floor over the hypocaust. The function of this room is clearly that of a *tepidarium*, in view of its distance from any stokehole and of the presence of Rooms 38 and 39 to the south-west.

A short length of drain was found turning a right angle immediately outside the north-west wall of Room 28, sealed beneath a second-period wall (Fig. 1). This drain had sides and bottom of bonding tiles, set in bright yellow mortar, but not rendered with *opus signinum*.

Room 29, a very small room measuring 2 ft. 6 in. by 9 ft, is undoubtedly a warm plunge-bath built over a hypocaust of which only the base tile (9 by 9 by 2 in.) of a *pila* was preserved *in situ* at its north corner where it was mortared to the *opus signinum* floor of the room. The walls of this room, except for the slighter wall (1 ft. 6 in.) dividing it from Room 28, were the bath building's standard 2 ft. in thickness, of ragstone and bright yellow mortar; they were almost entirely robbed to their lowest courses and then overlaid by the successive structures of Periods II and III.

Room 39, is largely unexcavated and only its extreme south-eastern portion was exposed below the later walls and floors. It contained a hypocaust over an *opus signinum* floor, which was 2-3 in. thick; only the mortar traces of its *pilae* remained on this floor. The known walls of this room were 1 ft. 6 in. thick, but of the same ragstone and bright yellow mortar construction. This room is very likely to be the main *caldarium* of the bath suite, particularly in view of its apsidal end, a

feature fairly usual in such rooms; its *praefurnium* no doubt lies further to the south-west in the area beyond the present excavation.<sup>12</sup>

*Room 38*,—small apsidal room (10 ft. at its widest and 4 ft. in maximum depth), opens off Room 39. Its wall was 2 ft. thick and built entirely of bonding-tiles set with bright yellow mortar, which was also used to render both the inner and outer faces of the wall (Plate III); some ragstone was also found *in situ* on the uppermost course of tiles which clearly suggests that, at a higher level, the construction was of ragstone and mortar. This room had been floored with yellow mortar compacted to the consistency of *opus signinum*, without any traces of *pilae*, and it is very probable that it was not hypocausted; it may have contained a hot-water basin (*labrum*) but, owing to the thorough demolition of this room, it is not possible to say what was the height of an upper floor. It would seem that, in the original plan of the bath building, Rooms 38 and 39 formed one single unit, and were later separated by the construction of a wall, 1 ft. 6 in. wide and of ragstone in orange-coloured mortar, built across the opening of Room 38.

The south-east wall of the bath building continues to the south-west beyond the part of Room 39 so far excavated and so does the *opus signinum* floor with its traces of mortar for *pilae*, suggesting that Room 39 was a fairly large hot room.

In this area some sections of walls have been exposed which, structurally, antedate the building of Room 39, as does a drainage system which is probably connected with the early drain found under structures of Period III in 1962 and traced only as far as the east corner of Room 19.<sup>13</sup> However, the area in which these features were first encountered at the very end of the excavation was so restricted that their examination had to be postponed.

#### (b) *The Living Quarters*

The general area of the villa's living quarters in this first period is thought to lie north-west and west of the bath building, but the evidence recovered so far is so slight that little of a positive nature can be reported.

A few trial trenches yielded evidence of two successive *opus signinum* floors in the area beyond Rooms 32 and 35; the pottery sealed under these floors is generally of the same types and fabrics as found in comparable layers in the bath building area. A section of wall was associated with these *opus signinum* floors, but it was found completely robbed out; no other structural evidence was recovered in this area.

<sup>12</sup> Confirmed in 1964.

<sup>13</sup> *Arch. Cant.*, lxxviii (1963), 128.

*Period II: c. A.D. 100-150*

Work was aimed at completing the plan of this period's bath building, and initiating the examination of the part of the villa's living quarters known to be contained within the area under investigation.

*(a) The Bath Building*

Room 26, belonging to the latest phase in the building's structural history, was almost completely unknown until it was first exposed this season as only its south-east wall had been partially cleared in 1962. It is a large hypocausted room (20 by 15 ft.) served by its own separate furnace, Room 27. Of its ragstone walls (2 ft. in thickness) in the characteristic off-white mortar of this period, only the south-east wall was preserved in good condition, and only short sections of the north-east wall remained on either side of the flue from Room 27; the rest were completely robbed out, although their construction trenches could be identified. Some courses of bonding-tiles were used in the construction of the south-east wall as well as some lumps of tufa, particularly below the level of the suspended floor, and the inner face of the wall was rendered with a coating of off-white mortar, which did not survive *in situ* above the suspended floor (Plate IX). The hypocaust was built on a floor of hard yellow mortar, 2 in. thick, laid on a foundation of ragstone above the subsoil; the *pilae* built on this floor were composed of a larger base (12 by 12 by 2 in.) and several smaller tiles, but none of the latter were found *in situ* intact. The floor was suspended over these *pilae* at a height of 2 ft. and rested upon slight ledges in the south-east and north-east walls of the room. The suspended floor was completely destroyed, and only very few lumps of *opus signinum* were recovered in the mass of débris filling the room; it was also noticeable that very few of its *pila* tiles remained, clearly pointing to robbing and re-use elsewhere, very probably in the Period III hypocausts.

The lowest level over the hypocaust floor in this room was filled with a deposit of domestic rubbish, which extended beyond the robbed north-west wall of this room (Section K-L: Layer 21) and contained much pottery of characteristically late-Antonine date, while a *dupondius* of Antoninus Pius was found lying in the mortar débris at the extreme south-west end of this room.

Room 27 (6 by 8 ft.) is the furnace-room for Room 26, with rather thin ragstone walls, 1 ft. 6 in. wide, set in yellow mortar. The door, 2 ft. wide, was at the eastern corner, and was floored with bonding-tiles. The stokehole itself was floored with bonding-tiles over the subsoil; these were covered with a thick layer of soot and black ash. The flue, leading into Room 26, was also floored with bonding-tiles and had cheeks

similarly finished; whether it was arched or not was found impossible to establish due to demolition (Plate IX).

*Room 8.* The north-east wall of this room was exposed immediately to the south-east of the furnace-room, Room 40. This room is now known to be rather larger (8 by 9 ft.) than thought in 1962 as the alignment of its robbed south-west wall was found to be slightly further to the south-west than previously inferred.

*Room 10.* Re-consideration of the evidence in the light of further results to the north-west of the 1962 area has led to the establishment of the correct dimensions of this room (18 ft. 6 in. by 7 ft.). It was observed in the earlier report<sup>14</sup> that the south-east wall of this room, found then completely removed to foundation courses, was much thicker (4 ft.) than the rest of the bath building's walls (2 ft.); it is now certain that this is due to the fact that this wall is partly overbuilt by the south-eastern wall of the Period III bath building, which formed the limit of this later structure and, in effect, incorporated part of the earlier Room 10 into the later Room 42 (see below). Likewise, work to the north-west of the 1962 area, below Period III levels, has exposed the alignment of the north-east wall of Room 10, which is now known to end at a north-west wall the position of which has been inferred from indications under Period III structures at the point shown on the plan. In the original plan of the Period II building, Room 10 was served by the furnace, Room 40, through two flues; of these, only the south-eastern one was retained in the following period whilst the other was blocked with bonding tiles behind the south-east wall of Room 24.

*Room 40,* whose complete dimensions are not yet known, contains the furnace serving the hypocausts in Rooms 10-12. Its north-east wall was found partly demolished to make room for the later stokehole and was pierced, west of Room 26, by a drain built directly on the hypocaust floor of the earlier Room 28 (Plate V); this drain was used for the disposal of water from the area of Rooms 2 and 4 through an outlet in the north-west wall of the bath building. The channel of this drain was thoroughly removed in the later reconstruction of the furnace-room, but its construction trench could be traced immediately outside the north-east wall of Room 40. The flue of the stokehole had cheeks built of tiles set in mortar, which were found badly worn through burning; it was 1 ft. 6 in. wide and had a clay floor baked hard and red over which was much black soot and ash. No evidence was found for a *testudo* emplacement, but this may have been removed in the subsequent re-building of the furnace.

*Room 41,* as yet incomplete, is represented by two lengths of walls built directly over Period I structures and sealed under the *opus signinum* floor of Room 24; they were both built of the standard

<sup>14</sup> *Loc. cit.*, 134.



*Photo: A. P. Detsikas*

Period I: Room 32. General View to West.



*Photo: R. G. Foord*

Period I: Room 32. Flues.

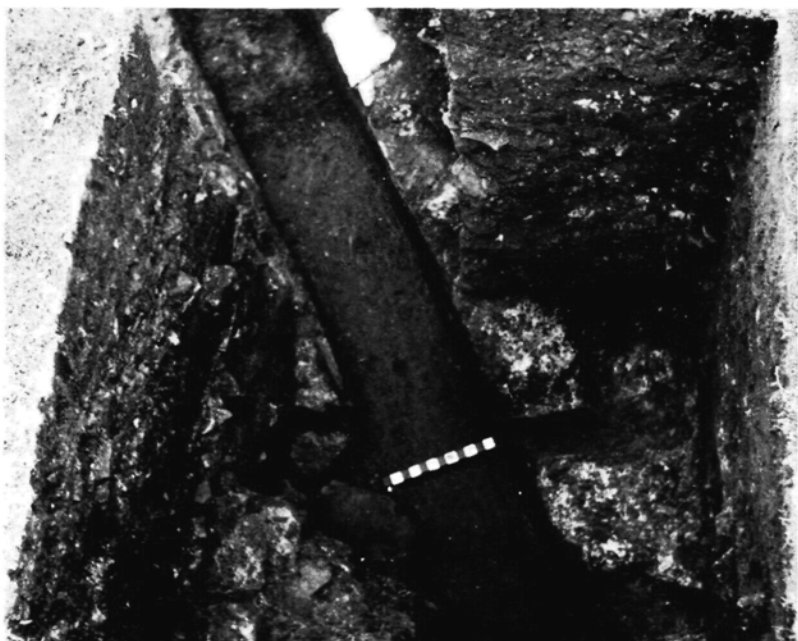




*Photo: R. G. Foord*

Period I: Room 38, under Period III Room 24.

PLATE IV



*Photo: R. G. Foord*

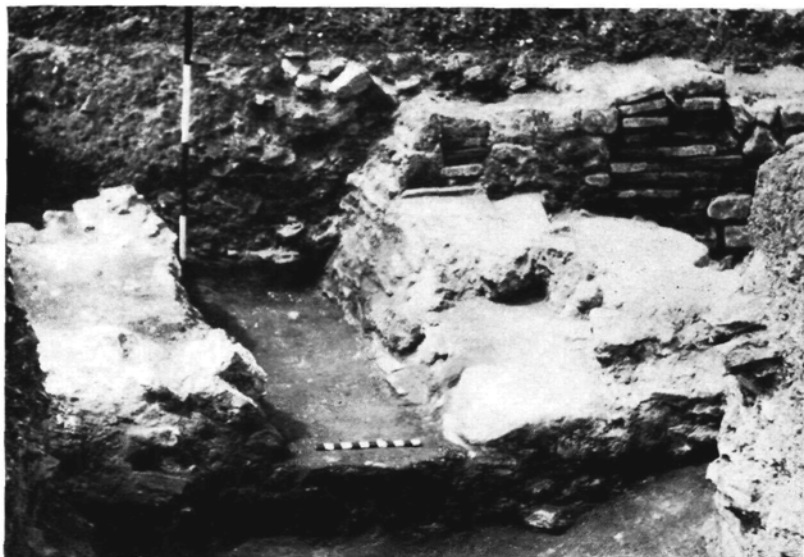
Junction of Drains of Periods I and II.



*Photo: R. G. Foord*

Period I: Room 28, and Period II Wall and Drain.

PLATE VI



*Photo: R. G. Foord*

Period III: Room 25. Flue.



*Photo: R. G. Foord*

Period III: Room 23.

PLATE VIII



*Photo: R. G. Foord*

Period III: Room 24. Detail of Box-Tiles.

Period II ragstone and off-white mortar to the usual 2-ft. thickness. Nothing much can be suggested about the likely function of this room, though the definite absence of an *opus signinum* floor, which if present could have been used for the later Room 24, suggests that Room 41 was not heated.

(b) *The Living Quarters*

Several lengths of walls, structurally earlier than Phase B, have been exposed in the area between the villa itself and the bath building belonging to this period, north of Rooms 26 and 27. The north-west wall of Room 33, for instance, is earlier than the rest of this room's walls; of ragstone and off-white mortar, 2 ft. wide, it was built to the north-west directly against the ruins of Room 32, its north-west face remaining unrendered and resting against the débris of mortar and tiles from the demolished Room 32. Likewise, some lengths of foundation courses of loose ragstone were found under Room 33 and north-east of Room 27 as well as the robber trenches of walls north-east of Room 37. However, as all these walls do not, at present, appear to belong to any definite structure, they will not be considered in detail until later work has elucidated their structural relationship.

Rooms 33-37 are a range of four rooms at one end of the villa reached by means of a long corridor.

Room 37, the corridor, was 12 ft. wide, but its length is not yet established. Its walls were 2 ft. thick and built of ragstone and off-white mortar; the north-east wall was almost completely robbed, but its position was definitely established thanks to the robber trenches. The corridor was floored with a tessellated pavement of plain red and buff *tesserae*, cut from tiles, which was exposed immediately below topsoil; the tessellation was laid on an *opus signinum* bed, 2 in. thick, which showed in places signs of subsidence to the north-east (Section M-N), and over an earlier floor of white mortar.

Room 33, the largest of this range (22 by 10 ft.), had walls of ragstone and off-white mortar, 2 ft. thick; its north-west wall, as mentioned above, is earlier than the rest. The floor of this room was badly destroyed, but appears to have been of hard yellow mortar upon which were found some fragments of mosaic and loose *tesserae*, though it is thought more likely that these were used in the make-up of the floor rather than *in situ*. This mortar floor was cut through by the trench of a wooden pipe some iron collars of which were recovered; it ran from the north corner of the room towards the main drain on the south side of this room. (Section M-N: Layers 47-48.) The whole room was filled by a large deposit of domestic rubbish (Section M-N: Layer 55), clearly denoting the end of this phase.

Room 34 (11 by 6 ft.), with the usual ragstone and off-white mortar

walls, was floored with a thin layer of white mortar, 2 in. thick, compacted upon the Romano-British topsoil. A channel, for a wooden pipe with some iron collars still *in situ*, had been cut through this topsoil from the north corner of the room; it led through the walls at the south corner of the room towards the main drain immediately outside the south-east wall of the room. A burial was inserted in this room close to the east corner; probably a male, it was fully extended on its back, except for the head which, at right angles to the body, was resting against the south-east wall of the room. No grave goods were recovered, and it is by no means certain that it is a Romano-British burial belonging to a later stage in the villa's history.

Another burial was found inserted in the area immediately outside the south-east wall of Room 34 beyond the drain (Section K-L: Layer 4), but very little can be said of this as only the lower part of the skeleton was exposed within the excavated area; it would appear, however, that this burial, too, was interred in a position similar to that of the burial inside Room 34.

Room 35 (20 by 9 ft.) is largely inferred, and its north-east wall was completely robbed.<sup>15</sup> It was floored with the same compacted layer of white mortar laid directly upon the Romano-British topsoil. The area immediately outside the robbed north-east wall contained a very solid aggregate of ragstone and yellow mortar to a thickness of some 2 ft. over the subsoil, which showed signs of heavy oxidation and probably denotes an industrial working surface of Period III.

Room 36 (12 by 11 ft.) contained much painted wall-plaster debris and rubble upon the same white mortar floor.

The presence of these floors of white mortar<sup>16</sup> laid down over the Romano-British topsoil in Rooms 33-36 and underneath the tessellated pavement in Room 37 clearly suggests that Room 37 was re-floored with its tessellated pavement in a later phase, but no floors were found in Rooms 33-36, which could be contemporary with the tessellation. A probable explanation may be that the corridor required re-flooring because of its heavy use whereas the mortar floors in Rooms 33-36 may have remained in good repair and quite suitable for their use in rooms, which could be considered as servants' quarters at the extreme north-west end of the villa; alternatively, it may be thought that even Rooms 33-36 were re-floored at the same time as Room 37, but with a less durable material than the *opus signinum* bed of the tessellation, which would not have survived under the slight depth of topsoil in this area.

A drain was exposed outside the south-east walls of Rooms 33, 34 and 36, which has been traced below the pavement of Room 37 and

<sup>15</sup> The south-east wall of this room was confirmed in 1964.

<sup>16</sup> These floors of white mortar could be the under-base for timber floors. I owe this suggestion to Professor Sir Ian Richmond, P.S.A.



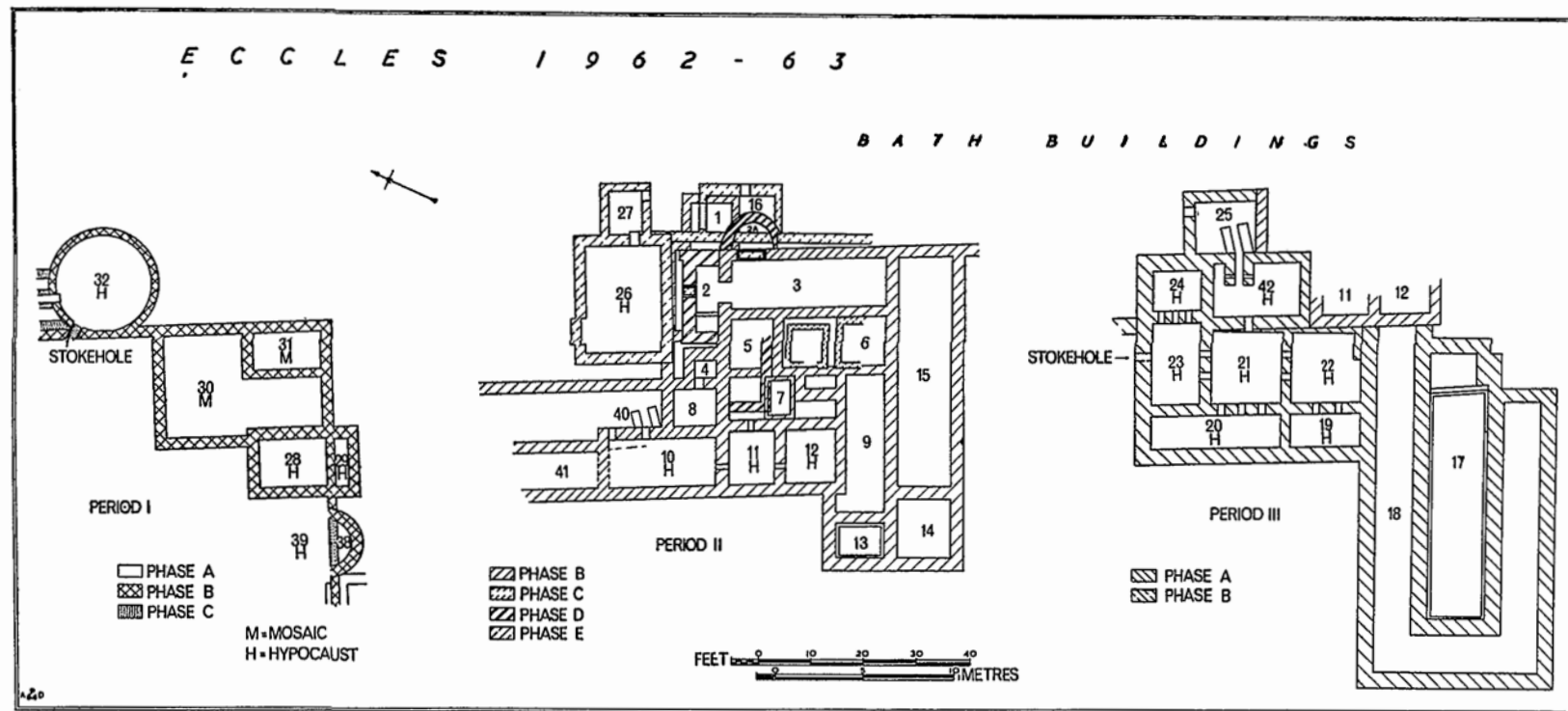


FIG. 2.

beyond it to the north-east. The sides of this drain were built of bonding-tiles and roofing-tiles were used to floor it; presumably, similar tiles would have been used to form a cover, but none were found *in situ*. Its sides were made waterproof with a thick coating of *opus signinum* (Plate X). About halfway along its course outside the south-east wall of Room 34, the drain channel deviates slightly to the south-east and becomes slightly wider; it continues under the south corner of Room 33, turns a little further to the west to avoid the thick floor of Room 31, and then joins the earlier drain from this room at a point a little beyond its west corner (Plate IV). Though this drain is known to continue beyond Room 37, its beginning is yet to be discovered; it is quite certain that it was already in existence before the building of the tessellated floor over it in Room 37, and that it served as an outlet for the wooden pipes leading to it through Rooms 33 and 34.

*Period III: c. A.D. 150-290. (a) The Bath Building*

The massive bath building of this period has now been almost completely exposed, with the exception of the later furnace still to be examined north-west of Rooms 20 and 23.

Room 25 is the original stokehole of this period and, in effect, a reconstruction of part of the earlier stokehole, Room 40. It measured 11 by 9 ft. 9 in.; its north-west and north-east walls (2 ft. in width) were new constructions, as was the south-west wall which is the full 3-ft. thickness of the bath building just beyond the flue of the furnace. The north-east wall was abutted against the north-west wall and necessitated the partial removal of the north-east wall of the earlier Room 40. The door of Room 25 lay near the north corner and was found containing a large accumulation of soot and ash; further ash had been raked outside the door (Section K-L; Layer 35). The flue of the stokehole had cheeks built of large river boulders set in clay and some bonding-tiles; its floor was of clay baked a deep brick-red colour and laid on a foundation of broken tiles resting upon the ash of the earlier flue of Period II. The flue itself was slightly longer than the earlier one of Period II and may have had a boiler placed over it; there was enough space for it and, indeed, the whole area had all the appearance of having had water-tanks placed over the flue, but of these no direct evidence was found (Plate VI).

This furnace is undoubtedly the original source of heat for the hypocausted rooms to its south-west as shown by the single flue pierced through the south-west wall of Room 42. It is possible that no provision for another stokehole had been made in the original plan of the bath building, and that Room 25 proved insufficient for the needs of such a large heated area, thus necessitating the construction of another furnace; but, at present, this is a matter for surmise.

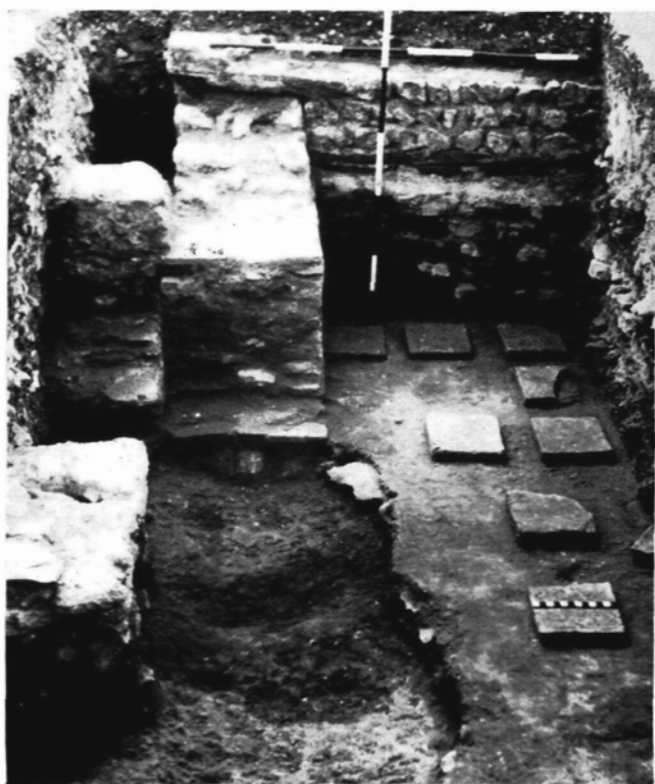
*Room 42* is Room 10 of the earlier Period II reconstructed rather smaller in size (16 ft. 6 in. by 10 ft.). Its walls were badly preserved; they are partly new constructions and partly rebuildings of existing Period II alignments. The room was extended to the north-east in alignment with the outside wall of the bath building, and this meant the removal of the north-east wall of Room 10 and the extension of the floored area over it. A new north-west wall was built slightly inside the inferred position of the north-west wall of Room 10, blocking the north-western of the two earlier flues. The south-eastern wall was breached by a flue to allow for the heating of the new Rooms 19-23 to the south-east. It would appear that the hypocaust *pilae* of the earlier Room 10 were mainly retained during this reconstruction as they are of a different size from those used in the exclusively Period III rooms.

*Room 24* (9 by 7 ft. 6 in.) was a small heated room. Its south-east wall did not contain any flues and very little heat would have reached this room from Room 25 until the building of the presumed later furnace to its north-west. Its external north-east and north-west walls were the standard Period III width of 3 ft., of ragstone set in yellow mortar, and the north corner of this room cuts through the north-east wall of Room 41.

The hypocaust was constructed on an *opus signinum* floor, 2 in. thick, which was laid on a foundation of lumps of chalk deposited on the levelled débris filling the Period II rooms; it also sealed underneath it the robbed remains of the Period II walls. The suspended floor, of which many large fragments were recovered in the débris filling this room, was of *opus signinum*, some 4 in. thick and supported by *pilae*. These consisted of one base tile ( $10\frac{1}{2}$  by  $10\frac{1}{2}$  by 2 in.) and several smaller ones ( $7\frac{1}{4}$  by  $7\frac{1}{4}$  by 1 in.) set in yellow mortar, varying in thickness from  $\frac{1}{2}$  to  $\frac{3}{4}$  in.; the suspended floor was supported by these *pilae* at a height of 2 ft. The walls were lined with box-tiles (about 6 in. in width), which were affixed to the wall of the room and held against one another by a layer of *opus signinum*, to a thickness of  $1\frac{3}{4}$  in. between each box-tile (Plate VIII); the box-tiles were supported on a slight ledge projecting from the walls of the room, and only about one-third of their depth was set on this ledge so that heat would circulate through them. Such box-tiles, or their *opus signinum* imprints, were found on all walls of this room, except for the robbed south-western partition wall. Room 24 was divided from Room 23 by this partition wall, which was 2 ft. thick and constructed of ragstone set in yellow mortar; it was rendered with a thick coating of yellow mortar and contained three flues,<sup>17</sup> each 1 ft. wide for the heating supply from Room 23.

*Room 23* was a larger room, which was only partly exposed; its dimensions are probably 16 by 9 ft. as the wall dividing it from Room 20

<sup>17</sup> Not shown on main plan, but see Fig. 2.



*Photo: R. G. Foord*

Period II: Room 26. Hypocaust.



*Photo: R. G. Foord*

Period II: Drain under Room 37.

is likely to be on the same alignment as the south-east walls of Rooms 21 and 22.<sup>18</sup> Its walls and hypocaust were of identical construction with those of Room 24; only the size ( $7\frac{1}{2}$  by  $7\frac{1}{2}$  by  $1\frac{1}{4}$  in.) of its smaller *pila*-tiles was slightly different. The north-west wall of this room had a flue in it conveying heat from the unexcavated stokehole outside; this flue was lined with clay, which was found baked to a hard brick-red consistency (Plate VII).

Of this later stokehole, only a small length of its north-east wall was exposed; built of ragstone and yellow mortar to the standard 3-ft. thickness, it was constructed on the *opus signinum* floor of Room 39 and is presumed to be built directly upon part of the south-west wall of Room 41.

Rooms 23 and 24 were both filled with a large deposit of *opus signinum* and tile débris as well as much decayed mortar from the wall faces, which lay directly upon the soot on the hypocaust floors; this deposit provided evidence for interments as in Rooms 20 and 21 in 1962.<sup>19</sup> Again, and as observed during the first season of excavation,<sup>20</sup> a deliberate effort appears to have been made to seal this deposit of rubble with a layer of large lumps of *opus signinum* from the destroyed suspended floors.

#### (b) *The Living Quarters*

Very little is known of the living accommodation of the villa in this period of occupation. The only evidence found is that of a length of wall exposed immediately north-east of Rooms 36 and 37. This wall was constructed of the standard ragstone and yellow mortar of the period to the usual thickness of 3 ft., and lies immediately north-east of its second period predecessor, the edge of which it slightly overlaps; it was abutted on to the north-east wall of the Period II corridor, but no further evidence is at present available about the purpose of this wall.

Another burial was found at the eastern corner of this trench, south-east of the Period II drain; a set of bronze toilet instruments, found in direct contact with the skeleton, suggests that this burial at least may be of Romano-British date.

#### DATING

*Period I: c. A.D. 75-100.* The tentative dating for this period suggested in the 1962 report is still retained for the time being, though evidence is gradually accumulating that the initial date of c. A.D. 75 may be a little late. Some of the material stratified in layers immediately above the undisturbed subsoil may well have become deposited rather

<sup>18</sup> Confirmed in 1964; with three flues.

<sup>19</sup> *Arch. Cant.*, lxxviii (1963), 140.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

earlier than c. A.D. 75. A fairly large deposit of coarse pottery found in the ash of the secondary stokehole of Room 32, which was sealed by later débris and is clearly the result of breakage by those tending the hypocaust, is consistently late first-century in date. The dating suggested for the close of this period depends on pottery and, in particular, on figured samian ware, of types not usually thought to have been current much later than c. A.D. 100-120.<sup>21</sup> However, to extend the first period of occupation of the site much beyond about A.D. 100 would seriously curtail the already rather short span allotted on secure grounds to Period II, and if Period I is to be made longer, it must start earlier than the suggested date of c. A.D. 75; an earlier starting date would suit the evidence at present available.

*Period II: c. A.D. 100-150.* This tentative dating, very slightly modified in one respect from that suggested in the earlier report, has been given additional support by pottery and coins found stratified in the destruction layers of Periods I and II. The closing date for this period is based on the rubbish deposits (Section K-L: Layer 21; Section M-N: Layer 55) found in Rooms 33 and 26, which have produced coarse pottery and samian ware characteristically Antonine to late-Antonine; it is further supported by figured samian stratified below the hypocaust floor of Room 23 and by a worn *dupondius* of Antoninus Pius of A.D. 145 deposited on the floor of Room 26 under the débris filling it, which provides a definite *terminus post quem* for the destruction.

*Period III: c. A.D. 150-290.* The initial dating of this period is based on the pottery stratified under the floor of Room 23 in the levelled débris under the chalk lumps which supported the *opus signinum*; it is clearly of mid-second-century date and supports the pottery and coin mentioned above. The closing date, suggested in the 1962 report, is confirmed by the pottery and stratified coins found in the destruction layers of Room 25. Though the pottery was rather scanty, enough was recovered of late third-century fabrics and forms, and in full accordance with the pottery types recovered from the 1962 Rubbish Pit C.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, the soot and ashes raked out of the furnace (Section K-L: Layer 35) yielded a coin of Victorinus, and the lowest destruction layer in Room 25 four coins of Carausius.

## SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

After two seasons' work on this site, it is clear that the complete extent of this large villa is yet to be determined, as is also its place in the history of the area.

Considering the bath buildings alone, the striking feature is the

<sup>21</sup> Further supported by two *dupondii* of Nerva of A.D. 98 found in 1964 stratified in the destruction layers of this period.

<sup>22</sup> *Arch. Cant.*, lxxviii (1963), 140.



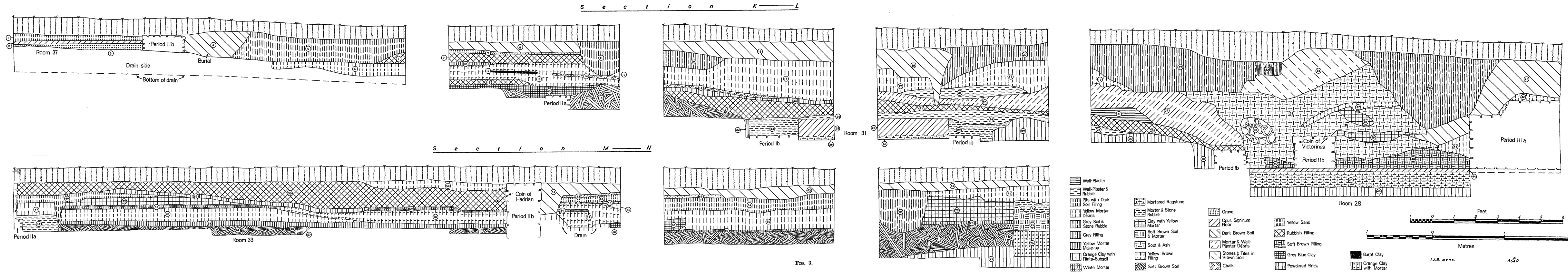


FIG. 3.



definitely military style of planning in the earliest and gradual elaboration, increase in size and civilian style of architecture of the succeeding buildings. Another salient feature is that, far from expanding from modest beginnings to a larger establishment, as in other villas, this villa appears to have been built on a palatial scale from the very outset. For, while little is so far known of the first bath building and its villa, there is enough to indicate that it was larger than normal; and this of course, applies even more to its successors and, in particular, to the baths of Period III.

The large size and the provision of so many heated rooms, implying expenditure of capital and use of labour on a large scale, suggest initial building probably by a philo-Roman Romano-British noble,<sup>23</sup> who may have sought to model his way of living on Roman prototypes soon after the Roman conquest of Britain. A suggestion made earlier<sup>24</sup> that this villa may have been at the centre of several smaller houses without their own bath-houses, whose occupants would be permitted to use the central baths, is still a valid possibility.

Alternatively, the plan of the earliest bath building might suggest a military connection, but no direct or indirect evidence has been found pointing to military occupation of the site; the only items possibly identifiable as military equipment are two bronze pieces from a harness and these could just as well have been in civilian use. Again, only the earliest bath building, with its *laconicum* projecting beyond the main line of the baths and its standardized arrangement of rooms, recalls military planning, and this could be due to no more than its designer having served as a military engineer, or to the probability that a first-century bath building follows first-century models and fashions.<sup>23</sup> Whatever the meaning of the military affinities apparent in this early bath building, they certainly disappeared in its successors, while the size of the buildings increased. No doubt this denotes increased prosperity and a bigger estate.

<sup>23</sup> I owe this suggestion to Professor S. S. Frere, V.P.S.A.

<sup>24</sup> *Arch. Cant.*, lxxviii (1963), 141.