

Flowing Through Time: A New Structure at the Coriglia Excavation Project

This paper will present the preliminary interpretations of a possible sacred space and structure, both associated with water found during the recent excavations at the Etruscan-Roman site of Coriglia. The site is located eight kilometers northwest of Orvieto on a hill above the River Paglia, along the route north from Rome. Thirteen seasons of excavation have been conducted at Coriglia, under the direction of Dr. David B. George and Dr. Claudio Bizzarri through Saint Anselm College and the Institute for Mediterranean Archaeology.

The major occupation of Coriglia began with an Etruscan phase in the 6th century BCE, and reached its peak during the Roman Imperial period. The site occupies a large hillside defined by a series of L-shape retaining walls that step down toward the river. These walls mitigate the natural instability of the hillside caused by the natural springs found on site. Originally appearing during the 6th century BCE Etruscan phase, these retaining walls support both a domestic area and a possible sacred space associated with the natural springs. In addition, the retaining wall is paralleled by a series of later Roman retaining walls, which together shape the hillside into at least three terraces, two of which are currently under investigation.

The lower terrace is defined by an Imperial-era bath complex supported by a series of rooms and structures, including a partially intact barrel-vaulted storage area. While this area will not be the focus of the paper, it is essential to our understanding of the constant use and reuse of the area and its abundant natural resources.

This paper will focus on the radical reworking of the upper terrace, in both plan and purpose, which modifies previous theories and interpretations of the area. As recent excavations have revealed, during the late Republic a monumental Roman structure was built respecting the

east/west-oriented Etruscan plan of the site. Significantly, it also upheld the Etruscan use and possible sacred character of the natural springs. This structure was rigorously maintained through constant repairs and a series of reinforcing walls that attempted to preserve the plan and function of the area, despite constant flooding and the unstable soil structure of the hillside.

At the end of the 1st century CE, the structure was intentionally destroyed. The drain associated with the exit of the structure was carefully cut, and a votive offering placed in the break. After this, the structure was destroyed, buried, and the area was leveled. The plan of the terrace was then redefined to a north/south orientation by a road that further covered the structure. In this same phase, the water that was previously intended for this structure was cut off, collected, and pushed to the Imperial-era bath complex on the lower terrace by a series of *vasca*.

This paper will discuss the datable and decorative objects associated with this partially revealed structure, including the ceramic vessels, architectural terracotta, and bronze votive objects. In addition to discussing the possible interpretations of this structure, this paper will also frame the construction, maintenance, reuse, and abandonment of the structure in the wider regional picture, adding insight to the area's evolution in the early Imperial period.