

The Roman Villa in S. Vincenzino is an astounding example of a large patrician villa (approximately 7000 square meters), divided in sections each of which of different use – from the residential rooms to the part devoted to the economic production – and it has experienced ongoing remodelling throughout its long life (from 1st century B.C to 5th century A.C. approximately).

It stands on a rise once called “Poggetto al Fico”, on the left bank of the river Cecina not far from the sea, under the rule of what in the ancient past was the Etruscan city of Volterra.

The villa, based on discoveries of old maps of the area and on Rutilio Namaziano’s testimony (De Red., 453 ss), is assumed to be likely to be owned by Decio Albino Cecina, nobleman descendant from the Caecina’s and *Praefectus Urbi* in 414 A.C., (Prefectus of Rome), during the early years of the 5th century A.C. The villa’s remains had already emerged mid of the eighteenth century but the first excavations took place just a century later, thanks to Leonetto Cipriani. The subsequent systematic excavation which started in the early sixties and seventies and continued up to the early eighties, notably from 1983 onwards, by the Soprintendenza of the Beni Archeologici and the University of Pisa, has made possible nowadays to track back most of its history.

In its first building installation (late Augustan-Republican age), the main building was modelled on the construction of urban villas with facilities posited on colonnades (around the atrium and peristyle) by numerous gardens.

**Run along the Red Villa (from late nineteenth century to early twentieth century) up to the excavation sites, position yourselves next to Location n. 1**

In this area the original installation (approximately 30 B.C – 70 A.C.) should have been consisted of two open areas with colonnades (*peristilia*) situated along an E-W axis. The portico towards West, now under the green area you have previously crossed, should have been found itself to a level which was slightly higher with respect to the portico towards East (1 remains of the floor next to the water wheel; 2, column base), as the slope of the original floor shows (3). The walking meters from an area to another one were filled with monuments (4) and enriched by a second line of columns of which the basis have been preserved (5). The

columns standing on calcareous basis were brick veneer with the addition of stucco, sometimes painted, with the effect of a marble replica. Two columns, partly rebuilt, are preserved within the Antiquarium on the ground floor of the Red Villa.

**Turn right into Location n. 2**

In front of you are displayed traces of an important remodelling of the area; between the end of the 2nd and the 3rd century A.C. it’s here that was realized a great summer bichlinium of which the building work to uphold the two beds has been partly preserved (6). The dining room was characterized by a luxury décor and was provided with a basin (7) and a nymphaeum (8) where the beautiful little statue of Isis displayed in the Antiquarium was more likely to be found.

**On the right hand side of the fencing on to Location n. 3**

Originally the main entrance to the Villa, consisting of an alley with monuments with two angular towers on both its sides, was on this very side and was axed with the atrium, an area with a big central quadrangular bath (*impluvium*) (10x10m), of which is preserved only what it is now left of the setting on the floor (9). Around the bath departed a colonnade with a mosaic decorated floor.

All this area has been heavily done up between the 80 and 120 A.C. approximately; the *atrium* was transformed into a residential area and on the right another service area was installed provided with kitchen, storage room and rooms used for the production of manufactures (10 small *dolia* to storage the food; 11 cisterns for water supply; 12 bath).

After the Villa was deserted, between the VI century and VII century A.C., the area became a necropolis site with as many as 130 buried corpses.

On the right hand side of the fencing, cautiously overcome the cutting without fencing.

On your left, within the cutting, it’s worth noting the remains of the external walls E of the villa, whose profile has been heavily affected by the later burial site as well (14).

**Go straight on direction north along the fencing up to Location n. 4**

In the middle of the excavation site stands a circular fountain, built between the end of the II and III century A.C. It stood in the middle of the garden and it was

marble covered in its entirety other than provided with four internal basins.

**On the right, direction north, after the basis of the columns to Location n. 5**

The great room that opens up to the garden perhaps dates back to the IV century B.C.: the vast alley was filled with two monumental columns (15, column base); on the main axis stood a brick base, marble covered as well (16) on which a statue should have probably stood. On the right stood two great linked rooms (17).

Behind this great area – destined to host the owner and his guests – and separated from this by a great wall today completely removed (18), a deposit of great terracotta containers (dolii) was built (19) which was related to a production plant installed between the end of the first century and the beginning of the second century A.C.

On what is left of the deserted room which is partly covered with the deposit of the near river Cecina after its esondation, during the XVI century was here implanted a small edifice, probably provided with a small portico (20 remains of the later middle age edifice) and perhaps to relate to some iron artisanship around the area.

**On the left to Location n. 6**

Originally (approximately 30 B.C. – 70 A.C.) here stood the residential quarters of the villa (21, cubic shaped). Between 80 and 120 A.C. approximately, this section was radically transformed: here found its place a productive plant: of the latter are traces in the inferior part of the great oil dolio or, more likely, wine (22) and in the circular setting (23) of small grain millstones.

**On the right to Location n. 7**

Between the end of the second and the third century A.C., contemporary to the summer triclinium and the monumental fountain in the middle of the garden, the spa was built. Of noticeable dimensions (940 square meters approximately) and with a good architectonic design for a private spa, is composed of a canonical series of rooms western-oriented to take advantage of the favourable climate and the scenery on the sea side.

**On the left, overcome the Park entrance path to Location n. 8, Cistern.**

The first architectural intervention on the villa was the building of a big underground cistern for the collection of rainy water with a provision tunnel and a series of weels used to draw surface water. The access to it is through a ladder realized about one century ago when

the cistern became the basement of the Red Villa, headquarter of the sugar industrial plant “Zuccherificio”. Realized in conglomerate concrete and covered with plaster has a capacity of about 540 cubic meters; its dimensions are quite astounding (m16,25x5,30 x6,30) but, in fact, the amount of water collected was undoubtedly inferior. In the cistern gathered also the rain water descending from the roofs, especially the portico. The two circular openings in the ceiling seems to correspond to other weels.

The provision tunnel (a walking path) follows a broken line that reaches out to the three circular wheels and provides water filtered by double grates pierced with terracotta.

**Go back to the cistern, climb up the ladder, turn right up to the entrance patch to the Park end enter the Red Villa – Private Exhibition Luxuria**

The Red Villa, built early in the ‘900 century above the massive walls of the Roman cistern and used as headquarter for the CEOs of the local sugar industrial plant, hosts now the Antiquarium of the Park. Within it is shown the exhibition “*Privata Luxuria*”. Décor and furniture for a luxury villa on the river Cecina” that, through a selection of the most precious remains, conveys the idea of the domestic luxury which characterized the lives of the owners of this ancient villa.

Among the others the little statue of the Goddess Isis, in precious alabaster, displayed on the first window is worth to be singled out. The statue is beheaded and lacks the upper part of the arms: the presence of iron joint pins was an indicator that the latter were originally of a different material, such as ivory or marble of different colours.

In the second window are presented everyday use tools or instruments to ornate women’s hair or men’s clothes (bone clips for the hair, a bone dice, a glass gem with the portrait of the Goddess Urania).

In the third window are displayed splinters of canteen vases in sealed ceramic, glass, bronze and oil lamps. The fourth window presents a selection of coins encompassing the villa long life.

The second part of the exhibition is devoted to the decorative elements of the floors and ceilings of the villa: in the last two windows are displayed splinters of painted plaster, marble slabs, mosaic tessera and small slabs in vitreous paste.

At the back of the room, after an accurate remodelling, are displayed two columns coming from the portico of the villa: built with brick element, they were accurately covered with stucco. One present a polished trunk painted as a marble replica, the other a flute trunk cut in the third inferior ionic capital.