Excavations were carried out by the Sangro Valley Project (SVP) in two different locations—Acquachiara and San Giovanni—on the southern slopes of Monte Paliano in the 2014 season.

**Acquachiara**

**ACQ T11000**

The re-opening of ACQ T8000 (excavated from 2004-2007—see preliminary reports on <www.sangro.org>), now ACQ T11000 (2014 -) was planned with two aims: to clarify the stratigraphy of ACQ T8000 and to explore more fully the extent of the site, particularly its relationship to the modern agricultural terrace to the north.

ACQ T8000 has been interpreted as a pre-Roman agricultural processing area—a rarity for the region—with an exterior working space supported by terrace walls.

Two phases were identified for ACQ T8000: Phase 1 (dated by C-14 to the early sixth century B.C.)—the construction of the terracing and some floor surfaces; and Phase 2 (mid sixth to early fifth century B.C.)—the laying and repairing of a thick beaten clay floor over large parts of the terrace. These surfaces appear to have been used for the threshing of wheat and the preparation of food, based on the discovery of quern stone fragments, an impasto cooking stand embedded in a burnt clay surface (fig 4), and by the type of paleoethnobotanical evidence collected. This interpretation was reconfirmed in 2014 with similar finds of a quern stone fragment and several fornelli fragments (fig 5).

Excavation in ACQ T11000 focused on three distinct zones adjacent to ACQ T8000: a 1,15 meter strip between the base of the modern agricultural terrace and
the northern-most extent of ACQ T8000; a 1.5 x 8 m slot through the western end of the modern agricultural terrace; and a 5 x 8 m area immediately to the west of ACQ T8000. In addition, two 1 x 10 m test trenches were cut to the south of ACQ T11000.

The most important discovery in 2014 was in the western end of ACQ T11000: a walled interior space with a paved floor (fig 6). The strata overlaying this structure have not yet been fully excavated, but large quantities of ceramic, bone, and carbon were recovered. The bone was highly fragmentary and worn, but the assemblage consisted primarily of cow and sheep/goat, with some pig, and possible rabbit. The ceramics are dated to the 6th-5th centuries B.C. and consist of utilitarian coarse wares (including fragments of *fornelli*) and impasto, as well as painted fine wares (fig 8), black gloss, and buccheroid (fig 9). Of particular interest is the discovery of a fragmentary painted kylix (fig 7), found just above the floor level in the north-east corner of the interior space. Two similar cups were excavated in a tomb in from nearby Carpineto Sinello in the Sinello River Valley; Colonna (*NSc* 1959, figs. 4 and 5, p. 282) published these cups and suggested a date in the 4th century B.C., but at Acquachiara, a carbon sample taken from the same context as the cup indicates a date no later than 540-400 B.C. (Measured Radio Carbon Age: 2400 +/- 30 BP; 2 SIGMA CALIBRATION: Cal BC 730 to 690 (Cal BP 2680 to 2640) and Cal BC 660 to 650 (Cal BP 2610 to 2600) and Cal BC 540 to 400 (Cal BP 2490 to 2350).

The discovery of a clearly defined interior space at this site instigated a re-examination of the previous seasons’ trench plans and photographs for ACQ T8000. This archival research shows that at least two phases of stone structures can potentially be reconstructed in ACQ T8000. The extent of this rare 6th-5th century BC domestic site and the re-interpretation of ACQ T8000’s features will be clarified in future seasons. The stone-wall construction techniques uncovered in ACQ T11000 offer significant potential for re-structuring thought on Samnite architecture and rates of development, just as the refinement of the flagstone floor construction and the associated drinking vessel imply an unanticipated standard of living for the region.
Fig 3. Composite plan of ACQ T8000 (2007) and T11000 (2014)
Fig 4. ACQ T8000 cooking stand being excavated (2005)

Fig 5. ACQ T11000 - Fornello fragments

Fig 6. ACQ T11000 - view of walled interior space under excavation

Fig 7. ACQ T11000 - painted kylix found in walled interior space

Fig 8. ACQ T11000 - base of a fine ware vessel

Fig 9. ACQ T11000 - buccheroid sherds
San Giovanni

In San Giovanni in 2014, three adjacent areas were investigated (SG T9000, SG T10000, and SG T11000). These areas were chosen in order to confirm whether certain observations made during previous field surveys and geophysical resistivity survey corresponded with excavated archaeological deposits. Excavation will continue in two of these areas (SG T10000 and SG T11000) in 2015.

SG T9000

SG T9000, located in an olive grove that constrained its dimensions, was 16.65 m in length but only 0.61 m in width, with two extensions, a western one (1.74 m in length) and an eastern one (2.65 m in length). Under a heavy deposit of colluvial soil, a series of anthropogenic layers were uncovered, all consonant with domestic debris of Roman Imperial –late Antique date. These layers were densely packed with large amounts of roofing tile (including one nearly complete tegula ca. 0.69 x 48.5 cm) and other ceramic building materials (opus spicatum and column bricks, a terracotta water pipe), large fragments of cocciopesto flooring, small amounts of intonaco wall plaster, and a quantity of animal bone (particularly cow). In addition to utilitarian wares for storage and cooking, the ceramic assemblage includes fine wares for serving and dining, lamps, and unguentaria. The nature of the material from SG T9000 suggests this is debris from an elite residence, possibly a villa similar to that excavated in San Giovanni in 2011-2013 (see preliminary reports on www.sangro.org).

Because of the constraints of the surrounding olive grove and the corresponding narrow width of the trench, a complete stratigraphic sequence in SG T9000 could not be obtained. A C-14 sample taken from SG T9000 provided a date in the late first century B.C. – first century A.D.: Measured Radio Carbon Age: 1990 +/- 30 BP; 2 sigma calibration: Cal BC 50 to AD 65 (Cal BP 2000 to 1885).

SG T10000

SG T10000 began as a 1.5 m wide by 8.5 m long slot; several extensions were added in response to the discovery of a number of features. The largest of these features is a lengthy segment of foundation for a wall (13.5 m in
length x 0.70 m wide) constructed of mortared rubble set into the clay sub-soil. The substantial dimensions and construction suggest that this wall was part of a very large and well-built structure. Unfortunately, due to erosion and agricultural working of the soil, much of the area surrounding this foundation wall has been damaged. The one surviving spur wall found this season indicates that more of this structure may be located to the east, an area that will be opened in 2015. Four terracotta tesserae suggest that there was a pavement associated with this structure. Ceramic finds included a range of fine (black gloss, Italian sigillata, and color coated ware) and coarse wares, amphora, and a mortaria fragment that span from the 3rd century B.C.–3rd century A.D.

At the end of the season in the north end of the trench, a plaster platform was uncovered along a deposit of ashy soil that contained impasto ceramics (figs 17-19, 21) and animal bone, similar to a deposit found in SG T11000. An impasto handle (fig 18) from this deposit can be parallelled in the near by Bronze Age site of Fonte Tasca (Archi): cf figure 1 in Di Fraia, Un abitato protostorico e tre fenomeni di lunga durata, in Claude Mordant, Hervé Richard et Michel Magny, eds., Environnements et cultures à l’Âge du Bronze en Europe occidentale (Paris 2007) pp 387-395. The relationship between this area and the foundation wall is still unclear. Further investigation of this area is planned for 2015.
SG T11000

SG T11000, measuring 1.7 m wide and 7.2 m in length, was opened in order to assess the geological (and potential archaeological) consequences of the bi-directional erosion at a significant change of slope to the north of SG T10000. At a depth of 0.40 m, the natural subsoil was encountered, but in a cleaning of the area, an archaeological deposit of Bronze Age material was uncovered, similar in content to a deposit located in the north end of SG T10000. Still not completely excavated, this deposit contains impasto (figs 20 & 22), a spindle whorl (fig 13) with parallels in the nearby Bronze Age site of Fonte Tasca (Archi): cf figure 3 in Di Fraia, Un abitato protostorico e tre fenomeni di lunga durata, in Claude Mordant, Hervé Richard et Michel Magny, eds., Environnements et cultures à l’Âge du Bronze en Europe occidentale (Paris 2007) pp 387-395. A sample from this deposit submitted for C-14 yielded a date consonant with a Middle Bronze Age date for this area of Italy: Measured Radiocarbon Date: 3420 +/- 30 BP 2 sigma calibration: Cal BC 1870 to 1845 (Cal BP 3820 to 3795) and Cal BC 1810 to 1800 (Cal BP 3760 to 3750) and Cal BC 1775 to 1660 (Cal BP 3725 to 3610). Further investigation of this area is planned for 2015.

The excavations undertaken during SVP 2014 have added both expected and unexpected new information to our knowledge of the history of human occupation in the Sangro Middle Valley. SVP excavations can now corroborate previous SVP survey data which indicate that Monte Pallano and its environs have had a continuous occupation from the Bronze Age (SG T10000 and SG T11000), Archaic (ACQ T11000), and Roman and late Antique (ACQ T10000; SG T1000 – SG T4000) periods into modern times. These data will contribute to the SVP’s long-standing aim to explore through a range of inter-linked disciplinary pathways the interaction between humans and their environment in the Sangro Middle valley over time.

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Figs 15 & 16. SG T10000 plan (top) and SG T11000 plan (bottom)
Fig 17. SG T10000 - impasto cup fragment

Fig 18. SG T10000 - impasto cup handle

Fig 19. SG T10000 - impasto rim fragment

Fig 20. SG T11000 - impasto rim fragment

Fig 21. SG T10000 - impasto body sherd

Fig 22. SG T11000 - impasto body sherd