

On the origin and persistence of praedial toponyms in central Italy

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*Con ciò sia cosa che li nomi seguitino le nominate cose,
sì come è scritto: “Nomina sunt consequentia rerum”
(Seeing that the name must needs be like unto the thing named;
as it is written: “Nomina sunt consequentia rerum”)
(Dante, Vita Nuova, XIII,4)*

This paper recognises the origin of the current series of praedial place names, through successive transcripts, in the Roman land ownership system of republican and imperial times, experimenting with some methodological aspects of the use of digital cartographic sources. Acknowledging the widespread presence of praedial place names in modern cartography and medieval notarial sources, the research reconstitutes the history of the land ownership system, considering the landscape as *“quella forma che l'uomo, nel corso ed ai fini delle sue attività produttive agricole, coscientemente e sistematicamente imprime al paesaggio naturale”* [“the form that man, in the course and for the purpose of agricultural production, consciously and systematically imposes to the natural landscape”] (Sereni, 1961, p. 29). The two sets of data, morphology and toponymy, are proposed here as an antonymic dyad representing the symbolic relationship between population and territory. The research considers two case studies: the valley of the river Savio, and the territory belonging to the abbey of Subiaco in the Lazio region. After the close examination of toponyms in the Italian official map (scale 1:25,000) a list of praedial names was selected and, with a GIS, was correlated with another set of place names extracted from medieval notarial documents (IV-XII cent.). For some of these place names it was possible to track back the history of the site to the Roman *praedium* and in three cases to identify the Roman owner, through the analysis of literary and epigraphical sources. Starting from these three specific *praedia* it was therefore possible to infer the origin and the history of praedial place names in central Italy. Nevertheless, the persistence of these names until today was possible only through the medieval notarial transcriptions, showing some continuity in the land ownership system through the Middle Ages.

Methodology: praedial toponyms, the villae rusticae and the “incastellamento”

In the past decades there has been a long historiographical querelle on the continuity or discontinuity between the dispersed rural settlement system of Roman ages and the small towns that arise from the 10th century, in what historians have called “incastellamento” phase. The discussion outlined how after the 6th century AD, in most of Italy, the scattered rural settlements of villae rusticae disappeared,

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but only in the 10th century, four hundred years later, the castles and the villages appeared. According to the continuist thesis, the “incastellamento” demic centres supplanted the ancient rural settlement system, inheriting its dispersed character, so there was some kind of continuity between the two (Toubert, 1995). The proponents of the discontinuist thesis instead, on the base of archaeological examination of excavated rustic villas, stated that, except rare cases, there was no continuity of use after the 6th century, and generally after the Gothic War (535-553 A.D.) the villas were permanently abandoned. The known archaeological data shows no persistence of use beyond the 6th century, so there can be no continuity between villas and castles (Francovich, 2003). According to this theory, after the decline of the Roman empire the population moved to new villages, built mostly of wood, and only after the 10th century the first fortifications, or churches, were built anew in stone, in a hilltop position, when the population moved again to repopulate these new territorial poles. It is evident, however, that most of the investigated rustic villas are abandoned settlements today, so there can be no continuity in their use. Apart from urban sites, the possibility that some of these villas became an urban centre still existing today, was not considered. Our hypothesis is that the “incastellamento” was mostly organized to control existing urban centres, starting with the Carolingian era, to reconstitute the political and military control, and that the pre-existing towns or villages were in strong continuity with the classical rural settlement system, especially where the Longobard domination had created new territorial polarities. These first urban centres, not in “hill-top”, but in “hill-edge” position, were determined by the “ribasification” of rustic villas [process of transformation of special types of buildings into basic types often happening in the Middle Ages] , often described in medieval documents as *fundi*. Thus the phenomenon of “incastellamento” should be reinterpreted in the light of a dialectic between the old Longobard *alodium* and the new comital and episcopal *feudum*, that hence the Ottonian *renovatio imperii* (X cent.) settled with castles to control the territory (Toubert, 1995, pp. 31-32).

The reconstruction of medieval landscapes, considering the scarcity of iconographical sources, and of sources in general, uses all the available data processing it with innovative methodologies. Two case studies are shown, based on the reconstruction of medieval topography using quantitative notarial sources, toponymic sources, ancient and modern cadastres.

Praedial toponyms are formed by the name of the owner of a site plus an ownership suffix: *-anus* (Latin), *-axum*, *-ascum* (Ligurian), *-ago -aco -igo* (Celtic). Latin Praedial toponyms in particular are formed by the *gentilicium* or by the nomen, followed by the suffix *-anus*, *-ana*, *-ani*, *-anellus*.

The Latin praedial toponym *-anus* can be subdivided following the different forms of land ownership: gentile, patrician ownership (over 500,000 m²), or plebeian private property, starting from 2 iugera (5,000 m²). Praedial toponyms are the immaterial evidence of the roman colonization. They survive across the Middle Ages for notarial continuity, and can be interpreted as the immaterial trace of the Roman colonization. The typical morphological characteristics found for the sites that hold a praedial place name are: prevalent exposure to south-east and south-west and about 500-600 m height position, lined up on ancient routes.

The Roman colonization of the Ager Sarsinatis and the castrum Corzani

In 266 B.C. the city of Sarsina surrendered to Rome and a few years later it became a federated city, in that year the consuls were *Numerius Fabius Pictor* and *Decimus Junius Pera*. After the Social War Sarsina gained the status of *municipium quattuorvirale*, with a formal constitution, and the inhabitants were enrolled in the *tribus Pupinia* (91-88 B.C.) within the Regio VI. Unfortunately this area is not mentioned in the *Liber Coloniarum* and therefore we have no information on the specific manner in which it was assigned to war veterans after the social war. The *Tabula Peutingeriana* (Von Scheyb and Mannert and Von Thiersch, 1824) does not report any road crossing the Apennines in this area, only the Via Flaminia from Fano to Spoleto, and so does the *Itinerarium Antonini* (Parthey and Pinder, 1848). In any case we know the existence of a road connecting Cesena to Sarsina and to Balneum and its continuation to Città di Castello (called in the Middle Ages *Castrum Felicitatis*) and Arezzo, joining the Via Amerina to Rome. During the Middle Ages this same road connecting Ravenna to Rome, gradually became more popular than the Via Flaminia since the last stretch close to Rome had become impractical for the frequent floods of the Tiber and the incursions of the closeby Longobards of the Duchy of Spoleto. This lesser route of the Roman times became in the Middle Ages the main north-south road infrastructure of the peninsula. In the wake of the upheaval caused by the Gothic War, Italy was divided between the territories still belonging to the Pope and those belonging to the Byzantine Exarchate: these two areas joined up in this strategic standpoint, around the various tracks that passed across the Apennines, known as the Byzantine corridor. This location next to the gap between the Tiber valley and the Sapis river, assumed at this stage of history a fundamental importance, it was not only the control point on an important path, but it became the gate of entry into Italy from the north. The castle of Corzano (*castrum corzani*) was built in a position of control on that route. According to our interpretation, Corzano is a praedial place name, the remnant of the Roman colonization of the territory, deriving from a *fundus curtianus*, which was probably inhabited with a rustic or suburban villa.

We have not proven this genealogy directly, but strong inferential indications could be outlined. The presence of several other nearby praedial place names, rustic structures related to praedials in the vicinity, several others Corzano place names with similar origins, and finally the typical morphological structure in the region pertaining to the castle, hill facing south east, close to the spring contour line, near an ancient route (Camiz, 2013, pp. 188-195). From the logic point of view this inferential thesis is proven, even though it still has to be demonstrated by documents, and above all by archaeological findings. The praedials were mapped (Fig.1) using a GIS, in an area of 1,000 km², using the IGMI 1:25,000 maps, finding 136 place names, with an average density of 0.136 praedials/sq km, which is quite close with the density we found near Rome in the Sublacense area (0,095 /km²).

The Roman state, at the end of the military service, assigned to each veteran a *praedium*: an estate that was recorded on a bronze plate (*forma*), showing the boundaries of the lot, the neighbors, the location, any geographic strongholds (*termini*) and the name of the assignee, or sometimes the most ancient properties

of a gens were part of a latifundus: all of them were recorded in two bronze copies at the appropriate *municipium* and in Rome. These bronze *formae* were preserved to solve the frequent disputes that arose between the owners, neighbors, colonists and the *res publica*: “*observari in hac controversia a mensore debet lineis: et habe aes, quouis forma respicit, cum modus in discrimine*” (Frontinus, p. 46).

If the owner of the plot was named *Curtius*, the name reported on the bronze forma was *fundus curtianus*, i.e. the land belonging to *Curtius*. The changes in ownership were not recorded on this kind of tablet but elsewhere, so the name

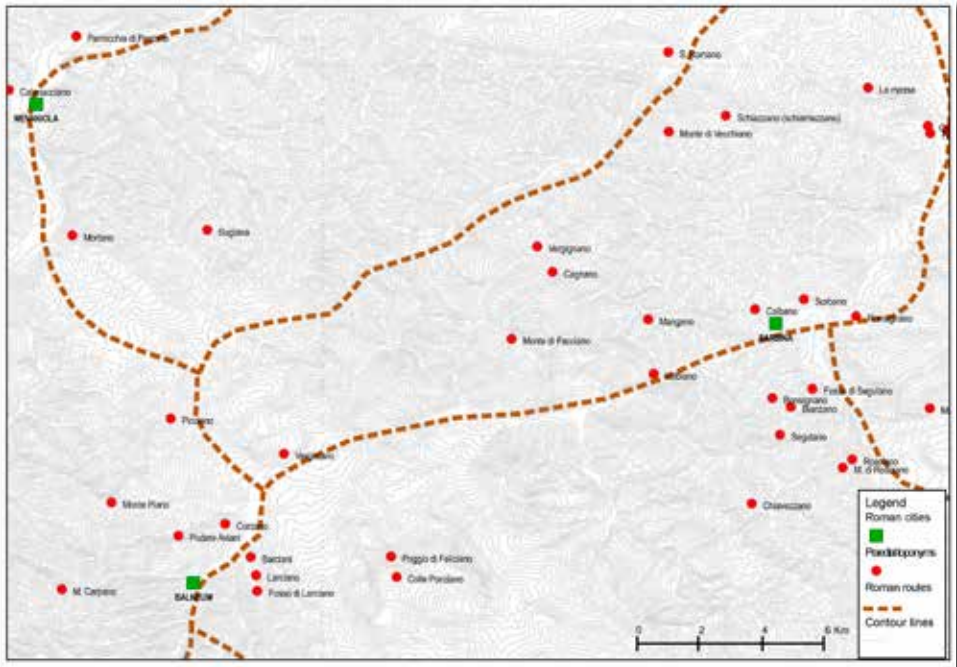


Fig. 1 Praedial toponyms in the Ager Sarsinatus, Roman cities, Roman routes and contour lines: author's elaboration, Quantum-GIS, Lisboa 1.8.0 (2013). Data sources: Toponyms, PCN-IGMI 1:25,000; contour lines, 25 m. SRTM Open DEM.

of the *fundus* remained *curtianus* even with a new owner. With the crisis of the administrative system of the Empire these bronze plates, of no more value, disappeared, but some of the written names (the praedial toponyms) survive to this day. The mechanism of their persistence has to do with the notarial transcription of donations to ecclesiastical entities before the end of the Empire. When the notary transcribed the donation he wrote the place name, and this was continuously copied through the Middle Ages until, later, it was transcribed into cadastres and finally on to modern maps. So from the Roman *fundus curtianus* derives the *fundus corzano*, or the written form *corçano* which is typical in the Medieval Latin of the exarchal area, and subsequently, *curte corzani* and *castrum corzani*. The corruption of *Curtianus* in *Corzano* follows the transformations

of spoken and written Latin that happened at the end of the 5th century. The path followed by the place name describes in general terms, within the history of medieval property, the transfer of the property from a private citizen of the Empire to the bishop, and subsequently the granting of the land from the bishop to a *miles ad faciendum castrum* (to make a castle), which generally occurs between the 10th and 12th centuries, or also to a peasant or a group of farmers to cultivate and inhabit it (*casalia*). Once the castle or the rustic houses were built, the *fundus* became *castrum* or *casalis* but maintained the praedial place name. Several other Corzano share this same history, as the Ager Curtianus at the II-III mile of the Via Appia, near Rome, or the one mentioned in the inscription “Sosio Secundo fund(i) Curtiani pago s(upra) s(cripto) adf(ine) / s(upra) s(cripto) aest(imati) HS LV(milia) in HS V(milia) / HS CXXV /” (CIL IX, 1455), or the Corzano “in comitato Castro Felicitatis ... portionem de caste(l)lo de Corzano et eccl. S. Angeli de ipso castello” (1073), or “in Cortiano capellam in honore sancti Petri”, near Benevento (972) or the town of Corzano near Brescia. The *gens curtia* was a very important patrician family and it owned many lands, as testified by the many findings of the praedial Corzano in Italy.

From the curtis to the castrum: continuity of place names.

The diocese of Sarsina, in the events that followed the Gothic War, was much closer to Ravenna than Rome, by maintaining political loyalty to the Byzantine Empire first, and then to the exarchate. With the advent of the Frankish and German Empire, this area became of particular interest, and the protection for the bishop was granted since the emperors passed there to go to Rome, claiming considerable autonomy and nomination of earls.

On August 27th of 1182, pope Lucius III granted privileges and properties to the chapter of the cathedral of Sarsina in the person of Raynerus, and confirmed the ownership of “que habetis in castro vel curte de valbiano” (Kehr, 1977, pp. 257-261). In 1220, 20 October, Frederic II took under imperial protection the bishop of Sarsina, Albericus, with his 73 castles. In this document a “castrum valbiani” is mentioned, and this seems to be the continuation of a possible *Fundus Balbianus*, probably owned by *Horatius Balbus* who lived in the area around II A.D. and is mentioned in the inscription found near Sorbano (CIL XI, 6528), now in the Sarsina Archaeological Museum. The “Castrum vel curte Valbiano” documents the evolution of the jurisdiction of this site in continuity from Longobard times to the “incastellamento” phase. The same temporal sequence, curte, and then castrum, is found in Corzano. In 1177 a donation of land “in territorio balneo, plebe s. marie in curte corzano” is registered: “*in territorio balneo, plebe s. marie in curte corzano, ecclesie petri de eremo novo site in l. fazolo in qua presb. donatus priore et custos est, fresa mater tebaldus et dachinellauxor eius cum suis ff. dant concedunt et offerunt in manu predicti priori unam petiam de terra in fundo paganico in l. q. d. bazolisi, iusta cassamento de gostantino, II et II terra de ingruzo. promittunt defensionem sub pena dupli. guido aviano, vivolo tt. (drudolus not.)*” (Schiapparelli and Baldasseroni, 1909, p. 251).

The *castrum corzani* is attested only some twenty years later in 1199, on March 16th within a vendition, “actum in castro corçani” ... “tantum terre q. est ad unum st. grani in sementa, pos. in val de Acero cum introitu et exitu suo” (*ibid.*, n. 1359, p. 318), proving the existence of an administrative structure (the Longobard *curte*) before the *castrum*. In 1191 Emperor Enrique VI assigned to Guido Guerra, palatine earl of Tuscany, the fortress of Bagno and other sites, but Corzano is not mentioned in this document. The first occurrence of the *castrum corzani* is in 1220, November 29th, when the Emperor Frederic II assigned this territory to five sons of Ruggero Guidi, Guido, Rigrino, Rugero, Marcoaldo and Aginolfo “item addimus et damus eis in rectorum et regalem feudum atque concedimus castrum corzani positum in partibus romaniolae cum tota curiae suae atque hominum eorundem locorum” (Böhmer, 1881-1901, p. 275).

The occurrence of the term *curtis* suggests a jurisdiction which usually dates back to the Longobard rule (Leicht, 1903), so the *curte corçani* mentioned in 1177 can be assumed as the trace of an organization of the area antecedent to the “castrum”, attested later in 1199. In 1220, on October 18th, in an act in presence of Aldebradi, prior of S. Salvatore in Balneo, a church is mentioned, “eccl. s. petri de corçano” (*Regesto di Camaldoli*, op. cit., vol. III, n. 1658, pp. 135-136), testifying the existence of an urban settlement in the lower part of the area, where now the town S. Piero in Bagno is. The church seems to be under the jurisdiction of the castle of Corzano. There are other instances of the *curte corzani*, as in 1240 when Remegarda conferred to the prior Iohannes some land, “clausuram pantiversi sita in curte corçani, territorio balnei et plebis eiusdem, a primo mapheus, a duos lateribus conforto, a quarto via currens cum introitu et exitu suo” (*Regesto di Camaldoli*, op. cit., vol. IV, n. 2194, pp. 47-48). One year before this donation we find the first mention of a *Forum Corzani*, a market place, that we tentatively identified with the valley settlement of S. Piero, in its central square, “actum in foro corzani” ... “unam petiam terre arabilis pos. territorio plebis galliate” (*Regesto di Camaldoli*, op. cit., vol. IV, n. 2181, p. 40). Some years later, on May 21st of 1242, we know that “in foro corçani” there was the vendition of “petiam unius terre posita in façolo, territorio strabatençoli, plebis galliade” (*Regesto di Camaldoli*, op. cit., vol. IV, n. 2244, p. 75). This site was used as a reference for notarial acts, thus must have been quite important in the surroundings. A notary coming from Arezzo, called Domenico di Gerosso Lodomeri, drew up in this square “in burgo Sancti Petri in Corçano, sub porticu ubi ius redditur”. In the “Statuta hominum de Trivio” (1309) Foro Corzani is mentioned “item, quod mensurare debeant pannos, quos texeriat ad brachium, quo mensuratur in foro Corzani, banno v solidorum”. There is an abundant documentation of the existence of an administrative structure, separated from the castle, in the area downhill where the route to Rome passed. The presence of this walled mercatale, *forum corzani* (1239), in a valley position, should be considered the medieval fortified nucleus of the town of S. Piero in Bagno, in analogy to the terra murata of Bagno di Romagna, built in continuity with the Roman thermal settlement of Balneus S. Mariae. Within this walled enclosure the urban fabric seems to follow the orientation of Roman land partition, suggesting the presence of a former rustic settlement, maybe belonging to the *fundus curtianus*.

The regressive method. From modern cartography to pre-unification cadasters

The theme of memory in the historical reconstruction of the medieval landscape is central, some memories are so remote as to be completely forgotten today: therefore the historical work on the medieval landscape consists mainly in the reconstruction of a lost memory. The reconstruction of the medieval landscapes, given the scarcity of available iconographic sources, and sources in general, must use the physical structure of the city, “considered in its irreplaceable value as historical document” [“valutata nel suo insostituibile valore di documento storico”] (Guidoni, 1974, p. 482), without opposition with documentary sources, the notarial sources, the sources of place names, Land Registers, ancient and modern, even with the application of the regressive method (Coste, 1996). In the territory belonging to the abbey of Subiaco, to the maximum extent reached in the 11th century, within a rectangular frame (Fig.

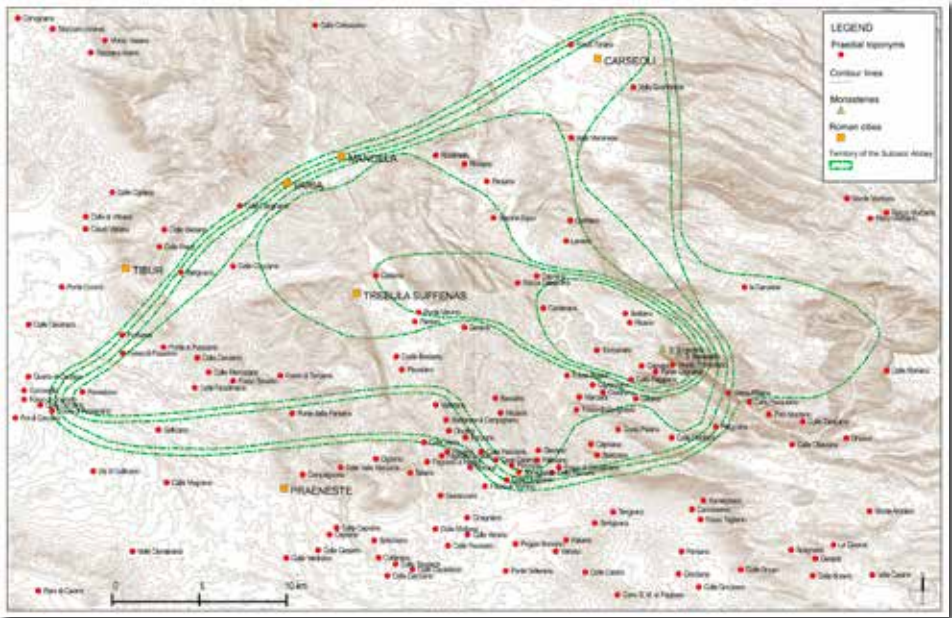


Fig. 2 Praedial toponyms in the Ager Praeestinus, monasteries, Roman cities, contour lines and evolution of the limits of the territory of the Subiaco Abbey (926, 936, 939, 958, 967, 997, 1005 AD): author's elaboration, Quantum-GIS, Wroclaw 1.7.0 (2011). Data sources: Toponyms, PCN-IGMI 1:25,000; contour lines, 25 m. SRTM Open DEM.

2) with a surface area of 1589 km², only by examining the IGMI cartography at the scale of 1:25,000, 152 praedial places were identified for an average density of 0.095 praedials/km². This list was correlated, using a geographic information system, with the morphology of the territory and with other lists of place praedial names extracted from imperial, papal and bishopal notarial documents from the 4th to the 12th century. Each of these lists covers a subset of the maximum extent of the territory of Subiaco, some are reported to the diocese of Tivoli, others confined to individual

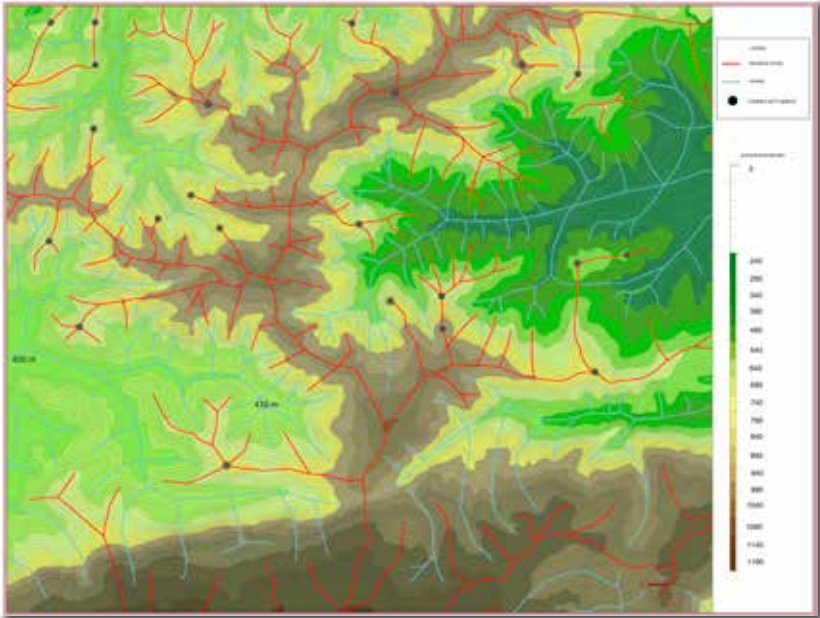


Fig. 3 Morphology of the territory of San Vito Romano, Pisoniano and Bellegra: drainage divide, rivers, sites appropriate for settlement. Elaboration Marco Fedeli (2011). Data sources: contour lines, Map of Regione Lazio 1:50,000.

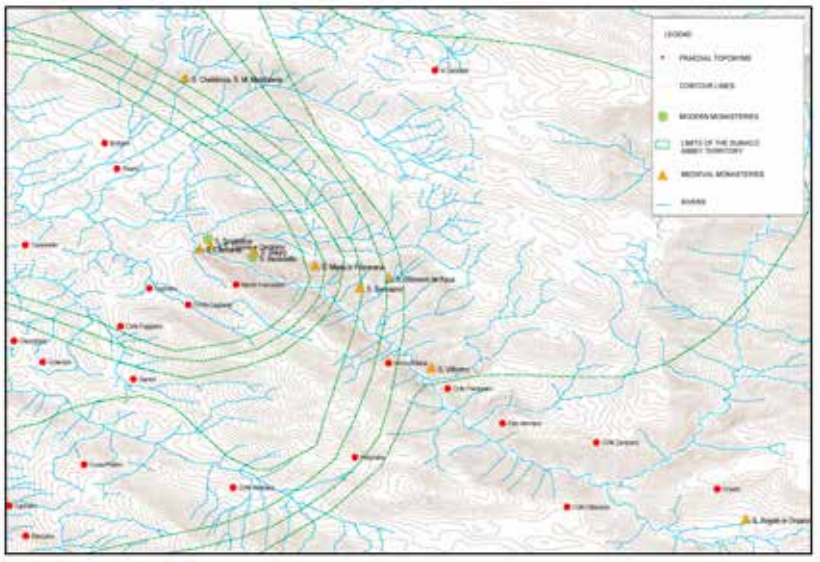


Fig. 4 Praedial toponyms in the Subiaco area, medieval and modern monasteries, contour lines, rivers and evolution of the limits of the territory of the Subiaco Abbey (926, 936, 939, 958, 967, 997, 1005 AD): elaboration, Quantum-GIS, Wroclaw 1.7.0. Data sources: Toponyms, PCN-IGMI 1:25,000; rivers, Map of Regione Lazio 1:50,000; contour lines, 25 m.

donations, it is therefore a data set arranged diachronically, partially overlapping but spatially inhomogeneous. Despite the dishomogeneity of the data set, quite frequent in the Middle Ages, we were interested to see if for some praedials extracted from the modern cartography it was possible to go backwards with the regressive method to the documentation of the Roman era, in order to give experimental evidence to the hypothesis of their origin. We have verified the growing number of praedials for a sample area (Fig. 5, municipalities of San Vito Romano and Pisoniano) based on the examination of other maps such as the Carta Tecnica Regionale (CTR)

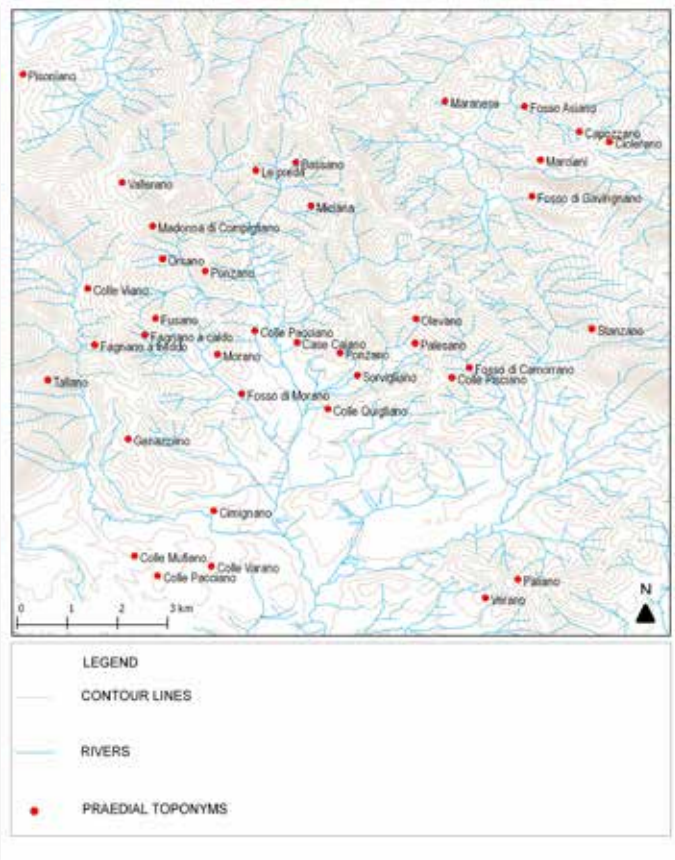


Fig. 5 Praedial toponyms in the territory of San Vito Romano, Pisoniano and Bellegra. Author's elaboration, Quantum-GIS Wroclaw 1.7.0 (2011). Data sources: Toponyms, PCN-IGMI 1:25,000; rivers, Map of Regione Lazio 1:50,000; contour lines, 25 m. SRTM Open DEM.

1:10,000 (1990), the current Land Register, the rustic Land Register (1859) and the Gregorian Cadastre (1819). Although these place names were not included in the general database, going back in time, the number of praedials grows, as if it were the remains of a structure that is slowly obliterated by subsequent transcripts.

With the drafting started in 1872 by the Italian Topographic Military Institute,

of the Topographic Map of Italy, at the scale of 1:100,000, specific guidelines for the collection and transcription of place names were defined including, among other things, the consultation of existing cadasters (Nocentini, 2004), and for the pontifical state the Gregorian Cadastre was the main reference.

The cartographic sources for this area are scarce and their systematic organization for the periods prior to the 19th century is challenging and out of the reach of such a research. The lists of properties described in papal and imperial medieval diplomas are rich in topographical information: starting from this set of data it was possible to correlate backwards praedial place names verifying the reasons of their persistence. The questionable authenticity of some of these diplomas is not considered here, the false document was compiled at a later date as declared, but was anyhow prepared to prove the ownership of certain funds; even if the document is false, or to be dated in another century, the occurrence of the praedial names of *fundi* remains significant in general terms, but the date of the document can-not be trusted instead. In these cases we considered the dates as a numeration of the documents used, where it is meant to show in general terms the occurrence of the praedial funds within medieval diplomatic and legal documents for the study area. An examination of the cases identified (Table 1) shows the evolution of the ownership structure of the *fundus* with an suburban villa, to the *fundus casalis*, to the medieval *castrum*, outlining in general terms the sequence that subsumes the birth of small towns in the area, where the substrate type of the suburban villa rustica emerges with all its documentary evidence. The working hypothesis is that for the preparation of registers of the 19th century surveys, place names were mostly extracted from listings with descriptive properties from cadastre, from pamphlets and cabrei, and correlated with the notarial sources which, as is well known, transcribed the properties throughout the Middle Ages. We can-not expect to find all the documents that describe all the changes of ownership for over two thousand years, but we can, treating them as a series of data, infer some relationships in statistical terms, assuming that if a phenomenon is traceable in a class of data, it is possible to infer that the same phenomenon occurs for a single data belonging to that class.

From pre-unification sources to the medieval notarial registers

The use of place names for a *longue durée* historiography is of considerable interest for the study of the case of the medieval landscape when it detects the cyclic oscillation of social systems and thus determines the chronological details of the research (Braudel, 1958, p. 727). Unlike other toponyms, praedial place names are of great importance for the large amount found in the Italian territory (Tosco, 2009, pp. 53-58), especially if placed in relation to the evolution of the society following the decline of the territorial organization of the ancient world. Tracing back the name from the modern cartography, to the cadastre of the 19th century, and back again to the *cabreum* and *libellum*, and even further back to the notarial deed assigning the ownership or use, it can reasonably be expected to have traced back, at least in theory, the path that the place name has done from the 21st century to the 10th century. With the analysis of the positioning of praedial place names in the area of

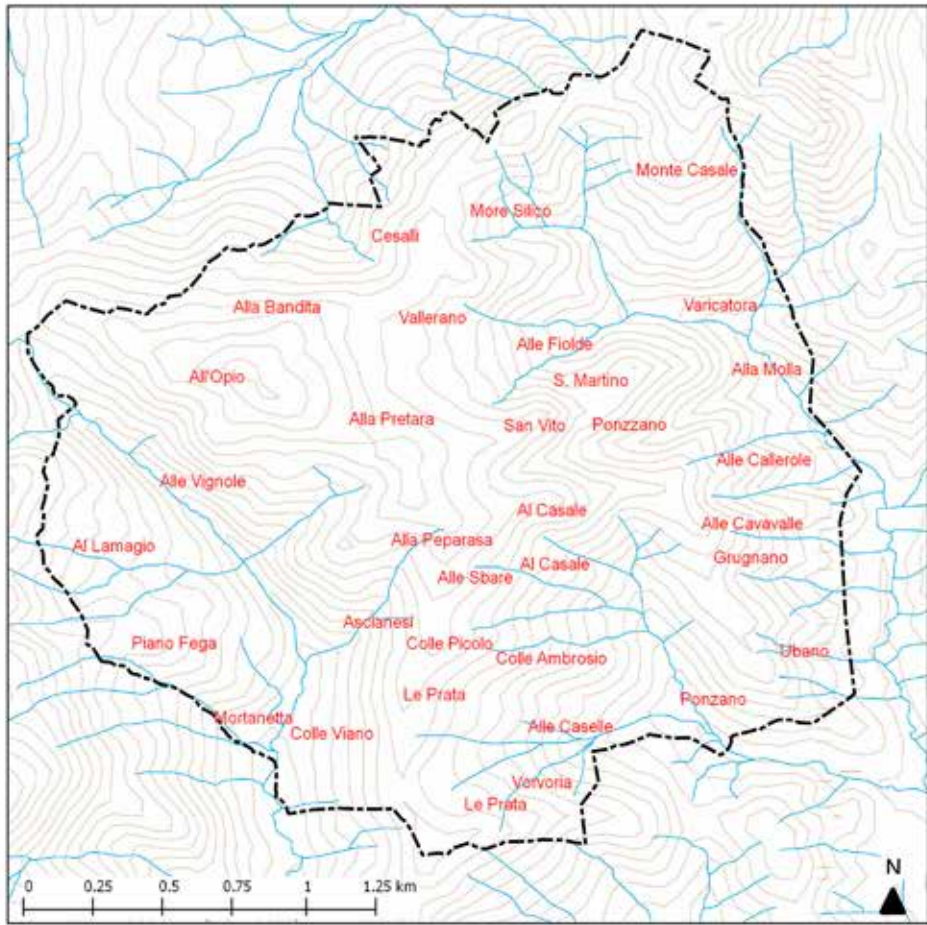


Fig. 6 Toponyms of San Vito Romano from the Gregorian Cadastre (1819). Author's elaboration, Quantum-GIS, Wrocław 1.7.0 (2012). Data sources: Toponyms, PCN-IGMI 1:25,000; contour lines, 25 m. SRTM Open DEM.

Subiaco correlated with the morphological analysis of the area (Caniggia, 1976), it was possible to identify the assignments of land to the Roman veterans. The praedial place names, consisting of a Latin praenomen or nomen followed by the suffix *anum*, are interpreted as trace intangible asset allocations of land to Romans settlers.

Consider, for example, the praedium assigned to a certain Pontius, probably as a result of the outcome of the civil war when Octavian defeated Tiberius in Palestrina (Senni, 1838, pp. 11-15), and repaid his veterans in this area *in iugeribus*. Each of these soldiers, so even our Pontius, received a *praedium* which became, once assigned and recorded on the *forma*, *fundus pontianus*, or more briefly *Pontianus*. This name survived the successive transfers of ownership, gift or inheritance, the name of the first assignee thus became the name of the fund. From the 1st century BC to this date a number of changes in land ownership have followed, such as mergers in the estates, the dropouts, the accumulation of more *fundi* in *massae*, division by inheritance or *hospitalitas*, as well as the occupation following the barbaric wars, yet some of these praedial place names survived thanks to the series of subsequent transcriptions. The documents reported during the medieval period whenever the *fundus* was merged with other properties in a *massa*, divided into a *portio*, donated to the abbey of Subiaco, or was simply being used as topographic reference, so to be transformed in today's Ponzano south of San Vito.

Continuity of land ownership, from the parchment to the bronze forma

The most difficult step is not only to draw back the single name from the Middle Ages until the Roman period, but also to identify the general mechanism of the transmission of the whole system of property besides the names, that as we have seen bears a remarkable continuity. In the face of a strong discontinuity in political, administrative and above all in the settlement system, the hypothesis of a continuity so evident in the names of the properties, although recognized by early literature (Leicht, 1903), is amazing with respect to the research of medieval archaeology (Francovich and Hodges, 2003), which tends to deny the continuity of use of the rustic sites after the 6th century. From the 3rd century the use by members of the Roman nobility, but also by the plebeians, once converted to Christianity, to donate to ecclesiastical institutions, bishop, abbot or a single church, their estates spreads systematically. Some of these cases are known, such as the donation to pope Damasus of the church of S. Lorenzo "in curte sublaco" by the patrician of Rome Nartius in August 3rd, 396 (RS, n. 28), or the donations of 587 (RT, pp. 128-130) and of June 28th 594 (RS, n. 216) that seem to bear witness to the transmission of large agnatic possessions of the Abbey of Subiaco by the gens Anicia constituting the core of the original possession of the monastery.

The donations were recorded by a tabellion that probably could still see the bronze *formae* deposited in the municipal facility as well as in Rome. When the bishop's notary transcribed these donations he reported the praedial as descriptive of the property, and perhaps for a legal proof in the event of disputes. Every ecclesiastical institution jealously kept note of these certificates of ownership. The custom of the donation began in Rome with the Christian era

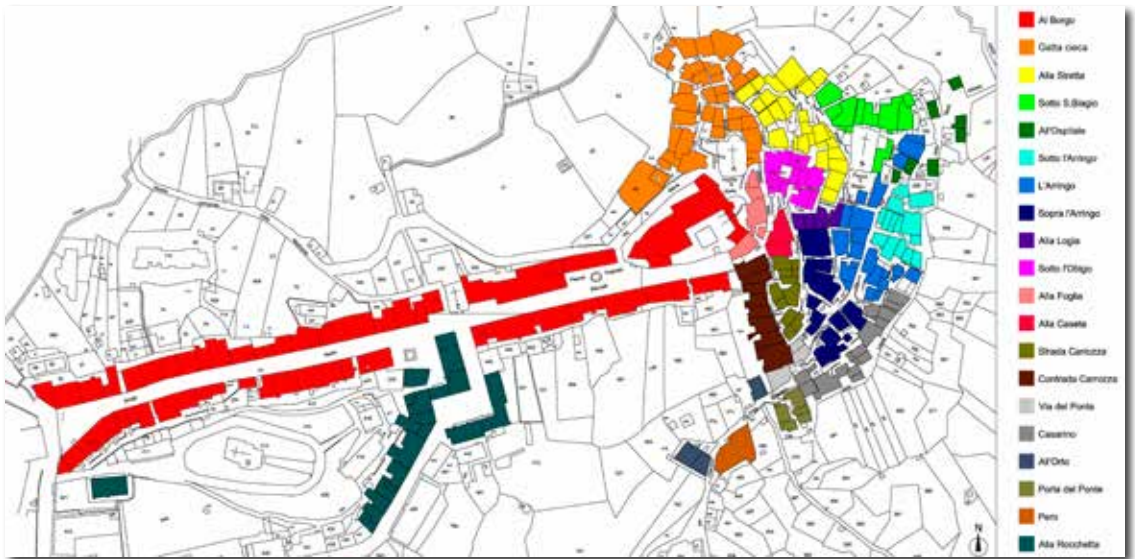


Fig. 7 Urban toponyms from the Brogliardo of the Gregorian Cadastre (1819).
Elaboration Michelangelo Dorata (2011).

and spreaded more and more, until the crisis of the political settlement of the Roman Empire in the late 5th century, when a large amount of funds were already part of the church-owned property. In the listing of properties that medieval documents show, especially in the oldest documents, the dishomogeneity of property titles is evident. Some only appear with the name of the *fundus*, in other cases the scriptures “qui dicitur”, “qui vocatur” or “qui appellatur” are used, e.g. “Casalem qui vocatur calicianum” (1051): in other cases the *interaffines* of the fund are described, in other cases the appendages of the fund appear. When we read the words “qui dicitur” it was probably an oral transmission, but in other cases the transmission must have been written. For some very large Roman properties, such as the *agri subsicivi* or the *agri non adsignati*, in addition to the neighboring estates, on the bronze *forma* a detailed description of the common rights, grazing, wood gathering hunting and fishing was found. These seem to keep turning even in the Middle Ages in the form of “una cum omnibus finibus, terminis, limitibusque suis, terris, casis, vineis, campis, pratis, pascuis, silvis, salectis, arboribus pomiferis fructiferis diversi generi, puteis, fontibus, rivis” (958). The colonists were bound by contract not to move from the fund in the late imperial era and we find regularly, although not always, in step with the medieval writings in the form “una cum colonis et colonabusutriusque sexus illi pertinentibus, simulque cum glandaticis, herbaticis” (958): serfdom inherited forms of late imperial colonate and become another strong element of continuity. We assume that the transition of the praedial name from the bronze *forma* to the parchment occurred mainly before the so-called barbarian invasions, note that the church property enjoyed territorial immunity and that the barbarians, Ostrogoths and Lombards, although non-Catholic Christians, tended to respect it.

This hypothesis finds some documentary evidence as described in the *fundus* quoted in the life of Pope Sylvester (LP, Vita Silvestri) in the *liber pontificalis*, a text written in the 6th century but which is believed to have used for the

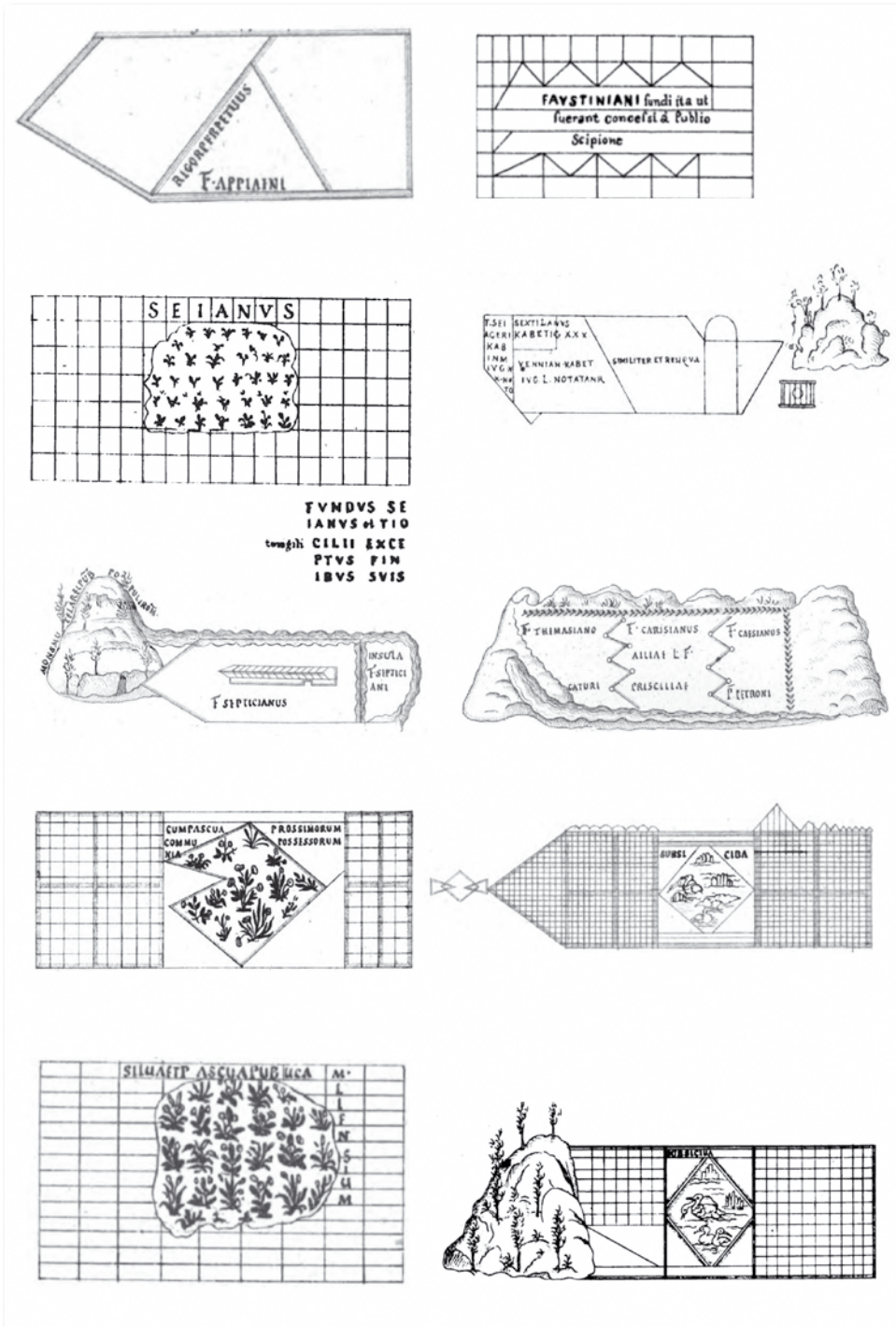


Fig. 8 Roman formae from the *Corpus agrimensorum Romanorum*, *Die Schriften der römischen Feldmesser*, F. Blume, K. Lachmann, A. Rudorff (eds.), Berlin, 1848-1852.

preparation of the life of Sylvester (314-335 AD) relevant documents of that time. Notice for example the writings of yet unprocessed Latin script that contains a list of fees paid to the pope by beneficial owners of funds in particular: the “*massa Statiana, territorio Sabinense, praest. sol. CCCL*” correlated with the ruins of the village of Stazzano, we have identified from the database of current predial IGMI. Or “*fundum Sentianum, territorio Tiburtino, praest. sol. XXX*” that we find mentioned in the papers of Farfa in a document of the antipope John XVI of 997, “*Et terre modium unum in fundo sentiano*” (CE, p. 26, RT, p. 125) that testifies the possessions of the Abbey of Farfa in the vicinity of the town of Tivoli, cited again in “*et modium unum infra sentiano*”. We can hypothesize two other forms of transmission. During the first wave of barbarian invasions in the 5th century, the Ostrogoth invoked the *hospitalitas*, or the right to acquire a portion of the property of the Latins, the third part after the edict of Theodoric, and to apply the subdivision of land assets. So it is reasonable that they availed themselves of bronze *formae* that had yet to be used for tax purposes: and it is possible that the records of these divisions were made after reviewing an ancient *forma* and transcribing therefore the praedial. An example of such a transmission is reported in the 471 for the foundation of a church in the *massa cornutiiana* by the Goth Valila in Tivoli (RT, n. 1). These assets generally flow into the ecclesiastical heritage much later with the allodial decline towards the end of the 10th century, and in some cases the praedials remain: e.g., the donation of Rosa to John Abbot of Subiaco in 984¹. The third transmission mechanism we hypothesized as relevant to the second wave of Gothic and Lombard migration in the 6th and 7th century. With the unfolding of the Gothic war, looting and destruction were frequent, with the Lombard migration it is reasonable that some of these troops have entered a municipal archive, and acquired legally or in a violent manner, the *formae* pertaining to a particular territory as a way to claim the exclusive property, or even as a bargaining chip for negotiations.

In the form of proprietary systems of the Lombard era we have a strong continuity with the *massa* and especially with the colonate. Finally there is the possibility that during the occupation of a land and appropriation of the settlers or slaves who lived there may have occurred an oral transmission, in the name of the *fundus*, even if we consider this hypothesis remotely. An example of such transmission is the donation of a public court near Carseoli, “*positam in gastaldatu turano que sala dicitur*” made by Ugo and Lothair to the monastery of Subiaco in 941, where, however, we do not find a list of praedial funds² (Sciò, 1986, pp. 35-46). Another case is that of Benedict duke and consul that gives to Leo, abbot of Subiaco, inherited property *in territorio campanino* in 952 (RS, n. 195). This document contains a list of praedials, that have lost the diction of *fundi*, becoming *loci* (*locum q.v. pusano, locum q.v. pentoma*) however, there is also a “*colonia in integro qui appellatur affile*” that should be the remnant of the colony reported in the *liber coloniarum*.

¹ Marini, n. 105, p. 165, RT, pp. 134-136, RG n. 2, pp. 8-12.

² See: Sciò M., *L'incastellamento del Carseolano nei secoli X e XI*, in “*Terra Nostra*”, XXV (1986), fasc. 1-2, pp. 35-46.

Toponym, IGM 25.000	Medievale sources	Fundus, owner	Archaeological evidences	Coordinates
Bassano	<i>fundum bassanum</i> (978a, 991) <i>ponte de bassano</i> (1005, 1015)	<i>fundus bassanus</i> , <i>Bassus</i>		13.012501, 41.890963
Cagnano	<i>fundum canianum</i> (926, 936, 1114-1115)	<i>fundus canianus</i> , <i>Cantius</i>		13.097886, 41.908550
Canterano	<i>monte q.v. cantorano</i> (867) <i>fundum canterano</i> (958) <i>fundum cantoranum</i> (939, 978a, 991, 967, 1029) <i>fundum q.v. cantoranu</i> (953) <i>fundum cantaranu</i> (973) <i>canterano</i> (998) <i>casale q.v. cantorano</i> (1005) <i>fundum cantoranum in quo est castellum</i> (1030)	<i>fundus cantoranus</i>		13.040357, 41.942947
Ciciliano	<i>cicilianum</i> (978a, 991, 1029) <i>biciliano</i> (1005, 1015, 1051) <i>sicilianum</i> (1114-1115)	<i>fundus caecilianus</i> , <i>Caecilius</i>	Platea di villa, Tibur3, n. 166	12.943342, 41.961770
Colle Carignano	<i>fundum qui ponitur cariniano</i> (956) <i>fundum carinianu</i> (991, 1029)	<i>fundus carinianus</i> , <i>Carinius</i>	Villa, Tibur 3, n. 50.	12.864521, 42.002171
Colle Cerviano	<i>fundum cerviano</i> (958, 973, 998)	<i>fundus cervianus</i>	Grande villa, Praeneste, n. 86	12.838744, 41.914855
Colle Cesarano	<i>fundum cesarianum</i> (817) <i>casale cesariano</i> (817) <i>fundum q.a. cesaranu</i> (939) <i>fundo cesarano</i> (997c) <i>cesarianus</i> (1029)	<i>massa cesariana</i> , <i>Olybrius</i> <i>cos. 378 e Scirtius, vir</i> <i>perfectissimus</i>	Villa, Tibur 4, n.194	12.742291, 41.933462
Colle Corzano	<i>fundum corsani</i> (945) <i>fundum corsoranu</i> (991, 1029)	<i>fundus curtianus</i> , <i>Gens Curtia</i>		12.748738, 41.887671
Colle Faustiniانو	<i>a tertio latere faustiniano</i> (999) <i>a tertio latere faustinianum</i> (1054) <i>valle fustiniana</i> (978b) <i>fustiniano</i> (992) <i>castellum q.v. fustiniano</i> (1019) <i>castellum q.v. fustinianum</i> (1081)	<i>fundus faustinianus</i> , <i>Faustus</i>	Villa e cisterna, Praeneste, n. 106	12.838432, 41.896950
Colle Mercorano	<i>fundo mercorano</i> (997c)	<i>fundus mercorianus</i>	Villa e tombe, Praeneste, n. 92	12.846492, 41.905949
Costa Poiano	<i>fundum poiano</i> (973, 998)	<i>fundus poianus</i>		13.080326, 41.871831
Fosso Saviano	<i>fundum q.v. saviano</i> (984)	<i>fundus savianus</i>	Villa e cisterna, Praeneste, nn. 131, 132.	12.863117, 41.903492
Gallicano	<i>a secundo latere gallicani</i> (999) <i>a secundo latere gallicani</i> (1054) <i>castellum gallicani</i> (1114-1115) <i>castellum q.v. gallicani</i> (1005, 1015, 1051)	<i>fundum gallicanum</i> , Cicerone, pro Quintio, XXIII		12.817383, 41.872621
Gerano	<i>fundum giranum</i> (987, 991, 1029) <i>monte q.v. girano</i> (1005) <i>castrum giranum</i> (1114-1115)	<i>fundus giranus</i>		12.994593, 41.931767
Lenano	<i>fundum lenanu</i> (958, 973, 998) <i>lenanum</i> (1005,1015)	<i>fundus lenanus</i>		13.053491, 41.981849
Marano Equo	<i>fundum marano</i> (958) <i>maranu seu seminaru</i> (973) <i>fundum maranum</i> (991, 1029) <i>marano seminarum</i> (998)	<i>fundus maranus</i>		13.011516, 41.995207
Olevano	<i>olevano</i> (967) <i>fundum olebano</i> (958, 998) <i>olibano</i> (1051) <i>olibanum</i> (1114-1115)	<i>fundus olibanus</i>		13.036425, 41.859913
Orsano	<i>casale ursanum</i> (832) <i>casale q.v. ursano</i> (864) <i>casale q.v. ursano</i> (1051)	<i>fundus ursanus</i> , <i>Ursus</i>		12.986056, 41.871828
Passerano	<i>passarano</i> (936) <i>castello q.v. passarano</i> (1005)	<i>fundus passaranus</i>		12.772340, 41.892970
Ponzano	<i>fundum pontzano</i> (978a, 991, 1029)	<i>fundus pontianus</i> , <i>Pontius</i>		13.021335, 41.853148
Romagnano	<i>fundum romaniano</i> (958, 998) <i>fundum romanianum</i> (973)	<i>fundus romanianus</i>		13.132009, 41.830226
Rovianello	<i>aliud rubianum</i> (1189)	<i>fundus rubianus</i> [minor]		12.978123, 42.031455
Roviano	<i>fundum rubianum, cum s. mariae ecclesiae</i> (817) <i>castellum q.v. rubianum</i> (864) <i>fundum q.v. rubiano</i> (867) <i>castellum q.v. rubiano</i> (997a, 1015) <i>rubianum</i> (1114-1115, 1189)	<i>fundus rubianus</i> [maior]		12.994601, 42.026302
Stazzano	<i>massa stadiana, territorio sabinens</i> (314-335) <i>fundus statianus</i> (DeAngelis 1621)	<i>fundus statianus</i> , <i>Stattius</i>		12.756153, 42.104487
Toccianello	<i>fundum toccianellum</i> (939) <i>fundum toccanellum</i> (958, 998) <i>fundum q.v. toccanellum</i> (973) <i>casale q.v. toccanello</i> (1005, 1051)	<i>fundus toccianus</i> [minor]		13.071290, 41.918673

Table 1 Correspondence between modern praedial toponyms (place names), medieval fundi, owners and archaeological evidence of Roman villas or rustic structures in the Ager Praenestinus.

Concluding methodological remarks

The picture presented seems consistent with the fact that the bronze *formae* were lost gradually until they disappeared altogether. Their disappearance follows the reuse of metallic materials to create other artifacts like bells, common in the Middle Ages when the value of the constituent material become greater than the value that could be certified by the document, following the disappearance of the legal value of the *forma* after the crisis of the administrative system of the Roman Empire. We have shown how such a model of theoretic interpretation is confirmed by historical data and documents: the past research on urban and territorial medieval history teaches us that to reconstruct a structure using documents, we only need a sufficient amount of documents. In some cases it was possible to correlate the praedial name with the rustic villas of which there is archaeological evidence, such as the *colle faustiniano*, with the Roman villa and the cistern that are located on its southern flank, or the *Colle cerviano*, with the great villa by some attributed to Trajan, near the route of a *via antiqua* (via Carciano), the *colle Saviano* with the ruins of a villa and a cistern, and the *colle Mercorano* characterized by the presence of a villa. In other cases it was possible to assume the owners as in the case of the *fundus ceseianus* and *C. Caesius M.f. duoviro quinquennalis* in 75-50 BC (CIL XIV, 2980), or *Sex. Caesius aedile* (CIL XIV, 2966) in 85-50 BC³ (Van Deman Magoffin, 1908, p. 100). Finally, in the case of the *colle cesarano*, formerly *fundus cesarianus* and before *massa cesariana*, we have the knowledge of two successive owners, first *Olybrius*, consul in 378 and then *Scirtius*, *vir perfectissimus* (Vera, 1999, pp. 991-1025) (see Table 1). The greater the number of place names that we can catalog, the greater is the probability of inferring significant correlations.

Abbreviations

Annales: Annales camaldulenses ordinis Sancti Benedicti, eds. D. Johanne Benedicto Mittarelli et D. Anselmo Costadoni, apud Jo. Baptistam Pasquali, Venetiis 1755-1773.

Antiquitates: Ludovico Antonio Muratori, Antiquitates Italicae Medii Aevi, Mediolani, typographia Societatis Palatinae, 1738-1742.

Bullarum: Bullarum privilegiorum ac diplomatum Romanorum Pontificum, ed. Caroli Cocquelines, Typis S. Michaelis ad Ripam, Romae 1739-1747.

Chronicon: Chronicon Sublacense, aa. 593-1369, Antiquitates, IV, pp. 1039-1074.

CF: Il chronicon farfense di Gregorio di Catino, a cura di Ugo Balzani, Tipografia del Senato, Roma 1903.

CIL: Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum, Inscriptiones Latii veteris Latinae, ed. H. Dessau, G. Reimerum, Berolini 1887.

LP: Liber pontificalis, pars prior, in MGH, Gestorum pontificorum romanorum I, ed. Theodorus Mommsen, apud Weidmannos, Berolini 1898.

³ See: Van Deman Magoffin R. , *A study of the topography and municipal history of Praeneste*, Baltimore 1908, p. 100.

Gromatici: Corpus agrimensorum Romanorum, Die Schriften der römischen Feldmesser, a cura di F. Blume, K. Lachmann A. Rudorff, Berlin, 1848-1852.

Marini: I papiri diplomatici raccolti ed illustrati dall'abate Gaetano Marini, stamperia della Sacra Congregazione de Propaganda Fide, Roma 1805.

MGH: Monumenta Germaniae Historica

RS: Il regesto sublacense del secolo XI, a cura di Leone Allodi, Guido Levi, Biblioteca Vallicelliana, Roma 1885.

RT: Regesto della chiesa di Tivoli, a cura di Luigi Bruzza, Tipografia della Pace, Roma 1880.

RG: Il regesto del monastero dei SS. Andrea e Gregorio ad Clivum Scauri, a cura di Alberto Bartola, Società romana di storia patria, Roma 2003.

RF: Il regesto di Farfa compilato da Gregorio di Catino e pubblicato dalla R. Società romana di storia patria, a cura di Ivano Giorgi e Ugo Balzani, Roma 1879-1914.

Praeneste: Maria Pia Muzzioli, Forma Italiae, Praeneste, pars altera, De Luca, Roma 1970.

Tibur 3: Cairol Fulvio Giuliani, Forma Italiae, Tibur, pars altera, I, 3, De Luca, Roma 1966.

Tibur 4: Zaccaria Mari, Forma Italiae, Tibur, 4, Olschki, Firenze 1991.

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Place names as intangible cultural heritage

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Andrea Cantile and Helen Kerfoot

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