The excavation of the gardens at “Horace’s Villa” has produced some of the most successful results of the AAR/SAL excavations. Preserved, systematically excavated ancient gardens outside of the region of Mt. Vesuvius are rare, but include the excavations of E. Salsa Prina Ricotti and W. Jashemski of the gardens at Hadrian’s Villa in nearby Tivoli and the joint Italian-Danish project on the gardens of Livia at Prima Porta. Given the importance of Horace’s poetry about the Sabine landscape and his villa, Frischer consulted Jashemski on the feasibility of undertaking a garden archaeology project, and she recommended a small team of specialists to do the work. He assembled the group for a feasibility study in August 1998. All participants were encouraged by the results of their investigations that year.

Gardens and designed landscapes are excavated for a number of reasons, and, contrary to expectation, the goal is not the discovery of the species of plants that grew there. This is not possible in most instances. Rather, the objective of archaeological exploration is to recover the basic physical layout of the garden (the boundaries, the paths, the edges, and the features that structure the space and the experience of the visitor), as well as to understand the garden within the

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3. Frischer et al. 2000. The 1998 team is discussed in the preliminary report. In 1999, the staff included: Kathryn Gleason, John Foss, and James Schryver, with student volunteers Peter Hedlund, Elizabeth Macaulay, Mary Pearsall, Deni Ruggeri, and Giovanni Malfatti, with timely assistance from the University of California Research Expeditions Program volunteers throughout the season. The March 2000 team added Ann Kuttner, Betsey Robinson, and Aicha Malek, as well as students of archaeology and landscape architecture at the University of Pennsylvania, Penn State and Cornell: Pamela Brown, Daniel Costura, Sarah Cupperberg, Michael Delli, Laura Gawlinski, William Gruen, Andrew Hahns, Brian Jencek, Margaretha Kramer-Hajos, Alexandra Minkovich, Millicent Moran, Paula Rosenberg, Beth Ryan, Outi Salminen, Joseph Teel, Maki Uchida, Alisia Vilonen, and Kim Wilczak. Their excavation records and drawings form the foundation for this report. During the summer of 2000 Jennifer Ramsay processed and analyzed the botanical remains collected by our team.