The fragments of architectonic terracottas found in the excavations of “Horace’s Villa” at Licenza can be traced back to a single model plaque that functioned as a crowning *sima*. Reproduced in several variants, it was characterized by a motif in which palmettes alternated with small columns.

The pieces were mainly found in secondary deposits, in the vicinity of the colonnade of Area 35, to the west of the first pier, between the water channel (*s*) and the northern wall of the *frigidarium* 37-40. They were together with plaques of marble belonging to a phase of production that occurred “after the last quarter of the first century A.D.” (see Camaiani et al., C.5.2.1, activity 18) and therefore have to be considered earlier than this date. Fragment no. 12 was found inside the pool of the *frigidarium* (37), in a stratum of abandonment datable to the early Middle Ages (see Camaiani et al., C.5.5.1, SU 428, activity 42).

Some fragments of *simae* of this sort were also found in the excavations of the villa conducted by Pasqui from 1911-1914. The excavation inventories, found by Frischer (see G.1.12) in the archive of the Archaeological Superintendency of Lazio, register the find of a fragment on land belonging to Angeletti (parcel 1214 in the cadaster) and of six other fragments on land belonging to Caponetti (parcel 1213 in the cadaster), but do not give an exact location for the find-spots (for property lines in the early 1900s, see Frischer, E.4). These fragments were mentioned by Lugli, without notice of the land parcels.1 Two photographs found by Frischer in the archive of the Archaeological Superintendency of Lazio (SAL 10075-76; see Frischer, G.2.5) give a view of these fragments from the old excavation. This is fortunate, since the fragments themselves are no longer traceable. The photographs reveal that the fragments are characterized by a central motif of rampant panthers at the two sides of a kantharos and by the presence of a stamp MAMAT ISIDOR (M. Amat[ius] Isidor[us]).2 Since the Caponetti and Angeletti properties correspond to the bath complex, the quadriporticus and the garden, it is possible that the fragments in question were found, like all those from the 1997-2001 excavation, in the bath complex. But it should be stressed that, given the poor documentation of the Pasqui excavations, this is merely a possibility.

Also studied and included in this report are two fragments whose archeological context is uncertain (even the date of their discovery is unknown); these are presently stored in the Santuario di Ercole Vincitore in Tivoli, where the Archaeological Superintendency of Lazio has its warehouse (see below D.5.1, nos. 9 and 13).

In all the fragments that have come to light, the lack of attachment holes permits us to exclude the possibility that they functioned as revetment plaques, while the documentation furnished by nos. 7, 8, and 12, which preserve the attachment of the lower-, or base-tile, clarifies that the form was beyond any doubt a *sima*. Such a function remains the most probable for the other fragments as well, where, however, the loss of the lower elements has made it impossible to verify the presence of holes in the bases.

Furthermore, in the case of Type I, the upper termination does not present the customary groove for the insertion of a crowning plaque above, a fact which suggests that the pieces functioned as the terminal decoration of a system of roof sheathing that was rather plain. A fairly close comparandum for this kind of arrangement is offered by the villa of Settefinestre in the territory of Cosa, where plaques analogous to

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those of Licenza (decorated with gorgon protomes, with lionheads alternating with palmettes, and also with a simple motif of palmettes under a denticular cornice) were found, mostly around the basis villae, near the southwest corner of the portico. In the case of Settefinestre, however, the contextual presence of antefixes and the lack, in the plaques, of a joint on the back of the tile have resulted in the reconstruction of a sheathing system that is more articulated. Here the plaques could have been immured for revetting the architrave, while the slope of the portico’s roof was decorated only with antefixes. In our case the absence of finds relating to antefixes and the secure identification of at least one type of plaque as a sima permit its hypothetical reconstruction as the final element of a roof, most likely of a portico, in which the water drainage occurred on the two ends.

The pattern of palmettes alternating with small columns having a figural motif in the center is a well-known feature of a series of architectural terracottas, mainly simae but also including crowning plaques, whose chronology has been the subject of debate. Distinguished, even if sporadically, by the presence of manufacturers’ stamps directly incised in the mold, in the fundamental publication of von Rohden and Winnefeld, they are considered the predecessors of genuine Campana plaques produced at Rome and dated “to the last half century of the Republic.” However, prosopographical, functional, and compositional considerations led me to propose that the dating of these simae should be radically revised and moved down to the period between the second half of the first and the beginning of the second century A.D. The drastic reduction of figural themes known earlier in the tradition of architectonic coroplastic corresponds in this period to a structural simplification that limited the use of decorative terracottas to the roof alone.

In recent years new finds have enriched the corpus of plaques that have palmettes and small columns, particularly with regard to the most common type, which has in the center two rampant panthers with thyrsos, at the two sides of a kantharos. New pieces of evidence, coming from well-defined contexts and in some cases assignable to fairly precise building phases, appear to offer good confirmation of the hypothesis of the late chronology that I have previously proposed. It will thus not be inopportune to reexamine briefly the data we possess relating to the attestation of the type of sima with palmettes and small columns with a view to verifying their diffusion and chronology.

Besides being attested by numerous examples in collections, the type of plaque with palmettes alternating with small columns has been found in some sporadic discoveries in the territory of Rome and Lazio; rarely, however, are these part of well-defined stratigraphic contexts.

A plaque with rampant panthers and kantharos between palmettes and small columns, with a stamp [MA]AMAT [ISI]DOR, similar to that on one of the fragments from Licenza, was found among the remains of a villa identified in Rome on the Via Trionfale in the locality of Insugherata, together with bricks with stamps of [FLAM]MA/[ANNI]AE ARES(cusae). It would be extremely interesting to be able to relate this last stamp to a small funerary plaque of a certain Annia Arescusa (CIL VI.4517) found in the second columbarium of Vigna Codini on the Via Appia. The tomb was in use starting from 10 A.D. and in general has been recognized as belonging to the familia of Marcella. Inside the columbarium another find of


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plaques with panthers, palmettes and small columns is attested. On the other hand, it is not so easy to determine the date of M. Amatius Isidorus, whose name is rendered with letters in relief and without margins, analogously to other stamps that are found on Campana plaques.\(^{11}\) The gentilicium, which was not very common, appears in some inscriptions from Rome pertaining mainly to freedmen, some of whom engaged in artigianal activities;\(^{12}\) lacking, however, is any connection with the manufacture of opus doliare.

In the context of the city of Rome, a first point of chronological reference arises from the use of a plaque of this type as the front of a small sarcophagus to which the inscription Epaphra puer capsas(rius) (CIL VI.6245) was affixed on a small slab of marble. The sarcophagus comes from the columbarium of the gens Statilia (room N), which was probably abandoned in 53 A.D. as the result of the suicide of the owner, Statiliius Taurus.\(^{13}\)

Plaques with palmettes and small columns have also been found in the Villa of Livia at Prima Porta.\(^{14}\) Some of these were reused as material for the subfloor of a pavement in opus sectile in room 3, which the excavators date approximately to the early years of the Julio-Claudian period but after Augustus.\(^ {15}\)

Unpublished examples in the Museo Nazionale Romano come from the Tiber (inv. nos. 15285-15298), from Via S. Stefano Rotondo, from Via Portuense, and from the Catacombs of Domitilla.\(^ {16}\) More important is the presence of this kind of plaque in a group of architectural terracottas related, when it was found, to the aedes Quirini on the Quirinal.\(^ {17}\) The stamp on it, (C. CALPETANUS) FAVOR, offers a secure chronological reference to the Domitianic period, thereby documenting the circulation of the type at the end of the first century A.D.\(^ {18}\)

Other plaques have been found together with sporadic material from a necropolis along the Via Latina at Bovillae;\(^ {19}\) still others have come to light at S. Maria in Galeria, Via Clodia, and Ponte della Bufala,\(^ {20}\) together with Campana plaques of various types. Fragments have been found at a villa in the locality of Monna Felice (Civitavecchia), the context of which is not datable with certainty.\(^ {21}\)

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10. von Rothen and Winnefeld, 14*.
11. Tortorella, 227-228; Steinby (as n. 2), 190-191.
12. CIL VI.8905, 9405, 11519, 12683, 19871, 22730, 37822; see also Ostita, CIL XIV.44, with two individuals belonging to the corporation of the stuppatores. In the second century the gentilicium reappears in Naples, Campania, and Sicily (CIL X.2042, 2043; 1153; 7211).
13. CIL VI.1011; Strazzulla, 412; D. Mancioli, “Sepulcrum: Statilii,” in Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae, vol. IV, ed. E. M. Steinby (Rome 1999) 299; M. L. Caldelli and C. Ricci, Monumentum Familiae Statiliorum. Un riesame (Rome 1999) 120 n374. We cannot exclude the possibility that (with some confusion of terminology) this is the find to which the following citation refers: “a small sarcophagus in terracotta Museo Kircheriano 1, found in the columbarium near S. Maria Maggiore;” von Rothen and Winnefeld, 16*.
16. Tortorella, 228 n21.
17. For the plaques, see G. Manca di Mores, “Terrecotte architettoniche e problemi topografici: contributi all’identificazione del tempio di Quirino sul colle Quirinale,” Annali Facoltà di LETTERE Università di Perugia 1, Studi Classici XX, n.s. 6 (1982-83) 357 n39, table XII. This siting of the temple has, however, been recently contested in favor of one on the present Via Quattro Fontane. On the problem, see F. Coarelli, “Quirinus, aedes,” in Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae, vol. IV, ed. E. M. Steinby (Rome 1999) 185-187.
18. Manca di Mores (as n. 17), 347; Strazzulla, 411.
Simae of this type have also appeared in the rich residential contexts of the Alban Hills, including Marino in the so-called Villa of Voconius Pollio and in the Albanum Pompei, the villa considered to have originally been the property of Pompey, which then passed into the imperial fiscus. This villa was the object of a series of phases of remodeling, dated to between the end of the first century B.C. and the end of the first century A.D. The site has yielded both the usual type with palmettes and small columns, as well as a type of crowning plaque on which the palmettes alternate with six-pointed stars.

Outside Lazio, plaques with palmettes and small columns paired with the motif of the panthers and thyrsoi have been found in the villa excavated on the island of Giannutri. There, they were used to support the dating of one of the building phases to the late Republican period. In reality, the remains of the villa that are currently visible belong to an organic phase of architectural design assignable to the late first or early second century A.D., and there is no reason to suppose that the terracottas found here should be dated to an earlier building phase not otherwise attested.

A more precisely datable piece of evidence comes from Luni, where simae with palmettes and small columns were found in the Casa degli Affreschi and in the zone to the south of the forum (CM III stratum A). The contexts to which the simae belong have been securely assigned on stratigraphical grounds to the period between 50 and 70 A.D.

Finally, the presence of the type in Gallia Cisalpina at Faenza must be noted. Examples have been found in Via Cavour and under Palazzo Costa, where the excavation data appear to indicate a date in the second half of the first century A.D. At Pediano, near Imola, a local variant was found that regularizes and tends to improve the often rather vague design of the terracottas produced in the city of Rome.

In light of these comparanda, the case of Settefinestre can now be revisited. When the examples of the type from Settefinestre were published by M. G. Celuzza in 1985, there was understandable uncertainty about whether to date them to the late Republic on stylistic grounds (following the old theory of von Rohden and Winnefeld), or to put them at the beginning of the second century A.D. as part of the important building phase that affected the villa at this time. We can now resolve Celuzza’s doubts in favor of the latter dating.

In fact, all the plaques with palmettes and small columns—if rather second-rate, from a stylistic point of view—present a revival of motifs appropriated from the earlier repertory of the Hellenistically-inspired Campana plaques. The panthers with the thyrso at the sides of a kantharos, the centaurs, and the winged figure riding a panther are all very similar to our examples in the treatment of the small columns and the slender proportions of the figure.
In particular, the simae of Licenza revive, in a form that is rather tired and cursory, a model present in Campania from late Republican Capua[35] and well known in the Campana plaques from the early Augustan age.[36]

To conclude, it must be noted that, evidently, the simae of this type continued to be used in the early imperial period as functional sheathing elements. They were inexpensive and at the same time showed minimal interest in iconography. It is thus surprising that we encounter the type especially in villas of great prestige such as those at Licenza, Prima Porta, Marino, Giannutri, etc., although it should be remembered that the excavation data for all these sites do not permit us to say with certainty in what sorts of buildings and architectural contexts they were used. Analogous to what is found with some exceptional Campana plaques,[37] the use of our type is not infrequent in funerary contexts such as the columbarium of Vigna Codini or that of the gens Statilia. In the latter case, it appears in the form of a small sarcophagus, where it was doubtless the Dionysiac imagery that was decisive for its adoption.

D.5. Catalogue

Type I

Sima decorated in the center with a nude, winged masculine figure (Eros), set almost in a three-quarter view. The arms, positioned symmetrically, are expanded to support some shoots. The lower limbs are wide apart, probably ending in vegetal shoots that culminated with an elongated flower. The head is slightly turned toward the right and shows hair that is short and wind-swept. To the sides is a motif of palmettes and small columns. The palmettes have seven fronds, of which the central one is rigid and the side ones have coiled leaves turned outward.

The upper termination is composed of a flat fillet, projecting and somewhat irregular (height 2.5 cm); the lower, preserved in two small fragments, also consists of a fillet that is slightly rounded (see nos. 7 and 8).

In contrast with the simae known from elsewhere, the upper rim does not have the usual groove for the crowning plaque. This suggests that the sima also functioned as the terminal decoration.

1) Plaque (crowning sima)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fig.</th>
<th>Present width</th>
<th>Present height</th>
<th>Thickness</th>
<th>Reconstructed width</th>
<th>Clay description</th>
<th>State of preservation</th>
<th>Excavation data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>73 cm</td>
<td>20 cm</td>
<td>2.5 cm</td>
<td>90 cm</td>
<td>Rose-colored with large reddish inclusions, porous (plaques of Rome)</td>
<td>Five fragments joined of the upper right part with the central figure of Eros, two pairs of small columns and palmettes to the right and a column-palmette pair to the left</td>
<td>SU 1242, Sector I.7, Area 35; VH 166</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2) Plaque (crowning sima)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fig.</th>
<th>Present width</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>24.5 cm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Present height: 18 cm
Thickness: 2.8 cm
Clay: as above, but with smaller and more regular inclusions
State of preservation: a fragment of the middle part remains with the winged figure, part of the lower shoot and of the right small column
Excavation data: as above; VH 215
Description: same mold as the preceding piece

3) Plaque (crowning sima)
   fig. 3
   Present width: 13.5 cm
   Present height: 16.5 cm
   Thickness: 2.6 cm
   Clay: as no. 1
   State of preservation: a fragment of the edge of the right side, with half the terminal palmette
   Excavation data: as above; VH 214
   Description: same mold as the preceding piece

4) Plaque (crowning sima)
   fig. 4
   Present width: 11 cm
   Present height: 15 cm
   Thickness: 2.8 cm
   Clay: as no. 1
   State of preservation: a fragment of the upper part remains with a small column and the coiled leaf of a palmette
   Excavation data: as above; VH 216
   Description: same mold as the preceding piece

5) Plaque (crowning sima)
   fig. 5
   Present width: 7 cm
   Present height: 5 cm
   Thickness: 2.5 cm
   Clay: as above
   State of preservation: a small fragment with an everted frond of a palmette
   Excavation data: as above; VH 218
   Description: same mold as the preceding piece

6) Plaque (crowning sima)
   fig. 6
   Present width: 5.5 cm
   Present height: 8 cm
   Thickness: 2.5 cm
   Clay: as above
   State of preservation: a small fragment remains with traces of an elongated frond of a palmette
   Excavation data: as above; VH 219
   Description: same mold as the preceding piece

7) Plaque (crowning sima)
   fig. 7a
   Present width: 8 cm
   Present height: 7.3 cm
   Tile thickness at the base: 4 cm; thickness of the plaque, 3 cm
   Clay: as above, but with smaller and more regular inclusions, some micaceous
   State of preservation: the fragment of the lower part remains with the rounded bottom fillet (height 2.5 cm) and part of the the lower shoot belonging to the central figure
   Excavation data: as above; VH 220a
   Description: same mold as the preceding piece (?)

8) Plaque (crowning sima)
   fig. 7b
   Present width: 11.5 cm
   Present height: 3.5 cm
   Thickness: 2.5 cm
   Clay: as no. 7
   State of preservation: a fragment of the lower part remains with the bottom fillet
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Excavation data: as above; VH 220b
Description: same mold as the preceding piece (?)

Type II

The fragment belongs to a plaque deriving from a mold that was different from that used for all the preceding pieces. The main difference is the form of the palmette, here with nine fronds that extend parallel to each other from a wide, molded base.

9) Plaque (crowning *sima*)
   
   Present width: 25 cm
   Present height: 14 cm
   Thickness: 2.8 cm
   Tile depth: 14 cm
   Clay: rose, rather compact
   State of preservation: a fragment with the right end and part of the tile remains

   Excavation data: from archaeological interventions after 1914 and before 1997; preserved at Santuario di Ercole Vincitore, Tivoli, in Cassetta UZ 1990.253, L24

Type III

The upper termination is decorated, not with a fillet, but a motif of wide and rounded dentils above a small cornice with a concave profile.

10) Plaque (crowning *sima*)
   
   fig. 8
   Present width: 5.6
   Present height: 12
   Thickness: 2.7
   Clay: as above, with small and regular inclusions
   State of preservation: a fragment of the middle part with a palmette remains; the central frond is preserved as are two pairs of everted fronds on the side

   Excavation data: SU 1242, Sector I.7, Area 35; VH 221

11) Plaque (crowning *sima*)

   fig. 9
   Present width: 5.5 cm
   Present height: 18 cm
   Thickness: 2.5 cm
   Clay: as above, with small and regular inclusions
   State of preservation: a fragment of the upper part remains with traces of the motif of rounded dentils, part of the small cornice with concave profile, and part of three right everted fronds of a palmette

   Excavation data: as above; VH 222
   Description: same mold as the preceding piece

Type IV

The fragment appears to belong to a *sima* analogous to those of the preceding types, from which it differs in the size of all its decorative elements, which are proportionately larger than those found in the preceding types.

12) Plaque (crowning *sima*)

   fig. 10
   Present width: 11 cm
   Present height: 13 cm
   Thickness: 3 cm
   Clay: rosey, fairly compact, with reddish inclusions of various sizes
   State of preservation: the fragment of the middle part with a palmette remains; the central frond is preserved as are two pairs of everted fronds on the side

   Excavation data: SU 428, Sector I.3 Area 37; VH 013
Type V

A small fragment remains with a small column and part of a palmette to its left, with three rigid and oblique fronds, which grow out of a rectilinear base.

13) Plaque (crowning sima)

Present width: 11 cm
Present height: 10 cm
Thickness: 9 cm
Clay: rose
Excavation data: from archaeological interventions after 1914 and before 1997; stored in Santuario di Ercole Vincitore, Tivoli, Cassetta UZ 1990.253, L18

Not Classifiable

14) Sima

Present width: 9.6 cm
Present height: 6 cm
Tile thickness at the base: 2.7 cm
Clay: yellowish, porous and friable with large reddish inclusions
State of preservation: a fragment of the base tile remains with the attachment to the plaque above; it is illegible, but its pronounced projection excludes a classification with any of the preceding types
Excavation data: SU 1242, Sector I.7, Area 35; VH 217
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