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## A Tribute to Nando and Sarah Cinelli

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BY JOHN J. DOBBINS

This volume of *Etruscan Studies* is dedicated to the memories of Ferdinando Oreste Federico Cinelli and Sarah McGraw Cinelli, founders of the Etruscan Foundation, who died within weeks of each other in 2002 (Sarah on March 2, 2002 and Nando on March 25, 2002). Since its inception in 1959, the Etruscan Foundation has been devoted to fieldwork and other academic programming in Etruscan archaeology aimed at bringing American scholars and students into direct contact with Etruscan civilization in present-day Tuscany.

Raised in Florence and at the family property of Spannocchia southwest of Siena, Nando Cinelli developed an intense interest and unwavering passion for the Etruscans during the years before he moved to the United States. Not a professional archaeologist himself, Nando, along with Sarah, created the Etruscan Foundation to be the instrument for making new discoveries in Etruscan archaeology and spreading their enthusiasm to others. Project directors were often young archaeologists at the early stages of their careers, for example Kyle Phillips, whose subsequent excavations at Murlo (Poggio Civitate)-still ongoing long after Phillip's own death in 1988-have established Murlo as a major Etruscan excavation and training site for subsequent generations of archaeologists.

My own foundation-supported excavations of a Roman villa at La Befra (under which Nando hoped would be located an Etruscan site-it was not there) always seemed to strike Nando as an anomaly. He was a good sport and actually helped in the excavations, as did two of his daughters. I especially enjoyed his unrelenting urgings that I conduct a study of Etruscan roads, or at least trade routes, that connected the hinterland with the coast and passed through or near his property at Spannocchia. On my last visit to him at Spannocchia (when he was still in vigorous, but advanced old age) we traced on foot stretches of a medieval road near the monastery of Santa Lucia and speculated on the antiquity of the route and on the possible age of farming terraces now overgrown with forest. He was and is an inspiration.

Sarah Cinelli did not dig. Her contributions were other. She brought her ener-



*Nando and Sarah Cinelli, taken in 1997 at Spannocchia.*

gy, clear thinking, sensitivity, devotion, generosity, and in her last months, especially keen insight to the foundation. Sarah contributed in invaluable ways to the operations of the foundation. Unbeknownst to many archaeologists, who over the years have enjoyed the Etruscan Foundation reception at the annual meeting of the Archaeological Institute of America, is that Sarah was the anonymous benefactor of the receptions. Her health did not permit her attendance at the 2002 AIA annual meeting in Philadelphia and its Etruscan Foundation reception, but she was delighted that at the reception the announcement was made of four annual fieldwork fellowships that would allow students to participate in archaeological projects in Italy. Her last contribution was an impassioned plea for the foundation to return to its initial mission in order to focus the resources of the foundation quite specifically on the Etruscans, their context, and their legacy. The current mission statement reflects her influence and was not written as a homage, but as a recognition that she was right. Sarah was a gem.

After the deaths of Sarah and Nando, the Cinelli children contributed funds to establish as part of the Archaeological Institute of America's annual lecture series the Ferdinando and Sarah Cinelli Lecture in Etruscan and Italic Archaeology.

Those who knew Nando and Sarah Cinelli miss them. For Etruscan archaeology, their living legacy is the Etruscan Foundation, whose journal, *Etruscan Studies*, annual fieldwork fellowships, annual AIA lecture, and field projects carry their vision forward.

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