

associated with quarrying, before being more definitively abandoned, although the suggestion is made that the facade is maintained.

Gabii's problematic history stems entirely from the difficulty of squaring its position and some of its architecture with substantial areas of abandonment and apparent decline. Roman historians have yet to come to terms with the consequences of the steady erosion of our models of ancient urban life. First we discovered that not all colonies followed a Rome-driven pattern, and maybe none. Increasingly we find monumental centres and substantial wall circuits, but little else. Now we have a site which reminds us more of the half built and abandoned concrete structures of failed building projects, and abandoned industrial parks, than the neat and orderly pictures we used to have. It is no longer just the problem of ordure and challenging traffic conditions; we have to conjure up a different model of the ancient city.

That leads me then to the final awkward disjunction. Gabii's 3D models look too clean, too neat. Moments of determined urban planning are followed by long periods of what we would regard as mild chaos. The assumption of the preservation of facades is an attractive idea, but it has relatively little evidential base. We need a new language to describe what is happening at Gabii, and oddly the innovative nature of the technical interface is as yet a step back or sideways, not forwards.

Yet any criticism needs to be tempered. This is the beginning of a very special attempt to do something different with archaeology, and a welcome move away from thunderous (and sometimes unaffordable) monographs filled with pottery profiles. It is not yet the open-access, multi-layered portal which welcomes the innocent layperson, informs the expert and protects data for the long term – but it is a fair way down the road, and the admirable openness of the team suggests it will be a process of steady amelioration. This then is a situation report, not a review; a good start with much excitement to follow.

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## BUILDINGS ON THE PALATINE HILL

PENSABENE (P.) *Scavi del Palatino 2. Culti, architettura e decorazioni*. In due volumi. (Studi Miscellanei 39.) Pp. 1470, ills, pls. Rome: 'L'Erma' di Bretschneider, 2017. Paper, €850. ISBN: 978-88-913-0971-6.

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This enormous volume represents (somewhat confusingly) the third instalment of P.'s work on the Palatine hill, begun in the late 1970s. The first part was published as P. Pensabene and S. Falzone (edd.), *Scavi del Palatino I: l'area sud-occidentale del Palatino tra età protostorica e il IV secolo a. C. Scavi e materiali della struttura ipogea sotto la cella del tempio della Vittoria* (2001) (reviewed by C. Smith, *CR* 53 [2003], 228–9). Volume 13 of *Scienze dell'Antichità* (2006) was largely given over to the excavations around the sanctuary of Magna Mater. Now we have two volumes, the first on the sanctuary again, and the second on the House of the Griffins, the House of Octavian/Augustus and the Temple of Apollo. They are in every sense monumental and will be indispensable.

Volume 1 begins in the vicinity of the hut of Romulus. Part 1, Chapter 1 starts with the literary sources, listing the key monuments we know to have been in the vicinity. However, P. and his team take a broad view of the revisiting of this site, and although there are

occasional slips into over-reliance on the sources for ancient Rome, for the most part the ancient identifications are used without evident belief in the origin stories. What is clear is the massive impact of the reshaping of the area with the temples of Victoria and Magna Mater.

We now know of more huts than the ones visible south of the Temple of Magna Mater and discovered early in the twentieth century. There is another area of huts further to the west, and the sequence here runs from thirteenth-century BC pottery through ninth-century BC burials onto ninth- and eighth-century huts. These are obliterated in the seventh century, and there is substantial investment in cisterns in the sixth century, but also a possible *heroon* from this period which marked one of the burials. In addition, between the later temples, there are two small buildings, which have been interpreted as an auguratorium and a fifth-century sacred building with a votive deposit. So this is a complex and busy area, with a larger settlement, but also one which made way for or was memorialised by later buildings, though also connected with the critical supply of water. All this was swept away, remodelled and recontextualised by the third- and second-century temples and the massive platform that extended in front of them. This has the critical consequence of forcing a rethinking of the Romulus story in the context – perhaps – of a myth connected to the Trojan world (that of Cybele). P. does not give any space to T.P. Wiseman's radical downdating of the Romulus and Remus myth to the politics of the third century, but a space is increasingly opening up for seeing a vibrant and vital set of traditions and memories from the Archaic period which have to be repurposed in the middle Republic.

Part 3 of the first volume is a useful history of the excavations up to 2006. It is extremely helpful to have this history laid out in one place – it is also a reminder of the number of interventions here. Part 4 gives a catalogue of the architectural terracottas found in this area, from the mid-sixth century onwards, and including all the finds from the full history of the site. P. follows the now standard sequence of the Rome–Veii–Velletri group, followed by the Rome–Caprifico sequence, although he identifies one piece which seems a *unicum*. The sequence continues down to the first century AD. This section is followed by a section on the architectonic elements of the temple of Magna Mater, including the peperino tufa, marble, the statue of Cybele, deposits of distinctive mural crowns and a handful of inscriptions. P. also finds space for some interesting thoughts about the arrival of Cybele and parallels with the Near East. There is a hint that we may be missing through lack of evidence some deep continuities and connections, which help explain the transformations that occurred when Rome encountered the Hellenistic world. The concluding summary brings some clarity and sequence to the immensely complex story.

The second volume moves eastwards into the complex of the villas of Livia and Augustus. Here the story is more familiar perhaps. P. includes an important account of the House of the Griffins, giving us a clear indication of the sort of late Republican housing we might have expected to see here. This then forms the background to the second part, on Octavian's house. The basic account of the structures we used to think of as Augustus' house is now much clearer – these were clearly Octavian's accumulation of previous properties and were buried by the later Augustan phase house, hence P.'s use of the description *casa interrotta*. The interruption was the lightning bolt of 36 BC, and the area was rethought and then grew expansively. Tiles stamped with Asinius Pollio's name offer an intriguing insight into the alternative activities of the Republican historian, and there is further evidence of an important cult building underneath the temple of Apollo. P. also suggests that what he terms the 'so-called' Casa di Livia was the original Curia Saliorum, and has another shot at placing the elusive Roma Quadrata, associating it with a large foundation in the western courtyard of the complex.

We are on different territory in Part 3 with another catalogue, this time of the *lastre Campana* and a few scattered earlier pieces. These fascinating objects, with a genealogy stretching back presumably to Etrusco-Italic decorations, and a wide mythological range, ran around the porticoed courtyards according to P.'s reconstruction. (A similar sequence was found on the Capitoline.) The catalogue of over 1,600 pieces is a hugely important contribution. This is followed in Part 4 by a catalogue of architectural fragments from the whole area. Again there is a strong and coherent conclusion.

With so many aspects of this site partly revealed, argued over and debated, it is not easy to distinguish what is new from what is already known. P. borrows from both the A. Carandini and the F. Coarelli camps, following neither slavishly. That is probably right, but the end result is that we have now a plethora of interpretations in play. A concordance would be very helpful!

The volumes contain a variety of catalogues and arguments, but also some omissions of or glosses over more recent debates. There is nothing on the A. Claridge/T.P. Wiseman rotation of the orientation of the temple of Apollo. P. notes but with reservations the relationship between the structures under Sant'Anastasia and the House of Augustus, but is less dismissive of the recent identification of the Lupercal in a nymphaeum beneath the Palatine than might have been expected. I have, however, scarcely touched on the richness of the suggestions and ideas opened up on almost every page.

The catalogues are well done and superbly illustrated, but the quality of reproductions and maps in the text is disappointing. Some were poorly reproduced; some too small to decipher. Infuriatingly, there is no single map for each area which details the various interventions and identifications; it takes the innocent reader 158 pages to work out where the critically important Saggio η is. It surely now behoves everyone engaged in this kind of work to deploy the best possible graphic design, and this is a disappointing volume in that respect, especially since P. has produced some superb axonometric designs with R. Mar. Given that other works eschew any reconstructions (for instance Coarelli's *Palatium* [2012], which has to be read alongside P.'s work, or many of Wiseman's critiques), this means that the field is left to Carandini's team's *The Atlas of Ancient Rome* (2017).

This inevitably raises questions. One is the volume price, of course. This is an essential reference work, but will be beyond many library budgets, even in the only slightly cheaper PDF form. Another is whether a fully online version would not have served us better and perhaps encouraged stronger visual material. A third is where we go next? A comparison between the various reconstructions currently on offer, using the same scale and orientation and basic appearance, would be hugely helpful.

However, it would be churlish and unfair to end on criticism. This is a life's work (though, astonishingly, in recent years P. has also found time to write what is an irreplaceable account of spolia, *Roma su Roma: reimpiego architettonico, recupero dell'antico e trasformazioni urbane tra il III e il XIII secolo* [2015], and a beautifully done handbook on ancient marble, *I marmi nella Roma antica* [2013]). The defects are ones of our painful transition from the physical to the virtual publication of archaeology, and there are disadvantages to both.

We are, however, coming closer to a new definitive story of the late Republican and early imperial Palatine, albeit with huge challenges remaining. For the Archaic and middle Republic, thanks to the painstaking work of P., his team and his colleagues, the narrative must be completely rewritten. This book is a monumental step in a new direction.

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