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## EXCAVATIONS AT 'LA CUMA', MONTE RINALDO (COMUNE DI MONTE RINALDO, PROVINCIA DI FERMO, REGIONE MARCHE)

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The 2019 season of archaeological research at the Latin sanctuary site of Monte Rinaldo by the University of Bologna and the British School at Rome had two main objectives: the continued excavation of a range of buildings discovered in 2018 in the western area of the complex (Giorgi and Kay, 2019) and to conduct further geophysical surveys in the surrounding area with the aim of locating other structures associated to the sanctuary in order to understand better the context of the site. As has been discussed elsewhere (Demma, 2018; Belfiori, Cossentino, Pizzimenti 2020 in press), the location of the sacred complex is the subject of ongoing research due to its seemingly isolated position in the landscape (Giorgi, Demma, Kay, Forthcoming). In order to understand this aspect of the sanctuary better, several seasons of fieldwalking have been undertaken since the beginning of the project with the aim of understanding the site within the inland territory.

The 2019 excavation at Monte Rinaldo (Fig. 1) continued the investigation of the structures discovered the previous year in the western area (Area 5) and extended the excavation further to the south (Area 6), which brought to light a further three consecutive rooms (C, D and E), in addition to the two discovered the previous year (A and B). The stratigraphic sequence was the same as that identified the previous year, with the structures buried deep beneath an alluvial layer which gradually tapered away towards the south. The walls belong to at least two distinct construction phases which cut through a lower stratigraphic sequence typified by a series of layers rich in carbon, ash, ceramics, and organic material. The predominant class of pottery was black glaze ware, of which the majority of forms are characteristic of vessels used for ritual functions (libation and other offerings). Also present within the contexts were numerous burnt animal bones of varying sizes, probably relating to a ritual practice that has not yet been fully understood in its complexity, but which dates to the second century BC. This material was present within the preparation layers for the building of the sanctuary which sat on the natural geological layers. In the southernmost part of the excavation, at a level significantly lower in respect to the other structures, a section of a containing wall was discovered, which may relate to a terracing of the area in a period prior to the sanctuary.

As previously noted, the structures discovered in 2019 belong to two main phases of building activity. The first phase, dating to approximately the mid-second century BC, is characterised by walls with foundations in pebbles laid in a foundation trench which cuts directly into the levelling layers with pottery dating to the first half of the century. The upper parts of the walls, where they survive, appear to have been constructed in *opus latericium*.

The plan of the complex is difficult to reconstruct, in part caused by its destruction and the reuse of material in later building phases. However, it is possible to define a long rear

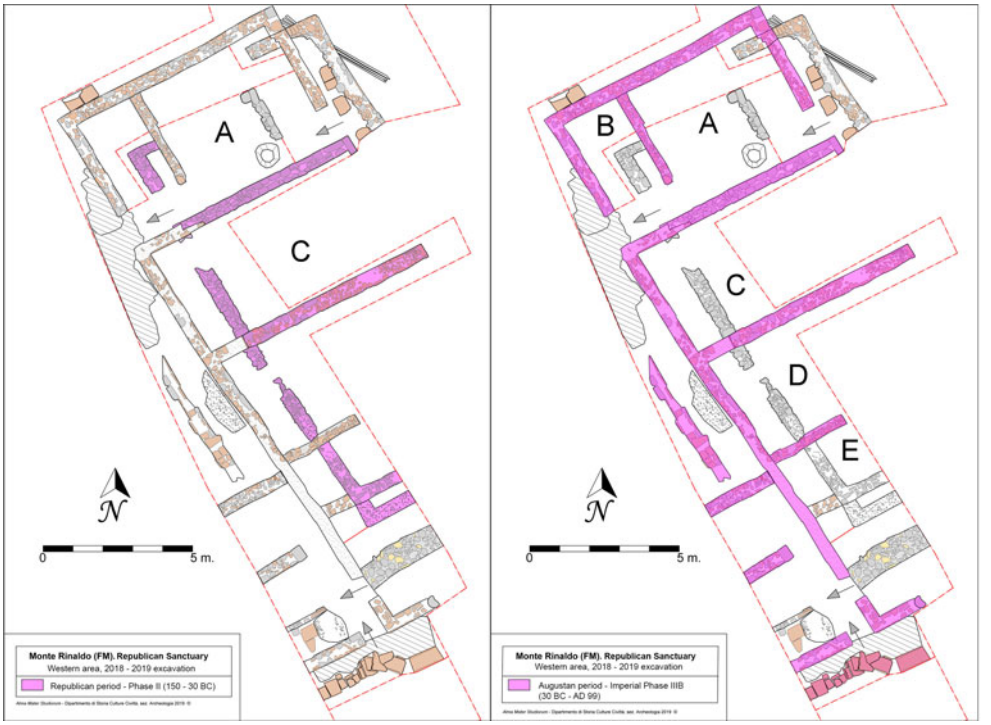


Fig. 1. The 2019 excavations in the western area of the Monte Rinaldo Republican sanctuary (Image F. Pizzimenti).

wall on a north-south alignment, which represents the limit of the site towards the west. From this structure, at least three further walls lead off at 90 degrees, defining three rooms each of varying dimensions (A, C, and D). Despite the use of the same construction technique, the building differs from the eastern portico on the opposite side of the square. The western range does not have pillars, and above all, the rear wall which defines the series of rooms is not aligned with the northwest corner of the rear portico. The question of the general layout of the complex, parts of which no longer respect the original form due to later use and substantial conservation work in the 1970s (Demma 2018), and in particular the lack of symmetry between the western structures and the rest of the sanctuary remains open ahead of further excavation.

Additional information regarding the dating of the sanctuary complex was provided by other excavated contexts, alongside the *terminus post quem* that had been provided by the stratigraphy cut by the foundation wall constructed from pebbles. A foundation deposit was discovered against the southern wall of room A. Inside the cut were found fragments of pottery, amongst which was a bowl with the stamp *Iovei Sacrum*. The layer which sealed the upper part of the cut contained other fragments of pottery dating to the second century BC.

The structures of the second building phase were for the most part built using material recovered from the collapse or the destruction of the preceding buildings. In several cases, the new walls were built on top of the earlier structures in order to form the foundations. The lower parts of the walls were constructed reusing material from the sanctuary, at that time in disuse, and some material was given a decorative function, such as two *potnia*

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*theròn* antefixes which were built into the outer face of the eastern wall of room A. The precise function of the various structures which form this second building phase is not yet known. However, it seems certain that they had a functional capacity, differing from the previous structures that had a religious function. The rooms had beaten earth floors, containers (*dolia*) for storing produce, the remains of an oven, and other material which suggests an agricultural use of the area, alongside the impression that some of the rooms may have been used as storerooms or as pools. This building of the second phase probably therefore had an agricultural use, constructed in approximately the Triumvirate-Augustan period, when the territory was heavily repopulated by veterans who had been sent as colonists.

The previous season of geophysical prospection at the sanctuary (Demma, Giorgi, Kay, 2018) had concentrated on a lower area to the east of the site, investigated using magnetometry, and within the sanctuary itself where both magnetometry and Ground-Penetrating Radar (GPR) were tested to examine the near subsurface of the site. In 2019, whilst the excavations concentrated on the western edge of the site, the geophysical prospection was extended to the south of the complex. A GPR survey was undertaken over an area of 505 $m^2$ and a magnetometer survey covered half a hectare and overlapped with the area covered by the GPR.

The GPR survey was conducted using a GSSI SIR 3000 with a 400 MHz antenna, at a traverse interval of 0.25 m, and overall gave unsatisfactory results. The data displayed the distribution of a series of parallel linear anomalies across the survey area, which probably relate to deep plough lines. With the exception of these anomalies, the data did not highlight any other clear features and the signal attenuated quickly as the depth increased. It is probable that the GPR survey was affected by the adverse field conditions, including rain and a heavy clay soil. The magnetometer survey was carried out using a Bartington Fluxgate Gradiometer. The data were collected at a sample interval of 0.25 m in parallel zig-zag traverses at a regular distance of 0.5 m. The magnetometer survey revealed a series of anomalies of high magnetic value (Fig. 2), which appear to relate to archaeological remains (Kay *et al*., 2020). As described above, the excavations around the sanctuary portico have shown that significant quantities of building material relating to the second-century BC sanctuary were later reused in the Augustan period, in particular architectural terracottas. It is therefore likely that the magnetic anomalies originate from walls built using this kind of construction. The promising magnetometer results from the 2019 season were to be examined during the 2020 excavation season, but the COVID-19 outbreak in March 2019 has meant that these excavations have now been postponed until 2021.

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Fig. 2. Results of the magnetometer survey at Monte Rinaldo (Image E. Pomar).

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## EXCAVATIONS OF THE NECROPOLIS ON THE ROMAN IMPERIAL ESTATE AT VAGNARI (COMUNE DI GRAVINA IN PUGLIA, PROVINCIA DI BARI, REGIONE PUGLIA)

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The site of Vagnari is located approximately 12 km west of the modern city of Gravina in Puglia. Survey and excavations at the site since 2001 have revealed the presence of a settlement with multiple phases of occupation dating back to the second century BC (Carroll, 2019), with the main period of occupation during the Imperial period. The majority of previously excavated burials in the necropolis date to the second and third centuries AD.

Ongoing excavations in the necropolis continued in the summer of 2019. We focused our excavations in two areas adjacent to trenches excavated in previous seasons (Fig. 1). The large northern trench (8 m east-west, 6 m north-south) contained a total of nine burials, the tops of which were visible after approximately 30 cm of topsoil was removed. Most of the burials were the characteristic '*alla cappuccina*' structures fashioned from a series of *tegulae* placed over the deceased in an inverted 'V' shape. Modest grave goods found with the deceased were typically deposited around the legs and feet. Three burials in this trench showed evidence of disturbance and reuse in antiquity, indicated by damage to the original burial structure, clusters of disarticulated bone in one area of the burial, and then reinforcement of the burial with large quantities of stone and mortar (Fig. 2). There was also evidence for burial of two individuals in the same interment event. F351 contained the remains of an adult female with the skeleton of an infant interred on the right side of the skeleton.