

Notes from Rome

by Robert Coates-Stephens

This gazette borrows its title from Rodolfo Lanciani, whose comprehensive and sometimes caustic eyewitness accounts of excavations in Rome between 1876 and 1913 it can in no way attempt to rival.¹ The intention here is simply to present to a readership outside Rome a newsletter of recent archaeological activity (chiefly for 2007) gleaned from public lectures, conferences, exhibitions and newspaper reports, whose detailed exposition will be found in forthcoming scientific publications by the experts concerned. Useful guides to recent press accounts may be found through the Ministero per i Beni e le Attività Culturali (<http://www.beniculturali.it>) and at <http://www.patrimoniosos.it>. An excellent online journal of up to date excavation reports is <http://www.fastionline.org>.

Fittingly, the conference that summed up the city's most significant archaeological project — the excavations of the Imperial Fora — took place in the auditorium of Richard Meier's new Ara Pacis pavilion. The excavations and the museum alike are *grand projets* of Rome's *Comune* (city council), and both have caused as much controversy as approval. Moreover, both represent complex contemporary strategies for the research and presentation of the city's most celebrated ancient monuments. 'Lo scavo dei Fori Imperiali (2004–2007)' was held over two days in October 2007 under the aegis of the city (Sovrintendenza ai Beni Culturali) and state (Soprintendenza Archeologica di Roma) archaeological bodies. Despite its title, it served to summarize the results of excavations going as far back as 1991, and dealt not only with the Fora themselves but also their surroundings — notably the *domus* beneath Palazzo Valentini and the works for the projected underground station at piazza Venezia. The period under examination extended from the bronze age to the 1930s, when the via dell'Impero (modern via dei Fori Imperiali) was carved through the densely inhabited sixteenth-century Alessandrino quarter. A volume providing an overview of the fifteen-year project was presented during the conference.²

The most significant data from the period prior to the construction of the Fora came from the Forum of Caesar, where six twelfth- to tenth-century BC tombs were discovered in a state of perfect preservation, associated by the

¹ R. Lanciani, *Notes from Rome* (London, 1988).

² R. Meneghini and R. Santangeli Valenzani, *I Fori Imperiali. Gli scavi del Comune di Roma (1991–2007)* (Rome, 2007). Individual volumes regarding each Forum are currently in preparation.

excavator with a small settlement (A. De Santis). Four construction phases between the sixth century and the definitive building of the Forum were encountered, including *cappellaccio* walls showing traces of destruction by fire towards the end of the fifth/early fourth century (Gallic sack?) and possible traces of an initial Caesarian phase pre-dating the incorporation of the rebuilt Curia within the complex (A. Delfino). An overview of the zone in the Middle Ages presented the first evidence in Rome for the *grubenhaus*, or sunken-floored building; two structures were found, dating to the seventh century (R. Santangeli Valenzani). The most recent excavations in the Forum of Augustus confirmed the presence of a third exedra, destroyed for the construction of Trajan's Forum; all of the ancient phases' stratigraphy, however, had been completely removed during spoliation from the ninth century onwards (R. Stocco).³ Results in the Templum Pacis were more impressive. The bulk of the cult hall has been brought to light, with an exquisite Severan coloured marble pavement; an ivory statuette of Septimius Severus and fragments from more than one marble plan were recovered (C. Mocchegiani, S. Fogagnolo).⁴ In antiquity, the complex's extensive statue collection seems to have been displayed chiefly in the porticoes, leaving the central court empty but for the rows of fountain basins and plants; two short rows of basements for sculpture, apparently of Hadrianic date, extended in front of the cult hall. There may be evidence that the original Flavian complex extended a little further towards the Argiletum, producing a perfectly square plan (A. Corsaro). The most recent excavations have not concerned the Fora of Nerva or Trajan, but the new volume provides striking axonometric reconstructions of both complexes, with a very detailed picture of the tripartite southeast end of Trajan's Forum (R. Meneghini, E. Bianchi). The Temple of the deified Trajan continues to elude us: during the concluding debate J. Packer repeated his conviction that it will eventually be found beneath the courtyard of the Palazzo Valentini, in its traditional axial location northwest of the Column. Beyond the boundaries of the Fora, two second-century *domus* were discovered beneath the northeast wing of the Palazzo Valentini, bordering the Forum of Trajan. One of these had been provided with an exceptional marble wall and floor decoration in the early fourth century, which — uniquely for Rome — is almost perfectly preserved (R. Del Signore, P. Baldassarri).⁵ In the central space of piazza Venezia, exploratory works for the new Metro C line revealed an extensive stretch of the paving of the ancient Via Flaminia, bounded on its eastern side by a row of *tabernae*, with extensive evidence of medieval continuity (R. Egidi, M. Serlorenzi).⁶ The wider question regarding the

³ The publication of the new Forum of Augustus excavations is in press: R. Meneghini and R. Santangeli Valenzani (eds), *Il Foro di Augusto. Lo scavo dell'area centrale, 2004–2007*.

⁴ The pavement has been published: S. Fogagnolo, 'Pavimenti marmorei di epoca severiana del Templum Pacis', *Musiva et Sectilia* 2/3 (2005–6), 115–41.

⁵ In December 2007 the houses were opened to the public, and a digital reconstruction of the rooms presented. See P. Baldassarri, 'Indagini archeologiche a Palazzo Valentini. La campagna 2005–2007', in *Palazzo Valentini: l'area tra antichità ed età moderna. Scoperte, valorizzazione, prospettive della Provincia di Roma* (Rome, 2008).

⁶ For the medieval phases, see L. Saguì and M. Serlorenzi (eds), 'Roma, piazza Venezia. L'indagine archeologica per la realizzazione della metropolitana. Le fasi medievali e moderne', *Archeologia Medievale* 35 (2008 (in press)).

architectural presentation of the vast excavated area of the Imperial Fora was discussed in the conference's concluding debate (A. Carandini, E. La Rocca), and the general opinion emerged that a way needs to be found of improving the site's 'legibility' by the removal of some of the more recent phases (modern house cellars). A commission of architects and politicians is currently at work on this.

The Imperial Fora represent the most extensive and talked-about excavations currently underway in Rome, but there are many other notable projects in progress, both of 'pure archaeology' (that is, carried out with the exclusive objective of research) and those effected in parallel with major and minor building works. The most celebrated of the former are those directed by Andrea Carandini on the Sacra Via, which are amply published and which have been continuing in the area of the Atrium Vestae.⁷ Clementina Panella's excavations on the slopes of the Palatine towards the Meta Sudans were illustrated in a lecture at the British School at Rome in February 2007. They have revealed a lengthy stratigraphy running from the eighth century BC (votive deposit associated with an archaic temple) through the Republican period (vast *domus*, identified due to its proximity to the shrine of the Julio-Claudians as that where Augustus was born) and into late antiquity (of which the most famous finds are the late Imperial standards, discovered buried beneath a third-century AD pavement, and now on show at the Palazzo Massimo).⁸

Also on the Palatine, substantial engineering works have been proceeding with the intention of strengthening the substructures of the hill's borders, susceptible to erosion and collapse from atmospheric conditions. In tandem with these restoration and consolidation works, in November the media reported the earlier discovery of the 'Lupercal of Romulus and Remus'. This was an entirely buried circular building at the foot of the slopes towards Sant'Anastasia, explored by means of a drill and fibre-optic camera. Photographs published in the newspapers revealed the elaborately decorated (first-century AD?) intrados of a dome in mosaic, stucco, fresco and applied shells, rather like the nymphaea or musaea of Campanian maritime villas or, closer to hand, the décor of the imperial palace itself. Initial debate revolved around whether this was indeed an Augustan rebuilding of the Lupercal (A. Carandini, I. Iacopi) or a later — perhaps Neronian — and entirely unrelated sector of the palace (F. Zevi, A. La Regina).⁹ Over the following months reports appeared of the clearing of a cryptoporticus beneath the Orti

⁷ Carandini summarized his ideas on the topography in *Workshop di archeologia classica. Quaderni* 1 (2004). Synthesis of the individual excavations in *Workshop di archeologia classica* 1 (2004), 61–161; addenda in vol. 2 (2005), with Carandini's conclusion at p. 189: 'Con una tale strepitosa scoperta, il problema delle origini di Roma in quanto esordio della città e dello stato può dirsi nel suo nocciolo risolto'. See now also A. Carandini, *Roma. Il primo giorno* (Rome/Bari, 2007), 57–77.

⁸ Forthcoming publication in *Scienze dell'Antichità* 13 (2006). For a brief overview of the discovery of the standards, see L. Pasquali, 'I segni del potere', *Forma Urbis* 12 (3) (2007), 16–20.

⁹ The debate was pursued in the newspapers, with the initial discovery reported on 21 November 2007 (Iacopi and Carandini, in *Il Corriere della Sera*), followed by the views of La Regina (*La Repubblica*, 22 November) and Zevi (*La Repubblica*, 23 November), who made the observation that in all the excitement over the Lupercal the simple fact that this represents the only surviving example of a completely preserved, decorated dome in all of Rome was being overlooked. Carandini's hypothesis was hotly contested by Filippo Coarelli in *La Repubblica* on 15 February 2008.

Farnesiani and the find of three white marble wings, presumably belonging to two statues of Victory, together with a headless imperial statue.¹⁰ In March 2008 the restored rooms of the House of Augustus itself were opened to the public. For the first time, the astonishingly vivid frescos of the 'Sala della rampa' were visible, together with those of the 'studiolo' and *oecus*.¹¹

The most imposing of Rome's new construction projects that have a bearing on the city's archaeology are less well known outside the city. These are the building works for the city's underground railway network. The new Linea C will eventually run from Pantano on the via Prenestina to Prati (piazza Mazzini), entering the city at San Giovanni in Laterano and pursuing a course under the Caelian to the existing station at Colosseo, thence to piazza Venezia and on through the Campus Martius, with projected new stations at via Amba Aradam, piazza Venezia, the largo Argentina, the Chiesa Nuova, Saint Peter's (actually, beneath the Tiber at ponte Vittorio Emanuele II, with exits to either side of the river) and piazza Risorgimento (from where a new underground entrance to the Vatican Museums has been proposed).¹² Whilst the tunnels will run well below any archaeological strata, the stations and air-shafts will impact massively on the city's archaeology, and with this in view exploratory trenches have been sunk at many of the proposed sites (work on the extramural section of the line is already underway). In all cases, excavations were supervised by the Soprintendenza Archeologica di Roma. The excavations at piazza Venezia are the only ones to have been communicated at a scholarly conference (see above); notices concerning other sites have appeared in the newspapers, and a press conference was held in March 2008 summarizing the state of the project.¹³ Notable amongst the discoveries reported have been: tufa embankment walls (later reports suggested the base of an arch) on the left bank of the Tiber at piazza Paoli; two sites of Imperial date with black and white and coloured mosaic pavements at the Chiesa Nuova; a vast concrete foundation wall and fragment of a cipollino column shaft in piazza Sant'Andrea della Valle, apparently the remains of a porticus with traces of planting (amphorae set into the ground, running parallel to the foundations; each site under the direction of Fedora Filippi); and a well-preserved marble-workers' yard of second-century AD date immediately outside the (later) Aurelian Walls at Porta Asinaria (site directed by Rossella Rea).

At the same time as Metro C has advanced, the old Linea A network has undergone restoration, calling for new air- and lift-shafts to be sunk on the Esquiline at piazza Fanti, piazza Vittorio Emanuele and viale Manzoni. The archaeological investigation at each of these sites was undertaken by the Soprintendenza Archeologica di Roma, under the direction of Mariarosaria Barbera. The first site revealed an ancient industrial quarter consisting of small second-century AD workshops, built up against the Servian Wall and bordering the complex

¹⁰ M. Tomei, in *La Repubblica*, 5 January 2008.

¹¹ See I. Jacopi, *La Casa di Augusto. Le pitture* (Verona, 2007) (including a photograph of the 'Lupercal' at p. 9). The extremely significant suggestion that all of these rooms were buried during the construction of the Temple of Apollo Palatinus (36–28 BC) is made at pp. 12–14 and 76.

¹² For an overview, with information and photographs of the archaeological remains at each site, see <http://www.archeoroma.beniculturali.it/sar2000/metroc/index.htm>.

¹³ *Il Corriere della Sera*, 7 March 2008.

excavated by Lanciani and labelled by him ‘Macellum Liviae’ on the *Forma Urbis*, pl. 23.¹⁴ At piazza Vittorio, a previously unexcavated sector of the imperial *horti* (Lamiani?) emerged, with a sequence of elaborate *sectile* pavements: students on the M.A. ‘City of Rome’ course at the British School at Rome were lucky enough to hear the first communication of this discovery, at a lecture in May 2007 by the site director (Mariarosaria Barbera), together with Salvo Barrano and Mariateresa Martines.¹⁵ The works at the Manzoni metropolitan station, not far from the Villa Wolkonsky, in a zone never explored by archaeologists, brought to light three phases of a residential complex ranging in date from the first century BC to the fourth century AD. When the station reopened in October 2007, the finds (pottery, fragments of revetment and statuary, a large lead aqueduct pipe) were exhibited in a small display-case in the ticket office, together with explanatory panels.¹⁶

Naturally, in a city like Rome, major public infrastructure works are not needed to reveal new archaeological data, and a trawl of the *fastionline* and newspaper reports of the last year produces fascinating new information from even the most minor roadworks and building restorations. Celebrated topography has been re-encountered, for example, on the Quirinal (garden landscape of the *Horti Sallustiani*, found during work on new pavements in via Veneto¹⁷), the Esquiline (where building works revealed new sectors of Brizio’s Via Praenestina necropolis¹⁸), the Caelian (*titulus* of Santi Marcellino e Pietro¹⁹), the via Lata (twelfth-century walls, perhaps relating to housing, in piazza Santi Apostoli²⁰), Testaccio (second-century AD warehouses — perhaps the *Horrea Seiana* — in the vast area between via Galvani and via Manuzio²¹) and on the slopes of the Pincio, where rebuilding works at the Hertziana have re-encountered the remains of a first-century AD nymphaeum.²² In the suburbs, works directed by Rita Paris continue at the Villa of the *Quintilii*, where it is hoped that a second entrance to the site will be opened from the via Appia Antica (currently visitors need to access it from the unsympathetic direction of the via Appia Nuova). Early in 2007, the discovery of second-century AD baths with mosaic pavements depicting gladiators in an adjacent property was reported; excavations towards the end of the year revealed a new area of the villa identified as an athletes’ complex, composed of 52

¹⁴ The first news of each site was reported in *Il Messaggero*, 25 January 2007.

¹⁵ See now S. Barrano, D. Colli and M. Martines, ‘Roma. Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II. Un nuovo settore degli Horti Lamiani’, <http://www.fastionline.org/docs/FOLDER-it-2007-87.pdf>.

¹⁶ *La Repubblica*, 17 May 2007. Works for a new branch of the Metro B from piazza Bologna to Conca d’Oro, crossing the via Nomentana at Sant’Agnese, have not produced any reports of archaeological discoveries.

¹⁷ G. Adinolfi and R. Carmagnola, ‘Rinvenimenti ai margini degli Horti Sallustiani’, <http://www.fastionline.org/docs/FOLDER-it-2007-92.pdf>.

¹⁸ G. de Cola and L. Giovannetti, ‘Strutture murarie di epoca imperiale e tombe tardoantiche presso Porta Maggiore a Roma’, <http://www.fastionline.org/docs/FOLDER-it-2007-86.pdf>.

¹⁹ G. De Rossi, ‘Ricerche archeologiche presso la caserma G. Carrea via Labicana 9, Roma’, <http://www.fastionline.org/docs/FOLDER-it-2007-90.pdf>.

²⁰ C. Pinci, ‘Un edificio medioevale a piazza Ss. Apostoli a Roma’, <http://www.fastionline.org/docs/FOLDER-it-2007-100.pdf>.

²¹ R. Sebastiani and M. Serlorenzi (eds), ‘Il più grande scavo aperto a Roma’, *Forma Urbis* 12 (3) (2007), 28–37.

²² Excavations directed by Maria Antonietta Tomei, reported in *La Repubblica*, 16 May 2007.

rooms opening off a large exedra, as well as a small rotunda and a 500 m long porticus.²³ At the eighth mile of the Appia, a way station composed of rooms arranged around a quadriporticus and originating in the late Republican period was announced in November.²⁴ To the north of the city, between the ancient Via Cassia and Via Flaminia, the discovery of a second-/third-century AD necropolis during modern building works was reported in February 2007.²⁵

As well as by the new excavations, a visitor returning to Rome after even a brief interval is also liable to be surprised by the continual additions to the city's museums. The extension to the Palazzo Conservatori ('Esedra del Marco Aurelio') on the Capitoline, where the enormous platform of the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus is now on display together with the museum's most famous colossal bronzes, opened at Christmas 2005 and is by now well known.²⁶ Joining the statues in the hall from early 2007 (it has since returned to its traditional home in the Sala della Lupa) was the newly-restored She-wolf, which warranted even more attention than usual due to the claims advanced by its restorer, Anna Maria Carruba, that it is in fact a medieval work.²⁷ In an initial presentation at the Palazzo Massimo in February 2007 the technical grounds for the new dating were outlined (single casting for entire statues said to be unknown in any other ancient examples; square apertures for the fixings of the armature, similar to others known from medieval works, were revealed in the wolf's back), as well as stylistic observations (a perceived resemblance to the thirteenth-century lion and griffin of Perugia's Palazzo dei Priori) that were felt to reinforce the argument. A month later the question was debated at the Università di Roma 'La Sapienza', and the traditional dating was argued for in some detail by Claudio Parisi Presicce: even if entire statues are not known to have been executed in a single cast, large individual elements are — and the single-cast tunic of Delphi's charioteer is in fact larger than the entire She-wolf; apertures for fixing the armature are known in numerous ancient bronzes; as for the stylistic grounds, Presicce produced abundant *comparanda* from archaic Greek and Italian works (wave pattern on the spine, ringlets of the mane, for example) that matched elements on the Capitoline bronze. The original claims in Carruba's book, proposing a specific 'Carolingian' date for the work, were not repeated so baldly during the two debates. Post-antique *comparanda* were instead sought from the later Middle Ages — which is hardly surprising, since not one new-made, free-standing bronze of any size larger than a miniature is known from anywhere in Europe in the period between the sixth and thirteenth centuries.²⁸

A lesser known bronze from the Capitoline collections was also put on show after a fresh restoration: the bronze horse from the vicolo delle Palme (now vicolo dell'Atleta), excavated in

²³ *Il Corriere della Sera*, 21 April 2007; *La Repubblica*, 2 February 2008.

²⁴ *La Repubblica*, 27 November 2007.

²⁵ Thirty-seven inhumations, excavation directed by Alessandra Cerrito: *Il Tempo*, 16 February 2007.

²⁶ Review by E. Fentress in *American Journal of Archaeology* 111 (2007), 365–9. For the genesis of the new display, see F. La Rocca, 'L'Esedra del Marco Aurelio nel palazzo dei Conservatori', *Bollettino dei Musei Comunali di Roma* 20 (2006), 178–97.

²⁷ A. Carruba, *La Lupa Capitolina. Un bronzo medievale* (Rome, 2006).

²⁸ The debate has been summarized by G. Bartoloni, 'La Lupa Capitolina: nuove prospettive di studio', *Bollettino dei Musei Comunali di Roma* 20 (2006), 221–4.

1849 under the charge of Luigi Canina.²⁹ It formed a part of an equestrian statue (whose rider was missing), and was at the time of its discovery attributed to Lysippus's 'Granicus' monument, set up in the Porticus of Metellus in 131 BC following its removal from Dion. Whereas the She-wolf was declared to be medieval after its restoration, the horse was now backdated to the fifth century BC, and tentatively identified as belonging to the Dioscuri group mentioned by Pliny on the Capitol, the work of Pheidias's brother Hegias (*Naturalis Historia* 34.78).³⁰ It is at present in a temporary berth in the Sala di Annibale (together with the rider's foot).

To very little fanfare in the press, important works from storage and restoration laboratories, not seen in public for many years, have returned to old and new homes. The historical friezes from the Basilica Aemilia are now on show at the Palazzo Massimo, where for the first time one can also see the medieval frescoes from the Temple of Portunus, executed when it was converted into a church at the end of the ninth century. Across the road at the Olearia, the National Museum also put on a brief exhibition of objects from a host of excavations carried out by the Soprintendenza Archeologica di Roma in the city and suburbs since 1980.³¹ The celebrated *opus sectile* hall from a late fourth-century *domus* at Ostia's Porta Marina, which had been recomposed in partial form during 2000's *Aurea Roma* exhibition, has undergone further restoration and is now reassembled almost in its entirety at the Museo dell'Alto Medioevo in EUR. The new arrangement reveals the entire pavement and, for the first time, the mosaic ceiling of the hall's rectangular exedra (probably a triclinium).³² Architectural sculpture from the Temple of Apollo Sosianus and Theatre of Marcellus is now on view in the courtyard of the Palazzo Lovatelli.³³ At the Villa Giulia, meanwhile, the restoration of the acroterial group from the Portonaccio sanctuary at Veii has been completed, and Apollo, Hercules and Latona have been reassembled next to the Castellani collection while awaiting a definitive arrangement in the southern wing, which is not envisaged to be carried out for some time. Temporarily on display in the same museum were five late first-century BC reliefs, representing combat between gladiators, that had been excavated illegally from a tomb near Fiano Romano some years ago, and recovered by the Guardia di Finanza and *carabinieri* from the Nucleo Tutela Patrimonio Culturale in January 2007. The reliefs, part of a considerably larger assemblage (the tomb is estimated to have been c. 8 m in height), are expected to find a permanent home at the Museum of Lucus Feroniae.³⁴

²⁹ For the circumstances of its discovery, in a large deposit of fragmentary bronzes, see G. Sacchi Lodispoto, 'Gli scavi archeologici del vicolo delle Palme in Trastevere', *Bollettino dei Musei Comunali di Roma* 31 (1984), 3–22. The rear portion of the bull is currently displayed in the Sala dei Magistrati.

³⁰ L. Pasquali, 'Un cavallo di bronzo per più cavalieri. La scoperta di un originale greco a Roma', *Forma Urbis* 12 (6) (2007), 37–40. For a more prosaic opinion, see H. Stuart-Jones, *Catalogue of the Palazzo dei Conservatori* (Oxford, 1926), 172: 'no more than a Roman copy'.

³¹ From December 2006 to June 2007. A detailed and beautifully illustrated catalogue was issued: M. Tomei (ed.), *Roma. Memorie dal sottosuolo. Ritrovamenti archeologici 1980/2006* (Rome, 2006).

³² See M. Arena and A. Carruba, *Opus sectile di Porta Marina* (Rome, 2005).

³³ To be published by M. De Nuccio and S. Pergola, 'Dai depositi al Museo. Il cortile del tempio di Apollo Sosiano in Circo Flaminio', *Bollettino della Commissione Archeologica Comunale in Roma* 108 (2007 [in press]).

³⁴ *Il Messaggero*, 25 January 2007.

The general question of the return of illegally exported artefacts took centre stage in December 2007, with the exhibition at the Palazzo del Quirinale *I Nostoi. Capolavori ritrovati*. Seventy works, almost all from public and private collections in the United States of America (notably the J. Paul Getty Museum, the Metropolitan Museum, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts and the Princeton University Art Museum) were displayed, all returned following accords reached from 2006 between the Italian Ministry of Culture and the institutions concerned, as a means of undermining the market in clandestine antiquities. The fact that the aforementioned Fiano reliefs had not found a purchaser was seen as an example of the success of the new policy. As is obviously the case with material deriving from illegal excavations, the precise archaeological provenance of the works displayed at the Quirinal was seldom assured. Nothing was traced directly to Rome itself; it seems that the bulk of the artefacts (chiefly Attic and Apulian pottery, but also statues and frescoes) came from Etruria, the Vesuvian cities and Magna Graecia.³⁵

This gazette closes with the newest addition to Rome's museums, which returns us to our starting-point. The Museo dei Fori Imperiali was inaugurated in the Markets of Trajan in October 2007 after a two-year restoration and installation project. For the first time, visitors and scholars can now see large-scale integrations of architectural components from the Forum of Augustus, together with sculpture from all of the Imperial Fora, in a display radiating out from the magnificent central hall of the Markets.³⁶ The Forum of Augustus material includes much architectural sculpture from the Temple of Mars Ultor (trabeation, columns, marble eaves components, the famous Pegasus pilaster capitals) and a remarkably eloquent recomposition of one of the *summi viri* niches (using the *elogium* of Drusus the Elder) from the porticoes, as well as a cast of the monumental Aeneas and Anchises group from Mérida. Statuary from the site itself includes the gilded bronze foot of a flying Victory (probably alighting on the tympanum of the temple), the signed base of a caryatid, and a reintegration of the enormous marble acrolithic hand from the Aula del Colosso (reconstructed as part of a 12 m high representation of the genius of Augustus, holding a *lituus*). The Forum of Caesar is represented by some fine sculptural elements (putti with sacrificial instruments) from the friezes of the Trajanic rebuild of the Temple of Venus Genetrix. More recent finds include the bronze statuette of Chrysippus from the Templum Pacis, together with three Severan statue-bases bearing Greek captions of the works' sculptors and fragments of a colossal porphyry fountain basin. From the Forum of Trajan there is the re-cut head of Constantine, discovered in a drain in 2005. The Forum of Nerva is represented by the recomposed panel from the attic of the colonnades, now identified as one of

³⁵ Catalogue: *I Nostoi. Capolavori ritrovati* (Loreto/Ancona, 2007). Additional works, notably the 'Morgantina Aphrodite' from the Getty, are expected to return in the coming years. The wonderful ivory face of a divinity, found in the countryside near Anguillara Sabazia and recovered from a London dealer, is assumed to have originated at a temple in Rome (A. Giuliano, 'Un volto di avorio', *Rendiconti della Pontificia Accademia di Archeologia* 77 (2004–5), 289–308).

³⁶ For a guidebook, including information on all exhibits mentioned here, see: L. Ungaro, *Il Museo dei Fori Imperiali nei Mercati di Traiano* (Rome, 2007). The full display of material from the Forum of Trajan awaits definitive arrangement.

a series of province personifications. The whole display is accompanied by video introductions to each Forum and a bookshop.

2007, in short, has been a remarkably rich year for archaeology in Rome. In 2008 building is set to continue on Metro C, and might possibly begin on the 20 km long Metro D (Montesacro to EUR), whose central stretch will cross the city from piazza di Spagna to Trastevere. Works for underground car parks are likely to continue to attract polemic: projects have been announced along the Lungotevere (outside Porta del Popolo and in via Giulia), and beneath the Pincio and Quirinal. The most ambitious museum project is that of the 'Grande Campidoglio', which foresees the transfer of the Museo della Civiltà Romana to a new seat next to Santa Maria in Cosmedin and restoring Sangallo's Villa Rivaldi to house the legendary Torlonia collection (if, of course, the small matter of its purchase by the State proceeds seamlessly). But the most interesting discoveries are likely to be those that are entirely unexpected: as these notes were going to press, for example, the find was reported of a fragment of an over-life-size marble equestrian statue, concealed just 50 cm beneath the cobble-stones of the piazza del Colosseo.³⁷

³⁷ Cautiously attributed by Rossella Rea to the decoration of the interior of the amphitheatre itself. *La Repubblica*, 10 April 2008; *Il Messaggero*, 10 April 2008.