

## NOTES FROM ROME 2020–21

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*This gazette presents to the reader outside Rome news of recent archaeological activity (June 2020 – July 2021) gleaned from public lectures, conferences, exhibitions, and newspaper reports.*

*Questa gazzetta ha lo scopo di presentare ad un lettore fuori Roma notizie della recente attività archeologica (giugno 2020 - luglio 2021) tratte da conferenze, convegni, mostre e relazioni su giornali.*

The project to restore and improve access to the Mausoleum of Augustus has been a long drawn out affair.<sup>1</sup> Following the announcement of the *Urbs et Civitas* scheme in 2009, works were held up and the expected reopening for the commemoration of the bimillennium of Augustus' death in 2014 postponed.<sup>2</sup> After operations recommenced in 2016, the site briefly reopened to the public in December 2020, enabling visitors to chart the progress. The tomb's central spaces, with the epitaphs and urn bases scattered among collapsed vaulting and 1930s concrete underpinning, remain as they were in 2009. But the planned exhibition spaces in the upper sectors of the *concamerationes* have been installed (if not yet filled): the long climb to the upper levels enables one vividly to appreciate the mausoleum's sheer height, and the vast space it encloses. The area outside the monument, where new ramps are being constructed to give access from the modern street level, is still a building site. A singular late antique structure is now visible at the border of the excavated area, to the right of the tomb's original entrance, and at a much higher level: a narrow apsed hall built of *opus vittatum* that looks no earlier than the fourth century AD.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Previous mentions in past 'Notes from Rome': *PBSR* 77 (2009), 294–5; *PBSR* 79 (2011), 357; *PBSR* 82 (2014), 319. Preparatory excavations have been briefly documented in: P. Virgili, E. Carnabuci, 'Mausoleo di Augusto: nuovi dati per la lettura della pianta, degli elevati e delle tecniche costruttive. Le indagini archeologiche', in *Arqueología de la construcción* III, eds. S. Camporeale, H. Dessales, A. Pizzo (Madrid-Mérida 2012), 181–201; N. Agnoli, E. Carnabuci, G. Caruso, E. Loreti, 'Il Mausoleo di Augusto. Recenti scavi e nuove ipotesi ricostruttive', in *Apoteosi. Da uomini a dèi*, eds. L. Abbondanza, F. Coarelli, E. Lo Sardo (Rome 2014), 214–29. For an illuminating exposition of the implications of these studies for the reconstruction of the Mausoleum in antiquity, see the online lecture by Elisabetta Carnabuci: <https://www.facebook.com/490753770997690/videos/453267839068545>

<sup>2</sup> On the bureaucratic delays and other unfortunate events (including the flooding of the monument during the open-day to mark the anniversary of Augustus' death on 19 August 2014), see: *Corriere della Sera* 30/9/2016, 10/10/2016, 21/11/2016, 22/11/2016; *Il fatto quotidiano* 28/10/2016 (newspaper reports cited here may be found at [www.patrimoniosos.it](http://www.patrimoniosos.it) in the *Rassegna Stampa* section).

<sup>3</sup> The latest excavations began in 2020. For an illustration of the works as of April 2021, see the informative online lecture by site director Ersilia Maria Loreti: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jj96fs-AsQk>

All of this activity has led to one remarkable and unexpected discovery. During works on a new sewer not far from the apse of S. Carlo ai Catinari, a cippus belonging to Claudius' *pomerium* was unearthed in its original position, still fixed in the ground.<sup>4</sup> This is the first such find in over a century and adds to the corpus of nine other Claudian *pomerium* cippi known to date.<sup>5</sup> The last four lines of the familiar formula are partially preserved, with the characteristic digamma known from other versions: ----- / [C]ENSOR [PP] / [AV]CTIS POPVLI RO[MA]NI / FINIBVS POMERIVM / AMPLIAFIT TERMINAFITQVE. The exact route of the boundary in the northern sector of the city, and especially its relation to the Via Flaminia and the river, remain poorly understood. The location of the new stone (which would leave the Mausoleum, as one might expect, outside the sacred boundary) confirms that Claudius' line ran to the west of the Via Flaminia, but the full course of the *pomerium* through the Campus Martius remains something of an enigma.<sup>6</sup> The new cippus was lifted from its ancient site and immediately placed on show in the adjacent Ara Pacis Museum.

A two-day online conference held in honour of Emilio Rodríguez Almeida at the Spanish School was dedicated to the archaeology and topography of the area between the Quirinal and Campus Martius.<sup>7</sup> The great topographer was remembered in papers by Francesca De Caprariis and Daniela Cavallo. In addition to such topics as hydrogeology, general topography, and surveys of past finds of roads, aqueducts and houses, there were notices of new excavations. Antonio Pizzo provided fresh information on the remains discovered beneath the buildings of the *Escuela* in via di S. Eufemia.<sup>8</sup> The fragmentary structure previously identified as an Augustan *columbarium* now appears to be a secondary phase of an earlier tomb of tufa and travertine, perhaps dating to the early first century BC. The chief acquisition was the discovery of an earlier structure composed of blocks of *grotta oscura* tufa. The initial hypothesis that this represents a terracing wall of the Quirinal was subsequently updated in a communication published on the website of the *Escuela*, proposing to identify it as a trace of the Servian Wall, dating to the

<sup>4</sup> Photographs of the find at <https://cloud.zetema.it/index.php/s/rKqRL87LTXgFGMY>

<sup>5</sup> M. Andreussi, 'Pomerium', *LTUR* 4, 96–105.

<sup>6</sup> Continuing south, it would be expected to have returned to the line of the Servian Wall at the *Porta Triumphalis*, before extending westwards again so as to account for the cippus of S. Lucia del Gonfalone (M. Labrousse, 'Le *pomerium* de la Rome impériale', *MEFR* 54 (1937), 186–94); Filippo Coarelli proposed it would have followed the *Euripus* in this stretch (*Il Campo Marzio* (Rome 1997), 131–3).

<sup>7</sup> The conference, in course of publication, may be viewed at <https://www.eehar.csic.es/giornata-dedicata-a-emilio-rodriguez-almeida>

<sup>8</sup> The new presentation elucidates the report presented at last year's conference at the Ara Pacis ('Notes from Rome 2019–20', *PBSR* 88 (2020), 345) and the short preliminary publication (A. Pizzo, M. Vitti, 'Via di S. Eufemia 13. Ritrovamenti archeologici nella Escuela Española de Historia y Arqueología en Roma', *BCAR* 120 (2019) 346–52).

fourth century BC.<sup>9</sup> Discoveries on via IV Novembre were illustrated by Simone Barbieri, Marta Baumgartner and Francescopaolo di Sabato. At largo Magnanapoli, in a trench for roadworks directly in front of the Torre delle Milizie, a disturbed burial was encountered, together with fragments of black glaze pottery and ashes, perhaps belonging to a funerary bed. Further down the hill, investigations were carried out beneath the pavement of S. Maria del Carmine. It was found that the building, which dates to the early seventeenth century with extensive later remodelling, is built directly over a series of square brick chambers dating to the Severan period, the upper sections of which had been used for the burial vaults of the church. As yet, only the upper sectors of the chambers, which are cut by the church floor at the level of the springing of the vaults, have been excavated.

The excavations beneath the former *Banca Nazionale di Lavoro* in piazza Albania on the Aventine, mentioned in previous ‘Notes’, have been opened to the public in a virtual reality display similar to that adopted for the houses beneath palazzo Valentini near the Column of Trajan.<sup>10</sup> The site is a large *domus* of second-century date situated just within the still standing section of the Servian Walls in via di S. Anselmo. Five rooms are visible from a raised walkway, each with mosaic pavements. Frescoed dividing walls, in the rarely surviving technique of *pisé*, stand to a height of over one metre. The house underwent as many as five changes in decor during the one hundred and fifty years between its construction during the reign of Trajan and its abandonment, perhaps due to subsidence, in the third century. Earlier phases of the pavements have been lifted, restored, and mounted on the walls of the exhibition space. One features a fragment of an inscription, also in mosaic, naming three benefactors, perhaps pertaining to a club house or *collegium*. Of the levels encountered beneath the house, a fragmentary structure in small blocks of tufa survives which may have something to do with the nearby Republican city defences. Whilst the site’s full publication progresses, an excellent preliminary volume, serving at once as guidebook and finds list, has been published.<sup>11</sup>

Another little-known site, this time in the suburbs, has been opened to the public. The construction over the last fifteen years of the new residential quarter of Lucrezia Romana, situated at Capannelle just to the south of the

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<sup>9</sup> The update may be found on the website of the Spanish School (with a short video of the excavation): <https://www.eehar.csic.es/unas-obras-en-la-escuela-espanola-de-historia-y-arqueologia-del-csic-en-roma-sacan-a-la-luz-una-muralla-del-s-iv-a-c/>. The overbuilding – or even abutting – of the Wall by a prestigious funerary monument as early as the early first century BC would certainly be unusual.

<sup>10</sup> ‘Notes from Rome 2014–15’, *PBSR* 83 (2015), 285; ‘Notes from Rome 2015–16’, *PBSR* 84 (2016), 300. On virtual reality as a tool to aid site visits in the city, see S. Keay, ‘Notes from Rome 2017–18’, *PBSR* 86 (2018), 295.

<sup>11</sup> *La scatola archeologica di piazza Albania all’Aventino*, ed. R. Narducci (Rome 2020), providing information on material from the eighth century BC to the sixth century AD and documenting the extensive excavated zones not on show.

Park of the Aqueducts, has revealed a great deal of archaeological information running from the prehistoric period to at least the third century AD. As mentioned in 2015, the new quarter is home to a small Antiquarium containing material found between the fourth and twelfth miles of the Via Latina.<sup>12</sup> Just before the pandemic, the excavations of a Republican paved road (so-called Via Castrimiense), flanked by an interesting assemblage of tombs, a villa, and multi-phase hydraulic structures relating to the nearby aqueducts, were arranged as a public park, entered from the new via Paul Cezanne.<sup>13</sup> Nearby, and to the east, a portion of the Via Latina has been uncovered next to an imposing Antonine mausoleum: these remains, too, may be visited in a new public park, situated between via del Casale Ferranti and Mario Broglio.<sup>14</sup>

The museums of the *Comune di Roma* have been enriched by finds both old and new. The *Museo dei Fori Imperiali* unveiled recently discovered sculpture from the excavations of the Forum of Trajan in via Alessandrina which had already yielded the colossal head of Dionysius mentioned in past ‘Notes’.<sup>15</sup> Found in the fill of the same late medieval foundation walls were an equally large (43 cm) head of a youthful Augustus and more than sixty fragments of friezes depicting arms, trophies and captive Dacians.<sup>16</sup> At the Capitoline Museums, the missing index finger from the colossal bronze hand of the emperor Constantine was reattached with great ceremony in April 2021. The piece was rediscovered in 2018 by researchers at the Louvre (where it was catalogued as a toe), whose holdings it had entered with the purchase of the collection of Giampietro Campana in 1861. After a successful match was made using a resin replica of the piece, an accord between the two museums enabled the bronze to be returned to Rome and the 38-cm digit was reattached before the waiting press on 28 April, the technicians’ anti-covid masks giving the occasion a suitably surgical air. How the fragment came into the possession of Campana is not known, but he presumably acquired it after it had passed through the collections of the great families sometime between the donation of

<sup>12</sup> ‘Notes from Rome 2014–15’, *PBSR* 83 (2015), 287. In lieu of a catalogue, see E. Alessandrini, A. Orrù, ‘L’Antiquarium di Lucrezia Romana’, in *Ti presento un museo*, eds. G. Calcagni, A. Corpascio (Rome 2018), 35–62.

<sup>13</sup> For a survey of the archaeology of the road, linking Rome with the Alban Hills, see A.L. Fischetti, ‘La Via Castrimeniense: lo stato della ricerca’, in *Alle pendici dei Colli Albani*, eds. A.L. Fischetti, P. Attema (Groningen 2019), with reference to our site at 68–9. The excavations, which started as long ago as 2001, are briefly described by R. Egidi, ‘Un’area suburbana alle pendici dei Colli Albani’, in *Roma, memorie dal sottosuolo*, ed. M.A. Tomei (Rome 2006), 360–65 and *id.* ‘Insediamenti, strade e sistemi di bonifica agraria nel suburbio orientale’, in *Suburbium II*, eds. V. Jolivet, C. Pavolini, M.A. Tomei, R. Volpe (Rome 2009), 497–517.

<sup>14</sup> The mausoleum is mentioned briefly in *LTURS* 3, 191. A panel illustrating the restoration describes subsidiary structures decorated with fifth-century opus sectile pavements.

<sup>15</sup> A. Claridge, C. Siwicki, ‘Notes from Rome 2018–19’, *PBSR* 87 (2019), 309–10.

<sup>16</sup> The new finds came to light in September 2019 and were presented to the press only in December 2020. See *Roma Today* 11/12/2021; *Corriere della Sera* 12/12/2020. Online video of the presentation at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X7HaJWMfUtw>

Sixtus IV in 1471 and 1539/40, when the hand appears already missing its fingertips in an engraving by Francisco de Hollanda.<sup>17</sup>

The long-awaited exhibition of the Torlonia marbles finally opened in October 2020. After further interruptions due to the reintroduction of a nationwide lockdown, the show was extended to January 2022.<sup>18</sup> Visitors had the opportunity to see ninety-two of the collection's c.620 pieces, arranged thematically in the newly adapted ground floor of the Villa Caffarelli. The display illustrated the sculptures' collection history, running in a reverse chronology from those unearthed by the Torlonia themselves (Portus relief, Vulci girl, Attic votive relief from the Villa of Herodes Atticus) to those first recorded in the great collections of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (Cesi vase, Athena Cesarini). Most illuminating was the opportunity to see the statues purchased from the Giustiniani as one, arranged in the exhibition's single large hall. There was some criticism of the display – the monotonous grey bases, intended to evoke the Capitoline temple, reminded one reviewer of a crematorium, and the crowded, miniature spaces made another feel claustrophobic; there were complaints of “overly zealous cleaning and lighting”.<sup>19</sup> All of this recalls Lanciani, in the original ‘Notes from Rome’, who filed his own review of the first Torlonia exhibition in July 1880. He found the modest sub-division of the spaces using simple coloured curtains ingenious, but also had something to say about the exhibits' modern restoration, “carried to such an excess that the question is no more a question of aesthetics, it amounts almost to imposition which has no excuse”.<sup>20</sup>

The one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of *Roma Capitale* (the unification of Italy with Rome as its capital city) was commemorated by an exhibition at the *Museo di Roma*. As well as graphic and cinematic material relating to the arts, industry and political events, the displays included a section on the institution of the *Commissione Archeologica di Roma* and its early archaeological investigations in the new capital. The original watercolours produced by Cicconetti for John Henry Parker's studies of the Aurelian Walls were displayed, as well as the astonishingly detailed archaeological map of the

<sup>17</sup> See the catalogue entry by A. Azéma, S. Descamps-Lequime, B. Mille in *Un rêve d'Italie. La collection du marquis Campana*, eds F. Gaultier, L. Haumesser, A. Trofimova (Paris 2018), 95–6. For the reattachment: <http://www.museicapitolini.org/it/mostra-evento/il-frammento-ritrovato>

<sup>18</sup> ‘Notes from Rome 2019–20’, *PBSR* 88 (2020), 347. Catalogue (in English and Italian): *The Torlonia Marbles. Collecting masterpieces*, eds C. Gasparri, S. Settis (Milan 2020).

<sup>19</sup> Reviews by A. Röstel (*Apollo* 5/2/2021) and C. Hornsby (*The Burlington Magazine*, January 2021). The architects responsible claimed that “the traditional brick blocks are a link to ancient Roman architecture, more specifically to the ancient temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus: the largest monument on the Capitoline Hill with foundations that are tectonically and traditionally in blocks of cappellaccio” (D. Chipperfield in Gasparri-Settis *op. cit.*, 300).

<sup>20</sup> R. Lanciani, *Notes from Rome* (ed. A. Cubberley, London 1988), 83–6. He was particularly scathing regarding the bronze ‘Germanicus’ and the Portus athlete, both featured in the new exhibition.

entire Esquiline, drawn up in twenty large plates by Costantino Sneider.<sup>21</sup> An exhibition on Pompeii at the Colosseum unexpectedly included an innovative reconstruction of Third Style marble revetment from the ancient deposit discovered in the *domus del Gianicolo* and hypothetically attributed to the *horti* of Agrippina.<sup>22</sup> The most interesting exhibition relating to the archaeology of Rome took place with very little fanfare at the Montemartini Museum. “Colori dei Romani” featured little known mosaics from the Capitoline collections, discovered during the great urban excavations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, many of which had not been displayed since the demise of the ill-fated *Antiquarium Comunale* in 1939.<sup>23</sup> In addition to small fragments of *emblemata* from largely unknown houses at S. Lucia in Selci and SS. Pietro e Marcellino, entire decorative ensembles from the celebrated Basilica Hilariana on the Caelian and the Quirinal *domus* of the Claudii were exhibited, with the sculpture, statue bases and inscriptions placed alongside the apotropaic evil eye of the former and showcasing the latter’s dramatic polychrome harbour scene.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> A handsome catalogue was issued (*Roma. Nascita di una capitale 1870–1915*, eds F. Pesci, F. Pirani, G. Raimondi, (Rome 2021), in which the archaeology was covered by E. Pallottino and R. Volpe, ‘Città antica e città moderna nella costruzione di Roma capitale. La Commissione Archeologica Comunale: un laboratorio di sperimentazione topografica (1872–1890)’, 161–73.

<sup>22</sup> The marbles, stylistically dated to the mid-first century AD, were found stored in a second-century house during building works for the *Giubileo* of 2000, and originally published as *I colori del fasto. La domus del Gianicolo e i suoi marmi*, ed. F. Filippi (Milan 2005). For the new display, see S. Colantonio, ‘Magnificenza a Roma: i marmi colorati della *domus* del Gianicolo’, in *Pompei 79 d.C. Una storia romana*, ed. M. Torelli (Milan 2020), 230–33.

<sup>23</sup> Catalogue: *Colori dei Romani*, eds N. Agnoli, S. Guglielmi, C. Parisi Presicce (Rome 2021).

<sup>24</sup> On these two monuments see: *Gli dèi propizi. La Basilica Hilariana nel contesto dello scavo dell’Ospedale Militare Celio*, eds P. Palazzo, C. Pavolini (Rome 2013); F. Coarelli, *Collis* (Rome 2014), 286–94.