

the drain, the distance from the level of the footpath to the street increases and the resulting step presents a facing in *opus reticulatum* (i.e. the same building material and technique as featured in the theatre and the basilica, both dated to the Augustan period). In this phase, the footpath extended across Street 15, effectively closing it and cutting it off from Street E. However, at an earlier point in time, the footpath had in fact stopped on either side of Street 15, as indicated by the travertine blocks (*opus quadratum*) which defined its edges. Building material and technique may indeed suggest a Republican date for this phase, in analogy with similar remains attested elsewhere within the excavation.

Whatever the case, once it had been closed, Street 15 appears to have been built over, as indicated by the remains of some concrete structures (of uncertain interpretation and abutting on the northwestern foundations of the basilica) and by what is left of a floor in *opus spicatum*. The latter may have been originally associated with a wall in *opus incertum*, whose poor remains could have belonged to a section of the perimetral wall of the *palaestra* of a bath complex known from geophysical prospection (Launaro and Millett, 2023: 58 [BU159]).

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DOMINIQUE GODDARD, ALESSANDRO LAUNARO AND NINETTA LEONE
(Faculty of Classics, University of Cambridge; Faculty of Classics, University of
Cambridge; Faculty of Classics, University of Cambridge)
dag47@cam.ac.uk; al506@cam.ac.uk; nl343@cam.ac.uk

**ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATIONS OF THE WESTERN SIDE OF THE
SANCTUARY OF MONTE RINALDO (COMUNE DI MONTE RINALDO,
PROVINCIA DI FERMO, REGIONE MARCHE)**

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The main objective of the 2022 season of archaeological excavations at the Latin sanctuary site of Monte Rinaldo by the University of Bologna and the British School

was to complete the excavation of a range of buildings discovered in 2018, and partially excavated in 2019, in the western part of the archaeological area of 'La Cuma' (Giorgi and Kay, 2019; Giorgi, Demma and Belfiori, 2020; Giorgi, Pizzimenti and Kay, 2020). The excavation had previously identified a series of structures that formed part of the Republican sanctuary of Jupiter (second–first century BC) and a workshop (hypothesized as residential) built in the aftermath of the destruction and abandonment of the sacred area (mid-first century BC), which was used until the end of the first century AD (Belfiori, Cossentino and Pizzimenti, 2020). The 2022 excavations, which covered an area of around 170 m², continued the investigation of some known structures, but also brought to light a new section of the early Imperial complex and further Republican structures.

The early Imperial building consisted of a series of rooms facing east which were connected by a north–south wall. To the west of this wall, and in the southernmost part of the complex, the 2022 excavations revealed two further rooms. The first (H) is L-shaped with an entrance on the south side with access through to Room E to the east (Fig. 1); the second is a small square room (G) that was only accessed through Room H on its southern side (Fig. 1). To the north the rooms probably opened on to a courtyard.

The newly discovered rooms G and H seem part of an adjoining building perhaps constructed for practical purposes. In its southeast corner, Room H had a hearth (possibly used for food preparation and cooking, measuring 1.25 m × 1.80 m) with an adjacent platform in the southwest corner of the room (about 1.90 m × 1.90 m). This platform was built with *manubriati*, bricks laid flat in six rows over a bed of concrete and mortar, and may have been functional to the activities of the hearth. The excavation recorded two drains from the building, one to the north and the other to the south, which were constructed using stone slabs, tiles and architectural terracottas that had previously been used in the roofs of the sacred complex. These channels probably served to divert water southwards towards the valley, as the sanctuary was situated on a sharp slope. A further pipeline, consisting of *tubuli* made of juxtaposed tiles, crosses Rooms F, G and H in a north–south direction below the earth-beaten floors (Fig. 1).

As previously noted (Belfiori, Cossentino and Pizzimenti, 2020), the later structures reused fragments of architectural terracottas originating from the roof decorations of the sanctuary, as well as other building materials (tiles, sandstone blocks) collected from the demolition of the previous buildings of the Republican phase. The construction and the ongoing study of the associated pottery suggests that the sacred complex was abandoned in the middle of the first century BC, with a later reoccupation towards the end of the century with a different use of the space. This chronology is compatible with the period in which the *ager Firmanus* was settled with veterans after the Battle of Philippi (42 BC) and the Civil War of 44–31 BC. Therefore, this building, coeval with one excavated 150 m to the south in 2021 (Giorgi, Kay and Pizzimenti, 2022), may be testimony of the socio-economic transformation and the new settlement dynamics that occurred in the Picenian region between the Late Republic and the Augustan age.

The 2022 excavations also revealed some new evidence regarding the Republican sanctuary, as structures were found to the south of the Triumviral–Augustan building. In particular, the excavation brought to light the remains of a large foundation (approximately 1 m in width), oriented north–south and built with irregular blocks of sandstone. Although the full length could not be exposed due to a later construction above the wall, the structure may probably be interpreted as a retaining wall due to its



Fig. 1. Monte Rinaldo, late-Republican sanctuary 'La Cuma'. The 2022 excavation with the southern part of the Triumviral-Augustan building. Remains of previous Republican phase in red and yellow. (Image: F. Pizzimenti.)

size and position on the slope, as through its construction it was possible to gain space for further buildings on the western side of the sanctuary and to protect them from any landslides. This was confirmed through the excavation of the beaten-earth floors of Rooms D and E of the Augustan building, where Republican structures were revealed. These walls, mostly constructed from smoothed pebbles and some rare bricks, delimited at least three rooms that opened to the east (towards the front of the temple square), that were closed to the rear by a continuous wall. At least one of these rooms may have been a tank or pool, as the remains of hydraulic mortar (*cocciopesto*) were recorded on some sections of the walls. The hydraulic infrastructure at 'La Cuma' would have played an important role in the sanctuary, which was fed by several springs on the slope to the north. The collection and the distribution of water in this area of the sanctuary may have been principally for religious and ritual purposes; however, it would also have supported other requirements of the rural communities in the territory (Belfiori and Giorgi, 2021). For example, activities such as sheep farming or the running of workshops and other productive economic activities would have required a

steady supply of water. The walls were built into layers containing rich amounts of pottery (in particular black-gloss ware) which provides a *terminus post quem* for their construction in the middle of the second century BC. Therefore, these structures belonged to the main monumental phase of the religious complex and formed part of the sacred space on its western side.

The decommissioning of these structures in the mid-first century BC and their subsequent destruction and burial under the Augustan building precludes a full reconstruction of the structural features of the western building of the sanctuary. However, the recorded remains show an asymmetrical arrangement differing from that of the porticus with *tabernae* on the opposite side of the sanctuary (the eastern one) that was built in the same period (Belfiori, Cossentino and Pizzimenti, 2020; Giorgi, Demma and Belfiori, 2020).

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FRANCESCO BELFIORI, ENRICO GIORGI AND STEPHEN KAY
(Department of History and Culture, University of Bologna; Department of History and Culture, University of Bologna; British School at Rome)
francesco.belfiori2@unibo.it; enrico.giorgi@unibo.it; s.kay@bsrome.it