

ARCHAEOLOGICAL FIELDWORK REPORTS

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In 2021 the British School at Rome, together with the universities of Harvard and Toronto, launched the Falerii Novi Project, a long-term study that seeks to explore the foundation, development and subsequent abandonment of the Roman town and evaluate it within the broader regional landscape (Andrews et al., 2023). This research builds upon a long tradition of research by the BSR, in particular the South Etruria Survey, the results of which have recently been reassessed by the BSR's Tiber Valley Project. The Falerii Novi Project therefore represents a new chapter in the BSR's long history of excavation in South Etruria, with the research now supported by scientific advances in environmental archaeology, geophysical prospection and material analysis, elements that are central to the project.

The study of Roman urbanism has for many years been the focus of archaeological research at the BSR, principally through the application of geophysical prospection. Whilst several surveys over the past year have been in support of the research conducted by partners, several new BSR initiatives were commenced with the aim of broadening the scope and application of these non-invasive surveys.

Specialist support was provided over the past year to the Tharros Archaeological Research Project led by the Universities of Cincinnati and Massachusetts Amherst, as well as to the study of the Roman villa at Gerace (Sicily), led by the University of British Columbia. Closer to Rome, further surveys were conducted in the Pontine region in support of the Minor Centres Project led by the University of Groningen.

The completion of legacy projects of the BSR also remains at the forefront of the archaeological activities as work continues on the monograph of the excavations conducted at the Roman villa at Matrice (Campobasso, Molise). The excavations, conducted between 1980 and 1984 under the direction of John Lloyd, represent an important investigation of a remote rural settlement in southern Italy. Therefore, as reported in the following pages, together with King's College London and the Ashmolean Museum, several new seasons of geophysical prospection and excavation have been undertaken to bring the volume to completion.

The joint research with the University of Bologna has continued in the Adriatic region with a further season of excavation at the rural sanctuary of 'La Cuma', Monte Rinaldo (Belfiori, Giorgi and Kay, 2023). Alongside this, geophysical prospection was also conducted at the Etruscan settlement of Spina (Comacchio). An earlier geophysical survey led by the BSR had recorded an organized layout to the settlement, built in a lagoonal area at the mouth of the River Po (Kay, Pomar and Hay, 2020). In support of new excavations and a coring campaign, Electrical Resistance Tomography was conducted to record the depth and profile of the channels that formed the artificial islands of the settlement.

Building upon the work being conducted by the Rome Transformed Project (Haynes et al., 2023) in the eastern area of the Caelian Hill, as well as the preceding study of the Basilica of Saint John Lateran (Bosman, Haynes and Liverani, 2020), a new initiative was launched in 2022 together with the Norwegian Institute in Rome for the study of the first



Fig. 1. Location of the archaeological fieldwork projects in Italy.

mile of the Via Latina. The second oldest of Rome's named roads, the Via Latina connected the city to Capua, 200 km to the south. Whilst stretches of the road have been well studied, the first 600 m inside the Aurelian walls has been relatively neglected, often grouped with the better-known monuments that faced onto the Via Appia. The project will follow a similar methodology to that developed for Rome Transformed, with an intensive campaign of geophysical prospection (utilizing various frequencies of ground-penetrating radar antennas) and structural analysis, supported by bibliographic and archival research.

Alongside these activities led by the BSR, fieldwork has recommenced at several sites following the break in activities due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Over the past decade the excavations at Interamna Lirenas led by the University of Cambridge have concentrated initially on the theatre and more recently on the basilica and southwest corner of the forum. The first major volume of the results of this research has just been published (2023) and will offer an important insight into the trade and economy of this area of southern Lazio. Excavations have also recommenced at Hadrian's villa of the so-called *Plutonium* led by the universities of Pavia and Oxford. This enigmatic structure, traditionally interpreted as a reproduction of the underworld, has been the subject of several seasons of excavation, and further documentation continued in 2022.

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ROME TRANSFORMED: STRUCTURAL SURVEY AND ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS IN SOUTHEAST ROME

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According to its original timetable ROMETRANS, ‘Rome Transformed: interdisciplinary analysis of political, military, and religious regenerations of the city’s forgotten quarter C1–C8 CE’ (<https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/835271>), aimed to complete field data capture by May 2022. Managing the long-term impact of COVID on project schedules, resurveying especially challenging areas and capitalizing upon the opportunities arising from earlier investigations, however, meant that ROMETRANS team members were still actively involved in fieldwork into 2023.

In previous reports, we have summarized the project’s extensive programme of geophysical survey led by Stephen Kay (BSR), Salvatore Piro (CNR) and Gianfranco Morelli (Geostudi Astier). Evaluation of the voluminous data recovered in that programme continues, but no new geophysics fieldwork was undertaken during this reporting period, and accordingly we do not discuss it further here. The borehole programme that supports our environmental analysis work and feeds our RT3D system for topographic modelling did, however, continue in the field during this time. Phyllida Bailey and Francesca Carboni oversaw drilling by Luca Rodriguez of TecnoGeo at a further six locations (Fig. 1). The cores extracted were subjected to geomorphological analysis by Carlo Rosa of TecnoGeo, before having their archaeological content and organic materials assessed by Francesca and Phyllida. Key deposits were then subjected to radiocarbon dating; a majority of samples recovered dated from the mid-Republican to early Imperial period. In the months to come,

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