

The preliminary results of this research thus far confirm the exploitation of the peri-urban area of Falerii Novi and the strong connection between the city and the surrounding landscape. The detected anomalies will be further analyzed, and trial trenches will be excavated to verify the interpretation.

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FURFO PROJECT (BARISCIANO, L'AQUILA): THE 2023 SEASON

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In September 2023 the first season of fieldwork of the Furfo Project took place, a new multimethodological research project between the British School at Rome and l'Università dell'Aquila – Dipartimento di Scienze Umane, Soprintendenza Archeologia Belle Arti e Paesaggio per le Province di L'Aquila e Teramo and the Comune di Barisciano. The aim of the project is to investigate the *vicus* of Furfo, an important archaeological site in the Aterno valley, positioned along the *via Claudia Nova*.

The location of the *vicus* has been identified through its toponym, noted in the inscription *CIL* IX, 3513, the *Lex Aedis Furfensis*, and in the name of the Church of Santa Maria di Farfona (or Forfona). Previous published archaeological research is limited to what was documented during brief surveys conducted in the 1980s (Gizzi, Spanu and Valenti, 1996), in which an initial topographical definition of the area occupied by the *vicus* was first proposed. The collected material indicated a continuous occupation, which for the pre-Roman phases were indicated by coarseware, then

varying ceramic material for the Republican and Imperial phases through until the medieval period. Finally, brief descriptions have been published of two monuments still visible in the area. To the northwest, immediately beyond what has been hypothesized as the extent of the *vicus*, a small fountain has been recorded, much of which is still buried. The walls and vault are constructed in *opus quadratum* with blocks of tufo; on the right-hand sidewall of the fountain is conserved, incised on a single block, an inscription (*CIL* IX, 3521), dated to between the mid to the end of the first century BC. The inscription records the dedication of the structure by four *mag(istri) pagi de v(ici) s(ententia)*. The second standing remain, dating to the medieval period, is part of the Church of Santa Maria di Farfona, constructed around the 12th century AD on the western margin of the *vicus*, a central point of a medieval settlement not previously recorded.

The choice of the site of Furfo as the focus of a long-term joint research project was made based on a number of considerations. A significant driver was the topographical suitability of the area, particularly the lack of any modern buildings, therefore allowing a diverse range of research methods. Furthermore, Furfo allows for the study of what is considered a ‘minor’ centre, widespread across Roman Italy, and which within the Vestini area appears to have had an important administrative and economic role in the territory throughout the Roman period (Strazzulla, 2014).

This form of settlement, a *vicus*, is little attested in the known archaeological record and few have been systematically investigated. The *vicus* of Furfo also has administrative characteristics which make it unique amongst other similar types of settlement: it appears to have had its own magistrates (the *aediles* of the *Lex Aedis Furfensis*) in contrast to what is known about other *vici* in ancient Italy.

The long period of occupation of Furfo, noted by the previous fieldwalking surveys in the 1980s and confirmed by the new research, establishes the site as an ideal example to study the *longue durée* of settlement, allowing the investigation of the problematic issue concerning the occupation of the territory in the Vestini period, the remodelling of this due to its entry into the Roman world and, in addition, the question of the continuation/transformation in the medieval period, where the Church of Santa Maria di Farfona (Forfona) is an important testimony of a settlement whose subsequent abandonment may be considered in correlation with the foundation of L’Aquila and with other settlement dynamics such as the movement of the site of Barisciano.

The project follows a holistic approach to the study of the site of Furfo, embracing the full chronological period and seeking to attain an overall understanding of the territory and the form and role the settlement played from its origins to its abandonment. The methodological approach of the project began with the creation of a Geographical Information System (GIS) aimed at combining different datasets in a single platform, aiding both the data management of the project as well as permitting comparison of the data and subsequent spatial analysis. The data collected by the project so far includes: bibliographic and archival data; cartographic data, both modern and historical; remote sensing data (satellite imagery, LiDAR); aerial photographs, including historical imagery provided by the Aerofototeca Nazionale, Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo e la Documentazione; and finally non-invasive research in the territory (fieldwalking, geophysical prospection).

The first year of the project centred upon the collection of non-invasive survey data building upon the information collected in the primary phase of bibliographic and archival work, which was aided by research conducted for dissertations at the Università dell’Aquila. The fieldwork took place between September 2023 and March 2024 and included the systematic fieldwalking of a portion of the *vicus*, magnetometry



Fig. 1. Results of the 2023 magnetometry survey.

and standing building survey of the two structures. Finally, with the assistance of the University of Salento, an extensive drone-based LiDAR survey was conducted with the aim of recording the microtopography of the area.

The preliminary results of the research have provided a new understanding of the settlement, which extended across an elongated area, bordered on three sides by steep

precipices. To the south the site overlooks a valley crossed by a major transhumance route, whilst to the northwest a flat plain extends to the foot of the mountains rising behind the site.

The first season of geophysical prospection aimed to test the responsiveness of magnetometry and focused upon three areas, split between a central block close to the church and an area to the north, understood to have been beyond the limits of the settlement (Fig. 1). In the immediate vicinity of the church (Area 1) few features were recorded, whilst 100m to the north a range of linear magnetic anomalies (Area 2), both positive and negative, were recorded. The third area, a further 300 m to the north, covered approximately 1 hectare and recorded a series of regular features (Area 3). These areas will be further investigated over the course of future seasons together with the additional application of ground-penetrating radar.

The fieldwalking covered 43.5ha which also comprised the areas investigated with geophysical prospection to allow a comparison of the datasets. The survey followed standard methodological practice, involving a uniform coverage of accessible areas, with the data georeferenced in the field and information recorded following the guidelines established by the Istituto Centrale per L'Archeologia (ICA) for inclusion within the Geoportale Nazionale Archeologia (GNA).

The combined application of fieldwalking and geophysical prospection has demonstrated that the area occupied by the settlement was significantly larger than previously estimated as well as seemingly more structured. Extending southward from the modern road (via Statale 17), the site comprises the features recorded by the magnetometry in Area 3 and extends to the central area including the remains of the Church of Santa Maria di Farfona, and then extends to the southeast across a flat area, the limits of which are progressively defined by the drop towards the valleys below.

In summary, the first season has recorded the outline of a substantial settlement. The relationship between the site and the major access routes will be further explored, as, first and foremost, the *Via Claudia Nova* is generally believed to correspond with that of the major transhumance route that passes to the south of the *vicus*. The results in terms of the chronology of the settlement indicate, in at least three core areas, a consistent presence of coarseware material, the interpretation of which is preliminarily limited to the Vestini period. There is a widespread and diffuse presence in the Roman period, in particular in the imperial period whilst the material of the medieval period is more limited.

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**INTERAMNA LIRENAS PROJECT (COMUNE DI PIGNATARO INTERAMNA,
PROVINCIA DI FROSINONE, REGIONE LAZIO)**

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Since 2010 the *Interamna Lirenas Project* has contributed to hugely expanding and fundamentally changing our understanding of the development of Interamna Lirenas (and its territory), from its foundation as a Latin colony (312 BC) until its definitive abandonment towards the end of the sixth century AD (Launaro, 2019 and 2023; Launaro and Millett, 2023). This project has been deploying a wide range of archaeological approaches (geophysical prospection, field survey, excavation) in order to map how this community may have changed and adapted in response to the broader transformations affecting this part of Italy specifically – and the Roman world more generally. Interamna Lirenas indeed offers an ideal case study: the full (and quite detailed) plan of the town is now largely known thanks to several seasons of geophysical prospection (magnetometry and ground-penetrating radar: Launaro and Millett, 2023); the thorough and timely study of the local/regional material culture (commonware pottery specifically) has made it possible to reliably document *all* periods, including those which would otherwise have been largely under-represented (Launaro and Leone, 2018).

The excavations within the urban area (which started in 2013) have greatly benefited from these favourable conditions, which made it possible to broadly contextualize the structures brought to light within our trenches and better interpret/date the associated contexts. At the same time, however, excavations have also confirmed that ‘structures, whose top is at a depth of at least ~0.70 m, were not detectable by the GPR at the time of the prospection’ (Verdonck, 2023: 33) and that the resulting plan ‘may be held to best represent the situation during the 1st–2nd centuries AD’ (Launaro and Millett, 2023: 95). Indeed, substantial remains associated with earlier phases of occupation – notably a section of a *porticus* in *opus quadratum*, dated to the early second century BC – have since been brought to light (Bellini *et al.*, 2019: 333–4), even though they were not detected by the geophysical prospection.

Although it has been possible to retrace the (likely) outline of the original layout of the Latin colony (Launaro and Millett, 2023: 83–92), our understanding of the Republican