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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



Fig. 1. View of the excavation in Area 1000, looking northwestwards (Republican *porticus* at the top).

town is still relatively limited and can only be improved by reaching deeper into Interamna's subsoil. It is for this reason that we have launched a new phase of excavations (over the period 2023–5) explicitly aimed at bringing to light structures and materials specifically associated with the Republican occupation of the site (late fourth to first century BC). The 2023 fieldwork season focused on two areas: the sector immediately outside the Republican *porticus* beneath the Augustan theatre (Area 1000) and the footpath bordering the northeastern side of the *basilica*, along Street E (Area 2000).

In Area 1000 (Fig. 1) we excavated the space located between the back of the *porticus* and the possible continuation of Street 15 (which would have been closed off and buried underneath the theatre in the second half of the first century BC). The southeastern sector had been heavily damaged by later interventions associated with the process of spoliation, which had cut through the *scaena* and *crypta* up to and including foundation level (Bellini *et al.*, 2017: 321–22). Nevertheless, the area between this cut and the backwall *porticus* was largely preserved and featured a substantial fill (c. 80 cm in height) covering a layer of compact clay, the latter partially bounded to the southeast by two blocks of travertine. The fill is almost certainly related to the creation of the terrace on which the theatre is built (which was held in place by a substantial retaining wall, one section of which was brought to light in 2019: Bellini *et al.*, 2020: 367). The compact clay may well represent what is left of a wide footpath lined with blocks of travertine (of which only two are left) and bordering the original path of Street 15 along its northwestern



Fig. 2. View of the excavation in Area 2000, looking northwestwards (*basilica* on the left, Street E on the right).

edge. This footpath was probably already in place by the time the *porticus* was built, as indicated by the fact that the foundation trench for its backwall (whose excavation is yet to be completed) appears to have cut through it. We hope that further excavation of the foundation trench (to be completed in 2024) may further add to – and clarify – our understanding of this sector.

The excavation of Area 2000 (Fig. 2) has revealed the existence of an earlier structure beneath the surface of the footpath running along the northeastern side of the *basilica*, next to Street E. It features a long wall (11.5 m) made up of both dressed blocks and large fragments of travertine running parallel to street E, with four similar walls abutting to it and defining three distinct spaces (rooms?). These latter four walls appear to have all been cut by the concrete foundations of the *basilica*, suggesting that they must have preceded its construction. Contexts more closely associated with these structures have yielded material of clear Republican chronology. The interpretation of this evidence is still in progress and will undoubtedly benefit from further work planned to take place in this sector in 2024.

The 2023 fieldwork season represented the first act of the new three-year project: as expected, it raised more questions than answers. At the same time, it confirmed the presence of earlier (Republican) structures which were entirely missed by the geophysical prospection, whose identification and interpretation will require increased reliance on excavation.

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THE SANCTUARY OF MONTE RINALDO: THE 2023 SEASON

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Excavation

The final season of excavations at the archaeological park of Monte Rinaldo (La Cuma) took place between 22 June and 15 July 2023 thanks to the support of the University of Bologna and with the logistical assistance of the Comune di Monte Rinaldo. The fieldwork was undertaken as part of a research agreement with the Soprintendenza per le Marche meridionali (SABAP AP-FM-MC) and the British School at Rome.

The excavations, undertaken by a team composed of 15 researchers and students, focused on the southwestern area of the archaeological park, corresponding to the area where it was presumed were the last structures not previously brought to light by the