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ROME TRANSFORMED: STUDYING THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE EASTERN CAELIAN

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With the bulk of its fieldwork completed in the first four years of our five-year project, ROME TRANS '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], this year saw more targeted work in site activity aimed at answering specific questions that emerged from our research. As a result, the work which we did undertake was varied, challenging and in some ways still more fruitful, because it capitalized on our growing experience of the structures, spaces and landscape of the study area.

From the outset the project has depended on the best possible geospatial data to ensure that the structural analysis, environmental survey, geophysical prospection and archival research can be brought together to map transformation convincingly. Maintaining a high-resolution geospatial control is a decidedly non-trivial task, and with so many work packages being delivered by so many teams at multiple sites across our 68-hectare research area gaps in coverage were to be expected. At the end of February 2024 Stephen Kay and Elena Pomar (British School at Rome) undertook a vital period of topographical survey work to close those gaps; this complemented an earlier programme of work using laser scanning in Piazza S. Giovanni in January which was used to further tighten the control. The surveying complemented ongoing study of the project's geophysics data, including notably the work of Salvatore Piro in the Lateran/Patriarchium area, together with other data gathered by the BSR team within the Rome Transformed project.

In addition to the survey work, there was an extended period of structural analysis and laser scanning in January and February 2024 coordinated by Thea Ravasi. Much of our work focused on the western end of the research area, in and around the Archbasilica of S. Giovanni in Laterano (the Lateran Basilica). Here Alex Turner completed a new photographic survey of the enigmatic 'Trapezoidal Building' that lies beneath the Archbasilica's late-nineteenth-century apse, while Susan Rands and David Williams reappraised brick and stonework elements of the Castra Nova. Elettra Santucci lent her expertise on hydrological engineering to the challenge of interpreting the chambers within the Castra ramparts, confirming definitively that at least some of them were used as water reservoirs.

Our long-standing work at the Lateran Baptistery (S. Giovanni in Fonte) continued with further analysis of the hydraulic system by Thea Ravasi and Elettra Santucci, combined with an inspection of historic fabric in the baptistery's roof. The structural assessment and recording of the sewers of the baths were finally made possible due to the lack of water, which rendered them accessible. This work provided additional information that confirmed our hypothesis: many of the structural interventions in the bath complex during the third and fourth centuries AD were responses to stability and subsidence issues the building had faced throughout its entire history (Fig. 1). These assessments also enabled the team to explore and document structures that had not been seen since Magi's 1962–4 open-air excavations around the baptistery. In particular, the team focused on analysing a portion of the foundations of the octagonal building that had traditionally been inaccessible to scholars. This analysis confirmed our hypothesis that the construction of the foundations of the octagonal building is more complex than previously understood and provided useful insights relevant for

Fig. 1. Lateran Baptistery: sewer of the third- and fourth-century thermal complex showing signs of subsidence and repair (Photo: T. Ravasi for Rome Transformed 2024).

understanding the building's structural transformations during late antiquity. Gianluca Foschi continued his work on the late-antique chapels that grew up alongside the baptistery with advanced survey work at the Chapel of S. Venanzio.

To the north the team returned to work on and around the Scala Santa. The archaeology of this area is of tremendous importance to our understanding of the Patriarchium, the papal palace of late antiquity. While most of this complex was destroyed in the reign of Sixtus V, some elements survived above and below ground. The team was privileged to have access to this remarkable site, and a comprehensive laser-scan survey was undertaken. The survey recorded the papal oratory of the Sancta Sanctorum (Fig. 2) and the chapels surrounding it, the five staircases of the complex with the Scala Santa in the centre, as well as two columns, frescoed spaces and other wall structures, including two walled windows, all visible on the ground floor inside the convent of the Passionist Fathers. For the first time, the new data enable an accurate analysis of the spatial relationships in this archaeological area, leading to groundbreaking hypotheses on the development of the papal residence from pre-existing structures. This information has allowed a new approach to visualizing the Patriarchium as it appeared in the eighth and ninth centuries AD and possibly earlier.

A final set of tasks brought team members back to the eastern edge of the research area, more specifically to the Basilica of S. Croce in Gerusalemme, where Thea Ravasi and Giuseppe Restaino inspected some of the underground spaces of the Domus Sessoriana Hotel that are not open to the public and advanced the structural analysis and scanning of the remains of the *porticus* that still survive in the underground office spaces of the hotel. This provided additional information as to the nature and design of the structure and the original presence of windows on its southern side. The Basilica incorporates the remains of a large *atrium* that was formerly part of the Sessorian Palace; it has long been associated with use by the Empress Helena, Constantine's mother.

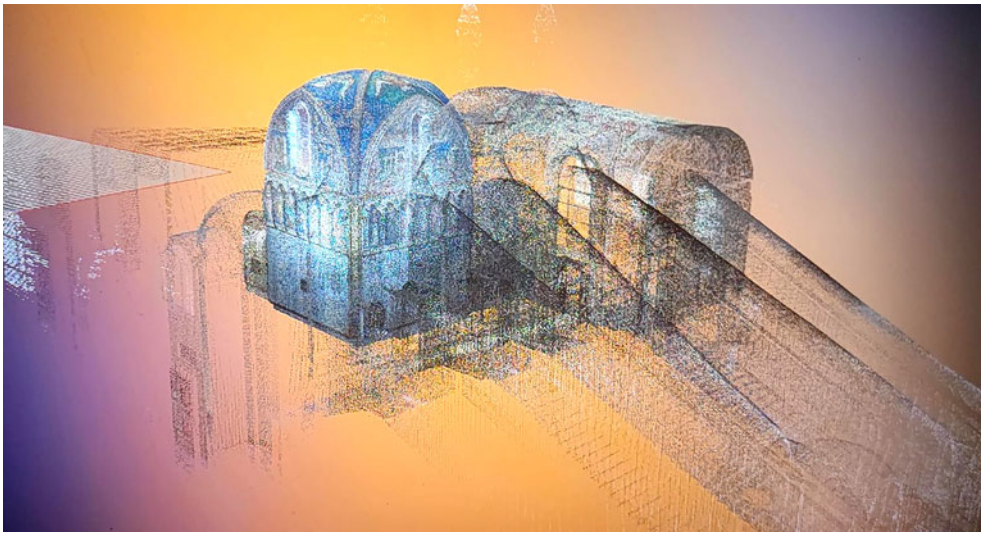

Fig. 2. Scans of the Scala Sanctorum (Image: Gianluca Foschi for Rome Transformed 2024).

As all archaeologists know, time in the field is just one part of a far longer process. Much of the project team's year was taken up with the analysis of this data and those captured in former years. This report is not the place to detail this work, but it is perhaps appropriate to note that it resulted in two specialist colloquia during the reporting period. In December 2023, The Late Antique Provocation Colloquium, held online, highlighted the project's use of visualization-stimulated analysis of the Eastern Caelian from the third to the eighth century AD. This was followed in March 2024, with the Transformation Conference, a stimulating event that brought together specialists at the BSR to discuss what the project had revealed about shifts in political power, military security and religious practice over eight centuries.

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THE FALERII NOVI PROJECT: THE 2023 SEASON

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A four-week campaign from 29 May–23 June 2023 marked the third season of the Falerii Novi Project, and the second season of stratigraphic excavation on site as part of an international collaboration between the British School at Rome, Harvard University, the Institute of Classical Studies (University of London) and the University of Toronto, along with researchers from Ghent University and the University of Florence, under the authorization of the Soprintendenza Archeologia, Belle Arti e Paesaggio per la Provincia di Viterbo e per l'Etruria Meridionale. The project, described in two previous reports (Bernard *et al.*, 2022; Andrews *et al.*, 2023b), sets out to explore the urban history of