



Laurence Seminar 2022

Roman urbanism in Italy: recent discoveries and new directions

Faculty of Classics, University of Cambridge

27-28 May 2022

Programme

Each speaker is asked to deliver a **40-minute presentation (in English)**, which will be followed by **up to 10 minutes of questions and discussion**.

DAY 1 / Friday, 27th May (room G.19, Faculty of Classics)			
	08:40	09:00	REGISTRATION
	09:00	09:10	GREETINGS
1. Methods and approaches	09:10	10:00	Approaches to Roman urbanism in Italy: the case of Falerii Novi Martin Millett (University of Cambridge)
	10:00	10:50	From periphery to core: Recent research in south-eastern Rome Ian Haynes (University of Newcastle), on behalf of the Rome Transformed Team
	10:50	11:05	BREAK
	11:05	11:55	Aquinum, Rediscovering an Invisible City: Luck is in the Research Method Giuseppe Ceraudo (Università del Salento)
2. Not your standard Roman town	11:55	12:45	From sanctuary to settlement. Mapping the development of Lucus Feroniae through geophysical prospection Stephen Kay (British School at Rome)
	12:45	13:45	BREAK
	13:45	14:35	Septempeda: integrated approaches for revealing a 'small town' in Picenum Frank Vermeulen (Ghent University)
3. Beyond the textbook (part I)	14:35	15:25	Cosa, Orbetello, and the Genesis of a Colony Andrea De Giorgi (Florida State University)
	15:25	15:40	BREAK
	15:40	16:30	The Archaeology of Fregellae: an Update Francesca Diosono (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München)

DAY 2 / Saturday, 28th May (room G.19, Faculty of Classics)

	08:50	09:10	REGISTRATION
3. Beyond the textbook (part II)	09:10	10:00	“One should always dress like a marble column”. New insights on the urbanism of Alba Fucens Cécile Evers (Université Libre de Bruxelles / Art and History Museum, Brussels)
4. Roman towns in the <i>longue durée</i>	10:00	10:50	Luni: New Perspectives from Recent Archaeological Fieldwork Simonetta Menchelli, Paolo Sangriso, Silvia Marini, and Rocco Marcheschi (Università di Pisa)
	10:50	11:05	BREAK
	11:05	11:55	Interamna Lirenas: a ‘divergent’ town? Alessandro Launaro
	11:55	12:45	Cities in Transition: A View from Aeclanum on the Via Appia Girolamo Ferdinando De Simone (Accademia di Belle Arti di Napoli) and Ben Russell (University of Edinburgh)
	12:45	13:45	BREAK
5. Late Antiquity and beyond	13:45	14:35	New archaeological discoveries on late antique Aquileia Patrizia Basso (Università degli Studi di Verona)
	14:35	15:25	Bridging the gap. New datas, starting from the “stone bridge”, to analyse aspect of continuity settlement in Parma Alessia Morigi (Università degli Studi di Parma)
	15:25	15:40	BREAK
	15:40	16:10	DISCUSSION Andrew Wallace-Hadrill (University of Cambridge)

Abstracts

1. Methods and approaches

- **Approaches to Roman urbanism in Italy: the case of Falerii Novi**
Martin Millett (University of Cambridge)

Conventional understanding of Roman urban sites has generally relied on excavations which can only ever reveal a small proportion of any city. In the past thirty years, the development of remote sensing techniques has increasingly allowed us to examine urban landscapes on a much larger scale. At Falerii Novi, such work has included the use of large scale gradiometry and high resolution GPR survey integrated with information from past excavations and some aerial photography. This paper will discuss first how the new data has provided new information about the development of the town and second how it changes approaches to thinking about urban landscapes.

- **From periphery to core: Recent research in south-eastern Rome**
Ian Haynes (University of Newcastle), on behalf of the Rome Transformed Team

Over eight centuries, the Eastern Caelian evolved from a peri-urban space dominated by *horti* to the location of the seat of the Bishop of Rome and the *Patriarchium*. The ERC-funded ‘Rome Transformed’

project studies the area's evolution from peripheral space to central place to understand better the distinctive forces that drove Rome's urban development. Despite the multiple achievements of generations of scholars, the eastern Caelian remains only very partially understood. Colini's study of the Caelian (1944) has been partially updated (Pavolini 2006; Consalvi 2009), but his successors have been limited by the lack of detailed information about the natural topography of the area and other parts of the built environment. Broader topographical studies on the Lateran area (Liverani 1996, 1999, 2004) and on the Sessorian Palace (Borgia *et al.* 2008a, 2008b) have, however, shown the need for a comprehensive reassessment of the existing evidence on the Eastern Caelian. While there has been some excellent work on individual monuments (Krautheimer 1937; Colini 1955; Pavolini 1993; Englen 2003; Guidobaldi 2004; Brandt, Guidobaldi 2008; Pavolini, Palazzo 2013; Englen *et al.* 2015), the project's detailed reappraisals of several major historical excavations are leading to changes in the way the area should be understood.

Compared to the monumental centre of Rome, an area of equal size which nonetheless saw less dramatic development from the Constantinian period onwards, the Eastern Caelian is a 'forgotten quarter' in scholarship in that its constituent parts have not been considered in relation to one another. There are three major reasons for this. The first is that the Eastern Caelian falls under two separate jurisdictions: of the Vatican City and of Italy. This division itself reflects the area's significance, but this has made it harder to study as an integrated whole. The second is that scholarly interest has been uneven; intense focus on a handful of major monuments has overshadowed many others worthy of attention, while those scholars who have worked in the area have overwhelmingly focused on later, rather than early and high imperial developments. The third reason for the lack of integrated work lies in the sheer difficulty in delivering a single study over an area which combines deeply buried deposits, currently accessible only through geophysical survey, some of Rome's largest monuments (notably the Basilicas of St John Lateran and of the Holy Cross, the finest sections of the Aurelian Walls and the Neronian Aqueduct) and 12 subsurface archaeological areas. Some of the latter lie deep underground, are extraordinarily extensive and poorly documented, if at all. 'Rome Transformed' is expanding on existing studies of the topography of Rome by tackling the Classical and Late Antique city as a dynamic entity in time and space, critically reassessing information from standing buildings (above and below ground) and locating the resulting findings alongside large-scale geophysical surveys. Challenging approaches that focus too rigidly on Classical versus Late Antique Rome, the project suggests that this area already took on a particular importance in the Severan period, and that much of the remodelling during that time ultimately helped shape a new Christian topography of the city.

- **Aquinum, Rediscovering an Invisible City: Luck is in the Research Method**
Giuseppe Ceraudo (Università del Salento)

Excavations, which have been regularly going on since 2009, have made the triumviral colony of *Aquinum* (Castrocielo, Frosinone - Italy) an important reality in the Italian archaeological panorama. The urban streets, the domus, the theater and the monumental thermal building, unearthed in the last thirteen years, provide fundamental data for the whole understanding of the ancient Roman city. This intense period of field activity has attracted interest and curiosity around *Aquinum* from a various audience. A series of discoveries have risen the ancient site to the national and international limelight as a "lucky" archaeological excavation, as it has been pointed out by media and social networks.

However, it must be reiterated that behind these surprising and "fortunate" discoveries there is an accurate and scrupulous research activity carried out in the last twenty-five years and developed within the "*Ager Aquinas Project*". This foreword is needed to introduce the "history" of the topographical

research at *Aquinum*, characterized by a multidisciplinary approach. A consolidated method that allowed to reach remarkable results that will be discussed in this presentation. The research activity, in which non-invasive activities of remote and proximal sensing have been found to be fundamental, is contributing to expanding, changing or challenging our knowledge and understanding of this important Roman urban site along the Via Latina between Rome and Capua.

2. Not your standard Roman town

- **From sanctuary to settlement. Mapping the development of Lucus Feroniae through geophysical prospection**

Stephen Kay (British School at Rome)

The sanctuary of Lucus Feroniae in the northern hinterland of Rome, close to Capena, was an important centre of cult attested as early as the Orientalising period. It was a sacred space for meeting, trade and worship for the Romans, Sabines and Etruscans and appears to have accumulated significant wealth until its sacking by Hannibal's troops in 211 BC. Archaeological evidence indicates there followed a partial rebuild, but the site underwent a major restructuring in the second century BC funded by Cnaeus Egnatius which saw the construction of a new temple and repaving, as recorded by a surviving inscription. The settlement of a colony here, dated to the first century BC, marks the moment of its most significant expansion, in particularly along the Via Campana that passed through the site as well as perhaps reflecting the lessening importance of the cult of Feronia.

Throughout the first and second centuries AD the settlement continued to grow with the construction of a dam, aqueduct and later an amphitheatre, complimented in the third century AD by two ornamental entrances created for the '*ludi iuvenum Romanorum Lucoferoniensium*' as well as a number of bath complexes. The wealth of the site appears to be closely connected to the Volusii whose lavish villa has been identified close to the town.

This paper will explore the potential differences in urban expansion at Lucus Feroniae in comparison with other towns in the lower Tiber valley that were a result of the presence of the sanctuary. The geophysical surveys conducted by the British School at Rome since 2013 have revealed a differing spatial pattern, with development along major thoroughfares rather than an orthogonal grid being imposed on the town. The sanctuary, the early focal point of the area, lays to the east whilst the baths and amphitheatre to the west form part of an irregular pattern of settlement. The absence of any city walls also gives the town a different appearance, with the geophysical survey recording land divisions at the edge of the town.

This paper will begin by considering the results of the extensive magnetometry survey which recorded the limits of the settlement. An area of particular interest lies to the north of the sanctuary where seemingly ancient agricultural activity was identified, perhaps to be associated with the sacred woodland of the sanctuary. To enhance the clarity and resolution of the magnetometry, the site was also investigated with Ground-Penetrating Radar (GPR) which provided greater clarity to the buildings, in the most part taberna, lining the Via Campana. The non-invasive surveys have shown the contribution these techniques can have in helping to examine the urban fabric of Lucus Feroniae.

- ***Septempeda: integrated approaches for revealing a ‘small town’ in Picenum***

Frank Vermeulen (Ghent University)

A substantial majority of settlement centres in Roman Italy, with formal urban status and characteristics, can be considered as ‘small towns’. All of these more than 250 high order settlements measured less than 20 hectares and can hardly be seen as dense population centres, even if their territories often contain many rural settlements. Some of these towns were founded and planned during the Republic as smaller Roman colonies, reflecting the larger high status colonial centres that impacted greatly on the newly conquered Italian territories. Others were transformations of indigenous centres which gradually took the appearance of their Roman role models. Particularly in the latest phases of the Republic and during the early Imperial period, however, widespread processes of urbanization and municipalisation created a category of towns that were both smaller, and less consistently planned. Many developed along the road system and were clustered around an Augustan era forum in the centre of an agriculturally rich river basin or settlement chamber. The regional economy, elite competition and the needs for administrative organization were some of the main driving forces for their gradual development.

The presentation will reveal some of the characteristics of this particular segment of the urban landscape in Italy, by focusing on a case study in the recently investigated regional network of small towns in central Adriatic Italy. The integrated approaches of urban survey, merged with legacy data and new stratigraphic interventions, applied in a series of towns in northern *Picenum*, allow now a more holistic discussion of this phenomenon of ‘small towns’ in Italy. In particular the recent archaeological mapping efforts by a team from Ghent University in and around the urban centre of *Septempeda* illustrate well the potential for revealing the essence of this specific urban model. Looking at the archaeological evidence from this small riverside city, away from the traditionally studied centres in *Latium*, *Campania* and *Etruria*, allows a deeper understanding of the remarkable diversity of Roman cityscapes in the Italian peninsula.

3. Beyond the textbook

- ***Cosa, Orbetello, and the Genesis of a Colony***

Andrea De Giorgi (Florida State University)

Cosa occupies center stage in the narrative of Rome’s expansion during the third century BCE, and, not least, in the scholarly discourse of the colonial politics that transformed the Italian peninsula during the Middle republic. Yet, the circumstances of the early foundation, as well as the vision of its founders, remain matters of dispute. Putative military rationales partially account for the nucleation and growth of a community that, by the time the Second Punic War over, could see no military threat at the horizon. Leveraging legacy data and new archaeological records, while also bringing into sharper focus the cultural realities of the region that was impacted by Cosa’s foundation, this essay explores the early days of the colony, delving into the institutional, demographic, and topographic features that shaped the urban project. More fundamentally, the paper addresses the relationship between the colony and the port city of Orbetello. The eclipse of the latter, and the concomitant investments on the Ansedonia hilltop and harbor areas will be foregrounded thanks to new geophysical and geoarchaeological surveys.

- **The Archaeology of Fregellae: an Update**

Francesca Diosono (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München)

Founded by Rome in 328 BC in hostile territory and destroyed in 125 BC by the Romans themselves as a warning to the other colonies in revolt, Fregellae is considered an unicum for the study of Roman archaeology at the turn of the middle and late Republican ages. Located in the Latium Adiectum in a strategic position along the via Latina, its trade occurred both by land and by river along the route connecting Rome to Capua and along the valleys of the Sacco and Liri, ending at the Minturnae seaport. Placed in a fertile and well connected territory, with a wealthy local aristocracy proud of its military and political role towards Rome, Fregellae was one of the largest and most flourishing cities of its time.

Modern archaeological research at Fregellae, whose territory is now divided between the municipalities of Arce and Ceprano (Frosinone), began in 1978 under the direction of Filippo Coarelli (University of Perugia). Several papers and three volumes have already been published and a fourth book on the domus (18 houses in the Baths district) is forthcoming . This contribution aims to present a re-evaluation of the evidence available on the city based on ongoing research and previous excavations.

- **“One should always dress like a marble column”. New insights on the urbanism of Alba Fucens**

Cécile Evers (Université Libre de Bruxelles / Art and History Museum, Brussels)

Founded in 303 BC, Alba Fucens is a typical example of a Roman colony with regular urban planning, following a plan derived from the Urbs. The forum area is particularly famous in the literature, the plan of the comitium probably reflecting that of Rome. Belgian excavations, led by prof. J. Mertens, started in 1949 and completed in the 1970s, uncovered a large part of the monumental centre. However, the forum area was only scratched and probed with a few long trenches. At the invitation of the Italian authorities, a new Belgian team (a collaboration between the Université Libre de Bruxelles and the Royal Museums of Art and History), has since 2007 resumed research in the south-western area of the forum. This excavation provides both a diachronic and planimetric view of the layout of the forum (platea, road, portico, side rooms), from the Republic to the end of the Late Empire. It shows the evolution, the change of function and the monumentalisation of the buildings along the public square.

4. Roman towns in the longue durée

- **Luni: New Perspectives from Recent Archaeological Fieldwork**

Simonetta Menchelli, Paolo Sangriso, Silvia Marini, and Rocco Marcheschi (Università di Pisa)

Luni has become a well-known case in Roman urbanism studies since the 1970s and in a long perspective, starting from the founding of the colony in 177 BC, up to the definitive deconstruction of the Roman townscape in the 6th century AD.

In more recent years, the city and its *suburbium* have been the subject of excavations and research , together with an important geoarchaeological project that has outlined a new framework of the Luni's geomorphology in relation to the location and organization of its harbour system.

Started in 2014, our project focuses on the southern quarter of the city, immediately to the east of the *Cardo Maximus* and near the southern walls and Porta a Mare (Sea Gate). This area, which has never been

investigated by archaeologists, is providing significant information about the urban organization in a peripheral sector near the harbour system. Here we brought to light 2 *domus* - both of them built in the 1st century BC and facing the *Cardo Maximus* - which subsequently underwent a great deal of reconstruction: a small temple in the 1st century AD, a workshop for washing fabrics in the 5th century AD; housing in the Byzantine period.

The results of our excavations find close comparisons with the previous research about Luni and therefore allow us to consider some aspects with greater attention and, at the same time, with a wider vision: now we can deepen our knowledge about the urbanism of the entire city, and its economic and social aspects also related to its territory, rich in agro-pastoral resources and for the exploitation of the Apuanian Marble Quarries.

In this paper, we will examine, in greater detail, the relationships between the excavation area, the *Forum* and the Porta Marina area and their evolution over time between the mid 2nd century BC and the early 8th century AD. The transformations of the structures identified by the excavation in an area never previously investigated in fact constitute a new and important interpretative sequence of Luni's urbanism from the Republican Age to Late Antiquity.

- **Interamna Lirenas: a 'divergent' town?**

Alessandro Launaro

Interamna Lirenas (Liri Valley, Central Italy) began its life as a Latin colony in 312 BC, established – not long after the nearby Latin colony of Fregellae – in the context of the Roman military operations against the Samnites. As conditions in Central Italy and across the Mediterranean changed and improved, especially following the 2nd Punic War, Interamna broke out of its mould and took renewed advantage of the strategic position it occupied within the region. Being placed along a major navigable river (the *Liris*) and well integrated within the road network gravitating on the *via Latina*, Interamna flourished as a medium-sized town and a trading hub. Occupation both in town and in the surrounding countryside peaked between the 2nd c. BC and 3rd c. AD, with clear signs of civic vitality well into the 5th c. AD, before its abandonment in the course of the 6th c. AD.

Interamna's historical trajectory differs from well-established narratives about the more general development of Roman Italy, often assumed to have entered a period of irreversible decline by as early as the end of the 1st c. AD. But there is something else which makes Interamna, if certainly not unique, at least special: a complete and remarkably detailed plan of the town is known thanks to a full coverage geophysical prospection that has been carried out in 2010-17. These results, combined with those from several seasons of field survey (in the countryside: 2010-14) and excavation (in town: 2013-present), have been further enhanced with a painstaking but hugely rewarding study of local/regional commonware pottery.

As a result, we should be asking ourselves whether Interamna was special in Antiquity or – as our team is indeed inclined to think – it was just an average community in Roman Italy whose nature and trajectory have been more comprehensively revealed by archaeology than it may have otherwise been the case. Needless to say, such a discussion has profound and wide-ranging implications for our understanding of the history and archaeology of Roman urbanism and – more generally – the transformations of Italy and its place within the Roman world.

- **Cities in Transition: A View from Aeclanum on the Via Appia**

Girolamo Ferdinando De Simone (Accademia di Belle Arti di Napoli) and Ben Russell (University of Edinburgh)

Aeclanum lies beyond the shores of the Bay of Naples in the inland Campanian district of Irpinia (ancient Hirpinia), which for most of the Roman period was part of Apulia et Calabria. The city seems to have been founded in the 3rd century BC. It was sacked by Sulla in 89 BC, turned into a municipium, became a colony under Hadrian in AD 120, and finally developed into an important Christian bishopric between the 4th and 7th centuries AD. Throughout this period Aeclanum owed its status to its position on the Via Appia and its influence seems not to have declined after the construction of the Via Traiana (which effectively bypassed it). In 2016, new excavations and survey work at the site were initiated as a collaboration between the Apolline Project, the University of Edinburgh, the Soprintendenza Archeologica, Belle Arti e Paesaggio per le Provincie di Salerno e Avellino and the Comune di Mirabella Eclano, in association with the British School at Rome. This project has provided key insights into the urban plan of Aeclanum and its public structures (such as the forum and theatre), as well the city's development over time. Particularly rich datasets relating to the late antique period, notably the 4th and 5th centuries AD, have been uncovered. In this paper we will consider the evidence from Aeclanum in a regional context and examine what this site can tell us about urban developments in this inland region over the *longue durée*.

5. Late Antiquity and beyond

- **New archaeological discoveries on late antique Aquileia**

Patrizia Basso (Università degli Studi di Verona)

In this lecture I will present the data emerging from ongoing archaeological research carried out from the University of Verona in Aquileia. The excavations focus in the southern sector of the city that played a central role in the late antique phase of town's history. The area, fortified in the 4th-5th centuries CE by two city walls, hosted a monumental market building, made of four paved squares surrounded by porticoes, stalls and shops. Piles of cereal seeds found during our excavations suggest that the commercial area was specialised in the storage and sale of food products. The market had a functional connection to large *horrea* and the first Christian basilica, forming a public and economic space similar to a new forum.

On the basis of the data obtained from excavations, archival research, geophysical surveys, cores and analyses, our research traces a new physiognomy of late antique Aquileia. In particular, archaeological evidence contributes to reconstructing urban life in the period between the 4th and early 6th century, which highlights the crucial transformation of Aquileia from heyday to beginning of decline.

Furthermore, the study of materials collected during the excavation explains Aquileia's fundamental role in the commercial system of the Upper Adriatic in late antiquity. Thanks to its geographical position open to the Orient and Continental Europe, throughout the Roman times Aquileia played a fundamental commercial role. A famous passage from Strabo (5.1.8) confirms it with regard to the Augustan age and another text from Herodian (8.2.3-4) with regard to the 3rd century CE. Further confirmation comes from numerous imported materials found during excavations in urban areas. These provide evidence of exchanges not only with the nearby territories of *Noricum*, *Histria* and *Pannonia* but also with north-eastern Europe, the Orient, Spain and North Africa. The data collected in our research clearly demonstrate the crucial importance of the city as a crossroads of trade until the end of the 4th century, but also the integration of the city in the Mediterranean trade network still ongoing during the 5th century.

- **Bridging the gap. New datas, starting from the “stone bridge”, to analyse aspect of continuity settelment in Parma**

Alessia Morigi (Università degli Studi di Parma)

The Roman city of Parma, and its territory, have been involved in new researches (focused also on digitization processes) promoted by Parma University during the celebrations for the 2200th anniversary of the foundation of Parma as Roman colony, culminated with the inauguration of the university hub in the area of the roman bridge of Parma.

Research, connected to a large framework of studies related on settlements along the Via Aemilia, started from classification of most important moments, in city history, beginning from the ancient phase.

In this view, archaeological data, particularly referred to ancient monuments contexts, have been investigated in their relations with settlement; continuity and discontinuity sequences, have been further analyzed to understand relations with post-classical urban stratification and urban regeneration, recently designed on the ancient palimpsest.

In this context, the ancient bridge has had a key role, bringing new useful data for the comprehension of the history of the city.

The collection, and subsequent digitization, of structural, stratigraphic, geo-archaeological and archival data related to the ancient bridge as a monument has positioned it into a diachronic line that underlines main events in the history of Parma.

Research around the bridge had also developed an insight into water archaeology and water priority role of water management in planning urban layout well beyond also in post classical era. Archaeological analysis has, finally, re-established the link between different moments in city settlement history.