


# **CONTEXTUALISING THE PAST IN THE ALBAN HILLS**

## **PROGRAMME & ABSTRACTS**

Accademia di Danimarca 8 – 9 January 2025



# CONTEXTUALISING THE PAST IN THE ALBAN HILLS

## PROGRAMME

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### Wednesday 8 January

**9.00 – 9.30** Welcome: C. Manetta (Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa), N. Bargfeldt (University of Copenhagen), B. Poulsen (Aarhus University), G. L. Giovannucci, (CENSE, Villa Santa Caterina), M. Harder Munck-Hansen (Director of Accademia di Danimarca)

#### *Villa Santa Caterina – Contextualising*

**9.30 – 10.10** B. Poulsen (Aarhus University): Introduction to the work in Villa Santa Caterina and some preliminary results

**10.10 - 10.30** S. Aglietti (independent scholar): L'infrastruttura idrica nel sito di Villa Santa Caterina. Usi e riusi

**10.30 – 10.50** B. Poulsen (Aarhus University): The ritual deposit in Villa Santa Caterina

**10.50 – 11.10** C. Manetta (Scuola Normale Superiore di Pisa): Sacred Traces at Villa Santa Caterina? The Bona Dea Cult within the Puzzling Sacred Landscape of the Colli Albani

**11.10 – 11.40** Break

**11.40 – 12.00** G. Vatta (independent scholar) & M. Moltesen (Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek): La collezione di antichità di Vito Volterra

**12.00 – 12.20** M. Grazia Granino (Università di Siena): Divinità, imperatori, legionari e addetti all'amministrazione imperiale, che si incontrano passeggiando nei giardini del villino Volterra

**12.20 – 12.40** F. Diosono (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München): Dentro e fuori la città: la campagna di rilievo 2019 delle mura e strade di *Ariccia*

**12.40 – 13.00** L. Galli (Università di Pisa): Il luogo del delitto. La localizzazione della morte di Clodio nella pro Milone (e nelle altre fonti)

**13.00 – 14.30** Lunch (for speakers)

#### *Castel Gandolfo – Ariccia – Bovillae*

**14.30 – 14.40** C. Valeri (Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities, Musei Vaticani): La villa di Domiziano a Castel Gandolfo: alcuni filoni di ricerca

**14.40 – 15.00** L. Di Blasi & S. Francini (Department of Greek and Roman Antiquities, Musei Vaticani): I ritrovamenti archeologici del 2020-2021 nel parco di Villa Barberini a Castel Gandolfo

**15.00 – 15.20** E. Polito & G. Restaino (Università degli Studi di Cassino e del Lazio Meridionale):  
La villa romana in località Quarto Cese (Ariccia)

**15.20 – 15.40** G. Ghini (SABAP): Tra Bovillae e Aricia: un contesto sacro di frontiera

**15.40 – 16.10** Break

### *Mediterranean contexts*

**16.10 – 16.50** S. Mantellini (Università di Bologna): Water harvesting in Pantelleria Island and the Mediterranean: the bottle-shaped cisterns between archaeology and persisting tradition

**16.50 – 17.30** T. Schreiber (Universität Münster): Reflections on the form and function of Hellenistic seals based on seal impression conglomerates from the Mediterranean world

## **Thursday 9 January**

### *Cults and cultic activities*

**9.00 – 9.40** F. Gatto (Università degli Studi di Urbino Carlo Bo): Divine Associations in Sacred Dedications to Bona Dea

**9.40 – 10.00** L. Dibbern (Aarhus University): Spatial Control and Access in the Cult of Bona Dea

**10.00 – 10.20** L.C.L. Christiansen (Aarhus University): Implications of identifying Bona Dea

**10.20 – 10.40** D. Andersen (independent scholar): Privy Talk in the Alban Hills – A Latrine at Villa Santa Caterina

**10.40 – 11.20** Break

**11.20 – 11.40** M. Giuseppetti (Università Roma Tre): Latium and its early heroes in Greek epic

**11.40 – 12.00** S. Stassi (Direzione regionale musei nazionali della Campania): Riflessioni metodologiche sul riconoscimento dei depositi votivi di fondazione e obliterazione in ambito romano

**12.00 – 12.20** A. Livia Fischetti (University of Groningen) & D. De Dominicis (Università degli Studi di Sassari): Pottery assemblages from Compitalia in the suburbium of Rome

**12.20 – 12.40** S. Scarselletta (independent scholar): Depositi votivi e culti legati alle sorgenti nell'area dei Colli Albani

**13.00 – 15.00** Lunch (for speakers)

### *Villas and architecture*

**15.00 – 15.40** M. Mogetta (University of Missouri): The Formation of Roman Republican Architecture in Context: Archaeological and Historical Perspectives from Gabii

**15.40 – 16.00** M. De Franceschini (independent scholar): Grottos and Nymphaea in the landscape of ancient Roman Villas.

**16.00 – 16.20** L. Reimann (Trier Universität): *De Tuscanicis dispositionibus*. The Typology, Chronology, and Cultural History of Doric and Tuscan Capitals in the Architecture of Republican and Imperial Italy: A First Glimpse from the Colli Albani

**16.30 – 18.00** N. Bargfeldt (University of Copenhagen): Wrapping up and discussion

Reception

**Wednesday 8 January**

## **Introduction to the work in Villa Santa Caterina**

Consuelo Manetta  
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Birte Poulsen  
Aarhus University  
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Within the framework of the Danish-Italian collaborative research project, “Contextualising the past in the Alban Hills”, it has been possible to re-examine the archaeological remains preserved in the Villa Santa Caterina (Castel Gandolfo), situated on the eastern side of the ancient Via Appia along the 13th mile. The investigations have resulted in important new knowledge about the ancient ruin that also challenges the traditional interpretation of the building complex.

<https://www.villa-santa-caterina.dk/>

<https://www.acdan.it/da/homepage> (Research/projects)

## **L’infrastruttura idrica nel sito di Villa Santa Caterina. Usi e riusi**

Silvia Aglietti  
Independent scholar  
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Tra le evidenze che caratterizzano il sito di Villa Santa Caterina, un posto di rilievo rivestono quelle relative all’approvvigionamento e alla distribuzione dell’acqua. Esse erano già parzialmente note dagli studi di Giuseppe Lugli che, in un articolo pubblicato nel 1914, riferiva della presenza di condutture sotterranee e di pozzi.

Nell’intervento verranno illustrate le novità emerse nel corso delle recenti indagini condotte nell’ambito del progetto italo-danese, che hanno permesso di rettificare quanto evidenziato dallo studioso e di rilevare l’esistenza di più sistemi di raccolta e distribuzione delle acque, legati alle diverse fasi costruttive attestate nel sito, dei quali, al momento, cronologia e sviluppo sono noti solo parzialmente.

Nel 2022 è stato ispezionato il più antico di questi impianti, finora sconosciuto, che si sviluppa al di sotto dell’area occupata dall’atrio e dagli ambienti circostanti. Impressionante per lo stato di conservazione, è articolato in pozzi e cisterne a fiasco collegati tra loro da cunicoli di diverse lunghezze e dimensioni.

Benché la realizzazione di queste strutture ipogee, funzionali a un approvvigionamento di tipo pluviale, si possa ricondurre a un periodo antecedente al II sec. a.C., sembra che esse continuarono a essere utilizzate come conserve anche in età imperiale, quando l’area fu attraversata da condotte in muratura sia per il rifornimento che per lo smaltimento. La loro costruzione fu probabilmente legata all’aumento del fabbisogno idrico del complesso, sul quale

dovette influire anche la trasformazione degli ambienti a nord dell'atrio, le cui caratteristiche riconducono a quelle di un impianto termale.

Dopo un lungo periodo di abbandono, l'infrastruttura più profonda fu riattivata e, forse, anche parte della rete di canali più superficiale. Quest'ultima trasformazione, che risale al XIX secolo, avvenne in conseguenza della risistemazione dell'intera area verde del comprensorio di Villa Santa Caterina, nel corso della quale emersero le strutture antiche, trasformate in "ruine" per volontà dei proprietari, i Principi Orsini, e inserite in quello che divenne il "Giardino all'inglese" annesso alla Villa.

## **The ritual deposit in Villa Santa Caterina (Castel Gandolfo)**

Birte Poulsen  
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In 2022, a unique discovery was made during the field work in Villa Santa Caterina. In the northern part of the site, between two buildings characterized as remains of a sanctuary and a peristyle a well-defined layer of ashes with numerous pieces of charcoal was located. The area measured only ca. 82 x 92 cm. The layer contained numerous fragments of crushed pottery that after conservation and restoration turned out to belong to a black-glazed jug, a miniature pyxis or bowl, also black-glazed, an olla with associated lid, a further lid, and seven beakers of thin-walled pottery, all of different sizes.

Among these vessels were some exceptional small finds, three small circular reliefs only ca. 1-1.5 cm in diameter. They are all grey or greyish-red due to having been burned together with the other objects. On the front they are stamped with different motifs such as a portrait of a mature man in profile to the right, a helmet with plume, and an armed soldier on horseback holding a round shield and a trident/spear heading towards the left. On the back there are impressions of fibres from a kind of texture that has been confirmed to be of papyrus. Furthermore, the small reliefs have openings showing that they originally encapsulated a very thin thread. Accordingly, they are presumably to be identified as stamped clay sealings from papyrus scrolls which had been consumed by the fire.

So far, no parallels are known from Latium, and such findings are extremely rare in Italy and the western part of the Mediterranean. On the other hand, such clay sealings are well known from archives in the eastern Mediterranean area during the Hellenistic and Imperial periods where they were used to seal both official, religious and private documents, often preserved in archives.

According to the pottery and representations of the sealings, the ritual deposit has been dated to the end of the 2nd century or the first half of the first 1st century BCE.

## **Sacred Traces at Villa Santa Caterina? The Bona Dea Cult within the Puzzling Sacred Landscape of the Colli Albani**

Consuelo Manetta,  
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In antiquity, the rhythms of private, collective, and public life were carefully shaped by ritual. Sacred installations were a familiar and defining feature of both urban and rural landscapes, whether at the scale of monumental temples or more modest shrines and altars. The distinct historical and symbolic connection of the Colli Albani to Rome, combined with the methods and chance of archaeological research, make the task of reconstructing the sacred landscape of this area both fascinating and complex. Literary and material evidence demonstrates that Bona Dea played a significant role in the religion of the Colli Albani. However, much uncertainty remains about the exact locations of her cult, its participants, and patronage, all of which have puzzled scholars for centuries. My paper builds on previous studies and incorporates new data from ongoing excavations at Villa Santa Caterina, offering a critical overview of the sacred landscape between Bovillae and Aricia. My goal here is twofold: first, to evaluate the hypothesis that the structures at Villa Santa Caterina may have been used for cult practices from the Archaic period onward; and second, to explore whether and how these structures might be linked to the cult of Bona Dea, particularly with respect to the sacrarium or sacellum mentioned in Cicero's sources.

### **Vito Volterra's collection of ancient art**

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In this villa at Ariccia, designed by the architect Giulio Magni in the beginning of the twentieth century, the well-known mathematician and Italian senator Vito Volterra collected marble statues, sarcophagi, altars, epigraphs, and architectural elements which were used to decorate his house, and above all the park that enclosed the property. As a rare example of a private garden from the early 1900's it was at the same time an open-air antiquarium and a pleasant and hospitable place which reflected the spirit of the ancient Roman villa of leisure.

In the years gone by the collection has undergone progressive impoverishment due to the circumstances of the second world war, when the villa was first occupied by German forces and subsequently by the allies, and finally by homeless families. In recent times, the villa has been robbed more than once.

Fortunately, there are cards commissioned by Vito Volterra describing many of the sculptures now missing or destroyed which document the original wealth of the collection. The major part of the collection is still preserved in the villa at Ariccia, while other objects are in the possession of Volterra's heirs. The single best-known object in the collection is a sarcophagus with the representation of the Nekyia, the sacrifice or rite with which the ancient Greeks conjured

up the dead for divination. It is a very rare theme, in fact, only known in one other example now in the Villa Giulia Museum in Rome. The sarcophagus is conspicuous by being one of the earliest of the Roman marble sarcophagi dating from the end of the Republican- and the beginning of the Imperial period, a period, in fact, where the predominant burial custom was cremation. Further, a funeral altar has been published which gives new dates for the vicesima hereditatum. Apart from a few pieces acquired from antiquarians, the provenances of the objects are nearly all unknown, though among the heirs of the collector the story goes that many of the antiquities came from the general area of Ariccia or even from the property itself, and in that case brought to life when the villa was built. The contribution presents the first complete study of Vito Volterra's extensive collection of ancient art, which thanks to the generosity of the family, aims at reconstructing the story of the collection from the very beginning to this day. The study conducted as part of the Danish interdisciplinary project: "Contextualising the past in the Alban Hills (Colli Albani)", gives rise to reflexions in two directions. On the one hand, the new study enriches the story of collecting in Rome in the early twentieth century and sheds light on a lesser-known side of Vito Volterra. The economic scientist, to whom we owe, among other things, the foundation of the Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche (CNR), was also a passionate devotee of ancient art. From a strictly archaeological point of view, however, and taking into account that we believe that many of the objects were found in the area of Ariccia, the study of the Volterra collection may help to form an idea of the output of sculpture meant for the embellishment of the numerous villas, public buildings and funeral monuments in the territory of ancient Aricia and its environment.

## **Divinità, imperatori, legionari e addetti all'amministrazione imperiale, che si incontrano passeggiando nei giardini del villino Volterra**

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Si prendono in esame alcuni documenti epigrafici di particolare interesse, quasi tutti inediti, che fanno parte della raccolta di antichità presente nel villino Volterra di Ariccia.

## **Dentro e fuori: la campagna di rilievo 2019 delle mura e strade di Aricia**

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Nell'ambito del progetto italo-danese "Contextualising the past in the Alban Hills", nel 2019 è stata svolta una campagna di rilievi in collaborazione con la cattedra di Cartografia della Technische Universität München. Oltre a realizzare una attività didattica sul campo, scopo di questa ricerca era



analizzare grazie a rilievi tridimensionali la posizione, le caratteristiche e i reciproci rapporti di tratti di mura e di viabilità suburbana e extraurbana finora noti nel territorio di Aricia. Nonostante le difficoltà pratiche incontrate, questa sezione del progetto ha permesso di realizzare nuove ipotesi e riflessioni sulla topografia aricina, che saranno oggetto del presente intervento.

## **Il luogo del delitto**

### **La localizzazione della morte di Clodio nella pro Milone (e nelle altre fonti)**

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L'utilizzo di un discorso giudiziario, quale l'oratio pro Milone di Cicerone, come fonte storica è inevitabilmente problematico, come più volte ribadito dalla critica (basti qui rimandare al saggio fondamentale di Andrew Lintott, *Cicero as Evidence. A Historian's Companion*, Oxford 2008). Una grande cautela occorre quindi adottare anche nell'usare le indicazioni fornite da Cicerone nella pro Milone per ricostruire la mappa dei luoghi dove, il 18 gennaio del 52 a. C., Clodio venne ucciso: per fare solo un primo, macroscopico esempio, Cicerone non menziona mai nel suo discorso Bovillae, che pure, in una lettera ad Attico (Att. 5.13.1), mostra di conoscere come luogo dello scontro decisivo tra Clodio e Milone.

In sintesi, nella pro Milone, Cicerone dice che Clodio è morto:  
sulla via Appia;  
davanti alla proprietà di Clodio nella zona di Alba Longa;  
davanti ad un sacrario della Bona Dea situato nella proprietà di Tito Sertio Gallo.

Il mio contributo si propone di analizzare criticamente le informazioni fornite da Cicerone procedendo lungo due direzioni:  
da un lato, ogni affermazione ciceroniana (ed anche ogni silenzio, come quello su Bovillae) necessita di essere collocato e compreso all'interno del contesto del discorso (cfr. J. Powell/Jeremy Paterson, *Cicero the Advocate*, Oxford 2004, 38). Infatti la narrazione ciceroniana, per sua natura, non è neutra, ma fortemente polarizzata: sarebbe errato tuttavia liquidarla come interamente falsa, perché un oratore si propone di convincere il suo pubblico, e plateali distorsioni della realtà sono contrarie ai suoi scopi («patent mendacity could only damage his own cause», P. Brunt, *The Legal Issue in Cicero, 'Pro Balbo'*, «Classical Quarterly» 32, 1982, 136-147).

Per valutare il grado di attendibilità delle informazioni offerte da Cicerone è perciò indispensabile sforzarsi di ricostruire la strategia ciceroniana;  
i dati forniti da Cicerone saranno messi a confronto con quelli presenti nelle altre fonti sulla morte di Clodio, in primo luogo il commentatore di Cicerone Quinto Asconio Pediano (I sec. d. C.), che fornisce un resoconto dettagliato e generalmente piuttosto attendibile sui fatti, ma anche Appiano e Cassio Dione. A queste fonti si può aggiungere la testimonianza di un contemporaneo di Cicerone,

Quinto Cecilio Metello Scipione, del cui discorso (tenuto nel febbraio del 52 a. C. in senato) è conservata una sintesi all'interno del commento di Asconio.

## **La villa di Domiziano a Castel Gandolfo: alcuni filoni di ricerca**

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## **I ritrovamenti archeologici del 2020-2021 nel parco di Villa Barberini a Castel Gandolfo**

Leonardo Di Blasi & Sabina Francini  
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Nell'estate del 2020, lo scavo per un cavidotto nel settore nord occidentale del parco di Villa Barberini a Castel Gandolfo, è stata l'occasione per individuare strutture afferenti ad almeno due fasi costruttive dell'area prossima al Teatro di Domiziano e pertinenti alla sistemazione di prima a età imperiale della terrazza mediana della proprietà. La realizzazione di un saggio di allargamento della trincea, ha inoltre permesso di confermare l'esistenza di una grande vasca circolare, già brevemente descritta da Giuseppe Lugli, puntualizzandone le caratteristiche costruttive e planimetriche.

## **La villa romana in località Quarto Cese (Ariccia) Architettura, decorazione, contesto**

Eugenio Polito & Giuseppe Restaino  
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Nel 1919, in occasione di lavori agricoli condotti in località Quarto Cese (Ariccia), venne alla luce una statua colossale di divinità femminile. L'eco della scoperta fu tale che Giuseppe Lugli fu incaricato di condurre uno scavo che portò effettivamente alla scoperta dei resti di una villa romana, della quale furono rimessi in luce vari ambienti gravitanti intorno ad una imponente aula absidata. Tecnica edilizia, bolli laterizi e il ritrovamento di una fistula recante il nome di P. Memmius Regulus (console nel 31 d.C.) indussero Lugli a datare le strutture al I secolo d.C. e a interpretare l'ambiente absidato – che, secondo lo Studioso, doveva ospitare la statua – genericamente come una schola. Da quel momento, l'attenzione degli studiosi si focalizzò sulla statua femminile, dando vita a un vivace dibattito, proseguito ininterrottamente sino ad oggi, sulla cronologia,

sull'identificazione della divinità e, soprattutto, sulla paternità dell'originale greco, modello della statua di Ariccia. Se, almeno sulla datazione, fissata agli inizi del II secolo d.C., la critica è ormai concorde, nessun tentativo di analisi e comprensione del contesto di rinvenimento è mai stato fatto. Il presente contributo si propone di rianalizzare le strutture della villa e, in particolare, la grande sala absidata, attraverso lo studio della decorazione parietale e pavimentale, con l'intento di definire cronologia, funzione e trasformazioni dell'ambiente. La nuova analisi delle strutture e il confronto con una serie di contesti analoghi permetteranno di chiarire la destinazione d'uso della sala e l'architettura della villa, contestualizzando in maniera più puntuale il rinvenimento della statua colossale. La rilettura complessiva delle strutture e dell'apparato decorativo, infine, consentirà di inquadrare l'edificio nel più vasto panorama insediativo dei Colli Albani.

## **Tra Bovillae e Aricia: un contesto sacro di frontiera**

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L'area indagata alcuni fa nel corso di scavi di tutela dalla Soprintendenza per il Lazio (2017) ha riportato alla luce un sito posto sotto Monte Savello, nel territorio attualmente ricadente nel Comune di Albano Laziale, caratterizzato dalla presenza di numerosi canali idraulici, di una stipe votiva, di un' area funeraria, di iscrizioni sacre e, in particolare, di un cippo di confine tra Aricia e Bovillae.

Il rinvenimento a S. Palomba di altri due cippi di confine con la stessa iscrizione relativa alle due città, rende sicura l'identificazione dell'attuale via che dalla costa conduce ai Colli Albani con un antico tracciato di divisione territoriale lungo il quale si dislocavano stipi votive. In particolare la presenza nel sito oggetto di questo intervento di un sacello, di due iscrizioni sacre a Diana, nonché di numeroso materiale votivo, rende probabile l'ipotesi che l'area possa identificarsi con il Caput Aquae Ferentinae e il Lucus Ferentinae, legato, come noto, al vicino Santuario di Diana aricina.

## **Water harvesting in Pantelleria Island and the Mediterranean: the bottle-shaped cisterns between archaeology and persisting tradition**

Simone Mantellini  
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Consistent water supply is a common issue in the history of Mediterranean civilizations, where hydraulic solutions, such as cisterns, wells, reservoirs and aqueducts, were adopted for private and public supply. In this context, the island of Pantelleria, where surface freshwater is virtually non-

existent, represents a unique case for understanding socio–environmental interaction in waterless environments. Because of the climatic and environmental conditions, since the Bronze Age to present the settlement development on the island is related to the digging of underground structures for collecting and storing water. There, in historical times, year-round water supply was based on the storage of rainwater in underground cisterns.

This lecture presents the results of an intensive survey of the cisterns carried out throughout the island, discussing main challenge in the typological-chronological attribution, evaluating the spatial distribution of the cisterns, as well as attempting a quantitative assessment of water storage of the island based on the evaluation of potential volumes of stored water for different periods. Finally, the case of Pantelleria will be compared with other Punic and Roman Mediterranean settlements where the cisterns played a fundamental role in the supply of water.

## **Reflections on the form and function of Hellenistic seals based on seal impression conglomerates from the Mediterranean world**

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Approximately 200,000 sealed document closures are known from Hellenistic and Roman times, often referred to as ‘bullae’. Originally applied to documents, these ‘lumps of clay’ are now decontextualized in multiple ways, since the archive burned down, the documents are lost, and the burnt debris with the document closures was often relocated. These circumstances lead to a kind of aporia in research, since thousands of decontextualized finds have to be explained out of themselves, giving room for speculation.

The presentation will therefore focus on the form and function of Hellenistic seals, based on the exploration of seal impressions from archival contexts from the Mediterranean using both quantitative and qualitative analyses. Due to a limited publication record, much of the material remains inaccessible, complicating comprehensive statistical analysis. This lack of data has influenced the scope of the talk, with a greater emphasis on sealings from the Seleucid Empire where the state of documentation is somewhat more complete.

The finds from the Seleucid Empire and other Hellenistic regions are analyzed aiming to categorize and understand the distinct iconographic and functional elements of the seals used. By investigating the differences between official and ‘personal’ seals, we get insights into the role of seals in bureaucracy, their role as identifiers, and the symbolic meanings of seal imagery, including mythological and religious iconography. Quantitative analysis, which is based on measurable values, allows us to detect deviations from an assumed ‘norm’ that may indicate that ‘foreign’ seal impressions have found their way into Seleucid archive inventories.

**Thursday 9 January**

## **Divine Associations in Sacred Dedications to Bona Dea**

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Università degli Studi di Urbino Carlo Bo  
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A group of sacred dedications, mostly from Italy, attests to various associations between Bona Dea and other deities of the Roman and indigenous pantheon. My presentation aims to classify and interpret these divine associations, in order to better define the domains that devotees attributed to Bona Dea while invoking her benevolence.

## **Spatial Control and Access in the Cult of Bona Dea**

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This research investigates spatial control within sanctuaries dedicated to Bona Dea, comparing them to similar sanctuaries across the Colli Albani and the broader Italian Peninsula. The cult of Bona Dea is defined by its secretive nature, restricting access to anyone aside from a specific group—matrons, slaves, and the Vestals. This exclusivity is reflected in the architectural design of its sanctuaries, which are situated near main roads yet arranged in a way that shields sacred rites from outsiders. A prominent example of this can be found in Clodius' sacrilege (62 BCE), where Caesar's villa becomes a disorienting maze during the festival, leading to the intruder's eventual capture. Through computational methods, such as access analysis and visibility graph analysis, this study examines the spatial layout of sanctuaries of Bona Dea to uncover how their architectural designs controlled access and visibility. This quantitative approach enables a deeper understanding of how these spaces were deliberately constructed to protect the rituals from external view. The analysis moves beyond descriptive studies by visualizing and quantifying the extent to which the architecture restricted access.

The results are then compared to the building at Villa Santa Caterina. Despite variations in their complexity, architectural patterns of spatial control emerge, offering insights into how secrecy was maintained across these religious sites.

## **Implications of identifying Bona Dea**

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The following proposition began as a case study on the small amount Bona Dea inscriptions and sanctuaries, as a post-processualistic attempt to reinterpret the so-called Clodius villa in Villa Santa Caterina (VSC). This complex is a part of the research project ‘Contextualising the past in the Alban Hills (Colli Albani). Villa, tomb, and sacred space from the 12th to the 18th milestones of the ancient Via Appia’, an Italo-Danish collaboration,

The main goal of this presentation is now to open up the possible understanding and interpretation to re-discover who Bona Dea was – a re-evaluation of the working thesis of the project. The presentation focuses on the ambiguity of studying a female divinity such as Bona Dea, before re-contextualising the divinity in the small amount of identified building complexes attributed to her and comparing these architectural observations to the site in VSC. The approach, in terms of data, is creating an overview of all certainly identified inscriptions and sanctuaries of Bona Dea. The material assessment is compiled by looking at clusters of inscriptions, assessing a selection of sanctuaries, applying the theoretical common-ground of Bona Dea interpretations, and arguing for shared sanctuary spaces to open up the understanding of Bona Dea. The latter is compiled of the perceptual assimilation, which is recognised in iconography by the blending characteristics of multiple goddesses, as well as area control of specific realm. I will argue how the condition of being a female carried cult problematises substantialising evidence of the divine presence based on the issues of potentially shared sanctuaries and geographical distribution, respectively concerning monumental materialisation and cult longevity.

## **Privy Talk in the Alban Hills – A Latrine at Villa Santa Caterina**

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The topic of Roman latrines has been subjected to scholarly dissemination time and again, their function inevitably connected to Roman concepts of cleanliness in both public and private spheres. They have recently received renewed scholarly attention, and this timing fits well with the uncovering of the example found at Villa Santa Caterina.

There can be no doubt that the room found at the SE corner of the site at Villa Santa Caterina functioned as a latrine: the room has the distinct drainage channel, which flows underneath what seems to have been the place where the seats, set on shelves (of which none remain), would have been located. The latrine is also comparable to others found at Ostia and Pompeii. It is built in a small room, close to the entrance, to which it is connected by a corridor. Given the number of cisterns and the bath identified at the site, it makes sense that there is a latrine within its walls.

Latrines are often found in connection with Roman baths, as both are dependent on large amounts of water.

This paper aims to present the latrine at Villa Santa Caterina and connect it with comparable latrines found in Italy during the Principate, while also taking into consideration its location close to what may be interpreted as a sanctuary.

## **Latium and its early heroes in Greek epic**

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The myths about early Latium prior to the foundation of Rome captured Greek interest early on. Evidence for this interest is a rather problematic passage at the end of Hesiod's *Theogony* (1008–1022). In the medieval manuscripts, this passage is placed at a crucial juncture in Hesiodic epic, one that juxtaposes Greek theogonical myth (the *Theogony*) and the ancestry of eminently local heroic traditions across the Greek world (the *Catalogue of Women*). Remarkably, the ending of the *Theogony* strategically embodies an intersection between Homeric and Hesiodic worldviews, so to speak. Here the western Thyrrhenians are dominated by Aeneas, Agrius, and Latinus. Aeneas is a distinctively Iliadic hero (he is conspicuously absent from the *Odyssey*), whereas Agrius and Latinus, qualified as they are as the sons of Circe and Odysseus, clearly evoke the other Homeric poem. The very fact that early Latium functions as the “link” between two mythological eras in different epic traditions deserves renewed attention today. This paper will address the following questions: when can the “Hesiodic” reference to Aeneas and Latinus be dated? How isolated was this interest in the pre-Hellenistic era? What influence did this authoritative passage exert in later ages, both with respect to Greek mythography and to its Roman counterpart?

## **Riflessioni metodologiche sul riconoscimento dei depositi votivi di fondazione e obliterazione in ambito romano**

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È sempre possibile, nel caso della fondazione di un edificio e non di una città, parlare di “riti di fondazione” e riconoscerne il carattere di reiterazione tipico del rito? E come identificarli archeologicamente, nella quasi totale assenza di fonti letterarie che li descrivano?

Queste domande hanno ispirato il mio dottorato di ricerca presso la Sapienza Università di Roma (2018), pubblicato nel 2022. In questa sede, desidero proporre alcune riflessioni metodologiche sulla riconoscibilità archeologica e la catalogazione dei depositi di fondazione e di altre deposizioni intenzionali di oggetti, talvolta associati a resti di pasto o libagione, riscontrabili in

edifici, soprattutto sacri e pubblici, al momento della loro costruzione, ristrutturazione o dismissione. Questi atti, spesso a carattere propiziatorio/espiatorio, sono documentati in diverse culture e sono stati studiati principalmente dal punto di vista storico-religioso ed etnografico, mentre l'interesse archeologico per questi fenomeni è emerso solo negli ultimi venti anni, soprattutto in ambito greco ed etrusco. Nell'ambito romano, invece, mancava un quadro di riferimento complessivo sull'individuazione archeologica di tali pratiche rituali, che si presentano per lo più come eterogenee e non codificate, salvo alcune ricorrenze.

La mia ricerca ha cercato di colmare questa lacuna, concentrandosi sulla costruzione teorica di un modello per il censimento, l'organizzazione e l'interpretazione dei dati archeologici. Questo modello interpretativo, di stampo post-processuale, si propone di adattarsi a vari scenari archeologici, al di là dei singoli casi-studio. Esporrò alcuni esempi pratici del modello adottato, che prevede l'analisi dettagliata dei dati archeologici attraverso la scomposizione in entità logico-informative progressivamente dettagliate e l'isolamento di indicatori di intenzionalità propiziatoria o espiatoria, classificati per ambito di riferimento (stratigrafia, oggetto depresso, resti animali e/o vegetali) e per grado di affidabilità, decrescente qualora l'indicatore sia presente anche in altri contesti (es. utilitaristici o funerari) o il contesto non sia chiuso.

Oltre ad analizzare questa prassi rituale dal punto di vista archeologico, il mio lavoro cerca di restituirne la complessità anche tramite l'esegesi delle scarse fonti letterarie e giuridiche disponibili. L'obiettivo è stimolare una riflessione critica nei ricercatori che si confrontano con depositi archeologici sospetti di intenti propiziatori/espiatori, ampliando le ipotesi interpretative nel passaggio dal dato materiale, da raccogliere con acribia, alle supposte intenzioni dell'uomo antico. Un ritrovamento straordinariamente unico come quello di Villa Santa Caterina, ad esempio, può ottenere e a sua volta fornire ancora più chiavi di lettura, se si leggono alcune sue caratteristiche – come hanno fatto le Autrici del rinvenimento - alla luce di una cornice più ampia e di indicatori e ricorrenze individuabili in analoghi *milieux* culturali e cronologici.

## **Pottery assemblages from Compitalia in the suburbium of Rome**

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Recent archaeological studies near Rome's southern border provide insight into votive deposits at two neighboring sites in the Alban Hills: Marcandreola and Via Romana Vecchia. Located approximately one kilometer apart and situated near historic crossroads, these sites reflect both their geographical importance and strategic role in connecting Rome with the Apennine ridge and coastal areas. The landscape's natural ridges, volcanic soil fertility, ample water sources, and close proximity to Rome contributed to the area's continuous occupation.

Marcandreola and Via Romana Vecchia share several characteristics, including proximity to valuable peperino quarries, exploited since the Archaic period. However, the sites differ in usage and ownership. Marcandreola, a public site within the ager Tusculanum, transitioned



to Roman control as a municipium in 381 BCE. Archaeological evidence reveals a complex history of water management and road development across seven phases. Notable finds include two votive deposits in pits, remnants of an archaic roof, Hellenistic building remains, and additional votive artifacts. These features suggest Marcandreola served as a communal, sacred space where public rituals were held.

In contrast, Via Romana Vecchia was initially a farm that evolved into a Roman villa complex, reflecting private ownership by an elite family. Excavations have uncovered the *pars rustica* near a funerary structure and a water system with two wells and an underground canal that became inactive in the 2nd century BCE. This system was later filled with votive deposits, indicating ongoing ritual practices. The evidence implies that the family extended their ceremonial activities to include nearby residents, possibly during public festivals.

Ceramic assemblages from both sites are undergoing further analysis, with preliminary findings identifying various ceramic types, including coarse ware, black gloss, *dolia*, amphorae, and tiles. The presence of black-gloss cups marked with an "H" and small votive bronzes suggests a cultic devotion to Hercules. This study aims to catalog ceramic finds comprehensively, analyze associated structures, and understand the nature of cultic practices at each site. Additionally, the research seeks to compare locally produced ceramics with imports to investigate local production and explore trade routes.

By examining the Marcandreola site's public rites and potential connections to the private, family-centered rituals at Via Romana Vecchia, this study endeavours to uncover a broader understanding of local worship practices and their integration with Rome's expanding religious and cultural networks.

## **The Formation of Roman Republican Architecture in Context: Archaeological and Historical Perspectives from Gabii**

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In this paper I elucidate the processes that brought about urban form of Gabii, a long-lived primary center of Latium Vetus and Rome's nearest neighbor, focusing on new data from ongoing large-scale excavations in one of the epicenters of town. Taking the creation of a quasi-orthogonal layout in the late fifth century B.C.E. as evidence of an intentional refoundation, I discuss how the unusual circumstances of Gabii's resettlement, its apparently only gradual repopulation, and its lack of legal status may have affected the progressive infill and consolidation of urban fabric throughout the Mid-Republican period. To that end, I first analyze the emergence of civic and commercial spaces in relation to the establishment of the street system, and then describe the development of domestic architecture with particular reference to exemplars of the canonical atrium design. Although difficult to interpret because of the general lack of comparanda, the results provide much needed

evidence to fill the existing gaps in our knowledge of the archaeology of urbanism and the formation of distinctive Roman building types in the core region of Rome's early hegemony.

## **Grottos and Nymphaea in the landscape of ancient Roman Villas**

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The Grotto was the beginning of everything, the mysterious place where the divine presence was felt, especially linked to the cult of Dionysus and to oracular sanctuaries such as the Antro delle Sorti of the Fortuna Primigenia in Palestrina. Gradually the grotto became a 'topos' of the gardens and of the landscape, inserted in the domus and suburban villas, and most of all in the great Roman imperial villas, where the highest levels were reached.

Grottos and Nymphaea were two sides of the same coin. They had in common waterfalls and waterworks, and wall coverings with shells or "tartari" which imitated the rocks and stalactites of natural caves. A repertoire that will inspire magnificent Renaissance villas such as the Villa d'Este in Tivoli or the Villa Farnese at Caprarola.

The first example from the imperial era is found in Sperlonga, where the Villa of Tiberius exploited an enormous Grotto near the sea. It looks completely natural but was modified to transform it into a spectacular summer triclinium. Inside the Grotto the famous statues depicting Ulysses blinding Polyphemus were placed.

The villas of the following emperors imitated the decoration of Sperlonga, since fragments of statuary cycles of Ulysses, with Polyphemus or Scilla have been found there. Natural grottos like the one in Sperlonga were rare, therefore artificial and 'virtual' caves were created. Instead of real rocks the "tartars" imitating stalactites were used, as some trompe l'oeil frescoes imitated with great realism the most precious marbles. Other nymphaea that looked like grottos were built such as the one at Punta Epitaffio in Baia near Naples, from the time of the emperor Claudius, then the Bergantino nymphaeum in the Villa of Domitian in Albano (Castel Gandolfo). In the 2nd century AD, we have in Rome the nymphaeum of Egeria, linked to the Triopium of Herodes Atticus, and finally, the many nymphaea of Hadrian's Villa in Tivoli, in buildings such as the Canopus, the Accademia, the Inferi (Underworld) and the Tempe Pavilion.

What did these buildings have in common? They resembled a Grotto which was a sacred and mysterious place. Their wall revetments with "tartari" imitated natural rocks, and their magnificent decoration had the same iconography, with sculptures of Dionysian or Homeric subjects. All of them had waterworks and canals, and were used as triclinia for imperial banquets. They had a very precise symbolic meaning linked to the religious aspect of imperial power.

## ***De Tuscanicis dispositionibus.* The Typology, Chronology, and Cultural History of Doric and Tuscan Capitals in the Architecture of Republican and Imperial Italy: A First Glimpse from the Colli Albani**

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Ever since their revival by the architects of the Italian Renaissance, the closely related Doric and Tuscan orders abound in classicising modern architecture. Yet despite their intensive reception, the archaeological remains of Roman Doric and Tuscan orders that had inspired Serlio, Palladio and others have so far largely been neglected in Roman architectural decoration studies. A comprehensive study of Roman Doric and Tuscan capitals thus constitutes a desideratum and enticing opportunity, which the doctoral research project presented here intends to seize. Entitled ‘*De tuscanicis dispositionibus*’ after Vitruvius, the project aims to delineate the typological and chronological development of Roman Doric and Tuscan capitals within in the monumental architecture of Roman Italy in detail for the first time. Following on from Henner von Hesberg’s premise that architectural ornamentation is to be understood as a cultural type form, these analyses furthermore provide the basis for a thorough investigation of the cultural history of the capital types. In situating the archaeological material within historical dynamics, which entail considerations of production dynamics, adaption processes, and aesthetics, the project thus breaks with the traditionally positivist impetus of architectural decoration studies; while the latter all too often contented itself with classifying the formal and stylistic properties of architectural decoration to develop reliable dating criteria, the project aims to exploit the primary heuristic potential of architectural decoration as the manifestation of multifarious cultural configurations and processes. Drawing on the rich material so far documented by the applicant in the Colli Albani region, the paper aims to present some initial results, examining in particular the typology of Latial capitals and their employment to engrave narratives into the built environment by virtue of their ascribed semantic values, thus shedding a light on contemporary tastes, cultural standards, and political agendas which found their physical expression in architectural decoration.



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