

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

the site of Falerii Novi in the Middle Tiber Valley (Andrews *et al.*, 2023a). Excavation concentrated on three areas of the city: work continued in Areas I (*macellum*) and II (*domus*), while Area III in the southern sector of the town was closed and a new Area V opened above a series of *tabernae* along the northwestern side of the forum piazza (Fig. 1). Reported elsewhere in this volume are other activities also undertaken under the broad umbrella of the Falerii Novi Project over the past year. These include a large geophysical survey of the suburban area begun with the aim of exploring the immediate hinterland of the city (Pomar, 2024) and a topographical reassessment of the open excavations conducted by the Soprintendenza between 1969 and 1974 (Fochetti, 2024).

### Area I: macellum

Excavations in Area I consisted of two trenches immediately north and south of the area excavated in 2022. The north trench (4 x 10 m) explored a building of tuff ashlar masonry immediately north of the *macellum* and probably earlier than it. This building was not visible in the GPR (cf. Verdonck *et al.*, 2020) but identified in the northern sector of excavations of 2022. The trench revealed four distinct rooms delineated by north–south walls of large tuff blocks, which formed the continuation of similar walls found in the 2022 trench. In the central room of the northern trench (4 x 5.5 m) was an extensive concrete floor preparation and pavements in *opus spicatum* and large peperino slabs laid above it with several smaller features, probably for production activities. At the southern halves of these pavements, a series of large, round cuts contained a wide

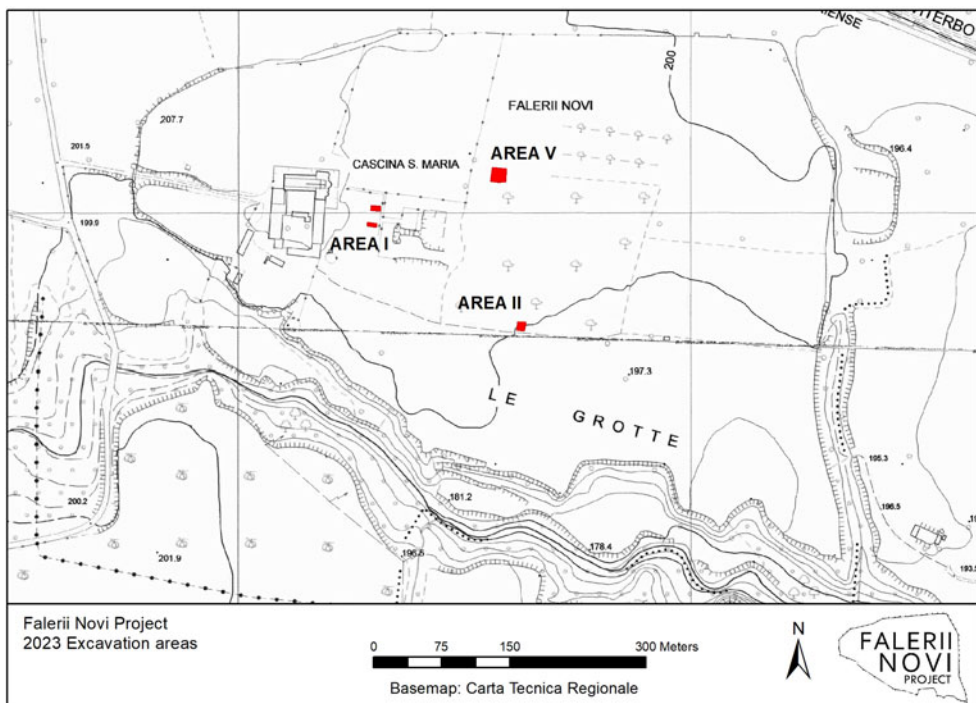


Fig. 1. Location of the 2023 excavation areas.

variety of material, with the earliest (measuring *c.* 3 x 2 m) containing an extraordinary quantity of fourth- and fifth-century AD ceramics along with animal bones, some of which showed butcher and cut marks. Excavation of the room immediately to the west revealed a square vertical shaft built with large tuff blocks connected to a monumental north–south drain feature also built of large ashlar blocks.

The southern excavation trench in Area I measured 10 x 3.15 m and comprised three rooms relating to the tholos and central basin of the *macellum*. In the western room (3 x 0.80 m) was a deep concrete wall foundation (3 x 0.75 m), interpreted as that of the tholos, which curved slightly north to south. The foundation had four vertical cuts for formwork on each side. The interior space to the east revealed multiple phases, the earliest comprising a surface of peperino slabs and an *opus listatum* wall. Between the peperino slabs, a long rectangular notch served as drainage for water, probably hosting a lead pipe robbed at a later date. Adjacent to this surface, a 2.60 x 0.42 m wall abutted by a square peperino block on one end marked the western limit of the courtyard's basin. In a later phase, its brick and tuff facing was supplemented with decorative marbles, as a new floor was installed in the room. Materials associated with this level were largely medieval, while three parallel cuts possibly related to horticultural or gardening activities.

The final room, consisting of the courtyard's basin, was surrounded by three walls constructed of brick and tuff stone, while a fourth remained unexcavated beneath the northern scarp. The basin was originally furnished with an *opus sectile* surface, evident from impressions in the underlying mortar. Below, a concave mortar bed extended from between the southern wall towards the central zone of the basin. It probably housed a lead pipe, later robbed out, to supply water to the basin. A central stone feature may have been a fountain. During later modifications, *cocciopesto* was applied to the surface and walls of the basin. Cuts in this flooring attest to the later medieval activities in this part of the *macellum*.

## Area II: domus

Excavations continued to explore a *domus* along the south of Insula XLIV (Keay *et al.*, 2000). A square area (8 x 8 m), opened immediately east of last year's trench (Andrews *et al.*, 2023b), revealed a series of rooms along the north of the trench and a large interior space to the south. These were divided by a long ashlar wall running across the extent of the trench and forming the continuation of an ashlar wall discovered in excavations of 2022. Within the spaces to the north of this long wall, rooms contained fills with fifth-century AD ceramics and other finds and crushed tuff floors. Beneath these fills, the long wall appears to have been built against a large terrace of building rubble, including partially worked tuff ashlar and earth with ceramics of Republican date (late second century BC, with residual ceramics of third-century BC date).

The space south of the long wall was developed at a later date than the initial construction of the terrace and rooms to the north. Excavation in a room immediately south of the long wall revealed a pavement of *cocciopesto* bedded on chipped marble, atop a thick earthen terrace with building rubble but no ceramics. Beneath this terrace was a burned layer and black gloss ceramics of late-first-century BC date, perhaps representing a construction surface with burning related to building activities. The southern area was developed in late antiquity with a platform at its north and a large *cocciopesto* pavement. At its very southern limit, the room was endowed with a series

of decorative pavements consisting of a low concrete feature just beyond the trench edge surrounded by *opus sectile* of geometric shapes and a band of mosaic with dark green stone *tesserae* set into friable mortar. These pavements turned into the trench section around the concrete feature, and their full extent will be explored next year. Immediately atop the mosaic and *opus sectile* was a thick layer of collapsed roof tiles sitting upon a layer of ash on its western extent. The absence of this ash layer between the collapse and *opus sectile* possibly indicates the absence of roof beams above the space of the pavement. Fragments of ceramics in this destruction layer suggest a fifth–sixth-century AD date for the collapse. The destruction layer was then cut by long, amorphous cuts with some sporadic medieval pottery, perhaps as part of the area’s final spoliation and transformation into agricultural land.

### Area V: Forum tabernae

A trench of 15 x 15 m was opened at the northwestern corner of Falerii Novi’s forum area, identified by magnetometry and subsequent GPR survey (Keay *et al.*, 2000; Verdonck *et al.*, 2020). The position was chosen based on the presence of several anomalies visible in the geophysical data, interpreted as a series of *tabernae* with later modifications. A well-preserved road was recorded along the trench’s northern limit *c.* 0.15 m below modern ground level and was excavated for a length of 15 m. Preparation constructed from fragments of tuff and concrete for the now-robbled blocks of the sidewalk was recorded from the eastern limit for a stretch of 2.46 m. An *opus quadratum* wall of tuff runs east–west alongside this and forms the rear wall of three rectangular rooms opening south onto the forum area and corresponding to the *tabernae* interpreted in the geophysical data.

Filling the trench’s western third, the first room was defined by an *opus quadratum* wall of large tuff blocks aligned north–south along its eastern limit and the wider foundation of another, probably later, wall in *opus caementicium* with medium-sized tuff inclusions at its western limit. In the room’s central area was a small rectangular structure with walls (*c.* 0.60 m wide) in *opus caementicium* at the base of which were ceramics dating to the mid- to late imperial period.

To the east, a second large room (10.5 x 4.9 m) was defined on its eastern limit by a north–south wall constructed first in *opus quadratum* of tuff blocks, with a later phase built on top in *opus vittatum*. The room’s western limit shares the *opus quadratum* wall of the room to its west. In the central area of this room at a depth of 0.30 m was the preparation for an *opus sectile* floor with the impression of robbed-out stone veneer in geometric patterns. This pavement abuts a well-built curved wall of *opus latericium* spanning the room’s width and preserving two courses of brick above a thick *caementicium* foundation. On this wall’s inner face, a large cut at the centre of the room suggests the robbing of a feature originally set into the floor. Just beyond the curved *latericium* wall, a small sondage revealed a large quantity of amphora sherds, lamps and coarseware dating to the first and second centuries AD. In the room’s northeastern corner, three large rectangular tuff blocks were laid flat as if to form a pavement, under one of which was a square drainage or cistern access hole constructed of large, dressed tuff blocks.

The third room is defined at its west by the shared eastern tuff and later *vittatum* wall of the central room. Large rubble fills in its northern and central zones contained

substantial fifth–early-sixth-century AD ceramics and small finds, including 201 iron hobnails. A cocciopesto floor with several preparation layers covers the room’s southern half. Remnants of mortar with negative traces of bedding for *tesserae* suggest it originally contained a mosaic; indeed, at its central northern edge, preserved against the corner of a rectangular tuff feature, were 17 white *tesserae in situ*.

The latest structural activity in this area was a large apsidal wall constructed across the full width of both the first and second rooms. Built with a substantial foundation (min. depth 1.3 m), this wall preserves several courses of *opus vittatum* similar to that used for the north–south wall between the central and easternmost rooms.

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