

## Interim Report on the Falerii Novi Project, 2021-2023

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*Presented are the results of the Falerii Novi Project, a multi-year international archaeological research project at the ancient urban site of Falerii Novi, in the Comune of Fabrica di Roma (Viterbo, Lazio), in the middle Tiber Valley. According to ancient sources, the Roman town of Falerii Novi was founded in the mid-third century BCE, when the nearby Faliscan center of Falerii Veteres (modern Civita Castellana) revolted and was conquered by Rome. The site, which measures nearly 32 ha and presents as a greenfield site today, lies along the ancient via Amerina, approximately 50 km north of Rome. The only standing premodern remains on site are the city's walls, generally dated to its foundation in the 3rd century BCE, an extramural amphitheater to the northeast, peri-urban tombs, and the complex of Santa Maria di Falleri, whose monastic community is first mentioned in the 11th century CE. Previous work in the 19th century and that carried out by the Soprintendenza during the late XXth century remain largely unpublished. More recently, however, non-invasive work using magnetometry and Ground-Penetrating Radar (GPR) has generated plans of the Roman town. The interim results of the FNP presented here build on this remote sensing to create a detailed understanding of the site's development over its full history. Pursuant to our aims of exploring a range of urban spaces, trenches have been excavated across the intramural area, guided by magnetometry and GPR results. We detail results from an initial campaign of test pits (2021) and two years of open-area stratigraphic excavation (2022–23). Five areas of exploration (Areas I–V) are discussed below, including one, Area IV, restudied by the FNP after some initial, unpublished excavation by the Soprintendenza.*

The Falerii Novi Project (FNP) is a multi-year international archaeological research project at the urban site of Falerii Novi, in the Comune of Fabrica di Roma (Viterbo, Lazio), in the middle Tiber Valley.<sup>1</sup> According to ancient sources, the Roman town of Falerii Novi was founded after 241 BCE, when the nearby Faliscan center of Falerii Veteres (modern Civita Castellana) revolted and was conquered by Rome.<sup>2</sup> The 31.86 ha urban site

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<sup>1</sup> The project operates under the authorization of the Soprintendenza Archeologia, Belle Arti e Paesaggio per la Provincia di Viterbo e per l'Etruria Meridionale (with the support of Dott.ssa Anna Corsi and Dott.ssa Biancalisa Corradini) and is a collaboration between the British School at Rome (BSR), Institute of Classical Studies (University of London), Harvard University and the University of Toronto, along with researchers from the universities of Ghent and Florence. Writing responsibilities divide as follows: MA, SB, ED, and SK wrote the introduction, the section on the test pits and the conclusions, and jointly edited the entire paper; MA wrote the section on Area I with AT contributing the paragraph on faunal remains; SB wrote the section on Area II; ED and SK wrote the sections on Areas III and V with ER contributing the paragraph on the archaeobotanical remains in SU 3070 and ES contributing the paragraph on coins from Room III.3; BF wrote the section on Area V; LC contributed detail on ceramics and chronology throughout.

<sup>2</sup> ANDREWS *et al.* 2023a: 10.

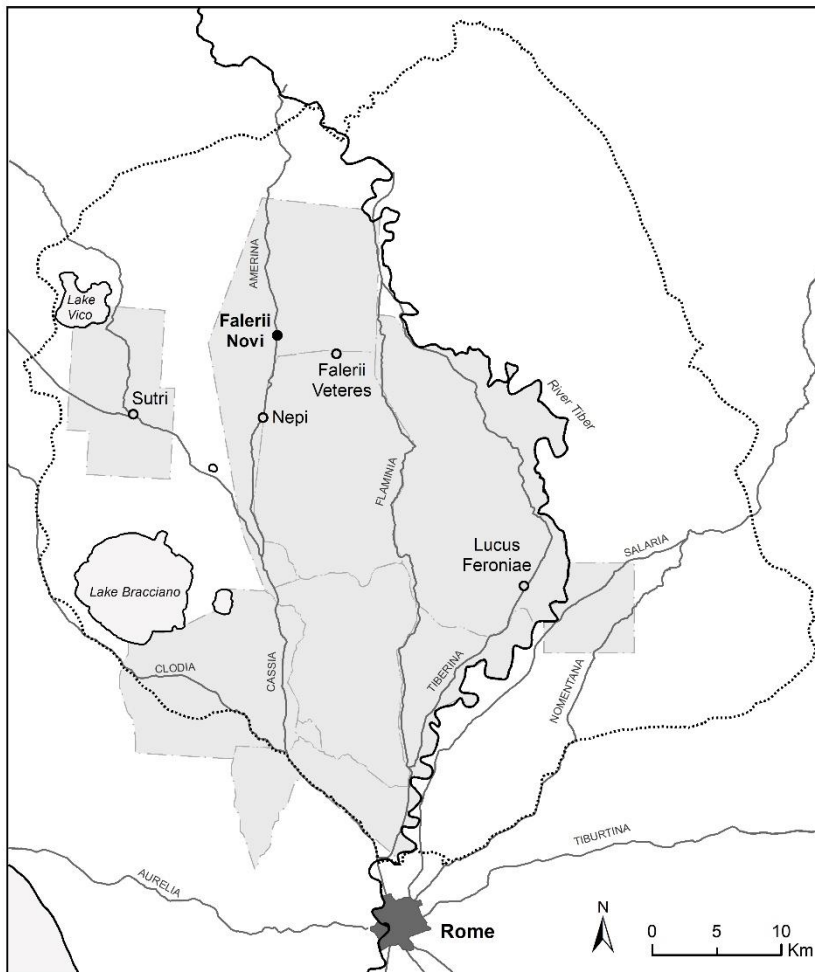


Fig. 1. The site of Falerii Novi in relation to Rome and the Tiber Valley. Grey areas indicate South Etruria Surveys and the dotted line the extent of the study area of the Tiber Valley Project. From ANDREWS et al 2023a, Fig. 1.

sits within the *ager Faliscus* along the *via Amerina*, approximately 5 km to the west of Civita Castellana and 50 km north of Rome, on a low-lying tufaceous plateau defined on its southern side by a deep natural ravine, the Rio Purgatorio (fig. 1). The only standing premodern remains on site are the city's walls, generally dated to its foundation in the 3rd century BCE, an extramural amphitheater to the northeast, several monumental tombs to the east, west and north, and the 11<sup>th</sup> century monastic complex of Santa Maria in Falleri.<sup>3</sup> Falerii Novi otherwise presents today as a greenfield site and an agricultural landscape.

The site has seen relatively little archaeological excavation. 19th century exploration and limited work by the Soprintendenza from 1969–75 and 1989–95 remains largely unpublished.<sup>4</sup> More recently, non-invasive work using magnetometry and Ground-Penetrating Radar (GPR) has generated plans of the Roman town.<sup>5</sup> Understanding of settlement in the surrounding area, both around the city and across the Middle Tiber Valley also benefits from geophysical survey

and landscape archaeology.<sup>6</sup> The FNP builds on this work to create a detailed understanding of the site's development over its full history. The project also intends to use Falerii Novi as a case-study for examining Roman towns in central Italy and, more broadly, as a laboratory for thinking about sociohistorical and ecological impacts of ancient urbanism.<sup>7</sup>

As the FNP completes the third of six planned campaigns at the site, we take the opportunity to provide an interim report of results to date. This report complements short annual reports published in the *Papers of the British School at Rome* and a synthetic paper on the project's scope in the same journal.<sup>8</sup> We present results from an initial campaign of test pits (2021) and two years of open-area stratigraphic excavation (2022–23). Pursuant to our aims of exploring a range of urban spaces, trenches have been excavated across the intramural area, guided by magnetometry and GPR results (fig. 2). Five areas of exploration (Areas I–V) are discussed below, including one, Area IV, restudied by the FNP after being excavated but only summarily published by the Soprintendenza in the late 1960s.

<sup>3</sup> ILLIANO 1989.

<sup>4</sup> DI STEFANO MANZELLA 1979; DE LUCIA BROLLI 1995.

<sup>5</sup> KEAY et al. 2000; VERDONCK et al. 2020.

<sup>6</sup> HAY et al. 2010; PATTERSON, WITCHER, DI GIUSEPPE 2020.

<sup>7</sup> ANDREWS et al. 2023a.

<sup>8</sup> BERNARD et al. 2022; ANDREWS et al. 2023a; ANDREWS et al. 2023b.

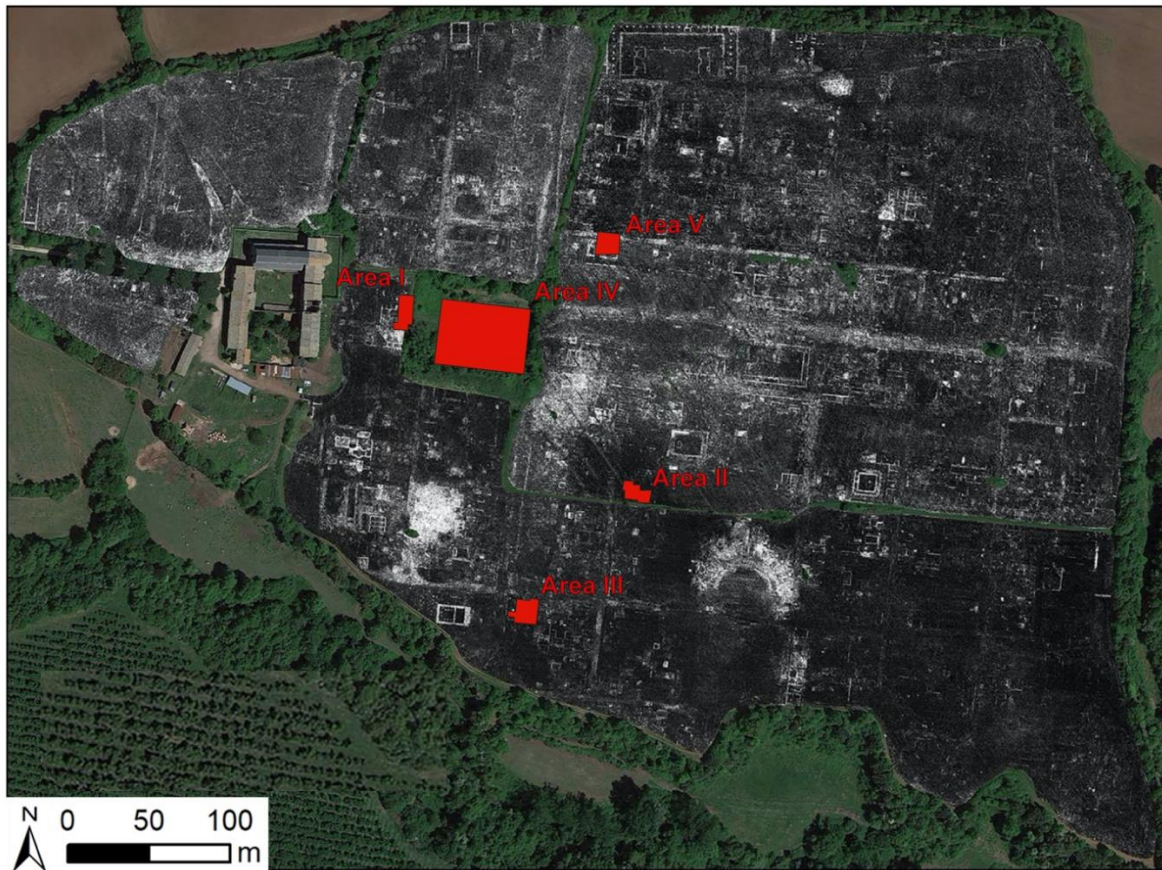


Fig. 2. GPR plan of the site with location of areas of study and excavation.

## 2021: TEST PIT CAMPAIGN

The FNP began with a two-week pilot season in summer 2021 to refine understanding of the site's configuration and chronological span, and to guide the location of trenches in following years. The site was unploughed at the time of study and presented limited surface visibility, having previously been subject to fieldwalking campaigns.<sup>9</sup> Using an approach followed at Interamna Lirenas, a team dug a grid of shovel test pits measuring 50 x 50 cm and spaced 50 m apart across the intramural area.<sup>10</sup> Each pit was dug to a depth of ca. 30–40 cm with the aim of reaching the topmost archaeological layers below the plough zone. Material was hand-sieved and all artefacts collected.

145 test pits across the site yielded 2,075 fragments of ceramic, 650 of tile, 67 of glass, 23 of metal, 214 tesserae and 1 coin, a bronze commemorative issue struck under Constantine and featuring Claudius II (*RIC* VII.112), found above the area of the *macellum* (Area I). Test pits around the Forum and the northern and northwestern areas of the city were the richest in finds, while the eastern sector yielded comparatively less material. Dates gathered from an assessment of ceramic material were concentrated between the 3rd century BCE and the 6th century CE, including the typical classes of black-gloss, sigillata, and ARS fineware. Medieval sherds appeared sporadically across the site as well, including several pieces of late Medieval maiolica and probable *ceramica viterbese*. Black and white mosaic tesserae were common, especially between the forum and the walls. Metal and ceramic slag, as well as a ceramic firing support, suggest intramural production activities.

<sup>9</sup> KEAY et al. 2000.

<sup>10</sup> LAUNARO, MILLETT 2023.



## 2022–2023: STRATIGRAPHIC EXCAVATIONS

In summer 2022, three areas of excavation were strategically located based on a combination of geophysical data and results from the test pits. The locations intended to capture a range of urban activities and spaces. Area I was located in the central-west sector of the city, ca. 100 m due west of the Forum, above a feature identified as a *macellum* in the GPR data. The area yielded an especially large quantity of pottery and the one coin in the 2021 test pits. Area II was located in the south-central part of the city, ca. 115 m south of the Forum, above spaces of an apparent *domus* identified in the magnetometry data. Area III was placed closer to the city's southern edge, at the intersection of the *via Amerina* and a secondary east-west street. We also restudied standing remains exposed by the Soprintendenza in the 1960s to the west of the forum, designated Area IV. Following the 2022 season, Area III was closed, and in summer 2023 a new trench, Area V, was opened above what was interpreted in the magnetometry as two *tabernae* near the northwestern corner of the forum's piazza.

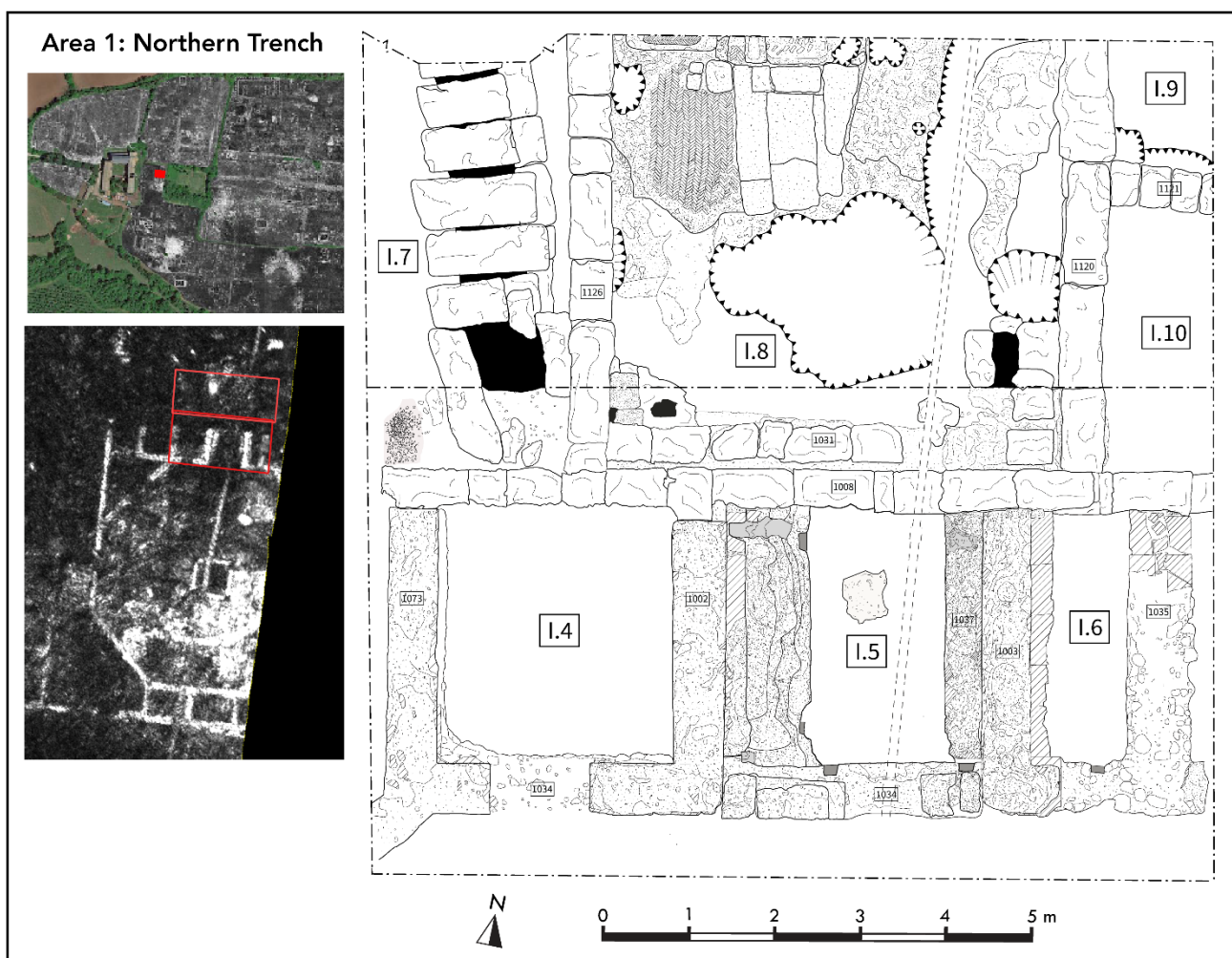


Fig. 3. Area I. Northern trench, location in relation to GPR results (VERDONCK et al. 2020) and plan.

### AREA I: MACELLUM

Area I consists of a series of trenches placed above and around a building whose layout was shown almost entirely by the GPR survey as a large structure (ca. 29.0 x 17.5 m) centered around an octagonal courtyard (cf. fig. 3). This open space had in its center two concentric structures, one probably octagonal (c. 12 m in diameter, the so-called *tholos*) and one quadrangular (ca. 4 m in diameter, a basin). On the building's northern side, six rectangular rooms (3 x 3 m) open towards both the building's interior and exterior. A larger central room (3.60 x 3.50 m) within this row appears to have served as the building's entrance, while the five lateral spaces resemble *tabernae*. Three similar shops are located on the building's southern side. In the courtyard's northwestern corner is a triangular room (ca. 9 x 6 m). The structure's form combined with its central location near the forum along one of the city's main streets, point towards its interpretation as a *macellum*, a market building specializing in the sale of meat and fish.<sup>11</sup>

In 2022, a trench measuring 10 x 5.50 m investigated the north side of the building with its entrance and flanking shops. The entrance corridor (Room I.5) measured 3.05 x 2.95 m and was associated with wall 1002 in the west and wall 1003 east, the latter constructed against the eastern side of an earlier wall 1037. Much of the corridor's fill was disturbed by the modern laying of an irrigation pipe running through it. Of what remained archaeologically intact, we note a deposit with large amounts of charcoal packed on top of the beaten-earth floor at a depth of 1.47 m. A rubble foundation 1034 was found along the southern limit of the room, upon which wall 1004 was later placed to block the passage off from the central area of the *macellum*. The shop to the west of the entrance (Room I.4) measured 2.75 x 3.00 m. The foundation 1034 apparent along the southern side of the entrance corridor continued along the southern side of this space as well. A passageway cut into it and measuring 1.20 m wide gave connected the shop to the inner courtyard of the *macellum*. Like wall 1002 in the east of the room, the elevation of wall 1073 in the west was constructed in *opus vittatum*. Deposits within Room 1.4 contained mixed materials: pottery, building rubble, marble, bone and glass, as well as four bronze coins. The shop to the east of the entrance (Room I.6) was rather narrow, ca. 1.15 x 3 m, and contained very little in its fill. The foundations of another north-south wall 1035 formed its eastern limits.

The *macellum's* primary phase of construction in *opus vittatum* is assumed on the basis of construction technique to date to the 4th century CE, but excavation of the shops revealed one, if not multiple, earlier phases. Most notably, both walls 1002 and 1003 of the central corridor show deep foundations of well-dressed tuff ashlar capped by several courses of brickwork (fig. 4). It is not clear if the ashlar ever functioned as elevation, as their fine workmanship might suggest, or if they were meant to serve as foundations. A similar question can be asked of the extant courses of brickwork. In both walls 1002 and 1003, however, the tuff ashlar were later supplemented for unclear reasons by equally large foundations of concrete rubble constructed against their eastern sides. The construction of wall 1003 in place of wall 1037 would have widened the entrance corridor, but significantly reduced the width of Room I.6. The ashlar foundations did not bond with the rubble foundation 1014 = 1034 running east-west along the southern side of the shops, whereas the rubble foundations of the other north-south walls 1073 on the western side of Room I.4 and 1035 on the eastern side of Room 1.6 did. The tuff foundations (elevations?) thus appear to predate the 4th century CE *macellum*, but the nature of the structure to which they originally belonged remains obscure.

The 4th century CE *macellum* abutted the southern wall 1008 of an earlier structure constructed of tuff blocks more poorly preserved than those blocks of the *macellum* foundations. Projecting north from wall 1008 were walls 1026 in the west and 1021 in the east. Room I.1, located in the northwest corner of the 2022 trench, measured 2.20 x 1.10 m and bounded by walls 1008 and 1026, contained a deposit with abundant pottery, glass, tile fragments and bone. Removal of this layer revealed a fragment of a concrete wall measuring c. 0.95 x 0.50 m. and clearly in secondary use. Adjacent to this feature in the northern scarp was an inverted pan roof tile. At a depth of c. 1.10 m, a collection of small irregular stones at the western extent of the room and traces of mortar might relate to floors or floor preparations.

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<sup>11</sup> HOFFELINCK 2021.



Fig. 4. Wall of central corridor of macellum's northern entrance showing deep foundations of ashlar superimposed by opus vittatum.

Room I.2 (5.40 x 1.10 m) was bounded by walls 1008, 1026, and 1021. An "inner" tuff wall 1031 ran parallel to wall 1008 on its northern side, and both walls 1008 and 1031 were partially cut for the placement of a modern water pipe visible in the GPR. A deposit containing tile, pottery dating to the 5th century CE (over 70% of the deposit), bone, and large amount of glass was found in the east, while a layer that covered inner wall 1031 contained a striking quantity of bone. In the small (ca. 0.50 m wide) space wall 1031 and the northern scarp were two deposits exceptionally rich in materials including metal, building materials, glass, and bone. In the western area of the room was a small ovoid cut with a small built feature of uncertain function below a squarish hole in the eastern face of wall. The beaten earth floor of the room lay at a depth of 1.52 m.

Room I.3 in the northeast of the trench was the smallest of the rooms in the northern building (1.15 x 1.10 m). The room was defined on its west by wall 1021 and on its south by wall 1008. Very little material was retrieved, and we reached the earthen floor surface at a depth of 1.5 m, similar to the surface found in Room I.2.

### *Macellum Tholos and Basin*

The complex situation of 2022 prompted expansion north and south in 2023, with the opening of two separate trenches. A southern trench (10 x 3.15 m) focused on the *macellum's* central basin and *tholos*, revealing signs especially of their later use (fig. 5). The trench also intended to shed light on aspects of water consumption in the structure and surrounding infrastructure. Three discrete spaces became apparent during excavation: Room I.11, to the west of the *tholos* wall; Room I.12, the area contained within the *tholos*; and Room I.13, the central basin.

In Room I.11 (3.0 m x 0.8 m) on the trench's western side excavation revealed a poorly preserved brick wall 1129 (ca. 0.6 x 0.6 m) built atop a solid foundation of mortar and medium-sized tuff blocks. This wall's foundation (3.00 m x 0.75 m), interpreted as the foundation of the *tholos*, continued a straight line in the northern scarp but had a curved, almost rounded, course as it extended into the southern trench edge. Cuts on its western



and eastern sides were made for inserting the wooden scaffolding used during the construction of its substantial foundations, ranging in excavated depth from 1.8–2.5 m.

Room I.12 in the middle of the trench measured 4 x 3.15 m. North-south wall 1124 with a peperino block at its southern end—the western wall of the central basin—appears at the room's eastern limit. 2.60 m long x 0.42 m wide with a preserved height of 0.65 m, the wall was constructed in *opus vittatum* similar to walls 1002 and 1003. The room's central area contained several cuts with fills rich in archaeological and organic materials, including bone and charcoal. Noteworthy were three parallel, quasi-rectangular cuts that may relate to medieval reuse, perhaps for gardening or horticulture associated with the nearby abbey. Other activity associated with reuse was a layer of mortar set with reused marble elements along the outside of the basin wall and a thick mortar floor across the room. To the west, a small portion of a tile floor was preserved, below which was a floor (3.40 x 3.15 m) of 23 rectangular peperino slabs of varying dimensions. In the northwest corner of this pavement, in a long rectangular cut (1.80 x 0.15 m) between some slabs, a mortar layer with a round imprint continuing underneath a slab suggested the original presence of a lead fistula, now robbed out, connected to the hydraulic system of the *macellum's* courtyard.

Room I.13 in the east of the trench (3.10 x 2.70 m) was bounded by three *opus vittatum* walls 1124, 1162, and 1163 with peperino blocks at their corners. The area formed the central basin of the *macellum* (fig. 6). Its northern wall 1162 was only partially preserved; its western side was severely damaged by the modern pipe and a substantial earlier (likely medieval) cut extending towards the room's center made through parts of a *cocciopesto* floor and an earlier *opus sectile* floor preparation. Lower down, a *cocciopesto* surface extended over the entire room and faced sections of walls 1162 and 1163, suggesting the basin contained water. One of several cuts into this surface was made to rob a lead fistula whose imprint was evident in the mortar preparation at its bottom. Beneath the *cocciopesto* paving was a thick preparation layer of mortar below a thin deposit with fragments of cut marble from the original *opus sectile* surface, with the geometric imprints still discernible in the mortar. A band of rectangle imprints for marble flooring visible at the center of the basin encircled a partially damaged rectangular white marble slab with notches on its surface. The surrounding basin walls also appeared to have been decorated with thin marble revetments preserved in some places. Pottery from these areas revealed systematic spoliation in the Medieval period during the monastery's construction.

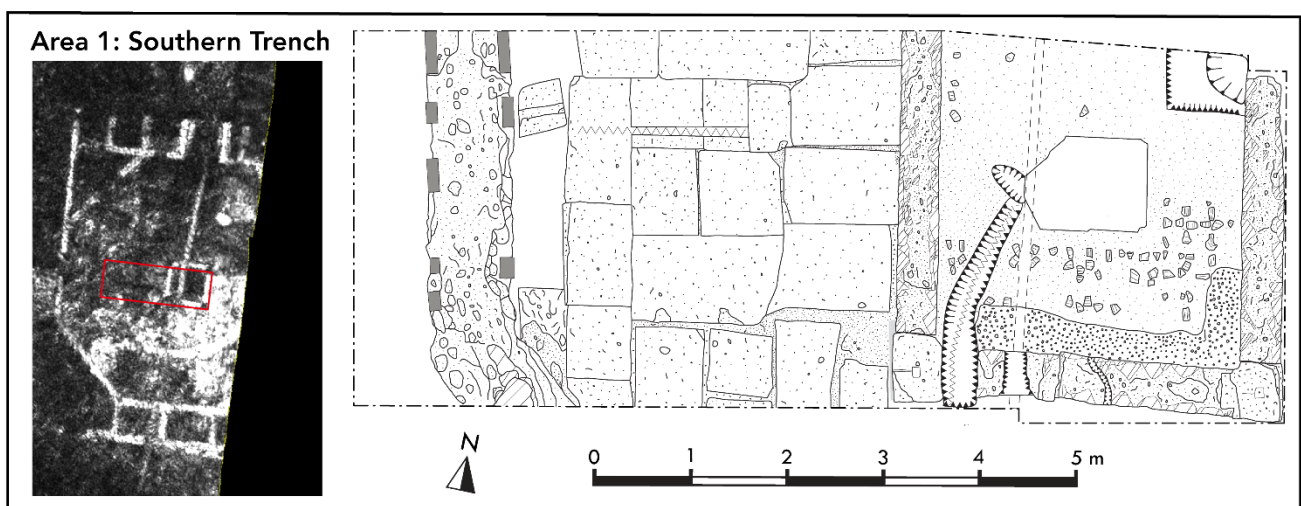


Fig. 5. Area 1 southern trench, location in relation to GPR results (VERDONCK et al. 2020) and plan.



*Fig. 6. View from south of central basin of macellum showing pavements and modern pipe.*



*Fig. 7. Large drain feature running below Room I.7 in building north of macellum, view from north showing large tuff blocks forming top of drain and vertical feature at south.*



## Northern Building

Removal of topsoil over a northern trench (10 x 4 m) opened in 2023 revealed a feature with large (ca. 0.52 x 0.52 x 0.90 m) tuff blocks on its western and northern sides, as well as the defining features of the trench: two north-south walls 1126 and 1120 of tuff blocks extending the trench's full length in the western and eastern areas, respectively continuing the tuff walls 1026 and 1008 found in the 2022 trench. A smaller tuff wall 1121, 1.5 m long, extended eastwards from wall 1120, about 1.5 m south of the trench's northern limit. These three walls divided the trench into four spaces: Room I.7 (2.3 x 4 m) in the west; Room I.8 (5.4 x 4 m) in the center; Room I.9 (1.4 x 1.2 m) in the northeast corner; and Room I.10 (1.4 x 2 m) in the southeast corner (fig. 5). Excavation concentrated primarily on Rooms I.7 and I.8. Excavation in Room I.9 was limited, while Room I.10 was not excavated. In Room I.7, along with some floor levels, we identified what appeared to be monumental sections of the area's hydraulic system. A vertical shaft lined by tuff blocks on three sides (west, north, and east) was immediately visible. To its north in the northwest corner of the trench was a series of poorly preserved, superimposed pavement preparations, with ca. 3.0 m of poorly preserved *cocciopesto* floor. At the northwest corner preserved for ca. 0.40 x 0.50 m was part of a pavement of small (ca. 0.04 x 0.04 m), irregular terracotta tiles placed in rows. Below three more layers, five large tuff blocks of the same stone as the shaft and the eastern wall 1126 were found running to the north. These blocks measured 0.52 x 0.52 m high and wide and between 1.00–1.50 m long. Each block was laid with its ends propped up on identically sized blocks placed upright below them. The whole comprised a large drain feature built of large ashlar blocks connected to the vertical shaft at the south limit of the room (fig. 7). Using a mechanical excavator, one block was lifted to reveal the drain's interior measuring ca. 0.60 m high and 0.32 m wide. Ceramics from the construction fill around this drain dated to the 1st century BCE to 1st century CE.

In Room I.8, east of Room I.7, excavation identified a series of pavements and features probably related to production or commercial activity (fig. 8). From west to east, these included a floor in *opus spicatum* preserved for ca. 1.0 x 1.8 m with a concrete basin (ca. 0.5 m deep, 1.1 m wide) partly lying outside the northern trench limit. At its northwest corner, a large cut made into the *opus spicatum* floor against wall 1126 contained a quantity of terracotta floor tiles cut into geometrical shapes (squares, rectangles, triangles, diamonds). This fill served the purpose of levelling for the *opus spicatum* floor above, and the tiles must have been reused from an earlier floor.



Fig. 8. Pavements and large cut with deposit of late 5th century CE material  
In room I.8 of building north of macellum.

East of the *spicatum* floor, another floor (1.45 m x 1.7 m) was made of four peperino slabs. To the north of this floor were a series of concrete features, some showing the imprint of terracotta tiles or stones in various arrangements. To the east of the peperino pavement, remains of a concrete floor preparation (2.0 x 0.9 m) could be seen extending below the peperino slabs and thus across the width of all three floor sections.

None of these floors or preparations was evident in the southern area of Room I.8. In the room's southwest corner, a small feature of unknown purpose (0.55 x 0.45 x 0.40 m) built of small peperino blocks was barely visible protruding from the southern trench

limit. An extensive (3.00 x 1.75 m) round cut covered nearly all the southern part of Room I.8, truncating the floors

evident in the northern half of the space. This cut's fill contained abundant broken and near-complete ceramic materials, especially tableware, cookware, and Africa red slip. It also yielded quantities of animal bones from a variety of species, as well as numerous coins. A discrete portion of this fill was rich in charcoal and ash with burned ceramics and bone. The fill as a whole dates to the 5th century CE; the large number of African red slip forms Hayes 67B and 67C, as well as Hayes 61C, suggests a chronology of mid to second half of that century.

In the east area of Room I.8 was the continuation of the modern pipe. At the bottom of the northern half of the cut made for the pipe was a roundish patch of mortar, perhaps a pavement preparation. In the far southeastern corner of the room was a basin or well built with large tuff blocks around an opening measuring 0.45 x 0.25 m.

Room I.9 was defined by wall 1120 on the west, 1121 on the south, and the trench limits to the north and east. It was only partially excavated but revealed that wall 1121, made of four relatively smaller blocks of tuff (0.50 x 0.32 m), was only one course deep.

Relevant to the identification of the function of the building as well as that of the adjacent *macellum* are those animal remains recovered in excavations. Preliminary results of the analysis of faunal material recovered from Area I shows a notable proportion of butchered cattle bones. Proximal and distal cattle metapodials were common, and frequently had been sawn to remove the diaphyses or chopped across the shaft. Carpals, tarsals, and first and second phalanges were also abundant; however, third phalanges were rare. Horncores and some cranial and mandibular elements were also frequently chopped into pieces. There were numerous shards of long-bone demonstrating heavy processing, including longitudinal chopping, but limb-bone fragments, as well as vertebrate and ribs, were visibly under-represented compared to foot and ankle bones. The majority of the heavily processed cattle material displays a consistent colour, surface preservation and breakage style (with many green breaks related to processing while fresh). The character of the material recalls deposits of cattle remains noted in various Roman provinces and linked to artisanal activities like marrow extraction and glue production.<sup>12</sup> Pigs and caprines were also present across Area I, including in contexts rich in cattle, but the strong patterning visible in cattle body-part distribution was not noted in other taxa. However, representation of smaller livestock is likely to be influenced by our practice of hand recovery, the impact of which will be assessed in greater depth by ongoing zooarchaeological analysis. Faunal material of different color and/or surface quality to the processed cattle material was encountered across various contexts in the Area, indicating mixture of earlier/later rubbish and likely other contemporary debris into a cache of specialized cattle processing waste.

Thus, excavations within the *macellum* confirm its identification as such based on architectural form and features, while those to the north of the complex raise questions about the development of the broader urban fabric of this part of the city. What preceded the 4th century CE *macellum*? Did the *macellum* replace the older northern building, or were the northern building and *macellum* in use at the same time? If they were, how did access to the *macellum* from the north work? What activities in addition to meat processing and bone working did the *macellum* host? What utility did the *macellum* have to occupants of the city in the medieval period, when we see activity in the area of the *tholos* and basin? Further seasons will continue to investigate these important features to the economic life of the town and clarifying how they, alongside other commercial properties, were integrated into the city's infrastructural systems including its street, drainage, and hydraulic networks. Pursuing these themes should allow us to gauge the vitality of this part of the town in any given period as evidence for each one emerges. For now, the 4th to 5th centuries CE and the early and high Middle Ages have been revealed as periods of great activity, and future seasons will aim to fill in current chronological gaps in our understanding of the *macellum*'s long life.

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<sup>12</sup> MALTBY 2007; LÁNG 2009; DE CUPERE et al. 2015.



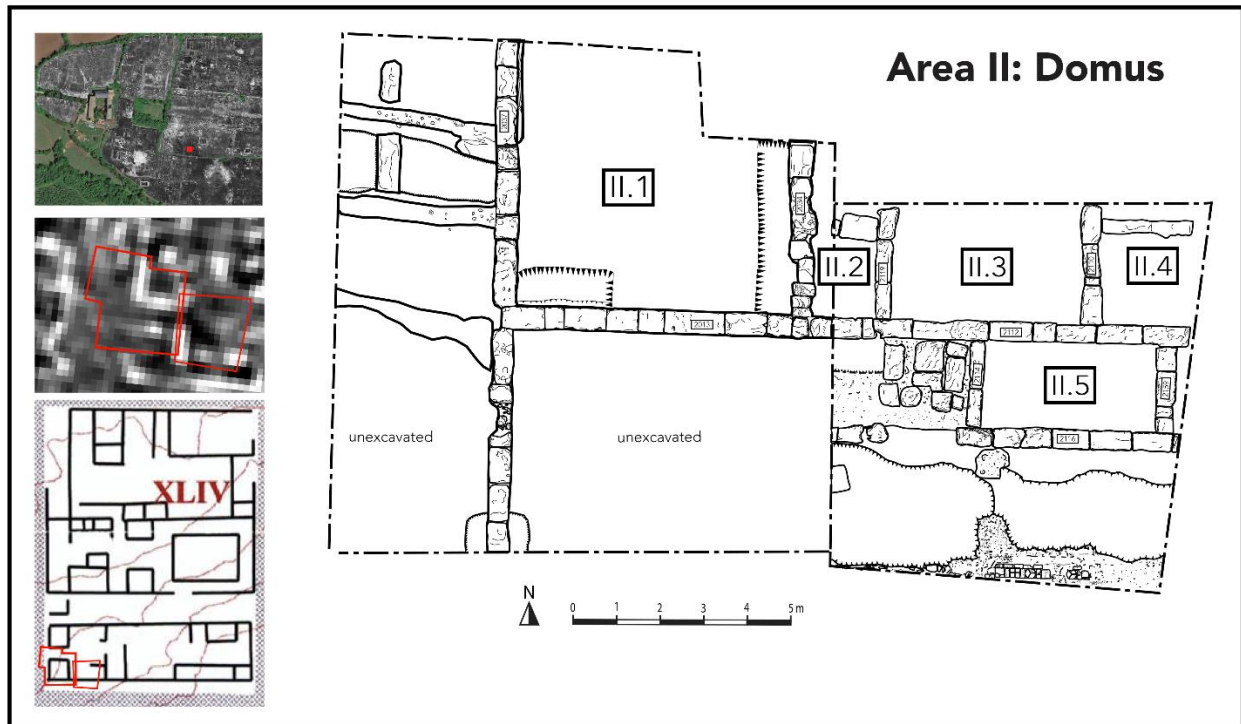


Fig. 9. Area II, location in relation to GPR (VERDONCK et al. 2020) and magnetometry (KEAY et al. 2000) results and plan.

## AREA II: DOMUS

Area II consists of two continuous trenches situated over what was identified by magnetometer survey as a large elite house forming the southernmost limit of a block of houses (*Insula XLIV*) immediately south of the forum (fig. 9).<sup>13</sup> The interpretation reconstructed a long *domus* of canonical Republican plan with atrium and peristyle extending the width of the *insula*.<sup>14</sup> The structures went largely undetected in the GPR survey.<sup>15</sup>

In 2022, a 10.0 x 10.0 m trench placed over the structure's far southwest corner intended to capture the intersection of the western and southern city streets. In 2023, the excavated area was extended eastward with a second trench (8.0 x 8.0 m). Excavations exposed a series of rooms of a structure whose foundations were built consistently of tuff ashlar blocks, but with evidence of complex phasing. The use of tuff ashlars and the absence of any foundations in concrete masonry may explain why the structure was visible in magnetometry but not GPR survey. Stratigraphic evidence so far suggests occupation between the 2nd or 3rd century BCE and the early 6th century CE, with signs of limited medieval activity especially in the exterior space around the structure.

At the structure's western limit, Room II.1 is a rectangular space bounded by walls 2013, 2024, and 2037; its northern limit was beyond the limit of the trench. Both built of the same finely drafted tuff ashlars, walls 2013 and 2037 bond and represent the earliest phase, preserved up to four courses high, with the lowermost course cut into a shallow foundation trench in the red clay bedrock. Wall 2037 represents the western façade of the house, while wall 2013 delimits Room II.1 from an unexcavated space to its south. Other walls are abutting and later in date; they display more roughly cut, irregular, and possibly even reused ashlars. Entrance to Room II.1

<sup>13</sup> KEAY et al. 2000.

<sup>14</sup> cf. JOLIVET 2011: 121.

<sup>15</sup> cf. VERDONCK et al. 2020.



Fig. 10. Feature made of tiles set directly against blocks of wall in loose clay mortar in Room II.1, viewed from the east.

from the street was at some point closed off by a wall of these irregular ashlars finished with a particular application of reused roof tiles affixed to the interior side of the ashlars with a thin clay mortar (fig. 10).

The floor of Room II.1 was destroyed and its interior space filled by a series of dumps. The lowermost dump contained building rubble of various forms, including pieces of tuff blocks, terracotta *tubuli*, fragments of painted wall fresco, and fragments of *cocciopesto* pavement set with lines of white *tesserae*, whose style suggests a date on either side of 100 BCE. A tuff capital of the Italic order was found in this deposit badly weathered with a deep socket on its upper face possibly attesting to reuse as the counterweight of a press (fig. 11). Along with building rubble were several signs of craft production such as an iron chisel and a serpentine weight. The layer contained no medieval pottery, while the latest forms (ARS forms Hayes 67B and 91A) suggest a date of the mid to second half of the 5th century CE. The layer showed signs of fire including large ash fragments, possibly from burned beams or other wooden architectural features. Directly atop this dump were a series of deposits excavated separately because of their heterogeneous nature but linked by related, sometimes joining ceramics. This layer was rich with materials, among them a fragment of a bronze basin, several pieces of a terracotta chamber pot, numerous small bronze coins, a large quantity of African red slip ware, and a considerable quantity of glass including vessels with figural etching. A fully preserved hanging lamp with carinated

body with cross-hatching (Bailey Type T, Q 1438) with signs of use still on its nozzle dates to the early 5th century CE. The lack of a floor or interface between this layer and that containing building rubble and ash below suggests this material fell from a collapsed second story.

A few fragments of *vetrina sparsa* within Room II.1 indicate limited medieval reoccupation in its central space. More significant medieval

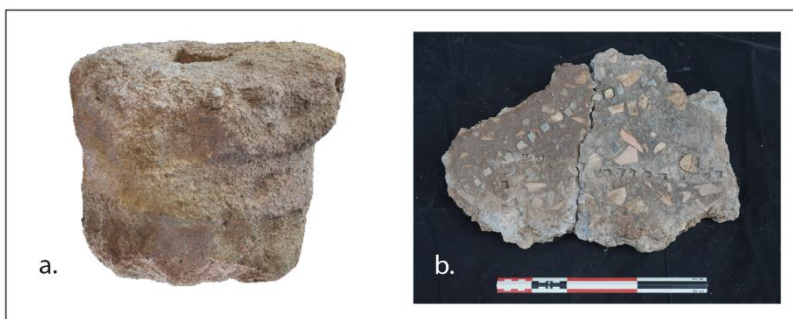


Fig. 11. Material found in Room II.1 from Republican phases of house including (a) tuff Italic capital and (b) *cocciopesto* pavement inset with lines of white *tesserae*.



occupation comes from outside the structure, immediately west of Room II.1, where the north-south road was completely robbed out. This street area was occupied by a structure built atop low *pisé de terre* walls, possibly to support a raised floor of wooden slats for a granary built immediately against the western façade of the *domus*.

To the east of Room II.1, moving into the interior of the *domus*, Room II.2 formed a corridor running north-south (0.97 m east-west x 4.25 m north-south) defined by wall 2024 (west) and 2109 (east), and divided by cross walls and possibly a step or threshold of two peperino blocks. Similar to material found in Room II.1, the fill contained bronze coins, glass, metal finds including a scalpel, and ARS forms Hayes 61B of the first half of the 5th century CE along with an African lamp, type Atlante VII. South of wall 2112, the extension of the corridor was paved with high quality *opus caementicium*.

Further east were two rectangular Rooms II.3 (4.29 x 2.57 m) and II.4 (max. 2.09 x 2.65 m). Room II.3, enclosed by walls 2112, 2109, and 2110, had a beaten tuff pavement or floor preparation atop a thick layer of construction rubble. The same sequence of fills characterized Room II.4 to the east. In both rooms, the long east-west wall 2112, continuing wall 2013 in Room II.1, seems original, while the north-south walls were built at a later date, possibly in the 5th century CE atop thick fill with quantities of building rubble. This thick layer extended down to the red clayey bedrock. It would appear that the long east-west wall 2112/2013 was built with a shallow foundation trench, and the space was then endowed with a thick terrace of dumped building material, including some large fragments of nearly complete ashlar blocks. In this context, there was no Imperial pottery. The terrace fill contained ceramics including bowls of type Morel 2873 (300–270 BCE) and two fragments of Genucilia plates of the later production of that class<sup>16</sup>. This material should date the initial construction of the building to the late 3rd to 2nd century BCE with residual material from an even earlier presence in this area going back to the middle or even early 3rd century BCE.

To the south of wall 2112, Room II.5 forms another rectangular space (3.87 x 1.93 m) delimited on the east and west by walls 2114 and 2159. Access was along its central axis on its south side, which was defined by a long wall 2166 extending across the trench parallel to wall 2112. Within this room, the very lowermost context, equivalent in elevation to the bedrock on the north side of Room II.3, was black with clear signs of burning. At the interface of this layer and the context above were several fragments of a Republican black gloss and two fragments of a striped local Faliscan vase of probably late 3rd or early 2nd century BCE date.<sup>17</sup> Above this was a thick stratum of building material, again with fragments of nearly completely worked ashlar blocks, but without any pottery except for pieces of a single Republican achromatic *olpe* or closed form. The sequence suggests that this space area was accessible but exterior to the structure at the time that wall 2112 and the terrace in Rooms II.3 and II.4 was constructed; at a later date, probably in the Late Republic, Room II.5 and its walls were built to the south with its own high terrace. Together, these walls and the room formed either a major expansion of the *domus* to its south, or even an entirely new house which shared the party wall 2112 with the *domus* to its north.

The burning visible beneath this terrace either pertains to a fire event or to industrial activities related to this construction phase. The construction of the terrace seems to relate chronologically with the paving of Room II.5 with a *cocciopesto* pavement, now visible only in small, friable sections, bedded on a chipped marble preparation. The southern face of wall 2112 was cut back with sockets for an unidentifiable purpose (fig. 12).

The large space south of wall 2112 outside of Room II.5 contained several features, including a small rectangular base of blue mortar and a platform of reused tuff blocks, among them a weathered column drum or section. At the trench's southern extent, another *cocciopesto* pavement borders a more luxurious pavement of a band of mosaic with a geometrical pattern of green stone *tesserae* set into very friable mortar and an *opus sectile* pavement of colored marble slabs arranged in rectangles and hexagonal forms.

<sup>16</sup> See production of Falerii Veteres in BIELLA et al. 2022: 158–59.

<sup>17</sup> BIELLA et al. 2022: 175.



Fig. 12. South face of wall 2112 opening onto Room II.5 showing cutting back of ashlars in secondary phase, viewed from south.



Fig. 13. Orthophoto of floor at south of trench in Area II showing sequence of opus sectile, mosaic, and cocciopesto finishes.

These turn around a low, rectangular concrete feature at the far southeastern limit of the trench (fig. 13). The preservation of these floor preparations was owed to their covering over by a layer of roof tiles atop a thick stratum of ash, probably the destruction and collapse of the structure's roof in violent fire. In the interface between this destruction collapse and the *opus sectile* pavement were pieces of a locally made Spello-type amphora of mid to late 6th century CE date. While the *opus sectile* was covered by the tile collapse, there was no ash layer between the tiles and the pavement, possibly as there was no roof at that point. The situation may suggest an impluvium below an open roof, possibly identifiable as the low concrete structure in the trench's southern section around which the mosaic and *opus sectile* finishes turn.

A long east-west cut across most of the southern extent of the 2023 trench was filled with a considerable quantity of stone rubble and fragments of Medieval ceramics. This reflects the first substantial post-antique intervention in this area after the destruction and abandonment of the *domus*. These interventions seem mostly



to have concerned robbing or even flattening the layers of collapse, perhaps to convert the area to pastoral or agricultural function.

At present, the two trenches have not provided definitive evidence of the southern and northern limits of the *domus*, while excavation raises the idea that we see not one, but two *domus* in a configuration that differs from the magnetometry interpretation (cf. Keay et al. 2000). Further work will clarify these issues.

Already, area II presents one of the wider chronological ambits attested thus far by the FNP on site. The initial phases of a Republican house seem attested by tuff architectural fragments and pavement in the rubble of Room II.1, and by the construction sequence of Rooms II.3 and II.4, which show that initial construction in this part of the town accompanied a substantial effort to raise a residential structure (or structures) upon artificial terraces. The discovery of Middle Republican ceramics in the earliest terrace may hint at even earlier presence in this area. Some of these residual ceramics give a date prior to the establishment of Falerii Novi, although the nature and extent of activity relating to this material is presently unclear. Generally, however, we may note that it makes sense to find signs of early frequentation in this area of the site just downhill from the low ridge occupied by the forum.

Ceramics suggest occupation became increasingly prominent in the 4th to 5th, or even early 6th centuries CE. In this period, high quality finds suggest a level of wealth at the disposal of the owners of the structure or structures. It is noteworthy to find such materials alongside signs of craft production or commercial and industrial activity. In Room II.1, the stratigraphic sequence suggests productive activities taking place on the ground floor, with higher quality materials coming from the collapse of a second story. Parts of the southern structure show clear indications of violent fire in the 6th century CE. After that, the interior of the structure or structures seems mostly abandoned, with activity concentrating on available space in the street to the west.

### AREA III: STREETSIDE AREA

Area III lies 50 m inside the South Gate of Falerii Novi, on the eastern side of the so-called *cardo maximus*, the *via Amerina*, at the northwest corner of *Insula LIX*.<sup>18</sup> The excavation explores the town's intramural periphery, in contrast to Areas I, II, IV and V extending our spatial investigation of diachronic urban development. Approximately 130 m east lies the excavated theatre, whilst GPR recorded a large temple to the immediate west across the *via Amerina*.<sup>19</sup> The geophysical prospection indicated several linear anomalies immediately east of the road junction, although no further features were recorded in the immediate vicinity.

The plough soil was removed over an area of 15 x 15 m (fig. 14). Stratigraphy was generally very reduced across the trench and the southern area was cleaned but not fully excavated. The shallow topsoil and level of the natural clay layer, confirmed by a core that indicated no lower archaeological deposits, meant that few structures were preserved to a significant depth. Excavation therefore concentrated on the northeastern parts of the area where preservation was best.

Along the trench's northern edge, a paved east-west road was recorded immediately below the topsoil, at its western end covered only by a thin layer of loose soil. The road was excavated for a length of 11.4m to expose its southern edge. The road's full width was not investigated but can be estimated from the geophysical data as approximately 3.5–4.0 m. Several small finds were recovered from the road surface, including two coins and fragments of bronze. It was constructed using two types of locally quarried basalt stone (Occhio di Pesce from the Lago di Vico area; and solid grey mass basalt from Bracciano)<sup>20</sup> much of which was well worn with deep ruts and in places filled with smaller stones, potentially indicating later repairs. In its final phase it was evidently blocked at its eastern end, where four large reused architectural pieces of peperino had been placed on the road together with two blocks of tuff. Ceramics and coins date this activity to the 6th century CE. All blocks show some

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<sup>18</sup> KEAY et al. 2000.

<sup>19</sup> VERDONCK et al. 2020.

<sup>20</sup> Our thanks to Ray Laurence for advice.

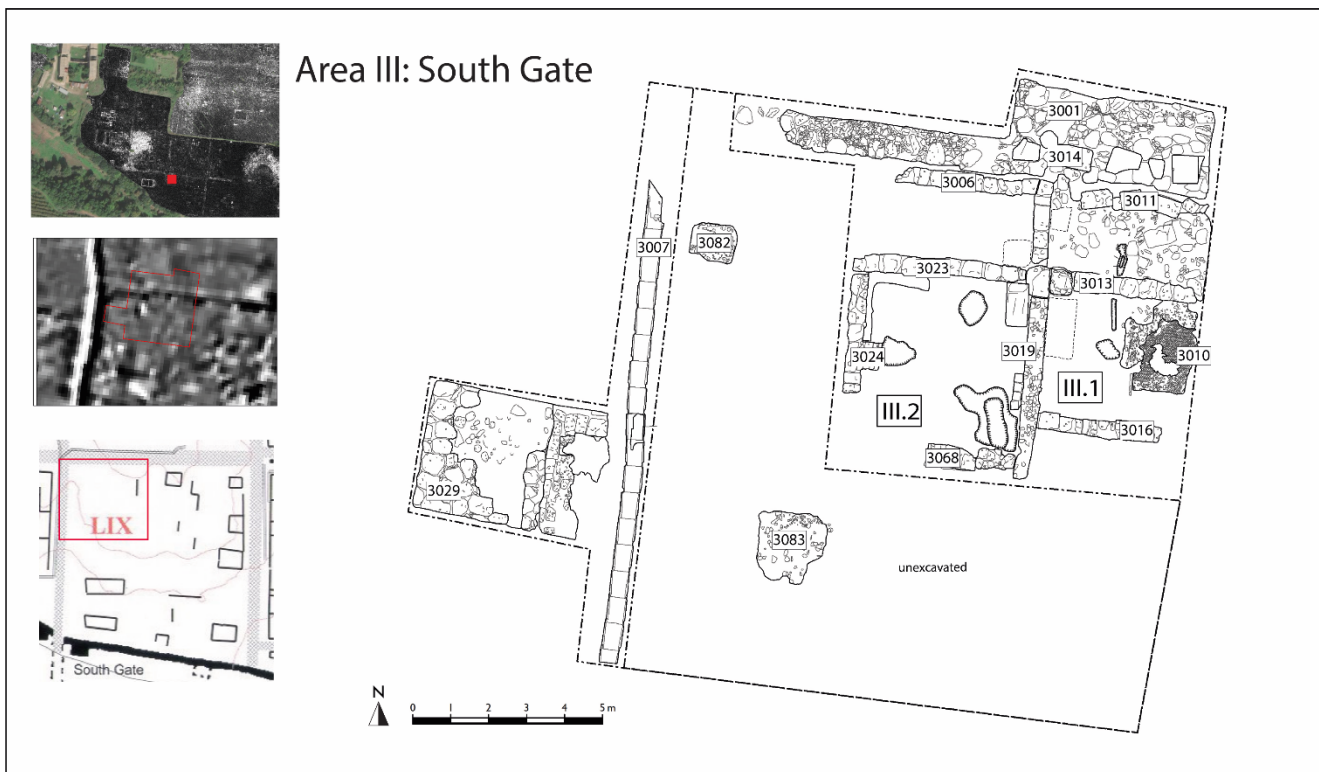


Fig. 14. Area III, location in relation to GPR (VERDONCK et al. 2020) and magnetometry (KEAY et al. 2000) results and plan.



Fig. 15. Aerial photograph of Room III.1 showing excavated opus spicatum pavement with plough damage, walls in tuff to the north and south and the caementicium wall to the west.



plough damage as they lie only 0.45 m beneath the topsoil. Two walls 3006 and 3011 lie parallel to the road, with wall 3012 a later extension of wall 3076 to the south, representing an encroachment over an earlier pavement running alongside the road.

Room III.1 is to the south, on the eastern limit of the trench and continues into the section edge, with three walls 3013, 3016 and 3019 defining a space of at least 4.00 x 3.34 m. A compact deposit in the room contained tile, ceramics, and 17 small finds, including 13 small bronze coins. The room's floor on the eastern side was built in *opus spicatum* using small terracotta blocks and its central area had been heavily damaged by ploughing (fig. 15). The floor's western edge was delimited by vertical pieces of marble, to the west of which, against north-south wall 3019 was a deep layer including ceramics, bone and charcoal, glass, gaming pieces, a bone dice, and a concentration of 26 bronze coins. Based on ceramic evidence, the context appears to continue into the late 6th to early 7th centuries CE.

All classifiable coins found in this room are imperial in date and struck in Rome, except for a 4th century CE *nummus* struck in Siscia (*RIC* VII.237). There is only one silver denarius, plated and heavily worn (Caracalla: *RIC* IV.1, 181), and lower-value bronze denominations otherwise predominate. The assemblage peaks with issues of the 4th to 5th centuries CE (*AE* 3–4: 65%), to which the most recent coin is related: a well-preserved *minimus* with traces of a monogram (*AE*, 0.31 g, 7 mm) dated to the late 5th/early 6th centuries CE. The remaining coins date mainly between the 1st and early 3rd centuries CE with a secondary peak of Julio-Claudian and Flavian issues (15%): *asses*, *dupondii*, and a *quadrans* (Gaius: *RIC* I.45 or 52; Nero: *RIC* I.344; Galba: *RIC* I.304; Domitian: *RIC* II.1, cf. 380; Hadrian: *RIC* II.3, cf. 1699; Alexander Severus: *RIC* IV.2, 669). Traces of use indicate long circulation periods for these specimens.

The spatial concentration of the coins, including a non-monetary bronze disc (84 g, 68 mm), if not due to chance, should reflect circulation patterns in the late 5th to 6th centuries CE. In fact, the association of Imperial bronzes with late 5th century CE currency is documented by hoards (e.g. the Falerii Novi hoard<sup>21</sup>). Moreover, the reuse of obsolete coins is attested in Italy by finds of an Imperial *as* and *dupondii* countermarked XLII, probably by Ostrogothic (476-553) issues. There is also other evidence of Ostrogothic coins from Area III (Athalaricus, MEC I, 13).

Room III.2 (4.5 x 4.55m) to the west of wall 3019 has northern (3023) and western (3024) walls constructed from tuff blocks and preserved to only one course. The western wall had a small internal offset, in front of which was revealed a hearth constructed as a small oval pit (fig. 16). Its uppermost fill was characterized by a compact soil with fragments of charcoal, animal bones, ceramics and glass. Beneath this was a harder, compact clay layer, deep red in colour due to the application of intense heat and with little material, except some bone. The bottom of the cut was filled by a rich charcoal deposit with few further inclusions.

On the room's eastern side alongside wall 3019 were the remains of a crude paving of reused tiles as well as two pieces of marble bearing a fragmentary inscription in monumental letters (fig. 17). The marble's surface is soft and degraded, possibly from burning. The first piece reads [- - -]AE[- - -] / [- - -]O[- - -]. The second piece reads [- - -]PA[- - -].

In the northeast corner, another offset block measuring 1.15 x 0.60m may have served as a work surface given its proximity to the hearth and a further pit. In the southeastern corner a large cut held a deposit containing a range of material including animal bones, charcoal, five bronze coins, a marble architectural fragment, and African red slip ware (Hayes 67B, Hayes 104A1) suggesting a date in the mid to late 6th century CE. The bottom of the cut was defined by an oval shaped structure lined in plaster indicating a hydraulic function. Due to its depth, the feature was not fully excavated.

This cut feature ended its use life as a repository for human waste, possibly acting as a latrine or small cesspit. The archaeobotanical sample from deposit 3070 contained a wide array of mineralized foodstuffs including grapes, fig pips, a cereal grain, and two cucumber/melon seeds. Also recovered from the sample, conserved inside a small jug (fig. 18), were the mineralized pupae of latrine, cesspit and dung flies, along with a

<sup>21</sup> <https://chre.ashmus.ox.ac.uk/hoard/13942>.



*Fig. 16. Hearth built into the floor of Room III.2 and up against tuff feature, facing north.*



*Fig. 17. Two fragments of monumental inscription on marble slab found reused in Room III.2.*

further 23 pupae and numerous isopods, crustaceans that feed on dead and decaying plant matter. These combined items are typical of the cess pit “indicator package” and shed light on diet, sanitation, and hygiene in 6th century CE Falerii Novi.<sup>22</sup> Further study of the insect remains, which are in an excellent state of preservation, will hopefully provide additional insights into human, plant, and animal relationships within the urban center.

<sup>22</sup> SMITH 2013.





Fig. 18. Late Antique red slip jug found in the large cut of Room III.2.

In the west of Area III was an open area 5m in width, with the wall 3024 to the east and a tiled drain to the west, characterised by two features cut into the natural clay and built in *opus caementicium* (fig. 13). These might be the remnant foundations of modest roadside monuments on display when using the South Gate. The drain, formed by 18 pan tiles and excavated for a length of 12.77 m, sloped gently to the south and perhaps relates to run-off from a paved area or roof above the open space. A small extension to the west was made to reveal a 3.4 m north-south stretch of the *via Amerina*. The central area of the road surface had been heavily damaged by modern activity, probably the result of the removal of a hedgerow and trees. The road did, however, preserve a border of kerbstones and a pavement in large tuff blocks, comparable to those noted in Area IV within *Insula XXXI*.

The architecture and material found within Area III suggest an association with roadside *tabernae*, or places otherwise seeing commercial and domestic activities in Late Antiquity. Traces of preceding 2nd to 1st centuries BCE activity were apparent through residual ceramic finds but no clear signs of early habitation in this area can be confidently identified.

#### AREA IV: MONUMENTAL TEMPLE (INSULA XXXI)

Area IV (*insula XXXI* as defined in KEAY et al. 2000) occupies a central sector of the city, at the intersection of the main east-west (*decumanus*) and north-south (*cardo maximus* or *via Amerina*) urban roads (fig. 19). It lies west of the southwestern flank of the forum and east of the *macellum* (Area I). Oriented east-west, the *insula* measured about 42 x 62 m (ca. 141 x 209 Roman feet) excluding streets. From 1969–75, excavations by the Soprintendenza in the *insula*'s eastern half of exposed remains of a monumental public structure built in *opus quadratum*, affected by heavy spoliation.<sup>23</sup> The area opened by these excavations remains visible today east of Santa Maria di Falleri. The western half of the *insula* remains unexcavated and was not covered by previous geophysical surveys, while the 1969–75 excavations remain largely unpublished.<sup>24</sup>

The entire area of the *insula* was systematically surveyed. Photogrammetry, supported by a topographic survey of 220 georeferenced levels was used to record standing remains. Systematic structural analysis recorded

<sup>23</sup> BRUNETTI NARDI 1972: 47.

<sup>24</sup> BRUNETTI NARDI 1972: 47; 1981: 97; *Fasti Archeologici*, 1979: 356–57, n. 5610; KEAY et al. 2000; VERDONCK et al. 2020; MILLETT et al., forthcoming.



## Area IV: Soprintendenza excavations, 1969 - 1975



Fig. 19. Area IV, location in relation to GPR results (VERDONCK et al. 2020) and state plan of remains uncovered in Soprintendenza excavations. Plan elaborated by Beatrice Fochetti based on FOCHETTI forthcoming, fig. 5.

more than 100 stratigraphic units, leading to the identification of four main architectural phases. The surviving stratigraphy under excavated levels was tested with a series of hand-augers by the University of Ghent in June 2022.

In 2022, GPR survey of the unexcavated western half (426 m<sup>2</sup>) completed coverage of the *insula*, filling a gap in previous geophysical work. This survey detected the north-south road separating *insula* XXXI from the *macellum* (Area I), confirming the *insula*'s full dimensions (42 x 62 m). To the east, remains are now interpreted as part of the foundations of a temple with phases dating from the Republican period. The complex occupies the entire *insula* and faces the forum from which it is divided by the *via Amerina*. Reconstruction of the excavations were further supported by archival research of excavation diaries, drawings, plans and historic photographs from the collections of the 'ex SABAP-VT-EM' archive, now at the Museo Nazionale Etrusco di Villa Giulia in Rome. In 2023, archival data (Villa Giulia, 'ex SABAP-VT-EM' archive) and aerial photographs, part of the 'Aerotop' collection held at the ICCD-Aerofototeca Nazionale in Rome, were further compared with data collected in the field.<sup>25</sup>

### Phase 1

The first phase, only partially visible, was largely obscured by the monumentalization of the complex in Phase 2. In this initial phase, the *insula*'s northern side was bordered by an *opus quadratum* portico opening to the south. Archival materials show that this portico featured white plaster decorated with red geometric squares in imitation of *opus quadratum*. From this portico, three tuff sub-plinth bases *in situ* suggest on the basis of parallels a date between the mid-3rd and mid-1st centuries BCE.<sup>26</sup> A portico was also built on the east side, bordered by a tuff water channel connected to an underground hydraulic system. A second water channel marking the eastern side of the *insula* aligned with the urban grid. While no trace remains, a portico on the south side seems likely.

To the excavated area's west, the 1975 campaign uncovered foundations at the same level of the northern portico of an *opus quadratum* building. Only the structure's eastern side was excavated, revealing a

<sup>25</sup> BOEMI 2003.

<sup>26</sup> FOCHETTI, forthcoming.

preserved extent of 17.20 m. Its orientation and relationship to the later temple of phase 2 perhaps suggests an earlier *aedes* oriented east-west, bordered by porticoes.

### Phase 2

In Phase 2, the complex was rebuilt on a monumental scale. The whole area was raised by means of a massive artificial platform (42 x 62 m) contained in substantial perimeter walls. Almost all Phase 2 structures survive at foundation level, built in *opus quadratum* from the same local tuff as the Phase 1 buildings with the addition of limited use of a local grey *peperino*. At the west of the platform, a monumental temple was built, englobing the probable *aedes* structure of Phase 1. The temple, of which only the foundations remain, has an east-west orientation and measures approximately 23 x 32/34 m, corresponding to 77 x 108/115 Roman feet. A single-nave portico flanked the north and south sides of the platform, opening onto the open area. Massive foundation pillars of its colonnade survive. The better-preserved southern portico can be reconstructed to a maximum length of 26.50 m and a depth of ca. 4.00 m. Entrance to the complex was probably provided from the *via Amerina* by a staircase in the middle of the platform's eastern side, where we find a structure built with blocks with an L-shaped profile blocks for housing staircase treads. The 7.50 m wide entrance was on axis with both the Phase 2 temple and the southeast side of the forum, overlooking the building identified as the basilica in geophysical survey.<sup>27</sup> At the platform's southeast corner was a smaller entrance with *peperino* steps *in situ*.

The 1969–75 excavations revealed a series of terracottas, *fistulae* and marble fragments, as well as two fragments of the inscription *CIL XI 3183*.<sup>28</sup> The architectural and decorative terracottas support the building's identification as a temple.

### Phases 3–4

A series of *opus caementicium* structures and later modifications testify to the continued use of the complex into the Empire (Phase 3). A main restoration concerns the creation of a hall (6.70 x 13.40 m) in the southern portico with an entrance framed by two columns or pillars. All that remain are the *opus caementicium* foundations. Later modifications include a massive spoliation phase (Phase 4).

### AREA V: FORUM TABERNAE

Area V is located near the northwestern corner of the town's central forum area, identified by the magnetometry and GPR survey, and ca. 30m to the east of the *via Amerina*.<sup>29</sup> Several anomalies visible in the geophysical data were interpreted as a series of *tabernae* lining the forum's northern flank. A trench of 15 x 15m was opened using a mechanical excavator to remove the plough soil with a small inset (1.34 x 5.30 m) in the SE corner maintaining distance from an olive tree (fig. 20).

Along the area's northern limit, an east-west road was excavated for a stretch of 15m, covered only by topsoil. It was well preserved at its eastern end with stretches near the center and west damaged by modern ploughing and a cut 5m from the trench's western limit where the basalt pavers had been removed. While only 1.4m of its width was excavated, the GPR data indicates a maximum road width of ca. 3.20 m. At the road's eastern limit, the preparation for sidewalk blocks was preserved for a length of 2.46 m.

Room V.1 covers the western third of the trench. It is defined to the east by wall 5004 of large tuff ashlar running north-south and at its west by the wider foundation of a north-south wall 5013 in *opus caementicium* with medium-sized tuff inclusions. In several places the first layer of elevation is preserved with a smooth surface of *caementicium* suggesting bricks or *bipedales* were once laid on top. At its southern limit, wall 5013 returns to the

<sup>27</sup> KEAY et al. 2000: 38–9; MILLETT et al., forthcoming.

<sup>28</sup> DI STEFANO MANZELLA 1981: 146–48, n. 25.

<sup>29</sup> KEAY et al. 2000; VERDONCK et al. 2020.



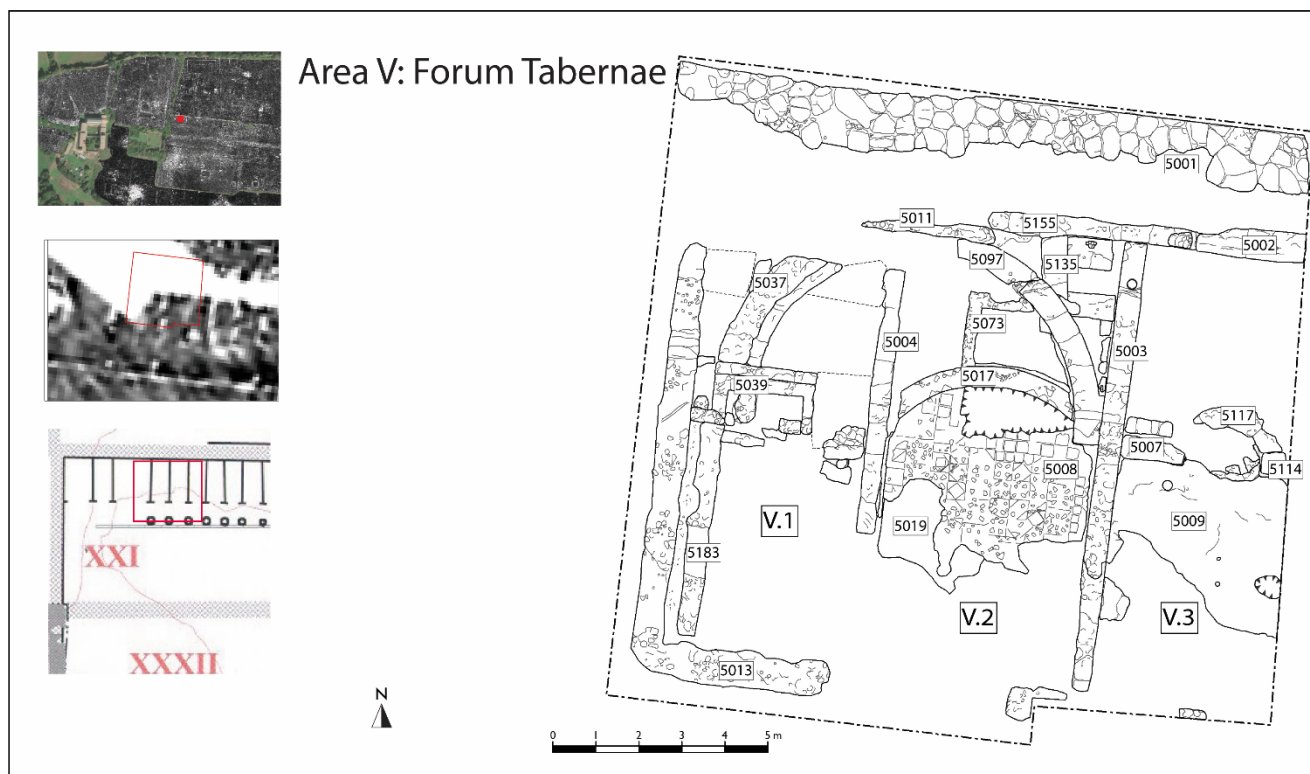


Fig. 20. Area V, location in relation to GPR (VERDONCK et al. 2020) and magnetometry (KEAY et al. 2000) results and plan.

east in the same construction technique, defining the room's southern limit. Two narrow *caementicium* walls were constructed inside these larger exterior walls: 5004 on the eastern side of the room running alongside the eastern tuff ashlar wall; and 5013 constructed along the western side of the room with a small gap between it and the larger *caementicium* foundation. Both end approximately halfway into Room V.1.

In the central area of the room, a small rectangular structure of *opus caementicium* was uncovered. This feature is closed to the west, north and east, but has two smaller projecting walls on its southern side, which appear to be finished on their ends, leaving an opening. A small patch of a thin pale mortar lining was recorded on the upper inner face of the western wall. This rectangular structure's interior contained a loose rubble fill of tuff pieces, fragments of mortar, tile, painted plaster, several iron objects and a small burnt deposit in the SE corner, with amphorae produced in North Africa and Iberia dating to the mid to late Imperial period. A small sondage of 0.50 x 2.10 m was excavated immediately to the south of the structure and a bronze fibula was recovered. A substantial *caementicium* foundation was laid over the entire western third of this rectangular feature itself, forming the SW endpoint of the later apsidal wall 5037 = 5097 that spans Rooms V.1 and V.2 (below).

Three deeper sondages were placed at the northwestern and northeastern corners of Room V.1, as well as between the exterior of the rectangular feature's eastern wall and interior of wall [5004] (see fig. 19). Sondage 1, located at the northwestern corner, revealed that the large, western *opus caementicium* foundation wall 5013 continued to a substantial depth, constructed in a relatively neat, layered fashion using alternating blueish *caementicium* and medium-sized tuff rubble. The eastern side of the sondage exposed a reinforcement in *opus caementicium* abutting the exterior of the large apsidal *vittatum* wall 5037. The cut related to its construction contained a mixture of coarse ware, some amphora sherds and African red slip ware. Sondage 2 at the northeastern corner was filled largely with rubble but exposed the inner face of the large apsidal foundation wall 5037 and Room V.1's eastern *opus quadratum* wall to a depth of 0.75 m.

Sondage 3 at the mid-point of Room V.1 revealed an upper layer of loose dark brown loamy soil mixed with large pieces of building rubble and pieces of *opus sectile* preparation, which likely originate from the adjacent Room V.2 to the east and the destruction of part of its *opus sectile* floor. In its eastern section, wall 5004 was





*Fig. 21. Room V.2, facing north. The excavated opus sectile pavement preparation is visible at center, behind which can be seen the smaller brick and larger vittatum apsidal walls, with the east-west road in the background.*



*Fig. 22. Remaining in situ white tesserae from a mosaic pavement set around a tuff feature in Room V.3.*



excavated to a depth of 1.45 m, with the upper section of the top course of blocks finely drafted but the lower courses dressed roughly, suggesting their use for foundations. The southern section of this sondage revealed a thick mortar and tuff rubble construction running its entire depth, built up against at least three courses of wall 5004 and cutting the compact clay below. At the lowest level, a gently curving, surface of plastered waterproof *signinum* could be traced back under the mortar and tuff construction, continuing south. This probably formed the uppermost section of a cistern built underneath the *taberna*.

Room V.2 is a similarly large rectangular space (10.5 x 4.90 m) in the central area of the trench. At its east is a north-south wall 5177 constructed first in *opus quadratum* using large, dressed tuff blocks, with a later wall 5003 in *opus vittatum* built on top, similar to reused walls in Area I. At its west, Room V.2 shares wall 5004 of Room V.1, and its northern side is the continuation of the east-west wall 5155 running parallel to the east-west road.

Immediately below the plough soil and at the center of V.2 was a large preparation layer for an *opus sectile* floor. While the inlaid stones have been removed, their impressions remain clearly visible allowing a partial reconstruction of their geometric pattern (figs. 20 and 21). The pavement stretches across the width of Room V.2, although it is badly damaged by ploughing and agricultural activities in its southern half. The northernmost section of *sectile* preparation was cut and deliberately removed, perhaps to detach a feature once set into the floor at its center. The pavement abuts the curved wall 5017 constructed in brick (*opus latericium*), two courses of which are preserved above a thick *caementicium* foundation 5044.

Two sondages were placed to the north of 5017. The first, located where the exterior western corner of the curved brick wall 5017 meets the western *opus quadratum* wall 5004 of Room V.2, revealed several compact clay layers. A foundation cut related to the construction of the *opus quadratum* wall along with a loose layer of small tuff, mortar, stone, and painted plaster aggregate were recorded in a small circular area against the northwest corner. The uppermost course of the *opus quadratum* wall on its eastern side was finely dressed to a depth of 0.30 m, then had a projecting face perhaps indicating an original floor level and the transition from elevation to foundation (cf. similar features in Area 2, above). The second sondage, located immediately to the east of the first, revealed two shallow perpendicular walls of poorly built *caementicium* at its western and northern limits. These later constructions abut the large apsidal wall 5016 and smaller curved brick wall 5017. The sondage revealed compact clay layers in the north and a darker more friable layer in the south, both with ceramic and painted plaster inclusions. A deeper layer contained a bronze coin, painted plaster, and a large quantity of amphora sherds, lamps and coarseware ceramics dating to the 1st and 2nd centuries CE.

The northeastern sector of Room V.2 revealed three large rectangular tuff blocks arranged in a U-shape and laid flat as if to form a pavement. A fourth continued to the south, under the *vittatum* apsidal wall. The small triangular space where the exterior of the apsidal *opus vittatum* wall meets the eastern north-south tuff wall of Room 2 was filled with a loose silty loam containing fragments of cookware, amphorae, and a piece of a lamp. A small trace of simple pavement constructed from four ca. 0.07 x 0.07 m pieces of terracotta set into mortar was also preserved in this corner, with another section found to the north with six terracotta blocks set in mortar immediately on top of the northernmost east-west tuff block in the 'U-shape'. Underneath this same tuff block was a cavity built into the northeastern corner of Room V.2 with all four sides constructed of dressed tuff blocks. This was excavated to a depth of 1.3 m, continuing for two courses of blocks and then appearing to end, perhaps indicating an access hole for a cistern or drainage system. The feature bonds with both the northern and eastern *quadratum* walls of Room V.2, and thus seems contemporary with earlier phases of use. Its fill, sampled for environmental analysis but not completely excavated, was a loose dark soil containing tuff fragments, animal bone, and pottery.

Room V.3 is defined to the north by the continuation of the rear tuff ashlar wall 5155 of all three rooms. On the west the room shares wall 5003 whilst its eastern wall is estimated to be ca. 0.5 m beyond the eastern limit of the trench, and its southern side is defined by the continuation of the large *opus caementicium* wall foundation 5176 also recorded in Room V.2. The geophysics and excavations indicate that this monumental later *caementicium* structure had two entrances: one in the western half of Room V.2 and another in the eastern half



Fig. 23. Rear wall of *tabernae* in Room V.3 showing tuff ashlar construction, viewed from south.

of Room V.3. Most of the southern part of Room V.3 was covered by a *cocciopesto* floor with several preparation layers. A modern circular borehole was found in the floor's northwest and two smaller circular holes arranged in linear fashion, perhaps postholes, appear near the room's center. At the floor's central northern edge were 17 *in situ* white *tesserae* and other degraded remnant traces of mortar with negative *tessera* imprints suggest that the entire floor was once finished with mosaic (fig. 22).

A large rectangular tuff block projected from the western wall of Room V.3 with traces of a thin layer of loose mortar on its exterior side surfaces. Parallel to the block and with a gap of ca. 0.15m to the north, a series of three regularly cut square tuff stones perhaps form the remnants of a pavement. Abutting this to the north and east was a rubble deposit containing 201 iron hobnails, residual material (Italian Sigillata, thin-walled ware, lamps dating to the 1st century CE) and local late antique cooking ware of the 5th century CE. Projecting from the trench's eastern section, an identical rectangular tuff block mirrors that above. It preserves a greater amount of exterior coating in mortar along with some traces of plaster. These two stone features are built into the *cocciopesto* floor indicating contemporaneity with the original *taberna*, perhaps as counters or benches. Between these two blocks, a curved feature was constructed from large irregular tuff blocks. It joins the eastern rectangular tuff block, though is badly damaged in the west, and the *cocciopesto* floor to the S has been cut away, found filled with a compact clay layer.

The northern half of Room V.3 was badly disturbed. With no traces of flooring *in situ*, the space was filled almost entirely with rubble layers containing 5th-to-early-6th-century CE ARS forms such as Hayes 91 and 53B Variante Sperlonga 3 type 66<sup>30</sup>, Hayes 59, local amphorae and local cookware. The rubble layers contained several small finds, including a bone hairpin, large quantities of ceramics, tile and animal bone, as well as glass, nails and other metal objects. The northern wall spans all three *tabernae*, constructed in neatly dressed tuff ashlars, however blocks of the uppermost course have been rotated 90 degrees at a later stage and laid on their sides (fig. 23). A small sondage inside the western wall of Room V.3 confirmed that this *quadratum* wall continues

<sup>30</sup> BONIFAY 2004, fig. 105, n.3.



beneath the entire *vittatum* wall and interrelationship with the other ashlar walls: 5004 between Rooms V.1 and V.2 and the rear wall 5155 of all three *tabernae*.

One of the last structural activities related to this area was the construction of the large apsidal wall spanning Rooms V.1 and V.2 (fig. 20). Built with a substantial foundation over 1.3m deep, the wall preserves several courses of *opus vittatum* in an identical style to the adjacent north-south wall 5003. Indeed, it abuts this wall at its southeastern limit and finishes with a square *bipedalis*. This *bipedalis* and the southeastern stretch of the apsidal wall are constructed on top of, and thus postdate, both the smaller curved brick wall 5017 and the *opus sectile* floor, as well as the rectangular feature in Room V.1 (above). While all traces of a floor related to this structure appear to have been destroyed, an indication of its level is provided along its interior eastern side where the foundations finish and elevation in *opus vittatum* begins. This is approximately level with the elevation of the surviving *opus sectile* preparation, perhaps suggesting that this continued to be used even after the smaller curved brick wall was built over. The three parallel *tabernae* (each measuring 10.5 m in length and 4.9 m in width) opening on to the forum to the south can be identified as belonging to the first phase of construction in Area 5 (distinguished by wall foundations of tuff ashlar blocks). Subsequently the spaces were requalified with the construction of a curved wall in Room V.2 and new floor surfaces, before the later construction in *opus caementicium* and a large apse in *opus vittatum* that incorporated all three of the *tabernae*. Future excavations will continue to explore the function and phasing of this later structure.

## CONCLUSIONS

The results of excavation at Falerii Novi thus far prompt several observations about both the city's development over time and the methodology of its excavation. In terms of what we have now learned about the city's historical development, we note two aspects in particular. First is the relative paucity thus far of phasing from the city's very earliest period. Residual pottery across all trenches confirms a human presence at Falerii Novi by the 2nd or perhaps the 3rd century BCE, but little architectural evidence sheds light on the nature of settlement at that date. That is, while we may prefer a date of ca. 241 BCE for the city's massive walls, so far there is little direct evidence of what sat within the circuit at the city's origins. Only the *domus* in Area II thus far yields good evidence of a 2nd century BCE phase. With less confidence, we may speculate about a Late Republican date for some of the more substantial tuff walls of the *tabernae* in Area V and perhaps the sizeable drain running to the northern wall of the *macellum* in Area I. Thus, while ceramic material makes the Republican settlement of Falerii Novi all but certain, its scale and nature remain obscure. Considering the issues of detecting early tuff ashlar masonry with non-invasive means that are raised by our current results (see below), we may wonder at this juncture how best to target areas with potential early phases.

Second, and standing in contrast to the early phases, is the richness of evidence coming into view for Falerii Novi in Late Antiquity and the Early Medieval period across all excavated areas. Abundant evidence converges upon a chronology of the 5th and 6th centuries CE and even in the case of Area III into the 7th century CE. This material includes major building phases in several trenches. Often, later Imperial or Late Antique building techniques suggest coordination across the city: major constructions of *opus vittatum* walls in Areas I and V, late *opus sectile* pavements in Areas I, II, and V, and so forth. That is, the creation of this Late Imperial city seems robust and extensive, and clearly Falerii Novi was a thriving urban community from the 3rd to the 6th centuries CE. We do not yet know precisely when or why the city was abandoned, even as the scatter of later Medieval pottery across most of the trenches offers a tantalizing trace of possible longevity. While the *domus* seems to collapse and become abandoned in a single moment, it is harder to find particular points at which other areas go out of use. This enduring vitality of the late city stands in contrast to a picture of decline in the surrounding landscape suggested by survey in the Tiber Valley.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> cf. PATTERSON, WITCHER, DI GIUSEPPE 2020: 236.

Methodologically, we can start to take stock of the relationship between the results of prior non-invasive survey and what has so far been discovered by stratigraphic excavation. The functional identification of space through magnetometry and GPR data proves successful in general terms, helping guide the program of excavation. At the same time, we emphasize the variation between what may be observed from survey and what is found below the surface. Particular to this site, the magnetometry and GPR appear to be less successful in capturing structures built of tuff blocks and more successful detecting architecture of mortared aggregate. This observation seems especially relevant to our knowledge of the earliest city exclusively built, it would appear, in tuff ashlar masonry.

We also emphasize the highly variable depths across the trenches. This comes as something of a surprise, as our claims to have reached archaeological layers in the 2021 test pit campaign were sometimes proven wrong by excavation. In the case of Area II, test pits finished at depths of 0.30 m where we encountered building rubble, tiles, and archaeological material. However, excavation confirmed that the topsoil was significantly thicker, sometimes requiring us to machine ca. 0.80 m to expose archaeological layers. 19th-century excavation and subsequent agricultural activity seems to have churned up and redeposited archaeological material in the plough horizon. In other parts of the city, by contrast, the overburden proved exceedingly thin. In Areas III and V, archaeological layers sometimes appeared no more than 0.15 m below ground level. In some cases, the difference in elevation was significant between close areas, as for example between Areas I and IV. Archaeological layers in Area I seem very deep, while we may also note the solidity and great depth of foundations in the *macellum*, which seem almost overbuilt. This variability of depths presents a challenge to city-scale excavation, and we hope to improve our picture of the geomorphology of the ancient site in coming years.

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