



## **ARCHEOLOGIA A ROMA - *'I Fori Imperiali cento anni fa' 1912/2012.***

Estratto di Prof. Thomas Ashby, Jr. Lettera all'Editore - THE TIMES / Londra (26/12/1912), p. 7.\*

Prof. Thomas Ashby, Jr; *"Archaeological Research in Italy. I. --- Rome In 1912."*

Letters to the editor of the Times. THE TIMES OF LONDON, (December 26<sup>th</sup>, 1912), p. 7.<sup>i</sup>

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Note: the additional citations below were added to highlight the history of the excavations of the Imperial Fora, and the design of the future archaeological park of Rome in 1911-12, etc.

Nota: le citazioni supplementari qui di seguito sono stati aggiunti per evidenziare la storia degli scavi dei Fori Imperiali, e il design del futuro parco archeologico di Roma nel 1911-12, ecc.

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### I. --- ROME IN 1912. THE IMPERIAL FORA.

*"The question of the excavations of the remains of the Imperial Fora, which occupy the space between the Capital, and the Quirinal, to the north-east of the Forum Romanum, will shortly become urgent."<sup>ii</sup>*

*The thick network of narrow of narrow streets which cover its site is of great hindrance to traffic, and some steps will probably have to be taken in the future to link up the Via Cavour with the Piazza Venezia. Commendatore Prof. Corrado Ricci, the Director-General of the Antiquities and the Fine-Arts in Italy, has brought forward a scheme, which, he admits is not ideally complete; but he rightly considers that to clear the whole area and leave it permanently open would be enormously expensive, and would constitute a hindrance to modern traffic that could not be tolerated for a moment. He therefore proposes an ingenious method by which, with a minimum of demolition, a maximum of archaeological results and monumental effect could be attained.<sup>iii</sup>*

*By excavating the north-eastern portion of this zone, omitting entirely the present the Forum of Julius Caesar and the south-western portions of the other three Fora - those of Augustus, Nerva , and Trajan - the most important part of the be laid bare; and that I may add that the site of the western exedra of the last falls within the area adjacent to the huge monument to Victor Emanuel, and has already been cleared of the houses, so that, though it may not be possible to leave its remains permanently open, there ought to be an opportunity of clearing them and making a plan for them.*

*At two other points of work has already begun in the sense of Commendatore Ricci's scheme - at the colonnade which surrounded the interior of the Forum of Nerva, and at the eastern excedra of the Forum of Trajan, above which now rises the conspicuous Torre delle Milizie, a huge brick tower. I must confess that my feeling is that if Commendatore Ricci's scheme is excellent as far as it goes, it is obvious that if the monument, is to have a proper setting, and if the development of Rome proceeds at its present rate, the whole quarter between the piazza Venezia and the Via Cavour will long have to be pulled down. There is a hardly a building in it which is suited for modern requirements, and few houses possess any architectural interest.<sup>iv</sup> If the work could be taken in hand as a whole, with an agreement that an open mind should be preserved about what was to be done (where the inevitable main artery of communication was to be placed, where modern buildings were to be erected, which sites were to be keep permanently open, and so forth), until the site was completely cleared, that would I think provide the best solution of all; but it is probably more than the archaeologists could reasonably demand; and Commendatore Ricci's scheme, if it can be carried out, provides perhaps the best term that they can expect, and does not prejudice the possibility of future explorations to any great extend.<sup>v</sup>*

\* = Martin G. Conde, "ARCHEOLOGIA A ROMA -'I Fori Imperiali cento anni fa' 1912/2012. Estratto di Prof. Thomas Ashby, Jr. Lettera all'Editore - THE TIMES / Londra (26/12/1912), p. 7." Washington DC, USA (26/12/2012).

[http://www.flickr.com/photos/imperial\\_fora\\_of\\_rome](http://www.flickr.com/photos/imperial_fora_of_rome)

<http://rometheimperialfora19952010.wordpress.com>

**Cover photograph / foto di copertina** = Roma 1912 - "Arco di Costantino," in: 'Di Roma ieri, Roma oggi di Alvaro de Alvaris,' (01/10/2007).

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/dealvaris/3511951097/in/set-72157617771872833>

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<sup>i</sup> Thomas Ashby (1874-1931), Director, British School at Rome (1906-25) / Thomas Ashby (Staines, 14 ottobre 1874 – Londra, 15 maggio 1931) è stato un archeologo britannico.

[http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas\\_Ashby](http://it.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thomas_Ashby)

Thomas Ashby (1874-1931), Director, British School at Rome (1906-25).

- Thomas Ashby: un archeologo fotografa la Campagna Romana tra '800 e '900, Roma 1986

- Archeologia a Roma nelle fotografie di Thomas Ashby, 1891-1930, Napoli 1989

- Il Lazio di Thomas Ashby 1891-1930, vol. 1, Roma 1992

- Sulla via Appia da Roma a Brindisi: le fotografie di Thomas Ashby 1891-1925, Roma 2003

- I giganti dell'acqua: acquedotti romani del Lazio nelle fotografie di Thomas Ashby (1892-1925), Roma - 2007

- Thomas Ashby: viaggi in Abruzzo 1901-23, Milano 2011

<http://www.bsrdigitalcollections.it/ta.aspx>

<sup>ii</sup> On June 4, 1911, the Italian national monument for King Victor Emmanuel II was officially inaugurated in Rome. At the time of the inauguration of the monument, the adjacent Palazzetto Venezia, was still in the process of restoration as designed earlier by prof. Corrado Ricci (ca. 1909-12).

See photos of:

- Roma - "In augurazione del Monumento a V. Emanuele II in Roma - 4 Giugno 1911."

[http://www.flickr.com/photos/imperial\\_fora\\_of\\_rome/5424916814](http://www.flickr.com/photos/imperial_fora_of_rome/5424916814)

-- Roma - 'In augurazione del Monumento a V. Emanuele II in Roma,' Il Messaggero ed. Roma (04/06/1911), prima pagine.

[http://www.flickr.com/photos/imperial\\_fora\\_of\\_rome/3766958422](http://www.flickr.com/photos/imperial_fora_of_rome/3766958422)

- Roma - "Palazzetto Venezia - Archi sottostanti alla Torre della Biscia - Progetto per la loro conservazione dell'arch. Corrado Ricci - (09/11/1910), [Tavola 1 &2]."

[http://www.flickr.com/photos/imperial\\_fora\\_of\\_rome/4176527897](http://www.flickr.com/photos/imperial_fora_of_rome/4176527897)

[http://www.flickr.com/photos/imperial\\_fora\\_of\\_rome/4177287142](http://www.flickr.com/photos/imperial_fora_of_rome/4177287142)

<sup>iii</sup> Also see: Italo Insolera, Francesco Perego, 'Archeologia e città : storia moderna dei Fori di Roma. Nuova edizione riveduta e aggiornata.' – Roma / editori Laterza, 1999. Cf: "I Fori Imperiali Progetto e Lavori. 1982-1999," pp. 375-384, = Antefatto: 1870-1922 / Ingegnere e archeologi di fronte all' antico in Roma Capitale. pp. 26-30. C. Ricci proposed the scheme of - "un minimo di demolizione e un massimo di risultato archeologico e monumentale."

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<sup>iv</sup> Prof. Eugenie Strong, comments below on the houses destroyed during the fascist systemization of the Via dell'Impero in 1929-1933, she wrote: *"cut through what were once tangled slums, impossible to retain in the interests of common decency and hygiene and with nothing artistic or historic to commend them"* (TLS, March 30, 1933).

“Strong, more favorable to the regime than Ashby, seemed not to share his hesitations, and rejoiced in Mussolini's construction, accomplished with the speed of which he was so proud, "ad nutum ducis", "at the Leader's nod", of the Via dell'Impero, the "Road of the Empire" - an Empire both ancient and modern: the parade route from the Piazza Venezia to the Colosseum through the site of monumental imperial Fora. She shed no tears for what was lost: it was *"cut through what were once tangled slums, impossible to retain in the interests of common decency and hygiene and with nothing artistic or historic to commend them"* (TLS, March 30, 1933). The most important development of recent years has been to return to the areas of Fascist clearance, in the conviction that the doubts voiced by Ashby were justified, and that the triumphalism which captured the innocent enthusiasm of Strong was pernicious.”

In: Prof. Andrew Wallace-Hadrill, "LETTER FROM ROME." The Times Online, (London), April 28, 2000. <http://rometheimperialfora19952010.files.wordpress.com/2012/03/hadrill-tls-2000.pdf>

<sup>v</sup> Prof. Thomas Ashby & Prof. Eugenie Strong - (Letter to the Editor), Medieval Rome - Work of the British School in Rome. The Times London (Dec. 10th, 1930), pg. 30. Prof. Ashby and Prof. Strong, stress the importance of establishing a scholarship for Medieval Archaeological Studies in Rome.

Prof. Thomas Ashby & Prof.ssa Eugenia Stong - THE TIMES (Londra, UK). "Roma Medievale - Lavori della British School a Roma. Sottolineare l'importanza di istituire una borsa di studio per gli studiosi inglesi in Studi Medievali Archeologica di Roma." The Times London (10/12/1930, p. 30).

[http://www.flickr.com/photos/imperial\\_fora\\_of\\_rome/4128872572](http://www.flickr.com/photos/imperial_fora_of_rome/4128872572)