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Fig. 1 – Rome, the Imperial Fora & the Via dei Fori Imperiali in 2011-12: View of Trajan’s Column and Forum taken from the roof-top terrace of the Palazzo Valentini overlooking the recently excavated ruins within the Forum of Trajan and the surrounding surviving historic structures dating from antiquity onwards.

“...Nothing remains on the surface of the ground. But, I who was born amid these ruins and who have lived in them, I can testify that in all the cellars of all the houses of the region and in many of the walls, there is evidence to prove that if one where to excavate the ground and demolish the houses, one would find exceptional important information concerning the ancient topography of Rome and the history of the arts.”


‘...Before closing this brief preface, I must warn students against a tendency which is occasionally observable in books and papers on the topography of Rome, — that of upsetting and condemning all received notions on the subject, in order to substitute fanciful theories of a new type.”(...) “Yet there are people willing to try the experiment, only to waste their own time and make us lose ours in considering their attempts. Temples of the gods are cast away from their august seats, and relegated to places never heard of before; gates of the city are swept away in a whirlwind till they fly before our eyes like one of Dante’s visions; diminutive ruins are magnified into the remains of great historical buildings; designs are produced of monuments which have never existed.’

"...We consign to history a group of buildings whose sight is magnificent, a worthy site for the Museum of the Roman Forum."

Prof. Giacomo Boni, 7th November, 1901.

"...The literature on the subject has not increased notably, except by an Italian edition of Prof. [Christian] Hulsen's work on the Forum, and the official reports consist of the publication of a single inscription (Not. Scav. 1904, 106). But Comm. Boni's idea of forming in the new museum [of the Roman Forum] a reference library and a collection of photographs of Roman monuments from all parts of the Roman world is a good one. Such a collection will be of very considerable use to students, if can combine completeness with simplicity of arrangement. There will, of course, be plans and photographs of the Forum itself, and of drawings and views, from the fifteenth century onwards, relating to it, many of which are of greatest value for the study of the subject. Comm. Boni's appeal to those who are interested in it to contribute any books, publications or photographs that have any bearing upon it, and it is to be hoped that further help will be forthcoming towards the formation of the collection."

Prof. Giacomo Boni, 7th November, 1901.

"...The question of the excavations of the remains of the Imperial Fora, which occupy the space between the Capitol, and the Quirinal, to the north-east of the Forum Romanum, will shortly become urgent. 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."

Prof. Thomas Ashby, Jr;
"RECENT EXCAVATIONS IN ROME,"

"The liberal opening to the general public of not only the Imperial Fora but the Roman Forum and the Palatine has, in very practical way, raised the question of the maintenance and the exhibition of the ruins, (...) Opinion will perhaps, at first, be divided as to the degree to which it is justifiable to refill and cover over considerable excavated area in interest of providing free space for the public; but the disquieting way in which structures of friable materials are likely to deteriorate if exposed to attrition, atmospheric agencies and the insidious action of vegetation furnishes a powerful argument in favor of these measures, when once the the remains have been adequately studied, recorded and published; and doubtless each instance must be considered and decided on its own measures."

Prof. Albert W. Van Buren,
[The American Academy of Rome, June 1933].

"...the scheme prepared by Corrado Ricci and Ludovico Poggiaghi in 1911 remained a dead letter. These two men had made a survey of all that was visible of the Fora in the basements of various houses, and, by comparing the material with designs prepared by great artists of the Renaissance, had obtained a marvelous picture of what they thought the locality of the Imperial Fora would look like after the demolitions had been carried out. (...) "...yet, to excavate that vast zone of now occupied by the new street [the Via dell’Impero, now the Via dei Fori Imperiali], to decide its plan on the basis of what might be have been found there of archaeological interest, and to make the street pass over the ruins like a suspension bridge, would have been exceedingly costly and difficult undertaking, and would have required in addition many years of work. This does not mean that partial research cannot be made here and there in order to see what is hidden."

Dr. Guido Calza,
"THE VIA DELL’IMPERO AND THE IMPERIAL FORA,"

The author's purpose is best described in his own words (p. xvi): "to give an exact and methodical account of each monument, to describe its building periods, its architectural and artistic features, in order to bring the reader into direct contact with the structure and serve as a guide for its examination."

Prof. C. A. Raleigh-Radford [-- Review of--],

‘...There is a moral here for archaeologists who are wrestling with the problems posed by the resurrection of Rome: they must resist the temptation to dramatize even the most insignificant ruin in order to lend it importance, and while we are on the subject, they must refrain from advancing flimsy hypothesis, from overhasty, and therefore incorrect identification. These are the pitfalls that lie in their path, pitfalls they must take care to avoid.’

Prof. Pierre Grimal,
“THE ROMAN FORUM – IMAGINATION, MOTHER OF ERRORS,”
'Rome's City Hall is on the Campidoglio, a magnificent public square designed by Michelangelo. Across the Tiber River stands the Vatican, home of the Sistine Chapel and other great works by the master. "Some distance separates us," said Prof. Giulio Carlo Argan, the city's new Mayor, "but the same genius should link us together..."


"Filippo Coarelli wrote the preface to the republication of Christian Hülsen's Il Foro Romano [1905], "...stating that the understanding of the history and archaeology was for all intents and purposes the same today as it had been in beginning of the 20th century."


"The plan for the transformation of the area of the Roman Forum [and the Imperial Fora] originates from the concern with conservation and improvement expressed by Archeological Superintendency of Rome. The town planning, historical, architectural and social aspects of the operation are perhaps more significant than the merely archaeological ones. (...) It is only the starting point to get the first phase of the work going and its needs to be constantly verified, modified and completed on the basis of a continuous social and cultural debate and of the excavation finds as well. (...) The success of the entire project to a large extent will depend on the citizen's degree of involvement and participation, during the excavations and later in the use of the archaeological area as a place where people can meet and pass. Only though a constant exchange of information and ideas will it be possible to bring the project to a satisfactory completion."


"...Much depends, therefore, on interpretation. [Prof. Andrea] Carandini holds that his interpretation is the wisest solution advanced so far to the question of Rome's city origin [in the Roman Forum]. "I am very careful about saying legends are not true," he says. "It is not wise always to say things are not true." (...) [The Italian] Government funds used to support him were expressly earmarked for restoration of the Forum area, not for excavation. The state's purse holders relented only when assured that good restoration depended on the fullest knowledge of the site, including its mysteries. Not everyone was happy about the diversion, but Carandini insists that Rome's legendary beginnings lay waiting beneath the soil. "All the history of Rome is under our feet," he says. "The problem is to reach it."


"I am an undergraduate art history student at Lake Forest College in Lake Forest, IL; working a 'senior thesis' on fascist period archaeology and urbanism in Rome. My interest is specifically the Fori Imperiali, Ara Pacis and mausoleum of Augustus. (If curious, I came upon this topic during a study abroad program last spring with the American University of Rome.) I have hit a wall trying to find information about recent debates, activities and such surrounding the destruction of the Via dei Fori Imperiali and excavating the Fori Imperiali. Some sources I have read say (very briefly) the removal of the Via dei Fori Imperiali is definite and ot...[and the Imperial Fora]

Prof. Linda A. Nolan, [then under-graduate student | art-history], in: "The Imperial Fora Debate & Excavations," [e-mail query], cited from: The 'ROMARCH – Internet List Server,' (February 1996 [retrieved as of May 2001]).

"The modern history of the Imperial Fora is above all one of shifting mentalities and conflicts of interest; if we fail to consider the rapid ideological transformations of our century, we cannot comprehend the problems involved archaeological research. (...) With new excavations, projects for museums, new circulation plans, after more than sixty years the problem of the Imperial Fora is once being confronted with different mentality and, above all, with maturity necessary to avoid underestimating the archaeological delicacy of the historical site and the strategic importance of relation between the environment and the functioning city, touching on a crucial node of the contemporary urban system."


"... [The Via dei Fori Imperiali] from a scenic highway through the ruins to a kind of balcony on the most extensive archeological area in the world..."

“[Early 20th century,] Rome became one of the most important places in the world for the development of archaeology. It was an international gathering place for scholars and a site of ongoing excavation. In time, the evolution of the science led to more exacting methods of preserving all historic structures, and the analytic tools that explained the riddles of ancient Rome were used to gain a more accurate understanding of the construction of buildings from subsequent eras. Gradually, the theory, technical disciplines, and practice of architectural conservation became a specialized study, with Rome as its center. The intellectual conflicts of the Renaissance had given birth to a new urban consciousness in which architectural preservation was regarded as a principal determinant of the city’s welfare.”


“Every city has its battles between preservationists and developers, but in Rome the situation is greatly complicated by the fact that there are so many different Rome’s to preserve—classical Rome, medieval Rome, Renaissance Rome, Baroque Rome, eighteenth-century Rome, post-unification-of-Italy Rome, and Fascist Rome. Each successive Rome is built on top of (and in many cases out of) previous Rome’s—more than two thousand years of history is squashed into dozens of feet of dense rubble. (You can see these striations of civilization at the edges of some of the excavations around the city, and they look almost geological, so thoroughly have the building materials and artifacts been compacted.) This is ‘Roma Che Sparisce’, or Vanishing Rome, the underground city that impinges on the surface city in countless ways…”


“…Knowledge and documentation are indispensable practices for efficiently dealing with problems related to the preservation and safeguard of a historical building: the process of understanding a monument is not only achieved through historical and bibliographical documentation but also through the acquisition of information obtained through direct observations, which is the primary source of discoveries and also an essential method of verification. Last, but not least, is the importance of the geographical area in which the building was constructed, without which it would not even had a reason to exist. The in-depth study of a building under the historic-graphic and critical aspects and interpretation of architectural concepts can all be summarized in the “giudizio di valore = evaluation”, which must be made by taking into account the historical period in which the building, the object of the present study, was constructed.”


“This combination of study, research, survey, recording, practical intervention and cultural exchange made up Boni’s [= Prof. Giacomo Boni – the Archaeological Director of the Roman Forum: 1898-1925] all-round knowledge and fair judgment on historic buildings, which he was never afraid of defending, saving many important buildings from demolition. To complete this extensive scientific and methodological rigor Boni had the capacity to cross reference information from different documentary and physical sources (classical sources, previous explorations, paintings, geology) and an incredible intuition that sometimes was not well understood and was taken as arbitrary interpretation. He did not leave his work in the mere discovery phase, but tried to analyze and to interpret the results, making a great contribution in the debate of the time.” (…) “The main criticism to Boni is that he did not publish more on his work (probably due to lack of time but mainly lack of collaborators willing to disseminate his findings). He compensated for this however by publishing a few important writings, like the one he published in 1901 on archaeological investigation methods: Il Metodo (Boni 1901 [republished in 1913]). In this publication, Boni makes clear how he privileges material evidence. This text discusses the stratigraphic archaeological excavation methodology. Boni had applied a similar approach in the Museo Forense [= The Museum and Antiquarium of the Roman Forum: 1900-1907], but instead of ground excavation, the stratigraphic sections have now been done in elevation. This example stressed the importance of conserving in situ not only the remains, but also some sections that show the stratification over the time. This method also enables the appreciation and research of remains that are not well understood at the time, but which may be understood by future generations.”


‘The study of ancient monuments is still the Cinderella of archaeology: in an archaeological context the value attributed to moveable finds such as statues, mosaics, and vessels, is often considered much more relevant than the remains of a building, which is usually regarded just as a ‘container’ for the exhibits that really matter. Moreover, it is not really clear who should study the buildings: an engineer? Or an architect? Or a particular kind of archaeologist? Of course, cooperation is always welcomed, but the results are valuable only if each specific field of work is well defined, the risk being that only some aspects will be examined, while the overall understanding of the construction will be missed.’

“...A study of the ‘in situ’ data [located in the Forum of Trajan], together with an analysis of literary and bibliographical sources and new documentation allowed for a topographical reconstruction that identified the chronological phases of the more important periods, with particular focus on the connections and possible influences of the conspicuous Imperial remains which, amongst other things, testify to the history of the Roman structures, the temporal vicissitudes by which they were gradually affected, their disappearance, phases of de-population, collapse and re-use, ignored by scholars to date.”

Dr. Arch. Maria Grazia Ercolino,


“Now I'll show you some very interesting things.”

Prof. Clementina Panella, interview in:

‘AIAC | Fasti Online: Excavations on the northeastern slope of the Palatine Hill,’ (15 March 2012).

“...Such difficulties indicate that the reconstruction of any given monument is complicated indeed. Any authoritative treatment should present all the evidence for the site: a measured archaeological plan, drawings of its existing state, a catalogue with photographs and scaled drawings of the architectural elements, full citations of all ancient and modern bibliography, detailed measured reconstructions and perhaps even one or more restored views. And since Roman buildings had columns of colored marble and granite, fine marble veneers and painted architectural elements, the restorations should be colored (as are the illustrations here in vol. I). Such presentations manifestly go far beyond what was possible for the authors of the Atlante” (...). “And digital reproduction would immeasurably improve the Atlante's maps and plans. As published, they are too small to be read easily (even with a magnifying glass), and there is frequently too much information on a single drawing. If the same materials were available online, they could be magnified on-screen so as to clarify all the details, and the maps could be configured (as in Adobe Photoshop) to turn on and off different chronological layers so as to illustrate the details of each period without the distracting presence of earlier or later elements. Without the enormous expense involved in producing modern printed publications, a visitor could, for each monument, access all the relevant images in black, white, and as many colors as necessary. Yet a digital collection of that kind would still be only a first step. With the close collaboration of the participating scholars, the programmers for the digital site could create colored, 3-D architectural models to serve as visual indices for the scholarship the buildings represent; a click on any of the constituent elements could bring up all the known verbal and visual information it represents.”

Prof. James E. Packer,

“The Atlante: Roma antica revealed,”

--- Review of --- ANDREA CARANDINI (a cura di) con PAOLO CARAFA, ‘ATLANTE DI ROMA ANTICA. BIOGRAFIA E RITRATTI DELLA CITTA’ (Mondadori Electa 2012).

“...The problem is more cultural than technical, how to merge the ancient with the modern, knowing that we are not a part of dead city, or a museum such as Ostia or Pompeii. There is no doubt,” continues prof. Panella – “in this strategic urban planning, delicate, more than any other because its fragility, Roman's and its visitors have to change their habits and attitudes, because a large section of this [central archaeological] area will be exclusively reserved for pedestrians.”

Prof. Arch. Raffaele Panella,

“Il dibattito Pedonalizzare I Fori e’ un rischio,”
Note: traduzione a cura della Sig.ra Daniela Carpineti di Roma, (14|06|2013)
= English Translation of the IL MESS., 14 June (2013).

“I want to change what was a highly trafficked street into a walk into history,” Mr. Marino, 58, said in an interview at his offices on the Capitoline Hill, which overlooks the Roman Forum. “It's part of a dream of giving back to Romans, Italians and people from around the world this incredible place where the history of the Western world developed.”

Mayor Ignazio Marino, in:
“Road Through Roman History Creates Colossal Headache [the Via dei Fori Imperiali],”
THE INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE, 1 August (2013), p. 1
& THE NEW YORK TIMES, 31 July (2013), p. 1

Fig. 2 - Roma - Fori Pedonali - “Era Una Strada Sara La Passeggiata Dei Romani | It Was a Street It Will Become Rome's Boulevard,” The ‘Comune di Roma,’ (2013), [retrieved as of May 2014).
INTRODUCTION –
Rome, the ‘I Fori Imperiali,’
the ‘Il Quartiere Alessandrina,’ and the ‘Via
dei Fori Imperiali.’
From: Roma “Restauri di
innovazione” 1913 to Roma
“Ininterrottamente” 2013.

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...To expose and exploit this
heritage remained the urban
policy through the early decades
of Roma Capitale, and most
emphatically so under the Fascist
regime. “Surely, among the great
expedients of Mussolini,”
commented Baldini in 1932, “that
of showing Rome to the Romans
will remain on of the most
memorable.” To the Romans ...
and to us. We do not recall
enough that what we see and
study the architectural history of
Rome has been selected, cleaned
up and staged for us by the
planners and rulers of Third
Rome. They were the ones who
decided which past buildings were
worth of preservation, and which
expendable for the sake of
progress; how much of excavated
antiquity would be retained for
show, and how much quickly
buried again under paving or new
construction. To be a creditable
student of Roman antiquity or the
Middle Ages, or the Renaissance
and Baroque, should presuppose
solid familiarity with modern
Rome, its city archives,
contemporary newspapers,
journals.’

Prof. Arch. Spiro Kostof,
“The Third Rome: The Polemics of
Architectural History,” in;
239-250.

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KEYWORDS:
I. Roma “Restauri di innovazione” (1913) = Prof. Giacomo Boni, "...‘Ricostruire le aree archeologiche' con percorsi e insiemi arborei, diposti secondo
schemi didattico-ricostruttivi," (1891); Prof. G. Boni, "Esplorazioni stratigrafiche," (1901 [republished in 1913]); Prof. Corrado Ricci, “...Un minimo di
demolizione e un massimo di resultato archeologico e monumentale,” (1912); Prof. Arch. Gustavo Giovannoni, "Restauri di innovazione," (1913).

II. Roma “Ininterrottamente” (2013) = Dr. Arch. Barbara Baldrati (2003); Philipp Schmitt M.A., (2005); Dr. Arch. Angela Lombardi (2006); Dr. Arch.
Cristina Gonzalez-Longo (2006); Dr. Arch. Giulio Testori (2007); Dr. Arch. Maria Grazia Ercolino (2008); Dr. Stefania Faro (2009); Dr. Antonio Lopez
Garcia (2009-10), & Sig. Alvaro de Alvariis (2013).
**Fig. 3** (above page 6): (Left) - General plan of the historic center of Rome, showing the areas of the Roman and the Imperial Forums, the Markets of Trajan, and the Via dei Fori Imperiali (former Via Dell’Impero) between the Piazza Venezia and the Colosseum Valley before start of the large-scale architectural surveys and archaeological investigations in the mid-1990s onwards. (Right) - General plan of the historic center of Rome, as above, showing the progress of the large-scale architectural surveys and archaeological investigations conducted between 1995 and 2009. Foto | source: Prof. Arch. Raffaele Panella, “Progetto di sistemazione dell’area archeologica centrale Roma | 2009,” in: Centro Progetti del Dipartimento di Architettura e Progetto DiAP, La Sapienza - Universita’ Di Roma (2012), PDF, p. 9 of pp. 1-26. http://www.progettidiar.it

**Fig. 4.** Comparative aerial views of the historic center of Rome in 1909 (right) and 2012 (left), with each view showing the ‘present-state’ of Rome's center following the major architectural surveys and archaeological investigations conducted as of the first decades of the early 20th and the early 21st century. Foto source: “Roma dell’altro,” in: ‘ROMA IERI OGGI,’ FLICKR (11 June 2014).