Introduction

Metro Line C runs from the Pantano terminus through the southeastern suburbs of Rome. Near Via Casilina Vecchia its course runs steadily closer to the external perimeter of the Aurelian Walls before cutting it near Porta Matronia (Fig. 3.1).

The results of the archaeological investigations carried out along Via La Spezia and Via Sannio, published as a series of preliminary reports, show evidence of intense human activity before the construction of the Aurelian Walls. These reports record different types of land use in different settings, but it is hard to get a broader understanding of the overall topography from them.1 This is because the excavations examined areas selected for building development rather than covering a large, connected area. It is also because there is a lack of archaeological data from nearby areas, where the exceptionally deep foundations of modern buildings have obliterated or obscured archaeological evidence. Furthermore, there is little evidence from the areas inside the Walls to the east of the Porta Asinaria, at the beginning of Viale Carlo Felice. Yet the archaeological evidence suggests that the river banks – here tentatively identified with the Aqua Crabra or one of its branches2 – were farmed from the third century BC, as were most of the areas excavated so far. The river worked as a catalyst in this sense, and imposing embankments to control its floods were

This chapter was translated from the Italian by Dr Giacomo Savani.

1 Via La Spezia produced a tuff quarry abandoned and filled in during the third century. It also produced agricultural features from the first to the fifth centuries AD near the Lodi metro stop (see R. Rea (ed.), Cantieristica archeologica e opere pubbliche: La linea C della metropolitana di Roma (Rome, 2011)). Part of a large farm dating from the first century AD was excavated near San Giovanni stop (see R. Rea, ‘Archeologia nel suburbi di Roma: La stazione S. Giovanni della Linea C della Metropolitana’, in A. F. Ferrandes and G. Pardini (eds.), Le regole del gioco: Tracce archeologici raccont: Studi in onore di Clementina Panella (Rome, 2016), 425–42). A marble workshop dating to the Hadrianic period was found in the gardens of Via Sannio, near Porta Asinaria (see M. Martines, ‘Un laboratorio di marmi fuori Porta Asinaria: Scavi Metro C 2006–2007’, Bollettino di Archeologia Online 6 (2015), 1–24). Rea wrote the introduction and section on Amba Aradam in this paper, Saviane the section on the via Sannio.

built in the third century BC. These allow us to indirectly reconstruct the original river bed (Fig. 3.2). Things started to change in the second half of the first century BC; the land use became diversified and the complexity of the landscape increased. This process continued up until the construction of the Aurelian Walls, which effectively created intra-mural and extra-mural areas, now linked only by roads that passed through gates and posterns. From the last quarter of the third century AD land use takes a more homogeneous form, mainly characterised by agricultural and funerary use. The construction of the Aurelian Walls modified and, in places, substantially reduced the width of the river bed. It was not until the twelfth century that we can find a more structured land use like the one in place during the Republican period, which continued until the nineteenth century.3

This is the picture that has emerged from rescue archaeology carried out in this area. We do not have stratigraphic continuity between archaeological sites of the imperial period located inside and outside the area later to be occupied by the Aurelian Walls. The different height of layers should not be

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interpreted a priori as an indication of different land use. A dense urban fabric is suggested by structures later incorporated into the Walls and still emerging around them, with architectonical solutions being employed to compensate for variations in the ground height. In some cases, however, these variations had an impact on the settlement development: the farm of San Giovanni, for instance, was built in the first century AD at the foot of a hill.

While recent investigations carried out in the gardens of Via Sannio at the foot of the Lateran hill have opened new perspectives on the topographic relationship of this area with the hill itself, the excavations in Viale

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4 See A. M. Colini, *Storia e topografia del Celio nell’antichità* (Memorie della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia 7) (Vatican City, 1944).

Ipponio have shed new light on the function of the large area between the southern slope of the Caelian and the Lateran hill.

The Amba Aradam–Ipponio Station

The station in Viale Ipponio lies around 15 m away from the Aurelian Walls. The excavation covers an area of 3,348 m² and approximately 30 m deep from modern ground surface to virgin (natural) soil. About 2,000 m² had been investigated at the time the buildings discussed in this chapter were uncovered, and work had exposed surface areas dating to the first century BC (c. 9 m deep). The archaeology of this area was previously unknown, with the exception of some structures discovered in 1999–2000 between Via Farsalo and Via Illiria. These were found between 25.23 and 23.85 m above sea level and were oriented in the same direction as the barrack-like Ipponio complex discussed below.

Variations in the ancient ground level have been reconstructed comparing orthometric heights obtained via borings. These were quite significant, ranging between 12 and 18 m above sea level (Fig. 3.3). A depression (12 m above sea level at its deepest point) was identified near the northwest corner of the station, and has been identified as part of a basin that lies between the southern slope of the Caelian and modern Piazzale Metronio.

Five macro-phases (dating from the first to the twentieth centuries AD) have been recognised at the site so far, a chronology that matches the data from Via Sannio and Via La Spezia. A Roman building was located beneath the post-classical and modern deposits. This building reached its greatest extent during the first half of the second century AD, covering an area of 1753 m². Its floor levels varied between 22 and 23.70 m above sea level (Fig. 3.4). The complex, only partially excavated, extends beyond the station, and only its eastern limit seems to have been identified so far.

Analysis of this complex suggests that it was built in accordance with ground morphology: the ground sloped south–north and east–west towards the depression near the northwest corner of the station. The stream identified in Via Sannio flowed to the north of the site. The complex was therefore built on different levels, gently sloping towards the stream (east–west). The instability of the ground required frequent later interventions.

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Fig. 3.3 The landscape before human interventions.
Fig. 3.4 Amba Aradam Ipponio station: the building partially excavated inside the perimeter of the station. Heights and numbers of the rooms are indicated.
The excavated building revealed a long corridor linking thirty-four rooms; the southern ones were gradually cut off by the perimeter of the station (Figs 3.5–3.6). To the northeast, three other rooms have been located at a lower level than the corridor, but their investigation has been temporarily suspended. Finally, another wing with at least six rooms was orthogonally attached to the east side of the building, at a higher height than the corridor. Forty-three rooms have been identified to date. At the eastern end of the site there was a large open space, divided into two sections by long rectilinear walls.

The complex was built in the second half of the first century AD, and was subsequently modified during the second and third centuries. It is possible to attempt an analysis of how the complex was used at the beginning of the second century, during the Trajanic period. Works at the site continued apparently without interruption, and the building reached its final layout in the Hadrianic period. The dating of the Hadrianic phase is suggested by the presence of several stamped bricks preserved in situ. Two different stamps of the *figlinae Sulpicianae*, dating between 129 and 139,8 have been found in the same brickwork.

The two parts of the building had different characteristics (see Fig. 3.5): the southern part included the corridor and the rooms linked to it, twenty-four of which had a square plan (4 x 4 m, 16 m² each); the northern one, only partially excavated, lay at a lower level than the southern rooms. The corridor was 1.50 m wide. It had a mortar floor that started to gently slope towards the southwest (from 22.15 m to 22.90 m, with a difference in height

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8 *CIL* XV 585b, 395b.
of 0.75 m) soon after Rooms A26 and A13 (see Fig. 3.5). The twenty-four rooms were built at the same time over an area of 672 m². They faced each other and were aligned along the corridor, to which they were linked via staggered doors of the same size, originally equipped with marble thresholds. Most of the rooms were constructed in opus mixtum with panels in cubilia (7 x 7 cm) and horizontal courses of irregular tuff blocks. The linking structures against which the partition walls between rooms were leaning were in opus vittatum, made of tuff blocks alternated with bricks. The walls were between 0.30 and 0.45 m thick. Part of the perimetral structures and those in opus vittatum were 0.60 m thick.

The back side of the rooms to the north of the corridor, originally underground, consisted of exposed brick walls made of horizontal courses of irregular tuff blocks. Segmental arches with brick voussoirs were used to support the weight of the walls.

Two rooms (A14 and A30), located at the western and eastern end of the complex, had peculiar characteristics (see Fig. 3.4). The door in Room A14 was wider and connected with stairs to the upper floor), with a fountain in front of it. Room A30 had windows, allowing for lighting and aeration of the rooms at a lower height. Under its opus spicatum floor, there was
a drain sloping east–west, in line with the slope of the ground, linked to two brick-made shafts. There was also a brick-made fountain/pool in this room.

In the Hadrianic period a new wing was added to the east side of the building and the open space to the east of the complex was reorganised (see Figs 3.4–3.5). The new rooms, between 0.38 and 0.80 m higher than the corridor, were also built in *opus mixtum*. They had a rectangular plan (8.45 x 4.50 m, c. 38 m²) and floors made of *opus spicatum*, *bipedales* or *opus signinum*. These types of flooring suggest that these rooms were service areas. The corridor extends beyond the western end of the excavated area, bending to the south in line with the new wing, which also continues beyond the excavated area.

Due to the incomplete state of the excavations, it is not possible to identify the doors that linked the rooms in the new wing and those between them and the two eastern areas, which were separated by a wall. The first one had a simple mortar floor over a substantial preparation layer. The second one was probably a green area, located between the former and the complex’s eastern boundary. The lower part of the boundary wall, identified along the entire width of the excavation (31 m), was built in *opus reticulatum*. It dates to the first building phase and was subsequently modified and reused. During the Hadrianic phase the door between the corridor and Room A30 was blocked, while a new entrance was opened on corridor A31. The access to the corridor from Rooms A27 and A28 onwards was also blocked and two blocks of stone, probably the base for a gate, were placed alongside these two rooms. The eastern part of the building was therefore intentionally separated from the twenty-four rooms to the west of the complex.

Mosaic floors have been recovered from five rooms on the northern line of rooms. Only the one in Room A25 is complete. The rooms were decorated internally with wall paintings characterised by geometric motifs (rectangular frames) on a background of different colours (white, red, yellow); some sections retain faint traces of floral motifs. The east pool was built between the end of the second and the third centuries at a higher level than the corridor, with a difference in height of about 1.50 m (see Fig. 3.5). From the second half of the third century, during the construction of the Aurelian Walls, part of the complex was reorganised, and the rest was demolished.

The plan of the building and its position in the topography of the Caelian hill suggest that it was most likely designed as barracks (Fig. 3.7). The complex was 59.43 m long (200 Roman feet) and 11.32 m wide (around 40 Roman feet). The ratio between length and width was 5:1. Each of the twenty-four rooms of the barracks could have hosted four people,
a grand total of about a hundred people (ninety-six), corresponding to a *centuria*. The building had an upper floor, and the number of people would have been then around 200, corresponding to two *centuriae*. If we were to argue that the complex hosted a cohort of 500 people, then we might hypothesise the presence of a similar building, perhaps further to the south, and of a third one with only one floor.

The centre-to-centre distance between doors was 2.50 m, enough to accommodate a line of four individuals occupying the same room, spaced with a distance of an arm’s length between them. If we envisage that the rooms were planned in a modular way to accommodate the soldiers of the *centuria*, it could be argued that such an arrangement would have allowed them to leave the two-storey building quickly and in an orderly manner whenever needed. Those living in the upper floor would have used the stairs in Room 14, which had a door large enough to facilitate the exiting of a large group of people. Another flight of stairs was probably symmetrically located to the eastern end of the complex.

Each room could host a maximum of four beds, and there was enough space in the corridor for 100 people in single file (see Fig. 3.7). The front wall of each room was of the right size for a bed to be placed to the right of the door, which was almost certainly single-leaf and opened in the opposite direction. A similar solution was adopted in the reconstruction of the *castrum* of Nijmegen, where three bunk beds and a single bed have been

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**Fig. 3.7** Above: plan and distribution of the billets. Below: scheme of the billets and the corridor, with the ninety-six occupants of the rooms in single file.
envisioned for each room (Fig. 3.8). The billets were separated from the rest of the complex by a gate at the eastern end of the corridor.

The standard plan of Roman barracks up until the fourth century was introduced in the Claudio-Neronian period, although some of its characteristics can be found in buildings of the earlier Augustan and Tiberian periods. While variations due to topographical differences and availability of building materials did occur, the spatial and functional balance between the different components of these complexes tended to be maintained, regardless of the size of the barracks. These buildings were overall similar and homogeneously organised.

This topic has been widely explored by scholars. In 1989 Davison carried out a complete analysis of all known Roman barracks, including three sites in Italy: Ostia, Albano and Rome. He claims that differences in the plans of these buildings could be explained exclusively by variations in their function. While the presence of stables might suggest a cavalry barracks, a ‘standard’ set of stables has not yet been identified and it is not always possible to identify them. Furthermore, without official documents it is extremely difficult to distinguish between legionary and auxiliary barracks, and between barracks hosting different auxiliary units. Military installations included billets, quarters for the officers, taverns, ovens, latrines,

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Fig. 3.8 Museum Het Valkhof, Nijmegen: the interiors of the billets.

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warehouses, washing facilities, storerooms, waste pits, kitchens, stables, and other buildings such as infirmaries/hospitals. While complexes on the limes had to be self-sufficient, barracks in Rome seemingly included only essential facilities.

Davison states that the surface occupied by billets in cohorts’ barracks was between 140 and 300 m². The size of a single billet varied between 14 and 29 m², most commonly between 21 and 25 m². Smaller examples were almost always located in installations believed to have been occupied by auxiliary infantry units. Davison distinguishes three groups of billets according to their size: those between 25 and 100 m² were part of small barracks; between 125 and 525 m² of medium-size barracks, the most common ones usually hosting auxiliary troops; and between 650 and 800 m² were part of large barracks. Legionary castra, which varied between 675 and 850 m², were part of the latter group.

Following Davison’s categories, the barracks of Viale Ipponio, where the twenty-four rooms at the ground floor alone cover 672 m², should be included among the large complexes. The size of each room was 16 m², with 7 m² available to each soldier. The plan of the building can be included in Davison’s typology F (Fig. 3.9). Given the particular conditions in Rome, however, we should be cautious in assuming that these general categories apply.

The site of Viale Ipponio did not produce any evidence that could help us to identify this complex more precisely. The Regionary Catalogues, generally dated to the fourth century, do not mention abandoned

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Fig. 3.9 Barracks plan: Davison’s typology F.
complexes, and this one was mostly ruinous at the time. The excavation revealed only part of the complex, including some of the billets and purpose service area. While further work is required, it is already clear that the complex extended far beyond the site of the station.

This is not the place to examine in detail all the barracks of Rome. Figure 3.10, however, shows the plans of the main barracks discovered in the city, and similarities can be recognised between the billets at the Ipponio site and those of the Castra Peregrinorum.

We should now briefly discuss the topographical context of the site (Fig. 3.11). The Caelian is well known for the presence of barracks: the barracks of the fifth Cohort of Vigiles, built under Trajan and functioning at least until the beginning of the third century; the Castra Peregrina, also dating to the Trajanic period and in use until the second half of the third century; the Castra Nova Equitum Singularium, dating to the Severan period, now lying under the archbasilica of Saint John Lateran and discussed elsewhere in this

Fig. 3.10  Plan of other barracks from Rome and plan of the Ipponio barracks. In the centre, a new fragment of the Forma Urbis shows the barracks of the fifth Cohort of Vigiles on the Caelian hill (Meneghini, ‘La Forma Urbis severiana’).

Fig. 3.11 The barracks on the Caelian and the Ipponio barracks (After Colini, Storia e topografia del Celio).
volume; and the Castra Priora Equitum Singularium, in use from the early second century, through the third and probably into the fourth century, built between Regio II and V and now under Via Tasso–Via Emanuele Filiberto and Via Statilia. The Ipponio barracks, completed in the Hadrianic period, should now be added to the list. Most of these sites – four out of five – were built under Trajan and Hadrian. All these barracks were close to the Campus Caelemontanus, which has been identified with the Campus Lateranensis (near Piazza San Giovanni in Laterano) and with the Campus Martialis, an area perhaps dedicated to military exercises of the equites or even of other units.\(^{12}\)

The area between Porta Maggiore and the Lateran (Regio V) transformed by Maecenas’ reclamation into a residential quarter of large private houses, in time became home to military facilities, such as the Castra Priora.\(^{13}\) Elagabalus built the Castrensis amphitheatre, which was large enough to host 3,500 people\(^{14}\) and is comparable to the amphitheatres at Carnuntum in Austria and Aquincum in Hungary. In 1998 Federico Guidobaldi suggested a link between this amphitheatre and the Castra Priora and Nova, but this building might have also been used by soldiers from other barracks nearby during the first half of the third century AD.\(^{15}\)

The area between Porta Maggiore and San Giovanni is believed to have been the centre of the system of imperial proprieties in the eastern suburbium of Rome. It is possible that this system included also the area of Via Sannio and, more likely, the area of Viale Ipponio where the barracks have been found.\(^{16}\)

The Shaft in the Gardens of Via Sannio

A multifunctional shaft (Shaft 3.3) was dug in the gardens of Via Sannio to serve Metro Line C of Rome (route T3: San Giovanni–Fori Imperiali

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\(^{16}\) Barbera, ‘Dagli Horti Spei Veteris’. 
Colosseo; see Fig. 3.1. Rescue excavations were carried out over an area of approximately 1,440m² between August 2014 and July 2016, previous investigations had been undertaken in 2006–7 in the an area northeast of the site (Fig. 3.12).

The site was excavated under the direction of R. Rea of the Soprintendenza speciale for the Colosseum and the central archaeological area of Rome, in collaboration with F. Montella and S. Morretta of the same Soprintendenza. Fieldwork, coordinated by N. Saviane, was carried out by M. A. Castagna, M. Carcieri, E. Civitelli, A. Di Feo, V. Forte, C. Frontani, A. Iannaccone, F. R. Paolillo and A. Sebastiani for Land s.r.l.–Indagini Territoriali e Archeologiche (technical supervisor: R. Leonardi). M. Casalini was in charge for the materials analysis. Photographic recording of the site was realised by M. Letizia and T. Letizia, video recording by B. Fruttini. Topographic surveys were executed by A. Caioli, field drawings by A. Di Feo, C. Frontani, F. R. Paolillo, N. Saviane. I would like to thank all my colleagues for their valuable contribution to this project. I would also like to thank R. Rea for letting me publish these new, if partial, data from the excavations.


Fig. 3.12 The structures found in the gardens of Via Sannio.
The stratigraphy of the excavation, 16 m thick, ranges from modern buildings down to the middle Republican period (Fig. 3.13). The material from the upper 4.5 m dates to the beginning of the twentieth century and is linked to the construction of the Appio-Tusculano quarter (see Fig. 3.13, in light grey). Immediately underneath there were strata from the second half of the seventeenth and the nineteenth centuries, showing a slow rising of the ground level and evidence for agricultural use in the area outside the Aurelian Walls (see Fig. 3.13, in dark grey). This agricultural use is attested by planting-holes and recorded in contemporary maps (max. thickness: 2.50 m, between about 29 and 26.50 m above sea level).¹⁹ No activity dating between the seventh and the sixteenth centuries has been recorded. Written sources, the earliest of which dates to the papacy of Callixtus II (1119–24),²⁰ and ancient maps indicate a stream called Aqua Mariana or Aqua Crabra, perhaps named in memory of the Ancient Aqua Crabra mentioned by Cicero, Frontinus and Procopius.²¹ While this stream was not identified during the excavations, small signs of erosion, accumulation of clay and sandy loam sediments in the southern sector of the site, as well as evidence of earth and masonry canalisation works, suggest its proximity.

The evidence from the fourth–sixth centuries is limited, mostly consisting of layers of levelling between 1 and 2 m thick, lying between 27 and 26 m above sea level. These layers reveal a north–south slope, which increases towards the southern end of the excavated area, possibly due to its proximity to the stream. A channel following a sinuous course dating to the fourth century passes through the site and was obliterated in the late fourth–early fifth centuries, when the Aurelian Walls were rebuilt by Honorius. Finally, three burials dating to the middle of the fifth century were located, contemporary with another three burials excavated in 2006–7 (see Fig. 3.12).²²

A 1 m stratum of debris has been interpreted as backfill soil from the construction of the Aurelian Walls in the second half of the third century (see Fig 3.13, in sky blue). The same slope seen in the Late Antique layers of levelling can be seen here, and its surface is likely to have been the grade

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²¹ Rea, ‘Archeologia nel suburbiio di Roma’.
²² These burials were excavated under the direction of W. Pantano. Four of these were simple inhumation burials and two were *enchytrismòs* burials. The funerary assemblage from one of them included a small ceramic jug; another one had two bone objects, a hairpin and a dice (see Martines, ‘Un laboratorio di marmi’). Other burials have been found near the excavations of San Giovanni Metro C Station (see Rea, ‘Archeologia nel suburbiio di Roma’).
plane of the Walls, previously identified by analysing a core from the inside of these fortifications.  

Further down we found a wall in *opus vittatum*, mostly ruinous, dating to the early Severan period (running northeast–southwest, 0.6 m wide). This structure was first located during the preliminary excavations in 2006–7 to the northeast of Shaft 3.3 (see Fig. 3.12, in green). It was at least 110 m long, with a maximum height of 2 m. A channel, with masonry abutment and tile floor, was found to the southeast of it. The wall seems to have been built to terrace the sloping land, with a difference of 1.50 m between the uphill (on the side of the Walls: 25.30 m above sea level) and downhill planking levels (on the side of Via Sannio: 23.85 m above sea level; see Fig. 3.13, in red). Planting-holes and post-holes with irregular distribution were found in the latter area, together with a narrow trench. This ran parallel to the wall and might have hosted a water pipe in *tubuli* or *fistulae*. A northeast–southwest track with carriage ruts was located 15 m from the wall, near the southern end of the excavation. A structure on the uphill side

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of the wall, possibly part of a garden, was identified in the 2006–7 excavations (see Fig. 3.12, in green). These structures are contemporary with the construction of the Castra Nova Equitum Singularium on top of the Lateran hill, the cavalry barracks built by Septimius Severus. We know that the latter donated to his friend T. Sextius Lateranus the Aedes Parthorum, later known as Aedes Laterani. The location of this complex near the archbasilica has been possible owing to the discovery in the seventeenth century of two lead fistulae stamped with the name of Sextius Lateranus.26

The construction of the wall in opus vittatum pre-dates a sequence of ground surfaces dating between the late Flavian and the early Antonine periods, each of which preserves a track running northeast–southwest on its southeast side.27 The oldest of these surfaces (see Fig. 3.13, in yellow), dating to the late Flavian period, contains three parallel rows of almost 300 ollae perforatae28 running northeast–southwest across and beyond the excavated area. Some rooms dating between the end of the first and the early second century were identified during the preliminary excavations in 2006–7 (see Fig. 3.12, in orange).29 These rooms, linked to a corridor running north-west–south-east, were part of a building with at least two storeys, of which only the southeastern end is known. They were probably part of marble workshops, the floor surface of which lay 23.80 m above sea level. The construction of this building post-dates the levelling of two structures in opus mixtum. A fragment of opus signinum (23.50 m above sea level) dates the latter structures to the Flavian period, on the basis of a comparison with the heights recorded in the excavation of the shaft. The ‘Garden of the ollae’


27 There are three different tracks, one over the other, located at 21.77 m, 22 m and 22.35 m above sea level, respectively.


overlays the remains of a portico, located near a green area. Three phases of the latter have been recognised, from the mid-first century AD and the Flavian period (Fig. 3.14). We will discuss them in more detail later on.

The construction of the portico levelled a complex built in *opus reticulatum* with tuff blocks, identified to the southwest of the excavated area (see Fig. 3.12, in purple; Fig. 3.15). Only the northeastern end of this building is known. It was modified several times between the early and mid-first century AD. Room 1 was part of the earliest phase, a heated room equipped with *suspensurae*. During a following phase, a set of rooms (Rooms 2–8) with earth floors were added to the structure. They were built around an open courtyard (Room 3). Room 2 was a portico with columns and pilasters in *opus testaceum*. Later structures with rectangular hollows, possibly flowerpots, were found leaning against them. The skeleton of an equine was located in Room 2, dating to the last phase of the complex. Outside the building there was a masonry water pipe with three different phases (see Fig. 3.15, in azure).

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30 This building was contemporaneous with a farm of the Augustan period (abandoned at the end of the first century CE) found during the construction of the San Giovanni Metro C Station (see Rea, ‘Archeologia nel suburbio di Roma’).

31 This burial was recorded by L. Brancazi.
Underneath these rooms there was a homogeneous backfill layer (mid-first century BC) covering a sunken area, dug in the second half of the third century BC perhaps to collect water. Only the southeastern end of this feature has been identified, where a masonry structure in *emplekton* runs northeast–southwest (see Fig. 3.12, in red). This was built in roughly squared blocks of tuff of the ‘cappellaccio’ type (1.35 m wide; higher height: 20.30 m above sea level), only one course of which survives on both sides. Between the two sides there was a difference in height of around 0.60 m (lower height: 19.50 m above sea level; higher height: 20.10 m above sea level). To the southeast of this structure there was a rectangular trench filled with clay, probably to waterproof it (0.60 m wide and 1.10 m high). The bottom of the sunken area lies above archaeologically sterile ground (lower height: 18 m above sea level) and does not include sediments indicating running water. Instead, it is covered by a layer of clay rich in gastropoda, suggesting stagnant water. This might have been a basin for collecting water, running alongside the river. The tuff blocks of the embankment were found scattered in the sunken area, perhaps following a violent flood event or the voluntary dismantlement of the structure. The embankment of Via Sannio is related to the one recorded during the

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32 Inside the excavated area, the basin covers an area of 800 m² (max. length: 62.50 m; max. width: 17.50 m). Its minimal estimated capacity was 890,000 litres of water (assuming that the water level touched the first course of tuff blocks). Based on borings in the area outside the shaft, the basin was probably between 21 m and 24 m wide, and it extended for at least 56 m to the northeast of the site. According to this reconstruction, the basin would have covered at least 2,500 m², hosting 2,780,000 litres of water.
excavation of the San Giovanni Metro C Station. No lateral trenches were found there, and the structure was broader, but it dated to the same period and was constructed with the same building technique.  

Two perpendicular structures in blocks of tuff, perhaps parts of fences, pre-date the construction of the embankment. They date to the early third century BC and their ground surface lay approximately 19.20 m above sea level (see Fig. 3.12, in sea green). These are the oldest structures identified during the excavation, and lie on natural fillings of a palaeo-channel of the river Tiber dating to the Holocene. This palaeo-channel ran northeast–southwest and cut Pleistocene volcanic deposits, including those of the Lateran hill. The northern river bank was located during the excavation between 19.10 m and 12.90 m above sea level (see Fig 3.13). The upper fills of the channel were of natural origin but contained isolated artefacts; the latest of these dated to the fourth century BC at the latest. The archaeologically sterile alluvial will was observed at 17 m above sea level.

Following this general introduction to the site and its stratigraphy, we will now discuss in more detail the portico built in the mid-first century AD (Phase 1; see Fig. 3.13, in dark blue; Figs 3.14, 3.16). The building faced northeast–southwest and was 9.30 m wide. While its length inside the shaft site was 63 m, it certainly continued beyond the limits of the excavated area both towards the northeast and southwest. The building was enclosed to the northwest by a wall in opus mixtum with panels in opus reticulatum and courses in opus mixtum of bricks and tufelli with a saw-tooth pattern. When excavated, the structure was 1.60 m high, but collapsed material found nearby suggests an original height of at least 3.20 m. A dwarf wall in opus reticulatum, interpreted as a colonnade’s base, enclosed the southeast side of the portico (0.78 m wide; 0.26 m high). Two fragments of columns in African marble (diameter of the lower scape: 0.68 m; diameter of the shaft: 0.60 m) might have come from this colonnade. The dwarf wall underlay a narrow wall in opus testaceum, of which three courses survived, with empty spaces for the columns. The portico was

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33 Rea, ‘Archeologia nel suburbio di Roma’.
34 R. Funiciello, A. Praturlon and G. Giordano, La geologia di Roma dal centro storico alla periferia (Florence, 2008), unnumbered table.
35 To the south of the excavation, the cut of the ditch was recorded through coring down to a minimum height of 9 m above sea level.
36 The wall was 35 m long and 0.58 m wide. The brickwork was very regular: the side of each cubilium was 7–7.5 cm; the small blocks of tuff were 15–28 cm long and 7.5–8.5 cm thick; the bricks used to form the courses were of a light yellow-pinkish colour and 16–26 cm long. Those used just above the foundations were 13–50 cm long. The mortar was of a light brown-greyish colour and was made with lime and crumbled brown volcanic material, with inclusions.
37 The structure is cut by blocks of travertine dating to the following phase, located about 4.70 m from one another. Both the structures enclosing the portico were built over foundations in opus
paved with a concrete screed 0.15 m thick. Arriccio were identified in its northwestern wall and holes for iron cramps (two of which survived in situ) to attach the opus sectile decorations to it were recorded (Fig. 3.17).  

Outside the portico, on the northwest side, a masonry channel was found (see Fig. 3.16). It was lined with bipedales, almost all with the same stamp: T. CLAVDI▲/SABINI▲. This feature seems to have been built to drain the soil and protect the building from water streaming down from the Lateran hill, as the drainage holes in the northwestern parapet of the pipe suggest. In the area outside the portico the ground surface (21.90 m above sea level, c. 0.50 m above the internal floor of the building) was paved with fragments of crumbled tuff.

To the southeast, the portico faced a garden. For 4.50 m the area near the building was paved with a thin concrete screed (5 cm thick). A series of quadrangular planting-holes (side: 0.7–1 m; see Fig. 3.16) were found near the portico, probably located in front of the columns and between inter-columniations. A row of larger circular ditches was identified approximately

caementicium made with mortar and pieces of tuff. The upper part of these foundations was laid directly in the preparatory trench (‘cavo libero’) while their lower part was laid in a mould made of wooden boards (‘cavo armato’). The height of the two foundations is different due to the composition of the soil they overlay (northwestern foundations: 3 m; southeastern foundations: 1.80 m).

38 Marks left over the arriccio seem to suggest that the lower part of the wall was covered with plates (0.30 m high). The surface of the wall was carved horizontally by a cut (0.60 m above the floor), probably to facilitate the lining of the wall. The holes for the cramps were mostly placed on three horizontal rows. Two of them still contained two iron cramps and others had fragments of marble.

5.50 m to the southeast, perhaps dug to house trees. Outside the excavated area, southeast of the portico, the pre-existing stream probably continued to flow (see Fig. 3.14).

Soon after its construction the portico was modified, and its marble decoration removed (Phase 2; see Fig. 3.13, in orange; Fig. 3.18). The inner floor was raised, and its centre showed traces of ruts, probably left by carriage wheels (height: 21.70 m above sea level). To the southeastern side were now brick columns (diameter: 0.88 m) on brick square bases (side: 0.90 m) placed over blocks of travertine, perhaps to substitute the marble columns of the previous phase. These blocks were linked by a structure in opus latericium, which incorporated the one from the previous phase. The marble decoration was removed also from the wall enclosing the northwest side of the portico and substituted by a new lining (see Fig. 3.17). Only the undercoat survived, but this was likely the base for decorated plaster, as suggested by many fragments of wall painting recovered from the abandonment layer of the building. The planting-holes near the portico were now filled in and covered by a pozzolana floor with a low trench, perhaps for planting.

The portico building was further modified before its final abandonment (Phase 3; see Fig. 3.19). During this third phase, a new wall in opus

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40 The stratigraphy would also allow for the possibility that these ditches were dug during the following phase. The filling of these ditches has been sampled and the pollen recovered has been analysed by F. Di Rita. Both arboreal (Quercus, Pinus, Cupressaceae) and herbaceous plants (mostly Chenopodiaceae, with some Cichirioideae, Poaceae, Fabaceae, Apiaceae, Caryophyllaceae; the percentage of Centaurea, Cyperaceae, Ranunculaceae, Brassicaceae was very low) have been identified.

41 Only the first course of bricks of one of the columns survived. All the brick bases survived in the northeastern area of the site. Over the blocks of travertine there were square marks, slightly raised circular areas and cavities, usually employed to house elements of stone. These marks seem to suggest some sort of reuse more than a different building phase.
latericium was built, lying over the blocks of travertine of the southeastern side. In places, this feature was lying over the brick columns of the previous phases, while elsewhere these were substituted by brick semi-columns or lesenes, jutting out towards both the inside and outside of the portico. The northwestern internal wall received a new lining and was probably painted. The internal floor seems to have remained unchanged.

The ground surface of the garden was 0.25 m above the previous phase and produced a cylindrical vase in Pentelic marble (see Fig. 3.20). Its foot was decorated with fillet and trefoil Lesbian kyma and its lip with fillet and Ionian kyma. The body was decorated with racemes linked by a ribbon tie.

Fig. 3.18 Plan of Phase 2 of the Julio-Claudian portico from the shaft of the gardens of Via Sannio.

Fig. 3.19 Plan of Phase 3 of the Julio-Claudian portico from the shaft of the gardens of Via Sannio.

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42 External diameter: 54 cm; internal diameter: 40 cm. It was 54 cm high and 45 cm deep.
to a nail.\textsuperscript{43} A stump of \textit{Prunus} (peach tree or plum tree; see Fig. 3.19) was found near the portico and two stumps of \textit{Juglans regia} (walnut tree) and roots of \textit{Buxus sempervirens} (box) and \textit{Rubus} (blackberry or raspberry bush)\textsuperscript{44} were identified in the area to the uphill side of the portico. It is possible that the plants located in the circular trenches to the southeast were still in place during this phase.

Materials from layers contemporary to Phase 1 date it to the mid-first century AD. Furthermore, the foundations of the building overlay the rooms in \textit{opus reticulatum} dated to the first half of the first century AD. This chronology is confirmed by the brick stamps on the canalization to the northwest of the area. Phases 2 and 3 cannot be dated through excavated materials, but the stratigraphic sequence suggests that their \textit{terminus ante quem} was the construction of the ‘Garden of the ollae’, dating to the late Flavian period. Built under Claudius, the portico was then robbed and partially rebuilt twice, perhaps between the Neronian and early Flavian period. It was subsequently destroyed and built over in the late Flavian period.

The topography of the area where the portico building was found during the excavations for Shaft 3.3 may be characterised as follows: as noted above,

\textsuperscript{43} A. Coletta is now studying this vase. It has been provisionally dated between the second and the first centuries BC, perhaps a luxury item imported from Attica.

\textsuperscript{44} The study of these stumps and roots has been coordinated by N. Macchioni (CNR IVALSA, Sesto Fiorentino).
the portico ran northeast–southwest, at the foot of the Lateran hill. It faced a garden near a river close to modern Via Sannio. The river had flowed through the area since before intensive human settlement began. The portico was probably part of a complex of many blocks, a typical form for the horti. The topography of this area can help us in reconstructing the size of this complex: it was probably enclosed by the Via Tusculana to the west; the river to the south; Via Asinaria to the east; and the Lateran hill to the north, where the residential quarters might have been located. This would have been in line with the classic ‘terracing system’. The complex was therefore probably part of the ‘belt’ of horti developed from the late Republican period onwards around and beyond the Servian Walls.

We know of several properties dating to the Julio-Claudian period in the Lateran area. Juvenal mentions the ‘egregiae Lateranorum aedes’, the position of which is still debated. They originally belonged to Plautius Lateranus, but were militarily occupied and expropriated by Nero in 65 after the Pisonian conspiracy and Plautius’ death. The house of the Calpurni Pisoni was also probably located in this area, as suggested by the finding of a lead fistula inscribed L. Piso[nis] between Via Tusculana and Via Amba Aradam (during the excavation of the ‘Lateran baths’). This complex was also most likely expropriated by Nero. A similar fate has been hypothesised for the horti Torquatiani, located further to the east and seemingly owned by D. Iunius Torquatus Silanus (nephew of Augustus and consul in 53), who was forced by Nero to take his own life in 64.

45 Some structures in opus reticulatum with side scarfs of tuff blocks were recorded by Colini to the northwest of the portico near Via Tusculana, later incorporated into the Aurelian Walls. See Colini, Storia e topografia del Celio, 343 and fig. 282. Two domus, dating to the late first–early second centuries, were found under the Castra Nova Equitum Singularium. The excavations carried out by Josi beneath the archbasilica produced a group of fragments of wall painting and marble dating to the first half of the first century AD, together with contemporary brick stamps. See Colini, Storia e topografia del Celio, 343–77; Liverani, ‘Introduzione topografica’.

46 Juv. 10.15–18.


48 Colini, Storia e topografia del Celio, 338.

49 Frontinus (Aq. 1.5.65) seems to suggest that the eastern boundary of these horti was in an area called ad Spem veterem, near Porta Maggiore. See S. B. Platner and T. Ashby, A Topographical Dictionary of Ancient Rome (London, 1929), 272–3; D. Mancioli, ‘Horti Torquatiani’, LTUR III, 85–6; F. Fraioli, ‘Regione V. Esquiline’, in A. Carandini (ed.), Atlante di Roma antica (Milan, 2012), 323–41, at p. 331 and table III) proposes that their boundary was near Via Tusculana, including the area of the archbasilica.