

The background of the book cover is a black and white photograph. On the left, there is a close-up of a classical marble statue's arm and torso, showing detailed drapery and a pectoral ornament. On the right, there is a dark, textured surface, possibly a wall or a piece of machinery, with several circular elements that look like rivets or bolts.

# Rome

Continuing Encounters  
between Past and Present

Edited by  
**DORIGEN CALDWELL  
AND LESLEY CALDWELL**

## ROME: CONTINUING ENCOUNTERS BETWEEN PAST AND PRESENT

Few other cities can compare with Rome's history of continuous habitation, nor with the survival of so many different epochs in its present. This volume explores how the city's past has shaped the way in which Rome has been built, rebuilt, represented and imagined throughout its history.

Bringing together scholars from the disciplines of architectural history, urban studies, art history, archaeology and film studies, this book comprises a series of essays on the evolution of the city of Rome and the ways in which it has represented and reconfigured itself from the medieval period to the present day. Moving from material appropriations such as spolia in the medieval period, through the cartographic representations of the city in the early modern period, to filmic representation in the twentieth century, we encounter very different ways of making sense of the past across Rome's historical spectrum. The broad chronological arrangement of the chapters, and the choice of themes and urban locations examined in each, allows the reader to draw comparisons between historical periods.

An imaginative approach to the study of the urban and architectural make-up of Rome, this volume will be valuable not only for historians of art and architecture, but also for students of cultural history and film studies.

*Dorigen Caldwell is Lecturer in Italian Renaissance Art in the Department of History of Art and Screen Media at Birkbeck, University of London and Lesley Caldwell is an Honorary Senior Research Fellow in the Italian Department of University College London.*

*For Peter*

*Who loved Rome and lived it with us*

# Rome: Continuing Encounters between Past and Present

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Dorigen Caldwell

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and

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# Contents

<i>List of Illustrations</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>Notes on Contributors</i>	<i>xiii</i>
<i>Foreword</i>	<i>xvii</i>
<i>Preface</i>	<i>xix</i>
 Introduction: Continuities of Place <i>Dorigen Caldwell</i>	 1
 1 Roman Archaeology in Medieval Rome <i>Caroline J. Goodson</i>	 17
 2 <i>Roma Renascens</i> : Sixteenth-century Maps of the Eternal City <i>Jessica Maier</i>	 35
 3 Time Concertinaed at the Altar of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere <i>Emma Stirrup</i>	 57
 4 Lione Pascoli, Giovanni Gaetano Bottari, Giovanni Battista Nolli: Functions and Topography of Rome in the Eighteenth Century <i>Mario Bevilacqua</i>	 79
 5 The Political Topography of Modern Rome, 1870–1936: Via XX Settembre to Via dell’Impero <i>Terry Kirk</i>	 101
 6 ‘Reconciliation’ or ‘Conquest’? The Opening of the Via della Conciliazione and the Fascist Vision for the ‘Third Rome’ <i>Aristotle Kallis</i>	 129

7	'An Extraordinary Proliferation of Layers': Pasolini's Rome(s) <i>Jacopo Benci</i>	153
8	Piazza Vittorio: Cinematic Notes on the Evolution of a Piazza <i>Lesley Caldwell</i>	189
9	Archaeology and the Modern City: Thoughts on Rome (and Elsewhere) <i>Daniele Manacorda</i>	207
	<i>Bibliography</i>	221
	<i>Index</i>	251

# List of Illustrations

## 1 Roman Archaeology in Medieval Rome

1.1 Map of the Forum in the seventh century. Source: Author

1.2 Basilica Aemilia: upper drawing: the Forum-facing façade of the Basilica Aemilia in the fourth century. After Christian Hülsen, *Il foro romano: Storia e monumenti* (Rome: Loescher, 1905); lower drawing: the Forum-facing façade of the Basilica Aemilia in the sixth century. After Eva Margareta Steinby (ed.), *Lexicon topographicum urbis Romae*, 6 vols (Rome: Quasar, 1993–2002)

1.3 Reconstructed interior section of S. Maria Maggiore in the fifth century. After Richard Krautheimer, *Corpus Basilicarum Christianarum Romae: The Early Christian Basilicas of Rome (IV–IX cent.)*, 5 vols (Vatican City: Pontificio istituto di archeologia cristiana, 1937–77)

1.4 House in the portico of the Basilica Aemilia, tenth century. Photo: Riccardo Santangeli Valenzani, reproduced from Roberto Meneghini and Riccardo Santangeli Valenzani, *Roma nell'altomedioevo. Topografia e urbanistica della città dal V al X secolo* (Rome: Istituto Poligrafico e Zecca dello Stato, 2004) with kind permission

1.5 House in the Forum of Nerva, ninth century. Photo: author

1.6 Plan of the substructures under the fifth-century basilica of SS. Giovanni e Paolo: the outline of the basilica at ground level is shown in dashed lines. After Antonio Maria Colini, *Storia e topografia del Celio nell'antichità*, Atti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia: Memorie, Series 3a/7 (Rome: Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana 1944)

## 2 Roma Renascens: Sixteenth-century Maps of the Eternal City

2.1 Bartolomeo Marliani, map of imperial Rome, from *Urbis Romae topographia* (Rome: Valerius & Aloysius Doricus, 1544), woodcut, 30×47cm. Reproduced with permission from Avery Architectural and Fine Arts Library, Columbia University in the City of New York (Avery Classics [Cage] AA1112 M34 F)

2.2 Pirro Ligorio, *Urbis Romae* (Venice: Michele Tramezzino, 1553), engraving, 42×71cm. Reproduced with permission from the British Library (Maps \* 155. [35.])



2.3 Detail from Pirro Ligorio, *Urbis Romae* (Venice: Michele Tramezzino, 1553), showing St Peter's. Reproduced with permission from the British Library (Maps \* 155.[35.] )

2.4 Leonardo Bufalini, *Roma* (Rome: Antonio Blado, 1551 [1560]), woodcut on 24 sheets, approx. 200×190cm. Reproduced with permission from the British Library (Maps S.T.R.[1.] )

2.5 Detail from Leonardo Bufalini, *Roma* (Rome: Antonio Blado, 1551 [1560]), showing a section of the street network. Reproduced with permission from the British Library (Maps S.T.R.[1.] )

2.6 Detail from Leonardo Bufalini, *Roma* (Rome: Antonio Blado, 1551 [1560]), showing Via del Corso leading to the Capitoline. Reproduced with permission from the British Library (Maps S.T.R.[1.] )

2.7 Detail from Leonardo Bufalini, *Roma* (Rome: Antonio Blado, 1551 [1560]), showing the equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius. Reproduced with permission from the British Library (Maps S.T.R.[1.] )

2.8 Detail from Leonardo Bufalini, *Roma* (Rome: Antonio Blado, 1551 [1560]), showing St Peter's. Reproduced with permission from the British Library (Maps S.T.R.[1.] )

2.9 Detail from Leonardo Bufalini, *Roma* (Rome: Antonio Blado, 1551 [1560]), showing the Baths of Trajan. Reproduced with permission from the British Library (Maps S.T.R.[1.] )

2.10 Mario Cartaro, *Celeberrimae urbis antiquae fidelissima topographia post omnes alias aeditiones accuratissime delineate* (Rome: Mario Cartaro, 1579), engraving, 91.15×113cm. Reproduced with permission from the British Library (Maps \* 155.[10.] )

2.11 Mario Cartaro, *Novissimae urbis Romae accuratissima descriptio* (Rome:

Mario Cartaro, 1576), engraving, 91×113cm. Reproduced with the permission of the Biblioteca dell'Istituto di archeologia e storia dell'arte, Rome (Roma X 648 inv 47738)

2.12 Details from Mario Cartaro, *Celeberrimae urbis antiquae* (Rome: Mario Cartaro, 1579) and *Novissimae urbis Romae* (Rome: Mario Cartaro, 1576), showing the Vatican. Reproduced with the permissions of the British Library (Maps \* 155.[10.] ) and the Biblioteca dell'Istituto di archeologia e storia dell'arte, Rome (Roma X 648 inv 47738), respectively

2.13 Detail from Mario Cartaro, *Novissimae urbis Romae accuratissima descriptio* (Rome: Mario Cartaro, 1576), showing the cartouche at upper right. Reproduced with the permission of the Biblioteca dell'Istituto di archeologia e storia dell'arte, Rome (Roma X 648 inv 47738)

### 3 Time Concertinaed at the Altar of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere

3.1 S. Cecilia in Trastevere, view of altar. Photo: author

3.2 Worshippers on St Cecilia's feast day. Photo: author

3.3 Worshippers on St Cecilia's feast day. Photo: author

3.4 S. Cecilia in Trastevere, grille and window to convent interior. Photo: author

3.5 Stefano Maderno, *St Cecilia*, 1599. Photo: author

3.6 Print by Adrian Collaert after Francesco Vanni, *The Life of St Cecilia* (Albertina, Vienna, Inv. 782)

3.7 Francesco Vanni, *The Death of St Cecilia*, S. Cecilia in Trastevere, originally in crypt

3.8 Ventura Salimbeni, *The Madonna and Child with the Martyred Saint Cecilia*, c.1604. Private collection; © Christie's Images Ltd., 2008

3.9 Stefano Maderno, *St Cecilia*, detail

3.10 Stefano Maderno, *St Cecilia*, detail

3.11 Stefano Maderno, *St Cecilia*, detail

#### 4 **Lione Pascoli, Giovanni Gaetano Bottari, Giovanni Battista Nolli: Functions and Topography of Rome in the Eighteenth Century**

4.1 Trevi Fountain, detail of the central niche. Photo: author

4.2 Engraving by Carlo Nolli and G.B. Piranesi from Bernardo Gambarini and Andrea Chiesa, *Carta del corso del fiume Tevere*, 1745. Private collection

4.3 G.B. Nolli, *Nuova pianta di Roma*, 1748, engraving. Private collection

4.4 Giuseppe Vasi, *Piazza Colonna*, 1752, engraving. Private collection

#### 5 **The political topography of modern Rome, 1870–1936: Via XX Settembre to Via dell'Impero**

5.1 The Breach of the Porta Pia, as restaged by the photographers Antonio and Paolo Francesco D'Alessandri, 12 Sept. 1870

5.2 Frontispiece to Philippe and Felix Benoist, *Rome dans sa grandeur. Vues, monuments anciens et modernes* (Paris: Charpentier, 1870), engraving. Private collection

5.3 Alessandro Moschetti, *Roma capitale d'Italia. Memoria dell'entrata dell'esercito italiano a Roma*, 1870, engraving. Private collection

5.4 Romolo Bulla, *Pianta guida della Città di Roma*. Veduta a volo d'uccello, 1884. Private collection

5.5 Pantheon, exterior decorations for the funeral of Vittorio Emanuele II by Luigi Rosso, 16 Feb. 1878

5.6 Pio Piacentini and Ettore Ferrari, Monument to Vittorio Emanuele II, competition entry, 1881. *Illustrazione italiana* 9/19 (1882): 328

5.7 Paul-Henri Nénot, Monument to Vittorio Emanuele II, competition entry, 1881. *Illustrazione italiana* 9/19 (1882): 329

5.8 Giuseppe Sacconi, Monument to Vittorio Emanuele II, Rome, 1885–1911. Photo: Jacopo Benci

5.9 Emilio Gallori, Monument to Giuseppe Garibaldi, Rome, 1882–95. Photo: Jacopo Benci

5.10 Alessandro Viviani, Master Plan (*piano regolatore*) for Rome, 1883

5.11 Angelo Vescovali, Ponte Vittorio Emanuele II, Rome, 1910–11. Photo: Jacopo Benci

5.12 Guglielmo Calderini, Palazzo di Giustizia, Rome, 1889–1911. Photo: Jacopo Benci

#### 7 **'An Extraordinary Proliferation of Layers': Pasolini's Rome(s)**

7.1 34 Via di Porta Pinciana. Photo: author

7.2 14 Piazza Costaguti in the Ghetto. Photo: author

7.3 Ponte Mazzini. Photo: author

7.4 Monte Testaccio surmounted by a tall cross, as seen from across Ponte Testaccio. Photo: author

7.5 Ponte Bianco. Photo: author

7.6 The 'Grattacieli', 1932 Donna Olimpia ICP complex, 30 Via di Donna Olimpia, Rome. Photo: author

7.7 Donna Olimpia, Monteverde, and the Purfina refinery: (1) The Valle dei Canneti in the Villa Doria Pamphilj; (2) Via di Donna Olimpia (the 'Fosso Tiradiavoli'); (3) The 'Grattacieli', 1932 ICP complex, 30 Via di Donna Olimpia; (4) The Church of the Divina Provvidenza, Via di Donna Olimpia; (5) Via Abate Ugone; (6) The 'Giorgio Franceschi' Elementary School, Via di Donna Olimpia; (7) The 'Case Nove', 1938 ICP complex, 5 Piazza Donna Olimpia; (8) The Monte di Casadio; (9) The Monte di Splendore; (10) The Ferro-Beton ('Ferrobèdò') works; (11) Via Ozanam; (12) Teatro delle Terrazze, Piazza San Giovanni di Dio; (13) Ponte Bianco; (14) Purfina refinery; (15) Viale dei Quattro Venti; (16) Piazza Rosolino Pilo; (17) Via Giacinto Carini; (18) Via Fratelli Bonnet; (19) Piazzale Ottavilla. RAF aerial photograph, 31 May 1944, negative #193328; © Aerofototeca Nazionale, Istituto Centrale del Catalogo e Documentazione, Rome

7.8 *Roma e suburbio. Scala 1:10000* (Rome & Milan: Istituto Geografico Visceglia, 1946), fol. 1. By kind permission of Cartografica Visceglia, Rome

7.9 Via Fonteiana and Donna Olimpia: (1) Pasolini's home (1954–59), 86 Via Fonteiana; (2) Carlo Emilio Gadda's home, 21 Via Innocenzo X; (3) Piazza Fonteiana; (4) 'A path that led to Donna Olimpia': Via Quinto Cecilio (no longer extant); (5) Monte di Casadio (no longer extant); (6) Via Abate Ugone; (7) The Church of the Divina Provvidenza, Via di Donna Olimpia; (8) The 'Grattacieli', 1932 ICP complex, 30 Via di Donna Olimpia; (9) Piazza Donna Olimpia; (10) The 'Case Nove', 1938 ICP complex, 5 Piazza Donna Olimpia; (11) 'Giorgio Franceschi' Elementary School, Via di Donna Olimpia; (12) Via di Donna Olimpia. Fotocielo aerial photograph, 4 Oct. 1960, negative #270293; © Aerofototeca Nazionale,

Istituto Centrale del Catalogo e Documentazione, Rome

7.10 Donna Olimpia, Monteverde Vecchio, Ponte Bianco: (1) The 'Grattacieli', 1932 ICP complex, 30 Via di Donna Olimpia; (2) The 'Case Nove', 1938 ICP complex, 5 Piazza Donna Olimpia; (3) 'Giorgio Franceschi' Elementary School, Via di Donna Olimpia; (4) The area of the former Ferro-Beton ('Ferrobèdò') works; (5) Via Fonteiana; (6) Monte di Casadio (no longer extant); (7) Via di Donna Olimpia; (8) Viale dei Quattro Venti; (9) Ponte Bianco; (10) Road works for the construction of the Via Quirino Majorana flyover; (11) Piazza Rosolino Pilo; (12) Water tower; (13) Via Giacinto Carini. Fotocielo aerial photograph, 21 Apr. 1960, negative #224281; © Aerofototeca Nazionale, Istituto Centrale del Catalogo e Documentazione, Rome

7.11 The 1960 Via Quirino Majorana flyover. Photo: author

7.12 Purfina, Portuense, Vigna Pia: (1) The Purfina refinery; (2) Road works for the construction of the Via Quirino Majorana flyover (3); The north end of Viale Marconi and Piazzale della Radio; (4) The Ponte Marconi connecting the Viale Marconi neighbourhood under construction and the San Paolo neighbourhood; (5) The railroad bridge over the Via Portuense; (6) The 'Spallanzani' Hospital for Contagious Diseases; (7) Vigna Pia. Fotocielo aerial photograph, 21 Apr. 1960, negative #224285; © Aerofototeca Nazionale, Istituto Centrale del Catalogo e Documentazione, Rome

7.13 Purfina, Portuense, Piazzale della Radio: (1) The Purfina refinery; (2) Road works for the construction of the Via Quirino Majorana flyover; (3) The railroad bridge over the Via Portuense; (4) The 'prostitutes' corner' on the Via Portuense (*Accattone*); (5) Piazzale della Radio; (6) Viale Marconi; (7) The

Tiber. DAM aerial photograph, 14 July 1960, negative #218426; © Aerofototeca Nazionale, Istituto Centrale del Catalogo e Documentazione, Rome

7.14 Pasolini's fifth and final Roman home at 9 Viale Eufrate, EUR, near the church of Santi Pietro e Paolo.

Photo: author

7.15 The Torre Righetti, as seen from Pasolini's Viale Eufrate home.

Photo: author

## **8 Piazza Vittorio: Cinematic Notes on the Evolution of a Piazza**

8.1 View of Piazza Vittorio, showing porticos. Photo: Jacopo Benci

8.2 Via Giolitti, with Temple of Minerva Medica. Photo: Jacopo Benci

8.3 Piazza Vittorio: central gardens. Photo: Jacopo Benci

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## Notes on Contributors

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## Foreword

Why would one visit New England if not for *The Scarlet Letter* or *Moby Dick*? Or Berlin if not for Expressionism and Mack the Knife? Madrid, without Goya's etchings? Or contemporary Rome, without Pasolini's *Accattone*? Stereotypes? Certainly, but still streets ahead of the 'neutral' tourist leaflets, telling stories of people and passions. Moreover, as soon as you begin to look beyond the first image, you feel compelled, if you are interested, to go further, to explore other aspects, times, characters: your knowledge will start becoming deeper, you will not be content without further steps. No chance of stopping, when the subject inspires passion. Rome is a case in point. The 'grand tour', the fall of the popes' temporal power, the rise of the new nation, Mussolini, and the images of the post-war liberal democracy recorded in the films of Rossellini, Fellini and Pasolini – even this very short list cannot be ignored when approaching contemporary Rome. And the list can only increase, offering new interests, new objects of curiosity. This is why an interdisciplinary project such as this attracts so much attention among everyone interested in Rome. (As a Roman I would have to ask, is there anyone who isn't?)

In this volume you will find a number of issues that arouse debate elsewhere, but in a more radical form. One, pre-eminently, is the relationship between the modern city and its archaeological remains. Archaeological ruins exist also in London and Paris, Vienna and Barcelona, but the problem of dealing with them is nowhere more pressing than in Rome. How far is the past – in this case the archaeological past – able to become an organic part of the contemporary city? The same question can be asked of industrial archaeology, which exists in Rome too, although not on the same scale as in Britain: large areas of nineteenth-century industrial development today fall within the limits of the urban fabric and await reconsideration. A creative solution was adopted in the 1990s when an old electric power station, together with its gigantic turbines, became the home for a number of items (mainly sculptures) hitherto hidden away in the Capitoline archives: classical

goddesses and emperors standing on and among huge industrial objects are impressive and give a strong sense of what could be thought of as two different religions.

Cultural displacement is probably one of the positive outputs of the interdisciplinary approach: stimuli and new ideas come from outside more often than from our own field. When *Ladri di biciclette* (*Bicycle Thieves*) came out, I remember my father saying critically that such wretchedness and the behaviour it generated were not the right topics to focus on at the moment when the country was engaged in a tough process of economic and civic reconstruction. But at the same time he noticed with surprise that the city, the characters, the objects were real, and that in some way they were actually telling what was happening. Somehow, the movie was showing what he (and many others) did not yet know. *Accattone* also had a mixed reception, thanks not only to the images of slums but also for the complicit gaze accompanying them. It is understandable that the work of Pasolini is now discussed both in film schools and in schools of architecture and planning (especially in Rome). The same is happening in the case of Fascist Rome: here the accurate and often splendid films documenting the demolition and reconstruction of the new imperial image sponsored by the regime express the same formal attitude as most of the new buildings of the period: films and architecture tell of each other and of the underlying ideology better than many academic texts. The list could continue, which is exactly the point: there is no end to an interdisciplinary investigation, and this book is a welcome contribution to the ongoing discussion.

Giorgio Piccinato  
July 2010

## Preface

The idea for the present volume grew out of a series of research seminars held jointly at University College London and Birkbeck from 2005 to 2008 on the theme of 'Rome: The Growth of the City from the Return of the Popes to the Present'. These seminars brought together scholars from a range of disciplines to examine the evolution of the urban fabric of Rome from the Renaissance on. But, whether discussing the mapping of the city, the role of the papacy or the latest town plan, the theme that emerged most consistently was the continuing dialogue between the city's inescapable past and its present, be it the present of the sixteenth or the twenty-first century. Some of the chapters presented here were originally given as papers in those workshops, while others were written specifically for the book. What they all share is a concern with how the city's past has shaped the way in which Rome has been built, rebuilt, represented and imagined.

Many people and institutions have helped and supported this project – both in its stage as colloquia and as a book, and they deserve a mention here. The Italian Department at UCL and the Department of History of Art and Screen Media at Birkbeck sustained us throughout the three years of research seminars, and individual seminars were also generously supported by the Bartlett School of Architecture (UCL); the Italian Cultural Institute, London; the British School at Rome; the Comune di Roma (Assessorato all' Urbanistica), especially Assessore Roberto Morassut; the Regione di Lazio, especially Enzo Ciarravano. Many people have helped in the production of this volume and we would like to thank Ashgate's anonymous readers for their insightful and constructive comments, Mandy Macdonald for her sterling editing, Clare Costa for her translations, Jacopo Benci for his photographic prowess and generosity, Liz Drew, Nick Lambert and Susan El-Ghoriayb for their last-minute help in getting the manuscript together and Alan Ford, for generally being wonderful.

On a more personal level, this project reflects a long-standing love of Rome on both our parts and the desire to bring together our own, very diverse, research interests on the city. Many Roman friends have accommodated us (literally and metaphorically) over the years, and have helped us gain access to people and institutions that would otherwise have been beyond our reach. We owe them a debt of gratitude and friendship: Giacomo Mazzone, Loredana Cicarelli, Mariella Gramaglia, Nando Vianello, Mariuccia Salvati and Giorgio Piccinato. Our Rome would not have been the Rome we know and love without Peter Caldwell, to whom this book is dedicated, but who sadly did not live to read it for himself.

Dorigen and Lesley Caldwell  
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## Introduction: Continuities of Place

Dorigen Caldwell

Rome is not just a city. It is an idea, a myth at the heart of western culture. It has been the seat of an empire and the capital of one of the world's most far-reaching religions, but its significance is far more than the sum of its historical parts. The resonances of Rome, both within and beyond the walls of the city itself, have long fascinated scholars from a range of disciplines, and this book, with its particular emphasis on the relationship between past and present, seeks to complement a growing literature in English. Among recent studies, Peter Bondanella's 1987 book *The Eternal City: Roman Images in the Modern World* is notable for charting the construction and enduring relevance of the myth of Rome,<sup>1</sup> while *Roman Presences: Receptions of Rome in European Culture 1789–1945* (1999) has looked at the influence of that myth from the late eighteenth century to the modern era.<sup>2</sup> The role of ancient literature in shaping the idea of Rome has also been explored, for instance, in Catherine Edwards's *Writing Rome: Textual Approaches to the City* (1996), and new perspectives on reading and viewing Rome through literary and other sources from antiquity to the present are contained in *The Sites of Rome: Time, Space, Memory* (2007).<sup>3</sup> A lucid account of the evolution of the city itself, most particularly since Italian unification, can be found in John Agnew's 1995 book entitled simply *Rome*,<sup>4</sup> which returns frequently to the problems that modern planners have encountered in accommodating existing historical layers.<sup>5</sup> While most of these books are located in a particular discipline or have a more focused time-frame, the present volume encompasses an eclectic choice of topics and has an ambitious chronological scope, ranging from a re-evaluation of the afterlife of classical buildings in the early Middle Ages to the cinematic representation of Rome's largest piazza. Some of the chapters deal with very specific projects, such as the counter-Reformation restoration of the altar area of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere, while others take a broader view, looking, for instance, at the theoretical discussions that helped shape a more rationalized Rome in the eighteenth century. And yet, while inclusive,

this volume is by no means comprehensive and makes no pretence of being an exhaustive account of the relationship of Rome to its past. There are necessarily gaps in coverage, with no chapters, for instance, on the later Middle Ages, Baroque urbanism or the Napoleonic occupation of the city. Nonetheless, the diversity of both subject matter and approach aims to convey something of the complexity of the relationship between Rome and its past lives. Using a variety of approaches and methods, the authors tackle the central questions of the occupation and reoccupation of space, the use and reuse of materials, the borrowing of forms and the appropriation of meaning. The book explores notions of reinterpretation and excavation in the broadest sense: from literal plunder to the recasting of styles, from conscious attempts at the re-enacting of empire to how the past is accommodated and conserved in the modern city, and the extent to which the conservation of heritage is at odds with *vivibilità*.

Few other cities can compete with Rome's history of continuous habitation, nor with the survival of so many different epochs in its present. The 'past' that is encountered in this book is not just classical antiquity, but includes early Christianity, the Renaissance and even neo-Realism. This is not to play down the importance of the classical city, however, as it provided the foundations, both physical and ideological, for successive manifestations of Rome. But, it is true to say that there is no single classical past to which all subsequent ages refer, but several, which were privileged at different times, and which evoked different ideas of antiquity and its contemporary relevance. This is in part because what was visible and known of the ancient city itself evolved as successive generations plundered its remains for use in new structures. Earlier ages had both more and less of classical Rome than we have now: key monuments such as the so-called Meta Romuli and the Septizodium were still standing in the Middle Ages, but demolished in the Renaissance,<sup>6</sup> while huge numbers of the antique statues now in the city's museums were only discovered in the last two centuries. Indeed, the unearthing of ancient Rome has a history of its own, from the sporadic, accidental discoveries of the fifteenth century,<sup>7</sup> to the systematic programmes of excavation driven by political agendas as diverse as the Napoleonic domination and the Fascist regime;<sup>8</sup> and, as Daniele Manacorda discusses in his chapter 'Archaeology and the Modern City', that history has shaped the city quite as much as new programmes of building.

The ancient Romans left a city full of monumental structures, precious materials and an impressive infrastructure, but after the departure of the imperial court in the fourth century, it could no longer be maintained to the same extent, and began to fall into disrepair, a state of affairs not helped by a succession of natural disasters and sacks.<sup>9</sup> The practice of reusing 'spoliated' materials from old structures – not unknown even in republican and imperial times<sup>10</sup> – became increasingly prevalent through the Middle Ages and into the Renaissance, although there was also a perception from very early on that Rome was uniquely embellished and should therefore be preserved. As Manacorda recounts, the Byzantine general, Belisarius, deliberately

contrasted the artistic accomplishments of the Romans on the one hand with the destruction wrought by the barbarians on the other.<sup>11</sup> In doing so, Belisarius evokes a city that has become a place of shared cultural heritage for humankind, a paradigm of civilization, to be bequeathed to posterity. And, if the ancient monuments continued to be quarried and re-occupied in myriad ways through the centuries – whether being dismantled to feed limekilns or being converted into churches and private fortresses<sup>12</sup> – a rhetoric of conservation also persisted. In the twelfth century, for instance, Trajan's Column was given a 'protection order',<sup>13</sup> and the emergence of humanism in the fourteenth century saw a growing interest in the historical value of the classical remains, which resulted in a series of papal edicts issued to protect them.<sup>14</sup> A veneration for the relics of antiquity did not mean that they ceased to be pillaged, however, and the Renaissance popes enacted large-scale destruction on the classical city in their attempts to rebuild Rome once more as *caput mundi*. The tension between the preservation of the old and the needs of the living city have always been a feature of Rome's relationship to its past.

Charting the history of archaeology in the city, Manacorda notes how it has evolved alongside broader cultural and political concerns. During the Napoleonic era, for instance, the ruins were afforded a particular significance as representing the glory of Rome before the prominence of the popes. But it was the creation of Rome as the capital of the new nation-state of Italy in 1870 that had the profoundest impact on the topography of ancient Rome, as the rapid expansion of the city led to destruction on an unprecedented scale.<sup>15</sup> Fascism also undertook the systematic demolition of earlier structures to create a modern vision of the imperial city by opening up monumental roads and highlighting key buildings.<sup>16</sup> Not only did this present an entirely artificial view of the ancient city, it either covered up or swept away the historical layers of Rome's subsequent developments. So the evidence of antiquity that remains today has been shaped by the needs, tastes and politics of successive generations. As Manacorda recounts from personal experience, today's archaeologists have stark choices to make about what to preserve and what to leave hidden. These choices are no longer based on purely aesthetic or ideological concerns, but they nonetheless reflect current debates about how to accommodate the past within the present city.

With the shifting of archaeological priorities outlined by Manacorda, new areas of historical investigation have opened up, some of which are discussed by Caroline Goodson in her chapter 'Roman Archaeology in Medieval Rome'. While excavations have traditionally focused on the imperial monuments, without asking questions about their use or occupation after the fall of the empire, the latest archaeological campaigns around the Roman Forum and the imperial Fora have brought to light new evidence of their subsequent use. Based on these findings, Goodson suggests a re-evaluation of the relationship of the early medieval city to the classical remains, emphasizing the continuity with the past. The picture that emerges of Rome from the sixth to the ninth centuries is of a city where a surprising number of existing structures were



not only still standing but in some cases still in use. Furthermore, it appears that the remains of empire were not only repositories of raw materials to be stripped out for use in new buildings, but frequent sources of inspiration in terms of architectural forms and proportions. In some cases the new structures conform to the hierarchy of materials characteristic of imperial architecture, suggesting a sophisticated understanding of traditional methods and their role in indicating function. Goodson concentrates on the area around the Roman Forum, arguing that it continued to be a focal point of early medieval Rome. Its prestige was partly maintained through the restoration of important facades, even when there was little behind them, perpetuating the appearance of monumentality in what was the symbolic heart of the ancient city. The memory of the Forum as a site of both display and elite building also appears to have endured and Goodson suggests that a ninth-century visitor would not have discerned a sharp divide between the old and the new and that the passage from antiquity to the Middle Ages was more fluid than is sometimes imagined.

Key to understanding the history of the Forum during this time – and the history of Rome more generally – is the significance of place in the memory of the city. The preservation and reconstruction of certain key sites and buildings had a prehistory in the classical era itself, when the mythology of the city was already deeply embedded in specific locations, with important temples, for instance, being rebuilt on the remains of older ones to preserve their history and significance. With the emergence of Christianity, existing buildings and spaces were appropriated to new functions, taking on additional layers of meaning, while still enjoying earlier associations. When the Pantheon – itself rebuilt by Hadrian in the second century AD and incorporating the original first-century BC inscription – was converted from a temple to all the gods into a church (AD 609), it was given an equally universal dedication to St Mary and the Martyrs.<sup>17</sup> The scale and monumentality of the existing building lent presence and permanence to its Christian reinvention, while simultaneously making of it a hugely powerful statement of the victory of the new religion over the old. The continued use of the Pantheon over the centuries, and its continued augmentation and representation, provide further levels and layers of association. It came to function, for instance, as a mausoleum – a fitting use for a centralized building<sup>18</sup> – housing tombs of artists from the sixteenth century on in the Capella dei Virtuosi; and, in the late nineteenth century, the tombs of the Kings of Italy. The Pantheon also, of course, serves as an iconic landmark, central to visual and other depictions of Rome from pilgrim guides to Piranesi prints and present-day tourist maps. As the most intact of ancient monuments and embellished with an astonishing array of rich materials (most of which were plundered over the centuries),<sup>19</sup> the Pantheon was hugely influential on later architecture. It was afforded particular veneration by the architects of the Renaissance, notably Raphael, whose Chigi Chapel in Santa Maria del Popolo represents the first conscious revival of the antique

use of coloured marbles, which was to prove so fundamental to the aesthetic of Baroque churches.<sup>20</sup>

The ongoing reoccupation of sites such as the Pantheon leads to an accumulation of meaning that is hard to disentangle, with each successive occupier contributing additional strata. This layering – of places, of materials, of meaning – continues through the papal domination of the city and into the ‘third Rome’ as is demonstrated in many of the chapters below. A prime example of the continued reoccupation of a particular site is the Capitoline Hill, where Romulus supposedly erected a shrine and where the largest and most important temple in ancient Rome, that of Jupiter Capitolinus, was later built. In antiquity, the Capitoline was the most sacred location in the city and was associated with the fortune of Rome itself through the legend of the colossal head that was discovered there, which gave the hill its name and was seen as an omen of future greatness.<sup>21</sup> The Capitoline acquired additional significance in the Middle Ages when it became the centre of civic power in the city, and represented a counterbalance to the seat of the papacy at the Lateran.<sup>22</sup> But it never lost its classical associations and remained a hugely significant symbol of the city’s ancient past; it was here that Petrarch was crowned poet laureate in 1341,<sup>23</sup> and here that the humanist Poggio Bracciolini set the opening scene of his *De varietate fortunae* (1448), in which he lamented the ruinous state of the once-great city.<sup>24</sup> While some attempts at restoring the appearance of the Capitoline to match its prestige were made at that time, the consolidation of papal power over Rome from the fifteenth century on meant that the municipal jurisdiction that ruled here was increasingly undermined. This was made symbolically palpable in 1474 by Sixtus IV’s bequest of a group of bronze statues that had been in the vicinity of the Lateran for centuries and were strongly associated with the popes.<sup>25</sup> As significant testimony to the classical heritage of Rome, their relocation strengthened the antiquarian associations of the Capitoline, making it almost a memorial to the glorious past, rather than a real, political location.

This deliberate appropriation of the site of secular power to a more symbolic function continued into the sixteenth century, when Paul III commissioned a total reorganization of the space from Michelangelo, which included the placing of the statue of Marcus Aurelius at the centre of a new piazza, whose porticos echoed those of an ancient forum.<sup>26</sup> Paul also constructed a fortified tower on the hill, in such a clear statement of the authority of the popes that it was duly pulled down after the *Risorgimento*. For it was here that the new Italian state chose to erect perhaps its most potent architectural expression, in the shape of the vast monument to Victor Emmanuel II. As Terry Kirk outlines in his chapter ‘The Political Topography of Modern Rome, 1870–1936’, the siting of the so-called Altare della Patria (or Vittoriano) was hugely significant, making the Capitoline once more the ‘epicentre of the city’. As revealed by the monument’s classicizing architecture and equestrian statue, the latter a clear allusion to the statue of Marcus Aurelius, this embodiment of the new Rome invokes earlier occupations of the location, standing alongside the past, rather

than simply eradicating it. Further historical continuities are emphasized by the dominance of the Vittoriano and its celebration of a united Italy, but despite, or perhaps because of, the disappearance of half of the hill itself in the construction of Sacconi's monument,<sup>27</sup> the Vittoriano stands somewhat apart from the idea of the Capitoline, forming the end point of the Via del Corso and the reorganized Piazza Venezia. Shining out in deliberately non-Roman Brescian marble, the monument turns its back on both classical and Renaissance precedents, to face toward the new city.

The Piazza del Campidoglio, on the other hand, is expressive of the symbolic value of Rome as an idea in the history of the west, which goes beyond the city itself. It also represents an emphasis on Rome as governed, remaining as it does the centre of local administration in the city, and therefore a lived and inhabited space over an extended period. Its availability for use in rituals, marriages and spontaneous gatherings, both public and private, partakes of a continuity of governmental and personal use that the place itself embodies spatially, territorially, architecturally and symbolically. As a clearly marked out social space, the piazza and its surrounding buildings provide both an individual and a public identity, at once historical and local. It is here that Rome is organized around the performative activity that Paul Connerton sees as fundamental to the continuation of any cultural memory.<sup>28</sup>

Recent projects for the redevelopment of the Capitoline Hill have sought to incorporate its historical significance in new ways. In the most recent master plan (*piano regolatore*), dating from 2003, for instance, a 'Grande Campidoglio' was conceived, in which parts of the Capitoline that are not as visibly familiar as the heavily invested cultural site were also given a role. This involved moving the remaining administrative offices, with the exception of those of the mayor and the *giunta*, away from the hill and forging agreements with the owners of the non-communal buildings, with the idea of establishing a museum site across the whole of the Capitol.<sup>29</sup> This project, which was put aside after the change of administration at the municipal elections of 2008, was designed to emphasize the symbolic importance of the Capitoline for Rome as heritage city and museum, and recognized the wealth that lies in the amassing of monuments and artistic treasures. One project that has finally been realized, albeit in a modified design, is Carlo Aymonino's plan for the Sala del Giardino Romano to house the statue of Marcus Aurelius within the Capitoline museums. The statue is now displayed together with other famous ancient works, but the project took over twenty years to come to fruition – partly because remnants of the great Temple of Jupiter came to light while the building's foundations were being excavated. This serves as a reminder of the complex layering of the Roman subsoil, especially at such an important site, which often throws up problems for those initiating new projects in the city. The third metro line, for instance, has been continuously beset by such accidental unearthings, which have set it back for years. In 2009 an Atheneum dating from the Hadrianic era was discovered at the proposed site of the Piazza Venezia station, and more important finds came to light at the same location

in the summer of 2010.<sup>30</sup> This is highly reminiscent of the vivid and moving scene in Federico Fellini's *Roma* (1972), where a newly discovered room of frescoes disintegrates before the eyes of those who have stumbled across it. In the case of the Temple of Jupiter, its discovery provides another dimension to the lived experience, with its remains now on view, along with a permanent exhibition showing the history of the earliest settlements on the Campidoglio, which date considerably further back than was previously thought.

The Capitoline is far from unique in its complex stratification, and there are numerous examples of locations in Rome where the layers of occupation are not only visible, but are central to both the significance of the site and the way it is now experienced. One such site is the church of San Clemente, on the Via Labicana, a consular road leading from the Colosseum. Here the Christian layers intermingle with the pagan, as the visitor is led vertically into the past. The church closest to the modern street level dates from the twelfth century but this was constructed on a pre-existing fourth-century basilica, which was itself built on top of a first-century 'titulus' associated with Clement, an early successor to St Peter. The lowest level also houses a Mithraeum, reminding us of the overlapping cults of late antiquity, out of which Christianity emerged triumphant. These lower levels, which add such an exciting dimension to the visitor's experience, were only excavated in the nineteenth century; but the upper church had been built very deliberately on top of the earlier, structurally unstable basilica, so as to retain the integrity of the site.

The physical evidence of early Christianity, which bore witness to the very antiquity and continuity of the Roman Church, became particularly important during the counter-Reformation. At a time when papal authority had been fundamentally questioned by Protestant reformers, Rome's claim to legitimacy rested on its Apostolic legacy, given concrete expression most vividly at St Peter's, and on the cults of its martyrs. The shrines and basilicas built in their honour, the focus of pilgrimage from the early Middle Ages on, represented the foundation stones of the Catholic faith. Their sacred locations were therefore given special attention after the Council of Trent (1545–63), with numerous early Christian churches restored in such a way as to emphasize both their ancientness and legitimacy. In a chapter entitled 'Time Concertinaed at the Altar of Santa Cecilia in Trastevere', Emma Stirrup demonstrates how the restoration of one particular church played very knowingly on the layers of Christian history accumulated there. The accidental finding of the body of St Cecilia under the high altar of her titular basilica in Trastevere in 1599 prompted a redesign of the altar area, with a marble effigy of the saint as its centrepiece. As Stirrup argues, the design alludes not only to the martyrdom of the saint on this site – which had been Cecilia's house – but also to the original discovery of the body in the catacombs in the ninth century, which had led to the translation of her relics back to the basilica. These earlier events are dramatically brought home to the viewer through the naturalistic treatment of the body, shown lying on its side, in the position in which the saint was supposed to have been both

martyred and later unearthed. According to legend, Cecilia's body was still incorrupt when found in the catacombs, having remained intact through the centuries, so that the statue echoes the real body lying under the altar in all its untainted glory. The immediacy of the treatment makes witnesses of the worshippers who kneel before the effigy, and in doing so lends authenticity to both the martyrdom and subsequent discoveries of the body. The dialogue here between past and present is vital to the significance of the site, where time appears, in Stirrup's words, to have been 'collapsed' into a distillation of meaning.

A rather different, but similarly self-conscious, referencing of the past of a specific location is touched upon in the chapter by Lesley Caldwell: 'Piazza Vittorio: Cinematic Notes on the Evolution of a Piazza'. Looking at the representation of this particular piazza in four very different films, Caldwell points out that the significance of site in these films depends not only on the actual, physical history of the piazza, but on the way it has been portrayed, its very representation becoming part of its identity. Piazza Vittorio itself is a space shaped as much by its past as by its present, with the ancient ruins of its central gardens encircled by traffic, and framed by late nineteenth-century facades and northern Italian porticos. Its history is most particularly the history of modern Rome, and of the people that have come to inhabit it, from the migrants who built and populated *Roma capitale* to the more recent arrivals who have transformed the area into the multicultural hub of the city. Situated close to the main railway station and site (until 2003) of Rome's largest market, the area is home to a shifting and varied population, as non-Roman as Roman. And yet, as Caldwell argues, the piazza is used in filmic representations as an unmistakable signifier of Rome, with its juxtaposition between old and new, the vibrant, workaday activities of the market existing in casual indifference to both ruins and nineteenth-century *palazzi*. The Rome that it represents is a very particular Rome, a living Rome, a *Roma popolare*. And while there may be a transience associated with the Piazza, it also represents continuity of function and association, particularly as regards its cinematic depiction, as directors repeatedly return to themes explored in De Sica's iconic *Bicycle Thieves*. As Caldwell points out, this accumulation of meaning through reference to previous cinematic depictions is merely the modern continuation of a long tradition of visual representation based on repetition that has forged such a strong identity for Rome in the western imagination.

In common with the directors discussed by Caldwell, the poet and filmmaker Pier Paolo Pasolini was also drawn to a more *popolare* Rome, far from the obvious heritage sites – which is not to say that he was not fascinated with the city's unique past. In fact, at times it seems that, for Pasolini, Rome meant encountering an almost archaic world, as Jacopo Benci outlines in his chapter "'An Extraordinary Proliferation of Layers": Pasolini's Rome(s)'. Pasolini's engagement with his adopted city occurs at close range, and his films and writings over a number of years chronicle his journey, both physical and emotional, through its various layers. In one account, Pasolini describes