

A new Republican temple on the *via Appia*, at the borders of Rome's urban space

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The excavation of 1970 and the available archival documentation

On May 27, 1970, during construction of the Caffarella sewer system which was to serve new districts in the sprawling suburbs of Rome, the Municipality of Rome alerted the Soprintendenza to the discovery of some ancient structures near the *via Appia*.¹ The area affected by the passage of the sewer system lies just beyond the Almo river, between the *Appia*'s first and second mile, in a place where, at the end of the 19th c., P. Cartoni built a rather large barn for his estate (*vigna*).² On the W side of the road, excavators discovered a concrete pedestal reveted with tuff blocks that was interpreted as the foundation of a sepulchral monument, the *ruderatio* of the *via Appia*, and a secondary paved road leading southeast, as published by L. Spera (see fig. 1, trench A).³ However, the excavations on the E side of the *via Appia* have never been published. The aim of this paper is to describe and interpret the remarkable discovery. My examination of documentation stored in the archives of the Soprintendenza identified photographs and sketches of the 1970 excavation, providing evidence for the existence of a Republican-era monumental architectural complex situated behind the barn of Vigna Cartoni. Since it was impossible unfortunately to locate any written reports, the research was based mostly on illustrations and administrative documents, but a fairly accurate history of the excavation could be reconstructed based on the latter.

Trench A, opened on the W side of the *via Appia*, was to be continued on its E side. Thus Trench B was opened behind the old barn (see figs. 1-2) and during its excavation some archaeological remains caught the excavators' attention. The reports of the Municipality of Rome show that on May 26, 1970, three tombs as well as some blocks and walls in *opus incertum* and *caementicium* were discovered.⁴ The tombs are otherwise undocumented, while the blocks may be part of what the excavators called "Structure 1" and the wall in *opus incertum* and *caementicium* may be part of "wall 2". The mechanical digger was then shifted alongside this wall and another trench (C) was opened, probably with the aim of uncovering it. As the digger moved south, it uncovered the main part of wall 2. The

* General abbreviations:

ACap	Archivio Storico Capitolino.
ArchX RZ	Archivio X Ripartizione del Comune di Roma, Rapporti di Zona.
ArchX RT	Archivio X Ripartizione del Comune di Roma, Registro dei Trovamenti.
Arch SBBAR	Archivio Corrente Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Roma.
ArchSt SBBAR	Archivio Storico Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Roma.
Carta	Comune di Roma, X Ripartizione, <i>Carta archeologica monumentale e paesistica del suburbio e dell'agro romano. Parco dell'Appia Antica</i> , foglio 24 (Rome 1988).

1 Arch SBBAR T.XI./401.002.1, prot. 2085 29.05.1970.

2 ACap, t. 54, prot. 45029 anno 1886. See also Carta n. 371.

3 L. Spera, *Il paesaggio suburbano di Roma dall'Antichità al Medioevo. Il comprensorio tra le vie Latina e Ardeatina dalle Mura Aureliane al III miglio* (Rome 1999) 321-22. See also ArchX, RZ, REG 15, p. 376, 16.9.1970; ArchX, RT, vol. XIII, p. 137, 16.9.1970.

4 ArchX, RZ, REG 74, p. 271, 26.5.1970; ArchX, RT, vol. XIII, p. 135, 29.05.1970. The letter was sent immediately after this discovery.