

# Old and new archaeological evidence for the plan of the Palatine temple of Apollo

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In answer to T. P. Wiseman's final paragraph, the SW orientation of the Palatine temple of Apollo was never questioned over the last 150 years for a single, good reason: a series of enormous foundation holes indicates the location of the temple's columnar façade. Now c.7 m deep but originally almost 10 m, these holes once contained the ashlar blocks of the temple's front colonnade, which featured 6 columns of almost 15 m height, rising to an overall height of about 26 m if we include both podium and pediment (figs. 1-2, 5-7). As the pairs of lateral columns shared a wider set of foundations, the temple preserves 4 foundation holes for the 6 frontal columns. The applied construction technique of the foundations is well known from Late Republican and Augustan temples: massive ashlar walls supported all load-bearing parts (columns and walls), while the spaces in between were filled with *opus caementicium*.<sup>1</sup>

As far as the location and the orientation of the temple's façade are concerned, the otherwise extremely complex archaeology of Octavian's Palatine sanctuary is indeed unusually straightforward. Not surprisingly therefore, most of those who have excavated or documented the temple's archaeological remains — from P. Rosa (1864/65), to G. Boni (1921), G. Lugli (1951), H. Bauer (1968), G. Carettoni (1960s), to myself (since 2006) — never had reason to doubt the temple's SW orientation. Lugli rightly based the first reconstruction of the temple's plan on a documentation of the frontal foundation, and my own reconstruction of the columnar façade followed the same approach. Already in 2008, after carrying out a more precise and detailed documentation of the foundation holes during two weeks of on-site measuring *inside* them, I was able to determine the columnar axial widths of the temple's front more precisely than was previously possible.<sup>2</sup> In conjunction with the documentation of several preserved architectural fragments, this fieldwork also allowed me digitally to reconstruct the façade.<sup>3</sup>

From an archaeological point of view, the SW orientation of the Palatine temple of Apollo has been regarded as a datum since Lugli's work in the 1950s. T. P. Wiseman's

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*Frequently cited:* Lugli = G. Lugli, "Il tempio di Apollo Aziaco e il Gruppo Augusteo sul Palatino," *Atti Accad. Naz. San Luca* 1 (1951-52) 26-55, reprinted in id., *Studi minori di topographia antica* (1965) 258-90.

Carettoni = G. Carettoni, "I problemi della zona Augustea del Palatino alla luce dei recenti scavi," *RendPontAcc* 39 (1966-67) 55-75.

Zink = S. Zink, "Reconstructing the Palatine temple of Apollo: a case study in Early Augustan temple design," *JRA* 21 (2008) 47-63.

Claridge = A. Claridge, *Rome: an Oxford archaeological guide* (2nd edn., Oxford 2010).

1 See Zink 49 with reference to the temples of Apollo Sosianus and the Augustan Pantheon. In both cases, the foundations of the columnar front were carried out as individual spot foundations in ashlar masonry while the spaces in between were filled with concrete: see A. M. Colini, "Il Tempio di Apollo," *BullCom* 68 (1941) 13 figs. 3-4; L. Beltrami, *Il Pantheon* (Milan 1898) 46, fig. 14.

2 See Lugli 43-46, figs. 5 and 15 (reproduced in Zink 48, fig. 2). For my reconstruction of the columnar front see Zink 51, 55-56, fig. 5 (photograph and detailed plan of the columnar foundation holes) and fig. 10 (reconstructed plan of front on basis of newly-measured foundation holes).

3 Zink 58-61, fig. 12; also S. Zink with H. Piening, "Haec aurea templa: the Palatine temple of Apollo and its polychromy," *JRA* 22 (2009) 110, fig. 1.