

## ↻ | Introduction

This study has grown out of several long-standing scholarly interests and personal enthusiasms. First and foremost is my devotion to Rome, not just the ancient city of the classicists and archaeologists, but medieval, early modern, and modern Rome. Much of that fascination comes from the fact that Rome is not a museum, but a living, dynamic city, shaped, informed, and constrained by its past, but never subservient to it.

Rome has to live with more remains of antiquity than any other city in the world. The monumental volumes of the great German historian Ferdinand Gregorovius remind us of the complex history of medieval Rome. The city was one of the seed grounds of the Renaissance and, of course, the epicenter for the Counter-Reformation. Eighteenth-century Rome stood at the center of the European Grand Tour and was one of the proving grounds of the neoclassical revival. French and especially Napoleonic Rome has received increasing attention from archaeologists, museologists, and students of cultural imperialism and cultural heritage. Even the sleepy Rome of the last days of the popes had its charms and is increasingly attracting scholarly attention.

The capture of Rome by the Italian forces in September of 1870 and its proclamation as the national capital dramatically changed the dynamic between past and present. The leaders of Italy wanted to modernize the city after the models of Paris and London. The nobility and the social and financial elites saw a way to profit from the expansion of the new capital. Much of modern Rome reflects their efforts, some regrettable, but some also representative of the best of the era. That development accelerated under fascism and, after the hiatus of the immediate postwar era, has continued to the present day.

The changes of the last 140 years have destroyed much of the classical past but have also revealed much that is new about that past. The enormity of that ancient Roman legacy is the central fact about the distinct nature of Rome. Paris and London were Roman cities, but the Roman remains there have not until very recently challenged the programs of planners or builders. Rome has always been different. While perverse urbanists occasionally dreamed of obliterating the whole of the classical city, those

fantasies could never become a reality. There was just too much of ancient Rome.

Moreover, the ruins have long possessed ideological significance for more important people than obsessed antiquarians and dreaming classicists. For the heirs of the Risorgimento, ancient Rome provided a useful alternative to the papal architectural legacy that dominated the cityscape. The first archaeological park in the world was created there, not so much to please the scholars and the tourists, as to provide a vision of Rome's past different from the omnipresent baroque domes and medieval bell towers. Fascist urban theater, often obsessed with a worship of both antiquity and modernity, was set against a background of the Rome of the Caesars. Only during the post World War II urban "Rape of Rome" did mindless greed and indulgent convenience destroy the past with little concern about aesthetics and historical meaning.

Much of my own scholarship has centered on the history of classical archaeology. My researches have focused not only on the birth and development of the discipline but also on the ways in which that archaeological legacy has been used to advance wider political and cultural agendas. The humanists of the Renaissance created classical archaeology as a field of study, and we are all their heirs. However, their impact on historical preservation was limited, and the great baroque builders had agendas more destructive to the remains of the ancient city.

I have begun this study with the eighteenth century, when Winckelmann gave classical archaeology new directions, and when the Grand Tour dilettantes from new "power countries" like England advanced the practice of "universal collecting." The popes responded to these new challenges by moving to protect their antiquities and to create the first great public archaeological museums. The "French interlude" was followed by a re-installed papacy, which sought to derive both old and new meanings from the antiquities. From the proclamation of Roma Capitale to the fall of Mussolini and then, after a hiatus, during the last three decades of the twentieth century, Rome was the scene of massive archaeological excavations, which have illuminated many aspects of the city's past from the settlement of Romulus to the fall of the Roman Empire.

Those grand archaeological undertakings not only provided much new information but also provoked much discussion about the conduct of archaeological excavation in the urban setting and the publication and presentation of the archaeological discoveries. They also provoked debates about the preservation of the archaeological past in a dynamic modern city. Those were debates centered on the complex intersection

of heritage and urbanism, other long-standing interests and concerns for me. I decided to bring all those themes together in a study which would investigate their intersections and interactions in early modern and modern Rome.

Bringing such a complex project to conclusion has not been easy. The first question was when it should begin. I decided to start with the eighteenth century, a period when the rulers of papal Rome had to redefine their goals for the city after the heady days of the Renaissance and the Counter-Reformation. Those changes were accelerated by the emergence of the Grand Tour, when the youth of Europe and especially of protestant England descended on the city to carouse and collect. Much has recently been written on the Grand Tour, both as a European and as a Roman phenomenon. I will consider it selectively, focusing on its impact on the archaeological heritage of Rome, and on the papal responses. Those ranged from the use of archaeology as a diplomatic tool to the redesign of the Roman museums to highlight the papal archaeological patrimony.

The most important “Grand Tour” figure was the German Johann Joachim Winckelmann (1717–1788). The patronage of popes and cardinals made him a major cultural force in the mid-eighteenth-century city. His “rediscovery of the Greeks” and the devaluation of the Roman heritage in the Empire’s capital city provoked cultural debate and stimulated scholarship. However, his was still largely a Roman story. Winckelmann’s Hellenic glorification was based on classical materials housed in Rome and mainly ancient Roman creations. His scholarship enhanced the value and importance of Rome’s collections and museums and drew more artists and savants to Rome.

Rome next fell under either French hegemony or direct control for a generation. The French intervention largely ended the elite Grand Tour. However, both Revolutionary France and the Napoleonic empire had long identified with the classical heritage. The French Academy was the older foreign study center in Rome. However, that identity was now combined with an assertion of cultural hegemony by the “New France.” That led to the removal of many of Rome’s most famous archaeological treasures to Paris, where they were to grace Napoleon’s universal museum. The French arguments for dominant political powers having hegemonic museums are still those set forth today by the great collecting institutions in Europe and America. The contemporary responses to such cultural imperialism, advanced by savants like Quatremère de

Quincy, stressed the importance of the linkage of object and place in preserving the past, and are those still used by defenders of heritage.<sup>1</sup>

That experience of expropriation made the papal administrators realize the fragility of much of their cultural heritage. It stimulated a new interest in excavation to provide antiquities to fill the decimated galleries. It also led to the promulgation of decrees designed to control excavation and the export of antiquities. The current archaeological protection laws of the Italian Republic can trace their origins back to decrees of papal bureaucrats made in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

The French were defeated, and Napoleon sent into exile. The pope and his ancient marbles returned to Rome. The elite Grand Tour was largely over, but a new brand of tourists, representing the bourgeoisie of Europe and North America, now crowded into the city. Rome of the last decades of papal rule is generally pictured as torpid, if quaint. Romanticism gave a new, slightly morbid glow to the tombs and the ruins. Post-1870 changes to the city settled a high level of nostalgia on those last decades of old papal Rome.

That picture of neglect is somewhat misleading when it comes to the antiquities, for the popes were more than just passive caretakers of a charming, if declining city. They valued their ancient remains and wanted both to care for them and to use them. Some very important restoration projects took place in late papal Rome. The popes also appreciated the importance of using ruins to bolster their ideological agendas. Hence Pius IX, the last pope to rule Rome, promoted Christian archaeology and the public presentation of the vestiges of primitive Christianity.

Those decades saw serious changes in the study of classical archaeology. Philosophical historians in the tradition of Edward Gibbon became less prominent. However, archaeological studies increased in range and intensity. Those decades were a golden age of antiquarian investigations, practiced by an international community of savants and scholars. It also saw the emergence of a more scientific archaeology, one which emerged mainly from the German universities. The antiquarian past and the archaeological future came together with the founding of the Istituto di Corrispondenza Archeologica, the ancestor of the modern German Archaeological Institute and of other research centers in Rome.

The decades between the Italian capture of Rome in 1870 and Mussolini's march on the city in 1922 saw diverse and complex archaeological developments, whose significance is generally appreciated only by experts.

<sup>1</sup> Settis 2010: 88–89.

The physical city expanded to a size not seen since the height of the Roman Empire. The innumerable building projects, which ranged from public buildings to private apartment blocks, uncovered vast numbers of archaeological features and artifacts. They included architectural remains, inscriptions, mosaics, paintings, and portable objects, ranging from statues to gems and coins. Scholars were overwhelmed by the mass of discoveries. They appreciated the new information they provided but became increasingly concerned about how this newly discovered heritage would be handled.

Both the academic and the political custodians of the new country's cultural heritage shared those concerns about heritage conservation but also sought to relate archaeology to other agendas. Ancient Rome was enlisted to serve as a counterbalance to papal Rome in the new national capital. That meant greater visibility for the archaeological remains. For that reason politicians, as well as archaeologists, pushed for the creation of an archaeological park, which would encompass most of the major Roman ruins in the city. After much debate and delay, the park was largely realized. It remains the largest urban archaeological display in the world.

The intersecting archaeological and urban renewal agendas of the fascist regime have recently received much attention. The full impact of the combination of archaeology and Mussolini's *Romanità* (the concept of "Romanness") in a city which was being shaped by a variety of agendas requires a book unto itself. Here I have tried to describe and evaluate the highlights of this intersected world of urban development, excavation, theatrical reconstruction, museum formation, and exhibition creation. Judgment on that aspect of the fascist era is difficult, because often the more imaginative interventions had their destructive underside and were created to promote regime goals that were dubious and destructive.

The decades immediately after the war were grim both for the urban fabric of Rome and for its archaeological remains. As the city recovered, it was launched into a frenzy of development. There was much short-sighted greed and little planning and control. Within the city the monuments and museums deteriorated, while the periphery was devastated by the uncontrolled construction of thousands of rapidly constructed apartment blocks. Its close association with fascist ideology had compromised the standing of Roman archaeology in general and of certain key Roman archaeologists in particular. A few brave figures tried to publicize the destruction and slow the carnage, but they were generally ignored. It was, after all, the Rome of *La dolce vita*.

The 1970s saw massive political, social, economic, and cultural changes in Italian society. It also saw the emergence of a new generation of urbanists

and archaeologists. They were horrified by what was happening to their city and were determined to save as much as they could. Marxist ideology blended with a new archaeological professionalism. Massive monumental restoration campaigns were launched. Special funding was provided to undertake the largest program of archaeological excavation since Mussolini. However, this time the work was executed using the best in contemporary techniques. An imaginative program of site restoration and museum redesign was also executed. Urban destruction and deterioration still continued, but now it was regularly and often effectively challenged.

With the 1990s, that golden age of archaeology in Rome began to pass. The economy faltered, politics turned right, and the generation of the 1970s gradually left the scene. A renewed propensity for ambitious politicians to make architectural statements added to the changed reality. That was most vividly embodied in Richard Meier's new Ara Pacis Museum. It has from its very beginning been surrounded by controversies, which captured the debates and concerns of a new age.

I end this study with a general sense of uncertainty. The economic crisis of Europe, and especially Italy, has led to massive budget cuts which have especially impacted agencies that handle heritage. Right-wing politicians on both the city and the national levels have pushed a business approach to managing the archaeological domain. There has developed a sense among significant sectors of the Italian populace that archaeological agendas have received too much attention at the expense of other urban needs.

As with so many aspects of Italian life, contemporary heritage management remains complex and contradictory. The economy is still parlous, and severe budgetary restrictions remain in place. Key people in the archaeological service retire and are not replaced. However, new emphasis is being placed on the importance of cultural heritage and especially archaeology for the tourist industry, which in turn is key to Italy's revival. Joint public-private restoration ventures, such as those undertaken at the Pyramid of Cestius appear to be working. However, at the time of the book's completion, the future of heritage management, as with so many other aspects of Italian life, is uncertain.

The interconnection of the three words *Archaeology*, *Ideology*, and *Urbanism* is central to an understanding of what I am trying to do and not do in this study. It is not a history of archaeology in Rome, either popular or academic, nor an effort to illuminate ancient Roman history through archaeology in the manner of Paul MacKendrick's classic *The Mute Stones Speak*. It is an investigation of the ways in which archaeologists have studied but

also tried to preserve the archaeological record in a city which was always undergoing social and physical change.

*Ideology* is always a slippery, ambiguous term. That is no less true here. An official, well-articulated ideological agenda, which used archaeology as an instrument, was important during certain eras such as the fascist decades. Political ideologies often merged with cultural ideologies with different articulations in different eras. In eighteenth-century Rome, a shared cultural ideology of classicism bridged obvious religious differences to bring together urbane popes, cultured diplomats, and Grand Tour noblemen, often from largely protestant countries. The interest shown by nineteenth-century popes in the vestiges of early Christianity was in part an expression of opposition to secular modernism, as well as a desire to return to an era of simpler Christianity. Clearly the Risorgimento leaders, who created Roma Capitale, had their own complex blends of ideologies. Among them was a desire to reidentify with many aspects of ancient Rome. That identity intensified during the decades of fascist rule.

Ironically, in the decades after World War II, when east and west were engaged in massive ideological combat, the fate of Rome was shaped by some of the least noble forces in its history. Many of those “friends of the city” claimed to love Rome but were ready to sell out the city to the most influential developers. Only with the 1970s did a new generation, in part the products of the distinctly Italian Gramscian Marxism but also of newly emerging social and ecological articulations, bring a “conscience” back to the city. The more recent, so-called “end of ideology” has meant the demise of many such hopes and concerns. Recent years have seen the intrusion of what may be called the “cult of capitalist efficiency” into the management of all cultural affairs. However, it has also seen the continued efforts of officials and citizens who love the city and want to save it from the many threatening forces.

Urban historians tend to give great cities their own *personae*, recalling the enthroned Dea Roma represented in Late Antique frescoes. A great city develops a dynamic of its own, which drives much before it. Even the sleepy late papal Rome was a very complex world, which impacted and was impacted by the archaeology in a myriad of ways, large and small. A city of millions has magnified those impacts many times. Planning programs, large and small, may channel some of that dynamic, but most urban life plays out beyond bureaucratic control. Some urbanism is official, but most is not. Since this is a study in urban archaeology and not urban planning or urban sociology, at each stage I found it necessary to understand what was happening in the wider urban society in order to contextualize the dynamics of archaeological development.



## 1 | Rome in the Eighteenth Century

The topics of archaeology, ideology, and urbanism in eighteenth-century Rome have received considerable attention in recent years. Much important research has been done on the history of collecting and the role of the Grand Tour in promoting an international classicism. Such lines of investigation have often been approached as part of a historical continuum in the study of artistic and cultural classicism and antiquarian collecting, which extended from the Renaissance down to the Age of Enlightenment. It is not my purpose to go over that familiar ground in any great detail. However, with the eighteenth century begins a new period in the history of archaeology, antiquities, and museums at Rome. It built on the past but also laid the foundations for the archaeological world of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Those developments require some detailed consideration as an introduction to this study.

The eighteenth-century popes appear rather colorless when compared to their dynamic and controversial sixteenth- and seventeenth-century predecessors. It is true that the spiritual enthusiasms of the Counter-Reformation had largely waned. Many elements of baroque culture had lost their creative force. Moreover, the popes faced new challenges. Nation-states had come to dominate Europe, and some of the most prosperous, progressive, and powerful of those states were Protestant. The Enlightenment, also a new force coming largely out of northern Europe, although not limited to the Protestant countries, posed major new intellectual challenges, especially to the theological underpinnings of the church.

The popes and their advisors were well aware of those changes and sought new avenues, both cultural and political, within which the church could maneuver. The classical heritage became useful in new ways, and the antiquities of Rome assumed new importance. Papal policy toward archaeology became as much a bridge to the future as it was a connection with the past. Most of the popes who ruled in those decades had strong groundings in classical humanism. The world of archaeology served their scholarly and artistic goals, but also diplomatic, cultural, and ideological ones. The development of accessible archaeological displays, like those of the museum collections at Rome,





**Figure 1** Bénigne Gagneraux, *Meeting of Gustavus Adolphus III of Sweden with Pope Pius VI in the Vatican Galleries*, Bildarkivet, Nationalmuseum Stockholm. Reproduced with permission.

helped to foster an Enlightenment consensus based on a common antique past. It countered, or at least blunted, some of the ideological conflicts emerging in contemporary Europe.

The pope who best captured those new trends was Pius VI (1775–1799). He was an experienced administrator with a long-standing interest in archaeology. His reign encompassed key decades in the later eighteenth century and embodied many of those cultural changes. Protestants reacted more positively to him than they did to other popes of the era.<sup>1</sup> That was captured well in the 1784 painting by Bénigne Gagneraux, which showed the pope conducting Gustav III, the Protestant king of Sweden, around his newly redesigned Vatican Museum (Fig. 1). The pope was using the common language of classical art to bridge religious differences and win concessions for Catholics in Gustav's country.<sup>2</sup> The Swedish king received special treatment when it came to the export of antiquities. Those requests for the royal collection were a reminder of the Roman archaeological resources, which the popes could use diplomatically.<sup>3</sup>

The protection and cultural/diplomatic use of classical antiquities had started early in the century. It began with Clement XI (1700–1721), who

<sup>1</sup> Paloscia 1997: 39.    <sup>2</sup> David 2002: 29.

<sup>3</sup> Farinella & Papafava 1985: 7; Ridley 2000: 112; Kirk 2005: 70–72, fig. 1.23.

was from the Albani family of Urbino. The Albani were to become some of the most important collectors of the century. They would be patrons of Winckelmann, the scholar who was to create the intellectual foundations of the new classicism. The century also started with a new papal antiquarian Francesco Bartoli (papal antiquary 1700–1733), who had inherited the position from his father Pietro (1635–1700), a leading archaeological figure in seventeenth-century Rome.<sup>4</sup>

The younger Bartoli was both an antiquarian and an engraver. The two pursuits would play an important role in the study of archaeology in eighteenth-century Rome. Bartoli, in his position as the pope's official antiquary, showed care both for the major monuments and for the portable antiquities. The restoration of the Pantheon was at the top of his restoration agenda.<sup>5</sup> He was also concerned about the growing export of antiquities from papal territory. It was a threat to papal patrimony, growing out of the increased collecting at all social levels throughout Europe.

Bartoli faced an increasingly complicated international antiquities market. English lords and the “tricky” Frenchmen were both a growing presence on the Roman scene. They were the forerunners of what would become by mid-century the massive Grand Tour phenomenon. The early years of the eighteenth century saw relative peace and stability on the European continent. Wars continued, but they were relatively sporadic and controlled and less devastating. Religious tensions relaxed. The elites of all countries could move around with greater ease and security. Increasingly, a central goal of their pilgrimage became Rome. They posed and they partied, but increasingly they sought artistic objects to bring home.

Bartoli watched over an indigenous antiquarian community, which evolved to meet the collecting enthusiasms of the visitors. One dealer and his special enemy was Francesco Ficoroni.<sup>6</sup> Ficoroni (1664–1747) was a scholarly antiquary with a substantial list of publications. They included a 1744 guide to the antiquities of the city.<sup>7</sup> He was active as a *cicerone* or personal guide for foreigners visiting the city. Bartoli regarded him as a key facilitator for the export of antiquities, a dealer whose interests ran counter to those of the papal official. Ficoroni with his complex cultural and commercial agendas stood at the start of a long line of antiquities agents that stretched down to Wolfgang Helbig in the late nineteenth century and Giacomo Medici in the late twentieth.

<sup>4</sup> de Grummond 1996: 122–24.    <sup>5</sup> Cerasoli 1909.

<sup>6</sup> Ridley 1992b: 134–36; de Grummond 1996: 439–40.    <sup>7</sup> Wilten-Ely 1994: 46.