Archaeology, Ideology, and Urbanism in Rome from the Grand Tour to Berlusconi

Rome is one of the world's greatest archaeological sites, preserving many major monuments of the classical past. It is also a city with an important post-Roman history and home to both the papacy and the modern Italian state. Archaeologists have studied the ruins, and popes and politicians have used them for propaganda programs. Developers and preservationists have fought over what should and should not be preserved. This book tells the story of those complex, interacting developments over the past three centuries, from the days of the Grand Tour through the arrival of the fascists, which saw more destruction but also an unprecedented use of the remains for political propaganda. In postwar Rome urban development predominated over archaeological preservation and much was lost. However, starting in the 1970s, preservationists have fought back, saving much and making the city into Europe's most important case study in historical preservation and historical loss.

STEPHEN L. DYSON is Park Professor of Classics at the University at Buffalo and SUNY Distinguished Professor. His research interests focus on the history of the city of Rome and the archaeology of Roman Italy and its empire. He is former president of the Classical Association of the American Academy in Rome and past president of the Archaeological Institute of America, and has written a number of titles including *Rome: A Living Portrait of an Ancient City* (2010).

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STEPHEN L. DYSON
State University of New York, Buffalo

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To those who have fought long and hard to save the heritage of Rome

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Preface

I first visited Rome in 1959. It was the drab but exciting postwar city now well known from the novels and cinema of the era. I continued to return over the decades. As a student-scholar of Roman archaeology, I appreciated the many new discoveries. I was also frustrated by the degradation of the archaeological sites and museums. Wider, generally negative changes in the urban physical, social, and economic fabric largely escaped the attention of those of us who mostly operated in the comfortable orbits of the foreign schools.

A growing interest in the history of classical archaeology led me into the socio-economic as well as the technical history of Italian classical archaeology. The writings of scholars like Ranuccio Bianchi Bandinelli provided a sophisticated new approach. Marxist perspectives were not readily found in American classical archaeological scholarship. Meanwhile, in Italy re-evaluations of fascist archaeology from both ideological and methodological perspectives led to new investigations of pre-fascist Italian archaeology. With that came a new appreciation of the contributions of archaeological scholars like Giacomo Boni. While those historical reconstructions and the complex, multi-directional discussions which grew out of them were well known in Italian archaeological circles, they had limited visibility, especially in anglophone scholarship. It again seemed a story worth telling.

Meanwhile, another, new archaeological narrative was developing. The deterioration of the sites, monuments, and museums in Rome continued unchecked from the end of World War II. By the late 1970s degeneration had reached the point where the very physical integrity of monuments like the Column of Marcus Aurelius was threatened. At that key moment a new generation of archaeologists, newly coming into positions of power, sounded the alarm. Gradually the public and politicians listened. A massive influx of financial resources led to a golden age of excavation, site restoration, museum development, and publications aimed at scholars and the general public.

This book seeks to place these developments in the wider context of the evolution of Rome as an "archaeological" city. It begins with the early eighteenth century, when cultural promotion based on the presentation of

the antiquities replaced doctrinal propaganda as a major instrument of papal policy. It continues with a consideration of the roles played by the popes and their advisors in creating Rome's first heritage policy.

The unification of Italy and the creation of Rome as the national capital provided new challenges for Rome's archaeological heritage. On the one hand, uncontrolled growth led to the massive destruction of ancient remains. On the other hand, the new national government needed the vision of ancient Rome provided by archaeology to counter the omnipresent reminders of the importance of the long history of papal, Christian Rome. The years from 1870 to 1922 proved to be among the most important for the creation of a modern archaeology in Rome.

Mussolini's seizure of power in 1922 initiated a new era in archaeology in the city, one largely based on the cult of ancient *Romanità*. There was an ironic contrast between the promotion of Roman archaeology in excavations, museums, and temporary exhibitions, and the destruction of so much archaeology as a result of Mussolini's grandiose plans of urban revitalization. The torpor and neglect that followed the end of fascism was a not unexpected outcome.

It would have been satisfying to end this study with the accomplishments of the new generation that emerged in the late 1970s and 1980s. However, history, especially in Italy, is never static. The political compass has kept shifting, as have the views about the role of archaeology in twentieth- and twenty-first-century Rome. This study ends with deliberate ambiguity, as the future of Rome's archaeological resources is very uncertain.

This book has been long in the making. The final product owes much to a variety of institutions and individuals. Much of the basic research was conducted at the library of the American Academy in Rome and through the various library services of the University at Buffalo. The Office of the Dean of Arts and Sciences at the University at Buffalo provided key research funding. The text owes much to discussion with colleagues in Europe and America and to interaction with my graduate students in various seminars.

Special thanks are owed to these who played key roles in turning manuscript into book. Alexander Masurek of the University at Buffalo Classics Graduate Program served multiple roles from bibliographer to editor. Michael Sharp brought the manuscript through the acceptance process and provided very useful initial editorial advice. Lisa Sinclair moved it into the initial stages of the editorial process. For the final editing I owe special thanks to Jacqueline French, who with patience and good humor turned

a rather disordered manuscript into a product ready to be presented to the press and the public. My family and my wife Pauline are owed special thanks for their support over the years.

The dedication has been left intentionally general. To highlight some figures would lead me to neglect others who were equally deserving. Often the most successful ventures in archaeological research and conservation have been complex undertakings with credit due to technicians and trench supervisors as well as the directors and organizers. Rome's rich archaeological heritage has obviously suffered from neglect and willful atrocity. However, from the eighteenth century down to the present, it has been well served by the research and advocacy of dedicated savants, public servants, and scholars. May the tradition continue.