

Rodolfo Lanciani's revenge

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In May 1922, Rome's major newspapers announced Rodolfo Lanciani's decision to donate some of his research notes to the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana (hereafter BAV). Lanciani (1845–1929) had been the most prominent Italian late nineteenth-century archaeologist of ancient Rome, and was considered a leading scholar on the topic. The notes, or *appunti*, represented decades of his work on aspects of the city's ancient topography. They contain extremely rare information on monuments and topographic features that had been discovered and then immediately destroyed during the years that the city was transformed into Italy's modern capital. Thus, the notes were an invaluable gift to the library. Three years later, forty-two thick folders filled with Lanciani's well-organized *appunti* were delivered to the BAV. They were catalogued in the 1930s, and since then scholars of ancient Rome have had access to them.¹

Several decades before the donation, some sketches and notes that formed part of the *appunti* were the subject of a pointed polemic in archaeological circles. Bureaucrats in the Italian national government stated that an employee's notes regarding an archaeological site belonged in the state archives. In 1889 and 1890, they opined that much which comprised Lanciani's *appunti* was the property of the *Direzione generale per le antichità e belle arti* (hereafter *Direzione generale*), the state office with oversight of the archaeological excavations.² At this time, Lanciani had been in that office's employ for nearly two decades. Contrarily, he believed that the notes he collected as an employee were his property. Furthermore, he insisted that any publication he produced using information from these notes was his to claim as a personal and professional achievement. In part because of his refusal to abide by government wishes, Lanciani was forced to resign his state position by January 1891.³

Lanciani's gift of this disputed material to the BAV was no doubt an outcome of the archaeologist's decades-long grudge against the state office. He was

¹ Marco Buonocore, ed, *Appunti di topografica romana nei codici Lanciani della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana*, Rome: Quasar, 1997, 1: 7-8. The forty-two folders were originally catalogued as Cod. Vat. Lat. 13031–13072. In 1934–1939, they were reduced to sixteen folders, thus Cod. Vat. Lat 13031–13047.

² Margherita Barnabei and Filippo Delpino, eds, *Le 'Memorie di un archeologo' di Felice Barnabei*, Rome: de Luca, 1991, 453–479, and especially 475.

³ Susan M. Dixon, 'Rodolfo Lanciani's Dismissal', *Bulletin of the History of Archaeology* 16: 2, 2016, 1–10, and Domenico Palombi, *Rodolfo Lanciani: l'Archeologia a Roma tra Ottocento e Novecento*, Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2006, 138–141.

certain that his forced resignation was unjust, the result of personal slander rather than the delivery of a sanction for any significant misconduct on his part. He was outraged because the incident tainted his reputation, which by 1891 included recognition by many national cultural institutions such as membership to the Reale Società Romana di Storia Patria, the Society of Antiquaries of London, and the Deutsches Archäologisches Institut, and honorary degrees from the University of Würzburg in 1882, Harvard University in 1886, and the University of Glasgow in 1889.⁴ For years, Lanciani nurtured a sense of hurt and outrage at the perceived injustice, expressing it in correspondences with friends and colleagues.⁵

Lanciani's career: amassing the *appunti*

In the late nineteenth century, establishing a shared cultural heritage for all Italians, including those of the former republics, duchies, and kingdoms on the Italian peninsula, as well as those of the Papal States, was of primary concern to the new national government. Thus, soon after the capture of Rome in September 1870, the government established the *Direzione generale* in part to oversee all archaeological activity in Italy. It fell under one of the government's major ministries, that of Public Instruction.⁶ Pietro Rosa (1810–1891), arguably best known for excavating the Palatine Hill in Rome during the 1860s, was appointed the first superintendent of Rome's excavations. Rosa immediately secured Lanciani's employment as an inspector of archaeological sites. Trained as an engineer and with expertise in surveying, as well as someone well-versed in the classical literature, and skilled in epigraphy, Lanciani was a highly qualified employee in the main office of the *Direzione generale* in Rome.⁷ The sites under Lanciani's supervision included the state's planned excavations, the most significant of which was the Roman Forum. In fact, in 1875, Lanciani's efforts were rewarded when, replacing Rosa, he was assigned the prestigious role as the director of the Forum excavations. His most notable accomplishments there were bringing down the level of the western section to correspond to that of the eastern, and in the process exposing a long stretch of the Sacra Via. He also tore down the Renaissance structures that concealed the ancient

⁴ For an expanded list of his accomplishments, see Palombi, *Rodolfo Lanciani*, 29–30.

⁵ Fondo Lanciani, Biblioteca dell'Istituto Nazionale di Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte, Roma, ms. 134: 19, 28, 30, 122, 123.

⁶ Silvia Bruni, 'Rapporti tra Stato e Municipio di Roma (1870–1911): L'istituzione di un museo archeologica', *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome: Italie et Méditerranée* 113:2, 2001, 775–777; and Anne Lehoerff, 'Pratiques archéologiques et administration du patrimoine archéologique en Italie, 1875-1885: l'exemple des anciens territoires villanoviens', *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome: Italie et Méditerranée* 111:1, 1999, 79 and 90.

⁷ Dixon, *Archaeology on Shifting Ground: Rodolfo Lanciani and Rome 1861–1914*, Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider, 2019, 20–29; Palombi, *Rodolfo Lanciani*, 60–69.

connections between the Palatine Hill and the Forum, and in the process exposed the House of the Vestal Virgins.⁸

His other duties at the *Direzione generale* included inspecting unanticipated archaeological discoveries in and around the city, including random finds that occurred during construction projects. These latter types of finds were frequent and numerous, when much dirt and debris was shifted during the rapid construction of new government buildings and residential quarters, as well as of any urban infrastructure to support them. Lanciani's oversight included some stretches of the Servian Wall, prehistoric grave sites in Rome's eastern hills, sumptuously decorated Imperial houses on the Celian Hill, and ancient roads and drains throughout the city.⁹ The significant discoveries were by-products of the transformation of Rome into Italy's capital city.¹⁰

Additionally, in 1872, Lanciani assumed the role of secretary of the city of Rome's newly established commission overseeing the same kinds of archaeological activity.¹¹ This commission had custody of property under municipal jurisdiction, which primarily included the land for the new urban infrastructure such as streets, squares, sewers and public utility lines. Furthermore, Lanciani was called in to negotiate with private owners about the fate of the finds excavated on their lands. This was the case with the artefacts and structures from the famous *horti*, or large gardens, on the Quirinale and Esquiline Hills.¹² In these two roles, then, Lanciani witnessed and recorded nearly all archaeological activity in and around Rome. With the information gleaned, he was in an excellent position to envision a reconstructed topographical map of the city of ancient Rome.

The allegations of Lanciani's unprofessional conduct were registered after nearly two decades of service. His superiors at the *Direzione generale* identified the retention of archival material as one of the archaeologist's unethical behaviours, but it was not the only claim against him. Others included dealing antiquities to American museums and aiding some Americans in securing archaeological permits to excavate in Italy.¹³ The complaints reveal a rift in attitudes towards cultural

⁸ Rodolfo Lanciani, 'Sull' Atrium Vestae', *Bullettino dell'Istituto di Corrispondenza Archeologica* 1884, 145–153; and Anthony Cubberley, ed., 'Notes from Rome' by Rodolfo Lanciani, Rome: British School at Rome, 1988, 149–157.

⁹ Dixon, *Archaeology on Shifting Ground*, 29–68, citing Filippo Coarelli, ed., *Gli Scavi di Roma 1878–1921*, *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae*, supplementum II, 2, Rome: Quasar, 2004, throughout.

¹⁰ Giuseppe Cuccia, *Urbanistica Edilizia Infrastruttura di Roma Capitale 1870–1990*, Rome: Laterza, 1991, 20–21 and 50–79.

¹¹ Maria Teresa de Nigris, 'La Commissione Archeologica Municipale di Roma (1872–1924)'. www.archiviocapitolino.it, accessed 9 September 2019; Lanciani, 'Prefazione', *Bullettino della Commissione Archeologica Comunale di Roma*, 2nd series, VIII, 1880, 4–8.

¹² Maddalena Cima, 'Gli horti dell'Esquilino', in Maddalena Cima and Emilia Talamo, eds, *Gli Horti di Roma Antica*, Rome; Electra, 2008, 63–105.

¹³ Dixon, 'Rodolfo Lanciani's Dismissal', 1–10.

patrimony at the end of the nineteenth century in Italy, as the state worked diligently to assert control over Rome's antiquities. In a sense, the allegations provide insight into the morphing archaeological practice at this time.¹⁴ Thus, the Italian state's demand for Lanciani's drawings begged the question: to whom did one's work as an archaeologist belong? The state claimed that Lanciani's notes and drawings, and relatedly, the knowledge that they represented, were the property of the state. Thus, neither the notes nor the knowledge was to be used in publications other than the state's, and particularly not in publications that furthered Lanciani's personal career.

In general, his superiors' accusations against Lanciani underscore the tensions between the national government that aimed to establish control of Rome's great wealth of antiquities, and the municipal government that had been its custodian for centuries. Those at the *Direzione generale* were convinced that the archaeologist was prioritizing the latter's interest and thus he deserved censure. The goal of the state office was to remove the practice of archaeology from the hands of private landowners, including those in the papal hierarchy, the aristocracy, and foreigners, those whose political powers were largely suppressed after the establishment of the nation of Italy. Wrenching control of the archaeological sites from those in the old regime, as well as those who were deemed amateurs, it was believed, would put a halt to the ruinous practice of digging haphazardly to retrieve sculpture and other objects in order to adorn private collections.¹⁵ According to the state, these individuals disrupted any gain in knowledge because they were not trained in the new scientific methods of archaeology, which sought to derive information from the position of the find, be it in the stratum or in a broad topographical context. The state wedded archaeology to public instruction, in order to build knowledge of Italy's ancient past and as a result form a cohesive cultural identity. Keeping archaeological art and artefacts in national museums rather than private collections within or outside of Italy could accomplish that.¹⁶

With this goal in mind, the *Direzione generale* did not employ any of the former papal archaeologists who had experience at digging in Rome. These men included the young Lanciani's professional mentors: Giovanni Battista de Rossi (1822–1894), Pietro Ercole Visconti (1802–1880), and Visconti's nephew Carlo Ludovico (1818–1894). They had been colleagues of Lanciani's father Pietro (c. 1800–1868), who had been employed as a hydraulic engineer at the papal court.¹⁷ After

¹⁴ Marcello Barbanera, *L'archeologia degli Italiani. Storia, metodi e ornamenti dell'archeologia classica in Italia*, Rome: Riuniti, 1998, 3–87.

¹⁵ Barbanera *L'archeologia degli italiani*, 37.

¹⁶ Domenico Bernini, 'Origini del Sistema museale dello Stato di Roma', *Bollettino d'Arte* 82:6, 1997: 7–45.

¹⁷ Maria Sperandio and Maria Teresa Petrara, 'Rodolfo Lanciani e i Lanciani di Montecelio', *Atti e memorie della Società Tiburtina di Storia e d'Arte*, 66, 1993, 171. On de Rossi, see Stephen L. Dyson, *Archaeology, Ideology, and Urbanism in Rome from the Grand Tour to Berlusconi*, New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019, 74–77; on the Visconti family, see

the suppression of the Papal State in 1871, these men had refused to work in the state service, or rather, they vehemently declined to sign allegiance to the state as a stipulation of employment. The tension between the former papal archaeologists and those in the state service was fierce. Many of the state employees hailed from Naples, a city known for its anti-clerical sentiment; they were trained in the new scientifically informed excavation methods at Pompeii.¹⁸ For the most part, they decried the sloppy excavating practices of the papal archaeologists. Furthermore, the papal archaeologists were most often trained in epigraphy, philology and classical literature. They would ridicule some of those in the state bureaucracy for their ignorance in recognizing the cultural importance of their finds. Last but not least, beyond the broad professional rifts, there were intense personality clashes.

Among the members of the city's commission on archaeology were many considered suspect by the national government: the former papal archaeologists such as de Rossi, as well as a few aristocrats Count Virginio Vespignani (1802–1882), Marchese Francesco Nobili Vitelleschi (1829–1906), and Duke Leopoldo Torlonia (1853–1918), Rome's mayor from 1882 to 1887. Augusto Castellani (1829–1914), a renowned antiquities dealer with international connections, also served on the commission in his capacity as director of the Capitoline Museums, the only municipal museum dedicated to ancient Rome's artistic past.¹⁹ In short, there was much vexation between the city commissioners and the state employees. In the state's estimation, the city created major obstacles to thwart the government's control of archaeological finds, by hiding information, and at times, by claiming them as municipal property for display in the Capitoline Museums, or by too easily selling off the nation's patrimony to the highest bidders, which often included foreign collectors.²⁰ For the city's part, they resented the state government's brutish oversight of the archaeological past, often destroying major monuments to reshape the new capital city. They resented this particularly because the state placed the primary economic burden on the municipal government to execute much of the new construction.

This strain between the two offices that supported archaeological practice in Rome – the *Commissione* and the *Direzione generale* – placed Lanciani in a particularly awkward spot, to say the least, given his employment in both. In 1889, he had

Ronald T. Ridley, 'To protect the monuments: the papal antiquarians (1534–1870)', *Xenia Antiqua* 1: 1992, 152–154.

¹⁸ Barbarera, *L'archeologia degli italiani*, 64–70; and Dyson, *In Pursuit of Ancient Past. A History of Classical Archaeology in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006, 40–41.

¹⁹ Antonella Magagnini, 'Alessandro and Augusto Castellani: Collecting, Museum History and the Antiquarian Market', in Susan W. Soros and Stephanie Walker, eds, *Castellani and the Italian Archaeological Jewelry*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2004, 285–301.

²⁰ Filippo Delpino and Rachele Dubbini 'Pietro Rosa e la tutela delle antichità a Roma tra il 1870 e il 1875', in Giuseppe Maria della Fine, ed, *La Fortuna degli Etruschi nella costruzione dell'Italia Unità*, Rome: Quasar, 403.

retained and excelled in his state position for so many years in part because of the strong support from his immediate supervisor Giuseppe Fiorelli, the chief officer of the *Direzione generale*.²¹ Fiorelli appreciated Lanciani's diverse skills, and specifically his talent as an extraordinary topographer. However, Fiorelli's health deteriorated in the mid-1880s, and when he was compelled to step aside from his duties, Lanciani lost his privileged position. At this time, his colleagues in the state offices, and specifically Felice Barnabei (1842–1922), began the investigation of Lanciani's behaviour. Barnabei was a skilled classicist and epigrapher who joined the state office in 1875, working as secretary under Fiorelli, whose duties he assumed in early 1887.²² He disdained the aristocratic class and those affiliated with the papacy, and indeed anyone who was engaged in the flow of antiquities out of Italy. He assiduously scrutinized the claims against Lanciani, even engaging the help of the national police in the investigation, and eventually forwarding the findings to Italy's Prime Minister.²³

Lanciani resigned before he could be fired. No disciplinary action was taken against him, and no records of the investigation were retained in the archives. Lanciani was well-mannered and well-connected in Roman society and had support from the king and queen of Italy's constitutional monarchy; this may explain his arguably lenient treatment at the time. In addition, the rules governing the state archaeological service were not explicit or well legislated enough to criminalize Lanciani's behaviour.²⁴ After he left office, Lanciani retained his notes and drawings.

The site material he created and collected during his state employment is varied. In the main, it is comprised of plans, sections, and details of buildings and objects, including such disparate things as portions of ancient house plans and highly fragmented classical sculpture repurposed as wall filler in an early modern structure. The sketches are all in Lanciani's distinctive drawing style: very small and neat, and often on graph paper (fig. 1). His handwriting, also small and controlled, graced these drawings, and convey miscellaneous information, some objective and some interpretive, as well as some metadata regarding the nature of the discovery, such as how a house renovation project revealed a portion of an ancient mosaic floor. Lanciani augmented these site documents to form the *appunti*. He added pertinent notes on the history of the ancient city's topography and monuments. They consisted of: citations from classical sources or medieval guidebooks; prints of the monuments from the fifteenth century forward, or more commonly, Lanciani's

²¹ A. Emiliani, 'Nella battaglia tra pubblico e private: l'istituzione della Direzione Generale e Giuseppe Fiorelli', in Stefano de Caro and Pier Giovanni Guzzo, eds, *A Giuseppe Fiorelli nel primo Centenario della morte*, Atti del Convegno, Napoli, 19-20 marzo 1997, Naples: Tipografica, 1999, 101–134, and especially 131.

²² Barnabei and Delpino, eds, *Le 'Memorie di un archeologo'*, 13–21.

²³ Barnabei and Delpino, eds, *Le 'Memorie di un archeologo'*, 453–479.

²⁴ Pier Giovanni Guzzo, 'Ostacoli per una legislazione nazionale delle tutela dell'archeologia dopo l'Unità', *Mélanges de l'École Française de Rome: Italie et Méditerranée* 113:2, 2001, 539–547.

sketches after the prints; notes and sketches of other nineteenth-century or early twentieth-century excavators; and an occasional photograph, sometimes which he had taken himself. In the aggregate, the *appunti* create a trail, if sometimes a disjointed one, of information that leads to an understanding of the existence and appearance of ancient Rome's built remains.

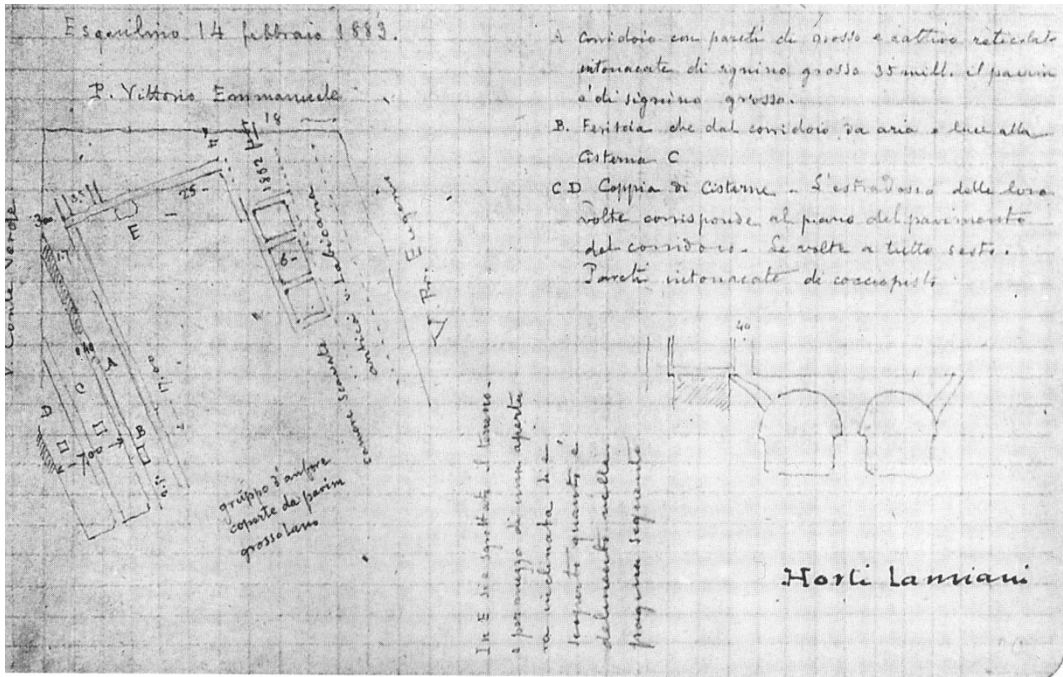


Figure 1 Rodolfo Lanciani, Sketches of archaeological remains of Horti Laniani, Rome. 14 February 1883. From Cod. Vat. Lat. 13034, f. 113r.

Indeed, Lanciani's *appunti* were assembled to aid him in constructing one of his major scholarly projects, the cartographic map of ancient Rome, the *Forma Urbis Romae* (hereafter *FUR*) (Fig. 2). It is a large map of Rome, comprised of forty-six separate sheets that when assembled together measure 4.6 x 7 meters. It represents a reconstruction of all that what was known of ancient Rome's monuments in Lanciani's day.²⁵ The first of the sheets was issued in the years shortly after his resignation, in 1893; the last, in 1901. The *FUR* still serves as a major reference work for anyone researching ancient Roman topography despite the fact that archaeological discoveries of recent years have made part of the reconstruction flawed.

To facilitate constructing the map, Lanciani used the *appunti* in the following way. He organized them into two folders. The first and larger folder was subdivided into fourteen sections, one for each of the traditional fourteen regions, or *rioni*, of the ancient city. Within each subfolder are the monuments or topographical

²⁵ Dixon, *Archaeology on Shifting Ground*, 113–117.

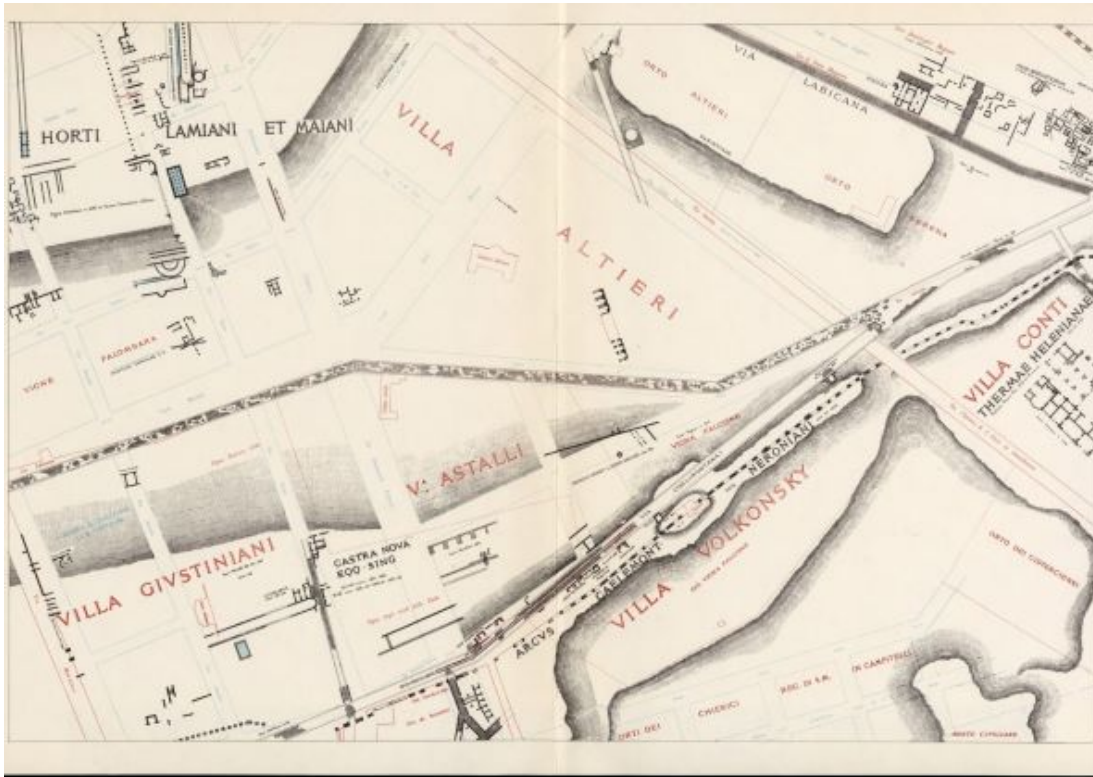


Figure 2 Rodolfo Lanciani, Sheet 31 of *Forma Urbis Romae*, illustrating reconstruction of Horti Lamiani in upper left. From *Forma Urbis Romae. Consilio et auctoritate Regiae Academiae Lyncaeorum*. Milan: Hoepli, 1893–1901.

features of that region, organized by their position in that area. What could not easily be categorized by *rioni* appear in the second folder, and is classified by major topographical features such as walls, aqueducts, and roads.²⁶ Thus, the arrangement of the *appunti* provides a view into Lanciani's process of reconstructing Rome's ancient monuments and urban structure. The benefit of having this evidence available to scholars is that they can trace Lanciani's method of operation, checking the assumptions underlying his reconstruction. Thus, they can scrutinize and critique his results with some ease. This was Lanciani's substantial gift to scholarship.

During the state's investigation of Lanciani's perceived misdeeds, he defended himself by explaining why he would not hand over the notes. He declared that as far back as 1878, the Accademia dei Lincei had commissioned him to work on a definitive topographical map of ancient Rome. His various presentations at this Academy, which began as early as 1875, provide evidence of his interest in such a project.²⁷ In this pursuit, he travelled to libraries in Italy and throughout Europe, to

²⁶ Buonocore, ed, *Appunti di topografia romana*, 1, 10–18.

²⁷ Lanciani, 'Intorno alla grande pianta di Roma antica', *Transunti. Accademia dei Lincei* 2:3, 1875–1876, 296–306, as well as Lanciani, 'Studi topografici sulla Roma antica di Baldassare e

gather information about the ancient city's topography from historical maps and images in the world's libraries and archives.²⁸ His notes from these travels supplemented and helped him make sense of the tangible discoveries he encountered as a state investigator. Thus, he surmised, by inference, the drawings secured while he was on state payroll belonged to him, as they were intertwined with his research notes for the Lincean project.²⁹

The purpose: the Accademia dei Lincei

Lanciani's assertion that the Accademia dei Lincei commissioned him to produce the *FUR* seemed unlikely to have appeased his colleagues at the *Direzione generale* or have insulated him from state censure. Circa 1890, the Lincei itself was not immune to the tensions undergirding Lanciani's troubled relationship with his state employer. The history of the academy's sponsorship reveals why this was so.

The Lincei was founded in the seventeenth century to promote investigations that verified the work of Galileo Galilei.³⁰ It subsequently became an institution devoted to the study of all the natural sciences. By the mid-nineteenth century, however, the Accademia dei Lincei, with a floundering membership and a poor reputation for innovative science, was placed under the patronage of the papacy. When the national government was formed in 1871, it did not suppress the academy, as it did other papal institutions. Rather, it assumed support of its activities. In 1874, the organization was renamed the Accademia Reale dei Lincei and was placed under the auspices of Italy's constitutional monarch, the Savoy king Vittorio Emanuele II. Quintino Sella (1827–1884), an influential politician during the unification of the nation, as well as a renowned scholar of mathematics and mineralogy, was charged with reorganizing the academy according to the modern divisions of knowledge. At his instigation, the study of archaeology was placed under the division of humanistic sciences. Lanciani's participation in the Lincei spanned the organization's major transition; he had attended meetings since 1868 and was invited to become an associate member in 1878.³¹

Retained among the Accademia dei Lincei's membership were several prominent papal archaeologists and some foreign scholars. This group often dominated the presentation and discussion of new archaeological information. It

Sallustio Peruzzi', *Transunti. Accademia dei Lincei* 5:1, 1880-1881, 150; Lanciani, 'La pianta di Roma antica e i disegni archeologici di Raffaello Sanzio', *Rendiconti. Accademia dei Lincei* 5:3, 1894, 790–804.

²⁸ Palombi, *Rodolfo Lanciani*, 138–140.

²⁹ Bernabei and Delpino, eds, *Le 'Memorie di un archeologo,'* 475.

³⁰ Raffaele Morghen, ed, *L'Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei nel CCCLXVIII anno dalla sua fondazione, nella vita e nella cultura dell'Italia Unità 1871–1971*, Rome: Accademia Nazionale dei Lincei, 1972, 7–43.

³¹ List of newly admitted associate members in *Atti dell'Accademia dei Lincei* 2:3, 1875, 129–131.

was at some sessions at the academy that the findings Rosa and Giacomo Boni (1859–1925), the predecessor and successor, respectively, of Lanciani's state position as excavator of the Roman Forum, were questioned, and at times ridiculed. Both Rosa and Boni were men concerned with the technical aspects of an innovative archaeological practice. They were not highly trained classical scholars, although Boni did know Latin. Both were infuriated at their treatment during the Lincei meetings. Boni in particular was loathe to offer any interpretation of his discoveries to the group, which included such extraordinary finds as the Lapis Niger and the prehistoric graves in the Forum.³² Furthermore, neither cared personally for Lanciani. Rosa thought him lazy while Boni found him old-fashioned and overbearing.³³ Thus, Lanciani was adding fuel to an already inflammatory situation when as part of his defence, he identified the Accademia dei Lincei's sponsorship of a forthcoming publication as his justification for the retention of the notes and sketches in his personal files.

The Donee: the Vatican Library

Lanciani had reasons to favour the BAV as a resting place for his manuscripts. His earliest and strongest connections were with those who served in the papal court. In addition, he himself was a loyal Catholic.³⁴ In 1922, he stated that he wished his notes to be joined with those whose scholarly work he admired. They include de Rossi, Enrico Stevenson and Marino Marini, nineteenth-century scholars who were all engaged with the study of Early Christian archaeology.³⁵ This was a subject to which Lanciani himself devoted his attention later in life; one of his last books is entitled *Wanderings through Ancient Roman Churches*.³⁶

Furthermore, the BAV had aided Lanciani as he advanced his scholarly reputation. At the behest of Leo XIII (reigned 1878–1903), and in reversal of

³² On Boni's work in the Forum, see Anna de Sanctis, 'Gli scavi di Giacomo Boni al Foro Romano', in *Dagli scavi al museo: come da ritrovamenti archeologici si costruisce il museo*, Venice: Marsilio, 1984: 76–83.

³³ For Rosa's assessment of Lanciani, see Archivio Centrale di Stato, Roma, Direzione generale Antichità e Belle Arti, MPI, Dir. Gen. AA.BB.AA, 1860-1892, Div. arte antica, personale busta 18, letters from Rosa to the Minister of Public Instruction, October and November 1872. For Boni's assessment of Lanciani, see Timothy P. Wiseman, 'Con Boni nel Foro: i diari romani di W. St. Clair Baddeley', *Rivista dell'Istituto Nazionale d'Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte* 3:8–9: 1985–1986, 119–149.

³⁴ Houghton Mifflin Company correspondences, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA, English translation of Lanciani's will.

³⁵ Buonocore, ed, *Appunti di topografica romana*, I, 8. A history of early Christian archaeology as practiced in the nineteenth century in Italy is wanting.

³⁶ Lanciani, *Wanderings through Ancient Roman Churches*, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1924. It was the eighth and last book in English that he produced for this publisher. For other publications on Early Christian subjects, beginning after 1890, see Dixon, *Archaeology on Shifting Ground*, 167–171.

centuries-long Vatican policy, the BAV's secret archives, or *archivio segreto*, opened its doors to scholars. In 1881, it allowed them access to restricted papal records, and in 1883, to its manuscript collection.³⁷ Leo XIII's action was political, aimed at countering the arguments of Italian nationalist forces that the Catholic Church, with its control over the narrative of its history, was an obstacle to creating a unified Italian identity. Ludwig Pastor's sixteen volumes of *Geschichte der Päpste seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters* (1886–1919) are the reference works most often noted as the good consequence of the library's new admittance policy.³⁸ Similarly, Lanciani's *Storia degli scavi e notizie intorno le collezioni romane di antichità* also was largely made possible because of access to the *archivio segreto*.³⁹ His publication participates in Leo XIII's agenda to expose the Church's considerable role in a history of Italy.

The *Storia degli scavi*, in four volumes, was Lanciani's second great reference work. With the *FUR*, it is positioned as one of the most highly influential works in a very long list of his publications that included innumerable articles and about a dozen books, some scholarly and some more popular, and quite a few in the English language. Samuel Bell Platner, the author himself of an important reference work, *The Topography and Monuments of Ancient Rome*, 1911, deemed the *Storia degli scavi* the most valuable of Lanciani's many publications.⁴⁰ The ambitious series deals with the history of excavations in and around Rome from 1000–1870, essentially Rome under the jurisdiction of the Popes. The volumes held innumerable notices of ancient Roman objects and architectural fragments that had been displaced from their original location throughout the nine centuries under examination, along with records of their ultimate fates. The volumes include records of the tangible remains of ancient Rome that were destroyed, reused, collected and displayed, or exported, ignorance of which made any complete understanding of ancient Rome impossible.

Lanciani revealed that it took him twenty-five years to accumulate the material for *Storia degli scavi*, and so was working on this project at the same time as the *FUR*.⁴¹ He documented the various places he visited: the State archives, the Capitoline archives, the personal archives of former archaeologists Visconti and Vespignani, and many museums and libraries. He journeyed to libraries and

³⁷ Leonard Boyle, 'The Vatican Reborn', in Anthony Grafton, ed, *Rome Reborn: The Vatican Library & Renaissance Culture*, New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993, xvi, and Nicholas J. Tussing, 'The Politics of Leo XIII's Opening of the Vatican Archives: The Ownership of the Past', *The American Archivist* 70: 2, 2007, 369–376.

³⁸ Ludwig Pastor, *Geschichte der Päpste seit dem Ausgang des Mittelalters*, 16 vols, Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1886–1919.

³⁹ Lanciani, *Storia degli scavi e notizie intorno le collezioni romane di antichità*, 4 vols, Rome: Loescher, 1902–1910.

⁴⁰ Samuel Ball Platner, *The Topography and Monuments of Ancient Rome*, Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 1911, 523. This published information is invaluable, especially because some of original notices are no longer extant.

⁴¹ Lanciani, *Storia degli scavi*, I (1902), 11; and Bernabei and Delpino, eds., *Le 'Memorie di un archeologo'*, 475.

collections throughout Europe, including other parts of Italy, France, Belgium, Holland, Germany, Switzerland and England, to acquire the notices.⁴² His colleagues reported that he travelled at least once a year, and his correspondences to many throughout Europe seem to bear this out.⁴³ He sometimes gathered information through correspondence with librarians and scholars in places to which he could not travel.⁴⁴ However, the BAV *archivio segreto* provided the most invaluable documents, including correspondences related to papal permissions to excavate and licenses to export antiquities. In his volumes, Lanciani gathered this priceless knowledge about the history of renowned but much diminished ancient monuments such as Mausoleum of Augustus and Hadrian's Villa, and the growth of antiquities collections such as those in the Capitoline Museums and the Palazzo Farnese in Rome, among many others.

As soon as the last sheets of the *FUR* were issued, Lanciani began publishing the first of the volumes of *Storia degli scavi*. The project was overly ambitious, and Lanciani ended it before its completion. Originally, he had planned to issue one volume per year, and indeed the first volume appeared in 1902 and the second in 1903. But the task was more time-consuming than he imagined, and he had some difficulty organizing the heterogeneous material in a coherent manner.⁴⁵ Volume 3 was issued in 1907 and volume 4 in 1910. Lanciani undertook the project using his daughter Marcello Lanciani Orsini's labours,⁴⁶ his own funding, and the good will of the printing house Tipographia Salviucci, and as the decade progressed, he exhausted these resources. In 1910, he halted the project, having covered the history of excavations from the years 1000 to 1605. The notes for the remaining years, 1605 to 1871, were set aside. Two years after his death, with Italy in the midst of a severe economic crisis, Lanciani's daughter and sole heir sold these notes, along with Lanciani's collection of prints and drawings and his library, to the Biblioteca dell'Istituto Nazionale di Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte, which served the *Direzione generale*.⁴⁷ Only in 1989 did the Institute issue the remaining two volumes.⁴⁸

⁴² Palombi, *Rodolfo Lanciani*, 139–140.

⁴³ Giuseppe Lugli, 'Rodolfo Lanciani', *Rendiconti della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia* 1945–1946, 11, 34–35; and James Donaldson papers, Special Collections, University Library, University of St. Andrews, Scotland, ms. 6766–6768, letters from Elena Lanciani to Mrs. Donaldson, among others.

⁴⁴ Lanciani, *Storia degli scavi di Roma e notizie intorno le collezioni romane di antichità*, edited by Leonello Malvezzi Campeggi, Carlo Buzzetti, Paolo Liverani, Maria Rosario Russo, Paolo Pellegrino, 7 vols, Rome: Quasar, 1989–2002, 1: 11.

⁴⁵ Lanciani, *Storia degli Scavi*, II, 11.

⁴⁶ James Donaldson papers, Special Collections, University Library, University of St. Andrews, Scotland, ms. 6776, letter from Elena Lanciani to Mrs. Donaldson, 30 November 1903.

⁴⁷ Maria Cristina Misiti, 'Le collezioni, la storia', in Maria Cristina Misiti and Simonetta Prosperi Valenti Rodino, eds, *Le meraviglie di Roma antica e moderna: progetti nelle raccolte della Biblioteca di Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte*, Turin: Daniela Piazza Editore, 2010, 13–19.

In 1922, when Lanciani announced his decision to send his *appunti* to BAV, he was seventy-seven years old, and not in the best of health. Furthermore, he was newly married to his second wife, and he was clearing out his pre-nuptial residence to facilitate a move to one of her properties in the new residential quarters of Rome.⁴⁹ When the materials were carted off to the BAV, the library was in the midst of a revival of a sort. It had just received a grant to improve accessibility to its collections.⁵⁰ The Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, an organization founded in 1910 to advance the U.S. engagement with the international community, and the Library of Congress, the U.S. cultural institution dedicated to ensure sound research for that government body, jointly funded a project to facilitate a modern card catalogue system of all the printed materials in the Vatican collections. From 1927 to 1939, it provided funds to compile an author and subject index of all manuscript holdings, to which Lanciani's *appunti* belonged. Although the manuscript index, unfortunately, was not completed by 1939, the major part of the *appunti* had been catalogued.⁵¹ The purpose of the grant was to modernize the library classification and arrangement system in order to facilitate greater use, a notion which Lanciani would have approved, given that he wanted scholars to make good use of his notes.⁵²

The revenge

Being successful is the best revenge, it is said. If that is so, then Lanciani had no reason to vengefully hold a grudge against the state for so long. After 1890 and his forced resignation from the *Direzione generale*, Lanciani's career was by no means destroyed. In the next two decades, he issued the *FUR* and the *Storia degli scavi*, publications that secured his reputation as an eminent scholar of ancient Rome. Furthermore, throughout the early part of the twentieth century, he held prestigious offices, such as Senator of the Republic and as a member of a few state and city

⁴⁸ The entire series of volumes was reissued and the last two added and an index. See *Storia degli Scavi di Roma e notizie intorno le collezioni e romane di antichità*, 7 vols., edited by Leonello Malvezzi Campeggi, Carlo Burzetti, Paolo Liverani, Maria Rosario Russo, Paolo Pellegrino. Rome: Quasar, 1989–2002. Maria Pia Muzzioli and Paolo Pellegrino, eds, 'Schede dei manoscritti Lanciani', *Rivista dell'Istituto nazionale d'archeologia e storia dell'arte* 3, 14–15: 399–422 and 3:17: 225–312. For a recent digitization of some of this material, see <https://exhibits.stanford.edu/lanciani> (accessed 30 July 2020).

⁴⁹ Dixon, *Archaeology on Shifting Ground*, 139–141.

⁵⁰ Boyle, 'The Vatican Library', xvii–xix.

⁵¹ In 1990, some additional Lanciani material was found. It was catalogued as Cod. Vat. Lat 15216–15229. Soon thereafter, the Vatican issued highlights of the *appunti* in the well-illustrated Buonocore, ed, *Appunti di topografia romana*.

⁵² Buonocore, ed, *Appunti di topografia romana* I, 8. In a letter dated 11 November 1925 to Cardinal Aidan Gasquet, the Vatican librarian, Lanciani stated that he wished to be 'sicuro che gli studiosi ne potrebbero trarre grande vantaggio.'

commissions.⁵³ Most significantly, he held a professorship at the Università di Roma, the national university, which allowed his promotion in 1894. It was a position he retained until his resignation in May 1922. But the memory of his shame at being accused of misdeeds haunted him a long time, and as a result, he shunned the state archives as a resting place for his *appunti*. Thus, Lanciani's arguably unsavoury personality flaw, his penchant to be unforgiving, facilitated the enhancement of the BAV's manuscript collection. And for this, the scholarly discourse around the history of archaeology of Rome has been enriched ever since.

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⁵³ Palombi, *Rodolfo Lanciani*, 199–239.