

Institution: Royal Holloway, University of London
Unit of Assessment: D.31 Classics
Title of case study: The Laurentine Shore Project
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>This research project, in collaboration with the Italian State Superintendency of Antiquities for Rome and the General Secretariat of the Presidency of the Italian Republic, is operating to preserve the archaeological remains of the Laurentine Shore, near Rome, a unique cultural resource hitherto largely unknown and in the process of destruction by natural and human agencies. The project is providing the tools for the immediate protection and future management, within their natural forest environment, of numerous archaeological sites of exceptional historic interest, for the education of the visiting public.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p><i>Key contextual information:</i> The Laurentine Shore, extending between Ostia and Ardea, developed under the emperors into a 'maritime facade' for the city of Rome to rival that of Alexandria in Egypt. It centred on a large imperial sea-front villa, <i>Laurentum</i>, legendary point of arrival of the Trojan hero Aeneas in Latium, as celebrated in Virgil's epic poem the <i>Aeneid</i>. <i>Laurentum</i> had its own harbour and a direct road to Rome and was backed by an eponymous imperial estate, and by a veteran colony, both administered from an imperial village (<i>Vicus Augustanus</i>). The villas of other members of the imperial family and inner imperial circle clustered to either side, including that of Pliny the Younger, whose letter describing his <i>Laurentinum</i> has influenced architectural imaginations since the 16th century.</p> <p><i>Research and impact area:</i> 8.5 kilometres of the ancient shoreline, including standing remains of the imperial villa, the <i>Vicus Augustanus</i> and probably also the villa of Pliny, run through the seaward reaches of the presidential estate of Castelporziano, the modern incarnation of the ancient imperial estate. Major excavations at the imperial villa in 1774-1801 and at the <i>Vicus</i> in 1874-1913 were never published and although left open became increasingly invisible after the 1950s, when local pastoralism stopped and the natural forest invaded, assisted by new plantations. Access has never been easy (previous owners were the monarchy, and a series of autocratic barons) and archaeology never a priority; the estate was a hunting preserve which has since become a nature preserve. In 1983 Claridge, then Assistant Director of the British School at Rome, was instrumental in bringing about contact between the local archaeological authority and the estate management, which led to the institution by the local authority of a programme of survey and conservation, and she has remained the principal investigator ever since, first at Oxford University, School of Archaeology (1994-9), and now at Royal Holloway (from 2000). At Royal Holloway, the primary research has been able to expand beyond an initial close focus on the <i>vicus</i> to address the wider archaeological landscape:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (2002- 5) New survey in collaboration with Dr Jari Pakkanen, lecturer at Royal Holloway and students of the Classics department mapped and analysed four adjacent sites to the west of the <i>Vicus</i>, experimenting with different techniques for accurate topographical survey under the forest conditions, notably a 3D digital terrain model (DEM) (2006-10) An AHRC Major Research Grant obtained by Claridge and Prof Helen Rendell (Loughborough University), building on an earlier collaboration (when Rendell was at Sussex university), funded the extension of the DEM and geophysical surveys integrated with geomorphological and palaeo-environmental studies. Researchers who joined Royal Holloway staff for this phase, funded by the grant, were Dr Peter Rose (2006-9) and Dr James Andrews (2009-10). (2013-on-going) jointly funded by Royal Holloway Centre for Archaeo-Architectural Reconstructions and the Castelporziano estate, is extending the DEM, geophysical survey, in tandem with a LIDAR survey (paid for by the Italian Ministry of the Environment) of the forest, to create a practical planning resource. <p>Key results in 2008-2013 were: a precise chronology for and understanding of the evolution of the coastline before, during and after the Roman period; definition of relationships between the ancient</p>

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natural and built environment at the Vicus, the villa to the west and two fish-farms; an efficient methodology for geophysical survey on sand; the demonstration to all parties concerned that the subsoil archaeology is far more extensive and at greater risk than had hitherto been perceived.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

1. Amanda Claridge, Helen Rendell (2010) *The evolution of Rome's maritime facade: archaeology and geomorphology at Castelporziano* [data-set]. York: Archaeology Data Service [distributor] (doi:10.5284/1000127)
http://archaeologydataservice.ac.uk/archives/view/castelporziano_ahrc_2010/
2. Bicket A., Rendell H.M., Claridge A, Rose P., Andrews J., Brown F.S.J. (2009) 'A multiscale geoarchaeological approach from the Laurentine Shore (Castelporziano, Lazio, Italy) *Géomorphologie: relief, processus, environment* 2009, no.4, 257-70
3. Amanda Claridge and Helen Rendell, *Evolution of Rome's maritime facade: archaeology and geomorphology at Castelporziano*. Sponsor: AHRC RG 18211 Dates July 2005-February 2010, £385,873.00 (+4%)
4. Amanda Claridge (2010) 'Life and Luxury on the Laurentine Shore' *Current World Archaeology* 42 (August/September) 24-7
5. www.rhul.ac.uk/classics/laurentineshore : Project website

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The research undertaken by the Royal Holloway teams at Castelporziano in 2008-13 has revealed - in the form of 3D visualisations readily comprehensible to a non-specialist audience - substantial tracts of a rich and varied archaeological landscape, which lies invisible under dense vegetation, complementing and contextualising the more visible remains. A key contribution has come from the Loughborough team, in proving that the modern vegetation is of quite recent formation, and very different from that which characterised the ancient landscape. These discoveries have already had some positive impact on local attitudes to heritage management, and are set to continue to have further beneficial effects as the models become more complete and detailed, leading to new methods of conserving and presenting the cultural heritage of the Laurentine Shore.

- The Soprintendenza Speciale per i beni archeologici di Roma is now more fully and much better informed than ever before of the actual nature and extent of the archaeological resources in this part of the Tenuta di Castelporziano, which it is their responsibility to protect and for which the project was originally set up.
- The Commissione forestale of the Tenuta di Castelporziano is also now more fully aware of the nature of the subsoil in this part of the estate and of the damage new plantings have done and can do in the future. It has been the practice in the past to renew fallen trees and plant extra trees in the area in order to protect the forest further inland, knowing they grow faster and higher when rooted in Roman remains. New pine forests were implanted on the imperial villa in the mid 2000s. The impact of this research has been to change the forestry plan so that more historically appropriate and archaeology-friendly forms of tree cover can be used.
- The Tenuta di Castelporziano is open annually to a wide visiting public of schoolchildren (primary as well as secondary) and members of adult amateur societies, totalling c. 12 000 a year, who are admitted in groups, accompanied by the Forest Guard who act as guides. The tours used to focus only on the natural environment and wild-life and are still primarily organised with those interests in view, but the local archaeological museum (opened in 2006) and some of the more visible and accessible archaeological ruins are now often included.

The Royal Holloway team has been responsible for maintaining the necessary diplomatic relations with the President's office and the local archaeological superintendency to obtain permissions and

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security clearance to enter the estate.

Progress of the research was communicated orally and reported in writing at regular intervals to the relevant partners: the Soprintendenza archeologica di Ostia (recently defunct, replaced by the Soprintendenza Speciale per i beni archeologici di Roma), the Director of the Castelporziano estate, the office of the President's adviser on Cultural patrimony and his representative. Liaison has also been with the Forest Guard and members of the forestry commission.

The entire site archive (from 1984-2010) was digitised as part of the AHRC funded phase of research and has been available online since July 2010 (see section 3.1).

On April 23, 2009 a day conference was held in the local museum at Castelporziano by the Royal Holloway research team, which communicated the results of the environmental and topographical surveys and current historical research to a wider local audience. On June 10, 2011 the President's Office itself organised a public conference in Rome, celebrating 25 years of archaeological research at Castelporziano, which show-cased the work of the British teams in particular and attracted a large general audience as well as members of the higher echelons of the presidential administration. The proceedings are to be published (2014).

The event on June 10, 2011 marked a quantum shift in attitude on the part of the estate management towards the archaeology and archaeological research, from polite tolerance to a willingness to engage positively. There is now a shared understanding that, at least in the seaward reaches of the estate where the archaeological remains are so substantial and of such historical importance, both the natural and the cultural landscape have equal rights to study, protection and (eventually) presentation.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

Public dissemination of any information regarding the Castelporziano estate by researchers permitted to work there is generally prohibited for reasons of security. Thus, the relevant page on the Quirinale palace website <http://www.quirinale.it/qrnw/statico/residenza/castelporziano/castelporziano-a.htm#p5> corroborates the activity, but little more.

For corroboration of the impact of the recent and current research programme, letters can be supplied from the following officials:

1. Vice Segretario generale amministrativo, (for the archaeological management of the estate).
2. Il direttore, Tenuta Presidenziale di Castelporziano, (for influence on estate policy).
3. Il vicario, settore Parchi e Giardini, (for influence on the management of the forest).
4. Funzionario responsabile Municipio XIII, (for the management of archaeological resources and museums)