

RODOLFO LANCIANI'S NOTES ON THE AGER LAURENS IN THE VATICAN LIBRARY

English translation by Amanda Claridge. For the original Italian see *Appunti di topografia romana nei codici Lanciani della Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana*, ed. M. Buonocore vol. V (Rome 2002).

3 January 1900

BAV, Vat.Lat 13046, fol.160; Buonocore 2002, pp. 111-112

Decimo to Castel Romano

Rosa says the ponticello (little bridge) of S. Paolo is ancient and of tufa – on the north side it is not (alternating voussoirs of marble and stone), on the south it could be of ancient brick. Most beautiful and intact instead is the bridge over the stream of Tor di Valle, with voussoirs either of peperino or sperone, huge travertine keystone. The arch is in isbieco. Perhaps there was once a smaller arch but the present one is modern. Also the bridge over the 'Risaro' beyond Mezzocammino is ancient. Adding to these bridges that of the Risalta and the substructions, the Ostiensis possesses more ancient bridges than the other roads.

The junction at Puttanella is not ancient as Tomassetti claims. For the rest, one should measure the 10 miles backwards from Decimo. I think the Laurentina (Decimo) branched off much earlier.

Medieval ruins on the Monte del Castelluccio pt. 36 on Cecchignola map.

A little above Mostacciano basalt paving blocks on the left hand side of the road.

Torre Brunori medieval.

The Capanna marked on Cecchignola map pt. 51 almost opposite the Casale Brunori is a huge ancient cistern.

Tim Ashby and Lawry have seen between Malafede and Brunori traces of the ancient road (Rosa - Kiepert- Corpus) between the Ostiensis and Bovillae.

Torre de' Cenci – medieval.

On the ridge at Torre de Cenci, ruins of a villa.

Near la scolarola (drain?) Torre da Cenci to the Laurentina, entering on the right, ruins razed to the ground.

Osteria at Malpasso 2 ancient columns and other fragments.

Osteria at Castel di Decimo Vecchio at the foot of the rise road blocks, columns, fragments, and a large piece of moulded slab (in the courtyard) half buried in the earth. [drawing of block: see Buonocore 2002, 111].

At Decimo, previously owned by Torrigiani, now Pallavicini, numerous road blocks, fragment of a double funerary inscription of the freedmen of the Cestii, a rough little milestone column of Maxentius: P. F. INVIC/AVG/ MIL. XI

and a funerary cippus of marble with patera and simpulum

M. CLODIVS

.HELENIO.

CLODIAE SVCCESAE

VXORI . KARISSIMAE

B.M.F.VIX.ANN.XXXVI

MES.III.DIES.XII.

Block of marble from a curvilinear monum(ent).

Returning to the road, trace of a tumulus on the right in the triangle formed by the King's boundary (C.Porziano) 34 m. in diameter, 20 m away from the road itself. The so-called tumulus of Dercenia is a hoax -

We forgot to look for the ancient road blocks seen by Canina rising up the hill at Decimo, which prince Pallavini mentioned to me. Revisiting on 16 February, we saw that the ancient road followed the boundary wall of Castel Porziano.

Beyond the tumulus, famous cylindrical milestone in travertine badly turned

diam 0.66 in Canina and Dressel

[drawing]

XI	0.12
TI.CAESAR.AVGVSTVS	0.04
PONTIF.MAXIM.	
TRIB POT.XXXII	

The royal boundary wall (C.Porziano), not as yet completely finished, has been made at the expense of the ancient road, which, beyond the XI mile ran parallel with it, along the edge of the forest. All the paving blocks can be seen, together with fragments of carved marble.

In front of the Carabinieri barracks at Capannone, pt. 78 a diverticulum branches off to the left, from which they are currently quarrying basalt blocks required by the farm at Castel Romano.

It does not seem to me that it can be the Laurentina itself, because the basalt blocks of the latter continue for a stretch to be evident in the royal boundary.

At Castel Romano nothing!

11 January 1900

BAV, Vat.Lat 13046, fol.160; Buonocore 2002, p. 112

Perna to Trigatoria

At the foot of the slope from the eucalyptus plantation at Tre Fontane towards the Buttero bridge, on the right, a road cutting that rises towards pt. 45. Rosa says he saw a villa there. Not us! The Torre d'Archetto in the Cicchignoletta estate is a large and well-made cistern of c. Maxentian date, of which a plan follows [missing]. We could not find the villa that it supplied. It is remarkable for the variations in levels, in that section A has two floors, the others only one.

12 March 1901

BAV, Vat.Lat 13046, fol.161; Buonocore 2002, p.112

CASTEL PORZIANO

The road that leaves the Laviniate the the bridge of Malpasso and leads to C. Porziano is probably ancient. At the point marked on the plan there is a typically deep cutting.

The road that leaves from Malafede and leads to the Vicus Augustanus disappears, as if by magic, immediately it enters the C. Porziano estate – for 5 kilometres there is not a stone to be seen.

The whole plateau between C.Porziano and Trafusa is formed of yellowish sand like that in the forests at Anzio

In the whole interior of the royal Estate there is not fragment of ancient pottery!

In Nibby's notes which Tim Ashby has the basalt paving of the Laviniate is twice referred to as intact: once near BRUNORI, once near TORRE DE CENCI.

One of the ancient routes is most probably Via Ostiensis-Malafede-Cancello -Finocchiello-Macchia la villa - La Torretta - I Tre Cancelli-Sto Quercio-il Capannone on the Via Laviniate.

50 m. below the Trafusina farmhouse, beside the ditch, in the lowest and deadliest part of the valley, a white mosaic pavement of the 3rd century on a bed of cocciopisto – flue tiles, brickwork of the walls fairly rough -

Column shaft in portasanta

The valley is closed to the west by vertical cliffs crowned with ivy in the face of which open caves like those at La Cervara

[fol. 162.1 mounted out of order; Buonocore 2002 p.114]

Cippus near S. Croce. Marble cinerary urn, simpulum and patera in gable

DIS.MANIB
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VERNAE.SVAE
CARISSIMAE.FECIT
VIXIT.ANNIS.XIII
MENSIBUS.X.
DIEBUS.II

The road between the Castle and S. Croce, cut into the ground, seems ancient - occasional flakes of basalt paving blocks.

16 March 1901

BAV, Vat.Lat 13046, fol.161; Buonocore 2002, p. 114

TOR PATERNO

The ruins of Laurentum extend to the west of the Casale for at least 500 m. – to the r. and l. of the path - the ruins are all of brick - large column of (breccia) corallina lying in the meadow on the right of the path-

Could be that there are tombs of the via Severiana mixed in.

In any case Laurentum appears to be a long, narrow band.

The ruins end to the west in the site called i Muraccioli - Circa 1 kilometre.

Marbles. Basalt blocks of via Severiana.

A circular tomb (?) at i Muraccioli

Past the ponticello over the Pantano, a mound covered with building debris.

[fol. 161.2; Buonocore 2002, p.113]

In the surviving stretches of the via Severiana there are no basalt flakes. These only appear where the paving has been lifted and broken up with a sledgehammer.

The paving of via Severiana can be seen intact at the point marked on the plan. Between the road and the ancient beach a line of dunes – Another stretch has been in part lifted this year in order to plant pine trees. The basalt blocks are left on the ground – Here was a villa or group of villas. Bricks, slab of yellow marble [=mound D4]

On the left a hill simply covered in debris with the following brickstamp

CAST
CÆS.A
AVG

Entering the macchia from the meadow, after a few paces the via Severiana is intact with the right hand kerb intact and that on the left in pieces - width 4.40 m - 15 feet – it continues under the bushes for several hundred metres.

As one approaches the ponte di Piastra, the road crosses other ruins, on the side towards the sea-

And just downstream of the bridge enormous ruins truncated by the drainage canal. There are many walls visible in the escarpment and bricks one foot square with painted plaster on one side – there is enough material to build a village – but the villa was not a fine one. The walls are carelessly made and no marbles. [in margin] FELI (a brickstamp). It is possible that in origin they were reticulate with brick quoins. An exquisitely fluted stucco column.

In building the bridge they have destroyed the basalt paving.

From the bridge to Grotta di Piastra continuous concrete always on the left

[BAV, Vat.Lat 13046, fol.162.1; Buonocore 2002, p.114 (illustrated on p.113)]

Grotta di Piastra - huge villa – not recently excavated the trees are centuries old - Marbles. Cryptoporticus.

Covered an area of 3-4 thousand square metres. Could it be the villa of Pliny?

O ///VRELIO.C///// There are remains of Torre di
//VIDI.FELICIS/// Piastra an embrasure??

There is reticulate. The line of the beach is clear.

There follow other villas marked on the plan, one of which with a column of exquisite alabaster, glass, glazed ware, marbles.

And to think that in all the six desolate kilometers we have travelled the only living beings we have met are two wild boar!

Nearing the VICUS AUGUST. the ancient road reappears and the buildings are continuous.

VICUS AUGUSTANUS

Continuing to the west a few paces before reaching the boundary of Castel Porziano – on the left huge remains of a villa, perhaps called Chiesuola. Reticulate. Could be the villa mentioned by Pliny.

Beyond the Chiesuola ruins the road for Castel Fusano diverges from the ancient one, towards the sea and therefore runs across not the usual hard ground but over sand dunes.

The VILLA DI PINO could not be found.

The ruins extend east of Tor Paterno for a long way - the via Severiana is exposed.