

ANALECTA ROMANA
INSTITUTI DANICI

XLIII

ANALECTA ROMANA

INSTITUTI DANICI

XLIII

2018

ROMAE MMXVIII

ANALECTA ROMANA INSTITUTI DANICI XLIII

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ISSN 2035-2506

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Analecta Romana Instituti Danici. — Vol. I (1960) — . Copenhagen: Munksgaard. From 1985: Rome, «L'ERMA» di Bretschneider. From 2007 (online): Accademia di Danimarca.

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Architectural Terracottas from Etrusco-Italic Temples on the Later Forum of Ostia Archaic Ostia Revisited*

by DANIEL DAMGAARD

Abstract. During excavations conducted on the southern half of the Forum in Ostia in the first half of the 20th century, some architectural terracottas were found. They were only briefly described in *Architectural Terracottas from Etrusco-Italic Temples* from 1940 and in *Scavi di Ostia I, Topografia Generale* from 1953, where they were dated to the 3rd century BCE. They were analysed once again in 1980 and re-dated to the 5th century BCE. Based on this research, a discussion of a settlement in Ostia prior to the Castrum appeared. This article will analyse the same fragments, but they will be integrated and compared to material that has been made available since 1980, which will lead to a discussion whether there is a temple on the later Forum of Ostia, which is to be dated to the late 6th or 5th century BCE.

Introduction

The study of pre-Imperial architecture in Ostia is limited due to the growth of the Imperial city that has subsumed the remains. However, due to the excavations on the Forum, we do have evidence of (pre)-Republican Ostia.

In 1980, Arvid Andrén wrote a short article in *Studi Etruschi* about three architectural terracottas made in Etrusco-Italic style found in the Forum of Ostia. Based on the dating of these terracottas, he put forward the idea of a possible settlement in the area before the

foundation of the Castrum.¹ Although the exact date of the foundation of the Castrum remains a matter of some debate, the common dating is set in the late 4th or early 3rd century BCE.²

Already in *Scavi di Ostia I, Topografia Generale* from 1953, Guido Calza briefly described some revetment plaques and an eaves tile found during the excavations on the southern half of the Forum. He dated the fragments to the period of the foundation of the Castrum, which he placed in the early 3rd century BCE,

* This article is part of my ongoing dissertation titled *The Forum of Ostia. Architectural Changes in a Diachronic Perspective* anchored in the Ostia Forum Project (www.ostiaforumproject.com). The material presented here is part of ongoing research.

I would like to thank the Directors of *Parco Archeologico di Ostia Antica* and the Superintendency of Rome and Ostia for their courtesy and hospitality in connection with my work in Ostia Antica. I would like to personally thank A. Pellegrino, C. Morelli, M. Barbera and P. Germoni for support

of our work on the Forum. I would also like to thank Dr. Mary Jane Cuyler and Dr. Brent Nongbri for important feedback, as well as Dr. Julia Böttcher for proof-reading.

¹ Andrén 1980. He is not the first one to hypothesise about this. Already in 1947–49, Paolino Mingazzini analysed the terracottas and advanced theories about a pre-Castrum settlement, see Mingazzini 1947–49.

² For the dating of the Castrum, see Calza *et al.* 1953, 75–77; Andrén 1980, 95; Martin 1996.

and on the basis of these finds, he mentioned the possibility of an Etrusco-Italic styled temple in the Castrum of Ostia.³

*Sorting out the Fragments*⁴

In *Architectural Terracottas from Etrusco-Italic Temples* Andrén analysed five fragments from Ostia, which consist of two antefixes, two revetment plaques and one eaves tile.⁵ When *Scavi di Ostia I, Topografia Generale* was published 13 years later, in 1953, the two antefixes and an eaves tile were discussed.⁶ The fragment identified by Andrén in 1940 as an eaves tile was identified as a revetment plaque in *Scavi di Ostia I* instead. Furthermore, in *Scavi di Ostia I* another eaves tile was presented and featured in a drawing.⁷ This eaves tile differs greatly from the fragment identified as an eaves tile by Andrén. The fragment treated as an eaves tile by Andrén is decorated with a guilloche, whereas the eaves tile in *Scavi di Ostia I* is decorated with a zigzag pattern.⁸ Notwithstanding, the two revetment plaques analysed by Andrén in 1940 and later in 1980 are identical with the revetment plaques mentioned shortly by Calza. However, they do not feature in any figures or plates in *Scavi di Ostia I*.⁹ Indeed, Andrén has since acknowledged that the fragment he identified as an eaves tile could equally be part of a *simā*.¹⁰ The identification of fragments can be difficult, as illustrated by similar problems in identifying a fragment from Vulci as either a *simā* or an eaves tile.¹¹

In Andrén's article from 1980, Inv. 3306 is described, but does not feature in the plates.¹²

However, two other fragments feature in his plates, but are not described by him.¹³ They are instead described by Fausto Zevi in *Museo Ostiense (nuove immisioni)* from 1971. They were found in a deposit at Rocca di Giulio II, and Zevi does also indicate that their context is not necessarily to be found inside the Castrum, but are associated with the other fragments found within the Castrum, due to their relevance when discussing a pre-Castrum settlement or building.¹⁴

Hence, we do now have five fragments, four of which feature in the plates of Andrén.¹⁵ To this, we can add the abovementioned eaves tile from *Scavi di Ostia I*, thus raising the total number of fragments to six.¹⁶

This may seem like a very small sample upon which to build an entire settlement theory, but the purpose of the research is to discuss the possibility and the existence of these terracottas, and their find spot in the Forum cannot be ignored. As mentioned above, this is not the first attempt to discuss a pre-Castrum settlement. However, what has been lacking with regard to previous attempts and analyses of the terracottas is a thorough discussion and analysis of their find contexts and possible original contexts. The crucial question in this respect is: do we have traces of a late 6th or 5th century BCE temple structure in Ostia?

The Fragments

INVENTORY NUMBER 3305 (fig. 1)

The fragment consists of a fascia, possibly with the remains of an upper torus. The fascia

³ Calza *et al.* 1953, 75, fig. 23. Calza uses the terms *antepagmenta* for the revetment plaques and *tegola di gronda* for the eaves tile. I will use the English words in this article. However, for a translation and introduction into the architectural terminology, see Ginouvés 1992; Winter 2009, xlix-li.

⁴ Unfortunately, I have not yet been able to see the fragments first hand. I therefore have to rely on photographs and descriptions in e.g. Andrén 1940; Andrén 1980; Zevi 1971; Zevi 1996; Zevi 2001.

⁵ Andrén 1940, 369.

⁶ Calza *et al.* 1953, pl. XXII

⁷ Calza *et al.* 1953, fig. 23.

⁸ Calza *et al.* 1953, fig. 23; Andrén 1980, pl. XXXVI: a.

⁹ Cf. nos. 3–4 in Andrén 1940, 369 and Andrén 1980, 96–9 with Calza *et al.* 1953, 75.

¹⁰ Andrén 1980, 99 Inv. No. 3305.

¹¹ Sgubini & Ricciardi 2011, 81, pl. II c.

¹² Andrén 1980, 97.

¹³ Andrén 1980, pl. XXXVI b, d.

¹⁴ Zevi 1971, 29–30 n. 2–3; Andrén 1980, 98–99.

¹⁵ Andrén 1980, pl. XXXVI.

¹⁶ Calza *et al.* 1953, fig. 23.

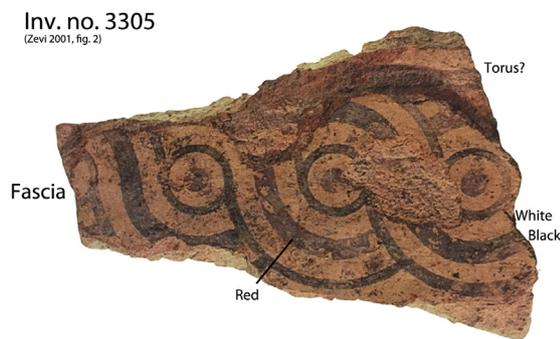


Fig. 1. Inv. no. 3305. The fragment is decorated with a guilloche (Andrén 1980, pl. XXXVI a).

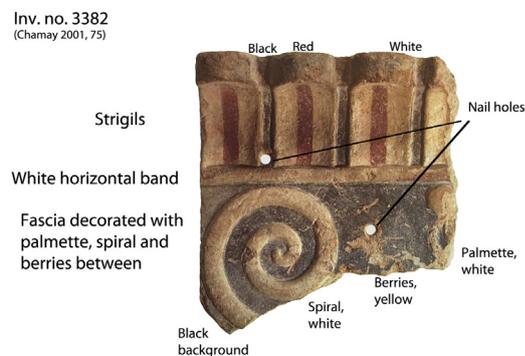


Fig. 2. Inv. no. 3382. Part of a revetment plaque decorated with spirals, palmette and berries (Andrén 1980, pl. XXXVI c).

is decorated with a guilloche painted in red and black on a white ground.¹⁷

In his article from 1980, Andrén assigned the fragment to the late 6th or early 5th century BCE, which was also supported by Gilda Bartoloni and Francesca Melis. 40 years earlier, Andrén dated it to the 3rd century BCE.¹⁸

INVENTORY NUMBER 3306

The fragment is decorated with lotuses and buds hanging from spirals. The decoration shows traces of red, black and yellow set on a black-and-red background.

Andrén assigned the fragment to the first half of the 5th century BCE, which was also supported by Bartoloni and Melis. As with Fragment 3305, he earlier dated this fragment to the 3rd century BCE.¹⁹

INVENTORY NUMBER 3382 (fig. 2)

The top part of the fragment consists of concave strigils, three and a half of which are preserved. They are divided by a little groove. The strigils are painted in a cream colour and the grooves in black. On the strigils, a central red line is painted. Directly below the strigils, a narrow horizontal band painted in white divides the strigils from the fascia. The fascia contains parts of a palmette and an almost complete spiral, both painted white. Between the palmette and the spiral, some yellow berries can be seen. The decoration of the fascia is set on a black ground. This fragment contains two holes for the nails used to fasten it to the woodwork.

Bartoloni and Melis assigned the fragment to the 5th century BCE, while Andrén assigned it more narrowly to the first half of the 4th century BCE. Earlier, Andrén dated this fragment to the 3rd century BCE.²⁰

¹⁷ Andrén 1940, 369 n. 5.

¹⁸ Andrén 1980, 98; Andrén 1940, 369 n. 5. See also Calza & Squarciapino 1962, 88, fig. 49; Helbig 1972, 135–36.

¹⁹ Andrén 1980, 97–98; Andrén 1940, 369 n. 4. See also Calza & Squarciapino 1962, 88, fig. 49.

²⁰ Andrén 1980, 97–98. The observations of Bartoloni and Melis can be found in Andrén 1980, 98. For Andrén's own view, see Andrén 1980, 97. For Andrén's earlier dating, see Andrén 1940, 369 n. 3. See also Calza & Squarciapino 1962, 88, fig. 49; Chamay 2001, 75.

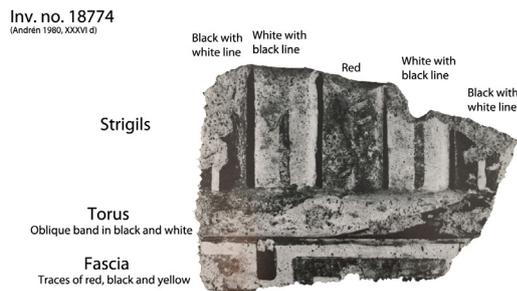


Fig. 3. Inv. no. 18774. Fragment of a *sima* with three elements preserved: strigils, *torus* and *fascia* (Andrén 1980, pl. XXXVI d).

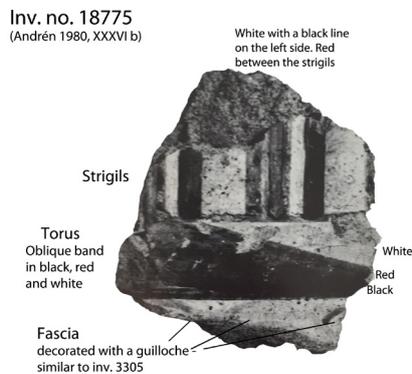


Fig. 4. Inv. no. 18775. Fragment of a *sima* belonging to inv. no. 3305. It contains three elements: strigils, *torus* and *fascia* (Andrén 1980, pl. XXXVI b).

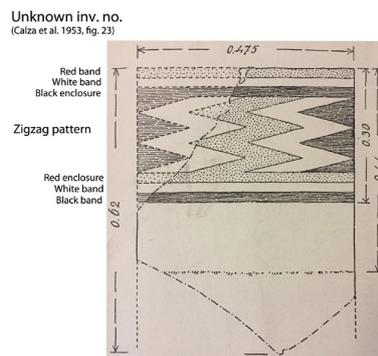


Fig. 5. Eaves tile. The tile is decorated with a zigzag pattern (Calza et al. 1953, fig. 23).

INVENTORY NUMBER 18774 (fig. 3)

Even though this is only a small fragment, it does provide us with evidence on three important parts of its original full appearance. The upper part is decorated with strigils, of which roughly five are preserved. They are painted in black, white and red. In the middle of the strigils, a narrow line is painted – the black strigil shows a white line and the white strigil a black one. On the photo, it seems as if the red strigil had not been decorated with a line. Below the strigils, a torus with an oblique band in black and white divides the strigils from a fascia decorated with a meander band. Only the very top of the meander band is preserved, however, enough to be identified as a meander band. There are traces of red, black and yellow on the meander band.

Andrén assigned the fragment to the 5th century BCE. Zevi, on the other hand, dated it to the 4th century BCE (?), indicating some doubts about the assignment.²¹

INVENTORY NUMBER 18775 (fig. 4)

The upper part of the fragment has two strigils preserved, which are divided by a narrow groove. They are painted in white with a black line positioned slightly left on the strigil. The groove is painted red. Below the strigils, a torus with an oblique band in black, white and red is preserved. Below this torus, only a fragmentary part is preserved, but it is clear that the fascia was decorated with a guilloche. Zevi, having seen the fragment, noted that the guilloche on this fragment is similar to that of Inv. 3305.²²

Andrén assigned the fragment to the 5th century BCE, whereas Zevi dated it to the 4th century BCE (?), again showing some hesitancy about the exact date.²³

UNKNOWN INVENTORY NUMBER – THE EAVES TILE (fig. 5)

This fragment is known only from a drawing

²¹ Andrén 1980, 98; Zevi 1971, 29–30.

²² Zevi 1971, 30.

²³ Andrén 1980, 98; Zevi 1971, 30.

in *Scavi di Ostia I*.²⁴ The decoration consists of a zigzag pattern, painted in black, white and, most likely, red.²⁵

Calza assigned the fragment to the 3rd century BCE, but I believe that the fragment more likely dates to the 5th century BCE.²⁶

Comparable Material

As it is evident in both the article from 1980 by Andrén and his monograph from 1940, many comparisons have already been made across excavations. However, since his article was published in 1980, new evidence has emerged and new research on the subject has been conducted. Of special interest in this article are the Nordic excavations conducted in the Temple of Castor and Pollux in the Forum Romanum in the 1980s, since some findings from these excavations help to identify and date some of the Ostian fragments. Furthermore, material from other sites in Lazio is also incorporated.

COMPARISONS FOR INVENTORY NUMBER 3305

Andrén compared Inv. 3305 with an eaves tile from the Dea Marica temple in Minturno, as well as with a *simma* from the Temple of Juno Moneta in Segni.²⁷ Thus, in the attempt to find the best possible comparison(s) for Inv. 3305 and to be able to define it as either a *simma* or an eaves tile, we have to look closer at the Minturno and Segni fragments. If we look at the example from the Dea Marica temple in Minturno, the guilloche is of a completely

different style and has a different colouring as well. The guilloche is a double guilloche painted in black, white and purple. In addition, the central decoration within each cable differs greatly from the Ostian fragment.²⁸ However, the *simma* from the Temple of Juno Moneta in Segni shows similarities with the Ostian fragment with regards to the style of the guilloche, as well as in the colouring. To this *simma* comparison we can add one further fragment, which ultimately will help to identify the Ostian fragment. It is a piece that was not available to Andrén in 1980, due to the fact that it was excavated some 8 years later during the Nordic excavations of the Temple of Castor and Pollux in the Forum Romanum. This fragment originally formed part of a *simma* from the Late Archaic phase of the temple. The fragment is decorated with a guilloche of exactly the same type as the Ostian fragment and the Segni *simma*.²⁹ Furthermore, the guilloches of all three fragments are set on a white ground with every second cable painted black and red respectively, with a central dot in the same colours. The Ostian fragment is therefore most likely part of a *simma*. *Simmas* are sometimes also referred to as terminal tiles.³⁰ In Etrusco-Italic architecture, the *simma* was placed above the revetment plaques, which covered the main rafters. The *simma* was attached to the roof tiles as part of the terminal pan tile.³¹

The three fragments are so similar in style that they could originate from the same

²⁴ Calza *et al.* 1953, fig. 23.

²⁵ The only access to the fragment is through the drawing (Calza *et al.* 1953, fig. 23). However, it is clear from the drawing that the fragment has three colours, whereas two of them are clearly black and white. The last colour is most likely reddish brown or red.

²⁶ Calza *et al.* 1953, 76. Based on comparisons from Veio, Ardea, Minturno and from the Castor and Pollux Temple in the Forum Romanum, it is possible to date the eaves tile from Ostia to the 5th century BCE.

²⁷ Andrén 1980, 97, n. 15. For the eaves tile in Minturno, see Mingazzini 1938, 722, pl. I. For the *simma* from Segni, see Andrén 1940, 399: I:6, pl. 121:429; Cifarelli 2003, 132–33, fig. 119–120.

²⁸ Andrén 1940, 487–488 I: 7; Mingazzini 1938, 720–723, pl. I, III: 4, 11. For the terminology of the guilloche, see Winter 2009, xlix.

²⁹ Grønne 1990, 108–109, fig. 8; Grønne 1992, 162 JJ-024, fig. 137, pl. I: 3.

³⁰ Andrén 1940, 399: I:6, pl. 121:429, 405: III:4, pl. 125:441, pl. E:1; Cifarelli 1997, 25–27 no. 6; Cifarelli 2003, 132–133, fig. 119–120, 158–159, fig. 176–177; Winter 2009, l.

³¹ For an impression of a *simma*/terminal tile from the Temple of Castor and Pollux, see Fischer-Hansen 2008, 288 JJ-93, fig. 225, pl. 215. For Segni, see Cifarelli 1997, 25–27 no. 6; Cifarelli 2003, 132–134, fig. 120. For a general overview and description of the architecture, see Colonna 1985, 63 fig. 3.1; Winter 2009, lii; Maras 2011, fig. 1.



Fig. 6. *Sima*. Inv. nos. 3305 and 18775 are put on a *sima* from Segni (Cifarelli 2003, fig. 119). One further fragment from the Temple of Castor and Pollux in the Forum Romanum has been added (Grønne 1992, pl. I: 3).

workshop (fig. 6). The fragments from the Temple of Juno Moneta in Segni and from the Temple of Castor and Pollux in the Forum Romanum are both ascribed to the Late Archaic period. Consequently, the Ostian piece should be dated to the same period.³²

Finally, a good comparison from the Archaic Capitulum in Rome does also exist. Those fragments, however, consist of revetment plaques and are decorated with a double guilloche. Nonetheless, the style of the guilloche is very similar to the ones from the Temple of Castor and Pollux, Temple of Juno Moneta in Segni and from Ostia.³³

³² For Juno Moneta in Segni, see Cifarelli 2003, 68–72 (arguments for the dating), 130–153 (the Late Archaic material). For the Castor and Pollux Temple in the Forum Romanum, see Poulsen & Grønne 1988, 27–30 (the stratigraphical context of the terracottas); Grønne 1990, 105–106 (arguments for the dating), 108–109, fig. 8; Grønne 1992, 157–158 (description of the find context), 162, fig. 137, pl. I.3. In the Forum Romanum excavations of the Regia, a *sima* fragment decorated with a guilloche and similar strigils has been found. It has been dated to the middle of the 6th century BCE. However, the cables of the guilloche differ slightly from the three guilloches from Rome, Ostia and Segni. See di Giuliomaria 2016, 115, fig. 6.

³³ The fragments from the Capitulum are on display

So this evidence further supports a late-6th-century-BCE dating for Inv. 3305.

COMPARISONS FOR INVENTORY NUMBER 3306

Since I have only seen this fragment on a blurred black-and-white photograph in *Museo Ostiense*, I will rely on the analysis provided by Andrén in his 1940 monograph and 1980 article.³⁴ Therefore, I will not add any new comparative material, since Andrén already compared this fragment with examples from Civita Castellana, Rome, Segni and Satricum.³⁵ The examples with which Andrén compared the fragment all consist of revetment plaques, thus indicating that this fragment also originally formed part of a revetment plaque. By regarding the comparable fragments, we can therefore get an impression of its layout.

COMPARISONS FOR INVENTORY NUMBER 3382

Most of the comparisons for this fragment are dated to the late 4th or to the 3rd century BCE.³⁶ However, the diagonal decoration with S-spirals, present on Inv. 3382, was already introduced in the early 5th century BCE.³⁷ From Orvieto, there is a revetment plaque datable to the 5th century BCE.³⁸ Based on the style of the palmettes and S-spirals, Luce and Holland date the fragment to the early 5th century BCE, whereas Andrén dates it to the 5th or early 4th century BCE.³⁹ It has a set of upper strigils. The strigils are divided by grooves. Under the strigils, a torus with a black-and-

in the Capitoline Museums in the exhibition *La Roma dei Re. Il racconto dell'Archeologia*.

³⁴ Andrén 1940, 369, n. 4; Andrén 1980, 97; Calza & Squarciapino 1962, 88, fig. 49.

³⁵ Andrén 1980, 97. For Civita Castellana, see Andrén 1940, 114: I:15, pl. 41:135. For Rome, see Andrén 1940, 364–365: I:5, pl. 109: 389. For Segni, Andrén 1940, 400: I:10, pl. 122: 430. For Satricum, see Andrén 1940, 474: II:16, pl. 150: 513.

³⁶ See the references to similar fragments in Andrén 1940, CCXXXVI–CCXXXVII.

³⁷ Andrén 1940, CCV.

³⁸ Luce & Holland 1918, 323 n. 3, pl. VIII: III; Andrén 1940, 198: II:4.

³⁹ Luce & Holland 1918, 321; Andrén 1940, 194.

white oblique band divides the strigils from the fascia, which is decorated with palmettes and lotus flowers. Thus, the decoration of the plaque is very similar to that of Inv. 3382. As with Inv. 3382, the strigils are white with a narrow central red line and black grooves in between. Furthermore, the palmettes and lotus flowers are also white. However, the difference between the two fragments is the colour of the background of the palmettes and lotus flowers, as well as the part between the strigils and the fascia. On the Ostian fragment, the background is black, and on the revetment plaque from Orvieto, the background is red. The division between the strigils and fascia consists of a narrow white horizontal band on the Ostian fragment, whereas the fragment from Orvieto consists of a torus decorated with a red, white and black oblique band – the same as seen, for example, on the torus of the Ostian Inv. 18775.

Since the Orvieto fragment has some quite distinctive differences, we may look elsewhere to find a more suitable comparison, which is difficult, since many comparisons deviate in either the horizontal band, which is often substituted with a torus, or the decoration differs in style. However, one fragment from the Temple of Castor and Pollux on the Forum Romanum is useful – fragment JJ-060.⁴⁰ Unfortunately, it only consists of strigils and the horizontal white band. Nevertheless, this is the only example known to me in which the division between the strigils and fascia consists of this type of horizontal white band. Furthermore, the colouring of the strigils is the same – white strigils with a central red line and black grooves in between. Indeed, it is not known how the fascia was decorated, but the preservation of the fragment is definitely worth of comparison. In addition, Claus Grønne dated the fragment to the Late

Archaic period.⁴¹ Six continuations to this fragment, revetment plaques decorated with spiral decoration, were found – these are: JJ-009, JJ-011 – JJ-015. They are from the same temple and from the Late Archaic period as well.⁴² It is unknown whether they belong to fragment JJ-060, since they have been divided into other groups. According to Grønne's division, fragment JJ-060 belongs to group 5a, which consists of miscellaneous fragments, which differ in clay, firing and decoration compared to groups 1–5. This indicates that fragment JJ-060 cannot belong to the same revetment plaque system as JJ-009, JJ-011 – JJ-015. Nonetheless, the most important step regarding the comparison between the fragments from the Temple of Castor and Pollux and Inv. 3382 from Ostia has been to find suitable comparisons in style and decoration. With some certainty, these can be found in the Temple of Castor and Pollux and could therefore further indicate a late 6th or 5th century BCE dating for Fragment 3382. Remains of a nail hole are also found on Fragment JJ-060 from the Temple of Castor and Pollux.⁴³

A temple has recently been discovered at Largo di Santa Susanna next to the former Palace of the Geological Office on the Quirinale Hill in Rome.⁴⁴ Amongst the many finds from this area, one fragment very well resembles the spiral decoration of Inv. 3382.⁴⁵ It contains part of the S-spiral and, maybe most importantly, this fragment contains similar berries as those on Inv. 3382. Moreover, not only does it contain the S-spiral and berries, they are also made in the same style and colouring.⁴⁶ In addition, this fragment is dated to the late 6th or early 5th century BCE.⁴⁷

Hence, based on these comparisons, it is possible to date Inv. 3382 to the late 6th or early 5th century BCE, thus supporting the

⁴⁰ Grønne 1992, 170 JJ-060, pl. 41.2.

⁴¹ Grønne 1992, 169.

⁴² Grønne 1990, 107–108 n. 5–10, fig. 5; Grønne 1992, 159–160 JJ-009, JJ-011 – JJ-016, figs. 129–

133, pls. 38.1, I.2.

⁴³ Grønne 1992, 170 JJ-060.

⁴⁴ Arizza & Serlorenzi 2015.

⁴⁵ Serlorenzi 2015, fig. 9.

dating given by Bartoloni and Melis.⁴⁸

The size of this fragment indicates that it most likely decorated the horizontal architrave, which is also the case with the fragment from Orvieto.⁴⁹

COMPARISONS FOR INVENTORY NUMBER 18774

Zevi identifies this fragment as part of a revetment plaque. However, by looking at two *simas* from Segni, which are quite similar to the Ostian fragment in terms of style, it may be possible to identify Inv. 18774 as a *simas* instead. The two *simas* from Segni consist of four parts. They have the upper strigils, which are separated from the fascia by a torus decorated with a black-and-white oblique band. The fascia of the first *simas* is a meander, whereas the other *simas* is decorated with a guilloche. Based on style and comparison with a *simas* from Ardea, Francesco Maria Cifarelli dates the meander *simas* to the mid-Republican period, whereas Andrén, based on size as well as weight, dates it to the 2nd or 1st century BCE.⁵⁰ The other *simas*, however, decorated with a guilloche, is dated to the Late Archaic period by Cifarelli. This is based on the stratigraphic context and comparisons with, amongst others, Pyrgi.⁵¹ In this context, a *simas*, which is very similar to the mid-Republican *simas* from Segni, can be found at Sassi Caduti in Civita Castellana, which is, however, dated to the 5th century BCE and not the mid-Republican period.⁵² In addition, further Archaic comparisons with *simas* consisting of strigils, tori with oblique bands and a fascia decorated with a meander band can be found in the Apollo

temple in Veio⁵³ and the Casalinaccio temple in Ardea. The *simas* from Veio belongs to the Late Archaic phase of the temple, and thus provides a perfect comparison for the Ostian fragment.⁵⁴ The *simas* from Veio consists of upper strigils divided from the fascia by a torus decorated with a black-and-white oblique band.⁵⁵ The fascia is decorated with a meander band.⁵⁶ The *simas* from Ardea is very similar to the *simas* from Veio and is dated to the Late Archaic period as well.⁵⁷ However, it should be noted that the layout of the *simas* from Ardea is based on only two fragments, which are from the meander band of the fascia and possibly parts of a lower larger torus. Thus, we do not have the parts consisting of the strigils nor the torus with the oblique bands. However, it has been reconstructed with upper strigils in black, white and red. Nevertheless, it is still sufficient for a comparison with the Ostian fragment (fig. 7). Furthermore, based on the above comparisons, it is also possible to date this fragment to the 5th century BCE.

COMPARISONS FOR INVENTORY NUMBER 18775

The comparisons for this fragment are the same as those mentioned for Inv. 3305 and Inv. 18774. Since this fragment does have a guilloche decorated on the fascia, and Zevi directly compares it with Inv. 3305, it is most likely from the same *simas* as Inv. 3305.⁵⁸ I therefore identify this fragment as being part of the same *simas* as Inv. 3305, and the dating of it should consequently follow that of Inv. 3305, which is the late 6th or early 5th century BCE (fig. 6).⁵⁹

⁴⁶ The colouring of the berries are not mentioned and difficult to identify on the black-and-white photograph.

⁴⁷ Serlorenzi 2015, 173–174.

⁴⁸ Andrén 1980, 98.

⁴⁹ Luce & Holland 1918, 323.

⁵⁰ Cifarelli 2003, 158–159, fig. 176–177; Andrén 1940, 404.

⁵¹ Cifarelli 2003, 68–72, 130–153, fig. 119–120.

⁵² Andrén 1940, 112–113: I:10, pl. 39: 130, pl. E:1.

⁵³ This is also known as the Portonaccio temple, see Andrén 1940, 3–8; Stefani 1954, 6; Colonna 2006, 156–157.

⁵⁴ Colonna 2001, 63.

⁵⁵ On the drawing found in Stefani 1953, fig. 41 a, it seems as if the oblique band of the *torus* was painted with three different colours, most likely black, white and red, but looking at the colour photo in Colonna 2001, pl. II, it is clear that the oblique band of the *torus* only consists of black and white.

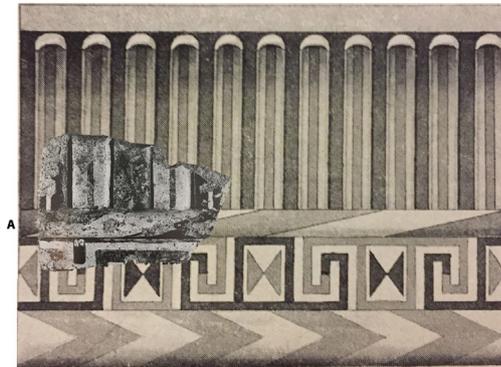
⁵⁶ Stefani 1953, 63, fig. 41 a; Colonna 2001, 63, I.F.3.3, pl. II.

⁵⁷ Andrén 1940, 447–448: I:1; Stefani 1954, 14–15, fig. 14.

⁵⁸ Zevi 1971, 30.

⁵⁹ Andrén 1980, 98.

Sima from Ardea
(Stefani 1954, fig. 14)



A: Ostian fragment 18774

Fig. 7. *Sima*. Inv. no. 18774 has been put onto a *sima* from Ardea (Stefani 1954, fig. 14).

COMPARISONS FOR THE EAVES TILE

Similar eaves tiles have been found in the Apollo temple in Veio, the Casalinaccio temple in Ardea, the Dea Marica temple in Minturno, the Temple of Castor and Pollux on the Forum Romanum, the temple in Satricum and amongst sporadic finds in Rome.⁶⁰ They all contain the same decoration – the zigzag pattern.⁶¹ However, between the individual fragments from the different sites, some kind of difference can be discerned. This difference is mostly seen in features and the number of triangles along the sides. Notwithstanding, an almost identical eaves tile can be used for dating the Ostian tile. It is from the Apollo temple in Veio and it is dated to the late 6th century BCE, based on stratigraphy in connection with the predecessor temple.⁶² This tile is decorated with a zigzag pattern in black, white and red.⁶³ The colouring of the

zigzag pattern matches the Ostian tile very well. Both tiles have two and a half triangles along the long sides painted in black, followed by one white zigzag band and a red zigzag band in the middle of the tile (fig. 8). The only difference between the two tiles is that on the tile from Veio, the lower enclosure is a red horizontal band emanating from the middle part followed by a white band and ending with a narrow black band at the very tip of the tile. The upper enclosure is a black horizontal band emanating from the triangles followed by a white band and ending with a narrow red band. On the Ostian tile, the lower enclosure is a black horizontal band emanating from the triangles followed by a white band ending with a red horizontal band at the very tip of the tile. The upper enclosure is a red band emanating from the central band followed by a white band ending with a black horizontal band. The eaves tile from Ostia can therefore be dated to the late 6th or early 5th century BCE.

The material thus consists of three *simas* (Inv. 3305, 18774, 18775), two revetment plaques (Inv. 3306, 3382) and one eaves tile (unknown inventory number). Based on the above analysis, it is possible to date most of them to the Late Archaic period and at least all of them to the 5th century BCE, thus still into a pre-Castrum period.

Discussion

Examining this corpus has both emphasized the details of the individual fragments and also placed them within a wider regional context. It can be assumed that the architectural terracottas formed part of at least one hitherto unknown building in the area that would later be the Forum in Ostia.

⁶⁰ For the temple of Apollo in Veio, see Stefani 1953, 48, fig. 24:a. For the Casalinaccio temple in Ardea, see Stefani 1954, 18, fig. 19. For the Dea Marica temple in Minturno, see Mingazzini 1938, 724, pl. III:3. For the Temple of Castor and Pollux on the Forum Romanum, see Grønne 1992, 169: JJ-053, pl. 41.1; Fischer-Hansen & Grønne 2008, 306–307: KK-7, fig. 307. For Satricum, see Gnade 2008, 116–117: 82–83. For the sporadic finds in Rome,

see André 1940, 366: II:4, pl. 108: 388.

⁶¹ In the literature, this decoration can also be referred to as rhomboid or lozenges, see Fischer-Hansen & Grønne 2008, 306–307, KK-7.

⁶² Colonna 2001, 40–41. Beelli Marchesini dates the erection of the temple to 500 BCE. See Beelli Marchesini 2011, 278–279.

⁶³ Stefani 1953, 48, fig. 24: a.

Eaves tile from Veio compared to Ostian eaves tile
(Stefani 1953, fig. 24a; Calza et al. 1953, fig. 23)

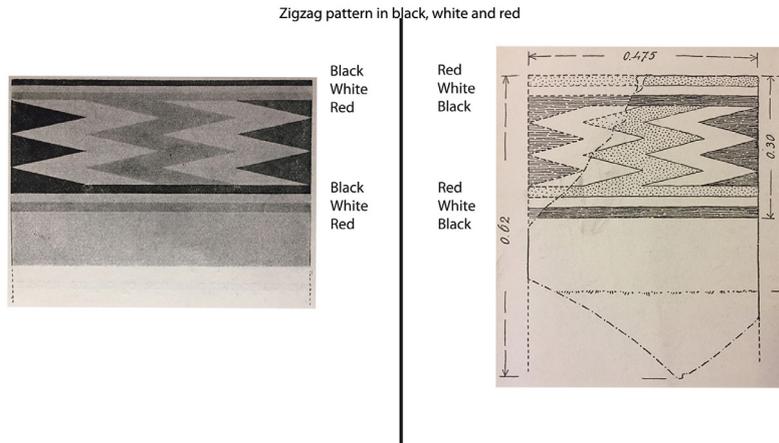


Fig. 8. The Ostian eaves tile compared to an eaves tile from Veio (Stefani 1954, fig. 24a).

Since all fragments are from the late 6th or 5th century BCE, we are looking for an Etrusco-Italic styled temple in Ostia. However, there are hitherto no known examples of any Etrusco-Italic temples. This does not necessarily mean that there were no such buildings in Ostia in the late 6th or 5th century BCE. The very first thing to do is to focus on the area in which the fragments were discovered.

THE LOCATION OF THE TEMPLE IN OSTIA

In the attempt to trace the location of the temple in Ostia, it is necessary to know where the fragments were found. Even though we are not provided with much stratigraphic information in *Scavi di Ostia I* regarding the fragments, we are provided with a plan and short description of where they were found, and the location of the fragments can therefore easily be traced (fig. 9).⁶⁴ It should be noted that since Inv. 18774 and 18775 are from a deposit in Rocca di Giulio II, their find context might not even be inside the Castrum. It is unlikely that they are from the excavations conducted by Dante Vaglieri on the portico east of the Capitolium between 1909 and

1913, since almost everything found during these excavations were well documented.⁶⁵

Nevertheless, according to Calza, the structures that feature in Figure 9 (A, B, C, D and F) all belong to the period of the Castrum, which, as mentioned earlier, was founded sometime in the late 4th or early 3rd century BCE.⁶⁶ Thus, according to this observation, the fragments in question do not form part of any 6th- or 5th-century-BCE structures in the area. Nonetheless, Calza divides the structures into three phases: Buildings A, B and C are part of the first phase. Buildings D and F belong to the second phase. The last phase consists of some kind of remake, which indicates a third phase.⁶⁷ According to its shape, he excludes the possibility that Building A may have been part of a temple.⁶⁸ In this regard, it is interesting that the fragments were all found in Areas D and F. Areas D and F consist of several walls constructed in different tuff. They consist of Walls *m*, *n*, *o*, *p*, *q*, *r* and *r1*. Of special interest in the description and analyses of the walls is the following quote: “il muro *r* da tuffi litoidi in parte poggianti su costruzione più antica”.⁶⁹ When regarding Figure 9, we can

⁶⁴ Calza et al. 1953, 76–77, fig. 19.

⁶⁵ I would like to personally thank Dr. Fausto Zevi for informing me about this important aspect.

⁶⁶ Calza et al. 1953, 71–77.

⁶⁷ Calza et al. 1953, 73.

⁶⁸ Calza et al. 1953, 72.

⁶⁹ Calza et al. 1953, 73.

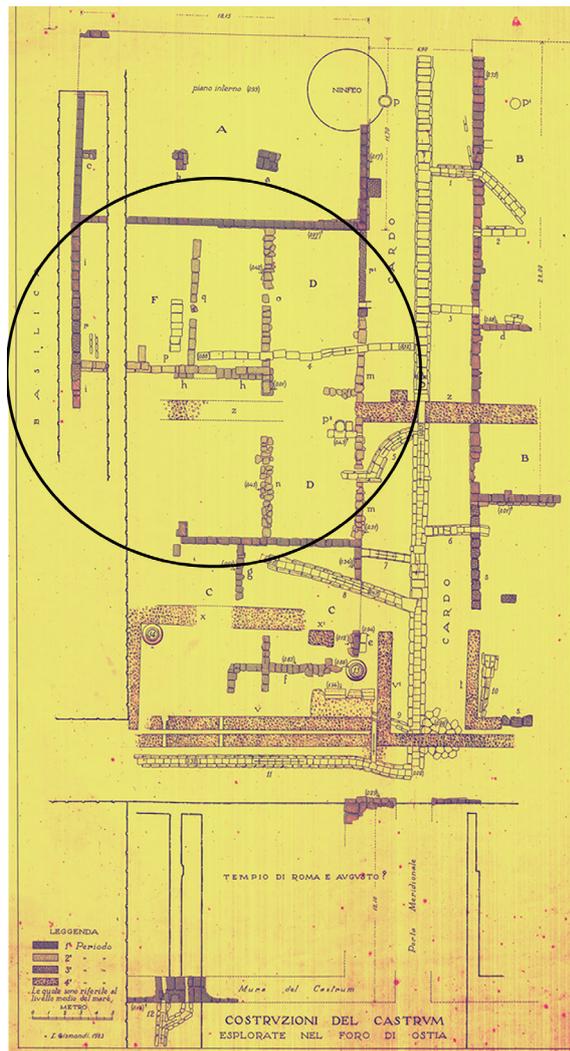


Fig. 9. Plan of the excavations on the southern half of the Forum in Ostia. The find location of the architectural terracottas has been circled (Calza *et al.* 1953, fig. 21 & Archivio Disegni B481).

see that Wall *r* rests on Wall *i*, which therefore must belong to an earlier phase. The same is said about Wall *b*, which supports the later Wall *p*. Walls *i* and *b* therefore belong to the earliest structures in the area. Furthermore, Calza writes that pottery and the fragments in question were used as fill in this area. The fill layer corresponds to the destruction of Walls *i* and *b*. We can therefore assume that

Walls *i* and *b* are from the same period as the fragments, and Walls *m*, *n*, *o*, *p*, *q*, *r* and *r1* were built thereafter, as the fragments were used as fill in their construction. Calza, as we know, dates the fragments to the late 4th or early 3rd century BCE, which therefore provides us with the dating of the Castrum founded on virgin soil in the late 4th or early 3rd century BCE.⁷⁰ However, since we now know that the fragments belong in the late 6th and 5th centuries BCE, we can date Walls *i* and *b* to this period instead. As mentioned above, Buildings A, B and C belong to the foundation of the Castrum. Calza does not mention that Walls *i* and *b* belong to the same phase as Buildings A, B and C, but just informs us that they are from the foundation of the Castrum – and that would be the same period as the three buildings. If we combine Building A with the two Walls, *i* and *b*, we do have a temple-like structure. Furthermore, if we look in detail at Figure 9 and assume that Italo Gismondi coloured and differentiated the walls correctly, the tuff of Walls *i* and *b* does look similar to the tuff of Building A. With these preliminary considerations in mind, we would have a temple located in this area in the late 6th or 5th century BCE. It was already acknowledged by Calza that the dating of the pottery and the fragments was debated, and he only excludes the possibility that Building A was part of a temple, due to the irregularity of the walls and the lack of architectural terracottas inside the building.⁷¹

Nonetheless, if we do follow the outer shape of Building A together with Walls *i* and *b*, it is possible to reconstruct the contours of a temple. Combined with the preserved Pillars *a* – *c* and a possible fourth pillar along the east wall of Building A, we do have a temple with a pronaos and parts of the *cellae*. Furthermore, all the walls, *m*, *n*, *o*, *p*, *q*, *r* and *r1*, are only mentioned as being from a later phase. It is not stated how much later. Indeed, Calza does

⁷⁰ Calza *et al.* 1953, 73–75.

⁷¹ Calza *et al.* 1953, 72, 96 n. 6.

imply that the architectural terracottas were found in a context that consisted of the fill for the construction of Walls *m, n, o, p, q, r* and *r1*, which would exclude them from being part of one structure together with Building A and Walls *i* and *b*. However, they do interact with the existing walls and if we incorporate these walls into the temple, we can actually make a temple plan that even follows three principles of Vitruvius (figs. 10–11). According to Vitruvius, the plan of an Etrusco-Italic temple, also referred to as Tuscan, follows these proportions: length to width 6:5, thus almost square. The back half, 3:6 parts, of the length is to be the length of the cellae, whereas 1:6 is the area between the cellae and the first row of pillars. The last 2:6 parts are thus the two pillar rows and the pronaos. The cellae are divided as such that the two lateral cellae are 3:10 parts of the width, whereas the middle is 4:10 parts. The pillars are placed in the axis of each cella wall – the *antae* – so that the intercolumniations correspond to the widths of the three cellae.⁷² The first architectural principle that follows this description is length to width at a ratio of 6:5, with the width being Building A's front towards the *Decumanus*, and the length the distance from the northern wall of Building A to Wall *b* in the south. The second principle is the distance between the cellae and the first row of pillars. The distance is exactly 1:6 of the length – from the southern wall of Building A to Pillars *a* – *c*. The third and last principle is the distance between Wall *r1*, which is the continuation of the eastern wall of Building A, and Wall *q*, which is exactly 3:10 of the width. Hence, there are some quite interesting features that point towards the existence of a temple in the area in the late 6th or 5th century BCE. The size of the temple, 21.9 metres x 18.25 metres, is

not unusual for this period, when we compare it to, for example, Temple B in Pyrgi, which measures 28.416 metres x 18.648 metres. The Belvedere temple in Orvieto comes very close in size, since it measures 21.91 metres x 16.9 metres. Both temples are dated to the Late Archaic period.⁷³

Although Giovanni Becatti states that the Castrum was built on virgin soil, he does not exclude the existence of inhabitants in the area prior to the foundation of the Castrum. Nor can we exclude the existence of structures positioned elsewhere within the Castrum walls.⁷⁴ The temple from where the fragments originated is most likely to be found in Areas A, D and F. The temple may also have been located somewhere else in an unexcavated area, and could today be hidden underneath the Basilica or the Tempio Rotondo, or alternatively and more likely, on the other side of the Decumanus under the two Republican temples. One major problem arises, if we accept the position of the temple presented in this article, and that is the orientation.⁷⁵ Normally, temples from this period would be oriented towards south, southeast or southwest.⁷⁶ The proposed temple in Ostia is oriented towards northwest, which, however, is not an isolated example. There are examples of temples facing the north, such as the Temple of Saturn and the Temple of Castor and Pollux, both in the Forum Romanum.⁷⁷ Notwithstanding, what can be stated is that it is oriented towards a main street. Since we have two different *sima* decorations, we may as well have two temples in the late 6th or 5th century BCE in the area of the later Forum – one placed in the Areas A, D and F, and another one below the two Republican temples (fig. 12). This would give us two temples facing each other with a main

⁷² *Vitr.* IV.7.1–2. See also André 1940, XXXV–LV.

⁷³ Colonna 1985, 80–83, 127–133.

⁷⁴ Calza *et al.* 1953, 93–95.

⁷⁵ I am grateful to Prof. Dr. Domenico Palombi for bringing this to my attention.

⁷⁶ Prayon 1991.

⁷⁷ For the Temple of Saturn, see Filippi, 157; Carandini & Carafa, pl. 11. For the stratification and dating of the Late Archaic remains, see Maetzke, 62–63. For the Temple of Castor and Pollux, see Nielsen & Poulsen, 79, fig. 55.



Fig. 10. The Late Archaic temple in Ostia follows three Vitruvian principles. The plan is based on The Belvedere Temple in Orvieto (Colonna 1985, fig. 4.7), plan by I. Gismondi (Scavi di Ostia I, fig. 21 & Archivio Disegni B481), plan by I. Gismondi & O. Visca (I, Pianta Generale).

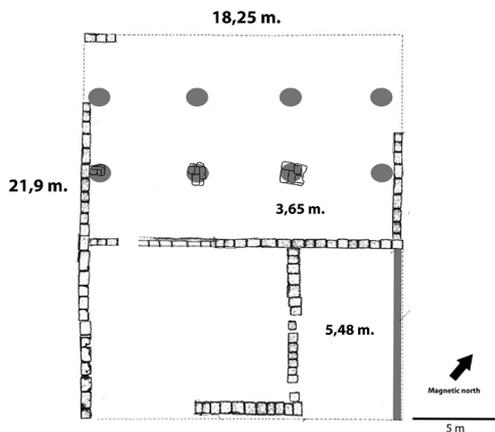


Fig. 11. Plan of the Late Archaic temple in Ostia (D. Damgaard).

street running in between. This scenario is a possibility, and could be part of an isolated sanctuary, which was placed in the area at the Tiber mouth, a practice, which is documented for other sites in the Greco-Roman world.⁷⁸

Before the foundation of the Castrum, a street ran from Laurentina in the southeast to the river mouth of the Tiber in the northwest. This street is also visible today and can be traced through the southern *Cardo* and the *Via della Foce*. Another street that ran from Rome to the river mouth and the salt mines located there intersected this street. This is today visible through the *Via Ostiense* and the *Decumanus*.⁷⁹ Their intersection is located where the western Castrum gate was

⁷⁸ This view is also shared by Gessert. See Gessert 2001, 68. For a discussion on the subject of 'urban sanctuaries', 'sub-urban sanctuaries', 'extra-urban sanctuaries' and 'santuari di campagna', see Colonna 1985.

⁷⁹ Calza *et al.* 1953, 94; Lorenzatti 1998, 92 n. 25. For discussions on the subject of the intersecting streets, see Algreen-Ussing & Fischer-Hansen 1985; Zevi 1996; Zevi 2001. More recently, see Salomon *et al.* 2018.

Pediments from late 6th or early 5th century BCE temples in Ostia - two different types of simas, A and B (The pediment is based on Winther 2009, p. lii)

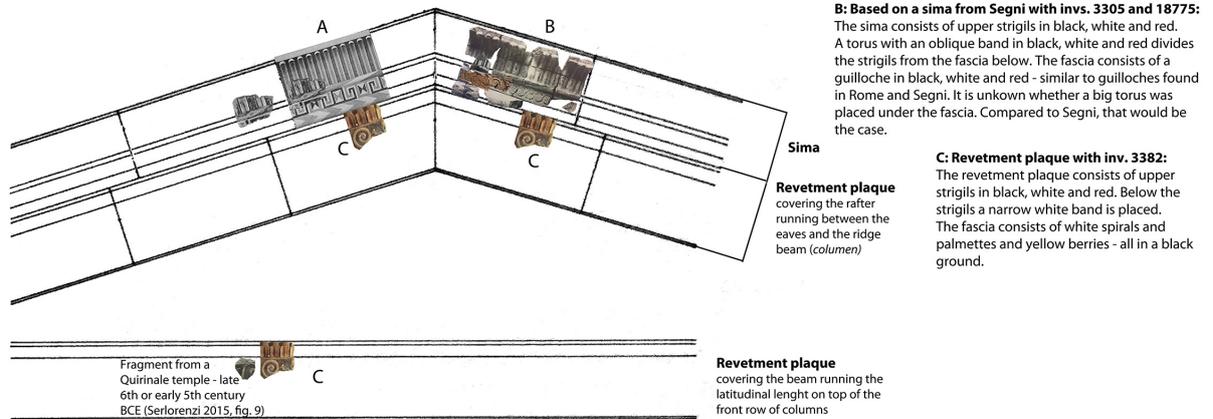


Fig. 12. Reconstruction of two pediments following examples from Ardea (A) and Segni (B) (D. Damgaard based on Winther 2009, p. lii).

later placed.⁸⁰ Recent geo-archaeological work conducted on the northern *Cardo* adds more information to these observations. The new evidence points towards the fact that between the 10th and 2nd centuries BCE the *Tiber* actually ran closer to where the northern *Castrum* gate was placed.⁸¹ This thus provides an image, in which the river ran closer to the pre-*Castrum* settlement or sanctuary, and thus also closer to the later *Decumanus*, which can be used as an argument for the existence of a street already in the pre-*Castrum* era. The street would thus have run from Rome along the river, passing *Ficana* on its way, and ended at the *Tiber* mouth, where a settlement or sanctuary would have been located around the street intersection.⁸² Should this be the case,

then in the pre-*Castrum* era the orientation of the structures placed in the area of the later *Forum* would still have followed the orientation of the later *Decumanus*, whereas possible structures located along the western *Decumanus* and the *Via delle Foce* would have been orientated along the coastline.⁸³

Under the so-called *Macellum* (IV,V,2) just west of the *Castrum* walls and in the intersection of the *Decumanus*, the *Via del Pomerio* and the *Via della Foce*, a structure with a different orientation has been found.⁸⁴ The foundations of the tuff blocks from this structure were found below sea level, thus indicating that it was one of the first structures in that area.⁸⁵ In Antiquity, the sea level was 1 metre lower than it is today.⁸⁶ The structure

⁸⁰ Calza *et al.* 1953, 94.

⁸¹ Salomon *et al.* 2018, 277–280, fig. 7. The idea that the *Castrum* was closer to the *Tiber* was already proposed in 1926. See Constans 1926.

⁸² Calza *et al.* 1953, 93. For the street running past *Ficana*, see Algreen-Ussing & Fischer-Hansen 1985; Fischer-Hansen 1990, 96–77.

⁸³ Salmon *et al.* 2018, 278.

⁸⁴ Kockel & Ortisi 2000, 354–359; Kockel & Ortisi 2018, 209.

⁸⁵ Kockel & Ortisi 2000, 358–359; Kockel & Ortisi 2018, 209.

⁸⁶ Goiran *et al.* 2017, fig. 9.

found underneath the so-called Macellum is dated to the late 4th or early 3rd century BCE on the basis of pottery finds.⁸⁷ Hence, it does not appear to be from the same period as the fragments in question. However, the orientation of this structure is of interest, because one set of ashlar walls located in the northeastern corner of the Macellum is east-west oriented. Furthermore, a wall located somewhat farther to the north follows a north-south orientation. Thus, we have here a structure that does not follow the orientation of the Via del Pomerio, which is dictated by the presence of the Castrum. Instead, the ashlar wall follows the orientation of the street coming from Laurentina and running towards the river mouth. This clearly indicates that this structure was built before the erection of the Castrum, and based on the pottery from that area and the latest possible date of the Castrum, this structure could have been built in the 4th century BCE in a pre-Castrum period, and could therefore prove the existence of the pre-Castrum settlement. Combined with the fragments from this study, we therefore have evidence of a settlement dating from the 6th or 5th century BCE, and thus of roughly 200 years of activity before the erection of the Castrum.

THE WRITTEN SOURCES

Not only the archaeological remains in Ostia indicate an earlier settlement in the area, but so do written sources. In the 2nd century CE, Ostia commemorated the foundation of the city as the first colony of Rome by Ancus Marcius, the fourth king of Rome.⁸⁸ This also corresponds to the first mention of Ostia in the 2nd century BCE in the *Annales* by Ennius. His first three books deal with the arrival of Aeneas in Italy, the foundation of Rome and the regal period. Since Ostia is mentioned in

Book II, it must have been founded in the regal period. Later authors such as Cicero, Livy and Dionysius of Halicarnassus mention Ancus Marcius directly as the founder of Ostia. We can thus assume that they relied on the narration of Ennius, since his *Annales* served as the national epic of Rome until Vergil's *Aeneid*.⁸⁹

Livy's account is not as spectacular, but it is more credible. He reports that when Rome expanded towards the sea and the mouth of the Tiber, a city was founded and salt-beds established.⁹⁰ Livy also reveals that the people of Veii were displaced from the area north of the Tiber, and that Ancus Marcius then focused on the left bank of the Tiber towards the sea. In that process, Ficana was destroyed.⁹¹ This corresponds in some way with the results of the Danish excavations conducted in Ficana. According to these results, Ficana was destroyed by a fire sometime in the late 6th century BCE. However, this would have been in the time of Servius Tullius or Tarquinius Superbus and not in the time of Ancus Marcius.⁹² It is difficult to say whether the fire was caused by a Roman invasion or not, but combined with the accounts of Livy, it is interesting. Furthermore, Livy refers to an important aspect of a possible Roman expansion in the late 6th or early 5th century BCE, and that is the import of grain. In the late 6th and early 5th centuries BCE after the expulsion of the kings, Rome needed grain to satisfy the needs of its population. A treaty with Carthage was signed and the grain was most likely sailed to Rome via the Tiber.⁹³ Thus, a settlement at the mouth of the Tiber was established to secure this area.

Apart from Ancus Marcius, another person from the pre-Castrum period is mentioned in the written sources. During

⁸⁷ Kockel & Ortisi 2000, 354–359; Kockel & Ortisi 2018, 209.

⁸⁸ Meiggs 1960, 16.

⁸⁹ Cuyler 2015, 13–14.

⁹⁰ Livy I.33.9.

⁹¹ Livy I.33.2. See also Gessert 2001, 67; Brandt 2002, 28–29.

⁹² Brandt 2002, 30–31.

⁹³ Meiggs 1960, 18–19, 479–482.

a famine in 440 BCE, L. Minucius had the position of *praefectus annonae*. He failed in relieving the grain. This led Sp. Maenius to buy grain from Etruria and Campania and sell it at a favourable price to the people of Rome, which made him very popular.⁹⁴ The interesting fact about this passage is that Ostia is mentioned in connection with grain import, which indicates the existence of a proper settlement – and a proper settlement did most likely have temples.

It is striking that no literary sources refer to the foundation of Ostia as a military fort, a castrum, in the 4th or 3rd century BCE. Livy and other historians described the foundation and re-foundation of several other colonies, but left out Ostia. They did, however, clearly state that Ostia was founded at the Tiber mouth, where it is today. So why would they leave out the Castrum foundation at Ostia?⁹⁵

Conclusion

This is not an attempt to ignore or neglect a Castrum foundation of Ostia in the late 4th or early 3rd century BCE. We do have solid

evidence of a Castrum foundation in that period. The purpose of this article is to trace a possible settlement or sanctuary in the area before the foundation of the Castrum. This will aid in the attempt to trace the first Forum of Ostia as well as highlight some aspects of the foundation of the Castrum. It will therefore change the idea that Ostia was founded on virgin soil. Instead, Ostia could have been part of a re-foundation as seen with many other colonies in Latium in the 4th century BCE. Furthermore, it is possible that the re-foundation happened due to outside threats in the 4th century BCE – that Ostia changed its role from salt production to military purpose. Whether the 6th- or 5th-century-BCE temple was still standing inside the Castrum after its foundation will at this point remain unknown.

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⁹⁴ Livy IV.13–16; Dion. Hal. XII.1–4. See also Meiggs 1960, 481–482.

⁹⁵ For a short discussion of the matter, see Gessert 2001, 66–72; Cuyler 2015, 12–41.

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