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Dale Kinney

Bryn Mawr College, dkinney@brynmawr.edu

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Spoliierung und Transposition

Herausgegeben von
Stefan Altekamp
Carmen Marcks-Jacobs
Peter Seiler

De Gruyter

Dale Kinney

Spoliation in Medieval Rome

The study of spoliation, as opposed to spolia, is quite recent. Spoliation marks an endpoint, the termination of a building's original form and purpose, while archaeologists traditionally have been concerned with origins and with the reconstruction of ancient buildings in their pristine state. Afterlife was not of interest. Richard Krautheimer's pioneering chapters on the "inheritance" of ancient Rome in the middle ages are illustrated by nineteenth-century photographs, modern maps, and drawings from the late fifteenth through seventeenth centuries, all of which show spoliation as a *fait accompli*.¹ Had he written the same work just a generation later, he might have included the brilliant graphics of Studio Inklinc, which visualize spoliation not as a past event of indeterminate duration, but as a process with its own history and clearly delineated stages (Fig. 1).² The revelation of those stages has been the patient work of thirty years of urban archaeology, beginning with the excavation of the Crypta Balbi in the 1980s and continuing in the Imperial Fora and elsewhere around the city. The approach of contemporary archaeologists, including Daniele Manacorda, Roberto Meneghini, Riccardo Santangeli Valenzani and their collaborators, is very attentive to afterlife, and especially to spoliation and "destructuralization" as essential factors in the remaking of Rome as a medieval and post-medieval city.

Before these recent developments, spoliation was conceived as a continuous and cumulative process, in which ancient monuments were progressively stripped of their reusable materials until those materials ran out. Although the supply was nearly limitless ("nahezu unbegrenzt") in late antiquity, it diminished over the course of the middle ages and especially in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, when several concurrent developments drove up demand: the emergence of an international market for architectural ornament and statues that drew such prominent shoppers as Desiderius of Montecassino, Suger of Saint-Denis, and Henry of Blois; the emergence of a marble-working industry operated by the craftsmen collectively called "Cosmati"; the emergence of an "imperial" papacy with a taste for porphyry and other antique attributes of power; and the "building boom" of the twelfth century, in which much architectural stone and marble were recycled to make lime and marble ornament was also reused intact, in colonnades, as doorframes, in ciboria and other liturgical furniture.³ It was assumed that this intense demand provoked equally fervent means of supplying it: rampant and unregulated spoliation. Michael Green-

1 Krautheimer 1980, chs. 10–14.

2 <http://www.inklinc.it/> (accessed 22. VII. 2010); Manacorda 2001, 15, illustrations passim; Santangeli Valenzani 2007a, 15–16 and passim.

3 Deichmann 1975, 24; Krautheimer 1980, ch. 7; Greenhalgh 1989, 152–155; De Lachenal 1995, chs. X–XII.

Fig. 1 | The Forum of Trajan, Forum of Augustus, Forum Transitorium, and part of the Forum Pacis in the 10th century (reconstruction: Inklink, Santangeli Valenzani 2007a, 114).

halgh wrote of “builders’ gangs” that “plundered Rome”, “[going] for the easiest pieces” lying on the surface, tunneling into buried buildings to extract their stone and marble, but perhaps lacking the technology to demount large blocks from standing ruins.⁴

In fact, the evidence suggests that the spoliation of Rome was much more controlled and episodic than has been supposed, and that the distinction between the early and the later middle ages is not one of degree but of kind. Archaeology has revealed dramatic changes in the fabric of Rome between the ninth and the twelfth centuries, which affected both the availability of spolia and the means by which they would have been acquired. The establishment of the papal state in the late eighth century ended the imperial tutelage of the state properties on which the prime reusable material was located.⁵ In the ensuing era of privatization some monuments became patchworks of individual holdings that were no longer recognizable as the unified structures they once had been. They became the property of monasteries, churches, and a variety of private owners, eventually including the urban magnates who created whole neighborhoods around their fortified estates. For these new proprietors, rents and leases were sources of stability and control, and in the eleventh century a new class of artisans, tradespeople and entrepreneurs arose to lease their properties or to acquire their own.

In his seminal book on the transformation of urban public buildings in Italy in the period before 850, Bryan Ward-Perkins demonstrated that the transformation was, by and large, state-sponsored. Buildings that could not be adapted to modern uses “could be treated as quarries and torn apart in order to reuse their building materials.”⁶ State-managed spoliation was written into law in the often-cited Novel “On Public Buildings” of 458, which decreed that no public building in Rome could be dismantled except upon petition to the senate; if the senate agreed, the emperor himself would review the case and allocate the building’s materials “to the adornment of another public work”.⁷ As argued by Joseph Alchermes, the intention of the law was to preserve the ancient *ornatus* of the city by a kind of triage, in which buildings that were beyond repair were sacrificed so that others could be improved.⁸ The well-known legislation of Theoderic was in the same spirit, although it allowed a greater role to private builders and patrons, evidencing the state’s diminished resources and capacity to maintain the urban fabric. By the seventh century, preservationist principles were untenable. After Pope Honorius I (625–638) raised 16 new roof beams in St. Peter’s, Emperor Heraclius gave him permission to strip the bronze tiles from the roof of the Temple of Venus and Rome for reuse on the church; this was not triage but alienation, since the church, albeit an imperial foundation, was not a public

4 Greenhalgh 1989, 137, 140.

5 Ward-Perkins 1984, 205.

6 Ibid. 207.

7 Meyer 1954, 161; Pharr 1952, 554. For the novel of 458 and other regulations, see the comments of Karl Leo Noethlichs in this volume.

8 Alchermes 1994, 177–178; cf. Geyer 1993, 69–74.

building.⁹ Some thirty years later, faced with an empire-wide shortage of metal, Emperor Constans II “pulled down (*deposuit*) every ornament of the city that was of bronze” and ordered that it all be sent to “the royal city” (Constantinople), in blatant violation of the often-stated principle that no city should be deprived of its ornaments for the benefit of another.¹⁰ In a crisis, tradition and precedent were overwhelmed.

State-managed spoliation was, at least initially, intended to counteract illicit spoliation; the one was legitimate (if regrettable), the other, theft. The Novel of 458 begins with a denunciation of the prefect’s office for permitting private builders to take materials from public places for their own constructions, and gruesomely makes the punishment fit the crime by prescribing amputation of the hands of any lower-level officials who enacted such permissions.¹¹ The bulk of such illicit spoliation may have comprised simple building materials – stone blocks, bricks and roof tiles – rather than ornament, if only because the demounting and transport of columns and carved marble blocks and statues were onerous operations, as other contributors to this volume have shown, requiring time, labor and machinery. Spoliation was hard to hide. In desperation, of course, nearly anything was possible, as when Byzantine soldiers broke up the marble statues on the base of the Mausoleum of Hadrian in order to hurl the pieces at the army of Vitigis, which was threatening to scale the monument (537). The “very large” statues produced great numbers of stones.¹² Spoliation under such circumstances falls in the realm of disaster response and is by definition exceptional, although it was not necessarily uncommon.

Based largely on literary sources, Ward-Perkins’ picture of the afterlife of Roman monuments in the early middle ages is a long fade-out: “With progressive adaptation, spoliation, or just plain decay through age, the monuments of Italy’s towns were gradually transformed, absorbed, or allowed to fall apart.”¹³ The Roman Forum offered an example. The Basilica Aemilia (Basilica Paulli) burned in the fifth century and was not rebuilt. Shops behind its facade continued to function, however, and temples and other buildings in the Forum were still intact in the early sixth century.¹⁴ Theoderic made some repairs, but he also made the first alienation of a public building to the Church (SS. Cosma e Damiano). This was followed by more conversions in the seventh and eighth centuries (the Curia became S. Adriano; some lower rooms of the imperial palace became S. Maria Antiqua), while one new secular monument was constructed (the Column of Phocas, 608), and nothing was repaired. New churches began to appear among the ruins. By the mid-ninth century so much of the Temple of Venus and Roma had vanished that Pope Leo IV could use its site for

Santa Maria Nova, “the first large building constructed *ex novo* [...] that is known in the Forum since classical times”.¹⁵ Ancient buildings succumbed to “gradual ruin or spoliation”, but there are few records of destruction. Many of the Forum’s landmarks were there to be seen by the author of the Itinerary of Einsiedeln around 800, and parts of the façade of the Basilica Aemilia were still standing in the fifteenth century.¹⁶

The recent archaeological investigation of the adjacent Imperial Fora yielded a picture of “destructuralization” (*destrutturazione*) that is generally in line with Ward-Perkins’ sketch, but it is more diverse and features considerably more spoliation.¹⁷ The Templum Pacis was despoiled already in the fourth century, when the elevated water channels in the plaza and parts of the western portico were demolished. Their materials were reused in utilitarian structures that may have housed the businesses displaced by the construction of the Basilica of Maxentius. These structures were in turn dismantled and the southern part of the old plaza became a cemetery around the mid-sixth century. Procopius described a stroll through the area – still known as the Forum of Peace – at just this time (551). He found many bronze statues with inscriptions identifying them as works of Pheidias and Lysippos, “all the finest things of Greece [that had been made] adornments of Rome” (hence, spolia).¹⁸ These statues may still have been there for Constans II to confiscate in 663. Architectural spoliation apparently did not impede the perception of the Forum Pacis as a functioning urban space in the sixth century, even if notions of “urban” were not what they once had been. Procopius’ stroll frames a story about “a herd of cattle [that] came into Rome in the late evening from the country” some twenty years before, when a live steer climbed upon a fountain to stand over a bronze bull. The event was an omen, but for our purposes it is interesting for the suggestion that had the steer not mounted the fountain, the passage of cattle through the forum would not have seemed unusual.

Santangeli Valenzani draws a distinction between spoliation that remained “tied to a monumental conception of the urban center” – in other words, the kind of triage identified by Alchermes – and spoliation that disassembled or “destructuralized” ancient monuments, leaving them denatured.¹⁹ He found the first instance of destructuralization in a “controlled demolition” of the Forum of Augustus in the late fifth or sixth century, when the columns of the Temple of Mars Ultor were demounted. The name of a “Patricius Decius” – perhaps Basilius Decius, consul in 486, or Flavius Decius, consul in 546 – was scratched into the underside of one of the column shafts, indicating that the spolia had been allocated to individuals for reuse.²⁰ Apparently by this time the temple had been judged beyond repair, and its ornament was legitimately fodder for other constructions. It may have fallen

9 Duchesne 1886, 323; A. Castella in Steinby 1999b, 122.

10 Duchesne 1886, 343; Llewellyn 1971, 157–158; Alchermes 1994, 174–175; A. Ziolkowski, in Steinby 1999a, 59; McCormick 2001, 42–53.

11 *fustuario supplicio manuum quoque amissione truncandos*, Meyer 1954, 161.

12 Procopius, *De bello gothico* 1.22.22 = Haury 1963, 112.

13 Ward-Perkins 1984, 218–219.

14 H. Bauer, in Steinby 1993, 186.

15 Ward-Perkins 1984, 220–223.

16 *Ibid.* 223.

17 Santangeli Valenzani 2001, 269–283; Santangeli Valenzani 2007a, 115–117.

18 Procopius, *De bello gothico* IV.21.11–17 = Dewing 1928, 275; Haury 1963, 601–602.

19 Santangeli Valenzani 2007a, 117–118.

20 *Ibid.* 118.

victim to a policy of preserving the buildings that fronted on main streets and passageways – this would explain the preservation of the Forum Transitorium (Fig. 1) – while relinquishing less visible buildings to spoliation and demolition.²¹

As early as the fifth or sixth century, the Forum of Caesar was covered with a layer of debris and a bronze-working furnace, probably associated with the new “business” of spoliation, was set up there.²² By the late seventh or eighth century there was a lime-kiln in the Forum of Trajan, but according to Santangeli Valenzani, it was in the ninth century that a “great spoliation” of the Fora occurred. In the Fora of Caesar, Trajan and Augustus pavement stones were lifted, wall revetments were probably stripped off, and the porticoes of the Forum of Caesar were knocked down in order to take their columns and epistyles. The evidence suggests a planned campaign involving “demolition workshops”, in which very large quantities of spolia were removed. The debris was piled up in the Forum Pacis.²³ Only the Forum Transitorium remained relatively undisturbed. There a pair of two-storied upper-class houses (*domus solaratae*) was constructed on the original pavement in the first half of the ninth century; they survived, with continual adaptations to a rising ground level and a progressive decline in function and status, for 200 years.²⁴

The great spoliation coincided with the establishment of the papal state, a long and partly unrecorded process that began with a pact between Pope Stephen II and the Frankish king Pepin in 754 and achieved legal definition in treaties between popes and Charlemagne’s sons in the early ninth century.²⁵ In this new arrangement the papacy was guaranteed possession of Rome and its duchy, eliminating any claims to sovereignty by the Byzantine Empire. Another emperor was created with the coronation of Charlemagne in 800, but unlike the emperor of Roman law, the Frankish emperor had no jurisdiction over Rome’s public buildings and space. Under Roman law, public buildings belonged to the collective, that is to the city; they were *res publicae*. The emperor had authority over them, however, as he did over everything else.²⁶ In the Novel of 458 previously discussed, the emperor exercised this authority in recognition of his responsibility to maintain the public appearance of the capital. In theory, both the authority and the responsibility passed to the pope in the eighth century, but in practice the papacy lacked the power, the resources, and perhaps the will to control all of Rome’s vast urban patrimony.²⁷ In the following centuries, especially after the papacy followed the Carolingian empire into decline, ancient structures were occupied and exploited by private interests.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid. 121–122. In the fifth century pieces of the marble ornament of this Forum were reused in the Lateran Baptistery, see Romano 1991, 31–70.

23 Santangeli Valenzani 2007a, 123–124.

24 Ibid. 130–137.

25 Noble 1984; Santangeli Valenzani 2007b, 74–75.

26 van Binnebeke 2007, 10–11, 18–21.

27 Manacorda 2006, 103.

In the short term, the Frankish-papal alliance enabled an enormous program of renewal. By Paolo Delogu’s count, 74 churches were restored by Popes Hadrian I and Leo III alone (772–816). Popes of the eighth and ninth centuries also repaired the Aurelian wall, and they built new fortifications at the mouth of the Tiber, around the extramural basilicas, and elsewhere. They repaired aqueducts and bridges and shored up the Tiber embankment. They built monasteries, hospitals and buildings for their own convenience and enjoyment, and magnificently enlarged the Lateran palace.²⁸ All of this construction was done with spolia, including reused bricks and roof tiles, blocks of tufa and travertine, columns and marble ornament, whole or in pieces, and even mosaic tesserae.²⁹ More than 12,000 tufa blocks were employed in just one project, the strengthening of the river bank under the portico that led to St. Peter’s, and enormous quantities of stone must have gone into kilns to produce lime for mortar.³⁰ Santangeli Valenzani plausibly connects this papal activity with the great spoliation of the Imperial Fora.³¹ Spoliation probably occurred in other areas of the city as well, as part of a general clean-up fueled by a dramatic increase in revenue from expanded landholdings, pious donations, and above all gifts of the Frankish kings and emperors.³² The extramural cemeteries were also opened to spoliation in this period, beginning with the bodies of the saints, which were taken from their graves and reinstalled in crypts and altars in churches within the Aurelian Wall. Marble inscriptions, tomb covers, wall and altar revetments, and other reusable ornament would have followed them.

It might seem odd to attribute spoliation to urban renewal (and vice versa), but in Rome the two always go hand-in-hand. In some respects Carolingian spoliation retained the spirit of the late antique imperial legislation, since it was done not for its own sake but to recover materials for the repair and improvement of other buildings. The difference was that in the eighth and ninth centuries most of the recipient buildings were either utilitarian or Christian. Early Christian churches were now themselves antiquities. As Delogu pointed out, the great majority of church constructions documented between 687 and 816 are structural restorations or rebuildings; *renovare* and *restaurare* were terms of praise.³³ Delogu found a different trend in the first half of the ninth century, when papal commissions began to reflect the personal desires and self-glorification of individual pontiffs.

It seems that the popes, now freed from the constraints of emergency restoration work, were able to devote themselves to new building projects inspired by new interests and new ideals of comfort and magnificence. As a result [...] the city was enriched with splendid new monuments, scattered over its entire area.³⁴

28 Delogu 1988; cf. Krautheimer 1980, ch. 5.

29 Krautheimer 1980, 112, 123–126, 134; Pergola 2002; Mancini 2008, 308–309; Barelli 2008, 315–317.

30 Duchesne 1886, 507.

31 Santangeli Valenzani 2007b, 74–75; Santangeli Valenzani 2007a, 124.

32 Delogu 1988, 35–38.

33 Ibid. 33–34, 39–41.

34 Ibid. 35.

In the second half of the century, however, papal finances collapsed as Italy and the Frankish empire fell into disorder. The great building program came to an end and with it the officially promoted spoliation.

In the Fora the great spoliation was a turning point, after which the archaeological evidence suggests that its separate areas were transferred to private ownership. By the second half of the tenth century most of the zone had been transformed by "urban feudalization" into a pattern of residential quarters and streets that persisted for nearly a millennium.³⁵ The Forum of Caesar, planted with grape vines and fruit trees in the latter part of the ninth century, was subsequently reurbanized with the installation of what appears to have been a planned settlement of small one-story houses (*domus terrineae*) lining a new street on a higher ground level. Santangeli Valenzani tentatively attributed this development to the Leo *protoscrinarius sedis apostolicae* (later Pope Leo VIII, d. 965) who gave his name to the nearby church of San Lorenzo de Proto.³⁶ By this time almost nothing was left of the ancient monumental enclosure except bare perimeter walls and possibly a broken colonnade. In the following century its ancient drainage system gave out, the area became swampy and the houses were abandoned.

The Forum of Trajan was initially abandoned and its plaza covered in mud. This open area was recuperated in the second half of the tenth century by a massive effort of resurfacing, including the importation of thousands of square meters of arable soil, after which it was developed into an urbanized zone of building lots and gardens by an entrepreneur who may have been the aristocrat Caloleo (d. 963/7).³⁷ By the eleventh century at least two churches were also established in the area. This enclave was enclosed by the still-standing Basilica Ulpia (which survived to be plundered in the sixteenth century), the curved multi-storied block of the so-called Markets of Trajan, and the stripped remains of lateral and entrance walls on the two remaining sides (Fig. 1). In the Forum of Augustus a monastery of San Basilio, first mentioned in 955, occupied the podium of the temple, and the surrounding area was raised, leveled, and cultivated. Sometime before 1217 the monastery was ceded to the order of the Knights of St. John of Jerusalem (Cavalieri di Malta), who built a new church at the current ground level, which was then six meters over the original pavement.³⁸

The afterlife of the Imperial Fora was not necessarily typical. Few other areas have been as extensively studied, but in the Campus Martius, two porticoes on either side of the Theater of Balbus show different paces and degrees of spoliation. The history of the Porticus of Octavia is more like that of the Imperial Fora. It retained its ancient layout and ground level until the eighth century, when the diaconia and church of Sant'Angelo were erected behind the propylaeum facing the Tiber.³⁹ The church and the commercial

structures that subsequently occupied the western portion of the propylaeum were built of spolia taken from the site, supplemented by materials from elsewhere. Between the ninth and the twelfth centuries the ground level rose sharply, and in the thirteenth century the church and the market – now specializing in fish – were rebuilt, again with local spolia. The ancient Porticus is still recognizable today, as part of its podium and the propylaeum are still intact.

By contrast, the Porticus Minucia was "precociously desolate" already in the fifth century, with piles of rubble lying inside the peristyle ready to be sifted for reusable stone and brick.⁴⁰ Before it collapsed, the temple may have been used as a depot for marble taken from other buildings. In an attempt to restore the Porticus to use, a hostel (*xenodochium*) was built in the western part of the enclosure; it was a diaconia in the time of Pope Gregory I (598). At the same time, however, the southern portico was suppressed and became a street (the present via delle Botteghe Oscure), the level of which was raised five times during the next two centuries as debris continued to accumulate. Stone-cutters' workshops appeared near the street in the sixth century, when the area also began to serve as a cemetery. At some point a monastery was established on the south side of the street; it was already abandoned in the eighth century, when Pope Hadrian I restored and repopulated it. A lime-kiln in the exedra of the Crypta Balbi may have made the lime for this reconstruction.⁴¹ In the later middle ages lime-burning was the characteristic industry of the quarter, as attested by the toponym "Calcarario".⁴²

Santangeli Valenzani posits a general degradation of the city traceable to the turn of the sixth century, when a spectacular drop in population – as much as 90 % by some counts – made maintenance even of residential structures impossible.⁴³ So much private property was ceded to the Church that by the end of the century Pope Gregory I found himself with more real estate than he could put to use. Many public buildings, including the Baths of Trajan, Caracalla, and Diocletian, ceased to function and were occupied by cemeteries. Even so, the structures remained recognizable, and the eighth-century sources of the anonymous *Itinerary of Einsiedeln* still listed gates, theaters, baths, circuses, aqueducts, triumphal arches, and commemorative monuments under their original names and located them correctly along the classical streets.⁴⁴ By the eleventh century many of these monuments lay buried in their own debris. Their names had changed or been forgotten. The continually rising ground level, especially in the flood-prone zones near the Tiber, had covered the ancient streets, and even when old routes were reproduced at a higher altitude, their names were different. Étienne Hubert raised the possibility of a "collective loss of memory" regard-

35 Santangeli Valenzani 2007a, 125.

36 Ibid. 144–150.

37 Ibid. 151–156; Meneghini 1993, 87.

38 Ibid. 139–143.

39 Ciancio Rossetto 2008.

40 Manacorda 2001, 45.

41 Ibid. 51.

42 Manacorda 1994, 652–653; Cortonesi 1986, 287.

43 Santangeli Valenzani 2007b, 67–74.

44 Walser 1987, 143–211; Meneghini 1993, 84–85.

ing the streets; whether or not collective forgetting was a cause of their disappearance, it was surely among its effects.⁴⁵

The new landscape of tenth/eleventh-century Rome was largely privatized. Correlating written documents with archaeology, Santangeli Valenzani concluded that the same process of “urban feudalization” observed in the Imperial Fora happened all around the city: “all the monumental buildings and public space that belonged to the ancient city that we find mentioned (in tenth-century documents) appear now in the hands of private individuals or monastic institutions”, including the Stadium of Domitian, the Baths of Alexander, and part of the Porta Maggiore.⁴⁶ Whether privatization occurred by legal transfer or by means of autonomous “implantation” in uninhabited areas is not known, and the form of the early occupation is debated. Against a general opinion that these settlements were open or lightly walled, Manacorda has proposed that urban *incastellamento* began as early as the second half of the ninth century, with families occupying Roman ruins and using their walls for protection.⁴⁷ The model is the *castrum aureum* erected by private persons on the ruined Theater of Balbus in the ninth century, according to Manacorda. By occupying the theater, these people became its de facto owners, and in the twelfth century, when the *castrum* had become the property of the adjoining Monastery of Lady Rose (*Dominae Rosae*), the pope confirmed without question that possession of the fort entailed possession of the ancient walls on which it was built.⁴⁸

Both institutional and individual owners tended to accumulate property in their immediate environs. Hubert and others speak of “family compounds” (*complessi famigliari*) and “urban manors” (*seigneuries urbains*) formed in the twelfth through fourteenth centuries, by means of which powerful families asserted control over various regions of the city.⁴⁹ These holdings, composed of many proximate but often not contiguous lots, were retained and managed by a system of long-term leases (*emphyteusis*) that guaranteed possession of the property for up to three generations, conditional upon its development and productive use. Hubert’s path-breaking study of these contracts revealed many fascinating patterns, including a much greater dispersion of the “abitato” than had been thought, far beyond the “elbow” of the Tiber; the significant role played by monasteries in the reurbanization of the city; and changing typologies of residential building.⁵⁰ By the twelfth century the normal form of aristocratic dwelling was a tower with clusters of houses beneath it, but thirteenth-century documents speak of “palatia”, usually “columnnata”. For our purposes the most interesting aspect of the *emphyteusis* contracts is that they often mention antique

remains, e.g., “parietibus antiquis in circuito” (1153) and “III^{or} columnnae serpentinae sanae et integrae et una confracta” (1261–1264).⁵¹

The ancient laws against spoliation prohibited the “tearing out” (*eripere*) of reusable materials, especially columns and marble ornament, from the walls of public buildings because to do so left them “spoliatae”, denuded “misshapen ruins” and eyesores in the public domain.⁵² In the twelfth century, when nearly all of the buildings in question were *ruinae* and, moreover, no longer public, the legal concept of spoliation was anachronistic. Ruins were real estate.⁵³ They had owners, who were entitled to (re)use their materials. The remains consisted largely of fragmentary walls (*parietes antiquae*) and detached units of ornament (“four serpentine columns, whole and intact, and one broken one”), which were found not only standing or lying on the ground, but also under it. Thus Michael Greenhalgh is probably correct that in high medieval Rome, the common methods of collecting ancient material for reuse were scavenge and mining. In this respect the *emphyteusis* contracts are of interest, because in legal terms usable materials extracted from a property held in *emphyteusis* were *fructus*, products of the land.

According to a study by John Lomax, in the latter part of the eleventh century – just when the market for spolia heated up – Roman leases began to provide for “gold, silver, iron, lead, or any other metal or substantial stones” that might emerge from below the surface of the property.⁵⁴ Sometimes these finds were to be shared between the leaseholder and the owner; in other cases the leaseholder obtained full rights to them, including the right to sell them. Not surprisingly, marble-workers and lime-burners turn up among the owners or leaseholders of properties likely to yield “substantial stones”; for example, a lease for a property in the campus of Caloleo in the old Forum of Trajan, dated 1004, describes the property as “a garden in which there are fig trees with stones and a column inside it [...] (bordered) on one side by the holding of Bonius the lime-burner [...]” Another property leased in 1035 adjoined one let to a stone-cutter (Gregorius sassore).⁵⁵

The sudden revival of church building around 1100 required enormous quantities of building materials as well as an effective means of supplying them: stone for lime and aggregate; bricks for facing; column shafts; marble for paving, furniture, and other ornament; wood for beamed ceilings; and roof tiles. Everything except the wood came from the ruins. It is not known exactly how this was accomplished, or how the unskilled, de-industrialized workforce of the early middle ages was replaced by builders capable of lifting and transporting monolithic column shafts, large blocks of marble and tons of bricks, and then re-

45 Hubert 1990, 123.

46 Santangeli Valenzani 2007b, 77.

47 Manacorda 2006, 100, 132–135; cf. Hubert 2006, 175.

48 Manacorda 1994, 638–639; Manacorda 2001, 130 no. 32.

49 Hubert 2006.

50 Hubert 1990.

51 Ibid. 130, 297–330.

52 Mommsen 1954, 803 (XVI.11, an. 364, Valentinian and Valens to Symmachus), 805 (XVI.19, an. 376, Valens, Gratian and Valentinian II to the Senate), 810 (XVI.37, an. 398, Arcadius and Honorius to the Praetorian Praefect).

53 Sommerlechner 2001.

54 Lomax 1997; for the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries see Brentano 1974, 25–40.

55 Meneghini 1993, 87–90.

erecting them in a new building.⁵⁶ Leo of Ostia's famous description of the transport of columns and marble blocks from Rome to Montecassino indicates, on the one hand, that this capacity already existed in the 1060s, but on the other, that it relied on a very basic technology and the literally back-breaking work of untrained laborers:

[...] he bought huge quantities of columns, bases, epistyles, and marble of different colors. All these he brought from Rome to the port, from the Portus Romanus thence by sea to the tower at the Garigliano River, and from there with great confidence on boats to Suium. But from Suium to this place he had them transported with great effort on wagons. In order that one may admire even more the fervor and loyalty of the faithful citizens, a great number of them carried up the first column on their arms and necks from the foot of the mountain. The labor was even greater for the ascent then was very steep, narrow and difficult. Desiderius had not yet thought of making the path smoother and wider [...].⁵⁷

The gang of pious volunteers is a topos, of course; but a contemporary visual document also makes the point that columns might be hauled by untrained, in this case unwilling workers (Fig. 2).⁵⁸ A mural painting in San Clemente illustrates a comic episode from the saint's biography in which slaves of the pagan Sisinnius drag a column back and forth, mistaking it for Clement. In the painting, three slaves shout profanities and one of them loses his balance while they struggle to move a column shaft using a stake (*palo*) and some rope. The saint's voice explains that "dragging stones" is the punishment for their hardness of heart.⁵⁹

Three men were not enough to move a column. Abbot Suger declared a miracle when 17 boys and some impaired weaklings managed to haul a shaft up from the quarry, a job that normally required 140 men, or at least 100.⁶⁰ Magister Gregorius, who was in Rome in the thirteenth century, also gives the figure of 100, not for moving a column but to "cut, polish and finish" a shaft like the colossal one he saw in the Baths of Diocletian.⁶¹ One hundred was evidently a conventional figure representing Leo of Ostia's "great number", but it must have been closer to reality than three. Perhaps, then, it was the size of the workforce rather than new expertise or technology that made a difference in the eleventh century. It has been calculated that solitary workers could extract 80 to 100 regular bricks and a couple of *bipe-*

⁵⁶ Santangeli Valenzani 2002.

⁵⁷ Hoffmann 1980, 394; Bloch 1957, 10–11.

⁵⁸ On the trope: Panofsky 1979, 231–233.

⁵⁹ SAXA TRAERE MERVISTI. On the inscriptions: Monteverdi 1934; Horrent 1969. José Saramago's fictional account of the construction of the eighteenth-century basilica at Mafra in the novel *Baltasar and Blimunda* (*Memorial do Convento*) gives a vivid sense of the difficulty and danger of this kind of labor.

⁶⁰ Speer 2005, 214.

⁶¹ Huygens 1970, 20.

Fig. 2 | San Clemente, lower church, The Slaves of Sisinnius Dragging a Column, ca. 1100; water color copy by Guglielmo Ewing, 1862 (Photo: ICCD phot. no 39825. Reproduction authorized by the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities, Central Institute for Cataloguing and Documentation)

dales from one square meter of the facing on a pier of the Basilica of Maxentius, a scale of "production" that would suffice for buildings of modest size.⁶² The construction of large basilicas would have demanded considerably more labor and organization. Concomitantly, the twelfth century saw a "rationalization" of brick production with greater uniformity of the hacked-out bricks achieved by selection and by some reworking of the sides and edges; and by the thirteenth century recuperated bricks evidently arrived at the building site in virtually standardized form.⁶³ Clearly there were progressive increases in the supply of bricks and in the skill with which they were removed and prepared for reuse.

Bricks were spolia, ripped out of walls that still stand, defaced, on the Forum, the Palatine, and especially in the Baths of Caracalla. The provisioning of columns and marble was probably more diverse. Some were undoubtedly obtained by spoliation. Magister Gregorius noted that the "Pallacium divi Augusti" (probably buildings on the Palatine), once

⁶² Montelli 2008, 125.

⁶³ Ibid. 127, 130.

Fig. 3 | San Benedetto in Piscinula, nave arcade (Photo by the author)

“tota marmorea”, had contributed “copious” precious material for the construction of Rome’s churches, to the extent that hardly anything remained.⁶⁴ Gregory also saw “a great pile of broken statues” and a headless colossal statue of Athena standing in a ruin known as the Temple of Pallas, which “the cardinals” were using as a warehouse.⁶⁵ This remarkable passage suggests that there may have been at least one Roman cult statue still *in situ*, albeit decapitated, in the thirteenth century (it was thought to be the idol in front of which St. Hippolytus was martyred); that the temple was Church property; and that it was being used as a collecting point for “fractae effigies”. Had the statues fallen and been salvaged, or had they been broken deliberately, centuries ago by intolerant Christians or recently, for sale or supply to *marmorarii* and *calcararii*?

Unlike bricks, the elements of high medieval church colonnades do not exhibit greater uniformity over time; on the contrary, the colonnades of thirteenth-century Santa Maria in Aracoeli are almost shockingly motley and beat-up. It is easy to imagine the patchwork arcades of a small monastery church like San Benedetto in Piscinula being assembled from the *fructus* of assorted properties with standing or buried ruins (Fig. 3). Every component – shafts, bases, capitals – is unique, and each could have come from a different source; they could have been separate donations, or the lot could have been assembled by a dealer or builder who – as Abbot Desiderius did – “wisely distribut[ed] a large sum of money”.⁶⁶ Even

⁶⁴ Huygens 1970, 22; Osborne 1987, 68–69.

⁶⁵ Huygens 1970, 21–22; Osborne 1987, 66–68.

⁶⁶ *larga manu pecunias oportune dispensans*, Hoffmann 1980, 394; Bloch 1957, 10.

Fig. 4 | Baths of Caracalla, reconstructed ground plan (Source: Guillaume-Abel Blouet, *Réstauration des thermes d'Antonin Caracalla à Rome* [Paris 1828] pl.III)

curial churches like Santa Maria in Cosmedin and San Clemente might fit this pattern. Grand basilicas like San Crisogono, Santa Maria in Trastevere, and San Lorenzo fuori le mura required a more planful and directed means of assembling materials, however, not only because of their scale but because their design demanded more consistency: all are trabeated and notionally of the Ionic order.⁶⁷ In the rare case of Santa Maria in Trastevere, we know where some of the spolia originated: eight Ionic capitals are traceable to colonnades fronting the libraries on the south side of the outer precinct of the Baths of Caracalla (Fig. 4).⁶⁸ Most of the remaining elements probably came from other sources, however: 22 shafts of various kinds of granite; 14 mixed capitals, or in at least one case, the marble block from which to carve a new capital; an assortment of column bases; architrave blocks; and up to a dozen small cornices from which to cut the modillions for the new entablature (Fig. 5).

Alongside an entrepreneurial market of “stones” culled or excavated from private holdings, there must have been a more centralized means of supplying large constructions like Santa Maria in Trastevere and the ambitious repairs of Pope Innocent II (1130–1143), who

⁶⁷ In Santa Maria in Trastevere, four of the 22 capitals are Corinthian.

⁶⁸ Kinney 1986; Piranomonte 1994, 334; DeLaine 1997, 40–41.

Fig. 5 | Santa Maria in Trastevere, detail of the north colonnade: entablature, two Ionic capitals from the Baths of Caracalla and one medieval capital (Photo by the author).

had colossal columns transported to Santo Stefano Rotondo and San Paolo fuori le mura, where they were re-erected to support the ceilings (Fig. 6).⁶⁹ According to Santangeli Valenzani, “gigantic robber trenches” found in the Imperial Fora date to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, and are the work of a “second great spoliation” in which the perimeter walls and colonnades were taken away.⁷⁰ Daniele Manacorda assigned an earlier date, in the eleventh century, to a “massive work of demolition and recovery of ancient structures” in the area of the old Porticus Minucia, but this seems to have been in the service of residential development.⁷¹ Just as in the Carolingian period, the “renovation” of Rome in the eleventh and twelfth centuries involved extensive decomposition of ancient monuments, but in this case it was not all driven by the Church. Quantities of architectural ornament went to adorn private dwellings, and even large-scale projects of mining, demolition and clearing, involving many workers and extensive coordination, could have been privately sponsored.⁷² Popes claiming imperial prerogatives after the conclusion of the Investiture Controversy (1122) may have thought of asserting the power of expropriation to obtain materials for reuse, but they would have met great resistance to enforcing it. For spolia, the pope was probably at the mercy of the market like everyone else. The colonnades of Pope Innocent II’s Santa Maria in

69 Duchesne 1892, 384.

70 Santangeli Valenzani 2007a, 282.

71 Manacorda 1994, 654–655.

72 Sommerlechner 2001, 340–346; Pensabene 2008.

Fig. 6 | Santo Stefano Rotondo, columns inserted by Pope Innocent II (Photo by the author)

Trastevere are ultimately no less a patchwork than those of San Benedetto in Piscinula, even if the components are grander and better sorted to conform to an ideal design (Fig. 7).

Outlying areas, like the Baths of Diocletian and Caracalla, seem to have escaped the Carolingian spoliation and were prospected for reusables in the eleventh century (Fig. 8). The builders of Pisa cathedral acquired three Corinthian capitals with attributes of Jupiter from the Baths of Caracalla; Giovanna Tedeschi Grisanti was able to identify the exact spot in the east palestra, where an identical capital was excavated in 1828.⁷³ Five such capitals survive on site, but only three were taken; perhaps the capitals left behind were already buried, too damaged for reuse, or simply too expensive. In the 1130s the demolition team was more ambitious, possibly demounting an entire colonnade; but again, the material supplied was only a fraction of what was needed for the new building.⁷⁴ The piecemeal pattern of removal may reflect the divided nature of the property (in the thirteenth century, parts of the Baths of Caracalla were owned by the monastery of San Tommaso in Formis); but it

73 Tedeschi Grisanti 1990.

74 Kinney 1986, 385–386.

Fig. 7 | Santa Maria in Trastevere, nave colonnades (Photo by the author)

might betray, as well, a respect for the ancient splendor of the site.⁷⁵ “The cardinals” evidently made the Baths of Diocletian a standard stop on the tour for visitors like Abbot Suger and Magister Gregorius. Suger famously (and perhaps facetiously) envisioned its columns as potential spolia for Saint-Denis, but Magister Gregorius was awed by the columns *in situ*:

I mustn’t forget to mention the Palace of Diocletian, although words are not adequate to describe its vast size and its most skillful and admirable construction. It’s so large in fact that I couldn’t get an accurate impression of the whole structure despite spending the best part of a day there. I discovered columns so large that no one can throw a pebble as high as their capitals, and the cardinals say that a hundred men could scarcely cut, polish and finish one of these in the space of a year. I shan’t say any more about it, since if I tell the truth you won’t believe me.⁷⁶

⁷⁵ Sommerlechner 2001, 325.

⁷⁶ Huygens 1970, 21; Osborne 1987, 27; Speer 2005, 210.

Fig. 8 | Rome in the 12th-14th centuries (Source: Valentini 1946)

In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, the scale of buildings like the ancient *Thermae* was virtually incomprehensible. Medieval Rome was comparatively small in every dimension, save one. As new construction progressively covered and obscured the ancient cityscape, Rome gained the dimension of time. The broken columns and half-buried vaults found on so many properties were conduits to another, older city below. The vertical dimension of the city now extended below ground as well as above it, and in that dimension time was embodied. The characteristic temporally layered space of Rome that enchants people today was made in the later middle ages, and it was a product of Rome's periodic spoliation. Medieval observers were aware of this dimension, as is clear from the well-known text of the 1140s, the *Mirabilia urbis Romae*. Almost obsessively, the *Mirabilia* enumerates monuments that *were once standing where another building is now: fuit templum [...] quod nunc vocatur; ubi est [...] fuit; templa fuere [...] quae nunc vocantur; fuit templum [...] ubi hactenus dicitur; fuit templum [...] ubi nunc iacent.*⁷⁷ These lists are tinged with the vigor of discovery but also with a sense of loss. Displacement, as in the moving of materials from one building to another to effect repairs, had given way to replacement, the substitution of one city for another. Materials salvaged from the replaced city would not bring it back; they had the value of mementos, and in some cases, of memento mori.

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