

ROMAN ANTIQUITIES

By DR. S. RUSSELL FORBES.

PRIMITIVE SEPULCHRES ON THE SACRED WAY.

Fourteen feet below the pavement of the Sacra Via off the south corner of the front of the Temple of Antoninus Pius and Faustina, a primitive tomb was discovered on April 2nd, 1902. A large terra-cotta jar of red clay was found with the handles broken off, within it was a cinerary vase containing calcined bones rather finely reduced: it is 11 inches high; the cover is of a sloping form with ridges raised in four parallel lines from the central ridge; this is also of red clay but somewhat blackened in the process of baking; the handles are perfect. Two ex-votive red terra-cotta hand-worked vases $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, somewhat like tobacco jars in form with two lines of raised ridges forming rectangular spaces, two smaller vases, one with a handle, and four small saucer bowls were also found. All are exactly like those found on the Esquiline hill, beneath the volcanic strata of Castel Gandolfo and at Grottaferrata preserved in the Museum of the Palazzo dei Conservatori on the Capitoline Hill (there is an example in the British Museum), so they are very early Italian pottery. The tomb is 4 feet out from the foundation of the portico of the temple, which extends 3 feet below the level of the tomb. It was covered with a small slab of *granulare cappellaccio* tufa, like that found on the Palatine Hill, broken into six pieces when discovered. The surrounding soil is clay, granular tufa and water-worn pebbles.

In the month of June another tomb was found adjoining it, but for burial. It was formed with blocks of red tufa, the edges being worn smooth by the percolation of water; it is 6 feet by 3 feet.

At the head of the skeleton were three jars containing wheat and husks of beans, the offerings to the Manes on February 19th.



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PRIMITIVE TOMBS ON THE SACRA VIA.

"Scatter fruit, and a small grain of salt,
 With corn soaked in wine, and loose violets,
 A jar holding these leave in the middle of the way."—

Ovid, F. II., 538.

A large circular bronze brooch with a long pin was also found. Other discoveries have been made since, so that the rocky bed of an area of 66 feet from west to east by 33 feet north to south, has been uncovered containing forty sepulchres.

At the bottom of a well-tomb a large hand-made terra-cotta jar was found containing a hut-shaped (*Tugurium* = *Capanna*) cinerary vase, similar to those found under the lava on the Alban Hills. Round it were nine vases of different forms containing ashes, fish bones (barbel), rib bones of lamb or pork, ashes of beans and funeral-cakes, porridge (*puls*), "the earliest food of the ancient inhabitants of Latium" (Pliny, XVIII., 8), and several fragments of bronze.

The tomb of a child was found who had been enclosed in a coffin formed out of the trunk of an ilex tree (holme oak), with it were five bronze brooches and four vases, one, without handles, is in red terra-cotta; one with handles and a long neck, is in ordinary clay; a third in red terra-cotta has red lines painted upon it; whilst the fourth, of an elegant form and fine work, is of black pottery, a Greek *Skyphos*.

Remains of a child were found in two jars placed with their mouths together.

Another, an older child, was found in a vase placed close by the Sacra Via.

Seven feet below the sacred way level two vases were found, one forming a cover to the other, within was a thin piece of bronze; the upper vase was of black pottery (*bucchero*), the lower one of reddish-yellow (*Italo-Greco*), with swans painted on it.

The last two tombs and vases mentioned are of the fifth or sixth centuries B.C. They are all at the base of the Velia ridge.

Most curious of all was the discovery of the skeleton of a colt; the body was arranged in a semicircular manner round the head, the whole being covered with

a tumulus; three vases were also found connected with the funeral rites *parentalis*. Ovid, F. ii., 548.

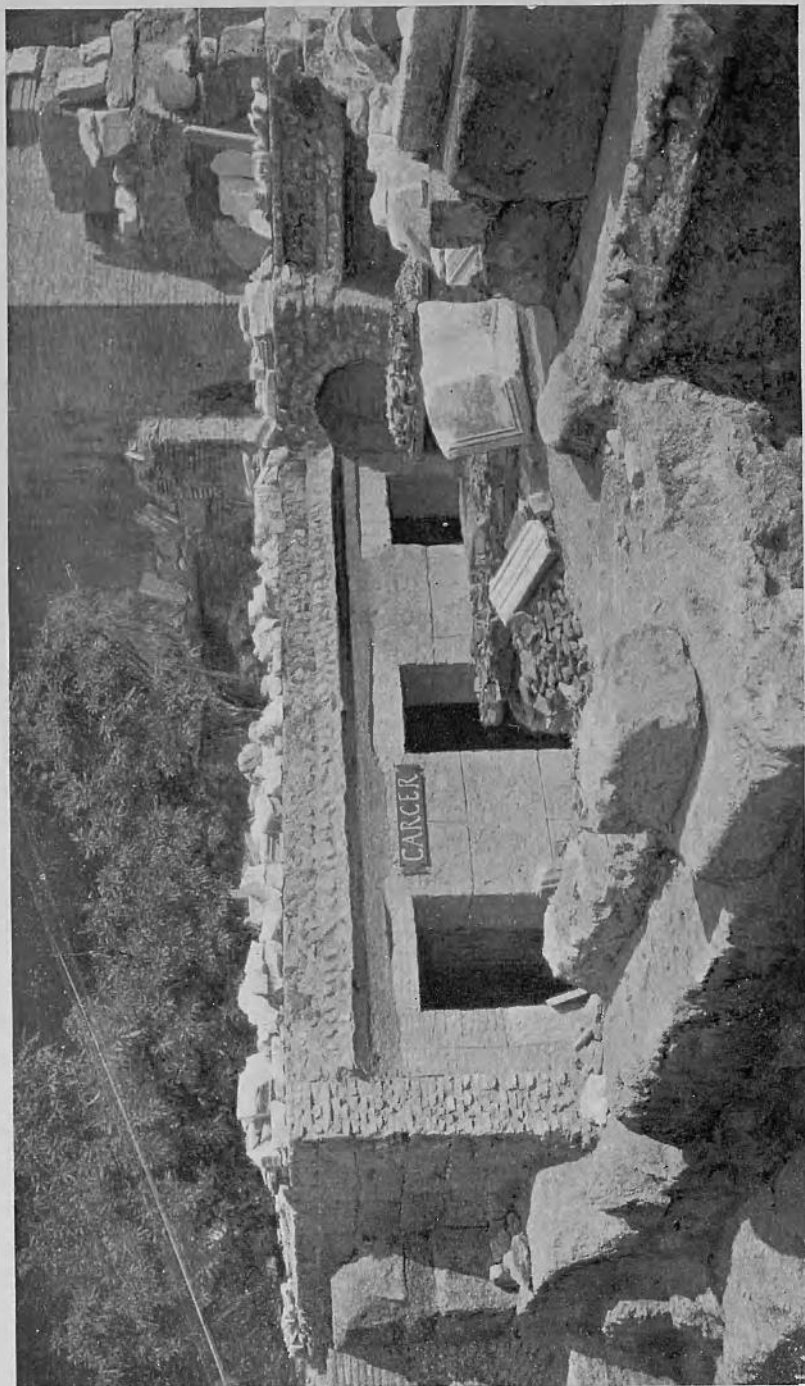
The Sabines looked upon Mars as the god of the spring-time, and in primitive times as a god of the netherworld. The horse was sacrificed to him.

Perhaps the most interesting of all was the discovery of the remains of a burnt *capanna* (*tugurium*) hut, such as the shepherds of the Campagna still use. Remains of the beech uprights, wood ashes, pottery and burnt clay were found. This reminds us that the house of Marcus Valerius Publicola was moved from the top of the Velia ridge and re-erected at the foot of it. Livy, II., 7.

This site was included within the second wall of Rome, when the Palatine and Capitoline hills and the valley between them formed the city; and as it was against the law to bury inside the walls (there were rare exceptions. Cicero de Leg, II., 23. Plutarch, *R.Q.*, 79), these sepulchres must be older than 748 B.C.; with the probable exception of the two children. This was doubtless the cemetery of the Arcadian settlement of Valentia on the Palatine hill or of some members of it.

It is known to students that there was once a burial-place about this vicinity, for in this neighbourhood Marcus Valerius Publicola was buried in B.C. 502, who died so poor that he was buried at the public expense. Livy, II., 16; Val. Max. IV., 4, 1. "The senate decreed that he should be buried at the expense of the public and appointed a place in the city, under the hill called Velia, near the Forum, where his body should be burned and buried, which was a distinction none of the illustrious Romans, besides himself, have to this day received." (That is, to be cremated within the city and at the public expense. The ashes of Tubertus B.C. 492, and Fabricius, B.C. 275, were brought into the city after cremation.) "This place is as it were sacred and dedicated to his posterity as a place of burial." Dionysius, V., 48; Plutarch in *Publicola*, 23.

In 1876 a travertine corbel was found in the Basilica of Constantine made out of a cippus that marked the tomb of Marcus Valerius Publicola. It is 5 feet high, 2 feet deep, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide; at present it is in the



CELLS IN THE FORUM BOARIUM.

garden of the Museum of the Palazzo dei Conservatori on the Capitoline hill. It reads

MN M · VALERIVS · M · T · A
 INVS MESSALLA · PONTIFEx
 TR · MIL · II · Q · PR · VRB · COs
 V · VIR · A · D · A · I · INTERum
 III · CENSOR.

This memorial was erected by a descendant, Marcus Valerius Mesalla, who was one of the quinqueviri appointed for some special duty connected with the treasury in a financial crisis (as in 351 and 216 B.C.). Livy, XXIV., 18; XXVI., 36. He held this appointment twice. He was one of the two *quæstores parricidii urbani* (an official subordinate to the consul in criminal jurisdiction; they had charge of the treasury and kept the keys of the Temple of Saturn). He was a military tribune and priest. Had been consul. (There was a consul of this name in 226 and again in 188.) He was three times censor. (There was a censor of this name in 252, but there was another consul in 161 who was censor in 154.) The stone may be his, but there is a difficulty if the numeral is correct. The first and only record we have of a man who was censor twice was when C. Marcius Rutilus held the office in 265, and who therefore was called Censorinus (*Val. Max.*, IV., 1, 3; Plutarch, *Coriol*, 1), and who passed a law that no man should hold the office twice, whilst this inscription is a record of a man holding it three times.

CELLS IN THE FORUM BOARIUM.

Off the south-west pier of the arch called Janus Quadrifons in the Forum Boarium, $12\frac{1}{2}$ feet below the present level, three chambers were discovered, each 6 feet 4 inches by 5 feet 10 inches, the walls being in *opus reticulatum* of the first century B.C. The thresholds are in travertine, as are also the architraves, the entrances being on the left side, 2 feet 7 inches wide, and 5 feet 10 inches in height. On the right in entering each one is a bench constructed in brick supported in the centre with a brick pier. The floor of the centre chamber is in *opus spicatum*, the others of lime covered with stucco and painted red. On the opposite side of the entry passage are traces of similar

cells. (Fig. 1.) The passage turns to the right, and traces of other chambers similar in construction have been found

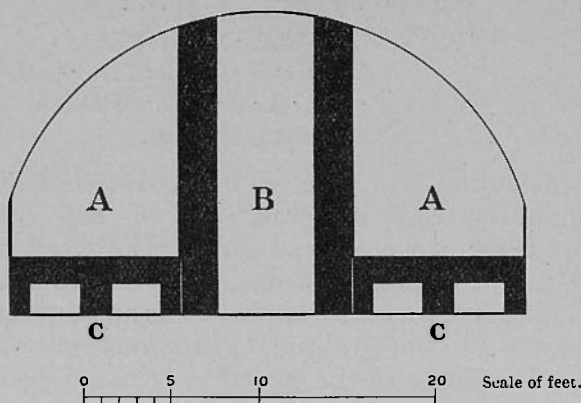


FIG. 1. CELLS IN THE FORUM BOARIUM.

- A. Cells in *Opus Reticulatum*.
- B. Corridor.
- C. Benches in brick in the cells.

73 feet beyond; the ancient pavement has been found 10 feet above their level and 14 feet 8 inches below the modern level. These chambers are better preserved than the others, all are formed in a vaulted gallery, so the centre of the vault forms the roof of the corridor. Bones and the teeth of animals were found, but no human remains. Amongst the dirt cleared out were found pieces of carbone, a spoon, two bone *stili*, lamps, pieces of glass, fragments of Etruscan, Aretine, republican and imperial pottery. A bone token inscribed in Greek:



It is supposed that these chambers were for human sacrifice, which on certain occasions took place in the Forum Boarium. The oldest of which we have notice is in B.C. 232, Dion Cassius, Vales, XII., then in 225, Plutarch, Marcellus 3, again in 217, Livy, XXII., 57, the next in 115, Plutarch *k.Q.* 83, Livy, Ep. LXIII, Pliny, XXVIII., 3, speaks of such a sacrifice in his time A.D. 79; and Plutarch mentions certain rites practised in A.D. 100

as the outcome of it. This is very doubtful as the cells are too numerous, and are towards the end of the first century B.C. in construction. Somewhat similar cells have since been found on the Sacra Via.

CELLS ON THE SACRA VIA.

On the west side of the Temple of Romulus, the son of Maxentius, by the north side of the Sacra Via, eight cells have been discovered, three on either side of a narrow passage, and two at its east end. They are similar to some previously found in the Forum Boarium by the Janus Quadrifons. The walls are of brick, covered to the height of 3 feet 10 inches with *opus signinum* cement, over which is white stucco; on the wall of one of the chambers is scratched the word CIVIT. The jambs and sills are in travertine, the front walls of tufa; the floors of *opus spicatum*; the first cell on the left and the last on the right have a built up narrow shelf, 2 feet wide, for reclining. The passage is 18 feet long by $3\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide, leading into a cross passage at the end, $3\frac{3}{4}$ feet wide and 15 feet long, which has at its south end a narrow shelf. Off this passage are two cells. There were twelve in all.

These cells originally extended as far as the centre of the door of the Temple of Romulus, where the remains of one has been found, with a shelf on two of its sides, covered over with the concrete for the podium of the Temple of Romulus. So some of these cells were destroyed when that temple was erected in A.D. 307. They were probably the lock-up of the Triumviri Capitales, whose office was at the east end of the Forum. Vitruvius, V., 2, says the prison should adjoin the Forum: the principal entrance to the Forum was at this east end.

Livy speaking of the fire of 211 B.C. says it comprised the Lautumiae and fish-market and the Regia, XXVI., 27; and in 198 he speaks of "the Triumviri of the prison in the Lautumiae keeping a stricter guard than usual," XXXII., 26; and in 191 of 43 Aetolian prisoners being thrown into the Lautumiae, XXXVII., 3, and in 184 he speaks of Cato buying two houses in the Lautumiae

and four shops, on which site he erected the Basilica Porcia, XXXIX., 44. Latumias=latomias, quarries at Syracuse which were used as a prison. Festus. Hence the name was applied to a prison in Rome, independent of the Mamertine, Varro, L. L. v, 32. M. A. Seneca, Contr. IX., 4, 21, mentions that Julius Sabinus requested that he might be removed from the Carcer (Mamertine) to the Lautumiae. M. A. Seneca died about 35 A.D. and this is the last notice we have of this prison.

The Lautumiae was a name given to a district on the north side of the Forum, because there was a prison in this vicinity called after the one at Syracuse which was notorious. I do not think there were any quarries here, but if so it must have been at a very early date.

The construction of these cells as they now exist is towards the end of the second century; they probably represent the Lautumiae prison of Rome.

THE PEDESTAL OF DOMITIAN'S HORSE.

In 1872 a pedestal, with large blocks of giallo antico marble, was found in the Forum, and still exists there; it was said to be the pedestal of the equestrian statue of Domitian. Now although it was about the position of that statue, the level and the construction showed that it was not of the time of Domitian. Thirty years having elapsed, the real pedestal has been uncovered, which Statius truly calls "*moles geminata*," exactly at the west end of the former one, 4 feet below the Severian level; it is 39 feet long from east to west and 19 feet wide from north to south, and 10 feet down to its foundation level. It is composed of concrete made with broken silex and travertine stones, and some of the wood forming the frame still remains; it is entirely void of marble. On the top of the pedestal, three blocks of travertine stone are set in the concrete, 5 feet 4 inches by 5 feet, in the centre of which the stone is cut out 17 inches by 16 inches and 6 inches deep, evidently where the supports went in for the horse's feet. The rear near travertine stone is 4 feet in from the west end and north side; 16 feet to the front is another 7 feet in from the east end, midway between these two 4 feet 3 inches in from the

south side is the third. In the centre of the concrete platform is a hole 4 feet 2 inches deep and 1 foot 8 inches square, probably for the support of the horse's belly. The horse looked towards the east, and from the size of the pedestal and the distance apart of the holes for the horse's feet, it is estimated that the statue of horse and rider must have reached a height of about 60 feet. The east end of the pedestal blocks up one of the underground galleries under the open space of the Forum.

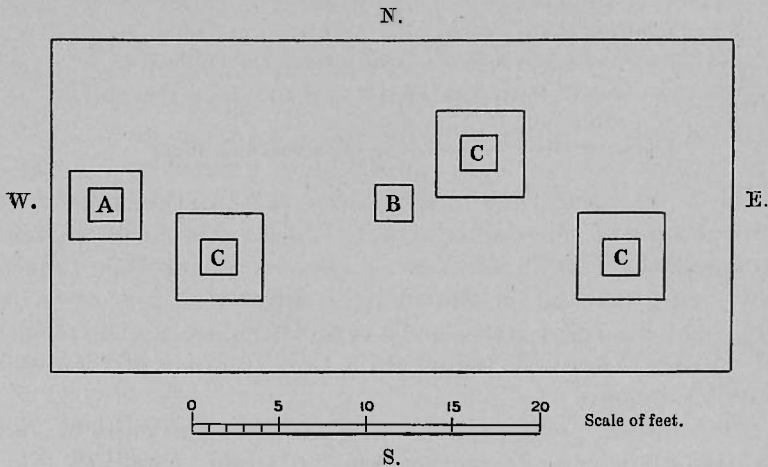


FIG. II. PEDESTAL OF DOMITIAN'S HORSE.

- A. Inaugural pit or consecrated foundation cavity, containing vases, etc., with cover over.
- B. Support for belly of horse.
- C.C.C. Slabs into which the support for horse's feet fitted.

The horse and rider are represented on a *sistertius* of Domitian's which was struck in his tenth consulship, that is A.D. 84. Suetonius tells us, "The tablet also inscribed upon the base of his triumphal statue was carried away by the violence of the storm, and fell upon a neighbouring monument." *Dom.* XV. This seems to have been just before his death, September 18th, 96, upon which his monuments were destroyed by the senate. Suetonius, *Dom.* XXIII.

The importance of this pedestal arises from the poem of Statius, *Silv.* I., 1, in which he describes its position relative to the surrounding buildings in the Forum.

1. What a gigantic pedestal the colossus is placed upon.
He stands commanding the Latin Forum!¹
22. . . . Hence, opposite, opens the threshold
Of him,² who tired of war, by the duty of his adopted son,³
First showed to our deified the way to heaven.
29. Beholding, but at a pace on this side, the Basilica Julia,⁴
On that side the sublime Basilica⁵ of the war-like Paulus.
Behind, he sees the bland visage of his Father⁶ and Concord.⁷
Besides, surrounded with pure air, his stately head
Shines above the temples and overlooks to see
Whether the grandly designed new palace rises from the
flames,⁸
Whether the silent watcher prepares the Trojan fire,⁹
And Vesta now inspects and praises her ministers.
66. He himself custodian of the spot to whom the gulf is
hallowed,
And guards the famous lake of memorable name.¹⁰

Thus we learn that in front was the Curtian lake, and the Temple of the deified Julius Caesar, his head turned towards the Temple of Vesta, beyond which his palace was being erected on the Palatine after the fire of A.D. 80. On his right was the Basilica Julia, on his left that of Paulus Aemilius, behind him the Temples of Concord and Vespasian.

On March, 1904, the inaugural pit or consecrated cavity, answering to our foundation stone, was found in the base of the pedestal at a depth of four feet at its east front. It is $23\frac{1}{2}$ inches square, $13\frac{1}{2}$ inches deep, formed with travertine stone, the cover being four feet square. Within the cavity were five ritual vases and a piece of gold quartz. The small piece of quartz represents the handful of earth from his mother-country. The Flavii were Sabines. See Plutarch in Rom. *Et de vicino terra petita solo.* *Ovid* F. IV., 822.

One large bowl in beautiful red terra-cotta with raised flutes, one mug-shaped in yellow clay with red bands, the other three in black clay (*bucchero*), one of the latter

¹ He means the Forum Romanum.

² The Temple-tomb of Julius Caesar.

³ Augustus.

⁴ *Julia tecta* can only mean the Basilica Julia.

⁵ *Regia Pauli* is the Basilica Aemilia.

⁶ Alludes to the statue in Vespasian's temple.

⁷ The Temple of Concord.

⁸ His head was turned towards the Temple of Vesta and Palatine, but it is impossible to see Domitian's palace from here.

⁹ Legend says the sacred fire was brought from Troy.

¹⁰ The Curtian lake was just in front.

a jar shaped vase with handles on each side, another, a patera or saucer, and the third a *capis* for libation pouring. Primitive utensils were always used in these ceremonies. They were found lying on their sides evidently upset by the water from the Tiber floods penetrating the cavity. On the 20th of March these vases were removed in the presence of the King. It is a great pity they were not allowed to rest in their cavity, a sight unique in the history of foundations, instead of being desecrated for a museum.

Twenty courses of the wood planks with vertical uprights which formed the box-casting for the concrete base have been uncovered on its south side. Five feet below a transverse wall of tufa blocks has been discovered.

On the primitive level, twenty feet below the present surface, two skeletons were found with some broken pottery; they lie with their feet towards the west; the northernmost one has a hole in his skull, the southern one has his arms raised above his head, which signs indicate a violent death.