



# DAY OF A DABBLER

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2011, Expeditions, Italy, Roman British School in Rome, historian, Italy, Rome, United Kingdom

I've been lucky enough to have been in Rome the last 6 months at the British School in Rome doing some post-ex work for the Kent-Berlin Ostia dig I'm involved with, and tying off some loose ends for it's interim report. I've also been doing my own research which is looking at urban space in late Roman Italy and have given a few papers. I'm trained as an historian, so I'm a dabbler when it comes to archaeology, but it's a crucial part of my work. I've excavated many times, can spot a context and backfilled in a thunderstorm, but AutoCad and such things leave me cold and a tiny bit confused.



But I'm leaving Rome on Monday and the library here is all but closed so today hasn't been typical, but I'll regale you anyway. The BSR as a research institute is pretty, well, institutional, but in the nicest possible way. Bells ring for breakfast, lunch and dinner at set times and cleaners come to clean your room every other day. Toilets and showers are communal so that's a bit like being in the field, but with hot water. This is a wonderful place, full of inspiring people, of which I've met many over the past few months, and is a perfect environment to research.

My typical day would involve a trip to the Ostia archives in the morning via a Rome rush hour, and the afternoon in the amazing library here with some gelato and coffee at convenient intervals. Today, however, I first went to the library, dodging the librarians stock checking, and took notes from and photographed part of a book I needed for my Italy project, in this case the late antique religious topography of Cosa. I did a couple of other things there and then the library closed and I have spent the rest of the day sorting through my images with the test match in the background. England are collapsing – good to see some things never change.