

## Newsletter for BSR Members 2024 | July Edition

Welcome to the July 2024 Members' Newsletter showcasing some of the research taking place at the BSR, both that carried out by our small but outstanding academic staff, as well as some snapshots of the range of excellent work being done by the many Research Fellows and other collaborators with whom we work in Rome and beyond. The various updates that follow beautifully encapsulate the interdisciplinary research that drives the BSR and makes it the invigorating and unusual setting that it is.

As I write the 2023-24 academic year is drawing to its close in the July heat. We have waved goodbye to the Summer Term cohort of award holders, and welcomed the group we refer to as the 'July-ers', a smaller group of students of architecture and fine arts who visit for a month to carry out their work, thanks to generous funding from the Universities of Newcastle and Gloucester, the City and Guilds of London Art School and the Nicholas Boas Charitable Trust. We are also hosting the Biannual Epigraphy Course taught by BSR Research Fellow Abigail Graham, with eleven students from all over the world trawling the city for words on stone and other materials. In August an even smaller band of artists and other alumni and members will occupy just the apartments and studios on a self-catering basis, while many staff take a well-deserved break. Then we will gear up for the September courses and the arrival of a new cohort.

It's an intense but pleasurable rhythm here at the BSR, and our lovely spaces on via Gramsci shelter us whatever the weather. Even in this heat the library is a cool sanctuary where, who knows, I might even retreat myself once various end-of-year reports are written!

Please enjoy what follows from my colleagues in Research Collections, Fine Arts and Archaeology, and please accept our ongoing thanks for your support of our mission: we need our members more than ever. Tell all your friends!

With best wishes,

Abigail Brundin



Courtyard, British School at Rome, 2024. Photo by Antonio Masiello

## Practice-led research at the BSR

The curatorial vision for the Fine Arts department adopts transfeminist perspectives that encourage collaborative inquiry, using processes that provoke action, dialogue, and reflection, and in doing so connect theory, practice, research and participation. This kind of approach, which began last Academic year with resident artists at the BSR, has been reinforced this year by inviting artists and organisations from the Italian art community to collaborate on the creation of a diverse and multidisciplinary program.

In November we opened *Minted in Enemy Bronze*, the first institutional solo show in Italy of BSR Research Fellow Justin Randolph Thompson, who is an artist, cultural facilitator and educator based in Florence since 1999. He is Co-Founder and Director of Black History Month Florence and The Recovery Plan, a research centre that fosters transnational exchange around Afrodescendent cultures and peoples. The exhibition presented a dozen films dedicated to the excavation of Black histories in Italy developed through dialogues and exchanges with Black scholars, artists and activists at sites that resonate with atmospheric tension.

To celebrate LGBTQIA+ History Month, which in the UK takes place in February, the BSR presented for the first time an evening of poetry readings. The evening focused on poems dedicated to queer topics, read by Andrea Acocella (bar.lina queer space), Viola Lo Moro (poet and founder of Libreria Tuba), Donatella Saroli (SIL – Società Italiana Letterate) and Giovanna Cristina Vivinetto (poet and teacher), while Baldwin Giang (Samuel Barber Rome Prize – American Academy in Rome, University of Chicago – PhD Candidate) shared musical compositions based on his research and Tura Oliveira (BSR Abbey Scholar in Painting) created an installation specifically for the event.



Viola Lo Moro reciting her poetry during the LGBTQIA+ History Month event, February 2024, Photo by Silvia Calderoni

This year the BSR has established a new partnership with the international residency programme based in Rome, CASTRO, where BSR artists presented their work during sessions of CRITS. We have also continued an ongoing project with the curatorial collective OnSite, that made possible the realisation of projects with NABA Academy students and Spin Time Labs, known for its works on urban regeneration in Rome.

The award-holders develop projects that are shared every three months with the Roman audience in an Open Studios Night. These evenings foster exchange and conversation, helping the artists connect with the art community of the city and provide the audience with an insight into the creative process rather than exhibiting finished artworks.

Some artist fellows also took part together with Rome-based artists in the final exhibition *You were kept awake all through the night*, curated by Marta Pellerini in the gallery space of the BSR. The show brought together artworks that approach monstrosity from different angles, focusing on the contexts, narratives and environments that frame monsters rather than the condition of the monster itself. Starting from the spaces they occupy, to their place in relation to the divine, the mythological and new technologies, the creatures in the exhibition were shaped by the

context in which they live, adapting or struggling to adapt to the scenarios that define them as Other creatures.



You were kept awake all through the night, install view, 2024, photo by Roberto Apa

This year we also welcomed the first practice-led postdoctoral British Academy fellow, Dr Eloise Fornieles to our department. Practice-led research is a discipline that offers a means of sharing original knowledge through a generative, creative practice that is intertwined with the methodical rigour of academic writing. For artists embarking on this discipline, it is their practice that leads the line of investigation, prioritising the creative process in order to communicate ideas, theories and histories differently to the written word. And in turn, the researchers' thinking is shaped by making, which enables the writing to articulate new theories discovered during the process.

The BSR was kindly invited to Anticoli Corrado by Rita Colozzi and Ralph Westbury and Dr Eloise Fornieles and UCL-BSR fellow Dr Andrea Frederickson visited their beautiful home, Villa Ulivella. Over the past year Rita and Ralph have renovated the early 20th-century villa and its elegant rose garden and olive grove. Hosting artists and events, the Villa sits in the heart of the town and its community, who continue to nurture and maintain its cultural legacy, evidenced in its churches, festivals, and Museum of Modern and Contemporary Art.

Anticoli Corrado is of particular interest to Dr Andrea Frederickson, who's research project, How Rome Shaped a London Art School: Tracing Slade Students in the BSR Archives, investigates many of the Slade students with BSR awards who visited the town over the past century. Artists such as Winifred Knight, Henry Inlander and Gillian Mary Turrall were all inspired by the town of Anticoli Corrado and its surrounding landscape. We look forward to reactivating the dialogue between the BSR and this unique place in art history.

The collaborations we have established over this year have provided vital energy to the experience of the award holders and in turn these international artists have become part of the diverse fabric of the contemporary art scene in Rome.

Eloise Fornieles and Marta Pellerini

## Epigraphy and inscriptions over the centuries: a rediscovered field at the heart of the British School at Rome research and practice

Epigraphy and the study of inscriptions have been of great interest for scholars and artists over the centuries. Humanists and antiquarians collected and published them, artists and photographers reproduced them and used them for inspiration; scholars have gathered them in the still ongoing Corpus inscriptionum Graecarum (since 1815) and Corpus inscriptionum Latinarum (since 1847). Computerisation and then digital humanities have renewed this field of research, with new projects being developed internationally. The British School at Rome is the locus for a wide variety of projects that have the study and representation of inscriptions at their core.

The Piranesi collection, part of our Research Collections, is composed of 139 prints and a few books created by Giovanni Battista Piranesi (1720-1778). It has been studied in recent years by BSR Research Fellows, Dr Caroline Barron (Durham University) and Dr Clare Hornsby during a 4-year research project. The majority of research has been on the prints from the volumes of the *Antichità Romane*, in which Piranesi focuses on ancient roads, tombs and bridges and the findings associated with their different locations; inscriptions have played a major role in this research, given their presence throughout these prints. The project has shown how Piranesi uses inscriptions to document the archaeological record, to illustrate arguments about engineering and building in antiquity and to make suggestive remarks about how the ancient city could, and should, have been organised. Not only are the inscriptions in Piranesi's prints part of the tradition of epigraphic documentation in the city of Rome, but they are also responsible for situating epigraphic text in the visual landscape of the city, establishing an aesthetic criterion in which their visualisation was an important part of Piranesi's reconstruction of the totality of the ancient world. The correct reproduction of their letterforms and the relationship between the content of the text and the objects on which they were inscribed were significant factors in his sometimes imaginative rendering of antiquity. In addition to four exhibitions at the BSR, we have set up an online research project, that includes the in-depth description of c. 80 prints (<https://ipervisions.digitalcollections.bsr.ac.uk/piranesi-project-intro/>), and a virtual exhibition created by Clare Hornsby and Caroline Barron (<https://virtualexhibitions.bsr.ac.uk/omeka-s/s/giovanni-battista-piranesi/page/welcome>).



Piranesi print, BSR Research collections.



Piranesi print, BSR Research collections.

Epigraphy and inscriptions are also well represented in our photographic archive, particularly in the collection gathered by John Bryan Ward-Perkins (1912-1981) during his directorship of the BSR (1945-1974). The extraordinary collection of c. 50,000 items (prints and negatives) reflects Ward-Perkins' many and diverse scholarly interests. Part of Ward-Perkins' collection of photographs of antique Libya is the Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania series. This extraordinary visual account of Libyan inscriptions was patiently collected and assembled by Ward-Perkins and Joyce Reynolds (1918-2022), a specialist of epigraphy from Cambridge, to accompany readings of the epigraphic texts. They were generously assisted by Richard Goodchild (1918-1968), BSR Librarian from 1949 to 1953. The resultant publication, which appeared with exemplary promptness in 1952, was the *Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania* (<https://search-libnet.org/cgi-bin/koha/opac-detail.pl?biblionumber=24225> ).

The series is made up of nearly 1,200 gelatin silver prints glued onto 284 cards and arranged according to the numbers assigned to each inscription in the 1952 publication. The photographs were taken between 1946 and 1953. The extensive correspondence preserved in the BSR Archive is testimony to the huge endeavour undertaken by both scholars in the spirit of encouraging international collaboration in the aftermath of the Second World War.

In 2022, we published online the whole set of photographs from the series, marking the longstanding collaboration with the British Institute for Libyan & Northern African Studies (BILNAS) (<https://www.bilnas.org> ) and many other scholars and contributors over eighty years, including, most recently, Roberta Cascino, BSR Research Fellow. The project was made possible thanks to the financial support of the British Academy and BILNAS. Central to the project was the enthusiasm and encouragement of professor Charlotte Roueché (ORCID), with whom the BSR has been collaborating since 2009 for the first digital edition of the *Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania* (<https://inslib.kcl.ac.uk/irt2009/> ).

The images and records from the series are linked up to the recently launched, enhanced digital edition of the *Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania*, IRT2021 (<https://irt2021.inslib.kcl.ac.uk/en/> ) as well as to the *Heritage Gazetteer of Libya* (<https://slsgazetteer.org> ), a crucial tool for the study of antique Libya which has as its aim to record, and to provide with Unique Identifiers, locations and monuments within modern Libya which are of significance to the history of the area up to 1950.

Two other projects developed in the field of Digital Humanities have been using our collections very recently. The first is the Manar al-Athar ('Guide to Archaeology') digital archive project (University of Oxford) (<https://www.manar-al-athar.ox.ac.uk/welcome.html>). This digital platform aims to provide, for teaching, research and publication, high quality and searchable images of archaeological sites, buildings and art, covering the areas of the former Roman Empire which later came under Islamic rule, from Alexander the Great through the Islamic period. In order to be searchable, the metadata of our Ward-Perkins Libya digital collection were enhanced with georeferenced data from the Heritage Gazeeter of Libya and the records will be made intersearchable by the Manar al-Athar search engine. The project will be completed very soon.

We were also very happy to collaborate with another international project, Nahan: North African Heritage Archives Network (<https://www.archo.ens.fr/NAHAN.html?lang=en>). This platform is hosted by the École normale supérieure in Paris, under the scientific direction of Elizabeth Fentress (BSR Research Fellow). The objective of this project is to make available as much as possible of the archaeological research that has been done in North Africa over the years. Many research centres, archives and libraries are taking part in the project and the BSR contributed by sharing some of our photographs through the French national platform Nakala. For the time being we were only able to add a small sample of our collections; additional funding would be needed to help us to extract and adapt our existing records to the Nahan structure.

Research collaboration is at the heart of the BSR's activities, and we are happy to be hosting two research projects that focus on the epigraphy of inscriptions: those of Dr Alessandra Tafaro, British Academy Post-doctoral fellow at the BSR, and Dr Oren Margolis (University of East Anglia), Research Fellow at the BSR.

Oren Margolis is leading the project Christian Epigraphy of Rome, ca. 590–1870, in collaboration with the BSR and with the support of the Leverhulme Trust (International Fellowship). Epigraphy is everywhere in the Eternal City. It dominates the public spaces before its fountains and façades, and proliferates on monuments, walls, and pavements inside its churches. Embodiments of power and memory, inscriptions shaped Rome and the experiences of its inhabitants – built environment, lived space, and, for those who quarried and carved, working lives. In this project, the post-antique inscriptions of the papal Urbs are revisited as places where the past is not simply commemorated but constituted; where ecclesiastical and political history meet the histories of labour, art, and knowledge, and over a long period of time.

This project seeks, through systematic re-evaluation and re-publication, to put the vast amount of writing on stone in Rome from the end of Antiquity (ca. 590) until the breach of Porta Pia by the Italian army and the end of the temporal power of the Papacy (1870) on a basis of sound philological, material, and art-historical knowledge. One major goal is to transform with up-to-date data and commentary and by means of digital annotation the early modern and nineteenth-century sylloges in which most Roman inscriptions have been recorded. Other research focuses on the ideology of developments in Renaissance epigraphy and papal titlature. Together we aim to put Christian Rome's inscriptions at the disposal of scholars and a wider public alike, as real, layered historical artefacts.



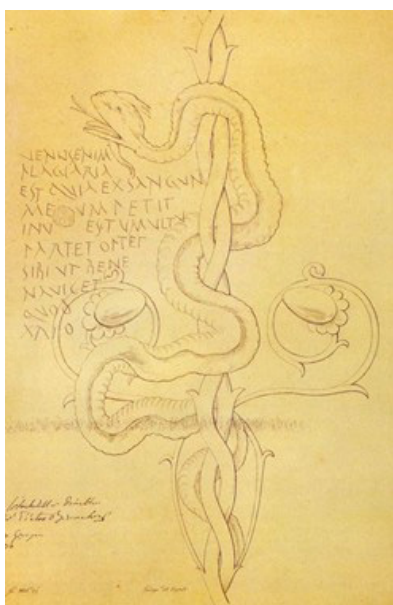
Original dedicatory inscriptions of the Ponte Sisto (1475), Villa Borghese



Inscription of Nicholas V at S Stefano Rotondo, with Stephen Kay and Elena Pomar

Alessandra Tafaro joined the BSR in November 2023 for three years. Her project, *Inscribing anonymity: un-authored poetry in Roman epigraphic culture*, examines anonymous metrical inscriptions from Rome and Pompeii (I century BC to II century AD) to assess for the first time the role of anonymity in Roman epigraphic and poetic culture. Texts without authors have long been victim of neglect or aesthetic prejudice and are underrepresented in the literary canon. A recent rehabilitation of anonymous poetry in Latin literary scholarship has disrupted key traditional assumptions about aesthetic worth, authorship, and authenticity. Yet, despite its field-defining contribution, epigraphic poetry has remained neglected.

This project seeks to shift traditional perspectives on Roman poetry as an exclusively highbrow activity, by offering a new analysis of the political, literary, and cultural function of anonymity in epigraphic poetic culture. It deploys textual and philological analysis of Latin texts alongside methodologies devised by studies in ancient visual and material culture. In situ research of epigraphic evidence takes place at the Archaeological Park of Pompeii, the Naples National Archaeological Museum and the 'National Museum of Rome – Baths of Diocletian', in order to develop a socio-cultural reading of epigraphic communication and of the complex interfaces between inscribed and literary texts. Via this interdisciplinary methodology, this project seeks to reshape scholarly understandings of political discourses, identities, aspects of gender relations, practices of citation, and modes of authorship.



Epigraphy is also a source of inspiration for artists, as visitors to our June 2024 Open Studios could see when they visited Anne McCloy's studio. Anne was Ampersand Fellow at the BSR during Summer term 2024, with a project entitled *Reditus In Patria: The Return of the Native (After the Flight of the Earls)*. As part of her research at the BSR, she visited the tombs of Irish Chieftains O'Neill and O'Donnell, who left Ireland in exile in 1607 and journeyed to Rome, never to return to Ireland. Their marble inscribed tombs are at the high altar in the church of San Pietro in Montorio. Using the technique of frottage she collected the epigraphs and decorative surfaces from the tombs. This ritual creates relics in paper and wax which will facilitate a symbolic act to return the Chieftains from exile, home to Ireland. Elizabeth Fitzpatrick has also published detailed research of the tombs and translations of the texts thereon, in the *Papers of the British School of Rome* (2017): 'The Exilic Burial Place of a Gaelic Irish Community at San Pietro in Montorio, Rome', *PBSR*, 85, 205-239.

Raphaële Mouren, with Caroline Barron, Beatrice Gelosia, Alessandra Giovenco, Oren Margolis, Anne Mc Cloy, Alessandra Tafaro.



Anne McCloy visits the tombs of the Irish Kings at San Pietro in Montorio

## 2024 excavations at Falerii Novi

The 3rd season of excavations at the Roman town of Falerii Novi, 50km to the north of Rome in the Tiber Valley, took place between the 27 May and 21 June. The international research project, led by the British School at Rome and universities of London, Harvard and Toronto is exploring several buildings within the city walls to examine key aspects of the daily life of the city. The team from the BSR is focusing its activities on the northern range of shops that opened on to the Forum.



Excavations of a taberna on the northern side of the forum, Falerii Novi



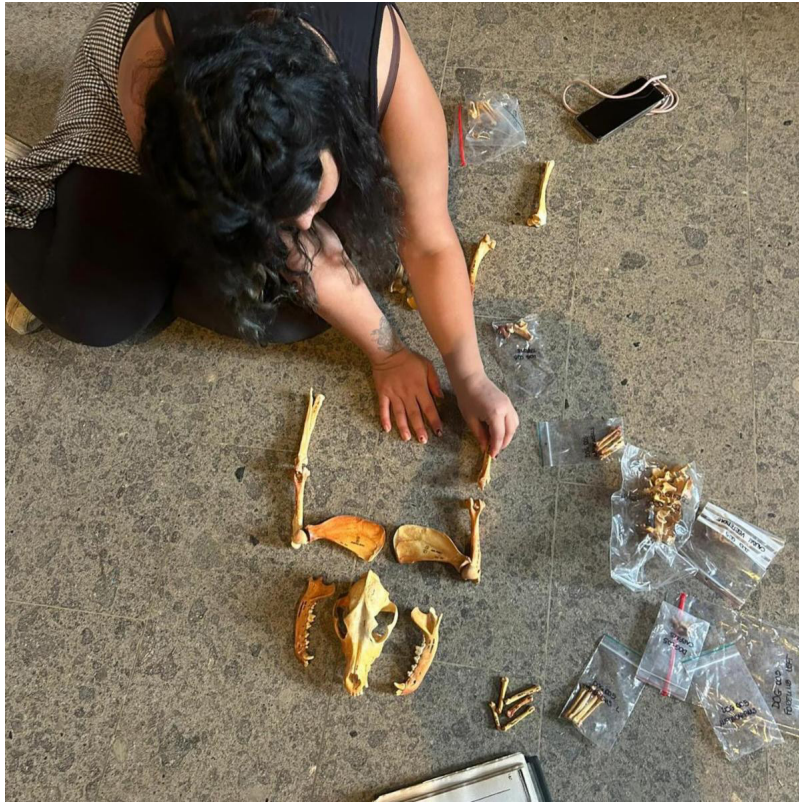
Flotation of soil samples for the recovery of plant and small faunal remains

This year, thanks to a successful grant application to the Society of Antiquaries of London, we welcomed an expanded environmental team to the field led by PJ Smith Senior Fellow in Archaeology Angela Trentacoste. The team included four international students who attended the inaugural season of the project's summer school in Environmental Archaeology Trench-Side. This programme provided intensive training in on-site environmental processing alongside short talks, practical sessions, and excursions. The diverse interests and experience of the participants, ranging from archaeological science to Classical literature, and their great enthusiasm for the material fostered a lively learning atmosphere. We hope they'll carry forward the interdisciplinary experience they gained on the course, and we look forward to seeing where it might lead.

Stephen Kay and Angela Trentacoste



The environmental team at work sorting through heavy fractions from flotation



Practical sessions with reference materials from the BSR collections gave students a foundation for identifying more fragmentary archaeological remains



The environmental summer school on excursion at the Villa of Livia at Prima Porta