

## **Introduction**

Ostia Antica, as a large excavated city of ruins, reflects an extremely complex depiction of human action through an undefined number of centuries. From an archaeological point of view, selective access to the material culture of the city has always occurred so that the research was only undertaken with specific questions, which always only resulted in sections of cultural-historical phenomena as results. So if one speaks of the end of the city, this signals the end of life there and the idea of an abandoned ghost town comes to the fore. On the other hand, from a universal point of view, it should be stated that Ostia has remained the scene of human activity. The deprivation of the ruins of Ostia - presumably in the most common cases for the recycling of material - probably did not stop until modern times. The removal of archaeological goods was also carried out over an uncertain period due to collection and monetary reasons (building the collection and trading in antiquities), coupled with scientific aspects. Although previous generations' research activities (mainly the period before the 20th century) aimed to share its generated knowledge with the general public, documentation and publication standards first had to be developed. The subject of the *Capitol* Temple and the hadrianic reconstruction of the forum in terms of architecture, building decor and furnishings in the course of time up to late antiquity, as a consequence, requires the revision of at least the scientific activities of past times around the forum to be able to generate the most complete image possible.

## **About the phd project**

The biggest temple of Ostia, considered to be a *Capitolium*, was constructed – indicated through brick stamps – in hadrianic times on the forum as part of huge change in the urban landscape of the ancient city. Since then the so called portico of Pope Pius IX was leading straight to the backside of the temple and gave entrance to the forum from the north side and forced people to go around the tall temple.

The name of this just mentioned portico points already to the fact, that Ostia was until the last quarter of the 19th century part of the Vatican and due to that, the first „real“ excavations on the beginning and in the middle of the 19th century were conducted under the papal aegis.

As a result, many finds came into the Vatican Museum, but only few were also scientifically published and recognised. Especially with regard to the temple, there were until today only the publication of Guattani accompanied by some travellers's accounts and only fragments of finds from excavations in the 1910ers in consideration for the archaeological questions (reconstructions, history etc.) around the hadrianic *aedes*.

In purpose of achieving more informations on the temple and the surrounding porticoes the reconsideration of historic sources around the excavations and descriptions of Ostia are quite promising. Besides that approach the OFP made several finds and observations during the last campaigns, which are bringing new light into this topic.

Together with the new finds, the puzzle of the reconstruction of the temple has to be rearranged.

Beyond that are some obvious questions never asked before: likewise for the reconstruction of the buildings themselves are only little pieces of their inventory known. There is to ask about statuary display and *incrustation* as there are niches and plug holes still visible.

Old excavation plans and also some informations out of the Gds (Giornale di Scavi) and NSc (Notizie delle Scavi) are pointing out the fact, that the former excavations (not those from the 1940ties) were not penetrating concrete pavements like marble or stone slabs and concrete layers. The statuary finds are in consequence giving strong evidence on the latest statuary display on the forum and in the temple in the latest phase of the city. Also in this regard the study of old literature is of huge help and proves more finds as there are mentioned in the modern literature.

According to the fact, that this phd-project is asking for inventory and appearance from hadrianic times until late antiquity for the forum and the so called *Capitolium*, the buildings phases also have to be analysed. In big parts the OFP also conducted research on this topic during the last years and particularly in the years 2010 and 2011. Surprisingly a big change in the outline of the forum was proven in late antique times, when the complete city underwent big changes and reorganisation. Those insights into the city's history were never transferred on to the *Capitolium's* building history and also it's today's appearance. The OFP found many parts of roof tiles being reused on other places in the city. According to this the OFP also found parts of the hadrianic porticoes turned with their flat sides up as part of the late antique pavement in the portico. From the GdS we know on the other hand, that the excavators moved the late antique marble slabs on the forum plaza itself away. Another important observation was made in regard of the building and decline history of the Roma and Augustus Temple, which was given up and flattened to the late antique ground level in the middle of the 5th century. At the moment there seem to be a big natural catastrophe responsible for this. Also traces of earthquakes were already mentioned in regard of the *Capitolium*, that clearly did not collapse. In consequence there is to ask about the further *Capitolium's* function and usage within the city. Already Du Rieu was suspecting to see the late antique *incrustation* (still *in situ* at that time or maybe only attested by Guattani). Obviously the traces of the former *incrustation* are leading to a very concrete concept of the temple's decoration system and parts of it's inventory. Also it's architectural outline gives very strong indications for statuary display. For the complete forum

itself, there are some already known examples of statuary display like the equestrian statue of Manilius Rusticus. Nevertheless the presence of the *præfectae annonae* is proven through statue bases and mentioned in ancient literature.

At the end, this phd project will generate a very vivid image of the forum and the so-called *Capitolium* from hadrianic times on until late antiquity.