

## RESEARCH PAPER

# Rodolfo Lanciani's Dismissal

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This essay deals with an episode in the career of classical archaeologist Rodolfo Lanciani (1845–1929), director of excavations of the Roman Forum from c. 1877 to 1886. Despite his success as a scholar and excavator, the Italian government dismissed him from the archaeological service for improprieties in 1890. The major charges against Lanciani reveal the tensions between the city of Rome and the Italian state on issues related to owning, caring for, and displaying the nation's antiquities. Significant social, economic, and political changes in the decades after the establishment of the new nation fueled the tensions.

During the pinnacle of his career in the mid-1880s, Rodolfo Lanciani (1845–1929) made significant discoveries in the Roman Forum and beyond. As the state-appointed director of excavations in Rome, he had led the campaign that exposed the entire Forum from the Temple of Concord to the Colosseum down to the level of the Via Sacra, and uncovered, if not fully explored, most of the major monuments, including the Curia, the Regia and the Atrium Vestae. He connected the Palatine with the Forum by demolishing part of the Orti Farnesiani on the slope of the hill (Sisani 2004: 59–61; Capodiferro and Piranomonte 1990: 111–118; Ridley 1989: 84). Since 1868, he had published widely on many aspects of the archaeological record of Rome (Ashby 1928: 127–143). By mid-1888, however, the Italian government was investigating him for improprieties. In late 1890, he was no longer a state employee. How did this influential figure in the emerging field of archeology come to lose his position so abruptly? This essay will examine the charges leading to his dismissal, identify some of the tensions in the archaeological service in late nineteenth-century Rome, and reveal various personal, social, economic and political pressures on those engaged in the excavations in the city.

Academic training programs in the new discipline of archaeology were not yet in existence when Lanciani was coming of age (Barbarera 1998: 57–77). Lanciani came to the practice of archaeology with degrees in philosophy and mathematics (1863 and 1865) and advanced degrees in civil architecture and civil engineering (1867 and 1868) (Palombi 2006: 41). He was well-versed in classical literature and skilled at epigraphy. Lanciani had family members in the papal court including his father Pietro, a hydraulic engineer, and his sister's father-in-law Conte Virginio Vespignani (1802–1882), an architect (Palombi 2006: 36–37). His early mentors were papal archaeologists Giovanni de Rossi (1822–1894), known as the father of Early Christian archaeology (Baruffa 1994;

Palombi 2006: 42), and Carlo Ludovico Visconti (1828–1894), from a long line of papal commissioners of antiquities (Palombi 2006: 45–46; Lanciani 1894b; Ridley 1992: 142–150). With Visconti, Lanciani explored Portus, then owned by Prince Alessandro Torlonia (1800–1886), a member of the prominent family of papal bankers (Dyson 2006: 39–40). One of Lanciani's first academic essays dealt with the topography of Portus, and it is still regarded as seminal work (Lanciani 1868). After the establishment of the Italian national government in the new capital city and the dissolution of the papacy's powers in Rome in 1871, Lanciani sought and secured employment with both municipal and state governments.

In 1872, the Commissione Archeologica Comunale, a body of representatives set up by the municipal government of Rome, was formed to provide oversight of the ancient monuments under its control (Lanciani 1872: 3–4.) Among its tasks was assessing monuments slated for demolition or alteration in the Piano Regolatore, the plan to transform Rome into a modern capital city. The commission was in charge of tracking the ancient structures and antiquities found during the construction of new institutional and residential buildings, streets, sewers, and other urban infrastructure. Some areas of the city, particularly in the eastern part with the Pincian, Quirinale, Viminale, and Esquiline Hills, were greatly affected (Quilici 1983: 48–74; Bruni 2001: 775–777; Cuccia 1991: 18–21).

The commission was comprised of individuals with connections to the suppressed papal court, including Lanciani's mentors de Rossi, Visconti, and Vespignani, who mistrusted the state government officials. Duke Leopoldo Torlonia, mayor of Rome and relative of Prince Alessandro, headed the commission. Lanciani was named the body's secretary in May 1872. His duties included recording the objects that the city acquired from recent excavations, donations and purchases. These lists appear in the newly instituted *Bullettino Commissione Archeologica Comunale di Roma* (hereafter *BCAR*). The journal also published scholarly essays on all aspects of the history of ancient Rome. Lanciani contributed essays on the latest archaeological finds.

In addition, the 26-year-old Lanciani was hired to work in the new national archaeological service established under the Ministry of Public Instruction. In 1871, he was an inspector of excavations, under the direction of Pietro Rosa (1810–1891) (ACS Dir. Gen. AA.BB.AA 1860–1892, Div. arte antica, busta 18). The national service was in charge of the major cultural sites of Rome, including the Roman Forum, the Colosseum, and the Palatine. Rosa had been awarded the position of first director for his extraordinary work on the Palatine Hill. Since 1861, he had excavated this important cultural site for Napoleon III, and in 1871, he helped negotiate the transfer of most of the land to the Italian government. Rosa adapted the systematical method of excavations being then employed in Pompeii, which were discernibly different from the rescue archaeology techniques of the papal archaeologists, in which the goal was to extract significant antiquities. Although he kept detailed notes of his procedures and his findings, Rosa never published his work (Tomei 1990: 102–106; Tomei 1999: 1–19). Instead, in 1873, Lanciani co-authored a guide to the history and remains of the Palatine Hill with Visconti (Lanciani and Visconti 1873).

In 1875, Giuseppe Fiorelli (1823–1896), the innovator of modern excavation methods at Pompeii, was brought in to reorganize the national archaeological service (Barbanera 1991: 19–21; Lehöerff 1999: 76–83; Dyson 2006: 98–100). Rosa was marginalized in the service, in part because of the uproar over bungled excavations at the Colosseum (Tomei 1990: 103; Dyson 2006: 42). By 1877 at the latest, Lanciani was promoted and given oversight of the excavations in the Roman Forum (ACS Dir. Gen. AA.BB.AA 1860–1892, Div. arte antica, busta 18).

Lanciani was a regular contributor to *Notizie degli Scavi* (hereafter *NS*). The state established this publication in late 1876 as a means to keep account of all new archaeological activity in the nation, including Rome. The monthly entries were largely short, descriptive reports. The format provided an indication of the fast pace and erratic nature of archaeological finds in the city, but it did not often accommodate long explications of single monuments (Coarelli 2004). Lanciani was also given the title of Director of the State's Museums. Initially this only comprised the Museo Kircheriano—the seventeenth-century Jesuit Anastasio Kircher's quirky collection that was appropriated by the state after dissolving the religious orders (Palombi 2006: 62). As the number of recently found and acquired antiquities increased dramatically after 1871, Lanciani established and tended to various temporary warehouses or magazines (Bernini 1997). Furthermore, by 1878, he was teaching topography at the Università di Roma, which had been established after the state's appropriation of La Sapienza (Palombi 2006: 149–151).

Thus, Lanciani was a busy man. His two major employers, the city and the state, had different agendas regarding the nation's patrimony. Tensions escalated over the question of which entity had jurisdiction over land, antiquities and their display, as well as archaeological information and its dissemination. Lanciani's 1890 dismissal from his state position was a result of these tensions.

By 1885, there were early indications of the economic crisis that catastrophically hit Italy in 1888 (Insolera 1971: 64–69). There was a slowdown and eventually a halt to the frenetic pace of construction, thus to archaeological activity (Cuccia 1991: 28). In spring 1885, with the dwindling work in the Forum, Lanciani requested and was granted a leave of absence for “nervous exhaustion”; Lanciani suffered from nerve problems in his legs and back most of his adult life (BibAngCB, 279, 8, letter, May 1885; JHU letter to Gilman, 9 Feb. 1886). He returned to Rome in time to teach during the academic year 1885–1886, but then took a leave from all his positions for the next academic year.

By October 1886, he was in the northeastern part of the United States, lecturing on new discoveries in Rome and their significance. The Lowell Institute, which was founded for the purpose of educating the American public (Smith 1898: 11–17), invited him to speak as part of their free lecture series, and thereafter Lanciani secured numerous other speaking engagements (Dyson 1998: 49–50; HUHL, letter to Norton, 24 June 1886). He delivered lectures at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (where the Lowell Institute lectures were held), Harvard University, Johns Hopkins University, the University of Pennsylvania, Princeton University, Bryn Mawr College, the Long Island Historical Society, the Berkeley School (a preparatory school for boys in New York City), Columbia University, Vassar College, Brown University and Wellesley College. He intended to lecture at six other places, including Cornell University, but cancelled for health reasons (Dyson 1998: 49–50; Palombi 2006: 120–122; HUHL, letter to Houghton 25 March 1887; *CDS*, 28 Jan. 1887 and 21 April 1887).

The American Institute of Archaeology (hereafter AIA), established in the Boston area in 1879 at the initiative of Charles Eliot Norton (1827–1908) (professor of art history at Harvard University), also arranged for Lanciani to lecture in New York City. The AIA used Lanciani's two-part lecture as a fundraiser to establish a school in Athens and to fund expeditions to ancient Greek sites (Dyson 1998: 37–46). It was an extraordinary success (AIA Box 3, folder 3.5, letter, 27 March 1887; *NYT*, 27 Feb. 1887; 4 March 1887).

The lecture tour exemplifies Lanciani's strong connections to the English-speaking world, particularly to Americans interested in archeology. For example, Lanciani knew Arthur Frothingham (1859–1923), who was in residence in Rome during his youth, and he had met Allan Marquand (1853–1924) by 1883. Frothingham and Marquand were members of AIA and founded *The American Journal of Archaeology* in 1885; both were professors of art history and archaeology at Princeton University by 1886 (Dyson 2006: 46–49). Edward Robinson (1858–1931) and Martin Brimmer (1829–1896) became acquainted with Lanciani during their travels to Rome. Robinson was curator of antiquities at the Boston Museum of Fine Arts from 1885 to 1902; Brimmer was a founder and trustee at that museum (Whitehall 1970, v.1: 10–13). Both were active members of AIA. All these men helped Lanciani shape

his American lecture tour (Princeton, letter to Marquand, 27 Dec. 1886; JHU, letter from Frothingham to Gildensleeve, no date; HUHL, bMs Am1088 (4124), letter to Norton, 24 June 1886). Lanciani's success was due in part to a post-Civil War phenomenon in the United States in which the elite fashioned itself as sharing values with classical culture, invoking ideological associations with it by adapting its visual aesthetic. In this nineteenth-century cultural milieu, classical archaeology emerged as a discipline in the United States. American art museums, the earliest of which were founded in the late nineteenth century, sought to develop classical collections (Dyson 1998).

When Lanciani returned to Rome from America in May 1887, he was suffering from severe sciatica (BMFA letter 11 Dec. 1887). Only in late 1887 did he resume teaching at the Università. Lanciani's colleagues in America presented him with tasks, including publishing his lectures with Houghton & Mifflin Company in Boston (Lanciani 1889), and consulting for American museums, most actively the Boston Museum of Fine Arts' acquisitions of ancient art between late 1887 and early 1889.

At this time, the Italian economy was in full crisis as banks became insolvent and construction companies dependent on their loans stopped all work. Parliamentary elections brought in new officials who promised to weed out corruption at the root of the crisis. With the death of Agostino Depretis in late July 1887, Francesco Crispi was named the new Prime Minister. Soon thereafter, the reformist Paolo Boselli was assigned to the Ministry of Public Instruction, which had oversight of the archaeological service. Fiorelli had been absent from his position for health reasons beginning in the spring of 1887. In his stead, Felice Barnabei (1842–1922) took charge of the service (Barbanera 1998: 69–72). Barnabei was intricately involved in the process of firing Lanciani.

Barnabei came to the profession of archaeology through the study of ancient Greek and Latin, and quickly developed a talent for envisioning ways to improve its practice (Pellati 1964). He is best known for founding NS in late 1876 and conceiving plans for the national museums (Barnabei and Delpino 1991: 13–20). In 1875, Fiorelli summoned him from Naples to Rome to work as his secretary, and in 1880 he was made an inspector of excavations. He worked closely with Lanciani, and in some ways he was Lanciani's superior (BibAngCB, 279, 8, letter 16 April 1883).

Barnabei was like Lanciani in some ways. He was also a skilled classicist and epigrapher, fluent in English, and politically savvy. Through the years, he ingratiated himself to various public figures. He also was notoriously prickly, although in a different way from the fastidious Lanciani (Cerasuolo 2003: 25–27). Born into poverty, Barnabei was disdainful of the aristocratic class and of those affiliated with the papacy. Thus, he was suspicious and critical of the operations of the municipal government, and specifically of the archaeological commission, including the Marchese Francesco Nobili Vitelleschi, Torlonia, de Rossi, and Vespigniani. One of Barnabei's major preoccupations was stemming the flow of antiquities out of Italy, and as

such, he was contemptuous of many art dealers, including Alessandro Castellani, who was on the commission until his death in 1883 (Barnabei and Delpino 1991: 109–116, 165–175).

Lanciani particularly annoyed Barnabei. Although neither aristocratic nor particularly wealthy, Lanciani belonged to the old order of Italy, with strong connections to the papal court, and to the royal court after Umberto I took the throne in 1878 (Palombi 2006: 35–54). For many foreign dignitaries visiting Rome, Lanciani served as a well-mannered guide (BIASA, mss. Lanciani 133).

Lanciani's troubles began in May 1889, when the Ministry of Public Instruction received a letter accusing him of selling antiquities illegally to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (Barnabei and Delpino 1991: 453; Palombi 2006: 124–133). The sender, Baron Saverio Fava, was a self-appointed Italian representative in Washington DC; the national government had not yet established proper diplomatic channels. Fueled by Fava's report, Barnabei quickly assembled a brief outlining Lanciani's offenses. There are two versions of Barnabei's report against Lanciani: an initial draft and a revision that was also approved by an ad hoc committee of three investigators (Barnabei and Delpino 1991: 468–471). The police considered the charges and found them unworthy of further action. However, Boselli, Lanciani's superior in the Ministry of Public Instruction, sent the report to the Prime Minister. Lanciani was dismissed, or more correctly, he voluntarily retired from state service (Barnabei and Delpino 1991: 458, 472). There is no trace of the proceedings in the Ministry files, however (Palombi 2006: 141). Barnabei's archives in the Biblioteca dell'Istituto Nazionale di Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte (hereafter BIASA) contain records of the process (BIASA, Carte Barnabei). Lanciani's personal files, in which he assembled records in his own defense, are nearby, in the same library (BIASA, mss. Lanciani 134).

Generally, the two reports outline the same charges, although some specific claims made in the first report were found too insignificant to include in the final (Barnabei and Delpino 1991: 464–470). Both versions accuse Lanciani of abusing the powers of his employment by:

1. Clandestinely selling the nation's artistic patrimony
2. Selling subscriptions to Americans willing to invest in Italian museums
3. Giving foreigners inaccurate and unwarranted advice on how to gain licenses for excavations on Italian soil
4. Refusing to hand over to the State his drawings of the archaeological finds, and related to this, withholding or altering information about the finds in order to profit personally from its publication

In what follows, I will examine each of these four charges in order to shed light on the complex nature of archaeological practice in late nineteenth-century Rome.

### Charge 1

Lanciani played a role in the Boston Museum of Arts' acquisition of over 300 ancient objects from Italy, including 18 busts, 7 inscriptions, 112 terracottas ranging from vessels to architectural reliefs, and 186 coins (Chase, Vermeule and Comstock 1972; BMFA records). The state was concerned with the nature of that involvement. It asserted that Lanciani took advantage of his office as overseer of the nation's antiquities in Rome and sold significant objects to the Americans. In Boston, Robinson acknowledged Lanciani's role in providing counsel to the museum for its purchases, but stated that Lanciani did not directly sell to the museum (Barnabei and Delpino 1991: 465). The philologist Barnabei unpacked the term counsel (*consiglio*) and argued that Lanciani's actions were illegal (Barnabei and Delpino 1991: 465–466).

An object's findspot determined its fate in late nineteenth-century Rome, according to rules governing antiquities at the time. The state reserved jurisdiction over all ancient objects found on its property, including on the land acquired for the construction of ministry buildings and the river embankment. The city claimed ownership over finds on its property, including that which it appropriated to implement urban infrastructure, such as roads, rail lines, and sewers. Private owners could retain any antiquities found on their holdings, but only after giving the state the first right of refusal to purchase. If an owner retained the object but wished to sell it, he had to abide by export laws and tax requirements. These rules were derived from the Edict of Pacca of 1820 and remained in place until new legislation was passed in 1909 (Bruni 2001: 775–777; Emiliani 1999).

Certain areas of the city, such as the Quirinal, Viminal, and Esquiline Hills, were problematic because they were in the hands of large landowners who created land development arrangements with big construction companies (Quilici 1983: 49–50; Manciola 1983: 156–162). Much to the state's displeasure, the city made liberal deals with these owners, ceding the right to inspect new finds (Kragelund, Moltesen and Østergaard 2003: 13–14; Maiuro 2004: 51–52). In 1883, such an agreement was made with Josef Spithoever, owner of the property over part of the ancient Horti Sallustiani. As a consequence, many significant works of art from the ancient gardens on the Quirinal Hill were exported (Hartswick 2004: 83–146).

Lanciani offered General Charles G. Loring (1828–1902), director of the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, two busts, one of Balbinus and one possibly of Caligula. They were identified as coming from the Horti Sallustiana (BMFA, letter 16 Feb. 1888). It was unclear if Eliseo Borghi, the dealer from whom Lanciani purchased the busts, had acquired them from Spithoever. Another possible source was the collection of Cardinal Ludovico Ludovisi (1595–1632), comprised of antiquities the cardinal extracted from his property, the Villa Ludovisi, which lay above part of the Horti Sallustiani until its destruction for the creation of residential housing in 1886. In 1883, after the death of the cardinal's successor Prince Rodolfo Boncompagni Ludovisi, the heirs wished to sell the collection. The state,

however, forbade the sale of important antiquities collections (Hartswick 2004: 21–25, 28–29; Moltesen 2012: 183–184).

Massimiano Pirani, another dealer, reported to Lanciani that he had seen some of the busts that the Boston Museum of Fine Arts had purchased in the lower level of a house used by the Ludovisi family (BMFA, letters, 3 Dec. 1888 and 6 April 1889). Lanciani understood that the busts were likely from the Ludovisi collection and therefore sold illegally (BMFA, letters, 3 Dec. 1888 and 6 April 1889). Thus, he asked Loring to be careful in constructing the records for these objects. In a similar vein, Lanciani asked Loring to alter the information about a marble head of Ajax to read that it was found on the left bank of the Tiber; he originally noted that it came from the river bed, which, according to the law, meant that it was the property of the Italian government (BMFA, records, Group VIII, 88–638–644). Barnabei's report condemned the sale of these works.

The sale of the head of Caius Memmius Caecillus Placidus to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts was an unequivocal example of Lanciani's illegal behavior, according to the report. The state prohibited the separation of different parts of artworks. Using Lanciani's 1887 *NS* publication as evidence, Barnabei argued that Lanciani sold the head knowing that the body was in Rome. Lanciani had reported that in June 1886 the body of a statue of a male was found near Piazza dell'Esquilino and Via Cavour, and a cippi inscribed with a commemoration to Caius Memmius Caecillus Placidus was discovered nearby (*NS* 1887: 197). At the time of sale to the art museum, Lanciani informed Loring that a head of a male was found at or near the same spot as the cippi, and he assumed the head was that of Memmius. Lanciani may or may not have been correct. His assertion to Loring was part of a sales pitch; an ancient bust was more valuable to a collector if its identification was known with some surety. Barnabei took Lanciani's argument to Loring at face value and claimed that Lanciani deliberately caused parts of an ancient statue to remain separated through the sale.

A few groups of objects sold under suspicious circumstances provided indisputable proof of Lanciani's corruption, according to the report. They included five prehistoric vases from a tomb in the Servian Agger, near the intersection of Via di San Martino ai Monti and Via Cavour. Terracottas from the area around Lago Albano, including prehistoric tomb vases as well as architectural decoration from the now destroyed Villa of Quinto Voconio Pollione near Marino, were among the Boston Museum of Fine Arts' purchases. Ex-voto terracottas from near Cerveteri and objects from the sanctuary of Diana Nemorensis at Nemi were also sold to the museum. These items were deemed important to national interests because of their great antiquity and rareness (Barnabei and Delpino 1991: 469).

In the second half of the nineteenth century, objects from these significant ancient sites had left Italy in great numbers after destructive excavations (Aglietti and Rose 2005: 79–102; Lanciani 1884; Nagy 2008: 101–102; Dyson 1998: 38; Nottingham City Museums and Galleries 2016).

The careful documentation and retention of these finds would have brought some clarity to Rome's history during the times of the kingship and the Republic, and could have helped form a national identity. Barnabei insinuated that Lanciani used his office to bypass regulations by hiding them from state officials and arranging for their sale and exportation.

Lanciani was not secretive about the purchases, suggesting he did not feel his activity was wrong. He kept the items at his residence, where they were seen by his colleagues in the state service, including Giuseppe Gatti (Barnabei and Delpino 1991: 458–461). Lanciani made clear to his co-workers that the items were destined for a museum in the United States. Lanciani also defended himself by noting that he secured the proper licenses, running them by the official three-person commission (BMFA, letters, 16 Feb. 1888, 27 Feb. 1888, and 30 May 1888). Furthermore, he shipped items through the firm Roesler Franz, which collected the government taxes (BMFA, document, 27 July 1888).

Nonetheless, Lanciani's correspondences with Loring reveal that he believed the state was being overly vigilant about policing exportation at this time. In early 1888, he informed Loring of a recent court case in which the dealer Augusto Castellani, brother of Alessandro, was held responsible for improprieties in exporting gold coins discovered in the foundations of the monument to Vittorio Emanuele II, then under construction (BMFA, letter, 6 Jan. 1888). Borghi, who had purchased the coins, was also implicated; he was the dealer who recommended the works from the Ludovisi collection to Lanciani.

To be sure, Lanciani's words to the museum director did not necessarily constitute convincing evidence against him. Lanciani characterised purchases to the museum in the best possible light. For example, a bust of Domitian was "the best he had ever seen," and the bust of Balbinus recommended by Borghi, "exceedingly rare" (BMFA, letter 16 Feb. 1888). In a statement to the state, however, Lanciani declared that the items had little value, and some were forgeries (Barnabei and Delpino 1991: 473–474). Indeed, some were forgeries. A marble head of Mercury purchased in late 1888 was deaccessioned soon thereafter; at the same time, a head of Minerva with helmet was quickly revealed as a late Renaissance counterfeit. Both were among the group of statues allegedly from the Ludovisi collection (BMFA, letter, 3 Dec. 1888; BMFA, undated typed notes on items 1571–1606).

Barnabei's annoyance with art dealing was understandable. At this time, many significant antiquities left Italy for museums throughout Europe and America through the agency of a network of individuals who manipulated the weak antiquities exportation laws. The network included small-scale property owners and laborers who found objects and concealed them from the authorities (Cubberley 1988: 16, 68, 81, 114). More significant operatives were the shop dealers who could obscure an object's provenance if they so desired. Some notorious characters were also in the network, including Pietro Pennelli, who had been accused of forging an Etruscan sarcophagus in 1865 (Andr n 1986: 68–69), and Anselmo Gasparini,

who had been an inspector of excavations employed by the Commissione Archeologica Municipale (Barnabei and Delpino 1991: 455–456).

Lanciani identified the many dealers he engaged with from 1887 through 1889: Borghi, Pirani, Pio Marinangeli, Alessandro Fausti, Augusto Valenzi, Ferdinando Cherici, Luigi and Filippo Jandolo (of a family of dealers), and Saturnino Innocenti. Lanciani recognized the diversity of characters among the dealers when he referred to honest ones like Pirani and Mariangeli, and "clever" ones like Fausti and Valenzi (BMFA, letter, 6 April 1888).

Some proactive dealers made arrangements with landowners to perform rescue excavations in exchange for a share of the antiquities. This was the case with Luigi Boccaneri, and after 1888, Borghi, who worked with Prince Filippo Orsini's property at Nemi, and with Prince Marcantonio Colonna's at Marino (Bilde 1998: 36; Aglietti and Rose 2008: 88–90). Lanciani secured items for Boston from both these locations, after they had passed through the hands of second-hand dealers. Another source of antiquities, as we have seen, were impoverished aristocrats, who wished to sell objects from their family's established art collections or from their land holdings (Moltesen 2012: 161–188).

Fueling the market were eager buyers, including private collectors and museum curators (Moltesen 2012: 143–159). Fava was suspicious of Marquand and Frothingham, then at the Princeton Art Museum, as well as Charles L. Hutchinson, director of the Art Institute of Chicago (Barnabei and Delpino 1991: 453, 471; BIASA, mss. Lanciani 134, 17, 18; Palombi 2006: 134–135). Lanciani was aware that the Berlin Museum, now the Altes Museum, was a fierce competitor for antiquities (MFA, letter, 27 Feb. 1888). Some collectors secured agents who knew how to work the system to acquire antiquities. The German archaeologist Wolfgang Helbig, Lanciani's associate at the Accademia Reale dei Lincei, was a highly successful agent. After 1888, Helbig aided Carl Jacobsen in building the Ny Carlsberg Glyptotek collection, which includes the portrait of Pompey the Great among other great works (Moltesen 2012). Barnabei had little respect for Helbig. He no doubt wanted to thwart Lanciani's role as agent for the American museums.

Lanciani's most vigorous counterclaims had little to do with the charge itself. He stated that 1) the state did not give him a chance to defend himself; 2) that it did not take into account his past stellar job performance; and 3) that others in the archaeological service were doing similar things. At the heart of these assertions was Lanciani's belief that his accusers, particularly Barnabei, were on the attack out of personal enmity, and that the state should therefore not trust them. Unarticulated was the fact that Italy's antiquities laws needed to be strengthened.

## Charge 2

The second charge was that Lanciani acted without state authorisation when he collected subscriptions from Americans to fund the construction of a municipal museum in Rome. By 13 October 1886, soon after his arrival in the United States, Lanciani had raised 15,000

of the estimated 70,000–200,000 lire needed for the museum; inflation caused the cost to rise significantly at this time (Bruni 2000: 784). Lanciani did not act surreptitiously when he solicited money for the project, and the news was carried in the Italian newspapers. In garnering subscriptions, Lanciani had the support and approval of Fiorelli, his supervisor in the national service, and of Leopoldo Torlonia, the head of the city's archaeological commission. However, that approval had less bearing when fortunes turned for both men while Lanciani was in America. The state replaced Torlonia with an official more sympathetic to its goals, and Fiorelli's health kept him away from his duties.

Barnabei claimed that the sale of subscriptions to Americans brought shame to the new Italian government. The government became increasingly cautious about taking foreign money for archaeological projects, including museums, because it would give foreigners a stake in Italy's cultural patrimony and make the government beholden to them. In fact, at this time, legislation to tighten the nation's control over its cultural patrimony was moving through the Italian Parliament (Emiliani 1999; Bernini 1997: 7–8, 33–34).

Rome lacked adequate storage to house and display the great number of archaeological finds unearthed in the city since 1870. A new municipal museum to supplement the Capitoline Museum was clearly needed. A temporary solution was realized in 1876 when a wooden pavilion was built in an open space in the Palazzo dei Conservatori. However, it quickly became inadequate to hold the growing municipal collection (Arata and Balistreri 2010).

Meanwhile, there was no state museum other than the Museo Kircheriano, acquired by the state in 1873; an eclectic collection of Latin inscriptions, Egyptian figurines, fossils, stuffed animals, and optical instruments (Bernini 1997: 7–9). One of Lanciani's duties was to find suitable places to store and display the vast amounts of materials added to the state's holdings.

The history of these temporary museums is complex. For example, by 1878, the Museo Tibertino was established in the Orto Botanico, along the Lungara, to house the most prestigious objects found in the river and its vicinity. The frescoes from the ancient villa found on the grounds of the Palazzo Farnesina were housed there, as were the remains of the Pons Valentinianus (*NS* 1879: 180–181, 267–269; Cubberley 1988: 68–69; Bruni 2001: 778–779). It was opened to the public for a short time in 1880, but because of new construction in the area, its contents were transferred to the Baths of Diocletian in 1883. Other temporary museums established after 1879 included the Colosseum collection, located in the ex-convent of Sta. Francesca Romana, and the Forum collection, held in the ex-convent of SS. Cosmos and Damian. Artifacts from the Palatine Hill, once stored in the Farnese garden pavilions, were transferred to the Baths of Diocletian in 1882, when Lanciani had the buildings demolished during his excavations in the Forum.

In 1884, newly appointed Minister of Public Instruction Michele Coppini and representatives of the municipal

government developed a shared plan for one grand museum for all antiquities found in Rome (Arata and Balistreri 2010: 269–282). Both parties agreed that this would solve the issue of displaying items from different collections that belonged together from an educational point of view. The projected museum was designed with two distinct sections, one to house objects related to the city and its suburbs, and the other, objects related to the provinces. To finance such a building, the government agreed to be responsible for one third of the expense, with the municipal government picking up the remaining costs (Bruni 2001: 783).

The project was tabled in October 1885 after it met with considerable opposition in the Parliament. In January 1887, the body looked anew at the project, and it was revised and revamped (Bruni 2001: 784). However, with the appointment of Crispi as Prime Minister in late July 1887, it was again thwarted. In 1888, it was definitively dismissed, and Coppino resigned in frustration (Bruni 1984: 124–125; Sommella 1992). Barnabei was a vocal critic of the project, calling it the brainchild of clerics and speculators. He held very specific ideas for two national museums, one for Roman objects, and the other for pre-Roman objects. These were approved by the Parliament in 1889; the Villa Giulia was operating soon thereafter while the museum in the Baths of Diocletian took longer to implement (Bernini 1997: 32).

During the four years that the Parliament deliberated the proposal for a shared archaeological museum, the municipal government had made plans for a building to house some of the city's collection (Bruni 2001: 784–785). Thus, when Lanciani was in America in October 1886, he sought money for the museum with what he believed was the approval of both city and state authority. His efforts were halted after he received a telegraph from Torlonia informing him to stop his fundraising immediately (BIASA, mss. Lanciani 134, 4–5).

Only in 1894, long after Lanciani left the state service, was an annex to the Capitoline Museum built, on the Celian Hill, on a stretch of land between the Colosseum and the church of San Gregorio al Celio. The Antiquarium, as it was soon called, displayed epigraphic and sculptural fragments from the municipal collection (Sommella 1992: 146–147). Speaking at the inaugural celebration, Lanciani lamented the project's failure to meet expectations (Lanciani 1894). In 1925, after the ouster of the German Embassy from the Palazzo Caffarelli on the Capitoline Hill, the Capitoline Museum was expanded and objects from the Celian location were moved there. A collection of minor arts was retained in the Antiquarium until 1939. Today, the building stands abandoned.

This charge against Lanciani did not make it to the final report. It seems the matter was too much in flux for it to be sustained. The issue of museums in Rome provoked great antagonism between the city and the state, prompting the question of who had the better stake in owning, caring for, and showcasing Italy's grand cultural patrimony. Arguably, the issue is still alive today.

### Charge 3

The third charge was that Lanciani was helping foreigners excavate on Italian soil and export objects abroad. This charge was directly related to Lanciani's open letter in *The Nation*, a liberal American weekly, which appeared the day before he set sail for Italy after his American tour (Lanciani 1887). Lanciani's letter incited Americans to excavate in Italy by announcing that other foreigners were already at work there. For example, he had stated that Sir James Savile Lumley dug at Nemi, in the sanctuary of Diana Nemorensis. Lumley's collection of over 4,000 objects from that site is currently in England (Nottingham City Museums and Galleries 2016). In addition, Lanciani noted that many Germans, Austrians and French easily obtained licenses to dig. He wrote that he would help secure permissions for Americans by pleading their cause to the proper authorities in the Italian government.

Lanciani had written the letter in response to Joseph Thacher Clarke's open letter in the same journal, which was critical of Italy's restrictive policies (Clarke and Emerson 1887). Clarke was a problematic member of the AIA whose excavation efforts were often ill-advised or executed. Although he had the support of Norton, some of his colleagues were less enthused by his actions, specifically by his disastrous excavation campaign at Assos (Allen 2002a). Clarke was upset because he had recently been evicted from his illegal excavations at the Temple of Juno Lacinia at Croton, in the Magna Graecia. The functionaries of the Minister of Public Instruction escorted him from the site, and his finds were confiscated.

Lanciani's reply to Clarke's criticism was that "no country is more liberal" than Italy in awarding the right to excavate for scientific purposes (Lanciani 1887: 362). Foreigners need only to notify the Italian government in advance, and thereafter periodically, of their activities. Lanciani noted that the excavators did have some right to the findings and could export them, with proper permissions and fees. However, the Italians retained the right to purchase "what it considers to be of national interest" at a pre-determined price (Lanciani 1887: 362).

In his defense, Lanciani referred to a private letter he had sent to Norton a year earlier, in which he advised the AIA president how to obtain excavation licenses in Italy (HUHL, bMs Am 1088 (4124), letter, 26 July 1886). In it, he suggested:

- Asking permission of the Italian Minister of Public Instruction, and submitting a copy of the request to the American ambassador in Rome, John B. Stallo, or to some higher authorities in Washington, DC
- Making the request under a private name rather than under the AIA
- Identifying a specific site and time of excavation
- Submitting the request two weeks in advance of excavation
- Supplying all materials for the process, e.g., workmen's salaries and tools, etc.
- Dividing the found goods between the property owner and the excavating party (and using a third-party to mediate any disputes between the two)

- Avoiding any "difficulties for the exportation of antiquities," by involving the US Legation, which "enjoys the diplomatic freedom [from] duties (or taxes)." This is where the conservative Stallo's cooperation was necessary.

Lanciani's private letter to Norton preempted William Stillman's published correspondence in *The Nation*, in which the journalist suggested that Taranto in the Magna Graecia would be an excellent archaeological site (Stillman 1886). The comment was an aside in Stillman's public argument with Clarke about where Americans should excavate. Stillman noted that the "Italian Government is most cordially disposed to any researcher in archaeological practice and would no doubt materially aid" the Americans (Stillman 1886). In order to make Taranto a viable location, Stillman recommended that the US purchase property there. Lanciani, however, strongly warned Norton against establishing excavations at Taranto, and counselled him to not even approach the Italian state about it. The site was near a national military base then under construction, and any foreign presence in the area would be suspect. In addition, Lanciani noted that the excavations there had been yielding prehistoric finds, which were of special interest to the Italian government.

Barnabei stated that there were no foreign excavation sites in Italy, and he accused Lanciani of conveying misleading and damaging untruths in a public forum. Furthermore, because Lanciani was a state employee, the offer to help foreigners was unethical. Lanciani's reply to this charge was that it was not sound. He noted that his advice was correct, and that the state was being dishonest if it claimed that it did not approve licenses to foreigners. He was correct. However, in Parliament, in the short time between Lanciani's return from America and his dismissal in 1890, efforts were in place to make Lanciani's advice obsolete (Moltesen 2012: 71).

### Charge 4

Lastly, the report claimed that Lanciani deliberately tampered with the archaeological record. He failed to submit his drawings of the excavation sites to the state archives, and instead he redirected them to city archives. In other words, he privileged one of his employers over another. Lanciani was also accused of misrepresenting or withholding data about the sites and objects. Sometimes he did this by publishing in *BCAR*, rather than in *NS*. Other times he published for personal profit and fame in venues for his English-speaking audience. This included notices in *The Athenaeum*, an English journal in which Lanciani had been publishing with some frequency since 1876 (Cubberley 1988), and following his American tour, in a book for a Boston publisher (Lanciani 1889).

In some sense, this is the most frivolous of the four charges. Lanciani himself noted that given the hectic pace of the construction and archaeological activity in Rome and the demands of his publishing schedule for *NS* and *BCAR*, there inevitably would be gaps and

mistakes. He claimed that in the chaos, he and his team of workers could “not follow the results of the work” (JHU, letter 19 May 1886). Given the bulk of information he amassed, it is understandable that some things were not reported well. In addition, since his two employers, the state and the city, were at odds with one another, there were bound to be dissatisfactions among the parties with his work. As for his English-language publications, the profit was not insignificant, but it was also not exorbitant (HUHL, various). The issue at the heart of this charge was that he shared information indiscreetly with foreigners.

In another sense, this is the most serious of the charges. It implies that Lanciani's records could not and currently cannot be trusted. Although one should always be skeptical of received knowledge, the report suggests Lanciani's published work should be approached with caution. Barnabei's claim resonates in recent times when there have been disturbing revelations about Lanciani's scholarship. For example, Kragelund, Moltesen and Østergaard (2003: 58–60) made some disquieting observations about Lanciani's reports regarding the Lincian Tombs. Hartswick (2004: 58, 68–72, 88–89) reports similar inconsistencies in his records.

Lanciani presents as a man obsessed with facts. He had a habit of relaying numbers, e.g., how many tons of dirt was removed from the Forum or how many objects were fished from the Tiber, and his small and careful drawings seem well conceived and highly detailed (Lanciani 1885; 1889: x–xi, among other places). On the other hand, Lanciani was an entertaining storyteller who incorporated a dubious anecdote in some instances to liven up his presentation of ancient Rome. Further studies on his scholarship should provide fresh insight into the matter of Lanciani's trustworthiness.

As to the question of where Lanciani archived his site drawings, the answer is unclear. The Archivio di Documentazione Archeologica (ADA), the online database being created by the Soprintendenza Speciale per i Beni Archeologici di Roma, is still under construction. It will be helpful in ascertaining how much of Lanciani's material is in the state archives. However, the bulk of Lanciani's notes are in two other archives in Rome. At his death, Lanciani's daughter Marcella was given the task of splitting his papers between the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana and BIASA (Misiti 2010). The first holds historical notes and sketches, including his own, of Rome's ancient monuments, organized by location; they served as source material for *Storia degli Scavi*, the multi-volume reference work on the excavations in Rome since the year 1000 (Buonocore 1997–2002; Lanciani 1902–1912). The second contains Lanciani's collection of prints and drawings related to Rome's artistic history and its monuments, as well as his personal documents (Muzzioli and Pellegrino 1994).

### Postscript

By January 1891, more than half of Lanciani's livelihood was gone. His career, however, was not ruined. Although he resigned as secretary of the Commissione Archeologica Comunale in 1890, he was immediately reinstated in a more prominent role (Barnabei and Delpino 1991: 474–475).

He continued to publish in *BCAR*, as well as with the Accademia Reale dei Lincei, in which he had been an active associate since 1878. He completed two major publication projects, *Forma Urbis Romae* and *Storia degli Scavi*, which synthesized an extraordinary amount of information about ancient Rome's excavations; both are still seminal reference works (Lanciani 1893–1902; 1902–1912). When excavations in the Roman Forum were restarted under Giacomo Boni in 1899, Lanciani was appointed to the advisory commission. He published six more English-language books with Houghton & Mifflin in Boston (Lanciani 1893; 1897; 1901a; 1906; 1909; 1924), and one with Macmillan Press in London (Lanciani 1901b). After a highly productive and successful life, which included being named Senator, he was given state honors at his funeral in 1929 (Palombi 2006: 149–264).

Barnabei was himself forced to resign from his position in 1900 on charges of misrepresenting the archaeological record. He was accused of muddling objects from the Faliscan tombs of Narce, in a display at the Villa Giulia. Helbig made the accusation in a published guide to the museum, and the denunciations of Barnabei's integrity were intensified in the scholarly community, which included Lanciani (Barnabei and Delpino 1991: 21–24, 218–221, 443–448; Moltesen 2012: 77–82). Lanciani kept track of the affair (BIASA, mss. Lanciani 134, 122–123).

### Abbreviations

ACS = Archivio Centrale di Stato, Rome

AIA = Archaeological Institute of America, Boston, archives

BCAR = *Bullettino della Commissione Archeologica Comunale di Roma*

BIASA = Biblioteca dell'Istituto Nazionale di Archeologia e Storia dell'Arte, Rome

BibAngCB = Biblioteca Angelica, Rome, Carte Barnabei

BMFA = Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, archives

CDS = *Cornell Daily Sun*, “The Classical Association” section

HUHL = Harvard University, Houghton Library

JHU = Johns Hopkins University, The Milton S. Eisenhower Library, Special Collections

NS = *Notizie degli Scavi*

NYT = *The New York Times*, “City and Suburban News” section

### Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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