

Eduardo Ottimofiore

Invisible history: An environmental history of Villa Ada and Monte Antenne

A tale of the land that is now a city park in Rome, Italy



UPPSALA
UNIVERSITET

Master's thesis in Global Environmental History

Abstract

Ottimofiore, E. 2019. Invisible history: An environmental history of Villa Ada and Monte Antenne. A tale of the land that is now a city park in Rome, Italy.

Starting from a simple observation of apparent neglect, this thesis aims to explore the heritage of the land of Villa Ada, a city park in Rome Italy. To do so, this study relates historical narratives regarding this piece of land, from the earliest human presence to formation of the current park. The narratives help engage the reader with the past of this land, and to anchor it into the current landscape. An online survey was conducted to address how the park is perceived today and what meaning the visitors and neighbors associate to it. By connecting the past to the present, and then looking forward, this thesis can contribute in opening a discussion about Villa Ada's fate and the strategies that can be implemented for its effective long-term management.

Keywords: Villa Ada, Rome, heritage management, heritage conservation, landscape.

Master's thesis in Global Environmental History (60 credits), supervisor: Anneli Ekblom, Defended and approved autumn term 2019

© Eduardo Ottimofiore

Department of Archaeology and Ancient History, Uppsala University, Box 626, 75126 Uppsala, Sweden

Table of Content

1. Introduction.....	7
1.1. Aims and motivations to study Villa Ada	7
1.2. Structure and methodology	9
1.2.1. Material and methods	9
1.2.2. Obtaining (reliable) evidence	10
1.2.3. Connecting the dots: layout of the study	12
2. Setting the scene	13
2.1. The geographical disposition	13
2.2. Villa Ada today	14
2.3. The geology of the area.....	15
2.3.1. The formation of the land.....	15
2.3.2. On the rivers	17
3. Early human activities	19
3.1. From the Paleolithic to the Bronze Age.....	19
3.1.1. Deep history in the land of Villa Ada.....	19
3.1.2. Agriculture and metals reach the Italian Peninsula: a shift in practices and livelihood... 20	
3.2. Antemnae, and the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age in Central Italy	22
3.2.1. The cultural background of the Central Italian Bronze Age	22
3.2.2. The urbanization and advent of city states in Central Italy.....	23
3.3. The emergence of Archaic Latins and their constellation of city states	24
3.4. Antemnae: from Antemnates to Romans	28
3.4.1. Early mentions of Antemnae	29
3.4.2. Archeological evidence of Antemnae	30
4. The rise of Rome.....	32
4.1. The emergence of Rome as a superpower.....	32
4.1.1. The Senate and the People of Rome: from the monarchy to the republic	32
4.1.2. The empire before the Empire	34
4.2. The agrarian situation in the Roman countryside during the Republic and the Empire	35
4.3. Villas, houses and households in Roman society.....	38
4.4. The fate of Antemnae, the construction of Aqua Virgo and modifications to the Via Salaria 39	
4.4.1. Antemnae after Antemnae.....	39
4.4.2. Aqua Virgo and Via Salaria	41
5. The decline and fall of the (Western) Roman Empire	42
5.1. General trends and the decline	42
5.1.1. Demographics in the countryside	42
5.1.2. Rome's place in the Empire	42
5.2. The Goths	43
5.2.1. The Goths enter the Roman world.....	43
5.2.2. Alaric's Visigoths sack Rome	44
5.2.3. The last Western Roman Emperor: from the end of the Western Empire to the Kingdom of Italy	45
5.2.4. The Eastern Empire's attempt to reconquer Italy.....	46
5.3. Christianization	48

5.3.1. Christianity in the religious Roman context	48
5.3.2. The Roman Church grows into a major player in the Roman society.....	48
5.3.3. The conversion of the Roman elite and the Roman countryside.....	49
5.3.4. The Christian household.....	50
5.3.5. The Church established her authority across Roman society	50
5.4. The catacombs under Villa Ada	51
6. From the Medieval reoccupation to the unification of the property	55
6.1. General demographic and societal trends of the Roman countryside	55
6.2. Chasing shadows on the land of Villa Ada	56
6.2.1. Plausible past land use in the land of Villa Ada	56
6.2.2. Other, non-agricultural elements of the landscape	59
6.3. The formation of a unified property.....	61
7. The formation of the current park: from private property to public property.....	64
7.1. Villa Ada as private park.....	64
7.2. Villa Ada divided: the long road towards a reunified public park.....	66
7.3. The restoration and inauguration of the unified Villa Ada	69
7.4. Controversies.....	70
8. Experiencing Villa Ada today.....	73
8.1. Building the study	73
8.2. A special, neighborhood park	76
8.3. The visitors' experience	77
8.4. The perceived state of the park	79
8.5. Taking care of a special park	80
8.6. Defining the ideal Villa Ada	82
9. Discussion and conclusive thoughts	85
Reference list	88
Appendices.....	96
Appendix 1: The Goths	96
A1.1. The Goths enter the Roman world.....	96
A1.2. Alaric's Visigoths sack Rome	97
A1.3. The last Western Roman Emperor: from the end of the Western Empire to the Kingdom of Italy	98
A1.4. The Eastern Empire's attempt to reconquer Italy.....	98
Appendix 2. List of questions in English.....	101
Appendix 3: List of questions in Italian.....	105

1. Introduction

1.1. Aims and motivations to study Villa Ada

When I started thinking about a thesis topic, I was directly looking into interfaces between culture and nature. What came quite quickly to me was the obvious green spaces within urbanized areas. Of course, there are different possibilities, but personal experience is usually a good starting point to find a topic that really matters. Growing up, I remember how much I liked parks, and now I can still observe how much children like playing in parks. Parks constitute such an important part of childhood for city dwellers that I thought that studying city parks would be a very relevant topic, in addition to being a natural choice for me. But I had to dig deeper in the matter and narrow down the topic.

I spent four years of my childhood in Rome. I remember my school, my friends, my neighborhood and the fascination that I felt for the city overall. Living in Rome might have been the strongest factor that sparked my interest in history. Apparently, even a child could feel the weight of history in this city, that some have called *Eternal*. In my childhood memories, Rome had the particularity to feel almost magical, a place where heroes, gods and ordinary people lived, in the same, yet different, city that is still alive today. Of course, I remember the many ancient monuments that offered me a glimpse into the past; however, what I most remember were the amazing and huge city parks that transported me and my imagination to these past worlds. One of these large parks, Villa Ada, happened to be not too far away from my home, so I could visit it regularly as a child. Its hills, meadows, woods and paths made me feel like it was in fact an entire country inside the city. I remember running downhill, trying to fly a kite that would never fly, having nice walks and playing different games with other children. I am not unique; similar, vivid memories of these parks live inside many Romans today, who grew up with parks as frequent family destinations, and who now bring their children there to play in the green. Despite these memories, and possible attachment, most of these parks are falling into disrepair. My first assumption about the current state of the park was that, despite the Romans' familiarity with these parks, they generally do not know much about their history, about how they were created, and what their very existence represents. That could explain why the parks seem neglected; it is, however, not fully known how much the population actually know the history of these parks, or what they represent for the citizens of Rome.

Surely, the Romans still appreciate the parks for being green islands inside the city, but this has not stopped the parks to degrade after decades of sporadic vandalism, municipal underfunding and neglect, and the unforgiving power of the elements. Villa Ada, particularly, features regularly in the newspapers and in concerned citizens' blogs, such as the quite-known blog *Roma Fa Schifo* —'Rome Is Disgusting'¹. Articles and social media deplore the general state of Villa Ada and its unrecognized heritage potential ('Villa ada lasciata nel degrado assoluto' 2013; Boccacci 2015; Dellapasqua 2016; Fiaschetti 2016; Gentile 2017, 2018; Laudati 2016; Mari 2017; Milanetti 2007). Some examples cited by the media are wooded areas turning into jungles, gardens overgrowing, dead trees occasionally falling on people,

¹ See <http://www.romafaschifo.com/> (in Italian)

vandalism, littering and garbage-dumping, historical buildings crumbling apart, illegal dwellers that squat different parts of the park in precarious and unsanitary conditions. This state of disrepair might be considered charming or romantic for such inclined hearts but, sadly, Villa Ada's chronic state of decrepitude can be seen as a mere reflection of the city herself. If you have ever been to Rome, straying a wee bit outside the tourist routes, you might know what it is that I am writing about. The problem of disrepair is not limited to parks and can be seen in the streets and other infrastructure (Bruni 2017). This degradation is not new, and has been allowed to run rampant and to thrive in the 'Eternal City'. The mob ('Ringleader of 'mafia-style' gang in Rome is jailed for 20 years' 2017; Day 2015) and the Romans themselves are the most often mentioned culprits for the current state, together with the municipal urban planning, or rather lack thereof. The inhabitants of the city are the first to notice the disrepair and are also the first victims. If one talks to the locals long enough, the issue of the state of the city will eventually come up: vandalism, lack of garbage collection, corruption, crumbling infrastructure to cite a few. A study of the European Commission about the quality of life in European cities confirms this perception (European Commission 2016). The study reports the satisfaction levels and views of the urban dwellers with their own city. And the Romans perceived their city as being in a bad shape: the inhabitants are generally dissatisfied with public transportation, the healthcare services, the state of streets and buildings and the city cleanliness; they distrust administrative services and find them generally inefficient, and the trust in fellow citizens is also low. This speaks volumes about the governance of the city and how Rome is perceived by its citizens. The study also reveals that there is a wish for things to improve. It might be that Romans' eyes judge harshly the state of their city (or that they are never happy), or that there is a real problem in governance at local government of Rome. Related to how the citizens of Rome perceive their city, my second assumption about the current state of Villa Ada was thus that the Municipality was failing in attributing value and promoting the parks, on top on mismanaging these parks. Like for the other assets of the city, the parks crumble, and the population feels disempowered and powerless, and the Municipality is blamed for the state of disrepair.

In any case, Villa Ada could be considered then as just one example of the current state of Rome. However, change for the better is not only wished for, but also theoretically possible. The problem is to find how. Rome was not built in a day and changing the city will not happen in a night. Exploring the situation in a restricted part of land, such as the land of Villa Ada, could be a start. Thus, for this study, I chose to focus on the land where lies Villa Ada today, and to explore this land's legacies that can be traced thanks to the park today. This implies researching on Villa Ada's history, its heritage, and how it is perceived and experienced today.

Heritage is intimately linked with history and bears different sides and nuances. In the case of Villa Ada, a city park, the concept of heritage allows for an exploration of the relationality between culture and nature, the human and the non-human. Parks constitute an interface, a space of ambiguous categorization where city meets nature, where grey meets green. In this thesis, I want to explore these ambiguities, and a good starting point would be to study the role of parks within cities and history of their land. As explained above, the choice of Villa Ada was immediate for me, as I have a special attachment to Villa Ada among Roman parks. That is why, every time I read a piece on Villa Ada's current state of disrepair, I wonder if an improved care of the park could improve if its heritage and the background of the park were more widely known. Outside the journalistic writings lamenting the state of the park, not many, but different pieces of literature on Villa Ada exist. They all show a glimpse of the land during pre-modern times and then relate, in more or less detail, the evolution of the park from the mid-1700s onwards (Amici di Villa Ada 2017; Marconcini 2010; MUSIS 1995; Ufficio

tutela ambiente del Comune di Roma 1996). I will use all these books, because they still represent a precious source of information. The focus in these writings has been on the park itself, and less on its land(scape), thus there is also a need for connecting today's space with the past. My intention is therefore to write about the historical ecology of the land of Villa Ada, where I try to contextualize the land and trace its landscape through time, as a space that has been connected, used and inhabited. My hope is to unravel the potential of Villa Ada as a way to learn about what invisible history of this particular piece of Rome.

1.2. Structure and methodology

1.2.1. Material and methods

Human presence in our portion of Italy is quite ancient, at least 3000 years old, and before embarking for our voyage through space and time, we must first consider the problem obtaining (reliable) evidence for a locality that is not specifically mentioned in written sources and where there have been few archaeological investigations. Secondly, we must discuss how to weave together a coherent environmental history of Villa Ada that holds together, even with large parts of temporal and spatial knowledge are missing. Think about pinpointing a tree in a park (or a person). How far back in the past can we trace its history? Until it was planted or seeded (or born)? What about before? Can we tell the story of the area without knowing such details? In general, the further we go back in time, the less details we know. The same can be said for the social relations that have bound together this landscape. Even so, it might be possible to infer what the landscape in our area would have looked like, based on evidence from other localities, and how it evolved. The task resembles that of painting the image of a finished puzzle on a blank canvas when all we have as reference are some of the pieces of the puzzle. It is not easy to reconstitute the gaps to connect the pieces. Similarly, it is not easy to grasp the multitude of individual actors in a given landscape, or what is socially and environmentally typical for every specific point in time for that space. What could help is to go through time and stop with a particular emphasis on selected periods, where the information is more abundant, and more can be said in relation with the land of Villa Ada. We will try to grasp the general movement of time. The method might indeed fall into generalizations, but as long as we remain within the limits of the evidence, we will maintain our duty of rigorousness towards History (MacMullen 2011). In any case, I consider this thesis as the starting point of a conversation, that I hope fruitful, and as such, I will remain open to suggestions, responses and corrections in the future.

For this thesis, I have examined as much evidence as could be located regarding the land that is currently Villa Ada. On one hand, I have tried to find all relevant sources that mention Villa Ada or its land. Given the span of this thesis, I had to use mainly secondary sources, as examining different archives thoroughly was not a feasible option, and as these have already been studied, the likelihood of me finding new information here was low. I have also used sources that would help me contextualize the situation across time (e.g. the Roman countryside from different times or points of view)(see Chapters 2–7). It will come as no surprise that my sources come from different fields of research —spanning from geology to art history, to archaeology, to economy to cite a few— and from different media —from maps to texts, to illustrations. Another method that I used was a questionnaire to better explore the current perception of Villa Ada and how the park is experienced today (see Chapter 8).

1.2.2. Obtaining (reliable) evidence

For historical research, the importance of Rome, as a political and cultural power in the history of the region, has carried the inconvenience of overshadowing precursor civilizations, like the Sabine or Etruscan, or even the older stages of their own Latin culture. As Rome grew, she expanded her influence, and Roman civilization not only spread throughout the Mediterranean, but it also enriched herself by building on and assimilating already existing cultures. It is no wonder, that Roman archeological remains can be found all over and as far as the limits of its domain (as far as England, Morocco, Palmyra, or Jerusalem) and beyond. With the large quantity of archeological sites, only the most important or the most accessible ones have been excavated. The center of Rome itself has constituted the Holy Grail for classical archaeologists and historians, and has monopolized much of the effort and resources. As a result, the research about the immediate vicinity of Rome has been rather scant. This is problematic because ancient Rome was more than her monumental center, the hinterland was also Rome, and now much of the evidence have been destroyed and lost, or is buried under the urban sprawl (Quilici Gigli 1994, p.142). As a consequence, when we try to learn about the history of the area of Villa Ada, we will find little evidence, as for the moment much has been lost in through urbanization and agricultural exploitation, or has remained unexplored. What's more, for the little evidence there is, the grain of detail is often rather coarse (e.g. the land of Villa Ada in medieval times, see Chapters 5 & 6).

For more ancient times, literary evidence is sometimes the only source available. What has more directly survived after the Roman assimilation (or simply as time passed by) is through legends and myths that I interpret as forms of social memory. These stories were constructed and reinvented through time from different components. The first components that we could cite are previous oral traditions and historical written accounts, in the form of plays, poems or funeral eulogies, for instance (Forsythe 2005, p.70–3). A very important second component that we can cite is the incorporation of foreign myths, mainly Greek, that were subsequently adapted to the Roman reality (Forsythe 2005, p.76, 88; Shotter 2003, p.6–8). The last component worth noting is the imagination of Latin authors that lived well after the times of the original legends were born (Forsythe 2005, p.60–2). In addition, the same authors had to work with no written contemporary accounts of the distant past and reconstruct it as they could, as any official recording was apparently destroyed during a Gallic invasion in 390 BCE (Shotter 2003, p.1–2). Their texts relate the legends of the foundation of Rome and were considered as ‘history’ during their time. Today they would be regarded perhaps as “romantic novelism” or ‘intriguing story-telling’ (MacMullen 2011, p.vii–xi). However, we would be wrong to discard right away these texts as fairytales. To some degree, authors, were aware of the poetic decorations that existed in these stories, as Livy explicitly commenting and admitting that Rome’s past was surrounded by both myth and mist (Livy, I, Preface²). Indeed, these texts still require to be handled with a special reserve (Forsythe 2005, p.60), but they constitute a precious literary corpus of evidence on the existence of peoples that would have otherwise been forgotten, and also help us understand how these classical authors saw the Roman past. For instance, we know about ancient peoples neighboring Rome through Livy (59 BCE–17 CE) and Dionysius of Halicarnassus (ca. 60–7 BCE). We must keep in mind who these stories were for: the Roman audience. Part of the purpose of these writings was to embellish the writer’s patron and to vilify his opponents—even if this meant using freely artifice and imagination (Garnsey 1988, p.209; Holloway 1994, p.4). These texts thus require caution and analysis when processing the historical information held in these narratives. This is not to say that these early sources are not valuable, but that we must sieve through the narrative to find some valuable

² See (Livy 1919b) in reference list.

nuggets of information. We can analyze the narrative itself of course, but more importantly, we must compare it with findings coming from different angles of research and a transdisciplinary approach, like mentioned above. This remains true not only for the more ancient times, but also for the whole extent of this thesis.

The examination of the archaeological evidence completes literary and cartographical sources, but there exist also some limitations regarding physical remains. Given the nature of archaeological studies, the findings are often fortuitous (e.g. during construction or agricultural works, sometimes quite destructive) (Quilici Gigli 1994). Results and findings also depend on the preservation conditions of the soil, and are also not representative of the entire society we are unveiling, but rather of the activities taking place in the very specific locality. To give an example, if we find a grave, we will first extract information primarily about religion and burial practices, but not about how they grew crops for instance, and secondly, we will have to question how much we can generalize from an individual grave. What's more, when the means and circumstances of discovery of archaeological remains did not allow a proper scientific investigation (i.e. lack of funds, interest, scientific diligence), even more information could have been lost (Forsythe 2005, p.21–2). The problem resides in interpreting the material culture into something we can work with to understand how they organized themselves, to contextualize their beliefs and how they dwelled in their environment (considering that both elements are often archaeologically invisible).

Besides dealing with problems of interpretation, a major issue in archaeology is the material evidence that could have been found, but that is instead lost forever. The best example for the land of Villa Ada is the decision to build a fort in the late 1800s, to protect the new capital of the Kingdom of Italy against a possible French invasion. Antonio Nibby and William Gell had formally described the location of Antemnae in 1827 (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.18), and therefore the possibility to find archaeological remains here was extremely high. Unfortunately, the priority went to the construction of the fort, which started in 1878. Captain Carlo Momo, the military officer in charge of the construction, monitored the archaeological findings with the help of a municipal officer G. Ferri (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.22). However, they were not competent enough, or did not have the sufficient means to overview these archaeological findings properly, especially when the priority was set on economic and military goals, with little place for scientific research (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.22). To add insult to injury, the stratigraphy was all scrambled and the findings were not geographically reported. The appointed archaeologist Rodolfo Lanciani visited the construction site merely five times during the decade but published numerous results of the findings and their interpretation. His colleague Luigi Borsari published the final report at the end of the project, but it was not done thoroughly enough, failing to add maps and photographs of the findings. Despite the possible goodwill by all the actors on the site, the archaeological overview of the construction came down to be a rushed monitoring of what the workers were finding on the spot during the project. Luckily the archives have kept precious information in the reports and the lists of the discovered items, the original personal notes of Lanciani, as well as 115 carefully illustrated objects by G. Ferri, because most of the discovered objects are nowhere to be found today. Besides the lost objects, the destruction of ancient architectural structures to make room for the fort is also to be mourned/a great loss. After all this loss, the fort was disarmed by 1930, without ever having to protect Rome from any foreign army.

This example illustrates the main issue in Rome with the conservation of conserve archaeological heritage: the effort has been minimal and many policies have been simply destructive. Later on, other objects were found during other construction projects. In 1978, Lorenzo Quilici and Stefania Quilici-Gigli compiled and discussed all the archaeological evidence from and

around the site of Antemnae (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.xi), and proposed a historical interpretation of the site. I will use this valuable source of information in this thesis.

1.2.3. Connecting the dots: layout of the study

Because of the limitations discussed above and after finding and examining the pieces of evidence, we must see how we connect the pieces together in a narrative. In this thesis, I will start by setting the scene (Chapter 2), by describing Villa Ada, its location and its geology. Then I will continue with a diachronic narration of the land of Villa Ada (Chapters 3-7). Like explained above, the covered periods were selected based on the information available. Lastly, we will explore the how Villa Ada is experienced and perceived today (Chapter 8), with the means of an online survey (via a questionnaire) that was conducted during the summer of 2019.

Such a feat can sometimes be straightforward, but other times we must take indirect roads to connect the pieces. We know that humans shape and reshape the environments in which they live in, like all living species, therefore we must have at least a basic understand of the cultures and practices existing in a given landscape to grasp a feel of *how* it was managed. It may seem self-explanatory, but this consideration must be stated because I intend to use this kind of indirect reasoning to weave together the environmental history of the land of Villa Ada. I will try and reconstruct, in an informed fashion, the evolution of this very land, though a diachronic narrative. With this method, I will try to give some needed perspective, because if we are to look at the landscape today, all its aspects might appear to have emerged at the same time (i.e. synchronicity), whereas they usually are the results of processes that may have happened at different times, at different paces or different scales (Lindholm, Sandström & Ekman 2013). With this thesis, I am inviting you then, dear reader, to accompany me in a journey following the Villa Ada landscape and experience its land —maybe differently— through time and space. The last chapter (chapter 8) will reconnect with the current situation and explore how Villa Ada is perceived and experience today. As humans, one of the most powerful of our capacities is our imagination, and through this thesis I hope to anchor imagination with this landscape. By this, I am not pleading for history to be a swirl of personal fantasies; I am rather arguing for the importance of our collective and personal imagination to reconstruct the evolution of a landscape. My hope is to give new ways of seeing Villa Ada and to engage in a conversation that could expand the way visitors experience this landscape.

2. Setting the scene

2.1. The geographical disposition

If we are to track our land of focus through time, we need spatial references that would have been relatively constant the last 3000 years. Rivers are fairly stable references, and since the Iron Age, so are some roads (see chapter 3). As the River Aniene flows out of the Apennine Mountains in Central Italy, it follows the Aniene valley westwards, meandering, until it meets its larger sibling River Tiber, coming from the North (Fig. 1–3). The two river valleys are locally separated by a hilly tuff terrain on the southern shores of the confluence (Ufficio tutela ambiente del Comune di Roma 1996, p.31), where Villa Ada is located.

Coming from the South and the ancient core of Rome, the ancient highway Via Salaria draws the eastern border of the Villa, before crossing the Aniene and continuing towards the Adriatic Sea. The Via Salaria was (and is still to this day, even if its exact course has changed through time) an ancient road linking the Tyrrhenian and the Adriatic Seas, and might even predate Roman times (Purcell 2014). The road still exists to this day, and conveniently enough, the road has not changed its path or its name since Roman times (Tomassetti et al. 1979, p.15).

Having set ourselves to remember the Via Salaria and the Rivers Aniene and Tiber, we can easily find the park location in today's Rome (Fig. 2) and also on older maps. Currently, Villa

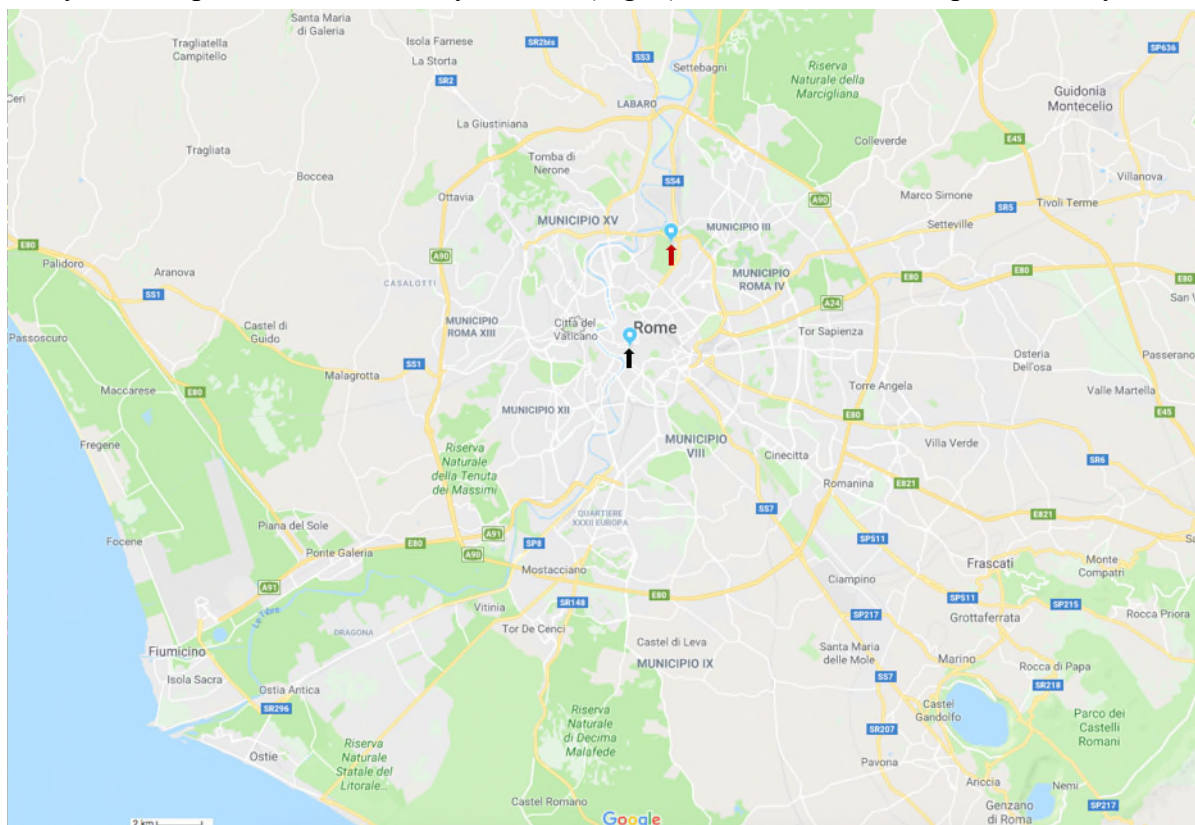


Figure 1. Villa Ada within the city of Rome. The red arrow points at Villa Ada; the black one at the Capitoline Hill. Base map from Google Maps, 2018 © Cartographic data.

Ada lies in the administrative district *Municipio II*, located in the Northeastern parts of the Municipality of Rome (Fig. 2). The park is surrounded by the streets Via del Foro Italico on its north side, by the Via Salaria on the east, by Via Panama on the south, and by Viale Romania, Via Mafalda di Savoia, Via San Filippo Martire, Via Anna Magnani and Viale della Moschea on the west (Fig. 3). The park ranks second among the largest in the city with its ca. 175 ha³ and acts as one of the green lungs specking Rome's urban sprawl. Villa Ada's area is hilly and counts four heights: the hills Monte Antenne (highest point, at 55 m a.s.l.), Monte della Finanziaria, Monte del Roccolo and Monte delle Cavalle Madri. The lowest point is by the river Aniene at 20 m a.s.l. (Ufficio tutela ambiente del Comune di Roma 1996, p.31).

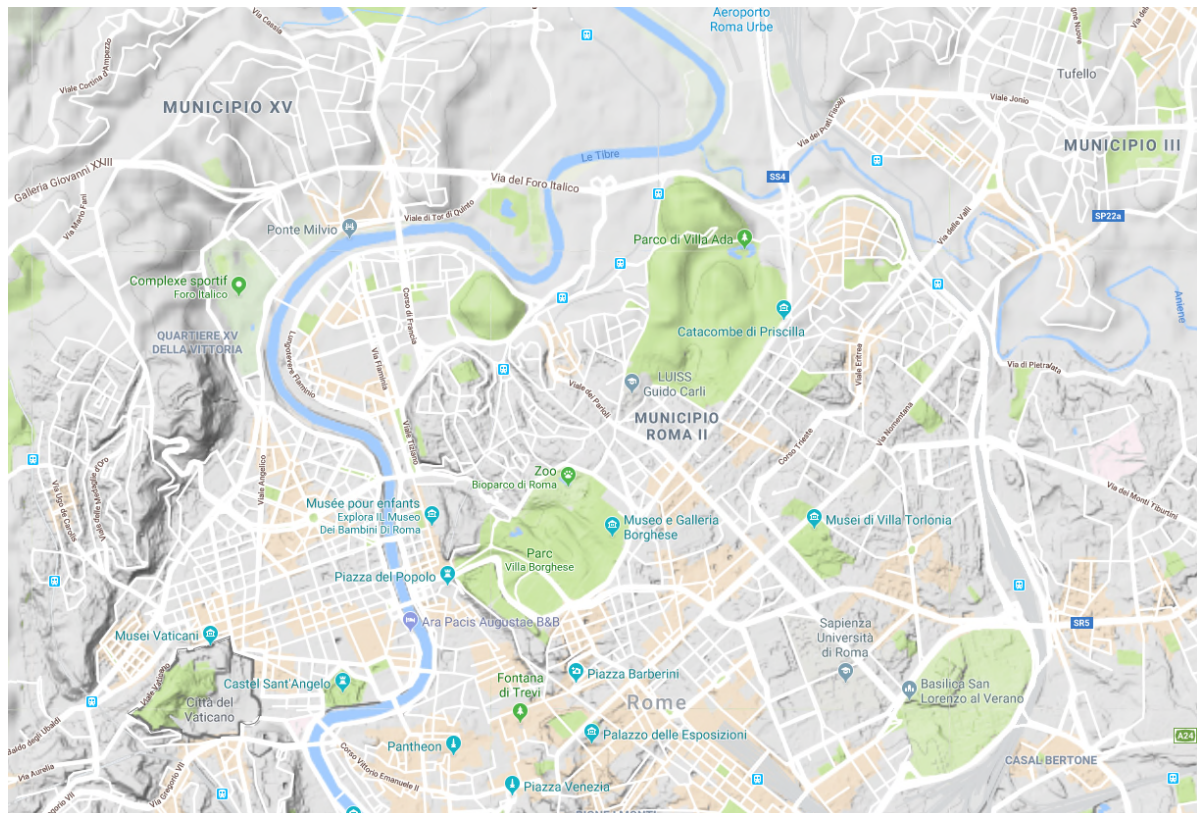


Figure 2. Villa Ada within the northern sector of Rome. Base map from *Google Maps*, 2018 © *Cartographic data*.

2.2. Villa Ada today

The park with all its infrastructure is currently almost entirely public property. The exception is the part of land that used to be the royal mansion (*Palazzina Reale*), which is now the site of the Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt. Different mansions, dispersed in the southern end of the park (e.g. *Casale Pallavicini*), are still the private property of the Savoy family. The park is a well-known and popular green area in the city, and neighbors flock to it to jog, walk their dogs and spend family time in the open air (see Chapter 8).

³ According to the City of Rome's webpage describing the park: <https://www.comune.roma.it/pcr/it/newsview.page?contentId=NEW814379>



Figure 3. Villa Ada within its neighborhood. We can appreciate the different hills within the park. (1) The northernmost is the hill Monte Antenne (where Antemnae was located). (2) On the western side lies Colle Roccolo.. (3) On the eastern side lies Colle della Finanziaria, and (4) at the center Colle delle Cavalle Madri. Base map from Google Maps, 2018 © Cartographic data.

2.3. The geology of the area

2.3.1. The formation of the land

Geomorphologically speaking, the landscape of the land where lies Villa Ada has not changed much for at least the last ten thousand years (Marconcini 2010, p.7). A Bronze Age dweller of Latium, coming from the Tiber's mouth in the south, would have walked roughly the same distance up and down the hills of the rolling route. The same person, however, would have seen a completely different landscape, as the land cover, the vegetation but also the built landscape, has greatly changed through time. Supporting the geomorphology and vegetation is the underlying basal rocks. The terrain has mixed origins and results from a succession of alluvial (i.e. river-related) and pyroclastic (i.e. volcano-related) layers (Marra & Florindo 2014). There is, indeed, more than the eyes can see. This piece of land, like much of continental Europe,

was under the sea for over 200 million years. Between 300 and 10 million years (Ma) ago, it was the seabed of the rather shallow Tethys Ocean that connected the Atlantic to the Indian Oceans. This situation allowed the deposition of marine sediments (Heiken et al. 2005, p.20) and formation of a rock bed that were later eroded by the elements when the land emerged from the waters.

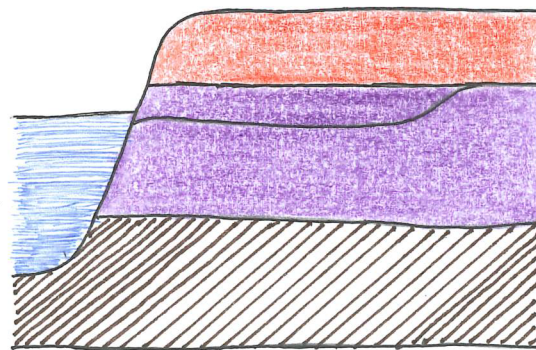
Because of plate tectonics, around 200 Ma ago the former seabed started to break; some portions rose from the waters, others sunk further into the sea (Heiken et al. 2005, p.20). In parallel, tectonic compression between 130 and 33 Ma ago rugged the land in such a way that created the Apennines (Heiken et al. 2005, p.22). Later on, around 25 Ma ago, the crust east of the Apennines (currently the Adriatic Sea) started to slide and sink under the Peninsula, which birthed a subduction zone on one side. At the same time, the crust started to extend on the western side, creating the Tyrrhenian Sea (Heiken et al. 2005, p.23). These two processes of subduction and thinning of the crust continued until sparking volcanic activity along the Peninsula later on, between 2.5 Ma and 3.5 ka ago (Heiken et al. 2005, p.26). In the later period of these tectonic processes, during the Pliocene (5.333 Ma to 2.588 Ma ago, see Gradstein & Ogg 2012, p.32), the land progressively rose, and a marine clay layer (the so-called 'Monte Vaticano formation') developed and formed current bedrock in our area (Marra & Florindo 2014).

As the Quaternary started (2.588 Ma ago, see Gradstein & Ogg 2012, p.32) with its characteristic glaciations and respective alternation between rise and fall of the sea level, the land progressively emerged further from the sea waters. The Quaternary saw the formation of the alluvial layers resulting from the very ancient course of the Tiber (*i.e.* Paleo-Tiber) formed (Marra & Florindo 2014). On top of these alluvial layers, repeated volcanic activity of the Sabatini and the Alban volcanic field⁴ deposited a succession of pyroclastic layers between 2.5 Ma and 20 ka ago (Marra & Florindo 2014). These eruptions progressively formed more land (sometimes at the expense of the sea) and resulted in the shaping of the tuff plateau that now stretches across the region of Rome (Fig. 4). This formation is essential for Rome's history, for it is the matrix of the many hills of Rome (which resulted from the plateau erosion), including the hills of Villa Ada, and the base of her buildings (Heiken et al. 2005, p.8–9). More specifically, the volcanic deposits forced the fixation of the river valleys, as the Tiber and its tributaries started entrenching their flood plains in the plateau and carving out the famous hills of the region (Brock 2017). This geological situation came to offer to Rome her highly strategic features of high defensibility and being a crossroad between water and land transportation. In addition, the tuff bedrock became the main material for early urban expansion in Central Italy (Claridge 2010, p.39; Jackson & Marra 2006).

⁴ The Sabatini volcanic field was active mainly between 2.5 Ma and 80 ka ago, located ca. 30 km northeast from Rome. The remnant structure now constitutes the Monti Sabatini (Marra & Florindo 2014). The Alban volcanic field was active mainly between 600 ka and 20 ka ago, located ca. 25 km southeast from Rome. The remnant structure formed the current Alban Hills (Marra & Florindo 2014).

Tiber valley

North of Rome



Alban Hills and Monti Sabatini volcanic deposits



Paleo-Tiber alluvial deposits



Bedrock

Figure 4. Geological section of Rome —adapted from Marra & Florindo (2014). Villa Ada's land lies on the north of Rome by the Tiber valley.

2.3.2. On the rivers

I started this section citing the rivers as stable geographical references, but this is somewhat a simplification of the character of a meandering river and deserves some precisions. Firstly, I must explain that the river Aniene has been called different names depending on the time. The ancient, Latin, name, most commonly found in historical sources, is Anio: personified under the same name as deity. The modern, Italian name of the river is Aniene, but the name Tevereone has also been occasionally used (e.g. in some 19th-century maps). Here, I will use the modern name Aniene to ease the reading of this text. I must also mention that the Tiber has changed greatly through time, like meandering rivers do, but that the most dramatic change happened mostly prior to the time span that I will be covering in this thesis. This means that the evolution of the Tiber has contributed to shape the environmental history of the land of Villa Ada by shaping its geomorphology, but it does not disqualify the river as a geographical reference. Indeed, past volcanic deposits that formed the plateau had an impact on the bodies of water. Lakes and ponds were born and died as the rivers were reshaped by eruptions and earthquakes. The Tiber once reach the sea at Rome about 2 Ma ago (Heiken et al. 2005, p.23), but with the volcanic interference, it had to dig through the tuff plateau to reach the sea (Brock 2017; Heiken et al. 2005, p.26). The river bed changed not only at the pace of eruptions, but also as land rose because of the compression and expansion of the crust, and as the glaciations beat the rhythm of sea level rise and fall. With erosion and the sea level rise, the Tiber and its tributaries (the Aniene river being one of them) started to deposit material by the end of the last glacial maximum, thus entering a new phase in river bed evolution, where the valleys in the area of Rome became prone to flooding and sedimentation (Brock 2017; Heiken et al. 2005, p.26).

These threats had to be addressed before any kind of durable urbanization became possible. Thus, during the first millennium BCE, the inhabitants of the area of Rome dedicated their efforts into works of land reclamation and consolidation, terracing and quarrying (Brock 2017). These works were the socio-political manifestation of a successful mobilization of sufficient manpower (and its coordination) and technological expertise that allowed urbanization (Brock 2017). In addition to floods, other natural phenomenon like landslides and earthquakes, have played a major role in Roman lives throughout history, and, naturally, the response to such ecological constraints took part as well in shaping what Rome came to be (Heiken et al. 2005).

3. Early human activities

Having given some context about the geological and geomorphological aspects of the area of Villa Ada and Rome, we must consider the prehistoric and then proto-historic human background of Central Italy. My intention here is not to make distinctions between human and non-human processes but rather to help the reader imagine this landscape's evolution, and to anchor remote times in the landscape of Villa Ada.

3.1. From the Paleolithic to the Bronze Age

3.1.1. Deep history in the land of Villa Ada

Paleolithic remains from the period between 400,000–10,000 BCE are relatively meagre in the Italian Peninsula; however, we can assume there was a human presence in Central Italy. It is very likely that human distribution was similar to the rest of Europe and the Mediterranean basin, where different small groups of hunter gatherers were dispersed and roamed the land (Forsythe 2005, p.23). The archaeological remains testify that both *Homo sapiens* and *Homo neanderthalensis* lived in Central Italy (Manzi & Passarello 1995). Neanderthal presence dates back to well before the last glaciation (Mussi 2002, p.101). Several sites along the Aniene river valley, situated between one and six kilometers away upstream from current Villa Ada, suggest a long and continuous presence of Neanderthal-type humans in the area (Marra et al. 2017). The evidence consists of tools and faunal remains, presumably resulting from hunting (Villa et al. 2016). Animal remains show also the existence of steppe- or savannah-like ecosystems⁵ at the Anio valley ca. 295–220 ka (Marra et al. 2017; Soriano & Villa 2017). It is worth noting that, although phases with steppe-like conditions alternated with woodier (open forest) conditions during the rest of the Pleistocene, the mammalian fauna does not seem to have changed significantly (Mussi 2002, p.58–9). One can imagine an open steppe-like landscape, where Neanderthal humans roamed the land in small groups together with other animals at that time. It was probably such an open landscape that met the anatomically modern humans (*Homo sapiens*) who, as far as we know today, reached the Italian Peninsula 40 ka ago (Milliken 2007).

The Italian Peninsula continued to be inhabited without significant interruption⁶ by hunter-gatherer human groups throughout the Paleolithic and Mesolithic (Milliken 2007). These hunter-gatherers were very much subject to their natural environment and its changes (Kozłowski 2005). Climate quickly comes to mind, but other ecological factors very likely influenced for the well-being and fitness of human populations; factors like for instance the

⁵ Remains from animals like spotted hyenas (*Crocota crocuta*), steppe rhinos (*Stephanorhinus hemitoechus*), common hippopotamus (*Hippopotamus amphibius*), straight-tusked elephants (*Palaeoloxodon antiquus*) or wild horses (*Equus ferus*) supports the past existence of steppe- or savannah-like ecosystems along the lower Anio valley ca. 295–220 ka (Marra et al. 2017).

⁶ There might have been possible a short hiatus during the period 29–28 ka due to the scant human population, in terms of general population and the number of groups that might have been wondering between the Italian Peninsula and neighboring regions (Milliken 2007).

dynamics and structure of the ecological community⁷ or the dynamics of the human population itself (Rodríguez et al. 2015). To face their changing environment, humans adapted culturally, and also locally, to survive (Bietti 1990; Kozłowski 2005) and even to thrive in most cases⁸ (Mussi 2002, p.373). During the glacial maxima, Southern Europe, including the Italian Peninsula, constituted a preferred refugium for humans and other organisms (Binney et al. 2017; Leroy & Arpe 2007). High levels of biodiversity and the closeness of varied environments (because of the Italian topography) made the Italian Peninsula particularly safe for species to adapt and cope against climate change (Mussi 2002, p.92–3). But glacial periods and the rapid change in climate is very likely to have broken exchange networks and affected demographics, thus becoming a major driver of cultural change in *Homo sapiens* and, as argued by some researchers, sounding the death knell of *Homo neanderthalensis* as a species (Bradtmöller et al. 2012; Finlayson & Carrión 2007). Regarding demographics, it is worth keeping in mind that human population density was very low⁹, and it must have been a limiting factor for the sustainability of human groups (Mussi 2002, p.270). The evidence suggests the existence of exchange networks for items, people and information throughout different regions in Europe associated to the Gravettian archaeological industry (i.e. starting ca. 28,000 BP)(Mussi 2002, p.270–1). This hints to the importance of cultural systems as adaptive responses to environmental pressures (Stiner & Kuhn 2006), and to the self-organizational faculties of these people, who had to face alternating periods of regional isolation (during colder periods) and periods where the milder climate allowed recolonization and the reestablishment of such exchange networks.

Although during the Last Glacial Maximum (ca. 26.5–19 ka), Europe’s vegetation patterns tended to resemble tundra and steppe-like (Janská et al. 2017), the subsequent warming (that marked the beginning of the Holocene) allowed the rapid diffusion of woodier species and of wetlands throughout the continent, starting from the south (Binney et al. 2017; Giesecke et al. 2017). This ecological change forced constraints on organisms, but it also opened new opportunities (and ecological niches). The chilled temperatures of the Last Glacial Maximum created part of the conditions for human sedentarization in the Near East (Kozłowski 2005). The following warming, which marked the beginning of the Holocene, encouraged the establishment of a trans-Mediterranean exchange network of goods, people and ideas (Kozłowski 2005). By 12–5,000 BCE, the climate had become mild enough to lay the ground for the westward propagation of agriculture along the eastern Mediterranean (Forsythe 2005, p.23–4). During the early 6th millennium BCE, Neolithic cultures started to encroach in the south of the Italian Peninsula and slowly diffused northward following the coast and diversifying along the two sides of the Apennines (Radi & Petrinelli Pannocchia 2018).

3.1.2. Agriculture and metals reach the Italian Peninsula: a shift in practices and livelihood

With the adoption of agriculture starts the Neolithic, a time associated with the beginning of larger human impact on the landscape. This, however true it might be, must be taken with caution, as humans and their environment influenced each other long before the advent of

⁷ The structure and dynamics of ecological communities include interesting relations of different nature between species, in terms of food web (revealing who eats who and competitors) but also on non-predatory relations that can be influential in the fitness of species.

⁸ The evidence strongly suggests that humans in Italy were overall fit and well-fed, enough to be able to care for disabled or sick fellow humans (Mussi 2002, p.366).

⁹ Some estimates of human population around 25 ka BP reach as low as 0.02/km² densities in very favorable environments of southwestern France (Mussi 2002, p.270).

agricultural practices¹⁰. Humans have inhabited Central Italy, the area of Villa Ada since time immemorial as discussed above. And to trace back the history of the land and the development of urbanism, we must go back in time to the early Neolithic.

There is little information from early Neolithic in Tyrrhenian Central Italy, because of the lack of research and presence of thick layers of sediment between possible layers of interest and current ground level (Radi & Petrinelli Pannocchia 2018); though, luckily, there are exceptions. The site La Marmotta situated by Lake Bracciano, ca. 25 km away northwest from current Villa Ada, gives us some evidence of the diffusion of agriculture to the region (Radi & Petrinelli Pannocchia 2018; Tagliacozzo 2005). The archaeological data suggests a well-established livestock raising¹¹ by 6800 BP complemented by hunting, fishing and gathering (Tagliacozzo 2005). The neolithization of Italy was progressive, and seems to have gone through phases of symbiosis between hunter-gatherers and agriculturalist groups within same areas (Guilaine 2018). From the 6th millennium BCE, there is also evidence of other types of multiple cultural and material exchange, through two main routes in Central Italy (Radi & Petrinelli Pannocchia 2018). Exchange networks connected the Adriatic and Tyrrhenian sides of Central Italy, probably through seasonal paths across the Apennines. Also, seaborne exchange routes followed the Adriatic and Tyrrhenian coasts and islands, moving obsidian and probably other materials across different communities (Radi & Petrinelli Pannocchia 2018).

Other innovations and practices also reached Italy, revealing additional exchange routes: The oldest stone arrowheads date back to the 4th millennium BCE, and weaved cloth and copper technologies also entered Italy, probably coming from the north of the Alps (Forsythe 2005, p.24–5). Even after increased sedentarization, we can see that exchanges of people, ideas and objects continue to happen (Kristiansen & Earle 2015) as if it were a constant in the human condition (Harding 2013). In any case, with the advent of the Neolithic and then the so-called Bronze Age, the evidence of exchange between communities intensifies greatly around the Mediterranean (Earle et al. 2015; Kristiansen & Larsson 2005, p.4–5). A typical example of human long-distance relations is the production and trade of the metal tin. The development of bronze production technology during the Bronze Age required the enrichment of copper with other compounds, like arsenic or tin. Tin is a scarce resource across Europe and the Mediterranean Basin —mainly localized in northwestern Italy, Sardinia, Portugal, Brittany and Cornwall (Muhly 1973)— and the spread of Bronze technology around the Mediterranean and across Europe attests to far reaching trade networks¹² (Harding 2013; Kristiansen & Earle 2015).

¹⁰ The influence was simply different. For instance, during the Paleolithic, humans were part of predator-prey relationships, like any organism (Barker 1976). The evidence suggests that depending on the period (and culture), human groups tended to select consistently their prey after species and age, which could reflect a preference based on cultural background and as a response to their environment. Once agricultural practices were adopted, humans did not free themselves from environmental influences, as a drought, or a crop epidemic could exemplify.

¹¹ These domesticated animals seem to have been the fruit of a long domestication process already by the time they were introduced in Central Italy (Tagliacozzo 2005).

¹² For instance, through long-distance trade networks, Scandinavia was connected to Iberia, the Italian and Austrian Alpine regions, Sardinia and Cyprus (Ling et al. 2014; Melheim et al. 2018).

3.2. Antemnae, and the Bronze Age and Early Iron Age in Central Italy

3.2.1. The cultural background of the Central Italian Bronze Age

Central Italy, with its particularities, was embedded in this context of exchange with the rest of the Peninsula (Artioli et al. 2017), Europe and the Mediterranean. The Bronze Age periodization changes depending on the region; in Italy the Bronze Age started around 2300 BCE and lasted until 950 BCE (Pearce 2004). Different material cultures succeeded one another: through the narrative, I will mention the Apennine, the Terramare, the Villanovan and Latial Cultures and finally the Etruscan and Latin cultures (thus reaching fully the Iron Age).

The combination of plain and hilly terrain in Central Italy was suitable for pastoralism and agricultural activities (Forsythe 2005, p.18–9). The Middle Bronze Age in Central Italy (1700–1350 BCE) is characterized by the emergence of a network of transhumance routes (Terrenato 2007, p.152). Remains of cattle, goats, sheep and ceramics used to boil milk and make cheese¹³ confirm that activities related to transhumance were already well-established by 1100 BCE, in the context of the so-called Apennine Culture (Forsythe 2005, p.30; Kindstedt 2012, p.84–5). During the same period, swine herding became an important complement to cheese-making (Kindstedt 2012, p.85). We know little about the Apennine Culture, because of the meagre archaeological record; though scarce, material remains associated with the Apennine Culture covers the southern two thirds of the Italian Peninsula (Mercuri et al. 2015). What's more, the people associated with Apennine material culture seem to have lived in scattered farmsteads and met regularly at the location of sanctuaries near springs or caves (Holloway 1994, p.14). Different sites related to this material culture have been found around Rome herself (Fugazzola Delpino 1973). For the purpose of this thesis, it is important to single out the Apennine material culture, because of the possible associated influence on the landscape and as a precursor to the culture that inhabited the site of Antemnae. Grazing might have been a main factor of landscaping, and transhumance routes from this period are thought to have been the precursors of roads that still exist to this day, such as the Via Salaria (Pasquinucci 2002, p.208).

Another important material culture in this thesis is the so-called Terramare culture¹⁴, occurring in the north of the Italian Peninsula, in the Po Valley region (Forsythe 2005, p.30). The settlements associated with the Terramare material culture developed between the 17th and 12th centuries BCE, and gradually transformed their environment through grain farming and pastoralism (Mercuri et al. 2015). This material culture progressed southwards through time, until reaching the areas associated with the Apennine culture. From the interaction between these two material cultures emerged the Proto-Villanovan culture (1000–900 BCE) that spread across much of the Peninsula. This cultural fusion translated into the spread of the cremation of the dead, one of the essential components of this material culture, throughout most of Italy (Pearce 2004, p.38). The cremated remains were then contained in an urn and buried with a selection of objects (Boatwright, Gargola & Talbert 2004, p.13–6). The Proto-Villanovan culture evolved into the so-called Villanovan culture (900–700 BCE)(Forsythe 2005, p.31–2), an evolution mainly characterized by the considerable enlargement of the related settlements (Boatwright, Gargola & Talbert 2004, p.8; Riva 2010, p.13). In Central Italy, this material

¹³ The evidence strongly suggests that ricotta-type cheese making constituted an important part of the agricultural economy, and an important staple food for the Apennine Culture (and the Italian countryside in general) during the second millennium BCE (Kindstedt 2012, p.84–5). During the first millennium BCE, the use of milk-boilers became marginal, as cheesemaking shifted away from acid/heating coagulation (ricotta-type cheese) and towards rennet coagulation method, producing to the hard pecorino- and caprine-type cheeses, suitable for grating (Kindstedt 2012, p.88–9).

¹⁴ The Terramare culture is also known as Terramara or Terremare.

culture continuum served as precursor to the Etruscan civilization (Forsythe 2005, p.31–2) in Etruria (i.e. north of the Tiber) and to the so-called Latial Culture in Ancient Latium (1000–580 BCE). Thus, the Latial Culture evolved in the region where the land of Villa Ada is located, and is also regarded as the cradle of the Latins and, thus the Romans and the Antemnates (Boatwright, Gargola & Talbert 2004, p.9; Forsythe 2005, p.54).

The Latial culture is recognized by the peculiar hut-shaped cremation urns that they used, and it is believed that they represent the house of the deceased (Forsythe 2005, p.55–6). These houses, which served as model for the urns, were one-room wattle-and-daub huts with thatched roofs (Brown 1976; Forsythe 2005, p.46). The best-preserved hut of this kind was found in Fidenae, located 5 km north of current Villa Ada, dates from the 8th century BCE (Latial Period III) and measured 6.2 x 5.2 m (Holloway 1994, p.51). Smaller huts (more or less 3 x 3 m) have also been found and some, containing traces of hearths, meat bones and cooking items (like trays, jars, bowls and casseroles), are believed to have been cooking sheds (Holloway 1994, p.52–5). Similar huts from the same period were found in the sites of Lavinium¹⁵, Satricum¹⁶, Antemnae (at Villa Ada) and Rome on the Palatine Hill that were developing as settlements by the 9th century BCE (Holloway 1994, p.53; Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.31).

By the 9th century BCE, iron smelting technologies had also reached Italy, thus progressively starting the so-called Iron Age (Forsythe 2005, p.31). During the 8th and 7th centuries in Central Italy, settlements, mere hamlets, grew as clusters of these huts (Momigliano & Drummond 1990, p.65), particularly on defensible places, usually on top of hills and plateaus (Forsythe 2005, p.44; Riva 2010, p.13). One such settlement was what later grew to become Antemnae, located mainly on the northern hill of Villa Ada. As discussed here, though the lack of concrete evidence pointing to a settlement at Antemnae much before the 8th century BCE, the town did surely not appear in a vacuum. At this point, the inhabitants of these hamlets (also the precursor of Antemnae) were probably subsistence farmers, cultivating wheat and barley as staple grains, and practicing pastoralism and some metal working (Forsythe 2005, p.55).

3.2.2. The urbanization and advent of city states in Central Italy

In the southern two thirds of the Peninsula, the Tiber is one of the few major navigable rivers (many even dry up in summer), a pattern which is believed to have existed also in prehistoric times (Forsythe 2005, p.19). In addition, the sea does not seem to have been used much for navigation by the people of Central Italy until later in history, yet, as I have discussed above, the different peoples in the area were still very much in contact with neighbors already from the Neolithic. This permeability of ideas, people and goods helped first the Etruscans and then the Latins to flourish and finally the Romans to become one of the most powerful states in (ancient) history. Phoenicians and Greeks reached Etruscan and Latial communities on water, and as soon as Greeks and Phoenicians entered the Tiber, Central Italic peoples entered a new world of possibilities (Holloway 1994, p.165). With maritime navigation, the interregional metal trade network consolidated; Bronze Age societies were more connected and aware of innovations happening throughout the network (Kristiansen & Earle 2015). From the 7th century BCE onwards, the oriental influence from Phoenician and Greek cultures started to be reflected in Central Italian local material culture (Brown 1976; Forsythe 2005, p.46–7; Holloway 1994, p.55; Kindstedt 2012, p.87), that is why this period is referred as the Orientalizing period (Table 1). Etruscans, Latins and other Central Italic peoples shifted not just

¹⁵ Lavinium was an ancient port city of Latium located 53 km south from Rome (currently in the municipality of Pomezia).

¹⁶ Satricum was an Ancient town of Latium located ca. 60 km southeast from Rome (currently in the municipality of Latina).

styles of ceramics, tools, weapons and jewelry but also their model for house construction. The archaeological evidence from this period, shows how Etruscans and other Central Italic peoples started building houses and towns based on Eastern Mediterranean models (Brown 1976; Forsythe 2005, p.46–7; Holloway 1994, p.55). The houses, which were mere fragile one-room oval huts previously, started to be replaced by more-than-one-room masonry-built constructions. The settlements also started to increase in size and to show more complexity and organization —through early signs of some sort of urban planning, but not necessarily under centralized power (Riva 2010, p.21–2). This shift is visible directly in the settlement of Antemnae. Here, the oldest remains of houses correspond to wooden, wattle-and-daub huts, covered with thatched roofs, dated to the early 8th century BCE (LCIII), and from mid-7th century began a transition towards masonry squared houses with terracotta tiles (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.31). Etruria had a head start with this trend, where the largest settlements started to become proper city states and to flourish earlier than in the rest of Central Italy (Kindstedt 2012, p.86–7). Their development and resources allowed them to establish trading relations with Phoenicians and particularly the Western Greek cities in Southern Italy and Sicily that had been established as colonies from the 8th century BCE onwards (Holloway 1994, p.17).

Table 1. Chronology of Latial Culture (LC) in Ancient Latium (from Forsythe 2005, p. 54 and Momigliano & Drummond 1990, p. 64): the exact chronology is still up to some debate but is generally accepted for the environs of Rome (Holloway, pp. 50–51). The table gives some perspective of time and of the succession and evolution of practices.

Date and phase	Material characteristics	Corresponding Etruscan phase
1000–900: LC I	undecorated pottery + cremation: hut urns depicting their homes	Proto-Villanovan / Final Bronze Age
900–830: LC II.A	simple patterns in pottery + inhumation	Villanovan / Early Iron Age
830–770: LC II.B	first signs of urbanization	Villanovan
770–740: LC III.A	limited foreign influence	transitional
740–720: LC III.B	limited foreign influence	transitional
720–620: LC IV.A	both foreign and native styles	Early and Middle Orientalizing
620–580: LC IV.B	further urbanization	Late Orientalizing

3.3. The emergence of Archaic Latins and their constellation of city states

By the 7th century BCE, foreigners —from Italic, Greek and Semitic background— were present in the emerging Latin towns, where they lived their integrated lives in their new Latin communities. This intermingling eventually became key to Rome’s later success; but in the 7th century BCE, Rome as Antemnae were just two out of the many Latin communities that sat across Latium, from the Alban Hills to the Tiber¹⁷. Although distinguished from each other, they spoke the same language, celebrated as a sole community the festival of Jupiter once a year on the Alban Mountain (Holloway 1994, p.165) and shared some kind of formal bond since time immemorial as the Latin League (Momigliano & Drummond 1990).

¹⁷ According to the tradition, the Latin communities were thirty (Momigliano & Drummond 1990).

At this period, Latium resembled inland Etruria in agriculture and rural practices and material culture (Forsythe 2005, p.55). However, as the Etruscans flourished, their civilization influenced its neighbors, and a powerful elite seems to have developed progressively in Latium as well (Harding 2013). The emergence of special tombs reflects the emergence of differentiation and consolidation of classes in society during the Late Bronze Age and, especially, the Early Iron Age (Harding 2013). The complexification of society and of its institutions can be seen by the codification of social behavior, through religious, political and economic rituals and practices (Kristiansen & Larsson 2005, p.11). Accordingly, a large aristocratic class transcending language and ethnicity had developed in Central Italy by the Orientalizing period (i.e. corresponding Latial culture IV, Table 1; Forsythe 2005, p. 58). Many tombs, found throughout the region, reveal the existence of a *koine* elite class¹⁸, that were buried with luxurious and exotic products, like silver, gold, amber and ivory —the best examples are the findings in Praeneste¹⁹ (Holloway 1994, p.156–64). These Orientalizing funerary material culture proves once again the large extent of trading contacts throughout the Mediterranean, and the economic and political influence this elite class could pull within their society (Riva 2010, p.37–8). This clear expression of political power and authority (Riva 2010, p.108) suggests that the elite's vocation could have been to exercise control on the landscape and urbanized centers, as well as on the flow of resources in and out of their region. Nevertheless, these wealthy people seem not to have been queens, kings, princes or princesses; their wealth and material means show that they were rather just part of a privileged class (Holloway 1994, p.168) that used funerary symbols of power as collective self-representation of their prominent status within their communities (Riva 2010, p.41–2, 106–7).

The incredible deposition of personal belonging in graves ended abruptly in the 6th century BCE, and the same time as the construction of temples boomed in different settlements over Central Italy (Forsythe 2005, p.58). Researchers have interpreted this trend as a social phenomenon linked to both a mere question of fashion and expression of power (Holloway 1994, p. 168), and to a possible change in the attitude towards life and death (Forsythe 2005, p. 58).

At Antemnae, only one grave has been uncovered from this period, so far. The grave contained a terracotta urn with an infant's remains and very few objects: a copper fibula, a piece of flint and pieces of bucchero pottery (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.42–3). However, on the basis of material remains in Antemnae, we can address the regional tradition of the construction of temples. At Antemnae, a temple was built during the 5th century at the center of the settlement, very likely on top of a pre-existing one from the 6th century BCE (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.46, 160, 164). The discoveries attributed to the temple's decoration suggest that a considerable amount of influence and wealth were invested into this sanctuary. The most significant example of the refinement of the decorations is an exquisite early 5th-century antefix of 'Juno Lanuvina' (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.48–52), whose finishing and colors speak for the investment of influence and wealth for its production. The emergence and increase of investment on public spaces (such as temples), exemplified in Antemnae, can be seen as re-configuration of power, where the display of status and power shifts from individualized and more intimate into monumental, for the use and display of the many, likely to have been followed also by a broader social reorganization (Forsythe 2005, p.56–7, 82; Holloway 1994, p.55). This shift could reflect a social reorganization of the communities, from lineage- or clan-related communities towards states (or proto-states) (Momigliano & Drummond 1990, p.98–99).

¹⁸ The homogeneous design and evolution of these tombs, independent of their culture of origin, actually suggest a transcendence over ethnicity and geography (Forsythe 2005, p.58).

¹⁹ Praeneste was an ancient town of Latium, ca. 35 km east of Rome, today called Palestrina.

Cultural exchanges and possible social reorganization are also particularly striking in other cultural levels like name patterns and their synchronized evolution. The Latin, Osco-Umbrian, Faliscan and Etruscan cultures all shifted the structure of individuals' full names structure between the 8th and the 6th century BCE. Previous to the shift, the personal name was combined with the patronymic (i.e. father or grand-father's name), but then was coupled with the clan's name —called *gens* in Latin (Momigliano & Drummond 1990, p.81). Interestingly enough, this shift seems to have happened at the same time as urbanization spread, which again suggests a shift in social structure accompanying the spatial transformation (Momigliano & Drummond 1990, p.98–99).

The parallel between peoples did not stop at the formation of the elites and a reconfiguration of expression of power, a major landscape transformation was on its way through two key processes: larger settlements urbanized and progressively became cities, and farmsteads, some of which being veritable mansions, spread throughout the Central Italian countryside during the 7th century BCE (Forsythe 2005, p.56–7; Holloway 1994, p.55). This expansion has been interpreted as a likely population growth and a connected intensification of farming in general (Holloway 1994, p.125). Etruria was naturally rich in mineral resources and thus developed early in the region and attracted foreign merchants from the East; Latium developed more slowly, with Rome being a striking exception because of its strategic position for trade and other types of exchanges (Claridge 2010, p.6). Latial peoples, beyond the elites, did, however, manage to take part in the trading network, to urbanize and to progressively develop into city states during the 7th and 6th centuries BCE (Forsythe 2005, p.82; Riva 2010, p.190). Latium had the geographical advantage of lying in the way of the trading routes connecting the Etruscans and West Greek cities in Sicily and Southern Italy. Rome, specifically, sat on the Tiber —the border between Latium with Etruria and a gateway inland from the sea— and at one of the few crossings where the navigation is still possible. This geographical location is a strategic difference in relation to early Rome's competitors lying upstream like Veii, Antemnae, Fidenae or Crustumerium (Holloway 1994, p.165). Rome was also situated just down the hills where the Sabines, a neighboring Italic people, lived: the location favored the frequent intermingling of Latins, Etruscans and Sabines (Forsythe 2005, p.77), and also of Greeks and Phoenicians. A crucial trade good, salt, was shipped up the river from the salt marshes at the mouth of the Tiber, until Rome, from where it was then transported on the Via Salaria towards the interior, the Sabine country and Umbria (Holloway 1994, p.165). Antemnae, with its location on the Via Salaria and by the Tiber, was strategically placed to guard the bridge crossing the river Aniene.

Already by the 9th century BCE, a couple of miles south from Antemnae, a settlement emerged on the Palatine Hill of Rome (currently in central Rome) (Torelli 1990; Wiseman 2008, p.1–2, 9). The early settlement of the Palatine Hill was located near a valley that seems to have been a frequent meeting location that came to be the Roman Forum by the 6th century BCE when it was drained permanently (Holloway 1994, p.14; Shotter 2003, p.18). The different settlements of the area seem to have attracted social activity, but the valley where the Forum lies had an extremely powerful pull and became the epicenter of what would become the state of Rome (Purcell 2007, p.184–5). This archaic sanctuary, like many other throughout Latium, seems to have been the ground for frequent sacrifices (Holloway 1994, p.75). Cattle, sheep, goats, pigs, dogs, doves, geese, turtles and fish were offered to the gods, alongside wheat, barley, olives, figs and hazelnuts (Holloway 1994, p.75). Food, pottery from different origins (Etruscan, Latin, Greek and Italic imitation of Greek ware) and cut-out wooden figurines were also offered. The remains of these offerings have been found in the Forum, as well as traces of different wood essences from different conifers, olive, oak, hazel and vine; all dating to before the 6th century BCE (Holloway 1994, p.75). It is possible that similar offerings were used at

the sanctuary in Antemnae. The site of the sanctuary at the Forum hosted an emporium (i.e. large market center) where foreign goods and traders stopped to rest and met with local traders (Holloway 1994, p.165; Tomassetti, Chiumenti & Bilancia 1979, p.43). Greek potters established shops in Rome and in other Central Italian cities during the 8th century BCE, and by the 7th century they seem to have been living in the city herself (Holloway 1994, p.167). Specialized workers settled around the forum offering diversity in the emporium's economy (Purcell 2007, p.184). It is likely that this situation opened many possibilities and attracted different kinds of immigration (Purcell 2007, p.185). After all, the Roman tradition tells how Rome's early history is much about wanderers, outsiders, outcasts and vagabonds (Purcell 2007, p.184). The Forum quickly became the center of a exchange network for people, ideas and goods. Cultural and artistic influence, languages, cults and gods permeated into local culture alongside the traded goods²⁰ (Forsythe 2005, p.88; Holloway 1994, p.165). This melting pot likely attracted specialized economic activities that sustained Rome's economic and political growth until becoming the most powerful city of Central Italy (Purcell 2007, p.185) and the political center of the Italian Peninsula by the 3rd century BCE (Claridge 2010, p.7–8).

To support and sustain such an emporium, farmers labored the land nearby, and they constructed houses to live near the market and their land (Purcell 2007, p.184–5). As Rome and other Latin communities established themselves and grew, farmsteads spread throughout the countryside during the same 7th century BCE. Permanent roads were constructed, following early transhumance and trading routes and connected hamlets and towns (Terrenato 2007, p.152). It is worth noting that forests occupied large parts of the archaic landscape, and were considered sacred spaces²¹, inhabited by divinities. Forests, mountains and moorland, created natural boundaries between settlements. Thus, roads became quickly crucial to overcome natural obstacles and navigate the landscape (Marcone 2002b, p.21). Larger centers expanded, and their population grew together with its demand for food. The increase in the number of farms does not only suggest population growth, but also an increase in the control over the hinterland by the larger towns, now becoming city states. By improving the control over the territory, the necessity to build on defensible positions disappeared and farmsteads could be established based in a wider array of lands (Terrenato 2007, p.140). Thus, the increase of farms could be the reflection of the successful establishment of states and their will to exercise control over their land. The necessity to optimise state control over the landscape might have been an important factor for the rise and expansion of Rome; this same process could explain why Antemnae was absorbed early by the Roman power (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.164–5).

It is very possible that the other Latin cities developed in similar manner, around meeting and trading centers, and absorbing nearby smaller communities, but their history is less known than Rome's. In any case, the key feature of Central Italy at this point was diversity and exchange. In this setting, religion was at the same time a factor of differentiation and of unity (Claridge 2010, p.5). No matter how successful the trade and the exchanges were, farming seems to have been a central driver in Latin societies. Latin religion in archaic times was very

²⁰ There are many examples of the Etruscan cultural influence on the Latins. Gladiatorial fights, the return of cremation as a funerary practice, and the design of official dresses and seats of magistrates (e.g. *toga picta*) have Etruscan origins (Forsythe 2005, p.50–1). Other such examples are the name of Rome itself that might be etymologically Etruscan (Forsythe 2005, p.88), and the adaptation of the Etruscan alphabet to create the Latin one (Forsythe 2005, p.53). Etruscan religious influence can be also found in the anthropomorphizing of the religion, shifting from natural spirits and other superstitions into the more god-based system that is remembered today as the Greco-Roman (Shotter 2003, p.18)

²¹ Some forests were explicitly dedicated to specific deities and consecrated as *lucus* or 'sacred groves' (Marcone 2002b, p.21).

much a religion of farmers, and its agrarian essence remained even after the 7th- and 6th-century urbanization of Latium. Before becoming the god of war, Mars protected the harvest, the peasants' health and what lied beyond the city against visible and invisible evils; it is only later in time that he took arms and became assimilated to the Greek Hares (Forsythe 2005, p.113–4; Tomassetti, Chiumenti & Bilancia 1979, p.66–7). *Bona Dea* (i.e. 'the good goddess') protected peasants, and the *Lares* guardian deities watched over whole families (Tomassetti, Chiumenti & Bilancia 1979, p.66–7). Juno was worshiped for maturity and fertility (for women but also for the fields), Ceres for growth (Forsythe 2005, p.113–4) and the goddess Ops for fertility (Tomassetti, Chiumenti & Bilancia 1979, p.66–7). Other lesser known divinities, spirits, *genii* and demons joined the procession of supernatural protectors (Dwight 1849; Tomassetti, Chiumenti & Bilancia 1979, p.66–7). The most important festivals and worships revolved around an agriculture-centered life, even in the city of Rome herself, which illustrates her people's main preoccupations and concerns (Tomassetti, Chiumenti & Bilancia 1979, p.67). Cultivated lands would be consecrated through different rituals to secure its health and yield. To give a significant example, the 21st of April, the day of the foundation of Rome, was originally *Parilia*, the festival of Pales, the deity of shepherds and livestock (Forsythe 2005, p.116). The legal system reflects also the agriculturalist inclination of early Roman society (Forsythe 2005, p.186): if someone harmed in any way another person's crop or stock — physically or merely by casting spells— there were provisions stipulating the penalty (ranging from compensation to death). All these rites and beliefs show some sort of common cultural identity among Latins and even of unity for certain events (Holloway 1994, p.129). They shared the important everyday cults of Vesta, Juturna, the Penates, Liber, Anna Perenna, Ceres and Castor and Pollux. One city, Lavinium, had a particular religious importance, as different pan-Latin worships, like the cults of the Penates, Vesta and Aeneas (the great ancestor of Rome), occurred regularly in this city (Holloway 1994, p.129). Roman magistrates travelled to Lavinium to sacrifice to the Penates and Vesta, and the 'thirty' Latin city states celebrated Jupiter on Mount Alban (*Mons Albanus*) as a sole community once every year. Other sanctuaries had similar, yet maybe more modest, pan-Latin roles as for instance the centers for the cult of Diana, like on the Aventine Hill at Rome and in a sacred forest nearby Aricia also for Diana (Momigliano & Drummond 1990, p.85). In spite of this Latin cultural commonality and unifying religious practices, the political powers and statehoods of these city states were very much separated and in competition, at least until Rome eventually incorporated all Central Italy under its control.

3.4. Antemnae: from Antemnates to Romans

On the northern side of Villa Ada, we can find today, perched on the tip of the hill, the 19th-century Fort Antenne; and buried under it, lie the remains of an ancient 'city' that the Romans called Antemnae. Interestingly, the name Antemnae itself is a witness of its strategic position (Ashby 1927, p.63). The name comes from the description of its location 'before the river', according to Varro —in Latin: *ante amnem*— and refers to a city positioned by the river Aniene, just before it meets the River Tiber (Varro, *De Lingua Latina* V, 28²²). Beyond the Aniene, to the North, was the land of the Sabines (Salmon & Potter 2012), and beyond the Tiber to the West, Etruscan country (Forsythe 2005, p.76; Marcone 2002b, p.22). Remember that we must put aside all our images of the 'glory of Rome' for this moment; at that time, Rome was just another settlement like many others in the melting pot that was Central Italy. Rome had the particularity to be Latin and to lie by the Tiber and the ancient Via Salaria.

²² See (Varro 1938, p.26–7) in the reference list.

Antemnae was also conveniently located between the Tiber and the Via Salaria. Antemnae might have been too close to the neighboring rising Rome and at too much a strategic position—which enabled the comfortable overview over two (at least partially) navigable rivers, one important, well-travelled road and a natural border (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.153, 159–61)—to have allowed Antemnae to be fully independent in the long run.

3.4.1. Early mentions of Antemnae

Various ancient Roman authors mention Antemnae in their texts with different historical references but always in relation to Rome. Varro cites Antemnae when explaining her name ‘before the river’ and her location (Varro, *De Lingua Latina* V, 28²³), but the majority of references relate to events taking place during the Archaic period, in (semi-) legendary terms. Silius Italicus (ca. 28–103 CE) reports that Antemnae was believed to be even older than the most ancient Crustumerium²⁴ (Sil. Ital. VIII, 365–366²⁵). Dionysius of Halicarnassus (ca. 60–7 BCE) relates different quarrels between Aborigines (part of the ancestors of Latin tribes) and Sicels (living in Central Italy before moving to Sicily) and attributes the foundation of Antemnae, which he describes as being still inhabited at his time, to the Aborigines (Dion. Hal. I, 16, 5²⁶). From this we can assume that the Antemnates were considered to be related to the Latins. Dionysius cites Antemnae also in the context of the Rape of the Sabines, where neighboring towns such as Antemnae used the opportunity to spite the too successful Roman state and sided with the vindictive Sabines (Dion. Hal. II, 32, 2²⁷). The attempt ended as a defeat for Antemnae, which was subsequently incorporated into the Roman state and became a colony (Dion. Hal. II, 35, 7²⁸). Virgil (70–19 BCE) mentions Antemnae as one of the entities of a coalition fighting the Trojan refugees in Central Italy (Virgil Aen. VII, 629–631²⁹). He describes Antemnae as being particularly fortified³⁰. Livy (59/64 BCE – 17 CE) relates how after the foundation of Rome, her neighbors refused to allow intermarriage with Roman citizens. Responding to this affront, the Romans organized games in honor of Neptune and invited their neighboring communities, including the Antemnates and Sabines, as a ruse to then abduct their women (Livy I, 9, 8-9³¹); this incident went to be remembered as the ‘Rape of the Sabine Women’. Here Livy gives an alternative version of how Antemnae came to be in war against Rome, but he does not tell the fate of the Antemnates. Plutarch (46–120 CE) reports similar accounts as Livy: Antemnates women were part of those abducted by Romans, and the subsequent war for vengeance ended with the defeat and incorporation of Antemnae into the young Roman state (Plut. Rom. XVII³²). The events here described all suggest an early incorporation of Antemnae in the Roman territory and the Antemnates into the Roman citizenry (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.3–4). Dionysius also relates events that would have happened by the end of what is called the ‘regal period’. According to Dionysius, when the last king, Tarquin the Proud who was of Etruscan origin, was ousted by the Romans, the Antemnates may have

²³ See (Varro 1938, p.26–7) in the reference list.

²⁴ Crustumerium was an ancient town of Latium, located ca. 7 km north of Antemnae, also on the Via Salaria.

²⁵ See (Silius Italicus 1927, p.419) in the reference list.

²⁶ See (Dionysius of Halicarnassus 1937a, p.54–5) in the reference list.

²⁷ See (Dionysius of Halicarnassus 1937b, p.404–5) in the reference list.

²⁸ See (Dionysius of Halicarnassus 1937c, p.414–5) in the reference list.

²⁹ See (Virgil 1918, p.46–9) in the reference list.

³⁰ Virgil writes: “And five mighty cities set up anvils and forge new weapons—strong Atina and proud Tibur, Ardea and Crustumeri and turreted Antemnae” (Virgil Aen. VII, 629-631). See (Virgil 1918, p.46–7).

³¹ See (Livy 1919a, p.34–7) in the reference list.

³² See (Plutarch 1914, p.138–41) in the reference list.

supported the return of the king and revolted against the new Roman regime (Dion. Hal. V, 21, 3³³).

These authors wrote for a Roman public many centuries after the events and we might question the accuracy of their narratives. As discussed in chapter 1.2.2. much of these historical narratives build on the reinterpretation of existing oral history and social memory, which is not always distinguishable from mythology and legends. In this way, we can assume that Antemnae was traditionally considered to be so ancient that it predated the foundation of Rome and to have been at odds with their Roman neighbors, before being incorporated in the Roman state. Antemnae and her location was remembered by Latin authors, and regardless of the lacking exactitude of the historical circumstances, they made possible the formal identification on the ruins found during the construction of the fort during the 19th century (Ashby 1927, p.64).

3.4.2. Archeological evidence of Antemnae

These literary references mentioned above are circumstantial pieces of evidence that should be compared with other sources to fill in the gaps. Despite the ancient literary works, the location of Antemnae was lost over the centuries until rather recent times. By the 1500s some scholars started to hypothesize its location: north of the Aniene river, right side of the Tiber, at the site of the Catacombs of Priscilla, further to the east (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.13–6). The guessing ended when the location was first identified by archaeologists Antonio Nibby and William Gell in 1918 (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.18), as seen in the introduction (Chapter 1). During the construction of a fort on top of the hill that started in 1878, the site was definitively confirmed to be indeed the settlement corresponding to Antemnae (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.21). The fort construction, despite the deplorable above-mentioned documentation, unearthed many useful findings: fortifications and waterworks, the presence of habitations and sacred and funerary spaces, and some material findings. Sections of defensive wall were uncovered, but additional ancient fortification features, including ledges and possible ditches and trenches that might have informed us about the full fortification perimeter, were leveled during the fort construction (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.21). We thus not know the full extension of the fortifications³⁴ (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.28). In any case, the walls were built on a leveled tufa ground between the 6th and the 5th centuries BCE³⁵ (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.29) and their presence confirms Virgil's qualification of the ancient Antemnae as 'fortified' (Virgil Aen. VII, 629-63). The walls were not destroyed during the fort construction, but have collapsed since then, naturally or were removed during the pine tree plantation of 1941 (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.26–8). The presence of subterranean *cuniculi*, (i.e. Central Italic hydraulic tunnels), alongside water wells and cisterns reveal the development of a complex system of water regulation from the early 6th century BCE (Archaic times) to 5th and 4th centuries (Republican era), mostly still being used until Imperial times (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.35–40). The oldest cistern is comparable to similar ones discovered in Tusculum³⁶ or at the Capitoline Hill in Rome (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978,

³³ See (Dionysius of Halicarnassus 1940, p.64–7) in the reference list.

³⁴ It is not known whether the walls formed a belt or whether wall sections defended only the topographically less defensible parts of the settlement (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.28).

³⁵ The reports from the construction describe the wall sections as being 7–9 m high, out of cappellaccio tuff and following the Osco-Latin foot metric, which allows to date the wall to the 6th–5th centuries BCE (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.26–9).

³⁶ Tusculum was an ancient town of Latium, located ca. 23 km southeast from Antemnae, today in the neighborhood Frascati of Rome.

p.26). Remains of dwelling spaces were also found, and are evidence of an urbanization process. Some spaces of the hill were conspicuously empty of such hut foundations, and have been interpreted as possible gardens or enclosures for livestock (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.30). These huts were succeeded by masonry square houses from the mid-7th century onwards (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.33). Many pieces of evidence, such as the antefix of 'Juno Lanuvina' and other religious themed ones, suggest that a sanctuary stood at the center of the settlement, erected during the 5th century BCE and very likely to have replaced an older, archaic one (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.52, 160, 164). Finally, an archaic tomb, from most likely the Latial Culture phase IV (630-580 BCE), was also discovered during the construction of the fort (already discussed above). The tomb is comparable to similar infant's graves also discovered at the Roman Forum in Rome (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.42-4).

Besides construction remains, every-day material culture from the same period were also found. We are talking about fibulae (from the 8th and 7th centuries BCE)(Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.81), glass beads (7th and 6th centuries), clay beads (at the latest 7th century), *aes rudes* (proto currency, from 5th-4th centuries)(Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.56-61), and pottery (from different periods of the time span 900-630 BCE)(Buonfiglio & D'Annibale 1994; Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.64-6). The diversity of the terracotta items, such as cups, bowls, lids (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.125-126,131-134), jars, pots (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.124-31), stoves and hearths (Buonfiglio & D'Annibale 1994; Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.123-4) from different periods spanning from the 7th to the 4th centuries BCE strongly suggests the continuous inhabitation of the site. Worth mentioning is the discovery of bucchero pottery, signifying an Etruscan influence, mainly from the 7-6th centuries BCE (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.70-72, 134-135).

From what we can gather from the archaeological discoveries, there is no direct evidence of settlement at Antemnae before the 8th century BCE. Despite the Roman tradition citing the town as very old, Antemnae seems to have been contemporary with the early settlements at Rome (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.154). The fortification is evidence of the strategic component of its location: Located on top of an isolated elevation, overlooking the swampy valleys of the Tiber and the Aniene rivers, which were partially navigable at that time, and controlling the crossing of the salt trade over the Aniene (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.153). It is very likely that Antemnae quickly became an oppidum (fortified town), a fortress to control the clear northern border of Roman territory (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.159-61). We do not know the precise date of the fortification, but it would fit with the building of the Servian walls in Rome and also reflect the Roman struggle against Veii for the control of the right bank of the Tiber just in front of Antemnae (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.160). What's more, Antemnae position and her new role as oppidum must have guaranteed its continued existence up until the 3rd century BCE (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.163). In any case, the collection of pottery remains, and religious decoration, such as the 'Juno Lanuvina', suggests a deep cultural influence of the Etruscan city Veii on the Latin (or even Roman) Antemnae. Antemnae's probable cultural communion with the (Etruscan) Upper Tiber valley comes as no real surprise. Veii was already a well-established and influencing city-state when Rome's power started to grow, and other towns geographically close to Veii, such as Fidenae, also show strong ties with this Etruscan city (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.164). Finally, this cultural communion surely meant exchange of goods, ideas, and possibly of people, exchange that does not seem to have disappeared with the subjugation of Rome.

4. The rise of Rome

4.1. The emergence of Rome as a superpower

Such is the influence of Rome on the fate of the land of current Villa Ada, that is impossible to treat its history of the latter without looking closely to the history of the former. From one out of many, Rome managed to establish herself as the center of an Empire that spread all around the Mediterranean Sea. As the Roman state expanded, Roman society evolved, and her civilization spread and mixed with local cultures throughout her territory and beyond. Rome became a gargantuan city that attracted a large amount of people (up to one million during the early Empire) requiring more resources and larger territories to sustain herself. As we will see, the fate of the land of current Villa Ada has been deeply influenced by the city of Rome. Be that as it may, ‘Rome wasn't built in a day’ as they say, so let us go back to our constellation of Iron Age Latin communities.

4.1.1. The Senate and the People of Rome: from the monarchy to the republic

Many aspects about early Rome remain unknown. We do not know for sure if the different villages around the Forum valley merged into a new entity, the city of Rome, or if the larger hamlets absorbed the smaller ones (Forsythe 2005, p.85–6). In a world of influence and exchange as already existing by Bronze Age in Central Italy, and given the role of the Forum as a center, both hypotheses are not mutually exclusive. In any case, the archaeological evidence suggests that the above-mentioned urbanization of Rome (and other communities) is linked to the introduction of the oriental idea of the city as a form of human organization (Forsythe 2005, p.86). Cities are not necessarily the natural evolution of hut villages, and urbanization does not immediately equate to vertical hierarchies (Bondarenko 2007; Crumley 1994). But in the Roman case, the existence of a powerful aristocracy and the short transition suggests organization and some form of decision-making for spatial planning and territorial expansion.

The tradition tells us, under different versions, that the first of the seven kings of Rome, Romulus, founded the city, urbanized the area (e.g. see Dion. Hal. I, 71; 73; 75), and established many early Roman social, political and military institutions, such as the institution of marriage, the patron-client relationship, the senate, the distinction plebeian-patrician, to cite a few (Forsythe 2005, p.89). Romulus’ and the other kings’ reigns are widely described in literary sources from centuries after. Unfortunately, the archaeological data is scant and does not allow us to contrast these legends with the material culture. Thence, though renowned in the myths, we do not know if these king figures existed as actual persons. Personally, I would prefer to interpret these legendary kings as personifications of the events that shaped Roman culture³⁷. Even if we do not know exactly how this happened and by whose initiative, we can trace back

³⁷ For instance, Servius Tullius, the sixth king according to the legends, is said to have ordered the construction of the first ditches and barricades that later became the so-called Servian Wall surrounding the Roman urban core. Servius Tullius was also remembered as the king that created the centuriated system (i.e. the system to draft men into Rome’s armies) and the subsequent Comitia Centuriata (i.e. voting assembly based on soldier groups as circumscription)(Forsythe 2005, p.100).

to this time the creation of many institutions and infrastructure that shaped Roman culture and her landscape.

By the end of the regal period, in the late 6th century BCE, and again according to legend, Rome had three political ruling institutions: the king, the senate and the people. The king led the army, held judicial and religious powers and duties (Forsythe 2005, p.99). According to the legends and documentation of later Roman historians, not all kings were Roman; there were also Sabine or even Etruscan kings sitting on the Roman throne (Momigliano & Drummond 1990, p.97). The regal period ended with the expulsion of the last king, Tarquin the Proud. His institution was abolished, and left a sentiment of repulsion for anything resembling kingship for the centuries to come. However, there seems to be disagreement in the legends about *how* the monarchy ended. Some legends suggest a successful Roman elite's plot overthrowing the monarchy, other a foreign invasion ordered by the Etruscan king Porsenna (Momigliano & Drummond 1990, p.92–7). Either way, the power vacuum was filled by the senate (Shotter 2003, p.41–2). This body of aristocrats seems to have had some degree of power influencing the king and governing *ad interim* between kings under the monarchy, and subsequently evolved into a more powerful entity with the advent of the republic (Forsythe 2005, p.102). The king's prerogatives transferred into the senate, the elected officials and priesthood of *rex sacrorum*. The members of this aristocracy were probably the ones buried in the 7th-century (BCE) tombs so rich in prestige items discussed in the previous chapter, and lived in larger houses, like those found on the Palatine in Rome, from the 6th-century. In any case, by 500 BCE, the Roman expansion had already started. Rome had already absorbed many neighboring communities like Antemnae, Ficulea, Crustumium, Nomentum, Corniculum, Collatia and Alba Longa (Momigliano & Drummond 1990, p.84). In addition to Rome's territory, her citizen body quickly grew as well. The citizenry was originally divided into three tribes of ten units each, which constituted the base of the political (i.e. voting and representation) and military (i.e. recruiting and organization) structures of the Roman state (Forsythe 2005, p.99). The creation of new tribes —so-called 'rural tribes'— meant the integration of these new communities into the Roman citizenry. Originally, citizen farmers would take arms when called, which meant possible death. Wealth was an important factor in Roman society and in determining one's fate. There were financial prerequisites to sit at the Senate, and wealth was the basis to assign citizens into different military classes, as citizen soldiers had at first to equip themselves. The poorest were excepted from the obligation to serve. This pushed some citizen farmers to sell their land to be disqualified. This meant families losing land ownership over generations. In parallel, as Rome's power grew, the army was progressively professionalized, and farmers could also join the campaigns for increasingly longer periods of time. Many soldiers did not return from war (Webster 2007, p.407). This pushed for social and economic transformation of the rural landscape (Marcone 2002b, p.40), mainly the transfer of land ownership from the hands of small-scale citizen farmers to wealthier ones (Lo Cascio 2002, p.275; Marcone 2002b, p.47) and the increase of slaves as staff to substitute part of the missing work force (Garnsey et al. 2015, p.98; Marcone 2002b, p.41). For our region, located along the Via Salaria between the Rome's walls and the Aniene, it has been estimated that the population decreased slowly until the 2nd century BCE, followed by a small recuperation between the 2nd and 1st centuries BCE (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.136). The subsequent economic development of the Roman countryside caused a proper demographic boom up to the 2nd century CE, reaching population numbers that would not be hit again in history until the 20th century (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.137–8).

Besides division of society in terms of wealth, people were separated into gens, tribes (and their subdivisions: the *curiae*) and were categorized as either Plebeians or Patricians. Gens were clans, where their members could trace back common ancestors. Gens were at first also

units of political and military power. We are already familiar with the tribes, but we have not introduced the Patrician-Plebeian distinction. It seems that Patricians were the original members of the Roman aristocracy, who during the monarchy managed to monopolize the exclusive hereditary access to the main priesthoods, and other political rights and offices (Momigliano & Drummond 1990, p.102–3). This seemingly unfair system was partially open later in the republic, during the 4th century BCE, as the Plebeians (being the majority) progressively formed a state within the state and ended fighting for and obtaining equal political rights (Claridge 2010, p.7; David 1994, p.60). This was concretized with the *lex Licinia Sextia* (laws) in 367 BCE, which allowed Plebeians to become consuls (Holloway 2014, p.143). The distinct Patrician-Plebeian did not concern the military, where wealth determined each soldier's position (Momigliano & Drummond 1990, p.103–4). Wealth was also a social elevator, as plebeian families found fortune (for instance the Acilii Glabrones), they emerged as new members of the Roman elite; at the same time originally patrician families simply disappeared, never to be heard again.

4.1.2. The empire before the Empire

Under the republic, Rome continued to expand through different methods: conquest, establishment of colonies and treaties. War after war, Roman influence and directly controlled territory expanded. Armed conflict resulted in perturbations in the countryside as well, as foreign armies could damage or pillage farms within Roman territory. One example of war-related desolation is the Gallic invasion of Central Italy (Traina 2010). During the early 4th century BCE, the Senones, a Gallic, invading tribe, attacked different city states and their hinterlands inflicting great human and material loss. In the historical records of Rome, the devastating defeat in Allia (ca. 9 km north of Antemnae) in 390/387 BCE and the subsequent sack of the city of Rome are remembered as one of the worst humiliations in her history (Dyck 2015). The setback of such a terrible event was, however, temporary, as it gave the opportunity for a rebound and a recovery that strengthened Rome against her competing neighbors. Rome's neighbors had been also heavily hit by the Gauls and do not seem to have been able to recover as swiftly. Rome also fought her Latin and Etruscan neighbors and prevailed (343–282 BCE)(Shotter 2003, p.69–71). This allowed Rome to further expand her territory in Italy. The Pyrrhic War (280–270 BCE) assured Roman supremacy in the Peninsula (David 1994, p.15) the First and Second Punic Wars (264–201 BCE), against Carthage, ended with Roman hegemony in the whole western Mediterranean, but drained free agricultural manpower from the Roman countryside. In fact, the Second Punic War (218–201 BCE) alone brought such direct destruction to the Central Italian countryside, that it marked the end of subsistence agriculture as the dominant form of farming (Marcone 2002b, p.39). The Macedonian Wars (214–148 BCE), opposing Rome and her Greek allies on one side and the Kingdom of Macedonia on the other side, opened the door for Roman dominance towards the East (Eckstein & Čašule 2012). Subsequent wars ensured Rome's expansion around the whole Mediterranean, the transition from republic to empire, and eventually establishing an Empire that stretched from the Britain to Mesopotamia.

War and conquest were not the only ways Rome used to serve her interests, Rome also used diplomacy and treaties when needed (Webster 2007). For instance, Rome incorporated neighboring communities early in her history as a state, as was the case with Antemnae. Rome also signed a defense treaty with the Latin League (coalition of Latin towns, Rome was not in the alliance)(Erskine 2010, p.12). This helped manage Rome's forces, since even if she was indeed a regional power, Rome could not deal with multiple fronts simultaneously. Eventually Rome's ambition to dominate the league led to a war with the Latin communities (Shotter 2003, p.71–2). When victorious, Rome dealt individually with the vanquished parties. It some

cases, Rome used the citizenship as a tool of power: instead of restricting citizenship to people born in Rome, it was granted to defeated neighbors to earn trust and show respect, but also to ensure obedience and subjugation to the Roman power (Erskine 2010, p.13–4).

4.2. The agrarian situation in the Roman countryside during the Republic and the Empire

Rome's expansion meant agricultural expansion of its territory and the reorganization of the agrarian landscape in the Roman countryside. Rome is said to have reached progressively one million inhabitants (Garnsey et al. 2015, p.88), which required an efficient agrarian system to sustain such a population. Accordingly, the nearby countryside saw itself flecked with villas³⁸ and agricultural land (Dyson 2003, p.88–90; Terrenato 2007, p.145–8).

One of the drivers of agricultural efficiency were agrarian technical advances that were made during Republic and Empire. The accumulation and refinement of knowledge on how to improve crop combination, seed and land selection, fertilization with compost and manure, and how to utilize labor more efficiently were key in Republican and Imperial agrarian development (Forni 2002, p.110–2; Foxhall 1998; Garnsey 1988, p.88). Thus, the advance in agricultural efficiency was mostly a result of agronomic knowledge —such as resting periods for lands and legume-cereal alternation (Forni 2002, p.113–5)— and labor management (Garnsey 1988, p.231). In Roman society land was considered the primary source of long-term wealth (Garnsey 1988, p.91; Kehoe 1994, p.47), and was very important to cement social status (Terrenato 2007, p.147); also, the closer the land was located to the city, the more prestige it would bring. Such was the importance of countryside property, that orphan children from the elite would have tutors to teach them estate management and also help them manage their estates until puberty (Kehoe 1994, p.48). The legal system established and guaranteed property rights, which ensured the transmission within the family. What's more, a whole branch of legislation specialized in such estate property matters; expert jurists made sure that pupils were protected against fraud, land depreciation and other types of land alienation (Kehoe 1994, p.48).

Through time, this translated into a transference and accumulation of land ownership towards the wealthiest. However, at the beginning of the Roman statehood, most farms were small; even the largest landowners had fragmented properties, with parcels scattered across the countryside (Garnsey 1988, p.44). Larger plantations, or *latifundia*, emerged by the 1st century BCE, but despite classic authors' complaints and moral condemnation that might make us believe otherwise, the *latifundia* remained the exception and not the rule (Dyson 2003, p.73; Garnsey 1988, p.93–4). Slaves worked the land alongside freeborn inhabitants of rural areas. Some of these free people were subsistence farmers that owned their own land, but with time, they came to sell their land to become tenant-farmers (Garnsey 1988, p.102) or to migrate to the cities (Garnsey 1988, p.126). In many cases, freeborn Romans came to work the land under working or tenancy contracts.

Agricultural activities evolved through time as well. Subsistence farmers mixed cultivations in their land: cereals with legumes and trees increased their self-sufficiency and minimized the risk during bad years (Garnsey 1988, p.49). This mentality survived into later times, even in larger specialized plantations. Farms locally produced as much food as possible to feed its workers —the ideal was autarchy for wine and grain (Rosafio 1994, p.151). As subsistence

³⁸ A villa is a country house. See section 4.3

farmers became rarer, the main orientation for farms became progressively more and more market-driven, by prioritizing the cultivation of crops orientated towards the market (Rosafio 1994, p.152). These market crops consisted of different species of wheat (*Triticum monoccum*, *T. dicoccum*, *T. aestivum*, *T. spelta*), barley, spelt and millet as cereals, and of lupine, chickpeas (Garnsey 1988, p.51–5), fava beans (Kaplan 2000, p.273) and lentils (Bietti Sestieri 2002, p.209) as legumes to cite a few³⁹. In addition, around Rome were cultivated different greens — such as garlic, cabbage, lettuce, leeks, asparagus, cucumber, onions, radishes to cite a few—(Henderson 2004; Kolendo 1994), fruits, such as olive, grape, figs to cite a few again, sesame (Garnsey 1988, p.53–5) and also flowers to meet the urban demand (Kolendo 1994, p.60). Livestock was kept to some extent around Rome as well (Kolendo 1994, p.60). For meat production, farmers raised cattle, whose flesh was a luxury because they required a lot of water and high-quality grazing ground, sheep and goats, but also pigs that were left in forests to feed on acorns, beech mast and cornel fruit (Foxhall, Jones & Forbes 2007, p.107–108), and whose porcine flesh was much appreciated in the Italian peninsula in general (Dyson 2003, p.66). In addition to these crops, specialized producers raised a generous array of poultry such as chicken, ducks, doves, geese, and also delicacies such as peacocks, thrushes, ortolans or quails, and other special orders, to meet the luxurious taste of Rome (Kolendo 1994, p.64). Ponds and lakes were used to raise fish, and flowerful lands for honeybees to buzz around (Kolendo 1994, p.64). Sheep and goats were good providers of wool and, with cattle, of hides, and also of milk for the most important cheese production. Generally, farmers used oxen, donkeys and mules for traction and transportation, and the better-put ones, horses (Foxhall, Jones & Forbes 2007, p.107–8). The vicinity of Rome was ideal for the production of perishable and highly valued products (Quilici Gigli 1994, p.141). The market was close, but as goes the old adage “you have to spend money to make money”, and such specialized occupations required to be backed by wealthy owners or patrons (Kolendo 1994, p.66).

One of the most important social relationships in Roman society was arguably patronage, i.e. the relationship linking a patron to a client. A patronage is a mutual, formal and lasting relationship (generally over generations) between two parties of unequal power and wealth, and consists of an asymmetrical exchange of goods and services (Garnsey 1988, p.58; Nicols 2014, p.2–3). The agreement is not based on the law, but rather on a moral etiquette: on one hand, being loyal to their sacred word, the client and the patron both brought dignity and prestige upon themselves, and on the other hand, not honoring their part was considered a disgrace and would tarnish their reputation. Such a relationship was a key aspect of Roman social interactions, it was essential for networking and improve or maintain their economic or social situation, but also especially during the republic when citizens would use patronage to play in the political arena to be (re-)elected to office. This meant that, increasingly during the Empire, the political benefits of patronage became obsolete (Garnsey et al. 2015, p.165–166). A patron in a given relationship could in turn be client to a more powerful person, and in the same way a client could be patron to someone of lower status. In the countryside, social relations, such as patronage, played a major role in shaping the landscape.

The Roman countryside was a dynamic space, where many different people practiced at least as many different activities, yet we know much more about the landowners, an ultra-minority, than the humbler majority. The elite not only tends to be better represented in the literary and archaeological evidence, but have also generated much more of the researchers’ interest. The focus has gone toward the larger, richer, lavishly decorated villas with long histories rather than the more ephemeral, modest farms (Dyson 2003, p.29) that leave less traces (Garnsey et

³⁹ Different Latin authors, such as Cato the Elder, Varro, Calumella and Palladius, discuss the agrarian reality at length in their works.

al. 2015, p.148). Because of this bias, the Roman countryside economy has been assumed to consist largely of huge slave-staffed latifundia spanning across deforested lands (Dyson 2003, p.29; Holloway 1994, p.128). The reality was, like in most cases, more complex (see discussion in Dyson 2003, p.73). In fact, even if rural poverty was endemic in the Peninsula's countryside (Garnsey 1988, p.268), peasants developed strategies to minimize hunger. Those who farmed for subsistence were not in competition with wealthy landowners, and those who owned their land could use their narrow surplus as means to be even more financially autonomous (Garnsey et al. 2015, p.79). Poor farmers could, however, end up being dependent to richer neighbors for loans, protection and extra jobs (Garnsey et al. 2015, p.135). Luckily for Roman peasants of Italy, they were exempt from taxation until the end of the 3rd century CE (Garnsey et al. 2015, p.22), which alleviated somewhat the hardship from their lives. Alongside these rural free workers, whose condition could range from debt-bondage⁴⁰ (i.e. legally free, but accumulated debt legally obliged them to repay with labor) to fully independence, there were also slaves (i.e. unfree folks). Slavery is already an unfortunate state to live in, but rural slaves had it worse than urban ones: they worked in harsher conditions and were much less likely to be freed (Garnsey et al. 2015, p.142). Putting the question of their freedom aside, the two groups, slaves and free people, shared common conditions: individuals were specialized in different trades (Rosafio 1994, p.154) and they were generally housed on the property with their families (Rosafio 1994, p.150–2). Thus, besides the obvious farm workers, smiths and bakers could also work in the villa, and women prepared spices, bread, fire and spanned wool. Larger villas had at least one *saltuarius*, a security guard to watch over the produce and the property boundaries (Rosafio 1994, p.151). Through time, villas seem to have become larger and more self-sufficient, harboring a microcosm of people, optimized towards production for the market (Rosafio 1994, p.152). Finally, slave or not, all workers were very much subject to the landlord's mood and character (Garnsey et al. 2015, p.135), especially from the late Empire onwards, as the ban on corporal punishment against citizens was lifted (Garnsey et al. 2015, p.140).

Farming was very important, but we should not imagine the totality of this rural landscape as cultivated land, it was more of a polychromic mosaic of land. By surveying these lands, and trying to reconstruct the landscape from archaeological data, the villas dispersion and distribution patterns across the landscape suggest that this mosaic consisted of patches of woods, *macchie* (i.e. Mediterranean shrublands, also called *maquis*) and pastures (Quilici Gigli 1994, p.137). The countryside also harbored other clearly non-agricultural elements, usually attached to the villas, like parks, baths, fountains, gardens and mausolea (Tomassetti, Chiumenti & Bilancia 1979, p.58) in addition to farmland. Interesting to cite is also the animal husbandry that was reserved for pleasure and that happened in separated spaces and at much lower scale (Kolendo 1994, p.65). Other elements not related to villas dotted the landscape and were also very important: inns, pubs, baths and other types of rest stations, and also sanctuaries (Quilici Gigli 1994, p.142). Sacred grounds were indeed another key the element of the rural landscape, the best examples being the suburban cemeteries of Rome and the sacred forests of Diana or Anna Perenna. The sanctuary of Anna Perenna and the sacred grove surrounding it are a good example of such sacred spaces that specked the landscape around Rome. The sacred grove spread around current Piazza Euclide⁴¹ (Piranomonte 2002, p.88), between at least the 2nd century BCE and the late 4th century CE (Piranomonte 2002, p.72). This sacred grove

⁴⁰ The spectrum of dependence and forced slavery was quite wide. Debt-bondage, in the strict sense, called *nexum* by the Ancient Romans, was abolished in 326 BCE, quite early in Rome's history (Bradley 2011).

⁴¹ The square Piazza Euclide is located in the same borough as Villa Ada, 1 km to the west.

might have been visible from Antemnae and the other hills of current Villa Ada throughout Antiquity.

4.3. Villas, houses and households in Roman society

One of the elements of Roman society that shaped the landscape, both in the cities as in the countryside, were houses —i.e. constructions— and households —i.e. social institutions (Dyson 2003, p.20). In this case too, land holdings of better-off farmers are far better attested than those of humble ones (Foxhall, Jones & Forbes 2007, p.96). Firstly, because ancient writers were usually (wealthy) landowners themselves and they wrote about the kind of estates that they knew best and in which they were interested in. Secondly, the most conspicuous physical remains tend to have been left by the property of wealthy landowners. Finally, scholar research has focused mainly on the grandiose villas and other flashier and more accessible structures. In any case, the most emblematic Roman house is the villa, and its study allows to better understand aspects of the Roman elite and the evolution of rural landscape. Despite its very Roman-specific context, Roman housing had no unity and was rather heterogenous, especially if we include time as a factor; the Roman house evolved as Rome expanded (Bergmann 2007, p.224–225). Factors as climate, social status and cultural background influenced the layout of housing. The atrium house (with central courtyard) was used as a loose model for elite housing during Republican and Early Imperial times, but was not the norm (Bergmann 2007, p.236). By the end of the 1st century the atrium was progressively replaced by an audience hall (Bergmann 2007, p.228). Villas were rural single unit houses (Bergmann 2007, p.236) and their size and decorum could lie anywhere between modest country houses to magnificent mansions with grandiose landscaping elements, such as gardens, fountains or baths (Dyson 2003, p.19–20). Each of these villas' purpose was different, but they usually integrated both residential and production aspects (Dyson 2003, p.22). Near major towns, there were the so-called suburban villas, offering a rural residence close enough to the city, which allowed the owner to participate to the political and social life of the cities, while remaining in control of agrarian economic activities. Such villas allowed for display of status (Terrenato 2007, p.147) through lavish decorum, architecture and furnishing, without being constrained by space (Dyson 2003, p.23). Villas were designed to be a reflection of the owner's social and economic status (Bergmann 2007, p.224). They were lavishly decorated with as much color and as much greenery, waterworks and as many pleasurable views as the owner was capable to afford (Bergmann 2007, p.238–239). Villas were also spaces of memory and learning: mosaics and frescos made allusions to visited places or scenes from the mythology and acted as spatial cues for the owner's mind (Bergmann 2007, p.238). Rome was surrounded by a belt of such villas, especially concentrated on the main roads leading to Rome, such as the Via Salaria (Dyson 2003, p.23). The remains of a Roman villa, discovered during the fort construction (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.89–90), shows that the land of current Villa Ada was no exception. In spite of these lavishing images of very conspicuous villas in the countryside (and also in the cities at a much lesser extent), we must insist however that it was not the norm, if we consider Roman society as a whole. Most people lived in small quarters that they usually rented (Bergmann 2007, p.239–240). Nevertheless, villas were socio-economical systems embedded in the broader Roman society and were one of the main drivers of the Roman economy and of the rural landscape (Marcone 2002a, p.328).

The first evidence of villas around Rome, which seem to be exclusively farms, dates back to the 3rd century BCE. The 80s BCE mark the beginning of a construction boom of villas that ends around 100 CE (Terrenato 2007, p.145). During the end of the 1st century and beginning of the 2nd century CE, the novel imperial power absorbed many prerogatives of the senate in

Rome, which impacted the senatorial aristocracy and their behavior in society. Aristocrats' financial wealth decreased on average and forced them to focus on their other social role, public munificence (i.e. philanthropy), rather than on private splendor (Terrenato 2007, p.149). The choice was easy as the generous actions that constituted the munificence helped them reinforce their reputation and their political position. During the 2nd and 1st centuries CE, a multitude of villas were slowly abandoned, as aristocrats chose to keep fewer of them, but still grandiosely built and decorated. Here the elite retreated increasingly more often and more permanently (Terrenato 2007, p.148–9). This trend intensified during the 3rd and 4th centuries CE. In addition to the changing financial situation, the importance and influence of political office continued to decrease. Civic unrest grew as the political tensions around who was to become emperor became increasingly violent and chaotic, turning into civil war at times (Terrenato 2007, p.150–1). The elite's interests shifted towards perceived nobility of character and their local reputation to cement their position in their communities. It might seem contradictory, but the elite started to retire more permanently into their monumental villas (Terrenato 2007, p.148–9). Villas became centers of social, cultural and economic activity for local rural communities, villages even formed in the periphery of villas, which in turn reinforced the interest of the elite in the countryside, where they could have a renewed expression of power (Terrenato 2007, p.149–151). Many villa sites remained centers of social activity and of exchange (of goods, ideas and people), even after their abandonment as residence by their owners (Dyson 2003, p.96).

Beside their physical reality, houses were also centers of extended social institutions, the households. Households were important in Ancient Rome, for they constituted one of the key building blocks of Roman society. We must note that *domus*, the Latin term for house or household, is far more including than its English counterpart. The *domus* could include the family of the (male) householder (in Latin *paterfamilias* or *dominus*), slaves, relatives, in-laws and even freed slaves (Bergmann 2007, p.225). This meant that the *domus* could extend over different property units (estates), sometimes distributed across the Empire, for the most elite *domus*. Households were also religious spaces, and the practice of religious rituals were seen as vital for the prosperous productivity and continuation of the household. This meant that shrines, altars and tombs could be present on the estates (Sessa 2012, p.54–5), such it was the case at Antemnae, and that it was important for the householder to see that rites were not subversive and performed in a proper manner (Sessa 2012, p.76–9).

4.4. The fate of Antemnae, the construction of Aqua Virgo and modifications to the Via Salaria

Since the incorporation of Antemnae and her land into the Roman state, the site was not abandoned, but underwent a conspicuous transformation. Three main processes marked the evolution of this landscape. Firstly, from an *oppidum*, a fortified settlement, Antemnae became the location of a villa. Secondly, the Aqua Virgo, the only still functioning ancient aqueduct today, was built, and its route crosses the land of Villa Ada. Thirdly, the Via Salaria underwent some modifications, reflecting the changes in the landscape.

4.4.1. Antemnae after Antemnae

Given the agrarian situation of the Roman countryside, and the belt of suburban villas surrounding Rome, the discovery of the existence of a villa at the location of Antemnae, during the construction of the fort, comes as no surprise. On the northern side of the hill, overlooking

the river, what is thought to be the northernmost part of the villa was uncovered and subsequently removed, while digging for a defensive trench (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.89–90). The remains revealed the nature of the construction, which consisted of pieces of stucco and different types of marble (yellow, portasanta and palombino marbles), and suggest a lavish decoration of this villa and allows to date it to the 1st century BCE (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.92–3). There were also signs of renovations during the 1st century CE, which demonstrates interest in the maintenance of the building. From the remains observed during the fort construction, the villa consisted of many rooms, a *cryptoporticus*, different halls, terraces and numerous outbuildings (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.165). The layout and precise structure of the villa is not known, as only small parts were uncovered and parts of the villa might still remain untouched under the fort (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.89–90). Also, because of the quarrying activities and construction works during the 1920s and 1930s that gutted the northern foot and side of the hill, much of the villa may also have been lost forever (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.112–4). The extension of the property is also unknown, but if we look at neighboring regions such as the area of Fidenae a couple of miles to the north, it is estimated that the properties ranged from around 10 ha up to 100 ha, with the majority of the ones identified at 20 ha (Quilici Gigli 1994, p.140–141).

Besides the structural remains of the villa, other findings witnessed the human activity of the oppidum and its fate. On top of the archaic *cuniculi* (i.e. hydraulic tunnels) at least other two underground tracts from the mid-Republic (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.40), traces of water well and cistern maintenance (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.35–7) and new cisterns were discovered, thus forming a hydraulic network typical of the late Republic and Imperial times (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.91–2). In addition, different daily-life items suggest continuous activity at the location, but also a connection with foreign lands. Such items consisted of pieces of pottery —from different periods between the 4th and the 2nd centuries BCE (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.77–8)— and different coins —covering a period running from the early 3rd century BCE to the early 5th century CE (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.56–61, 87–9, 105–8, 118–9). Different funerary *cippi* were also found around the hill, suggesting a possible small cemetery in the villa complex (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.108–11).

The archaeological evidence and also written sources suggest a decline of the oppidum, maybe because of the military obsolescence of the position, as by the 3rd century BCE, the Aniene river was not a border anymore (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.165). In fact, Pliny even cites the *Antemnates* (the people of Antemnae) as one of the peoples of Latium that no longer existed by his time (Pliny NH, III, 68–70⁴²). However, the archaeological evidence reveals that a small village is likely to have persisted around the sanctuary of Antemnae until the establishment of the villa and beyond (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.165–7). Strabo seems to coincide better with the archaeological evidence as he lists Antemnae as one of the ancient settlements now reduced to mere village or private property (Strabo V, 3, 2⁴³). In any case, it is interesting to note that Pliny does not mention Antemnae when he reports Gauls and Romans facing each other from both sides of the Aniene river on two different occasions and a duel on the bridge Ponte Salario, events that would have taken place in 367 (Livy VI, 42, 5⁴⁴) and 361 BCE (Livy VII, 9, 6–7⁴⁵). This suggests that no matter the size of the village, Antemnae may have become less of a landmark (or entity) during the Republic, and henceforth the site of a suburban villa.

⁴² See (Pliny the Elder 1942, p.52–3) in the reference list.

⁴³ See (Strabo 1923, p.382–3) in the reference list.

⁴⁴ See (Livy 1924a, p.348–9) in the reference list.

⁴⁵ See (Livy 1924b, p.382–3) in the reference list.

4.4.2. Aqua Virgo and Via Salaria

We must not forget that any landscape is a canvas of cultural expression, and the result of ecological practices. Thus, another way to track the rise of Rome through the land of Villa Ada is by reading the landscape. Hydraulic works, like drainage channels and *cuniculi* (i.e. tunnels), started to shape the landscape of and around Rome by the 8th century BCE (Terrenato 2007, p.153–4). The hydraulic works helped to manage the water levels of fields for cultivation and water reserves. Hydraulic works are also a visible manifestation of an ecological adaptation and the will to control the environment. For domestic use, networks of cisterns and wells, together with cuniculi, were used from early on (Wilson 2009, p.285–90), as we can see at Antemnae. However, the ultimate example of water control concretized with the construction of aqueducts (Wilson 2009, p.296). Aqua Virgo, one of the eleven aqueducts feeding the city of Rome, was built completely underground between 32–19 BCE and was ordered by Agrippa, at his own expense (Cassius Dio LIC, 11, 7⁴⁶). Frontinus gives us some details about the Aqua Virgo. It starts under a marshy land near the 8th mile of the road Via Collatina, east of Rome (Frontinus I, 10⁴⁷) and brings water to the Campus Martius (currently Campo Marzio) in the city (Frontinus I, 22⁴⁸). Its route is, however, not straight and makes a detour, passing under the land of Villa Ada, because of the topography. The aqueduct is said to be called Virgo because a young girl indicated the location of the water spring that was to be the source of Aqua Virgo (Frontinus I, 10). Invisible from the surface of the land of Villa Ada now, the aqueduct transported water that was renowned for being pure and clear (Martial VI, 42⁴⁹; Cassiodorus VII, 6⁵⁰). The aqueduct is arguably an unsuspecting part of the landscape, even if invisible, which reveals that a landscape could be more than what meets the eye.

Similar to aqueducts, roads also shape the landscape and have something to tell about human practices. The Via Salaria, like other Roman highroads, underwent some transformations through time. As Rome grew, the role of roads evolved as well, from graveled paths to paved highways integrated in a network of lesser roads. The primitive Via Salaria was born as a transhumance and salt trade route connecting the Adriatic Sea, the Apennines, the Tyrrhenian lowlands and the mouth of the Tiber river (Ashby 1927, p.59; Pasquinucci 2002, p.208). Its importance during the Bronze Age, and then Iron Age, is visible by the number of settlements, such as Rome, Antemnae (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.141), Fidenae, or Reate at the Sabine heartland (Salmon & Potter 2005), that developed on its route. Its route changed through time (Terrenato 2007, p.152). Near Rome, the archaic route followed the topography of the wavy terrain. During the 3rd century BCE, the integration of the Sabine country into the Roman political sphere required a radical renovation to better connect Rome to the new parts of her hinterland. A new tract of the Via Salaria was built to reach the Aniene more directly. Straightness in roads was meant to project power and promote civic order and the exchange of goods, ideas and people. Straight roads also signified control over these exchanges and over the land through political power (Quilici 2009, p.560), and conveyed impressive surveying and engineering skills (Quilici 2009, p.554–555,561). Thus, by the early Empire, the Via Salaria was paved with basalt (Quilici 2009, p.565–6) and comprised two tracts, the so-called Via Salaria Vetus and the Via Salaria (Nova). Both routes merged before passing by Antemnae and crossing the Aniene.

⁴⁶ See (Cassius Dio 1917, p.312–3) in the reference list.

⁴⁷ See (Frontinus 1925, p.350–1) in the reference list.

⁴⁸ See (Frontinus 1925, p.350–1) in the reference list.

⁴⁹ See (Martial 1993, p.30–3) in the reference list.

⁵⁰ See (Cassiodorus 1886, p.324–5) in the reference list.

5. The decline and fall of the (Western) Roman Empire

5.1. General trends and the decline

5.1.1. Demographics in the countryside

Rural population in the Italian Peninsula peaked between the 1st and 2nd centuries CE (Lo Cascio 2002, p.293). After this, the rural population decreased, and would not reach similar levels until the 20th century in the Roman countryside (Quilici Gigli 1994, p.137–8). As part of the Roman countryside, the area of Antemnae (and land of current Villa Ada) is very likely to have followed this generalized trend. Different factors contributed to the population decline. Firstly, illness became a factor working against rural population. During the mid-2nd century a big epidemic took a toll on the Roman rural population (Lo Cascio 2002, p.305). The epidemic was most likely smallpox and was probably brought to Italy by the legions after the Parthian Campaigns in the East (Marcone 2002b, p.53–6). Secondly, during the 3rd century, political unrest became more frequent (mainly linked to the power struggle to become Emperor), which further impacted the Roman countryside in terms of population decline (Dyson 2003, p.89). The political unrest also affected the state of the infrastructure (especially roads) that was generally not repaired (Chiappa Mauri 2002, p.25). Finally, the subsequent barbaric invasions intensified insecurity and unrest. The most noteworthy of the events that affected the Roman countryside are the so-called Gothic wars. I will further develop on these invasions in a dedicated sub-chapter. The countryside was particularly exposed to such destructive agitation. With increased instability, by the 5th century, the remaining rural centers, usually revolving around villas, adapted to the new circumstances and became very locally integrated and very self-sufficient (Terrenato 2007, p.151).

As it could be expected, the most vulnerable part of the rural population were the peasants, who not only did suffer the direct effects of raids from the invaders and other passing armies, but also had to bear the weight of increasing taxation (Dyson 2003, p.89). The systemic oppression of free peasants further worsened progressively; by the end of the 3rd century CE farmers were subject to corporal punishment (Garnsey et al. 2015, p.140) by their landlord and they became attached to their land and were forbidden to leave it by law (Marcone 2002b, p.58–9; Sessa 2012, p.155). It is also interesting to mention that, from the 2nd century onward, the slave portion of the rural population started to decrease as well, as it was replaced by free folks —mainly by landless or indentured laborers (Lo Cascio 2002, p.304).

5.1.2. Rome's place in the Empire

Rather than ‘being constructed’ Rome's empire ‘happened’ through punctual expansions. Similarly, imperial succession was never decided, which can explain the recurring struggle throughout the Empire to become Emperor (Reece 1999, p.163). From the 2nd century CE onward, Emperors spent increasingly less time in Rome, and resided increasingly more permanently in provincial capitals. For instance, Emperor Diocletian does not seem to have visited Rome more than twice (one of the visits was to celebrate his 20th anniversary as Emperor).

After the death of Emperor Septimus Severus (193–211 CE), the 3rd century was marked by a descent into political chaos (Reece 1999, p.164) that concluded with the ascension of Diocletian in 284. He established the so-called 'Tetrarchy', where four co-emperors reigned at the same time (2 senior and 2 assistant), a system that ensured a certain temporary stability until Diocletian's abdication in 305 CE and subsequent return of civil war ultimately won by Constantine in 324, when he emerged as the sole Emperor (Reece 1999, p.165). Constantine moved the capital of the unified Empire to Constantinople (Reece 1999, p.166), but ordered the construction of many magnificent churches in Rome (Sessa 2012, p.30), thus confirming her prestige in a troubled Roman world (Reece 1999, p.166).

Also, during the 4th century CE, Milan and then Ravenna became capitals of the western part of the Empire (Reece 1999, p.166). However, even without the Emperor, Rome maintained her political and religious prestige, both in pagan and Christian times (Purcell 2007, p.196–8). This meant that in many cases, the political unrest focused around and in Rome herself, as usurpers marched to the city to depose the emperor or to be hailed by the Senate. The Empire was indeed under the assault of different difficulties that would beget further chaos. Frequent civil war alimented economic dwindling of the Empire and opportunistic invasions of different neighboring, foreign peoples, the so-called Barbarians (Kulikowski 2007, p.28–9). It is interesting to note how these foreign, 'uncivilized' Barbarians came to play an important role in the late Roman Empire.

5.2. The Goths

In this section we shall see how it is possible to connect the land of Villa Ada to distant foreign lands, and explore storytelling through its landscape, through specific events (for the full narrative, see Appendix 1).

5.2.1. The Goths enter the Roman world

Beyond the north-eastern frontier lived many different peoples, from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds⁵¹. One of these groups, the Goths, came to live in an area well beyond the Danube, during the 2nd and 3rd centuries. They shared a territory that spread from the Black Sea northwestward, currently situated in current day Ukraine, Moldova and Romania (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.24–5). It seems that, gradually, the Goths became a more political and territorial entity, under the form of a loose confederation of Germanic, Hunnic and Sarmatian tribal groups, forming a collective of tribes that the Romans simply called 'Goths' (Kulikowski 2007, p.98–9). Living at first at a distance from the Roman frontier, they began their incursions into the Empire during the 3rd century CE. Overpopulation and the subsequent hunger made them desperate to look elsewhere to make a living. The attraction of loot in Roman territory and Germanic warrior culture made easier the choice between attacking their (Barbarian) neighbors, that were in a similar demographic and economic situation and attacking a wealthier Roman Empire, offering plenty of riches and fertile land to plunder (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.29).

Different invasions occurred many times (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.28–29) and were solved by arranging the service of Gothic warriors under Roman banners and Roman pay-

⁵¹ Among these Barbarians we can recognize Germanic tribes, Huns, Alans and maybe others of whom we do not know about (Kulikowski 2007, p.56–60).

ments to different Gothic groups (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.24–5). Ultimately, an increasing number of Goths served in the Roman army (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.36) and the Goths beyond the Danube became progressively a force to be reckoned with. Part of the Roman political game, to keep invaders a bay on the short term, was the payment and favoring of specific chiefs or kings, so they could keep the infighting beyond the Danube (Kulikowski 2007, pp.36–37). This however created stronger groups led by more powerful leaders, and consolidated Gothic identities on the long run (Kulikowski 2007, pp.36–37). In 376, some Gothic groups entered the Roman Empire while escaping the attacking Huns. They were admitted peacefully by the Roman emperor Valens in return of their service in the Roman army, a golden opportunity for him to increase his forces (Kulikowski 2007, pp.128–129). In 377, following an incident during a banquet gathering a Roman and Gothic leaders, the Goths rioted and were soon joined by other oppressed groups of the region (Moesia and Thrace), mainly miners, slaves and prisoners (Kulikowski 2007, pp.133–134; Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.46). The rebellion grew, and Emperor Valens marched to crush it. The conflict ended at Adrianople in 378 with the crushing defeat of the Imperial army: the emperor Valens died alongside many Roman senior officers and two thirds of the entire Roman army (Kulikowski 2007, p.142–3). Such a humiliating defeat had a profound impact on the Roman society: Pagans saw it as the direct result of the neglect of the traditional gods, whereas Orthodox Christians blamed the Arian beliefs of Valens (which they saw as heresy). It took over two years for Valens' successor, Theodosius, to secure a peace treaty (382 CE) with the Goths about which we do not know the specifics. Now tens of thousands of Goths lived inside the Empire, settled and serving in the army both as soldiers and officers (Kulikowski 2007, p.156–7), and they became important actors in the social and political life of the Empire (Kulikowski 2007, p.144–5).

5.2.2. Alaric's Visigoths sack Rome

Theodosius fought and won against the Franks and the western part of the Empire at the Battle of the Frigidus (somewhere between current Slovenia and Italy) with the help of 20,000 Goths under the command of Alaric. Alaric considered he had not been given enough recognition for his service, and rebelled after having been proclaimed king of the Visigoths (Kulikowski 2007, p.165–6). Alaric's groups raided northern Italy and the Balkans between 401 and 405 CE. In 405, Stilicho, the regent of the western part of the Empire, agreed to give Alaric proper office (Kulikowski 2007, p.170–1); however, the promise was not upheld after Stilicho's death in 408 (Kulikowski 2007, p.173–4). In retaliation, Alaric marched directly to Rome and blockaded the entry of grain for two years (408–409) as leverage (Kulikowski 2007, p.173–4). In 410, the Visigoths besieging Rome, sacked it (Kulikowski 2007, p.177). The sack of Rome had a psychological and physical impact of the city. The effects were downplayed by Christian writers to discredit the pagan argument that the sack happened because of Christianization (i.e. that the gods were not happy). Famine and disease had taken many lives, and an additional internal turmoil caused additional civil loss when many citizens decided to settle old grudges (Kulikowski 2007, p.9). The population, though, recovered in a few years (Kulikowski 2007, p.178–9), but their impact in the surrounding countryside might have been quite deep. At least for Antemnae, and the area of current Villa Ada, even if it is difficult to prove causation, archaeological evidence suggests high levels of activity until the 3rd century CE, after that, the last evidence of activity can be dated to the mid-5th century CE at the latest⁵²

⁵² The main archaeological findings were amphorae from 1st century CE and many coins from different periods between 1st century BCE to 5th century CE (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.105–6, 118–9).

and thus coincides with the gothic troubles around Rome (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.165, 168).

In 415 CE, the Imperial power made peace with the Goths; they were incorporated into the Roman army, where they would be sent to fight against the Alans, Sueves and Vandals that had settled in Spain during the previous years (Kulikowski 2007, p.180–3). The Goths were then officially settled in southern Gaul (current Aquitaine), becoming officially part of the Empire, as the first autonomous (Barbarian) kingdom inside of the Empire (Kulikowski 2007, p.157–8, 182–3).

5.2.3. The last Western Roman Emperor: from the end of the Western Empire to the Kingdom of Italy

The episode of the sack of Rome was more a symptom than a cause for the continuation of the dismembering of the western part of the Empire. In 474, Julius Nepos was proclaimed Emperor, who chose Orestes as commander in chief. With his new power, Orestes quickly deposed Julius Nepos in favor of his own son Flavius Romulus, with the support of Germanic mercenaries in Italy and their leader Odoacer⁵³ (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.65). The Germanic mercenaries then demanded land in Italy in exchange of their support, Orestes refused and was murdered for this in 476. His son Romulus was allowed to live and retired in Southern Italy with a yearly pension (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.65). Flavius Romulus had not been recognized as Emperor by Constantinople, and in 480 Julius Nepos was murdered. With Nepos' death was the end of Western Roman Emperors (Reece 1999, p.168). The Roman Senate asked for Odoacer to be made administrator of Italy, which was refused by the East Roman Emperor Zeno, who considered himself enough emperor for both parts of the Empire (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.65–6). But in 480 Odoacer became *de facto* the only ruler of the Italian Peninsula⁵⁴ and chose to be addressed simply as king (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.65–6). Odoacer acted as if he recognized Imperial superiority from East Rome (e.g. gold coins minted in Italy bore Eastern Roman Emperor Zeno's effigy). Odoacer was also supported by the Senate in Rome, so Odoacer's Kingdom of Italy was left alone for the time being (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.66). This meant some stability for the economy to have space to recover. The whole Western part of the Empire was by now fragmented into different Barbaric kingdoms (Vandals, Franks, Visigoths), and East Roman Emperor Zeno felt increasingly threatened by Odoacer as he continued to push into the Eastern Empire (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.63).

In 488, Zeno sent the Ostrogothic commander Theodoric and his band to Italy to wage war against Odoacer and his kingdom. The Ostrogoths started to conquer and occupy northern Italy, advancing towards Ravenna (that had been officially capital of the western part of the Empire since 402), besieging the city for three years (August 490–February 493) until Odoacer's surrender (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.67–8, 70–1). Theodoric and Odoacer made peace, and Theodoric recognized Odoacer as equal ruler of Italy (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.71). Ten days later Theodoric personally murdered Odoacer during a banquet (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.72). Theodoric became king of the Ostrogoths in March 493 and reigned on a successful state as *rex* ('king') and *princeps* ('first citizen') until his death in 526: He never took the title of emperor, even if he was given the imperial regalia (Cumberland

⁵³ Odoacer was probably of Scirian descent, an East-Germanic tribe (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.65). This shows two things: how Germanized the Roman army was, and also how blurry the line between of Barbarian war bands and regular army was.

⁵⁴ Odoacer's dominion also included the provinces Raetia (which spread over current Bavaria and Switzerland) and Noricum (current Austria)(Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.65–6).

Jacobsen 2009, p.72–3). Theodoric did not change much the already existent Roman administration, which was still largely composed of Roman citizens. He continued to guarantee the role of the Senate in Rome and of the Roman aristocracy, and reinforced the Imperial guard, even if there was no emperor to protect. He also ensured the harmony between Arian Goths and Orthodox Romans (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.73–4). After centuries of vagrancy, the Ostrogoths came to build a home in Italy (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.74).

5.2.4. The Eastern Empire's attempt to reconquer Italy

In 527, Justinian became Eastern Roman Emperor, with the great plan to reconquer the lost West and reestablish the former glory of the Empire (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.2–3). In 536, he sent an army commanded by Belisarius. The expedition landed in the Peninsula with his army and took Neapolis (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.89–91) and started the march on Rome. The Goths had evaluated the situation and decided that they could not keep Rome, so they retreated to the north of Rome, where they camped waiting for further orders (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.95). The Roman army was left free to enter the city through the gate Porta Asinaria in the south, as the Gothic garrison left the city through the city gate Porta Flaminia in the north. Thus, the city of Rome was taken peacefully in December 536 (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.96).

The sacks of Rome by the Visigoths (410) and Vandals (455) had not destroyed the monuments of the Eternal City, the Imperial Palace was still protected by the Imperial guards, even if empty, and it is estimated that 600 thousand people still inhabited the city. The city still functioned, baths and circuses were still running and visited by the citizens (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.96). Belisarius immediately prepared the city for siege: grain from Sicily and more provisions from the Roman countryside were stored in warehouses (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.98). The Aurelian walls were old and not fully operational: they had to quickly repair some holes and dig ditches (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.102). In February 537, Vitigis, the Ostrogothic king, ordered the march on Rome to almost the entire Ostrogothic army and the start of the siege (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.103).

Some events of the siege took place in the area of current Villa Ada. Belisarius and small group of other Roman soldiers met the Gothic vanguard at the bridge Ponte Salario. Being massively outnumbered, they retreated and fought slowly toward the gate Porta Salaria, where they finally put the Goths to flight (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.104–5). Once the whole Gothic army arrived outside of Rome, they established seven camps of the northern side of the city and managed to blockade 14 gates out of the 18 (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.106). The Goths cut the aqueducts but did not interrupt the drinking water supply as the Tiber flew directly through the city, giving access to unlimited water supply. Baths could not work anymore, but floating mills were built on the Tiber to ensure flour availability (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.106). The population was put to sentry duty on the walls and received small rations, which fostered discontent inside the city (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.107). The Gothic army built a large number of ladders, siege rams and towers on wheels (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.107–8), which must have needed a large quantity of wood, most likely cut in the area of the north of Rome. They did not manage to break the siege, and Vitigis ordered the execution of the hostage senators, thus alienating the Roman population (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.117). By July 537, virtually all rural estates of the Roman countryside had been sacked and foraged for food, and famine started to appear, which struck another blow to the population of Rome (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.134). During a truce decided at the end of 537 (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.142–4), the Goths tried and failed to infiltrate the city through the Aqua Virgo's tunnels (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.147–8). In March

538, the siege ended, and the Goths left not without being harassed by the Romans (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.150). In 540, the Roman army entered Ravenna and Belisarius was offered the kingship of Italy that he feigned to accept to pacify the Goths and end this war that had been taking a heavy toll on the Roman countryside (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.187–90).

The Imperial victory meant that Belisarius was ordered to leave Italy and that the Peninsula soon began to be taxed as a fully integrated part of the Empire, which shook the population that had not been taxed by imperial agents for over 50 years (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.210). Some Roman generals stayed in Italy with their armies to defend the *status quo* (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.209). Peace, however, would not last long. In the northern Po valley, indeed, the Goths proclaimed Totila king and started to prepare for war in 541 (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.214). The Ostrogothic army took town after town, and by the summer of 542, it controlled southern and Central Italy. The taxes collected by the Empire were now diverted towards Totila, and the Gothic army swelled with every victory. The Gothic army was instructed not to hurt civilians and to return them to their families, which gained the favor of the already desperate Italian population. In addition, Totila promised the ownership of the land to tenants and freedom to slaves who would join his army; and many did (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.328). In the meantime, the Imperial generals and soldiers that had stayed in Italy, stayed at their respective cities, from where they plundered the countryside, trying to squeeze out as much wealth as they could. This slowly alienated the Italian population they were supposed to have liberated and now to protect (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.222). The Ostrogothic banner quickly overran Italy (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.214–9). Emperor Justinian sent Belisarius back to Italy (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.227). The Ostrogoths, besieged Rome again in 545 (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.235) and took it on 17 December 546, when some Imperial soldiers betrayed their banner and opened the gates during the night (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.243). During the siege, the population of Rome suffered hunger again, but this time it was amplified by the misconduct of the Imperial generals that used the misery to enrich themselves by selling military rations at exorbitant prices (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.237–8). By the end of the siege, the few remaining citizens fled the city, and the Gothic army left as it was too small to hold on to Rome and other more strategic positions were deemed more urgent to take by Totila (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.246). For about six weeks, Rome was left deserted until the Imperial army reoccupied it. Belisarius ordered the population from the immediate surrounding countryside to be commissioned to help the soldiers repair the walls and secure the city (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.248). Early in 549, Belisarius was recalled to Constantinople (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.256), and during that same year's summer Totila ordered to march on Rome to try to take it back. Rome was therefore besieged another time, but this siege ended quickly with the surrender of the few hundred hungry Roman soldiers, most of whom chose to accept to serve under the Gothic banner (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.262–4). Totila and his army were ultimately defeated by the Imperial army in 552 (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.282–8) after what had become a war of extinction (the Imperial army did not take prisoners anymore) (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.286). The Imperial army took Rome the same year (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.290).

The war over, the Imperial administration sought to restore political and economic order in Italy: tenants returned to their lands, owners that had been expropriated recovered their land, slaves were returned to their owners and public funding for infrastructure maintenance was reestablished (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.293). However, the effects of the Gothic War would be felt long after it had ended: the intensive agricultural system revolving around the city of Rome did not survive the fall of the western part of the Empire and the sharp decrease

in demand from the metropolis (Tomassetti, Chiumenti & Bilancia 1979, p.78). What's more during 6th century, less defensible villas did not survive the Gothic Wars. It was most likely the case in the area of current Villa Ada. Rural sites that remained usually became the backbone of the Medieval settlement system, many becoming castles by the 8th century (Terrenato 2007, p.151). War would, however, return to Italy in 568 with the Lombard invasion (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.295).

5.3. Christianization

This section serves the purpose to explore a side of how Christianization happened in Roman society and how it affected the landscape around Rome. Any social and political change will impact the landscape the respective landscape where it takes place, but we must also consider that there are parts of at least three distinct networks of catacombs under Villa Ada: this piece of land hosted conversion, worship and other related cultural practices.

5.3.1. Christianity in the religious Roman context

Religion was very much embedded in the political structure of the Roman state (Garnsey et al. 2015, p.187). New, foreign gods were officially invited into the Roman official religion when the state expanded and included new lands (Garnsey et al. 2015, p.194). Roman religion was receptive, and syncretism was the norm. This happened through both the penetration of Roman religious aspects into foreign religions, and the incorporation of foreign gods and beliefs into Roman spiritual traditions (Smith 2007, p.276). At the same time, personal religious interpretations and rites were permitted in private (Garnsey et al. 2015, p.199). The key was to respect the status quo, which was believed to be the base of the *pax deorum* ('divine peace') that the gods gave in return of collective appropriate religious practice. Such a practice was considered a religious and civic obligation towards the state and the gods (Garnsey et al. 2015, p.198). With the integration of so many different ethnicities and beliefs in the Empire and such a tolerance for the non-public sphere, different so-called mystery religions were practiced privately throughout the Empire. One of the most known examples was Mithraism, which became very popular within legionaries and slaves (Garnsey et al. 2015, p.196). Mithraism is a good example to illustrate what the clear distinction in Roman society between what was an appropriate public cult and not. Despite Mithraism's popularity, it was never accepted as official, but was allowed to be practiced in private and never persecuted, because it did not challenge the public religious status quo (Beard, North & Price 1998, p.211–44; Garnsey et al. 2015, p.196; Smith 2007, p.278).

Similarly, Christian beliefs were generally allowed to exist on the private sphere. Churches were allowed to grow across the Empire until the mid-3rd century. Particularly striking is the overall absence of references to Christianity in non-Christian sources, which suggests that they were not that much of a concern or seen as a threat until the mid-3rd century (Garnsey et al. 2015, p.198). Amid this tolerance, there were, however, punctual persecutions of Christians and Jews (Smith 2007 p.276), but their circumstances varied, and the prosecutions were handled case by case and based on criminal charges and not because of their Christian denomination (Garnsey et al. 2015, p.197).

5.3.2. The Roman Church grows into a major player in the Roman society

The last and most severe persecution happened under Galerius and Diocletian, starting in 303 CE, and ended by Galerius' hand with the edict of toleration (311 CE), making Christianity a

licit religion. With the subsequent edict of Milan by co-emperors Constantine and Licinius' (313 CE), Christianity started to be celebrated in the light and newly formed rural residence areas grew around Christian sanctuaries (Tomassetti, Chiumenti & Bilancia 1979, p.74). Constantine and his family's substantial donations to the Church allowed the Church's *patrimonium* to quickly increase and become an important social and economic power in the Empire (Tomassetti, Chiumenti & Bilancia 1979, p.80–1). Thus, the Church became a massive 'corporate property-owning entity', operating in practice as a gargantuan trans-regional household (Sessa 2012, p.115). These changes started the power shift between pagans and Christians (Reece 1999, p.165), that could not be stopped even by emperor Julian's (364–375) best efforts to bring back paganism: paganism political weight did not make it against the ever-growing Christianity (Reece 1999, p.166). Even some Barbaric tribes across the Empire's frontier started to convert to Christianity (more specifically, to Arianism, considered as heresy by the Orthodox Christians)(Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.39–40). The spread of Christianity was accompanied by the development of the churches as institutions and of their respective ecclesiastic administration. Bishops, as leaders of regional Christian communities, became powerful actors in the Roman society. The bishop of Rome's position quickly gained prominence and developed into the Papacy, a major temporal power in the Christian world.

5.3.3. The conversion of the Roman elite and the Roman countryside

Christianization happened first in cities and progressively spread to the countryside by the 4th century (Dyson 2003, p.98). This new faith reached both the poor and the elite. When urban elites started to convert, some embraced their new faith by retiring into their rural estates to live a semi-monastic life (Dyson 2003, p.98). Some aristocrats opened their homes and country villas to be used as churches (villa-church phenomenon) (Tomassetti, Chiumenti & Bilancia 1979, p.70–1) and donated part of their resources for their community (Sessa 2012, p.16). Under Constantine, donations increased, and the first churches were built around the Empire exclusively for religious purposes (Reece 1999, p.90–1). Christianization of the Empire happened at the expense of traditional Roman religion: not only were churches built, but pagan sites were also converted (Reece 1999, p.93). Full Christianization was, however, a long process. For instance, by 400 CE, the cities of the Empire were majorly Christian, even if pagan monuments were still standing and worship was still practiced (Kulikowski 2007, p.9), but when Alaric's Gothic army besieged Rome between 408 and 410 CE, facing desperation, a wave of residual paganism reemerged throughout the city, when the Romans turned toward the old gods in prayer. The Pope even authorized sacrifices when held in secret (Kulikowski 2007, p.10). In the countryside, traditional superstitions seem to have lasted well after the official Christianization of the Empire (Tomassetti, Chiumenti & Bilancia 1979, p.68). The transition had to be forced sometimes through different means (Tomassetti, Chiumenti & Bilancia 1979, p.153). To fight these old practices, sacred forests were decimated because of their strong and deeply rooted pagan association. To counter the worship of isolated trees and other natural elements and create new associations, images of Mary and other saints were introduced at these locations. The cult of the saints was also used to found new centers of settlement around monasteries (dedicated to specific saints, e.g. St. Basil or Benedict), and to replace pagan cults. For instance, the cult of the Caesars was replaced by Saint Caesarius, the cult of Castor and Pollux by Saint Hyppolytus (tamers of horses), the cults of Sylvanus, Apollo and Diana by Saint Sylvester, the cult of the nymphs by Saint Nympha, to cite a few (Tomassetti, Chiumenti & Bilancia 1979, p.153).

5.3.4. The Christian household

The importance of the Roman household needs not be introduced again. As mentioned before, the Roman household was a key element of society, and also a sacred place (Bowes 2007). The cultural framework did not change much, Christianization in elite households was grafted into preexisting norms (Bowes 2007). Thus was created the ascetic householder figure, born from the marriage between the idealized qualities of the apostles (celibacy, communal living, renunciation and poverty) and the traditional prerogatives of the *paterfamilias* (estate management, procreation, property ownership) (Sessa 2012, p.58). The *dominus* was now the steward of God, following the logic that everything on Earth belongs to God alone (Sessa 2012, p.67). However, this image was ideal for religious and intellectual metaphor, it did not change anything in the actual position of the householders in practical terms (Bowes 2007; Sessa 2012, p.68). Similarly to in pagan conditions, the *dominus* had to see that in his household proper worship, now Christian, was held, and that no subversive superstitions, now idolatry, were practiced (Sessa 2012 pp.76-79). The *dominus* could prove his virtue and political ability by running a successful, ethical and efficient *domus* (household) (Sessa 2012, p.35–7). In addition, the *domina* (*dominus*' wife), was expected to assist her husband to ensure the proper Christian ways of the household (including e.g. not to treat slaves too harshly and to provide for them) and was regarded as responsible as her husband for her own salvation and for those under her care (Sessa 2012, p.80–1). The continuation of the elite's overall structure ensured its supremacy; now it even had a renewed legitimacy (Sessa 2012, p.83). This remained true until the late 6th century when the Empire was crumbling (Sessa 2012, p.37, 85).

5.3.5. The Church established her authority across Roman society

The bishopric of Rome (i.e. the papacy), had to fight to establish itself as a reference within the city of Rome first. In spite of a certain importance within Christianity (the Bishop of Rome was considered 'first within equals'), events, such as the Laurentian schism (498–506 CE), suggest that the Roman Church was not fully unified yet, and that the bishop of Rome did not hold power and full control on all of Rome's clerics (Sessa 2012, p.213–6). The proper organization of Rome's See became a political struggle as well, as with the donations under Constantine of various estates of imperial and private *patrimonium* meant a dominion over a significant territory in the Roman countryside and in Italy (Ashby 1927, p.46) and control over large amounts of wealth as well. By 500 CE, the Roman bishop exercised ecclesiastic jurisdiction over the administrative district of *Italia Suburbicaria* (which included about the southern two thirds of the Peninsula, and the islands of Sicily, Sardinia and Corsica) (Sessa 2012, p.25). We are talking of a jurisdiction over 200 suburbicarian dioceses (and thus bishops) and thousands of clerics (Sessa 2012, p.29). However, authority had to be established on lay households as well. Christian estates had been also centers of independent religious activity, acting as being part of the Christian community, as equals and partners of bishops and other estates (Bowes 2007). It is worth noting that rural estates covered large land surfaces and included thousands of persons (Bowes 2007). In these terms, rural estates had been the main actors of Christianization in the countryside, where most bishops' influence had no reach, thus escaping episcopal control (Bowes 2007). With time, bishops tried to establish themselves as council and spiritual references, when problems intersected civil law, Christian ethics and domestic governance (Sessa 2012, p.128). The bishop of Rome, therefore, used situations of crisis as opportunities to assert his authority and position within Roman society. We could cite three good examples of such interventions. Firstly, many opportunities took place in the domestic sphere (Sessa 2012, p.159). By the early 5th century, many private households hosted religious rituals and ceremonies (in villa-churches for instance), even if bishops discouraged it in favor of communal services in settings controlled by the Church. This practice was intentionally

curbed during the late 5th century, when Pope Leo (457–474) and Emperor Zeno (474–491) issued laws that regulated the consecration of churches and placement of relics in buildings. Later, under Justinian (527–565), the consecration of private spaces were restricted and subject to the bishop's authorization (for consecration of buildings but also for invitations of clerics to celebrate rites in private homes) (Sessa 2012, p.164–6). It was more a matter of principle and authority, as in practice authorization was virtually automatic, and householders were systematically allowed to consecrate their churches (no evidence of refusal) (Sessa 2012, p.169). Be that as it may, the result was an increased control by the Roman bishop over private households and its hierarchical ecclesiastic structure, by requiring the Papacy's direct involvement in religious matters of the household (Sessa 2012, p.168). The Roman bishop was thus enthroned as the superior authority regarding the household's religious life at the expense of the *dominus* (Sessa 2012, p.263). It is worth noting that this control over religious practice was a manifestation of the larger trend about how the bishops became the ones defining Christian orthodoxy, by monopolizing liturgical and doctrinal affairs: places under their influence became places of proper belief (Bowes 2007).

Secondly, the bishop of Rome intervened as the defender of private property, by intervening against local clerics that attempted to force donations (Sessa 2012, p.162). In addition, slaves were confirmed as the master's possession⁵⁵ (Sessa 2012, p.107). In other words, conversion did not mean manumission (Sessa 2012, p.149), and both slaves and *coloni* (peasants attached to specific land) were forbidden to leave their land to join a monastic or ecclesiastic life without their master's previous and explicit permission (Sessa 2012, p.156). Thus, despite the tension between the bishop of Rome and lay householders, collaboration brought them together and created opportunities for increasing the leadership status of the Roman bishop (Sessa 2012, p.281).

Finally, the Roman bishop asserted his power through the increasingly deep interconnection between bishops and elite households (Sessa 2012, p.217). It is worth noting that the majority of senatorial families did not convert until the late 4th century CE (Sessa 2012, p.259), but once converted, members of the Roman elite quickly started to become clerics in large numbers (Sessa 2012, p.276). The distinction between bishop, lay and cleric in the sphere of Christian leadership became even more blurry (Bowes 2007). Thus, Christianization became a political game on top of a religious one (Sessa 2012, p.245), where the bishop of Rome could further exercise his temporal power.

5.4. The catacombs under Villa Ada

Different sets of galleries exist under current Villa Ada. Apart from the aqueduct Aqua Virgo, which we have already discussed, different catacombs can be found underground. Catacombs are underground cemeteries composed by a network of galleries and chambers that are often connected to Christianity (Claridge 2010, p.447; Fiocchi Nicolai 2002, p.9). You could be wondering: why talk about catacombs if they are not visible for the unsuspecting observer wandering across the land of Villa Ada? The reason is simple: the catacombs constitute a whole world underground and reflect processes and social changes that have impacted the visible, aboveground landscape. The catacombs run over 1000 km of galleries under Rome⁵⁶. Villa Ada alone counts five known catacomb networks: Catacomb of Priscilla, Catacomb of

⁵⁵ It is worth pointing out that the Roman episcopal household owned so many slaves that it needed to create specialized steward positions to oversee them by the 6th century (Sessa 2012, p.107).

⁵⁶ To give an idea: as the crow flies, Frankfurt, Luxembourg, Ibiza, Algiers, Tripoli, Sofia, Budapest or Prague are all less than 1000 km away from Rome.

the Jordans, Catacomb of Ilaria, Catacomb of Thrasion and anonymous Catacomb of Via Anapo. In this section, I will mainly discuss the Catacomb of Priscilla, as it is the best studied. In Ancient Rome, virtually all catacombs and other above-ground funerary complexes could be found outside the Ancient core of the city, placed along the Ancient main roads leading to Rome, such as the Via Salaria. One of the most ancient Roman laws⁵⁷ stipulated that the dead were to be handled outside the city's sacred perimeter, the so-called *pomerium* (Tomassetti, Chiumenti & Bilancia 1979, p.70). That is why, excluding some rare cases (e.g. exceptional privilege), all inhabitants of city of Rome were buried outside the city walls.

Roman catacombs are often depicted as Christian safe harbors against persecutions in different works of fiction (Beard, North & Price 1998, p.271); the most known example are the novel *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ* (Wallace 1880) and its cinematographic adaptation (Wyler 1959). But contrary to popular belief, catacombs were exclusively for burial purposes and not for habitation or refuge (Fiocchi Nicolai 2002, p.12). Catacombs were still visited places, mainly associated to the commemoration of the dead and the cult of the martyrs (Beard, North & Price 1998, p.271). But before becoming enormous funerary complexes associated with Christianity, catacombs went through centuries of change.

The origins of the catacomb of Priscilla, like other Roman can be traced to the 2nd century CE, when the norm for funerary practices shifted from cremation to inhumation (Beard, North & Price 1998, p.270). Around Rome, families and funerary associations started building chambers underground to lay the bodies to rest, often on private property (Claridge 2010, p.447). The further diffusion of inhumation increased the demand of burial space, which in turn contributed to the rise of land cost (Fiocchi Nicolai 2002, p.16). The solution to create affordable burial space was found underground. Soon short galleries were dug under mausolea, and as extensions of preexisting chamber tombs (Fiocchi Nicolai 2002, p.16). However, it did not take long before the Christian community took over the catacomb building enterprise in Rome (Beard, North & Price 1998, p.270). In this aspect, the growing Roman Christian Church soon showed that catacombs were more than just communal burials, they were the result of a well-functioning community. A community that was now economically and organizationally capable of setting up and maintaining such vast and numerous cemeteries (Fiocchi Nicolai 2002, p.15). In practical terms, the Christian community organized a communal fund from its members' donations to ensure a proper funeral even for the poorest of the congregants (Fiocchi Nicolai 2002, p.13–4). Also, the professionals building the catacombs and handling the tomb sales, called '*fossores*' were part of the ecclesiastic body and belonged to the clergy of the Roman Church (Mazzoleni 2002, p.165).

As such, the oldest parts of catacomb of Priscilla dates back to 190 CE (Beard, North & Price 1998, p.270). The current complex developed from three different cores: the so-called 'Greek Chapel', the hypogeum of the Acilii and the *arenario* (Claridge 2010, p.454). From these original cores, soon grew different galleries and chambers, using when possible already existing cavities. *Cuniculi*, *piscinae* (i.e. reservoir pools) and quarries were converted into galleries and chambers, and wells into skylights (Tolotti 1970, p.26–7, 36–42). What is today the first level of the Catacomb of Priscilla was thus created during the early stages of the complex (ca. 200–230 CE) interconnecting the convenient preexisting structures, giving them a somewhat unplanned appearance (Claridge 2010, p.454; Tolotti 1970, p.81–3). In contrast to the almost organic growth of the first level, the second level (as well as some later extensions in the first level) appears to have been dug *de novo* from ca. 230 to the early 4th century CE (Tolotti 1970,

⁵⁷ The so-called Twelve Tables was the Roman state's first codified set of laws, traditionally dated to 451/450 BCE (Bradley 2011, p.243).

p.212). This lower level supports the hypothesis that the Catacomb of Priscilla was planned and funded collectively, following a more rational plan to accommodate the growing needs of the funerary activities (Fiocchi Nicolai 2002, p.27).

The Catacomb of Priscilla was not the only cemetery to grow during the 3rd century CE. In fact, the reign of Constantine kick-started the enlargement of all Roman catacombs (Fiocchi Nicolai 2002, p.37). By the 360s CE, the ‘enlargement boom’ seems to have attenuated (Fiocchi Nicolai 2002, p.49), but the catacombs continued to be transformed until the 440s (Fiocchi Nicolai 2002, p.38–9). Rather than extending the networks, the focus of catacomb maintenance now shifted towards the enlargement and decoration of the already existent structures. In fact, the quantity of monumental areas and family chambers increased, and it is believed that it was the result of the mass conversion of the population and especially the elite (Fiocchi Nicolai 2002, p.38–9).

The conversion of the elite meant more means for the Christian community through generous donations, following the example of Emperor Constantine. The improved financial capability of Christians translated in lavish decoration in certain parts of the catacombs. Specific catacomb art emerged to decorate the catacombs walls, using hybridized themes. Pagan and other pagan themes representing daily-life scenes were painted alongside scenes from the new and old testaments (Bisconti 2002, p.100). Some examples of such biblical scenes can be found in the Catacomb of Priscilla; scenes such as *Daniel and the lions’ den* (from Daniel 6:1-28), the *Good Shepherd* (from John 10:1-21), a woman nursing a child (thought to be one of the first representations of Mary) or the ‘*fractio panis*’ (the breaking of bread of the Eucharist) can be found in the so-called Greek Chapel of the catacomb of Priscilla (Angelova 2015, p.245–6; Tolotti 1970, p.260). Decorations did not end with painting, architectural features contributed to create a suggestive atmosphere. Elements such as skylights allowed fresh air to enter the galleries and strategically let light pierce through the darkness and illuminate specific decorations (Bisconti 2002, p.72–3). Lamps were also used not only for illumination but also to cement the atmosphere, for the ‘Followers of Christ’ to experience while visiting the catacombs (Fiocchi Nicolai 2002, p.81–2).

Visits to the catacombs were frequent from their origins until their abandonment later on. The nature of the visits changed, however, through time. Pope Sylvester built a small basilica at the location of the Catacomb of Priscilla, today within the perimeter of Villa Ada⁵⁸; Sylvester was buried there at his death and other popes followed suit and were buried there until 555 CE (Claridge 2010, p.455). From the 360s CE, the Popes, starting with Damasus (366-384) favored the cultic aspects of the catacombs. To privilege the worship of saints and previous popes buried in the catacombs, and to make place for believers inside the catacombs, Pope Damasus pushed for a further monumental transformation (Fiocchi Nicolai 2002, p.49). New staircases and skylights were built, as well as spaces for the liturgy were created (Mazzoleni 2002, p.176). Soon catacombs became pilgrimage destinations, and became part of a whole circuit in Rome (Claridge 2010, p.449). These further developments were the first signs of the Roman church officially sanctioning the cult of the saints as a form of control and management of popular devotion (Fiocchi Nicolai 2002, p.50). By the 5th century CE, the catacombs were used almost exclusively for worship (Fiocchi Nicolai 2002, p.60). Subsequently, the successive wars with the Goths (5th–6th centuries CE) and then the Lombards, made the countryside of Rome unsafe. As a result, the regular worship activities were disrupted. When the Popes decided to transfer the bodies of the martyrs buried in the catacombs to specifically dedicated sanctuaries within the safety of the city walls, the catacombs were simply abandoned and fell

⁵⁸ The basilica of Sylvester was built on top of an older construction from the 1st–2nd centuries CE (Tolotti 1970, p.112–4).

into oblivion by the 12th century (Claridge 2010, p.449; Fiocchi Nicolai 2002, p.9; Tomassetti, Chiumenti & Bilancia 1979, p.74).

6. From the Medieval reoccupation to the unification of the property

After the end of the Gothic wars (6th century CE), there appears to be nothing but silence regarding the land of Villa Ada. There is no direct mention of the land around Villa Ada, as in previous periods. The archaeological record is also blank for at least eight centuries. However, it is still possible to discuss the possible landscape changes, based on the knowledge of the Roman countryside in general during medieval and early modern times. Rome stood out from other Italian cities during the Middle Ages for multiple reasons: the city of Rome controlled a vast hinterland in a way that was unique for the Italian Peninsula. We can therefore expect that the land of Villa Ada continued to be under direct control of urban actors, even though they are not always named. The medieval Roman countryside was, however, not a monolith and underwent changes that I am going to address in this chapter. The text will be divided in three distinct parts. In the first, I will cover the demographic and general societal trends that will be useful to understand the possible evolution of the land of Villa Ada, in terms of land use and land ownership. The second will examine the probable land use related to our landscape. Finally, the third part will recount the unified property that today corresponds to the perimeter of Villa Ada.

6.1. General demographic and societal trends of the Roman countryside

With the fall of the Western Roman Empire started the so-called early Middle Ages. During the 5th century CE, the ancient orders collapsed, and new ones reformed until the 9th century.

The Early Middle Ages were marked by a period of initial abandonment of the countryside, including the Roman suburbs (Piranomonte 2002, p.13). This phase of abandonment was followed by a progressive reorganization of the landscape, and a reoccupation from the 8th century onwards (Chiappa Mauri 2002, p.23). It is difficult to imagine the scale of this change. The population of Italy was estimated to 8 million during the 3rd century CE, but was halved by the mid-6th century (Chiappa Mauri 2002, p.24–5). The Gothic Wars, the comeback of the plague and other epidemics⁵⁹, floods, earthquakes and fires throughout the Mediterranean region tried and overcame the ability of Italian communities to protect themselves against all these perturbations. Eventually, Italian societies proved themselves unable to recover demographically, economically and politically (Chiappa Mauri 2002, p.25). This situation, however, did not last long, as by the 9th century, an agrarian expansion was well underway (Pini 2002, p.476–7). In fact, agricultural expansion in the Roman hinterland and on the Peninsula continued until the 14th century (Montanari 2002, p.66).

This agrarian expansion took place under a specific legal land situation in Rome. As discussed above, the lands of the huge Roman hinterland were owned and controlled by urban landowners, and managed exclusively for the needs of the urban market (Wickham 2014, p.109). This

⁵⁹ Epidemics of bubonic plague between 6th and 8th centuries, smallpox, tuberculosis and leprosy start to diffuse in Italy (Chiappa Mauri 2002, p.27).

predominance of large landowners (whether lay and ecclesiastic) persisted until very recently (Wickham 2014, p.109). Large landowners leased out their land to lay that would in turn rent the land for a specific use (Wickham 2014, p.39). Initially, the lawful landowners were almost exclusively ecclesiastic entities (e.g. individual churches, monasteries or orders), but this situation changed progressively on both ends of the owner-lessee relationship from the 13th century onwards (Maire-Vigueur 1974, p.70). On one hand, from the 11th century, landowners started to lease these lands to a 'new aristocracy' and what can be referred to as a 'medium elite'. These new actors were part of emerging classes in the Roman society, in terms of wealth and influence (Wickham 2014, p.56) but came from a commercial background (Maire-Vigueur 1974, p.135). On the other hand, these lay landowners (from new and old aristocracy) started to take over ecclesiastic land (Maire-Vigueur 1974, p.130).

Overall, the trend of population increase in the Roman countryside went on. Black Death marked a pause, but the population continued to increase after this crisis.

6.2. Chasing shadows on the land of Villa Ada

6.2.1. Plausible past land use in the land of Villa Ada

The land of Villa Ada is likely to have been deserted for habitation and cultivation during the early Middle Ages, as Rome's population was only a shadow of its recent past. The land of Villa Ada was probably too far away from the walls of Rome to be cultivated or settled permanently. Forests and *macchie* grew in the valley of the Tiber (Chiappa Mauri 2002, p.28) and very likely in the area around the land Villa Ada as well. These overgrown rural spaces provided the ideal environmental conditions for the diffusion of alternative activities to complement subsistence farming, alternatives such as hunting, fishing, wild fruit picking and extensive herding (Chiappa Mauri 2002, p.28; Cortonesi 2002, p.83). Rome, like the other cities in the Peninsula were now more isolated than during the Imperial times; roads stopped being maintained and were left to crumble, making transportation troublesome (Chiappa Mauri 2002, p.25). Nevertheless, trade did not die with the end of the Western Empire (Dini 2002, p.384; Montanari 2002, p.61). And Rome had the particularity to have a strong Bishopric, the Papacy, that had ensured the stable inflow of grain to the city (Dini 2002, p.385). During the 6th and 7th centuries, the Papacy arranged the grain transport on her own ships between Papal lands in Sicily and the city of Rome (Dini 2002, p.385). The stable supply of grain was complemented by a small-scale, diversified subsistence agriculture characteristic of the Early Middle Ages (Chiappa Mauri 2002, pp.28–29) that met the Roman population's needs as much as possible (Montanari 2002, p.61). Any small-scale cultivation must have happened near the security of the city, especially during the Early Middle Ages. Even if grain was assured, and its cultivation was not urgent in the region, cereal cultivation was nonetheless reestablished over time. By the 12th century a cereal belt spanned around the Rome, located between 3–5 km and 20–25 km from the city walls (Wickham 2014, p.41). The land of Villa Ada is located partially within this distance from the walls (between 1.5 and 3.3 km by following the Via Salaria), and could therefore have been used to cultivate grain or other crop at some point. Near the bridge Ponte Salario, on what seem to be the hills of the land of Villa Ada⁶⁰, several mentions of land for sowing are reported by Adinolfi (1881, p.90–93) to have had changed hands during the late 14th century. According to Adinolfi's account, the properties were known

⁶⁰ These lands location are explicitly localized out of the city gates, on this side of the bridge Ponte Salario, before crossing the river (Adinolfi 1881, p.90).

as *Canicatore* and *Monte della Giogia*. The latter is particularly important because it is in fact the hill of Antemnae, now named after the family that owned the land. This hill came to be known later as Monte delle Gioie and to give its name to the whole hilly area in the following centuries. It is difficult to know what kind of crop was sowed, but at least one of the pieces of land in this area is explicitly said to contain spinach culture (Adinolfi 1881, p.90–1). A 1547-map by Eufrosino della Volpaia clearly shows two *casali* (farmhouses) north of the Parioli hills, at the approximate location of the land of Villa Ada (Marconcini 2010, p.8). The lack of indication about the crops makes it impossible to confirm or refute if grain was cultivated in the area until the 14th century, but it is more likely that it was reserved for other uses as will be discussed below.

Livestock herding, especially bovine and ovine (Cortonesi 2002, p.87), was also another probable form of land use. In the Roman countryside, bovines were still common, mainly for work—traction and transport—and for their milk (Cortonesi 2002, p.94–5). Bovine meat production also took place, but limited, due to a short demand for veal specific for the city of Rome (Cortonesi 2002, p.95). However, this demand came nowhere close to Rome’s great appreciation (and therefore high demand) for lamb meat and sheep cheese (Cortonesi 2002, p.103). The *Pecorino Romano*, Roman sheep cheese, was also greatly appreciated throughout the Peninsula, and was a great exportable good for Rome’s economy (Cortonesi 2002, p.103). Goats were raised by the poor people for local consumption: goat milk was of good quality and its cheese was very much needed to complement the diet. In addition, young goats provided good meat (Cortonesi 2002, p.104). The goat’s reputation as the poor men’s livestock did not help its diffusion as livestock. In addition, goats were also seen as a direct threat to crop cultures (because goats would eat anything) (Cortonesi 2002, p.104–5). As a result, goat numbers were limited throughout the Roman countryside, and goat grazing constrained by strict rules, excluding them from sensitive areas, such as forests and crop fields (Cortonesi 2002, p.104–5). Still, their small numbers did not curb their ubiquity, as having one or two goats could be already very beneficial for a family’s diet and income. It is then possible that on the land of Villa Ada, goats were seen grazing during the Middle Ages and then until more recent times.

In fact, even if livestock-related activities were generally restricted to the grain belt (previously cited), there are three possible reports from the mid-16th century (Adinolfi 1881, p.90–1), mid-17th century (Fea 1790, p.264) and early 19th century that suggest the existence of pasture land on the hill of Antemnae itself (Nibby 1819, p.70). Firstly, Adinolfi reports that (at least parts of) the property known as Monte delle Gioie was rented as pasture for livestock wintering in 1539 (Adinolfi 1881, p.91). Adinolfi also mentions the earlier existence of other pieces of uncultivated land in 1345, without specifying their use, though we can imagine that grazing could have been a possibility. It is difficult to prove continuity of pasture between 1345 and 1539 in the area, but at least we know that livestock raising occurred in the area, and it is possible to think that it persisted through time. Secondly, Fragments of information of the landscape is given in a ghost story dating from the 17th century and documented by Fea (1790, p.264). Tabarrino, a butcher from (the neighborhood of) St. Eustachio in Rome, and his two brothers and some friends went to the hill of Antemnae—called by Fea “Monte delle Gioie”—to have a nice picnic. Once arrived, they let the horses loose from the shackles of the carriage, to let them graze around and rest. Having heard stories about the presence of ghosts in the area, the friends thought it would be funny to pretend to cast out these spirits. As they played around, the group was shocked to see their horseless carriage start moving by itself, moving down towards the slope leading to the river. The carriage raced downhill and dove into the Aniene. According to the story, the carriage had to be pulled it out of the river using oxen; and the friends remained horrified by the experience (Fea 1790, p.264). If we take this story at face value—being moved by a malicious invisible hand or not—the carriage must

have covered a rather unwooded surface to reach the river. On the basis of Fea's story, we may then assume that the area was, at least occasionally, grazed by livestock. Thirdly, Nibby describes the hill of Antemnae as being clearly uncultivated and lacking any significant woody vegetation by the early 19th century (Nibby 1819, p.70). Nibby makes this comment in reference to the fact that it was in fact possible to see the presence of ancient material half-covered on the ground and have a clear and undisturbed view on both rivers and the surrounding land (Nibby 1819, p.70). Considering the combination of sources, it is not unreasonable to think that the described pastoral landscape was a legacy of and a continuation of past activities during the previous centuries. Based on what we know about livestock raising in the Roman countryside from medieval times until recently, the possible pastoral activities occurring on the land of Villa Ada most likely revolved around sheep. In fact, the nearby bridge Ponte Salarario acted as a one of the centers for customs duty collection for sheep, where flocks were counted, thus regulating transhumance activity (Pasquinucci 2002, p.205–6; Tomassetti, Chiumenti & Bilancia 1979, p.119). Sheep were, therefore, not foreign to the land of Villa Ada⁶¹.

In our landscape, it would have been likely also to find beehives. Apiculture remained a very important activity for different sectors of Roman society as well (Cortonesi 2002, p.118). Honey was one of the two main sweeteners in the whole Peninsula⁶² (cane sugar was imported and incredibly expensive), and bee wax was important for writing (wax tablets), for illumination (candles), seals and religious figurines (Cortonesi 2002, p.118). Besides all the animals discussed until this point, other animals raised in the Roman countryside⁶³ would have been less likely to have been found on the land of Villa Ada, or at least it is impossible at the moment to prove any direct link.

The other most likely land use possibility for the land of Villa Ada during the Middle Ages and early modern times is vine and fruit tree cultivation. During the 6th and 7th centuries, viticulture was no longer a plantation crop, but rather a crop found in urban spaces (Montanari 2002, p.65–6; Pini 2002, p.476–7), grown even within Rome's city walls (Wickham 2014, p.41). During the 9th century, viticulture expanded greatly again, under the impulse of clerical authorities, and followed and amplified by a lay agrarian expansion (Pini 2002, p.476–7). By the 10th century, a vineyard and orchard belt had emerged around Rome, extending 3–5 km from the city walls (Wickham 2014, p.41). The first evidence on the presence of vineyards dates to the 14th centuries; Adinolfi reports that different vineyards on and around Monte delle Gioie, the hill of Antemnae (Adinolfi 1881, p.92–3). If we were to jump to the 1590s, Bosio reports vineyards on the left side of the Via Salaria, between the Catacomb of Trasona and the Catacomb of Priscilla (Bosio 1632), covering parts of the southern half of the land of Villa Ada⁶⁴. In this aspect, the so-called *Casale dei Trenatori* (mansion, see Fig. 5), one of the three buildings forming the Royal Stables in Villa Ada today, has its origins in the 1500s and served as a cellar for the production and storage of wine (Marconcini 2010, p.45). Finally, different vineyards covered significant parts of the land of Villa Ada by the 18th century (Marconcini

⁶¹ However, as for cattle and goats, there is no definitive way to confirm their presence

⁶² The other main sweetener, *defrutum*, was grape concentrate and considerably cheaper. Cane sugar was incredibly expensive and considered exotic, because imported from distant Asian lands, like Persia for instance (Thurmond 2005, p.133, 248).

⁶³ Chicken and their eggs were consumed and complemented farmers' diet (Cortonesi 2002, p.112–3). In addition, geese were also raised for their meat and feathers, doves for their meat and 'guano', and rabbits for meat production (Cortonesi 2002, p.113–4).

⁶⁴ One was directly nearby the Catacomb of Trasona. Another one, located ca. 750 m away from this catacomb, towards the Aniene, is reported as being property of the Basilica of St. John Lateran and leased to a De' Crescenti (Bosio 1632, p.488). Another vineyard is reported to be just next to the latter, following the Via Salaria towards the bridge Ponte Salarario (Bosio 1632, p.505). Another one (leased to a certain De' Cuppis) is reported to be on the small hill near the current entrance of the Catacomb of Priscilla, and contained the ruins of the ancient Basilica of Pope Sylvester (Bosio 1632, p.533).

2010, p.9). It is difficult to prove any strict continuity, but let us consider what we know about wine consumption and production throughout the Middle Ages and the end of the 18th century. As wine had become a part of Roman identity during the Roman Empire, it quickly became a strong and important symbol also for Christian Europe (Pini 2002, p.476). Beyond the Christian religious symbolism, this beverage never stopped being a status symbol as well as simply a very popular drink (Pini 2002, p.476–7). In fact, wine was considered nutritious, and a remedy for many ailments, and safer to drink than water in many cases (Pini 2002, p.484). Wine was also the social drink *par excellence*: it was the drink of every-day recreation and celebration (Pini 2002, p.485). Estimates of wine consumption for the Italian Peninsula during the 13th century lie around 1 liter per person per day (Pini 2002, p.484). Vines were also a status symbol, as ownership of a vineyard within the 3-mile-radius belt around Rome was a condition to be recognized as citizen of Rome (Tomassetti, Chiumenti & Bilancia 1979, p.98). Given the importance and necessity of wine for the Roman population, and given Villa Ada's location well inside the 3–5-mile vineyard belt, vineyards are likely to have remained a significant part of the landcover in the area between the early Middle Ages and the late 18th century



Figure 5. Casale dei Trenatori.

(Marconcini 2010, p.9).

6.2.2. Other, non-agricultural elements of the landscape

Vineyards and orchards, and maybe livestock (mainly ovine) raising, as discussed above, were most likely the main land uses of the land of Villa Ada. The general landscape of the land of

Villa Ada and environs must have appeared as a mosaic, since pastures and vineyards were kept strictly separated: the livestock was left to graze on allocated plots, well-separated from any crop fields, or by the side of roads (Cortonesi 2002, p.88–9). This distinction of activities and land use was often accompanied by heated conflicts between crop farmers and shepherds, and crop fields were subject to active surveillance to keep livestock out (Cortonesi 2002, p.89). The resulting landscape mosaic was crossed by the Via Salaria, and other possible perpendicular roads. By the 16th century, it would have been possible to find the Church of the Divino Amore (Divine Love), today abandoned and found embedded in the portion of Villa Ada's wall along the Via Salaria (Marconcini 2010, p.46–7). In addition, at least by the 16th century, quarries were also part of the past landscape of the area, but it is difficult to know when such activities had started. In fact, 16th-century quarrying activities accidentally destroyed parts of the Catacomb of Priscilla (Tolotti 1970, p.194), but the same type of activities allowed for the accidental discovery of the Catacombs of Trasona and of the Jordans (Tolotti 1970, p.17), which are also partly under Villa Ada. The rediscovery of the catacombs brings us back to the underground element of the land of Villa Ada, and helps us remember that the land of Villa Ada consisted of more than what met the eye: as it has been already discussed in the previous chapter. The aqueduct Aqua Virgo and different sets of archaeological remains, including the networks of catacombs, subsisted under the surface during medieval times.

The first structure that crosses under the land of Villa Ada is the aqueduct Aqua Virgo. Similar to other features of the Roman countryside, the fall of the Western Roman Empire impacted Aqua Virgo. The aqueduct was directly damaged by the Goths in 537–538 CE (Heiken et al. 2005, p.3), but remained operational throughout the Middle Ages (Bono & Boni 1996). After the Gothic wars, all aqueducts of Rome were restored under the Eastern Roman Empire's authority. Then as the Middle Ages progressed, the lack of maintenance brought down most above-ground aqueducts, if not all (Coates-Stephens 1998). In fact, Aqua Virgo is generally considered the only ancient aqueduct still functional by the Late Middle Ages whereas all the above-ground aqueducts collapsed through time due to the lack of maintenance (Bono & Boni 1996). The Lombard siege of 756 CE resulted in the Aqua Virgo being damaged, but the aqueduct was then restored under papal orders (Coates-Stephens 1998). The next greater restorations happened under Popes Nicholas V (1447–1455), Pius IV (1559–1565) and Pius V (1566–1572), that lasted many years and ended in 1570. Another great restoration took place between the reigns of Popes Clement XII (1730–1740) and Benedict XIV (1740–1758) (Coates-Stephens 1998; Nibby 1849, p.470–1). Since Aqua Virgo draws water from the terrain it crosses (Bono & Boni 1996, p.467; Nibby 1849, p.467), it is possible to argue that it helps drain the landscape and regulate Villa Ada's land water levels. As mentioned above, the aqueduct is still very much in use today.

The catacombs of Rome were forgotten during the Early Middle Ages. By the 5th and 6th centuries CE (late Antiquity) the catacombs were used exclusively for worship (Fiocchi Nicolai 2002, p.60). They were visited and maintained only as long as the bodies of the venerated saints and martyrs were still there (Tomassetti, Chiumenti & Bilancia 1979, p.73). It is important to take the time to appreciate these underground spaces because, for a long time, they were surrounded by mystery, and the fascination for such hidden spaces fed the collective imagination and served as source of legends and ghost stories as the one related by Fea above (Fea 1790, p.264).

The catacombs were rediscovered and explored by Antonio Bosio in the 16th century (Tomassetti, Chiumenti & Bilancia 1979, p.71). His survey notes also contain descriptions of the land surface connected to the catacombs. Bosio's writings provide direct references of vineyards on the left side of the Via Salaria, and from his descriptions we can draw an image of location of vineyards on the land of Villa Ada (as discussed above), but also of other sacred

spaces like the small church del Divino Amore (Divine Love). The rediscovery of the catacombs was also very convenient for the Roman Catholic Church at the time. The 16th century was a time of reformation for Western Christianity, and the Catholic Church saw in the catacombs a source of much needed evidence to help her legitimize herself and to confirm Catholic dogmas (Tolotti 1970, p.10–1). In other words, the catacombs became fuel for the Counter-Reformation. During the 17th and 18th centuries, the catacombs were pillaged from their valuable content (Claridge 2010, p.449) with the approval of the ecclesiastic hierarchy (Fiocchi Nicolai 2002, p.12). In fact, the pillaging was eventually institutionalized in 1668 by pontifical decree (Fiocchi Nicolai 2002, p.12). The objects ended up in museums, private collections and in churches (Claridge 2010, p.449). The pillaging likely created a logical back and forth movement of people and artifacts in the area around the catacombs, and a gradual familiarization with the area. It is however difficult to determine the actual effect of this new traffic for the landscape of Villa Ada.

Besides underground cemeteries, other physical remains, including rooms of the Ancient Roman villa of Antemnae should also be mentioned. These rooms have not been subject to archaeological studies, because either they were either leveled during the fort construction, either left untouched and thus are still undiscovered under the surface, but there exist literary mentions of them. Carlo Fea reports (1790) that, under Pope Innocent X (1644–1655) and Pope Clement IX (1667–1669), excavations were organized to find buried treasures within the ruins of the hill Monte delle Gioie, but it was in vain. All that was found were rooms with lavishly decorated walls (Fea 1790, p.264). Particularly striking to the explorers was the cleanliness of the stucco and its finishing. It is easy to envisage that these kind of events might have had an impact on the locals' imagination.

6.3. The formation of a unified property

Having sketched the landscape of medieval and early modern times based on the very few circumstantial sources, we can move to the 1700s, where we can find the direct precursor properties that would eventually be unified as Villa Ada. In this regard, the formation of the unified property of Villa Ada has been very thoroughly synthesized by Emma Marconcini in 2010 (Marconcini, 2010). To my knowledge, there is no better reference for current Villa Ada for this period; and Marconcini helps me draw a map of the landscape of Villa Ada.

By the middle of the 18th century, the left side of the Via Salaria was a mosaic of different properties, consisting of vineyards, groves, reed beds and farmland (Marconcini 2010, p.9) — though we do not know what was sowed in this land. On the land of Villa Ada, we can distinguish three different precursory properties. Traveling this landscape and coming from Rome, we first found the vineyard of the scholar and physician Natale Saliceti (Donato 2017), then the vineyard of the lawyer Domenico Calzamiglia, and finally the vineyard of Michele Capocaccia (Marconcini 2010, p.9–10). First, it is worth noting that these owners were not aristocrats, but that they belonged to the bourgeoisie (Marconcini 2010, p.9). Then, although the properties were called 'vineyards' (in Italian '*vigna*'), they contained much more than that. In fact, reports from 18th-century surveys describe these properties as containing also fruit tree orchards, mulberry trees and reeds, and also spaces for leisure with roads, residential mansions and parks, groves and bird hunting spaces (Marconcini 2010, p.10–1).

In any case, Marino Torlonia bought Calzamiglia's property in 1783, and three years later, after his death, his son Giovanni Torlonia sold it to the prince Luigi Pallavicini (Marconcini 2010, p.10). Between 1785 and 1789, the Prince Luigi Pallavicini acquired other properties

nearby and unified these three properties (Marconcini 2010, p.9–10). Luigi Pallavicini also quickly ordered the reorganization of green spaces to better integrate the three previous parts into a coherent unified property (Marconcini 2010, p.11). The greenery was entrusted to Francesco Bettini, who had to fight to organize the property as he had envisioned. In fact, Bettini is said to have disliked strict symmetry and the pretension of grandiose formal gardens (Marconcini 2010, p.14). His aesthetical ideals conflicted with the architects and Pallavicini's demands for grandiosity (Marconcini 2010, p.13–5). As a result, the property ended up by the end of the renovation in 1792, as a mosaic of different elements, even if the details are now unknown: straight wide alleys, rocks, ponds, a belvedere, a coffee-house (i.e. temple of Flora) and English landscaping (Marconcini 2010, p.12–3).

The Napoleonic invasion of Rome marked a disinterest in the newly refurbished Villa Pallavicini. In 1804, Luigi Pallavicini rented out the villa to the cardinal Stanislao Sanseverino (1764–1826), with a clause for a later acquisition (Marconcini 2010, p.16). We know some details of the transaction as the two parties then went into a legal dispute over the contract. The legal dispute, which lasted until 1819, demanded land surveys to settle the issue. The surveys of the property generated some detailed descriptions that reveal to us the state of the property by that time (Marconcini 2010, p.16). The estate included a monumental entrance to the property, sided by a gatehouse, the mansion Salicetti (on today's Via Salaria 265), the mansion Pallavicini with an external double staircase (Fig. 6), other residential houses, a coffee-house (shaped as a classical temple; Fig. 7) and a roundabout at the intersection of the main alleys (Marconcini 2010, p.16). What a glorious sight must have been all these elements in the decades before the surveys. But sadly in 1819, the surveyors described most structures as crumbling and urgently needing maintenance (Marconcini 2010, p.17). In any case, the Gregorian cadaster of 1819 shows the new disposition of the estate, referred as 'Villa Pallavicini' (Marconcini 2010, p.11, 17–8).

In 1826, Luigi Pallavicini put the property up for sale and by 1839, the estate becomes 'Villa Potenziani' —as visible in the map of Rome of 1839 (Marconcini 2010, p.18). However, it is unknown when the ownership was transferred from Pallavicini to Potenziani. When Luigi Pallavicini died in 1835, the property was still listed as his, but in any case, the Villa remained Potenziani's property until 1872. Under the Potenziani, the estate was particularly used for its agricultural production, and did not undergo great transformation (Marconcini 2010, p.20). The more conspicuous modification could be found in the introduction of irregular alleys and flowerbeds (Marconcini 2010, p.20), visibly matching the codes of English gardens that were becoming increasingly popular in Rome by the mid-19th century (Marconcini 2010, p.18).

In 1872, the estate was bought by the king of Italy, Victor Emmanuel II of Savoy (Marconcini 2010, p.20). Between this year and the next (1872–1873), the king bought ten neighboring properties that had remained mostly agricultural land: the vineyard Barigioni (Marconcini 2010, p.46), the vineyard Paolotti (corresponding the Villa Ada's area of the Cavalli Madri), the vineyard of the Pontical Irish College, the vineyard Marzocchi, the vineyard Paparozzi and the vineyard Mengarini⁶⁵. In the following years (1875–1876), to these already acquired lands would be added the properties Tenuta del Ponte Salario (around hill of Antemnae and near the bridge Ponte Salario), the properties of Massimo and Jannoni families (area of Colle Roccolo), and the vineyards Prati Filonardi, Gualdi and Sabatini (in the area of the Acqua Acetosa) (Marconcini 2010, p.20). This new, unified estate covered 160 ha.

⁶⁵ The vineyard Mengarini corresponded to the previous vineyard Capocaccia that we have mentioned above (Marconcini 2010, p.20).



Figure 6. Casino Pallavicini.



Figure 7. Tempio di Flora/Temple of Flora, coffee house.

7. The formation of the current park: from private property to public property

7.1. Villa Ada as private park

From 1874, the reconfiguration of this new, very large property started. The landscaping project aimed to create a majestic and picturesque English landscape garden (Marconcini 2010, p.21). Over hundred thousand plants, sometimes exotic, were planted (Marconcini 2010, p.56), paths, alleys, stairs and other structures were built, and ponds and streams dug, all to make the most and exalt the natural morphology of the land (Marconcini 2010, p.21). Some pre-existing buildings were demolished (e.g. the houses of the previous properties Filonardi and Jannoni), other were restored or altered (e.g. the houses “antica Filomarino” and Paolotti). For example, the mansion of the former property Barigioni, dating from the early 1700s, was transformed into the so-called *Casale dei Trenatori* (mentioned above, see Fig. 5) to provide accommodation to the coachmen and to store the royal carriages (Marconcini 2010, p.45). The *Casale dei Trenatori* formed the first building of the Royal Stables. Besides reusing already existing buildings, the royal family also ordered the construction of different buildings for their own use in the new unified property. In 1874, the second building of the *Scuderie Reali* (Royal Stables) was built, the so-called *Scuderia d’agenzia* (Fig. 8). It was a stable for the horses of the royal family, which included also accommodation for the stable hands (Marconcini 2010, p.43–4). A third building for the Royal Stables was also built during the late 1800s, the so-called *Edificio centrale* (Central building) (Marconcini 2010, p.44). A small palace (“*Palazzina Reale*, now the Embassy of the Arab Republic of Egypt) was built, at the location of the former property Barigioni, to serve as place of residence and official entertainment and work (Marconcini 2010, p.21). The palace was inaugurated in 1877. Near the palace was also built a water tower disguised as an aesthetically pleasing Neogothic tower that fitted very well with the English garden (Marconcini 2010, p.36). Finally, a greenhouse for the production of flowers and other decorative plants of the park was built (today in ruins) during the same decade —1870s (Marconcini 2010, p.46). In 1878, the King Victor Emmanuel II died, and his son, the new King Umberto I sold the property to the Count Giuseppe Telfener, for 513,000 Italian Liras (compared to the estimated 1,500,000 liras spent by the Savoy family in the previous years). The Count Telfener renamed the unified property after his wife Ada Hungerford: Villa Ada was born (Marconcini 2010, p.21).

At the beginning of the 1900s, Villa Ada was part of a system of urban and suburban villas spanning from Villa Borghese to the Aniene river’s confluence with the Tiber (Ufficio tutela ambiente del Comune di Roma 1996, p.14). In 1909, this existing system of villas was formally integrated in the first regulatory plan organizing the land outside the Aurelian walls (Ufficio tutela ambiente del Comune di Roma 1996, p.14). This plan kickstarted a first wave of urbanization in the area south of Villa Ada, on the Parioli Hills and current Via Panama (Ufficio tutela ambiente del Comune di Roma 1996, p.14). In 1904, the Savoy family reacquired the property of Villa Ada for 610,000 liras (Marconcini 2010, p.26), but it is only in 1919, the property became the official residence of the royal family. The same regulatory plan of 1909 marked Villa Ada as private property, automatically excluding it from any kind of expropriation or parceling. The regulatory plan of 1931 allowed a new wave of urbanization

in the area and defined Villa Ada as private park, giving license to the Savoy family to manage more freely her property (Ufficio tutela ambiente del Comune di Roma 1996, p.14). As the urbanization took place in the neighborhood of Villa Ada, the property underwent different modification projects between 1904 and 1937 (Marconcini 2010, p.28). Part of the park was dedicated as a hunting reserve, new paths were drawn, and many trees were planted (Marconcini 2010, p.56): Villa Ada gained many pine trees (*Pinus pinea*) and cork oaks (*Quercus suber*) from Sardinia. A monumental gate on the Via Salaria was erected between 1904 and 1906, along with the groundskeeper's house (Marconcini 2010, p.28). The ancient mansion Filomarino was transformed into a dairy farm (today seat of the *Servizio Giardini del Comune di Roma*/ Gardens service of the City of Rome). The mansion Pallavicini (Fig. 5) became a dependence of the royal residence and renamed 'Villa Maria' (Marconcini 2010, p.28). The so-called mansion of Sacra Famiglia (during the 1800s situated in the property Bettelli Olivieri, later called 'Villa San Filippo' after the neighboring rural road, and today 'Villa Polissena') was transformed between 1925 and 1930 into a dependence of the royal residence as well (Marconcini 2010, p.28). A private garden was rearranged adjacent to Villa Polissena (today still private property, within the complex of Villa Ada). The royal palace was given its own private garden as well, an Italian Renaissance-style garden, which was finalized around 1936 (Marconcini 2010, p.29). The royal palace underwent from 1935 a radical internal transformation as well (Marconcini 2010, p.30). In the same period of transformation, the park was embellished with exotic and rare plants and different palm species. Also, pines were planted to replace the vineyards near Villa Polissena, and the area of Monte Antenne (hill of Antemnae) already wooded at that time became a hunting reserve, called at the time 'Bosco della Regina Elena'—Queen Elena's Woods (Marconcini 2010, p.34).



Image 8. Scuderia d'agenzia.

7.2. Villa Ada divided: the long road towards a reunified public park

After World War 2, the political situation pushed for the organization of an institutional referendum to choose between republic or monarchy (Corbi 1996). The king Victor Emmanuel III had proved himself incompetent, as head of state, to advert 20 years of fascism and was considered to have been accomplice, at least by silence. On 9 May 1946, King Victor Emmanuel III abdicated in anticipation to the referendum, in favor of his son Umberto II, who had less baggage. The referendum took place on 2 June 1946 and resulted with the victory of the republic. The Italian Republic was proclaimed on 18 June 1946; the new constitution banned all male members of the Savoy family from Italian soil. Villa Ada remained property of the Savoy family. When Victor Emmanuel III died in Alexandria, Egypt, in 1947 without any written will, all his property, including the estate of Villa Ada, was divided following Italian succession law: four fifths (80%) of the property were inherited by the Savoy female heiresses, and the remaining fifth (that should have been the now-exiled Umberto II's share) was transferred to the Italian State (Marconcini 2010, p.34). In 1951, a variation to the regulating plan created the possibility for the entire complex of Villa Ada to become public park (Ufficio tutela ambiente del Comune di Roma 1996, p.14). In 1954 a presidential decree sanctioned the proposal, but the Savoy family appealed immediately the decision at the Italian Council of State: the Savoys denied the existence of a 'public interest' in the regulatory plan (Ufficio tutela ambiente del Comune di Roma 1996, p.14). The division of the property was finally approved by notary deed in 1957: 84 ha remained private property and 34 ha became public property, to which were subsequently added 32 ha, corresponding to the area of Monte Antenne. In 1958, the ownership of these lands transferred from the Italian State to Municipality of Rome so it could become a public park (Ufficio tutela ambiente del Comune di Roma 1996, p.14); the private part of Villa Ada was confirmed to be private park (Ufficio tutela ambiente del Comune di Roma 1996, p.14). In the 1970s, the public part of Villa Ada underwent radical changes that erased the 19th-century mark on the landscape: a new artificial lake was dug, alleys and paths were laid and the vegetation was opened up (Marconcini 2010, p.56–7; Ufficio tutela ambiente del Comune di Roma 1996, p.14). The private parts of Villa Ada underwent different fates: some areas were extremely well maintained, like the Italian-style garden by the Royal Palace, and others were left in a complete state of neglect, like the area of the Royal Stables (Marconcini 2010, p.57).

In 1965, the new regulatory plan assigned the entire complex of Villa Ada as public park (Ufficio tutela ambiente del Comune di Roma 1996, p.14). In 1987, rumors about the Savoy heiresses selling parts of their property started to spread. The WWF could confirm some of the rumors through the actress Maria Allasio, that lived in the Casale delle Cavalle Madri in Villa Ada. The WWF managed to find definitive proof of the transaction: the bill of sale in the Land Registers of Rome indicated that Enrico d'Assia, Ottone d'Assia, Maurizio d'Assia and other nine heirs had sold their shares of the land and included buildings to the developer company 'Villa Ada 87' for 18.8 billion liras, amounting to 54 ha (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.24; Marconcini 2010, p.35). It was also discovered that the Savoy heiresses had sold another 16 ha of private land to the real estate company 'Società Immobiliare Tirrena' (Marconcini 2010, p.35) already in the early 1960s (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.24). Both real estate companies, Villa Ada 87 and Immobiliare Tirrena, had ties with Renato Bocchi, successful businessman (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.24). The Savoy family remained in control of merely two buildings (Casino Pallavicini and Villa Polissena) and surrounding 3.5 ha of land (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.24).

In 1988, environmentalist associations held a press conference, where the copy of the bill of sale was distributed to the surprised participants, including representatives from Italian and Roman administrations (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.25–6). Even if the entire area had been

defined as public park, the acquisition of this land by real estate companies raised preoccupation and pushed environmentalists and politicians to action (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.26). Caterina Nenni, a communal councilor, promoted debates and asked for an official confirmation that Villa Ada was to remain defined as public park (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.26). A petition signed by 4000 users of Villa Ada was addressed to the President of the Republic Francesco Cossiga, asking for his intervention in the matter (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.28). Antonio Cederna, parliamentary man, proposed a bill (n. 2878, 15-06.1988) with the support of representatives of all parliamentary groups (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.30). Amici di Villa Ada collected 7000 signatures of private citizens supporting the proposed bill (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.30). The socialist government tried to push the bill aground during 1989 for mysterious reasons, according to Cederna (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.32–3). More initiatives were created to push for the expropriation of the private part of Villa Ada: 10,000 cards were signed by 10,000 children, and sent to senators and deputies, 20,000 signatures were collected for a petition and then presented under the form of a fax roll and then unrolled on the steps of the Capitol (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.33–4). Finally, on 15 December 1990, the law n. 396 passed which established measures to reunite the whole Villa Ada as public property: the goal to buy out the private land is clearly stated (art 1b) and 100 billion liras are allocated for the expropriation (art 9)(*Legge 15 dicembre 1990, n. 396 'Interventi per Roma, capitale della Repubblica'* 1990). After decades of struggle, the possibility to reunite the whole complex of Villa Ada as public park seemed to be finally within reach. But having a goal does not automatically translate into a satisfactory result. Indeed, the actual path towards a public park was still to be taken.

In 1991, under the initiative of Caterina Nenni, Italia Nostra⁶⁶, Censis⁶⁷ and WWF agreed to compose a common management plan in order to rehabilitate the natural and historical assets of the soon to be acquired parts of the park (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.36; WWF Italia, Associazione Amici di Villa Ada & Censis 1991). The gist of the plan was to bring back the beauty of the fragmented and divided park, by integrating important archaeological structures into the natural heritage (a forest in the city), and by distinguishing three different areas with different restriction levels: a nature reserve, a protected area with paths and possible guided visits, and an open area, with full public access, where it would have been possible to “showcase nature” (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.36–7). The plan proposed that Villa Polissena, Palazzina Reale and Forte Antenne were to become cultural centers and that the Casale della Finanziaria, Scuderie and the Coffee House could have been used by WWF and Amici Villa Ada as educational, cultural and information centers (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.36). The proposal was presented to the Mayor of Rome Franco Carrararo, but it did not have any follow up (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.37–8). Amici di Villa Ada blames the disinterest and the indifference of the Municipality for the lack of acceptance of the project (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.38). The association cites the plan as an important milestone of integration of the historical assets in a natural heritage site (as it is presented as combination of nature and culture in the same landscape (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.38).

Among other associative initiatives, we could cite the debate that took place on 21 November 1992, organized by Amici di Villa Ada, WWF Italy and Censis. To the debate participated

⁶⁶ Italia Nostra (Our Italy) is a nonprofit organization whose main goal is to conserve and promote Italy's environmental, historical and artistic heritage. For more information: <https://www.italianostra.org/chi-siamo/una-storia-lunga-oltre-50-anni/> (in Italian).

⁶⁷ Censis (*Centro Studi Investimenti Sociali* —Research Center for Social Investments) is a research and consulting institute that provides technical assistance all sort of initiatives that have an impact on the landscape.

also deputies and representatives from both the Municipal and Italian governments⁶⁸ (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.40).

In the meantime, the Municipal administration was also trying to determine the right plan of action, but it was facing some problems on its own. Municipal experts estimated the total cost of the expropriation at 40 billion liras, but the Municipality was only willing to allocate 26 billion upfront, a sum that could be increased along the years. The Municipality's plan consisted of first acquiring the 80 ha of private land and restoring the vegetation; then in a second occasion, acquire the major buildings (Palazzina Reale and Villa Polissena) and the other minor buildings (Scuderie, Fienile, Coffee House, Groundkeeper's house, Casale delle Cavelle Madri) (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.37). The Municipal Administration had also planned a youth hostel at Fort Antenne, which would have costed 5 billion liras. The project was aborted by the budget commission of the Municipality, because of its cost. In any case, as mentioned by Amici di Villa Ada, the location would have been very inconvenient, as Forte Antenne is completely disconnected from public transportation network and rather isolated altogether (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.37).

In any case, in November 1992, the Department of Environmental Protection started working on a land-use plan, without which any attempt of expropriation could not happen (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.40). A commission was formed to draft the plan, and Amici di Villa Ada and WWF were granted to participate. Caterina Nenni (Amici Villa Ada) and Alessandro Bardi (WWF) were incorporated into the 24-member commission, coordinated by Anna Maria Leone from the Department of Environmental Protection (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.41).

The land-use plan decided to organize Villa Ada in four areas of interest: archaeological and naturalistic, historical, recreational and sport (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.43). Accordingly, the buildings were proposed to have different functions. Buildings with high historical value would have been used as museums: Palazzina Reale, Casino Pallavicini, Tempio di Flora and Villa Polissena. There would have been a place for exhibitions: Fort Antenne. Minor buildings could have been used for the reception, information and education of the visitors: Casale delle Cavelle Madri, Fienile, Tribuna II and Groundkeeper's house. Regarding the environmentalist aspect of the land-use, the WWF proposed to establish the so-called Oasis on the recently acquired part of the park that had not been restored and turned into city park yet. The gist was to create an haven for the fauna and flora of the park, within the urban setting (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.88). It would have been the first such an initiative in Italy: use what was already an overgrown forest to create a nature reserve within the city of Rome. The idea was not taken into consideration, but served to show the discrepancies between different municipal departments and their respective plans for Villa Ada. For instance Alberta Campitelli (From Department for the Environment) considered that the oasis would have been restrictive towards the public and did not fit in the ideal of a public park, whereas Municipal Assessor for Environmental Policies Loredana De Petris was very much in favor of the WWF's proposed idea (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.88–90). In any case, the final land-use plan excluded also other proposed projects, such as a market at Via Panama, the hostel at Fort Antenne (mentioned above), the mechanical transportation from railway station in the Tiber valley to the top of Monte Antenne, and parking lots (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.43). The catacombs were not taken into consideration in the plan and were therefore not integrated in the organization of the park (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.43). The plan was finally published in 1996. Important

⁶⁸ Antonio Cederna, as well as Enzo Forcella (Assessore comunale alla Trasparenza), Bernardino Antinori (Ambiente), Renato Napoli (from secretariat of Minister of Environment Carlo Ripa di Meana), Vicerektor of Censis Giuseppe Roma, Caterina Nenni (amici Villa Ada), green parliamentary Carla Rocchi, etc... and a couple of audits (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.40).

to note is that the constraint of intransformability in the sense of the law n. 1089/39 (Legge 1089/1939 Tutela delle cose d'interesse artistico o storico) was not applied to Villa Ada (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.46). This lack of protection had allowed, in 1994, the construction of two two-story buildings by the Carabinieri to provide housing for the troops of the 8th Battalion Lazio (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.44, 46). The issue of this lack of protection of the park was brought by WWF and Amici di Villa Ada to the Minister of Cultural Heritage and Activities, Alberto Ronchey (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.47). The minister assured that he had entrusted the Soprintendenza to identify possible shortcomings in the agreement and to fix them. He also offered his support to the project Ricostruire un parco (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.47). It was finally the next Minister, Antonio Paolucci who finally affixed the constraint on 14 December 1994, which guaranteed the protection of the integrity of the park and gave the pre-emption right to the Municipality of Rome in case of the sale of the Palazzina Reale by Bocchi (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.47). The Palazzina Reale was in any case discretely sold by Villa Ada 87 to the Government of Egypt, without the knowledge of the Municipality or the citizens of Rome (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.51).

The expropriation was finally decided (all parties in favor, abstention of the MSI party), but worded as “voluntary cession” of the real estate company Villa Ada 87’s land, excluding the Palazzina Reale (Embassy of Egypt)⁶⁹ (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.50–1). Mayor Rutelli announced during a press conference on 21 December 1996 that the 74 ha of private part of Villa Ada had been bought for 21 billion liras⁷⁰. The park now counted 136 ha, which would have been entirely open to the public (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.51). Mayor Rutelli also assured that, with 6 extra billion liras from the budget for the preparation of the Great Jubilee of 2000, the park would have been reorganized and the buildings Scuderie Reali, Casale delle Cavalle Madri, Temple of Flora, the Belvedere and the Groundkeeper’s house would have been restored (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.51). The cession act from the two real estate companies (Immobiliare Tirrena and Villa Ada 87) was concluded on 31 July 1996, and in a successive act on 11 October the Palazzina Reale was excluded (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.55–7). The Palazzina Reale was sold on 6 May 1997 for 25 billion liras (ca. 13 million euros) (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.57). Because all buildings of Villa Ada were now assets falling within the constraints in the sense of the law n. 1089/1939, the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities could have used its pre-emption rights within the 60 days following the declaration of the purchase (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.57).

7.3. The restoration and inauguration of the unified Villa Ada

The construction works for the restoration of Villa Ada started in April 1998 for all the structures except for the Scuderie (later works would have been done), and only 3.8 billion liras were used out of the 6 billion allocated. The decision was based on mysterious reasons, as the funds were available and allocated for this purpose, and linked to the Great Jubilee, an opportunity that would not have presented itself for at least the next 25 years (Amici di Villa Ada

⁶⁹ Amici di Villa Ada report a story about the Palazzina Reale. As the King Victor Emmanuel III was exiled to Egypt, he would have given the keys of his house (Palazzina Reale) to King Faruk of Egypt, with all its property: pieces of art, family souvenirs, furniture, clothes, etc. Faruk entrusted the villa to the representative of Egypt in Italy, the ambassador. Interestingly, when Faruk was deposed in 1957, he fled to Rome and found refuge at the Hotel Excelsior. The Villa Reale remained at the care of the Embassy of Egypt since then, first as tenants of the Savoy family and then as legal owners of the estate of the Palazzina Reale (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.51).

⁷⁰ The real estate companies received 21 billion liras from the Italian Republic and 25 billion from the Republic of Egypt; a sum that must be compared to the initial cost of 18.8 billion liras that was spent by Villa Ada 87 to acquire its share from the Savoy heiresses (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.57). It is still unknown how much Immobiliare Tirrena spent for its 16.5 ha of the park.

2017, p.54). Going against the suggestion of experts proposed by the associations, the Municipality of Rome chose to execute the restoration project at once, in once unique phase, to be concluded in a as short time as possible. Amici di Villa Ada deplores the choice, as there was a necessity to stop and define the relations between wilderness and formal structures of the park, and to listen to the opinion of experts and park users. Amici di Villa Ada states that the better plan was to act with caution and in different phases, to better respect the different vocations of Villa Ada and its different areas (Italian garden, English garden, hunting reserve and wild woods —the last kind of area resulted from the neglect starting in 1946) (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.54–5). The chosen approach quickly created conflict between the park users and the contractors executing the restoration works. The tensions heated up during the process of deforestation (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.55). The lack of transparency was a pivotal issue, as Amici di Villa Ada reports the absence of information signs (required by law for public works) indicating the duration, the cost, the supervisors, and the date of end (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.55).

On 24 December 1999, Mayor Rutelli and Assessor for the Environment Loredana Di Petris unveiled the new Villa Savoia at the Temple of Flora, only in front of the press: the associations and the citizens had not been invited to attend to the ceremony (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.55). Mayor Rutelli specified that the Temple of Flora, the Belvedere and the Groundkeeper's house had been restored, that a new entrance had been created at Via Panama, that only non-invasive interventions had been executed on the vegetation for its conservation, that the Palazzina Reale, the Italian garden, Villa Polissena and Casino Pallavicini were excluded from public use (as they remained private property), that the job had costed 3.8 billion liras, and that only 7 ha of private property remained in the entire park (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.55). Amici di Villa Ada hypothesises that the main reason not to invite the public to the ceremony was to spare to avoid embarrassing questions regarding the private buildings fate (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.57).

With the expropriation in action, as mentioned above, different buildings were reserved different fates. The case of the Casale delle Cavalle Madri s particularly interesting. The actress Marisa Allasio was evicted from the mansion Casale delle Cavalle Madri, where she had been living since the 1960s, after marrying a member of the Savoy family (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.52). In 1987, as soon as Villa Ada 87 had bought the land and the buildings, the company immediately started a case for the eviction of Marisa Allasio that had been authorized by the Savoy family to live there (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.52–5). Once the expropriation ('voluntary cession') was executed, the appeals of the actress were denied and the courts of appeal, then the Court of Cassation in turn confirmed the eviction. For the Municipality of Rome, the eviction constituted a victory over the unregulated use of historical public green spaces (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.54).

7.4. Controversies

Since the reunification and reopening of the park as a whole, different affairs came to further tarnish the trust of the population in the municipal administration. In 2004 a scandalous affair took place in Villa Ada. The 29 September 2004, the area between the Temple of Flora and the Groundkeeper's house was closed for an upcoming construction. The signs did not stipulate the lawful indications (duration, cost, supervisors, dates of beginning and end of the work) (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.60). The associations protested and managed to end the operation on 20 October 2004 (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.60). The protests came not only from the associations, but also from the municipality, political parties and even the priest of the Church of San Saturnino: the protestors urged the assessor to look into the matter (Amici di Villa Ada

2017, p.60). It was discovered that a concession had been signed by the Municipality of Rome, for about 1 ha of land to make a restaurant, for the meager annual rent of 1944.38 euros, for a period of 20 years (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.60). However, many irregularities were found. First of all, there was no call for tender. There was a municipal official signature, but its date did not match the date of the meeting for the decision (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.60). It was also found that the signature of the regional coordinator of the WWF had been forged on the agreement that served as basis for the authorization (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.63–4, 66). The project for a restaurant went against the land-use plan, especially because it had been done lacking any kind of transparency (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.63–4). Eventually, the mayor had to intervene and request the annulation of the project to the assessor. In addition, the mayor confirmed that no such project would happen in the future (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.64).

Another controversy started in the same year 2004. One of the main projects of the Municipal Administration under mayor Walter Veltroni was the project of the European Museum of Games and Toys that was planned to be created in the Scuderie and the abandoned greenhouse nearby (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.70). The project was approved on 24 November 2004, for a total cost of ca. 5.37 million EUR. The project included the construction of extensions to the existing buildings, and an exception for the constraint of untransformability was voted in the municipal council (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.70). On 19 July 2007, a meeting of the municipal council approved a deep modification of the initial project: an underground extension was to be built (15000 m³) to create extra space for an entrance, didactic labs, storage and additional exhibition rooms (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.70). The new estimated cost rose to ca. 8.23 million EUR⁷¹, an extra 35% (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.72). The new version of the project met a strong opposition in the public. Amici di Villa Ada found the project too costly, ostentatious and unproductive and damaging for the environment of Villa Ada. However, not only did the usual associations protest, but local representatives at different levels sent letters to the mayor urging to reconsider the new project and to go back to the previous version, where only the surface was used (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.72). The project was finally stopped in 2008 by the new Municipal Administration, in the person of the Assessor for Culture Umberto Croppi. The authorization for the construction of the structures was revoked: the advanced reason was that Rome had other priorities (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.74). The funds that had been allocated in 1998 for the restoration of the Scuderie (2.2 billion liras/ 1.34 million EUR) were never used and vanished mysteriously: the buildings were left crumbling and are still falling apart (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.74)(see Fig. 5 & 8).

The final word of this part could be neglect. These mishaps and botched plans only show the lack of structure and long-term plan behind the management strategy of Villa Ada. The park is often described as degraded by media and associations⁷², but who is to blame? Department for Environment, Garden Services, city subdivision Municipio II, Department for Cultural Activities, Department for Heritage? It is difficult to say, for even if they share part of the responsibility, it is possible to say that all departments do their jobs diligently with the means they have at their disposal. Amici di Villa Ada argues that the origin of the problem dates back to the acquisition of the private 84 ha to reunite the 150-ha complex of Villa Ada: something was missed while developing the management and land-use plan (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.92). Amici di Villa Ada further argues that the Municipality underestimated the issue of proper management of the park and was not able to use adequate professional help. Amici di Villa Ada recognizes a lack of interest for rectifying the situation since then: “the municipal

⁷¹ 2.789 million were declared already available, to which 2.582 million were added by the Ministry of Transports and an unspecified contribution was to be provided by the Province of Rome (Cronache p.72).

⁷² For instance (in Italian): <http://www.lorenzograssi.it/sinopoli/documenti/schedasinopoliinquinamento.pdf>

administration has maintained a mode of management more adapted for a small city garden than for a historic forest” (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.92).

8. Experiencing Villa Ada today

I began this thesis making some what can best be called assumptions of how people perceive Villa Ada. I acknowledged the complaints in the media that not just Villa Ada but also other parks, streets and infrastructure in Rome are falling into disrepair. One motivation for writing this thesis as explained in the introduction has been the idea that if people knew more about Villa Ada and its long history, they would care for it better. However, as I was writing about Villa Ada, during my visits and walks through the park I could observe other flaneurs, and the realization struck me that I did not actually know how people that use the park perceive Villa Ada. I also became aware of that to understand how visitors and nearby residents experience the park today I needed also to know much more about who and why people visit Villa Ada.

8.1. Building the study

A good starting point to better understand the motivations for why people come to the park and their experiences were the very strongly expressed opinions within both the associative circles and the media; however, these might have been biased as many focused on the lack of management of Villa Ada. While visiting the park in December 2017 and a year later in December 2018, I could not help but notice that there had been some changes. Some trees had been felled, some stairs had been cleared from the overgrowth; I saw structures that had deliberately been left for what I recognized as ecological reasons. Fallen trees were left strategically on the ground, branches and foliage were piled and left as a microstructure within the habitat they were in (Fig. 9). In the span of one year, I saw that some management work had been done. I remember thinking while observing these changes that blaming the Municipality of total inaction or of doing an improper job could be somewhat unjustified. The current state of the park results from its management that seems to follow a certain logic and depends on the allocated means, even if sometimes the management does not meet the best standards. I thought then that the discrepancy between what I saw and what these frustrated voices described in social media might come down to a problem of perception. To take one example some of the management interventions for biodiversity —such as leaving dead wood or not clearing areas (Jonsson et al. 2016)— would appear as mismanagement by visitors.

This discrepancy made me think even more about the other visitors of Villa Ada. My own perception of the park —being personal and individual, and resulting from my own past experiences, education, sensibilities and ideology— might be different from how other people viewed and valued Villa Ada. One important question to ask here and one that was also raised above is why and how do people come to the park in the first place? Is their experience similar to mine, or how does it differ? What do they do in the park and what is the general knowledge of its heritage? I had two choices here. I could do deep interviews with flaneurs of different ages and ask them to tell their story about why and how they use and experience Villa Ada. However, considering that I was going to be away from Rome for most of the time of this thesis work, I instead put together an online questionnaire that would help me address some of these questions. It is possible to argue that a questionnaire does not give the same depth of

understanding, but as I will show in this chapter, it can indeed give a broader understanding of how some visitors experience the park of Villa Ada.

While researching the most recent history of Villa Ada, I found out that the idea of a questionnaire to address public opinion on Villa Ada was not new. A survey was made in April 1993 when the Municipality of Rome, with the help of some citizen organizations, ran an in-field questionnaire in Villa Ada⁷³, in the ambition to draft a management and land-use plan taking into account perspectives from users (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.41). The survey addressed the park users' frequentation patterns, activities, the means of transportation to reach Villa Ada, the assessment of the existent services, knowledge about the private part, the expectations from the expropriation and possible free observations (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.41). The survey revealed the main complaints: lack of hygienic services (no toilets), lack of public payphones, lack of surveillance of the territory (unauthorized traffic with presence of cars and motorbikes was considered frequent) (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.41). After 25 years, I felt it was opportune to do a new survey. While I was finishing with the first draft of the questionnaire, I started contacting organizations involved with the neighborhood of Villa Ada or the park itself. One of these citizen organizations was the group 'Osservatorio Sherwood', an activist group fighting against and documenting the neglect of Villa Ada. The 'Osservatorio Sherwood' suggested to me the idea to include in the survey an assessment of the visibility of the organizations that look after Villa Ada and the involvement of the public in the conservation effort⁷⁴. The various organizations also agreed to help me spread the link to the online questionnaire⁷⁵. At the same time, I also contacted the Municipality of Rome⁷⁶. Alessandra De Romanis was very useful in guiding the study further, as she informed me that another municipal department was doing a similar survey and put me in touch with Tiziana Pescosolido⁷⁷ from the municipal administration. I could confirm that the Municipality of Rome had performed a paper-based, on-field survey in November 2018 and were planning on having a second round in June 2019, as a follow-up to the 25-year-old survey. Through the contact with Tiziana Pescosolido and the Department for Environmental Protection, it was initially proposed that my questionnaire were to be used as the online adaptation of the municipal one, through an official collaboration with the Municipality. To better match the municipal concerns, I therefore added some questions regarding the public's wishes and priorities for the maintenance and management of Villa Ada (Q21-22, see Appendix 2 for the full list of questions). However, because of some delays in the formalities around this process, an official collaboration could not be established within the time constraints of this thesis. To avoid further undetermined delays, I thus decided to proceed with the publication of the now amended

⁷³ The survey was led by sociologists Piero Malenotti and Tiziana Piermarini of the Ufficio Tutela Ambiente (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.41). The associations were formally asked to help in the data collection on the field. The questionnaire took place in 1993; in total 15000 visitors were counted on a Sunday, 10000 on a Saturday and 3000 during a week day (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.41).

⁷⁴ This idea led to three questions, Q18–20. Q18: "Do you give of yourself for the protection, conservation and/or care of Villa Ada?"; Q19: "Do you give of yourself for the protection, conservation and/or care of other parks or gardens in Rome?"; Q20: "Various entities are involved in the creation of initiatives for the care and conservation of Villa Ada. Do you know the following actors?"

⁷⁵ The interest organizations that I contacted and from which I received a positive reply were (in chronological order): "*Quelli che il Parco...*", "*Osservatorio Sherwood*", "*Amici di Villa Ada*", *AMUSE*, *Roma Sotterranea*, *Legambiente*, "*Percorsi Verdi*", *3C Cascianese Country CLUB*, Church of San Saturnino, the Islamic Cultural Centre of Italy at Rome, *Embassy of Finland* in Rome, and "*Pro Natura Roma*".

⁷⁶ I first established contact with the *Sovrintendenza Capitolina ai Beni Culturali* (Department for Cultural Heritage), which takes care of the management, maintenance and the promotion of the archaeological, artistic, historical and monumental assets owned by the Municipality of Rome. The contact was with Alessandra De Romanis, Art History Curator/Curatore storico dell'arte, at the Office for Historic Villas and Parks/U.O. Ville e Parchi Storici).

⁷⁷ Tiziana Pescosolido, Direzione gestione territoriale ambientale e del verde/Office for the land, environmental and park management, at Dipartimento Tutela Ambientale/Department for Environmental Protection).

questionnaire used here on my own, and in agreement with Tiziana Pescosolido and my supervisor (the totality of questions can be found in Appendices 2–3).

The survey was published on the platform SurveyMonkey⁷⁸ to better diffuse and collect the responses. I published one version in Italian (most responses were given in Italian) and another in English. I made efforts to translate and adapt the questions as accurately as possible so not to bias the responses because of the phrasing. The main means of diffusion of the survey was by word of mouth through family, friends, interest organizations and other institutions, trusting the further diffusion of the questionnaire (so-called snowballing). Some interest organizations published the link to the questionnaire on their web pages. In addition, I also had put up a poster on advertising boards at the entrance of Villa Ada and some neighboring parks. The poster contained a QR code leading to my questionnaire. I finally published the questionnaire on 18 June 2019 and left it open until 18 October 2019 to maximize the number of responses. Most responses, however, came during the first two weeks. The questionnaire was answered by 284 people in total. I removed 14 answers that were basically empty —only Q1 was answered, skipping all other question. After removing empty responses, I had a remaining 269 responses that I will use here for this discussion⁷⁹. Some of the questions gave the opportunity for respondents to write free answers (Q15). I thematized these free text replies through 18 identified keywords⁸⁰ to better group the answers and be able to better assess them.



Figure 9. Cut branches and foliage placed to form a structure within the habitat.

⁷⁸ SurveyMonkey is accessible at the address www.surveymonkey.com.

⁷⁹ 262 responses as the body of my data: 262 in Italian + 7 in English = 269 responses; by 18 October 2019.

⁸⁰ The 18 keywords were: special, green, fresh air, beauty, relax, urban, park, heritage, neighborhood, social space, exercise, culture, waste, nature, uncivility, childhood, memories and freedom.

8.2. A special, neighborhood park

Since I mainly used local associations, it comes as no surprise that the overwhelming majority of the respondents do in fact know Villa Ada (Q1, yes: 97.8% of respondents). Among those who know Villa Ada, about two thirds are what I would call infrequent visitors, visiting the park at most once per month (65.2%, Q2). One third of the same cohort (those who say that know Villa Ada) goes to Villa Ada rather frequently, at least once per week (34.8%, Q2). If we consider that about two thirds of the cohort reach Villa Ada on foot (61.2%, Q3), it could mean that many of the visitors who took part to the questionnaire are neighbors of the park⁸¹. If we look more closely, at the responses, about more than half of the respondents (55.4%, Q27: “Please enter your post code and country, or leave blank otherwise”) live in the areas in direct contact with Villa Ada, and could strictly be called neighbors⁸². A significant minority (38.8%, Q3) uses a private motorized vehicle to visit Villa Ada, and could be coming from further away.

Based on the responses, it seems that Villa Ada is frequented to a large extent by its neighbors and perhaps we can speculate that it is seen as a neighborhood park. The next question of interest that we should ask is what people actually do in the park when they visit it (Q4: “What is (are) the purpose(s) of your visit?”). The most common activities based on the responses are ‘recreational’ such as walking (53.3%), doing sports (33.5%), bringing kids to play (18.6%), relaxing (18.6%), and socializing (13.8%). All of these activities are activities that we can expect from people visiting a neighborhood park. In any case, these are activities that indicate that people come here because Villa Ada has certain features that are particularly appealing.

From the replies of the respondents we can conclude that Villa Ada is mainly appreciated because of its vegetation and greenery (79.1%, Q5: “What do you like the most about Villa Ada?”). Others chose to reply that they appreciate the park in terms of its beauty (47.0%) and its open spaces (45.0%). Some (26.5%) also appreciated its history and buildings. Personally, I find these preferences quite revealing. The park seems to be appreciated because of the change in scenery it has to offer, as a break from an overcrowded city. This thought seems to be confirmed by the majority of the respondents (Q9: “How do you find the park on an aesthetic level?”), as the majority finds that Villa Ada is beautiful (86.6%). In other words, even if Villa Ada’s beauty is not enough for being the main reason for visiting, the park visitors do appreciate its beauty. They seem to see something inherently special in the park, which may also be linked to the fact or why an overwhelming majority of the respondents call it a heritage site (96.4%, Q10). In addition to this assessment, the respondents tended to experience good feelings when thinking about Villa Ada (88.3%, Q12). This combination of the overwhelming percentages in these responses, and if the correlation between scenery, beauty and heritage is correct, it opens up to question what heritage is.

Heritage is in fact a broad concept that could be understood in different ways. If we were to ask to the non-academic layman, a common answer would be that heritage is a precious resource from the past, something that should be treasured and protected for the future generations (Lowenthal 2005; Smith 2012). If this aspect of heritage is not at all wrong, we will find it quite limiting once we start exploring the concept a bit further. What about what the so-

⁸¹ The situation might, however, be different if we were to ask every single person that visits the park. I do not know if the respondents are representative of all Villa Ada’s visitors. It could also be that those living close to the park are more inclined to take part in the survey, thus skewing the data.

⁸² The neighboring areas have as postal codes: 00197, 00198 and 00199, and are safe bets as neighborhood proxy. Expanding the analysis to the respondents living “close enough” (1–2 km) but not as direct neighbors would have required to know the exact address, as postal codes can cover rather large surfaces in some cases.

called natural heritage? Can we call something that was not only built only by humans —such as a park— as part of our past? Of course, we could, if we consider that this natural piece of Earth has some kind of connection with our human past, and if people associate meaning to it in terms of heritage. This further expansion in the exploration of the concept of heritage already blurs the boundaries between human and non-human (or between human and nature). The concepts of cultural and natural heritage are in fact deeply interconnected (Lowenthal 2005; Tengberg et al. 2012). Heritage is much more than its physical support, it is also the ensemble of actions and process surrounding a given object of conservation (Smith 2012) — which, in our case, is represented in a landscape⁸³ and, more specifically, a park. Heritage is hence a dynamic and temporal phenomenon, a connection to the past, of course, but also to the present and future; thus heritage is about identity (Smith 2012; Tilley 2006), and involves giving meaning, (re-)interpreting and negotiating values and meaning (Tengberg et al. 2012). This broader concept of heritage implies that heritage is intimately linked with power dynamics as well, thus as all other aspects, heritage is a political concept (see discussion in Tilley 2006); we will come back later to this implication. In the case of Villa Ada, we can see how the overwhelming majority (in Q10, 96.4%) of the people responding to the questionnaire considers the park as heritage, even if only about a quarter appreciates the Villa in terms of its history and buildings. This clearly shows that the respondents see something more in Villa Ada than just the past and human-built landscape as would be a conventional view from heritage officials. In terms of combining responses, visitors greatly appreciate the greenery and freshness of vegetation, and this is maybe the strongest value they put in their experience of and motivations for visiting the park. As anthropogenic as the vegetation might be, this landscape is arguably meaningful enough for many visitors to consider the greenness as beautiful and also as heritage.

8.3. The visitors' experience

Thus, the visitors tend to experience Villa Ada as a 'heritage site' mostly for its greenery and as a 'feel-good place', but the majority is still unhappy with the current state of the park (63.7%, Q7). Half the cohort thinks that the maintenance is poor (50.0%, Q6) and an overwhelming majority thinks that maintenance needs to be improved (87.9%, Q6). For what I have seen, personally, how the park requires indeed maintenance, but the situation might not be as dire as it is reported, overall. This can be exemplified by the dilemma that was raised in the introductory part of the chapter, as some of the interventions made for the benefit of biodiversity might be perceived by visitors simply as further disrepair. Regarding the vegetation, between December 2017 and December 2018, I was able to observe some maintenance action. However, the buildings that were falling apart, or otherwise neglected, stayed in the same condition in the best case, or just crumbled further away or were covered by new graffiti. Similar to the question on maintenance, the large majority thinks that the park should be 'cleaner' (89.9%, Q8). These responses suggest that visitors consider Villa Ada to be special, yet neglected and unrealized in terms of not reaching its full potential as a recreational area, or a city park. This common opinion that the park is neglected may have been reinforced by the media that reports stories of disrepair and also of Villa Ada as a place of crime. I have

⁸³ To be precise, the European Landscape Convention defines the 'landscape' as "an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors" art 1. This comprises the intangible processes, as discussed for the concept of heritage. Also, the concept of landscape "applies to the entire territory of the Parties and covers natural, rural, urban and peri-urban areas. It includes land, inland water and marine areas. It concerns landscapes that might be considered outstanding as well as everyday or degraded landscapes".

myself given some examples, in the introduction of this thesis, of how Villa Ada is represented. In a similar vein, over half of the respondents think that Villa Ada is not represented in a good light in the media (55.1%, Q11: “When you hear/read news about Villa Ada on the media, how do you feel it is usually reported?”).

Despite the initial assumption behind my motivation of this thesis —that people do not know and therefore cannot appreciate the historicity of Villa Ada— a majority of respondents think they have a rather good knowledge of the history of Villa Ada (55.1%, Q13), yet only a third of respondents would associate Villa Ada with the phrase ‘rich in history’ (36.6%, Q14: “Which ones of these phrases would better characterize Villa Ada?”) and less than a third with the phrase ‘heritage’ (29.3%, Q14). The latter response on heritage may, however, be due to the ambivalence of heritage as a concept as I have discussed above, or also due to the self-determined nature of their extent of knowledge on Villa Ada’s history. There might in fact be a difference between how much they think they know about the land of Villa Ada and how much they actually do know. It could be also a question of how they engage with the landscape, how they feel history within this land. In any case, a self-professed knowledge shows a fundamental interest in Villa Ada, in my opinion. The other most chosen phrases in association with Villa Ada (Q14, multiple choice question), non-related to its history, were ‘green’ (59.8%, Q14), ‘forest in the city’ (59.4%, Q14), ‘trees’ (31.3%, Q14), and ‘meeting place/social space’ (27.3%, Q14). The natural features of Villa Ada seem to take the upper hand in the respondents’ mind and their associations with Villa Ada. It echoes the first motive to visit the park among the respondents: its vegetation and greenery (79.1%, Q5). When asked freely what Villa Ada means to the respondents on a personal level, more than half (56.6%, Q15) recognized the park as a ‘special place’. Other images were also common among the responses (Q15): a place of relaxation (33.5%), a place within the city of Rome (32.5%), a green space (24.5%), and a place for fresh air (21.2%). If we put all these elements together, the image of a ‘green oasis’ within a densely built city (or “concrete jungle”) emerges. This image is consistent with some beliefs that emerged as free text responses (Q15: “What does Villa Ada represent for you? (you are free to give the answer you want; from one word to a couple of lines”) in the same questionnaire. ‘Green oasis’ as such was a whole phrase that has been repeated by different respondents (Q15), and is also a phrase that reoccurs in texts about Villa Ada (books and associations web pages) (MUSIS 1995, p.17). Thus, Villa Ada is, in this sense, a counterimage of dense urbanism for its visitors, as discussed above. We can make a parallel here with the more constrained response to direct questions of why people visit Villa Ada (Q4-5). Most respondents recognized the functions of large city parks first and foremost in terms of ‘air cleaning’ (74.1%, Q24).

At this point we can circle back to the aspects of identity and politics in relation to heritage. If Villa Ada is recognized as a haven where one can breathe clean air, we can argue that it is linked with the perception that Rome residents have of the city herself. Anyone that has lived in Rome long enough or talked with Romans would notice that complaining about the city and its fellow inhabitants is a common conversation topic. It is not exclusive to Rome, but in my personal experience, Rome residents are especially prone to complain about the state of Rome. This sentiment is also somewhat confirmed as one reads about Rome in the newspapers and other media, or especially the European Union study on how the inhabitants of European cities perceive their own cities, as it was discussed in the introduction of this thesis. This issue of perception is about (self-) identity and how the dwellers of this city engage with their environment. Other responses in the questionnaire about the main functions of large urban green spaces, I think relate to this sentiment. Replies in the main functions of green areas were that parks improve individuals’ mental health (61.4%, Q24), they regulate heat in summer (56.1%,

Q24), and that they provide spaces for physical activity (55.3%, Q24). This goes in the direction of how ‘heritage’ —whether natural or cultural, or a combination—can also be seen as a refuge from everyday world (Smith 2012). The image of a ‘clean haven’ in a corrupted city, where even the air is poisonous, sticks. In fact, the respondents unanimously agreed that green public spaces are vital to a city's health and the wellbeing of its inhabitants (100%, Q23), it is therefore not difficult to imagine why Villa Ada is so important for Rome in the respondents’ minds.

8.4. The perceived state of the park

Villa Ada, as a special space, would need to be maintained and conserved. About two thirds of the respondents (66.2%, Q16) are rather dissatisfied with the municipality’s efforts in the care of Villa Ada, and if we include those who are neutral in this aspect (22.2%, Q16), we can say that most respondents (88.5%, Q16) are not enthusiastic about the city’s management of the park. In contrast, when asked about their fellows’ behavior towards helping conserve the Villa Ada, the dissatisfaction is not as high. Less than half (43.1%, Q17) were explicitly dissatisfied about the other visitors’ behavior in Villa Ada. About the same numbers (44.0%, Q17) were neutral towards how other visitors behave, which could indicate that even if they do not fully approve of their fellows’ investment in the care of Villa Ada, less blame is directed towards them for the current state of the park, compared to the blame directed towards the administration. The dissatisfaction towards the state of the park is not new. If we check the data from 1994, less than a third of the respondents was satisfied with the state of Villa Ada back then (Ufficio tutela ambiente del Comune di Roma 1996, p.72). It is arguably understandable why the public would shift the blame of the situation towards the management of the park, due the blatant lack of any sign of improvement, and hence the blame goes to the Municipality as official caretaker of the park.

One can imagine that the municipal perceived inaction could be a driver for citizen action. In this regard, over half of the respondents states that they also actively participate in one way or another in the conservation and care of Villa Ada (59.4%, Q18), and some respondents also replied that they participated in the conservation of other parks in Rome (35.0%, Q19). These results are in part dependent on the means of diffusion of the questionnaire: since I used the channels of the interest organizations, it comes as no surprise that a majority of the respondents say they give of themselves in the conservation of the park. What is surprising, however, is the variation in knowledge of the different associations and other institutions that have interests in the park and that coordinate actions for the conservation of Villa Ada. The best known are the municipal Department for Cultural Heritage⁸⁴ (68.18%, Q20) and the association *Amici di Villa Ada* (Friends of Villa Ada, 63.6%). The municipal Department for Environmental Protection⁸⁵ (60.9%) follows closely and also the association *Roma Sotterranea* (managing the Savoy Bunker, 51.5%). The prevalence of municipal departments is not surprising, but still one third of the respondents have not heard of them. It seems that the population is not fully aware of who are the institutions responsible for Villa Ada’s management. It is interesting, in this regard, that some interest organizations, such as *Amici di Villa Ada*, are at the same level of renown as the state departments. However, the small notoriety among the respondents of the association AMUSE (known by 33.0%) is quite surprising. The citizen association AMUSE tends to the interests of the whole District *Municipio II* of Rome, and thus has a considerable size and ties within the whole area, not only specifically to Villa Ada. Its lack of

⁸⁴ Sovrintendenza Capitolina ai Beni Culturali.

⁸⁵ Dipartimento Tutela Ambientale del Comune di Roma

common knowledge among the respondents is unforeseen, in my sense. In addition, it is also surprising that very active interest organizations such as the smaller group “*Osservatorio Sherwood*” (known by 31.4%, Q20) are not well known. Another example of a not so well-known is the group *Percorsi Verdi* (known by 21.2%, Q20), which organizes guided botanical visits and is the didactic continuation of the four published books on Villa Ada’s flora. The difference in renown could be a matter of visibility, or also possibly that the associations occupy non-overlapping interest niches (and that the respondents simply knew the organizations that fit their own interests). However, by assessing newspapers articles or some associations blog posts, I can immediately see that there is in fact collaboration between organizations, which means that these institutions share common interests. Thus, I would have expected synergy and relative comparable prominence rather than the observed large gaps in common knowledge. I will leave this reflection here, as, based on my knowledge, trying to find further explanations would be mere speculation.

What is sure is that each of these associations has its own specific set interests (however similar they might be) and that the public also have their individual interests and hopes for the park. The Municipality, as well, has a specific vision of the park, on which the maintenance logic is based. All these visions do not concur neatly, apparently, which causes frustrations and conflict between parties. Different actors, different stakes, we return to the fact that heritage is embedded into politics and power dynamics. Villa Ada is a good example to discuss heritage (mis-) management. The park, as a landscape, is recognized as cultural heritage by the City and is administered as such. I see two problems from this. It is possible to recognize the way the Municipality treats Villa Ada as an Authorized Heritage Discourse: public land, with unique natural and cultural (including historical) features, to be protected for the greater good. But we have seen that it is possible to see heritage as more than just its physical, tangible reality. Thus, the Authorized Heritage Discourse collides with other interpretations of the past and the present (cf. Smith 2012). If heritage is not actively negotiated or explained, made visible for contestation, it tends to create further friction and frustrations on the long term. Since heritage is a communal process, it develops from the negotiation and reinterpretation of a community’s values and identities, anchored on a given place (Tilley 2006, p.18) —in this case Villa Ada. I will pick up this train of thought in the next section.

8.5. Taking care of a special park

The current unsatisfaction regarding the state of Villa Ada and its conservation begs to consider the questions: what are we conserving? Who are we protecting this space for? How are we protecting it? These questions were addressed in the questionnaire as well. Villa Ada is admittedly in urgent need of maintenance action, as recorded by the media and also commented by its visitors. The responsible officials at the Municipality of Rome itself, also suggested this need when adding two questions (Q21 and Q22) about the priority of intervention if more funds were to be allocated for the park’s management⁸⁶. Based on the responses, the top priorities of intervention were the maintenance of the greenery (lawns and flowerbeds)(65.2%, Q21), but also the restoration of the public-owned buildings (64.3%). These priorities were closely followed by the wish for planting of new trees (to replace the trees that have already been or will be cut down)(60.2%), after which came the maintenance of outdoor

⁸⁶ Q21: “Villa Ada undoubtedly needs urgent maintenance action. If funds were to be allocated, where should be the top priority in your opinion?”; Q22: “Would you have any wishes or comments to add regarding the prioritization of the maintenance in Villa Ada?”

furniture (benches and fountains)(58.8%), and the improvement of the cleaning and the number of trash cans (58.8%). Other chose the need for the access to public bathrooms (54.3%), the restoration of lakes and ponds (50.2%), and the maintenance of the alley and stairs (46.6%). Assessing the ranking of priorities amongst the respondents, again, what strikes me is the idea of the green oasis. I sense the wish to reestablish a green landscape, well-kept, but with a ‘natural touch’, somewhat as the ideals of an English garden. This was also the ideal behind the landscape planning of the park when Villa Ada was first designed to become a sole unified property, as a private park from the 1800s onwards. The maintenance of cultural features of the park —care of buildings, outdoor furniture and alleys— are still requested, but at significantly lower levels than natural heritage; the wishes for the maintenance of a cultural feature of the park are only ticked by a third of the respondents (Q21). The cultural assets of the park are relegated to a second level of priority. In this ranking of priorities, if you will, I do not necessarily see a disinterest in the cultural landscape of Villa Ada, but rather a strong wish to see the physical integrity of the park preserved first and foremost. When asked freely (Q22: “Would you have any wishes or comments to add regarding the prioritization of the maintenance in Villa Ada?”), the most recurrent wish of prioritization was to improve the maintenance (48.9%, Q22) and improve the security to better police the park and curb bad behavior of the visitors⁸⁷.

We can now reassess the three questions asked in the beginning of this section in relation with this questionnaire. What are we conserving? Until now, Villa Ada has been managed as its physical reality, the park. But the boundaries of a landscape are blurry, both in space and in time (see similar discussion in Tilley 2006, p.27; West & Ndlovu 2010). Villa Ada is part of a neighborhood, where people live and grew up, it could thus be seen as an emblem of this locality and an element of local identity (for the area, and for the city). We are entering here the realm of semiotics, the study of signs and the creation of meaning (Chandler 2007, p.1–8), in which we will not dive much deeper, as it is beyond the scope of this thesis. Nevertheless, it is clear that the physical integrity of the park seems to be important to the locals (personified by the respondents to the questionnaire). Who are we protecting this for? This question brings the issue of who owns the heritage Villa Ada. As a landscape, therefore, anyone can have memories or values anchored in it. Any heritage is diverse in terms of meaning and associations (Smith 2012; West & Ndlovu 2010) and Villa Ada is no exception. Villa Ada means different things for different individuals and groups of people, it thus has many owners. The mean age of the respondents (51.7, Q26) is consistent with the median (52, Q26), but by looking closer and categorizing the respondents by age (following the Municipality’s questionnaire) we see that the majority of respondents are over 46 years old (74.2%, Q26). These data are interesting because they mean that most respondents have known Villa Ada as divided between private and public parts and have witnessed the incorporation of the formerly private area. The majority of the respondents live in the vicinity of Villa Ada (Q27). This strongly implies that the respondents do have memories linked with the park. Thus, Villa Ada is a place of memories, which means that different hopes and expectations for its future exist in people’s minds, and these may clash with the Municipality’s efforts to manage the park, for instance in terms of favoring biodiversity or esthetics. This dilemma entails that if we are to conserve Villa Ada effectively, we need to think of Villa Ada as more than just a park, and look into the cultural practices that have created the landscape in the first place, as well as knowing why we are mobilizing conservation efforts for the present and the future. This brings us to the next

⁸⁷ Examples of curbing bad behavior were: to better control their dogs, to prevent unauthorized circulation of vehicles, drug dealing, animal cruelty, flora destruction and other criminal behavior.

question, how are we protecting the park? The Villa is conserved as both a cultural and naturalistic asset, by two different departments of the Municipality, as it is often the case in landscape management (cf. Tengberg et al. 2012). However, the park is partly a forest and is not conserved as such. The image that pops into mind are the words of the Association Amici di Villa Ada, the Municipal administration has been using a managing style more adapted to a small neighborhood garden than to a historic forest or park (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.92). To give credit to the municipal administration, the conservation efforts have been severely underfunded, hence, no matter all the goodwill and hard work that the municipal staff could have been putting in, the results have been cut short as well by political disinterest.

The funds are what they are, however, the current situation would present a good opportunity to change management style for the premises of Villa Ada. It would be time that the prospective of the conservation of Villa Ada would not only be the exclusive prerogative of official experts that could be seen as extraneous to the landscape, and that its conservation would be open to local actors, as the interest organizations for instance, which are eager to get more involved. This involvement of the locals could bring with it community empowerment and diversity of views and the discussion, negotiation and reinterpretation of the Villa Ada heritage could result in a more dynamic and better managed landscape for Villa Ada (cf. Silberman 2007, p.189–90; Tengberg et al. 2012). Specifically, the consultation with stakeholders could help identify the values and significance that people attribute to the landscape (Tengberg et al. 2012). Questionnaires are an excellent beginning, but they should be properly analyzed, and the results implemented, and translate into action, for instance through the involvement of the local associations. To give a brief example, in the survey from 1994, it was clear that the locals were very much in favor of an official collaboration with the local interest organizations (91.1% in favor)(Ufficio tutela ambiente del Comune di Roma 1996, p.77), but no significant measure was consequently implemented. Villa Ada is not alien to the neighborhood, as heritage, it is a spatial reference for the community, and as such, it is arguably part of the memories, stories and attitudes that shape the community's shared identity (Silberman 2007, p.187). It is therefore advisable to involve the locals in the conservation process.

8.6. Defining the ideal Villa Ada

In 1996, the Municipality of Rome stated its ambition to create a modern park, where the unity would be reestablished, but at the same time to respect the historical and naturalistic features of the park (Ufficio tutela ambiente del Comune di Roma 1996, p.7). To this day the ambitious plan has not come through, but it does not imply that Villa Ada is doomed forever. The European Landscape Convention was signed five years later (2000), and has good guidelines that could help Rome to better conserve Villa Ada as a heritage landscape. For instance, good recommendations could be viewing the territory as a whole (and no longer just identify places to be protected), and including and combining several approaches simultaneously, thus linking ecological, archaeological, historical, cultural, perceptive and economic approaches (see European Landscape Convention 2000, art I.4.). Nevertheless, I will not dive further into it, but it is worth noting, as an outlook for further research, that the European Landscape Convention and its guidelines for implementation could help improve the management of Villa Ada.

Until this point, the conclusions to these responses are quite clear to me: Villa Ada's visitors—the ones who have responded to the questionnaire— wish for an improved maintenance and a restoration of the park. But what is this certain idea of what a park is supposed to look like? What would the criteria be? Though most respondents agree with the fact that public parks should be properly maintained (98.8%, Q23), not everyone might agree on what it means to 'properly maintain' a park. For instance, the aesthetics of a park are considered more important

than its ecological viability⁸⁸ for a considerable part of the respondents (41.1%, Q23), in contrast with a quarter who disagrees (25.0%, Q23). This answer is interesting because it brings up the issue of what a park is ‘supposed to look like’. Asking locals for their opinion can potentially bring diversity and disagreement as well. Asking different people about their Villa Ada leads to (at least) as many different views. Even if most respondents admittedly agree that public parks should favor biodiversity and native species (88.7%, Q23), i.e. Mediterranean vegetation in Villa Ada’s case, there is a sizeable majority that thinks that undergrowth looks messy and should therefore be removed (57.9%, Q23). What appears as ‘messiness’ is, however, an important structure for biodiversity and is actually characteristic of Mediterranean biomes (Filibeck, Petrella & Cornellini 2016). It seems that a paradox emerges at this point: the same habitat that favors biodiversity and indigenous species can become an eyesore to denizens⁸⁹. There might also be a discrepancy in how people imagine an indigenous habitat with how it actually looks like⁹⁰. Urban parks tend to be formal and planned landscapes, constituted of recurring species (often non-native), and thus seeing native species left to grow in an unplanned manner might shock visitors⁹¹. Indigenous species may have some appeal when they are isolated or staged, but on urban settings —such as a not-fully managed environment such as Villa Ada— native plants and biomes tend to be frowned upon and to be unpopular (Breuste 2004). The lack of acceptance of native species or Mediterranean biomes could also be attributed to the long-lasting cultural traditional view that culture improves the land and, by extension, the landscape (Breuste 2004). In an Italian setting the pertinence of this point is quite easy to argue with the concept of ‘*bonifica*’, the improvement of the land. The view that land had to be reclaimed (“*bonificato*”) drove agrarian and landscape policies in Italy for the last centuries⁹².

In any case a cultural acceptance can happen and native landscapes within cities can be driven towards becoming the new ‘normality’. Ecological knowledge is the greatest driver towards acceptance of messy, yet richer biodiversity (planned) landscapes (Qiu, Lindberg & Nielsen 2013). This could mean that ecological education could be a lead for a possible solution involving cultural acceptance of native Mediterranean habitat in the city. For instance, informing the population about the positive effects of ecological management and the actual process of this management, like the biological importance of decaying wood, and ‘messy’ looking edges grass patches, as mentioned above. In addition, let us take note that a considerable majority of the respondents thinks that overgrown structures can, in some cases, be charming (e.g. moss or plants growing on stones or walls)(66.4%, Q23). Some accessible ‘wilderness’ seems to be also a pressing need for city dwellers (Jorgensen, Hitchmough & Dunnett 2007).

⁸⁸ Q23: “It is more important for a park to be pretty than being ecologically functional” from ‘strongly agree’ to ‘strongly disagree’.

⁸⁹ These results go in the direction of what studies have found: private citizens tend to prefer formal parks, which are more aesthetically pleasing for the general public, where visitors feel safer (Jansson et al. 2013; Jorgensen, Hitchmough & Dunnett 2007; Qiu, Lindberg & Nielsen 2013), and which provide a higher accessibility, regardless if this is at the cost of a low biodiversity (Hofmann et al. 2012).

⁹⁰ But we can ask the question why are native species less accepted? It could be a problem of lack of familiarity in urban ‘positive’ settings (as opposed to abandoned urban spaces where the natives are part of the spontaneous vegetation). The mere exposure effect, a well-known psychological phenomenon, that explains why people tend to like familiar things (Zajonc 1968), could explain why lack of exposure means a reduced fondness.

⁹¹ In addition, the problem of public acceptance of native species is a main issue in decision-making and urban planning, a problem that is not only specific to the city of Rome or Italy (Breuste 2004).

⁹² For instance, the concept of ‘*bonifica*’ can be found behind laws such as the 1802 Law of Pope Pius VII that described taxes for uncultivated land around Rome; or the decree of 1840 by King Victor Emmanuel II to move towards the improvement and irrigation of the Roman countryside; or the agrarian law of 1883 that compelled land owners to improve the land around Rome, by draining and cultivating it (Ashby 1927, p.50; Cazzola 2005, p.130; Tomassetti, Chiumenti & Bilancia 1979, p.204).

Thus, some controlled messiness seems to be acceptable currently, maybe talking to the romantic hearts of the visitors, but it must be sporadic and under check. I think this vision is to be compared to the English garden archetype, a space that appears wild, but in check and staged. Conversely, the wilderness within the park limits seems to be largely accepted for animals, as a majority rejects the idea of not having wild animals living in Villa Ada (72.7%, Q23). If we remember the five most recognized functions of large city parks are directly related to human wellbeing and how they improve people's health⁹³. Still considered as important, but less recognized, are the functions of absorbing carbon (thus fighting against climate change)(49.1%, Q24), and biodiversity conservation (47.4%, Q24). With these elements, we can still recognize the image of Villa Ada as a green oasis in the city, a space that serves first and foremost human beings. Though non-human organisms are not excluded, they are certainly relegated to a second place. However, it is easy to argue that the non-human environment of the park is what makes the park attractive and enhances its functions for human wellbeing. Even if it is possible to see a separation between human and non-human, the two are connected and very dependent one from another. As such, (circling back to what has been discussed before) Villa Ada needs to have a more integrated management, linked to different aspects of the park.

Considering the size of Villa Ada, it would be wise to keep different areas with different degrees of reservation, which goes in the direction of what WWF Italy and Amici di Villa Ada proposed 25 years ago in their plan (Amici di Villa Ada 2017, p.36–7). It is possible to argue for considering distinct zones to better serve different purposes and better manage the park as a whole.

⁹³ In Q24: air cleaning, improving individuals' mental health, heat regulation in summer, providing spaces for physical activity, and being social spaces.

9. Discussion and conclusive thoughts

The land of Villa Ada has changed much through history as has been shown in previous chapters. Even considering the 20th century alone, the park evolved from an English garden-type to the current state. This piece of land represents much more than a relaxing space. It is considered as heritage, but, as I have discussed in previous chapters, there might be a missing connection between its history and its ecological value, and how it is perceived today. Reducing the land to a former royal residency (as historical heritage) and a pretty garden that cleans the air (as an environmental heritage) might be waste of an opportunity. For a deeper knowledge of Villa Ada, we have followed narratives that were to engage the reader's imagination with past times and to anchor today's landscape with invisible past processes.

We started with deep history of Villa Ada. At first glance, this deep historical narrative might seem to have steered off course. It might not seem to relate directly to our land of focus, the land of Villa Ada, but I think it is possible to argue that, to the contrary, it does relate. This thesis can serve as a reminder that any landscape has undergone change and evolution, and what we observe today is the result of a living past, whose mark is there but for the most part invisible for the present-day observer. Living organisms have shaped the landscape that we see today and have also been influenced by their environment. The land has witnessed the flow of time, and it invites us to (re-)discover its history. The current world evolved from a succession of past ones. Thus, the landscape is the result of this spatiotemporal continuity. This invisible past adds a dimension to any piece of land; however, in the case of the land of Villa Ada, the long-term story of humans, and also non-human entities, to me adds to and builds up the importance of the site, especially if we are to view Villa Ada as a form of open-air museum.

We have continued with the flow of time, and have seen how the landscape of Villa Ada could serve as cues to explore neolitization and the formation of material and cultural exchange networks. The latter becomes ever more relevant as we enter the Bronze and Iron Ages, as we have seen in Chapter 3. The hill of Monte Antenne and the road Via Salaria are exceptional cues to establish a link with the past and explore the themes of early urbanization, exchange and early statehood, and the course of physical continuity through time. As such, the land of Villa Ada might be used to explore the expansion of Rome as a military, economic and cultural power, and the everyday reality of the Roman suburban countryside (Chapter 4). Subsequently, we have seen how the land of Villa Ada might have evolved through the decline of the Roman Empire and how it can anchor ties with invisible lands. Invisible because they are distant lands, through for instance Christianization or barbaric invasions (Chapter 5), or simply because they are underground, in the instances of the catacombs (Chapter 5) and the aqueduct Aqua Virgo (Chapter 6). These features transformed deeply society and the landscape (e.g. Christianization), but have not necessarily left very visible landmarks. Therefore, exploring these narratives could be beneficial to engage with the heritage of Villa Ada.

We then chased the 'shadows' of the land of Villa Ada by trying to reconstruct the activities and processes that could very likely have taken place in our landscape (Chapter 6). This tracing of events is particularly important, because it serves as a prelude to the unification of the property and, thus, the creation of the current Villa Ada (Chapter 7). It is in fact not always

easy to imagine that a huge piece of land that is engulfed by a dense urban setting could have been so diverse, fragmented and different until rather recently (in terms of human occupation). Engaging in new ways of seeing the landscape of Villa Ada could deepen the understanding of the land itself and maybe influence how it is perceived. It can also open a fruitful discussion about the future of the park, in terms of management and conservation. Finally, as a way of initiating this discussion of the future and management of the park, we have explored how people use and perceive Villa Ada today, through an online survey (Chapter 8). I have also tried to see the meaning people attribute to this landscape and their aspirations regarding the future of the park. I believe this exercise could help open a door to the future. Expanding with further studies on how people use the park and what they aspire from it—as well as more explicit information of the conservation work that is going on in the park and its motivations—would be a natural continuation of this thesis, a much needed work to establish an effective strategy regarding the management of Villa Ada on the long term.

By connecting the future, the past and the present within the landscape of Villa and anchoring time in space, I hope that in this thesis I could provide some directions of reflection about how we see and what we want from Villa Ada today, yesterday and tomorrow.

Acknowledgements

This thesis was ultimately made possible by the help (under different forms) of a wide and diverse array of people.

In chronological order, I would like to deeply thank, together with their respective organizations, Alessandra De Romanis (Sovrintendenza Capitolina ai Beni Culturali, Comune di Roma), the Comitato "Quelli che il Parco...", Lorenzo Grassi (Osservatorio Sherwood), Tiziana Pescosolido for her precious assistance and availability (Dipartimento Tutela Ambiente, Comune di Roma), Pietro Rossi Marcelli and Andrea Ventura (AMUSE - Amici Municipio II), Silvia Arbicone (Percorsi Verdi) and Amici di Villa Ada.

In addition, I appreciated the help of Don Marco (parish priest of San Saturnino), the Islamic Cultural Centre of Italy - Rome, Roma Sotterranea, Mirko Laurenti (Legambiente), Riikka Ala-Risku (Embassy of Finland), Lorenzo Barucca (Legambiente Lazio), Emiliano Pulvirenti (Pro Natura Roma) and all the anonymous, whose names I am not aware of, for spreading the access link to the online questionnaire.

Also, many thanks go to my family, friends and all the other people that have supported me and helped me throughout this journey in one way or another.

Finally, I would like to express my deepest gratitude to Anneli Ekblom, my supervisor, for her guidance and mentorship all along the process and realization of this thesis.

Reference list

- 'Ringleader of 'mafia-style' gang in rome is jailed for 20 years' 2017, *The Guardian*, 20 July, viewed 7 June 2018, <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2017/jul/20/ringleader-mafia-style-gang-rome-jailed-massimo-carminati>>.
- 'Villa ada lasciata nel degrado assoluto' 2013, *Il Tempo*, 29 December, viewed 25 May 2018, <<http://www.iltempo.it/roma-capitale/2013/12/29/news/villa-ada-lasciata-nel-degrado-assoluto-920771/>>.
- Adinolfi, P. 1881, *Roma nell'età di Mezzo. Tomo Primo*, Fratelli Bocca, Rome.
- Amici di Villa Ada 2017, *Cronache di Villa Ada: Oltre la rete di villa Savoia*, M.T. Carani, B. Babbi, A. Ferraretto & A.C. Russo (eds), Grafica Internazionale, Rome.
- Angelova, D.N. 2015, *Sacred Founders : Women, Men, and Gods in the Discourse of Imperial Founding, Rome Through Early Byzantium*, University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Artioli, G., Angelini, I., Kaufmann, G., Canovaro, C., Dal Sasso, G. & Villa, I.M. 2017, 'Long-distance connections in the Copper Age: New evidence from the Alpine Iceman's copper axe', J.P. Hart (ed.), *PLoS ONE*, vol. 12, no. 7, p. e0179263.
- Ashby, T. 1927, *The Roman Campagna in classical times*, Ernest Benn Limited, London.
- Barker, G. 1976, 'Morphological change and neolithic economies: an example from central Italy', *Journal of Archaeological Science*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 71–81.
- Beard, M., North, J.A. & Price, S.R.F. 1998, *Religions of Rome. Volume 1: A History*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.
- Bergmann, B. 2007, 'Housing and households', in S.E. Alcock & R. Osborne (eds), *Classical Archaeology*, Blackwell, Malden, pp. 224–43.
- Bietti, A. 1990, 'The Late Upper Paleolithic in Italy: An Overview', *Journal of World Prehistory*, vol. 4, no. 1, pp. 95–155.
- Bietti Sestieri, A.M. 2002, 'L'Agricoltura italiana nell'Età del Metalli', in G. Forni & A. Marcone (eds), *Storia dell'agricoltura italiana I: L'Età antica - I. Preistoria*, Accademia dei Georgofili, Polistampa, Florence, pp. 205–17.
- Binney, H., Edwards, M., Macias-Fauria, M., Lozhkin, A., Anderson, P., Kaplan, J.O., Andreev, A., Bezrukova, E., Blyakharchuk, T., Jankovska, V., Khazina, I., Krivonogov, S., Kremenetski, K., Nield, J., Novenko, E., Ryabogina, N., Solovieva, N., Willis, K. & Zernitskaya, V. 2017, 'Vegetation of Eurasia from the last glacial maximum to present: Key biogeographic patterns', *Quaternary Science Reviews*, vol. 157, pp. 80–97, viewed 24 September 2018, <<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277379116305534#undfig1>>.
- Bisconti, F. 2002, 'The Decoration of Roman catacombs', in V. Fiocchi Nicolai, F. Bisconti & D. Mazzoleni (eds), *The Christian catacombs of Rome: History, decoration, inscriptions*, 2nd edn, Schnell und Steiner, Regensburg, pp. 71–145.
- Boatwright, M.T., Gargola, D.J. & Talbert, R.J.A. 2004, *Romans : From Village to Empire*, Oxford University Press, New York.
- Boccacci, P. 2015, 'Satanisti, musei fantasma e degrado: l'agonia di Villa Ada', *La Repubblica*, 10 January, viewed 25 May 2018, <http://roma.repubblica.it/cronaca/2015/01/10/news/satanisti_musei_fantasma_e_degrado_nel_parco_dell_ultima_festa_di_ammaniti-104633894/>.
- Bondarenko, D.M. 2007, 'Homoarchy as a Principle of Sociopolitical Organization. An Introduction', *Anthropos*, vol. 102, no. 1, pp. 187–99.
- Bono, P. & Boni, C. 1996, 'Water supply of Rome in antiquity and today', *Environmental Geology*, vol. 27, no. 2, pp. 126–34.
- Bosio, A. 1632, *Roma sotterranea, opera postuma di Antonio Bosio romano, antiquario ecclesiastico singolare de' suoi tempi*, Fr. Carlo Aldobrandino, Rome.
- Bowes, K. 2007, 'Christianization' and the Rural Home', *Journal of Early Christian Studies*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 143–70.

- Bradley, K. 2011, 'Slavery in the Roman Republic', in K. Bradley & P. Cartledge (eds), *The Cambridge World History of Slavery: Volume 1: The Ancient Mediterranean World*, vol. 1, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 241–64.
- Bradt Möller, M., Pastoors, A., Weninger, B. & Weniger, G.-C. 2012, 'The repeated replacement model – Rapid climate change and population dynamics in Late Pleistocene Europe', *Quaternary International*, vol. 247, pp. 38–49.
- Breuste, J.H. 2004, 'Decision making, planning and design for the conservation of indigenous vegetation within urban development', *Landscape and Urban Planning*, vol. 68, no. 4, pp. 439–52.
- Brock, A.L. 2017, 'Floodplain occupation and landscape modification in early Rome', *Quaternary International*, vol. 460, pp. 167–74.
- Brown, F.E. 1976, 'Of huts and houses', in L. Bonfante & H. von Heintze (eds), *In Memoriam Otto J. Brendel: Essays in Archaeology and the Humanities*, Philipp von Zabern, Mainz, pp. 5–12.
- Bruni, F. 2017, 'The Filthy Metaphor of Rome', *The New York Times*, 10 May, p. A27, viewed 25 May 2018, <<https://www.nytimes.com/2017/05/10/opinion/the-filthy-metaphor-of-rome.html>>.
- Buonfiglio, M. & D'Annibale, M.L. 1994, 'Via Salaria. Monte Antenne: la ceramica di impasto comune arcaica e medio-repubblicana', *Bullettino della Commissione Archeologica Comunale di Roma*, vol. 96, pp. 263–76.
- Lo Cascio, E. 2002, 'La Proprietà della terra, i percettori dei prodotti e della rendita', in G. Forni & A. Marcone (eds), *Storia dell'agricoltura italiana I: L'Età antica - 2. Italia romana*, Accademia dei Georgofili, Polistampa, Florence, pp. 259–313.
- Cassiodorus 1886, 'Book 7, Chapter 6', in T. Hodgkin (ed.), *The letters of Cassiodorus, being a condensed translation of the Variae epistolae of Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus Senator*, H. Frowde, London, pp. 324–5.
- Cassius Dio 1917, 'Book 54, Chapter 11', in E. Cary & H.B. Foster (eds), *Roman History, Volume VI: Books 51–55*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, pp. 310–5.
- Cazzola, A. 2005, *I paesaggi nelle campagne di Roma*, Firenze University Press, Florence.
- Chandler, D. 2007, *Semiotics: The Basics*, Taylor & Francis Group, London, UNITED KINGDOM.
- Chiappa Mauri, L. 2002, 'Popolazione, popolamento, sistemi culturali, spazi coltivati, aree boschive ed incolte', in G. Pinto, C. Poni & U. Tucci (eds), *Storia dell'agricoltura italiana II: il Medioevo e l'Età Moderna*, Accademia dei Georgofili, Polistampa, Florence, pp. 23–57.
- Claridge, A. 2010, *Rome: An Oxford archaeological guide*, 2nd edn, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Coates-Stephens, R. 1998, 'The Walls and Aqueducts of Rome in the Early Middle Ages, A.D. 500–1000', *The Journal of Roman Studies*, vol. 88, pp. 166–78.
- Corbi, G. 1996, 'Cronaca di un'abdicazione', *La Repubblica*, viewed 22 January 2019, <<https://ricerca.repubblica.it/repubblica/archivio/repubblica/1996/05/07/cronaca-di-un-abdicazione.html>>.
- Cortonesi, A. 2002, 'L'Allevamento', in G. Pinto, C. Poni & U. Tucci (eds), *Storia dell'agricoltura italiana II: il Medioevo e l'Età Moderna*, Accademia dei Georgofili, Polistampa, Florence, pp. 83–121.
- Crumley, C. 1994, 'Historical Ecology. A Multidimensional ecological orientation', *Historical Ecology: Cultural Knowledge and Changing Landscapes*, School of American Research Press, Santa Fe, NM, pp. 1–16.
- Cumberland Jacobsen, T. 2009, *The Gothic War: Rome's final conflict in the West*, Westholme, Yardley.
- David, J.-M. 1994, *La Romanisation de l'Italie*, Aubier, Paris.
- Day, M. 2015, 'Rome's notorious mafia families are putting their rivalries aside to work together', *The Independent*, 26 August, viewed 7 June 2018, <<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/romes-notorious-mafia-families-are-putting-their-rivalries-aside-to-work-together-10473773.html>>.
- Dellapasqua, E. 2016, 'Villa Ada: presunto stupro, Degrado tra baracche e abusi', *Corriere della Sera*, 19 July, viewed 25 May 2018, <https://roma.corriere.it/notizie/cronaca/16_luglio_19/villa-ada-presunto-stupro-degrado-vero-baracche-abusi-305d7e78-4d28-11e6-b4d6-1a2d124027e8.shtml>.
- Dini, B. 2002, 'La Circolazione dei prodotti', in G. Pinto, C. Poni & U. Tucci (eds), *Storia dell'agricoltura italiana II: il Medioevo e l'Età Moderna*, Accademia dei Georgofili, Polistampa, Florence, pp. 383–448.

- Dionysius of Halicarnassus 1937a, 'Book 1, Chapter 16', in E. Cary (ed.), *Roman Antiquities, Volume I: Books 1–2*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, pp. 51–5.
- Dionysius of Halicarnassus 1937b, 'Book 2, Chapter 32', in E. Cary (ed.), *Roman Antiquities, Volume I: Books 1–2*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, pp. 403–5.
- Dionysius of Halicarnassus 1937c, 'Book 2, Chapter 35', in E. Cary (ed.), *Roman Antiquities, Volume I: Books 1–2*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, pp. 411–5.
- Dionysius of Halicarnassus 1940, 'Book 5, Chapter 21', in E. Cary (ed.), *Roman Antiquities, Volume III: Books 5–6.48*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, pp. 63–5.
- Donato, M.P. 2017, 'SALICETI, Natale', *Dizionario Biografico degli Italiani*.
- Dwight, M.A. 1849, 'Genii and Inferior Deities', *Grecian and Roman Mythology*, Putnam, New York City, pp. 253–9.
- Dyck, L.H. 2015, "Woe to the Vanquished" The Battle on the Allia River and the Gallic Sack of Rome', *The Roman Barbarian Wars : The Era of Roman Conquest*, Pen & Sword Books, Barnsley, pp. 6–17.
- Dyson, S.L. 2003, *The Roman countryside*, Duckworth, London.
- Earle, T., Ling, J., Uhnér, C., Stos-Gale, Z. & Melheim, L. 2015, 'The Political Economy and Metal Trade in Bronze Age Europe: Understanding Regional Variability in Terms of Comparative Advantages and Articulations', *European Journal of Archaeology*, vol. 18, no. 4, pp. 633–57.
- Eckstein, A. & Čašule, N. 2012, 'Macedonian Wars', in R.S. Bagnall, K. Brodersen, C.B. Champion, A. Erskine & S.R. Huebner (eds), *The Encyclopedia of Ancient History*, Wiley-Blackwell, Malden, MA.
- Erskine, A. 2010, 'From city to empire', *Roman imperialism*, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, pp. 12–32.
- European Commission 2016, *Quality of Life in European Cities 2015, Flash Eurobarometer 419*, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, viewed 7 June 2018, <http://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/sources/docgener/studies/pdf/urban/survey2015_en.pdf>.
- Fea, C. 1790, *Miscellanea filologica critica e antiquaria. Tomo Primo*, Stamperia Pagliarini, Rome.
- Fiaschetti, M.E. 2016, 'Alberi pericolanti e scuderie in malora: l'agonia di Villa Ada', *Corriere della Sera*, 29 November, viewed 25 May 2018, <https://roma.corriere.it/notizie/cronaca/16_novembre_29/alberi-pericolanti-scuderie-malora-l-agonia-villa-ada-cb55c6d2-b598-11e6-a2c1-e1ab33bf33ae.shtml>.
- Filibek, G., Petrella, P. & Cornolini, P. 2016, 'All ecosystems look messy, but some more so than others: A case-study on the management and acceptance of Mediterranean urban grasslands', *Urban Forestry and Urban Greening*, vol. 15, pp. 32–9.
- Finlayson, C. & Carrión, J.S. 2007, 'Rapid ecological turnover and its impact on Neanderthal and other human populations', *Trends in Ecology & Evolution*, vol. 22, no. 4, pp. 213–22.
- Fiocchi Nicolai, V. 2002, 'The Origin and development of Roman catacombs', in V. Fiocchi Nicolai, F. Bisconti & D. Mazzoleni (eds), *The Christian catacombs of Rome: History, decoration, inscriptions*, 2nd edn, Schnell und Steiner, Regensburg, pp. 9–69.
- Forni, G. 2002, 'Colture, lavori, tecniche, rendimenti', in G. Forni & A. Marcone (eds), *Storia dell'agricoltura italiana I: L'Età antica - 2. Italia romana*, Accademia dei Georgofili, Polistampa, Florence, pp. 63–156.
- Forsythe, G. 2005, *A critical history of early Rome: from prehistory to the first Punic War*, University of California Press, Berkeley.
- Foxhall, L. 1998, 'Snapping up the Unconsidered Trifles: the Use of Agricultural Residues in Ancient Greek and Roman Farming', *Environmental Archaeology*, vol. 1, pp. 35–40.
- Foxhall, L., Jones, M. & Forbes, H. 2007, 'Human ecology and the Classical landscape', in S.E. Alcock & R. Osborne (eds), *Classical Archaeology*, Blackwell, Malden, pp. 91–117.
- Frontinus 1925, 'The Aqueducts Of Rome. Book 1, Chapter 10', in C.E. Bennett & M.B. McElwain (eds), *Stratagems. Aqueducts of Rome*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, p. 351.
- Fugazzola Delpino, M.A. 1973, *Testimonianze di cultura appenninica nel Lazio*, Sansoni, Florence.
- Garnsey, P. 1988, *Famine and food supply in the Graeco-Roman world: responses to risk and crisis*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.
- Garnsey, P., Saller, R., Elsner, J., Goodman, M., Gordon, R., Woolf, G. & Hirt, M. 2015, *The Roman Empire: Economy, Society and Culture*, 2nd edn, University of California Press, Oakland.
- Gentile, C. 2017, 'Villa Ada, viaggio nel parco che vive di glorie passate', *La Repubblica*, 23 September, viewed 25 May 2018, <http://roma.repubblica.it/cronaca/2017/09/23/news/roma_villa_ada_viaggio_nel_parco_che_vi

- ve_di_glorie_passate-176266984/>.
- Gentile, C. 2018, 'Roma, dai parchi alle aiuole niente manutenzione: la città è una giungla', *La Repubblica*, 4 May, viewed 25 May 2018, <http://roma.repubblica.it/cronaca/2018/05/04/news/roma_dai_parchi_alle_aiuole_niente_manutenzione_la_citta_e_una_giungla-195472515/#gallery-slider=195425326>.
- Giesecke, T., Brewer, S., Finsinger, W., Leydet, M. & Bradshaw, R.H.W. 2017, 'Patterns and dynamics of European vegetation change over the last 15,000 years', *Journal of Biogeography*, vol. 44, no. 7, pp. 1441–56, viewed 27 September 2018, <<http://doi.wiley.com/10.1111/jbi.12974>>.
- Gradstein, F.M. & Ogg, J.G. 2012, 'The Chronostratigraphic Scale', in F.M. Gradstein, J.G. Ogg, M.D. Schmitz & G.M. Ogg (eds), *The Geologic Time Scale 2012*, Elsevier, Amsterdam, pp. 31–42.
- Guilaine, J. 2018, 'A personal view of the neolithisation of the Western Mediterranean', *Quaternary International*, vol. 470, pp. 211–25.
- Harding, A. 2013, 'World Systems, Cores, and Peripheries in Prehistoric Europe', *European Journal of Archaeology*, vol. 16, no. 3, pp. 378–400.
- Heiken, G., Funicello, R., Rita, D. de & Veltroni, W. 2005, *The Seven Hills of Rome : A Geological Tour of the Eternal City*, Princeton University Press, Princeton.
- Henderson, J. 2004, *The Roman Book of Gardening : The Roman Book of Gardening*, Routledge, London, UNITED KINGDOM.
- Holloway, R.R. 1994, *The archaeology of early Rome and Latium*, Routledge, London.
- Holloway, R.R. 2014, 'A cover-up in early roman history: Fabia minor and the sextian-licinian reforms', *Classical Journal*, vol. 109, no. 2, pp. 139–46.
- Jackson, M. & Marra, F. 2006, 'Roman Stone Masonry: Volcanic Foundations of the Ancient City', *American Journal of Archaeology*, vol. 110, no. 3, pp. 403–36.
- Janská, V., Jiménez-Alfaro, B., Chytrý, M., Divíšek, J., Anenkhonov, O., Korolyuk, A., Lashchinskyi, N. & Culek, M. 2017, 'Palaeodistribution modelling of European vegetation types at the Last Glacial Maximum using modern analogues from Siberia: Prospects and limitations', *Quaternary Science Reviews*, vol. 159, pp. 103–15, viewed 27 September 2018, <<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0277379117300598>>.
- Jonsson, B.G., Ekström, M., Esseen, P.A., Grafström, A., Ståhl, G. & Westerlund, B. 2016, 'Dead wood availability in managed Swedish forests - Policy outcomes and implications for biodiversity', *Forest Ecology and Management*, vol. 376, no. October 2015, pp. 174–82.
- Jorgensen, A., Hitchmough, J. & Dunnett, N. 2007, 'Woodland as a setting for housing-appreciation and fear and the contribution to residential satisfaction and place identity in Warrington New Town, UK', *Landscape and Urban Planning*, vol. 79, no. 3–4, pp. 273–87.
- Kaplan, L. 2000, 'Beans, Peas, and Lentils', in K.F. Kiple & K.C. Ornelas (eds), *The Cambridge World History of Food*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, pp. 271–81.
- Kehoe, D.P. 1994, 'Approaches to profit and management in Roman agriculture', in J. Carlsen, P. Ørsted & J.E. Skydsgaard (eds), *Landuse in the Roman Empire*, 'L'Erma' di Bretschneider, Rome, pp. 45–58.
- Kindstedt, P.S. 2012, *Cheese and Culture: A History of Cheese and Its Place in Western Civilization*, Chelsea Green, White River Junction.
- Kolendo, J. 1994, 'Praedia suburbana e loro redditività', in J. Carlsen, P. Ørsted & J.E. Skydsgaard (eds), *Landuse in the Roman Empire*, 'L'Erma' di Bretschneider, Rome, pp. 59–71.
- Kozłowski, J.K. 2005, 'Paléolithique supérieur et Mésolithique en Méditerranée : cadre culturel', *L'Anthropologie*, vol. 109, no. 3, pp. 520–40, viewed 24 September 2018, <<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0003552105000671>>.
- Kristiansen, K. & Earle, T. 2015, 'Neolithic Versus Bronze Age Social Formations: A Political Economy Approach', in K. Kristiansen, L. Šmejda & J. Turek (eds), *Paradigm Found: Archaeological Theory Present, Past And Future (Essays in Honour of Evžen Neustupný)*, Oxbow Books, Oxford, pp. 234–47.
- Kristiansen, K. & Larsson, T.B. 2005, *The rise of Bronze Age society: travels, transmissions and transformations*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.
- Kulikowski, M. 2007, *Rome's Gothic Wars*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.
- Laudati, A. 2016, 'Villa Ada, il parco romano a rischio degrado', *La Stampa*, 2 November, viewed 25 May 2018, <<http://www.lastampa.it/2016/11/02/scienza/villa-ada-il-parco-romano-a-rischio-degrado-7XqrHSRVHfbXqJHRKmxZtM/pagina.html>>.

- Legge 15 dicembre 1990, n. 396 'Interventi per Roma, capitale della Repubblica' 1990 (Camera dei deputati ed il Senato della Repubblica).
- Leroy, S.A.G. & Arpe, K. 2007, 'Glacial Refugia for Summer-Green Trees in Europe and South-West Asia as Proposed by ECHAM3 Time-Slice Atmospheric Model Simulations', *Journal of Biogeography*, vol. 34, no. 12, pp. 2115–28.
- Lindholm, K.-J., Sandström, E. & Ekman, A.-K. 2013, 'The Archaeology of the Commons', *Journal of Archaeology and Ancient History*, vol. 10, pp. 1–49.
- Ling, J., Stos-Gale, Z., Grandin, L., Billström, K., Hjärthner-Holdar, E. & Persson, P.O. 2014, 'Moving metals II: Provenancing Scandinavian Bronze Age artefacts by lead isotope and elemental analyses', *Journal of Archaeological Science*, vol. 41, pp. 106–32.
- Livy 1919a, 'Book I, Chapter 9', in B.O. Foster (ed.), *History of Rome, Volume I: Books 1-2*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, pp. 33–9.
- Livy 1919b, 'Book I, Preface', in B.O. Foster (ed.), *History of Rome, Volume I: Books 1-2*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, pp. 2–9.
- Livy 1924a, 'Book VI, Chapter 42', in B.O. Foster (ed.), *History of Rome, Volume III: Books 5-7*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, pp. 347–51.
- Livy 1924b, 'Book VII, Chapter 9', in B.O. Foster (ed.), *History of Rome, Volume III: Books 5-7*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, pp. 382–5.
- Lowenthal, D. 2005, 'Natural and cultural heritage', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, vol. 11, no. 1, pp. 81–92.
- MacMullen, R. 2011, *The earliest Romans: a character sketch*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor.
- Maire-Vigueur, J.-C. 1974, 'Les 'casali' des églises romaines à la fin du Moyen Âge (1348-1428)', *Mélanges de l'école française de Rome*, vol. 86, no. 1, pp. 63–136.
- Manzi, G. & Passarello, P. 1995, 'At the Archaic/Modern Boundary of the Genus Homo: The Neandertals From Grotta Breuil', *Current Anthropology*, vol. 36, no. 2, pp. 355–66.
- Marconcini, E. 2010, *Villa Ada Savoia*, De Luca Editori d'Arte, Rome.
- Marcone, A. 2002a, 'La Circolazione dei prodotti', in G. Forni & A. Marcone (eds), *Storia dell'agricoltura italiana I: L'Età antica - 2. Italia romana*, Accademia dei Georgofili, Polistampa, Florence, pp. 315–52.
- Marcone, A. 2002b, 'Popolazione, popolamento, sistemi culturali, spazi coltivati, aree boschive ed incolte', in G. Forni & A. Marcone (eds), *Storia dell'agricoltura italiana I: L'Età antica - 2. Italia romana*, Accademia dei Georgofili, Polistampa, Florence, pp. 17–62.
- Mari, L. 2017, 'Roma, tutor e sorveglianza: appello per tre ville. "Istituzioni assenti"', *La Repubblica*, 23 September, viewed 25 May 2018, <http://roma.repubblica.it/cronaca/2017/09/23/news/roma_tutor_e_sorveglianza_appello_per_tre_ville_istituzioni_assenti_-176263664/>.
- Marra, F., Ceruleo, P., Pandolfi, L., Petronio, C., Rolfo, M.F. & Salari, L. 2017, 'The Aggradational Successions of the Aniene River Valley in Rome: Age Constraints to Early Neanderthal Presence in Europe', M.D. Petraglia (ed.), *PLOS ONE*, vol. 12, no. 1, p. e0170434, viewed 26 September 2018, <<http://dx.plos.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0170434>>.
- Marra, F. & Florindo, F. 2014, 'The subsurface geology of Rome: Sedimentary processes, sea-level changes and astronomical forcing', *Earth-Science Reviews*, vol. 136, pp. 1–20.
- Martial 1993, 'Book 6, Stanza 42', in D.R. Shackleton Bailey (ed.), *Epigrams, Volume II: Books 6-10*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, pp. 31–3.
- Mazzoleni, D. 2002, 'Inscriptions in Roman catacombs', in V. Fiocchi Nicolai, F. Bisconti & D. Mazzoleni (eds), *The Christian catacombs of Rome: History, decoration, inscriptions*, 2nd edn, Schnell und Steiner, Regensburg, pp. 147–85.
- Melheim, L., Grandin, L., Persson, P.-O., Billström, K., Stos-Gale, Z., Ling, J., Williams, A., Angelini, I., Canovaro, C., Hjärthner-Holdar, E. & Kristiansen, K. 2018, 'Moving metals III: Possible origins for copper in Bronze Age Denmark based on lead isotopes and geochemistry', *Journal of Archaeological Science*, vol. 96, pp. 85–105.
- Mercuri, A.M., Allevato, E., Arobba, D., Mazzanti, M.B., Bosi, G., Caramiello, R., Castiglioni, E., Carra, M.L., Celant, A., Costantini, L., Di Pasquale, G., Fiorentino, G., Florenzano, A., Guido, M., Marchesini, M., Lippi, M.M., Marvelli, S., Miola, A., Montanari, C., Nisbet, R., Peña-Chocarro, L., Perego, R., Ravazzi, C., Rottoli, M., Sadori, L., Ucchesu, M. & Rinaldi, R. 2015, 'Pollen and macroremains from Holocene archaeological sites: A dataset for the understanding of the bio-cultural diversity of the Italian landscape', *Review of Palaeobotany and Palynology*,

- vol. 218, no. 1, pp. 250–66.
- Milanetti, G.P. 2007, 'Scuderie di Villa Ada, col degrado non si gioca', *Il Giornale*, 20 August, viewed 25 May 2018, <<http://www.ilgiornale.it/news/scuderie-villa-ada-col-degrado-non-si-gioca.html>>.
- Milliken, S. 2007, 'Neanderthals, Anatomically Modern Humans, and 'Modern Human Behaviour' in Italy', *Oxford Journal of Archaeology*, vol. 26, no. 4, pp. 331–58.
- Momigliano, A. & Drummond, A. 1990, 'The origins of Rome', in F.W. Walbank, A.E. Astin, M.W. Frederiksen & R.M. Ogilvie (eds), *The Cambridge Ancient History*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK, pp. 52–112, viewed 1 June 2018, <https://www.cambridge.org/core/product/identifier/CBO9781139054355A010/type/book_part>.
- Montanari, M. 2002, 'Colture, lavori, tecniche, rendimenti', in G. Pinto, C. Poni & U. Tucci (eds), *Storia dell'agricoltura italiana II: il Medioevo e l'Età Moderna*, Accademia dei Georgofili, Polistampa, Florence, pp. 59–81.
- Muhly, J.D. 1973, 'Tin Trade Routes of the Bronze Age: New evidence and new techniques aid in the study of metal sources of the ancient world', *American Scientist*, vol. 61, no. 4, pp. 404–13.
- MUSIS 1995, *Breve guida a Villa Ada*, EuRoma, Rome.
- Mussi, M. 2002, *Earliest Italy: An overview of the Italian Paleolithic and Mesolithic*, Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, Boston, viewed 27 September 2018, <<http://link.springer.com/10.1007/b110672>>.
- Nibby, A. 1819, *Viaggio antiquario ne' contorni di Roma. Tomo I*, Vincenzo Poggioli, Rome.
- Nibby, A. 1849, *Analisi storico-topografico-antiquaria della carta de' dintorni di Roma. Tomo III*, 2nd edn, Tipografia delle Belle Arti, Rome.
- Nicols, J. 2014, *Civic patronage in the Roman Empire*, Brill, Leiden.
- Pasquinucci, M. 2002, 'L'Allevamento', in G. Forni & A. Marcone (eds), *Storia dell'agricoltura italiana I: L'Età antica - 2. Italia romana*, Accademia dei Georgofili, Polistampa, Florence, pp. 157–224.
- Pearce, M. 2004, 'The Italian Bronze Age', in P.I. Bogucki & P.J. Crabtree (eds), *Ancient Europe 8000 B.C.-A.D. 1000: encyclopedia of the Barbarian world*, Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, pp. 34–42.
- Pini, A.I. 2002, 'Vite e vino', in G. Pinto, C. Poni & U. Tucci (eds), *Storia dell'agricoltura italiana II: il Medioevo e l'Età Moderna*, Accademia dei Georgofili, Polistampa, Florence, pp. 475–87.
- Piranomonte, M. 2002, *Il Santuario della musica e il bosco sacro di Anna Perenna*, Electa, Milan.
- Pliny the Elder 1942, 'Book III', in H. Rackham (ed.), *Natural History, Volume II: Books 3-7*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, pp. 1–115.
- Plutarch 1914, 'Romulus, Chapter 17', in B. Perrin (ed.), *Lives, Volume I: Theseus and Romulus. Lycurgus and Numa. Solon and Publicola*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, pp. 139–43.
- Purcell, N. 2007, 'Urban spaces and central places: The Roman World', in S.E. Alcock & R. Osborne (eds), *Classical Archaeology*, Blackwell, Malden, pp. 182–202.
- Purcell, N. 2014, 'Roads', S. Hornblower, A. Spawforth & E. Eidinow (eds), *The Oxford Companion to Classical Civilization*, 2nd edn, Oxford University Press, Oxford, viewed 10 June 2018, <<http://www.oxfordreference.com.ezproxy.its.uu.se/view/10.1093/acref/9780198706779.001.0001/acref-9780198706779-e-551?rskey=hejfl4&result=9>>.
- Qiu, L., Lindberg, S. & Nielsen, A.B. 2013, 'Is biodiversity attractive?-On-site perception of recreational and biodiversity values in urban green space', *Landscape and Urban Planning*, vol. 119, pp. 136–46.
- Quilici Gigli, S. 1994, 'The Changing landscape of the Roman Campagna: Lo sfruttamento del territorio in età imperiale', in J. Carlsen, P. Ørsted & J.E. Skydsgaard (eds), *Landuse in the Roman Empire*, 'L'Erma' di Bretschneider, Rome, pp. 135–43.
- Quilici, L. 2009, 'Land Transport, Part 1: Roads and Bridges', in J.P. Oleson (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Engineering and Technology in the Classical World*, Oxford University Press, Oxfo, pp. 551–79.
- Quilici, L. & Quilici Gigli, S. 1978, *Antemnae*, Consiglio Nazionale delle Ricerche, Rome.
- Radi, G. & Petrinelli Pannocchia, C. 2018, 'The beginning of the Neolithic era in Central Italy', *Quaternary International*, vol. 470, no. B, pp. 270–84.
- Reece, R. 1999, *The later Roman Empire: An archaeology AD 150-600*, Tempus, Stroud.
- Riva, C. 2010, *The urbanisation of Etruria: funerary practices and social change, 700-600 BC*,

- Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.
- Rodríguez, J., Mateos, A., Martín-González, J.A. & Rodríguez-Gómez, G. 2015, 'How rare was human presence in Europe during the Early Pleistocene?', *Quaternary International*, vol. 389, pp. 119–30.
- Rosafio, P. 1994, 'Slaves and coloni in the villa system', in J. Carlsen, P. Ørsted & J.E. Skydsgaard (eds), *Landuse in the Roman Empire*, 'L'Erma' di Bretschneider, Rome, pp. 145–58.
- Salmon, E.T. & Potter, T.W. 2005, 'via Salaria', in S. Hornblower & A. Spawforth (eds), *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 3rd edn, Oxford University Press, Oxford.
- Salmon, E.T. & Potter, T.W. 2012, 'Anio', *The Oxford Classical Dictionary*, 4th edn, Oxford University Press.
- Sessa, K. 2012, *The formation of Papal authority in late antique Italy: Roman bishops and the domestic sphere*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, UK.
- Shotter, D.C.A. 2003, *Rome and Her Empire*, Routledge, London.
- Silberman, N.A. 2007, 'Sustainable Heritage? Public Archaeological Interpretation and the Marketed Past', in Y. Hamilakis & P. Duke (eds), *Archaeology and Capitalism: From Ethics to Politics*, Left Coast Press, Walnut Creek, CA, pp. 179–93.
- Silius Italicus 1927, 'Book VIII', in J.D. Duff (ed.), *Punica*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, pp. 392–443.
- Smith, C. 2007, 'Cult and ritual: The Roman World', in S.E. Alcock & R. Osborne (eds), *Classical Archaeology*, Blackwell, Malden, pp. 263–85.
- Smith, L. 2012, 'Discourses of heritage: implications for archaeological community practice', *Nuevo Mundo Mundos Nuevos*.
- Soriano, S. & Villa, P. 2017, 'Early Levallois and the beginning of the Middle Paleolithic in central Italy', *PLoS One*, Public Library of Science, San Francisco, p. e0186082.
- Stiner, M.C. & Kuhn, S.L. 2006, 'Changes in the 'Connectedness' and Resilience of Paleolithic Societies in Mediterranean Ecosystems', *Human Ecology*, vol. 34, no. 5, pp. 693–712.
- Strabo 1923, 'Book 5, Chapter 3', in H.L. Jones (ed.), *Geography, Volume II: Books 3-5*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, pp. 377–85.
- Tagliacozzo, A. 2005, 'Animal exploitation in the Early Neolithic in Central-Southern Italy', *Munibe Antropologia-Arkeologia*, vol. 57, no. 1, pp. 429–39.
- Tengberg, A., Fredholm, S., Eliasson, I., Knez, I., Saltzman, K. & Wetterberg, O. 2012, 'Cultural ecosystem services provided by landscapes: Assessment of heritage values and identity', *Ecosystem Services*, vol. 2, pp. 14–26.
- Terrenato, N. 2007, 'The essential countryside: The Roman World', in S.E. Alcock & R. Osborne (eds), *Classical Archaeology*, Blackwell, Malden, pp. 139–61.
- Thurmond, D.L. 2005, *Handbook of Food Processing in Classical Rome : For Her Bounty No Winter*, Brill Academic Publishers, Boston, UNITED STATES.
- Tilley, C. 2006, 'Introduction: Identity, Place, Landscape and Heritage', *Journal of Material Culture*, vol. 11, no. 1–2, pp. 7–32.
- Tolotti, F. 1970, *Il cimitero di Priscilla: studio di topografia e architettura*, Società 'Amici delle catacombe' presso Pontificio istituto di archeologia cristiana, Vatican City.
- Tomassetti, G., Chiumenti, L. & Bilancia, F. 1979, *La campagna romana: antica, medioevale e moderna. Vol. 1, La campagna romana in genere*, Leo S. Olschki, Florence.
- Tomassetti, G., Tomassetti, F., Chiumenti, L. & Bilancia, F. 1979, 'Vie Nomentana e Salaria', *La campagna romana: antica, medioevale e moderna. Vol. 6, Vie Nomentana e Salaria, Portuense, Tiburtina : edizione redatta sulla base degli appunti lasciati da Giuseppe e Francesco Tomassetti*, Leo S. Olschki, Florence, pp. 9–302.
- Torelli, M. 1990, 'Archaic Rome between Latium and Etruria', in F.W. Walbank, A.E. Astin, M.W. Frederiksen, R.M. Ogilvie & A. Drummond (eds), *The Cambridge ancient history, Volume VII, Part 2: The rise of Rome to 220 BC*, 2nd edn, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, pp. 30–51.
- Traina, G. 2010, 'Le Sconfitte dei romani', *Aevum*, vol. 84, no. 1, pp. 177–85.
- Ufficio tutela ambiente del Comune di Roma 1996, *Villa Ada: il piano per l'acquisizione pubblica*, Edizioni grafiche Manfredi, Rome.
- Varro 1938, 'Book V, Chapter 28', in R.G. Kent (ed.), *On the Latin language: Books V.-VII.*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, pp. 26–7, viewed 16 June 2018, <<https://archive.org/stream/onlatinlanguage01varruoft#page/26/mode/2up>>.
- Villa, P., Soriano, S., Grün, R., Marra, F., Nomade, S., Pereira, A., Boschian, G., Pollarolo, L., Fang,

- F. & Bahain, J.-J. 2016, 'The Acheulian and Early Middle Paleolithic in Latium (Italy): Stability and Innovation', *PLOS ONE*, vol. 11, no. 8, p. e0160516.
- Virgil 1918, 'Book VII', in H. Rushton Fairclough & G.P. Goold (eds), *Aeneid: Books 7-12. Appendix Vergiliana*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, MA, pp. 2–59.
- Wallace, L. 1880, *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ*, Harper & Brothers, New York.
- Webster, J. 2007, 'Linking with the wider world: Romans and 'Barbarians'', in S.E. Alcock & R. Osborne (eds), *Classical Archaeology*, Blackwell, Malden, pp. 401–24.
- West, S. & Ndlovu, S. 2010, 'Heritage, landscape and memory', in T. Benton (ed.), *Understanding heritage and memory*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, pp. 202–37.
- Wickham, C. 2014, 'The Countryside and the City', in C. Wickham (ed.), *Medieval Rome: Stability and Crisis of a City, 900-1150*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 35–110.
- Wilson, A.I. 2009, 'Hydraulic Engineering and Water Supply', in J.P. Oleson (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Engineering and Technology in the Classical World*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, pp. 285–318.
- Wiseman, T.P. 2008, *Unwritten Rome*, Liverpool University Press, Liverpool.
- WWF Italia, Associazione Amici di Villa Ada & Censis 1991, *Ricostruire un parco: Programma integrato per il recupero e la gestione del comprensorio di Villa Ada-Savoia. Proposta di intervento*, Rome.
- Wyler, W. 1959, *Ben-Hur*, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, USA.

Appendices

Appendix 1: The Goths

A1.1. The Goths enter the Roman world

Beyond the north-eastern frontier lived many different peoples, from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds. These people did not write, and all literary sources that we have on these Barbarians were written by Greco-Roman authors that imposed their own interpretation to these peoples' history, writing centuries after the events they were relating. This translated into a misclassification of groups, amalgamation and lack of distinction between peoples (Kulikowski 2007, p.56–60). To add to the confusion, the archaeological evidence does not always overlap with the Greco-Roman knowledge of these Barbarians. We are mostly interested in the Goths in our case, but many Gothic characteristics are relevant for other groups. The most accepted theory is that the Gothic people was the result of the amalgamation of different tribes that came to live in the same area well beyond the Danube, during the 2nd and 3rd centuries. They shared a territory that spread from the Black Sea northwestward, currently situated in current day Ukraine, Moldova and Romania (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.24–5). Much of the Goths' past is still quite obscure to this day (Kulikowski 2007, p.100–1). It seems that, gradually, the Goths became a more political and territorial entity, under the form of a loose confederation of Germanic, Hunnic and Sarmatian tribal groups, forming a collective of tribes that the Romans simply called 'Goths' (Kulikowski 2007, p.98–9). Living at first at a distance from the Roman frontier, they began their incursions into the Empire during the 3rd century CE. Overpopulation and the subsequent hunger made them desperate to look elsewhere to make a living. The attraction of loot in Roman territory and Germanic warrior culture made easier the choice between attacking their (Barbarian) neighbors, that were in a similar demographic and economic situation and attacking a wealthier Roman Empire, offering plenty of riches and fertile land to plunder (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.29). The first Gothic group entered Roman territory in 238, and they were stopped by the imperial army commanded by Decius (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.24–5). The Goths agreed to stop their rampage and to supply Gothic warriors to serve under Roman banners, in exchange of an annual payment. In 248, the Romans stopped their payment without notice, which was seen as a breach in the agreement. In 250, Decius was declared emperor by his army and marched on Rome to depose Emperor Philip. The frontier was thus left open for the Goths, under the command of king Cniva, to enter the Empire and lay waste to the provinces of Dacia and Moecia. The Roman legions went back to stop the Goths, but the conflict spread to the Balkans. Decius was defeated and his successor, Trebonianus Gallus, had to accept to pay the Goths annually and let them have the spoils of war for them to go back to their homeland (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.26–7). Similar invasions occurred many times (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.28–29) because of breach from the Roman side (stop of payments) or from the Gothic side (because loyalty was based on the person and her family, when the Roman emperor or general, with whom the treaty was agreed, died, the Goths considered the pact terminated) (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.33). Ultimately, an increasing number of Goths served in the Roman army (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.36) and the Goths beyond the Danube became progressively a force to be reckoned with. Part of the Roman political game, to keep invaders a bay on the short term, was the payment and favoring of specific chiefs or kings, so they could keep the infighting beyond the Danube (Kulikowski 2007, pp.36–37). This however created stronger groups led by more powerful leaders, and consolidated Gothic identities on the long run (Kulikowski 2007, pp.36–37). In 376, some Gothic groups entered the Roman Empire while escaping the attacking Huns. They were admitted peacefully by the Roman emperor Valens in return of their service in the Roman army, a golden opportunity for to increase his forces (Kulikowski 2007, pp.128–129). Once officially inside the Empire, the Goths were subject to

many exactions by the local Roman army officials (e.g. the food destined for the Goths was diverted and sold by the Roman generals to fill their own pockets, and dog meat was sold in exchange for children to be sold as slaves), and as hunger grew in their ranks, so did the tension between Romans and Goths (Kulikowski 2007, pp.130–134). In 377, following an incident during a banquet gathering a Roman and Gothic leaders, the Goths rioted and were soon joined by other oppressed groups of the region (Moecia and Thrace), mainly miners, slaves and prisoners (Kulikowski 2007, pp.133–134; Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.46). The rebellion grew, and Emperor Valens marched to crush it. The conflict ended at Adrianople in 378 with the crushing defeat of the Imperial army: the emperor Valens died alongside many Roman senior officers and two thirds of the entire Roman army (Kulikowski 2007, p.142–3). Such a humiliating defeat had a profound impact on the Roman society: Pagans saw it as the direct result of the neglect of the traditional gods, whereas Orthodox Christians blamed the Arian beliefs of Valens (which they saw as heresy). It took over two years for Valens' successor, Theodosius, to secure a peace treaty (382 CE) with the Goths about which we do not know the specifics. Now tens of thousands of Goths lived inside the Empire, settled and serving in the army both as soldiers and officers (Kulikowski 2007, p.156–7), and they became important actors in the social and political life of the Empire (Kulikowski 2007, p.144–5).

A1.2. Alaric's Visigoths sack Rome

Theodosius fought and won against the Franks and the western part of the Empire at the Battle of the Frigidus (somewhere between current Slovenia and Italy) with the help of 20,000 Goths under the command of Alaric. Alaric lost 10,000 of his men and was refused the promotion to general. He considered he had not been given enough recognition for his service, and rebelled after having been risen on the shield by his men and proclaimed king of the Visigoths (Kulikowski 2007, p.165–6). Alaric's groups raided northern Italy and the Balkans between 401 and 405 CE. In 405, Stilicho, the regent of the western part of the Empire, agreed to give Alaric proper office (Kulikowski 2007, p.170–1); however, the promise was not upheld after Stilicho's death in 408 (Kulikowski 2007, p.173–4). In retaliation, Alaric marched directly to Rome and blockaded the entry of grain for two years (408–409) as leverage (Kulikowski 2007, p.173–4). He lifted the blockade the time of a negotiation in Ravenna, which released the hunger of the Roman population; however, his demands were not met, so he went back to Rome and ordered the continuation of the siege (Kulikowski 2007, p.173–4). In late 409, he tried another strategy to improve his stance with Ravenna: he declared Emperor the urban prefect of Rome, Priscus Attalus, Roman nobleman (Kulikowski 2007, p.175–6). Attalus stopped listening to Alaric as soon as he was declared emperor. Unhappy with the situation, Alaric deposed him in 410 (Kulikowski 2007, p.175–6). After an imperial attack on his army, the Visigoths besieged Rome for a third time, before sacking it (Kulikowski 2007, p.177). The sack of Rome had a psychological and physical impact of the city. The effects were downplayed by Christian writers to discredit the pagan argument that the sack happened because of Christianization (i.e. that the gods were not happy). Famine and disease had taken many lives, and an additional internal turmoil caused additional civil loss when many citizens decided to settle old grudges (Kulikowski 2007, p.9). The population, though, recovered in a few years (Kulikowski 2007, p.178–9), but their impact in the surrounding countryside might have been quite deep. At least for Antemnae, and the area of current Villa Ada, even if it is difficult to prove causation, archaeological evidence suggests high levels of activity until the 3rd century CE, after that, the last evidence of activity can be dated to the mid-5th century CE at the latest and thus coincides with the gothic troubles around Rome (Quilici & Quilici Gigli 1978, p.165, 168).

Alaric died in 411, and Athaulf was elected to succeed the late king. Athaulf was determined to restore relations with Ravenna and find a place to call home (Kulikowski 2007, pp.180–182), so he decided to move towards Gaul, where he proclaimed Priscus Attalus Emperor a second time in 415, before abandoning him to the actual Emperor Honorius' forces. Attalus was exiled to Lipari until his last days, and the Goths were incorporated into the Roman army, where they would be sent to fight against the Alans, Sueves and Vandals that had settled in Spain during the previous years. The Goths were then officially settled in southern Gaul (current Aquitaine), becoming officially part of the Empire, as the first autonomous (Barbarian) kingdom inside of the Empire (Kulikowski 2007, p.157–8, 182–3).

A1.3. The last Western Roman Emperor: from the end of the Western Empire to the Kingdom of Italy

The episode of the sack of Rome was more a symptom than a cause for the continuation of the dismembering of the western part of the Empire. In 474, Julius Nepos was proclaimed Emperor, who chose Orestes (Roman, but former general under Attila the Hun) as commander in chief. With his new power, Orestes quickly deposed Julius Nepos in favor of his own son Flavius Romulus, with the support of Germanic mercenaries in Italy and their leader Odoacer (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.65). The Germanic mercenaries then demanded land in Italy in exchange of their support, Orestes refused and was murdered for this in 476. His son Romulus was allowed to live and retired in Southern Italy with a yearly pension (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.65). Flavius Romulus had not been recognized as Emperor by Constantinople, and in 480 Julius Nepos was murdered. With Nepos' death was the end of Western Roman Emperors (Reece 1999, p.168). The Roman Senate asked for Odoacer to be made administrator of Italy, which was refused by the East Roman Emperor Zeno, who considered himself enough emperor for both parts of the Empire (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.65–6). But in 480 Odoacer became de facto the only ruler of the Italian Peninsula and chose to be addressed simply as king (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.65–6). Odoacer acted as if he recognized Imperial superiority from East Rome (e.g. gold coins minted in Italy bore Eastern Roman Emperor Zeno's effigy). Odoacer was also supported by the Senate in Rome, so Odoacer's Kingdom of Italy was left alone for the time being (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.66). This meant some stability for the economy to have space to recover. After 480, Odoacer took Dalmatia and started to push for territory in the Balkans (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.66). The whole Western part of the Empire was by now fragmented into different Barbaric kingdoms (Vandals, Franks, Visigoths), and East Roman Emperor Zeno felt increasingly threatened by Odoacer as he continued to push into the Eastern Empire (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.63).

In 488, Zeno sent the Ostrogothic commander Theodoric and his band to Italy to wage war against Odoacer and his kingdom. Theodoric left with his people (estimated to 200,000 souls, including an estimated 40,000 warriors) and arrived in Italy one year later; it was not easy. Apart from hunger, Theodoric's forces had to fight bands of Gepids in the Balkans to force their way through to Italy (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.63–4). The Ostrogoths started to conquer and occupy northern Italy, advancing towards Ravenna (that had been officially capital of the western part of the Empire since 402), besieging the city for three years (August 490–February 493) until Odoacer's surrender (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.67–8, 70–1). Theodoric and Odoacer made peace, and Theodoric recognized Odoacer as equal ruler of Italy (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.71). Ten days later Theodoric personally murdered Odoacer during a banquet (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.72). Theodoric became king of the Ostrogoths in March 493 and reigned on a successful state as rex ('king') and princeps ('first citizen') until his death in 526: He never took the title of emperor, even if he was given the imperial regalia (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.72–3). Theodoric did not change much the already existent Roman administration, which was still largely composed of Roman citizens. He continued to guarantee the role of the Senate in Rome and of the Roman aristocracy, and reinforced the Imperial guard, even if there was no emperor to protect. He also ensured the harmony between Arian Goths and Orthodox Romans (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.73–4). After centuries of vagrancy, the Ostrogoths came to build a home in Italy (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.74).

A1.4. The Eastern Empire's attempt to reconquer Italy

In 527, Justinian became Eastern Roman Emperor, with the great plan to reconquer the lost West and reestablish the former glory of the Empire (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.2–3). In 533, the eastern frontier with the Persians being secured, the Danubian frontier being quiet, he sent an expedition to conquer the Vandal Kingdom in Africa (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.9). Once North Africa was secured, the (East) Roman army under Belisarius command landed in Sicily and took it with little resistance in the same year 535 (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.77–80). The next year (536), Belisarius landed in the Peninsula with his army and took Neapolis (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.89–91). The Ostrogothic king Theodahad was blamed for the defeat and the Gothic nobility chose Vitigis, an old general, to replace him (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.92). After having secured the loyalty of Pope

Silverius, the Senate and the people of Rome, the new king gathered the majority of his army in Ravenna and left Rome protected by a garrison of 4000 men (he still took senators with him to Ravenna as hostages)(Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.93). However, Pope Silverius changed sides and offered to submit to Belisarius, who promptly marched on Rome. The Goths had evaluated the situation and decided that they could not keep Rome, so they retreated to the north of Rome, where they camped waiting for further orders (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.95). The Roman army was left free to enter the city through the gate Porta Asinaria in the south, as the Gothic garrison left the city through the Port Flaminia in the north. Thus, the city of Rome was taken peacefully in December 536 (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.96).

The sacks of Rome by the Visigoths (410) and Vandals (455) had not destroyed the monuments of the Eternal City, the Imperial Palace was still protected by the Imperial guards, even if empty, and it is estimated that 600 thousand people still inhabited the city. The city still functioned, baths and circuses were still running and visited by the citizens (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.96). Belisarius immediately prepared the city for siege: grain from Sicily and more provisions from the Roman countryside were stored in warehouses (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.98). The Aurelian walls were old and not fully operational: they had to quickly repair some holes and dig ditches (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.102). In February 537, Vittigis ordered the march on Rome to almost the entire Ostrogothic army (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.103).

Some events of the siege took place in the area of current Villa Ada. Belisarius and small group of other Roman soldiers met the Gothic vanguard at the bridge Ponte Salario. Being massively outnumbered, they retreated and fought slowly toward the gate Porta Salaria, where they finally put the Goths to flight (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.104–5). Once the whole Gothic army arrived outside of Rome, they established seven camps of the northern side of the city and managed to blockade 14 gates out of the 18 (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.106). The Goths cut the aqueducts but did not interrupt the drinking water supply as the Tiber flew directly through the city, giving access to unlimited water supply. Baths could not work anymore, but floating mills were built on the Tiber to ensure flour availability (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.106). The population was put to sentry duty on the walls watch and received small rations, which fostered discontent inside the city (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.107). The Gothic army built a large number of ladders, siege rams and towers on wheels (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.107–8), which must have needed a large quantity of wood, most likely cut in the area of the north of Rome. They did not manage to break the siege, and Vittigis ordered the execution of the hostage senators, thus alienating the Roman population (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.117). By July 537, virtually all rural estates of the Roman countryside had been sacked and foraged for food, and famine started to appear, which stroke another blow to the population of Rome (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.134). During a truce decided at the end of 537 (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.142–4), the Goths tried and failed to infiltrate the city through the Aqua Virgo's tunnels (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.147–8). In March 538, the siege ended, and the Goths left not without being harassed by the Romans (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.150). In 540, the Roman army entered Ravenna and Belisarius was offered the kingship of Italy that he feigned to accept to pacify the Goths and end this war that had been taking a heavy toll on the Roman countryside (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.187–90).

The Imperial victory meant that Belisarius was ordered to leave Italy and that the Peninsula soon began to be taxed as a fully integrated part of the Empire, which shook the population that had not been taxed by imperial agents for over 50 years (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.210). Some Roman generals stayed in Italy with their armies to defend the status quo (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.209). Peace, however, would not last long. In the northern Po valley, indeed, the Goths proclaimed Totila king and started to prepare for war in 541 (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.214). The Ostrogothic army took town after town, and by the summer of 542, it controlled southern and Central Italy. The taxes collected by the Empire were now diverted towards Totila, and the Gothic army swelled with every victory. The Gothic army was instructed not to hurt civilians and to return them to their families, which gained the favor of the already desperate Italian population. In addition, Totila promised the ownership of the land to tenants and freedom to slaves who would join his army; and many did (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.328). In the meantime, the Imperial generals and soldiers that had stayed in Italy, stayed at their respective cities, from where they plundered the countryside, trying to squeeze out as much wealth as

they could. This slowly alienated the Italian population they were supposed to have liberated and now to protect (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.222). The Ostrogothic banner quickly overran Italy (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.214–9). Emperor Justinian sent Belisarius back to Italy (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.227). The Ostrogoths, besieged Rome again in 545 (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.235) and took it on 17 December 546, when some Imperial soldiers betrayed their banner and opened the gates during the night (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.243). During the siege, the population of Rome suffered hunger again, but this time it was amplified by the misconduct of the Imperial generals that used the misery to enrich themselves by selling military rations at exorbitant prices (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.237–8). By the end of the siege, the few remaining citizens fled the city, and the Gothic army left as it was too small to hold on to Rome and other more strategic positions were deemed more urgent to take by Totila (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.246). For about six weeks, Rome was left deserted until the Imperial army reoccupied it. Belisarius ordered the population from the immediate surrounding countryside to be commissioned to help the soldiers repair the walls and secure the city (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.248). Early in 549, Belisarius was recalled to Constantinople (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.256), and during that same year's summer Totila ordered to march on Rome to try to take it back. Rome was therefore besieged another time, but this siege ended quickly with the surrender of the few hundred hungry Roman soldiers, most of whom chose to accept to serve under the Gothic banner (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.262–4). Totila and his army were ultimately defeated by the Imperial army in 552 (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.282–8) after what had become a war of extinction (the Imperial army did not take prisoners anymore)(Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.286). The Imperial army took Rome the same year (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.290), but it was not until 554 that Italy was fully pacified (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.293), coming out completely exhausted from the long years of war (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.298).

The war over, the Imperial administration sought to restore political and economic order in Italy: tenants returned to their lands, owners that had been expropriated recovered their land, slaves were returned to their owners and public funding for infrastructure maintenance was reestablished (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.293). However, the effects of the Gothic War would be felt long after it had ended: the intensive agricultural system revolving around the city of Rome did not survive the fall of the western part of the Empire and the sharp decrease in demand from the metropolis (Tomassetti, Chiumenti & Bilancia 1979, p.78). What's more during 6th century, less defensible villas did not survive the Gothic Wars. It was most likely the case in the area of current Villa Ada. Rural sites that remained usually became the backbone of the Medieval settlement system, many becoming castles by the 8th century (Terrenato 2007, p.151). War would, however, return to Italy in 568 with the Lombard invasion (Cumberland Jacobsen 2009, p.295).

Appendix 2. List of questions in English

Q1: Do you know the park of Villa Ada in Rome?

- Yes
- No

Q2: How often do you visit Villa Ada?

- Almost every day
- A couple of times per week
- Once per week
- Once per month
- A couple of times per year
- Once per year
- Less than once per year

Q3: How do you usually reach the park? (multiple choice)

- On foot
- By car
- By scooter / motorbike
- By public transport (bus, metro, tram or train)
- I cycle
- Other (specify)

Q4: What is (are) the purpose(s) of your visit? (multiple choice)

- Sports / physical activity
- Walking the dog
- Just walking, breathing and admiring (flânerie)
- Taking a break, resting
- Bringing my children to the park to play
- Spending time with people
- Reading or studying
- Horse riding
- Visiting its historical buildings
- Ornithology / bird watching
- Botany / lichenology / mycology
- Other (specify)

Q5: What do you like the most about Villa Ada? (multiple choice)

- The vegetation, the green
- The infrastructure to do physical exercise
- The different playgrounds for the kids
- The open spaces
- Its beauty
- Its history and historical buildings
- I don't know
- Other (specify)

Q6: How do you find the maintenance of the park? (pick one)

- Excellent
- Good
- Passable but could improve

- Bad
- Extremely bad

Q7. Overall, are you satisfied with Villa Ada? (pick one)

- Yes
- No

Q8. How clean do you find Villa Ada? (pick one)

- Very clean
- Clean
- Not bad, could be improve
- Dirty and littered
- Very littered and dirty

Q9. How do you find the park on an aesthetic level? (pick one)

- Lovely
- It's okay
- Ugly

Q10. Would you define Villa Ada as a heritage site? (pick one)

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

Q11. When you hear/read news about Villa Ada on the media, how do you feel it is usually reported: (pick one)

- Under a positive light
- Under a negative light
- Neutral (neither positive nor negative)
- {I don't know}

Q12. What kind of feelings do you experience while thinking of Villa Ada? (pick one)

- Extremely positive
- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative
- Extremely negative
- {I don't know}

Q13. How well do you know about the history of the land of Villa Ada? (pick one)

- Very well
- Well
- I know some elements
- Bad
- Very bad, I don't know anything

Q14. Which ones of these phrases would better characterize Villa Ada? (multiple choice)

- Green
- Historically rich
- Forest in the city
- Social/meeting place
- Personal space
- Relax

- Fascinating
- Reflection of Rome's state
- Dirty
- Beautiful
- Neglect
- Trees
- Hills
- Via Salaria
- Rome
- City
- Countryside
- Democracy
- Heritage

Q15. What does Villa Ada represent for you? (you are free to give the answer you want; from one word to a couple of lines)

Q16. How satisfied are you with the City of Rome's work and effort to maintain Villa Ada?
(Very satisfied / satisfied / neither satisfied nor unsatisfied / unsatisfied / very unsatisfied)

Q17. How satisfied are you with how other visitors behave and help in taking care of Villa Ada?
(Very satisfied / satisfied / neither satisfied nor unsatisfied / unsatisfied / very unsatisfied)

Q18. Do you give of yourself for the protection, conservation and/or care of Villa Ada?

- Yes
- No

Q19. Do you give of yourself for the protection, conservation and/or care of other parks or gardens in Rome?

- Yes (specify which ones)
- No

Q20. Various entities are involved in the creation of initiatives for the care and conservation of Villa Ada. Do you know the following actors? (Yes/No)

- The association AMUSE (Amici Municipio II)
- The website Roma2Pass.it (comprises information, resources and news about the Municipio II, and therefore also Villa Ada)
- The group "L'Osservatorio di Sherwood"
- The association "Gli Amici di Villa Ada"
- Sovrintendenza Capitolina ai Beni Culturali del Comune di Roma
- Dipartimento Tutela Ambientale del Comune di Roma

Q21. Villa Ada undoubtedly needs urgent maintenance action. If funds were to be allocated, where should be the top priority in your opinion? (multiple choice)

- Maintenance of the alleys and stairs
- Maintenance of the greenery (lawns and flowerbeds)
- Maintenance of outdoor furniture (benches and fountains)
- New trees (to replace the trees that have already been or will be cut down)
- Improvement of the cleaning and the number of trash cans
- Restoration of the public-owned buildings
- Restoration of lakes and ponds
- Restoration of free playgrounds for children

- Improvement of the security and the control over the access of motorized vehicles
- Creation of an information center within the park
- Educational and information signs
- Environmental educational trails
- Creation of a library/toy library/cultural center
- Access to public bathrooms
- Identification of spaces for cultural performance (musical, theatrical, literary)
- Identification of spaces for cultural performance for meetings and exhibitions
- Infrastructure and trails for sports and physical activities
- Dog parks
- Creation of bars and restaurants
- Creation of a simple and transparent communication system for the advertising of maintenance operations by the managing body, and for the feedback by the visitors

Q22. Would you have any wishes or comments to add regarding the prioritization of the maintenance in Villa Ada? (free text response)

Q23. In your opinion:

(table with strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree)

- Public parks should be properly maintained
- It is more important for a park to be pretty than being ecologically functional
- No wild animals should live in the park
- Public parks should also favor biodiversity and native species
- Undergrowth looks messy and should therefore be removed
- Overgrown structures can, in some cases, be charming (e.g. moss or plants growing on stones or walls)

Q24. Which of the functions of large parks are the most important for large cities such as Rome? (multiple choice)

- Heat regulation in summer
- Storm water collection
- Social spaces
- Air cleaning
- Absorb carbon (fight against climate change)
- Improve individuals' mental health
- Spaces for physical activity
- Biodiversity conservation
- Their potential as open-air museum [education]
- Other (specify)

Q25. What is your age?

Q26. Do you live in Rome?

- Yes
- No

Q27. Please enter your post code and country, or leave blank otherwise:

Q28. How did you find out about this questionnaire?

- By word of mouth (someone you know shared the access link)
- Poster (with the QR code)
- On a blog or website. Please specify:

Appendix 3: List of questions in Italian

Q1. Conosce il parco Villa Ada a Roma?

- Sì
- No

Q2. Con quale frequenza visita Villa Ada?

- Quasi ogni giorno
- Un paio di volte alla settimana
- Una volta alla settimana
- Una volta al mese
- Un paio di volte all'anno
- Una volta all'anno
- Meno di una volta all'anno (in media)

Q3. Con quale mezzo di trasporto si reca a Villa Ada? (scelta multipla)

- A piedi
- In macchina
- In taxi
- In moto / motorino
- Mezzi pubblici: bus / metro / tram / treno
- Bicicletta
- Altro (specificare):

Q4. Quali sono i motivi che la inducono a visitare Villa Ada? (scelta multipla)

- Sport / attività fisica
- Passeggiare il cane
- Andare a zonzo / Passeggiare
- Riposo
- Accompagnare i bambini per farli giocare
- Passare il tempo con la gente
- Leggere oppure studiare
- Andare a cavallo / equitazione
- Visitare edifici storici
- Ornitologia / osservazione degli uccelli
- Botanica / lichenologia / micologia
- Altro (specificare)

Q5. Cosa le piace di più di Villa Ada? (scelta multipla)

- La vegetazione, il verde
- Le infrastrutture per l'attività fisica
- I parchi giochi per i bambini
- Gli spazi aperti
- La sua bellezza
- La sua storia and i suoi edifici storici
- Non lo so
- Altro (specificare)

Q6. Come trova la manutenzione del parco?

- Ottima
- Buona

- Passabile ma potrebbe migliorare
- Cattiva
- Pessima

Q7. In generale, è soddisfatto/a dello stato di Villa Ada?

- Sì
- No

Q8. Come trova la pulizia di Villa Ada?

- Pulitissima
- Pulita
- Non male, ma potrebbe migliorare
- Sporca (+ rifiuti in giro)
- Sporchissima

Q9. Come trova Villa Ada riguardo all'estetica?

- Bella
- Va bene, ma non è un granché
- Brutta

Q10. Definirebbe Villa Ada come parte del patrimonio culturale o naturalistico di Roma?

- Sì
- No
- Non lo so

Q11. Quando sente parlare di Villa Ada nei media, come pensa che venga presentata solitamente?

- In modo positivo
- In modo neutro (né positivo, né negativo)
- In modo negativo
- Non lo so

Q12. Che tipo di sentimento prova quando pensa a Villa Ada?

Estremamente positivo

- Positivo
- Neutro
- Negativo
- Estremamente negativo
- Non lo so

Q13. Che conoscenza ha della storia di Villa Ada?

- Ottima
- Buona
- Conosco qualcosa
- Scarsa
- Scarsissima

Q14. Quali di queste espressioni crede che caratterizzi meglio Villa Ada? (scelta multipla)

- Verde
- Ricca di storia
- Bosco in città
- Luogo d'incontro / Spazio sociale
- Spazio personale
- Riposo

- Affascinante
- Riflette lo stato generale di Roma
- Sporca
- Bellissima
- Degrado
- Alberi
- Colline
- Via Salaria
- Roma
- Città
- Campagna
- Democrazia
- Patrimonio

Q15. Che cosa rappresenta per lei Villa Ada? (risposta libera; da una parola a un paio di righe)

Q16. Quanto si sente soddisfatto/a del lavoro e dello sforzo del Comune di Roma per la manutenzione di Villa Ada?

(Molto soddisfatto/a, soddisfatto/a, né soddisfatto/a né insoddisfatto/a, insoddisfatto/a, molto insoddisfatto/a)

Q17. Quanto si sente soddisfatto/a del comportamento degli altri visitatori e di come partecipano alla cura di Villa Ada?

(Molto soddisfatto/a, soddisfatto/a, né soddisfatto/a né insoddisfatto/a, insoddisfatto/a, molto insoddisfatto/a)

Q18. Ci mette anche Lei del proprio nella difesa, la conservazione e/o la cura di Villa Ada?

- Sì
- No

Q19. Ci mette anche Lei del proprio nella difesa, conservazione e/o cura di altri parchi o giardini a Roma?

- Sì (specificare quale)
- No

Q20. Varie entità si interessano a, e creano iniziative per la cura e conservazione di Villa Ada. Conosce le seguenti entità? (colonne con sì / no)

- L'associazione AMUSE (Amici Municipio II)
- Il sito Roma2Pass.it
- Il gruppo "L'Osservatorio Sherwood"
- L'associazione "Gli Amici di Villa Ada"
- Percorsi Verdi
- L'associazione Roma Sotterranea (Bunker Savoia)
- La Sovrintendenza Capitolina ai Beni Culturali del Comune di Roma
- Il Dipartimento Tutela Ambientale del Comune di Roma

Q21. Villa Ada ha indubbiamente bisogno di interventi di manutenzione. Dovendo stanziare dei fondi, a suo parere, quale sarebbero le priorità per un intervento?

- Cura dei viali e delle scalinate
- Cura del verde (prati e aiuole)
- Manutenzione arredi (panchine e fontanelle)
- Nuovi alberi (in sostituzione di quelli abbattuti o da abbattere)
- Potenziamento della pulizia e del n° dei cestini

- Restauro e recupero degli edifici (di proprietà pubblica)
- Riqualificazione dei laghi
- Riqualificazione delle aree giochi pubbliche per i bambini
- Potenziamento della vigilanza e controllo dell'accesso dei veicoli motorizzati
- Creazione di un punto informativo all'interno del parco
- Cartellonistica informativa/educativa
- Percorsi di educazione ambientale
- Creazione di una biblioteca/ludoteca/Centro culturale
- Accesso a bagni pubblici
- Individuazione di spazi per spettacoli (musicali, teatrali, letterari)
- Individuazione di spazi per incontri e mostre
- Attrezzature e percorsi per attività sportive
- Aree cani
- Creazione di punti bar e ristorazione
- Creazione di un sistema di comunicazione semplice e trasparente per l'annuncio delle azioni d'intervento da parte dell'ente gestore, e per la formulazione di commenti da parte dei cittadini

Q22. Avrebbe dei desideri o commenti da aggiungere riguardanti le priorità d'intervento nel comprensorio di Villa Ada? (risposta libera)

Q23. A suo parere:

(tabella, con colonne: assolutamente d'accordo, d'accordo, né d'accordo né in disaccordo, in disaccordo, totalmente in disaccordo)

- La manutenzione nei parchi pubblici dovrebbe essere impeccabile.
- La bellezza di un parco pubblico è più importante della sua funzione ecologica.
- Non ci dovrebbero essere degli animali selvatici in un parco pubblico.
- I parchi pubblici dovrebbero favorire le specie autoctone (mediterranee) e la biodiversità.
- La boscaglia ha un aspetto sporco e disordinato, e dovrebbe essere pulita e messa in ordine.
- Le strutture invase dalla vegetazione possono essere in certi casi affascinanti (per esempio: muschio sulle pietre o i muretti).

Q24. Quali funzioni dei grandi parchi considera essere le più importanti per una grande città come Roma? (scelta multipla)

- Regolazione della temperatura in estate
- Raccolta dell'acqua piovana
- Spazio sociale
- Purificazione dell'aria
- Assorbimento del carbonio (per combattere il cambiamento climatico)
- Miglioramento della salute mentale
- Spazio per l'attività fisica
- Conservazione della biodiversità
- Museo all'aria aperta / Educazione
- Altro (specificare)

Q25. Qual è la sua età?

Q26. Abita a Roma?

- Sì
- No

Q27. Il suo codice postale (facoltativo, per stimare la distanza a Villa Ada):

Q28. Come è venuto/a a conoscenza di questo questionario?

- Passaparola (qualcuno che conosce ha condiviso il link di accesso)
- Manifesto con il codice QR
- Via un blog, o sito internet (specificare)