

# The Jewish Catacomb on the Via Labicana

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“Dopo la morte di Garrucci, Orazio Marucchi fu quasi l’unico cultore rimasto dei monumenti sepolcrali romani del popolo d’Israele. A lui si deve il rinvenimento del cimitero ebraico della via Labicana.”

E. Josi, Introduction to Marucchi’s *Le Catacombe Romane, Opera Postuma* (1933) p. XIX.

## DISCOVERY AND IDENTIFICATION: 1881–1882

The Jewish catacomb discovered in late 1881 below the via Labicana (the modern via Casilina) a little over two miles southeast of Rome has been described as one of two small funerary hypogea for the ancient Jews of Rome in addition to larger catacombs by the consular roads of the Appia, Nomentana, and Portuense.<sup>1</sup> A three-day survey of the site in January of 1884 revealed a small section of an underground cemetery. Yet the Roman archaeologist Orazio Marucchi (1852–1931) believed that many galleries inaccessible at the time of his study would demonstrate that, once excavated, the via Labicana catacomb would indeed prove extensive, possibly reaching the size of another Jewish catacomb in Rome below the Vigna Randanini, which had been continually accessible since its discovery in 1859.<sup>2</sup>

The land-owner, Roman lawyer Francesco M. Apollonj-Ghetti, alerted Marucchi to the presence of catacombs below his vineyard after the re-activation of an abandoned quarry for *pozzolana rossa* (a granular volcanic tufa) on the far side of the property had penetrated a cavern near the road. The cavern connected to a long gallery with piers of *loculus* tombs (gallery A on Marucchi’s plan, Figure 1).<sup>3</sup> The site was some distance from the Christian catacombs of Castulus (one mile from the city gates) and Saints Peter and Marcellinus (at the third mile), both located on the via Labicana in Medieval itineraries for the city and securely identified by explorers centuries before.<sup>4</sup> Intrigued by the possibility that an unknown cemetery could belong to a private and perhaps heretical Christian sect, Marucchi immediately examined the galleries accessible from quarry tunnels below the Apollonj property.<sup>5</sup>

Though found already “sacked” by miners from the neighboring quarries, the catacomb nonetheless preserved traces of its great history, and during a series of visits at notable personal risk,<sup>6</sup> Marucchi was able to answer his own questions about the catacomb’s original owners and silence of ancient literary sources on the site.<sup>7</sup> At the point where a gallery (I–L) had been blocked by rubble from a nearby stairwell (I),

Marucchi found a fragment of terracotta tile closing a *loculus* (Marucchi n. 6, marked S on plan), painted with the image of the menorah, lulab, and ethrog in red.<sup>8</sup> This and other fragments of “tegole dipinte in rosso con il candelabro” to mark Jewish burials are described in his immediate report to his mentor, Giovanni Battista de Rossi. Marucchi preferred to speak with de Rossi directly about other things he had seen.<sup>9</sup> De Rossi accompanied Marucchi on a second visit to the site, and together they decided, with the owner’s cooperation, to explore the remains of a catacomb “abbastanza vasta.”<sup>10</sup>

Marucchi’s first communication on the discovery in April 1882 proposed that the cemetery had belonged to members of a *Siburenses* synagogue in Rome, which took its name from the ancient region of the *Subura*, close to where the via Labicana leaves the Republican city gates. De Rossi had already identified a Jewish *proseucha* in that area in a non-Jewish funerary text (CIJ 1.531/JIWE 2.602/CIL 6.9921), and it had long been assumed that Jewish burial sites would have some geographical relationship with areas inside the city walls populated by Jews.<sup>11</sup> In the end, nothing but its location even remotely connects the Labicana cemetery to the *Siburensi*, although the Jewish catacombs on the via Nomentana, discovered at the start of the twentieth century, contain, in fact, several references to members of this group.<sup>12</sup>

## JANUARY 1884: MARUCCHI’S SURVEY AND RESULTS

Marucchi’s work in other archaeological sites delayed his return to the Apollonj quarries until January 1884. In the three days allocated to the project—determined by the catacomb’s poor condition and scarce material remains—the *cavatore* Luigi Capone and two other diggers sent by the Commission of Sacred Archeology opened galleries in all directions.<sup>13</sup> With a somewhat clearer picture of the catacomb’s size, location, and appearance, Marucchi was now able to determine that burial space had been created from pre-existing, ancient quarries with additional galleries excavated for

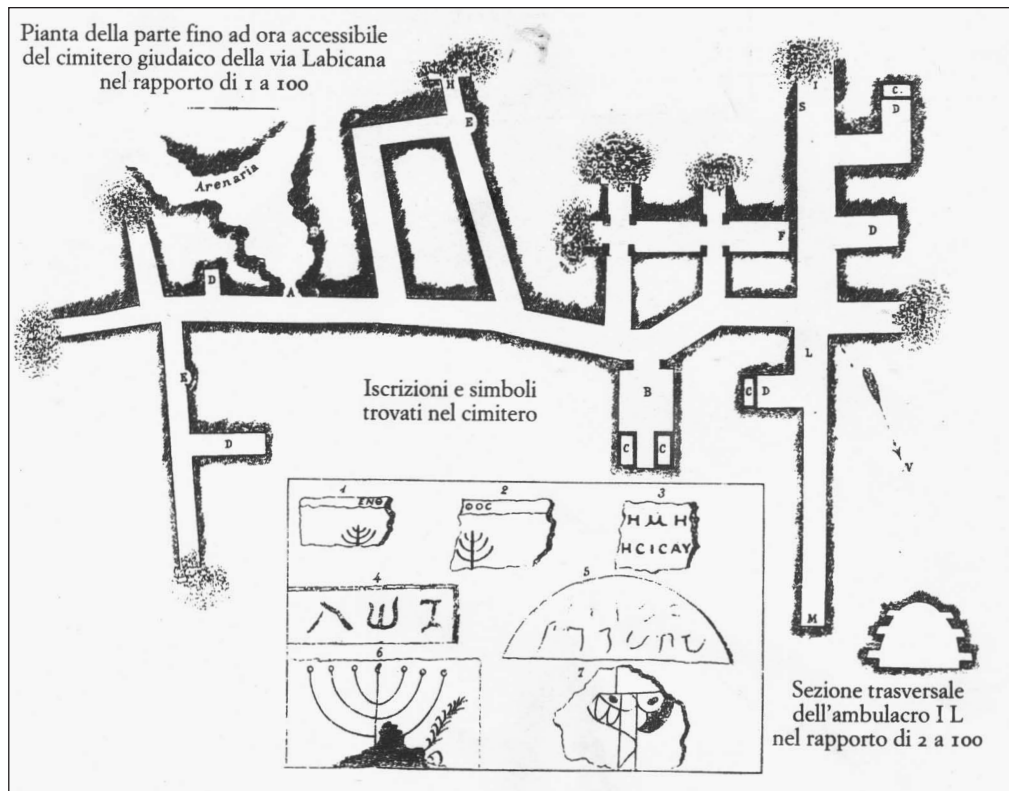


Figure 1. Marucchi plan of the regions explored in 1882–1884, “Di un nuovo cimitero giudaico scoperto sulla via Labicana,” *Dissertazioni della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia*, 2.2 (1884), pp. 497–532.

the cemetery proper at a slightly higher level.<sup>14</sup> His site plan (Figure 1)—Marucchi’s training had been in engineering, and his drafting capabilities were modest but capable when impossible to employ more scientific means—shows Gallery A, the first area he had seen two years before, leading west to a large rectangular cubiculum B; beyond this, Gallery A intercepts a series of galleries on an apparent grid plan (I–M; F–G, and branch galleries).<sup>15</sup> Gallery L is larger than the other galleries, and appears to connect at its southernmost extreme to a vestibule or staircase (I) leading to an ancient entrance into the site.<sup>16</sup>

The labor of the *cavatori* now confirmed the presence of two additional cubicula in the transverse galleries of gallery A (G and H);<sup>17</sup> five other short “dead-end” galleries used in a manner similar to crypts (D); and two examples of a curious tomb-form (E) that Marucchi identified as an “absis.”<sup>18</sup> In the semi-dome of the “absis” outside of the cubiculum in gallery H, Marucchi thought he read the Hebrew letters of the name Sara (Marucchi n. 5; CIJ 74); he also believed that another tomb had been marked as well with barely legible Hebrew script (Marucchi n. 4; CIJ 73).<sup>19</sup>

The few tombs discovered intact were at the lowest levels of the galleries, below a layer of fill. Following the “costume degli altri cimiteri giudaici,” these *loculi* had been sealed with a simple wall of brick covered with plaster (many anepigraphic).<sup>20</sup> A number of tile fragments painted with inscriptions in Greek and Jewish symbols were recovered from the debris covering the pavement of one gallery (Marucchi nn. 1–3; CIJ nn. 75–77). Marucchi was unable, however, to provide clear readings of these.<sup>21</sup>

Only one decorated tile was found *in situ* over a loculus (Marucchi n. 6). Anepigraphic, but marked with a large menorah, lulab, and ethrog in red, it was clear evidence that the catacomb had contained Jewish tombs. A smaller fragment of painted tile bore a design (but still no inscription) that Marucchi proposed to reconstruct as the pavilion for the celebration of the Jewish feast of Tabernacles (Marucchi n. 7).<sup>22</sup> There was, on the other hand, conspicuous evidence of glass cups or plates fixed into the mortar closing the tombs, exactly as was often done in the Christian catacombs.<sup>23</sup> This detail attracted much attention following the recent discovery of a celebrated gold-glass fragment with

Jewish symbols in the catacombs of Saints Peter and Marcellinus at a short distance down the same ancient road.<sup>24</sup> While the latter is seen today in the Vatican Museums, no artifacts can be traced back to the Jewish catacomb below the Apollonj property (Marucchi had made copies of the inscriptions for his lectures).

The areas explored by Marucchi in the Labicana catacomb did not contain the “oven-type” tombs found in certain areas of the catacomb in the Vigna Randanini.<sup>25</sup> But the five smaller dead-end galleries in the former (all marked as D), intensely used like cubacula, are found also in the latter (as well as in the catacomb of the Vigna Cimarra and in those at Venosa).<sup>26</sup> In addition, the larger cubiculum B and the back walls of two of the short “D” galleries contained not only loculi but also “mensa” tombs, masonry cases on the gallery floor that were built up against the wall like the tomb to *Ursos* discovered intact in the catacomb of the Vigna Randanini in 1862.<sup>27</sup>

Marucchi’s plan indicates reinforcement piers in masonry at the corners of several intersections of galleries near cubiculum B. Two like piers also flank the entrance into this cubiculum.<sup>28</sup> Gallery F leading westward to these intersections is shown either walled up before joining gallery I, forcing one into an irregular segment of gallery A past the entrance into cubiculum B, or secured by reinforced vaulting at the crossroads with gallery I–L–M. The rising vault at the southwest end of gallery I–L–M, passing below the ancient via Labicana, suggests the slope of a stairwell. Several galleries are shown still partially filled, particularly at the east, near the *arenarium*, and the excavations revealed no *lucernaria* (sky-lights) or other points of access. Marucchi’s plan also illustrates a cross-section of gallery I–L, measured at two meters in height and a little over a meter in width, rather egg-shaped, with a curved vault and three tiers of *loculi* on each side.

Marucchi treated the mid-second-century (Antonine) brick-stamps and signs of later expansion as evidence that the Labicana site was quite ancient in “catacomb chronology,” but neither this evidence, nor that which Marucchi’s published reports provide on tomb-forms and artifacts, can date the site earlier than the other Roman catacombs, most of which were excavated and used during the third and fourth centuries CE.<sup>29</sup> More recent studies of the Labicana area date the use of this catacomb to the fourth century.<sup>30</sup>

#### A JEWISH CATACOMB REVEALED: MARUCCHI’S LECTURE AND ARTICLES ON THE CATACOMB

Orazio Marucchi presented the plan of the Jewish catacomb for the first time in a meeting of the Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia on April 20, 1884. With few material

results for his claims, Marucchi’s observations cover much of the ground already laid out twenty years before by de Rossi in the first volume of *Roma Sotterranea Cristiana*.<sup>31</sup> Perhaps in light of his own research into the art and archaeology of the ancient Near East, Marucchi does appear to place more stress on the “Jewish origins” of subterranean burial in Rome, attributing similarities between Jewish and Christian burial practices in Rome to an “Eastern influence” that had also created the rock-cut tombs in Palestine for the Patriarchs, Kings, Prophets, and even the “corpo santissimo del Redentore.”<sup>32</sup> Although Marucchi believes Jewish hypogaea had existed in Rome before the advent of Christianity, he maintains, as had de Rossi, that the Christians were never “servile” and in fact would have been inspired by Patriarchal traditions rather than contemporary burial practices of the Jews in Rome.<sup>33</sup> Marucchi points out furthermore that the Jewish minority in the city would have needed only hypogaea “of limited extension.”<sup>34</sup> In all, Marucchi defines his research on the Vigna Apollonj site as a means to ensure that the catacomb is not “lost to memory” rather than an occasion to reflect on the Jewish cemeteries recently recovered in and around Rome.<sup>35</sup> But Marucchi would address this subject in detail a good twenty years later (in a work regrettably still unpublished), after demolition work on the Monteverde brought to light the Jewish catacomb first seen by Antonio Bosio four centuries before.<sup>36</sup>

#### LOCATING THE “MONTE D’ORO DELLE HEBREI”

Later scholars encountered great difficulty in retracing Marucchi’s route.<sup>37</sup> Despite Marucchi’s impassioned plea for sponsorship to continue the excavation and study of the site, the Apollonj-Ghetti family dealt with their “amara delusione” of a non-Christian catacomb by selling off part of the property that same year to the Sante Villeggi (1884).<sup>38</sup> The new tenants continued *pozzolana* quarrying and agricultural activities on the slopes above the via Labicana, occasionally intercepting and destroying ancient galleries and tombs. The remainder of the Apollonj property was sold in 1930.<sup>39</sup> The widening of the left side of the via Casilina between 1954–1957 and expropriation of the land near the roadside for government-funded housing concluded the drastic alterations to the site.<sup>40</sup> (Figures 2–3)

The area between the via Casilina and two modern streets, the via Anassimandro and via Zenodossio, is still defined at points by steep tufa ridges, the remnants of the “Monte d’ Oro.” (Figures 4–5) This slope descends into the valley of the Marranella towards the locality of Tor Pignattara, the vast plain above the catacombs of Saints Peter and Marcellinus.<sup>41</sup> The medieval path through this area had followed the route of the ancient via Labicana at a slightly lower level





Figure 2. Apartments constructed on the site of the “Monte d’Oro” on the via Casilina. (Photo: J. Dello Russo)



Figure 4. Remnants of the “Monte d’Oro” beside the via Casilina opposite the “Villa Certosa.” (Photo: J. Dello Russo)



Figure 3. Panorama of the via Casilina, with apartments, tram line, and clearing in front of entrance to the “Villa Certosa.” (Photo: J. Dello Russo)



Figure 5. Remnants of the “Monte d’Oro” beside the via Casilina opposite the “Villa Certosa.” (Photo: J. Dello Russo)

than that of the original consular road.<sup>42</sup> It had also narrowed as it continued down the steep slope between the vineyards of the Apollonj-Ghetti (Monte d’Oro) at left, and Villa Certosa on the right.<sup>43</sup> (Figures 6–8)

Today the district contains the scarce archaeological remains of tomb foundations in *opus quadratum* that flank the via Casilina at its intersection with via Filarete.<sup>44</sup> Centuries earlier, however, this area had been rich with artifacts from ancient villas and cemeteries, and known in documents of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (the time of intense quarrying) as the Monte d’Oro “delli Hebrei” (of the Hebrews).<sup>45</sup> This denomination echoes those for lands above

the Jewish catacombs of the Villa Torlonia and Monteverde long before their excavation.<sup>46</sup> It suggests as well the extent to which pozzolana extraction was accompanied by a silent plundering of cemetery regions outside the limits of modern Rome. Quarrying on the site, at least since the sixteenth century and well into the early decades of the twentieth, must have stripped the Labicana catacomb of its artifacts long before Marucchi’s time, although the said quarries of the Apollonj were apparently inactive for at least half a century until 1882.<sup>47</sup> While laws specifically forbade access to underground cemeteries, the damage caused by quarrying and agrarian activities was frequently overlooked by government





Figure 6. Tufa bank cut away from the street level and new “Private Property” sign in front of the “Villa Certosa.” (Photo: J. Dello Russo)



Figure 8. Tufa bank in front of the entrance to the “Villa Certosa.” (Photo: J. Dello Russo)



Figure 7. Geological strata of the “Monte d'Oro” in front of the entrance to the “Villa Certosa.” (Photo: J. Dello Russo)

officials and tolerated by the antiquarians, who valued artifacts, but left no description of their provenance.<sup>48</sup>

Just before urban expansion overtook the area in the 1930s, the geologist Gioacchino de Angelis d'Ossat surveyed the site. Although the Apollonj quarries were by then newly sealed, he was able to interview a certain Angelo Montanari about geological features brought to light during Montanari's own quarrying on the hill slope not many years before.<sup>49</sup> The landowner recalled, in fact, a quarry tunnel and large sand-pit that had led to a catacomb not far from the road. Its galleries had been distributed on different levels over a large area, and contained cubicula and at least three ancient stair-

cases as well as galleries lined with loculi containing bones.<sup>50</sup> According to Montanari's report, one small gallery and a cubiculum<sup>51</sup> bear some resemblance to area H on Marucchi's plan. Montanari, however, claimed not to have noted anything Jewish about the site, and, with the exception of one lost marble epitaph pulled out of an unspecified construction site near Tor Pignatarata in 1928 (78/533), Frey and others were unable to trace Jewish artifacts to the area.<sup>52</sup>

Unsuccessful attempts to rediscover the Jewish catacomb have forced scholars to acknowledge “the exact location of the catacomb is not entirely certain.”<sup>53</sup> Even de Angelis d'Ossat could provide only a general idea of the catacomb's size and extent. But we know from Marucchi's testimony that the catacomb extended below the via Labicana (areas I–L–M) to an ancient staircase below the property leased to the Marolda-Pitili family on the periphery of the large and ancient “Villa Certosa” (Carthusian Chart-house).<sup>54</sup> (Figures 9–10) When Marucchi republished his study in a larger work, he stated in a footnote that the vigna Marolda-Pitili “era posta incontro all' osteria cosiddetta ‘del Pino.’”<sup>55</sup> Early-twentieth-century maps place this *osteria* at via Casilina, 277 at the corner of via Ignazio Danti.<sup>56</sup> (Figure 11) On the opposite side of the street, small workshops, shacks, and bare lots now cover the land formerly belonging to the Marolda-Pitilli family.

## NOTES

1. According to the grandson of the original landowner, the Apollonj-Ghetti (or Apollonj-Caracciolo) family first intercepted the catacomb in 1881, while quarrying for pozzolana



Figure 9. Entrance into subterranean area on the grounds of the “Villa Certosa.” (Photo: J. Dello Russo)



Figure 10. View into the stairwell of preceding image on the grounds of the “Villa Certosa.” (Photo: J. Dello Russo)

below the site; see F. M. Apollonj-Ghetti, “Due Vigne sulla Casilina” in *Lunario Romano*, 1975, p. 29. H. J. Leon, *The Jews of Ancient Rome*, Philadelphia, 1960, p. 65, calculates that, from the very small number of artifacts discovered in Marucchi’s dig, the catacomb must have been of very limited size. More

recently, L. V. Rutgers, *The Jews of Late Ancient Rome*, 2d ed., Leiden-Boston, 2000, pp. 56–57 and p. 92, and in “The Jews of Italy, c. 235–638 CE” in S. T. Katz, ed. *The Cambridge History of Judaism: Volume 4, The Late Roman-Rabbinic Period*, Cambridge, 2006, p. 496, defines the catacomb of the Via Labicana (with that in the Vigna Cimarra) as a “family tomb” or hypogaeum “not destined for the entire community, and never developed into a real catacomb for their use.” In a separate study of Rome’s Jewish population in Late Antiquity, Rutgers estimates the number of tombs in the Labicana cemetery as 141 total, a figure based on tomb density per meter from another Jewish catacomb in Rome below the grounds of the Villa Torlonia. Defining the via Labicana catacomb as “not very big in any event,” Rutgers does not mention that Marucchi’s excavation was incomplete: see “Reflections on the Demography of the Jewish Community of Ancient Rome,” in M. Ghilardi, C. Goddard, eds., *Les Cites de l’Italie Tardo-Antique (IV–VI siècle): institutions, économie, société, culture et religion*, Collection de l’Ecole française de Rome, 369 (2006), p. 354 n. 49. D. Noy, in *Jewish Inscriptions of Western Europe*. Vol. 2, *The City of Rome*, Cambridge, 1995 (JIWE 2), p. 337, also describes the site as a “small catacomb” but later confirms that “only a small portion of the catacomb” was actually brought to light: the same view is held by S. Cappelletti, *The Jewish Community in Rome From the Second Century B. C.E. to the Third Century C.E.*, Supplements to the Journal for the Study of Judaism 113, Leiden-Boston, 2006, p. 161. The extent of the catacomb is still unknown. Years after the excavation, in an article on the Christian catacombs of Saints Peter and Marcellinus, “La cripta storica dei SS. Pietro e Marcellino recentemente scoperta sulla via Labicana,” *Nuovo Bollettino di Archeologia Cristiana* 4 (1898): 143, Marucchi recalled that much of the cemetery, in fact, remained to be discovered on the opposite side of the via Labicana (in the Vigna Marolda-Pitilli). The small number of artifacts recovered during Marucchi’s survey may not reflect on the hypogaeum’s size but instead a prevalence of brick, mortar, and tile used to close tombs instead of pieces of marble, as well as the site’s near-total destruction by vandals of the eighteenth century, if not before. Prior to the twentieth century, catacomb explorers had little interest in preserving tile and other like material, strewing them over gallery floors or inside the tombs, as evidenced in certain galleries of the Vigna Randanini and Vigna Cimarra catacombs today.

2. Marucchi states in his article, “Di un nuovo cimitero giudaico,” for the newly launched Catholic periodical for emerging scholars in Rome, *La Rassegna Italiana*, July 15, 1884, p. 13, that “la parte accessibile del cimitero e’ sufficientemente vasta, ma forse questa che oggi si vede ne e’ solo una piccola parte giacche’ sette strade presentano gli accessi ricolmi di macerie e di terre, oltre i quali non conosciamo quanto potesse estendersi la rete sotterranea.” At the time of the dis-





Figure 11. The location of the Osteria del Pino on a 1906 map of the Roman suburbs and countryside by the Istituto Cartografica Italiana. A. Frutaz, *Le Pianta di Roma*, 3, 1962, pl. 573, n. 222

covery of the Labicana catacomb, Marucchi was working on another Jewish catacomb on the via Appia: O. Marucchi, "Scavi nella vigna Randanini," *Chonachetta mensuale* 3.2 (1882): 180–190; and *Breve guida del cimitero giudaico di Vigna Randanini*, Rome, 1884. The Vigna Randanini catacombs are located between the via Appia Antica and via Appia Pignatelli, about two and a quarter miles outside of the old city walls of Rome. Marucchi's studies (1882–1884) were carried out while the landowners were excavating and restoring areas close to the entrances into the catacomb in order to reopen the site to the public (closed since the early 1870s in a pending suit over the illegal sale of artifacts). The Randanini excavations were privately conducted and funded—although Marucchi and the German scholar Nicholas Muller published individual finds from the site.

3. G. de Angelis d'Ossat, *Geologia delle Catacombe Romane 3: via Latina e via Labicana*, Vatican City, 1943, pp. 256–257, analyzed the geological strata in the area, finding a partial reuse of abandoned quarries in zones that contained fewer loculi. Support piers were built at the corners of areas intensely used for burial. The upper galleries are excavated in a *tufa terroso*, while areas near the ceiling touch a higher stratum of *tufa litoide*.

4. O. Marucchi, 1884, pp. 12, 19. The Labicana catacombs mentioned in the Medieval itineraries are those of Saint Castulus (first identified by R. Fabretti in *Inscriptionum Antiquarum quae in aedibus paternis osservantur explicatio et additamentum una cum aliquot emendationibus et indice rerum, et verborum memorabilium*, Rome, 1702, p. 556) and Saints Peter and Marcellinus (visited in 1594 by Bosio and published posthumously, *Roma Sotteranea*, Rome, 1632, p. 313 et seq.).

The geologist M. S. de Rossi, in his appendix to G. B. de Rossi's *Roma Sotteranea*, 1, Rome, 1864, p. 52, was struck by the lack of cemeteries in the Labicana region although he found numerous quarries had long been in use. Subsequently, the catacombs of Castulus were rediscovered during construction of the Rome-Naples railway in 1864, G. B. de Rossi, "Rivista generale delle escavazioni e ricerche che ora si fanno nelle catacombe romane," in *Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana*, 3.1 (1865): 9–10. The same year as Marucchi's first visit the Apollonj catacomb (1882), the Commission of Sacred Archaeology (CDAS) also carried out archaeological explorations in areas of the Catacombs of Saints Peter and Marcellinus damaged by pozzolana quarrying. M. Ghilardi has now provided a useful chronology of CDAS activities during this period in "Dalla morte di Pio IX all' elezione di Pio XI: il recupero ideologico della Roma Sotteranea," in *Gli arsenali della Fede: tre saggi su apologia e propaganda delle catacombe romane (da Gregorio XIII a Pio XI)*, Rome, 2006, pp. 113–155.

5. Marucchi, 1884, p. 12: "Andai io piu' di una volta sul luogo pensando . . . che fosse un cimitero cristiano . . . nella forma generale . . . somigliante agli altri gia' noti." Marucchi, during his long career in the catacombs, pursued the idea that hypogean burial places of small extent not mentioned in the medieval itineraries of Rome or in hagiographical sources were the cemeteries of Christian Gnostic or heretical groups; see Ghilardi, 2006, n. 4, p. 144 (via Latina).

6. O. Marucchi, "Di un nuovo cimitero giudaico scoperto sulla via Labicana," *Dissertazioni della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia*, 2.2 (1887): 509.

7. Marucchi, 1884, p. 12.

8. Marucchi, *Conferenza della Societa' dei cultori della cristiana archeologia in Roma*, in *Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana* 4.1 (1882): 79. In Marucchi, 1887, p. 520, he describes the image thus: it was "assai piu' nettamente delineato in questo grafito che non sia nei mattoni (other examples of painted inscription/designs). . . Oltre la forma piu' regolare delle sue braccia a ricurve, vi riconosciamo alle estremita' le *techae* rotonde destinate a contenere le lucerne mobili di metallo."

9. Marucchi, 1882, pp. 79–80 and Cod. Vat. 14271 (G. B. de Rossi Correspondence), f. 464. De Rossi praised Marucchi's April 16, 1882, report to the society of the Cultores di Antichita' Cristiane connecting the cemetery to a Jewish community in the Suburra district. See also "Conferenze della Societa' di Cultori della Cristiana Antichita' in Roma," in *Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana* 4.1 (1882): 79–80.

10. It is not clear if Raffaele Garrucci, S.J., visited the Labicana site before his death in Rome in 1885; what is certain is that Garrucci followed Marucchi's work carefully, being in touch with the Apollonj family as well. F. M. Apollonj-Ghetti, in his family memoir, 1975, p. 30, recalls, in fact, that Garrucci had presented his grandfather with a copy of Marucchi's published work on the Labicana site.

11. For Marucchi's proposed "relationship between the cemetery and Jewish community of Rome" based on ancient literary and epigraphic evidence, see Marucchi, 1887, pp. 526–531. G. de Spirito's article "Synagogae" in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae*, 4, ed. M. Steinby, Rome, 1999, pp. 389, 392 (Σιβουρητων, Σιβουρητων), also cites the ancient literary sources that mention the Jews in Rome. While not explicitly associating any one synagogue with a specific cemetery, de Spirito does believe that a core function of the synagogue was to arrange burial.

12. G. B. de Rossi had already speculated that a Jewish cemetery would be found in this region in "Le varie e successive condizioni di legalita' dei cimiteri, il vario grado di liberta' dell' arte cristiana, e la legalta' della medesima religione nel primo secolo, verificate dalle recenti scoperte nel cimitero di Domitilla," *Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana* 12 (1865): 95. The epitaph CIJ 1.380/JIWE 2.557 and copy had been displayed in Roman collections since the mid-eighteenth century. Epitaphs to other officials in the synagogue of the Siburensians were discovered in the Jewish catacombs in the Vigna Randanini (CIJ 1.140/JIWE 2.338) and Villa Torlonia (CIJ 1 nn. 8, 22, 37, 67/JIWE 2 nn. 461, 451, 488, 452).

13. Marucchi, 1884, p. 13 counts seven galleries still inaccessible at the end of the 1884 campaign.

14. Marucchi, 1884, p. 13, accompanies his illustration with a description of the vault in gallery I "come tutti gli altri, un semielisse, e questi percio' sono simili alle gallerie di un' arenario e molto diversi dalle forme usuali delle gallerie cimiteriali cristiane." Marucchi, 1882, pp. 78–80, had earlier anticipated this conclusion during the April 16, 1882 session of the *Conferenza della Societa' dei cultori della cristiana archeologia in Roma* (cited in Ghilardi, 2006, p. 121).

15. Marucchi, 1887, p. 509: in three days "non mi fu possibile di eseguire esattamente la pianta del sotteraneo con i consueti mezzi geometrici che richiedono tempo e tranquillita', ma per il pericolo imminente doveti limitarmi a farne piuttosto un "abbozzo" segnando ad occhio come meglio potei la direzione delle singole strade."

16. Marucchi, 1884, pp. 12–13.

17. Marucchi, 1884, p. 13 adds that the area contained at least two other cubicula, still partially filled.

18. The term *absis* had been used by Raffaele Garrucci to describe the semi-domed niches above tombs cut parallel to the galleries in the catacombs of Venosa and Naples (also found in the Jewish catacombs on the Monteverde in Rome). R. Garrucci, "Cimitero Ebraico in Puglia," in *La Civiltà Cattolica* 12.1 (1883), p. 708 (cemetery plan); p. 718 (description of *absis*). A probable "absis" tomb is found in R. Kanzler's plan of the Jewish catacomb galleries on the Monteverde explored in 1913, see his "Scoperta di una nuova regione del cimitero giudaico della via Portuense," *Nuovo Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana* 21 (1915): 153 (figure 2, Q).



19. Published by J.-B. Frey in the *Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum*, vol. I (CIJ 1), Vatican City, 1936, pp. 46–50, nn. 73–77. Accepted by few modern authors (Leon, 1960, pp. 71–72 n. 1, p. 74 n. 1; *JJWE* 2, pp. 337–339, nn. 407–409 for tombs 4–5), but de Rossi’s manuscripts provide no alternative readings (Ms. de Rossi XLII, ff. 16377–16378, cited in Frey, 1936) also Cod. Vat. Lat. n. 10556 f. 209. “Adnotationes de coemeterio veterum judaeorum quod inventum fuit in viam Labicanam ab Horatio Marucchi 1882.” Marucchi copied terracotta fragments or bricks marked with letters or designs in red, including what he thought were three “Hebrew letters,” found between E and H near the door of cubiculum H (Marucchi, 1887, p. 518).

20. Marucchi, 1884, p. 15.

21. Marucchi, 1884, p. 15: on the tombs were written “col caratteri rossi l’epigrafe ma le lettere sono talmente svanite che non ho potuto ricavare alcun senso.”

22. Marucchi, 1887, p. 531, plan opposite p. 36, tomb n. 6 and Noy, 1995, p. 338 (Marucchi no. 7). Marucchi describes this as “composta di un grosso tronco piantato verticalmente intorno a cui e’ attorcigliata una fascia e che sostiene una traversa orizzontale da cui pendono alcuni veli. . .” However crude, Marucchi identified these as curtains or tents. Marucchi’s theory—which would have added a previously unknown image to Roman Jewish iconography—was echoed by E. Le Blant, “Lettre relative aux fouilles exécutées actuellement à Rome,” *Comptes-rendus des séances de l’Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres* 28.2 (1884): 208–211. From Marucchi’s drawing, however, the fragment is more likely to represent the stem and trunks of a seven-branched candelabra (menorah).

23. Marucchi, 1884, p. 18 and 1887, pp. 27–28.

24. Marucchi, 1887, pp. 28–30, cites the article by G. B. de Rossi, “Insigne vetro rappresentante il Tempio di Gerusalemme,” *Bullettino di Archeologia Cristiana* 4.1 (1882): 137–158; and “Verre representant le Temple de Jerusalem,” *Archiv de l’Orient Latin* 2 (1884): 439–455. L. V. Rutgers dates the production of gold glass in Rome to the first half of the fourth century CE, and adds, on the subject of the specific glass published by de Rossi from the Saints Peter and Marcellinus catacombs, that “given (the) iconography, which differs from the Jewish gold glasses, and considering the Christian nature of the catacombs in which (it) was found, it is conceivable that (the gold glass) was in fact Christian rather than Jewish”; see “Dating the Jewish Catacombs of Ancient Rome” in *The Hidden Heritage of Diaspora Judaism: Essays on Jewish Cultural Identity in the Roman World*, Contributions to Biblical Exegesis and Theology 20, Leuven, 1999, pp. 68–69.

25. Marucchi, 1887, p. 512, speculated that such tombs could be found also in the Jewish catacomb on the Monteverde, either reading into Bosio’s 1602 description of floor

tombs as a reference to kokhim or accepting, as it appears he did, that the Monteverde catacomb pre-dated the creation of Christian catacombs in Rome. No examples of *kokh* tombs were identified in the areas of the Monteverde catacomb explored by N. Muller between 1904 and 1906.

26. Marucchi, 1887, p. 16 describes the five examples at Venosa as probable “chapels” for multiple burials.

27. R. Garrucci, *Cimitero degli Antichi Ebrei scoperto recentemente in Vigna Randanini*, Rome, 1862, p. 59.

28. De Angelis d’Ossat, 1943, pp. 256–257.

29. Marucchi, 1882, p. 79; Noy, 1995, p. 338, reviews the dates proposed for the site, ranging from the second–fourth centuries CE, concluding that “there seems to be no reason to date the catacomb before the larger ones.”

30. Dating “posteriore al terzo secolo” by R. Volpe, “Via Labicana,” in *Suburbium: il suburbio di Roma dalla crisi del sistema delle ville a Gregorio Magno*, ed. P. Pergola, R. Santangeli Valenzani, R. Volpe, Collection Ecole Francaise de Rome 311, Rome, 2003, p. 232, CD-ROM n. 242, and Z. Mari, “Labicana, via” in *Lexicon topographicum urbis Romae. Suburbium*, 3, ed. V. Flocchi Nicolai, M. G. Granino, Z. Mari, Rome, 2006, p. 121. Cappelletti, 2006, p. 161, reserves judgement, believing that “no dating element . . . has survived today.”

31. G. B. de Rossi, *Roma Sotteranea Cristiana*, 1, Rome, 1864, especially pp. 87–92.

32. Marucchi, 1887, pp. 509–510.

33. Marucchi, 1887, p. 510.

34. Marucchi, 1887, p. 512. G. B. de Rossi had explored the Cimarra site in 1866, but did not issue a full report on the finds.

35. Marucchi, 1887, p. 531.

36. O. Marucchi, Session of January 17, 1907, in *Dissertazioni della Pontificia Accademia Romana di Archeologia* 10.1 (1907): 235–237. A. Ferrua notes in “Via Portuense,” *Archivio della Società Romana di Storia Patria* 111 (1988): 27, that he found Marucchi’s unpublished manuscript in the archives of the Pontificia Commissione di Archeologia Sacra; 40 pages with index of 13 inscriptions.

37. Frey, CIJ, p. 73; De Angelis d’Ossat, 1943, p. 253; Rutgers, 2000, p. 33.

38. Marucchi stresses at the end of his discourse that work on the catacomb was far from complete, and the “very few fragments” up to now recovered from the site did not detract from this important chapter in the history of “Roma Sotteranea.” He expresses himself very willing to return to the study of the vigna Apollonj catacomb, or ready to assist anyone who attempted it (Marucchi, 1887, pp. 531–532). Marucchi, 1884, pp. 19–20, ends with a public appeal to the owner, himself: “Concludo invitando pubblicamente il colto e facoltoso proprietario del sovrastante terreno, il sig. avv. Apollonj, egregio consigliere del nostro comune, ad imitare l’esempio generoso dato già del benemeritato sig. Randanini ad aprire uno scavo regolare nel sotteraneo di cui ho parlato. La

devestazione del luogo e' purtroppo grandissimo, ma cio' non deve distogliere dall' impresa oltre alla speranza di trovare intatti i sepolcri piu' bassi, che essendo ancora in parte ricoperte di terra sfuggirono forse ai devastatori, abbiamo ancora da tentare lo sterro di sette ambulacri e di due cubicoli, ed in questi potrebbero trovarsi pitture ed iscrizioni - i quali forse ci darebbero luce su qualche punto ancora oscuro della storia e degli usi del popolo ebraico." Apollonj-Ghetti, however, lost his enthusiasm for the discovery after finding out the catacomb was not Christian; see Apollonj-Ghetti, 1975, pp. 29–30. The Sante Villeggi (Villeggia) family purchased the land (elevated at points above the street level) in 1884.

39. *Cartografia Storica ed incisioni del territorio del Lazio dalla collezione di Fabrizio Maria Apollonj-Ghetti*, ed. Antonio Sperandio, Rome, 1997, p. 14. The property was a possession of the Carthusians; after 1870 owned by the Otti and Apollonj (or Apollonj-Ghetti).

40. Apollonj-Ghetti, p. 9 (street widening); Leon, 1960, p. 52, fig. 1.

41. T. Ashby, "Classical Topography of the Roman Campagna," *Papers of the British School of Rome* 2 (1902): 221. F. M. Apollonj-Ghetti (descendent of the family which once owned the Vigna Apollonj), 1975, pp. 29–35.

42. Ashby, 1902, n. 24, p. 221, and P. Gioia, R. Volpe, A. Arnoldus Huyzendveld, *Centocelle 1: Roma S. D. O. e le indagini archeologiche*, Rome, 2004, p. 90, n. 21. Volpe, 2003, p. 212, fig. 1. Comune di Roma Riparazione AA.BB.AA, *Carta Storica, Archeologica, Monumentale e Paesistica del suburbio ed Agro Romano*, Rome, 1988, p. 70, n. 1: basalt blocks were visible in the vigna opposite that of the Apollonj.

43. S. Barbeta, *Via Labicana*, Rome, 1995, p. 22.

44. Gioia, Volpe, and Arnoldus Huyzendveld, 2004, p. 90 (n. 21). Volpe, 2003, p. 212, fig. 1. Comune di Roma Riparazione AA.BB.AA, *Carta Storica, Archeologica, Monumentale e Paesistica del suburbio ed Agro Romano*, Rome, 1988, Labicana n. 2485: "antico tracciato stradale." No indication is made on this map of catacombs or other tombs. A water reservoir was found in the Vigna Apollonj in 1884, the same year as Marucchi's excavation; see Gioia, Volpe, and Huyzendveld, 2004, p. 89 (n. 18) for description and evidence of a structure—possibly a villa—nearby.

45. Gioia, Volpe, and Arnoldus Huyzendveld, 2004, p. 89 (n. 17). Frey had found many fragments of sarcophagi and pagan funerary inscriptions during a site visit in the 1920s (Frey, 1936, p. 46).

46. G. Tomassetti, *La Campagna Romana Antica, Medievale e Moderna*, vol. 3, ed. Chiumenti, F. Bilancia, Florence, 1979, pp. 466–467, note b; Apollonj-Ghetti, 1975, pp. 33–34 (t. 4).

47. The Ghetti (later Apollonj-Ghetti) family inherited the property between the via Casilina and via del Pigneto in the early seventeenth century (Apollonj-Ghetti, 1975, n. 10, p. 19). The great Carthusian "villa Certosa" was situated on the

opposite side of the road, and contained noted archaeological remains (Gioia, Volpe, and Arnoldus Huyzendveld, 2004, pp. 87–88, nn. 14–15). In the mid-nineteenth century (ca. 1834), modern quarries on the Ghetti property were opened well within the vineyard, at some distance from the via Casilina, due to pre-existing "caverns" not specified as catacombs, perhaps to prevent authorities from closing the site ("irregular" quarrying in a neighboring "Cava Giannoni" the year before had already caused part of the via Casilina to collapse). See Apollonj-Ghetti, 1975, pp. 19–22, for citations and plans of the vineyards in the *contrada* Monte d'Oro from the sixteenth through eighteenth centuries: he also implies, p. 33, that the Ghetti family had been unaware of the catacomb's existence for generations prior to its rediscovery in 1881. Documents and plans conserved in the Archives of the Papal State (Archivio dello Stato di Roma), however, testify to pozzolana quarrying by his family and others in the area: these are summarized in the revised edition of R. Lanciani, *Storia degli Scavi di Roma e notizie intorno le collezioni romane di antichità* (vol 5, ed. L. M. Campeggi and M. R. Russo, Rome, 1994, p. 262; vol. 6, ed. P. Liverani and M. R. Russo, Rome, 2000, pp. 57, 94, 144, 164, 195). The families mentioned in these reports had cultivated and developed the land through long-term leases as "enfiteuti" of "perpetual" owners, in most cases Church orders and monasteries; see L. Maestri, "Cartografia e Documentazione Storica," in Gioia, Volpe, and Arnoldus Huyzendveld, 2004, p. 49, n. 17.

48. M. Ghilardi, "Del Cimiterio de gli Antichi Hebrei: la catacomba ebraica di Monteverde nel Quarto Centinaro della scoperta," *Studi Romani* 51, 1–2 (2003): 27–28 and de Rossi, 1864, pp. 61–63. Nearly all the Jewish inscriptions in Rome discovered before the nineteenth century were attributed to the cemetery on the via Portuense (with few exceptions from the via Appia). Today, however, archival evidence reveals private quarrying and excavation in virtually all areas where Jewish catacombs were later officially "discovered" (Monteverde, Vigna Randanini, Vigna Cimarra, and Via Labicana).

49. De Angelis d'Ossat, 1943, pp. 254–256.

50. Frey's description of the site is similar; see Frey, 1936 p. 46.

51. N. 10 in de Angelis d'Ossat, 1942, p. 255, fig. 118.

52. See above, n. 40. A stele with Greek funerary inscription to a *philologos*, was also discovered in the early 1920s in a pozzolana quarry at via Casilina, n. 277 (the street address of the "Osteria del Pino"; the inscription is now lost); L. Moretti, *Inscriptiones Graecae Urbis Romae* 2.2, 1973, n 736.

53. Leon, 1960, p. 52.

54. In 1889, the remains of a probable suburban villa were found on the Marolda-Pitilli property at the point where a secondary road joined the vicolo del Mandrione and via Labicana in antiquity. The excavation identified two distinct structures, one with walls of tufa and the other composed of "brick cov-



ered with stucco painted in very bright colors." Many fragments of elaborate mosaic and pictorial decoration were found, but the construction of a railway line through the site prevented the drafting of a plan and complete excavation; *American Journal of Archaeology* 6 (1890): 231, from reports in *Notizie degli Scavi* di 1889; see also Gioia, Volpe, and Arnoldus-Huyzendveld, 2004, pp. 82–90, for extensive documentation of archaeological remains in this area of the Casilina, particularly in the Vigna Marolda). Gioia, Volpe, and Arnoldus-Huyzendveld, 2004, p. (n. 17), locate the catacomb on both sides of the via Casilina, extending to the "vigna Marieta, o Marolda, o Marolda-Pitilli o Pitilli (corrispondente ad un settore della antica vigna della Certosa)" south of the via Casilina, below an area today delineated by the Casilina and cross-streets viale Filarete-via Anassimandro-via Dulceri-via Bufalini; via Casilina, nn. 351–373 and 224 (Frey, 1936, p. 46, also locates the Jewish catacomb at via Casilina nn. 351–373). The early nineteenth-century geologist, G. B. Brocchi, explored subterranean quarry galleries near the roadside in front of the entrance into the Certosa grounds (via Casilina, n. 222) (G. B. Brocchi, *Catalogo ragionato di una raccolta di rocce disposto con ordine geografica per servire alla geognosia dell' Italia*, Milan, 1817, pp. 16–17). Just inside the villa gates, a staircase leads underground. Current residents deny knowing its extent or purpose. It merits at least an inspection, should this be one of the few remains of subterranean excavations in the Monte d'Oro, ancient and modern.

55. O. Marucchi, *Catacombe Romane*, Rome, 1903, p. 680, note 1. A report on the villa discovered on the grounds locates the vigna between the railroad tracks of the Rome-Naples line and the vicolo del Mandrione; "Notizie degli Scavi," *Atti della R. Accademia dei Lincei*, 4th series, 6.2 (1889): 341.

56. De Angelis d'Ossat, 1943, p. 254, states this Osteria del Pino was adjacent to the contrada Monte d'Oro. The IGM 1906 map of Rome (adapted from an 1875 original) locates the Osteria del Pino on the left side of the via Casilina, n. 277; reprinted in F. M. Apollonj-Ghetti, 1975, table 3.

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THE INTERNATIONAL CATACOMB SOCIETY was founded in 1980 by Estelle Shohet Brettman. The society is dedicated to the preservation and documentation of the Roman catacombs and other sites that illustrate the common influences on Jewish, Christian, and Pagan iconography and funerary practices during the time of the Roman Empire. The society also strives to increase knowledge of the catacombs by circulating exhibits, sponsoring lectures, and disseminating information and publications.

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