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Plaster casts of the Portico from Aphrodisias:
Archaeology and/or politics

<A> Abstract

This paper presents a case study that demonstrates three essential uses - archaeological, political, and museological - of plaster casts in Greco-Roman studies. The case is the Portico of Tiberius at Aphrodisias which the Italian Archaeological Mission in Anatolia excavated in 1937. Casts of the most relevant architectural elements of the portico (entablature, capital, and column) were made immediately, shipped to Rome, and employed to create a one-to-one plaster reconstruction (7.5 m tall, 5.8 m wide, and 1.6 m deep) for a fascist-period exhibition in Rome, the *Mostra Augustea della Romanità*. Notwithstanding its Tiberian-period inscription, there the portico was deliberately interpreted as an Augustan monument, with a clear political intent. Both the plaster fragments and the reconstruction today belong to the collection of the *Museo della Civiltà Romana*, in Rome. These objects are extraordinary in their versatile uses - three-dimensional documentary replicas, propagandistic tools, and a decontextualised museum exhibit - and in their capacity to represent and mis-represent their sources.¹

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<A> Introduction

In the last forty years, growing interest in collections of plaster objects has led to studies about their use in diverse academic fields and creative artistic processes. Many international exhibitions have featured casts as objects in their own right, demonstrating their impressive potential to contribute to social discourse.² Plaster casts of Greco-Roman sculpture and architecture are among the oldest and most traditional of the genre. They have served as

archaeological and didactic tools, allowing for the reconstruction, preservation, and detailed study of original objects, especially those that are damaged or inaccessible.³

That archaeological casts have provided significant opportunities for the dissemination and appropriation of classical culture is not always immediately recognized. This paper explores the relationship between classical casts and imperialist policies in 20th-century Europe. It presents a campaign of casting -- that of a portico at Aphrodisias -- undertaken in the name of archaeology and made possible by politics, that resulted in a new monument. In the winter of 1937-1938, Giulio Jacopi, an archaeologist trained to recognize the grandness of imperial Rome, commissioned numerous plaster casts at Aphrodisias to preserve and disseminate the monumental art, epigraphy, and architecture that he had excavated. The Fascist Regime in Rome incorporated these casts into an imposing reconstruction for an exhibition that trumpeted the dominance and ubiquitous presence of Augustus' reign. Now a museum object, the reconstruction exists in a world apart, separate from its marble sources and in a new social context. This study provides an outstanding example of the power of plaster casts, illustrating why they were made and why we should preserve them. In addition, it reflects on the value of archaeology, the history of cultural heritage management, and issues of ownership of antiquities.

<A> The Italian Archaeological interest in Anatolia in the early 20th century

Foreign archaeologists had worked in Asia Minor under the Ottoman Empire from the 19th century onwards.⁴ The Italians entered the scene late but with the conviction that their descent from the Roman Empire justified both their archaeological and colonial intervention in foreign countries.⁵ In the case of Asia Minor, the Italian consul at Smyrna pushed for an archaeological mission by 1904, because of the “glorious remains of the Roman dominion,

that is to say the moments of our own history”.⁶ The 1911 World’s Fair in Rome, with its innovative exhibition of archaeological casts and models of monuments from all parts of the Roman Empire, organized by leading archaeologists and set in the Baths of Diocletian, promoted precisely such ideology.⁷ Shortly thereafter, in May 1912, the Italians occupied the Dodecanese islands.⁸ They imposed a Greco-Roman narrative onto the eastern Aegean, making it important in Italy by establishing historic links to the Roman Empire. The island of Rhodes, off the coast of Asia Minor, became a strong center of propagation of Italian culture.⁹ From there preparation started for the Italian occupation of Adalia/Antalya in 1919, following the redistribution of the territories of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I.¹⁰ The fact that the Italians had put themselves in charge of a large part of the Aegean region of the Ottoman Empire made their attempts to extend their archaeological research into Asia Minor impossible. The local authorities strongly opposed research applications from Rome.¹¹

In 1923 the foundation of the Turkish Republic was accompanied by a wave of xenophobic and nationalist sentiments. The Italians and their archaeological mission were expelled from occupied Antalya.¹² Yet, between 1928 and 1932 the relations between Turkey and Italy improved,¹³ and so thereafter the Italians were allowed to carry out research and excavations in eastern or internal areas—with the prohibition against extending to the coastal areas, where sites of strategic and political importance were located.¹⁴ This specific permission had underlying archaeo-political and military motivations. First, the new Turkish republic had an agenda to pursue its Anatolian, non-Greco-Roman roots, and it therefore sought research on Hittite, Phrygian, and prehistoric sites. An important “Exhibition of Turkish History”, organized by the Turkish Historical Society (Türk Tarih Kurumu) at Dolmabahçe Palace in Istanbul in 1937, displayed a range of visual material (including plaster casts of Etruscan objects, see below) and traced Turkey’s different cultures (Sumerian, Egyptian, Hittite,

Minoan, Etruscan, Uyghur, Avar, Seljuk, Mamluk, Ottoman), culminating with the achievements of the new republic.¹⁵ Second, there was a territorial issue. The Turkish government regarded Italy with suspicion, especially after the Italian conquest of Abyssinia of 1935.¹⁶ A letter from Percy Loraine, the British Ambassador in Ankara, to Anthony Eden, Foreign Affairs Minister, dated 12 April 1936, claims that Mustafa Kemal Atatürk feared Mussolini was planning to reconstitute the Roman Empire.¹⁷

The positive political moment after Britain and Italy signed a gentlemen's agreement on 2 January 1937 in which they promised to respect existing borders in the Mediterranean; the daily pressure of Carlo Galli, the Italian ambassador at Ankara (1935-1938); and the trust that the Italian archaeologist Giulio Jacopi had obtained in 1935-1936 in Turkey together resulted in the grant of a permit for Jacopi to excavate at the site of Aphrodisias.¹⁸ 1937 was also a crucial year for Mussolini's development of the idea of *Romanitas* in connection with those of Empire and Race,¹⁹ and the time when in the Italian capital the bimillenary of the birth of Augustus was being celebrated with parades, publications, and the *Mostra Augustea della Romanità* (MAR, see below).

Giulio Jacopi, born in Trieste in 1898, graduated from the University of Rome, La Sapienza in 1920.²⁰ He did post-graduate studies at the *Regia Scuola Archeologica di Roma* in 1921-1922 and at the *Regia Scuola Archeologica Italiana ad Atene* (SAIA) in 1922-1923. His career progressed quickly, first in Italy—as officer and director for the Superintendence of Antiquities and Fine Arts—then in the colonized East—as Superintendent of the Monuments and Excavations at Rhodes²¹ and at the Dodecanese Islands (respectively in 1924 and 1929), and Director of the newly established Archaeological Museum in Rhodes.

In 1927 Jacopi, with Alessandro Della Seta (1879-1944), SAIA Director, proposed to Mario Lago (1878-1950), Governor of the Aegean Islands, the foundation of the Historical-Archaeological Institute of Rhodes, known as FERT (from the Latin, *Fortitudo Eius Rhodum Tenuit*). The aim of the institute was to enrich the knowledge of the history and heritage of the Dodecanese islands and Anatolia through a specialized library, scholarships for young Italian researchers, and a conference and publication, *Clara Rhodos*—a series that counted ten volumes edited between 1929 and 1941.²² Jacopi, nominated secretary of the newly founded Institute, was one of the first recipients of the scholarship. Accompanied by his wife, Marica Montesanto, an expert on ethnological studies, he used it to explore sites in Turkey starting in 1932.²³

Commented [EIC2]: Above you say he was the founder of FERT. So he founded it, and then served as secretary?

Commented [MM3R2]: The Institute was founded by the governor Mario Lago, after the proposition of Jacopi, in his role as superintendent of Antiquities

In 1935 the Turks refused to give the Italians the site of Halicarnassus and any place in Caria for military reasons, but did grant Jacopi the possibility to explore various sites in less sensitive areas.²⁴ In September-October 1935, Jacopi went to Kastamonu, Yozgat, Nigde and Malatya where, exploring only three of the four, he found prehistoric ruins, two rock cut sanctuaries, and recorded unpublished inscriptions. The sites are geographically distant: Kastamonu is in northern Turkey, Yozgat and Nigde are east and south of Ankara, and Malatya is east of Adana.

During his time in the Aegean islands, and later in Turkey, Jacopi strove to find a permanent position—either by means of a transfer from the Ministry of Education to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, or by the establishment of a new research institute in Istanbul (“un osservatorio archeologico italiano”) under his direction.²⁵ Accounts from peers and colleagues in Italy and Greece give us a vivid idea of his personality. They portray a competitive social climber, jealous and unaccommodating towards new scholars.²⁶ Galli

described Jacopi as “always very agitated and restless”.²⁷ Most importantly, he used the Fascist doctrine as the theoretical underpinning of his archaeological work and promoted it with dedication, while exploiting all political connections afforded by his various positions. At a time when “archaeological performance (...) became instrumental in establishing a direct link between Fascist Italy and classical Rome”, Jacopi was well-suited to lead the new archaeological mission at Aphrodisias.²⁸

<A> The MAR Casting Campaign in the Istanbul Museum

In 1936 and 1937, Jacopi participated in the taking of moulds from archaeological materials at the Archaeological Museum in Istanbul. This casting project was important for Jacopi; it was his first contact both with Aphrodisias and with plasters. It also provides crucial evidence for the underlying tensions between the two countries and their conflicting programs of political propaganda in which plaster casts played a real role. It sets the stage for the subsequent problems at Aphrodisias.

The project, conceived already in 1934, aimed to reproduce important Roman works in the Istanbul Museum for the MAR exhibition in Rome. The *Archivio Storico del Museo della Civiltà Romana* (ASMCR) records the project in six folders: Banking and Shipping; Scanzani Alberto (the cast company); Alessandro Caretoni; Embassy; Jacopi; Vietti Violi.

A letter to Jacopi on 13 August 1935, notes that on 6 October 1934 an Italian businessman with connections to the Embassy, Giovanni Barone di Giura, was asked to serve as a middleman and to initiate inquiries into casts from the Istanbul Museum.²⁹ On 3 December 1934, Di Giura informed his co-nationals that the Director of the Museum Aziz had provided an estimate of 4209 Turkish lire for the cost of the casts. In response to the Italian protests

over the excessive cost, on 24 December 1934, Di Giura forwarded Director Aziz's justification:

“The prices indicated in my letter of November 3 are according to the estimate established by the head of our sculpture workshop. We had to take into account the costs (sic!) necessary to remove certain objects from the walls where they are fixed and then replace them, and above all the very high cost of the plaster that we will have to import. I think that for this and other similar questions, in order to avoid any loss of time, you would perhaps consider it preferable for the management of the Museums of Rome to correspond directly with us, as we do with the other Museums.”³⁰

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Di Giura then advised Giulio Quirino Giglioli to contact the Museum directly but warned him not to mention either the MAR or the *Museo dell'Impero Romano* (MIR).³¹ On 26 March 1935 Giglioli, at that time conveniently both the Director of the Cast Gallery and the Director of the MAR, made the request in the name of the *Gipsoteca di Roma* rather than the MAR and passed on the message to avoid mention of the exhibitions of *Romanitas* to Galli.³² He, however, requested more casts and a discount in light of the importance of the order from Aziz, who did not respond.

The negotiation remained at a standstill until Alessandro Caretoni, a businessman with a strong archaeological interest, arrived in Istanbul on 6 November 1935 to address the situation.³³ On 13 November he met with the Director Aziz and the Vice Director Arif, notably “with the aid of Prof. Jacopi (just returned from his excavations)”. A few days later he met in Ankara with the Secretary of Culture Ridvan Nafiz, the General Director, and

another functionary who countered with a request for plaster casts from Italian museums, particularly casts of Etruscan monuments, which the Turks wished to display in their history exhibition, Türk Tarih Kurumu at Dolmabahçe Palace in Istanbul. Caretoni, returned to Italy in December where he addressed a letter of frustration to the Director of the *Banca Commerciale Italiana*,

Dear Mr. Benzon, I really hoped not to have to bother you further about those blessed casts, but I really don't know anymore... to what saint can I turn! In fact, not only has the famous confirmation that we have been waiting for two months not arrived, but Aziz Ogan has written to the Hon. Giglioli only to ask him for catalogues of Etruscan monuments, without even mentioning either the casts, the pacts I made there and in Ankara, or the agreements made.³⁴

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In a second letter, dated 6 February 1936, Caretoni reveals that the *Mostra Augustea* was willing to provide the casts that the Turks had asked for “naturally within the limits of the possible since Etruscan monuments are generally in terracotta and in part with polychromy and thus difficult to cast.” In addition to technical difficulties, the Italians had academic misgivings about the Turkish request which by June 3, 1936, included the Chimaera of Arezzo and the Lupa of the Campidoglio.³⁵ On 22 July, Giglioli writes to Galli that it is historically untenable for the Turks to claim descent in any way from the Etruscans and therefore they should not be given the casts.³⁶ It is an ironically marvelous example of one appropriation arguing against another. In fact, Ambassador Galli has little patience with this. On 24 July, Galli, a true diplomat, while noting that Jacopi had explained Giglioli’s concerns, dismisses them crisply: “Allow me to explain to you that I consider the sending of the casts

as a fact completely independent of this thesis, the responsibility for which will not be shared by us as it is borne exclusively by future expounders.”³⁷

When an agreement was settled, the Italians decided to send plaster from Italy for their project in the Istanbul Museum in order to save money and ensure quality. Galli and the Head of the Cabinet of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ottavio De Peppo, made shrewd arrangements for 150 quintals of plaster to pass through customs without duties or quantity restrictions since the plaster was not staying in Turkey but would return to Italy in the form of casts.³⁸ The shipping company Lloyd Triestino provided free passage on 26 October 1936.³⁹ Not all of the plaster however was used in the museum casting campaign. Half of the leftover plaster was to be ceded to the Istanbul Museum as a gift and the other half -- 100 sacks of 5000 kilos, worth 250 Turkish lire each -- was to be purchased by Turkey.⁴⁰ The payment however was never made because no invoice showing the value of its acquisition in Turkey had ever been made and thus could not be provided. The Italians therefore assumed that the plaster was still theirs and in storage in the Museum.

Giglioli arranged with the Società di Navigazione Adriatica “for the passage Brindisi-Constantinople-Brindisi for the plaster-makers Scanzani and Paolini” under the same conditions as the plaster.⁴¹ Alberto Scanzani seems to have arrived in Istanbul by 30 November 1936 and Francesco Paolini by 14 January 1937. By May 1937 plaster casts made in Istanbul had arrived in Rome, because Scanzani is paid at that point for the cleaning of the casts made in Istanbul. This document contains a precise list, with inventory numbers and locations of the originals, as well as inventory numbers for the casts in the MAR. Four casts of the 34 were objects from Aphrodisias: **the peopled scroll** from the Hadrianic Baths (inv. MA 7858); the statue of a Theodosian emperor (inv. MA 7863) and two statues of late-

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antique magistrates (inv. MA 2535 e MA 2532). Paul Gaudin excavated all four of these impressive objects in precisely the area that Giulio Jacopi chose to begin his excavations in October of 1937 (see below).

<A> Italian Excavations at Aphrodisias

European scholars and adventurers had visited the site of Aphrodisias already by the early 18th century. The ancient city is located in the Morsynos valley south of the main east-west basin of the Maeander River (fig. 1). Because of its remote location, it was not until 1904 and 1905 that Paul Gaudin (1858-1921), a French railway engineer, conducted excavations under the aegis of the Imperial Museum at Constantinople and superintended by the Director of Public Instruction in Smyrna.⁴² Gaudin explored major areas of standing ruins, especially the Temple, Hadrianic Baths, and Walls. His work at the Baths yielded well-sculpted monumental architectural members and statuary, the most exciting of which obtained international recognition in the new Imperial Museum. Because Gaudin transferred to Syria for work, the next French expedition did not take place until 1913; the first World War then curtailed further exploration.

In 1934, the Scottish archaeologist and epigrapher William Calder explored Aphrodisias with a permit.⁴³ But when his colleagues, the American William Hepburn Buckler and the Frenchman Louis Robert applied for a permit in 1935 to continue their joint epigraphic studies at Aphrodisias, the Turkish ministry denied them. In the spring of 1935 **Buckler**, who had himself served diplomatic posts, wrote to his contact, the US Chargé in Turkey, Gardiner Howland Shaw. Shaw responded from Ankara as follows in a letter dated 14 May 1935:

“As soon as I received your telegram yesterday, I took steps to stir things up in

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the Ministry of Public Instruction. To my amazement, I learned from Hamid Zubeyr that the military authorities had objected to your going to Aphrodisias because it is in some military zone, and that the Ministry of P.I. was just on the point of writing to you to this effect. I immediately sought out Halil Bey, who had already heard the news and who was very much upset by it. We talked the matter over at some length and it was decided that he should sound the Ministry and let me know the results. He has just done so, and has now telephoned me that there is no possibility at all of changing the decision with respect to Aphrodisias, but that the Ministry was quite willing to designate, in a broad sort of way, the areas of Turkey in which they would be entirely willing to authorize you to carry on your studies.”⁴⁴

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Buckler in turn wrote to Robert on 24 May 1935:

“Your two letters - the second just arrived - clearly show the inappropriateness of a trip such as we had wished. And I regret it very much, because this work with you in Aphrodisias would have given me great pleasure.

It is clear that the Turks are ever more uneasy about Mussolini's aims, and the area 'reserved' for the defence of Anatolia gets bigger every year. Without doubt you would not be able to make your tour of Caria again, and I congratulate you on having accomplished it just in time.”⁴⁵

This correspondence, which emphasizes Atatürk's distrust of the Italians, makes it surprising that the Ministry of Culture granted an excavation permit for Aphrodisias to Giulio Jacopi in September of 1937. According to Galli, it was due to a general upswing in political relations,

his own pressure, and the esteem for Jacopi. To these reasons, we can suggest also that Italian archaeologists, who had not previously considered Aphrodisias (though they had explored other areas of the Maeander valley), had come into contact with the site through the objects in the Istanbul Museum in 1936 and so pushed specifically for it,⁴⁶ and that the Turks may well have believed that the site's remote location was a suitable compromise.

Jacopi describes his 1937 excavation season as bipartite.⁴⁷ The first stage, a study trip, was his travel from Istanbul to Aphrodisias. Between 9 and 16 September, he visited sites en route and recorded archaeological details (including a tomb with an impressive tondo of "Septimius Severus" near Karacasu which he had moved to the Izmir Museum).⁴⁸ The second stage, field work, was conducted in two periods: from 1 to 28 October, the initial excavation, and from 16 November to the 5 December, with an emphasis on documentation. Activity resumed later in December and continued to mid-January 1938, when Francesco Paolini made casts of the most significant materials unearthed. The results of the season were published in a scholarly volume less than two years later, in 1939.⁴⁹

In his first week on site 1-7 October 1937, Jacopi directed trenches and the cleaning of the "Corte dell'Est" of the Hadrianic Baths which the French mission had excavated in 1904, 1905, and 1913 (fig. 2). His team of about 40 workmen then moved to the east "where some evidence suggested the presence of a portico."⁵⁰

On 17 October 1937, Jacopi sent a telegram full of excitement to the Ministero dell'Educazione Nazionale about his exceptional discovery of a portico with a sensational frieze decorated with sculpted heads (fig. 3).⁵¹ He worked moving eastwards in this area until 28 October, finding the structure "in certain places complete, with all elements, columns,

capitals, epistyle, frieze, and cornice.”⁵² On account of this find, he asked Luigi Crema (1905-1975), a young architectural engineer with an interest in archaeology whom he had met at SAIA a few years earlier, to join the mission.⁵³ Crema participated in three weeks of excavation from 16 November to 6 December 1937, in which period the team produced accurate documentation of the architectural finds (in order to reconstruct the full plan) and recorded the remnants of the walls (figs. 1 and 4).⁵⁴

In a total of 35 working days, the Italian mission uncovered, mainly between 13 and 28 October 1937, most of the facade of the portico as it had fallen. The tall columns, fluted above and smooth below at pedestrian level, carried ionic capitals. On the fasciae of the architrave an inscription in Greek recorded the dedication of the building to Aphrodite, the divine Augustus, Zeus Patroos, the Emperor Tiberius, Livia, and the people, by Diogenes and Menander, probably brothers from a local elite family. Jacopi was particularly struck by the inscription; he writes, on the 20 October, “we began to find the monumental dedicatory inscription in magnificent hellenic Greek letters with apices” which he then fully translates.⁵⁵

The frieze above the architrave carried a sequence of masks, which emerged from the earth with a crispness and sculptural beauty that was astonishing.⁵⁶ The range of subjects and expression, all skilfully wrought, made them appear as the visual equivalent of an encyclopaedia of classical types and sculptural forms.⁵⁷ Jacopi himself described the masks as possibly portraits from life, because of their diversity and the two remarkable masks of legionnaires. He noted: “The range of attributes, hairstyles, diadems, symbols that decorate the heads is extremely varied – the heads form an invaluable repertoire for the study of artistic tendencies, iconography, and typology of Augustan-Tiberian sculpture.”⁵⁸ (fig. 5). He

concludes that “the frieze is the longest that we know of this period, and is one of the most prominent for its artistic value.”⁵⁹

Jacopi made sure that his finds received public recognition quickly, publishing himself in the internationally-prominent *Illustrated London News* on 18 December 1937 and in the Turkish arts and crafts magazine *AR* in the January 1938 issue; a Turkish journalist also summarized his finds in the journal *Ankara* in 1939.⁶⁰ In addition, two articles were published in Italy in November and December of 1937, full of fascist propaganda (see below).

Jacopi was also determined to protect his finds and to continue his excavations. In his Italian report dated November 1937 he writes that he established site surveillance and reached out to the Ministry of Culture and the Italian Embassy, asking that the finds be moved to Istanbul.⁶¹ In his final report to the Turkish Ministry, he explains that the guard house is a temporary measure until the objects can be moved to a museum which he had **by that time identified as the museum in Izmir** and that he has purchased land from the registry in Karacasu on which to continue next season.⁶² Although the concern for the preservation of the objects was used as leverage to justify the site casting project (see below), it was probably sincere and ultimately proved legitimate.⁶³ Portions of the portico excavated in 1937, including sculpted frieze blocks and the inscribed architrave, reappeared only in the excavations of the 1980s: some had been reburied and others were built into a “farmer’s wall.”⁶⁴ A small epigraphic fragment (of the Price Edict of Diocletian) has not been seen since.⁶⁵

<A> The making of the Portico of Tiberius casts

With such an important but clumsily large discovery and facing an off season of potential risk (exposure to weather and harmful human agents), Jacopi arranged for the

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plasterer Francesco Paolini, with whom he had worked earlier in the year in Istanbul, to come to site from Rome. He announces this season-end activity in his final report to the Ministry of Culture on 15 December: “the execution of casts of the best sculptural subjects discovered is in progress under the care of the Mission.”⁶⁶

His motivations, however, had a political bent. In a handwritten letter dated 31 October 1937, the end of the main phase of the fieldwork, Marica Montesanto, Jacopi’s wife, shared her husband’s misgivings about the safety of his finds with Giovanni Battista Guarnaschelli, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs officer. Much of the worry related to the uneasy political relationship between the countries: “We have had too many conditions and too many accidents in this country. And who knows how the authorities will view the finding of a masterpiece of Augustan Art. I am therefore very worried. The only solution would therefore be to obtain the immediate sending of a cast-maker to cast the heads. These could then be shown at the Exhibition [MAR] with enormous success.”⁶⁷ A material, three-dimensional documentation of the frieze, which could be eventually displayed at the MAR, would guarantee the preservation of the sculptures.⁶⁸

Roberto Paribeni (1876-1956), Director of the Italian Archaeological Missions in the East, budgeted 2000 lire from the funds coming from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for Paolini to travel to Istanbul, and from there to reach Jacopi at Aphrodisias by land.⁶⁹ In December 1937, Paolini expected to collect 120 plaster bags of gypsum left at the Museum earlier in the year, but to his surprise he did not find them, and had to source materials locally.⁷⁰

The poor materials and the winter weather made the casting on site at Aphrodisias difficult. The results are a testimony to the commitment and expertise of both the maker and the

archaeologist. Paolini, who “with commendable zeal”, made casts of 65 of the decorative protomes, and of the main architectural elements of the portico (columns, capital, entablature including the fasciae of architrave, and the cornice with dentils and water-spouts) as well as epigraphic fragments of the Price Edict of Diocletian (figs. 6-7).⁷¹ The focus of the casts of the frieze was on the sculpted heads rather than on the block itself, the depth of which was never cast and the width of which was often curtailed, presumably to save on plaster. There is no record of the molds, but we presume that they were made of clay. The area around Aphrodisias is rich in clay (the local town of Karacasu is today a center for ceramic production) and the material is a reliable and economic alternative to plaster. It can be reused and reworked if mixed with water, while plaster solidifies. Moreover the Italians clearly had an unexpected shortage of plaster on site, were acting fast, and wanted finished objects, rather than the molds themselves.

The potential display of the casts of the new finds at the MAR, which had opened on 23rd September 1937 at *Palazzo delle Esposizioni* in Rome, was a motivating factor. The aim of the show was to celebrate the bimillenary of the birth of Emperor Augustus (born on 23 September 63 BCE) by offering a striking, visual representation of the most significant social, cultural, and engineering elements of the Roman Empire.⁷² This great exhibition, directed by Giglioli and assisted by various scholars, featured artistic and architectural objects in plaster, reconstructions, scale models, and miniatures, specifically made for the occasion—an incredible effort of financial and human resources, as well as diplomatic negotiations with international museums. Benito Mussolini was actively involved in the organization of the show: the parallelism between the old Roman Empire and the Fascist Regime was explicit, and so was the link between Augustus and ‘il Duce’. To include the new

archaeological finds from Aphrodisias in the MAR exhibit represented an invaluable opportunity in terms of prestige and fame, both for Jacopi and for the Regime.

By the time the objects went on display, the Turkish government had declined to renew the one-year excavation permit. On 15 December 1937, the date of his final report for Ankara, Jacopi thought that he would be returning for a second season.⁷³ Yet by 23 February 1938, the Italians were aware that they would not be given another year.⁷⁴ These casts and the Italian hype over the finds (next section) provided the tangible reason for termination in a moment of fragile diplomatic relations.

<A> The Portico in Rome

Paolini's casts were sent to Rome after they were made in January. We do not know the details of their journey from Aphrodisias to Rome but they would probably have been hauled to the nearest railway stop on the Izmir-Denizli line and then shipped to Izmir.⁷⁵ Long before their arrival, Jacopi's discovery had been enthusiastically publicized in the national press (fig. 8). In *Il Giornale d'Italia*, the scholar and member of the Fascist cultural institution *Accademia d'Italia*, Ettore Romagnoli (1871-1938), went so far as to emphasize the resemblance of the frieze's "100 Roman faces" to the young Italian *littori*—members of the Fascist party. He interpreted the monument as a celebration of Rome and her Empire, and identified in the sculptures the physiognomic characteristics of the ideal Fascist man; "masculine outline and powerful forehead, short and full nose, firm jaw, and very proud eye." He also concluded with a veritable heroization of the archaeologist as the chosen descendent who had come from the motherland to liberate those Roman faces from the "shadowy underground darkness" into which they had fallen.⁷⁶ One month later, *Il Popolo d'Italia*,⁷⁷ in the frenzy of the contemporary Augustan commemoration, defined the monument as a

Commented [EIC16]: Not the right use of apology here; perhaps replace with 'justification'?

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Temple of Augustus rather than a stoa dedicated during the reign of Tiberius, a first step towards the misrepresentation of the plaster at the MAR (see below).

An exhibition of the casts was organized by Jacopi and Giglioli at the *Museo dell'Impero Romano* (MIR) to celebrate the Italian archaeological accomplishment in Aphrodisias.⁷⁸ The Mayor of Rome, Prince Piero Colonna (1891-1939) approved a resolution confirming the restoration and mounting of the pieces by Paolini on 15 June 1938,⁷⁹ and the show opened on 4 July at 11.00 am (fig. 9).⁸⁰ Giglioli even managed to procure for Jacopi the honor of showing the casts to “Sua Maestà il Re Imperatore”, Vittorio Emanuele III.⁸¹

Two months later, in August, Colonna approved a second resolution for a one-to-one plaster reconstruction of a sector of the portico from the casts and the measured drawings of the architectural elements made on site by the Mission.⁸² In the resolution the city of Rome commissions and agrees to pay the lowest of three bidders, the cast maker Francesco Mercatali whom Giglioli believed to be the best artisan in the field.⁸³ This single bay of the portico of Aphrodisias entered the great exhibition of Empire (MAR) for the last three months of its duration. The fourth and definitive edition of the MAR catalogue, published on 7 September 1938, includes the object, now MCR inv. 1972.⁸⁴

The reconstructed portico bay, 7,50 (H) x 5,80 (W) x 1,60 (D) metres, was a new monument comprising casts of the Paolini casts and elements interpolated from the drawings of Crema (fig. 10). Both the columns and the entablature are hollow.⁸⁵ An inner armature made of wood, organic fibre and plaster, which was reinforced during the restoration in 2012, supports the structure. The current installation at the MCR uses tie rods to secure the

Commented [EIC18]: ? The technical drawings of the casts?

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structure to the wall, and is probably similar to that of the display at the MAR, some 75 years earlier.

In order to make the two full-height Ionic columns, Mercatali copied Paolini's casts of the half column, capital and base and restored the missing parts on the basis of Crema's drawings (fig. 4). For the entablature, Mercatali made casts of the Paolini casts (fig. 11). The frieze of the recreation includes seven masks with garlands hanging between them. The seven masks belonged to three consecutive original blocks of which Paolini had made four casts.⁸⁶ On top of the frieze, Mercatali recreated the cornice with dentils and waterspouts in the form of lion heads. The cornice shows three seams, and the four sections seem to have been created by replicating a single Paolini cast (of one block, fig. 12); the leftmost section is plain and the adjacent section shows the same lion head as that on the rightmost section.

The most interesting decision of the reconstruction concerned the inscribed text on the architrave. The 1937 excavations had found it almost complete and had mainly transcribed it correctly.⁸⁷ Whereas the portico was dedicated to Aphrodite, Augustus, Tiberius, Livia, and the People (of Aphrodisias), Mercatali had partial casts of only blocks 2 and 3 (fig. 7), commemorating Augustus: [..]τοκράτορι Κάισαρι Θεῶι | Σεβαστῶι Διὶ Πατρώω καὶ (to the divine Emperor Caesar Augustus Zeus Patroos and). The new bay even omits the final word "and," which Paolini had cast and was therefore available. The dedication thus reads simply as a dedication to Augustus as Zeus Patroos. The discrepancy between the text of the reconstruction (figs. 10-11) and that of the line drawing provided by Crema at fig. 52 of the 1939 publication (fig. 4), which runs from the end of block 4, through the middle of block 6 (καὶ | Αυτοκράτορι Τιβερίωι Κάισα[ρι] | [Θεο]ῦ Σεβαστ) (and for the Emperor Tiberius

Caesar son of August...) highlights the political needs of the display as opposed to the academic interest in a fixed date, provided by the name Tiberius.

At the MAR, the portico was displayed on the right-hand side of the entrance to room XV, “Augustan monuments in the provinces of the Empire”, on the first floor in a section curated by Carlo Pietrangeli (1912-1995), pupil of Giglioli and future Director of the Vatican Museums.⁸⁸ Objects in the room ranged from the imposing, life-size recreation of a colonnade from the temple of Augustus and Rome at Athens, to portraits of Augustus, pictures of monuments, scale models and inscriptions. The 1938 catalogue entry reads:

13 Portico of Augustus at Aphrodisias: 1: 1 reconstruction of the architectural order, by arch. Luigi Crema. The monument – which belongs to a square surrounded by porticos or a palaestra – was discovered and excavated in 1937 by Prof. Giulio Jacopi, head of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Anatolia. Here a reconstruction of a sector of the colonnade of the ionic order shows a marvelous frieze of festoons of flowers and fruit held by masks of heads in high relief. The heads found total 177 in number (with a great variety of types, which include gods, heroes, mythological forms, athletes, etc) comprising a splendid artistic ensemble, one of the most perfect known in architectural decoration. The work is obviously of different hands, of a local school, some of which, as certain letters prove, were Greek or Roman/Italian. On the architrave is incised the dedication of the building, “to Aphrodite, to the divine Augustus Jupiter Patroos, to Tiberius son of the divine Augustus, to Julia Augusta (Livia) and to the people,” 14-29 CE.⁸⁹

Although the text of the entry dates the object to the Tiberian period (14-29 CE), the object bears the title Portico of Augustus. The Emperor Augustus as the focus of the cultural propaganda of the Fascist regime is highlighted by the omission of all others. This represents both a curatorial choice and a political statement: the aim was to form a direct visual link between the portico and Augustus, and subsequently to place the reconstruction in an already established museum narrative within the exhibition.

The Aphrodisias reconstruction does not represent an isolated case. The same manipulative approach recurred throughout the exhibition, where sculptures, monuments, parts of architecture were not only reproduced, but also recreated. For example, the so-called Duilia column, known only from its inscribed base in the Roman Forum and from the literary and numismatic sources, was specifically recreated as a plaster monument for the MAR.⁹⁰ The practice of reconstructing parts of buildings and monuments in plaster was not new, as the collections of the National Museum of French Monuments in Paris, the Victoria and Albert and the Sir John Soane Museum in London attest.⁹¹ Plaster monumental reconstructions and architectural fragments were made for the same reason: to educate and stimulate different types of audiences. From the inception of Universal Expositions, to the organisation of blockbuster archaeological exhibitions (like the aforementioned 1911 *Mostra* at the Diocletian Baths in Rome), the idea was to display and foster, in sensationalistic terms, the canonisation of each country's past through historical monuments.⁹² Excitement and learning stimulated by gigantic portals, arches and porticoes, and models, photographs and maps, served to exalt the Regime, il Duce, and the superiority of his purposefully recreated Rome. As the casts of the portico of Aphrodisias became part of this new Rome, they lost all connections with their site of origin and the circumstances that generated them and their discovery. Saved from destruction and oblivion (“dalle tenebre sotterranee”) and brought

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back to the motherland (“Madre Patria”), they were part of the uninterrupted history that connected the Roman Empire with the current regime.⁹³

In Turkey, conversely, the full-fledged Roman reading of the portico presented by the Italian press and the exhibition rekindled all suspicions about the Italians and their political use of culture conflicted with Turkey’s nationalist agenda. The Romagnoli article and the casts, which were sent to Rome without offering the first copies to the Turkish Ministry, had irreparably offended the Turkish government, which held Jacopi responsible.⁹⁴ On 7 January, the Director General of Antiquities from the Turkish Ministry of Culture asked the archaeologist to resume his earlier excavations in Anatolia, implying that Jacopi needed to close those at Aphrodisias.⁹⁵ The official notice of closure came later, and the Turks ignored Jacopi’s request to present his discoveries in the annual archaeological meeting in Istanbul.⁹⁶ Galli considered the handling of the results of the excavation to have been fundamentally harmful to the relations between the two countries.⁹⁷

The geo-political situation, though, had already fast deteriorated in the course of 1937, and the climate, under growing pressure of nationalism from both sides, was tense. The Italian remilitarization of the Dodecanese Islands was a reason for concern for the Turks, as much as Turkey’s failure to recognize the Italian Empire was for the Italians. A series of visits scheduled in 1937 between the two countries never took place and the mutual dissatisfaction was aggravated, in Turkey, by the fear of cultural aggression: in August of the same year, the president of the Dante Alighieri Society, which offered Italian language courses abroad, had branches throughout Turkey, and represented one of the most reliable agents of propaganda beyond the borders argued in his speech that the society was “the watchman of italianità and

fascism” in the Levant.⁹⁸ In such climate, there was no way Jacopi could defend himself or the archaeological mission could be salvaged in 1938.⁹⁹

<A> The Portico of Aphrodisias from November 1938 to the present

The plaster recreation of the portico was on display until the MAR closed on 5 November 1938. Mussolini supported Giglioli’s idea to relocate all the MAR exhibits to a new, permanent museum at EUR, a new area of Rome specifically conceived to host the *Esposizione Universale 1942* (or *E42*).¹⁰⁰ Thus, the MAR exhibits were either variously stored around the city (from the lower ground floor of *Palazzo delle Esposizioni*, to the so-called *Serbatoio De Vico* in via Elaniana), or moved to the MIR. The outbreak of the war delayed the project, and the museum, the *Museo della Civiltà Romana* (MCR) opened between 1952 and 1955 in a building whose construction was funded by the FIAT automobile group.¹⁰¹ The museum incorporated all the documental, archival and photographic materials belonging to both MAR and MIR.

We know little about the specific museum arrangement of the Paolini casts at the MIR and the subsequent positioning of the Mercatali-Crema display there. We assume that while the MAR exhibition was on, visitors to the museum and the show had the possibility to engage to engage with the Portico of Aphrodisias in the form of original casts, showing impressive detail, at the MIR and in the full bay of an imposing architectural monument, at the MAR.

A photograph of the Mercatali entablature with the edge of an ionic capital (fig. 11), labelled MIR, indicates that the Crema-Mercatali reconstruction was dismantled upon arrival there. Furthermore, the reconstruction is not mentioned in the 1943 MIR catalogue.¹⁰² The MIR catalogue, which has the most correct academic presentation of all the catalogues, reads:

21-24 Elements of the entablature of a portico of the agora of Aphrodisias in Anatolia, formed by a frieze with at least 175 heads (of which here on display are only the most interesting) of notable decorative importance and of eclectic classicizing inspiration.

The portico was dedicated to Aphrodite, the divine Augustus - Jupiter Patroos, Tiberius, and Livia by a certain Diogenes and Meander, between 14 and 29 CE. On exhibit is also part of a column with an ionic capital, from the same portico. The excavation of the monument was carried out in 1937-1938 by the Italian Archaeological Mission in Anatolia, directed by Giulio Jacopi.

Both the Crema-Mercatali-recreated full bay of the portico and Paolini's architectural fragments reached their new home, in the MCR, by 1958. They are described in two entries of the first edition of the catalogue published that year. The entry for the reconstruction makes four changes to the entry of the MAR catalogue which we highlight below in italics:

6 Portico of Tiberius at Aphrodisias, in Caria, 1:1 reconstruction of the architectural order by the *engineer* Luigi Crema. The monument – which belongs probably to a square with a portico (*agora*) – was excavated in 1937 by Prof. Giulio Jacopi, The work is obviously of different hands, of a local school, some of which, as certain letters prove, were Greek or *Roman* [as opposed to Italian].”¹⁰³

In addition, the catalogue refers to Paolini's casts on display:

7-11 Fragments of the frieze of the Ionic portico of Aphrodisias. The festoons of fruit and leaves are held by protomes of various types. Notable are the Dionysian types, among which is Dionysos himself and some divinities.”¹⁰⁴

The first text includes a significant shift in title. The Portico of Augustus has now become the Portico of Tiberius. The change emphasizes Tiberius (the Republican-loving reluctant Emperor), rather than Augustus, the image of imperial authority, who had been so much of a focus during the Fascist years. To date no title has yet to acknowledge Aphrodite as namesake of the portico, although she is the first of the recipients listed in the inscription.. The second text of the catalogue informs us that a further five frieze blocks were part of the display, while the half-column with the Ionic capital seems to have been removed.¹⁰⁵

Both the architectural recreation and the frieze blocks were hosted in room XXXIV of the MCR, *Sala del Portico d'Afrodisia*. The eponymous room clearly conferred prominence on the portico, making it the center piece of the space. The reconstruction of part of the monumental arch of Septimius Severus at Leptis Magna, offered a pendant on the opposite wall .Sculptures of emperors and male figures, a 1:20 scale model of the Roman bridge at Rimini, and a few inscriptions completed the display. Considering that the portico and the frieze are numbered consequentially in the catalogue (6 and 7-11), they must have been displayed next to each other. In this sense, the MCR literally embraced the museum interpretation of both the MAR and MIR. In 2022, the elements of the frieze were no longer in the same room.

In 1938, the copying of architectural elements and the recreation of the portico served two archaeological purposes: a conservation tool and a means for didactic dissemination and

academic research. Its tangible presence was easily adopted for political use. Of course, academic interest as well as politics have evolved in the intervening 75 years. The most recent studies of the area have adjusted our understanding as historians, forcing us to consider the portico in depth, not just as an ornate elevation, and to see it as the covered surround not of a bustling agora but of a green Urban Park.¹⁰⁶ In the 1930s the tall portico was a compelling visual demonstration of the extent of the power and culture of the Roman world which Augustus, whose name was in fact written on it, had fostered. Now, scholars understand the stoa as a demonstration of inclusivity and local custom, of the Greek ability to incorporate Roman rule and emperors seamlessly into their local urban fabric and traditional forms.

From a museological and cultural heritage perspective, the reconstruction is a fascinating contradiction. It creates an academic monument from replicas and drawings in a completely new location; it is an abbreviation and a de-contextualization. Yet it is also unique research that creates a compelling visual aid. Its value grows when one realizes that on site in Aphrodisias in their original location the marble elements from which the casts were made can in no way be reassembled (fig. 12).¹⁰⁷ The original blocks of the frieze, many of which went to the Izmir Museum for protection from ca. 1940—2009, now belong to the Aphrodisias Museum.¹⁰⁸ These blocks are stacked for reasons of conservation, to protect them from the elements and vandalism (as much a concern today as it was in 1937), and to exalt their sculptural appeal (which never fails to wow visitors) in expressive walls of faces of 5-7 m in height around the main tourist plaza and entrance to the site museum.¹⁰⁹ The effect and the appeal of these walls faithfully maintain the first impression that they had made on Jacopi and the receiving public of 1937-1938. The architrave blocks, when they were excavated, when they were cast, and when they were stacked in the 21st century wall, were

treated as sculpted heads rather than architectural units. These new museum walls, however, contain many more recent finds as well as friezes from other monuments of the site, for example the Basilica. The columns of the portico itself, both those excavated by Jacopi and by the New York University excavations, were re-erected in situ in the 1980s in order to give the area an architectural definition and because standing columns weather less than drums on the ground. The architrave and cornice have been laid out in the stoa at ground level so that tourists to the area can read the inscription. Each of the elements is impressive and curated but they are all separate and lack the cohesive vertical monumentality of the 7.50-m-tall creation of Mercatali and Crema.

The recreated bay of the “Portico” in Rome remains a monument of its time and a demonstration of the interests of a political regime. In contrast, the casts of the frieze, preserving a freshness of sculpted detail, remain available for future use and reinterpretation. They can be used for restoration of damaged areas in the original monument; they can be placed above columns at a height of c. 6 m as if they were a frieze. They can be erected together, one above the other on a wall, achieving an effect like that now at the Museum in Aphrodisias. The options are numerous and future generations can decide in keeping with their interests and needs, archaeological, political, or museological. They are flexible objects that function both in their own right and as copies.

<A> Conclusion

The story of the portico of Tiberius at Aphrodisias in its three forms - the marble blocks of an original structure still on site, the plaster elements cast by Francesco Paolini during the 1937-1938 Italian Archaeological Mission in Anatolia, and the reconstruction of a full bay directed by Luigi Crema and made by Francesco Mercatali - illustrates early twentieth-century

archaeological practice and shows the traditional and expected uses of the plaster cast in documentation and research. In addition, it tells a story that academics, museum professionals, and the general public tend to overlook: that is, that cultural heritage management is always intricately linked to geo-political and social contexts. The archaeological operations and the tensions that they cause among hosting and hosted countries always reflect larger diplomatic and political events.

That Giulio Jacopi was known for his faith to the Regime,¹¹⁰ and that archival documents highlight even Mussolini's interest in the excavations in Turkey,¹¹¹ give this case study a high political profile. Jacopi is particularly representative of a generation that emerged from WWI with the desire for action and intervention that characterized the birth of the Fascist party under Benito Mussolini. Jacopi acted fast and effectively, for his country, motivated by a passion for the Roman Empire. At the same time, he embraced technical progress, as it had been engrained in the Fascist doctrine. So, he documented his finds at Aphrodisias by applying state of the art techniques and using top specialists in the field of architecture and engineering. Paolini's casts and the Mercatali-Crema reconstruction must be placed into this complex historical perspective. The idea of plaster casts as empty **mechanical copies**, made of a traditionally poor material, is hardly the case. In addition to their artistic and pedagogic values, plaster casts also perform a clear political role.

In 2014, the MCR closed for renovation. It partly reopened (two rooms) in summer 2022. As members of the staff explained, researchers and school groups often visit, as it allows them to engage, in one space, with objects and monuments dispersed, destroyed or located around the world. Although the educational vocation is of pivotal importance, it is equally important to

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acknowledge the historic perspective discussed here, in order to appreciate the full value of the plaster casts and the reason that casts are museum objects in their own right.

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Fig. 1. Map showing Aphrodisias in relationship to other important ancient cities (courtesy of New York University Excavations at Aphrodisias).

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Fig. 3. Telegram, sent 17 October 1937 by Jacopi to Ministero Educazione Nazionale (Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Dir. Gen. AA.BB.AA. 1934-1940, busta/fascicolo 359).

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Fig. 10. Crema-Mercatali reconstruction in plaster of one bay of the “Portico of Aphrodisias,” in the Museo della Civiltà Romana. Two views (Museo della Civiltà Romana).

Fig. 11. Mercatali reconstruction in plaster of the entablature of the bay of the “Portico” of Aphrodisias. Photographed for the Museo dell’ Impero romano (Museo della Civiltà Romana).

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<A> Endnotes

¹ This study was funded by the John Fell OUP Fund and was carried out at the Faculty of Classics of the University of Oxford between 2022 and 2023 with the collaboration of the Aphrodisias excavations (run jointly by the University of Oxford and New York University) and the Museo della Civiltà Romana (hereafter MCR). In Rome, relevant materials are kept at the Historical-Diplomatic Archive of the Ministero degli Affari Esteri e della Cooperazione Internazionale (hereafter MAECI), Archivio Centrale dello Stato, and Archivio Storico del MCR (hereafter ASMCR). Research in the latter included the review of documents (letters, telegrams, various notes, inventory catalogues, plans, maps, reliefs and pictures, etc.) from the Mostra Augustea della Romanità (hereafter MAR), Museo dell'Impero Romano (hereafter MIR), and MCR itself. All the MAECI and ASMCR archival documents and the selected passages of the MAR and MIR catalogues used throughout the text are originally in Italian, and have been translated by Julia Lenaghan.

² For example, *A Modern Antiquity*. French Academy in Rome. 7 November 2019-1 March 2020; *Infinite Sculpture. From the antique cast to the 3D scan*. Fine Arts Academy, Paris. 4 December 2019-16 February 2020 and Calouste Gulbenkian Museum, Lisbon. 18 September 2020-19 January 2021; *Near Life. The Gipsformerei - 200 Years of Casting Plaster*. State Museums, Berlin. 30 August 2019-1 March 2020; *Facing History*. University of Bern, Bern. 8 June 2019-31 December 2020.

³ On the value of classical casts, Frederiksen and Marchand 2010; Alexandridis and Winkler-Horaček 2022; Marabelli 2022, 47-65.

⁴ Dinler 2018.

⁵ For example, east Africa and the Balkans under Francesco Crispi in the 1880s: McGuire 2020, 38.

⁶ Enrico Acton, Italian consul at Smyrna: Petricioli 1990, 168.

⁷ For the 1911 *Mostra Archeologica delle Terme di Diocleziano*, conceived by Giulio Quirino Giglioli (1886-1956) and his mentor Rodolfo Lanciani (1845-1929), which opened on 8 April 1911 and closed 1 May 1912: Palombi 2009, 71-100; Polverini 2013; Liberati 2016, 206-222; Tortosa 2019; Cecamore 2025.

⁸ Together with Tripolitania and Cyrenaica.

⁹ McGuire 2020, 42. A permanent archaeological mission in Rhodes operated from 1914 to the 1947, at which point the Dodecanese islands were ceded to Greece: Pellizzari 2023.

¹⁰ The occupation was preceded by the opening of schools, cultural and medical centres: Petricioli 1990, 194. The landing of the Italian troops and their penetration through the region were guided by the archaeologist Biagio Pace: Petricioli 1990, 209-210.

¹¹ Petricioli 1990, 206-248. On the difficulties faced by the Italian archaeologists in Asia Minor see also Faldelli 2022

¹² For the report on the 1923 events: Viale 1926, 357-356.

¹³ Barlas, and Gülmez 2018, 830.

¹⁴ MAECI, Affari Politici 1931-1945, Turchia 1937, busta 23, fasc. 15 (25-1-37). notes that the Italians had asked for position in the Aegean but were allowed only eastern or internal areas. These explorations were the first assignment to Giulio Jacopi in Turkey (see main text).

¹⁵ The Italian Ambassador to Turkey Carlo Galli summarized the situation: “Kemalism aims at this: to give young people the awareness that there exists a million years of Turkish culture that is not inferior to others, in fact mother to European civilizations which developed after. The possibility of foreign cultural propaganda becomes difficult, actually blocked, by this principal necessity that Kemalism must follow. The little that can be carried out is immediately hindered for not respecting this fundamental concept enough” 25 May 1938, 5, Telespresso 921/904 in MAECI, Affari Politici 1931-1945, Italia 1938, busta 59, fascicolo 14)

¹⁶ It followed Mussolini's declaration, at the Fascist Congress of March 1934, that 'Italy's historic objectives lie in Asia and Africa' (Barlas, and Gülmez 2018, 831).

¹⁷ The episode is cited by Barlas and Gülmez (2018, 832, n. 77).

¹⁸ Barlas, and Gülmez (2018, 834) present a discussion of the British-Italian-Turkish interests. For Carlo Galli and Turkey, see Sommella 2024, 82-93. For the excavation permit, see Galli, 16 November 1937, *Telespresso* 2040/1091, MAECI, Affari Politici 1931-1954, *Turchia* 1937, busta 23, fasc. 15).

¹⁹ See, for example Canfora 1976; Stone 1999; Giardina 2008.

²⁰ His surname was originally Jacopich. His father was a political prisoner from Austria. Jacopi, "Rapporto per S.E. il Barone Aloisi," typewritten document dated 3rd August 1933, 11: MAECI, Affari Politici 1931-1945, Italia 1936, busta 41, fascicolo 7.

²¹ Petricioli 1990, 200-201. The position in Rhodes was held by Amedeo Maiuri who returned to a post in Italy in 1924.

²² On FERT and its activities: Petricioli 1990, 200-202; Pellizzari 2023, 171 ff.

²³ Petricioli 1990, 340-342.

²⁴ Document, signed by the General Director Tricarico and dated 17 June 1935: "After a first request from Italy for an archaeological concession in Caria, particularly for Halicarnassus, was rejected (the proximity of that zone to the Italian Aegean islands explains the categorical rejection), the Turkish government seemed willing for a concession in another region of Anatolia, and in the end defined a potential concession in the zones of Negde, Kastamuni, Malatya, and Josgat. Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Dir. Gen. AA.BB.AA. 1934-1940, busta/fascicolo 359.

²⁵ Giulio Jacopi, Rapporto per S.E. il Barone Aloisi, typewritten document dated 3 August 1933, 8-9 (MAECI, Affari Politici 1931-1945, Italia 1936, busta 41, fascicolo 7).

²⁶ Barbanera 2003, 219. Jacopi left Turkey in 1938 and never returned. In Italy, he subsequently worked in the Superintendence of Monuments and Excavations in Rome, Bologna and Reggio Calabria, and died in 1982. Renewed interest in him and his role in the excavations at Rhodes led to the publication of Bossolino 2018.

²⁷ Carlo Galli to Giuseppe Bottai, typewritten document dated 24th November 1937 (Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Dir. Gen. AA.BB.AA. 1934-1940, busta/fascicolo 359).

²⁸ Plantzos and Balaskas 2023, 258. Plantzos refers to Mussolini's comment, "Cedo la parola al piccone" (I let the pickaxe speak) recorded in *La Domenica del Corriere* (4/11/1934) at the start of the excavations at the Mausoleum of Augustus in Rome.

²⁹ The letter is unsigned: ASMCR, Turchia, Jacopi, Mostra Augustea della Romanità, prot. 4313, 13 August 1935.

³⁰ Letter of Barone Di Giura to Giglioli, 24 December 1934: ASMCR, Turchia, Ambasciata, Mostra Augustea della Romanità, prot. 2765, 2 January 1935.

³¹ He interestingly notes "the infantile sensitivity and strong concerns in these areas, in general, for similar things." Letter of Barone Di Giura to Giglioli, 24 December 1934: ASMCR, Turchia, Ambasciata, Mostra Augustea della Romanità, prot. 2765, 2 January 1935.

³² Giglioli notes to Galli, "that in order to avoid potential sensitivity that the name of the Cast Gallery in Rome was used and this in agreement with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, as had been done in the case of other states": ASMCR, Turchia, Ambasciata, Mostra Augustea della Romanità, prot. 6285, 22 July 1936.

³³ Letter of Giglioli to Caretoni, dated 8 November: ASMCR, Turchia, Caretoni. The official relationship between the MAR and Turkey in November of 1935 is attested by the reimbursement of £25.80 for a telegram of 19 words sent to Istanbul on 13 November 1935 by an employee of the Exhibition (ASMCR, original receipts, 1935, b. 449). There are no

receipts for reimbursements for Caretoni who presumably was funded by the MIR. Caretoni was an interesting figure who paid for the excavations of the amphitheater at Cassino. He brought his son, Gianfilippo Caretoni, a recent graduate, with him to Istanbul. Gianfilippo became an important archaeologist.

³⁴ ASMCR, Turchia, Banca Commerciale Italiana.

³⁵ Letter of Galli to Giglioli, 30 June 1937: ASMCR, Turchia, Ambasciata, Mostra Augustea della Romanità, prot. 10069, 6 July 1937.

³⁶ ASMCR, Turchia, Ambasciata, Mostra Augustea della Romanità, prot. 10408, 23 July 1937.

³⁷ ASMCR, Turchia, Ambasciata, Mostra Augustea della Romanità, prot. 10514, 24 July 1937.

³⁸ Letter from De Peppo to Giglioli, 1 December 1936: ASMCR, Turchia, Ambasciata, Mostra Augustea della Romanità prot. 7081,3 December 1936.

³⁹ ASMCR, Turchia, Banca Commerciale – Compagnia Navigazione, Mostra Augustea della Romanità prot. 6796, 26 October 1936.

⁴⁰ Letter of Giglioli to Galli in Ankara, 21 February 1936. ASMCR, Turchia, Ambasciata, Mostra Augustea della Romanità prot. 13932, 21 February 1936.

⁴¹ ASMCR, Turchia, Banca Commerciale – Compagnia Navigazione, Mostra Augustea della Romanità, prot. 8851, 26 April 1937.

⁴² Collignon 1904 is an archaeological description of Gaudin's work. Erim 1967, an investigation of some objects that Gaudin excavated, provides an account of his exchanges with developing cultural heritage protection in Turkey . For the importance of railway engineers in Anatolia, see Cobb 2017, 188.

⁴³ For a history of Calder and Buckler, Rouechè 2013, 256-264.

⁴⁴ Shaw to Buckler, 14 May 1935. Fonds Louis Robert, Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, Institute de France, Paris. We thank Charlotte Roueché for bringing these letters (Fonds

Louis Robert, Institut de France) to our attention. She not only herself transcribed them but her comments on them were invaluable.

⁴⁵Buckler to Robert, 24 May 1935. Fonds Louis Robert, Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres, Institut de France, Paris. .

⁴⁶ In 1919 Biagio Pace, an archaeologist sponsored by the Italian government, sought to continue the train line in the Maeander valley and to add a southern extension to reach the new Italian colony based in Antalya which, though on the sea, was a poor harbor and far from Istanbul and Izmir (see Pace 1927, 30). Given his position in Antalya and the growing strife concerning the Greek interests in the Maeander valley, home to the largest Greek population in Anatolia, he was interested in a site, probably near the Izmir-Aydin train line. After the Italians were removed from Antalya and after the defeat and the expulsion of the Greek faction from the Maeander valley in 1922, the economic and political interests in the valley changed. The Italians applied for the permit of Halicarnassus which was strategically located near their possessions in Dodecanese and which the Turks wished to reopen because of its Carian as opposed to Roman history (see discussion above and n. 24).

⁴⁷ Final report on excavations, submitted to the Ministry of Culture and Direction of Museums on 15 December. A copy is attached to Archivio dello Stato, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Belle Arti 000030, 4 January 1938.

⁴⁸ Smith et. al. 2006, R 9, pl.155.

⁴⁹ Jacopi 1939.

⁵⁰ Jacopi 1937a, 2.

⁵¹ “Onoromi comuncarLe eccezionale successo iniziale scavi Afrodias scopersi quadriportico squisito fregio marmoreo altorilievo finora 35 teste onde alcuni capolavori pari centauri capitolini arte imperiale antoniniana apronsi nouvi [nuovi] orizzonti altre quindici teste corso scavo ossequi direttore missione archeologica Jacopi.” (Honored to communicate exceptional

initial success of Aphrodisias excavations, discovered quadriporticus exquisite marble frieze in high relief already 35 heads of which some masterpieces equivalent to the Capitoline centaurs imperial Antonine art revealing new horizons 15 further heads in course of excavation, faithful director archaeological mission Jacopi): Telegramma Italo Radio, Archivio Centrale dello Stato, Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione, Dir. Gen. AA.BB.AA. 1934-1940, busta/fascicolo 359.

⁵² Jacopi 1937a, 2. De Chaisemartin 2024, fig. 5, illustrates the find location of the blocks of the frieze.

⁵³ Bascapé 1975, 7. Crema had a grant at the Italian School of Archaeology in Athens in 1929.

⁵⁴ Crema 1939

⁵⁵ Jacopi 1937a, 2. For the inscription, see below ns. 65 and 88.

⁵⁶ “Di fattura e conservazione quasi sempre eccellente” (of manufacture and conservation almost always excellent): Jacopi 1937a, 2. “Un état de conservation presque parfait” (an almost perfect statue of conservation): Tiryakioglu 1939.

⁵⁷ Tiryakioglu 1939 described them as follows: “artistes différentes (...), divinités mythologiques, personnages légendaires ou historiques” “different artists...divinities, myth, legendary or historic figures.” In the mid 1980s, Kenan Erim assigned the sculptures as a dissertation topic to a French graduate student, Nathalie de Chaisemartin, see De Chaisemartin 1989a, 1989b and 2024. Interestingly in 2016 Tommaso Ismaelli (Ismaelli 2016) was still noting striking typological correspondences between the heads and statuary in the round.

⁵⁸ Jacopi 1937a, 3. It merits note that the fine quality of the heads and the delineation of the irises and pupils had suggested initially an Antonine date to Jacopi: see the Telegram at fig. 3.

⁵⁹ Jacopi 1937a, 3.

⁶⁰ Jacopi 1937b and Jacopi 1938, Tiryakioglu 1939.

⁶¹ Jacopi 1937a, 3.

⁶² Final report (above n. 48), 3.

⁶³ Jacopi complains that eight blocks were mutilated after he had consigned them: Jacopi to Ministro degli Affari Esteri, included in Telespresso 223461, dated 10 June 1938: MAECI, Affari Politici 1931-1945 Italia 1938, busta 59, fascicolo 14.

⁶⁴ Block 1 of the inscribed architrave was re-found in 1984. See below n. 90 and *Iaph2007* 4.4 (where the date is erroneously given as 1986-1988). Other blocks of the architrave and frieze were recovered during 1984 and 1985 at a depth of ca. 1 m or built into a wall. For example, the frieze block with Jacopi 1939, nos. 95-96 was recovered in 1984 in a “farmer’s wall”. The Crema-Mercatali recreation shows the final omega and iota of Block 2 fully preserved; they are now broken.

⁶⁵ Crawford, Appendix 2, Bay V 3. Jacopi brought 7 casts of the Price Edict to Rome, MCR inv. 8106-8112.

⁶⁶ “l’exécution des moulages des meilleurs sujets sculpturaux découverts est en cours par les soins de la Mission.” Final report (above n. 48), 3.

⁶⁷ Marica Montesanto Jacopi, handwritten letter dated 31st October 1937, in MAECI, Affari Politici 1931-1945 Italia 1938, busta 59, fascicolo 14.

⁶⁸ According to Jacopi, they would break everything after his departure (“spaccherebbero tutto dopo la nostra partenza.”): Marica Montesanto Jacopi, handwritten letter, 31 October 1937, in MAECI, Affari Politici 1931-1945 Italia 1938, busta 59, fascicolo 14.

⁶⁹ Carlo Galli, Telespresso 2096/1126 dated 23rd November 1937: MAECI, Affari Politici 1931-1945 Turchia 1937, busta 23, fascicolo 15.

⁷⁰ A note from Ambassador at Ankara Galli to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs explains the situation. Paolini went to the Museum to collect the gypsum plaster bags, but the Museum had used them without informing the Italians. In the same document, Galli asks the Ministry to send more money to Paolini (around Lit. 25.000 in total), since the sum given to him by

Paribeni was only sufficient to cover travel and accommodation expenses (Carlo Galli, *Telespresso* 2096/1126 dated 23rd November 1937, in MAECI, *Affari Politici 1931-1945 Turchia 1937*, busta 23, fascicolo 15).

⁷¹ Jacopi 1939, 75.

⁷² For bibliography on the MAR: see Marcello 2011; Arthurs 2013; Liberati 2019; Tortosa 2019; and Cecamore 2025.

⁷³ Final report dated 15 December (n. 48 above), includes campaign project for the spring of 1938.

⁷⁴ A letter from Carlo Formichi, the president of Reale Accademia d'Italia dated 23 February 1938 to Giovanni Bottai, Ministro dell'Educazione Nazionale, informs him that "il Governo turco ha manifestato l'intenzione di non rinnovare più l'autorizzazione che era stata infatti concessa soltanto per la durata di un anno." (Archivio dello Stato, Belle Arti 001886).

⁷⁵ For important precedents concerning the Ottoman railways and archaeological shipping, see Cobb 2017. The Izmir-Aydin railways (built in 1865) was extended to Denizli in 1912.

⁷⁶ "Discendente venuto dalla madre patria per tornarli dalle tenebre sotterranee alla luce del sole": Romagnoli 1937, 3.

⁷⁷ 'Il Tempio ad Augusto scoperto presso l'antica città di Afrodizia dall'archeologo italiano Giulio Jacopi', *Il Popolo d'Italia*, 12 December 1937, 87.

⁷⁸ MIR opened in 1929, incorporated the exhibits of the 1911 Mostra dell'Impero, and aimed to become a centre for research on the Roman Empire. It later transformed into the MCR.

⁷⁹ Rome, Archivio Capitolino, Segretariato Generale, Deliberazione del Consiglio Municipale, vol 528: No. 2902. Deliberazione del Governatore, Session 15 June 1938. XVI.

⁸⁰ The invitation, addressed to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs officer Guarnaschelli, bears a hand-written note (by him?): "Paribeni told me that this initiative was undertaken by Jacopi

and Giglioli” (Il Paribeni mi ha detto che l’iniziativa è stata presa da Jacopi e Giglioli.): MAECI, Affari Politici 1931-1945 Italia 1938, busta 59, fascicolo 14.

⁸¹ Jacopi 1939, 76.

⁸² Rome, Archivio Capitolino, Segretariato Generale, Deliberazione del Consiglio Municipale, vol 531: No. 4003. Deliberazione del Governatore, Session 18 August, 1938.

⁸³ For Francesco Mercatali, see most recently: *Bucolo* 2024, 29 (with footnotes and further references).

⁸⁴ Giglioli 1938, 168.

⁸⁵ In 2013, conservation was needed because the portico was in poor condition, due to the passage of time and the continuous physical alterations caused by humidity and temperature. Dust, detachment of elements, and cracks, some potentially jeopardizing the integrity of the object, were significant problems. The documentation is available at the MCR Archive. It was one of the last interventions before the MCR closed its doors in 2014.

⁸⁶ The original blocks are: De Chaisemartin 2024, PTN 8, 9, 10. The Paolini casts are now MCR 5803, 5806, 1976, 5297.

⁸⁷ Jacopi 1939, 86-96. Reynolds 1980, 77-78, no. 6, presented a revised version but noted that the blocks were unavailable for study. After rediscovery and new finds, a full version appears in *I Aph2007* 4.4. The inscription spread over thirteen architrave blocks. Jacopi failed to note or overlooked two details on blocks which he had excavated. In block 7 he did not leave space for the accusative τὴν στόα[v] (fragments which were found in 1985), and in block 10 he did not record the initial HA. The full text and translations, in *I Aph2007* 4.4, reads: *vv. Ἀφροδίτη καὶ | Αὐτοκράτορι Καίσαρι Θεῶι | [Σεβαστῶι Διὶ Πατρώωι καὶ | Ἀυτοκράτορι Τιβερίωι Καίσαρ]ι | [Θεο]ῦ Σεβαστοῦ υἱῶι Σε | βαστῶι stop καὶ stop Ἰουλίαι Σεβασ | τῆι stop καὶ τῶι Δήμωι τὴν στόα[v] | vv. Διογένης Μενάνδρου τοῦ | [Δ]ιογένους τοῦ Ἀρτεμιδώρ | [ου καὶ ·· c. 13 ·· ἱερ] | ἠα Ἀφροδίτης stop καὶ stop Μένανδ | [ρος ·· ? ··]* Transl.: To Aphrodite, the Deified

Emperor Caesar Augustus Zeus Patroos, and the Emperor Tiberius Caesar, son of the Deified Emperor and the Empress Iulia and the demos, Diogenes, son of Menandrus, son of Diogenes, son of Artemidorus (dedicated) the stoa and...priest of Aphrodite and Menandrus (?).

⁸⁸ Giglioli 1938, XXV.

⁸⁹ Giglioli 1938, 168. Nota bene, this entry cites 177 heads because that is the total number of heads presented in Jacopi 1939. Jacopi includes among his 177, two (nos. 162 and 163) that are console blocks from the Hadrianic Baths. Also note that Jacopi and Crema are mentioned but that the cast-maker, Mercatali, is mentioned only in the introduction of catalogue, p. xxviii.

⁹⁰ Column, MCR inv. no. XXX

⁹¹ See Lending 2017, 11.

⁹² Iannantuono 2022, 240-241.

⁹³ Romagnoli 1937.

⁹⁴ Telespresso written by Galli dated 25 January 1938 to which he appended his letter to Paribeni of 17 January 1938 and sent to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 25th January 1938: MAECI, Affari Politici 1931-1945, Turchia 1937, busta 23, fasc. 15. Galli notes that he had warned Jacopi already in November to be sensitive to the Turkish reception. He refers specifically to the “impression assez désagréable” that certain passages of Romagnoli’s article of 7/11/1937 had caused. He repeats this in a letter of 25 May 1938: Carlo Galli, *Prof. Jacopi. - Missione archeologica italiana.*, Telespresso 921/904 dated 25th May 1938: MAECI, Affari Politici 1931-1945 Italia 1938, busta 59, fascicolo 14.

⁹⁵ Galli notes that Jacopi had received a letter on 7 January 1938 to this end: Galli, *Prof. Jacopi. - Missione archeologica italiana.*, Telespresso 921/940 dated 25th May 1938: MAECI, Affari Politici 1931-1945 Italia 1938, busta 59, fascicolo 14.

⁹⁶ Again in Galli, *Prof. Jacopi. - Missione archeologica italiana.*, Telespresso 921/940 dated 25th May 1938: MAECI, Affari Politici 1931-1945 Italia 1938, busta 59, fascicolo 14.

⁹⁷ Carlo Galli, *Prof. Jacopi. - Missione archeologica italiana.*, Telespresso 921/904 dated 25th May 1938: MAECI, Affari Politici 1931-1945 Italia 1938, busta 59, fascicolo 14. According to Galli, the Turkish Secretary General of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Numan Menemencioglu noted that Italian mission was designed to strengthen ties between the countries but that Jacopi had produced absolutely contrary results.

⁹⁸ Dođar 2021. On the relation between the Dante Alighieri Society, see also Cavarocchi 2016.

⁹⁹ Jacopi, hand-written document dated 27th February 1938: MAECI, Affari Politici 1931-1945, Italia 1938, busta 59, fascicolo 14. Note also that the offer of Ambassador Galli to replace Jacopi with another director was ignored. Galli, *Prof. Jacopi. - Missione archeologica italiana.*, Telespresso 921/940 dated 25th May 1938, in Archivio Storico-Diplomatico MAECI, Affari Politici 1931-1945 Italia 1938, busta 59, fascicolo 14.

¹⁰⁰ Pisani Sartorio 1983, 105-106.

¹⁰¹ Pisani Sartorio 1983, 105-106.

¹⁰² Giglioli 1943, 181.

¹⁰³ Colini 1958, 658.

¹⁰⁴ Colini 1958, 659.

¹⁰⁵ These are identifiable with MCR 1973-1977.

¹⁰⁶ Russell and Wilson 2024.

¹⁰⁷ Colini and Giglioli 1955 makes this point if on erroneous grounds. Giglioli, 28, writes that the portico has gained importance since the original was mutilated and semi-destroyed in the war. A visitor to site must have reported that he could not find the results of the Jacopi excavations. However, the frieze blocks were moved to Izmir for safe-keeping and other blocks were built into a “farmers’ wall. See above n. 66.

¹⁰⁸ The return of these objects was celebrated on 24 October 2009 at the Aphrodisias Museum. Their date of departure from Aphrodisias was after 1938 and before 1961.

¹⁰⁹ This was done in 2017. The excavation team took pains to place the blocks in the appropriate order in as much as possible. The frieze's more recent study is De Chaisemartin 2024.

¹¹⁰ He enrolled in the *Associazione Nazionalista Italiana* in 1919, and later moved to the National Fascist Party in Rhodes (see n. 20, Rapporto Aloisi, 11).

¹¹¹ Mussolini sent a telegram to Cesare Maria De Vecchi in the Ministry of Education: "I beg you to leave Prof. Jacopi in Turkey for the whole of November" (Ti prego di lasciare a tutto novembre il Prof. Jacopi in Turchia) : MAECI, Affari Politici 1931-1945 Turchia 1936, busta 20, fascicolo 13, Telegramma 4395 R. dated 2 October 1936.