Three Perspectives on Late Antique Aeclanum in its Regional Context: Buildings, Inscriptions, and Ceramics

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In the middle of the fourth century, much of central and southern Italy was devastated by an enormous earthquake, an event conventionally dated to 346 C.E.\(^1\) Just over a century later, in 472 C.E., Vesuvius erupted again, covering much of the province of Campania and some of northern Apulia et Calabria with ash (Fig. 1).\(^2\) Between these events, the coastal region in particular had to contend with the Visigothic invasion and Vandal incursions. Communities across the region were impacted by these events in a variety of ways and responded to them differently.\(^3\) Upon first glance, the picture that emerges from the archaeological record is one of extreme heterogeneity, comprising varying degrees of social and economic change. Yet upon deeper examination, it is clear that the different datasets available to us often paint contrasting pictures. Depending on where one looks within this wider region (the coast or the interior) but also what one looks at (buildings, epigraphy, ceramics, etc.), it is possible to come to a range of conclusions about urban development in the fourth and fifth centuries. Even within a single site, the evidence often defies simplistic characterization, a fact that has significant implications for wider debates about late antique urbanism more generally.

The focus of this paper is the varied late antique urban landscape of a single city in the mountainous inland region of Hirpinia, which straddled south-eastern Campania and north-western Apulia et Calabria.\(^4\) Aeclanum was a small but influential settlement, prominently

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\(^1\) Galadini and Galli 2004
\(^3\) Rotili 2005; 2017.
\(^4\) Even though today it is in the modern \textit{regione} of Campania, it has been argued that Aeclanum was always part of \textit{Apulia et Calabria}: Clemente 1965; Grelle and Volpe 1994; Volpe 1996, 25-37; Savino 2005, 18-26.
positioned on the Via Appia. It became a Roman *municipium* in the first century B.C.E. and a *colonia* under Hadrian (Fig. 2). While most of its public buildings date from the first and second centuries C.E., the city remained important later. It hosted a bishopric from the fourth century and in the early fifth century its bishop was Julian (‘of Aeclanum’), a Pelagian best known for his contentious correspondence with Saint Augustine.\(^5\) While the city was hit by the 346 C.E. earthquake and impacted by the eruption of Vesuvius in 472 C.E., testimony to its continued urban habitation is provided by the large necropolis to the east, in the San Michele locality, which was used well into the sixth century (see Fig. 2).\(^6\)

Previous studies of the site have shown that the 346 C.E. earthquake ushered in substantial changes to the urban fabric of *Aeclanum*, probably against a background of gradual socio-economic transformation that is harder to quantify.\(^7\) Evidence for abandonment, repurposing of areas for industrial activities, and blocking of roads have all been noted.\(^8\) While these observations are accurate, the results of new fieldwork add further nuance to this reconstruction. In particular, we can now more accurately chart changes across the city, including signs of new construction, restoration and expansion of existing structures, as well as the re-functioning of old buildings and abandonment of others. Substantial quantities of recovered ceramics datable to the fourth to sixth centuries offer further insight into the economy of the city and its territory. A fuller picture will be provided in due course by a detailed assessment of the animal bone, charcoal, archaeobotanical and small finds assemblages from the site, all of which are still being processed. This paper aims to highlight the overlapping pictures presented by three different bodies of evidence for urban change in late antique *Aeclanum*: buildings, inscriptions, and ceramics. Our purpose is to explore what

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\(^5\) On Julian, see Lössl 2001.
\(^7\) Lo Pilato 2010, 351; see also Rotili and Ebanista 2018, 54.
\(^8\) Lo Pilato 2010, 351; Volpe and Goffredo 2020, 66.
can be said about the lived experience of the population of late antique *Aeclanum* and how they actively shaped the cityscape around them. Like other papers in this volume, therefore, our focus is on how human agency—of different forms—manifests itself, and how this manifestation varies across the datasets available to us. While *Aeclanum* was not exceptional in late antique Italy—far from it—the availability of different datasets allows us to explore aspects of urban life at the site in greater detail than is possible for many nearby cities.

**The Regional Context**

Before turning to the data from *Aeclanum*, it is useful to consider what is known of late antique urbanism at other sites in inland *Campania* and northern *Apulia et Calabria*. This is the background against which we will consider the evidence from *Aeclanum*, since this must be first and foremost examined in its proper regional context.

The heterogeneous pattern of urban transformation across this region between the fourth and fifth centuries is clearly by the contrasting evidence from even neighboring cities. *Capua*, the booming capital of the new province of *Campania*, can be contrasted with the nearby (and much smaller) cities of *Calatia* and *Suessula*, which were already struggling by the fourth century. On the eastern edge of the Campanian plain, evidence for devastation in the urban center of *Nola* can also be contrasted with the investment in the complex of San Felice at Cimitile. *Nola* was sacked by Alaric but even before this, in 405/406 C.E., Paulinus of *Nola* references the fact that farmers from the region were migrating south-east to the plains of *Apulia*. Already by the early fourth century, the new buildings at Cimitile employed spoliated material from *Nola*. Excavations at various points in and around the center of *Nola*

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11 Ebanista 2003, 145, 566.
have shown that by 472 C.E., when the eruption of Vesuvius struck, much of the city was already abandoned.\textsuperscript{12} At nearby \textit{Abella} the limited excavated late antique layers reveal glimpses of a largely similar picture of abandonment prior to 472 C.E..\textsuperscript{13}

Further into the Apennines, at \textit{Abellinum}, the earthquake of 346 C.E. seems to have led to the closure of the baths and the sub-division of the large \textit{domus} excavated close to the city walls into smaller units.\textsuperscript{14} By 472 C.E., however, even this structure was largely abandoned. There was some attempt to maintain a sense of urban cohesion, since the city walls were partially restored after the middle of the fourth century, and perhaps in response to the invasions of the fifth century.\textsuperscript{15} As at \textit{Nola}, the new focal point of life at \textit{Abellinum} was beyond the old urban core, in this case in the ecclesiastical center of S. Ippolito at Capo La Torre, where a basilica developed in the first half of the fourth and continued to be used into the middle of the sixth century.\textsuperscript{16} While there are few signs of significant investment at \textit{Abellinum} beyond Capo La Torre, this is not the case elsewhere. At other sites in the Apennines, the earthquake of 346 C.E. prompted a range of restoration activities, which testify to the fact that both local elites and, increasingly, regional governors were still willing and able to invest in urban centers. Symmachus, in fact, in a letter datable to 375 C.E.,\textsuperscript{17} describes the elites of \textit{Beneventum} engaged in competitive euergetism in the wake of an earthquake, either that of 346 C.E. or a later one.\textsuperscript{18} At \textit{Beneventum}, new city walls were created around this date, even if the amphitheater went out of use.\textsuperscript{19} Further north, series of inscriptions tell us that Fabius Maximus

\textsuperscript{12} Cesarano 2018, 11-14.
\textsuperscript{13} Cinquantaquattro 2017, 776.
\textsuperscript{14} Colucci Pescatori 1986, 126, 127-132.
\textsuperscript{15} Tocco Sciarelli 1999, 248.
\textsuperscript{16} See Colucci Pescatori 2017, 169-170 with earlier bibliography.
\textsuperscript{17} Torelli 2002, 271-277.
\textsuperscript{18} Symm. \textit{Ep.} I, 3, 3-4; see Soricelli 2009, 249-250.
\textsuperscript{19} Rotili 2005, 44-46; Rotili, Rupuano and Cataldo 2010, 309-314.
and Autonius Justinianus undertook restoration activities in Allifae, Aesernia, and Telesia following an earthquake or earthquakes.\textsuperscript{20}

Although the cities of northern Apulia et Calabria were also hit by the 346 C.E. earthquake, they were more insulated from the turmoil of the fifth century than the cities of Campania. Evidence from the smaller sites of Hirpinia suggests some degree of new investment after the middle of the fourth century. At the vicus of Aequum Tucidum, a new villa was built directly over debris from the earthquake; this site was probably too far east to have been impacted by the 472 C.E. eruption and continued to be inhabited until the end of the fifth century.\textsuperscript{21} At Compesa, new mosaics were added to the rooms behind the cathedral in the fourth century.\textsuperscript{22} In Venusia there are still signs of vibrant urban life in the fourth century, including the continued functioning of public buildings and expansion of the baths. However, in the eastern sector of the city, increasing abandonment can also be noted in this period and the large domus beneath the church of the Santissima Trinità went out of use at the end of the fourth century.\textsuperscript{23} This domus was partially re-occupied, perhaps by domestic units, until the sixth century when the church was then built on top of it; indeed a similar re-functioning of a house in the middle of the archaeological park has also been documented.\textsuperscript{24}

The most detailed observations come from Herdonia. Here the earthquake led to the collapse of many of the largest public buildings of the city, notably those around the forum, including the macellum and basilica.\textsuperscript{25} Although most of these structures were not re-built, some of those in the area of the forum were re-occupied by small dwellings or shops and warehouses.\textsuperscript{26} Significantly more effort was invested in the restoration of the baths, which were

\textsuperscript{20} CIL IX, 2338; CIL IX, 2638; CIL IX, 6429. On these individuals, PLRE I, Maximus 35, Justinianus 3; see also Ward-Perkins 1984, 25; Soricelli 2009, 251-254.
\textsuperscript{21} Tocco Sciarelli 1999, 247; Colucci Pescatori 2005, 284. On the site more generally, Caldarola et al. 2015.
\textsuperscript{22} Tocco Sciarelli 1999, 252; Colucci Pescatori 2005, 293-295.
\textsuperscript{23} On the site, Marchi 2010, 2-3, 9-11.
\textsuperscript{24} Marchi 2010, 13; Marchi and Salvatore 1997, 101-103.
\textsuperscript{25} On the site in this period, Volpe 2006, 562-564; Volpe and Goffredo 2020, 66.
\textsuperscript{26} Giuliani 2010, 137-138.
even provided with new mosaic floors and entirely new rooms, while a set of workshops were also fully restored.\textsuperscript{27} The center of the city changed substantially in the fourth and fifth centuries, therefore, but it was far from abandoned.

What this survey reveals are the varied ways in which urban centers responded to change in this period. While a range of common patterns can be noted across these various regions, so too can sharp differences, even between neighboring cities; topography, access to transport networks, and exposure to external pressures all shaped developments at a highly local level. While the historical events that punctuate this period had an impact on the landscapes of cities throughout the region, it was not these events alone that caused the observable changes. The earthquake of 346 C.E. might have damaged a range of buildings, but the decision about which of these to rebuild and which to abandon was shaped by the socio-economic, even cultural concerns of the populations that used these spaces. It is in the response to these events that we can see the changing priorities of these populations, priorities that had been evolving for some time prior to this period.\textsuperscript{28} At Aeclanum, the new excavations are helping to throw these changing priorities into sharp relief.

\textbf{Built Environment}

Excavations at Aeclanum between the 1950s and 1980s, under the direction of Giovanni Onorato and then Gabriella d’Henry, uncovered a sizeable sector of the city center, comprising several houses, a Christian basilica, a macellum, and a bath complex to the north.\textsuperscript{29} In 2006-2009, the remains of a large public building, initially interpreted as a nymphaeum but recently

\textsuperscript{27} Leone, Rocco and Buglione 2009.
\textsuperscript{28} On this point, Volpe and Goffredo 2020, 68.
\textsuperscript{29} Onorato 1960; Colucci Pescatori and Di Giovanni 1999; also Ditaranto 2013.
re-identified as the city’s theater, were uncovered close to the site entrance. Various other structures have been uncovered around the outskirts of the city, while further work has been undertaken on the city’s territory. New excavations, survey and conservation began at *Aeclanum* in 2017 and have comprised a survey of the standing remains, extensive geophysical prospection, and excavation in four main zones: the theater; the northern sector of the city, where the large baths are located; the residential zone in the city center; the central-southern district, where the *macellum* was located and the geophysics has identified both the forum and a series of residential blocks stretching to the west (Fig. 3). All of these areas have provided extensive evidence for late antique phases of occupation at the city. Some of these, especially in the theater and baths, are closely dated by evidence of earthquake damage, on the one hand, and volcanic deposits, on the other, to the period between 346 and 472 C.E.

*New structures and renewed investment*

Several scholars have proposed a large-scale campaign of urban renovation in fourth-century *Aeclanum* as a direct response to the devastation caused by the 346 C.E. earthquake. However, the epigraphic evidence for a concerted program of restoration and new building, on which such proposal has relied, is limited. The clearest example of new construction at the site after the mid-fourth century is the building of the Christian basilica, which probably began in either the late fourth or the early fifth century (Fig. 4). This church was built over the remains of an earlier second-century *domus* and, at its eastern end, a major crossroad in the city’s street.

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30 On the finds, Mesisca et al. 2013; Mesisca 2015; on the identification as a theater, De Simone and Russell 2018.
33 De Simone and Russell 2019a, 378-383.
34 Tocco Sciarelli 1999, 250; Lo Pilato 2010, 352.
network. There is a contrast here with *Nola* and *Abellinum* where, as noted above, new ecclesiastical centers grew up outside the traditional urban core. At *Aeclanum* the new church dominated the old city center.

While the church replaced one domestic unit, its construction seems to have stimulated investment in the *domus* immediately adjacent to it (see Fig. 4). 36 This ‘Casa con peristilio’ is the largest excavated in the city. 37 It was built in the Imperial period and located at the corner of an insula block, with streets to the south and west of it. When this building was first excavated, a glass workshop was found in the northern sector of its peristyle and the structure was assumed to have been put out of use as a *domus* by the 346 C.E. earthquake and turned over to industrial purposes. 38 However, the building was closely connected to the new church. In fact, when the church was constructed, its north-eastern corner was built up against the south-western corner of this house, across the earlier intersection of two streets. 39 New excavations inside the house also indicate that much of the house was also rebuilt at this date. While the general layout of the complex does not seem to have been altered, its walls were found to have been re-built (either following collapse or dismantling). 40 Although the top half of many of the walls have been restored, a mix of brick, stone and roof tiles can be seen even at the base of many (Fig. 5). 41 This was not a ruin in the fourth century that was gradually repurposed for industrial pursuits, therefore; the glass workshops and other remains probably post-date 472 C.E.

Investment in this particular *domus* in the fourth century parallels developments seen in other cities, notably Ostia, where many of the large late antique houses show a continuation

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36 On urban housing elsewhere in *Apulia et Calabria*, Giuliani 2010; 2014.
37 Onorato 1960, 28; Di Giovanni 1996a, 241-250; Russell and De Simone 2020, 369 fig. 1, 370-371.
38 Colucci Pescatori and Di Giovanni 1999, 32-33.
40 Russell and De Simone 2020.
41 Russell and De Simone 2020.
of earlier modes of elite living.\textsuperscript{42} The proximity of the new church and the fact that this \textit{domus} was restored as a high-end residence in late antiquity might suggest that it served an ecclesiastical function, perhaps as the home of a prominent church or lay official, much like the sixth-century \textit{domus} excavated in the episcopal complex of bishop Sabinus centered on the church of S. Pietro at \textit{Canusium}.\textsuperscript{43} Sandra Lo Pilato has identified this sector of \textit{Aeclanum} as a sort of \textit{insula episcopalis}, but whether this large house and the church, and associated structures to the west of the street, formed a unified \textit{episcopium} is uncertain; it remains a possibility, however.\textsuperscript{44}

The final body of evidence for the investment of considerable capital in the urban fabric of the city comes from one of its largest public structures: the bath complex on the northern edge of the city center (Fig. 6). This building was probably built in the first half of the second century C.E. but excavations in 2017 and 2018 have provided new information about a range of late antique interventions: the raising of the floor level and the installation of a new mosaic in Room 8 (Fig. 7); the addition of the pool in Room 9; the raising of the floor level of Room 10; and the relaying of marble paving in both Room 10 and the pool in Room 3, the \textit{frigidarium} (Fig. 8). \textit{Verde antico}, one of the most fashionable late-antique marbles, was widely employed in these new floors, alongside second-hand material. The exact date of these interventions cannot be pinpointed precisely but they are very likely to have been stimulated by damage caused by the 346 C.E. earthquake; in fact, the use of fragments of fluted pilaster shafts face down in the floor of the marble-lined pool of the \textit{frigidarium} would seem to support the suggestion that this work followed earthquake damage. While the earthquake of 346 C.E. \textit{might} provide a \textit{terminus post quem} for these interventions, a clear \textit{terminus ante quem} is offered by the discovery of primary volcanic deposits 10-12 cm thick in Room 10 (Fig. 9). These can be

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item On the Ostian \textit{domus} of Late Antiquity, Becatti 1948; Pavolini 1986; Boin 2013, 66-68; also Underwood 2019, 23.
\item Volpe 2007, 145-147.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
connected to the 472 C.E. eruption of Vesuvius and their particular arrangement shows that prior to this date the building was still functioning.\(^{45}\)

The late antique interventions in the baths made prior to the late 5\(^{th}\) century C.E. were geared towards preserving or even enhancing the monumentality of the structure; they reveal a degree of confidence on the part of whoever paid for this work; they clearly felt that there was still demand for baths and that they could continue to be supplied with water and fuel. This continued interest and investment in bathing complexes in the fourth and even fifth century is paralleled elsewhere.\(^{46}\) In central Italy, at Antium, Interamna Lirenas, Oriculum, Puteoli, Saepinum, Tarracina and Trebula, various baths were restored by provincial governors.\(^{47}\) The emperors Arcadius and Honorius even requested that funds from municipal land be assigned to the repair of public buildings and heating system for baths.\(^{48}\) At Herdonia, the archaeological record shows that the baths underwent a similar transformation at the same date as at Aeclanum.\(^{49}\) At Venusia the baths were also expanded in the fourth century.\(^{50}\) At Abellinum, in contrast, the 346 C.E. earthquake seems to have prompted the closure of the baths.\(^{51}\)

Shifting functions: the theater and the macellum

While the baths at the northern end of the city were maintained as a monumental building beyond the fourth century, other large civic structures were adapted, at least partially, to new functions at this date. In the theater, which was probably built in the Julio-Claudian period, late

\(^{45}\) De Simone and Russell 2019a, 380-381.
\(^{46}\) Underwood 2019, 30-89. Maréchal’s detailed new study of baths in Late Antiquity provides numerous parallels for such investment in Rome and Ostia, though it does not consider many sites from further south in Italy (see Maréchal 2020, 91-138).
\(^{47}\) Ward-Perkins 1984, 20-7; Soricelli 2009, 251-4; Christie 2006, 199; Underwood 2019, 39-41, fig. 19. For further inscriptions mentioning interventions in baths, see Maréchal 2020, 227-234.
\(^{48}\) Cod. Theod. 15.1.32.
\(^{49}\) Leone, Rocco and Buglione 2009; Volpe and Goffredo 2020, 66.
\(^{50}\) Marchi 2010, 2.
\(^{51}\) Colucci Pescatori 1986, 126.
antique stratigraphy sealed by ash datable to 472 C.E. is available from three areas. In the interior of the cavea (1 on Fig. 4), the 2006-2009 excavations found volcanic deposits overlying a set of architectural elements and the torso of a large imperial statue, which had been stacked behind the proscenium. This suggests that the stage building had already been dismantled by 472 C.E. In 2018, similar deposits were found in the drain running around the orchestra (2 on Fig. 4), showing that this drain was still functioning and had its cover-slabs in place in 472 C.E. (Fig. 10). Likewise, the marble of the orchestra itself only seems to have been stripped after 472 C.E., since this process removed any traces of the volcanic deposits in this area. Large-scale spoliation of the stage building, in other words, was in progress prior to 472 C.E., but the cavea and orchestra seem still to have been standing and were largely untouched. Finally, volcanic deposits were found in Room C in the exterior of the cavea (3 on Fig. 4). This room must have been open when the eruption struck, while Room B, next to it, was closed. Occupation surfaces within Room B show that it was being used as a domestic unit by 472 C.E. The ceramics from the last occupation surface comprise a domestic assemblage and include African Red Slip ware (hereafter ARS) datable to the second half of the fifth century as well as local cooking wares of late fifth-century date. The ceramics from the earlier occupation layers in the same room suggest it was used as a dwelling for most of the fifth century and perhaps earlier, as will be shown below.

The late antique layers from the theater, therefore, suggest that the stage building had gone out of use well before 472 C.E. Some of its structural elements had been assembled for re-use but the fact that the column shafts and the statue from this context were broken suggests that they came from a collapsed building and not a carefully dismantled one. The stage building, therefore, could well have come down as early as 346 C.E., with the cavea remaining

52 Colucci Pescatori 2017, 174. On these finds, Mesisca et al. 2013; Mesisca 2015; Avagliano 2017
largely intact until after 472 C.E. The convenient vaulted sub-structures of the *cavea* were then turned into domestic units at some point in the late fourth or fifth century. On one level, the theater provides good evidence for the phenomenon that Simon Ellis calls ‘subdivision’: this civic and intra-connected structure was split up into distinct units.\(^{54}\) It was also ‘re-functionalized’, switching from public to private use.\(^{55}\) However, this shift in function was not total. Although its stage building had collapsed, the *cavea* of the theater remained standing. The houses built into its vaults did not detract from the overall architectural form of the exterior of the building; there is no reason to think that the theater lost its function as an impressive reference point in the cityscape. Indeed, it is even possible that the interior of the *cavea* and the *orchestra* were used in some way for public meetings or similar since the evidence for spoliation here seems to post-date 472 C.E. Comparable dwellings built around the outside of entertainment complexes have been identified in other late antique cities, and at least in some cases they seem not to have interfered with the original function of the building.\(^{56}\)

In addition to the theater, the *macellum*, on the east side of the forum, has provided rich evidence for late antique occupation. Originally built in the Hadrianic period, it is of a type typical of this date, comprising rooms built around an open-air circular court; this building was a celebration of both *Aeclanum*’s role as a commercial center on the Via Appia and the agricultural wealth of its territory.\(^{57}\) Excavations in the middle of the 20\(^{\text{th}}\) century, however, first identified the presence of domestic spaces inside the complex in Late Antiquity.\(^{58}\) This was confirmed by excavations in 2017, which identified a series of new walls and an occupation layer in the interior of this space in its south-eastern corner (Fig. 12; 4 on Fig. 4). The ceramics from here date to the fourth to sixth centuries and indicate that at least this area of the *macellum*

\(^{54}\) Ellis 1988, 567; see also Zanini 2006, 399; Uytterhoeven 2007, 45–47.

\(^{55}\) On similar ‘re-functionalization’ at *Herdonia*, Volpe and Goffredo 2020, 66.

\(^{56}\) On the structures around the circus at *Areleate*, see Sintès 1994, 185; Heijmans 2004, 239. On theatres in Late Antiquity and evidence for their continued function, see Puk 2014.

\(^{57}\) De Ruyt 1983.

\(^{58}\) Onorato 1960, 28; Lombardo 1977, 814; Tocco Sciarelli 1999, 251.
had been turned over to domestic use in much the same way as the substructures of the theater had.\textsuperscript{59} The fact that sixth-century ceramics have been found also seems to indicate that this structure continued to be lived in after 472 C.E.

Any changes that occurred in the \textit{macellum} in the fourth and fifth centuries were not total, however. Although some of the building was occupied by domestic space, excavations in 2019 in the north-western corner of the structure suggest some continuity of commercial activity (Fig. 13; 5 on Fig. 4). Here the layout of the complex was substantially altered, probably in Late Antiquity, when a new room was created, not on the alignment of the walls of the original interior walls of the former \textit{macellum}\.\textsuperscript{60} This room seems to have been accessible from the street beyond the former \textit{macellum} and not the interior of the complex. Large quantities of animal bones from the occupation layers within this room, mostly comprising cow bones, suggest that butchery still went on in this area, potentially in this space, though more likely in a neighboring room, with the refuse then deposited here.\textsuperscript{61} This area also produced the highest concentration of coins excavated on the site to date, all of late fourth- or early fifth-century date.\textsuperscript{62} The picture that emerged from the excavations in the area of the former theater, of a public building transformed into houses, does not apply to the \textit{macellum}, therefore; here some of the building was transformed into domestic units but other parts of it, including newly-built structures, were seemingly still used for the processing and selling of meat. By Late Antiquity, the former meat-market had become a multi-functional space.\textsuperscript{63}

When the central part of the \textit{macellum} ceased to function as a meat-market is unclear. The ceramics and coins from the structure would seem to indicate that changes occurred in the second half of the fourth and the fifth centuries. The 346 C.E. earthquake could have acted as

\textsuperscript{59} De Simone and Russell 2019a, 26; Castaldo, De Simone and Russell (in press).
\textsuperscript{60} Russell and De Simone 2020, 369-370.
\textsuperscript{61} Putzeys and Lavan 2007, 101-103.
\textsuperscript{62} A full study of the coins is currently being prepared by Alfonso Mammato.
\textsuperscript{63} On this shift from single to multiple functions in Late Antiquity, Lavan 2003a, 180.
stimulus for the change in use.\textsuperscript{64} The new data from the 2019 excavations nevertheless indicate a degree of continuity. There is epigraphic evidence from elsewhere for the continued use of macella. In fact, at Aesernia the macellum was repaired after the 346 C.E. earthquake by Autonius Iustinianus, with state funds used for certain components.\textsuperscript{65} It is possible that the macellum at Aeclanum was also restored as a commercial structure, but perhaps only in part; the residents of the city still required, or desired, a building where they could purchase meat but did not need the whole of this structure to have this function.

\textit{Abandonment}

Not every structure built prior to the fourth century survived the 346 C.E. earthquake. In 2017, the remains of an abandoned structure were excavated just east of the main residential sector of the city (6 on Fig. 4). This building had collapsed suddenly: one wall, with a window in it, was uncovered, which had fallen flat, its roof lying on top of it. The ceramics associated with this structure suggest it did not survive the fourth century and was destroyed by the earthquake. Despite its central location, it was then neither rebuilt nor removed.\textsuperscript{66} Similar evidence for destruction was excavated in 2019, in the southern area of the site (7 on Fig. 4). Here an inner room of a large structure was uncovered, which had been filled in by multiple phases of wall collapse. Fragments of fresco imply that this was an elite residence, while the ceramics from the layers covering these collapses were again fourth-century in date.\textsuperscript{67} To the west of the macellum, the forum seems to have abandoned and its paving, at least partially, spoliated in Late Antiquity. Post-holes relating to a possible dwelling were also discovered in this area in

\textsuperscript{64} De Simone and Russell 2019a, 25.
\textsuperscript{65} CIL IX 2638 = ILS 5588; Ward-Perkins 1984, 20, 26.
\textsuperscript{66} De Simone and Russell 2018, 300.
\textsuperscript{67} Russell and De Simone 2020, 371-372.
earlier excavations. The date of this development is unclear, however. It has been connected with the occupation of areas of the former *macellum* by domestic units in the fourth or fifth centuries, but this is not necessarily the case. The fact that the butchers in the north-east corner of the former *macellum* seem not to have been accessible from the core of the old building, which in turn opened off the forum, but from the street to the east instead, could indicate that they expected more traffic from this direction than the forum. There is widespread evidence for the abandonment of *fora* in the West in the fourth and fifth centuries, and indeed the evidence from *Aeclanum* is similar to that from *Tolosa* in Gaul, where the forum was dismantled in the fifth century before being partly re-occupied by small structures in the sixth. This was by no means a ubiquitous process, however. The *fora* at *Albingaunum* and *Neapolis*, in fact, were restored in this period, the latter by Constantine. While there is no evidence for the restoration of the forum at *Aeclanum*, it is possible that this area continued to function through this period. And even if the forum did become dilapidated, evidence from elsewhere, notably *Arelate*, suggests that it could still have been used as a public space.

Ceramic Evidence

While the evidence outlined above offers useful insights into the changing urban fabric of *Aeclanum* in the fourth and fifth centuries, it reveals less about the economy of the city and, in particular, its regional and inter-regional connections. For this, we are reliant on the rich ceramic finds from the site, which together constitute one of the largest ceramic assemblages from inland Campania. This material is crucial for building up a typology of shapes and for

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68 Tocco Sciarelli 1999.
70 On new *fora*, and new building in old ones, see Lavan 2020, 265-273.
71 *CIL V*, 7781 (*Albingaunum*); *Lib. Pont.* 1.186 (*Neapolis*).
72 Lavan 2003b, 317-318
characterizing the fabrics of late antique pottery in the region, but it also provides useful data on the relative importance of local, regional and imported products, and how ceramic production in Aeclanum and its territory developed.

The bulk of the pottery recovered during the new excavations at Aeclanum is late antique in date (86%), while late Republican and Imperial-period ceramics (mostly residual in late antique layers) are less attested; very little Medieval or modern material has been found (Fig. 14). The late antique pottery from the site mainly comprises ceramic types and shapes produced locally and in Campania between the fourth and the first half of the sixth centuries, with fifth-century material dominating; imports from beyond Italy are rare but a range of African Red Slip ware (ARS) types are found (Fig. 15). This fine, red-orange slipped tableware, produced in North Africa from the first to seventh centuries C.E., is one of the most distinguishable ceramic types in the archaeological record. It tells us about long-distance trade but can also be closely dated.74 Finds of ARS, therefore, are useful for dating excavated contexts, which is in turn vital for creating a chronological framework for the locally-produced ceramics; further refinement of this chronology is enabled by the volcanic deposits of 472 C.E., which offer an important terminus ante quem for much of this material.

Long-distance trade and ARS

Only around 5% of the late antique ceramics from Aeclanum consist of imported pottery. Although this number is low, the presence of imports this far inland shows that active connections still existed between Hirpinia and other Mediterranean regions, at least until the first half of the sixth century. Some of these imports, such as certain amphorae (including Late

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74 ARS production has been subdivided on the base of fabric features, place of production and chronology into wares A, A/D, C, C/E, D and E, each with a different chronological range. For the main discussion of these wares, see Hayes 1972, 1-200; Atlante I, 9-208; Bonifay 2004.
Roman 1 amphorae) testify to the existence of trade links with the eastern Mediterranean, either via Neapolis or perhaps the ports of Apulia. The majority of imports, however, were produced in North Africa. Of these, most are ARS; however, there are also amphorae, lamps, and a few fragments of African Cooking wares (hereafter ACW), cooking vessels produced between the first and fifth centuries, again in Africa, which also have a well-defined typology.75

From a chronological perspective, relatively little ARS that can be dated to the first to third or fourth centuries (ARS A) and only small quantities of typically third-century forms (ARS A/D) have been found, though among the early shapes of the former is a fragment of bowl Hayes 9A found in the baths (Fig. 16, 10).76 More third- to fifth-century ARS (C) has been found, with the most recurring types including dish Hayes 50, bowl Hayes 74 (Fig. 16, 11) and dish Hayes 84.77 The majority of ARS recovered during the excavations at Aeclanum to date, however, belong to the fourth- to seventh-century ARS D wares.78 Particularly well attested are the dishes Hayes 61 and Hayes 67 produced in the fifth century C.E.79 Among the later forms produced from the end of the fifth and into the first half of the sixth century are a good number of dishes Hayes 104A and bowls 99A (Fig. 16, 12).80

The ARS offers important chronological data for the transformation and re-purposing of some buildings in the city, notably the macellum. In fact, the presence of ARS datable to the fifth century (especially the dishes Hayes 61 and Hayes 67), suggest that in this period at least some of the rooms of this complex were transformed into residential units. At the same time, the presence of ARS forms datable to between the beginning of the second and the end of the

77 On ARS C, Atlante I, 58-59; Bonifay 2004, 50-51
80 On the chronology of these types, see Hayes 1972, 152-155, fig. 28; Bonifay 2004, 180, 181-183, fig. 96, type 55, fig 97, type 56/A1, n.1.
fifth centuries in the baths (forms Hayes 9A, Hayes 20, Hayes 61, Hayes 99 and Hayes 104A) suggests a continuous use of this complex throughout the Imperial and late antique periods.

*Regional products*

The study of morphological and typological features of the ceramics from *Aeclanum* reveals a wide variety of Campanian ceramic productions and pottery classes (see Fig. 15). Among these, there are a good number of specimens of pottery classes that were widespread in central-southern Italy during Late Antiquity. These are named according to their visual characteristics and include so-called Painted Ware and Burnished Ware, as well as some forms in Slipped Ware. These pottery classes were produced by different workshops, some of which were active in *Neapolis*, the Vesuvian area, and the *Ager Falernus*. Painted Ware, in particular, which is generally dated between the mid-fourth and the sixth centuries, is found across *Apulia et Calabria*, as well as in neighboring *Bruttia et Lucania*. Although several workshops were operating in these areas, the repertoire of shapes demonstrates the presence of some shared types produced in different regional variants.

The presence of ceramics produced in several Campanian workshops at *Aeclanum* suggests the existence of a well-functioning inter-regional distribution system in the late antique period. The city certainly benefited from its strategic location on the Via Appia, which connected it to nearby *Beneventum*. Furthermore, the Via Traiana and Via Herculia (accessed via the Via Aeclanum-Aequum Tuticum) connected *Aeclanum* to other urban centers in *Apulia et Calabria* as well as *Bruttia et Lucania*. In addition to the main roads, *Aeclanum* was likely

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82 Martucci, De Simone and Castaldo 2020, 367-376.
83 Arthur and Soricelli 2015.
supplied by secondary roads, transhumance routes, and through the activity of merchants and itinerant fairs, the network of which is less easily traced.

Local ceramics: a self-sufficient production system?

While both regional and imported products have been found at Aeclanum, a group of materials made in a distinctive fabric does not fit into either category. Mineralogical analysis of thin sections of this fabric has revealed a composition characterized by predominant quartz, feldspars and minor mica, compatible with the geology of the territory of Aeclanum. In other words, we can posit a local origin for the ceramics made with this fabric.\(^85\) The production is characterized by a significant presence of ceramic forms with red/brown slip and/or burnishing of the surfaces and therefore we refer to it as Red/Brown-Coated Burnished Ware (RBCBW)).\(^86\) There are also some plain ceramics made out of this fabric.

Morphologically, the RBCBW group mainly consists of forms used for cooking or preparation of food; however, and quite strikingly, it was also employed for tableware and transport amphorae. Among the most common cooking shapes are ollae of various sizes, the most attested being a type with a cylindrical neck and vertical rim (Fig. 16, 1).\(^87\) Also common are cooking pots with an oblique rim (fig. 16, 2-3), a late version of Roman cooking pots with horizontal flat rims that are widely documented in Campania in the Imperial period.\(^88\) The later versions, characterized by a more or less oblique and rounded rim, are present on various sites not only in Campania (including Pratola Serra, Nola and Taurasi) but also in Apulia (for

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\(^{85}\) On the similar fabrics from the Masseria Grasso at Beneventum, Germinario et al. 2018.

\(^{86}\) Castaldo, De Simone and Russell (in press).

\(^{87}\) This type is attested also at Beneventum (Germinario et al. 2018, fig. 2d, type BNC21), at Pratola Serra (Peduto 1992, 179–180, tab. LVII, n. 68–72) and Herdonia (Annese 2000, 30–331, tab.XX, n.17.3; Turchiano 2000, 365 and 372, tab. X, n. 17.7).

\(^{88}\) Di Giovanni 1996b.
example at Herdonia). At Aeclanum, this type of cooking pot is present in numerous variants, some of which are more similar to the other Apulian specimens rather than those attested at sites on the Campanian coast.

At Aeclanum, many casseroles were also produced in different shapes and sizes. Among these, the most common type has a thickened rim characterized by an almond or rounded section (Fig. 16, 4-6). This type is a local imitation of the casserole Hayes 197 produced in ACW, the Campanian versions of which are generally referred to as type Carminiello 12. The casseroles Carminiello 12 were widespread in Campania, above all in the fifth century, and they represent a clear example of the influence and the impact that African products had on regional ceramic repertoires in late antique Italy. These casseroles are attested in numerous local variants in Campania, at the coastal sites (e.g. Neapolis), in the Vesuvian area, the Ager Nolanus, and now in Hirpinia. It is interesting that at Aeclanum there are several variants of this type, including later ones (Fig. 16, 6), which tend to have a more rounded rim and wavy horizontal handles similar to the versions widely attested in Apulia. Among other shapes produced under the influence of ACW are some casseroles imitating the types Hayes 185 and Hayes 23 (Fig. 16, 7), although very little actual ACW has been found at the site – which itself implies that this material did not travel far inland. The influence of imported pottery is also visible in the repertoire of local tableware, where there are numerous imitations in RBCBW of types known in ARS. Among these, the most recurrent are imitations of the types Hayes 84

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89 This type of cooking pot is attested in Campania at Taurasi (unpublished), Pratola Serra (Peduto 1992, p.182, tab. LVI, n.88 and tab. LVII, n. 90–91), and at Nola (Castaldo, De Simone and Russell (in press), fig. 4, n. 5). It is also attested in Apulia: Annese 2010, 322–323, tab. XVII–XVIII, type 9; Leone 2010, 414 and 417, tab. XII, type 5.

90 On local imitations of ACW types in Campania, Castaldo 2020.

91 The type Carminiello 12 is present at Neapolis (Arthur 1994, 230–232, fig. 108–109), at Pollena Trocchia (Martucci, De Simone, Castaldo 2020, 365, fig. 7, n. 2–3), Somma Vesuviana (Aoyagi, Mukai and Sugiyama 2007, 447, fig. 5, n. 27–28), and at Nola (Castaldo, De Simone and Russell (in press), fig. b4, n. 4).

(Fig. 16, 8), Hayes 91, Hayes 104A (Fig. 16, 9), and, in lower numbers, imitations of the bowl Hayes 67.  

The local production of ceramics in *Aeclanum* was active before the Vesuvian eruption of 472 C.E. as data from the theater shows. This is also supported by the discovery of specimens in RBCBW under the volcanic deposit of 472 C.E. in the Roman villa at Pollena Trocchia on the northern slope of Vesuvius. The evidence from *Aeclanum* and its territory, however, suggests that local production of pottery also continued in the sixth century. In fact, significant quantities of RBCBW have been recovered from post-eruption layers in which late forms of ARS are also found (mainly Hayes 99 and Hayes 104A). A similar conclusion can be reached based on an analysis of ceramics from nearby Taurasi, where local imitations of Hayes 104A dishes are very common. 

That this local production was significant is revealed by the quantitative data. Local products typically account for 75-85% of the total minimum number of individuals (MNI) in the contexts that have been excavated. This figure, and the fact that the local products came in such a large repertoire of shapes, implies that there was substantial demand for these products and that production took place on a large scale. It also suggests that *Aeclanum* and its territory, in terms of ceramic production, were largely self-sufficient by the fifth century; the local potters knew of foreign forms but were capable of imitating them and producing a full repertoire of shapes locally. Furthermore, the discovery of some forms from *Aeclanum* in the area around Vesuvius territory, the *Ager Nolanus* and in *Apulia* also suggests the existence of a surplus production that was exported regionally.

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94 Fragments of casseroles in RBCBW are currently unpublished; on burnish amphorae from the area of *Aeclanum*, Martucci, De Simone and D’Italia 2014, pp. 436 and 439, fig. 4, n.15;
95 Castaldo, De Simone and Russell 2020, fig.4, n.2; Scrima and Turchiano 2012, 601–603, tav.1, n.17.
The large quantity of late antique pottery from Aeclanum, shows that the city was a dynamic consumption center during the fourth and fifth centuries. Furthermore, the presence of ceramics produced by several workshops in western and northern Campania testifies to the existence of a well-functioning trade system despite the various destructive episodes that characterize this period, such as the earthquake of 346 C.E. and the Visigothic incursions. Similarly, the supply of ARS continued after the Vandal conquest of North Africa, as shown by the presence of forms datable to the fifth and sixth centuries at Aeclanum, while the presence of LR1 amphorae shows that eastern products could still be secured in the fifth century. The city’s vitality in this period is also evidenced by the reorganization of the pottery manufacturing system at Aeclanum and in its territory, with an emergence of new local ceramic production at some point during the fifth century. The dominance of this production testifies to the economic autonomy of the city and its territory. The similarities between the ceramic forms produced in Aeclanum and those produced elsewhere in both Apulia and Campania suggest the existence of a shared repertoire of shapes across these regions.

**Epigraphy**

In wider discussions of late antique urbanism, the kinds of changes visible in the stratigraphic record, and indeed the ceramics, at Aeclanum have often been attributed, at least in part, to social and political developments: to the shift of influence away from civic elites and towards the imperial bureaucracy and the church, and the loss of significance of urban spaces as venues for elite display. At Aeclanum, the rich epigraphic record offers some support for social and political shifts of precisely this sort, especially after the fifth century. However, it also indicates

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that in the wake of the 346 C.E. earthquake, in particular, civic elites continued to invest in the city. The lack of later occupation of the site is the likely reason why *Aeclanum* offers a sizeable corpus of over 530 documented inscriptions, which makes it one of the communities with the richest epigraphic evidence in the region, alongside more prominent centers like *Beneventum*, *Brundisium* and *Canusium*. These documents are paramount for gaining a fuller understanding of the civic community of *Aeclanum*, even though the information that can be gleaned from inscriptions is partial, given the intrinsic nature of the medium. Although only a fraction of the inscriptions from the city can be dated with certainty, a wider chronology can be assigned to a much larger number by taking into account less objective clues. A chronological and typological analysis of the inscriptions from *Aeclanum* highlights important changes in how the local community engaged with the epigraphic medium over time; in turn, these changes can illuminate the evolution of the social and institutional fabric of the city, especially from the beginning of the third century onwards.

There is a significant degree of diachronic and synchronic variation in the inscriptions set up in the two centuries between the creation of the Roman *municipium* and the accession of the Severans, yet these documents show remarkable similarities, especially when contrasted with later ones. The first element to note is the high degree of typological variation: pre-third century monuments include epitaphs, *tituli honorarii*, building inscriptions, *miliaria* and imperial inscriptions, *arae* and sacred dedications, as well as inscriptions on objects such as *fistulae* and *signacula* (see Fig. 17). The inscribed record from this period offers the

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97 On this topic, see the contribution of Evangelisti to Supplementa Italia 29, especially 48-50.
98 On the fact that inscriptions cannot offer a full picture of the demography of a local community, but only of those sectors of society that chose to adopt the medium, see MacMullen 1982 and Meyer 1990.
99 Elements considered include changes in the formulas, most notably in funerary monuments; changes in the onomastics of individuals mentioned (see Salway 1994); diachronic changes in the Latin employed, and especially in the phonology, albeit acknowledging that changes in Latin are also subject to a degree of synchronic variation (Kruschwitz 2015). At *Aeclanum* the physical aspects of the material support cannot always help to date the evidence, though epitaphs inscribed on *cupae* can usually be dated to the late second or third century (Romanò 2006).
100 Fig. 17 does not claim to be exhaustive. Not all inscriptions can be dated, and some can only be tentatively dated to a timeframe wider than a century – as a result, these documents have been excluded from the chart.
(familiar) impression of a bustling civic community, in which resources were periodically invested by magistrates and notables alike to erect new public buildings or to enrich, expand or embellish pre-existing ones. Shifting attention to the individuals mentioned in these documents, it is interesting to observe that every stratum of local society is represented in pre-Severan inscriptions, even if unevenly: from slaves and freed individuals, to local magistrates and decuriones, and even families of senatorial rank – usually a subset of the local curial class.

Conversely, the picture offered by the inscriptions datable to the third century is much less varied. The only public monument that can be dated with certainty to this period is a statue base, dedicated to Caracalla in 204 C.E.\textsuperscript{101} As for the other inscribed documents, with the exception of one titulus honorarius, and of an inscription of difficult interpretation that might belong to a collegium,\textsuperscript{102} the epigraphic landscape of Aeclanum in the third century is dominated by epitaphs.\textsuperscript{103} The demographic picture is also much more blurred compared to the one that emerges from earlier documents: very little can be said about the legal status and social standing of the residents of Aeclanum in this century, although this is mostly a result of the nature of these inscribed documents, and of changes in epigraphic practices and habits. However, it is evident that the curial class, which appears to flourish in the second century, is entirely absent in these (and later) inscriptions. Notwithstanding the possibility that the epigraphic landscape of third-century Aeclanum might be the result of the accidental nature of the finds, we might be tempted to suggest that the inscribed record points toward a time of contraction in public and civic life. Yet, the absence of significant public inscriptions in the third century, and the disappearance of the curial class from the epigraphic record, might both be consequences of changes in how the city was administered. Already in the second century,

\textsuperscript{101} Suppl 29, AE 11.
\textsuperscript{102} CIL IX, 1191.
\textsuperscript{103} Two sacred inscriptions (both dedicated to Hercules) \textit{might} also belong to this period: CIL IX, 1095 and 1096.
the imperial authority started to nominate *curatores*, some of which were involved with the finances of local civic communities.\textsuperscript{104} While the *curatores* were initially meant to aide local magistrates, it has been suggested that their involvement in the administration of civic finances and the public might have become more prominent over time.\textsuperscript{105} Inscriptional evidence from elsewhere indicates that *curatores* were repeatedly appointed at *Aeclanum* over the course of the late second and the third century,\textsuperscript{106} and it is not a coincidence that the only honorific inscription from this period was dedicated to the *curator* Lucius Calventius Nepos.\textsuperscript{107} Therefore, it is possible that civic life in *Aeclanum* did not come to the grinding halt in the third century, but rather that the disappearance of the curial class from inscriptions might be the result of the local notables being less interested in competing for visibility in the public spaces, as in other Roman communities.\textsuperscript{108}

This theory appears to be corroborated by the inscriptions dated from the fourth century onwards. With the accession of Diocletian, inscribed monuments start to appear again in public spaces, yet individuals belonging to the curial class and the local magistrates remain absent from the epigraphic record. Usually, these monuments are commissioned by the local governors, who held the office of *corrector Apuliae et Calabriae*, and it is important to note that—with one significant exception—all honorific inscriptions dating to the fourth century are dedicated to either the emperor or the *correctores*.\textsuperscript{109} Among the public inscriptions dating to this period, two show a return to the practice of commemorating the renovation or construction of public buildings. Both documents are illuminating in their own way. The earlier of the two, which is fragmentary, commemorates the renovation of a building using *pecunia*

\textsuperscript{104} On the topic, Lucas 1940, Duthoy 1979, especially 237-8; Granino Cecere 2017.

\textsuperscript{105} Lucas 1940, especially 64-72; Camodeca 1979.

\textsuperscript{106} See *CIL* III, 1456 and 10471; *CIL* VI, 41224.

\textsuperscript{107} *CIL* IX, 1151.

\textsuperscript{108} On the role that the desire to leave a record of social prominence played in the decision to set up inscriptions, Beltrán Lloris 2015, Mouritsen 2005.

\textsuperscript{109} *CIL* IX, 1115, 1116, 1117, 1127. There are three *miliaria* from the city’s territory, all inscribed when Diocletian and Maximian were joint *Augusti*: *AE* 2013, 328; *CIL* IX, 6071, 6387. On milestones as a medium for demonstrating political allegiance, Sauer 2014.
publica under the reign of Maxentius.\textsuperscript{110} While there are no comparable inscriptions from this period, this document can still be taken as evidence that a (limited?) program of renovation of the public space was carried out at the beginning of the fourth century, with the involvement of the local community. The second inscription is even more significant: it is a statue base dedicated to the \textit{vir clarissimus} Umbonius Mannachius, who is saluted as \textit{patronus} and \textit{fabricator ex maxima parte etiam civitatis nostrae}.\textsuperscript{111} It has been argued, convincingly, that Mannachius was active at \textit{Aeclanum} after the earthquake of 346 C.E. and was honored for his role in financing the reconstruction of the city.\textsuperscript{112} That the people of \textit{Aeclanum} deemed this effort worthy of commemoration is significant; so too is the fact that despite the absence of \textit{decuriones} and magistrates in the inscribed record, this text shows that \textit{Aeclanum} still had an \textit{ordo}, which played a part in regulating the use of public spaces (and of public money). However, there is also an important element of novelty in how the civic community styled itself in this period: whereas in older inscriptions \textit{Aeclanum} is always indicated as \textit{res publica}, \textit{municipium} or \textit{colonia},\textsuperscript{113} in the monument of Mannachius it is called \textit{civitas}, a much more nuanced term. This shift might seem of little consequence, yet it underpins a change in how the local community perceived itself, which seems to have developed further in later inscriptions.

In general, the impression offered by these documents is that, in fourth-century \textit{Aeclanum}, inscriptions have almost exclusively a public dimension: they are set up rarely, and only to celebrate either key markers in the development of the community, or to honor the emperor, the local governors, or individuals of the outmost standing in local society.

In addition to the monuments that we have already analyzed, two other inscriptions can be dated with reasonable certainty to the fourth century: they are both funerary, and likely

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textit{CIL} IX, 1114.
  \item \textit{CIL} IX, 1362.
  \item Caruso 2005; Chelotti 2006.
  \item For reference: \textit{AE} 1994, 535 (\textit{res publica municipium Aeclanensium}); \textit{CIL} IX, 1151, 1156 (\textit{colonia Aeclanensium}).
\end{itemize}
Christian, but in more than one way they represent a seamless transition towards slightly later inscriptions. From the fifth century onwards, the epigraphic output of *Aeclanum* increases considerably, but it consists exclusively of Christian epitaphs. Despite showing little typological variation, these documents reveal much about the local community. This corpus of Christian *tituli sepulchrales* consists of 41 inscriptions, most of which can be dated to a specific year thanks to the mention of the consular date. The documents date to the fifth and the sixth centuries, with 20 and 18 inscriptions in each respectively; another 3 cannot be dated. While these inscriptions span the course of a century and a half (the latest inscription that can be dated with certainty was dedicated in 559 C.E.), they show a remarkable degree of continuity. From these documents emerges a picture of a vibrant community centered on its Church: while two individuals bear the old senatorial rank of *spectabilis* and three women are indicated as *honestae feminae*, it is interesting to observe that all the titles that can be identified in these inscriptions pertain to the Church, and not to the government of the city. Thus, we have mention of a *praeposita*, a *subdiaconus*, two *acoliti*, an *exorcista*, and finally a *lector*, Caelius Laurentius. This last epitaph is particularly significant because in this inscription Laurentius is called *lector Sanctae Ecclesiae Aeclanensis*. This does not indicate that Laurentius carried out the duties of *lector* in a specific church within the dioceses of *Aeclanum*; rather, by mentioning the *Sancta Ecclesiae Aeclanensis*, whoever commissioned the inscription intended to stress that Laurentius had belonged to the local community.

This situation is comparable to that of *Nola* (and later Cimitile) and *Capua*, where the epigraphic records show interesting similarities with the one from *Aeclanum*. At *Capua* and *Nola* the curial elite seems to disappear after the second century. A drop in public inscriptions

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115 *CIL* IX, 1379, 1383, 1389; *SupIt* 29, *AE* 95, *AE* 97.
116 *CIL* IX, 1393, 1385, 1395, 1381, 1069, 1377.
118 With one exception from *Capua*, discussed below.
can also be noted in the third century,\textsuperscript{119} with a few *tituli honorarii* reappearing in the fourth century, mostly dedicated to munificent *patroni*, *curatores*, or men of senatorial rank.\textsuperscript{120} From the latter half of the fourth century onwards, the two communities become renowned Christian centers. This resulted in an increase in the production of inscriptions (all *tituli sepulchrales*), with the epigraphic evidence suggesting that both communities, much like *Aeclanum*, gravitated around their Church, and perhaps identified with the *Ecclesia* outright: at *Nola*, Adeodatus Indignus is identified *archipresbyter Sancta Ecclesiae Nolanae*, and an epitaph from *Capua* commemorates Guttus, *acolitus Sanctae Ecclesiae Capuanae*.\textsuperscript{121}

**Conclusions**

The datasets analyzed above indicate that the fourth and especially the fifth centuries were periods of heightened flux at *Aeclanum*. And yet, while significant changes occurred over this era, the picture that emerges is one of general, though not exclusive, vitality.\textsuperscript{122} The city was not abandoned, even if some of its structures were left in ruins. Substantial investment in new structures and renovations was undertaken and the epigraphic record testifies to continued euergetism in the fourth century. The city as a political and economic entity continued to

\textsuperscript{119} At *Capua*, only 21 inscriptions can be dated with reasonable certainty to the third century. Of these, only two are imperial (*CIL* X, 6876 and *CIL* XI, 3836); three *tituli honorarii* (*AE* 1964, 223, *CIL* X, 3856, and *CIL* X, 3850). The rest are epitaphs.

\textsuperscript{120} At *Capua* 36 inscriptions can be dated to the fourth century: the majority are funerary (with some early Christian epitaphs), but there are a few *tituli honorarii* dedicated to individuals of senatorial rank, usually *patroni* (*CIL* X, 3844; *AE* 1972, 76), or *curatores* (*CIL* X, 3846; *AE* 1973, 136). There are also four statue bases commissioned by three governors of *Campania*: *CIL* X, 3858, 3866; *AE* 1972, 77; *AE* 1978, 114. At *Nola* only 15 inscriptions can be dated with reasonable certainty to the fourth century: of these, four are Christian or likely Christian (*Ebanista* 2006, 68; *Solin* 2008, 115; *CIL* X, 1338; *Lambert* 2008, 32). The rest of the inscribed documents are honorific, and are dedicated to emperors (*Constantine*, *CIL* X, 1245; and two *miliaria*, one of Maxentius, *CIL* X, 6952, and the other of Julian, 6053), the local governor (*CIL* X, 1254), and to the *patroni* of the *colonia*, especially Pollius Iulius Clementianus, who was honored with four distinct statue bases (*CIL* X, 1255, 1256, 1257; *AE* 2015, 344), and celebrated with a ceremonious language that echoes that of the inscription of Mannachius from *Aeclanum*.

\textsuperscript{121} *CIL* X, 1365, 4528.

\textsuperscript{122} On this point, *Rotili* and *Ebanista* 2018, 53.
function, as shown by both the epigraphic and the ceramic evidence, and it remained a population center, as the necropolis demonstrates.\(^{123}\)

Significant changes are visible, of course. New investment was unevenly spread and channeled into a smaller range of projects than in the period between the first century B.C.E. and second century C.E., when the city hosted a wide range of civic structures. The two poles of late antique investment were the baths and the church. There was no interest in maintaining the theater or the *macellum* as public monuments, even if the latter did not entirely lose its function. These structures were simply no longer priorities for local elites or regional administrators.\(^ {124}\) This being said, these structures were not removed from the urban landscape of *Aeclanum* simply because they were in part occupied by housing. Their re-purposing was presumably sanctioned. At *Herdonia* it has been concluded that similar alterations ‘can hardly be read as uncoordinated initiatives’;\(^ {125}\) and the same argument has been made for the late antique shops and houses at *Egnatia*.\(^ {126}\) At *Arelate*, Loseby also sees official sanctioning in the ‘orderly relaxation, or redefinition, of the boundaries between public and private space.’\(^ {127}\) It is even possible that renting out spaces in formerly public structures might have been a source of income for the city.\(^ {128}\) The result, however formalized, was that more people probably lived in the heart of *Aeclanum* in the fourth and fifth centuries than earlier. The individuals who lived in the former theatre in this period are part of a sub-elite population that is simply not visible in the city center of *Aeclanum* in the Imperial period, at least as far as the excavations undertaken to date can reveal; at that date, the urban core was dominated by public buildings and elite *domus*, and we might expect the sub-elites to have lived in more ‘geographically-

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\(^{123}\) On the distinction between cities as political and economic entities and their physical remains, see Underwood 2019, 3.
\(^ {124}\) On public structures meeting public needs, see Underwood 2019, 3.
\(^ {125}\) Volpe and Goffredo 2020, 66.
\(^ {126}\) Giuliani 2010, 160
\(^ {127}\) Loseby 1996, 54.
\(^ {128}\) On this point, Saradi 1998.
marginal areas.'\textsuperscript{129} The movement of such groups into these public structures in Late Antiquity might, therefore, represent the kind of ‘micro-migration’, as Enrico Zanini calls it, of individuals who previously lived on the periphery of the urban core into its heart.\textsuperscript{130} Some of these individuals might even have come from further afield, such as the Campanian plains, which were under such pressure in this period; Paulinus, as discussed above, references migration to the south. The presence of Campanian ceramics at \textit{Aeclanum} throughout the fourth and fifth centuries, and the evidence for exportation of products from the city’s territory, show that this was a region that remained closely connected to those to the north-west.

How far the vitality apparent in the fourth and fifth centuries stretched beyond this period is difficult to assess. The theater dwellings were not re-occupied after 472 C.E., nor were the baths. The houses in the \textit{macellum}, however, do seem to have been used into the sixth century. The church remained standing and was expanded. It had a large buttress added to its apse, probably in the sixth century, and was fitted with new mosaics in the same period.\textsuperscript{131} With the loss of the baths it was the church and the structures around it that became the focus of activity after the fifth century. The epigraphy demonstrates the overwhelmingly ecclesiastical identity of the site by this date. For Laurentius, the \textit{lector Sanctae Ecclesiae Aeclanensis} mentioned above, and presumably also for others of his contemporaries, the civic community of \textit{Aeclanum} had ceased to be centered on the \textit{res publica}, and instead was to be identified with the \textit{Ecclesia}. The fact that industrial activities—evidenced by the glass workshop, as well as a large kiln and the remains of an oil processing facility—concentrated in the area around the church after 472 C.E., should not be interpreted as a sign that this sector lost its importance. Quite the opposite, in fact: at \textit{Canusium} artisans’ quarters have been identified in the immediate proximity of the \textit{episcopium}, their activities perhaps even sponsored

\textsuperscript{129} Roskams 2006, 489.
\textsuperscript{130} Zanini 2006, 402-403.
by the resident bishop; and it is possible that such activities were in fact standard features of these complexes. ARS imports continue into the sixth century, showing that the settlement retained a functioning local economy. A drastic downturn, therefore, is hard to identify prior to the mid sixth century.

When the end of urban life did arrive at Aeclanum it came suddenly. Imported ceramics disappear over the course of the sixth century and the San Michele necropolis goes out of use around the middle of the century. The last mention of the diocese of Aeclanum is in 536 C.E., when a bishop from the city attended the Council of Constantinople. The church survived longer, seemingly until the early or mid-seventh century, but little survives from the site that is later. Indeed a document from the papacy of Gregory II refers to the foundation of a monastery ‘in civitate diruta XV miliario apud Beneventanam civitatem’, implying the Aeclanum had by this date lost its name and perhaps much of its urban character. Despite this, compared to many cities in the wider region Aeclanum faired well; indeed it shared this good fortune with the more influential Beneventum. Much of Abellinum, Nola, and Abella, in comparison, had been abandoned by 472 C.E. The closest parallel to the situation at Aeclanum is provided by Herdonia, the major difference being that Herdonia seems to have become increasingly ruralized after the end of the fifth century, foreshadowing the end of urban life at the Aeclanum.

By 472 C.E., when the ash of Vesuvius fell on Aeclanum, the city was no longer physically the same place that it had been in the second century. Some of its structures were ruins, others were no longer the public monuments they had once been. There were, however,
new additions to the cityscape, also monumental in character, and at least one major structure—the northern baths—had grown in size and even lavishness over the centuries. Crucially, the city retained its urban character; investment had been concentrated in the city center. The community continued to consume, as the quantity of ceramics, which include imports, demonstrate. Demand for manufactured goods encouraged regional and local producers to develop new product ranges, some of which were even exported. Importantly, the epigraphic record shows that, while the institutional structure of *Aeclanum* changed over time (as did the topography of the settlement), the *sense* of belonging to a community remained unaffected. As the *res publica* faded into *civitas*, which later coalesced around the *Sancta Ecclesia*, and the older magisterial authority was shadowed by that of the *episcopus*, the people continued to celebrate their belonging to the polity of the *Aeclanenses*.

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