



Italian Archaeologist Leads of Unearthing Ancient City

Alexsandra Arlia (May 10, 2019)



Italian papyrologist and archaeologist, Rosario Pintaudi, recently gained attention for his work in Egypt with the remains of the ancient city of Antinopolis-- a site laying on the Eastern bank of the Nile river, about 285 km from present-day south of Cairo. Born in the Messina province, and later moving to the city of Florence, Pintaudi is a highly regarded Italian archaeologist, helping historians further discover the ancient Egyptian remains.

According to history and legend, toward the end of October 130 AD, [Emperor Hadrian](#) [2]'s young male lover, Antinous, was found to have mysteriously drowned in the Nile river, making Antinous the embraced being of the ancient Egyptian god of life, death, the afterlife, and the flooding of the Nile, Osiris. In his honor, Emperor Hadrian had officially declared the city Antinopolis to be established, near the bank of where his lover had drowned.

The archaeological mission to work on [Antinopolis](#) [3] has been in place since 1935, under the leadership of the University of Florence's G. Vitelli Istituto Papirologico. The mission, currently being



led by Pintaudi, is an impactful project that will lead to the further understanding of the Coptic Christian Period-- an era caught between the area's practice of the Ancient Egyptian religion and the later Muslim conquest, about which little is known.

Findings so far include blocks of stone (talatat) dating back to Pharaoh [Akhenaten](#) [4]'s rule, Christian symbols such as a circled cross painted in red, and symbols of the Christian practice of Confirmation. Tokens relating to the Islamic rule, as well as remnants of apotropaic rituals and a multicolored painting depicting a battle scene between the Byzantine Empire and the conquering of Islam over Egypt were also amongst the findings. Along with the University of Rome and experts hailing from other countries, a large granite column weighing about 37 tons was also properly re-installed to Antinopolis' eastern entrance, which led to the unearthing of thousands of both Coptic and Greek papyri.

The work that Rosario Pintaudi has implemented in the lost city of Antinopolis, has led to the further understanding of this ancient world and the lives that had once inhabited it. The more experts such as Pintaudi dig into these archaeological findings and sites, the better we will be able to understand our history and the world's cultures.

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