A Monument to Romulus Emerges in the Roman Forum

Roberta Cutillo (February 21, 2020)

Archaeologists found a funerary monument dedicated to Romulus, the mythical founder of Rome and the city's first king, inside the Roman Forum Complex.

About a year ago, an excavation campaign was launched inside the Roman Forum, the world-renowned archaeological complex located in the center of the Italian Capital, by the Colosseum.

The goal of this excavation was to find a monumental sanctuary dedicated to the mythical figure of Romulus, whose presence inside the forum – near the Lapis Niger and the Comizio - was hypothesized in the studies of renowned 20th century archaeologist Giacomo Boni.

“An underground room containing a tufa sarcophagus about 1,40 centimeters long associated with a circular element, probably an altar, emerged from the ground. It should date back to the fourth century BCE,” reads a statement by the Coliseum Archaeological Park.

The fact that the new finding is located in close proximity to the Lapis Niger (“black stone”), an ancient shrine featuring one of the earliest Latin inscriptions ever found, further supports the idea that it could indeed be a monument to the founder and first king of Rome, perhaps even his tomb, according to some.

However, as the director of the archaeological park Alfonsina Russo noted, calling it Romulus’ tomb might be a little too simplistic and hasty: it was actually more likely built as an honorary shrine dedicated to the mythical figure. A conference will soon take place in order to decide how to present the new discovery to the millions of tourists who visit the site as well as to the reset of the world.

It’s a delicate issue and certainly one of the challenges that comes with of living in a time of constant advancement and active discovery. But it’s also proof that even the most ancient monuments can continue to surprise us and evolve along with our understanding of them.

Source URL: http://www.iitaly.org/magazine/focus/art-culture/article/monument-romulus-emerges-in-roman-forum

Links
[1] http://www.iitaly.org/files/romanforumjpg-0