

The Rome Reborn 1.0: A Report on the Rome Reborn Project, 1997-2007

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The Rome Reborn Project (www.romereborn.virginia.edu) was initiated in 1996 by Bernard Frischer in collaboration with Diane Favro, both then professors at the University of California, Los Angeles. They collaborated with UCLA students from classics, architecture and urban design who fashioned the digital models with continuous advice from expert archaeologists. The goal of the project, which was named in honor of Flavio Biondo's *Roma instaurata* (1446), was to create a digital model illustrating the entire urban development of ancient Rome, from the first settlements in the late Bronze Age (ca. 1000 B.C.) to the end of the Gothic Wars (552 A.D.). Since 2004, the project has been managed by the Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities at the University of Virginia, while the Politecnico di Milano has been added as a major partner.

The purpose of this talk is to report on the first results of the Rome Reborn Project: "Rome Reborn 1.0." Rome Reborn 1.0 illustrates how we can use information technology to spatialize and digitally represent archaeological knowledge about a site at the urban scale. Rome Reborn 1.0 shows almost the entire city within the 13-mile-long Aurelian Walls as it appeared in A.D. 320. At that time Rome was the multicultural capital of the western world and had reached the peak of its development with an estimated population of one million. The year 320 A.D. was chosen because it represents the time when the last great civic building of the ancient city, the Basilica of Constantine and Maxentius, had been completed and before the city started to be augmented by large Christian sanctuaries. Along with a digital model of the city, Rome Reborn 1.0 provides georeferenced archaeological metadata, allowing the user quickly to understand the basis of the reconstruction she is seeing on the screen as the urban model is explored.

The talk will conclude with a discussion of the challenges still facing the project. These include: densifying the model by adding more born-digital buildings at a scale of 1:1; publishing the model to the Internet as a true real-time model; and integrating more archaeological metadata into the documentation window.