

A Cosmopolitan Building Program: The Evidence of Brick Stamps at Gabii

Recent excavations at the ancient Latin city of Gabii have produced a large quantity of ceramic building material with a sizable portion bearing maker's marks, mostly in the form of brick stamps. Brick stamps from the Roman world have been studied to identify the sources of the bricks used for urban building programs. The variable nature of the brick stamps from Gabii show that numerous workshops were involved in supplying the construction material for the city. Some of these stamps have comparable examples from Rome and other proximal locations, suggesting the existence of a local trade network. As of now, there is nothing to support a domestic production of bricks at Gabii, and based on the initial results of this study, the Gabines appear to have readily acquired their brick from outside sources.

New evidence from the collection of brick stamps at Gabii may point to the city having international ties. There is one recurring stamp that features a single register of Greek letters, although the full stamp cannot yet be reconstructed due to the fragmentary nature of the surviving specimens. If this stamp can be interpreted to be a proper name, which is the usual practice for ancient brick stamps, this discovery raises additional questions regarding the identity of the individual involved with the workshop producing these bricks, as well as how far abroad these materials were transported. From analyzing the evidence of brick stamps from Gabii, this study aims to contribute to a better understanding of how ceramic building material was both created and distributed across regional, or international, supply lines.