



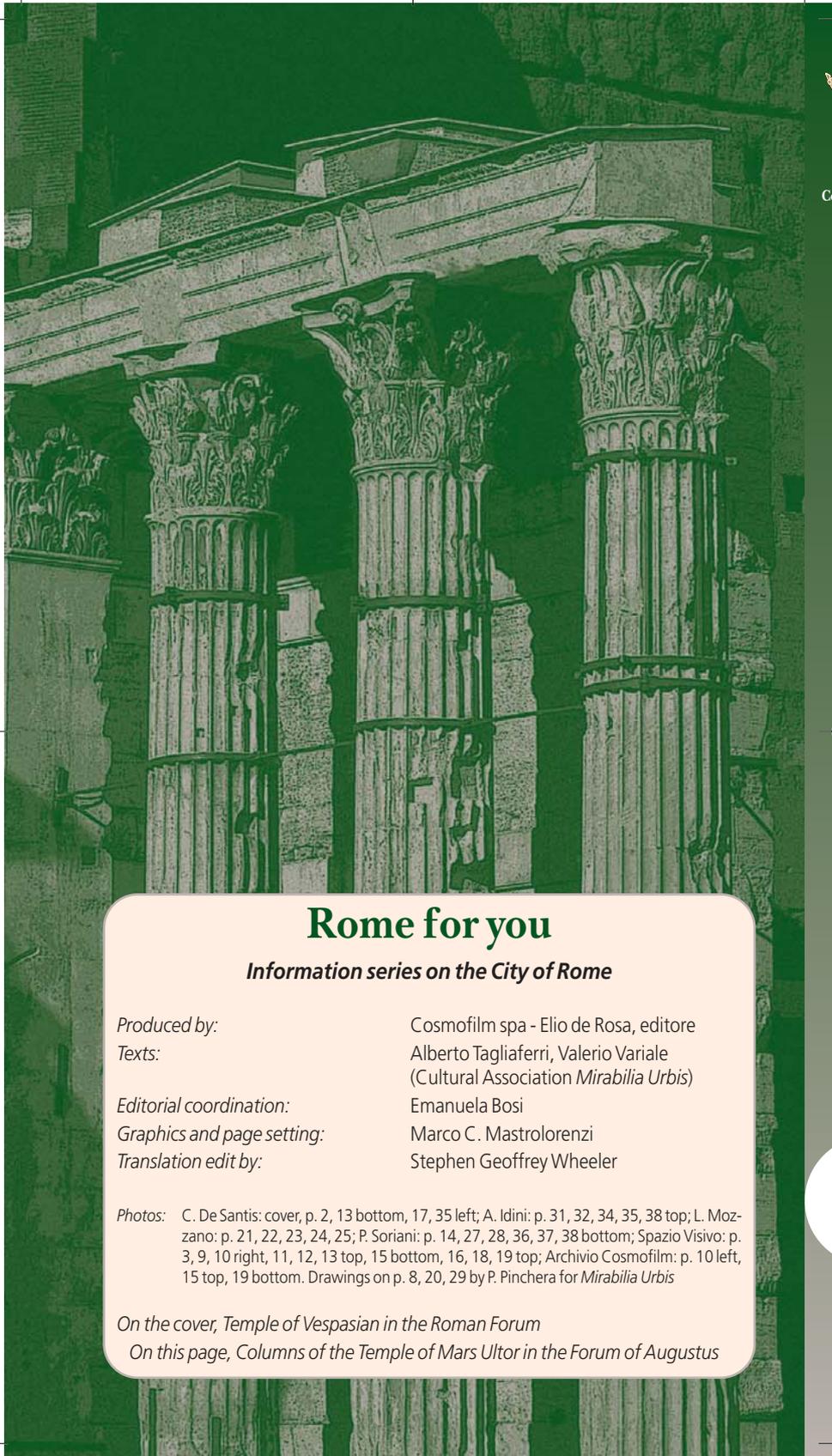
Comune di Roma
Turismo

Walks in Rome



Monumental Rome

From Via dei Fori Imperiali to the Colosseum



Rome for you

Information series on the City of Rome

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On the cover, Temple of Vespasian in the Roman Forum

On this page, Columns of the Temple of Mars Ultor in the Forum of Augustus



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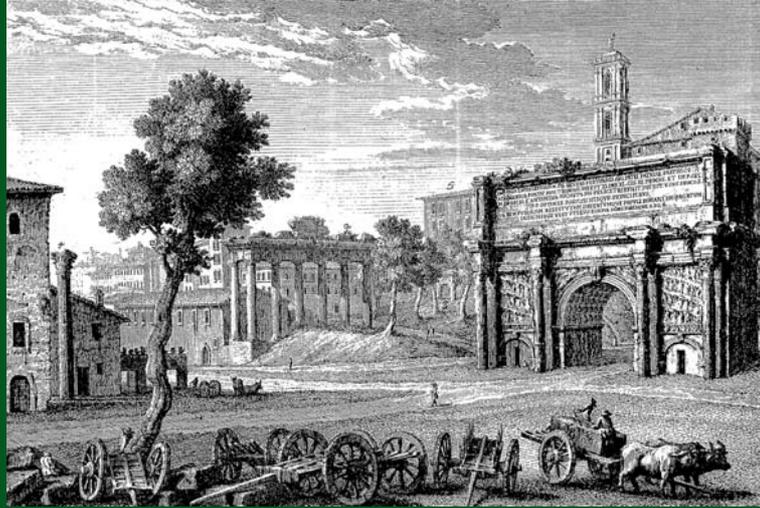
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The Curia

Monumental Rome

From Via dei Fori Imperiali to the Colosseum



A view of the Roman Forum looking towards the Capitoline Hill in an 18th century engraving by G. Vasi. The Forum area had not yet been excavated, and it was used for grazing cattle.



The Colosseum and Arch of Constantine in a 17th century engraving by L. Cruyl. The monuments are viewed for the area of the Temple of Venus and Rome, which was then covered in orchards and vegetable gardens.

Presentation

The Roman academic Silvio Negro maintained that in order to know Rome, a "lifetime was not enough".

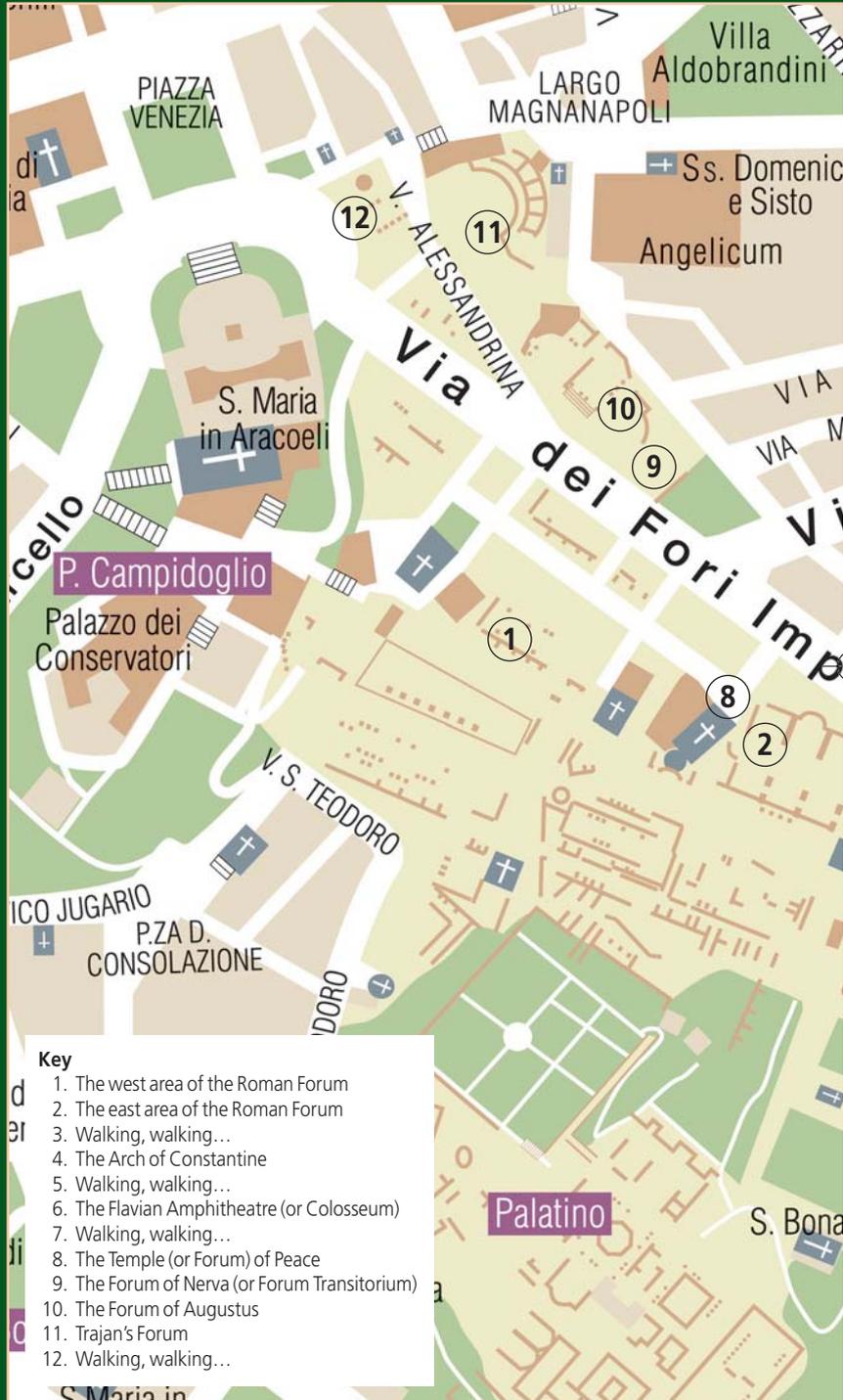
When faced with a history that is as eventful as Rome's, it is difficult to appraise it even into brick thick guides, still we decided to offer a series of encompassing pocketbook volumes that any curious tourist may carry with them during their visit.

The "Walks in Rome" series offers routes within the city's great web of must-see sites and monuments. Each publication has chosen a guiding theme allowing you to follow a path through, to mention a few, "Monumental Rome" (via dei Fori Imperiali and the Colosseum) or "The Dawning of Christian Rome" (The Basilicas of St. Johns in the Lateran and the Holy Cross in Jerusalem) or even enjoy the most earthly Rome "A virtual film set" (via Veneto and surroundings).

So, even if a lifetime is not enough, you might as well start.

**Tourism Office
Rome Municipal Council**

Map



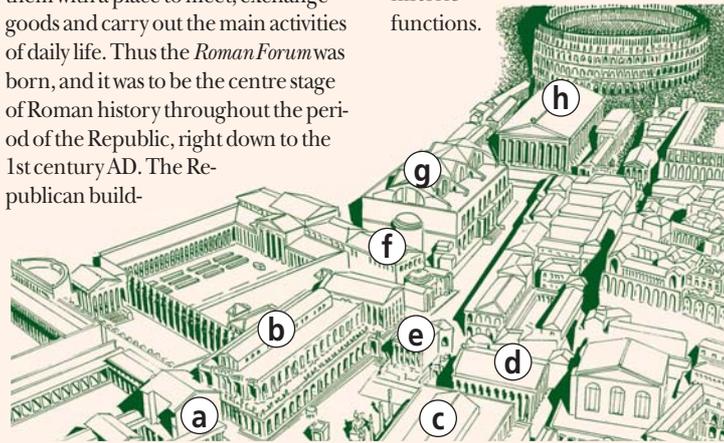


...the walk
begins...

The Roman Forum

The valley in which the Roman Forum came into existence was formed by the Tiber's erosion of the sides of the volcanic lava which constitutes the base of the seven hills. The lower part of this basin, stretching roughly from the central area almost as far as to the river, was occupied by a marsh known as the Velabrum. On the edge of this marsh, at the foot of the Palatine, rose some of Rome's most ancient monuments, such as the Regia, seat of the ancient kings. Towards the end of the 6th century BC, under the Tarquin dynasty, the valley was reclaimed and the waters drained into the Tiber down a sewer, the Cloaca Maxima. The area was now ready for use by the tribes who were already living on the surrounding hills, providing them with a place to meet, exchange goods and carry out the main activities of daily life. Thus the *Roman Forum* was born, and it was to be the centre stage of Roman history throughout the period of the Republic, right down to the 1st century AD. The Republican build-

ings mirrored changes in the political institutions. First came the great temples of the 5th and 4th centuries, representing the city's extraordinary importance right from the start of its history. Basilicas were constructed from the 3rd century onwards, buildings which served to provide citizens with a covered area for business and assembly as an alternative to open areas. The earliest were the Basilica Porcia and the Basilica Sempronia, later to be substituted by the Basilica Aemilia and the Basilica Julia. The Imperial period, from the reign of Augustus onwards, saw the definitive transformation of the entire area into a monumental square which served a strictly commemorative purpose, adorned in opulent marble but by now deprived of its historic functions.



The valley of the Roman Forum in the Imperial Age: a) Curia Julia - b) Basilica Aemilia - c) Basilica Julia - d) Temple of Castor and Pollux - e) Temple of Divus Julius - f) Temple of Romulus - g) Basilica of Maxentius - h) Temple of Venus and Rome

1. The west area

Our walk begins in Via dei Fori Imperiali. Coming from Piazza Venezia, the entrance to the archaeological area of the Roman Forum is on the right. We go through the gate and follow the short ramp down the left side of the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina; on the right is the area of the Basilica Aemilia, built at the expense of the *gens Aemilia* (Aemilii clan), from which it took its name. It was built by the censors Marcus Aemilius Lepidus and Marcus Fulvius Nobilior in 179 BC. The south facade of the basilica, looking towards the Forum Square and the Sacred Way, featured a two-storey colonnade of piers decorated with engaged columns. Below the porticus of the basilica was a series of *tabernae*, leading to the offices of the *argentarii*, or money changers. Entrance to the basilica was via three entrances on the long side of the building. The huge interior was divided into four aisles: a main central one, two smaller ones to the

north and another to the south. Following the paved **Sacred Way**, the most important street in Ancient Rome, which traverses the whole of the Forum area, we come to the west side of the Basilica Aemilia and what remains of the ancient **Shrine of Venus Cloacina**: its circular marble base. The shrine consisted of a precinct surrounded by a low wall, containing the statues of the goddesses Cloacina and Venus. It was an imperial-age reconstruction of a very ancient building erected at the point where the *Cloaca Maxima* entered the square.

In the same area, at the meeting point of the Via Sacra and the **Argiletum**, the road which led to the crowded Suburra neighbourhood, are the remains of a small brick building which has been identified as the **Temple of Janus**, a double-faced god who was the patron di-



The Basilica Aemilia



Arch of Septimius Severus

vinity of transition, of the beginning and end of all things. The temple must have been square in shape, and it featured two doors, which were kept closed in time of peace and open in time of war. In front of the Arch of Septimius Severus, in an area marked off by a rail, are the remains of what is known as the **Lapis Niger** (black stone), a segment of black marble paving surrounded by the remaining fragments of slabs of white marble. In addition to an altar, 1899 excavations beneath the paving also revealed a stele bearing an inscription in archaic Latin cursing anyone who profaned the place, which was reserved for the ritual sacrifices carried out by the king. The small sanctuary can therefore be dated to the 6th century BC and may have marked the site of the mythical death of Romulus, whom legend has it was killed near the *Volcanal*, an ancient temple to Vulcan. Together with the courts and other buildings, the *Lapis Niger* formed part of the ancient area of the **Comitium**, the political heart of the city, where the people met in assembly and where the public crier announced the times of midday



Temple of Saturn

and sunset. On one side of the Comitium was the *Graecostasis*, a platform from which overseas ambassadors made their addresses, generally in Greek. Another space contained the *Rostra*, a platform decorated with the prow-heads (*rostra*) taken from enemy ships, from which orators harangued the people. The Comitium was entirely redesigned during Caesar and Augustus's reworkings of the Forum, after which it no longer served the traditional political function it had under the Republican order. Caesar embarked upon his ambitious transformations of the political area of the Forum in 54 BC. The old Senate House, the *Curia Hostilia*, was closed and converted into a temple, and the new **Curia** was erected where it still stands today, to the right of the *Lapis Niger*, in between the Roman Forum and the one which Caesar had built next to it. The large brick building was inaugurated by Augustus in 29 BC and underwent several restorations over the course of time, the last of which was effected under the principate of Diocletian. Planned according to Vitruvian specifications, the building is rectangular

in form, with four piers at the corners and a pitched roof. The lower half of the outer walls was clad in marble slabs, above which was an stone-work effect in plaster. The facade featured three large windows and a portal on which were mounted the doors which were subsequently transferred to the main door of S. Giovanni in Laterano. Even the **Rostra** were moved: the platform became a proper stage, from which the politician, no longer having to worry about obtaining an electorate's consensus, performed with his retinue in front of the crowd. Continuing in the direction of the Capitoline Hill, we come to the **Arch of Septimius Severus**. This emperor of African origin immortalized the record of his exploits in the field

against the Parthians with the construction of a grand triumphal arch in 203. The monument, which is about 21 metres high, was topped by a bronze quadriga and statues of the leader and his sons, Caracalla and Geta. When Caracalla killed his brother in 211, with a view to becoming the sole heir to the throne, all references to Geta were obliterated from the construction.

On the right after the arch is the monumental platform of the **Temple of Concord**, of which a few architectural fragments are left. It was built by Furius Camillus in 367 BC in order to commemorate the resolution of the struggles between patrician and plebeians with the approval of Licinius Sextius's legislation and the consequent exten-



Area of the Lapis Niger

sion of political entitlements. Under the reign of Tiberius it became a sort of museum of Greek art.

The **three columns** forming an angle to the left of the platform of the Temple of Peace, which feature Corinthian capitals and a section of entablature, are more recent, dating back to the Flavian dynasty. These are the remains of the **Temple of Vespasian**, which Domitian subsequently also dedicated to Titus. Restored under Septimius Severus and Caracalla, the temple stood on a platform, was 33 metres long and 22 metres wide, and had a pronaos with six Corinthian columns on the front and two on the sides.

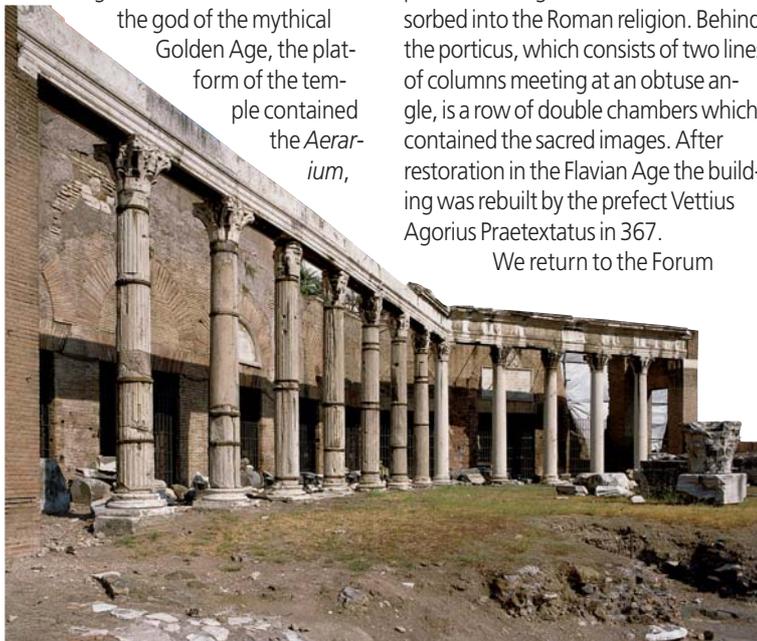
Further to the left stand the imposing ruins of the **Temple of Saturn**, which was located near the ancient *Volcanal*. Built in 498 BC and dedicated to the god who founded the first village on the Capitoline Hill, it was the first major construction of the Republican

Age. Because Saturn was also the god of the mythical Golden Age, the platform of the temple contained the *Aerarium*,

where the state treasury was kept. The temple formed the starting point of the **Clivus Capitolinus**, the last stretch of the Sacred Way, trodden in ancient times by the processions of triumphant generals on their way up to the Temple of Capitoline Jupiter. Today the high podium of the Temple of Saturn can still be admired, along with its eight granite columns and their Ionic capitals, dating back to reconstructions in the 3rd century AD. There is still an inscription on the frieze commemorating the restoration, and the east facade of the podium, looking towards the square, contains a series of holes used for hanging the great panel upon which acts and documents of state were exhibited.

On the slopes of the Capitoline Hill the remains may be seen of the last great temple dedicated to the pagan tradition: what is known as the **Porticus Deorum Consentium**, referring to pairs of Greek gods who were absorbed into the Roman religion. Behind the porticus, which consists of two lines of columns meeting at an obtuse angle, is a row of double chambers which contained the sacred images. After restoration in the Flavian Age the building was rebuilt by the prefect Vettius Agorius Praetextatus in 367.

We return to the Forum



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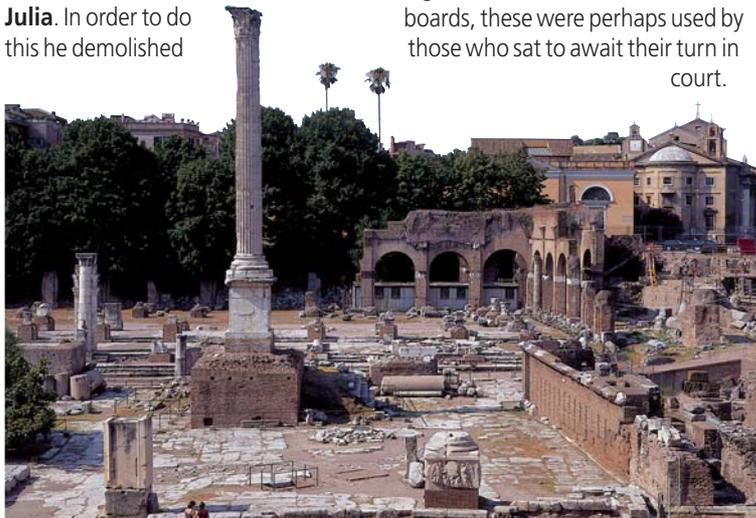
The Porticus Deorum Consentium

Square. In front of the right corner of the Rostra is the **base of a column** erected in 303 in order to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Tetrarchy, the subdivision of the empire into four areas according to Diocletian's wishes. The base is decorated with carvings in low relief depicting winged victories, barbarian prisoners and the traditional sacrifice of the pig, the ram and the bull. In the area behind the base the ancient travertine paving of the Forum is partially visible. This was undertaken by the praetor Lucius Naevius Sordinus in 14 BC according to Augustus's wishes. The last monument to be erected in the square was the **Column of Phocas**. Mounted on a stepped base, it still bears part of its inscription in honour of the Byzantine emperor Phocas, whose statue has been lost. The column was dedicated to the emperor in 608 by the Church of Rome in gratitude for the donation of the Pantheon, which then became the church of S. Maria *ad Martyres*. Caesar rounded off the Forum area on the south side with the construction of the **Basilica Julia**. In order to do this he demolished



Basilica Julia, detail of chess board carved on one of its steps

the pre-existing Basilica Sempronia put up by Tiberius Sempronius Gracchus, father of brothers Tiberius and Gaius, the famous tribunes of the people. Now only the large platform, the steps and the bases of some of the piers remain of this large building, which measured 101 metres by 49 and was divided into five aisles, and was used to hear cases regarding questions of inheritance. Some **tabulae lusoriae** have been found carved on the surface of the steps surrounding the basilica. Similar to chess boards, these were perhaps used by those who sat to await their turn in court.



The Forum Square and, in the centre, the Column of Phocas

2. The east area

In 29 BC Augustus dedicated a temple to Julius Caesar, the first Roman citizen to be deified. What is left of the **Temple of Divus Julius** is located on the east side of the Forum, where the dictator's body was cremated: the massive core of the podium, in concrete, with a semi-circular area in the centre containing a circular altar. In the same year Augustus erected a single-doored **arch** in order to celebrate his victory at Actium. Ten years later, in 19 BC, the arch was replaced by another more imposing one, with three doors, commemorating the policy of negotiations initiated by Augustus with regard to the Parthians. Remains



Columns of the Temple of Castor and Pollux

of its **central pylons** may still be seen to the south of the Temple of Caesar, and fragments of decoration attributed to what was known as the Parthic Arch have been found close by. To the right of the Temple of Caesar are the remains of the **Temple of Castor and Pollux**. Theirs was a Greek cult introduced to Rome by the aristocratic class. The temple was put up in 484 BC by the son of Aulus Postumius, victor in the Battle of Lake Regillus in 499 BC. The last of its many reconstructions was that of Tiberius in 6 AD, of which three majestic columns survive in fluted Parian marble with large Corinthian capitals, mounted on a tall podium. Behind the Temple of Castor and Pollux is the church of **S. Maria Antiqua**, a 6th century conversion of the large vestibule of the imperial palaces. The church, which acquired its epithet after the construction of S. Maria Nova (now S. Francesca Romana), was built with three aisles and an apse in the back wall. It was decorated with frescoes between the 6th and the 9th centuries, and abandoned in the 9th century due to the damage caused by a series of earthquakes.

The **Spring of Juturna**, or *Lacus Iuturnae*, was the spring which provided the ancient nucleus of the city with water. It was here, according to legend, that Castor and Pollux stopped to water their steeds and broke the news of the Roman victory at Lake Regillus.

Nowadays the spring consists of a basin located between the Temple of



S. Maria Antiqua, overall view of decoration of left wall

Vesta and that of Castor and Pollux, with a pedestal in the centre which once supported the marble sculpture of the twin gods. Near the spring

stood the head office of the **Statio Aquarum**, or Water Board, after it was moved here from the Campus Martius in 328.



The Temple of Vesta

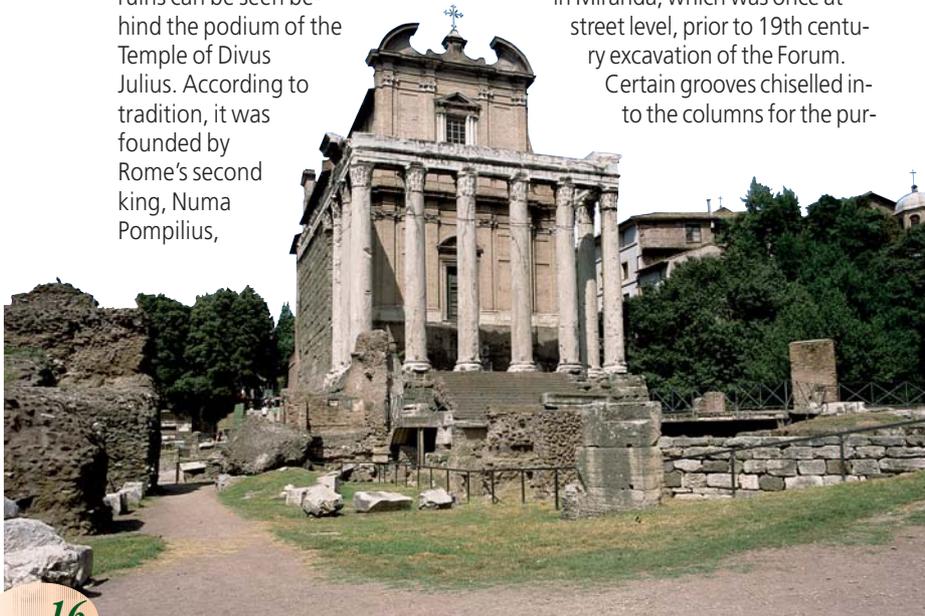
The circular **Temple of Vesta**, which is surrounded by 20 Corinthian columns, was restored in 1930 and now features a reconstructed section in which the original fragments, which date back to the period of Septimius Severus, have been incorporated into the modern travertine used in the reconstruction. The temple probably had a conical roof with a central opening to allow the smoke from the sacred fire to escape. Behind the temple, on the east side, is the entrance to the **House of the Vestals**. In its earliest form, the House of the Vestals consisted of six parallel rooms, reserved for the priestesses, which opened onto a courtyard built on a precise N-S, E-W alignment. Reconstructions in the reigns of Trajan and Septimius Severus resulted in a building designed around a vast inner courtyard 69 metres long.

The **Regia**, or Royal Palace, is deeply rooted in the monarchical period. Its ruins can be seen behind the podium of the Temple of Divus Julius. According to tradition, it was founded by Rome's second king, Numa Pompilius,

and served as official residence of the king. In Republican times the latter figure was substituted by the *Rex Sacrorum* and the *Pontifex Maximus*. One of the rooms contained the *ancilia*, the sacred shields borne in procession by the Salii priests.

The monumental **Temple of Antoninus and Faustina** was dedicated to Antoninus Pius and his wife Faustina the Elder. It faces onto the north-east side of the Forum, next to the visitors' entrance ramp. The temple demonstrates the definitive triumph of the cult of the emperor-god and therefore of the divinity of the State, which was identified primarily in the person of the emperor. In the middle of the modern stairway is the brick core of the ancient altar, and the temple's **pronaos** features ten marble columns, seventeen metres tall and topped with Corinthian capitals, brought from the quarries of the Island of Euboea. Inside the pronaos is the facade of the church of S. Lorenzo in Miranda, which was once at street level, prior to 19th century excavation of the Forum.

Certain grooves chiselled into the columns for the pur-



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The Temple of Antoninus and Faustina

pose of holding ropes point to an attempt to demolish the building in order to recycle and sell off its building materials. The construction of the church of S. Lorenzo in Miranda subsequently preserved the colonnade from any further attempts at demolition. The church was first built around the 8th century. It was bestowed to the University of Spicers and Aromaticians by Pope Martin V and now belongs to the Noble Chemical-Pharmaceutical College. In the early 17th century it was rebuilt according to the design of Orazio Torriani, who incorporated the elegant facade into the pronaos of the Temple of Antoninus and Faustina, thus creating one of the most emblematic monuments to Rome's ability to wed ancient and modern. To the right of the temple podium some grassy patches mark out the positions of the thirty-odd sunken and shallow graves which formed part of the **archaic cemetery** discovered in 1902. The site was used by the inhabitants of the Palatine and has yielded material dating from the 10th to the 8th centuries BC.

Along the Sacred Way a building on the left commemorates Maxentius and - in particular - his son Romulus, who died in infancy in 309 and was deified by his father. This is the so-called **Temple of Romulus**: circular in plan and topped by a dome, it boasts a slightly concave front decorated with niches for statues, while next to the original bronze door are two red porphyry columns with marble capitals. Some scholars identify the monument as the Temple of the Penates, moved here to make way for the erection of the Basilica of Maxentius. Here the Sacred Way climbs somewhat. A turning on the left takes us to a large open area dominated by what remains of the **Basilica of Maxentius**. This was the emperor who started to build the gigantic basilica, which is divided into three aisles by four colossal piers and topped with barrel vaults, on the high ground of the Velia. The central nave was 80 metres long and 25 wide, achieving a maximum height of 35 metres. It was covered by three cross-vaults, resting on eight fluted columns of Procon-

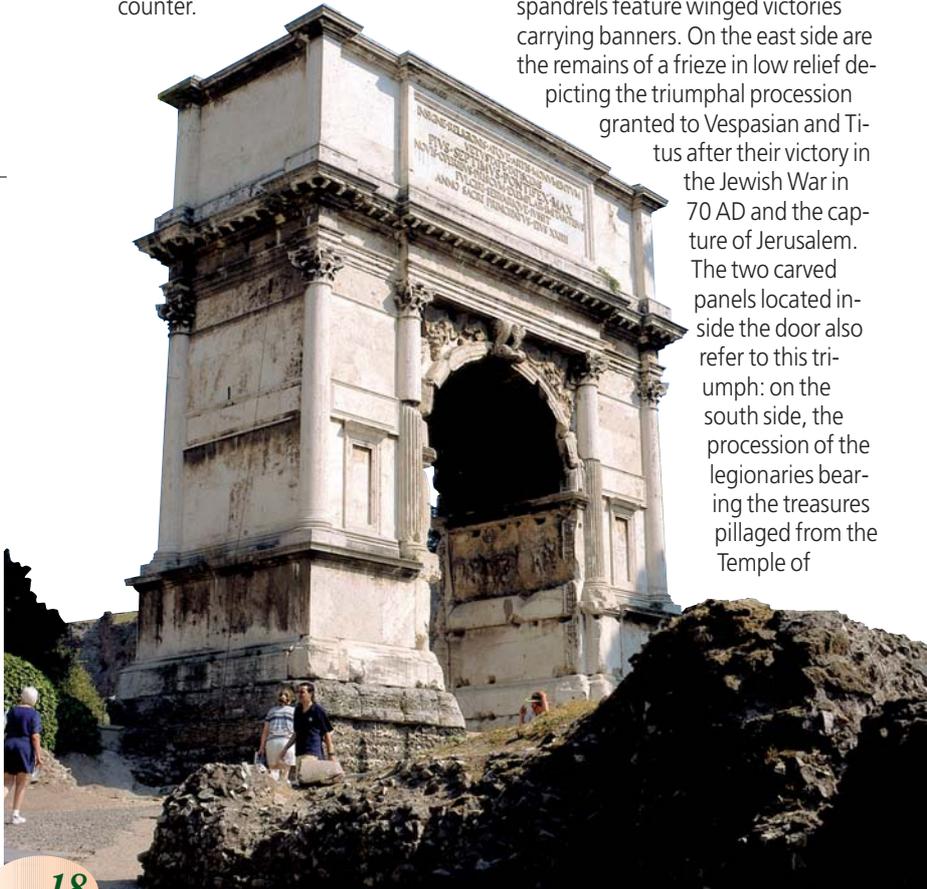


The Basilica of Maxentius

nesian marble, the last of which was taken by Pope Paul V Borghese in 1613 as a support for the statue of the Madonna in Piazza S. Maria Maggiore. Access to the basilica was via the east side, and the west side terminated in a deep apse. The remains of the colossal statue of Constantine were discovered in 15th century excavations: the head is 2.6 metres high and is kept, together with other fragments, in the courtyard of the Palazzo dei Conservatori on the Capitoline Hill. Maxentius himself never saw the finished project: it was completed after the Battle of the Milvian Bridge by the victor of the encounter.

The two side aisles consisted of three intercommunicating areas surmounted by imposing barrel vaults, which were decorated with coffering and illuminated by large windows. The remains still visible are of the right aisle. If we return to the Sacred Way and continue our ascent, we come to the **Arch of Titus**. The arch, which was dedicated to Titus by his brother Domitian, has a single passage and its two facades feature couples of engaged columns with composite capitals. The keystones of the arch depict the Personification of Rome on the east side and the Genius of the Roman People on the west side. The spandrels feature winged victories carrying banners. On the east side are the remains of a frieze in low relief depicting the triumphal procession granted to Vespasian and Titus after their victory in the Jewish War in 70 AD and the capture of Jerusalem.

The two carved panels located inside the door also refer to this triumph: on the south side, the procession of the legionaries bearing the treasures pillaged from the Temple of



Solomon (the *menorah*, the sacred seven-branched candlestick, and the silver trumpets), and on the other side, another panel with Titus on the triumphal four-horse chariot, preceded by the lictors' *fascies*, while the goddess Rome leads the horses by the bridle and a winged victory crowns the victor. This is followed by the toga-clad personification of the Senate and a bare-breasted personification of the Roman people. In the centre of the vault is a smaller panel featuring Titus being borne into the sky on an eagle. In the Middle Ages the arch formed part of the fortification wall built in the area by the Frangipane family, and it



The Sacred Way towards the Arch of Titus

was only in 1822 that it was disengaged and restored by Valadier.

3. Walking, walking...

If we descend the Sacred Way in the direction of the Colosseum valley, we come, on the left, to one of the apses, a few columns and the substructures of the **Temple of Venus and Rome**, built by the emperor Hadrian. Together with the Temple of Serapis on the Quirinal, this was the biggest in the whole of Ancient Rome, with a podium measuring 145 metres long and 100 metres wide. This long platform was lined with porticoes with tall granite columns on its long sides. There were two short staircases at either end on the Colosseum side, and a large flight of steps descended the podium in the direction of the Roman Forum. The temple, surrounded by steps, was peripteral, ie it had a row of columns around all four sides, in line with the traditional models of Greek architecture favoured by the emperor. The interior consisted of two chambers with back-to-back apses: the east one contained the statue of the Goddess Rome and the west one, looking to-

wards the Colosseum, that of Venus. The chamber looking towards the Forum is well preserved: it used to form part of the convent of S. Francesca Romana and it is now annexed to the Soprintendenza Archeologica di Roma and the Forum Antiquarium. Continuing along the Sacred Way, we come to the Colosseum Valley.

The chamber dedicated to Venus in the Temple of Venus and Rome

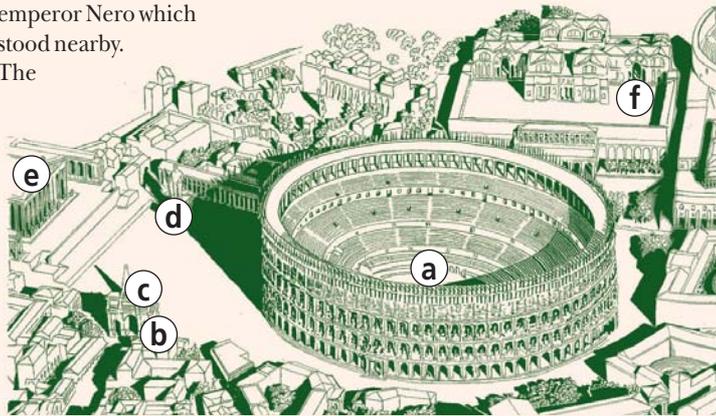


...continuing
the walk...

The Colosseum area

The area now occupied by the Colosseum was, in Nero's time, the point around which the whole of his *Domus Aurea* complex was articulated. The place where the Colosseum now stands was occupied by an artificial lake which was drained after the emperor's death to allow for the construction of the grand new monument. This was brought about by the fusion of blueprints for two theatres, resulting in an elliptical building designed to host spectacles of wild animal hunts (*venationes*) and gladiator fights (*munera*, lit. dutiful gifts). Its actual name was the Flavian Amphitheatre, because it was built by the Flavian emperors, and it only became known as the Colosseum in late medieval times, probably in memory of the colossal statue of the emperor Nero which stood nearby. The

Colosseum is, of course, not only the largest amphitheatre and undoubtedly the greatest monument in the Roman world, but also the very symbol of Rome and her immortality. According to a 7th century prophecy by the Anglo-Saxon monk Bede: "As long as the Colosseum exists, so will Rome, and when the Colosseum falls, Rome too will fall; and when Rome falls, so will the world". Besides the statue of Nero, the Colosseum valley also contained the spring known as the Meta Sudans and the famous Arch of Constantine, which was a sort of "swan song" of pagan architecture. Assembled in 315 using pieces recycled from earlier monuments, it was followed by the construction of the first Christian churches in the same years.

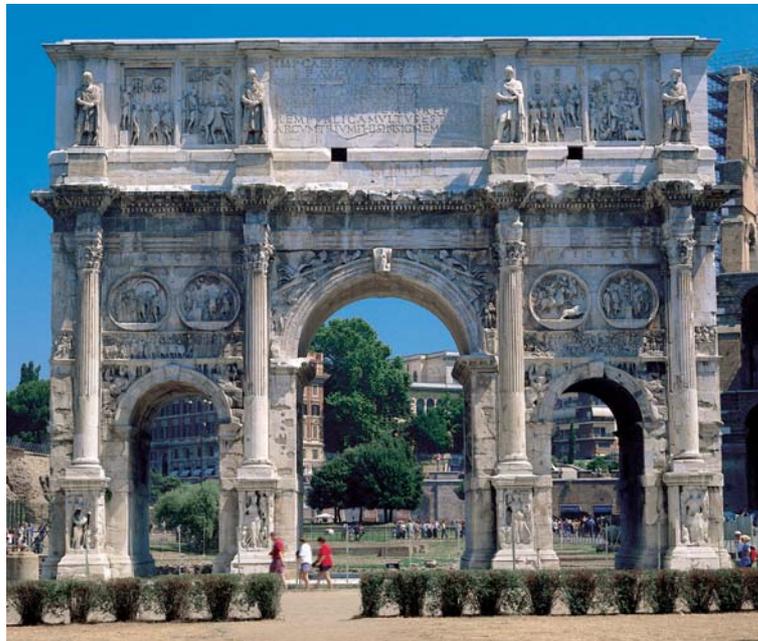


The Colosseum valley: a) Colosseum - b) Arch of Constantine - c) Meta Sudans - d) Colossus of Nero - e) Temple of Venus and Rome - f) Trajan's Baths

4. The Arch of Constantine

Next to the Colosseum is the most famous of all the ancient arches of Rome. Started in 312 to celebrate the victory of Constantine at the Milvian Bridge, it was completed in 315 in time to mark the tenth anniversary of the reign of Constantine, who had become tetrarch in Britannia in 305. The arch has three openings, the middle one bigger than the side ones, and it was approached up a stairway, now no longer visible. In order to accelerate its completion, it was decorated on its facades, in the attic and inside the central archway, with works of art taken from other Roman monuments which may al-

ready have been abandoned. The attic contains the following **inscription**: "To the emperor Flavius Constantine, the Great, pious and fortunate, the Senate and People of Rome dedicated this arch to mark his triumphs, because by divine inspiration and his own great spirit he simultaneously freed the State from the tyrant and from all factions". Over the side arches run the six sections of the frieze in low relief which tells the story of his military campaign against Maxentius, from his departure from Milan to his arrival in Rome, the only decoration undertaken especially for the occasion. On top of this continuous



The Arch of Constantine



Side roundel portraying god Apollo on sun chariot

panel relief, the small archways feature carved roundels dating back to

the period of Hadrian and originally depicting the latter, which were reworked in order to make Constantine the new protagonist of the scenes. On either side of the inscription on the attic were reworked panels, over three metres in height, which probably came from an arch erected in honour of Marcus Aurelius by his son Commodus. These refer to the military campaigns which the philosopher-emperor conducted against the Quadi and the Marcomanni. Other low-relief carvings and statues of Dacian prisoners originate from the area of the Forum of Trajan.

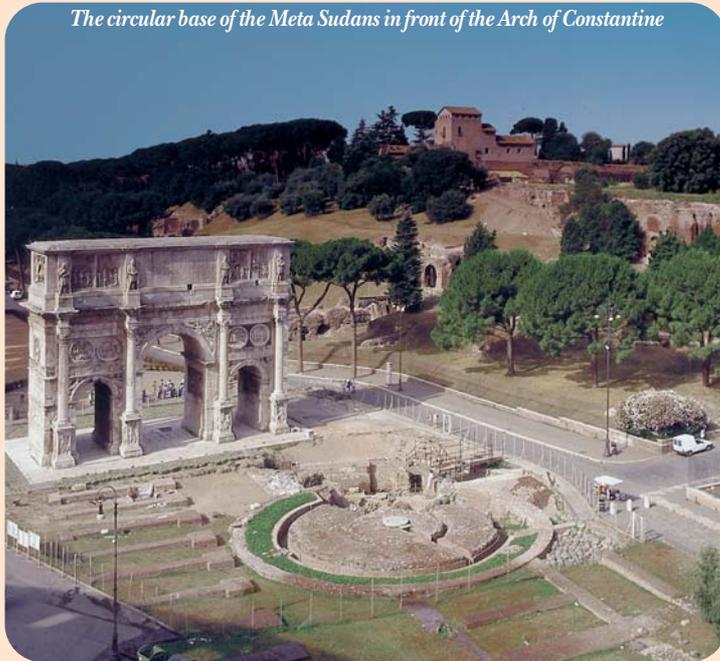


5. Walking, walking...

Between the Arch of Constantine and the Colosseum we come upon the remains of the foundations of what was known as the **Meta Sudans**. This was a monumental fountain in the shape of the trunk of a cone, from which water flowed as if it was sweating. Its brick core survived until 1936, when it was demolished to make way for the Fascist military parades which took place in the area of the Arch of Constantine. The fountain was located at the meeting point of four of the fourteen wards into which Imperial Rome was divided. It was referred to as *meta* (limit) because it was built on the site of one of the stelai marking the boundaries of Romulus's primitive city.

If we follow the ancient street paving which runs alongside the area of the Meta Sudans, we pass by a large raised area of grass planted with a group of holm oaks which precisely marks the area of the base of the colossal **statue of Nero**. The statue, which was carved by the Greek sculptor Zenodorus, was over thirty metres high and remained over the centuries the largest bronze statue ever cast. Nero had himself portrayed with the radiate features of the sun-god Sol. During Hadrian's reign the statue was moved from the crest of the Velia to the place marked by the current grassy patch, in order to make room for the building of the Temple of Venus and Rome.

The circular base of the Meta Sudans in front of the Arch of Constantine



6. The Flavian Amphitheatre, or Colosseum

Originally occupied, as we have seen, by the artificial lake of Nero's *Domus Aurea*, the area of the Colosseum was restored to the public domain by the emperors of the Flavian dynasty. Vespasian was the first emperor to tackle the construction of the building, and in the years 72-79 it rose to two-thirds its final height. It was inaugurated by Vespasian's

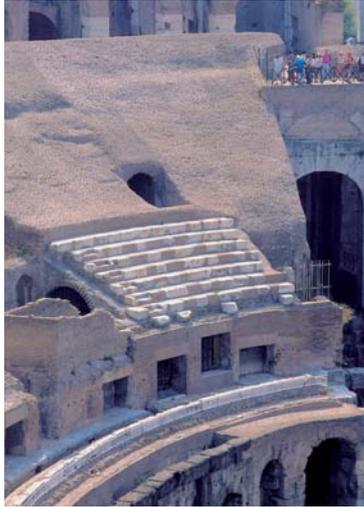
son Titus

in 80 AD, with a series of spectacles lasting a hundred days, which saw the slaughtering of over five thousand wild beasts. Domitian, Titus's brother, also contributed to the building's construction, decorating it *usque ad clypea*, ie right up to its crowning with bronze shield motifs. A retractable canopy was also installed, manned by a special crew of sailors, in order to furnish the seating area with shade. Renouncing the possibili-



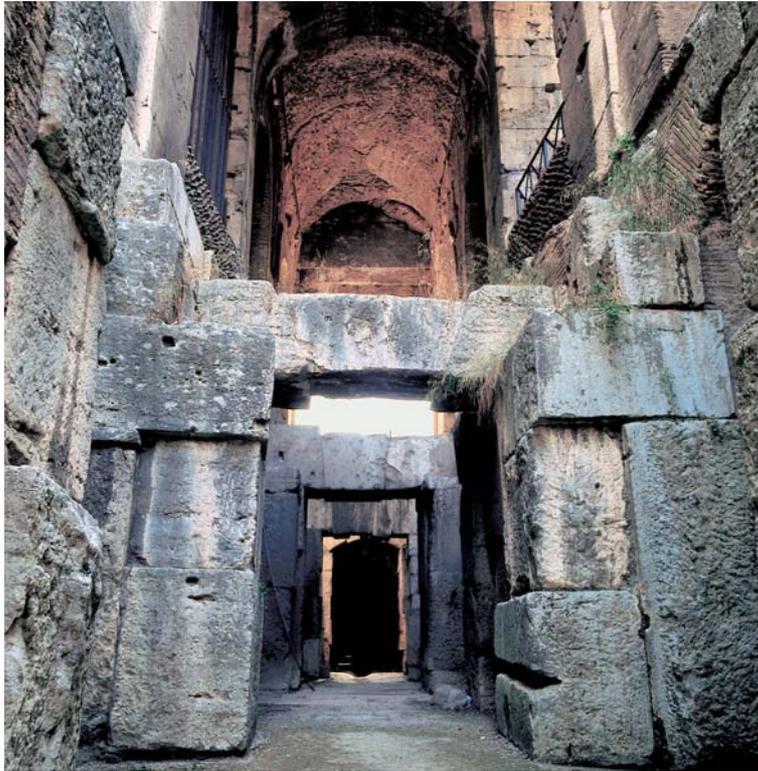
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The subterranean areas of the Flavian Amphitheatre



Erroneous reconstruction of the sector reserved for senators

ty of flooding the arena, an underground system of passageways was created with equipment for facilitating the rapid succession of animals and scenes. The amphitheatre was repeatedly stricken by earthquakes and fires and was repaired many times over the years. In 523 it hosted its last wild beast hunt. In the Middle Ages it was converted into a fortress, by the Frangipane and then the Annibaldi families. The monument's decline accelerated after the 1349 earthquake, when the materials in marble, bronze and iron started to be stripped systematically. For centuries the Colosseum became noth-



Subterranean parts of the Flavian Amphitheatre: the east entrance, connected to the gladiators' barracks, the Ludus Magnus

ing but a city quarry. In order to save it, Pope Benedict XIV pronounced it a holy place in 1744 due to the blood spilt by the martyrs, and placed around the arena 14 aedicules of the *Via Crucis*, which were later removed in 1874. The restoration of the monument began in the 19th century, but its condition only improved notably after 1870. The amphitheatre is elliptical in plan, measuring 188 metres by 156, and travertine was used for the exterior and load-bearing parts. The cavea, which seated a public of as many as 50,000, was planned with particular care, with the seating rows plotted on radial walls, inclining at about 37 degrees. At the bottom and middle levels the seating rows were of marble, as these were the places taken up by the most important spectators, while in the upper section of the cavea the structures were of wood. Rationalized systems of access and numbered entrances facilitated the rapid tran-

sition of spectators. The imperial family and the highest-ranking state officials enjoyed the use of entrance passages especially designed for retinues, with no steps or long diversions.

The architectural structure of the building was of three orders, each with eighty archways, framed by engaged columns set in the middle of piers. The lowest order was in the Tuscan style, the middle one Ionic, and the upper one Corinthian. The attic contained windows which, in ancient times, alternated with bronze shields. Two thirds of the way up the attic we can still see the large stone brackets which held the masts used to hoist the canopy. The underground sectors included storage areas, lifts, ramps, trapdoors, cages for the wild beasts and various facilities. There was also an underground passageway via which combatants might reach the amphitheatre from the nearby gladiatorial barracks, the *Ludus Magnus*.

Leaving the Colosseum behind us, we enter the left side of **Via dei Fori Imperiali**.

The Via del Impero was created between 1924 and 1936, with the destruction of the dense carpet of buildings which stretched from Piazza Venezia to the Colosseum. Since the end of the Second World War it has been referred to by its present name. The annual parade of the armed forces takes place down this road every year on 2nd June, to mark the Anniversary of the Republic.

7. Walking, walking...

If we continue down the left side of the road and up the Clivo di Venere Felice we soon reach the church of

S. Maria Nova, better known to Romans as **S. Francesca Romana**. It was here, at this point on the Velia, that there rose an older, smaller church, which Pope Paul I dedicated to Saints Peter and Paul at the very spot where Simon Magus is reputed to have fallen after a magic flight undertaken as a public challenge to St Peter. Indeed, the church preserves the *silices apostolici*, flagstones which are sup-

posed to bear the imprint of knees left by the apostle Peter when he knelt to pray to God for the punishment of Simon Magus. The church is referred to as *Nova* because it was built to replace the church of S. Maria Antiqua, rendered unviable by the frequent flooding of the Tiber, towards the end of the 10th century. It is where S. Francesca Romana and her followers became Oblates in 1425. After 1870, part of the convent passed to the demesne, and it is now used as headquarters of the Archeological Superintendency of Rome and Forum Antiquarium. The travertine **facade** was executed in 1615 by Carlo Lombardi. At the highest point of the facade are **five statues of saints**, including one of the titular saint. Next to the church stands the 12th century **Romanesque campanile**, which rises to five storeys, the top three of which are decorated with two-leaved windows: at the top is a Marian niche decorated by a pair of small columns. The interior of the church features a single nave and remains of the original Cosmatesque **paving**, which has been

partly restored. The **confessio**, by Gian Lorenzo Bernini, contains the remains of the saint, which were brought here from Tor de' Specchi. In the basin of the apse is a 12th century **mosaic** featuring the **Madonna enthroned flanked by Saints James, John, Peter and Andrew**.

Back on Via dei Fori Imperiali, we come to a stretch of wall on our left bearing **four marble panels** documenting the extent of the conquests of Ancient Rome, from the reign of the seven kings up to that of Trajan, under whom the empire expanded to its maximum size between 98 and 117. A little further on, we come to the church of **SS. Cosma e Damiano**, which Pope Felix IV had built inside the Temple of Romulus in the 6th century. Cosmas and Damian were two brothers, both doctors, who were martyred under Diocletian and were much venerated in Byzantium. Of all the renovations which the church has undergone, the most important was that under Urban VIII in 1632, when the floor was raised by seven metres, trans-

Via dei Fori Imperiali



SS. Cosma e Damiano, facade and wall on which *Forma Urbis* was hung



forming the Temple of Romulus into a sort of crypt. Of particular interest is the wall to the left of the entrance to the church, which bears the regularly spaced holes which once contained the bronze hinges which supported the marble panels of the *Forma Urbis*, the

map of Rome carved in the reign of Septimius Severus. Of particular interest in the interior of the church is a splendid 6th-century **apsidal mosaic**, which features **Christ in between Saints Peter, Paul, Cosmas and Damian, accompanied by Saint Theodore and Pope Felix IV**. On the triumphal arch is the **Mystic Lamb surrounded by seven candlesticks, angels, the symbols of the Evangelists and the 24 Elders of the Apocalypse**. Since 1939 the basilica has also conserved an 18th-century Neapolitan *presepio*.

Exiting the church and returning to Largo della Salara Vecchia, we cross over to the right side of Via dei Fori Imperiali and then cross Via Cavour at the pedestrian crossing. On our left extends the area of what is left of the Imperial Forums.



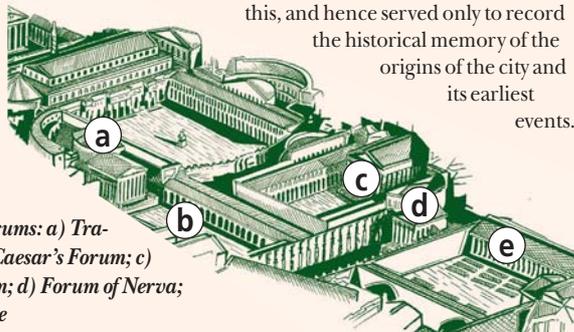
SS. Cosma e Damiano, apsidal mosaic: Christ at his Second Coming amid Saints Peter and Paul and Cosmas, Damian and Theodore and Pope Felix IV; below, the twelve lambs

...continuing
the walk...

The Imperial Forums

By the end of the Republican period the ancient Roman Forum was no longer big enough to carry out all those functions – political, religious, administrative and representative – which up until then had made it the engine of the city. Rome was now the centre of a considerable empire and it needed a project for extending the Forum area. The most suitable area for this purpose was identified in the broad flat area located to the north-west of the old square. This had for centuries been an intricate labyrinth of winding streets, shops and street markets. Julius Caesar was the first to build in this area, with Caesar's Forum, which was to become a kind of prototype for the Imperial Forums. Augustus followed suit, adding another forum at right-angles to that of his predecessor, penetrating deep into the heart of the Suburra. Then it befell Vespasian to construct the grand complex of the Temple of Peace, further to the south, in celebration of his conquest of Judaea. This, in practice, took on all the functions of a public square. A small space remained between this and the earlier Forum of Augustus, which Domitian used to build what was known as the

"Forum Transitorium", later completed by his successor Nerva, from whom it then took its name. When Trajan acceded to power there was no longer any area big enough to contain a forum worthy of his conquests, which is why he decided to level off the saddle of land joining the Capitoline to the Quirinal, in order to create the necessary space to undertake what is by far the biggest and most spectacular of all the Imperial Forums. With this operation Trajan also connected the ancient city, which had grown up inside the circle of the seven hills, with its more recent part, which stood on the outer plain of the Field of Mars. The greatest project of city and architectural redevelopment in ancient times was therefore completed in less than a hundred and fifty years, and the main commercial and economic functions of the ancient Forum came to a decisive end. With the building of a series of large squares surrounded by porticoes and featuring temples, basilicas and other buildings, the city acquired a new political, administrative, judicial and monumental centre. The Roman Forum was inevitably cut off from all this, and hence served only to record the historical memory of the origins of the city and its earliest events.



The Imperial Forums: a) Trajan's Forum; b) Caesar's Forum; c) Augustus's Forum; d) Forum of Nerva; e) Forum of Peace

8. The Temple, or Forum, of Peace

The first of the Imperial Forums that one comes to when arriving from the Colosseum is actually the least visible, in so far as its remains are almost completely buried under the road surface. Only a small part of it, currently still under excavation, can be seen in the area between the church of SS. Cosma e Damiano and Largo della Salara Vecchia.

Under the emperor Vespasian, father of Titus and Domitian and founder of the Flavian dynasty, construction began of an enormous area occupied by gardens and surrounded by a quadri-

porticus. This monumental square, one of the most beautiful in Ancient Rome, was dominated by the presence of the temple dedicated to Peace, from which the entire architectural complex, known as the *Templum Pacis* and later as the Forum of Peace, derived its name. The temple was built to celebrate the conquest of Jerusalem in 70 AD, and tradition has it that its inner chamber contained objects sacred to the Jewish religion, including the famous *menorah*, or seven-branched candlestick, in addition to several works of Greek art.

9. The Forum of Nerva, or Forum Transitorium

Domitian, the last of the Flavians, had a monumental forum of his own built in the area still free between the Temple of Peace, the Forum of Augustus, Caesar's Forum and the north-east side of the Roman Forum. This was a grand square, long and narrow, decorated with columns which formed a pseudo-porticus and bore reliefs perhaps connected to the myth of Arachne, of which a section survives bearing the figure of **Minerva** and scenes of women's tasks. Below are two columns which, over the centuries, became known as the **Colonnacce** (ugly columns). At the bottom was a temple dedicated to the goddess

Minerva, of whom Domitian was a particularly fervent devotee, of which the podium remains, uncovered during excavations in the 1930s. The columns and remaining marble of the temple were used by Pope Paul V in 1606 for the construction of the Acqua Paola fountain on the Janiculum. Inside the forum were two large statues of emperors, but Domitian was unable to complete his project as he was assassinated in 96 AD in a palace conspiracy. It was his successor, the elderly emperor Nerva, who inaugurated the square in 97. It was known as the Forum Transitorium because of the way in which it functioned as a thoroughfare, connecting the earlier forums.



Representation of Minerva in the Forum of Nerva

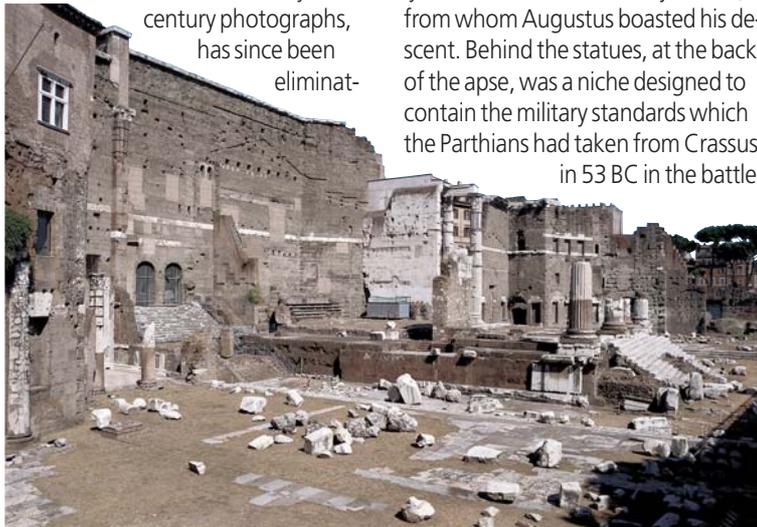


The so-called Colonnacce in the Forum of Nerva

10. The Forum of Augustus

If we continue down Via dei Fori Imperiali, we may admire the forum opened in 2 BC by Augustus to endorse his own political role and that of the Julian dynasty. The forum is separated from the surrounding inhabited area, just as it was in ancient times from the Suburra neighbourhood, by an imposing wall in blocks of *peperino* tufa with elements in travertine, which served to protect the square from the fires that were a frequent occurrence in the popular quarters. There were two entrances in the wall: one with three openings and the other with just one. The latter became known over the centuries as the **Arco dei Pantani** (Arch of the Marshes), or Saint Basil's Marsh, because water tended to stagnate around it. The street which passed under the arch, which can be seen in some early 20th century photographs, has since been eliminated.

The two entrances led to two stairways flanking the podium of the **Temple of Mars Ultor**, which led up to two commemorative arches. The podium of the temple still stands in the middle at the back, with a stairway in front which led up to the altar. Each side of the temple featured eight fluted columns with Corinthian capitals, three of which still stand on the left side, plus the pier at the back, and some columns have been re-erected on the front of the temple. The chamber ended in an apse which contained the statues of Mars, Venus and Caesar. Mars Ultor ("the avenger") celebrated Augustus's avenging of the death of Caesar with the defeat of his assassins at the battle of Philippi in 42 BC. The goddess Venus, mother of Aeneas, underlined the Julian family's connection with the Trojan hero, from whom Augustus boasted his descent. Behind the statues, at the back of the apse, was a niche designed to contain the military standards which the Parthians had taken from Crassus in 53 BC in the battle



of Carrhae and which Augustus had managed to get back through skilful diplomacy.

The square was built over an area of about 125 metres by 118, and it featured a portico with columns of Caryatian green marble on three sides, topped off by an attic with *Caryatids*. The long sides of the square opened into two large exhedras with a series of niches containing statues of gilded bronze, dedicated to the main characters of the legendary Trojan cycle and to those of Rome's Monarchical and Republican history. The centre of the forum contained the statue of Augustus

on a triumphal quadriga. The complex must also have contained a colossal statue of the emperor, measuring about 14 metres in height. Indeed, the fragment of the foot of a large marble statue can still be seen at the end of the left portico, in a large square room. The head of the emperor is probably the one now kept on the east wall of the Cortile della Pigna in the Vatican. We know that the room which contained the colossus also contained panels by the famous Greek painter Apelles, which depicted the exploits of the Macedonian leader Alexander the Great.

11. Trajan's Forum

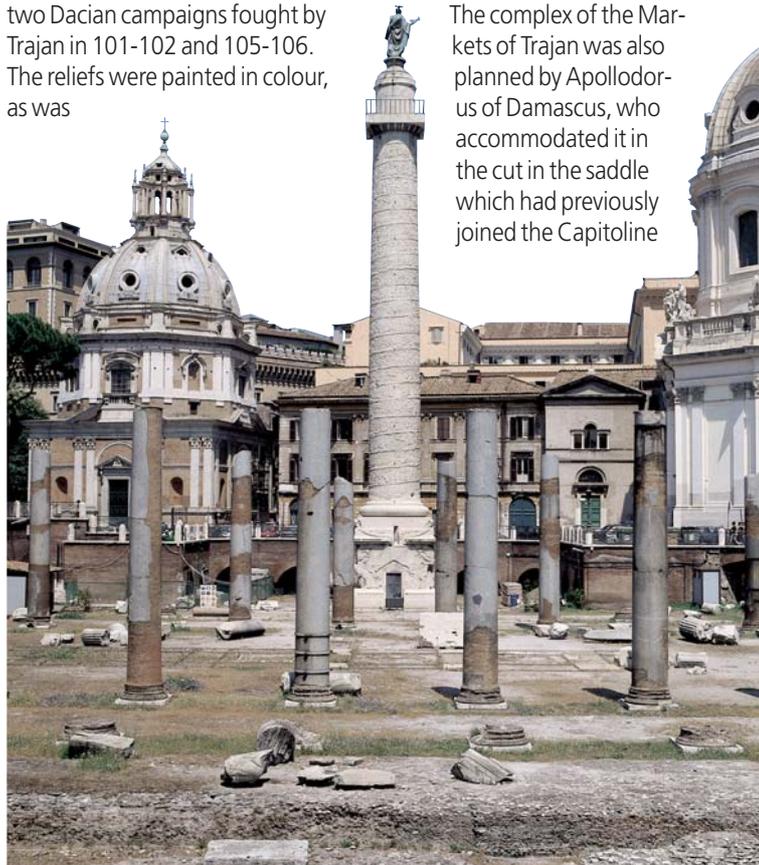
Trajan entrusted the job of designing his monumental square and the adjacent Markets of Trajan to the greatest architect of the time, Apollodorus of Damascus. The largest of all the Imperial Forums, it was undertaken between 107 and 113, making use of the area between the Velia, the Suburra, the valley of the Roman Forum and the Quirinal, with the levelling off of the saddle which had until then joined it to the Capitoline. The forum was 300 metres long and 185 metres wide. Entrance was via a commemorative arch surmounted by a statue of the emperor on a quadriga. The centre of the square was also dominated by a gigantic equestrian statue of Trajan, while the porticoed sides of the fo-

rum were adorned with statues of Dacian prisoners, some of which were recycled for the Arch of Constantine. The long sides of the square opened into two exhedras, of which the one adjacent to Trajan's Markets can still be seen. These exhedras contained statues of the emperors from the time of Augustus onwards. At the bottom of the square stood the **Basilica Ulpia**, the largest basilica in ancient history, named after the emperor, whose full name was Marcus Ulpius Traianus. At the top of the building was another monumental quadriga with Trajan, and the facade bore the standards of the imperial legions. On the attic, a large frieze in high relief narrated Trajan's departure for war and the salient moments of

his battles. Part of this frieze, divided into four panels, is used to decorate the Arch of Constantine. The *Atrium Libertatis*, the Hall of Liberty, where slaves were formally freed, was transferred to one of the apses of the basilica. **Trajan's Column** is 39.83 metres tall, the same height as the saddle of land which levelled off to make way for the building of the forum. It consists of large blocks of Italian Luna marble and a square base decorated with reliefs depicting the arms of the vanquished Dacians and eagles bearing festoons. Like a kind of long papyrus, a low-relief frieze circles up the column narrating the two Dacian campaigns fought by Trajan in 101-102 and 105-106. The reliefs were painted in colour, as was

the custom in ancient sculpture, and the 2,500 odd figures were equipped with miniature arms and accoutrements. The base originally housed the golden urn containing the emperor's ashes. At the top was a statue of Trajan, which disappeared in medieval times and was replaced in the 16th century by a statue of Saint Peter. The column was previously thought to have stood between the Latin and Greek libraries. However, the traditional reconstruction of this forum and the exact position of some of its most important constituent elements has since been cast into doubt by more recent studies.

The complex of the Markets of Trajan was also planned by Apollodorus of Damascus, who accommodated it in the cut in the saddle which had previously joined the Capitoline





Trajan's Column, detail of the legionaries crossing a boat bridge over the Danube, the personification of which may be noted below

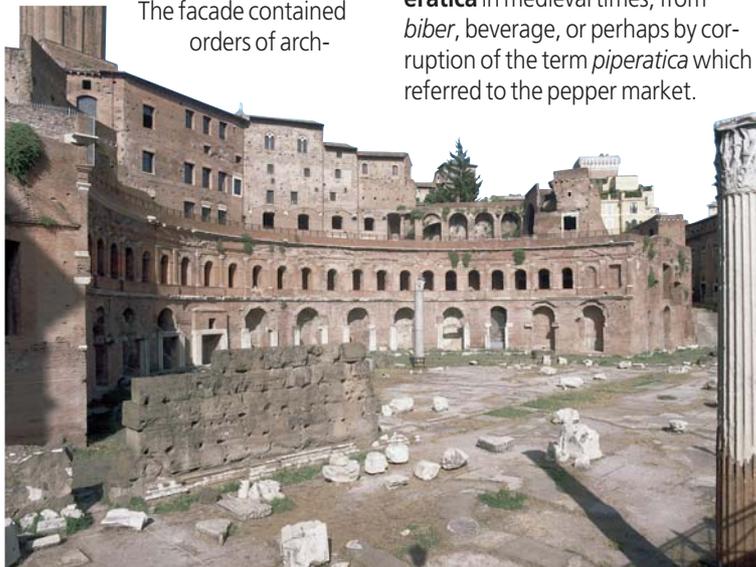


Base of Trajan's Column

to the Quirinal. The ancient entrance was near one of the exhedras of Trajan's Forum. Here extended the main front of the complex architectural structure, which consisted of a large exhedra, concentric to that of the forum and connected to it by a street.

The facade contained orders of arch-

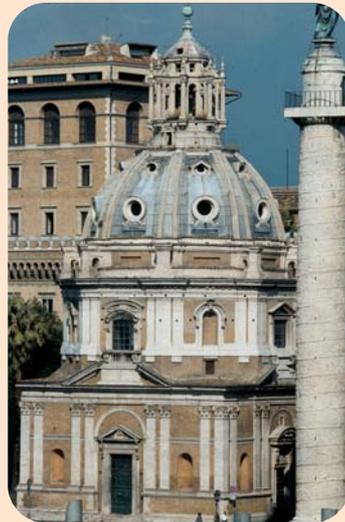
ways framed by small pilasters with capitals and surmounted by alternating whole and broken pediments. Inside the exhedra were shops (*tabernae*) and stairs which led up to the upper storeys. The upper part consisted of a terrace along which ran a road lined with *tabernae*, which still exists and was renamed the **Via Biberatica** in medieval times, from *biber*, beverage, or perhaps by corruption of the term *piperatica* which referred to the pepper market.



The large exhedra of the Markets of Trajan

12.
Walking,
walking...

We continue on our walk and enter an open space to the right of Piazza Venezia. Piazza Madonna di Loreto takes its name from the **church of S. Maria di Loreto**, the first of the two churches on our right. This was started in around 1507 by the Tuscan architect Antonio da Sangallo the Younger, and was completed by a pupil of Michelangelo's, Jacopo del Duca. The church stands on a massive square brick base, decorated by pairs of composite pilasters. On top of this massive cube stands a tall octagonal drum with windows, which supports the cupola, in turn divided into eight segments. Entrance is via a tall doorway surmounted by a triangular pediment, which contains an admirable carving in low relief of the **Madonna and Child and the Holy Family**, which dates back to 1580 and is attributed either to del Duca or to Andrea Sansovino. The interior is octagonal in plan, with chapels, a deep presbytery and a vault decorated with gold



S. Maria di Loreto: Antonio da Sangallo the Younger and Jacopo del Duca, drum and cupola

stucco. On the walls are six marble statues, including one of **St Susanna**, a masterpiece by François Duquesnoy, and **St Cecilia** by Giuliano Finelli,

both dating to 1630. On Onorio Longhi's high altar is a painting on wood of the **Antoniazio Romano** school depicting the **Madonna between St Sebastian and St Roche**. Next to S. Maria di Loreto is another church which is at first sight similar in structure. This is the church of the **Santissimo Nome di Maria**, built in 1736 by the confraternity of the same name which was formed after the Christian victory over the Turks during the siege of Vienna in 1683. The building work was supervised by the French architect Antoine Dérizet, who took his inspiration from the nearby 16th century church. The interior is fairly simple: elliptical in plan, with seven chapels lined in coloured marble. On the high altar is an ancient image of the **Virgin Mary**, which originates from the Oratory of S. Lorenzo in Laterano.

Crossing over Via dei Fori Imperiali at the traffic light, we come to the remains of **Caesar's Forum**, which was uncovered during the demolition in the last century of the old Renaissance quarter which had grown up over the area. The excavated part consists of the west porticus and the remains of the podium and temple. The square was built up by the dictator over an area previously occupied by private dwellings, purchased at huge cost in 54 BC. Although it was inaugurated in 46 BC, it was actually only completed by Augustus after Caesar's death. The Forum represents the prototype for the imperial squares: it consisted of a rectangular area measuring 160 metres by 75, in the middle of which stood a statue of the leader on horseback. The short side to the north-west was occupied by the Temple of Venus Gen-



etrix, dedicated by Caesar in 48 BC on the eve of the Battle of Pharsalus, in which Pompey was defeated once and for all. As progenitor of Aeneas, Venus was regarded as founder of the Julian clan. The temple boasted a pronaos with eight Corinthian columns across the front. It contained a statue of Venus by Arcesilas, two famous pictures by Timomachus of Byzantium, and a gilded bronze statue of Cleopatra. Alongside Caesar's Forum ran the

Clivus Argentarius, the street of the *argentarii*, or moneychangers, and from there an ancient road descended to the square.

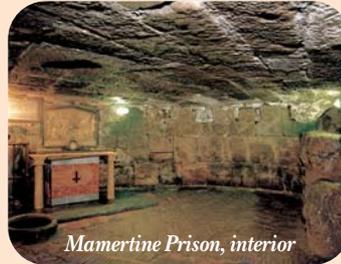
Now the slope takes us to an open space which contains the **church of S. Giuseppe dei Falegnami** (St Joseph of the Carpenters), which is named after the confraternity which started renting the pre-existing church of S. Pietro in Carcere in 1540. The interior of the new church of the Carpenters, built



between 1597 and 1663, was entirely refurbished after 1860, and it took on its current external appearance with the lowering of the level of the square in 1941. Inside, half way down the right wall, is the entrance to the **Oratorio dei Falegnami**, with its 17th century ceiling in pure gold.

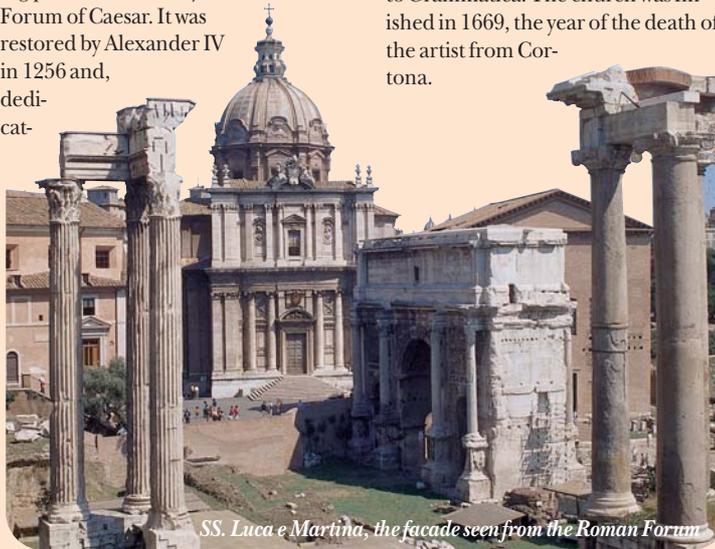
The church stands on the ancient prison of the **Tullianum**, an ancient cistern used by the Romans as a place of detention and execution. In the Middle Ages it was known as the **Mamertine Prison**. It was the place of execution of Jugurtha, Vercingetorix, the supporters of the Gracchi, those of Catiline and Sejanus and his sons. According to Christian tradition it is here that the Apostles Peter and Paul were imprisoned before being martyred.

The facade in travertine blocks dates back to the mid-1st century, and bears the inscription of the Consuls Vibius Rufinus and Cocceius Nerva. On the left of the open space stands the majestic **church of SS. Luca e Martina** (St Luke and St Martina). Originally, the church was only dedicated to St Martina, and it was probably founded in the 7th century under Pope Honorius I using parts of the nearby Forum of Caesar. It was restored by Alexander IV in 1256 and, dedi-
cat-



Mamertine Prison, interior

ed to St Luke from 1577 onwards, it was donated to the *Accademia del Disegno* by Sextus V in 1588. It was then that the reconstruction of the church began, the supervision of building work being entrusted to the Bolognese architect Ottaviano Mascarino. The final appearance of the church is, however, due to Urban VIII and his nephew Cardinal Francesco Barberini, who entrusted the reconstruction to Pietro da Cortona in 1643. The latter restored the crypt and executed the splendid facade and cupola, all at his own expense. The interior is in the form of a Greek cross with semi-elliptical apses at its ends. The nave floor contains the **tomb of Pietro da Cortona**. Over the high altar is a copy of Raphael's **St Luke painting the Virgin** by Antiveduto Grammatica. The church was finished in 1669, the year of the death of the artist from Cortona.



SS. Luca e Martina, the facade seen from the Roman Forum

CAPOLINEA

How to get there...

Piazza Venezia:

H - 30 - 40 - **44** - **46** - 60 - 62 - 63 - 64 -
70 - 81 - **84** - 85 - 87 - 95 - 117 - 119 -
130 - 160 - 170 - 175 - 271 - 492 - 571 -
628 - 630 - **715** - **716** - **780** - **781** - **810** -
850 - **916**

Piazza del Colosseo:

3 - 60 - 75 - 81 - 85 - 87 - 117 - 175 - 271
- 571 - 673 - **810** - **850** - Metro B

Tour Lines:

110

Legend:

Numbers in **bold** show the terminus (e.g. **70**)
the **underlined** indicate the tram (e.g. 3)
those in **green** are on Mondays - Saturdays (e.g. 30)
those in **red** are only on holidays (e.g. **130**)



Comune di Roma
Turismo

2

Tourist Information Points

mon-sun 9.30am-7.00pm

- Castel Sant'Angelo Piazza Pia
- Santa Maria Maggiore Via dell'Olmata
- Piazza Sonnino Trastevere
- Via Nazionale near Palazzo Esposizioni
- Piazza Cinque Lune - Navona
- Via Minghetti - Fontana di Trevi
- Visitor Centre Via dei Fori Imperiali *mon-sun 9.30am-6.00pm*

- Fiumicino Leonardo da Vinci Airport - International Arrivals - Terminal C

mon-sun 9.00am-6.30pm

- Termini Station Via Giolitti 34 - Inside of building F/track 24

mon-sun 8.00am-8.30pm

- Ciampino "G.B. Pastine" Airport of Rome

mon-sun 9.00am-6.30pm

- Lungomare P. Toscanelli - corner Piazza A. Marzio (Ostia Lido)

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