

four regions of the Augustan city (II, III, IV and X). It was the largest monumental fountain in the ancient city, surrounded by a circular basin, and its shape is known from its representation on some ancient Roman coins. It was restored by Constantine, and received its name from its resemblance to the conical turning-post for chariot races in circuses (*meta*), and from the fact that it 'sweated' water (from *sudare*, to sweat) through numerous small orifices. In 2002 another circular structure made from red tufa, about 3m in diameter, was found here and dated to the time of Augustus.

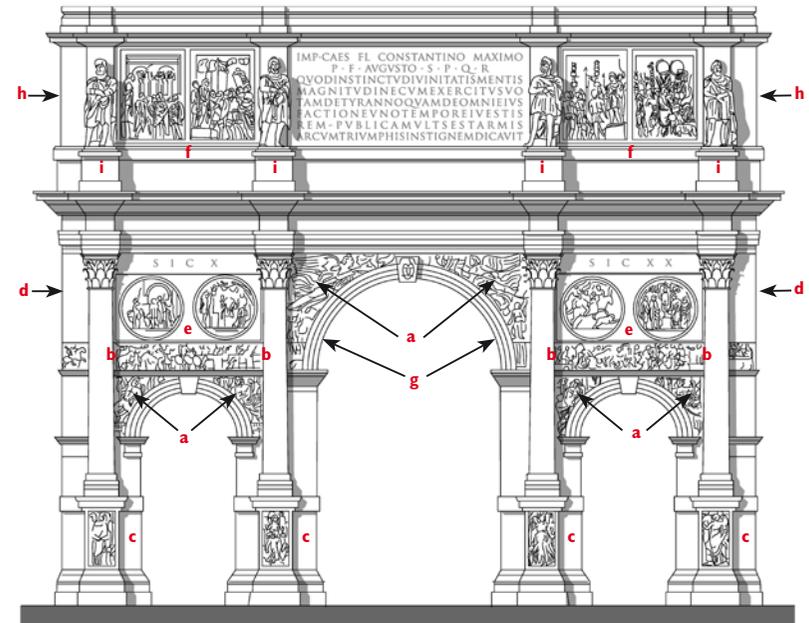
### Temple of Venus and Roma

The summit of the Velia is now a terrace with gardens (145m by 100m); the area virtually coincides with that of the enormous Temple of Venus and Roma, the largest temple ever built in Rome. The ruins are being restored, and may one day be opened to the public. Probably designed by Hadrian himself, the temple stood on the site of the vestibule of the Domus Aurea. The temple was built in honour of Venus, the mother of Aeneas and the ancestor of the *gens* Julia, and of Roma Aeterna, whose cult appears to have been localised on the Velia. Begun c. 125 and dedicated in 135, it dominated this end of the Roman Forum. Its Classical proportions show how strongly the emperor was influenced by Greek architecture. Damaged by fire in 283, it was restored by Maxentius in 307. It is said to have been the last pagan temple which remained in use in Rome, as it was not closed until 391 by Theodosius. It remained virtually entire until 625, when Honorius I stole the bronze tiles off its roof for the old basilica of St Peter's.

To counteract the unevenness of the ground, it was necessary to build a high platform. This was of rubble, with slabs of peperino and marble-faced travertine. The temple was dipteral, with ten granite Corinthian columns at the front and back and 20 on each of the sides. It had two *cellae* placed back to back; that facing the Forum was the shrine of Roma Aeterna and the other that of Venus. The visible remains date from the time of Maxentius. The two cellae (the apses and diamond-shaped coffers were added by Maxentius) are still standing. That facing the Roman Forum has been partly restored, and is visible from a room of the Antiquarium in the Forum (see p. 86). The brick walls were formerly faced with marble and provided with niches framed with small porphyry columns. The apse contains the base of the statue of the goddess. The floor is of coloured marbles. The temple was surrounded by a colonnaded courtyard, with propylaea on the north and south sides; in 1935 some of the columns and column fragments on the south were re-erected, and can be seen from the extension of the Sacra Via which leads from the Colosseum towards the Arch of Titus in the Forum.

## THE ARCH OF CONSTANTINE

The triple Arch of Constantine (*map p. 639, D3*) was erected in AD 315 by the senate and people of Rome in honour of Constantine's victory in 312 over a rival emperor, the 'tyrant' Maxentius, at the Milvian Bridge, which crosses the Tiber to the north. A triumphal arch of excellent proportions, it was partly decorated with fine sculptures



ARCH OF CONSTANTINE, NORTH SIDE

and reliefs reused from older Roman monuments. Because of this it is often taken as an example of the decline of the arts in the late Imperial period. The inscription mentions the 'divine inspiration' which served Constantine in his victory over Maxentius, which seems to refer to both pagan and Christian beliefs. Indeed scholars have suggested that the idea of a supreme god (Jupiter) already existed in pagan Rome.

#### Decorations from the time of

**Constantine:** The decoration in the spandrels of the arches (a), the oblong reliefs above them (b), the victories and captives at the base of the columns (c), and the two roundels and oblong friezes on the two short sides of the arch (d).

**Decorations from the time of the Antonines:** The large medallions on each of the two long faces (e), with finely-carved hunting scenes and pastoral sacrifices, belonged to an unknown monument erected by Hadrian. The high reliefs

in the attic (f) were taken from a monument to Marcus Aurelius, and represent a sacrifice, orations to the army and to the people, and a triumphal entry into Rome.

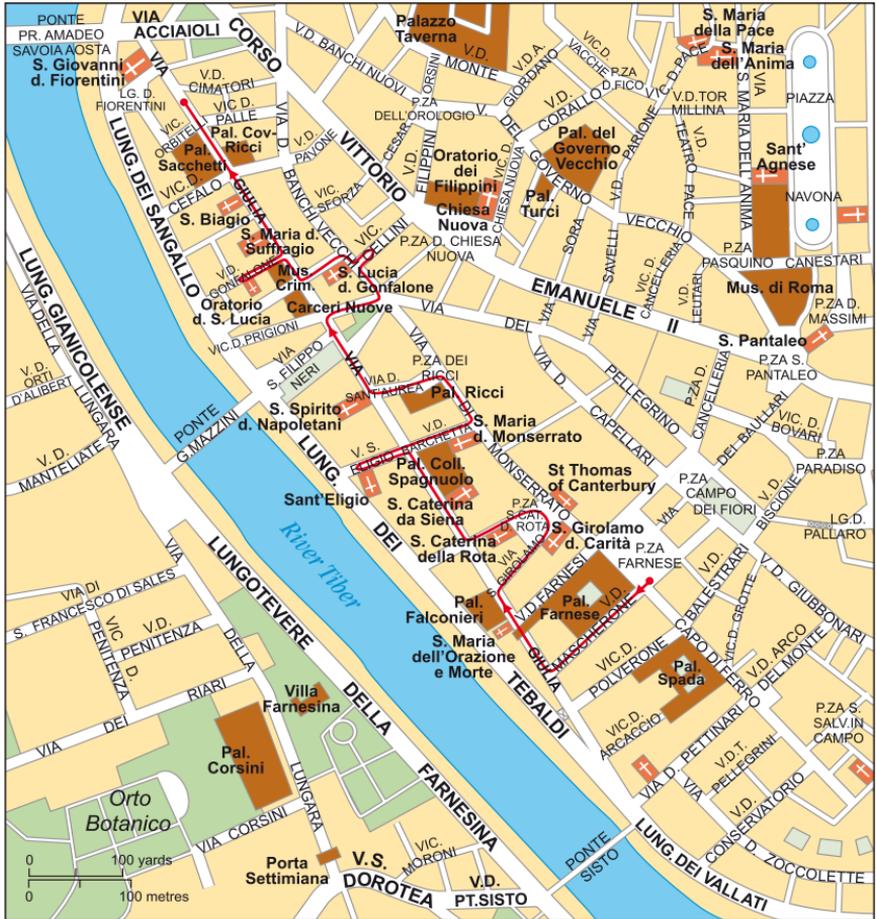
**Decorations from the time of Trajan:** The splendid large reliefs on the inside of the central arch (g) and the two on the upper sides (h) come from the frieze of a monument commemorating Trajan's victories over the Dacians and are probably by the sculptor who carved Trajan's Column. The eight statues of Dacians (i) are of the same date.

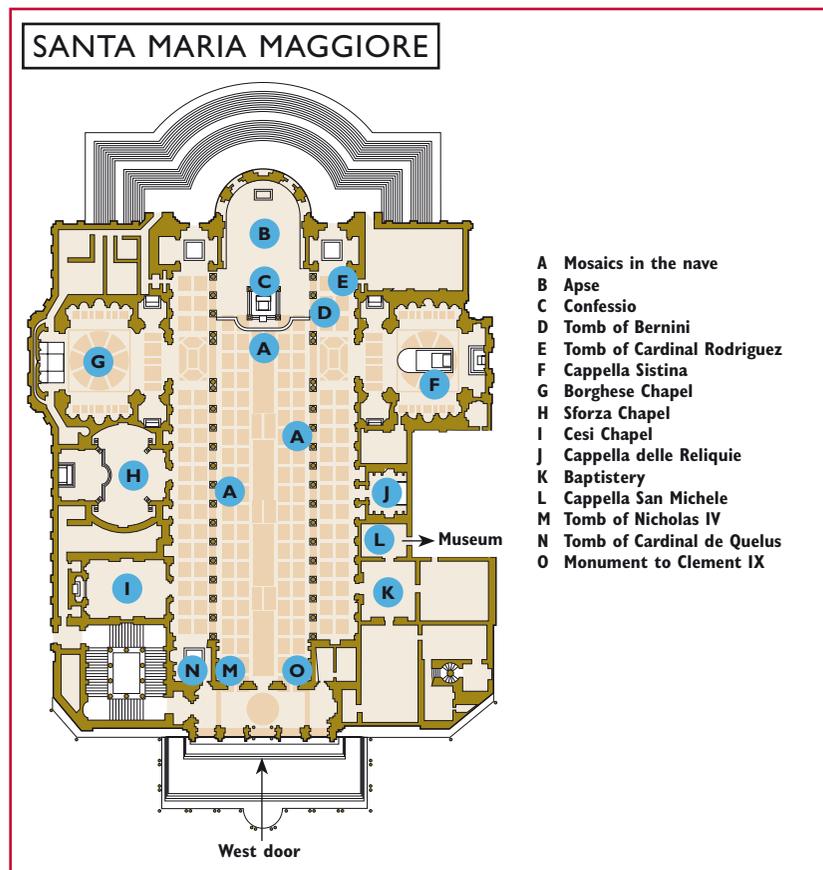
## WALK THREE

### VIA GIULIA: A 16TH-CENTURY STREET

From Piazza Farnese, Via del Mascherone leads down towards the Tiber skirting the magnificent side façade of Palazzo Farnese to meet Via Giulia. This very long, straight street was laid out by Julius II (1503–13) parallel to the Tiber, and it was for a long

time the most beautiful of the 16th-century streets of the city. It still has a number of fine palaces with lovely courtyards, and many churches (although most of them are kept closed). There are some antique shops and art galleries on the street.





tradition, they are the most important Roman mosaic cycle of this period. The small rectangular biblical scenes high up above the nave architrave are difficult to see with the naked eye. On the left are scenes from the lives of Abraham, Jacob and Isaac; on the right, scenes from the lives of Moses and Joshua (restored, in part painted); over the triumphal arch are scenes from the early life of Christ.

**B** The **mosaic of the apse**, dating from the time of Nicholas IV (1288–94),

is signed by Jacopo Torriti and represents the *Coronation of the Virgin*, with angels, saints, Nicholas IV, Cardinal Jacopo Colonna and others. It is the culminating point of all the mosaics in the church, commemorating the declaration at the Council of Ephesus that the Virgin was the Mother of God. The Virgin is seated on the same throne as Christ, a composition probably derived from the 12th-century mosaic in the apse of Santa Maria in Trastevere (see p. 382). Below, between the windows, are more mosaics

by Torriti depicting the life of the Virgin, notably, in the centre, the *Dormition*. The four reliefs below the windows are from

the old ciborium by Mino del Reame. (For the mosaics on the façade, also dating from Nicholas IV's day, see p. 299 below).

### High altar

**C** The **confessio**, reconstructed in the 19th century by Virginio Vespignani, contains a colossal kneeling statue of Pius IX (see p. 431) by Ignazio Jacometti. A porphyry sarcophagus containing the relics of St Matthew and other martyrs serves as the high altar; the baldacchino over it, with four porphyry columns, is by Ferdinando Fuga, who designed the

main façade. A fragment of the crib of the Infant Jesus is kept here in a reliquary adorned with reliefs and silver statuettes.

**D** By the two sanctuary steps is the simple **pavement tomb of the Bernini family**, including the great architect and sculptor Gian Lorenzo.

### Side chapels

**E** In the chapel (*being restored at the time of writing*) at the end of the south aisle is the beautiful **tomb of Cardinal Consalvo Rodriguez** (d. 1299), a masterpiece by Giovanni di Cosma, showing the influence of Arnolfo di Cambio. The mosaic of the *Madonna Enthroned with Saints* fits well with the architectonic lines of the tomb, which was completed by the beginning of the 14th century.

produced by a pope who started out life as a swineherd but by the end of his pontificate had paid for this staggering profusion of statuary, marble and precious stones. A few years later the astute diplomat Paul V decided he was not to be outdone and he commissioned the even more sumptuous Borghese Chapel opposite. The temple-like baldacchino, carried by four gilt-bronze angels by Sebastiano Torrigiani, covers the original little Cosmatesque Chapel of the Relics, redesigned by Arnolfo di Cambio (late 13th century) with figures of the crèche by his assistants. These are now displayed in the museum (see below).

**F** The **Cappella Sistina** (*being restored at the time of writing*), on a domed Greek-cross plan, is a work of extraordinary magnificence executed for Sixtus V by Domenico Fontana (1585). Some of the marble panels were brought from the Septizodium on the Palatine (see p. 104), which had been demolished by the same pope. The chapel is a veritable church in itself, decorated with statues, stuccoes and Mannerist frescoes around the sumptuous tomb of the pontiff (and that of St Pius V on the left). It is a remarkable example of competitive opulence

**G** The splendid **Borghese Chapel** or Cappella Paolina was erected for Paul V by Flaminio Ponzio in 1611 as the pope's burial place. The best-known contemporary artists were employed to decorate it, including Lodovico Cigoli, Guido Reni, Giovanni Baglione and Passignano, and the sculptors Stefano



Statue of a Muse (2nd century AD) enveloped in a cloak, one of a group of Muses which once adorned the garden of a suburban villa. Her left hand originally held a scroll. In the background can be seen one of the two *Pothos* statues, headless and leaning languidly against a pillar:

a colossal figure of Jupiter and a female figure, both also found near the Theatre of Marcellus and thought to date from the Augustan era.

By the door into the Boiler Room are fragments of a colossal **acrolithic statue of Fortuna** from her temple in Largo Argentina (see p. 564). The head has holes in the earlobes for earrings. It must have been some 8m high and is attributed to a Greek artist working in Rome in 101 BC.

#### Sala delle Caldaie (Boiler Room):

Finds from the *horti*, the gardens of the villas of Rome's wealthiest citizens, which were destroyed at the end of the 19th or early 20th centuries to make room for new buildings. The beautiful **statue of a Muse**—possibly Polyhymnia—shown

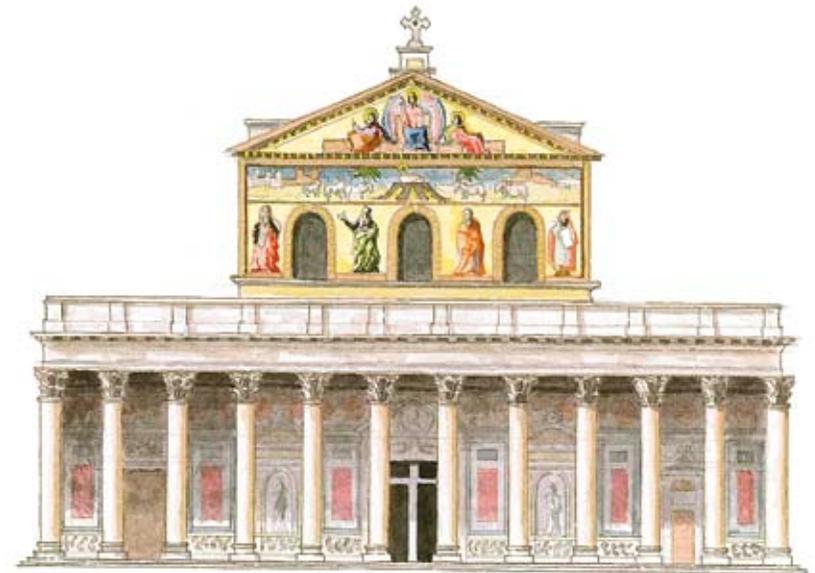
leaning on a pillar of rock (illustrated above) was found near the Variani Gardens. Close to the wall are statues found in the Gardens of Licinius (see p. 566), including a charming **seated figure of a girl**, a Hadrianic copy of a Hellenistic work. Near the machines at the far end are two **statues of Pothos**, son of Aphrodite, symbol of physical yearning. At the side of the machines are **funerary monuments** (some from the nearby Ostiense necropolis), including the amusing grave marker of a shoemaker.

Stairs lead up to a balcony with a good view of the 4th-century AD **mosaic with hunting scenes**: one part shows a wild boar hunt, the other shows animals being herded into a cage, prior to shipment to the amphitheatre.

## SAN PAOLO FUORI LE MURA

Map p. 5. Open 7–6.30. Cloisters 9–1 & 3–6 (except Sun). Bus 23 or 769 from Piazzale Ostiense (map p. 637, A3). Metro line B to San Paolo.

San Paolo fuori le Mura, 2km from Porta San Paolo, is the largest church in Rome after St Peter's. It is one of the four great patriarchal basilicas of Rome, and one of the three which have the privilege of extraterritoriality. The church commemorates the martyrdom of St Paul, whose remains are preserved under the altar. In 2009 forensic experts joined voices with tradition in their opinion that these were indeed the bones of the Apostle. Pope Benedict XVI announced the result at the close of the Pauline Year (see p. 276).



BASILICA OF SAN PAOLO FUORI LE MURA

### History of the basilica

According to Christian tradition, a Roman matron called Lucina buried the body of St Paul in a vineyard on the site of the church. A small shrine existed here when, in 384, a large basilica was begun by Valentinian II and Theodosius the Great at the request of Pope Damasus. It was enlarged by Theodosius' son, Honorius, and decorated with mosaics at the expense of Galla Placidia, Honorius' sister. After the additions made by Leo III (pope 795–816), it became the largest and most beautiful church in Rome. In the 9th century it was pillaged by the Saracens and John VIII (872–82) enclosed it in a fortified village known as Giovannipolis. It was restored c. 1070 by Abbot Hildebrand,