

Appartamento dei Conservatori

These rooms were decorated over the centuries with scenes of Roman history. They have fine carved ceilings and marble doors, and are adorned with sculptures.

(1) Sala degli Orazi e Curiazi:

Decorated in the late 16th century with **frescoes by Cavaliere d'Arpino**. The scenes, in imitation of tapestries, depict the mythical founding of Rome and the famous legendary episodes in its early history (including the battle between the Horatii and the Curiatii, after which scene the room takes its name). From the 16th century onwards, statues of popes were set up here in acknowledgement of papal power in the city. Today just two statues face each other at either end of the room: *Urban VIII*, a marble studio work begun by **Bernini**; and Urban's successor *Innocent X*, a bronze of some ten years later by **Alessandro Algardi**. It is interesting to compare the work of these two great rival sculptors.

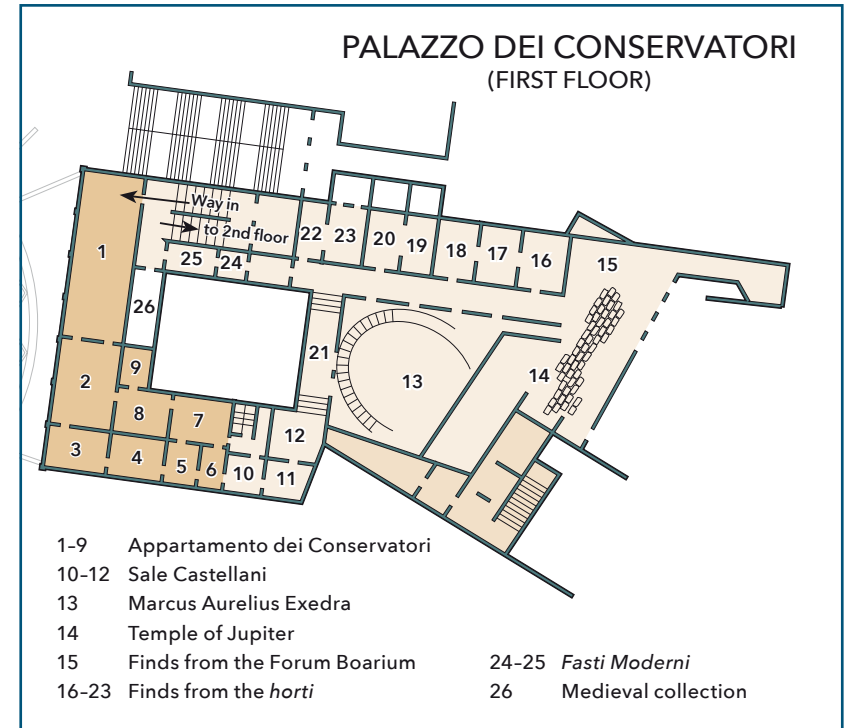
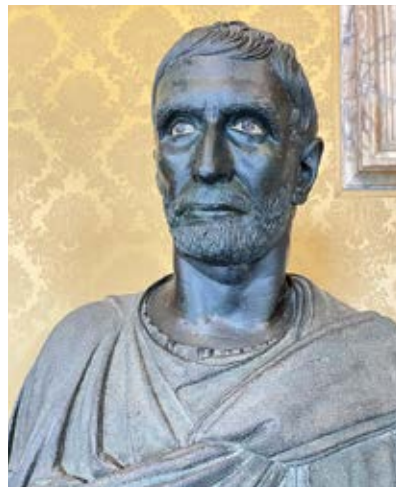
It was in this room in 1957 that the Treaty of Rome, the foundation of the European Economic Community, was signed by Italy, Belgium, France, West Germany, Luxembourg and Holland. In 2004 the treaty establishing a constitution for Europe was ratified here (replaced in 2007 by the Lisbon Treaty).

(2) **Sala dei Capitani:** The *Capitani* are the **statues of generals**, all of them members of Roman patrician families who served the pontifical state by combating the infidel. They are all amusingly dressed as ancient Romans. The statue of Alessandro Farnese, great-grandson of Paul III (who fought against Protestants in the Spanish Netherlands, d. 1592), is a modern head on an antique body. Carlo Barberini (brother of Urban VIII) is celebrated by a full-length

ancient statue restored by Alessandro Algardi (who added the cloak) and completed by Bernini (who supplied the portrait head). Gian Francesco Aldobrandini (nephew of Clement VIII) died fighting the Turks in Hungary in 1595. Marcantonio Colonna was the victor of Lepanto, also fought against the Turks (1571). The statue of Tommaso Rospigliosi, who sports a magnificent periwig, is by Ercole Ferrata. Late 16th-century **frescoes by Tommaso Laureti** show legends from Republican history as recounted by Livy.

(3) **Sala dei Trionfi:** The room is named after the **frieze** of 1569 illustrating the triumph of the consul Lucius Aemilius Paullus after he defeated

The *Capitoline Brutus*, one of the earliest portrait bronzes known, thought to date from the 4th century BC.



Perseus, King of Macedon in 167 BC, resulting in Rome's domination of the Greek mainland. Plutarch's description of the triumphal procession up the Capitoline hill (although written some two centuries later) provided the source. The fine painting of the **Battle between Alexander the Great and Darius** is by Pietro da Cortona, on a monumental scale despite its relatively small dimensions (and dominated by one of the artist's characteristic bright blue skies).

The superb bronze head with striking pale ivory eyes, known as the **Capitoline Brutus**, shows Etruscan, Greek and Roman influences and is usually dated to the 4th century BC, making it one of the

earliest bronze portraits known (the bust was added much later). This Brutus was the Republic's first consul, in 509 BC. The Brutus who murdered Caesar, who lived over four centuries later, may have been a descendant.

In 1471, Sixtus IV presented four ancient bronzes to the *Conservatori*, and two of them, the *Spinario* and the *Camillus*, have traditionally been displayed here since that time (*though at the time of writing, they had been removed to the Marcus Aurelius Exedra, where they were exhibited together with the other two, the Roman She-wolf and a head of Constantine*). The celebrated **Spinario**, a sculpture of a boy (with copper lips) plucking a thorn (*spina*) from his foot,

THE ROMAN FORUM

The Roman Forum (*map p. 703, D3*) is one of the most famous historic sites in any capital city in the world. It served both as a market-place and as a space for political assemblies, and its ruins stand today as a powerful testament to past greatness. The Curia or Senate House is still one of the most conspicuous buildings. Some vestiges of Republican basilicas and temples survive, although the most visible remains date from the Imperial era. They include the triumphal arches of Titus and Septimius Severus and the towering vaults of the Basilica of Maxentius. Throughout the year visitors flock here in vast numbers: even in ruins, the Forum remains a place where people gather, preserving its extraordinary atmosphere as a place of human congress.

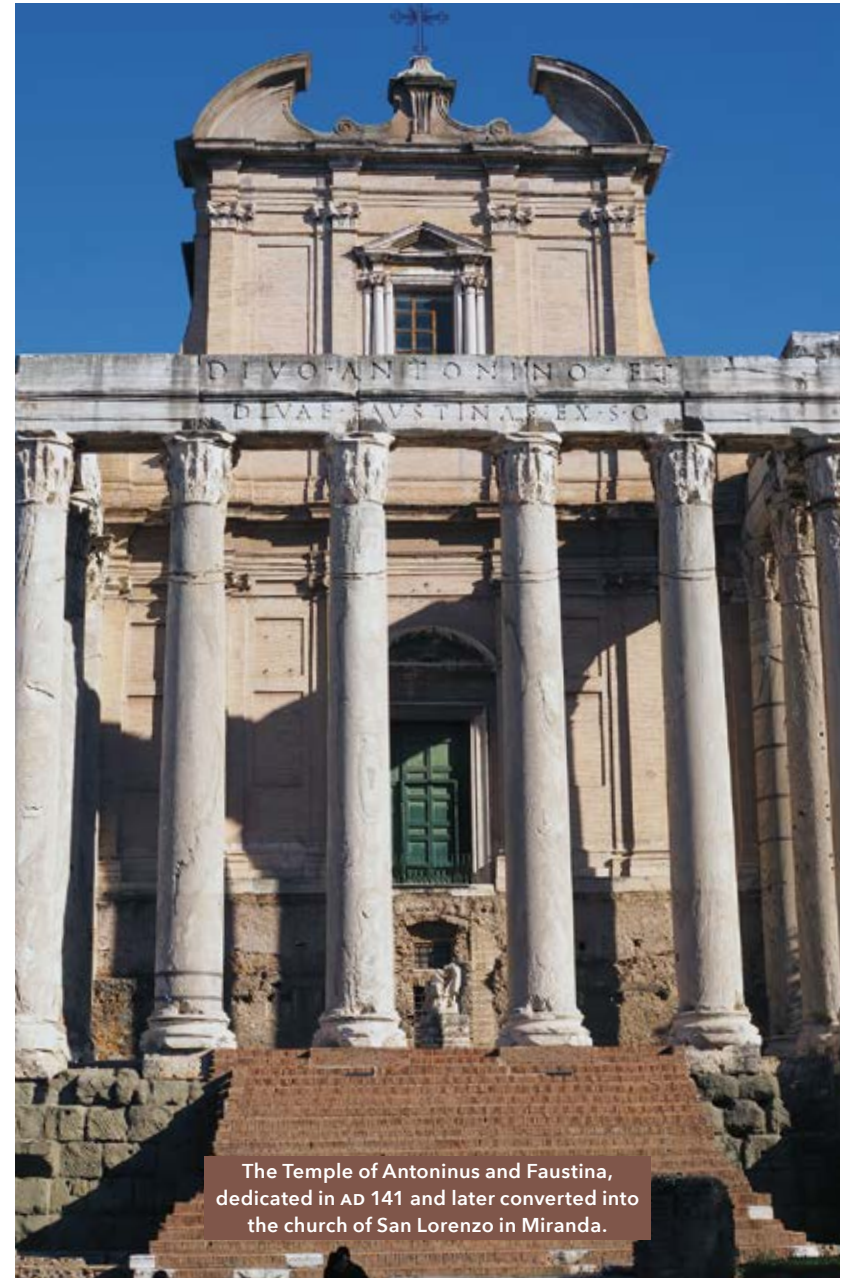
VISITING THE ROMAN FORUM

NB: Excavation and maintenance work is constantly underway and the accessible areas at any one time are subject to change.

Tickets: The Roman Forum, Imperial Fora, Palatine, Colosseum and Domus Aurea are grouped together as the 'Parco Archeologico del Colosseo'. Open 8.30–dusk. There are a number of different ticket options. A standard day ticket gets you into the Forum, Palatine, accessible areas of the Imperial Fora and certain parts of the Colosseum (not the arena). The Forum Pass SUPER gives supplementary access to special and newly-opened sites in the Roman Forum and Palatine: this is a highly recommended option (though it does not include the Colosseum). For details and advance tickets (worth buying to avoid the queue), see colosseo.it.

Entrances and exits: At the time of writing there were entrances on Via dei Fori Imperiali; from a gate at the Colosseum end of the Forum; from Via di San Gregorio through the Palatine; and from beside Trajan's Column. The first and two last also function as exits and there are further exits from the Basilica of Maxentius and off the Vicus Tuscus. However, entrance and exit points are subject to change, so check before you visit, or consult the online map, which has exits and entrances marked on it. SUPER ticket-holders can also enter by the gate above the Arch of Septimius Severus. There are lifts at Via dei Fori Imperiali and Colosseum/Arch of Titus, but although some smooth paths have been provided, the Forum is difficult for wheelchairs and buggies.

There are drinking fountains with a constant supply of Rome's excellent fresh water, as well as WCs (though often with queues) and vending machines for snacks.



The Temple of Antoninus and Faustina, dedicated in AD 141 and later converted into the church of San Lorenzo in Miranda.

ECLIPSED BY BERNINI

The Tuscan-born Francesco Mochi (1580–1654) was once one of the pre-eminent sculptors in Rome, sought after by patricians and prelates, with a busy workshop in Via Gregoriana. In 1645 the Falconieri commissioned a sculpted high altarpiece for the church of San Giovanni Battista, not far from their family *palazzo*. The new figures, in marble, were to replace a *Baptism* in painted wood. But Mochi's work did not please his patrons. His style, intensely Mannerist, sinewy and stiff, was very unlike the easy fluidity of Bernini that was so captivating Roman patrons and instead it was Antonio Raggi, a disciple of Bernini, who produced the *Baptism* group that adorns the high altar today. Another disappointment was to befall Mochi when a couple of years before his death, the Basilica of San Paolo fuori le Mura rejected the statues of *St Peter* and *St Paul* that he had produced for them.

Thanks to well-wishers, all of the unclaimed statues were ultimately sold (the money went to Mochi's widow) and sites were found for them: the *Baptism* statues were placed at the north end of the Milvian Bridge and *St Peter* and *St Paul* on the exterior face of Porta del Popolo. All four have now been replaced by copies *in situ* and the original statues were brought back into town, all finding their way to San Giovanni dei Fiorentini. The *Baptism* group is now in the second north chapel. *St Peter* and *St Paul* (beside the west door) await re-housing.

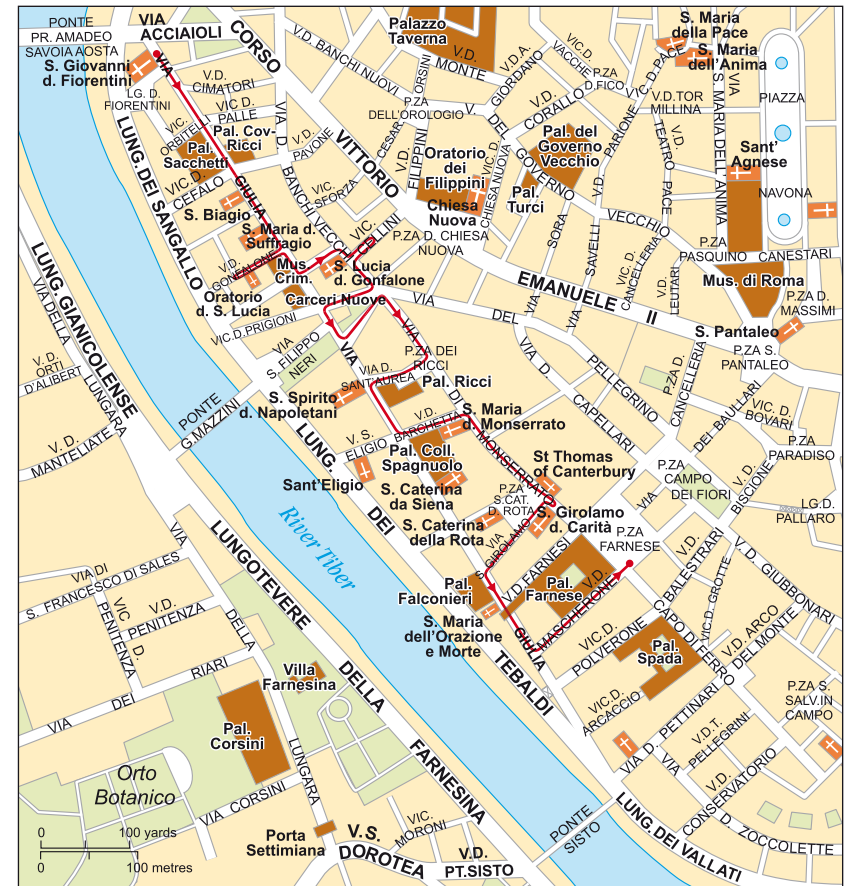
A WALK ALONG VIA GIULIA, A 16TH-CENTURY STREET

Via Giulia, a long, straight street running parallel to the Tiber, was laid out in 1508 by Pope Julius II (and named after him). For long the most beautiful of the city's 16th-century streets, it still has a number of fine palaces with somnolent inner courtyards, and numerous churches (although many of them are kept closed). At night it is lit by old-fashioned street lamps.

An impression of Via Giulia

Quiet like some noble street in a provincial town; quiet like a corridor between rooms which were the courtyards of palaces, or like the nave of a church with chapels on either hand: and when one went into these courtyards one was filled with astonished reverence on account of their secret silence broken only by the gentle sound of a fountain.

Mario Praz, *The House of Life*, 1958.



BEGIN THE WALK OUTSIDE THE CHURCH OF San Giovanni Battista dei Fiorentini, and look south along the line of the dead straight, slightly undulating street, with the sky and trees spread out as a backdrop at the end. Beyond a building on the right with a *trompe l'oeil* doorway and windows, the *palazzo* at **no. 79**, by Antonio da Sangallo the Younger (1535), has a plaque commemorating Cosimo de' Medici, of the great Florentine ruling dynasty, placed there by the palace's Florentine former owner. Opposite (if

you feel in need of sustenance) is the little Caffè Perù, and further on on the left (with another small *trompe l'oeil*, of a barred window) is *Vicolo delle Palle*. It was in this street, in 1640, that a man was said to have been struck with paralysis after hitting a tabernacle of the Madonna with his bowling ball, in a fury at having lost a game. The painting from the tabernacle is now in the Florentine church (see p. 245).

Further on up Via Giulia, the small palace at **no. 93** (left) has a pretty

harvests), Spes (Hope) and Venus (born from the sea), deities appropriate to a maritime and trading town.

(10) Seat of the Augustales: This was the headquarters of the priests of the Imperial cult. In it stands a copy of a statue found here, the solemn-faced empress Sabina, wife of Hadrian, as Venus Genetrix. Sabina was unloved by her husband and their marriage produced no children

The **Porta Orientale**, at the junction with Via dei Molini, was the east gate of the original *castrum*. Behind it are the ruins of huge **horrea** (11), warehouses for the storage of grain. They had multiple small rooms, some of them arranged around a central courtyard. Opposite them, across Via dei Molini, are the remains of **mills and bakeries** (12) (some rooms still preserve the stone kneading basins). Grain would have been fed to the mills from the warehouses across the street.

(13) Casa di Diana: Running perpendicular to the west of Via dei Molini is Via di Diana, a fine street which takes its name from a house whose small inner courtyard has a fountain and a relief of Diana. It has a characteristic layout: shops on the ground floor and apartments above, accessed by steep stairways. The rooms on the second floor had projecting balconies. The house

is entered through a vaulted corridor. A room on the left has fragments of restored frescoes. At the back are two rooms converted into a Mithraeum (*for the cult of Mithras, see p. 547*).

(14) Thermopolium: The remarkable survival of this Roman snack bar is one of the highlights of Ostia. Outside the entrance, under the alcove, are three brick-topped benches where one can imagine customers sitting in the shade with their jugs of wine. Just inside the door is a marble counter on which is a small stone basin. Inside is another counter for the display of food; above are wall-paintings of fruit and vegetables. On the rear wall is a marble panel which once had hooks for hats and cloaks. To the right is a latrine. At the rear is an outdoor courtyard and fountain.

The **Caseggiato dei Dipinti** (15), a 2nd-century apartment block on the corner of Via di Diana and Via dei Dipinti, was originally of four storeys, enclosing a garden. The ground floor has traces of 'architectural' wall-paintings in many of its rooms. In a hall behind, a substantial piece of fine polychrome mosaic flooring has been set up. Further up the street is the **Caseggiato dei Doli** (16), where numerous *dolia*, large terracotta jars for the storage of corn and oil, are sunk into the ground. More such *dolia*, some encrusted with barnacles, can be seen behind the Museum.

AROUND THE FORUM

The wide space occupied by Ostia's Forum is surrounded by the ruins of what once would have been noble buildings. The large brick hulk at its north end is the central core of the **Capitolium** (17), the city's most important temple, dedicated to the Capitoline Triad (Jupiter, Juno and Minerva) and fronted by a wide flight of steps.

View of Via di Diana in Ostia Antica.