

**Review: R. A. Staccioli, *Rome: Past & Present With Reconstructions*,
VISION, Roma, IT, 1959 (2008 edn.)**

Pages: 101

Old Rome From New Angles

This catalogues all of ancient Rome's major building works with basic descriptions and detailed pictures. The innovation of reconstruction transparencies overlaid on modern ruins is quite impressive, and something not available by just visiting sites.

The history is adequate and shows how religious both pagan and so-called 'Christian' Rome was, with the latter simply re-dedicating temples to popes and saints, contra scripture. The most notable example being the Pantheon to the Greek gods, made into a 'Christian' church in AD 608 by Pope Boniface IV.

Unfortunately, since Adobe Flash is deprecated the CD's swf files can't be played.

I) The Monuments of Rome (pp. 4-8)

Ara: altar.

Augustus chose to live on the Palatine hill, and in AD64 Nero burnt it and Rome to make way for his Domus Aurea.

In AD 275, Aurelia built a new circle of city walls 18km in circumference.

Constantinople was founded on the Bosphorus on 11 May AD 330

II) The Colosseum (pp. 9-21)

The Colosseum was built in the middle of the broad valley between the Palatine, Caelian and Esquiline hills. It had 160 outlets (*vomitoria*), and a

30-m high bronze naked Colossus of Nero adjacent. After his death it was modified to depict the sun god.

The great square of the Colosseum housed the Temple of Venus and Rome, inaugurated AD 135 by Hadrian.

The Arch of Constantine was erected AD 312 in his honour from liberating the city from tyrant Maxentius.

III) The Roman Forum (pp. 21-28)

This had the Temples of: Concord; Saturn; Castor and Pollux; Divus Julius; Vesta; Venus Genetrix; Augustus; and Mars Ultor.

A small sanctuary with slabs of black stone (*Lapis Niger*) with a 6thC BC inscription are said to be the grave of the legendary Romulus, Rome's founder.

Gladiatorial shows were free to attend.

IV) The Temples of Saturn and Concord (pp. 29-31)

Saturn was inaugurated at the Republic's founding, AD 498/7 BC. At its entrance stood the *Miliarum Aureum*, the umbilicus (centre) of Rome from which distances to other cities were inscribed.

Titus commissioned the Temple of Vespasian and Titus.

The Senate built the Arch of Septimus Severus in AD 202 to commemorate his extension of the Empire's boundaries out to Mesopotamia.

V) The Basilica Aemelia (pp. 32-34)

VI) The Temples of Divus Julius and of Castor and Pollux (pp. 35-37)

Caesar's adopted son Octavian built the temple to Julius in 29 BC, next to Castor and Pollux which was there since the 5thC BC.

Castor and Pollux were the *Dioscuri*, sons of Jupiter.

VII) The Temples of Vesta and the Arch of Augustus (pp. 38-43)

Vesta was protectress of the family, and the Vestal Virgins guarded the sacred and eternal flame inside her temple. They lived in the House of the Vestal Virgins, six in number, and had to serve for thirty years. They were chosen by the *Pontifex Maximus*.

Any priestess who broke her chastity vow or let the eternal flame go out was buried alive in the *Campus Scleratus* (“field of the wicked”).

The Vestal’s house was considered a prototype of the Catholic convent.

VIII) The Basilica of Maxentius (pp. 44-46)

This was 100m bu 65m, but he never saw its completion.

IX) The Imperial Fora (pp. 47-53)

Vespasian constructed the Temple of Peace after winning the Jewish War [a notable contradiction with the later Colosseum!].

The last and most grandiose building here was the Forum of Trajan, 300m by 185m. It was a built to celebrate Rome’s victory over the Dacian barbarians of modern Romania.

X) Trajan’s Markets (pp. 54-55)

XI) The Forum of Caesar (pp. 56-57)

Julius Caesar had this built from the spoils of his Gallic Wars.

Venus was thought to be the progenitrix of his family; mother of Aeneas the Trojan hero who fled and settled in Latium, then had a son Iulus.

XII) The Forum Augustus (pp. 58-63)

The Temple of Mars Ultor (“Mars the Avenger”) was the centrepiece.

The Palatine hills was the city's sacred birthplace, said to be founded 21 April, 754/3 BC by Romulus. The hill has remains of early bronze-age huts.

In 44 BC, Augustus made the hill his home. In 28 BC, he built a temple to Apollo on it.

XIII) The Domus Aurea (pp. 64-67)

Seutonius writes the *atrium* of the house had a portico of 1.5km and a 120ft Colossus of Nero.

After Nero's death in AD 68, most of the site was returned to the Roman people.

XIV) The Circus Maximus (pp. 68-70)

The first circus was said to be built by King Tarquinius Prisca to mark the place of the rape of the Sabine women. It was 600m long and 200m wide, and could house 300,000.

In AD 357, Constantine placed an Egyptian obelisk of Thutmosis II there.

Aurigae were chariot drivers.

XV) The Theater of Marcellus (pp. 71-74)

Traditional Roman custom viewed the theatre as a danger to public morality.

The Cult of Apollo Medicus (Apollo the Healer) was introduced in Rome in 431 BC.

XVI) The Pantheon (pp. 75-77)

The building colours were Numidian yellow and Phrygian purple.

Emperor Phocas gifted it to Pope Boniface IV in AD 608 and the pope turned it into a Christian Church dedicated to Mary and all the martyrs.

XVII) The Mausoleum of Hadrian (pp. 78-80)

From the 10thC, this was changed into the Caste Sant'Angelo in defence of the Vatican.

XVIII) The Stadium of Domitian (pp. 81-83)

Domitian built this c85 AD; 275m by 106m and holding 30,000 spectators.

XIX) The Sacred Area of Largo Argentina (pp. 84-86)

XX) The Tiber Island (pp. 87-89)

This is said to have formed after expulsion of the last king, Tarquin the Proud when people threw sheaves of wheat into the river looted from Campus Martius

The Temple of Aesculapius was built there 291 BC; his serpent would swim around the island.

XXI) The Basilica of Saint Peter (pp. 90-93)

This area was known since ancient times as the *Ager Vaticanus*, unhealthy from its marshy nature.. Caligula reclaimed the land in AD 37-41 and built a circus, which Nero completed. It was here innumerable Christians were killed.

Peter is said to be buried on the northwest slope of the Vatican Hill in a pagan necropolis. In the 4thC, Constantine ordered the slope levelled and construction of a basilica in Peter's honour which was completed AD 349. It was 85m X 64m.

Warrior Pope Julius III had it reconstructed from 18 April, 1506, under Bramante, as well as building Vatican Palace.

XXII) Christian Rome (pp. 94-101)

κατα-κυμβασ: "by the caves".

Outside Rome's walls developed a subterranean city of the dead in dozens of kilometres of tunnels.

Large extensions occurred from the 3rdC, with Christians, Jews, and Pagans contributing.

The Catacombs of Domitilla and St Callistus were the longest.

Flavia Domitilla was niece of emperor Domitian, who put her husband to death and exiled her in AD 95 for "atheism and Judaic practices".

Callistus was a deacon who was killed in the persecution by Severus in AD 222.

People thought anyone buried near the 'holy' tombs would be greatly helped in getting to heaven.

The Papal Crypt and Crypt of Cecilia are the first collective burial sites of the bishop of Rome.