The wheel of history
The Oppian and Esquiline Hills
The wheel of history

The Oppian and Esquiline Hills

- The Oppian and Esquiline Hills  
  1. Walking, walking...  
  2. The Domus Aurea  
  3. Walking, walking...  
  4. San Pietro in Vincoli  
  5. Walking, walking...  
  6. San Martino ai Monti  
  7. Walking, walking...  
  8. The Trofei di Mario and the Porta Magica  
  9. Walking, walking...  

Cover image, the so-called Trofei di Mario (Trophies of Marius)  
On this page, San Martino ai Monti, detail of the room with staircase leading underground.
Walks in Rome are a series of itineraries for those wishing to further their knowledge of the city. Publications covering Rome’s great Renaissance period have already been made available - Caravaggio, Raphael, Michelangelo, and Baroque art as expressed in the architecture of Bernini and Borromini. Now further special walks have been drawn up to accompany and aid the visitor in their “step by step” discovery of our city. As such, the city is represented and “read” as a unique picture, a mosaic which comes together and dissolves according to the needs of the visitor. You can choose from monumental Rome (Via dei Fori Imperiali and the Colosseum), The Hill of Poetry (the Aventine and its surroundings), Amid Woods and Aqueducts (the Caelian Hill), The Dawning of Christian Rome (San Giovanni in Laterano and Santa Croce in Gerusalemme), The Suburra (the neighbourhood of Monti and Santa Maria Maggiore), and A Virtual Film Set (Via Veneto and Surroundings). It has been a daunting enterprise but a fulfilling one that has succeeded in simply conveying an image of the city’s traditions and cultural identity, whilst being at the same time scientifically accurate. The narration uses both a graphic approach and text, which is an effective system for conveying an understanding of Rome’s vast and unbelievable history. Our guides allow tourists to immediately identify the main significance of their chosen walk and at the same time orientate themselves in the area they wish to visit. These carefully selected walking guides serve well as a symbolic “artist’s sketchbook,” providing the visitor with a large window display, full of mirrors, inside of which there is a cultural horizon that could not be more Roman, evocative or abundant in enduring values.

Rome awaits you!

The Tourist Office
of the Rome Municipal Council
Key
1. Walking, walking...
2. The Domus Aurea
3. Walking, walking...
4. San Pietro in Vincoli
5. Walking, walking...
6. San Martino ai Monti
7. Walking, walking...
8. The Trofei di Mario and the Porta Magica
9. Walking, walking...
The Oppian and Esquiline Hills

In the ancient city, Esquiliae was the name given to the eastern hilly area that created the fifth Augusta District. The name, which probably originates from the verb *excolere* (resident of the exterior), illustrated that the area was considerably different in respect to the original centre on the Palatine. Beginning in the ninth century BC, a good part of the Esquiline was used as a burial area and maintained this purpose throughout the entire republican period. However, the western summits known as the Oppian, Falvatrus and Cispius were a part of the primitive *Septemtium* (religious festival of the seven hills) and consequently were included within the Servian Wall. During the principate of Augustus, the cemetery area was reclaimed, fully included within the city and luxurious villas such as the Meccenate began to embellish the entire area. Throughout the imperial period, many of these aristocratic residences became encompassed into imperial property despite the fact the area maintained a peripheral feel in respect to the more ancient nucleus of the city. Its distance from the centre encouraged the concentration of the early Christian basilicas here and some of the most ancient *tituli* quickly followed, as such a new Christian city arose next to the pagan one. Events during the Middle Ages caused the few surviving inhabitants to concentrate their activities near the banks of the Tiber, thus the hills of the Esquiline remained practically uninhabited. During the second half of the sixteenth century, Sixtus V launched a rebirth of the area with the construction of his own villa in the area of present-day Termini train station as well as with the creation of a modern network of roads that had the Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore at its centre. Successive centuries would see the area flourish with grand noble villas, emulating those of classical antiquity which made the hilly area into an unforgettable city-garden until 1870. However, when Rome became the capital, everything was sold, parcelled out and destroyed. According to the 1873 regulatory plan, the area was designated for public administration and a new Rome was superimposed over the ancient one. During the twentieth century, the Esquiline experienced a strong increase in its residential population with a progressive urban deterioration. Beginning in the eighties, a neighbourhood advancement programme was launched that began with the renovation of Piazza Vittorio. Thus, the wheel of history continued to turn and provide new challenges and changes. Currently, the area between the Oppian and Esquiline Hills has the largest number of inhabitants originating from other areas of the globe and exhibits all of the advantages and difficulties that this dimension involves. The ancient Esquiline finds itself at the cutting edge of new strategies for advantageous co-habitation among cultures. Yet again, it is the birthplace of a new city.
It has a basilica shaped nes, adorning it with the various coats of arms of noble families and grotesque decorations, whereas the garden contains the remains of fountains, nymphaeum and statues. At the end of via del Colosseo, there is Largo Agnesi whose terraces provide a beautiful view of the area surrounding the Colosseum, as well as the Velian and Palatine Hills.

Continuing to the left, past via Vittorino da Feltre, which contains large school buildings, there is via degli Annibaldi. This road was dug in 1894 as a sort of trench between the slopes of the Esquiline and takes its name from the Roman family, members of the Ghibellines, who supported Frederick II. The family obtained control of the Colosseum, previously fortified by the Frangipane, from this sovereign. Near the intersection with via Nicola Salvi, it is possible, with advance permission, to visit a nymphaeum. It has a basilica shaped design that is probably from the late-Republican age and was discovered at 6 metres underground during the excavation work for the road in 1895. The remains include a large apsidal room with basin and is adorned with niches featuring decorations in the form of shields, armour, cornucopias and bucrania (heads of cattle) created from pumice as well as pieces of marble, glass and shells. The Torre degli Annibaldi (Annibaldi Tower) is located on the right side of via degli Annibaldi, on the slopes of the Fagutalis, one of the three summits of the Esquiline. The building, which in part has collapsed and currently belongs to the Order of the Maroniti, was erected in 1204 in an advantageous position as a controlling fortalice for the Colosseum. Subsequently, the extensive fortification system to which it was connected housed the Convent of Santa Maria in Monasterio. To the right of via degli Annibaldi, there is the beginning of via Nicola Salvi, above which, facing the Colosseum, there are a few visible remains of the Terme di Tito (Baths of Titus). With the arrival of the Flavian dynasty, damnation of the memory of Nero began. This included returning the area previously confiscated by Nero for the Domus Aurea complex to public use. The Baths of Titus were installed in the area where the private Neronian bathing establishments may have been located, as witnessed by Suetonius. The baths were still visible around the middle of the sixteenth century as works of the Venetian architect Andrea Palladio testify. The complex was successively demolished for building material until the 1930s when it became a part of a definitive public park area. The building’s design confirmed the innovations of the Terme Neroniano-Alessandrine (Baths of Nero and Alexander) built in 62 AD by Nero in Campus Martius. The design featured a central axis for the bathing houses. Beginning from South to North, it ran caldarium (hot), tepidarium (warm) and frigidarium (cold). Twin symmetrically equal areas flanked it to sides that encompassed changing rooms (apodyteria), gymnasia and various services. The most recent excavations, assisted by the study of the Palladian drawings, have ascertained that the complex was distributed on various levels along the slope of the hill. The gate to Parco del Colle Oppio (“Colle Oppio” Park) is located along the descent of via Nicola Salvi. This gate was built in the 1930s by architects R. de Vico and A. Muñoz. The entrance to the ruins of the Domus Aurea is located to the left after travelling a short distance along viale della Domus Aurea. The complex was reopened for tours from 1999 to 2005, but was then declared unstable due to a collapse caused by the infiltration of rainwater from park’s drainage system.
2. The Domus Aurea

The immense residence, the result of Emperor Nero’s fervent imagination, was created by architects Severus and Celer. It extended along the Palatine, Esquiline and Caelian Hills incorporating and transforming buildings that existed prior to the famous fire of 64 AD. When referring to the complex today only the remains located on the Oppian Hill, the part which has provided the greatest contributions to our knowledge about the monument, are considered. Nero’s residence was inspired by models for Hellenistic monarchies. It included pavilions surrounded by parks populated with exotic fauna and an artificial lake red. Nero’s residence was inspired by Greek sculptor Zenodoros, who had already erected a colossal image of Mercury for the Gauls of Auvergne. Years later, the statue was moved next to the Flavian Amphitheatre and centuries later, it would give rise to the naming of the Colosseum. The first nucleus of the palace was the so-called Domus Transitoria, which connected the complexes on the Palatine with those on the Esquiline across the high grounds of the Velian. The Flavian family’s residence on the Palatine, created by architect Rabirio, probably reused many of Nero’s structures. The pavilion situated on the Oppian Hill allowed for an extensive view of the valley and the lake. In order to build it, the slopes of the hill were excavated and a series of reinforcing terraces were added. The urgency to complete the enormous project forced the architects to reuse some pre-existing structures, in particular some horrea (warehouses), but we know that many parts of the palace were still not completed in 69 AD. The surviving pavilion structure consists of two large polygonal courtyards connected by a series of rooms. At one time, these rooms were open, extremely bright and situated around the celebrated Octagonal Room. They were buried during Trajan’s time in order to be used as foundations for a new bathing complex. The Domus Aurea complex extended from east to west for approximately 350 metres and was 60 metres wide. It was preceded to the south by a sloping portico of which some traces still remain. To the north, the rear of the construction, there were long cryptopor ticus (covered passageways) which served as a barrier against the cold and allowed the servants to move about freely, thus avoiding the areas used for entertaining. The complex’s decoration was entrusted to the painter Fabullus, who covered the walls and ceilings with minute decorations with fanciful features. These paintings, which were copied by Renaissance painters, who were lowered down into the dark with only candlelight, inspired the so-called “grotesque” style. Elsewhere, marble decorations predominated including the flooring in opus sectile (patterned inlay) and the walls which were covered up to a certain height with panels and small pillars. Almost all of the marble was reused to decorate the Baths of Trajan and a few pieces are conserved in the adjacent Antiquarium. The pavilions began to be dug out at the beginning of the seventeenth century to search for treasures and only recent excavations have been for scientific purposes. The Sala Ottagona (Octagonal Room) is a fairly recent find. Its dome was an early model for the one used for the Pantheon built during Hadrian’s period. Many studies have identified this dome as the coenatio rotunda as cited by Suetonius. The coenatio rotunda was similar to a planetarium with a reconstruction of the heavens on the ceiling and had a mechanism, probably with hydraulic traction, which made the dome continually rotate day and night. With the death of Nero in 68 AD, the area began to decline and the Baths of Titus and the Flavian Amphitheatre were built on the area. After a disastrous fire in 104 AD, the complex was definitively abandoned and its burial began with the construction of the Baths of Trajan. To better sustain the weight of the bathing complex, Nero’s structures were reinforced by sustaining walls and replacement colonnades which altered the design of the original buildings.
Looking down from viale della Domus Aurea towards via Labicana, it is possible to catch a view of the remains of the Ludus Magnus. These ruins are located at the centre of an area below street level and are surrounded by a metal railing. This structure was the most important Roman gladiatorial barrack built during the princeps of Domitian. Its remains were identified in 1937 during demolition in the area for the construction of new buildings, while more intense excavations were performed in 1961. The barracks had a rectangular portico structure with a courtyard at its centre. In the middle of the courtyard, there was a small amphitheatre created by an oval arena equipped with a small cavea (underground cells for the animals) to aid in gladiator training. Around the courtyard, there were series of rooms used for accommodation. An underground corridor allowed the fighters to reach the performer’s area of the Colosseum during games. These barracks were a part of the vast area that Domitian had built to service the Flavian Amphitheatre, which included other barracks, warehouses for scenery used during the games, the armoury and the infirmary. Continuing on via della Domus Aurea, along which there are fountains and pergolas, there is a monument to Alfredo Oriani, a nineteenth-century politically subversive writer and patriot.

Take a left on via Serapide and enter the “Colle Oppio” (the Oppian Hill) Park. This portion of the park is characterised by the presence of the Terme di Traiano (Baths of Trajan) ruins. The emperor had the baths built on the remains of the Domus Aurea, which had been devastated by a fire in 104 AD. The designer of these baths was Apollodorus of Damascus, the same architect responsible for Trajan’s Forum and Markets. According to legend, Hadrian killed the architect because he was annoyed by Apollodorus’ criticism of his dome projects, which he ridiculed as being “pumpkins.” The Baths of Trajan represented the definitive model for grand imperial baths, as its features were later replicated in successive creations. There was a large area (330 x 315 metres) enclosed at the back by a large exedra and surrounded by gardens, pavilions, nymphaeum and probably, a library. The actual bathing complex was located at the centre and was equipped with changing rooms, gymnasiaums.
and basins for mud baths as well as thermal waters. The decision to orient the baths NE-SW in order to maximise the sun’s heat was maintained in successive bathing establishments. Other modifications included adding a series of basins with water of varying temperatures, a *caldarium*, a *tepidarium*, and finally, a *frigidarium*, along with a large open pool known as a *natatio*. There were also numerous rooms for private baths, massages and saunas. Only two exedras, a hall from the external enclosure with two apses and some minor remains from these baths are still visible today. According to testimonial inscriptions, they were also the first to be open to women. The celebrated *Laocoön* group, perhaps recovered from the *Domus Aurea*, which is currently visible in the Octagonal courtyard of the Vatican Museums, was among the numerous works of art that adorns this facility. Continue to *via delle Terme di Traiano* where there is the so-called *Cisterna delle Sette Sale (Cistern of the Seven Rooms)*, inside an area behind a high wall and enclosed by a gate. This cistern contained the water necessary for operating the Baths of Trajan. It is also possible that they were previously in use for the *Domus Aurea* and the Baths of Titus. During the sixteenth century, the rooms, originally believed to have numbered seven (hence the name) were drawn by Pirro Ligorio. However, in 1760 another two cisterns were discovered but a drawing of the entire structure, which includes the nine galleries and nine cisterns, was completed only during the last century. The complex was completely covered in *opus signinum*, a waterproof concrete, and it was possible to enter the rooms through two openings to control water level and perform necessary maintenance. The water flow for the bathing facility was regulated by pipes and large bronze taps. The late imperial age witnessed the construction of a courtly villa above the structure with small private baths, whereas in the successive centuries, the cisterns were used as communal graves for the plague-stricken. Upon reaching the end of *via delle Terme di Traiano*, take a left onto *via delle Sette Sale*. Continuing along this road, you pass one of the entrances to a large complex built from 1915-25 for the *Facoltà di Ingegneria (Faculty of Engineering)*, a large project which required the destruction of various ancient chapels and oratories. From *via delle Sette Sale*, we reach *Piazza di San Pietro in Vincoli*, where there is the celebrated basilica of the same name.
4. San Pietro in Vincoli

The basilica was attributed to Vasari and Baccio Pontelli, but it is currently considered to be the work of Meo del Caprino. The della Rovere family coat of arms appears on the capitals of the pillars, while the portico is enclosed with an early eighteenth-century railing adorned with the coat of arms of Clement XI of the Albani family. The main entrance to the basilica is a part of the renovations of Sixtus IV, della Rovere, and is surmounted by this important Ligurian family's coat of arms. The basilica's interior has three apsidal naves divided by twenty Doric marble columns, most likely of Greek origin, placed on Ionic bases that were created during the eighteenth century. The central nave features a lacunar ceiling based on a design by Francisco Fontana, and is adorned with the 1706 fresco of the Miracle of the Chains by G.B. Parodi. The side aisles have cross vaulted ceilings that date back to the renovations of Pope Julius II. In the right aisle at the first altar, there is a painting of St. Augustine by “Guercino.” At the second altar, there is a copy of the Domenichino Liberation of St. Peter and next to it, the monument to Cardinal Girolamo Agucchi based on a design by

modernising efforts of 1475. The portico was attributed to Vasari and Baccio Pontelli, but it is currently considered to be the work of Meo del Caprino. The della Rovere family coat of arms appears on the capitals of the pillars, while the portico is enclosed with an early eighteenth-century railing adorned with the coat of arms of Clement XI of the Albani family. The main entrance to the basilica is a part of the renovations of Sixtus IV, della Rovere, and is surmounted by this important Ligurian family's coat of arms. The basilica's interior has three apsidal naves divided by twenty Doric marble columns, most likely of Greek origin, placed on Ionic bases that were created during the eighteenth century. The central nave features a lacunar ceiling based on a design by Francesco Fontana, and is adorned with the 1706 fresco of the Miracle of the Chains by G.B. Parodi. The side aisles have cross vaulted ceilings that date back to the renovations of Pope Julius II. In the right aisle at the first altar, there is a painting of St. Augustine by “Guercino.” At the second altar, there is a copy of the Domenichino Liberation of St. Peter and next to it, the monument to Cardinal Girolamo Agucchi based on a design by

the same artist. Further ahead in the right transept, there is the celebrated Mausoleum of Julius II, which was completed in 1545 by Michelangelo with the assistance of his understudies. The mausoleum was built according to the desires of the della Rovere Pope, who had commissioned the Tuscan artist in 1505 to create a monument of grandiose proportion that was to be placed inside St. Peter's basilica directly below the dome and was to be adorned with forty statues. However with the pope's death and the election of Leo X of the Medici family, the project was initially shelved and then greatly re-dimensioned. In the end, after various mishaps that had Michelangelo speaking of a “tragedy of the sepulchre,” it was transferred to San Pietro in Vincoli. At the centre of the monument, there is the celebrated Moses, actually created by Michelangelo in person between 1514 and 1516. Next to him in two niches, there are statues of the two biblical wives of Jacob, Rachel (left) and Leah (right), symbolising an idealistic life of faith and an active life and charity, respectively. These statues were sketched by Buonarroti and completed by Raffaello da Montelupo from 1542 to 45. The reclining Julius II statue is traditionally attributed to the scalpel of Maso del Bosco, even though recent studies suggest signs of Michelangelo's own hand. Regarding the remaining images, the Madonna with Child, who is above the image of the pope, is attributed to Scherano da Settignano, whereas the Prophet and Sybil that flank it are attributed to Raffaello da Montelupo. The success of this monument undoubtedly rests entirely on the titanic force that is released by the powerful image of Moses. He is depicted at the moment he descended from Mt. Sinai with the tablets containing the Ten Commandments and is enraged with the Jews, who have taken to worshiping the Golden Calf idol. Some of the uncompleted masterpieces of Michelangelo, the so-called Prisoners, the chained slaves that were designed to adorn the grand St. Peter's sepulchre, ended up in Florence and at the Louvre. In the small chapel at the end of the right aisle, there is the extremely vivid Santa

San Pietro in Vincoli, façade

The counter-façade
Margherita, another work by G. Francesco Barbieri, who is known as the “Guercino.” The high altar features a canopy by Virgilio Vespignani, under which is the confession containing the reliquary of the chains. The canopy features a fifteenth-century relief depicting Scenes from the life of St. Peter by Cristoforo Foppa, who is known as the “Caradosso.” The crypt located under the altar contains an early Christian sarcophagus containing the reliquary of the Maccabei. Moving to the left aisle, in the second altar, there is a very interesting seventh-century mosaic that features St. Sebastian. He is usually depicted as a young nude pierced by arrows but in this mosaic he is depicted as an older, bearded officer of the Imperial army, reflecting more ancient Byzantine iconography. Next, there is an eighteenth-century monument to Cardinal Cinzio Aldobrandini. In the first altar, there is the Deposition of the Cross, attributed to Cristoforo Roncalli, who is known as the “Pomarancio.” At the beginning of the aisle, there is the burial monument to Cardinal Nicola Cusano, perhaps the greatest philosopher of the fifteenth century. He was the author of the fundamental treatise La dotta ignoranza (On learned ignorance) and among the first to imagine an unlimited universe devoid of a centre. The monument’s bas-relief featuring an image of the cardinal, an angel and St. Peter, is a work of art by Andrea Bregno. To the left of the entrance, there is a fresco depicting the 1476 procession across Rome with the image of St. Sebastian beseeching the end of the plague, artwork which is attributed to students of Antoniazzo Romano. Below it, there is the tomb of Antonio and Pietro del Pollaiolo, with portraits of the two celebrated brothers and artists sculptured by Luigi Capponi in 1498. Externally and to the left of the basilica, there is the considerable tomb of Antonio and Pietro Borgia, lived here. Immediately to the right of the palace, there is the convent of San Francesco da Paola, where a part of the Istituto Centrale del Restauro (Central Restoration Institute) is housed. Next is the façade of the church of San Francesco di Paola, the national church of the Calabrese. San Francesco di Paola, a native of Calabria, was a Franciscan at the age of twelve. He lived in the forests of the Sila and at nineteen founded the Order of the Minim for those who respected the most rigorous traditions of the Saint of Assisi. His most celebrated miracle is his crossing of the Straits of Messina by means of his cloak as a vessel. The church and convent were established in 1623 based on a design by Orazio Torriani and it was enlarged in 1650 following a donation by Olimpia Aldobrandini Pamphilj. The façade has two orders. During the eighteenth century, the lower order, partitioned into three parts by Iconic pilasters with che-
The church, the complex demolished and annexed monastery were picturesque during the eighteenth century. The picture high altar, featuring a stucco drapery supported by angels, is a 1655 work of art by G. Antonio De Rossi. Prior to reaching the sacristy, there is the burial monument to Lazzaro Pallavicini by Ferdinando Fuga, whereas inside the same on the vault, there is the Apparitions of the Virgin to St. Francis of Paola by Sassoferrato. In two niches, there are busts of Christ and Madonna, originating from a former church of the Suburra, the church of the Saviour ad Tres Imagines. Returning to via S. Francesco di Paola, descend the stairs to via Cavour, and go to the right in the direction of Largo Visconti Venosta.

The Santi Gioacchino e Anna church faces this large square. Originally, the church and annexed monastery were dedicated to St. Francis, but in 1760, Clement XIII had the complex demolished and rebuilt a church dedicated to St. Gioacchino. The church, designed by Francesco Fiori, is preceded by a flight of steps and has a façade that is divided by narrow Corinthian pilasters and surmounted by a double tympanum. The interior, decorated with stucco and vaults with cherubs, is in the form of a Greek cross with the arms covered in barrel vault ceilings. It is believed that the church was built on the site where the Temple and sacred woods of Juno the Queen, protector of women in labour, was located during the Roman age. In the vicinity, there was also the temple of Mephitis, the goddess protector of springs. Exit from the church, take a right on via in Selci, and pass next to a building, which was annexed to the church in ancient times. This is the ex-monastery of the Paolotto, a former nunnery of the order of San Francesco di Paola and currently a commis-

sary’s office. In 1744, the monastery was the location for an extraordinary finding - a Roman age treasure consisting of sculptures, candelabras, precious equestrian harnesses, jewellery and silver. This was the ancient trousseau (dowry) belonging to Secundus and Proicta of the Aproniani family. The trousseau was divided among various collections but common people continued to tell stories about the treasure and a mysterious Polish King. These tales are the reason that the name of the street to the right of the staircase ramp of the church of Santi Gioacchino e Anna’s called via del Monte Polacco. Continue your journey along via in Selci, a street which corresponds to the higher part of the ancient divus Suburanus. In ancient times, it connected the Suburra with the Esquiline and was also called “in silic”, due to its flint paving. The monastery is located on the right side of the street and it was created by connecting continuous buildings including the annexed church of Santa Lucia in Selci. The primitive church was built at the end of the fifth century based on the desires of Pope Symmachus. During the thirteenth century, it was flanked by a Benedictine monastery which was substituted in 1568 by an Augustine monastery. The building was then reconstructed in 1604 by Carlo Maderno. Entry is through a seventeenth-century door surmounted by a multi-linear tympanum. There is a small revolving wooden door in the atrium that at one time was used to entrust abandoned babies to the convent. The single nave interior has a bar-
rel vaulted ceiling and three altars on each side. The counter-façade holds a choir, a work of art by Borromini, and an image of God the Father, painted by the Cavalier d’Arpino. The high altar is located in the rectangular apse. It was reconstructed during the nineteenth century by eliminating the previous one by Borromini. The only remaining feature of the Borromini altar is the grating. The extremely elegant ciborium is attributed to Maderno and at one time, it included multicoloured marble. In the first altar on the right, there is the Martyrdom of Santa Lucia by Giovanni Lanfranco, whereas in the first altar on the left, there is the Chapel of Landi, a work by Borromini. Leaving the church and continuing to the right on via in Selci, there are the remains of a brick façade dating back to the Roman age, which is visible in the walls of the convent, rising to the second floor. There is also a portico built on travertine pillars and surmounted by arches. This was most likely a basilica-like building with five openings on to shops and five large windows and was sighted on a location called Orpha. The name is derived from a famous fountain adorned with statues depicting the myth of Orpheus and Ganymede, which was described by Martial in his epigram and which would have been located in the current-day Piazza di S. Martino ai Monti. At the end of via in Selci, in Piazza S. Martino ai Monti, there is the Romanesque apse and sixteenth-century rear portal of the church of the same name. The Capocci tower and the Graziani tower are both located here as well. These towers were built with Roman bricks most likely originating from the nearby Baths of Trajan. The tower at the centre of the square is 36.1 metres high with a square base and windows framed in travertine. It was originally built by the Arcioni family and then definitively passed to the Capocci. The smaller tower, visible to the left of the intersection between via Lanza and via dei Quattro Cantoni is a tower originally built by the Cerroni, a noble Roman family to which the celebrated painter Pietro Cavallini probably belonged. This building also passed hands several times before becoming the property of the Graziani. A brief detour on via dei Quattro Cantoni will allow us to view the remains of an ancient noble villa. On the left side of the street, at no. 50, there is the ex-Monastero delle Filippine, previously the villa of the Sforza family and currently the location of government offices. The building dates back to the first half of the seventeenth century, however it had already passed to the Sisters of San Filippo Neri by the end of that century. Enclosed by a Rococo style railing, it is a majestic structure surmounted by a small belvedere tower, with a beautiful double ramp staircase leading to the main entrance. The first floor windows are surmounted by a double tympanum and decorated with the emblem of the Sforza family, the pomegranate. Returning to piazza di S. Martino ai Monti, take a left at the apse of the church onto via Equisia. This street’s name is in memory of the ancient Equizi family, who owned the land on which the church was built. To the right, at the base of the eastern side of the church, there are some rows of tuff belonging to the ancient Servian Wall. Turning to the right again on via del Monte Oppio, we find ourselves in front of the façade of the church of San Martino ai Monti.
The church is identified both of Pope St. Sylvester and St. Martin, the bishop of Tours. Tradition holds that St. Sylvester converted Constantine to Christianity after having cured him of the plague. The placement of his feast on 31 December is connected to the legend of his killing a dragon that had overrun the Roman Forum. He is also said to have descended a staircase with 365 steps on each day of the year. On the other hand, St. Martin is connected to the "Indian summer" at the beginning of November, celebrated for having shared his cloak with a poor man who was cold in 370. He was consecrated as the bishop of Tours where he died in 397. Upon his death, he had the people place him in a sepulcher only in December. The church is called titulus Equitii alluding to the domus ecclesiae, situated in the home of Equitius, presbyter of Pope Sylvester. In the area under the sacred building, there are the actual remains of a building dating back to the third century AD. The building consists of a grand central hallway with a cross vaulted ceiling on pillars, and an open vestibule with three doors to the street. During the sixth century, Pope Symmachus renovated the two adjoining churches of St. Martin of Tours and St. Sylvester. The churches were later demolished during the ninth century by Sergius II, who then reconstructed a single church entitled to both Saints using the columns from the previous buildings. Numerous spoils of the martyrs were collected in the crypt of Leo IV. The church underwent a profound restructuring by architect Filippo Gagliardi during the seventeenth century. Currently, a staircase leads to the Baroque façade with two orders featuring pilasters and a large triangular tympanum. To the sides of the central doorway, there are two bas-reliefs with the images of the Saints Sylvester and Martin. The interior, which has maintained its ancient basilica like structure, has a central nave and two aisles divided by 24 ancient Corinthian columns. The ceiling of the central nave substituted the ancient one donated by St. Carlo Borromeo, which was destroyed by fire. Among the more impor-

6. San Martino ai Monti

Th
de church is identified both of Pope St. Sylvester and St. Martin, the bishop of Tours. Tradition holds that St. Sylvester converted Constantine to Christianity after having cured him of the plague. The placement of his feast on 31 December is connected to the legend of his killing a dragon that had overrun the Roman Forum. He is also said to have descended a staircase with 365 steps on each day of the year. On the other hand, St. Martin is connected to the "Indian summer" at the beginning of November, celebrated for having shared his cloak with a poor man who was cold in 370. He was consecrated as the bishop of Tours where he died in 397. Upon his death, he had the people place him in a sepulcher only in December. The church is called titulus Equitii alluding to the domus ecclesiae, situated in the home of Equitius, presbyter of Pope Sylvester. In the area under the sacred building, there are the actual remains of a building dating back to the third century AD. The building consists of a grand central hallway with a cross vaulted ceiling on pillars, and an open vestibule with three doors to the street. During the sixth century, Pope Symmachus renovated the two adjoining churches of St. Martin of Tours and St. Sylvester. The churches were later demolished during the ninth century by Sergius II, who then reconstructed a single church entitled to both Saints using the columns from the previous buildings. Numerous spoils of the martyrs were collected in the crypt of Leo IV. The church underwent a profound restructuring by architect Filippo Gagliardi during the seventeenth century. Currently, a staircase leads to the Baroque façade with two orders featuring pilasters and a large triangular tympanum. To the sides of the central doorway, there are two bas-reliefs with the images of the Saints Sylvester and Martin. The interior, which has maintained its ancient basilica like structure, has a central nave and two aisles divided by 24 ancient Corinthian columns. The ceiling of the central nave substituted the ancient one donated by St. Carlo Borromeo, which was destroyed by fire. Among the more impor-

San Martino ai Monti, façade

The apse

The large hall of the building beneath the church
tants works of art to be noted is the Ecstasy of St. Carlo Borromeo by Filippo Gherardi, located to the right of the entrance, and the tabernacle and candelabra, works of art by Francesco Bello on the high altar. Next to the altar, there is access to the Baroque crypt, a work by Filippo Gagliardi. The crypt features alternating columns and pillars, as well as stucco and statues of saints created by Paolo Naldini in 1655. Below the crypt, there is a ninth-century fresco with Images of the saints and a bejewelled Cross as well as an effigy of St. Sylvester in a sixth-century mosaic. In the right aisle at the first altar, there is Santa Maria Maddalena de’ Pazzi painted by Matteo Pignatone in 1647. At the second altar, there is the Ecstasy of Santa Teresa di Gesù by Giovanni Greppi, and at the third, an eighteenth-century St. Martin by Fabrizio Chiari. In the left aisle, there is a fresco depicting the Interior of St. Peter’s basilica painted by Gagliardi, and then a seventeenth-century Landscape of the Roman Campagna by Gaspare Dughet. Following is the second altar with the painting of St. Alberto Carmelitano, a 1575 work of art by Girolamo Muziano. A successive fresco reconstructs the scene of the Council of St. Sylvester, in which the pope ordered the burning of all books contrary to the theological thoughts of the Catholic Church. At the first altar, there is a St. Angelo by Pietro Testa. Finally, there is another fresco featuring the architectural features of the Interior of the basilica of San Giovanni in Laterano prior to Borromini’s renovations. At the beginning of the aisle, there is a 1651 fresco by Jan Miel of San Cyril baptising a sultan. In the sacristy, there is a silver votive lamp, a papal tiara attributed to St. Sylvester, and a bishop’s mitre.

The museum covers from 4000 BC to the nineteenth century and consists of sixteen halls in which approximately 26,000 objects are exhibited, making the collection one of the most important in Europe. The museum is divided into the following sections: Ancient Near and Middle East, Tibet and Nepal, China, Islamic Art and Archaeology and India and Gandhara. There are also collections relative to Japan, Korea and South-East Asia. Opposite the palace, at the corner of the intersection with via Mecenate is Teatro Brancaccio, which was built in 1916 and is still operating today. Cross over Largo Brancaccio, and continue to the left on via Merulana. This street was made famous in the novel by Carlo Emilio ‘Gadda Quer pasticciaccio brutto de via Merulana’ (That Awful Mess on Via Merulana). Continue straight until reaching the staircase of the Church of Sant’Alfonso de’ Ligori. The church was built in 1859 on the site of Villa Castani by George Wigney and was the first example of Gothic revival in Rome. The interior has a central nave, two aisles and features a painted panel dating back to the second half of the fifteenth century depicting the...
Madonna of Perpetual Help. Continuing beyond Largo S. Alfonso, take a right on via di S. Vito, where at the end of the street, there is the small façade of the Santi Vito e Modesto Church. The most ancient structure of this church dates back to the end of the fourth century. Due to its proximity to the ancient Macellum (market) of Livia, the church had the name San Vito in Macello until the end of the ninth century. Abandoned for a long period, it was finally reconstructed in 1477 by Sixtus IV near the ancient building. The simple façade and the marble door with the abraded coat of arms and the engraving: *Sixtus fundavit 1477* belong to this era of the church’s history. Over the course of the nineteenth century and primarily, in celebration of the 1900 Jubilee, the church sustained far reaching renovations. Its orientation was even changed with the creation of a new façade on via Carlo Alberto. However, restorations in 1977 restored the aspect and orientation created by Sixtus. The extremely simple interior consists of a rectangular room that finishes with an apse, containing two lateral altars in its interior and a fifteenth-century aedicule (shrine). In the altar to the right under the arch, there is a fresco of the Madonna with Child and saints, which is attributed to Antoniazzo Romano. In the church behind a grate, there is the so-called *pietra scellerata* (wicked stone), a Roman funeral cippus which is said to have originated from the location of the martyrdom of the patron saints. The stone, considered miraculous, cures people with rabies when it is scrapped and the dust is inhaled by those afflicted with the disease. The Arch of Gallieno stands to the right of the church and is the sole remaining element of Porta Esquilina, an opening in the perimeter of the Servian Wall that originally had three arches. The remaining fornix, flanked by two Corinthian pilasters, was part of a renovation under Augustus. According to the inscription under the attic, the arch was dedicated in 262 AD to the Emperor Gallieno and the Empress Salonina by M. Aurelius Victor. Passing the arch, on the left at the end of via di S. Vito, there is the graceful travertine fountain of the Rione di Monti (near-
The Trofei di Mario and Porta Magica

From Largo Leopardi, take a left on the street of the same name and continue until reaching Piazza Vittorio Emanuele II. The square, which is simply called Piazza Vittorio by Romans, was designed by the architect Paniconi in 1871. It was part of the residential neighbourhood constructed for the bureaucracy that flowed to the new capital of the Kingdom of Italy. Various architects, including Gaetano Koch, contributed to its completion approximately ten years later. This is the only porticoed square in a “Piedmontese” style in Rome. The garden at the centre which is still surrounded by its original railing was the creation of Carlo Tenerani. Until a few years ago, the area around the garden was filled by a large market that opened at the beginning of the twentieth century but has now found a new location in a nearby covered building. Inside the garden, named in memory of Nicola Calipari, there are the remains of a grand public work of art that was built during the third century under Emperor Alexander Severus. The ruins, erroneously called the Trofei di Mario (Trophies of Marius) are what remain of a monumental fountain that also had the practical function of distributing water originating from the Claudius aqueduct. The name of the building, nymphaeum Alexandri, appears in a list of public works drafted during the Constantine age. During the first half of the twelfth century, the ruins were renamed the “Trofei di Mario” due to presence of two marble monuments depicting barbaric arms that were associated with the victory of Gaius Marius over the Cimbri and Teutoni. However, the two sculptures, transferred in 1590 to the balustrade of the Campidoglio, did not originally belong to the fountain either. In fact, the trophies are from the Domitian era and were built to commemorate the victory over the Chatti and the Dacians in 89 AD. The fountain, built at the point where the ancient roads of via Labicana...
and Collatina forked, had a trapezoidal design and was built of brick. Funds from the time of Alexander Severius allowed for the embellishment of the fountain's façade that rose three stories with a series of niches filled with statues and an attic adorned with a bronze quadriga (chariot drawn by a four-horse team). A basin collected water that flowed through three frontal and two side channels. It was still operating during the sixth century, but with the cutting of the aqueduct by the Goths of Vitige, the monument began its state of abandonment. It was definitively abandoned with the introduction of the city's new water system. From the sixteenth century to the eighteenth century, the fountain was depicted by various artists but the first systematic cataloguing was only performed by the French Academy in 1821. There is a statue located within the Calipari garden to the right of the ruins. This statue was conceived by the sculptor Mario Rutelli to adorn the fountain of the Naiads in piazza Esedra that was later substituted by the current works of the same artist. Behind the Trophies, there is a War monument in memory of the soldiers of the Esquiline who died during the 1915-18 conflict. It was created by Guido Carafa. The so-called Porta Magica (Magic Door) is located next to the ruins on the right. This door, which features some alchemic formulae engraved in its frame accompanied by a sentence in Hebrew and Latin, is the remains of a secondary entrance to the Villa del Marquis Massimiliano Palombara di Pietraforte. According to tradition, the formula was given by a mysterious visitor to the marquis who was an important seventeenth-century alchemist. Around 1680, Palombara placed the door in the secret garden of his villa and performed numerous experiments there. Following its demolition at the end of the nineteenth century for new buildings on the Esquiline, the door was moved to Piazza Vittorio, and flanked by two ancient statues of the Egyptian god Bes, which originated from the excavations on the Quirinal in 1888. The so-called Discobolo Lancellotti (Lancellotti Disc-thrower) a Roman age copy of the fifth-century BC bronze original by Myron was found in 1781 at the same Villa Palombara.
A the corner of Piazza Vittorio and the beginning of via Napoleone III, the San Eusebio Church is tucked between Umbertini buildings. The house, where the Roman presbyter and grand opponent of Arianism died in 357 AD, was quickly transformed in a titulus and consecrated by Pope Liberius. Archaeological excavations under the church have effectively identified the remains of a second century AD residence. The church was restored on several occasions beginning in the eighth century and then during the thirteenth century when Gregory IX, who almost completely reconstructed it. The bell tower dating back to the time of Honorius III and the apse, which is no longer visible from the exterior, are the only Romanesque period elements to have survived. The central staircase and two lateral ramps leading to the church, remain slightly elevated due to the nineteenth-century excavations for the construction of the Piazza. The façade, with two orders, is an eighteenth-century work by Carlo Stefano Fontana. At the base, there is a portico with five arches supported by pillars, whereas in the second order, which is separated from the first by a projecting frame, there are pilasters surmounted by Ionic capitals and five windows with frames and tympanums showing Borromini’s influence. Above the dedicatory inscription, the façade concludes with a balustrade adorned by four statues of saints to the sides and two angels kneeling in the middle with a grand tympanum surmounted by a metal cross slightly behind them. In the portico, there are some tablets, including one which recalls the dedication of the church to Saints Eusebius and Vincent by Pope Gregory IX in 1238. The interior, which maintains the ancient Romanesque three nave structure despite the drastic alterations during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, features decorations in stucco and gold. Notable artwork includes the fresco on the vault of the central nave depicting the Glory of St. Eusebius, a 1759 work by the grand neoclassical painter Anton Raphael Mengs. On the high altar, created by Onorio Longhi, there is a depiction of the Madonna consoler of the afflicted attributed to Pompeo Batoni. On the two altars of the presbytery, there are two depictions one of St. Celestine, a work by Ruthard, and the other, St. Benedict by Cesare Rossetti. Three paintings are conserved in the seventeenth-century wooden choir seating, which also contains a richly sculptured lectern in walnut. The paintings include the Assumption by an unknown artist; the Madonna among St. Eusebius, St. Vincent and a Seraph by Baldassarre Croce, and Mary and Mary Magdalena at the foot of the cross by Rossetti. Next to the church is the ex-convent, which is currently a police station. The building hosted one of the first printing offices opened in Rome until the end of the fifteenth century. Inside, there is still the brick cloister with two orders of arches and a central fountain built by Domenico Fontana in 1588. Every year on 17 January, in celebration of the feast of San Antonio Abate, the protector of animals, numerous dogs and cats along with their owners crowd in front of this church to receive the traditional blessing. At one time, this blessing was primarily given to the horses of elegant noble carriages at the nearby church on via Napoleone III, which was entitled to the saint and is now incorporated into the Russicum Pontifical College. Exit from San Eusebio, take a left and go back along the entire length of Piazza Vittorio until reaching the intersection with via Lamarmora. Continue along this street, then successively along via Guglielmo Pepe until reaching via Giovanni Giolitti. Take a right and go a short distance until reaching the church of Santa Bibiana. The location of this ancient sacred building has been heavily altered due to the presence of a railway embankment and buildings belonging to Termini Station. The church was built in 468 by Pope Simplicius on the home of the martyr St. Bibiana, who was killed by flagellation in 363 during the persecution of Julian the Apostate. In 1224, the church was restored by Honorius III and a monastery was added that was occupied by Benedictine nuns until the end of 1440 and demolished during the seventeenth century. During the 1625 Jubilee celebrations, Urban VIII assigned Gian Lorenzo Bernini, who was not yet thirty years old, to renovate the church whilst keeping its original architectonic structure. The internal restorations and the creation of the baroque façade, which constitutes the architectural début of Bernini, were completed in a mere two years. The façade features a portico with three...
Walk 8

There are two small niches in 1626. To the sides of the high altar, Bibiana, her sister Demetria and their mother Dafrosa. Above the altar in a niche, there is a marble statue of St. Bibiana, which was sculptured by Bernini in 1626. To the sides of the high altar, there are two small chapels dedicated to St. Dafrosa on the right with an altarpiece created by Pietro da Cortona and to St. Demetria on the left with an altarpiece by Agostino Ciampelli. In the central nave, there are frescoes with Scenes from the life of the Saint created by Agostino Ciampelli on the right and Pietro da Cortona on the left. To the left of the central doorway is the column to which, according to tradition, the saint was bound during her martyrdom. The musical Angels in the counter-façade are works by Agostino Ciampelli. Returning yet again to via Giulitta with Termini station to the left, continue straight until reaching the imposing structure of the so-called Temple of Minerva Medica. This name, used for the first time during the sixteenth century by Pirro Ligorio, is inaccurate. The name was derived from the in loco finding of the statue of the so-called Athena Giustiniani, now housed at the Vatican Museums. The building is actually the residual portion of a hall with a pentagonal shape that was 25 metres across and featured ten large windows. The entrance was preceded by an atrium forcipes (terminating with two apses at the extremities) while semicircular rooms were placed outside the hall. The domed roof, a large part of which collapsed in 1828, features ten brick ribs on the interior and four levels of rings on the exterior. The underground tubing of the Anio Vetus aqueduct passed near the pavilion. The building, datable back to the fourth century AD, was identified as the nymphaeum of the Horti Liciniani, the large villa on the Esquiline that took its name from Emperor Licinius Gallienus. The villa was an extensive property containing enough buildings to host all members of the court when the emperor resided there. The structural characteristics of the building advanced the developments of the Byzantine period and created a model for Renaissance and Baroque architecture.
Tourists Information Points (PITs)

AIRPORTS
• Ciampino “G. B. Pastine” Airport of Rome
  International Arrivals - baggage claim area
  Daily 9:00am / 6:30pm
• Fiumicino Leonardo Da Vinci Airport
  International Arrivals - Terminal T3
  Daily 8:00am / 7:30pm
  Daily 9:30am / 7:00pm

Daily 9:30am / 7:00pm
• Castel Sant’Angelo
  Lungotevere Vaticano - (Piazza Pia)
• Minghetti
  Via Marco Minghetti - (corner of Via del Corso)
• Fori
  Visitor Center, Via dei Fori Imperiali
• Leopardi
  at the Tourism Department of Rome Capital
  Via Leopardi, 24 - from monday to friday
• Ostia Lido
  Lungomare Paolo Toscanelli - (corner of Piazza Anco Marzio)
  from May to September
• Tiburtina
  Tiburtina Train Station - next opening

Daily 8:00am / 7:30pm
• Termini Train Station
  Via Giovanni Giolitti, 34
  Inside Building F / Platform 24

Roma Capitale - Turismo
Via Leopardi, 24 – 00185 Roma

Call Centre Tourism Office
tel +39 06 06 08 (daily 9:00am / 7:30pm)

Switchboard Rome Municipal Council
tel +39 06 06 06

www.comune.roma.it
www.turismoroma.it
turismo@comune.roma.it