

Thursday the 16th of July 2009

After two overnight stays at Hotel A. Viola in Naples, we continued further on with the train to Rome.

According to legend, Rome was founded 21 April 753 BC by Romulus. This date was the basis for the Roman calendar and the Julian calendar (ab urbe condita).



Romulus and Remus were sons of the Roman god Mars and priestess Rea Silvia, daughter of Numitor, king of Alba Longa. The King was ejected from his throne by his cruel brother Amulius. The new king feared that Romulus and Remus would take back the throne, so they were to be drowned. A she-wolf, which is still one of the symbols of Rome, saved and raised them, and when they were old enough, they returned the throne of Alba Longa to Numitor.

The twins then founded their own city, but Romulus killed Remus in a quarrel over which one of them was to reign as the King of Rome, though some sources state the quarrel was about who was going to give their name to the city.

Rome was built on the Sun hill, which later was called the Palatine, and was extended to include the seven hills, Palatine, Aventine, Capitoline, Quirinale, Viminale, Esquilinen and Caelius after the Moon, Mercury, Venus, Mars, Jupiter and Saturn.

Rome's coat of arms

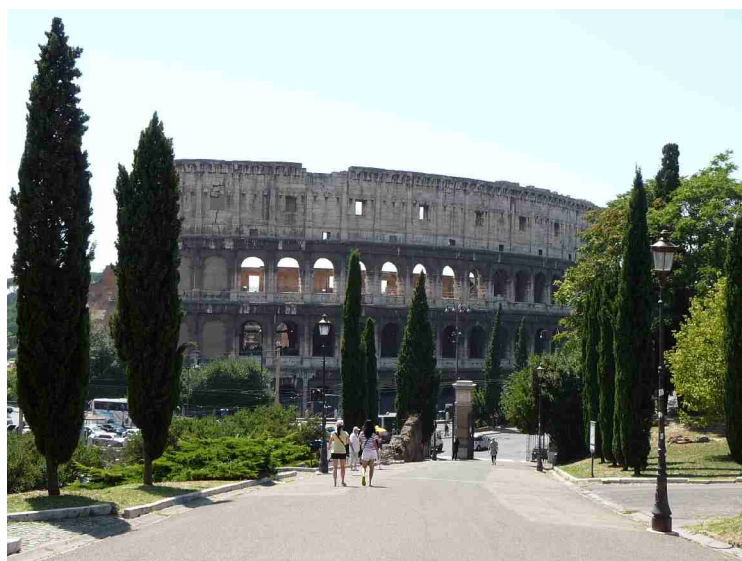
Rome was the capital of the Roman kingdom (753 BC-510 BC), both the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire that followed. After the fall of the Roman Empire, Rome was once the capital of the Papal States. Throughout this long period, Rome was the world center of Christianity and in an increasing degree the papal church gained a political role that made Rome one of the most important cities in Europe.



In Rome we had booked at Hotel Washington Termini, which was situated right beside the railway station.



We started the sightseeing the same day as we arrived by walking in direction of Colosseum. We went past this square with the church Santa Maria Maggiore. This is the oldest of the basilicas remaining from before the Christianity was introduced.



Here we are approaching Colosseum



This is just before we come down to Colosseum. We can also see the Victor Emmanuel monument in the background.



Close-up of Colosseum



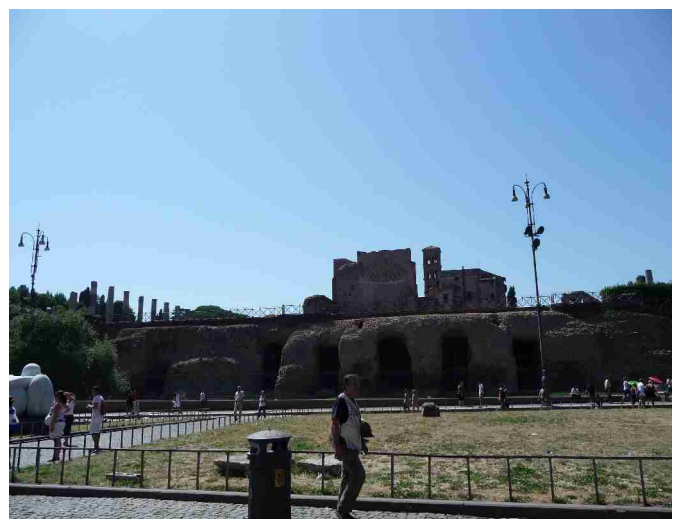
Here is a gladiator preparing for a show



Arco di Costantino stands right beside Colosseum and is the last triumphal arch that was erected, in 315 AD.



On our way to the Palatine hill



Here we look across the place in direction of the church Santa Francesca Romana.



Here we see the church Santa Franceska Romana from another angle and in front of it we see the ruins of the temple for Venus and Rome.



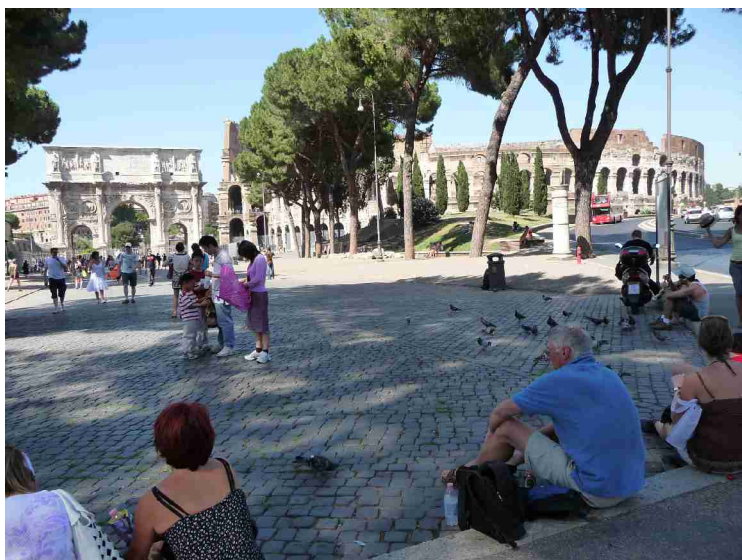
There were endless ticket queues that didn't move. We didn't want to stand in the line in the heat to get in.



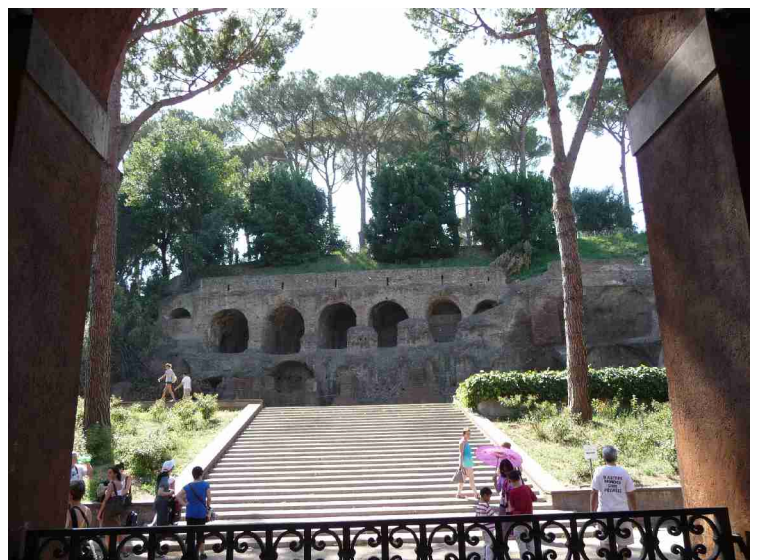
Colosseum from another angle



Ruins in the area behind Colosseum



Here we are sitting in the shades having a break.



Here are some bathing facilities that were closed



The entrance to the Palatin Hill. We had to pay to get in.



On our way uphill.



Ruins of Emperor Severus Septimus' arcades



Close-up on a detail



To the right lies the thermaes of Severus Septimus. Anne Berit is rather walking in the shade, because it is over 40°C hot.



More ruins



The thermaes are still to the right



The stadion or the hippodrome



Here we see the hippodrome at a distance



Domus Flavia at a distance. The group of buildings were built by emperor Domitian.



This is Domus Augustiana, which in fact is a wing of Domus Flavia



Close-up of a detail



This is a museum, which Mussolini built



Here are remains of Flavian's palace



Here we are a bit closer the remains of emperor Flavian's palace



There are nicely planted



The museum from another angle



Don't know what this is, but it is quite stylish.



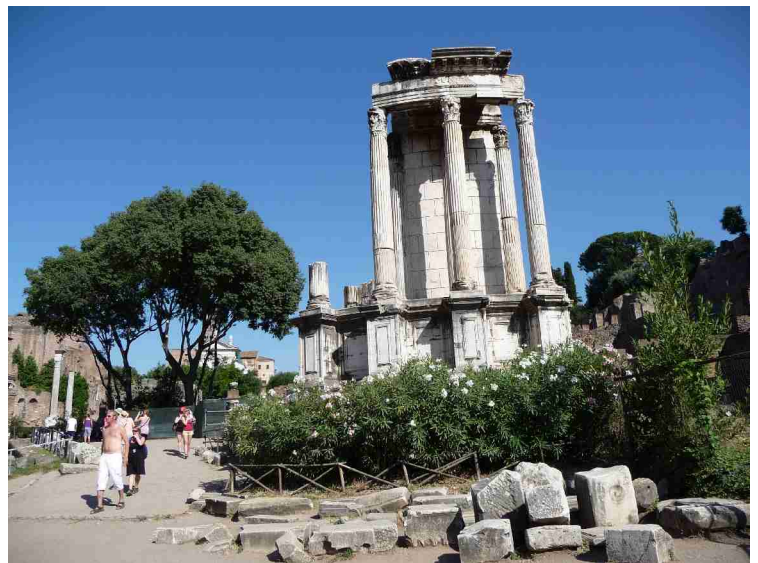
Here we still are near Flavian's palace



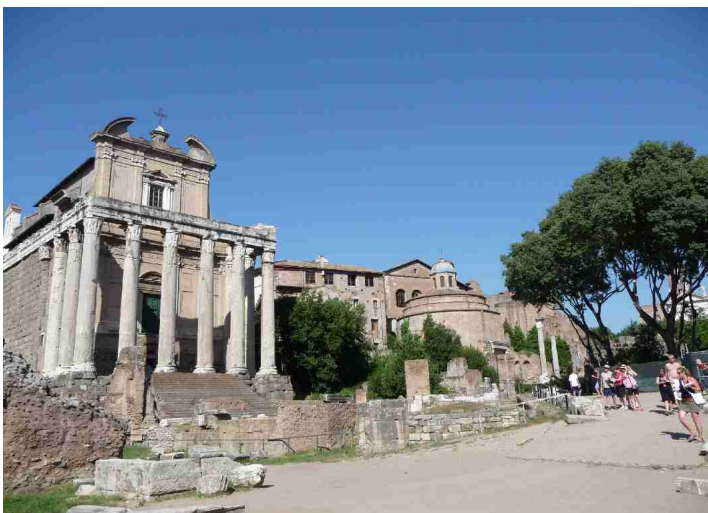
Looking down to Forum Romanum. The round building in the middle is the Romulus temple, which now is a part of the church Santi Cosma e Damiano, which is located right behind.



Lookin back towards Colosseum, we can also see the Titus arch, which emperor Domitian erected in 81 AD as a memory of the plundering of Jerusalem, that his father Vespasian and brother Titus carried out 13 years erlier.



The Vesta-temple was center of one of Rome's oldest cultures. Six Vestal Virgins of noble birth kept the sacred fire of Vesta, the goddess of the home hearth, alive. The Vestal Virgins were the only female priests in Rome.



The temple for Antonius and Faustina is now built into the church San Lorenzo in Miranda.



Here we look up to the Capitol hill.



A bit closer to the Capitol hill, and we can see the Septimius Severus arch.



Looking back to Forum Romanum.



Here we can see the remains of the Saturn temple, where every year at 22. Desembre there was set the table for the gods. It was also her the the Treasury was.



Looking back to the centre of Forum Romanum



Now we have walked through the Septimius Severus arch. It was erected in 203 to celebrate the decade jubilee for the crowning of emperor Septimius Severus.



Now we are almost on the top of the Capitol hill, looking back in direction of Forum Romanum



This is the statue of the she wolf with Romulus and Remus. This is a copy. The original is at the Capitol museum.



Looking across to Fori Imperiali with the church Santi Luca e Martina.



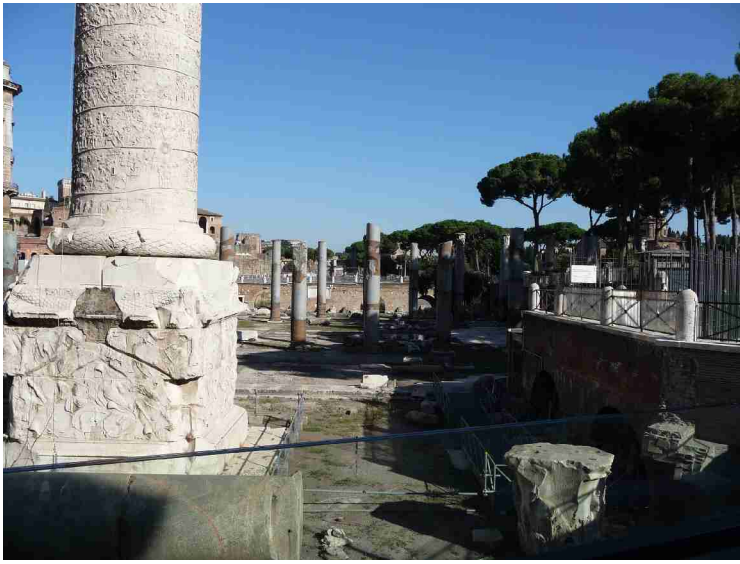
On the top of the Capitol Hill lies Piazza del Campidoglio with Palazzo Senatorio that was built in the 1300s-1400s. In front is an equestrian statue of Markus Aurelius



Palazzo Nuovo was made a public museum in 1734



On the Capitol Hill lies also the Victor Emmanuel monument, which was commenced in 1885 and opened in 1911 to honour of Victor Emmanuel II, the first king in a united Italy.



Fori Imperiali seen in the direction of Colosseum. Here was Trajan's Market, a large complex of ruins.



Here we are almost back at our hotel and see here the church Santa Maria Maggiore from another angle.



We had travelled by train from Naples and walked around in the city the whole day, so in the evening we were not capable of going further away than to the nearest restaurant outside the hotel to get something to eat.

The next day we went to the State of the Vatican City. We took the subway to a station just north of the Vatican.



The Vatican's flag

The history of the Papal state goes far back in time. It was earlier a big secular state that included the middle of Italy. When Italy was united in 1861, mostly of the Papal state became a part of the new state formation, but with help of military support from Emperor Napoleon III, the Pope kept control over Rome and the surrounding areas (Latium). The French troops were withdrawn during the French-German war in 1870, and Rome was annexed by Italy. 13. May 1871 the Italian state approved the so-called «Law of guarantee», which guaranteed the pope's inviolability inside the Vatican and gave him certain rights, as the right to his own diplomacy and life guard through the Swiss Guard.

The church refused to accept the «Law of guarantee», because it believed that it had to be independent from any political and secular authority in its spiritual work. Pope Pius IX isolated himself in the Vatican and regarded himself as a prisoner. The Italian rule over Rome was not approved by the Pope until in 1929. Then Pope Pius XI and Mussolini signed the so-called «Lateran Treaty». At the same time Italy accepted the Vatican as a sovereign state.

It is today the smallest state in the world and is situated in the middle of Rome. The Vatican has about 1000 inhabitants. The state is quite independent and the Pope is the head. The Vatican is only 0,44 km², but it has its own monetary unit, its own postal authorities, its own radio- and TV station, and its own newspaper. It also has a railway station and 862 meter of tracks.



Here we are at the St Peter's Square.

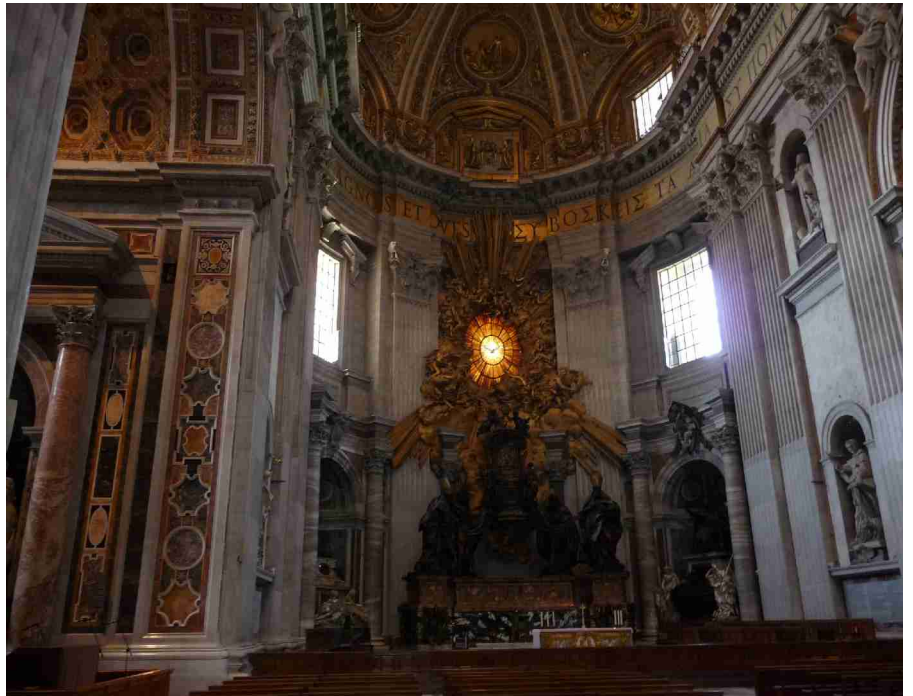


St Peter's Square from another angle



Inside Saint Peter's Basilica. It is built over the tomb of Saint Peter, and is the biggest church in the world. Below follows a series of pictures without comments.





The dome seen from below. It is designe by Michelangelo and is 136 m high. It is the worlds highest.



Here we are out in the street again



Special street lamps



This is Castel Sant'Angelo. It was built in the second century by Emperor Hadrian as a mausoleum. The name comes from the history when the archangel Michael once showed himself over the castle; during a pest epidemic the Pope and the people walked in a procession when they saw that the angel put a sword in his sheath as a sign that the epidemic was to cease. A statue of the angel was erected on the castle, which thereby got its new name. Today's statue is a copy of the original. In the middle ages it was reconstructed to a powerful fortress. Pope Nicholas III connected the castle with St. Peter's church with a covered passage called *Passetto di Borgo*. The castle was situated at a strategic place related to the bridges over the Tiber that were fewer than today.



Ponte Sant'Angelo



This is Piazza Navona. The square was constructed on top of Domitian's stadium.



This is one of the three fountains on Piazza Navona

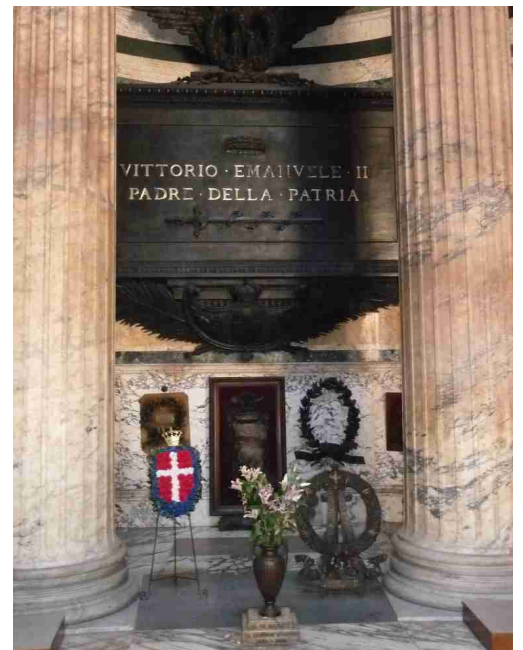


We are still at Piazza Navona. Here we see the church Sant'Agnese in Agone.

To the left we can see Fontana dei Quattro Fiumi.



Here we are inside Pantheon



The burial place of Vittorio Emanuele II

Pantheon, *The temple of all gods*, is one of the best preserved buildings from the Roman imperial times. It was probably built in the 120s by emperor Hadrian.

Pantheon is composed by two building elements, a column facade with a classical temple gable of the traditional type with architrave and a dome shaped cylinder. The last one is built in typical Roman material, brick covered concrete. The wall were originally marble covered. The dome has the same diameter as height (43,30 meter) and is built in in the wall such that only the upper part is visible from outside. It was an example for Michelangelo's dome in the St. Peter's church. Behind, there is a column supported entrance hall that is experienced as extrovert.

Pantheon is burial place for artists. The painter Rafael is buried her. Over his grave is a statue of virgin Mary by the artist Lorenzetto and equipped with the facial features of Rafael's fiance, Maria Bibbiena. Also Italy's kings after 1870 is lying buried here, Vittorio Emanuele II and Umberto I together with his queen Margherita. The cause of this is the bad relations between the church and the government after the union of Italy, so the Pope didn't want to make the main churches available as burial places for the kings. Instead Pantheon was used.



Still inside Pantheon



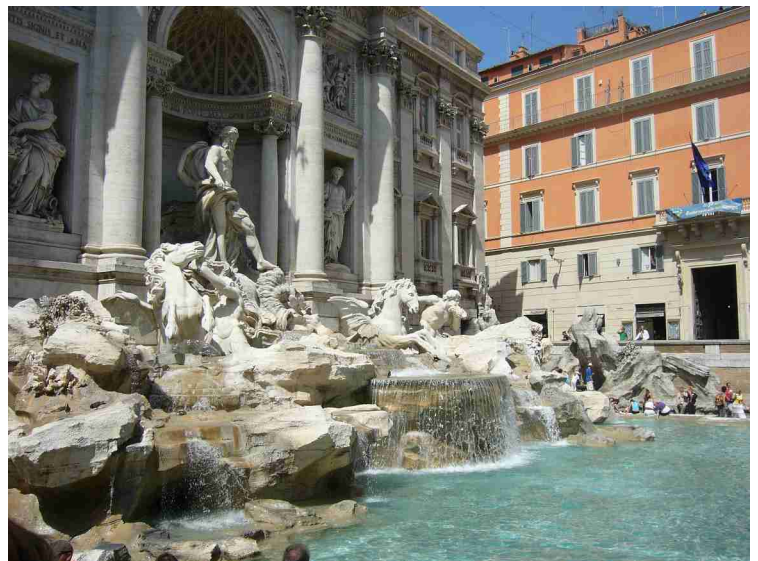
This column is positioned at the square outside Pantheon



Pantheon at the entrance



Fontana di Trevi. Those who throw a coin over their shoulder, into the fountain, will be sure of coming back to Rome.



Fontana di Trevi or **The Trevi Fountain** is the biggest and most famous fountain in Rome. The fountain is more than 26 meters wide and 20 meters high, and was finished in 1762. The water comes from the old aqueduct Aqua Vergine (Aqua Virgo). It was built in the year 19 BC. The source shall have been found by a virgin, thereby the name Aqua Virgo.



There was quite crowded around the fountain



This is Colonna dell'Immacolata standing at the end of Piazza di Spagna



The Spanish steps were built to connect the square Piazza di Spagna with the French church Trinità dei Monti, which is positioned at the top.



It is possible to have horse taxis for sightseeing



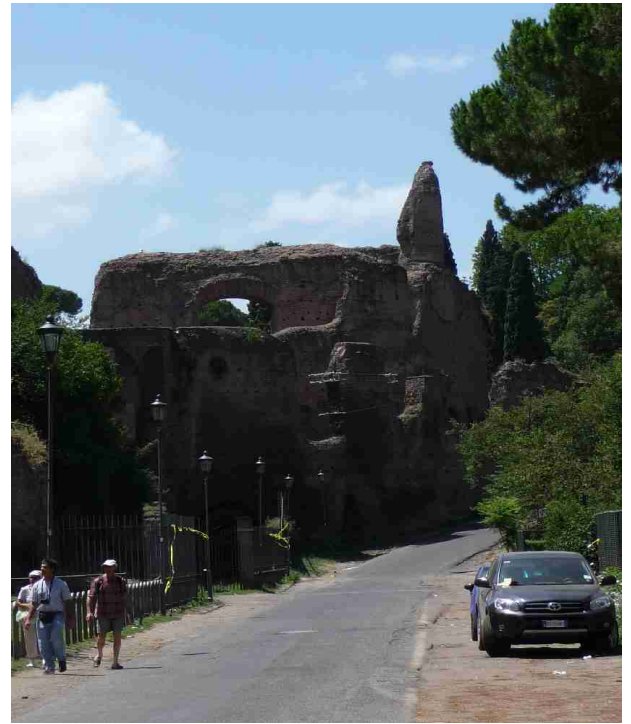
Right below the steps is Fontana Barcaccia, which is inserted in the street because of low water pressure here.



In a side street lies Ernest Hemmingway's regular café, but it was not open when we were there.



The last day in Rome, we planned to walk over to one of the catacombs, which lie just outside the town. On the way we passed Terme di Caracalla, which is the best preserved bathing facilities in Rome.



Big ruins



At the entrance



We sat down in a park, Parco Egerio, just besides the baths. There were big cones on the pine trees.



There was also a little church there



Here we are looking back in direction of the bathing facilities



To get out of Rome, we had to go through this gate in the old city wall, Aurelian's wall. The gate is named Porta Latina.



The gate after having passed it.



They grew date palms here.



Big clusters of dates



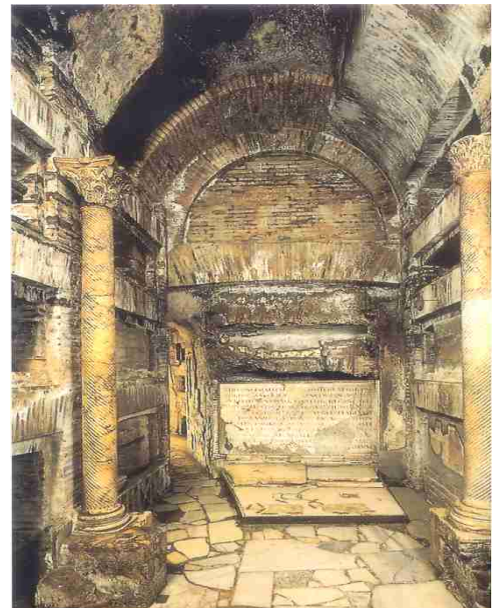
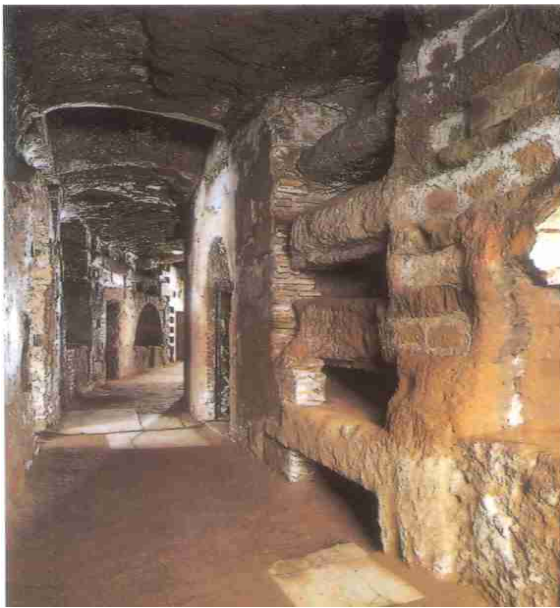
Here we are out on the country road, leading to the catacombs.



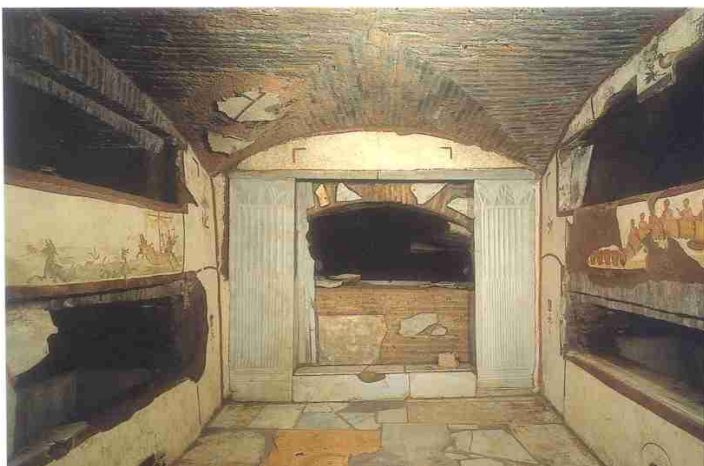
Almost there



These are the buildings of Catacombe di S. Callisto.



This is down in the catacombs. The San Callisto catacombs are among the biggest and most important in Rome. They came into being in the middle of the 100s and belong to a burial complex covering 15 hektar, with a network of corridors, which are almost 20 kilometers long in various levels, going about 20 meters down. Here was buried a tenfold martyrs, 16 Popes and a lot of Christians. They are named after the diacon Callixtus, who in the beginning of the 200s got an assignment of Pope Zefyrinos to maintain the burial ground. The San Callisto catacombs became the Roman Church's official burial site.



When returning to the city we were not good for walking all the way. We went to the nearest bus stop and took the bus into town.



This is the church San Giovanni in Laterano. It was erected on a basilica from the 300s and was Rome's cathedral and the Papal seat until the 1400s.



Near the church there were more remainders from the walls around Rome. This is Porta Asinaria.



At last we were back in the room on the hotel. We took a picture of the wall painting before we lay down on the bed for a bit relaxation.



Here we are out eating in the evening



This cappuccino was not as good as it looks like



The name of the restaurant



It looks a Kjell thinks that the food was first-class, but it doesn't look as the waiter quite agree. Does he mean that the food was second-class?

