

MAKING SENSE OF THE ROME WE SEE TODAY

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LECTURE 2: THE RELICS OF CLASSICAL ROME

Yesterday I tried to give you an idea of Rome's topography (the hills, the river and its wetlands) and the way in which it grew over three thousand years... and today we're going to have a look at some of the oldest of the relics of that history, the relics of classical Rome...

However, an aspect of what we see must also include questions, if unconscious, about how real are these things, how much restored, how much remade... indeed, in making sense of what we see today, we must talk about the reasons why what we see today is still there and what has been done to it...

So, before I start talking about today's subject, the actual relics of classical Roman architecture and city-making that we can still find, I have to say a little about the re-use or new-use, repair, conservation, restoration, of these relics... because each of these buildings and/or sites has been through thousands of years of endeavours to repair or sustain them...

And, because of the history of Rome and the concentration of these relics here, Rome is a, perhaps **the**, best place to explore the history of the ideas of conservation and restoration... especially as Rome had, as I pointed out yesterday, become a backwater until the mid-15th century when the papacy had returned, the church recovered and sought to restore Holy Roman empire of Constantine... and as the population grew from just 20 000 in 1400, the city and its constituent parts were gradually transformed...

That said, if we think about it, it's clear that the intentions of and arguments about conservation and restoration are arguments about the authenticity or integrity of the relics being considered... whether they have, through the damages suffered and/or the transformations of new uses and/or repairs necessitated by all sorts of vicissitudes, already lost so much that that they are no longer what they are claimed to be... or what may be lost if a repair or addition or refurbishing will have the effect of damaging rather than sustaining or recovering its value... or enhancing the meaning and significance... as an artefact of cultural significance....

There are a number of approaches or implicit theories for measuring or assessing **and** for ensuring or achieving **authenticity** in conservation-oriented endeavours, past and/or future...

- **functional/traditional repair/re-use/adaption** including:
 - anastylosis... a **recomposition** of a broken whole
 - reconstruction or reassembly
 - and repairs can be simple refurbishments or something rather more comprehensive, perhaps even **transforming** appearance but sustaining usefrom the earliest times; **essentially functional**; and even **a-historical**

And the word “restoration” meant rather different things until the 19th century; and as the very concept of history and of the importance of historical relics, especially as icons or signifiers of the nation and of national identity, changed and developed during the 18th and 19th C, ideas and arguments about sustaining the values associated with these icons, the arguments about how to sustain the things themselves developed....

So we have a series of ideas about approaches to restoration, conservation, etc...

- **restoration** of the **appearance/form**
 - **stylistic** restoration... returning to a consistency of style.. Viollet-le-Duc
 - **historical** restorations... returning to a specific moment/event.. very SA

- **preservation/conservation** of the substance/the material itself
 - building as a **document**
 - buildings as **evidence** (of its history)... very archaeological....
 - often very **romantic**... or emotive... Ruskin’s “restoration is a lie”, rather a “crutch”.. in 1849..
 - reliant on patina
 - leading to the “daily care” of William Morris and SPAB (since 1877)
 - promotes the ‘layers’ of history...
 - the dominant idea in Europe and the international charters till perhaps about 2000 ... and, in many quarters, it is **still the “orthodoxy”**

- **values-based management**
 - Italian just after WWII... 'restauro critico' or critical restoration... in the 1950s and 60s
 - explicit about values; method-based; **reliant on an assessment of the significances**...
 - tho, in Italy in the 1950s and 60s the values were primarily aesthetic and socio-political
 - today, the values are rather more catholic

So, that said, what is there to see of classical Rome???

First, it’s self-evident that the ordinary buildings will have disappeared... the houses and apartment buildings of the two million inhabitants that made up the greatest part of ancient Rome ... with no occupants, they will have collapsed and/or been covered in the thousand years of the Middle Ages... there are a few isolated relics of this kind of building... but they are fragmentary and difficult to understand... [If you want to see a classical urban environment with ordinary buildings, you must go Ostia, the port of Rome... just 20 kms away... this is an easy day-trip by train... and Ostia is a romantic delight... or, of course, Pompey or Herculaneum, just south of Naples...]

So, what remains today, of course, are the very big and the very special... and even these relics have been badly damaged by time ... and often used **as mines of useful materials**... carved columns and capitals, architectural elements of all sorts appear around very corner, used in *ad hoc* ways ... and innumerable medieval churches are comprised largely of pagan temple pieces....and considerable volumes

of marble and travertine were mined from these buildings for the Renaissance and Baroque palaces and churches of the 16th and 17th centuries....

But I must emphasise that I am setting out to explain what we see today... so we are only going to look at actual remains... **and I am preferring buildings that are still buildings rather than ruins**... but, given that, we're also going to see what the relics we're going to look at today looked like in the 16th or 17th century as the restoration of the Holy Roman empire began ... that is what was intended in the 15thC...

But to orientate us, let's have a quick look at an illustration, a map that we looked at yesterday... Rome in about 300 CE:

Illustration 1: Imperial Rome 300 CE [300 CE; cos Baths of Diocletian incl]
[Benevolo p150]

- Remember that there were probably as many as 2 million inhabitants around 100 CE... gradual decline down to 500 000 by 300 CE...
- see the Aurelian wall circa 280 CE... much of this remains today...
- and we're going to look at some of the bits that remain...
- first the Forum Romanum
- then the Imperial Forums and Trajan's Markets
- then the Arch of Titus
- then the Colosseum
- then the Pantheon
- then the Temple of Hadrian and
- finally the Baths of Diocletian

Illustration 2: The Campo Vaccino (Cow Field) or Forum Romanum, Vasi etching, **circa 1740**

- note the level of the ground and the levels of the buildings
- this is the Forum: now rural even rustic, the half buried classical temples, the ruin of those buildings, the baroque buildings built on, even inside, the temples

Illustration 3: Arch of Septimus Severus, Piranesi etching, **circa 1750** (p704, 903)

- looking the other direction
- note the level of the ground and the Senate building behind

Illustration 4: Arch of Septimus Severus, later etching, probably **circa 1820**

- note the excavations and the Senate building behind

Illustration 5: The Campo Vaccino (Cow Field), Piranesi, **circa 1760** (p693)

- note the level of the ground and the Arch of Titus and the Colosseo in the distant background

Illustration 6: Forum Romanum in 1877, Excavations (photograph, de Rossi, p68)

- just **five years after unification**
- note the level of the ground and the levels of the buildings

Illustration 7: Forum Romanum in 1882, Excavations at speed (photograph, de Rossi, p70)

- note the level of the ground and the levels of the buildings

Illustration 8: Forum Romanum in 2017 (SST, Sept 2017)

Illustration 9: Palatine, Forum Romanum, Imperial Forums (Google Earth)

- See the relationships between these great pieces city making, the markets and forums of ancient Rome
- all uncovered in the last two centuries... I'll talk a little more about the times and processes on Friday when we talk about the making of Rome as the capital of Italy after 1871

Illustration 10: Imperial Rome 310 CE- detail [Benevolo p151]

- I showed you this yesterday
- see Forum Romanum and the Forums of Caesar (died 44 BCE), Augustus (14 CE) , Vespasian (died 79 CE, Foro della Pace), Nerva (died 98CE), Trajan (died 117CE)
- the map is of circa 310 CE because it includes the Basilica di Maxentius-Constantine... jambed in
 - Forum of Caesar (he died 44 BCE)
 - of Augustus (he died 14 CE)
 - of Vespasian (he died 79 CE)
 - of Nerva (he died 98 CE)
 - of Trajan (he died 117 CE)
 - Titus completed the Colosseum (81 CE)

Illustration 11: The Markets of Trajan (Tourist brochure, 2018)

- The Museum of the Markets of Trajan is a new and very good museum... and the most complete piece of an 'every-day' classical Roman building

Illustrations 12-16: Museo di Mercati di Traiano (SST, September 2018)

- photographs taken in 2018

What has been apparent from these images are three things: one, quite the extent of the collapse of Rome during the middle ages; two, the ruinous-ness of the remains; and, three, the extent of the **uncovering** and recovery of these buildings... and, in these instances, relatively little reconstruction... though I am going to point out as we go where reconstruction has taken place... indeed, that's a big part of understanding what we see...

But, now back to the **Forum Romanum** for a quick look at the **Arch of Titus**... as an example of a different sort...

Illustration 17: The Arch of Titus, circa **1750**, etching by Vasi

- erected in **81 CE** by Domitian just after Titus's death... celebration of the fall of Jerusalem in 71 CE
- here's a view from outside the Forum along the Sacred Way through what has become a wall of an inner precinct of the medieval city...

Illustration 18: The Arch of Titus, **1821**, etching by Taylor/Cresy (Salmon p59)

- here's a view from inside the Forum along the Sacred Way through this wall...
- with the Colosseum in the background, which we'll get to in a moment

Illustration 19: The Arch of Titus, photograph (Bogen, from Internet)

- as it is today
- restored by **Valladier in the 1820s**
- carefully distinguishing between the original marble by reconstructing the missing parts in Travertine
- long regarded as an ideal restoration.. and still is today....

And, there is, of course, much much more to say about the Forums... but we must race on... first to **the** very icon of Rome, the Colosseum... completed in 81 CE by Titus... treated as a quarry for almost a thousand years... repaired/recovered from the early-1800s...

Illustration 20: Arch of Constantine and Colosseo, painting circa **1750** (unknown)

- the arch is overgrown... ground level raised... note the Colosseum in the background

Illustration 21: Arch of Constantine and Colosseo, Piranesi, **circa 1750** (p696)

- note the level of the ground and the extent of destruction
- external ring is demolished as is much of the interior... mined for new buildings in the Renaissance and Baroque periods...
- but the question is how do you stop further erosion... by the weather and earthquakes

Illustration 22: Colosseum, Piranesi etching, **circa 1750** (p 755)

- Bird's eye view from above showing the extent of the mining... and the incomplete ring

Illustration 23: Colosseum, circa 1865: Photograph (Alinari p55)

- still picturesque... but already consolidated ring and ends

Illustration 24: Colosseum circa 1860-65, photograph (Alinari Coll, p54)

- the interior still as a Christian memorial...

Illustration 25: Colosseum, GoogleEarth view from above

- showing the restoration of the ring
- the ends, the interior

Illustration 26: Colosseum, Photograph (SST,)

- the exterior...

Illustration 27: Colosseum, Photograph (,)

- the exterior...

Illustration 28: Colosseum, Photograph (SST, 1982)

- inside that external ring, Becs in 1982

Illustration 29: Colosseum, Photograph (SST,)

- buttress to the **east end** of the broken ring; increasingly unstable after an earthquake in 1802
- **consolidating buttress in 1804** by the engineer, Stern
- an apparently simple brick-clad (permanent shuttering) concrete buttress (pozzolana),

Illustration 30-31: Colosseum, Photograph (SST,)

- but it's not so simple... on closer inspection we see that it's very witty... the collapse arrested mid-fall

Illustration 32-34: Colosseum, Photograph (SST,)

- **buttress to the west end** of the broken ring; increasingly unstable
- **in mid-1820s...** by Giuseppe Valadier
- a restoration of the shape and form but in brick... ensuring that there is no deceit

Illustration 35: Colosseum, Photograph (SST,)

- **reconstructed "inner ring", restoring the oval to completeness** (of a sort)
- carried out in the mid-1800s

Illustration 36: Colosseum, Photograph (SST, 1982)

- **interior**
- note the limited reconstructed seats aimed at giving an idea of scale

Illustration 37: The Pantheon, Sketch, Maarten van Heemskerck, **circa 1533**

- built by **Hadrian after being initiated by Trajan in 114 CE**, dedicated to the first builder, the consul, Agrippa, circa 25 BCE, who built the first much smaller version
- dedicated to S Mary and the Martyrs, **609 CE**
- **and its use as a church explains its protection** (when most pagan temples were demolished or mined for materials)
- **in the illustration**, note the missing columns on the left
- the buildings built into and abutting
- the central bell-tower
-

Illustration 38: Pantheon, Etching, Vasi, **circa 1750**

- note the restored columns (by Bernini in about 1660) and the medieval buildings are no longer there
- and now there are two Baroque bell-towers by Bernini (for the Barberini pope, Urban VIII, 1623-1644), "What the barbarians did not do, the Barberini did"... barbari-barberini
- note also Giacomo della Porta's fountain of the 1590s

Illustration 39-47: Pantheon, Photographs (SST,)

- today... as you see in the late 1890s the bell-towers were removed...

Illustration 48: Temple of Hadrian/Chamber of Commerce/Piazza di Pietra, circa 1615: Etching, Giovannoli (Wikipedia)

- Temple of Hadrian, **145 CE**
- columns of a marble from northern Turkey
- long filled in and occupied by other uses

Illustration 49: Temple of Hadrian/Chamber of Commerce/Piazza di Pietra, circa 1747: Etching, Vasi ()

Illustration 50: Temple of Hadrian/Chamber of Commerce/Piazza di Pietra, circa 1750: Etching, Piranesi (p705)

- compared with the previous by Vasi, much the same illustrated, but with more information and directness

Illustration 51-56: Temple of Hadrian/Stock Exchange, Photographs (SST, 2015/2016)

- the piazza and the temple

And now to S Maria degli Angeli or **the Baths of Diocletian**

Illustration 57: Imperial Rome 300 CE [300 CE; cos Baths of Diocletian incl] [Benevolo p150]

- just to orientate you

Illustration 58: Baths of Diocletian/S Maria degli Angeli, [Lanciani, Forma Urbe]

Illustration 59: Baths of Diocletian/S Maria degli Angeli, circa 1750 (Piranesi, p198)

- the Baths of Diocletian, 298-306 CE
- the ruins were transformed into a church in 1563-64 by Michaelangelo.. floor raised so ancient columns truncated... transept by Michaelangelo
- note the entrance from the south on the axis of the nave...
- by Vanvitelli in 1740s... as shown in the Piranesi etching

Illustration 60-68: Baths of Diocletian/S Maria degli Angeli/Piazza della Repubblica

- Photographs of the interior and of the Piazza della Repubblica

Illustration 69: Location of S Costanza/Mausoleum of Constantina, GoogleEarth, Map 14 of yesterday

- outside the city walls on Via Nomentana/Mentana

Illustration 70: Mausoleum of Constantina/S Costanza, (Piranesi, p226)

- constructed as the mausoleum of Constantina, circa 350s CE
- initially with the Basilica of S Agnes (martyr late-III or early-IV century)
- converted to church in 1250CE

Illustration 71: Mausoleum of Constantina/S Costanza, (Piranesi, p226)

Illustration 72: Mausoleum of Constantina/S Costanza, (Piranesi, p227)

Illustration 73: Mausoleum of Constantina/S Costanza, (SST, 2016?)

Illustrations 74-78: Mausoleum of Constantina/S Costanza, Photographs (SST, 2011, 2015, 2017)

What we know of the Roman empire has been painfully and gradually assembled since the 15th C and, of course, this research continues ... and **the extraordinary excitement and sense of achievement** on the discovery of something unseen/unknown is, I suspect, one of the reasons researchers of all sorts spend their lives at it.

Illustration 80-82: Excavation in 1885: The Boxer (de Rossi, p229)
2nd-1st century BCE, found on the Quirinale, Via IV Novembre, based on work of Lysippos (4th century BCE)

Illustration 82: The Boxer (in the Museo Massimo, SST, 2017)

Rodolfo Lanciani, archaeologist and historian extraordinaire of Rome, said:

“... about a month later, a second bronze statue was dug up, under the same circumstances as related above. The discovery took place between the second and third foundation walls, at a depth of eighteen feet below the level of the platform. Being notified at once, we assembled this time on the spot and were present when only the head of the figure appeared above the ground, and consequently we could follow and study the minutest details of the discovery... The most important piece of evidence collected in witnessing and following the removal of the earth in which the masterpiece lay buried is that the statue had not been thrown in there, or buried in haste, but had been concealed and treated with the utmost care. The figure, being in a sitting posture, had been placed on a stone capital of the Doric order, as upon a stool; and the trench, which had been opened through the lower foundations of the temple of the Sun, to conceal the statue, had been filled up with sifted earth, in order to save the surface of the bronze from any possible injury. I have witnessed, in my long career in the active field of archaeology, many discoveries; I have experienced surprise after surprise: I have sometimes and most unexpectedly met with real masterpieces; but I have never felt such an extraordinary impression as the one created by the sight of this magnificent specimen of a semi-barbaric athlete, coming slowly out of the ground, as if awakening from a long repose after his gallant fights.”

(R. Lanciani, *Ancient Rome in Light of Recent Discoveries*, 1888, p. 305–306)