Figure 1 Plan of the area of the Forum Romanum and the Imperial Fora in antiquity. The five Imperial Fora are to the north; to the south, the irregular piazza of the Forum Romanum lies between the Basilica Julia and the Basilica Aemilia (drawing by Joseph Skinner, adapted).
Memory and Movement in the Roman Fora from Antiquity to Metro C

Introduction: Movement and Memory

The built landscape of the city of Rome is a powerful engine of cultural memory. The visitor can pick out elements of buildings two thousand years old woven into the fabric of the modern city at every street corner in the centro storico. But there is more to Rome than picture-postcard images of crumbling columns juxtaposed with modern development. In Rome, perhaps more than anywhere else, ancient architecture is experienced not only as isolated and picturesque ruins but also as an integral part of the living city. Scholars and tourists can choose to stand and wonder at these buildings, photograph, draw, or write monographs about each of them individually, but Rome’s inhabitants and visitors also walk and drive between and around them as they go about their daily business.

In this article, I investigate the relationship between movement and memory, and in particular how the integration of a space or building into the city’s wider movement patterns affects its role as a place of memory. By considering two neighboring districts with very different ancient layouts and subsequent histories, I demonstrate how awareness of the creation and reproduction of cultural memory through movement can illuminate the enduring influence of ancient street networks on the modern cityscape. The Forum Romanum and the neighboring Imperial Fora shared in antiquity and still share today a similar role as places of memory, but they have had different relationships to urban movement networks (Figure 1). The Forum Romanum’s function as a node on several ancient, medieval, and Renaissance major routes was vital to its preservation as a place of memory for centuries until it was isolated and enclosed in the twentieth century. The Imperial Fora, on the other hand, became isolated from movement networks, and their historical associations were largely forgotten until Mussolini used movement on the great processional route of the Via dell’Impero to revitalize the area as central to Roman cultural memory and identity. Both areas had experienced continuity in movement patterns from antiquity to the twentieth century, when sweeping changes essentially reversed their relationship to the city. Mussolini’s road replaced the path through the Forum Romanum as the major artery between the Capitoline and the Colosseum. The pattern of long-term continuity and the recent change in each area’s relationship to the wider city are direct consequences of the way cultural heritage has been consumed and cultural memory constructed through movement.

In recent years, the relationship between these areas and the city has come under greater scrutiny than ever before. An entry fee for visitors to the Forum Romanum was introduced...
knowledge itself is relatively stable. The phor: “lieux de mémoire,” which I translate as “places of memory.”4 Very often these places of memory are literal places. Buildings and landscapes endure temporally and are loaded with emotional significance and meaning for the community. They play a role in the construction and reproduction of both communicative and cultural memory. Individual events may be remembered in the place where they happened or deliberately memorialized by plaques, statues, or monuments elsewhere. Anything from an architectural style to a toponym may call to mind some element of the past. As a result, memories can be arranged spatially as well as chronologically, mapped onto the landscape in a way that disassociates each moment from its temporal context and produces new juxtapositions.5 In Rome, history lives as much in space as it does in time. Thinkers from Virgil to Petrarch have used the sites of Rome to call up memories of the past.6 But we need not stop there. If the past is neither ordered nor understood in terms of the chronological progression of time, other methods of organizing and structuring the past become important. In space, one of the ways of joining individual memories into meaningful wholes is movement: both the movement of individuals as they go about the city and the shared knowledge and experience of such routes as ritual processions.7 In a city, movement becomes narrative.

When we consider ancient architecture as monument, our impulse is often to separate out the building from communicative memory and to move instead into the more permanent realm of cultural memory.8 This can involve dismissing the ephemeral patterns of behavior and movement that surround the edifice. Isolating an ancient building from its place in urban life either now or in a previous period risks missing those forms of behavior and movement that fit into the more permanent category. Formalized or ritualized movement is a key component of long-term cultural memory production and preservation. Each generation tells stories about buildings in which and among which they live, but those that are memorialized and formalized through cultural practices, including movement, have the greatest effect on how the cityscape is known and understood. Such understanding and knowledge affect decisions shaping the city’s cumulative architectural development over time.

Static and Moving Modes of Experience

The visual experience of ancient architecture has been a prime method of accessing the city’s cultural heritage at least since the Grand Tour flourished. The vedute of artists such as Étienne Dupérac and Giuseppe Vasi depict monuments as part of a living city; for the viewer, however, the element of movement in such depictions is missing (Figure 2;
The presence of figures in the foreground in contemporary dress, some going about their business and others depicted as an audience of tourists, reminds the viewer that the monuments these images depict have a wider context both spatially and temporally. But the engravings themselves—souvenirs deliberately intended as aides-mémoire to allow returning Grand Tourists to recall and share memories of Rome—preserve only static images. The medium privileges the experience of standing still at a scenic point to take in the view. Today, despite the alternatives offered by video, tourists queue to frame the perfect still shot from a specific vantage point. The literal reproduction of “picture postcard” views gives these spots prominence in the cultural memory, and we can see the influence of this phenomenon on the cityscape when a new project is halted because it blocks a famous view.

Highlights of the static and visual modes of experience proposed by the vedutismo tradition and its photographic descendants are the monuments that can be seen standing at street level, picturesquely woven into the modern streetscape. But it is not only there that Rome’s classical past touches the visitor. The present city of Rome is not just built alongside the monuments of its past but also on top of them. Buildings from the time of the republic and empire, made of nearly indestructible Roman concrete, have served as foundations for later structures. Traces of ancient monuments are preserved in the city’s fabric and layout almost everywhere: not just where columns and capitals are visible but also in the arrangement of streets and even the internal articulation of buildings. For example, Piazza Navona is built upon the foundations of the Stadium of Domitian. The open space of the piazza traces out exactly the lines of the racetrack, something the visitor walking through the piazza can easily grasp. Other examples are more difficult to pick out at street level but still affect our experience of the city. Across the Corso Vittorio Emanuele, the area south of the Piazza Navona overlies Pompey’s Theatre. The curve of the Via di Grottapinta is formed by the curve of the cavea beneath. Here the presence of the ancient city imposes itself directly not on vision but on movement. The foundations of Pompey’s Theatre, below street level but deferred to by later construction, force anyone who walks along the street into a curved path. Modern visitors may or may not realize they are tracing a route marked out by ancient architecture. Some modern routes follow an ancient route exactly: for example, the Via del Corso is the direct descendant of the ancient...
Are movement patterns like these to be understood as contributions to cultural memory? Is the route itself a monument? Unmarked and mostly unremarked upon except by the occasional group of archaeology students, such routes do not fit into the criteria laid out above for cultural memory.

As our appreciation of cultural heritage has expanded beyond the single monument, the ancient streets that underlie the modern have sometimes been excavated and displayed. Rimini has an example (Figure 3). Such solutions for ancient streets, which are then ringed by railings or covered over with glass, fit into the static viewing pattern of the vedute. When these streets become places of memory, the ancient infrastructure of movement is transformed into a modern stopping point, something to look at rather than to travel through. In Rimini, the railings impede the progress of traffic along the modern road that exactly follows the ancient route. The choice to mark the streets architecturally as places of memory disrupts the continuity of movement patterns, suggesting that static viewing rather than the experience of movement is preferred as a memory practice. Such choices throw into sharp relief the problems caused when memory and movement collide or where memory brings ancient and modern movement into conflict. If the streets themselves are monuments, there is no space left in which to move or from which to watch and remember.

**Movement Patterns in Antiquity**

The areas I consider here, Rome’s Forum Romanum and the adjacent Imperial Fora, had and continue to have a variety of different relationships to citywide movement patterns. In antiquity, the Forum was a thoroughfare, a place of movement, while the Imperial Fora were largely not traversable. In the postantique, medieval, and Renaissance periods, the Forum remained an open space, while the Imperial Fora became heavily built over. Today the situation is exactly the reverse of that in antiquity: the Forum Romanum is a sealed-off precinct for tourists while the Imperial Fora are bisected by the Via dei Fori Imperiali, once Mussolini’s grand fascist parade route. A detailed analysis of a few key periods of urban development reveals that in both the Forum Romanum and the Imperial Fora modern patterns of movement developed as a direct result of their ancient equivalents, although the ancient functions were the exact opposite of the modern functions in the same areas. The impetus for the reversal resulted from the different relationships between movement and memory that evolved in the two spaces.

The Forum Romanum was Rome’s central square, its political and economic focus, as well as an important site for religious activity. Its location was determined by the intersection of two routes. The Via Sacra paralleled the Palatine slope before climbing the Capitoline Hill and extended along the Forum’s long axis. Across the short axis ran the path from the river Tiber to the Esquiline heights, that is, from the river port and crossing at Tiber Island to Rome’s main residential area. The Romans called this heavily traversed place in the city the *locus celeberrimus*, “the busiest spot,” and precisely because of its busyess, it became the most prestigious site for monuments. The crossroads of the two routes in the Forum developed as Rome’s most important representational space, a space of memory par excellence.

The Via Sacra was a processional route of great antiquity used in such community-defining movement rituals as the triumph, the *pompa circensis* (procession to mark the start of the games), the elite funeral, and the inauguration of new magistrates, to name just a few events. Over time, the space was marked by innumerable statues, inscriptions, shrines, and even full-scale temples set up by individuals or the community as permanent reminders of particular moments of celebration. Each arch or statue built to honor a general or an emperor for some great achievement, and each temple erected to thank the gods for success in a specific battle, served as a space of memory for that occasion; the past was organized spatially rather than sequenced chronologically. An individual was free to wander around them at will, creating his or her own narrative of the Roman past. But it was the
formalized, ritualized movement of the great processions that allowed the creation of narratives that could live in communal (as opposed to communicative) memory. Each honoree reauthored and added to this communal narrative: as he moved in space, he also journeyed in time, past monuments of earlier achievements, thus linking his latest success to the unfurling history of the Roman people.

To a great extent, these narratives are lost to us today. We do not even know which of the paths along the long sides of the square was properly known as the Via Sacra. The exact assemblage of buildings changed over time as well; many of the meanings they would have held for an ancient audience are no longer known. Still, there is much we can re-create: for example, as the triumph of the high empire processed from the southeast to the northwest, it would have passed by the points shown in Figure 4. If the triumphant general and his soldiers entered on the south side, they passed through the ‘Triple Arch of Augustus, a monument to the great achievements of Rome’s first emperor that also bore a list of every consul and every triumph in Roman history from Romulus to the time of Augustus (Figure 5). The Temple of Castor and Pollux on the left was traditionally believed to have been founded as a sign of gratitude for victory at the Battle of Lake Regillus in ca. 495 BCE, when the divine brothers themselves had come to the Romans’ aid in person and afterward watered their horses at the fountain known as the Lacus Juturnae, which still flowed next to the temple. Entering the open square, those processing saw to their left the Basilica (Aemilia) Paulli, decorated with friezes depicting events from early Roman history; straight ahead stood the Temple of Saturn, which was thought to date back to the time of the kings, and off to the side of the route lay the Lacus Curtius, a low precinct containing a basin legend told was named for a Roman youth who had plunged into it on horseback to avert by his sacrifice a doom-laden oracle. The basin would have winked in and out of view between the large freestanding honorific columns, themselves monuments to great Romans’ achievements, as the participants moved along the length of the open square. Once the procession reached the far end of the Forum, attention would have been drawn to the Arch of Septimius Severus, richly decorated with depictions of his triumphs over Parthia; beyond it loomed the Carcer, the place of execution for Rome’s defeated enemies, including notorieties such as Jugurtha and Vercingetorix.

After their progression through the Forum, the participants moved up to the heights of the Capitoline. Earlier in the day, before they had entered the Forum, they had moved past dozens of other important monuments lining the route elsewhere in the city, from comparatively small and unprepossessing temples commemorating victories going back centuries, such as those of Janus, Spes, and Juno Sospita in the Forum Holitorium (all three now built into the Church of San Nicola in Carcere), to the Colosseum (a monument to the Flavian conquest of Jerusalem). No doubt for a Roman traveler or viewer there would be a great deal more to say about the order in which the monuments were encountered and the specific associations brought to the fore by juxtaposition, and not least by the interplay between the individual’s own memories and the collective memory of the culture in
which he or she participated. Even if we cannot hope to recover the full effect, we can say with confidence that the triumphal route thus provided not just a path through the confusing whirl of memories congregating around the Forum but also a way to link the Forum to other places of memory elsewhere in the city. The route linking these places redolent of Rome’s past allowed each participant or spectator to read and find his own place in a larger narrative of patriotic service and Roman glory extending across but detached from time: the route connected the distant past of kings and living gods to the imperial present. Even when no parade was taking place, the route’s power did not dissipate: Romans had seen the same path traversed with magnificent ceremony on so many important and festive occasions that this particular itinerary through the city was prominent in their minds. The parades along the Via Sacra were perfect examples of movement as narrative: an ongoing and iterative process by which Romans could find meaning by ordering their disparate pasts and linking them to the present.

The Forum was one of the most important nodes on this and other processional routes. It was endowed with monumental buildings from the archaic period onward. But its overall architectural layout arose haphazardly, the result of multiple building projects by competing patrons over many centuries. Particularly during the Roman Republic, there was no centralized coordination of planning, no patron who was responsible for the Forum as a whole rather than for one of its individual structures. The colonnades decorating many of the buildings and the repeated pattern of temple pediments and podiums provided coherence in stylistic terms, but architecture of different periods and materials stood side by side. The square’s limits were loosely defined by individual freestanding elements often not arranged on a common orientation; its irregular shape is apparent even
in the imperial period (see Figure 1). The only element that drew the entire grouping together was its paving: although controversies surround the dates of the various surviving levels, the Forum of the late republic and empire was distinguished from the streets around it by stone flagstones laid neatly across its entire expanse. More than any single building, this uniform surface defined the square, further marking it as a space for movement. The Forum Romanum can be apprehended more as a monumentalized crossroads or even a widening of the Via Sacra rather than as an enclosed square. A great deal of traffic crossed the Forum on quotidian business in addition to the grand ritual processions that moved along the Via Sacra. A place to move through as well as a destination, its preeminence as a space of memory was largely determined by its relationship to the city's movement patterns.

Organized urban development would not come to the city of Rome until the unifying will of Julius Caesar and the emperors. Caesar, Augustus, and the rulers who followed them devoted substantial time and money to improving the city of Rome. Five new squares, collectively known as the Imperial Fora, were constructed in the area to the north of the original Forum Romanum between 46 BCE and 113 CE: the Forum of Caesar, the Forum of Augustus, the Temple or Forum of Peace (an enclosed precinct built by Vespasian, in practice indistinguishable from the other Imperial Fora structures despite the different convention of its name), the Forum of Nerva, and the Forum of Trajan (see Figure 1). Each was designed deliberately as a monument, a lesson to contemporary and future audiences in how to read the past: the Forum of Augustus was decorated with a sculpture gallery depicting great men of the Roman past with captions inscribed in stone listing their illustrious deeds.

The new Imperial Fora aspired to serve a similar representational purpose as the Forum Romanum, except that all their allusions to the past were centered on the present emperor as the glorious culmination of Rome’s history. Their contribution to cultural memory was a snapshot of a particular moment, not an evolving narrative bringing together multiple pasts. So it is not surprising these new projects differed substantially from the earlier Forum Romanum in architectural design and practical functions. As a result, the ways in which they are incorporated into the city today differ. For the builders of the Imperial Fora, there was no need to conform to the earlier layout of the areas they chose. They had the money to buy property and the authority to expropriate it if necessary. Indeed, the observable imposition of a new order on the human and natural landscape of the city was a desirable feature of the projects. We see this most clearly in the final result. Trajan’s Forum is an explicit conquest of landscape: in a crowded and hilly city center, he cut away 316,000 cubic meters of earth to provide flat land for his new square. One of its most striking features, the famous Column of Trajan, memorializes this achievement: its inscription tells the reader it was placed there “to show how high a mountain and place were removed for such great works.” But it was also a conquest of cityscape, since the newly flattened hill had not been empty fields but densely inhabited land crossed by dozens of routes. In its place, Trajan, like emperors before him, built a monumentalized open square bounded by colonnades. Like all of the previous Imperial Fora, it was distinctly inward looking: the colonnades bounding it were open and richly decorated on the side facing the square but closed and unornamented on the exterior side. From the outside, all the Imperial Fora appeared as massive, unelaborated walls towering above the wooden residential districts (Figure 6). Unlike any other area of the city of comparable size, each Imperial Forum was laid out precisely with symmetrical rectilinear plans uninterrupted by older monuments. At the moment of entry, visitors confronted a gleaming, open, and above all unified space, providing a marked contrast with the narrow, dark city streets from which they had emerged.
The earlier Forum Romanum had long been a place for grand representational architecture, but it was also always a multipurpose space hosting commercial and recreational activities alongside political ones. On the roads leading up to it and in the square, there were plenty of shops with businesses ranging from prestigious moneylenders to disreputable brothels. Until the construction of the Colosseum in the 70s CE, it was the standard venue for Rome's gladiatorial games. And as described earlier, one of its most important functions was to determine movement patterns: situated at the crossroads of major routes through the city, the Forum Romanum continued to be used as a thoroughfare and processional route. The new Imperial Fora were designed to function differently and had the opposite relationship to movement patterns, as recent studies have convincingly established. The emperors created new spaces where art and architecture could disseminate a single message, a single version of Rome's past and present, in honor of a single patron. To do this, they found new architectural forms recalling the Forum Romanum but rejecting its multipurpose nature. Architecturally, they enclosed the new squares within massive walls with few openings. These were dead ends with few pathways even from one forum to the next, barring chance wanderers or through traffic (Figure 7). The

**Figure 7** Plan of the area of the Forum Romanum and the Imperial Fora in antiquity showing one possible system of entrance and exit routes to the Forum (black) and the Imperial Fora (dark gray). The width of the arrows roughly indicates the width of the entrances (not to scale). Much remains speculative and some commentators would restore further exits and entrances in the areas now under the road, for which see Figure 29 (drawing by Joseph Skinner, adapted).
emperors restricted the activities taking place within these spaces, thus discouraging casual visitors. The Imperial Fora’s main functions were religious and civic: they contained important temples and were the venue for law courts and imperial ceremonials but by deliberate design did not have such features as shops to attract passersby.29 The small entrances often provided access only by stairways, prohibiting wheeled traffic, and they were screened by arches or colonnades (Figures 8–10). Given these architectural innovations, the new fora stood apart from patterns of movement in the city. Indeed, their presence must have massively disrupted previous routes.30 These same innovations produced a unified, immersive experience for those inside. Being so decisively set apart from the rest of the city and its quotidian business rendered them powerful places of memory in antiquity.31

The Afterlife of the Forum Romanum and the Imperial Fora
The gigantic tufa walls bounding the Imperial Fora have enabled their footprint to survive in the modern city.
(see Figure 6). From as early as the fourth century CE, much of the area was hidden under other structures incorporating the walls’ strong foundations and gradually obscuring their shape. In a changing political context, as rulers shifted their attention away from the capital or preferred new building types, the inward-looking buildings of the Imperial Fora, separated from each other and from the rest of the city, no longer served a useful purpose. Residential, commercial, and agricultural activities took over the area. Trajan’s Forum survived the longest, but it too was eventually filled in by new building. These new uses required new movement patterns. Because there were no obvious pathways across the Imperial Fora, new routes cut at diagonals across the careful rectilinear plan. With changes in the area’s use and movement patterns, knowledge of its earlier purpose and layout was lost.33

Sixteenth-century drawings and engravings by Dupérac, Maerten van Heemskerck, and others show the standing ruins of the Temple of Minerva in the Forum of Nerva, although the long wall originally flanking the temple had already been reduced to two lone columns (Figures 11–13). Such engravings are our last surviving pieces of evidence for elements of the original layout, because in the 1560s Pope Pius V began constructing a new residential district in the area with its own plan rather than following ancient or medieval logic.

Half a century later, in 1606, Pope Paul V removed substantial quantities of marble from the temples of the Imperial Fora for his own construction projects elsewhere.34 The sixteenth- and seventeenth-century papal interventions completely changed the area’s layout once more. An engraving by Vasi from Delle magnificenze di Roma antica e moderna
memory and movement in the roman fora from antiquity to metro c

(1747–61) shows part of the area previously belonging to the Forum of Nerva, in his time a small crossroads: only one short section of the long wall of the Forum survives (the section, still visible today, is known as the Colonnacce); the street leading away from the viewer passes directly through the original line of the wall (Figure 14). At the far right of the composition, the Church of Santa Maria in Macello Martyrum occupies what had been the open space of the Forum (Figures 15–17). Interestingly, Vasi also produced a reconstructed view of the same area showing the lost façade of the Temple of Minerva in the Forum of Nerva, presumably based on his knowledge of earlier images. But for those not endowed with his antiquarian interests, the original layout of the area was forgotten. Giambattista Nolli’s Nuova Pianta di Roma of 1748 shows that little trace of the original shapes of the Imperial Fora had survived (Figures 18 and 19). The great eastern walls of the Forum of Augustus and Forum of Trajan are indicated, as is the footprint of the Temple of Mars Ultor in the Forum of Augustus, but almost all are surrounded by later buildings and crisscrossed by streets.

In Nolli’s time and the century following, the few standing remains of ancient buildings (the Colonnacce, part of the back wall of the Forum of Augustus, and Trajan’s Column) received interest as individual monuments from architects, artists, and even Napoleon, who endowed them with new roles as places of memory in isolation from the complex of which they had been a part. The area as a whole did not feature in Rome’s cultural memory: no toponyms marked the streets of the Pantano district (later better known as Alessandrina), which developed there on the site of ancient temples and fora, and nonscholars would not have had much knowledge of its wider history. The Forum Romanum, on the other hand, was still mostly open space right up to the excavations of the late nineteenth century. In the Middle Ages, marsh partially reclaimed it as the ancient drainage system was gradually blocked, and cows were pastured there: the area acquired the toponym Campo Vaccino (cow field). Tops of monuments such as the Arch of Septimius Severus protruded from the ground (see Figure 2), and the Forum Romanum remained a place of historical associations for Rome’s inhabitants and visitors in a way the Imperial Fora did not.

The difference in the fates of the two adjoining areas was partly a product of their different relationships with
Figure 14  Giuseppe Vasi, Descrizione della Chiesa di Santa Maria in Macello Martyrum, 1747–61 [Research Library, Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles].

Figure 15  Reconstructed view of the Forum of Nerva from a similar point of view as Figure 14. The church in the foreground of Figure 14 corresponds to the open square in this reconstruction (copyright 2014 Matthew Nicholls, created using the Virtual Rome model, http://www.reading.ac.uk/classics/research/Virtual-Rome.aspx).
Rome’s street network. Without the commanding presence of the emperors’ control, the practical need for people to create new routes across the massive block of the Imperial Fora became too great to discount. Widening the existing access points would have been impractical because of the stairs and changes of level involved, so new paths were forged on new orientations, thereby diminishing the striking effect of the area’s rectilinear spatial choreography. The Forum Romanum, on the other hand, was already integrated into patterns of movement, so no new routes were needed.

In the medieval period, memory and movement combined to preserve the existing layout of the Forum Romanum. In early medieval Rome, many imposing ancient buildings had ceased their original functions. Consequently building activity was sometimes characterized by “façadism,” the practice of retaining imposing ancient façades at the front of entirely newly constructed buildings. In the eighth or ninth century CE, a wealthy Roman chose to build his new house on the site of the Basilica Paulli (better known today as the Basilica Aemilia) in the Forum Romanum (Figures 20 and 21).36 He retained elements of the ancient façade in his new building. The decision to use this particular site and its façade for the Basilica Aemilia house was conditioned by a number of factors: the prestige of the space (including as a place of memory), the striking visual impact of the façade, and its position along a major route.37 The result of the decision to retain the ancient façade meant that less tangible things were preserved as well: the space was reinscribed as a place of memory and prestige and the route as an important one. What is more, façadism guaranteed that the spatial relationship between building and street remained unchanged.
Nearby in the Forum of Nerva in the Imperial Fora, more recent excavations have uncovered another medieval house built about the same time (Figure 22; see Figure 20). This house stands in the center of what would have been a pedestrian precinct at the time of the Forum’s construction, but ruts in the ancient paving stones show the development of a new route used by wheeled traffic throughout the medieval period. Unlike the Basilica Aemilia house in the Forum Romanum, this house disregards the open space of the Forum of Nerva by directly impinging on it, contributing to the transformation of the space from relatively broad piazza to narrow road. The Basilica Aemilia house’s use of an ancient façade preserved the ancient open space, and the route through the Forum Romanum remained stable; in the Imperial Fora, medieval building activity altered the area’s spatial configuration and movement patterns.

We know from documentary as well as topographical evidence that a route through the Forum Romanum was still in use in the eighth or ninth century. The Einsiedeln Itineraries, a fascinating set of pilgrim routes, guide pious visitors
through the center of Rome, listing landmarks on the left or right of the route. One route goes “per arcum Severi”—through the Arch of Septimius Severus. Next, on the left, come “sti. Hadriani. Forum romanum”—the Church of Sant’Adriano (the ancient Curia) and the square in front of it that the author identifies as the Forum—and Santa Maria Antiqua, on the right. The path is shown in Figure 23. In ancient terms, it passes directly along the Via Sacra. The fact that the itineraries, written for a Christian audience, list the ancient arch alongside contemporary churches demonstrates the persistence of ancient monuments as places of memory even in an altered city; these routes told narratives about the transformation from ancient imperial pagan glory to contemporary Christian piety. The practice of ritualized movement by pilgrims along these routes secured their continuing status as places of memory, as information about them was passed from pilgrim to pilgrim and preserved in documents like the Einsiedeln Itineraries.

In the early Middle Ages, the Forum Romanum continued to provide a pathway lined with evocative monuments and loaded with historical associations. Papal Rome from late antiquity through the Renaissance and beyond continued to use the Forum Romanum both as a quotidian thoroughfare and as part of one of the most important grand processional routes structuring the city and linking together its most prestigious locations. The route from the Vatican to the Lateran, known as the Via Papalis, followed the ancient Via Sacra from the Capitoline to the Colosseum directly through the Forum Romanum. In a ritual known as the possesso, the newly elected pope and his grand entourage would process across the city along the Via Papalis to take possession of the Lateran. In the Renaissance and early modern period, temporary triumphal arches would be set up along the route of the procession, contrasting with and calling attention to the standing ancient arches, and the parade passed through both ancient and new arches. Vasi’s engravings of these temporary arches use conceits of composition.
to play up the juxtaposition, showing in one example the Arch of Titus visible through the opening of a temporary arch erected by the King of the Two Sicilies for the *possesso* of Benedict XIV in 1741 (Figure 24). The movement of the procession created narratives linking temporal and spiritual power, both ancient and modern, and rituals performed en route reinforced the monuments’ role in cultural memory: at the Arch of Titus, originally erected to commemorate the Sack of Jerusalem by the Flavian emperors and decorated with a frieze showing the menorah being carried through Rome in triumph, the pope would receive homage from the Jews of Rome (Figure 25).43

The Forum Romanum was active as a place of memory not only when a papal procession was in progress. The parade route was permanently marked, giving the rituals lasting power in cultural memory through physical form as well as repetition: Nolli’s plan of Rome shows a double line of trees marking an avenue running diagonally across the open area from the Colosseum to the Capitoline (see Figure 18). The contrast with the area of the Imperial Fora could not be greater; as Nolli’s map shows, their architecture and layout had been entirely subsumed into the residential Pantano district.

### Into the Modern Period

Movement would continue to be an important way of experiencing the Forum as a space of cultural memory into the modern period. In the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the static experience of the *vedute* was supplemented in
Figure 24 Giuseppe Vasi, *Arco Triumfale Innalzato ... per ... Papa Benedetto XIV*, 1741 (copyright Trustees of the British Museum, London).

Figure 25 Frieze of the Arch of Titus, still in situ, showing the Triumph over Jerusalem (author’s photo).
the imagination of the champions of Rome’s cultural heritage with the notion of a *passeggiata archeologica*, a park that offered walking routes through ancient monuments preserved in picturesque landscapes. During the Napoleonic period, archaeologist and architect Luigi Canina instigated the trend with his excavations and restorations along the Via Appia leading out of the city, and half a century later, in 1871, after Rome had been granted its first self-government of the modern period, the new city council proposed a great *parco archeologico* using large swathes of land from the Via Appia to the Circus Maximus, Colosseum, Palatine, and Forum Romanum. This idea would recur in different forms in the following decades. A law was passed in 1887 to create a zone protected from construction, and although funding for the purchase of land was slow to come, some expropriations were made. The official *Passeggiata Archeologica* was formally inaugurated in 1911. The area had been gradually planted with trees to create long vistas and map out walking routes, formalizing the concept that Rome’s archaeological heritage was something to be explored in motion as well as viewed as a static panorama. Entirely excluded from the *passeggiata* was the area of the Imperial Fora, which was known to archaeologists but lost to the sight of tourists; it was too built up to fit neatly into the concept of a park characterized by open spaces and scenic views.

Rome’s new *passeggiata*, promising movement, in fact posed a problem for circulation in the modern city. The ancient thoroughfares of the Forum Romanum, long used by all kinds of traffic from papal processions to cowherds, were now conceptualized as spaces set aside for edifying strolls. The park became an obstacle. Today the surviving parts of it, linking the Palatine and the Forum, remain an obstacle to foot and vehicular traffic, especially after the reintroduction of entrance fees (Figure 26). Separation from the rest of the city marks the area as a space of memory in a new way, but the movement rituals that had long preserved

*Figure 26* The Forum Romanum seen from the western slopes of the Capitoline; tourists look over the wall dividing the ticketed area from the public street (author’s photo).
its centrality to the city’s cultural memory as well as its integration with the urban fabric have been decisively curtailed. The Forum Romanum, always a place of transit as well as a destination, has become a dead end, isolated from the movement of daily life.46

The Imperial Fora, on the other hand, have had a very different afterlife. By the beginning of the twentieth century, they had long been entirely built over, hidden from sight by more recent construction and their footprint obscured by winding routes dating from the medieval period and Pius V’s sixteenth-century interventions. But the problems of circulation that the new capital of a united Italy faced in the automobile age were soon to affect many of Rome’s historic districts. In the nineteenth century, a number of proposals were on the table to create wider new roads cutting through the city. Several schemes involved the area of the Imperial Fora, as the planners hoped to devise a new route between the Piazza Venezia (and the new Vittoriano) and the Colosseum—thus directly replacing the artery lost when the Forum Romanum became a park rather than a through route.47

The various new roads already created in modern Rome offered two different models for ways to reconcile their paths with the earlier layouts upon which they were superimposed. The Via Nazionale and the Via Cavour, taking advantage of the more regular layout of the later eastern areas of the city, cut Haussmannesque wide swaths down the hill of the Esquiline. The Corso Vittorio, in contrast, was designed by the planner Alessandro Viviani as a modern traffic artery not at all in the style of Georges-Eugène Haussmann. It curves gently but perceptibly around the great palazzi of the Campo Marzio. In constructing the new road around rather than through the preexisting street layout, Viviani succeeded in creating a route punctuated by picturesque piazzas and bounded by imposing façades, which observers today might be forgiven for thinking is a relic of the city’s ancient or medieval layout. Some of the buildings facing onto it were originally designed to front a roadway but were later engulfed by later construction from which Viviani freed them; others, like the Piazza della Cancelleria, have had their side façades elaborated to match their fronts.48 Viviani’s careful evocation of the city’s organic development is congenial to present taste, though the false sense of “authenticity” it offers might find detractors.

Nineteenth-century proposals for a route through the area of the Imperial Fora had been rejected because they would have required too much expropriation. The suggestions of the early 1900s aimed to ameliorate difficulties by suggesting a curving road with minimal demolitions, similar to the Corso Vittorio. The buildings these plans aspired to preserve were not those of the rectilinear Imperial Fora but the jumbled medieval and later constructions that overlay them. During the same years, however, others had different ideas. The archaeologist Corrado Ricci and the architect Marcello Piacentini, both of whom later worked with Mussolini on the Via dell’Impero, proposed in 1911 and 1925, respectively, that the area of the Imperial Fora should be cleared of postantique structures. Both were more interested in investigating antiquity than freeing up circulation. Ricci’s proposal did include the road, but Piacentini explicitly aimed for an expanded archaeological park, including the Imperial Fora, which would be uncrossed by vehicular routes.49 Disagreements and funding difficulties resulted in nothing being done, but the various plans considered in the early 1900s demonstrate for the first time an awareness of both the street layouts, antique and postantique, which together constitute the architectural patrimony of the area. Indeed, the great archaeologist and topographer Rodolfo Lanciani, then a member of the Italian Senate, discussed the changes in the area’s orientation over time at a hearing on Ricci’s proposal in 1917.50

Just like the original construction of the Imperial Fora, it took an autocrat to cut through the deliberations and begin building a new road through the area. Mussolini was perfectly conscious of the parallel he was drawing between himself and the emperors and saw his interventions in Rome’s urban fabric as deliberate reworking of the city’s history and its people’s memory and identity. Both his ideology of romanità and the process of expropriation, clearance, and construction there and elsewhere in the capital were well documented at the time and have been examined by many scholars since.51 Mussolini and those surrounding him were interested in “liberating” the monuments of imperial Rome from what they saw as worthless accretions engrossing them over time. The liberated structures would then be placed in juxtaposition with the new monuments of the fascist regime. To those who made a claim for the significance of Rome’s winding streets in the city’s cultural heritage, Mussolini answered that a distinction should be drawn between “the living testimony of the glory of Rome” and “the picturesque and so-called local color.”52 Fascism emphasized the distant past and the future; anything in between was removed from the picture.53 The fascists did not consider medieval and later buildings that had occupied the area of the Imperial Fora to be a useful part of Rome’s collective history. They destroyed an entire neighborhood, including 5,500 residential units, and constructed the grandiose Via dei Monti, soon renamed the Via dell’Impero, now the Via dei Fori Imperiali.54

Antonio Muñoz, whom Mussolini placed in charge of Rome’s antiquities and fine arts, produced a pamphlet on the construction of the new road outlining the fascist attitude
toward urban history, memory, and preservation. The post-
pre-antique city, he wrote, was an obstacle; displaying the monu-
ments of antiquity was a key goal, but everything was
subordinate to the needs of the contemporary city, not least
its traffic circulation. Muñoz noted that the project had a
long history, and multiple different routes had been planned.
He was not interested in emulating Viviani's curving route
around existing buildings, objecting that a proposed curve
at the Via Cavour in the Piano Regolatore of 1931 to spare
some Renaissance constructions would impede the view of
the Colosseum. Nor was he concerned about minimizing the
destruction of ancient architecture. Full-scale excavations
to uncover its exact layout would require too much money
and time, he claimed, and so he proposed the simplest solu-
tion: a straight line was best (Figure 27). He took care to note
that a straight route would also offer the best panorama,
demonstrating the concern with scenography often charac-
terizing fascist interventions. The route required cutting
away part of the Velian Hill, a challenge Muñoz welcomed
for its parallelism with Trajan's landscaping excavations at
the other end of the valley. Finally, Muñoz conceptualized
the result as a kind of *passeggiata archeologica* as well as a traffic
teritory; the area carved out, he claimed, would allow cars to
zip along the street while pedestrians strolling in the green
park areas of the verges could contemplate the monuments
of the Imperial Fora forming the road's backdrop. With the

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**Figure 27** The area of the Imperial Fora in light of recent excavations overlaid with the modern street layout. The large arrow shows the approximate viewpoint of Figures 28–30. The Via dei Fori Imperiali is outlined: the part of the road running across most of the fora remains open to all traffic; the stretch closed to private cars is the crosshatched portion to the right of the junction with the Via Cavour (courtesy of Amanda Claridge, modified).

**Key to relevant items:**
1. Church of Santi Luca e Martina, originally 7th century
4. Curia, converted into the church of Sant'Adriano in the 7th century
6. Medieval house in the Forum of Nerva, 9th century
13. Church of Santi Cosma e Damiano, built into the structures of the Forum (or Temple of Peace in the 6th century
16. Standing section of the wall of the Forum of Nerva, known as the Colonnacce
17. Temple of Minerva
18. Porticus Absidata
21. Temple of Mars Ultor
29. Medieval houses in the Forum of Trajan, 13th–14th century
30. Medieval hospital in the Forum of Trajan, 13th century
interventions of Muñoz and Mussolini, the Imperial Fora once again found a place in cultural memory as important repositories of national identity and pride. Indeed, new excavations in the Imperial Fora undertaken by the Comune di Roma for the millennium demonstrate their continuing importance today.

The road ran, and still runs, in a straight line obliquely across the Imperial Fora’s layout, creating a new line of sight between the Piazza Venezia and the Colosseum (Figures 28 and 29). The closed spaces of the Imperial Fora were opened for movement, modern speed, and fascist parades, which paralleled those of the ancient and papal periods through the Forum Romanum next door (Figure 30). Mussolini was keen to exploit the Imperial Fora as places of memory, and in many ways his imperial pretensions conjured up accurate reflections of their original representational purposes. The new fascist roads were themselves monuments: monuments to modernity, to the triumph of fascism, above all to speed. These roads-as-monuments combined movement and memory in an entirely different way from the fenced-off Roman road displayed in Rimini. They were not there to be looked at: movement at the speed of the automobile was an essential part of their existence, an urban ritual implying a new mode of viewing for the ruins and a new form of cultural memory. Mussolini’s use of the area as a processional route solidified its role in cultural memory through practice and taught Romans and visitors how to understand it during their own speedier journeys. But the demolitions erased not just the
buildings of later periods that were entirely destroyed but also the ancient spatial experience of the area’s inward-looking separation and careful layout set apart from the city’s movement networks.58

Mussolini was looking for a monument, a unified structure that could measure up to his grandiose plans for the Third Rome. But so much of the original ancient architecture there, as elsewhere, had been lost, and what remained had evolved new stories over the intervening centuries. After the demolitions, what remained was inevitably fragmentary. Nowadays, we mourn the loss of the intermediate phases, but for its original audience, the effect produced by the juxtaposition of fascist showpieces with a past stripped of its context was problematic in a different sense. Mussolini’s propaganda described the ancient monuments in their new settings as examples to emulate or celebrate: Italy’s imperial past and future standing together. But as always, a city like Rome can bear many meanings, and the overlay of ancient and modern topography suggested competition as well as imitation.59 The modern vision presented by Mussolini inevitably excited two concomitant anxieties inherent to competition: that one might win—or one might lose.

Mussolini’s road did not defer to the original architecture that had been newly isolated to form its backdrop. Large portions of the Imperial Fora were now “liberated” from later accretions of construction only to be buried under the new road and its parks, and Muñoz and others were happy to admit that traffic needs trumped historical preservation.60 The huge ancient walls on display made obvious the earlier orientation of the area and the fact that the new road steamrollered across it at a defiant angle (see Figure 27).61 The smooth tarmac of the road contrasted with the pockmarked brick and tufa of the ancient walls, their marble revetments long since vanished. The visible triumph of new over old contrasted with and detracted from the intended message of continuity and inheritance.

Figure 30 Fascist parade of youths of the Opera Nazionale Balilla along the Via dell’Impero, 3 Mar. 1936 (copyright 2013 Cinecittà Luce/Scala, Florence).
Even so, the triumph of new over old was not fully realized and could be called into question. Despite Mussolini’s unambiguous elevation of movement over memory, his desire to preserve even parts of the Imperial Fora as a backdrop for his road irked some of his supporters who looked to the future. The futurist movement, at times a contender to be an official fascist style, despised the remembrance of the past as harbinger of imitation and fear. Futurists had been among the strongest supporters of the demolitions, and their ideals precluded leaving some privileged remains standing against which to judge the present. The futurist Filippo Tommaso Marinetti wrote that history was a burden the Italian people must set down; he conjured up the image workmen in awe surrounding “the latrine of the third public scribe who wrote the first love letter to Cicero’s cook.” Marinetti believed that the supposed grandeur of antiquity, no less than the winding medieval streets that overlay its structures, held back modern Romans from their full potential. Memory and movement could not coexist under futurist doctrine; all movement was to be forward, unimpeded by the past.

The futurists had a point. The picturesque ruins of the Imperial Fora were also monuments of decline and decay. From one point of view, Mussolini could claim to be avenging the shameful defeat of the ancient past by the barbarisms of the intervening centuries; but surely the eventual fall of the empire he regarded as his model could also be read as an omen for the inevitable end of his new order. Marginal voices such as an American living in Rome quoted in the National Geographic in 1937 drew attention to the bleakness of the contrast in another part of the city: “Look to your left. See those young Fascists on the athletic field. Behind them lie ruins of Caracalla’s Baths. Vast in size and equipped with every luxury then known, they marked the beginnings of Rome’s fall.” Indeed, impressive as some of the Imperial Fora’s newly revealed standing ruins were, they were all damaged and incomplete. The traumatizing potential of ruined buildings was soon freshly apparent in Rome itself as the city was bombed in the war; Mussolini did not visit the affected areas.

Official communications betray no trace of possible alternative readings, but in the final phase of his building projects Mussolini rejected the ideal of glorious unification of past and present, preferring to emulate the emperors more literally by creating new areas in which no extraneous material disrupted his unified modern vision. Originally the Via dell’Impero was to have been the site for one of the grandest fascist projects of all, the Palazzo del Littorio, for the party headquarters. In 1934, a massive open competition was held for designs. But the following year, the site was switched. The new building would now be built at the Foro Mussolini, on land less loaded with cultural memory outside the city center. Its model was neither the Forum Romanum nor the current Imperial Fora, which had become palimpsests of generations of construction and destruction, but the Imperial Fora as they were originally built. Mussolini took decisive steps away from the old, multilayered space of memory of the older fora to a place where a new ruler could paint his own image on a blank canvas.

Today the road still runs at an angle across the Imperial Fora, despite the recurrence of proposals to demolish it for the sake of further archaeological investigation. On the one hand, the road is a major source of pollution and vibration, threatening the ancient ruins and marring the experience of tourists in the city center. On the other hand, closing the road to traffic circulation (especially Rome’s bus network) is a stumbling block. Mayor Ignazio Marino has succeeded in closing to private cars a stretch to the south of the Imperial Fora leading toward the Colosseum, but the rest of the road remains open (see Figure 27). Full pedestrianization (pedonalizzazione) remains the mayor’s stated goal. In 2014, Marino experimented with a series of temporary closures of the entire road, but they raised the ire of drivers and passengers and the result remains uncertain. Although traffic continues to thunder down the Via dei Fori Imperiali, in the open spaces of the Imperial Fora themselves the balance between memory and movement has tipped once again, and the more recently excavated portions are closed spaces, set apart from the modern street layout (Figure 31). They are still important places of memory to Romans and to tourists, but only scholars with special permessi can actually visit the excavations and temporary fences force even them into defined paths across the ancient open squares. Plans for the area aspire to value all the different stages of the site’s development, integrating architecture of different periods into the modern city. Even so, the problem of movement and memory has reared its head once again with the excavations for the new Metro Line C, which will run directly underneath the area. The tunnel itself does not pose a problem; the engineers plan to dig at a lower level than any human archaeological strata. However, in test excavations for possible entrance sites to the proposed station at Piazza Venezia, the archaeologists have discovered few viable options; they are constantly tripping over more and more fascinating structures connected to Trajan’s Forum. These finds represent some of the most exciting new archaeological discoveries in Rome for decades, which are as we speak reshaping the way we see the Imperial Fora. The difficulties the Metro faces are directly connected to the ways the Imperial Fora originally controlled movement and limited...
access routes for the traffic of their own time. The Imperial Fora’s unified, centrally planned layout left no space unused. Since the structures directly abut each other, they have not left any gaps for metro passengers today.

**Conclusion**

Until very recently, movement and memory worked together in the Forum Romanum; in the area of the Imperial Fora, they were at odds. The success of movement-related narratives ensured the persistence of the Forum Romanum as a place of cultural memory, lifted above the quotidian or communicative memory by tradition, repetition, and ritual. Leaders who wanted to link their present to a past significant to Roman identity—from triumphing Roman generals to early modern popes—created routes linking older and newer parts of the built environment and themselves to all those who had followed the same path. Mussolini’s new road aimed to accomplish the same, but his imposition of a new movement pattern also created a sense of competition with the past that eventually became a threat.

An understanding of the relationship between movement and memory in Rome explains why the two areas under consideration had such different postantique fates. The original design of the Imperial Fora deliberately did not allow for movement across the area, setting each closed space apart from the daily life of the city. Because the Imperial Fora were not integrated into the city’s movement patterns, they did not survive in the developing postantique cityscape. Once there was no longer a powerful central authority forbidding such passage, people eventually made their own routes across the Imperial Fora despite the massive walls and orthogonal rigor of the area’s layout. Over time, these encroachments lessened the unified visual impact and sense of separation that had originally made them such powerful places of memory. They languished unremembered until Mussolini plowed his way through the area of the Imperial Fora to rediscover and reappropriate only the memories he selected from among the many layers of memory the Alessandrina neighborhood embodied. In doing so, he created a location of memory that was also a location of movement designed for the motor age.

The Forum Romanum, in contrast, had always been a location of movement. A great deal of its specific power in cultural memory was bound up in the processional practices of papal Rome, a direct inheritance from the ancient ritual of the triumph. The Forum’s importance as a route, for both ceremonial and quotidian purposes, was one reason why it was never built over in the same way the Imperial Fora were. As a direct consequence, its ancient structures have survived, and it has become once again one of Rome’s primary locations of cultural memory. But the way we consume our memories has changed since the papal processions of the Renaissance and early modern period. A residue of formalized movement still persists, as we follow tour guides in a ritual dance from monument to monument; but we must
now pay to enter a fenced-off area, and although we may wander as tourists along the ancient flagstones of the Via Sacra, the Forum Romanum’s role as a location of movement integrated with the city’s movement patterns is lost.

Notes
1. Preliminary versions of this article were presented at the European Architectural Historians Network Annual Meeting in Brussels, 2012, and at Durham University; my thanks to Samantha L. Martin-McAluliffe and Daniel Millette as the organizers of the EAHN panel and to both audiences for helpful comments. I have also benefited greatly from the advice and suggestions of David J. Newsome and Matthew Nicholls and from the editorial and anonymous reviewing team at JSAH. Any deficiencies in the final result remain my sole responsibility. Translations are mine unless otherwise specified. I regret that I have been unable to engage with the insights of Diane G. Favro, “Moving Events: Curating the Memory of the Roman Triumph,” in Memoria Romana: Memory in Rome and Rome in Memory, ed. Karl Galinsky (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014), which appeared just as this piece was going to press.


5. Walter Benjamin explores the idea of documenting his life not chronologically but spatially on a map of places tied to vignettes of memory in “A Berlin Chronicle,” written in 1932 but unpublished in his lifetime (here cited from Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings, ed. Michael W. Jennings, Howard Eiland, and Gary Smith; trans. Edmund Jephcott [Cambridge, Mass.: Belknap Press, 1999], 2:595–637). He writes: “I have long, indeed for years, played with the idea of setting out the sphere of life—how graphically on a map” (596); later he writes: “For autobiography has to do with time, with sequence and what makes up the continuous flow of life. Here, I am talking of a space, of moments and discontinuities” (612). The shifting relationships between time and space also extend beyond individual memories; in his final, unfinished project on Parisian arcades (“Passagen,” here cited from Walter Benjamin, Gesammelte Schriften, ed. Rolf Tiedemann [Frankfurt: Suhrkamp, 1982], 5:2:1041–43), he describes the arcades as “raumgewordene Vergangenheit” (the past become space) (1041). For more on the specific roles played by place and the built environment in discourses of cultural memory, see Aleida Assmann, Cultural Memory and Western Civilization: Functions, Media, Archives (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 281–324.

6. David H. Larmour and Diana Spencer, “Introduction—Roma, recepta: A Topography of the Imagination,” in Larmour and Spencer, The Sites of Rome, 1–60, esp. 15–18, provide a vital guide to a range of historical and contemporary approaches to the conflation of time and space in Rome. Not surprisingly, walks through Rome play an important role in Aleida Assmann’s conception of places of memory; discussing a letter of Petrarch (to Giovanni Colonna, Fam. 6.2) about a stroll he took with a friend, she writes, “For the two walkers, time is now condensed into space…. Chronology is turned into a topology of history, and one can make one’s way through it step by step over the very ground where it all happened” (Cultural Memory and Western Civilization, 294).

7. Ritual processions are part of Erinnerungskultur (the tools of memory culture). By repetition and because they are marked as special, they transmit knowledge of particular routes.

8. Astrid Erll, “Cultural Memory Studies: An Introduction,” in Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook, ed. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2008), works with a wider definition of cultural memory that resists drawing such boundaries between any different forms of memory related to culture and identity, including between communicative and cultural memory (1–15). For this article, the distinction is vital, although we should be careful before deciding in which category any specific instance belongs.


10. London has a View Management Framework to protect thirteen specific views in the capital; the most recent detailed information can be found in London View Management Framework: Supplementary Planning Guidance (London: Greater London Authority, 2012). In Rome, one of the recent controversies over Richard Meier’s Museo dell’Ara Pacis has focused on a wall that separates the piazza from the Lungotevere, thus blocking the view of the Churches of San Girolamo and San Rocco from the river. See “Ara Pacis, giù il muretto di Meier, spostata la Fontana dei naviganti,” La Repubblica, 28 May 2012, http://roma.repubblica.it/cronaca/2012/05/28/news/ara_pacis_cancellato_il_progetto_del_sottopasso_ridimensionato_il_muro_della_fontana_del_navigante-36082819 (accessed 1 May 2014).


12. Other options are available: in Córdoba, the ancient flagstones have been covered with strong glass on which visitors can walk, with the result that the old route can still be followed. Variables such as considerations of cost, the need to protect the ancient stones from the elements, modern movement patterns, and the attitude taken by local authorities to tangible and intangible cultural heritage will mean different solutions are appropriate in different places.


17. Recently, Eva Margareta Steinby, *Edilizia pubblica e potere politico nella Roma repubblicana* (Rome: Jca Book, 2012), has suggested that the republican Senate played a larger role in urban planning than has sometimes been thought. The large-scale patterns she cites as evidence of a guiding hand, such as the fact that all four sides of the Forum square were adorned with basilicas by different patrons within twenty years in the early second century BCE, can be explained equally well, however, by upmanship and fashion.


19. The emperors made various attempts to create a more unified visual aspect for the buildings lining the Forum, and the arches installed in the time of Augustus at the two main entrances to the southeast added to the feeling of enclosure; for these changes, see most recently Susanne Muth, “Reglementierte Erinnerung: Das Forum Romanum unter Augustus als Ort kontrollierter Kommunikation,” in *Kommunikationsräume im Kaiserzeitlichen Rom*, ed. Felix Mundt (Berlin: De Gruyter, 2013), 3–47. Even so, none of these interventions could match the Imperial Fora’s sense of enclosure and isolation from movement patterns.


22. The Latin word *monumentum*, derived from *moereos* (I remind), makes the didactic and mnemonic aspects of monuments explicit. The semantic connection was often commented upon by Latin authors (e.g., Varro, *De lingua latina* 6.49; Ulpian, *Digesta* 11.7.2.6; Porphyry, *Hoe Carm.* 1.2.15) and is thoroughly explored by Andrew Meadows and Jonathan Williams, “Moneta and the Monuments: Coinage and Politics in Republican Rome,” *Journal of Roman Studies* 91 (2001), 27–49.


24. The purchase at great expense of huge amounts of prime residential land for the Forum of Caesar is described in a letter of Cicero’s from 54 BCE (*Att. 4.16.8*). Augustus famously boasted that he built his forum on private land (Res Gestae Divi Augusti 21)—to be interpreted as a sign of his modesty in buying rather than expropriating. Suetonius claimed that Augustus could not persuade all the owners to sell (Suet., *Aug.* 56.2),
and the slight irregularities of the plan at the northeast corner have sometimes been cited as evidence that he did make some changes in response. This has more to do with propaganda than reality; if Augustus had wanted to make his forum a perfect rectangle, he could have done so. Augustus made a point of publicizing his refusal to expropriate because this was unexpected. Later emperors would have faced even fewer social constraints on their ability to build anywhere they wished.


27. For the development of this inward-looking architectural type and its contrast with the Forum Romanum, see in particular John R. S. Senseney, “Adrift toward Empire: The Lost Porticus Octavia in Rome and the Origins of the Imperial Fora,” JSAG 70, no. 4 (Dec. 2011), 421–41, esp. 422–23.


29. The absence of suitable architectural features for shops in most of the Imperial Fora is argument enough, although Caesar’s Forum, which contains small rooms suitable for use as shops, is an exception. Appian (Civil Wars 2.102) tells us that Caesar explicitly barred commerce from his forum. See also Roger B. Ulrich, “Julius Caesar and the Creation of the Forum Iulium,” American Journal of Archaeology 97, no. 1 (Jan. 1993), 58–66.

30. For further discussion, see Palombi, “Morfologia, toponomastica”; Ulrich, “Julius Caesar and the Creation of the Forum Iulium.”

31. In 357 CE, when the emperor Constantius II visited Rome for the first time, he was taken to visit Trajan’s Forum. The emperor had no trouble deciphering its message and thus its place in his own past and present. Ammianus Marcellinus wrote: “But when he came to the Forum of Trajan, a building which I believe has no equal under the sun and which even the gods agree is a marvel, he was transfixed with astonishment while his mind roamed around the gigantic complex, indescribable in words and never again to be attempted by mortals” (Amn. 16.10.15).


33. David J. Newsome (personal communication) has pointed out that the Mirabilia Urbis Romae (Marvels of Rome) (a loose family of descriptions of the city that can be traced to the mid-twelfth century CE) mistakenly placed the Forum of Caesar on the other side of the Forum Romanum entirely— contra the claim stated in Anderson, The Historical Topography of the Imperial Fora, that the Forum of Caesar was “never really lost” (44). Chapter 24 of the Mirabilia (following the editing of Roberto Valentini and Giuseppe Zucchetti, eds., Codice topografico della città di Roma, vol. 3 [Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medioevo, 1946], 17–65) links the forum Cesaris (Caesar’s Forum) with templum Palladi (Temple of Pallas [Minerva]) and templum Iani (Temple of Janus), identifying Caesar’s Forum with the Church of San Lorenzo in Miranda (the ancient Temple of Antoninus and Faustina) and the Temple of Janus with the Torre dei Frangipane, which was built on the site of the Arch of Titus.

34. At first glance, the Forum of Nerva provides an exception, but upon closer inspection, it too conforms to the pattern. Known in antiquity as the Forum Transitorium (the going-through forum), it stood on land that had previously been occupied by the Acrileum, one of Rome’s major movement arteries. The Forum of Nerva has the appearance of a monumentalized street. Even so, at the northeast end, the Temple of Minerva provides a visually satisfying terminus and the appearance of closure; movement through the narrow passage that remained to the south of the temple was further hindered by stairs.

35. The postantique history of Trajan’s Column, including its appropriation by the popes and early excavations under Napoleon, deserves an article in itself, but it was treated in the main as an individual monument, not part of an urban landscape. For the Napoleonic interventions, see in particular Ronald T. Ridley, The Eagle and the Spade: Archaeology in Rome during the Napoleonic Era (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 152–66.

36. This house and the practice of façadism are discussed in detail by Caroline J. Goodson, “Roman Archaeology in Medieval Rome,” in Caldwell and Mayernik, eds., The Historical T opography of the Imperial Fora is argument enough, although Caesar’s Forum, which contains small rooms suitable for use as shops, is an exception. Appian (Civil Wars 2.102) tells us that Caesar explicitly barred commerce from his forum. See also Roger B. Ulrich, “Julius Caesar and the Creation of the Forum Iulium,” American Journal of Archaeology 97, no. 1 (Jan. 1993), 58–66.

37. The owner was presumably, in the words of Richard Krautheimer, Rome: Profile of a City, 312–1308 (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1980), one of the “respectable burgheurs able to afford festooning their houses and the adjoining stretch of street for papal processions” (315).


39. Indeed, this stretch was part of the papal processional route from the Lateran to the Vatican, which according to the order of Benedictus Canonianus of ca. 1140 CE passed through slightly different areas of the city to the reverse path discussed here; it crossed the area of the Imperial Fora there and continued up the Salita del Grillo, behind the back wall of the Forum of Augustus. For further detail, see Krautheimer, Rome, 278–79.

40. Goodson, “Roman Archaeology in Medieval Rome,” discusses this section of the itinerary and the links it suggests between old and new architecture in the Forum (25–26).

41. Mark Humphries, “From Emperor to Pope? Ceremonial, Space, and Authority at Rome from Constantine to Gregory the Great,” in Religion, Dynasty, and Patronage in Early Christian Rome, 300–900, ed. Kate Cooper and Julia Hillner (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 21–58, discusses the evolution of processional ritual in Rome from late antiquity to the medieval period, noting how many imperial practices and routes were retained and revitalized by the popes even as entirely new forms also developed. The possesso shows specific links with the Roman triumph and the imperial adventus, the ceremony of an emperor’s arrival in the capital.

42. The possesso was a long-standing ritual, although in the medieval period it involved movement from the Lateran to the Vatican and back, rather than beginning at the Vatican. For the sixteenth-century version, see Irene Fosi, “Court and City in the Ceremony of the Possesso in the Sixteenth Century,” in Court and Politics in Papal Rome, 1492–1700, ed. Gianvittorio Signorotto and Maria Antonietta Visceglia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 31–52. David Mayernik, Timeless Cities: An Architect’s Reflections on Renaissance Italy (Boulder, Colo.: Westview Press, 2003), reads the possesso route as a “memory path” (66–74).
and time for reflection” (35, trans. Baxa). Muñoz, as Baxa notes, preferred ruins; he preferred that ruins be studied in an atmosphere of “calm, solitude it was Le Corbusier who counseled against the juxtaposition of roads and 


45. The problem is noted by Lugli, Urbanistica di Roma, 128–29.

46. Newsome, “The Forum and the City,” reacted in 2010 to the problems created by the introduction of ticket barriers (which took place in 2008, when he was carrying out his research) in similar terms: “The Forum Romanum has changed from a place that one might move through, to a place that one moves to; from a shortcut to an obstacle. This has implications for how one should evaluate the perception of this space in the city at large. “The Forum Romanum is no longer a well-integrated route but is a segregated destination” (preface, unpaginated).

47. Lugli, Urbanistica di Roma, collects the evidence for Rome’s urban development in this period. Italo Insolera and Francesco Perego, Archeologia e città: Storia moderna dei Fori di Roma (Rome: Editori Laterza, 1983), are particularly helpful for the area of the Forum Romanum and the Imperial Fora.


49. Mario Piacentini, “La grande Roma,” Capitalium 1, no. 7 (1925), 413–20; Corrado Ricci, Antonio M. Colini, and Valerio Mariani, Via dell’Impero (Rome: Libreria dello Stato, 1933), 3.

50. For Lanciani’s intervention, see Francesco Mora, La ‘passeggiata archeologica,’ “La ‘pazza idea’ di Marino: Smantellare i Fori Imperiali,” in Leone and Margiotta, Via dei Monti e Via del Mare (Rome: Biblioteca d’Arte Romano, 1998), 128–29; Paola Ciancio Rossetto, “La ‘passeggiata archeologica,’ ” in Borden W. Painter Jr., Roads and Ruins: The Symbolic Landscape of Fascist Rome (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010), has revitalized the study of fascist urbanism with a new emphasis on the lived place that one moves to; from a shortcut to an obstacle. This has implications for how one should evaluate the perception of this space in the city at large. “The Forum Romanum is no longer a well-integrated route but is a segregated destination” (preface, unpaginated).


54. In addition to the works cited above in n. 51, for the Via dell’Impero project, see Fabio Betti, Via dell’Impero: Nascita di una strada; Demolizioni e scavi 1930–36 (Rome: Palombi Editori, 2006); Insolera and Perego, Archeologia e città; Rossella Leone and Anna Margiotta, eds., Fori Imperiali: Demolizioni e scavi; Fotografia, 1924–1940 (Milan: Electa, 2007).

55. Antonio Muñoz, Via dei Monti e Via del Mare (Rome: Biblioteca d’Arte Editrice, 1932).

56. Baxa, Roads and Ruins, 80–84; specifically on the Via dell’Impero, he quotes Le Corbusier’s and Muñoz’s conflicting ideas on how best to appreciate ruins (85). In an interview with Muñoz published in Antonio Muñoz, “Les Corbusier parla di urbanistica romana,” L’Urbe 14 (Nov. 1936), it was Le Corbusier who counseled against the juxtaposition of roads and ruins; he preferred that ruins be studied in an atmosphere of “calm, solitude and time for reflection” (35, trans. Baxa). Muñoz, as Baxa notes, preferred a model whereby speed of movement enhances the immediacy with which a passerby is confronted, even surprised by, ruins: see Antonio Muñoz, “La Via dell’Impero,” Emporium 10 (Oct. 1931), 242.

57. For further discussion of fascist rituals using the street to claim control over public space, see Atkinson, “Totalitarianism and the Street in Fascist Rome.”

58. Angela Maria D’Amelio, “Foro di Augusto,” in Leone and Margiotta, Fori Imperiali, discusses the loss of the ancient “spazialità,” pointing out that postantique interventions meant it was not only unrecovered but also unrecoverable (49).

59. Muñoz, Via dei Monti, remarks with pride that the two exedras in the new layout of the area flanking the Vittoriano are 10 meters larger than Bernini’s exedras at St. Peter’s Basilica (10). As Sprio Kostof, “His Majesty the Pick: The Aesthetics of Demolition,” Design Quarterly 118/19 (1982), 32–41, remarks: “The presentation of ancient monuments in a drama of historical association brings out the comparable or rather competitive grandeur of the present regime in relation to the past.”


61. On ideological impulses behind the change in orientation, see ibid., 24; Baxa, Roads and Ruins, 85.

62. The link is noted by Kostof, in “His Majesty the Pick,” quoting Filippo Tommaso Marinetti’s Futurist Manifesto: “Get hold of picks, axes, hammers, and demolish, demolish without pity, the venerated cities” (53).


64. The anonymous American is quoted in Painter, Mussolini’s Rome (52–53), citing John Patrick’s National Geographic article “Imperial Rome Reborn” (71, no. 3 [Mar. 1937]).

65. Kostof, The Third Rome (33–38), traces the three phases: reverence and concern for authenticity in the display of monuments; then the juxtaposition of ancient and fascist architecture; and finally the move to entirely new contexts.


67. Full details can be found at the project’s website, www.foripedonalii.it (accessed 14 May 2015).


69. In the 1980s, Insolera and Perego, Archeologia e città, wrote of the “multiplication of points of intersection and exchange” between periods (xi). The most recent project, in the words of Sonia Martone, “La Linee C della metropolitana di Roma: Procedure e nuove prospettive,” in Egidi, Archeologia e infrastrutture, has the aim of “recuperating and exalting the value of the stratified city” (14).

70. The most recently published synopsis can be found in Egidi, Archeologia e infrastrutture.