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## **Space, Ritual, Event: Constantine's Jubilee of 326 and its Implications On Urban Space**

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To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Brian Christopher Doherty entitled "Space, Ritual, Event: Constantine's Jubilee of 326 and its Implications On Urban Space." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Architecture, with a major in Architecture.

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We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

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(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

**Space, Ritual, Event: Constantine's Jubilee of 326 and its Implications On  
Urban Space**

A Thesis presented for the  
the Master of Architecture  
Degree  
The University of Tennessee, Knoxville

Brian Christopher Doherty  
August 2013

## **ABSTRACT**

Architecture has been characterized as the study of space. But this notion presupposes that the edifices created are not irrevocably tied to the activities, the *rituals* that activate them as part of a greater whole. As a historical example, Constantine's triumph of 312 and the subsequent jubilee celebrations of 326 will be examined in order to illustrate the way in which architecture, literature, and history coincide to further Constantine's imperial legitimacy and usher in a return to solitary rule within the Roman Empire.

## Preface

Tracing its way between the Palatine and the Caelian Hills, a wide street ran north into the heart of the city. Temples nestled themselves on the hillsides, towering over the street. An aqueduct sliced its way across the valley from right to left. A large paved square lay beyond the road. There, a colossal statue reached into infinity. On the right of the street was the Colosseum, mammoth in scale. On the left, a huge podium encroached on the gathering slopes of yet another hill. Over a hundred freestanding columns stretched upward toward the sky. The road turned. On the far side of the massive podium were grand steps full of people, behind them coffered concrete vaults: the basilica, not yet completed. Further still, the domed rotunda clung to the side of the street. The crowd filled the space between the two buildings. The cheers drowned out all noise. The road delved downward and under an arch. A central square, paved in travertine, was covered in scores of people. Banners waved violently from the building facades. A podium stood at the far side of the square. Ship prows speared themselves outward from it, into the crowd. Five columns rose from the podium's base. Statues littered every available space, as if they are part of the crowd as well. The temples and arches surrounded the street on every side, people amassed upon their podiums, watching the street. The very air was choked with people. This was the Roman Forum of Constantine's triumph.

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## List of Abbreviations

Barnes, <i>CE</i>	T.D. Barnes, <i>Constantine and Eusebius</i> . (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981).
CIL	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> .
Eusebius, <i>VC</i>	Eusebius, <i>Vita Constantini, Life of Constantine</i> .
LTUR	Eva Margareta Steinby, ed. <i>Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Suae</i> . (Rome: Edizioni Quasar, 1993-2000).
PLRE	A.H.M. Jones, John Robert Martindale, John Morris, eds. <i>Prosopography of the Later Roman Empire, 3 vols.</i> (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964)

## Chapter I. Introduction

### Overview

If writer Alan Moore is right in saying that "artists use lies to tell the truth and politicians use lies to cover the truth up," then Constantine's jubilee of 326, celebrating his *vicennalia*, or twentieth anniversary of accession, and the jubilee's ability to activate the space of the Roman Forum, was a masterwork of both art and politics.

By the early fourth-century, Rome was losing its influence as *caput mundi*, or capital of the world, as emperors found themselves increasingly in other imperial capitals at the fringes of the empire.<sup>1</sup> Constantine's interests were elsewhere, as he only spent less than two years within Rome during his reign. Why then, was Rome important to his legitimacy? Even as the empire became more polycentric, Rome still held precedence as one, if not the largest city in the Roman world, at one reportedly holding approximately one million people within its walls. Also, Late Antique Rome, and the Forum in particular, functioned as what would now be called a "city-museum," as defined by twentieth-century architects and theoreticians Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter: a space in which several layers of history, politics, and social change are recorded in the guise of statues and other monuments.<sup>2</sup> Urban space and ritual celebrations both attested to the emperor's supremacy as the space in which orations recited his meritorious deeds, such as his conquering of foes. Together, the space and the ritual created a powerful statement not only politically and socially, but architecturally. When people activated a space through ritual, the architectural space changed. The people present created temporary forms, the street became redefined, and the timbre of the crowds affected the sound, the sight, and the experience for the people: ritual space was created.

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<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Marlowe, "*Liberator Urbis Suae*," 199.

<sup>2</sup> Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, *Collage City*. (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 1978), 126.

Constantine's defeat of his political rival and fellow emperor Maxentius at the Battle of the Milvian Bridge, on October 28, 312, and accession to sole emperor of the western half of the Roman Empire is now considered a watershed moment in Roman and in Western history. Looking at Constantine's triumphal procession into Rome, following a period of instability and civil war, describes nothing of the years after Maxentius' defeat. Maxentius had been a co-ruling *emperor*: this caused Constantine (and the senate, on his behalf) to tread lightly. There were no acts of outright destruction of Maxentius' civic projects, such as the Temple of Venus and Roma or of the Basilica Nova. To have done so would have been hasty and anti-Roman on Constantine's part. Therefore, by subtly changing Maxentius' buildings and erasing his memory through official acts of condemnation, Constantine's regime was able to obscure the civil war aspect of his victory and further legitimize his rule by furthering Maxentius' benevolence toward Rome.

As the only truly legitimate capital city at the beginning of Constantine's reign, Rome was always the focus for impressive urban projects that reinforced the emperor's power and that of their dynasties.<sup>3</sup> Since the days of the Roman Republic, the Forum was a meeting place of sorts for the emperor and for the public: a "topographical mirror of the constitution, pointing at the people's power in reaching decisions," to quote Olivier Hekster.<sup>4</sup> As time wore on and natural disasters such as fire destroyed public buildings in the Forum, the opportunity to amend and to challenge the memories of the past became more prevalent. After the transition from the Roman Republic to a Roman Empire, Republican monuments became increasingly rare or fell into a state of disrepair; each time a building or statue was in need of updating, the memory was added to or augmented, whether by the reuse of an existing statue base, or the adding of a new inscription, or simply in the diction within the inscription itself. These revisions could be imperial or senatorial, based on the benefactor involved; regardless, both used rededication and new

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<sup>3</sup> Mark Humphries, "From Emperor to Pope? Constantine to Gregory" in *Religion, Dynasty, and Patronage in Early Christian Rome, 300-900*, Cooper, Kate and Julia Hillner, eds. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 34.

<sup>4</sup> Olivier Hekster, "The City of Rome in Late Imperial Ideology" in *Mediterraneo Antico* 2 (1999), 723.

construction as a way to further their respective ends.<sup>5</sup> Carlos Machado states that while the buildings themselves and the connotations that they communicated changed almost with each new ruler, that the boundaries of the Forum, usually the thoroughfares feeding into the space and the long-standing buildings, remained the base on which the Forum could be re-evaluated and memories could be advertised.<sup>6</sup>

The Forum used the layers of meaning inherent in memory through the use of *spolia*, or the use of architectural ornament from older buildings or monuments. This was meant at first as a means of triumph over an enemy and to signal a victor; therefore, *spolia* were used as a sort of architectural propaganda.<sup>7</sup> *Spolia*, however, could also be used to align oneself with a specific lineage or memory, often a preceding emperor or other historical or mythological figure. As H.P. L'Orange first theorized *spolia* in 1939 with his analysis of the Arch of Constantine, *spolia* were no longer "archaeological shards to be reintegrated, but...components of coherent medieval or pre-medieval representations."<sup>8</sup> I agree with Dale Kinney's theory that *spolia* can be used to communicate a triumph or the emperor's legitimate succession. *Spolia* were probably not always seen this way, as it was once a criminal act to appropriate extant artistry for one's own ends. In its original terms, *spolia* referred to "the captured arms of an enemy and thence war booty of any kind." Indeed, by the time of Constantine, *spolia* might have been seen in the way L'Orange theorized, as representations, collages made of different components achieving a coherent new connotation. But *Spolia* are an just one example of altering a building in the Roman Forum: by using architecture, Constantine was able to legitimize his hold on imperial power via the Roman Senate and alter the existing buildings in order to align them with his political aspirations.

In considering power, a city is a personification of its people, to be sure. The city upholds certain symbols to both residents and outsiders alike. Rome certainly qualifies as a symbolic city: even as absent

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<sup>5</sup> Carlos Machado, "Building the Past", 158.

<sup>6</sup> Carlos Machado, "Building the Past", 158.

<sup>7</sup> Dale Kinney, "Rape or Restitution of the Past? Interpreting Spolia," in *The Art of Interpreting*, Susan C. Scott, ed. (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1995), 53.

<sup>8</sup> Dale Kinney, "Rape or Restitution of the Past," 56.

emperors made imperial residences on the fringes of the Empire, Rome still was ceremonially, and symbolically the capital. At the crux of this symbolic city was the Forum, itself a highly decorated and ritualistically powerful urban space within downtown Rome. That the Roman Forum is an amalgamation of different styles, uses, and ideological tactics is a powerful statement for the Roman people and for the western world at large. Through the Forum itself, certain symbolic gestures are made through use of *spolia*, the reuse or adaptation of existing spaces, and the subversion of existing spaces through new construction.

To provide a pertinent example, a particular tragedy occurred prior the reign of Diocletian (284-305): the fire of 283 under emperor Carinus, which destroyed many buildings within the Forum, including the Basilica Julia and the Senate House. As a result, Diocletian and his fellow senior emperor (*augustus*), Maximian, and their junior emperors (*caesares*), Galerius and Constantius I (also Constantine's father) collectively known as the Tetrarchy, had the opportunity to put their own stamp on the Roman Forum and create new foci within the central paved area.<sup>9</sup> With each political development, the emperor(s) had the ability to strengthen or weaken the memories of the past through physical means.

The ability of architectural change to illustrate and present political and cultural ideals in a physical form, (i.e. the ideas of collegial rule and cyclical time in the Tetrarchic rostra in the central forum) is a powerful symbol in and of itself. These spaces once bred a kind of experiential and conceptual agenda that can be reconsidered in later periods; through recycling of materials, adaptive reuse, annexations, revisions, and other techniques, the architecture of yesteryear can be a provocateur for our own needs and wants. How did Constantine use this to create his own Roman Forum that responded to his political needs?

However, simply altering the buildings was not enough; by the lack of monumentality in Constantine's interventions in the Forum, he was not able to extinguish the memories of the Tetrarchy and Maxentius by architecture alone. He made a profound impact by celebrating the rituals of his subsequent

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<sup>9</sup> Olivier Hekster, "The City of Rome", p. 723.

jubilees, like the one examined here in 326, in order to create an architectural *event* capable of both an advancement of Constantine's imperial persona and a sustained public opinion.

The quintessential Roman ritual, the triumph, had long been performed throughout Roman history, dating back to the early Republic. The triumph usually consisted of three parts: the first before the *pomerium*, or Rome's sacred boundary at the northern edge of the Campus Martius, among the army and senators at the Porticus Octaviae. This was strictly militaristic; civilians would not be included nor watch this segment of the triumph. Afterwards, the emperor(s) came through the triumphal gate (*porta triumphalis*) and changed into triumphal costume before making the customary sacrifices to the deities of the triumphal gate.

By the fourth century and the time of Constantine's reign, much had changed in Rome. The *pomerium* was no longer the boundary of the city; the Aurelian walls no extended far beyond the Triumphal Gate of the Republican era. Therefore, the Campus Martius does not hold special significance, or perhaps a diminished significance, in the fourth-century CE. Secondly, in terms of sacrificing, whether at the *pomerium* or elsewhere along the ritual path, Constantine again is a unique case: no literary or archival accounts recount his performing a sacrifice. At this point in the ritual, the emperors would put down their arms and be welcomed in a peaceful manner into the city. The people included in the parade, even those captured and made to walk out as prisoners, altered the space as the victory was made tangible.

The jubilee, like many other rituals, activated the public space in Rome, specifically the Roman Forum and created experiential linkages for the spectators, both physical and the allusive. Constantine's victory over Maxentius was a particularly grey area for a triumph, as it was a battle in a civil war between two emperors.<sup>10</sup> Although Maxentius' head was paraded on a pike before the triumphal cortege, his memory erasure (*damnatio memoriae*) was a special case: his memory was condemned in order to gloss over a period of political uncertainty and civil war, and also legitimized Constantine's hold on power within Rome and Italy, where Maxentius' rule had been established.

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<sup>10</sup> Indeed, the only other precedent of this is when Augustus defeated Marc Antony at Actium in 27 BCE.

It is perhaps easier to see this through the specific example of the procession. Rituals combined orations and other ritual elements such as spoils of war and captive peoples with the buildings lining the ritual path of the Forum. The architecture was strung together by the procession's movement through urban space, especially during the *adventus*, the triumph, and later, the *jubilee*. From the moment the emperor joined the cortege outside the city to the public address within the city walls and the panegyric delivered within the Roman Forum, the relationship between the emperor and the people was made tangible by means of the spatial cues made through built forms. As an example of architectural event, the jubilee creates a fundamentally different space, rich with historical, literary, and mythological allusions connecting the various buildings, statues, and other monuments within the Roman Forum. To describe this with a method that captures the experiential nature of the event, I have deemed it appropriate to recreate a walkthrough of downtown Rome in 326, highlighting the changes made to the Roman Forum that legitimize Constantine's hold on imperial power and enable him to "acquire the past," so to speak. This allows the reader to understand the architectural and experiential differences made by the Senate on Constantine's behalf.

Perhaps more lasting than Constantine's imperial tenure is his pre-battle "conversion" to Christianity, altering the religious climate of the Roman Empire and the world at large. Scholars' disagreement as to whether Constantine would have completed the traditional processional terminus up the Capitoline Hill to the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus in 326 is important, as it could be indicative of his relationship with a still-mostly pagan Rome at the time; however, this attention on the concerns over sacrifice belittles the entirety of the jubilee procession through downtown Rome, which is of more importance for the goals of my argument.<sup>11</sup>

Constantine's triumph was especially consequential for the space of the Roman Forum, coming on the heels of the Tetrarchic system of collegial rule among four emperors (two senior *augusti*, two

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<sup>11</sup> See Nixon, C.E.V. and Barbara Rodgers, p. 323-326. J. Straub discusses the possible changes made in the procession through Rome. Constantine is believed not to have made the obligatory sacrifice at the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, but according to Zosimus 2.29.5, Constantine did make a sacrifice on the Capitoline, but this account is almost two hundred years after the triumph, so confirmation of this event is problematic.

junior *caesares*) and the period of civil war following the retirement of the first two *augusti*, Diocletian and Maximian. The jubilee, as well as ritual itself in the Roman Empire, seemed to connect the common people with their emperor, their generals, and their fellow Roman citizens through the entirety of the procession. This was an important urban phenomenon where individuals with power, such as emperors or senators, crossed paths with the public in a ceremonial fashion. The urban space where this happened was activated in a rare way and was elevated to a symbolic space; on other days, the Forum would have simply been a commercial, practical, and bureaucratic space.

### **Constantine's Triumph as Architectural Event**

By looking at the Roman Forum through the lens of Constantine's triumph, I suggest that the ritual elicits a concern for the architectural *event*: the abstract, temporal architectural space activated by the perceptions of the spectators. By this definition, a space is not simply governed by its physical--and, for the most part, visual--limitations, but its ceremonial boundaries (or lack thereof). Minute differences, such as time of day, temperature, humidity, or light quality, in addition to more individual conditions including, but certainly not limited to a spectator's height, weight, and their understanding of historic events all create a different reading of the architectural space at that moment.

Architecture can be characterized as if each building is a vessel of cultural, socioeconomic, and humanistic storytelling: each space holds within its boundaries the endless combinations of conditions, i.e. temperature, light level, time of day, level of acoustic absorption, number of people, and so on that shape each person's individual experience. This is evidenced by the adaptability of spaces: each person or group receives a different spatial experience, morphing their own individual experiences or memories constantly. It is through the use of architecture that designers, along with the other professionals, help to sculpt the human story through the architectural *event*. For the Roman Forum at the time of Constantine's triumph, one could read a story of the Roman people, from the mythical founding of Rome by Romulus



up to the reigns of Diocletian, Maximian, and the other Tetrarchs to the monuments built under Maxentius. During the ritual of the jubilee in 326, after the changes have been made on Constantine's behalf, a spectator might have a different experience of the space, depending on their location along the processional route, whether they could hear Constantine's address to the people or the delivery of the panegyric. Their ability to unite the ritual with the space is fractured: any single individual does not obtain the full potential of the event.

There are many intangible characteristics of urban space, such as the number of people present, whether the space is being used for an everyday purpose or an extraordinary instance, or even the tone of the event taking place (i.e. a fourth of July parade has a very different reading, and therefore, is a different architectural experience, than a funeral procession). These properties, the intangible context, encompass, enliven, and engender what I will call ritual space. While the physical architecture is apparent to most people, it is not as easily discernible to see an event's effect: its ability to conjure an event space. A sensual approach to architecture establishes a superimposed experiential structure upon an already visually stimulating physical composition. But does this sort of intervention belie a more fundamental question: how do our senses not only create space, but sculpt experience and memory? Is the *experience* brought upon the user(s), the *event* itself, the true architectural space created, shaped by the conventional limits of sensual space? Within the context of fourth-century Rome, the rituals performed in the Forum and elsewhere activated memories within the spectators' minds that might not have otherwise been apparent. This changed the spectators' perceptions of the Forum itself and the events that had transpired within the space and throughout the Empire.

### **Scholarly Context of the Thesis**

Considering how the physical space of the Roman Forum was experienced during the event of Constantine's triumph gives us a wider understanding of how the temporal conditions, such as the passage of time, the number of people present, or the political atmosphere at that time, altered the users'

perceptions of architectural space and provided for a richer, more experiential sense of place versus solely examining the physical elements of the space.

In looking at the idea of 'event space' and of spectator response to the Roman Forum, the traditional literature attempts to recreate a story through inscriptions, monuments, and statues in the Forum, or through orations presented at imperial court as part of a ritual ceremony, also known as panegyrics. The idea that the monumental building projects in the Forum and elsewhere through the Empire reached their full potential when combined with inscriptions, literature, and rituals was pioneered by (Octavian) Augustus himself, and as argued by Paul Zanker.<sup>12</sup> I agree with this, arguing that only through such a cross-disciplinary undertaking of imperial politico-artistic endeavors does the user understand the full context of the architectural space and the ideology behind it. Some, such as Carlos Machado, have even taken this combinatory approach to constitute a collective memory of Rome itself, or of distinct epochs of time in different areas of the Forum.<sup>13</sup> This presents a problem, as there is no evidence for the recording of memories of multiple people from antiquity; with the evidence recovered we can simply know what panegyrists slanted as a "collective memory" to be after the fact. We do not have evidence for the public at large. As a result, I will look at the Forum through the ritual of the triumph itself, and examine how the ritual of the triumph altered the architectural space and the spectators' interpretation of it. Certain relationships and connotations were altered with respect to the jubilee, whether heightened or diminished. By looking at the space of the Forum in this way, the argument can be made that the space, or the perception and experience of said space, rather, is irrevocably tied to the events contained within it. This has numerous consequences when looking at the urban fabric, especially when designing for a more experiential architecture.

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<sup>12</sup> Paul Zanker, *The Power of Images in the Age of Augustus*, A. Shapiro, tr. (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1988).

<sup>13</sup> Carlos Machado. "Building the Past: Monuments and Memory in the Forum Romanum" in Bowden, William, Adam Gutteridge, and Carlos Machado, eds. *Social and Political Life in Late Antiquity*. (Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2006): 157-192.

To explain the idea of event space and how it affects readings of an architectural space (in this case the Roman Forum), I will frame the Forum in 326 (during the twenty-year jubilee celebrations for Constantine). This will show different associations based on the time, such as Maxentius' head being paraded through the Forum, being replaced by his memory erasure from building and statue inscriptions that had occurred by the *decennalia* jubilee of 326. This is just one example of the subversion and amplification of certain memories or associations that could have been made in the Forum, which had become increasingly popular in the later days of the empire.

Machado explains that collective civic memory, and in the case of the Forum, elite collective memory, is both representative of selective remembering and forgetting, and is crucial in determining a social identity.<sup>14</sup> This methodology only provides us with the "collective memory" of the elite; as the most educated group within Rome, they would surely have been the most able to recognize the allusions and ideologies being extracted within the architecture of the Forum, but the problem is just that: this does not provide an audience response for the common *plebeians* of Rome. Collective memory's goal is to provide a united, mass response to the things going on in the Forum. However, this methodology looks at the response as a unanimous response rather than as a official, state-sanctioned response. I aim to look at the recorded orations and architectural evidence as tied to concepts or ideologies that furthered the individuals in power's *hold on power*. Without admitting this shortcoming, collective memory ultimately simplifies into something erroneously homogenous.

Machado asserts that the spaces in front of the western rostra and the Curia had a historical timbre to them unrivaled within Rome. The rostra dated back to (Octavian) Augustus and the establishment of the Empire; the Curia was the meeting house for the Senate. While the Senate House itself was not the original, the site dated back to the days of the Republic. As such, the spaces were highly coveted for Tetrarchic displays for their relation to the earlier Curia Julia and the Comitium. The area was also

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<sup>14</sup> Carlos Machado, "Building the Past", 158.

important for being the site of several imperial celebrations.<sup>15</sup> There is also the consideration for the western end of the forum versus the eastern end. The eastern end of the Forum, where the Rotunda and the Basilica Nova were situated, was more suited for architectural innovation, as will be discussed in the following chapter.

In response to Machado, I will argue that ritually-implemented memories, even those of elitist imperial or senatorial aims, served to illuminate architectural space. The inscriptions and reuse of materials and bases, and the statues placed in proximity to certain structures recorded individual memories for the spectators; the memories incited by the physical space affected the spectators' understanding of the architectural space as a whole, i.e. the *event space*. In the case of the Tetrarchy, the skillful appropriation of the past, such as the transformation of the Augustan rostra and the subsequent addition of the Diocletianic rostra on the east end of the Forum, enhanced the agenda of the Tetrarchy through architectural augmentation and innovation. But the choice to amend the Augustan rostra uses the memory of the early principate to change the viewer's perception of the space versus, say, if the Tetrarchic rulers had completely dismantled and built the western rostra anew.<sup>16</sup> This is certainly true with Constantine as well, as his appropriation of Maxentian projects as well as his rejection and/or alteration of Tetrarchic works elicits a different architectural reading than if he had simply torn down the monuments of his predecessors; indeed, it was to his advantage to amend and absorb their works in order to establish himself as an imperial benefactor in Rome.

In looking at Constantine's jubilee celebrations at Rome in 326, I hope to illuminate the differences in the Forum and the public's understanding of the architectural space and of memory through the subversion of Maxentius' monuments as well as the addition of purely Constantinian building projects, such as his triumphal Arch and his equestrian statue that encroaches upon the foundations of the western rostra extension in the central Forum space.

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<sup>15</sup> Carlos Machado, "Building the Past", 166.

<sup>16</sup> Carlos Machado, "Building the Past", 168.

One of the major sources for what Machado would call "collective memory" is in *panegyrics*. *Panegyrics* are orations written and delivered for the emperor at the culmination of a procession or on the anniversary of an important occasion. These orations are problematic as historiographic evidence, as they are ultimately imperial propaganda written with the aim of delivering pleasing words to the emperor, and prompting mass audience response. Because of the lack of actual audience response during these rituals, we are required to siphon an accurate reading of imperial ceremonies and their role in skewing spectator response.

For example, in Nazarius' panegyric of Constantine, *Panegyrici Latini 12(9)*, the author gives a fractured view of Constantine in 321, at the celebration of the quinquennialia (a fulfillment of five years of successful rule) of his sons Crispus and Constantius II in Rome.<sup>17</sup> Nazarius is clear to extrapolate and revise events of Rome's history and of the period of civil war at the end of the Tetrarchy. However, he is quiet on Constantine's actions during the immediate past, as they may have been interpreted as causing more strife when Constantine was preparing to fight Licinius, his rival *augustus*, for complete control of the empire.<sup>18</sup> Nazarius keeps most of the panegyric oriented toward Constantine's victory over Maxentius and his liberation of the city. Nazarius tells a different story than an earlier text of 312 by the orator of the *Panegyric of Constantine Augustus*--the pro-Constantine propaganda is more established in the older text, and the reasoning for Constantine's offensive is spun to make Maxentius look as the aggressor rather than Constantine, as in the *Panegyric of Constantine Augustus*.<sup>19</sup>

The unknown orator for the *Panegyric of Constantine Augustus* in 312 presents a more historically accurate account of the campaign against Maxentius. For example, it is clear that in 312, no apology is made for Constantine's aggression. It is clear that Constantine was the first to make a strike against Maxentius in open battle. Indeed, the entire oration treats the campaign as worrisome for the people, as they did not know if their emperor would succeed until much later, as the text suggests. In this

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<sup>17</sup> C.E.V. Nixon and Barbara Rodgers, 338. It is unclear whether the two Caesars were actually present. It seems that Constantine was elsewhere, even though most of the oration is made about him rather than his sons.

<sup>18</sup> C.E.V. Nixon and Barbara Rodgers, 338.

<sup>19</sup> C.E.V. Nixon and Barbara Rodgers, 340.

panegyric, Constantine was waiting for the right time to make his move and liberate Rome. It is not until later (as evidenced by Nazarius' account) that the story changes Constantine's role to that of a reluctant warrior whose patience is tried by Maxentius until all other lines of civility are extinguished.<sup>20</sup> This might be because of the political events during Nazarius' account, when Constantine is on the eve of making war with Licinius.

Other accounts, such as Lactantius, point Constantine's "conversion" to Christianity, which is still a point of debate. Lactantius wrote his *De Mortibus Persecutorum* as a historical account of the persecutors of the early Christians from Nero to the time of Licinius' defeat at the hand of Constantine.<sup>21</sup> While the chronology of Lactantius' account is sound, the bias he shows toward Constantine versus the Tetrarchy, especially, as spearheaders of the last "Christian persecution," exaggerates Constantine's supposed newfound piety. Lactantius' coloring of Constantine does not enable us to read Constantine's continued associations with Sol in his commemorative Arch, as it was built in 315, after Constantine's supposed "conversion," and does not allow for his acceptance and tolerance toward paganism throughout his reign and subsequent visits to Rome. Much of Constantine's "Christianization" is reported after his death and obviously seeks to color Constantine as a Christian emperor from the Battle of Milvian Bridge onward; we cannot accept this as fact in light of recent arguments.

This thesis will look at Constantine's jubilee by seeking to expand the discussion on how the rituals of his triumph and the jubilee itself both served to heighten the public's understanding of both the architectural space and Rome's history. This avenue of thinking of Roman public space is inspired by Elizabeth Marlowe's article "Framing the Sun: The Arch of Constantine and the Roman Cityscape," in which she describes how the placement of the Arch of Constantine creates an innovative reading of the earlier Colossus of Sol, sculpted during Nero's reign, but which was relocated to the Colosseum Valley

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<sup>20</sup> Pan. Lat. 12(9).4.3; C.E.V. Nixon and Barbara Rodgers, 300.

<sup>21</sup> J. L. Creed, Introduction to Lactantius' *De Mortibus Persecutorum* by Lactantius, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), xxv.

during Hadrian's reign (interestingly, to make room for his Temple of Venus and Roma).<sup>22</sup> However, while Marlowe examines the movement through the space, not every reference would have been understood by the Roman people at large. In addition, this does not account for specific references being made during the ritual of the triumph or jubilee. By looking at the Roman Forum in this way, one can make an argument that there are very specific references that are made (such as the use of Hadrianic or Trajanic reliefs in Constantine's triumphal Arch) versus something as cloudy as the memory of Claudius' sponsorship of the Temple of Sol Invictus in the Colosseum Valley. It is through this that Machado's idea of collective memory flounders, as very few people would understand the juxtaposition of Claudius and the Temple of Sol Invictus with Constantine and Sol. However, in the Arch and the Colossus of Sol, specific references are made through use of *spolia* to align Constantine's reign with those of Trajan and Hadrian.

Indeed, calling to attention Marlowe's hypothesis that through its relative coherence, the Colosseum Valley could be construed as a "Forum of Constantine", and a direct response to the ubiquity of Maxentius' public building campaign in the "eastern forum" immediately to the west of the Colosseum Valley.

While much of Constantine's triumph and its spatial allusions deal with the rejection of both the Tetrarchic system and of his rival Maxentius, some of the evidence will support a wider view of Constantine within Roman history.

## **Organization and Synopsis of Chapters**

It is important to think of Constantine's jubilee not as occurring as an isolated event within Roman history, but as an interconnected event. As such, in the following chapter, I will take the reader

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<sup>22</sup> Elizabeth Marlowe, "Framing the Sun," 225.

on a walkthrough of the Roman Forum as a historical and experiential backdrop for both the triumph of 312 and the jubilee of 326. I have chosen to illustrate the architecture of the Forum in 326, after Constantine's interventions in order to both look at how the Forum appeared during 312 as well as during the jubilee procession. This allows us to understand the different connotations that both events might have had on the public.

In 312, Constantine's triumph occurred amidst the dissolution of the Tetrarchic system of rule, which had its own set of spatial and experiential 'events' as a result of the implications of the Tetrarchy and their short-lived, yet potent ideology. The resulting architectural imprint and its implications on Constantine's triumph must be fully understood.

The spaces that were altered within the Colosseum Valley and within the Forum registered to the change in power from the Tetrarch to Maxentius to Constantine, even though Constantine was mostly absent from Rome as he absorbed the past through architectural reuse and alteration. Constantine's rejection of the Tetrarchic system and the restoration of singular imperial rule competes with the late antique legitimization of collegial rule, but also the memory of Maxentius as a great benefactor for the city of Rome. Constantine's direct challenge to the Tetrarchic system of rule and its short-lived, yet potent ideology has its own set of spatial and experiential references within the Forum. The resulting architectural imprint on Constantine's jubilee must be fully understood within that context.

In the third chapter, the physical backdrop of the Forum and the historical backdrop that the Tetrarchy and Maxentius had created will come together in Constantine's triumph of 312. Through the sightlines and framing of the physical space and through the literary allusions made by inscriptions, Constantine's triumph promoted a specific audience response. This is a marked contrast to the jubilee of 326, in which the militaristic aspects of Maxentius' defeat were downplayed in favor of promoting the idea of Constantine as a peaceful emperor after his defeat of co-emperor Licinius in 324.

The fourth chapter will assess the jubilee of 326, when Constantine had become the sole emperor of the empire. Constantine's role as the restorer of solitary imperial rule was paramount, while his defeat



of Maxentius (whose memory by this time had been censored) and, to a lesser extent, Licinius in a period of civil war and uncertainty, had faded. This creates a new rubric of associations for Constantine and his supporters to address. As Constantine's public works in the Forum had been completed at this time, the architecture served to further Constantine even further than it had during his triumph in 312. From the Flavian Amphitheater valley (which I will argue as a 'precinct' of Constantine) through to the western rostra, Constantine's jubilee through downtown Rome activated a space in a way that was unique to that moment in history. Through the architectural and literary evidence, I will argue for an Roman Forum that was experientially distinct from the space witnessed without considering the ritual. By arguing that the Forum was activated by the ritual of the jubilee, I will make the case that a ritual space was created that provided historical and mythic allusions to the spectators, and that this *ritual space* shaped the perception of memory through architecture.

This thesis will join in a conversation of both late antique revision within the Roman Forum as well as asserting that the combination of architectural space coupled with ritual sought to further Constantine's imperial legitimacy and establish him as the sole ruler of the empire by 326. Through the use of the ritual space of the Roman Forum, and the memories activated by both the architecture and the rituals themselves, the urban space of the Roman Forum is not only defined by geometric means, such as sightlines, axes, and other data, but also experientially, by means of intersecting styles, ideals, and perspectives through historical and literary allusions. These allusions and memories are then meant to be understood by the audience. Reciprocally, the space can commemorate the event of the ritual itself, as in the case of several of the monuments within the Roman Forum. In these political and historical references imbedded in the Forum, a connected whole is created. It is this relationship between the two that creates this understanding of architecture as an opportunity to join space and ritual.

## Chapter II. The Decomposition and Recomposition of the Past: The Roman Forum as it Appeared in 326

On October 28, 312, the day after the Battle of Milvian Bridge, Maxentius' "tyranny" was at an end: his severed head was placed on a spike and paraded around in front of the Roman people as part of Constantine's triumphal procession through Rome. By defeating Maxentius in open battle, Constantine acquired Rome and Italy as part of his imperial holdings, and also "acquired" a past from Maxentius' civic projects in Rome, together with those of the First Tetrarchy beforehand. This transition of power explains the changes made to the Roman Forum by the time of Constantine's jubilee celebrations in 326 and provides a backdrop for the ritual space. Constantine's jubilee reinforced his legitimacy and showcased his reign as a continuation of the glorious history of Rome and the emperors who preceded him. Also, by 326, Constantine's role as sole emperor can be traced through his architectural interventions in the Forum, namely the two "bookends" in his commemorative Arch and his equestrian statue next to the western rostra. While these spaces are connected by the processional path of the *Via Sacra*, it is my goal to consider the urban space for the jubilee independently at first, focusing on the appearance of the Colosseum Valley and the Forum before understanding the space along with the ritual taking place within it, which will be discussed in the subsequent chapters.

Constantine's political rival, Maxentius, had earlier been proclaimed emperor by the Praetorian guard, as well as the people of Rome in 306 after one of the Tetrarchs, Galerius, decided to impose a tax upon the people of Italy, including Rome itself.<sup>1</sup> Maxentius' legitimacy

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<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Marlowe, "Liberator Urbis Suae: Constantine and the Ghost of Maxentius," 199. Rome had enjoyed the privilege of being exempt from taxation since ancient times.

was further built on his ties to Rome, as well as being a senator.<sup>2</sup> As such, Maxentius initiated a vast building project to the east of the central Forum. These buildings built by Maxentius raise important questions. How does each individual space help to illuminate Constantine and serve to alter the viewer's perception, whether through the *spoliation* of other important imperial monuments or reliefs, through the revision of Maxentian or Tetrarchic projects, or by some other means? How did this change the viewer's perceptions of Constantine, if one had knowledge of the initial Maxentian phase?

Maxentius' construction of buildings and erection of statues solidified his role as one of Rome's great benefactors and strengthened his hold on imperial power during the twilight of the Tetrarchy; here, I will argue that Constantine acquired the past through subtle changes of meaning in Maxentius' buildings, and in turn used them to further his own policies. With the erasure of Maxentius' name from his projects and the senate's rededication of these buildings to Constantine as told by Aurelius Victor, Constantine appeared merciful by abstaining from destroying evidence of Maxentius' civic benevolence while shifting the buildings' associations to suit his own ends.

### **Constantine's Rome**

Following the triumph of 312, Constantine was ever abroad from Rome, only returning to the city for celebrations, such as the jubilees of 315 and 326. By building monuments and statues within the Forum, Constantine could make his presence known without actually being

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<sup>2</sup> Maxentius' father was Maximian, a member of the Tetrarchy; this would have furthered his hold on imperial power. However, Diocletian's assertion of merit-based, rather than dynastic succession overlooked Maxentius as a possible Tetrarch; this also held true for Constantine prior to his accession immediately following his father's death.

within the city for any extended period of time. Indeed, his constructions within the city, especially religious structures, are extensive; but with an empire undergoing a religious transition, senate-sponsored monuments cemented Constantine's power and provided an ever-present sign of his benevolence and stewardship of the city. Constantine, therefore, used the senate to make it appear as though the emperor was omnipresent within the city limits. This occurred as a result of Constantine's endorsement and strengthening of the senate; the aristocracy reciprocated, dedicating “all the monuments constructed magnificently by him [Maxentius], the city’s temple and basilica, the senate had dedicated to Flavius [Constantine] because of his meritorious deeds.”<sup>3</sup> It was not Constantine, but rather the urban prefects and the senators who were sponsored the monuments and subsequent revisions or additions, who were responsible for most, if not all, of the Constantinian architecture in the Roman Forum and elsewhere along the processional path. Therefore, on Constantine's behalf, the senate erected structures and commemorative monuments in his honor, shrewdly enabling Constantine to legitimize his rule among the Roman people.

### **The Arch of Constantine and the Colosseum Valley**

As the one ventures north along what is now the *Via Triumphalis* (Triumphal Street), the Arch of Constantine becomes visible in the Colosseum Valley [Figures 2.2, 2.3]. At the end of one of the straightest stretches along the triumphal route, the commemorative arch, built in 315,

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<sup>3</sup> Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus* 40.25: *adhuc cuncta opera, quae magnifice construxerat urbis fanum atque basilicam, Flavii meritis patres sacravere.* tr. H.W. Bird, *Aurelius Victor: De Caesaribus*, (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1994,) 48; Elisha Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius: A Study in Architectural Design and Urban Planning in the Early Fourth Century*, p.206.

makes a definitive statement in the heart of Constantinian Rome.<sup>4</sup> The shrewd placement of Constantine's triumphal arch along the sightlines of the Via Triumphalis creates one of the most dynamic experiences within the city limits. As Elizabeth Marlowe asserts, the Arch's placement along the road partially hid the fountain of the Meta Sudans, located roughly to the north, and placed the Arch between the Temple of Venus and Rome to the west and the Flavian Amphitheater to the east. This created a focal point at the end of the Via Triumphalis that was purely Constantinian.<sup>5</sup> For a viewer coming from the Via Triumphalis, the alignment framed the Colossus of Sol perfectly on more than one occasion within the sightlines of the Arch; this is important in considering Constantine's associations with Sol, whether by the emperor's mandate or by the senate.<sup>6</sup>

Activated by the procession up the *Via Triumphalis*, the Colosseum Valley and the Arch of Constantine itself would have been framed by the Temple of Sol Invictus on the slope of the Palatine to the west, and the Temple of Divus Claudius on the slope of the Caelian to the east.<sup>7</sup> This Temple was dedicated to the divine emperor Claudius, whom Constantine had appropriated as his ancestor, much like the Flavians.<sup>8</sup> Marlowe concludes that the two structures would have filled the peripheral vision of the spectators along the Via Triumphalis, a tunnel-vision effect framing the Arch of Constantine, which in turn framed the Colossus at the far end of the valley.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Elizabeth Marlowe, "Framing the Sun: The Arch of Constantine and the Roman Cityscape," 223. The siting of the Arch also places it within one of the most-heavily trafficked areas in the city, near the main entrance to the Flavian Amphitheater (The Colosseum).

<sup>5</sup> Elizabeth Marlowe, "Framing the Sun: The Arch of Constantine and the Roman Cityscape," 223.

<sup>6</sup> Sol by this time had coalesced with both the gods Helios and Apollo, and is referred to as Sol, Sol-Apollo, and Sol-Helios; for purposes of clarity, I will simply name the deity Sol to avoid confusion.

<sup>7</sup> Elizabeth Marlowe, "Framing the Sun," 229-230.

<sup>8</sup> Elizabeth Marlowe, *That Customary Magnificence that is Your Due*, 183-184.

<sup>9</sup> Elizabeth Marlowe, "Framing the Sun," 230.

As the observers would have moved up the Via Triumphalis, they would have seen the Colossus' head, patinated over the centuries since its first dedication to Nero. Now the Colossus served as a backdrop for the figure of Constantine-as-Sol and the *quadriga* atop his Arch, newly gilt. It is as if Sol-Apollo enveloped Constantine in his divine aura [Fig. 2.4].<sup>10</sup> As the cortege moved closer still, the *quadriga* and the Arch would shift within the spectator's field of vision, while the Colossus would descend into a viewshed in the Arch's central opening [Fig. 2.5].<sup>11</sup> This interplay of viewshed and ideology by the framing the Colossus of Sol within the Arch of Constantine cannot be looked at as a simple coincidence, but rather a calculated look at how the movement of the procession affects the reading of a space.

The Colossus of Sol was reported to be either one hundred two and a half or one hundred and twenty Roman feet tall, on a base measuring sixty by fifty Roman feet; the rays from his crown were estimated to be twenty-three and a half Roman feet long [Figure 2.6]. The gilded bronze statue was originally constructed for Nero; the statue at first portrayed a nude Nero as Sol/Helios, set upon the top of the Velian Hill originally serving as the entrance to Nero's Golden House (*Domus Aurea*). The statue was recarved so that the head and attributes more nearly matched those of Sol but remained on the Velia Hill until Hadrian had it moved for the construction of the Temple of Venus and Roma.<sup>12</sup> Coincidentally, as Maxentius rebuilt Hadrian's Temple of Venus and Roma during his reign, he also recut the Colossus to bear the

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<sup>10</sup> Elizabeth Marlowe, *That Customary Magnificence that is Your Due*, 186. This is further evidenced by Constantinian coinage: Sol appears behind Constantine, backing him, ensuring his victory. Sol's features so nearly match Constantine's that the two are seen to be interchangeable; an effect mirrored in the Colosseum Valley.

<sup>11</sup> Elizabeth Marlowe, "Framing the Sun", 231.

<sup>12</sup> Amanda Claridge, *Rome: The Oxford Archaeological Guide*, 271. Hadrian intended to erect an accompanying Luna colossus on the other end of the temple platform, forming a pair of doorkeepers for the residence of Eternal Rome (*Roma Aeterna*). It never came to fruition.

likeness of his son, Romulus; the inscription accompanying it was rumored to have been removed and placed within the attic of the Arch of Constantine.<sup>13</sup>

Even more interesting is the proposal that the Arch itself had been meant originally to be an Arch for Maxentius, and that Constantine's reign only saw the completion and the insertion of a different inscription, rather than the entire design and construction being attributed to him.<sup>14</sup> However, I disagree with this theory, as this simplifies the issue, considering the reliefs in the Arch, such as Constantine's personal ties to Sol. Also, the metaphors of Luna setting into the sea as a metaphor for a close to the period of civil war, and of Sol rising from the sea as a metaphor for Constantine's reign being the beginning of a golden age, create a condition that could only have made sense when applied to Constantine. Constantine's heading into final open battle with Maxentius outside the city walls of Rome is personified by the moon goddess Luna in a chariot setting into the sea; his arrival into Rome, signaling the end of Maxentius' "tyranny" and the beginning of Constantine's reign as a "golden age", is shown in Sol rising from the sea. It is noteworthy that the panegyrics recorded from the time of the Tetrarchy establish the arrival of an emperor as a cosmic, supernatural event, when the emperor's presence created a moment of harmony and safety within an increasingly unstable empire.<sup>15</sup> Here the Arch is using the same Tetrarchic methodology, but with Constantinian content that casts the emperor in the guise of Sol [Figures 2.7a and b].

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<sup>13</sup> Elizabeth Marlowe, "Framing the Sun: The Arch of Constantine and the Roman Cityscape," 224. It is clear that fragments of the inscription were reported to have been found in the attic in the mid 1980's; however, the complete inscription has not been seen to this day.

<sup>14</sup> Elizabeth Marlowe, "Liberator Urbis Suae," 204. Ideally, as Constantine was constantly at the fringes of the Empire, this may have been a blessing in disguise, a convenience to cement his legitimacy without having to be present in Rome.

<sup>15</sup> Sabine MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity*, 35-36.

Constantine's triumphal arch commemorates his defeat over Maxentius and his triumphal parade through the streets of Rome. As the arch is at the end of the *Via Triumphalis*, it makes sense that the arch activated a major street along the processional route before the route turns into the eastern Forum. The dedicatory inscription for the Arch reads as thus, further acknowledging the supernatural aspect of Constantine's victory:

To the emperor Flavius Constantine, the Great/ pious and fortunate, the Senate and People of Rome/ Because, by the inspiration of the divinity and by the greatness of his mind/ he and his army/ avenged the republic with just weapons/ at once from the tyrant and from all his party.<sup>16</sup>

The arch itself is made of a greyish-white Proconnesian marble, spoliated from several different earlier arches (most from one particular arch, according to Amanda Claridge); the top of the arch is grey and white marble from other monuments.<sup>17</sup> The background marble around the tondos (the circular reliefs) [Figures 2.7a and b] were veneers of purple-red porphyry; the pedestal bases for the Dacian prisoners on the attic are of Carystian green marble; the prisoners themselves are carved from Phrygian purple marble. The prisoners are so similar to those found in Trajan's Forum that it has been proposed that these are appropriations as well; Claridge asserts that there is no concrete evidence for this, seeing that it would require the Forum of Trajan to be in the process of being raided by the fourth-century. The materials then must have been acquired legally.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Inscription translated by Elizabeth Marlowe, "Framing the Sun," 237. CIL 6.1139: "IMP[eratori] CAES[ari] FL[avio] CONSTANTINO MAXIMO P[ro] F[elici] AUGUSTO S[enatus] P[ro] P[ro] Q[ue] R[omanus] QUOD INSTINCTU DIVINITATIS MENTIS MAGNITUDE CUM EXERCITIO SUO TAM DE TYRANNO QUAM DE OMNI EIUS FACTIONE UNO TEMPORE IUSTIS REM PUBLICAM ULTUS EST ARMIS ARCUM TRIUMPHIS INSIGNEM DICAUIT."

<sup>17</sup> Amanda Claridge, *Rome: The Oxford Archaeological Guide*, (Oxford and New York: University of Oxford Press, 1998,) 273.

<sup>18</sup> Amanda Claridge, *Rome: The Oxford Archaeological Guide*, 274. Using *spolia* from existing buildings was a highly regulated legal matter; friezes and other materials had to either have fallen off the existing building or similar



Inside the central barrel vault of the Arch are two sections of what is called the Great Trajanic Frieze, made of Greek Pentelic white marble. The first section is on the west side (that is, on the side of the Forum and the Palatine Hill), the frieze shows Constantine (the frieze being recut with his head) charging into battle against barbarians, with the caption *liberator urbis* (liberator of the city) [Figure 2.8, (1-3)]. Dale Kinney questions H.P. L'Orange's reading of the frieze, whose interpretation of the reliefs assumed that all of the imperial portraits were recut with the likeness of Constantine. Kinney states that two of the heads that originally depicted Trajan were recut with Constantine's likeness, but elsewhere, only three of the five remaining heads depict him, the others may have been fellow emperors or esteemed emperors of the past.<sup>19</sup> The second section, on the east facade (on the side of the Colosseum), features a caption reading *fundator quietis* (founder of calm), with Constantine appearing in battledress but on foot, crowned by Victory and greeted by two females.<sup>20</sup> On the short sides of the attic are two more sections of the Trajanic frieze, with more of the comprehensive battle scenes.<sup>21</sup>

Another frieze shows Constantine between the likenesses of Hadrian and Marcus Aurelius, giving a public address from the western rostra (and in front of the Tetrarchic five-column monument) [Figure 2.9]. Gregor Kalas, considering the Arch as a whole, states that the use of sculptural fragments within the reliefs alluded to the past as broken and as subsequently

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circumstance. For more on the procurement of *spolia*, see Dale Kinney, "Spolia: Rape or Restitution of the Past?" in *The Art of Interpreting*: (University Park: Pennsylvania State University, 1995): 52-67.

<sup>19</sup> Dale Kinney, "Spolia: Rape or Restitution of the Past?", *The Art of Interpreting*, 56.

<sup>20</sup> Amanda Claridge, *Rome: The Oxford Archaeological Guide*: 274. The two females greeting Constantine are believed to be personifications of Honour, in Amazon dress with a crested helmet, and Virtue, in battle-dress with lion-skin boots.

<sup>21</sup> Amanda Claridge, *Rome: The Oxford Archaeological Guide*, 274. The length of the original intact frieze is estimated to have been at least 18 m. (other fragments have survived, two in the Villa Borghese). Opinion is divided as to the original emperor; while the frieze is known as the Great Trajanic Frieze, the style and iconography, as well as the availability of the reliefs for reuse, suggest that Domitian could be a more likely candidate (his memory and monuments were annulled after his murder in 96 CE.) This ambiguity could have helped Constantine in aligning himself with Trajan (as Domitian's reputation was less than favorable.)

recomposed under Constantine. Thus, this relief aligns Constantine with some of the great emperors of the past while supplanting the collegial rule of the Tetrarchy. The emperor was to be honored in the context of his imperial predecessors and that this invited the crowds to see Constantine as appropriating imperial memories by connecting himself with Rome's past rulers.<sup>22</sup>

Eight circular reliefs, known as the "Hadrianic roundels," are mounted in pairs on the north and south sides of the monument [Figure 2.8, (4-7)]. All are carved in white Italian (luna) marble, all from one former monument. The reliefs show scenes alternating between hunting with bears, boars, and lions, and sacrifices to Silvanus, Apollo, Diana, and Hercules. The south roundels facing toward the Via Triumphalis and the Circus Maximus have been recut to feature Constantine's face in the sacrifice scenes; in the hunt scenes, it is unclear whether the faces are of Licinius (his co-emperor at the time) or Constantine's father, Constantius Chlorus.<sup>23</sup> L'Orange believed that the older, bearded emperor had been depicted as Licinius.<sup>24</sup> Kinney asserts that the actual likenesses are less important, since that the reliefs are abstracted enough to be any emperor performing state functions. This simply illustrates a physical embodiment of the joint rule of the collegial emperors. On the north side, the roles are reversed and the sacrifice scenes in these reliefs feature the abstracted faces and the hunt scenes feature Constantine's face as recut from the spoliated reliefs.. It is unknown whether the original emperor's likeness was that of Hadrian or from which monument the reliefs originated.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Gregor Kalas, *Transforming Public Space in Rome: The Late Antique Revision of the Roman Forum*, 79-80.

<sup>23</sup> Dale Kinney, "Rape or Restitution of the Past?", *The Art of Interpreting*, 56 ; H.P. L'Orange, " (1939), .

<sup>24</sup> Dale Kinney, "Spolia: Rape or Restitution of the Past," *The Art of Interpreting*, 56.

<sup>25</sup> Amanda Claridge, *Rome: The Oxford Archaeological Guide*, 275. The style and techniques of the roundels propose a date from the early second-century CE; they are possibly of Hadrian's reign, citing a possible identification of Antinous, Hadrian's favorite companion, who drowned in the Nile in 130 CE (the reliefs can be argued that the roundels came from an arch erected to Antinous. However, a young Antoninus Pius may be in the reliefs, they may have been a visionary monument of Hadrian with his intended successor; some of the reliefs are incomplete).

This ambiguity raises another issue from both L'Orange's and Kinney's reading of the spoliated reliefs within Constantine's Arch, which is the abstraction of the portraiture. The portraits represented are purposely generalized in their facial features, so that they lose their "historical specificity," which allows Constantine's likeness to be inserted into a Hadrianic context. Kinney agrees with L'Orange, when she argues that *spolia* have an inherent multivalence that enables historical as well as contemporary readings simultaneously.<sup>26</sup> This is important, as it enables the *spolia* to refer to past emperors as well as Constantine simultaneously and allows him to establish a connection with the memories of his predecessors' deeds.

Also of note within the Arch are the use of panel reliefs originating from the time of Marcus Aurelius flanking the dedicatory inscription on the attic. There are eight such reliefs, all rectangular carvings of white Italian (luna) marble. The four reliefs on the south face (facing the *Via Triumphalis* and the Circus Maximus) show the emperor at war.<sup>27</sup> The four on the north face (facing the Colosseum piazza, the Meta Sudans, and the Colossus) depict Constantine, likewise recut from a monument originally for Marcus Aurelius, performing civilian duties.

It is clear that the senate aligned Constantine with the memory of the Flavian emperors in sponsoring Constantine's commemorative arch. As the name of Flavius is attested in Constantinian inscriptions, the emperor must have adopted the name of the first-century imperial dynasty as an indication of his intention to acquire the past and create not only a political, but architectural lineage, furthered by the siting of the Arch near the Flavian Amphitheater (Colosseum) and the Meta Sudans, also built by the Flavians. Constantine used the memory of

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<sup>26</sup> Dale Kinney, "Spolia: Rape or Restitution of the Past," *The Art of Interpreting*, 56-57.

<sup>27</sup> Amanda Claridge, *Rome: An Oxford Archaeological Guide*, 276. The reliefs might have originally commemorated Marcus Aurelius' triumph in 176 CE. It is unclear whether these are from one monument or two separate arches.

the Antonine emperors through the use of many spoliated reliefs of Marcus Aurelius as well as those of Trajan, and Hadrian. This acquires a Flavian and Antonine lineage for Constantine while erasing Maxentius' associations with these same dynasties.

The reliefs on the Arch, especially those of Hadrian, Trajan, and Marcus Aurelius, hint at Constantine's desire for singular rule rather than the collegial rule of the Tetrarchs. This is also reflected in his adoption of Sol as a patron deity, which also clouds his religious loyalties in the aftermath of the Battle of Milvian Bridge. By acquiring the physical architecture, Constantine "acquires" the associations made with these past emperors and asserts himself as the continuation of their respective reigns, all of which had favorable connotations. This is exemplified in the reliefs that were recut to feature Constantine's likeness, rejecting the abstraction shown in Tetrarchic statues and reliefs.

### **The Eastern Forum**

As the area between the Colosseum Valley and the central Forum the so-called "eastern Forum" is a modern term and was probably never used in the fourth century, but is useful to distinguish the area from other sectors to the east and west. The "eastern forum" encompasses the Temple of Venus and Roma, the basilica Nova (or Basilica of Constantine), and the rotunda complex. The Roman Forum is seen as dominated by a paved central area and was framed on its eastern edge by the Temple of the Deified Caesar [Figure 2.1, monument (21)]. Therefore, the "eastern Forum" is something else entirely: it might be prudent to note Maxentius possibly had ambitions for creating a precinct all his own, as the Tetrarchy had so altered the central Forum

proper that Maxentius sought to create his own statement between the central Forum and the Colosseum Valley.

At the start of the *Via Sacra* (Sacred Way) was the Temple of Venus and Rome, perched on the Velian Hill. After two fires, the first in 283, and the second dated roughly between 306-307, only the podium and the peristyle columns remained from the original Hadrianic structure.<sup>28</sup> As a symbol of his piety toward "his" city, Maxentius took on rebuilding the Temple. After Maxentius' rebuilding, the massive podium then featured over a hundred freestanding columns, each sixty Roman feet high.<sup>29</sup> It was the largest temple in the city. Within a double peristyle colonnade that held between them statues of other gods and past emperors (including a silver one of Marcus Aurelius and one of Minerva) stood two *cellae* chambers, the walls embedded with red porphyry columns on white marble brackets. The two *cellae* are placed back to back: one for Venus, the other for Roma, the goddess of the City. The one facing the valley was for Venus Felix (goddess of fertility and prosperity); the one facing toward the Forum was Roma's.<sup>30</sup> Each chamber had an apse behind the statue.<sup>31</sup> The ceilings were of bronze-plated coffers. The *cellae* were built on top of Hadrian's floor of polychrome marble. The entire structure must have been over one hundred meters long and probably around half as wide. The freestanding Corinthian columns, made of white fluted marble, numbered around twenty-two on the long sides, and about ten on the short sides.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Elizabeth Marlowe, "Liberator Urbis Suae: Constantine and the Ghost of Maxentius," 201.

<sup>29</sup> Amanda Claridge, *Rome: An Oxford Archaeological Guide*, 113.

<sup>30</sup> Amanda Claridge, *Rome: An Oxford Archaeological Guide*, 115. The temple had an altar set up in 176 CE where newlywed couples were expected to sacrifice.

<sup>31</sup> Alessandro Cassatella, "Venus et Roma, Aedes, Templum," *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae V*. (Rome: Quasar, 1999), 121-123.

<sup>32</sup> John R. Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital*. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999): p. 57; Amanda Claridge, *Rome: An Oxford Archaeological Guide*. (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 113; A. Cassatella, "The Temple of Venus and Roma" in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae* (1993), 171.

While an inscription noting the patron and/or honoree of the Temple does not survive, through the numismatic evidence as well as literary evidence from Aurelius Victor in *De Caesaribus* that Maxentius constructed a "temple of the city" in a "magnificent manner," as also was recorded in the *Chronograph of 354*.<sup>33</sup> The chronograph asserts that the original patron was Maxentius, but the rededication to Constantine lies entirely on the literary evidence from the same passage by Aurelius Victor.<sup>34</sup> Maxentius had restored the Temple of Venus and Roma, giving the populace a symbol for the spiritual and civic renewal for the city itself.<sup>35</sup> Indeed, Maxentius had used Roma in his coinage to suggest his affinity for the goddess of the city. Maxentius could have also been alluding to his family lineage, the Valerians, by rebuilding a temple that placed the goddess of the City herself with the patron goddess of the imperial family, Venus on the Velian Hill, which had been associated with P. Valerius Publicola. The entire hill was linked with the ancestral tomb of the Valerii, near the Rotunda nearby.<sup>36</sup>

Even though the temple had numerous Maxentian ties, by agreeing with the senate's plan to preserve the temple, Constantine could demonstrate his *romanitas* by preserving the temple, even as it was initiated by his defeated rival, acquiring Rome's traditions. This also showed his tolerance toward Rome's pagan cults. Conversely, Constantine's religious ambiguity could be reflected in his preservation of the temple even as he was tolerant of Christianity.

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<sup>33</sup> Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus* 40.26: *adhuc cuncta opera, quae magnifice construxerat urbis fanum atque basilicam Flavii meritis patres sacrevere*. tr. H.W. Bird, *Aurelius Victor*, 48-49. ; *Chron. Min. 354*, 148, *hoc. imp.* [Maxentius] *templum Romae arsit et fabricatum est*.

<sup>34</sup> Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus* 40.26, tr. H.W. Bird, *Aurelius Victor*, 48-49.

<sup>35</sup> Elisha Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius: A Study in Architectural Design and Urban Planning in the Early Fourth Century*, (Ph.D. Thesis, University of Pennsylvania, 2005,) 209-210. Dumser states that it is problematic to attribute the rebuilding of the Temple to Maxentius entirely, as the numismatic evidence *CONSERVATORES URBIS SUAE* suggests that Maxentius is sharing credit with his then-allied co-rulers, Maximian and Constantine. Some of the coinage also possibly predates the fire, so the exact motives for the rebuilding are not entirely clear.

<sup>36</sup> John R. Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital*, 57-59.

Constantine continued to receive credit for successful rule by means of erasing the memory of Maxentius and through the subversion of Maxentius' buildings in the eastern Forum, so that I find it useful to see this precinct as the "Forum of Constantine" after 312 [Figure 2.1]. As this had been the epicenter of Maxentius' civic instauration, Constantine's regime subtly changed each of Maxentius' projects to further erase his memory and establish Constantine's architectural benefactions within Rome. The Basilica Nova (Basilica of Constantine) and the so called "Temple of Romulus" rotunda formed the nexus of this "eastern Forum" [Figure 2.1].

### **The Basilica Nova**

Recently, scholars such as Elisha Dumser have challenged the Basilica Nova's innovative construction being credited to the period of Constantine's rule.<sup>37</sup> Through hers and others' analyses, the Maxentian phase of the basilica is now understood as instigating all facets of the building but for the northern apse. Indeed, we know the basilica to be Maxentian from Aurelius Victor. The Basilica Nova was located to the west of the Temple of Venus and Roma. Its main structure is comprised of concrete faced in brick, which can be dated to the same time as the Temple of Venus and Roma, and covered in stucco, to resemble the earlier ashlar construction.<sup>38</sup> There were three subsidiary concrete barrel vaults, each twenty-five meters high.<sup>39</sup> These vaults flanked the central nave, where the real innovation lay in the cross-vaulting where these vaults

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<sup>37</sup> Elisha Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius*, 61.

<sup>38</sup> Elisha Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius*, 69; Noel Lenski, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to the Age of Constantine*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006,) 280-281. The brickstamps date the building to the Tetrarchic period. See also Theodora Heres, 223-232, and Coarelli, "Basilica Nova" in *Lexicon Topographicum Urbis Romae, Volume I* (1993), 171.

<sup>39</sup> Elisha Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius*, 67.

intersected the central nave.<sup>40</sup> This cross vault in the nave was created by three cross-aisles perpendicular to the barrel vaults, each measuring thirty-five meters tall, with monolithic Corinthian columns embedded within the walls.<sup>41</sup>

At the western end, under an apse, stood a colossal statue that may have originally been carved in Maxentius' likeness. The statue was fifty Roman feet tall, in a seated position, watching over the proceedings of the courts.<sup>42</sup> On the long side (southwest) facing the *via Sacra*, a set of four red porphyry columns front a porch with wide steps leading down to the *Via Sacra*.<sup>43</sup>

## The Basilica of Constantine

The Basilica Nova, while certainly initiated under Maxentius, was amended during Constantine's rule. What we know to purely have been Constantinian additions is cloudy. While the entrance-porch fronting the *Via Sacra* is now thought to be part of the original plan for the building, it is clear that the apse on the northeast facade of the building was not original. This was built as a result of structural weakness in the eastern wall. Under Constantine, the Basilica Nova received several alterations to the building itself, as well as the colossal statue (not to be

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<sup>40</sup> Elisha Dumser, *The Architecture of Maxentius*, 72.

<sup>41</sup> Amanda Claridge, *Rome: An Oxford Archaeological Guide*, 115.

<sup>42</sup> Whether the banner was actually a Christian cross or not is a contention between scholars; Eusebius maintains that it was a cross; however, being a Christian bishop, his coloring of Constantine must surely have been skewed to retroactively present Constantine as being more Christian than he actually might have been.

<sup>43</sup> Susanna Buranelli Le Pera and Luca D'Elia, "'Sacra Via': note topografiche," *Bullettino della Commissione Archeologica Comunale di Roma* 91 (1986): 241-262, esp. pp. 257-249; Amanda Claridge, *Rome: An Oxford Archaeological Guide*, 116. Le Pera and D'Elia assert that the porch and steps facing the *Via Sacra* were integral to the original [Maxentian] plan for the Basilica, as the foundations for the entire structure projected out under the south-facing steps.



confused with the Colossus of Sol). Along the edge of the central nave, the north-eastern wall had an apse as well, one complete with coffered half-dome and niched wall that was not there in 312. Its addition was mostly structural; the basilica's apse being built into the side of the Velia Hill had to do with strengthening the integrity of the northern wall along the hill and shoring up the instability of the foundations, but I am sure that the ideological subversion of the usurper's building was also considered in the building of the northern apse.<sup>44</sup> Therefore, the colossal statue within the western apse of the Basilica Nova becomes even more important to us as a physical indication of Constantine's appropriation of Maxentius' civic works [Figure 2.10].

The head of the colossal statue has a square jaw, dimpled chin, and a hook nose. This presents the Constantinian image, with the aquiline nose being a "dynastic badge" adopted by Constantine's father, Constantius I.<sup>45</sup> However, the statue has evidence of being recut from a statue of an unknown individual, presumably Maxentius. The hair framing Constantine's forehead is of his style, but the curls on the top of the head are more akin to a Tetrarchic image. There are also dowel holes at the temples that support the addition of the Constantinian-era hair to alter the head's appearance.<sup>46</sup> Constantine's face is clean-shaven and his eyes reflect the change from c. 326 onward of large, deeply-carved eyes looking toward the heavens.<sup>47</sup> If this holds true, the statue as a whole may not have been recut until around 326, or the eyes were recut to reflect this change in iconography, the rest of the statue presumably being recut sometime

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<sup>44</sup> Carla Maria Amici, "Le tecniche di cantiere e il procedimento costruttivo," in *La Basilica di Massenzio: Il monumento*, 149-160; Amanda Claridge. *Rome: An Oxford Archaeological Guide*: 115.

<sup>45</sup> Jonathan Bardill, *Constantine, Divine Emperor of the Christian Golden Age*, 11, 204. Constantius had adapted the Tetrarchic imagery sometime after his ascension to the rank of caesar. this served as precedent when Constantine adapted his imagery to being clean-shaven, with longer hair at the ends and a more youthful, handsome face. Constantine then adopted the hooked nose as a hallmark of a Flavian dynasty; this indicated his dynastic ambitions.

<sup>46</sup> Jonathan Bardill, *Constantine, Divine Emperor of the Christian Golden Age*, 204.

<sup>47</sup> The eyes looking toward the sky are also indicative of Constantine's association with Alexander the Great. See Bardill for more information on the heavenly gaze.

around 312, after the erasure of Maxentius. The "heavenly gaze," as Bardill calls it, illustrates either a divine association or the suggestion of divine guidance or inspiration. This is confirmed by the symbolism also inherent in the numismatic evidence of the time.<sup>48</sup> There are also two small holes in the center of Constantine's head beneath the added locks of hair; this may prove the addition of the diadem, which Constantine also adopted after 326.<sup>49</sup>

The inscription of the colossal statue may also have been added to what is now probably an extant statue at the onset of Constantine's reign. The text as recounted by Eusebius reads:

By this saving sign, the true proof of courage, I saved your city [Rome] from the yoke of the tyrant [Maxentius] and set her free; furthermore I freed the Senate and people of Rome and restored them to their ancient renown and splendour.<sup>50</sup>

The premise that the colossal statue existed prior to Constantine's reign is evident in the discovery of a similar right hand, found during building work near the Capitol in 1744; it is thought that this is the original hand and that a new right hand was carved in order to incorporate Constantine's supposedly "saving sign" [Figure 2.11].<sup>51</sup> While it is easy to name the inscription as referring to Maxentius, depending on the translation, could be extrapolated to mean general "tyranny": that of the Tetrarchy, Maxentius, and later, Licinius. This made the statue a hallmark of Constantine's aim of a single *augustus*. The colossal statue has no congruent brethren to speak of. The singularity, as well as the scale of the statue in this basilica leads to both Maxentius' and Constantine's utter rejection of collegial rule and a return to governance by a single emperor.

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<sup>48</sup> Jonathan Bardill, *Constantine, Divine Emperor of the Christian Golden Age*, 19.

<sup>49</sup> Jonathan Bardill, *Constantine, Divine Emperor of the Christian Golden Age*: 206.

<sup>50</sup> Eusebius, *Life of the Blessed Emperor Constantine*, 1.40.2, ed. pp. 36-37, trans. 85.

<sup>51</sup> Jonathan Bardill, *Constantine, Divine Emperor of the Christian Golden Age*: 209. There is contention in that the found right hand has too narrow a wrist for the statue's right forearm. Bardill maintains that the entire right arm could have been recarved to fit the statue.

Singular rule is furthered in the Basilica of Constantine. The colossal building obviously was of a scale unprecedented in the Forum. Its innovative structure also elicited imperial power: containing judicial courts. This showcased Constantine's role as a lawgiver and "watchful eye" over the legal proceedings within through his colossal statue. Indeed, the nave added on the east side of the basilica probably served as offices and other service spaces for the courts.<sup>52</sup>

Constantine, as sole emperor, would have had global dominion over the Roman world, represented not only in his laws and edicts, but represented by his presence in the colossal statue in a colossal new basilica in the heart of downtown Rome. The visibility of both the statue and the basilica itself would have been paramount in Rome, at the time the empire's most populous city. The ubiquity of the basilica asserts Constantine's role as emperor of Rome and of the known world.

The Basilica of Constantine also fronts the *Via Sacra* in order to present its most prominent facade along the ritual path. Curran disputes Dumser's (and others') argument that the southern entrance from the Basilica of Constantine to the *Via Sacra* was Maxentian and part of the original construction; while Dumser's argument is more grounded in the archaeological evidence of the foundations of the basilica, his idea that Constantine's reasoning for the second entrance *fronting the processional route* and inserting his new inscription along the *Via Sacra* along the most prominent facade is certainly intriguing.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Gregor Kalas, *Transforming Public Space in Rome: The Late Antique Revision of the Roman Forum*. (Austin: University of Texas Press, forthcoming), 106-107.

<sup>53</sup> John Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital*, 81.

## The Rotunda Complex

On the far side of the Basilica Nova is the Rotunda complex, the so-called "Temple of Romulus" [see Figure 2.12]. The circular building, constructed of brick-faced concrete and flanked by two apsidal halls, served as a transitional precinct that led to the Temple of Peace to the north and had been used as a museum of sorts for the city and the Empire at large, containing spoils of war and artworks along with the marble plan of Rome.<sup>54</sup>

Constantine's supporters added the two curved walls to flank the entrance that addressed the Via Sacra. In order to further activate the entrance that fronted the Via Sacra, which served as the processional path through the Forum, and to further illustrate Constantine's acquisition and continuation of Rome's past, the materials used in the portal were an amalgam of several earlier buildings. The two doors were bronze and the marble jambs were from a Severan building, set between four red *porphyry* columns [Figure 2.13].<sup>55</sup> The Corinthian capitals of the porphyry columns are Flavian in origin.<sup>56</sup> The cornice over the door was actually four different pieces, with the middle two blocks being *spolia* from the first and early second-century CE respectively. The outer two blocks were made by the builders of the Rotunda during the fourth century.<sup>57</sup> The framing of the "past" in the *spolia* of the entrance to the Rotunda, possibly with statuary within the four niches embedded within each curved wall, allowed Constantine to reframe the past as his and call attention to his role as a benefactor for Rome and the city's cultural treasures within the building.

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<sup>54</sup> Gregor Kalas, *Transforming Public Space in Rome*, 106-107.

<sup>55</sup> Amanda Claridge, *Rome: An Oxford Archaeological Guide*, 109.

<sup>56</sup> Amanda Claridge, *Rome: An Oxford Archaeological Guide*, 109.

<sup>57</sup> Amanda Claridge, *Rome: An Oxford Archaeological Guide*, 109.

The facades of the two apsidal halls exhibited *spolia* as well. The *Carystian* green marble column shafts on the side facades, measuring twenty-four Roman feet, as well as a Corinthian capital on the still surviving right-hand porch [Figure 2.13] dates to the Flavian period, circa 90 CE.<sup>58</sup> The cornice block for this column is from the reign of Septimius Severus in the early third century CE.

Given that the rotunda complex functioned as an entrance precinct to the Temple of Peace (*Templum Pacis*), which served as a museum of sorts to visitors and citizens alike, the changes made to the building under Constantine would have seemed to highlight his civic munificence toward Rome, when in reality, the building was sponsored by the senate as well. The brick curved walls, added to join the apsidal halls with the recessed entrance doors during Constantine's reign, framed the spoliated entrance doorway. Within each of the two curved walls were four statue niches.<sup>59</sup> To acquire this Maxentian structure, a new inscription inserted above the door which granted honor to Constantine in order to revise the earlier inscription dedicated to the rotunda's creator, Maxentius. Transcribed by the sixteenth-century antiquarian Onofrio Pinvinio, the inscription dedicates the building to 'Constantine the Great' (*CONSTANTIN[O] ... MAXIM[O]*).<sup>60</sup> There is discrepancy due to an alternate version of the transcription, as another antiquarian of the same time, Pirro Ligorio, embellishes the missing letters from the inscription to *IMP CAES CONSTANTIN[O] ... MAXIM[O] TRIUMPH*, though Ligorio is thought to be less credible than Pinvinio.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>58</sup> Amanda Claridge, *Rome: An Oxford Archaeological Guide*, 109.

<sup>59</sup> John R. Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital*, 59.

<sup>60</sup> Amanda Claridge, *Rome: An Oxford Archaeological Guide*, 109.

<sup>61</sup> Onofrio Panvinio transcribed the text as *CONSTANTIN[o] MAXIM[o] . . . [---]ME[---]*, Cod. Vat. Lat. 6780, fol. 45.

<sup>61</sup> Pirro Ligorio in Cod. Vat. Lat. 3439, fol. 40, records the inscription as *IMP CAES. CONSTANTIN . . . MAXIM TRIUMPH*. One could infer that Ligorio looked at the same inscribed epistyle, interpreting the letters that Panvinio

As Constantine defeated Maxentius in 312, his acquisition of the rotunda complex could be interpreted as acquiring a precinct of peace in the Temple of Peace behind it. Politically, this equates his triumph over Maxentius as a return to an era of peace following a period of civil war, in which Rome had been attacked multiple times. Constantine's acquisition and amending of this building brings back a period of culture and history of the Roman people.

Indeed, if the rotunda complex had functioned as a transitory vestibule from the Via Sacra to the Temple of Peace, this accentuated Constantine's role as a civic benefactor. The Temple of Peace was a showcase of Roman superiority, containing spoils of war and other artifacts from conquered peoples, as well as including the fabled Marble Plan of Rome (*forma urbis*), symbolizing the entire city [Figure 2.14].<sup>62</sup> Constantine's adaptation of this, fueled by the addition of the two curved walls framing the spoliated entrance, created a museum-like entrance to a museum-like building in which to impress the citizens and visitors to Rome, which was still the symbolic capital of the empire. Like the Temple of Venus and Roma, this building exemplified Constantine's *romanitas* as he acquired the cultural treasures inside the Temple of Peace.

## The Central Forum

As the center of Rome and the Empire itself, this area was the heart of downtown Rome. It had been around since the first days of the Roman monarchy and Republic, but underwent

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read as *ME*, but proposing a variant reading of *MP* so and accordingly filled in letters to form an epigraphic interpretation of “[*triu*]MP[*h* - -]. The editors of the *Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum*, due to the loss of the original inscribed epistyle, suggest that letters could have been either MP or ME, since the inscription might have read [*cle*]ME[*ntissimoque principi*], *CIL*.6.1147 (and p. 4329).

<sup>62</sup> Gregor Kalas, *Transforming Public Space in Rome: The Late Antique Revision of the Roman Forum*, 99-100.

multiple changes, including multiple pavings. It was the culmination of political life in Rome with the rostra and the Senate House. It was the center of cultural life in Rome as well; there were artistic displays within the basilicas and statues that marked the history of the Roman Republic and Empire. Located in a low basin between several of Rome's seven hills, the Forum not only marked the center of everyday life in Rome, but also the culmination of Constantine's triumph.

The central area of the Forum, long a gathering place for the public, had been almost entirely altered by the Tetrarchs. The resultant space was enclosed by commemorative monuments for the group of four co-ruling emperors.<sup>63</sup> As the central Forum had long been a space to represent political concepts in a built form, the Tetrarchs changed the space to suit their ideals of collegial rule and cyclical renewal. The Tetrarchy extended the western rostra, which dates back to the reign of Augustus, to match the construction of a new eastern rostra at the opposite end of the central Forum square. Both rostra signified the Tetrarchs' associations with their patron gods, Jupiter and Hercules. This made the rostra and their respective statue monuments an appropriation of the past and the memories inherent in the central Forum square, suited to illustrate the omnipresence of the collegial emperors, especially as they were seldom in Rome, and almost certainly never at the same time.<sup>64</sup> In the central area of the Forum stood the eastern and western rostra [see figure 2.1, monuments (1) and (5)] that the Tetrarchy built, with the group of statues atop the five-column monuments on both rostra, showing the Tetrarchy: the two senior emperors, or *augusti*, flanked the central column (on the eastern rostra it was Hercules in the center) and the two *caesares* on the outside. The western rostra had been narrower before,

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<sup>63</sup> Carlos Machado, "Monument and Memory," 164-165.

<sup>64</sup> Carlos Machado, "Monument and Memory in the Forum Romanum," 168.

on axis with the rostra protruding from the podium of the Temple of the Deified Caesar. With the construction of the eastern rostra, the western rostra was extended to match its length and the rostra embedded in the Temple lost its significance as the axial line dividing the central Forum [See figure 2.1, monument (A)].<sup>65</sup> The western rostra dated back to Augustus but was amended during the Tetrarchy to display another five-column monument. It is generally assumed that the central column featured Jupiter. The western rostra was where Constantine addressed the people during the jubilee, and formal acts of generosity, such as distributing monies, were made.

To the north of the western rostra, along the southern edge of the *Via Sacra*, stood a statue of Constantine on horseback, staged next to the rostra [Figure 2.15].<sup>66</sup> The inscription for this statue states:

To our lord Constantine the Great, pious and ever triumphant emperor, [who] gladly earns divine blessings for enlarging the state to encompass the whole world by his plans and actions for the senate and people of Rome, dedicated by Anicius Paulinus Iunior, of the highest aristocratic rank, consul (*consul ordinarius*) [and] urban prefect.<sup>67</sup>

While this interjection seems of little consequence, the statue made a major statement within the central paved area of the Forum, especially when a spectator walked along the *Via Sacra* and the processional route. The inscription for the statue fronted the *Via Sacra*, declaring that the predominant face of the statue was along the ritual path. Also, the statue showed Constantine facing toward the Arch of Septimius Severus, the same direction that his triumph or jubilee

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<sup>65</sup> Amanda Claridge, *Rome: An Oxford Archaeological Guide*, 81-84.

<sup>66</sup> Giuliani and Verduchi, *L'area centrale*, 69-73, 143-147; Patricia Verduchi, "Equus: Constantinus," in *LTUR* 2, 226-227; Gregor Kalas, *Transforming Public Space in Rome*, 15.

<sup>67</sup> CIL VI.1141: D(omino) N(ostro) CONSTANTINO MAXIMO/PIO FELICI AC TRIUMPHATORI SEMPER AUGUSTO/OB AMPLIFICATAM TOTO ORBE REM PUBLICAM FACTIS CONSULTISQ(ue)/S(enatus) P(opulus)Q(ue) R(omanus)/DEDICANTE ANICIO PAULINO IUNIORE V(iro) C(larissimo) CONS(ule) ORD(inario) PRAEF(ecto) URBI; for Anicius Paulinus, see PLRE, Paulinus 14.



processions would have proceeded. The link between Constantine's equestrian statue and the ritual path would have strengthened the impact of the emperor's visits to Rome, in 312, 315, and 326. Depicting an actual emperor's likeness contrasted with those of the Tetrarchic columnar monuments, whose highly abstracted, vague identities were meant to suggest the accordance of collegial rule. Unfortunately, none of these statues survive to confirm this. Constantine's equestrian statue would have signified a return to solitary rule, commemorated by the memory of a specific likeness of the emperor.

The inscription describes Constantine as "ever-triumphant," something reiterated in his subsequent rituals within the Roman Forum. In addition, the equestrian statue blocks the view of the western rostra and places Constantine before the Tetrarchy and their revision of the western rostra. Constantine may have been making a statement: along the processional route, he was denying any associations that he had with the Tetrarchy by blocking the view of their statues. In addition, Constantine's supporters in the senate set up statues within the central forum area that critiqued the Tetrarchic system and created a slightly more approachable persona for the emperor.<sup>68</sup> As in the case of Constantine's equestrian statue, statues took on an important role in the late antique Forum, as the emperors became only rarely present within the capital.<sup>69</sup> Therefore, as the Tetrarchs and then Constantine himself were increasingly concerned with the fringes of the empire while neglecting Rome, statues and other monuments both became evidence of Constantine's omnipresence and recalled the events of his triumph and the subsequent jubilees during his absence. As purported by the orator of the panegyric addressed to

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<sup>68</sup> Gregor Kalas, *Transforming Public Space in Rome: The Late Antique Revision of the Roman Forum*, 85. This was overseen by the curator of statues, a newly-created position under Constantine's rule; as such, the office holder would have reciprocated Constantine's benevolence in bestowing the position.

<sup>69</sup> Gregor Kalas, *Transforming Public Space in Rome: The Late Antique Revision of the Roman Forum*, 39.

Constantine's father, Constantius Chlorus, in 297, the statue of an emperor transmitted their divine power: "The power of your divinity would be everywhere that your images, everywhere that your statues, are revered."<sup>70</sup> Therefore, the likeness of Constantine in his statues could be interpreted as a statue of a divinity. This was useful to Constantine, as his statues become representative of his imperial omnipresence even when he was absent from Rome.<sup>71</sup>

To the northwest of Constantine's equestrian statue, and up a slight slope was the Arch of Septimius Severus. Over seventy Roman Feet in height, the Arch towers over the central paved area of the Forum. The side passages were approached by two sets of stairs; the central archway was ramped as part of the *Via Sacra*. The Arch of Constantine was similar to the Arch of Septimius Severus; they created 'nodes' at each end of the *Via Sacra* and of the Roman Forum and the 'Forum of Constantine'.<sup>72</sup>

Constantine's equestrian statue was an affront to the collegiality of the Tetrarchs. By placing a statue of a singular emperor almost on top of the altered western rostra, the statue makes a definitive statement on Constantine's politics and the eventual return of sole rule based on heredity.

On the far side of the Arch of Septimius Severus, near the Senate House, stood a statue of Mars, probably with Rome's legendary founders Romulus and Remus, standing upon a marble plinth near the *Lapis Niger*, a sacred marker in front of the Senate House [Figure 2.16].<sup>73</sup> Maxentius had dedicated this statue, and upon his defeat, his name was erased from the

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<sup>70</sup> Pan. Lat. 8(3)15.6. C.E.V. Nixon and Barbara Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors*, 136.

<sup>71</sup> Jonathan Bardill, *Constantine, Divine Emperor of the Christian Golden Age*, p. 211. This is used in reference to Constantine in the *Panegyric of Constantine Augustus*, 25.4.

<sup>72</sup> Noel Lenski, ed, *Age of Constantine*, 281.

<sup>73</sup> John R. Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital*, 60-61. The plinth may have held the she-wolf statue that now stands in the Palazzo dei Conservatori. Maxentius' name is erased from the inscription.

inscription. However, the rest of the inscription remained. The statue inscription [Figure 2.17] read:

To unconquered Mars, Father, and to the founders of his eternal city. Our Lord Imperator [Maxentius Pius Felix], unconquered Augustus [dedicated this].<sup>74</sup>

Maxentius might have thought that his affiliation with Mars, god of war, would help him during his usurpation. And he thought that by dedicating the statue on the *Parilia*, the anniversary of Rome's founding (April 21) would do him good in the eyes of the Roman people.<sup>75</sup> However, upon Maxentius' defeat, the senate condemned his memory by effacing his name from the statue, but leaving the inscription and the statue itself as a monument in the area in front of the Senate House. Thus, the senate decried his reign on Constantine's behalf; the statue served as a reminder of the shame of Maxentius' tyranny. Constantine's court assured that Maxentius would not acquire the past through such an important landmark.

## Conclusion

Constantine's affiliations with the Roman senate provided him with clear ties to the governing class who helped him to rule over the Empire, and this is evidenced in the Senatorial sponsorship of Constantinian buildings and monuments within the Forum and the Colosseum Valley. The interventions in the Colosseum Valley under Constantine might have been a direct response to Maxentius' interventions in the "eastern Forum." Perhaps the senate sought out an

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<sup>74</sup> CIL 6.33856: "MARTI INVICTO PARTRI/ ET AETERNAE URBIS SUAE/ CONDITORIBUS/ DOMINUS NOSTER/ IMP. MAXENT[iu]S P.F./ INVICTUS AUGU./ (in latere dextro): DEDICATA DIE XI KAL. MAIAS/ PER FURIUM OCTAVIANUM V.C./CUR. AED. SACR."; tr. John Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital*, 61.

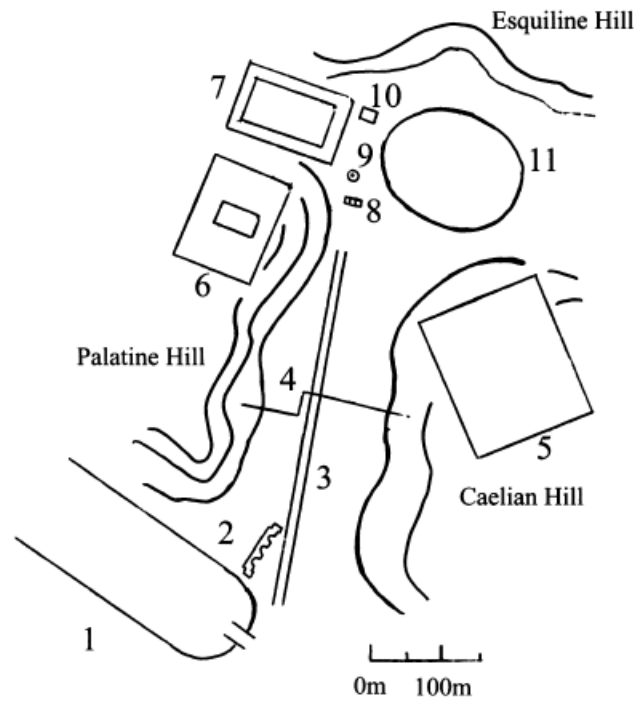
<sup>75</sup> Curran, John R. *Pagan City and Christian Capital*, 61. The association with Mars, a martial god, would have helped Maxentius in his relationship with the praetorian guard.

opportunity to create a Constantinian precinct along the *Via Triumphalis* between the Circus Maximus and his Arch.

The Arch of Constantine, the buildings of the eastern Forum, and the insertion of his equestrian statue in the central Forum all serve to create a tangible representation of the power struggle from the time of the first Tetrarchy to Constantine's reign, glossing over the civil war between himself and Maxentius by erasing Maxentius' name from the building projects in order to subvert them to a pro-Constantinian agenda. Constantine's legitimacy was strengthened by his associations with specific former emperors, namely the Flavians and the Antonines. Also, Constantine's ties to Sol not only aligned him with the sun god and victory, but also masked the ambiguity of his religious links to Christianity following the Battle of Milvian Bridge. Also notable is the secular transition evident in the reliefs: the transition from soldier emperor to civilian emperor is marked in his Arch. The symbolism suggested by the Luna descending and Sol rising on the tondo reliefs could suggest the end of the Tetrarchic system and the return to solitary rule and the end to the period of civil war. These pagan deities, while not aligning with the paganism of the Tetrarchy or of Maxentius, also clearly illustrate Constantine's ambiguous religious affiliations.

These provocations are, for now, isolated incidents, insufficient to showcase a Constantinian political agenda. But Constantine's interventions in the greater Forum were not static and devoid of connection; they encouraged the use of the jubilee ritual in order to completely amend Maxentius' and the Tetrarchs' memories and to reiterate Constantine's role as "liberator of the city" of Rome rather than the victor in a series of civil wars. The Colosseum Valley and the Roman Forum, on the one hand, provided Constantine with individual monuments highlighting his many roles. Constantine appeared as a conquering soldier and a

restorer of liberty in his Arch; as respectful preserver of Rome's pagan traditions in the Temple of Venus and Roma; as judicial supporter in the Basilica of Constantine; and as civic benefactor in the Rotunda complex. These monuments, buildings, and spaces all have a specific uses. But alone, spaces are simply that: spaces. But as Constantine acquires the past through his sponsored monuments and statues along the *Via Sacra*, viewsheds, such as Constantine's equestrian statue blocking the Tetrarchic rostra, become powerful, and seek to create a ritual space activated by moving along the processional route of the jubilee. The *Via Sacra*, as the street lined with these nodal buildings and figures, connects these disjointed pieces and gives them a superseding importance in the Forum. Linked through their siting along the major street of the Forum, the buildings front a distinct space that is activated by the people moving through the streets and on the porticoes of the basilicas and temples. The *Via Sacra* becomes a ritual space, the street bound by buildings that allude to Constantine's reign and triumph over Maxentius. The buildings are changed by their use as grandstands during the procession. The ritual, transforms the space and the viewer's perception of it, as will be showcased in the next chapter.



[Figure 2.2] Plan of the monuments of early-4th century Rome, for the Circus Maximus to the Flavian Amphitheater (the Colosseum):

1. Circus Maximus
2. Septizodium
3. Via Triumphalis
4. Acqua Claudia
5. Temple of the Deified Claudius
6. Temple of Sol Invictus/Jupiter Ultor
7. Temple of Venus and Roma
8. Arch of Constantine
9. Meta Sudans
10. Colossus of Sol
11. Flavian Amphitheater (Colosseum)

Plan courtesy of Elizabeth Marlowe.



[Figure 2.3] The Arch of Constantine.  
[Image: Gregor Kalas]



[Figure 2.4] The Colossus as Framed by the quadriga atop the Arch of Constantine.

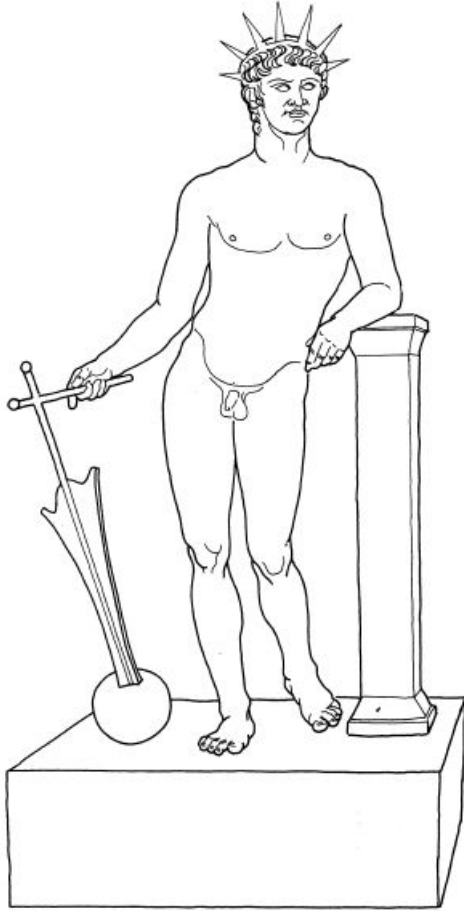
[Image from reconstruction by Elizabeth Marlowe]



[Figure 2.5] The Colossus framed within the central fornix (opening) of the Arch of Constantine.

[Image from reconstruction by Elizabeth Marlowe]





9 Reconstruction of the Colossus of Nero (by Marianne Bergmann, from *Der Koloss Neros*, fig. 10, provided by Bergmann)

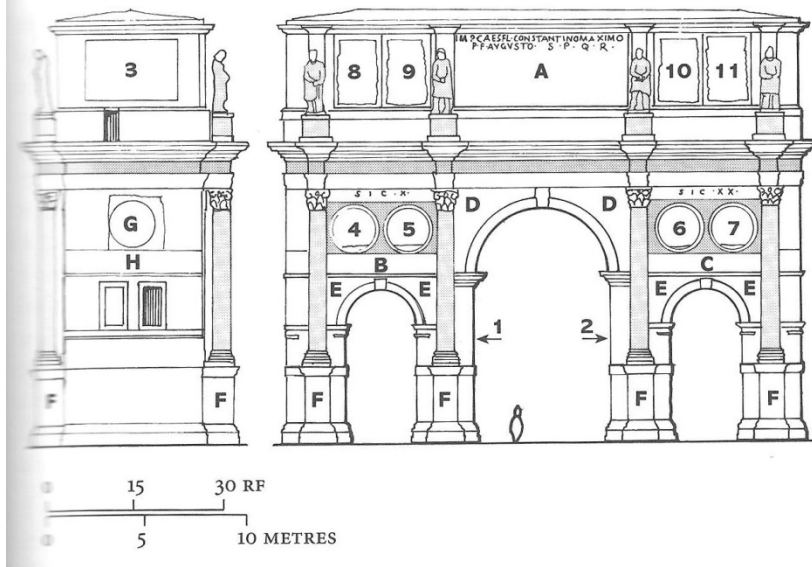
[Figure 2.6] Recreation of Nero's Colossus of Sol statue. Courtesy of Marianne Bergmann and Elizabeth Marlowe.



[Figure 2. 7a] Tondo showing Sol rising.



[Figure 2.7b] Tondo relief showing Luna descending.



[Figure 2.8] Diagram of Arch of Constantine

Spolia:

- 1-3. Great Trajanic Frieze
- 4-7. Hadrianic Roundels
- 8-11. Panel Reliefs of Marcus Aurelius

Constantinian:

- A. Dedicatory inscription
- B. Siege of Verona
- C. Battle of Milvian Bridge
- D. Victory
- E. River gods
- F. Victories and captives
- G. G. Roundel: Sun (east) and Moon (west)
- H. Departure from Milan (west) and Entry into Rome (east)

Diagram courtesy of Amanda Claridge.



[Figure 2.9] Relief from the Arch of Constantine showing his address from the rostra.



[Figure 2.10] Colossal marble bust of Constantine, Capitoline Museums, Rome. Photo courtesy of Gregor Kalas.



[Figure 2.11] Remnant fragments of the Colossal statue of Constantine, Capitoline Museum, Rome.



[Figure 2.12] The Rotunda complex as it appears today as the Church of SS. Damiano e Cosma.

Image: Gregor Kalas.



[Figure 2.13] The bronze doors, columns, and cornice of the Rotunda complex as they appear today.

Image. Gregor Kalas.



[Figure 2.14] Digital reconstruction of the marble plan of Rome (Forma Urbis Romae). Produced by Gregor Kalas and Lu Liu.





[Figure 2.15] Screenshot of Constantine's equestrian statue blocking view of the western rostra. Image courtesy of Gregor Kalas.



[Fig. 2.16] Screenshot of the statue of Mars and portrait of Maxentius next to the Lapis Niger.  
[Image courtesy of Gregor Kalas]



[Fig. 2.17] Inscribed base for the statue of Mars displayed adjacent to the Lapis Niger with the name of Maxentius erased.

[Photo courtesy of Gregor Kalas]

### **Chapter III. "To the Greatness of His Mind": The Triumph of 312 and its Architectural Politics**

Constantine's triumph on October 29, 312 started his political journey toward solitary rule. The Roman Forum read as a Maxentian forum: Maxentius had restored the Temple of Venus and Roma, initiated the Basilica Nova (one of the largest, grandest buildings in Rome) and built the rotunda complex as an entry precinct to the Temple of Peace.

Constantine's triumph and subsequent jubilees attempted to diffuse an increasingly unhappy population in the capital. During the Tetrarchy, the emperors had resided outside Rome and made minimal effort to visit. As the political power inherent in the emperors' presence diverged from Rome, the people of Rome took notice of their dwindling role in the empire. It was this frustration with the Tetrarchy that led to Maxentius' usurpation and legitimization by the soldiers and people of Rome.

Therefore, Constantine's triumph was his first impression upon the people of Rome. This triumph would have outlined his entire political stance and aspirations for years to come; he would have had to tread lightly. As Constantine's defeat of Maxentius was an atypical triumph, as traditionally a triumph paraded spoils of war through the streets of Rome along with captives of the conquered people(s). In this case, to display spoils or captive peoples would only have reminded the populace of Rome that Constantine's victory was the result of a civil war, something that Constantine and his supporters wanted to gloss over. So in order to portray Maxentius as a tyrant, only his severed head was displayed in front of the triumphal procession. Furthermore, Constantine treaded lightly when it came to the senate, granting clemency to the

vast majority of them. This earned him the support of the senate, as Aurelius Victor stated: “Since it is true that nothing is welcomed more than eliminating tyrants, one’s popularity only increases once one has offered proof of restraint.”<sup>1</sup> Hence, the senators aided Constantine's propaganda campaign to eradicate Maxentius' memory among the roman people, and sought to sponsor Constantine's monuments and alter Maxentius' building projects within the city. As Mark Humphries states, "Such architectural projects and their dedications gave physical form to the senate's loyalty to its emperors."<sup>2</sup> This provides for most of the Constantinian interventions in the Forum, as Constantine's deference and respect for the senate created a venerable dialogue between the two, with senators eager to sponsor Constantinian projects, as they could also be commemorated in the inscription.

The triumphal procession of 312 had a decidedly militaristic tone. However, as a civil war between two rival emperors, there were many aspects of a triumph that were conspicuously absent. There were no spoils of war, as these would have hypothetically been those of Rome herself.<sup>3</sup> Also, there were no captives of the conquered people, as these would be the people of Rome themselves. Certainly, the senators who had supported Maxentius' bid for power were not shackled in front of the populace, as this would have been political suicide for Constantine, who was entering Rome for the first time as an emperor.<sup>4</sup> Senators played a prominent role in the triumphal procession and positioned themselves as colleagues of Constantine. During the

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<sup>1</sup> Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus* 40.29, tr. H.W. Bird, *Aurelius Victor*, 49: *Adeo acceptius praestantiusque tyrannorum depulsoribus nihil est, quorum gratia eo demum auctior erit, si modesti ipsi atque abstinentes sint.*

<sup>2</sup> Mark Humphries, "From Emperor to Pope? Constantine to Gregory" in *Religion, Dynasty, and Patronage in Early Christian Rome, 300-900*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 35.

<sup>3</sup> Barnes, *CE*, 44; Eusebius, *VC* 1.41.13; *Pan. Lat.* 4(10).31.3. In a macabre sense, Constantine returned properties lost under Maxentius' rule to their respective owners, political prisoners of Maxentius were released, and exiles were recalled back to Rome, but these are obviously not spoils or captives in a traditional sense of the triumphal procession.

<sup>4</sup> There is evidence that Constantine was present for the jubilee celebrations of 304 as one of Diocletian's junior officers, however, Constantine was not originally intended for imperial rule under the Tetrarchy.

spectacle of the procession, the senators championed Constantine as the "liberator of the city" from Maxentius' tyranny. The senators would likely have been a part in the processional cortege as well as the "audience" for the emperor during his senatorial address and the delivery of the panegyric.

### **The Ritual Path of Constantine's Triumph**

While the processional route traversed much of the city, I am concentrating on the culmination of the route, from the Colosseum Valley along the Via Triumphalis and into the Forum along the Via Sacra. It is this portion of the procession that deals the most with the issues I am examining.

The start of Constantine's triumphal procession would have been the Milvian Bridge itself outside the *pomerium*, or sacred boundary of the city. Constantine reportedly respected the city's patron deity by taking the necessary reverent precautions before crossing the sacred boundary into the city when freeing Rome from Maxentius' "tyranny."<sup>5</sup> To have crossed the *pomerium* while armed was considered a religious offense against the protective deity of the city, so by conducting himself accordingly, Constantine (even if he had experienced his famed 'vision' before the battle), had respected the pagan rites and thus kept favor and respect with the Roman population.<sup>6</sup> This piety is reflected in the inscription for Constantine's triumphal arch, dedicated by the "inspiration of the divinity and the greatness of his mind."<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Noel Lenski, "Evoking the Pagan Past: Instinctu Divinitatis and Constantine's Capture of Rome," *Journal of Late Antiquity* 1 (2008): 204-257.

<sup>6</sup> Noel Lenski, "Evoking the Pagan Past", 232.

<sup>7</sup> Inscription translated by Elizabeth Marlowe, "Framing the Sun," 237. CIL 6.1169. *INSTINCTU DIVINITATIS MENTIS MAGNITUDINE.*

Constantine was greeted by senators and the populace outside the city limits.<sup>8</sup> The triumph would have started as a procession from outside the city walls, proceeding toward the Forum [Fig. 3.3]. As the army was not allowed to bear arms within the city walls, before proceeding through the *pomerium*, Constantine would have shed his military garb and armor. This was the transition from military leader to leader of the people: a *citizen* leader. The soldiers would have shed their weapons outside the *pomerium* and the party would have continued, escorted by a civilian entourage including senators, Constantine's family, and other patricians. This symbolically replaced Constantine's army with a *civilian* cortege. This transition is commemorated in the sculptural reliefs on the Arch of Constantine marking his dual roles, as discussed in the preceding chapter.

### **Constantine and Sol**

As the cortege would have moved along the *Via Triumphalis*, the Colosseum Valley would have become a focal point along the processional path [Fig. 3.4]. At the end of the street, the Colossus of Sol would have been visible between the Temple of Venus and Roma to the west and the Colosseum to the east. There is evidence that Maxentius had recut the colossal statue in order to commemorate his late son, Romulus. However, the Colossus, associated with numerous emperors since its erection during Nero's reign, would have also provided associations with Constantine already.

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<sup>8</sup> Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum* 44.10: *Confecto tandem acerbissimo bello cum magna Constantinus Maximini perfidiam cognoscit, litteras deprehendit, statuas et imagines invenit.*

In 306, Constantine had supposedly received a vision of Apollo, along with Victoria, according him with a prophecy of thirty years of rule in the form of laurel crowns, as recorded in a Panegyric of 310.<sup>9</sup> Constantine then adopted Sol-Apollo as his patron deity in a move that perfectly obscured his religious views, debased Maxentius' role as champion of Rome, and made Constantine appear as a liberator of Rome.

Constantine's associations with Sol distanced him from a number of the emperors before him. The triumph traditionally equated the emperor to Jupiter; Constantine's alignment with Sol-Apollo not only masked his alleged "Christian vision" before the battle, but also distanced him from the Tetrarchic allusions to Jupiter and Hercules.<sup>10</sup> In addition, Maxentius' association with Mars, as noted with his dedication of the statue near the Lapis Niger, aligns Maxentius with the god of war. As a patron deity for both Maxentius and the city, this makes sense during a period of civil war and Rome being under attack multiple times in order to thwart Maxentius.<sup>11</sup> Therefore, Maxentius' reign could be equated with Mars and with the overwhelming possibility of war. On the other hand, Constantine's associations with Sol could be representative of a newfound period of peace, as physically marked by the Arch of Constantine. Obviously, Sol could be translated into a Christian reading, unlike those of Jupiter and Hercules.

On the other hand, Constantine's association with Sol and its cult may have recalled the reigns of Augustus, as he was closely connected with the god.<sup>12</sup> Augustus' reign was long seen

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<sup>9</sup> *Panegyrici Latini* 7(6).21.4-7.

<sup>10</sup> Sabine MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity*, 36.

<sup>11</sup> John Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital*, 61.

<sup>12</sup> Elizabeth Marlowe, *That Customary Magnificence that is Your Due...*, p. 191; see Elizabeth Marlowe, "Framing the Sun", p. 226-228. The cult of Sol had long been an imperial tradition, but had only been an official state-sponsored cult since Aurelian's reign, in the 270's. Nero was also associated with the cult of Sol during his reign (54-68 CE). The Colossus of Sol was originally commissioned by Nero and positioned at the entrance to his Golden House (*Domus Aurea*) and might have been carved in his likeness; this is uncertain. The Colossus was rededicated by Vespasian, reportedly recut to resemble Titus, Vespasian's son and heir. The Colossus was moved during the



as a "golden age" in Rome's history at the outset of the *Pax Romana* and would have been well suited to Constantine, likewise asserting power after a period of political strife.

Activated by the triumph, the framing of the Colossus of Sol through the Arch read as the focal point of the triumph rather than the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus. As it is unclear whether Constantine sacrificed at the Temple, this has been read by Marlowe as supplanting Jupiter, the Tetrarchic patron deity, and established Sol as the divine patron of his new order.<sup>13</sup>

By moving along the *Via Sacra*, Constantine's triumphal party would then have moved through the "eastern forum," comprising of the Temple of Venus and Roma, the Basilica Nova, and the rotunda complex. While these buildings were not complete at the time of Constantine's triumph, they sent a clear message of Maxentius' building campaign in Rome. Although defeated, the activism Maxentius had shown for the city of Rome was by no means scant within the memory of the Roman people. The Temple of Venus and Roma, the Basilica Nova, and the Rotunda complex were altogether Maxentian; it is this ubiquity that perhaps drove the changes under Constantine.

Constantine must have been cautious; Maxentius, through his restoration and his piety toward *his* city, had been seen as one of the great benefactors of Rome. His coinage had attested to this through the phrase *Conservator Urbis Suae*, or "preserver of his city". The Roman people might have had mixed feelings toward Constantine at the time of his triumph, as he was entering

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reign of Hadrian (coincidentally to build the Temple of Venus and Roma on the remains of the vestibule of the *Domus Aurea*) and explicitly rededicated (and possibly recut) to remove any associations with Nero; there were allegedly plans to implement a congruent statue of Luna, the moon goddess opposite the Colossus of Sol to further eradicate any Neronian connotations.

<sup>13</sup> Elizabeth Marlowe, *That Customary Magnificence that is Your Due: Constantine and the Symbolic Capital of Rome*, p. 182.

Rome for the first time (as an emperor).<sup>14</sup> Perhaps when Constantine paraded through the streets in his triumph in 312, he noticed this and thus his own 'Precinct of Constantine' was instigated in the Colosseum Valley, with the repurposing of the Colossus of Sol and his triumphal Arch in an area tied to the Flavian dynasty. As Maxentius had built the "eastern forum" as his own precinct, Constantine had the Colosseum Valley created in order to create his own, and to blur the distinction between the projects under Constantine and those appropriated and subsequently rededicated to him.

### **Panegyrics as Evidence of "Audience Response"**

As Constantine came to the end of the *Via Sacra*, he would have arrived at the western rostra and given a speech to the people. Also, a panegyric would have been made proclaiming his victory over Maxentius and his other meritorious deeds to the people. Although the Panegyric from the triumph does not survive, if Aurelius Victor's *De Caesaribus* is an indication of Rome's reception of Constantine in 312, then joy at Constantine's overthrow of Maxentius' tyranny must have been evoked: "It was incredible how joyously and delightedly the senate and people exulted in his death; he had beset them so much that once he had assented to the praetorians' slaughter of the people, and in a most terrible decree he was the first to force the senators and farmers to contribute money to his own indulgence, pretending it was a tax."<sup>15</sup> In addition, the Roman people were reported to favor Constantine on the eve of the Battle of

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<sup>14</sup> Elizabeth Marlowe, "Liberator Urbis Suae" in *The Emperor in Rome: Space, Representation, and Ritual*. Björn C. Ewald and Carlos F. Noreña, eds. (Cambridge University Press, 2010): 202. There is evidence that Constantine was in Rome in 304 as a junior officer in Diocletian's army, however, this would have been his first time entering Rome since his accession.

<sup>15</sup> Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus*, 40.24, tr. H.W. Bird, *Aurelius Victor*, 97.

Milvian Bridge, as riots had broken out both in 310 and in 312, with spectators in the Circus Maximus already chanting, "Constantine cannot be conquered."<sup>16</sup> Therefore, according to the panegyrics, Constantine's favor was won over the Roman people *before* he battled Maxentius. This would account for his welcome into Rome throughout his reign. Panegyricists had long articulated the desire of a city's residents to welcome the emperor in person. On the several occasions when emperors did visit, the residents of Rome rushed to greet the rulers in gestures of affection that matched the campaigns to set up public statues in honor of imperial authorities.<sup>17</sup> This was certainly the case with Constantine.

During the spectacle of Constantine's triumph, Rome herself was characterized as living, breathing entity in the panegyrics. While looking for evidence of "collective memory", as Machado would state, is folly within a panegyric, it *is* useful to use panegyrics in order to ascertain the official state response, orchestrated in order to please the emperor.

At Constantine's intervention and victory over Maxentius, the senators and entire Roman population were "freed, as it were, from the restraint of a prison, along with the whole Roman population," as recounted in Eusebius' *Life of Constantine*.<sup>18</sup> This is markedly different from the responses of the crowd during other emperors' receptions: Diocletian's *vicennalia* in 303, as

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<sup>16</sup> Noel Lenski, "Evoking the Pagan Past: Instinctu Divinatatus and Constantine's Capture of Rome" in *Journal of Late Antiquity*, (Volume 1, Number 2, Fall 2008): 209; Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum* 44.7: "TUMQUE REPENTE POPULUS, CIRCENSES ENIM NATALI SUO EDEBAT, UNA VOCE SUBCLAMAT CONSTANTINUM VINCI NON POSSE." The riots are recorded in the Chron. ann. 354: (MGH AA 9.148). The first riots had broken out as a result of Domitius Alexander's revolt in North Africa, which disrupted grain distribution in Rome and cause Maxentius to murder 6,000 citizens via his praetorian guard. The riots in 312 were a result of public favor shifting to Constantine as he gained control of Northern Italy and advanced on Rome itself.

<sup>17</sup> Gregor Kalas, *Transforming Public Space in Rome*, 85.

<sup>18</sup> Eusebius, *Life of Constantine I*, 41.

retold by Lactantius, was marked by the populace "abusing" Diocletian and his subsequent fleeing the city, never to return.<sup>19</sup>

While he was upon the rostra, Constantine would also have shown his generosity by distributing monies to the populace. This original distribution, during 312, was marked in the relief on his commemorative arch in 315. In addition, Constantine's presence upon the rostra would have been especially potent on the day of his triumph. As Constantine's legitimacy exceeded that of Maxentius, Constantine's statues (that were set up as a part of his being affiliated with the Tetrarchy) had been removed by Maxentius; his effigy would have been absent from Rome, leaving Maxentius as Rome's one "true" emperor. However, after Maxentius' defeat, Constantine's procession through Rome was a response to this: with the statue(s) destroyed, the man himself activated the city, following the path of the *Via Sacra* into the Forum past Maxentius' buildings. It is as if Constantine had the final say, as it were, to Maxentius' "memory censure" of him.

As Constantine stood upon the rostra, the seed of solitary rule were already being sown. Constantine had celebrated a solitary triumph, with none of his collegial rulers. This would have been an affront to the other emperors as well as to the Tetrarchic system as a whole. But perhaps Constantine might not have had solitary rule in mind yet, but simply a hatred for the Tetrarchy. This makes sense, considering his and Maxentius' being overlooked as possible successors to their fathers' positions as emperors.

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<sup>19</sup> Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, 17.1-3. This abuse is might be explained by MGH 1, 148, which records the deaths of 13,000 people when part of a circus (presumably the Circus Maximus) collapsed.

There is no evidence that shows if Constantine did perform the sacrifice in 312, although Augusto Frascchetti has put forth an illuminating notion that Constantine did perform the customary sacrifice on the Capitoline at the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus, but later in his administration (and further in his religious ambiguity) this was diminished within the imperial records and literature.<sup>20</sup>

### **"Evictio Tyranni": The Reiteration of Maxentius' Defeat in Constantinian Propaganda**

The triumph after the Battle of Milvian Bridge processed through Rome's streets with Maxentius' head on a lance before the cortege.<sup>21</sup> In 312 Maxentius' building projects in downtown Rome were not isolated incidents, static and devoid of connection; most, if not all of them being incomplete, they encouraged the use of the ritual and their rededication in order to completely amend Maxentius' memory and reiterate Constantine's role as "liberator of the city" of Rome rather than the victor in a civil war.

In his panegyric in 321, Nazarius obviously paints an overwhelmingly pro-Constantinian view for the audience at Rome, asking if there ever was a "triumph more illustrious, what spectacle more beautiful, what procession more fortunate?" than his triumph of 312.<sup>22</sup> Nazarius also cites the use of Maxentius' head and corpse in the procession by stating the Constantine wanted no one to be cheated of having Maxentius' corpse purify all of Rome and "wherever hatred of him had penetrated."

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<sup>20</sup> John Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital*, 73, 75; Augusto Frascchetti, "Costantino e l'abbandono," 63-69.

<sup>21</sup> *Panegyrici Latini* 12 (9).18.3.

<sup>22</sup> Nazarius Pan. Lat. 10(4).32.1-2.

However, when Nazarius tells of Maxentius' head being sent to Africa to stifle his supporters there and to confirm Constantine's victory, he states that the elements were favorable, even though the voyage was out of navigable season.<sup>23</sup> He makes it clear not to state that it was Constantine's own imperial power, as Nazarius is distancing Constantine from the Tetrarchy and their idea of total control over the elements.<sup>24</sup>

Nazarius tells a different story than an earlier text of 312 by the orator of the *Panegyric of Constantine Augustus*--the pro-Constantine propaganda is more established in the older text, and the reasoning for Constantine's offensive is spun to make Maxentius look as the aggressor rather than Constantine, as in the *Panegyric of Constantine Augustus*.<sup>25</sup>

This reflects the role that Constantine fills at this point in his reign: that of victor over Maxentius. This role establishes him as an emperor to all of the western empire by way of conquest. Later, during his jubilee in 326, as Constantine's political aspirations change, the panegyrics reflect this in their recounting of the events leading up to the Battle of Milvian Bridge. Indeed, the unknown orator for the *Panegyric of Constantine Augustus* in 313 presents a more historically accurate account of the campaign against Maxentius. For example, it is clear that in 313, no apology is made for Constantine's aggression. It is clear that Constantine is the first to make a strike against Maxentius in open battle. Indeed, the entire oration treats the campaign as worrisome for the people, as they did not know if their emperor would succeed until much later, as the text suggests. In this panegyric, Constantine is waiting for the right time to

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<sup>23</sup> Maxentius' head being sent to Africa also alluded to an incident in 308, when his *Vicarius* in Africa, Alexander, had interrupted the grain supply, causing riots and famine within Rome. Maxentius reportedly used the praetorian guard to quell the riots; however, this meant that rioters were murdered in the streets, with some figures estimating over six thousand. Although Alexander was This was a source of contention for the Roman people, not forgotten when his head and corpse were sent

<sup>24</sup> Nazarius Pan. Lat. 10(4).32.6-7.

<sup>25</sup> Nixon, C.E.V. and Barbara Rodgers, 340.

make his move and liberate Rome. It is not until later (such as Nazarius' account) that while Constantine is on the eve of making war with Licinius, the story changes his role to reluctant warrior whose patience is tried by Maxentius until all other lines of civility are extinguished.<sup>26</sup>

As the Battle of Milvian Bridge became a symbolic transition of power in Rome and the empire at large, the anniversary of the battle and Rome's liberation from Maxentius' "tyranny" (*evictio tyranni*) provided opportunity to keep the memory alive, reminding people of the new chapter in the history of the Empire, as well as reminding the people of Rome of his *eternal victory*.<sup>27</sup> Through this appropriation of memory, Constantine emerges as inseparable from the past emperors that he has been associated with, and as the eternal victor over the "tyrant" Maxentius. Through this, he is able to appear as the better man as opposed to Maxentius, who had lived in Rome, been a member of the senate, and may have actually loved the city itself. Constantine seems to love the city only so far as catapulted him politically.

But rather than instigate a singular ritual, further rituals of Constantine's jubilees of 315 and 326 furthered the imperial propaganda in order to cement and legitimize Constantine's hold on solitary power. In order to further Maxentius' memory censure, the anniversary of his defeat (interestingly, also the date of Maxentius' ascension) continued to be held in the ritual life of Rome. The configuration of monuments in the public space of the Forum recorded the triumphal messages of the Constantinian procession in 312 and the themes were reiterated in the annual

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<sup>26</sup> Pan. Lat. 12(9).4.3; Nixon, C.E.V. and Barbara Rodgers, 300.

<sup>27</sup> Michael McCormick, *Eternal Victory*, 29. For evidence of this, see W. Schmidt, *Geburtstag im Altertum*, Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten, 7, I (Giessen, 1908), 1-4; Michele Renee Salzman, *On Roman Time*, 121.

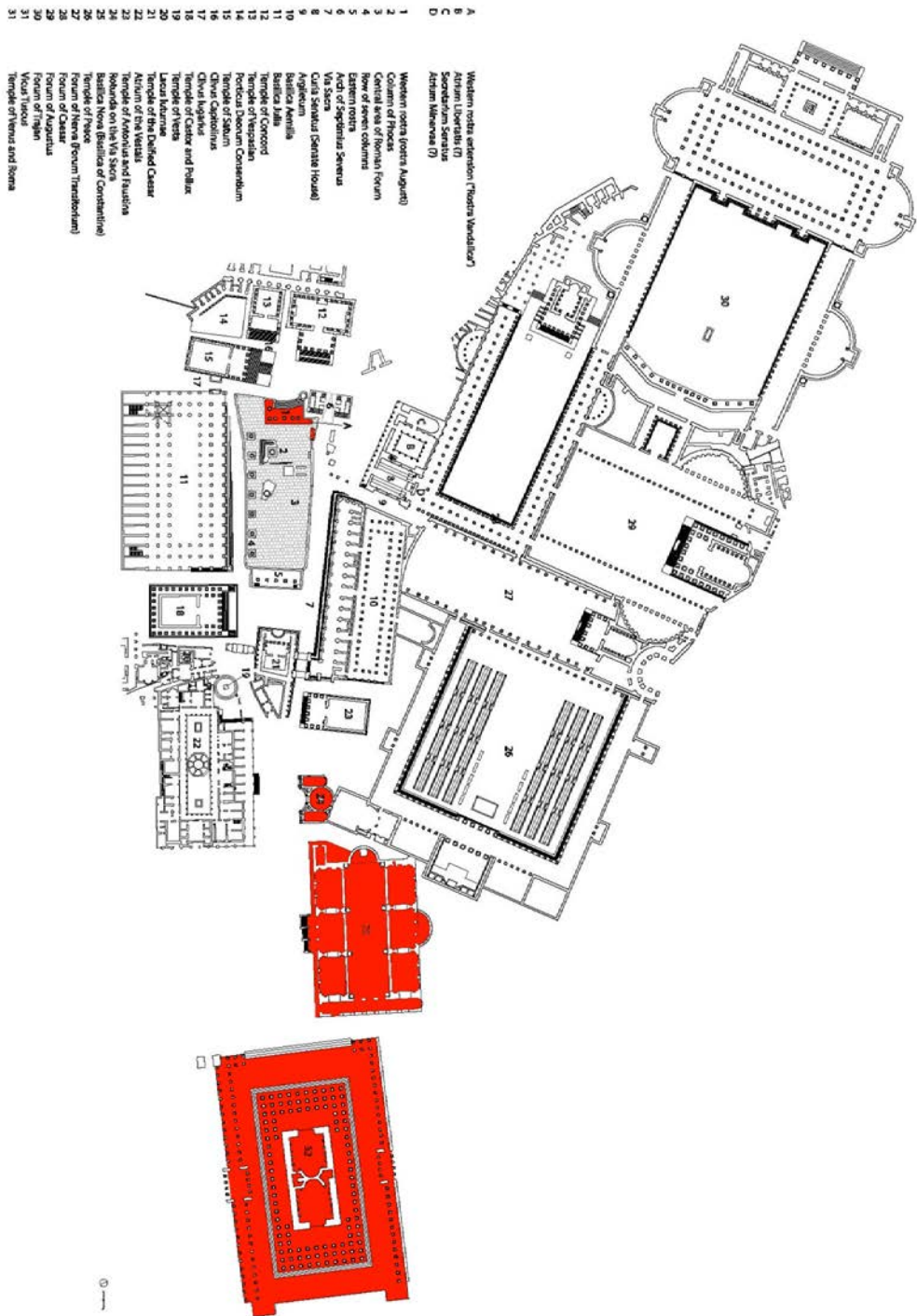
commemorations on October 28 of the tyrant's defeat.<sup>28</sup> These memories were "triggered" by the anniversary and the architecture of the Forum.

In the triumph of 312, Constantine started a transition from the Tetrarchic system of collegial rule as well as condemning Maxentius' reign. Constantine's adoption of Maxentius' "ghost" in his buildings and memory might be explained as Maxentius was a fellow discontent of the Tetrarchy; however, as time wore on, this association was downplayed for obvious reasons as Constantine continued his reign. This provided an impetus for the Constantinian building projects and alterations within the Forum. Through the completion of Maxentius' buildings as well as the insertion of a commemorative Arch in 315 (with an accompanying jubilee procession), Constantine's politics were displayed within the architectural spaces of the Forum. While the buildings and the triumph through Rome exemplified Constantine's imperial persona, a bookended procession in 326 went further and illuminated other aspects, namely the return to solitary rule following the defeat of his rival co-emperor Licinius in 324.

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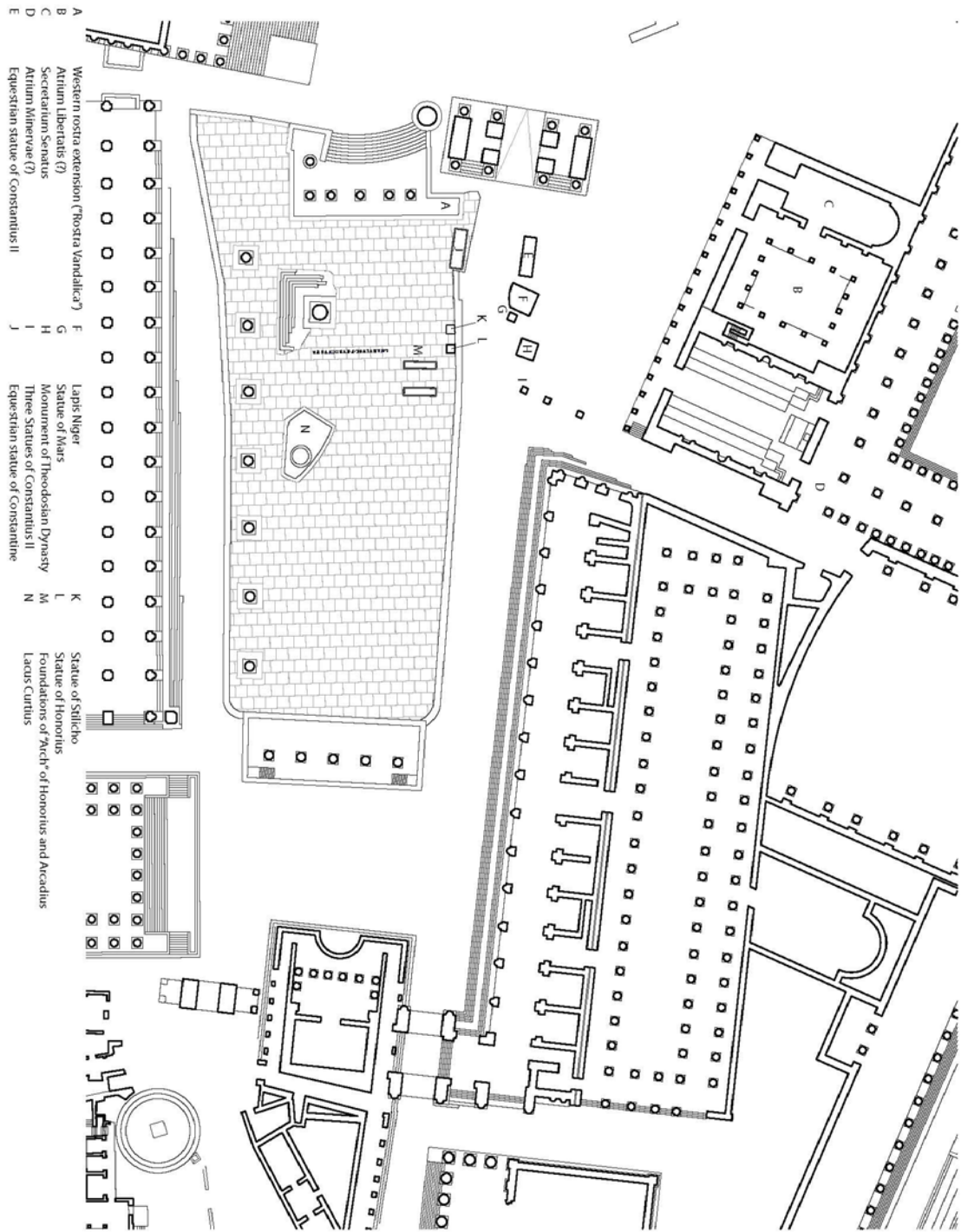
<sup>28</sup> Michele Renee Salzman, *On Roman Time*, 121.





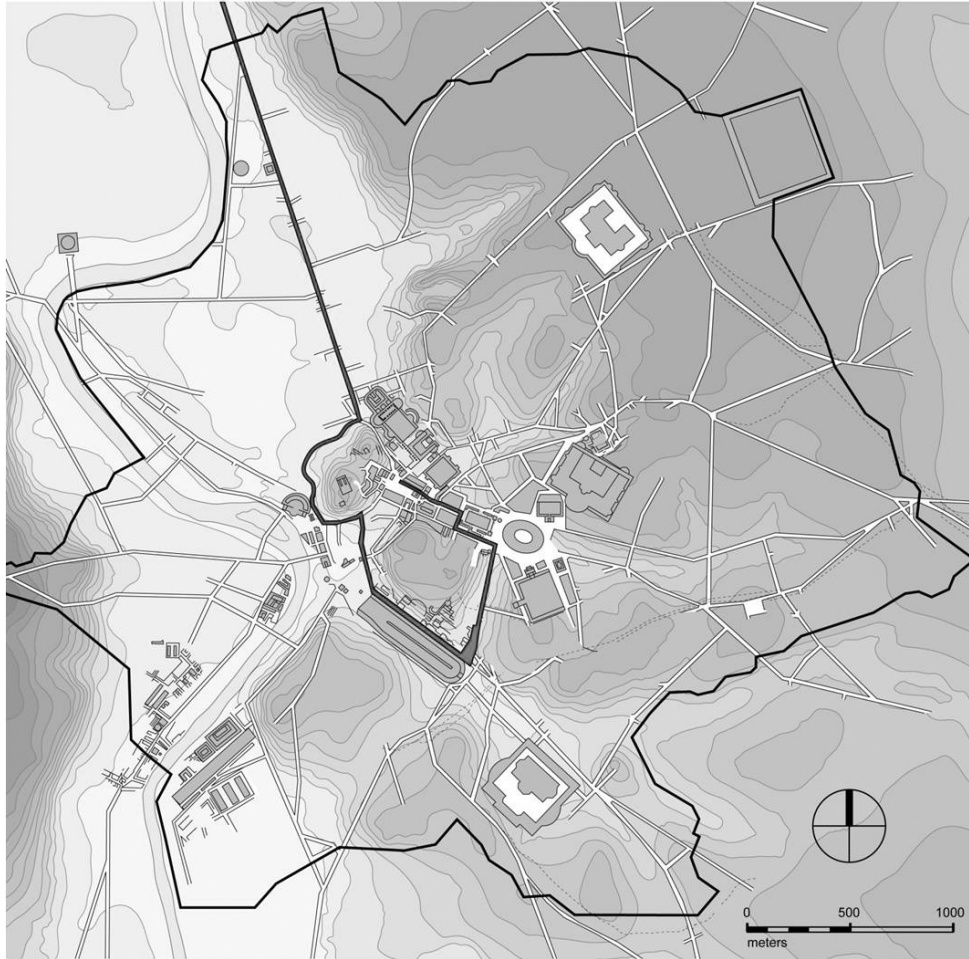
[Figure 3.1] Plan of the Roman Forum, showing the Constantinian interventions in the Forum.

[Drawing by author]



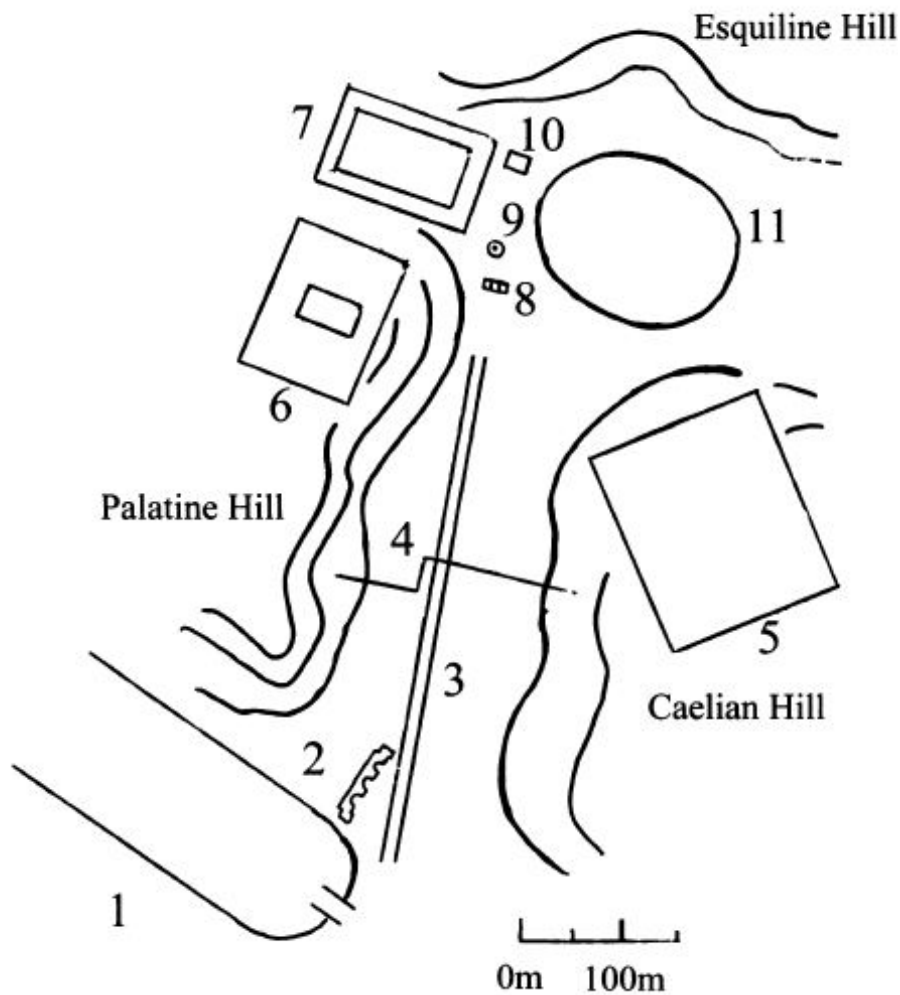
[Figure 3.2] Plan of the Central Area of the Forum

[Drawing by author]



[Figure 3.3] The processional route of Constantine's jubilee of 326.

[Image. Maria Sadaña]



[Figure 3.4]

Processional route along the Via Triumphalis

1. Circus Maximus; 2. Septizodium; 3. Via Triumphalis; 4. Claudian Aqueduct; 5. Temple of Deified Claudius; 6. Temple of Sol Invictus; 7. Temple of Venus and Rome; 8. Arch of Constantine; 9. Meta Sudans; 10. Colossus of Sol; 11. Colosseum (Flavian Amphitheater)

[Image: Elizabeth Marlowe]

## **Chapter IV. The Triumph Renewed: Constantine's Jubilee of 326 and its Architectural Repercussions**

Constantine's twentieth jubilee celebration, or *vicennalia*, in 326 placed him in a Forum that was updated, censured, and altered to create a historically and experientially different space than the Forum of October 29, 312, the date of his triumphal procession. By 326, the Forum reflected Constantine's presence through the changes in the Rotunda complex, the Basilica Nova (Basilica of Constantine), Constantine's equestrian statue at the north end of the Forum's central paved area (near the Arch of Septimius Severus), and the insertion of the Arch of Constantine in 315 in the Colosseum Valley just to the east of the Forum. The Forum as it was in 326 allowed for the crystallization of Constantine's political ideology in physical form by alluding to emperors of the past, (i.e. Augustus and the Flavian dynasty) and dissociating himself from both the reign of the Tetrarchy and the return to solitary rule of a reunited empire.

There was a lack of monumentality in the Constantinian-era buildings and statues within the Forum. This suggests an emphasis on the jubilee itself and provides us with an understanding of Constantinian Rome in 326. While most of the Constantinian-era changes to the Roman Forum were minor, as in the case of changed inscriptions, when combined and activated by the jubilee ritual, these all combine to create the greater whole. By looking at Constantine's jubilee celebration of 326, by which time Constantine had put his own stamp on Rome's public buildings, as well as establishing his own architectural interventions, such as his triumphal arch in the Colosseum Valley and his equestrian statue in the central Forum, we can look at the subtle transformation of the Forum as activated by the ritual of the jubilee.

In his jubilee celebrations of 326, Constantine sought to further new political motives; namely, the return to solitary, hereditarily-derived rule after the collegial system of the Tetrarchy. Constantine, as the son of Constantius Chlorus, traditionally would have seemed primed for accession into the Tetrarchy when his father ascended to the rank of *augustus*, or senior emperor. However, Diocletian had established a non-hereditary system of succession, which denied the prospect of imperial rule to Constantine (and Maxentius, as the son of *augustus* Maximian). Diocletian cited that meritoriously-begotten rule was the crux of Tetrarchic accession.<sup>1</sup> Thus, both Constantine and Maxentius were passed over and neglected from being future Tetrarchs. This led indirectly to both being hailed as emperors by different factions; Constantine by the army he commanded, Maxentius by the people of Rome and the Praetorian guard stationed in Rome.

Since Constantine's triumph over Maxentius in 312, the physical changes to the Forum, when activated by the ritual of the jubilee procession, created a far more profound change than the individual buildings made. As Mark Humphries attests, "Together with ritual, architecture, and the command of space were mobilized to achieve the political obliteration of Maxentius and his minions, establishing Constantine alone as the legitimate imperial authority."<sup>2</sup> It is through the interweaving of the physical and the experiential that Constantine reasserted his legitimacy during his jubilee of 326. The jubilee, like all of the imperial processions in Rome as practiced during the Constantinian dynasty, drew upon themes of the triumph ritual.<sup>3</sup> Thus, imperial visits to Rome marked the "everlasting victory" (*victoria aeterna*) for a ruler with festivities

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<sup>1</sup> Lactantius, *De mortibus persecutorum* 18.2-5 states that Diocletian originally wanted hereditary accession, but Galerius convinced him to appoint unrelated heirs.

<sup>2</sup> Mark Humphries, "From Emperor to Pope," 35.

<sup>3</sup> Michael McCormick, *Eternal Victory: Triumphal Rulership in Late Antiquity, Byzantium, and the Early Medieval West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 84-91.

perpetually commemorating the act of conquering.<sup>4</sup> While Constantine's persona at this point had been altered to that of peaceful liberator and not conquering soldier, the fact remains that the jubilee "conquered" the Forum for Constantine and his supporters.

### **Renewal through Anticipation: The Inner Workings of the Jubilee of 326**

Constantine's jubilee celebrations in 326 were celebrated as his twentieth year of successful rule.<sup>5</sup> However, as a jubilee was to be conducted at the outset of his twentieth year, in 325, Constantine elected to take his vows in Nicomedia, where he had assembled church officials for the famed Council of Nicea. As noted in the *Chronicon Paschale*, a *vicennalia* (the one in Nicomedia) was held in 325. The celebrations in Rome the following year are recorded as ceremonies being held with "so much splendor and beauty."<sup>6</sup> Constantine deemed it more appropriate to hold the "real" *vicennalia* in Nicomedia. However, Constantine was the only emperor to go back to Rome after the foundation of Constantinople to celebrate a jubilee. Augusto Frascchetti hints that this may have been a moment of simple closure for Constantine, held out of respect for tradition rather than reasserting Rome's place in the empire.<sup>7</sup> Also, the idea of celebrating a communal celebration in a city other than Rome was seen as sacrilegious to the gods, the city, and the people. Constantine could have been appeasing the people and

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<sup>4</sup> The tetrarchs had developed the term *VICTORIA AETERNA AUG* in coinage (*RIC* 6, 705; *RIC* 7, 754-758). For rituals, the fourth-century *ludi aeterni* were mentioned in *Panegyrici Latini* 12 (9).19.6. This could be linked with the *evictio tyranni* on October 28 to commemorate Constantine's defeat of Maxentius that was repeatedly celebrated in the fourth century according to the *Codex-Calendar of 354*, Michele Renee Salzman, *On Roman Time: The Codex-Calendar of 354 and the Rhythms of Urban Life in Late Antiquity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), 121; 141.

<sup>5</sup> Actually, each ceremony for ten successful years was celebrated at the commencement of the ninth year; so Constantine's *vicennalia* was celebrated at the onset of his eighteenth year of rule.

<sup>6</sup> Augusto Frascchetti, *La Conversione: da Roma pagana a Roma cristiana*. (Roma-Bari: Editori Laterza, 1999), 83.

<sup>7</sup> Augusto Frascchetti, *La Conversione*, 84.

keeping appearances by celebrating his *vicennalia* in Rome, albeit a year late. This is further exemplified by Constantine's ultimate jubilee being held in Constantinople rather than in Rome. In 326, Constantinople was still being constructed as an *imperial* city (enough buildings had to be constructed for the ritual to be meaningful, according to tradition, possibly with the presence of augurs or other "superstitious" rites).<sup>8</sup> This sense of "closure" with Rome must have been palpable in the jubilee. Constantine's panegyrics often hinted at a slight disappointment by the population of Rome, urging him to stay in Rome for as long and as often as possible:

There is but one thing by which Rome could be made happier, a very great thing but yet the only one, that it see Constantine its preserver, that it see the blessed Caesars, that it obtain the means of enjoyment in proportion to the measure of its longing, that it receive you joyously and, when reasons of state have made you depart, that it send you away with a promise of your return.<sup>9</sup>

However, the reaction of residents in Rome to Constantine's preference of Constantinople as a setting for his final jubilee could further the argument that Constantine was still trying to balance the two capitals in 326.

The jubilee was a celebration that created an extraordinary event in the case of Constantine; as an emperor mostly absent from Rome, the emperor's arrival and presence within the capital recalled his triumph of 312. However, while some of the aspects of the triumph had coalesced with those of the jubilee, the jubilee remained a peaceful, civilian ritual, rather than the militaristic nature of the triumph, which commemorated Constantine's victory (over Rome, no less) in a civil war. As Constantine had just defeated Licinius in order to assert himself the sole *augustus* of the empire, his role as a peaceful liberator of the city who restored the senate was presented as opposed to his role as conquering military leader.

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<sup>8</sup> David Potter, *Constantine the Emperor*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 241.

<sup>9</sup> Pan. Lat. 4(10).38.6. , C.E.V. Nixon and Barbara Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors*, 385. This is the final line of Nazarius' address to Constantine through his Panegyric of 321, commemorating the *quinquennalia* of Crispus and Constantinus.



To this end, Senators had sponsored the completion and altering of the buildings within the Forum as a way to further Constantine's as well as their own political power and receive prestigious public offices. Mark Humphries states, "Such architectural projects and their dedications gave physical form to the senate's loyalty to its emperors."<sup>10</sup> This provided for most of the Constantinian interventions in the Forum, as Constantine's relationship with the senate created a mutually beneficial political situation, with Constantine receiving credit for the building projects in the Forum while the senators received prestigious offices and sponsorship of key civic structures.

Senators therefore also played a prominent role in the procession and this positioned Rome's aristocrats as colleagues of Constantine. This was renewed during Constantine's jubilee celebrations of 326, the senators still played into their roles as Constantine's supporters during the spectacle of the procession and championed Constantine as the "liberator of the city". Linked through their ability to appropriate the past for Constantine and his supporters, these buildings during the jubilee are connected not only by a parade of people coursing through the streets alongside them, but by the *meanings*, the memories, the allusions that connected them as the ritual progressed from the Milvian Bridge to the western rostra. Specific connections were tailored toward the public and those involved in the ritual, ones that highlighted Constantine's imperial persona and marked his policies and victories.

### **The Ritual Path of the Jubilee**

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<sup>10</sup> Mark Humphries, "From Emperor to Pope? Constantine to Gregory" in *Religion, Dynasty, and Patronage in Early Christian Rome, 300-900*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 35.

Like the triumph, the jubilee would have started outside the city walls and proceeded toward the Forum along the Via Lata, in the northwest corner of the city [Fig. 4.1]. This also marked the entrance to the city from the Milvian Bridge. The start of Constantine's jubilee procession outside the *pomerium* (sacred boundary of the city) recalled his triumph of 312, when the emperor had paraded into the city for the first time. However, this time, Maxentius' head was not at the fore of the procession, a decidedly triumphal aspect. Instead of Constantine's army accompanying him, now a peacetime cortege proceeded through the city with him, comprised of Constantine's family, Roman senators, and other patricians. The senators proceeding with him cemented the symbiotic relationship between Constantine and the senate. Constantine this time had no arms or armor to shed before crossing through into the city.

It is useful to picture the processional route, from the city walls to the Forum, not with people milling about on daily business, but lining the streets, bottlenecking to see the cortege marching through Rome. To give an example of the processional route as activated by the people of Rome, the Circus Maximus, at the base of the *Via Triumphalis*, was adorned and filled, the porticoes populated with spectators, eager not only to see "the pleasure of the spectacle" but also the splendor, the "spectacle" of the building changed by the event.<sup>11</sup> This evidence from Nazarius designating the procession in 321 can be applied to the jubilee of 326. The Circus Maximus was activated by the people of Rome, the spectators of the jubilee. The ritual streets of the *Via Lata*, the *Via Triumphalis*, and the *Via Sacra* each had a distinct identity as a result of Constantine's jubilee; the people became a spatial boundary as well as the audience for the spectacle.

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<sup>11</sup> Nazarius, *Pan. Lat.* 4(10).35.5.

The jubilee parade now moved through a downtown Rome that alluded to Constantine, both directly and indirectly, from the Colosseum Valley and his commemorative arch through the "eastern forum," containing the Temple of Venus and Roma, Basilica Nova and the Rotunda complex, to the central forum, with his equestrian statue and the western rostra.

The Colosseum Valley and the eastern Via Sacra now appeared not as new districts by means of construction, but made by the framing of key structures in order to heighten certain pro-Constantinian connections. By order of memory censure (*damnatio memoriae*), Maxentius' name had been erased from the inscriptions of the buildings and statues he had sponsored or that the senate had sponsored on his behalf, and Constantine's name had taken its place in several cases (the Temple of Venus and Roma, the Basilica Nova, and the Rotunda complex).<sup>12</sup>

Constantine, or rather his supporters, created a civic space within the Colosseum Valley that, with the addition of his triumphal Arch in 315 and the careful amending of existing structures of the site, quieted any discontents as to the legitimacy of his rule. The Valley was now a precinct of Constantine; everything in it was fine-tuned to create this spectacle, whether by new construction, such as the Arch or adaptation of existing structures, such as the Colossus of Sol.

The *Via Triumphalis* was a relatively straight street within the greater processional route, and as such, as the cortege and any spectators would have moved along it, the monuments at the end of the street in the piazza would have been seen as framed by the Velian and the Esquiline Hills long before reaching them, establishing them as an endpoint for this segment of the procession [Figs. 4.2, 4.3].<sup>13</sup>

This space, through the procession's progress north along the *Via Triumphalis*, aligns Constantine with Sol, the Temple of Divus Claudius, and the Temple of Sol Invictus simply

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<sup>12</sup> Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus* 40.26.

<sup>13</sup> Elizabeth Marlowe, "Framing the Sun," 229.

through use of the spectator's field of vision and movement through space. Constantine's adoption of Sol allows these monuments to be connected through his ideology and provide allusions to his victory over Maxentius and his imperial persona.

Sol was already featured along the triumphal route in the Temple of Sol Invictus, representing eternal victory. The placement of the temple, coupled with the Colossus of Sol at the end of the Colosseum Valley, would prove sufficient for Constantine's own triumphal arch, built at the end of the *Via Triumphalis*. Not only ideologically, but experientially, the Arch of Constantine creates a dynamic procession for the spectator, telling a story of Constantine's rise to power and his personal associations with Sol.

### **Constantine and Sol**

This association with Sol distanced Constantine from a number of the emperors before him. The Tetrarchic triumphs equated the emperor to Jupiter; Constantine's alignment with Sol-Apollo not only masked his supposed conversion to Christianity before the battle, but also distanced him from the Tetrarchic allusions to Jupiter and Hercules.<sup>14</sup> In addition, Maxentius' association with Mars, as noted with his dedication of the statue near the Lapis Niger, aligns Maxentius with the god of war. As a patron deity for both Maxentius and the city, this makes sense during a period of civil war and Rome having been under attack multiple times in order to thwart Maxentius.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, Maxentius' reign could be equated with Mars and with the overwhelming possibility of war. On the other hand, Constantine's associations with Sol could be representative of a newfound period of peace, as physically marked by the Arch of Constantine. Obviously, Sol could be translated into a Christian reading, unlike those of Jupiter

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<sup>14</sup> Sabine MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity*, 36.

<sup>15</sup> John Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital*, 61.

and Hercules. Activated by the triumph, the Colossus of Sol as framed by the Arch read as the focal point of the triumph rather than the Temple of Jupiter Optimus Maximus. As it is unclear whether Constantine sacrificed at the Temple, this has been read by Marlowe as supplanting Jupiter, the Tetrarchic patron deity, and established Sol as the divine patron of his new order.<sup>16</sup>

Constantine's association with Sol may have recalled the reign of Augustus, as he was closely connected with the god.<sup>17</sup> Augustus' reign was long seen as a "golden age" in Rome's history at the outset of the *Pax Romana* and would have been well suited to Constantine, likewise asserting power after a period of political strife. This contends with the Tetrarchs' earlier campaign to restore and amend the Augustan rostra, the Basilica Julia, and the chambers connecting the Senate House to the Forum of Caesar, all traditionally tied to Augustus' reign, to equate their reign with the first days of the principate.<sup>18</sup>

In the Panegyric of 310, the speaker confirmed that Constantine had a vision in which he recognized his likeness in the features of Apollo (who by this time, was aligned with Sol). It has been argued that in his resemblance to Apollo, Constantine was one whom the gods promised rule over the whole world. It has also been suggested by Barbara Rodgers in her article "Constantine's Pagan Vision" that in this same person would reside the spirit of Augustus. This

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<sup>16</sup> Elizabeth Marlowe, *That Customary Magnificence that is Your Due: Constantine and the Symbolic Capital of Rome*, p. 182.

<sup>17</sup> Elizabeth Marlowe, *That Customary Magnificence that is Your Due...*, p. 191; see Elizabeth Marlowe, "Framing the Sun," 226-228. The cult of Sol had long been an imperial tradition, but had only been an official state-sponsored cult since Aurelian's reign, in the 270's. Nero was also associated with the cult of Sol during his reign (54-68 CE). The Colossus of Sol was originally commissioned by Nero and positioned at the entrance to his Golden House (*Domus Aurea*) and might have been carved in his likeness; this is uncertain. The Colossus was rededicated by Vespasian, reportedly recut to resemble Titus, Vespasian's son and heir. The Colossus was moved during the reign of Hadrian (coincidentally to build the Temple of Venus and Roma on the remains of the vestibule of the *Domus Aurea*) and explicitly rededicated (and possibly recut) to remove any associations with Nero; there were allegedly plans to implement a congruent statue of Luna, the moon goddess opposite the Colossus of Sol to further eradicate any Neronian connotations.

<sup>18</sup> Gregor Kalas, *Transforming Public Space in Rome: The Late Antique Revision of the Roman Forum*, p. 44.

established Constantine as the new Augustus, fulfilling an old prophecy of the return of a golden age and a return to solitary rule of the empire.<sup>19</sup>

### **The "Forum of Constantine"**

As the cortege of the processional moved along the *Via Sacra*, the dichotomy of the representation of space depicted in the reliefs (such as those on the Arch of Constantine) showing the procession in 312 would have compared with the actual experience of the physical space. The Arch depicts Constantine during his triumphal procession, addressing the people from the rostra and distributing monies to the public in the reliefs on his arch; the discrepancy between the idealized and the real becomes apparent. The reliefs show the Forum as an abstracted space, with certain aspects regularized (i.e. building orientations, the exaggerated scale of the monuments in the reliefs) but is used to show the most important aspects of the idealized ritual (the emperor, the buildings of the Forum) [Figs. 4.4, 4.5].

The procession, as it passed the Temple of Venus and Roma, might have passed by recontextualized statues, moved from the interior of the temple to the outside, visible from the *Via Sacra* and the processional route on the massive podium. It is unclear whether this occurred under Constantine, but an early fifth-century account by Prudentius sets forth anti-pagan complaints about statues displayed at the temple. In the *Contra Symmachum*, Prudentius describes a still impressionable boy gazing toward the statue display: “the lofty Capitoline Hill, the priest wearing a laurel wreath standing at the temples of their gods along the *Via Sacra* and the valley resounding with the cattle lowing on their way to the temple of Roma...He would think

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<sup>19</sup> C.E.V. Nixon and Barbara Rodgers, *Panegyrici Latini*, 250; Barbara Rodgers, "Constantine's Pagan Vision." *Byzantion* 50 (1980): 259-278.

that what is done by the senate's authority must be genuine, and so he gave his faith to the images and believed that the figures standing in a row, which he shuddered to look at, were the lords of the heavens." Many of the pagan gods were present in the displays, such as Hercules (Alcides) and Castor and Pollux (sons of Leda), among others.<sup>20</sup> This statue display directly addressed the ritual path of the jubilee, backdropped by the double peristyle columns upon the podium.

Moving along the *Via Sacra* the cortege passed through the eastern Forum, then a "Forum of Constantine" as it were. Constantine's decision to further his clemency toward Maxentius' supporters by not destroying his projects, rather amending them, allowed Nazarius to say in 321 that "all the most celebrated things in the city gleam with new work."<sup>21</sup> As these buildings were some of the most grandiose in the city, by adding even more to these buildings, especially the Basilica of Constantine, along with the memory censure of Maxentius' name, Constantine was able to display *his* sense of *romanitas* toward the people along with his power and clemency toward Maxentius' supporters. This in turn, as John Curran suggests, is more than a *damnatio memoriae*: the only way we know that the Basilica Nova was originally built under Maxentius is from Aurelius Victor, as pointed out by Filippo Coarelli.<sup>22</sup> Through his alteration of both the Basilica as well as the rotunda complex, Constantine reasserted his role as a champion of Rome.

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<sup>20</sup> Prudentius, *Contra Symm* 1.215-224. . . . *ut publica festa diesque / et ludor stupuit celsa et Capitola vidit / laurigerosque deum templis ad stare ministros / ac Sacram resonare Viam mugitibus ante / delubrum Romae . . . / vera ratus quaecumque fiant auctore senatu, / contulit ad simulacra fidem dominosque putavit / aetheris, horripico qui stant ex ordine vultu. / illic Alcides, spoliantis Gadibus hospes / Arcadiae, fulvo aere riget, gemini quoque fratres. / corrupta de matre, nothi, Ledeia proles / nocturnique equites, celsae duo numina Romae, / independent retinente, venu magnique triumph / nuntia suffuso figunt vestigia plumbo.*

<sup>21</sup> Nazarius, *Pan. Lat.* 4(10).35.4, C.E.V. Nixon and Barbara Rodgers, *The Panegyrici Latini*, 381.

<sup>22</sup> John Curran, *Pagan City and Christian Capital*, 80-81; Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus*, 40.26, tr. H.W. Bird, *Aurelius Victor*, 48-49; Filippo Coarelli, "L'Urbs e il suburbio," in *Societa romana e impero tardoantico I: Istituzioni, ceti, economie*, A. Giardina, ed. (Rome: Laterza, 1986,) 1-58 at 3.

## Constantine's Central Forum as the End of the Tetrarchy

As the cortege moved into the central forum, Constantine would have been arriving not at a precinct dedicated to him, but one that could be subverted and critiqued by his mere presence. Perceptually, the processional route traveled back through the reigns of his immediate predecessors as the Via Sacra went farther into the Forum, from his precinct in the Colosseum Valley, to what had been Maxentius' "eastern forum", to the central forum area, transformed under the Tetrarchs. Constantine had acquired Maxentius' precinct as his own, but he could not fully acquire the central paved area of the Forum. However, he was still able to subject it to his political ends by critiquing tenets of Tetrarchic ideology. This anti-Tetrarchic ideology confirmed Constantine's aims to return to solitary rule as opposed to a collegial system of co-ruling emperors.

Constantine himself, as the object of his jubilee celebration, obviously comprised a part of his political imagery. He wore a diadem in his coinage starting in 326 as a graphic depiction of the end of the Tetrarchic system; the diadem had become a part of his royal garb, and he would have surely worn it during the jubilee procession in 326.<sup>23</sup> The diadem not only distanced him from the Tetrarchy, but also alluded to his patron deity, Sol. Sol, associated with victory and light, was widely ignored by the Tetrarchy, who wished to reestablish the more traditional cult of Jupiter and Hercules. However, Constantine's aspirations of sole emperorship were better served by Sol and his attributes of invincibility, eternity, and dominion over the East. In the face of

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<sup>23</sup> Jonathan Bardill, *Constantine, Divine Emperor of the Christian Golden Age*, 11-15. Bardill concludes that Constantine's adoption of the diadem designates not only a break with Tetrarchic imagery, but also recalls the reigns of Alexander the Great, who allegedly wore and was synonymous with the wearing of a diadem. This posturing with the reign of Alexander advertises Constantine's political motives to become uncontested ruler of Rome and the successor to Alexander's vast empire.



civil war and growing influence of the East, these attributes were a model for the emperor.<sup>24</sup> As Constantine passed by his equestrian statue along the *Via Sacra*, the impact of the statue would have been realized: like the Tetrarchic statue display atop the rostra, Constantine's presence beside his effigy along the processional route would have become apparent to the people assembled in the paved central area of the Forum as a tangible, *singular* emperor, no longer absent from Rome [Fig. 4.6]. As the equestrian statue (and Constantine himself, along with the rest of his cortege) blocked the view of the Tetrarchic columns, the idea that Constantine had ushered in this new epoch becomes clear. Constantine asserts through both ritual and physical means that he has returned Rome to a system of solitary rule. After the jubilee, his equestrian statue, complete with the inscription praising him as "ever-triumphant augustus" gives the ritual a physical form. On any other occasion, the statue served to remind the Roman people of his triumph over Maxentius and a conjurer of the state-sanctioned memory.

This idea of a statue serving to activate the memory of the ritual during is further purported by the orator of the panegyric addressed to Constantine's father, Constantius Chlorus, in 297, within which it is explained that the statue of an emperor transmitted their divine power: "the power of your divinity would be everywhere that your images, everywhere that your statues, are revered."<sup>25</sup> Therefore, the likeness of Constantine in his statues could be interpreted as a statue of a divinity. This is useful to Constantine, as his statues become representative of his imperial omnipresence even when he is absent from Rome.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Elizabeth Marlowe, *That Customary Magnificence that is Your Due*, 191-192. This is further evidenced by Constantine's coinage issued between 313 and 317. Seventy-five percent of the coins issued feature the legend *SOLI INVICTO COMITI*, "the invincible sun, companion [of the emperor]". This further signifies his break with the Tetrarchic system and his aspirations for solitary rule.

<sup>25</sup> *Pan. Lat.* 3(8).15.6, trans. C.E.V. Nixon and Barbara Rodgers, *In Praise of Later Roman Emperors*, 136.

<sup>26</sup> Jonathan Bardill, *Constantine, Divine Emperor of the Christian Golden Age*, p. 211. This is used in reference to Constantine in the *Panegyric of Constantine Augustus*, 25.4.

As Constantine came into the central paved area of the Forum, his presence as a solitary emperor contradicted the Tetrarchic system of co-ruling emperors. As Bauer stated, the full potential of the columnar statues atop the rostra could only be activated by the actual emperors being present on the rostra with their statues. This was never documented, and it can only be assumed that the four of them would have never all occupied Rome together. This put Constantine at a distinct advantage, as it only required his person to activate his equestrian statue and reach its full potential. As Constantine's procession neared the statue, the statue became part of the jubilee: a permanent emperor made real for the city.

As Constantine stood upon the western rostra in front of the Tetrarchic columnar monument in his address to the Roman people, a powerful moment built on the challenging of the Tetrarchy would be evident. The five columns never would have had their full effect unless at least two of the four collegiate rulers were all in attendance.<sup>27</sup> While this would have indeed been a striking architectural event, in which the emperors would have been present not only in their *genius* upon the Tetrarchic display, but also physically upon the rostra: the divine made tangible, the four emperors were believed to have never occupied the rostra together.<sup>28</sup> Therefore, when Constantine stood upon the rostra, he made a statement about solitary rule. By returning the empire to one *augustus*, he recalled the emperors of the past and openly criticized the Tetrarchic system, something he hinted at by celebrating a sole triumph in 312, without the other emperors to share in the credit.

The jubilee had become more imbued with meaning during the Tetrarchy. The ceremony became more important under Diocletian's reign (285-305 CE) simply because many of his predecessors did not reach even ten complete years of rule; however, upon Diocletian's

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<sup>27</sup> F.A. Bauer, *Stadt ohne Kaiser*, 68.

<sup>28</sup> F.A. Bauer, *Stadt ohne Kaiser*, 68.

appointment of Maximian in 286 CE as co-emperor, followed by the selection of Constantius Chlorus and Galerius as *caesares* and the elevation of Maximian to senior *augustus* in 293 CE, the four effectively became Diocletian's co-emperors, with the two *caesares* as heir-apparents. Diocletian and Galerius both took the name Jovius (that of Jupiter) to assert themselves as avatars of the supreme god, while Maximian and Constantius took that of Herculus (Hercules), avatars of the son of Jupiter who became a god through his meritorious labors.<sup>29</sup> In order to further the notion of Tetrarchic rule as divine and consensual, the jubilee celebrations for the four was set from Diocletian's original ascension date of 285, thus aligning the vows for all of the emperors and presenting the Tetrarchy as a cohesive entity. This did not see fruition in physical form; there is no evidence that the four Tetrarchs celebrated a jubilee together in Rome. According to Franz Alto Bauer, the five column monuments atop the rostra would only have had their full effect when at least two of the Tetrarchs appeared in front of them.<sup>30</sup> This was something that Constantine could take advantage of in fulfilling a return to solitary imperial rule: a singular emperor celebrating a jubilee in Rome.

As 326 marked the twentieth anniversary of his accession, Constantine had ruled as long as Diocletian (284-304 CE). Furthermore, this jubilee celebrated an anniversary of *solitary* rule, as Constantine had defeated Licinius and was sole ruler of the empire. This jubilee then highlighted this point: One emperor standing in front of the people of Rome, on the same rostra where other solitary rulers had stood since the time of (Octavian) Augustus. Constantine's repeated appearances in Rome, first in 312, then in 315 for his decennalia, now standing upon

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<sup>29</sup> Aurelius Victor, *De Caesaribus*, 39.1. The Tetrarchy further cemented their ties by having the *caesars* divorce their current wives and marry the daughters of the two *augusti*: Constantius married Maximian's daughter-in-law; Galerius married Diocletian's daughter.

<sup>30</sup> Franz Alto Bauer, *Stadt ohne Kaiser*, 68.

the rostra for a third time, would have proved potent for his political longevity and his imperial power.

The jubilee usually culminated with the emperor showing that he had fulfilled vows, or *vota*, for the past ten years, and would have subsequently taken vows for another ten years of successful of rule, traditionally with an accompanying sacrifice. There is no evidence indicating that Constantine performed the sacrifice in 326; by this time, his "conversion" to Christianity may have precluded a participation in the pagan rites, therefore, in all probability, he did not.<sup>31</sup> Rather than accept Constantine's budding Christianity, it may be prudent to speculate that Constantine simply did not sacrifice in 326 in order to be more inclusive to the growing Christian population in Rome and abroad.<sup>32</sup>

Constantine's triumph and subsequent jubilees attempted to diffuse an increasingly unhappy population in Rome. During the Tetrarchy, the emperors had resided outside Rome and made minimal effort to visit. As the political power inherent in the emperors' presence diverged from Rome, the people of Rome took notice of their dwindling role in the empire. It was this frustration with the Tetrarchy that led to Maxentius' usurpation and legitimization by the soldiers and people of Rome. Constantine had to contend with not only the "ghost of Maxentius," but that of the Tetrarchy during his reign.<sup>33</sup> This came in the form of the subjugation of Tetrarchic monuments by blocking of sight lines; this blocking would have only be apparent as the cortege moved along the *Via Sacra* toward the rostra.

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<sup>31</sup> Augusto Frascchetti, *La Conversione*, " 85.

<sup>32</sup> This obviously would prove well for Constantine, as a large sect of his supporters prior to 312 were Christians. Also, it should be noted, as pointed out in Frascchetti's *La Conversione*, p. 85 that the pagan rites might have been seen as the "residue" of Maxentius and Constantine was again distancing himself from the memories of his predecessors.

<sup>33</sup>This is Elizabeth Marlowe's phrase; "*Liberator Urbis Suae: Constantine and the Ghost of Maxentius*," 199.

## Rome Personified as Audience "Response"

At the culmination of Constantine's jubilee, an orator presented a panegyric, singing his praises. Panegyricists had long articulated the desire of a city's residents to welcome the emperor in person. On the several occasions when emperors did visit, the residents of Rome rushed to greet the rulers in gestures of affection that matched the campaigns to set up public statues in honor of imperial authorities.<sup>34</sup>

As during the triumph of 312, During the spectacle of Constantine's jubilee, Rome herself would have again been characterized as an entity in the panegyrics. To recall Nazarius' *Panegyric of Constantine* in 321, he characterizes Rome as a queen who "derives enjoyment from the enormous hopes which she has conceived of the most noble Caesars and their brothers," and that Constantine's "tireless might and exceptional bravery extricated the City" when she was "entangled and smothered" by such "grievous ills."<sup>35</sup> While this panegyric commemorates Constantine's sons on their fifteenth-anniversary (*quinquennalia*), the object of praise is really Constantine himself, who is not present at the ritual. This is markedly different from the responses of the crowd during other emperors' receptions: Diocletian's *vicennalia* in 303, as retold by Lactantius, was marked by the populace "abusing" Diocletian and his subsequent

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<sup>34</sup> Gregor Kalas, *Transforming Public Space in Rome*, 85.

<sup>35</sup> Sabine MacCormack, *Art and Ceremony in Late Antiquity*, 5-6. This cites the importance of the panegyrist's ability to please the emperor and his duty to illuminate the emperor's knowledge of past rulers' misdeeds, without naming any specifics, as specifically mentioned by Menander. Menander implores the orator to welcome the emperor as a "star from on high" or as a "ray of the sun" and to express the inherent renewal in the imperial arrival. This general rule for panegyrics applies especially to the fallout from the Tetrarchy as well as from Maxentius' reign would have been readily known to Constantine regardless of Maxentius' condemnation and erasure.

fleeing the city, never to return.<sup>36</sup> Through reading these panegyrics, it becomes clear that they are propagandistic pieces, written for the purpose of pleasing the emperor at the culmination of his jubilee rather than creating historically accurate renderings of the current political and cultural condition in Rome.

While he was upon the rostra, Constantine would also have shown his generosity by distributing monies to the populace. The original distribution, during 312, was marked in the relief on his commemorative arch in 315. By repeating this process in 326, not only is he activating the memory of the event of 312, but activating the relief in his arch.

## **Conclusion**

In 326, Constantine had made his final visit to Rome for his *vicennalia*. In this event, the ritual and its orations and costuming, came together with the altered Roman Forum to state Constantine's political aims: now that Maxentius had been defeated and Constantine liberated the city, twenty years of his rule, as well as his return to solitary rule had brought a period of peace to the people of Rome, brought upon by Constantine's political moves and executed by the senate on his behalf. As a result, through the ritual and the architecture, the Roman Forum furthered Constantine's role as a champion of the Roman people, descended from the benevolent emperors of the past. Constantine used architecture in order to insert himself in an imperial chronology that put him alongside other emperors worthy of esteemed memory.

As ritual can use architecture to evoke the past, the reciprocal is also true: architecture and monuments can invoke past rituals. A prime example of this is in the Arch of Constantine,

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<sup>36</sup> Lactantius, *De Mortibus Persecutorum*, 17.1-3. This abuse is might be explained by MGH 1, 148, which records the deaths of 13,000 people when part of a circus (presumably the Circus Maximus) collapsed.

as it commemorates Constantine's victory in the Battle of Milvian Bridge and his triumphal procession during the jubilee. Even Constantine's equestrian statue commemorated the emperor's presence within the city, Constantine was only within Rome for a short time (less than two years altogether during his reign). In general, the statues within the ritual space of the Forum were records of the bonds created between the emperor and the senators that sponsored them, as implied by the urban prefect Q. Aurelius Symmachus in 384:

This noble order of senators has discovered a pleasant way of making a return to prove its gratitude [to the emperors]. It has solemnly honored with equestrian statues, and has thus enrolled among ancient names...<sup>37</sup>

This ability to invoke past events raises several questions about the joining of architecture with ritual. When considering the Roman Forum, the connected fragments of buildings, inscriptions, *spolia*, and the placement of these fragments create a tapestry with which Constantine can cement his hold on imperial power and use it to return to the system of solitary rule before the Tetrarchy. The urban space of the Forum, as activated by the jubilee, was a space with the street as its focus, rather than the buildings, which then served as nodes along a linear route. The buildings were changed: they were not destinations during the jubilee, but simply platforms for the spectacle taking place along the *Via Sacra*.

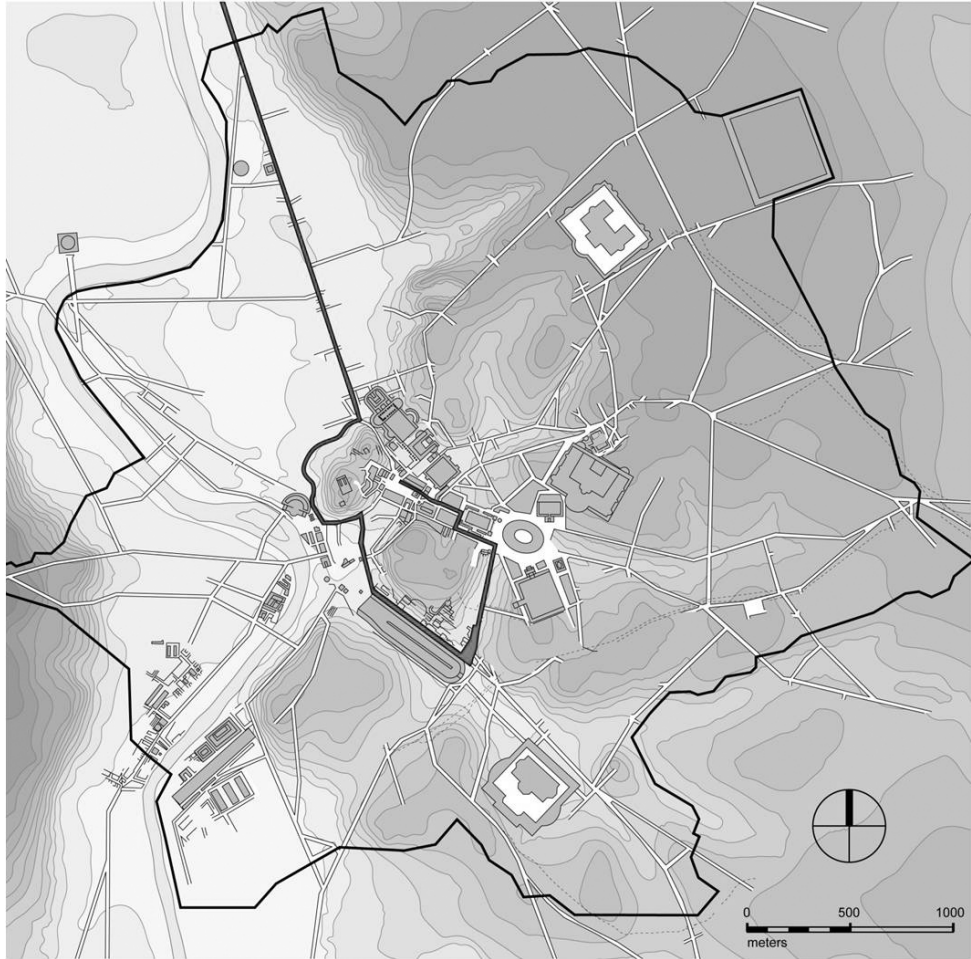
As more and more rituals were performed throughout Rome's history, the Forum was built up more and more around this idea of ritual space: as the monumental center for the city and of the Empire at large, the Forum was built around the procession, its buildings making use

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<sup>37</sup> Gregor Kalas, *Transforming Public Space in Rome*, 87; Symmachus, *Relations* 9.4-5. *invenit ordo amplissimus amabilem vicem, qua se gratum probaret. nam familiae vestae et stirpis et stripis auctorem, Africanum quondam et Britannicum duces statuis equestribus inter prisca nomina consecravit. . . . sic coluntur, quorum liberi ad bonum publicam nati sunt. at vero populis imperialis munificentiae muneribus expletus in amorem vestrum prompta inclinatione concessit. qui ubi conperit meo praefatu, adfore dona publicorum parentum, portis omnibus in longinqua fusus erupit, feliciter ceteris iudicans, qui primus bona vestra vidisset. ergo cum expectari munera principis soleant, nunc accita venerunt. praetereo illum diem, quo elefantos regios per conferta aagmina equorum nobilium pompa praecessit.* Translation from R.H. Barrow, *Prefect and Emperor: The Relations of Symmachus, A.D. 384* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 69.

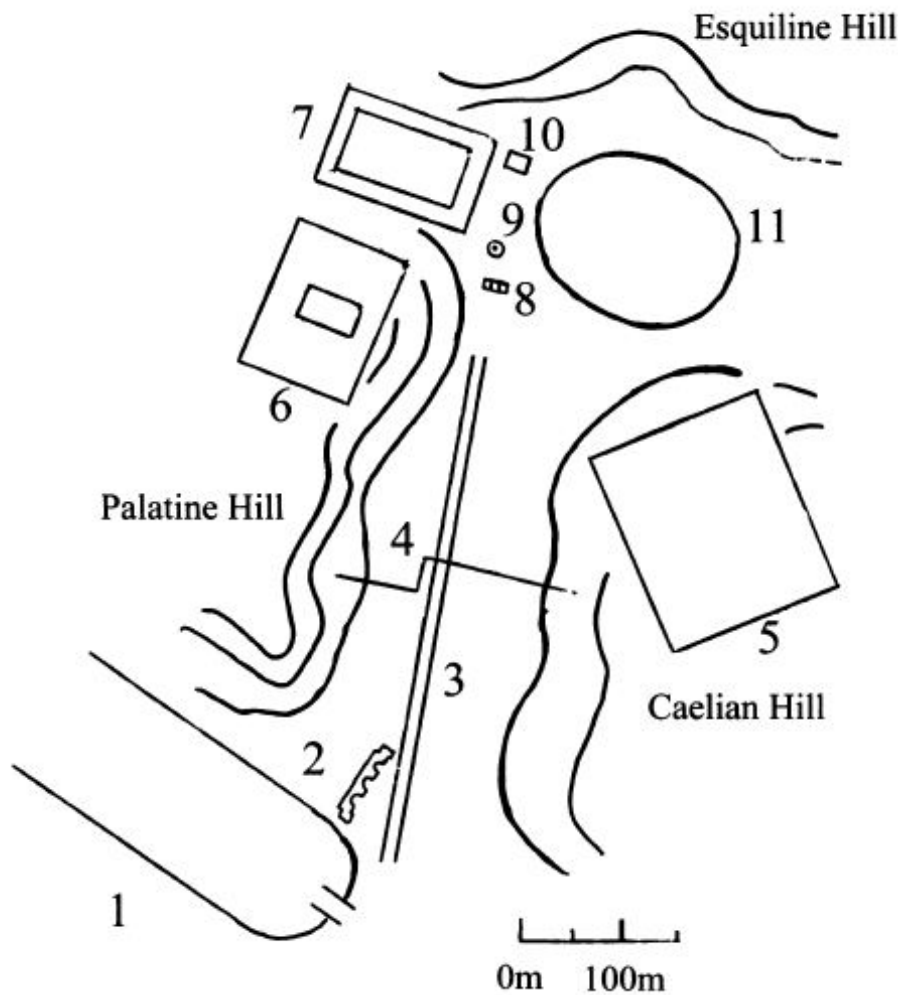
of their respective porticoes and the natural topography of the Forum in order to further the Forum as a site for rituals and other happenings. This idea of creating a space specifically to activate different aspects of memory and politics is indicative of what now might be called *ritual space*.





[Figure 4.1] The processional route of Constantine's jubilee of 326.

[Image. Maria Sadaña]

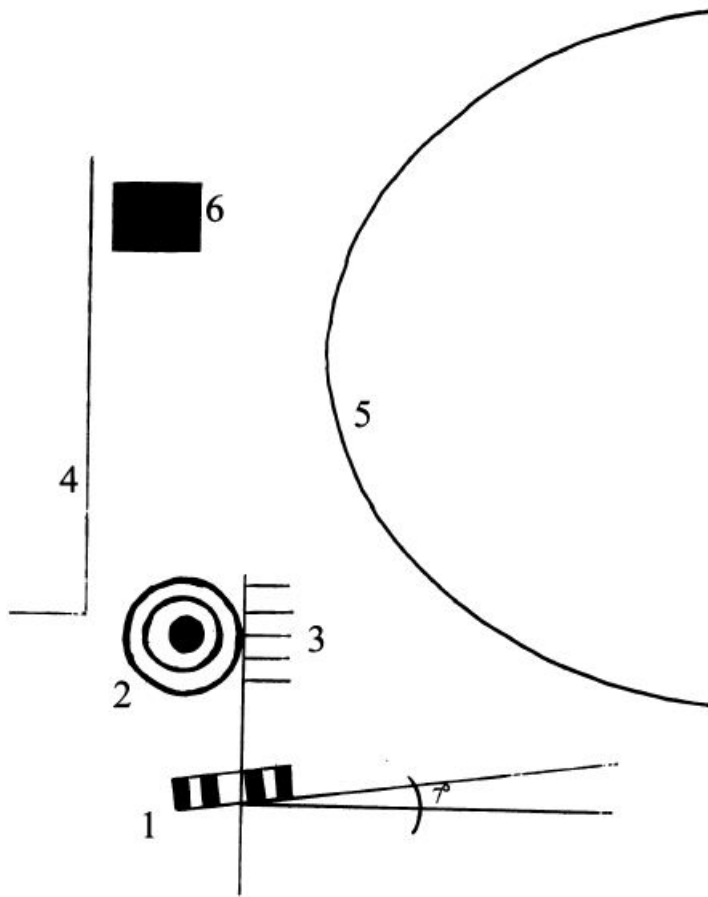


[Figure 4.2]

Processional route along the Via Triumphalis

1. Circus Maximus; 2. Septizodium; 3. Via Triumphalis; 4. Claudian Aqueduct; 5. Temple of Deified Claudius; 6. Temple of Sol Invictus; 7. Temple of Venus and Rome; 8. Arch of Constantine; 9. Meta Sudans; 10. Colossus of Sol; 11. Colosseum (Flavian Amphitheater)

[Image: Elizabeth Marlowe]



[Figure 4.3]

The monuments of the Colosseum 'piazza'

1. Arch of Constantine
2. Meta Sudans
3. Neronian grid paving
4. Temple of Venus and Roma
5. Flavian Amphitheater (Colosseum)
6. Colossus of Sol

[Image courtesy of Elizabeth Marlowe]



[Figures 4.4, 4.5] Relief from the Arch of Constantine showing the emperor atop the rostra. Note the temples behind the crowd and the scale of the people versus the actual scale of the rostra.

[Images: Google images]



[Figure 4.6] Screenshot of Constantine's equestrian statue blocking the view of the Tetrarchic columns atop the western rostra from the Via Sacra

[Image courtesy of Gregor Kalas, *Visualizing Statues in the Roman Forum*]

<http://inscriptions.etc.ucla.edu>

## Chapter V. Ritual Space and its Opportunities

Constantine's equestrian statue at the terminus of the *Via Sacra* can be understood as a metaphor: with his triumphal Arch at the outset of the Forum, the two monuments bookend each other. The Arch commemorates his defeat of Maxentius and his triumphal procession into Rome in 312. The equestrian statue celebrates the return to solitary rule, directly criticizing the collegial rule of the Tetrarchy.

However, Constantine's arch and statue also mark the path of the *Via Sacra*. As the terminal street of the procession through Rome, the two monuments mark a movement through urban space. The path between them is connective tissue, tying the Arch, the statue, and the spaces between them into a greater whole. By way of a series of individual spaces, or situations, a network, or path, is created. A goal of urban space is to create a street that connects disparate spaces as well as is a space in and of itself. Even in fourth-century Rome, the street served as a space of extraordinary importance as a processional path. Used in both triumphs and jubilees, the *Via Sacra* united the individual public works and wove them together in order to established a greater whole that was a Constantinian Roman Forum.

As ritual can use architecture to evoke the past, the reciprocal is also true: architecture and monuments can invoke past rituals. A prime example of this is in the Arch of Constantine, as it commemorates Constantine's victory in the Battle of Milvian Bridge and his triumphal procession during the jubilee. Even Constantine's equestrian statue commemorates the emperor's presence within the city, as Constantine was only within Rome for a short time (less than two years altogether during his reign). In general, the statues within the ritual space of the Forum

were records of the bonds created between the emperor and the senators that sponsored them, as implied by the urban prefect Q. Aurelius Symmachus in 384.<sup>1</sup>

This ability to invoke past events raises several questions about the joining of architecture with ritual. When considering the Roman Forum, the now-connected fragments of buildings, inscriptions, *spolia*, and the placement of these fragments create a tapestry with which Constantine can cement his hold on imperial power and use it to return to the system of solitary rule before the Tetrarchy. The urban space of the Forum, as activated by the jubilee, becomes a space with the street as its focus, rather than the buildings, which now serve as nodes along a linear route. The buildings are changed: they are not destinations during the jubilee, but simply platforms for the spectacle taking place along the *Via Sacra*.

When the Forum was activated by the ritual of the jubilee, the people made just as much of a difference for the reading of the space as do the traditional limitations of walls, colonnades, balconies, and so on. Ritual space provides for an architectural reading that accounts for the physical space as well as the movement through the space. The prospect of architecture as a linear path rather than as a nodal phenomenon allows for previously-considered parts to be connected, united in their ability to evoke a greater meaning than the respective monuments allow by themselves.

The lack of monumentality in the Constantinian interventions encouraged the use of the ritual in order to completely establish Constantine's role as "liberator of the city" of Rome.

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<sup>1</sup> Gregor Kalas, *Transforming Public Space in Rome*, 87; Symmachus, *Relations* 9.4-5. *invenit ordo amplissimus amabilem vicem, qua se gratum probaret. nam familiae vestae et stirpis et stripis auctorem, Africanum quondam et Britannicum ducem statuis equestribus inter prisca nomina consecravit. . . . sic coluntur, quorum liberi ad bonum publicam nati sunt. at vero populis imperialis munificentiae muneribus expletus in amorem vestrum prompta inclinatione concessit. qui ubi conperit meo praefatu, adfore dona publicorum parentum, portis omnibus in longinqua fusus erupit, feliciorum ceteris iudicans, qui primus bona vestra vidisset. ergo cum expectari munera principius soleant, nunc accita venerunt. praetereo illum diem, quo elefantos regios per conferta aagmina equorum nobilium pompa praecessit.* Translation from R.H. Barrow, *Prefect and Emperor: The Relations of Symmachus, A.D. 384* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 69.

Through Constantine's use of the jubilee ritual through which he channeled the memories of specific past emperors, the discrediting of Maxentius as a great benefactor of Rome, and the instigation of Maxentius as a tyrant from whom Constantine "liberated the city", he activated several buildings along the Via Sacra and used them to supplement the relatively understated architectural interventions into the buildings themselves. This ultimately crystallized in his jubilee of 326 when he became the sole ruler of the empire after his defeat of Licinius, reflected in his equestrian statue at the end of the *Via Sacra*.

The idea of the ritual has been explored within the framework of Constantine's final visit to Rome and the ritual space created by his jubilee. As more and more rituals were performed throughout Rome's history, the Forum was built up more and more around this idea of ritual space: as the monumental center for the city and of the Empire at large, the Forum was built around the procession, its buildings making use of their respective porticoes and the natural topography of the Forum in order to further the Forum as a site for rituals and other events. This idea of creating a space specifically to activate different aspects of memory and politics is indicative of a ritual space.

One must now consider the modern-day examples that support this idea of ritual space. It is through connections that relationships such as axes, sightlines, and parade routes, to name a few, are made: otherwise each architectural remains just a freestanding unit within an endless Cartesian field. It is useful to not look only at a building within a spatial field, but also as a along a chronological timeline, yields a more comprehensive understanding of the continuity within fourth-century Rome. A space does not remain constant throughout its lifespan. By looking at a progression over the lifespan of building, the architecture comes alive; it becomes not only spatially relevant, but ideologically and/or referentially meaningful throughout its



lifespan, such as in the Roman Forum. For over a millennia, the Forum was a space for consensus, a space for political spectacle, and a space to display *romanitas*. Through the rebuilding of structures such as the Temple of Venus and Roma and the insertion of new structures in the eastern Forum, like the Basilica Nova, buildings and their meanings were changed.

Architecture is traditionally thought of as the study of space. Buildings, monuments, statues, and events cannot truly be understood without an understanding of their context within a greater whole. But taken another step, architecture is the study of the built environment *and* its significance within society. In the case of the Roman Forum, the "Forum of Constantine" are all a connected whole through their ability to legitimize his rule. This coherent precinct gives a more powerful experience than collective memory, as it evokes specific references between Constantine and the past. Through the activities, the populations, and the events taking place within the physical urban space, human experience is "sculpted" and altered. To examine architecture as a sculpture of experiences, the space itself should not be considered as it always has been. By looking at architecture as a vessel or container of not just space, but ideologies and histories, and by uniting these spaces, designers as well as spectators can understand more than just a building or open space. They can *experience* a space.

When the processional path activated a space, a distinct, fundamentally different space was created by the ritual that connected the connotations of the surrounding buildings. One could argue that the Forum was the first architectural space orchestrated by Constantine's regime. By activating and altering meanings in the existing buildings and monuments, Constantine's political aspirations were explained through the plethora of meaning that was downtown Rome. By activating the different memories inherent in the buildings, including those built by

Maxentius, and aligning them with Constantine's own meritorious deeds, Constantine's supporters within the Senate actually strengthened his legitimacy more than if they had simply torn down any edifice built by Maxentius or the Tetrarchs.

Architectural theoretician Henri Lefebvre said that space is “whole and broken, global and fractured, at one and the same time. Just as it is at once conceived, perceived, and directly lived.”<sup>2</sup> As stated by Lefebvre and distilled through fellow theoretician Jacques Derrida, space is not some exploding montage of events, but a spectrum of simultaneous spaces, at once many spaces, space as past, present, future. Each space is layered with the previous space(s) it has been, is presently, and will be. By Unger's definition, the ritual is just another "layer" to be added to the urban fabric, a superimpositive system upon the physical architecture that adds to the complexity of meaning. And as Rowe said of meaning: "Has there ever been enough to go around?"<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, 356.

<sup>3</sup> Colin Rowe and Fred Koetter, *Collage City*. (Cambridge and London: The MIT Press, 1978), 138.

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