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WORLD HERITAGESITES

RESIDENCE OF BUKOVINIAN AND DALMATIAN METROPOLITANS

VIDEO | JUNE 12, 2016 | LEAVE A COMMENT

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Welcome to *Rome Across Europe*! For those new to the site, Sunday is typically the day we visit a [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#).

These sites are all over what was once the [Imperium R?m?num](#). We are not so strict on if the sites were made by Romans simply that [Ancient Rome](#) impacted the location in some fashion.

Today we're heading back to the Ukraine as we take a look at the [Residence of Bukovinian and Dalmatian Metropolitans!](#)

Situated within the boundaries of the town of Chernivtsi, on the river promontory, named Mount Dominic, the architectural ensemble comprises the former Residence of the Metropolitans with its St. Ivan of Suceava Chapel; the former seminary and Seminary Church, and the former monastery with its clock tower within a garden and landscaped park.

The Residence, with a dramatic fusion of architectural references, expresses the 19th Century cultural identity of the Orthodox Church within the Austro-Hungarian Empire during a period of religious and cultural toleration. In the 19th century, historicist architecture could convey messages about its purpose and the Residence of Bukovinian and Dalmatian Metropolitans is an excellent example.

The conditions of authenticity are generally adequate. The original shaped wooden ceiling of the Synod Hall was lost to fire in 1942 and was replaced in the 1950s. The roof has been gradually replaced using quality color-glazed roof tiles manufactured according to the original patterns and imported from Austria. The change of function

of the ensemble, initially being the Residence of Metropolitans and becoming a university did not unduly affect its authenticity.

The buildings of the complex are laid out on 3 sides of a courtyard which is approximately 328 feet deep and 230 feet wide: the 4th side of this yard contains the main gates, set in tall railings.

Opposite the gate is the largest single building, the residence of the Metropolitan, which also contains the Chapel of [John the New of Suceava](#). The building presently houses the University's Faculty of Modern Languages.

It contains the [Synodal](#) Hall (today called the Marble Hall), with a painted ceiling. Originally this hall contained portraits of Austrian monarchs by [Epaminonda Bucevschi](#) (1843-1891). Other major rooms in this building include the former library of the Metropolitan (the Blue Hall), a smaller meeting space (the Red Hall) and the former reception room of the Metropolitan (the Green Hall).

To the left of the gate is the seminary building (the right wing of the ensemble) and its church, the Church of the [Three Holy Hierarchs](#), which contains [murals](#) by Karl Jobst and other artists.

On the other side of the courtyard, the former monastery building is today the geography department of the university. The clock tower of this building is decorated with [Stars of David](#) as a tribute to the [Jewish](#) community of Czernowitz which contributed to the construction of the complex.

The buildings originally hosted a substantial [theological](#) faculty which continued to function as such when Czernowitz became, after the end of [World War I](#), part of [Romania](#) under the name of Cernăuți. It was in the Synodal Hall that on 28 November 1918, Bukovina's union with Romania was ratified.

The buildings were looted and considerably damaged by fire

during [World War II](#). After the war when the region came under [Soviet](#) control, the theological faculty was closed down; when the buildings began to be restored in 1955, they were transferred to the town's university. In 1991 the building was listed on the State Register of the newly independent Ukraine.

How This Relates to Rome:

In [antiquity](#) the [Roman province of Dalmatia](#) was much larger than the present-day [Split-Dalmatia County](#), stretching from [Istria](#) in the north to historical [Albania](#) in the south.[5] Dalmatia signified not only a geographical unit, but was an entity based on common culture and settlement types, a common narrow eastern Adriatic coastal belt, [Mediterranean climate](#), [sclerophyllous](#) vegetation of the Illyrian province, Adriatic [carbonate platform](#), and [karst geomorphology](#).

Along with [ancient Greek](#) colonies founded in the 6th Century BC on the northeastern shore of the [Black Sea](#), the colonies of [Tyras](#), [Olbia](#), [Hermonassa](#), continued as [Roman](#) and [Byzantine](#) cities until the 6th Century AD.

We hope you enjoyed your stop in the Ukraine and look forward to seeing you again. Till next time, Don't Stop Rome-ing!

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THE MEDITATIONS BY MARCUS AURELIUS

QUOTE | JUNE 11, 2016 | LEAVE A COMMENT

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When thou hast been compelled by circumstances to be disturbed in a manner, quickly return to thyself and do not continue out of tune longer than the compulsion lasts; for

thou wilt have more mastery over the harmony by continually recurring to it.

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GARNI TEMPLE (#37)

JUNE 10, 2016 | LEAVE A COMMENT

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Welcome to *Rome Across Europe!*

Today we continue examining the list of [52 Ancient Roman Monuments](#) which had been claimed as a “must see” by [Touropia Travel Experts](#). The last location we had checked out was [#38 - the Pyramid of Cestius](#).

Today we’re going to someplace we’ve yet to visit, Armenia. We bring to you #37 – the [Garni Temple!](#)



Dedicated to Helios, the Roman god of the sun, the Garni temple was built by the Armenian King [Tiridates I](#) in the 1st century AD. It is perhaps the best-known structure and symbol of pre-Christian Armenia.

items.

It occupies 3.5 hectares and is supervised by the Service for the Protection of Historical Environment and Cultural Museum Reservations, an agency attached to the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Armenia.

The precise construction date of the temple is unknown and is subject to debate. The dominant view is that it was built in 77 AD, during the 11th year of the reign of King Tiridates I.

In 1945 the painter [Martiros Saryan](#) discovered a Greek inscription, which named Tiridates the Sun (Helios) as the founder of the temple. The inscription, which probably came from the fortress wall of Garni and not the actual temple, is damaged and various readings are possible.

One reading and translation is:

The Sun God Tiridates, uncontested king of Great Armenia built the temple and the impregnable fortress in the eleventh year of his reign when Mennieay was hazarapet [thousander, chiliarch] and Amateay was [sparapet](#) [general, commander].



Early medieval historian [Movses Khorenatsi](#) attributed the inscription to [Tiridates III](#). Most scholars now attribute the inscription to Tiridates I, considering that the inscription says the temple was built in the 11th year of his reign.

The date is primarily linked to the visit of Tiridates I to [Rome](#) in 66 AD, where he was Coronated by Roman Emperor Nero. To rebuild the city of [Artaxata \(Artashat\)](#), destroyed by the Roman General [Gnaeus Domitius Corbulo](#), Nero gave Tiridates 50 million [drachmas](#) and provided him with Roman craftsmen.



Tiridates began a major project of reconstruction upon his return to Armenia, which included rebuilding the fortified city of Garni. It is during this period that the temple is thought to have been built.

The temple is believed to have been dedicated to [Mihr](#), the sun god in the [Zoroastrian](#)-influenced [Armenian mythology](#) and the equivalent of [Mithra](#). Tiridates, like other Armenian monarchs, considered

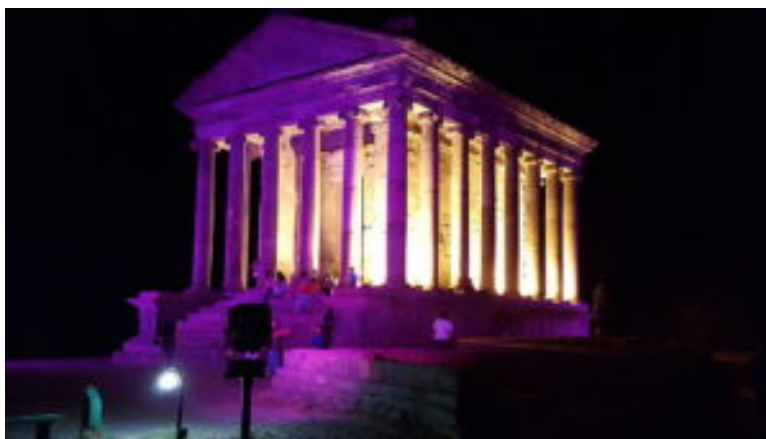
Mihr their patron.

According to a different interpretation of the extant literary testimonial and the evidence provided by coinage, the erection of the temple started in 115 AD. The pretext for its construction would have been the declaration of [Armenia as a Roman province](#) and the temple would have housed the imperial effigy of [Trajan](#).



In the early 4th Century AD, when Armenian King [Tiridates III](#) adopted Christianity as a state religion, virtually all known pagan places of worship were destroyed. The Temple of Garni is the only pagan and Hellenistic structure to have survived the widespread destruction.

It remains unknown why the temple was exempted from destruction, but philosopher Grigor Tananyan argues that its status as a “masterpiece of art” possibly saved it from destruction. He suggests that the temple was perceived to be a “[quintessence](#) of an entire culture.”



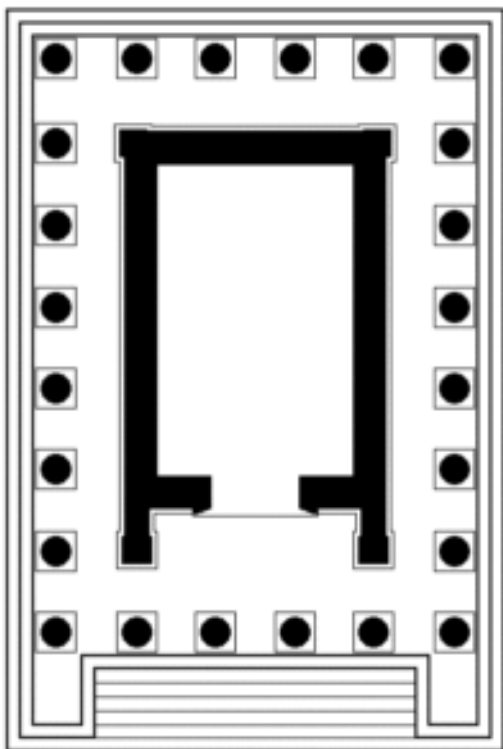
[Robert H. Hewsen](#) suggested that the reason why it was not destroyed is because it was not a temple, but a tomb of a Roman-appointed king of Armenia. He also noted that in the 7th Century AD a church was built immediately next to it and not in its place.

According to [Movses Khorenatsi](#) the temple was at the time

converted into the [summer house](#) of [Khosrovidukht](#), the sister of Tiridates III. As its purpose changed the temple underwent some changes.

The sacrificial altars on the outside of the temple and the cult statue in the [cella](#) were removed. The opening in the roof for [skylight](#) was closed.

The stone structures for removal of water from the roof were also removed, while the entrance of the temple was transformed and adjusted for residence. Almost nothing is known about the



subsequent history of the temple.

In 1949 the [Armenian Academy of Sciences](#) began major excavations of the Garni fortress site led by [Babken Arakelyan](#).

Architectural historian [Alexander Sahinian](#) focused on the temple itself.

It was not until almost 20 years later, on 10 December 1968, that the Soviet Armenian government approved the reconstruction plan

of the temple. A group led by Sahinian began reconstruction works in January 1969, and completed it by 1975.

The temple was almost entirely rebuilt using its original stones, except the missing pieces which were filled with blank stones intended to be easily recognizable. In 1978 a monument dedicated to Sahinian was erected not far from the temple.

The temple follows the style of classical [Ancient Greek architecture](#) which began developing in the 7th Century BC. Scholars have variously described the structure as Greek,

Roman or Greco-Roman and have usually linked it to [Hellenistic art](#), almost always pointing out its distinct features and local Armenian influence.

Some scholars have emphasized the Armenian influence on its architecture, calling it “Armenian-Hellenic” (Sahinian), while others have completely dismissed this view, calling it a “foreign structure on Armenian soil”. [Toros Toramanian](#), for instance, stressed the singularity of the temple as a Roman-style building on the [Armenian Highlands](#) and “remarked that the Garni construction essentially had no influence on contemporary or subsequent [Armenian architecture](#).”

More specifically, it is a [Peripteros](#) (a temple surrounded by a portico with columns) built on an elevated podium. It is constructed of locally quarried grey basalt.



The temple is composed of a [Portico](#) and a [Cella](#). The temple is supported by a total of 24 [Ionic order](#) columns measuring 21.5 ft high. Based on a comparative analysis Sahinian proposed that the columns of the temple of Garni have their origins in [Asia Minor](#).

The triangular [pediment](#) depicts sculptures of plants and geometrical figures. The staircase has 9 unusually high steps—11.8 in high around twice as high as the average height of stairs.

On the both sides of the staircase there are roughly square

pedestals. [Atlas](#), the Greek mythological [Titan](#) who held up the earth, is sculpted on both pedestals in a way seemingly trying to hold the entire temple on its shoulders. It is assumed that, originally, pedestals held up altars.



The exterior of the temple is richly decorated with a [frieze](#) depicting a continuous line of [acanthus](#). Furthermore, there are ornaments on the [capital](#), [architrave](#), and [soffit](#). The stones in

the front [cornice](#) have projecting sculptures of lion heads.

The *Cella* of the temple is 23.4 ft high, 26.2 ft long and 16.6 ft wide. Due to the relatively small size of the *Cella*, it has been proposed that a statue once stood inside and the ceremonies were held in the outside.

Furthermore, white marble sculptures of bull hooves have been discovered some 65 ft from the temple. This could possibly be the remains of a sculpture of the god Mihr, who was often portrayed in a fight with a bull.

The temple of Garni, along with the nearby medieval monastery of [Geghard](#), is one of the main tourist attraction sites in Armenia. The two sites are often collectively known as Garni-Geghard.

In 2013 some 200,000 people visited the temple. In recent years many notable individuals have visited the temple, such as Cypriot President [Demetris Christofias](#), Polish First Lady [Anna Komorowska](#), Austrian President [Heinz Fischer](#), Spanish opera singer [Montserrat Caballé](#), Greek President [Karolos](#)

[Papoulias](#), American TV personalities [Khloé](#) and [Kim Kardashian](#), American keyboardist [Derek Sherinian](#), and American comedian [Conan O'Brien](#).



O'Brien, who visited the temple in October 2015 with his Armenian assistant Sona, filmed an episode in Armenia which included dancing at the temple of Garni. The episode aired on his [late-night talk show](#) on November 17, 2015 and scored 1.3 million viewers.

The temple and the fortress are part of the Garni Historical and Cultural Museum Reserve, which is supervised by the Service for the Protection of Historical Environment and Cultural Museum Reservations, a government agency attached to the Armenian Ministry of Culture. In a 2006 survey the state of conservation of Garni was rated by over 75% of the visitors as “good” or “very good”.

In 2011 [UNESCO](#) awarded the Museum-Reservation of Garni the Melina Mercouri International Prize for the Safeguarding and Management of Cultural Landscapes for “measures taken to preserve its cultural vestiges, and the emphasis placed on efforts to interpret and open the site for national and international visitors.”



We hope you enjoyed our adventure past [Turkey](#) and the [Black Sea](#). Come back again soon to see where we'll be or what we'll be up to.

Till next time, Don't Stop Rome-ing!

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Touropia.com



ITEMS OF INTEREST , RELIGION / MYTHOLOGY

ANCIENT MYSTERIES: THE QUEST FOR THE HOLY LANCE

VIDEO | JUNE 9, 2016 | LEAVE A COMMENT



Hello and welcome to *Rome Across Europe!*

Last week we discussed the [Lance of Longinus](#), what it is and what it has meant to people throughout history.

Today we are going to have some fun and show a Quest for the Holy Lance!

We hope you enjoyed today's video and look forward to having you stop by again soon. Till next time, Don't Stop Rome-ing!



PEOPLE OF INTEREST

ANTONINUS PIUS: EXPANDING ROME BEYOND ITS BORDERS

JUNE 8, 2016 | LEAVE A COMMENT

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Welcome to *Rome Across Europe!*

When we take a look back at the extent of the [Imperium Rōmānum](#), there are many places that come to mind. Obviously there's [Rōma](#) itself and [Italia](#), but then there's other places like [Troy](#), [Constantinople](#), [Judea](#), [Dacia](#), [Germania](#) and [Gallia](#).

There was another place Rome had expanded to that was outside of mainland Europe. The Empire had taken over [Britannia](#).

[Julius Caesar](#) was the original Roman to conquer *Britannia*, but there was another who expanded the boundaries of the Empire even farther. Today we take a look at Titus Fulvus Aelius Hadrianus Antoninus Augustus Pius!



Antoninus Pius (also known as Antoninus) was [Roman Emperor](#) from 138 to 161. He was one of the Five Good Emperors in the [Nerva-Antonine Dynasty](#) and the [Gens Aurelij](#).

On 19 September 86 AD Antoninus, the only child of [Consul Titus Aurelius Fulvus](#), was born. Antoninus's family came

from [Nemausus](#) (modern [Nîmes](#)) in [Gallia Narbonensis](#).

Titus Aurelius Fulvus was the son of a Senator of the same name, who, as [Legatus](#) of [Legio III Gallica](#), had supported [Vespasian](#) in his bid to the Imperial office and been rewarded with a suffect consulship, plus an ordinary one under [Domitian](#) in AD 85.

Antoninus was born near [Lanuvium](#) and his mother was Arria Fadilla. Titus Aurelius Fulvus died shortly after his AD 89 ordinary consulship, leaving his son to be raised by his maternal grandfather [Gnaeus Arrius Antoninus](#).

Sometime between AD 110 and 115, Antoninus married the wise and beautiful [Annia Galeria Faustina](#) who just happened to be the daughter of [Consul Marcus Annius Verus](#) and [Rupilia](#) Faustina (a half-sister to Roman Empress [Vibia Sabina](#)).

Antoninus and Faustina are believed to have enjoyed a happy marriage. Faustina spent her whole life caring for the poor and assisting the most disadvantaged Romans.

Faustina bore Antoninus 2 sons and 2 daughters. They were:

- Marcus Aurelius Fulvus Antoninus (died before AD 138); his sepulchral inscription has been found at the Mausoleum of Hadrian in Rome.
- Marcus Galerius Aurelius Antoninus (died before AD 138); his sepulchral inscription has been found at the Mausoleum of Hadrian in Rome. His name appears on a Greek Imperial coin.
- Aurelia Fadilla (died in AD 135); she married Lucius Lamia Silvanus, [Consul](#) of AD 145. She appeared to have no children with her husband and her sepulchral inscription has been found in Italy.
- Annia Galeria Faustina Minor or [Faustina the Younger](#) (born between AD 125–130 and passed in AD 175), a future Roman Empress, married her maternal cousin, future Roman Emperor [Marcus Aurelius](#) in AD 146.

When Faustina Major died in AD 141, Antoninus was greatly distressed. In honor of her memory, he asked the [Senate](#) to deify her as a goddess, and authorized the construction of a temple to be built in the [Roman Forum](#) in her name, with priestesses serving in her temple.

He had various coins with her portrait struck in her honor. These coins were scripted 'DIVA FAUSTINA' and were elaborately decorated.

He further created a charity which he founded and called it *Puellae Faustinae* (Girls of Faustina), which assisted destitute girls of good family. Finally, Antoninus created a new [Cura Annonae](#).

Having filled the offices of [Quaestor](#) and [Praetor](#) with more than usual success, he obtained the consulship in AD 120. He was next appointed by the Emperor [Hadrian](#) as one of the 4 [Proconsules](#) to administer *Italia*, then greatly increased his reputation by his conduct as *Proconsul* of [Asiana](#), probably during AD 134–135.

He acquired much favor with the Emperor Hadrian, who adopted him as his son and successor on 25 February 138 AD, after the death of his initial adopted son [Lucius Aelius](#), on the condition that Antoninus would in turn adopt Marcus Annius Verus, the son of his wife's brother, and Lucius, son of Lucius Aelius, who afterwards became the Emperors Marcus Aurelius and [Lucius Verus](#).

By this scheme, Verus, who was already Hadrian's adoptive grandson through his natural father, remained Hadrian's adoptive son through his new father. The adoption of Marcus Aurelius was probably a suggestion of Antoninus himself, since the former was the nephew of the latter's wife and would be his favorite son.



On his accession, Antoninus's name became *Imperator Caesar Titus Aelius Hadrianus Antoninus Augustus Pontifex Maximus*. One of his first acts as Emperor was to persuade the Senate to grant divine honors to Hadrian, which they had at first refused.

Immediately after Hadrian's death, Antoninus approached Marcus and requested that his marriage arrangements be amended. Marcus's betrothal to Ceionia Fabia would be annulled, and he would be betrothed to Faustina, Antoninus' daughter, instead.

Faustina's betrothal to Ceionia's brother Lucius Commodus would also have to be annulled. Marcus consented to Antoninus's proposal.

Antoninus built temples, theaters, and mausoleums, promoted the arts and sciences, and bestowed honors and financial rewards upon the teachers of rhetoric and philosophy. Antoninus made few initial changes when he became Emperor, leaving intact as far as possible the arrangements instituted by Hadrian.

There are no records of any military related acts participated in by Antoninus. One modern scholar has written "It is almost certain not only that at no time in his life did he ever see, let alone command, a Roman army, but that, throughout the twenty-three years of his reign, he never went within five hundred miles of a legion".

His reign was the most peaceful in the entire history of the Principate; notwithstanding the fact that there were several military disturbances throughout the Empire in his time. It was in

Britannia, however, that Antoninus decided to follow a new, more aggressive path, with the appointment of a new governor in AD 139, [Quintus Lollius Urbicus](#) a native of [Numidia](#) and previously governor of [Germania Inferior](#).

Under instructions from the Emperor, Lollius undertook an invasion of southern [Scotland](#), winning some significant victories, and constructing the [Antonine Wall](#) from the [Firth of Forth](#) to the [Firth of Clyde](#). The wall, however, was soon gradually decommissioned during the mid-150s and eventually abandoned during the early 160s, for reasons that are still not quite clear.



Antonine's Wall is mentioned in just one literary source, Antoninus' biography in the [Historia Augusta](#). [Pausanias](#) makes a brief and confused mention of a war in Britain.

In one inscription honoring Antoninus a [relief](#) showing 4 naked prisoners, one of them beheaded, seems to stand for some actual warfare. It also shows the [Legio II Augusta](#), which participated in the building of the Wall.



Although Antonine's Wall was, in principle, much shorter and outwardly more defensible than Hadrian's Wall, the area included by it into the Empire was barren, therefore straining supply lines and not worthy

holding to on a cost benefit analysis. It has been therefore speculated that the invasion of Lowland Scotland and the building of the wall offered Antoninus an opportunity to gain some small amount of necessary military prestige at the start of his reign.

Nevertheless, Antoninus was virtually unique among Emperors in that he dealt with these crises without leaving Italy once during his reign, but instead dealt with provincial matters of war and peace through their governors or through imperial letters to the cities such as Ephesus. This style of government was highly praised by his contemporaries and by later generations.

Antoninus was regarded as a skilled administrator and as a builder. Free access to drinking water was expanded with the construction of aqueducts throughout the Empire, and several bridges and roads were also made. In spite of this extensive building directive, the Emperor still managed to leave behind a sizable public treasure of around 2.5 million *sestertii*.



The Emperor also famously suspended the collection of taxes from cities affected by natural disasters, such as when fires struck Rome and Narbona, and earthquakes affected *Rhodes* and the Province of Asia. Antoninus offered hefty financial grants for rebuilding and recovery of various Greek cities after 2 serious earthquakes (140 and 152 AD).

In his dealings with Greek-speaking cities, Antoninus followed the policy adopted by Hadrian of ingratiating himself with local intellectuals (philosophers, teachers of literature, rhetoricians and physicians) and had them explicitly exempted from any duties involving private spending for civic purposes. Antoninus also created a chair for the teaching of rhetoric in [Athens](#).

Antoninus was known as an avid observer of rites of religion and of formal celebrations, both Roman and otherwise. He is known for having increasingly formalized the official cult offered to the [Great Mother](#) and of [Mithra](#), while still presiding over the celebrations of the 900th anniversary of the founding of Rome.



Antoninus did take a great interest in the revision and practice of the law throughout the Empire. One of his chief concerns was to having local communities conform their legal procedures to existing Roman norms.

In a case concerning repression of banditry by local law enforcement in Asia Minor, Antoninus ordered that these officers should not treat suspects as already condemned. He also instructed that a detailed copy of their interrogation be kept to be used in the possibility of an appeal to the Roman governor.

Although Antoninus was not an innovator, he would not always follow the absolute letter of the law. It seems he was driven by

concerns over humanity and equality, and introduced into [Roman law](#) many important new principles based upon this notion.

Antoninus passed measures giving rights to slaves. Mostly, he favored the principle of giving the freedman the benefit of the doubt when the claim to freedom was not clear-cut.

Also, he punished the killing of a slave by his/her master without previous trial and determined that slaves could be forcibly sold to another master by a *Proconsul* in cases of consistent mistreatment. Antoninus upheld the enforcement of contracts for selling of female slaves forbidding their further employment in prostitution.

In criminal law, Antoninus introduced the important principle that accused persons are not to be treated as guilty before trial. He also asserted the principle that a trial was to be held, and the punishment inflicted, in the place where the crime had been committed.

Scholars place Antoninus Pius as the leading candidate for fulfilling the role as a friend of Rabbi [Judah the Prince](#). According to the [Talmud](#), Rabbi Judah was very wealthy and greatly revered in Rome.

Two days before his death Antoninus was at his ancestral estate at [Lorium](#) in [Etruria](#), about 12 miles from Rome. He reportedly ate Alpine cheese quite greedily at dinner, vomited during the night, then developed a fever the next day.

On 7 March 161 AD, Antoninus summoned the Imperial Council and passed the State and his daughter to Marcus. The Emperor then turned over, as if going to sleep, and died. His death closed out the longest reign since Augustus.

Antoninus Pius' funeral ceremonies were, in the words of the biographer, "elaborate". If his funeral followed the pattern of past

funerals, his body would have been incinerated on a pyre at the [Campus Martius](#), while his spirit would rise to the gods' home in the heavens.

However, according to his *Historia Augusta* biography, Antoninus's body (and not his ashes) was buried in [Hadrian's mausoleum](#). After a 7-day interval (*justitium*) Marcus and Lucius nominated their father for deification.

In contrast to their behavior during Antoninus's campaign to deify Hadrian, the senate did not oppose the emperors' wishes. A [Flamen](#) (Cultic Priest) was appointed to minister the cult of the deified Antoninus, now *Divus Antoninus*.



A [column](#) was dedicated to Antoninus on the *Campus Martius*, and the [temple](#) he had built in the Forum in AD 141 to his deified wife Faustina was rededicated to both the deified Faustina and the deified Antoninus. It survives as the church of San Lorenzo in Miranda.

Antoninus in many ways was the ideal of the landed gentleman praised not only by ancient Romans, but also by later scholars of classical history. Later historians viewed



Antoninus as a lackluster statesman, with the rest which the Empire enjoyed under his auspices being owed to Hadrian's activity. He not

only had no originality or power of initiative, but he had not even the insight or boldness to work further on the new lines marked out by Hadrian.

Although only 1 of his 4 children survived to adulthood, Antoninus came to be ancestor to generations of prominent Roman statesmen and socialites, including at least an empress consort and as the maternal grandfather of the Emperor [Commodus](#). The family of Antoninus Pius and Faustina the Elder also represents one of the few periods in ancient Roman history where the position of Emperor passed smoothly from father to son.

Direct descendants of Antoninus and Faustina were confirmed to exist at least into the 5th Century AD.

1. Marcus Aurelius Fulvus Antoninus (died before 138), died young without issue
2. Marcus Galerius Aurelius Antoninus (died before 138), died young without issue
3. Aurelia Fadilla (died in 135), died without issue
4. [Faustina the Younger](#)(16 February between 125 and 130 – 175), had 13 children
5. [Annia Aurelia Galeria Faustina](#)(30 November 147 – after 165), had 1 child
6. [Tiberius Claudius Severus Proculus](#)(c. 163 – 218), had 1 child
7. [Annia Faustina](#)(about 201 – after 222), had 2 children
8. [Pomponia Ummidia](#)(219 – after 275), died without known issue
9. [Pomponius Bassus](#)(220 – after 271), had 1 child
10. Pomponia Bassa (born c. 250), had 1 child
11. [Septimius Bassus](#), had 1 child
12. Septimia (born c. 305), had 1 child
13. [Lucius Valerius Septimius Bassus](#)(c. 328 – aft. 379 or 383), had 1 child
14. [Valerius Adelphius Bassus](#)(c. 360 – aft. 383), had 1 child
15. Valerius Adelphius (born c. 385), had 1 child
16. Adelphia (c. 410 – aft. 459), had possibly 1 child

17. Anicia Ulfina
18. Gemellus Lucillae (7 March 148 or 150 – c. 150), died young without issue
19. [Lucilla](#)(7 March 148 or 150 – 182), had 4 children
20. Aurelia Lucilla (born 165), died young without issue
21. Lucilla Plautia (after 165 – 182), died without issue

III. Lucius Verus, died young without issue

1. [Pompeianus](#)(170 – between 212 and 217), died without issue
2. Titus Aelius Antoninus (after 150 – before 7 March 161), died young without issue
3. Titus Aelius Aurelius (after 150 – before 7 March 161), died young without issue
4. Hadrianus (152 – 157), died young without issue
5. Domitia Faustina (after 150 – before 7 March 161), died young without issue
6. [Fadilla](#)(159 – after 192), had 2 children
7. Plautius Quintillus
8. Plautia Servilla
9. [Annia Cornificia Faustina Minor](#)(160 – after 211), had 1 child
10. Petronius Antoninus (after 173 – between 190 and 192), died young without issue
11. Titus Aurelius Fulvus Antoninus (161 – 165), died young without issue
12. [Commodus](#)(31 August 161 – 31 December 192), died without issue
13. [Marcus Annius Verus Caesar](#)(after May 162 – 10 September 169), died young without issue
14. [Vibia Aurelia Sabina](#)(170 – before 217), died without issue



As are most people of history, the achievements of Antoninus Pius are able to be determined by individuals. That seems to be a great thing about history.

We hope you enjoyed learning more about Antoninus Pius, and wish you to check us out again soon. Till next time, Don't Stop Rome-ing!

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THE MEDITATIONS BY MARCUS AURELIUS

QUOTE | JUNE 7, 2016 | LEAVE A COMMENT

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Take pleasure in one thing and rest in it, in passing from one social act to another social act, thinking of God.



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ARCHITECTURE, HISTORICAL SITES

MAUSOLEUM OF AUGUSTUS: RESTING PLACE FOR ROME'S

ORIGINAL EMPEROR

JUNE 6, 2016 | LEAVE A COMMENT



Welcome to *Rome Across Europe!*

As we venture from East to West and from North to South, it's always nice to just get back home. In this case we do not mean Texas, we are talking about [Rome](#).

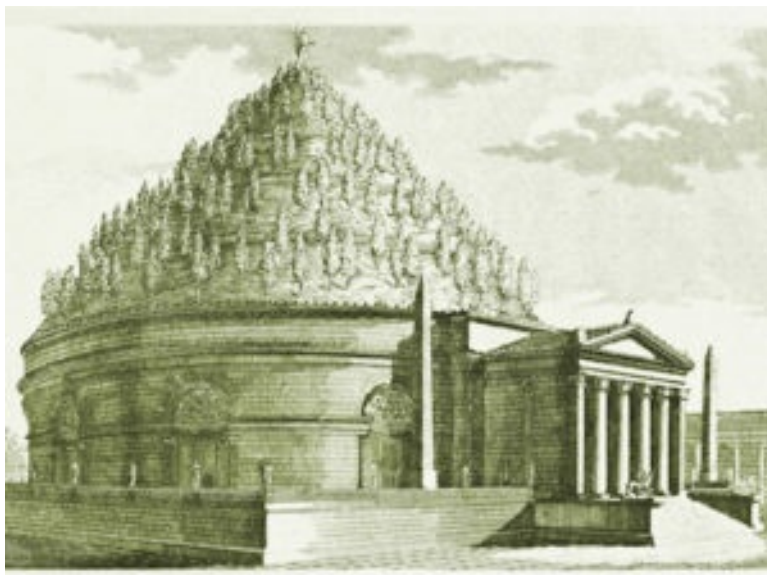
Today we are heading back to where it all began to take a look at the the resting place for Rome's Original Emperor, the [Mausoleum Augusti!](#)



The [mausoleum](#) is a large tomb built by the [Roman Emperor Augustus](#) in 28 BC on the [Campus Martius](#) in Rome, [Italy](#). The mausoleum is located on the *Piazza Augusto Imperatore*, near the corner with *Via di Ripetta* as it runs along the [Tiber](#).



The grounds cover an area equivalent to a few city blocks, and nestle between the Church of [San Carlo al Corso](#) and the Museum of the [Ara Pacis](#). The interior of the mausoleum is not open to tourists.



The mausoleum was one of the original projects initiated by Augustus in the City of Rome following his victory at the [Battle of Actium](#) in 31 BC. The mausoleum was circular in plan, consisting of several concentric rings of earth and brick, planted with [cypress trees](#) on top of the building and capped by a conical roof and a statue of Augustus.

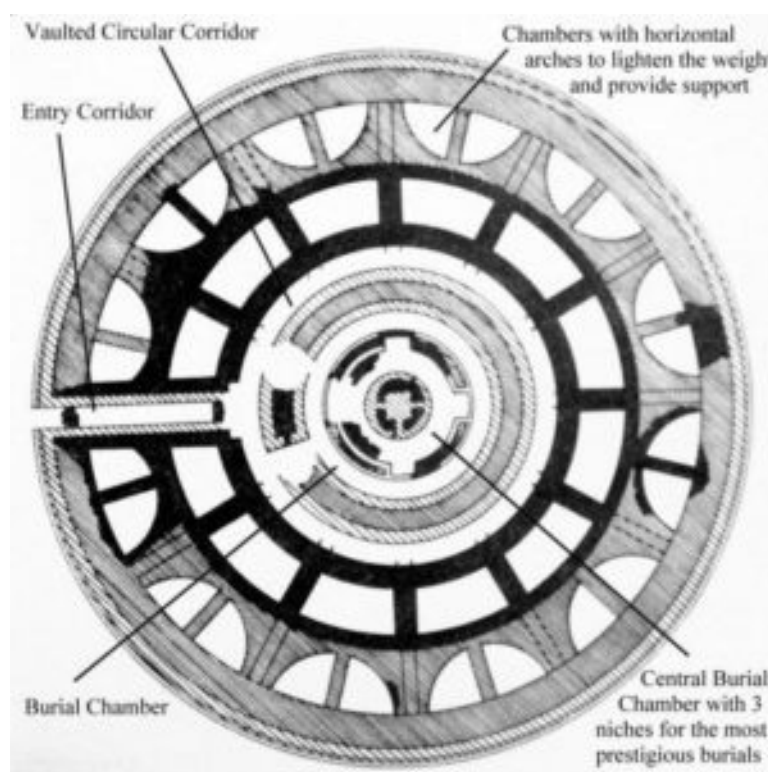
Vaults held up the roof and opened up the burial spaces below. The completed mausoleum measured 295 ft in diameter by 137 ft in height.



A corridor ran from the entryway into the heart of the mausoleum. Here there was a chamber with 3 niches to hold the golden urns enshrining the ashes of the Imperial Family.

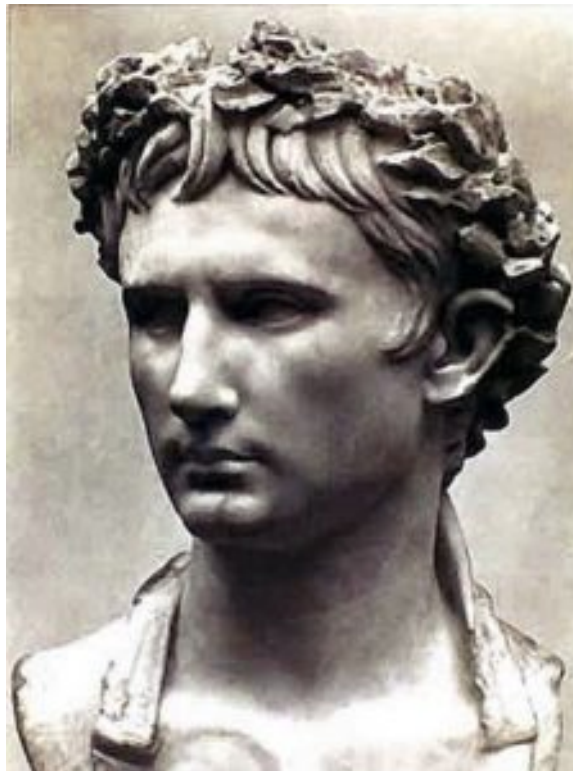
The traditional story is that in AD 410, during the [sack of Rome](#) by [Alaric](#), the pillaging [Visigoths](#) rifled the vaults, stole the urns and scattered the ashes, without damaging the structure of the building ([Rodolfo Lanciani](#)). In the [Middle Ages](#) the [tumulus](#) was fortified as a castle— as was the mausoleum of [Hadrian](#), which was turned into the [Castel Sant'Angelo](#)— and occupied by the [Colonna](#) family.

After the disastrous defeat of the [Commune of Rome](#) at the hands of the [Count of Tusculum](#) in AD 1167, the Colonna were disgraced and banished, and their fortification in the Campo was dismantled. Thus it became a ruin.



It was not until the 1930s that the site was opened as a preserved archaeological landmark along with the newly moved and reconstructed *Ara Pacis* nearby. The restoration of the Mausoleum of Augustus to a place of prominence was part of [Benito Mussolini](#)'s ambitious reordering of the city in an attempt to connect the aspirations of [Italian Fascism](#) with the former glories of the [Roman Empire](#).

Mussolini viewed himself especially connected to the achievements of Augustus, seeing himself as a 'reborn Augustus' ready to usher in a new age of Italian dominance. (We know Augustus, and Mussolini was no Augustus.)



Twin pink [granite obelisks](#) also once flanked the arched entryway, but have since been removed. One now stands at the [Piazza dell'Esquilino](#) (on the northwest side of the [Basilica of Santa Maria Maggiore](#)) and the other at the [Quirinal Fountain](#).



Included among those whose remains were laid inside the mausoleum before the death of Augustus were:

Marcus Claudius Marcellus (who was the first to be buried there, in 23 BC),

Marcus Agrippa in 12 BC,

Nero Claudius Drusus in 9 BC,

Octavia Minor (the sister of Augustus) in 9 or 11 BC,

Gaius and Lucius, grandsons and heirs of Augustus.

After the death of Augustus, the mausoleum hosted the ashes of:

Livia (Augustus's wife),

Germanicus,

Agrippina the Elder,

Agrippina's daughter [Julia Livilla](#),

[Nero \(son of Germanicus\)](#),

[Drusus Caesar](#) (son of Germanicus),

[Caligula](#),

[Tiberius](#),

[Drusus Julius Caesar](#) (son of Tiberius),

[Antonia Minor](#) (mother of Claudius),

[Claudius](#),

[Britannicus](#) (the son of Claudius),

the embalmed body of [Poppaea Sabina](#) wife of Nero,

[Julia Domna](#) (later moved to Mausoleum of Hadrian), and

[Nerva](#), the last Emperor for whom the mausoleum was opened.



Recently Rome Commissioner Francesco Paolo Tronca has approved a €6-million preliminary project to complete restoration work at the Mausoleum of Augustus. Funding will serve to finish structural work on the monumental tomb including covering it, building a circular catwalk around it, and preparing it to open for public visits.

This commitment to restoring Rome's historical monuments not only benefits tourism, but it also keeps

alive remnants from a dominate world culture for future generations. Keeping Rome's past intact benefits everyone.



We hope you enjoyed our trip to the [Romani Patriae](#) and look forward to having you back again. Till next time, Don't Stop Rome-ing!

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["Mausoleum of Augustus Restoration Project to Begin"](#)

Archaeology News Network. 04 March 2016.

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WORLD HERITAGE SITES

HISTORIC CENTRE OF OPORTO

VIDEO | JUNE 5, 2016 | LEAVE A COMMENT

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Welcome to *Rome Across Europe*! For those new to the site, Sunday is typically the day we visit a [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#).

These sites are all over what was once the [Imperium Rōmānum](#). We are not so strict on if the sites were made by Romans simply that [Ancient Rome](#) impacted the location in some fashion.

Today we're heading back to Portugal as we take a look at the Historic Centre of [Oporto](#)!

The city of Oporto, built along the hillsides overlooking the mouth of the Douro River, is an outstanding urban landscape with a 2,000-year history. Its continuous growth, linked to the sea, can be seen in the many and varied monuments, from the cathedral with its Romanesque choir, to the neoclassical Stock Exchange and the typically Portuguese Manueline-style Church of Santa Clara.

How This Relates to Rome:

During the [Roman occupation](#) of the [Iberian Peninsula](#) the city developed as an important commercial port, primarily in the trade between *Olissipona* (the modern [Lisbon](#)) and *Bracara Augusta* (the modern [Braga](#)). Roman rule lasted until AD 711 when the [Moors](#) took over the Iberian Peninsula.

The Romans even gave the city the name *Portus* (Port).

We hope you enjoyed today's trip and look forward to having you back again. Till next time, Don't Stop Rome-ing!

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ITEMS OF INTEREST , RELIGION / MYTHOLOGY

LANCE OF LONGINUS

JUNE 4, 2016 | LEAVE A COMMENT

2



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Welcome to *Rome Across Europe!*

Having so much interest in [Ancient Rome](#), we are always curious about things considered to be mythological or holy. [Religion in Ancient Rome](#) transitioned from [multiple deities](#) and the [Cultus Imperiales](#) to [Christianity](#) and the [Sacrum Romanum Imperium](#), so there are tons of things considered sacred.

One item we find particularly intriguing bridges Rome during the time of [Augustus](#) and the early days of Christianity. Today we take a look at the [Lance of Longinus \(Lancea Longini\)](#)!



Known also as the Holy Lance, the Holy Spear, or the Spear of Destiny, the *Lancea Longini* is the [lance](#) that pierced the side of [Jesus](#) as he hung on the cross, according to the [Gospel of John](#). Several churches across the world claim to possess this lance.

The *lancea* is mentioned in the Gospel of John ([19:31–37](#)), but not the [Synoptic Gospels](#). The gospel states that the Romans planned to break Jesus' legs, a practice known as *crurifragium*, which was a method of hastening death during a [crucifixion](#).

Just before they did so, they realized that Jesus was already dead and that there was no reason to break his legs. To make sure that he was dead, a Roman [Centurio](#) (named in extra-Biblical tradition as Longinus) stabbed him in the side.

One of the soldiers pierced his side with a lance, and immediately there came out blood and water.

—[John 19:34](#)

Longinus's name was not given in the Gospel of John, but in the oldest known references to the legend, the apocryphal [Gospel of Nicodemus](#) appended to late manuscripts of the 4th Century [Acts](#)

of Pilate.

A form of the name Longinus occurs on a miniature in the [Rabula Gospels](#) (conserved in the [Laurentian Library, Florence](#)), which was illuminated by one Rabulas in the year 586. In the miniature, the name LOGINOS (ΛΟΓΙΝΟΣ) is written in Greek characters above the head of the soldier who is thrusting his lance into Christ's side.



The phenomenon of blood and water was considered a miracle by [Origen. Catholics](#), while accepting the biological reality of blood and water as emanating from the pierced heart and body cavity of Christ, also acknowledge the [allegorical interpretation](#): it represents one of the main key teachings/mysteries of the Church, and one of the main themes of the [Gospel of Matthew](#), which is the [homoousian](#) interpretation adopted by the [First Council of Nicaea](#), that “Jesus Christ was both true God and true man.”

The blood symbolizes his humanity, the water his divinity. A ceremonial remembrance of this is done by a Catholic priest during [Mass](#): The priest pours a small amount of water into the wine before the consecration, an act which acknowledges Christ's humanity and divinity and recalls the issuance of blood and water from Christ's side on the cross.

There have been three or four major relics that are claimed to be the Holy Lance or parts of it.



The Holy Lance in Rome is preserved beneath the dome of [Saint Peter's Basilica](#), although the [Catholic Church](#) makes no claim as to its authenticity.

The first historical reference to the lance was made by the pilgrim [Antoninus of Piacenza](#) (AD 570) in his descriptions of the holy places of [Jerusalem](#), writing that he saw in the Basilica of [Mount](#)

[Zion](#) “the crown of thorns with which Our Lord was crowned and the lance with which He was struck in the side”.

A mention of the lance occurs in the so-called Breviarius at the Church of the [Holy Sepulchre](#). The presence in Jerusalem of the relic is attested by [Cassiodorus](#) as well as by [Gregory of Tours](#), who had not actually been to Jerusalem.

In AD 615, Jerusalem and its relics were captured by the Persian forces of King [Khosrau II](#). According to the [Chronicon Paschale](#), the point of the lance, which had been broken off, was given in the same year to Nicetas, who took it to [Constantinople](#) and deposited it in the church of [Hagia Sophia](#), and later to the [Church of the Virgin of the Pharos](#).

This point of the lance was acquired by the Latin Emperor, [Baldwin II of Constantinople](#), who later sold it to [Louis IX of France](#). The point of the lance was then enshrined with the [crown of thorns](#) in the [Sainte Chapelle](#) in [Paris](#). During the [French Revolution](#) these relics were removed to the [Bibliothèque Nationale](#) but the point subsequently disappeared.

As for the larger portion of the lance, Arculpus claimed he saw it at the Church of the Holy Sepulchre around 670 in Jerusalem, but there is otherwise no mention of it after the sack in AD 615. Some claim that the larger relic had been conveyed to Constantinople in the 8th Century, possibly at the same time as the Crown of Thorns.

At any rate, its presence at Constantinople seems to be clearly attested by various pilgrims, particularly Russians, and, though it was deposited in various churches in succession, it seems possible to trace it and distinguish it from the relic of the point. Sir [John Mandeville](#) declared in 1357 that he had seen the blade of the Holy Lance both at Paris and at Constantinople, and that the latter was a much larger relic than the former.

“The lance which pierced Our Lord’s side” was among the relics at Constantinople shown in the 1430s to [Pedro Tafur](#), who added “God grant that in the [overthrow of the Greeks](#) they have not fallen into the hands of the [enemies of the Faith](#), for they will have been ill-treated and handled with little reverence.”

Whatever the Constantinople relic was, it did fall into the hands of the Turks, and in 1492, under circumstances minutely described in [Pastor’s History of the Popes](#), the Sultan [Bayezid II](#) sent it to [Pope Innocent VIII](#) to encourage the pope to continue to keep his brother and rival Zizim ([Cem Sultan](#)) prisoner. At this time great doubts as to its authenticity were felt at Rome, as [Johann Burchard](#) records, because of the presence of other rival lances in Paris (the point that had been separated from the lance), [Nuremberg](#) and [Armenia](#).

In the mid-18th Century [Pope Benedict XIV](#) states that he obtained from Paris an exact drawing of the point of the lance, and that in comparing it with the larger relic in St. Peter’s he was satisfied that the two had originally formed one blade. This relic has never since left Rome, and its resting place is at Saint Peter’s.



The Spear of Destiny in Vienna is displayed in the [Imperial Treasury](#) at the [Hofburg Palace](#) in [Vienna, Austria](#). In the 10th Century, the [Holy Roman Emperors](#) came into possession of the lance, according to sources from the time of [Otto I](#).

In 1000, [Otto III](#) gave [Boleslaw I of Poland](#) a replica of the Holy Lance at the [Congress of Gniezno](#). In 1084, [Henry IV](#) had a silver band with the inscription “Nail of Our Lord” added to it. This was based on the belief that this was the lance of [Constantine the Great](#) which enshrined a nail used for the

Crucifixion.

In 1273, the Holy Lance was first used in a coronation ceremony. Around 1350, [Charles IV](#) had a golden sleeve put over the silver one, inscribed “*Lancea et clavus Domini*” (Lance and nail of the Lord). In 1424, [Sigismund](#) had a collection of relics, including the lance, moved from his capital in [Prague](#) to his birthplace, Nuremberg, and decreed them to be kept there forever. This collection was called the [Imperial Regalia](#) (*Reichskleinodien*).

When the French Revolutionary army approached Nuremberg in the spring of 1796, the city councilors decided to remove the *Reichskleinodien* to Vienna for safe keeping. The collection was entrusted to one “Baron [von Hügel](#)”, who promised to return the objects as soon as peace had been restored and the safety of the collection assured.



However, the Holy Roman Empire was disbanded in 1806 and the *Reichskleinodien* remained in the keeping of the [Habsburgs](#). When the city councilors asked for the *Reichskleinodien* back, they were refused. As part of the Imperial Regalia it was kept in the [Imperial Treasury](#) and was known as the lance of [Saint Maurice](#).

During the [Anschluss](#), when Austria was annexed to Germany, the *Reichskleinodien* were returned to Nuremberg and afterwards hidden. They were found by invading U.S. troops and returned to Austria by American General [George S. Patton](#) after World War II.

Dr. Robert Feather, an English metallurgist and technical engineering writer, tested the lance for a documentary in January 2003. He was given unprecedented permission not only to examine the lance in a laboratory environment, but was allowed to remove the delicate bands of gold and silver that hold it together.

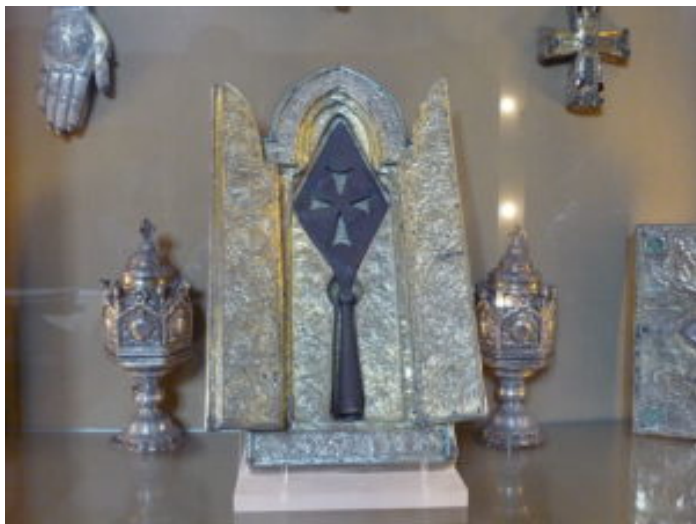
In the opinion of Feather and other academic experts, the likeliest date of the spearhead is the 7th Century AD – only slightly earlier than the Museum’s own estimate. However, Dr. Feather stated in the same documentary that an iron pin hammered into the blade and set off by tiny brass crosses, long claimed to be a nail from the crucifixion, is “consistent” in length and shape with a 1st Century AD Roman nail.

According to [Paul the Deacon](#), the inauguration rite of a Lombard

king consisted essentially of his grasping of a sacred/royal lance. Milan, which had been the capital of the Western Roman Empire in the time of Constantine, was the capital of the Lombard kings [Perctarit](#) and his son [Cunipert](#), who became Catholic Christians in the 7th Century.

Thus it seems possible that the iron point of the Lombard royal lance might have been recast in the 7th Century in order to enshrine one of the 1st Century Roman nails that St. Helena was reputed to have found at [Calvary](#) and brought to Milan, thus giving a more Christian sacred aura to the old pagan royal lance.

If [Charlemagne](#)'s inauguration as the King of the Lombards in 774 had likewise included his grasping of this Christian sacred lance or royal lance, this would explain how it would have eventually become the oldest item in the German Imperial Regalia. The [Iron Crown of Lombardy](#) (dated to the 8th Century), which eventually became the primary symbol of Lombard kingship, takes its name from the tradition that it contains one of the [holy nails](#).



The Holy Spear in [Echmiadzin](#) is conserved in the religious capital of Armenia. The first source that mentions it is a text Holy Relics of Our Lord Jesus Christ, in a 13th Century Armenian manuscript.

According to this text, the spear which pierced Jesus was to have been brought to Armenia by the [Apostle Thaddeus](#). The manuscript does not specify precisely where it was kept, but the Holy Spear gives a description that exactly matches the lance since the 13th Century, the name of [Geghardavank](#) (Monastery of the Holy Lance).

In 1655, the French traveler [Jean-Baptiste Tavernier](#) was the first Westerner to see this relic in Armenia. In 1805, the Russians captured the monastery and the relic was moved to Tchitchanov Geghard, [Tbilisi](#), Georgia. It was later returned to Armenia at Echmiadzin, where it is always visible in the [museum Manoogian](#), enshrined in a 17th Century reliquary.

During the June 1098 [Siege of Antioch](#), a poor monk named [Peter Bartholomew](#) reported that he had a vision in which [St. Andrew](#) told him that the Lance of Longinus was buried in the [Church of St. Peter](#) in [Antioch](#). After much digging in the cathedral, Peter apparently discovered a lance.



Despite the doubts of many, including the papal legate [Adhemar of Le Puy](#), the discovery of the Holy Lance of Antioch inspired the starving Crusaders to break the siege and secure the city.

Another lance has been preserved at [Kraków, Poland](#), since at least the 13th Century. However, German records indicate that it was a copy of the Vienna lance. Emperor [Henry II](#) had it made with a small sliver of the original lance. Another copy was given to the Hungarian king at the same time.

The story told by [William of Malmesbury](#) of the giving of the Holy Lance to King [Athelstan of England](#) by [Hugh Capet](#) seems to be due to a misconception.

In his opera [Parsifal](#), [Richard Wagner](#) identifies the Holy Spear with 2 items that appear in [Wolfram von Eschenbach](#)'s medieval poem

[Parzival](#), a bleeding spear in the Castle of the [Grail](#) and the spear that has wounded the [Fisher King](#).



The opera's plot concerns the consequences of the spear's loss by the Knights of the Grail and its recovery by Parsifal. Having decided that the blood on the Spear was that of the wounded Savior, Jesus is never named in the opera, Wagner has the blood manifest itself in the Grail rather than on the spearhead.

The Spear of Destiny is a name given to the Lance of Longinus in various accounts that attribute mystical powers to it. Many of these have originated in recent times, and several popular New Age and conspiracy theory books have popularized the legend of the Spear.

Trevor Ravenscroft's 1973 book, *The Spear of Destiny* (as well as a later book, *The Mark of the Beast*), claims that [Adolf Hitler](#) started World War II in order to capture the spear, with which he was obsessed. At the end of the war the spear came into the hands of US General George S. Patton. According to legend, losing the spear would result in death, and that was fulfilled when Hitler committed suicide and Patton died in a car accident in an army camp.

Dr. Howard A. Buechner, MD, professor of medicine at [Tulane](#) and then [Louisiana State University](#), wrote 2 books on the spear. Buechner was a retired colonel with the U.S. Army who served in World War II and had written a book about the [Dachau massacre](#).

He claims he was contacted by a former [U-boat](#) submariner, the

pseudonymous “Capt. Wilhelm Bernhart”, who claimed the spear currently on display in Vienna is a fake. “Bernhart” said the real spear was sent by Hitler to [Antarctica](#) along with other Nazi treasures, under the command of Col. [Maximilian Hartmann](#).

In 1979 Hartmann allegedly recovered the treasures. Bernhart presented Buechner with the log from this expedition as well as pictures of the objects recovered, claiming that after the Spear of Destiny was recovered, it was hidden somewhere in Europe by a Nazi secret society. After contacting most of the members of the alleged expedition and others involved, including [Hitler Youth](#) Leader [Artur Axmann](#), Buechner became convinced the claims were true.

The Lance appears in many [DC Comics](#) titles. In DC continuity, the Spear of Destiny has had many owners over the years, most notably Adolf Hitler who used it to prevent superpowered characters (particularly those vulnerable to magic) from interfering in World War II. As Allied forces closed in, Hitler used a dark magical ritual to taint the Spear itself and cause anyone who used it to become corrupted by the spear’s magical powers.

In the movie [The Librarian: Quest for the Spear](#), the protagonist Flynn Carsen searches for the Spear of Destiny.

The 1992 video game [Spear of Destiny](#) features [Wolfenstein](#) protagonist [B.J. Blazkowicz](#) attempt to recover the Spear of Destiny from [Nazi Germany](#).



The anime franchise [Neon Genesis Evangelion](#) features an Evangelion-sized weapon named the “Lance of Longinus”. The [Rebuild of Evangelion](#) series also features it.

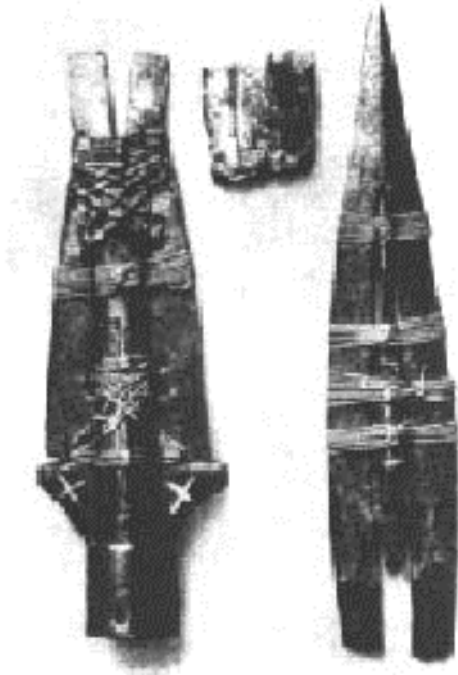
In the movie [Constantine](#), the spear is used to help the devil’s son come to earth.



The Lance, referred to as the “Spear of Longinus”, is a plot point in season 3 of the 2011 TV series [The Borgias](#). Pope Alexander VI commissions the Jewish population of Rome to locate the Spear for him, as he would like a holy relic to display in the Vatican in time for

the [New Year](#) celebration in 1500.

In exchange, the Jews will be mainstreamed into the Papal States' economy. Alexander's enemies attempt to discredit the Jews' discovery to keep them marginalized and interfere with the Borgia, but they successfully expose the Cardinals' spear as a fake. It is left vague as to whether the Jews' spear is genuine, and as to whether Alexander believed them.



As you can see there is quite a lot of mystery, interest and intrigue associated with the Lance of Longinus. How anyone not could find this interesting is something beyond our scope of imagination.

We hope you enjoyed today's adventure and look forward to having you back again soon. Till next time, Don't Stop Rome-ing!

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HISTORICAL SITES

PYRAMID OF CESTIUS (#38)

JUNE 3, 2016 | LEAVE A COMMENT



Welcome to *Rome Across Europe!*

Today we continue examining the list of [52 Ancient Roman Monuments](#) which had been claimed as a “must see” by [Touropia Travel Experts](#). The last location we had checked out was #39 – the Theatre of Sabratha.

Today we're going to where it all started, [Rome](#). We bring to you #38 – the [Pyramid of Cestius](#)!



The Pyramid of Cestius is an ancient [pyramid](#) in Rome, near the [Porta San Paolo](#) and the [Protestant Cemetery](#). It stands at a fork between 2 ancient roads, the [Via Ostiensis](#) and another road that ran west to the Tiber along the approximate line of the modern [Via della Marmorata](#). Due to its incorporation into the city's fortifications, it is today one of the best-preserved ancient buildings in Rome.



The pyramid was built about 18 BC–12 BC as a [tomb](#) for Gaius Cestius, a magistrate and member of one of the four great [religious corporations](#) in Rome, the [Septemviri Epulonum](#). It is of brick-faced concrete covered with slabs of white marble standing on a [travertine](#) foundation, measuring 100 Roman feet square at the base and standing 125 Roman feet high.

In the interior is the burial chamber, a simple [barrel-](#)

vaulted rectangular cavity measuring 19.5 feet long, 13.45ft wide and 15.75ft high. When it was (re)discovered in 1660, the chamber was found to be decorated with frescoes, which were recorded by Pietro Santi Bartoli, but only the scantest traces of these now remain.



There was no trace left of any other contents in the tomb, which had been plundered in antiquity. The tomb had been sealed when it was built, with no exterior entrance.

A dedicatory inscription is carved into the east and west flanks of the pyramid, so as to be visible from both sides. It reads:

C · CESTIVS · L · F · POB · EPULO · PR · TR · PL

VII · VIR · EPOLONVM

Gaius Cestius, son of Lucius, of the *gens Pobilia*, member of the College of Epulones, praetor, tribune of the plebs, septemvir of the Epulones

Below the inscription on the east-facing side is a 2nd inscription recording the circumstances of the tomb's construction. This reads:

OPVS · APSOLVTVM · EX · TESTAMENTO · DIEBVS · CCCXXX

ARBITRATV

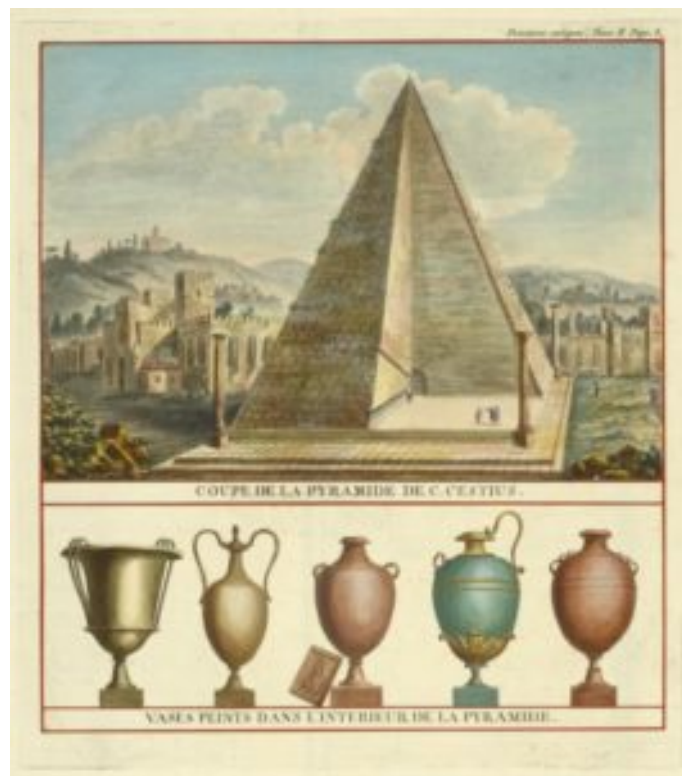
PONTI · P · F · CLA · MELAE · HEREDIS · ET · POTHY · L

The work was completed, in accordance with the will, in 330 days, by the decision of the heir [Lucius] Pontus Mela, son of Publius of the [Claudia](#), and Pothus, [freedman](#)



Another inscription on the east face is of modern origins, having been carved on the orders of [Pope Alexander VII](#) in 1663. Reading INSTAVRATVM · AN · DOMINI · MDCLXIII, it commemorates excavation and restoration work carried out in and around the tomb between 1660–62.

At the time of its construction, the Pyramid of Cestius would have stood in open countryside since tombs were forbidden within the city walls. Rome grew enormously during the imperial period, and, by the 3rd Century AD, the pyramid would have been surrounded by buildings.



It originally stood in a low-walled enclosure, flanked by statues, columns and other tombs. Two marble bases were found next to the pyramid during excavations in the 1660s, complete with fragments of the bronze statues that originally had stood on their tops. The bases carried an inscription recorded by Bartoli in an engraving of 1697:

M · VALERIVS · MESSALLA · CORVINVS ·

P · RVTILIVS · LVPVS · L · IVNIVS · SILANVS ·

L · PONTIVS · MELA · D · MARIVS ·

NIGER · HEREDES · C · CESTI · ET ·

L · CESTIVS · QVAE · EX · PARTE · AD ·

EVM · FRATRIS · HEREDITAS ·

M · AGRIPPAE · MVNERE · PER ·

VENIT · EX · EA · PECVNIA · QVAM ·

PRO · SVIS · PARTIEVS · RECEPER ·

EX · VENDITIONE · ATTALICOR ·

QVAE · EIS · PER · EDICTVM ·

AEDILIS · IN · SEPVLCRVM ·

C · CESTI · EX · TESTAMENTO ·

EIVS · INFERRE · NON · LICVIT ·

This identifies Cestius' heirs as [Marcus Valerius Messala Corvinus](#), a famous general; Publius Rutilius Lupus, an orator whose [father of the same name](#) had been [consul](#) in 90 BC; and Lucius Junius Silanus, a member of the distinguished gens [Junia](#). The heirs had set up the statues and bases using money raised from the sale of valuable cloths (*attalici*). Cestius had stated in his will that the cloths were to be deposited in the tomb, but this practice had been forbidden by a recent edict passed by the [aediles](#).



The sharply pointed shape of the pyramid is strongly reminiscent of the [pyramids of Nubia](#), in particular of the kingdom of [Meroë](#), which had been attacked by Rome in 23 BC. The similarity suggests that Cestius had possibly served in that campaign and perhaps intended the pyramid to serve as a commemoration.

His pyramid was not the only one in Rome. A larger one, the Pyramid of Romulus, of similar form but unknown origins stood between

the [Vatican](#) and the [Mausoleum of Hadrian](#) but was dismantled in the 16th Century by Pope Alexander VI and the marble was used for the steps of St. Peter's Basilica.

Some writers have questioned whether the Roman pyramids were modeled on the much less steeply pointed Egyptian pyramids exemplified by the famous pyramids of [Giza](#). However, the relatively shallow Giza-type pyramids were not exclusively used by the Egyptians.



Steeper pyramids of the Nubian type were favored by the [Ptolemaic Dynasty](#) of Egypt that had been brought to an end in the Roman conquest of 30 BC. The pyramid was, in any case, built during a period when Rome was going through a fad for all things Egyptian.

During the construction of the [Aurelian Walls](#) between 271 and 275, the pyramid was incorporated into the walls to form a triangular [bastion](#). It was one of many structures in the city to be reused to form part of the new walls, probably to reduce the cost and enable the structure to be built more quickly. It still forms part of a well-preserved stretch of the walls, a short distance from the *Porta San Paolo*.

The origins of the pyramid were forgotten during the [Middle Ages](#). The inhabitants of Rome came to believe that it was the tomb of [Remus](#) (*Meta Remi*) and that its counterpart near the Vatican was

the tomb of [Romulus](#), a belief recorded by [Petrarch](#).

Its true provenance was clarified by Pope Alexander VII's excavations in the 1660s, which cleared the vegetation that had overgrown the pyramid, uncovered the inscriptions on its faces, tunneled into the tomb's burial chamber and found the bases of 2 bronze statues that had stood alongside the pyramid.



The pyramid was an essential sight for many who undertook the [Grand Tour](#) in the 18th and 19th Centuries. It was much admired by architects, becoming the primary model for pyramids built in the West during this period.

In 2001, the pyramid's entrance and interior underwent restoration. In 2011, further work was announced to clean and restore the pyramid's badly damaged marble cladding, through which water seepage has endangered the frescoes within.

The restoration was sponsored by Japanese businessman Yuzo Yagi and his €1-million donation. Restoration works started in March 2013.



Until the end of restoration works in 2015, it was not possible for

visitors to access the interior, except by special permission typically only granted to scholars. Since the beginning of May 2015, the pyramid is open to the public every 2nd and 4th Saturday each month. Visitors must arrange their visit in advance.

The pyramid is the namesake of the [Piramide](#) station of the [Rome Metro](#).



We hope you enjoyed getting back to our favorite city in the world. Come back soon to see what is coming.

Till next time, Don't Stop Rome-ing!

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