



A Walk Through The Field of Mars: Rome's Ancient Campus Martius A Piedi

Paul W. Jacobs II

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No visitor to Rome can fully appreciate the city without walking through the warren of narrow streets in the historic center, or centro storico, an area about two-thirds the size of New York's Central Park bounded by the Capitoline Hill, the Piazza del Popolo, the Corso and the Tiber River. But the shops and buildings of the Renaissance and Baroque eras that line these streets hide what was once the entertainment center of ancient Rome. This was the Campus Martius, or Field of Mars, the swampy military mustering ground for the Republic's soldiers that changed over time to the site for the city's first stone theater, the first imperial baths, the remarkable Pantheon and many other beautiful temples, arches and colonnades. It is where Julius Caesar was assassinated, Augustus and his family were buried and where, according to tradition, Rome's founder Romulus ascended to the heavens.

With this self-guided walking tour, it is now possible to peel back the layers of development and rediscover this space that was so sacred to the Romans and that the ancient geographer Strabo claimed was so beautiful that it relegated the rest of the city to the status of "a mere accessory." Numerous plans and hyperlinks to Google Maps and other external resources make it easy to navigate through the modern city and find the Roman structures. The descriptions are enriched with the eyewitness observations of ancient writers as well as the statues and architectural elements that graced the extraordinary monuments.

The book is divided into three walks, each approximately 2-3 hours in length. While the walks can be taken in any order, they follow somewhat chronologically the development of the space from south (near the Capitoline Hill) to the north (in the vicinity of the Mausoleum of Augustus). It is designed as a companion resource to *Campus Martius - The Field of Mars in the Life of Ancient Rome* by Paul W. Jacobs, II and Diane Atnally Conlin published by Cambridge University Press.

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