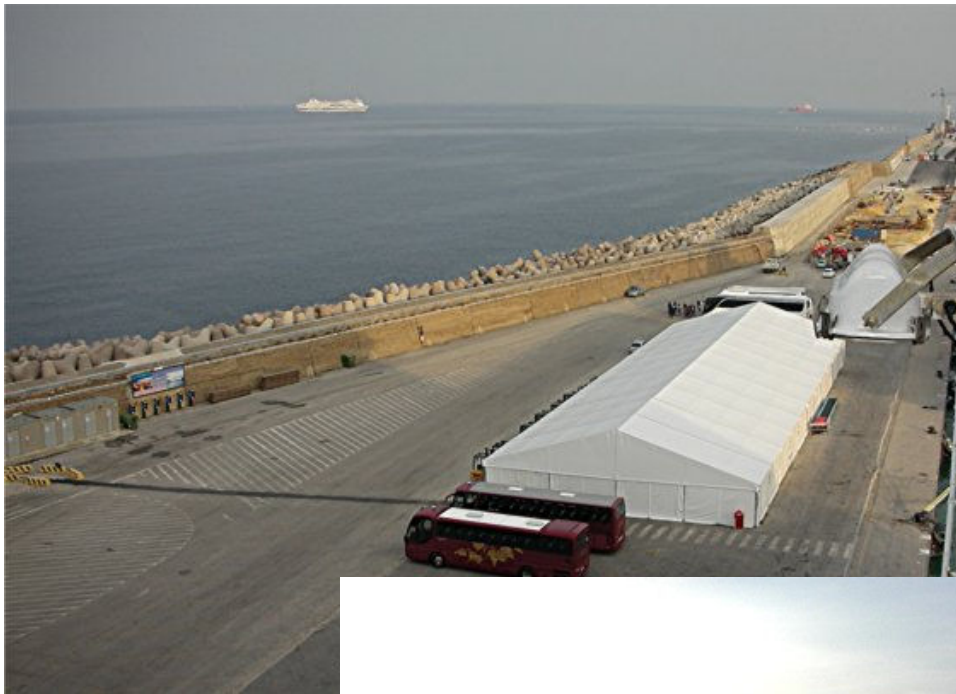


4/13/07 Day 88 – Rome and Civitavecchia - Friday, 13 April, 2007: We arrived in the harbor of Civitavecchia, Italy about 7am on a sunny but hazy day. Civitavecchia is the chief port city for Rome which is 37 miles to the southeast. Here is where we were located on the map.



The view of the port from the Amsterdam was typical of a busy commercial port with an emphasis on Cruise Ship service. Here are a few pictures.





The cruise terminal is shown on the left.

We took an 8am tour bus to Rome. There was a tour guide on the bus who gave us some background information for the major sights of Rome. He had a charming Italian accent and sly wit as he bantered with the passengers. It seems that Barbra Streisand was one of his favorite people

and he mentioned her every chance he got.

As we drove through the rolling hills covered with grass and some trees we saw some typical rural scenes such as these.



The tour arrangement was for the bus to drop us off at a specific location in the city of Rome. We would independently visit whatever sights we wanted to see and then be picked up for the return to the Amsterdam. The bus took us on a brief sight seeing trip in Rome on the way to the drop-off spot. We first saw the Piramide Cestia near the Piazza Di Porta S. Paolo. This monument in the form of a pyramid had a casing of white limestone. Although much smaller than the Egyptian pyramids it must appear much like the original pyramids when they were first constructed over 4000 years ago with their white limestone casing.



The bus then took us by the Coliseum and finally dropped us off in the north part of Rome near Piazzale Flaminio where there was room for many tour buses to park. We arrived about 10am and we were to return to the bus at 4:45pm for the return trip.

We had visited Rome in 2005 and spent a lot of time touring the Vatican and Coliseum so we wanted to concentrate this time on Spanish Steps, Trevi Fountain, The Forum, and Pantheon. The temperature was just right for walking so we set off with our map toward the first destination which was the Spanish Steps. After about 15 minutes we arrived at the Spanish Steps and found them busy but not difficult to navigate. They were beautiful with the spring flowers blooming and we took a few photographs of the scene.



Our next destination was Trevi Fountain or Piazza Di Trevi which we reached in about 45 minutes. This is the fountain featured in the popular old movie, "Three Coins in the Fountain". Legend has it if you should turn your back to the fountain and toss in some coins over your shoulder into the fountain then you will return to Rome some day. We had tossed some coins in two years ago on our first trip to Rome and it seemed to be working. The Fountain is a popular tourist attraction and there were plenty of people there. Here is a view of the crowd milling around the Fountain.



Everyone was polite and even though crowded it was not difficult to find space available the edge of the fountain. We went through the coin tossing ritual again. By luck we met up with Glen and Jennifer Smith who are neighbors on the Amsterdam and they took this picture for us.

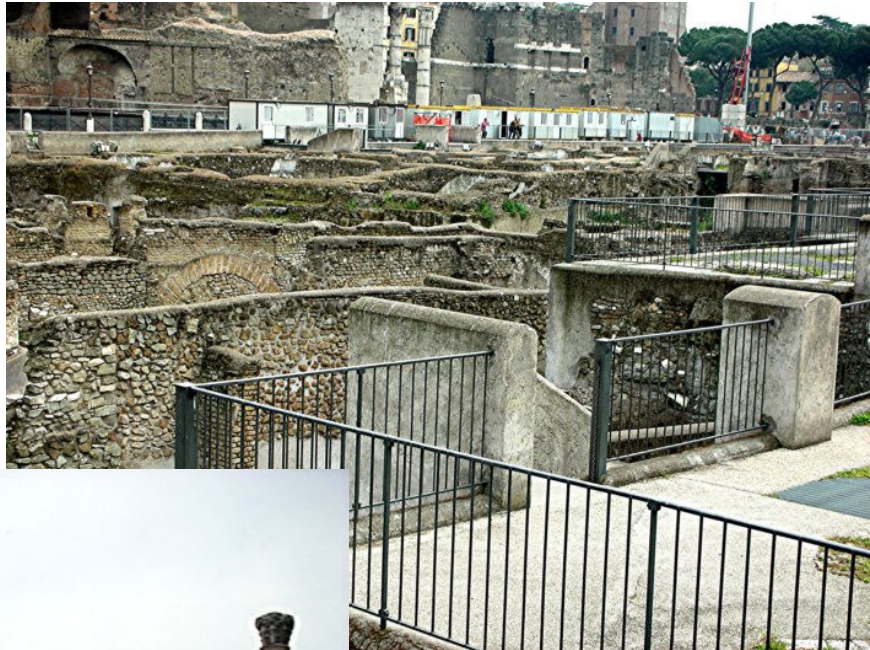
We didn't hang around Trevi Fountain very long before we headed off to see the Roman Forum and The Coliseum. The Forum was a large meeting place near the Coliseum in ancient Rome where community social events and political activity took place. We walked to that site from Trevi Fountain in about 30

minutes. We spent about an hour roaming around the ruins which have been uncovered and

fenced off so they can be viewed without being damaged. The ruins are in a large park called Foro Romano. Here are some of our pictures.

These close packed building walls on the right were separated from the rest of the Foro Romano park by the wide and busy street called Via Dei Fori Imperiali.

The ruins that were pictured in Orlin's high school Latin text book are shown below. They were



closer to the Coliseum and south of a street called Via Dei Fori Imperiali. The Forum ruins were pleasantly uncrowded so it was possible to stroll through them in a leisurely fashion and take pictures as shown below.



We took time out for lunch.

We next walked out of the Forum at the location of Constantine's Arch as shown on the right. From the edge of the Forum it is possible to see both Constantine's Arch and the Coliseum.



On the Amsterdam there is a program



called "Exploration Speakers" where scholars and people with specialized experience are invited on board for a few days or several weeks and they give periodic lectures on their specialty. Recently Dr. Howard Clarke, who is a specialist in ancient Mediterranean history, gave a series of lectures. He provided some detail about the function of the Coliseum that we had not known about.

We had the impression that the Coliseum was just the scene of one killing after the other as entertainment for a blood thirsty crowd of Romans. His view of the Coliseum was that indeed it was the scene of killing but it also provided a valuable civics lesson for the average Roman and helped to knit the city and nation together. There was no mass media communication system but the average Roman could go to the Coliseum occasionally and see his government leaders and important groups within his culture. For example, important people in Roman life had assigned seats in the Coliseum. The average citizen could see the emperor sitting in his vaulted place surrounded by the high officers of government. They would be surrounded by leaders and workers in the various crafts, such as masons, plumbers, carpenters, shipwrights, and others that kept Rome and the rest of the nation functioning. The citizen could see that his government was made up of real people worth working, fighting and dying for. In this way the Coliseum contributed to the stability and security of the Roman nation.

Dr. Clarke also provided some interesting insight about how the spectacles were carried out in the Coliseum. He said there were three basic types of entertainment all involving men who were captives or slaves of the Roman Empire. The lowest type was men who fought animals. At that stage in human history, animals were considered a real threat to human survival so there was a lot of enjoyment in seeing a dangerous animal killed. Lions, tigers and other dangerous animals would be put in the arena with an armed man and usually the man would win the battle but the other possibility created the excitement.

The next type of entertainment was a lightly armed man (perhaps just a net and a trident fork) fighting a heavily armored man. This provided fun for people who like to cheer for the underdog and, in fact, the fast, lightly armed person could sometimes win because of the more rapid movement that was possible.

The top class of entertainment was the large, strong and heavily armored gladiators. A gladiator who won many matches could achieve some measure of social standing not possible for other slaves or captives.

The men fighting animals was usually part of the late morning show, say 9am to noon. The fighting of lightly armored versus heavily armored men took place in the early afternoon, perhaps noon to 4pm. The main event of heavily armored gladiators took place in the later afternoon with much fanfare.

We seem to be always trying to connect in some way with the ancient people of our world and the detail added by Dr. Clarke helped put the spectacles of the Coliseum in more everyday terms that indirectly could be related to our current culture of government, politics, sports and entertainment.

Back to the current tourist scene. We noticed that in some places the Coliseum had many large pock marks in the exterior limestone as shown on the right. The guide had earlier pointed out that these holes in the



limestone were used as part of the system to hold smooth limestone facing stones on the walls of the original structure. As the Roman government decayed, the Coliseum became a quarry for stones to build houses, government buildings and churches. It was in this quarry mode that most of the damage to the Coliseum took place. This brings Dr. Clarke back into the picture.

Dr. Clarke said that Christians may have been martyred in the Coliseum but there is no documentation or other evidence for such activity in the Coliseum. The martyring of Christians probably took place in another arena built by the emperor Caligula. However, the legend of Christian martyrs in the Coliseum probably saved the structure from being carted away in small pieces for other buildings. One of the Christian emperors noted what was happening to the Coliseum and used the legend of Christian martyrs there to build a case that the Coliseum should be preserved as a monument to those early Christian martyrs. The piece by piece dismantling of the Coliseum was thus halted and we have a wonderful tourist attraction today.



Barbara couldn't resist the opportunity to get a picture of her Oak Ridge Library Card with the Coliseum in the background.

We stayed on the sidewalk across the street from the Coliseum. A couple years ago we had toured it fairly well and didn't feel the need to do it again. Now it was on to the Pantheon where we had never been. Our route took us up Via Dei Fori Imperiali street in the direction of the Pantheon. We had picked up a map on the bus that gave good detail on street names and Rome is wonderful in providing clear street names on every corner. The print on the map was a bit too small for Orlin's aging eyeballs but it was possible to navigate the busy streets.



After about a 45 minute walk from the Coliseum and we found ourselves in front of the Pantheon building.



There was no lack of a crowd at the Pantheon but it was not difficult to find an open spot and gaze at the wonderful structure. One thing that comes through immediately is the pock marked limestone above the columns and below the roof line.

We surmise that, like the Coliseum here in Rome and the Parthenon in Athens, these pits served some purpose for attaching decorative stone or metal pieces to the front of the building.

After getting as much of the Pantheon as we wanted we walked back to the Trevi Fountain in about 15 minutes. It was even more crowded than when we first visited earlier in the day. We started walking back to the bus pickup point but quickly decided to take a taxi. The taxi driver could speak only limited English but with the help of our map we

got our destination across to him. The ride took us by the Spanish Steps and back to the bus stop at a cost of about \$15 USD. Not too bad for a big city.

The ride back to Civitavecchia and the Amsterdam took about 1.5 hours over fine highways with right hand drive traffic. When we arrived back in our cabin on the ship Barbara got a nice welcome from our room steward, Bayu. He had decorated the room with balloons and streamers for her birthday which was today. If we have to grow older it's hard to imagine a better birthday than today.



After enjoying the room decorations for a moment we headed up to the Lido Restaurant since it was too late for dinner in the main dining room.



Just by luck we ran into Paul and Maria Bradley and had dinner with them. That's always a good time. The Lido Restaurant for the evening meal has a combination buffet and table service arrangement that we have never quite learned how to use. Luckily, Paul is a master at that fine art and got us through the meal with minimum effort on our part.

This brought another day to a close. The Amsterdam got underway about 10pm headed for Livorno, Italy. Tomorrow we tour Lucca and Pisa, Italy.

