

Rome-1

Our flights from Denver to Rome had a plane change in Atlanta. All went well, and we arrived late Friday morning. We stayed at a hotel outside Rome and had Friday afternoon free for walking outside. I followed a street for a couple kilometers along the edges of a golf course and mostly looked at the birds. Small lizards moved quickly along the ground. There were large muskrats in two locations. Olive trees had both green fruit and ripe black fruit that was falling to the ground.



Lizard



Golf course ponds



Olives



Hooded Crow



Gray Heron



Eurasian Tree Sparrow



Muskrat



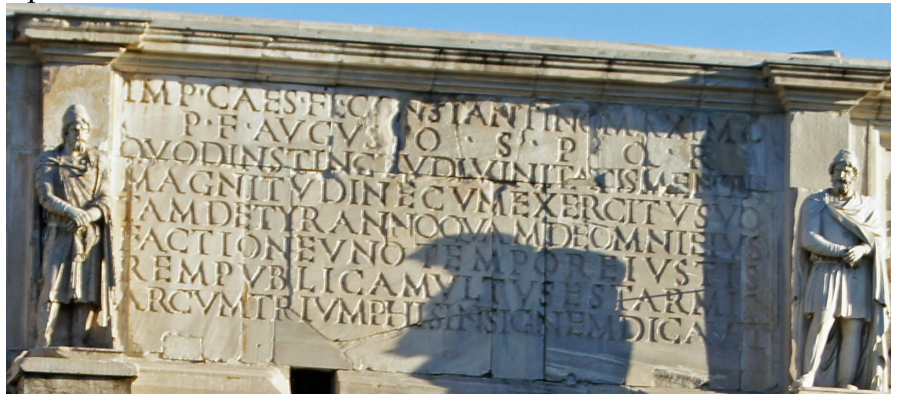
Italian Sparrow

The Hooded Crow is black and gray. The Italian and Tree Sparrows are similar.

Saturday morning began the 70-year birthday of Gail, my wife of nearly 47 years. Our tour group went into the historic area of Rome by 3 busses. The first monument was the largest Roman arch in the world. The words at the top proclaim the emperor as Constantine the Great, who in about 312 A.D. proclaimed Christianity to be the official religion of Rome, ending the general persecution.



Arch of Constantine



The Colosseum was at the right. We then walked on some of the original pavement stones from two thousand years ago. The arch of Titus was ahead.







Inside the arch of Titus are historical details. Titus conquered and destroyed Jerusalem in 70 AD. He brought back to Rome many Jews as slaves. He also brought valuable gold and silver items from the Jewish Temple, some shown in the carving at the left. The Temple silver trumpets are shown on the



right side of that image. The large (70 kg?) 7-branched gold minora (candlestick) is shown at the left side. (A replica will be seen in Jerusalem.) The tremendous amounts of gold and silver from the capture of Judea were used to pay for and build the Roman Colosseum from 70 to 80 AD. I had not known that.



From the Titus arch we looked beyond to the area that had been the center of Roman government. Some of the pieces remain. Our guide had a book showing present views. For each view there was a transparent overlay on which an artist drew what the ancient architecture likely resembled. Important historical events took place within the short distance of our view. After passing through or beside some more recent, yet still very old, buildings we went to the Colosseum. Every doorway was numbered because people had assigned seating and had to enter through their assigned doorway. Inside, the columns had holes. Some were where pieces of iron used to hold marble coatings. Other holes were more modern to hold wooden beams for dwellings of poor people. Much of the marble rock and the iron fittings were stolen over the ages (quarried) for use in newer buildings and monuments. Some marble remained.



Doorways LII and LIII





Beneath the central floor of the arena were hallways and chambers for storing animals, people, and equipment used in the entertainments. A small model showed examples of manual elevators that were used to hoist the things higher to the main level at the proper time.



The site of the Colosseum is where former emperor Nero had a small lake. He had died several years prior to the land use change made by the Colosseum.

For our tour group it was very interesting to connect the timings and particular buildings and places with the presence of famous people of Roman and Biblical history. I had not known that people took the stones and iron from old buildings to use in the construction of new buildings, leaving the older ones in ruins. That was being lazy. It was easier to steal from existing structures than to quarry new stone from far away. In a similar way, the marble of the Colosseum was taken to build the Vatican buildings that exist today. We will visit the Vatican when our tour returns to Rome.

Dr. Ed Holroyd,  
24 October 2016, as we leave the island nation of Malta