

## TOUR 1- FASCIST ARCHITECTURE AND FORO ITALICO

### Architettura fascista e Foro Italico

Fascism's legacy is very present in Rome.

In three places – EUR, the University district and the Foro Italico (originally called Foro Mussolini) the regime created the monumental, architectural complexes willing to promote the dream of its mission.

A city within a city, the Foro Italico complex was dedicated to youth, spirit and physical fitness – all Fascist priorities.

Foro Italico, formerly Foro Mussolini, and renamed after the II WW, is a sport complex, built between 1928 and 1938 under the design of Enrico Del Debbio assisted by rationalist Luigi Moretti ([link to the architects](#)).

Inspired by the Roman forums of the Imperial age, its design is a prominent example of Italian fascist architecture started by Mussolini.

The best to appreciate the Foro is to approach from the Flaminio district, crossing the Duca d'Aosta bridge, itself an example of fascist modernism, completed in 1939.

There, the most salient symbol of the Foro and the Fascist regime is a 60- foot obelisk, known as 'the Monolith' with the name Mussolini prominently displayed.

To the left of the monument is the Natatorium (the pool building) and to the right an enormous brown red painted building (the color chosen to evoke antiquity): the Accademia di Educazione Fisica (Academy of Physical Education), also known as the H Palace for its plan shape as seen from the air.

Nearby there is the white Carrara marble facade (also originally in rosso-bruno) of the Foresteria del Sud (South Guest Quarters), early redone apparently in order to be in accord with Moretti's Casa delle Armi, (nowadays inaccessible) but considered today to be the most important piece of architecture of the entire complex.

Back to the obelisk, in the Piazzale dell'Impero (Grand Piazza of the Empire), there are mosaics of Gino Severini and other distinguished artists, each with a fascist or imperial theme and slogans and commemorative fascists achievements. A few ones were added after the war celebrating Fascism's fall and the emergence of a democratic state. The Piazzale was designed by Luigi Moretti.

It is home to numerous sport events; mainly interesting are the Stadio dei Marmi (Stadium of the Marbles) and the adjoining building which is the seat of the Italian National Olympic Committee (CONI), originally built for the purposes of the Fascist Male Academy of Physical Education.

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## Stadio dei Marmi (Stadium of the Marbles)

It was designed in the 1920s as a complement to the annexed Academy of Physical Education to be used by its students for training.

Originally designed by Enrico Del Debbio, the construction was completed in 1928 and inaugurated in 1932. It has Carrara marble steps lined by 59 (60 in the original project), marble statues in classical style portraying athletes, each offered by the provinces of Italy and representing an Italian city, together a symbol of Italian unity, each alone a representation of the ideal Fascist body.

## Stadio del Nuoto

The Stadio Olimpico del Nuoto (Olympic Swimming Stadium) was inaugurated in 1959, designed by the architects Enrico Del Debbio and Annibale Vitellozzi to host the swimming diving, water polo, and swimming portion of the modern pentathlon events for the 1960 Summer Olympics.

The main pool in Foro Italico has stunning 1930s mosaics by some of the Fascist era's best artists, including Gino Severini and Angelo Canevari.

## Stadio Olimpico (Olympic Stadium)

It is the main and largest sports facility of Rome; the structure is intended primarily for football, but also home for the Italian National Rugby Union team and Italy's national athletic stadium. It also occasionally hosts concerts and events.

Throughout its history, the Stadio Olimpico has undergone several substantial restructurings and complete restyling.

In its first stages, it was named Stadio dei Cipressi (Cypress Stadium), it was designed and constructed within the larger project of the Foro Mussolini.

Construction began in 1927, under the direction of turinese engineer Angelo Frisa and architect Enrico Del Debbio and was finished in 1932. The construction of the masonry stands wasn't foreseen, the original stands consisted of grassy terraces.

In 1937 the construction of a second tier of stairs was started but the work was interrupted in 1940 due to the outbreak of the war.

On December 1950, the site was reopened for the completion of the stadium, but the scarcity of funds and the environmental characteristics of the area led to a less ambitious version than envisaged. In 1951 the direction of work was entrusted to architect Annibale Vitellozzi, reaching the capacity of about 100.000

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people (hence the name of Stadio dei Centomila) which the stadium was called before 1960 and in the view of the XVII Olympiad.

During the 1960 Summer Olympics the stadium hosted the opening and closing ceremonies and the athletics competitions.

In 1990, for the FIFA World Cup the facility was the subject of an extensive enhancement, and the work was entrusted to a team of designers, including the original designer Annibale Vitellozzi.

Ultimately Olimpico was entirely demolished and rebuilt in reinforced concrete, and all sectors of the stadium were covered with full coverage in tensile structure white, also installed were backless seats in blue plastic and two giants screens.

## Ponte Duca d'Aosta

Also known as Foro Italico Bridge, it crosses the Tiber between Lungotevere Flaminio and Piazza Lauro De Bosis. It is dedicated to Emanuele Filiberto the Duke of Aosta who was a commandant of the III army during I WW. It is located perfectly on the axe of the Mussolini obelisk, and it represented the main entrance to the former Foro Mussolini.

In 1935 the Ministry of Public Works opened a competition for the project and realization of the bridge, and many architects presented their project, between them the same Del Debbio and Morpurgo of the entire complex.

The competition was won by architect Vincenzo Fasolo who realized a concrete bridge with a unique arcade, even if apparently they are three, the two lateral not being supported in the river.

The works started in 1936 and were completed in 1939.

The big central arcade measures 100 meters, with different sections for the ribs and with a full section of 30 m in the middle, so that the entire structure results very thin. The lateral arcades are 25 meters wide. The total length of the bridge is 220,30 m and the width is 30 meters.

The entire work is totally covered by travertine from Tivoli, and at the two ends there are sculpted decorations showing the enterprises of the Third Army on the Italian rivers Isonzo Tagliamento, Sile e Adige, realized by four different sculptors Drei, Ponzi, Valenti and Consorti.

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## Palazzo della Farnesina

Piazzale della Farnesina, 1

[web.esteri.it/registrazionevisite/](http://web.esteri.it/registrazionevisite/)

The Palazzo della Farnesina is an Italian government building in the Foro Italico area; it was designed in 1935 and it has housed the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs since its completion in 1959, varying only slightly from its original design.

The nine floors building was designed in 1935 by architects Enrico Del Debbio, Arnaldo Foschini and Vittorio Morpurgo, interesting because the project won a design competition. Its massive look reflects the decline of rationalist modernism and the rise of a most monumental architectural style. The huge piazza was intended to showcase enormous Fascist rallies (600,000 people) and was to include a memorial to the 'caduti fascisti'.

It was originally designated to be the headquarters of Italy's National Fascist Party.

Construction was halted in 1943 and throughout World War II. Despite being titled a 'palace' (palazzo) which suggest an ornate royal or noble building, it is a functional structure, having nothing in common with ancient Roman palaces.

The facade consists of travertine, and though this type of facade is commonly linked to the rationalist style of Giuseppe Terragni, it is derived from contemporary fascist ideals.

The building consists of more than 1300 rooms, is 169 meters in width and 51 meters tall, and has a total internal volume of approximately 720,000 cubic meters, comparable in size to the Caserta Palace and is one of the largest buildings in Italy.

Called 'Farnesina', the word has been used synonymously to refer to the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, this name comes from the land on which it rises, which were called the Farnese Gardens (Orti della Farnesina) due to the ownership of Pope Paul III, Alessandro Farnese.

Since 1999, with '*Farnesina Porte Aperte*' it was launched the initiative to allow public access to the collections of the Palazzo della Farnesina, opening galleries and collections with a series of exhibitions with a focus on 20<sup>th</sup> century Italian art through Art Nouveau, Futurism, abstract art, Arte Povera, Transavangarde and the New Roman School.

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## Officine Farneto

Via Monti della Farnesina,77 – T 06 8339 6746

[www.officinefarneto.it](http://www.officinefarneto.it)

Officine Farneto is a recently restored building, part of the Foro Mussolini (now Foro Italico complex), an Enrico Del Debbio work dating also of 1930s. It is another example of Fascist era architecture that continues to be rediscovered and rehabbed in 21<sup>st</sup> century Rome.

Del Debbio , who designed this construction site warehouse, was one of the premier Fascist era modernist architects and the chief architect for Mussolini.

Post WW II the building housed an artisan ceramics factory up until the 1970s. The owners took and restored the place for weddings,events, exhibitions, and any type of show or conference.

It has also a bistro and restaurant including a roof-garden.

## Ponte Milvio

The Milvian (or Mulvian) bridge (in italian also Ponte Mollo) located a few minutes from the Foro Italico, is a bridge over the Tiber.

It was an economically and strategically important bridge in the era of the Roman Empire and was the site of the famous battle of Milvian Bridge.

It was built by Consul Gaius Claudius Nero in 206 BC after he had defeated the Carthaginian army in the battle of Metaurus.

In 115 BC, consul Marcus Emilius Scaurus built a new bridge made of stone in the same position demolishing the old one.

In AD 312, Constantine I defeated his stronger rival Maxentius between this bridge and Saxa Rubra in the famous battle of the Milvian Bridge.

During the middle ages the bridge was renovated by a monk named Acuzio, and in 1429 Pope Martin V asked a famous architect Francesco da Genazzano to repair the collapsing bridge.

During the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, the bridge was modified by two artists, Giuseppe Valadier and Domenico Pigiani.

In recent history, in late 2006, the bridge began attracting couples, who used a lamp post of the bridge to attach love padlocks, than throwing the key between them into the Tiber: the ritual started after it was described in a popular book and movie 'I want you' of roman author Federico Moccia.