

Cammin Arte

ROME PAST AND FUTURE:

ARA PACIS AUGUSTAE



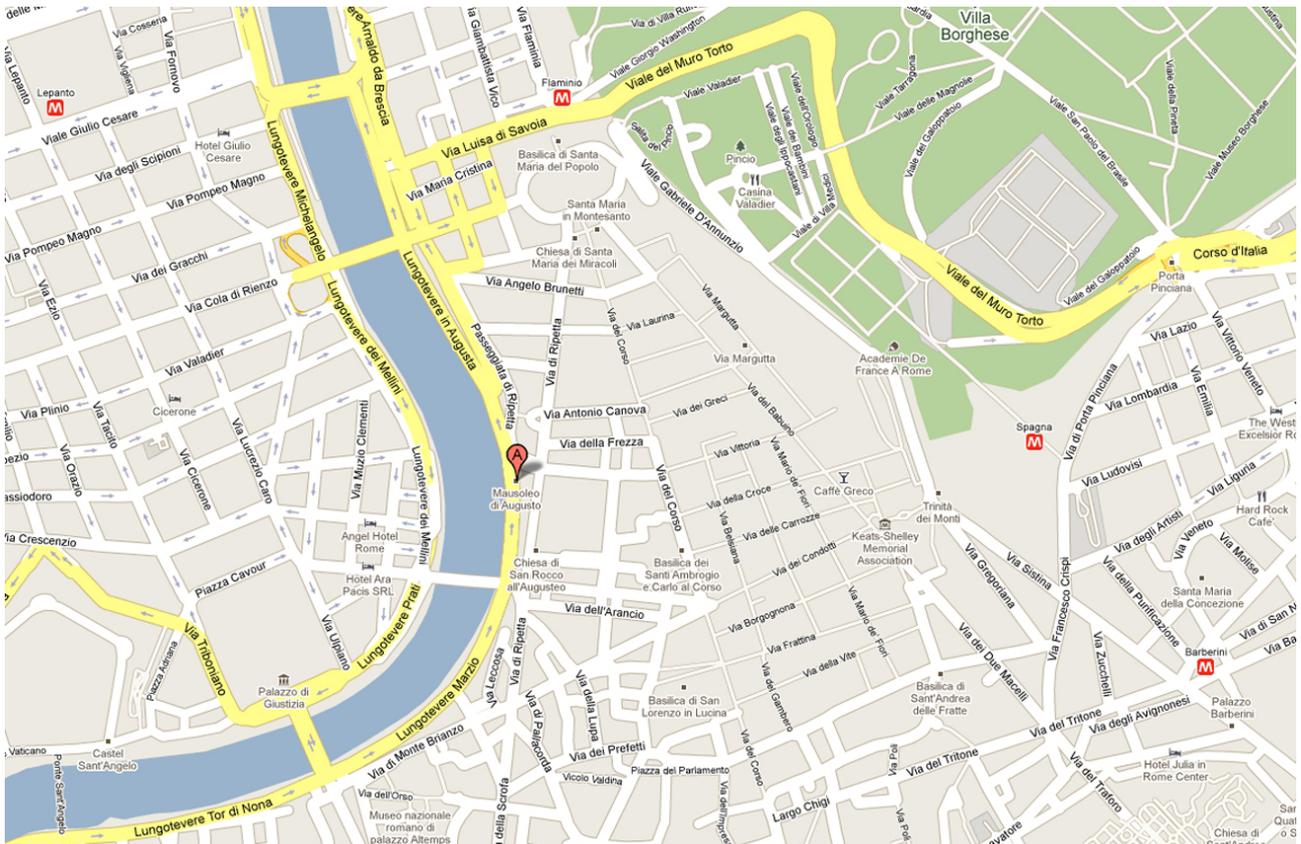
The Altar of Peace built to celebrate the glory of Julius Caesar and Augustus's family is today displayed in Richard Meier's building, which has become one of the most controversial museum complexes of recent times.

This altar was dedicated to the "Peace" brought to Rome by the emperor Augustus and was built near to the Via

Flaminia, the road which lies under the modern Via del Corso, but after its discovery (1937-1938) it was relocated near to the Mausoleum of Augustus. The Ara Pacis is made up of a marble enclosure around an inner altar which can be reached up a flight of steps and is perhaps the most eloquent example of the official art of the Augustan period. The style is exquisitely classical, with a few departures into the Greek tradition only in the decorative motifs. The imperial family and their political and religious entourage are represented in a sculptural relief along the two longer sides of the marble enclosure. The shorter sides are decorated with symbolism relating to the birth and greatness of Rome. This is an extraordinary example of political propaganda, just like today images were intelligently employed in order to gain broad popular consensus.

Today the Ara Pacis is housed within a new purpose-built museum complex by one of the most famous of contemporary architects, Richard Meier. The building was inaugurated in April 2006 and substituted a previous one that had been built in 1938, although that project had never been completely concluded for a lack of time and money and had always been a provisional arrangement. The new complex seeks to maintain the monument's links with the surrounding urban environment through the use of specific materials, open spaces and transparent views, and simultaneously to protect it. Our visit will allow you to

evaluate how well the American architect has achieved that result, so you can add your opinion to the lively debate about the new museum that has been going on since its inauguration – on the one hand there are those who appreciate it and on the other those who find the large structure out of harmony with its surroundings.



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