

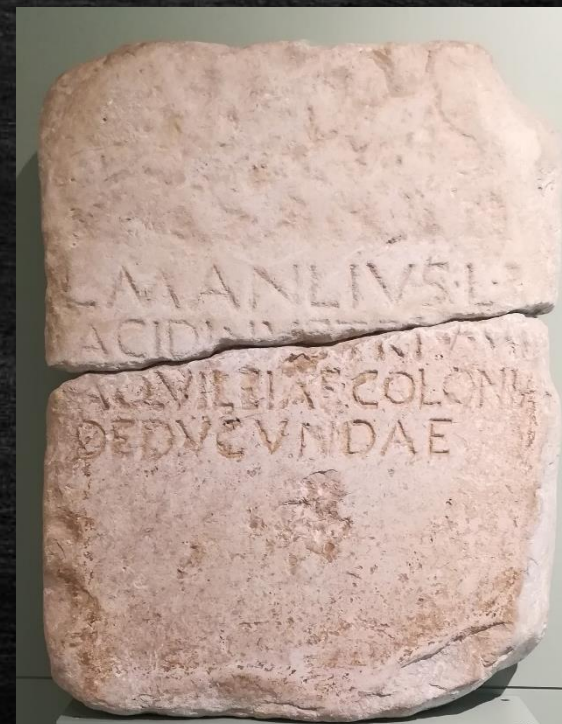
AQUILEIA

A Time Travel



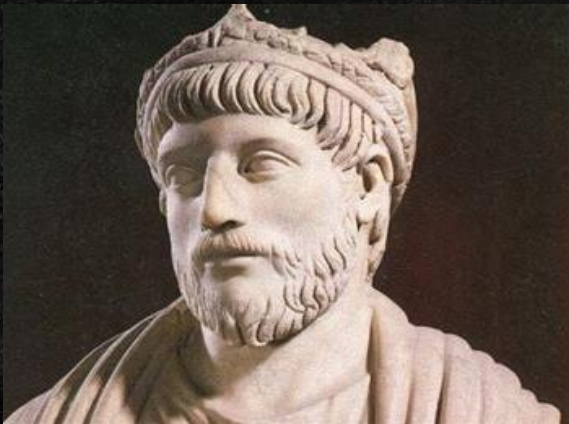
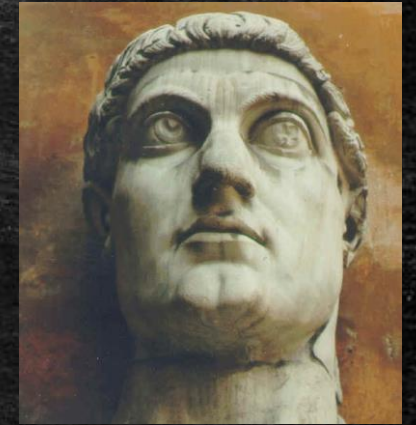
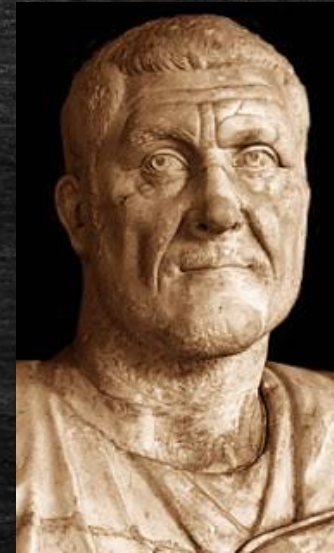
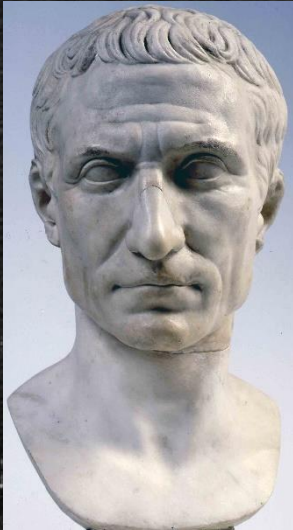
A brief history: the foundation

The Roman colonia of Aquileia was founded in 181 BC by three magistrates, triumviri Publius Cornelius Scipio Nasica, Gaius Flaminius and Lucius Manlius Acidinus: in the first room of the Archaeological Museum there are two very important archaeological pieces which witness this birth.



Military outpost, trading port, religious center

Aquileia was in a strategic position, between Adriatic and Balkan regions. Many emperors passed, fought or died here.



Fall and rebirth

- In 452 AD Attila, king of the Huns, destroyed Aquileia.
- Aquileia rose again as the headquarters of the Patriarch, but after the XIV century malaria forced people to leave the city, which today it's a quiet village.



The Cemetery

These are the only visible remains of the graveyards that were located outside the city walls, along the roads which connected Aquileia with the neighborhoods and with other cities of the Roman Empire.



A general view

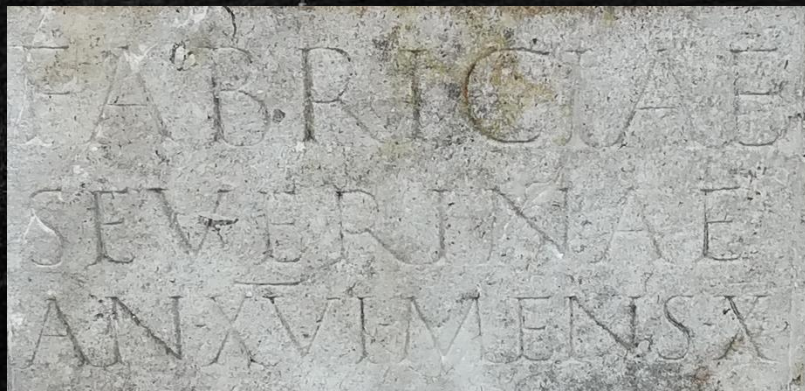
These 5 funerary enclosures belonged to 5 different families (Statia, anonymous, Iulia, Trebia, Cestia) and they were used from the I Century AD to the Late Antiquity (IV-V Century AD).



Some details of the decorations



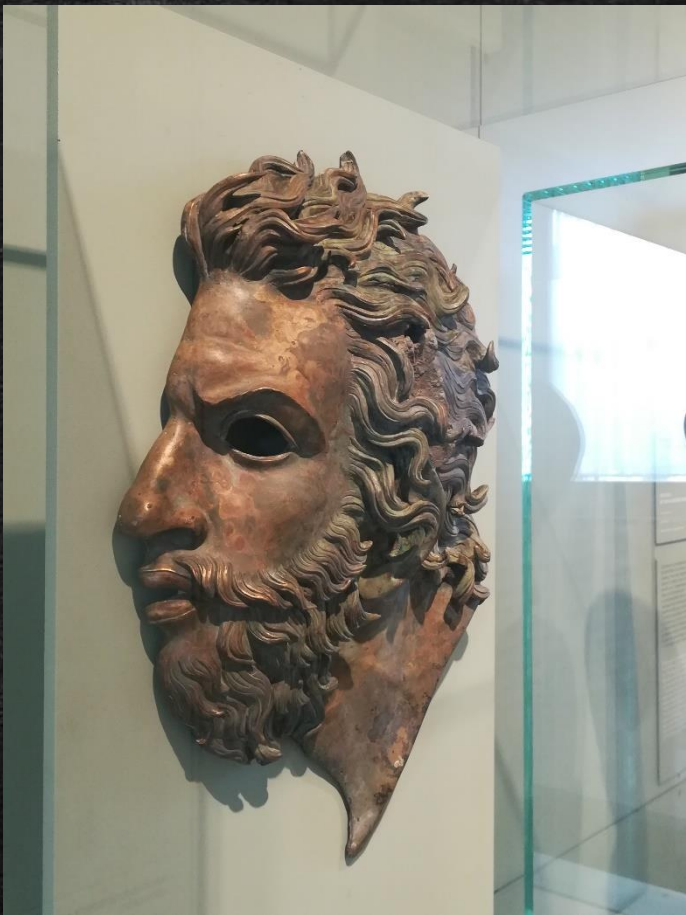
And some details of the inscriptions



The center of the power: the Forum

The Forum we see today is dated to Late Republican – first Imperial age (I century BC – I century AD): it's a porticoed square; a Basilica was built on the southern side. Porticoes were decorated with two particular subjects: Iuppiter Ammon and Medusa. They represent Empire's eastern and western borders. Probably you saw them also in Portogruaro...





Findings from the Forum

The trading place: the harbour

You are going to visit the harbour walking on the so called «Via Sacra» which was created in 1934.

On your left you will see the western docks, the only one visible today, made of blocks of limestone from Istria, on the confluence of two rivers, Natissa and Turro (originally 48 meters wide). There are some blocks with a vertical hole, probably used to anchor the ships. Behind the docks there was a long and narrow building, probably warehouses.

The quay, dated to I century AD, was fortified at the time of the siege of Maximinus the Thracian (238 AD) and of Julianus the Apostate (361 AD) with reuse material: columns, inscriptions, blocks coming from other places of the city.

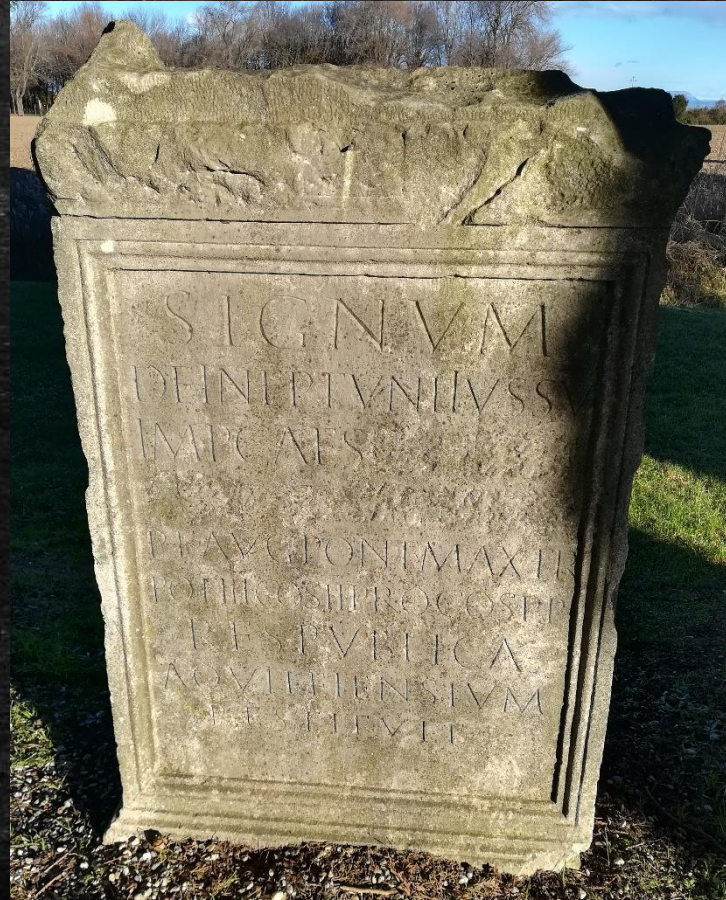




The harbour of Aquileia today



Some materials visible on the Via Sacra



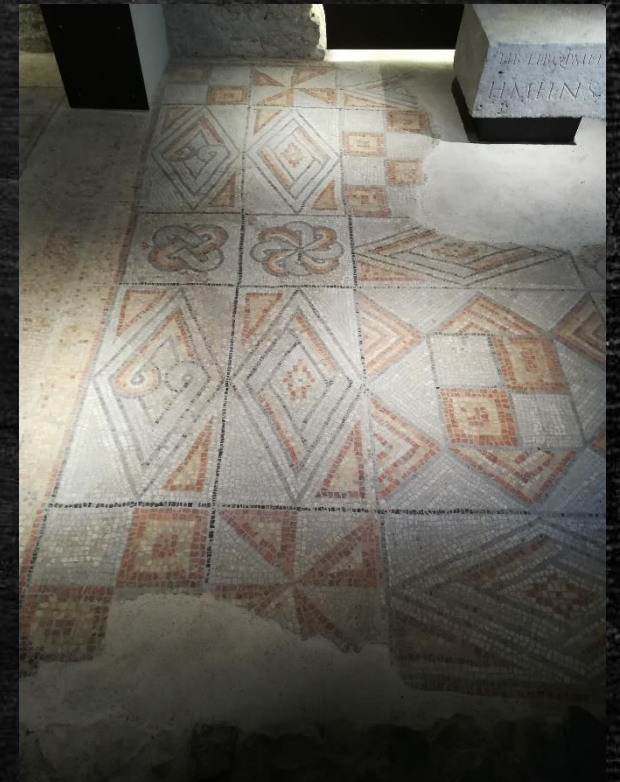
Aquileia and Christianity: The Basilica complex

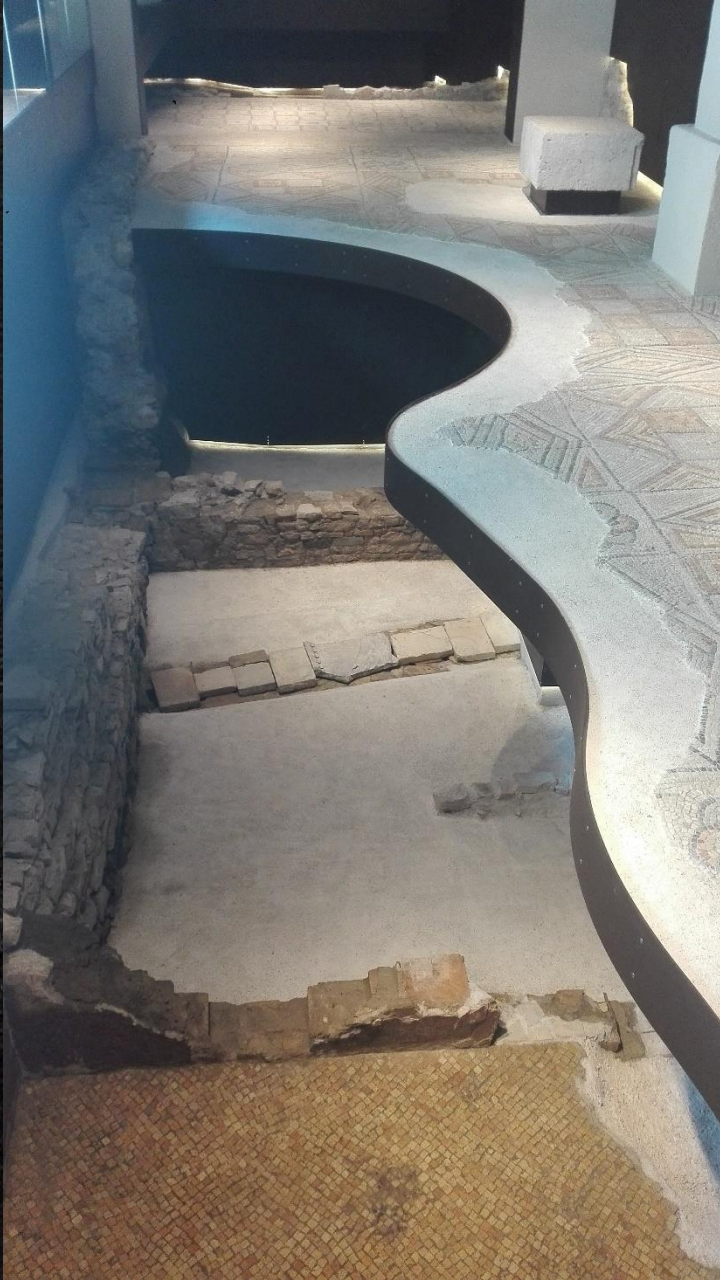
The Basilica complex is composed by three buildings:
the so called «Domus e Palazzo Episcopale», «Battistero
e Sudhalle», «Basilica, Cripta degli Affreschi e Cripta degli Scavi».



Domus e Palazzo Episcopale

The archaeological site named «House and Bishop's palace» offers the possibility to see four centuries of the life of Aquileia, from Imperial time to Late Antiquity.





The oldest and deepest level refers to an house built in I century AD (on the left); on the upper level there is another house, built between IV and V century AD, whose owner was the Bishop of Aquileia (on the right).

At the northern edge of the excavation area there is an apsed hall dated to IV century AD, probably part of the bishop's residence: the mosaic of the apse is a drapery pattern, the mosaic of the hall shows a lot of vegetation and animals motifs very similar to the ones in the Basilica.



Battistero e Sudhalle



The baptistery has an octagonal shape, as a symbol of the eight day, the Resurrection. On the south side of the baptistery there is the so called Sudhalle, an hall that flanked it; this hall was used during the medieval period as a cemetery. Very famous is the Peacock mosaic: some of the mosaic's *tesserae* were covered by gold.

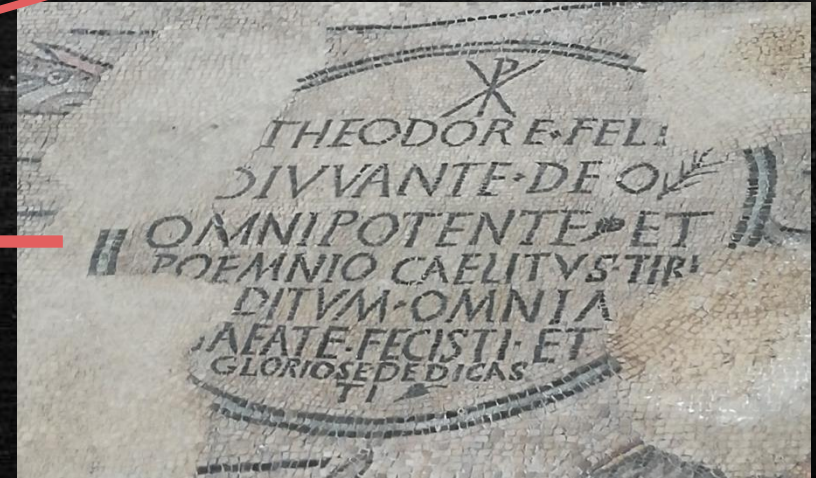
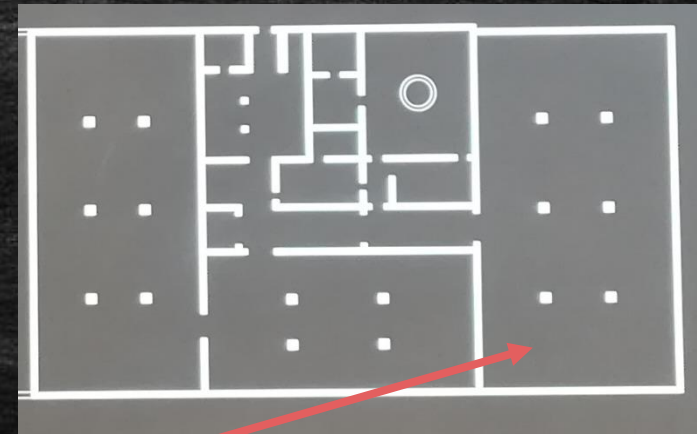
Basilica, Cripta degli Affreschi e Cripta degli Scavi

The Basilica of Aquileia, dedicated to the Virgin Mary and Saints Hermacora and Fortunatus, was built almost four times: the actual structure dates to the first half of the 11th century.



The first Basilica: The Theodorian halls

The most impressive thing is the 760 square metres floor, which is the largest paleochristian mosaic (IV century AD) of the western world. This mosaic belongs to the first construction: two rectangular parallel halls, South and North hall, connected by a rectangular transversal hall. To the east of this hall there was the baptistery. These halls were built by the bishop Theodor during the first half of the IV century AD, as witnessed by an inscription on the floor.





- These are some of the most famous scenes:
- The battle between Cock and Tortoise (another in the Northern hall).
- The Devil.
- The Good Sheperd.
- Images of some donors, men and women: today we could call them sponsors!
- A fishing scene with some episodes concerning Jonas.

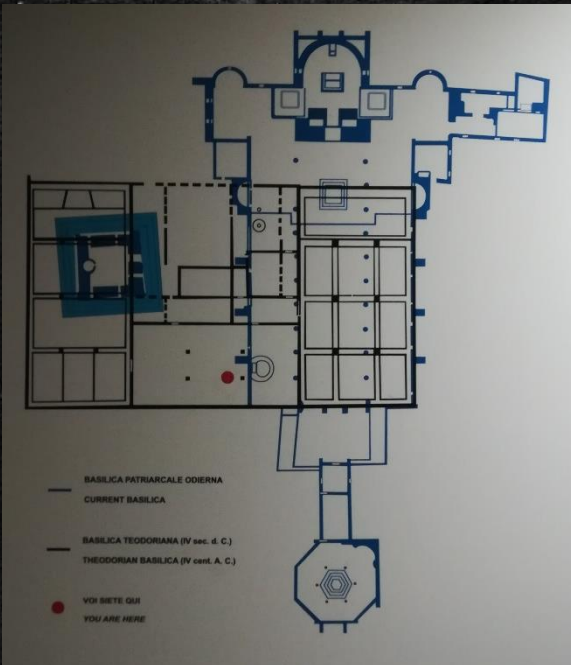
The Crypt of frescoes

The structure dates to 9th century, frescoes were painted in the second half of the 12th century: they represent the History of Saint Hermacora.



The Crypt of excavations

- It is an underground archaeological area situated underneath the garden surrounding the bell tower. We can see the remains of a Domus dated to the I century AD, part of the transversal hall and the floor of the Theodorian Northern hall full of mosaics representing animals with symbolic meanings.





And now... ENJOY THE
TOUR!