



THE AREA OF THE FORUM?*

* Partially disappeared structure

You can find this point of interest in Como – Path 7 - Stage 2

INFORMATION

Location: several clues lead us to believe that the Forum of Roman Como was in the area of today's Piazza San Fedele

Pavement: Piazza San Fedele is paved with cobblestones, with a central rectangular area of granite slabs that marks the location of the ancient grain market that was held here; granite slabs mark the roadways and pave the arcades

Architectural barriers: the churchyard of the Basilica is bordered by 6 low iron posts without chains; the portico on the opposite side of the square on the right is bordered by two memorial stones

Services: Car park in Viale Lecco / Via Dante (515 parking spaces); urban and suburban bus stops available outside the walled city; ATMs in Via Giovio and Piazza Duomo; Post office in Via Vittorio Emanuele; Pharmacies in via Adamo del Pero, via Natta, via Vittorio Emanuele; Municipality of Como in via Vittorio Emanuele

Leisure and catering: bars, restaurants, and shops of various kinds in Viale Lecco, Via Dante, Via Vittorio Emanuele; a small garden with playground in Via Vittorio Emanuele

Other information: the square is in a pedestrian area with limited traffic, like the entire historic centre

DESCRIPTION

The location of the ancient *Forum of Novum Comum* - which, in cities of Roman foundation, traditionally stood at the intersection of *Cardo Massimo* and *Decumanus Maximus* - is not known with certainty. In the case of Como, several clues lead us to think that the ancient Forum was located in what is now Piazza San Fedele. Over the centuries, numerous architectural fragments and epigraphs have come to light and, above all, a head of Augustus, which presumably belonged to a statue displayed in some public building, perhaps a Basilica.

Moreover, the central role assumed by the square in the centuries following the fall of the Roman Empire suggests that there may have been a continuity in the role of the area. This square was the seat of the first cathedral of Como, dedicated to Sant'Eufemia, in front of which stood the baptistery of San Giovanni in Atrio; moreover, Piazza San Fedele was home to the grain market, a fundamental element in the life of medieval villages.

Even inside the Basilica of San Fedele there are references to ancient Como, such as two holy water fonts placed above two stylophorous lions, already used to support the columns of the vestibule of the ancient cathedral of Sant'Eufemia, and the presence of a Corinthian capital reused as a holy font.

The various references to the presence of a portico (or "atrium") in the ancient buildings of San Giovanni in Atrio and San Pietro in Atrio and the presence of colonnades on various sides of the square, could also recall the colonnade that traditionally surrounded the square of the forum on at least three sides, while the fourth was occupied by a religious building.