



CULTUREGUIDE

# ITALY

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY  
KENNEDY CENTER  
FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDIES

# ITALY CULTUREGUIDE

This unit is published by the Intercultural Outreach Program of the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies at Brigham Young University as part of an effort to foster open cultural exchange within the educational community and to promote increased global understanding by providing meaningful cultural education tools.

## Curriculum Development

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# WHY STUDY CULTURES?

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For most of us, cultures are misunderstood; they are nebulous, vague, and hidden. Like the famous iceberg analogy, we know that most of what a culture is cannot be seen. But what does that mean? And why, then, should we study cultures if we do not know what we're studying in the first place?

In the late twentieth century, Brigham Young University did not embrace a new discipline, but rather a new area of study—the study of cultures. Typically, anthropology is the social science that studies cultures. Why should they have all the fun? The study of cultures unites other academic disciplines (as needed), drawing upon literature, political science, sociology, and even the more applied areas of nursing, social work, law, and business. The study of cultures has grown into nothing short of a revolt against disciplines, “a mode of inquiry” that looks at things in new ways.<sup>1</sup>

In 1982, the David M. Kennedy Center for International Studies established Intercultural Outreach<sup>2</sup> as a formal program to help build bridges of intercultural understanding. Since then, more than 10,000 gratis cultural presentations have been given to local area public schools, taking students to new places using language, multimedia, and imagination. *CultureGuides* derive from the same expertise that has been honed in classrooms—with the exciting exception that these intercultural learning tools are not geographically bound. Thanks to the Internet, accessible multimedia technology, and our trusty eMACs, a limitless audience can learn about different cultures.

Globalization, the driving paradigm of the post-Cold War world, means that now, more than ever, culture matters. Culture is the invisible context that may keep us from understanding important people, places, and ideas; it exists whether or not we think about it. Intercultural education can help us, not only as an intellectual exercise, but also in very practical ways to combat racism, to expand business, and to communicate effectively.

*CultureGuides* share the same aim as Edward T. Hall, the eminent cultural scholar, to try to “make culture real.”<sup>3</sup> Even though our “student guides” are not present in every classroom, we hope that *CultureGuides* will make classrooms of the mind and cultural laboratories wherever you may reside.

<sup>1</sup> Ziauddin Sardar and Borin Van Loon. *Introducing Cultural Studies*, Totem Books, New York: 1998.

<sup>2</sup> The program was originally called International Outreach when it was established in 1982, but it was renamed Intercultural Outreach in 2006 to better reflect its aims.

<sup>3</sup>*The Edge: The E-Journal of Intercultural Relations*, Summer 1998, Vol. 1(3) Posted 10/11/98, <http://interculturalrelations.com/v1i3Summer1998/sum98sorrellshall.htm>.

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# TRADITIONS

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## CARNIVAL

Carnival, a holiday celebrated throughout Italy and in a number of different countries, is especially grand in Venice, Italy. It is a time for feasting and fun before the fasting season of Lent begins. Lent is the forty-day period before the Easter holiday in which Catholic believers fast from food and festivities. The period preceding Lent started out as a practical time for people to get together to prepare for Lent and developed into Carnival, an extended holiday. During Carnival, everyone dresses up in fancy costumes and masks and participate in unique activities for days at a time. Today, thousands of people flock to the city of Venice during Carnival.



### Starting Points

1. Did you ever dress up as a child or do you enjoy wearing costumes on Halloween? Look at pictures of Italians wearing Carnival attire (**see Traditions Visuals 2–4 or Additional Resources: Carnival**). What might be the purpose for these costumes and masks? In Italy, costumes and masks are one of the biggest parts of Carnival. Not only are costumes a tradition, they allow people of different classes to act as equals.
2. Why do we celebrate holidays? Where did they originate from? How have various religions influenced the celebration of holidays in the U.S.? In general, do holidays continue to portray the religious elements they originated from? In Italy, one of the widely celebrated holidays is Carnival, which was created as a reaction to Lent. However, over the centuries much of the religious aspect has been forgotten or replaced with the festivities of Carnival.
3. Imagine giving up your favorite food for forty days. What would you do prior to the day your fast begins? The predominately Catholic society of Italy created Carnival so Italians would feast and celebrate prior to the church institution of Lent, a forty-day fast from some things.



### Information

#### Catholic Background

The holiday of Carnival has been celebrated all over Italy and other Catholic nations for centuries. The holiday originated out of the Catholic tradition of Lent, a period which called for a forty-day fast from all meat products, marriages, and celebrations before Easter. Before this fast, communities would gather together to finish their meat and, before long, this gathering developed into the celebration of Carnival. The most famous celebration of Carnival takes place a short distance off the northeastern coast of Italy on a number of small islands known as Venice (**see Traditions Visual 1**). Carnival has changed quite drastically over the centuries, yet it remains a popular festive occasion consisting of costumes, games, and entertainment.

## Origins of Carnival

In Italian, Carnival is spelled *Carnevale* [Car-ne-va-le], which in Latin means “to remove meat” or “stop eating meat.” Carnival began as a practical gathering for friends and family to finish meat products before Lent. The ritual of Lent was very important to much of Europe during the Middle Ages because Europeans were predominately Roman Catholic. Like much of Europe, religion was so deep-rooted in Venetian society that the non-religious went to Mass and participated in the rituals because it was part of everyday life for the entire society. Therefore, all Venetians took Lent seriously and all had a cause to celebrate Carnival. Carnival is not only celebrated by Venetians, but by most Roman Catholic nations including the principalities of Italy, Brazil, France, and Spain. In Venice, as well as many other places, the gathering before Lent has developed into a large celebration of its own and lost much of its religious significance over time.

## Chronology of Venice and Carnival

In Venice, the Carnival season developed into a huge celebration that lasted from two to three months. The celebration in Venice was first recorded in 1268, although much of what is remembered of Carnival today comes from records during the eighteenth century when the celebration was the biggest and longest. This time is often referred to as the glorious days of the Venetian Republic. At the height of Venice’s glory days, the celebration began as early as 26 December and continued until Shrove Tuesday. Shrove Tuesday was the last day before the forty-day fast began; Ash Wednesday follows and marks the first day of Lent. Shrove Tuesday, also called *Mardi Gras* [Mar-di Gra], and Ash Wednesday usually take place in the middle of February, making the celebration over a month and a half long.

The celebration of Carnival came to an abrupt stop in 1797, when the French imperialist Napoleon Bonaparte conquered Venice. At this time, Napoleon’s armies spread across Europe conquering a large portion of the European mainland. The once-powerful Venetian Republic was defeated. Many attributed the fall of the republic to the continual partying and decadence that had become progressively worse during the 1700s. In any case, this ended the Venetian Republic, including their government, laws, and traditions. The unique celebration of Venetian Carnival was put to an end by foreign control, and the spirit of the holiday was lost for over two centuries, although Carnival celebrations continued in other parts of Italy. Venice was released from foreign control during the late-nineteenth century, but the tradition of Carnival remained uncelebrated. It was not until 1979 that a group of non-Venetian organizers attempted to bring back the traditional celebration of Carnival. Venetians recognized the economic benefit such a holiday would bring to their city, and the revival of this holiday has been gladly received. Today, Carnival is celebrated for a ten-day period before Lent and thousands of people flock to Venice for the celebration.

## The Significance of the Mask

The most recognizable features of Carnival are the elaborate masks and costumes that fill the streets and squares during the celebration (**see Traditions Visuals 2–4**). The tradition of mask-wearing actually dates back to the Roman Empire when masquerading was used during the feast in mid-December to honor Saturn, the sun god.

Masquerading provided an opportunity for class distinctions to disappear so citizens and slaves could openly celebrate together.

The Roman tradition of masquerading was adopted by Venetian society, where the mask was also significant for its ability to conceal one's identity. Venice was a big city with little space and lots of people. Society was stratified between the very rich and the impoverished. In such a setting many people took advantage of masks as an opportunity to take a break from demanding social pressures. Historically, the wealthy, poor, bold, and shy could all participate in the masquerading because behind a mask, one could recklessly gamble, participate in illegal and immoral activities, and behave in a way that would otherwise be unacceptable to their social position, without their identity ever being known. An environment where an entire city could legally run around incognito naturally brought about an increase in crime. As early as 1268, laws were passed by the city's governing bodies to restrict the times a mask was allowed to be worn. Wearing a mask was illegal on most holy days and during all religious services and celebrations such as "The Circumcision of Christ" and "The Purification of the Virgin Mary." However, during the legally approved times, wearing a mask was serious business and forcible removal of someone else's mask was punishable by the authorities as a violation of acceptable play.

Carnival masks were handmade by *mascareri* [ma-sca-re-re] or mask makers. Mascareri enjoyed a special position in society with specific laws and privileges. By 1436, mascareri had their own guild, an association of artisans, for the purpose of making masks. Some masks became standard throughout the centuries, while others remained unique to their time and place. There are three categories of Venetian masks: the *Commedia dell'Arte* [com-me-dia dell ar-te], the fantasy mask, and the traditional Venetian mask. *Commedia dell'Arte*, which in Italian means the artistic comedy, was actually a form of improvisational theatre in which actors would satirize current events, local scandals, and conventional situations. The actors were often identified by the mask and costume they wore and therefore *Commedia dell'Arte* masks were based on traditional and well known characters. Fantasy masks were generally unique to the mask-maker's imagination, although some may have been historically influenced as well. Traditional Venetian masks include the *volto* [vol-to], *mattasin* [mat-ta-sin], and *Maschera de Coltra* [ma-ske-ra de col-tra].

The *Volto*, or face mask, was usually white and shaped to allow one to easily eat, drink, and talk without having to take it off (see **Traditions Visual 2**). This mask was made of a wax cloth, making it lightweight and comfortable for all-day and even all-night use. The *mattasin* mask got its name from the Italian word *mattinate* [mat-ti-nate], which means "mornings." This implies that this mask was good for partying long hours, even until morning. It was worn with white or multicolored clothes and a feathered hat (see **Traditions Visual 3**). Few records remain to inform us about the *Maschera de Coltra*, which is not really a mask, but a long veil tied over the head. This type of attire was worn by all classes (see **Traditions Visual 4**). As seen by the pictures, the mask dictated the costume, and certain masks were only worn with certain clothes.

## Festivities

Although the mask played a large role in Carnival, the celebration also consisted of great festivities and entertainment. Traditionally, festivities took place in Saint Mark's Square (see **Traditions Visuals 5 and 6**), which would have been filled with all forms of entertainment such as puppet shows, Commedia dell'Arte, concerts, balls, pageants, magicians, tightrope walkers, and acrobats. The games and entertainment went on all day—and all night—during Carnival.

Carnival also set the stage for a number of romantic encounters. Mingling between classes, incessant flirting, games of seduction—and the jealousy that followed—are all representative of Carnival. The throwing of eggs filled with rose water became a popular romantic offer during Carnival. These eggs-throwers were usually young men dressed in the mattasin mask. They would throw the eggs filled with sweet scents on the doorsteps of the ladies they liked most. As pranksters often do, the mattasins often got out of hand and threw the eggs at spectators, the ladies' husbands, and the ladies themselves.

## Carnival Today

Today, Carnival is celebrated fifty to forty days before Easter every year. This Carnival not only revives the traditional Carnival in dress and activities of the eighteenth century but also provides an opportunity for kids to dress up as their favorite modern day hero and play popular games (see **Traditions Visual 7**). The two weeks of Carnival are filled with processions, masquerades, traditional ceremonies, private parties, music, and festivities all around the canals, squares, and palaces of the city. As in its glory days, the city is filled with musicians, acrobats, and theatre. Although the celebration portrays the Carnival of the past, the participants are generally visitors, and the advantage of being relieved for a short time from a stratified society is not as valuable. As in any big city, crime remains a problem, not only during Carnival, but year-round. People are rarely hurt during Carnival, but it's important to pay very close attention to your personal belongings!

Although the celebration has been revived, the meaning has changed. People of all nationalities and religions flock to Venice for the celebration, and its significance lies in the celebration alone rather than the preparation period before Lent. The event today has little religious significance and instead has become one big festivity for people from all over the world.



## Activities

1. Imagine it is the seventeenth century and you are visiting Venice for the first time during the Carnival celebration. Write a letter to a friend telling of the events and costumes you have seen and your impressions of the holiday and the people celebrating it.
2. Imagine it is the seventeenth century and crime has increased during the holiday of disguise, Carnival. Some believe that regulations should be placed on the holiday to control crime, others believe that carnival has become too corrupt and the holiday should be ended completely. Some believe it should remain as it is despite the crime because of its cultural and religious significance. Choose posi-

tions as a class or in small groups, and debate what should be done about the crime and the holiday. Make sure to be specific. Pose a possible solution that may appease all parties.

3. Make and decorate a carnival mask out of papier mâché. The decoration may be based on a popular traditional mask or may be a creation of your own.
4. Imagine it is the eighteenth century and the first day of Carnival just ended. Write a newspaper article about the opening day. Include highlights such as what festivities took place, what costumes were worn, and how people responded to the events and entertainment of the day.
5. Have a small “feast” with your class. Decorate the room in ways you think Italians may decorate their cities for Carnival. Wear your papier mâché masks to celebrate carnival.



### Discussion Questions

1. What parts of Italian culture and lifestyle does the tradition of Carnival represent? What are some national traditions that represent parts of American culture? How are the two cultures similar and different?
2. How does religion in your country play a role in holidays and traditions among believers and non-believers? Why do many holidays that start as religious observances move toward secular parties? Is this transition good, bad, or neutral? Why?
3. What might happen to our holidays and traditions if our country or town was taken over by a foreign power? What if the foreign power was of a different religion? What would it be like to be forced to stop celebrating traditional holidays such as Christmas, Easter, or Chanukah? How do you think the Venetians felt when Napoleon conquered Venice and they could not celebrate Carnival?
4. What problems might arise if your entire school was allowed to run around in disguise? How would students’ choices and actions differ if they were not held accountable for their actions? What might be some potential problems with Carnival, which allows the entire city of Venice disguise themselves for months at a time? What could be done to prevent or control problems relating to crime during permitted times of disguise?
5. What may have been the benefits of eliminating social distinctions through disguise in seventeenth century Venice? Take into consideration the differences in the lifestyle of a commoner or a peasant to that of a noble or a king.
6. Why do many people, especially the Venetians, enjoy wearing masks? Do you think people behave differently when wearing a mask? Why or why not? What are some personal advantages if no one knows who you are? What are some personal disadvantages?

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# FOLKLORE & LANGUAGE

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## DIALECTS

The country of Italy is a little larger than the state of Arizona and consists of twenty regions, similar to U.S. counties. Each region inside Italy has its own unique traditions, history, and dialect. The majority of Italians speak Italian, a Latin-based language, yet there are variations of the Italian language, similar to accents, which vary from one region to the next. The variations of Italian are known as dialects and have developed over the past sixteen centuries. The regional differences in language give each person a strong connection with their region of origin but little sense of nationality. In 1861, Italy became a monarchy, and a standard Italian language was instituted in public schools to create a national language. The attempt to standardize the Italian language has been fairly successful, but even 150 years later dialects are still spoken often and are important to the heritage of a region.



### Starting Points

1. As a class, say the words “tomato” and “sorry” together. Then say these words in different accents such as Southern, New York, or British. Why is there such a variation in the way English speakers say words when they are all speaking the same language? Italians speak with different dialects, depending on the region they live in, similar to the variety of English accents.
2. Imagine that your friend is talking to you in English, but you can’t understand what he or she is saying—no matter how hard you try. In Italy, although the majority of the country speaks Italian, the type of Italian varies from region to region. Sometimes they seem like they are not speaking the same language at all.
3. What characteristics unify a people so that they may identify themselves as American, German, or Chinese? How important is a common language in the unity of a country? In Italy, it was not until the country was unified and standard public education was instituted that the entire country spoke the same form of Italian. Before then each region spoke its own variation, or dialect, of Italian.



### Information

#### Unification

The famous and beautiful country of Italy did not become a nation until 1861, when many regions and city-states were unified. Before 1861, what is now known as Italy consisted of a number of small city-states, or regional states; these were small principalities with their own forms of government, money, and society; each was independent with its own history, traditions, and dialect. The states began to form after the fall of the Roman Empire and remained separate from one another until the unification. The unification completely changed the order of the states by bringing in a national government and creating the nation of Italy. The unification sought to unite

the states where citizens continued to identify themselves as Venetians, Sicilians, or Romans, rather than Italians. The first step to nationalize the country was standardizing the language spoken in all of Italy and removing regional dialects through classroom education. Although the standard Italian language is taught and spoken by all who have attended school, regional differences remain strong. In many households the regional dialect is still spoken and regional traditions are still practiced.

### **From Latin to Italian**

The Italian language originated from Latin, the formal language of the ancient Roman Empire. Latin, which was spoken as early as 280 B.C.E. has changed and developed over the centuries. Due to the influx of people and ideas during the later Roman Republic, Golden and Silver Latin replaced Old Latin. The changes in the language were small, but over time became significant. Latin words ending in “-om” and “-os” were changed to “-um” and “-us.” This Latin can still be found on inscriptions of ancient buildings such as the Pantheon Temple in Rome (see **Folklore & Language Visual 1**).

With the continual invasions of Barbarian tribes into the vast Roman Empire during the third and fourth centuries C.E., the Roman Empire fell. The great empire was attacked from all sides by Visigoths, Vandals, Ostrogoths, and Franks. All these groups were semi-nomadic tribes loosely termed as Germanic Peoples. The great capital of Rome was sacked and destroyed by 476 C.E. These events brought greater changes to the Latin language by causing a number of dialects to arise throughout Europe.

The fall of the Roman Empire led thousands of Germanic tribes to settle within the old empire’s boundaries and among the Latin-speaking Romans. Over the course of the next few centuries, the languages and cultures merged together to create new languages, cultures, and principalities. The merging of a number of peoples and cultures, including pre-Latin cultures, created a new category of languages referred to as romance languages, or languages that originated from Latin. Spanish, French, Portuguese, Italian, Romanian, and Catalan are all romance languages. Italian is the language most similar to Latin, and about 75 percent of Italian words originate from Latin. Today, although the majority of people living on the peninsula of Italy speak Italian, the Italian still differs from one region to the next. The differences among regions are known as dialects.

### **Italian Dialects**

Prior to the unification of Italy in 1861, different dialects and hundreds of sub-dialects were spoken in the cities and city-states of the Italian peninsula (see **Folklore & Language Visual 2**). Some dialects remain so different from Italian that linguists actually classify them as completely separate languages. Some of the major dialects include Piemontese, Neapolitan, Roman, Sicilian, Milanese, and Venetian.

The Tuscan variation is possibly the most important because it is the basis for the modern, standard Italian. The dominance of *Toscano* [to-scon-o], or Tuscan variation, began during the medieval period of history in the great city of Florence. Florence was the most powerful city-state in Italy and is known for the Renaissance that grew from it. The Renaissance brought about remarkable art, literature, and music. Florence produced famous poets such as Boccaccio and artists such as

Donatello and Raphael. The famous poet Dante Alighieri (1265–1321) was the most instrumental in influencing the Italian language. He has been credited for initiating the Italian language because of his famous writings, such as *The Divine Comedy*, which were read throughout Italy (see **Folklore & Language Visuals 3 and 4**). Because his works were read throughout Italy and because of Florence's economic power, the Italian he spoke became the primary language known throughout Italy. Due to its prominence, the formal Italian used by Dante became the standard Italian taught in schools.

Although Tuscan is the variation most commonly used, other dialects are significant for their clarity, accent, and fluctuation. For example, before the unification, and even today, many Italians generally believe that *lingua Toscana in bocca romana* [lin-goo-a tous-can-a in boc-ka rom-an-a], or “the Tuscan tongue in a Roman mouth,” is the best spoken Italian. This refers to the Tuscan spoken with the Roman inflection. Tuscan was preferred because it was attributed to Florence, enlightenment, arts, and culture. The Roman inflection was preferred because Romans were known for their clear and distinctive speech. Like many Americans enjoy the accents of an Australian, New Yorker, or Southerner, some Italian dialects were preferred over others.

### **Dialects Today**

Once Italy was unified and the Italian nation was created, it was important to help people identify with Italy as a nation, rather than with their native city-state. The first step was to impose a standard language. Although the new government could not change the centuries-old traditions and beliefs that differed among regions, the standardization of a common language would help unify the people of Italy. The aim was for people to identify themselves as Italians, rather than Venetians, Romans, or Florentines as had been done for centuries. The new government went about standardizing the language by creating a national education system. This did help decrease the use of dialect over time; however, it is generally believed that it was not until televisions were common that Italian became standardized.

Today, standard Italian may be understood throughout the country, but regional variations such as vocabulary, accents, and vowel emphasis remain. The use of dialects is sometimes looked down upon and seen as a sign of a lack of education. Younger generations almost exclusively speak standard Italian with a local accent in all situations. Today dialects are often used in movies to provide comedy and produce stereotypes. Such stereotypes connect northern dialects with greedy merchants, Roman accents with haughty, simple-minded bullies, the Neapolitan dialect with dishonest and sly slackers, and the Sicilian dialect with the secret crime organization known as the Mafia. Although stereotypes developed through the media, some dialects have had a recent revival as newly created regional assemblies work to promote and protect the unique language and heritage of their region.

### **Conclusion**

Dialects are a distinctive part of the Italian language and culture. Rooted in Latin, dialects have formed over the centuries because of the fall of the Roman Empire and popular literature. Today, the Italian language is most influenced by television and media, and the regional dialects continue to be representational of much of Italy's identity.



## Activities

1. Play a game of telephone where one person whispers a phrase or sentence into another's ear. Continue to whisper the message to each person in the class. Have the last person say out loud what they have heard, as well as a few people in the middle of the message and the first person. Discuss how and why the message changed. Relate this to how an Italian city-state's language may change over time and what forces may bring about changes.
2. Complete the Latin Roots worksheet to identify the influence Latin has had on modern English words (see **Folklore & Language Visual 5**).
3. Watch a commercial, television show, or movie and pay specific attention to the way the main character speaks. Determine whether or not it reflects upon aspects of their personality such as intelligence, education, arrogance, etc. Discuss whether media may lead us to make a generalization about the personality of that actor or people in general.
4. Write an essay on the impact foreign invaders may have on a country. Include how daily life may change when language, religion, and traditions change.
5. Color and label the regions and major cities on a map of Italy (see **Folklore & Language Visual 2**).



## Discussion Questions

1. How do events such as invasion by foreigners affect the everyday life of those invaded? Do aspects such as language, culture, politics, and religion change right away or gradually? Why?
2. Why would traditional dialects still be spoken in the home when standard Italian has been put into effect for over one hundred years? What may be the significance of holding on to the traditional language of one's region?
3. How does public education affect language? How important is a standard language to a culture? Why?
4. What events or people may have influenced how we speak English? What different things may have influenced the way New Yorkers speak English compared to the way Australians speak English?
5. What countries speak English as their first language? What countries speak a Latin-based language as their first language? How did these languages cross oceans and spread to places all over the world?
6. Why might languages adapt foreign words into their vocabulary? Think of some foreign words we have adapted into English. Why do we use these words instead of creating an English equivalent?

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# FOOD

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## PIZZA, PANINO, AND GELATO

In many modern-day societies, sitting at the table with your family for a homemade meal has become a less frequent experience. Commercial fast food restaurants have become the norm for many Americans and are gaining dominance in foreign nations as well. Italians, who are well known for their excellent cuisine, have also joined the fast-paced life of modern-day society and have found a greater need to grab something “on the go.” Like America, Italy has produced some of its own fast food restaurants—they can be found on almost every street in Italy. However, Italian fast food restaurants greatly differ from American fast food restaurants and are representative of the unique Italian culture. The three most common fast food restaurants in Italy are pizzerias, bars, and *gelaterias* [ge-la-at-ter-e-as], which sell slices of pizza, *panini* [pa-nee-nee] (Italian sandwiches), and *gelato* [ge-la-at-oh] (Italian ice cream). These convenient foods are an important part of modern Italy because they are the most popular restaurants among Italians and visitors alike.



### Starting Points

1. On a blank piece of paper, draw anything that comes to mind when you think of Italy. If you drew food raise your hand. If you drew pizza keep your hand up. Pizza is Italy’s best-known and most popular food. In Italy, pizza is found in restaurants in every city and on almost every street. Less well-known convenience foods in Italy are the Italian sandwich, called a *panino* [pa-nee-no] (singular version of panini), and Italian ice cream, known as gelato. Pizza, panini, and gelato may be found all over Italy, but each city, and even each restaurant, prepares its specialty dishes a little different from the rest.
2. Imagine what meals would be like without your favorite fast food chain restaurants. Where do you suppose you would eat? Although a few American fast food restaurants have found their way into Italy, few native Italians dine at them regularly. Italians in big cities are always on the go, like Americans, and often prefer one of the thousand unique pizzerias or bars for a bite to eat or gelaterias for a dessert or a social snack.
3. What foods are considered to be American? How large a role do these foods play in our culture? How often are American foods eaten compared to Chinese, Mexican, or Italian food? Italians have access to foreign foods in their country, yet still choose pizza, pasta, and panini for the majority of meals. Pizza, panini, and gelato are commonly eaten on the go, at home, and at sit-down restaurants.



## Information

### The Italian Lifestyle

Fast food has become an important part of Italian urban life as people become more busy with school, work, and play. Italians are known throughout the world for their excellent cuisine and pride themselves in the quality and freshness of their food. Oftentimes the need for convenient food leads to a poorer quality of food. This may be seen in America's fast food restaurants that often rely on preservatives and advance preparation to get a variety of food to the customer fast and cheap. Italians, on the other hand, mix convenience with quality by using local, fresh ingredients and daily preparation. The majority of Italians prefer the fresh and speedy meal that may be found at a local pizzeria or bar. These fast food restaurants are usually privately owned and unique in menu and design from one another. Pizzerias, bars, and gelaterias are the most commonly visited Italian fast food restaurants and are representative of Italian culture.

### Pizzerias

A pizzeria is a restaurant that sells a variety of pizzas and sodas. At most pizzerias, the pizzas are on display on a counter behind glass (**see Food Visual 1**) and customers order by telling the server how much pizza and what type of pizza he or she wants. Each city makes their pizza a little differently. Commonly, pizza in Rome is made on large rectangular dough, which serves as the crust of the pizza. Toppings are generally placed on top of this dough without any sauce. Common toppings include tomatoes, basil leaves, mozzarella balls, potato shreds, peppers, ham, and other meats, all of which are found locally throughout Italy. Roman pizza is ordered by a weight measurement called an *etto* [eht-to]. Etto means 100 grams. After telling the server how many etti you would like, he or she will cut the pizza with large scissors and place it in an open oven to warm it for a few minutes. Once the pizza is hot, the server will place the pizza on wax paper ready for you to eat. An average lunch of two to three etti of pizza will usually cost less than five euros. The euro is the common currency in Italy and many European countries. One euro is generally the same amount of money as one-and-a-half American dollars, but due to inflation and fluid economies the exchange rate changes constantly.

Pizza originated in the city Naples, about two hours south of Rome, in the nineteenth century. The introduction of the tomato from Spain, a fruit not native to Italy until the fifteenth century, was what brought about the creation of pizza. The tomato was first believed to be poisonous, and it was not until the eighteenth century that people began to add it as an ingredient to their yeast-based flat bread, or the first pizza crust. Pizza was further developed with the use of *mozzarella di bufala* [mottz-sar-el-la dee boo-fa-la], which means buffalo mozzarella. Buffalos were introduced to Italy from India around the eleventh century and their milk was highly valued because it contained more fat and proteins, giving it a better taste than cow milk. Buffalo milk is used to make a variety of cheeses and is especially important for making mozzarella balls. Naples is best known for its *Margherita* [mar-gher-eet-a] pizza, a specific type of pizza created to honor Queen Margherita of Savoy in the late-eighteenth century. This pizza reflects the colors of the Italian flag with its

green basil leaves, white mozzarella, and red tomatoes and has become a standard variety of pizza that can be found in every city today (see **Food Visual 2**). By the nineteenth century, pizza was commonly sold by outdoor vendors and pizza bakeries. The first pizzeria is thought to have been opened in Naples in 1830, and today multiple pizzerias may be found on every street of every city in Italy.

Most pizzerias are designed to serve people who are eating on the run and usually only have a few bar seats for eating. The majority of people will either eat their pizza as they walk, or take their pizza and sit outside at one of the many parks and sites that fill Italian cities, or hurriedly will eat their pizza in the pizzeria. The owners of pizzerias take pride in the presentation and quality of their food as well as the atmosphere and relationships with their costumers. Often, the personal service of a pizzeria, is valued as much as the quality of the pizza, which is representative of many Italians, preference for friendly, familiar relationships. Pizzerias are successful because they quickly get fresh food to hungry customers and provide a familiar and friendly break from the busy work day.

### **Bars**

A bar in Italy is a walk-in restaurant where one may get a panino, which is an Italian grilled sandwich, and a drink. Many bars also sell pizza, gelato, hot chocolate, coffee, alcohol, and sweets. Bars are also restaurants that boast of speed and convenience and are set up much like pizzerias. The panini are previously made and put on display behind glass. Once a panino is ordered it is placed in a toaster, which grills the bread on both sides, and it is ready to be served. Italian sandwiches differ from American sandwiches in that most panini don't use any condiments such as mustard or mayonnaise. They also rarely use processed meat such as the ham and turkey sandwich meat that comes from the grocery store. Panini are generally made with fresh ingredients such as crude ham, mozzarella cheese, fresh tomato, fresh basil leaf, and thick slabs of salami. Many bars do not have seating and probably serve even more people on the run than pizzerias, because a panino is easier and cleaner to eat when in a hurry. The simple yet flavorful sandwich is like many Italian foods—it uses only a few rich ingredients to create a delicious Italian taste.

### **Gelaterias**

Gelato is the ice cream of Italy and a gelateria, like an ice cream parlor, is solely dedicated to the selling of gelato (see **Food Visual 3**). Gelaterias are just as convenient and quick as pizzerias and bars and may be found in many stores in the major cities of Italy. Gelato is different from ice cream because no air is needed when the ingredients are whipped together. This creates an extremely dense and flavorful frozen treat different from the creamy ice cream Americans eat. Gelaterias offer an assortment of fruit, nut, and chocolate flavors. The traditional flavors of chocolate, bacio, hazelnut, pistachio, stracciatella, fragola, and lemon are the most common, but there are hundreds of other flavors. Gelato, like ice cream, comes in a cup or cone with the option of adding whipped cream on top. Other than the cream, gelato is not served with add-ins such as cookie dough and gummy bears or toppings such as nuts and fudge. Italians visit gelaterias for more than just gelato—they go to watch people. When not busily running around the city, one of Italians' favorite pastimes is people watching. Oftentimes a group of friends will go out, get some gelato,

and hang out around public sites such as the Spanish Steps or Trevi Fountain in Rome (see **Food Visual 4**) just to see what people are doing. The hoards of tourists that visit the culturally rich country are often the best form of entertainment for young Italians.

### **Conclusion**

Italian fast food restaurants and foods are unique to Italy and representative of the culture. Quality and convenience combines individually owned pizzerias, bars, and gelaterias, whose owners take pride in the freshness and tastiness of their food. The products that fast foods are made with are generally locally grown and fresh. The rich flavors leave little need for condiments to improve or alter the taste. Many Italians tend to enjoy personal and familiar relationships and therefore prefer the personal feeling of an independently owned pizzeria to the impersonal atmosphere of a large commercially owned restaurant. The simplicity, yet richness of their food is a great analogy to Italians in general, who prefer the simple and rich things in life. Italian fast food restaurants are important to their culture and enjoyable to all who visit.

### **Traditional Margherita Pizza Recipe**

Margherita Pizza was first made in Naples in the late-eighteenth century. Its ingredients were chosen to make the finished pizza resemble an Italian flag—the tomatoes are red, the mozzarella cheese is white, and the basil leaves are green. This is a very simple, unembellished pizza and is a favorite in Italian restaurants both in Italy and around the world.

#### **You will need:**

4 1/3 C all-purpose flour	2 C fresh Italian mozzarella balls
4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil	2 tsp dry basil
1 tsp salt	2 C canned plum tomatoes without juice
1/2 tsp sugar	
1 1/2 C lukewarm water	
1 pack dry active yeast	

#### **Preparation**

1. In a large bowl, mix flour, 1/2 tsp salt, sugar, and yeast.
2. Add 2 tbsp olive oil and slowly mix in the warm water. Stop adding water if it starts to become runny, even if you haven't used all of it yet.
3. Knead the dough with your hands for ten minutes and place it back in the bowl. Cover the bowl with a kitchen towel.
4. Allow the dough to sit for about 3 hours, or until it has doubled in size.
5. While you are waiting for the dough to rise, complete steps 6–8.
6. Preheat oven to 450 degrees.
7. Grease a 11" x 15" baking sheet with olive oil.
8. Finely slice the tomatoes and mix them in a second bowl with 1/2 tsp salt and 1 tbsp olive oil. If there is a lot of excess juice, drain it into the sink before continuing.
9. Once the dough is ready, roll it out with a rolling pin, if you have one, and then spread it evenly on your baking sheet.

10. Spread the tomato mixture over the crust, and sprinkle it with basil.
11. Cook for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, cut the mozzarella balls into cubes.
12. Add mozzarella to your pizza and allow it to cook for 5–10 minutes more depending on your oven. You can tell the pizza is cooked when the crust is light brown and the cheese is mostly melted.



### Activities

1. Create a menu for a local pizzeria, bar, or gelateria. Include descriptions, prices, and a creative logo.
2. As a class or in groups, make a commercial for your brand-new, family-owned pizzeria, bar, or gelateria. Advertise what your restaurant has to offer such as quality, fresh food, and personalable service. Present the commercial to the class.
3. Split into groups and, using construction paper and scissors, create a name, logo, and menu for your pizzeria, bar, or gelateria. Have a contest to determine which restaurant would get the most business and discuss why.
4. Create an Italian food word search using words found in this section. Trade with a partner and try to solve each other's word searches.
5. Cook a traditional Margherita pizza (**see Food Visual 5**). Have a few members of the class donate ingredients, and then serve the pizza at a class party for everyone to share. Try ordering your pizza in etti!



### Discussion Questions

1. How do Italian and American fast food restaurants differ? How does the ordering of fast food in America differ from the ordering of fast food in Italy? How are these differences representative of American and Italian culture?
2. What influence have fast food restaurants had on our society as a whole? Are these influences good or bad? Why? Why do you suppose Italians have not gravitated toward the same fast foods Americans have?
3. How did the introduction of new foods and animals not native to Italy influence their food? What foods do Americans commonly eat that are not native to America? How has the introduction of new foods from foreign countries changed the diets of people all over the world throughout history?
4. The first pizzeria was started in the U.S. by a native Italian, yet over the past hundred years, pizza in American has transformed into a unique American pizza that is very different from the pizza found in Italy today. What may have caused American pizza to evolve from the original Italian pizza?
5. How have modern cooking inventions and technologies helped the preparation and preservation of foods? Would American and Italian fast food restaurants operate without these technologies? What foods have become more readily available because of freezers, refrigerators, ovens, and microwaves?

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# CROSS-CULTURAL CONTRIBUTIONS

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## ARCHITECTURE OF THE ROMAN EMPIRE

The ancient Roman empire was one of the most advanced and prosperous civilizations of its time and influenced much of the ancient and modern world. Its contributions to other cultures include those of law, art, technology, religion, and architecture. Architecture is especially representative of the Roman empire, and the Roman influence may be seen in buildings all over the world even today. Due to the wealth and size of the empire, its thousand-year existence had a great impact on the world. Carefully constructed roads and buildings provided the blueprint for buildings in much of the Western world, even into our modern day.



### Starting Points

1. Look at pictures of the Colosseum, an aqueduct, a basilica, and a cobblestone road. What do these structures resemble in today's architecture? The ancient Romans were among the first civilizations to invent an amphitheater with seating for thousands, an irrigation and sewer system to improve efficiency and comfort for the empire, covered markets that developed into the base structures for cathedrals all over the world, and city-based grid systems that continue to be used today.
2. Imagine it is 200 C.E., and you are living in the bustling city of Rome. What is your life like? What public structures do you visit? What do you do for entertainment? What comforts of life are you without? Although 200 C.E. was a very long time ago, the Romans lived in a surprisingly metropolitan society, centered around temples, forums, markets, palaces, and amphitheatres. Rome is known in the ancient and modern world for their major architectural abilities and structures. These structures served as the basis for later architecture and continue to be seen in public and private buildings today.
3. Much of our lives are spent inside man-made structures. Are the structures we spend our time in representative of our individual lives? How are they representative of the condition of the city or country we live in? Structures are not only used to shelter but may be used to display the condition of a society. Simply based on the number of remaining ancient Roman building structures, one may judge that Rome was a prosperous and advanced civilization. Ancient Romans are known for their advanced techniques, excellent materials, and ability to construct magnificent structures. These structures were representative of the wealth, strength, and greatness of the empire.



## Information

### The Roman Empire

The great civilization of Rome was one of efficiency, innovation, and wealth. The city of Rome was founded in 753 B.C.E. and over hundreds of years it developed into an empire stretching across Europe and North Africa, lasting until the fourth century C.E. The Roman Republic (509 B.C.E.–31 B.C.E.) and Empire (27 B.C.E.–476 C.E.) contributed much to the ancient world. Their roads, temples, amphitheaters, aqueducts, and basilicas, among other structures, were used as the model for much of the architecture throughout the rest of the Western world.

### History

According to legend, the city of Rome was founded by Romulus in 753 B.C.E. At this time it was little more than a few sheep herders who came together along the Tiber River. By 509 B.C.E. the republic was created, which ruled the growing city and territory with a senate rather than a king. The republic form of government later served as a model for the French and American Revolutions, which fought for a government free of monarchal rule. Due to the extensive growth of Rome's territory, which extended all the way to the British Isles, and the ambitions of one man, Julius Caesar, the republic turned into an empire around 31 B.C.E. The new empire from this time until its fall about four hundred years later was ruled by every whim of an all-powerful emperor. Both the republic and empire were very prosperous and demonstrated their wealth by building magnificent structures. It was because of this zealous building that we have been left with a number of ruins that provide a good idea about life and history of Roman civilization and show how influential Rome was in the centuries following its fall. A number of Rome's ancient structures were new and unique to their time and have served as a blueprint for many buildings and city plans today.

### Concrete

Concrete was the most important building material of the Romans, and the reason for their architectural success. Some historians attribute the invention of concrete to the Romans, but whether they invented it or not, they mastered the art of using concrete in building. Romans made concrete by creating mortar out of small gravel and sand pieces and mixing that together with hot lime and water. Although by a modern standard this concrete mix would seem primitive, their concrete has withstood the test of time, as evidenced by the many structures and roads built during the empire that exist today. Concrete was most useful in the building of roads and aqueducts, which helped expand Roman civilization.

### Roads

Much of what is left behind from the time of the Romans are their extensive roads, which are still used today. Roads were essential to the growth of the Roman Empire, because they helped the Romans maintain their power and control conquered land. Armies could move quickly along the roads and merchants and traders could travel easily between different territories and cities. The popular saying "all roads lead to Rome" was true at the height of the empire because fifty-three thousand miles of

road were built to connect all the cities and lands conquered by the Romans to the great capital of Rome. Roads were built with precision and durability—they continue to be the basis for many roads running through Europe and Italy today. The process of building a road was a long one and ended with laying stones and filling the cracks between them with concrete to produce a relatively smooth road (see **Cross-cultural Contributions Visuals 1 and 2**). The building of roads also led to the construction of Roman cities on a grid plan. The grid plan is a city plan in which streets run at right angles to each other, forming a grid. Although the Romans were not the first to use the grid plan, they are recognized for their perfect right angles and for intersecting two main streets. The intersection of these two main streets is often where the city forum would be built. A city forum is where public meetings, markets, and government meetings were held. Roads improved the efficiency of the empire. They continued to be used throughout the Middle Ages and continue to be used today. The grid plan also continues to serve as the city plan of choice in many U.S. cities.

### **Aqueducts**

Aqueducts were used during the Roman Empire to transport water into cities. Romans constructed aqueducts both above and below the ground. Ones below the ground were preferred because they reduced the risk of infected water caused by dead animal carcasses, and were more difficult for enemies to destroy. Aqueducts are the greatest example of Romans' advanced building techniques, and the sophisticated construction of aqueducts was not matched until over a thousand years after the fall of the Empire. The aqueducts were remarkable because they could transport large amounts of water up and down all different kinds of terrain, powered only by gravity. Concrete arches aided in the transportation of water because arches allowed the aqueducts to raise and lower the gradient depending on the terrain (see **Cross-cultural Contributions Visual 3**). The aqueducts brought fresh water into the city's fountains, baths, and to the emperors' and wealthy citizens' private villas. Aqueducts remain an important aspect of life in all countries today, especially in countries like the U.S., where water is not readily available in many areas and must be transported in. Although we have technology today that can purify water or pump water up steep hills, the Romans remain responsible for the masterful architecture of the aqueduct.

### **Temples and Public Buildings**

Temples were a very important part of the Roman Empire, because they served as the place for religious worship. The majority of Romans practiced a polytheist religion known as Paganism. This religion worshipped a number of gods and goddesses and was very similar to Greek mythology. Temples were built to honor the gods, such as Jupiter, Juno, Mars, and Venus. They believed to have power over different aspects of Roman life. Mars, for example, was the god of war and Venus was the goddess of fertility. Revering these gods and paying tribute to them was believed to be essential to the prosperity of one's personal life and the empire as a whole. Inside the temple structure was a statue of the god, and only special priests were allowed inside to offer sacrifices. Many Roman temples were built after the Greek style, which consisted of a raised podium, columns that ran along the front, and a triangle pediment on top in which a relief sculpture was placed. Once paganism was replaced by Christianity in the second century C.E., temples were

abandoned, torn down, or converted into new buildings. In fact, the stock exchange building in Rome was once an ancient temple (see **Cross-cultural Contributions Visual 4**).

Many public buildings and monuments also followed the Greek style, including temples, senate house, basilicas, baths, and coliseums (see **Cross-cultural Contributions Visual 5**). All of these buildings were built with brick, stone, and concrete and were decorated with columns, relief sculptures, and arches in a style that is copied in a number of the U.S. public buildings today.

### **Basilicas**

A basilica was generally found at the center of town, in the forum, and served as a tribunal place for the city. The Basilica of Maxentius, which remains in very good condition in the Roman Forum, is open on two sides of a wide hall and its roof is supported by large arches. The basilica gained its importance with the rise of the Christian faith. When the Christian faith gained dominance in the Roman Empire around 321 C.E., the believers needed a proper place to worship. Christians could not worship in the pagan temples, which were generally too small to hold a large congregation, so they turned to the more familiar basilica. The basilica provided the perfect basic structure to create a church to worship in because it had a long, wide hall (and two lateral, parallel halls) with a raised area at one end known as an *apse* [ap-s]. The hall was perfect for the congregation of believers, and the apse was the ideal place for important members of the church hierarchy to sit, perform rituals, and speak to the congregation. Later in history, the hall of the basilica was crossed by a shorter hall so that the building made a cross and created more space for saint worship, burial, and seating. The basilica-based churches soon grew into magnificent cathedrals during the Middle Ages and Renaissance and were adorned with intricate detail, sculptures, and domes (see **Cross-cultural Contributions Visual 6**). A number of cathedrals continue to be built today based on the traditional basilica model, and it is one of Rome's great and long-lasting contributions.

### **Amphitheatres and the Colosseum**

Amphitheatres were used throughout the Roman world as a place to witness spectator sports, games, and displays. Amphitheatres differ from theatres because amphitheatres are circle or oval shaped, whereas theatres are semi-circular. Amphitheatres could seat hundreds to thousands and were the perfect construction for viewing games and sports. The most famous amphitheatre is the Colosseum in Rome (see **Cross-cultural Contributions Visuals 7 and 8**). The Colosseum was originally known as the Flavian Amphitheatre, but due to a colossal statue of the emperor in front, it adopted the name "the Colosseum." It was capable of seating fifty thousand and, due to its elliptical shape, the actions in the center were always in view. The Colosseum was ingeniously constructed and is believed to serve as the basis for many spectator buildings today. The Colosseum is remembered for its vicious gladiator games and horrific executions; they are often accurately portrayed by popular movies and television shows. It was built at a time during the Roman Empire when many people were unhappy with a string of bad emperors and were restless for change. The Colosseum was therefore built to try to appease the people through entertainment. Although the activities that took place in the amphitheatres

were much more violent than sports today—often resulting in brutal death—they drew huge crowds. The spectator aspect and government appeasement is not much different than today. Like in Roman times, many people today enjoy watching an aggressive football game or boxing match and will pay a lot of money to do so. Often companies keep employees happy by giving them season tickets or box seats to a favorite team or sport. The Colosseum’s structure and purpose to society is very similar to many forms of entertainment in America today. Its structure and purpose continues to be copied by nations all over the world.

### **Conclusion**

The ancient Romans have contributed a number of great structures and techniques to the ancient and modern world. The extensive use of concrete brought about excellent roads and masterful aqueducts. Temples and public buildings provided the basis of the modern architectural style of government and public buildings. The basilica’s floor plan continues to be used as the basis of cathedrals built all over the world, and the Colosseum serves a very similar purpose to our many sports arenas today. The Roman Empire contributed much to society, and its contributions continue to be seen and recognized all over the world sixteen hundred years later!



### **Activities**

1. Using popsicle sticks, cardboard, and glue, engineer an ancient Roman structure such as an amphitheater, temple, or basilica for display. Include a one-paragraph explanation of the structure.
2. Write a magazine article that could be featured in *National Geographic* on one of the ancient Roman structures that interest you. Include a history of the structure, and what it was used for.
3. In groups, thoroughly research one ancient structure, create a poster board of pictures and facts, and present what you have learned to the class.
4. Write an essay on the significance of Roman structures and how they have been influential throughout history. This can be written about one structure specifically or about a handful of structures.
5. Create a travel log of your tour of ancient structures in Europe. Describe where you are and the different ancient structures you have visited. Also explain how what the structures remind you of at home and how they contributed to the modern world.



### **Discussion Questions**

1. What importance do roads have today? Before e-mail, tv, and telephones, how did roads add to the unity and efficiency of a country as a whole? Think about Paul Revere and Wells Fargo. What did they help accomplish? Why was the organized road system of the ancient Roman Empire so crucial to its prosperity?
2. Why was concrete such an important invention? How did it affect the building process and durability of the building? If concrete had never been invented, how would buildings and roads differ today?

3. Compare the design of a Roman temple with that of the White House or your state's capitol building. What are some similarities? Why do you suppose many of our national buildings are reminiscent of ancient Roman architecture?
4. What is an aqueduct? Are they still used today? How are they important to the running of our homes and cities? How might the building of aqueducts all over the Roman Empire affect and improve society?
5. How did Christians make use of the basilica? Are basilicas still the base structure for buildings, namely churches, today? Are basilicas still used in the same ways as they were in the ancient world? In what ways? How are the uses different?
6. The Roman Empire is remembered for its magnificent amphitheaters and the fatal spectacles that took place in them. Why do you suppose people came to watch gruesome gladiator fights and torturous deaths? What role did these spectator sports play in Roman society? What role do spectator sports play in our society? Are there similarities?

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# FACTS ABOUT ITALY

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**Official Name:** Italian Republic

**Capital:** Rome

**Government Type:** republic

**Area:** 301,230 sq km

**Land Boundries:** Austria, France, Holy See (Vatican City), San Marino, Slovenia, Switzerland

**Climate:** predominantly Mediterranean; Alpine in far north; hot, dry in south

**Lowest Point:** Mediterranean Sea 0 m

**Highest Point:** Mont Blanc (Monte Bianco) de Courmayeur 4,748 m (a secondary peak of Mont Blanc)

**Natural Resources:** coal, mercury, zinc, potash, marble, barite, asbestos, pumice, fluorspar, feldspar, pyrite (sulfur), natural gas and crude oil reserves, fish, arable land

**Natural Hazards:** regional risks include landslides, mudflows, avalanches, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, flooding, land subsidence in Venice

**Population:** 58,145,320 (July 2008 est.)

**Ethnic Groups:** Italian (includes small clusters of German-, French-, and Slovene-Italians in the north and Albanian-Italians and Greek-Italians in the south)

**Relgions:** predominately Roman Catholic with mature Protestant and Jewish communities and a growing Muslim immigrant community

**Languages:** Italian (official), German (parts of Trentino-Alto Adige region are predominantly German speaking),

French (small French-speaking minority in Valle d'Aosta region), Slovene (Slovene-speaking minority in the Trieste-Gorizia area)

**GDP:** \$1.8 trillion (2007 est.)

**GDP Per Capita:** \$30,900 (2007 est.)

**GDP Composition by Sector:** agriculture: 2%, industry: 27%, services: 70.9% (2007 est.)

Labor Force: 24.74 million (2007 est.)

**Unemployment Rate:** 6.2% (2007 est.)

**Industries:** tourism, machinery, iron and steel, chemicals, food processing, textiles, motor vehicles, clothing, footwear, ceramics

**Agricultural Products:** fruits, vegetables, grapes, potatoes, sugar beets, soybeans, grain, olives; beef, dairy products; fish

**Exports:** \$502.4 billion f.o.b. (2007 est.)

**Imports:** \$498.1 billion f.o.b. (2007 est.)

**Trade Partners:** Germany, France, U.S., Spain, UK, Netherlands, China, Belgium (2006)

**Currency:** euro (EUR)

**Exchange Rate:** euros per U.S. dollar - 0.7345 (2007)

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# HISTORY AND HOLIDAYS

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## TIME LINE

- 1000–3000 B.C.E.** Etruscan civilization lives on the Italian peninsula
- 753** Romulus founds the city of Rome
- 509–31** The Roman Republic is created and governed by the senate and Rome gains land and dominance in the ancient world
- 31** The Republic falls and is replaced by the Roman Empire, governed by the emperor
- 31 B.C.E.–395 C.E.** Empire stretches across the European continent to the British Isles and as far south as North Africa
- 313** Emperor Constantine legalizes Christianity, empire is split, creating the eastern and western roman empire
- 387** Rome is sacked by barbarian invasions
- 400–600** Barbarian invasions continue from the north and east, bringing the empire to its end
- 600–1300** The Italian peninsula is ruled by various city-states during the Middle Ages
- 754–1305** The Catholic church gains prominence and the papacy rules all of central Italy
- 808–1797** The Venetian Republic gains wealth and power until it is conquered by the French dictator Napoleon
- 1400–1500** The Renaissance occurs in Florence, bringing an explosion of art, literature, science, and reason. Michelangelo and da Vinci live and work during this time.
- 1282–1743** The Medici family governs the prosperous state of Florence and surrounding areas
- 1815–1861** The Austrian Empire rules much of northern and central Italy
- 1861** The states on the Italian peninsula are unified, creating the Italian Republic
- 1922–1945** The Fascist regime, lead by Mussolini and supported by Hitler, rules Italy
- 1946–present** The Italian Republic begins

## HOLIDAYS

- 1 Jan** New Years Day
- 6 Jan** Epiphany (Christian feast celebrating the three Wise Men arriving to see Jesus)
- Feb** Shrove Tuesday (the last day of Carnival and the day before the beginning of Lent)  
Ash Wednesday (the first day of Lent [dates change annually])
- 19 Mar** St. Joseph's Day (a day of feasting to honor Joseph, the spouse of Mary and foster father of Jesus Christ)

- Apr** Good Friday (a day of fasting to commemorate the crucifixion of Jesus Christ)
- Easter Sunday
- 25 Apr** Liberation Day (celebrates the liberation of Italy from Germany at the end of World War Two)
- 1 May** Labor Day
- 9 May** Ascension Day (the day Christ ascended to heaven following his resurrection,(one of the greatest feasting days)
- 18 May** Pentecost (a Christian festival commemorating the descent of the holy spirit on the apostles)
- 2 Jun** Republic Day (celebrates the unification of Italy in 1861)
- Jun** Corpus Christi (a Christian feast commemorating the institution of the Holy Eucharist [sacrament])
- 15 Aug** Ferragosto (celebrates the day the Virgin Mary ascended to heaven)
- 1 Nov** All Saints Day (a feast held to honor all faithful saints and martyrs)
- 8 Dec** Immaculate Conception Day (celebrates the conception of Mary, Jesus born free of original sin)
- 25 Dec** Christmas
- 26 Dec** St. Stephen's day (commemorates the first Christian martyr, St. Stephen)

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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

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### ITALIAN EMBASSY TO THE UNITED STATES

3000 Whitehaven Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20008  
Phone: (202) 612-4400, Fax: (202) 518-2154  
Web site: <http://www.ambwashingtondc.esteri.it>

### ITALIAN DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM

630, Fifth Avenue Suite 1565  
New York, NY 10111  
Phone: +1 (212) 245-5618, Fax: +1 (212) 586-9249  
Web site: <http://italiantourism.com>

### ITALIAN CULTURAL CENTER

3000 Whitehaven Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20008  
Phone: (202) 612-4400, Fax: (202) 518-2154  
Web site: [http://www.iicwashington.esteri.it/IIC\\_Washington/Menu/Istituto/](http://www.iicwashington.esteri.it/IIC_Washington/Menu/Istituto/)

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#### **FILM**

*Modern Marvels: The Colosseum*, A & E Television Networks, 2007.  
(DVD can be found on [www.historychannel.com](http://www.historychannel.com) or often at the local library)  
*Rome: Engineering an Empire*, A & E Television Networks, 2005. (DVD can be found on [www.historychannel.com](http://www.historychannel.com) or often at the local library)

#### **INTERNET SITES**

##### **Ancient Rome:**

<http://www.crystalinks.com/rome.html>

##### **Carnival:**

<http://www.delpiano.com/carnival/html/gallery.html>

##### **CIA World Fact Book:**

<http://www.cia.gov/cia/publications/factbook/geos/it.html>

##### **The Colosseum:**

<http://www.the-colosseum.net/idx-en.htm>

##### **Encyclopizza: Recipes and Guide to Preparing Great Pizza:**

[http://www.correllconcepts.com/Encyclopizza/\\_home\\_encyclopizza.htm](http://www.correllconcepts.com/Encyclopizza/_home_encyclopizza.htm)

##### **History and Legends of Pizza:**

<http://whatscookingamerica.net/History/Pizza/PizzaHistory.htm>

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<http://italian.about.com/library/weekly/aa070401a.htm>

##### **Latin Languages:**

<http://latin-language.co.uk/>

##### **Romar Travel Guides**

<http://www.romartraveler.com/index.html>

##### **Tricolore:**

[www.tricolore.net](http://www.tricolore.net)

##### **Venetian Masks:**

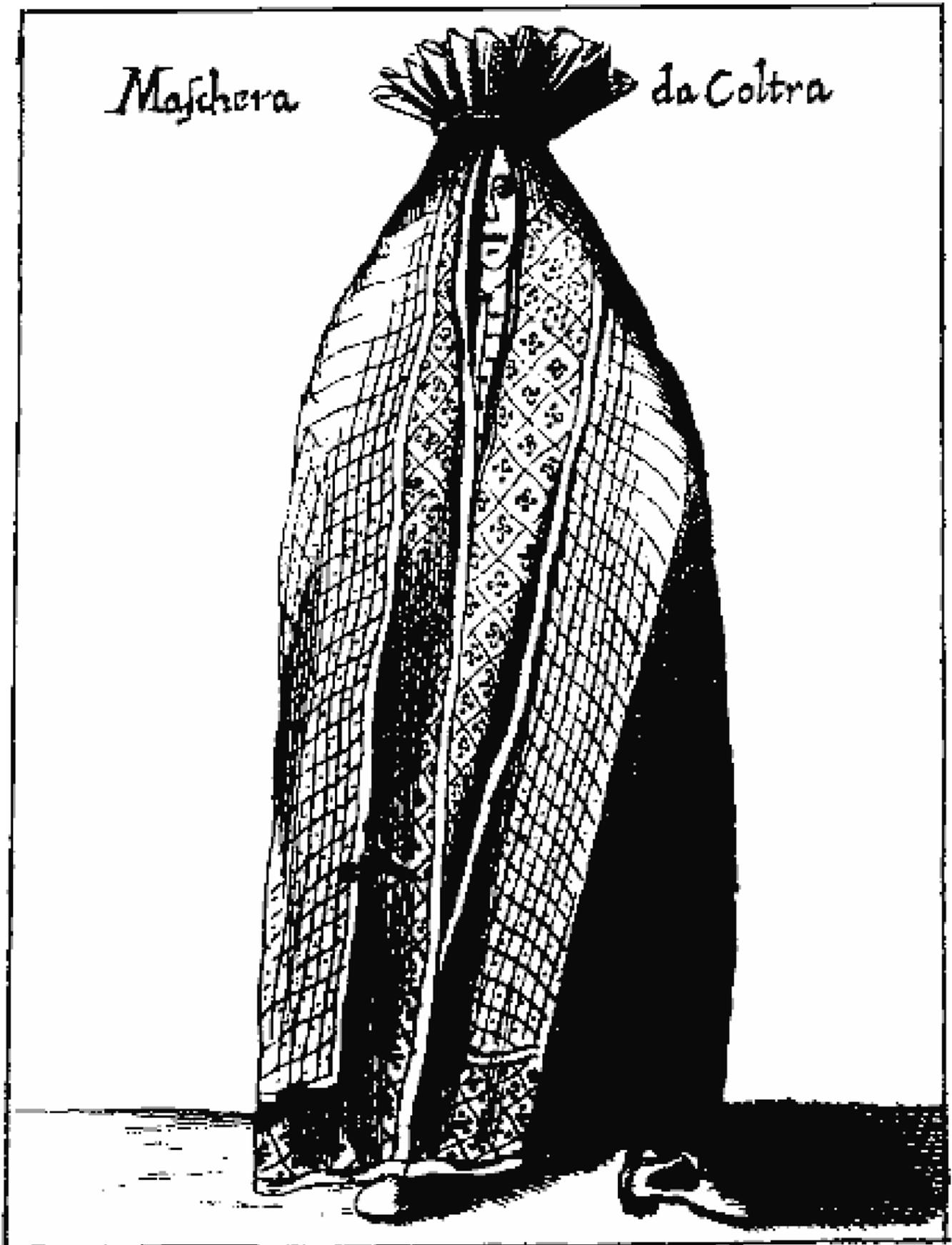
[http://outoftheattic.homeip.net/Venetian\\_Masks.html](http://outoftheattic.homeip.net/Venetian_Masks.html)

**Traditions Visual 1: Venice**

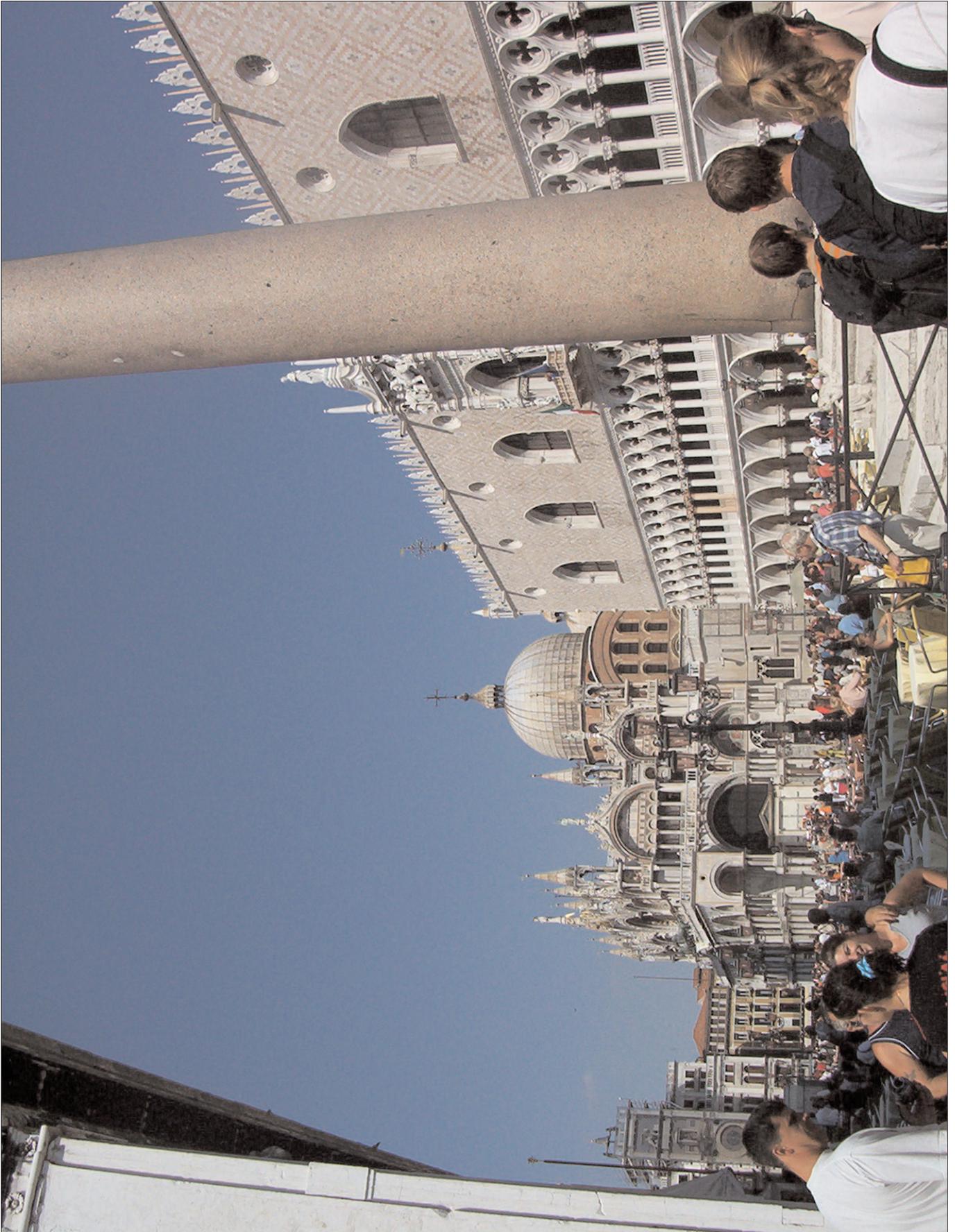








Traditions Visual 5: St. Mark's Square



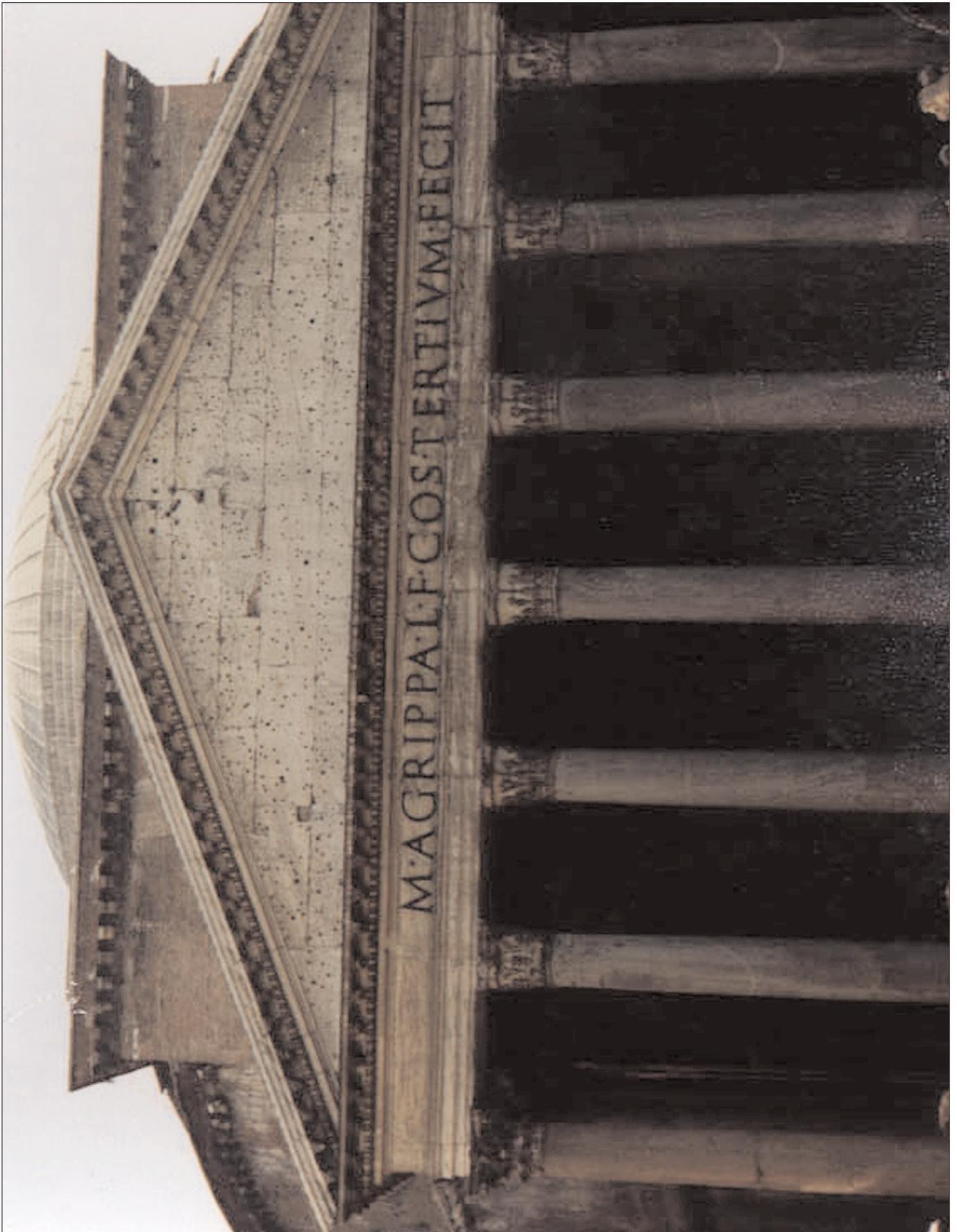
Traditions Visual 6: St. Mark's Square



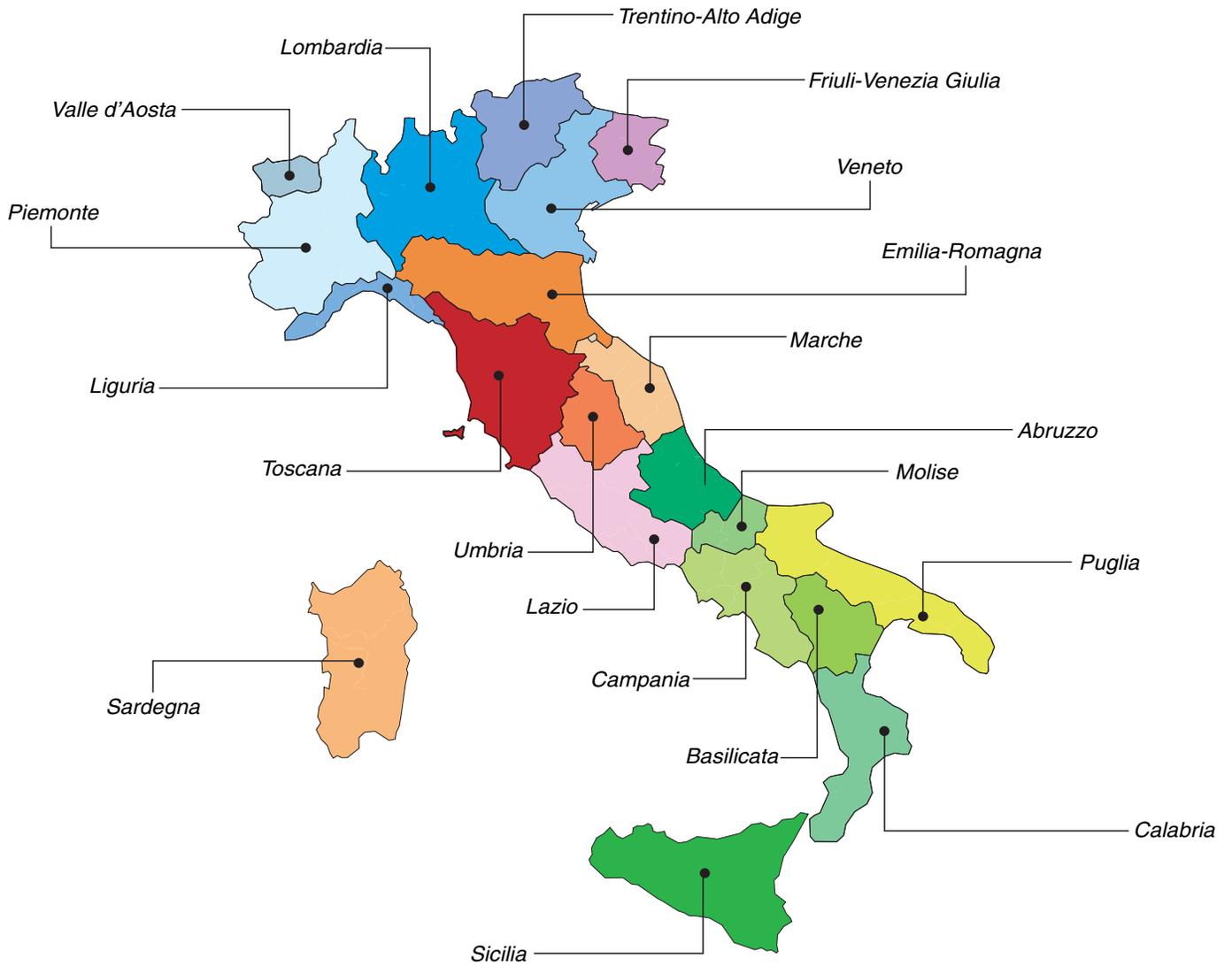
Traditions Visual 7: Boy Dressed as Zorro for Carnival



Folklore & Language Visual 1: Pantheon in Rome with Latin Inscription



## Folklore & Language Visual 2: Regions of Italy





**Italiano**

1. Nel mezzo del cammin di nostra vita  
mi ritrovai per una selva oscura,  
chè la diritta via era smarrita.
  
4. Ahi quanto a èdir qual era è coas dura  
esta selva selvaggia e aspra e forte  
che nel pensier rinova la paura!
  
7. Tant' è amara che poco è più morte;  
ma per trattar del ben ch'i' vi trovai,  
dirò de l'altre cose ch'i' v'ho scorte.

**English Translation**

1. Midway upon the journey of our life  
I found myself within a forest dark,  
For the straightforward pathway had been lost.
  
4. Ah me! how hard a thing it is to say  
what was this forest savage, and rough, and stern  
which in the very thought renews fear.
  
7. So bitter is it, death is little more;  
But of the good to treat, which there I found,  
speak will I of the other things I saw there.

## Folklore & Language Visual 5: Latin Prefixes and Roots Used in the English Language

1. Study the table of Latin prefixes, roots, and suffixes, and fill in English words that use the Latin base

LATIN PREFIX	GENERAL MEANING	ENGLISH EXAMPLE
Co-	Together	
De-	Away, off	
Dis-	Not, not any	
Inter-	Among, between	
Non-	Not	
Post-	After	
Pre-	Before	
Re-	Again, back, backward	
Sub-	Under	
Trans-	Across, through	
LATIN ROOTS	GENERAL MEANING	ENGLISH EXAMPLE
-dict-	To say	
-gress	To walk	
-ject	To throw	
-pel	To drive	
-port	To carry	
-scrib, -script	To write	
-tract	To pull, drag, draw	
-vert	To turn	
LATIN SUFFIX	FUNCTION	ENGLISH EXAMPLE
-able, -ible	Forms adjectives	
-ation	Forms nouns from verbs	

### KEY

LATIN PREFIX	GENERAL MEANING	ENGLISH EXAMPLE
Co-	Together	coauthor, cooperate
De-	Away, off	deactivate, defrost
Dis-	Not, not any	disbelief, disrespect
Inter-	Among, between	international, interfaith
Non-	Not	nonstop, nonviolent
Post-	After	postwar, postnatal
Pre-	Before	preexist, prepay
Re-	Again, back, backward	rewrite, rerun
Sub-	Under	submarine, subhuman
Trans-	Across, through	transatlantic, transpolar
LATIN ROOTS	GENERAL MEANING	ENGLISH EXAMPLE
-dict-	To say	dictate, predict, contradict
-gress	To walk	progress, transgress
-ject	To throw	project, interject, subject
-pel	To drive	compel, repel
-port	To carry	export, support, report
-scrib, -script	To write	describe, prescription
-tract	To pull, drag, draw	attract, extract, traction
-vert	To turn	convert, divert, invert
LATIN SUFFIX	FUNCTION	ENGLISH EXAMPLE
-able, -ible	Forms adjectives	likable, flexible, admirable
-ation	Forms nouns from verbs	creation, information

2. Based on what you have learned about the development of the Italian language from Latin, what events may have brought so many Latin influences to the English language?

Food Visual 1: Pizzeria



Food Visual 2: Margherita Pizza





Food Visual 4: The Spanish Steps in Rome



## Food Visual 5: Margherita Pizza Recipe

### You will need:

- |                                     |  |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| 4 $\frac{1}{3}$ C all-purpose flour | 2 C fresh Italian mozzarella balls     |
| 4 tbsp extra virgin olive oil       | 2 tsp dry basil                        |
| 1 tsp salt                          | 2 C canned plum tomatoes without juice |
| $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp sugar             |  |
| 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ C lukewarm water    |  |
| 1 pack dry active yeast             |  |

### Preparation

1. In a large bowl, mix flour,  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp salt, sugar, and yeast.
2. Add 2 tbsp olive oil and slowly mix in the warm water. Stop adding water if it starts to become runny, even if you haven't used all of it yet.
3. Knead the dough with your hands for ten minutes and place it back in the bowl. Cover the bowl with a kitchen towel.
4. Allow the dough to sit for about 3 hours, or until it has doubled in size.
5. While you are waiting for the dough to rise, complete steps 6–8.
6. Preheat oven to 450 degrees.
7. Grease a 11" x 15" baking sheet with olive oil.
8. Finely slice the tomatoes and mix them in a second bowl with  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp salt and 1 tbsp olive oil. If there is a lot of excess juice, drain it into the sink before continuing.
9. Once the dough is ready, roll it out with a rolling pin, if you have one, and then spread it evenly on your baking sheet.
10. Spread the tomato mixture over the crust, and sprinkle it with basil.
11. Cook for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, cut the mozzarella balls into cubes.
12. Add mozzarella to your pizza and allow it to cook for 5–10 minutes more depending on your oven. You can tell the pizza is cooked when the crust is light brown and the cheese is mostly melted.

Cross-cultural Contributions Visual 1: Road in Pompeii



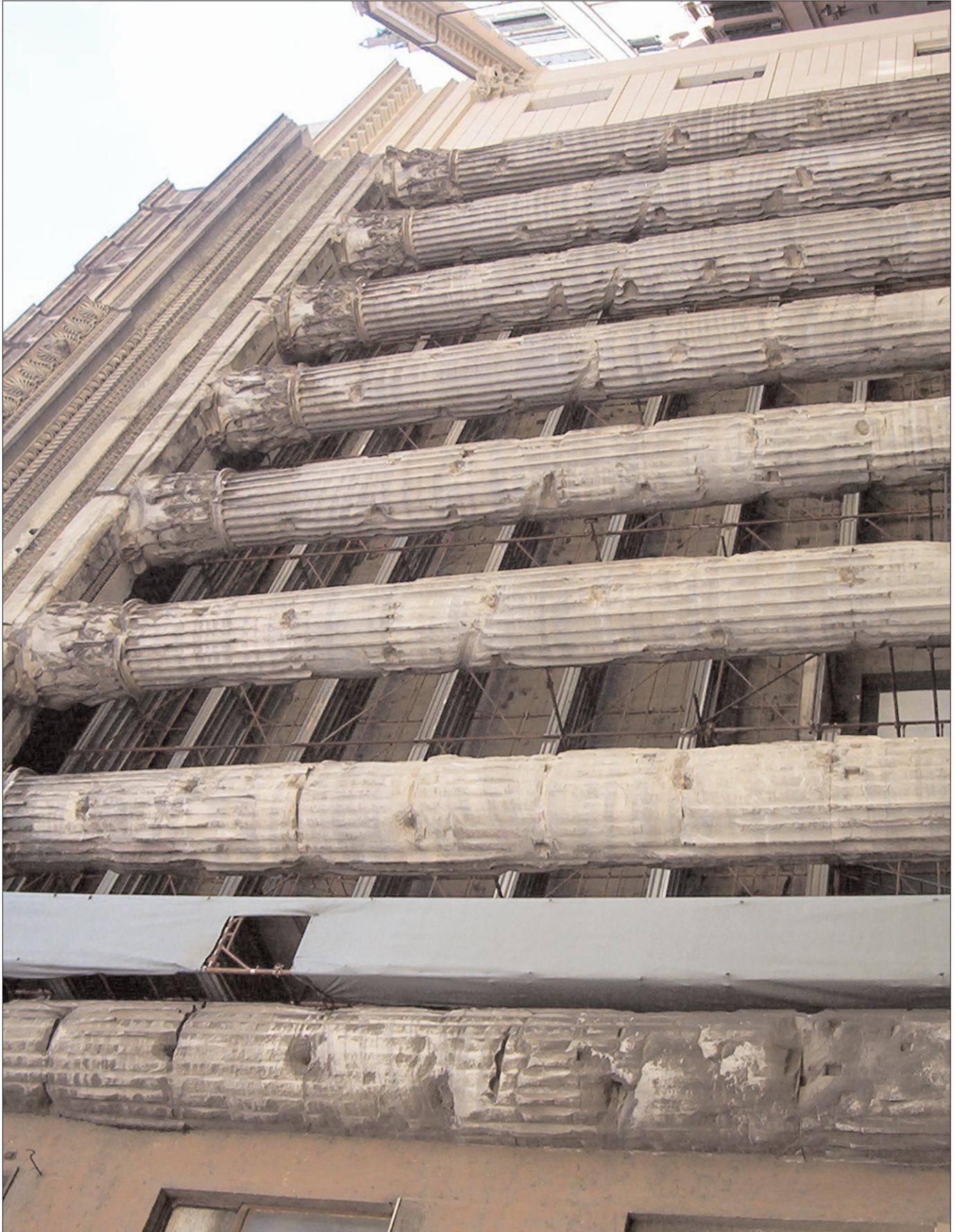
Cross-cultural Contributions Visual 2: Road in Ostia



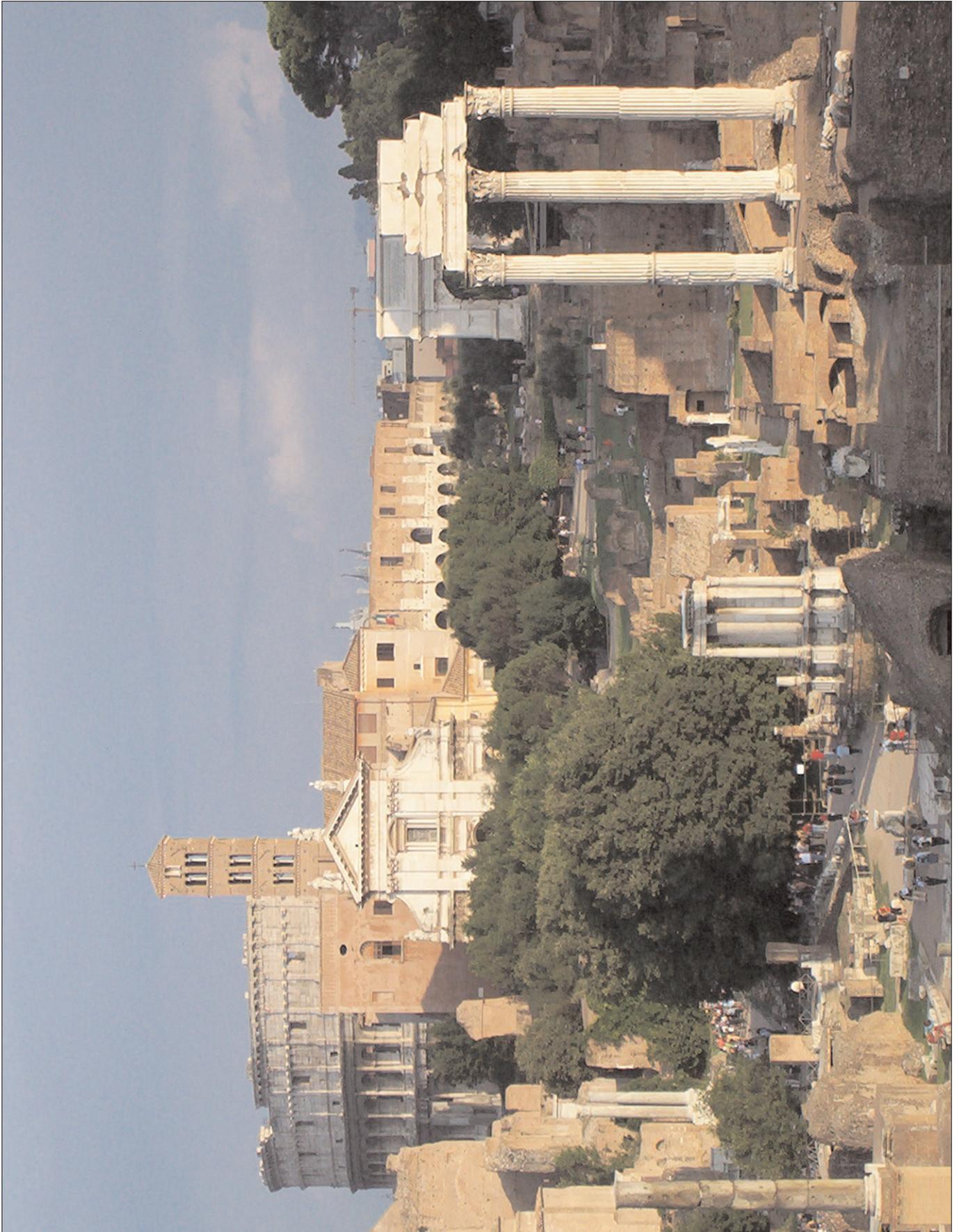
### Cross-cultural Contributions Visual 3: Aqueduct in Rome



Cross-cultural Contributions Visual 4: Roman Temple and Stock Exchange



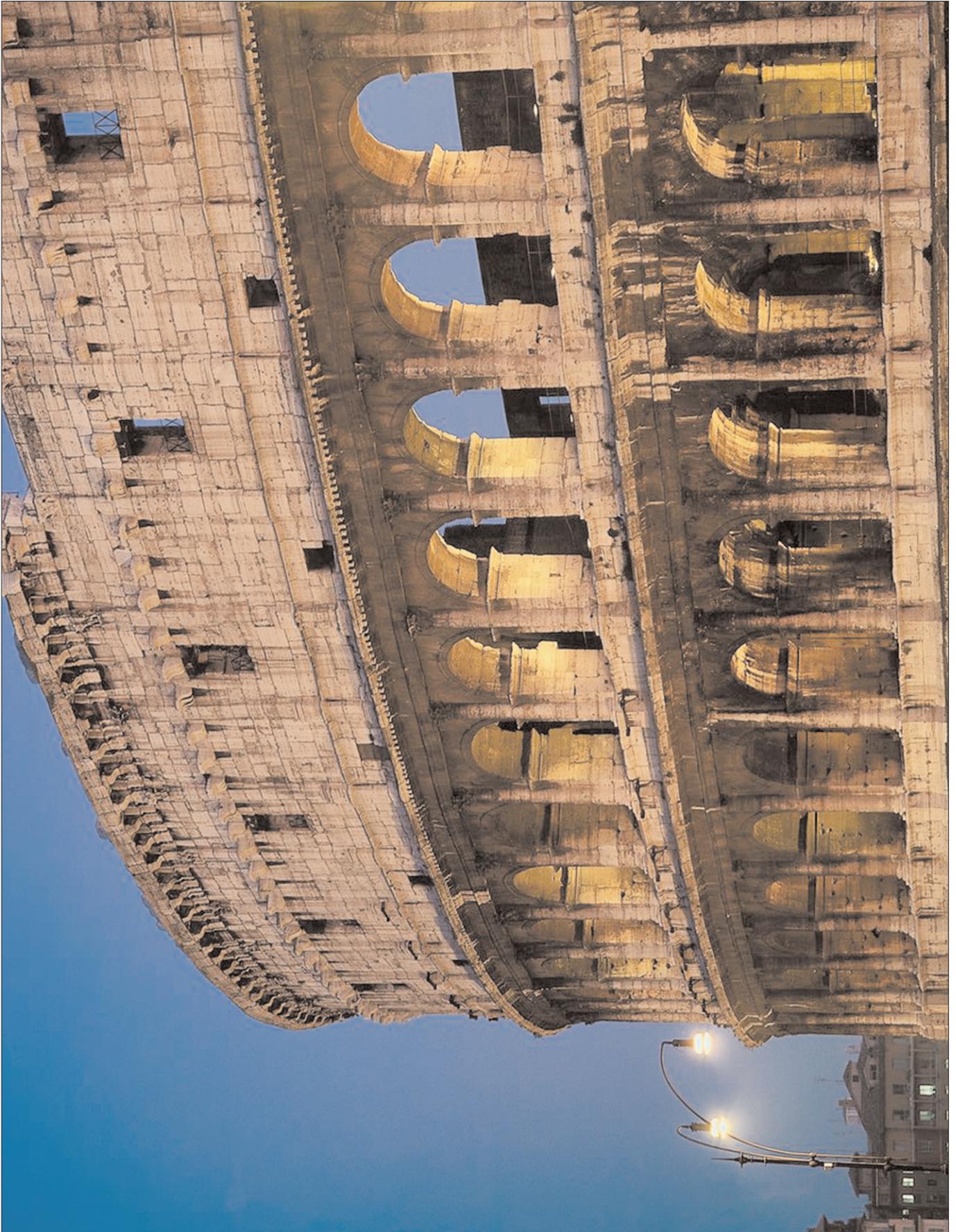
Cross-cultural Contributions Visual 5: Roman Forum

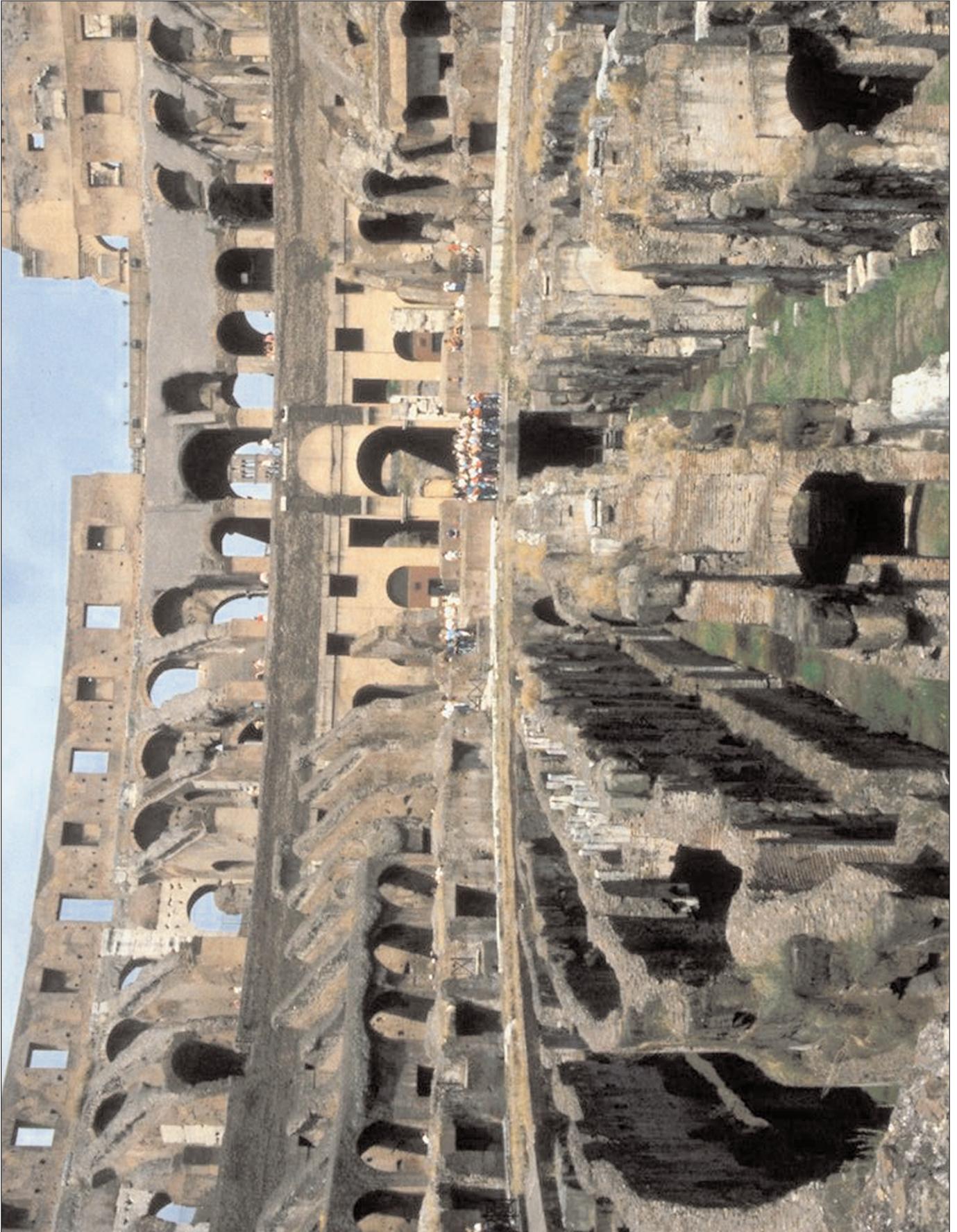


Cross-cultural Contributions Visual 6: St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome



Cross-cultural Contributions Visual 7: Colosseum in Rome







### **FLAG OF ITALY**

The Italian flag has three equal vertical bands of green, white, and red. It is similar to the flag of Ireland, which is longer and is green and is green white, and orange; also similar to the flag of the Cote d'Ivoire, which has the colors reversed—orange, white, and green. It was inspired by the French flag brought to Italy by Napoleon in 1797.

# Map of Italy

