

Museums in Rome

Advanced

There is no lack of museums in Rome. A substantial part of the city is more or less an open-air museum anyway. So it shouldn't be too difficult to see plenty of good old Roman iron and steel hardware. Maybe that is true for smarter people than me. I, however, didn't see any - and I have been to quite a few Roman museums.

I did see a lot of extremely good things, however, some are shown below.

Let's start with the *Galleria Nazionale del Antiqua*. Nothing very "antiqua", however, just paintings. Swords were only shown in use like in this "Judith and Holofernes" from Caravaggio (1571 - 1620)



Judith puts Holofernes to the sword

Source: Photographed in Rome; April 2016

Otherwise they have the usual collections of great old ("antiqua") art. Eschewing details, most art pieces are either of the "dead Christians" or naked women type. Here are examples:



Dead Christians type of art

The entombment of Christ; Jacobino del Conte (1510 - 1598)

Source: Photographed in Rome; April 2016



Naked women type of art

Pittor Fiamingo; Diana and her nymphs bathing

Source: Photographed in Rome; April 2016

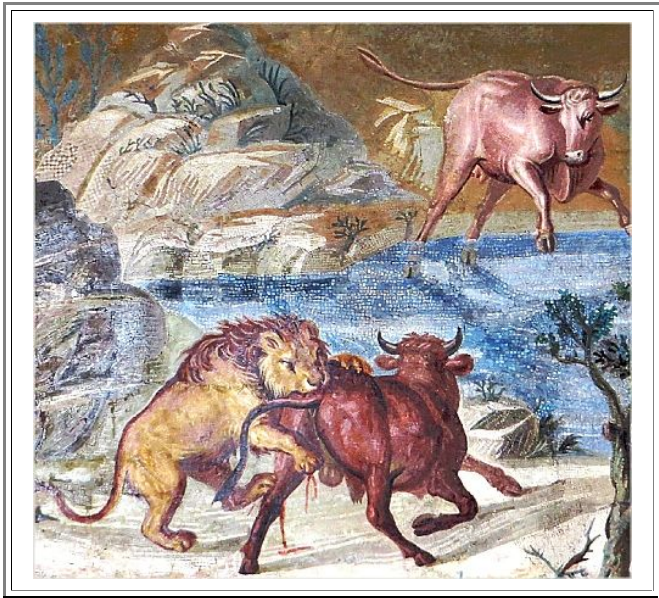
▀ The world-famous *Vatican Museum* also has a lot of old pictures on display. It is, however, clearly in favor of paintings showing dead or soon-to-be-dead Christians and eschews the naked woman kind of pictures. While I like my Christians dead, it gets a bit boring after a while. Just kidding, There are many breathtaking paintings; I particularly liked [these frescoes](#). But the Vatican museum has much more to offer than just pictures. Here is Ulysses or Odysseus, apparently taking a selfie:

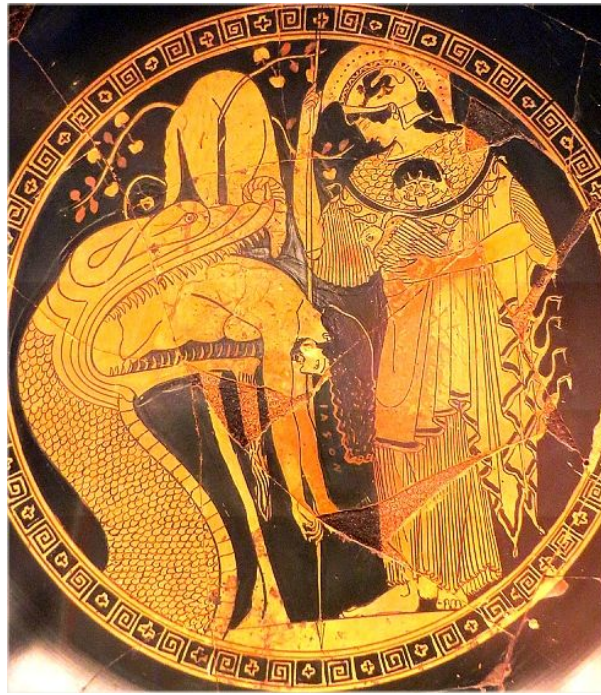


Odysseus taking a selfie?

Source: Photographed in Rome; April 2016

- There are plenty of gorgeous marble sculptures and other great objects, often showing somebodies dinner.





Dinner Time

Source: Photographed in Rome; April 2016

- Marble and bronze sculptures, mosaics, Greek and Etruscan vases, reliefs, you name it, it's there. Except iron, steel and swords. [This picture](#) shows pretty much the full extent of what you can find in this respect: Nothing of particular interest
- .Walking through the vast area of the Forum Romanum and so on, you encounter the *Palatine museum* on the Palatine hill, where the palaces of the emperors used to be. Once more no metal but clear evidence of skilled steel tool uses:



Small part of palace floor

Producing thousands of small marble pieces with precise shapes calls for steel tools

Source: Photographed in Rome; April 2016

▶ The *Capitoline Museum* is next. Wonderful, fascinating, breath-taking, marvellous - you can't praise it too much! There are even a few exciting *Leda's*. Just no metal objects.

● As an example, here is another version of the dinner scene from [above](#):



Dinner Time

Source: Photographed in Rome; April 2016

● We also have friendly Romans:



"The bathroom is over there"

Equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, ca. 170 AD

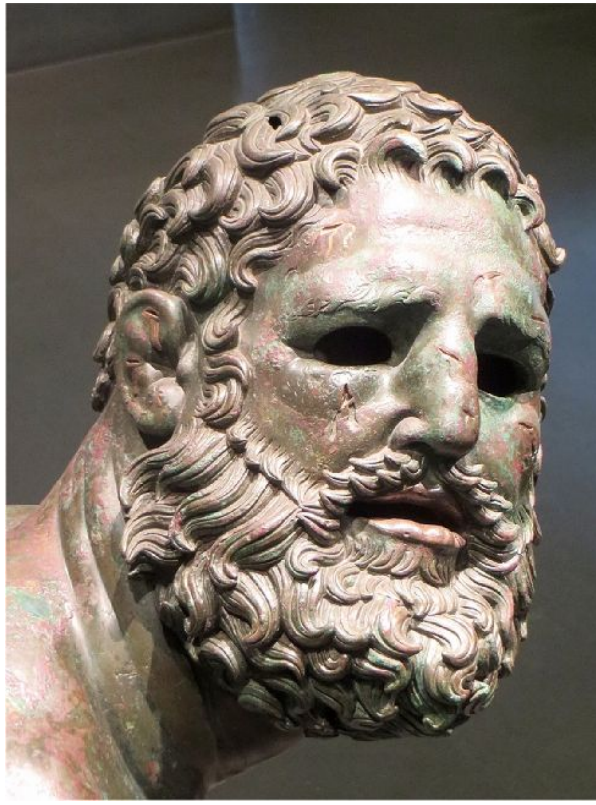
- Then we have the "dying [Gaul](#)" , one of the most famous cultures from antiquity:



Dying Gaul

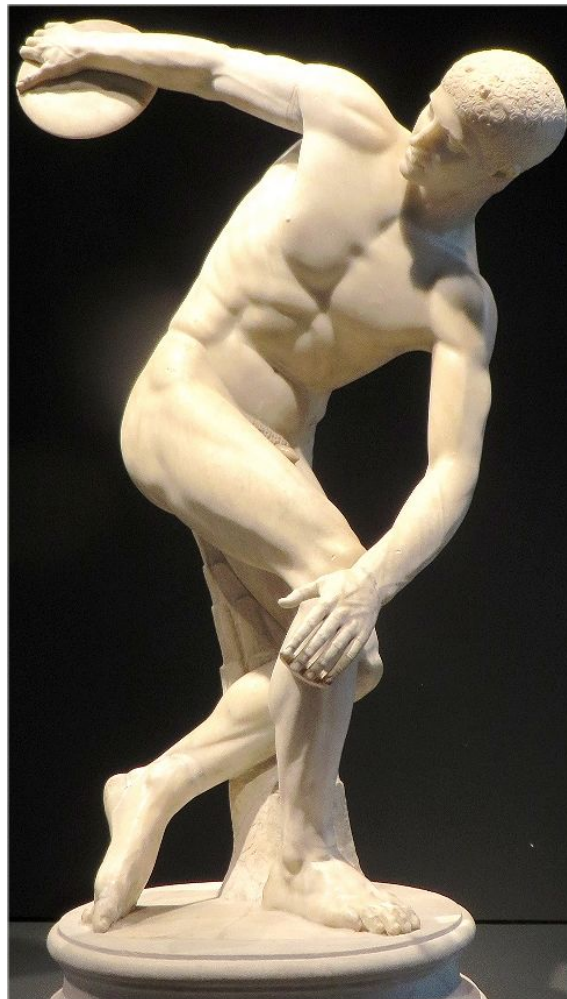
Roman copy of a Greek sculpture; another picture is [here](#).

- ▶ .Let's move on to the *Palazzo Massimo alle Terme*, a part of the *Museo Nazionale Romano*. Wonderful, fascinating, breath-taking, marvellous and so on once more. No iron steel and swords once more, too.
- High points are the bronze sculpture of "the Boxer" and a marble disc thrower:



Head of "The Boxer"
[Large version and 2nd picture](#)

Source: Photographed in Rome; April 2016



"Discobolus" or disc thrower
1st century BC copy of 5th century Greek original

And so on and so forth. Time to move on to the *Galleria Borghese*. It is world-famous and a private enterprise, meaning that it is crowded, expensive and not given to suck up to mere customers. Explanations, for example, are only given in Italian if at all.

I must admit, however, that the Galleria Borghese does have remarkable stuff - just no iron steel and swords.

- Prominent among hundreds of world-class art works are in particular the Bernini "marbles". Below "Apollo and Daphne"; another one is [here](#).



Apollo and Daphne; Bernini, ca, 1623

Apollo, hit by same magic, is deeply in love with Daphne, who, influenced by some other magic, can't stand him. The happy end (?) includes Daphne turning into a laurel tree.



**Ratto di Proserpina (The Rape of Proserpina);
Bernini 1621.**

We see the abduction of Proserpina, where Proserpina is seized and taken to the underworld by the god Pluto. You also see Fluffy, Hagrid's three-headed dog of Harry Potter fame

[Large picture](#)

Source: Photographed in Rome; April 2016

● By now it should be clear that Greek mythology was invented so that artists had an excuse for doing naked women (plus a naked men on occasion), using all the media at their disposal. That's fine with me; I definitely prefer it to doing dead Christians.

▶ .No iron, steel and swords, of course. So let's move on to the *Etruscan Museum*. Marvellous and so on; and I mean it.

● Hundreds of cases show highly interesting pottery; here is an example of a case, the next picture shows why the pottery might be highly interesting.



One of many cases showing pottery

Source: Photographed in Rome; April 2016



Etruscans with clear ideas of how to have a good time

Source: Photographed in Rome; April 2016

Finally! Some iron:



Coppia di alari di ferro and almeno otto spiedi in ferro; 630 BC

Whatever, essentially spits for roasting your pig.

Source: Photographed in Rome; April 2016

- Explanations were given in Italian only (could be worse, e.g. Latin).
There were several interesting bronze objects and two actual swords:



Iron swords. In a Rome museum!
The only ones I encountered.

Source: Photographed in Rome; April 2016

- ▣ Seven museums. All of them amazing. But only two (mediocre) iron swords. I'm sure there are more - in the museums I didn't see. So let's wait for next time around.

- ▣ We also went to the opera in Rome. The building is not exactly a museum but it does have an interesting painting way up on the ceiling. With a good tele lens you can even find out what it features.
Surprise! Naked women!



Ceiling painting at the Rome opera

Source: Photographed in Rome; April 2016



Ceiling painting at the Rome opera; detail

Source: Photographed in Rome; April 2016



Ceiling painting at the Rome opera; detail

Source: Photographed in Rome; April 2016

Visiting Rome is fun. You should definitely do it. Go to the museums. You may not find the iron, steel and swords you are looking for but in almost all those places you will find other things also dear to (most) men older than about 13.