



The Farnese Aviaries

Rome, Lazio, Italy

The Farnese Aviaries are located on the Palatine Hill, once the heart of ancient Rome. Creation of the Farnese gardens began in the sixteenth century, when leading Roman families controlled the land on the Palatine. The garden complex included a variety of structures connected with terraces, stairs, and ramps leading to the top of the Palatine Hill from the Roman Forum. The aviaries are twin square pavilions, arranged at an angle to each other, and originally decorated using *sgraffito*, a technique employing different layers of plaster, popular in Italy at the time. The original curving metalwork roofs of the pavilions were replaced in the nineteenth century with timber and terracotta tiles. The garden complex was described in countless travelers' accounts, and was depicted in numerous engravings, drawings, sketches, prints, and paintings between the sixteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The gardens were created on top of rich archaeological remains, including the first-century Palace of Tiberius, and lost much of their form with archaeological excavations starting in the late nineteenth century. The gardens were restored, but the aviaries have stayed untouched for more than half a century, and, due to prolonged lack of maintenance, the architectural surfaces are now in a highly deteriorated condition. A restoration study was recently completed by the Special Superintendency for the Archaeological Heritage of Rome, but funding is needed to carry out this program. The Farnese Aviaries represent the best-preserved Renaissance remains on the Palatine, and are one of the few spaces suitable for public interpretation and programming relating to this period of the Palatine's history. Their restoration has the potential to enhance the visitor experience and public understanding of this complex archaeological site.