



Veleia: the Archaeological site



How to reach Veleia



Visiting Hours

Every day from 9.00 to one hour before sunshine
From 1st December to 15th March from 9.00 to 15.00
Information: Tel. (+39) 0523 807113

Download on
<http://www.archeobologna.beniculturali.it/veleia/index.htm>



The Roman city

Veleia looks like a typical mountain centre, with its buildings placed on a terraced hillside, partly natural and partly artificial, and the structures for the religious, social and civil life (the latter belonging to the most powerful families) organized around the forum.

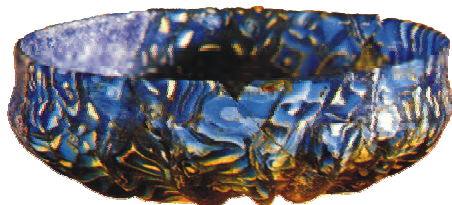
The forum of Veleia was formed by a square, paved by slabs of sandstone, closed on one side by the *basilica*, where justice was administered and public functions carried out; it was surrounded on the other three sides by a portico, with the *tabernae* (the shops). In the main room of the basilica, statues of marble from Luni, portraying the members of the Julio-Claudian family, were aligned on a podium against the back wall.

In the second half of the I century AD, on the northern side, facing the basilica, a monumental entrance with columns on two sides was placed to connect the inner portico with a new one, probably planned for public use. On the upper terrace, overlooking the basilica, there are the ruins of the thermal spa, belonging to the Imperial period, and the built-up southern district, including the *Domus del cinghiale*, a clear example of a Roman house with atrium.

The present appearance dates back to the Imperial period but traces of more ancient times have been unearthed in different areas of the town.

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The buildings were placed on a terraced hillside and we can distinguish the chronology of the different building stages. The forum, of the Augustan and Julio-Claudian period, extended over a level ground that had been artificially created through a deep excavation, as revealed by the stratification, clearly recognizable under the staircase of the oriental side. The well-preserved paving was surrounded by a drainage canal to carry rainwater away.



The Forum

It is surrounded on three sides by a portico with shops and public buildings, all provided with a heating system. Originally it probably seemed to widen out thanks to the optical illusion of a wall painting.

It was closed on the fourth side by the lower terrace, obtained by amassing the materials from the excavation of the upper slope, and contained by solid substructures. This terrace, connected to the upper one by an impressive entrance, was probably intended for religious purposes. To the west of the forum, recent excavations have unearthed ruins of buildings that have been dated prior to its construction, as well as ruins of its original entrance, which was replaced by the monumental one, on the northern side, during the second half of the I century AD.

The ruins of the basilica

The basilica was located on the southern side of the complex; it was a building with a nave and no aisles, with rectangular exedrae in the heads, intended for the worship of the emperors. For this commemorative purpose, twelve statues of marble from Luni, portraying members of the Julio-Claudian family, were aligned along the back wall. The whole complex was erected, as revealed by a series of inscriptions, thanks to the generosity of some wealthy citizens and local magistrates.

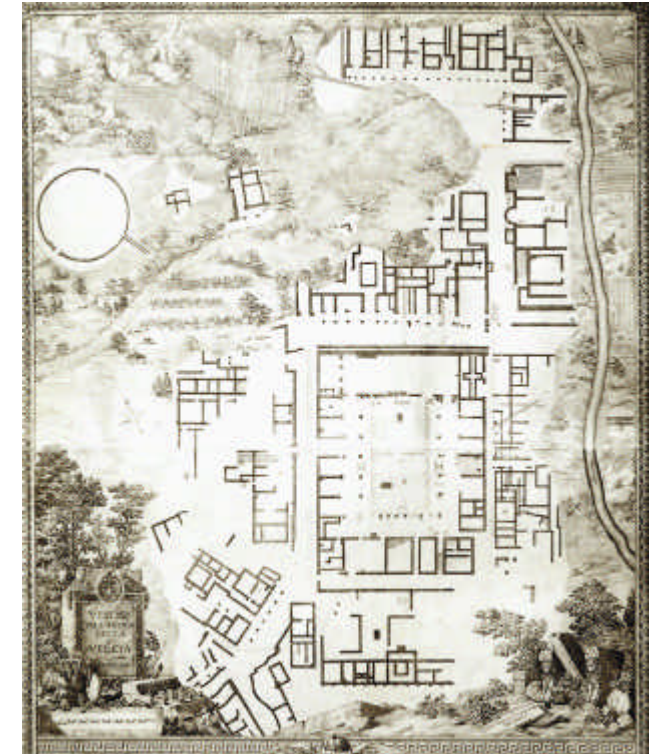
The bath

Above the forum there is a residential district and a bath. The terrace, where a parish church devoted to Saint Antonino was built during the Middle Ages, had probably already been the location of a religious building in more ancient times. Further up, there is another building that was correctly identified, when discovered, as a water reservoir, but was then misinterpreted as an amphitheatre and as such restored.



The findings

The official exploration of Veleia started in 1760 under the Duke of Parma, don Filippo I di Borbone, after the discovery by chance in 1747 of the Trajan "*tabula alimentaria*" which still remains the biggest bronze Roman inscription found.



The Museum of Veleia

At the end of the 18th century, to the west of the basilica, the housekeeper's house was erected; then, in the first half of the 19th century, a building intended for the curator, was built next to it and was to receive, besides the cast of the Trajan tabula and the Lex de Gallia Cisalpina, a group of findings that represents the most significant moment in the history of Veleia: the ligurian origins, the building of the most valuable public monuments, the furniture of private houses and the objects of everyday life, the gladiator combats and the funerary rites