THE OBELISKS OF ROME

	Location	Origin	Dynasty	Time of	Date	Height	Removed under	Erection at	Re-erection under	Year
1	Lateran	Karnak, Sanctuary of Amun-Re	18th	Thutmose III Thutmose IV	14th c.	32,18 m	Constantinus II. (337)	Circus Maximus (357)	Sixtus V	1588
2	Piazza del Popolo	Heliopolis Temple of Ra	19th	Sethi I Ramesses II	13th c.	23,20 m	Augustus (10 BCE)	Circus Maximus	Sixtus V	1589
3	Piazza della Rotonda (Pantheon)	Heliopolis Temple of Ra	19th	Ramesses II	13th c.	6,34 m	Roman times	Temple of Isis	Clement XI	1711
4	Villa Celimontana	Heliopolis Temple of Ra	19th	Ramesses II	13th c.	2,68 m (fragm.)	Roman times	Temple of Isis	Family Mattei	1817
5	Viale delle Terme di Diocleziano	Heliopolis	19th	Ramesses II	13th c.	9,25 m	Roman times	Temple of Isis	-	1924
6	Monte Citorio	Heliopolis	26th	Psametik II	595-589	21,79 m	Augustus (10 BCE)	Campus Martius	Pius VI	1792
7	Piazza della Minerva	Sais Temple of Atum	26th	Apries	589-570	5,47 m	Roman times	Temple of Isis	Alexander VII	1667
8	Piazza Navona	Rome, Campo Marzio Temple of Isis	-	Domitian	81 CE	16,54 m	-	Temple of Isis	Innocent X	1648
9	Pincio: Piazza Bucarest	Rome, tomb of Antinous	-	Hadrian	130-138 CE	9,25 m	-	-	Pius VII	1822
10	Trinità dei Monti	uncertain	-	uncertain	uncertain	13,91 m	Roman times	Horti Sallustiani	Pius VI	1789
11	Piazza di San Pietro	uncertain	-	Augustus	30 BCE	25,5 m	Caligula	Circus of Nero	Sixtus V	1586
12	Santa Maria Maggiore	uncertain	-	uncertain	uncertain	14,75 m	after Augustus	Augustus' Mausoleum	Sixtus V	1587
13	Quirinal	uncertain	-	uncertain	uncertain	14,63 m	after Augustus	Augustus' Mausoleum	Pius VI	1786
14	Villa Borghese	uncertain	-	uncertain	uncertain	ca. 2 m (fragm.)	?	?	-	1790

Transferred to other places in Italy:

15	Florence, Boboli Gardens	Heliopolis	19th	Ramesses II	13th c.	6,34 m	Roman times	Temple of Isis	Medici	1790
16	Urbino, Piazza Rinascimento	Sais Temple of Atum	26th	Apries	589-570	(fragm.)	Roman times	? Temple of Isis	Cardinal Albani	1737

All obelisks in Rome are made of rose granite, originating from Assuan (Egypt). Ancient descriptions of Rome mention 48 obelisks, so several smaller obelisks have probably been lost (IVERSEN 1968, 178-184). At least six obelisks were kept at the Temple of Isis at Campo Marzio (today S. Maria sopra Minerva; LEMBKE 1994, 202-213). Outside of Italy, thirteen standing Egyptian obelisks are described in SOREK 2010: six in Egypt and one in each of the following cities: Istambul, Paris, Arles, London, Dorset, New York, Caesarea (Israel).

1. Lateran: 337 CE removed from Karnak under Constantinus II. 357 erected at the Circus Maximus. Excavated, reconstructed and re-erected at the Lateran under Pope Sixtus V in 1588.

2. Piazza del Popolo: 10 BCE removed under Augustus to celebrate his victory at Actium. Re-erected at the *spina* of the Circus Maximus; excavated 1587 and re-erected at Piazza del Popolo 1589 under Pope Sixtus V; served as a model for the Roman copy of the instricptions on the obelisk at Trinità dei Monti.

3. Piazza della Rotonda (Pantheon): Removed in Roman times and integrated into the temple of Isis in the Campus Martius; transferred for some time near the church of San Mucato; erected in front of the Pantheon in 1711 under Pope Clement XI.

4. Villa Celimontana: Twin of the aforementioned; discovered in the 13th century; erected at Santa Maria in Aracoeli; 1588 at Villa Celimontana; 1817 at its present location.

5. Viale delle Terme di Diocleziano: Transferred in Roman times to the temple of Isis in the Campus Martius; excavated in 1883 and erected at Piazza dei Cinquecento, 1924 at the present location.

6. Montecitorio: 10 BC transferred to Rome as the *gnomon* of Augustus' sundial at Campus Martius, where it was probably standing until 1084; rediscovered in 1502; completely excavated in 1748; re-erected in 1792.

7. Piazza della Minerva: Transferred in Roman times to the temple of Isis in the Campus Martius; discovered in 1665 and erected upon Bernini's elephant in 1667 under Alexander VII.

8. Piazza Navona: erected in honour of Domitian's coronation in the temple of Isis in 81 CE. Moved to Villa di Massenzio (Via Appia Antica) at the beginning of the 4th c. (*spina* of the Circus). The inscriptions were made in Rome.

9. Pincio (Piazza Bucarest): Relocated in the 3rd c. AD at the Circus of Valerianus (Via Labicana). After 1570 transferred to the courtyard of Palazzo Barberini; in 1769 relocated to the Cortile della Pigna at the Vatican; erected at the present location in 1822.

10. Trinità dei Monti: The hieroglyphs were incised in Rome.

11-13 have no hieroglyphic inscription. Their origin and date are therefore uncertain. They were produced in Egypt, probably during the late Ptolemaic or the Roman period.

11. Piazza San Pietro: It is uncertain whether the obelisk was produced in pharaonic or in Roman times (but the latter seems more likely). It was first dedicated by C. Cornelius Gallus (*praefectus Alexandreae et Aegypti*) in Alexandria in 30 BCE. As Pliny the Elder attests in his *Naturalis historia*, it was transferred to Rome during the time of Caligula (37-41 CE) and erected on the *spina* of the Circus of Nero. It remained standing during the Middle Ages and was transferred to the present location under Pope Sixtus V in 1586. The previous location is marked by an inscription in the pavement between Saint Peter and the Camposanto Teutonico (Piazza dei Protomartiri Romani). See esp. ALFÖLDY 1990.

14. Villa Borghese: The small obelisk hidden between Viale del Lago and Viale dell'Aranciera (some 50 meters southeast of the Casina del Lago) is one of the smaller obelisks from antiquity. The original pyramidion is replaced by a modern one (IVERSEN 1968, 182-184).

15. Florence, Boboli Gardens: erected in the 16th century in the gardens of Villa Medici in Rome. Moved to Florence in 1788; erected in the Boboli gardens in 1790.

16. Urbino, Piazza Rinascimento: incorporates two fragments probably of **4** and two fragments of another obelisk; given by the Jesuits of the Collegio Romano to Cardinal Alessandro Albani in 1729, who donated them to his home town Urbino; erected there in 1737 (IVERSEN 1968, 179).

Literature

CIAMPINI 2004 contains drawings, transcriptions, and an Italian translation of the hieroglyphic inscriptions (except for the obelisk at Trinità dei Monti, since the inscription is a Roman imitation of the Piazza del Popolo obelisk). LEMBKE 1994, 202-213 presents transcriptions and German translations of the inscriptions of obelisks 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 15, 16.

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