



Historical map of

Romans – Bourg-de-Péage

Discover the history of
Romans and Bourg-de-
péage

An hour hike through the past :

(1) The « Jacquemart » tower.

Built of sandstone and limestone, the tower is an ancient city door at the time of the first surrounding wall of the 12th century.

In order to increase their power as well as to bring rhythm to the peoples work, the consuls of the town decided, in the 15th century, to install a clock at the top of the tower (inaugurated in march 1429). Since then a wooden puppet strikes the hours with its hammer. First dressed as a “jacque” (peasant clothes) thus the name “*Jacquemart*”, it changed uniform at the end of the 19th century as it endorsed the ideals of the new french republic by wearing the colors of the Revolution soldiers, that he kept since.



(2) The Jacquemart street

This street on a slope was the quarters of the shareholders, traders and law people until the french Revolution (end of 18th century). The front walls are witnesses of Romans' flourishing days : the upper floors of sandstone still have their mullioned windows and the ground floor has remains of arches (= « flying buttress » in Architecture) from the middle ages.

(3) The « Armillerie street »

The name comes from Latin meaning « bracelet maker », who were present in the street during the middle-ages. 2

famous addresses :

#18 “*Hotel Servan-Nugues*” : this house dates back to the renaissance (16th 17th century) its interior courtyard has a well and a balcony. The families living in this house gave birth to important political people such as *General Servan* during the french revolution or *Saint-Cyr Nugues* an army-general of Napoleon.

#25 “The common house” (town hall): This building was the first Town Hall of *Romans* from 1382 until the french revolution. This house still has its old street number from the revolution time.

(4) The *Josaphat* stairs

This stairway, that dates from the 15th century, is part of *Romans'* “stations of the cross” path. This path, unique in France, is a series of 40 stations (21 in the historical center and 19 on the hill west of the town).

The name of the stairs recalls the *Josaphat* valley in Jerusalem. It leads to the *Presle* district where you still find the houses of the tanners who would use the water from the “*Martinette*” canal to work the leather and would live on the first floor. Above the private apartments wooden dryers well ventilated were used to dry the skins.

(5) The “Pont-Vieux” (old-bridge) and the docks.

The first bridge over the *Isere* river, in *Romans*, dates from 1030; for centuries, it has allowed the canons of the *Collégiale Saint-Barnard* to establish tolls, a major source of revenue, upon cattle and goods. This explains the name of the town across the river called “*Bourg-de-péage*” which means in french “town (burg)-of-the-toll”. Back then, the houses had direct access to the *Isère*: as proof, an iron ring that served to tie the boats remains in *Port Rivail* street. Repeatedly swept away by flood, rebuilt each time, the old bridge was partly destroyed during the Second World War, in June 1940 and August 1944. In 1860 the docks were built: not only to fight against the devastating floods but also to cope with the increasing traffic in the direction of Grenoble.

(6) The “*Pêcherie*” Street (Fisher street)

It owes its name to the presence of a fish pond fed by abundant sources and belonging to the canons of the Collegiate Church.

(3)

(7) The *Puit-du-cheval* (Well-of-the-Horse) square and it's fountain.

According to a legend, a group of young men from *Romans* coming out drunk of a tavern would have ridden a white horse to return home. Arriving near the river, they understood that this horse was actually an incarnation of the devil himself and they called to God. The horse then hit the ground and threw off his victims before diving into the infernal pit. Since then, a spring flows here.

(4)

(8) The Collegiate church *Saint Barnard* ***

Based on a excavation on the right bank of the *Isère* river, the church of *Saint-Barnard* is the birthplace of *Romans* city. The first church was built in 837 by *Barnard*, Archbishop of Vienna. Here, in the 10th century, a monastery houses a college of canons, hence the name “*Collégiale*”. The nave is unique and of Gothic style, it is built on the walls dating from the Romanesque period; its vault, which is ribbed, stands at 24m above ground.

A “triforium”, gallery with 160 elegant arches and bays and contemporary stained glass windows, sheds light on the nave and transept.

In the chancel, mural paintings of the 14th century are of a mediterranean style and show a rich diversity of colors, geometric designs and figures.

The Blessed Sacrament Chapel (14th and 15th centuries) holds one of the jewels of *Romans'* heritage: the tapestry embroidered with the “mystery of the Passion”, dated from the 16th century (note: accessible only on guided tours).

(5)

(9) *Place aux Herbes* and *Hotel de Clérieu**

This square is named after the small herb market that took place here. During the 10th century, the lords of the family of *Clérieu* tried to impose their

protection on the monastery of *Saint-Barnard* and built a dungeon. Around 1360, the house became a fortified work-shop for royal money (Royal Mint). A fortified gate was built around 1450 and is topped by carved lion heads. In the courtyard, a spiral staircase, elegant witness of the Gothic age, leads to the top floors and the dungeon. This mansion welcomed *King Louis XII* in 1511 and *King Henry III* in 1575 (note: accessible only on guided tours).

(6)

(10) The "trois-carreaux" Street (three-tiles street) *

A Medieval street of cobblestone. At the corner of *Merlin* street and the street of the Cleric, there is a house with a "watchtower".

(7)

(11) The "Clercs Street"(Clerics)

Hotel Dochier (#4) has a Renaissance doorway and an inset with the face of a man and woman. An archway of Gothic style brings access to a courtyard with a loggia and an elegant spiral staircase (note: accessible only on guided tours).

(8)

(12) The Saint-Nicolas street

The Saint-Nicolas street was the headquarters of sailors and boatmen. The *Hôtel Thomé* (#70) has a Renaissance facade decorated with mullioned windows.

(13) Place Jules-Nadi *

The square is named after the first Socialist mayor of Romans, *Jules-Nadi*. The *Cordeliers* theatre got its name from the Franciscan monastery which occupied the square before 1801. The stone facade is part of the military community. This facade along with the kiosk are witnesses of the time when Romans was the garnison town of the 75th Infantry Regiment between 1889 and 1921.

(14) Le Musée International de la Chaussure (The international Shoe Museum) ***

The museum is established in the former "convent of the Visitation", built in the 17th century. Abolished by the French Revolution (1789), the community is reconstituted in 1801 and is dedicated to educating young girls. The main building, decorated with elegant arches, as well as the south wing along the *Saint-Just* street, were built in the 19th century. The cells, once occupied by the *Visitation* nuns, are now the setting for a unique collection of shoes; retracing 4000 years of history, with a special tribute to the creators of the 20th and 21st centuries.

(9)

(15) The second wall

Remains of the surrounding wall of the 14th century that circled the city until the 19th century are still visible today.



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(A) The plight of the Récollets **

(15mn walk from the Josaphat stairs (4)

Built in 1516, this is a monumental series of funerary chapels of the 19th century, it marks the end of the stations-of-the-cross path of Romans and represents « Golgotha » of Jerusalem (note: accessible only on guided tours).

(B) The Town Hall

(5mn walk from the Docks (5) Former monastery of the Minims built in 1621. Since the dissolution of the community in 1791, the building is used to house municipal services.

Other sites 15mn walk away...

(C) The Parisière house

Charles Mossant, mayor of *Bourg-de-Péage*, built this prestigious mansion not far away from his headgear factory in 1890. It is now a clinic since 1949.

(D) The Chapellerie Mossant (hat shop)*

From 1835 to 1985, a series of business families: *Mossant*, *Vallon*, *Argod*, added to the economy life of *Bourg-de-Péage* with the felt hats industry until 1953, then clothes until 1985. In 1929, the firm was at its peak when the economic crisis affected exports, a fire destroyed the factory which was rebuilt in concrete in an artistic style, the buildings got awarded the title "Heritage of the twentieth century."

At *Grande Rue Jean-Jaures* street, a fresco (made in 1998) recalls this economy saga.

(E) Bois des Naix **

(12 hectares (1200 Are) of shaded park, -picture on the back of the original document-)