



CARRER DE SANT VICENT

The street currently known as Saint Vincent Street is an ancient Roman access road to the city of Valencia, which has become fossilised into the city street map throughout history, receiving various different names: Via Augusta, Saint Vincent the Martyr Road, Outer Road, Straw Road.... and currently Saint Vincent the Martyr Street.

VÍA AUGUSTA, or Augustus Road, the ancient access road to the city of *Valentia*, the Roman name for Valencia, is one of the main roads, as well as being the longest one, built by the Roman Empire in Hispania or Roman Spain, a communications and commercial road between towns and ports on the Mediterranean, which ran from Cadiz to the Pyrenees.

On arrival at the Pyrenees, this road connected with another road, the *Via Domitia* or Domitia Road, which ran along the French coastline and joined another road, *Via Aurelia*, Aurelia Road, which went through Italian territory as far as Rome. The emperor Augustus gave it its name, as a result of the repairs and improvements which were carried out under his mandate, around the years 8 to 2 BC, but this road's route is more ancient, as it existed before the arrival of the Romans.



1. The route of Via Augusta, Domitia i Aurèlia.

Via Augusta crossed Valencian land from north to south joining the most important towns of the times: *Saguntum*, (Sagunto), *Valentia* (Valencia), *Saetabis* (Xativa), and *Illici* (Elche). On its way through Valencia, it ran along St Vincent Street, crossing the city of Valentia from south to north (*cardo maximus*) to continue along called del Salvador or the Saviour's Street.



2. *Cardo maximus* on its way through the city of Valentia. (The Archaeological Centre of La Almoína, Valencia).

Its itinerary is known thanks to the *Vasos Apolinales* or Vicarello Cups and the Antonine Itinerary. These Cups, found in the thermal springs of Aquae Apollinare, are four silver glasses in the shape of milestones; the complete itinerary from Rome to Cadiz was engraved on them with the towns and distances, 1,841 Roman miles or approximately 3,000 kilometres. It is thought that they were an offering to Apollo from a Cadiz traveller whose reason for his stay in Rome was to look for health in the thermal waters close to the Bracciano lake and he was also a travel guide.



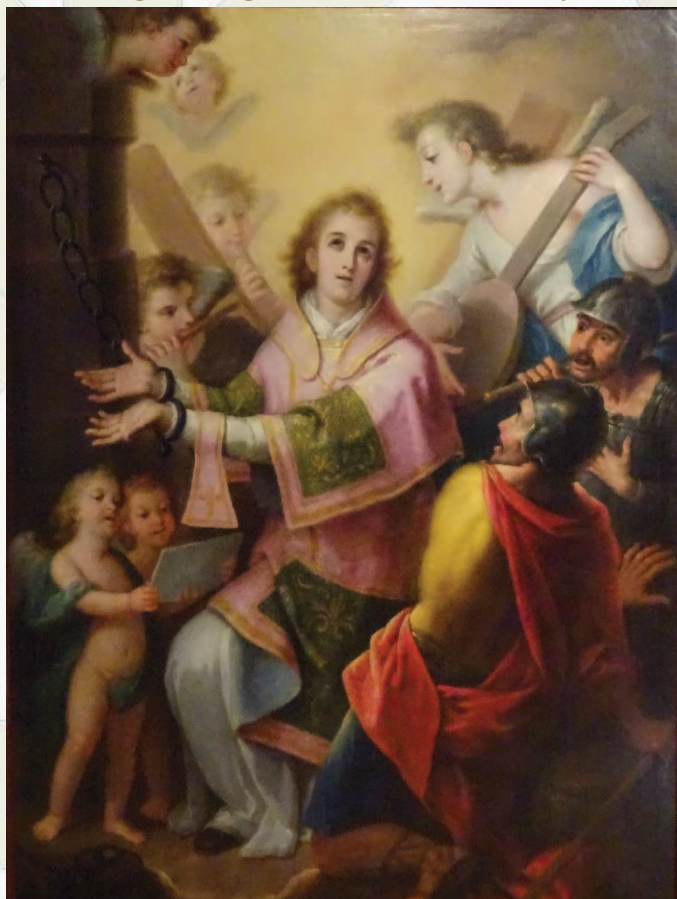
3. The Apolinales or Vicarello Cups. (The museum of Villa Giulia, Rome).

Milestones or stone columns were placed on the sides of the road in order to mark distances, at intervals of approximately 1.5 km, equivalent to one Roman mile or one thousand Roman steps. The name of the street was indicated on these, the distance from the beginning of the road and the name of the emperor. On either side of the Roman roads, there were inns where you could eat or rest, villas and necropolises.

EL CAMÍ DE SANT VICENT or Saint Vincent Road. This road was renamed Saint Vincent Road, a name which was due to a historic event of Saint Vincent the Martyr which was an important occurrence at the start of Christianity in the Western world and which took place in Valencia in the fourteenth century.

Vincent was a deacon of Bishop Valero and in 304 AD, the Roman Prefect Publio Daciano, following the dictates of the Roman authorities, ordered their capture and transfer to the city of *Valentia*. After his refusal to renounce on his Christian faith, the two priests were incarcerated, later banishing Bishop Valero whilst his deacon, the young Vincent, was martyred. This martyrdom episode is known by sources not very distant from the events, the poet Prudentius and Saint Augustine, which gives it great historical veracity.

The Martyrdom of Saint Vincent: “*Saint Vincent resisted torment such as the colt or the torture rack, the catasta in the shape of a cross (which separated arms and legs by ropes), whips, tearing by hooks, and the grill with incandescent coals, after which he was locked up in a cell on top of glass and spikes, with his limbs immobilised by clamps. Finally, when he died, the martyr was thrown on to a waste ground to be devoured by vermin so as to avoid a situation whereby his body might be revered by Valencia's Christian community which would make him a martyr, but the crows scared away the beasts and the body of Saint Vincent remained intact. An enraged Daciano gave orders for him to be thrown and sunk into the depths of the sea after tying him to a mill wheel but the body miraculously reappeared on the beaches of Cullera, (the location of the Font Santa or Holy Fountain), where the widow Jonica found it, burying it and erecting a hermitage in its place*”.



4. “*San Vicente en la cárcel*”. Oil painting of valencian painter Josep Vergara, 1792. Museum of the Cathedral of València.

The circumstances of the death of Saint Vincent were spread all around Spain and Europe which, during the subsequent centuries, caused a trend of

pilgrimages to Valencia. Currently, there are various places associated with the saint: the archaeological centre of La Almoina, the archaeological crypt of the prison of Saint Vincent the Martyr, the convent or prison of Saint Thecla, the parish of Saint Vincent the Martyr, and the church and monastery of Saint Vincent of La Roqueta.



5. Capitals with scenes of the martyrdom of Saint Vincent. (The romanese façade of the Monastery of Saint Vincent of La Roqueta, Valencia).



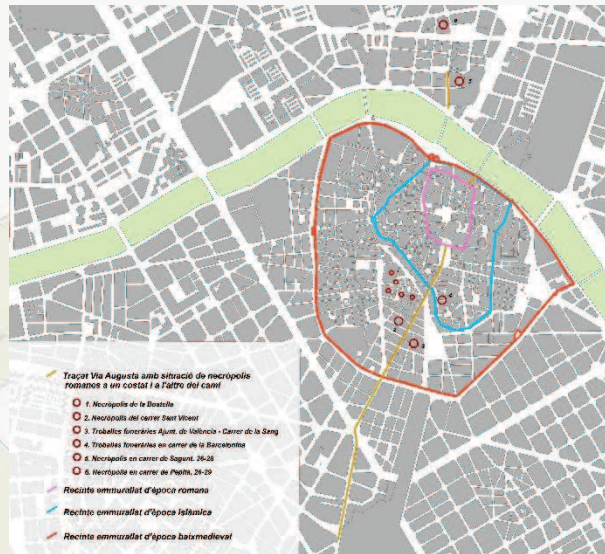
6. Archaeological Centre of La Almoina.



7. Archaeological Crypt of Saint Vincent Mártir's Prison.

The road, situated outside the city walls, with nearby slums and necropoles, slowly started to become encompassed in the metropolis during its various historical expansions. In the eleventh century, the Islamic wall was built which crossed Saint Vincent the Martyr street at the height of what is currently Cerrajeros Street where the gate - Bab Baytala - was. Subsequently, in the fourteenth century, a new wall was built which encompassed the zone in which we find ourselves and which ran down to the nearby square of Saint

Augustine, plaza de San Agustín, where the access door called Saint Vincent, was found.



8. City street map of Valencia.

It would become the largest street in the city and new buildings were built, until it transformed itself into the commercial artery which it still is today. Amongst the historical buildings in this street, we can highlight some which no longer exist such as the Casa de las Arrepentidas (1345), the House of the Repentants, and the convent of Saint Gregory, both situated on the block which now houses the Olympia Theatre. This monastery was converted into a women's prison and, at the beginning of the twentieth century, a temporary prison where Vicente Blasco Ibañez was imprisoned.

Other buildings, reconstructed throughout the centuries, which can be seen in this street are: the church of Saint Martin the Bishop and Saint Anthony the Abbott built in the fourteenth century, the parish church of Saint Augustine which belonged to an old convent founded at the end of the thirteenth century; this monastery was considered to be one of the greatest in Valencia. The church and Monastery of Saint Vincent of La Roqueta dedicated to the memory of Saint Vincent the Martyr, of medieval origin, and the fifteenth century Cruz del Término or the boundary cross, situated at the end of Saint Vincent Street which marked the entrance to the city.



9. Images of Saint Vincent Street at the beginning of the twentieth century, (General and photographic Archive of Valencia (AGFDV). The Corbin Collection, nº 10715.



10. Images of Saint Vincent the Martyr Street at the beginning of the twentieth century (Valencian Nicolau Primitiu Library, José Huget Collection, Valencia).