

Developments to Watch

EDITED BY OTIS PORT

FOR THE APPIAN WAY, HIT COMMAND-A

ROME WASN'T BUILT IN A DAY. Reconstructing it in virtual reality is no snap, either. The ambitious Rome Reborn project at the University of California at Los Angeles plans to make a multilayer virtual reality Rome that spans the centuries from 850 B.C. to 450 A.D. Archaeologists, architects, historians, and other researchers will be able to click on a spot and peel the

virtual reality "onion" to step back in time.

The project won't be completed until about 2020. But Imperial Rome of 450 A.D. will spring to life again in time for the Eternal City's celebration of the new millennium. In multimedia kiosks around the city, people will be able to prowl the Colosseum's dungeons, stroll through the Roman Forum, and listen to toga-clad ac-

tors. This first model will be sold on CD-ROMS to help defray the project's cost—as much as \$20 million.

Rome Reborn was started in 1995 by a multidisciplinary group of UCLA professors. When they learned of similar efforts at Infobyte, an Italian multimedia company, the groups joined forces. Infobyte expects to finish its model of the Colosseum within weeks. UCLA plans to

unveil its reconstruction of the Trajan Forum at the opening of the new Getty Museum in Los Angeles late this year. *Monica Larner*



FOR FURTHER INFORMATION: Go to Business Week Online at America Online or E-mail dtwapr@businessweek.com